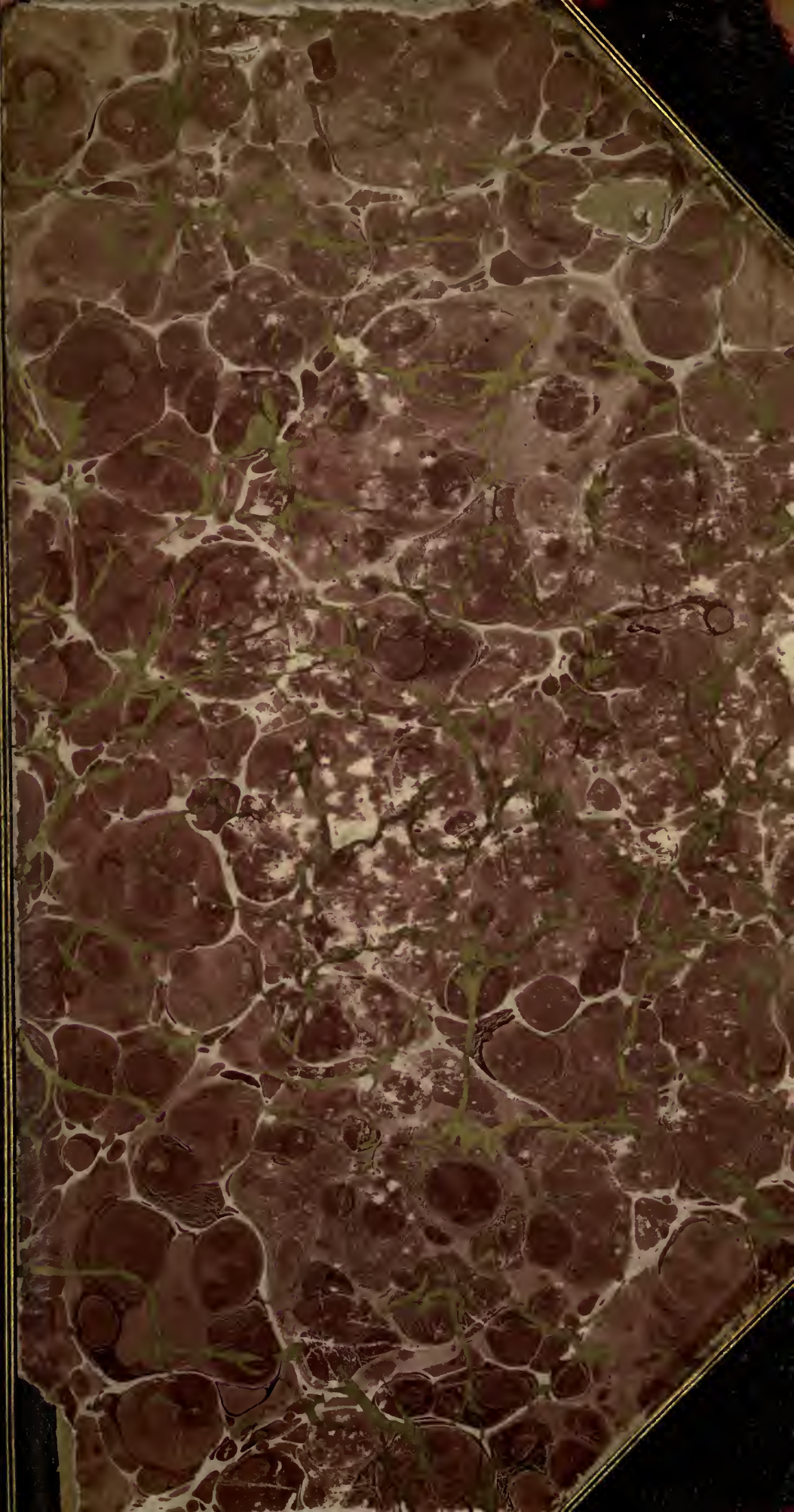
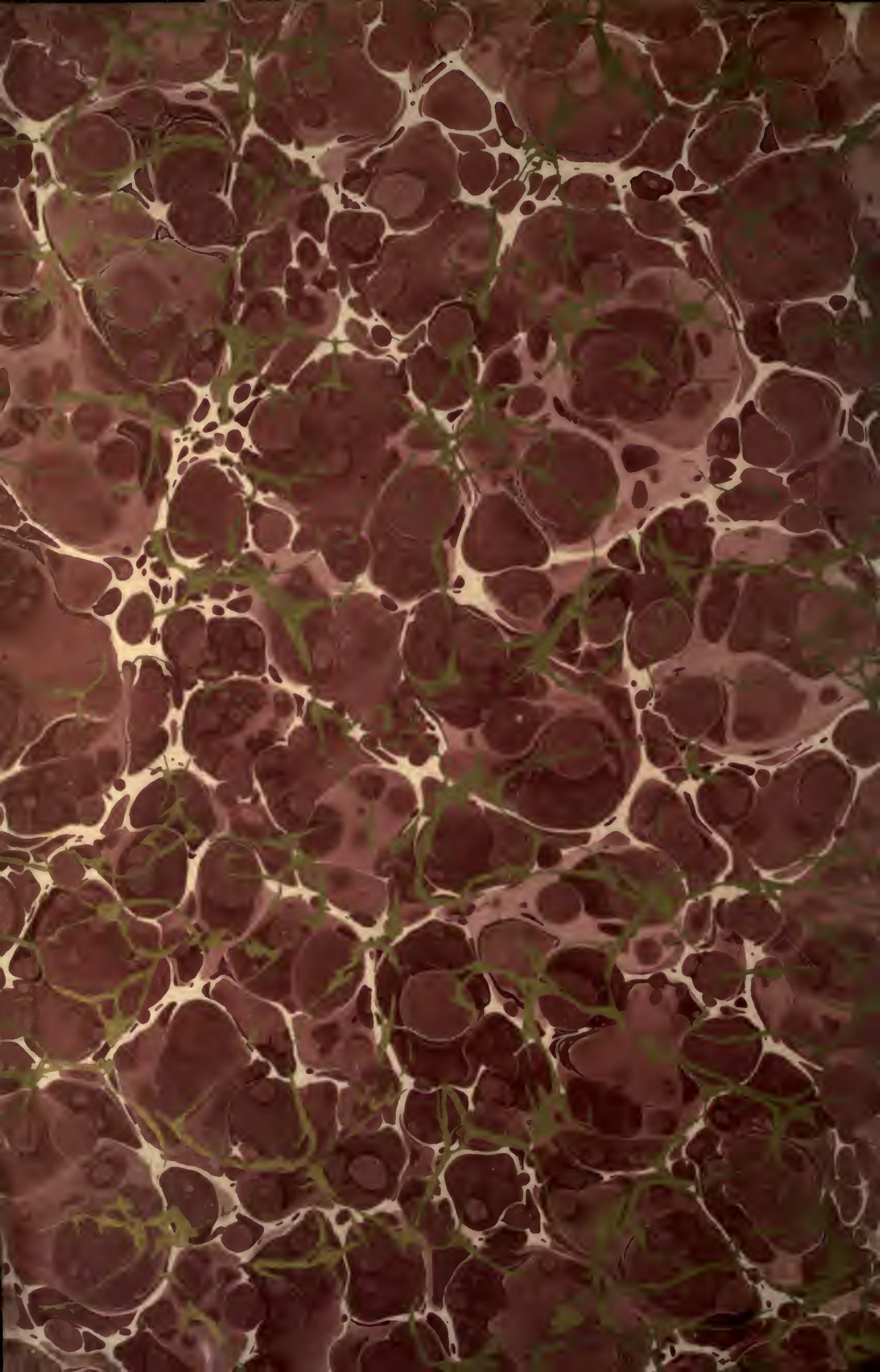


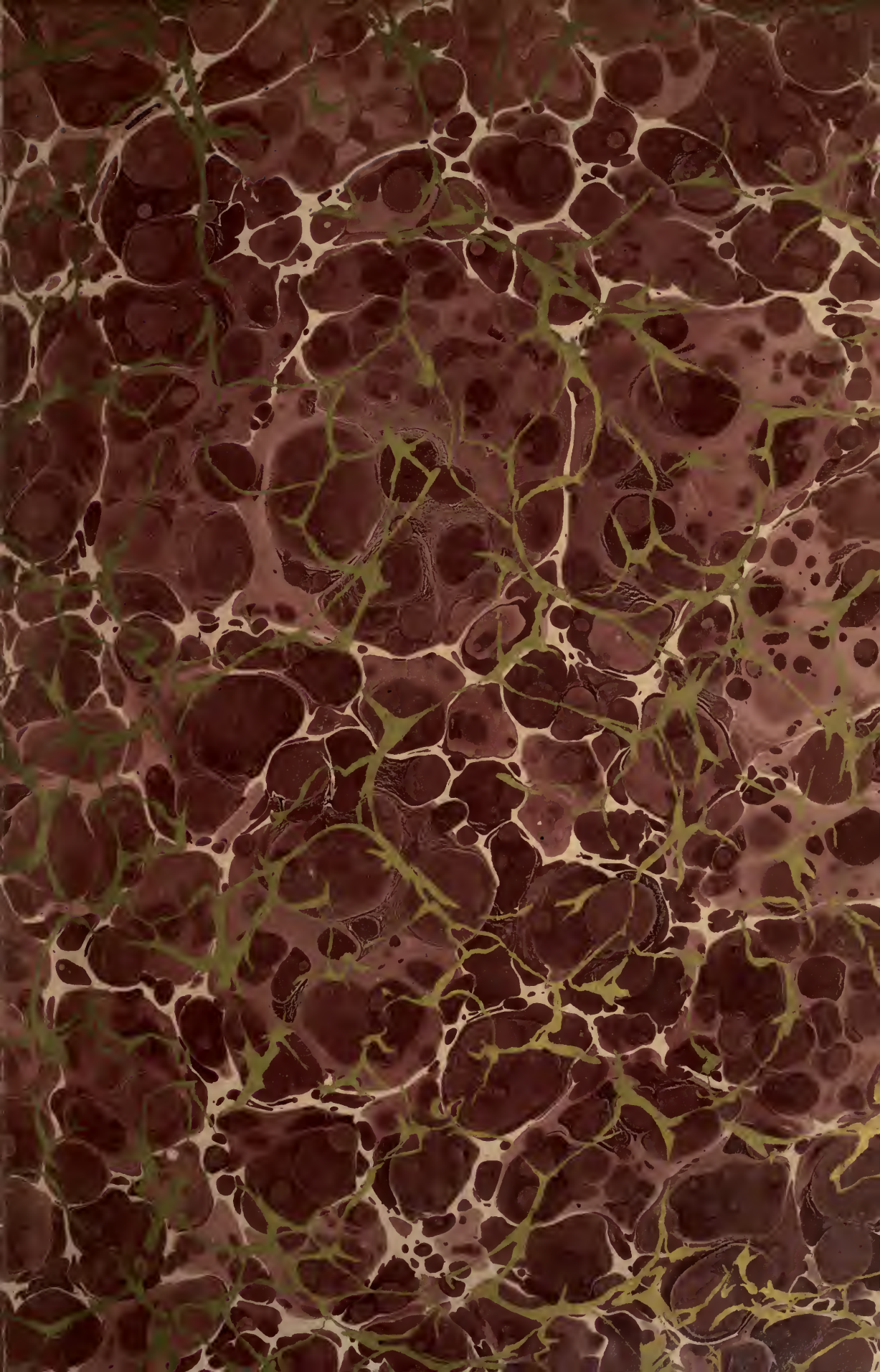
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THE ENGRAVINGS OF ALBRECHT DÜRER

By
(Sir) LIONEL ^{Henry} CUST

Of the Department of Prints and Drawings, British Museum



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1. "Das Leben und die Werke Albrecht Dürers," von Joseph Heller (Bamberg, 1827).
2. "Albrecht Dürers Kupferstiche, Radirungen, Holzschnitte, und Zeichnungen," vom Oberbaurath B. Hausmann (Hannover, 1861).
3. "Dürers Kupferstiche und Holzschnitte. Ein kritisches Verzeichniss," von R. v. Retberg (München, 1871).
4. "Albert Dürer : his Teachers, his Rivals, and his Followers," by Sidney Colvin, in the *Portfolio*, vol. viii. (1877).
5. "Albert Dürer, his Life and Works," by Moriz Thausing. Translated from the German and edited by Fred. A. Eaton, 2 vols. (John Murray, 1882).
6. "Albert Dürer et ses Dessins," par Charles Ephrussi (Paris, 1882).
7. "The Literary Remains of Albrecht Dürer," by W. M. Conway and Lina Eckenstein (Camb. Univ. Press, 1889).
8. "Albrecht Dürer," von Anton Springer (Berlin, 1892).
9. "Albrecht Dürers Aufenthalt in Basel, 1492-1494," von Dr. Daniel Burckhardt (München, 1892).
10. "Albrecht Dürers Venetianischer Aufenthalt, 1494-1495," von Dr. Gabriel von Terey (Strassburg, 1892).
11. "Catalogue of the Engraved Work of Albrecht Dürer," the prints arranged in the order of their execution, by C. H. Middleton (Cambridge, 1893).
12. "Dürers Schriftlicher Nachlass, etc." herausgegeben von Dr. K. Lange und Dr. F. Fuhse (Halle, 1893).

THE ENGRAVINGS OF ALBRECHT DÜRER

CHAPTER I

History of engraving on wood and copper before Dürer—Martin Schongauer—Dürer's birth and parentage—Anthoni Koberger and printing in Nuremberg—Early drawings—Apprenticeship to Wolgemut—"Wanderjahre"—First visit to Venice—Jacopo dei Barbari—Return to Nuremberg.

To one writing of the life and work of an artist such as Albrecht Dürer, the weighty words of John Ruskin, in his Introduction to the gospel of modern art, *Modern Painters*, recur with particular emphasis. "If it be true," says Ruskin—"and it can scarcely be disputed—that nothing has been for centuries consecrated by public admiration, without possessing in a high degree some kind of sterling excellence, it is not because the average intellect and feeling of the majority of the public are competent in any way to distinguish what is really excellent, but because all erroneous opinion is inconsistent, and all ungrounded opinion transitory; so that while the fancies and feelings which deny deserved honour and award what is undue have neither root nor strength sufficient to maintain consistent testimony for a length of time, the opinions formed on right grounds by those few who are in reality competent judges, being necessarily stable, communicate themselves gradually from mind to mind, descending lower as they extend wider, until they leaven the whole lump, and rule by absolute authority, even where the grounds

and reasons for them cannot be understood. On this, the gradual victory of what is consistent over what is vacillating, depends the reputation of all that is highest in art and literature." So writes the art-prophet of the nineteenth century, and his words, leading up as they do to the study and appreciation of the immortal works of Turner, apply as well to the equally immortal creations of Albrecht Dürer.

Albrecht Dürer fills a large space in the history of art. So far as Germany is concerned he is *facile princeps*, unrivalled even in his own age by so great an artist as the younger Hans Holbein, and towering above all his successors, no one of whom can raise a head high enough to look him in the face, with the exception perhaps of Adolf Menzel at the present day. Wherever there are or will be students and lovers of art, there must be a great majority in whom instinct and intellect will be stimulated by the study of the works of Dürer, whether as painter, engraver, philosopher, author, or merely as simple burgher citizen of Nuremberg. That city—*mein liebes Nürnberg*, as Hans Sachs sings in *Die Meistersinger*—is justly proud of the artist to whom it owes so much of its fame, and cherishes among its most treasured relics that low-ceilinged gabled house near the Thiergärtner Thor in which Dürer lived, worked, and died. Although it would seem that it was Dürer's ambition to excel as a painter, it is as an engraver that he has won his fame and taken so sympathetic a grasp of the human heart. It is as an engraver also both on wood and on metal that he has earned that high place in the hierarchy of art which generations of students have allotted to him. It is all the more astonishing to think that copperplate-engraving was hardly older than the century in which Dürer was born, and that wood-engraving, if of greater antiquity, owes its place among the pictorial arts almost entirely to Dürer himself.

It will probably always remain an impossible task to fix an exact date for the invention of engraving on copper or wood, even when limited to the function of giving off an impression with ink or some similar pigment. Two factors must, however, be always taken into consideration—namely, the ink and paper necessary for the making of prints. It was not until the fifteenth century that paper began to be manufactured from linen rags, good, strong, and above all cheap enough to be of use to the printer and the engraver. Parchment, beloved of the scribe, was at all times

an expensive luxury, well adapted for highly finished work, but most unsuitable for rapid and marketable writing or printing. The invention of such paper led to the development of all branches of engraving, and in its turn to that invention which has proved perhaps the most important and fruitful for the whole human race—printing from movable types. Moreover, it was not until the middle of the fifteenth century that an ink was manufactured of a consistency suitable for really satisfactory printing—an ink which it must be remarked, by the way, has never been excelled even at the present day. Given the absence of these two necessary ingredients, the tardiness of the human race in the invention of engraving, or rather of printing in all its branches, can be explained and excused.

The history of wood-engraving is well known : its early use for small rude outline prints of saints or playing-cards, intended solely as a framework for colour, roughly but not always inartistically applied ; then the picture- or block-books, from which sprang the invention of printing with movable types ; and, finally, its adoption for the purpose of decorating or illustrating books. The history of copperplate-engraving is more obscure. The researches of Dr. Max Lehrs, the director of the Royal Cabinet of Prints at Dresden, have proved that it was practised in the first quarter of the fifteenth century, and with some skill. It was really developed out of the goldsmith's art, all the earliest copperplate-engravers being probably professional workers in metal. The earliest practitioner of the art was an engraver known as the "Master of the Playing-cards," from a series of interesting cards engraved on copper by him in the early part of the fifteenth century. These cards were popular at the time, because they were copied by the illuminators of manuscripts, which can be dated not later than 1435. Other engravers, whose names are unknown, followed, but the first engraver to invest the art of copperplate-engraving with interest and importance was a native of the Upper Rhine country, whose initials only, E. S., are known, and who worked from about 1450, or perhaps earlier, till 1467. He was probably a goldsmith by profession, but his engravings, which show his gradual progress in the art, are frequently picturesque and decorative, combining great technical skill with much beauty of design and intensity of conception. His immediate successors of importance and originality were the

artist known as "The Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet," from the fact that the bulk of his engravings, executed with the needle or dry point, are preserved at Amsterdam, but who was a native of Swabia or South Germany, and has been identified conjecturally by no less an authority than Dr. Lippmann of Berlin as Hans Holbein the elder; an engraver known by his initials P. W., apparently a native of Cologne; and Martin Schongauer.

Schongauer was a native of Colmar in Alsace, where he was born about the middle of the fifteenth century. Living as he did in the vicinity of the Upper Rhine, and not far from the district in which the master E. S. worked, he must have been acquainted with that artist's engravings. He was both painter and engraver, mingling with the hard dry goldsmith's handling of the copper a tenderness of touch and a depth of feeling which have made his engravings not only highly valued both by his contemporaries and by posterity, but also models which formed and influenced the whole of German art, and established a national character in it, as opposed to the dominating influence of the Flemish school of Rogier van der Weyden and the stern uncompromising art of Cologne. His engravings were circulated far and wide, penetrating even beyond the Alps. Michelangelo was not too great to copy a print by Schongauer, nor Raphael to adopt from one of Schongauer's engravings the principal motive of one of his most famous pictures. *Hübsch Martin*, or Martin the Beautiful, he was dubbed by his friends.

Albrecht Dürer's family did not belong to Nuremberg, nor was he sprung from any patrician or burgher race in its neighbourhood. Fortunately he has left a record of his early life and parentage, compiled in 1524 from some notes left by his father. From these he tells that his grandfather Anthoni Dürer was of a farmer race in a hamlet called Eytas, close to a small town called Gyula, eight miles south of Grosswardein in Hungary, into which town he came as a boy and was apprenticed to a goldsmith. The grandfather married a girl called Elisabeth, by whom he had one daughter and three sons, the eldest of whom was Albrecht, Dürer's father; of the other two the second was called Ladislas, became a saddler, and was the father of Dürer's cousin, Niklas Unger (the Hungarian), who, after working with Dürer's father at Nuremberg, settled as a goldsmith at Cologne; the third son became a scholar, and



Armorial Bearings of the Dürer Family. From a woodcut by A. Dürer.

parish priest at Grosswardein. Albrecht Dürer the elder, after wandering through Germany and in the Netherlands, came to Nuremberg in 1455, being about twenty-eight years of age, on St. Eulogius's Day (March 11), "and on that same day Philipp Pirkheimer was celebrating his wedding on the Veste, and a great dance was held under the big lime-tree"; so early did the names of Dürer and Pirkheimer come together. It has been suggested, with some ground, that the name of Dürer (or Thürer, as it was pronounced at Nuremberg) is merely a rendering of the Hungarian word *Ajtó* (Eytas), meaning a door. Albrecht the elder was taken as an apprentice by Hieronymus Holper, who in 1467 gave him his daughter Barbara to wife, the marriage taking place eight days before St. Veit's Day (June 8). Holper had married Kunigunde Oellinger von Weissenburg, which shows him to have been a man of some position. Albrecht and Barbara Dürer had eighteen children, of whom only three lived to grow up—Albrecht, the third child and second son, born in 1471; Andreas, born in 1484; and Hans, born in 1490.

Albrecht Dürer the elder became one of the leading goldsmiths in Nuremberg. His marriage obtained him an entry into the rights of a burgher, and he became Master of the Goldsmiths' Company, and held other public offices of repute. Dürer has left two painted portraits of him—one, dated 1491, at Florence, and another, dated 1497, at Sion House. On the reverse of the former are painted the arms of the Dürer family, being two shields, one bearing gules, an open door azure (for Dürer or Thürer), the other azure, a ram argent for Holper, and surmounted by a Moor's bust with cap and jacket gules, faced with or. Dürer has left a fine woodcut of his own arms, the canting coat being evidently adopted according to the practice prevalent among the leading families of Nuremberg. He also left a written description of his father, in which he says that his father "spent his life in great industry and hard severe work, his only object being to earn with his own hand a living for himself and family; that he was very poor, met with many troubles and reverses, but was esteemed by all who knew him, since he led an honourable Christian life, was patient, gentle and peaceful in his dealings with everybody, and always thankful to God; that he kept but little company, and sought few pleasures for himself, was a man of few words, and feared God; that he paid a great deal

of attention to his children's education, his daily words to them being 'that we should love God and deal truly with our neighbours.' His mother's character is more shadowy : she seems to have been pious and benevolent, and deeply attached to her children, especially to her youngest son Hans, the Benjamin of the family. The two younger sons both became artists : Andreas, a goldsmith at Nuremberg ; and Hans, after working at Nuremberg, and in the service of the Emperor Maximilian, eventually became a painter at Cracow in Poland, not far from the country of his ancestors. Dürer was born on May 21, 1471, in his father's house in the Burgstrasse, a street in the St. Sebald quarter of Nuremberg, leading up to the castle or Veste. In the immediate vicinity were the houses of Bernhard Walther the astronomer, Michel Wolgemut the painter, Hartmann Schedel the man of letters, and Anthoni Koberger the famous printer and publisher, who stood godfather to the young Albrecht. Dürer says that his father took a special delight in him, as he saw that he was anxious to learn, so that he allowed him to go to school and learn to read and write before he apprenticed him to his own trade as a goldsmith. Dürer, however, found that his inclinations were much more towards painting than goldsmithry, and told his father so. His father was disappointed at having wasted so much time on teaching the boy his craft, but gave in to him, and apprenticed him for three years, on St. Andrew's Day in 1486, to the painter Michel Wolgemut, during which time, Dürer says, "God lent me industry, so that I learnt well ; but I had to put up with a great deal of annoyance from my fellow-pupils."

The date of Dürer's birth synchronises with the commencement of a great artistic and industrial movement in Nuremberg.

Wie friedsam treuer Sitten
Getrost in That und Werk
Liegt nicht in Deutschlands Mitten
Mein liebes Nürenberg.—*Die Meistersinger.*

Painting, though practised in Nuremberg for some years previously, did not attain any importance there until the days of the Pleydenwurffs and Wolgemut. Wolgemut married the widow of Hans Pleydenwurff, and with his stepson Wilhelm Pleydenwurff was the chief purveyor of

paintings to the citizens of Nuremberg. Their paintings are of no mean merit, which is now beginning to be recognised.

More important, however, to Nuremberg was the great development in the art of printing. Gutenberg's invention was brought from Mayence to Nuremberg about 1470 by Johann Sensenschmidt. Johannes Regiomontanus printed there in 1472 his *Kalendarium Novum*. The great man, though, in the trade was Anthoni Koberger, the first great bookseller in the world, who, besides the numerous printing-presses which he kept at work in Nuremberg, was the chief disseminator of books throughout Europe, with correspondents in every town of importance—Augsburg, Munich, Prague, Vienna, Pesth, Cracow, Lübeck, Paris, Lyons, Basle, Milan, Bologna, Florence, and Venice—a veritable “prince of booksellers,” as one of his contemporaries addresses him. Koberger, though not the actual printer of the first illustrated Bible, which was published by Heinrich Quentel at Cologne in 1480, purchased the blocks, brought them to Nuremberg, and published them in a Bible of his own in 1483. These cuts are evidently designed by a good artist, and probably instigated Koberger to a new venture of book-illustration, when he planned out the *Schatzbehalter* and the *Weltchronik*, with Hartmann Schedel as editor of the latter, and intrusted the drawing of the illustrations to the best artists at hand—the painters Wolgemut and Pleydenwurff. As these books were not published until 1490 and 1492 respectively, after the expiration of Dürer's apprenticeship, he could scarcely have had much share in their production. Supposing that they occupied some years before completion, it is not impossible that he may have had, as an apprentice, some subordinate part in the work. Unfortunately for these books, the merit of the designs was ruined by the inefficiency of the wood-cutters in Koberger's employment, as may be seen by comparing the drawing of *The Creator* in the Print Room at the British Museum with the printed frontispiece of the *Chronicle*. The only painting of importance known to have been produced in Wolgemut's studio during Dürer's apprenticeship is the so-called Peringsdörffer altarpiece, now in the German Museum at Nuremberg, a work of great merit and interest, which must have been executed before the young Dürer's eyes.

There are but few traces of Dürer's work as a boy artist. The most



Albrecht Dürer at the age of thirteen. From a drawing by himself in the Albertina collection at Vienna.

interesting is the portrait of himself (in the Albertina collection at Vienna) at the age of thirteen, drawn in silver point from a reflection in a looking-glass, an amazing production for a boy of that age. A somewhat older portrait of himself has just been discovered at Erlangen, a head resting on his hand, drawn with the pen, evidently also from a looking-glass, with a large composition of the Holy Family drawn with the pen on the other side of the same sheet of paper. This drawing



Portrait of Albrecht Dürer when a boy. From a drawing by himself in the University Library at Erlangen.

shows a great advance in the art ; though a mere sketch, the drawing of the hand is masterly, and it must be ascribed to a time when the young Dürer had acquired some training, probably during his apprenticeship to Wolgemut. Another drawing (in Berlin), signed and dated 1485, represents the Virgin and Child enthroned, with an angel playing music on either side, and a somewhat similar drawing is in the Louvre at Paris. A fourth drawing in pencil (in the British Museum) of a woman with a

hawk on her wrist is inscribed by another hand: "This also is old. Albrecht Dürer did it for me before he came to the painter, in Wolgemut's house on the upper story in the hinderhouse, in the presence of Conrad Lomayr, deceased." A few other pen-drawings have also been preserved—one of three soldiers (at Berlin), a riding-party (at Bremen), and a courier (in the British Museum). These are all what may be termed engraver's drawings, drawn in outline and shaded with cross-hatchings, as if they had been done by Martin Schongauer. Dürer's father seems not only to have been acquainted with Schongauer's engravings, but to have been in correspondence with Schongauer himself, and the style of these early drawings of Dürer, and many of the designs of Wolgemut and Pleydenwurff, show that Schongauer's engravings must have been regular subjects of study among the pupils in that studio. These drawings show that even at this date Dürer studied the works of other artists, but never merely copied, always working up his notes into original compositions of his own.

Dürer's apprenticeship to Wolgemut terminated towards the close of the year 1489. "When I had completed my service," he says, "my father sent me away, and I remained absent four years, until my father summoned me back." He left Nuremberg after Easter in 1490, and returned after Whitsuntide in 1494. It was the custom in Germany for all young men who intended entering on a trade after the completion of their apprenticeship (*Lehrjahre*) to go away from home for a similar period (*Wanderjahre*) and acquire what knowledge they could of the trade on which they were going to embark, in places and from persons away from their own immediate surroundings. It has been a matter of some dispute as to how Dürer spent his years of wandering. Fortunately, a friend and contemporary of Dürer, Christoph Scheurl, a leading man of letters and humanist in Nuremberg, has left an explicit statement of how part of Dürer's time was occupied. Noticing a statement made by the historian Wimpfeling in 1503, to the effect that Dürer had learnt engraving from Martin Schongauer, Scheurl questioned Dürer himself about the matter. Dürer informed Scheurl that when he was thirteen years old his father had intended to send him eventually to study under Schongauer at Colmar, and had even written to Schongauer on the subject, but that Schongauer died just about the time when Dürer had completed

his three years' apprenticeship to Wolgemut. However, Dürer, in 1492, after travelling through Germany, went all the same to Colmar, and was hospitably received by Schongauer's brothers, the goldsmiths Caspar and Paul, and the painter Ludwig, as he was also at Basle by another brother, the goldsmith Georg Schongauer. Martin Schongauer, however, Dürer never even saw, so that he could never have been his pupil. From this it is evident that Dürer's father, being well acquainted with Schongauer as an engraver, intended his son, after completing his drawing studies with Wolgemut, to go and study in Schongauer's school at Colmar. It is now known that Schongauer died at Breisach on the Rhine early in 1491, but that his school of engraving was carried on by his brother Ludwig. Dürer therefore, although he could not have the advantage of instruction from the great Martin himself, did the next best thing, by coming all the same to study in the Schongauer school at Colmar. It is uncertain what places he had previously visited in Germany, but it is highly probable that his travels were directed by his godfather Koberger, who was in communication with every important town in Germany, and in constant employment of young men like Dürer as travellers in the

¹ This passage is seldom quoted at length. It occurs in Scheurl's letter, "De Vita et Obitu Reverendi Patris Antonii Kressen, &c.," printed in Goldast's edition of the *Life and Works of Willibald Pirckheimer*. It runs as follows: "Et in magno precio habuit Albertum Durer Nuremberga, quem ego Germanum Appellem per excellentiam appellare soleo. Testes mihi sunt, ut reliquos taceo, Bononienses pictores, qui illi in faciem me audiente publice principatum picturæ in universo orbe detulerunt, affirmantes jucundius se morituros viso tamdiu desiderato Alberto. Testis liber quem de ratione pingendi post Appellem nostro avo solus perscripsit, de quo pictores judicant et potentes. Mihi in meo suavissimo Durer non minus grata sunt ingenuina probitas, facundia, comitas, facilitas, humanitas. Itaque unum præterire nequeo. Jacobus Vimphelingius nunquam a me sine honoris præfatione nominandus capite 68 Epitomatis Germanorum tradit Albertum nostrum usum esse præceptore Martino Schön Columbariensi, ceterum Albertum ad me, hoc significantem, scribit, sæpe etiam coram testatur, patrem Albertum, is ex vico Cula prope Veradium civitatem Hungariæ natus erat, destinasse quidem se adolescentulum, tertium decimum annum natum, Martino Schön ob celebrem famam in disciplinam traditurum fuisse, et ad eum eius rei gratia dedisse etiam litteras, qui tamen sub id tempus excesserit undi ipse in Gymnasio utriusque nostrum vicini et municipis Michaelis Wolgemuts triennio profecerit: tandem peragrata Germania, quum anno nonagesimo secundo Colmariam venisset a Caspare et Paulo aurifabris et Ludovico pictore, item etiam Basileæ a Georgio aurifabro, Martini fratribus, susceptus sit, benigne atque humane tractatus. Ceterum Martini discipulum minime fuisse, immo ne vidisse quidem, attamen videre desiderasse vehementer."

bookselling trade. It is certain that at some time Dürer visited Strasburg¹ and Basle, where two of Koberger's chief correspondents were in business—Grüninger at Strasburg and Amerbach at Basle. Moreover, these two printers were the chief continuers of Koberger's enterprise in books illustrated by the best artists, of whom there was at the time no large choice. Dürer therefore could have got plenty of employment both in designing and cutting wood-blocks from either of these firms. That he did so at Basle is clear from a wood-block of St. Jerome, preserved in the museum there, which bears his name on the back, and was used for an edition of *St. Jerome's Letters*, published by Kessler, another of Koberger's correspondents at Basle in 1492. A series of partially completed wood-blocks for use as illustrations to an edition of *Terence* are also preserved in the museum at Basle, and a large part of these have been credited to Dürer.² The conventional treatment of the figures and costume then in vogue makes it almost impossible to separate with certainty the works of various draughtsmen on wood at the time. The same features occur not only in the illustrations published at Basle and Strasburg, but also in some of the later illustrations to the Nuremberg *Weltchronik* and in the drawings and engravings of the so-called "Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet" mentioned above. That so intelligent a writer as Sebastian Brant, who supervised the printing and illustration of his own works, should have perceived the value of Dürer's draughtsmanship is very probable indeed.

Although evidence has been strongly, almost passionately, brought to show the contrary, it seems to be clearly proved that the latter portion of Dürer's *Wanderjahre* was spent in Venice. Venice was one of the chief centres of the printing world, in fact of the whole world's commerce. German merchants from Venice, Augsburg, and the Hanse Towns mustered there in such force that a special building was reserved for their accommodation, the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, adjoining the Rialto, where they were enjoined by the Venetian Government to reside. Many merchants resided there as general

¹ It has been ascertained that Georg Schongauer, the goldsmith, and his wife Apollonia left Basle and settled at Strasburg, where according to an old tradition Dürer worked under him, and painted their portraits.

² See D. Burckhardt, *Dürers Aufenthalt in Basel*.

agents, among whom was Anthoni Kolb, a native of Nuremberg, and one of Koberger's chief friends and correspondents. Dürer, as Koberger's godson, would naturally have a strong recommendation to Kolb, and a warm welcome from the merchants of Nuremberg. Painting in Venice had just commenced that era of progress and increasing glory which was inaugurated by the introduction of the secret of oil-colours by Antonello da Messina, was continued and brought to a higher pitch of excellence by Gentile and Giovanni Bellini, and reached its culmination in the works of Giorgione and Titian. At the time of Dürer's first visit the Bellinis were the chief power in Venetian painting, though their rule was shared by that great pioneer in art, their brother-in-law Andrea Mantegna, at Padua. It is known that Dürer had intercourse with Giovanni Bellini, but the painter with whom he was brought into most close association was one Jacopo dei Barbari, or de Barbaris, known familiarly to his fellow-countrymen as Jacometto, and to his German friends as Jakob Walch, that being the word always used by Dürer in his letters to signify an Italian. Barbari was about twenty years older than Dürer, and apparently already an acquaintance of Kolb. He had a considerable reputation as a painter of portraits and illuminations, and was noted for the minuteness and delicacy of his painting, though his colouring, at least in his later works executed in Germany, was very cold and thin. He was however certainly one of the leading painters in Venice before the suns of Giorgione and Titian had risen, and a writer in 1529, the "Anonimo" of the Abbate Morelli, does not hesitate to assign to him the exquisite little painting of *St. Jerome in his Study*, recently acquired by the National Gallery, but now accredited with every possible authority to the great Antonello da Messina himself, whose pupil Barbari¹

¹ Although there is no reason for doubting the ascription of this interesting painting to Antonello da Messina, it is interesting to quote the "Anonimo's" own words, since he wrote as far back as 1529. The picture was then in the house of Antonio Pasqualino at Venice. "El quadretto del S. Jeronimo che nel studio legge, in abito cardinalesco, alcuni credono che el sii stato di mano di Antonello da Messina; ma li più, e più verisimilmente, l'attribuiscono a Gianes, ovvero al Memelin, pittor antico ponentino; e cussi mostra quella maniera, benchè el volto è finito alla italiana; sicchè pare de mano de Jacometto. Li edifici sono alla ponentina, el paesetto è naturale, minuto e finito, e si vede oltra una finestra, e oltra la porta del studio e pur fugge: e tutta l'opera, per sottilita, colori, disegno, forza, rilievo, è perfetta. Ivi sono ritratti un pavone, un cotorno e un bacil da barbiero espressamente. Nel scabello vi è finta una letterina

may have been. Barbari was not only a painter, but also an engraver of merit. His engravings stand alone among the works of his contemporaries, and, though clearly influenced both by the technical execution and the antique paganism of Mantegna, have an originality of types quite their own, and a style of engraving which approaches more nearly to the northern school than to Mantegna. The half-open mouths and sentimental pose of his figures, with their languorous limbs and clinging drapery, are in strong contrast to the robust and buxom vitality which one associates with Venetian art. Barbari it was who first introduced Dürer to the proportions and measurements of the human body as a subject for study. Dürer has recorded how, when Barbari first showed him the male and female figure drawn according to measurement, he would rather have had it explained to him than received a new kingdom. Like Keats in his sonnet on Chapman's Homer, Dürer may have said—

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims within his ken.

Barbari however refused to explain the whole thing clearly to Dürer, who wanted to get it printed "for Barbari's honour and for common use." Dürer therefore being young and ignorant, but already a devoted art-student, racked his brains to try and work the matter out, and finally, after reading what Vitruvius had to say upon the matter, began that course of original studies on the subject which formed his most absorbing occupation throughout life.¹

attaccata aperta, che pare contener el nome del maestro, e nondimeno, se si guarda sottilmente appresso, non contiene lettera alcuna, ma è tutta finta. Altri credono che la figura sii stata rifatta da Jacometto Veneziano." (*Notizia d'opere di disegno*, pubblicata e illustrata da D. Jacopo Morelli. Seconda edizione . . . di G. Frizzoni, Bologna 1884.) The suggestion might be hazarded that the barber's basin in the front of the picture is a canting device on the name Barbari or Barberino. It has been doubted by some critics whether the painter Jacometto and Jacopo dei Barbari are the same person.

¹ Dürer's statement is also seldom quoted at length. It occurs in one of the draught dedications to Pirkheimer of Dürer's book on *Proportion*, and is among the manuscripts in the British Museum. "Idoch so ich keinen find, der do Etwas beschrieben hätt van Menschlicher Mass zu machen, dann einen Mann, Jacobus genennt, van Venedig geborn, ein lieblicher Moler, Der wies mir Mann und Weib, die er aus der Mass gemacht hätt und dass ich auf diese Zeit liebr sehen wollt, was sein Meinung wär gewest dann ein neu Kunigreich, und wenn ichs hätt, so wollt ich ihms zu Ehren in Druck bringen, gemeinen Nutz zu gut. Aber ich was zu derselben Zeit noch jung und hätt nie van solchem Ding gehört. Und die Kunst ward mir fast lieben, und nahm die Ding

Dürer's sojourn in Venice was terminated by a summons from his father to return home. He has left an interesting record of his travels in the portrait of himself painted in 1493, and now in the collection of Herr Eugen Felix at Leipzig. Here we see Dürer as he appeared to the Venetians, already displaying a love of fine clothes, and holding in his hand a sprig of blue eryngium (the *Männertreue* of Germany). This portrait was originally painted on parchment, like a drawing of the *Child Christ* in the Albertina collection at Vienna which bears the same date. Over a copy of this portrait no less a personage than Goethe was once moved to enthusiasm. Such paintings on parchment were much in vogue in Basle at this date, so that it is probable that these two paintings were executed during Dürer's stay in that town. Dürer brought home with him from Venice several careful copies of engravings by Mantegna and the Paduan school, showing how deep an impression that great artist and student of the antique had made upon Dürer's mind with his novelties of perspective and audacious feats of draughtsmanship.

zu Sinn, wie man solche Ding möcht zu Wegen bringen. Dann mir wollt dieser vorgemeldet Jacobus seinen Grund nit klärlich anzeigen, das merket ich wol an ihm. Doch nahm ich mein eigen Ding für mich und las den Fitruflum, der beschreibt ein Wenig van der Gliedmass eines Manns. Also van oder aus den zweien obgenannten Mannen hab ich meinen Anfang genummen, und hab dornoch aus meinen Fürnehmen gesucht van 'Tag zu 'Tag.'—See Lange and Fuhse's *Dürer's Schriftlicher Nachlass*, Halle, 1893.



Portrait of Albrecht Dürer in 1493 ; from the painting in the collection of Herr Eugen Felix at Leipzig.

CHAPTER II

Marriage—Early engravings—Influence of Barbari—Early paintings—Early woodcuts—The Reformation—Pirkheimer—The Apocalypse—Adam and Eve—The Life of Mary.



THE cause of Dürer's peremptory summons home was soon apparent. "After my return," writes Dürer, "Hans Frey came to terms with my father, and gave me his daughter Agnes, and two hundred gulden with her, and we were married on the Monday before St. Margaret's day (July 7), in 1494."

Dürer was now twenty-three years of age, and, though his early drawings show a wonderful amount of skill for his age, there is no trace of that precocity of productiveness which characterised some of his contemporaries, for instance Lucas van Leyden. Dürer was still more of a student than a practical artist. What he studied he absorbed into his mind, digested so to speak, and drew upon for use at subsequent periods. He was now, however, brought face to face with the struggles and difficulties of life. His father was a poor and industrious man, with a wife and two growing boys still to provide for. Hans Frey, though a man of good position, was a *dilettante* dabbler in various mechanical crafts, and it may be doubted whether Agnes Frey brought to her husband at any time more than her wedding dowry of two hundred gulden. The young couple found a home under Dürer's father's roof, and no doubt were also called upon to contribute to the economy of the Dürer household.

In painting, to succeed in which was the goal of Dürer's ambitions, he had made as yet but little progress. He could have learnt in Venice, but hardly yet had time to practise, the art of oil-painting in the manner of Antonello da Messina, but his early works are executed in the old

“tempera” manner, as in the altarpiece at Dresden. When he took to oil-painting he practised it chiefly on portraits.

It was to engraving that Dürer turned for a livelihood. There are no traces of his having executed or published any engravings on copper before his return to Nuremberg and his marriage in 1494. One is tempted to see in an anonymous engraving with four nude studies for figures of Adam and Eve an early experiment on copper by Albrecht Dürer, so striking is the resemblance of the head in the figure of Adam to that in Dürer’s own portrait of 1493. Expert authorities however have shown that the technical execution of the engraving is not only quite different from that of Dürer, but is also in close affinity to one or two other contemporary engravers.

Dismissing this engraving, of which the only impression is in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris, there remain several engravings which must have been executed between the summer of 1494 and 1497, the latter date being the first which appears on any plate engraved by Dürer. In his early engravings Dürer remains faithful to the method of the Schongauer school, the firm, rather hard, and dry goldsmith’s touch and line. The freedom and almost violence of Mantegna’s parallel strokes of shading seem to have been alien to the more reserved and concentrating temperament of Dürer. Although a practised and accurate draughtsman, Dürer shows in his earliest prints an inexperience in the actual engraving which can only be accounted for by the supposition that they were literally his first attempts at copperplate-engraving. Perhaps the earliest in date is the unsigned print of *Death as a Ravisher*, which is entirely in Dürer’s manner, though some have declined to admit it as his work. In this, one of the manifold representations of the omnipresence and omnipotence of Death, which had so powerful a hold on the popular imagination at this date, the figure of Death is Dürer’s own conception, not a gibbering skeleton as in Holbein’s work, but the ragged corpse-like wild man of the woods, whom we meet again in *The Four Riders* of the Apocalypse, *The Knight, Death, and the Devil*, and *The Arms of Death*. Next come three engravings, which bear Dürer’s monogram in its earliest forms—*The Love-Bargain*, a familiar study of sensuality and avarice, and *The Six Soldiers*, signed , and *The Holy Family with the Locust*, signed . In the last, which may possibly be the earliest of all, there is an

attempt to cope with difficulties of grouping and perspective which has not been wholly successful. The unsuccessful foreshortening of the figure of Joseph in this last engraving lends some colour to the views of those who would see in the engravings of *The Great Courier* and *The Conversion of St. Paul*¹ early and unsuccessful attempts of Dürer as an engraver. With these four early engravings may be grouped *The Promenade*, another Death subject, in which a handsome pair of lovers walk unconscious of the vicinity and menaces of the common enemy. These five engravings, with their landscape backgrounds, show a distinct attempt to produce a picturesque effect on the copper, an advance already on the Schongauer school, where the skill of the engraver was chiefly exercised in the simple representation of the subject.

Next came a group of small engravings, treated more delicately and in the Schongauer manner—that is to say, in simple line without the introduction of a landscape background, and in general handling rather suggestive of the work of Jacopo dei Barbari: these are *The Peasant and his Wife*, *The Three Peasants*, *The Cook and the Housekeeper*, *The Oriental Family*, and *The Little Fortune*. The last is probably, if the *Adam and Eve* studies be set aside, Dürer's first engraving of the nude. It is noteworthy that in three of these early engravings—*Death as a Ravisher*, *The Holy Family with the Locust*, and *The Little Fortune*—a plant of eryngium occurs similar to that held in Dürer's hand in his portrait of 1493. Two small engravings with landscape backgrounds may be classed with these early prints—*The Lady on Horseback with a Lanzknecht* and *The Little Courier*, and with these *The Monstrous Pig*, important to those to whom the fixing of dates is the chief object, since this abortion is known to have actually been born in 1496.

Perhaps a little later come three larger and more ambitious compositions, more genuinely pictures on copper than those mentioned before—*The Penitence of St. John Chrysostom* (sometimes known erroneously as *St. Geneviève*), *St. Jerome in Penitence*, and *The Prodigal Son*. The last is a well-known and popular engraving, for which a preliminary drawing exists in the British Museum. Both drawing and engraving show the same fault in the drawing of the Prodigal's limbs, and testify to the fidelity with which Dürer transferred his carefully prepared drawings on to the

¹ The only known impressions of these are in the Print Room at Dresden.



The Promenade. From an engraving by A. Dürer.

copper. Here Dürer displays that mingling of pathos and humour which is so stimulating to human sympathy. The delightful and yet wholly unobtrusive humour of the pigs is an excellent foil to the haggard and heartrending expression of the poor prodigal.



The Prodigal Son. From a drawing by A. Dürer, in the Print Room, British Museum.

In the *St. Jerome* a new phase commences of Dürer's career as an engraver. No student of the engravings by Jacopo dei Barbari can fail to be struck by the similarity between the figure of St. Jerome and some of those in Barbari's engravings. It appears to be certain that during the

last few years of the fifteenth century Barbari visited Nuremberg and resided there some time. Many of his engravings are printed on the same paper which was used by Dürer, though this does not necessarily prove that they were printed in Nuremberg, since the paper could easily have been obtained in the Fondaco dei Tedeschi at Venice. But from this time for a period Dürer's engravings show distinct traces of the influence of Barbari, and the presence of Barbari at Nuremberg would make the personal association of the two artists for this period very probable. Barbari, as the older man, naturally influenced Dürer, especially in his choice of subjects, his types of face, and treatment of the nude. Dürer's training as a goldsmith no doubt helped him to see that the delicate graver-work of Barbari, however useful for artistic fame, was of inferior commercial value to the firmer and more durable work of the Schongauer school.

To this, which may be termed the Barbari period of Dürer's career, belong the four prints *The Rape of Amynone* (*Das Meerwunder*), *Hercules* (*Eifersucht* or *Hahnreih*), *The Four Naked Women*, and *The Dream*, all remarkable for the studies of the nude, the elaborate landscape backgrounds and accessories, and the general obscurity of their meaning. In 1) the *Hercules* certain figures are taken directly from a drawing adapted H from a North Italian engraving of *The Death of Orpheus*, and brought home by Dürer from Italy in 1494; the figure of Deianeira (if this be the right interpretation) is borrowed from the drawn copy of Mantegna's *Fight of Tritons* of the same date. The whole composition is, however, worked up into a group which is thoroughly Dürer's own, and forms perhaps the most important and instructive of his early engravings. The subject is obscure, and it is sometimes called *The Effects of Jealousy* (*Eifersucht*); but it is spoken of by Dürer himself as *Ercules*, and probably is a mediæval rendering of the story of Nessus and Deianeira, a similar subject occurring in later series of the *Labours of Hercules*, one in a series of French engravings attributed to Geoffroy Tory, and executed about 1529, being obviously based on Dürer's composition. In *The Rape of Amynone* (the *Meerwunder*, as Dürer himself calls it) a nude nymph is borne away on the back of Glaucus, a marine deity; the composition offers similar types, but still greater affinity to the work of Barbari. It appears to be based on a drawing of *The Rape of Europa*, which is accompanied on

the same sheet by some studies of lions' heads, traditionally said to have been done in Venice, and two figures immediately copied from Barbari. This group was probably altered by Dürer to the more obscure fable, in order to introduce the figure of Glaucus with its resemblance to Barbari's *Triton and Nymph*. In *The Four Naked Women*, the first engraving by Dürer with a date, and also the first which bears his monogram in its familiar state, the same female type occurs: the group with its enigmatical meaning, which perhaps Dürer would alone be able to explain, is probably nothing more than a group of nude studies which, by the addition of a few emblematical accessories, has been converted by Dürer into an allegory of obscure import. It is characteristic of much of Dürer's engraved work that the central motive of the work is to present some study in draughtsmanship, and by adding certain accessory objects—what he himself would call his "traumwerk"—to invest the whole composition with a mysterious significance. So in *The Dream* the nude female figure is obviously the chief motive, the allegory of the sleeping student being analogous to that in Barbari's engraving *Custodi nos dormientes*.

The popularity and commercial success of Dürer's engravings are shown by the rapidity with which pirate copies were made and put upon the market. The chief purveyors of these copies were Israhel van Meckenem, a goldsmith of Bocholt in Westphalia, where he kept a workshop, from which, until his death in 1503, issued numerous copies of the engravings of the Master E. S., Martin Schongauer, and eventually Dürer; and Wenzel von Olmütz,¹ who devoted his attention chiefly to the works of Schongauer, the Master P. W. of Cologne, and Dürer. Copies by Meckenem exist of *The Holy Family with the Locust*, *The Promenade*, and *The Four Naked Women*. The last two were also copied by Wenzel with *Hercules*, *The Rape of Amymone*, *The Dream*, and others of Dürer's early engravings. It is an argument against the publication of Barbari's engravings in Nuremberg or anywhere in Germany that had

¹ It is perhaps necessary to point out that the otherwise admirable *Life of Dürer* by the late Dr. M. Thausing of Vienna (translated into English and edited by F. A. Eaton) is marred by an unfortunate identification of the engraver W. with M. Wolgemut, Dürer's master, instead of with the mere copyist Wenzel, whose authorship of these engravings has been clearly proved by Dr. Max Lehrs of Dresden.

they been known and circulated in Germany they could hardly have escaped the vigilance of these and other pirates.

Allusion has been made to the elaborate landscape backgrounds of some of these engravings. Dürer was from an early age a careful student of nature, and a number of drawings have been preserved, views of scenery in or near Nuremberg, which are minutely executed in a kind of gouache or in water-colours, perhaps the earliest use of these for purely pictorial art, as opposed to that of the illuminist or miniature-painter. In the British Museum there is a fascinating drawing of the river Pegnitz near Nuremberg, in which there stands on an island one of those tall gabled houses which formed part of the outworks of a fortified city. This building, the "Weierhaus" of the drawing, existed until quite lately. It was introduced by Dürer into the background of one of his most attractive engravings, *The Virgin and Child with the Monkey*, one which was quickly pirated by Wenzel von Olmütz and others. Dürer's hand was now strong and precise upon the copper, and the smaller engravings of *The Virgin with Flowing Hair on a Crescent*, the two *St. Sebastians*, *The Virgin and St. Anne*, *Justice*, *The Standard Bearer*, and *The Man of Sorrows*, all executed in the simple line manner, show a great advance on the smaller prints of a few years back.

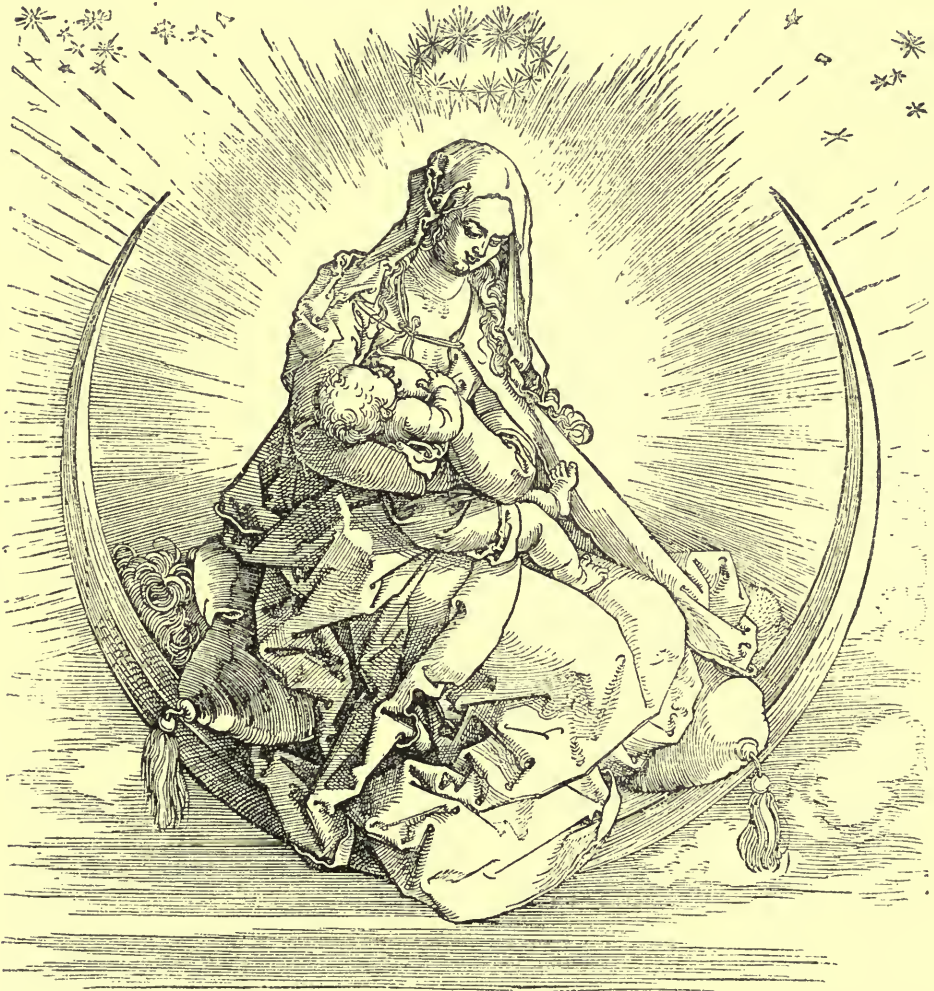
Copperplate-engraving by no means occupied all Dürer's time. Painting was still his most cherished art, the Mantegna-like altarpiece at Dresden being his first important work, in which the centre group of the Virgin and Child is full of the small incidents of German home-life which Dürer so frequently introduced, while the figures of St. Anthony and St. Sebastian on the wings are powerful studies from the life. In this picture also occur the child-angels in which Dürer specially delighted. For the next few years his paintings were chiefly portraits, such as those of his father (1497), now at Sion House; more than one portrait of a fair Madonna-like maiden of the Fürleger family; various members of the Tucher family; the wonderful portrait of Oswolt Krell (1499), now at Munich; and his own portrait in gaily coloured dress (1498), now at Madrid. With his pen and pencil he was never idle, and wood-engraving now revealed to him special opportunities for the use of his skill as a draughtsman. The *Briefmaler* and *Formschneider*, male and female, were well known in Nuremberg among craftsmen for

many years before Dürer. The art of wood-engraving had risen little above the level of a mechanical craft until the time of Koberger, who first called in the assistance of superior draughtsmen. It was Dürer, however, who by perfecting the skill of the wood-engraver and by means of his own admirable designs on the woodblock first brought the art to rank high in the hierarchy of the arts. Before his time, the woodcut as a separate picture in black and white, independent of colour, unaccompanied by explanatory text, and used for ornamental and not for mere utilitarian purposes, could hardly be said to exist.

