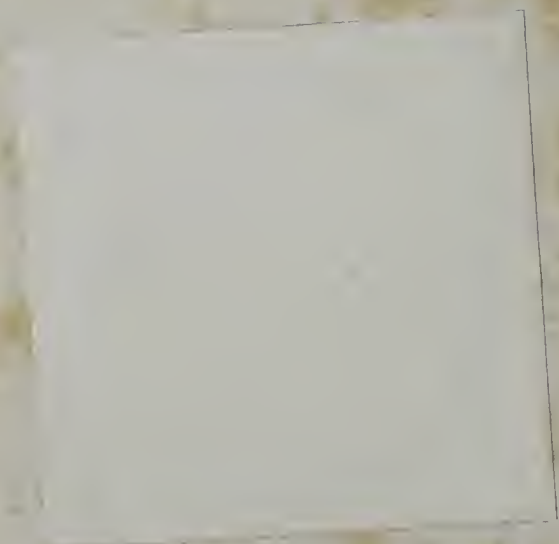
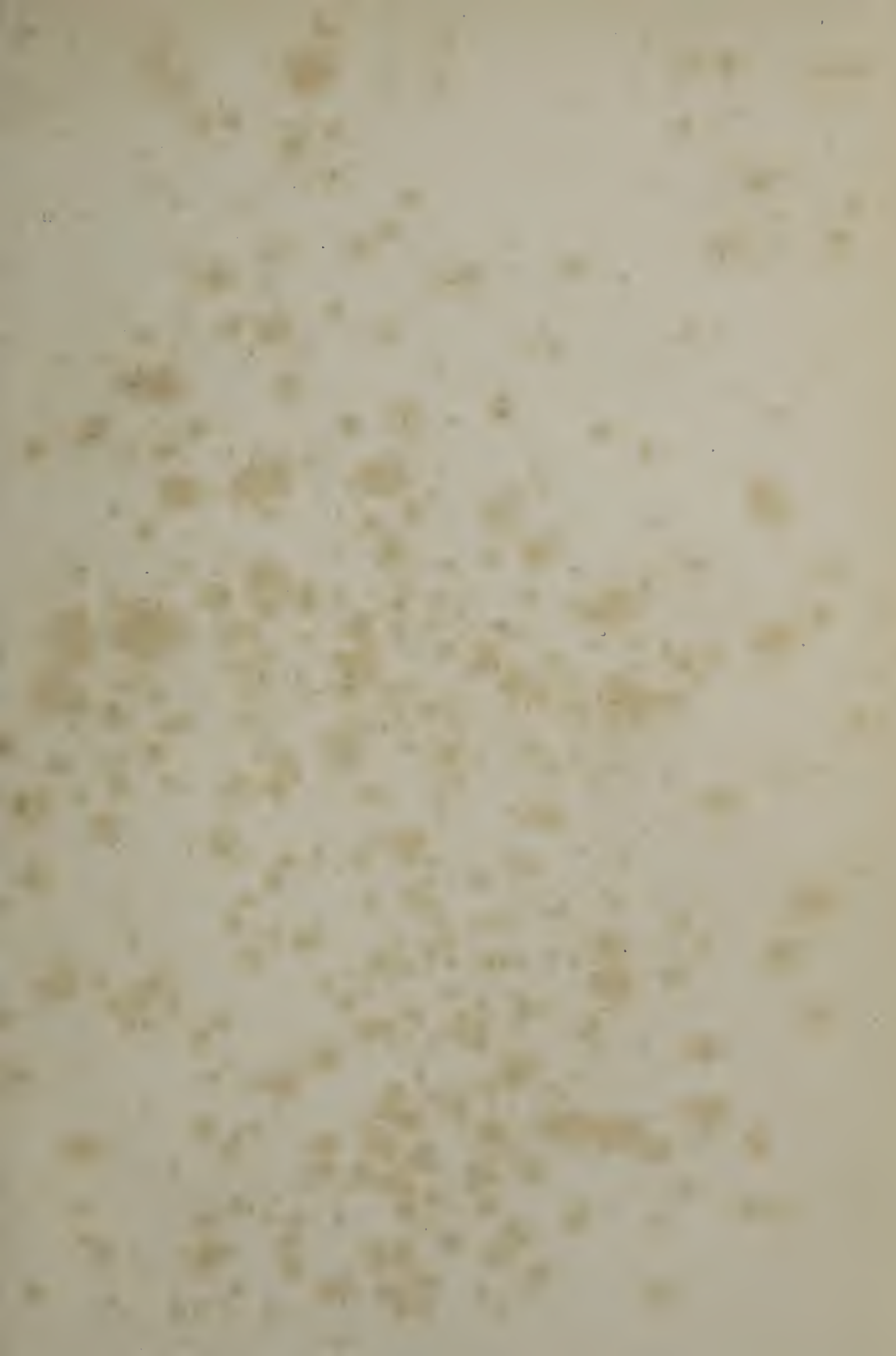


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*Ballantyne Press*

BALLANTYNE, HANSON AND CO.  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON

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## THE LORD'S PASSION.

WE now approach those consummating scenes of our Saviour's course which are comprised by theologians and artists under the designation of The Passion. This word was adopted from the Latin, and, while meaning suffering in a general sense, has been emphatically applied to the sufferings of our Lord: in the same sense the Italian term, the 'Compassione della Madonna,' exclusively designates the Virgin's sympathy with the sufferings of her Son. No part of the Saviour's history is found so thickly strewn with the flowers of Art—simple and homely, many of them, in form, but fragrant with earnest and pathetic feeling. The nature of the subject sufficiently accounts for this efflorescence, comprising as it does within a few days the culminating evidences of our Lord's character and mission, the humility and obedience of His humanity, the power and triumph of His divinity. Representations of scenes from the Passion occur in every pictorial history of Christ, but it is especially as a separate series that they crowd before the eye from the 13th century. The cause for this will be found in the impassioned cry to contemplate the sufferings of Christ, which arose from the founders of the two great Orders of Dominicans and Franciscans, and which gave an impulse to this class of subjects, both in dramatic and pictorial Art. The Passion of our Lord, commencing with the Entry into Jerusalem, and terminating in the Descent of the Holy Ghost, is known to have been performed as a kind of play or mystery as early as the 13th century, in different parts of Italy, on the Day of Pentecost. This play continued to be a popular form of religious entertainment and edification for centuries in various parts of the Continent, though less traceable in England, and is still carefully and piously performed in the

Tyrol.<sup>1</sup> That the plays and the pictures of the time, both constituting a part of the same great ecclesiastical system of instruction and stimulus, should have agreed in treatment of their common subjects, is natural; also that they should have materially influenced each other. There is no doubt that these representations afforded a school, and in many respects a beneficial one, to the painter; for he here saw costume and action, groups and attitudes, and, in a general way, expression, which ministered to his own Art. But the school could only be beneficial as long as the nature of the source was not apparent in the result. Much, therefore, that is theatrical and exaggerated in later religious Art may be justly attributed to inspirations adopted too directly from scenes of this nature. It is probable, also, that the almost entire neglect of these subjects, as a series, by the great Italian masters of the 15th and 16th centuries, may have been owing, with other causes—such as the more exclusive devotion to the Madonna and the increasing legends of saints—to the indifference bred by familiarity with these sacred plays, which formed the stock entertainment of all classes of society. This is little to be regretted, for there is plenty of evidence in single scenes from the Passion, treated by the Cinquecento painters, how little their modes of conception harmonised with the sacred character of the subject. It is fortunate, therefore, that we are able to derive our impressions of the series of the Passion from the two great masters who mainly head the generations of Italian Art. Duccio has left us the Passion, in a number of small pictures, formerly at the back of his colossal Madonna and Child in the cathedral at Siena. Giotto the same on the frescoed walls of the Chapel of the Arena, at Padua. Neglect and violence have gone far to destroy both these series, especially that by Giotto. Still, as will be seen, enough remains to show that, in a religious sense, they have never been so truly and worthily conceived. Fra Angelico has also bequeathed to us a full series of the Passion, accompanying the history of Christ, and multiplied illustrations of

<sup>1</sup> The Play of the Passion ('Das Passionsspiel') is performed every ten years at Ober-Ammergau, a village in what are called the Bavarian Highlands of the Tyrol. Here the traditional rendering of each scene, with its types, is retained, and the close connection between these religious mysteries, and the Art which is exemplified in the 'Biblia Pauperum,' is demonstrated.

See 'Das Passionsspiel zu Ober-Ammergau, von Ludwig Clarus München, 1860.'

single scenes from it. Some of these are unsurpassed in beauty and piety of conception by anything before or since, while others are not free from the corruption of Christian Art which had even then obtained. The Lombard school, which M. Rio rightly eulogises as that in which a purer spirituality lingered longer than elsewhere, gives evidence of this quality in its greater devotion to the subjects of the Passion. No one has embodied some of the events on the road to Calvary with greater pathos than the sweet painter, Bernardo Luini.

But it is Gaudenzio Ferrari principally, of the Lombard painters, who has left a complete series of the Passion in his frescoes in the church at Varallo, and in his coloured terra-cotta groups on the *Sacro Monte* of that celebrated place of pilgrimage.

It was reserved, however, especially for the great German artists of the 15th and 16th centuries to treat these subjects: Martin Schön, Albert Dürer, Israel von Mechenen, and Lucas van Leyden, are chiefly known to the world as illustrators of the Passion, in the form of woodcuts and engravings. Germany, with her princes and potentates indifferent to Art, and the great mass of the population always depressed by poverty, gave but few commissions for pictures, and far less for works on a monumental scale, to her great painters. They therefore gained their bread chiefly by the exercise of forms of Art more accessible to a humbler class of patrons. These etchings and engravings are monuments of skill in knowledge of drawing, practice of hand, and microscopic power of eye, and occasionally show indications of deep feeling; but too often, with the partial exception of those by Lucas van Leyden, they lower their subject by a degradation of the Lord's Person, and by a brutality in those around Him which it is painful to witness. To call these forms of conception realistic is a misapprehension of terms. The ideal and the real are not opposed to each other like a good and an evil principle. True feeling is as proper, and bad taste as foreign, to the one as to the other. The causes for the repulsive ugliness which meets us in many of these engravings lay deeper than it is within the scope of this work to inquire; but the low and unjoyous physical condition of a poverty-stricken people under a stern climate may be readily believed to have given a deeper impress of outward degradation to the

period of the decline of the Roman Catholic Church in Germany than elsewhere. On the other hand, the circulation of these series contributed doubtless to that heterogeneous momentum which set the Reformation in motion. For these engravings spoke the truth, though only under those debased forms which naturally preceded the unlocking of the Bible itself.

The series of the Passion properly begins, like the plays, with the Entry into Jerusalem, and ends with the Descent of the Holy Ghost, though some painters take up the subject at a later moment, and close it earlier. The number of designs in these series varies considerably: Duccio has twenty-six; Albert Dürer, in one of his series, fifteen; Holbein, nine. We give a list of those by Duccio:—

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Entry into Jerusalem.                      | 14. Christ before Herod.              |
| 2. The Last Supper.                           | 15. Christ again before Pilate.       |
| 3. Washing the Disciples' Feet.               | 16. Christ crowned with Thorns.       |
| 4. Christ's last Address to His Disciples.    | 17. Pilate washing his Hands.         |
| 5. Judas bargaining for the Pieces of Silver. | 18. The Flagellation.                 |
| 6. Agony in the Garden.                       | 19. The Road to Calvary.              |
| 7. The Capture of Christ.                     | 20. Crucifixion.                      |
| 8. Denial of Peter.                           | 21. Descent from Cross.               |
| 9. Christ before Annas.                       | 22. Entombment.                       |
| 10. Christ before Caiaphas.                   | 23. Descent into Limbus.              |
| 11. Christ mocked.                            | 24. The Maries at the Sepulchre.      |
| 12. Christ before Pilate.                     | 25. Christ appearing to the Magdalen. |
| 13. Pilate speaking to the People.            | 26. Christ at Emmaus.                 |

Our object is now to follow these scenes, though not confining ourselves exclusively to them; for Art, taken generally, fills up this sacred course with a far closer gradation of scenes than any known series would supply.



## ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

*Ital.* Nostro Signore che entra trionfante in Gerusalemme.

*Fr.* Entrée de Jésus à Jérusalem. *Germ.* Christi Einzug in Jerusalem.

OUR LORD was now about to enter the gates of Jerusalem with the acclamations due to Deity, which He was so soon to leave with the contumely cast only upon a criminal. His entry into Jerusalem is therefore justly looked upon in Art as His first stage to Calvary, and, when given at all in the series of the Passion, is always given first. The Evangelists are all agreed as to the main particulars of the circumstances of His entry—that it was upon an ass, and accompanied by a multitude, who cried, ‘Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!’ All but John describe the disciples as casting their clothes on the ass, and the people as spreading their garments in the way. St. Matthew and St. Mark relate that the people cut down branches, and ‘strawed them in the way.’ St. John, that they took branches of palm trees, and went to meet Him. The only ambiguity relates to the animal. St. Matthew relates, that when come unto the Mount of Olives, our Lord sent His disciples, saying, ‘Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them and bring them unto me’ (xxi. 2); adding, ‘All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet (Zechariah), saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.’ St. Mark and St. Luke both speak only of a colt, whereon never man sat, and St. John of a young ass. This variety in the narrative has left its impress upon early Art, the foal being frequently seen accompanying the mother, on which Jesus rides. Thus early artists embody one literal portion of the text, later painters another, for in the strong young animal of maturer Art we identify the colt ‘whereon never man sat.’ The Entry into Jerusalem is properly always

triumphant in character. Jeremy Taylor says, 'The blessed Jesus had never but two days of triumph in His life—the one His Transfiguration, the other this His riding into the Holy City.' It is one of the subjects of the early Christian cycles, occurring frequently on sarcophagi in the Catacombs (woodcut, No. 139). Here, with the economy of materials characteristic of classic Art, seldom more than one figure is seen spreading the garment; while another behind represents the disciples, and one bough the branches.<sup>1</sup> The foal is here a frequent accompaniment, sometimes naïvely stretching its



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Entry into Jerusalem. (Sarcophagus.)

little head to smell at the garment or nibble the branch, or, as in the illustration, trotting like a diminutive war-horse beneath its parent. The figure here seen in the tree, and in early miniatures, not engaged in plucking branches, but attentively looking at our

<sup>1</sup> According to Brady's *Clavis Calendaria*, p. 278, *note*, the yew was substituted in England for the palm, and the box in Rome. Now the palm-branch is supplied as an article of trade to the Roman Church in Passion Week. The branches are whitened by a process of tying up the tree, as may be observed on the South coast of Spain, at Alicante, and Elche, where an unfortunate tree here and there among the noble groves of *palmas* is seen thus treated like a magnified lettuce.

Lord, suggests the idea of Zacchæus, who being little of stature and not able to see Him for the press, ran before and climbed up into a sycamore tree. This incident occurred, according to St Luke, who alone mentions it, as our Lord was passing through Jericho, and before He mounted the ass, when such an elevation for the purpose of seeing Him would be no longer necessary. Nevertheless, the system in early Art of giving consecutive moments in one view warrants this interpretation.

Another variation from the text also is often seen in the small size of the figures which welcome the Lord. In the Catacombs, and where the classic feeling maintained its supremacy, this smaller scale was indicative of moral inferiority, as seen in the representations of the miracles (vol. i. pp. 351-2); but in miniatures, and other forms of Art, in which a Greek element prevails, the small figures are intended to represent children. This is in allusion to the subsequent overthrow of the money-changers, when the children cried Hosanna in the Temple, and to our Lord's application to that circumstance of the text from the Psalms (Ps. viii. 2), 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength.' In the Greek Church, to this day, the representation of the Entry into Jerusalem is thronged with children.

In early Art the position of our Saviour on the ass varies much. As in the illustration from the Catacombs, He is often seen seated astride, and with His right profile to the spectator. But a sideways position is also frequent, and is the type usually found in the earliest MSS. On these occasions our Lord usually sits with both feet to the spectator. Instances may be seen when both are turned from him. In each case His face is in profile. Also there is an ancient form where our Saviour is seated full front to the spectator, as if on a chair of state, one hand raised in benediction, the other holding a scroll — 'Benedictus qui venit in nomine,' &c. — 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' This small quaint illustration (No.



140 Entry into Jerusalem.  
(Early miniature. D'Agincourt, pl. ciii.)

140)<sup>1</sup> is a specimen. Here there are no reins to the animal, which, strange to say, is going at full gallop, both fore-feet in the air, threatening to upset the figure on his knees spreading the garment. The little foal is again here. On the gates of St. Paolo-fuori-le-Mura, executed at Constantinople in the 11th century, and destroyed by fire in 1823, our Saviour also sits full front like one enthroned. The sideways position continues comparatively late in Art—we shall see it in an illustration by Gaddo Gaddi—and tradition has retained it in the curious *Passionsspiel*, still acted in the Tyrol (see p. 2).

In a miniature of the 6th century, from the Gospels of St. Augustine and St. Cuthbert, our Lord has a whip in His right hand, raised to strike the animal. To say nothing of the improper character of this action, it prevents the gesture of benediction. It may be considered as a rule in Art that our Lord is riding from left to right of the picture—a position evidently calculated better to show the right hand with which He is invariably blessing. Nevertheless, exceptions, as in the woodcut above, occur to this. On the bronze gates of S. Zeno at Verona, our Lord is seen coming from the right, with His left side to the spectator. No ruder example can be well cited. Here, in the total ignorance of perspective, the figures are placed one above the other, like objects on a table. The head of the figure who holds the garment being lower than the ass's hoofs, so that instead of stooping to the act, he is stretching his arms upwards. Here the branches held by the figures are those of palms—which also occur in early MSS.—traceable, probably, to the usage of the Greek Church, which had no difficulty in procuring them. There are instances of Christ Himself bearing a palm-branch as He sits on the animal; one occurs in a painted window at Bórges. This is doubtless connected with the fact, that in the Greek Church Palm Sunday is called the Sunday of the palm-bearer. In some rare instances the Saviour is represented with a book in His hand.<sup>2</sup>

The garments spread in the way have also their variations according to the period. In the Art of the Catacombs, which was comparatively real in detail, though typical in meaning, a real garment—the tunic of antiquity—is being spread; a figure is even seen

<sup>1</sup> D'Agincourt.

<sup>2</sup> British Museum, MS. Tiberius, C. IV.

in the act of stripping his outer garment over his head; and, in later Art, the real garment of the day is given and the same dramatic action repeated. But the intervening centuries were not so literal. In a miniature at Brussels, quoted before, the ass is walking over three layers of drapery, red, blue, and yellow. In the MS. in the British Museum, just quoted, the idea of honour rendered is increased by a long breadth of gorgeous brocade, spread under the ass's feet.

As regards the clothes cast by the disciples upon the animal's back to form a seat for their Lord, Art has by no means adhered to the letter of Scripture. In the illustration from the Catacombs, as we have seen, regular trappings are given to the animals. In other instances our Lord sits on the ass's bare back; while there are not wanting some in which He occupies a high Eastern saddle.

Duccio's representation of the Entry<sup>1</sup>—the first subject in the series, mentioned p. 4—is the first which breaks through the limits of early treatment. No conception of the subject at any time has been more picturesque and animated. The number of figures which throng through the gate to meet our Lord give the effect of a crowd, while the trees seen above a wall, skirting the road, are beset by eager numbers, to whom others, who have climbed aloft, are throwing down branches. Here the greater part of the multitude are small and unbearded, and therefore intended for children. This is quite in harmony with the Byzantine forms which constituted the groundwork of Duccio's original conceptions. Our Lord here sits easily upon the ass; His action, in this respect perhaps, varying with the habits of the painter. Fra Angelico, the gentle Dominican monk, who may be supposed to have known but little of the science of horsemanship, even on so lowly an animal, makes the Saviour, in his series (formerly on the doors of the press in the Chapel of the Nunziata, now in the Accademia at Florence), with projected feet and tight-drawn reins, like one truly unused to such a seat. Whilst Taddeo Gaddi (born 1300), in our illustration (No. 141, over leaf), from a drawing in the British Museum, leaves the Lord free from any thought of His position, with the reins fallen on the patient animal's neck, as if, amid all the human treachery and infirmity which environ Him, He is, at all events, sure that her faithful feet

<sup>1</sup> See plate in Kugler's Handbook of Italian Schools. Vol. i. p. 115.



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Entry into Jerusalem. (Drawing. Taddeo Gaddi.)

will not play Him false. Here, as we see, the sideways position is retained. Giacomo Bellini has it also in his volume of drawings in the British Museum. Tintoretto's almost ruined great picture of the Crucifixion, in the Scuola di S. Rocco at Venice, follows the ass farther in its possible history. Whilst He who had so lately been the object of popular acclamation hangs dying on the Cross, an ass, as the author of 'Modern Painters' has observed, points a moral by innocently grazing on the old trodden-down palm-branches, which alone testify to the course of His evanescent triumph.

It may be observed, that there is a tradition which still connects the ass with the Entry into Jerusalem, though it has failed to gain consideration towards the 'oppressed race;' namely, that the dark line down the animal's back and across the forequarters, forming the shape of a Latin cross, was the heritage of the race from that day.<sup>1</sup>

As Art progressed, the subject became more exclusively picturesque. Gaudenzio Ferrari gives little expression to our Lord, and a

<sup>1</sup> For an account of the honour done to the ass by the Church in the triple character of the animal which Balaam rode, which carried the Virgin and Child into Egypt, and on which Christ entered Jerusalem, see Hone on 'Ancient Mysteries,' p. 160.

very disagreeable one to the vicious, backward-bent ears of the animal; but he turns to good account the haste to procure branches, the feet of one figure who is reaching up the tree being propped on the hands of another.

Poussin has treated it with great picturesqueness, the scene being laid in an open country with Jerusalem on one side, and a grove of palms on the other, up and down the step-like stems of which figures are hurrying.

Still, except as part of a series (and seldom even as such with the German and Flemish artists), the Entry has not been popular with mature or later Art, and though offering great opportunities, both for landscape and architecture, to the realistic painters of the Netherlands, has not, even in that subordinate sense, been treated nearly so often as the flight into Egypt.

We may add, that in some illustrated Bibles the prophet Zechariah is represented with this subject in the background, in reference to his prophecy.

The Entry into Jerusalem is understood in the scheme of Christian Art as comprising the Weeping over the City.<sup>1</sup> St. Luke says, 'As He drew near the city' (it may be supposed still on the ass), 'He wept over it.' The conception of that scene as a separate incident is an instance of modern Protestant interpretation.

Our Lord entered Jerusalem thus riding on an ass on the first day of the Jewish week—kept in the Anglican Church under the title of Palm Sunday; in the Greek Church, as the Sunday of the Palm-bearer; and in the Syrian and Egyptian Churches as Hosanna Sunday.

<sup>1</sup> At the same time the weeping of Christ over Jerusalem is given in more elaborate series, such as the 'Speculum Salvationis,' by a type from the Old Testament, namely, by the prophet Jeremiah lamenting the destruction of the city.

## CHRIST WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET.

*Ital.* Cristo che lava i Piedi agli Apostoli. *Fr.* La Sainte Ablution.  
*Germ.* Die Fusswaschung.

THE washing of the disciples' feet by the hands of the Lord occurs between the eating of the Paschal Lamb and the institution of the Last Supper. 'When the Holy Jesus had finished His last Mosaic rite, He descends to give example of the first-fruits of evangelical grace.'<sup>1</sup>

It was the custom in the East to wash the feet of honoured guests before a meal; and besides giving them thus the example of His great humility, it is believed that our Lord designedly timed this act as one of symbolical purification before the institution of that Spiritual Supper which was His last bequest. St. John is the only evangelist who mentions this incident. He relates that Christ having risen from supper, 'and laid aside His garments, took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poured water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded. Then cometh He to Simon Peter . . . . Peter saith unto Him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head' (John xiii. 4, &c.)

This is the moment which is always chosen. Some writers assert that our Lord denuded Himself of all except the cloth with which He was girded. Art has, however, adopted the more becoming and probable view, and our Lord is always seen fully draped.

Two opposite principles were gathered from the subject of the Washing of the Disciples' Feet, according to different periods. When the Church was young, it served as an encouragement of faith; in later times, as a repression of pride. We find the subject, therefore, in the first sense, on a sarcophagus in the Catacombs,

<sup>1</sup> Jeremy Taylor's Life of Christ.



though but one instance of it occurs. After that it may be looked upon as the sign of that humility which is supposed to be exclusively Christian, being perpetuated as such, not only in the form of Art, but as an annual observance in the Roman Church, where the Pope, as most of our readers know, washes the previously perfectly cleansed feet of twelve poor men on Maundy-Thursday.

The chief variations in the representation of this subject consist in the position of our Lord, who is depicted as successively stand-



ing, stooping, and kneeling for His act of self-abasement. The standing position is that which the reference of the earliest Art chose. This necessitated a corresponding elevation in the position of St. Peter. Both these features appear in the representation from a sarcophagus found in the Catacombs, where Peter sits on a raised platform, and our Lord stands before him with a cloth attached round His neck, obviously long enough for the purpose intended (woodcut, No. 142).

The moment chosen is another source of variety in the subject,

and is equally significant of more or less reverence in treatment. Our Lord is here not engaged in the act, though the mind is satisfied that He will be so in another moment. This elevated attitude on the part of Peter, and the consequent standing or only stooping position on that of Christ, is seen also in early manuscripts, but the moment is less reverential. Our Lord, with a cloth in His hand, and another hanging on the wall behind Him, is in the act of wiping one of Peter's feet, who sits with an air of consternation, one hand to his head, on a platform, with the other Apostles ranged all full front on the same. Thus it is evident that the Lord can pass easily along the line.<sup>1</sup>

As our Lord's figure bends lower to His humble task, other agencies are resorted to by the artist to counteract the appearance of degradation. Even angelic ministrations, as in the Baptism, was called in. A manuscript of the 11th century,<sup>2</sup> shows our Lord on one knee, but an angel from heaven is descending to bring Him the towel. 'Thus showing,' as said by Dr. Waagen,<sup>3</sup> 'in the strongest light, the humility of Him whom even the angels serve.'

The figure of Peter also undergoes change with time. In early works he either holds up one hand or both, as deprecating such an honour, or he points with his right hand to his head. This may be interpreted either as an Oriental salutation of humility, or as an express reference to the words, 'not my feet only, but my hands and my head.' He is also sometimes given with his hands crossed reverentially on his breast.

It was believed by the early commentators on Scripture, that Judas' feet were washed first, our Lord having commenced with him and not with Peter. The words of John favour the belief that Peter was not the first thus honoured. 'After that He poured water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet . . . Then cometh He to Peter.' His words, too, to the chief of the Apostles after the ceremony, 'And ye are clean, but not all,' may imply that one was already washed, who could, nevertheless, not be made clean. Art has not lost sight of this inference; and where we see a disciple already tying on his sandals, as in our next woodcut, while our Lord

<sup>1</sup> D'Agincourt, pl. civ.

<sup>2</sup> British Museum, Biblia Cotton. Tiberius, C. VI.

<sup>3</sup> Treasures of Art, vol. i. p. 144.

is in the act of washing Peter's feet, the figure is meant for that of Judas. Oftener, however, the traitor is seen with a bag of money in the background, in the act of departing.

It is obvious that when Art ventured on a *bonâ fide* representation of the scene, with our Lord kneeling on the floor before His disciples, the utmost refinement of feeling was requisite to counteract



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Christ washing Disciples' Feet. (Giotto. Arena Chapel.)

what might appear as a profane reversal of the order of things. Giotto's fresco in the Arena Chapel is the first large and important representation of this subject (woodcut, No. 143). He has seized the moment which gives dignity to the Saviour and raises Him above His office. The Master, it is true, is on one knee before His servant, holding one of the feet which He is about to immerse in the water, but His head is uplifted, His other hand raised; He is speaking,

inculcating the humility they are to imitate, and thus bringing the doctrine more before our minds than the act. His head is full of energetic grandeur. Two young Apostles, St. John and another, the first carrying a pitcher of water, and thus, by this act of service, helping to elevate the office of Christ, look like attendant angels. A fully-bearded and long-haired figure (red hair in the fresco) in



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Christ washing Disciples' Feet. (Fra Angelico.)

the foreground, tying on his sandals, is, as we have said, doubtless intended for Judas.

But of all the painters who expressed the condescension of the Lord by the impression it produced upon those to whom it was sent, Fra Angelico stands foremost in beauty of feeling (woodcut, No. 144). Not only the hands, but the feet of poor shocked Peter protest against his Master's condescension. It is a contest for humility

between the two ; but our Lord is more than humble, He is lowly and mighty too. He is on His knees ; but His two outstretched hands, so lovingly offered, begging to be accepted, go beyond the mere incident, as Art and Poetry of this class always do, and link themselves typically with the whole gracious scheme of Redemption. True Christian Art, even if Theology were silent, would, like the very stones, cry out, and proclaim how every act of our Lord's course refers to one supreme idea.

Unfortunately such refinement of feeling did not long accompany this subject, and we are shocked by treatment even of an opposite character. It will hardly be believed that in various manuscripts of the 14th century, and in several engravings of a later date, one or two of the disciples are seen with large knives in hand, coolly relieving their feet of some inconvenient encumbrances. A picture, too, in the Ambrosian Library at Milan, falsely called 'Perino del Vaga,' repeats this action with variations, while Judas looks on with undisguised contempt.

At best, in the few representations of the subject by masters of the mature time of Art, all we see is one figure kneeling, wiping the feet of another, who neither lifts up his hands nor points to his head, but, as in Gaudenzio Ferrari's fresco at Varallo, seems only to think of so holding his drapery that it should not be wetted in the operation, while the disciples around are pulling off their stockings.

## THE LAST SUPPER.

*Ital.* La Cena.     *Fr.* La Cène.     *Germ.* Das Abendmahl.

THE importance of the Last Supper in the history of Christian doctrine rendered it an early subject in Art. Though it does not appear in the Catacombs, it is seen in religious subjects as early as the beginning of the 11th century. It appears, for instance, in the *retablo*, supposed to have been executed by Greek artists for the Emperor Otho III. out of the gold plates taken from the throne of Charlemagne. This, and the miniatures of the same time,<sup>1</sup> give a semicircular table, the straight side being next the spectator, with the Saviour seated at the end on the left. St. John, who does not lean on His breast, sits with the other Apostles round the semicircle. Judas alone stands or sits in the centre in front, receiving from our Lord the sop. Thus early Art has chosen the moment at which the Lord points out His betrayer. This incident descended in many instances to maturer times, and even when the giving of the sop is not represented, Judas is placed alone in front, as in the Last Supper by Giotto, and in the fresco discovered in the refectory of S. Onofrio at Florence, now generally attributed to Pinturicchio. In another respect, later Art has departed, and not to its advantage, from the early traditions of the subject. For the figure of St. John, leaning on the shoulder of Christ, and sometimes fallen forward on his Master's lap, which is stereotyped from the 14th century, has too often the double defect of being disrespectful and unpicturesque. This incident is given with most exaggeration in the Northern schools. The Last Supper, however, is less frequently treated in later times. It was considered, probably, and with justice, as too distinct and important a subject, embodying rather the solemn institution of a Sacrament than an event in the hurried tragedy of the last days of our Lord's life, and fitted, therefore, to be the centre, and not merely a portion, of a pictorial system. Its necessary form

<sup>1</sup> For example, MS. with ivory cover, A.D. 1014, in Munich Library.

of composition also disqualified it from occupying the same space which sufficed for scenes of more usual proportions. Nor could it well be brought into the same category with the Supper at Emmaus. These reasons account for our seldom finding the subject in the series of representations which illustrate the Passion and Death of our Lord.

We now proceed to consider the Last Supper in the only sense which Mrs. Jameson has not anticipated; for we must remind the reader that the Last Supper, both historically and devotionally, finds place, from its connection with the history of the Apostles, and especially with that of Judas, in her 'Sacred and Legendary Art' (see vol. i. p. 260). The subject, indeed, in all its bearings, its naïve traditions (in the sense of Art) and archæological lore, has been exhausted by her able pen; excepting in one respect,—for, with the project of the present work always kept in view, she abstained from all critical investigation of the office which Art has performed towards the principal Personage in this scene. It remains, therefore, for us to consider the Person of our Lord as given in the representations of the Last Supper, and we approach it necessarily, as will be shown, through those of His companions.

We take up her remarks on the difficulty of rendering this scene anything more than a mere symmetrical convention, from the number of the figures, and the monotonous and commonplace character, materially speaking, of their occupation. Considered merely in the sense of Art, we may say that there was too little in the nature of the subject for so many figures, all men, to do. Eleven out of the twelve were to be represented devout, earnest, and faithful, and Judas even decorous in demeanour. Many of them, too, were of the same age, most of them attired in the same kind of costume; while the introduction of their attributes was altogether incompatible with the occasion. Thus, the distinction of one Apostle from another strikes us at the very outset as a difficulty, which, in the case of sculpture, as in the cathedral at Lodi, or of wood-carving, as in Adam Kraft's work in the Church of St. Lawrence at Nuremberg, is further increased by the absence of colour. This was doubtless the reason, in early times, for the insertion of the names in the glories, and, perhaps, for the exaggerated

nature of the position of St. John, and of the character of Judas, which seem to have been seized upon as the only salient points. The discrimination of the characters and individualities of all, or even most of these passive and almost uniform figures, required, therefore, nothing short of the utmost refinement of observation and power of expression. These conditions, it is obvious, could only be fulfilled by a mind and hand of the highest order.

But here another difficulty presented itself. The Apostles, after all, were but the subordinates in the piece; such expression and character as could at best be given them depended entirely on the part which belonged to the principal actor. In representing Him, the artist had to choose between two modes of conception, each equally encumbered with objections. Our Lord might be depicted, as He has often been, in the act of blessing the bread and wine, and with His hand raised in prayer—an action full of grace for Him, and which clearly conveyed His part in the story to the comprehension of the beholder, but one which, occupying Him alone, left His companions little more than lay figures; or our Lord might be represented as engaged in no actual act at all, but simply in the character of one uttering, or having just uttered, a few words expressive of deep and mournful mental conviction. But such a moment, however easily described in words, is not so easily painted. These words, however full of meaning for the mind, offer none to the eye (for the giving the sop of Judas, a very displeasing incident in the sense of Art, which, in the difficulty of telling the tale, was frequently resorted to in early works, belonged to another and later moment). Moreover, our Lord did not address these words to one Apostle more than another, still less to any one out of the picture. Nay, words spoken thus, in the deep abstraction of prophetic vision, would have produced the same effect on the hearer had the speaker been even invisible. And yet those words were indispensable to rouse all these lay figures into appropriate, though requisitely minute, indications of individual character. It was plain, therefore, that only he who could paint the ‘troubled spirit’ of Jesus as it breathed forth the plaintive sentence, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, one of you shall betray me,’ would have the power to touch that spring which alone could set the rest of the delicate machinery in motion.



We need not say who did fulfil these conditions, nor whose Last Supper it is—all ruined and defaced as it may be—which alone rouses the heart of the spectator as effectually as that incomparable shadow in the centre has roused the feelings of the dim forms on each side of Him. Leonardo da Vinci's *Cena*, to all who consider this grand subject through the medium of Art, is *the* Last Supper—there is no other. Various representations exist, and by the highest names in Art, but they do not touch the subtle spring. Compared with this *chef-d'œuvre*, their Last Suppers are mere exhibitions of well-drawn, draped, or coloured figures, in studiously varied attitudes, which excite no emotion beyond the admiration due to these qualities. It is no wonder that Leonardo should have done little or nothing more after the execution, in his forty-sixth year, of that stupendous picture. It was not in man not to be fastidious, who had such an unapproachable standard of his own powers perpetually standing in his path.

Let us now consider this figure of Christ more closely.

It is not sufficient to say that our Lord has just uttered this sentence; we must endeavour to define in what, in His own Person, the visible proof of His having spoken consists. The painter has cast the eyes down—an action which generally detracts from the expression of a face. Here, however, no such loss is felt. The outward sight, it is true, is in abeyance, but the intensest sense of inward vision has taken its place. Our Lord is looking into Himself—that self which knew 'all things,' and therefore needed not to lift His mortal lids to ascertain what effect His words had produced. The honest indignation of the Apostles, the visible perturbation of the traitor, are each right in their place, and for the looker on, but they are nothing to Him. Thus here at once the highest power and refinement of Art is shown, by the conversion of what in most hands would have been an insipidity into the means of expression best suited to the moment. The inclination of the head, and the expression of every feature, all contribute to the same intention. This is not the heaviness or even the repose of previous silence. On the contrary, the head has not yet risen, nor the muscles of the face subsided from the act of mournful speech. It is just that evanescent moment which all true painters yearn to catch, and which few but painters are wont to observe—when the tones have ceased, but the

lips are not sealed—when, for an instant, the face repeats to the eye what the voice has said to the ear. No one who has studied that head can doubt that our Lord has just spoken; the sounds are not there, but they have not travelled far into space.

Much, too, in the general speech of this head is owing to the skill with which, while conveying one particular idea, the painter has suggested no other. Beautiful as the face is, there is no other beauty but that which ministers to this end. We know not whether the head be handsome or picturesque, masculine or feminine in type—whether the eye be liquid, the cheeks ruddy, the hair smooth, or the beard curling—as we know with such painful certainty in other representations. All we feel is, that the wave of one intense meaning has passed over the whole countenance, and left its impress alike on every part. Sorrow is the predominant expression—that sorrow which, as we have said in our Introduction, distinguishes the Christian's God, and which binds Him, by a sympathy no fabled deity ever claimed, with the fallen and suffering race of Adam—His very words have given Himself more pain than they have to His hearers, and a pain He cannot expend in protestations as they do, for for this, as for every other act of His life, came He into the world.

But we must not linger with the face alone; no hands ever did such intellectual service as those which lie spread on that table. They, too, have just fallen into that position—one so full of meaning to us, and so unconsciously assumed by Him—and they will retain it no longer than the eye which is down and the head which is sunk. A special intention on the painter's part may be surmised in the opposite action of each hand; the palm of the one so graciously and bountifully open to all who are weary and heavy laden, the other averted, yet not closed, as if deprecating its own symbolic office. Or we may consider their position as applicable to this particular scene only; the one hand saying, 'Of those that Thou hast given me none is lost,' and the other, which lies near Judas, 'except the son of perdition.' Or, again, we may give a still narrower definition, and interpret this averted hand as directing the eye, in some sort, to the hand of Judas which lies nearest it, 'Behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.' Not that the science of Christian iconography has been adopted here, for the

welcoming and condemning functions of the respective hands have been reversed—in reference, probably, to Judas, who sits on our Lord's right. Or we may give up attributing symbolic intentions of any kind to the painter—a source of pleasure to the spectator more often justifiable than justified—and simply give him credit for having, by his own exquisite feeling alone, so placed the hands as to make them thus minister to a variety of suggestions. Either way these grand and pathetic members stand as pre-eminent as the head in the pictorial history of our Lord, having seldom been equalled in beauty of form, and never in power of speech.

Thus much has been said upon this figure of our Lord, because no other representation approaches so near the ideal of His Person. Time, ignorance, and violence have done their worst upon it, but it may be doubted whether it ever suggested more overpowering feelings than in its present battered and defaced condition, scarcely now to be called a picture, but a fitter emblem of Him who was 'despised and rejected of men.'

## THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN.

*Ital.* L' Orazione nell' Orto.      *Fr.* Jésus au Jardin des Olives.  
*Germ.* Christus am Oelberge.

THE rapid passage of events in those last days brings us now to a scene which Art is bound to approach with more than usual reverence. For being one which the eyes of men were not permitted to witness, it became known to the Christian world by direct inspiration. The Scriptures tell us, on more than one occasion, of our Lord's retiring from the sight of men; but, except in two instances, they do not unfold to us what befell Him when alone. The first instance was the temptation, when angels came and ministered to Him after the conflict was over; the second was the Agony in the Garden, when an angel was sent to sustain Him, even during the struggle.

The Last Supper was over, and all that last discourse of tenderness, and promise, and farewell. Judas was gone on his errand, and there remained but brief space for that approaching agony of mind and body, only possible to be produced by the combined divine capacity and human extremity of anguish. The history of this incident is gathered from three of the Gospels. Matthew, Mark, and Luke relate the event, and they divide it amongst them. Matthew and Mark describe the Lord's sorrow and sore amazement, and His praying three times, and thrice returning to His sleeping disciples. St. Luke alone tells of the agony and bloody sweat, and of the angel who appeared from heaven strengthening Him. All three agree almost verbatim in the words of that prayer, and in the simile of the cup, in which our Lord expressed it.

Jesús, we read, went forth over the brook Cedron, where was a garden He had often visited with His disciples. And coming to a place called Gethsemane, 'He saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, whilst I go and pray yonder. And He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee'—the same three who had witnessed the Transfiguration—'and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith

He unto them, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me' (Matt. xxvi. 36-38). 'And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down and prayed, saying, Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done. And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven strengthening Him. And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground' (Luke xxii. 41-44).

The early Fathers assign the two sentences of this prayer to the two natures of our Lord. As man, He begged to have the cup pass from Him; as God, He submitted Himself to His Father's will. St. Leo says, 'The first petition proceeded from infirmity; the second from righteousness.'

This is one of the most solemn scenes which the New Testament offers to a painter. The mixed human and divine nature of Christ breaking forth into a passion of suffering; the divine messenger hastening to His side, or already ministering unto Him; the solitude and darkness of the night; the sleeping men; the flowing brook; the distant city; and the approaching traitor and his band. These latter materials, in which the picturesque more particularly lies, have been in some measure done justice to; but a short survey will show that the main idea, the solemn fact itself, embodied in our Lord's Person and in that of the angel, has been unaccountably neglected and perverted.

The Agony in the Garden is hardly seen on the stage of Art before that time—often alluded to here—when the great Italian preachers had raised up before the minds of their hearers vivid pictures of our Saviour's sufferings. It is probably first seen in the 13th century, and then under forms of great reverence and simplicity. The great facts to be conveyed were the Lord's prayer and the divine answer to it. How that answer was conveyed was not deemed so important to show as the higher fact of whence it proceeded. Thus, in lieu of the angelic messenger, it is not unusual to see the hand of the Father, or even the head of the First Person, appearing from a cloud, in token of assistance to the afflicted Son. Occasionally also, in ivories of the 14th century, not three disciples only, but all eleven, lie asleep around the kneeling figure of Christ,

like a flock of sheep—the Shepherd soon to be smitten, and the sheep scattered.

Sometimes even these innocent solecisms gave way to a literal rendering of the text, as seen in our illustration (No. 145), from a Greco-Latin miniature of the 13th century taken from D'Agincourt, pl. xcvi. Here the angel stands close to our Lord—the staff, the

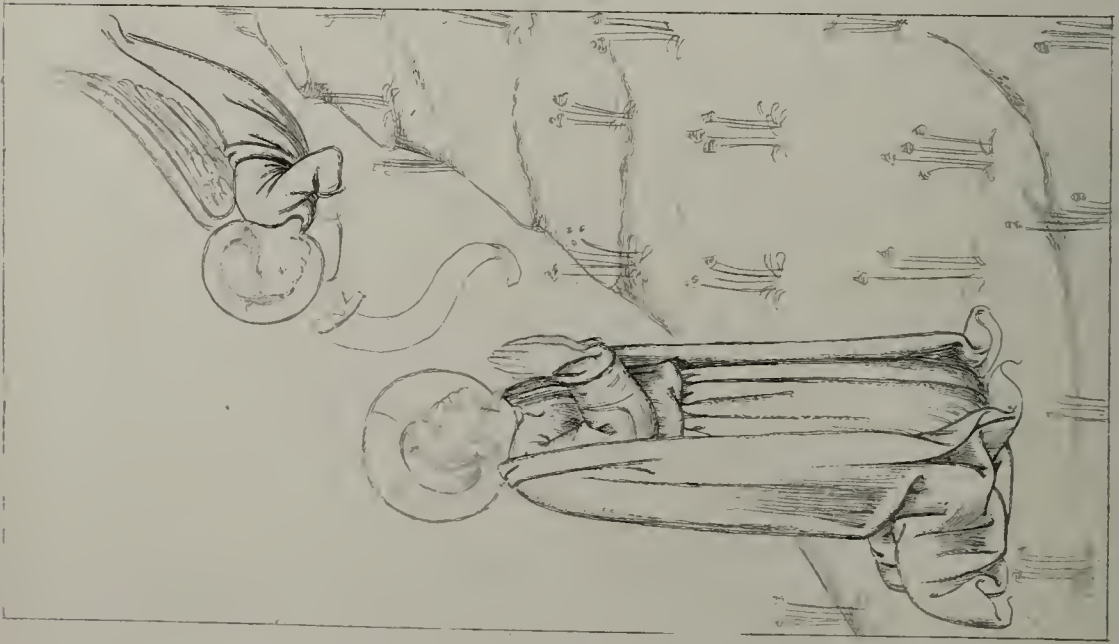


145 The Agony in the Garden. (Early Greek miniature. D'Agincourt.)

true symbol of support, in his hand—where the outstretched arms of the Sufferer show the need for it. The lower compartment of this miniature gives the intervening moment, when, coming to His disciples, He finds them sleeping.

Occasionally, also, the Agony in the Garden is imaged forth by the sole figure of our Lord, as in our etching from Mr. Boxall's Italian Speculum of the 14th century. Here nothing further than the ideas of suffering, prayer, and heavenly succour are given, the scroll in the hands of the angel being meant to convey the words





*Italian Speculum. 14<sup>th</sup> century*



THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN.

*Rembrandt. Etching*



of comfort of which he is the bearer. These were the naïve conceptions of early times; but as Art improved, the treatment of this subject declined, both in arrangement and intention. Let us examine, first, the lesser and comparatively unimportant error of arrangement.

There is that broad and natural variety in the events of our Saviour's life, each with a character of its own, which especially fits them as materials for that Art which is intended to be read as we run. The eye in this subject needs but to see the figure of Christ alone, under the temple of heaven, prostrate in prayer, to recognise 'the Agony.' There is no other occasion in His life that can be confounded with this. Our Lord's Person, therefore, is the prominent feature; all others are but accessories. Nevertheless, the prevailing type of this subject takes the eye by surprise, by placing, not the Saviour, but the three figures of the disciples in the most prominent place. There they sit or lie in front—St. Peter usually on the left hand, known by the sword, to be drawn in the next scene, in his hand, and St. John in the centre; while in the middle distance, or even in the extreme background, is discerned the diminished and subordinate figure of Christ in prayer. This is a strange misapprehension; it is as if our office as spectators concerned the disciples, not the Lord, and that the object of the painter was rather to impress us with the infirmity of man than with the sufferings of Deity. Nor does Art itself plead any excuse; on the contrary, the figures of three sleeping men, all doubled up with drowsiness, directly in front, are a dead weight that would swamp the interest of any composition.

Thus the opportunity for the highest efforts of religious Art, that of rising to the expression of the divine countenance seen under such touching conditions, has been upon the whole disregarded.

This may be called the error of arrangement—that of intention is infinitely worse. It need hardly be observed, to the reader who has thought at all on these subjects, that the attempt to render a figure of speech through the medium of any form of Art addressed only to the eye, must be always unsuccessful in interest, and often false in meaning. A metaphor in words becomes a reality in representation. Such a metaphor our Lord employed in the prayer

that this cup might pass from Him. The cup, we know, is a frequent figure in the allegorical language of Scripture. There is the 'cup of wrath,' and the 'cup of salvation,' and there is, emphatically, 'my cup,' of which Christ says that all His followers shall indeed drink; the very anticipation of which now caused Him such anguish of mind and body. But every Christian believes, without over-anxious searching, the simple words of Scripture, 'an angel appeared unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him.' The angelic messenger's office, too, is more defined in the Latin version, where the word '*confortans*' indicates strength and comfort too. What, then, has the cup to do in his hand? For no casuistry can convert the signs of suffering, to one fainting under the consciousness of its approach, into the symbol of strength. It is difficult to imagine what confusion of ideas can have led to such an anomaly. In such solemn scenes, known, as we have said before, only by revelation, all frivolous conceits of a painter are sternly interdicted, for the real is the ideal, and *vice versâ*. Here the mockery of the cup in the very hand to which only the ministry of comfort was appointed, is a direct subversion of the truth, invalidating both the supplication and the interposition: it is difficult to conceive that the prayer has been for bread, where a stone is sent in answer.

The absurdities into which this form of misconception branched were innumerable. In some pictures by the grandest Italian masters—for instance, in Mantegna's Agony in the Garden, in Mr. Baring's gallery—the false idea is further developed by the absence of the angel and the substitution of a whole row of little *angioletti*, who present all the instruments of the Passion, the Cross, the column, &c., together.

Nor was Poussin, in the 17th century, less ingenious in this false direction. The master who was punctilious as to probabilities of costume and position—making his figures in the Last Supper recline upon couches—gave no thought to the real features of the scene we are considering. His angel, it is true, is sustaining the fainting Lord, but the eyes of the winged messenger are fixed with childish glee on a swarm of little cherubs, who occupy two-thirds of the picture, holding aloft, as in mockery of the Sufferer, every object that has the remotest connection with the approaching

ordeal—from the Cross, column, and ladder, they can barely lift, to the money, the dice, and the mailed hand of the High Priest's servant, who was to strike the Divine Victim.

Often, too, the angel alone is the bearer of all the instruments of the Passion he can possibly sustain—an idea the more unseemly



when we remember that the archangel Michael was the messenger believed to have been here sent to Christ, and who is thus seen reeling beneath these heterogeneous encumbrances, to the sacrifice of all dignity as much as of all truth. In the 'Bedford Missal,' in the Agony in the Garden, the Almighty Himself appears above,

showing Christ a crucifix.<sup>1</sup> Or we see, as in our illustration from Gaudenzio Ferrari (No. 146), the angel bearing the cup which contains a miniature cross.

This last conception is a connecting link to a far more serious perversion. From the negative contradiction of the words of Scripture Art proceeds to superadd grave and positive heresy. Having punned, as senselessly as irreverently, on a metaphorical expression, she next seizes upon a synonym of the same, and wrests from it still profaner conclusions. For the word given as 'cup' in the English Bible is in the Latin Missal rendered as 'chalice.' This seems the only solution for the conception of this solemn subject which shocks the Protestant eye in numerous pictures of the best times of Art. The cup in the hand of the angel is no longer the false symbol of suffering, but the profaner representation of the Eucharistic chalice with the sacramental wafer in it, which is being offered by the angel to the suffering Jesus. This is not the place for controversial argument; at the same time there are few so utterly ignorant of the leading doctrines of all Christian Churches as not to perceive the profane confusion of fact and idea thus implied. Not a tenet of our faith remains secure under the casuistry of such a conceit. Nay, the very Divinity of Christ falls before it; for who but *man*—and man as *sinner*—needs to partake of that just instituted cup of His Body and Blood?

Thus the simplicity of Art and of the Gospel stand or fall together. The literal narrative of the Agony in the Garden lost sight of, all became confusion and error. So deeply rooted was the heretical idea of our Lord's having on this occasion received the Sacrament, that in many a fresco and picture of the 14th century the angel is seen bringing the cup and wafer in the *corporale* or cloth with which a Roman priest always holds the sacred elements. Raphael himself, in his picture, formerly in Mr. Rogers' possession,<sup>2</sup> places our Lord kneeling upright, and with folded hands, before the bearer of the cup, exactly in the position of a communicant. If the truth were known, many an unlearned spectator has taken this

<sup>1</sup> Waagen. Treasures of Art, vol. i. p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> Now in that of Miss Burdett Coutts.

conception of the Agony in the Garden for our Lord confessing His sins and receiving absolution before His death.

Another form that may be mentioned suppresses the angel altogether, and places the cup only with the wafer, all resplendent with radiance within it, upon a ledge of rock, or some elevation, while Christ kneels in apparent adoration before it. This is seen in Albert Dürer, and other German masters.

At the same time, among the pictures thus marred in a religious sense, are works of the highest possible beauty. Some of the greatest masters have treated this subject. Mantegna's picture, already mentioned, is a *chef-d'œuvre* of magnificent drawing and drapery, and quaint detail of landscape, architecture, and animals. His disciples all lie in soundest slumber, thus departing from the established type which, derived probably from our Lord's words to those left at the entrance of the garden, 'Sit ye here,' makes the three who were to watch during His prayer sit also.

Perugino's large picture in the Accademia at Florence represents another school. Bellini, too, is seen in this subject. It is impossible to forget a picture ascribed to him, formerly belonging to Mr. Davenport Bromley, now in the National Gallery. Here the solitary landscape and solemn twilight give that indescribable 'grace of a day that is gone' so peculiarly in harmony with the kneeling figure.

This still pathos of nature is also remarkable in a picture by Basaiti, in the Venetian Belle Arti, where the fading light and the leafless trees seem to point to a new morrow and a new summer. Here the disciples sleep full in the foreground, in the form of a pyramid, of which one, full length on his back, forms the base. Christ is on an elevation behind, where the painter seems instinctively to have felt the anomaly of placing Him, and therefore gives Him another form of prominence by the force of the figure against the twilight sky. This is a devotional picture, with saints on each side. The lamp is a quaint device to show its destination upon an altar.

Michael Angelo's design for the Agony in the Garden has certainly not sinned in the way we condemn. There is neither cup nor even angel, and our Lord is as clumsily conspicuous as His

massive disciples, who sit like solid sacks of sleep. Nevertheless, it is difficult to conceive anything less solemn or sublime than the great old Florentine's version of this scene.

It is corroborative of the conclusions to which we have endeavoured to lead the reader that the most true, and therefore, in a religious sense, the finest representations of the Agony in the Garden, are by what are called realistic painters. Among the Italians, Correggio stands foremost; his well-known picture in Apsley House—of which there is a good copy in the National Gallery—though famed for the painter's special quality of *chiaroscuro*, is equally remarkable for the way in which the story is told. Here the Christ, though not of elevated character, is, at all events, the principal Person, while the grand angel who shines upon Him from the very edge of the picture has no false auxiliary which breaks the promise both to heart and eye.

In Paul Veronese's picture, too, in Mr. Baring's gallery, and in others of the same subject by this gorgeous realistic painter, the help of the angel, though over-material in character, is thoroughly genuine.

Albert Dürer has always all the faults of arrangement and meaning we have condemned; but his figure of our Lord throwing up His arms with the action of wild despair is terribly grand.

But beyond every other master in conveying the reality of this subject to the eye, and that with the slightest means, may be mentioned that marvellous utterer of the noblest emotions under Dutch forms. Rembrandt's little etching of the subject, of which we have given a fac-simile (p. 26), is almost an agony to look on. Those crooked lines and apparently accidental blurs all find their only point of sight in the very depths of the spectator's heart. All convention is banished here, and all propriety that may be banished. Our overburdened Lord shuts His eyes and wrings His hands, and, in the conflict of mind and body, taxes the bodily strength of the angel on one knee before Him—a creature, it is true, with nothing angelic but his wings, and the intense sincerity of his beneficent purpose. Here, too, Rembrandt has introduced all proper accessories, and in their proper places. The three disciples lie sleeping on the receding slope of the hill. Jerusalem is indicated above, overshadowed with symbolically heavy clouds,

through which the moon is breaking, while a troop passing through a gateway, expressed in the fewest possible lines, show who it is that is approaching.

Nor must we forget another painter, but lately taken from his work—Ary Scheffer—whose conception of this scene alone would preserve his name. In his picture the expression of agony seems to burst forth at every pore, as did those drops of sweat, while the imploring, failing hands are such as only an angel from heaven can fitly sustain.

Thus, in this subject the reality and reverence of the Protestant painters have proved the truest interpreters; and, whether Catholic or Protestant, Reality hand in hand with Reverence can alone unlock the deeper powers of Art.

We may mention, that both in Italian and German Art, whether sculpture, painting, or miniature, the scene of the Agony is laid within an enclosure either of palings or what is now called ‘wattled fence.’ This occurs so constantly as to show some purpose—probably that of designating, according to European notions, the locality of a garden.

A few words upon another point. The words in Scripture are, ‘And His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling on the ground.’ This is generally interpreted by the early commentators not as real blood, but as drops like unto drops of blood in size. Art, therefore, has only introduced the actual Bloody Sweat in early and homely forms, such as miniatures of Byzantine origin, and coloured German woodcuts—of which the British Museum furnishes examples—where the crimson drops are seen falling from Christ’s Person. It may be remarked, too, that the fervour of the Middle Ages converted the purple robe into a symbol of that supposed bloody exudation.

## THE BETRAYAL.

*Ital.* La Presa, or La Cattura nell' Orto.      *Span.* El Prendimiento.  
*Fr.* La Prise de Jésus-Christ.      *Germ.* Die Gefangennehmung Christi.

THE Betrayal of our Lord may well be placed by Art immediately next to or under the Agony in the Garden. The language of the Gospel is almost identical in each Evangelist: 'While Jesus yet spake,' or, 'immediately while He yet spake, came Judas'—showing that no respite was granted between those quickly shifting scenes. The fact of the capture of Christ by means of the treachery of Judas is mentioned in all four Gospels. The kiss of Judas, by Matthew, Mark, and Luke; the going backwards and falling to the ground of the guards, on our Lord saying 'I am He,' by John only. Peter's drawing the sword, and cutting off the servant's ear, by all. The miracle by which the man was healed, only by Luke; the forsaking Him, and flight of all the disciples, by Matthew and Mark; the escape of 'a certain young man, having a linen cloth about his naked body,' only by Mark.

These are the incidents gathered thus piecemeal from the several narratives, every one of which has found illustration in Art.

No one can study this story without having a vivid picture before the mind's eye. Nowhere is the contrast between our Lord and His enemies, and even His friends, more strongly seen. The kiss of those false lips has only elicited a remark more of sorrow than reproach: 'Judas! betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?' The natural violence of one of His disciples in His defence is instantly repaired by a beneficent miracle. Our Lord re-asseverates the words, 'I am He,' the better to favour the desertion of His own friends: 'If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way.' And all these staves and swords and torches are brandished to capture one who, in the selfsame moment, discloses a divinity in His very Person which levels them to the ground, and yet, in every act and word, a calm readiness to surrender Himself into their hands.



The scene is thus crowded with more than Art can express at once; for, looking broadly at the recital, there are two separate ideas—that of treachery in the kiss given by Judas, ‘one of the twelve,’ and that of supernatural power in the effect of those few small words, ‘I am He’—‘an answer so gentle, yet which had in it a strength greater than the Eastern wind, or the voice of thunder; for God was in that still voice, and it struck them down to the ground.’<sup>1</sup>

Both these ideas were adopted by Art; that view of the Betrayal which is given by the prostrate guards being, from its greater reverence, adopted first. For early Art never lost sight of the fundamental conditions on which every event in our Lord’s course on earth, and especially of this portion of it, was based, namely, the voluntary nature of all His acts. In the true sense this was a surrender, not a capture, for Jesus knew ‘all things that should come upon Him.’

The prostration of the troop is almost an anomaly when seen in Art, for the guards seem at this moment to be the captured and betrayed, not our Lord. The probably earliest example of this subject embodies, however, neither of these ideas. It forms one of the small compartments of the bronze doors of St. Zeno at Verona, and is a simple, rude composition; our Lord between two figures, who each hold Him by the hand, and two figures with flambeaux behind Him.

Generally the prostration of the guards is given in a very simple fashion. A few figures with weapons, and often in armour, are lying flat on the ground in parallel lines, whilst our Lord stands erect above them, the image of calm power. The incident of St. Peter and Malchus does not belong here. Thus the scene is represented in miniatures, and in the ‘*Speculum Salvationis*,’ where each recumbent figure has a casque, or covering of some kind on his head, except one, intended, it is believed, for Judas, who had involuntarily bared himself, as the fashion of the day led the artist to believe, at the sight of his Master, for he also, as Scripture says, ‘stood with them,’ and, it may be supposed, fell with them.

Fra Angelico is the only master of note who has given this view

<sup>1</sup> Quotation from Nonnus’ ‘Paraphrase of Gospel of St. John,’ given in Jeremy Taylor’s ‘Life of Christ.’

of the Betrayal in his series now in the Accademia at Florence; he, however, combines it with the kiss of Judas. We give an illustration from this picture (No. 147).

The other version of the subject of the Betrayal, the kiss of Judas



147 The Kiss of Judas, and Prostration of the Guards. (Fra Angelico.)

only, abounds in ivories and miniatures, and, where its fellow-subject scarcely appears at all, in all serial works of the Passion. As the signal for all that was to follow—the date of that moment when ‘the prince of this world was come, who had no part in Him—this incident could never be omitted. In ivories and other works, where the space is limited, not more than twice two figures are given—Christ and Judas, Peter and the servant; one the idea of treachery, the other of the miracle. A simple and effective conception prevails; Judas is drawing our Lord to him, or enfolding Him in his arms. The Saviour is generally looking earnestly and sorrowfully at him. Peter has a choice of attitudes. He is either in the act of cutting off the ear—sometimes, in spite of the express words of Scrip-

ture, the *left* ear, the servant standing quite still for the occasion ; or he is sheathing his sword, long enough to have spitted an ox, with an air of satisfaction, and the man is lying crying on the ground. Often the union of the two groups is effected in a touching manner, for in the same moment that Judas betrays with a kiss, our Lord's hand is extended in the act of healing the ear. In ivories<sup>1</sup> of Northern origin, of the 14th century, our Lord has the severed ear in His hand, and is stooping down to restore it to its place. An old German woodcut, in the British Museum, rude and coloured, dated 1457, carries on the story with great *naïveté*, for the miracle is accomplished, and the man, though still on the ground, is feeling his restored ear with manifest astonishment. Generally Peter, in the early examples, is standing and preserving a certain equanimity ; but in a Greek miniature, engraved by D'Agincourt, the impetuous Apostle has got the man under him, and is kneeling with both knees on his back.

It may be observed in the Betrayal, that Judas is often represented as shorter than our Lord. This may appear a natural arrangement to enhance the prominence of the principal figure. The 'Revelations of St. Brigitta,' however, doubtless influenced Art in this respect. The fervent saint, quoting the words of the Blessed Virgin, whom she reports to have closely interrogated on the point, says : 'My Son, as His betrayer approached Him, inclined Himself to him, because Judas was of short stature.' Judas is sometimes seen, as already said, enfolding the Saviour in his arms—an action almost more treacherous than the kiss. It was supposed that he was apprehensive that by the exercise of supernatural power our Lord might even at the last moment elude their grasp. Hence his words, given here in italics, 'whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He, *hold Him fast.*' And again, 'take Him and lead Him away *safely.*' Thence also the embrace according to Art which promoted this end, by, in most cases, fettering our Lord's arms.

This is seen in Giotto's fresco in the Arena Chapel at Padua, which though too much injured to be represented here, gives the full historical event with all the vehement action which was that great master's characteristic. Judas has here both his arms round

<sup>1</sup> See one in Arundel Society.

his Master ; the action helping to render his ungainly figure still uglier, for the drapery is pulled tight over his back as it follows the hands round our Lord's neck, who is thus almost concealed in the coils of this serpent. Angry soldiers—a sea of heads—some helmeted, some bare, stand around, brandishing clubs, battle-axes, spears, lanterns, and flambeaux, which latter glare full on the mild head of Jesus, looking earnestly into Judas's face. One figure raises a horn to his lips, and gives evidently a lively blast, probably to inform fresh cohorts that the Lamb whom so many armed butchers were sent to capture is safe in their hands. In the front, on the right, is some important Jewish functionary in the wildest excitement. On the left is St. Peter, in eager action, with his knife promptly used, for the ear already hangs detached from the head, while an Elder, with a hood over his head, is clutching at Peter with unmistakably pugnacious intentions. So violent is the scene, with the knife out, blood flowing, and dangerous weapons in fierce hands, that nothing, humanly speaking, can possibly prevent murder. But with the next moment the scene was to change—the Victim was willing, His friends too happy to quit the field, and the only wound that had been inflicted healed.

Well does George Herbert—that poet of the Passion—illustrate in his turn such pictures as these :—

Arise ! arise ! they come. Look how they run !  
 Alas ! what haste they make to be undone ;  
 How with their lanterns do they seek the sun.  
 Was ever grief like mine ?

With clubs and staves they seek me as a thief,  
 Who am the way of truth, the true relief,  
 Most true to those who are my greatest grief.  
 Was ever grief like mine ?

Judas ! dost thou betray me with a kiss ?  
 Canst thou find hell about my lips, and miss  
 Of life, just at the gates of life and bliss ?  
 Was ever grief like mine ?

See, they lay hold on me, not with the hands  
 Of faith, but fury ; yet, at their command,  
 I suffer binding, who have loosed their bands.  
 Was ever grief like mine ?

All my disciples fly! Fear put a bar  
 Betwixt my friends and me; they leave the star  
 Which brought the Wise Men from the East from far.  
 Was ever grief like mine?

Very rarely do we see the fact, 'all my disciples fly,' commemorated in Art. Duccio, throughout faithful to the letter of Scripture—the key to the simple sublimity of his compositions—has a remarkable picture of the Betrayal in his series. Here the disciples



148

The Betrayal. (Duccio. Siena.)

are fleeing like frightened sheep on one side, whilst Judas is in the act of kissing the Lord, who is serenely intent on restoring the wounded servant—the right hand being raised in benediction for that purpose. This is one of the most dignified, as it is the most complete, representation of the scene. We give an illustration (No. 148).

Now that the subject of the Betrayal, under the form of the Kiss of Judas, was fairly in the hands of known and great masters, it becomes interesting to note how one particular and objectionable feature was overcome. The violence used to our Lord's sacred

Person in this incident, though in some sort understood in the Scriptures, is not described. It is simply said, 'And they laid their hands on Him, and took Him;' or, according to St. John, 'And the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus and bound Him.' Art is here put upon her resources to avoid offending the eye of reverence. The scene must be rude, and the only safety lay in dwelling, as in the Scripture narrative, on that dignity and gentleness of our Lord which acts both in a hallowing and contrasting sense. The mild effulgence of Christ's Person is sufficient to counterbalance the necessarily rough elements of infuriated Jews and stern Pagan soldiery. Where this idea is not duly developed the eye is sure to be offended. There were three moments in the scene open to the painter's choice—Judas approaching to betray with a kiss; in the act of so betraying; and having already betrayed Him. The first of these, Judas approaching, is the form most fitted to spare the spectator the sight of blasphemous outrage. This preparatory moment is generally preferred by the nameless artists of early ivories and miniatures, and by Italian painters; but the engraved series of the German masters of the 15th and 16th centuries generally show one of the two later moments. Martin Schön represents Judas as leaving the scene, bag in hand, already a prey to remorse; the malignant despair of his face being artfully increased by the curved end of a soldier's helmet, which projects like a horn from behind his forehead. Christ is therefore already in the hands of the rabble—for such the German and Flemish artists of this time always made 'the troop'—the rope over His head, His hands bound, one wretch pulling Him by the hair, and another dragging up His robe, till His bare feet and ankles are exposed. But our Lord's divine head, or rather the intention of it, overcomes in great measure even so barbarous a conception. He is not heeding His captors, or His bound hands—self is forgotten in pity for another—the wounded servant is the object of His earnest gaze, and in another moment, by the mere exercise of divine volition, we feel that the healing miracle will ensue. Thus a great master may choose what seems a difficulty, and turn it into the evidence of triumphant power. This shows who it is that those brutified and caricatured figures have in their grasp, more strikingly than if He had stretched forth His hands to work the miracle.

Not so did Albert Dürer conceive, who, sometimes most sublime of all German masters in sacred subjects, sinks here and elsewhere into the lowest perversion of truth and taste. In his large wood-cut of the subject, the spectator is left uncertain whether the treacherous sign agreed upon has been given. A fierce masculine head, with grand curling hair, belonging to a figure holding a bag, is close to the Saviour. But the artist betrays the Lord as well; for he depicts Him with upraised head appealing to Heaven against the outrage, and resisting it with all His might. His left foot is planted convulsively on the ground before Him, and He is throwing His whole weight backwards from two figures; the one dragging Him by the neck of His garment, the other by a rope round His waist. At the same time a Roman soldier is tying His hands behind Him. This is a highly offensive representation, simply because untrue to our Lord's character.

Two other plates by Albert Dürer of the same subject are scarcely better: in both Judas is in the act of kissing the Lord with protruded lips; thus in great measure hiding the face, the expression of which can alone redeem the scene.

But the very lowest conception of the subject appears in a design purporting to be by Poussin, but more probably by the hand of his scholar, Stella, by whom is a series of the Passion, all equally reprehensible. The garden is here occupied by a mere rabble rout, in the midst of which is our Lord screaming with terror, and with both His arms extended—an action as improbable in one just captured as it is unbecoming when applied here to Christ. Not only does His state of excitement, but also the distance to which the crowd have dragged Him, preclude all possibility of His healing the servant, who, with his lantern under him, lies under Peter's drawn sword with his ear still untouched.

It is a relief to turn to a picture with beauties of expression seldom found in the sumptuousness of later Art. There were rich elements in this night subject for gorgeous lighting and colour to attract Van Dyck, and his picture of *El Prendimiento* at Madrid is one of his *chefs-d'œuvre*. (We give an etching.) Judas is here only approaching, going as if uphill to his prey. He has taken our Lord's right hand, which lies passive in his, and is treading with one foot on the Saviour's drapery, partially fallen off, as if the

more to detain Him. Other fierce hands are on our Lord's left shoulder, while two brawny arms behind are lifting the sacrilegious rope just ready to be thrown over His head. A strong figure, following close on Judas, has another rope. Figures of brutal strength hold flambeaux, and one in armour glares fiercely in the night. St. Peter has knocked his man down, who is screaming under him, with his lantern overturned, and the candle burning on the ground. Thick trees, illumined with the glare, are above the group, and an owl, just roused, is about to take its heavy flight. The moon, a waning crescent, 'on her back,' is more poetical than true, for during the Paschal week the moon was at the full. The whole scene has a dark and treacherous character, the lines of the picture all leading up in violent action to one pale face in the centre—the only face not distorted by rage or cunning—radiant, tranquil, and loving—

The ever fixèd mark  
Which looks on tempests and is never shaken.

Van Dyck, however, painted another picture of this subject, an engraving of which exists, which contrasts painfully with that we have described—also by torchlight.

The incident of St. Peter and Malchus is an invariable accompaniment of this subject; sometimes occupying too prominent a part in the foreground. The struggle between the two figures is not always so decorous as might be desired. The man is sometimes on his back, kicking the chief Apostle, like the evil one overpowered, though the comparison cannot be extended to rough Peter and the Archangel. There was, perhaps, a tradition in the 15th century of the servant having carried a lantern, for from about that time it is always introduced and seen fallen with him to the ground. In a manuscript in the Brussels Library, executed for Jean de Berry, in honour of his wife Ursigne, where the rebus of *Ours* and *Cygne* is perpetually recurring, there is a miniature of the Betrayal, in which the prostrate servant is catching hold of the robe of Judas to save him: a touch of bitter satire, on the painter's part, on the blindness which could thus appeal to the sinking sinner, with the Ark of refuge standing by. In ivories of the 14th century the servant is sometimes seen with a club.





THE BETRAYAL.

*Vandyck Madrid Gallery*



In these German series of etchings or woodcuts, and in pictures, especially of the Flemish school, the figure of the young man fleeing, and throwing off his garment before a pursuing soldier, is sometimes seen in the background. This figure is also given by Correggio. Tradition, fond of finding a name for every actor, however subordinate in these scenes, affixed that of St. John the Evangelist to the young man, and modern writers, including our own Jeremy Taylor, adopt this as a fact. But there seems no evidence to prove it, though the reasons advanced by St. Ambrose and St. Gregory in opposition, that St. John cannot be supposed to have worn a loose garment over his naked person, are not very conclusive. At all events, Art has not adhered to the letter of Scripture, for, except by Correggio, a tight-fitting under-garment is always given.

By some, this figure was supposed to represent the keeper of the garden, who, roused from sleep by the outrage going on within its precincts, had taken flight. The Italian writers, adopting this conclusion, have named the fleeing figure *l'ortolano*.

## CHRIST BROUGHT BEFORE ANNAS.

*Ital.* Cristo avanti Anna.      *Fr.* Jésus devant Anne.

THERE are few artists who have ventured to lift the veil which the Scriptures have spread over the incidents that befell our Lord between the period of His betrayal and His appearance before the High Priest. It is too probable that the passage from Gethsemane to the palace of the functionary was the scene of blasphemous outrage towards the Lamb of God, for, as Jeremy Taylor says, 'it is certain that His captors wanted no malice, and now no power, for the Lord had given Himself into their hands.' There were traditions, too, of violence used by the ruder soldiers as they recrossed the little brook Cedron with their prey, a prophetic allusion to which is supposed to be found in the Psalm, 'He shall drink of the brook by the way.' It is, however, to the credit of Art seldom to have attempted to fill up this undescribed interval. It is true that among the bas-reliefs on early Christian sarcophagi, which give us, in repeated forms, the chief miracles and events of Christ's life, with the events from the Old Testament which typify them, there occurs on more than one occasion a figure led between two others, which has been sometimes interpreted as that of our Lord on His way to the tribunal, sometimes as St. Peter being taken before Herod. At all events, nothing more than the indication of the subject is given in such early Art. And the same may be said of Fra Angelico, who gives the time after Judas has disappeared, in the series now in the Accademia. But Fra Angelico ran no risk of shocking our feelings of reverence. His captors of our Lord, if not lambs, are very gentle wolves, and the scene little more than a pious fiction. It is only the attempt at reality, which occurs at a later time, which is reprehensible. In this sense it appears in a work at the National Museum at Munich, consisting of fifty rude German miniatures in one frame, representing the whole life of our Lord, where He is shown falling under circumstances of violence in the brook itself. Holbein appears, however, to be the greatest

delinquent in this respect, having represented the passage of this stream in an engraving of which it is said that 'his hand must have trembled while it gave form to an invention as novel as it was cruel, barbarous, and diabolical.'<sup>1</sup> Albert Dürer also has approached far too near this forbidden subject. In his series called the Little Passion, we see Annas, or Caiaphas, seated in the distance, while our Lord, in the foreground, is dragged along, evidently up steps, by His hair as well as by the rope; His hands tied behind Him, His form bent double, His head hidden by His position and by the disordered hair, and with all the expression of a figure which will fall to the ground the next moment.

To represent the sacred Person of our Lord succumbing beneath degrading treatment, is not endurable to a reverent eye, even in scenes which commemorate His known sufferings, and, on occasions where Scripture is silent, utterly unjustifiable. We can never too often impress upon our readers that Art is bound, as the very first condition of her service, to show respect to the Person of our Lord, by rendering its dignity paramount to every outrage to which He subjected Himself. To endeavour to assume the position of a looker-on at the time, is the fallacy, as we have observed in the Introduction, by which many an artist of no elevation of character has erred. Such a position, however true in the light of a fact then, has never been true in any light since. To us Christ, in every circumstance of His life, is the Lord of heaven and earth, and nothing less. To depict Him under the loftiest and benignest of forms, while in the act of being bruised, wounded, despised, and rejected, is the only mode of conveying that religious lesson which is meant to melt and humble the heart. It is only by the comparison of His sufferings with His divine nature, that the tremendous spectacle of His Cross and Passion can reach our perceptions. Associate these sufferings with a mean and degraded figure, or exaggerate them so as to hide all the character of Him who endures them, and they immediately lose their solemn effect on the mind. For where Christ is made but a suffering and persecuted man, humanity looks on with pity, sometimes with disgust, but never with humble and penitent awe. We may be sure that upon this very passage, our Lord, however outraged, still bore the impress of a power which could have sum-

<sup>1</sup> Zani, vol. vii. p. 186.

moned twelve legions of angels to His rescue. And our great requirement from Art in the ensuing terrible scenes is, that she should always remind us of that great declaration in the 10th chapter of St. John: 'No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.'