Dürer, as has been seen, very probably worked in his boyhood as a *Briefmaler* or *Formschneider* for Koberger at Nuremberg, and almost certainly for Amerbach at Basle: witness the *St. Jerome* woodblock of 1492. At Venice he would have seen what beautiful results could be obtained by care both in designing and cutting the woodblocks for the ornaments and illustrations of books. In Venice, too, were produced at this date fine woodcuts on a very large scale; but it is doubtful whether any of these were published anterior to *The Apocalypse* of Dürer. So Dürer now set up for himself a working studio in his father's house at Nuremberg, and, bringing his own early training to bear on his assistants, inaugurated a new era of wood-engraving as a pictorial art.

The earliest woodcut thus produced by Dürer appears to be *The Men's Bath*, a group of nude men in one of the open-air public baths in Nuremberg. The town was noted for its many baths in the ever-useful Pegnitz, and its cobbler poet, Hans Sachs, chronicles these public baths as among its chief glories. Here no doubt came Dürer very often in pursuit of his studies of the nude. The drawing of this woodcut, and that for *The Women's Bath*, dated 1496, and preserved at Bremen, of which a woodcut also exists, though possibly not published in Dürer's lifetime, were made in this way, and the engraving of *The Four Naked Women*, mentioned before, was probably composed from similar studies. Drawings of these baths also exist, done by Dürer in later years. The youthful spectator gazing over the palisade in *The Men's Bath* is perhaps the young artist himself. On the same scale, and drawn in the same bold and masterly manner, are the woodcuts of *Samson and the Lion*, *The Martyrdom of St. Catherine*, *The Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand Saints in Nicomedia*, *Hercules* (another obscure version

of one of the *Labours*), *The Knight and Foot-soldier* (an equestrian study similar to, though on a larger scale, the engravings of *The Little Courier* and *The Lady on Horseback*), and *The Holy Family with the Hares*, in which the animals disport themselves in gay *insouciance* of the solemnity



The Virgin and Child. Woodcut title-page to "*The Life of Mary*," by A. Dürer (reduced).

of their surroundings. But Dürer was meanwhile planning a work to be engraved on wood which has remained one of the great achievements of the graphic arts, which called out all his artistic skill and invention, and which reflects not only the internal thoughts and aspirations of Dürer's

Apocal

own mind, but the sentiments and emotions of the age in which he lived. This was the famous series of illustrations to *The Apocalypse*, the trumpet-call, or *réveille*, as it may be called, of the Reformation.

Two events of singular importance occurred during Dürer's *Wanderjahre*—the accessions of a new Pope and a new Emperor. Under any circumstances these events would have been exciting enough, but the characters of the two men thus elevated were so remarkable that there was hardly a human being in the civilised world who was not in some way or other affected by them. In 1492 the infamous Roderigo Borgia was elected Pope under the title of Alexander VI., and in August 1493 Maximilian of Austria, who had already acquired by marriage the sovereignty of the Netherlands, succeeded his father as Emperor of Germany.

The excesses and exactions of the Papacy soon began to excite murmurs of disapprobation, especially in Germany, where the printing-press had now opened the gates of knowledge to the laity and afforded a channel for the expression of criticism and free thought. From the printing-presses at Nuremberg, Augsburg, and Basle there poured forth a stream of literature with which all the allied powers of autocracy and priesthood were inadequate to cope. Theology no longer kept the key turned on the human intellect. The writings of the ancients in poetry and philosophy, the *Literæ Humaniores* of the schools, brought men to consider man for man's sake, as well as for God's. Authors of their own country began to be read as well as the classics or the writings of the Church Fathers. No town was so well adapted to receive and foster the new ideas as Nuremberg, with its burgher government and commerical intercourse with other countries, and by its daily practice of liberty, equality, and fraternity. The great book-merchant of Nuremberg, Koberger, must be regarded as one of the pioneers of the Reformation. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that his godson Albrecht Dürer was on terms of friendship with the leading men of culture and learning in Nuremberg. Among these were Conrad Celtes, Maximilian's poet laureate; Peter Dannhäuser, author of the *Archetypus Triumphantis Romæ*; Lazarus Spengler, the town secretary, poet, jurist, theologian, and friend of Luther and Melancthon; Melchior Pfünzing, provost of St. Sebald, court poet and polisher of Maximilian's verses; and, above all,



Willibald Pirkheimer. The friendship of Dürer and Pirkheimer is famous in history, but it is difficult to say for certain when and where they first met. Although Dürer was born in part of a house which belonged to a member of the Pirkheimer family, it could hardly have been there that the two first met. Pirkheimer, who was about six months older than Dürer, was born on December 5, 1470, at Eichstädt, where his father was then living. He was educated there, and went in 1490 to Italy, where he remained seven years, studying Greek and jurisprudence at Padua and Pavia. He did not settle in Nuremberg till 1497. He was well known to Maximilian, and intrusted by the Emperor with an imperial command in the Swiss war of 1499. It must have been during his visit to Italy that Dürer was first brought into contact with the clever, lusty, hot-headed young Pirkheimer, in every way a great contrast to so quiet and refined a student-artist as Dürer. The only traces of coarseness in the whole of Dürer's works or writings have reference to or were suggested by Pirkheimer. Pirkheimer was a good scholar and writer, and doubtless assisted Dürer a great deal in this way, since Dürer, though an indefatigable student, does not seem to have had much acquaintance with Latin or Greek. Yet much as Pirkheimer wrote and studied, valued as he was by his contemporaries, it is entirely due to his friendship with Dürer that posterity bestows one glance upon his countenance, or fingers the leaves of any of his literary productions.

These Humanist friends of Dürer had a large share in the promotion of the Reformation. Reform, and not revolution, was in the air. The contest against the immoralities of the Borgian clique at Rome, against the traffic in indulgences, or against the attempted suppression of the freedom of the press, was in no way directed against the main dogmas or practices of the Catholic Church. To Dürer, among the rest, Mary was still the Mother of Christ and the Queen of Heaven. Saints and relics were as great an object of reverence as before. Only there was working in the minds of the German people the idea that a new age was soon about to open upon the world—an age of freedom, goodness, and humanity which they believed to be the long-awaited millennium, and to have been foreshadowed in the Bible by the Apocalypse of St. John.

The invention of printing was followed quickly by the translation of the Bible from Latin into German. The importance attached to the

Apocalypse is shown by the number of illustrations to it in the Bible first published by Quentel at Cologne in 1480, and by Koberger again at Nuremberg in 1483. As this edition of Koberger's was published when Dürer was a boy of twelve, it was no doubt the object of his constant study. Hence his illustrations of the Apocalypse follow closely in the lines of those in Koberger's Bible. The strange, awe-inspiring, almost bizarre imagery of the Apocalypse appealed strongly to an imagination like that of Dürer, with its creative instincts and dreamy enthusiasm. Adhering closely to the text, he produced a series of original creations in pictorial art which carry the spectator away by the strength and boldness of their conception. These woodcuts are too well known to need detailed description here, and words would fail at any time to convey any idea of them. Allusion must, however, be made to the beautiful serene landscapes in the lower part of *The Throne set in Heaven* and *The Archangel Michael's Combat with the Dragon*; to the all-compelling majesty and force of *The Four Riders*, with its grim figure of Death trampling on the human race, or of *The Four Angels of the Euphrates*; and to the vivid realism of the falling star in *The Opening of the Seventh Seal*. Reminiscences of Dürer's Italian journey sometimes occur, for in *The Opening of the Fifth and Sixth Seal* a group of terrified women is borrowed directly from Mantegna, and whereas in *The Woman Clothed in the Sun* a regular placid German type is displayed, in *Babylon the Great* the Scarlet Woman is a Venetian courtesan, such as Carpaccio has painted in a picture in the Museo Correr at Venice. In the *St. Michael* both the figure of the saint and the demons floating in the air are reminiscent of Dürer's precursor Schongauer. Throughout is symbolised the triumph of Christ over the powers of the Emperor and the Pope, the latter being specially selected as the object of the Divine vengeance. Two editions of the Apocalypse were published by Dürer in 1498, one with German and one with Latin text, printed under his own immediate supervision and perhaps with his own hands.

With the exception of a few illustrations to the works of Conrad Celtes, Dürer's attention for the next few years was chiefly devoted to painting or to engraving on copper. The care which he bestowed on every picture or engraving accounts for the comparatively small number of works produced by him at this period. The pictures completed



The Babylonish Whore. From a woodcut in "The Apocalypse," by A. Dürer.

during the next few years from 1499 to 1504 were the two *Pietás*, or *Lamentations over Christ's Body*—one at Munich, and the other, originally painted for the Holzschuher family, still at Nuremberg; *The Crucifixion*, now at Ober St. Veit, painted in 1502 for Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony, whose portrait, painted by Dürer about this date, is now at Berlin; *The Nativity*, with the portraits of the two Baumgärtners in armour, now at Munich; and *The Adoration of the Kings*, painted in 1504, and now in the Uffizi at Florence. Ever since his first journey to Venice, and probably in consequence of his intercourse with Jacopo dei Barbari, Dürer had spent much time on making the most minute studies of natural objects, animals, insects, vegetables, and the like. Nearly all such studies can be traced among the accessories to his paintings and engravings, and they are often interpolated in bewildering profusion, not unfrequently, especially in his later works, disturbing the balance of the composition. The copperplate-engravings of these years are *Apollo and Diana*, *St. George on Foot*, *The Arms of Death* (1503), *The Virgin Giving Suck to the Child* (1503), *The Nativity* (1504), and *Adam and Eve* (1504). Of these *The Virgin and Child* is one of the sweetest and tenderest renderings of the subject which Dürer produced, and also one of his best engravings, and *The Nativity*, or the *Weihnacht* (Christmas), as Dürer himself called it, is unrivalled for the quiet, placid, happy domesticity of the scene, as well as for the consummate skill of the perspective and general composition. The *Adam and Eve* ranks amongst the most important of Dürer's works. In it are seen the results of Dürer's studies into the proportions of the human body, and the triumph of his attempts to produce a chiaroscuro effect in a copperplate-engraving. Moreover, Dürer has left so many drawings for this composition, and also unfinished states of the engraving, that it is possible to trace its whole history. Starting from the studies of proportion, instigated by Jacopo dei Barbari, Dürer is seen, first, entering into competition with one of Barbari's engravings, *Apollo and Diana*, with a similar engraving of his own; then taking the motive of Barbari's engravings in a drawing of his own (in the British Museum), but altering the figure of Apollo into a version of the Apollo Belvedere. After experimenting with this Apollo as an Æsculapius (drawing in Beckerath collection at Berlin), he, by reversing the figure of Apollo, turned it into Adam, as in the engraving; to this he added a companion



The Birth of the Virgin Mary. Woodcut from "The Life of Mary," by A. Dürer (reduced).

drawing of the figure of Eve (both these last drawings are in the Albertina collection at Vienna), and then combined the two figures in one composition (drawing in the Lanna collection at Prague) as in the engraving, though in reverse. The unfinished states of the engraving show how carefully Dürer elaborated the dark masses of the background in order to throw into relief the nude bodies, in the earliest state these figures being left in outline. Thus the real motive of this wonderful engraving is to produce ideal figures of a man and a woman as exemplified by Adam and Eve before the Fall. Similar motives are evident in two well-known and admirable engravings of 1505—*The Little White Horse* and *The Great Horse*, the motive in each case being to produce an exact figure of a horse, Dürer being nearly as much interested in the proportions of the horse as in those of the human body. The accessories which invest these two engravings with a mystic character are merely the additions of Dürer's own fantasy, in order to make the composition more complete.

Meanwhile Dürer, while producing a number of wood-engravings of lesser importance, had commenced another series, to be published in book-form, and selected for this purpose the life of the Virgin Mary from her birth to her deification. In this series there is none of the majesty or terror of *The Apocalypse*. The story is told in incidents of a reposeful nature, with considerable humour in some of the earlier scenes and deep pathos in the later. The scene of *The Flight into Egypt* is reminiscent of the earlier engraving of the same subject by Martin Schongauer; but otherwise the series is replete with incidents of a domestic character, such as the chattering housewives in the scene of *The Birth of Mary*, or the peddling stallholder in that of *The Presentation in the Temple*. In others, such as *The Holy Family in the Carpenter's Shop*, or in the final scene of *The Adoration of Mary*, Dürer fills the scene with the child-angels in whose gambols he took so much delight. It seems probable also that about this time Dürer commenced his series of *The Large Passion* on the same scale and with the same note of earnestness as *The Apocalypse*, since the woodcut of *The Holy Women Lamenting over the Body of Christ* was among those copied by Marcantonio, with Dürer's monogram affixed. Both series, however—*The Life of Mary* and *The Great Passion*—remained unfinished, when a break of an important nature occurred in Dürer's life, the cause of which has been interpreted in various ways.



The Holy Family. Woodcut from "The Life of Mary," by A. Dürer (reduced).

CHAPTER III.

Dürer's home-life—His portraits—Second visit to Venice—Marcantonio—Letters to Pirckheimer—Return to Nuremberg—Large paintings—Engravings and woodcuts—St. Eustace and Nemesis—The Passion—Dürer's house—Dürer as a poet—Dry points and etchings.

DÜRER had come to occupy a prominent position among the citizens of Nuremberg. He was on terms of friendship with all the leading patrician families, whose armorial bearings are so prominent in the great churches of Nuremberg : Kress, Tucher, Nützel, Harsdorffer, Volckamer, Baumgärtner, Ebner, Holzschuher, Löffelholz, and the great banking family of Imhoff. Powerful and rich as many of these patrician families were, the municipal government of Nuremberg seems always to have obtained a reputation for closeness and thriftiness in expenditure. Patronage of art does not seem to have been a desirable charge on the citizens' pockets, so that such commissions for works of art as were given at all were usually for the honour or gratification of some private individual or family. In this respect the Republic of Nuremberg presents a strong contrast to the Venetian Republic, which gloried in the artistic decoration of their streets and public buildings at the expense of the citizens themselves. Venice was ever extending its borders and its privileges, while Nuremberg drew them tighter and tighter, as its citizens did the strings of their purses. Painting, too, was a free trade in Nuremberg. No protection was offered to native artists as at Antwerp and elsewhere. The principle may have been a good one, but it effectually checked the production of any native art of a high class in Nuremberg. Wealth therefore Dürer, as an artist, seems never to have been able to acquire. In 1502 he lost his father, and thereby was forced to find a home for himself and his wife Agnes, into which, in 1504, he received his widowed mother and his boy brother Hans. This must have been a serious

addition to his incumbrances, while the demands made upon his society by Pirkheimer and others, with his evident taste for fine clothes and good living, must have caused the thrifty Agnes many heart-searchings, and perhaps tended to acidulate her temper. The remarks of Pirkheimer about Dürer's wife after his friend's death have led to the unfortunate Agnes being set down as a modern Xantippe, and, to combat this, recent writers have rushed into the other extreme in order to clear her entirely of all blame. There seems no reason to believe that she made Dürer's life unhappy, or that she was other than a careful, thrifty housewife, on whom depended all the economy and stability of the household. Dürer was of too dreamy and docile a nature to be able to look properly after his own affairs, or to mind leaving them in the hands of his wife. Romance was entirely absent from his domestic life. His marriage was childless, and this was doubtless a deep sorrow to Dürer, for in all his works he shows a love for little children, and a keen appreciation of the humours of child-life. This lack of interest in his home-life no doubt led him to give much time to the society of his friends, which would account for any hostility shown by Agnes to Pirkheimer and others. It is noteworthy, however, that while Dürer has left most touching records of his love for his father and mother, he makes but little more than mere mention of his wife. It is always "my dear father and my dear mother," but never "my dear wife."

Dürer's appearance at this time is well known to posterity. No artist, except perhaps Rembrandt, took so much delight in the portrayal of his own self. Starting with the boyish drawings at Vienna and Erlangen, then come the portraits of 1493 and 1498. Already in the last the gay garments and carefully curled hair show that Dürer was fully conscious of his own personal attractions. The most famous portrait is that now at Munich, executed shortly after 1500. Joachim Camerarius,



Winged Genius. From the engraving known as "The Dream," by A. Dürer.

writing of Dürer after his death, says that "Nature bestowed on him a body remarkable in build and stature, and not unworthy of the noble mind it contained. His head was intelligent (*argutum*), his eyes flashing, his nose nobly formed, and, as the Greeks say, *τετράγωνον*. His neck was rather long, his chest broad, his body not too stout, his thighs muscular, his legs firm and steady. But his fingers—you would vow you had never seen anything more elegant." These features are clearly shown in the Munich portrait, and especially the beautiful hands. Camerarius goes on to say that "almost with awe have we gazed upon the bearded face of the man, drawn by himself, in the manner we have described, with the brush on the canvas and without any previous sketch. The locks of the beard are almost a cubit long, so exquisitely and cleverly drawn," &c. No one who gazes on the Munich portrait can fail to see in it the delineation of a gentle, serene, pure, and trustful character. The whole portrait is strongly suggestive of the ideal type of Jesus Christ, and in fact Dürer perceived this himself, as there is hardly any representation of Christ by Dürer which does not recall the features of the man himself. Looking on the Munich portrait, one is reminded of Roydon's lines on Sir Philip Sidney :—

A sweet attractive kind of grace ;
 A half assurance given by looks,
 Continual comfort in a face,
 The lineaments of gospel books,
 I trow that countenance cannot lie
 Whose thoughts are legible in the eye.

The break in Dürer's life was caused by his decision to pay a second visit to Venice. His fame as an artist had preceded him there through his engravings, which were not only appreciated but copied freely and often very closely by the engravers in Venice and Bologna. Zoan Andrea, Giulio Campagnola, Nicoletto da Modena, Robetta, Giovanni Antonio da Brescia, all paid homage to Dürer by the use which they made of his engravings. Chief among them, however, was the famous engraver Marcantonio Raimondi, who literally pirated Dürer's engravings, copying even his signature, translating even the woodcuts, including the unfinished series of *The Life of Mary*, on to copper. It would seem that it was by copying Dürer that Marcantonio, like the Wierixes in later days, obtained his noted skill as an engraver.



Portrait of Albrecht Dürer by himself; from the painting in the Alte Pinakothek at Munich.

In his account of Marcantonio, Vasari asserts that it was owing to the piracy of his engravings that Dürer came to Venice. The inaccuracies in Vasari's account have led to this story being regarded as a fable, but in all probability Dürer took some steps to prevent the circulation of fraudulent copies with his signature, for the copies of Dürer's *Little Passion*, made by Marcantonio in after years, do not bear Dürer's monogram; and Dürer, on his return to Nuremberg, not only issued a manifesto against such pirates, but obtained a privilege from the town council to protect him.¹ It was probably through Marcantonio that Dürer's work was brought to the notice of Raphael, who sent Dürer a drawing of his own in exchange for a specimen of Dürer's work, and is said to have always had Dürer's prints at hand in his studio.

Dürer's second visit to Venice was in quite a new character. Whereas, on the former visit, he was a shy, retiring student, he was now the famous engraver, the creator of those wonderful prints which one bought under the arches of the Piazza in Venice. A new race, however, of young painters had sprung up, including Titian and Giorgione, who seem to have looked askance at first on the advent of their northern

¹ The story as given by Vasari is as follows: "Intanto capitando in Vinezia alcuni fiaminghi con molte carte intagliate e stampate in legno ed in rame d'Alberto Duro, vennero vedute a Marcantonio in su la piazza di San Marco: perchè stupefatto della maniera del lavoro e del modo di fare d'Alberto, spese in dette carte quasi quanti danari aveva portati da Bologna, e fra l'altre cose comperò la Passione de Gesù Cristo intagliata in 36 pezzi di legno in quarto foglio, stata stampata di poco dal detto Alberto: la quale opera cominciava dal peccare d'Adamo ed essere cacciato di Paradiso dall' Angelo, infino al mandare dello Spirito Santo. E considerato Marcantonio quanto onore ed utile si avrebbe potuto acquistare, che si fusse dato a quell' arte in Italia, si dispose di volervi attendere con ogni accuratezza e diligenza; e così cominciò a contrafare di quegli intagli d'Alberto, studiando il modo de' tratti ed il tutto delle stampe che avea comperate: le quali per la novità e bellezza loro erano in tanta riputazione, che ognuno cercava d'averne. Avendo dunque contrafatto in rame d'intaglio grosso, come era il legno che aveva intagliato Alberto, tutta la detta Passione e vita di Cristo in 36 carte; e fattovi il segno che Alberto faceva nelle sue opere, cioè questo, A.D.; riuscì tanto simile, di maniera che non sapendo nessuno ch' elle fussero fatte da Marcantonio, erano credute d'Alberto, e per opere di lui vendute e comperate: la qual cosa essendo scritta in Fiandra ad Alberto, e mandatogli una di dette Passioni contrafatte da Marcantonio, venne Alberto in tante collera, che partitosi di Fiandra se ne venne a Vinezia, e ricorso alla Signoria, si querelò di Marcantonio; ma però non ottenne altro, se non che Marcantonio non facesse più il nome e nè il segno sopraddetto d'Alberto nelle sue opere."

rival. Even Dürer found a change. Writing to Pirkheimer from Venice, on February 7, 1506, he says :—

“I wish that you were here at Venice! There are so many nice fellows among the Italians, who seek my society more and more, which is very soothing to one’s heart, learned men of importance, good players on the lute and the pipe, with great knowledge in painting, with much noble sentiment and honest virtue, and they treat me with great honour and friendship. On the other hand, there are also the most untrustworthy, perjured, thievish rascals as ever lived on the earth. Did one not know this, one would think them the nicest folk on earth. As for myself, I cannot help laughing when they talk to me. They know that their rascality is notorious, but nobody minds.

“I have many good friends among the Italians, who warn me not to eat and drink with their painters. They, however, are very hostile to me, and counterfeit my work in churches and wherever they come across it; afterwards they abuse it and say that it is not antique style, and, therefore, cannot be good. Giambellino however it was who praised my work highly before several nobles. He wanted very much to have some of my work, and came himself to me and begged me to do something for him, which he could pay well for. And all people tell me how upright a man he is, so that I am equally friendly to him. He is very old, and is still the best in painting here.

“And the thing which pleased me so much eleven years ago pleases me no more; had I not seen it myself I should not have believed any one else. Moreover, I let you know that there are many better painters here than Master Jakob, who is again abroad; yet Anton Kolb is ready to swear an oath that no better painter lives than Master Jakob. Others scoff at him, and say that were he so good he would have remained here, and so on.”

In this last paragraph it can hardly be doubted that the thing with which he was no longer satisfied was the art of Jacopo dei Barbari. The rising stars of Giorgione and Titian cannot fail to have impressed Dürer, and to have dispelled the illusion under which he laboured as to Barbari’s proper rank as a painter. Barbari had been to Nuremberg, and had returned to Venice, probably to execute for Kolb the great woodcut view of Venice which that merchant commissioned and

published in 1500. He had then gone north again in the service of Philip of Burgundy, and was destined to finish his days probably at Brussels in the service of Maximilian's daughter Margaret, then Regent of the Netherlands.

Though ready to acknowledge Dürer's pre-eminence as an engraver, the Venetian artists, always with the exception of the aged Bellini, seem to have denied his merits as a painter. This may have stirred up the German colony near the Rialto, who had just rebuilt their Fondaco, to which was attached the small church of S. Bartolommeo. The Nuremberg merchants gave Dürer a commission to paint an altarpiece for the choir in this church, in which was the German burial-place. This painting represented *The Feast of the Rosary*, and contained portraits of Maximilian, Julius II., Dürer, Pirkheimer, and several German merchants. It is satisfactory to know that the Venetian painters fully recognised the merits of this work, and treated Dürer with greater honour. Bellini even paid a visit to Dürer to learn how he managed to execute such marvellously fine hair-painting, and was astonished to see Dürer do it straight off.

While he was in Italy Dürer visited Bologna, "to learn the secrets of the art of perspective, which a man is willing to teach me," where, as his friend Scheurl testified, he was received by the artist colony, and entertained as the prince of painters. His fame also reached Mantua, where the aged Mantegna was lying on his death-bed. Camerarius narrates that "while Andrea was lying ill at Mantua he heard that Albrecht was in Italy, and had him summoned to his side at once, in order that he might fortify Albrecht's facility and certainty of hand with scientific knowledge and principles. For Andrea often lamented, in conversation with his friends, that Albrecht's facility in drawing had not been granted to him, nor his knowledge to Albrecht. On receiving the message, Albrecht, leaving all other engagements, prepared for the journey without delay. But before he could reach Mantua, Andrea was dead [September 13, 1506], and Dürer used to say that this was the saddest event in all his life; for, high as Dürer stood, his great and lofty mind was ever striving after something yet above him."

Another great artist with whose works Dürer now became acquainted was Leonardo da Vinci. It does not seem likely that the

two artists ever met, but he may have been brought into relation with him through Luca Pacioli, the author of the book *De Divina Proportione*, which appeared at Venice in 1509, and an intimate friend of the great Leonardo. Dürer would naturally be deeply interested in the proportion theories of Leonardo and Pacioli. He was certainly acquainted with some engravings of Leonardo's school, representing a curious circle of concentric scrollwork on a black ground, one of them entitled *Accademia Leonardi Vinci*; for he himself executed six woodcuts in imitation, the *Six Knots*, as he calls them himself. Dürer was amused by and interested in all scientific or mathematical problems, but he had no real gift for scientific research.

It is remarkable that among Durer's countless studies of the human form there are no signs of any deep study of anatomy, such as characterised the work of Raphael, Michelangelo, and Leonardo da Vinci. Having trained his eye to observe accurately, he could seize and depict the minutest details of facial expression or physical construction. His nude studies of proportion are all constructed by measurement alone. He could transfer on to the canvas or the copper the exact features of the subject before him, whether human face, limbs, stag-beetle, plant of celandine, lime-tree, or marble quarry; but he merely observed, and never, like Leonardo, made a thorough and systematic investigation of nature. Had Leonardo left no paintings behind him he would still have ranked high among the leading scientists of his day, among whom he has probably as yet not been allotted the place which is his due.

It is from Dürer's letters to Pirkheimer that some knowledge of his life at Venice and Nuremberg can be gleaned. Referring to himself, they deal with his numerous commissions, chiefly for jewellery; the hostility and treachery of certain Venetian artists; the friendship of Bellini; the pictures which he has in hand; and his own clothes, in which he took a deep interest. With reference to Pirkheimer, he writes chaffingly of Pirkheimer's habits and love-affairs. It appears from them that it was with Pirkheimer's help that he came to Italy, and that Pirkheimer had promised to look after his wife and mother.

In the following extracts from his letters to Pirkheimer, some information can be gleaned concerning his domestic life. On January 6, 1506,

he writes : " All the money I hope, if God will, to put by, as with it I will pay you, for I think I need not so soon send any money either to my mother or to my wife. I left ten florins with my mother when I rode away ; she has also taken nine or ten florins for art wares ; then Dratzier has paid her twelve florins, and I have sent her nine florins by Sebastian Imhoff. Out of that she has to pay the Pfinzings and Gärtner seven florins for their rent. I gave my wife twelve florins, and she took thirteen at Frankfurt—that makes twenty-five florins, so I think she is in no need. But if she wants anything my brother-in-law must help her till I come home, and then I will honourably repay him." Again, on April 2 : " Now on behalf of my brother [Hans], do speak to my mother, that she may have a talk with Wolgemut, as to whether he can give him work until I come back, or help him to get it with others. I would gladly have taken him with me to Venice, which would have been of use to both of us, and besides he would have been able to learn the language. But she was afraid that the sky would tumble in upon him. I beg you to look after him yourself, because it is a waste of time to trust women. Have a talk with the boy, as you can do so well, and tell him to be studious and steady until I come, and not to be a trouble to his mother, since although I cannot bring everything to pass, I will try and do my best. As for myself, I should be in no trouble, but to have to support so many is too hard for me ; moreover, no one throws his money away." This letter affords a touching glimpse of the home in Nuremberg, with the old mother cherishing her Hans, the son of her declining years, and Dürer's struggle to support the three lives of mother, brother, and wife, all dependent on his earnings. On August 18 he writes : " Thank you for one thing, for explaining to my wife in the best way how I stand ; for I know you are never lacking in wisdom. If you only had my meekness, you would have all the virtues." Finally, in October, he writes that he intends going to Bologna for eight or ten days, and then to return to Venice : " After that I shall come with the next messenger. How I shall freeze after this sun ! Here, I am a gentleman ; at home, only a parasite." In all these letters to Pirkheimer there is no trace of any affectionate epithet for his wife, but if his letters to her had been preserved they would no doubt tell a different story. What with the sale of his prints and the payment for the *Feast of the*

Rosary and other pictures, Dürer made money enough at Venice to pay off his debts to Pirkheimer and others. He then prepared to leave Venice. So much honoured was he now there that the Venetian Council actually offered him a sinecure post with a good salary, if he would only take up a permanent residence in their city. The love of his home and native town, however, prevailed with Dürer, and early in 1507 he was back at Nuremberg, for—

Bright and fierce and fickle is the south,
But dark and true and tender is the north.

TENNYSON.

Dürer probably proceeded leisurely on his home journey across the Brenner Pass. He has left numerous records of places which he passed, either coming or going, laboriously executed and brightly coloured as before in gouache or body colour.

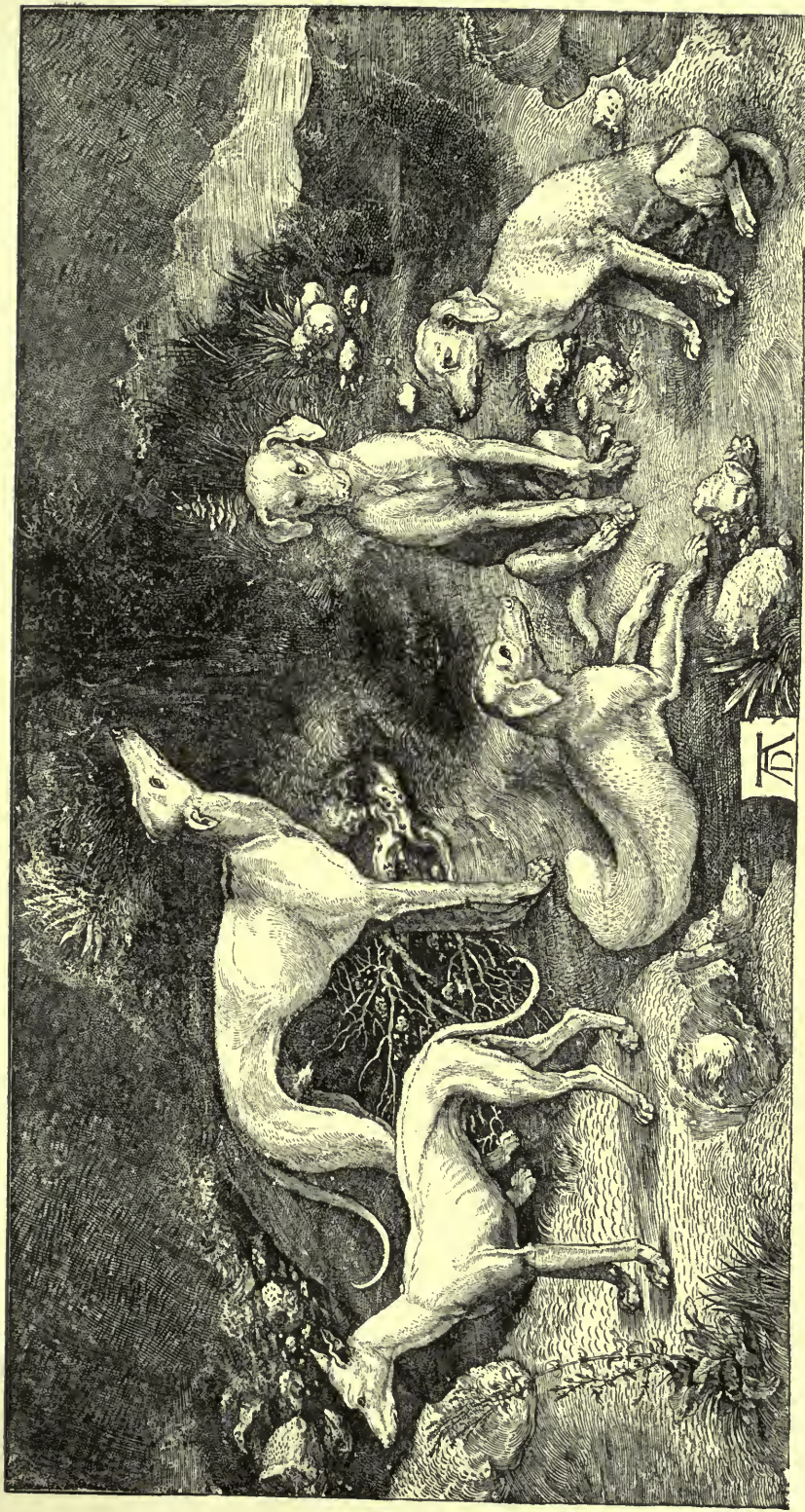
With his return to Nuremberg a new epoch commences in Dürer's life. He had gained the summit of his ambition—success as a painter. Commissions now came in for paintings. The Elector of Saxony, Frederick the Wise, for whom Dürer had in 1504 painted *The Adoration of the Kings*, commanded a large picture, *The Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand Saints under King Sapor of Persia*. This subject may have been chosen by Dürer himself in consequence of the numerous opportunities for the treatment of the nude body, and he had already dealt with it in his first series of large folio woodcuts. The trouble taken by him in composing the picture is shown by the sketch in the Albertina collection at Vienna, which is a more pleasing composition than the finished picture now in the Imperial Gallery in the same city. The picture took Dürer a long time, and, as he says, cost him more in time and money than he received in payment for it. Before it was finished he received a commission from a rich merchant of Frankfurt to paint a picture of *The Assumption of the Virgin*. A somewhat acrimonious correspondence has been preserved between Dürer and Heller concerning this picture, the price to be paid for it, and the delays in completing it, which makes a jarring note in the peaceful tenour of Dürer's life. The letters give, however, an interesting insight into Dürer's method of work, and explain how difficult it would always have been for Dürer,

with his minute labour and care, to make any profit from paintings on such a large scale. "It brings me no gain," he writes to Heller, "and robs me of my time"; and, again, "of ordinary pictures I will in a year paint a pile which no one would believe it possible for one man to do in the time. But very careful nicety does not pay. So henceforth I shall stick to my engraving, and had I done so before I should to-day have been a richer man by 1,000 florins."

In spite of his determination not to paint such a picture, Dürer in the same year accepted a commission to paint a large picture of *The Trinity and All Saints* for Matthäus Landauer of Nuremberg. This picture, now at Vienna, is the most successful of all Dürer's paintings. In it, as in the other two large pictures, he introduced his own portrait, this time standing in the lower part of the picture in a landscape of serene and ideal beauty, suggestive of the scenery of the Lago di Garda.

While in Venice, Dürer made numerous drawings, which can be recognised by the paper which he used there. He continued his favourite studies in proportion, still trying to frame ideal bodies for Adam and Eve in their state of innocence before the Fall. In 1507 he painted two such figures, which greatly excel in beauty the engraving of 1504, and show the softening influence of the Venetian atmosphere.

It was on engraving, therefore, that Dürer still depended for the support of his household. He obtained in 1508 a privilege from the Nuremberg Town Council to prevent the sale of fraudulent copies of his prints. Soon after his return from Italy he executed two of his most important copperplate-engravings, the *St. Eustace* and *The Great Fortune*, or, more properly, *Nemesis*. The *St. Eustace* is one of the best known and most popular of Dürer's engravings. Every detail is most carefully wrought out in the figures and the landscape, both in the foreground and in the distance. In this engraving, however, a somewhat over-elaboration of detail produces a disturbance of the planes in the composition, resulting in apparent errors of perspective. The high castellated hill in the background is adapted from one of the gouache landscape studies made by Dürer in Italy, called by him *Ein Welsch Schloss*. The *Nemesis*—for this is certainly the title by which Dürer knew it himself—is one of Dürer's boldest conceptions on copper, though the effect is marred by



Group of Dogs. From the engraving of "St. Eustace," by A. Dürer.

the unpleasing and uncompromising truth with which the naked body of a German *Hausfrau* has been delineated. Apart from this defect, the minute engraving of the wings, and above all the marvellous landscape below, are among Dürer's highest achievements. The mountain valley, with the riverside village and high-roofed church on a hillock above, is obviously an Alpine scene from one of Dürer's travelling sketch-books. Some smaller copper-engravings appear also to have been executed about this date, such as *The Witch*, *The Three Genii Blowing Trumpets*, and Dürer also appears to have published for the first time an engraving of *St. George on Horseback*, the plate being dated 1505, but altered by Dürer himself to 1508. In 1508 also he engraved *The Crucifixion* (*Das Kreuz*, as he called it himself), one of his most finished works.

Finding no doubt that small prints were more marketable than large, Dürer now commenced a series of engravings on a smaller scale to illustrate the Passion of Jesus Christ. He had already shown his intense sympathy with this subject in a series of drawings made in 1504 (now in the Albertina collection), and known as *The Green Passion*, from the green paper on which they are drawn. It has been stated above that the greater part of the woodcuts of *The Great Passion* had probably been finished before he left Nuremberg. *The Passion* on copper is engraved in much the same manner as the *Adam and Eve* of 1504, but in this series Dürer surrenders his fondness for dexterous and audacious feats of draughtsmanship and chiaroscuro to the pathos and human interest of his subject. In all scenes from Christ's Passion which Dürer treated there is a sincerity and earnestness, as if the artist had lived himself through the sufferings and anguish which he delineates. Add to this the resemblance of the type of Christ to Dürer's own portrait, as in *The Veronica* of 1513, and the result is that whether Christ is lying prone or kneeling with outstretched arms in Gethsemane, standing shivering before Pilate or mocked by his enemies, or stooping to raise a lost soul from hell, it is always Dürer's own personality which adds a touch of human sympathy to the deep religious fervour of these engravings.

The Passion in copper was carried on for several years, and never seems to have been brought to a definite conclusion. Meanwhile Dürer resumed his labours in wood-engraving, and completed his *Life of Mary* and *The Great Passion*. The success of the earlier engravings of *The*

Passion in copper was probably the reason that he interrupted this series, in order to draw and superintend the execution of a similar series on wood, more rapid to complete, although running in this case to no less than thirty-six blocks. This series, which is generally known as *The Little Passion*, is perhaps the best known and most popular portion of Dürer's work. It remains, and probably will long remain, unsurpassed as a pictorial narration of the great tragedy of the Christian Faith.



The Man of Sorrows. Title-page to "The Small Passion," on wood, by A. Dürer.

Several of the original wood-blocks are preserved in the British Museum. In 1511 Dürer determined to publish his four series of wood-engravings in book form. He added a title to each of them, these four title-pages being among his most spirited work. Benedictus Chelidonium, a monk and a friend of Dürer, contributed an explanatory text in Latin verse to *The Life of Mary* and to the two *Passions*. The four books were issued as printed and published by Dürer himself, and *The Apocalypse* and *The*

Life of Mary conclude with a warning fulmination against all future pirates of the prints.

Impressum Nurnberge per Albertum Durer pictorem. Anno christiano Millesimo quingentesimo vndecimo.

Heus tu infidiator: ac alieni laboris: & ingenij: surreptor: ne manus temerarias
 his nostris operibus inicias. caue: Scias enim a gloriosissimo Romano
 rum imperatore. Maximiliano nobis concessum esse: ne quis
 suppositicijs formis: has imagines imprimere: seu
 impressas per imperij limites vendere aude
 at: q; si per contemptum: seu auaricie cri
 men: sec? feceris: post honoru? co
 fiscationem: tibi maximum pe
 riculu? subeundum
 esse certissime
 scias.

Colophon to "The Life of Mary," by A. Dürer.

During the progress of the two small *Passions* an important change had taken place in Dürer's life at Nuremberg. After his father's death he had inherited his father's house in the street under the Veste, sharing it, however, with his brother Andreas. On his return from Venice, when he wished to set up a regular printing-press for himself with a staff of apprentices and assistants, he found this house too small, so that he purchased in 1509 a large corner house in the Zistelgasse, near the Thiergärtner Thor, in which he spent the rest of his Nuremberg life, and which exists as the Dürerhaus to this day. Subsequently he bought out his brother's interest in their paternal home, a house which is also still in existence. It was in his new house that he printed and published his four immortal series of woodcuts. He had now become one of the leading citizens of Nuremberg, and in 1509 was appointed to the office of *Genannter des Rathes*. In this same year also Dürer seems to have been moved to dabble in verse. "I composed two lines," he says himself, "each with exactly the same number of syllables, and thought I had succeeded very well." And so he became a poet; but Pirkheimer laughed at him, and Spengler wrote jeeringly, with allusions to the cobbler and his last. However, Dürer continued writing rhymes, and in 1510 actually



The Coat of Arms, with a Cock. From an engraving by A. Dürer.

published three broadsides with verses of his own and a woodcut at the head of the page. These were *The Schoolmaster*, *Death and the Soldier*, and *The Seven Times of the Day*. Such broadsides or flysheets were a product peculiar to Nuremberg, Hans Folz, a popular poet, having printed his poems in this way as early as 1479, while, as is well known, it was in this way that Hans Sachs circulated his. But when it came to serious publication Dürer thought better of it, relinquished poetry himself, and had recourse to his friend Chelidonium.

By this time Dürer had gathered round him a set of young apprentices, some of whom also became artists of note : in engraving, Barthel and Hans Sebald Beham ; Hans von Kulmbach in painting ; Georg Pencz in both painting and engraving ; and also Hans Leonhard Schäußelein, excellent both as painter and wood-engraver. That he employed various hands to cut his blocks is evident from the inequalities of execution in the *Little Passion* series. His principal wood-engraver however was one Hieronymus Andreae, who was probably assisted by his wife Veronica, of whom Dürer has left a drawn portrait, now in the British Museum. He now turned his attention to the possibility of shortening the process of engraving, or making the art more picturesque with greater freedom of touch. The proof impressions which have been preserved of the *Hercules* and the *Adam and Eve* show that Dürer first sketched in the composition in open line, gradually completing the details, but leaving the principal figures to the last. These outlines are freely but strongly drawn, and point to the use of the graver rather than the needle. In 1510, whether he was influenced or not by a sight of the dry-point engravings by the "Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet," he began to experiment with dry point or needle himself. In this way he produced a small engraving, *St. Veronica*, which was so delicately engraved that very few impressions could ever have been printed from it, only two being known to exist at the present day. Then in 1512 he engraved a small print of *The Man of Sorrows*, and a larger one of *St. Jerome in Penitence*. In the latter Dürer discovered that by the use of the burr on the copper he could produce a rich and velvety effect. This however was only possible for a very few impressions, and the plate quickly became a wreck. The same may be said of a somewhat larger plate engraved in the same way, *The Holy Family by the Wall*. More important however was his

being the first to make use, perhaps the actual discoverer, of the art of etching with acid on metal. It is uncertain whether Dürer borrowed this art from the armourer, or whether it was not just the other way. Nuremberg had been for years the centre of the armourer's trade, until the beginning of the sixteenth century, when it was chiefly transferred, through the influence of the Emperor Maximilian, to Augsburg. It was at Augsburg that etching was first practised for the decoration of armour, but it does not appear that any armour is known to have been decorated in this way before 1520. The aquafortis may have been used by the armourer for more ordinary purposes, but there is nothing to show that any person practised etching for the purpose of pictorial engraving before Dürer. In 1515, perhaps in 1514, Dürer took plates of iron, instead of the usual copper, and worked with the help of the acid on them. The earliest probably is a group of figure studies, thrown casually together on the same plate, perhaps with no real significance as a composition, being nothing more than different experiments on the same plate in biting with the acid. One figure appears to be a portrait of his brother Andreas, done from a sketch made by Dürer in 1514. In 1515 he had attained more skill in the art, producing *The Man of Sorrows Seated* and *The Agony in the Garden*—a favourite subject with Dürer, who made many drawings of it—and in 1516 *The Rape of Proserpine*, as the subject seems to be, and *The Angels with the Sudarium*. His last work in pure etching was *The Great Cannon*, in which a large gun—the *Feldschlange* of Nuremberg—with the arms of Nuremberg upon it, is surveyed by a group of soldiers and orientals, the chief figure of the latter group being borrowed from a coloured drawing of three orientals (in the Malcolm collection), dated 1514. But Dürer by no means abandoned engraving on copper with the burin. On the contrary, he now discovered that, by blending the use of the burin with the dry point or with the acid, he could produce a fuller and at the same time tenderer effect upon the copper than he could by the use of the burin alone. Dürer in his letter to Heller describes the care and labour which he bestowed on every detail of his painting, so that it may readily be assumed that he lavished the same upon his engraving. All Dürer's prints after 1510 have in the best impressions a silvery gray tone, which is quite new in the history of engraving. This Dürer attained by first working on the

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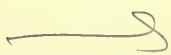


plate with the needle, and then strengthening the engraving bit by bit with the burin until the required effect was produced. In this way he produced the most beautiful of his renderings of *The Virgin and Child*, in every one of which the motive of homely motherly love is as conspicuous and as touching as in the *Madonna della Sedia* or the *Madonna della Casa Tempi* of Raphael. Chief among those may be reckoned *The Virgin with the Pear* of 1511, and *The Virgin Seated by a Wall* of 1514.

The year 1511 was a busy one in wood-engraving. In this year he published several well-known woodcuts—*The Adoration of the Kings* (a kind of supplemental plate to *The Life of Mary*), *The Vision of St. Gregory*, *The Holy Family with a Lute*, the large and fine woodcuts of *The Holy Trinity*, *St. Jerome in his Cell*, and others. In the last-named woodcut it is interesting to compare the treatment of the subject with the later and more famous engraving in 1514.



St. Jerome. Woodcut by A. Dürer.

CHAPTER IV

Dürer and his dreams—The Knight, Death, and the Devil—St. Jerome—Melencolia—Maximilian—The Triumphal Arch—Maximilian's death—Journey to the Netherlands—Return to Nuremberg.

THE time had now come for the production of Dürer's three most famous, most imaginative, and best engraved compositions. His genius had now attained its full maturity, his intellect and his idiosyncrasies were most fully developed. In the dedication of a translation of one of Lucian's Dialogues by Pirkheimer to Dürer's friend Ulrich Varnbuler, of whom Dürer has left so remarkable a woodcut portrait, Pirkheimer speaks of Dürer's dreamy and abstracted nature. He says that as in Lucian's dialogue Adimantes leaves his friends and wanders down to the Piræus, where he, while gazing on a richly laden merchant-ship, becomes absorbed in dreams of future richness, so did Dürer once behave in the company of friends at Pirkheimer's house. While they were all amusing themselves in watching a troop of mercenaries march by in armour with a band of music, Dürer sat in a kind of trance, and afterwards confided to Pirkheimer that he had seen, in his imagination, such beautiful things that he would have been one of the happiest of mortals if he had been able to achieve them. Dürer has himself recorded some of his dreams, and, as has been mentioned above, as he drew his studies of men and horses, the figures grew and composed themselves into some fantastic scene which probably existed but for a few fleeting moments in Dürer's brain. Looking through the whole history of German art, the student will find no instance in Germany of this dreamy poetic nature in any other artist. Power, learning, industry, truth, a true worship of the beautiful, a fervent spirit of religion, these are to be found often in the works of German artists. Beauty, that quality which not

only attracts the eye and stirs the heart, but also affects and informs the intellect, was ever a "Fata Morgana" to the art of Germany, perceived, ardently pursued, but always evading the ultimate capture. How true is Goethe's description of the Pursuit of Beauty by Faust ! The philosopher, learned and saturated with mediæval lore, has still one unappeased desire, the Beautiful. Religion, love, power, all fail to bring this within his reach. When, by supernatural means, he moves in a world of dreams and elemental mysteries, and when he has for once grasped Ideal Beauty in the person of Helen, what is the result ? Euphorion is born, child of Classic Beauty and Mediæval Romance:—

Blumenstreifige Gewande

Hat er würdig angethan
 Quasten schwanken von den Armen, Binden flattern um der Busen,
 In der Hand die goldne Leier, völlig wie ein kleiner Phöbus,
 Tritt er wohlgemuth zur Kante, zu dem Ueberhang ; wir staunen,
 Und die Eltern vor Entzücken werfen wechselnd sich ans Herz
 Denn wie leuchtet's ihm zu Häupten ? Was erglänzt ist schwer zu sagen,
 Ist es Goldschmuck, ist es Flamme übermächt'ger Geisteskraft.

But this child, the "future master of all beauty," beautiful and agile as he is, in a moment vanishes into the air, while the embroidered garment, mantle, and lyre fall masterless to the ground.

Dürer alone among German artists came near to a vision of the Beautiful, and where he was unable to express it himself he still retained the power of communicating his conception to other minds. He is a curious phenomenon in busy mercantile Nuremberg, this dreamy artist-student. His peculiar qualities were no doubt due to his Hungarian descent. From Hungary has come much of what is most human and sympathetic in German art and music. The best and purest music may be produced from Germany itself, but it is from Hungary that the music comes which sends a throb through the hearts of all who hear it. While Dürer was thus dreaming over the problems of knowledge and difficulties of life, there came a stern reality into his life in the shape of Death, who in 1514 knocked at the door of Dürer's house, where his poor old mother had lain sick and dying for a year, and, in Dürer's own words, "smote her two great strokes to the heart." Sorrowing for his mother's sickness, but intent on leading a pure and unperturbed life

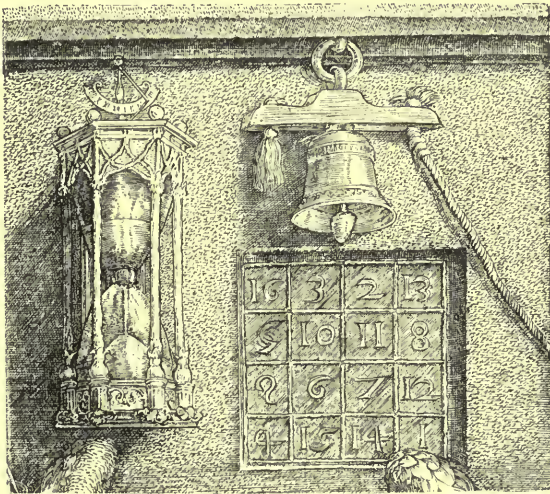
among temptations and difficulties, ever absorbed in and discovering something new in his own work and studies, and yet at the same time sensible of the impossibility of achieving anything permanent in the way of knowledge or art within the limits of a single life, Dürer produced from his brain the three world-famous engravings, *The Knight, Death, and the Devil*, *St. Jerome in his Library*, and *Melencolia*, which contain the philosophy of a lifetime, and are more eloquent than a thousand volumes of printed knowledge.

The panoply of war was familiar to all Germans of Dürer's date, especially since Maximilian had flooded Germany with his lanzknechts. War was ever stalking through the land with its cannons and *condottieri*. Dürer had already in 1498 made a drawing of a knight on horseback (now in the Albertina collection), clad, as he has written on the drawing, in the armour of the day. From his youth up he had studied the proportions of the horse as keenly as those of the human figure, as in *The Great Horse* and *The Little White Horse*, the *St. Eustace*, and other engravings. He had already used his drawing for the small engraving of *St. George on Horseback* in 1505. The type of the stern resolute *condottiere* may have been suggested to him by Verrocchio's statue of Bartolommeo Colleoni at Venice, and was embodied by him in the portraits of his two friends the Baumgärtner brothers in the altarpiece at Munich. Death also he had looked in the face from his boyhood as the omnipresent enemy of the human race, and he felt ever conscious of the demons of evil surrounding the path of life for every traveller thereon. Thus in 1513, the year of his sorrow, he combined these elements in his immortal conception of *The Knight, Death, and the Devil*, which he himself described as *Der Ritter*. The engraving shows the Christian, clad in the armour of faith and courage, riding to his goal, conscious of, but undisturbed by, the menace of death or the horrible suggestions of the devil. In the words of an old German poem: —

Across my path though Hell should stride,
Through Death and Devil I will ride.

The second of these three engravings, published in 1514, shows a happier temperament. St. Jerome, the type of the mediæval scholar, who by his translation of the Bible into Latin became one of the real fathers of Christianity, sits at his writing-desk in his library, as he does

in the earlier woodcut by Dürer in 1511. The room is a regular German interior, such as that of Hans Sachs in Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*, and the warm morning sun streams through the windows, over the saint, and the floor, where the lion and a dog lie slumbering in its warmth. All is peace, happiness, and contentment, and simplicity and comfort are blended in the fittings of the chamber. A strong contrast to this is shown in the *Melencolia* of the same year. The blow had fallen, and his mother was no longer alive. In this engraving all is dark and gloomy. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," dreams Melancholy. "What use are wings, what



Portion of Dürer's "Melencolia."

worth the crown of bays, what avails it to build, to measure, to level, to weigh, to solve problems of mathematics, alchemy, or philosophy, when the only end is nothing? Night and eternal sleep is all that mankind has to look forward to in this life." The rainbow is the only note of hope in the composition, while the comet seems to denote the existence of another world beyond human comprehension.

In the *Melencolia* there can be no doubt that the so-called "magic square" refers directly to the death of his mother. His mother died on May 17, 1514. Now the figures on the square can be read as follows: the two figures in the opposite corners to each other, $16 + 1$ and $13 + 4$,

make 17, the day of the month ; so do the figures in the centre, read crossways, 10 + 7 and 11 + 6, and also the middle figures at the sides, read across, 5 + 12 and 8 + 9. The two middle figures in the top line, 3 + 2, give 5, the month in question ; and the two middle figures in the bottom line give the year, 1514.¹ Above the square a bell tolls the fatal knell, and the sandglass timepiece hard by records no doubt the hour at which the sad event happened.

Dürer in his writings dwells so much upon the dominating influence of the Four Temperaments in life, that there is good ground for believing that these three engravings were part of a series intended to represent the Sanguine, Melancholic, Phlegmatic, and Choleric Temperaments. Dürer, however, makes no allusion to any such intention thereof. That there was a lighter side, however, to Dürer's life and thoughts is shown by the two little popular engravings of *The Bagpiper* and *The Dancing Peasants*, both published in 1514.