The Gospels vary with all the unconsciousness of truth in the recital of our Lord's appearances before the various tribunals, but all agree in compressing the passage from Gethsemane into such words as these: 'And they led Jesus away to the High Priest;' or, 'they that had hold of Him led Him away to Caiaphas;' 'Then they took Him and led Him, and brought Him unto the High Priest's house.' Even the Old Testament, in its prophecies, gives the same decorous character to this part of the Passion: 'He was led as a lamb to the slaughter.' It is nowhere said that He was dragged there. And, finally, St. John, more circumstantially: 'Then the band of the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound Him, and led Him away to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the High Priest that same year.' St. John is the only Evangelist who mentions Annas. St. Luke, the only one who describes our Lord's appearance before Herod, and His two appearances before Pilate. St. John alone gives the incident of Caiaphas tearing his robe, and of the officer who struck Jesus in his presence. St. Matthew alone tells how Pilate's wife came to him and said, 'Have thou nothing to do with that just man,' &c.; and, also, the fact of Pilate's washing his hands. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all describe the outrage our Lord suffered at the hands of the Jewish council and of their servants when they blindfolded Him. Matthew, Mark, and John, that which He endured from the soldiers of the governor when they pressed the crown of thorns upon His head. St. Luke alone says that Jesus was mocked by Herod and his captains, who put upon Him 'a gorgeous robe.' All the Evangelists relate that Pilate delivered Him to be scourged; but St. John alone that Pilate brought Him forth to the people wearing the purple robe and the crown of thorns, and said, 'Behold the man.'

These, therefore, are the scenes of which Art has to avail herself in representing incidents of such partial similitude as our Lord's five distinct appearances before authorities—before Annas, Caia-

phas, Pilate, Herod, and Pilate again—and His three different outrages, known in scholastic phraseology under the appellation of ‘The Three Mockings,’ successively by Caiaphas, by Herod, and before Pilate. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that confusion should have arisen, and that these various events should be misnamed and frequently shuffled into a wrong order of succession; also, that few artists should have attempted the whole series at all. Duccio in this respect stands alone, and also in the nicety of discrimination, and in the carrying on of the same countenances and characters, like as in the shifting scenes of a play, whence, doubtless, his ideas were derived. Duccio commences with Christ before Annas; according to St. John’s words, ‘Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound Him, and led Him away to Annas first’ (xviii. 12, 13). The master has here introduced the incident of the servant raising his hand to strike the Lord, which properly belongs to the appearance of Christ before Caiaphas. But a slight ambiguity in the Scripture narrative excuses this mistake, for the fact is related, and with it the mild remonstrance of Jesus that ensued; and then St. John adds, ‘Now Annas had sent Him bound unto Caiaphas, the high priest’ (v. 24). Strictly speaking, the scene before Annas has no identifying action for an artist’s use, and is therefore scarcely ever delineated.

## CHRIST BEFORE CAIAPHAS.

‘ Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people ’ (John xviii. 14). On this account Dante has placed him in hell, ‘ fixed to a cross with three stakes on the ground ’ (Canto xxiii.) :—

That piercèd spirit, whom intent  
Thou view’st, was he who gave the Pharisees  
Counsel, that it were fitting that one man  
Should suffer for the people. He doth lie  
Transverse ; nor any passes, but him first  
Behoves make feeling trial how each weighs.  
In straits like this along the foss are placed  
The father of his consort (Annas), and the rest  
Partakers in that counsel, seed of ill  
And sorrow to the Jews.

This is usually the first tribunal rendered in Art, as most expressive of evil towards our Lord, Caiaphas having thus stirred up the people. It is finely treated by Duccio, who makes the High Priest tearing his robe—the identifying action—with a hypocritical expression of horror, which is repeated by a number of hoary-headed Jews around and behind him. But a still finer conception of this scene is that by Giotto in the Arena Chapel, of which we give an illustration (No. 149). Here we see two functionaries occupying the seat of justice. This, doubtless, arose from the mention by St. Luke of Annas and his son-in-law, Caiaphas, as being High Priests conjointly ; which, however, applies to the appearance of John the Baptist, seven years earlier. There was, however, much early controversy as to whether Annas did not occupy the position of vicar, and continue to reside in the same palace. At all events, the idea of the conjoint high-priesthood is seen in Art as early as the 11th century, when it appears on the brass doors of the cathedral at Benevento,<sup>1</sup> and in early miniatures, and was thence adopted by Giotto in his grand fresco. The moment here

<sup>1</sup> Ciampini.





149 Christ before Caiaphas and Annas. (Giotto. Arena Chapel.)

chosen is when Caiaphas has adjured Christ by the living God to say whether He be the Son of God. To which Jesus answered in the affirmative, adding the prophecy that they shall see Him as the Son of man—or, in His human figure—sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then Caiaphas rends his clothes, and says, ‘He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses?’ Caiaphas, therefore, is tearing open his robe, and showing his bare chest, while an officer lifts his hand to strike Jesus with the palm. But the figure of Jesus Himself is the true test of a great master’s power of conception. Here our Lord is neither meekly facing His accuser, nor looking at His smiter; He is neither strong in innocence, angelic in forgiveness, nor, as the Northern schools too often made Him, borne down with degradation, but He is

in the position of one erect, noble, and especially unconscious, who is looking beyond all earthly things, as He gazes into futurity and utters this prophecy. By these means Giotto has raised our Lord above the scene—He is in it, but not of it; and thus the closest adherence to Scripture has resulted in one of the loftiest conceptions of the scene that Art had rendered. Two moments are here combined, the action of Caiaphas and that of the officer, which other artists have separated. As regards the individual who committed the outrage of striking the Saviour, tradition—which always busied itself in naming, connecting, and touching up all anonymous persons or unexplained incidents in Scripture—has identified him with that Malchus, the servant of the High Priest, whose ear Jesus had just healed, thus transforming the man into a kind of minor Judas. The German artists in their series have, therefore, generally made this figure bearing the same lantern which invariably escapes from his hand at Peter's onslaught. Giotto, however, seems to have disdained this spurious interpretation, for the individual about to strike Christ is, by his dress, evidently an officer of some importance. The presence of the two false witnesses is also a distinguishing sign of the hall of the High Priest. This is seen in rude early forms, as on the bronze doors of S. Zeno at Verona, where the group is limited to a person on a throne, the figure of our Lord, and two men in speaking gestures. Rude as is this representation, it suffices to prove that the Art of the South, even at that undeveloped period, gave evidence of its elevation of feeling in one respect. Any violence towards the Person of our Lord was out of the power of an Art not sufficiently advanced to grapple with lively action. The stiff decorum of the scene, therefore, does not go for much. But one point was left to their own feeling. The Scriptures, namely, say nothing of *how* Christ was bound, and in the freedom of choice thus left, the artists of the South preferred the more reverent mode of binding His hands in front; many of those of the North, the greater degradation of pinioning His hands behind.<sup>1</sup> It is obvious, however, that this point was one of no light importance to an artist. The hands of Christ as He stands before these tribunals—all bound as they

<sup>1</sup> One probable cause for this arrangement is that S. Buonaventura describes our Lord with His hands bound behind Him. English translation, p. 215.

are—the touch of which was life, health, and spiritual blessing—appeal to the feelings with a power only second to His countenance. There is another reason, too, for our seeing the hands, which is



150

Christ before Caiaphas. (Gaudenzio Ferrari.)

that, in most early forms, the right hand, though bound, is still blessing—as if that action flowed from Him by a humane necessity. With His hands tied behind Him, whether seated, standing, or dragged along, no man could well look dignified. This was an

instance where an artist could either give or deny himself the materials for maintaining the dignity of the principal figure. By the 16th century, even in Italy, and still earlier in the North, we find this tribute of reverence already sacrificed, and the pinioning the hands behind adopted.

Gaudenzio Ferrari, in his Christ before Caiaphas (not before Herod, as the Italian commentators call it), has bound the hands of Christ behind Him. The sense, however, is exquisitely rendered, and sufficiently distinct from Giotto to warrant another illustration (No. 150). He concentrates the interest upon the incident of the blow. Here it is evidently a furious servant who has just dealt it, while our Lord turns to him with an expression of which nothing can exceed the angelic gentleness.

THE MOCKING BEFORE CAIAPHAS, AND THE DENIAL OF OUR LORD  
BY PETER.

*Ital.* Nostro Signore beffeggiato e schernito.      *Fr.* Jésus outragé par les Juifs, et le  
Reniement de St. Pierre.      *Germ.* Die Verspottung Christi.

THE first of the so-called Three Mockings follow in Holy Writ close after the declaration of the High Priest that our Lord had spoken blasphemy. Step by step the outrages of His captors increase in malice and cruelty. Having become their prey, He was now to be their sport, as, finally, their victim. There can be no doubt that Caiaphas, with the elders of the people, had departed from the hall, leaving our Lord, during the night, at the mercy of the soldiers and servants who had assisted at His betrayal. It was His character of a Prophet that at this time most wounded the pride of the Jews. It was but on the first day of that same week that the multitude had hailed Him with loud hosannas as the Prophet of Nazareth. On the same day Jesus had prophesied the destruction of the city, and denounced the chief Jews as the children of them who slew the prophets; bidding them, in prophetic vision, to fill up the measure of their fathers' crimes. And now, those here present had just heard the seemingly helpless Prisoner in their hands declaring the glory that awaited Himself. This last act may be supposed to have given them the immediate cue to the kind of derision in which they were to take their wretched pastime. St. Mark tells the tale thus:—'And some began to spit on Him and to cover His face, and to buffet Him, and to say unto Him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike Him with the palms of their hands' (xiv. 65). St. Luke says, 'And the men that held Jesus mocked Him, and smote Him. And when they had blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face, and asked Him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote Thee?' (xxii. 63, 64). St. Matthew omits all mention of the blinding, though he implies it by narrating the same usage and taunts. St. John does not describe this mocking at all.

In the earliest conceptions of this scene, found scattered in MSS., the artists seem to have preferred the omission of the blind-

ing, justified by St. Matthew's account, as leaving the divine countenance free, and thus aiding the simple idea of the lofty superiority of the Incarnate Word to the malice of His tormentors, who, on the classic principle, are made much smaller than Himself. Thus, also, that sense of the voluntary sacrifice is preserved, which is the chief truth required by the Christian spectator at the hands



151 The Mocking of Christ.  
(Miniature. Bologna.)

of Art. We give an instance (No. 151), from the initial letter E, heading an Exultet of the 13th century, in the collection of the ancient choral books in the 'Lyceo Musicale' at Bologna. In other early versions Christ is seated as on a throne, with book and sceptre, in regal dignity, while His tormentors seem to ply their vile occupation unheeded by Him. Such a conception is seen in one of the ancient silver-gilt plates preserved in the Treasury at Aix-la-Chapelle, and believed to be of the 11th century (No. 152).<sup>1</sup> In all these early conceptions, the sense of reverence in the artist and of dignity in the Lord are the chief features.

In later Art the scene is generally given in an historical sense, as a part of a series, where the mind may be supposed to be in some measure prepared for so terrible a sight. We are not aware of any master having found pleasure in it as a separate theme.

The scene is variously introduced: sometimes in the background of Christ's appearance before Caiaphas; sometimes in Caiaphas' presence; in other examples dividing the space with the Denial of the Saviour by Peter—always in a large hall. The variety consists in the more or less exaggerated brutality of the mockers, who too often

<sup>1</sup> Casts of these and of many remarkable ivories may be seen and purchased at Herr Leer's, 37 Stolk Gasse, Cologne.



152 The Mocking of Christ. (Silver-gilt plates. Cathedral, Aix-la-Chapelle.)

transgress the needful decorum of Art. In the often-quoted 'Bible Historiée' at Paris, among the various modes of insult and annoyance, a squirt is being used. Albert Dürer also gives a figure blowing a horn close to the Saviour's ear.

Also the mode of covering our Lord's face is significant of time and school. The covering the whole face, according to St. Mark, may be considered the exception. This is generally seen in the ivories of the 14th century (woodcut, No 153), where a soldier on each side holds the ends of the cloth which conceals the divine face. But later Art vindicates her right to see as much of the face as possible; accordingly, nothing more than a bandage is passed across the eyes. Even this was sometimes eluded, for occasionally the bandage is transparent, and the eyes are seen gazing through with a strange and unearthly effect,



153 The First Mocking of Christ. (Ivory. 14th century.)

as if piercing all obstacles by their divine power. Fra Angelico has imagined this supernatural appearance (woodcut, No. 154). He has given also to Christ the ball and sceptre of sovereignty, thus showing His abstract dignity in the midst of actual insults. For



154

The First Mocking of Christ. (Fra Angelico.)

this is not to be taken as a confusion of this scene with that mocking where Christ is invested with the crown of thorns and the reed sceptre, but rather as an ideal setting forth of the opposite principles of Good and Evil. This last representation occurs in his series in the Accademia at Florence. The sentence in the 50th chapter of



Isaiah, which so closely described these and following scenes of the Passion, and where it is said, 'Therefore have I set my face like a flint,' has been held to refer to this particular effect of our Lord's eyes, which are looking straight and steadfastly out, as if through and beyond all things.

This mocking does not occur near so often, even in series, as that, which we shall soon approach, inflicted by Pilate's soldiers, and distinguished by the reed sceptre and the crown of thorns. And it is not to be wondered at if mistakes between the two have taken place. Nicoletto da Modena, for instance, in a well-known engraving cited by Bartsch, further confounds both mockings by representing the handkerchief as bound over the crown of thorns. The German engravers are distressingly rude in their conception of this scene. Albert Dürer gives our Lord sitting with His hands convulsively grasping each knee, as if wincing from a brutal servant who is dragging the divine head ignominiously on one side by the hair. There is, however, more story and satire in their plates. This latter quality is carried by Lucas van Leyden to the brink of the profane, for he makes a Jewish father directing the attention of his young child to Christ, thus maltreated, as a warning against doing likewise.

The commentators differ as to whether the denial of Christ by Peter occurred before or after the mocking. By Matthew and Mark it is placed after that event; by Luke, before it. It must, however, be believed to have taken place after the Apostle had witnessed a scene which tempted him the more to deny the knowledge of one thus set at nought. It is plain, also, that it did not occur during the mocking, as some have rather paradoxically suggested; for St. Luke, who only mentions this pathetic incident, says that our Lord 'turned and looked upon Peter.' His eyes, therefore, must have been at that time free from their bandage. The fact, too, that our Lord 'turned' to look upon His recusant disciple, implies that Peter had denied Him, where, perhaps, he thought that he was as little heard as seen. And thus the Denial is appropriately introduced into the same plate or picture, alternately as its foreground or background, with the First Mocking. Perfect accuracy of detail, however, is of course not to be looked for where the chief aim is to set forth the ideas of our Lord's suffering and of man's infirmity.



155

The Mocking of Christ before Caiaphas. (Duccio.)

Thus Duccio gives the Mocking with our Lord blindfolded before Caiaphas (woodcut, No.155); while outside the hall—and therefore interpretable as another and later moment—are the highly expressive figures of the maidservant<sup>1</sup> and Peter, with the cock crowing above.

Instances, nevertheless, occur of the confusion entailed by the quick succession of these various tribunals. We have seen the denial of Peter put in the background with the appearance of Christ before Annas. Peter's actual repentance is sometimes treated as a sepa-

<sup>1</sup> It is curious to observe that even this nameless maidservant is not overlooked by the early writers in their close researches into the typical meaning of every fact in Scripture. Generally women are allowed the negative merit of not having personally participated in the crime of the Crucifixion. But St. Ambrose (4th century) quaintly says, 'What meaneth it that a maid is the first to betray Peter, save that that sex should be plainly implicated in our Lord's murder, in order that it might also be redeemed by His Passion?'

rate picture; the most remarkable instances are by Spagnoletto and Rembrandt. It is also seen in backgrounds, as in the Crowning with Thorns by Luini; the Apostle kneeling in fervent prayer, and burying his head in his hands. Further information is found in Mrs. Jameson's 'Sacred and Legendary Art,' vol. i. p. 197.

For the chief details of the life and death of Judas, the reader is referred to the same work by Mrs. Jameson (vol. i. p. 255). But a few more particulars applicable to this part of the history of our Lord may be inserted here. The repentance and death of the traitor is an episode that occurs, apparently, while our Lord was being led bound from the palace of Caiaphas to that of Pontius Pilate the governor. It is mentioned in the rapid course of events only by St. Matthew, who says that Judas, when he saw that He was condemned—Caiaphas and the elders having openly asserted Him to be worthy of death—'repented himself,' and returned the money to the chief priests, more as an act of restitution than because he thought he could thereby save the innocent blood. And as they cast his guilt back upon him, he threw down the money in the Temple, 'and went and hanged himself.' Another account is given by Peter in the first chapter of the Acts, who, speaking of Judas, 'which was guide to them that took Jesus,' says that 'falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.' The truth is supposed to consist in the union of these two accounts—the rope with which he suspended himself having broken, so that the fall became the actual cause of death. Certain generations of artists who executed the series of the Passion apparently by rote, do not seem to have reasoned much upon the words of Scripture. The figure of Judas, both hanging and with his bowels gushing out, and thus combining the two forms of death, is almost an invariable feature in the ivory diptychs and tablets which compress into a small space the leading events of the Passion, as in our etching, vol. i. p. 23. In some of these ivories Judas, though thus dead, is represented with his hand raised to the rope by which he hangs—a mode, perhaps, of instructing the spectator that it was his own act. On the Benevento doors the story is told with dramatic vehemence, for Satan is seen seated upon the shoulders of the pendent traitor, as if to weigh both soul and body down. In the

far-fetched logic of scholastic reasoning, this 'bursting asunder' was interpreted as a particular judgment, viz., as preventing his last breath from being exhaled through the same lips that had betrayed his Lord. This idea also found expression at the hands of Art, of which we have seen an example in a book of drawings of the 14th century, in the Ambrogian Library at Milan. Here the demon is taking the soul of Judas, under the customary form of a little child, from the region of the bowels. Horrible as the subject is, there is something quaint and almost graceful in this drawing.

A modern painter has conceived a new and striking moment in the short space between Judas's act of treachery and his death. This is given by A. Thomas, a Belgian painter. The time is the night. Two men have been fashioning the Cross by the light of a fire; one is asleep, the other engaged upon it. Judas, bag in hand, the moon shining behind him, comes suddenly on this scene, and is transfixed with horror.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Exhibited in the International Exhibition, 1862.

## CHRIST BEFORE PILATE.

*Ital.* Cristo avanti Pilato.*Fr.* Notre Seigneur devant Pilate.*Germ.* Christus vor Pilatus.

ART now brings before us that Roman governor, who, in his ignorant, evil, and comparatively obscure life, little thought that his name was destined ever after to be preserved in connection with the sacrifice of the mysterious Prisoner who twice stood before him, who was 'conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, and suffered under Pontius Pilate.'

We have already alluded to the apocryphal history of Pontius Pilate; his real history is much shorter. He is known to have been very corrupt in his administration, and to have greatly oppressed the Jews. Christian Churches have differed much in the estimate of the part he played. The Coptic Church raised him to the dignity of a saint, and in the types which his acts and nation suggested, a favourable interpretation has, as we shall see, been given. Scripture thus introduces him: 'When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders took counsel against Jesus to put Him to death. And when they had bound Him, they led Him away, and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate, the governor.' These are the words of St. Matthew, and the substance of the account given of the same incident by the other Evangelists. The Jews, it appears, had either no power to put to death, without the order of the governor, or their customs did not allow it during the Paschal week. The accusation against the Prisoner varied according to the tribunal. Before Caiaphas, Christ had been charged with sorcery and blasphemy; before Pilate, and subsequently Herod, with treason to Cæsar, in styling Himself a 'King.' It was Pilate who, not sorry to deride the hypocrites before him, seems first to have embodied the accusation in those ever-memorable words, 'the King of the Jews,' which began with the inquiry of the Wise Men, and ended with the inscription on the Cross.

In the same spirit of derision, he asked our Lord the question: 'Art Thou the King of the Jews?' to which He answered in an affirmative of which Christians understand the real import. But to all the accusations of the chief priests and elders, and to the further appeals of Pilate, He answered 'to never a word,' so 'that the governor marvelled greatly.' Hearing, then, that Christ was a Galilean, and glad to rid himself of a suit in which the accusers made a charge which he knew to be false, and yet which the accused mysteriously owned to be true, he sent Him to Herod, whose jurisdiction included the district of Galilee. 'And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad, for he was desirous to see Him of a long season, because he had heard many things of Him, and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by Him.' But here our Lord preserved the same course; He made no answer to Herod's 'many questions,' nor to the vehement accusations of the chief priests and scribes. Tradition says that Herod believed our Lord, from His silence, to be devoid of understanding, which may, humanly speaking, account for his so far joining cause with the chief priests as to mock their Prisoner, arraying Him 'in a gorgeous robe,' which the Greek Church interprets as 'a white robe,' this being an attribute of regal dignity, and, as commentators have not been slow to observe, of Innocence. Thus attired, Herod sent Him back to Pilate.

. . . . . This makes them agree ;  
 But yet their friendship is my enmity.  
 Was ever grief like mine ?

Along this space of narrative, however touching, Art has left but few of her traces. The first interview with Pilate was, as we see, barren of all that action necessary to the Art whose first requisite is visible distinctness. It is, therefore, not admitted in the series of events on early bas-reliefs, or even on ivories, both requiring, in their simplicity of treatment and limit of space, a particular identifying action.

One feature, however, there was, which may be gleaned indirectly, but with certainty, from Scripture, and which belongs to this first interview only. It appears that on our Lord's being first brought to the governor's palace the Jews refused to enter, 'lest

they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover' (John xviii. 28). Pilate, therefore, to humour them, 'went out to them.' The old play of the Passion observes this circumstance, by representing Pilate as first seeing and addressing our Lord from a balcony. On Christ's return from Herod, however, it is stated that Pilate took his seat in the judgment-hall, and there carried on the further dialogue with the Prisoner. On this occasion, even, it would seem that the chief priests and Jews did not enter the hall—the objection regarding defilement being the same as it was an hour previously—but that they incited the less formal multitude, who had Christ in their grasp, to demand His death instead of that of Barabbas, for Pilate is mentioned as again going out to them, and as going backward and forward between the Prisoner and them. Such minutiae are not material, either to Art or edification, and are only mentioned to prove that the distinction proper to this particular tribunal is, that the accusers should be outside the building. Duccio takes the lead here with his admirable fidelity. In one of the close succeeding scenes of the Passion he has shown Pilate going out to the Jews and elders who stand without (woodcut, No. 156, over leaf). Pilate is saying, 'Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined Him before you, have found no fault in Him' (Luke xxiii. 14). The figure of Pilate here, with his eagle nose, and civic wreath of bay leaves on his head, admirably expresses the cold, formal Roman who utters these measured classic accents, and the interest of whose sagacious and shrewd, but corrupt mind in this strange Prisoner is one of the mysteries of this scene. The German artists, in their sometimes rather spun-out series of the Passion, occasionally give both the first and second appearance before Pilate; and Albert Dürer has rightly identified the first by representing Pilate as standing on the steps of his palace and thus over-looking the Prisoner, of whom little more than the back is seen.

Gaudenzio Ferrari, in his thirteenth fresco of the Church of the Minorites at Varallo, gives the scene with the same fidelity as to this particular. Pilate is standing pointing to Christ, under architecture which from the inscription on the entablature, 'Palacium Pilati,' is evidently outside the building. But this scene, like Albert Dürer's, however true to the letter, has too little action



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Christ before Pilate. (Duccio. Siena.)

to be interesting; and Pilate, in the Gaudenzio fresco, looks like a strutting actor.

### CHRIST'S APPEARANCE BEFORE HEROD.

NOR is the Mocking before Herod, 'the Second Mocking' of scholastic history, a subject which found favour in the religious cycles—probably from the too great similarity between 'the gorgeous robe' and 'the purple robe,' for purposes of distinctness, especially in forms of Art devoid of colour. Duccio identifies it with great



refinement of expression, for our Lord evidently preserves a resolute silence, while attendants bring a robe.

### CHRIST'S SECOND APPEARANCE BEFORE PILATE.

WE come, therefore, after this long preamble, to that second appearance of our Lord before the Roman governor, which is called, *par excellence*, 'Christ before Pilate,' and which, from its character, has admitted of a large range of expression.

St. Matthew and St. John are the two Evangelists who closely describe the scene. St. Matthew says: 'When' Pilate 'was set down on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him. But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let Him be crucified. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children' (xxvii. 19-25).

Neither Mark, nor Luke, nor John give either the episode of the wife's dream or of the washing the hands. And St. John is the only one to detail that wonderful dialogue between divine light and human darkness which was stopped short by Pilate's asking, 'What is truth?' and then, as Lord Bacon says, 'would not wait for an answer.' For 'when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in Him no fault at all' (John xviii. 38).

Thus in this scene we have definite elements of Art—Pilate's sitting on the judgment-seat, the messenger sent by his wife, his

washing his hands, the animated dialogue between the judge and the Prisoner, and the exclamation of the people that the blood of the Lord should be upon them and their children.

The earliest representations of Christ before Pilate appear on Christian sarcophagi, found either in the Roman Catacombs or disinterred in excavations at Rome. These are full of interest and beauty. Pilate is always seated, generally attired in classic costume, with the chlamys fastened on the shoulder, a crown of pointed bay leaves on his head—retained at least eight centuries later by Duccio—and sometimes with a cuirass of scale armour. Next to him stands usually an attendant, with a delicate ewer of beautiful form in one hand, and a kind of *patera* or basin in the other. A larger ewer or vase stands before them on a tripod, or some kind of stool. All these objects are of beautiful antique character. Sometimes a figure sits next Pilate in animated action. This was the officer associated with the judge in the administration of the law according to Roman usage, called an assessor.<sup>1</sup> Bosio and other writers on ‘Roma Sotterranea’ content themselves in the description of this bas-relief by stating that ‘Pilate is “stolidly,” “senselessly,” or “stupidly” washing his hands,’ varying the epithets with a care which they have not bestowed on the examination of the subject. In truth, Pilate is never given here in the act of washing his hands, and what he is doing is anything but senseless in character. It is evident that the sculptors of these various bas-reliefs, belonging to the 4th and 5th centuries, the best of whom all follow the same type, had in this scene an aim of no common refinement. Instead of the mere act of washing the hands, they give us the cause that preceded and led to it. Pilate is obviously troubled in mind. The life of a ‘just man’ is demanded at his hands, and the end of this perplexity will be to wash those hands in token of his non-participation in the deed. We therefore see Pilate seated in a position which, however varied, betokens the same mental disquietude. The expression of the whole figure is that of a man sorely puzzled what to do, with one hand up to his head, his person averted, and his face more so, from Him who stands before him. This is the conception as seen on the tomb of Junius Bassus (see etching, vol. i. p. 13). Another bas-relief,

<sup>1</sup> Münter. Simmbilder, p. 103.

of somewhat later date, shows him sitting full front to the spectator, his hands clasped before him, the figure stiff and unconscious, like one wrapt in reverie.<sup>1</sup> From that time to this we know of no representation which aims at the same refined individuality in Pilate. We must remember that the part taken by the Roman governor of Judæa was at that time fresh in the traditions of the early Christians, and that the efforts he made to save our Lord, and his wife's testimony to the innocence of the Prisoner, were carefully analysed and commented upon by St. Chrysostom, Origen, St. Jerome, and other early Fathers, whose writings just proceed or are coeval with the date of this form of representation. By them Pilate and his wife are looked upon as the type of the Gentiles, who, in this, however unworthy, form, bear testimony to the innocence of the Lord. In that light, too, the allusion to the washing of the hands, in the form of the attendant, with the water standing ready, has a twofold importance; first, in showing the moment when Pilate's perplexity was at its height—for the washing the hands took place after the message from his wife—and also as a figure by which, St. Chrysostom says, the Gentiles are 'cleansed and acquitted from all share in the impiety of the Jews.'

Our Saviour's figure standing before His judge has also a beautiful significance. True to the feeling of classic Art, it shows nothing of the painful part of the position. His expression is not that of one harassed, or even captive. On the contrary, He stands before the judge not only innocent in look, but young, beautiful, and, to all appearance, free. For at most the hand of one figure only is laid gently on His arm; and, more generally, no sign whatever of His being restrained is given by the figure on each side of Him. One of the Saviour's hands is in gentle action, the other holding a roll of papyrus, in token either of His mission as Teacher, or as typifying the act of speech. The scene is perfectly peaceful: there are no accusers; and there is no sign of tumult, except that in Pilate's breast. It may be objected, with apparent truth, that there is nothing in such a representation which conveys the idea of the violence and cruelty of the captors, or of a weary prisoner who had already been subjected to so much suffering both of mind and body. In one respect

<sup>1</sup> Bottari, vol. i. pl. xxxv.

the objection is overruled by the conditions of classic Art, which eschewed all signs of degradation and suffering—otherwise it is really false. For, what was it that so puzzled the mind of Pilate? Something, doubtless, in the expression and bearing, as well as in the words, of that strange Prisoner who stood before him. And how was this something to be rendered, and at the same time the indecision of the governor to be accounted for? The antique artist saw no other mode than to write, as it were, on the Person of the Lord, those arguments that might well stagger even the Pagan governor of Judæa. An angelic Being, young, beautiful, and innocent, therefore stands before the judgment-seat, presenting a far truer version, both of idea and story, than any appearance of that personal misery and degradation which would have made no impression on such a mind as that of Pilate. It must be borne in mind, too, that in the absence, for the first six centuries of Christianity, of the subject of the Crucifixion, Christ before Pilate was the only actual form in which the sacrifice of our Lord was given; Abraham about to offer up Isaac being its more frequently seen type. The Lamb, therefore, thus brought to the slaughter, of whom so many types were being slain in this very Paschal week, was to be represented as beautiful and young—because the firstling of the flock—and ‘without blemish.’

The next representation of this subject, as part of a series, has been preserved in the ivory diptychs of the 13th and 14th centuries. Here, more usually, the scene is limited to Pilate’s figure standing opposite that of an attendant, their heads almost touching. The servant is pouring water from a jug upon his hands, as seen in the etching of the ivory, vol. i. p. 23. Here our Lord does not appear at all. But in a few instances we have seen a fuller representation, evidently embodying the moment when the dialogue is going on between the judge and the Prisoner (woodcut, No. 157). The hands of each are in animated action; our Lord is bearded, and has a certain elevation of character, but the individuality of Pilate is quite lost—he is no longer the judge distracted between his convictions and his fears, or the mysterious type of a hitherto uncovenanted race, but he sits with his legs crossed, and his hand clenched, the very impersonation of an obstinate and conceited old burgomaster.

In many series, Christ bearing His Cross is seen departing from the judgment-seat at the same moment that Pilate washes his hands. This is not to be considered as incorrect, but simply as a compression of the sequence of the story in which both fact and idea are fully maintained, for it was then that Pilate gave Him up to be crucified, though the journey to Calvary did not immediately follow.

The episode of the wife, or of the messenger from her, does not occur in early Christian Art, nor in the 'Speculum Salvationis.' An early appearance of the wife's dream as connected with Christ before Pilate may be seen in a work by Meister Wilhelm of Cologne, containing thirty-five subjects from the life of Christ, in one frame, and now in the Museum at Berlin. Here the wife herself is seen standing at the governor's side, with a small black demon whispering into her ear. This mysterious cir-



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Christ before Pilate.  
(Ivory. 14th century.)

cumstance is accounted for by a belief which prevailed, that Satan, in order to prevent the salvation of mankind, had himself sent the dream to this heathen woman. It being further suggested that his information of this crisis on earth was derived from the Fathers in Limbo, who were too much excited with their approaching deliverance, of which they had received tidings from John the Baptist, to be able to conceal it. In miniatures of the 13th and 14th centuries—for instance, in what is called Queen Mary's Prayer Book, in the British Museum—the wife is in bed asleep, and a large demon is hovering above her, inspiring the dream. Other early writers refuted the idea as illogical and profane, and to us the revealed fact that Satan entered into Judas for the express purpose of tempting him to betray his Master, is sufficient answer to a useless speculation.

In a drawing of the Netherlandish schools, pronounced by Dr. Waagen to be about the date 1430, belonging to a series of the Passion, in the British Museum, the character of Pilate is given

with a feeling which we have seen in no other instance. He is not perplexed, as in the sarcophagi, but as he wipes his hands at a regular 'roll towel,' suspended, according to still existing custom, on the wall, he turns his head with an expression of the tenderest pity to the Lord, of whose figure little more than the back is seen. Pilate is dressed in what looks like the costume of a Burgundian prince of the day, and his wife, who is seen at a window, is like an effigy on an ancient monument. Our Lord is evidently on the way to crucifixion. In Gaudenzio's fresco, where Pilate is washing his hands, the same trace of compassion is observable in his face as he looks down from his seat on the Prisoner. Otherwise the Pilates of the 15th and 16th centuries, especially among the Germans, including Holbein, are usually bustling, self-important officials, washing their hands with an air as if wanting to be rid of the whole matter. In this fresco by Gaudenzio there is a figure which is rather puzzling. It is that of a young man seated on the step, with his elbow on his knee and his head on his hand, in evident distress—the same figure, though not so young, is seen in Lucas van Leyden's plate of the Flagellation. It may be supposed to be the messenger from Pilate's wife, who, in both instances, thus finds her message, 'Have thou nothing to do with this just man,' discomfited. In later Art—as in Schiavone's picture in the Stafford Gallery—the messenger is speaking into Pilate's ear as he washes. In a picture by Benedetto Cagliari of Christ before Pilate, in the Belle Arti at Venice, the wife is present.

The German artists have given no elevation to the scene of Christ before Pilate. The Christ is always wanting in the commonest dignity of man. He does not even stand upright, which is the first condition of that attribute, and has generally His head bowed on His breast, with a sullen, downcast, and even guilty look. Instead of wearing that presence which belongs even to a dis-crowned king, the figure is mainly to be distinguished by the wretchedness of the expression and abjectness of mien. No one could say, looking at Martin Schön's and Albert Dürer's representations of Christ in this scene, that this is the hidden Light of the world, and still less that such a figure would disturb the hardened mind of a corrupt heathen governor.

## THE FLAGELLATION.

*Ital.* Nostro Signore flagellato alla Colonna.      *Fr.* Le Christ à la Colonne.  
*Germ.* Die Geisselung Christi.

WE now approach a portion of our task more painful, perhaps, than any other. All that our Saviour underwent must be matter of deep pity and horror, but some of His sufferings are invested with a sanctity from Himself, and with an indistinctness from long disuse, which strip them somewhat of their degrading character. Even the Crucifixion, the most dreadful and degrading of all, has had a halo thrown over it by the reverence and discontinuance of ages, so that could such a punishment be now inflicted, our sense of the ignominy and cruelty would be lost in that of the profaneness of a mode of death which our Lord has sanctified to Himself. But it is not so now with the Flagellation. It is true that, for a period, that paradoxical piety which thought to approach the Creator by the degradation of the being made in His image—one of the riddles in the history of humanity—found morbid gratification and humiliation in the giving and receiving of stripes. At that time the image of our Lord bound to the column must have lost all its more painful features, without gaining in sanctity. Now, however, the current of feeling has set in the contrary direction. History and experience have taught that personal degradation, whether self-imposed or inflicted by another, seldom leads to humility of heart or amendment of life. The self-flagellator, therefore, even in that abstract sense which will never become obsolete, meets with no sympathy; while, as a form of penal severity, the age in which we live is becoming more and more averse to any infliction of severe corporeal punishment. Meanwhile the mind recoils almost more from the subject of the Flagellation than from any other in this mournful series, and can only approach it at all through the sense of the sanctity of those stripes by which we are healed.

The Evangelists give no sanction to extreme opinions, whether of sympathy or horror. No part of our Saviour's ordeal is related with greater reticence of words. St. Matthew and St. Mark speak of the incident, as it were, in parenthesis.

'Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified' (Matt. xxvii. 26).

'And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged Him, to be crucified' (Mark xv. 15).

With St. Luke, the Flagellation is only mentioned as a proposition for the acceptance of the Jews: 'I will therefore chastise Him, and release Him' (Luke xxiii. 16).

St. John alone brings the fact prominent, though with no greater expenditure of words: 'Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged Him' (John xix. 1).

The commentators are not agreed whether the infliction of scourging was, under the Roman law, the usual prelude to the Roman death upon the cross. It is certain from St. Luke, that Pilate proposed this punishment as a compromise, in order to induce the Jews to forego further extremities. It remains, therefore, an open question whether, if the punishment of scourging always preceded crucifixion, the shrewd Roman governor, whose strong leaning towards the unknown Prisoner before him is one of the mysteries of this course of events, would have suggested what could scarcely fail to stimulate those who, like wolves, would be far more ferocious after once tasting blood.

From the narrative of three of the Evangelists, it has been supposed by some that our Lord was condemned by Pilate before His Flagellation. But St. John's more circumstantial account leaves no doubt as to the sequence of these events. In legends, too, this order is preserved. St. Brigitta, the royal saint of Sweden, seeing the Flagellation in a vision, relates that one of the scourgers stopped and said, 'What! will ye kill Him before He is judged?' This exclamation alludes to the supposed severity of the punishment—a question partially solved by the admitted fact that the scourging of our Saviour was given under the Roman law. According to the Levitical code, the number of stripes for any offence was limited to forty. Lest they should miscount, however, the



Jewish judges always confined the number to thirty-nine, reminding us of St. Paul's repeated endurance of 'forty stripes save one.' But the Roman law assigned no limit to such sentences, and instances are related, under the consular history, of sufferers who perished beneath the infliction, though it does not appear that these were cases preceding crucifixion. On the other hand, the gratuitous malice shown by the soldiers, and permitted by Pilate, in the mocking and crowning with thorns which followed the Flagellation, leads to the conclusion that no mercy had been shown.

Thus Art has been left to build up her materials for this painful subject from a variety of indirect evidence, which has, as we shall see, left its traces on her path. From the Gospels she extracted nothing but the fact itself; from the Old Testament, a few prophetic notices believed to refer to this particular part of our Lord's trial; from the Roman law, the knowledge that the condemned received this punishment standing, and therefore, it may be inferred, attached to a pillar; from the Levitical law, prostrate on the ground; also from St. Augustine, in his sermon on the Passion, that 'God lay extended before men, suffering the punishment of the guilty;' from tradition, that He was beaten, not with rods like a free man, but with whips like a slave; from conjectural computations, that He received above 5000 stripes; from others, equally without authority, that they were limited to 300; from a passage in Psalm cxxix. 3: 'The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows,' and in Isa. l. 6: 'I gave my back to the smiters,' that the Lord was smitten on the back; from St. Jerome's commentary on St. Matthew, that 'the capacious chest of God was torn with strokes;' from St. Brigitta's 'Revelations,' that His person was entirely bared to the blows, and that no part of it remained whole. Finally, according to the opinion of some, that Pilate, feeling as he did, would not have permitted any excess of severity; and, from St. Chrysostom, that the Jews bribed the Roman soldiers to treat their Victim with unusual cruelty. Such, therefore, were the ideas, either softened or exaggerated by the feeling of the time, which offered themselves to the service of the artist.

The Flagellation was not a subject, as we have had occasion to

observe, for any Art embued with classic reminiscences; yet it appears before those had quite died out, for one of the earliest specimens of the subject may be traced back to the 11th century, the Flagellation occurring with other Scenes of the Passion on the silver-gilt plates at Aix-la-Chapelle, to which we have referred. Here an unmistakable sign of the reverence of the time (assisted by the helplessness of Art) is seen in the fact of our Lord being fully draped (woodcut, No. 158). This screen, thus interposed be-



158 The Flagellation. (11th century. Silver-gilt plates. Cathedral, Aix-la-Chapelle.)

tween the uplifted thongs and His sacred Person, greatly increases the sense of His dignity. The forms are short and rude, but a classic character still clings to the drapery. The same form of conception continued through this century, being seen on the doors of the cathedral at Benevento, and of St. Zeno at Verona, though these two examples offer no analogy in their form of Art, the bronze of S. Zeno being immeasurably ruder than the brass of Benevento. In both of these examples, too, the principle of our Saviour's voluntary sacrifice is presented to the eye; for in neither instances is

there any appearance of the rope which is supposed to have attached Him to the column, His hands are simply laid round it, implying His never-suspended power of withdrawing them. In a MS. of 1310, called Queen Mary's Prayer Book, one of the most beautiful examples in the British Museum, there is even no column; Christ stands clothed in blue drapery from head to foot, holding a book in one hand, and blessing with the other. These examples, however imperfect, are animated by a far devouter feeling than that which was expressed by the exaggerated physical horrors of mature Art.

But the Lord's position, with His back or side to the spectator,



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The Flagellation. (Ivory. 14th century.)

did not long recommend itself. It had a more degrading aspect, and constrained our Lord's face, which, we must remember, always belongs to the spectator, to be turned in a forced attitude. This position, with the face seen at most in profile, lost favour as Art advanced in powers, when it was overcome in an ingenious manner. In the series of the Passion belonging to the 14th century, where the Flagellation never fails, the Saviour is seen with His face fronting the spectator, and His hands attached to a pillar before Him of such slender form as not to conceal the front of His Person (woodcut, No. 159). This, too, serves to spread a viel

between the spectator and the reality, for the fury of the assailant is spent where the eye does not follow. In these forms of representation also He is often entirely draped. Duccio follows the same course. Our Lord stands with the column before Him. Giotto has omitted the incident. It is in the tender hand of Fra Angelico that we recognise the Flagellation given under the form of the most reverential reality (woodcut, No. 160). Nothing is



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The Flagellation. (Fra Angelico.)

omitted, and in the expression of our Lord's face, as He regards one of the scourgers, a more personal feeling is given than is elsewhere seen. It is this expression which gives them the true character of their vile office, for, regarded separately, they are not men of violence; the rods in their hands (Fra Angelico avoided the more debasing whip) are slight and powerless; they are gently each holding the end of the rope which fastens the Saviour's hands, doing their task without any sign of that malice which later times

have indecorously exaggerated. Here, perhaps for the first time, our Lord stands in the position adopted by all subsequent Italian Art, with His back to the column, His hands attached behind Him to it, and His Person stripped of all but the cloth round the loins. Thus the column protects the back of the Saviour, and the strokes fall, as St. Jerome had said, upon the capacious chest of God.'

The standing position, according to the Roman law, may be pronounced the accepted type of this subject; nevertheless instances may be seen (one in the Moritz-Capelle at Nuremberg) where the Saviour is on the ground, attached by one hand to the column, and still being scourged—which either imply the Jewish custom, or the more terrible idea of our Lord having fallen beneath the severity of His sufferings. In the great Florentine period of the Quattro Centisti, this subject, in common with the other events of the Passion, found little favour. This was the time, more or less in all schools, when our Lord's Person was seldom represented in adult age, unless under the aspect of Death, in Pietàs and Entombments. As it has been observed in the Introduction, the Madonna and Child, in every varied position of tender beauty, the life of the Virgin, that of John the Baptist, and the lives of saints, especially of St. Francis, mainly absorbed the energies of the painters of the 15th century. It would be difficult to point to a Flagellation by a great Florentine hand, besides that by Fra Angelico. It occurs, however, twice in that most interesting book of drawings by Jacobo Bellini in the British Museum, where the lead pencil, however faint the lines, gives life to a most elevated conception of our Lord, as He stands serene and patient rather than suffering. In one instance the scene is laid in the open air, and the column to which He is attached is a solitary pillar surmounted by an urn.

Gaudenzio Ferrari is the chief Italian painter and modeller of the Passion. He has two representations of the Flagellation. That in a chapel in the Church of the Madonna delle Grazie at Milan is a *chef-d'œuvre*, though barbarous ignorance and neglect have swept away all traces of the lower portion. Our Lord's figure is indescribably beautiful; its benignity and sweetness triumph over all the violence around Him. The scourgers are ferocious, the instruments are deadly, and a figure raising his knee as he fiercely fastens our

Lord's hands to the pillar, belongs to that class of exaggerated violence which, with Gaudenzio, goes hand in hand with the most exquisite feeling for beauty; but a radiance goes forth from the Victim which neutralises all. Beauty in Art, like holiness in life, has a stronger influence than its opposite quality.

Here, too, the painter, designedly or not, has adopted a mode of conception which might be laid down as a canon for all representations of the Flagellation. He has made the Lord looking full at the spectator. In all scenes our Saviour's face, as that of the principal figure, belongs, in the sense of Art, to the spectator. But in this scene we especially require it as a refuge from the impious features around. It is believed, too, that the Sacred Person was in the Flagellation first exposed to the gaze and violence of man. It is the more fit and natural, therefore, that His eye should be turned upon those for whom He thus suffered. 'This is my body which was given for you.'

It does not appear that many painters reasoned thus. Too often the Lord's head in this scene is averted, or cast down. Sebastian del Piombo's painting of the Flagellation in the Church of S. Pietro in Montorio, in Rome, believed to be from a design by Michael Angelo, is an instance of this, and of the loss of all spiritual feeling. The figure is that of a brawny athlete embarrassed how to dispose of his gigantic limbs; while His head, turned from us, and bowed on His chest, as if avoiding the blows, gives an idea as contrary to dignity as it is to doctrine.

A miniature at Brussels in the Library of the old Dukes of Burgundy, in a psalter of Jean de Berri (15th century), departs, in our Saviour's figure, from all rules of what may be called propriety. The Saviour is placed with the slender column before Him, and is covering His face with one of His hands. This is very touching, but false in sentiment, as acknowledging a sense of shame in Him of whom one of the chief characteristics is, that He 'endured the cross, despising the shame.'

It is as bad when our Lord is made looking up, as if appealing to heaven, which is the equally inappropriate conception of Gaudenzio's other fresco. This is an action scarcely ever successful in Art, and especially unfit in Him who, in these hours of trial, obviously avoided ministering to the impiety of the Jews, who

throughout sought a sign from Him. We have seen this idea further caricatured in a drawing of the Flagellation belonging to a series of the Passion, otherwise of most touching character, in the British Museum. Here the Saviour's whole Person is wrung in



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The Flagellation. (L. Carracci. Bologna Gallery.)

the attempt to cast up the eyes, and the spectator involuntarily searches for the motive of such extraordinary contortion: only a vision seen above could justify it.

But the most objectionable conception of the Flagellation that we have known was reserved for the later Italian school. Ludovico Carracci, in his picture in the Bologna Gallery (woodcut, No. 161), outdoes every one, as our illustration will show, in offence alike to

Art and to Christian reverence. This scene needs no comment, unless to suggest to the reader to glance from this back to the woodcut (No. 160) from Fra Angelico, the comparison showing the total decadence of Christian Art in the interim.

The Flagellation had by this time assumed a regular type of composition, only differing in the conception of the principal figure. The scene is generally placed in a hall sustained by pillars, to one of which our Lord is fastened. The scourgers vary from two to four in number. The expression of ferocity is increased by their holding the rod or whip (for both instruments are used)—in both hands—a feature seldom seen in the calmer proprieties of the Italian school. In most instances, the instinctive taste of Art has chosen the moment when the execution of the sentence is just begun. Thus one man is seen tying our Lord's hands to the column, and another binding a bundle of loose switches into a rod. The figure of Pilate is often present—entering the background, seated on his throne, or standing looking on, and in some instances holding forth his hand or sceptre, as if to say, Enough.

The German masters of the 15th and 16th centuries, in their engravings of the Passion, have given the lowest view of the scene; the coarse reality being generally overdone, and those touches of spiritual feeling in our Lord's Person, which should counteract it, omitted. Nevertheless, there is more *story* in these scenes, and more allusion to what is to come; while the recurrence of the same individuals in succeeding subjects—for instance, of the same brutal figure who is foremost as mocker, scourger, and mocker again, and who finally drags our Lord along the road to Calvary—gives that sense of dramatic effect which they probably took from the then familiar play of the Passion. In these respects Martin Schön has a peculiar force; we recognise gradually all the wild beasts who hunt down their divine Prey. His reality in the Flagellation is least repugnant. He has adopted the Italian arrangement of our Lord's back to the column. The Person of the Saviour is ugly, and over-emaciated, and He stands uneasily, with feet slipping off the base of the column: but the head is noble and intelligent, and, though not looking at the spectator, He is looking nowhere else. All speculation of those harassed eyes is within, and the expression is of deep and painful abstraction, but not of







SCULPTURE FROM THE COLUMN

In the Monastery of the Holy Mary

bodily suffering. His hands are just being fastened; His garments—or perhaps the purple robe—lying before Him in rich folds on the ground, while an old villain is sitting by, plaiting a tremendous crown of thorns.

Albert Dürer's two representations of the Flagellation are of a very degraded type; for some reason—perhaps the tradition of our Lord's having embraced the column, derived from St. Brigitta—he has returned to the earliest mode of all, and placed Christ with His face to the pillar. But, with the spirituality of the old time, all that made that arrangement endurable is gone. The position in which Albert Dürer has placed the figure, turned sideways, and with His back to the spectator, staring at the column, is most unbecoming. But his Pilate has a touch of real life. It is not the Pilate moved with compunction for the Prisoner, but it is a true man of the world, standing by with folded arms, evidently bored, and wishing to get it over.

Israel von Mechenen has placed our Lord with His back to the column, and His hands attached to it above His head. This position is occasionally seen. In early and rude coloured German woodcuts it is given, while St. Brigitta's vision, that there was no whole spot left in Him, is alluded to by the spots of blood at regular distances all over our Lord's Person.

Ruben's picture of the Flagellation in the Dominican Church at Antwerp is the most important instance of this subject as an independent composition. He, too, has turned the Saviour's back towards the spectator for motives inspired by his peculiar, and, in this case, too unscrupulous art. It is a terrible picture.

## CHRIST AFTER THE FLAGELLATION.

BUT the subject of the Flagellation is not exhausted by the usual form we have been describing. Painters have felt that the moments which succeeded its accomplishment furnished a scene more acceptable to their feelings. Here, however deeply the emotions of the spectator may be touched, there is no risk of their being offended, for only artists of refined pathos would think to lift the

veil of this unrevealed interval. Luini has here left the stamp of his exquisite feeling. The Saviour is being unbound, all strengthless and fainting, from the dreadful pillar. This is a devotional picture, in which sense, owing probably to its painfulness, the Flagellation is not seen. St. Catherine is showing the sad spectacle to a kneeling devotee, and St. Laurence, on the other side, points it out to the spectator. We add an etching of it, though nothing can give an adequate idea of the original fresco, all ruined as it is, which is almost more than the eye can bear. It is in the Monasterio Maggiore at Milan, in the dark, dilapidated church behind the building usually visited by the traveller; both being full of what have been some of the most beautiful works of this most sympathetic of painters.

Another great master, in another age and land, was also inspired by an analagous thought. A picture by that grandee of Spanish Art, Velasquez, has lately come to England,<sup>1</sup> which takes up this pathetic interval at a still later moment. Our Saviour is seated on the ground, His arms suspended by the rope which still attaches the hands to the column. Ropes, whips, and rods, with broken twigs, lie on the ground, and slender streams of blood indicate the severity of the strokes, and, in a pictorial sense, by following the forms, serve to define the anatomical markings. A guardian angel, of solid Spanish type, is pointing to the Lord's figure, while in front of the angel kneels a child, with clasped hands, in unspeakable reverence. To this child the Saviour's gaze is turned, and a single ray goes direct from His head to the child's heart. Much of the pathos is conveyed by this child, whose parents may be supposed to have given this picture as an *ex-voto* offering for its recovery from illness. Velasquez and Luini, have few points of comparison in their respective excellences. Here the Christ is full, strong, and robust in look, though the comparative prostration is, perhaps, as touching, while the flow of the lines has an ineffable grace. There is an elevated feeling, too, in the absence of the just departed tormentors. Our Lord, though bleeding and exhausted, seems for a moment scarcely in this world, for He is alone with a child and an angel. We give an etching.

<sup>1</sup> Belonging to Mr. John Savile Lumley, who became possessed of it at Madrid, and exhibited in the British Institution.



CHRIST AFTER THE FLAGELLATION.

*Velasquez. In possession of J. Savile Lumley Esq.<sup>re</sup>*



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A small rude woodcut in the British Museum shows that earlier minds also pored reverentially into this interval. We here see our Lord sinking as far as the rope allows; His scourgers are leaving Him with mockery in their gestures, and His Mother is looking through the window.

St. John has been introduced as a witness to the Flagellation, being believed to have followed our Lord into Caiaphas' palace. Zani mentions an engraving from a picture or design by Giulio Romano, in which a young man, supposed to be the Apostle, is standing by weeping. The Virgin also, in later conceptions of false sentimentality, is given as a witness in an ideal sense—as, for instance, with a sword through her heart.

## THE CROWNING WITH THORNS.

*Ital.* Nostro Signore coronato di Spine. *Fr.* Le Couronnement d'Épines.  
*Germ.* Die Dornenkrönung.

‘THEN the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto Him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped Him, and put on Him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand: and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, Hail, king of the Jews! And they spit upon Him, and took the reed, and smote Him on the head’ (Matt. xxvii. 27-30).

This description by St. Matthew differs in no respect from those by St. Mark and St. John, except that these two Evangelists call it ‘a purple robe.’ St. Luke omits the incident of the crowning with thorns and the mocking altogether.

This difference between the terms ‘scarlet’ and ‘purple’ is not unobserved by early commentators. Some imagined it to mean two robes, especially as the word used by St. Matthew is interpreted as meaning a military cloak; and considering the improvised nature, as well as the spirit, of this mockery, it is most probable that some such old garment as this was hastily chosen. But the more general voice also of early commentary decided the two words to be different names for the same colour. We see, also, that the Scriptures use the various definitions for intense red indifferently: ‘Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.’ The French translation of the Scriptures takes this view, and gives no other definition of the purple robe than that of ‘le manteau d’écarlate.’

To the painters this latitude of colour was rather a boon. They took advantage of it to portray our Lord in every variety of red, from brilliant scarlet to mournful violet. Occasionally, too, the idea of a royal robe is further wrought out; and, as in Giotto’s



fresco in the Arena Chapel, a gorgeous brocaded pattern is added to hues of Tyrian dye. Nor was there any discrepancy, in a theological sense, in this variety of term, for while any deep red colour sufficiently represented the robe in which our Lord was derisively invested, it was equally typical of the colour of blood, in which sense the early writers found various profounder meanings. The purple or scarlet robe was thus not only the emblem of royalty, but that of suffering or martyrdom—also of victory. Here was the conqueror coming from Bozrah ‘with dyed garments’ (Isa. lxiii. 1), and in a ‘vesture dipped in blood’ (Rev. xix. 13). Or the robe was the type of the flesh crucified through the blood of Christ, or the sign, St. Jerome says, of His having taken on Himself ‘the bloody works of the Gentiles.’

As regards the Crown of Thorns, Scripture throws no light on the particular plant thus distinguished; but among the numerous thorn-bearing shrubs of Judæa, one has received the name of ‘Spina Christi.’ The thorns are small and sharp, and the branches soft and pliable—the more fitted, therefore, to have been ‘platted’ for such a purpose.<sup>1</sup> The Italian artists, with their usual refinement, have generally given a wreath of thorns of this description, while those North of the Alps have conceived an awful structure of the most unbending knotted boughs, with tremendous spikes, half a foot long, which no human hands could have forced into such a form. This object, too, like all the various instruments of our Lord’s suffering, was viewed in the likeness of various types, accomplished unconsciously by the cruel ingenuity of His enemies. While thrust on His brows, in mockery of a regal diadem, it denoted also the thorns and briers sown by the first Adam, and now for ever blunted on the sacred head of the second Adam. Or, according to a beautiful idea of St. Ambrose, the thorns are the sinners of this world, thus woven into a trophy, and worn triumphant upon the bleeding brows of the Redeemer.

We have dwelt upon the purple robe and crown of thorns more at length, because with them begins the first mention of the so-called Instruments of the Passion—an important chapter, both in

<sup>1</sup> The three-thorned acacia is also supposed to have supplied the crown of thorns. A fine tree of this species is in the garden of the Bishop’s Palace, at Fulham.

Art and Theology—and also because their appearance ends not here. The robe is carried on into the next and far more frequent subject of the ‘*Ecce Homo* ;’ while the crown of thorns accompanies our Lord upon the Cross, and leaves Him not even when deposited by Art by the side of the sepulchre, for it reappears invariably on the head of that pathetic and mysterious figure—alive and yet crucified—called ‘the Man of Sorrows.’

Nor may we overlook the reed sceptre. This is often given by painters as the real bamboo cane, well-known in the Middle Ages, both North and South of the Alps, and also by the Italians in the form of that ‘reed’ which grew nearest to them, known by the name of the ‘*canna*.’ The sceptre of pretended authority had also its spiritual meaning, and became the type of our infirmities thus graciously grasped by Him in His very right hand, or the sign of a strength henceforth to be made perfect in weakness. This, too, was to reappear both in the next scene and in the plaintive picture of the Man of Sorrows. Thus, throughout, a double meaning of endless significance was evolved from this scene, converting the insulting attributes of a mock kingdom into the insignia of the highest spiritual sovereignty. However fanciful and far-fetched some of these interpretations may appear in a theological sense, for Art, at all events, a lofty spiritual meaning, breaking through the actual facts of the scene, was the true object to be sought.

One of the earliest representations of this scene is, as we have found with other subjects, the most elevated in character. It is on the brazen doors of the cathedral of Benevento. Our Lord is standing, erect and noble, a robe of dignity upon Him; the indication of a crown, now at all events smoothed by the hand of time of its thorns, is on His head; a short staff, more like a *bâton* of power than a reed sceptre, in His right hand. Four figures are around Him, yet at respectful distance, as if He were hedged in by His Divinity; two in mock worship, and two as if about to strike Him with their hands. With our eyes habituated to a lower interpretation of the subject, such conceptions as these look almost like a parody of respect. But if involving an apparent departure from the letter of the description, there is the closer adherence to the spirit in which we are bound to view it. For it must be always

borne in mind, in considering Christian Art, that there is a truth in these scenes higher than the mere facts, at which, unless Art aims, she falls far short of her calling. As we have said before, there are two points of view to be remembered—that of the spectator of the scene, and that of the spectator of the picture. The latter knows all the solemn secret, the former not. To us, therefore, this is properly the very Lord of glory, though at the same time the mind consents to the fact that to the rude soldiery the same figure is but a mock king. In a miniature in a MS. dated 1310, the reverence is carried so far that our Lord only holds a sceptre in His hands, and there is no crown of thorns at all. Still two figures, formally mocking, identify the subject.

Giotto's fresco of this subject in the Arena Chapel maintains the same sense of our Lord's paramount dignity. Here our Lord's hands are not bound. His robe is of a gorgeous pattern, the crown of thorns is small, and the cruciform nimbus large, as if the grace as of the only-begotten of the Father overmastered all the mocking devices of his enemies. This, again, is a real king to our eyes, though an impostor to those who swarm about him—more, apparently, in wanton mischief than with brutal insult. Among the figures is a black man, probably the type of the unconverted Gentiles, whilst figures of a higher class, possibly Pilate and some of the elders, look on.

Both these representations embody a moment rarely chosen for this subject, viz., that immediately after the crown has been placed, making the mock worship the real action. But the almost universal conception of the subject gives us the actual crowning—a moment far more difficult to invest with propriety, and which, moreover, from its earliest to its latest treatment, has been given under a conventional form which palls upon the eye. This consists in the pressing down the crown upon our Lord's brows by means of two long staves, each held by a figure, who thus ostentatiously avoids all contact between his own hands and this object of terrible ingenuity. These staves are sometimes so long and pliable as to take the form of a bow. This conception is seen in all forms of Art, and becomes the regular type of treatment from the 14th century to the time of Luini, Titian, Domenichino, and later painters. We give an illustration from a *Speculum Humanæ Salvationis* (No.

162). It is also traditionally preserved in the play of the Passion before referred to. It is possible that the passage, 'And they took the reed and smote Him on the head,' may have been thus interpreted. In a *Speculum Salvationis* with Latin and German text, one of the earliest printed, it is said, 'They struck Him on the head with a reed; pressing down upon Him the sharpest points of the crown of thorns.' Also in the 'Reproaches' chanted by the Roman Catholic Church on Good Friday, it is said, 'For thee I struck the kings of the Canaanites, and thou didst strike my head with a reed.'



Oh! my people, what have I done to thee? Answer me.' Thus the striking the Lord's head with a reed—no slight instrument in the East—after He was thus excruciatingly crowned, by which the thorns were necessarily driven deeper into His brow, was the feature kept prominent in the Church, and, therefore, it may be inferred, required to be so by Art. In a larger sense, however, this cross-wise mode of pressing down the crown of thorns was considered as a type of the Cross.

This subject, like the Flagellation, scarcely occurs in the wide school of Florentine *quattro* and *cinquecento* Art; though here again the peculiar qualities of the Lombard school seem to have



THE CROWNING WITH THORNS.

Lucca. Ambrosian Library. Milan.



favoured its admission. The grandest form in which it was ever represented is found in Bernardo Luini's fresco (of which we give an etching), in an apartment of the Ambrogian Library at Milan. This is a magnificent devotional picture, amplified with all the circumstance that could contribute pathos and dignity. The scene takes place under an open arcade of pillars. On each side kneel six figures of black robed citizens, cap in hand. Above, in the background, is St. John, a figure of pathetic distress, pointing out the scene to the Virgin and Magdalene; on the other side is a Roman soldier, perhaps Longinus, also indicating the scene to two figures, one with a long white beard, supposed to portray the painter himself; while within a cavern Peter is seen kneeling in repentance. The centre figure of the picture, raised on a regal height, is indescribably fine—Sweetness and Dignity knit together by Patience, such as only Luini ever conceived—less a suffering than a tranquil image, between the clenched fists directed at Him. Here, too, the same convention of the staves, held by two soldiers, is preserved. The mantle is more scarlet than crimson. By a whimsical conception, the pillars themselves are wreathed with gilt thorns, and two crowns of thorns hang on each side from the architrave. With these two rows of Milanese citizens kneeling below, the eye consents to any fanciful allusion. Not, however, to the bodiless cherubs with wings, like short-clipped flowers with two leaves, which flutter over the Saviour, and mar the earnestness of the effect. Above the throne is the inscription, 'Caput regis gloriæ spinis coronatur.'

Titian's 'Crowning with Thorns,' now in the Louvre, is one of the finest pictures, as a work of Art, which commemorates this scene. But, with all its great qualities, it is totally deficient in the spiritual feeling which alone makes the scene, as such, endurable. The same two staves are here brandished violently as they press down the crown of thorns; a third figure, with another long stick, is about to add the weight of his hand. Our Lord's figure is highly constrained, His legs spread, His head turned away, and His eyes raised with that appealing expression which is peculiarly out of place.

Domenichino's picture is still lower in conception. One staff, held by two figures, is pressing the crown so violently on the

brow, that our Lord's figure threatens to lose its equilibrium. The violent action of the figure above our Lord, with a formidable prong, is inconsistent with the very life of the Being against whom it is directed. In the play of the Passion at Ober-Ammergau our Lord is overthrown; but this, though revolting to the eye, is more excusable, for, once raised again, the offensive action is forgotten. As regards exaggeration of violence and rudeness, the eclectic painters stand much on a par with the German and Flemish engravers. The Person of our Lord in these scenes is generally made succumbing beneath every possible indignity.

The German engravers of the 15th and 16th centuries have chiefly chosen the first moment of the scene, accompanied by the same peculiar incident of the staves. Martin Schön, the master of 1466, Lucas van Leyden, Israel von Mechenen, have all followed this traditional form. Albert Dürer, in one case, departs from it; for while one figure presses down the tremendous structure of thorns with a staff, another in front seems to be assisting with a pair of pincers. Much violence and rudeness is used, our Lord's head being sometimes dragged down by the hair, with other incidents which outrage instead of elevating the piety of the spectator. These masters have, however, the same merit in this scene as in the Flagellation. There is more story given; Pilate is seen frequently seated on a stately tribune, looking on. Some of them have preserved the tradition that our Lord was mocked seated on a stone. In a print by Lucas van Leyden this has the disadvantage of placing the Saviour so low, that dignity of bearing is impossible.

Occasionally, in later times, we see the convention of the staves omitted, instead of which a soldier is forcing the crown on with a mailed hand, proof to the thorns. This is the case in a picture by Annibale Carracci, engraved by himself.

The same is seen in a work by Michelangelo Amerighi, in the Munich Gallery (No. 532).

Van Dyck, also, in his well-known composition, represents the crown as gently placed on the head by a figure in armour with mailed gloves.

Rembrandt has an etching of the subject after the crowning has taken place.



## THE ECCE HOMO.

*Ital.* Nostro Signore presentato al Popolo. *Fr.* Notre Seigneur présenté au Peuple.  
*Germ.* Pilatus stellt Christus dem Volke vor.

‘THEN came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!’ (John xix. 5). St. John is the only Evangelist who narrates an incident which brings before the eye one of the most solemn, and, therefore, suggestive moments in the whole course of our Saviour’s sufferings. Pilate’s original intention in these words, possibly to disarm the fury of the Jews, by stripping our Lord of every claim but that of His humanity—as some of the early writers have it—matters not. The spirit for once yields to the letter, and is swallowed up in the awful significance of these simple words, ‘This is the man’—and our part is to behold Him.

Art, therefore, has no other such direct occasion as this for gratifying her pious ambition in the conception of the countenance our Lord wore upon earth. It was, indeed, her bounden duty to place Him before us—face to face—occupied only with our contemplation, as we only with His. This is the same Christ we have seen throughout this ‘*via dolorosa*,’ and shall see to the end, differing only as being for a brief moment divided from His sufferings, and seen only for Himself. He was not being questioned, reviled, or scourged, but simply shown—the mock king to His accusers, the Saviour to the sinner. It was a momentary pause in which the principles of good and evil confronted each other, and in which the evil principle was to be permitted to triumph. Art did not always comprehend the height and depth of this task, and a subject which centred so much in the head of our Lord was too elevated not to be often proportionally degraded; though, in the endeavour to rise to it, some of the most devout and pathetic images that the world of Art possesses have been produced.

The choice of the artist lay in a very small compass; namely, as

to what particular expression to give to the head. Our Lord's countenance must be believed to have exhibited every quality befitting Him and this occasion—His patience, resignation, dignity, and love, never omitting His power. But all these qualities could not be given in equal force; for the combination of every expression is the negation of all. One particular expression it was needful to keep prominent to the eye. It remained, therefore, to choose that which was proper, not to all men, but to Christ only at this moment. Meekness under suffering, and, still more, apathy—an aim which has contented many an artist—is common to many men; patience and dignity, often and beautifully depicted, possible to some; the mere expression of suffering, common to all; but love and pity for His very persecutors, 'The Man' alone could maintain at such a moment. Here, therefore, we arrive at the expression proper to our Lord.

At the same time all restrictive theories upon Art must be taken with great reserve, for some of the most wonderful powers, as we have often occasion to see, have been exerted in defiance of all rule. An artist's feeling is a law unto himself, and Art is justified of her children.

The *Ecce Homo* is a comparatively late subject. It did not occur in the Greek Church; it is absent from the series of the Passion by Duccio and Giotto; it does not appear in early ivories, nor in manuscripts. It was kept possibly out of the field of Art by that mystic subject of the crucified Saviour, which we shall more particularly describe, erroneously called the *Ecce Homo*. The fact, too, that 'the Man of Sorrows,' dead under their weight, was directly addressed to the pity of the spectator, may account for the *Ecce Homo* being addressed to the same feeling. It was one of the aims in the Roman Church from the 15th century to excite compassion for the Saviour—an aim which has always tended to lower Art by lowering the great idea she is bound to keep in view.

The subject of the *Ecce Homo* is divided into two forms—the devotional picture, which offers the single head, or half-figure, of Christ to our contemplation, as the 'Man of Sorrows' of the Passion; and the more or less historical picture, which either places Him before us attended by Pilate and one or more attendants, or gives the full scene in numerous figures.

The figure of Christ in either cases is generally seen with the purple robe hanging upon the shoulders, the chest bared, the traces upon it, more or less given, of the scourging He has undergone; often with the rope round His neck, and His hands usually bound in a crossed position, so that the right hand holds the reed on His left side. The eyes are either cast down, or raised blood-shot and tearful, or looking at the spectator. In almost all early pictures, whether Flemish or Italian, tears are falling down the cheeks.

The first eminent painters who treated this subject were both the Van der Weyden. A picture by the younger of the two, in the National Gallery, belonging formerly to the Prince Consort, excites deep emotion. The Saviour stands before us with eyelids red with weeping, the hands clasped in evident prayer. This is not a high ideal, but it is Christ 'The Man,' bearing our flesh, and intensely one of us. He who could reject and despise that fellow-sufferer must be what Scripture classes among the vilest of the race of Adam, 'without natural affection.' This was, however, a perilous road to enter. Rogier van der Weyden himself knew not always how to preserve the distinction between suffering and degraded humanity. He repeated this subject several times, and of one, also in this country, Nagler says that it frightens more than edifies the soul. His imitators fall into extravagant exaggerations, and a number of hideous Ecce Homos are to be seen in foreign galleries—for instance at Berlin, which renew the horrors of the latest Byzantine time. A face of abject woe is inundated with rivulets of tears; shivering, distorted, and weeping, the figure stands there incapable of the ideas of love, sacrifice, or glory—'a worm, and no man.' The intercourse between the Netherlands and Spain makes it easy to account for the same low character in the Spanish Ecce Homos. Morales, certainly in this subject misnamed 'El Divino,' gives the most deplorable head—an insult to any sufferer. Murillo's type, though not so doleful, is commonplace enough.

The full historical scene given in the series of German and Flemish engravings was not much less debased. Our Lord's Person is ignobly conceived. He stands in a crouching and servile attitude far removed from true humility. The whole picture is viewed through the eyes of the wretched rabble before Him; not even through those

of Pilate, who, in such instances, is a hypocrite ministering to their passions, while pretending to restrain them; for the crafty governor must know that the exhibition of such an abject figure can only the surer raise the cry, 'Away with Him!'

As regards, therefore, the conception of our Lord, the same mistake prevails, with little exception, from Martin Schön to Holbein. The merit of these plates consist in their hurried and dramatic character. All is brutal excitement and violence. The people cannot wait for His blood; they are bursting their throats in cries for His crucifixion. The cross, or the crosses, are sometimes seen borne already aloft in the hands of the multitude. A ruffian with a rope coiled round his arm, like a street porter, stands ready to throw it over the condemned head. Lucas van Leyden again makes an innocent child an accomplice; one, typically eating an apple, sits on the steps bawling, with its little mouth full, in unison with the rest.

One of the most important pictures by this rare master, whose name as 'Luca d' Olanda' is systematically given to every Flemish or German picture in Italy, represents this subject. It is in Mr. Baring's gallery. In the background is a city, with a tall and massive guardhouse, on which are inscribed the words 'Ecce Homo.' On the parapet wall of the terrace before it, and behind a kind of bar, stands the Lord, bleeding all over from the scourging; the robe held open by two figures, the crown of thorns on His head, and His hands bound. Close to Him is Pilate with the reed—like a northern bramble—in his hand, pointing Him out to a group on lower ground before them, who are vehemently demanding His life. In the immediate foreground is a previous scene—Christ taking leave of His Mother, who sinks on her knees while He blesses her. The sky is very fine; heavy thunder-clouds on one side, and breaking light on the other.

But there was another master about to appear in the plains of Holland, who was destined, while adhering to the so-called reality, and even vulgarity, of these Northern Schools, to retrieve both by the spell of the highest moral and picturesque power. That 'inspired Dutchman,' as Mrs. Jameson has called Rembrandt, threw all his grand and uncouth soul into the subject. He painted it once in chiaroscuro (dated 1634), and treated it





THE ECCE HOMO.

*Rembrandt. Etching*

twice in an etching; each time historically. We give an etching. The incident takes place in the open air. A crowd is round and behind our Lord, a crowd is importunately pressing upon Pilate, and below is more than a crowd—rather a furious sea of heads—vanishing beneath an archway, of which we see neither the beginning nor the end. A figure in front, connecting this multitude with the group before Pilate, is extending a hand over the seething mass, as if enjoining patience. Far off in the gloom, another figure, borne apparently on the shoulders of the multitude, is gesticulating to the same effect in the opposite direction; both seeing numbers invisible to us. The conception of our Saviour departs from all our theories; He is not looking at the people, or at any one. His head and eyes are uplifted, not in protest or in prayer, but in communion with His Father. The people are not even looking at Him, for Rembrandt well knew that such a multitude, in this state of violent excitement, are incapable of fixing their attention upon anything. The Christ is neither beautiful nor grand in the usual sense, nor is there any glory round His head; nevertheless, a light seems to emanate from His Person, and the darkness comprehendeth it not. One face alone has apparently caught the suspicion that this is no common culprit. It is a hard-featured soldier near Him, who is wrapt in thought. But the group before Pilate is the prominent and master stroke. Rembrandt must have witnessed incidents which had told him that there is no earnestness like that of fanaticism. These are not the mere brutes who bawl from infection, and who can be blown about with every wind, such as we see in former representations; these are the real Jews, and this is the real Pilate—vacillating, bending in indecision, with his expressive, outstretched, self-excusing hands, and false temporising face—who has no chance before them. It is not so much the clutch on his robe by one, or the glaring eye and furious open mouth of another, or the old Jew, hoary in wickedness, who threatens him with the fury of the multitude; but it is the dreadful earnest face, upturned and riveted on his, of the figure kneeling before him—it is the tightly compressed lips of that man who could not entreat more persistently for his own life than he is pleading for the death of the Prisoner. Rembrandt has given to this figure the dignity, because the power, of a malignant delusion: horribly fine. This is a truly realistic

conception of such a scene, which has a grandeur of its own, in contradistinction to those improperly so called, for the reality of mere brutality is not a subject for Art at all. Rembrandt, in executing this etching, may be conceived to have had the second Psalm in his view: 'Why do the heathen so furiously rage together; and why do the people imagine a vain thing?' Yet the master has exquisitely contrived the full effect of a scene of violence, without shocking the most refined spectator. Not a sign of it approaches our Lord's Person, who, as long as He is in the custody of the Roman soldiers, is guarded by a form of law; while the furious crowd below is so wrapt in Rembrandt gloom as to suggest every horror to the imagination, and give none to the eye. But 'the vain thing' is seen without disguise in that urgent group before the wavering Roman—embodying the strength of an evil principle against which nothing can prevail but that 'Truth' which Pilate knows not.

The first appearance of the *Ecce Homo* in Italy was in the finest time of Art. The subject was conceived either as a single figure or in a semi-historical sense, our Lord being accompanied by Pilate and one or a few attendants, who hold back the robe and show Him to the spectator. We remember no representation of the full historical scene.

Andrea Solario (born about 1458) has a fine *Ecce Homo*, a single figure, in the gallery of Lutschena, belonging to Count Speck Sternberg, near Leipsic. The crown of thorns, like stags' antlers, round the gentle downcast head, is unusually large for an Italian painter. Here the passive expression is given. The eyes are cast down, and the tears are falling.

Fra Bartolomeo (born 1469) has the simple figure of our Lord—without hands, of a very gentle character. The eyes are down. It is quite the Lamb of God. Also in the Pitti.

Razzi (born about 1479) has painted the *Ecce Homo*. It is in the Pitti. Pilate and an attendant are lifting the robe. The Christ is of stern character, looking at the spectator neither in distress nor pity, but almost in anger.

Gaudenzio has not omitted the subject in his series. It forms the upper compartment of the Flagellation in the Church of the Madonna delle Grazie at Milan, and is a fine specimen of the



tender feeling of the Lombard school. Two attendants are holding up the robe. The Lord has His arms crossed on His breast, and is looking down. The figure shows a sad and touching lassitude, and the colouring helps its ineffable refinement.

Correggio's picture in the National Gallery is a masterwork, on which all praise is superfluous. He has attained that look of earnest



163 Ecce Homo. (Gaudenzio Ferrari. Madonna delle Grazie, Milan.)

commiseration and sympathy for those before Him, in the head of Christ, which we have ventured to indicate as the proper expression.

The fainting Virgin in front is a novel incident in this piece, and, far from adding pathos, embarrasses the position of the Saviour, whose attention would naturally be concentrated on His Mother. This is the first time we see this unscriptural passage in the Virgin's life: it will often occur as we proceed, and seldom be acceptable to the feelings.

One of the most beautiful pictures of this subject was reserved for a comparatively late master to execute. Cigoli's large work in the Pitti (born 1559), of which we append an etching, can hardly fail to touch the heart. The feeling of the head is indescribably pathetic; all is mournful, gentle, and loving, and the very colour of the robe adds to the sadness.

Other later Italian masters sentimentalised the subject into the loss of all truth and pathos. There is nothing to pity, except that the head is so pitiably weak. Affectation takes the place of all other expressions—the figure is not being shown, it is displaying itself. The hands are made objects of vanity, and the robe and sceptre are held as if sitting to a court portrait-painter.

A further representation remains which is of strictly ideal character, and may be considered as embodying the general idea of our weary and tormented Lord between the time of the Flagellation and the Bearing the Cross. This is seen in a grand and strictly original picture by Moretto (born about 1500) in the Museo Tosi at Brescia, his native city. Here the Saviour sits bound, His body marked with stripes, and the reed sceptre in His hand, upon the steps which possibly lead up to the tribunal of Pilate. The Cross, to which He was to be obedient, is at His feet, while above, holding the garment of Christ, is an angel, the face all convulsed with weeping, like a grand youth not ashamed to show his affliction. Few artists could have coped with such an expression as we here see in the angel's face, distorted, and yet so overpoweringly touching. The idea of the angel holding the robe is doubtless taken from the early conception of angels holding the garments at the Baptism. We refer the reader to the accompanying woodcut (No. 164).

A picture called an *Ecce Homo*, in the Pitti, attributed to Polajuolo (born 1439), evidently aims at the same combination of ideas. Here Christ, crowned with thorns, is looking at those before Him.



*Ciagli. Pitti. Firenze.*





But He is without the purple robe, while on a parapet in front lie the three nails and the sponge of gall.

## CHRIST BEARING HIS CROSS.

*Ital.* Nostro Signore che porta la Croce al Calvario.      *Fr.* Le Portement de la Croix.  
*Germ.* Die Kreuztragung.

THE final delivery of the Captive into the hands of the Jews was the turning-point of the doings of this awful day. It could, therefore, not be omitted by any of the sacred narrators, who describe it, three out of the four, in few, grave, and graphic words. St. Matthew, who, like St. Mark and St. Luke, omits the scene of the *Ecce Homo*, continues the narrative immediately from the crowning with thorns: 'And after that they had mocked Him, they took the robe off from Him, and put His own raiment on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear His cross' (Matt. xxvii. 31, 32).

St. Mark says, in almost similar words: 'And when they had mocked Him, they took off the purple robe from Him, and put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him. And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear His cross' (Mark xv. 20, 21).

St. Luke is more brief in the first part of the scene, and more circumstantial afterwards: 'And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he released unto them Him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will. And as they led Him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on Him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. And there followed Him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented Him. But Jesus turning unto them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover

us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death' (Luke xxiii. 24-32).

St. John is very short; nevertheless his words have been the chief guide for Art in this subject: 'Then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led Him away. And He bearing His cross went forth' (John xix. 16, 17). This Evangelist, we may observe, is the only one who mentions our Lord as bearing His Cross at all.

Here, therefore, we have the materials for a scene known to all conversant with Scripture illustration, and which assumes a position in Art commensurate with its importance as a great historical fact and Christian lesson. It has been frequently treated as an independent subject, is never found absent from any series of the Passion, and has received every variety of illustration incidental to varying times and schools.

The subject dates from the earliest application of Art to the Life, Passion, and Death of Christ, and is seen on ancient doors and in early miniatures. The painter has, we see, clear instructions as to the costume of our Lord on starting for the place of crucifixion. First they put on Him His own raiment again, which had been successively changed for the white and purple robe. This was done, it is supposed, that the multitude, seeing Him pass along in the robe familiar to them, should have no doubt of His identity. Next, the silence of all the Evangelists permits the inference, that the crown of thorns was not taken from His brow; for the resumption of His own garments was for a purpose of their own, viz., the greater shame of the Victim. But the removing that crown would have served, as Jeremy Taylor observes, 'as a remission of pain to the afflicted Son of Man,' and therefore presents a terrible motive for leaving it where it was. Thus Art, with few exceptions, has depicted the Lord Jesus Christ, on His way to Calvary, wearing the raiment in which He had been captured—in Art always a blue mantle and red under-robe—and with the crown of thorns on His head. In rare instances, our Lord is seen attired in white, the symbol of innocence. Such an example appears in a curious and rude early picture (attributed by D'Agincourt, in pl. lxxxix., to the 13th century) in S. Stefano

at Bologna. Here the figure of our Lord with the long hair, wreath-like crown of thorns, white robe, bare arms, and girded waist, is almost womanly. We have seen another in a MS. in the British Museum, where Christ is bearing His Cross exactly in the state in which He came from the column—that is, devoid of all clothing except the perizonium or linen cloth round the loins. Thus attired, He now for the first time touches that Cross on which He was to die. It was especially the condemnation of malefactors to carry their cross to the place of execution: this was so great an ignominy in the eyes of the Roman people, that the lowest term of degradation was that of ‘*furcifer*,’ or gallows-bearer. The transverse beam alone is supposed to have been thus borne, but Art has here rightly adhered to the letter of the text, and to the spirit in which every Christian must mentally view this scene. Our Lord is therefore always bearing a real cross, thus outwardly symbolising, as the early Fathers ingeniously supposed, the mysterious words of Isaiah, ‘*And the government shall be upon His shoulder;*’ that government of which thorns were the crown of investiture. Another feature usually attached to our Lord’s Person by Art is the rope round His waist by which He was led. This, though not gathered from Scripture, is sufficiently probable. The feeling of the artist is seen in the manner in which it is used; sometimes hardly visible, or hanging loosely in the hand of the soldier going before Him—oftener, tightly stretched as He is rudely dragged along. The rope is also sometimes seen fastened round our Lord’s neck. The reverent monk, Fra Angelico, attaches no rope to our Lord at all, though one is seen coiled in the hand of a soldier accompanying Him.

Of the subject in this limited form—the Saviour alone, thus attired, and bearing His Cross—Art has made very touching use. Depending as this mode of conception did on the expression not only of the head but of the hands thus graciously used, it was not attempted until these two Shibboleths of the painter had been mastered; and, therefore, not until the maturity of Art. This simple treatment was especially adopted by Marco Palmezzano, a scholar of Melozzo da Forlì, who executed many figures of the single figure of Christ bearing His Cross. Two of them may be instanced; one in the Museum at Faenza, his native place, and



another, belonging to the late Mr. Brett, exhibited at Manchester, of which we subjoin an illustration (No. 165). Nothing can be more touching than this view of the subject, thus divested of all but the pure idea—the patient submission to the burden, the resolute clasp of those tender hands, and the mercy and pity in the humid eyes, which we feel are warning all to weep for themselves more than for Him.



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Christ carrying the Cross. (Palmezzano.)

The same single figure has been treated by Morales. A fine specimen is in the Louvre, another in Mr. Baring's gallery, and a third at Oxford. These are totally wanting in the real pathos which Palmezzano has given. Morales' face is that of a sufferer too miserable to give a thought to another: and the hands, though beautiful, are spread upon the Cross for show, and not for the real pain and labour of love.

Another view, of which we give an illustration (No. 166, over leaf), may be called a mystical conception of the subject. It is by Fra Angelico. Our Lord is here proceeding with a light, rapid, and even elate step; utterly opposed to all idea of exhaustion. Nor is there any Jerusalem behind, or Calvary visible before Him; but



166 Christ carrying the Cross. (Fra Angelico. Convent of S. Marco, Florence.)

the scene is rocky, and the way rough—an epitome of the Christian's course, thus passing, as a vision, before the eyes of St. Dominick and the Virgin.

Another conception, of a late and poetic kind, by Poussin, is our Lord alone, fallen beneath the weight of His Cross, with angels in the clouds compassionating Him.

Thus far our Lord's figure alone. Beyond that the subject branches off into great variety of conception, being accompanied by more or fewer figures, varying from two or three to above a hundred. These may be classed under three different heads—the more or less simple bearing of the Cross, as the great example of Christian fortitude and humility; the falling beneath the Cross; and, thirdly, that fuller representation, in which either the true idea of the bearing the Cross, or the false type of the falling beneath it, is lost in the confusion and violence of the scene, which may be termed the Procession to Calvary. Under no circumstances can

the representation of this subject be termed historical, for legend intermingles with all these aspects, and is the entire foundation of one of them.

Of all these, the Bearing of the Cross, as a great Christian fact and idea in Art, takes the precedence in date. It also generally embodies an earlier moment in the scene—that in which our Lord has just come forth with His burden from the gates of Jerusalem, which are often seen behind Him. In early miniatures, and on the doors of S. Zeno at Verona, the ideal character is especially given by the size of the Cross, which is so small as scarcely to amount to more than a symbol, and is utterly inadequate to its terrible purpose. This assists that beautiful intention of the willingness and freedom, and, therefore, the ease of the sacrifice which hallows all the early conceptions of these scenes. The Cross is often also seen represented as green in colour, which may either be in allusion to its origin as a tree, or, it has been supposed, to some far-fetched association with our Lord's words, 'For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?' But as regards the size of the Cross, Art did not long require such an obvious solecism to effect her purpose. Giotto, in the Arena Chapel, ventures to be true, and more than true; for the Cross our Lord is bearing is over large, and, of course, heavy in proportion. He carries it, too, in defiance of all physical laws; holding it by the lower end of the upright beam, so that the topheavy transverse part is considerably behind Him, thus adding considerably to the weight. Nevertheless, He walks freely underneath it; thus suggesting both the gladness of His gracious work and the miraculous effects of a strong and patient faith under all crosses of life.

The incidents of the Passion in which the Cross appears are especially to be looked for in churches dedicated to the Cross, which, in the Roman calendar, takes the position of a saint. Thus, in the magnificent Church of S. Croce, at Florence, one in which the lover of Art and of History may alike find inexhaustible sources of interest, the legendary history of the Cross itself, which will be separately treated farther on, is represented on the walls of the choir, while the sacristy contained those events in which our Lord is historically associated with the instrument of our salvation. The greater portion of these last-named frescoes, which are by the hand

of Taddeo Gaddi, have been long covered with whitewash, leaving only one wall visible, on which are three magnificent representations, hitherto unengraved. 1. The Bearing of the Cross; 2. The



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Christ carrying the Cross. (Taddeo Gaddi. S. Croce, Florence.)

Crucifixion; and 3. The Resurrection. We give a woodcut of the Bearing of the Cross, which is remarkable in several respects (No. 167). Here Christ, clad in a robe of the most delicate

light red, walks with tolerable ease beneath His burden. Behind Him is a figure helping to bear the Cross, though scarcely to be interpreted as Simon the Cyrenian, for with his other hand he is about to push our Lord. Farther back is the Virgin with the women—of whom we shall have more to say. We will here only draw attention to her beautiful action, with the outstretched arms, which Raphael must have seen in his sojourns in Florence, between 1504 and 1508, and which is the same motive as that given in his Spasimo (painted 1516–18). This is a specimen of the way in which the best things in Art descended from one generation of painters to another; Taddeo Gaddi himself having, perhaps, borrowed it from some earlier form.

To return to our description. In front of the Cross are Jews. The attendants consist chiefly of Roman guards with standards, one of which bears the customary S. P. Q. R.—‘*Senatus populusque Romanus*’—the cohort vanishing under the gate of Jerusalem, from which they are issuing. The figure of one of the thieves, with bound head and disconsolate look, is seen close to the right end of the transverse beam, and in front, with a banner borne before and behind him, is evidently the figure of Pilate, still retaining that troubled, puzzled look which had descended from the Art of the Catacombs. Above are seen the battlements and towers of Jerusalem, under the form of beautiful Italian towers and campaniles. A circumstance in this fresco shows the morbid appetite for exaggerating the sufferings of Christ, which hastened the decline of Christian Art. Some late and wretched limner had disfigured this fresco by painting an enormous round stone as suspended to the transverse beam, in order to increase the weight of the Cross. Fortunately it has faded in colour, and is no longer conspicuous. These were the inventions by which it was endeavoured to stimulate the compassion of the ignorant for the sufferings of Christ, but which, it may be safely asserted, only stimulated the depraved appetite for sights of cruelty.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The old writers relate that those condemned to the Cross were tormented in various ways to increase their speed on the way to it. See Sandinus, ‘*Historia Familiæ Sacræ*,’ p. 154. We give also this quotation from Jeremy Taylor: ‘It cannot be thought but the ministers of Jewish malice used all the circumstances of affliction which in any case were accustomed towards malefactors and persons to be crucified, and therefore it was

Another magnificent fresco of the Bearing of the Cross, forming part of a series, is by the unknown painter who has left his immortal works in the Cappella degli Spagnuoli, at S. Maria Novella in Florence. Here Christ assumes much the same position, while a novel and original meaning is given to the attendant figures by the earnest manner in which they are evidently discussing the event. The battlements, also, are thronged with figures looking down, and thus an importance is given which, though not consistent with probability, is favourable to the pomp and magnificence of Art.

We return, however, to more circumstantial description. The appearance of Simon the Cyrenian on the scene (to adhere at first to the sacred narrative only) is another moment. The wisdom of Scripture, which seems all along to interdict too close a search into the details of our Lord's sufferings, has kept entire silence on the immediate cause which induced the soldiers to remove a burden from Him to which it is sufficient for us to know that He brought a greatly exhausted frame. But that they laid the Cross on Simon, instead of bearing it themselves, is readily solved. No Roman or Jew would touch that instrument of shame. No passer-by of either nation could they have compelled to do so with impunity. But Simon, a man of Cyrene, coming from the country, thus unexpectedly compelled to the only act of mercy here recorded, was a stranger and a foreigner—one of the people excluded from the Old Covenant, whom the Jews hated, and yet, as the early writers have figuratively described, the type of those to whom the New Covenant was now about to be sent. For he came from the country, which, they argued, meant from the abodes of heathenism and idolatry, while his very name, as St. Jerome and others observe, betokened the gathering of the Gentiles—Cyrenian meaning obedient, and Simon an heir. Whether Simon literally bore the Cross in our Lord's stead, as Matthew and Mark simply say, and as was strenuously urged by the early Fathers, and as a further type of those who were to take up

that in some old figures we see our Blessed Lord described with a table appendant to the fringe of His garment, set full of nails and pointed iron, for so sometimes they afflicted persons condemned to that kind of death : and St. Cyprian affirms that Christ did stick to the wood that he carried, being galled with the iron at His heels, and nailed even before His crucifixion.' We have never met with this class of picture.

the Cross and follow after Him, or whether he bore it together with and behind Him, as mediæval theology insists, are points which we may leave. There are evidences, however, in early Art that the positive transfer of the Cross to Simon was believed in. On the Benevento doors our Lord is standing upright in the centre, while a figure towards the edge of the bas-relief bears the Cross. Duccio also represents our Lord erect and unencumbered, evidently in the act of prophesying that they shall call to the mountains to fall on them, as He turns with dignity to a man who is carrying a vessel with nails and hammer. The Cross is here again borne by Simon, who in both cases precedes Christ. Zani also mentions a picture by Ercole Grande di Ferrara, where Simon is bearing the Cross alone. But, as time proceeded, the feeling gained ground that our Lord could never have consented to separate Himself a moment from the instrument of our salvation. The Cross is therefore invariably seen carried by Him; and Simon, when he does appear, is either giving but nominal assistance—merely conveying the idea, by placing his hands on the Cross, sometimes on one of the transverse ends, as may be seen in ancient ivories—or he is giving his help more seriously, though occasionally doing cruel service by lifting the lightest end and thus throwing the weight more upon the Sufferer. Upon the whole, however, Simon is not so frequent a feature in this scene as might have been expected, and in later times not to be distinguished among the various hands that assist to lift it from the prostrate figure of Christ. Where distinguishable, he is represented as an old man.

The thieves who were led with Christ to be put to death are another historical feature in this scene. They are not so frequent in Italian as in Northern Art, though they occur early. Fra Angelico has introduced them in his more historical rendering of the subject, in the series, often quoted, in the Accademia at Florence. They are here, and usually, preceding our Lord, with their hands tied behind them. Sometimes a touching interest is given to one of them which leads the spectator's mind forward in anticipation of the high destiny awaiting him. For he is seen looking back with tenderness and respect at the patient and burdened Lord, with whom we perceive already that he is the one

destined to be that day in Paradise. This refined trait is given by Niccolo Alunno in his picture in the Louvre. The thieves are very rarely, and only in late Art, seen carrying their crosses—a departure from the Roman custom justified (as not specified in Scripture) in order to give the greater prominence to the moral idea of the Bearing the Cross. In an early Italian engraving in the British Museum, where the Crucifixion is seen above, and the Bearing of the Cross occupies the lower portion, the rope which is round Christ ties the hands of both the thieves, thus enclosing Him with them, who help to drag Him along.

But here, strictly speaking, the materials from Scripture terminate, for the women who followed Him lamenting are seldom given, and then only in that much later form which we term the Procession to Calvary. That these women mentioned in Scripture were not the Virgin and the attendant Maries, is evident from the words our Lord addressed to them. It was not to His Mother that our Saviour can be supposed to have prophesied the time when it should be said of her, 'Blessed are the barren.' Nor in her typical character as the Church, in opposition to the Synagogue, can she be represented as following Him lamenting, for the Church, as we shall see in the Crucifixion, is always represented as rejoicing. The frequent appearance, therefore, of the Virgin, with St. John and the other Maries, following our Lord in the Carrying of the Cross, may be attributed to the fact stated by Mrs. Jameson in her 'History of the Madonna,' p. 302, viz., that this scene constitutes one of her mystical sorrows in the series of the Rosary instituted by St. Dominick (born 1175). It may also have descended from the art usages of the Greek Church, with which it is a standard incident. 'Derrière lui la sainte Vierge, Jean le Theologos (the Evangelist) et d'autres femmes en pleurs.' No early painters—Duccio, Giotto, or Fra Angelico—are without this group of sorrowing figures. To the Greek Church alone, however, we directly trace an incident which often accompanies them, both in Southern and Northern schools; viz., a soldier with a stick repulsing the Virgin, and resisting her further progress. 'Un soldat la repousse avec un bâton.' This is seen in our woodcut from Taddeo Gaddi (No. 167), and gives rise to a touching action on the part of our Lord, who is turning His head, and looking with pity at His Mother's distress. Her supposed presence,



however, at this time, led to conceptions highly derogatory to her sacred character. In a fresco by Niccolo di Pietro, a pupil of Giotto, in the chapter-house of S. Francesco at Pisa, a soldier is seen drawing his sword upon her; and in a picture by Pinturicchio, in the Casa Borromeo at Milan, a soldier has actually seized the Virgin by the throat. Not seldom, the Virgin is seen fainting, supported by St. John or the Maries, which attracts the same notice from our Lord. In the same Bearing the Cross, by Nicolo Alunno, in the Louvre, mentioned p. 109, a horseman with lance and pennon is galloping his steed between the group of the Mother and Son. The Virgin is stretching out her arms in agony to Him, and St. John rushes between her arms, with a reverential though impassioned action, as if at once to calm her emotion and protect her from harm.

But this introduction of the Virgin thus impotently bewailing her Son, and often rudely repulsed in the attempt to follow Him, is an instance of the questionable service derived by Art from any legendary addition to the revealed scenes of the history of our Lord. Her presence and her grief are often rendered very touching—never more so than in the Spasimo by Raphael; yet the eye feels that they are so pictorially, and the heart that they are so morally, at the expense of the principal Figure and chief Sufferer. His Mother here increases His burden instead of diminishing it. It is He who is compassionating or suffering with her, not *vice versa*. The incident of her fainting is worse still; it is a poor subject for Art, occupies others with her sufferings instead of with His, and is contrary to that character of the Blessed Virgin conveyed by Scripture and preserved in tradition, as the Mother who was constant to her Son, ‘non solum corpore sed et mentis constantiâ.’

Another aspect of the part assigned by legend or the painter’s imagination to the Virgin is less unworthy of her. In various forms of Art, ivories, drawings, and painted glass, chiefly of Northern origin, the Virgin may be observed attempting herself to bear the weight of the Cross. These are instances when our Lord is still upright beneath it, and when her feeble hand touching the burden gives little more than the pathetic idea of her yearning to relieve her suffering Son (woodcut, No. 168, over leaf). St. John, too, sometimes participates in this action.



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Christ carrying His Cross. (French Bible. Bibl. Imp., Paris.)

But the fittest part taken by the holy and submissive mother of the Lord, if seen upon the road at all, is not as the mother only after the flesh, vainly endeavouring to save her offspring, but as the first and firmest believer in His mission—she who kept His sayings in her heart, and at His first miracle showed no surprise; who knew that He had ‘a baptism to be baptized with, and was straitened till it should be accomplished’ (Luke xii. 50). In a picture by Girolamo di Santa Croce (painted in 1520), in the Berlin Gallery, our Lord is seen bearing His Cross, followed only by Pilate and a soldier; His Mother, St. John, and the Maries, stand looking on by the road side as much in awe as in sympathy, as if knowing that He *must* be doing His Father’s business, unaided and almost unpitied by them. This agrees with a tradition embodied in the Sacro Monte at Varallo, that the Virgin ascended the Mount of Calvary by a shorter way than her Son, and that meeting about half-way up, He turned and said to her, ‘Salve, Mater!’

Mrs. Jameson in her ‘History of the Madonna,’ mentions a tradition that the Virgin and her customary companions witnessed the dreadful scene from a rock overlooking the way, and that she there fainted from the violence of her anguish. This is more consistent

with propriety and probability. We know that the Virgin and St. John must that day have trodden the way from the gates of Jerusalem to Calvary. At the same time, St. John's extreme reticence of description seems especially intended to show us that they were only spectators to our Lord's first going forth.

One other conception in which the Virgin is introduced into this subject is where she appears alone with her Divine Son. This, which goes under the name of the '*Madre Addolorata*,' is more strictly one of her sorrows, and has a consistency which justifies it to the eye. There is no attempt at the real story. No one is there but the martyred Son and the compassionating Mother. He is fallen—a type of the sacrifice—and she sits by with folded hands, agonised but resigned.

But the Bearing of the Cross, like all the other subjects of our Lord's life, was not frequent with the masters of the 15th and 16th centuries. A Veronese painter, who died young, Paolo Morando, called Cavazzuola (born 1491), has left, among the few works that show his surpassing excellence, a Bearing of the Cross, now in the gallery at Verona (woodcut, No. 169, over leaf). This conception is one of the few which realise the Scriptural and historical picture to the mind. Simon is here in his suitable character, and no superadded incident diverts the eye from the chief figure.

Sebastian del Piombo has also treated the subject. The Christ is only seen half-length, the ends of the Cross going out of the picture. Two soldiers are with Him—no other figures—one of them is evidently beckoning to Simon to come and help, and the Saviour's head is bowed with exhaustion.

Giorgione has treated this subject, also in half-length figures, thus keeping the Christ prominent. One of the soldiers is striking Him on the neck. This may be attributable to the morbid source supplied to these times by the '*Revelations*' of St. Brigitta, which have left their traces on many scenes of our Lord's sufferings executed after the 14th century. The Virgin, being interrogated by St. Brigitta, says, 'My Son, going to the place of His Passion, was struck by some in the neck, by others in the face.'

Thus far our Lord is seen bearing His Cross erect. As time progressed, however, the idea of His human sufferings began to be



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Christ carrying the Cross. (Paolo Morando. Verona Gallery.)

more brought forward than that of His free sacrifice. His attitude gradually undergoes a change. He no longer moves lightly and gladly beneath His self-chosen load, signs of failing strength appear, and He staggers under the Cross. In a picture by Raphael, formerly in the Orleans Gallery, now at Mr. Miles', of Leigh Court, this is strikingly seen. The figure is unsteady, and the moment when its equilibrium will be lost is fast approaching. The Virgin is seen fainting behind Him, but her Son has hardly strength to turn His head towards her. As a next step to this, Raphael was one of the first in Italian Art who represented our Lord sinking to the ground. This is seen in the celebrated picture of the Spasimo, at Madrid, engraved in Mrs. Jameson's 'Madonna.' The incident of our Lord's supporting Himself on a stone with one hand is supposed to have been taken from an engraving by Albert Dürer. Raphael

may have taken the whole idea of the fallen Christ from the German engravers, for Martin Schön, who preceded Albert Dürer, has it ; or it may have been adopted by him and them from the Byzantine school, which thus dictates to the painter, 'Le Christ épuisé, tombe à terre, et s'appuie d'une main.'

It has been observed that all the Evangelists are alike significantly silent upon the immediate cause which led the soldiers to compel the services of Simon. The interpretation, however, which the Greek and Roman Churches have given to this silence are so little favourable to the cause of Art, that in this sense, and not as a question of controversy, which would be misplaced here, we venture to comment upon it. All events in our Lord's life have, we know, both a direct and typical meaning. Such an event as His bearing His Cross is not only one of the most solemn, but, for daily example, the most necessary of types. It seems strange, therefore, to fill up the silence of Scripture by a contradiction to the whole spirit of the subject. For, if our Lord fell beneath His Cross, what becomes of the type and of the lesson? Who shall bear the cross He lays on them, if He could not bear that which He freely took Himself! It is a narrow judgment which insists on tying Art slavishly to the truth of facts, but Art herself forfeits her vocation if she voluntarily violates truth of character. What is Christ's unvarying teaching? 'Take up thy cross and follow me.' And what is His example too? It is not too much to say that the painter who should make Him succumbing in the Temptation would be not farther from the moral truth than he who presents the false and discouraging image to the eye of His falling beneath His Cross. Nor do the early Fathers make the slightest allusion to an incident so inconsistent with the life and doctrine of Christ. It was not till the 14th century that a suggestion is made by Nicolas de Lira, a Franciscan monk, as to the cause of summoning Simon, which offers, at all events, a solution consistent with our Lord's character—viz., that Christ, exhausted with fasting, watching, sorrow, and ill-usage, proceeded too slowly on the way to Calvary for the impatience of His guards. In the course of the Crucifixion we see various indications that they were tired of their office, and wanted to hurry on the end; they therefore hailed the help of one whom they could coerce. Art is not without her

witnesses to this idea. The small Netherlandish drawings in the British Museum, before mentioned, show Christ proceeding laboriously, and even awkwardly, along; while the chief soldier is evidently and impatiently hailing one, unseen to us, who is coming in the distance.

Also in Sebastian del Piombo's picture, to which we have alluded, which contains but two attendant figures, one of them, with a gesture of impatience, is calling to some one without the picture.

To return, however, to the strangely false conception adopted by the Church in the 15th and 16th centuries, and which even in the ablest hands never fails to degrade our Lord's Person to the eye, Raphael's picture, called the *Spasimo*, is an example of what may be called the more moderate abuse of the truth. Christ is also by no means the principal figure here, but rather the Virgin, whose anguish gives perhaps the highest idea of earthly sorrow that was ever conceived. Otherwise, the picture is in many respects displeasing.

This view of our Lord falling, having obtained that impetus which belongs to all degraded forms, did not stop where Raphael placed it. The figure gradually sinks lower and lower. Andrea Sacchi, for instance, shows Him fallen on both knees. Domenichino, in the Stafford Gallery, represents Him prone, with both hands on the ground (woodcut, No. 170)—the beautiful sentiment of His never quitting hold of His Cross quite abandoned; while Tiepolo, the last of the Italians, reaches the climax of irreverent extravagance by throwing our Lord on His back under a cross which three men could not have lifted. (The consideration of the 'Stations'—the *ne plus ultra* of violence, and therefore of bad Art—will be found at the end of this chapter.) So completely had the Church impressed on the popular mind that our Saviour succumbed beneath His Cross, that even on occasions where the painter's intention was to inculcate the doctrine of the Christian's carrying his cross, the Lord is brought in falling beneath His own. This is seen in one of Hoffer's masterly engravings. The text is, 'Who does not take up his cross and follow me, is not worthy of me.' We see in this engraving a crowd of human sinners, struggling to carry their respective crosses—struggling in sorrow and sickness; the poor one-legged competitor for everlasting life, though weeping with pain and fatigue,



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Christ fallen beneath the Cross. (Domenichino. Stafford Gallery.)

being sure to reach the goal. All are getting on as they can; many crosses are already thrown down, but among those still holding on, none of them have, apparently, so little chance of success as our Lord Himself, who, instead of marching triumphantly at the head, the great Captain of our salvation, is sunk on His knees, and soiling His Cross with the support of earth.

To return to the incidents which legend has added to this scene. Towards the end of the 15th century, the presence of the Virgin was occasionally accompanied, but far oftener replaced, by another female personage, who from this time plays a prominent part in this subject. We mean St. Veronica, of whom it is told that, issuing from her house when our Lord passed on His way to Calvary, she gave Him her veil wherewith to wipe His face, which our Lord returned to her with His image miraculously impressed upon it. This is the *sudarium*, or cloth which wiped the sweat from His face, and not to be confounded with the *vera Icon*, sustained by St. Veronica or by angels, the history of which is given in the Introduction. St. Veronica enters the scene in Italian Art, while Christ is still proceeding erect under His burden, and is less

an intrusion to the eye in that form; but she is far more generally associated with the later-conceived fallen figure of Christ. Occasionally the incident of the soldier repulsing the Virgin is transferred to the saint, as in a picture above mentioned by Andrea



171 St Veronica. (Andrea Sacchi.)

Sacchi, where it is difficult not to take part with the soldier against a troublesome woman so much out of her place. We give an illustration of the figure of the saint from this picture (No. 171). For, however touching the legend which describes her as the very woman cured by our Lord of the malady of twelve years' standing, and meeting and ministering to Him in His sore distress, it is precisely because Art has so very seldom preserved the idea conveyed by this legend, that the figure of the importunate saint is felt to be a discord in

the pathetic piece. She is generally given besetting our Lord like a troublesome creditor; while He looks up at her, pale and worn, as if to say, Am I not burdened enough already? Nothing, indeed, can be more theatrical than this figure, kneeling with her back to the spectator, in a studied attitude, displaying her acquisition, and conveying any idea but that of having assisted the suffering Saviour. In this respect, those later masters, who flung aside conventions, were more likely to make her a living reality. A picture by Rubens, in the Brussels Gallery, shows her in the act of wiping the distressed and Divine countenance; and thus, however fictitious the fact, becomes a touching reality to the eye.

The third version of this subject is one in which the legendary incidents which encumber our Lord's way may be said to be amplified rather than changed. The scene is extended, and the figures multiplied, so as more to represent the modern idea conveyed by the words, 'Procession to Calvary.' The foreground is occupied



by a concourse of people surrounding the Sufferer, while the advanced guard (if it may be so called) of the procession, consisting of horsemen and others escorting the thieves, are seen making their way through various planes of distance, and leading the eye to Calvary itself, an elevated spot marked by three crosses; thus involving the not uncommon liberty of a double representation. This composition, whether representing our Lord as fallen or erect, is usually very low in conception, and gives rather the picture of a rabble rout going to execute lynch law than that of a scene in which, at all events, there were the formalities of military order. One of the earliest examples is by Martin Schön. The Saviour has fallen, and His head only is seen under the Cross, like that of an animal under the bars of a cage. All the crowd around Him seem animated with personal fury; hard-hearted old age, scarcely able to keep pace, hobbling after, and malicious childhood gambolling before—both alike viciously greedy of sights of suffering—are a terrible comment upon the character of the time.

This conception, in which nothing is distinguishable except a scene of violence, and which amounts frequently to above a hundred figures, was also popular with the later Italians. Domenico Campagnola treated it, and Annibale Carracci. It is occasionally accompanied by women with compassionate gestures, holding infants in their arms, who are the proper representations of the Daughters of Jerusalem. Sometimes the body of Judas is seen hanging on a tree by the way. In such scenes the Virgin is occasionally placed, by the better taste of the painter, in the distance, though often, as also St. Veronica, mixed up with the rabble.

The impression produced by this class of picture is less unpleasant, because less profane, when the painter merges entirely into common life, so as to make us forget the proper character of the incident in the observation of the life and humour characteristic of his own times. As, for instance, in a picture by Peter Breughel the younger, in the Berlin Museum, which represents an orderly procession of German horsemen of the beginning of the 17th century, with the thieves seated ruefully in a cart with their hands tied behind them, and a friar sitting on the bench opposite, exhorting them to repentance. This is merely a picture of the manner in which criminals were taken to the cruel executions of that day, with our

Lord's figure—of no indecorous character, walking erect beneath His Cross, with soldiers about Him, and St. Veronica kneeling before—brought in as a necessary feature to give the piece a name.

### THE STATIONS.

*Lat.* Via Crucis.      *Ital.* Via Dolorosa.

HAVING thus given a sketch of the various forms into which the Bearing of the Cross grew and lapsed, we must now refer to one of comparatively late adoption in which it is still maintained as a necessary accessory in every Roman Catholic place of worship. No matter how remote the village, or poor the edifice, we always observe certain representations, either in the form of painted sculpture, oil pictures, or of plain or coloured engravings, affixed either to the walls or upon the pillars of the nave. In earlier days these were usually seven in number; they now amount to fourteen. They represent the way to Calvary through which the believer is typically supposed to enter into the inner and holier part of the Church, and have always descriptive titles written in the language of the country. When seven in number, the subjects are as follows:—

1. Jesus Christ bearing His Cross.

The legend says that He here leant against the wall of a house, and left on it the impress of His shoulder.

2. Jesus falls for the first time.
3. Jesus meets His Blessed Mother.
4. Jesus falls for the second time.
5. Jesus meets St. Veronica.
6. Jesus falls for the third time.
7. Entombment.

When fourteen in number, the subjects are thus arranged:—

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jesus is condemned.</li> <li>2. Jesus takes the Cross.</li> <li>3. Jesus falls for the first time.</li> <li>4. Jesus meets His Blessed Mother.</li> <li>5. Simon the Cyrenian appears.</li> <li>6. Jesus meets St. Veronica.</li> <li>7. Jesus falls for the second time.</li> <li>8. The Daughters of Jerusalem.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Jesus falls for the third time.</li> <li>10. Jesus is stripped of His garments.</li> <li>11. Jesus is nailed on the Cross.</li> <li>12. Jesus dies on the Cross.</li> <li>13. Is laid in the arms of His Blessed Mother.</li> <li>14. Entombment.</li> </ol> |
|--|--|

These same representations are associated also with reminiscences of sweet Italian landscapes, on the borders of lakes or rivers; being seen, each enshrined in a tiny chapel, or affixed to a stone pillar dotting the zig-zag path to some loftily situated church or crucifix, and inviting the pilgrim to rest as well as pray at each. Or the traveller sees them in Northern countries tracking the miniature way to some mimic Calvary, an artificial eminence raised against the walls of a church, as in the Dominican church at Antwerp.

As the subjects of the Rosary—the joys and sorrows of the Virgin—in great measure superseded the direct representation of the Passion as a series, especially in Italy, so this amplification of our Lord's painful progress to Calvary grew in its turn out of the subjects of the Rosary. The idea would seem to have originated at Jerusalem, where every piece of ground possibly connected with the scenes of our Lord's sufferings, including the imaginary localities of the *Parables*, have, since the 15th century, been encumbered with all that can most disturb and distort the sacred associations of the place. The road by which our Lord is supposed to have proceeded to Calvary has been especially overtaken by the same fate. It is tracked by a zig-zag series of buildings and arches, meant to illustrate the story, like a *catalogue raisonné*, starting from the so-called 'Arch of the Ecce Homo' up to the supposed site of Golgotha.

The first importation of the 'Stations' into Europe is attributed to a citizen of Nuremberg, who, returning home in 1477 from a pilgrimage to the Holy City, with the intention of imitating in his native town the scenes of the Via Dolorosa, discovered that he had lost the measurements he had taken of these holy places. He repeated his pilgrimage and repaired his loss, and returning again in 1488, employed Adam Kraft, the friend of Albert Dürer, to execute seven stations, which should start from his own dwelling. These consist of seven sculptured reliefs placed on stone pillars, which proceed from the Thiergärtner Gate of the city of Nuremberg to the Church of St John, and terminate in a Crucifixion. They still exist, though in a dilapidated condition, and furnish one of the few examples of the treatment of this series by a master's hand. It stands to reason that little variety, except in degrees of violence, can be extracted from such subjects. There is, therefore, no temptation to give more

than a short description, which we may preface by the assurance that Adam Kraft's reliefs are less exaggerated in character than most representations of the subject.

1. Our Lord is seen stumbling with bent knees beneath a large Cross; His hands, with which He holds it, are bound together with ropes. A rope is round His waist, held by a ruffian in the act of striking Him with a club, while another in front lifts a stick. On one side stands the Virgin, sinking into the arms of her attendants.

2. Our Lord is here sinking to the ground, being pulled up before by the rope, and behind by His hair. Two men are apparently forcing Simon, with jocular expression, to undertake his task. He is in form of an old man with weak, bending frame, who lifts the end of the stem of the Cross, and thus throws the weight more on to the Lord.

3. Our Lord fronts the spectator, and is apparently pausing, while He turns and looks at His Mother, who, with clasped hands, seems about to faint again. Simon has disappeared. The same violence is continued. A club is descending on the Saviour's head; one figure pulls Him by the hair, another by the rope and sleeves.

4. Our Lord is again sinking. Before Him stands St. Veronica, with the door of a house behind her, holding her miraculous cloth, which one of our Lord's bound hands is in the act of returning to her. As He could not have lifted His hands thus bound without dropping His Cross, the legend is here doubly miraculous. The same violence continues.

5. The Saviour has sunk still lower, and four figures are maltreating Him with clubs, sticks, fists, and pulling of hair.

6. Our Lord lies full-length beneath the Cross; one man with both hands pulls Him by the hair, a second by the rope, and a third by the sleeves (woodcut, No. 172). Being thus dragged up on opposite sides of the superincumbent Cross, it becomes physically impossible for Him to rise.

7. Entombment.

All these scenes are represented under the figures of coarse Nuremberg men and women, in the costume of the 15th century.

The reader has now had too much of this wretched phase of so beautiful a subject, and will not wonder that real Art should have



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Christ fallen beneath the Cross. (Station pillar. Nuremberg.)

been shy of it. It bore contemptible fruits in such Art as it has generally enlisted, and there are no objects which the eye shuns more instinctively than this never-failing series in the nave of a Roman Catholic church.

## CHRIST STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS.

*Ital.* Cristo spogliato.

THERE are certain self-understood passages in these last moments of our Lord's life, of which Scripture, with its sense of what was really important for a Christian to know, says nothing. Such incidents, however, when they present an edifying or touching image to the mind's eye, are perfectly justifiable as subjects for Art, which has different conditions to those of narrative, and no liberty is taken with the truth in thus filling up its interstices. Such a case is the disrobing of our Lord in preparation for the Cross. Being out of the usual routine of the subjects of the Passion, it fell under no conventional treatment, and is therefore, in the few instances in which we see it, a fresher expression than usual of the mind of the artist, and to be regarded as in some sort a reverential desire to delay the fatal act. No one can think of these last moments, in which our Lord divested Himself of those coverings of humanity which are the first and last tokens of social life, without feeling the pathos of which the subject was capable. It was treated by two great early painters. We find it in Giotto, in the predella to a picture in the Uffizj at Florence, and nowhere more pathetically rendered. We give an illustration of the two principal figures (No. 173).

Fra Angelico also has the subject in his series in the Accademia. Each of these masters accompany this incident by other acts significant of the impending tragedy. In Giotto the base of the Cross is seen behind, standing in the ground, while a figure with a large hammer is driving in the wedges which make it more secure. In Fra Angelico's representation, the coat of our Lord, 'without a seam, woven from top to bottom,' is already in the hands of the soldiers, and it is His under garment, out of the sleeve of which, by a simple action, He is gently drawing His left arm. The casting lots for the garment is here given peculiarly, because more truthfully than usual. A soldier standing with his eyes shut,



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Christ Stripped of His Garments. (Giotto.)

as was the custom on drawing lots, is taking a lot out of the tall dice-cup held to him by another ; each have a hand on the garment, while an old soldier behind holds up his finger, as if watching that all is fair.

The contrast between these two conceptions and that by Holbein, in his nine drawings of the Passion,<sup>1</sup> is curious. Here all is violence on the one part, and helpless, even abject misery, on the other. Our Lord is awkwardly kneeling, half on and half off the Cross, while two brutal figures are pulling His garment over His head. The crown of thorns lies on the ground—an incident taken from St. Brigitta, who, in her visions, saw it taken off, and then replaced when our Lord was on the Cross. The subject is also seen in early German woodcuts in the British Museum, but treated with that

<sup>1</sup> Seven of these are in the British Museum. The series is engraved in a work published by Chrétien de Méchel, 1780. Basle : chez Guillaume Haas, Typographe.

degrading ugliness and exaggeration for which the term 'realistic' is a misplaced compliment.

### THE VIRGIN WRAPPING THE LINEN CLOTH ROUND OUR SAVIOUR'S BODY.

THIS is another incident with which Art lingers out these last moments. If it does not claim our assent, like the last, as to a fact



174 The Virgin binding the Cloth round Christ. (Cologne Museum.)

which must have happened, it obtains our sympathy on grounds which only a very morbid delicacy could criticise. It is a fiction, like other passages we have considered in the part taken by the Virgin in the Passion, but this time a fiction not at variance with the beauty of her character, and therefore harmonious and touching when seen in Art. This subject is rarely seen, but may be traced to a passage from a dialogue on the Passion of our Lord, much after the fashion of St. Brigitta's 'Revelations,' by one Dionysius à Richel, a Carthusian, who makes the Virgin say, 'Panniculum capitis mei circumligavi lumbis ejus' ('I wrapt His loins round



with the cloth from my head'). An early and large Franconian picture in the Berlin Museum (No. 1197 B), by Hans Holbein the father, is the only important instance we know. It represents the Virgin in the act of binding this covering round our Lord after His disrobing; the Son given back to the Mother for the last exercise of a Mother's privilege, and both weeping. It is ugly and rude in point of Art, and the person of our Saviour is marréd all over in the exaggerated mode of the time; nevertheless, the sentiment is overpoweringly pathetic, and places Hans Holbein's father above himself in point of feeling. Our illustration (No. 174) is from the background of a picture in the Cologne Gallery. The subject is found in miniatures of the same period.

#### OUR LORD IS OFFERED THE CUP TO DRINK.

ANOTHER moment on which Art has found occasion to pause is that narrated by two of the Evangelists: 'They gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink' (Matt. xxvii. 34).

'And they gave Him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but He received it not' (Mark xv. 23.)

The slight difference in these sentences has led some commentators to suppose that two different liquids were offered. But the general feeling has pronounced them to have been one and the same; the vinegar being probably the common wine always at hand in warm climates for the use of the soldiery—the same of which it is said in St. John, at a later moment, 'Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar.' The intention of this draught is, however, less clear. By some, it is believed to have been a bitter restorative given by Roman custom to those condemned to the death on the cross; by others, a merciful potion contributed by humane, honourable women of Jerusalem to deaden their sufferings. For whatever purpose prepared, our Lord only tasted it, but 'would not drink.' The subject is also rare. It occurs in the series of the Passion by Lucas van Leyden, and also in a miniature in the gallery of the Ambrogian Library. These two instances are similar in arrange-

ment. One man, offering the cup to our Lord, is holding Him by the hair, and trying to force Him to drink. Another stands by with a jug. The Cross lies beside Him. We give an illustration from Lucas van Leyden's etching (No. 175). Another picture of



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Offering the Vinegar. (Lucas van Leyden.)

this subject, in the Ertborn collection at Antwerp (No. 69), has a nun kneeling in front, presented by St. Ambrose: the Virgin and St. John are seated in the middle distance. This is a wretched caricature.

## CHRIST ASCENDING THE CROSS.

THIS is so rarely seen, that no known master can be quoted as having attempted it. It occurs in a series of miniatures of the Life and



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Christ Ascending the Cross. (Italian miniature. 13th century).

Passion of the Lord, of the 13th century, belonging to the writer, from which our illustration is taken (No. 176). Also in a finely preserved enamel<sup>1</sup> of the 13th century, containing the Crucifixion in the centre, and eight subjects, some of them of unusual selection, around; our Lord is in the act of being helped, not ungently, up the ladder by two figures. The Cross, like all early crosses, is

<sup>1</sup> Belonged, in June 1861, to Mr. Farrer, of 106 New Bond Street.

short, so that one figure stands on the ground, and the other on a kind of high stool behind. A third figure is driving in wedges, to strengthen the Cross in the ground.

### OUR LORD BEING NAILED TO THE CROSS.

*Ital.* L'Inchiodazione.

AND now Art can no longer delay the last and only less terrible scene before the final suspension on the Cross. Scripture, again, is as sparing of its words as it is simply great in the art of narrative, giving us the bare fact without description of manner, or comment of pity or horror: 'And they crucified Him.' Nothing could be said that would not weaken the effect of these words. It is only when Art attempts to bring their ineffable meaning before the eye that she necessarily supplies the manner and awakens the comment. The subject is not frequent, though often enough given to afford materials for comparison.

It appears that the early writers all inclined to the more probable opinion, since confirmed by historical evidence of the custom in such cases, that our Lord was attached to the Cross while it lay on the ground. St. Buonaventura (born 1221, canonised 1482) states, on the other hand, that our Lord ascended a ladder, and was nailed to the Cross standing. St. Brigitta, in her visions, saw both modes. The impress of each opinion is seen in Art—that of our Lord ascending the ladder to the Cross being the earliest; that of His extending himself on it on the ground the most frequent.

An engraving in D'Agincourt ('Pittura,' pl. xcvi.), from the frescoes in the since destroyed Church of S. Paolo-fuori-le-Mura at Rome, gives a strange conception of the same subject. There is no ladder, but our Lord is being nailed to the Cross, partly upheld by a figure standing on an elevation at His side. One hand is attached, and a figure with an instrument, intended to guard the limb from the blow, is driving the nail into one foot. The figure

supporting Him is affectionately reverential, and the presence of the sun and moon, and the absence of the crown of thorns, denote an early period. D'Agincourt places it in the 11th century, but it is believed to belong to the 13th. We give an illustration (No. 177).



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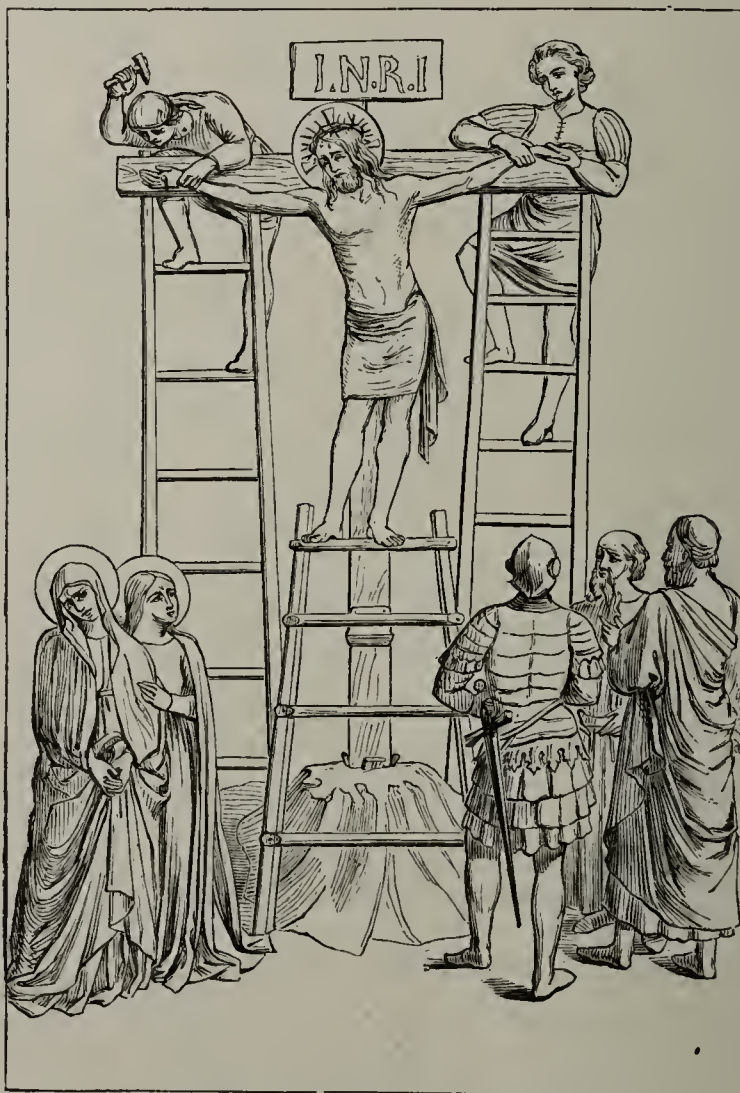
The Nailing to the Cross. (D'Agincourt.)

Another small woodcut in D'Agincourt (pl. ciii.), from an Italian miniature of the 12th or 13th century, shows an immensely lofty cross, with a long ladder placed against it, and the procession to Calvary just arrived at the foot. Angels are already seen weeping above.

Fra Angelico is perhaps the only painter of note who has treated this view of the subject. The Cross is upright, and our Lord and His crucifiers are standing on ladders. We annex an illustration (No. 178, over leaf). All Fra Angelico's ruffians are sheep in wolves' clothing. The action of the figure who takes the left hand

to draw it to its place is tenderly respectful, while his eyes at the same time gaze with compassion on the sorrowing Virgin below.

On the other hand, the earliest representations we have seen of the recumbent figure being fastened to the Cross are in very rude German woodcuts of the 13th century in the British



Museum. Here the influence of further details from the visions of St. Brigitta is seen. She narrates that holes were first bored at the ends of the Cross; that our Lord then laid Himself upon it, and first gave His blessed right hand. This being nailed into the hole thus provided, the executioners found that the space

between the two opposite holes was too wide for the left hand to reach. They therefore attached a rope to the arm, and stretched it till the hand came to the requisite spot. This cruel invention of a morbid mind is exactly given in these woodcuts. Our Lord is lying on the Cross, with His right hand already nailed, and a noose round the left wrist, at which two men are pulling, while a third lifts the hammer to strike. The feet are also bound to the Cross by ropes above the ankle, preparatory to piercing them.

A very curious picture of the 'Inchiodazione,' of Flemish character, belongs to Mr. Layard; it was exhibited in the British Institution in 1862. The belief that our Lord was first bound by ropes to the Cross is seen in other instances. D'Agincourt gives a small woodcut (pl. xcvi.) where the Cross is seen erect, and our Lord nailed to it, and also still bound to it by ropes twined round every part of His Person. Two figures are hanging to the ropes, untwisting them. This subject of the 'Inchiodazione' also occurs in the 'Speculum Salvationis.' We give an illustration (No. 179, over leaf), the invention of which is more refined than the execution. Luini has the subject in the dark church behind the Monasterio Maggiore, at Milan. Albert Dürer has also treated this scene, divested of all gratuitous painfulness. Our Lord is lying on the Cross, with one hand already in the grasp of His executioners. The other lies calmly across Him. His sacred Person is still inviolate from the nail, but the hammer is uplifted, and the eye turns away.

The unutterable pathos of this scene is enhanced by the supposition, entertained by some commentators, that the prayer of divinest pity and love, 'Father, forgive them, they know not what they do,' was uttered while in the act of being pierced by the nails. The tense in which this is spoken—'they know not what they *do*'—justifies this idea.

The same instinct to recoil from the act, and yet approach its very brink, is seen in Gaudenzio Ferrari, who takes it back a moment earlier. This is a fresco, the 17th compartment in the church at Varallo. Our Lord, divested of His garments, is kneeling with folded hands beside the recumbent instrument of our salvation. The thieves stand behind Him with bound hands.



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The Nailing to the Cross. (Speculum. M. Berjeau.)

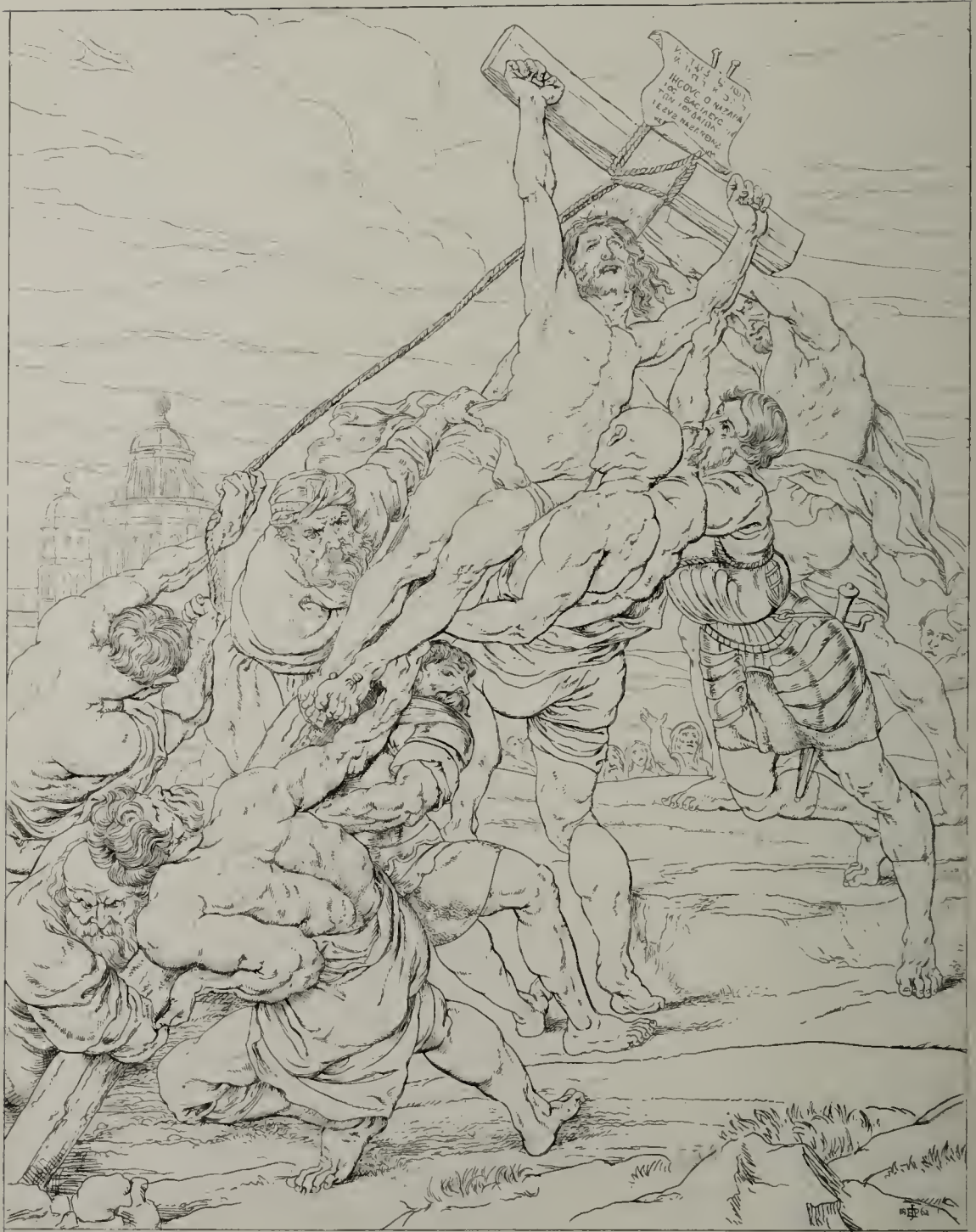
Next the Saviour, and looking at Him with downcast, pitying eye, stands one of those 'daughters of Jerusalem' whom Gaudenzio makes so pathetically beautiful. She holds a little child by the hand, who, by an apparent accident, is standing unconsciously on the very centre of the Cross; thus prefiguring the innocence of the Victim about to be laid on it.

### THE ELEVATION OF THE CROSS.

THE crucifying, properly speaking, of our Lord, has now taken place; but the tremendous spectacle of the Crucifixion is not yet before us. The elevation of the Cross comes between. It is a later subject in Art, being reserved for times of greatly diminished earnestness of feeling, but equally developed powers of anatomical







DESCENT FROM THE CROSS.

*Rubens - Antwerp Cathedral*

drawing. Stalwart figures—as many, sometimes, as eight or nine in number—are seen raising the Cross with their arms, or pulling simultaneously the ropes attached to it, like seamen hoisting a sail. Figures on horseback direct the act. Daughters of Jerusalem look on. The Cross on which our Lord is extended slopes across the picture, and is intended to fall into a hole in the earth prepared to receive it, and to which the efforts of some of the figures are directing it. This is supposed to have been the actual mode by which all crosses were raised and placed upright; the sudden fall of the lower end into the hole causing terrible suffering to the victim. Rubens' Elevation of the Cross, in the cathedral at Antwerp, presents the grandest type of the subject. We give an etching from the centre compartment. This subject has been treated by painters of the 17th and 18th centuries—by Van Dyck, Lebrun, Largillière, and Jouvenet. The thieves are sometimes represented as already crucified—sometimes as awaiting their doom.

## THE CRUCIFIXION.

*Ital.* La Crocifissione.    *Fr.* Le Crucifiement.    Le Christ en Croix.  
*Germ.* Die Kreuzigung.    Christus am Kreuze.

THE road we have gradually traversed, chequered with alternate rays from heaven and stains of earth, the brightest and deepest of each, now terminates with terrible consistency in that sacrifice and crime of which the Crucifixion is the great symbol and picture. No one studying religious Art, and, far more, attempting to write upon it, but must draw near this scene with an equal sense of its awfulness and difficulty. In every form, from the plainest to the most complex, whether as the simple and solemn mystery of human redemption—as the crime against the Creator from which nature recoiled—the earth yawning, and the sun withdrawing its light—as the great tragedy which excited the anguish of angels—as the type of the sacrifice, transferred from the Synagogue to the Church—or merely as the historical event, teeming with human sorrow, suffering, passion, and violence—the eye but too well knows the terrible subject of the Crucifixion. Unmistakeable at a glance, it rears itself up before us, having for centuries enlisted every kind of Art, and every class of the artist mind; a monument of the faith which weighed no considerations of Art in its prescription of such a scene, and a trophy of the Art which relied unquestioning on faith to redeem the unfitness of such a scene for representation—the last thing to which classic Art would have devoted its powers, and by no means the first thing which Christian Art ventured to bring before the sight; which needed the lapse of centuries of prejudice and timidity before it could be represented at all, but which, setting forth, as it does, the great culminating mystery of our faith—the head corner-stone of the theological temple—‘the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world’—has since abounded in an hundredfold proportion to every other form of Scripture representation. No subject in the whole cycle of Art is seen under such peculiar conditions as the Crucifixion.

Two causes prevent our viewing it, even if we would, through the medium of common and absolute reality: the reverence of ages, which has invested what is supposed to have been the most dreadful form of death with sanctity, and the disuse of ages, which has consigned its horrors to oblivion. Art furnishes a third cause; for she herself refuses to bring this scene within the conditions of reality. However common and real the other features of the picture, however distorted the figure on the Cross under the disfiguring influence of Byzantine feeling, that figure is always more or less a convention, or the eye could not look upon it.

The Crucifixion is not one of the subjects of early Christianity. The death of our Lord was represented, as we have seen, by various types—the sacrifice of Isaac, the death of Abel, &c.—but never in its actual form. A picture of the Crucifixion in the Catacombs is supposed to be of the 11th century. The Art of the first centuries, animated only by the still existing energy of classic feeling, repudiated a subject so utterly at variance with all its principles of physical beauty and mental repose. Nor could the Christian of that time be supposed to gaze with befitting feelings on a scene of which the terror and ignominy were still a reality; while both these reasons received a stronger impulse from the fact of the blasphemous derision cast on the subject by the Romans, to which Tertullian alludes, and of which a surviving proof has been found in the recent excavations beneath the Palace of the Cæsars at Rome.

The pictorial history of the Crucifix and the Crucifixion—the one the image, the other more or less the scene—overlap one another. It is probable that the Crucifix takes the earliest place. The step from the one to the other, however, was natural, while the fuller imagery of the Crucifixion probably reacted on the Crucifix, and led to that amplified form of it in metal, enamel, or ivory, which makes it a full picture rather than a solitary image. The Crucifix will be described farther on. Future labourers in this field of inquiry may be able to point out the probable earliest date of the representation of the Crucifixion, strictly so called, but the question of date is, for the present, far too obscure for any decisions on that head to be ventured upon here, the object being

rather to define what constitutes the character of an early Crucifixion than its precise period. All larger forms of Art in which this subject may have been rendered—such as wall-paintings and sculpture—the former especially, not improbably executed under Charlemagne, the chapel of whose palace at Ober-Ingelheim, on the Rhine, is known to have been adorned with scenes from the Old and New Testament—all such have yielded to the destructive influence of time. The earliest instances of the Crucifixion, therefore, are found in objects of a scale more favourable for preservation—in illuminated manuscripts of various countries, and in those ivory and enamelled forms which are described in the Introduction. Some of these are ascertained, by historical or by internal evidence, to have been executed in the 9th century—there is one also, of an extraordinary rude and fantastic character, in a MS. in the ancient Library of St. Galle, which is asserted to be of the 8th century. At all events, there seem no just grounds at present for assigning any earlier date. Till the 9th century, and later still, the influence of classic Art still lingered—if feebly in execution, yet decidedly in that form of abstract conception which expressed itself in symbolic signs and figures: thus favouring the reverence with which such a theme as the Crucifixion was approached. Nevertheless, it is impossible not to feel how wide is the space which lies between the Christ enthroned on the Rainbow, upborne by angels, and holding the universe in His hand—a subject of very remote date—and the most abstract and reverential representation of the Christ hanging upon the Cross.

## VARIOUS CLASSES OF THE CRUCIFIXION.

THERE is no portion of our Lord's history which the four Evangelists have divided so strikingly among them, and which is so incomplete, as a fact or a picture, without their combined narratives, as the Crucifixion. All say that our Lord was crucified—that a superscription, describing Him as the King of the Jews, was put over His head—that two malefactors or thieves were crucified with Him—and that the soldiers parted His garments. But St. Matthew and St. Mark alone tell the mockings addressed to Him by the chief priests and people, while He hung on the Cross; St. Matthew, St. Mark; and St. Luke, that the sun was darkened, and the veil of the Temple rent; St. Matthew only, that the graves were opened, and the dead arose; St. Luke only, the episode of the good thief; St. John only, that the Virgin was present and stood by the Cross, and that our Lord there committed her to His favourite disciple's care; and St. John, again, only, that they brake the legs of the thieves, and pierced the side of the Saviour.

The great subject for which Scripture thus offers such elaborate materials is scarcely treated, up to a late period, otherwise than in a devotional, because a doctrinal sense; as the accomplishment of all the types and ceremonies of the Old Law, all prefiguring that Victim, without the shedding of whose blood there was to be no remission of sins. We have seen the course of our Lord's life on earth faithfully reflected in Art—how He took upon Himself our flesh, submitted to the rites of the Old Covenant, suffered temptation, performed miracles, taught doctrine, ordained Sacraments, and approached, by slow and painful steps, that Calvary where we are about to see Him sealing the great work of His mission. This was the mystery, which Art rendered only the more mysterious by translating it into a visible form—giving to sight what mere sight can never understand—strong in the faith which could look exultingly on so terrible and unnatural an image, and say, 'This is my

Salvation.' It was long before the subject was approached otherwise than with the admixture of symbols, types, allegories, and angelic machinery; or accompanied by prophets of the Old Testament, who had foretold the Messiah, or by saints of the New Covenant, who were especial witnesses of the power of the Cross. We say the admixture of these elements, for one phase of the literal history of the Crucifixion seldom fails, even in the midst of the most complicated imagery—the figure of the Mother, who stood by the Cross, and that of the beloved disciple who there received the charge of her.

Under these circumstances, the conception of the Crucifixion as the Great Sacrifice, while always devotional in character, includes within itself many diversities of treatment. The varieties in the Cross itself, and in the figure stretched thereon, are comparatively small; the diversity consists in the treatment of the accessories. These may be thus generally classed as—

*Symbolical*, when the abstract personifications of the sun and moon, earth and ocean, are present.

*Sacrificially symbolical*, when the Eucharistic cup is seen below the Cross, or the pelican feeding her young is placed above it.

*Simply doctrinal*, when the Virgin and St. John stand on each side as solemn witnesses, or our Lord is drinking the cup, sometimes literally so represented, given Him of the Father, while the lance opens the sacramental font.

*Historically ideal*, as when the thieves are joined to the scene, and sorrowing angels throng the air.

*Historically devotional*, as when the real features of the scene are preserved, and saints and devotees are introduced.

*Legendary*, as when we see the Virgin fainting.

*Allegorical and fantastic*, as when the tree is made the principal object, with its branches terminating in patriarchs and prophets, virtues and graces.

*Realistic*, as when the mere event is rendered as through the eyes of an unenlightened looker on.

These and many other modes of conception account for the great diversity in the treatment of this subject; a further variety being given by the combination of two or more of these modes of treatment together; for instance, the pelican may be seen above the



Cross, giving her life's blood for her offspring ; angels, in attitudes of despair, bewailing the Second Person of the Trinity, or, in an ideal sacramental sense, catching the blood from His wounds—the Jews below looking on, as they really did, with contemptuous gestures and hardened hearts—the centurion acknowledging that this was really the Son of God—while the group of the fainting Virgin, supported by the Maries and St. John, adds legend to symbolism, ideality, and history.

Most of these forms of treatment, especially the earliest, are applied only to the single Cross of our Lord ; the addition of the thieves, though very early, and attended with much ideal circumstance, must be considered as partaking more of the historical. We purpose, therefore, first tracing the single Crucifixion through its various phases of treatment. In point of time, the examples present themselves nearly in the order in which we have sketched them. We take, therefore, first, that of a symbolical and abstract character.

### THE CRUCIFIXION SYMBOLICALLY TREATED.

THE earliest representations of the solemn subject of the Crucifixion, like those of other passages of our Lord's life, were characterised by intense reverence of feeling. The Christian of that time was more reminded of the great fact that Christ died for him, than of the agonies which accompanied that death. An admirable writer<sup>1</sup> says, 'Christian antiquity took great care not to reduce the spectacle of the humiliations and sufferings of the Man God to a scene of affliction and tenderness. Art, like the preaching of the great doctors, aimed to inspire faith more than pity.' The excitements to pity by dwelling exclusively on the bodily sufferings of our Lord were reserved, as we have seen, for later and less implicitly believing ages, where the emotions were urged, as they still are, to do the work of principle. This involved a wide difference in conception, for compassion sees only helplessness in the Victim, faith only triumphant power.

<sup>1</sup> *Mélanges Archéologiques*, vol. i. p. 216.

Compassion is exemplified by the first verse of Dean Milman's grand hymn for Good Friday, faith by the second verse:—

Bound upon th' accursed tree,  
Faint and bleeding, who is He?  
By the eyes so pale and dim,  
Streaming blood and writhing limb,  
By the flesh with scourges torn,  
By the crown of twisted thorn,  
By the side so deeply pierced,  
By the baffled, burning thirst,  
By the drooping death-dew'd brow,  
Son of Man! 'tis Thou! 'tis Thou!

Bound upon th' accursed tree,  
Dread and awful, who is He?  
By the sun at noon-day pale,  
Shivering rocks, and rending veil,  
By earth that trembles at His doom,  
By yonder saints who burst their tomb,  
By Eden, promised ere He died  
To the felon at His side—  
Lord, our suppliant knees we bow,  
Son of God! 'tis Thou! 'tis Thou!

The earliest artists of the Crucifixion preferred to set forth the God. Our Lord was shown as triumphant over death, even while enduring its worst smart. For, as St. Augustine says, 'with the worst death, He overcame all death.' Like as on the early crucifixes He is represented as young and beardless, always without the crown of thorns, not always with the nimbus—alive and erect—apparently elate—His feet always separate, and with two nails upon the foot-board, or *suppedaneum* (a Greek feature), to which they were attached; the arm at right angles with the body, the hands straight, the eyes open. The figure is sometimes draped to the feet and to the wrists:<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Curzon, one of our highest authorities on these subjects, states that 'before the 11th century the figure was always clothed in a robe.' It appears, from more recent investigations of authentic crucifixes of the 9th century—for instance, that of the Emperor Lothario (succeeded 823), of which we give a woodcut under the chapter 'Crucifix'—that some were simply attired with a drapery from the hips to the knees. We are inclined to believe the draped figures of our Lord to be always of Byzantine origin (they exist chiefly in Greek manuscripts), and that the difficulty of rendering the nude figure is a clue to its being thus covered. In a legendary sense, however, another cause may be

in other examples, the *perizonium*, or cloth around the loins, extends to the knees in front, and lower still behind. No signs of bodily suffering are there, the sublime idea of the voluntary sacrifice is kept paramount—

Bound upon th' accursed tree,  
Dread and awful, who is He?

This 'King of Kings,' who, even on the Cross, appeals only to our awe and adoration, is attended by all that can most denote His triumph. It is not the physical death of humanity which wrings His body, but that mysterious death which disturbed the elements and wrought miracles, which we see in these early forms. It was the death which spread a pall before the sun: 'Now from the sixth to the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land;' and which convulsed the earth: 'for the earth did quake and the rocks were rent;' and which summoned the dead from their sepulchres: 'And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose.' These were the accessories of early Crucifixions—not fainting Virgins, nor wrangling soldiers, nor even that miracle of grace in the heart of man, the converted centurion. Art was concerned also in this restriction of subject. The Crucifixion is too vast a theme to be rendered with any prominence of the principal idea in one picture. From the earliest times, therefore, Art laid down the principle of selection, while the faith of the period dictated in what it was to consist, and the Art traditions of the time how it was to be expressed. We see, therefore, the darkness over the whole land symbolised by the classic images of the sun and moon—the hiding of the greater planet having of course affected the lesser—on each side above the Cross. The one, Sol, with rays; the other, Luna, with the crescent; or seated in their orbs, surrounded with what are

suggested. Molanus (p. 420) asserts that the Greek Church always covered the Christ on the Cross with clothes, in explanation of which he gives the following story. A priest, who had exhibited to the people a figure of Christ only cinctured with a cloth, was visited by an apparition which said, 'All ye go covered with various raiment, and me ye show naked. Go forthwith and cover me with clothing.' The priest, not understanding what was meant, took no notice, and, on the third day, the vision appeared again, and having scourged him severely with rods, said, 'Have I not told you to cover me with garments? Go now and cover with clothing the picture in which I appear crucified.'

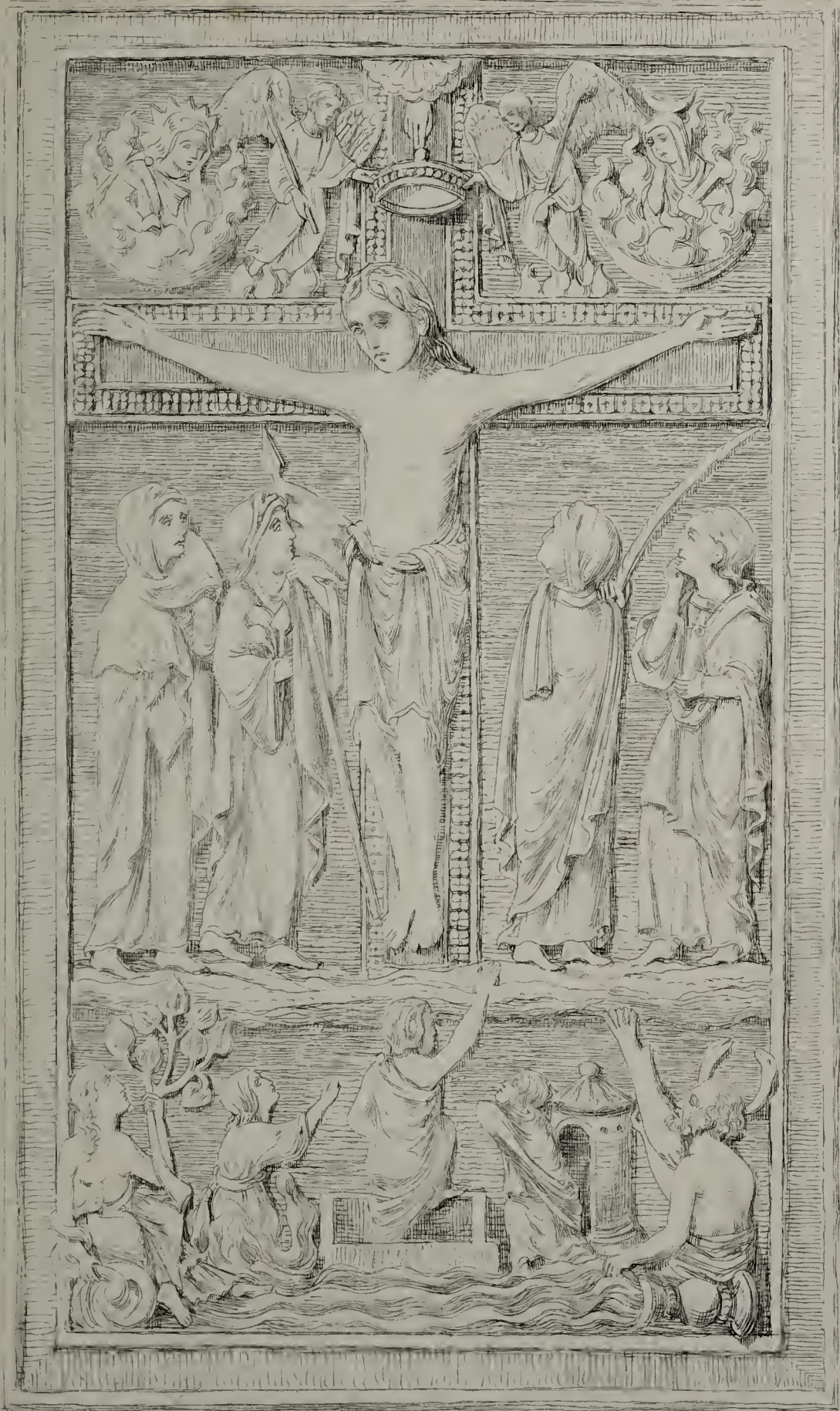


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Sun and Moon at Crucifixion. (Ancient ivory.)

meant for clouds, each with the right hand to the cheek, an antique sign of affliction; in other instances, in their chariots (woodcut, No. 180), the sun drawn by horses, the moon, as usual, by oxen. Or another symbol is chosen, and, instead of Sol and Luna, full-length figures are seen with reversed torches; and below the Cross in the accompanying etching from an ivory (supposed to be of the 9th century) are seen figures, two or more rising from classic tombs, and the third emerging from what appears to be water, showing that the dead shall rise—for this has a general as well as a particular meaning—from the sea as well as the land. And, lower still, are classic personifications of Water and Earth; the one a bearded and horned river-god, with a fish or an oar in his hand, sometimes riding on a dolphin, and with a stream issuing from his subverted urn; while the figure of Earth, semi-nude, with a conventionally formed tree at her side, holds a cornucopia, signifying her abundance, and nurses a serpent at her breast—this being the symbol of Life, supposed to derive nourishment from mother Earth. These two figures typify the Elements which witnessed the scene.

And, leaving things of nature, the symbolism next extends to institutions divinely appointed on earth. For on the right hand of the Cross stands a female figure with a banner, looking up at the Lord; on the left, another, turning her back with a rebellious expression. These are the earliest types, afterwards much exaggerated and debased in character, of the Church and Synagogue. Nor does the slender vein of actual fact, to which we have already alluded,



THE CRUCIFIXION.

Early Ivory. 9th Century



fail here, for on each side of these allegorical figures stand the Virgin and St. John, the witnesses, from the earliest known instances of the Crucifixion, of our Lord's last moments. Each has the hand raised to the cheek, in token of sorrow; the Virgin with hers under her drapery, an early Oriental sign of respect, imported into Italy, where, in certain acts of obeisance to the pontiff, or on receiving the cardinal's hat, the ecclesiastics still cover their hands with their garments.<sup>1</sup> St. John stands with the book, as the theologian in whose gospel the presence of the Mother and the beloved disciple is alone narrated. Angels also take part here, either, as in our etching, holding a crown above the Saviour's head, or hanging headlong above the Cross in attitudes of anguish. And to complete the ideal and abstract character of this scene by the indication of the Highest Presence, the hand of the Father is seen above in the act of benediction, or, in some instances, holding a crown. For these were the times, as has been remarked before, when no representation of the Godhead which dwelleth in light unapproachable were suffered by Christian reverence, and when the right hand of the Lord was introduced as the symbol, not the image, of the Father, whom no man hath seen. The benediction with the thumb and two fingers, according to the Latin rite, shows this Crucifixion to have been the offspring of Western Art. We have literally described the ivory represented in the etching, supposed, from certain peculiarities (for instance, the strange spiral clouds), to belong to the same period as the Lothario Crucifix (see woodcut in chapter 'Crucifix'); viz., to the 9th century. In some ivories the scene is further peopled by the four Evangelists, who sit on the transverse beam of the Cross—the sun and moon between them—inditing their gospels, while their winged symbols, poised headlong above, whisper inspiration into their ears.