Meanwhile a new sphere of action had been opened to Dürer, fraught with hopes of riches and glory, but which turned out in reality to be the shoal on which Dürer's whole career was eventually wrecked. In February 1512 the Emperor Maximilian came to Nuremberg. Maximilian is one of the most curious and interesting figures of his time, in his way a personification of the Renaissance. Steeped in mediævalism and romance, the lusty vigour of his character led him to become one of the pioneers of a new age. His ambition was to excel in every walk of life. As sovereign, general, athlete, scholar, law-giver, churchman, man of letters, in everything he saw himself the first. He even aspired to the Papacy, as a fitting close to his career. When he was not careering over Europe in some of his innumerable wars, he was engaged in encouraging tournaments and pageants, or in patronising art and literature. The genial warmth of his encouragement made them grow apace. One thing, however, accompanied him during the whole of his career—namely, want of cash. “Why trouble yourself,” may have said this knight of the jocund countenance, “about money, when you have rich bankers like the Fuggers of Augsburg or the Imhoffs at Nuremberg, ready and willing to be bled?” So progressed Maximilian in a blaze of triumph, commanding this and commissioning that, and trusting to the fact of all

¹ See Anton Springer, *Albert Dürer*. Berlin, 1892.

reckonings being submerged in the deluge, which he knew must follow upon his removal from the scene.



Maximilian, Emperor of Germany. From a woodcut portrait by A. Dürer (reduced).

Struck by the achievements of Dürer in wood-engraving, Maximilian at once considered how the art could be turned to his own glorification.

He conceived in his mind a colossal woodcut picture, representing himself in a triumphal procession riding in a chariot towards a triumphal arch, on which all his achievements were depicted. He ordered Stabius, his professor of astronomy and mathematics, to confer with Dürer, and produce the literary part of these vast compositions. For two years Dürer worked on these designs for Maximilian, receiving no payment, being put off by Maximilian with an order to the Town Council at Nuremberg to exempt Dürer from taxation, an order to which the Council paid not the slightest attention. Ninety-two blocks did Dürer design for *The Triumphal Arch*, the biggest and in some ways the finest thing ever produced in engraving. Had this *Triumphal Arch* or *Gate of Honour* been the only engraved work of Dürer's which survived, it would still have won for him a place among the great artists of the world. The design is fantastic, but original. There are three openings in the arch—"The Gate of Honour and Might," "The Gate of Fame," "The Gate of Nobility." In the centre is the family tree of Maximilian, and on either side the principal historical events of his career and his achievements in the civil arts. It is nearly all drawn by Dürer from the descriptive designs of Joannes Stabius, but it seems that Hans Dürer and Hans Springinklee had some share in its composition. After its completion Dürer claimed his reward, the yearly pension of 100 florins promised by Maximilian. Maximilian acceded to this, by giving him a charge for this sum on the taxes of Nuremberg, though he did not scruple later on to assign all these taxes to the Elector of Saxony for some years. Dürer, however, had a truer friend in Frederick the Wise than in the jocund Emperor, so generous at other people's expense.

Many other designs did Dürer make for Maximilian, including twenty-four blocks for *The Triumph*, *The Triumphal Car* (not completed till after Maximilian's death), the patron saints of Austria, the ornamental borders to the famous *Book of Prayers*, the wonderfully minute little *Crucifixion* for Maximilian's sword-hilt, designs for a rich suit of armour, &c. Moreover, he drew on the wood for Stabius some of the latter's astronomical and geographical tables. When Maximilian presided at the Diet held at Augsburg in 1518, Albrecht Dürer, Caspar Nützel, and Lazarus Spengler were the commissioners sent by the town

of Nuremberg. There Dürer drew Maximilian's portrait from the life, "in his little room upstairs in the palace, in the year 1518, on the Monday after St. John the Baptist's Day." This drawing Dürer copied on wood, and afterwards, after the Emperor's death, inserted the block in an elaborate frame as a posthumous memorial. At Augsburg also during this Diet Dürer drew the portrait of the young Charles, Maximilian's grandson, already installed in the kingdom of Spain, but now for the first time invested with the imperial dignity. From this drawing a very rare woodcut was made, known chiefly by the numerous copies made of it at Augsburg by Jost de Negker and others.

Thus did Dürer's art grow and wax fruitful in the sun of the imperial favour, but his difficulties in extracting any remuneration from the Emperor are shown in the following letter, written about 1515: "Dear Herr Kress,—The first thing I have to ask you is to find out from Herr Stabius whether he has done anything in my business with his Imperial Majesty, and how it stands. Let me know this in the next letter which you write to my Lords. Should it happen that Herr Stabius has made no move in the matter, finding that the attainment of my ends was too hard for him, in that case I beg you, as my gracious master, to make such representations to his Imperial Majesty as Caspar Nützel explained to you, and as I asked you. Point out in particular to his Imperial Majesty that I have served his Majesty for three years, spending my own money in so doing, and if I had not been diligent the ornamental work would have been nowise so successfully finished. I therefore pray his Imperial Majesty to recompense me with the 100 florins—all which you know well how to do. You must know also that I made many other drawings for his Majesty besides *The Triumph*. If, however, you find that Stabius has accomplished anything for me, there is no need for you to take any trouble about me this time." If payment was slow in coming, it seemed certain to arrive in due time, when on January 12, 1519, an incautious meal of melon suddenly put an end to the jocund Maximilian's wars, feastings, tournaments, artistic schemes—to everything except his debts.

Dürer had just obtained from the Emperor a grant of 200 florins, chargeable on the Town Council of Nuremberg, in addition to his annual pension of 100 florins. This the Council declined to pay without

ratification. Hearing, therefore, that the new Emperor, the young Charles V., Maximilian's grandson, was going to the Netherlands to assume the sovereignty inherited from his mother, and was also going to be crowned as Emperor at Aix-la-Chapelle, Dürer made up his mind to go in person and try and obtain from the Emperor himself a ratification of Maximilian's grant. Charles V. (already King of Spain) was elected Emperor at Frankfurt on June 28, 1519, and the Nuremberg Council determined to strike a medal to commemorate the occasion. Dürer sent in a sketch from which the medals were eventually made.

On July 12, 1520, Albrecht Dürer, with his wife Agnes and her maid



The Crucifixion. From an engraving by A. Dürer, executed for the sword-hilt of the Emperor Maximilian.

Susanna, left Nuremberg and set forth on their journey to the Netherlands. Their departure may have been accelerated by a serious outbreak of the plague at Nuremberg, which may also have been the cause of Dürer being accompanied by his wife and maid, instead of journeying alone, as on his last visit to Venice. The party can be followed as they went by Erlangen, Baiersdorf, and Forchheim to Bamberg, where they were entertained by the Bishop; thence by degrees to Würzburg. From thence the journey was by Lohr and Aschaffenburg to Frankfurt along the valley of the Main, much the same route on which modern pilgrims are whirled by the railroad from their Mecca at Bayreuth. At Frankfurt they encountered Jakob Heller, Dürer's former patron and correspondent. Thence to Mayence, where they took passage on the Rhine on a boat bound for Cologne. Ten days it had taken them to get from Nuremberg to the Rhine, and the best part of three more before they arrived at Cologne. Here Dürer met his cousin Niklas the Hungarian, son of his father's brother Ladislas. They were quickly off from Cologne on the road to Antwerp, which city they reached on Thursday, August 2. Great was the honour paid to Dürer by the painters at Antwerp. They entertained him, his wife, and also the maid Susanna, at dinner in the hall of their guild, all their wives being present. Among other persons, Dürer met at Antwerp Quentin Matsys, Joachim Patenir,

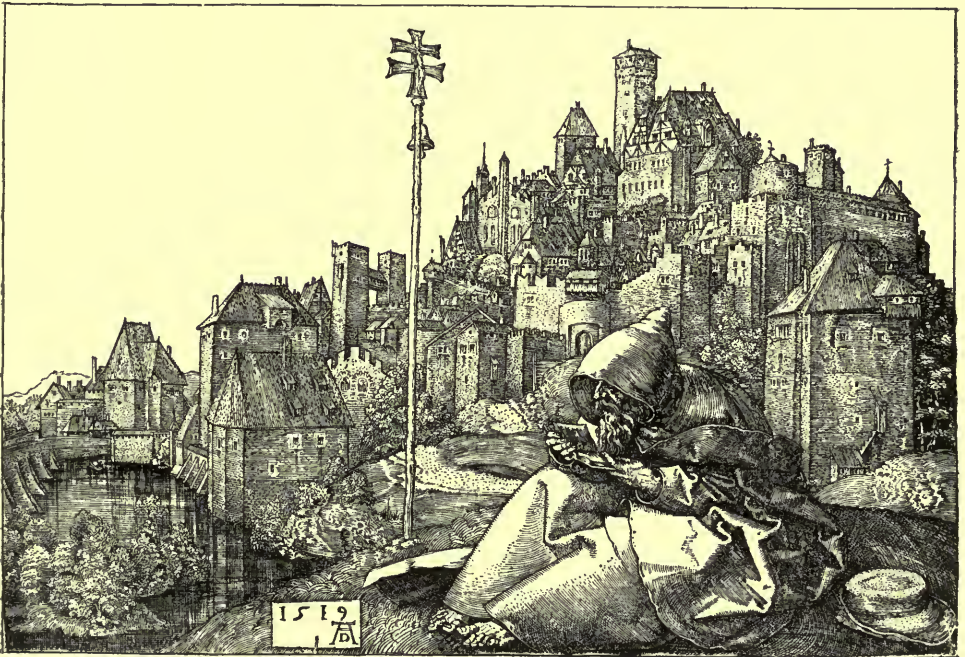
Erasmus, Nicolas Kratzer (Henry VIII.'s astronomer, so well known from his portrait by Holbein), and Peter Aegidius, the friend and correspondent of Sir Thomas More. He witnessed the Ommegang with the procession of all the guilds at the Feast of the Assumption. On August 26 Dürer left Antwerp, leaving his wife there, and travelled by Mechlin to Brussels, where he was presented to the Regent Margaret. Here at Brussels Dürer met Bernard van Orley, the painter, and drew his portrait, and also was much thrown with Erasmus. Dürer returned to Antwerp on September 3. Here he received the news of Raphael's death on April 6 of the same year, from the mouth of one of Raphael's pupils, Tommaso Vincidore of Bologna, who drew a portrait of Dürer, which has been engraved. On October 4 Dürer's party left Antwerp to go to Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle), where the new Emperor was going to be crowned in the cathedral of Charlemagne, and where Dürer hoped to get an audience of the Emperor himself. They attended the coronation on October 23, and on the 26th paid a second visit to his cousin at Cologne, where they stayed till November 14, when they started on their return journey to Antwerp. This time they accomplished the journey by the Rhine boat, passing Düsseldorf, Nijmegen, and Hertogenbosch, and reaching Antwerp on November 22. Here Dürer heard that a great whale had been stranded at Zierikzee on the coast of Holland, and he determined to try and get a sight of it. So on December 3 he started on horseback with his wife for Bergen-op-Zoom, and thence took boat for Arnemuyden, where Dürer was nearly shipwrecked while landing, and afterwards for Middelburg. On December 9 they started for Zierikzee, but the sea had washed away the whale before they got there, so back they came to Bergen, and home to Antwerp on December 14. Dürer now remained nearly four months at Antwerp, till April 6, when he paid a five days' visit to Bruges and Ghent. He then remained at Antwerp, with the exception of a short visit to the Lady Margaret at Mechlin, till July 3, when he started on his homeward journey by Brussels and Cologne. At Mechlin Dürer came across traces of his old friend Jacopo dei Barbari. "On Friday," he writes, "Lady Margaret showed me all her beautiful things; amongst them I saw about forty small oil pictures, the like of which for precision and excellence I have never beheld. There also I saw good works by Jan [van Mabuse] and Jakob Walch [Barbari]. I asked

my Lady for Jakob's little book, but she said she had already promised it to her painter [Bernard van Orley]." About this time Dürer records a meeting of the greatest interest. "Master Lukas, who engraves on copper, asked me as his guest. He is a little man, born at Leyden in Holland; he was at Antwerp;" and again, "I have drawn with the metal point the portrait of Master Lukas van Leyden."

Lucas van Leyden was Dürer's greatest contemporary rival in engraving north of the Alps. He was a little man with a little mind, but a great artist. His precocity was most remarkable, and his productive energy in painting and engraving quickly exhausted a weak constitution and brought him to an early grave. His engravings are very lightly executed and gave but few good impressions, so that really fine impressions of Lucas's engravings are rarer than those of Dürer's. He lacked Dürer's precision in drawing, and was totally deficient in Dürer's sentiment and imagination. He had however a breadth of design and a mastery of aerial perspective which is often lacking in Dürer's work. Dürer evidently appreciated his work, for he writes that he gave eight florins' worth of his own prints for a whole set of Lucas's engravings. It is obvious that Lucas knew Dürer's work, and worked in direct rivalry of it, as he did in his later days of Marcantonio.

Valuable information can be gleaned from Dürer's journal concerning his own prints and what he sold or gave to his friends. It appears from these entries that he divided his engravings roughly into three classes: whole-sheets, half-sheets, and quarter-sheets—for example, the *St. Eustace*, the *St. Anthony*, and the quite small prints. He took with him his most recently published engravings, his "four new pieces" being the two new *Marys* of 1520, *The Virgin Crowned by an Angel*, and *The Virgin with the Infant in Swaddling Clothes*, the *St. Anthony* (the famous little plate of 1519, with the wondrous view of Nuremberg in the background), and the *New Peasants* (a group also dated 1519). He most frequently gives or sells the "Three Large Books," *i.e.* *The Apocalypse*, *The Life of Mary*, and *The Great Passion*, or *The Little Passion*, and *The Passion* engraved on copper. He also mentions the *Adam and Eve*, the *St. Jerome in a Cell*, *Melencolia*, *The Knight*, *St. Eustace*, *Nemesis*, the *Meerwunder*, and the *Hercules*, the *Veronica*, *The Nativity* (or *Christmas*), and *The Cross*. In one place he alludes to what he calls his

“bad woodcuts,” and he gives Augustin Lombard “the two parts of the *Imagines Cæli*, and to Master Dietrich the painter, the *Six Knots*.” On Monday after Michaelmas 1520, he writes, “I gave Thomas of Bologna a whole set of prints to send for me to Rome to another painter, who should send me Raphael’s work in return.” On July 3 he says, “I gave the King of Denmark the best of all my prints; they are worth five florins.” This unrivalled selection is still at Copenhagen. What would it be worth now? Shortly after attending the coronation of Charles V.



St. Anthony. From an engraving by A. Dürer.

he succeeded in accomplishing the object of his journey. “My confirmation,” he writes, “from the Emperor came to my Lords of Nuremberg for me on Monday after Martinmas in the year 1520, after great trouble and labour.” On July 12, 1521, exactly a year after their departure from Nuremberg, Dürer and his wife started for Brussels on their journey home. As at Venice, the Town Council of Antwerp offered him a residence, a salary, and immunity from taxation, if he would remain there; but Dürer’s love of his home proved invincible.

CHAPTER V

Result of journey—Ill health—Later engravings—Religious views—Luther—Waning powers—Engraved portraits—Melancthon—The Four Temperaments—Literary works—Illness and death—Dürer's ideas of beauty—His importance as a black-and-white artist.

ALTHOUGH Dürer succeeded in the chief object of his journey, he was not at all contented with the profits got by the sale of his own wares. "The Lady Margaret especially," he writes, "gave me nothing for what I had presented to her or made for her." Ill-health, too, he brought home with him to Nuremberg. During his expedition to Zeeland he had been attacked by an extraordinary sickness which he could never quite shake off. After his return to Antwerp he was in April seized with great weakness, nausea, and headache, and had to have resort to medical advice. This illness seems to have seriously impaired not only his physical health but his creative faculties, and seems to have been intermittent. When, however, he returned to Nuremberg and to his house by the Thiergärtner Thor, he was treated with increased respect by his fellow-citizens. Hitherto the Councillors of Nuremberg had not shown themselves of a very liberal or generous disposition. All the commissions which Dürer had as yet received were from princes or private individuals. Now in 1521 the Council decreed that the Rathhaus at Nuremberg should have its large hall painted after designs by Dürer, those chosen being the *Calumny of Apelles* and *The Triumphal Car of Maximilian*, as it is seen in the great woodcut of 1522. Dürer's industry as an engraver now flagged. Two unimportant engravings of *St. Christopher* were done soon after his return. He seems to have contemplated another Passion series on wood in an oblong shape, completing some of the drawings and one woodcut, *The Last Supper*, dated 1523. He also seems to have intended a series of the Apostles, which he commenced in

1514 with *St. Thomas* and *St. Paul*, to which he now added *St. Bartholomew* and *St. Simon* in 1523, and later on, in 1526, *St. Philip*.



Book-plate of Willibald Pirckheimer. From a woodcut by A. Dürer.

He frequently drew coats-of-arms, book-plates (*ex libris*), or sometimes title-pages for his friends; but his creative powers seem to have lapsed.

As Dürer advanced in life he became more and more absorbed in the progress of the Lutheran doctrines. He showed his hatred of sacerdotalism and lay oppression as far back as *The Apocalypse*, but he gradually began to take a deeper personal interest in the doings and writings of Luther, Melanchthon, and Ulrich Zwinglius. Unfailing faith in the benevolence and mercy of God seems to have been the kernel of Dürer's religious views, as they are of many an upright and industrious German household at the present day. After his father's death in 1502, Dürer wrote to a friend asking for their prayers on behalf of his father's soul, and says that it is not possible for one who has lived well to depart ill from this world, for God is full of compassion. Again he says, in defence of his art, "that what God had formed is good, whatever wrong use men may make of it." Now that sickness had struck a warning note in his life, his mind turned to the contemplation of another world. The three great engravings, *The Knight, Death, and the Devil*, *Melencolia*, and *St. Jerome*, were the results of his brooding over the trials and the shortness of life. A true Humanist, Dürer carried out the old Latin adage—

Homo sum ; nihil a me alienum puto,

and trusted implicitly that by leading an upright and industrious life he would be rewarded by God in a future life. Thus the simple, downright honesty of Luther was in easy consonance with his own thoughts. To Dürer, as well as to Luther, one page of the sacred book itself was worth all the learning of the Fathers, one simple good action to another fellow-creature would be more efficient to secure future bliss than a thousand indulgences bought by gold and the repeating of venal supplications.

It was in Antwerp that Dürer received the news of Luther's abduction near Eisenach, though he naturally was unaware that it was done by Luther's friends. Dürer felt that he was gone from them altogether, and writes a lament full of genuine pathos and sorrow. "All men," he writes in his journal, "who read Martin Luther's books can see how clear and lucid is his doctrine, because he sets forth the Holy Gospel. For this reason his books ought to be greatly revered and not burnt, unless indeed his enemies, who are always fighting against the truth, and would make men into gods, were also thrown into the fire, together with their opinions, and then a new edition of Luther scrolls prepared. Oh God,

if Luther be dead, who will henceforth expound to us the Holy Gospel with such clearness? What, oh God, might he not still have written for us in ten or twenty years!" Writing in 1520 to Georg Spalatin, chaplain to his former patron Frederick the Wise of Saxony, Dürer says: "And pray God that I may come to Doctor Martin Luther, for I will diligently draw his portrait and engrave it on copper for a long memorial of the Christ-like man who has helped me out of such great sorrows; and I beg your Honour, when Doctor Martin composes anything new in German, to send it to me at my expense."

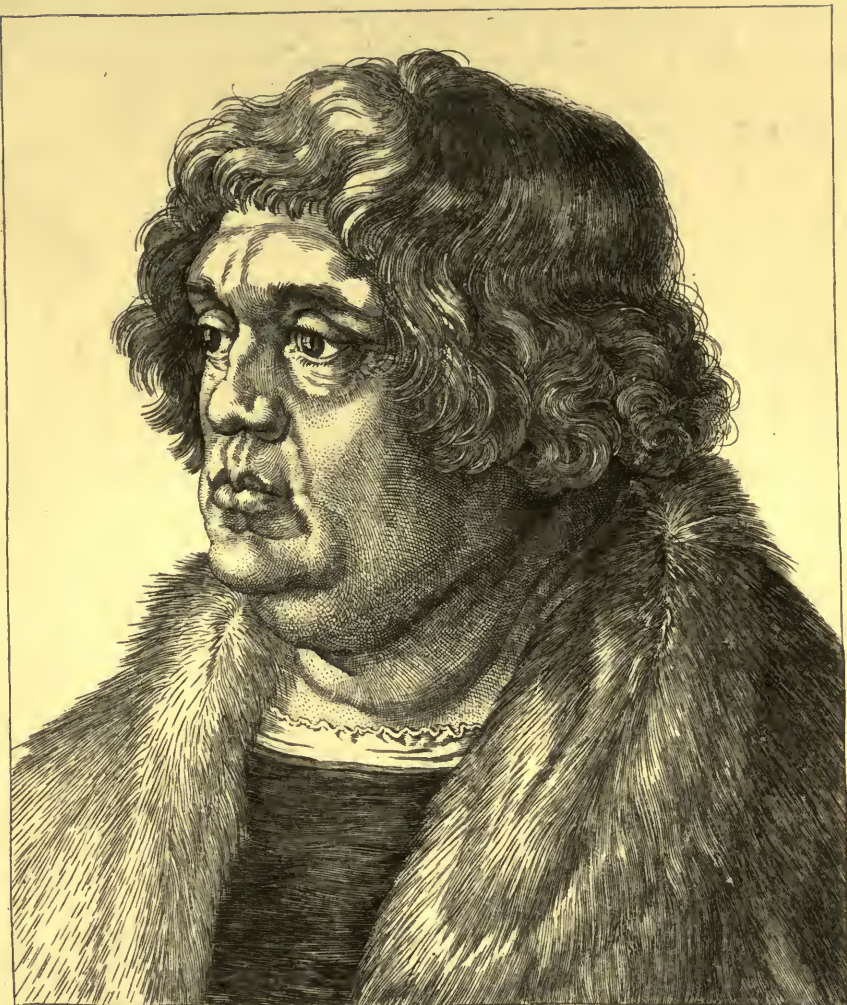
Soon after Dürer's return from the Netherlands, Nuremberg was convulsed by religious troubles. Although the town was ready to embrace the reformed doctrines, it was in a peaceful and conservative spirit. The outbreak, however, of the Peasants' War brought great troubles into the town, for many of the younger and more turbulent spirits adopted the extreme doctrines of Münzer, and raised a tumult against the civil authority. In vain did Dürer and his friends lament these religious convulsions. Dürer's own best wood-engraver, Hieronymus Andreae, was not only one of the ringleaders, but was actually thrown into prison, and three of his chief pupils and assistants in copperplate-engraving, Barthel and Hans Sebald Beham and Georg Pencz, were expelled from the town.


Ill-health, religious troubles, and the waning of his productive energy seem to have had a rather embittering effect on Dürer's nature.

Although he seems never to have been in want of money, he now began to show himself to be a true Nuremberger in the care which he took of his affairs, and he was egged on no doubt by his thrifty and unromantic wife Agnes. In 1524 he wrote a letter to the Town Council of Nuremberg, in which he alludes sarcastically to the little encouragement given him by his fellow-citizens. "During the thirty years I have stayed at home, I have not received from people in this town work worth 500 florins—and not a fifth part of that has been profit." He then says that he has saved 1,000 florins, which he asked them to receive for him, and to pay to him and his wife five per cent. interest. This the Town Council agreed to do, although after his death they reduced the rate of payment to his wife to four per cent.

Feeling his imaginative powers failing him, Dürer occupied his last

years in making portraits in painting as well as on wood and on copper. When in Augsburg in 1518, he had met and made acquaintance with the art-loving and influential Albrecht of Brandenburg, Cardinal Archbishop of Mayence, and had drawn his portrait more than once. One of these drawings he had engraved in 1519 as a frontispiece to the *Heilthumsbuch*, published at Halle in 1520. He now engraved another portrait of the Cardinal, which he sent with 500 impressions. In a letter to the Cardinal, dated September 4, 1523, he inquires anxiously after this plate, sent, as he says, before he was ill that year. It is to be hoped that the good Cardinal did not, like Maximilian, leave his *protégé* unpaid. In 1524 Melanchthon came to Nuremberg and was the guest of Pirkheimer, in whose house Dürer frequently met him. Many seem to have been the discussions between the three friends—the artist, the reformer, and the gouty scholar. Melanchthon said of Dürer that in him the artistic element, prominent as it was, was by no means the most important. The last engravings from Dürer's hand were portraits of his friends among the supporters of the reformed religion. In 1524 he published that of his old patron Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony, now grown old and corpulent, and very different from the strong fiery man depicted by Dürer in earlier years in the portrait now at Berlin. In the same year he published the portrait of his friend Pirkheimer, a marvel of engraving and a complete rendering of his features, in which one can read the impetuous and voluminous scholar and writer, the man fond of life, love, and feasting, and the querulous victim to gout and other ailments of advancing years. It has been shown how eagerly Dürer desired to engrave Luther's portrait. In 1526 he engraved that of Melanchthon, and also that of Erasmus, done from one of the drawings made by Dürer in the Netherlands. The last two are by no means the most satisfactory of Dürer's portraits, though as engravings they quite hold their own. The portrait of Erasmus is avowedly done from memory and from a drawing of a few years back. The world is so much accustomed to see Erasmus as Holbein painted him in his old age, that Dürer's portrait comes rather as a surprise, or even as a shock. Erasmus himself, on viewing the portrait, dismissed it with a sarcasm, and was evidently far from being flattered by it, although he acknowledged that he himself had altered much during the intervening years. Others among Dürer's friends and patrons,



B I L I B A L D I · P I R K E Y M H E R I · E F F I G I E S
· A E T A T I S · S V A E · A N N O · L · I I I ·
V I V I T V R · I N G E N I O · C A E T E R A · M O R T I S ·
· E R V N T ·
M · D · X X · I V · · 

whom he seems to have intended to immortalise on copper, were Eobanus Hesse, of whom a woodcut exists from a drawing by Dürer, Christian



Portrait of Albrecht Dürer. From a woodcut published after his death (reduced).

of Denmark, &c., but his work as a copperplate-engraver was now at an end.

Once more did painting monopolise his attention. He conceived the idea of four great figures, representing his favourite subject of the Four Temperaments, as represented by the Apostles Peter, John, Paul, and Mark. These he painted on two great upright panels, and presented to the Town Council of Nuremberg, though they have since found their way to Munich.

When Dürer's creative powers as an artist began to fail him, he set to work to put in order the numerous notes and studies he had made throughout his life on Measurement and Proportion. Among the scraps of manuscript which have been preserved is the following scheme for a *magnum opus* on the theory and practice of art :—

Ten things are contained in the little book :—

The first, the proportions of a young child.

The second, proportions of a grown man.

The third, proportions of a woman.

The fourth, proportions of a horse.

The fifth, something about architecture.

The sixth, about an apparatus through which it can be shown that all things may be traced.

The seventh, about light and shade.

The eighth, about colours ; how to paint like nature.

The ninth, about the composition of a picture.

The tenth, about free painting, which alone is made without any help from the understanding.

The result of his labours was that in 1525 he published a kind of preliminary work entitled *The Teaching of Measurements by Rule and Compass in Lines, Planes, and Solids*, compiled by Albrecht Dürer, and printed with illustrations for the use of all lovers of art, in the year 1525.¹ This was a work on geometry, and Dürer paid special attention to the illustrations, since, as he says in the text, "anything which you see is more credible than what you hear, and when both seen and heard it is easier to remember." He then took in hand the four books on *Human*

¹ Underweysung der Messung mit dem zirckel uñ richtscheyt in Linien ebenen unnd gantzen corporen durch Albrecht Dürer zusammen getzoge und zu Nutz allē kunstliebhabenden mit zugehörigen figuren in truck gebracht im Jar m̄xxv.

Proportions, but in the meantime put forth in 1527 a treatise on *The Art of Fortification*.¹ He had only completed for the press one out of the four volumes of *Human Proportions* at the time of his death, but the work was seen through the press and completed by Pirkheimer in 1528.² His studies on the proportions of a horse remained incomplete and unpublished, and were eventually stolen or appropriated by Hieronymus Andreae and Hans Sebald Beham, who would have published them for their own profit and credit, had not Dürer's widow obtained an injunction against them from the Town Council. Another work, intended to be called *A Banquet (or Dish) for Young Painters*, remains only in fragments. This work would seem however to have been completed, for Camerarius, in the eulogy of Dürer from which quotations have already been made, says that "if I find that my industry and devotion in this matter meet with my readers' approval, I shall be encouraged to translate into Latin the rest of Albrecht's treatise on painting, a work at once more finished and more laborious than the present. Moreover, his writings on other subjects will also be looked for, his Geometrics and Teichismatics, in which he explained the fortification of towns according to the system of the present day. These however appear to be all the subjects on which he wrote books. As to the promise which I hear certain persons are making, in conversation or in writing, to publish a book by Dürer on the symmetry of the parts of the horse, I cannot but wonder from what source they will obtain after his death what he never completed during his life. Although I am well aware that Albrecht had begun to investigate the law of truth in this matter too, and had made a certain number of measurements, I also know that he lost all he had done through the treachery of certain persons, by whose means it came about that the author's notes were stolen, so that he never cared to begin the work afresh. He had a suspicion, or rather a certainty, as to the source whence came the drones who had invaded his store, but the great man preferred to hide his knowledge to his own loss and pain rather than to lose sight of generosity

¹ Etliche underricht zu befestigung der Stett Schloss und flecken. . . . Gedrückt zu Nürenberg nach der Geburt Christi Anno mccccxxvii in dem Monat October.

² Hjerin sind begriffen vier bücher von menschlicher Proportion durch Albrechten Dürer von Nürenberg erfunden und beschriben zu nutz allen denen, so zu diser kunst lieb tragen, MDXXVIII.

and kindness in the pursuit of his enemies. We shall not therefore suffer anything that may appear to be attributed to Albrecht's authorship, unworthy as it must evidently be of so great an artist."

Dürer's labours were terminated rather suddenly by his death, which occurred in Passion Week, on April 6, 1528. A woodcut portrait of him published after his death shows the extent to which he had been reduced by the ravages of disease. The face is worn and haggard, and the head has been shorn of those golden curls which were the glory of Dürer's portraits, and made him famous among his fellow-citizens. It is usually supposed that Dürer died of an inflammation of the spleen, brought on by the malarious fever which he incurred during his visit to Zeeland. A drawing at Bremen seems to support this, in which he has drawn himself pointing to a large yellow spot near the left groin, and inscribed "Where the yellow spot is to which my finger points, there it is that I feel pain." It has been suggested, however, to the present writer that the recorded symptoms of Dürer's illness point rather to the continuous presence of renal disease, and that he suffered for many years from the presence of a calculus or calculi in the left kidney. As far back as the year 1503 Dürer had been attacked by illness, during which he suffered great pain, as is shown by a drawing of Christ in agony as *The Man of Sorrows*, which is inscribed by Dürer, "This I drew during my sickness," and is evidently a record of his own suffering. The journey to the Netherlands, with its constant change of diet and mode of travelling, its feasting and wine-drinkings, and, finally, the long hurried ride and expedition by boat with the escape from shipwreck during the journey to Zeeland, would all have aggravated the existing ailment, and rendered him an easy victim to the malaria of the marshy coast. The fever, nausea, and headache from which Dürer subsequently suffered are all usual symptoms of the presence of such a disorder, and the sudden and peaceful passing away of a patient is, according to Dr. Norman Moore, a frequent occurrence in such cases. Many were the lamentations over his death. Those of Pirkheimer were loud and pathetic. Eobanus Hesse, one of the friends whose portraits Dürer drew, wrote an elegy on his death, which he sent to Luther, who replied in the touching words, that "Christ had taken him away in good time from those stormy days, which were destined to become more stormy still." Melanchthon added his voice to the chorus of

mourning. Erasmus alone was rather chilly in his reception of the news : perhaps he had not forgiven Dürer for the unflattering portrait mentioned before. Dürer was laid in the burying-place of the Frey family in the cemetery of St. John outside Nuremberg, where at a later date a monument was erected to mark the spot where his body had been laid. His widow and his chief assistant and wood-engraver, Hieronymus Andreae, carried on the trade in his engravings for several years.

Hieronymus, as has been stated before, was concerned in the piratical abstraction of Dürer's notes on the proportion of the horse. It was probably at his advice, or under his direction, that a great number of woodcuts were published after Dürer's death bearing his well-known monogram, and many of them, no doubt, from drawings actually made by Dürer himself. In this branch of engraving it is sometimes difficult to separate the woodcuts published during Dürer's lifetime and under his superintendence from those furbished up by Hieronymus in the years immediately following Dürer's death. Many of those by Hans Schüfelein have been included among Dürer's works at a time when the tendency to pile on to the name of a great artist any work which could be said in the slightest degree to resemble his was as great as the present tendency among critics to eliminate any work which may seem to them of inferior value or inadequate execution in proportion to the estimate in which they hold the artist in question.

What is beauty? This was the question which Dürer asked himself daily throughout his life, and to which he could never find a satisfactory answer. "Utility is an element of Beauty," he says, "therefore what is useless in man is not beautiful. To judge of Beauty requires reflection. The standard of Beauty should, in my opinion, be like the standard of what is good." Such are some of Dürer's scattered thoughts upon the subject. His final opinion was that no man on earth can positively affirm what the perfection of human beauty is. No one but God knows that, and he to whom God may reveal it. In truth, and in truth alone, lies the secret of what constitutes beauty and perfection of shape in the human form. Truth, therefore, in Dürer's opinion is the nearest equivalent to beauty, and truth can only be acquired by close intellectual study with careful and accurate observation of nature. The æsthetic mind of the nineteenth century may be repelled by some of Dürer's most truthful

creations, especially in his delineations of the nude female figure. Dürer, however, went to nature for his studies of truth, and rejected all search of ideal beauty, feeling, no doubt, that it would be as futile and unsatisfying as that of Faust. Hence all his exquisite studies of natural objects. A stag-beetle, a hare, a plant of celandine, a dead jay, a marble quarry, a village nestling by a stream—to him are all as much imbued with beauty as the human form and countenance. Dreaming of beautiful things which he could not achieve, he depicted exactly what he did see in his waking hours; combining the somewhat *farouche* veracity of a Rembrandt with the imagination of a Watts and the minute accuracy of an Isaac Oliver.

As has been mentioned before, Dürer was a devoted student of natural history, especially of any object new or strange to him. A good instance of this is the well-known woodcut of a rhinoceros, done in 1515 from a drawing made by Dürer from the description sent him by a friend from Lisbon, where in 1513 a live rhinoceros had been brought from India. The original drawing of which this woodcut was made is in the British Museum, together with a similar drawing of a walrus, made also from description. It will be remembered that it was to try and see a whale that Dürer made his hurried and, as it proved, fatal journey into Zeeland.

It is as a black-and-white artist that Dürer has his chief claim on the reverence of posterity. He was the first great artist in this noble art, in which he was to be followed by Rembrandt, Hollar, Ostade, Meryon, Whistler, Haden, and a host of others. For the first time in history art was, in spite of the abnegation of colour, placed within the grasp and the intelligence of the people. Schongauer had led the way with his engravings; but it was Dürer, with his great woodcuts, who spoke and taught a new popular language. Erasmus writes of Dürer's woodcuts as follows: "Apelles, it is true, made use of few and unobtrusive colours; while Dürer, admirable as he is too in other respects, what can he not express with one single colour—that is to say, with black lines? He can give the effect of light and shade, brightness, foreground and background. Moreover, he reproduces not merely the natural look of a thing, but also observes the laws of perfect symmetry and harmony with regard to the position of it. He can also transfer, by enchantment, so to say, upon the canvas things which it seems not

1515
RHINOCERVS
A



A Rhinoceros. From a woodcut by A. Dürer (reduced).

possible to represent, such as fire, sunbeams, storms, lightning, and mist ; he can portray every passion, show us the whole soul of man shining



The Virgin crowned by two Angels. Engraving by A Dürer

through his outward form, nay, even make us hear his very speech. All this he brings so happily before the eye with those black lines that the picture would lose by being clothed in colour. Is it not more worth

admiration to achieve without the winning charm of colour what Apelles only realised with its assistance?"

In this short study of Albrecht Dürer's life and work it has not been possible to do more than recount the more salient events of his life, and note the development and importance of his work as an engraver. His countless drawings, executed in every size and method, must be passed over with the remark that it is in them that Dürer's chief excellence as an artist is to be found, and that a prolonged study of such collections as those in the print rooms at the British Museum and at Berlin, or in the Albertina collection at Vienna, cannot fail to instruct and inform the mind of any student, lay or professional. Of his numerous designs for ornament more cannot be said here than that they proved the foundation of a school at Nuremberg, it being the branch of engraving in which Dürer's pupils and successors, the little masters, particularly excelled. All the works of carving or sculpture which have been attributed to Dürer may be considered as doubtful; the once famous hone-stone carving of *The Birth of St. John the Baptist* being now known to be the work of a later Nuremberg artist. As a painter Dürer's works rank high, but not in the first class; as an engraver he is easily the first of his age, though some may think him to have been excelled in mere technical skill by Schongauer or Aldegrever; as a draughtsman he remains unrivalled for precision, dexterity, and variety; as a thinker he is a worthy representative of the age of Luther and Erasmus.

But it is not only as a mere creative artist that Dürer attained his eminence. He was one of the great pioneers of art. Before him, little or nothing had been done north of the Alps to make art a factor in popular life. There is probably no branch of the fine arts which has not been affected in some way or another by the fact of Dürer's existence. Of how many artists can it be said that they left an impress on the whole subsequent history of art, and that they remain beacon lights or milestones by which the course of true art can be followed with the certainty of arriving at some definite conclusion? Giotto, Luca Signorelli, Michelangelo, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, Rubens, Titian, Velazquez, Turner, Rembrandt, it is among these names that that of Dürer will rank for ever in the history of the world.

The minds of those who study Dürer's work should be open and

unbiased. In that case there cannot but be conveyed to them the lesson which truth, purity, and sincerity of purpose are ever bound to teach. In the words of Camerarius, "There is nothing foul, nothing disgraceful in his work ; the thoughts of his pure mind shunned all such things" ; and again, "if there be anything in this man that at all resembled a fault, it was only his incessant diligence and the frequently unjust severity of his own self-criticism."

In bringing this monograph to a conclusion, the words may be quoted which Dürer wrote in 1512 among the many drafts for his book on proportion : "In this matter I will, with the help of God, set forth the little which I have learnt, though it will seem but a poor thing to many. But this does not trouble me, for I know well that it is easier to find fault with a thing than to make something better."



St. Jerome. From a woodcut by A. Dürer.

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Christ in Glory.

From Bettini's Monte Sancto di Dio; Florence. 1477.

ITALIAN BOOK ILLUSTRATIONS

Chiefly of the Fifteenth Century

By

ALFRED W. POLLARD

*Editor of "Books about Books," Author of "The History of the Title-page"
and "Early Illustrated Books"*



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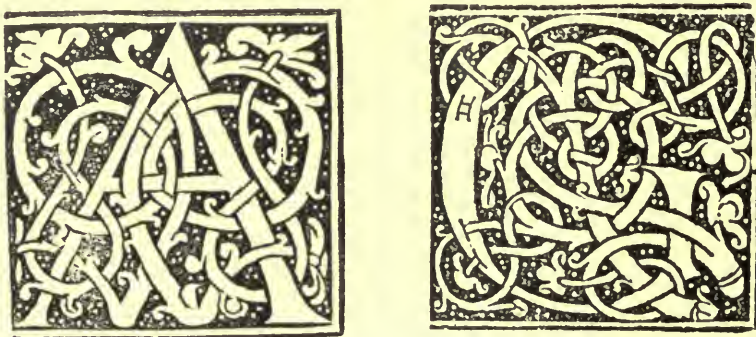
ITALIAN BOOK ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER I

The purchasers of illustrated books—Decoration versus illustration—Early examples of printed initials and borders—Classes of books in which illustrations are found.

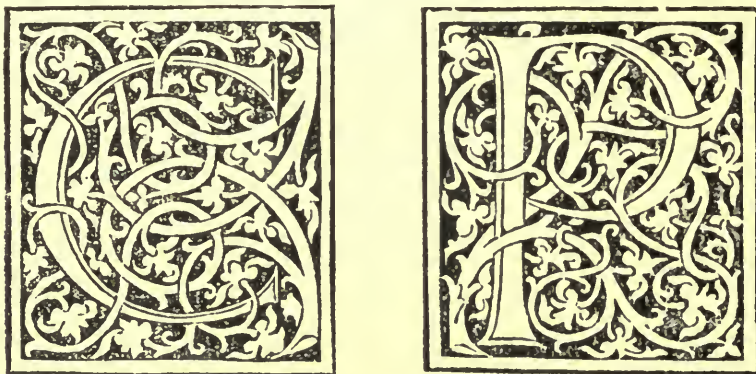
ILLUSTRATIONS in books have always appealed to one or other of two classes of book-buyers, those who love pictures and those who love, or imagine they love, art. The worst books of all are naturally those, from the famous *Nuremberg Chronicle* onwards, which the business instincts of publishers have provided for the well-to-do citizens, who convince themselves of their possession of artistic instincts by insisting that the illustrations in the few books they buy shall be large, striking, and plentiful. But the books which have been designed to please the eyes of a more cultivated class than this have seldom been entirely successful. The soberness of printed books appears to resent attempts at too great magnificence, and few artists of note, when they have attempted book-illustration, have worked with any due sense of the limitations imposed on them by the necessities of the press. In this respect the French have been the most successful, for, while their very popular books have never been peculiarly good—in the fifteenth century the cuts in them were rather conspicuously bad—the good taste which characterises even the wealthiest of educated Frenchmen has reaped its reward in a succession of charming

illustrated books, from the *livres d'heures* of the fifteenth century to the fascinating volumes, only spoilt by their heavy paper, which are still turned out from the best French presses. But the most



Examples of "Sweynheym and Pannartz" initials used by Riessinger.

delightful book-illustrators have always been those who have worked with simplicity and directness to please simple readers, and among these—despite the *naïveté* and quaintness of the early German cuts,



Examples of Ratdolt's second set of initials from the *APPIAN* of 1477.

and the real beauty of many of the Dutch—the palm must certainly be given to the Italians. During the fifteenth century the illustrated books printed in Italy to attract wealthy purchasers may almost be counted on the fingers, and, with the exception of the *Hyperotomachia*, none of them take the highest rank. The rich Italian book-

lovers preferred to have their purchases decorated by hand, and for the first twenty years after the introduction of typography (in 1465 at the monastery of Subiaco, near Rome), not only illustrations, but printed initials and other decorations were entirely neglected by the vast majority of the Italian printers. Where they occur they were plainly put forward as experiments, the ill-success of which is sufficiently proved by their repeated abandonment.

It is worth while to bring out this point with some clearness, because a paragraph in Dr. Lippmann's useful monograph, *The Art of Wood Engraving in Italy in the Fifteenth Century* (Quaritch, 1888), is certainly calculated to mislead. He there writes (pp. 3, 4):—

“The Italian printers had to sustain the rivalry of the splendidly illuminated manuscripts, which they could only overcome by strenuous endeavours to embellish the pages of their books with equally attractive decorations. The general characteristic difference between German and Italian illustrative work might be defined by stating that it was developed in Germany from a mere love of pictures, as a sort of dramatic commentary upon the text which they accompanied; and in Italy from the desire for beautifying books, as well as everything else, with decorative graces. In Germany, the proper function of book-illustration was instruction; in Italy, ornament.”

The distinction thus suggested is a very neat one, but it rests on rather a slight foundation of fact. What amount of instruction may have been gathered from the woodcuts in German books is a question which does not greatly concern us. It was certainly not very large, for the German printers were not superior to the common tricks of the time, drawing freely on their imaginations for their portraits of persons and views of places, and making the same cuts serve again and again for totally different subjects. Moreover, as we shall see, the classes of books for which illustration was thought appropriate were almost exactly the same in both countries. In Italy, again, the element of instruction, pure and simple, was certainly not lacking. Among the handful of illustrated books produced in the earlier years of Italian printing (while yet the rivalry of the beautifully illustrated manuscripts was keenly felt), we find some (the *Ptolemy* at Rome in 1478, and the *Sette Giornate*

della Geografia of Berlinghieri, printed at Florence about 1480) which contain maps, and others, notably several of the books printed by Erhard Ratdolt at Venice between 1476 and 1485, which contain rather elaborate diagrams. The cuts also of military engines in the *Valturius*, printed at Verona in 1472, must certainly be reckoned as instructive.

It would thus not be difficult to show that the proportion of the element of instruction in German and Italian books is not very largely different. As regards the element of decoration, it is certainly true that the Italian* printers had a keener decorative instinct; but the decorative instinct of early printers was shown for the most part not "by strenuous endeavours to embellish the pages of their books," but by abstaining from decorating them at all, and the keener artistic instinct of the Italians is mainly evidenced by the greater completeness of their abstention. In Italy, as well as in Germany, until well into the sixteenth century, it is common to find books with the spaces for the initial letters at the beginning of chapters left to be filled in by hand; and it is notable that Aldus, when he attempted to rival the glories of the earlier Italian press-work, made the most sparing use of printed decorations, almost the only instances of his employment of them being the couple of woodcuts in the *Musæus* of 1494, the profuse ornamentation of the *Hypnerotomachia*, which he printed on commission, and the headpieces and initials in a few Greek books, where he may have been actuated by the fear that the ordinary Venetian rubricators were not very deeply versed in the mysteries of the Greek alphabet. When he specially desired to please a patron, he printed a copy on vellum and had it illuminated by hand. In the ordinary copies the spaces were left blank, and if we may judge from the Aldines bound for Grolier, the most approved method of filling them in was with absolutely plain letters painted in gold.

What is true of Aldus at the turn of the century is naturally even truer of his predecessors who worked in the seventies. The

* It should, perhaps, be mentioned that the majority of the early printers in Italy were themselves Germans, but in the fifteenth century every press was strongly influenced by its local surroundings.

immense majority of the splendid books printed during that decade at Venice and Rome have come down to us either with no initials and no decoration at all, or more or less beautifully illuminated by hand. At Venice in 1469-72 a workshop seems to have existed, independently of any firm of printers, to which the purchasers of books, printed by Jenson and the brothers De Spira, could send them to be cheaply illuminated by means of a labour-saving device. Patterns, in the approved fashions of Italian decoration, were stamped on the margins, and these were then painted over by hand. To stamp the patterns wood-blocks must have been used, and the Duc de Rivoli, in his *Bibliographie des Livres à figures vénitiens*,* has, therefore, claimed the books in which he has found them as part of his subject. The stamping, however, was merely as a guide for the illuminator, and it was done quite independently of the printer, for the borders are only found in comparatively few copies, and the same borders occur in books printed by different printers.

When we turn to the first employment of wood-engraving in decorations not intended to be coloured, we meet with an experiment of a similar character to that which we have just recorded. In a copy of the *Lactantius* printed by Sweynheym and Pannartz in 1465, seen by Dr. Lippmann, there is a woodcut border. But this ornament is not found in the majority of copies, and we cannot conclude that it was the work of the printers themselves. A copy of the same firm's *Suetonius* of 1470, in the Rylands Library, has woodcut initials, joining on to a border which decorates the inner margin of the pages on which they occur; but of nearly forty copies of books by these printers at which I have looked at the British Museum, not one possesses these decorations.

What became of the borders is not known. The initials must have come under the notice of Johann Müller (Regiomontanus), the astronomer-printer, for we find them closely imitated in the C and Q which appear in a *Vegius Laudensis* attributed to his press at Nuremberg, and probably printed about 1473. The letters themselves must have been acquired by Sixtus Riessinger, when he removed from

* See a review of the Duc de Rivoli's book by Dr. Paul Kristeller in the *Archivio Storico delle Arti*.

Naples to Rome in 1480, for we find them in his editions of the *Tractatus Solemnis* of Philippus de Barberiis, and of a warning written by one R. D. G. M. against a certain hateful vice (possibly part of a larger book). Riessinger's last book is dated December 20, 1493, and three of the letters appear again in the *Boethius* printed by Oliverius Servius, February 20, 1484, after which I am unable to follow them. Their original connection with the border with which they are found in the *Lactantius* may be traced in the absence of the lines on the outer side, showing that they were intended to join on to a larger design.

The first firm which deliberately attempted to render its books independent of the colourist was that of Erhard Ratdolt, Bernhard Maler, and Peter Löslein, who started printing at Venice in 1476. In the very full bibliography appended to Mr. G. R. Redgrave's beautiful monograph on *Erhard Ratdolt and his Work at Venice*, recently printed by the Bibliographical Society for its members, an exact list will be found of the ten different sets of initials used by Ratdolt, together with reproductions of four of his seven magnificent borders. His first alphabet, of which we know of twelve letters as existing, was prepared for the different editions of the *Kalendar* of Johannes Regiomontanus (Johann Müller), printed in 1476 and 1478. The letters are difficult to read, and have a rustic appearance, resembling more nearly some in use at Ulm than any others which I have seen. The second alphabet, of which only seven letters seem to have been used, is much finer, and is distinctly Italian in character, the ground being black, and the form of the letters standing out clearly in white, interlaced with branch-work tapering off into delicate leaves. The other eight alphabets fall far short of this, though some of them are sufficiently graceful. Two small printed initials are found in the *Fasciculus Temporum* printed by G. Walch at Venice in 1479. In Frezzi's *Quadriregio*, printed by S. Arndes at Perugia in 1481, there is a magnificent initial L, and in the *Æsop* printed by Matthias Moravus at Naples in 1485, there are one or two good letters. It is probable that there are a few other instances of their use in early Italian books with which I am unacquainted, but there can be no doubt, from their extreme rarity, that as regards this element of decoration the general

attitude of the best printers was one of absolute refusal to compete with the colourists.

The early history of the use of borders to decorate the first page of text is not very different from that of initials. There is a neat border of interlacing strap-work to the book of Philippus de Barberiis printed by Riessinger, and in 1476 we find two very handsome borders (the smaller of which has been used to adorn the cover of Messrs. Paul & Co.'s magazine, *Bibliographica*), frequently repeated in the only book printed at Polliano, a village four miles from Verona. The book is an edition of Petrarch's *De Viris Illustribus*, and the borders were intended to serve as frames for portraits of the heroes, to be supplied by the miniaturists, a use to which they have been put in one of the two copies in the British Museum, while in the other they remain blank. There is a border also in the Verona *Æsop* of 1479, and perhaps some occur in other books which I have overlooked; but the only printer who used them extensively was Erhard Ratdolt, and it is noticeable that six of his seven borders appear in the first three years of his career (1476-78), that only one of these (that which appears in the second volume of the *Appian* of 1477, and again in the *Euclid* of 1482), was used subsequently, and that the seventh border is a very poor affair compared to its predecessors, and appears only in the later reprints (1482, '83, and '85) of the *Kalendar* of Regiomontanus, a popular book with which a printed border seems to have been specially connected. The inference is obvious that Ratdolt found that his patrons still preferred to intrust the decoration of their books to the colourist.

Yet of the beauty of all but the last of these woodcut borders it is difficult to speak too highly. The first, which surrounds the Calendars of 1476 and 1478, and is our earliest example of a decorative title-page, has been so often reproduced that I content myself here with



indicating its style by means of a slightly reduced *facsimile* of one of the sides. The first of the two borders to the *Appian* is sometimes found printed in red, which greatly enhances its effect. The centre of the lower compartment is occupied by a graceful Italian shield surrounded by a circle of laurels; from each side of this proceeds branch-work, similar to that in the second set of initials, and surrounding the entire page. The border to the second volume is of the same character, but surrounds only three sides of the page. The fourth and fifth borders, those of the *Cepio* and the *Dionysius*, are closely similar; but in the first there are two crossed shields in a plain circle, in the second one shield only, surrounded by a wreath. The design of these borders is much more delicate than in those of the *Appian*, the stem of the branches being thinner, and the black ground being mainly covered with the foliage. The sixth border, used in the Latin and Italian editions of the *Ars Moriendi* of 1478, is composed of acorns and oak leaves, and though very striking is hardly as fine as its predecessors. The seventh, as has been said, is altogether poor.

Who designed these beautiful borders we do not know. The six good ones were only used (save for the reappearance of No. 3 in the *Euclid* of 1482) while Bernhard Maler, or Bernhardus Pictor, as he is called in the Latin colophons, was associated with Ratdolt. In 1478 they parted company, and (save for the *Euclid*) the borders disappear, Maler's own books being also undecorated. It has been contended that Maler or Pictor was an epithet, and not a mere surname, and that Bernhard the Painter was the designer to the firm; but this is only a hypothesis, which we cannot verify. The two points which we must note are (i.) the great skill shown in the design and execution of these borders compared with the rudeness of most of the woodcut pictures to which we must soon turn, and (ii.) the fact that they were not imitated, and were speedily disused. The example here shown (taken by Mr. Nimmo's kind permission from Mr. Horatio Brown's *Venetian Printing Press*) is from the *Cepio*. The arms on the shields are, of course, not part of the original design.

If Ratdolt's experiments during the golden age of printing had been successful and provoked imitators, Dr. Lippmann's theory that the province of the woodcutter in Italy was decoration rather than illustration

Cotiolanus Cepio Clarissimo uiro Marco Antonio Mauroceno equiti apud illustrissimū ducem Burgundię Venetorū oratori felicitatem.