These forms of representation expanded into further symbolism and greater reality. It would be impossible, however, to assign any positive dates to such changes. The figures of Earth and Ocean become more distinct in their attributes. Ocean is some-

<sup>1</sup> Bottari, vol. ii. p. 101. The manner in which nuns and monks to this day cover their hands in their sleeves is supposed to have the same origin.

times seated on a dolphin, and with an oar in his hand. Earth nurses young children at her breast, and has a serpent twined round her arm. She is also seen with a small human figure uplifted on her hand, which represents the darkness over the earth<sup>1</sup>—the sun and moon in such cases being merely present, like the other abstract figures, in their character as the powers of the creation witnessing the sufferings of the Creator. And between the figures of Earth and Water occasionally appears a female figure seated, with banner and globe in hand, or simply draped, with uplifted veil, like the figure of Tellus under Christ in the Catacombs, which represents the Heavens; for ‘heaven and earth are full of thy glory.’ Also, on the same level with Church and Synagogue, on the left side, sits a female figure, crowned with towers—the emblem of a city—with a disconsolate air, who puzzles antiquaries, but is supposed to represent the guilty city of Jerusalem. And coiled round the foot of the Cross is the ancient symbol of all, ‘the old serpent;’ sometimes lifeless, with its head prone on the ground, or, if alive, looking impotently up at the Second Adam upon the tree of our salvation, as before, according to Art, he looked triumphantly down upon our first parents from the tree of our fall.

These are merely the leading accessories of such Crucifixions as remain to us from these little elucidated times and forms of Art; and which are accompanied by minute details, all conveying some meaning, remote, local, mysterious, but always earnest, and demanding a science properly so called, which only the investigations of a lifetime could elaborate. Even the right and left side of the Cross have their meaning, never lost sight of when symbolism was concerned, and kept up in form when the meaning came to be forgotten, derived from the passage in St. Matthew, where, describing the Day of Judgment, our Lord says, ‘And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left’ (xxv. 33). The right hand of the Cross, therefore, became the place of election, as we shall see in the position of the good thief, and in that of the Church, while the left marked that of reprobation, and was occupied by the impenitent thief and by the Synagogue. It was this, doubtless, that as a rule placed the wound in Art on the right side;

<sup>1</sup> Piper, vol. i. Part II. pp. 75 and 78.



Scripture being silent as to which side was pierced. The sun also is seen on the right hand, in token, doubtless, of its higher dignity. The fiction of our Saviour having hung on the Cross with His back to the East (Jerusalem), and His face to the West (Rome), which is of later date, has, however, falsified the position of the sun, always an inconvenient heretic in mediæval theology. For with our Lord's face to the West, the sun would necessarily be on His left hand instead of His right.

These were the materials from which subsequent generations of Art supplied themselves, developing some into overstrained meanings, suppressing others, adding more that was actual, and something that was fictitious. As classic traditions were gradually trodden out, the abstract figures of Earth, Ocean, and Heaven vanished from the scene; the mystic personifications of the Old and New Law lingered into the 16th century, sometimes amalgamated with the symbols of the Evangelists, and leading to a combination in which a hideous fantasticality, the offspring of decaying faith, took the place of all earnest idea and pure Art, of which we shall give specimens in due order. The rising dead became rarer—the sun and the moon became material signs instead of abstract figures—the hand of the Father disappeared from the top of the Cross—a swarm of passionately weeping angels called upon the beholders to lament with them rather than adore—the serpent at the base became a conventionality, and remained so till the latest times; or was replaced by the skull, also an early image, round which tradition spread its moss—and Adam himself, whose skull it was supposed to be, starts from the ground. Sacrificial types also were varied: the pelican appears both above the Cross and at its base—the wolf is seen suckling Romulus and Remus, in allusion, it is supposed, to ancient Rome—or an altar stands below the Cross, on which a red heifer is being sacrificed, in allusion to the rites of the Old Testament now giving way. In forms of Art, also, such as the ivories, which represent several incidents together, the eye is carried forward to the events immediately succeeding the Crucifixion—the sleeping guards and the empty tomb appear, and the three women approach the angel seated on the stone. Above all, the Saviour's Person changes slowly in character—the head falls more on one side, always

on the right, the body becomes less straight, though, while the four nails remain, never much wrung; and the signs of natural suffering appeal to a sense of tenderness and compassion which no longer permits faith to be the paramount feeling in the spectator.

## THE CRUCIFIXION WITH THE VIRGIN AND ST. JOHN.

‘Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

‘When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son!

‘Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home’ (John xix. 25–27).

This form of the Crucifixion—the most frequent existing—in which the figures of the Virgin and St. John, standing alone on each side of the Cross, especially embody and isolate this passage from Scripture, had its origin in the earliest symbolical period. An ivory diptych,<sup>1</sup> presented by the Empress Ageltruda, at the end of the 9th century, to the Monastery of Rambona in the Marches, represents the form of composition which may be believed to have supplied the parent idea to this class of Crucifixion. It is not only that the Mother and the favourite disciple are seen on each side, in the attitude proper to them in all forms of Crucifixion at that period, but that above the head of each, upon the transverse beam of the Cross, under and parallel with the Saviour’s arms, are written the words, ‘Mulier en!—Discipule ecce!’—‘Woman, behold (thy son)! Disciple, behold (thy mother)!’ These words, in so ancient a work of Art, show the original meaning given to these figures—that they were not there in the merely conventional, however touching, sense expressive of natural sorrow and sympathy, generally adopted in later ages, but as intended to identify that very moment when our Lord gave His last human charge to the Mother and beloved disciple.<sup>2</sup> This inscription does not descend into later ages, nor does Art need it where the subject is treated

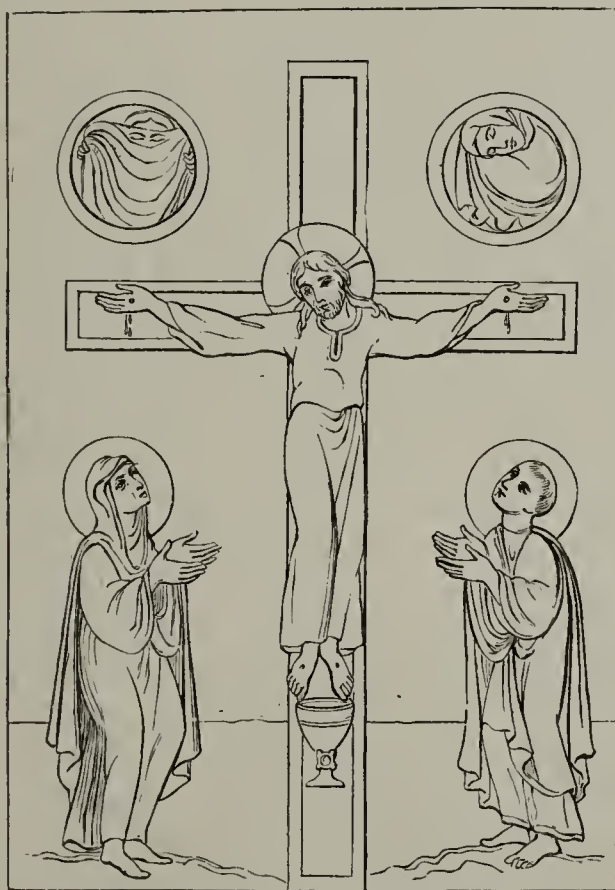
<sup>1</sup> See Buonarroti, *Vetri Antichi*.

<sup>2</sup> The same inscription is traceable in very rude Greek letters in a pectoral Cross, with the Saviour in the centre, and with the bust-figures of the Virgin and St. John at the horizontal ends, now in the possession of Mr. Beresford Hope, engraved by Barthe; and in another given in ‘*Borgia de Cruce Vaticana*.’ Thus it may be concluded to have been not infrequent at that early period.

with consistency. This is, however, not to be considered as an historical scene, for in that case the figures would have been more numerous, and those of the Virgin and St. John more arbitrary in expression, but as a representation in which the Real ministers to the Devotional. For the real fact places the Mother of Jesus as she stood by the Cross, in faith, and fortitude, and sorrow, there to receive that injunction which our Lord's respect for the ties of nature addressed to her individually, and to the beloved disciple—while the devotional idea expands this injunction into a divine law for ever, making it a pattern both for the observance of human ties, and also for those larger bonds of love and dependence between old and young, weak and strong. It would have ill harmonised, either with fact or idea, under these circumstances, to have made the Mother, who had power given her to stand by such a Cross, as appealing by her anguish to our commiseration; here, therefore, and throughout the many generations of Art in which this moment is pourtrayed, the prevailing expression given to her is that of a decorous sorrow and pious faith—the sorrow due to our human nature—the faith proper to her exalted character. Her attitude in the earliest examples is strictly indicative of these combined emotions; one hand—the left—is upon her cheek; the sign, as we have already seen, of sorrow; the right hand is raised towards her Son—an ancient token of assent and obedience, which, in a Christian sense, may be called a gesture of faith. We see it in the figures of the Apostles upon the early sarcophagi, who raise their right hands toward the Saviour in the centre in the same way. St. John's actions convey the same decorous meaning. His hand is also on his cheek, while the other holds the book of his gospel. The strict unity of the moment is further preserved by the circumstances of our Lord's Person. It is the moment when He is addressing, or has just addressed, these two; He is, therefore, alive and unpierced by the lance. A further idea is also given in some of the early representations; for the head is not turned to either, but is perfectly straight, as if giving this injunction to the world at large. Thus the facts are strictly preserved, while the higher idea dominates throughout.

Again, we see the Virgin and St. John on each side of the Cross, accompanied by symbolical and Eucharistic accessories.

This form is also of early origin—seen in a manuscript at Brussels, and in an ivory at the Bibliothèque Royale, stated to be of the 11th century, and so similar that they may be believed to approximate in date. The accompanying illustration (No. 181) is from the Brussels MS., in which the sun and moon appear curiously represented in their eclipsed state. The Eucharistic chalice below



181

The Crucifixion. (MS., Brussels Library.)

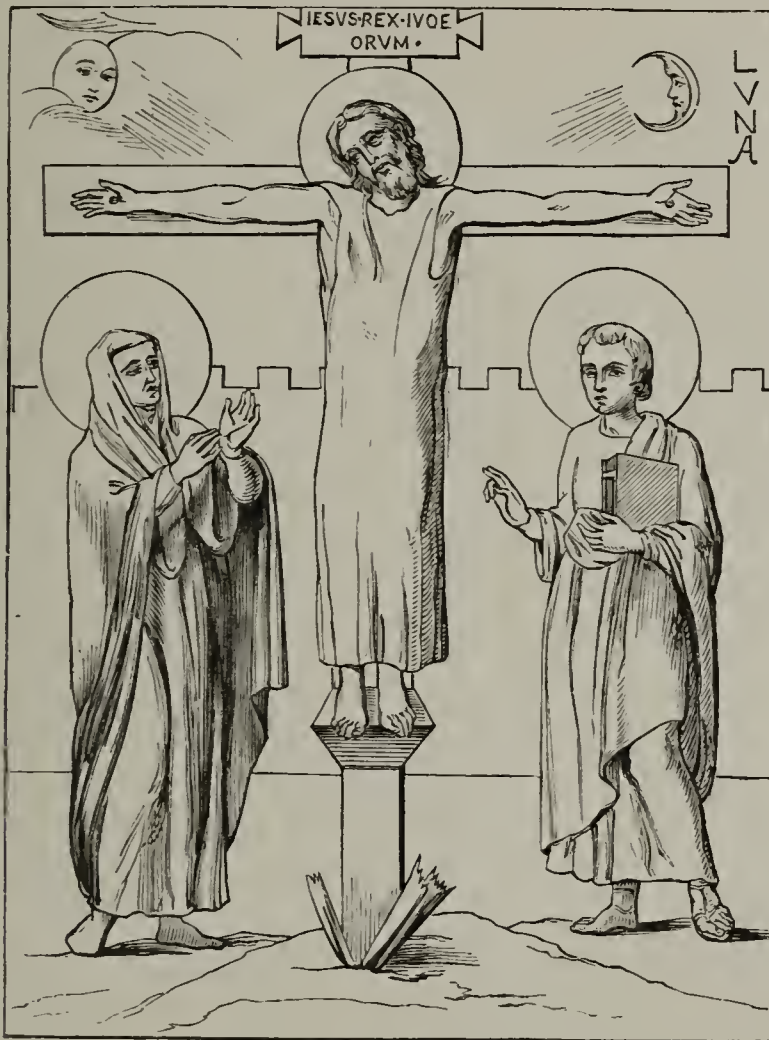
the feet of the Saviour here stands, not with the blood from the wounds flowing into it, as in times when the type was strained into an objectionable reality, but merely as a sign of that sacrifice which the Church perpetuates in her Sacraments. Here, again, the Christ is alive—His unpierced side showing that the Sacramental meaning was held to be complete, even without that wound in the side, to which Art afterwards gave such a prominence. In the Paris ivory the hands of the Virgin and St. John are disposed one to the

cheek in sorrow, the other raised in assent. In our illustration above, a change has taken place—both are raised—giving almost a joyful character of obedience. Both these actions may be seen in the figures of the Virgin and St. John, either with or without other figures, in the earliest known Crucifixions. Or, if the position of the hands varies, it does not depart from that character of fortitude and submission which pervades the whole figure. As time advanced, the hands are sometimes folded; and in a MS. in the British Museum,<sup>1</sup> the Mother stands grandly with her arms crossed on her breast, much in the same attitude in which Art sometimes supposes her to have first received the angelic announcement that she is to bear that very Son who now hangs dying before her.

The picture of the Crucifixion in the Catacombs has also the Virgin and St. John alone, as seen in the accompanying illustration (No. 182). The date of this is uncertain—later critics assign it to the 11th century. The sun and the moon have become little more than signs, and their names, though in Latin, are written perpendicularly—the usage of Greek Art—of which important schools had settled at Rome from the 8th and 9th centuries.

Thus the figures of the Mother of Jesus, and of the beloved disciple—for the double reason of commemorating a fact and embalming a principle—may be said to be stereotyped in Art as the proper supporters of this awful escutcheon of our faith. We see them on ancient bronze and brazen doors, so defaced by time that only the general outline is preserved, but with it the point of the same divine moral, and the adorning of the same sacred tale. They linger in early windows, obscured with centuries of dust, yet faithful in their dimness to the same unchangeable fact and idea. The remnants of them, headless and handless, remain in many a mouldering niche, but the torsos are true to the family from which they descend. They stood upon rood-screens, dividing church from choir, studied with listless or curious eyes by succeeding generations of worshippers, and, in forgotten nooks of our country, they stand there still. Time, however, which changes or modifies all things, changed them too. A different condition of the crucified figure

<sup>1</sup> Arundel. 156. Plat.



entailed different expressions in those figures on each side of it. As the Christ on the Cross became less expressive of triumph, and more of suffering, their faith apparently diminished, and their anguish increased. As the body hangs distorted on the instrument of our salvation, the Virgin wrings her hands or averts her head, while St. John covers his face with his hands, or appears to beat his breast. The unity of the moment is also sacrificed, for the Saviour is dead and His side already pierced. He has bound these two, dearest to Him, in sacred bonds of adoption, but they refuse to be comforted; and there is no lesson to be gathered, but for us to sorrow like them. For though, in this display of human emotions,

there is that touch of nature which makes all men kin, yet it must not usurp the place of that higher and wider kinship whose power consists in being above nature. Here, therefore, is the error in all works of Art which in such scenes make the human predominate over the spiritual emotions—the natural man over Him that is born again. This occurs at the time in which the Virgin, as we have seen, attempts by her impotent hands to relieve her Son, on the way to Calvary, of the weight of His Cross. This was the age when the feelings of nature became clamorous for representation, and when, to indulge them, the limits of religious reverence were transgressed. These were the beginnings of the false excitement to pity which in time, as we have seen, degraded its objects. It is no wonder if the Virgin is soon discovered in the position most untrue to fact and to character—not standing a monument of faith and piety by her crucified Son, a lesson and a consolation to all who are heavy laden—but succumbing beneath her Cross, as He also is falsely made to succumb beneath His. This, however, does not belong to the present form of Crucifixion we are considering. The Virgin never faints in Art except when a more or less numerous company surrounds her. With St. John alone she is almost invariably erect, though her gestures appeal in some cases more and more to our compassion.

The great early masters of the Renaissance have left few specimens of the Virgin and St. John alone in known and larger Crucifixions. Duccio and Giotto have none, nor even Fra Angelico, that special devotee of the Mother of God. This formal yet graceful composition better suited the conventions of the Umbrian school. Perugino has left his naïve and devout impress on these two stereotyped figures; while the nearly allied Florentine, the gentle Lorenzo di Credi has given all his insipid grace to them (woodcut, No. 183). It may well be believed that in the endless forms in which this class of Crucifixions abounded around them, the maturer masters shrank from a convention which afforded little encouragement to their enlarged powers. Michael Angelo's design may be cited as almost a unique instance in the great Florentine school, perpetuating the mere tradition of the form, but signalling the utter departure of the feeling. Nothing can be well imagined more opposed to all true conception of the scene than the colossal





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Virgin and St. John at Foot of Cross. (Lorenzo di Credi.)

woman who stands ranting like a bad actress, apparently at the shivering St. John, while two massive angels above, tearing their cheeks, suggest no other idea but that of defiance to all the laws of gravity (woodcut, No. 184, over leaf).

The German artists have favourably impressed their peculiar feeling on this form of crucifixion. The Saviour is always dead, and the two figures stand motionless there, with no grace but that of quiet sorrow. We give an illustration from Martin Schön (No. 185, over leaf). The Mother—for so alone can one call that humble and maternal figure, with the coiffike veil and quaint drapery—has folded her hands, or crossed them on her breast, in uncomplaining grief. She is not the being who quotes Jeremiah to call on the spectator to see her grief: 'All ye who pass by,' &c. Humble circumstances and lowly thoughts are stamped upon her form, in spite of that blaze of



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The Crucifixion. (Michael Angelo.)

glory round her head; while perhaps the idea of true simplicity which best suits the Handmaid of the Lord is more striking here than in even the meekest figures of the Italian school. Occasionally, the hands are gently wrung, as if the tide of the heart were swelling; but it is all pure grief—neither protest nor complaint appear. St. John, young and curly-headed, stands with knit brow and swollen eyelids, his hands tightly folded, and his gospel under his arm: all ideality is gone, but the effect of that humble reality is comforting—as unpretending people and things comfort us most in times of affliction.

Occasional solecisms and errors of taste also occur in this simple



composition. In early ivories and other routine representations the Virgin is seen, though rarely, with a book also. This is one of those mistakes to which all such mechanical forms of Art were subject. Another and greater impropriety we have remarked is, that the head-gear of the Mother has been stained with drops of her Son's blood. This requires no comment. In so arbitrary a history as that furnished by the legends of the Virgin, and one so little calculated to exalt her character, it is no wonder that the most unbecoming

eccentricities have found favour. How low the conception of the Virgin could fall in times when the real sources of Christian Art were forgotten or troubled, may be gathered from an example of the



186 Virgin and St. John at Foot of Cross. (Guffins. Church of Notre Dame at S. Nicolas, between Antwerp and Ghent.)

Crucifixion, mentioned by Zani, where she is seen lifting up her hands, not in grief, complaint, or protest, but as if the words of the mocking Jews, or the impenitent thief, were put into her mouth: 'If

thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross;' to which the Lord replies that He hangs there to save the human race from everlasting perdition.<sup>1</sup> Such aberrations, for the credit of Art, are rare, but there are some conceptions of the Virgin, such, for instance, as that by Michael Angelo, just illustrated, to which these words seem the only natural key. One is tempted to wonder why old painters, instead of attempting novel and dangerous ground, did not rather proceed to represent these two sacred figures as commencing their new duties, the first being to comfort each other, which is the next natural step in the lives of both. Lord Lindsay mentions traces of their meeting after the Crucifixion in a defaced fresco in S. Francesco at Assisi. Mr. Dyce, Paul de la Roche (in one of his exquisite three pictures of the Passion, exhibited in the International Exhibition, 1862), and other modern painters, have represented St. John leading her home. But their tearful greeting before they left Calvary has scarcely been attempted but by M. Guffins of Antwerp, whose fresco in St. George's Church in that city, representing the Virgin taking the hand of her just-adopted son, each bowed with grief, is so touching, and so probable in sentiment, that no one can look at it unmoved (woodcut, No. 186).

<sup>1</sup> Zani, vol. viii. p. 69. The colloquy is thus given in Latin: 'Fili! Quid, mater? Deus es? Sum. Cur ibi pendes? Ne genus humanum vergat in interitum.'

## CRUCIFIXION WITH LANCE AND SPONGE.

IN early miniatures, enamels, and ivories, a figure lifting a lance, and another a sponge at the end of a staff, are seen on each side of the Cross, with almost as much conventional regularity as those of the Virgin and St. John. In this no historical accuracy is intended, for we know that between the giving the vinegar on the sponge, and the piercing the side, our Lord said, 'It is finished,' bowed His head, and gave up the ghost. But both these incidents showed forth a great principle—namely, the fulfilment of prophecy; and it is in this sense that they are simultaneously presented to the Christian spectator. St. John says: 'After this' (after Christ had consigned His Mother to the disciple's care), 'Jesus, knowing all things were now accomplished, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar, and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to His mouth.' The same moral accompanies the piercing of the side: 'For these things were done that the Scriptures should be fulfilled. And again, another Scripture saith: They shall look on Him whom they pierced.' Thus the idea of the fulfilment of prophecy becomes the real intention.

The name of the individual who pierced the Lord's side is not given in Scripture. St. John, who alone mentions the fact, says simply, 'one of the soldiers.' From an early time, however, this individual has been distinguished by the name of Longinus, which appears in the splendid Syriac manuscript in the Library of S. Lorenzo at Florence, probably of the 11th century, being inscribed horizontally, in Greek letters, beside the figure holding the spear. The name cannot be ascribed to any tradition; its obvious derivation from *longchē* (λόγχη), spear or lance, shows that it was, like that of St. Veronica, fashioned to suit the event. Later times have pronounced this spearman to be one and the same as the centurion who was converted by the signs following the death of Christ, and of whom a history is given under the name of Longinus in Roman

Catholic legend. This is a curious instance of the tendency of all such inventions to overreach themselves. It is not that the simplicity of the sacred narrative is disturbed, but its inherent logic utterly disregarded. This has of course attracted the attention of Catholic as well as Protestant writers. De Tillemont, in his 'Histoire Ecclésiastique,' exclaims, 'Is it to be believed that the same man dared to pierce the side of one whom he himself had just confessed to be the Son of God?' So much for the identity of these two separate individuals—an idea never dreamt of by early Art, which, representing successive actions simultaneously, frequently shows Longinus piercing the side, whilst the centurion holds up his hand and exclaims, 'Truly, this was the Son of God.' We see the two together in Giotto, and in Martin Schön, and even as late as in Gaudenzio Ferrari, as will be seen in our etching of the Crucifixion (p. 211), where the conspicuous horseman pointing with his *bâton* is meant for the centurion. The blunder of confounding these two individuals is, therefore, as recent as it is absurd.

But the legend of Longinus having received his sight, which is given by Mrs. Jameson ('Sacred and Legendary Art, vol. ii. p. 788), belongs only to the individual who pierced our Lord's side, and is traceable as early as the 10th century, in an Anglo-Saxon MS. in the British Museum. This legend describes Longinus to have been blind, and thus to have struck at our Lord on the Cross, when, the blood falling on his hand, he lifted it to his eyes, and immediately received sight. We give an illustration of this incident from a psalter belonging to Mr. Holford, where one eye is opened, and the other still closed (woodcut, No. 187, over leaf). Here also the centurion is seen on the opposite side behind, holding up his hand in confession of the divinity of the figure on the Cross. The legend has in later times received addition in the person of a soldier who guides Longinus's spear, of which also we have seen examples. Of the centurion, who, to the feeling of the Christian, is by far the more interesting individual of the two, no trace is found, we believe, in legend. Art sometimes makes him kneeling in sudden self-abasement at the foot of the Cross.

The figure with the sponge has been also left unnoticed, except that tradition gives him the name of Stephaton,<sup>1</sup> but his history has

<sup>1</sup> See 'Guide de la Peinture,' 196, *note*.



been in no way preserved or imagined. The spear itself is always true to the ancient and accepted form of that weapon; the sponge is sometimes exchanged for a cup fastened to the end of a staff, and generally, in early forms, Stephaton has the vessel of vinegar in his other hand. Both these incidents are seen in our last illustration. The lance and sponge appear in every possible form of the Crucifixion, with all the array of symbolism, when the Church, under an abstract female form, is catching the blood from the side—alone—



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with the two thieves, with the Virgin and St. John, and with the full scene of the historical Crucifixion. As time advanced, and ideas yielded to literal facts, all simultaneous action of these two implements ceased. The sponge is generally seen—its office over—among the uplifted weapons in the background, while the spear is doing its terrible work. As regards this latter, we can recall no example in which the appearance of undue violence is seen. In this respect Art has not been led away by the visions of St. Brigitta, who reports the spear to have been thrust so violently that it went through the Saviour's body, and buried itself in the wood of the Cross.

## THE CRUCIFIXION WITH THE THIEVES.

ALL the four gospels mention the fact that there were two criminals crucified with Christ, the one on His right hand, the other on His left. They call them, alternately, 'thieves' and 'malefactors;' St. Mark adding, 'And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, And He was numbered with the transgressors.' We know nothing of the previous history of these men, nor of the crimes for which they were condemned; but that their lives had been evil is the avowal from the lips of one of them. St. Matthew says that the thieves joined in that reviling of our Lord which bade Him, if the Christ, descend from the Cross: 'The thieves also that were with Him cast the same in His teeth.' But St. Luke relates that one only railed on Him, for which he was rebuked by the other, 'saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly: for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.' St. Luke also alone mentions, that the same who had thus spoken then added an entreaty to our Lord to remember him when He should come into His kingdom; and records the last act of divine beneficence, which promised that he should that day be with Him in Paradise. Finally, St. John alone tells that the soldiers, finding the thieves still alive, brake their legs, as he alone narrates that one of them pierced the dead Saviour's side. In these combined accounts there is one apparent discrepancy—namely, that one Evangelist describes both thieves as reviling our Lord, and another, only one. Ancient commentators have tried to reconcile this in two ways. First, by the supposition that St. Matthew used the plural number in an idiomatic sense, which to this day is sometimes used when only a single fact is intended; as St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, speaking of the saints, says, 'have stopped the mouths of lions,' when only Daniel was in his mind. Secondly, by the more probable assumption that both reviled Him at first; but that the spectacle of the darkened earth and disturbed elements operated a change in him who, by a necessary paradox, has ever since been known in religious

phraseology as 'the good thief.' Then he became a new creature, as testified by his few words bespeaking fear of God, belief in Christ, and knowledge of a life to come.

The above are the simple materials from Scripture which Art has amplified rather than added to. But the fact of these two malefactors, who thus unconsciously fulfilled a strange, mysterious, and long-recorded prophecy—one of whom was mysteriously taken and the other left—a subject momentous to all—was too tempting not to be the occasion of much legend and superstitious conjecture.

To begin with their names—no less than four have been given to each—according to the Venerable Bede (8th century), the good thief was called Matha; the bad thief, Joca. In the History of Christ by St. Xavier, the one is termed Vicimus, the other Justinus. In the apocryphal Gospel of the Infancy of Christ, their names are Titus and Dumachas; and in the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, or the Acts of Pilate, the good thief is described as Dismas, the other as Gestas. Thus no reliance, even in an antiquarian sense, is to be placed on traditions so varying; while, to complete the confusion, a learned Father is known to have reversed the two last names, terminating a sacred strophe with the line, 'Dismas damnatur, Gestas super astra levatur.' The question, however, may be considered as settled in a certain sense by the Roman Martyrology, where Dismas appears as the 'Sanctus Latro.'

The mention of these men in the 'Gospel of the Infancy' connects them with a former period of our Lord's life—that of His residence in Egypt; it being the favourite object of such writings to bring forward pretended prophecies and coincidences, as in the case of Judas, to fit on to the well-known events of the gospel. It is related that, passing through a desert country in the night, the Holy Family came upon two robbers, by name Titus and Dumachas, who were the outposts of a large band of thieves. Titus, moved by some mysterious instinct, persuaded his companion not to arouse the other miscreants, but to let the Child and His parents pass safe, giving him, as a bribe, his girdle, and the promise of forty groats. On this the Virgin, not knowing the meaning of what she uttered, prophesied that God would receive him at His right hand, and grant him the pardon of his sins. And the Child Jesus added that in thirty years they should be both crucified with Him, on

His right hand and on His left, and that Titus should go with Him into Paradise.<sup>1</sup>

The other story from Jacob de Varagine runs thus:—‘Jesus as a child showed His power by protecting His parents against robbers. When the robbers rushed upon them, and wanted to despoil them, one of the band, looking fixedly at the young Child, exclaimed, “Surely, if it were possible for God to be seen in the flesh, that boy must be God.” Whereupon his companions desisted, and let them go free. This was the thief to whom the Lord afterwards said, “To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.”’

The question of the good thief’s title to be considered a martyr was one which excited early, and not irreverential inquiry. St. Jerome, in the 4th century, awarded the palm ungrudgingly to him, saying that he had exchanged the cross for Paradise, and the penalties of the homicide for the pains of the martyr. And S. Buonaventura, defining the complete martyr as dependent on two conditions—a right will and a right cause—says that the first was wanting in the Innocents, the second in the good thief, but that Christ supplied the deficiency in each. It is also as a martyr that he was received among the saints of the Roman Calender.

Other questions of a less excusable nature, and what we should now feel it almost profane to consider at all, also engaged the attention of the learned in the Middle Ages. The first was the *cause* of the conversion of the good thief, which was ascribed, by a strange misprision of facts, to the shadow of Christ, which during the crucifixion fell on the fellow-sufferer at His right hand. This suggestion received the most solemn investigation—the arguments against being on a par with those for it. The second question was the mode of his baptism, since without this sacrament it appears to have been thought that not even Christ was powerful enough to save him. And this was solved by the belief that the water which flowed from the wound in our Lord’s side reached the body of the good thief, and thus besprinkled him with a ‘sacratissimo batesimo.’ The fact that he was already dead when the Lord was pierced, did not, it seems, weigh with such writers.

The Greek Church represents the good thief as bearded and

<sup>1</sup> Gospel of Infancy, chap. viii.

grey-haired, the impenitent one as young and beardless. The one has a scroll, inscribed, 'Remember me, Lord, when thou comest into Thy kingdom.' The other turns his back, saying, 'If Thou be the Christ, save thyself and us.'

There is some reason to believe that the crucifixion of the thieves preceded, in Art, the Crucifixion of our Lord. We see in an early Crucifixion, given in Frisi's 'Memorie delle Chiese Monzese,' the thieves bound to their crosses, with the figure of the Lord standing between them, or simply with the head of Christ in a circle, and a cross beneath it; the sun and the moon, as small heads or signs, appear in their usual places; and below kneel two figures—probably the Virgin and St. John (woodcut, No. 188).

The thieves already indicate their history, for the head of the one on the right is turned to the centre, while that of him on the left is averted. This is a very remarkable instance of the incongruous mixture of the real and ideal in which early reverence halted before venturing on the complete picture. How soon



188 Early Crucifixion  
with Thieves.

the centre cross was erected between them it would be difficult to say—at all events, the three crosses appear by the 11th century. In the Syriac MS., in the Laurentian Library at Florence, the thieves are nailed on to their crosses—in this, doubtless, preserving greater historical accuracy. In later forms, however, they are generally seen tied on to their crosses—the transverse beam passing under the armpits, their hands evidently fastened behind (see woodcut, No. 187). The reason for their being nailed in the one instance, and bound in the other, may be found in the necessity, considering the rude and ignorant eyes of those who beheld them, of distinguishing their figures at a glance from that of Christ. In the earlier instances this distinction was sufficiently supplied by the difference in their dress—they having merely a short petticoat round the hips, whilst the Lord was often draped from shoulders to feet. But when the dress became similar—Christ being girded only with the perizonium, or linen cloth—the necessary distinction was found in the different way in which their figures were attached to the cross. Economy of space had also something to do with this arrangement. The crosses of the thieves were often made far

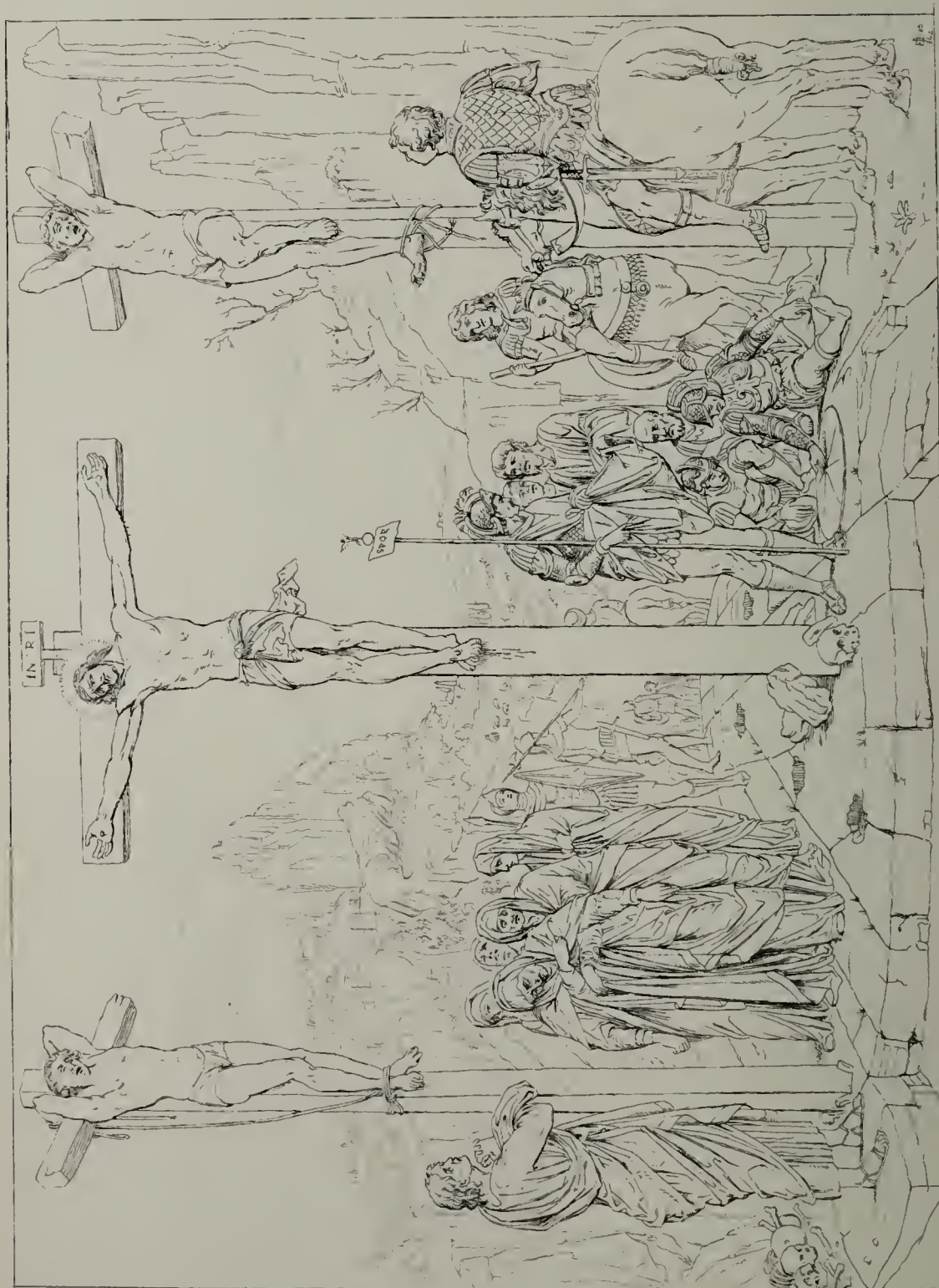
smaller (as we see in woodcuts Nos. 188 and 192) than that of the Lord; and the position of the bound arms further contracted the size. There is no doubt, considering the Crucifixion in any form known in Art as a mere convention, that this mode of attaching the thieves was the most merciful to the eye—the feet being sometimes supported by a suppedaneum, sometimes not, according to the more or less prevalence of a Greek element. Duccio, in his grand composition, gives the thieves nailed, their crosses being



189 Bad Thief. (Antonello da Messina. Antwerp Gallery.)

of the same size, and their drapery of the same form, as that of the Lord. But even he has a distinguishing sign, though small; for while he was one of the first who places the Lord's feet across, and fastens them with one nail transfixing both, he places the feet of the thieves separate, with a nail to each. But in this Duccio is an exception. Cavalini, in the Church of S. Francesco at Assisi, Buffalmacco, at the Campo Santo, and generally all masters to the latter days of the Reformation, represent the thieves as bound to their crosses. But the identity of treatment went no further, for, after this, painters seem to have vied with one another in inventing modes for the crucifixion of the thieves. This was no longer by way of distinction, for the times for such a necessity were past, but rather as affecting pictorial variety in a terrible and thankless subject. The bodies of the thieves were accordingly wrung into every form that humanity could be compelled to assume, their crosses consisting of unhewn stems or boughs of trees, either fashioned into the general shape of a cross, or taken just as the tree and branches happened to grow. The adaptation of the limbs to this kind of improvised cross is strikingly seen in the celebrated signed picture by Antonello da Messina, in the Ertborn collec-







tion at Antwerp (woodcut, No. 189); the long Northern residence of this painter having apparently imbued him with the fantastic feeling in the treatment of this subject afterwards so strongly and often unbecomingly developed in Germany and Flanders. Here it is palliated by a certain feeling for beauty, which, if we forget for a moment the period of suspension, strikes us in the elastic and bowlike form of the bad thief. He seems, too, to have borrowed the Greek tradition as to the age of the sufferers; for the head of his good thief is bearded, the other not. But more frequently, in the Italian school, the signs of age are reversed, and the bad thief is made an old sinner, whilst the other turns to the Lord a countenance beautified by youth as well as by repentance.

The more Italian feeling of the great masters of the 15th century—Bellini, Mantegna, &c.—have left to us no such arbitrary distortions. Their thieves, though variously treated, have always a certain decorum of position; while the utter violation of all physical rules robbed the subject as far as possible of its horrors. The two crucified figures hang generally at ease, with gracefully bended knees, in positions that could not be maintained for a minute—tied on by ropes, elegantly and loosely—no footboard to alleviate the strain. Mantegna, as we see in our etching, has tied the arms, like Pietro Cavallini, over the transverse beam. Bellini has merely attached the arms to it—one before and the other behind the beam; the feet tied loosely—one foot at liberty. Luini, in his gorgeous Crucifixion at Lugano, has nailed his thieves to their crosses, in each instance leaving one foot free.

We must turn to the early German and Flemish schools for a very ungraceful view of the Crucifixion in every sense, especially of the thieves. In Rogier van der Weyden's picture in the Castelbarca Gallery at Milan, the cross is in front of the thief, who rides on it in a very unbecoming manner. Israel von Mechenen has, in two instances, represented both his thieves blindfolded. The '*Maître Criblé*' has tied them in a mode which necessitates the utmost distortion; while his bad thief is turning more than disrespectfully from our Lord, and, perhaps to show his further irreverence, has a slouched hat on!

But the most hideous and objectionable conception of the figures

of the thieves is seen in German pictures of the 16th century, generally by nameless masters, who leave no impression on the mind but that of the cruel and ghastly ugliness of their inventions. A picture by Aldegrever<sup>1</sup> is an example. The thieves are in person the lowest specimens of plebeian life, tied on to their crosses with every distortion of limb that could mock and outrage humanity; the head of the good thief is that of a ruffian over which no light of sanctifying grace and hope has passed. To make the bad thief more brutal still, was to snatch a horror beyond the reach of Art. He is therefore so placed that the face is not seen at all. They are both dead, killed with dreadful gashes, which extend to the thighs and the arms. We look on and think with horror of the familiar scenes of cruelty which took place under sovereign electors and bishops; of him, the pastor of the flock, surnamed John the Cruel, Bishop of Liège; of the Archbishop of Cologne, who welcomed travellers up the Rhine by a row of gibbets placed along the banks—and feel what that social state must have been where churches demanded and artists supplied such detestable spectacles.

Later masters, who sought a different earnestness and a different horror in a closer adherence to historical probability, have nailed the two malefactors to their crosses. Rubens supplies an instance, who, in his great Crucifixion at Antwerp, thus gives the opportunity of deepening the horror of that moment, which of all others he has chosen, the breaking of the legs. This dreadful act is seldom seen doing, though often done. When the thieves are represented dead, that act must also be supposed as passed, since we know that it was committed in order to kill them, 'that they might be taken away.' The avoidance of this display of cruelty was, doubtless, one of the motives why the thieves are so generally represented alive by the Italian great masters. But the Northern mind was differently constituted; the Germans especially delighted in the ghastly fractures—indeed, such was their appetite for the ugly and the horrible, that we have seen instances where the arms are broken also.

A German picture in a gallery more remarkable for quantity than quality, at Posen, gives a soldier with a club ascending a

<sup>1</sup> In the Board Room of the National Gallery.

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ladder placed against one of the thieves' crosses, when he is suddenly terrified by a figure rising from a grave at the foot of Christ's Cross.

In the play of the Passion, the soldiers strike the chests of the thieves, as the fiction could not be so well represented with the legs.

## THE CRUCIFIXION WITH ANGELS.

IN the very earliest Crucifixions, as we have seen, angels are always present, two or three in number, hovering above the Cross, or seated on the transverse beam. And in the midst of all the array of the symbolism of Sun and Moon, Earth and Ocean, Church and Synagogue, with the Christ on the Cross far more God than man, the angels—who are made entirely in the image of man, with superadded wings—strike the eye as the most real beings present. In the great Crucifixions, however, of the 13th and 14th centuries, in which a new and gorgeous representation of the scene burst forth, crowded with real persons below, and assuming more or less an historical character, the swarms of angels who fill the air at once assume their right supernatural relation. This sense is increased by the change in their forms; they are no longer made in the image of man, or rather, they are only half so. This may be accounted for by those typical modes of reasoning, only tolerable in speech, but utterly anomalous for the purposes of Art—in vogue in early theology—by which the angel was pronounced to have two purposes of being; viz., the power of understanding and the promptitude of executing, the one lying in the head, the other in the wings. Beyond these two members, both St. Augustine and St. Bernard leave it uncertain whether angels have bodies at all. Under these circumstances, the great early painters of the Renaissance seem to have taken a middle course. Their angels have heads to understand, wings to sustain, arms to gesticulate, and hearts to feel, but they terminate below the waist with a complete repudiation of the lower limbs. Thus they appear in the earliest of those grand Crucifixions by the first masters of the Renaissance—by Giunta Pisano, Pietro Cavallini, Duccio, Giotto, Niccolò di Pietro, and Buffalmacco. But while discarding some of the limbs of man, they have taken on themselves all his passion and vehemence. Giunta Pisano, Pietro Cavallini, and Giotto's angels, as seen at the Crucifixion, are beings of a Southern clime, under

the utmost excitement of Italian feeling; heads, arms, and hands never went through a more varied and violent pantomime of agony and despair. This is carried almost to caricature, where a distracted little angel above the Cross is seen tearing open so human a looking breast as to contrast curiously with his superhuman wings and



his airy terminations. Giotto and Pietro Cavallini have both this incident. In the Crucifixions by Giunta Pisano and Giotto, some of the angels, with golden chalices, are charged with the office of catching the blood from the hands and side—a function hitherto restricted to the side only, and more properly performed, in a symbolical sense, by the female figure impersonating the Church. Duccio is free from this rather unattractive conceit; his angels, all grouped in a graceful semicircular wreath above the Cross, are unrivalled in the beauty of pathos and propriety. These have a higher purpose here also than the mere fluttering impotence of

despair. True to their character as divine messengers, they are hastening on each side, in heavenly dismay, to bear the unspeakable tidings aloft, while one yet lingers a moment to kiss the dead hand. We give a woodcut (No. 191). Duccio, too, has evidently felt the absurdity of the conventional terminations, and though not venturing to give the feet, has yet so disposed the drapery as to hide the absence of them.

It is not often that we see the angels occupied (except when catching the blood) with the figure of our Lord. D'Agincourt (pl. ci.) gives an example from the Chapel of S. Silvestro, near the



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Angels round Cross. (Duccio. Siena.)

Church of the Quattro Incoronati at Rome, where an angel is taking off the crown of thorns and putting on a real crown. We give the illustration (No. 192). This is an early fresco, date 1248. (As regards the crowned figures of the crucified Saviour, see chapter 'Crucifix').

A striking and characteristic purpose to which the attendance of angels is applied is seen in those early and full Crucifixions which include the two thieves. Here both angelic and demoniac ministry is introduced—angels to receive the soul of the good thief, and demons waiting for that of the impenitent malefactor. This was a natural idea at a period when no death-bed was represented without



192 Angel exchanging Crown of Thorns for real Crown. (D'Agincourt.)

a good or evil spirit watching for the disembodiment of the soul. These ghostly convoys to opposite worlds hardly occur before the 14th century. Buffalmacco and Niccolo di Pietro, each in their large Crucifixion with the three crosses, are among the first who introduce them. We give a fine example of the treatment in each case (woodcuts, Nos. 193 and 194, over leaf). The angel here conveys its charge—a little child, 'pure, innocent, and undefiled'—with a tenderness too dignified to be called maternal, while, on the opposite cross, a scene of Dantesque horror takes place, like an incident in a Last Judgment.

Later masters varied the idea without improving it. Luini's and Gaudenzio's angels are too priestlike in character, receiving the little soul upon the *corporale* or cloth on which the sacramental wafer is borne, as if they had visited the sacristy on their way from heaven. The good thief is always dead, the little soul with folded hands already yielded up, but the impenitent thief is sometimes still alive, either cowering from the harpylike monster who keeps guard with outstretched claws over him, or, as in a Crucifixion by Gaudenzio, looking up at him with an obdurate face, as if defying him



193 Angels receiving Soul of good Thief. (Buffalmacco. Campo Santo.)

to do his worst. (We give an etching.) An angel here hovers above, weeping, its grief diverted from the slain Shepherd to the lost sheep.



194 Demons receiving Soul of bad Thief. (Niccolo di Pietro. Pisa.)



There are few Crucifixions with angels between the date of these just described and those designed by Perugino and Raphael. And by the 15th and 16th centuries the swarm of heavenly beings which formerly filled the air has taken flight, and two or three alone are admitted, catching the blood in chalices. These, though restored to the full complement of their limbs, have not gained strictly in beauty of character, but seem only to make use of their feet to stand tiptoe on little shreds of clouds. Luini and Gaudenzio, in their



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Angel lamenting, above Crucifixion. (Gaudenzio Ferrar.)

Crucifixions, summoned back the departed hosts, and again made the air alive with them, being intermingled in Luini's work with little winged bodyless heads, which fly about like moths among the more stately dragonflies. Gaudenzio's angels are perhaps the most beautiful creatures that were ever conceived. Those which stud the ceiling over the Crucifixion are models of heartrending emotions expressed with heavenly grace (woodcut, No. 195).

The German masters were fond of angelic attendance upon the Cross, but they have mixed it less with the historical personages belonging to the scene. Martin Schön has four angels, less passionate and more substantial—heavy, solid creatures—their feet hidden, if they exist, in the mass of snapt hempen drapery—with chalices, one to each nail and one to the side. Israel von Mechenen has the same privileged four, though their effect is much marred by the blood which issues straight like a spout from each wound. It would seem that he took this conception from the hideous, carved wooden images, with the same straight and solid streams, which are seen in the German museums. The angel catching the blood from the feet is always rather a burlesque, being placed behind the Cross, in order not to intercept the sight of the feet, and peeping round to fill its chalice. Albert Dürer reduced his angelic attendance to three—one angel holding a chalice in the right hand to the side, and in the left to the hand. This peopling the air round the Cross lasted till angels were cut down to the cherub head and two wings—like a rose and two leaves—which hum about the Cross, or sit on the transverse beam like half-fledged birds. It is almost ludicrous to see one of these little creatures, with its chubby important face, seated on the end of the cross, watching for the soul of the good thief, which it has no means of sustaining, while the opposite demon, similarly employed, has every corporeal advantage to assist him in his labours.

Last of all, the angels in the Crucifixion seem to have descended to earth, for Wierix places two tall winged forms behind the figures of the Virgin and St. John.

## THE CRUCIFIXION WITH THE VIRGIN FAINTING.

THE VIRGIN fainting at the foot of the Cross, supported by St. John and the Maries, belongs generally to a crowded composition, with the thieves, the mocking Jews, the soldiers casting lots, &c., the group surrounding her being usually on the left hand of the spectator, and in front of the Cross.

This incident dates from the earliest masters of the Renaissance. At that time, the consideration of her grief at the sight of her crucified Son, as well as at the sufferings which preceded the Lord's suspension on the Cross, was the great subject brought forward for the contemplation of Christians by the Church and the monastic preachers. The spectacle and description of her sorrows took the precedence of her Son's sufferings; those were measured by what they cost her—His Passion by her Compassion. Art especially selected the act of her fainting at the foot of the Cross as the embodiment of this idea. The hymn of the *Stabat Mater*, written by Pope Innocent III. (1296–1318), probably contributed materially to suggest this form of the Virgin's maternal emotions. For though commemorating the Scriptural fact of her standing, it is the description of one ('*O quam tristam, quam afflictam!*') hardly likely long to maintain that position. The fainting of the Virgin was considered in some sort as her martyrdom; and while the mass of the Seven Dolours of the Blessed Virgin sets forth her sorrows generally, a separate feast was instituted called the '*Spasimo*,' or fainting of the Virgin, which belonged especially to a Marian Order of the Annunciation. This received fresh vigour from a Bull issued by Julius II. in 1506, granting large indulgences to all who should attend the observance of this feast in any church belonging to the houses of this Order. Under these circumstances it is no wonder that Art should have been pressed into the service, and that the fainting of the Virgin should have become so stereotyped that scarcely an historical picture of the Crucifixion, either North or South of the Alps, is found to exist without it.

It is almost needless to say that to us this conception, which reduces the Mother of our Lord to the condition of a fond but feeble woman, and robs her of her crowning act of fortitude and faith recorded in Scripture, is as incomprehensible in a moral sense as it is distasteful in the light of Art. Are we to believe that the Mother of Christ was outdone by the mother of the Maccabees—in some sort a type of her—who stood firmly by through the martyrdom of seven sons? Nor is such a supposition less condemned by the rules of Art. To them this abdication of her high estate is a perpetual anomaly and embarrassment, creating that forbidden thing in a picture, a second centre of interest, and proportionately diverting the attention of the actors in the piece and of the spectators of the scene from the great and sole object. It is difficult, too, to understand how a church, otherwise charged with over-zeal for the Virgin's dignity, should have taken pleasure in the contemplation of an incident so little complimentary to her character. If the words of Scripture could be set aside, were there not those of the great St. Ambrose? 'Mary not being less than it behoved the Mother of Christ to be, stood before the Cross, ready even herself to die for the human race.' It is fair, however, to state that the fainting of the Virgin at the Crucifixion has been indignantly condemned by many Roman Catholic divines. One quoted by Molanus, Thomas Cajetani by name, referring to a question whether the Spasimo of the Virgin be canonical, replies that it is not canonical, '*sed indecens et improbabile.*' Another writer, levelling his indignation directly at Art, inveighs against the impiety of painters who represent the Blessed Virgin as 'collapsed, extended in a swoon, and only not deprived of life; supported in the arms of others, like any other mother from the common people.'<sup>1</sup> Again, other writers deny the possibility of her fainting, calling the supposition '*temerarium, scandalosum et periculosum,*' affirming that those preachers in Spain who maintained this fact were, by an edict of the Sacred Inquisition, compelled to recant their words as contrary to the magnanimity and fortitude of the Virgin.<sup>2</sup> This list of protesting writers may be closed with the pithy words of the Abbé Zani, writing in this century: 'This group may be rather

<sup>1</sup> Molanus, p. 444.

<sup>2</sup> Idem, p. 445.

dispensed with, so that the spectator may have an open field to turn the eyes of repentance to Him who suffered for him.<sup>1</sup>

We must now consider the subject in its course through Art, in which it forms a remarkable example of the impetus to exaggeration ever acquired by an heretical incident. The earliest examples of this mournful group are, therefore, the finest; for they give



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Virgin fainting. (Duccio. Siena.)

little more than the indications of the approaching swoon. In Duccio, especially, the first weakness of the limbs appears. We see that she has stood till that moment, when, Christ being dead, her fortitude forsakes her; but she is still looking upwards at her Son. It must be said for those early masters that they generally give the fainting of the Virgin after the death of the Saviour, though afterwards not even this decorum was observed. Tintoretto, for instance, makes her fainting while the Cross was being raised. Giunta Pisano goes a step farther in the falling attitude; her eyes are closed, and her head sunk on her shoulder. It is not too much

<sup>1</sup> Zani. vol. viii. p. 50.

to say that during the 13th and 14th centuries the Virgin is still semi-upright—her usual action being that of sinking back, with outstretched arms, as if catching at some support. The 15th century saw her seated on the ground, apparently deposited there from the same feeling in her attendants as is experienced by the Protestant spectator—namely, that her sorrow is embarrassing and mistimed. In a beautiful picture in the Louvre by Giovanni da Milano, this feeling is strongly indicated, though with perfect reverence. The Virgin has fainted in a seated position—the Magdalen supporting her in front, and St. John on his knees behind her. But the painter has felt the anomaly of making her a centre of attention. St. John holds her mechanically, his head turned up with an absorbing feeling to the lofty Cross, while the Magdalen's tears are evidently not for the feeble Mother 'tramortita,' as the Italians express her position, before her. The close of the 15th and beginning of the 16th century laid the Virgin lower still. Bellini and Raphael have each placed her almost flat—the women turning their backs on the Cross of Christ, and bending low to succour her.

Gaudenzio Ferrari represents the Virgin merely reclining, and very beautiful, in both his great Crucifixions; but this was owing to the narrowness of the space, which forbade a recumbent figure. This great master has also a beautiful terra cotta group, in a chapel on the Sacro Monte of Varallo, in which the Virgin, approaching the scene, seems as if she would fall forward, not senseless, but from excess of emotion.

The German and Flemish masters did not evince more respect to the character of the Virgin in this scene. Even Albert Dürer, whatever his knowledge of and respect for Scripture, shows little adherence to it in his works. His Virgin is almost lying at the foot of the Cross.

In Martin Schön we see that the whole weight of the sinking figure is on St. John, who has one arm round her waist, while he stays himself with the other hand against the Cross. And here the Abbé Zani expresses the feeling of a Protestant spectator, in censuring the occasion which this group gives to the semblance of a familiarity on the part of St. John, as he holds her in his arms, by which the sense of religious decorum is disturbed. He adds that

some painters have contrived that the fainting shall befall one of the Maries instead of the Virgin. Of this, however, we can cite no instance, although one may be quoted in which St. John himself is swooning into the arms of the women!

The fainting of the Virgin continued to a late time, when it was taken up in a different sense—of which, however, instances are seen as early as the 14th century. That tendency to represent figures of speech by means of forms of Art was especially favoured by the Society of Jesuits. The Virgin transfixed with a sword (‘and a sword shall pierce thine own heart’) was a favourite image in their churches, and is so still. She is even seen thus barbarously used at the scene of the Crucifixion—the sword in some instances coming out at her back, so as to convince the faithful that no juggling is practised upon them: under such circumstances the fainting must be considered as a very natural result.

## CRUCIFIXION, WITH THE VIRGIN, ST. JOHN, AND SAINTS.

It seems strange that the Virgin, seen in a fainting condition, should almost invariably accompany all Crucifixions, especially Italian, which assume an historical character; while, with consistent contradiction, our Lady is no sooner placed under more or less fictitious circumstances—that is, with St. John alone, or attended by other saints—than she assumes the standing position which belongs to her true history.

A not unfrequent class of the devotional Crucifixion is that in which the Virgin and St. John appear at the foot of the Cross, with other saints who in no way belong to the scene. This form seems to date from the same time as those holy anachronisms when saints of different periods group together on each side of the Enthroned Virgin and Child, in what is called a ‘*santa conversazione*.’ In these Crucifixions, which are chiefly Italian in origin, she is always ‘*in piede*,’ and by her devout and submissive attitude, becomes an edifying example to her companions, and to the Christian spectator. The choice of the particular saints who figure here may be interpreted by the same rules as those which influence the ‘*santa conversazione*,’ the saints being national or local, or founders of the Order, or patrons of the Church, for which the particular picture of the Crucifixion was executed.

Thus, for instance, we may take a well-known Crucifixion, by Perugino, in the Ghigi Chapel of the Church of St. Augustine, at Siena. The Cross of the Saviour is alone. On the one hand are seen the Magdalen, St. Mary Monica, and St. Augustine; on the other Mary of Cleophas, John the Baptist, and St. Jerome. The Virgin and St. John stand behind. Here St. Augustine is properly introduced in a Church dedicated to him; the Cappella Ghigi, founded by an ecclesiastic of that family, accounts for St. Jerome, who, as a Cardinal, may be considered as the fitting representative of the clerical founder. St. Mary Monica is a natural companion of



her son, while the presence of John the Baptist needs no explanation. In a devotional sense he is perfectly in character at a Crucifixion, pointing to the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world. He is, however, very rarely present.

Another well-known Crucifixion by the youthful Raphael (doubtless greatly influenced in arrangement by his master's picture, just described, formerly in the Fesch collection, now belonging to Lord Dudley, is of similar though more limited character. Here St. Jerome and the Magdalen kneel in front, while the Virgin and St. John stand behind. In almost all these devotional and composite Crucifixions, the Mother and the disciple take their stand behind the saints, as figures before which a succession of worshippers of the Cross may be supposed to kneel: while their position, like that of fixed stars, higher and deeper than the rest, changes not.

The legendary saints most often seen at a Crucifixion of this class are St. Jerome, St. Francis, St. Dominic, St. Rocco, and St. Sebastian, St. Catherine of Siena, and St. Veronica.

In these cases the Virgin is almost invariably accompanied by the faithful St. John. There are instances, however, where she appears with St. Francis. A large picture at Berlin, by Filippino Lippi, shows her and the devotee of poverty kneeling on each side of the Cross, while angels catch the blood in chalices. The kneeling figures are of the highest spiritual expression and pathos.

#### THE CRUCIFIXION WITH THE MAGDALEN.

THE attendance of this impassioned saint at the Cross occurs, in later Art, next to that of our Lady in frequency. She hardly appears with any distinct prominence till the period of the Renaissance, being confounded with the other Marias in the Art of previous centuries. Whether considered as the sister of Martha and Lazarus, or as the sinner who sat at the feet of Christ at the Pharisee's feast, who washed our Lord's feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair, her position at the foot of the Cross, embracing those feet

which brought such mercy to her, is natural. Her presence there is historical also, being recorded by St. John in the same and only passage which tells the presence of the Mother of Jesus.

Giotto is one of the first who makes the Magdalen prominent at the foot of the Cross—embracing and kissing the bleeding feet, which, in His Crucifixion, are on a level with her: where the Cross is loftier, she holds up her hands in impotent yearning, or flings them back in despair. In the reticence of early Art she has a certain stiffness and reserve; but as Art conquered mechanical difficulties, her impetuous nature breaks more and more forth. In



197 Magdalen at Foot of Cross.  
(Luini.)

Luini's great fresco, at Lugano, she kneels apart in front, clad in gorgeous drapery, her hair falling in a torrent (woodcut, No. 197). Instances are too numerous to be given. This saint has also been fully described, under every view that Art has given her, by Mrs Jameson. The position of one so graceful and tempting to the painter takes every variety that a female figure kneeling and looking up could assume. But in early pictures she often joins in attendance on the fainting Virgin, or more seldom, as in the pictures by Perugino and Raphael, described in

the last page, she kneels gravely, with other saints. Occasionally she appears without the grave escort of the Virgin, as in a devotional Crucifixion by Andrea del Castagno, formerly in S. Giuliano, at Florence, where St. Giulio and St. Dominic kneel on each side, while she embraces the feet.

And, lastly, the Cross of our Lord is often seen attended only by the Magdalen—a picture in which the beautiful mourner, with her elaborate tresses and brocaded mantle, disturbs the solemnity of the scene. That place was not meant for passion or display—and there is too much of each in these late pictures of false sentiment to be consistent with the Magdalen's character, either as saint or penitent.

## THE CRUCIFIXION WITH THE MARIES.

A SHORT account must be given of these holy women, who appear in this and succeeding scenes of our Lord's Passion, and appear in strict accordance with the narrative of Scripture. They are variously mentioned, by Matthew, Mark, and John, as Mary the mother of James, or James the Less, and Joses—as the mother of Zebedee's children—as Salome, and as the Virgin Mary's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas. The early Fathers abridged this number by asserting the mother of James and Joses (the wife of Alphaeus) to be the same as Mary wife of Cleophas, sister to the Lord's Mother. St. Jerome says: 'She need not be thought a different person because she is called in one place Mary the mother of James the Less, and here Mary of Cleophas, for it is customary in Scripture to give different names to the same person.' Again, the mother of Zebedee's children, mentioned by Matthew, is declared by Origen (3rd century) to be the same as Salome, mentioned by Mark. Thus the four different appellations are believed to apply but to two women, who, with the Magdalen, make up what are called the three Maries. The painters, however, have been less critical. Often there are only two holy women—nearly as often, three—and on some occasions, four (distinguished by their glories), besides the unfailing Magdalen. In these shrouded and lamenting figures there is little individuality. Their part at the Crucifixion is to stand behind the Virgin, or to bend over her; and, like a Greek chorus, they are always at hand to repeat the burden of this most terrible drama.

## DOCTRINAL CRUCIFIXION, BY FRA ANGELICO.

THE strictly devotional Crucifixion, representing the scene, not in the hands of the Jew and Roman ignorantly and maliciously fulfilling the mysteries of Redemption, but as the great doctrine of Atonement, upheld by the Church, adored by saints, and surrounded with the light of fulfilled prophecy, is a separate subject, in which but few of the details we have been describing enter, and which requires a general explanation.

As the head and model of all this class, unique in beauty, fervour of thought and piety, and in consistency of conception, the Crucifixion, as predicted by the prophets, preached by the most eminent saints, and viewed through the sorrow and humility of the burning and shining lights of Christendom, we turn immediately to the great Crucifixion by Fra Angelico. This may be considered the highest example of the mystery of our redemption that the pencil of man has produced for the edification of his fellow-creatures. It is in the convent of S. Marco at Florence. This newly-erected convent had been bestowed in 1436 on the Order of the Dominicans, who migrated from Fiesole here, by Cosmo de' Medici. In gratitude for the gift, the pious hand of Fra Beato gave it a further consecration by works which breathe the airs of heaven, and which can never find a higher development upon this earth. The cells, the cloisters, the refectory, were all hallowed by scenes from the life of our Lord, conceived in that abstract form in which holy men living in seclusion and self-abasement, and devoted to their Order, might be supposed to view them; while the hall of the chapter-house gave room for that great event to which all others converge as the centre of the Christian system. This was called, not the Crucifixion, but the Adoration of the Cross. A reference to the etching will show this picture as supported by the bust figures of the holy founder, and of the canonised and beatified members of the Order of Dominicans, enframed within a semicircle of those prophets of the Old Testament who especially predicted the





ADORATION OF THE CROSS.

*Pa. Inghini S. Matteo, Florence*

sacrifice of the Messiah, and accompanied by a train of adoring saints of every period and denomination. Thus it knits together in one unexampled whole the grand Christian idea, from the earliest glimmerings of truth permitted to the patriarchs of the old Law to the joyous confessions of faith delivered by the latest preachers of the painter's own brotherhood.

To begin with the centre representation. This forms a large semi-circle, with the three crosses placed symmetrically, and with twenty figures, life-size, ranged in various attitudes below. The Christ, with a small crown of thorns, is dead. It is a gentle figure, but little marked by bodily pain—the body straight—the head just bent on one side—the expression that of a full, free, and perfect sacrifice. The thieves are still alive, nailed like Himself, the crosses slightly turning to the centre. The good thief gazing on the Lord with holy peace; the other uttering a wail of pain, with head turned from the only Physician. Below, on the extreme right, are the three patron saints of the house of Medici (by whom the convent, as we have said, was presented to the Order). St. Lawrence, with his hands gently folded; St. Cosmo, clasping his hands tightly—both gazing at their crucified Lord—while St. Damian turns away in uncontrollable grief, and covers his eyes. Next in order kneels St. Mark, gospel in hand, as patron saint of the convent. Beside him stands the child of the desert, John the Baptist, than whom born of woman no greater prophet had risen, one hand directed towards the veritable object of which the small reed cross in his other hand was the symbol.

The fainting of the Virgin here is less discordant to the eye in a scene where no historical reality is aimed at, yet it seems incongruous that she alone should fail, where all others beside herself and those occupied with her swoon should have strength to stand or kneel. St. John and a Mary uphold the Virgin; the Magdalen kneels to support her in front, her back turned to the spectator. This group alone is diverted from the one thought; they alone see the falling Mother, for, in the wrapt contemplation of the dead Lord of souls, no other heeds or sees what his neighbour does. We continue the figures in the same succession. The first on the left hand of the Cross is the founder of the great Order of Preachers of the Cross, St. Dominic himself, kneeling with extended arms and raised head,

in speechless rapture. Behind him kneels St. Jerome—not beating his breast, for self-humiliation gives way here to holy contemplation—wrapt in a hermit's dress, his cardinal's hat, like all other worldly things, on the ground beneath him. Above the two stands St. Ambrose, in episcopal robes, his crozier in his hand, pointing to the Cross, like a man prepared in the strength of that sign to intercept the course of the greatest earthly potentates, and looking at his book in his other hand. Next him, again, is St. Augustine, also in episcopal attire, with pen and book in hand, in reference to his rules which the Dominicans had adopted, looking earnestly at the Author and Finisher of his faith. Behind St. Jerome kneels another pillar of the Church—the ardent St. Francis, with his eyes fixed on the Lord, in the brown Franciscan dress, a cross in his hand: the signs of the stigmata are there, but his whole thoughts are fixed on the sufferings of which they are the impress—his hand to his own cheek, in compassionate yearning. Behind him in a godly company, like burning lights set in a row, kneels, again, the gentle St. Bernard, pressing the rules of the Order to his heart, and gazing on Christ as if for help to keep them faithfully. Above these two last figures stands one with a rod, believed to be St. Benedict, who sought to realise the sufferings of Christ by self-inflicted scourgings; while next him is St. Romualdus, the hermit, solitary there even amongst this number, in the abstraction of his gaze. Then, in the foreground, kneels a pathetic figure in the dress of a Franciscan, turning from the Cross as not worthy of it—looking fixedly out of the picture, with one hand over his weeping face. This is supposed to be St. Gualbertus, while some have suggested that the painter's own humility and grief, though not his own figure, are meant to be depicted. St. Peter Martyr stands above, gazing into space, with the expression of one who purposes faithfulness unto a bloody death; while St. Thomas Aquinas terminates the row of righteous confessors, here gaining knowledge and courage for the work they had set themselves to do.

We now take the semicircular framework, which forms another part of the great thought. This is a broad compartment, varied by graceful arabesques, with perforated sexagonal spaces, out of which proceed the half-length figures of prophets, with inscribed



scrolls, who have referred to this great moment of Christ's sufferings.

In the centre of the arch is the well-known type of the pelican feeding her young with her blood, with the inscription, 'similis factus sum pelicano solitudinis' ('I am like a pelican of the wilderness,' Ps. cii. 6).

On the left of this centre are the prophets in the following order:—

King David holding forth the scroll: 'In siti mea potaverunt me aceto;' which the Psalm expresses, 'And in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink' (Ps. lxix. 21).

Jacob Patriarch: 'Ad predam descendisti fili mi dormiens accubuisti ut leo.' This is the translation of the patriarch's prophecy to Judah, of whose tribe Christ came; 'From the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion' (Gen. xlix. 9).

Zechariah: 'His plagatus sum.' (?)

Daniel: 'Post hebdomades VII. et LXII. occidet Chst.'—('After seven and threescore and two weeks Messiah shall be cut off.') This is a combination of Daniel ix. 25, 26.

Dionysius the Areopagite: 'Deus naturæ patitur' ('The God of Nature suffers'). This is intended for the individual of whom Luke speaks (Acts xvii. 34): 'Howbeit, certain men clave unto Him (Paul): among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite.' It is related of him that, being in Heliopolis at the time of the Crucifixion, he beheld the eclipse of the sun, which took place contrary to the laws of such phenomena, and exclaimed to a friend, 'The God of Nature suffers.' Scholastic theology adds, that the Athenians, in consequence, erected the altar mentioned by St. Paul 'to the unknown God.' Dionysius is hence admitted in Art as one of the witnesses of Christ.

Isaiah, with the scroll: 'Vere languores nostros idem tulit et dolores nostros' ('Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows,' Isa. liii. 4).

Jeremiah: 'O vos omnes qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus' ('All ye that pass by, behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.'—Lamentations of Jeremiah i. 12).

Ezekiel: 'Exaltavi lignum hīle' (humile); 'I bare it upon my shoulder' (Ezek. xii. 7).

Job: 'Qui det de canibus ei ut saturem.' (?)

And finally the

Erythrean Sibyl: 'Morte morietur. Tribus diebus somno subcepto et tunc ab inferis regressus ad lucem veniet primus.' This may be considered as a paraphrase from the passage in the Nicene Creed.

The horizontal base on which the picture stands shows the pious *esprit de corps* which, next to religion, animated the painter monk. The great superstructure of prophecy and accomplishment rests on the strength of the Dominican Order. In the centre is St. Dominic, sustaining a kind of genealogical tree, which encloses in its lateral circles bust pictures of the most eminent brethren of the Order: those canonised by the Church, with circular glories; those only beatified—as the painter himself was destined to be—with rays of light from the head. St. Dominic, as we say, is in the centre compartment, with eight bust figures on each side of him—seventeen in all, their names inscribed within the same circle, though our etching is too small to give them. First, on St. Dominic's right hand (the spectator's left) is:—

1. Pope Innocent V. ; blessing, with the keys.
2. Cardinal Hugo; with book and pen—alias Ugolino. The Cardinal Legate, who performed the funeral obsequies to St. Dominic, 1221.
- 3 Paulus, Patriarcha Gradensis, in Florence; with book.
4. Antoninus, Archbishop of Florence (this name has been inserted since—he being still alive when the work was executed); with book.
5. Jordanus of Alemania (Germany), second General of the Order; with staff; called Jordanus of Saxony, who succeeded St. Dominic.
6. Nicolas, 'Provinciales Portugalēsis;' with rod.
7. Remigius of Florence; expounding on his hands.
8. Buonianus, saint and martyr; with a saw and palm-branch.

On the left of St. Dominic:—

1. Pope Benedict II. ; blessing, with the keys.

2. Cardinal Giovanni—'Domenicus Cardinalis' of Florence; with book.
3. Pietro della Pallude of France, Patriarch of Jerusalem; with book.
4. Albertus Magnus; with pen and book.
5. Raimond of Catalonia, of Pegnaforte, third General of the Order; with staff and book. Elected 1237.
6. Chiaro da Sesto of Florence, 'Provincialis Romanus.'
7. S. Vincent of Valencia, 'Predicator.' His hands raised in act of preaching.
8. Bernard, Saint and Martyr; with palm-branch.

Most of these heads are individual and grand. The marvellous completeness of this work, proceeding, as it does, in equal proportions from the Churchman, the Christian, the Monk, and the Man, will excuse the length of this description. No other Crucifixion is like it, except in the mere fact of the devotional as opposed to the historical character; and in some respects, such as the attitude of the Virgin, it forms an exception to this class.

## THE TREE OF THE CROSS.

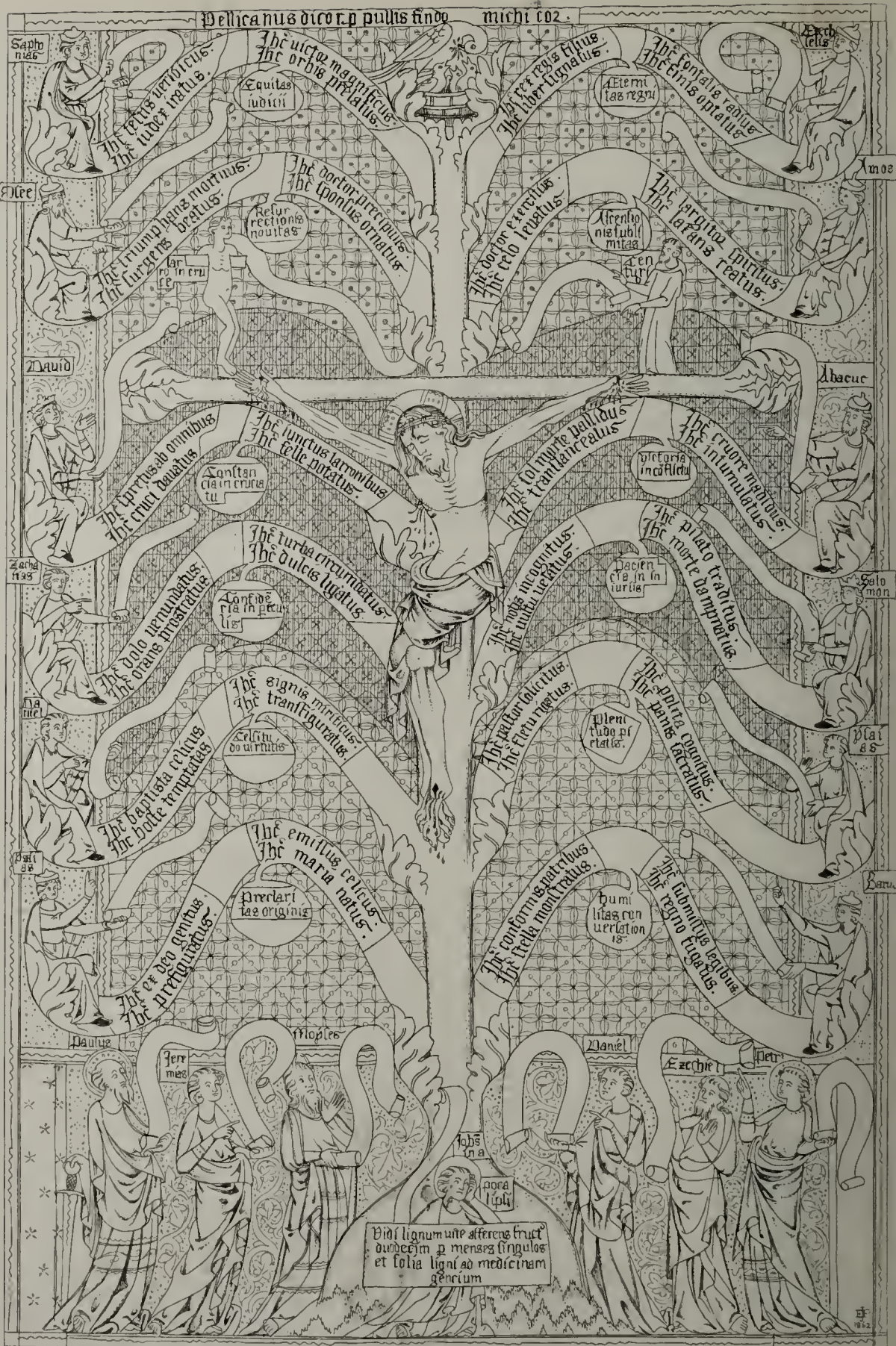
*Fr. L'Arbre de la Croix.*

THIS curious and complex form of the Crucifixion, properly named the Tree of the Cross, on which the heads of the prophets hang like fruit, and the leaves represent the Christian virtues, is occasionally seen in pictures of the 15th and 16th centuries, though more generally it lies hidden in illuminated MSS. of an earlier time. This is a complete history, carefully laid down, and though breaking forth into further development, according to fancy or local requirement, never departing from the main outline, so that one specimen will furnish a key to every variety of the species. The origin of *L'Arbre de la Croix* is traceable to a source whence, as we have seen, flow other pictorial forms of our Lord's Passion. It is to S. Buonaventura (born 1274) that the metaphorical description of the tree of life, worked out from the second verse of the twenty-second chapter of the Revelation, is owing, whence Art took the positive forms given in our etching. This illustration, necessarily reduced in size, is little more than a map of the subject, but if the reader will follow the references, a complete index of the contents may be gathered. It is taken from a magnificent manuscript of English origin, in the British Museum,<sup>1</sup> believed to be of the date 1310. We must preface the description by stating that, in the mechanical working out of such representations in times when Scripture was a sealed book to the workman, discrepancies and mistakes appear. Thus the same prophet is repeated twice in the case of Isaiah, and one prophet put for another—as, for instance, Zephaniah for Malachi, Ezekiel for Daniel, and Habakkuk for Samuel, their identity of course being decided by the texts they hold.

In the centre we see the Crucifixion itself. This is an instance of the distortion which continued to prevail in Northern countries, long after it had yielded before the purer feeling of Italian Art. It is curious to see how the left knee is put over the right, and the right foot over the left; a position which only the young and

<sup>1</sup> Arundel, 83.





Pelicanus dicitur p pulis fudo michi cor.

The victor magnificus.  
The orbis prelatius.  
Equitas iudicii

The victor magnificus.  
The orbis prelatius.

The victor magnificus.  
The orbis prelatius.

The victor magnificus.  
The orbis prelatius.

The triumphans mortuus.  
The furens beatus.  
Retur rections nouitas

The doctor exercitus.  
The spondus ornatus.

The doctor exercitus.  
The teo legatus.

The doctor exercitus.  
The teo legatus.

The spyrus ab omnibus.  
The cruci donatus.  
Dantia in cruce tu

The iunctus laronibus.  
The tulle poratus.

The iunctus laronibus.  
The tulle poratus.

The iunctus laronibus.  
The tulle poratus.

The dolor mendicatus.  
The orane prestratus.

The turba circumdatus.  
The dulces lyetus.

The turba circumdatus.  
The dulces lyetus.

The turba circumdatus.  
The dulces lyetus.

The dolor mendicatus.  
The orane prestratus.

The signis mirandus.  
The transfiguratus.

The signis mirandus.  
The transfiguratus.

The signis mirandus.  
The transfiguratus.

The ex deo genitus.  
The prefiguratus.

The emillus celsus.  
The maria natus.

The emillus celsus.  
The maria natus.

The emillus celsus.  
The maria natus.

The ex deo genitus.  
The prefiguratus.

The confortatus.  
The stella montstratus.

The confortatus.  
The stella montstratus.

The confortatus.  
The stella montstratus.

Didi lignum vite afferens fructu duedecim p mensas singulos et folia ligni ad medicinam generum

TREE OF THE CROSS.

English MS. Early 14<sup>th</sup> century. B. Museum.

elastic can assume at all, and which is wanton barbarism in Art, when we consider that the figure must be supposed to have been so crucified. From the tree issue six branches on each side, the ends bearing prophets holding texts relating to the Crucifixion, gathered from their writings (too small to be inserted in the etching), and with their names written above. Along each branch is a quadruple inscription extolling the virtues and sufferings of Christ, and in the centre a leaf inscribed with a Christian virtue. On the right, beginning at the top is:—

1. Zephaniah—put by mistake for Malachi—bearing scroll inscribed: ‘*Accedam ad vos in iudicio, et ero testis velox.*’ ‘And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness’ (Mal. iii. 5).

2. Hosea: ‘*Mors, ero mors tua.*’ ‘O Death, I will be thy plagues’ (Hos. xiii. 14).

3. David: ‘*Foderunt manus meas et pedes meos.*’ ‘They pierced my hands and my feet’ (Ps. xxii. 16).

4. Zechariah: ‘*Appenderunt mercedem triginta argenteos.*’ ‘So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver’ (Zech. xi. 12).

5. Daniel: ‘*Lapis abscissus de monte sine manibus.*’ ‘A stone was cut out (from the mountain) without hands’ (Daniel ii. 34; which brake the image which Nebuchadnezzar saw in a dream).

6. Isaiah: ‘*Ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium.*’ ‘Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son’ (Isa. vii. 14).

On the left side, beginning from the top:—

1. Ezekiel, put for Daniel: ‘*Evigilabunt alii in vitam eternam, et alii in opprobrium.*’ ‘And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame’ (Daniel xii. 2).

2. Amos: ‘*Qui edificat in cœlo ascensionem suam.*’ It is He that buildeth His stories (or spheres) in the heaven’ (Amos ix. 6).

3. Habakkuk put for Samuel: ‘*Unum petit autem Agnum lactantem.*’ ‘And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering unto the Lord wholly’ (1 Samuel vii. 9).

4. Solomon: ‘*Morte turpissima condemnemus eum.*’ ‘Let us condemn Him with a shameful death’ (Wisdom of Solomon, Apocrypha, ii. 20).

5. Isaiah: 'Disciplina pacis nostræ super eum' (Isa. liii. 5). 'The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.'

6. Baruch: 'In terris visus est.' 'Afterward did He show Himself upon earth' (Baruch iii. 37).

Below the tree stand three figures on each side, with scrolls. On the right:—

1. St. Paul: 'Christo confixus sum cruci.' 'I am crucified with Christ' (Gal. ii. 20).

2. Jeremiah: 'Spiritus oris nostri Christus Dominus traditus est.' 'The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits' (Lam. iv. 20).

3. Moses: 'Lignum vitæ in medio Paradisi.' 'The tree of life also in the midst of the garden' (Gen. ii. 9).

On the left:—

1. Daniel: 'Post septuaginta hebdomados,' &c. 'And after threescore and ten weeks shall Messiah be cut off' (Daniel ix. 26). 'Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people' (ix. 24).

2. Ezekiel: 'Et folia ejus in medicinam.' 'And the leaf thereof for medicine' (Ezek. xlvii. 12).

3. St. Peter: 'Christus pro nobis mortuus est.' 'Christ also suffered for us' (1 Peter ii. 21).

Below the Cross is the bust length of St. John the Evangelist, holding a tablet: 'Vidi lignum vitæ afferens fructus duodecim permenses singulos, et folia ligni ad medicinam gentium. 'The tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations' (Rev. xxii. 2).

Upon the transverse beam of the Cross stands a small cross with the good thief; next him written, 'Latro in cruce.' From his mouth is a scroll: 'Memento mihi, Domine, cum venis in regno tuo:' On the opposite side is the centurion—by him is written 'centurio:' out of his mouth, 'Vere, filius Dei erat iste.' Above the Cross is the Pelican feeding her young—written above: 'Pelicanus decor, pro pullis scindo mihi cor.'

The quadruple inscriptions on each branch are for the magnifying of Christ, a kind of manual in verse of His attributes and life.



1st branch, right hand below (Jesus written I.H.S.) :—

Jesus ex Deo genitus.  
 Jesus prefiguratus.  
 Jesus emissus celicus.  
 Jesus Maria natus.

1st branch, left hand, below :—

Jesus conformis patribus.  
 Jesus stella monstratus.  
 Jesus submissus legibus.  
 Jesus regno fugatus.

2nd branch, right side :—

Jesus baptista celicus.  
 Jesus hoste temptatus.  
 Jesus signis mirificus.  
 Jesus transfiguratus.

2nd branch, left side :—

Jesus pastor sollicitus.  
 Jesus fletu rigatus.  
 Jesus propheta cognitus.  
 Jesus panis sacratus.

3rd branch, right side :—

Jesus dolo venundatus.  
 Jesus orans prostratus.  
 Jesus turba circumdatus.  
 Jesus dulcis ligatus.

3rd branch, left side :—

Jesus notis incognitus.  
 Jesus vultu velatus.  
 Jesus Pilato traditus.  
 Jesus morte damnatus.

4th branch, right side :—

Jesus spretus ab omnibus.  
 Jesus cruci damnatus.  
 Jesus junctus latronibus.  
 Jesus felle potatus.

4th branch, left side :—

Jesus sol morte pallidus.  
 Jesus translanceatus.  
 Jesus cruore madidus.  
 Jesus intumulatus.

5th branch, right side :—

Jesus triumphans mortuus.  
 Jesus surgens beatus.  
 Jesus doctor precipuus.  
 Jesus sponsus ornatus.

5th branch, left side :—

Jesus ductor exercitus.  
 Jesus celo levatus.  
 Jesus largitor spiritus.  
 Jesus lætans reatus.

6th branch, right side :—

Jesus testis veridicus.  
 Jesus judex iratus.  
 Jesus victor magnificus.  
 Jesus orbis prelatus.

6th branch, left side :—

Jesus rex regis filius.  
 Jesus liber signatus.  
 Jesus fontalis radius.  
 Jesus finis optatus.

Finally, there remain the six medicine-bearing leaves on each side.

On the right hand :—

1. Præclaritas originis.
2. Celsitudo virtutis.
3. Confidentia in periculis.
4. Constantia in cruciatu.
5. Resurrectionis novitas.
6. Equitas judicii.

On the left hand :—

1. Humilitas conversationis.
2. Plenitudo pietatis.
3. Paciencia in injuriis.
4. Victoria in conflictu.
5. Ascensionis sublimitas.
6. Eternitas regni.

A magnificent specimen of this Tree of the Cross is in a Bible at Berlin.

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In S. Antonio at Padua is a picture of the 16th century, in which the subject is partially rendered. A tall cross, with branches only from the upper part, bears the heads of the twelve prophets as in a glory round the Saviour. Below stand SS. Sebastian, Felice, Ursula, and Alessandro.

## CRUCIFIXION ON CROSS WITH LIVING ARMS.

*Fr. La Croix brachiale vivante.*

THIS very unattractive and unpoetic conception had its origin in a time when the far-fetched allegories indulged in by preachers to arouse sluggish ears of the 15th and 16th centuries became the very inappropriate theme of positive colour and form. The age was full of false comparisons, carried out in lame, turgid, and wearisome metaphors, in which the decline of Italy and her mental deterioration may be clearly foreseen. It would be strange if Art had not partaken of this vapid taste. The types of Church and Synagogue, on each side of the Cross, represented in grand female figures, the one receiving the Sacramental blood, the other turning away, have been described; the questionable moral taste of the Cinquecento restored them in forms of tasteless monstrosity. Some of our readers may have puzzled over a fresco lately laid bare in one of the first of the left-hand chapels in S. Petronio at Bologna, where a Cross, with living arms proceeding from it, is seen between two women mounted on animals, one of the arms from the Cross holding a crown, the other a sword. A few hour's journey to Ferrara clears up the mystery, the gallery of that ancient city possessing the largest and most circumstantial picture of this form of subject that exists. It is by Garofalo, thirty feet long, and too vast for any illustration. We must be therefore satisfied to describe this correctly, which, as the greater includes the less, will furnish a sufficient key to the simpler form of the subject, taken from a drawing of the sixteenth century, of which a woodcut is given (No. 198).

The Cross is in the centre, the Christ dead upon it, the ends of the transverse beam each terminate in two arms and hands; those on the right holding a crown in one hand, a key in the other; those on the left a spear, and a broken key without wards. On the same right side of the Cross is a female figure holding the globe of the world with the Cross on it, seated on a fabulous animal with four



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The Crucifixion with Church and Synagogue.

heads—the four attributes of the Evangelists—the lion, the bull, the eagle, and the angel; the Church seated upon the Gospels—the crown held by one of the arms above is being lowered upon her head.

On the left side is a woman blindfolded, seated on an ass, as the type of wilful stupidity, her crown falling off, her sceptre broken; by it the inscription, 'It fell' (*cecidit*). 'The Lord hath broken the sceptre of the rulers' (*Isa. xiv. 5*). The spear held by the hand above the woman is being plunged into her heart. Altogether her state is hopeless, for the ass on which she sits is wounded in several places, and about to drop. Above the Cross is a square building with towers, the heavenly Jerusalem, inscribed, *Paradiso*.

The figure of the Almighty above. Angels are seen on each side over the walls—those on the right playing on musical instruments; those on the left adding further to the embarrassment of the poor Synagogue by shooting at her with most unangelic spite with arrows and even with a gun. On the right is an open door into the building, with an angel, beckoning, and holding a scroll: ‘Veni, Columba mea’ (‘Come, my dove’)—a paraphrase from the Song of Solomon. On the left side a closed door and angels over it holding a scroll: ‘Non intrabunt nisi qui scripti sunt in libro vitæ’ (‘None may enter but those who are written in the book of life’)—a paraphrase from Rev. xxi. 27. From the foot of the Cross two hands again proceed—one holding a cross to the open mouth of Limbus, signifying that through the Cross all these should be saved; the other hand holding a key and locking up the fiery mouth of hell, whence there is no escape. On the right side above, St. Paul is seen preaching to the Gentiles; and below are representations of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confession, and the Mass. On the left are the Jewish High Priest and other figures in consternation—the lamb standing on the altar for sacrifice. Above is the Temple of Solomon in ruins. Higher up are two tablets suspended on each side; the one on the right inscribed with the verse from 1 Cor. i. 21: ‘For, after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe;’ the one on the left with the verses from Isa. i. 13–15: ‘Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons, and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with: it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth, they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them, and when ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood.’

This explanation will supply a sufficient key to smaller works (like our illustration) on the same theme, which are occasionally seen. The subject is an insult both to Art and morals—a cruel spectacle, a bad lesson, and a frightful pictorial monstrosity.

## SOLDIERS DIVIDING ROBE.

ALL the Evangelists mention that the soldiers parted His garments—'casting lots.' St. John says: 'Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also His coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots (Ps. xxii. 18). These things therefore the soldiers did' (John xix. 23, 24).

This incident, therefore, assumed a high importance among the accessories of the Crucifixion. The soldiers occur early in Art, and continue to appear in full Crucifixions of every time and country. They are seen in the Syriac MS. in the Laurentian Library at Florence. In this, and in most early instances, they are but three in number, seated with the vesture on their laps, their hands raised in gesticulation and evident dispute over it. Giotto, in the Arena Chapel, introduces this incident with all his dramatic feeling. The coat, a beautiful Eastern garment with embroidered sleeves, is held between two standing soldiers, each in violent excitement; one has a knife out, and a third soldier between them has seized and arrested his uplifted arm with both hands.

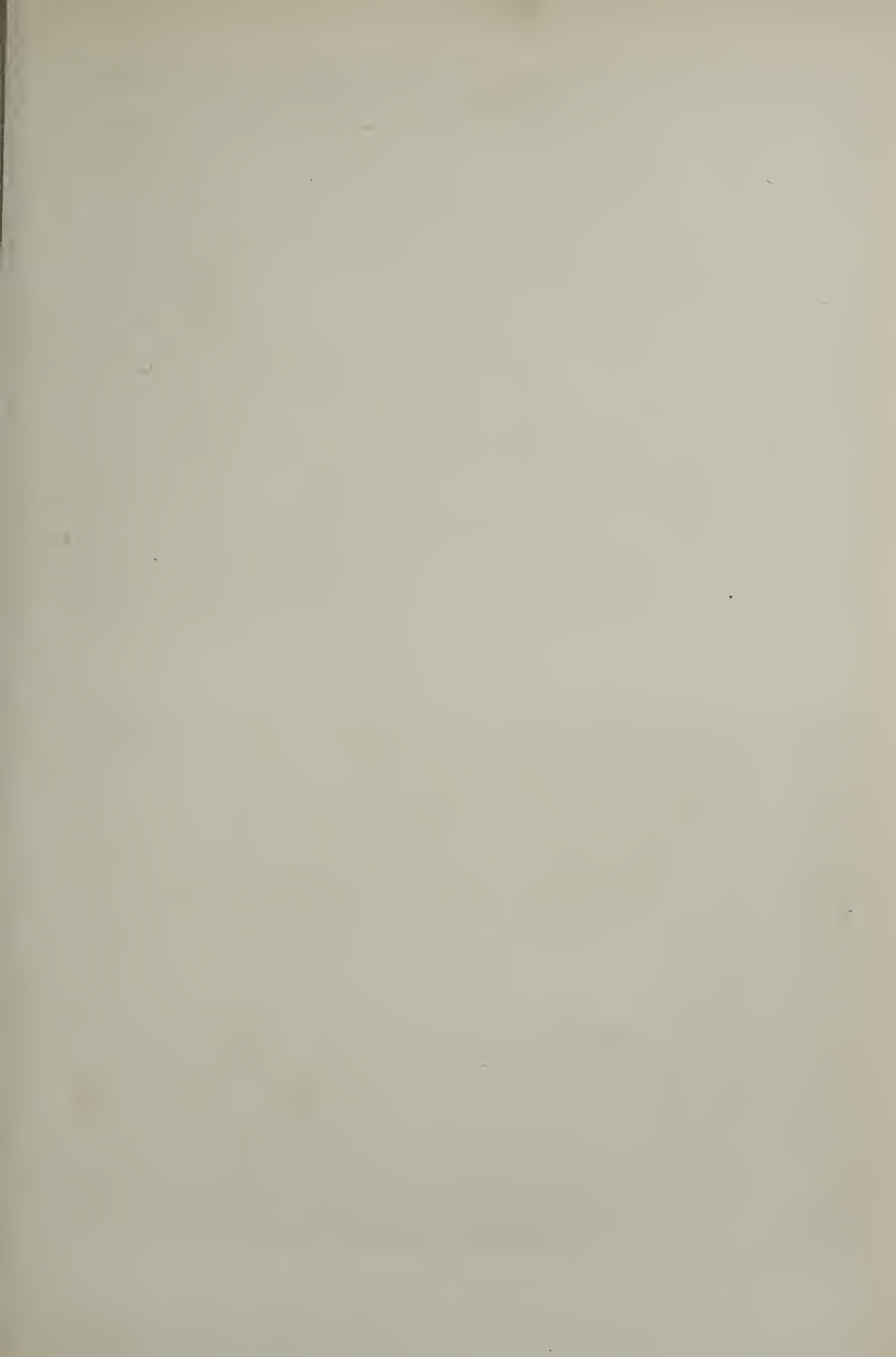
Other painters represent them as in the act of casting lots, which may be supposed to have succeeded to this violence of dispute. Fra Angelico, as we have seen (p. 124), gives the incident even before the Lord is crucified, and before He is entirely despoiled of His garments. He increases the reality of the act by closing the eyes of the man who holds the dice-box. A fourth stands over them. Gaudenzio also gives the casting lots, as may be seen in the etching (p. 210). Luini has three men standing in

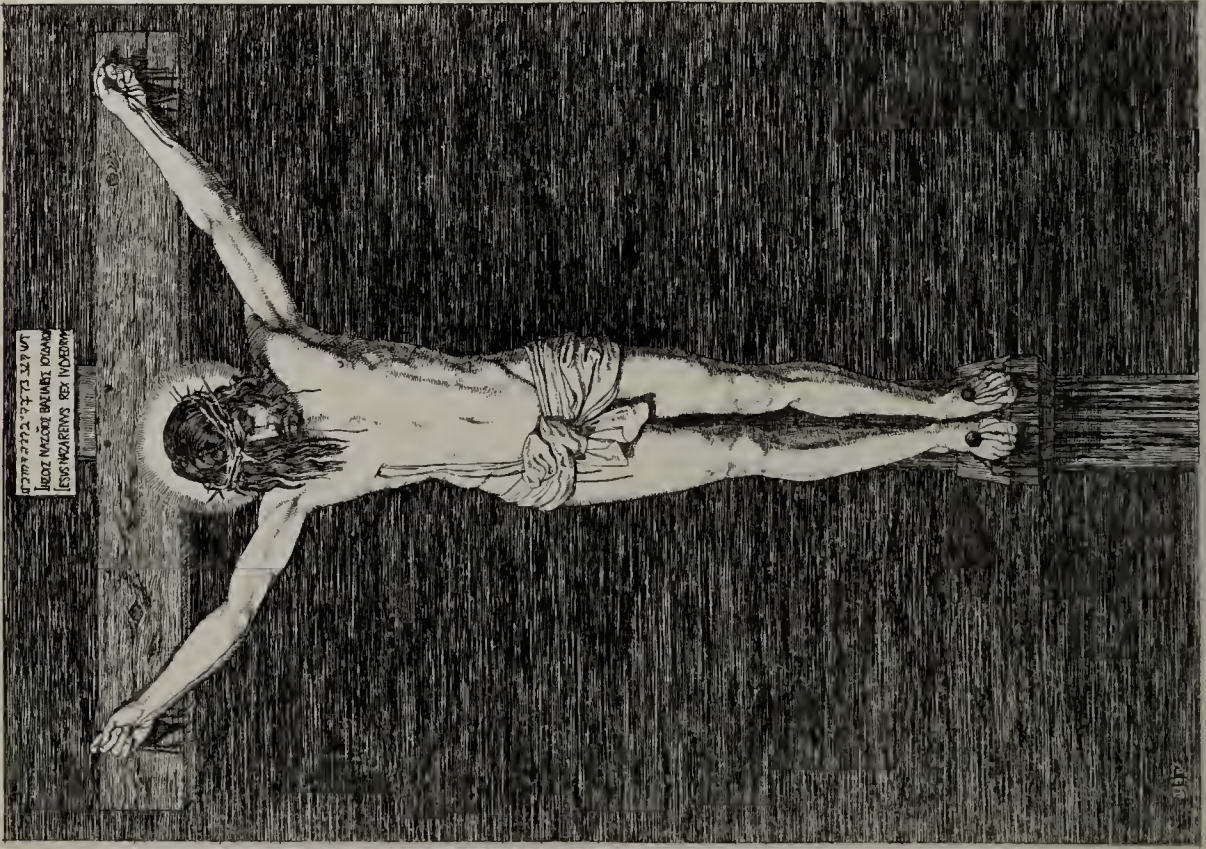


199 Soldiers quarrelling over division of Robe. (Luini. Lugano.)

violent altercation, each with a hand on the garment, one just drawing his sword (woodcut, No. 199). Neither history nor legend says anything of these men.







CHRIST ON THE CROSS

Velasquez Madrid Gallery

Vandyck Borghese Gallery Rome

## THE CRUCIFIXION WITH THE FIGURE OF CHRIST ALONE.

THIS is altogether a modern subject, hardly known till the time of the Carracci, and always treated more or less with a devotional intention. This is not to be considered as a portion of the actual scene, but as a separate subject, conveying the idea of one forsaken by man as well as by God: 'My kinsmen and acquaintance stood afar off.' As a further embodiment of this idea, the moment is generally chosen when the Saviour is uttering the agonised cry: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Guido is a great master in this conception. His Christ, of which there is a fine example at Modena, hangs alone and alive against the densely obscured sky. There is tempest as well as darkness in that eclipse, for the drapery is agitated, not with the convention of Raphael or Martin Schön, but by a real wind. Guido is always beautiful in our Lord's suffering head, and here the refinement of His pallid silvery tones adds an indescribable pathos to the figure.

Rubens and Van Dyck have a similar conception, as in our etching after Van Dyck. There are also numerous examples of the single Crucifixion by them and their school with the Christ dead—still adhering to the same idea of one left alone with that nature which is supposed to have suffered with her author.

It was reserved for Valasquez to revive this somewhat hackneyed type with the infusion of his strong originality. The great painter, who gave something none ever gave before to every subject, touched this also with his wand; yet not to reanimate it, but to turn it to stone. Valasquez's prominent quality is always intense character, whether of an individual, as in his portraits—of a class, as in his dwarfs—of a scene, as with the commonest landscape, which under his hands becomes an individual locality. That he sought for the stamp of character in the Crucifixion as well, is evident. And he found it in that which, as regards the Man, was most natural; as regards the God, most supernatural; in that which gives a stern pathos to the meanest creature that has ever

breathed, and is almost too dreadful to gaze upon in the Person of the Lord of Life—he found it in the character of Death itself. This picture (see etching) is no conventional form of a dead Christ—a sight as hackneyed in Art as the words that express it—no counterfeit to spare the feelings of the beholder. Death reigns and triumphs in this pendent head, which, with the sudden relaxation of the muscles, has fallen straight forward on the chest, while, with that last movement, the hair has fallen too, and hangs down over one half of the countenance. It was a daring thought to make the extinction of life the hiding of the face. Nor did Valesquez use this devise to get over a difficulty none could better cope with than he. He knew that pain would not make the head fall thus—nor weakness, nor weariness—that while there was life the position was not that. In short, he knew that death only could thus lower that Divine brow; on which, while we gaze, we realise the feelings of the disciples, to whom the rising again of this dead body was for a while as an idle tale, not even remembered in their time of desolation.

## THE FIGURE OF ADAM CONNECTED WITH THE CRUCIFIXION.

WE have seen that the skull at the foot of the Cross was sometimes interpreted as that of Adam. Mount Calvary and the hills about Jerusalem were too tempting a locality for early theologians not to have made them the site of every possible historical and spiritual coincidence. By the Jewish writers the site of the Temple was believed to be the same as that where Adam was created, where Cain and Abel brought their offerings, where the Ark rested and Noah built his altar, and where Abraham led Isaac to be sacrificed. By Christian writers this mania for local coincidences was naturally transferred to Mount Calvary. That, too, was believed to be the same hill where the sacrifice of Isaac prefigured that of Christ; but more especially it became the supposed resting-place of father Adam, who was supposed to have been buried exactly where the Cross subsequently stood, thus reconciling, even locally, the dogma that 'As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.' 'An apt connection,' St. Jerome says, 'smooth to the ear, but not true.' Another glorious text, too, fitted this arrangement: 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' The blood of Christ falling on Adam's tomb was supposed to have called him to life. Accordingly, it is not unfrequent, in miniatures and early pictures, to see the figure of our first father arising exactly at the foot of the Cross, and holding a chalice by which to catch the blood. We give a curious illustration from a miniature of the 14th century, in the British Museum (No. 200, over leaf). The single skull, too, at the foot of the Cross or Crucifix, which is of very early origin, is sometimes intended for Adam's skull—though it also simply illustrates 'the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha'—Golgotha being a Syriac expression for Calvary, and Calvary betokening the place of the beheaded. This accounts for examples where more than one skull and several bones are seen lying about.

In a picture at Nuremberg, in the Moritz-Capelle (No. 116), we



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Adam at foot of Cross.

(English MS., beginning of 14th century. Arundel, 83. British Museum.)

see John the Baptist, by a retrospective exercise of his office, pointing out the Lamb of God to Adam, on whose chest falls the blood from Christ's side; the dove is close to the wound, while other events and types of the Lord's life are given in the distance.

Such subjects as these are, of course, never to be taken in an actual sense—they are mysteries, illustrating doctrinal speculations, which the Church tolerated, though it did not absolutely teach them.

## THE CRUCIFIXION CONSIDERED AS A WHOLE.

HAVING thus described the figures and groups which form the usual component parts of the Crucifixion, it will be as well to take a rapid glance at a few of the largest, fullest, and most characteristic representations of the scene as a whole. These, in the form of frescoes on walls, or of pictures on panel, were the offspring of the 13th century, and, like all the fuller details of the Passion, were called into existence by the fervent preaching of St. Dominic and St. Francis. The churches dedicated to St. Francis, whose aspirations to share in the sufferings of the crucified Lord were believed to have been rewarded by the visible impress of the Saviour's wounds, were therefore the most appropriate field in which the sufferings of the Cross could be shown to the faithful. Accordingly, the Church of S. Francesco, at Assisi, was distinguished by two grand representations of the Crucifixion—by Giunta Pisano and Pietro Cavallini—to each of which we have often had occasion to refer. That by Giunta Pisano is the earliest of this class that can be cited. It partakes strongly of a Byzantine element—the Christ being already dead, greatly swayed in position—and with the suppedaneum or board for the feet. He has no crown of thorns, but the head is bound with a cloth, which is perhaps a unique instance. One peculiarity of this Crucifixion is, that the crowd beneath are divided into women on the one side and men on the other, as in ancient church congregations. They are placed all on the same level, one head above the other, with no difference of character. St. Francis, almost obliterated, kneels at the foot of the Cross.

Duccio's Crucifixion may be supposed to come next in point of time. Here there is a sense of reality mingled with much of the traditional feeling of the day. The group on the left side shows the progress of Art, being full of expression. Some grey-bearded Jews are holding up their hands as if in mockery, while with others the whole scale of feeling is expressed, from the first suggestion of doubt as to what manner of man this was, to the obvious remorse which will in another moment send them away smiting their breasts.

The Crucifixion by Buffalmacco, in the Campo Santo, if rightly ascribed to him, comes next in date ; he was born 1273. Here, in order to gain height for the background figures, the crosses are placed on a hill, and figures on horseback, probably for the first time, introduced. The Roman soldier is more numerous represented here than the Jewish elder. The centurion on horseback, with a nimbus, is raising his hands in adoration on the right side ; the daughters of Jerusalem and their children, seldom seen so prominent, are also here perhaps first introduced. Fully a fifth of the work has been destroyed.

We pass on to a Crucifixion of which no engraving exists, and which is perhaps the grandest ever executed. We mean the great fresco of this subject, of which, though attributed to Simone Memmi, the author is yet unknown, in the Capella degli Spagnuoli, in S. Maria Novella, at Florence. This is on the wall opposite the entrance door, over and around the arched space left for the altar. This is characterised by all that dignity and variety of expression which preceded the full maturity of Art. Angels and demons are still here, fulfilling their respective ministry, while the human groups have expression and grace, and even a common truthfulness bordering on the humorous. Of such a class is on the left side a rabble of women and children, like the wretched beings which throng executions, at whom a horseman is spurring his horse, with uplifted club, while they disperse at full speed in all directions, one woman holding both hands up to her head. Another group, of remarkable effect, is that of the Magdalen, a tall and lovely creature, with long fair hair and slim Florentine figure, who, with her beautiful hands raised, is addressing a Roman horseman clothed in white. He, like a true cavalier, is bending low and listening courteously to her. She appeals to him with a modest confidence and dignity, as if to say, Can nothing be done for our misery, and for that Mother who stands so piteously there? For the Virgin, with the higher feeling of this unknown master, is not fainting here, but stands, with hands folded, low, the very attitude of sorrow and resignation. The Maries with her are magnificent beings ; and in front, gazing upon her, is St. John. The centurion holding up both mailed hands is there, with two horsemen behind him, leaning forward with piously folded arms, as if catching the sacred infection of







THE CRUCIFIXION.

Gaudenzio Ferrari & Cristoforo Verelli.

his conversion—this being also a strictly Scriptural feature; for St. Matthew says (xxvii. 54): ‘And they that were with him.’ The scene is thronged with horsemen, with flags and banners, and, in the absence of all the more barbarous features, assumes a kind of splendour seldom associated with the Crucifixion.

Indeed the Italian Crucifixion has always a certain grandeur, and though seldom conceived with so elevated a feeling as in this instance, yet may be always said to be without caricature. All the personages—whether on the left or right side—are alike of a fine race, and lend themselves to the true characteristics of high Art.

The Crucifixion in this full dramatic sense is a rare subject after the 15th century. It was the single Cross, with beautiful and picturesque saints round it, that occupied the Cinquecento. Gaudenzio Ferrari is an exception. He has three Crucifixions, one pre-eminently gorgeous and elaborate, with the historical and fantastic elements in equal force; more beautiful than any other painter in his angels—as beautiful almost as Raphael in his female figures. We subjoin an etching.

The German painters, chiefly of the school of Albert Dürer, have the equivocal merit of giving the most ghastly and horrible character to the pictures of the Crucifixion. Perhaps the most repulsive representation of the principal figure is that by Hans Baldung Grün, in the Museum at Colmar. We have alluded also to the conceptions by Aldegrever, &c. In these there is not a part where the eye of taste or even of devotion can dwell. It is difficult to understand the thoughts of those who gazed on pictures like these, for if the wicked on the left side may be conceived to be typified by figures of the most monstrous ugliness, what business have the good people on the right to be equally as hideous? For costume and for the irony which lurked in all forms before the Reformation, these pictures offer, however, some compensation. Here we see the Roman soldiers habited as German burghers in leather cap and jerkin, while the unbelieving Jews are often ill-favoured *monks*.

Lucas van Leyden, the Dutchman, has attempted the whole scene of the Crucifixion in an engraving. The consequence is that the three crosses, which are very lofty, are distant from the eye. The moment chosen is when the interest of the scene is just over, for

the ladders are being placed to break the thieves' legs. Many groups are coming away, evidently in agitated converse. The soldiers are quarrelling over the robe, one pulling the other by the beard.

It was reserved for that other Dutchman, above a century later, to give the impressiveness, and for the first time the picturesqueness, of the Crucifixion in comparatively few lines. An etching by Rembrandt has placed the three crosses in a blaze of light. But it is a light which is rather brought out by the supernatural darkness around, for he has chosen the time when there was that darkness over all the earth in which Jesus, having cried with a loud voice, gave up the ghost; the moment being indicated by the centurion, who is on his knees before the Cross. And in considering this sublime work, one is led to believe that the deep under-current of Rembrandt's intention must be read by this very light; for with a strong moral significance it shines on all those to whom the light of faith or possible repentance was given. The bad thief has his face averted from it, the good thief hangs with his head upturned and bathed in radiance. The groups round the Cross, even of those hitherto indifferent, are glorified by it; one figure clutching his hair with both hands and looking straight up as if struck with irresistible and sudden conviction, another lying flat on the earth. On the other hand, numbers are turning from it, and bending their blind way pertinaciously and hopelessly into the darkness around, some covering their eyes from it with their wilful hands, while a large group, in densest obscurity, surrounds a bareheaded old man going forth in affliction into the deepest shadow. The meaning of this is doubtful, but it is probable that the figure of the old man is intended for the Jew Ahasuerus, who, as the story goes, drove the Lord from his door as He leant against it on His way to Calvary, and, as a punishment, was condemned to wander while time should last.

The Crucifixion is rarely seen in any sense in Spain, where Art was not developed till the Christian traditions on which it rested in other countries were forgotten. Spanish Art abounds with figures of Christ bearing the Cross, but offers hardly an example of the Christ upon the Cross. The interdict on all exhibition of the nude was probably in great measure the cause.

## THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS.

*Ital.* Il Cristo deposto della Croce.*Fr.* La Descente de la Croix.*Germ.* Die Kreuzabnahme.

THE next act in the great Christian drama is strongly defined and richly illustrated in Art. Even if the Descent from the Cross had not been mentioned in Holy Writ, it would have been a proper subject for Art, for it must have taken place. All four Evangelists, however, tell of it, and of the persons concerned in it. All four mention Joseph of Arimathea—‘a counsellor, a good man and a just, who himself waited for the kingdom of heaven’—as coming forward to beg the body ‘boldly’ of Pilate. There is every probability, as always represented in the play of the Passion, that Joseph of Arimathea belonged to the body of the Sanhedrim, who bribed Judas to betray his Master; for it is added, ‘he had not consented to the counsel and deed of them.’ Scholastic theology goes further in interpretation, and for this non-participation on his part identifies him as the man designated by David in the first verse of the first Psalm, ‘Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly.’ St. John alone mentions Nicodemus as bringing spices and assisting in this service of courage and piety, as helping to take the body from the Cross, to wrap it in linen, and to deposit it in that new sepulchre, ‘hewn out of a rock, wherein was never man yet laid,’ which was in a garden, and which belonged to Joseph of Arimathea—thus fulfilling the prophecy that He ‘should make His grave with the rich.’ The importance of the sepulchre being new, and no man having laid in it, is obvious as preventing any heretical doubts as to who it was that rose from it.

The figures of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, therefore, are always present in Art in this labour of love. The Scriptures further mention: ‘And the women also, which came with Him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how His body was laid.’ These are identified in another Evangelist as ‘Mary Mag-

dalene and the other Mary ;' again, the latter as the 'mother of Joses.' These, therefore, are present by historical right. The Virgin Mary and St. John are not mentioned at all, but Art, backed by scholastic theology, which circumstantially describes them as actors in this scene, and even gives the very words that passed, invariably brings in these two tender and sacred figures. Some of the disciples, too, who had fled, are supposed to have returned to render sympathy and help, and where the male figures engaged in taking down the body exceed the three mentioned, they may always be interpreted as 'disciples.' Vasari calls them, 'i Nicodemi.'

Several scenes in Art here closely follow on each other, which are sometimes confounded in name—the Descent from the Cross—the Pietà, or Lamenting over the Body—the Bearing it to the Sepulchre—the Entombment—and the Anointing it in the Tomb. Two of these are sometimes apparently combined, for there is much lamentation over the body at the Entombment; but they are separate scenes in Art and strongly defined in character.

The subject of the Descent from the Cross was attended with peculiar conditions. The Crucifixion, as we have seen, was always represented, more or less, as a convention; for the proprieties of Art forbade too close an adherence to physical truth. Here, however, the proprieties of Art required a precisely opposite treatment. The artist had to represent the lowering of a heavy and inanimate weight, and to represent it as lowered in the most reverential manner. To give the slightest appearance of insecurity would have been as opposed to the feeling of decorum as to mechanical laws. Signs of haste or violence were equally objectionable. The chief requirement here, therefore, was that very study of physical probability which Art had justly shrunk from in the previous scene; for the most scientifically mechanical would be the most reverentially pictorial mode of dealing with this peculiar subject. We shall see great error in this respect, and those under the highest names.

The Greek Church has a regular formula for this, as for every other sacred subject it treats, and one of the most mistaken kind. 'Joseph (of Arimathea) mounts to the top of a ladder, holds the Christ round the centre of the body, and lets Him down. Below is the Holy Virgin, standing. She receives the body in her arms,

and kisses the face. Mary Magdalene takes the right hand of Christ and kisses it. Behind Joseph is John the Theologian (Evangelist), who kisses the left hand. Nicodemus stoops, and draws the nails from the feet of Christ by the aid of pincers—near him a basket.’<sup>1</sup> This composition is occasionally seen. There is an example, quite in point, in Ottley’s ‘Florentine School,’ from a picture by a Greek artist of about 1230, in S. Francesco, at Perugia. The hands of the Christ are already detached from the Cross, and Joseph of Arimathea is standing on a ladder between the Cross and the body. This ladder, which supports this double weight of himself and the body of our Lord, stands at an angle where it would not keep its place for a second. The Virgin stands below, on a high narrow stool, in the act of receiving a weight into her arms which would immediately overpoise her balance. The scene is an impossibility from beginning to end, and therefore looks as improper as it is awkward and untrue. Whenever we see this form of the Deposition, even partially followed, a Greek source may be concluded. The chief anomaly is Joseph’s position. How came he there at the back of the figure? Who has sustained it whilst the ladder was being adjusted in a place it could not occupy till our Lord’s body was inclined forward, and while Joseph was mounting? Art represents but one moment, it is true; but she is bound to account both for the moments that precede and those that follow.

Duccio, in his Deposition, has followed the Greek type, though the exquisite beauty of his lines and expression go far to obviate the faults. The ladder is awry and insecure, and Joseph’s position upon it is false; but, being there, he is doing his part with intense reality. His right arm supports the weight of the body, the left is hooked round the junction of the stem and the transverse beam of the Cross, thus giving him the means of resistance, while the weight is seen in that strongly planted foot on the round of the ladder. In this position he looks compassionately on the Virgin, who, standing at the foot of the Cross, receives the dead face upon hers, while the arms fall with lines of deep pathos over her shoulder. Joseph’s earnest look at her is quite in keeping here, for his brave manly strength is securing her from the possibility of any accident; while St. John, instead of the sentimental action of kissing the hand, enjoined by

<sup>1</sup> Guide de la Peinture Grecque, p. 197.



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Descent from the Cross. (Duccio. Siena.)

the Greek Church, is holding the body round the knees, thus adding further security, while he facilitates the disengaging of the nails of the feet by Nicodemus (woodcut, No. 201).

Niccolo di Pietro is another painter—scholar of Giotto—who, in his fresco in the chapter-house of S. Francesco at Pisa, has adhered in some respects to Greek treatment. His Italian common sense, and the increasing correctness of Art, are shown in the position of the ladder; but the mode in which Joseph holds the body, and is in the act of transferring it to the outstretched but distant and feeble arms of St. John, is a parody on all mechanical laws. Only an infant in weight could be thus held and thus received. To increase the appearance of improbability, the body of our Lord is here represented as unusually full, muscular, and large (woodcut, No. 202).

In all this criticism of the Greek element we would not be understood to be influenced by the exceeding ugliness and meagreness of the Greek type of our Lord. Art would not be Art if she could not make the worst appear the better cause; or, in other words, redeem the deficiency of one quality by exceeding





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Descent from Cross. (N. di Pietro. Pisa.)

beauty in another. A Deposition by Puccio Capanna, in S. Francesco, at Assisi, engraved in Ottley, is an example of this. The body of our Lord is all haggard, lean, and angular—the very exaggeration of Greek ugliness—but seen through the love and reverence with which it is environed, it appears all transfigured with Divinity. Joseph of Arimathea sits with it calmly on his upraised knee, on the broad ladder. The Virgin receives the upturned and pendent head. One Mary presses her lips to the meagre bony arm, while another stands waiting for the same privilege. St. John holds the body round the knees, and presses his face to the limb next to him, while Nicodemus extracts the fourth nail from the left foot, and the kneeling Magdalen reverentially holds and kisses the foot that is disengaged. We refer the reader to the etching in Mrs. Jameson's 'Legends of the Madonna,' p. 314.

The purely Italian form of the Deposition, which prevailed with

almost unvarying repetition during the 13th and 14th centuries, in all forms of Art, contrasts strikingly with that we have described. S. Buonaventura (born 1221), in his contemplation of this particular scene,<sup>1</sup> laid down a precise canon of the form of arrangement proper to this moment; and nothing better, in some respects, could be devised. He thus addresses a Christian desirous to abstract his mind from worldly things:—‘Consider carefully and deliberately how Jesus was taken from the Cross. Two ladders were placed against the arms of the Cross, at each end. Joseph mounts that on the right of the Saviour, and endeavours to draw the nail from the hand. This gives him much trouble, for the nail is thick and long, and deeply buried in the wood, and it does not appear that it can be drawn without cruelly pressing the hand of the Lord. The nail being taken out, St. John makes a sign to Joseph to give it to him, so that our Lady may not see it. Nicodemus then draws the nail from the left hand, and also gives it to St. John. Then Nicodemus descends and begins to take the nail from the feet’ (the two nails had just given place to one only when the saint wrote this), ‘while Joseph sustains the body of our Lord’ (in front). ‘Happy Joseph, who deserved thus to embrace Him! The right hand of Jesus remains suspended. Our Lady lifts it with respect, approaches it to her eyes, contemplates it and kisses it, while inundating it with tears, and uttering mournful sighs.’

This form is precisely what we find in all miniatures, ivories, and enamels which succeeded the probable spread of these words. Joseph of Arimathea is invariably seen supporting the body in front—the heaviest part of which falls over his shoulders, thus resting where a man can best bear a great weight; while the pendent right hand and arm are in the tender grasp of the Mother. This composition is positively stereotyped during the 14th century, till which time, indeed, it was a rare subject. Nevertheless there is evidence that this form of composition preceded the directions given by S. Buonaventura. Their very precision, indeed, argues the probability of a definite object before his eyes. Niccolo Pisano’s Deposition—a bas-relief over the door of the Lucca Cathedral—was executed eleven years after S. Buonaventura was born. This,

<sup>1</sup> *Contemplatio Vitæ Christi.*

in the main features, embodies his description: an engraving of it will be found in Mrs. Jameson's 'Legends of the Madonna.'

But there is a far earlier instance of this form, as regards the position of Joseph and the Mother towards the body, which, though doubtless unknown South of the Alps, is an indication of how the subject was treated. It is a bas-relief of the Descent from the Cross, described as being rudely hewn in a mass of peculiarly formed rock, on the road between Paderborn and Horn, in Westphalia.<sup>1</sup> It is colossal in size, being about 20 feet high. The figure of the Christ is about double the height of that of Joseph of Arimathea. Nevertheless he receives the body in front over his shoulders, his head bowed forward, and his whole position, though he has but one leg left, showing natural resistance to the weight, while the Virgin's almost obliterated figure still indicates that her head is bent tenderly over the right arm of her Son. This work is supposed to be of the 10th century. It is most curious. The sun and moon, in their classic figures, are on each side above, veiling their orbs with drapery; while on the transverse beam, on the right side, is the figure of the Almighty, with cruciform nimbus and the banner of Victory—therefore under the semblance of Christ—holding the little soul of Jesus in His arms, while He looks down on the dead body whence it has fled.

Mature Italian Art did not improve upon S. Buonaventura's arrangement. As we advance, the task itself becomes more difficult—the Cross is much higher, and the mode of lowering the body necessarily more complicated. To meet this, a long breadth of cloth, like a strong bandage, is slung around the body, the ends held by a figure or figures on the ground, while another aloft, whose hands act like pulleys through which this cloth slips, regulates the lowering, and thus relieves the figure on another ladder, who is receiving the weight. But even where this mechanical appliance is skilfully managed, other elements disturb the scene—women press forward, or lie in the way, interfering with men's earnest and dangerous labour, and distracting their attention at a critical moment; for the tender ministration of the Mother of Jesus is now exchanged for her fainting figure, with the women around her; or a false desire to

<sup>1</sup> Kinkle's *Geschichte der bildenden Künste*, p. 239, and engraving.

represent gracefully-floating masses and flowing lines takes precedence of the more rigid laws of gravitation, and gives us representations in which the next move will be a catastrophe.

Luca Signorelli, in his picture engraved by Rosini,<sup>1</sup> is foremost in this false walk. Bone and muscle will hardly hold that weight for a moment, as it is represented suspended between the two arms of the figures on the ladder; for the long strip of linen does not, to all appearance, sustain the body at all, being only invisibly, if at all, passed behind through a slight belt round the body, which is scarcely seen in the bend of the waist. Such contrivances are not legitimate in Art, which must openly show its resources. At the foot stands the Magdalen, impotently holding up one hand, apparently more to catch the blood than the feet, past which rope of sand we feel the body will fall headlong in a moment full on the Virgin, who has fainted directly below, and on the women who are busied about her. Another woman, unaware of the impending peril, stands with folded hands looking at her; and St. John, a great stalwart young man, instead of assisting in the serious labour going on behind, stands in an attitude, with his back to his dead Master and his hand pointing to the Virgin, soliciting our attention to the wrong thing. A falser picture of the scene, physically and spiritually, can hardly be conceived.

Michael Angelo's small clay model of the Descent from the Cross—an early work, now seen in the Casa Buonarroti at Florence—furnishes irrefutable evidence of the entire dereliction of all Christian feeling in Art in his time. It may safely be asserted that no other artist has ventured so entirely to forget the divinity of the figure in its mere mortal lifelessness. It is simply a dead body they are lowering, and that with an utter disregard to decorum. Nor are the commonest conditions of safety regarded, so that the terrified actions of those below become the chief, because the truest, idea presented to the eye. Even the Virgin, though preparing to faint, looks for the moment more alarmed than afflicted.

Nor is Raphael, in his design engraved by Marc Antonio, less to be criticised, except that even his faults are clad in beauty of form, which is an atonement Luca Signorelli never makes us. In this

<sup>1</sup> Storia della Pittura Italiana.

composition the figure of our Lord, if it does not fall, which is an imminent conclusion, must stay where it is (woodcut, No. 203). Not one inch lower can it descend, for the lower it comes,



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Descent from Cross. (Raphael. M. Antonio etching.)

the wider apart will be those two figures on the opposing ladders, who now only just reach the head and the feet.<sup>1</sup> Below, again, lies the Virgin, with three women about her.

<sup>1</sup> Zani mentions a drawing by Raphael (vol. viii. p. 168), in which a third figure, 'che si trova necessarissimo al soggetto,' is placed below between the two ladders. He wonders

Razzi, again, in his Deposition at Siena, is amenable to the same criticism. St. John in these pictures has anything but a complimentary position. Razzi shows two figures on high ladders descending with their burden with the utmost difficulty, and evidently not knowing how to advance another step, while St. John stands crying below and covering his face.

Daniel da Volterra's Descent from the Cross is one of the celebrated pictures in the world, and has very grand features. The body is not skilfully sustained, nevertheless the number of strong men engaged about it makes up in sheer muscle for the absence of skill. Here are four ladders against the Cross, stalwart figures standing, ascending, and descending upon each, so that the space between the Cross and the ground is absolutely alive with magnificent lines. The Virgin lies on one side, and is like a grand creature struck down by a sudden death-blow. She has fallen, like Ananias in Raphael's cartoon, with her head bent backwards, and her arm under her. The crown of thorns has been taken from the dead brow, and rests on the end of one of the ladders. In these Italian versions of the 15th and 16th centuries, and in all later forms of Art, Nicodemus is no longer seen detaching the feet, but the body is altogether free from the Cross; indeed, the arrangement has become quite arbitrary.

After contemplating these conceptions of the Deposition in which a certain parade of idle sorrow, vehement action, and pendent impossibilities are conspicuous, it is a relief to turn to one who here, as ever, stands alone in his mild glory. Fra Angelico's Descent, painted for the SS. Trinità at Florence (to retrace somewhat our steps chronologically), now in the Accademia there, is the perfect realisation of the most pious idea. No more Christian conception of the subject, and no more probable setting forth of the scene, can perhaps be attained. All is holy sorrow, calm and still; the figures move gently and speak in whispers. No one is too excited to help, or not to hinder. Joseph and Nicodemus, known by their glories, are highest in the scale of reverential beings who people the ladder, and make it almost look as if it lost itself, like Jacob's, in heaven. They each hold an arm close to the shoulder. Another disciple sustains the

that Marc Antonio should not have known this improved edition of the composition. Yet even so it must have been still defective.



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Descent from Cross. (Fra Angelico. Accademia, Florence.)

body as he sits on the ladder, a fourth receives it under the knees ; and St. John, a figure of the highest beauty of expression, lifts his

hands and offers his shoulder to the precious burden, wherein another moment it will safely and tenderly repose. The figure itself is ineffably graceful with pathetic helplessness, but 'Corona Gloriæ,' victory over the old enemy, surrounds a head of divine peace. He is restored to His own, and rests among them with a security as if He knew the loving hands so quietly and mournfully busied about Him. And His peace is with them already: 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.' In this picture it is as if the pious artist had sought first the kingdom of God, and all things, even in Art, had been added unto him. He who could hardly set a figure in action, or paint the development of a muscle, here puts Luca Signorelli, Michael Angelo, Raphael, and Razzi to shame, in his quiet success in one of the most difficult of subjects. Pious carefulness and earnest decorum here do even this hard work far better than the most ostentatious display of anatomical knowledge and physical strength. We have taken only the centre group (the size forbidding more), leaving out the sorrowing women on the right, with the Mother piously kneeling with folded hands, as if so alone she could worthily take back that sacred form. In front kneels some beatified saint, and on the left is another saint holding the crown of thorns and nails in his hands, as he shows them with sorrowful gestures to several other figures.

The action of showing or looking at the nails is frequent, and, like other *conceits*, seldom becoming the occasion. Here, however, it assumes a purely devotional meaning, separate from the picture, though in keeping with its character.

The Deposition was a favourite subject with Rogier van der Weyden. It is seen by him both in the Madrid Gallery and in the Louvre. It was next taken up by Rubens and Rembrandt. But here the object had again changed—effects of light, breadth of masses, or fine colour, had become the aim. Most of our readers know Rubens' celebrated picture of the Deposition in the Cathedral at Antwerp; and few, except professed connoisseurs, if they spoke the truth, but would confess that the picture give them no great sense of pathos or fitness. This is natural, for Rubens seldom gives us either, and not at all in his great Deposition. His aim is the same here as it would be with a lion-hunt, or a Bacchanal, viz., movement, light, and colour. He shows his mastery over two of



these qualities by placing his figure upon a white sheet, which descends through the picture in a stream of light. The most we know of the Magdalen kneeling at the foot is, that her hair is of gold, and her dress of the most luscious green; and of the Virgin, that she stands in half-mourning, as in the great Crucifixion, like a declaiming actress. A stroke worthy of Rubens (and he was one of the greatest painters in the world) is that ruddy masculine figure above, who, having both brawny arms fully occupied, holds the sheet of white linen, on which the body of the Lord rests, between his teeth.

Rembrandt, in his large etching, appeals almost more exclusively than Rubens to the perception of the artist, rather than, in this instance, to the sympathy of the Christian; though, as we have seen, no one had greater power to do that also. The body of our Lord is a repelling caricature, in the flaccid truth with which it falls, all heaped together, into the arms of those who hold it—one arm clutched up by the bend of the elbow, with desperate and indecorous force, by a figure on the ladder. But full on this confused mass falls a ray of light which is enough for those who seek in Rembrandt for what Rembrandt always gives. Through the surrounding gloom, too, may be discerned figures, uncouth, but full of mysterious earnestness; while the background, with the grand tower of an Amsterdam church by way of the city of Jerusalem, is seen through that 'dim religious light' in which lay the great man's chief spirituality of expression.

THE PIETÀ ; OR, THE LAMENTATION OF THE VIRGIN, THE MARIES,  
AND OTHERS, OVER THE BODY OF CHRIST.

*Ital.* Cristo morto in Grembo di Maria. *Fr.* Le Christ mort sur les Genoux de la Vierge.  
*Germ.* Der todte Christus im Schoosse der Maria.

THE word Pietà represents a class of subjects rather than one particular incident. It is applied, in the sense of an actual scene, to three different moments; namely, to that immediately succeeding the Descent from the Cross—to the carrying the body to the sepulchre, and to the placing it in the tomb, or the Entombment: that is to say, it is applied to these two last when accompanied by gestures of grief; so that the Entombment, for instance, under these circumstances, becomes a Pietà as well. The first moment which we consider here, when the body is received on its descent by the afflicted Mother and other women, is always a Pietà—a word for which no other language has the same conciseness of term. It is represented within view of the foot of the Cross, or of the sepulchre in the rock.

This incident has no mention in the Gospels; but Art would have been cold in feeling and barren in invention if she had not perceived a vacant place here, waiting to be filled with one of the most touching scenes that Nature presents. For it was the old as it is the ever new story, that Lamentation over the Dead—transmitted from mortal generation to generation in Nature's unbroken descent—the very word an echo, as M. Didron observes, from the ancient funeral obsequies, and here, as concerning this sacred body, strictly legitimate in its intense humanity. For does not He who had taught, and ministered, and healed the sick, and raised the dead, lie dead here Himself, with no other Christ on earth to bid Him rise and live! Right was it, therefore, that Art should show, as it oftenest did, this Mother and these friends mourning as those who have no hope, 'for as yet they knew not the Scriptures that He should rise again.' Thus the Pietà, to those who consider some of its finest examples, has a twofold sense—the sorrow of a Mother weeping

for her Son, and also the last strong cry of our humanity, here, as it were, fitly wound up into one burst of lamentation for Him whose resurrection in three days' time was to give the first certain pledge of His own and His followers' life beyond.

Yet natural as this subject appears, it was not of early invention. The very word Pietà would have found no place in early Art, when Faith, and not Pity, was the paramount object. There was too much excitement here for early reverence—the difficulty also of representing the nude had probably its weight. It may be doubted whether this subject arose in Italy before the 13th century, when Art and Nature began to recognise what each could do for the other; and it would be difficult to determine whether the pen of the writer or the pencil of the painter took the initiative. The mediæval saints were not scrupulous in furnishing close descriptions of this lamentation over the body of our Lord—pious frauds by which to stimulate sympathy for a sorrow intelligible to the hardest heart; not recognising that all stimulants have a tendency to increase in use, and to destroy finally what they were intended to revive.

S. Buonaventura thus continues his imaginary sketches from the tragedy at Calvary: 'The nail being extracted from the feet, Joseph descended, and all received the body, and placed it on the ground. Our Lady sustained the head and shoulders on her lap; the Magdalen the feet, next which she had formerly found such grace; others stood around, all making great lamentations—all weeping for Him as bitterly as for a first-born.'

The Greek formula differs little from the picture thus suggested, except that the Virgin kneels and leans over Him, the Christ being 'étendu sur une grande pierre carrée.' It is also more passionate in expression, for the Maries 's'arrachent les cheveux'—a relic of antique custom of which only Donatello in the Italian school, hereafter to be mentioned, furnishes an example. A specimen of a Pietà by a Greek painter (1250), with the Virgin kneeling at the head of the body and fainting in that position (woodcut, 205, over leaf), while the Saviour lies straight on an oblong raised stone, is in that temple of early Italian Art, the Church of S. Francesco, at Assisi. But Cimabue, treating the same subject, in the upper part of the same church, places the Christ already on the lap of the Virgin,



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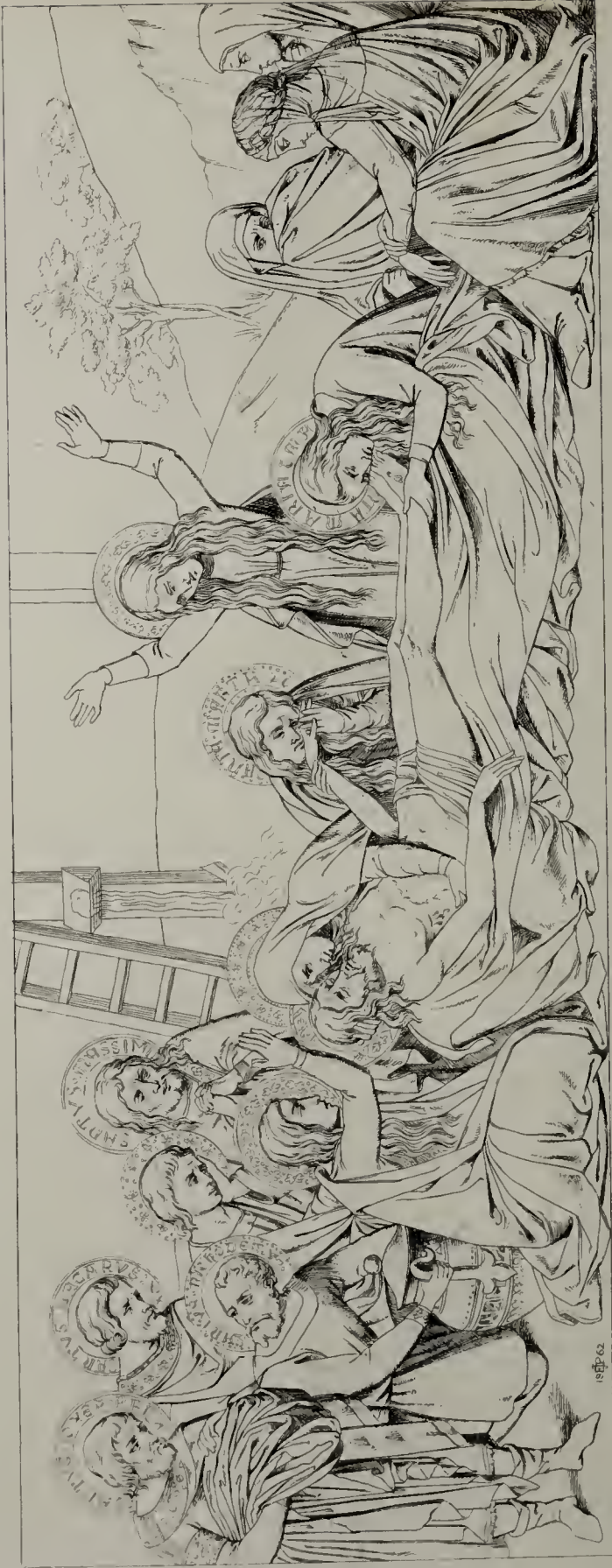
Greek Pietà.

though adhering to the Greek formula in making St. John kiss the hand. There is no vehemence of passion, however, except on the part of the angels above, one of whom tears its cheeks.

Giotto has the subject in his treasure-house, the Arena Chapel. But, instead of the Virgin, a male figure apparently supports, leans over, and embraces the head and shoulders of the Lord. The injuries, however, passive and active, which these frescoes have received, may account for this change of parts. The figure is not St. John, whose gesture of anguish, as he stands over the body, remains, after the treatment of the Pietà by many generations of artists, unrivalled in dramatic force.

Ambrogio Lorenzetti's picture in the Academy at Siena, of which we give an etching, is one which strikingly illustrates the words of S. Buonaventura. From the mention that the upper part of the body rested on the Virgin's lap, it may be inferred that the rest was sustained by others. Accordingly we see that the women





P I I E T A .

*Ambrogio Lorenzetti. Accademia. Siena.*

have ranged themselves along under it—Martha in the centre, the Magdalen at the feet—each taking a portion of the precious burden on their knees; while another Mary flings up her arms in the antique action of despair—sometimes given to the Virgin, sometimes to St. John, but later more generally identified with the passionate grief of the Magdalen. On the right are seen Joseph of Arimathea bearing the linen cloth, and Nicodemus with a large urn, though not more than adequate to contain ‘the mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundredweight.’ Lazarus is also here—an appropriate figure over the body of One who had restored him to life.

Fra Angelico, as might be predicated, treated this subject. It occurs in the series of the Passion painted on small panels forming the doors of a press which contained the Eucharistic vessels in the Chapel of the Nunziata at Florence, now in the Accademia there. The body is sustained against one knee of the Mother, who kneels on the other. She does not even caress the lifeless form—that would have been too free for Fra Angelico. It is the grief that has no tears, only the clasped hands and the fixed gaze. The same decorum prevails among those around. It is the same sacred body that has been lowered with such reverence and quiet; no one ventures to touch it—only the Magdalen bends forward on her knees, and just touches the tips of the fingers with her lips. The body, as is usual in these early and reverential conceptions, which have also far more possibility in them than the later more arbitrary forms, lies, carefully straightened, in the cloth by which it will be carried to the tomb, and finally placed in it.

Fra Angelico has the subject again in S. Marco, treated with great beauty, but here we have the traces of St. Brigitta’s visions. She relates that, on being brought down from the Cross, ‘the arms were found so stiff that they could not fold them over His chest, but only over the stomach.’ St John, in this picture, is seen gently bending the arms, the hands of which will only just cross. This is the position, whether owing to St. Brigitta’s revelations or not, which is almost invariably seen in the representations of this scene before the 16th century.

Donatello, in his Pulpit of S. Lorenzo, has a Pietà, in which the Furies seem broken loose, not one woman only, but all have

dishevelled hair, so that the Magdalen cannot be identified. Two are tearing their locks; one, strange to say, with great tufts of hair thus plucked out in her hands (woodcut, No. 206); two more have tossed their arms wildly aloft. It is an incomprehensible production. No wonder Donatello is reported to have regretted that he had made the expression of physical so far exceed that of moral grief. This is not grief at all, but most unseemly frenzy.



206 One of the Marys in Pietà. (Donatello. S. Lorenzo.)

Nevertheless, there were painters who could approach even this frenzied phase of grief without offending. Sandro Botticelli—that painter of Titanic forms and normal emotions—of man and woman, like full-grown but tragic children without disguise—has left one of the two most passionate conceptions of this subject that exist (the other being by Mantegna; see etching, p. 239). It is now in the Munich Gallery. The Virgin, on a raised seat, has fainted, with the body of our Lord on her knees, which would fall to the ground but for St. John, who holds both the insensible Mother and the dead Son; one woman at the head, another at the feet, in gestures of overpowering anguish, are too distracted to give any help. The Magdalen plunges her face into her hands. These women, with their heads bent down and their grand tragic eyelids, are like creatures intoxicated with grief; they know not what they do. Behind them yawns a dark cave in the rock, which marvellously increases the mournful character of the picture—it is ‘the pit’ to which all mortality descends, shutting out light and hope. Three aged saints behind, pursuing their customary vocations—St. Jerome beating his breast—are quite a relief to contemplate in this hurricane of woe.

In suggestive contrast to such as this—widely apart as the schools whence they sprung—is Perugino’s exquisite picture in the Pitti, a work in which there are more beautiful heads than perhaps in any other in the world. Here all is quiet and decorous sorrow. The



Mother, with her face of patient pathos, gives the key-note to those who press gently around. She is able to kneel, with His hand laid on hers, and to look into that face which one of the Marias devoutly holds up to her gaze. Unlike that cry of excessive but uncaricatured grief, which rises from such pictures as Sandro Botticelli's and Mantegna's, scarcely a sound is heard here. There is *hope* in these mourners, and therefore there is submission. The women weep, but the men not, though Joseph of Arimathea, who sustains the upper part of the body, averts his head lest the face of the Virgin should upset his self-control. Grief here only beautifies these faces; in Sandro Botticelli and Mantegna, such is its tremendous truth, that we care not how it distorts them.

Another conception of this subject represents a form of composition in which the figures are only half-length, and therefore brought nearer to us, rendering the expression of the head the principal aim. Bellini and Mantegna are masters here. The one may be studied in the Academy at Florence, and Mantegna in the Brera. Crivelli took up the same form, as seen in his picture in Lord Dudley's gallery. In these representations the grief cannot be called caricatured—it is too true, though at a stage which, being beyond the power of concealment, is seldom looked upon.

Raphael's Pietà is so exquisite in beauty and grace of lines, and in single figures, that it is difficult to judge it coolly as regards the rendering of the subject, in which respect one may venture to pronounce it far inferior to Perugino's. Here, also, the main object is forgotten, for all the attention is devoted to the Virgin. The action of lifting her veil, too, is trivial, and does not explain itself; nor is the manner in which the body is held across the knees by the Magdalen devotional, or scarcely respectful. St. John's figure is beautiful, but his grief is not for the right object.

Fra Bartolomeo is one of the last of the Italians who gives us a genuine Pietà: it is in the Pitti. And here the great agony is over, and it is affection rather than grief that is expressed (woodcut, No. 207, over leaf).

With the great colourists and draughtsmen of the 16th century the Pietà lost all pathos, as it discarded all tradition. Michael Angelo's repeated version of this subject will never draw a sigh. The eye turns unwillingly from the placid straightened body of our



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Pietà. (Fra Bartolomeo. Pitti.)

Lord lying peacefully in its winding-sheet, and ready to be borne farther with ease and reverence, which we have hitherto contemplated, to the huge muscular development which lies apparently as it fell, and is totally beyond the management of the women or angels about it. Not from their want of strength, however, for they are all bone and muscle too, but from the irreverent clumsiness with which they are hoisting up the flaccid mass. They are all conscious, also, of being looked at by the spectator: the very body has the same expression.

We turn to the early Art of the North for the traditional Pietà. The two great masters—father and son—Rogier van der Weyden, the elder and younger—were masters of that intensity of expression which alone could beautify their austere and homely types of countenance. This, perhaps, led them to choose the group of subjects succeeding the crucifixion, as they did the *Ecce Homo*, as their favourite study. A Pietà in Berlin (No. 554 A), by the elder

Rogier is one which few will look at unmoved. The Virgin seated with Christ on her lap, her beautiful hands clasped round the body, has a pathos which the painter has made doubly moving to us by its effect on the young St. John. With his face all streaming with grief, not for her, he tenderly touches her shoulder—a useless action, but one we all know well, expressive at once of that longing and powerlessness to comfort which is the essence of sympathy. Such pictures are an evidence of the power Art has over us—the truer for being indescribable by words, in proportion to their effect on the mind.

Albert Dürer's Pietà is an unmitigated horror. St. John holds the Saviour on his lap, while the Mother stands preparing to wipe either the wounded hands or her own eyes with her dress.

The Italians took up the subject again in the late Bolognese school. The Carracci, both Lodovico and Annibale, were fond of it.

Annibale Carracci's Pietà at Castle Howard—called the Dead Christ and Maries—is an epoch in the subject, and combines very great qualities. But it is too artificial in arrangement to touch the feelings deeply. The three figures lie too symmetrically, each in the lap of the other, while the expression of the two grand creatures, leaning over with horror-struck visages, has an antique rather than a Christian pathos.

The time had now come, both in Southern and Northern schools, when a false taste disfigured this subject. All these admonitions on the part of fervent saints to contemplate the bodily sufferings of the Redeemer had gradually led to the substitution of the shadow for the substance. The instruments of the Passion and the wounds of Christ were invested with morbid and familiar importance. The very words 'God's wounds' became first a profane oath, and later, a profaner contraction. The Virgin herself was stated by St. Brigitta to have habitually contemplated these wounds in prophetic vision, long before the Saviour's death, which, by the way, would render the unresigned and unprepared part she is made to play in several generations of Art the more inconsistent. In most of the Pietàs of the 16th and 17th centuries, accordingly, a mawkish sentimentality takes the place of reverent feeling. The women are made contemplating the wounds, or one little whimpering angel

holds the hand, and points out the print of the nail to two large angels looking compassionately over, with much the same expression that tender sisters would look at a cut thumb; or the nails are the centre of attention and despair, as if they were to blame; or St. John pricks his fingers in feeling the sharpness of the crown of thorns. As an Italian writer says, speaking of this subject:<sup>1</sup> ‘Little griefs fritter themselves away with the analysis of the causes for the affliction, while great griefs remain absorbed in a synthesis of infinite bitterness. Hence the mind predisposed to console itself bestows its lamentation on the livid wounds, the spent eye, the hair dabbled in blood, and such like. On the contrary, the heart that is desolate for ever concentrates all feeling on the one great fact which takes away the power of thought or speech.’ At this time the Virgin, with perfect consistency, instead of bending over her Son, or wrapping Him in a terrible embrace, spreads her hands, and raises her eyes to heaven, not, as some writers interpret it, as offering Him to God, but much more as if demanding why He had taken Him.

Rubens and Van Dyck both conceive the subject in this sense. Both saw in it the capability for the display of their transcendent technical powers; and though with each it has successfully answered that purpose, yet with neither has it served any other.

Rubens’ picture of the Pietà in the Antwerp Museum is even too disagreeable for his glorious colour to redeem. The Christ lies foreshortened in the lap of the Virgin, who, leaning over the head, is engaged in closing one of the eyes. This wretched conceit, however it may sound in words, looks in the picture like a surgical operation, at which the Magdalen, holding one of the arms, and looking closely at the act, seems to be assisting. In this, and in most late representations of the scene, the Magdalen has her vase of ointment at her side, doubtless referring to the words when she originally poured the ointment on His head—‘She has done it to my burial.’ The idea that she assisted in the anointing of the body would be a false interpretation. This attribute, however, which gives the ideal view of her character, accords ill with the very realistic scene in which she is at this period usually engaged. In many instances the discrepancy is increased by its standing side

<sup>1</sup> Guerazzi’s text to the Pietà by Perugino in the engravings of the Pitti Gallery.

by side with a matter-of-fact vessel ; very offensive here—viz., the brass basin and sponge with which the body has been washed. This odious accessory, borrowed from the barber-surgeon or undertaker, is unworthy of Art, which, like Fiction, is interdicted such details. The old artists fell into no such mistakes ; they had better judgment, because greater feeling.

### THE VIRGIN AND DEAD CHRIST ALONE.

THIS form cannot be said to aim at the representation of the actual scene. It was probably intended more exclusively as one of the seven sorrows of the Virgin. It may also have been influenced by the conditions of Scripture, in which it frequently finds expression, and which did not permit of more than two figures. It often appears in terra cotta.

Michael Angelo's group in St. Peter's—the cast of which is in the Crystal Palace—will occur to all. This was an early work, and is the best of all his numerous designs for this subject. His Virgin's head, generally of an unsympathetic type, is here appropriate in its grandly abstract and solemn character—a grief locked within, stony as the material in which it is rendered. The criticism of the time upon the youthfulness of her appearance was not much more absurd than his answer—that the purity of her life had preserved her freshness. Intense feeling—and nothing less can be attributed to the Mother of the Man of Sorrows—is not a preservative of youthful looks. Nor was the criticism true ; for, like Michael Angelo's other Madonnas, and here more in character, the face is angular and haggard. The curious flatness of the Saviour's face is supposed to have been owing to a miscalculation of the size of the marble.

Raphael's drawing, engraved by Marc Antonio, is another well-known composition. Mrs. Jameson has given an illustration of it in p. 37 of her 'Legends of the Madonna,' where she has also entered into the subject of this form of Pietà.

THE VIRGIN WITH THE DEAD CHRIST AND ANGELS.

THIS conception places the subject at once out of the range of fact, and greatly contributes to its beauty. It is as if the Virgin's grief were placed on the same sublime category with those of angelic beings—theirs not having become human, but hers heavenly. Francia's touching picture in the National Gallery is the most elevated conception of this form (woodcut, No. 208). Nowhere, perhaps, is the



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Pietà. Virgin and Angels. (F. Francia. National Gallery.)

true Mother of Christ—in age, dignity, intellectual grandeur, and religious strength, all chastened by the sad baptism of tears—so truly rendered as here. This is true religious Art. It may be observed that the angels are not intended to be visible to her—which is the right thought. They are not sent as messengers to assist her; nor does that faithful handmaiden need, like Elisha, that the mortal mists should be cleared from her eyes to enable her to believe in the ministers of grace which surround her. Thus they help not in sustaining the body: the one at the feet only clasps its own hands, without touching the Christ; the other, by a

strange yet pathetic action, passes its hands through part of the delicate auburn hair. The body of the Lord is beautiful, with a character peculiar to itself—a refinement of colour, features, and form, over which mental but not physical anguish appears to have passed.

Michael Angelo's conception of women, angels, and grief was strangely opposed to the foregoing. His two little thick-legged angels without wings are as tangible as they are perceptible to the Virgin. She seems to have consigned to their clumsy little arms the charge of the body, which but for them would tumble from its place against her knees—her hands and her eyes being alike uplifted in apparent expostulation. (See 'Legends of the Madonna,' illustration, p. 37.)

Guido has this subject in the upper part of his great votive picture for the plague in the Bologna Gallery. Here the particular intention of the picture justifies the Virgin's appeal to Heaven, with whom she is intended to be interceding, 'by His precious death and burial,' for the afflicted city, a view of which, with its leaning towers, is below. Nothing can be grander than her figure and face here, which might serve as an abstract female personification of Fortitude and Faith.

Lodovico Carracci goes out of the beaten path, and ventures to give the Virgin fainted, with her Son on her knees. The expression of the two terrified angels over her shoulder is very peculiar. It is a beautiful composition.

The same subject, with Nicodemus also present, by Cigoli, is in the Vienna Gallery. Here the Virgin's head is beautiful and tender; but the two angels in the background are marred in expression by holding a cloth with the nails, which they are sentimentally contemplating.

Van Dyck treated this form more than once. The Virgin is peculiarly unsympathetic, with her theatrically raised arms and protesting, upcast head, intended to show his power of foreshortening, while his angels are examples of the worst sentimentality we have alluded to.

## THE BEARING THE BODY OF CHRIST TO THE SEPULCHRE.

*Ital.* Il Cristo morto portato al Sepolcro.

THIS incident does not occur with sufficient frequency in Art to have obtained any settled form of representation. Like other amplifications of the story of the Passion, it was probably the offspring of the fervid 13th century, though the chief series of Italian Art are without it. Andrea Pisano gives the carrying of the body of John the Baptist to his grave on the doors of the Baptistery at Florence; but not that of our Lord. Scripture has but one passage which alludes to this incident, namely, Luke xxiii. 55: 'And the women also, which came with Him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how His body was laid.' These words, which positively show the position of the women, were not borne in mind by S. Buonaventura, who, giving a fluent account of the bearing of the body, states that the Virgin carried the head and shoulders, the Magdalen the feet, while the others held the body in the centre. Art, fortunately, has not availed herself of this imaginary picture; no such anomaly as the Virgin bearing the chief weight of the body, or any portion of it, being known, though, in an Entombment presently to be mentioned, she assists to lay Him in the tomb. All pictures of the scene of transit always place a strong man—the one Nicodemus, the other Joseph of Arimathea—at the head and foot. For this subject, like that of the Descent from the Cross, offers mechanical difficulties which only the appearance of sufficient mechanical resources can reverentially overcome. The painters of the Pietà had bequeathed a not contemptible appliance for this purpose; for the winding-sheet in which they had laid the sacred form offered a convenient mode of lifting it from the ground and conveying it to the tomb. In that cloth it rested easily, the ends being held at head and foot by strong hands. Mantegna, whose engraving of this subject is one of his most remarkable compositions (we give an etching from it), was sufficiently early in reverence of feeling to perceive the propriety of this mode of moving an





THE BEARING TO THE TOMB.

*Mantegna. Etching*



object at once so ponderous and so sacred. The figures at head and foot, who hold the cloth with both hands, are magnificent specimens of athletic power, rightly poised. The one at the foot, though probably intended for Nicodemus, is in that grand costume of a Roman soldier which lent itself to the great master's drawing of the figure. The group is close to the tomb, which, by a pardonable fiction, is made a separate monument, with a rocky cave behind it, and the next action will be to turn so as to bring the body alongside of it. This Bearing to the Tomb, as we have mentioned, generally included some of the features of a Pietà: in Mantegna's engraving these are of the most passionate kind. At the sight of this display of ungovernable grief, the most tragic images of Nature's sorrow described by the poets occur to the mind. Hecuba's passion, Lear's rage, are all here written in characters of analogous woe. These are the paroxysms of no common race of creatures. They are of that splendid type of Nature's children whose actions become the more dignified the less they are restrained. However violent the agitation, it is, like the ocean in its fury, never too disturbed to be sublime. A reduced illustration of this subject can serve little more than the purpose of a map of reference. The fainting of the Virgin has here a peculiar propriety. She is thus protected from the tempest of her own sorrow, which, in Mantegna's hands, would have been incompatible with the sanctity of her character. What the Mother's affliction would have been may be inferred from that of the beloved disciple, who stands at her side literally roaring with grief, his mouth wide open. In words this presents an indecorous image; but such art justifies itself to the spectator, who gazes with the more admiration upon a magnificence of treatment capable of dignifying elements so disfiguring. In these tremendous aspects of human emotion lay one phase of Mantegna's multiform force. He especially understood how to extend the human mouth without lapsing into caricature; and in no other conception of St. John, by any other master, shall we find the idea of a young, strong, and sorrow-convulsed man so grandly expressed.