Qvom p̄fectus triremis ad classem proficiscerem quam felicissimus imperator Venetorū Petrus Mocenicus contra Othomanum Turcorū principē ducebat: uehementer rogati me: ut quicquid in hac expeditione gestum esset litteris mandarem: affirmans ea te Apollinis oraculo uetiora habiturum quę a me scripta forent. Igit̄ ut tibi morē gererem quę ab imperatore Mocenico p̄ quadrienniū gesta sunt annotaui: Tanto enim tempore & ille imperiū gessit: & ego p̄fectura functus sum. Quap̄pter opusculū in quo hęc scripta sunt tibi mitto: quod qū perlegeris: nō minus te egregias imperatoris uirtutes qū magnifica ipsius gesta admiraturū certū habeo: meritoq; damnabis eorū sententiā qui affirmare solent effœtam esse naturam: nec producere tales uiros quales p̄scis temporibus existerūt: omniaq; mundo senescēte degenerasse: qū falsi sint uel ex hoc maxime apparet. Nam si

a z

would have been abundantly true. But the course of the trade in illustrated books proceeded on the same lines in Italy as in Germany and other countries. The most fastidious Italian book-lovers were as conservative then as the French are now. Just as the Frenchman will not have cloth-covered books, because in theory, though not often in practice, he prefers his books properly bound, so the Italian book-lover preferred the books with the blank spaces because he always intended to have them beautifully decorated by hand, though the intention was as often as not unfulfilled. This temper lasted for many years—as we have seen, it affected the practice of Aldus himself; but as books cheapened its absurdity was gradually perceived. We have very little information as to book-prices in Italy, and that little is rendered almost useless by the difficulties of the coinage. But that editions grew larger, press-work more hurried and less careful, and that by about 1490 a very large number of books were being produced to tempt purchasers of very moderate means, cannot be gainsaid. That the buyer of an expensive book would send it to be illuminated was a possible fiction; that the buyer of a cheap one would do so was inconceivable, and in the interest of the majority of purchasers, printers began to complete and decorate their cheap books themselves, while they still left blanks in handsomer volumes. From the outset it was the humbler class of purchasers for whom the illustrated books had been designed. The rudeness of the pictures at which we shall soon be looking will speedily convince us of this, and by the time that they become really beautiful the character of the books in which they occur is very clearly marked. The fine editions of the classics and the learned treatises, which the patrons of literature loved to purchase, the books printed on splendid paper with all the glories of Italian press-work—there are no pictures in any but a handful of these. It is in the little books of devotion, or of popular morality or education, the fables, the almanacs, the treatises of astrology and chiromancy, the *rappresentazioni* or miracle plays, and the *novelle*—all the books, in fact, which appeal to readers who do not profess to be literary—that pictures appear. Side by side with these it is true that at Venice we find illustrations and decorative borders in a handful of larger books, standard works of established reputation: Petrarch's *Trionfi*, Dante's *Divina Commedia*, Boccaccio's *Decamerone*, translations of Livy and

Herodotus, a Terence, an Ovid, and a few others. But the faulty press-work of these larger volumes betrays their really popular nature. Venice abounded with well-to-do shopkeepers and merchants, who could afford more imposing volumes than the chap-books beloved of the peasants and artisans, while their taste was not widely different. The Italian woodcutters were very democratic. The name of not one of them has come to us as more than a conjecture, and their best work was all done, not for the connoisseur, but for the crowd.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST PICTURE BOOKS

THE first printing press in Italy was set up in 1465 by two Germans, Conrad Sweynheym and Arnold Pannartz, at the Benedictine monastery of Saint Scholastica, at Subiaco, near Rome. Many of the monks were Germans, and the abbot of the monastery was Cardinal Turrecremata. In 1467 another German, Ulrich Hahn, started printing in Rome (whither in the latter half of the year Sweynheym and Pannartz also removed), and the first book which he issued came out under the auspices of the same cardinal, and is interesting to us as the first illustrated book printed in Italy. Turrecremata had written a series of meditations, chiefly on the life of Christ, and had caused frescoes on the same subjects to be painted on the walls of the cloister of the church of San Maria di Minerva at Rome. Hahn now printed the Meditations, with a large woodcut at the head of each of them, in amazingly rude imitation of the frescoes.* The frescoes themselves were probably fine. When we get used to the rudeness of the cuts, we are left free to admire a certain largeness and dignity of design which has not wholly disappeared under the craftsman's hands. In addition to a large genealogical tree, the woodcuts are thirty-three† in number, of which the first three represent the creation of the world (among the animals is a delightful elephant), the creation of

* We learn the history of the cuts from the inscription, printed in red ink, which heads the book: "Meditationes Reverendissimi patris domini Johannis de Turrecremata sacrosancte Romane ecclesie cardinalis posite & depicte de ipsius mandato in ecclesie ambitu Marie de Minerva, Rome."

† Three of these—the Flight into Egypt, the Temptation, and the symbolical representation of the Trinity—do not appear in the first edition, while that of the Last Judgment is omitted from the reprints.

man, and the wretched plight of Adam and Eve after the Fall. The next twenty-two are taken from the Gospel narrative, and these are followed by representations of a procession of the Eucharist; the three strangers who appeared to Abraham, symbolising the Holy Trinity; the Last Judgment, St. Sixtus, the Assumption, Angels, Saints, and a Mass



Christ before Pilate. From the MEDITATIONES of Turrecremata, Rome, 1473 (1467).

for the Dead, in which the worshippers ranged on each side of the altar probably represent souls, as they are all naked.

Dr. Lippmann, who is fond of such pronouncements and conjectures, declares that these rude cuts are "thoroughly Germanic" in style and were probably executed by Hahn himself, who was afterwards too busy to take up such work. It is more likely that the book was only printed to secure the patronage of Turrecremata, and that the printer, who shortly after gained the help of the famous scholar Campanus for his editions of the classics, set little store by this popular book, and did not care to

follow it up, though he was content to reprint it in 1473 and again in 1478. To attribute the cuts to him savours rather of guesswork, and even their "thoroughly Germanic" style is not undisputed. Whoever the craftsman, he was clearly untrained, and the style on which an untrained workman stumbles is rather a matter of accident than of artistic influences.

In 1471 two Italian Bibles were printed in Venice, one by Vindelinius de Spira, the other, probably, by Jenson. In Dibdin's description of the latter in the *Bibliotheca Spenceriana*, he says that six spaces were left blank at the beginning of the book for the miniaturist to fill them in with representations of the work of the six days of Creation, and that in the Spencer copy (now the Rylands) they have been so filled in. Mr. Duff, however, tells me that though the colour is heavily laid on, woodcut outlines can be distinctly traced beneath it. In the copy at the British Museum the six spaces all remain blank, and it is therefore reasonable to infer that the pictures which appear in the Rylands copy were subsequently added in some illuminator's workshop, in the same way as the borders which we noticed in our first chapter.*

With the edition of the *De Re Militari* of Robertus Valturius printed by John of Verona in his native city in 1472, we approach the first illustrated book produced in Italy by a native printer, and one of the very few books with woodcuts which were intended for book-buyers of means and discrimination. The book is a handsome folio, well printed, though neither paper nor press-work is quite of the finest, and the eighty-two cuts with which it is illustrated are drawn in firm and graceful outlines, which leave little to be desired. The book had been written some years before and dedicated to Sigismund Malatesta, who died in 1464. The cuts in the printed edition must have been copied from the drawings in the original manuscript, and these have been ascribed with some probability to the medallist Matteo de' Pasti, who lived at the court of

* The following note by Mr. Duff gives fuller information about these cuts:—

"They are six in number; the first five depicting the days of the creation, the sixth the Almighty talking to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. The cuts had originally no border and were in simple outline, but some one has drawn a coloured border round each, and also coloured the cuts. The smallest is about 55 mm. high, the largest 85, and all are about 60 wide. Spaces are left at the side of the text for them. They occur on leaf 10 verso and leaf 11 recto, though I think they should rather be called leaves 11 and 12, as a blank must be wanting at the beginning or end of introduction."



Warship from the VALTURIUS, printed at Verona, 1472. (Reduced.)

Malatesta, and whose skill Valturius had commended in a letter written in the name of Malatesta to Mahomet II. Of the eighty-two woodcuts the great majority represent the complicated military machines then in use, but a few which introduce figures of men or animals gave the artist greater opportunities. We may particularly note the pictures of war-chariots drawn by oxen and horses, the shielded "rams" and "tortoises" used in assaults, a sketch of a soldier battering at a gate, another of two soldiers working a movable bridge across a river, and a wonderful "great Arabic engine for assaulting towns, of great strength, and fitted with bridges, ladders, and various equipments," all of which are worked into the form of an extraordinary griffin-like creature, with a beautiful waddle. The most ambitious of the pictures is that shown in the accompanying illustration, which, though not perhaps the most vigorous in the book, shows very effectively the skilfulness of the execution compared with other contemporary work. Another edition, with copies of the cuts, was printed in the same town in 1483 by Boninus de Boninis.

Only one other early illustrated book is known to have been printed at Verona. This is an edition by Giovanni Avisio of the Italian version by Accio Zucco of one of the commonest of the medieval collections of fables which passed under the name of *Æsop*. Its real authorship is a mystery, one theory attributing it to an Englishman, Walter, Archbishop of Palermo, in the time of Henry II. The Verona edition (I quote the description from my *Early Illustrated Books*) has a frontispiece in which the translator is seen presenting his book to a laurel-crowned person sitting in a portico, through which there is a distant view. This is followed by a page printed throughout in capitals, containing the title of the book, but ending with a "foeliciter incipit." On the back of this is a tomb-like erection, bearing the inscription "lepidissimi Æsopi fabellæ," and facing this is a page surrounded by an ornamental border, at the foot of which is the usual shield supported by little naked boys. Within the border are the Latin verses beginning

"Ut iuuet et præsit conatum pagina præsens
Dulcius arident seria picta iocis:"

the lines being spaced out with fragments from the ornamental borders

which surround each of the pictures in the body of the book. These must have been drawn from very spirited and clever originals, and the cutter was possessed of some technical skill. He was not able, however, to give different values to the different parts of the designs, so that the



From Boccaccio's PHILICOLO. Naples, 1478.

general effect is often confused (the confusion being increased by the figures being mostly too large for the little frames), and this is one of the few books with woodcuts which the colourist was able to improve. The copy in the King's Library at the British Museum has been painted with some delicacy, and the result is very pleasing and decidedly clearer than in the uncoloured copies.

The year before the appearance of the Verona *Æsop*, Sixtus Riessinger had printed, at Naples, Boccaccio's *Libro di Florio et di Bianzefiore chiamato Philicolo* in a handsome folio, with his device at the end and forty-one woodcuts, measuring about four and a half inches each way. The execution of the cuts varies very greatly, the majority of them showing hasty work, while here and there a single figure, like that of Blanchefiore in the illustration here given, preserves the delicate beauty which must have marked many of the original designs. Among other cuts which deserve special mention, we may mention one where the lovers are approaching the King and Queen, and a marriage scene at the end, distinguished by its excellent grouping, but to which the engraver has not done justice. At least one of the cuts from this book appears in a later chap-book version of the story, a copy of which is in the library at Erlangen.*

During his stay at Naples, Riessinger also printed another illustrated book, a prose version in the Florentine dialect of the *Epistole Heroidum* of Ovid. A copy of this, in the possession of Mr. Fairfax Murray, was shown at the Italian Exhibition at the New Gallery in 1894, and contains numerous cuts in the same style as the *Philicolo*.

The colophon of the *Philiccolo* tells us that it was printed in the excellent city of Naples, the Queen of Italy, with the aid and favour of the noble man, Francisco de Tuppo, a student of law. Tuppo concerned himself in the printing of several other books, mostly relating to his own profession; but he once again indulged in the production of an illustrated book of a lighter kind, the well-known *Æsop* of 1485, which he translated himself. No other name but his own occurs in the colophon, but the printing was probably done for him by Matthias Moravus of Olmütz, who had been at work at Naples for some years. The cuts are eighty-seven in number; one of them, representing the death of *Æsop*, occupying a full page. They are firmly and strongly cut by a skilful engraver, and exhibit a curious modification of German work by Italian influence. This is especially marked in the illustrations to the life of *Æsop*, who passed in the middle ages for a

* See Dr. H. Varnhagen, *Über eine Sammlung alter Italianische Drucke der Erlanger Universitätsbibliothek* (Erlangen, 1892). The tract is said to contain eight cuts, but I can only speak of the one of the lovers being burnt which I recognised in the reproduction.

shrewd and knavish clown. Here the figures are all grotesquely large, and Æsop himself approximates closely to the type assigned him in the Ulm edition of 1480, but the work is more elaborate and finished than in the German cuts. The purely decorative work owes nothing to German influence. The large border to the first page of the fables (used again in the Hebrew Bible of 1488) shows a magnificent design of cupids and foliage on a black ground. Each of the cuts to the fables is set in a frame made up of several different pieces, the upper compartments being variously filled with representations: Hercules wrestling with Antæus, Hercules riding on a lion, and a battle between mounted pigmies. The ground of these compartments is black, relieved by a delicate floral design, which appears again in the four printed initials which the book contains. The general effect is very rich and decorative, though most of the designs show but little imagination. In the one here shown, the drawing of the mule is spirited enough, but if the fly was really as big as the artist has represented it, its claim to have a share in goading the mule along was not altogether unreasonable. A title-cut of an astronomer in a little book on the *Noble Arte de Astrologia*, whose calculations date from 1485, is in the same style as those to the life of Æsop.

About 1480 Riessinger removed to Rome, and there printed the edition of the *Tractatus Solemnis* of Philippus de Barberiis, at which we have already looked for the sake of its initials and strap-work border. This contains woodcuts of the twelve Sibyls and the virgin Proba, each surrounded by an architectural border. Four of the cuts are reproduced by the Vicomte Delaborde in his delightful book, *La Gravure en Italie avant Marc Antoine*, where he praises them rather highly.* The original designs were no doubt graceful and dignified, but they have been rendered so stiff and ungainly by clumsy (though careful) cutting, that their effect is not pleasing. I must own to a perhaps childish preference for the cuts in another edition of the same work, issued under the title of *Opuscula*, by the printer-physician, Joannes Philippus de Lignamine, in 1481. In this the twelve Sibyls and Proba are reinforced by representations of the

* The reproductions are dated "Rome, 1482," but the date, as far as I am aware, is conjectural. Dr. Lippmann ascribes this edition also to Philippus de Lignamine, imagining that he discarded his 1481 cuts in favour of these more dignified ones. But the name of Sixtus Riessinger appears in some copies at the end of the book, and his shield occurs in one of the corners of the border surrounding the Sibylla Persica.



From Tupp's Aesop. Naples, 1485.

twelve Prophets, St. John the Baptist, the Holy Family, Christ with the emblems of His passion, and the philosopher Plato. There are thus twenty-nine different subjects, but the same cut is used for Plato, Malachi, and Hosea, and two others are used twice. The woodcutter was unexpert, but not timorous, and the rakish appearance his rapid handling sometimes conveys is rather pleasing. Lignamine printed also another book, the *Herbarium* of Apuleius Barbarus, with numerous botanical cuts of no great interest, and the same description may be applied to a *Cheiromantia* printed by Riessinger. In the last decade of the century, book-illustration was taken up again at Rome by the popular printers, Silber and Planck, but during the eighties it does not seem to have flourished.

So far all the attempts at illustration we have noticed have been by woodcuts. In Florence, however, where the art of wood-engraving was afterwards practised so successfully, the earliest experiments in book-illustration were made on copper. The first of these are found in a devotional treatise, Bettini's *Monte Santo di Dio*, printed in 1477 by Nicolaus Lorenz, of Breslau. In this there are three plates, the first of which has for its subject the Holy Mountain, from which the book takes its name. A ladder, whose rungs are inscribed with the names of the theological virtues, leads up to it, and beside it stands a youth, hesitating whether to climb or not, while the devil is snaring one of his feet in a noose. In the second plate (which forms the frontispiece to this paper), Christ is represented surrounded by a "mandorla," or almond-shaped halo, formed by the heads of not very graceful cherubs. The last plate, the smallest and least successful of the three, is an unimaginative picture of the torments of hell. On the whole, both in design and technique, the second plate is the finest, the figure of Christ being dignified and the engraving fairly sharp. In the plate of the Monte Santo it is woolly, and the design, though pleasing enough, lacks distinction. Four years later, in 1481, the *Monte Santo* was followed by an ambitious edition of the *Divina Commedia*, swollen, by the ponderous commentary of Landino, into a large folio volume. Engravings were executed to illustrate the first eighteen cantos of the *Inferno*, blank spaces being left for them, and the sheets at first being passed through the press a second time

to receive the impression of the plates. In some copies, however, no engravings have been inserted, in others only two, while a complete set of all the eighteen is extremely rare. It is evident that the printer was dissatisfied with his experiment after printing the first few sheets, and quickly abandoned it. Dr. Lippman conjectures that the difficulties of the double impression may have been the cause of the change of plan, and his theory is supported by the fact that only the first two plates are usually found printed with the text, the later ones being pasted into their places.

It was known that Sandro Botticelli had executed a series of designs in illustration of the *Divina Commedia*, and a passage in Vasari tells us that a Florentine engraver, one Baccio Baldini, always worked after the designs of Botticelli. On this rather slender foundation it has been customary to assert that the engravings in the *Dante* of 1481 were executed by Baldini in imitation of Botticelli, and the same attribution has been extended to the three plates in the *Monte Santo di Dio* of 1477. The discovery of Botticelli's real designs for the *Divina Commedia*, in the splendid manuscript formerly in the possession of the Duke of Hamilton, now in the Print Room at Berlin, shows that the plates in the 1481 edition are at best rather unintelligent versions of excerpts from Botticelli's designs, and the identification of the engraver with Baldini is merely conjectural. That Baldini in his engravings always imitated Botticelli does not enable us to assign every plate in which Botticelli is imitated to this engraver. In the Vicomte Delaborde's *La Gravure en Italie avant Marc Antoine* he gives reproductions from two series of engravings, one illustrating the astrological influence attributed to the planets, the other a splendid set of designs for playing cards. Both of these show the influence of Botticelli, both are attributed by the Vicomte Delaborde to Baldini. Even allowing for the poor results likely to follow from the printing of engravings on unsuitable paper and by ordinary pressmen, the plates in the *Dante* seem to me so inferior that they can hardly be by the same artist, and as our knowledge of Baldini is confined to what Vasari tells us of him, the use of his name in this case seems superfluous.

The only other early book in which copper-plates are known to have been used in Italy, except for maps, is the *Summula di pacifica*

Conscientia of Fra Pacifico di Novara, printed in 1479, at Milan, by G. Brebia and P. de Lavagnia. This contains three plates, two of them diagrams illustrating the prohibited degrees of consanguinity, while the third and (presumably) most ambitious represents the virtues of the Madonna. This last I have not seen, for the British Museum copy lacks this particular plate: an

unlucky accident which makes me record in a chastened spirit Dr. Lippmann's error in speaking of the copy at the Ambrosiana as unique. One other early Milanese book contains an illustration, the woodcut portrait (here shown) of Paulus Attavanti, of Florence, which is prefixed to an addition of his *Breviarium totius juris canonici*, printed by Leonard Pachel and Ulrich Scinzen-celler in 1479. The cut is a delicate one, but if its authenticity is to pass unchallenged, it must have been copied from a much earlier sketch, for, according to the *Bibliographie Universelle*, Attavanti was in his eightieth year when he died in 1495, and must therefore, in 1479, have been already sixty-four, about twice the age assigned to him in his portrait.

In the same year as the Milan *Breviarium*, Johann Numeister, a very wandering printer, produced an edition of the *Meditationes* of Turrecremata which, though duly dated 1479, does not contain any note as to the place of imprint. Numeister had printed at Foligno from 1470 to 1472, but after this we lose sight of him for some years. He was a native of Mentz, and in the colophon to this book



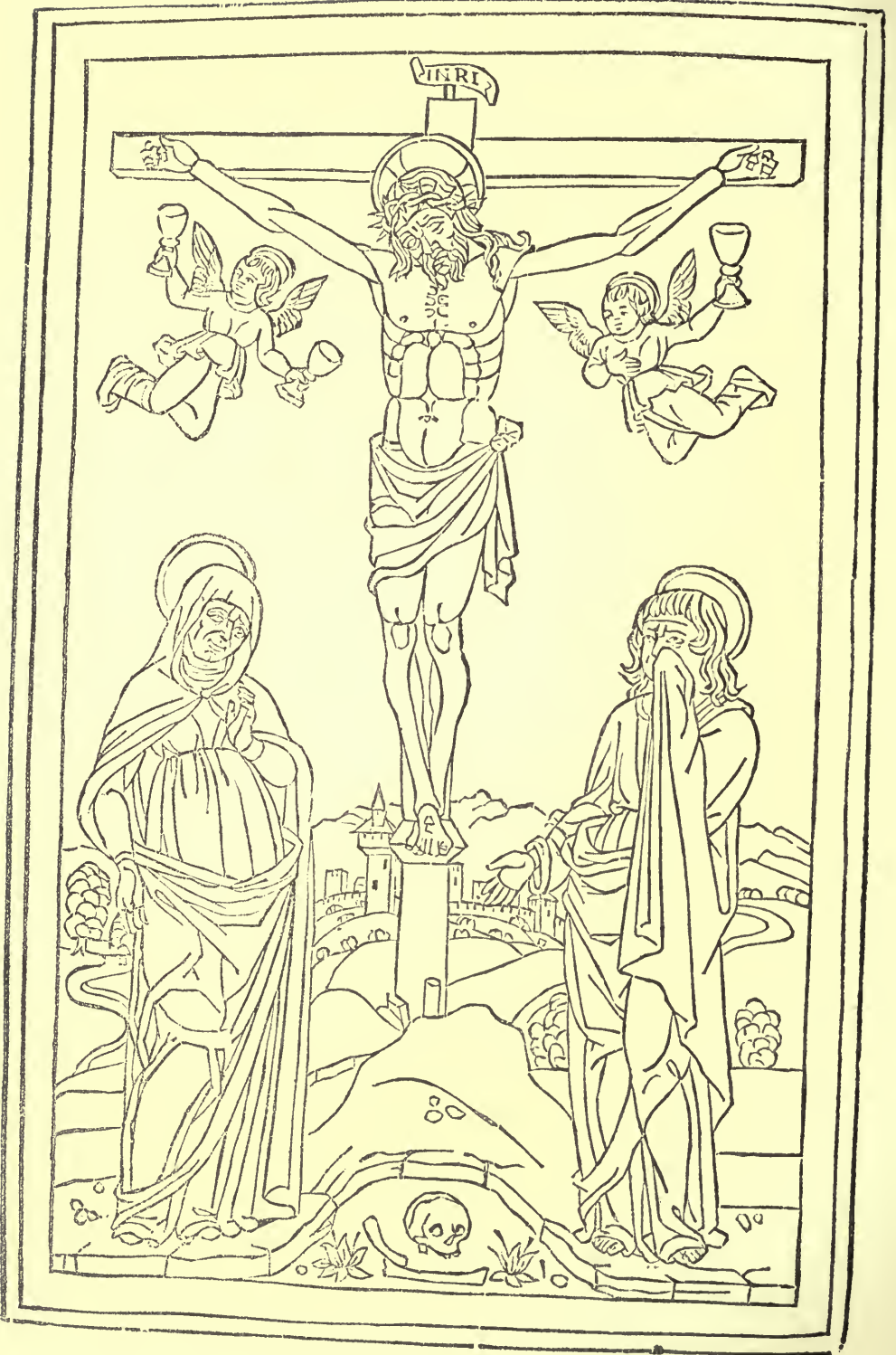
Portrait of the Author from Attavanti's *BREVIARIUM*
Milan, 1479.

calls himself "clericus maguntinus." The type has a superficial likeness to that used in the Mentz Bible of c. 1455; the cuts show another variety of that mixture of Italian and German influences which we have noticed in the Naples *Æsop*. It is thus impossible to say with any certainty where the book was printed.

The same year, 1479, witnessed the production at Venice, by Georg Walch, of an edition of the *Fasciculus Temporum*, a popular manual of chronology, with cuts modelled on those of the German editions, most of which were printed at Cologne. This was imitated the next year by Erhard Ratdolt, whose edition was reprinted, with variations in the cuts, in 1481, '83, '84, and '85. Neither edition is of much interest; the cuts, with the exception of the two little rude representations of Venice, being quite unoriginal. In 1482, Ratdolt printed the *Poeticon Astronomicum* of Hyginus, with a considerable number of cuts of Mars, Venus, Orion, etc., represented with their mythological attributes. Some of these figures bear a distant resemblance to those in the Florentine series of engravings of the planets, of which we have just spoken—an argument, to be taken for what it is worth, of their Italian origin. But in their firm yet clumsy outline, and the pleasing quaintness, often bordering on the grotesque, the cuts are far more characteristic of Augsburg than of Venice, and though they were immensely successful, enjoying a long career in Germany and being copied also in Italy, we need not stop to examine them closely. Interesting as Erhard Ratdolt's work during his ten years' residence at Venice must always be, it is clear that his endeavours to decorate his books both with ornaments and illustrations met with little appreciation. During the later years of his stay, with the exception of the Gran Missal of 1486, he made no more experiments in this direction, and his example provoked no imitators; even Renner of Hailbrun, who pirated some of his books, not troubling to imitate the borders for which they are now chiefly valued.

In noticing the early books with woodcuts printed at Naples, I omitted to mention an unpretentious edition of the *Musices Theoria* of Francesco Gafori, issued in 1480 by Francesco di Dino, and containing a rough woodcut illustrating the supposed origin of music by the figures of five blacksmiths working at an anvil, their hammers

being labelled with the notes they were supposed to strike. In an edition of the *Clementine Constitutions*, printed by Bernardinus Carnerius, and his son, Augustinus, at Ferrara, in 1479, there is a rather delicate little cut of the Pope and two cardinals. These complete the list of early Italian illustrated books with which I am acquainted. The older bibliographers so rarely gave any indications of the presence of woodcuts in the books they catalogued that it is probable that there are a few more, which at present I have not heard of, but my list is complete enough to give an adequate idea of the extent to which cuts were used in the golden age of printing in Italy, and I am afraid it may have wearied those of my readers whose interest is purely in art and does not extend to books. Of recent years early illustrated books have risen so greatly in value and esteem, that it seemed worth while to examine individually this little handful of the earliest Italian examples. But they are certainly more interesting to bookmen (who almost uniformly overpraise the cuts) than to students of art. There are no traces of any schools of woodcutting having come into existence, such as were flourishing during this period in Germany at Augsburg and Ulm, and rising up in Holland. Ratdolt worked with consistency at Venice, and perhaps Riessinger and Tuppo at Naples had some dim ideal of book-illustration which they were unable to realise; the books of the other printers seem to have owed their existence to a series of accidents. Clearly a market for illustrated books had not yet been found, and the printers of those days had little reason to anticipate the great increase, both in individuality and popularity, which book-illustration was soon to receive.



From the MISSALE ROMANUM, 1484.

CHAPTER III

VENICE, 1482-1500

As we have already noted, Erhard Ratdolt's illustrated books must be regarded as standing apart from the development of the art of wood-engraving in Venice, while the stamping of borders and initials as a guide to the illuminator, to which we alluded on p. 9, is only found in books printed during the years 1469-72. The beginning of a native school of wood-engravers at Venice must, therefore, be dated from the Missals printed by Octavianus Scotus in 1482, containing woodcuts of the Crucifixion, preceding the Canon of the Mass. In his review of the Duc de Rivoli's monograph, Dr. Kristeller mentions three of these 1482 Missals, and a copy of one of them is in the British Museum (3366. e. 9.), though the cut is so thickly coloured that it is not easy to trace its outlines. In 1484 Nicolaus de Frankfordia printed a small octavo Missal for the use of the Dominicans. In the Museum copy of this, the cut of the Crucifixion is uncoloured, allowing us to see how small a command the graver had as yet obtained over his knife. In the same year another firm of printers, G. de Rivabenis and P. de Paganinis produced a folio Missal with a full-page cut, here reproduced. The execution is rude and clumsy, so that the sorrow and anguish which the designer endeavoured to depict have degenerated into grimace. Despite this clumsiness, the cut retains a certain breadth and nobility which compel our admiration. It would be interesting to compare with it the woodcut of the same subject printed two years later by Erhard Ratdolt in his *Gran Missal*. Unfortunately the only four copies of this book known to be extant are all in Hungary, and therefore unavailable for comparison.

In the same year as the Gran Missal appeared an edition, from the press of Bernardino de Benaliis, of the *Supplementum Chronicorum* of Giovanni Philippo Foresti of Bergamo. This, as its title denotes, was a compendium of history, rather fuller than the *Fasciculus Temporum*, but illustrated in much the same way with numerous cuts of cities, in this edition drawn mainly out of the artist's head. At the beginning of the book, however, are three larger cuts, representing the Creation, the Fall, and the Sacrifices of Cain and Abel, all of them copied from the corresponding illustrations in a large Bible printed by Heinrich Quentel at Cologne, about 1480.

In 1487 we know of two Venetian books with woodcuts: the one an edition printed by Ieronimo de Santis, of the *Devote Meditationi sopra la passione del Nostro Signore*, attributed to St. Bonaventura, with eleven coarsely executed cuts; the other an *Æsop*, printed by Bernardino de Benaliis, with sixty-one woodcuts copied from those in the Veronese edition of 1479. Both these books only survive in unique copies, that of the *Meditationi* being at the Biblioteca Casanatense in Rome, where it has been examined by Dr. Kristeller; that of the *Æsop* at Berlin, under the charge of Dr. Lippman, who describes the edition as a "genuine chap-book," the style of the cuts being "cramped and angular," a description fully borne out by the example he reproduces.

In 1488 a step forward was taken by the issue by Bernardino de Novara of the first illustrated edition of the *Trionfi* of Petrarch. Swollen by commentaries of Lapino, and the addition of the *Sonetti*, the *Trionfi*, though not in themselves very long, make a folio volume of some size, and the illustrator thus had plenty of room at his disposal, each of the six woodcuts measuring ten inches by six. The subjects also which had to be illustrated lent themselves easily to pictorial and decorative treatment, while the ground-plan for each of them was suggested by the poems themselves. The six books of the *Trionfi* describe respectively the triumphs of Love, of Chastity, Death, Fame, and Time, and of the true Divinity. The central feature in each picture is thus a triumphal car on which the conqueror is riding, attended by votaries, or, as in the case of Death, trampling on the prostrate bodies of his victims. Subjects like these could

hardly fail to incite both artist and engraver to do their best, but the result of their joint labours is certainly disappointing. That the fault did not rest with the designer must be at once conceded, for the arrangement and grouping of several of the pictures is excellent, that of Fame, who is represented blowing an enormous trumpet, being perhaps the best, while the Triumph of Death is certainly the weakest. But the woodcutters were as yet only 'prentice hands, and incapable of doing justice to the drawings they had to reproduce. Except for clearing out large blank spaces, the only tool in use throughout the whole of this period was the knife, and this necessitated working on soft wood and on planks cut with the grain, instead of, as now, on box-wood sawn through the tree. There was thus a constant danger of the knife slipping or splintering the wood, and the wonder is, not that for some years the work of the cutters was so cramped and angular, but that they were ever able to attain to the firm and delicate outlines, and the beautifully rounded contours at which we shall soon have to look. In the 1488 *Petrarch* this mastery is not yet exhibited, and the angularity of the lines, especially marked in the treatment of the eyes, spoils the design.

We shall not be seriously departing from chronological sequence if we look at once at the next edition of the *Trionfi*, printed by Piero Veronese in 1490-91, and reissued two years later. For this edition new designs had been made—imitated from a series of Florentine engravings on copper, now in the Print Room at the British Museum. As rendered upon wood they are very unsatisfactory. The engraver had, it is true, a much better command of his knife than his predecessor of 1488; but his work is flat and colourless, and spoilt by unintelligent shading, so that its general effect is dull and unpleasing. The designs themselves are much more crowded than those of 1488, and several differences of treatment may be marked. Thus, in the Triumph of Love, the car is being driven straight past the spectator, instead of curving round towards him. In the Triumph of Fame, the vigorous trumpet-blower is replaced by a small figure, at first calling to mind the conventional representation of Justice, seated in a mirror, and the numerous attendants are all mounted. In the Triumph of Divinity, the artist of 1488 had shown the car of the false gods being shattered to

pieces by a vision from heaven. In 1490 the car of the false gods disappears, and we have a kind of altar, surmounted by a representation of the Trinity, which is being drawn along by saints and apostles.

Returning now to 1488, we find J. L. Santritter de Hailbronn issuing in that year an edition of the *Sphæra Mundi* of Sacro Bosco, with a full-page cut on the back of the first leaf, in which we reach our first characteristic example of Venetian work. As such, the woodcut is here reproduced, and we need only note that the crown on Ptolemy's head owes its place there to the erroneous belief that the astronomer was one of the kings of Egypt. The *Sphæra Mundi* contains numerous astronomical diagrams, some of them imitated from Ratdolt's editions, a little cut of a ship and a castle and numerous initials. It was reprinted in 1490 by Octavianus Scotus, and again in 1491 by Gulielmus de Tridino, the cuts and diagrams apparently passing from printer to printer.

Two other books with woodcuts are so closely allied in style to the one here shown that we can hardly avoid grouping them together. The first of these is the *Dialogo della Seraphica Virgine Santa Catherina de Siena de la Divina Providentia*, printed by Mathio di Codeca for Lucantonio Giunta with the date "mccccxxxiiii adi xvii de mazo." In some copies a ten and a one have been omitted, the day and the month remaining the same, and the Duc de Rivoli therefore enters the book under the year 1483. The dropping of a single numeral in dates is common enough, and though I cannot call to mind any other instance of the disappearance of two figures, it is better to suppose that this has happened than to imagine that Codeca printed for Giunta two otherwise identical editions, at an interval of eleven years to a day, with the further difficulty of having to account for no other woodcuts of equal excellence, or of a similar style, appearing at Venice for at least five years. The cut itself is reproduced by the Duc de Rivoli, and shows St. Catharine seated, and holding in each hand a book which she is presenting to two kneeling votareesses, identified with Isabella of Aragon and Beatrice d'Este. Over the saint's head a crown is held by "le bon Dieu," while a male and female saint are hovering in the air. This

picture occurs on the back of the title-page; the first page of the text of the *Dialogo* is ornamented by a dainty border running along



Frontispiece of the *SPHÆRA MUNDI*, 1488.

the inner margins, and by a smaller cut representing St. Catharine dictating to three scribes. Towards the end of the book there is

another full-page cut, in which the saint is kneeling before an altar in a chapel, through a window in which is shown a little landscape. This has been reproduced by the Vicomte Delaborde on p. 249 of his *La Gravure en Italie avant Marc Antoine*.

The third book illustrated in this style, with which I am acquainted, is a Missal printed in 1497 by Joannes Emericus de Spira, but of which earlier editions probably exist. This contains a full-page woodcut of Christ on the Cross, and both in design and execution is of great beauty.

In 1489 there was printed an edition of the *Postilla*, or sermons, of Nicolaus de Lyra, with thirty-eight small vignettes of biblical subjects, which I am unlucky enough not to have seen. They are described by Dr. Lippmann as apparently by the same artists as the contemporaneous cuts in the *Meditazioni* attributed to St. Bonaventura, at which we must now look. As we have seen, the *Meditazioni* had been already printed with woodcuts in 1487. The new edition was issued by Matteo di Codeca, and is dated February 27, 1489. As the Venetian calendar reckoned from the 1st of March, the book was really published in 1490, a fact worth noting, because the number of illustrated books issued in that year makes it almost as important a date in the annals of the Venetian press as we shall see that it is in that of Florence. Matteo di Codeca reprinted the *Meditazioni* no less than six times during the next five years, and in conjunction with B. de Benaliis published also an undated edition, probably in 1491, in which the pictures were recut on a slightly larger scale. The little book continued popular, and was issued subsequently by other printers, e.g., by Gregorio di Rusconi in 1508. Some editions have eleven, others fourteen cuts, illustrating our Lord's Passion, from the raising of Lazarus to the Ascension. They are full of life and vigour, and not without tenderness, and the woodcutter's interpretation of them is adequate on the whole, though the representation of eyes remained a difficulty.

Of another book with an illustration, assigned to 1489, the real year is not quite easy to fix. This is an edition of the *De Civitate Dei* of Augustine, printed by Octavianus Scotus, "Duodecimo Kalendas Martias," 1489, the classical form in which the date is given suggesting

that the printer may have reckoned his year from January 1st. The solitary cut appears on the back of the title-page, and, though it does not fill the whole of the folio page, is of considerable size, measuring six inches by seven and a half. In the upper part of the cut St. Augustine is shown writing at a desk, uncomfortably attired in his full episcopal robes. In the lower half are battlements representing the cities of heaven and hell, and in the two corners Abel and Cain are seated, the one with his shepherd's crook and sheep, the other with some kind of mattock, as further representatives of the opposition of good and evil. The cutting is rather flat, but as the picture is not overcrowded the general effect is pleasing enough.

Of the illustrated books bearing in their colophons the date 1490, the edition of Malermi's Italian translation of the Bible is generally regarded as the most important. It was printed by Giovanni Ragazzo, at the expense of Lucantonio Giunta, and is profusely illustrated, according to Dr. Lippmann, with no less than three hundred and eighty-three* vignettes, though these include some repetitions. The Cologne Bible of 1480 was still regarded as a masterpiece of biblical illustration, and it is thus not surprising to find that most of its hundred and ten cuts furnished suggestions for the pictures in the Italian version, though the new artist not only reduced their size, but freely altered their designs. Nineteen other cuts are said to have been adapted in a similar manner from the *Postilla* of Nicolaus de Lyra of 1489. A large number, however, of the designs appear to have been especially made for the Bible, and small as they are, measuring 3 inches by 1 $\frac{3}{4}$, they exhibit a freedom and grace which prove that the artist to whom we are indebted for them was one of no small ability.

Who this artist was we do not know, and as this ignorance applies generally to the designers of all the illustrations in early Italian books, it may seem superfluous to draw attention to it in this particular instance. But in the woodcuts in the Malermi Bible we meet for the first time the little minuscule, *b*, which occurs also, sometimes in conjunction with other letters and in at least two different forms, in the two *Dantes* of 1491, the *Vite dei Santi Padri* (in conjunction with

* The Duc de Rivoli gives the numbers as 205 for the Old Testament and 175 for the New, or 380 in all.

i or *j*), the *Boccaccio* and *Masuccio* of 1492, the *Epistole ed Evangelii* of 1495, the *Terence* of 1497, and the *Hypnerotomachia* of 1499. In the Italian *Livy* of 1493 many of the cuts bear a very conspicuous **F**, others the *b*. In the reissue of the Malermi Bible in 1492, we find the same two letters. In the *Metamorphoses* of 1497 some of the cuts have an *ia*, others **N**. Attention was first called to these signatures, if signatures they are, in connection with the fine woodcuts in the *Hypnerotomachia*, where the large minuscule *b* was variously interpreted as standing for Botticelli or Bellini. Neither theory now meets with any favour, and in his *Art of Wood Engraving in Italy*, Dr. Lippmann starts a new claimant in the person of Jacopo de' Barbari, otherwise Jacob Walch, who is mentioned by Dürer, and was summoned to Nuremberg by the Emperor Maximilian in or before 1500. I cannot myself discover from Dr. Lippmann's arguments that the Barbari theory rests on any sounder basis than the discredited ascriptions to Botticelli and Bellini. It is true, to quote a happy line from Beddoes, that like "Britons, bores, and buttered toast, they all begins with **B**;" but I cannot myself trace any real similarity of style between the early vignettes of the Bible and the *Dantes*, and the much more mannered drawings of the *Hypnerotomachia*; and when Dr. Lippmann proceeds (with much better reason) to claim for the same artist an enormous wood-engraving of Venice, in a totally different style, the net result appears to be that counsel is greatly darkened. I cannot myself believe that the initials stand for any artist or for any single engraver; the most probable theory is that which attributes them to the different *ateliers* of wood-engraving in which the little blocks were executed.

In the same year as the Malermi Bible, Bernardino de Novara issued a new edition of the *Supplementum Chronicorum*, first illustrated in 1486. In this reprint the fancy pictures of several of the more notable cities, notably Rome and Florence, were replaced by much more correct views. Dr. Lippmann argues from certain resemblances of arrangement, that the cut of Florence must have been imitated from a large single print of this city now in the Print Room at Berlin, the engraving of which he dates before 1489, on the ground that the site of the Palazzo Strozzi, begun in that year, is still occupied

by other houses. Beyond the fact that both pictures view the city from the same point, the resemblance between them is not very distinct, nor can I conceive it possible that the large engraving, which is totally unlike in style to any early Florentine work we know, was cut in that city before 1489. Dr. Lippmann himself is obliged to allow that his unique example "seems to have been worked at a more recent date than the [hypothetical] original issue," but the difficulty as to the Palazzo Strozzi would be easily accounted for by supposing that a sixteenth-century engraver was copying an earlier drawing, without supposing the existence before 1489 of a Florentine woodcut measuring 585 millimètres in height and 1315 in length.

Two books printed by Johann Herzog in 1490 deserve a word of notice. In the first, a treatise *De Heredibus*, by Johannes Crispus de Montibus, there is a genealogical tree growing out of a recumbent human figure vigorously cut (reproduced by Dr. Lippmann, p. 69). The figure is printed in brown ink, the leaves of the tree in green, the inscriptions in red. Printing in different-coloured inks had been used by Ratdolt in his astronomical works, but this is the first example of its application to more pictorial subjects. Herzog's second book is an *Officium B. V. Mariæ* or *Horæ*, with six full-page cuts and many small vignettes. No perfect copy of this is known, and the earliest edition with which I am acquainted is that of 1493, in which the cuts are five in number: scenes from the life of Our Lady, and one picture of David playing, not on a harp, but on a violin approaching in size to a 'cello. The Museum copy of this edition is heavily coloured, but the designs appear to be graceful, especially those of the small vignettes. Each page is also surrounded by a dainty border, imitating, though with characteristic differences, the much better-known *Horæ* printed about this time in France.

We have already noticed the unhappy 1490 edition of Petrarch's *Trionfi*, and only one other book printed in this year need detain us. In this, its first illustrated edition, it possesses but a single cut, which is placed on its title-page, but the grace of this is so exquisite that it deserves the very highest rank among Venetian illustrated books. The reader, as he looks at our reproduction of

it, will doubtless at once identify the friar walking in the garden with St. Francis of Assisi, and it would be a pleasure to confirm this natural opinion. Unhappily, in the fifteenth century, saints were not allowed to walk about, even in their convent garden, without their halo (in the 1494 *Legenda Sanctorum* a pope is being cruelly birched, but he still wears his tiara!), and it is generally agreed that some other original must be found for the portrait. The authorship of the *Fior di Virtù* is not certainly known, but among the writers to whom it has been attributed, Fra Cherubino da Spoleto seems to have slightly the best claim, and as he is the only Franciscan among the suggested authors, there can be no doubt that Signor Castellani is right in identifying him with the friar in the garden. A confirmation of this view, which I do not remember to have seen mentioned, is found in the occurrence, a few years later, of a very inferior copy of this cut in one of Fra Cherubino's undoubted works. The *Fior di Virtù* was often reprinted, and in the 1492, 1493, and subsequent Venetian editions, it was further illustrated by thirty-six tiny vignettes of the stories of birds and beasts, from which its morals were drawn. In the Florentine editions, at which we shall look in our next chapter, to each of these was annexed a picture of some human instance, and as far as the vignettes are concerned, the Florentine editions easily bear away the palm. On the other hand the title-cut offers an almost unique instance of Venetian work suffering greatly by transference into the Florentine style, a disaster to which the tawdry border by which it is surrounded helps not a little.

Passing at length to the year 1491, our attention is first arrested by the appearance of two illustrated editions of Dante's *Divina Commedia*, with the bulky commentary of Landino. The first of these was published on March 3rd by Bernardino Benali and Matheo Codeca; the second on November 18th by Piero Cremonese. Both publishers went for their vignette cuts to the engravers who used the initial b, and the two sets of cuts, both of them poor, are closely similar in design, the later edition having the advantage in the little pictures being larger and better executed. Two conventions of the day were mainly responsible for the artist's failure in these designs. In the first place it was customary

Q VESTA SIE VNA VTISSIMA OPERETTA ACADA/
VNO FIDEL CHRI STIANO CHIAMATA
FIOR DE VIR TV LAVS DEO

DIO



PADRE



Title-page of the FIOR DI VIRTU, 1493 (1490).

to indicate the motion of travelling by showing the travellers in different positions in the same picture. Not only thus do Dante and his Guide appear in every cut, but in almost every cut they appear twice, and, in many, three times. Fortunately they are very dignified little figures, so that the monotony is more easily forgiven, but by the second artistic convention dignity is sadly sacrificed. For the *Divina Commedia* is concerned entirely with souls, and in these days a soul was distinguished by



Dante and Pope Adrian. From P. Cremonese's DANTE,
November, 1491.

the absence, not of its body, but of its clothes. The perpetual recurrence of these little naked figures, mostly bald (though Dante seized one of them by his hair) is merely annoying and quite destructive of the dignity of the design. The cut here chosen is from the nineteenth canto of the *Purgatorio*, where Dante talks with the avaricious Pope Adrian (who, of course, retains his tiara), and is a typical example of the less distressing kind. The larger illustration forms the frontispiece by which Codeca's edition partly atones for the inferiority of its vignettes to those of Cremonese's. In the original it is surrounded by the same border which

is shown in the reproduction facing p. 46, from Codeca's *Petrarch*. Next to the Dantes, the most important illustrated book of 1491 is the *Vite de'*



Frontispiece to Coeeca's DANTE. March, 1491.

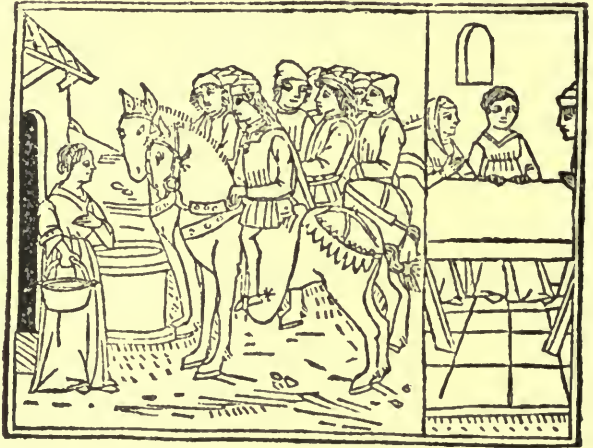
Santi Padri, printed by Giovanni Ragazzo for Lucantonio Giunta. This, in addition to a frontispiece, made up of small pictures of saints within

a border, has no less than 388 vignettes (including some repetitions), some of them signed b, others b., others i or j. As Giunta had been the publisher of the Malermi Bible, it is not surprising to learn that some of the cuts signed b are taken from that work. Altogether the *Vite* command attention rather from their bulk and the number of the illustrations than from their artistic importance. In another 1491 book, the *Legenda delle Santa Martha e Magdalena*, we find Codeca imitating Giunta's economy, many of the cuts in this being taken from his editions of the *Meditationi* of S. Bonaventura. In this year were also published, by the brothers De Gregoriis, the *Fasciculus Medicinæ* of Joannes Ketham, which in this edition only possesses some cuts of horrid-looking surgical instruments and anatomical figures, and by Giovanni Ragazzo a *Plutarch* with a border to its first page of text, and a single woodcut (reproduced by Dr. Lippmann, p. 95). The maidens patiently awaiting the result of the combat which Theseus is here represented as waging within circular lists with a creature half man, half horse, justify the common description of it as "Theseus and the Minotaur." The Minotaur was properly half man, half bull, and the artist appears to have confused this conflict with that which the same hero carried on against the Centaurs. The picture, repeated in the edition of 1495, is a fine one, the figure of Theseus, as sword in hand he averts the Centaur's club and grasps at his long hair, being especially good.

In 1492 the illustrators were no less active than in the two preceding years. Giunta brought out a new edition of his Bible, and combined with Codeca in a re-issue of that printer's *Meditationi*. He also employed Zoan Roso da Vercegli to print a *Vita de la preciosa Vergene Maria* in quarto, with a charming border, which, save for the substitution of the figure of a scribe for one of Christ in the centre-piece, was repeated in the *Trabisonda istoriata*, printed by Christof Pensa de Mandel, in the same year. Within this border in the *Vita* is a large vignette of Joachim dividing a sheep into three shares, one for the priest, one for a beggar, and one for himself. The text is illustrated by a large number of little cuts, some of them from the Malermi Bible; others, according to the Duc de Rivoli, from the series afterwards found in the Livy of 1493.

Giunta's previous record entitled his books to priority of notice, but the chief illustrated editions of this year came from other firms. The brothers Joannes and Gregorius de Gregoriis especially distinguished themselves by the publication of the *Decamerone* of Boccaccio and *Novellino* of Masuccio. Of the former we give reproductions of the first page of text, of the double cut which heads the tales of each of the ten days,* and of the little vignette to the story of Griselda, in which the

Marquis is shown surprising his too patient wife as she fetches water from the well, and in conference with her and her mother over the terms of the marriage contract. The delicate grace of all these pictures, and of the fine border to the frontispiece, speaks for itself. Of the vignettes, there are one hundred in all, one to each tale, that



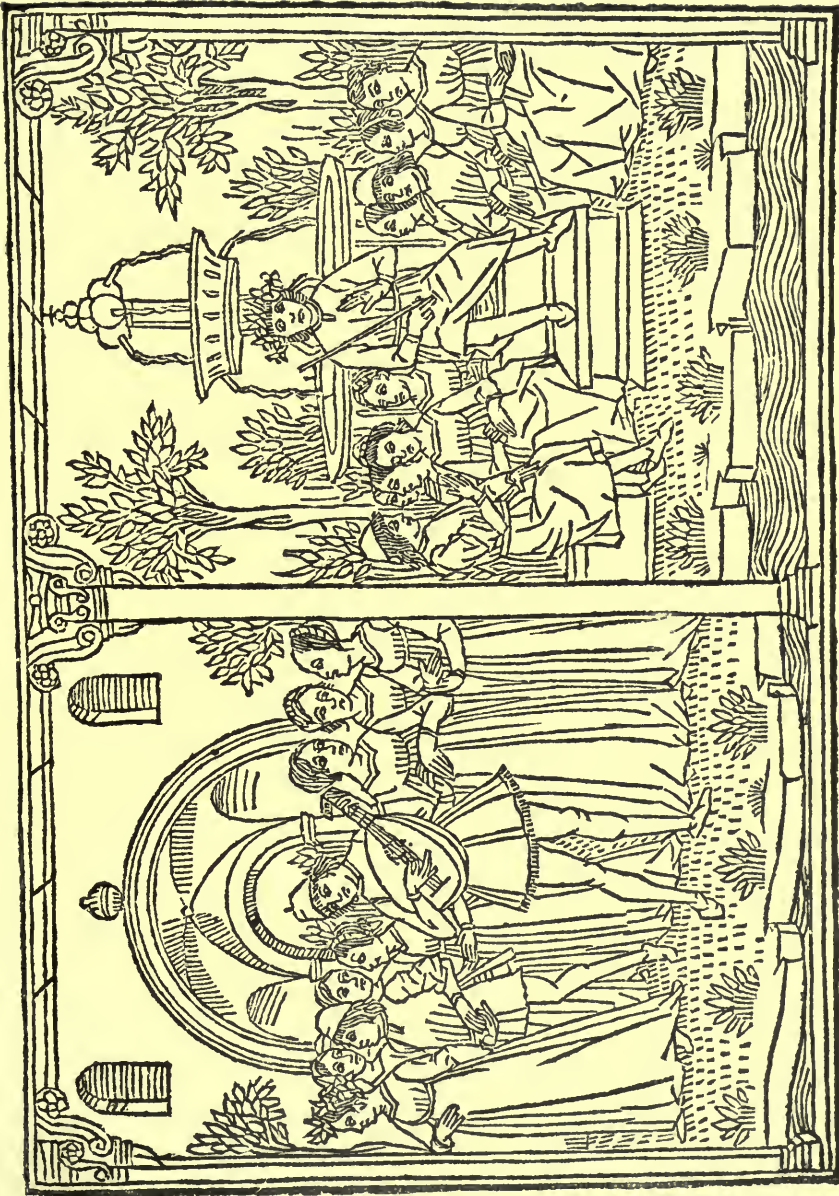
Griselda surprised by the Marquis.
From the *DECAMERONE* of 1492.

of Griselda being, perhaps, a rather favourable example. Of the *Novellino* of Masuccio I know only the 1510 reprint by Zani da Portese, in which both the large cut of the author presenting his book to the Duchess of Hippolyta of Calabria, and most, if not all, of the fifty-five vignettes, have been re-cut. As Zani issued a *Decamerone* in the same year, in which the illustrations had been similarly treated, it is so much the easier to reconstruct the original *Novellino* in our imaginations. Along with these two books in 1510, Zani printed also the *Settanta Novelle* of Sabadino degli Arienti, of which Dr. Lippmann records his issuing an edition seven years earlier, in 1503. The cuts in all three books are so closely

* In the Bodleian copy, and one recorded by the Duc de Rivoli, three of the days are headed by a different and less effective double cut.



UMANA COSA ELHAVER COMPASSIONE
A GLI AFFLITTI. e come che a ciaschuna psona stia
 bene a choloro massimamète e richieho liquali già hã
 no di conforto hanuto misterî: & hãnolo trouato in al
 cuno sta liquali se alcuno mai nebbe:ogli fu caro o già
 ne ricenete piacere. Io sono uno di quelli p cio che dal
 la mia prima giouenezza infino a questo tempo :oltra
 modo essendo stato acceso da altissimo & nobile amo
 re forse piu affai chella mia bassa conditione non pare
 be nartandolo io si richiedesse : quantunque doppo
 coloro che discreti erano: & alla cui noticia puèneo ne fussi lodato & da mol
 to piu reputato. Non dimeno mi fu egli di grãdissima fatica a soffrire: certo
 non per crudelta della donna amata: ma per souecchio amore nella mente con
 cepto da pocho regolato appetito ilquale percio a niuno regolato cõuenueo
 le termine mislascia contento stare piu di noia che di bisogno nõ era spesse uol
 te sentite mi faceua. Nella qual noia tanto refrigerio mi porfero li piaceruoli
 ragionamenti dalcuno amico & le delectuole sue cõsolatiõe che io porto ser



Chapter-heading showing the Procession to the Garden and the Narrators. From the DECAMERONE of 1492.

alike that it seems probable that there must have been a still earlier *Settanta Novelle* in which the brothers De Gregoriis may have had a hand as early as 1492.

The remaining book nominally of the year 1492 which we have yet to notice is a new edition of the *Trionfi* of Petrarch, the printing of which, by Codeca, was finished in January 12th, 1492-3, though its publication was delayed in order that the *Sonetti*, finished March 28th, might be issued with it. The illustrations in this are certainly the most successful of the three series designed for the book. The artist takes his ideas from his predecessor of 1490, but by judicious selection reduces the overcrowded pictures of his model into harmonious arrangement, while his designs were interpreted by a fairly competent engraver, whose work, however, compares unfavourably with that in the *Decamerone*.

We have already alluded by anticipation to the Italian *Livy* printed by Zoan Vercellese for Giunta in 1493, with a border slightly altered from that in the Malermi Bible and innumerable vignettes, many of them marked F., some of which had been used before in the *Trabisonda* of the previous year. It is a delightful book, and the copy in the British Museum was doubtless rendered more delightful still in the eyes of its original possessor by most of the cuts having been rather daintily coloured, a process which the severer student of art vigorously condemns. Pretty as they are, however, they show no advance on previous books of the kind, and neither this nor the edition of the *Golden Legend* of Jacobus de Voragine which Giunta published the next year (it was printed for him by Codeca) need detain us.

With the *Voragine* the series of profusely illustrated folios may be regarded as practically closed, though in 1497 Simon de Luere revived them by adding to his *Terence* a number of rather poor vignettes imitated from the larger cuts in the Lyons edition of 1493. But, as we have seen, in the five years from 1490 to 1494, Giunta and the brothers De Gregoriis had illustrated the Bible, the Lives of the Saints and the Fathers, the *Divina Commedia*, the *Decamerone*, the *Novellino* of Masuccio, possibly the *Settanta Novelle* of Sabadino, and the only old-world history in which Italians took an interest, and the



The Triumph of Love. From Petrarch's TRIONFI, 1492-3.

series came to an end for lack of fresh worlds to conquer. It is possible that the invasion of Italy by Charles VIII. contributed a little to this result, for, if we may take the books chronicled by Panzer as representative, the Venetian book-trade in 1495 fell off by about a seventh in that year. But there had evidently been a keen competition between the rival firms up to that date, and it is reasonable to suppose that they would in any case have preferred to rest content with re-issues of old works rather than to extend the same method of illustration to less popular ones. As regards the artistic value of the vignette series it is not easy to speak judicially. It may fairly be said that the effect of the multitude of little pictures is cumulative, and that no single example of them quite justifies the praises bestowed on them, or explains the charm they exercise. Dr. Lippmann is unkind enough to suggest that they were "intended simply as landmarks for the reader, to guide him in the search for special lines or passages." No doubt they served this purpose, but I cannot think it was their final cause. If we could have been in a Venetian bookshop when the bookseller was tempting a hesitating purchaser, I think we should have heard him expatiating on their gaiety and prettiness rather than on their utility as an index, and it is this gaiety and prettiness which makes them so much beloved by the bookmen of the present day.