It is curious how the winding-sheet—that necessary feature for the reverential carriage of the body—gradually shortens and loses its office as time began to place the technical qualities of Art before the sanctities of tradition. Raphael's picture of this subject, in the

Borghese Palace, although meriting all its fame in respect of drawing, expression, and knowledge, has lost all signs of reverential feeling in the persons of the bearers. The reduced size of the winding-sheet is to blame for this, by bringing them rudely in contact with their precious burden (woodcut, No. 209). Nothing



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Carrying to Tomb. (Raphael).

can be finer than their figures, or more satisfactory than their labour, if we forget what it is they are carrying; but it is the weight of their burden only, and not the character of it, which the painter has kept in view, and we feel that the results would have been the same had these figures been carrying a sack of sand. Here, from the youth of the figure, the bearer at the feet appears to be St. John.

Titian gives the same moment in his fine picture in the Louvre. But he errs more than Raphael, inasmuch as the body of the Saviour is of a heavier type, and the bearers not so earnest in their labour. The cloth, in which they are making-believe to lift it, is not even drawn tight beneath the weight; Joseph of Arimathea, who has the whole burden on his arms, and whose feet will soon be entangled in his own scarf, is putting forth no strength, while St. John's gentle hold of the dead hand will never support the figure for an instant.

Tintoretto represents a further phase in this school of picturesque irreverence. In his picture in the Stafford Gallery, the chief weight



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The Bearing to the Sepulchre. (Rembrandt etching.)

of the body is supported, we know not how, by bandages not taut and hands not firm, while a figure in front, with his head between the Lord's knees, carries the legs hanging over his shoulders.

Long after these painters, and in the cold regions of the North, came at last that wonderful man who rekindled the worn-out subject of Christian Art with an earnestness of his own. Rembrandt's etching of the Bearing to the Sepulchre is all that is intelligible, possible, decorous, and pathetic (woodcut, No. 210). There is no

hoisting or dragging of such a burden. There is no anatomical display in the figures that do their work, and no aristocratic nonchalance in those who shirk it; but the body lies, placid and beautiful, upon a simple bier, and is thus borne with equal care and reverence along. He thus at last chose the best mechanism for its conveyance: and where Scripture is silent as to means, a painter is free to choose those best adapted to his purpose.

## THE ENTOMBMENT.

*Ital.* Nostro Signore deposto nel Sepolcro. *Fr.* Le Christ mis au Tombeau.  
*Germ.* Die Grablegung.

THE Placing Christ in the Sepulchre is an important subject in Christian Art. Where the actual scene of the Resurrection, or scenes proving it to have taken place, were to be presented to the eye, the Entombment, as its necessary antecedent, could scarcely fail to appear. Indeed, in many a representation where successive moments



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Entombment, with Virgin assisting. (S. Angelo in Formis.)

are naïvely given in the same picture, the Resurrection is seen above and the Entombment below. Thus Art combined the two great facts and dogmas of our faith—that Christ died and rose again, and that through the curse on the first Adam we pass to the glorious resurrection of the sons of God.

This subject is seen under two forms, too nearly approaching each other in time to be considered as separate subjects. The

earliest representations, believed to be of the 11th century, represent the body swathed in cerements like a mummy, in the act of being laid in or upon an oblong tomb. Our illustration (No. 211) is taken from a wall-painting of the 11th century in the Church of S. Angelo in Formis, in the Neapolitan territory.<sup>1</sup> The Virgin, here seen at the head assisting to lower the body, though taking but little of the weight, is probably a unique instance of this arrangement.

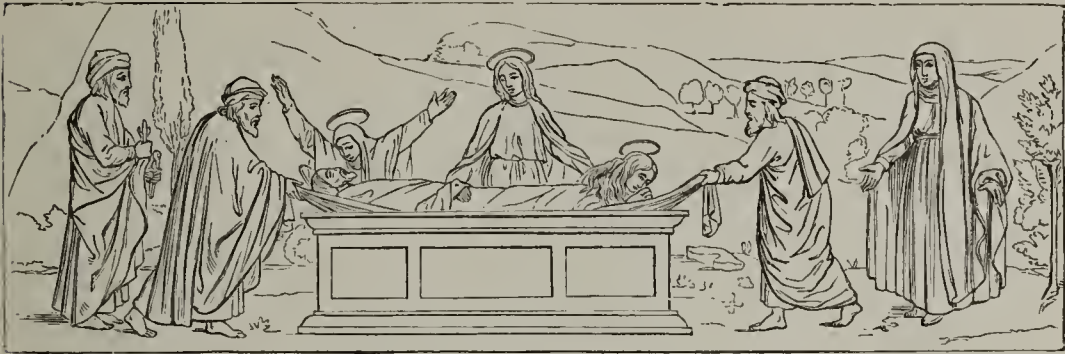
The other form of the Entombment begins apparently in the 12th century. Its first examples show their antiquity by the same swathed condition of the body.<sup>2</sup> The peculiarity of this composition is, that the Lord lies flat on an oblong tomb, a figure standing at the head and at the feet, while a third in the centre pours an unguent from a bottle or vase with one hand, while with the other hand he spreads it over the chest of the body. This is a form stereotyped to all familiar with religious works of Art of the period extending from the 12th to the 14th century. Occasionally the Virgin is seen behind, but usually the three men alone appear. This conception, but for the presence of the tomb, might be taken for the moment previous to the enveloping the body in cloths and bearing it to the sepulchre. In objects of this remote time, however, little consistency in such details is to be looked for. The ancient limners gave the known events in this instance—the anointing of the body and the laying it in the tomb—as forms they were bound to supply, the spectator being expected to adjust the succession as he pleased. This form is generally seen in ivories of the period, which were mechanically repeated.

With the great early Italian masters, the *bonâ fide* Entombment reappears. By this time (the 13th century) the Greek Church appears to have fixed its formula of Art. ‘Hors du tombeau la Vierge serre le corps entre ses bras, et le couvre de baisers.’ As the body is lowered, Nicodemus supports the head, Joseph the knees, and St. John the feet. Duccio is faithful in the main to this convention, except that St. John supports the head. Giotto has not this subject, though it is advertised, by some mistake, among the

<sup>1</sup> See Quast and Schultz, *Denkmäler der Kunst*.

<sup>2</sup> An example is seen in a miniature in the British Museum. *Old and New Testament and Psalter*. Cotton. Nero, C. VI.





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Entombment. -(Pietro della Francesca. Borgo S. Sepolcro.)

engravings of the Arena Chapel, published by the Arundel Society.<sup>1</sup> Duccio's form may be said to have been adopted in all Entombments which express the real scene. Nor was there much variety possible where the shape of the tomb and the position and generally the number of the mourners are the same. Pietro della Francesca's picture, forming a predella at Borgo S. Sepolcro, is only an elegant paraphrase of the scene (woodcut, No. 212), and is an instance of that action of despair in the Mother of Christ which is afterwards monopolised by the Magdalen. Nothing can be more graceful than the service which the always useful and appropriate winding-sheet here performs.

A magnificent representation of this subject, preceding the last-named considerably in time, and setting forth the doctrine more than the actual scene, was executed by Taddeo Gaddi (born 1300) for the Church of Or-san-Michele, and is now in the Academy at Florence. We give an etching. This is an instance of the Entombment going on below, while the Resurrection is seen above. Here the Church, in the persons of the disciples, may be said to be gathered round the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, the instruments of the Passion—the types of Christian trials—being borne by them and by two sorrowing angels above; while, by that proper instinct which characterises all early Italian Art, the solemn figure of the glorified Lord with his banner of victory above is invisible to all the actors in the picture, and only presented for the edification of the spectator.

<sup>1</sup> The editors of this work have fallen into strange misnomers of these subjects. The Mocking of Christ is called the Flagellation, and the Pietà the Entombment.

The moment is beautifully chosen. The bearers are just about to cover the Saviour's form from mortal sight in a gorgeous pall; even the Magdalen is assisting to hide the feet she adores, and they only wait till the lingering arm of the Mother is withdrawn. Meanwhile St. John takes advantage of the delay to imprint a last kiss on the hand, even while preparing to wrap it in the cloth.

We have remarked that the features of the Entombment, represented as an actual scene, bear a certain sameness. It follows, therefore, that variety is chiefly to be looked for in the expression of the heads, and this variety we find eminently attained by that Northern painter, who is especially known by his touching conception of some of the scenes of the Passion. If Mantegna, the grand Paduan, knew how to depict the storm of human emotion in the countenance, the humbler Brussels painter, Rogier van der Weyden the elder, equally excelled in the lull of suppressed feeling. The picture of the Entombment by him in the National Gallery is as much more sad to the heart than the passionate Italian conception as a deep sigh sometimes than a flood of tears. We could almost wish these mourners, with their compressed lips, red eyelids, and slowly-trickling tears, would weep more—it would grieve us less. But evidently the violence of the first paroxysm of grief is over, and this is the exhaustion after it. The tide is ebbing, as with all new sorrow, too soon to flow again. No finer conception of manly sorrow, sternly repressed, exists than in the heads of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, who devote themselves the more strenuously to their task in order to conceal their grief. Strange that a painter of such exquisite refinement of feeling, who died thirty-one years after Leonardo's never-surpassed ideal of the Saviour had been completed, should adhere to so hideous a type of Christ as that which appears here.

Martin Schön, again, has a pathos of his own. The tradition of the Mother leaning over the body is set aside, and she is seen close by, with clasped hands, St. John tenderly supporting her, watching the lowering form as it is about to vanish from her sight.

Lucas Cranach has a small and exquisite picture of the Entombment in the Moritz-Capelle at Nuremberg. Here, also, the less demonstrative character of the North, as well as early Protestant feeling, is evident in the quiet reality of the scene.



ENTOMBMENT & RESURRECTION.

*Taddeo Gaddi. Accademia. Florence.*



The subject was not popular with late Art, which may be easily accounted for. Prospero Fontana, in the Bologna Gallery, shows how utterly it could be stripped of all its pathos, in spite of the attempt of one of the men (no women are present) to perform the part of the Magdalen by throwing up his arms.

The body was now laid in the sepulchre, and a great stone was rolled against the door. And those who had attended it to the last returned to the city, 'for the Sabbath drew on'—which, according to Hebrew reckoning, began immediately after sunset of the previous day. And here it may not be amiss to say something of the temporary resting-place of Christ—

That sad sepulchral rock  
That was the casket of Heaven's richest store—

which appears in the next subjects as often as in that just considered. Art is not the better for adhering to the minor facts of history which do not affect the feelings. The permanent points of likeness between all generations—the touches of that common nature which make all men kin—are her care; not the mere externals, which differ in every country, and change with every century. A picture perfectly correct in these respects may be totally devoid of interest. The actual nature of the sepulchre was therefore little thought of at the time when the purest sentiment in Art most prevailed. The early Fathers were more occupied with the moral allusions, however far-fetched, to be gathered from these accessories, than with the real shape they assumed to the eye. The tomb hewn in the rock was to them the hard heart of the Gentiles, hitherto unpenetrated by any fear of God, to be hewn out by the teaching of the Apostles. The stone, or rather its rolling back, signified, in their sight, the opening of Christ's Sacraments, hitherto covered by the letter of the Law, which was written on a stone. This was the character of their contemplations, and when in one instance they attempted to describe the outer aspect of these things, they destroyed all signs of probability by attempting too much. The Venerable Bede (8th century) enters into details respecting the shape and size of the tomb. He says, 'The monument was a circular building, cut from the adjacent rock, of such height

as a man with difficulty could extend his hand in it, having an opening to the East: within this, to the North, was the place for the Lord's body, made of the same stone, having seven feet in length.' These words, quoted as the highest authority by many subsequent ecclesiastical writers—among them by S. Buonaventura—have an ambiguity, to say the least, that possibly, as we shall see, misled the artist who may have desired to attain the semblance of reality.

The real form of this resting-place is, however, sufficiently clear from the inspired writings—a sepulchre hewn out of the rock, entered by an opening so low, that Mary Magdalen, coming on the morning of the Resurrection, 'as she wept, stooped down, and looked in.' Peter is also described as doing the same. Probably by the word 'door' the entrance to the cavity alone was intended. What 'the stone' was is also evident—not square, for Joseph of Arimathea and those with him '*rolled* it unto the door of the sepulchre,' whence it was '*rolled* back' by the angel. It was also heavy, for the women coming the first day said among themselves, 'Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?' This description of the stone coincides with the peculiar machinery seen to this day at the so-called Tombs of the Kings at Jerusalem. 'This consists of a circular stone, moving along a groove in front of the tomb, and wheeled backwards and forwards, but not without great exertion.'<sup>1</sup> These, therefore, were the local conditions of the scene, the flattened face of the rock and a flat circular stone, like a millstone, before it. Few, if any examples could be found, however, which attempt adherence to this actual mode of construction. The stone may be said to be always a flat slab, which has fitted the top of the monument, or still lies upon it, on which the angel is sitting. Nor has the sentiment appropriate to the subject of the Entombment suffered by this interpretation. Nevertheless, there are not wanting critics who attach importance to a false precision, and by such the utter disregard of most of the old painters for all appearance of local probability will be gravely censured. The Italian master seldom attempted the niceties of time or place; his grand instinctive feeling dictated the expression of the subject, his daily life supplied the nature of the accessories. The sepulchre,

<sup>1</sup> Sketch of Jerusalem, by Thos. Lewin, Esq., p. 159.

therefore, is a square monument, or an elegant classic sarcophagus, in the centre of a landscape, as with Pietro della Francesca's Entombment, with no sign of a rock near; or at best the same kind of monument appears at the lofty entrance to a cave, or within a cave, as was represented by Fra Angelico and Mantegna. Or, if we search an earlier time—an ivory, for instance, of the 9th century—a regular building like a small church, always surmounted by a dome, meets the eye, showing probably its Greek origin, or possibly the influence of Bede's description. In all these early instances, the entrance, usually a circular arch, is open, and the linen is seen within. In the later Greek form, described in the 'Guide,' there is no analogy, it may be observed, between the sepulchre in which Christ is laid and that whence He rises. The first is 'une montagne, et dedans un tombeau de pierre;' the second, 'un tombeau de marbre, scellé de quatre sceaux.'

## DESCENT INTO LIMBUS ; OR, CHRIST DELIVERING THE SOULS.

*Ital.* La discesa nel Purgatorio.    *Fr.* Descente aux Enfers. Jésus-Christ aux Limbes.  
*Germ.* Christus in der Vorhölle.

THE Descent of our Lord into Hell, based on a few well-known passages in the Old and New Testament, forms one of the articles of the Apostles' Creed—'He descended into hell.' It is accordingly held alike by all Christian Churches. The Church of England proceeds no further than this fact; in the discreet words of her third article of religion: 'As Christ died for us, and was buried, so also is it to be believed that He went down into hell.' Thus she forbears to discriminate either the object for which Christ descended, or the nature of the region vaguely called hell, or a place of concealment. Both these questions, which proceeded naturally from the acknowledged dogma of the Descent, were the subject of much consideration among Christian writers up to the 6th century. By that time they seem to have arrived at the conclusion that the Lord's visit was for the purpose of liberating souls, but that the place was not that of everlasting torment, nor the souls those of the damned. The succeeding commentators went further, and by the 7th century it was absolutely affirmed that the abode to which Christ descended was one of milder penalties, though still called 'infernal,' and that the souls He there set free were those of the righteous, who, in St. Gregory's words (died 604), 'living in the flesh, had, by the grace of Christ, served Him in faith and good works.' This definition, again, gave rise to questions whether Christ, so descending, did deliver all the spirits thus imprisoned, or only a portion, and this seems to have received no precise solution. The result of this apparently not very logical process of reasoning appears, however, in the belief which obtained in the Greek and Latin Churches, to which it would be difficult to assign a proximate date, that a region under the earth existed, whither the spirits of all the unbaptized descended, though not for the purposes of purification, called Limbus, or a 'border



place,' as distinguished from the abode of the baptized, or Purgatory. This category of souls included those of the patriarchs and prophets, from Father Adam to John the Baptist, and hence received the more particular appellation of 'the Limbus of the Fathers.' Whether the character of this region was better or worse than that of Purgatory, Theology did not seem to define. We owe the more precise ideas which prevailed upon it to Poetry and Art, which combine to give it an aspect of no slight terror. Dante places Limbus, according to the meaning of the word, in the outer circle, or 'border' of hell—

Where no plaint was heard,  
 Except of sighs, that make the eternal air  
 Tremble, not caused by tortures, but from grief  
 Felt by those multitudes, many and vast,  
 Of men, women, and infants.

The poet ranges himself on the side of those theologians who maintained that our Lord drew only a few chosen spirits from this drear abode.

The following sublime stanzas, in which Virgil, himself an inhabitant of Limbus, is made solemnly to give evidence as an eye-witness of Christ's advent below, embody a confession of the faith on these mysterious points, which reigned among the most enlightened minds of the 13th century:—

Then to me  
 The gentle guide: 'Inquirest thou not what spirits  
 Are these which thou beholdest? Ere thou pass  
 Farther, I would thou know that these of sin  
 Were blameless; and if aught they merited  
 It profits not, since baptism was not theirs,  
 The portal to thy faith. If they before  
 The Gospel lived, they served not God aright,  
 And among such am I. For these defects,  
 And for no other evil, we are lost;  
 Only so far afflicted that we live  
 Desiring without hope.' Sore grief assailed  
 My heart at hearing this, for well I knew,  
 Suspended in that limbo, many a soul  
 Of mighty worth. 'Oh tell me, Sire revered,  
 Tell me, my master,' I began, through wish

Of full assurance in that holy faith  
 Which vanquishes all error, 'say, did e'er  
 Any, or through his own or other's merit,  
 Come forth from thence, who afterwards was blest ?'  
 Piercing the secret purport of my speech,  
 He answered : ' I was new to that estate  
 When I beheld a Puissant One arrive  
 Amongst us, with victorious trophy crown'd.  
 He forth the shade of our first parent drew,  
 Abel his child, and Noah, righteous man,  
 Of Moses, lawgiver, for faith approved,  
 Of patriarch Abraham, and David king,  
 Israel with his sire, and with his sons,  
 Nor without Rachel, whom so hard he won,  
 And others, many more, whom he to bliss  
 Exalted. Before, then, be thou assured,  
 No spirit of human kind was ever saved.'

DANTE. *Inferno*, canto iv.

There is enough to appal the heart in this most solemn narrative, imbued as it is with that intense reality by which Dante well-nigh subjugates the reason, as well as the imagination.<sup>1</sup> But Art, less logical, was generally far more merciless. Her most usual representations of the subject, by a strange inconsistency, not unfrequent in so-called Christian Art, place the souls of those who, Scripture teaches us, 'all died in faith, having received the promises'—nay, even that of Patriarch Abraham, whose bosom was defined by our Lord Himself as a place of beatitude for the righteous—place, we observe, these very souls in torments, fitted only for the damned. Their position, according to Art, is either among flames of fire, or, by an actual image of the common figure, they are represented as in the mouth of an enormous monster, which percnates 'the jaws of hell.'

But the ideas of poets and artists were not borrowed only from the controversies of theologians. One of the apocryphal writings, called the 'Gospel of Nicodemus, or the Acts of Pilate,' embodies a full description of the Descent into Hell; and, doubtless, in the Middle Ages, greatly influenced the treatment of this subject. The date of this Greek manuscript is uncertain, though assumed to

<sup>1</sup> The poet's description may be partly traced to the mysterious lines in Zechariah : 'Prisoners of hope, in the pit where there is no water.' (Chap. ix.)

have been discovered in the time of Theodosius the Great (died A.D. 405). It is in great measure, considered in a literary sense, a worthless production, giving an amplified and feeble paraphrase of the Evangelist's history of the Judgment, Crucifixion, and Burial of Christ; in which nothing is so conspicuous as the total sacrifice of the simplicity of the Gospel. But it is remarkable that when the writer proceeds to a fictitious part of his subject, and has to trust entirely to his own invention—as in the description of Limbus, and the stir produced there on the approach of the Great Deliverer—he launches into a pomp and circumstance of language which entitles this portion to some indulgence as an effort of the imagination. At the same time, like all dealers in legendary wares, he overdoes the very points on which he founds his claim to belief, so that the numerous and strained coincidences between this narrative, and the mysterious language of the Old Testament, are in themselves sufficient arguments against its genuineness.

The contrivance for telling our Lord's Descent is ingenious. The story is put into the mouths of two witnesses, by name Charinus and Lenthius, the sons of Simeon—he who took the Infant Christ in his arms—which two sons, having been long dead and buried, are stated to have risen with the saints, when the graves were opened at the Crucifixion, and, having received baptism in the Jordan, to which Mrs. Jameson alludes, they were allowed to relate to the conscience-stricken Jews the mysteries they had witnessed. They accordingly tell the following tale, of which we give an abstract.

Being with the Fathers in the depth of hell, in the blackness of darkness, suddenly there appeared the colour of the sun, like gold, and a thick purple light, enlightening the place; whereupon Adam and all the patriarchs and prophets rejoiced, as understanding who it was that thus cast the rays of His glory before Him. And Isaiah the Prophet cried out and said: 'This is the light of the Father, and of the Son of God, according to my prophecy when I was alive upon earth: "The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, beyond Jordan, a people who walked in darkness saw a great light, and to them who dwelled in the region of the shadow of death, light is arisen."'

And then Simeon said: 'Glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whom I took up in my arms when an infant in the Temple,

and acknowledged that now “mine eyes have seen salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.”’

And then another spoke, saying: ‘I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness;’ and narrated how he baptized the Lord in the Jordan, and bade the saints rejoice that the Son of God ‘will next visit us, and the dayspring from on high will come to us, who are in darkness and in the shadow of death.’



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Colloquy between Satan and Prince of Hell. (MS., 14th century.  
Ambrosian Library, Milan.)

Then, while all the saints were praising God, Satan, the Prince and Captain of Death, addressed the Prince of Hell, bidding him prepare to receive Him who still hung on the Cross, and boasting that he would bring Him to this abode, ‘subject both to thee and me.’ But the Prince of Hell replied in consternation, and adjured Satan not to bring the Crucified One to his keeping, for if it were the same who took away from him Lazarus, after he had lain four days in the grave, he should have no power to hold Him, and would even lose those whom he now held in bondage. We

introduce these two quaint illustrations from a MS. of the 14th century in the Ambrosian Library, Milan (woodcuts, Nos. 213 and 214).

And while they were thus in altercation, there arose on a sudden a voice as of thunder and the rushing of winds, saying, 'Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lift up, O everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.' At which the Prince of Hell desired Satan to depart, or, if he were a warrior, to fight with the



King of Glory. And then he said to his impious officers, 'Shut the brass gates of cruelty, and make them fast with iron bars, and fight courageously.' Then the saints cried in anger, 'Open thy gates, that the King of Glory may come in.' And the same voice of thunder was heard again: 'Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted

up, ye doors of hell, and the King of Glory shall enter in.' And the Prince of Hell cried out, as though he had been ignorant, 'Who is that King of Glory?' And David replied: 'The Lord, strong and powerful, the Lord mighty in battle; He is the King of Glory, and He is the Lord of heaven and earth. He hath looked down to hear the groans of the prisoners, and to set loose those that are appointed to death. And now, thou vile and wicked Prince of Hell, open thy gates that He may enter in, for He is the Lord of heaven and earth.' And while he was saying this, the mighty Lord entered in likeness of a man, and enlightened those places which had ever before been in darkness. And Death, and all the legions of devils, were seized with horror and great fear, and confessed that never before did earth send them a man 'so bright as to have no spot, and so pure as to have no crime.' And the Prince of Hell reproached Satan as the author of destruction, and of their mutual defeat and banishment, and the scorn of all angels: 'Thou who wouldest crucify the King of Glory, and hast made us promises of very large advantages by His destruction, but, like a fool, wert ignorant what thou wast about. For now this same Jesus of Nazareth has broken down our prisons from top to bottom, and released all the captives who were wont formerly to groan under the weight of their torments, so that they now insult us, though before they never durst behave themselves insolently towards us, nor, being prisoners, could ever on any occasion be merry; yet now there is not one that groans, nor is there the least appearance of a tear on their faces. O Prince Satan, thou great keeper of the infernal regions, all the advantages which thou didst acquire by the forbidden tree, and the loss of Paradise, thou hast now lost by the wood of the Cross.' Then the Lord trampled upon Satan, and, seizing upon the Prince of Hell, said unto him, 'Satan shall be subject to thy dominion for ever, in the room of Adam and his righteous sons, who are mine.'

Now Jesus, turning to the saints, took hold of Adam by his right hand, saying, 'Peace be to thee, and to all thy righteous posterity.' On which Adam, casting himself at the feet of the Lord with tears, magnified Him with a loud voice. And, in like manner, all the saints prostrated themselves, and uttered His praises. Then David the royal prophet boldly cried out and said, 'O sing unto the Lord a new song, for He hath done marvellous things; His right

hand and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory.' And the whole multitude of saints answered, 'This honour have all His saints. Praise ye the Lord.' And then the prophet Habakkuk spoke, and in like manner all the others. And the Lord, still holding Adam by the right hand, ascended from hell, and all the saints followed Him.

This is an abstract of the portion of the apocryphal manuscript, whence Art has in some measure taken the most thankless subject, in her sense, of the whole series of the Passion. Nevertheless it was a subject of infinite importance in the eye of a Christian, for we should greatly err in restricting the aim of the artist to the supposed deliverance of certain souls from hell. In the earlier times, at all events, the illustration of a great principle as well as of a legendary fact was his object. It was Christ having overcome the sharpness of death, and opening the kingdom of heaven to all believers—it was the despoiling principalities and powers, which the painter sought, at least collaterally, to express, and to which the Latin name inscribed above the subject on the doors at Benevento, 'Despolatio Infernorum,' is a testimony. And equally, in early times, the Descent into Hell served as a figure of the Resurrection, which, for centuries, was not represented in an actual scene; and here again on the brazen doors of S. Paolo-fuori-le-Mura, at Rome,<sup>1</sup> of the same century (the 11th) as those at Benevento, we find the Greek word Anastasia,<sup>2</sup> or the Resurrection, inscribed upon the subject.

Still, nothing could render it an attractive theme for Art proper, though a great master like Mantegna imbued it, as we shall see, with a certain grandeur. Otherwise the merely calligraphic or the allegorical forms under which early Art treated it, commend themselves as the most judicious mode of embodying this mysterious dogma.

The subject appears, as we have seen, in the 11th century, upon the bronze and brazen doors of ancient Italian cathedrals, now so obliterated by time that little is seen beyond the indication of a figure bearing a small cross, and extending a hand to small rudiments of figures below himself. It is also seen under the calligra-

<sup>1</sup> Destroyed by fire in 1823.

<sup>2</sup> Illustrations of these doors are in D'Agincourt, *Scultura*.

phic conditions of the small miniatures of the same century.<sup>1</sup> In these, two successive moments are separately given. The Lord is first seen in an almond-shaped glory, attended by angels, striking with His small cross at the Princes of Hell and Death—two demons in flames—one of whom is already chained. He next appears in the same glory, His cross-surmounted staff on His shoulder, dragging Adam out of the fire by his right hand. A female figure, meant for Eve, is behind. As a rule, seldom departed from, the Saviour is always seen bearing this small cross of the Resurrection—in early times without a banner attached—in His left hand, thus leaving the right one free to grasp the parent of our race. Equally as a rule in Art, under the feet of Christ, or lying near, are seen two broken doors, a demon, doubtless Satan, sometimes crushed underneath them. Occasionally a dark cavity is seen in the ground under Christ, in which lies a demon enchained, with scourges, pincers, nails, and keys, and such instruments of cruelty, scattered and broken around him.

The allegorical picture of the Jaws of Hell also appears in the 11th century. This is a large mouth, seen in profile, extended to the utmost, full of awful teeth, and vomiting forth flames, through which the souls press forward, Adam foremost, whom Christ always takes by the hand. This is the form in many manuscripts, and in all ivories, and, once understood, it is easily recognisable. The jaws belong to the partially visible head of a great fishlike monster. We take our woodcut (No. 215) from the *Bible Historiée* of the end of the 13th century at Paris. Sometimes an angel accompanies the Lord, and strikes at the demons in His stead. Then both the gracious hands are at liberty: Adam has the one, and poor Eve fondly grasps the other. Sometimes, also, the sameness of these compositions is varied by a touch of dramatic humour. In the Italian ivory of which we have given an etching (vol. i. p. 23), a demon is seen hurling a human soul, as if in defiance, at the Deliverer. In an ancient ivory situla, or holy water vessel, of the time of Henry II. of Germany, which is adorned with flat sculpture representing the incidents of the Passion, an angel is seen holding down one of the demons, while Christ delivers the souls.

It stands to reason that the broken doors are not seen in

<sup>1</sup> D'Agincourt. *Pittura*, t. liii.





215 Jaws of Hell. (Bible, end of 13th century. Bibl. Imp., Paris.)

the same representation with the extended jaws, each being the figure for the same thing; nevertheless, from the mechanical way in which these types were often executed, instances may be found where the ancient limner has introduced both, to make doubly sure. The jaws may be said to have gone out by the 15th century.

The great early Italian painters did not favour this subject, probably from a sense of its unfitness for Art. Neither Duccio nor Giotto has it. The mystical and fervid Fra Angelico seems to have introduced it into the domain of Art proper. He has two conceptions of the scene. Here the large red cross banner appears in the Lord's hand, the doors are broken, the demon beneath them, and Adam has already the divine hand in both of his. Abel, a bearded man in skins, follows with Eve; David is recognised by his crown, Moses by his horns of light (woodcut, No. 216, next page). All these, with the procession following them, are encircled by the nimbus of sanctity. In his other picture, the happiness of the spectator is disturbed by a peep behind the scenes, where two different groups



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Descent into Limbus. (Fra Angelico.)

of a man and a woman are seen struggling with fiends, and alas! being without the investiture of sanctity, with no chance of escape. Thus the doctrine of hell being emptied only in part is rather cruelly set forth.

Jacopo Bellini, born about the same time as Fra Angelico, has the subject in his book of delicate drawings in the British Museum. Here a new feature appears, which does not again leave the subject in Italian Art. The good thief, holding a large cross, stands by, whilst the Saviour delivers the souls. This incident was adopted by Mantegna, who has the subject of Limbus more than once. In his grand engraving, the Lord stands with His back to the spectator, stooping into an abyss whence a few outstretched arms are appearing. The good thief, a young nude figure, is very grand. He may be supposed to be standing there, in order to enter heaven with that happy procession of which

Adam, in Christian Art, is the first figure, and the good thief the last.

The 'Gospel of Nicodemus' also supplies the further history of the good thief. The story is curious. When the Lord quits Limbus with the saints, He consigns them all to the Archangel Michael, at the gates of Paradise, where two ancient men meet them, who, on being questioned how they came to be in heaven without first having gone to hell, prove to be Enoch and Elijah, translated direct, and now about to return to earth to fight Anti-christ. 'When behold, there was another man in a miserable figure, carrying a cross on his shoulder.' Him they question too, 'Who art thou? for thy countenance is like a thief's, and why dost thou carry a cross upon thy shoulder?' And he answers, 'Ye say right, for I was a thief, who committed all sorts of wickedness upon earth.' And forthwith he tells the tale of his crucifixion by the Lord's side, adding, 'And Christ gave me this sign of the Cross, saying, "Carry this, and go to Paradise; and if the angel who is the guard of Paradise will not admit thee, show him the sign of the Cross, and say unto him, Jesus Christ, who is now crucified, has sent me hither to thee." When I did this, and told the angel all these things, he presently opened the gates, introduced me, and placed me on the right hand in Paradise, saying, "Stay here a little time till Adam, the father of all mankind, shall enter in with all his sons, who are the holy and righteous servants of Jesus Christ who is crucified."'

Gaudenzio Ferrari is one of the last of the Italians who has this subject, and his treatment of it shows his familiarity with this apocryphal gospel. For while the good thief stands with his cross on one side, two figures of 'ancient men' with flowing white beards, evidently designed for Enoch and Elijah, stand on the other. The presence of these three may be accounted for under the idea, that Paradise consisted in being at the side of the radiant figure, all bursting with light, who, trampling on prostrate doors and impotent demons, is lifting Adam with a conqueror's grasp.

The Limbus seldom failed in the series of the Passion by the German engravers. They treated this subject as they treated all, with a mixture of naturalistic and dramatic feeling. In Martin

Schön's engraving Eve follows close on Adam, with the fatal apple in her hand. Abel, clad in skins, is at her side. The broken gates are under the Lord's feet, but one of the demons has seized a splinter, and with it is threatening the group of anxious spirits who press forward. Another has its claw fiercely set on a woman's shoulder. Yet the souls evidently perceive that the reign of their tormentors is over, and eager hands are seen behind in the deep profound, raised as if in clamorous joy.

Albert Dürer forsakes tradition. Many figures are already delivered—children among them—and Christ is taking John the Baptist apparently by the hand, who is being helped up from below. Above the black arch is a window, whence demons with staves are aiming blows at Christ.

This subject went out of favour as Art matured, and very few instances of it will be found in Italian Art of the 16th century.





THE RESURRECTION.

THE MARYS AT THE SEPULCHRE.

*Early Ivory.*

## THE RESURRECTION.

*Ital.* La Resurrezione ; *or*, Il Risorgimento di Cristo.      *Fr.* La Résurrection.  
*Germ.* Die Auferstehung Christi.

THE Rising of our Lord from the Tomb, always called the Resurrection, is presented for the treatment of Art under peculiar conditions. Not having been witnessed by mortal eye, it takes no graphic form in Scripture. There is no narration of the actual scene of the Resurrection. Yet this event, the most stupendous of all for the 'sure and certain faith' of the Christian world, it was more especially the duty of Art to bring before the eye; for 'if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain; ye are yet in your sins' (1 Cor. xv. 14). In lieu, therefore, of the fact itself, which the simplicity or the reverence of early Art forbore by any effort of the imagination to supply, the proofs of it were resorted to. For many centuries, therefore, the Lord's descent into Limbus, and His obvious triumph over Death and Hell, or, from an earlier period still, the terrified women at the empty tomb, the stone rolled away by no mortal hand, and the angel seated upon it: 'He is not here—He is risen,' were the scenes which represented, in language unmistakable to all believers, this crowning assurance of their faith. Nevertheless, early instances do occur, though extremely rare, in which the actual Resurrection is given. Two examples of this representation have come to our knowledge. The earliest is an ivory, of which we add an etching, now in the National Museum at Munich, stated to be of the 5th or 6th century, and of which it can only be said, from its classical character, that it bears the signs of a very remote date. Here is the tomb, like a small temple, the guards leaning in sleep against it, while Christ, young, beardless, and beautiful, with no nimbus, is rushing rather than rising from it; His eager extended hand grasped by the hand of the Almighty above. No subsequent conception of the actual scene approaches this in power of expression. This is no cold abstraction—a body rising alone, and going

we know not whither, or, as in later times, a theatrical convention, peculiarly repugnant to the eye—here is a reality, which, though in one respect of a symbolic kind, takes the imagination by storm. The course is run, the battle is fought, and there is the hand of divine welcome extended to that Beloved Son in whom the Father is well pleased, and who rushes impetuously to His reward, reinvested with immortal youth.

The other instance belongs apparently to the Carlovingian time, and decorated the shrine of St. Albinus in the Church of Our Lady



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Resurrection (Shrine S. Albinus. Cologne.)

in Cologne (woodcut, No. 217). There is a curious opposition between these two illustrations—the one the effort of a great but expiring period of Art, the other that of one yet unconscious of its coming strength. The design is ruder, but in so far more interesting as being the work, so to say, of unassisted Christian reverence and simplicity. Here the Lord is seen rising, the banner of victory in His right hand, while, with His left, He Himself puts aside the linen clothes in which He had been enveloped. An angel is on each side, not to help Him, but to adore. Below lie two figures prone on their faces—more than asleep—for, for fear



of the angel who had descended from heaven, the guards 'became as dead men.' In this deathlike aspect the illustration just given is unique.

We return to the usual substitutions for the actual scene of the Resurrection. In some instances the appearance of Christ to the Magdalen—the first revelation of Himself on His return to earth—was felt to be a sufficient setting forth of this irrefutable doctrine. This occurs in the series by Duccio.

Such forms of Art are, in this instance, the thermometer by which the temperature of the faith of the time may be ascertained. Scepticism was an enemy unknown, or at least unacknowledged, in the early ages of the Church. The part of the artist was therefore comparatively easy. He had to confirm faith, not to convince Reason; and if he shrank from or never dreamed of the representation of a mystery not revealed to human sight, over which the silence of Scripture rested like a pall forbidden to be lifted, he gave an equivalent in forms of equal logic and, to his view, of greater propriety.

The so-called revival of religion in the 13th century, under the impassioned impulse given by the great Spanish and Italian saints, tells a tale not only of the previous indifference of the masses, but of a more treacherous danger. Art responded to this stir, and hastened to bring forward stronger visible materials for inward conviction. In this time—the 13th to the 14th century—as we have witnessed, the scene from our Lord's passion became amplified in number, and more exciting in character. And among them in due time appeared that subject which bears witness to a necessity, falsely acknowledged, of a more direct proof of its truth. The actual Resurrection—our Lord Himself ascending from the tomb—was now felt to be required. For the accessories of this hitherto unimagined scene, Scripture was consulted. For St. Matthew, and he alone, relates that on the day after the Crucifixion, 'the chief priests and Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away,<sup>1</sup> and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead:

<sup>1</sup> In a manuscript in the British Museum, called 'Queen Mary's Prayer Book.

so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch, go your way, make it as sure as you can. So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.' Accordingly, Art always surrounds the tomb with a company of soldiers varying in number. The Latin Church has given these men no name or identity, but, according to the Greek Church, Longinus the centurion was one of the number.

The first man who finally brought this subject into the painter's repertory was the ever-daring Giotto. In a small picture by him in the Academy at Florence,<sup>1</sup> Christ is here characterised in a manner, artistically speaking, befitting the first of such representations (woodcut, No. 218). He is not under a glorified aspect—there is no nimbus surrounding His Person, no angel to greet Him with homage; yet He is peculiarly spiritual, for He glides upwards as if formed of those subtler essences which must rise at once in the heavier atmosphere of this world; so that the closed tomb, on which the stone lies undisturbed, and the unawakened guards, appear the natural concomitants of such a vision. The banner of victory is in his hand.

The school of Giotto adopted this new and fascinating subject. Taddeo Gaddi has it, as seen in our etching, p. 246, above the Entombment. Also Niccolo di Pietro. These both, lacking the dramatic power of Giotto, have supplied the sense of the supernatural by the accessories of glorification. But Christ no longer soars naturally and necessarily upwards, as in Giotto's conception. With Niccolo di Pietro, He is stepping out of the tomb, which, possibly to favour that action, is open, with the stone lying by, and the guards asleep. This is literally wrong; for, in the silence kept by Scripture as to the mode of our Lord's Resurrection, it is to be inferred that the earthquake took place at this stupendous event—our Lord, namely, rising through all barriers—and that the angel descended, and rolled away the stone after the Lord was risen, in

2 B. VII., 1320, there is a strange picture. It is night, and an old man is coming to the foot of the tomb. The guards start up and repel him. It looks like an embodiment of the suspicion that the disciples might come by night and steal the body. This is literally a heresy in Art, which is bound to depict only the truth in fact or doctrine.

<sup>1</sup> It formed one of a series upon a press for sacred vessels, in the sacristy of S. Croce at Florence.



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Resurrection. (Giotto.)

order to show that the sepulchre was empty. It is evident that a certain latitude of treatment was felt to be allowable here. The elder Bellini, who partook of the dramatic feeling of Giotto, has left in his book of drawings a Resurrection, in which the Lord is also rising buoyantly, like a spirit of finer tissues, from a closed tomb. The guards always asleep.

Fra Angelico has treated this subject several times. In one of his pictures he adheres to the old type, the women and the angel at the sepulchre. In another he has combined the old version with the new. The Maries are looking into the empty tomb; the angel is solemnly addressing them; while above soars the Lord, not as one rising, but as merely a glorified body, with the banner of victory in one hand and the palm-branch of martyrdom in the other, His feet lost in clouds. A third picture gives the actual Resurrection.

The great visible argument of the Resurrection once admitted into the scenery of Art, that also in its turn became the thermometer of

surrounding faith. What no man had seen might still suffer doubt. This was met again by a slight but significant change. Not all the guards remained asleep; the eyes of one of them, at least, were opened to behold the marvellous fact, and thus, in his person, a fictitious witness was supplied. It need scarcely be said that this, being an assertion which Scripture does not warrant, proved too much, and led naturally to further and profaner amplifications. M. Didron mentions a painted window in the Church of St. Bonnet, at Bourges, where five soldiers are watching, and all five are roused by the rising of the Lord. Two are as if dazzled, another is meditating on what he sees, the fourth stands before Christ in admiration, while a fifth, more brutal or more sceptical, seizes a pike, and aims a blow at the figure.<sup>1</sup> Paul Veronese has the same profane incident;<sup>2</sup> also Simon de Vos, in the Lille Museum.

Perugino was one of the first to initiate the introduction of the awakened guard. This occurs in his well-known picture in the Vatican, where the two sleeping soldiers in front are reported by Vasari to embody the portraits of himself and his youthful pupil Raphael. The rising Christ is encircled by a glory, and adored by angels. The guard who is roused is seen in the background (woodcut, No. 219).

Rafaelino del Garbo (born 1466) added further alloy of human conceit. There are four guards—three around, expressing ignoble fright, not awe; while a fourth lies crushed, and to all appearance dying, under the stone which has fallen upon him. To this barbarous version had come the sublime fact of the angel rolling away the stone. Our Lord, above, is raising His right hand in benediction just over the dying soldier—a most inappropriate gesture as applied to such an incident.

Nor do the signs of wavering faith in this the Shibboleth of Christian doctrine stop here. The actual scene was first represented for the purposes of conviction; then the attestation of its truth by the presence of an eye-witness was added; now a further step in this false direction was taken. For it became necessary, not only to prove that Christ rose, but that He rose in a miraculous manner. As time had advanced, the tomb had been generally represented open; the action of the Saviour, doubt-

<sup>1</sup> Guide de la Peinture, p. 200, *note*.

<sup>2</sup> Zani, tom. ix. p. 92.



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Resurrection. (Perugino. Vatican.)

less dictated by the space allowed, being often that of one stepping out upon the earth, instead of rising in the air. Instances even exist in which He is stepping on to one of the sleeping guards, as in an alabaster-coloured bas-relief of the end of the 14th century, in the Cluny Museum.<sup>1</sup> But towards the close of the 16th century the tomb is not only closed and ostentatiously sealed, while the Saviour soars above, but one of the guards lies sleeping full-length upon it, so as to prove beyond contradiction that the figure of the Lord must have passed through this double barrier by supernatural means. This is seen in two pictures of the Resurrection by Annibale

<sup>1</sup> No. 137, and others there.

Carracci, in the Louvre. Our illustration gives the two principal figures in the larger picture (No. 220).

On looking at the German and Northern schools, we find similar



signs of accumulated evidence, in proportion to the decline of implicit belief. Martin Schön and Albert Dürer each gave the Saviour stepping from the open tomb; one guard witnessing the scene with scared looks, who in Martin Schön's engraving is the

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same servant with the lantern whose ear Christ had restored. Other German painters have placed Him already out, standing on the ground, the tomb either closed or open; sometimes with a scroll by His head, 'Ego sum resurrectio et vita.' In a picture at Munich the angel is lifting the stone, and Christ is seen emerging at a corner, with bandaged head, just like Rembrandt's picture of Lazarus. Thus, whichever way we look in late Art, we find signs of an instinctive embarrassment: none of the conceptions we have described being, perhaps, so unwelcome to the eye as that theatrical convention, borrowed from the play of the Passion, which makes our Lord soaring with unbecoming agility, and which the mind associates with a firm framework of machinery behind.

THE WOMEN AT THE SEPULCHRE, WITH THE ANGEL SEATED ON  
THE TOMB.

*Ital.* Le tre Marie arrivate al Sepolcro.

*Fr.* Les Myrrhophores au Tombeau.

*Germ.* Die Marien am Grabe.

THIS subject—which served, as we have remarked, as a representation of the Resurrection—was on that account an unfailing incident in the brief series of the Passion, during the centuries which preceded Giotto, when, having fulfilled its purpose, it yielded the place to the actual scene of the Rising of Christ, and retired in great measure from the domain of Art.

The account of the women at the sepulchre is given by all four Evangelists, though with a disagreement in circumstance which only proves a truth in the spirit too secure to be guarded in the letter, and which commentators have had no difficulty in reconciling. The general solution is as follows. Mary Magdalen having agreed to visit the sepulchre with other women, in order to anoint the body, arrived there first ‘while yet it was dark’ (St. John). She found the stone rolled away, and returned quickly back to tell Peter and John. Meanwhile her companions, bearing sweet spices, came to the tomb ‘at the rising of the sun’ (St. Mark). And they, finding the stone rolled away, entered into the sepulchre, and saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a white garment, and they were affrighted. And when the angel had spoken, telling them that the Lord had risen from the dead and that they should see Him in Galilee, ‘they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed.’ These are supposed to be the same party who were met later by the Lord Himself as they returned, as mentioned by St. Matthew.

Then, to continue the narrative of St. John, Mary Magdalen, with Peter and John, returned. And Peter entered the sepulchre first and then John, ‘and they saw the linen clothes lie,’ but no angel appeared to them. They ‘went away again unto their own



home,' and the Magdalen was left weeping behind, and she looked in and saw 'two angels in white, the one at the head and the other at the foot, where the body of the Lord had lain.' And after they had asked her why she wept, 'she turned herself back and saw Jesus.' And she too returned and told the disciples. And again another party, according to St. Luke, undistinguished by name, came 'very early in the morning,' and they too entered and found the body of Jesus gone, and 'behold two men stood by them in shining garments,' who said, 'He is not here, but is risen,' and then reminded them how the Lord had told them that He 'must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, and returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.'

Thus it is evident—from the fact that one angel only appeared to one party and two to the others, and that the words of the heavenly messengers differed remarkably in each case, as well as from other circumstantial evidence—that two groups at least of pious women pilgrimaged to the sepulchre; both separate from the Magdalen, whose name, in the fearless truth of the narrative, is joined to theirs as companions in the sense of the same errand. We find also, in the different Gospels, no less than four women mentioned by name—being Mary Magdalen, Mary the mother of James, Salome, and Joanna the wife of Herod's steward—though three are only once mentioned together; and besides these, 'other women that were with them' (St. Luke). Here are, accordingly, women enough to account for two parties, or even more—of what number we know not. But Art has always adopted three as the traditional number, and the Three Maries at the Sepulchre—or, as the Greek Church terms them, *Les trois Myrrhophores*, from the spices and myrrh they carried—are as invariable in Christian as the Three Graces or Fates are in Pagan Art.

Early theology has not overlooked the coincidence which places woman—'the last at the Cross, the first at the Tomb'—in a position here morally reversed to that she assumed in the Garden of Eden. 'For the angel bids them go quickly and tell His disciples; as much as to say, Return to the man (Adam), and persuade

him to faith whom thou didst once persuade to treachery. Carry to man the proof of the Resurrection, to whom thou once didst carry the counsel of Destruction.’<sup>1</sup> The visit to the sepulchre, indeed, is too fertile a source of pious allusion not to be overlaid with the richest offerings of the early writers in this respect. Every detail is pressed into the service of moral illustration—no part is allowed to lie fallow. And Art, reminded in every way of the importance of this subject, bears witness to these admonitions by the early date at which it was enrolled in the scenes of the Passion. It appears on the earliest known ivories, partaking largely of the symbolism of classic imagery: and the first conception, which continued almost unvaried in intention till the subject was exchanged for the Resurrection, shows how finely it was felt.

At first sight this early form seems to represent two successive moments in the incident. For we find the women approaching the sepulchre, the angel seated on the stone, but the guards still lying apparently asleep at their post, who, we are told, after our Lord had risen, ‘came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.’ But a reference to St. Matthew proves that no succession of incident was here intended, and that the scene has all the unity of one and the same moment. St. Matthew is the one who approaches nearest to this undescribed event by mentioning those signs in nature which preceded or accompanied it. ‘And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him’ (not for fear, let us remark, of the sight of the rising Lord) ‘the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women’ (who now evidently arrived), ‘Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.’ Thus we almost invariably see the guard seated or standing by the tomb, not in real slumber, but as ‘dead men’ paralysed with terror—in reference to whom the angel says to the women, ‘Fear not *ye*.’

<sup>1</sup> Chrysologos. 5th century; quoted from ‘Catena Aurea,’ vol. i.

Nothing can be more complete and simple than the conception of this scene in the grand intention, though imperfect forms, of early Art. The guards sit, lie, or stand, both motionless and mute. They are reduced to mere signs of men, for Christian Art wants no dramatic help from them, and, to turn their scared and vulgar actions to account, shows how low so-called Christian artists subsequently sank. The choice of this moment, thus comprising the inanimate guards, is doubtless in part attributable to the amplified description of this scene in the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus. Here the Scriptural account, almost verbatim rendered, is put into the mouth of one of the soldiers, who reports the scene to Annas and Caiaphas, and adds that, though through fear they became 'like persons dead,' yet they heard the words which the angel spoke to the women. 'Then the Jews called all the soldiers who had kept guard together, and said to them, Who are these women to whom the angel spoke? Why did you not seize them? The soldiers answered and said, We know not who the women were; besides, we became as dead men through fear, and how could we seize these women? The Jews said to them, As the Lord liveth, we do not believe you. And the soldiers answering said to the Jews, When ye saw and heard Jesus working so many miracles and did not believe Him, how should ye believe us? Ye said well, as the Lord liveth, for the Lord truly does live' (chap. x.) That these soldiers, thus convinced of the Divinity of the Lord, should afterwards, like so many Judases, deny Him for money (see Matthew xxviii. 15), is one proof, if any were needed, of the inconsistencies which such writings entail.

To return to our subject. This arrangement continues to the time of Giotto, and is seen perpetually repeated in the form of ivories and small miniatures. But the angel sits on an open tomb, and by a fine action, observable in many representations of this scene, points across himself into it. 'See where the Lord lay.' The angel thus seated on the stone has generally a staff terminating in a fleur-de-lis in his left hand—he points with the right. This is the attribute proper to the Archangel Gabriel, who, having announced the birth of the Saviour, figures appropriately here as the announcer of His resurrection. This attribute is exchanged occasionally for a cross-surmounted staff, like the cross of the Resurrection.

With the beginning of the 14th century this subject, like all others in Christian Art, underwent a change. Duccio is a remarkable instance of the transition. His design is strictly modelled according to the Byzantine form, which was bursting with new life under the young breath of Western feeling. Nothing can be



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Maries at Sepulchre. (Duccio. Siena.)

finer than the action of awe in the foremost Mary. The action of the angel is also retained. But from growing instincts of Art, or waning traditions of Scripture, he leaves out the motionless guards altogether.

From this time the Women at the Sepulchre is a subject seldom seen in the higher forms of Art, and when it appears, it bears that theatrical impress common to all these subjects from the 16th century. In such a painter as Pietro da Cortona, the women have neither faith nor fear in their looks, and the angel, forgetting Scripture, is pointing falsely and sentimentally up to heaven. For the reader need hardly be reminded that the words 'He is risen' mean not into the sky, but simply from the dead. The German engravers have not this subject at all.

Christ's Appearance to the Virgin, which occasionally occurs,

especially in German Art, at this stage of the series, has been fully described in the 'Legends of the Madonna.'

### THE APPARITIONS OF OUR LORD.

THE Apparitions, as they are called, of our Lord, after His Resurrection, are scattered among the Evangelists with that absence of any regular plan which showed how little they took heed to agree in the letter. St. Augustine reckons ten apparitions:—1st, to Mary Magdalen; 2nd, to the Maries; 3rd, to Peter; 4th, to the disciples going to Emmaus; 5th, to the Apostles at Jerusalem without Thomas; 6th, to the same, with Thomas; 7th, to Peter and others at the Sea of Tiberias; 8th, at a mountain in Galilee; 9th, as the eleven sat at meat; 10th, at the Ascension. It may be doubted whether the 9th and the 6th apparitions were not identical. Another, that to St. James mentioned by St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 7), which became the subject of a legend,<sup>1</sup> is not included by St. Augustine, nor that to St. Paul himself: 'And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.' The 3rd apparition, to St. Peter, is mentioned by Luke (xxiv. 34) as to Simon, by St. Paul as to Cephas, leaving no doubt that St. Peter was intended. Art here deals with several subjects: whether with that earnestness which so solemn a period peculiarly demands—whether with that feeling which recognises our Lord as no longer suffering but still more condescending, as not less man but mysteriously more God—this is a question we must apply ourselves to investigate.

<sup>1</sup> See 'Sacred and Legendary Art,' vol. i. p. 25, *note*.

### APPEARANCE OF CHRIST TO THE MAGDALEN.

THIS subject follows immediately upon that of the Women at the Sepulchre, and is told only by St. John. The Magdalen, left weeping at the sepulchre by Peter and John, and engrossed by a passion of grief, acts very differently from the other women. The vision of the angels which terrified them seems to have had no other effect on her than to make her tell her woe. 'But a conversation with angels could not satisfy her who came to look for the Lord of the angels.'<sup>1</sup> 'They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto Him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not' (John xx. 13-17).

The whole quotation is necessary to elucidate the Art to which it gave rise.

St. Chrysostom says, with pious and permissible fancy, 'It seems to me that while she was speaking to the angels, Christ appeared behind her, and that the angels, by their posture, look, and motion, showed that they saw the Lord, and that thus it was that she turned back.'

That the weeping woman should not recognise Christ at first, that she should take Him for the gardener, or for anybody, is nowise strange. It was not the darkness, as some have supposed—for by this time with an Eastern sunrise, it could not be dark—but her preoccupation which dazzled her eyes. She took no heed; she evidently had addressed herself again to the angels—her back to Christ—as the most promising sources of help in her quest, when that one word, 'Mary!' fell on her ears. She turned, and saw what her soul sought.

Few incidents in Scripture offer such materials as this. On the

<sup>1</sup> Jeremy Taylor, vol. iii. p. 801.

one side, dignity and beneficence, on the other, grace and beauty, and sorrow merging into sudden joy. Of these last-named elements Art has taken full advantage—there is hardly a painter of female beauty with whom the subject has not been popular. But it contains much more than these two figures, or even than the touching narrative itself directly tells. For this appearance of Christ to the Magdalen, which stands rightly, on many occasions, in lieu of the fact of the Resurrection, is in reality that which was needed to invest that fact with perfect comfort to the believer. The angels had announced ‘He is risen,’ but Christ Himself alone could show in what form ‘the first fruits of them that slept’ would appear. That the Lord was the same, to ear, to eye—in love, memory, and human interest—that He took up His identity of mind and body where He had laid it down, unchanged by death or the grave—this is the great truth announced by His first revelation of Himself after His Resurrection to mortal vision, and told in those two responding and ineffable words, Mary! Master! This, accordingly, was the stupendous fact and doctrine—given for the comfort of all past, present, and future generations of man—which Art was bound to represent—which the Art which addresses itself solely to the eye was best able to represent, but which, strange to say, was too frequently sacrificed to a puerile conceit, false alike to truth and taste.

The Appearance of Christ to the Magdalen does not seem to occur early in Art, but rather starts to view with that efflorescence of new scenes which marked the 14th century. The first great Italian painters alone seem to have understood its sublime import. Duccio and Giotto, and Martin Schön in Germany, show us the same Jesus, who suffered and was buried, risen again for our justification. The revered form and the gentle countenance of the Divine Victim, whom we have accompanied through every step of His precious Cross and Passion, are here restored to us—no longer weary, bruised, and dying, but fresh, vigorous, and with the standard of victory in His grasp; but yet the same Christ.

Duccio’s design is touching in its simplicity; the Magdalen as modest as she is adoring, and Christ as loving as He is divine (woodcut, No. 222, next page). No commentators, ancient or modern, have ever satisfactorily explained why Jesus denied to her

imploing hands that touch of Himself which He proffered to those of the doubting disciple. But in Art this action, 'Touch me not,' needs no vindication. He has passed the gates of death. She is still on our side of them. He is the same, yet mysteriously changed, for mortality has put on immortality. A narrow space only divides them, but yet it is 'the insuperable threshold,' and she as those 'who stretch in the abyss the ungrasped hand.' Art, like music, is privileged to suggest many meanings besides that prescribed.

Giotto is the only painter we have seen who brings before us a



222 Christ appearing to the Magdalen. (Duccio. Siena.)

wider view of the scene. It would seem as if he had read the words of St. Chrysostom, for the two angels sit solemnly at the head and foot of the tomb, within a few feet of the Magdalen, each looking and one pointing at Christ, as if they had just aroused her perception to whom it is she has so carelessly glanced at. And she, dashing herself on her knees, is there before Him in a moment, her outstretched arms seeking those feet she had been wont to clasp, thus making His identity as certain as His Resurrection.

Such representations, and we find them reflected in the minia-



tures and other forms of Art of the period, are worthy of this subject, but Art, though about rapidly to advance in all material powers and beauties, was also about grievously to decline in the respect for the simplicity of Christian truth. This decline naturally coincides with that phase of the human mind which preceded the invention of printing, when the grand old traditions based on Scripture began to be cast aside, and when Scripture itself, which could alone refresh or replace them, was still a sealed book. It was a fatal time to such subjects as the Agony in the Garden, and the Appearance of Christ to the Magdalen, in which the infusion of human and puerile conceits led equally to offences to the eye and outrages to doctrine.

Giotto's scholars seem already to have lost the real meaning of this subject. Their imagination found in it nothing loftier than the fleeting fact of the Magdalen's mistaking Christ for the gardener. All the pathos of her recognition, all the profound meaning of His identity, were lost; for in the place of Christ stands a figure shouldering a spade or a shovel—an evanescent oversight as presented to the eye of the weeping woman, a profane travesty as displayed to that of the Christian.

A fresco, dated 1392, by Niccolo di Pietro, shows the time when this false conception may be supposed to have been introduced.<sup>1</sup>

Even the spiritually-minded Fra Angelico had his eyes 'holden' here, so that he neither saw the importance of preserving the Lord's identity, nor the miserable absurdity of commemorating the momentary mistake of a tear-clouded eye. He also makes Christ shouldering a great spade, strangely incongruous with the glory that half conceals it. It was time now that pictures ceased to be the 'books of the simple,' when all they taught, in such a subject as this, was that souls returned to the body with a shovel over their shoulders. This innovation travelled slowly to the North. Martin Schön, in the 15th century, gives the same Christ whom he has entombed in his previous plate, only with a rich robe and the banner

<sup>1</sup> A Byzantine picture, on panel, stated by D'Agin-court to be of the 12th or 13th century (pl. xcii.), shows Christ with a spade, and the Magdalen in the act of embracing His feet—a notion which the 'Touch me not' forbids. It is probably of a much later time. If of the 13th century, it would show that the Greek Church introduced this conception of the subject.

of glory. Albert Dürer, in the beginning of the 16th century, seems to halt between two opinions, and tries to serve both Wisdom and Folly, putting the standard of victory in one hand, and a spade in the other. Yet there have been writers on Art, and no common ones, who have approved this wretched conceit. The Abbé Zani apologises for '*lo Schön,*' who, he says, seems to have been ashamed to give Christ the form of a gardener, whereas, he naïvely urges, 'if the Magdalen had seen her Lord in a splendid garment, and with the banner of victory, she could not have failed to recognise Him.' But here he entangles himself in one of those apparent dilemmas of Art which have no real difficulty in them. As stated before, in subjects of Christian Art, where the actor and spectator are under different conditions, which they almost always are, there must be two different views. But Art can choose but one of them, and is bound to prefer that which addresses itself to the spectator. Thus the rich mantle, and the standard of victory, even the nimbus of the Saviour, are not intended for the Magdalen's eyes. She knows Christ by His familiar personal identity; we know Him by His divine attributes. Without them the story is not told, as Art should tell it, so that those who run may read.

Like all false ideas in Art, this soon expanded into full-blown absurdity. No painter seems to have been able to resist the seductions of going wrong; the mine of false ore was diligently worked out. Raphael himself led the van—if, indeed, the design ascribed to him be his—with a figure, old and clumsy, with disorderly beard and plebeian face, wearing a broad-brimmed hat, and with a pick-axe on his shoulder (woodcut, No. 223). The light that encircles this figure is utterly incongruous, and the marks of the wounds on hands and feet profane. But for these, He would look like some Mercury or Apollo, veiling his beams beneath a crafty disguise, in order to beguile the rather light-looking lady at his feet.

Poussin equally bowed the knee to false gods in this respect. With a consistency in error worthy of a better cause, Christ is made digging up carrots, which lie strewn on the ground before Him, His foot on the haft of the spade. Such designs would be better withdrawn from the series of the Passion, and renamed as '*tableaux de genre,*' fitting any story to them that might suggest itself, for it is almost needless to say, that the Magdalen is as little honoured here



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Christ appearing to Magdalen. (Raphael.)

as her Master. If the painter's object is the embodiment of a momentary blunder, how comes she to be consenting to it? For every child who has read the story knows that this is not the person she turned to, recognised, and adored.

It is not too much to say, that no high name and no technical merit can render such conceptions enduring. No Christian would willingly live with the Person of our Lord thus parodied before his eyes. It is different with those who have restricted the error to the display of the spade only, in which they all follow each other like sheep into a devious path. Without this, but few examples of this subject are found in Italy after the 14th century.<sup>1</sup> We must, there-

<sup>1</sup> The small picture in the National Gallery, called, 'Francesco Mantegna,' is one exception.

fore, turn our attention more to the Magdalen, whose kneeling has been a kind of test of grace and pathos for all painters of female beauty.

Lorenzo di Credi—that one insipid offspring of the best period of Florentine Art—is seen here to great advantage. The Magdalen in this subject in the Uffizj at Florence, like the Woman of Samaria at the Well by him, in the same gallery, is the highest expression of his peculiar sweetness.

Titian also has hardly left a more exquisite conception of his class of female beauty. In his well-known picture bequeathed by Mr. Rogers to the National Gallery, Art can do no more in the delineation of an earnest, impetuous, and most beautiful woman. Her movement of recognition has been so sudden, that the delicate sleeve still stirs in the air. The Christ, however finely coloured, and forgetting His long scythe-like instrument, is an awkward and unsympathetic figure. But Titian sought nothing more here than what he has rendered, and we want no fiction of angels or tomb in that glorious Italian landscape.

Correggio, who, as we have seen in his Agony in the Garden, was one of the few to resist a false convention, has kept clear of the gardener delusion. His Christ, however, in his picture at Madrid, has nothing spiritual about Him, except the master's exquisite chiaroscuro; but the Magdalen, though loaded with more drapery than she can carry, has an unspeakable beauty.

Barroccio (died 1612), a great painter, however frivolous his types, is better here, in the picture in the Uffizj, than better men. If frivolous, he is not false. The moment chosen, too, is a variation from the everlasting 'Noli me tangere,' which demands a nicety of action for which but few were competent. He has chosen the moment of recognition; the sound of that one word has scarcely passed her Lord's lips—only long enough for the Magdalen to snatch her handkerchief from her eyes, for her kneeling position is what she evidently assumed to stoop and look into the sepulchre, in which posture she may be supposed to have 'turned' alternately to the angels and the Lord.

It needed the lapse of time to disengage the beautiful and fertile suggestions of this narrative from the absurdities which had encumbered it. Protestant religious Art hardly applied its freshened eye

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to the subject. Rembrandt would scarcely have ventured to depict the Magdalen. But a late great master, alone in his generation, gazing mentally upon the scene, saw it all centred in one wonder and joy-smitten face. The single head of the Magdalen, by the lamented Ary Scheffer, hearing the one word, 'Mary!' gives the very quintessence of fact and doctrine. In these blue eyes, suddenly dried, opened, and illumined, Christ is visible in His own benign Person; come not only to show that 'because I live ye shall live also,' but that in 'this flesh' we shall see God.

THE APPEARANCE OF CHRIST TO THE MARIES.

THIS subject has a place in Art, though it rarely occurs. St. Matthew, whose text, as we have seen, was selected by early Art as the chief authority for the subject of the Women at the Sepulchre, continues thus: 'And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail! And they came and held Him by the feet, and worshipped Him.' The difference between the narratives of Scripture regarding the visits of the women to the sepulchre gave rise to much argument among the mediæval writers. None have denied that our Lord appeared twice—first to the Magdalen, and secondly to the women returning to the city; but some have literally followed the words of Matthew, that the Magdalen was with the latter party, and thus saw Him twice, when, it appears, the interdict against touching His Person was taken off, for, as we see, they held Him by the feet. In ancient miniatures the Magdalen is omitted, and only two women meet Him.<sup>1</sup> Giotto is the only Italian master we remember who gives this second apparition. In his picture in the Accademia at Florence he introduces the Magdalen, and altogether lends it the character of a 'Noli me tangere.' But in miniatures of that time we occasionally see the figure of our Lord, always in the act of blessing, with the women clustered round His feet. The Greek Church makes the Virgin one of the three Myrrhophores—a supposition at variance with Scripture, propriety, and legend. For the great argument of old Latin writers is that the Virgin, keeping in her heart the words of Christ, that He should rise the third day, and thus representing in her sole person the immutable faith of the Church, stayed in her house that first morning after the Sabbath, and there received her Son's visit. (See Mrs. Jameson's 'Legends of the Madonna.')

<sup>1</sup> Greek MS., No. 510, Bibliothèque Impériale.

## THE JOURNEY TO EMMAUS.

Les Pèlerins d'Emmaus.

THIS incident appears neither in St. Matthew nor St. John—is mentioned only briefly by St. Mark: 'After that' (the appearance to the women), 'He appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country;' and as follows by St. Luke: 'And behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. - And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden, that they should not know Him. And He said unto them, What manner of communications are these, that ye have one to another as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto Him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? . . . And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went: and He made as though He would have gone further. But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And He went in to tarry with them' (Luke xxiv.)

The only disciple here named is Cleopas. But by Origen, St. Peter is supposed to have been the other, and that this is the appearance of Christ to him to which allusion has been made (see p. 277). This it is only needful to mention, because Art seems in some instances to have adopted this conjecture.

The subject of the Journey to Emmaus was also the fruit of the 14th century. It does not occur at all in the Greek Church, which thereby reduces the number of apparitions to nine, and which accounts for its not appearing in that earlier Art in Italy which was always based on Byzantine tradition. Duccio, who swelled the incidents of the Passion, as recorded in Art, to the unprecedented

number of twenty-six, was probably the first who introduced the subject to the world (woodcut, No. 224). With his fine feeling, he chose the true dramatic moment, when, coming in sight of Emmaus, called by the early writers a 'fortress' or 'castle,' the Lord made as if He would have gone farther, and the disciples constrained Him to abide with them.

There are few instances more capable of refinement of expression and action than this. On the one hand, the humility of the glorified



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Journey to Emmaus. (Duccio. Siena.)

Saviour, thus subjecting Himself to the conditions of a roadside wanderer, and putting the hospitality of His former followers to the proof, and on the other, their constraint practised freely on Him, more affectionately even (the original text bespeaks a vehement pressing) than the shortness of their intercourse warranted; for had not their hearts 'burned within them' at the wisdom of His discourse by the way? Duccio's conception tells the tale at once. They are at a point where two roads meet. There is the battlemented gate to the village, the rough paved way through it, and the younger traveller, the more demonstrative of the two, is pointing



in that direction; yet with a reverential courtesy of action which satisfies our jealousy for the divinity of the unknown guest. Christ stands by, only known to us by His doubled-ringed glory, otherwise no longer the Christ of the former scenes, and, this time, justifiably changed, for He appeared 'in another form.' But, it may be asked, why is this other form here, and generally in Art, studiously that of a pilgrim? with the hat, the staff, and the satchel. The answer is, that a conception in Art turns occasionally, as we have seen in 'the Agony in the Garden,' upon a single word—following the letter and all its extremest consequences rather than the spirit, and following it harmlessly in this case. For it is the word *stranger*—'Art thou only a *stranger* in Jerusalem?' (in the Latin text *peregrinus*, or *pilgrim*)—which is the sole key to this invariable mode of representation, the word bearing the same twofold meaning from the days of St. Paul—who speaks of 'strangers and pilgrims' only as synonyms of the same thing—to those of Duccio, when every stranger was still a pilgrim.<sup>1</sup>

This literal interpretation also suited the times, in respect of the hospitality to pilgrims enjoined to all the faithful, and regularly provided for in all religious houses. Thus, the Journey to Emmaus became the type of hospitality in the broader sense, and of conventual charity in particular, by which, according to the fervid feeling of the day, angels, and more than angels, might be entertained unawares.

For this reason it was, that Fra Angelico painted this subject in the convent of S. Marco, over the door by which travellers were admitted to entertainment; pointing the beautiful moral further, for his particular purpose, by transforming the disciples into pious Dominican monks, who, with gentle force, are constraining the heavenly Guest to abide with them (woodcut, No. 225, next page). All the gracious soul of Fra Angelico is in this design, a fit monitor to works of mercy: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'

<sup>1</sup> It may be added, that the sense attached by the Latin commentators to the passage, containing this suggestive word is not the same as in our English version. We have it, 'Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem?' &c.; they, 'Tu solus peregrinus es in Jerusalem,' or, 'Thou art the only stranger in Jerusalem who has not known these things.'



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Journey to Emmaus. (Fra Angelico. S. Marco.)

Fra Bartolomeo, another Dominican painter of the same Convent of S. Marco, in Florence, has the same subject on a similar compartment, and obviously imitated from Fra Angelico.

The subject is rare in Art, requiring, as it did, great nicety and refinement of treatment to render three male figures, of about the same age, attractive to a generation whose 'itching' eyes sought chiefly extravagance of action and violence of contrast. And it was the more difficult to treat when a less dramatic moment was chosen; as in a picture by Altobello Mellone (flourished in the 16th century), now in the collection of Count Castlebarco, at Milan, formerly in S. Bartolomeo, in Cremona, where the Christ is represented as having just joined the two pedestrians, His hand on the shoulder of the elder figure, who looks like St. Peter. Here the Lord is again in a pilgrim's habit, while, in the absence of the glory, the marks of the wounds on hands and feet reveal to us His identity.

But soon the very slender cause which had invested our Lord in

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this scene with the habit of a pilgrim was forgotten, and the two disciples, for no reason at all, adopted the pilgrim's costume, while our Lord retained His usual vest and mantle. Sometimes even all three are in the pilgrim's habit. In a miniature of the 14th century, in the old Burgundian Library at Brussels,<sup>1</sup> where the three are walking side by side, attired exactly alike, the centre figure is entirely gilt, as a sign of His glorified state.

Either of these last conceptions accounts for the French title for the subject—'Les Pèlerins d'Emmaus.'

<sup>1</sup> Latin Psalter. No. 9961.

## THE SUPPER AT EMMAUS.

*Ital.* Nostro Signore in Emaus (*or*, in fractione panis).      *Fr.* Les Pèlerins d'Emmaus.  
*Germ.* Christus mit den Jüngern zu Emmaus.

THIS scene is only mentioned by St. Luke: 'And it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and He vanished out of their sight' (Luke xxiv. 30, 31).

When two subjects follow closely on each other, both indicating the same fact, as in this case—where the Journey to Emmaus and the Supper at Emmaus both represent the same appearance of Christ—we must expect that they will alternately prevail, but seldom be simultaneously seen in Art. We see them together, though rarely, in the form of miniatures in early MSS., but otherwise the subject of the Supper does not occur till the 15th century. There were other reasons for its being thus unfrequent. The first condition of all Art is distinctness of meaning. Subjects, accordingly, which bore a general likeness to those already before the eye of 'the simple' were avoided. And here not only the Last Supper, given often with far less than thirteen figures, but the Pharisee's Feast, often seen with no more than three, were each likely to be confounded with the new comer. A mutilated bas-relief, placed in the basement story of the gallery at Bologna, representing the Supper at Emmaus, shows an early example of the subject. Being accompanied by a bas-relief of the same series, of Christ appearing to the Magdalen, where our Lord is already invested with the spade, the execution of both can hardly be earlier than the end of the 14th century. The arrangement is simple: three figures at a table—Christ in the centre—only bread before Him, which bears the mark of a cross. This leads to the probably direct cause for the more general introduction of this subject, viz., its interpretation as a type of the Sacrament of the Last Supper. There is evidence among the early Fathers that the incident at Emmaus was so considered. Speaking of the blindness of the

disciples on the way, St. Augustine says, 'For we do not unfitly take this obstacle in their sight to have been caused by Satan, that Jesus might not be known; but still it was so permitted by Christ up to the Sacrament of the Bread, that by partaking of the unity of His Body, the obstacle of the enemy might be understood to be removed.'

We must bear in mind, too, that the subject of the Last Supper, from its peculiar length, was one for which it was not easy to find adequate space. Accordingly, we observe that one of the first pictures of the Supper at Emmaus was painted, evidently in lieu of the Last Supper, for the Chapel of the Sacrament in S. Salvatore, at Venice, where it still remains. This is the well-known picture by Bellini, in which the turbaned head in shade of the figure on the right, is supposed to be the portrait of the painter's brother, Gentile.

The moment chosen is always the moment of the disciples' enlightenment—the breaking of the bread, 'in fractione panis.' Christ in this view, the presider at the board, always faces the spectator in the centre. Whether the meal had been commenced is questionable; Art was therefore left free to load the table with dishes, or, following only the chief idea, to place bread alone before the Lord. But a subject first starting into life in the 15th century, and especially in the atmosphere of Venice, where it oftenest occurs, was not likely to be conceived in a very ascetic or ideal spirit. Accordingly, in the gorgeous pictures in which the theme was embodied, there is the natural reflection of the generous fare and sumptuous raiment which were habitually before the painters' eyes. They introduced also the portraits of friends, or, as we shall see, of distinguished personages. Their favourite animals also figured in the scene—in Bellini there is his tame partridge—the table is spread with damask; rich curtains or pompous architecture inframe a background of Italian beauty; melting fruits, flasks of Cyprus wine, and Venetian glass adorn the board. A page with feathered cap is bringing a dish; the host looks on to see that his guests are well served, and a dog and cat have already begun their meal under the table.

Such, at least, is the conception given by Titian in more than one version of the scene (woodcut, No. 226, next page). In his

glorious picture in the Louvre—glorious in the sense of Art without reference to religious feeling—the disciple on the right of the Saviour, raising his hands with no more vehemence of surprise than might become the greatest monarch of the time, is supposed to be the portrait of the Emperor Charles V.; the disciple on the left, already started from his seat, though in no more haste than is convenient to a corpulent man, with folded unctuous palms, and round shaven face, and a pilgrim's hat hanging over his shoulders, that of Cardinal Ximenes; while the page, with plumed cap, is meant



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Supper at Emmaus. (Titian. Louvre.)

for the Infant, afterwards Philip II.; and the host, with both hands cavalierly stuck in his belt, for the grinder of Titian's colours.<sup>1</sup>

Paul Veronese, a half-century later, has further secularised the subject. In his grand picture, also in the Louvre, the chief incident

<sup>1</sup> This picture was originally painted by Titian for the Sala de' Pregadi in the Ducal Palace. The age of the page, apparently about nine or ten years old, would assign the date of the work to 1536 or 1537, Philip II. having been born in 1527. This also agrees with Titian's first (?) meeting with Charles V. in 1536, when the Infant may be supposed to have been with his father.

is almost lost in the crowd of seventeen persons which surround it—chiefly consisting, it is said, of the painter, his wife and family, many of whom are nearer the spectator's eye than the sacred group. This is especially the case with two little girls fondling a splendid dog in the foreground. Here, as in preceding representations, the idea of Christ being the pilgrim or stranger is lost. He is in His usual attire, while the disciples have each the pilgrim's staff in their hands—an implement they would certainly not have retained in their grasp whilst seated at table.