In order to finish with the vignettes we have anticipated a little, and must now go back to 1493, to look at the new edition of the *Fasciculus Medicinæ*, this time in Italian, which the brothers De Gregoriis brought out in that year. This has four new full-page cuts representing respectively a physician lecturing from his rostrum; a consultation of physicians (here shown); a dissection, with a physician lecturing on it to his students, and a plague-stricken patient, his pulse being felt by a doctor, who smells his pouncet to avoid infection, while two pages hold flambeaux, nurses attend to the sick man's wants, and a cat sits serene and unconcerned on the tessellated pavement. Each cut measures no less than $7\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and the effect sought and obtained is of a larger and more pictorial kind than in any of the woodcuts at which we have hitherto looked. Translated into oils the pictures would have

been extremely striking; they are striking regarded as single cuts; as illustrations to a thin, rather closely printed folio, they are almost a mistake, though a very interesting one.* Nevertheless, they were a success, for the book was reprinted with them in 1495 (when poor puss was cut out of her picture) and again in 1500. It is notable as showing the really popular nature of this work that the cuts were sometimes printed very roughly in colours. The Latin *Herodotus*, printed by the brothers De Gregoriis in 1494, demands passing attention for its fine (though rather over-praised) border in white relief on a black ground. On the upper portion of this is a charming figure of a faun; in the lower a very finished little cut, introducing a turret-crowned lady, identified with Clio, though she should be Cybele, and some auditors in strange attitudes which have defied explanation. Within the border is a rather uncouth Herodotus whom Apollo is crowning as he sits at his table. With a different cut the same border was repeated by the De Gregoriis in their edition of St. Jerome's Epistles of 1497.

While these large books were being issued for well-to-do purchasers, the wants of humbler readers had been provided for by a stream of small quartos which it is impossible to record individually. An edition of *Æsop*, imitated from that of Verona, 1479, went through numerous editions; so did the *Fior di Virtù*, and the *Meditationi* at which we have already looked, and an *Epistole ed Evangelii*, first issued in 1475, with numerous, but feeble, little pictures. Two charming outline cuts (the one representing St. John Baptist and St. Peter upholding an emblem of the Trinity; the other St. John the Evangelist and St. Francis supporting one of the B. Virgin) appear at the beginning of at least five little books, of which one, the *Doctrina della Vita Monastica* of Lorenzo Giustiniano is further enriched by a very pictorial cut of a preacher preceded by a little crucifer, which Dr. Lippmann thinks was imitated from a picture painted by Gentile Bellini in 1466 for the Church of St. Maria del Orto. In a little four-page flysheet commemorating the *Legā facta novamente a morte e destructione de li Franzosi* in 1495,

* The reduction of a third in our reproduction of the "Consultation" rather improves it as a book illustration.



A Consultation of Physicians. From Ketham's FASCICULUS MEDICINÆ, 1493.



Handwritten text at the bottom of the page, likely a title or description of the drawing above. The text is extremely faint and illegible due to the low contrast and fading of the document.

there is a fine picture of the pope blessing a kneeling warrior, conceived somewhat in the style of the *Ketham*. A delightful outline cut of a lecturer and his class is found in the *Speculum finalis retributionis* of Petrus Reginalditus (1498), and again in the *Summula* of Occam, while the *Libro de l'occhio morale* is enriched by one in a similar style of a friar preaching. Single cuts of great interest occur also in the *Epigrammata Cantalycii* of 1493, and the *Fioretti* of St. Francis printed in 1495. Now and again it is possible to class two or three of them together as exhibiting the work of the same artist or engraver; but these humbler books have suffered far more severely from the ravages of time than the large folios: many have doubtless perished utterly, and those that survive are scattered over many libraries and collections, and their study is thus rendered extremely difficult.

The year 1496 was not at all productive of illustrated books, but from the press of Johann Hertzog there issued an edition of the *Epitome* by Johann Müller (Johannes Regiomontanus) of the *Almagest* of Ptolemy. This has a fine frontispiece which it is a pleasure to reproduce—all the more so as the bolder and heavier style of engraving in the figures of the astronomer and his commentator warns us of the change which was soon to come over the art at Venice. The next year Simon de Luere printed the *Terence*, with the poor vignettes we have already mentioned, and two fine full-page pictures, the one representing the comedian lecturing to his future commentators, the other a view of a Roman theatre as seen from the stage.

The same year Giunta came once more to the fore with an edition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, illustrated with fifty-nine finely designed but poorly executed woodcuts, measuring about $5\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and thus much more pretentious than the little vignettes on which Giunta had hitherto relied. Many of these woodcuts are marked *ia*, a signature which Dr. Lippmann, on the score of the absence of any dividing stop, seems fully justified in distinguishing from the *Z. A.* which occurs on so many sixteenth-century woodcuts, and is generally identified with the mark of Zoan Andrea Valvassori. His suggested identification of the *ia* with the

work of a certain Jacob of Strassburg, to whose known woodcuts they bear no visible resemblance, is much less certain.

All the good qualities of the *Ovid* of 1497 are found united with admirable engraving in a much more famous book, the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, printed by Aldus Manutius, in 1499, at the instance of Leonardo Crasso, a jurist of Verona. At the outset of his career, in the Greek and Latin *Hero and Leander* of 1494, Aldus, though the fact is often mercifully forgotten, had already attempted book-illustration. In two little cuts, which face each other and are probably the worst printed at Venice during that decade, we see Leander breasting the waves of the Hellespont while Hero watches him from her tower, and then his corpse thrown on the strand, and Hero precipitating herself on it through an impossibly small window. Aldus did not repeat this misdemeanour in his subsequent books, and it is reasonable to suppose that it is to Leonardo Crasso, rather than to the author of the unlucky experiment of 1494, that we owe the *Hypnerotomachia*.

The author of this book (I quote from my own previous description of it in my *Early Illustrated Books*. Kegan Paul & Co., 1893) was a Dominican friar, named Francesco Colonna, who had been a teacher of rhetoric at Treviso and Padua, and was now spending his old age in the convent of SS. Giovanni e Paolo in Venice, his native city. His authorship is revealed to us in a sentence formed by the initial letters of the successive chapters: "Poliam Frater Franciscus Columna peramavit." Brother Francesco Colonna greatly loved Polia. In the opening chapter this lady tells her nymphs that her real name was Lucretia, and she has been identified with a Lucretia Lelio, daughter of a jurist at Treviso, who entered a convent after having been attacked by the plague which visited Treviso, 1464-66. Polifilo's dream is assigned to May-day, 1467, at Treviso, so that place and date fit in very well.

The lover imagines himself in his dream as passing through a dark wood, till he reaches a little stream by which he rests. The valley through which it runs is filled with fragments of ancient architecture, which form the subject of many illustrations. As he comes to a great gate he is frightened by a dragon. Escaping from this, he meets five nymphs, and is brought to the court of Queen Eleuterylida. Then follows a description of the ornaments of her



Frontispiece of the PTOLEMY, 1496.

palace, and of four magnificent processions, the triumphs of Europe, Leda, and Danaë, and the festival of Bacchus. After this we have a triumph of Vertumnus and Pomona, and a magnificent picture of nymphs and men sacrificing before a terminal figure of the



Polifilo frightened by the Dragon. From the HYPNEROTOMACHIA, 1499.

Garden-God. Meanwhile Polifilo has met the fair Polia, and together they witness some of the ceremonies in the temple of Venus, and view its ornaments and those of the gardens round it. The first book, which is illustrated with 151 cuts, now comes to an end.

Book II. describes how the beautiful Polia, after an attack of the plague, had taken refuge in a temple of Diana; how, while there, she dreamt a terrifying dream of the anger of Cupid, so

that she was moved to let her lover embrace her, and was driven from Diana's temple with sticks; lastly, of how Venus took the lovers under her protection, and at the prayer of Polifilo caused Cupid to pierce an image of Polia with a dart, thereby fixing her



The Meeting of the Lovers. From the HYPNEROTOMACHIA, 1499.

affections on Polifilo as firmly as he could wish. This second book is illustrated with only seventeen cuts, but as these are not interrupted by any wearisome architectural designs, their cumulative effect is far more impressive than those of the first, though many of the pictures in this—notably those of Polifilo in the wood and by the river, the encounter with the dragon, his presentation to Eleuterylida, the scenes of his first meeting with Polia, and some of the incidents of the triumphs, are quite equal to them.



From the HYPNEROTOMACHIA, 1499.

Our reproductions show the incident of Polifilo's encounter with the dragon, from Book I.; the lovers embracing, from Book II.; and the well-known full-page picture of the worship of the "Garden-God," in reproducing which the precedent has been followed which was set in the edition of the cuts issued by the Science and Art Department in 1888.

In 1500 Joannes de Spira printed for Giunta an edition of the Rules of St. Benedict and other monastic orders, with a fine frontispiece representing St. Benedict and St. Scholastica. With this exception we may take the *Hypnerotomachia* as marking the close of the artistic period of book-illustration at Venice. The little vignettes which had come into existence during the decade we have been examining were used again and again, sometimes for new books, sometimes for re-issues of old ones, but no fresh work of this kind seems to have been done. After 1500, almost the only important illustrated books issued were the numerous Missals and other liturgical works printed chiefly for the firms of Giunta and Stagninus. Now and again, as in the Missals of 1506 and 1509, these attain some delicacy, but for the most part they are overloaded with coarsely executed ornaments, the work in which is of the most mechanical kind. The style of engraving used in these illustrations is heavy and hard, and it is a pleasure to turn away from them to review the little Florentine pictures, the most charming of all Italian woodcuts, at which we must now look.

CHAPTER IV

FLORENCE

COMPARED with that of the Venetian printers, the output of the Florentine presses during the fifteenth century was almost insignificant. The lists in Panzer's *Annales* are, of course, far from complete, but if we take them as representative we shall find that the whole number of books registered as printed in Florence from 1490 to 1500 does not equal the number issued at Venice in a single year, and even if we make some allowance for a larger proportion of Florentine books having been published without date or printer's name, the ratio will not be seriously altered. Only about fifteen printers appear to have worked at Florence during this decade, and only four of these, Francesco Buonaccorsi, Francesco di Dino (who had previously printed at Naples), Antonio Mischomini, and the firm of Lorenzo di Morgiani and Giovanni di Piero di Maganza (Johannes Petri of Mentz), were at all prolific. All of these printed books with illustrations, and about 1495 their activity was greatly stimulated by the appearance of an enterprising publisher in the person of Ser Piero Pacini da Pescia, whose name is thenceforward connected with a very large proportion of the illustrated books produced at Florence during the next fifteen years.

We have already, in our second chapter, noticed the copper engravings used in the editions of the *Monte Santo di Dio* of 1477, the *Dante* of 1481, and for the maps in the *Sette Giornata della Geografia* of 1480, all published by Nicholaus Lorenz. It is at first sight curious that the cheaper and easier process of wood-engraving should not have been used for the decoration of books until as late as 1490. We must remember, however, that the

copper-plates were obviously regarded as a failure, and that the *litterati* of Florence at this period were the most aristocratic in Italy. The companions of the Medici, who amiably proved the reasonableness of Christianity out of the Greek philosophers, would care little for the cuts that found favour in the religious chap-books of the poor, and down to the end of the century every handsome book printed in Florence was left for the illuminator to decorate. There seems to have been no demand from the burgher class for editions of *Dante* and *Boccaccio*, such as found favour in Venice, or, if there were, it was satisfied by importation. With about three exceptions, the books at which we shall look in this chapter are all printed in small quarto or octavo, and the immense majority of them are more or less religious.

We have said that no Florentine book with woodcuts, with an earlier date than 1490, is known to be extant; it is probable, however, that one or two may have been printed which have now perished. An edition of the *Specchio di Dio* of Cavalca, printed by Francesco di Dino, and dated March 27 in that year, contains a rudely cut picture of the Crucifixion which bears traces of once having been surrounded by a chain-work border. The cut must, therefore, have been used before, and may one day be discovered in a copy of some similar work printed in 1488 or 1489. It reappears in 1492, in an edition printed by Mischomini (June 26) of Savonarola's *Tractato dello Amore di Jesu Christo*, and a fragment of the border can still be traced.

The second Florentine woodcut which has as yet been discovered in a dated book is found on the back of the eighth leaf of the *Laudi* of Jacopone da Todi, printed by Francesco Buonaccorsi, September 28, 1490. The Franciscan mystic, to whom we owe the *Stabat Mater*, has closed his book and put it down by the little reading-desk, and is kneeling in an ecstasy of prayer before a vision of the Blessed Virgin, seated in a *mandorla*, or almond-shaped shrine, supported by angels. The picture is thoroughly Florentine, and full, as Dr. Lippmann very justly remarks, of the same delicate charm which distinguishes the fine silver-point drawings of the Florentine school at this period. The woodcutter has not



The Vision of S. Jacopone. From his LAUDI. Florence, 1490.

failed to do it justice, though he has taken less pains with the faces of the supporting angels than with the two chief figures. No other woodcut in any Florentine book quite approaches its delicate

grace, and we note that the characteristic Florentine device of working in white relief upon black, as well as in black upon white, is not yet employed. It is thus very interesting to compare it with the woodcut of St. Augustine writing at his episcopally begirt desk,



St. Augustine or St. Antonino. From the SOLILOQUII, 1491.

which ornaments the title-page of an edition of the *Soliloquii volgari*, printed November 10, 1491,* but by what firm is not stated. In design this picture is hardly less fine than that of S. Jacopone da Todi, and it is not impossible that it may have been the work of

* It recurs in the 1493 *Curam illius habe* of St. Antonino, printed by Morgiani and G. di Maganza.

the same artist. The cutting is much bolder and more vigorous, and in place of the delicacy of the earlier cut we have a richness of general effect, largely due to the deep black of the open cupboard and the bars of the little window, which is hardly less pleasing. Closely linked with this St. Augustine cut is another which appears



St. Augustine (?). From the *SERMONI VOLGARI*, 1493.

on the title-page of the *Sermoni volgari* printed by Antonio Miscomini, June 28, 1493, though it may have been designed for some earlier edition. Some similarities of style and arrangement make it reasonable to attribute this to the same artist, but the success attained is less complete. The contrast of black and white is here supplied by the border in which the little picture is framed, the only black space in the cut itself being the niche in the wall

above the saint's desk. We miss altogether the delicacy of the Jacopone, and there is but little of the compensating richness of the earlier Augustine cut. But perhaps it is only by comparison with these two that we reckon the artist to have failed.

Along with the two St. Augustine cuts we must mention the picture of a youthful master teaching an eager class which adorns the *Formulario di lettere e di orationi volgari composto per Christofano landini*, printed by Miscomini in 1492, and the cut in *Alcbuni singulari tractati di Vgho Pantiera da Prato*, printed by Lorenzo di Morgiani and Giovanni da Maganza on December 15 of the same year. The latter is almost put out of court by its too simple device of indicating the proper relations of master and pupil by an absurd difference in size, the figure of the pupil being drawn on a much smaller scale. The *Landini* cut, on the other hand, is really beautiful, and it is a pity that an indiscreet early possessor of the British Museum copy has seen fit to further adorn it with the aid of red chalk.

Meanwhile other experiments in woodcutting had been made, to which we must now draw attention. On March 20, 1491, Morgiani and Giovanni da Maganza finished printing a new edition of Bettini's *Libro del Monte Santo di Dio*, in which the three copper engravings of 1477 were freely reproduced upon wood. The method of translation is very interesting, as the woodcutter has freely altered both the designs and the tones in order to accommodate them better to his own art. Each picture is now framed in a typical Florentine border of white upon black, and the ground-work is now black, relieved, however, by innumerable little dots, dashes, or thin lines of white. In the "Christ" (reproduced by Dr. Lippmann, p. 27), the "mandorla" is now formed by a double row of white clover-leaves, if a name must be found for them. At its base it is supported by two angels, whose tripping gait and flowing draperies have the peculiar Florentine grace. Two smaller angels, hovering in the air, support the mandorla from above. At the head and foot is a winged cherub-head, and two others are poised comfortably in the air on each side. The central figure, standing on the white clouds at the foot of the mandorla, is dignified, and the pensive face, though

not entirely successful, shows that the second artist was more anxious than his predecessor to represent the character of the Man of Sorrows. The main changes in the design may all be traced to the artist's consciousness that he was working within a frame, all of which he was anxious to fill, the four angels being brought further away from the mandorla to occupy the corners, while the two midmost angels and two of the cherubs of the copper-engraver are now omitted.

The same rearrangement and selection marks the "Monte Santo," here reproduced. On the copper, the whole of the upper part of the plate is studded with cherubs' heads; the face of Christ follows the same model as in the larger plate; the quotation from the Psalms, *Levavi oculos*, etc., which here repeats the form of the rainbow, is only a label stretching from the youth's head to the ladder; the demon, not content with entangling the youth's feet in the gauds of blindness, is striking at him with a prong; the little tree on the right of the mount is omitted, etc., etc. The differences are small in themselves, but they are interesting as betokening the independent spirit in which the second artist reproduced the design of his predecessor. We need not, however, trace them also in the third picture, representing the torments of hell, which in both editions is singularly weak. The woodcut of Christ in Glory, from the *Monte Santo* was used again as the title-cut of the *Libro molto deuoto e spirituale de' fructi della lingua* of the same printer, completed on September 4, 1493. The other two cuts I have not met again, nor any others of equal size or quite in the same style.

Another book which stands alone in the method of its decoration is a little treatise on Arithmetic, by Filippo Calandro, dedicated to Giuliano dei Medici, and proceeding from the same press as the *Monte Santo*. Its frontispiece of "Pictagoras [*i.e.*, Pythagoras], Arithmetice Introductor," is in very thin outline. The earlier pages are surrounded by an arabesque border, with little medallions and other designs; the text they enclose consisting of rows of little quaintly shaped figures. The body of the book is printed in black-letter, and many of the problems are illustrated by tiny cuts, about three-quarters of an inch square, which are very charming. I take



From Bettini's MONTE SANTO DI DIO, 1491.

this opportunity of apologising to Ser Calandro for a gross injustice I passed upon him by a slip of the pen in my notice of his Arithmetic in my *Early Illustrated Books*. One of his illustrated problems is of a fat cat who each day climbed half-a-yard up a tree in order to catch a squirrel, and each night slipped back a foot. The squirrel, on its side, slipped a quarter of a yard each day and retreated a fifth of one each night. The tree was $26\frac{3}{4}$ yards high. When would they meet? The real answer is 121, and for the carelessness by which I wrote a three for a two, and thus damaged the author's reputation as an arithmetician, I sincerely apologise.* The *Aritmetica* was reprinted in 1518 by Bernardo Zucchetto, with the same ornaments, but in Roman type instead of black-letter. It is a fascinating little book, but has none of the characteristics of Florentine work.

One other cut in an unusual style remains to be noticed. The first known occurrence of this is in the *Tractato della Humiltà* of Savonarola, printed by Miscomini, June 30, 1492. The border, however, which is similar in style to that of the *Cavalca*, (which four days earlier Miscomini had used again in his edition of the *Tractato dello Amore di Jesu*) shows signs of wear, and we may conjecture that the cut had been in existence for some time, and may possibly have been drawn by the same artist as that of the *Cavalca*, though interpreted by a far more able woodcutter. It represents a "Pietà," the dead Christ in a tomb leaning in front of the Cross, while two lily-bearing angels support His arms. The cutting is rich and bold, and the whole picture is thoroughly Florentine in its feeling and grace, though the style was not employed again.

We have already had occasion to mention the woodcuts in two editions of works by Savonarola, and we must now approach the consideration of the long series of his tracts and sermons, the cuts in which are among the most important examples of Florentine work. After preaching at Genoa during the Lent of 1490, Savonarola had been recalled to Florence, it is said by Lorenzo de' Medici himself,

* By way of penance, I demonstrate its correctness. In each 24 hours, cat and squirrel come $\frac{1}{80}$ of a yard closer; \therefore in 120 days they will have approached 26 yards, and will complete the remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ on the evening of the 121st, before they begin to retreat again. But they must have been very tired!

and preached his first public sermon there on August 1st. During his previous stay in Florence, whither he had been sent from his convent at Ferrara in 1482, during the Ferrarese war, his preaching had attracted little attention, and it was only with his sermons preached at Brescia during Lent, 1487, that he had become known. His sermon of August 1, 1490, at St. Mark's, electrified Florence, and thenceforth to the day of his death his influence was enormous.

Savonarola's mother was a member of the family of Buonaccorsi, and I have pleased myself with imagining that the Francesco Buonaccorsi who printed the *Laudi* of Jacopone da Todi on September 28, 1490, and the next year issued the first edition of the *Libro della Vita viduale*, which is, I believe, the earliest dated Savonarola tract, may have been an uncle or cousin, and that Savonarola may have had some direct share in the introduction of artistic book-illustration into Florence. However this may be, it is certain from his published sermons that he was keenly alive to the service which art might render to the cause of religion, and there is thus every reason to believe that the illustration of his tracts was no mere publisher's venture, but that it was done by his wish, and possibly to some extent under his superintendence. In the Appendix to Villari's *Life of Savonarola* (Italian edition) a contract is printed, concluded in 1505 between his friend Lorenzo Violi and two printers, Antonio Tubini and Bartolommeo Ghirlandi, for a reprint of the *Prediche* of 1498. According to this contract Violi was to supply the paper necessary for an edition of eleven hundred copies, and to pay the printers week by week at the rate of two and a half lire for every ream (four hundred and forty sheets) printed off, the printers undertaking to print off the whole eleven hundred copies at the rate of not less than one sheet (four pages) every working day. The contract is an interesting one for the history of printing, and it suggests that during Savonarola's life the same sort of arrangement may have been in vogue, to some extent under his control.

In a delightful monograph published in 1879 M. Gustave Gruyer gave a nearly exhaustive list of the illustrated Savonarola tracts, and the woodcuts they contain. Of the sixty-eight different cuts (including

variants) which he enumerates, about a dozen belong to Venice, Milan, Ferrara, and Rome. Variants account for about fifteen more, and four or five others are so small as to require little notice. We are thus left with upwards of forty different subjects, which fall into three classes, dealing respectively with the Passion of Christ, with



Gethsemane. From Savonarola's TRACTATO DELLA ORATIONE, 1492.

Prayer and Preparation for Death, and with the representations, always imaginary, of Savonarola himself. The first of these classes includes a number of very small cuts, but the treatment of four of the subjects claims especial attention. Of the Agony in the Garden three different woodcuts have come down to us, all of them of great beauty. The one here shown was apparently the favourite, for it occurs again and again in various editions of his tracts. Of the two variants, one, in which only the hands of the angel are shown, occurs in the *Tractato ovvero Sermone della Oratione* (Miscomini, October 20,

1492); the other, in which the angel appears on the left instead of the right, in an undated edition of the *Expositione del Pater Noster*.

Of Christ carrying the cross there are three variants, two of them occurring in different editions of the *Tractato dell' Oratione*, the third in the *Tractato dell' Amore di Jesu Christo*: all three being of great beauty, though, as M. Gruyer points out, neither the figure nor the face of Christ is impressively rendered. The Crucifixion itself is shown in two different sets of cuts, in one of which St. John, the Blessed Virgin, and St. Mary Magdalen stand beside the cross; in the other only the first two. The finest examples of both occur in editions of the *Tractato dell' Amore*, the first being also found in the *Dieci Comandamenti* of October 24, 1495, and the second in the *Libro da Campagnia di Battuti* (Morgiani and G. di Maganza) of 1493. Another cut of great beauty represents Christ holding the cross in one hand, while from the other He allows blood to trickle into a chalice. This is found in an undated edition of the *Tractato della Humiltà*, and in other works.

Of the woodcuts illustrating the duties of prayer and the preparation for death, the best known, but not the finest, are those found in the different editions of the *Prediche dell' Arte del ben Morire*. One edition of this is heralded by a hideous title-cut of Death flying over ground strewn with his victims; the other cuts represent (1) Death showing a youth God in glory and the Devil in torment; (2) a sick man on his bed, Death sitting outside the door; (3) a monk ministering to the sick man, Death now seated at the bed's foot. In another edition the title-cut is omitted; the vision of Heaven and Hell is recut (now measuring $5\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ inches instead of $6 \times 4\frac{1}{2}$), and occurs twice, and the cut of the monk's ministrations is also new. M. Gruyer mentions an edition similar to this, and with the cut of the vision appearing only once, but with a title-cut of a Triumph of Death, which, from his description, must clearly be taken from the Florentine *Trionfi* of Petrarch, and therefore later than 1499. The other cuts, even in the better of the variants, appear to me to be overrated. Though on a comparatively large scale for Florentine work, their effect is cramped and poor, the

figures seeming too small for the great room, while the woodcutter was not particularly skilful.

Infinitely finer than these is the magnificent title-cut (reproduced in my *Early Illustrated Books*, p. 114) of an edition of the *Operetta della Oratione mentale*, in which a man is kneeling in prayer before a crucifix in a little chapel. Here the floor and the further wall of the chapel are in black with lines of white, the shadows of a door and window deep black, and against this background the figure of the worshipper and the altar and crucifix are in relief. The whole effect has the severity and breadth of a great picture, and can hardly be surpassed. Another edition of the same work has a title-cut, probably by the same artist, of a man and woman kneeling in prayer on either side of an altar, above which is a crucifix in relief against a black hanging. A third chapel scene, of which two variants exist, is found in the *Trattato del Sacramento*, and shows a priest elevating the Host before a little crowd of worshippers. With these Savonarola cuts we may join two others representing Confession: the first and finer, in which there is only a male penitent, occurring in the treatise *Defecerunt* of St. Antoninus, Archbishop of Florence (the venerated saint of Savonarola's convent); the other, in which there are both a man and a woman, in the same writer's 'somma,' entitled *Omnis mortalium cura*.

Despite the fact that the portraits have no claim to be authentic, the cuts in which Savonarola himself is shown naturally possess a peculiar interest. The largest and finest of these, reproduced by M. Gruyer, occurs in the *Dyalogo della verità prophetica*, and shows Savonarola talking with seven Florentines under a tree. In the distance is seen the Duomo, in mid-air are hovering the Holy Dove and tongues of fire. Savonarola is in his black robe, and the keen face assigned to him is doubly impressive from the cowl which surrounds it. Next in interest to this is the little cut, here given, from the *De Simplicitate Christianæ Vitæ* (P. de Pacini, September 5, 1496), in which he is seen writing in his cell. The title-cut of the *Compendio di Revelatione* (September 1, 1495), which represents him preaching before a crowded audience, is badly rendered, and the same fault mars the picture of his argument with

an astrologer in the *Tractatus contra astrologiam*. The *Compendio*, however, has two other cuts (besides a full-page crown of glory), both showing Savonarola on an embassy to the Blessed Virgin, attended by Simplicity, Prayer, Patience, and Faith. In the first, and finer, he meets the Devil, attired as a hermit; in the second he arrives at the entrance to the celestial city. Three other cuts



Savonarola in his Cell. From his DE SIMPLICITATE, 1496.

represent his relations with the Convent of "Murate," or Recluses of Florence. In one of these, repeated in many different tracts, he is being welcomed to their convent; in another (if the boy preacher can stand for him) he is addressing the nuns; in the third he is presenting his treatise on the Ten Commandments to the Abbess.

Along with the Savonarola tract-books we must mention the *Tractato di Maestro Domenico Benivieni, prete Fiorentino, in defensione et probatione della doctrina et prophetie predicate da Frate Hieronymo da Ferrara* (printed by F. Buonaccorsi for Pacini, May 28, 1496), which has a title-cut of Benivieni eagerly arguing in Savonarola's defence, and a full-page illustration of the reformer's vision of the

regeneration of the world by the river of blood flowing from the crucified Christ being literally used for the washing away of sins. Two other religious books, whose titles clash with those of works by Savonarola, must be mentioned. Of these the most important is an undated edition of the *Arte del ben Morire* of Capranica (reprinted 1513), in which two of the large cuts from Savonarola's work of the same name were used again, along with small ones also found in his books, and ten important cuts in which the old block-books of the *Ars Moriendi* are imitated with much freedom and grace.

The other, and earlier book, the *Libro delli Comandamenti di Dio*, of Frate Marco del Monte Sancta Maria, is notable for possessing a large woodcut (hardly ever found uncropped) imitated from a very fine early copper-plate, an example of which is in the Print Room at the British Museum. In the lower corner the Frate is preaching; in the middle of the picture (greatly abridged in the woodcut) are represented the works of mercy; in the upper section are Christ and the Blessed Virgin in glory, and between them a "Loco tondo et vacuo" in place of any more anthropomorphical depiction of the Almighty. The artist has shown some skill in selection, but the coins in a "Monte della Pietà" are made to look strangely like a beehive, and when we realise that they are really coins, we wonder why the prisoners, who are meant to be stretching out their hands for alms, appear so very much as if they were helping themselves in rather a different fashion from that which the proverb commends. Two other pictures illustrate the giving of the Law, and there is also a title-cut. The book was printed by Miscomini in 1494. To Miscomini's press also belongs an undated Florentine edition of the *Devote Meditationi* of St. Bonaventura, in which (along with extra illustrations from other works) we find a number of designs of the Venetian editions recut, with a gain in depth and a variety of tone so great as to afford a striking example of the superiority of the Florentine school of engraving. Two other little didactic books printed by Miscomini may also be noted. The first of these is an edition of the *Fior di Virtù* (see p. 40), in which the beautiful Venetian title-cut was

rather clumsily copied, and surrounded by an ugly border, while the Venetian vignettes were improved into charming little pictures, in which the larger half was occupied by the human instances, which the Venetian artist had neglected, and only the smaller by that from animal life. The first Florentine edition of this book was issued, I believe, in 1493, but I only know the cuts as they occur in the 1498 edition, where they are mixed with others originally designed



Studies of Fear. From the FIOR DI VIRTÙ, 1498 (1493?).

for other works. The cut here shown, which illustrates Terror—in men by the instance of Damocles, in animals by the rabbits running from an imaginary hunter—is one of the original set of cuts, and its charm can hardly be surpassed. Miscomini's other didactic book, printed March 1, 1493-4, is the *Libro di Giuoco delli Scacchi intitolato dei costumi degl' huomini e delli officii de' nobili*, an Italian version of the moralisation of the game of chess by Jacobus de Cessolis. It is illustrated with a large title-cut of courtiers playing the game with a king as umpire, and thirteen smaller cuts, cleverly drawn, but a little stiff, of the different functions and occupations which the pieces and pawns were supposed to represent.

After 1495 Miscomini disappears, but his place as a publisher

of illustrated books was amply supplied by Ser Piero Pacini, of Pescia, whose name we have already had occasion to mention in



The Triumph of Love. From Petrarch's 'TRIONFI, 1499.

connexion with some of the Savonarola tracts. In 1495 he commissioned two very important illustrated editions—an *Æsop*, printed

for him by Buonaccorsi, and an *Epistole e Evangelii*, giving the epistles and gospels throughout the year in Italian, for which he employed Morgiani and G. di Maganza. The *Æsop* I am unlucky enough not to have seen. The earliest edition of the *Epistole* which has come under my notice is that of 1515, in which there are no less than eighty different cuts. In both editions there is a fine title-page, showing Christ with a book and a sword, and St. Peter with a book and a key, standing in an arch enclosed in an arabesque border on a black ground, in the corners of which are figures of the four Evangelists.

In 1499 Pacini published a very interesting little book, an edition of the *Trionfi* of Petrarch, in which most of the cuts are suggested by those in the Venice edition of 1490. Only one copy of the book is known to exist, that in the Vittorio Emmanuele Library at Rome, but this has been reproduced in (rather poor) facsimile. Of the six full-page cuts that of the Triumph of Death was used again, as we have seen, in one of the three editions of Savorarola's *Arte del ben Morire*. Another, unluckily not by any means the finest, occurs on the title-page of Pacini's 1508 edition of the *Quatrigio* of Frezzi. This is the only one available for reproduction, and it is therefore given here, and its contrast to the treatment of the same subject in the Venetian cut already shown is very instructive. The Venetian edition is a pretentious folio, in which the commentary overshadows the text. The Florentine is a thin quarto, probably sold for a few pence. But in grace and artistic feeling the Florentine edition is incomparably the finer. This is especially shown in the Triumph of Divinity, in which the woodcutter has unconsciously reproduced much of the charm of the earlier Florentine copper-plate, though he does not seem to have known of the existence of this, and worked as we have said from the Venetian edition of 1490.

The *Quatrigio* of Frezzi, from whose title-page we have thus borrowed, is almost the only pretentious book illustrated in the Florentine style.* Its size has perhaps earned for it more attention than its artistic

* The only other I know of is the *Morgante Maggiore* of Pulci, a long poem on the adventures of Orlando, printed in 1500, the unique copy of which I am not fortunate enough to have seen. According to Dr. Lippmann, it has two hundred and twenty cuts.

merits deserve. Its author, a Bishop of Foligno, who died in 1416, was ambitious of emulating the *Divina Commedia*, and conducted his hero through the four kingdoms of Cupid, Satan, the Vices, and the Virtues. Like the greater work, it suffers, from the illustrator's point of view, from the perpetual recurrence of the same two figures, the author and the lady who guides him. The majority of the hundred and



The Pursuit of Cupid. From the *QUATRIREGIO*, 1508.

twenty-six cuts which it contains are angular and hard. The one here shown, in which Cupid, represented as an evil spirit, is endeavouring to hide himself from pursuit, is pronounced by so good a judge as Mr. Horne (who wrote on the book in Vol. III. of *The Hobby-horse*), to be the finest of the whole series, but it can hardly stand comparison with the beauty found in the best of the earlier Florentine cuts.

In 1509 P. Giunta printed a little Dante with a frontispiece which may have been specially designed for this edition. Save for this we may regard the *Quatriregio* as closing the cycle of original Florentine illus-

trated books. But our survey of them is not yet complete. Throughout the whole period from 1490 to 1508, innumerable chap-books were issued, mostly with only one, but sometimes with several cuts. A prince among these is the *Lettera dell'isole che ha trouato nuouamente il re*

La lettera dell'isole che ha trouato nuouamente il Re di Spagna.



The Discovery of the Indies. 1493.

dispaña (1493), a translation into *ottava rima* of the famous letter of Columbus, the unique copy of which, in the British Museum, might well be valued at a thousand pounds. The little stream which separates the King of Spain from the islands with their pleasing savages gives but a quaint idea of the Atlantic, but the picture is a very delightful

one. To enumerate such single tracts would be endless, but there is one large class of them which we are bound to notice, the *Rappresentazioni*, or plays on the lives of the saints and of Christ, which were in great vogue in Florence from the last quarter of the fifteenth century to the beginning of the seventeenth. These plays were written in *ottava rima*, and the earliest author of them who obtained the honours of print seems to have been Maffeo Belcari, who died in 1484. I believe I am right in saying that no illustrated edition of any *Rappresentazione* bears an earlier date than 1501, but there are several of Belcari's, and others by Lorenzo de' Medici, Bernardo and Antonio Pulci, Giuliano Dati, Giuntino Berti, and some anonymous authors, which exist in editions printed in the same types as many of the Savonarola tracts, possibly by Francesco di Dino.

Our two illustrations are both from plays by Belcari, the first from one of St. John the Baptist visited by Christ in the Desert, the second from his *Rappresentazione di Sancto Panuntio*. This latter requires a little explanation, which may serve as a sample of these charmingly simple entertainments. Panuntius was a hermit, who thought rather well of his own piety. So he prayed that he might be shown another as devout as himself, and was intensely surprised when an angel bade him make the acquaintance of "Quel cantor



From the RAPPRESENTAZIONE DI SAN GIOVANNI QUANDO FU VISITATO PER CHRISTO NEL DISERTO.

sublime che suona e canto in questo borgo primo." "O poor Panuntius!" the saint exclaims; "either you are not at all what you have been esteemed by holy fathers of sincerity, or this musician must have some touch of great virtue which remains hidden from the world!" But to the town he goes, finds the musician singing a cheerful



From the RAPPRESENTATIONE DI SAN PANUNTIO.

song, and proceeds to cross-examine him. The musician had been a robber, but he was a kindly rogue, had saved a girl's virtue and paid the debts of a poor woman, so grace was given him to repent, and now he helps to keep people cheerful and free from "accidie," and is full of faith and contentment. Panuntius is more astounded still when he hears that this change was wrought "without the aid of any sacred book," and falls on his neck; the musician on his

side is so touched that he breaks his flute and becomes a monk, a little to our disappointment.

The copy at the Bodleian Library, in which I first read this simple story, was undoubtedly printed about 1500; the Museum copy from which this reproduction is taken is dated 1565, but the cut, save for a break in the border, is practically uninjured. The long life of these cuts makes the dating of anonymous editions no easy matter, as a little accidental carefulness in the impression often gives a spurious appearance of early date. A sure test of this, but one that cannot often be applied, is where there are several cuts all obviously appropriate to the story. This is the case with the four cuts in the *Sancto Paulino*, the *Stella*, and the *Reina Hester*, at the Bodleian Library, all of which have plainly been designed for these particular plays. But in the *Barlaam et Josafat*, whose appearance is very much the same, four of the seven cuts are dragged in from the *Fior di Virtù* (one of them being that of Damocles and the Rabbits!), and the *Fior*, the *Epistole e Evangelii* and the Savonarola tracts furnished a large number of the cuts which appear in the countless editions which were issued throughout the sixteenth century.

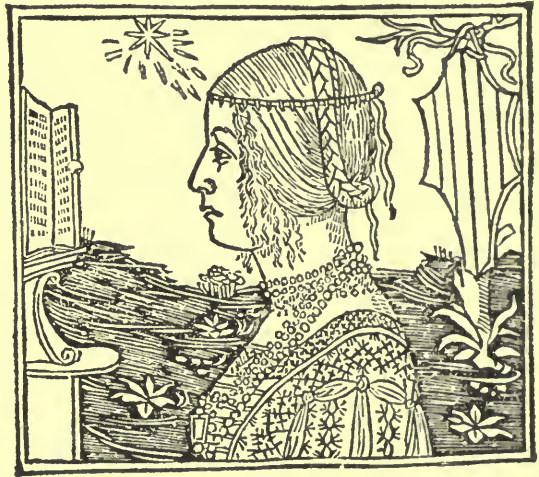
Along with the *Rappresentationi* we must mention the *Novelle*, or short stories in verse, which are far more difficult to meet with, though Dr. Hermann Varnhagen has lately been lucky enough to unearth a collection of over a score of them in the Erlangen Library, some with specially designed illustrations, others with cuts obviously borrowed. There seems, however, no reason to believe that any of the special designs were made much, if at all, after 1508, and the progressive deterioration of such of them as were recut shows how quickly the artistic feeling died out which had given birth to these most charming of all Italian book illustrations.

CHAPTER V

FERRARA—PAVIA—MODENA—MILAN—SALUZZO

BESIDES Venice and Florence, Ferrara, to whose illustrated books M. Gustave Gruyer devoted a series of articles in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* of 1888-89, and Pavia, on whose books Dr. Paul Kristeller contributed a masterly article to Part III. of *Bibliographica*, are the only cities in Italy whose woodcuts have as yet been carefully studied. After the little cut of the Pope and Cardinals in the *Clementine* of 1479 (mentioned on p. 29), there is a gap of ten years in Ferrarese illustration, which begins again with two editions of a *Leggenda del Sancto Maurelio*, a Bishop of Ferrara, printed by Lorenzo de Rossi in 1489. Both of these possess a rudely cut portrait of St. Maurelius, but in one of them there is also a far finer picture of St. George. Four years later Andreas Gallus printed the *Compilatio* of the astronomer Alfraganus, with a frontispiece in which he is represented instructing a hermit, who, as in the Florentine *Tractati di Vgho Pantiera* (p. 59) is reduced to proper insignificance by a much smaller scale. In 1496 Rossi printed the *De ingenuis adolescentium moribus*, with a really fine frontispiece of the Virgin and Holy Child, which in cutting and design resembles, while it surpasses, the Venetian *Dialogo* of St. Catharine of Sienna (p. 34). In the following year the same printer produced three notable books, a *Uffizio* of the B. Virgin, which I have not seen; the treatise *De pluribus claris selectisque mulieribus* of Philippus Bergomensis, and the *Epistole* of St. Jerome. The frontispiece in the *Epistole* is distinctly Venetian, resembling closely in style those of the *Decamerone* of 1492, the *Livy* of 1493, and the rest of the series produced in these years. Moreover, it is actually dated on the columns MCCCCL/XXXIII., and there

can be little doubt that it was really executed in Venice. It is probable that the one hundred and eighty little vignettes which adorn the text, chiefly illustrating the monastic life, have the same origin. They are pretty and interesting, but have nothing to distinguish them from average Venetian work of the same date. The *Bergomensis* is more important. Its frontispiece, in which the author (sadly in need of shaving) presents his book to Beatrice of Aragon, imitates the Florentine use of the relief of white against black, and yet has sufficient individuality to recall the contemporary Ferrarese school of painting. The numerous small portraits in the text vary in merit; the earlier ones, in which the artist drew from his imagination, being mostly poor, while a few of the latest, representing the great ladies of the day, are obviously imitated from portraits in different styles, and are of great interest. The last in the book, here shown, represents Damisella Trivulzia, then a girl of



Damisella Trivulzia. From the DE CLARIS MULIERIBUS. Ferrara, 1477.

fourteen, and is entirely charming. The series of Ferrarese books is continued by a Missal of 1503, with a cut of St. Christopher; Niger's Funeral Oration over Ercole d'Este I., and a few other books; but the *Bergomensis* of 1497 represents its highest attainment.

Of the books printed at Pavia, investigated by Dr. Kristeller, I do not propose to say much, as his article has only recently appeared. They begin with an incredibly rude cut of the Crucifixion in a Missal of 1491, and reach their best in the little figures of bishops and saints in the *Papie Sanctuarium* of 1505, in the portrait of Quintianus Stoa in his *De Quantitate Syllabarum* (1511), and in the interesting initial letters found in the *Singularia* of M. de Matthesilanis (1501), and the

Commentaria and *Repetitio* of Philippus Decius (1506-7). In these initials profile busts of the authors are introduced, standing out prominently from the black ground and giving the impression of a medal, and Dr. Kristeller hardly exaggerates when he calls them "masterpieces of the art of portraiture."

The Pavese books were so learned that their publishers could, as a rule, neither borrow nor imitate their cuts from those printed in other towns; but these restrictions did not exist in many places. We have thus to be on our guard against too lightly attributing woodcuts to an artist of the town where the book is printed. In the first place, blocks were borrowed. Dr. Lippmann has already noticed (*op. cit.*, p. 96) the appearance of the Theseus and Minotaur from the *Plutarch* of 1491 at the end of *De Structura compositionis* of Ferrettus, printed at Forlì in 1495, and I am able to identify the other cuts in the book, of which he rightly suspected the Venetian origin, as having been borrowed from the *Epigrammata Cantalycii* of 1493 (p. 49). Again, earlier cuts might be closely imitated, as is the case with those in the Silber and Planck edition of the *Meditationes* of Turrecremata, which are copied from Numeister's edition of 1479 (p. 27). Once more, both artists and printers occasionally moved about: Boninus de Boninis, a lover of illustrated books, who worked at Venice, Verona, and Brescia, being an instance of a travelling printer, while Dr. Kristeller shows good reason to believe that the engraver of some of the Pavese cuts had previously worked at Milan. For these reasons the study of the illustrated books of the smaller centres of printing in Italy is peculiarly difficult, and it is only an investigator like Dr. Kristeller, who has hunted for them in almost every library in Europe, who can pursue it with success. I show here a little cut of the making of a monk, which occurs in the Latin and Italian editions of the *Prognosticato* of Lichtenberger, printed at Modena in 1492, as an example of how good the work in some of these smaller centres occasionally was; but I know of no other illustrated Modenese book, and my knowledge of the woodcuts found in books printed at Bologna, Cremona, and other Italian towns, is similarly fragmentary.

Of books published at Milan, more is known, though they have not yet been arranged in any series. No woodcuts are recorded

THE EARLY WORK OF RAPHAEL

By

JULIA CARTWRIGHT

(MRS. HENRY ADY)

Author of "Sacharissa," "Madame," "Jules Bastien-Lepage," &c.



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THE EARLY WORK OF RAPHAEL

PART I

U R B I N O

1483—1500

Birth and family of Raphael—Giovanni Santi as a painter and a poet—His relations with the Court of Urbino—Early training of Raphael—Timoteo Viti his first master—His earliest pictures—St. Michael—Vision of a Knight—The Three Graces—His character and genius.

AMONG the many services which the late Senatore Morelli rendered to the cause of art, none is more important than the new light which he has thrown on the life and work of Raphael. His keen and accurate eye, his patient researches, have done more to place the study of the great Urbinate's art upon a scientific footing than the whole mass of literature which, in former years, had gathered round his name. Many old traditions have been upset, more than one favourite conviction of the popular mind has been destroyed, in the process. The fables which had grown up round the painter's childhood and the story of his loves have been blown to the winds. A few celebrated pictures and a vast number of drawings which had been indiscriminately assigned to his hand have been restored to their true authors. But it cannot be said that Raphael's fame has suffered loss. On the contrary, his genius only shines with a purer and serener lustre. Now for the first time we realise the rare excellence and supreme beauty of his art. Now, better than ever before, we can

follow him through the successive stages of his development. Step by step we can measure the growth of his powers and note the marvellous facility with which he received and assimilated each fresh impression. We can lay our finger on the varied sources from which he drew his inspiration, and see how line by line, form by form, his creations derived their birth from one master after another, until all that was best in the art of Ferrara, of Umbria, and of Florence became gradually absorbed into his art. Much more, no doubt, remains to be done. Our knowledge of the actual facts of Raphael's early years is still vague and fragmentary, and too often lacks the support of historic evidence. But the main lines which future investigation will take have been laid down, and all systematic study of Raphael's work will be henceforth based upon Morelli's conclusions.

Foremost among the kindly influences which fostered the development of Raphael's art were the time and place of his birth. For once at least in the world's story the child of genius saw the light under the most fortunate conditions. Urbino, where he was born in the full noontide of the Italian Renaissance, was famous not only for its pure air and lovely situation, but for the virtue and wisdom of the Montefeltro princes. Under the paternal rule of the good Duke Federigo, this narrow strip of land between Umbria and the Marches had become the seat of an ideal Court, upon which the eyes of all Europe were fixed. Here, on the rugged heights of the Apennines, overlooking the distant Adriatic, the Illyrian architect Luzzo di Lauranna had reared that palace which was to become one of the wonders of Italy—"a palace," writes that accomplished gentleman Castiglione, "so richly furnished with all things needful that it appeared rather a city than a palace. For he adorned it not only with silver plate and splendid hangings of gold and silk brocade, but with an infinite number of antique statues of marble and bronze and precious pictures and musical instruments of all kinds, neither would he add anything but what was most rare and excellent. Above all, he collected a large number of rare and excellent books, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, which he ornamented with gold and silver, and counted the most costly treasure of his great palace." Here the good Duke, himself as ardent a student as he was brave as a warrior, loved to collect noble youths and men of learning about him, and with them devote his leisure

hours to knightly exercises and Latin studies. Often, too, he would descend into the narrow streets at the foot of the castle hill and walk freely up and down among his subjects, entering their workshops and talking with the peasants on market days, and so beloved was he by all, that the people fell on their knees and cried "God keep you!" as he passed.

At this model court Raphael's father, Giovanni Santi, held a distinguished position, both as a painter and a poet. Originally natives of Colbordolo, a village in the hills above the valley of the Foglia, the Santi saw their homes laid waste by an inroad of Sigismondo Malatesta in 1446. Four years later, fearing a second incursion of the enemy, they took shelter within the walls of Urbino. Here they carried on their trade as corn and oil dealers, and, in 1464, bought a house in one of the steep streets at the corner of the market-place, known at that time as the Contrada del Monte, to-day as the Contrada Raffaello. Giovanni, who was born before 1440, recalls the perils of his youth and the flames that consumed the paternal nest in his verses, and sighs over the ceaseless round of domestic cares, "of all the ills that flesh is heir to, the most wearisome," but which nevertheless have not hindered him from embracing the splendid art of painting—"la mirabile e clarissima arte di pittura," of which noble calling he does not blush to call himself the servant. Yet he seems to have been a fortunate and prosperous man. When he was about forty, he married Magia Ciarla, the daughter of an Urbino tradesman, who brought him a dowry of 150 florins, and at the death of his father, in 1485, inherited the chief part of his property in land and houses. By this time he was an artist of considerable reputation, although he still plied his trade in corn and ropes and oil, and carved images and gilded candelabra, as well as painted altar-pieces for the churches of Urbino.

Magia Ciarla bore her husband three children, two of whom died in their infancy. The only surviving one, Raphael, was born on Good Friday, the 28th of March 1483. His father gave him the name of the archangel who was revered as the special protector of the young, and Magia nursed the boy herself, by the express wish of her husband, who feared that he might not thrive under the roof of hired peasants. A faded painting of the *Madonna and Child* in the courtyard of the house

where he was born is said to represent the artist's wife and child, while according to another old tradition, Raphael appears as a boy-angel with curly locks and brown eyes in his father's wall-painting in the Dominican church at Cagli. This altar-piece of the *Virgin and Saints*, with a lunette of the *Resurrection* above, and another Madonna at the convent of Montefiorentino, near Castel Durante, are among the best of many works with which Giovanni Santi adorned the churches in the neighbourhood of Urbino, during the last ten years of his life. These are for the most part painted in the conventional Umbrian manner, and cannot be said to give us any high idea of his powers. The same faces and types are repeated with little variety, the draperies are stiff, the attitudes constrained, but the execution is careful and conscientious throughout, and the architectural backgrounds and foreshortened figures show that he had profited by the teaching of the more distinguished artists who had visited Urbino. Paolo Uccello came there in 1468, and a year afterwards, Giovanni Santi himself received Piero della Francesca under his roof, when he came to paint an altar-piece for the confraternity of Corpus Christi, while he speaks of Melozzo da Forli as a dear and intimate friend. But if the father of Raphael never rose above the rank of a second-class artist, he was a man of considerable mental attainments, and his influence as a scholar and poet had probably a greater effect upon his son's future than his actual achievements in art. It was these gifts which endeared him to Duke Federigo, whose death in 1482 he lamented with such heartfelt grief, and which won for him the favour of his youthful son and successor, Guidobaldo. In a letter of the 10th of May 1483, Antonio Braccialeone, the young Duke's doctor, mentions a portrait of himself which has been lately finished by the Duke's painter, who "is also a disciple of the Muses"—a description which, as M. Müntz has already remarked, plainly applies to Giovanni Santi. In this capacity he probably accompanied Guidobaldo when, in 1486, he went to Mantua to visit his destined bride, Elizabeth Gonzaga, and there saw Messer Andrea at work on his famous *Triumphs*. When, two years afterwards, the Duke's marriage was celebrated with great pomp at Urbino, it was Giovanni Santi who composed the dramatic poem introducing all the gods and goddesses of Olympus to welcome the royal bride, which the young Duchess describes, in her letters to Mantua, as the most splendid part of her reception.

It was doubtless in honour of this occasion that Giovanni wrote and dedicated to Guidobaldo his famous poem, consisting of 23,000 verses in *terza rima*, and now preserved in the Vatican Library. The long chapters which recount the warlike deeds of Duke Federigo and the well-known passage on living painters have been often quoted, but in some ways the most interesting part of the poem is the prelude. There, in strains of tender melancholy that recall Chaucer's verse, the poet tells us how one autumn day, when the leaves were growing pale and the flowers had vanished from meadow and hillside, he lay down in the shade of a spreading beech, and, musing sadly over the sense of human failure, fell asleep, and was led in a trance by Plutarch through the halls of the Gods and the temple of Mars. There he heard the fatal news of Duke Federigo's death, and, waking from his dream, resolved to sing the praise of the dead hero. The whole poem is plainly written in imitation of the *Divina Commedia*, and shows Raphael's father to have been a man of wide culture, who shared the humanists' love of antiquity, and was familiar with every phase of contemporary art. He does not forget good King René or mighty John of Bruges, and enumerates the painters and sculptors of Florence from Fra Angelico and Masaccio to Ghirlandajo and Donatello. He speaks of Lionardo and Perugino as two youths equal in their age and affection for one another, dwells with delight on the art of Desider, "*si dolce e bello*," and has a word of praise for the Venetian masters. But, above all, he extols Andrea Mantegna as foremost among living artists, a compliment which would not fail to be appreciated by the young Duchess, but which was also the fruit of his own genuine admiration of the great Mantuan's art. The influence of Mantegna certainly makes itself felt in Giovanni's later works, especially in the portraits of donors which he introduces in his altar-piece at Montefiorentino and in another which he painted about this time in the Cathedral of Urbino, for the Buffi, a family intimately connected with his wife's relations. His portraits, we learn from a letter of Isabella d'Este, were in great repute, and he himself was highly esteemed by her sister-in-law, the young Duchess Elizabeth.

But in the midst of this prosperous career, family troubles came to darken Giovanni's home. In October 1491, he lost both his wife and

mother within a few days, and his infant daughter soon followed them to the grave. Six months later he married a young girl named Bernardina di Parte, the daughter of an Urbino goldsmith, who brought him a dowry of 200 florins. In the summer of 1493, the Duchess paid a long visit to her sister-in-law, Isabella d'Este, and when at Christmas the Duke went to Mantua to bring her back, he took Giovanni Santi with him, to paint the portraits of the Gonzaga family. By the 13th of January 1494, he had finished that of Isabella d'Este, which she sent to a friend, with the remark that the likeness did not satisfy her, although it was the work of Giovanni Santi, the Duchess of Urbino's painter, who was renowned for his skill in portraiture. He proceeded to take portraits of her husband the Marquis Gianfrancesco and of his brother, Bishop Lodovico, but before he had completed these, he fell ill of fever and returned home. There he lingered on for several months, growing weaker every day, and finding himself unable to complete the portraits which he had begun, or to paint that of the Duchess, which was impatiently awaited at Mantua. On the 1st of August he died, and on the 19th Elizabeth wrote to her sister-in-law: "About twenty days ago Giovanni de' Sancti, the painter, passed out of this life. He was conscious to the last, and died in an excellent state of mind. May God pardon and receive his soul!"

A few days before his death Giovanni had made a will, leaving the bulk of his property, valued at 860 florins, to be equally divided between his brother, a priest, by name Don Bartolommeo, and his young son Raphael, and giving his widow her dowry and clothes, together with the right of living in the family house. Soon after her husband's death Bernardina gave birth to a daughter, who was entitled under her father's will to a portion of 150 florins. But Don Bartolommeo, who had been appointed guardian to his nephew, soon quarrelled with his widowed sister-in-law, and refused to pay for his niece's maintenance. In 1495, and again in 1497, the case came before the courts of law, and each time the priest was condemned with costs. Still Don Bartolommeo remained obdurate, until, in June 1499, the case again came before the Bishop's Court, and he was ordered to pay his brother's widow a yearly sum of twenty-six florins. Meanwhile Bernardina had taken refuge in her mother's house, and did not finally receive the payments due to her

until the 13th of May 1500, when the matter was finally settled. In the records of these law-suits Raphael is expressly named as present in court on June 1499, but as absent from Urbino in the following May.

While his uncle and stepmother were wrangling over this heritage, it was his mother's relations who watched over his childhood. Both his grandfather and grandmother left him money in their wills, and his uncle Simone Ciarla acted a parent's part by the orphan boy, who loved him as dearly as if he had been his own father. Unfortunately we have no record of Raphael's boyhood. Vasari's story of his being taken to Perugia in 1495 and placed by his father in the school of Perugino, to the bitter grief of his mother, is now proved to have been mere fable. His mother, we have seen, died when he was eight, his father when he was eleven years old. Later writers have assumed that he entered Perugino's *atelier* in 1495, a year after Giovanni Santi's death. But we know now that between 1493, when Perugino married a young wife in Florence, and 1499 he was engaged in executing works at Florence or in other cities, and seldom visited Perugia. The question remains who was Raphael's first master? It is this question to which Morelli has given so convincing and decisive an answer. His conclusion on this point is now accepted by the majority of foreign and English writers, but still rejected by some authorities, among whom we regret to name Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle and Dr. Bode. Raphael no doubt learnt the elements of drawing and painting from his father, and as a child gave sign of that quick receptiveness and keen sense of beauty which were his especial gifts. His uncle, seeing him to be a boy of remarkable promise, naturally placed him in the workshop of the only painter of note then living in Urbino—Timoteo Viti. This artist had left home in 1490, to enter the shop of Francia the goldsmith-painter of Bologna, and after serving his apprenticeship had returned to Urbino in April 1495, to the great sorrow of his master, who records the departure of this favourite pupil in the following entry of his journal: "1495.—On the 4th day of April my dear Timoteo left me. May God give him all happiness and prosperity." Timoteo, then twenty-six years of age, is described as a pleasant, genial youth, who was the best of fellows and gayest of companions, and sang and played on the lyre with rare skill. His joyous nature and refined tastes soon won the love of young Raphael, and a strong friendship sprang up between the two

artists. This circumstance, together with the remarkable likeness that is apparent between the early works of Raphael and those of Timoteo, led Vasari to hazard the statement that the boy of twelve was the teacher of a master fourteen years older than himself, and already a painter of considerable reputation, and to add that Raphael, struck by Timoteo's youthful promise, invited him to Rome in 1518, to assist him in painting the Sibyls of St. Maria della Pace. It is now proved that Timoteo settled at Urbino in 1495, where he was employed by successive Dukes as their Court-painter, that in 1501 he married Girolama Spaccioli, a girl of a noble Urbino family, held the post of chief magistrate in 1513, and seldom if ever left Urbino again. That he was the first to influence Raphael's genius is clearly proved by a glance at the works which he painted at this period, more especially the altar-piece of the Virgin between St. Vitale and St. Crescenzo, in the Brera. Both in this picture, which long bore the name of Raphael, and the later St. Margaret at Bergamo or the Magdalen at Bologna, we find the same broad hands and feet, the same oval faces and heads bent on one side, the same naïve and graceful feeling that we are accustomed to ascribe to Raphael. Timoteo, in the words of Morelli, was in fact Raphaellesque before Raphael, or rather, it was from his teaching that the young Raphael derived those marked characteristics of the Ferrarese school which Timoteo had learnt from Francia and Costa, and which are evident in his pupil's early productions.

The first undoubted work of Raphael, painted in all probability when he was about sixteen, and still studying at Urbino under Timoteo Viti, is the *Vision of a Knight*. This famous little picture, which, together with the pen-and-ink drawing from which it was traced, is now one of the treasures of the National Gallery, came originally from Urbino into the Borghese Collection, when the Duchy was annexed to the Papal See. The subject breathes the very essence of that courtly and romantic atmosphere which haunted the palace of Urbino, and may well have been inspired by the Duchess Elizabeth herself. This accomplished lady, we are told by a sixteenth-century writer, the architect Serlio, was the first to honour the son of her old friend Giovanni Santi with her patronage, and Raphael may have painted this little allegory for the decoration of her chamber, just as Costa and Mantegna painted their pictures of Parnassus and the Muses for Isabella d'Este's grotto



Portrait of Timoteo Viti. By himself. British Museum.

at Mantua. The story of the choice which each traveller who sets out on the journey of life has to make between work and idleness, between duty and pleasure, may have been taken from the Greek myth of Hercules or from the romance of some Renaissance poet. The youthful knight lies asleep upon his shield under a laurel-tree, between two fair maidens. The one, simply robed in purple, offers him a book and a sword; the other, gaily attired in a pale-blue robe with cherry-coloured sleeves, and wearing a coral string twisted in her hair and round her neck, holds out a myrtle spray, and seeks to lure him into her smooth and pleasant paths. Every detail in the picture—the attitude of the two maidens, the forms of their hands and faces, the fall of their short skirts, the handkerchief twisted round their heads, the very shape of the trees and rocks in the background, recall Timoteo Viti's works, and prove the young painter to have inherited the traditions of Ferrara and Bologna masters. At the same time, the timid, careful drawing, the simple directness with which the story is told, stamp the picture as the work of a very youthful artist. The same childlike naïveté, the same miniature-like finish, appear in another work of this period, which Morelli considers to have been executed even earlier than the *Vision of a Knight*. This is the little *St. Michael* of the Louvre, which Raphael painted on the back of a draughtboard for Duke Guidobaldo, and which Lomazzo (1548) mentions as being in the collection of the French king at Fontainebleau. The picture may have been sent as a gift to King Louis XII. in acknowledgment of his courtesy, when in 1503 he conferred the order of St. Michael upon the Duke's young nephew Francesco della Rovere, just as Raphael's *St. George* was presented to Henry VII. after Guidobaldo had been made a Knight of the Garter. But, whatever its exact date may be, this *St. Michael* is clearly a work of Raphael's early youth. The warrior-saint, armed with the red-cross shield and brandishing his sword above his head like some paladin of old, might have stepped straight out of some nursery-book of fairy tales. His youthful face and glittering helmet recall the sleeping Knight of the Dream, his green wings are touched with gold after the manner of Timoteo's saints, and the scaly dragon and grotesque monsters crawling away behind him are the offspring of the same childish fancy. But the smoking towers of

the City of Dis in the background, and the poor souls tortured by cruel demons or wandering to and fro under the weight of their leaden capes, "like the hooded monks of Cologne," are evidently borrowed from Dante's *Inferno*. So exact is the rendering of the torments endured



The Vision of a Knight. By Raphael. National Gallery.

by the thieves and hypocrites, as described in the 23rd and 24th Cantos of the *Inferno*, that we are inclined to think young Raphael must have copied this part of his picture from one of those splendidly illustrated copies of Dante that were the glory of the ducal palace.

If this may help to explain the Dantesque imagery of the *St. Michael*, the third work which Morelli ascribes to this period—the *Three Graces*, now at Chantilly—doubtless owes its origin to some antique gem or miniature from some Latin manuscript in the ducal collection. But anything less classical than this little picture it would be hard to conceive. It has certainly no connection with the marble group at Siena which Pinturicchio copied on a sheet of the Venice Sketch-book, and which was long supposed to have supplied Raphael with this motive. There is nothing Greek or statuesque about these three maidens who stand side by side in the green mountain valley, each laying one hand on her sister's shoulder and holding a golden apple in the other. Their rounded limbs and rosy faces are modelled on the true Ferrarese type, and bear an unmistakable likeness to Francia's saints, while they wear the same coral beads as the maiden with the myrtle-spray, in the *Vision of a Knight*. The drawing is marked by the same anxious endeavour, and, if here and there the outline of a limb may be defective, there is a soft charm and grace about these youthful forms that bears witness to an ideal of beauty already present to the young painter's mind. The picture, which is under seven inches in height and less than five inches in breadth, must have been painted at the close of his Urbino period, probably just before he left Timoteo's side to seek further teaching in Perugino's school. Like the *Vision of a Knight* and the *St. Michael*, it once adorned the halls of Guidobaldo's palace, until it passed with the first-named picture into the Borghese Collection. A singular interest belongs to these three little pictures, that were the first-fruits of Raphael's genius, and which by a fortunate chance have come down to us in fair preservation, when so much of his riper work has perished. In them we see the hand of the boy of genius striving to give expression to the romantic dreams of his imagination, filled already with the yearning after beauty and the passionate love of antiquity that were to attain their complete development in after life. And in a remarkable way they foreshadow the triumphs of his future years. These little pictures which Raphael painted in his mountain home, under the shadow of Lauranna's castle towers, represent the different realms of sacred story, of mystic allegory, and classical antiquity which supplied the inspiration for those great dramas that he was one day to set forth on the Vatican walls, in the eyes of all Christendom.

There is at Oxford a drawing, in black chalks, of a boy of fifteen or sixteen, with a serious and gentle face, wearing a black cap over his long locks. It is on the same paper and in the same style as another drawing which hangs close by—a head of St. Catherine bearing a palm-branch—now generally recognised to be the work of Timoteo Viti. So there can be little doubt that this lad with the graceful air and the



St. Michael. By Raphael. In the Louvre.

thoughtful eyes is the young Raphael, drawn by the hand of his first master, in the days when he painted the sleeping knight and the sister Graces. But this fair boy, whose happy nature and winning ways charmed young and old alike, was the hardest of workers and most unwearied of learners. He had, in fact, already formed that ceaseless habit of acquiring ideas which lay at the root of all his future greatness.

From the first Raphael was never an artist of remarkable originality. He did not break new ground or discard old traditions to make room

for types and ideas of his own invention. He was, in point of fact, less of an innovator than Michelangelo or Lionardo, than Giorgione or Mantegna. But he possessed, in a measure rarely given to any human being, the power of assimilating the impressions which he received from a thousand different quarters. Every picture that he saw, each artist whom he met, became to him a fresh spring of inspiration and a new source of strength. But while he was always receiving fresh impressions and learning new lessons, he never forgot the old or lost the knowledge to which he had once attained. In a wonderful way he knew how to select and combine, to blend and transform all these separate elements into one perfect and harmonious whole. His pure taste and exquisite feeling gave the final touch, and his originality, it has been happily said, was his excellence.

PART II

P E R U G I A

1500—1504

Raphael in the school of Perugino—His first pieces—The Dudley Crucifixion—The Coronation of the Vatican—Influence of Pinturicchio—Siena frescoes—Venice Sketch-book—The Berlin Madonnas—The Conestabile Virgin—St. Sebastian at Bergamo—Portrait of Perugino—The Sposalizio—St. George of the Louvre—Raphael at Urbino—Giovanna della Rovere's letter.

AT the close of the fifteenth century Perugino was the most popular painter in Italy. That mystic strain which Umbrian masters had derived from Benozzo Gozzoli, the scholar of Fra Angelico, and which had been further developed by the presence of the great sanctuary of Assisi, reached its highest technical perfection in the works of the Perugia master. These pensive Madonnas, clad in richly ornamented robes and set in peaceful landscapes under summer skies, these saints whose upturned faces and yearning eyes spoke of a haven of rest after the storms of this life, had a peculiar fascination for the men and women of that troubled age, tired as they were with the din of perpetual warfare. Perugino's pictures were accordingly in great request, and orders flowed in from all quarters. In 1500, he had just completed the frescoes of the Hall of Exchange in his native city, and was engaged to supply altar-pieces for the convents of Vallombrosa and the Certosa of Pavia, for the nuns of the Pazzi in Florence, and several of the principal churches in Perugia. It was no easy task to execute all these commissions, and great ladies, such as Isabella d'Este, had to wait years before their demands could be satisfied.

Under these circumstances it was natural that young Raphael, having served his apprenticeship under Timoteo Viti, should enter Perugino's workshop as one of the large band of scholars and assistants who were employed in carrying out his designs. The Umbrian master's fame stood high at the Court of Urbino, and he was well known to Duke Guidobaldo's sister, Giovanna della Rovere, the wife of the Prefect of Rome, whose uncle, Pope Sixtus IV., had employed him to paint the frescoes of the Sistine. Raphael's own father had spoken of him in his poem as a divine painter, and as lately as 1497, he had finished the great altar-piece at Fano, for the same church which Giovanni Santi had formerly adorned with his works. In all probability Perugino had been personally acquainted with the Court-painter of Urbino, but, whether he had known the father or not, the son soon won his affection. His talent for drawing, as well as the charm of his manners, says Vasari, captivated Pietro, who pronounced at once that he would become a great master.

The busy life of Perugia itself and its turbulent streets offered a strange contrast to the quiet scenes in which Raphael's early youth had been spent. From the first the loveliness of the Umbrian landscape and glory of those wide views over the Tiber valley sank deep into his soul. The sight of Assisi, with its memories of Dante and St. Francis, and the great double church where generations of artists had painted their masterpieces in turn, may well have stirred his impressionable nature. But there were other scenes nearer home which touched him still more deeply. After a long spell of fierce warfare between the rival factions whose quarrels tore Perugia in twain, the Oddi had been expelled and the Baglioni had triumphed. For a time peace reigned in the distracted city, churches were rebuilt, and art flourished within its walls. But soon the fiery passions which filled the breast of the leading citizens broke out again, and the summer of 1500 witnessed one of those bloody tragedies that were common in the annals of Perugia. In June Astorre Baglioni celebrated his wedding with great rejoicing, but a fortnight later he was murdered in cold blood by his kinsman Grifone, who in his turn fell under the avenger's sword. A general massacre followed, the churches were desecrated, and the streets ran with blood. The scene of Atalanta Baglioni bending in the agony of her grief over her dying son is touchingly described by the chroniclers of the day, and must have come back



The Crucifixion. By Raphael. In the possession of L. Mona, Esq.

to Raphael's mind, when at her bidding, six years afterwards, he painted his picture of the Mother of Jesus mourning over her dead son. But, while these scenes of strife and bloodshed were happening without, Perugino's young assistant was busy within the workshop, learning the secrets of the great Umbrian's art. The singular receptiveness of his mind made him the best of scholars. As he had already absorbed all the grace and sincerity of Timoteo's art, so now he surrendered himself wholly to Perugino's influence, and before long imitated his style so closely that, in Vasari's words, it became almost impossible to distinguish his work from that of his master. This is certainly true of the first independent picture which he painted after his arrival at Perugia, *The Crucifixion*, for the Gavari chapel in the Dominican church at Città di Castello. The altar-piece must have been executed in 1501 or early in 1502, before the Vitelli, who reigned in this hill-set town, and were closely allied to the Duke of Urbino, were driven out by Cæsar Borgia. "Raphael Urbinas F." was the signature which the young master placed on the foot of the cross in the centre of the picture, "but for which name," remarks Vasari, "it would certainly have been taken for Perugino's work." The composition is exactly similar to that of *The Crucifixion* which Perugino had lately painted in St. Francesco del Monte at Perugia, and which he has repeated in other renderings of the subject at Siena or in Florence. As in the elder master's work, the cross divides the picture in two equal parts, and the sun and moon and angels, hovering in the air to catch the blood in their cups, are symmetrically arranged to fill up the space between the limbs of the crucifix. The gently sloping hills and slender pines of the landscape, the four isolated figures in the foreground, are all in Perugino's usual style. The *Christ* is copied from *The Crucifixion* which he painted for the Brotherhood of the Calza, the *St. John* from his *Deposition* in the Pitti, the other figures of the Virgin, the Magdalen, and St. Jerome are taken from his altar-pieces in St. Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi. In each instance Raphael has made use of his master's studies, but has inspired them with his own deeper and finer feeling. Their attitudes are less conventional, their movements truer to nature, the way in which the Virgin clasps her hands or the Magdalen lifts her tearful gaze to the cross, speak of genuine love and sorrow. Slight as these changes are, they make us feel the presence

of a new and more intense life, and realise how soon the scholar was to surpass the master at whose feet he sat.

Raphael's next important work was the *Coronation of the Virgin*, now in the Vatican Gallery. This altar-piece was painted in 1502, by order of a widowed lady of the Oddi family, for a chapel which she had endowed in the cathedral-church of Perugia. The design of the upper part, if not



*Head of an Angel. Study for the Coronation of the Virgin. By Raphael.
British Museum.*

actually by Perugino's hand, is evidently borrowed from the noble *Assumption* which he painted about 1500 for the convent of Vallombrosa. Here Christ, throned upon the clouds, and surrounded by a host of tiny cherubs, places the crown on His mother's brow, while four boy-angels play musical instruments at His feet. But in the lower half of the picture, where Perugino had after his wont introduced four single figures of saints, Raphael represents the Apostles standing round the open tomb. Some of

the twelve look down wonderingly into the empty grave, where lilies and roses are blossoming, others turn questioning eyes on their companions, but St. James on the right and St. John on the left lift yearning faces heavenwards, and in the centre of the group St. Thomas, holding the Virgin's girdle in his hands, looks upwards with the same love and longing in his eyes. The whole style of the picture, the black shadows and bright colouring, the shape of the hands and the folds of the drapery, show how closely Raphael had adopted his master's methods. But even here there is a youthful loveliness about his seraphs to which Perugino never attained, and more than one of the studies for the picture, especially the beautiful drawing of the Angel playing the violin in the British Museum, remind us of his old master, Timoteo Viti, while the head of St. James (in the Malcolm Collection) is copied from a drawing by Pinturicchio.

The influence of Perugino is especially apparent in the predella of the *Coronation*. This consists of three subjects—the *Annunciation*, *Presentation in the Temple*, and *Adoration of the Magi*, which are also in the Vatican Gallery. In painting the two first he was able to make use of the similar subjects in the predella of his master's altar-piece at Fano. This he did after his wont, adding some types, altering others, and refining and improving all. The cartoon of the *Annunciation* is now in the Louvre, and that of the *Presentation* at Oxford, while a fine drawing for part of the *Adoration of the Magi* is in the Museum of Stockholm. In all the annals of Italian art there is no more lovely rendering of the old subject than this lowly Virgin seated alone under a stately colonnade of Corinthian pillars, receiving the message of the angel, who, running in with swift, bird-like movement, hails Mary as blessed among women. The long evening shadows fall upon the tessellated squares of the brown marble floor, but, through the columns of the open portico, we see the western sun shining on the valley and the towers of Urbino beyond. In the *Presentation*, of which we have the study at Oxford, the arrangement of the figures, the High Priest standing between Joseph and Mary and bending down to receive the Child, and the font and pillar on which it rests, are faithfully copied from Perugino's predella at Fano, but the smile of the Virgin's face and the action of the Child, who turns in sudden alarm to his mother, are of Raphael's own

invention. The third picture is a more original and animated composition, in which the artist brings the kings from the far east to worship with the shepherds of Bethlehem at the manger throne, and introduces a number of horsemen and spectators, after Pinturicchio's manner, in the background.

In 1502 the invasion of Cæsar Borgia spread terror throughout Romagna. One by one the princes who had opposed his ambitious plans took flight, and the chief cities opened their gates at his approach. Urbino yielded without a blow, and Duke Guidobaldo narrowly escaped with his life. The Baglioni, who had long held sway in Perugia, fled, and the exiled Oddi returned. The general confusion and insecurity may have been one reason which led Perugino to leave his native city and return to Florence in the autumn of this year. In his absence, Raphael now attached himself to the other distinguished artist who, after painting a succession of great works for two Popes and adorning the *Cappella bella* of Spello with another remarkable series of pictures, had lately returned to his native city, and had succeeded Perugino in his office as one of the city priors. Bernardino Betti, commonly called Pinturicchio, or the little painter, from his small stature, and sometimes also *Sordicchio*, because of his deafness, was in many respects the very reverse of Perugino. He worked hard all his life, but never attained wealth or popularity, and was unfortunate alike in his public and private life. He made an unhappy marriage, and had few friends, being, according to Vasari, of a strange and capricious temper. But from the first Raphael seems to have been attracted by the man's genius, and he became fast friends with this artist, who was thirty years his senior. The influence which his new teacher acquired over him, the hold which the Umbrian's picturesque and dramatic conceptions gained upon his imagination, soon became apparent in Raphael's works. He copied Pinturicchio's heads, adopted his types, and caught the peculiarities of his style. The result has been that in many cases the elder master's works have been assigned to the hand of his younger and more famous comrade, and Morelli discovered no less than 118 of Pinturicchio's drawings, in different collections, among the works ascribed to Raphael.

This confusion is partly due to Vasari's assertion that Raphael supplied Pinturicchio with the design of his frescoes in the library at

Siena, and accompanied him to that city in 1504 to assist in their execution. The inaccuracy of this statement, which Morelli calls the pure invention of Siennese municipal vanity, has now been generally recognised. It is, as the same writer remarks, highly improbable that a master of Pinturicchio's age and experience, who had been Court-painter to Pope Alexander VI., should have borrowed designs from a youth who was thirty years his junior, or allowed him to execute an important part of the work. But as a matter of fact, there is no trace of Raphael's hand in the frescoes, nor any evidence that he ever visited Siena. On the contrary, his name is not even mentioned by Sigismondo Tizio, the priest of the parish in which Pinturicchio lived at Siena, who wrote a full and accurate account of the artists that were employed in the decoration of the Cathedral library. Morelli has also dispelled another delusion of comparatively recent invention—the theory which ascribed to Raphael the authorship of a volume of one hundred and six drawings bought by the painter Bossi early in this century. The greater part of these drawings, to which Bossi himself first gave the name of the Venice Sketch-book, are now proved to be the work of Pinturicchio. Among them are not only designs for his frescoes at Siena, but for many of the paintings which he executed in Rome before the birth of Raphael. Others are plainly studies or copies by inferior hands, and of the whole collection, two only are the work of Raphael himself. These two drawings are on a single sheet of paper of different size and texture from the rest of the sketch-book, and are studies of men and horses which he copied at Florence from Lionardo's cartoon of the *Battle of the Standard*.

On the other hand, Raphael, there can be no doubt, availed himself repeatedly of Pinturicchio's designs in the pictures which he painted after Perugino's departure for Florence. Chief among these are two Madonnas in the Berlin Gallery, which are of especial interest as the first paintings of the Virgin and Child that we have from his hand. Two still earlier versions of the subject, however, are to be found among his drawings. These are the little pen-and-ink sketch of the Virgin and Child at Oxford (Braun, No. 10), and a chalk drawing of the Virgin offering the Child a pomegranate, in the Albertina at Vienna. Both of these retain strong marks of Timoteo Viti's influence, and were probably executed in 1500, during the first year of Raphael's residence at Perugia,

if, indeed, the Oxford sketch does not belong to an earlier date. The Child is of the same type as Francia's babies, and the background of lake and towers recalls the plates in the Correr Museum, which Timoteo Viti designed for Isabella d'Este. The Virgin holds an open book before the Child, a favourite motive, which Raphael was to repeat in many different forms during his Umbrian and Florentine period. The *Madonna* of the Albertina is copied from a drawing by Perugino at Berlin, but the face and hands are still fashioned on Timoteo's model, and the expression of the gentle Virgin is of the same character. The reading *Madonna* of the Solly Collection, now in the Berlin Gallery (141), is, on the contrary, entirely Peruginesque in treatment, and is copied from a drawing by Pinturicchio in the Salle des Boîtes at the Louvre. Here the Virgin's long and narrow face, pursed-up mouth, and hooded drapery are of purely Umbrian type, and the Child holding a finch in his hand exactly resembles Perugino's infants. Of the same date (1502-3), and also taken from a drawing by Pinturicchio in the Albertina, is the Virgin between St. Jerome and St. Francis (145) in the Berlin Gallery. The *Madonna* turns lovingly to the Child seated on her knee with his hand raised to bless, and on either side, St. Jerome in his cardinal's hat and St. Francis lifting his pierced hands, look on with the tenderly ecstatic air common to Umbrian saints. The shape of the Virgin's face and hands and the gold embroideries of her mantle, the frizzled locks of the Child and the cushion upon which he is seated, are all closely imitated from Pinturicchio.

There is a distinct advance in the third *Madonna* of this period—the circular panel executed, it may be towards the end of 1503, for the uncle of Domenico Alfani, Raphael's friend and fellow-worker in Perugino's *bottega*. This beautiful little picture is taken from the same design of Perugino which Raphael had already copied in his drawing of the *Madonna* with the pomegranate. But here he has altered the pomegranate into a book, and changed the position of the Child, who turns over the pages in childish delight. He has removed the nun-like veil from the Virgin's brow to show the hair smoothly braided on each side of her youthful face, and while preserving his master's original design has given us a far sweeter and more natural picture of the Mother and Child than any which Perugino painted. In the background, we have not only the



Robert Pinx.

Walter L. G. & Co.

S. Sebastian.

usual landscape of green slopes and slender trees, but a lake with a boat sailing upon its waters and distant hills capped with the first winter's snow. This little work, charmingly composed and painted with gem-like finish and brightness, passed from the heirs of the Alfani to the Conestabile-



*The Conestabile Madonna. By Raphael. Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.
From a photograph by Braun, Clément et Cie, by permission.*

Staffa family, and was sold in 1871 by Count Scipione Conestabile of Perugia to the late Empress of Russia for the sum of 330,000 francs.

Two other small pictures also belong to this period, and must have been painted about 1503 at Perugia. One is the little *Salvator Mundi*

in the gallery of Brescia, a half-length figure of the risen Christ wearing a crown of green thorns, and raising his pierced hand in blessing, which originally belonged to a family of Pesaro, in the Duchy of Urbino. The other is the *St. Sebastian* bearing a dart in his hand, now in the Bergamo Gallery. The lovely features of the youthful martyr recall the faces of Perugino's Saints and the Evangelist of Raphael's own *Crucifixion*, the rich embroideries of his tunic might have been painted by any Perugian Sartist, but in the mass of the Saint's curling locks and the beauty of his expression we recognise the hand of Raphael. Another noticeable feature which is to be seen in this picture, as well as in the Berlin Madonnas and in the saints and angels of the *Coronation*, is the peculiar formation of the eyeball, and the way in which the iris and pupil are blended together. This peculiarity, which is now recognised as an absolutely crucial test of Raphael's Peruginesque works, is also apparent in the portrait of Perugino that was discovered by Morelli in the Borghese Gallery. This most interesting work came to Rome from Urbino with the *Vision of the Knight* and the *Three Graces*, and, in spite of its distinctly Italian character, was long ascribed to Holbein. Although in bad condition and evidently left unfinished, the portrait is a marvel of vivid and forcible representation. The sitter is a man of about fifty, richly clad in a fur-trimmed suit with white frilling at his throat, and wearing a black cap on his flowing locks of dark-brown hair. The black tunic is only sketchily painted, and the position of the cap has been shifted by the artist himself, during the progress of his work. The features resemble the portrait of Perugino in the hall of the Cambio, and the general character of both face and dress agree with all that we know of this able and prosperous master who painted heavenly faced saints to order, and at the same time had so keen an eye to his worldly interests. Many years ago, an acute critic the late Otto Müндler, pronounced this picture to be the portrait of Perugino by himself, and the present catalogue of the Borghese Gallery ascribes the work to that master. But Perugino never painted a portrait so full of power and vigour, so intensely real and living. The jet-black eyes sparkle with light, the nose and mouth, as Morelli remarked, are more sharply modelled than in Perugino's work, and the hair is treated with true Raphaellesque grace and feeling. The picture may be safely accepted



*Portrait of Perugino. By Raphael. In the Borghese Gallery, Rome.
From a photograph by D. Anderson, by permission.*

as a youthful work of Raphael, painted either before Perugino's departure in 1502, or during the brief visit which he paid to Perugia, in the autumn of 1503. Both as the portrait of the master with whom he had been so closely connected, and as the first of a long line of masterpieces in this direction, the Borghese picture is of the deepest interest.

Towards the end of 1503, Raphael received orders for two large altar-pieces from the churches of Città di Castello. The death of Alexander VI. had altered the state of affairs in Umbria, the dreaded Borgia had fled, the Vitelli had returned to Città di Castello, the Baglioni to Perugia, and peace was restored to the distracted land. It was then, according to Vasari, that Raphael painted the *Coronation of St. Nicholas of Tolentino* for the Augustinian monks of the hill-set city. This time he made use of a design by Pinturicchio, now in the Musée Wicar, at Lille, in which the saint is represented as trampling upon the devil and crowned by God the Father in the presence of the Virgin and St. Augustine. The subject agrees with a copy of the picture that was made early in the last century, but the original altar-piece was sold by the monks in 1787, to Pope Pius VI., and disappeared during the French invasion of Rome.

The *Sposalizio* which Raphael painted for the Franciscans of Città di Castello was carried off by a French general in 1798, but rescued by Giovanni Sannazzaro of Milan, who bequeathed it to the hospital of that city in 1804. Two years later it was purchased by the State and placed in the Brera Gallery. The marriage of the Virgin had been a favourite theme in Italian art from the days of Giotto and Angelico, but, often as it was seen in predellas and small panels of the life of Mary, it was never the subject of a large altar-piece, until, in 1501, Perugino painted his *Sposalizio* for the Chapel of St. Joseph in the cathedral of Perugia. Here the ring of the Virgin, stolen by a friar from the treasury of Siena, was preserved as a sacred relic and jealously guarded by the brotherhood of St. Joseph, from whom Perugino received the commission. This picture, which had lately left his master's shop, Raphael now took for his model. So closely indeed did he follow the composition that it has been supposed that the Franciscans of Città di Castello desired him to supply them with a copy of the Perugia altar-

piece. The size and the shape of the pictures are exactly similar ; the number of personages introduced, the general arrangement and scheme of colour, are the same in both works. A classical temple occupies the centre of the background, and in front the high priest joins the hands of bride and bridegroom in the presence of the wedding party, a group of six men surrounding Joseph on one side, while as many women of different ages stand round the Virgin on the other. Yet, if we compare the two pictures, the general effect is entirely different. Raphael has, first of all, reversed the position of the bridal pair, and placed the women on the right, the men on the left hand of the priest. He has made the temple smaller, the figures larger, and altered Perugino's octagonal building into a graceful Renaissance structure, recalling Bramante's Tempietto at S. Pietro Montorio of Rome. He has modified the variegated hues of the dresses, and, without subduing their brightness, has brought them into more perfect harmony. He has placed the temple on a higher and broader flight of steps, throwing a softened shadow over the background, and revealing the lovely expanse of distant hill and woodland, on either side. Above all, he has broken up the rigid symmetry of the principal group, and has given both actors and spectators an air of animation and natural grace that is wholly lacking in Perugino's figures. There is more youth and charm about Mary, greater manliness and earnestness in the face of Joseph. The disappointed suitors breaking their rods, and the fair maidens who wait upon the bride, are no longer isolated figures looking idly out of the picture. They are stirred by a common interest and united by one and the same purpose. In a word, Raphael has lifted the whole composition to a higher level, and transformed a dull and formal scene into a picture of the purest beauty and pathos. This, we feel, is the last word that Umbrian art had to say, the highest point of perfection to which it could attain. And yet, strictly speaking, the *Sposalizio* is not the work of an Umbrian painter. As long as Perugino and Pinturicchio were at Raphael's side, he could never wholly free himself from the limitations of their art, but left to himself, he went back unconsciously to his early manner, and drew his hands and faces and laid on his colours in the old way. It is singular how this work, which was directly modelled on an Umbrian pattern, bears more distinct traces of Timoteo Viti's influence than any other that



Raphael. Dinx.

Water-Colour. Ph. Sc.

The Marriage of the Virgin.

Raphael painted during the year which he spent at Perugia. The superiority of his art to that of his master was manifest, and when he wrote "Raphael Urbinas MDIII." on the cornice of the temple in his picture he must have felt that he had nothing more to learn from Perugino.

When the *Sposalizio* had been finally placed over the high altar



St. George. By Raphael. In the Louvre.

in St. Francesco of Città di Castello, Raphael went back to Urbino to see his friends and spend the summer in his old home. The moment was happily chosen. The storm which had swept over the land had rolled by, the return of the Duke and Duchess had been welcomed by their devoted subjects with tears of joy. The library and most of the works of art which Borgia had carried off as his booty to Rome, had been recovered, the palace resumed its old aspect, and

the old court life was once more lived within its walls. When Raphael reached Urbino, Duke Guidobaldo was absent in Rome. He had been appointed Captain-General of the papal forces by Pope Julius II., and did not reach Urbino until late in the summer. But the good Duchess Elizabeth was acting as regent in her husband's stead, and the young painter was sure of her favour and kindly interest in his career. For her he now painted the little *St. George* of the Louvre, that companion picture to the *St. Michael* which, if Morelli's conjecture is correct, he had painted four or five years before. Like that interesting little work, and like the *Three Graces*, the *St. George* bears strong marks of Ferrarese influence, while in drawing and technique it exhibits a very decided advance. The pen-and-ink sketch in the Uffizi is in the style of Raphael's Peruginisque drawings, but at the same time bears a marked likeness to Francia's early pictures of *St. George* in the Corsini Palace. The hero mounted on his white horse, with plumes and mantle waving on the wind, rides full tilt at the dragon, and lifts his sword to strike the monster dead. On the ground at his feet lie the broken fragments of his red and white lance, and in the landscape behind the captive princess is seen, with outstretched arms, hurrying away from the scene of conflict. The lost picture of *Christ on the Mount of Olives*, which Vasari describes as so admirable a work, and one that was highly prized by the ducal family of Urbino, may have been painted during this visit; but Guidobaldo's time and thoughts were engaged by his new office, his treasury was exhausted, and the State had not recovered from the ruinous effect of Borgia's invasion.

There seemed no prospect of important artistic undertakings in the Court of Urbino, and Raphael's thoughts were already turned in another direction. That he renewed his old intimacy with Timoteo Viti and worked in his old master's *atelier* is more than probable. The beautiful silver-point study for a Virgin's head from the Malcolm Collection was evidently taken from the same model as Timoteo's drawing, which formerly went by the name of Raphael's sister, and may belong to these days. In that face we already see the germ of the early Florentine Madonnas, of the Granduca and the Cardellino Virgins. But wonderful news came from Florence—of the colossal David which had lately been set up on the public square, of the cartoons for the decoration of the Great Hall upon

which the two great artists Michelangelo and Lionardo were engaged. Perugino himself was there ; and his scholar, who may have met Lionardo



Study of a Woman. By Timoteo Viti. In the Malcolm Collection.

when he came to Perugia two years before in the service of Cæsar Borgia, and had certainly seen Michelangelo's famous Cupid in the palace

of Urbino, longed to mingle in that august company and have a share in these great works. Before long, the opportunity which he sought presented itself. In September, the Duke arrived from Rome, followed by a brilliant train, bringing with him his widowed sister Giovanna della Rovere and her young son Francesco, who had succeeded his father as Prefect of Rome, and was commonly known as Il Prefettino. On the 14th, a splendid ceremony was held in the cathedral, when the Papal Nuncio solemnly delivered the bâton of Captain-General of the Holy See into Guidobaldo's hands. This was followed, four days later, by a still more imposing function, when the Duke recognised his young nephew Francesco della Rovere, the son of Pope Julius's brother, as his adopted heir, and his subjects in turn swore fealty to their future lord. Meanwhile Raphael was graciously received by the Prefetessa, as Giovanna della Rovere was called, for the sake of his dead father. She remembered how, long ago, Giovanni Santi had painted an Annunciation for her at Sinigaglia, to commemorate the birth of her son on the 25th of March 1490, and, hearing of Raphael's wish to visit Florence, she addressed the following letter to the Gonfaloniere of that city :—

“ TO THE HIGH AND MAGNIFICENT LORD AND MOST HONOURED FATHER, PIER SODERINI, GONFALONIERE OF FLORENCE.—The bearer of this letter will be Raphael, painter of Urbino, who being endowed with natural talent for his profession has decided to spend some time in Florence, in order to study art. And since his father was a very excellent man and dear to me, and the son is a discreet and gentle youth, I am very fond of him, and wish him to attain to perfection. I therefore recommend him most earnestly to your lordship, and beg you, for my sake, to give him your help and favour on every occasion, and whatever services and kindness your lordship may show him, I shall consider as rendered to myself, and shall esteem this to be the greatest favour on the part of your lordship, to whom I now commend myself.

“ GIOVANNA FELICIA FELTRIA DELLA ROVERE,

“ *Duchessa di Sora, Prefetessa di Roma.*

“ URBINO, 1 Oct. 1504.”

The genuineness of this letter has been disputed by some writers because Bottari, who first published it in the last century, gave a mistaken

reading of the MS., which made it appear that Giovanni Santi was alive when the letter was written. But; as the last editor of Vasari, Professor Milanesi, has pointed out, the word which Bottari gives as *so* (*il padre*



Madonna. From a Drawing, by Raphael. In the Malcolm Collection.

suo) was no doubt *fô*, the Umbrian form of *fû* (was), and the sentence in which Giovanna speaks of Raphael's father, is in the past and not in the present tense. The actual MS. belonged to a valuable Florentine

collection of autograph letters, including several from Pier Soderini himself and the Medici, which were put up to auction at a sale in Paris, in January 1856. On this occasion Giovanna della Rovere's letter was sold for two hundred francs, and the contents were fully described in the catalogue of the auction at the Salle Sylvestre. The present owner of the letter is unknown, but there seems no sufficient reason for disputing the authenticity of a document which agrees with both the date of Raphael's first visit to Florence, and with those frequent allusions to the ducal family, and more especially to Giovanna della Rovere and her son, that we find in the painter's own letters. But, whether the letter of the Prefetessa is genuine or not, there can be no doubt that, towards the close of 1504, Raphael came to Florence.

PART III

FLORENCE

1504—1508

Raphael's first visit to Florence—His friends and patrons—Studies of Lionardo and Michelangelo—Portraits of the Doni—Early Madonnas—Works at Perugia—Ansidei and Sant'Antonio Madonnas—Fresco of San Severo—Visit to Urbino—Castiglione, Bembo, and the Ducal Court—The St George at St. Petersburg—Second group of Madonnas—The Entombment—Letter to his uncle—Last works of the Florentine period.

“IN Florence, more than in any other city, men become perfect in all the arts, especially in that of painting. There the fine air makes men naturally quick to praise and blame, prompt to see what is good and beautiful, unwilling to tolerate mediocrity. The keen struggle for life sharpens the wits, and the love of glory is stirred in the hearts of men of every profession.” Such, according to Vasari, were the words in which Perugino's old Umbrian master urged him to seek his fortunes in Florence. And now the same impulse drew his still more gifted scholar to the banks of Arno, and at the age of twenty-one Raphael came to Florence, as a learner, in the words of his patroness—*per imparare*. The moment was a memorable one. Never, even in the Magnifico Lorenzo's days, had so brilliant a company of artists met together within the city walls, as that which assembled in January 1504, to decide on the site of Michelangelo's David. Among the architects present on that occasion were Cronaca and the brothers Sangallo; among the sculptors, Andrea della Robbia and Sansovino; among the painters, Cosimo Roselli, Sandro Botticelli, Filippino Lippi, Piero di Cosimo, Lorenzo di Credi, Pietro Perugino, and Lionardo da Vinci. All of these were still living when Raphael came to Florence, with the single

exception of Filippino, who had died of an acute attack of *angina pectoris*, on the 18th of April, leaving his *Deposition* for the church of the Servi Brothers to be finished by Perugino. The presence of so many illustrious masters naturally provoked that generous spirit of rivalry which, Vasari assures us, was generated by the pure air of Florence. Great works were produced amidst the enthusiastic applause not only of the artists but of the whole city. Lionardo's cartoon of the *Holy Family* had hardly been finished when the Servi friars threw open their convent doors and allowed the people to come in and see the wonderful work with their own eyes. "During two days," we read, "the hall was thronged with men and women of every rank and age—such a concourse, in short, as we see flocking to the most solemn festivals, all hastening to behold the marvel wrought by Lionardo."

The sight of Florence itself—of that dome which had as yet no rival, of the palaces and churches which lined the streets, of the frescoes that filled chapels and convent-cells with light and colour, of Della Robbia's blue-and-white Madonnas and angels shining down above the crowded market-place and in the quiet corners of side alleys—might well delight Raphael's soul. The city and the works of art he saw there, says Vasari, alike seemed divine to him, and he asked nothing better than to take up his abode there, and spend the rest of his days at Florence.

He went everywhere and saw everything. His quick eye took note of each different object in this new and wonderful world, and his hand recorded countless forms and shapes which he could never have dreamt of in his Umbrian days. He lingered in the dim chapel of the Carmine until he knew every figure in Masaccio's works by heart, he studied Ghirlandajo's heads and Donatello's marbles, and made careful drawings of Michelangelo's David on sheets which may still be seen in the British Museum. But it was Lionardo above all others who attracted him by the science and beauty of his art. "He stood dumb," Vasari tells us, "before the grace of his figures, and thought him superior to all other masters. In fact, the style of Lionardo pleased him better than any which he had ever seen, and, leaving the manner of Pietro, he endeavoured with infinite pains to imitate the art of Lionardo. From having been a master, he once more became a pupil. At the same

time, Michelangelo's mastery of the human frame made a profound impression upon his mind, and he applied himself with ardour to learn



Group in the Venice Sketch-book, from Leonardo's Battle of the Standard. By Raphael.

the principles of anatomy. Night and day he devoted himself to the task, and studied the structure of the body, the movement and fore-

shortening of limbs, and connection of nerves and muscles, with such unwearied industry, that in a few months he learnt what others acquire in the space of years."

The letter of La Prefetessa does not seem to have brought him any commission from the Gonfaloniere, who had already the two greatest living painters in his service, and many other excellent artists awaiting his commands. But the recommendations of his Urbino friends and the influence of his master Perugino—above all, his own charming nature, brought him many friends, and made him a general favourite in artistic circles. He was a frequent visitor at the shop of the distinguished architect Baccio d'Agnolo, where artists of every age and rank met on winter evenings to discuss problems connected with their craft. All the well-known painters and sculptors in Florence were to be seen at these gatherings in turn, and sometimes, although rarely, the great Michelangelo himself would look in. But since he had lately quarrelled with Lionardo, and had been summoned before a court of justice to explain the abusive language which he had used of Perugino, openly calling him "*goffo nell'arte*," his presence may have inspired more awe than pleasure among his younger comrades. Of the youths whom Raphael met at Baccio d'Agnolo's shop or worked with in the Brancacci chapel, Ridolfo Ghirlandajo and Sebastiano Sangallo were his chief friends. The former was the son of the great painter who had lately died, and, like Raphael, had declared himself to be an ardent admirer of Lionardo. The latter was a first-rate draughtsman, whose gay temper and witty sayings had earned for him the nickname of Aristotile. But the young painter from Urbino was soon to form a still closer friendship with a master of a very different type, the gentle and serious Baccio della Porta, who five years before, in his grief at the death of Savonarola, had left the world to take the vows of the Dominican order, and was now a friar of S. Marco. That magnificent fresco of the *Last Judgment*, which, in the darkest hour of his despair at the loss of his beloved master, he had painted in the hospital of S. Maria Nuova, made a powerful impression on Raphael's mind and exerted a marked influence on his future work. The painter of that noble fresco, now known as Fra Bartolommeo, had lately taken up his brush again, and was at work on an altar-piece for the Badia. Ere long Raphael became his intimate friend, and learnt from him the secrets of the fine



*Angelo Doni By Raphael. Pitti Gallery, Florence.
From a photograph by Braun, Clement et Cie., by permission.*

colour and modelling which were the charm of the Frate's pictures. Among the visitors who came to Baccio d'Agnolo's gatherings was Taddeo Taddei, a wealthy Florentine of cultivated tastes, who corresponded with Bembo and was a liberal patron of the fine arts. Baccio d'Agnolo had built him a palace in the Via de' Ginori, and Michelangelo had carved one of his finest Holy Families for him in stone. Taddeo soon made friends with Raphael, and was never happy unless the young painter were in his house and at his table. And Raphael, writes Vasari, "who was the most amiable of men (*ch' era la gentilezza stessa*), not to be outdone in courtesy, painted two pictures for him, which Taddeo valued among his most precious treasures." "Show all honour to Taddeo, of whom we have so often spoken," wrote the painter to his uncle Simone, when his friend was about to visit Urbino, "for there is no man living to whom I am more deeply indebted." Another noble Florentine who shared Raphael's intimacy was Lorenzo Nasi, afterwards one of the City priors. Either of these friends may have recommended him to the wealthy merchant Agnolo Doni, one of the most discerning and at the same time one of the most niggardly lovers of pictures in Florence. This cautious personage, whose palace was a museum of antique and contemporary art, had lately bought Michelangelo's famous *Holy Family* of the Tribune, after wrangling with Buonarotti for months over the price. Now in his anxiety to obtain good pictures at the lowest possible price, he employed the young painter from Urbino, who was as yet little known in Florence, to paint his own portrait and that of his wife, a lady of the Strozzi family. Both of these portraits, which hang to-day in the Pitti Gallery, are admirable examples of Raphael's close and faithful study of life. They are painted with the same minute attention to detail, the same anxious rendering of each single hair, that we note in the Borghese portrait. The wealthy merchant in his black damask suit and red sleeves, with refined features and keen anxious gaze, his staid, richly dressed wife in her blue brocades and jewelled necklace, well satisfied with herself and all the world, are living types of their class. Yet in the form of the pictures, in the pose of Maddalena Doni's head and of her placidly folded hands, we are conscious of a new influence. If from the picture we turn to the pen-and-ink sketch in the Louvre, we see at a glance that Lionardo's *Mona Lisa* was



*Maddalena Doni. By Raphael. Pitti Gallery, Florence.
From a photograph by Alinari, by permission.*

in Raphael's mind when he painted Maddalena Doni's portrait. The cut of the dress, the ripple of the hair, the very folds of the bodice are exactly copied from that famous picture, which Raphael must have seen in Francesco Giocondo's house at Florence. Only instead of Lionardo's rock landscape, he has sketched a view of Umbrian hills and Urbino towers, framed in between the columns of an open loggia. There is, we must confess, a charm in the drawing which is lacking in the picture. This maiden with the dreamy eyes and youthful face was the painter's ideal; the other was the actual woman, Maddalena Doni, the rich merchant's wife, a subject, it may be, not very much to his taste, but none the less to be painted with perfect accuracy and truth.

But Raphael's dreams and studies were soon to bear richer fruit. The earliest, and in some ways the most perfect of that long series of Madonnas that were the glory of his second period, belong to the first year which he spent in Florence. The chronological arrangement of Raphael's Madonnas has been attempted, but not yet finally accomplished, by many writers, and still remains a matter of uncertainty. But we may safely assume the Madonna del Granduca to have been one of the first which the artist painted after he came to Florence in 1504. We know nothing of its origin or history. It may have been the picture which he painted for the Prefetessa or one of the two Virgins, which Vasari tells us, were ordered by Duke Guidobaldo. All we know is that this Madonna was found in the last century in the house of a poor widow, and that in 1799 it was bought by the Grand Duke Ferdinand III., who would never part from it again, and carried it about with him on all his journeys. But one thing is certain: when Raphael painted this picture, the face of the Virgin with the downcast eyes which he had drawn in Timoteo's *atelier* at Urbino was still in his mind. With that vision before his eyes, he drew the sketch now in the Uffizi, taking for his model this time some Tuscan peasant-girl whom he had seen with her babe on her arm. Then he painted the beautiful picture on the dark-green panel, with no thought in his head but simply that of mother and child. Nothing could well be simpler or more natural. The child rests on his mother's arm, and his little hands stray over her neck in perfect trust and safety. The Virgin stands directly facing us, wearing a blue mantle without gilding or ornament, and a transparent veil over her fair hair. The whole beauty of the

picture lies in the serene peace of the Maid-mother's face, in the calm features and downcast eyes that tell of a deeper bliss and a diviner hope than mortals dream of here. "Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart."

Closely linked with the Virgin of the Granduca is the Casa Tempi Madonna. This picture was seen by Cinelli in 1677, after which it was lost sight of for many years, and was eventually found by a doctor of the family, covered with dust and dirt, in a forgotten corner. It was bought in 1829, by King Ludwig of Bavaria, for 16,000 scudi, and is now in the Old Pinacothek of Munich. Although in a bad state of preservation, and sadly disfigured by the restorer's hand, this Casa Tempi Madonna still retains much of its original charm. In this mother and child meeting in fond embrace, Raphael has set the very ideal of maternal love before our eyes. The Virgin is represented standing up and clasping the child in her arms. She wears a blue mantle over a red bodice and sleeves, a light veil on her hair, and a gold-striped handkerchief round her shoulders. Her face is turned to the right, and she is about to press a kiss on the face of the eager child, who raises his face to hers.

The Orleans Madonna, once in the possession of Louis the Fourteenth's brother, and now, after many vicissitudes, restored to his descendant the Duc d'Aumale, is generally supposed to have been painted for Duke Guidobaldo, since it agrees with the following entry in the inventory of the Urbino Gallery: "A little picture of a Madonna with Christ in her arms on wood by Raphael." The description, however, might apply equally to either of the two last-named pictures, or to the Cowper Madonna. The Virgin is seated in her lowly chamber, and bends tenderly over the child, who, resting one foot on her right hand and holding on with both hands to the hem of her bodice, looks round with a beaming face. A dark-red curtain hangs on the wall behind, and a row of jars and pots and wine-flask stand on the shelf above. It might be some Tuscan cottage-home, where a young peasant-mother is nursing her first-born child. The same strong and joyous Child, the same Virgin with the yellow hair and gold-threaded veil, meet us in the little picture at Pan-shanger, bought by Lord Cowper when he was Minister at Florence at the end of the last century. But here the Virgin is seated in the open air, and the sun shines on a well-known scene in the neighbourhood



*The Casa Tempori Madonna. By Raphael. Old Pinacothek, Munich.
From a photograph by Hanfstüngl and Co., by permission.*

of Florence—the hill of San Miniato with its tall cypresses, and the cupola and campanile of Cronaca's newly built church, *la bella villanella* which Michelangelo loved. There is, perhaps, more actual charm and beauty in this youthful Madonna and in the smiling child who clings with both arms about her neck, than in any other of Raphael's Virgins. Often as he repeated the same subject in his later Florentine days, endless and varied as are the changes which he was to ring on the old theme, he never surpassed these four Madonnas. In their ideal loveliness and human tenderness they bear witness to the close study of nature which was one great result of his Florentine experiences. As we turn over those sheets covered with countless sketches of mothers and children, which are still to be seen in the Albertina or the British Museum, we feel that the sight of Lionardo's cartoons, of Michelangelo's and Fra Bartolommeo's great works, has not been in vain. He has gone nearer to nature, and has learnt the lesson which she has to teach. And in the light of the new learning, the old has lost its charm. He has forgotten Perugino, and put away Umbrian things.

But while Raphael was scaling new heights at Florence, his presence was much desired at Perugia, and in the autumn of 1505 he returned there to execute several important commissions. The nuns of Monte Luce, a convent of Poor Clares, outside the town, desirous of placing a picture of the Assumption above the high altar of their chapel, consulted the leading citizens of Perugia as to the choice of an artist, and were advised by them, as well as by certain Franciscan friars who knew his work, to employ "Maestro Raffaello da Urbino, the best painter of the day." The contract, we learn from the convent records, was signed on the 23rd of December 1505, when the factor of the community paid Raphael thirty gold ducats in advance. But other engagements took up the painter's time, and he never did more than make a preliminary sketch for the picture which he had agreed to paint. The years went by, and still the poor nuns waited in vain, until at length, in despair of ever obtaining a work from Raphael's hand, they agreed, in 1517, to a fresh arrangement, and allowed their altar-piece to be painted by his pupils Giulio Romano and Francesco Penni.

Among the works which he now pledged himself to execute at Perugia was the altar-piece for the family chapel of the Ansidei, in the

Church of St. Fiorenzo, and the *Madonna and Saints* for the nuns of St. Antony of Padua. Both these pictures are now in London. The *Ansidei Madonna* was bought from the priests of St. Fiorenzo in 1764 by Gavin Hamilton for the third Duke of Marlborough, on condition of supplying a copy in place of the original, and sold by the late Duke in 1885, to the Trustees of the National Gallery for £70,000. The *Madonna of Sant' Antonio* was sold by the nuns, in 1677, to pay their debts, and, after passing through the hands of the Colonna family and the late King of Naples, has of late years been lent to the South Kensington Museum by its present owner, the Duke of Castro. The composition of both works follows the favourite Umbrian tradition: in both the Virgin sits enthroned under a lofty canopy, wearing the same gold-embroidered mantle falling in heavy folds from her head to her feet. But in both instances, in the execution of the picture, in the figures of the Virgin and Child, and the forms and attitudes of the attendant saints, we see the influence of Raphael's Florentine studies.

This is already evident in the fine pen-and-ink drawing for the *Ansidei Virgin* at the Städelsches Institut, Frankfurt, copied as it is from a sketch which Pinturicchio had made for a *Madonna* at Spello. In Raphael's picture the motive is still further modified. He has changed the attitude of the child, who, instead of raising his hand in blessing, looks down at the open book on his mother's knee, and has given the Virgin's countenance a youthful beauty and simplicity akin to his Florentine *Madonnas*. If St. John the Baptist, who stands on the left of the throne, holding a crystal crozier in his hand, and wearing a crimson mantle edged with gold over his camel's-hair garb, recalls Perugino's saints, the venerable figure of St. Nicholas of Bari, in his jewelled cope and mitre, is modelled with all the truth and freedom of Raphael's later style. The date inscribed on the hem of the Virgin's mantle has been differently read by almost every writer. Passavant and Kugler, Sir Charles Eastlake and Sir Henry Layard, give it as 1505; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, as 1506; Minghetti, as 1507. There can however be little doubt that the picture was chiefly painted during Raphael's visit to Perugia in 1505-6, but not finally completed until a later period. The *Ansidei Madonna* is in a far better state of preservation than most of Raphael's



The Ansidei Madonna. By Raphael. From the Picture in the National Gallery.

works, and bears few traces of inferior workmanship. This is more than can be said for the *Madonna di Sant' Antonio*. A split in the panel two centuries ago caused part of the surface to scale off, and the picture has suffered severely from injudicious cleaning and re-painting, while the hand of assistants is clearly visible in the lunette of *God the Father*, as well as in some parts of the draperies. But we recognise Raphael's art in the central group, alike in the little St. John pressing forward to adore the Child, and in the gentle Virgin bending down to lay her hand upon his shoulder. Both children are clothed, the Christ in a white tunic and blue mantle, the little Baptist in camel-hair shirt and green and purple robes, because, in Vasari's words, "those simple and pious women, the nuns, willed it so." The Virgin-saints Catherine and Cecilia, who stand on either side, crowned with roses and bearing the palm of martyrdom, and their companions the Apostles Peter and Paul, recall Fra Bartolommeo's style so forcibly, that Morelli was inclined to assign the picture to 1507 or 1508. But, like the *Ansidei Madonna*, the *Virgin of Sant' Antonio* was probably begun in 1505 or 1506, and completed, with the help of assistants, at a later date. There is certainly no trace of Raphael's own hand in the predella of these pictures. The *Preaching of St. John the Baptist*, that formerly belonged to the Ansidei altar-piece, the *Christ bearing His Cross*, that is now Lord Windsor's property, but which, together with its companion subjects of the *Pietà* and *Christ on the Mount of Olives*, once formed the predella of the *Madonna di Sant' Antonio*, are clearly the work of some second-rate Perugian artist who served as Raphael's assistant.