The picture of the subject by Marco Marziale, in the Belle Arti at Venice, is very remarkable. Both the disciples—grand, careworn men—are represented as pilgrims, the idea being carried out in the minutest details of their costume. On each side of Christ is an attendant, one of them a negro, as typical of the Gentiles, with folded arms, and an expression of peculiar awe. The moment of dawning enlightenment on the part of the two disciples is wonderfully expressed. Altogether, this picture, which is executed with a Dutch minuteness, has a reality which overpowers the convention, and converts these travel-soiled men into real wanderers and pilgrims, so that the curious staff with pointed end, and hook for carrying the wallet—a complete memento of the familiar implement of the time—which lies on the floor before the table, seems to belong naturally to those hardy hands.

But if the general likeness of a subject involving figures seated at a table to the Last Supper and to the Pharisee's Feast was the reason for the non-appearance of the Supper at Emmaus in the series of early Art, the very fact of such likeness evidently became one reason for its admission into the category of Art in the jovial 16th century. Baldassare Peruzzi's 'Four Banquets,' painted, probably, for some Sybarite's palace in Rome, and known by the engravings, represent the Marriage at Cana, the Pharisee's Feast, the Last Supper, and the Supper at Emmaus.

Jacobo Bassano was rather less profane in his choice. His Supper at Emmaus, with the cook at the fire, and a servant arranging the drinking-cups, is called 'La terza Cucina.' The other two cooking scenes are represented by the Rich Man's Feast with Lazarus at the door, and our Lord entertained by Martha and Mary.

Thus this subject may be said to have had comparatively no infancy of earnestness and innocence, but to have been born at once in the pomps and vanities of mature Art, and in the purple and fine linen of the Venetian school especially. It was destined, however, to more reverent treatment in a Northern land, and to return under the hands of one of the greatest religious painters in the world to those first spiritual principles which were always the dowry of early Art. Rembrandt took the subject of the Supper at Emmaus, and baptized it in the pure waters of the Gospel. His small and exquisite picture in the Louvre brings it for the first time into the cycle of religious Art. Here there is no lust of the flesh, or pride of the eye; no Christ, comely and well-liking, redolent of the good things of this world, with kings of the earth and portly ecclesiastics, playing with senseless pilgrims' staves, for His mock disciples. But here we have before us a countenance, pale and tender, meek and lowly of heart, adorned only with holiness and glorified life—with eyes of unfathomable pathos, needing no theatrical upcasting, for they see God everywhere. Here, too, we find that however 'holden' the eyes of the disciples till then, that face, so full of love and pity, those gracious, gentle hands, blessing the fruits of the earth, are sufficient to enlighten the blindest. Nor are these humble men, absorbed in sudden surprise, put into any fancy dress to illustrate the shadow of a wrongly interpreted word. Pilgrims they are, in the sense of 'pilgrims and strangers on earth;' such pilgrims as will rise up that same hour and go back the eight miles of the dusty way, to bring to the Apostles the glad tidings of the Lord's Resurrection, and 'how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.' Their actions, too, are touchingly true—the dignity of Nature, though seen in the lowliest of her children. One already perceiving all, with folded hands; the other, who is much like St. Peter, rising with hand on chair, scarcely trusting his eyes. And on the table there are no viands, and only the plainest utensils, with a space of mere light before the Saviour—that light with which the great painter transfigured the commonest objects, and which mildly illumines the rough walls, more like a prison than a palace, on which no decoration is seen but the mantles the weary men have thrown off and hung on a homely stand.



Rembrandt has also the subject more than once in his etchings. In one remarkable instance he goes farther in time, and gives a moment none but himself has conceived. Here the astonishment of the disciples, the sense of something supernatural, extends to the spectator—for the Lord is gone! The bread He broke is there, but He has vanished, and the empty chair standing by the table seems to mock the sight.

## THE UNBELIEF OF THOMAS.

*Ital.* L'Incredulità di S. Tommaso.      *Fr.* L'Incrédulité de Thomas ; *or,* l'Attouchement  
de Thomas.      *Germ.* Der ungläubige Thomas.

ST. JOHN alone relates the incident which furnishes this subject. On the first appearance of Christ to the Apostles collectively, on the evening of the first day of the week, when the disciples from Emmaus had first joined them, Thomas, not having been present, refused to believe in his Lord's Resurrection: 'Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe. And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then said He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God.'

This subject was too important not to find place in Art. To the early theologians it became the occasion of much pious argument, involving, St. Gregory says, the contradiction, according to our human reason, of a body so spiritual as to enter through closed doors, and yet so material as to be palpable to touch. Further, it was debated how a matter of faith should have been made subject by the Lord Himself to the conditions of sight and touch, faith being the evidence of things not seen. This question was answered in the same over-refining spirit; viz., that Thomas did not actually believe on sight, but that seeing and touching the Man, he confessed the God—an explanation, we need hardly say, invalidating all the force of the Lord's reproof: 'Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.' Others, more justifiably, argued that Thomas, struck with awe, may have abstained from touching at all, since Scripture does not say that he actually did so. But if this version ever obtained

in theology, it has left no traces on Art, which invariably represents Thomas as reaching his hand to touch, or in the act of touching, the wound in the side.

The Greek Church gave an early form to this subject. It was seen on the doors executed in the 11th century of the now destroyed Church of S. Paolo-fuori-le-Mura at Rome<sup>1</sup>—our Lord standing on a throne under a canopy, while St. Thomas, bending forward with reverence, lifts his hand to the side. The Apostles stand, five on each side, in actions of wonder and humility.

This is the type which continued in miniatures and other forms of Art—the Lord sometimes assuming a grand gesture with the uplifted right arm, as in this illustration (No. 227) from a miniature of about the year 1200, in the British Museum. Giotto retains the same arrangement in his series of the Passion in the Academy at Florence; but Thomas has drawn nearer to Jesus, and instead of reaching the hand towards the side, his fingers are buried in the wound. Here we again trace something of that Thomas-like spirit prevailing at Giotto's time, which Art, as in the subject of the Resurrection, sought to meet by more palpable proof. It was the consciousness of that spirit of doubt—leading the painter to place the hand of Thomas



227 Incredulity of Thomas (Byzantine MS., Harleian, 1810. A.D. 1200).

in the very wound—which here and in other subjects swept away reverential forms in Art. The same spirit in due time made the Lord no longer standing majestically, and almost unconcernedly, with uplifted arm, but with His hand lowered, showing the print of the wound, or even participating in the act, and Himself guiding

<sup>1</sup> D'Agincourt. Scultura, tab. xv.

the hand of the unbeliever to His side.<sup>1</sup> This is seen as early as Cima da Conegliano, pupil of Bellini, whose picture in the Venetian Academy shows how much the composition lost by this vain attempt to give double assurance to the eye. By this conception, the Lord's arm is lowered, the head and eyes cast down, while the act of guiding St. Thomas's hand is in itself an undignified and thankless movement (woodcut, No. 228).

The same degenerate conception is given by Michael Angelo Caravaggio, in a picture in the Vatican Gallery, by Mattia Preti,



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The Incredulity of Thomas. (Cima. Belle Arti, Venice.)

in the Dresden Gallery, and by many other painters of this subordinate class. And by few others was the Incredulity of St. Thomas attempted, the subject offering little pictorial attraction to eyes educated in mature and gorgeous Art.

In order, possibly, to counterbalance the sacrifice thus made of general elevation of sentiment which must have been tacitly felt by the painter, St. Thomas was occasionally placed on one knee, and in that position putting his fingers into the wound. This is seen in a picture by Andrea del Sarto, in another by Lairesse, and in

<sup>1</sup> M. Didron says that, after the 13th century, the Incredulity of St. Thomas was often represented, and that the early sculpture in Paris, 'la ville du scepticisme,' shows by its numerous and significant representations of the appearances of Christ, the anxiety that was felt to prove the fact of the Resurrection.—Guide de la Peinture Grecque, *note*, p. 200.

others mentioned by Zani. More rarely is the Apostle on both knees, not raising his hand at all, but confessing his fault with outstretched arms, 'My Lord and my God.' Poussin gives this moment with the Apostles on each side, and the closed doors behind. This is meant for a purely historical conception. Otherwise, after the time of Giotto, the Apostles ceased to group round the principal figures, their presence in no way assisting the conviction of the spectator. In Cima's picture the presence of St. Magnus, Bishop of Aquileia, patron saint, probably, of the individual for whom the picture was executed, gives it a devotional rather than historical character.

Cavazzuola, a great cinquecento Veronese painter, only now beginning to take his place in the history of Art, has a fine picture of this subject in the Verona Gallery. Christ has here the banner of the Resurrection in His left hand. In the background is seen the Ascension on the one hand, and the Descent of the Holy Ghost on the other.

Guercino has the same subject—half-length figures—in the gallery of the Vatican.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Incredulity of St. Thomas forms one of the modern mosaics in St. Peter's at Rome, executed from a picture by Camuccini, who apparently took the composition from a picture signed, 'Marcus de Pino faciebat A.D. 1573,' in the cathedral at Naples.

### JESUS APPEARING AT THE SEA OF TIBERIAS.

*Fr.* Le Christ apparaît aux Apôtres sur la Mer de Tibériade.

THIS subject is rarely seen in modern Art, and not at all in early forms. It is mentioned by St. John only, and it was in this wise that Jesus showed Himself. The disciples had been out fishing all night. 'But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered Him, No.' The Lord then told them to cast the net on the right side of the ship, and for the multitude of fishes they were not able to draw it up. Then St. John said to St. Peter, remembering, doubtless, the miraculous draught of fishes, 'It is the Lord;' and Peter girt his fisherman's coat unto him, and cast himself into the sea to come to Jesus.

This is the moment chosen, as seen in a picture by Cigoli, in the Pitti Palace. Our Lord stands on the shore; Peter is close to Him, half in the water, looking in His face with as much awe as faith, for 'none of the disciples durst ask Him, Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord.' The boats are close by, with figures pulling up the nets—St. Thomas, who is individually named in the gospel—true to his character, either not suspecting or not believing—busied in the work, while St. John, a young figure in the boat, looks at our Lord with intense devotion. Sometimes a fire is seen burning on the shore.

We frequently find this incident mistaken for the next following—the Charge to Peter; also, more pardonably, for the Miraculous Draught of Fishes—while in the old catalogue of the Pitti Gallery, where names of incidents, as of masters, were little discriminated, it is called Peter walking on the Water—'S. Pietro che cammina sulle acque.'

## THE CHARGE TO PETER.

THIS is the title given to the incident following the last, with the interval of the repast between, also told only by St. John. 'So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee.' The Lord put this question to Peter three times, in mystical allusion, it is supposed, to the Apostle's three denials, adding each time, 'Feed my sheep.'

There is something singularly unadapted to the reading of the eye in this incident. Art requires action. Here there is none, except that of one figure addressing another, but for what purpose, and whether for the first or third time, it would be impossible for Art to convey. It therefore might be predicated that this subject remained unthought of in Art before the dogma of the supremacy of the Romish Church arose, and also during those times when that dogma was not questioned. We therefore look backward for the appearance in Art of the Charge to Peter to a particular period in the history of Christianity, as men look forward to the appearance of a comet at a particular junction in the heavenly bodies. And we find it, accordingly, emerging above the horizon at the close of the 15th century, and completely above it in the reign of Leo the Tenth; also first seen in works of importance in the locality most suited to its presence—viz., in the Sistine Chapel of the Vatican. Perugino's fresco of the Charge to Peter still exists on the right-hand wall, and Raphael's cartoon of the subject is one of the series originally intended to adorn the lower part of the same walls. In both these, and generally in all representations, the giving of the Keys is added to the subject of the Charge; or rather, in point of Art, it may be said to supersede it, for this assertion of a dogma, under the form of the giving and taking of a conventional implement, shuts out all remembrance of the Scripture narrative. This is especially the case with Raphael's cartoon, which suffers by comparison with its fellow-works; for after standing before the Death of Ananias, the Preaching of St. Paul, and others, which bespeak

the closest adherence to the spirit of the sacred text, the eye turns away with more than indifference from these actual sheep and these gigantic keys, which have no possible point of congruity, except that of an equal departure from the laws of Art and the simplicity of the Gospel. In other respects, where the great master may be supposed to have followed his own feeling rather than the required forms of the time, his genius is vindicated, for in the arrangement of twelve male figures, ten of whom are without any distinguishing action, he has left a masterpiece of composition.

Donatello rendered the giving the Keys to Peter in a flat relief of indescribable beauty, lately purchased from the Campana collection, and now in the South Kensington Museum.<sup>1</sup> The Virgin, here crouched in front, has something hag-like in form and expression, though with a grandeur which silences criticism.

The Greek Church has in this subject merely recourse to inscriptions to explain its meaning. The Christ is standing holding a scroll, on which is written, 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?' St. Peter, standing before Him, says on another scroll, 'Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee.'

<sup>1</sup> See description and plate in 'Italian Sculpture of the Middle Ages,' by J. C. Robinson, Esq.



## THE ASCENSION.

*Ital.* L'Ascensione.*Fr.* L'Ascension.*Germ.* Die Himmelfahrt.

THIS last incident, properly speaking, of the Passion and Death of our Blessed Redeemer, is stated very simply in the Gospels. Neither St. Matthew nor St. John mentions it at all, and St. Mark rather as an article of faith. 'So, then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.' This testimony is embodied almost verbatim in the Creed: 'He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God.' St. Luke also speaks of the Ascension very briefly: 'And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.' But this Evangelist reserved a fuller account of the stupendous event for the Acts of the Apostles, where, in the first words of the first chapter, he enters on the subject: 'The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up.' Then, after referring to Christ's appearance 'after His Passion,' and the promise of the Holy Ghost conveyed by the Saviour's last words, he thus, with singular circumstantiality, describes the scene of the Ascension: 'And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly towards heaven, as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.'

This description, in part or as a whole, has been, during a number of centuries, variously turned to the purposes of Art. The Ascension is not among the very earliest subjects of Christian Art. Like the other great fundamental articles of our Creed, it seems at first to have been considered as above any evidence that could be presented

to the eye. Until perhaps the 7th or 8th century, we see no Crucifixions, Entombments, or Resurrections, even under the figure of the Descent into Hell, and also no Ascensions. The first forms under which the subject appears are very simple, but strikingly effective. An early ivory<sup>1</sup> represents Him without nimbus to head,



229 Ascension. (Early ivory.)

His back turned to the spectator, in the act of lively flight—birdlike—towards heaven, where the hand of the Father is stretched towards Him. Below are the Apostles, one of them probably meant for St. Peter, with outstretched arms after His Lord. There is fine feeling in the figure of the Lord, thus immediately averted from earth and turned to the heavenly joys awaiting Him (woodcut, No. 229). We feel this early form, therefore, to be the work of a true artist, kindling the imagination with what is hidden from the sight.

Another form gives the Saviour alone—springing from the grotesque cone of a hill—with His figure also turned from earth, and the arms extended towards a rainbow semicircle (frequently seen in miniatures of the 9th or 10th century) above. Here<sup>2</sup> there are no figures at all below, but the words, ‘Ascendans in altum captivam duxit captivitatem.’ Later than this, though it would be difficult to pronounce the date, is a miniature engraved in D’Agincourt (pl. xliii.) The Christ is in the same significant position, though less averted—with the plain Cross of the Resurrection in the left hand—the right uplifted, and already grasped by the hand of the Father above. On each side of Him, in the air, is an angel directing the attention of the Apostles below to the ascending figure; on the one side are five figures of the disciples standing, headed by a female figure with a nimbus, doubtless intended for the Virgin. On the other are six figures, making up the eleven existing at that time.

In the 11th and 12th centuries, Christ is seen surrounded by a

<sup>1</sup> Arundel. Class 4.

<sup>2</sup> Evangelarium. Brussels Library, No. 9428.

massive oval glory; the figure in profile, as if the sentiment of His turning to the joy that was set before Him were gradually waning; the hand of the Father still above, two angels in the air, evidently addressing the Apostles and the Virgin below; Christ's foot is still on the cone of a hill, below which a bust-length of the Prophet Habakkuk is seen looking up, and bearing a scroll with his name (woodcut, No. 230). This is supposed



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Ascension. (Ivory. 12th century.)

to be in allusion to the passage in the second chapter of his book: 'The Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him.'<sup>1</sup> Still the Christ is here moving upwards by

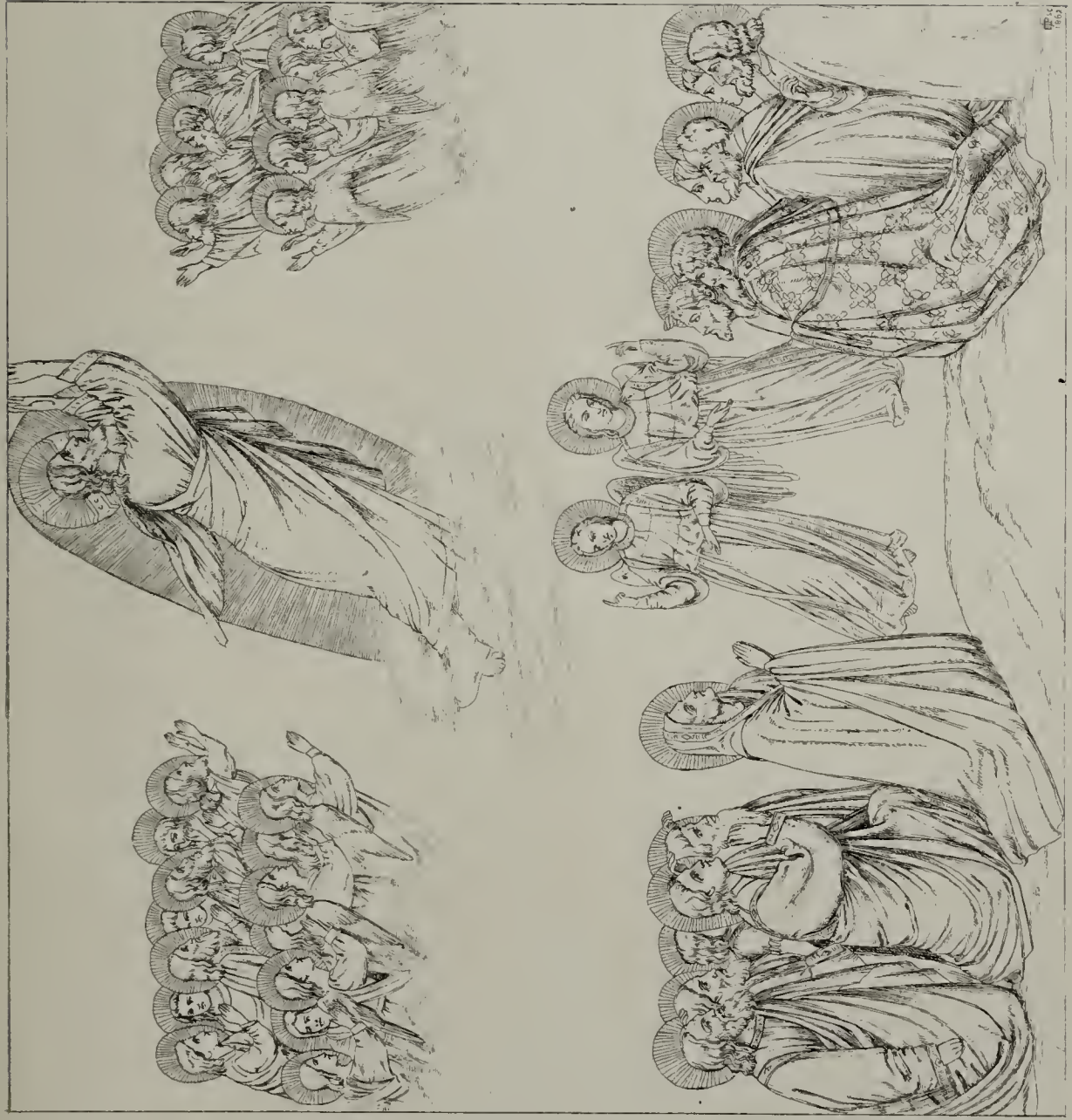
<sup>1</sup> Even as early as this period great confusion of idea is observable in the conception of the subject. D'Agincourt gives a plate (No. xxvii.) from a Syriac miniature, where a female figure with upraised hands—the action of prayer—intended probably for the Virgin, stands in the centre below; the Apostles on each side, and the two angels in the

His own apparent act, He carrying with Him the glory round His Person, not the glory bearing Him, and thus retaining the character of voluntary movement which ought to distinguish the Ascension from the Transfiguration, and from other and abstract representations of our Lord in the air. This was, doubtless, in allusion to His cleaving or breaking the way to heaven for the souls that were to follow through His Atonement. For, by early theologians, a passage in Micah was interpreted to refer to the Ascension of the Lord. 'The Breaker is come up before them; they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it, and their king shall pass before them, and the Lord on the head of them' (Micah ii. 13).

It would seem as if the words, 'He was taken up,' were, as time progressed, interpreted to mean the interposition of angels and the help of heavenly machinery. Christ no longer takes personal part in the act of movement, but, by the 12th and 13th centuries, appears seated passively in the mandorla, which is carried along by the sole agency of angels. Here, therefore, the main and actual idea of the Ascension is sacrificed. The glory in which the Lord sits is held by angels like a *tableau* presented to the view of those below, whom He is blessing from that height; but there is no sign that He is receding from them. It is a more sumptuous composition than that of a single figure rising through the air, but it is not so impressive, and was probably derived from the stage machinery of sacred plays.

Contemporary with this form of representation, and lasting through many generations, is another phase of the subject, more real in intention, but curiously showing the helplessness of Art which preceded the revival of painting in Italy. Taking advantage of a line in the sacred text, 'And a cloud received Him out of their sight,' the Person of the Saviour is ingeniously concealed from

midst, energetically pointing to the vision above. In the Christ, however, who stands with a terrible countenance above—holding a large scroll, and surrounded with a glory supported by angels, on a sort of platform full of eyes, with four fiery wings, and the heads of a lion, an ox, an eagle, and an angel—'The living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river of Chebar' (Ezekiel x. 20)—we recognise the vision of Ezekiel. But this miniature, attributed to the 4th century, is probably as falsely dated as it is named.

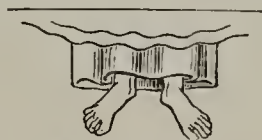


1805

Gravito. Arena Chapel. Padua.



sight. At first this extended to the upper half of the Person, which is buried in clouds,<sup>1</sup> but soon this device was adopted to get rid of the difficulty of the figure altogether, and nothing further was given to the eye of the spectator than the hem of the garment and the feet of the Lord (woodcut, No. 231); this remained the convenient resource for a considerable time, Fra Angelico, in his devout following of tradition, being the last painter of any note who took advantage of it. In his Ascension, in the Academy at Florence, only the lower part of the drapery is seen through the clouds that receive Him.



231 MS., British Museum.  
Biblia Regia, 2 B. VI.

But Giotto, before this, had cast aside all trammels of helplessness. His fresco of the Ascension in the Chapel of the Arena has the full composition below—the Apostles, the Virgin, and the angels addressing them—while in the figure of the Lord, which is entirely seen, he has returned to the early and beautiful action by which the Saviour is turning eagerly from the earth to glories concealed from us. Here He is again ‘the Breaker,’ opening the way to heaven before us; the action gaining fresh force and beauty by the sloping position of the figure, which, carrying along its own glory, is buoyant with its own divine power. Here no angel ventures to give help to Him who is able to draw all after Him; but the heavenly host—saints above and angels below—adore at respectful distance, and soar upward with Him. We give an etching. The figures below are shading their eyes from the light. This fresco is but a wreck, one foot of the Saviour obliterated, and the angels terminating cloudily rather from the injuries of time and man than from intention; yet the sublime expression of the composition is still conveyed. The arrangement of saints and angels on each side was, doubtless, in allusion to a belief embodied in the writings of the Fathers, that the heavenly host, each in their order, came to meet the Lord on His Ascension, inclining themselves before Him, and singing hymns of ineffable triumph. It would seem that St. Michael was believed to be one of the angels who addressed the Apostles—‘Ye men of Galilee’—an office quite consistent with him who was especially the Patron Saint and

<sup>1</sup> MS. Cotton. Nero, C. VI. British Museum.

Prince of the Church Militant, and that hastening before our Lord to Paradise, he announced His coming and sent forth the host to meet Him.<sup>1</sup>

Many magnificent representations of the Ascension followed Giotto's example in one respect—viz., in the distance at which the angels are placed, so that the figure is felt to rise in its own strength.<sup>2</sup> This is seen in Taddeo Gaddi, in the Florence Academy, where the Ascension appears, as not unfrequently, above the Entombment (see etching, p. 246), in Niccolo di Pietro in his often-quoted series in the chapter-house of S. Francesco at Pisa; and in Buffalmacco, engraved by Rosini, who have all given the highest character of grandeur and awe to the subject. The Lord is rising straight and full front, like a monumental effigy, sometimes with the banner of victory in one hand, and blessing with the other; or with a palm-branch—the sign of martyrdom—in the right hand; or with a crown on His head and a sceptre in His hand. This latter version, of which Niccolo di Pietro gives an instance, is rare. It may be ascribed to the royal idea in Micah, 'of the king going before;' or, perhaps, more particularly, to a statement by S. Buonaventura, that 'the Lord was triumphantly borne into heaven, crowned and attired like a king.' Instances occur of the omission of the Virgin from the place not assigned to her by Scripture, though not improbable as a fact; also instances where all the Maries are present with her. But no master, as far as we know, ventured on the fine action of Giotto, which links his fresco with the grand sentiment of the early times.

Perugino has left a magnificent picture, in point of Art, of the subject. It was painted in 1495, for the high altar of S. Pietro Maggiore, at Perugia, was presented by Pope Pius VII. to the city of Lyons, and is now the chief attraction of the public museum there. Here, by a change of conception—which substitutes a lingering earthly sentiment for the impatient foretaste of heavenly bliss—the sublimity of the upper part of the picture is greatly

<sup>1</sup> S. Buonaventura, 'Vita Christi,' p. 416.

<sup>2</sup> In later days, when tradition and feeling were alike lost, the angels have been represented as carrying the Lord in their own hands—the same also in the Resurrection. This is a manifest impropriety, on which Zani is very indignant (vol. ix. p. 82).





1875

THE ASCENSION.

Perugino. Museum. Lyons.



sacrificed. Our Lord, surrounded by a mandorla, or almond-shaped glory, is occupied only with those He leaves, blessing them with one hand, and directing their attention to heaven by pointing upward with the forefinger of the other. The mandorla is composed of winged cherub heads, on one of which, to all appearance a tender infant's skull, the Saviour's left foot most inappropriately rests. And thus supported, He stands perfectly still, like a mere *tableau* suspended for the sight of those below. Two angels on each side, playing on musical instruments, stand also formally on little platforms of clouds, equally as motionless, the flutter of their drapery, and of the Lord's, being caused by no wind but that which always blows at the command of Peruginesque convention. The interest lies with the group below, where the characters are grandly individual. The Virgin stands in the centre, young and exquisitely graceful, her upcast foreshortened head a beau ideal of spiritual beauty. St. Peter, with keys in hand, on one side, is gazing with all his might on his Lord above; St. Paul on the other side, a majestic figure with sword and book, one of the finest conceptions of the Apostle, stands looking away, wrapt in thought, like one who views the scene abstractedly through the grace of subsequent conversion. His presence here shows that no historical conception was meant, and that it is rather the Church in 'the glorious company of the Apostles,' thus witnessing the setting forth of a great article of faith. This view is confirmed by the number of figures, which include the Apostle Matthias, not chosen at the time of the Ascension, and who, with St. Paul, makes thirteen in number. Conspicuous amongst them is St. John, not the sweet and graceful youth, with almost feminine feeling, but a grand young man with a resolute character of countenance. St. Bartholomew is a grave, bearded man, thinking profoundly while he gazes from under his eyebrows; while St. Thomas, over-true to his name as Didymus, 'double or doubtful,' stands looking full at the spectator with an expression as if he mistrusted the evidence of his eyes. We give an etching.

Raphael's design for the Ascension—executed as one of the series of tapestries—is also not impressive in the upper part. The Saviour soars full front, with outstretched arms and upraised eyes and head, yet with a leisurely consciousness of being 'en évidence'

to those below. In the group of the Apostles there is more reality. They are no merely dignified figures, calmly watching their vanishing Lord, but men struck with sudden consternation, thrown on their knees, with outstretched hands and open mouths, their empty centre showing how suddenly He has been taken from them. Here the Virgin's figure is absent.

The Ascension is the subject which generally occupies the principal cupola of a Greek church. The figure of the Saviour is placed in the highest centre, and gains a retiring effect from the perspective of the building. He is represented, according to the 'Guide de la Peinture Grecque,' seated upon clouds, and welcomed by angels with musical instruments. The Virgin standing exactly below, with the angels dressed in white on each side of her, is a feature proper to the Greek Church.

The subject of the Ascension was also applied by Correggio to the same vaulted form, as in his well-known decoration of the cupola of the Church of S. Giovanni at Parma. This representation, though subversive of all traditional laws and Scriptural proprieties, has a consistency with itself, which renders it, all perishing and dropping as it is, only second in fascination to the Assumption of the Virgin in the cathedral close by. There is no resisting the boisterous delight of these little wingless urchin angels, swimming in air and light, peeping round clouds, or riding upon them, and chasing each other like troublesome kittens, into the very laps of grave Apostles. Not even the graver and more draped figures of the Evangelists and Fathers of the Church, two and two, all intent on their books, in the angles below, can give any colour of seriousness to the gambolling 'angioletti' playing hide-and-seek in the clouds that uphold them—the very acolytes that support the Gospel books looking wistfully round, as if longing to doff their little surplices and join in the game. In such a representation as this, 'religious Art' is forgotten altogether, and we can readily forgive a master who even under the title of the Ascension gives us an enchanting burlesque which does not suggest one thought of Scripture. Better this than the systematic perversion of it by other hands which affect the essential truths of our faith—in which respect Correggio, as we have had occasion to observe, is refreshingly blameless.

In thus giving to the subject of the Ascension the various forms natural to different periods and minds, Art has also retained the impress of a superstition which obtained in the scholastic times, and even still attracts the devotion of the pilgrim. In addition to the many holy places in Jerusalem, which to this day are matters of ardent controversy, the very spot on the Mount of Olives whence our Lord ascended was pointed out. There was no difficulty in this, for the prints of His sacred feet were asserted to have been left, and though pilgrims flocked daily to the place, each carrying off some of the very ground which had received the impression, yet no change ever took place in the form of the prints, which were miraculously renewed as fast as they were destroyed. Even when the Empress Helena built a church over the spot, in honour of the Agony in the Garden—not knowing, it must be concluded, of the existence of these sacred vestiges—the very paving-stones with which they unconsciously covered them were thrown into the workmen's faces as fast as they attempted to place them. Finally, a church was constructed around these precious memorials, with a circular opening in the roof above them, through which, by a reversal of dates, which does not seem to disturb the pilgrim's faith, the body of our Lord is supposed to have ascended. Of this church Art takes no account, but she retains the record of the footprints in the 'Speculum Salvationis,' and other religious illustrated works, both in the Italian and German forms of the 14th and 15th centuries.

## THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

THE simple combination of lines which constitutes the form of a cross was used as a heathen symbol before the period of Christianity. It is found on Egyptian coins of the Ptolemies and on Indian as well as Egyptian monuments. On the taking of the Temple of Serapis, at Alexandria, by Theodosius, in 395, the existence of this sign on various portions was pleaded by the Egyptian priests as an argument against the destruction of the edifice. Whether this cross may be looked upon as a mystic prefiguration of the great sign of Christianity, or whether merely as a fortuitous coincidence, owing to a simplicity of form which may have had more than one independent origin, it is not our purpose to inquire. As a heathen emblem it had various and very heterogeneous meanings, but among them, it may be observed, that of Eternal Life.

The question is, how early the Christian sign began to be used, and of what form that sign consisted. There seems no doubt that the cross was honoured by the Christians as an emblem of faith and a sign of a Christian profession in the earliest times, and possibly in the times of the Apostles. The earliest Christian writers, Justin Martyr (martyred A.D. 162) and Tertullian, treat much of the cross. The Apology by the former is a defence of the Christians, who were accused by the heathen as being worshippers of the cross in the sense of an idol. Both writers rise into fanciful imagery in its vindication, piously tracing its form in the shape of a man with his arms extended in prayer (the antique gesture), in that of a bird flying, of a ship sailing, and of other common objects in Nature and Art. The Cross was also held to be all-powerful against demons. It was the sign of recognition (it is supposed as the gesture of one crossing himself) between Christians, while its use in baptism loses itself in Christian antiquity.

It is, indeed, admitted by all writers on Christian antiquity, that the cross, under whatever conditions—whether in what the

learned denominate the permanent form of the sign, or the transient figure of the gesture, was from the earliest ages in vogue among Christians. Chrysostom, in the 4th century, no longer traces it like Tertullian in fanciful comparisons, but describes it in actual usage as seen everywhere held in honour, 'in the private house and the public market-place, in the desert, in the highway, on mountains, in forests, on hills, on the sea, in ships, on islands, on our beds and on our clothes, on our arms, in our chambers, in our banquets, on gold and silver vessels, on gems, in the paintings of our walls, on the bodies of diseased beasts, on human bodies possessed by devils, in war and peace, by day, by night, in the dances of the feasting, and the meetings of the fasting and praying.'<sup>1</sup> That this was true in some sense, there can be no question, but, at the same time, it must be owned, that ancient objects of Art, as far as hitherto known, afford no corroboration of the use of the cross in the simple transverse form familiar to us, at any period preceding or even closely succeeding the words of St. Chrysostom. But if the simple cross be not found in any relics of Art, there is no doubt, on the other hand, that another form of it exists on objects coeval with Chrysostom, and that in such abundance as to infer the truth of the fullest meaning of his words. This is, namely, the so-called monogram of Christ, in the more or less complex tracery of which the cross, if not actually seen, is at least indicated. This monogram is composed of two Greek letters, the *X* or *Ch* and *P* or *R*, which by a usual Greek abbreviation formed one composite letter out of the first consonants of the name of Christ, and was adopted evidently in familiar household usage by Christians alike of the East or West. There is no doubt, also, that this monogram was venerated, not only as containing the name of Christ, but as affording to the eye of faith the materials in some sort for the sign of the cross. It is found, namely, on innumerable monumental stones on the front of Christian sarcophagi, on bronze lamps, and at the bottom of glass vessels, some of which have been believed to have contained the Eucharistic wine, while others, from their inscriptions, are known to have served for convivial purposes. While, at all events, the monogram of Christ abounds in every collection of early



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<sup>1</sup> Milman's 'History of Christianity,' vol. iii. p. 497.

Christian relics, it would be difficult to find as early a specimen of the cross in its simplicity as now familiar to us. Some writers on Christian Art<sup>1</sup> have pleaded the early existence of the simple form of the cross from the fact that the Christians marked their bread with a cross, and have thence rather hastily concluded that they imprinted this sign on other objects in daily use. The evidence that they thus crossed their bread is gathered from those bas-reliefs on Christian sarcophagi, where, in the miracle of the Loaves and Fishes, our Lord is represented as blessing baskets of bread all inscribed as in our illustration (No. 233). But the force of this argument has been entirely neutralised by discoveries made since the date of these writers, for among the household objects found in Pompeii are loaves of bread of the same circular shape, and inscribed with exactly the same cruciform lines. This was, in short, the baker's mark, doubtless of great antiquity, and showing analogy with ancient Egyptian bread, which is marked with four equidistant notches. Thus the sign at all events was common as regards bread, both to Gentile and Christian, and in no way distinctive of the mysterious emblem of our faith.



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It would be difficult, even, to prove that the Cross of Constantine was of the simple construction as now understood. It was in A.D. 311 that the supposed vision of a luminous cross appeared to this emperor in the sky, accompanied by the words, 'In hoc signo vinces' ('in this sign thou shalt conquer'). But no description determines the exact form in which this supposed vision appeared.

234 The Labarum.  
(4th century.)

Neither is it said what species of cross it was which Constantine erected, resplendent with jewels, on the palace at Byzantium, or placed aloft on the sacred banner, or 'Labarum,' which preceded his armies in all engagements, or which he inscribed on the shields of his soldiers. As regards the Labarum, however, the coins of the time in which it is especially set forth, prove that the so-called cross upon it was nothing else than the same ever-recurring monogram of Christ. We give an illustration (No. 234) from a coin of the time of Constantine. The

<sup>1</sup> Bosio. Arringhi, &c.



coins of this subject are many and various in size, yet in no single instance does the simple cross appear. Nor, in the matter of the soldiers' shield, has Art left us without testimony, for in the early mosaics at Ravenna which represent the Emperor Justinian and Empress Theodora, the body-guard attending them are seen with their shields inscribed, not with the cross, according to our idea, but with the monogram.<sup>1</sup>

Granting, therefore, that the simple form of the cross existed, if at all, too rarely at this age to have left any trace behind, we may venture next to seek a cause for this peculiarity. And here the same cause suggests itself, which is admitted to account for the absence of the crucifix, or the figure of our Lord upon the Cross, for a far longer period. For early Christian Art, such as it appears in the bas-reliefs on sarcophagi, gave but one solitary incident from the story of our Lord's Passion, and that, as we have had repeated occasion to remark, utterly divested of all circumstances of suffering. Our Lord is represented as young and beautiful, free from bonds, with no 'accursed tree' on His shoulder; while the other subjects selected were such as were calculated to comfort rather than depress the infant faith. The first Christians needed the signs of their Redeemer's love and power as God, given in the healing the sick, and the raising of the dead, and not of His sufferings as man, the ignominy and horror of which were still in full practice as the worst of punishments. And if this feeling, as is supposed, led to the avoidance of all representation of the Crucifixion, why should it not also have, in a certain measure, forbidden that of the simpler form of the Cross, thus leading them to take refuge in the more covert way which the monogram afforded of expressing the sign of their faith? Assuming, therefore, a natural repugnance on the part of the Christians, we must remember, in addition, that the form of this instrument of punishment inspired a deeper and an unmitigated horror on the part of the Romans. Cicero (died forty-one years before Christ) says that 'the very name of the cross was

<sup>1</sup> It appears that the archæologists—if there were such—in Rubens' time, had come to the same conclusion, for in his series of the History of Constantine as connected with the apparition of the Cross—formerly in the Orleans Gallery, and engraved in the work of the Palais Royal, vol. ii.—the vision is represented in the full form of the monogram.

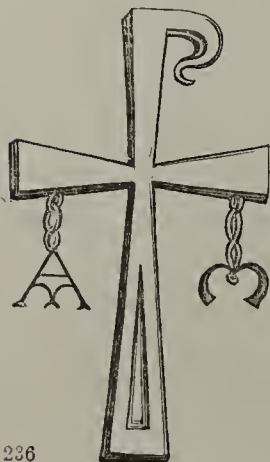
banished from the thoughts, eyes, and ears of a Roman citizen.' Thus the early Christians had a twofold motive for abstaining from an ominous combination of lines which certainly irritated their enemies and possibly depressed themselves. Nor does there seem any doubt that the form of the cross continued to inspire the same odium with the great body of Roman converts who followed the example of Constantine, not only until the abolition of the punishment of crucifixion by that emperor, but for a considerable time after. For it naturally required an interregnum of generations ere the old ideas connected with the 'arbor infelix' gave way before its new and glorious meaning. Accordingly, it is not till the middle of the 5th century, more than a hundred years after the cessation of death by crucifixion, that the pure form of the cross emerges to sight, no longer the sign of a horrible death, but of the Divine Triumph over all Death.

Returning, therefore, to the evidence of that form of Art which exists in greatest abundance, namely, coins, we find



235 First Coin with Cross. (5th century.)

the first appearance of the simple cross in the dignified form given in our illustration (No. 235) in a coin issued by Galla Placidia (died 451). And it emerges to view during the same period on large monuments of Art, the first instance of which, that can be authenticated, is found occupying the centre of the mosaic decorations on the roof of the Chapel of Galla Placidia, in Ravenna, erected about 440. By this time fresh Christian ideas had clustered round it, for it is guarded at the four angles by the signs of the Evangelists, probably their first appearance also on the scene of Christian Art.



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About a century later, it appears in the Church of S. Vitale, at Ravenna, equally simple in form, though different in its proportions, representing the 'Scutum Fidei,' or shield of faith, encircled in a wreath of laurel, and upheld by angels. Later still we see it in the same city, in the Church of S. Apollinare in Classe, surrounded with stars, and encircled with a wreath of gems.

At the same time, it is interesting to remark

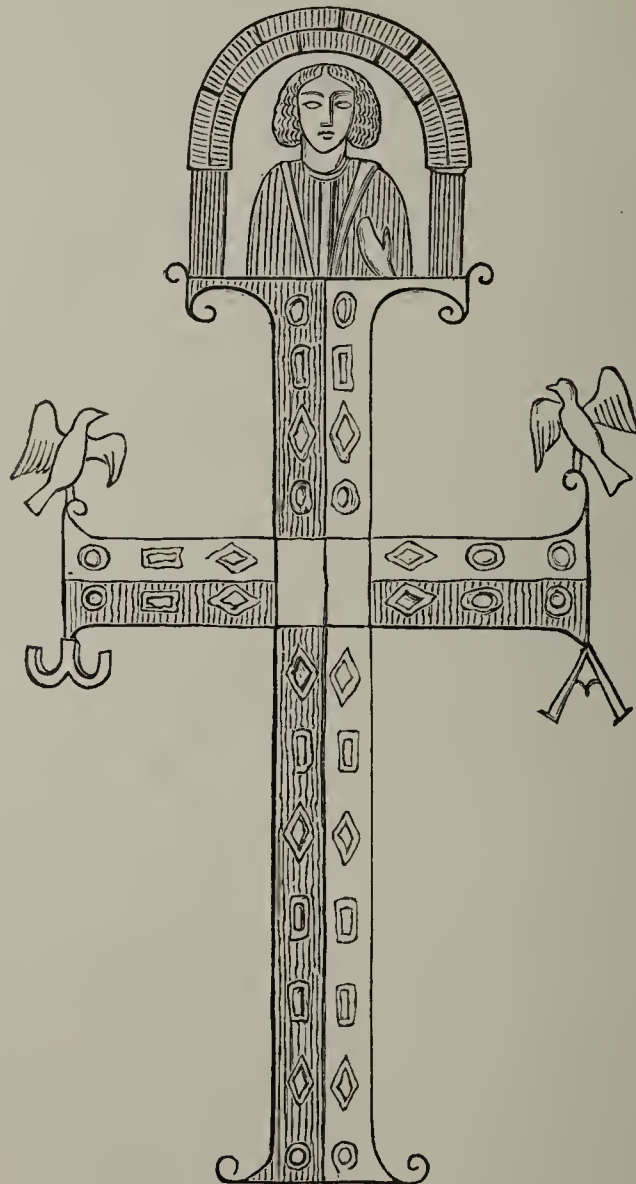
the gradual changes in the old form of the monogram of Christ, which still lingers in view, though no longer seen in its integrity. For some time the **X** or **Ch** is alone retained, as seen between two peacocks on one of the sarcophagi in Galla Placidia's Chapel. Or the **P** or **R** is seen adhering to the firmer forms of the real Cross, with the Alpha and the Omega dependent from it, as in our illustration (No. 236), from a tomb in the Church of S. Apollinare in Classe, at Ravenna. Or even a new idea springs up, and the Cross of Life stands supreme upon the globe of the world, as in woodcut (No. 237), taken from a font in the Church of S. Apollinare Nuovo, in the same ancient city.



It would seem that a cross studded with jewels, and associated with some form, actual or symbolical, of the Redeemer, held its place for some time. We give an illustration of an object of this class, surmounted by the head of Christ within a horseshoe form (woodcut, No. 238, next page). This is taken from an Evangelarium in the Munich Library, believed to have been executed in the 6th century. Here the pendent Alpha and Omega of early Ravenna usage are still seen, while the two birds perpetuate in some sort the meaning of the two peacocks to which we have alluded. Even in the slight hooked forms at the end of each limb of the cross may be seen the expiring vestiges of the **P** of the monogram. The writing in the centre, omitted in our woodcut, records, by an exceptional example, the name of the calligraphist. With this cross is probably coincident in time one richly gemmed (often engraved) upon a sarcophagus in the Catacombs, which is surmounted by the monogram in a circle, and adored by six Apostles on each side.

The 7th century shows us still the jewelled cross, ornamented with pendent gems in lieu of the Alpha and Omega. Several crosses of the kind are connected by gold chains with the gold crowns discovered near Toledo, and now exhibited in the Cluny Museum. A fringe of gold letters round the principal crowns shows these objects to be of the time of the Gothic king Reccesinthus, 649-672.

Still we have not yet arrived at the simple and abstract intention of the sign as it is now regarded. For, in examining the various



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Cross. (MS., 6th century. Library, Munich.)

crosses just illustrated, it is impossible not to be struck with the fact that they are meant to symbolise the Redeemer, rather than to signify the Christian faith. In the same sense as the Vine or the Rock, the Lamb or the Pelican, do they personate Him, not the faith in Him. In some instances, the Cross is directly put in His stead, in an historical as well as abstract sense. This is obvious, from the accessories around it, as in the case of the above-mentioned cross,

encircled with a wreath of jewels, in the Church of S. Apollinare in Classe, in Ravenna. Here the hand of the Father above, the figures of Moses and Elijah at each side, and the disciples as three sheep below, show that the scene is meant to represent the Transfiguration, and the Cross itself the Saviour. (See description of Transfiguration, vol. i. p. 340.)

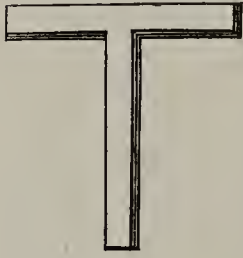
At the same time, the cross, as a mere sign, does appear; but always in a subordinate sense, being borne in the hand of our Lord, or of a disciple, as an attribute. These are invariably simple, however slightly various, in form. Thus our Lord stands on the holy Hill, with the four streams of Paradise issuing from His feet, holding a cross, or a disciple (for there is nothing to prove that the figure is meant, as usually stated, for that of St. Peter) bows before Him with a scroll in one hand and a similar cross in the other.

It would be beyond the limits of this work to enter further into detail on this subject. By the 6th century, we see the cross approaching nearer still to the conditions of the crucifix. This is observable of a pectoral cross—so called from being worn on the breast of ecclesiastical and royal personages—which, according to an ancient inscription on it, was presented by the Emperor Justin (elected emperor 519) to the Pope of that period, Gregory II. Here the Agnus Dei, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, stands in the centre, with the bust-length figure of our Lord in the act of benediction, occupying the upper end. Below is a figure believed to be John the Baptist, while with a profane presumption which only the abject exaltation of the Eastern emperors can account for, the figures of Justin and his wife, Flavia Eufemia, are placed at the transverse ends. From this cross to the actual crucifix there appears but a short step.

Meanwhile larger varieties of the simple sign gradually diversify the hemisphere of Art, distinguished as attributes of different sacred or ecclesiastical personages—as derived from different causes, or as belonging to different countries. We add a few specimens of the principal varieties.

The cross here given (No. 239) is derived from the Tau, or Hebrew letter T. This takes its origin from a passage in Ezekiel ix. 4: ‘And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of Jerusalem, and set

a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.' This mark was



239

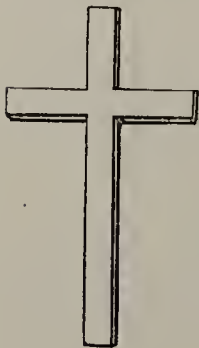
interpreted as the Tau by the Jewish converts to Christianity, who gladly persuaded themselves that a prefiguration of the Cross had been thus mystically given in the Old Testament. This fanciful interpretation is not allowed by Protestant commentators, but it



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held its place in mediæval Art. In the subject of the Elevation of the Brazen Serpent in the Wilderness, as a common type of the Crucifixion—in the 'Biblia Pauperum,' and in other devotional illustrated books of the 14th and 15th centuries—the Tau Cross is generally represented.

Our next illustration, No. 240, represents what is popularly called the Greek Cross, but the name has no foundation whatever in fact. The form is very ancient; it appears within the circular crown held by angels, in the Church of S. Vitale, at Ravenna, mentioned p. 318, called the Scutum Fidei, and its equilateral character is probably owing to the circumscribing conditions of this circle. It is also seen, for the same reason, on coins and in the centre of ancient crosses. The true Greek Cross appears farther on.



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Our woodcut No. 241 represents what is generally understood by the Sign of the Cross, being the form in which this sacred idea most abounds. Here it appears under its more especial intention as the Latin Cross, which is the usual form adopted in the Western or Catholic Church. It is also called the Cross of the Passion, being that which Christ usually carries on the way to Calvary.



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It further symbolises the rank of a bishop, as distinguished from that of an archbishop, and is called the Episcopal Cross.

Woodcut No. 242 represents a small long cross, which is seen in early works in the hand of our Lord as Second Person of the Trinity,

and which is also borne by Him as a kind of sceptre when engaged in the creation of the world. This is also frequent in the fore-foot of the Agnus Dei, as will be seen in our illustration from a capital of S. Ambrogio, at Milan (p. 336, No. 256).



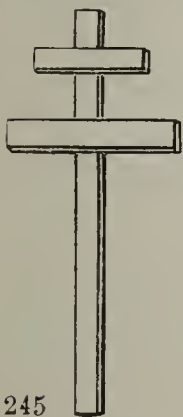
243

Woodcut No. 243 shows what is termed the Cross of the Resurrection. This is the triumphal banner, sometimes greatly amplified in form, and appended to a small and delicate cross with which our Lord is seen rising from the tomb, and also descending into Limbus.

The Cross of the Baptist (woodcut, No. 244). This is also delicate and small, and is usually represented as made of reed. The banner or <sup>244</sup> scroll is always inscribed, 'Ecce Agnus Dei.'

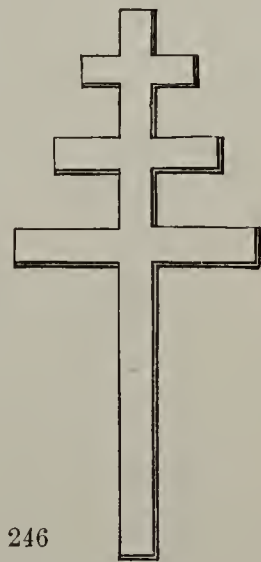


The Patriarchal Cross, or the Cross of the Holy Sepulchre (woodcut, No. 245). This is properly speaking the Greek Cross, and is supposed to have been brought from the East by the Crusaders. It is also called the Archbishop's Cross, and is further known by the name of the Cross of Lorraine. The second transverse line is supposed to represent the form of the inscription placed above our Saviour's head, I. N. R. I.



245

The Papal Cross (woodcut, No. 246), with three transverse bars, is distinguished from the Archbishop's



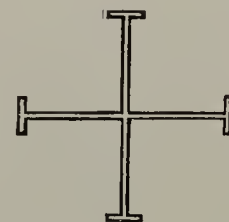
246

Cross, or from the simple cross carried by a bishop, by its three transverse bars, which typify the triple tiara.

This woodcut (No. 247) represents the Greek X or Ch, being the first letters of Christ's name. In mediæval times it was chiefly identified as the Cross of St. Andrew—the Apostle being believed to have been crucified on a cross of this form.

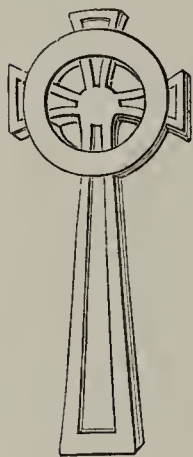


247



248

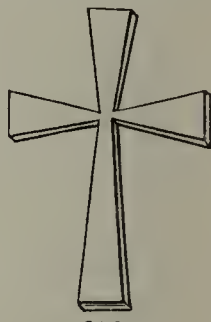
The Cross in Jerusalem (woodcut, No. 248). This is borne on armorial bearings as a token of a Crusader.



249

Woodcut No. 249 shows the Irish Cross, or Cross of Iona.

Woodcut No. 250 is the Pectoral Cross, which often contained a relic, and was worn on the breast of emperors, ecclesiastics, &c.



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Further and numberless varieties will be found on the coins of different countries, on armorial shields, on orders, &c. Last, though not least, the study of ecclesiastical architecture and decorations will show the cross in endless applications—from the ancient ground-plan of the edifice to the comparatively modern tin plate pricked with holes in the shape of a cross, against which the priest leans his ear to receive the confession of the Faithful.



## THE CRUCIFIX.

THE crucifix succeeded the cross in the chronology of sacred Art, and, we have reason to believe, preceded the Crucifixion; each forming a stage in the development of the same idea, and each overlapping the other in the attempt to anticipate the next step. Thus the cross, as we have shown, was, by the aid of accessories, made to symbolise the Person of the Redeemer; and the crucifix, as we shall see, by the same process, conveyed something of the fulness and scenery of the Crucifixion. Strictly speaking, however, the crucifix is to be regarded only in the light of a symbol, setting forth the Great Sacrifice foreshadowed in the Old Testament, and accomplished in the New; and figuratively, still more than actually, representing the Person of 'Christ crucified.' Like the cross, therefore, it is an abstract image, and in no way to be regarded in the sense of that historical event which has been fully treated in the subject of our Lord's Passion.

Writers on these subjects have alluded to an intermediate crucifical form, between the cross and the crucifix. This is described<sup>1</sup> as the figure of our Lord on the Cross, clothed, not nailed, and with His hands uplifted in prayer. For such an invention as this, we need hardly say there is no justification, either in Scripture or feeling. But its existence may be doubted. No example that we are aware of is extant, nor do these writers, who copy such assertions unquestioning one from the other, give a single instance. If such have ever been, they may possibly have derived their origin from a Gnostic heresy, that a phantom took its place on the Cross in the stead of Christ. And there are some early examples of the Crucifix which so far approximate to this idea as to divest our Lord of all signs of suffering. He stands there alive, with body upright and arms extended straight, with no nails, no wounds, no crown of thorns—frequently clothed, and with a regal crown—a God, young and beautiful, hanging without compulsion or pain—the perfect idea

<sup>1</sup> Münter's Sinnbilder.

of the voluntary sacrifice. This form of conception, of which we shall speak further, was doubtless attributable to the reverence of those who first approached this subject, by whom the sense of the divine triumph was made to predominate above that of the human death. It may also be partly owing to that principle in classic Art which disguised a subject of terror under some analogous but mitigated form. Thus, in the great fresco by Polygnotus, a Delphi, the unhappy Phædra, who had hung herself, was pictured seated in a swing.

The first notices of the existence of a crucifix—and by this term we mean a portable cross, bearing the figure indicated either flatly, as by painting or incising, or in semi-relief, or in the round, upon it—the first notices are quoted by most writers from the works of St. Gregory of Nyssa, Bishop of Tours, A.D. 574. The words of the ancient prelate would fail, however, to convince most modern archæologists that a crucifix in any sense now accepted was meant, while their possibly real meaning is beyond all conjecture.

Neither can we be certain, knowing how great a difference there may exist to the eye between objects of apparent similitude in description, that the injunctions of the often-quoted Council—called the Quini-seximum, or ‘in Trullo’ (a domed building)—had reference to the actual crucifix. This was a council held by Greek bishops, A.D. 692, who express themselves to the effect that it is high time that the types of the old Law should yield, ‘even in painting,’ to that which shows the fulfilment of the promises. ‘We therefore order that in the stead of the ancient Lamb (the Agnus Dei), Jesus Christ our Lord shall be shown henceforth in His human form, in the images—He being the Lamb which bears the iniquity of the world. In this way, without forgetting the height whence the Divine Word abased itself, we shall be led to the memory of His mortal life, of His sufferings, and of His death which paid the ransom of mankind.’

To those unaccustomed to see any direct representation of our Lord at all, except in scarce instances, widely separated in locality, such as the mosaics of ancient churches, ‘any image’ of Him might be said to recall His life, His sufferings, and His atonement. Considering also the absence of all allusion to the cross, on which the human figure of Christ was to be shown, the words of this edict must

be considered as not necessarily bearing the interpretation generally given to them.

In like manner we obtain from ancient writers no precise definition of the images of Christ proscribed by Leo the Isaurian, in the middle of the 8th century, the destruction of which led to the great schism, now more apparent in Art than in doctrine, between the Greek and Roman Churches. In that fierce inquisition, not even the lonely cell of the anchorite escaped the fury of the iconoclast; and a story is told of an old hermit who, on being deprived of an image of Christ which had beguiled his solitude, exclaimed in sorrow, 'You have taken away my God!' This is usually cited as an evidence that the image of which he was bereft was nothing less than that expressed under the term of a crucifix. Were a painter to represent this incident, he would wisely have no scruple in thus personifying the old man's God. But history has no latitude beyond that given by the nearest possible approach to the truth; and having seen the great difference between ancient and modern ideas, regarding the cross of Constantine's vision, it would be rash, in the total absence of all evidence on the part of Art, to identify the positive figure of our Lord crucified on the Cross with the 'images' thus remotely described. Until, therefore, Art discloses some unmistakable and long-hidden relic, all that can be said is, that the history of the crucifix commences in obscurity. When, also, the sacred symbol emerges to our view, the dates are too uncertain for us to venture to define them. But without attempting to lay down positive rules, it may be said that the early crucifix is generally a richly storied and composite object; the figure in the centre being surrounded by all that can enrich the idea, and that the narrow space can be made to contain. The transverse ends beyond the hands of the figure are occupied with bust-length figures of the Virgin and St. John, or of the Sun and Moon weeping and hiding their faces; and at the upper end, over the head of the Lord, is the hand of the Father, holding a wreath, or blessing—or the sun and moon, in their natural shapes as disk and crescent, are inserted, or even the pliable forms of angels are fitted in; while below, the serpent and the scull appear at the foot of the Cross. Frequently, too, all these are superseded by the attributes of the four Evangelists, at the four ends. Thus, the early crucifix forestalls many of those

incidents which are strictly proper to the expanded dimensions of the Crucifixion, and which have been considered more at length under that head. It is usually asserted that the earliest crucifixes represent our Lord as alive, but our researches do not corroborate this idea.



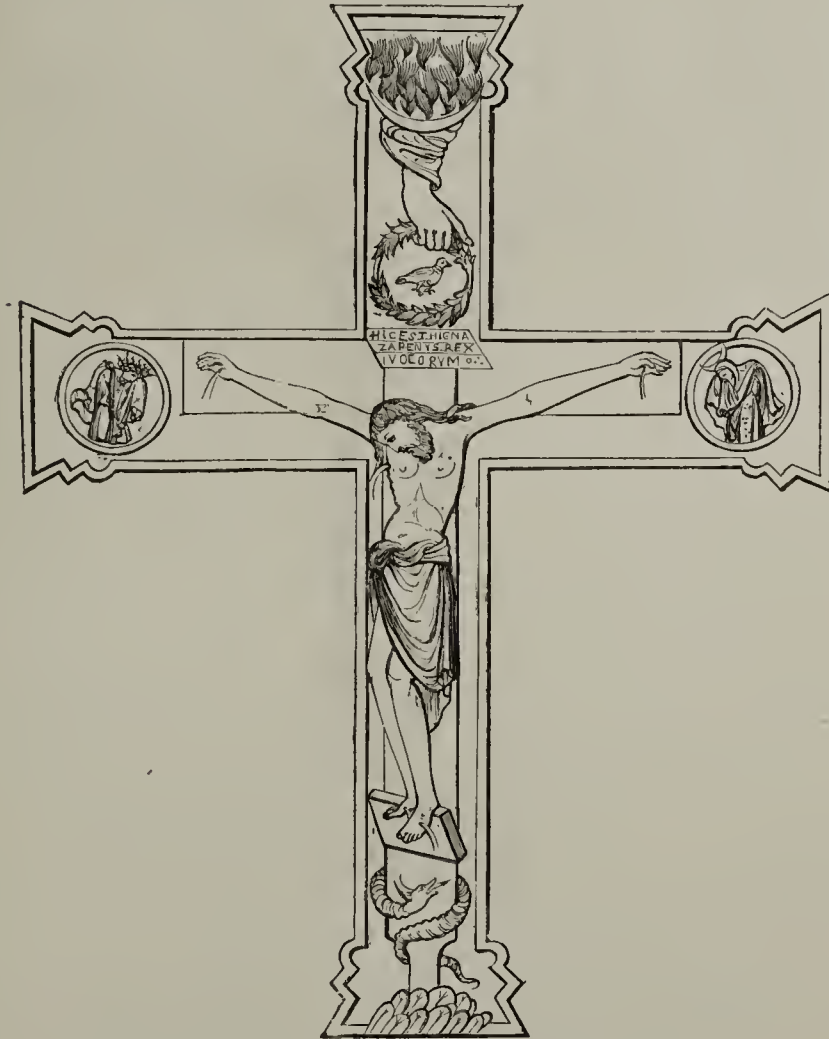
251

Early Pectoral Crucifix.

We give an illustration of a crucifix described and engraved by Cardinal Borgia,<sup>1</sup> which has the stamp of great antiquity (woodcut, No. 251). This was evidently a pectoral cross, from its shape. The Christ is clothed to the feet in a robe that is intended to be honourable in character. He is dead, with His eyes closed, and His head inclined. Sun and moon as disk and crescent are above. Here the Virgin and St. John, at the transverse ends, are rude signs rather than figures. Nevertheless, they serve to represent the inauguration, as it were, of that group which, whether as an accessory in the crucifix or as an historical adjunct to the Crucifixion, is universally seen. Here, too, the direct historical sense in which the crucifix encroaches on the Crucifixion is evident in the inscription—

<sup>1</sup> Borgia de Cruce Vaticana.

that traditional refuge of Greek Art—under each arm of our Lord: under the right, ‘Behold thy son;’ under the left, ‘Behold thy mother.’ This is the meaning, therefore, which must be borne in mind wherever we see those stereotyped figures of the Mother and the beloved disciple on each side of the Cross, even when our Lord, as in this case, is seen already dead.



252

Cross of Lothario. (9th century.)

A crucifix in the Treasury of Aix-la-Chapelle, of which the date is supposed to be certain, is another specimen of the earliest known kind where the Christ is represented as dead. This is a richly jewelled object, called the Cross of Lothario<sup>1</sup> (son of Charlemagne—

<sup>1</sup> The untrustworthiness, however, of a traditional name, even in such a treasury as that  
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died 855). Here, in addition to the Christ being dead, and not fully draped, as we see by our woodcut (No. 252), the figure is sunk and swayed, and the head fallen, as in the worst art of the 14th century, while all four wounds are given, and seen bleeding.<sup>1</sup> The hand of the Father, holding the wreath with the bird in it, shows the symbolic idea of the Trinity. These figures are all incised on a silver-gilt ground.



253

Hohenlohe Siegmaringen Crucifix.

A figure singularly opposed in character to that we have illustrated (it would be difficult to assign a date) exists on a crucifix formerly belonging to the family of Hohenlohe Siegmaringen, and, in 1862, in the Archiepiscopal Museum at Cologne.<sup>2</sup> This fulfils that idea of

of the ancient cathedral at Aix-la-Chapelle, is proved by another object in the same place, viz., the crown of Mary Queen of Scots, so called there for centuries, and which has nothing to do with that princess, even in date.

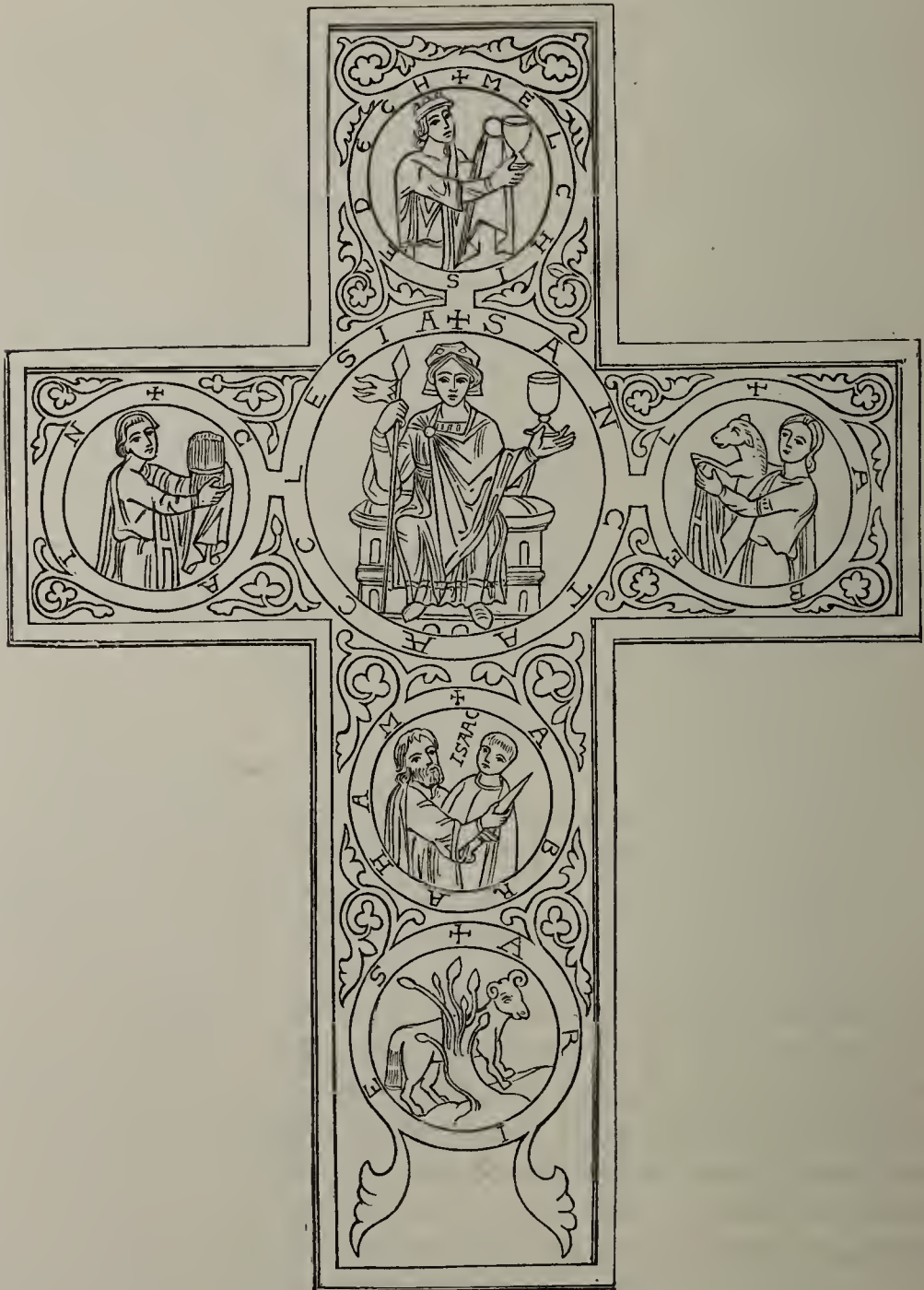
<sup>1</sup> *Mélanges Archéologiques*, vol. i.

<sup>2</sup> We are sorry to add, that this so-called Archiepiscopal Museum is not meant for the

the voluntary, and, therefore, to the eye, the apparently painless sacrifice, which early Art, in other portions of our Lord's history, especially embodies. The Lord is young, alive, and upright, with no wounds, no nails, no footboard, and no signs of suffering, while the simple and beautiful drapery invests the figure with an expression of innocence and even gladness. The cross on which the figure thus buoyantly hangs has been laid upon a larger and perhaps later bronze-gilt cross, on which are seen, incised at the transverse ends, the effigies of the Sun and Moon with torches, while above appears the right hand of the Father—'Dextera Dei.'

But early crucifixes developed even greater resources than most early Crucifixions, for back as well as front was turned to account. Here appear the types of the Old Covenant, appropriately occupying the reversed side to the great Alpha and Omega, in which all types meet. On the pectoral crucifix first described (see woodcut, No. 251), the reverse is filled, not by the types, but by the Bride of Christ. For it is impossible to examine this figure with feminine drapery, yet with head uncovered (for the veil of the Temple was rent), with arms upraised, the antique position of praise, and not feel that it is the Church who thus stands in the centre, and not, as some have supposed, the Virgin Mary. In the heads of the Evangelists, also, each with his gospel, through which the Church of Christ imparts all true doctrine, is seen further evidence. It would be contrary also to the first principles of Christian Art that the Madonna, who occupies the end of the Cross next to Christ's right hand on the other side, should be seen again on the same object standing in the centre. The fact that the Church is here intended is further proved by the unmistakable figure with the letters forming the word 'Ecclesia' round it, on the back of the Hohenlohe Siegmaringen cross (woodcut, No. 254). The Church here sits enthroned on the centre, back to back to her great Head, holding the chalice in the right hand and the banner in the left, according to the form of conception which, as classic influences died out, superseded the antique figure. Around her appear the types, peculiarly yet grandly given. Above, Melchisedec, after whose Order

desirable preservation of objects of Art in the ancient city of Cologne, but is only used as a place of sale. The very beautiful crucifixes from which we took our illustrations, Nos 253 and 254, have been sold, and their whereabouts is no longer known.



Christ was a priest for ever, holding forth the Eucharistical sacrifices of which the bread and wine offered to Abraham were the foreshadowings. On the left hand of the Church is Abel with the firstling of the



flock, and on the right, Cain with the fruit of the earth. Below, Abraham with an enormous knife in his right hand and a diminutive Isaac in his arms, and lower still the ram caught in what is intended to represent the thicket. The ornaments on this cross pronounce it to be of the 12th century.

The custom of adorning the back of the crucifix with appropriate subjects continued into the 14th century. Ciampini gives the back of a crucifix,<sup>1</sup> in which Adam and Eve, under the fatal tree, occupy most appropriately the centre, while around are the typical events from the lives of Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph.

Meanwhile the simple crucifix appears in the scene of Art, whether before the 11th century it would be difficult to say, but it is believed by that time. In these the figure is usually crowned, which, combined with its isolation from all accessories, gives it peculiar grandeur. The feature of the crown may be supposed to need no explanation, for it is obvious that those who aimed at the idea of the victory rather than the sacrifice, would choose the fittest insignia for the King of Glory. But a special origin for these crowned crucifixes, which are frequent, may be found in a passage in the hymn of the *Vexilla Regis*, composed in the 12th century:—

*Impleta sunt quæ concinit  
David fideli carmine,  
Dicendo nationibus :  
Regnavit a ligno Deus.*

We take this illustration (No. 255, next page) from a very remarkable crucifix in the possession of the Hon. Robert Curzon. This is unique in its severe rectangular forms, in the resolute straightness of head and person, and in the completeness and gorgeousness of the robe.<sup>2</sup> The hand of the Father above is the only accessory; the back of the single crucifix here ceases to be ornamented. This crucifix is executed in Limoges enamel.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii. tab. xi.

<sup>2</sup> In all cases where the human figure is covered in preference to being shown, a certain motive may be allowed for in the inability of the artist, or the rigidity of his material. Any drapery is easier than the figure: this is especially seen in the instance of enamels, the unpliant nature of the colours of which lent themselves better to the representation of the most gorgeous robe than to the peculiar surface of the human body.



255

Enamel Crucifix. (Hon. R. Curzon.)

Much more might be said on the subject of the crucifix, if the cross and the Crucifixion had not been treated before. In the limited sphere of this work we have only attempted to give those characteristics which belong to the crucifix itself. As Art matured, its outline will be found to correspond with that of the cross, and the figure of our Lord with that of the Crucifixion most in vogue at the same period.

## CHRIST AS THE LAMB.

THE LAMB without blemish—the Paschal Lamb—the Lamb of God that taketh away sin—the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world—all these Scriptural allusions to the spotless nature and to the sacrifice of Christ were, from the earliest period of Christianity, embodied by Art under the form of a lamb, a sheep, or a ram. The Church added her authority—as she still does in the liturgy—to this sacred definition: ‘O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.’

Although the innocent animal given in Art is under every circumstance to be considered as the type of our Lord, and, as such, is as consistent with itself as is the doctrine, however variously set forth in Old or New Testament, yet certain distinctions of the idea are traceable in Art corresponding with the diversities of time, place, and purpose in the Scriptures. Thus one of the earliest representations of the Lamb seems to have been intended not only as a symbol but as an actual substitute for the Person of Christ—for Art not venturing to depict the body of our Lord on the Cross, a lamb is mentioned by a bishop of the 4th century, St. Paulinus of Nola, as seen lying at the foot of the Cross, and thus setting forth the Crucifixion. Thus, also, the lamb or sheep seen standing with accessory of cross or banner in the centre of the domed roof of early churches, with the four Evangelists in the angles—as, for instance, in the oratory of SS. John the Baptist and Evangelist, in the baptistery of the Lateran,<sup>1</sup> the mosaics of which were executed in 462—represents the abstract idea of the Lamb of God to whom all the Gospels bear witness.

Or the Lamb, in a more allegorical sense, is seen standing on an eminence whence issue the four streams of Paradise, as in a bas-relief on the tomb of Galla Placidia, of the 5th century, at Ravenna. This is in allusion to the passage in the Revelation: ‘And I looked,

<sup>1</sup> Ciampini, vol. i. p. 240.

and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion' (chap. xiv. 1). In this instance the cross is behind the animal, with the Alpha and Omega hung on the transverse beam, thus grouping together three types of the same divine object.

Or the Lamb is seen lying 'as it had been slain' on a throne, between the seven candlesticks—resting on the book with the seven seals, or with the book, below the throne, as in the mosaic of S. Vitale at Ravenna, executed 547. This is again the apocalyptic Lamb.

Or if without candlesticks and book, the throne becomes an altar, and the Lamb the sacrifice of the Eucharist.

A further apocalyptic version sometimes occurs of a very monstrous kind, setting forth the words where the Lamb is described as having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent unto all the earth. This takes the form of a fabulous-looking animal with a crest of seven horns along its head, and with seven eyes on the side of its head, which is generally turned to the spectator.

Again, there is a form more directly indicative of the Crucifixion, and yet typical, where the animal stands with blood flowing from each foot and from the wound in the side, typifying the five wounds of Christ, the blood from the side being caught in a chalice.<sup>1</sup>

Then there is a form more familiar to us all, in pictures and miniatures, in the sculpture of ancient churches, in painted glass, &c.—as an animal sometimes with cruciform nimbus, holding the Cross with one fore-foot. We take our woodcut (No. 256) from the capital of a pillar in the atrium of S. Ambrogio, Milan. Sometimes the animal has ram's horns: this is rather the allusion to the sacrifice of Isaac, the type of the Crucifixion, 'when, behold a ram was caught in the thicket.'

Again, there was the Paschal lamb, a little effigy moulded in the wax of the great Paschal candle, blessed by the Pope and worn by the Faithful as a kind of amulet against evil, in a heart-shaped case, round their necks.

<sup>1</sup> See plate of the now destroyed mosaics of the Basilica of the Vatican. Ciampini, vol. iii. p. 42.



256

Agnus Dei. (Capital of Column. S. Ambrogio, Milan.)

Finally, we know the Lamb carrying a cross or banner to which the Baptist points, as he bears it upon the book of the Gospels, or in a circle—'Behold the Lamb of God' (see vol. i., woodcut No. 112)—and which descending, in the Art of Titian and his contemporaries, to the age of perfect Art and little meaning, loses all its mystic intention, and degenerates into a common sheep lying at the feet of the Precursor.

Yet all these varieties, however distinct in minuter circumstances, are each alike the *Agnus Dei*—the type of Christ—the one identical idea in which the Scriptures from first to last assert their doctrinal unity.

In some instances, even the figure of Christ—as in the Art of the Catacombs—is accompanied by a lamb with a cross on its head, standing beside Him on the mount, whence issue the four streams of Paradise. This is as if the type had so taken the place of the reality, that the human figure had become unintelligible without it. And thus it was in truth; for so identified, and in great measure so lost, was the idea of Christ during the first six centuries in that of a lamb, that there remains indirect though unmistakable evidence of the misapprehension to which it led in ignorant minds, by the prohibition laid on the further use of the symbol in the Council 'in Trullo,' held at Constantinople in 692, of which we have given an account under chapter 'The Crucifix,' p. 326.

This was reasonable enough; but, though the prohibition probably led to more direct representations of Christ, it certainly failed, even in the Eastern Church, and far more in the Latin, to banish the favourite symbol of the *Agnus Dei*. The distinctions in the idea, however, vanished in great measure, owing to the decline of religious Art, and for other reasons, after the 8th century; and the symbol became, in the sense of the abstract doctrine, limited to the figure we have mentioned as most familiar to us—that of a lamb, with the Cross as if held by the fore-foot.