The round panel long in the possession of the Duke of Terranuova, and bought, in 1859, by Frederick William IV. of Prussia for the Berlin Gallery, may also have been painted during this visit to Perugia. Here Raphael again availed himself of a Peruginesque motive, and borrowed his idea of the *Child showing St. John a Scroll*, with the words *ECCĒ AGNUS DEI*, from a drawing by his master, also at Berlin. But his treatment of the subject shows how far he had left his old teacher behind him. The youthful loveliness and natural movement of Mother and Child, the rocky landscape, the very shape of the picture, are fashioned on Florentine models, and recall the marble roundels of Desiderio or Mino da Fiesole and Michelangelo's *Doni Madonna*. One

more important work, the fresco of the *Trinity* in the Carmelite convent of San Severo, bears the date of 1505, and must have been painted before Raphael left Perugia in the following spring. This work, which is of especial interest as the forerunner of the Vatican frescoes, has suffered terribly from cleaning and restoration. The upper part, containing a figure of God the Father in glory, is practically destroyed, and the lower portion has been entirely painted over. But enough remains to show us the original grandeur of the design. The figure of Christ throned upon the clouds is exactly copied from Fra Bartolommeo's fresco of the *Last Judgment*. So too are the majestic forms of the saints seated in a half-circle on either side, whose noble heads and flowing draperies show how closely the painter had studied Lionardo's types. Having reached this point, Raphael left Perugia without completing the work or painting the row of Camaldoli worthies who were to occupy the space on the lower part of the walls. In vain the good fathers waited, like the nuns of Monte Luce, hoping that the painter would some day come back to finish his fresco. Not till they heard that Raphael was dead would they allow another to complete his work. Then they employed Perugino to paint the missing figures, and the failing hand of the aged master finished the fresco which his scholar had begun in the prime of his genius.

It has always been assumed, on the authority of Passavant, that Raphael went to Urbino in the spring of 1506. There is no actual record of this visit, but it is certain that during the years which he spent in Florence (1504-1508) he frequently visited his old home, and painted several pictures at the Court of Urbino. The allusion to the ducal family in his letters to his uncle, his grief at the death of Guidobaldo, and the fact that he bought a house at Urbino about this time, all support the old tradition that he spent some months at Urbino before his return to Florence in 1506. These were the most brilliant days of the ducal Court, the days which live for ever in the pages of the *Cortigiano*, when the most polished scholars and finest gentlemen of the day met within the palace walls and wrote sonnets and acted pastoral plays in the presence of the Duke and Duchess. Then Elizabeth herself sang verses from the *Æneid* to the music of her lute, and talked of art and love with Madonna Emilia and Bembo, with Canossa

and Castiglione, till the short hours of the summer night were gone and the dawn broke over the peaks of Monte Catria. Raphael may have been there that carnival time, when Castiglione's play was acted before the Court, and his friendship with that accomplished gentleman may date from that spring-time. We know that he was often at Court, that he painted portraits of the Duke and of Castiglione himself, and made a chalk drawing of Bembo, which the Cardinal counted among the choicest treasures of his house at Padua. And tradition says that he painted a portrait of the peerless Duchess Elizabeth for her devoted knight Castiglione, who wrote impassioned verses in her praise, and kept the picture of a *bellissima e principalissima Signora*, by the hand of Raphael of Urbino, to his dying day. All of these are lost, and of the many portraits that Raphael painted at Urbino, the only one remaining is his own picture, which was brought to Rome from his old home in 1588, and is now in the Uffizi. There we see him as he was at three-and-twenty, with brown eyes, long locks of chestnut hair, and a singularly youthful and gentle face. The beautiful features are almost womanly in their charm, the dark eyes are full of poetry, and the black felt cap, the doublet edged with white, and quiet green background, all help to give the same impression of refinement and simplicity. He is already a great master, "the best painter in the land," as the nuns of Monte Luce know, but still as gentle and modest a youth as in the days when he worked in Timoteo's shop. He has kept the sweet and joyous nature that was the charm of his boyhood; "jealous of none, kindly to all, always ready to leave his own work to help another," he is still a favourite with great and small, as welcome a guest in the palace of Urbino, or in Baccio's shop at Florence, as he will be one day among cardinals and princes in Rome.

Among the other pictures which Raphael painted for the Duke of Urbino, the only one to which we can point with certainty is the *St. George and the Dragon* in the Hermitage at St. Petersburg. This second version of the legend differs in several respects from the *St. George* of the Louvre, and the fine drawing in the Uffizi shows a marked advance on his former conception. The position of horse and rider is reversed, and instead of charging towards us they are seen from behind. The hero gallops past at full speed on his fiery white horse, and rising in his



Raphael Pinxit.

Braun, Clement & Co. Sculp.

Portrait of Raphael.



stirrups, drives his spear through the dragon's coils. In the background, overgrown with bushes, is the cavern where the monster dwelt, and on the other side we see the rescued princess on her knees thanking Heaven for



St. George and the Dragon. From a drawing by Raphael in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

her deliverance. The name *Raphello U.* is written on the charger's blue and gold harness, and St. George himself wears the riband of the Garter with the word *Honi*, on his knee. This finely coloured and spirited little

picture was evidently painted to commemorate Duke Guidobaldo's admission into the ranks of this illustrious order. The insignia of the Garter, which had been conferred on his father, Duke Federico, and was now bestowed on Guidobaldo, by Henry VII., was presented to the Duke by the Abbot of Glastonbury and Sir Gilbert Talbot, when they were sent to Rome, in June 1504, to congratulate Pope Julius II. on his election in the name of the English monarch. The newly elected knight proudly wore his Garter on the next St. George's Day, and held high festival on the 23rd of April, at Urbino. It was customary for foreign princes on whom this honour was conferred to send an ambassador to England, within the next year, to be installed in his master's place. Castiglione was selected, as early as March 1505, for this mission, but did not finally set out for England until September 1506. After much care and deliberation, the Duke chose three fine chargers of the famous Urbino breed, and various other costly presents, and gave them to his messenger to lay before the King of England. Among these, it has always been supposed, was Raphael's picture of St. George, which is now at St. Petersburg. That a St. George painted by Raphael's hand was in Henry the Eighth's collection of pictures is no doubt true, but the following description, from the Inventory of works of art at Westminster Palace, taken at the time of that monarch's death, cannot apply to the Hermitage picture :—

“ 126. Item. A table with the picture of St. George, his spear being broken and his sword in his hand.”¹

The words exactly describe the first St. George, painted, it is supposed, about 1504, for the Duke of Urbino, and now in the Louvre. In that picture the Saint is armed with a sword, and the fragments of his shattered spear lie on the ground at his horse's feet, while in Raphael's second version of the subject, St. George's sword is in his sheath and he slays the dragon with his spear. There can be little doubt that it was the Louvre picture which Castiglione presented to Henry VII. on his master's behalf, in November 1506, and that in its stead Raphael painted the second St. George, which remained in the palace at Urbino as a memorial of the Garter bestowed upon the Duke. This may have been the St. George by Raphael which Lomazzo saw in 1548 in Milan, and which is

¹ Harleian MS. 1419, in the British Museum.



The Madonna del Prato. By Raphael. Belvedere Gallery, Vienna.

mentioned by Passavant as belonging to M. de la Noue and M. de Sourdis, but in any case it came during the last century, into the Crozat Collection, from which it was finally bought by the Empress Catherine II. of Russia. Henry the Eighth's *St. George*, on the other hand, after being described in Van der Doort's catalogue of the Whitehall pictures as "Raphael's *St. George*, a little picture," was sold after Charles the First's execution for the sum of £150. It was bought by Cardinal Mazarin, one of the chief purchasers at the royal sale, and passed from his collection into the Louvre.

If Raphael was still at Urbino in September 1506, he must have seen Pope Julius II., as he stopped there on his way to conquer Bologna, and witnessed the splendid festivities with which that warlike pontiff was received by the Duke and Duchess. But before the end of the autumn he was back at Florence, where, Vasari tells us, he once more devoted himself with incredible ardour to the study of art. The cartoons of Lionardo and Michelangelo were now exposed to public view in the Council Hall, and Raphael was among the crowd of artists who flocked to the Palazzo Vecchio to study these masterpieces, which created such an extraordinary sensation, and became, in Benvenuto Cellini's words, "the school of the whole world." While his friend Bastiano Sangallo copied Michelangelo's *Soldiers bathing in the Arno*, Raphael drew these masterly groups of soldiers and horsemen fighting for the flag, from Lionardo's *Battle of the Standard*, which are preserved in the Venice Sketch-book. But the frescoes of the Great Hall were never painted, for Michelangelo had been summoned to Rome, and Lionardo had thrown up the work in disgust, after painting a single group upon the walls, and was gone to Milan. Perugino had also left Florence, where his art was no longer as popular as in past days, and soon afterwards went to Rome. But Fra Bartolommeo remained to welcome his friend back, and with him Raphael lived during the next two years, on terms of the closest intimacy. The Dominican painter's influence is strongly marked in the pyramidal arrangement and colouring of the group of Madonnas which Raphael painted immediately after his return to Florence in 1506. Foremost among these was the *Madonna del Prato*, which he painted for Taddeo Taddei, and which was sold by his friend's descendants to the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, after whose



*The Madonna del Cardellino. By Raphael. Pitti Gallery, Florence.
From a photograph by Alinari, by permission.*

death it passed, with the rest of the Schloss Ambras Collection, into the Belvedere Gallery at Vienna. The Virgin, seated on a stone bench in a flowery meadow, looks down with the sweetest of smiles on the child standing on the grass at her feet, and gently guides his steps, as he receives a cross of reeds from the hands of the kneeling St. John. The same grouping is repeated in the *Madonna del Cardellino*, which Raphael painted in the same year as a wedding present for Lorenzo Nasi, who had doubtless seen and admired Taddeo's picture. Only here the action of the children is more playful, and instead of the cross, the boy Baptist places a goldfinch in the hands of his companion, while the Virgin turns from the book that lies open before her, to watch their happy faces. Unfortunately this picture, which Lorenzo Nasi treasured "both on account of its rare excellence and of the great love that he bore to Raphael," was broken to pieces, thirty years later, in an earthquake which destroyed the Nasi *palazzo*. The fragments were carefully put together again, and the *Madonna del Cardellino*, as all the world knows, is now one of the gems of the Pitti Gallery. A third picture in a similar style, commonly called *La Belle Jardinière*, was painted in 1507, and bought by Francis I. from Filippo Sergardi of Siena. Here the Virgin is resting in a fair garden, full of flowers and bushes, and looks down with an expression of infinite tenderness at the child, whose face is lifted in eager questioning to hers, while St. John kneels reverently at her feet. This picture is generally supposed to be the one which Vasari mentions as having been finished by Ridolfo Ghirlandajo, who painted the Virgin's blue mantle, after Raphael had left Florence. But it is doubtful if the picture to which Vasari alludes may not have been the Colonna Virgin, at Berlin, which was painted later, and clearly executed by an inferior hand.

These three pictures—the Cardellino, Prato, and Louvre Madonnas—rank among Raphael's most perfect creations. In all three the Virgin's face is full of charm, the children are animated by the same free and natural movement, and the landscape is of the same rich and varied description. Tall pines and distant lakes, still waters sleeping in the shadow of blue mountains, heights crowned with castles and bell-towers adorn the background, and bear witness to Raphael's delight in the beauty of the natural world. The flowers and grasses of the



*La Belle Jardinière. By Raphael. In the Louvre.
From a photograph by Braun, Clément et Cie, by permission.*

foreground, the very weeds and rushes, are painted with loving care and accuracy. We watch the fleecy white clouds floating across the sky, and the dim haze that rests on the hills through the summer day. Often the scenery recalls the Tuscan Apennines in the neighbourhood of Florence. In the Cardellino Madonna, for instance, we have a picturesque valley, such as you may see in the mountainous district at Vallombrosa or La Vernia, with a single arched bridge spanning the torrent, on the one hand, and on the other, the Duomo and Campanile of Giotto.

The bride of Lorenzo Nasi, who received this fair wedding gift from Raphael, was Sandra Canigiani, and it was for a member of her family that the Canigiani Madonna at Munich was originally painted. This picture afterwards became the property of the Medici, and was given as a wedding present to Anne de' Medici, daughter of Cosimo III., when she married the Elector Palatine. Here St. Joseph is introduced, leaning on his staff and looking down on a group composed of the Virgin and Child, St. John, and his mother St. Elizabeth, an aged and toothless matron in the style of Andrea del Sarto. The different expression of the heads is finely given, but the formal effect of the whole has been increased by the removal of the choir of angels in the sky, and the rest of the picture has been much damaged by clumsy restoration. The name "Raphael Urbinas" may still be read on the hem of the Virgin's bodice, but his assistants probably had a share in the work. There is far more charm in the *Madonna with the Lamb* at Madrid, sadly as this too has suffered from time and repainting. There the child sits astride on the back of a lamb, and throws both arms round its neck, a motive clearly derived from Lionardo, but carried out with true Raphaellesque grace. The landscape, with its distant lake and castle towers, its road winding up the heights, and flight of birds across the sky, is painted with exquisite finish. The date, 1507, is inscribed on the Madrid picture. To the same year we may assign the Bridgewater Madonna, formerly in the Orleans Collection. A sheet of charming studies, in Raphael's most delicate silver-point drawing, representing children in varied attitudes, is preserved in the British Museum, and bears witness to the pains which he bestowed upon the preparation of this work. The painter has once more gone back to his old conception, and has given us only two figures in the picture. The Virgin is of the same type as the Cardellino Madonna, but the free-

dom of the drawing and lively action of the child, turning round to seize his mother's veil, point to a later date. Meanwhile the greater part of Raphael's time and thoughts were devoted to the preparation of another and more important work.

Before leaving Perugia in 1506 he received a commission from Atalanta Baglioni, the widowed mother of the murdered Grifone, to paint an altar-piece of the Entombment for a chapel which she had endowed in the Cathedral of that city. According to Vasari, Raphael first executed the cartoon in Florence, and finally completed the picture at Perugia in 1507. This commission was in some respects the most important which he had yet received, and the ardour with which he applied himself to his task shows how anxious he was to produce a masterpiece worthy of the occasion. The numerous and varied studies which are still to be seen in the Uffizi, the Louvre, the British Museum, the University galleries at Oxford, the Albertina, Habich, and Malcolm collections, bear witness to the immense amount of thought and labour which Raphael bestowed upon the subject. The natural diffidence and timidity of his nature prompted him, as before, to seek the help of other men's ideas, and he borrowed one figure after another from familiar versions of the same theme. First of all he took the pathetic *Pietà* that Perugino had painted for the nuns of Santa Chiara, in Florence, as his model, and represented the dead Christ in his mother's arms, wept over by his sorrowing disciples, in a series of studies at Oxford, and one fine drawing in the Louvre. Here the figure of St. John, standing apart and clasping his hands in an agony of despair, was borrowed from Mantegna's famous print of the Entombment. In another study (in the Gay Collection) the Magdalen, a noble and touching figure, kneels at the feet of St. John, and fixes her sorrowful gaze on the dead Christ, while Nicodemus and two other men stand farther back. But then a sudden change came over the painter's thoughts, and, discarding his original intention, he adopted Mantegna's design, and represented the dead Christ carried in the arms of bearers to the grave, while the fainting Virgin, supported by the holy women, formed the subject of a second group on the right. A whole series of drawings illustrate the progress of his thought in this new direction. In the Uffizi we have the central group. The foremost bearers are represented stepping backwards up the stone steps

that lead to the tomb hewn in the rock, and the Magdalen, stooping tenderly over her dead Lord, holds his arm in her hand. In the Malcolm Collection there is a separate study of the Virgin and her companions, one of whom, kneeling on the ground and turning round to support the fainting mother, is copied from the Madonna of Michelangelo's Doni picture. Another altogether different version may be seen in the accom-



Sketch for the Entombment. By Raphael. Habich Collection.

panying drawing from the Habich Collection at Cassel, a slight and rapid sketch, but marked in an especial manner by the peculiar lightness and boldness of the master's touch. In the end, Raphael retained Mantegna's grouping, altering some types and modifying others in accordance with his gentler nature and more refined feeling. He kept the Magdalen, but left out the solitary St. John, and placed the beloved disciple among the bearers

at the head of the group. And he framed the composition in a rich and varied landscape, making the hill of Calvary with the three crosses, as seen in Mantegna's print, a prominent object in the view. The two groups are cleverly linked together by the action of one of the women, who looks back at the dead Christ while supporting his mother in her arms, and the influence of Michelangelo is apparent, not only in the kneeling figure, but in the limbs and body of the Christ, which recall the great sculptor's *Pietà* in St. Peter's.

Unfortunately the combination of all these separate motives did not succeed in producing an harmonious effect, and the result of all these labours is distinctly disappointing. The correctness and vigour of the drawing, the variety of expression in the heads and attitudes, the skill with which these ten figures are grouped in a comparatively small space, is undeniable. But for all this Raphael's *Entombment* leaves us cold and unmoved. As a triumph of academic skill it may command our admiration, but it lacks the spontaneous charm, the simpler and natural pathos of his finest work. This is no doubt partly the result of the excessive labour and prolonged study which he had bestowed upon the composition. It may also partly be explained by the share which his assistants had in the completion of the work. These deficiencies, however, were not felt by the painter's contemporaries, who hailed *The Entombment* with a general burst of delight. Vasari's impassioned language reflects the wonder with which they looked upon this masterpiece, and saw in it a perfection beyond all that had been hitherto known in art. And in one sense they were right. Raphael had reached a point of mastery to which few artists have ever attained. In scientific knowledge and technical completeness, in the vivid representation of human life and emotion, the Urbinate had far surpassed his teachers, and stood on a level with the first masters of the day. The citizens of Perugia might well applaud his latest achievement, and had good reason to raise an indignant protest when this altar-piece, which was the proudest treasure of their cathedral, was presented by the Franciscan friars to Cardinal Borghese, afterwards Pope Paul V. Since then Raphael's *Entombment* has been the chief ornament of the Borghese Gallery, and has now been removed, with the remainder of that collection, to the villa outside the Porta del Popolo.

The predella of this altar-piece, unlike most pictures of this class, is

distinguished by originality of subject and excellence of execution. The three Christian Graces, Faith, Hope, and Charity, are here painted in chiaroscuro on round panels, each of them accompanied by two winged



*The Entombment. By Raphael. Borgese Gallery, Rome.
From a photograph by Alinari, by permission.*

genii. Faith bears in her hand the chalice and host, as the symbol of redemption ; Hope clasps her hands and lifts her eyes heavenward in the calm certainty of unshaken trust. Charity, a Madonna-like form with a handkerchief twisted round her brows, folds three fair children in her

arms, while two more cling to her side, and seem to ask for a share in her embrace. The sketch of this noble figure is in the Albertina Collection, on the back of another of the many studies which Raphael made for Atalanta Baglioni's altar-piece.

In October 1507, while the painter, in all probability, was still at work upon his *Entombment*, he was suddenly summoned to appear before the law-courts of Urbino. Some time before this, the heirs of Serafino Cervasi di Montefalcone had sold him a house for 100 scudi, and had given him a nominal receipt, although the money had not yet been paid down. The Cervasi were now condemned to pay a fine of 87½ scudi for having allowed the marriage of a minor in their family without legal authority, and, being unable to meet their liabilities, they applied to Raphael for the payment of his debt. On the 11th of October, he appeared in court and paid the Duke's treasurer, Francesco Buffi, the sum of 50 ducats, promising to pay the remainder of the fine before Christmas, and giving his creditors 12½ scudi as the balance of the sum due to them. This document, which was discovered by Signor Alippi in 1881, proves that Raphael was at Urbino as late as October 1507. Guidobaldo was already suffering from the lingering disease that was soon to end his life at the age of thirty-six, but his palace was still the centre of a brilliant court. Castiglione, who had returned from England in the spring, Bembo and Emilia Pia, and young Francesco della Rovere and his mother, were all there, and with their help the Duchess sought to cheer the hours of her sick husband. On this last visit, Raphael certainly renewed his intercourse with the ducal family, and may have painted some of the portraits that have been already mentioned. He was never to see his native city again, but the memory of these happy days did not pass away. In all the turmoil of his Roman life his old home was not forgotten. His dearest friends, Castiglione, Bembo, Bibbiena, were the men whom he had known at Urbino. Overworked and pressed for time as he was at the Papal Court, he never lost sight of his family or failed in his duty to his uncle. "Do not complain if I do not write," he says in one letter; "I love you with my whole heart, and your name is as dear to me as that of a father." Four years later, we find him interceding with the Pope for an Urbinate in disgrace, then again pleading the cause of a kinsman who is seeking a vacant benefice. He

begs his uncle to tell the new Duke and Duchess, his old friend Francesca della Rovere and Eleanora Gonzaga, how well he is prospering, and as one of their subjects, rejoices to think that he is doing honour to them, to his family and his country. On the 11th of April 1508, Duke Guidobaldo died, and Raphael, hearing the sad news, wrote the following letter from Florence to his uncle, Simone Ciarla :—

“ Dear to me as a father, I have received your letter telling me of the death of our illustrious Lord Duke. May God have pity upon his soul ! Indeed I could not read your letter without shedding tears. But he is gone, and there is no more to be said. We must have patience, and bow to the will of God. I wrote the other day to my uncle the priest [Don Bartolommeo] asking him to send me the little picture which the Lady Prefetessa used as a cover. He has not yet sent it. I beg you to let him know, that I may satisfy Madonna, for I may shortly require her help. I also ask you, my dearest uncle, to tell the priest and Santa [his father’s widowed sister] that if Taddeo Taddei the Florentine, of whom we have often spoken, should come to Urbino, they must spare neither money nor pains to do him honour. I pray you also to show him kindness, for my sake, for I am certainly more indebted to him than to any man living. As for the picture, I have not yet fixed the price, and if possible I shall not name any sum, for it will be better for me to have it valued. So I could not tell you before what I did not know myself, and even now cannot say for certain. But from what I hear, the owner of this picture says that he will give me orders worth 300 gold crowns, for work either here or in France. When the feast-days are over, perhaps I shall be able to tell you the price I am to receive, since I have already finished the cartoon, and after Easter shall set to work at the picture. I should, if possible, very much like to obtain a letter of recommendation from the Lord Prefect for the Gonfaloniere of Florence. A few days ago I wrote to my uncle and to Giacomo, to beg them to procure this for me, from Rome. It would be very useful to me, on account of some work in a certain room, which his lordship can give to whom he pleases. I beg of you to ask for this, for I think that if the Lord Prefect hears it is for me, he will consent, and I commend myself to him many times over, as his old servant and friend. Commend me also to Maestro . . . and to Ridolfo [his cousin] and

all the others. xxi. day of April 1508.—From your Raffaello, painter, in Florence.”

We do not know if the Lord Prefect complied with this request, but he probably rendered Raphael a more important service by recommending him, a few months afterwards, to his uncle Pope Julius II. The employer of whom Raphael speaks in his letter was probably the dealer Gian Battista Palla, who acted as agent for Francis I. and many illustrious lovers of art. The cartoon on which he was engaged may have been the fine drawing of *St. Catherine* in the Louvre, since we know that the picture of *St. Catherine* now in the National Gallery was painted about this time. The Saint, in grey robe and crimson mantle, is leaning against the wheel of martyrdom looking up with an air of saintly resignation in her eyes. A gleam of sunlight, beaming through the clouds, falls upon her face like a ray of hope from another world. The landscape is soft and rural: village-roofs peep out among the trees along the shore of a still lake, and low hills rise in the distance, while the flowering grasses and dandelion-seed in the foreground are there to tell us how soon death comes to all and how short is the day of youth and joy. “In the morning it is green and groweth up, in the evening it is cut down, dried up, and withered.”

Among other works of this period are the Colonna and Nicolini Madonnas. The former was first the property of the Salviati of Florence, then of the Colonna of Rome, from whom it was purchased by Bunsen for the Berlin Gallery. The latter was bought by Lord Cowper from the Nicolini of Florence, and is now at Panshanger. Both are finely designed, but executed at least in part by assistants. A certain affectation in the Virgin's air, as well as the attitude of the Child, betray the touch of an inferior hand. At this period of his life Raphael seems to have been in the habit of supplying his friends at Perugia with designs for pictures, and the museum at Lille contains a carefully shaded drawing of a Holy Family which he sent to Domenico Alfani. Here no less than six figures are introduced—Zacharias and Elizabeth in the background, the Virgin and children in front, and St. Joseph in the act of giving the infant Christ a pomegranate. The cherubs in the sky are not unlike the boy-angels of the San Sisto, and the forms of distant hills and

trees are all indicated. On the back of the sheet we read the following lines in Raphael's handwriting :—



St. Catherine. By Raphael. From the picture in the National Gallery.

“Remember Menico, to send me the *strambotti* (songs) of Ricciardo, about the tempest which overtook him on his journey.” According to

Grimm, Raphael here alluded to a passage of Pulci's *Morgante Maggiore*. "Remind Cesarino [the artist Cesare di Rosetti] to send me that sermon, and commend me to him. Remember also to ask Madonna Atalanta to send me the money, and see that it is in gold, and tell Cesarino to remind her to do this. And if I can do anything more for you let me know."

Such paintings as the *Virgin with the Beardless St. Joseph* at St. Petersburg and the *Madonna of the Palm* in the Bridgewater Gallery were probably executed from similar designs, and passed for Raphael's work in later years. Two other pictures were begun by him during that last summer at Florence, but left unfinished at the time of his departure. One of these was the altar-piece known as the *Madonna del Baldacchino*, ordered by the Dei family for their chapel in the Church of St. Spirito. A Virgin and Child very similar to the Nicolini and Bridgewater Madonnas are enthroned under a domed canopy, and at their feet, two lovely boy-angels are singing from the scroll of music which they hold in their hands. The seraphs, who, hovering in mid-air, draw back the curtains on either side, and the saints who stand on the steps of the throne—Peter and Bernard on the right, James and Augustine on the left—bear a marked likeness to the similar figures in Fra Bartolommeo's *Marriage of St. Catherine*, and afford another proof of the close community of thought and style that existed between these two masters. After Raphael's death, this picture, which remained unfinished in his studio, was bought by Monsignor Turini, the Papal Datary, and placed in the Cathedral of his native city of Pescia. In the last century it was purchased by a Tuscan Grand Duke, who employed the artist Cassana to finish Raphael's work, and placed it in the Pitti Gallery. The other was the little picture of the *Virgin and Child with St. John* which Clement XI. presented to the Empress Elizabeth in the last century, and which is now in the Esterhazy Gallery at Buda-Pesth. The original cartoon for this Madonna, in the Uffizi, is far more lovely than the picture itself. The kneeling mother and eager child are drawn with the same delicate grace as the Madrid Virgin, and in the background, Raphael has given us a glimpse of some Tuscan valley with a mill-stream descending between wooded banks and a hill crowned with towers. In the picture itself, this landscape was altered, and a background of ruined temple and cliffs afterwards added by one of Raphael's pupils. But the drawings

of this period as a rule excel the finished pictures in form and beauty of expression. Nothing, for instance, can be finer than the *Santa*



Sta. Apollonia. By Raphael. Habich Collection.

Apollonia of the Habich Collection, a standing figure with a profile of the same type as *St. Catherine* and the *Graces* in the Vatican. Like most

of Raphael's drawings at this time, this study is executed in black chalk, a practice which he had lately borrowed from Fra Bartolommeo and now frequently adopted instead of the pen-drawing common in Perugino's school. But at this time of his life Raphael, like other masters of his age, was obliged to avail himself largely of the help of assistants, in order to satisfy the demands of his patrons. He was now an original and independent artist, able to stand alone, and second to none in his profession. He had learnt all that Perugino and Fra Bartolommeo had to teach, and the separate currents of Ferrarese, of Umbrian, and of Florentine painting were united in his art. All that he needed now was a wider field, a sphere where his powers of brain and hand might be displayed on a grander scale, before the eyes of a larger world. This was what he sought when he asked Duke Francesco to plead his cause with the Gonfaloniere of Florence, and begged for leave to paint a single room in the Palazzo Vecchio, all unconscious of the Vatican halls that were awaiting him. His opportunity soon came. Whether the young Duke recommended his friend, whether Bramante suddenly remembered his fellow-citizen, or whether Michelangelo himself told his Holiness that the painter of Urbino was the man for his work, the Pope's summons reached him that autumn, and at twenty-five, Raphael went to Rome and entered on the last stage of his glorious career.

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W. J. L. & Co. N. Y. A. pen.

Dujardin ph. sc.

A Tender Chord.

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THE ART OF
WILLIAM QUILLER
ORCHARDSON

By

WALTER ARMSTRONG

Director of the National Gallery of Ireland



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THE ART OF WILLIAM QUILLER ORCHARDSON

R.A.

I

“It is difficult to believe that any man is able to do first-rate things both in subjective and objective work.” I stumbled upon this sentence the other day in a review of Louis Stevenson’s romances, and I fancy it embodies a notion acceptable to the superficial observer, to the critic who works by individual comparisons, by canons, and, generally, by avoiding views either broad or deep in judging a work of art. And yet it amounts to little less than a denial of possible solution to the one problem which every artist has to solve before he can become efficient, not to say great. If a fairly complete work of art, in any medium whatever, is not a happily consummated union between elements objective and elements subjective, each being duly controlled, it will be difficult indeed to say what it is.

Let me try to illustrate this by following the successive stages in the making of an artist, as the process would appear to himself were it conscious and deliberate.

The boy begins, as soon as he can look, by taking an interest in the life he sees in action about him. It is not by objects in themselves that his senses are excited; it is by their movement, their variation, the presage they give of some awakening power within himself. He is like a young cat. His indifference to things which give no sign

of life is profound. It is only when they move that he is struck by the notion that possibly they might in some way be made to gratify his own passions. The first enjoyment he receives through his outward instinct is that of destruction. When he gets old enough to handle things, the only vent for his desire to assimilate them, to make them part



*W. Q. Orchardson, Esq., R.A. From a painting by T. Graham.
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of his *ego*, is to pull them to pieces, to punish their unresponsiveness by summary execution. Between this stage and the next there is a period during which the boy does not know what to be at. In him the girl's instinct for protection is only feebly developed. He knows no middle course between destruction and creation. The months between the last wilful disembowelling and the first attempt to "make"

are passed, as a rule, in the persecution of every living thing he comes across. At last the time arrives to give him paints and pencils. What does he do with them? Does he put a vase of flowers on a table and sit down to study its forms? No; he tries to recreate the life by which he has been fascinated all along. He wearied of his tin cavalry because it could not charge, of his popguns because they had neither noise nor smoke. And so he tries to make action of every kind visible. Purely objective fact has no existence for him. What he wants to realize is his own conception of how things should move and what patterns they should make. If Wellington drew a battle for him, he would insist on more smoke; or Fordham a racehorse, he would want more flash of mane and tail. The boy who tries for correctness in these early stages never becomes an artist. His untutored ambition, if it is to lead to much, has to be of the subjective, creative, self-assertive kind.

Now comes the crisis. The boy has carried his natural light as far as it will go. He has made men fight as furiously and horses gallop as extravagantly as he can with his scanty knowledge of either. He begins to see that if he is ever to express himself fully and to satisfy his own nascent critical sense, he must lay aside imagination and turn for a time to acquisition. This is the parting of the ways. To some, conditions oppose an impassable barrier; to others, the prospect of seven years or so, spent in work with no obvious charm of its own, is too appalling to face; to the few, the prize at the end has such attractions that they begin their sap cheerfully, and their toil is sweetened by the discovery, at every step gained, how science ministers to art, and elaborates a language for her use. The consummation of it all, even with the greatest artists, does not come too soon. It does not come until the scientific foundation is fused, as it were, into the art built upon it. The expressive artist must put his knowledge of form, of structure, of the behaviour of paint or clay, into action, as unconsciously as the orator does his knowledge of grammar; and this he cannot do, as a rule, until long after the years of confessed pupilage are over. The early works of nearly all painters are more scientific and objective than artistic and subjective. Creation only begins when the two qualities acquire their due proportions, or, to put it concretely

and with some triviality, when he can both paint a lemon and make it indispensable to a picture.

Much confusion of ideas has been caused by the failure both of artists and theorizers about æsthetics to recognize that every so-called work of art is a combination of art and science. The connection of the two is so intimate that you may watch a painter at work, and of successive brush-strokes you may say, "That is for art, but that for science." Every touch governed by the necessity for objective truth must obviously be referred to science; those which go to express individual preferences, personal conceptions, and sensuous predilections, which go, in short, to complete the subjective envelope in which the artist desires to clothe his facts, belong to the side of art. All this may sound very elementary, but it is curious how seldom any serious attempt has been made to trace out the real line of demarcation between art and science. The reason, perhaps, is that so many of those who have written upon such matters have failed to begin by learning to know a work of art when they see it, while those who have done so have been unwilling to acknowledge the very large share of science in the equipment of the artist. It is not too much to say that nine tenths of the labour bestowed on a picture, and, I should say, ninety-nine hundredths of that given to a statue, is not artistic but scientific labour. Of course it varies very considerably with different men. In the pictures of Dürer, for instance, the scientific, and in those of Velasquez the artistic, element would be in greater proportions than those mentioned above.¹

Throughout the process of creating a work of art the artist is, then, moved by a double force, the subjective and the objective. Were artists in the habit of analyzing their impulses, this would have been acknowledged long ago. Unfortunately they very seldom do anything of the kind, and the exceptions, as a rule, are not the best artists. So we have to do without their help. In the few cases I have known of self-analyzing painters I have found that the more persistent difficulty which attends the scientific side of their work inclines them enormously to exaggerate

¹ It is curious to realize that the proportion of art in the total result becomes greater as we sink in the precedence of the arts. Painting, sculpture, and architecture are, when measured quantitatively, rather sciences than arts, while, for instance, the designing of decorative patterns is almost purely artistic.

its importance in philosophizing on the whole question. The mature artist does the artistic part easily—nay, almost unconsciously. In the case of those with vivid imaginations—with exceptional powers of creating a mental *imago*—it is mostly done in their heads before a touch is put upon the canvas. Little remains to be determined after the palette is on the thumb beyond those modulations of detail and personal accents in handling which make for unity and concentration. And yet, easy as it may be to those who can do it at all, it is by the fabrication of a subjective envelope for its collection of objective facts that a work of art becomes a work of art. The most delightful painters—to narrow the arts to the one which more directly concerns us here—are those who have the finest sense of proportion between the two elements, those who are gifted with the most subtle instinct as to how much truth of the objective kind is required to leaven that subjective truth upon which alone artistic excellence is founded. I say the “most delightful” advisedly. We apply the word “great” too often to men with some single faculty developed out of all measure with the rest to make it a happy epithet for those who, like Pieter de Hooch, Watteau, Chardin, Fragonard, Gainsborough (to take the first names which occur to me), and the man to whom the following pages are devoted, William Quiller Orchardson, have combined outward and inward truths in the most exquisite proportions.

II

BEFORE attempting to give the very slight sketch of Orchardson's career which alone seems to me desirable during a painter's lifetime, it is necessary to dwell a little on the artistic *milieu* out of which he sprang.

The beginnings of organized art teaching are even more difficult to follow in Scotland than in England. Their first remote impetus was given as far back as 1700, in the Act by which the two kingdoms were united. By that Act certain sums were secured to the northern kingdom for the purpose, among others, of nursing the national manufactures. In course of time such an employment of the money became a work of supererogation, and at last, through various changes, part of it was used for the upkeep of a school of design, which was known as the Trustees' Academy. This academy lasted down to our own time, for it was not until 1858 that it was bisected, as it were, the more elementary classes being put under the rod of South Kensington, and the more advanced under that of the Royal Scottish Academy. Down to the year 1850 nearly all the masters appointed by the Board of Trustees had been men whose sympathies lay with the drier and more "classical" forms of art, men whose influence still survives in the work of most Scottish painters whose education was completed in the first half of the century. In 1850 an appointment was made which changed all this, and did more than anything else to impress upon Scottish painting the character most of us still associate with the title of the school. Robert Scott Lauder was selected for the Mastership of the Trustees' Academy. At the time of his appointment he was forty-seven years of age. He had himself been a pupil of the academy under Andrew Wilson—whose work shows more than a slight affinity with that of his more famous

namesake, Richard—and had afterwards studied in London and Italy. Lauder's own style proves that his chief attention abroad had been given to the Venetians ; that, as soon as he found himself under the sun of Italy, he had promptly turned his back upon those severer masters who had



Study from the Nude.

By permission of W. Q. Orchardson, Esq., R.A.

monopolized earlier generations of Scots. He settled afterwards for a time in London, and there painted a Crucifixion which at least contained one original idea : the figure of Christ was entirely draped in a white cloth. The picture excited great interest at the time, but where it now

is I do not know. There is a large but weak picture in the Scottish National Gallery which shows his preoccupation with colour and allows his faculty for its treatment to be divined. I have seen small things by him which rise to a very high level indeed. Mr. John Hutchison, the sculptor, has a picture of still life which glows like a gem.

Lauder revolutionized the Trustees' Academy. He set himself to teach the students how to see. He insisted upon a grasp of the model as a whole, in all its relations of line and colour. Possibly he carried this too far, and may have to bear the blame for some of the vagueness, the apparent inability to define, which hangs about not a few of his pupils. But at least he brought them up to see things broadly and in their places, and to get quality in their colour. Besides Mr. Orchardson, he had among his scholars Robert Herdman, George Paul Chalmers, and John Pettie, who are dead, as well as Mr. Peter Graham, Mr. Tom Graham, Mr. Hugh Cameron, Mr. W. M'Taggart, and Mr. Macwhirter. All these men, and several more who might be named, have a decisive school affinity to each other. They bear the mark of one influence so strongly that their connection could be recognized at a glance, and, in fact, their common features were accepted as the distinctive *cachet* of the Scottish school until the recent sudden birth of a new style in Glasgow. The completeness with which he instilled his ideas into a regiment of students shows Robert Lauder to have been no common man, especially as, according to his friends, he belonged to the *douce* type of Scotsman. In any case, his was the influence which created the school of Scottish painting which will be chiefly associated with the second half of the present century. To him belongs the credit of putting an end to the period of conventionality in conception and heavy-handed dirtiness in execution which marks so much of the work done before his time. His system may not have been thorough. It is more than doubtful whether many young men could have been found in the Edinburgh of forty years ago to bear a thorough system. But it was healthy; it awakened and kept awake the interest of the student, and it enabled him to produce work which could at least arouse interest in others. I have ventured upon this sketch of his career because, without it, the very marked general character of the crop of painters to which Orchardson belongs would be left without any reasonable explanation.

III

THE somewhat uncommon patronymic of Orchardson is a corruption of Urquhartson, the name of a Highland clan, or rather sept, on the shores of Loch Ness, from which the painter traces his origin. His second christian name, Quiller, points to a strain of Austrian blood, inherited through his mother, to which it pleases those who discover foreign roots for everything artistic in this country to ascribe his genius. His father, who was engaged in business in Edinburgh, sent him to the Trustees' Academy in 1850, when he was fifteen years of age. He will not quarrel with me, I hope, for saying that he was not one of those who arrive by dint of plodding application. The facility which marks him now was his almost from the first: feats which only became possible to his fellow-students after months of labour he mastered, those fellow-students tell me, in weeks. However, I do not mean to trace him through all the stages of his apprenticeship. It must suffice to say that, if he did not kill himself with overwork, he at least assimilated all that was best in the teaching of his master, while, at the same time, he became an exquisite draughtsman, in a vital and personal way rare in any school, and rarest of all in ours. I wish it had been possible to reproduce in these pages some of the drawings he made as a member of a sketch club in Edinburgh to which Mr. Hugh Cameron, Mr. Peter Graham, Mr. George Hay, now Secretary to the Royal Scottish Academy, Mr. M'Taggart, Mr. John Hutchison the sculptor, and several others belonged. Unhappily Orchardson is the least acquisitive of mortals, and except a few that fell into the hands of friends, which I was not able to run down until too late, and are, moreover, scarcely in a condition to permit of successful photography, they seem to have all disappeared. Judging from the scanty specimens just alluded to, they were marked by

the same fine cadence and vivid truth of line which is never absent from his maturer work.

The rapidity with which Orchardson mastered the essentials of his art is proved by the portrait of his old friend and fellow-student, John Hutchison, here reproduced. This picture was painted before he was twenty, and yet it shows all the confidence in simple effects which as a rule only comes with experience. The head seems a trifle large, but when I have said that I do not know what else to criticize. The colour is delightful. The background is a luminous grey; the coat, etc., grey too, but in that cool, greenish tone which has the force of positive colour in so many of Orchardson's harmonies. It is curious to compare this portrait with that of himself (see page 19), painted more than thirty years later, for the famous series in the Uffizi. The scheme is practically the same in both, the only serious difference being the substitution of a dark background for a light one in the later picture. The handling, of course, has become freer with practice, and the whole conception is carried out with more breadth, fire, and self-confidence. In the earlier portrait the beautifully painted left hand has as evidently posed as the head. In the later, the corresponding member seems to have painted itself. In short, Orchardson is one of those whose growth has been a steady and consistent development from the very first. There is nothing experimental about him. He has known his own mind from the beginning, and, just as before he puts a touch upon a canvas he sees in his mind's eye the finished work, so he may well, when he first emerged from the Trustees' Academy, have already built up a clear mental picture of the whole course of his future activity.

The pictures he painted in Edinburgh are not all, however, so decisive in accent as the portrait of Mr. Hutchison. They are often tentative, as if feeling their way towards bolder schemes of design, chiaroscuro, and colour. The young man's hand was never put out farther than he could draw it back. He was content to work within his powers, to restrict his palette and the latitude of his brush, to realize such conceptions as he could create in his comparatively inexperienced mind, rather than to fling himself into deep water and trust to luck. Even after he ventured south, it was long before he quitted the reserved, almost secretive style of his youth, and gave free play to his native facility.



J. Hutchison, Esq.
By permission of J. Hutchison, Esq.

IV

ORCHARDSON came to London in 1862. He was followed twelve months later by his friend John Pettie, who was four years his junior. The pair chummed together at No. 37, Fitzroy Square, in the house which was afterwards the home of Madox Brown. For reasons not difficult to explain, the younger man was the first to catch the eye of the public. His conceptions were more ambitious, and his art more *voyant*: he played, in fact, a trumpet to his companion's flageolet. Hence it was that, to the amusement of those they had left behind in Edinburgh, the London critics talked of Orchardson as if he had moulded himself on Pettie. Their fellow-workers at home knew well enough that, after the teaching of Lauder, the moulding influence over the whole clique had been the example and the square mind of the older man. It was to him that his friends turned—and have turned ever since—when they fell into difficulties with their work, to his methods that they looked for hints in perfecting their own. A few years ago one of the most gifted among them said to me, “Ah! Orchardson: he has two heads on his shoulders!”

The true explanation of the comparative slowness with which he won recognition here is to be found in that nice balance of his own ambition to which I have already referred. He never attempted to paint for the gallery; he never hankered after any effects but such as were entirely within the compass of his equipment at the moment. For years after he came to London he restricted himself to the most reticent colour harmonies, to the simplest arrangement of figures, to the most self-contained and readily comprehensible themes. A girl at a stile waiting for her lover; a Venetian greengrocer paddling his boat-load of vegetables along some shadowy canal; a wild Cavalier presenting a challenge on

his sword's point to a two-minded Roundhead ; a girl nerved by her own beauty, threading the clashing swords of a crowd of adoring males—it was upon themes like these that he lavished his power to rival the soft, sleeping tints on the back of an old Arras. In the blatancy of Burlington House they were not calculated to force attention, and so it was not until his familiar friend had been an A.R.A. for eighteen months that he won the right to sport the same initials, and not till Pettie had been four years an Academician that he became one too.

It must, however, in fairness be confessed that there was another factor in retarding Orchardson's promotion. He had then, as he has still, an *insouciant* way of taking his art which gave him the air almost of an amateur among the painfully-in-earnest young men who were racing him for academic honours. People might have been forgiven, when they saw the alacrity with which he would throw down his palette if any one whispered "tennis," for supposing that he would not break his heart if the outward signs of success in his profession were a little delayed. This easy way of taking life clings to him still. Even now that he at least shares the headship of the English school, it is difficult to say whether his favourite weapon is a paint-brush or a split cane fishing-rod. I fancy that any one who wishes to see him at his moment of fullest enjoyment will have to journey down into Wiltshire, and find him on the banks of the Kennet just as the dry fly settles provokingly over the nose of a three-pound trout.

In fact, Orchardson has always set his art against a background of sport. When he first came to England, it was for the saddle that he used to lay down the palette. A feather weight, with the lightest of hands and an excellent judgment, he used for years to follow the fortunes of the Chiddingfold Hounds, in Surrey, a yeoman pack, hunted by four brothers called Sadler.

On his marriage he gave up hunting, and took to a sport to which he had been casually introduced years before at Brighton. Pettie and he strolled one day into the tennis-court behind the Bedford Hotel, took up a pair of rackets, and set themselves to solve the mysteries of the king of games. The fancy here conceived was nourished in St. John's Wood, when Orchardson became a member of the M.C.C., and frequented the tennis-court with some regularity. It was not until 1877, however,



Portrait of the Painter, by Himself.
From the picture in the Uffizi Gallery.

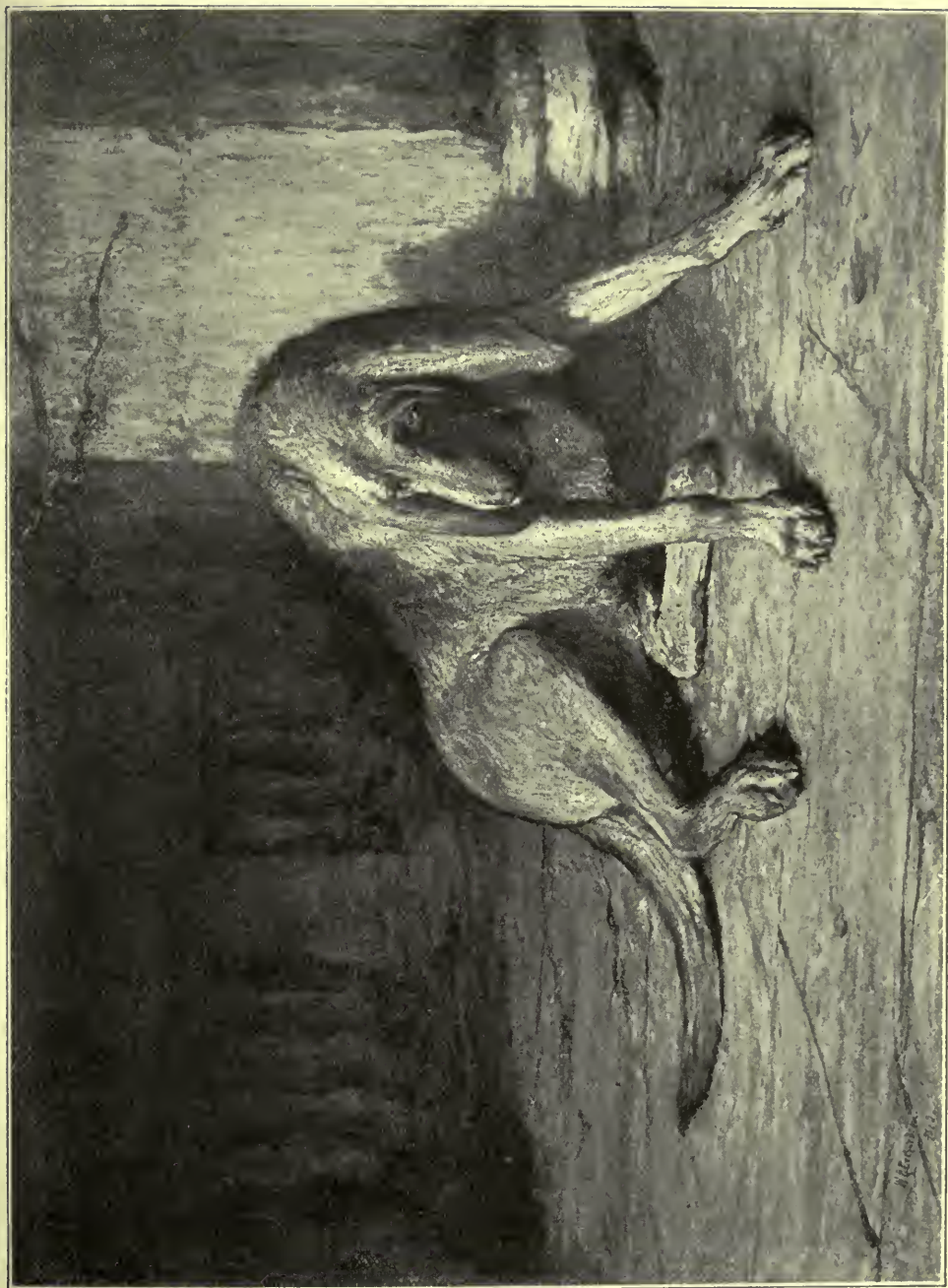
that he became a devotee to the game. In that year he finished building the house at Westgate in which he spent much of his time until two or three years ago. In the garden he built an open tennis-court, the first, I believe, which had been constructed since the sixteenth century, when most of the French courts, at least, were roofless. Here, thanks to the dry climate of the "east neuk" of Kent, he lost and won chases against nearly all the heroes of the game for a matter of fifteen years, with few disappointments from the weather. I have spent whole summer days in this court, and a more delicious setting for a delightful game it would be hard to conceive. Overhead a sky like Italy, within the walls an atmosphere like dry champagne, behind the gallery nets roses hanging in bunches from the pillars on which the service wall was carried, and nothing to awaken care except an occasional crash of broken glass, when some wild return leapt the high wire guards and broke a neighbour's window! In the same garden he built a combined studio and billiard-room, so that work could be sandwiched between two kinds of play. In fact, the whole installation epitomized the man who contrives, as few others have contrived, to refute the implication in Raphael's *Vision of a Knight*. The man who is "Integer vitæ, scelerisque purus" is not called upon to choose between Duty and Pleasure. For him these are different names for one thing.

To finish with Orchardson's diversions, if, after this, I may still call them so. As the years pass, and violence becomes too sharp a sauce to exercise, the judicious man looks out for some form of relaxation which shall make a less demand upon the muscles. To-day he has the choice of two—the contemplative man's recreation, and the royal and ancient game of golf. Orchardson began with the former. With Pettie and some other friends he took a fishing on the Kennet, near Marlborough, and there for the last few years he has been proving the merits of the dry fly, and landing trout to which the little three-to-the-pounders of his native streams were but as *hors-d'œuvre* to a feast.

May we call talk a diversion? Is it not rather the purest medium of intellectual expression? Does not all that a man has become, all that he can ever hope to be, betray itself in his conversation? Is not spoken language, the instrument to which he has been trained, hour by hour and minute by minute, ever since his eyes first opened on the world,

the completest test of the intellectual man? Orchardson's talk is of the pregnant kind. Every remark he makes straightens out what has gone before, and prepares it for the next contribution to the common structure. And his "colloguer" goes home convinced that he had never met a more unerring mind.

The *ménage* in Fitzroy Square was broken up in 1865, when Pettie entered into the holy estate of matrimony. Orchardson then moved to Bedford Gardens, Campden Hill, and from there to the neighbouring Phillimore Gardens. In 1873 he followed Pettie's example, and married Miss Ellen Moxon, whose features appear in two of our illustrations—her own portrait, on page 41, and the *Master Baby* (Plate III.). He afterwards lived at various addresses in the Brompton Road, Lansdowne Road, Spencer Street, Westminster, and, lastly, in Portland Place, where the erection of a palatial studio has probably fixed him for the rest of his days.



A Bloodhound.
By permission of W. Q. Orchardson, Esq., R.A.

V

IN 1870 the power of attraction wielded by Venice over every cultivated mind drew Orchardson to Italy. He left London late in April, and, better advised than most of those who make the same journey, arrived in the City of the Lagoons early in May. Venice from the beginning of May until well on into June is the most delicious thing in the world. The heat is just what it should be. The sky is seldom cloudless, but never cloudy. The air has none of the *tièdeur* of July, and the smells have not yet begun to seriously invade the Grand Canal, although the smaller waterways, the *anastomoses* of the great main artery, will make even a gondolier mutter "Cattivo!" And the atmosphere: even that of Egypt falls short of its vivid clearness. Perhaps this is due to the never-absent touch of moisture in the air, for the only days to equal in brilliancy those of the early Venetian summer I have ever seen have been one or two in the Western Highlands of Scotland, very rare July days, when the sun blazed through an atmosphere washed clean by showers, and made the mountains and the scintillating surface of the sea gleam as if a rain of jewels had fallen on the earth. Unfortunately, things are not very paintable under such conditions. The scale of tones at the painter's command is far too short, his pigments far too dull, to render, or even to suggest, the action of the sunlight through an absolutely transparent medium. Now and then it has been tried. Rochegrosse attacked the problem in front in last year's Salon with his *Chevalier aux Fleurs*; Besnard attempted to turn its flank in the strange and much-disputed picture of horses which was at the Salon du Champs de Mars. But, on the whole, the results are not worth the sacrifices which have to be made. Such pictures must, in their very nature, be rather

tours de force than art. And you may force their tones as much as you please, they will never make the weakest eyes blink. It was partly, no doubt, owing to its irresistible invitation to a delicious *far niente*



Study from Miss Orchardson.

By permission of W. Q. Orchardson, Esq., R.A.

that Orchardson did little work in Venice, but the conviction that the Venetian summer was better to look at than to paint must also have had its share in his idleness. His home was on the Grand Canal.

He took rooms in the Casa Benitzki, and of course he chartered a gondolier. This man, Antonio, was one of those invaluable servants you may find once or twice in a lifetime among the Latin races, but never, in ten lives, among the Teutons. Everything conceivable that an Englishman in Venice could require, Antonio sought and found. He was, too, a bit of a Caleb Balderstone. The lamented Freddy Walker joined Orchardson in Venice, and the latter gives a droll account of his arrival. He came by sea. Antonio was ordered to engage a second gondolier, so that the visitor might be brought with due safety and expedition from the steamer's stopping-place at Malamocco. Antonio improved on these instructions, and arrived before the Casa Benitzki with a double gondola, and three men besides himself. As soon as the boat was under the steamer's side, Walker scrambled down the companion, landed in the gondolier's brawny arms, and, twisting about to grasp his friend's hand, spluttered out without a word of preface: "Caught a four-pound trout! caught a four-pound trout!" He was as delighted as a child over the whole performance, and the climax came when, after a record-breaking transit, the four men brought their gondola up sharp at the steps, like a racehorse pulled on to his haunches.

Antonio was a hero, as well as a first-rate factotum. During his service with Orchardson he took a wife, and the story of his marriage is one of rare devotion. The girl to whom he was *fiancé* caught small-pox in its worst form. After a long battle with the disease she was left almost for dead. Her strength had been drained to the last drop, and her Italian doctor took refuge in an old-fashioned idea, which may be superstition or may be wisdom. He declared that her only chance of life lay in some healthy and vigorous person giving part of that vigour to her. Who would run such a risk? The girl's relations were proud, though poor enough, and would not listen to Antonio when he offered, or rather demanded as a right, to make the trial himself. He persisted, however. He forced his way to the girl's bedside, took her in his arms where she lay, and never relaxed his hold for a day and a night, until the feeble spark of life was nourished back to the beginnings of flame. The girl survived, frightfully disfigured, but Antonio married her, and presented her, his face beaming with pride and delight, to his English employer.

Another little sketch, and I have done with Antonio. He could not read a line of any language, but he spoke English fluently, having sailed in English ships. Orchardson knew no Italian, but, thanks to his Scottish schooling in Latin, he could read it intelligibly. So, in the late summer of 1870, when the newspapers grew so exciting that the *Times* could not be waited for, the painter used to read the Venetian papers aloud to the gondolier, who, dubiously, never quite convinced that to a signor who could actually read Italian its sounds conveyed no meaning, would translate the accounts of the defeat at Wörth, of the fights before Metz, and of the advance of Fate on Paris.

Towards the end of August, Antonio's translations became too stimulating. Orchardson determined to pack up his traps and try to see something of the war. Leaving Italy by way of the Brenner, he travelled through Munich, passed Strasburg within distant sight of the siege, and found himself entangled in the great double stream of war-traffic, the German reinforcements crowding forward, and the poor French prisoners from Sedan—"train-loads without a human expression among them"—slowly crawling to their captivity among the scenes of their fathers' triumphs. It soon, of course, became quite impossible to get through, and our painter had to turn southwards, and by slow roundabout stages make his way to Dieppe and London.

Since 1870 Orchardson has only left his native country for short runs abroad, and Mons. Chesneau's supposition that he has elaborately studied French and German painting has no sort of foundation.

VI

ORCHARDSON'S career may be fairly divided into two parts, the line being drawn after the summer of 1880. Before that date his work had been reticent, self-contained, and as it were painted for himself. Only those who looked with seeing eyes understood its quality. It had comprised a few of his very finest things—the *Queen of the Swords*, the *Challenge*, the *Conditional Neutrality*, and the *Portrait of Mr. Moxon*, for instance. But it had embodied little of that broad, dramatic effectiveness which has been a feature since 1880. Considerations of space make it impossible to follow his footsteps, as marked by pictures, one by one, while it would require a genius to make such a detailed exhibition agreeable, not to say profitable. I propose, therefore, to glance at a few of his more characteristic productions, taken more in the order suggested by a certain sequence of ideas than in any stricter method of classification.

The *Queen of the Swords* was at the Academy in 1877, and had a great success twelve months later at the Universal Exhibition in Paris. The subject is taken from *The Pirate*, from the scene where Minna Troil justifies the *sobriquet* with which Halcro had dubbed her. Here is Scott's creation: "The first movement was graceful and majestic, the youths holding their swords erect, and without much gesture; but the tune, and the corresponding motions of the dancers, became gradually more and more rapid—they clashed their swords together, in measured time, with a spirit which gave the exercise a dangerous appearance in the eye of the spectator, though the firmness, justice, and accuracy with which the dancers kept time with the stroke of their weapons did, in truth, insure its safety. The most singular part of the exhibition was

the courage exhibited by the female performers, who now, surrounded by the swordsmen, seemed like the Sabine maidens in the hands of their Roman lovers ; now, moving under the arch of steel which the young men had formed, by crossing their weapons over the heads of their fair partners, resembled the band of Amazons when they first joined in the Pyrrhic dance with the followers of Theseus. But by far the most striking and appropriate figure was that of Minna Troil, whom Halcro had long since entitled the Queen of Swords, and who, indeed, moved amidst the swordsmen with an air which seemed to hold all the drawn blades as the proper accompaniments of her person and the implements of her pleasure ; and when the mazes of the dance became more intricate, when the close and continuous clash of the weapons made some of her companions shrink and show signs of fear, her cheek, her lip, and her eye seemed rather to announce that, at the moment when the weapons flashed fastest and rang sharpest round her, she was most completely self-possessed, and in her own element."

The painter has taken from the scene exactly what it had to spare for a new medium of expression. The words of Scott are followed closely enough ; the picture might even, with a touch of malice, be called an illustration ; and yet it can stand alone. We do not require even the title to put us *au fait* with what is taking place. The canvas explains itself even to the dullest, and even the dullest can see why it was painted at all. It was not painted to be read with the novel. It was painted because the double line of swordsmen, with the sinuous stream of women stepping in time beneath the arch of steel, gave an opportunity for the coherent play of line ; it was painted because the stately measure of the dance gave just the right sense of movement, and the costumes of 1750 the right opportunity for colour ; it was painted because the fiddlers and the older, soberer section of the company would furnish excellently the empty spaces of the canvas. In fact, the reading of Scott's page suggested to the painter's mind an image in which all pictorial elements would work together for unity. To those who look upon any "subject" whatever as fatal to a work of art this will seem a poor excuse. Others less fanatical will acknowledge that a subject, like the stubbornnesses of paint itself, is at worst an obstacle to be overcome, a difficulty the facing of which may be justified by the way in which it is negotiated. *The Queen*



Wm. & G. 1857 N. 35.

Hard Hit.
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Wm. & G. 1857 N. 35.

of the Swords was so good a subject that it required nothing but the painter's modulating eye to turn it into a picture. With the next thing I have to speak about it was otherwise, and here I find an opportunity of showing how a good literary theme can be turned into a good pictorial one by taking a few judicious liberties.

Every one is familiar with the delightful scene in *Woodstock* where



Escaped.

By permission of Humphrey Roberts, Esq., owner of the copyright.

Roger Wildrake carries Mark Everard's *cartel* to the supposed Louis Kerneguy.

“‘Let us get to business, sir, if you please,’ said the King. ‘You have a message for me, you say?’

“‘True, sir,’ replied Wildrake; ‘I am the friend of Colonel Markham Everard, sir, a tall man, and a worthy person in the field, although

I could wish him a better cause. A message I have to you, it is certain, in a slight note, which I take the liberty of presenting with the usual formalities.' So saying, he drew his sword, put the billet he mentioned upon the point, and, making a profound bow, presented it to Charles.

"The disguised monarch accepted it," &c.

Now that is the whole scene. The only characters on the stage are Charles and the Cavalier. Paint it as it stands, and you will have to quote a whole page of Scott before you can make it comprehensible to the poor wretch who finds himself before it with no preparation but his catalogue. And even then you will not move his interest. To do that you require to know all that has passed in the story. You require to have the jealousy of Everard, the fears of Alice Lee, the unconsciousness of Wildrake, and the consciousness of Charles, all vividly present in your mind. In fact, the force of the situation depends upon a multitude of things which paint—which no simultaneous form of art—can give. In the novel the scene is splendid, and most fit. In a picture it would be nothing. And yet it has wrapped up in it some first-rate pictorial materials, in the contrasted figures and characters of the two men, in the forward bend of the one and the recoil of the other, in the long horizontal line of the rapier and the menacing touch of white on its point. The problem Orchardson had to solve was how to clothe all this in accessories which would explain, and even heighten, its significance. *Woodstock* itself suggested a solution. Within the same boards as Louis Kerneguy lives Trusty Tomkins, the psalm-singing Roundhead, whose creed may well have allowed a little corner for the duello, no less than for the charms of Phœbe Mayflower. Put him in the place of the hiding king, set a dissuader in the person of a Puritan divine at his elbow, throw a combination of scruple and a taste for *sa, sa* into his physiognomy, and you have at once a complete and most paintable drama.

* * * *

By this time the reader is probably feeling for his pencil, to scribble a sarcastic note on the margin of this page. And indeed the mistake into which I have fallen is absurd enough. It has at last dawned upon me, however, that it was not with *Woodstock*, as I find it in the notes



Charles Mexon, Esquire.
By permission of W. Q. Orchardson, Esq., R.A.

to one of my talks with Orchardson, that *The Challenge* has to do, but with *Peveril of the Peak*. There, of course, the scene will be found almost exactly as we see it in the picture. The challenger is Sir Jasper Cranbourne, the challenged Major Bridgenorth, and the dissuasive divine Master Solsgrace. I am tempted, however, to leave the paragraph as I wrote it, because, although it does not happen to apply to the particular case as well as might be wished, it does explain the kind of process which most incidents taken from books have to undergo before they become self-contained works of art.

* * * *

I have said already that the *Queen of the Swords* was at the Paris exhibition of 1878. Together with other things from the same studio it had a very great success both with painters and critics on the south side of the Channel. Its happy design, its gallantry, and its debonnaire treatment generally appealed to the French mind, and seduced it for the moment from its preoccupation with the more actual moods of art. Nevertheless, to eyes accustomed to the cool, gray tones, the broad handling, and the solid *pâte* of French pictures, the more positive tones, the more detailed if yet dexterous brushing, and the comparatively thin, transparent impasto of Orchardson, was not altogether agreeable—and yet they might have found a precedent for it all in some of their own great men, in more than one of those painters of *fêtes galantes* who were the only glory of French painting in the eighteenth century. To this question, however, we must return when the moment comes for trying to fix Orchardson's place in the general march of art.

The two portraits which I have chosen as characteristic examples of his work in the first half of his career were painted in 1875 and 1876, *Mr. Moxon* belonging to the former year, and *Conditional Neutrality* to the latter. The first is a straightforward portrait, depending on no adventitious aid for its effect. The pose is momentary, full of power, at rest, but about to pass into action in pursuit of thought. The head is finely and most searchingly modelled, the left hand perfect in expression, the background thoroughly sympathetic and complementary. In short, it is a simple, sedate, and most thorough piece of work. The second is more deliberately picturesque. The portrait of a boy of five or so, it presents us with a delightful scheme of colour, picked up by the happy introduction

of some of those nursery properties which have done so much to smooth the paths of all who have had to paint children. In a way it reminds us of Sir Joshua's *Master Crewe*, which by the time these lines are in print will be hanging on the walls of Burlington House. The pugnacity of the young human male is the keynote of both. Orchardson, like Reynolds, saw in proneness to resist the most characteristic feature of man at the age of five, and, also like Reynolds, he thought his truculence would be none the worse for being set off with the bravery of silk and velvet. Painters generally do best when they are painting for themselves. The hero of *Conditional Neutrality* is the painter's own first-born son, now a most promising student at the Royal Academy; and this explains, perhaps, a certain audacity in the colour scheme, a certain *bravura* in the handling, a certain pervading vivacity of selection, which are scarcely to be found in the same degree in other things belonging to this period. It is usual to suppose that some of the mellow harmony of Venetian pictures is the gift of time and varnish. One of the greatest of English painters has consistently worked in obedience to that belief, and not a few smaller men have followed his example. Whether it be well founded or not it is difficult to say. One fact may be pointed to which throws some doubt on the theory—namely, that the shadows in good Venetian pictures are as warm and luminous as the lights. A brilliant passage, a piece of drapery, for instance, painted chiefly with vermilion, will undoubtedly become richer and more luminous when it glows through a coat of mellow varnish, because the tone of the latter is lower than its own. But suppose this same varnish overlying a very dark but still luminous shadow. Being higher in tone than the shadow, it will diminish its transparency. In short, it will act as a scumble, whereas in the first instance it acted as a glaze. Now any first-rate example of the greater Venetians is equally transparent all over, except in those very high lights which have been painted with extreme solidity. And this makes it doubtful whether time and accident have had so much to do with their superb tone as is often believed. However that may be, a picture painted almost entirely in high tones will certainly benefit by time, supposing it to have no seeds of premature decay in its own constitution. *Conditional Neutrality* is such a picture, and I suspect that a century hence it will be looked upon as one of the treasures of the English school.



Conditional Neutrality.
By permission of W. Q. Orchardson, Esq., R. A.



During the earlier of the two periods into which I have ventured to divide his career, Orchardson's whole work was marked by judgment in conception and sobriety in execution. The subjects chosen, whether suggested by writers or spun out of his own inner consciousness, are always so arranged as at once to tell their own story, and yet to declare that the motive which led to their being painted at all was truly and essentially pictorial. In this respect it would not be fantastic to attempt a comparison between him and Hogarth, most of whose fame depends—not so much on those gifts of satire and detached common sense to which critics have chiefly directed our attention, but—on the extraordinary skill with which he combines dramatic with æsthetic qualities, and makes his scenes explain themselves, down to the minutest details, through matters required by pictorial balance and unity. Hogarth, in short, was a master of composition. His *Marriage à la mode* reads like *Tom Jones*. We pass from scene to scene, receiving from each exactly what it has to give, missing nothing, inventing nothing, and accumulating as we go a conviction of the painter's infallibility in selecting and marshalling materials, of his power to breathe the keenest vitality into his men and women. It would be going too far to transfer all this to Orchardson. He has never been pricked by the didactic spur. He feels no desire to reprove the time, or to strip poor human nature and lead it up naked to the mirror. To him the second of Hogarth's incentives is the first, and, when the events of life have supplied him with a hook on which fine colour, sympathetic design, and a coherent arabesque may be hung, he is content.

The Paris exhibition of 1878 marks with sufficient accuracy the close of this first period; and here I should like to quote what one of the more intelligent of the French critics was then impelled to write of our painter:—

“Le maître en ce domaine de l'expression, celui qui domine tout le groupe des physionomistes par la mesure, par le jeu des nuances et aussi par l'habileté de la main, c'est Mons. W. Q. Orchardson. Ses tableaux cependant—est-ce un éloge?—sont peu ou même point du tout anglais. Ils figureraient indifféremment dans les galeries françaises, belges, ou dans l'école de Düsseldorf, sans que personne en fut étonné. Est-ce donc que le talent n'a point de nationalité! Ou plutôt, ce que

j'incline à croire, que Mons. Orchardson a soigneusement étudié, de ce côté de la Manche, les écoles contemporaines, et qu'il s'est composé ainsi, en y ajoutant sa propre personnalité, un talent très personnel, plus voisin des principes d'art du continent cependant que de ceux de ses compatriotes.

“En tout cas, le résultat est des plus séduisants, et les tableaux de Mons. Orchardson, le *Défi* [“The Challenge”] et *Christopher Sly*, ont obtenu chez nous un succès aussi rapide que légitime.

“*Le Défi* est charmant de grâce spirituelle ; je ne sais malheureusement à quel drame le motif est emprunté.

“Une sorte de Scapin ironique, tout vêtu de satin jaune serin, chapeau bas, le haut du corps incliné, présente à la pointe de son épée la lettre de défi à une sorte de cavalier philosophe que cette provocation intempestive trouble dans son travail. Un vieillard enveloppé d'une lévite, son compagnon d'études, s'est levé avec empressement ; il retient le bras du cavalier comme pour le dissuader d'accepter et de prendre au sérieux ce défi insolite et insolent.

“Il est inutile de rappeler au lecteur que Christopher Sly est le héros de cette bouffonnerie qui sert de prologue à la *Mégère domptée* de Shakespeare.

“Mons. Orchardson a disposé tous ces groupes, animé toutes ces physionomies avec une entente profonde de la scène. L'interprétation de cette amusante parade était pleinement dans son talent souple et enjoué. Les attitudes sont justes, d'un dessin facile et correct ; l'expression des têtes est fine et spirituelle, comique sans charge, grotesque sans grossièreté. En outre, malgré certaines maigreurs de touche et bien que l'exécution soit un peu mince, un peu épinglée, l'ensemble est cependant d'une coloration ravissante, harmonieuse comme l'envers d'une vieille tapisserie.

“Depuis, bien d'autres tableaux d'un goût exquis, la *Reine des Epées* [*Queen of the Swords*], *l'Antichambre*, le *Décavé* [*Hard Hit*] ont placé Mons. William Quiller Orchardson au premier rang des petits maîtres du genre.”

To the English reader Mons. Chesneau's assertions that Orchardson's pictures are “little if at all English” and “might figure without causing remark in the school of Düsseldorf” will seem both strange and bold,



Mrs. Orchardson.
By permission of W. Q. Orchardson, Esq., R.A.

and we shall see presently that his conjectural explanation has no foundation at all. But the remainder of his estimate strikes me as



On the North Foreland.

From the picture in the Diploma Gallery, Burlington House.

sound, although, no doubt, one or two of the phrases mean little more than that Orchardson does not paint quite as a Frenchman would. An

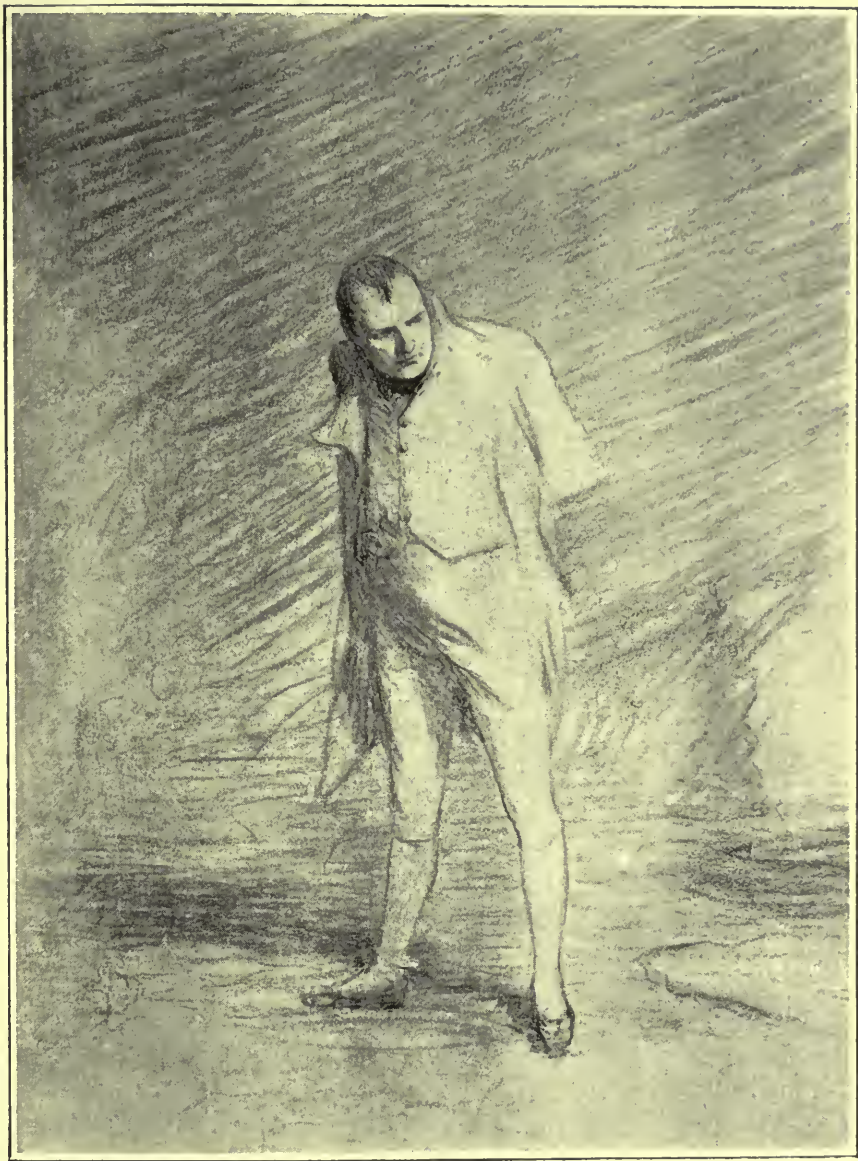
interesting question is suggested by his dictum that the painter's colour is "delightful, and as harmonious as the back of an old tapestry." Other French writers were not so kind—"âcre" and "cruë" were the best epithets they could find for the English master's colour, and in view of the line taken by English painting since 1878 it is likely enough that their strictures would find many sympathizers on this side of the Channel. But colour is a large subject, and what I have to say about it in connection with Orchardson must be postponed to a later page. Here it will be enough to confess my agreement with Mons. Chesneau's comparison of Orchardson's colour schemes, before 1880, with the delicious harmonies in gray which meet you when you pull out an old arras from the wall, and examine the side which time has modulated without the help of dirt.

VII

ORCHARDSON first blazed out into popularity in 1881. To the exhibition of that year he sent the large picture *On Board the "Belle-rophon,"* which was bought by the Council of the Royal Academy in their capacity as Chantrey's Trustees. He had always been a believer in Napoleon. The modern conception of the first French Emperor—the idea which has found its strongest expression, perhaps, in the volumes of Mdme. de Rémusat and the history left incomplete by Lanfrey—had never made a home in his mind, and those who talked to him on the subject ten years ago stumbled on a forecast of the notions which are now, thanks to Marbot, Sardou, Masson, and a number of other incongruous people, again beginning to group themselves round the figure of the *Petit Caporal*! Every one, I suppose, has a right to his own conception of such an apparition as Napoleon. His orbit was so far above the plane in which most of us move that it is difficult to get him into any rational perspective. We may guess at his motives by analyzing our own, but a single consideration is enough to make us doubt the result. The vast majority of mankind is unable to see conduct otherwise than in the light of inherited and instilled notions. It is unable to comprehend an individual in whom the intellectual powers are so audacious, independent, and self-reliant, that, by their own action, they can wipe out any inherited prejudice whatever. It is absurd to think of Napoleon as of a man believing in the usual morality, and deliberately outraging it for his own purposes; absurd to paint him, as one writer has done, disturbed by no qualms over the fate of the *Grande Armée*, but blenching at the name of the Duc d'Enghien. He was one of those to whom the distinction the world

chose to make between devastating a neighbour's country and shooting an inconvenient prince in the ditch of Vincennes seemed purely fantastic; still more fantastic would he think it to have such incidents turned into footrules to measure his own stature. He belonged to a system outside all this. He looked upon himself as a sort of kosmic force, and, like a kosmic force, he put the individual out of sight in taking measures for the triumph of an idea. The only question, perhaps, worth an answer in this connection is the very large one, Was his final impulse selfish or ideal? Did he devastate the Continent to make his own name blaze in history, or because he had the ambition to do for the world at large what he had done for the laws of France and for the constitution of the Comédie Française? Between these two explanations each man will choose according to his own predilection: Orchardson chose the latter. His Napoleon on the deck of an English ship of the line is an imprisoned force. It is not only a great soldier, not only an absolute ruler, not only a disappointed man, we see there. It is an embodiment of will, of order, of control, arrested for the moment by a vexatious accident. Grant that small, square, deep-thinking, firmly planted personality a respite from physical decay, and at the first opportunity it will be back at the work of bringing order out of destruction, or, if you like, clearing the site for a new civilization.

You may say that all this is inconsistent with Napoleon's picture of himself, especially with that part of it in which we see him anxious about the verdict of posterity. You may say, too, that my reading of the painter's intention in the *Bellerophon* picture is contradicted by the Napoleon he himself painted twelve years later. This second picture is the *St. Helena*—1816, which was at the Academy in 1893. Here the captive is by no means an heroic figure; but he has been a captive for a year. For a year he has been controlled by his inferiors. For a year his vivid, all embracing, essentially constructive imagination has hurtled against those of men to whom life is routine. For a year he has been a caged eagle, conscious of his wings and of his ability to face the sun, and yet chained down by wingless, blinking mortals, to whom even his own glory had been a thing too dazzling to look at and comprehend. A painter might well choose such a change to give point to his drama, and yet I must confess that, to me, Orchardson seems to have slightly over-



*Study for the figure of Napoleon at St. Helena.
By permission of W. Q. Orchardson, Esq., R.A.*

done the contrast. In his second *Napoleon* we may trace a combination of impatience with solicitude, of irritability with a desire to put his best foot foremost, which do not grow inevitably out of the checked but irresistible personality of twelve months before. To me he even seems to have painted his idol concocting a lie, and the secretary knowing he is doing it. On this I do not animadvert from a moral but from an artistic point of view. It seems an error in proportion. The painter, of course, justifies himself, or rather, to be more exact, the presumptuous critic finds an excuse for what the painter has done, in the plea of physical decay, in the consideration that "General Bonaparte" had, in 1816, already begun to understand that his time was short, and that, if he would leave such a portrait of himself as he would like the world to accept, he must make haste and get it done. I may put it another way. A novelist writes a story. Through the main development of his tale he takes full thought for the logical sequence of his events, for the natural growth of his characters, for the due presentation of the catastrophe. So far his bow is at full stretch. His style is at the level of his theme. But afterwards he cannot resist the temptation of a little more. In pity, perhaps, for the curiosity of his readers, he lifts the curtain he has just rung down, and, in a few hurried, formless sentences, he lets you see the peace of the widow, the philoprogenitive delights of the married lovers, or, may be, when the writer is a cynic, the otiose triumph of the villain. It is anticlimax all round. The style sinks with the theme, and too often the postscript is to the novel what the call before the curtain is to the tragedy consummated before it fell. In painting his second *Napoleon* Orchardson yielded perhaps to a similar temptation; the way in which he conducted himself therein shows that he knew well enough that the great French Emperor came to his end on the deck of an English man-of-war.

So far I have said nothing of the pictorial constitution of this *On Board the "Bellerophon."* It is, in fact, unmistakable. The æsthetic and the intellectual elements alike find their focus in the Emperor's figure. All the rest is complement, complement rightly placed and just in proportion, balancing the masses, picking up and resolving the lines, completing the chords of colour. Orchardson is often blamed for his empty spaces. The truth is that his spaces—and, I confess, they are

often ample enough—are seldom empty. They are filled with subtle colour modulations, with the infinite echoes of a harmony which never



Study for the figure of Madame Récamier.

dies completely into silence. Almost the only exception I can call to mind occurs in the picture we are now discussing. The mainsail

of the *Bellerophon* seems "blinder," more monotonous and opaque, than it need have been. But that seems a pettifogging fault to find.

Orchardson followed up his success of 1881 by building on a less satisfactory theme a still more perfect work of art. The incident which took his fancy is one of those too numerous events in the life of Voltaire which prevent him, as a personality, from looming over the life of his day at the height his intellect would justify.

In the book already quoted, Chesneau complains that English pictures too often compel a reference to the catalogue before they can be understood. He goes on, with some simplicity, to find a partial excuse for this in the idea that the English public is much more literary in its tastes than the French, and "se tient très généralement au courant de toutes les publications. Les personnages," he adds, "de l'histoire et du roman lui sont donc bien plus familiers qu'ils ne le sont en France." Unhappily for our *Voltaire*, his next sentence is equally true, and here it is: "Les artistes de la Grande-Bretagne n'ont souci que du public de la Grande-Bretagne. Leurs œuvres quittent rarement leur île. Ils sont donc sûrs d'être toujours compris." But the life of Voltaire, epoch-making person though he was, is not currently known in England. Among all the half-million persons who passed through the Academy turnstiles in 1882 it would have been difficult to find a hundred to whom the title of Orchardson's picture would have been explanation enough without the extract in the catalogue. As I hope these pages may be read by some outside that small minority, as *Voltaire* is, perhaps, Orchardson's masterpiece in its class, and as a book is, after all, the better for explaining itself, I may be excused if I repeat the story.

It is about 1720. A large party is dining with the Duc de Sully. Among the guests are the young Arouet de Voltaire and the Chevalier de Rohan-Chabot, notorious for usury and cowardice, vices not often allied with the *grands noms* of France. Voltaire ventures to contradict some assertion of the Chevalier's, who thereupon calls out with a sneer: "Who is this young man who talks so loudly?" "Monsieur le Chevalier," replies Voltaire, "it is one who, if he cannot boast a great name, at least knows how to make the name he does bear honoured." The chevalier goes out in a cool fury, and the company thank his conqueror for driving him off the field. Presently comes one with a message to



F. Collins, A. S.

Master Baby.

W. Q. Richardson, pinx.

Voltaire, seducing him into the street by one of those tales of distress to which his ears were never closed. A great racket ensues, and in a few minutes Voltaire reappears in the dining-room, his clothes disordered, his wig awry, his face inflamed with rage, and calls on his host to avenge an outrage to himself just consummated on the person of his guest, who has been set upon and beaten by the footmen of Rohan. Sully, with many shrugs and phrases of regret, excuses himself from avenging a *roturier* on a ruffian of his own caste.

There is the subject, and we cannot deny that it leaves too much outside the canvas to be an ideal one for pictorial treatment. On the other hand, it lends itself superbly to design and colour. The splendid room, the long table with its load of glass and gold, the figures about it, richly dressed and expressing a variety of emotions in the subtle way proper to a well-bred crowd, the deprecating duke, and the little flaming personality on which the interest is focused, all this gives an opportunity for characterization, for the sort of design which pursues coherence through the most changeful and apparently capricious rhythm, for a decorative scheme of colour, incessantly developing itself out of itself, like a fugue in music. Looking at its organization, nothing could be better than the *Voltaire*. The walls of the room, the stooping servants busied at the sideboard, the long perspective of the table and the men about it, the warm-toned oak parquet, all these form a background against which is set, exactly in the right place, the cool, silvery passage which is the figure of Voltaire. The violence of the little gentleman is undeniably a blot, and, as it was a necessary outcome of the choice of subject, that choice had to be justified. The painter has gone far to afford that justification by the quality of his art.

Voltaire was bought by Mr. Schwabe, and forms part of his gift to his native city of Hamburg.

Twice more Orchardson returned to the vein he had struck so successfully in 1882—in *The Salon of Madame Récamier* of 1885, and *The Young Duke* of 1889. I put these in the same class as the *Voltaire*, because the pictorial inducement in each case was the opportunity given by a picturesquely accoutred crowd in a picturesque interior. In such a subject his correct but facile and intensely personal draughtsmanship could enjoy itself to the top of its bent; his light, dexterous, occasionally

meticulous, handling could revel among such gauds as epaulets, sword-hilts, Couthière mounts, glass and gold and silver plate; while in the passions only half hidden under the conventional masks of society he found satisfaction for his desire at all costs to get character. "Character I must have," I have heard him say; "good character if possible, but, if not good, then give me bad!" There was plenty of both in the salon presided over by Juliette Récamier and Germaine de Staël; and it is not all good character that peeps from beneath the wigs in *The Young Duke*.

Our illustration makes it needless to describe the arrangement of the *Madame Récamier*. Here again the painter hit upon a telling arabesque. The opposition of the deep, dark masses on the left to the higher-toned and smaller groups on the right is managed with consummate tact, while through the whole runs a subtle cadence of line, of which some indication is given to those who have only these pages to refer to in the beautiful sketch we reproduce (page 49).

It would be impertinent, perhaps, to say much on the subject treated in this picture. Every one knows enough about the most famous, if not the most notorious, of the Parisian salons to understand all that Orchardson has here to tell them. It may, nevertheless, be as well to remind the reader that the room in which all these soldiers, diplomats, and men of letters are assembled is not that drawing-room in the Rue de Sèvres to which our thoughts turn most readily at the words *Salon de Madame Récamier*. It is the earlier salon, the throne of which the fair Récamier had to share with the brilliant and by no means fair De Staël. The presence of Lucien, of Bernadotte, of Necker's daughter herself, is enough to show that the time was not yet when half the patronage of the French minister had to pass through the hands of the sexless beauty.

The subject of *The Young Duke* is all upon the canvas. A young grandee has come of age, and celebrates his manhood by feasting his men friends. Pictorially, it is a variation on the *Voltaire*. Putting aside the suggested drama—tragedy or comedy, as it strikes you—of the earlier picture, the materials are the same in both cases, and the new creation is little else than the old looked at from a different point of view. Again we have the shimmer of tapestry and gilded mouldings for a background, a line of periwigged and be-satined men for population, a table with its



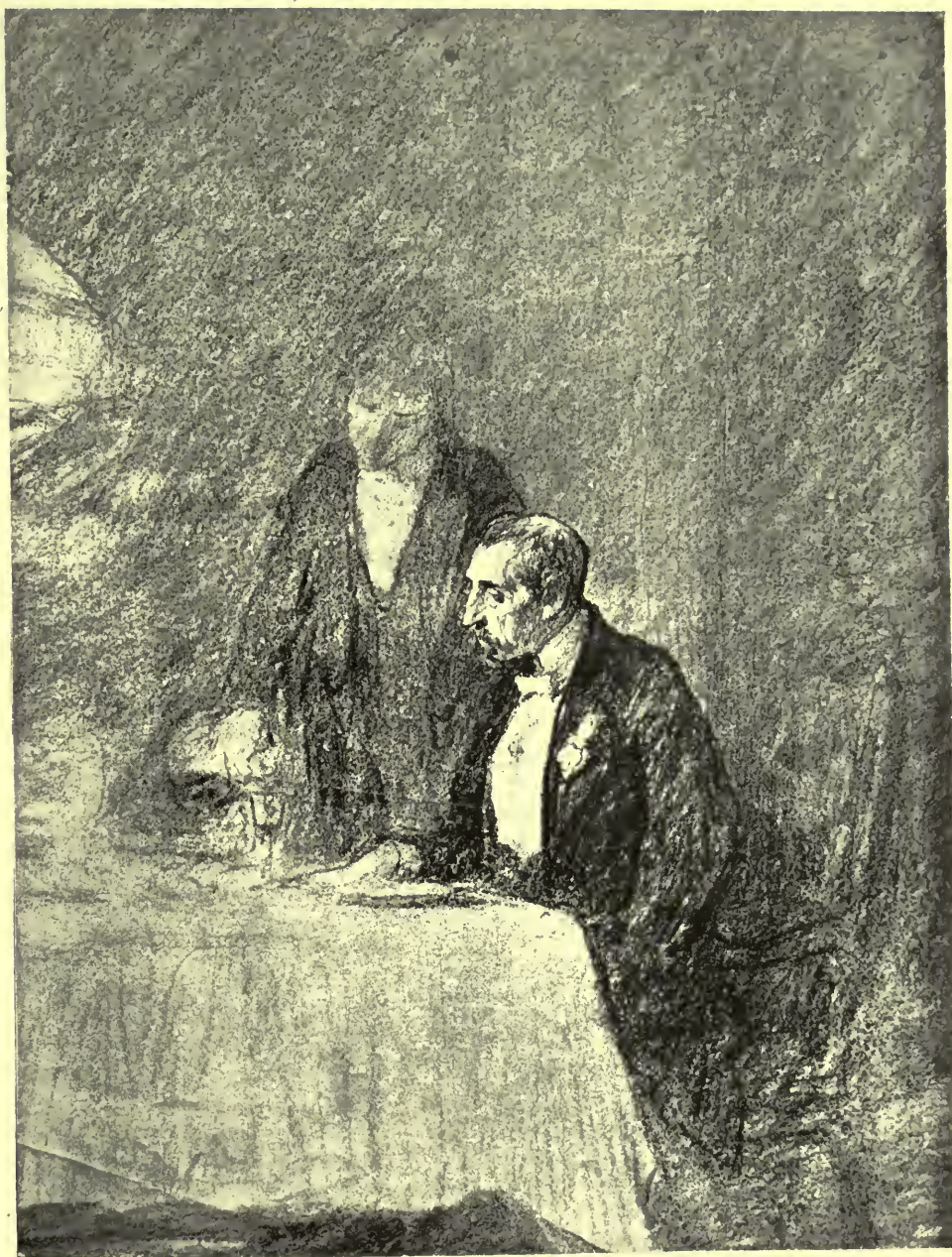
Madame Récamier.
By permission of John Aird, Esq., M.P.

load of furniture and its white cloth for nucleus. The focus and the trend of the masses are different, and the element of opposition—furious Arouet versus impassive Sully and Co.—on which the vitality of the *Voltaire* so greatly depended, is absent altogether, unless, indeed, the freshness of the bowl of roses, with its silent protest against the dissipation going on within its scent, may be taken to supply it.

VIII

THE most popular of all Orchardson's pictures is probably the *Mariage de Convenance*. The group to which it belongs includes its sequel, *After*, and such domestic scenes as *A Social Eddy*, *Her Mother's Voice*, *An Enigma*, *If Music be the Food of Love*, *play on*, *Hard Hit*, *Her First Dance*, and *Music, when Sweet Voices die, vibrates in the Memory*. All these, with the one exception of *After*, explain themselves, or rather require no explanation. They afford glimpses into the kaleidoscope of society, which you cannot fail to interpret satisfactorily to yourself, and may be classed with those social notes, suggesting much, but putting no dots on the i's, which threaten to supersede the regular short story, just as the latter has half superseded the novel.

The *Mariage de Convenance* speaks a language every man and woman who sees it can understand. The fairly respectable *viveur*, *rangé* at last, and settled down—in his own belief, poor man!—to the quietude of good dinners, good wines, and a handsome wife, with nothing exciting to think about for the rest of his days but the monthly checking of his bank-book, is a not uncommon sight. Every one understands it when they see it, and, happily for the peace of the world, the discontent perceptible on the face of Orchardson's heroine develops into a shattering of all these comfortable arrangements with less frequency than one might expect. This picture shows all Orchardson's usual judgment. The proportions between the figures and the canvas, the placing of the table furniture, the opposition of the two men to the one woman—put the butler beside the lady and you ruin the composition—are all *right*; that is, they work actively together towards the winning of unity, while the pattern of the *chiaroscuro* and the envelope of atmosphere and colour fall smartly into line with the rest. The alertness of the painter's fancy is illustrated by



Study for Mariage de Convenance.
By permission of W. Q. Orchardson, Esq., R.A.

a curious device, which breaks the monotony of the background, and helps to keep it in its place. A shaded lamp stands in the middle of



Reflection.

By permission of Messrs. Laurie and Co.

the table. At the wife's left hand there is a finger-glass. Note the angle at which the lamp-light strikes the water, the angle of incidence ; and

then raise your eyes to the left. There, at a point fixed by the angle of reflection, you will find a disk of light, shimmering through the otherwise unbroken shadow. The trick is slight enough; you might call it trivial; but it has its value in building up not only the truth, but the æsthetic balance, of the scene. *After* is an anticlimax in all but art. In colour, in the transparent depth of its shadows and the brilliancy of its quick sparkling points of light, and in the expression of character, it is even better than the *Marriage*. And the insinuation of a departed glory, the quiet, sympathetic fire—a crackling blaze would have spoilt the whole expression of the scene—the one lamp deepening the gulfs of shadow beyond, and the absolute immobility of the single figure, all these emphasize the disappearance of the one disturbing element in the quietude of the first scene. The man's prospective cares have been whittled down to little more than the temperature of his claret.

The painter was in a more tender mood when he conceived *Her Mother's Voice*. It was one of the first things undertaken after his move into Portland Place, and the room, with its wall of glass and hints of palm and fern, is his own back drawing-room. A girl sings to a young man—her *fiancé*, if you like, but Orchardson had no such meaning—while her widowed father lays down his *Times*, and listens with a face full of memories to an echo of the voice which had won him thirty years before. Few things are more impertinent than the suggesting to a painter of some vital change in his work. Nine times out of ten it amounts to nothing less than asking him to make your individuality, and not his own, the *modulus* for his ideas. Still it is not impossible, with some experience and a vast amount of goodwill, to put oneself behind the artist, to see through his brain and eye, and occasionally to hit upon a notion which may have escaped himself, and yet would reinforce his own conception. It may be pure fatuity, but I fancy that if Orchardson had turned his young lady's back to us, reflecting the effect of her song from her companion's face only, his picture would have profited. One difficulty would have had to be overcome—that of keeping the two groups in effective proportion to each other. This is done at present by pushing the couple away into a distant corner, while the old man is brought down, as it were, to the foot-lights. Disturb this arrangement, and the balance would have to be



Music, when Sweet Voices die, Vibrates in the Memory.
By permission of Messrs. Hildesheimer and Faulkner.

reconsidered, but the problem is by no means so insoluble as that of painting a singing mouth which shall be anything but a disfigurement.

Orchardson is a great lover—I won't say admirer, for indeed his fancy is by no means of the kind which blinds its possessor to defects—of the Empire style in furniture as well as other things. His house is filled with it, and more than once the genesis of a picture is to be traced to the purchase of a piano, or a sofa, or a set of chairs. In the series of domestic idyls which we are at present looking at you will find three of these. *An Enigma*, perhaps the finest of the three, would never have existed just as it is but for the introduction into the painter's household of the ample, curly-ended sofa, on which his man and woman, his *jeune femme* and *roué*, are at some cross purpose not closely defined even to their creator himself. Again, *If Music be the Food of Love, play on* is the portraiture of a superb, five-pedalled bronze and *ormoulu*-mounted grand piano, weighted with an incident which, no doubt, it may have seen many a time during its lifetime of ninety years. Another piano, a vertical, harp-shaped engine, recalling with a difference the cupboard-like machines still to be found in the back regions of most old provincial houses, suggested an exquisite little picture most unsympathetically treated by the hangmen of the 1893 Academy. The design of *Music, when Sweet Voices die, Vibrates in the Memory*, no less than its motive, was determined by the shape of the piano. A young girl, in a pink dress, the long lines of the skirt repeating happily the perspectives of the instrument at which she sits, turns over the leaves of old music-books, or invokes the echoes of half-forgotten airs. It is among the simplest and sweetest of Orchardson's later pictures, excelling in design even the beautiful work we reproduce in our frontispiece. *A Tender Chord* is lovely in colour, but as a creation in line it must yield the *pas* to its sister-picture of two years ago. Here the painter has deliberately concocted a *double entente*. His title may be taken, if you like, to refer to the sounds produced by the young fingers straying pensively over the keys; but it may refer just as well to the chord of delicate pinkish tones in which most of the work is done. *Her First Dance* is another scene from the days of short waists and conspicuous ankles. A girl stands up to open a ball with a young buck whose self-satisfaction is fanned by the too evident timidity of his partner. The room has not filled yet, and

in its empty spaces the girl looks like a veritable Iphigenia, waiting for the knife. The picture reads like a page from Miss Austen, whose delicate literary workmanship is represented by the delightful colour and airy, silvery tone of Orchardson's painting.

Hard Hit has technical affinities with *Her First Dance*. The ample spacing, the high key, the cool silvery tonality, the infinitely subtle



Her First Dance.

By permission of Messrs. Dowdeswell and Dowdeswell, owners of the copyright.

contrasts of the one picture are repeated in the other. Both are full of light, atmosphere, and tone. In spite of what the hasty critic might call empty spaces, there is no sense of paint. The broad surfaces of white panelled wall play all over with tone and colour. In spite of their superficial baldness they are full of infinity, and not an inch degenerates into mere pigment. Imagine, too, the difficulty of painting all those cards, so that they should seem neither too monotonous nor too various, so that they should at once look what they are, a multitude of squares of

one colour, receiving the light at a hundred ever so slightly varied angles, and each affected, in its own degree and way by its own number of spots of red or black, and fulfilling their proper functions in the scheme. For this part of the picture Orchardson used fifty packs of cards, throwing them down successively at each corner of the table, so that the actual pattern we see represents two hundred packs. The scene recalls the story of how Fox and some kindred spirits once played at Brooks's, from six o'clock one evening to late into the morning of the next day but one, when a servant stood at each man's elbow to tell him what was trumps, and they were all up to their knees in cards! *Hard Hit* was engraved by the late French etcher Champollion—a descendant, I believe, of Champollion the Egyptologist—who contrived to entirely lose its fine tone and delicious colour under an incredible hardness and dryness of method.

IX

So far little has been said about Orchardson's portraits, and yet the very best of his subject-pictures do not excel, even in interest, such things as the *Mr. Moxon* or the *Sir Walter Gilbey*. These portraits, and many others hardly less fine, have not yet won all the applause they deserve, and they may have to wait some time before they do. They are not painted in the way made fashionable by the rush to Paris. At present, French models are too often accepted without the least attempt at argument as the one touchstone of excellence. Those who seek to guide opinion seem not unfrequently to form their own after the manner of the famous, "Kneller in painting, and Shakespeare in poetry, damme!" And yet, if, instead of taking a contemporary school, with all its temptations to error, for their test, they would turn to those masters who have steadily grown in fame through one generation after another, until, like Shakespeare, they have seated themselves on thrones which no one tries any more to shake, they would find Orchardson bearing the juxtaposition vastly better than some of their idols.

Let us try the comparison here, and let us take no less a man than Rembrandt for our purpose. Supposing we apply the fashionable notion as to how a subject should be looked at, as to how paint should be handled, as to how far objective fact should control the whole performance, to him, we should be forced to allow that three or four living artists are greater painters. Tested in any way whatever, except by the creative force of the imagination displayed in his work, and by the certainty with which he selected those facts which helped him to enforce his own conceptions, Rembrandt's present elevation to the highest summits of art will be difficult to justify. If we judge his colour, or his sense of values, or even, down to a comparatively late period in his life, his hand-



W. H. R. 1853. 20. 25.

An Enigma.

(in personification of the Libretto de l'Etat Sacré, sources of the Epigram).

W. H. R. 1853. 20. 25.



Portrait of Miss Orchardson.
By permission of W. Q. Orchardson, Esq., R.A.

ling, by the standards we accept from the French school of the moment, we shall be driven to confess that two or three French and Franco-



Sir Walter Gilbey, Bart.

American painters can beat him. The conceptions of Rembrandt are entirely personal; his objective treatment is governed by the determination to take only what coheres with his individual preferences, modified,

of course, by the necessity for enough truth to prevent any suspicion of incapacity or of poor equipment in himself. Put a head by Rembrandt, say his own head in Lord Ilchester's picture, beside Carolus-Duran's portrait of Pasteur. Compare them in the light of the principles on which the most important section of the French and its affiliated schools work for the moment, and you will be staggered at the result. As a piece of objective truth the Rembrandt will be beaten out of the field. Its colour, illumination, and even to some extent its handling will be recognized as arbitrary. But, nevertheless, you will find the Rembrandt stirring your imagination long after the impression made by the Carolus has faded away. The Dutchman has been able to see the soul, the intellect, the total personality within the outward head, and has been able to select from the facts before him all those, and only those, which actively helped to enforce that personality, and has enhanced them without such violence to truth as to either awaken our resentment or make us doubt his own equipment. Put as shortly as I can contrive to put it, the finest portrait painter is the one who most completely succeeds in building an organic pictorial structure upon the character of his sitter. The sitter gives the keynote, the splendour of the harmony depends upon the artist.

So far as this conviction will guide us, such a portrait as Orchardson's *Sir Walter Gilbey* has a right to a higher place than the best work now being done by any French painter. This does not mean that I want to put our English master on a level with Rembrandt, but simply that the essential principles on which they work are the same, and that those principles alone lead to the highest art. Look at the *Sir Walter Gilbey*, or the *Mr. Moxon*, or the *Mrs. Joseph*, or at a still quieter conception which was at the Academy some ten years ago, *Mrs. Ralli*, or even at his more decorative and less closely organized performances, such as the *Sir Andrew Walker* and the *Professor Dewar*. In these creations you will find a grip on the personalities before him, an instinctive determination to make those personalities his keynotes, and a power to compel every touch he puts upon the canvas to at once give vivacity to the expression of the sitter's character, and to prove, subjectively, that thus and thus only the artist intended to present him, which approach the painter of the *Syndics*, and excel anything of the same kind we ever



*Portrait of Professor Dewar.
From the picture at Peterhouse, Cambridge.*

now see at the Salon. For the Dutchman and the Englishman objective truth is a medium for the strongest possible enforcement of a subjective, æsthetic conception, while the French school is apt to concentrate its attention mainly on the objective qualities, using the subjective ones merely for control and restraint. On the one side we have passionate, on the other dispassionate, statements; on the one side science in a rich robe of art, on the other science to which art has granted a scanty rag to veil her nakedness.

And this brings me back to the theory from which I started, that all fine art which works through imitation must be a happy mixture of objective and subjective qualities. The imitation or reproduction of objects is the medium through which the personal conceptions have to be made visible, and so it must be good enough not only to avoid giving offence or betraying weakness, but even to give a certain amount of pleasure for its own sake. But as the gratification we receive from the best imitation is both limited in quantity and not of the highest order in kind, it should not be allowed to substitute itself for those subjective, expressional qualities whose power to give enjoyment is as wide as the capacities of the human mind. The objective side of such an art as painting has a limit, which is reached as often by a South Kensington student as any one else. You cannot go beyond illusion in that direction, and yet illusion will only give you the sort of pleasure you derive from looking at a rope-dancer. The subjective side has no limits upwards, although its base, as it were, is limited by the conditions of the materials in which you work. Objectively the artist has to satisfy the critical sense; subjectively he has to stimulate the sympathetic imagination as vigorously as he can. Between these two constituents of a work of art there can be no doubt, I imagine, as to which should hold the higher rank. One exists for its own sake, the other as an antecedent necessity to its companion.

The great charm of Orchardson appears to me to lie in a happy union of these two characteristics. Facts have a powerful fascination for him. Look, for instance, at the heap of maps in his *Napoleon at St. Helena*. These were painted from a set actually prepared for the 1805 campaign in Germany, which the painter spent weeks in hunting up. Evidence to the same effect is conspicuous all over his work.

And yet this scientific interest never gets the upper hand; the modulating personality never yields or slumbers. The cadence of the lines pursues its unerring way through and about every object set upon the canvas, building up and enriching the general harmony, and providing a skeleton, well knit and most dexterously articulated, for the whole conception. To this result his powers of drawing contribute enormously. He is one of the very few painters whose drawing is in their bones. It is sometimes by no means literal; with a pair of compasses and a treatise on proportion you might now and then convict a limb of being too long. But it never fails in subtlety; it is always intensely vital and consistent with the movement of the scene, and it never betrays the slightest sense of labour. He seems, indeed, to revel in feats of draughtsmanship which almost any other painter would avoid. Into a small picture, which may possibly be seen at the next Academy—the subject is a young woman in a conservatory—he has gratuitously introduced about as irksome an object to draw as can well be imagined. It is one of those hammered iron tripods, in which all sorts of intricate curves have to be followed through their convolutions with extreme precision if, at the end, they are to look at all probable and organic. Who else would add to the difficulties of such a subject as the *Young Duke*, the extra task of putting in a *nef*, with all its complication of ropes, ports, and arbitrary bends and planes? Look at our plate after *Hard Hit*. Note the crystal chandelier, with its dozens of scintillating pendants and the skeleton of gilded bronze peeping through them here and there. Let your eye search among the various *dejecta* from a night of dissipation which load a side table, and you will find all sorts of unconsidered trifles which help to tell the story, such as the wig of the chief swindler, hung inside out upon a bottle, so that its owner's head may stay cool enough for his purpose. All these things are drawn with delightful precision and painted with an unsurpassable eye for their envelope of light and colour. Turn back to our reproduction of his study for the head, shoulders, and arms of Madame Récamier. Who has excelled it in elegance and in that justness of accent in which lies the highest test of draughtsmanship? Slight as it is, the best drawings of many men more famous as draughtsmen would look amateurish beside it.



*The late Sir A. B. Walker, Bart.
By permission of Sir Peter Walker, Bart.*

About his colour there may be more dispute. Occasionally it rises to a very high level indeed, as in the *Voltaire*, and such less ambitious



Mrs. Joseph.

By permission of Mrs. Joseph.

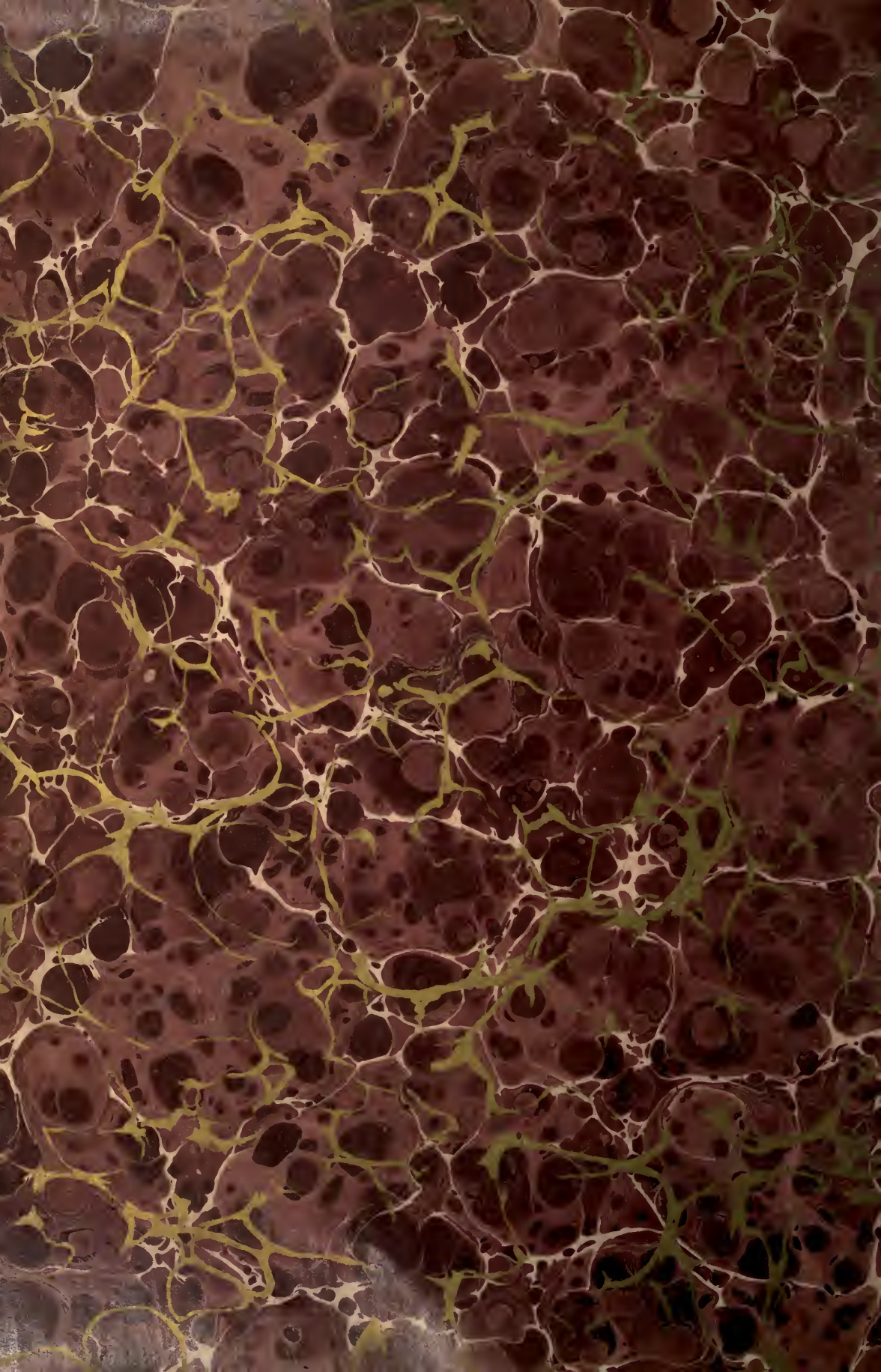
things as *A Tender Chord* and *Music when Sweet Voices die*. In his early period it was full of the most delicate grays, and was as a rule

silvery in tone. I have already quoted the similitude found for it by Mons. Ernest Chesneau, which so happily characterized the harmonies of green, gray, gray-brown, and blue we find in so many of his pictures before 1880. Since that date a tendency towards a brassy yellow has occasionally over-asserted itself, and perhaps he has been a little overfond of schemes in which the chief and all the minor parts were played by a brownish buff! But when at his best, as in the three pictures just named, Orchardson has no superior as a colourist. Just now, when we so often hear the painter restricted in theory to a bare imitation of natural colour, this assertion will not find general acceptance. And yet the objectors themselves will go down on their knees before the *Bacchus and Ariadne* of Titian, the *St. George* of Tintoretto, the *Rape of the Sabines* of Rubens, and a hundred other pictures in which a gorgeous convention has been substituted for any attempt to render the literal tints of nature. The question, again, is one of the due proportions between subjective and objective elements, only that here we at last find these opposing, or parallel, or complementary qualities, which ever we may elect to call them, difficult to reconcile. It is enough for the present to point out that those in whom the world agrees to see its greatest colourists have been the most personal in their dealings with colour, have taken the widest liberties with nature, have shown the greatest audacity in elaborating splendours of their own in which to clothe the sedateness of the world about them.

The final verdict on Orchardson will have to be given by posterity, but he who can put fine colour and exquisite design at the service of a sound judgment and of an essentially pictorial imagination, may trust his reputation to his pictures with complete equanimity.

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