In the 14th and 15th centuries a new impulse, destined to gain strength with the growth of the Reformation, was given to the symbol of the lamb, considered in an historical sense, by the great development in Art of the subjects from the Apocalypse. The miniatures of this period, of France and Germany, show the source

which inspired, or rather the contemporaneous streams of Art which flowed side by side with that of the brothers Van Eyck, whose mystic Lamb forms the central, culminating, and closing scene of the religious cycle portrayed in their great picture painted for St. Bavon, at Ghent. This compartment, called the Adoration of the Lamb—which is the only portion of the grand work left in the cathedral church at Ghent—may be considered in some respects as the highest exposition of all representations of this class, however marred by the then growing corruptions and inconsistencies of religious Art. The merit of this picture, which is exquisite in execution and expression, is the earnest reality of certain portions: its fault is the incongruous symbolism and convention of others. Whoever considers the nature of the apocalyptic vision—the first object of the painter's attention—must feel that the time for types and shadows is past, and that the accomplishment of all things is come. Though, therefore, the word 'Lamb' is used by the Apostle throughout the Book of Revelation, yet, who does not know that it is thus used no longer in the sense of a symbol, which is the substitute, but in that of a name, which is the designation for the pure and glorified Person of the Son of God? The eye turns, therefore, coldly away from the image of a lamb placed upon an altar, for the Lamb standing on an eminence typifying Mount Sion, with sheep around it, is a true symbol—they are all symbols together, but an animal elevated in the midst, and worshipped by human beings, becomes, by the only rightful reading of the eye, an image of the golden calf, or of any other four-footed object of idolatry. The inconsistencies are increased by the figures of angels, not 'standing round about the throne'—seraphs in position and rank—but kneeling round the altar-steps like acolytes, and like them flinging incense, while others bear the actual instruments of the Passion—the sponge, nails, &c.—which only add further confusion. It needed, doubtless, a disentanglement of idea, more than could be expected, from the established conventions and contradictions of the Art of the time, to avoid incongruities which are the emptier when contrasted with those portions, where the master was obviously left to his own truthful conceptions. For here, approaching from all sides, are seen that 'great multitude of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues'—the holy warriors and the holy pilgrims,

coming in solemn processions from afar—with other throngs already arrived in the celestial plain, clothed in white robes, and holding palms in their hands. Their forms are like unto ours; the landscape around them is a mere transcript of the sweet face of our outer nature; the graceful wrought-iron fountain in the midst is such an one as still sends forth its streams in an ancient Flemish city; yet we feel these creatures to be beings from whose eyes God has wiped away all tears—who will hunger and thirst no more; our imagination invests these flowery meads with the peace and radiance of celestial precincts, while the streams of the fountain are converted into living waters, to which the Lamb Himself will lead His redeemed. Here, in short, where all is human and natural in form, the spiritual depths of our nature are stirred; there, where all affects to be ideal, our sympathies instinctively close. The reason is easily found; in the one instance, the painter truly felt what he traced on the canvas; in the other, he merely borrowed a conventional though otherwise sacred symbol, and greatly misapplied it.

We have dwelt the more on the defects of this glorious picture, because in all representations from the Apocalypse, from Van Eyck to Albert Dürer, the subjects are more or less travestied by these incongruities, till one is tempted, especially in the presence of inferior works, to believe them unfitted for the conditions of Art. But far from this being really the case, one can conceive no higher occasion for the loftiest aims of religious Art than this stupendous vision, if treated with that earnest and reverential unity which must be its first condition, and which is more easy, perhaps, to express in the language of the eye, than in that of speech.

## CHRIST AS THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

IT was natural that Art should embody our Lord under that form in which He directly imaged Himself, or rather, in that among the many types by which He explained His mission and character to our comprehensions, which was most adapted to Art.

‘I am the way, the truth, and the life,’ were figures of speech which could find no entrance to the soul through the eye. ‘I am the vine,’ or ‘I am the door,’ were only partial interpreters when given in Art—themselves needing a glossary; but ‘I am the good shepherd’ supplied a type which fell from the blessed lips as visible to the eye as it was grateful to the mind, and needing no comment to become the most familiar, beautiful, and expressive of symbols. It may be even said that with the Scriptures abounding as they do with allusions to the human race under the metaphor of sheep—‘All we like sheep have gone astray;’ ‘We are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand’—that Art would have readily and naturally gone one step farther, and invested our Lord with the character of a shepherd, even if He had not so described Himself. In the days of persecution, this figure adapted itself also, peculiarly, to the condition and need of the early Christians. No enemy could draw offence or suspicion from this humble effigy of their God, which bore no sceptre except that of the Cross or the crook, and assumed no sovereignty save that of a shepherd caring for his sheep, and ready to lay down his life for them. And here the purpose to which the figure of a shepherd bearing a sheep on his shoulders was dedicated by the heathen, contributed, doubtless, to render this symbol of Christian doctrine the more safe. For Mercury, attired as a shepherd, with a ram on his shoulders,<sup>1</sup> borne in the same manner as in many of the Christian representations, was no unfrequent object, and in some instances has led to a difficulty in distinguishing between the two.

<sup>1</sup> Piper. Vol. i. p. 77.



No wonder, then, that the figure of the Good Shepherd should have been one of the earliest, as it was certainly the most popular and comprehensive, of Christian symbols. It is mentioned by Tertullian, who flourished at the beginning of the 3rd century, as engraved upon the glass and metal vessels used in the sacramental rites and love-feasts of the early Christians, fragments of which exist in our museums. It appears also on lamps, seals, and gems.

But it is chiefly known to us in its larger and more important forms in the flat reliefs on early sarcophagi, and as painted on the walls of the Roman Catacombs, and in the early mosaics of Ravenna.

Yet, with all these various modes of rendering, the subject can never be said to have lapsed into a mere convention. On the contrary, a marked distinctness of purpose, based on different passages in the same beautiful parable given in Luke and John, is evident, and may be classed under the following heads:—

1. In certain representations—one, for instance, on a sarcophagus in the Vatican, another a mosaic at Ravenna—our Lord is seen standing or seated. In the earlier instance, with a staff; in the latter, with a cross, caressing a sheep. Here He is in the abstract character of the Good Shepherd. Other sheep lie or stand around Him, with their heads turned in His direction, as if listening. These are the sheep that ‘know His voice.’

2. Another form shows the shepherd leaning on his staff with a melancholy air, his hand lifted to his head, the ancient gesture of one who had received ill tidings;<sup>1</sup> or seated, as in a wall-painting in the Catacombs, in a position of unmistakeable depression. This is the shepherd who has lost his sheep: ‘What man of you having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?’ (Luke xv. 4).

3. This is where he finds the sheep, and is catching it, sometimes in an ancient fashion still observable in pastoral countries, both North and South, by the tail.

4. The fourth representation is the most frequent. It is the

<sup>1</sup> Bucnarotti. *Vetri Antichi*, p. 24.

shepherd after his search, with the sheep on his shoulders, bearing it to the fold: 'And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.' In several instances the shepherd mourning for the loss of the animal, and in the next scene catching it, are given together; but there is one example given by Bosio, in which the three moments—the loss, the recovery, and the bearing it home, are seen in juxtaposition<sup>1</sup> (woodcut, No. 257). Thus the whole pastoral drama is seen at a glance.



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The Good Shepherd. (Ancient sarcophagus.)

This beautiful type of the love of the Saviour and the safety of the once stray soul meets the eye perpetually in the Art of the Catacombs, sometimes given singly, sometimes showing its pre-eminence in a Christian sense by its central position on the vaulted roof, with the other and more mediate types of salvation—Noah with the Ark—Abraham and Isaac—Daniel between the lions, &c.—as tributary forms around it (see woodcut, No. 3, vol. i.) The shepherd sometimes sustains the sheep with his outstretched arms, taking thus the form of the Cross, with the right hand holding the fore-feet, with the left the hind. Thus the animal lies helpless in the grasp of his preserver, who seems to say that no man shall pluck his ransomed creature from him. Or again, he holds the animal, as in a circle, round his neck, the four feet in both hands on his breast. This has a more endearing effect, and the sheep turns

<sup>1</sup> Bottari, tom. iii. tav. 163.

its head naturally and lovingly towards its master. In some cases all four feet are in his left hand, and the right holds the syrx, as if about to express his joy in music. In a few instances, even, the animal is quite free, the shepherd's hands being engaged, one with his pipe, the other in caressing a sheep at his side. The joy of the flock, to whom their lost companion is restored and their shepherd returned, is sometimes evident. In an illustration from the Catacombs, a sheep has risen on its hind-feet, like a dog welcoming his master.

The figure of the shepherd with the animal on his shoulders was also regarded as a symbol of the Resurrection—the Lord of souls thus bearing the sheep that were to stand at His right hand in the Day of Judgment to His everlasting mansions.

This idea, however, was not strictly adhered to, for sometimes it is a goat with horns—the animal so much abounding in Italy—which is thus supported.

In one instance mentioned by Buonarotti, a further idea is dwelt upon, when the shepherd, having set down his charge, is seen returning thanks for its restoration.

The subject of the Good Shepherd is redolent with the peculiar fragrance of early Christian feeling. It did not descend beyond perhaps the first six centuries, and no breath of a later and less pure Art has passed over it. For the Good Shepherd by Murillo, in the Madrid Gallery, is merely the lovely Christ Child, whom, in the veto imposed by the Spanish Church against all nude figures, the painter has attired in a costume justifying the introduction of some very matter-of-fact Spanish merinos. The reality of this subject, and not its symbolism, was its recommendation to the Spanish school, where real sheep were painted truer to life than spiritual shepherds. The Ribera in the National Gallery is an instance in point.

Neither Italian nor Netherlandish Art, properly speaking, exhibits the subject. In Philippe de Champagne's picture in the gallery at Lille, the ideal yields entirely to the material; a great fat sheep lies on the shoulders of a well-fed, robust man—both evidently much inconvenienced by the juxtaposition.

Steinle's well-known design of the Good Shepherd saving the strayed sheep is very beautiful in intention and expression. It does

not, however, like the early representations, illustrate any distinct passage in Scripture, and the sheep caught among the thorns has the pictorial demerit of not being at once intelligible to the untaught eye.

## CHRIST AS SECOND PERSON OF THE TRINITY.

THE mystery of the Trinity—three Persons and one God—which, in the words of St. Bernard, it was ‘temerity to search into, piety to believe, and life eternal to know’—was not approached by Art in the outward equality of the three Persons for many centuries. This was owing to the strong feeling entertained, in early Christian times, against any representation under a human form—and in no other form could He be conceived—of that First Person whom no man has seen at any time. Thus Art had no choice but to abstain from all attempt to depict this dogma, since only by the form in which Christ was known to us could the equality between the Father and Son be expressed.

In an historical sense, the three Persons under human semblance may be said to have been represented, at an early date, in the visit of the three angels to Abraham, which is seen in the mosaics at Ravenna. Neither early Art nor theology, however, admitted this to be a manifestation of the Trinity—and in the mosaic in question the three figures, each with a simple nimbus, are doubtless intended for the three angelic visitants. In an historical sense, too, Art, from an early time, gave the presence of the Trinity at the Baptism of our Lord, who is seen in His human Person with the accompanying symbols of the First and Third Person—the hand and the dove above Him. Our subject, however, is unconnected with sacred history, and relates only to ideal and abstract conceptions of this mystery, whether given in symbolic or human forms, or in a combination of both.

The three Persons, the First and Third in symbolic forms, may be seen together, rather in juxtaposition than in triune connection, as early as the 6th century. This appears in the mosaics of the Church of SS. Cosmo and Damian, and in those of other early Basilicas at Rome, where Christ is represented in His human form with the hand of the Father holding a crown above Him, and a bird with a glory round its head on a tree or in the air at His side. The

Apostles ranged on each hand, show that though each Person of the Trinity is thus indicated, it is not the mere idea of the dogma which is intended. This idea is more directly seen, with an exchange of symbolism, in the 12th century. In St. John Lateran, at Rome, for instance, the Second Person is effigied by a jewelled cross, over which hovers the dove, while the Father above assumes the human form seen as far as a bust-length in the clouds.<sup>1</sup>

It would appear that as soon as Art ventured to represent the First Person under the form of man, the perfect equality and similitude of the Three was, as a natural consequence, immediately aimed at. This is believed to have occurred first in a manuscript by St. Dunstan (died A.D. 908), where three figures are seen attired in royal robes with crowns and sceptres. The First and Second Person are here alike in age; but Art, whose great charge it is, in imitation of her great original, Nature, to make no one Being exactly like another, has gone so far as to distinguish the Third Person by a more youthful aspect. This tendency to individualise shows itself, as time proceeded, by different attributes proper to each. To the First Person, for instance, is given the globe; to the Second, the Cross; and to the Third, the book. Only in one particular exemplification of the mystery do these attributes vanish before the attempt to establish a perfect identity. This occurs in a series of the Creation, where God says, 'Let us make man in our image.' Here the noun singular, 'image,' being interpreted strictly as the same for all three, is conveyed by three figures of identical features, dress, and position, who, seated side by side, hold a scroll on which this text is inscribed.<sup>2</sup> There is something startling and supernatural to the eye in this exact repetition of the same form, a mystery as much in Art as it is in theology. Yet even here the necessity of a distinction, though reduced to a minimum degree, is vindicated by a slight mark, typifying rather than depicting the print of the nails on the feet of the centre figure. The Second Person, properly placed between the First and the Third, is thus identified. He also is the only one whose uplifted hand expresses the act of blessing.

Such representations, connected with the language of Genesis, may, however, in some sense be termed historical. When Art is left to the mere ideal conception, her impatience of all repetitions

<sup>1</sup> Didron, 'Iconographie Chrétienne,' p. 560.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Woodcut, No. 137.

of the same form expresses itself more and more in an appeal against too literal an embodiment of the mystery. At the same time, it would appear that the increasing necessity, in the growing scepticism of the 13th and succeeding centuries, for upholding the divinity of Christ, and the great dogma of His being seated at the right hand of God, led to a careful habit of retaining the identity between the First and Second Person, while the Third resumed His historical symbol—the dove.



In all these Trinities, whether in three equal Persons or in the two Persons and the dove, it may be observed that the character of Christ takes the lead, and imparts itself to all, the supremacy of the idea which connects man with God being seen in that so-called livery of the Cross—the cruciform nimbus—which, up to the 14th century, generally environs alike the head of each.

A further reason for the introduction of the Holy Spirit under

this form of the dove may be traced in the doctrinal purpose to which its position is made to serve. For the dove is almost invariably seen in the Art of the 13th and 14th centuries, and even occasionally as late as the 16th, hovering between the Father and the Son, with the tips of its wings touching the lips of each (woodcut, No. 258). This illustrates what is called the double procession of the Holy Spirit—in the words of the Nicene Creed, ‘proceeding from the Father and the Son.’ This is a feature in Art peculiar to the Latin Church, which probably thus sought to exhibit its point of departure in doctrine from the Church of Byzantium.

No more beautiful representation of the Trinity can be quoted than that by Memling, towards the close of the 15th century, contained in the celebrated Breviary of Cardinal Grimani, at Venice. Here the identity of the First and Second Persons, who are clothed in the same royal robe, is carefully preserved, and the distinction conveyed only by the attributes—the Son bears His Cross, in sign of His mediatorial character, while, as if the more jealously to assert His no less equality with the Father, the sceptre of authority is held by one hand of each. (We give an etching.) Here the feeling of the great master seems to have forbidden that stiff and unnatural position of the dove, typical of the doctrine of the procession. The sacred bird hovers gracefully between them, and the crown above is emblematical of the equal Godhead of all. Nevertheless the Second Person takes the lead to the eye of the believer, for the end of the Cross rests upon the world.

It may be remarked that in these forms of representation, where the locality is heaven, the Trinity, whether two only, or all three in human forms, are always seated. This position refers to the figure of speech, illustrative of repose and command, which describes the First Person as sitting on the throne or the heavens, and Christ as seated at His right hand.<sup>1</sup> Not that Art has always observed this position of the Son, who in our etching, as in many instances that could be given, is on the left of the Father. This is probably

<sup>1</sup> In scholastic times, when every sense but, or besides, the most obvious one was given to the forms of Scripture speech, the idea of the exclusive privilege of the seated posture possessed by the Trinity was worked out to the verge of the burlesque, as described in the history of the Fall of Lucifer (see vol. i. p. 57).







THE TRINITY.

*Memling. Grimani Breviary. S. Mark's Library. Venice.*

traceable to a confusion even still existing between the right and left of the figures represented and that of the spectator.

The three Persons of the Trinity, it is true, are also seen standing, and even in animate gestures, as in the subject of the Creation of the Angels (see etching, vol. i. p. 62), or of Man. But whenever the abstract idea of the great mystery is intended, the seated position will always be found. This position of the Trinity is the most stately and reverential which Art has embodied. There is something superhuman to the eye in these grand and solemn figures which sit side by side—separate, yet the same—‘the Father Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord,’ invested with purple mantles, and with such insignia as conveyed the highest impersonation of dignity proper to the age or country. And here, as well as in the Art, the stamp of history is found, for in the 15th and 16th centuries we find the regal or imperial idea, which had hitherto prevailed, superseded by that which had become one higher still in the feeling of Christendom—the idea, namely, of the Papal power (see last woodcut, No. 258). The Father and Son accordingly appear with the triple tiara of the Vatican and the Papal mantle, alike in every respect, only that the priestly character of the Son is distinguished by the stole seen across His breast. Sometimes each holds the sacred volume.

Rubens’ picture in the Munich Gallery is one of the last expressions of this class of Trinity—a magnificent work of Art, but with an entire abandonment of the intention of the conception (woodcut, No. 259, next page). No mystery of equality of Persons, or dogma of trinity in unity, can be deduced here. To the unassisted eye it is rather an epitome of the Three Ages—Age lolling on clouds, Manhood sitting erect, and Infancy gambolling around a globe below. Here also another abstract idea, that of Christ as Mediator, which we shall presently consider, is superadded. Christ has His Cross (as in the etching from Memling), and the Father the sceptre, and both have their feet upon the globe as the indication of joint supremacy; but Christ is showing His wounds in intercession for mankind, and the character of the Mediator thus supersedes that of the Second Person of the Godhead.

The history of the Coronation of the Virgin also supplies a large



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The Trinity. (Rubens. Munich Gallery.)

number of illustrations of this class of Trinity, for which the reader is referred to Mrs. Jameson's 'Legends of the Madonna.'

We now turn to another distinct form in which Art has attempted to embody this mystery. Here the chief condition of the idea of the Trinity is lost, the equality of the Persons being as far sundered as life from death and truth from semblance.

By a strange reversal in the feelings of Art, the First Person is here alone invested with the human shape, and the Second Person represented by the mere symbol of a crucifix, with an image of a dead Christ upon it, thus sacrificing the idea of His divine nature to that of His earthly sufferings. We give a specimen of this strange device, known by the name of the Italian Trinity, which obtained a strange popularity from the 12th to the 17th century, exhibiting little variety of composition during all those



Italian Trinity. (14th century.)

ages (woodcut, No. 260). The Father is always seen supporting the Cross by the two ends of the transverse beam, the effigy of the dead Son hanging generally between His knees, while the dove appears proceeding from the lips of the Father and touching the head of the Son—which is the earliest form—or perched like a mere bird on one side of the cross. Angels sometimes support the feet of the Saviour. It would be difficult to explain this spurious kind of *Ecce Homo* by any text of Scripture or tenet of theology. It comes before our eyes like false logic in Art, the propositions of which are unequal. The Father is a living person, the Son a dead image, and on a different scale of size. The Father can be nowhere but in heaven (seated sometimes on the rainbow), the Son nowhere but on earth, while the dove ceases to form a bond of union between beings of such unequal conditions, and, in the sense of His procession from both, becomes a theological absurdity. One of the grandest expressions of this composite idea, stripped of its more unattractive features, is a fresco by Masaccio, recently discovered in S. Maria Novella, in Florence. The Almighty stands on a kind of ledge, the Son is of the same size, and the Cross is fixed in the ground. The hands of the First Person are under the transverse

beam, illustrating the passage in Scripture: 'Underneath are the everlasting arms.' The dove is between, but not touching either; the Virgin and St. John stand on each side, within the grand architectural arch which enframes the subject; outside of which kneel the figures of the donor and his wife.

Another magnificent example is that by Pesellino (died 1457), in the National Gallery, the masterpiece of that little known master, and perhaps the finest work of its time.

Though called *par excellence* the Italian Trinity, this form abounds in the miniatures of every school, and especially in all forms of Art in the school of Nuremberg. There its most important illustration is seen in the Adoration of the Trinity, by Albert Dürer, now in the Vienna Gallery.

There have been other attempts to embody the triune doctrine—such as the three Persons seen with one body and three heads—or one head and three faces—or under a combination of three interlaced circles—or as an aged figure within a circle holding an equilateral triangle, &c. The first mentioned, especially, are monstrosities of a frightful character, and all alike are unfit to be considered in the domain of Art.

There are occasions on which the First and Second Persons of the Trinity are seated together on a throne without the Third. This is usually found connected with the Psalm: 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool' (Ps. cx. 1). (Woodcut, No. 261.)



CHRIST SEATED IN A GLORY, WHICH IS SOMETIMES BORNE BY  
ANGELS.

*Ital.* Una Maestà.

THERE are certain representations of our Lord seen on high within a glory, and seated upon the rainbow, or upon a throne, which are known under the general term of 'Christ in Glory,' and approve themselves to our feelings by their solemnity and grandeur, without our precisely defining their meaning. These date, in the form of miniatures, from the 10th century, and seem, when compared with the classic Christian Art of preceding ages, to initiate a new epoch of feeling as well as forms. The Christ of the early bas-reliefs of the Catacombs is a beautiful and angelic being, ever young and winning; flowers, we feel, rise up beneath His tread, and perpetual spring invests His path. But He inspires neither fear nor awe, nor sense of immeasurable moral distance and boundless superiority of nature. Such higher and more congruous ideas were, it seems, reserved for a ruder and more earnest race to enunciate, who, having buried all reminiscences of classic beauty and convention beneath the wreck of empires and the convulsions of social order, drew forth, as De Profundis, the true elements of Christian Art, all helpless and unformed, but strong in the first conditions of the reverential and the supernatural. The nature of this transformation derives further corroboration from the locality in which it first appeared, for these more solemn ideas of Christ in Art emerge to view not in a Southern or Eastern land, but from amidst a Northern people, being first seen, we are inclined to believe, in the forms of Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-French Art. Christ is here no longer the fairest of the sons of men, endowed with the terrestrial persuasions of grace and beauty, but He is the enthroned God of the Universe, riding upon the heavens, and as separate from us as they are from the earth. The general arrangement of this subject, which makes Christ seated on a rainbow, and with another rainbow round about

Him, was taken from the vision of Ezekiel (i. 27, 28): 'And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of His loins even upward, and from the appearance of His loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about.'

The ideas of the Infinite and the Everlasting had now gained possession of the minds of men, grafting themselves more readily upon the mystic mythology of Odin than upon the more earthly creed of the Pantheon. Not inaptly are these subjects termed in Italian 'Una Maestà'—or, as we simply translate it, 'A Majesty.' Nor is their least recommendation that they leave the imagination free while lifting it to the utmost range of vague but pious conjecture. For to the devout eye the image is always that of 'Christ in Glory;' and whether intended to set Him forth as a King ruling the destinies of this earth, or as a Judge, coming to weigh it in the balance, is equally edifying and appropriate. At the same time, a little study of the subject elucidates certain distinctions in arrangement which in some measure define the purpose of the artist, without diminishing the grandeur of the general thought.

In the scheme of Christian subjects, which had greatly increased in number by the 10th century, Christ, surrounded with a glory, and seated on a rainbow or on a throne, holding the book or sceptre in one hand and blessing with the other, and sometimes borne along by angels, will always be found next after the representation of the Descent of the Holy Ghost. With that, the revealed history of the past terminates; with the Last Judgment the revealed prophecy of the Future commences: this abstract subject of Christ in glory stands between them. Such being its position in religious illustration, there can be no doubt that this picture is intended to set forth the accomplishment of the great Christian idea, culminating in Christ's resumption of His divine state. This is frequently confirmed by the globe or sphere which our Lord holds in His hand—in the twofold character of Creator and Saviour; more often still by the attributes of the four Evangelists, each with his book or name on a scroll, which are placed at the angles outside the glory. It is, in short, the embodiment



of the belief that Christ has ascended on high and entered into His glory, there to exercise all power in heaven and earth, and to shed His benediction on all who believe in Him through the teaching of the four gospels. We take this illustration (No. 262) from a psalter belonging to Mr. Holford. Thus we also



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Christ in Glory. (Belgian MS. Mr. Holford.)

understand it in the large and splendid picture in King Edgar's Prayer Book (also of the 10th century), where the king stands below the celestial vision with upraised arms, as if confessing his faith. And we arrive at this solution more clearly still in the

so-called Queen Mary's Prayer Book (of the beginning of the 14th century), where this subject is seen heading the Athanasian Creed: 'Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith.' This representation, therefore, of Christ, as Lord of all, is intended to express the Catholic faith in the abstract—the doctrine of the Trinity being set forth in the next picture. On one occasion, in a psalter of the 12th century—in the British Museum (Lansdowne, 383)—the idea of Christ as King of glory, or King of kings, has been directly given by the word 'rex' in His cruciform nimbus.

This figure of Christ in glory is seen frequently over the side doorway of early Gothic churches, of the 11th and 12th centuries. The composition agrees exactly with that seen in miniatures of the same and earlier dates. It appears usually over the South portal, which is the spiritual side of the building, the Annunciation being sometimes over the door to the North, which represents the temporal side.

#### THE REST OF THE CHURCH.

THERE is another class also of these representations in which another intention is evident, and which is generally mistaken for the Day of Judgment. This is seen in objects of a Byzantine origin; for instance, in the imperial dalmatic, believed to be of the 12th century, preserved in the treasury of St. Peter's, at Rome; and in the centre of a triptych given by D'Agincourt (tab. xci.), the two representations having that exact similarity which results from the laws regulating Greek Art. Christ here sits upon the rainbow in the centre of a circle, the right hand raised, the left holding the open book. Above Him are the sun and moon, and the instruments of the Passion; at the angles are the four symbols of the Evangelists; on each side the Virgin and St. John the Baptist; under His feet two winged wheels, the ancient symbol of eternal life—admitted in Greek Art as emblems of thrones—while around Him are the angels and archangels, the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, saints, and martyrs, all offering praise and adoration—

an embodiment, as it were, of the *Te Deum*, 'The glorious company of the Apostles praise thee,' &c. The ground in this circle is studded with stars. Outside it, on one hand, is the figure of the good thief bearing his cross; on the other, Abraham seated with the souls of the blessed, represented as little children, in his lap and at his knees.<sup>1</sup>

Here the ground is strewn with flowers and with crosses within crowns, the true emblems of Christian victory. The whole is intended for an inner and outer Paradise, and, we venture to think, may be meant for the first Resurrection, when the saints shall reign with Christ, while the souls in Abraham's bosom await the second Resurrection. This subject is given in the '*Guide de la Peinture Grecque*' as '*La réunion des esprits*'—a term of which it is difficult to guess the meaning, but in point of time it occurs before the Day of Judgment. Certainly it is not intended for the Day of Judgment itself, under which title it is described by M. Didron.<sup>2</sup> It may be rather considered as that somewhat undefined period of celestial bliss for the souls of the righteous which is termed in mediæval theology 'the Rest of the Church.' This interpretation gains further strength from the circumstance that Christ is sometimes seen seated in such representations upon an actual edifice in form of a church, or with His feet resting upon it. This subject merged in later Art into the Coronation of the Virgin, which occasionally is shown in full state—our Lord and His Mother seated on high with angels around them, and the hierarchy of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, saints, &c., below. Thus it appears in the beautiful picture of the Corona-

<sup>1</sup> Art is not accountable for perfect distinctness of ideas in such abstract subjects. It is evident that the painters, and therefore the theologians, of the Greek Church limited the souls in Paradise to those whom our Lord had liberated from Limbus. This explains the figure of the good thief standing alone, who is stated to have brought up the procession of the released Fathers, and entered heaven last after them. In all representations where Adam goes first, the good thief will be found last. The souls in Abraham's bosom—itsself a type of Paradise—are understood to be those of the Christian Church who have lived after Christ's Ascension. The Virgin herself is an exception, having been at her death conveyed by her Son direct on high.

The inconsistency of this division of the souls, when taken in connection with the parable of Lazarus and Dives given by Christ Himself—the only source whence the idea of Abraham's bosom is derived—will be immediately obvious.

<sup>2</sup> *Annales Archéologiques*, vol. i.

tion of the Virgin by Fra Angelico, in the Louvre, where each hierarchy is represented by two or three individuals. The splendid Bedford Missal, of about the same date (1430), also gives the same subject with its quaint French legend beneath: 'Comment Dieu est en divine majesté et . . . sa digne mère avecq tous les bénoits (bénis) saints, patriarches, prophètes, martyres, confesseurs, et vierges, chacun en leur ordre et selon leur mérite, louant Dieu de sa gloire.'

It is presumptuous to suggest new meanings for well-known and long-studied subjects, but we are inclined to believe that the fresco by Raphael, in the Camera della Segnatura in the Vatican, called *la Disputa*, or the Dispute of the Sacrament (a title now recognised as merely arbitrary), has some reference to this very subject, thus vaguely called 'la réunion des esprits.' Italian writers have dwelt upon its theological intentions, and Germans have mystified them under the appellation of the higher life of man. But, while grasping at a larger circle of ideas, there is every appearance that Raphael was mainly influenced in this composition by the then well-known types and descriptions of 'the Rest of the Church.'

We have Christ here seated within a glory, with the Virgin and St. John the Baptist at His side; around Him are the hierarchies, already described, the angels, archangels, patriarchs, prophets, saints and martyrs, with the (in the sense of Art), unmanageable symbols of the Evangelists, transformed into winged cherubs of infinite beauty, bearing the four books of the Gospels. The division of the saints and martyrs into two portions—the one heaven, the other earth—is strikingly consistent with Raphael's practice. Nor does this interfere with the harmony of the idea, for, admitting this meaning, the earth was intended by him in a glorified sense—'a new heaven and a new earth'—in both of which the spirits of just men find happiness in contemplating the perfections of Christ. Thus while He is seen in His glory enthroned on the heavens above, He also reposes below on His earthly throne, the altar, where the monstrance containing the Sacrament of the Eucharist, surrounded with heavenly light, stands aloft in the centre.

But perfect as is this fresco in general grouping and individual

expression, it is not to be expected that even Raphael should, in his lax epoch, be very consistent in his conception of Christian forms. It seems to be a law in traditional Christian Art that, however amplified and typified, no more than one point of doctrine should be treated at once. If a painter were required to represent the doctrine of the Atonement, for example, he did not bring in that of the Trinity. Here this simplicity and clearness of aim is lost sight of, and the full representation of the Trinity is superadded to the full idea of the Church Triumphant and of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Thus the hitherto forbidden individuality of the First Person is seen above the Second, in the semblance of a venerable figure holding the globe, and with the triangle above His head, which by this time parodied the solemn cruciform nimbus. At the same time the very Person of Christ, surrounded with a glory, of no cruciform character at all, introduces a certain contradiction. For while the Holy Ghost, in the figure of a dove, floats below His feet, and sheds celestial grace upon the spirits assembled below, our Lord with His uplifted hands and bared side displays those wounds which are only thus exhibited for the confusion of the reprobate in the Day of Judgment.<sup>1</sup>

This fresco has puzzled many to read, nor do we presume to have succeeded better. It would be difficult to find any key of Christian tradition that would fit so complicated a structure, and the more the science of Christian iconography is developed, the more hopeless, doubtless, will its interpretation become.

<sup>1</sup> The Lord retains His wounds, according to S. Buonaventura, for three reasons: that they might be a proof of His Resurrection to the Apostles—a plea to the Father in interceding for us—and a confusion to the reprobate in the Day of Judgment.

## INSTRUMENTS OF THE PASSION.

THERE are several abstract subjects in the history of Art in which the instruments of the Passion are conspicuous. We describe a few of the principal in the following pages.

## DEAD CHRIST, ERECT IN THE TOMB, SHOWING HIS WOUNDS.

This is a mysterious, and, to most spectators, an unintelligible subject, which meets the eye in every form of Art from about the end of the 14th century. Our Lord is seen at about three-quarters height erect in the tomb, sometimes seated on the edge. The crown of thorns is on His head, and the marks of the Cross on His person, for the wound is seen in the side, and the hands are so placed as to show the wounds in them. Generally the Cross is behind Him, with the chief instruments of the Passion suspended from it, or leaning against it. Sometimes the sun and moon, as at the Crucifixion, are in the background. But the chief mystery of the subject consists in His being thus erect and self-supporting, and therefore alive, and yet with His eyes closed, His head sometimes much on one side, and with those signs on His body which show that He has already undergone the death of the Cross.

The position in which this subject is found, and which, there can be no doubt, suggested its peculiar characteristics, furnishes a ready clue to the meaning. It may be observed almost invariably in ancient churches, painted, or in low relief, upon the doors of the sculptured tabernacle or ciborium, in which the pyx containing the consecrated wafer is deposited. We see, therefore, immediately, the connection of idea between the locality and the representation. Christ is here the great Sacrifice of the Eucharist, pleading to us by those wounds by which the Divine Victim was slain: 'Take, eat. This is my body, which was given for thee.' The Lamb without blemish, and slain from the foundation of the world, is thus here representing His perfect humanity, while the sculptured

architecture of the tabernacle continues and expands the idea of the Godhead. For the dove is frequently seen under the frieze hovering over Christ's head. The frieze itself consists of angels' heads, and above, in the lunette, is the head of the Father, or Christ Himself, no longer as Victim, but as Lord of all, in the act of benediction.

In the position, also, on the doors of the ciborium, we find the explanation of the double and supernatural idea of Christ dead, and yet alive. For without touching on those doctrinal distinctions regarding the Sacrament, which are especially silenced before such pictures, the mystery of the Eucharist is this, that the Church shows forth His 'precious death until His coming again,' who yet ever liveth to make intercession for us. This is the great dogma which Art has endeavoured to embody, making Christ alive as the Intercessor, and yet pleading to us *by His Death*, of which He Himself shows us the indisputable signs.

The knowledge of the origin of this subject is the more necessary when it is seen in isolated pictures without the context of the ciborium. Here the instruments are generally absent, and the mournful, mysterious figure sits here, like His own type, 'the pelican in the wilderness.'

The subject goes under the general term of the *Ecce Homo*. If further distinguished as the Eucharistic *Ecce Homo*, no fitter title could be given. For it is here intended that we should behold 'the Man,' not as about to die, and shown to a small and ignorant multitude, but in the larger sense of having overcome the sharpness of death, and pleading this to a redeemed world. Art here shows her power to deal even with those mystical truths of our faith which seem least adapted for sight. There are few representations of this subject, even in the rudest form, which fail to touch the chord of religious emotion. But there is a reverse also to this view of her capacities, for we need but to see those versions of the subject into which it merged, to feel how ready Art was to debase herself in times wanting alike in taste and reverence. The usual type of the Eucharistic *Ecce Homo*, which succeeded the above-described, and which prevails to this time in Roman Catholic churches, is a full-length figure of Christ in perfect health and vigour, holding His Cross with one hand, and pressing His

wounded side with the other, so that the blood is projected like a spout of water into a chalice that stands on the ground. This is one of those wretched conceits, for the purpose of illustrating the idea of the Church, rather than that of her Head, which mark the downfall of Christian Art.

#### DEAD CHRIST IN THE TOMB SUPPORTED BY ANGELS OR SACRED PERSONAGES.

THIS is a variety of the same idea, though less clear in intention, and quickly branching off into other lines of thought. It hardly occurs earlier than the end of the 15th century, when the traditions of Christian Art were fast being broken up. At first the double and mystical idea of life and death was preserved, for the Christ, though supported by the arms of angels or sacred persons, is alive. He is thus exhibited to the devotion of some saint peculiarly associated with the contemplation of His sufferings. Thus St. Jerome, usually kneeling before the crucifix, is here seen in the act of penance before the Dead Christ in the tomb, as in a small picture by Lorenzo Costa, exhibited in the Loan Museum in 1862, where the idea is repeated in the background by the scene of St. Francis receiving the stigmata. Or St. Francis himself is the worshipper on one side, as in the predella of the large picture by Filippino Lippi (No. 293) in the National Gallery, and the Magdalen on the other, while Joseph of Arimathea supports the here lifeless body, thus showing a mixed idea of the historical Entombment with that of the Dead Christ in the tomb. This branch of the subject soon became a kind of Pietà—the exponent of the grief of Christ's followers, or of that of the angels who lament over Him—or it embraces a further idea, and the Baptist assists Joseph of Arimathea in sustaining the body, and points with the other hand to the dead Lamb of God. (See Cosimo Tura in National Gallery, No. 590.)

In the hands of later masters this kind of subject degenerated into a mere *tour de force*, in the contrast between the athletic proportions of the Dead Christ and the infantine forms of winged



cherubs sporting in mock affliction about Him. This is seen, for instance, in the so-called Giorgione, at Treviso, where the master possibly had no idea of any mystic kind at all in view. Or, worse still, it became an ecclesiastical sentimentality, where boy-angels, dressed like acolytes, with white surplices, and holding guttering candles, illumine the body as it lies within the secret and rocky enclosure of the sepulchre itself. An instance may be seen by Taddeo Zuccaro, engraved in the Crozat Gallery.

#### DEAD CHRIST IN TOMB, WITH THE VIRGIN MARY AND ST. JOHN.

THIS is a distinct intention grafted upon that which belongs to the ciborium. It took its origin from the feast in the Marian Calendar, called the Feast of the Compassion of the Blessed Virgin—the term *compassion* here denoting her suffering *with* the Passion of her Son. In the French service it is called ‘La fête de notre Dame de pitié.’ This French word gave rise, it is supposed, to the Italian term, nearer to it in sound than in sense, for this subject is included under the wide title of a Pietà. It is, however, strictly distinguishable from the supposed historical occasion where the Virgin laments over the body of Christ, upon its descent from the Cross. Here neither time nor place are taken into account, for it is an abstract subject. In the earlier examples the Virgin is seen seated before precisely the same representation as that given on the ciborium, in contemplation of the spectacle of what her Son has endured. St. John, her unfailing companion, is opposite to her. She is thus rendered in the predella of a picture by Fra Angelico in the Louvre (woodcut, No. 263, next page).

This somewhat stiff composition soon yielded to a more picturesque treatment. We see it by Gaudenzio Ferrari, set off by all the grace of mature Art (woodcut, No. 264, p. 365). Here the Eucharistic idea is preserved in the Cross, and in the display of the wounds.

Martin Schön has the subject seen within a Gothic arch, which is filled with a glory of angels. The Christ is alive and seated on the tomb, and the Virgin, with the homelier feeling of Northern Art, is wiping her eyes with her handkerchief.



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Ideal Man of Sorrows. (Fra Angelico. Louvre.)

This subject of the Dead Christ, attended by His Mother and beloved disciple, is sometimes met with under an aspect which points to a dramatic origin. It is well known that sacred plays, mysteries, or pageants were given on the day especially dedicated to the Feast of the Holy Sacrament, called the *Corpus Christi*. Traces of the influence of this custom upon the Art of the time appear occasionally in early German engravings and drawings. In the Bibliothèque Impériale, at Paris, there is an engraving of great beauty by an anonymous master, where Christ is seen standing in the centre of a platform, showing His wounds. The Virgin and St. John stand in postures of dejection symmetrically on each side of Him, and the ball and Cross lie at His feet. Above is an arched canopy—a feature always redolent of church or theatre decoration—upheld by two angels, the one holding the lily, the other the sword, as described in the Revelation.

A drawing in the Berlin Gallery also bespeaks the religious shows and processions of the age. It represents a car of light and elegant form supported by fifteen figures. Over it is a canopy, under which is seated our Lord in the tomb, while the Virgin and



St. John stand on each side with gestures of sorrow. The car is decorated with dolphins at the angles, with figures outside them holding musical instruments. It recalls the taste of the Emperor Maximilian's car, by the same hand, viz., Albert Dürer, and must have harmonised well with the decorated windows and gables of old Nuremberg.

## THE MAN OF SORROWS.

THE Abbé Zani has given this title to a subject of, in some respects, similar features, but of wide difference of meaning. The Christ here, as before, is seen alive in action, and with His eyes open, but dead, and having His wounds. He is either seated or standing, always with the crown of thorns, and often holding instruments of the Passion. But the tomb is not always present, and His wounds, though visible, are not displayed. It would be difficult to assign the precise origin of this conception, though certain texts suggest themselves at its sight. It would be difficult also to define its exact character, for it branches off into many varieties. We will describe two of them.

Under one aspect our Lord is seen full length, standing with bent knees and with an expression of great dejection, with His hands crossed on His breast, the one holding a scourge, the other a rod. Sometimes the blood is pouring from His side. This generally woful figure is looking full at the spectator, as if uttering the words of Zechariah: 'They shall look on me whom they have pierced.' We give an illustration from a drawing by Albert Dürer, in the Dresden Gallery (woodcut, No. 265). This is a conception which scarcely excites emotion, being too abject and morbid in character for Him whose Divinity should never be lost sight of. In some cases it assumes to be the direct transcript of visions described by nuns and other devout persons, through whose eyes, we may venture to say, the Lord of Life never assumes an elevated appearance.

This class of the Man of Sorrows is rarely the theme of a picture, but exists in early woodcuts and engravings of great rudeness. It commences probably in the 14th century. In the museum at Cologne there is a small early picture in which the subject is curiously treated. Christ stands with the scourge and the rod in His crossed hands. On each side in the air is an angel topsyturvy, one with the bottle for the vinegar, the other with the jug for the gall, and each with the other hand holding a gorgeous

piece of brocade half way before our Lord's Person. The lance and the reed, the latter with cup instead of sponge at end of it, which is an early feature, are behind.

On the other hand, another Man of Sorrows, by the strong and homely tool of Albert Dürer (woodcut, No. 266, next page), we do not hesitate to define as one of the most remarkable productions of religious Art. Placing ourselves in the position of an unenlightened but intelligent spectator, viewing a picture of the God of the Christians for the first time, and in this form, and reasoning upon the figure and its attributes, as we should do on that of any new form of personification, we cannot help feeling that the chief mysteries of our faith—the two natures of Christ, and His vicarious sufferings—might be deduced from it. Here sits a being, like unto ourselves in the forms of humanity, denuded of all worldly circumstances, and bowed down with misery and shame.

He is cinctured with a crown, the materials of which denote the bitterest mockery. He is pierced with wounds which betray the most terrible form of death. Yet this is no criminal—nay, this is no penitent—for glory bursts mightily from around Him, mingling its rays with the spikes of that cruel diadem. By this glory He is shown to be of a nature nobler and stronger than man. Light and fire in all mythologies have been the sign of Deity. Yet, if nobler than man, why bowed down with shame?—if stronger, why subject to torment and death? If Deity, how could He die?—if Man, how can He be thus alive?

There is scarcely another subject in the repertory of Christian Art, which will yield such deep-meaning contradictions if interro-



265 Man of Sorrows  
(Drawing. A. Dürer. Dresden.)



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Man of Sorrows. (A. Dürer.)

gated by the natural mind. Our Lord on the Cross is either dying or dead; our Lord risen is not bowed down with the sins of the world; our Lord seated on the rainbow is a natural conception of the Godhead; our Lord enthroned for Judgment is in the fitting exercise of power. None touch the whole mystery like this Man of Sorrows, thus seated, naked and miserable, on a stone, yet effulgent with 'the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.'

This solitary representation, also, is the highest embodiment of this and of any class. Albert Dürer is prolific in all varieties—the title-page of his Great Passion is another instance; but here he rises to his highest dramatic and religious power. The hiding the face of our Lord—so touching a feature—is not here, as in most cases, the weak evasion of a difficulty, but the wise avoidance of an impossibility; for Deity and shame are not compatible in the same countenance, and it is not for us to gaze upon the Lord

of Life while saying, in the words of the Psalmist, 'The shame of my face hath covered me.'

The subject of the Man of Sorrows, and all its varieties, prevailed greatly in the 15th century; its mysticism seems to have recommended it especially to the German mind. It is, however, found in Italy, by the hand of painters of a fantastic and ascetic tendency—for instance, by Cosimo Tura, of the Ferrarese school, by Marco Palmezzano, and by an anonymous master of great exaggeration of character in the public gallery at Verona.

### THE MASS OF ST. GREGORY.

THIS is the real subject of a composition usually styled in catalogues, 'A Bishop saying Mass before an Altar, on which stands our Lord showing His Wounds, and surrounded by the Instruments of the Passion.' This is, literally, the description of the subject, of which there are several pictures of the Cologne school in the Museum at Cologne. It is also frequently seen in miniatures, woodcuts, and engravings of the 15th century. Its origin is supposed to be derived from the fact that Gregory the Great (Pope 590, died 604) was in great measure the compiler of the Roman Missal, or, as the early writers call it, 'the Book of Sacraments.' Hence he was represented as engaged in the sacrifice of the Mass, while our Lord Himself, as the Eucharistic *Ecce Homo*, stands on the altar before him. There is, however, the tradition of a legend current at Rome in the 15th century, that the apparition of our Lord was seen on the altar by St. Gregory, while in the act of sacrificing. To this legend, doubtless, the sudden outburst of this strange subject and of its exaggerated and ingenious accessories is to be ascribed. It consists of the figure of a bishop, or sometimes of a priest, kneeling before an altar, with hands clasped, his stole supported by an attendant. At the side kneel other bishops or priests; on the altar is the figure of Christ, sometimes a half-figure, sometimes full-length, pointing to the wounds in His side; behind Him are not only the Cross, the column, the lance, the sponge, and every instrument usually included in the instruments of the Passion, but also every accessory that had any

possible connection with the sufferings of the Lord previous to crucifixion. Thus the space under the Cross on each side of Christ



is studded with a multitude of separate objects which it requires some ingenuity to interpret. There is the head of Judas, with the bag of money tied round his neck. There is the sword of St. Peter; the ear of the High Priest's servant, the lantern he carried; the rope by which the soldier dragged the Lord; the cock that crowed when



Peter denied Him; the handkerchief that bound our Lord's eyes; the mouths that mocked; the hands that struck Him (in our illustration, one hand is open to slap, the other, with painful ingenuity, contains the plucked-out hair!); the basin and jug with which Pilate washed his hands; the veil of St. Veronica; the dice, the dice-box, the garments, hammer, nails, &c. In addition to these, there is sometimes seen the head of Judas in the act of kissing that of our Lord, and even the figure of Pilate and his attendant, and in some instances those of the Virgin and St. John. No other representation in Christian Art has gathered together so many of these objects. Seen as they are, each isolated from the other, they look at a distance like an aviary, and will have puzzled many an eye to read their meaning. We give this illustration (No. 267) from a small and beautiful picture of the school of Memling, in the possession of Mr. Ruhl of Cologne. Here the feeling of the artist has moderated the redundancy of the accessories.

#### THE ARMS OF CHRIST.

THIS is one of the strangest applications of the instruments of the Passion, which are wrought up into the form of shield, helmet, and crest, with our Lord Himself and the Virgin as supporters. It seems to have been of German origin, and to have arisen at the time when the German engravers were in the habit of receiving commissions to engrave the arms and mottoes of guilds and wealthy families. This is a conceit which, originating probably with some over-ingenious construer of heraldry, assumes in Art the always unfortunate conditions of an allegory translated into positive and therefore profane images.

## CHRIST ENTHRONED.

It may seem strange, that among those abstract representations of our divine subject which may be called the offspring of pious fancy, that of Christ enthroned and treated as an object of simple adoration occurs with comparative rarity. It is not that Scripture gives no warrant for such a moment, for the same remark would apply to almost all the abstract conceptions we have treated. The cause probably lay in the fact that the throne for several centuries of later Christian Art was filled by the Madonna and Child; thus combining the sense of her mediation with that of the Divine Infant, and also affording an occasion invaluable to the artist for introducing his highest conception of feminine beauty and purity. The subject also depended upon the demand. It is obvious that a picture of Christ with saints, unaccompanied by His Mother, was a commission which very seldom found its way to an artist's studio; though when it did, we are tempted, from our Protestant point of view, to infer that a more than common sense of dependence and devotion dictated the order. So seldom is it seen, however, that the unaccustomed eye does not immediately recognise the benign and solemn figure thus terrestrially elevated. The subject is seen by the hands of the Vivarini. A picture in the Venetian 'Accademia delle Belle Arti,' of a very grand order, shows the Saviour seated on a throne, in the act of benediction, His left hand on an open book (woodcut, No. 268). On the left stands St. Francis, with the rules of his Order under his arm, and a small cross in the right hand. On the right a canonised abbot, reading a book. The figure is known to represent an abbot by the position of the crozier, which, when turned inwards, denotes cloistral authority; when outwards, external jurisdiction.

Another instance by Antonio da Murano, the earliest of the Vivarini, gives a single devotee at the foot of the throne. The



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Christ Enthroned. (L. Vivarini. Belle Arti, Venice.)

picture must be considered as having been ordered from the painter by the kneeling woman, in a sense expressive of the sacramental relation between the Saviour and herself. For Christ is showing His wounds, and the angels above bear inscriptions: the one on the right, 'Venite vos amici mei a me tantum dilecti carnem meam comedite;' that on the left, 'Venite dilectissimi mei in cellulam vinariam sanguineo meo inebriate vos' (woodcut, No. 269, next page.)

In more than one instance we have remarked Christ standing on a slightly elevated pedestal between the two saints invoked against the plague—St. Sebastian and St. Rock. These were doubtless votive pictures, and denote a sense of the Supreme Preserver acting through His agents. A picture of this class, of the cinquecento time, is in the Belle Arti, at Venice (No. 535). Another is in the collection of Count Rasponi, at Ravenna.

The Virgin is very rarely seen standing in adoration by the enthroned Son; an instance occurs in a miniature heading an ancient title-deed of the Scuola Grande di S. Teodoro, at Venice, of the date 1257, now in the British Museum.



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Christ Enthroned. (Vivarini.)

### SALVATOR MUNDI.

THIS is the title given to a late class of pictures in which Christ is represented alone, in the act of benediction, and with the sphere or world—often represented as a crystal ball with Cross upon it—in His hands. This is especially the characteristic of the German and Flemish schools. A series of figures of the Apostles, as by Lucas van Leyden, is sometimes headed by the figure of Christ, blessing with one hand, and holding the ball and Cross with the

other. Sometimes Christ stands upon the ball—called in old phraseology the mound, from ‘monde,’ or world. Quentin Matsys has represented the Christ with the globe and Cross in one hand, and blessing with the other, more than once. He is accompanied by the Virgin in an adjoining frame. Her hands clasped in intercession, uncovered beautiful hair, and jewelled mantle, give an additional meaning to the subject, by showing the scene to be laid in heaven. A most beautiful example of this double picture is in the National Gallery. The subject is not usual in Italy. A *Salvator Mundi*, by Antonello da Messina, in the National Gallery, shows the probable result of Flemish residence. The Christ is without the ball. Fra Bartolomeo and Barroccio have also examples of the subject in the Pitti.

#### CHRIST TREADING ON ASP AND BASILISK, ON YOUNG LION AND DRAGON.

THIS is an ancient subject, preserved in miniatures and ivories, and in the sculpture of cathedrals. It is believed to occur as early as the 9th century. The verse of the ninety-first Psalm is here literally portrayed; the moral intended being that Christ is thus treading under foot the most cruel and dangerous forms of evil. The comparison of a few of these ancient representations might furnish a curious chapter on the various ideas, in these remote times, regarding the dragon and the basilisk. The latter is represented sometimes as a kind of lizard, at others as a cock; this idea being obviously taken from ‘the cockatrice.’ More frequently the dragon and the lion alone are given. This is not a subject which has found favour with late Art.

Another analogous subject makes Christ treading on the demon—‘He shall tread Satan under his feet’—and overcoming him physically with the Cross. An illustration of this kind is seen in Mr. Boxall’s *Speculum*.

## CHRIST AS PREACHER.

THIS is hardly a subject, treated abstractly, within the scope of Christian Art. It is distinct from the Sermon on the Mount, which is historical, and also from the address of our Lord to His disciples before His betrayal. Gaudenzio Ferrari has it. Christ is in a regular pulpit, in animated action of discourse, the disciples, as in a church, below. Rembrandt also has the subject.

## CHRIST TREADING THE WINE-PRESS.

THIS is a very curious subject, seen in the Lorenz-Kirche, Nuremberg, where the actual representation of a figure of speech is carried out into minute detail. Here our Lord, with the Cross on His shoulders, is standing in the vat in violent action. The new wine flows into a sort of tub, which a bishop draws off into another barrel upon four wheels, which is dragged by the ox and the lion, driven by the eagle, while the angel walks by the side with a whip. On one side is the Pope, holding a dish of grapes, on the other a bishop and cardinal making more wine vats, while a number of priests hold cups. The reader will sufficiently construe the meaning of this rather hard-pressed allegory. Nuremberg churches have many curious examples of this symbolic tendency. We may mention, though not belonging here, a curious application of the Gospel and Sacraments in the painted glass of the choir of the Lorenz-Kirche. The four Evangelists are seen each with the head of their attribute—St. Luke with that of a bull, St. John with that of the eagle, &c. John and Matthew are bringing baskets full of the sacred wafer; St. Luke and St. Mark are pouring them into a large hand-mill, the round stones of which are revolving—the mill being intended to represent Man, by whom the sacraments are converted and digested to his salvation.

## IL SALVATORE.

THIS is a late subject, and being associated only with the times of mature Art, when the higher pathos of expression gave way to the pride of the eye and lust of the flesh in Art, can never be said to offer an image of our Lord sufficiently reverential for Christian contemplation. Titian painted this subject, now in the Pitti; and if we forget who it is that this handsome and worldly figure represents, we find all the master's qualities to admire. Another example is in the Bologna Gallery.

## CHRIST AS PILGRIM.

THIS is a mediæval subject of much interest, proceeding chiefly, it is supposed, from a versified romance, 'Romant des trois Pèlerinages —de la Vie, de l'Âme, et de Jésus-Christ,' written in 1358.<sup>1</sup>

It begins with our Lord before His Incarnation, sent forth as a little child by the Father, with the staff and wallet, and finally, returning after His death to deliver an account of His mission. The verses have a profane humour, which will hardly bear translation.<sup>2</sup>

The idea obtained another and more reverent form, of which we give a specimen here by Wohlgemuth (woodcut, No. 270, next page). Here the much-popularised history of the Instruments of the Passion finds a further vent, for Christ, returning to render an account of His mission, brings with Him the Cross, the crown of thorns, and scourge. The second niche under the canopy of honour at the hand of the Father is awaiting Him.

<sup>1</sup> See 'Iconographie Chrétienne,' p. 301.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem.*, p. 308.



### THE CHILD CHRIST.

THE Infant Jesus, represented alone, is a subject which does not occur before the latter part of the 15th century. It always assumes an abstract character, and represents the idea of the Sacrifice. This is conveyed by various accessories denoting the divine nature and



mediatorial office, combined with the person of a little child of about three years of age. It may be supposed that the subject first suggested itself to a painter who excelled in the delineation of infantine forms and expression; and Luini was probably one of the earliest of the Italian school, as he was certainly the best fitted, by the character of his art, to originate so sweet and tender an image. A



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Infant Christ. (Luini. M. Reizet. Paris.)

picture by him in the collection of M. de Reizet, at Paris, adds all the pathos of childish innocence to the solemnity of the mediatorial idea. The beautiful Child, as seen in our woodcut (No. 271), is seated alone in a cave, with its little hand pointing to the Cross, His features already sanctified with the promise of that manhood, 'who, when He was reviled, reviled not again,' while an apple with a piece bitten out of it on which His foot rests, and the dead serpent at His side, show what brought the Divine Word to earth 'wrapt in clouds of infant flesh.'

Murillo, for the same reason, that of excelling in the expression of childhood's sweetness and grace, was fertile in the same subject. His Child Christ is less pathetic than that by Luini, whose children, under any circumstances, bear something on their little features like the shadow of an approaching sorrow. Both Luini and Murillo may be said to be feminine in the character of their Art, in which doubtless lies the key to the choice of the subject. For who could



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Infant Christ sleeping on Cross. (Franceschini.)

paint the cheek of childhood more truly than Titian or Velasquez? yet, a lonely infant—timidly yet earnestly self-conscious, with all the beauty of infancy, and yet with that expression which shows Him to be a predestined sacrifice, and a voluntary one—is not the subject which either of these great masters would have depicted. A boy by Velasquez is always the incipient man, strong, healthy, magnificent, but with that unmistakable stamp of self-will which has no affinity with self-sacrifice.

Later painters of the Italian school have turned the idea of the Child Christ into a mere sentimentality. With Guido and Frances-

chini He lies asleep on His Cross dreaming of His Passion. This is a lovely infant, as in our woodcut (No. 272), perfect in colour and limb, but nothing more. We need the pathetic contrast between His innocence and His predestined fate to convey the religious feeling.

Northern Art can hardly be said to have set its stamp on this subject, unless we except Lucas Cranach, who gives a more particular meaning to it. The Infant Christ stands on the slab of a half-open tomb, with the globe and Cross in His hand. Above is a scroll, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.' On each side are infantine angels, holding the instruments of the Passion.<sup>1</sup>

Rubens also has left an example of the subject, in an exquisite picture, of oval form, in the collection of Baron Steengracht at the Hague. But though giving the benediction with the little right hand, no other trace of the pathetic idea is conveyed by the beautiful boy, who sits on a red velvet cushion.

<sup>1</sup> Guhl and Gaspar, vol. iii. pl. xxi.

## INTERCESSION.

THE wounds of our Lord, as the types of the doctrine of Intercession, afforded the preachers of the Middle Ages a legitimate, however exaggerated, theme for flights of fancy. Sermons for hearers of excitable temperaments could be drawn from every detail of Christ's sacrifice. But the painter's translation of them into positive forms showed, as usual, their unfitness for his purpose. The class of pictures which go by the name of Intercession are distasteful to the eye from the very absence of all imagination. The Scripture words, 'He ever liveth to make intercession for us,' are poorly rendered by a prostrate, and often abject, figure of our Lord, holding up one hand, and with the other pointing to His side. In these pictures the Saviour is always accompanied by His Mother, who is also urging her plea for the salvation of mankind by exposing the breast from which our Lord, as an infant, derived sustenance. The joint idea is expressed by St. Bernard in one of his sermons: 'O man! thou hast direct access to God, where the Mother pleads to the Son, and the Son to the Father. The Mother shows her breast to the Son, the Son His wounds and His side to the Father. There can be no repulse where there are such tokens of love.' These words belong to the 12th century, when painters, however backward in technical respects, were far truer to the instincts which limit their subjects, and when, also, the idea of baring the Virgin's breast to the gaze of the spectator would scarcely have found favour. They therefore found no embodiment till the decline of religious Art in the 15th century, at which time Molanus mentions the frequent representation of the above passage.<sup>1</sup> We give an illustration from Hans Baldung Grün (woodcut, No. 273), which, however rude in forms, is true to the usual conception of the subject. The figure below shows that it is a votive work.

There is a picture of Intercession in the Munich Gallery by Filippino Lippi, where the refinement of Italian feeling is seen in

<sup>1</sup> Page 92.



covering the Virgin's breast with a light drapery. In this case the two figures are on this earth, and the Almighty appears above in the clouds. Dr. Waagen (vol. i. p. 184) mentions a miniature in the British Museum belonging to an English manuscript of 1420-39. He describes a dying man, with an angel at the head receiving the soul. 'Above is the Virgin, with the crown on her head, supplicating Christ by the breast which nourished Him, and which she is baring, to have mercy on the soul of the dying man. Christ, in His turn, is showing His wounds, in token of granting His Mother's request, to the First Person of the Trinity, who is raising

His right hand in benediction. In most instances, however, the painters have introduced the anomaly of making the Virgin thus urging her plea to the Father, and not to the Son, which is a departure from all principles of Mariolatry.'

## THE HISTORY OF THE TRUE CROSS.

THIS is a subject which has given employment to Art in various forms, from the grand frescoes on the walls of lofty choirs to the rude woodcuts which illustrate the early-printed book called 'Historia Crucis.' The legends which make up the history of the Cross, and which include its origin, discovery, or invention, as it is called, and its exaltation, though agreeing in general ideas, differ somewhat in detail. We shall endeavour to weave them together.<sup>1</sup>

The beginning of the story is contemporary with our first father. One day, when Adam was weary with digging for roots, he leant upon his spade to rest himself; and he began to think of his long life and hard labour, and of the cares and pains which would be the lot of his descendants; and he felt tired of life, and longed to die. Then he called his son Seth, and said, 'Go to the gates of Eden, and ask the angel who guards the tree of life to send me some of the oil of mercy which God promised me when He thrust me out of Paradise.' And Seth replied, 'Father, I am ready, but show me first the way.' And Adam answered, 'Go by that valley which lies towards the East. There you will find a green path, along which you will see footsteps; for where my feet and those of your mother passed, on leaving Paradise, no grass has since grown.' And Seth went as Adam bade him, and he found the green paths and his parents' footsteps, and he was astonished at the splendour which shone from the gates of Paradise. And when the angel asked him what was his errand, Seth replied, 'Adam, my father, is weary of life. It is he who sends me to ask for the oil of mercy which God promised to him.' Then the angel said, 'The oil of mercy which God promised to Adam can only be given after five thousand five hundred years shall have elapsed; but take these three

<sup>1</sup> The chief sources will be found in 'La Légende Dorée,' translated from Jacob de Voragine, and in a Dutch work, 'Gerschiedenis van het heylighe Cruys,' recently translated and facsimiled by M. Berjeau, in which quotations from an ancient French MS. of the 13th century, preserved in the British Museum, are given.

seeds, they will bear fruit for the good of mankind.' And he gave him three seeds like unto apple-pips, taken, it is believed, from the same tree of which Adam had eaten. And he told Seth to put them under his father's tongue after his death, for that, on the third day after his return, Adam would die. Then Seth came back by the same way, and told Adam all that the angel had said. Whereupon Adam became quite merry, and laughed for the first time since his disobedience; and he lifted up his voice and said, 'O God! I have lived enough; take my soul from me.' And on the third day he died, and Seth buried him in the Valley of Hebron, and placed the three seeds under his tongue.

According to another account, the angel gave Seth a branch of the tree of life, and he placed that upon his father's grave. To follow, however, the history of the three seeds, they quickly sprung up into three saplings, significant of the Holy Trinity, afterwards miraculously united into one. This sapling Moses found in the Valley of Hebron; this it was that turned the waters of Marah sweet; with this also he struck the rock a second time, without calling upon God, for which he was not permitted to enter the Promised Land. From the hands of Moses the tree passed into those of David, who also worked wonders, unrecorded in Scripture, with it, and finally brought it to Jerusalem, where he planted it in his garden, and built a wall round it. And there it grew and was forgotten when David was old. And Solomon, his son, when he was building the Temple, seeing the tree that it was large and strong, cut it down for one of the beams of the Temple. But the workmen were sore puzzled, for nothing could make it fit into its destined place—sometimes it was too long, sometimes too short. At length they threw it aside, and it lay unheeded for some years. Then there came a woman, Sibylla by name (in allusion to the Sybil), and she sat down to rest herself upon it, and suddenly her clothes took fire, and, rising up, she prophesied that this beam should be for the destruction of the Jews, and those that were round her flung the tree into a pond or stream, where it rose to the surface and formed a bridge by which all wayfarers passed. At length the Queen of Sheba came to visit Solomon, and was about to cross this bridge, when, seeing in a vision its future destination, she knelt down and worshipped it, and, refusing to walk over it, she took off



her sandals and forded the stream. And she told King Solomon that on this holy wood would hang One who should be the Saviour of Adam and all his posterity. Thereupon Solomon took the beam and overlaid it with gold and silver, and placed it over the door of the Temple, that all who entered therein might bless it. And there it remained till the wicked reign of Abijah, the son of Rehoboam, who, coveting the silver and gold upon it, stript it bare, after which, to conceal his theft, he had it buried deep in the earth.

[*A. J.*—And after many years, when all this was forgotten, it happened that a well was dug just over the spot where the tree of mercy was buried, which was called the pool of Bethesda; and because of the healing virtue in the wood, as well as by the power of the angel, the waters of that well cured all the sick and afflicted.

And when the time of the Passion of our Lord drew near, the beam of wood was cast up to the surface of the water, and floated there; which the Jews seeing, and that it was fit for their purpose, they took it, and fashioned from it the Cross on which they suspended the Saviour of the world, and this was the tree of mercy through which Adam and his posterity were healed and redeemed from death.]

This account rather interferes with another legend, which affirms that the Cross of our Lord was made of four different kinds of wood, the stem being of cypress wood. The reason for this was that the Jews reckoned that the body of Christ would hang as long as the Cross would last, and, therefore, they chose the cypress for the principal portion, as that is known to remain sound both in earth and water.

[*A. J.*—After the Crucifixion the Cross was buried deep in the earth, and remained hidden from the eyes of men for more than three hundred years.

When the persecutions and oppressions, through which the servants of God had been sorely tried, ceased at length, and Constantine and his mother were, through divine interposition, converted to the faith, the blessed Empress Helena went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to seek the Cross on which our Lord died. Having arrived there with a great train, she ordered all the wise men of

A. J.] the Jews to be assembled in her palace. Then they were alarmed, and said one to another, 'What is this? Why hath the empress called us together?' But one among them, wiser than the rest, whose name was Judas, said, 'Know, my brethren, that the empress hath come hither to discover the Cross on which Jesus Christ suffered. But take heed that it be not revealed, for, in the hour that the Cross comes to light, our ancient Law is no more, and the traditions of our people will be destroyed. My grandfather Zaccheus taught this to my father Simon, and my father Simon hath taught me. Moreover, he told me that his brother Stephen had been stoned for believing in Him who was crucified, and bid me beware of blaspheming Christ or any of His disciples.'

So the Jews gave heed to his words, and when the Empress Helena demanded of them where the Holy Cross lay buried, they professed ignorance. Then the blessed Helena commanded that they should all be buried alive. Then, being seized with fear, they delivered up to her Judas, saying, 'Here is a just man, and the son of a prophet, who knoweth all things pertaining to our Law, and who will answer all questions.' So she released them, retaining Judas in her power, and commanded him to show her what she desired. But he replied, 'Alas! how should I know of these things which happened so long before I was born?' Then the empress was filled with anger, and she vowed by the great name of Him who died on the Cross, that she would have this obstinate and perverse Jew starved to death. Whereupon, at her command, he was cast into a dry well, there to perish with hunger. For six days did he endure the pangs of famine, but on the seventh day he yielded.

Now it is well known, being written in all the histories, that the Emperor Hadrian, in mockery of the Christians, had built upon that sacred spot a temple to the Goddess Venus, so that all who came to worship there might seem to worship Venus, for which reason the place had become forsaken and lay desolate. Thither did Judas lead the empress, and she commanded that the temple should be wholly destroyed, and every stone removed; which being done, Judas began to dig, and when he had dug twenty feet deep, he found three crosses, all alike, and no man could tell which was

A. J.] the Cross of Christ. And while the empress and Macarius, Bishop of Jerusalem, who was with her, stood there in doubt, there passed by the body of a dead man being carried to the grave, and by the suggestion of Maccarius, he was laid upon the first cross, and then upon the second, and stirred not. But when he was laid upon the third, he rose up, restored to life, and went on his way giving thanks; while the demons were heard lamenting in the air, because the kingdom of Satan was destroyed, and the kingdom of Christ begun upon earth.

Afterwards Judas was baptized, and received the name of Syriacus or Quiriacus.

And when Helena found that the nails were not forthcoming, she prayed, and, at her prayers, they appeared at the surface of the earth, shining like gold.]

Then the empress, according to her biographers, with rather ambiguous piety, instead of preserving the Cross of our Lord intact, divided it into halves. One half she left in Jerusalem, the other she took to Constantinople, where her son Constantine inserted a part of it into the head of a statue of himself, and the rest was sent to Rome and deposited in the Church of the S. Croce in Gerusalemme, built on purpose for it.

The nails also she distributed with equal maternal partiality—one she threw into a dangerous whirlpool in the Adriatic, which immediately tranquillised the waters; with another she forged a bit for Constantine's horse, in verification of the mysterious passage in Zechariah xiv. 20: 'In that day shall be upon the bells (*margin, bridles*) of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord;' and the third she placed in his crown.

[A. J.—The Cross remained at Jerusalem until the year 615, when Cosroes, King of Persia, coming to Jerusalem, carried it away as the most precious treasure of the Christians. Then the Emperor Heraclius, who had been till then an indolent and worthless sovereign, was suddenly roused by this indignity, and he raised a powerful army, and defied Cosroes to battle. When the two armies met, the two monarchs agreed to decide the fight by single combat. Heraclius overcame his enemy, and, on his refusing to be baptized, cut off his head. Then, taking the Holy Cross, he brought it back with great devotion and joy to Jerusalem. And arriving

A. J.] at the gate on horseback, surrounded by all his attendants, he sought in vain to enter, for the wall was miraculously closed up. And as he stood stupified with surprise, an angel appeared and said, 'When the King of heaven and earth entered through this gate to suffer for the sins of the world, He entered not with regal pomp, but barefooted and mounted on an ass.' Then the emperor, perceiving that it was the sin of pride which had closed up the gate, shed many tears, and took the crown from his head, and the shoes from his feet, and all his royal vestments, even to his shirt. And taking the Cross of our Lord upon his shoulder, the wall opened before him, and he entered in. Thus after many years was this precious cross restored to its place, and being erected on an altar, was exhibited to the people.

Hence the feast of the 'Esaltazione della Croce,' held on September 14, which had first been instituted when St. Helena placed the Cross on the summit of an altar in A.D. 335.]

This history, the same in general outline as we have given it, has been treated as a series in frescoes of great interest and importance by several Italian masters. It is found appropriately covering the walls of the choir of the Church of S. Croce at Florence, by the hand of Agnolo Gaddi. These frescoes, though terribly obscured by dust above, and by injury below, are very remarkable both as regards Art and legendary history. One of the most striking of the series are the patients in an hospital, lying in their beds and drinking water from the Pool of Bethesda. Another, equally conspicuous, represents the Emperor Heraclius, in his pomp and vanity, endeavouring to enter in by the gate of Jerusalem. This is engraved in Ottley's Florentine Art.

Pietro della Francesca also dedicated his pencil to the history of the Cross in a series of frescoes mentioned by Vasari, in the Chapel of the Bacci, in the Church of S. Francesco at Arezzo. In one of these much-obliterated designs occurs the incident of Seth planting the seeds beneath his father Adam's tongue.

The legend of the Cross continued in vogue till the middle of the 16th century. Frescoes of the subject by the hand of Pomponio Amalteo exist at Casarsa and at Baseglia, both in Friuli. At Casarsa he is supposed to have been assisted by Pordenone.

The history of the Cross is occasionally seen in predella pictures,

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as, for instance, in the picture No. 2 among the specimens of early Art in the 'Accademia delle Belle Arti' at Venice.

It occurs also in the German school—a picture by Beham, in the Munich Gallery (No. 2), in which the invention and identification of the Cross is given with great detail.

## THE LAST JUDGMENT.

*Ital.* L' ultimo Giudizio.    *Fr.* Le dernier Jugement.    *Germ.* Das jüngste Gericht.

THERE are no examples of Christ conceived as Judge, or of the Last Judgment, in the early Art of Christianity. It would be difficult to define the cause for this, though many may be conjectured. That the early Christians dwelt on the great day of reward and retribution as a support under persecution, and in the pardonable light of retaliation on their persecutors, is evident from the well-known passage in Tertullian.<sup>1</sup> It is true, also, that the Art of which Christianity first availed itself had in its best days inspired the representation of Tartarus and the Elysian Fields; but even had that power not passed away, it may be questioned whether the converts would have availed themselves of such conceptions of their heaven and hell. As time advanced, also, and classic Art expired, leaving the world free from its bondage and its beauty, the popular expectation of the Millennium, which has left its mark on the history of Architecture, may be supposed to have intruded between the minds of men and the remoter sense of the end of all things. The reign of Christ on earth was interpreted to commence with the year 1000, and in this belief no new edifices of a sacred character were undertaken towards the close of the 10th century, where old ones were suffered to fall into decay. This idea embraced the belief in a transformed earth, in the binding of Satan, and in the first Resurrection, when the saints should reign with our Lord, but not of that day when Christ should come to judge the world. At all events, no representation of a Last Judgment can be indicated in any forms of Art prior to the 11th century, though traces of the anticipation of the Millennium are observable in miniatures of the 10th century. Nay more, when the 11th century was turned, and men saw that, 'since the fathers fell asleep, all things continued as they were,' the idea of the Last Judgment became even more indistinct than before, and, in the reaction

<sup>1</sup> 'You are fond of spectacles, except the greatest of all spectacles, the last and eternal judgment of the universe.' Tertullian de Spectaculis, c. xxx.

against what had proved a fallacious dread, doubts arose, we are told, regarding, not the time, but the doctrine of the general Resurrection. It was then that the Church laboured to set forth the certainties of what theologians called the 'Quatuor Novissima,' or Four Last Things—viz., Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell,—invoking a spirit which raised glorious cathedrals, founded a succession of crusades, culminated, in a literary sense, in Dante's 'Inferno,' 'Purgatorio,' and 'Paradiso,' inspired the 'Dies Iræ,' and was embodied in the form of Art chiefly by representations of the Last Judgment.

These representations, whether in sculpture or painting, have a traditional place in the symbolism of ecclesiastical architecture. They are always seen on the West front of the church, either spread out with all the detail that the subject permits, as on the Cathedrals of Ferrara and Wells, or in simpler forms, as at Autun, within the West porch, or in Greek Art on the West wall within the church; in any case occupying this position in a typical sense, for the Church being the type of Heaven, the believer enters it through the portals of Death and Judgment. Later we find this subject placed, with more obvious meaning, in the cloisters surrounding a place of interment, as by Orgagna, in the Campo Santo at Pisa, where one grand fresco represents the triumph of Death; another, to which we shall chiefly refer, Judgment and Hell;<sup>1</sup> while a third design for Heaven, never executed, was intended to make up the 'Four Last Things.' A sign of the same intention is traceable in the Dance of Death, painted on the walls of the churchyard at Basle and elsewhere, but generally confined in this form to the Northern countries of Europe.

A complete representation of the Last Judgment invariably comprises certain features derived mainly from Scripture. That it is the Second Person who presides as Judge is an article of our Faith, founded on His own direct teaching, and embodied in our creeds and *Te Deum*: 'We believe that Thou shalt come to be our judge.' On each side of Him, in most examples, sit the figures of the Apostles, according to the passage in Luke xxii. 30: 'That ye may . . . sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' These are frequently accompanied by the hierarchies seen in the Rest of the Church—the patriarchs, prophets, saints, martyrs, &c.

<sup>1</sup> Engraved in Kugler's 'Handbook of Italian Paintings.' Part i. p. 146.

—illustrating the words of St. Paul in 1 Cor. vi. 2: ‘Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?’ Under this category may be included the seldom absent figures of the Virgin and of John the Baptist. In the air around are figures of angels holding the instruments of the Passion. This is probably derived from the speculations of the early Fathers. For St. Thomas Aquinas, quoting St. Chrysostom, urges that Christ as Judge shall not only show the marks of His wounds, of which we shall speak presently, but also exhibit His most reproachful ‘*exprobratissima*’ death. Other angels, too, are here in a sterner Scriptural sense, for, ‘He shall send His angels, and shall gather together His elect from the four winds’ (Mark xiii. 27). These bear trumpets to call the dead from their graves, ‘For at the last trump the dead shall be raised.’

Below, therefore, is the earth whence the bodies are rising, according to the text from Daniel xii. 2: ‘And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.’ Here the dead are divided into two armies: the blessed as the sheep on the right hand of the Judge; the condemned as the goats on the left. And, to make up the awful complement of the Four Last Things, there are few instances where the joys of heaven are not given in some form, quaint or typical; and fewer still where the torments of hell are not dwelt upon with an ingenuity and circumstantiality which show that the ancient preachers and painters, often identical, considered this the clenching argument of the scene.

These are the main features proper to the Latin Church. In the Greek form, which is stereotyped from an early period, there are conspicuous differences, in part traceable to other portions of Scripture. Here, the Christ is old and haggard. At the foot of His glory are the winged wheels, the emblems of eternal life, guarded by two seraphim. An altar is below, on which stand the Cross and the book; and from beneath the throne issues a stream of fire, which divides the good from the bad by an impassable barrier, and leads into the great lake of flames and brimstone. This is derived chiefly from the vision of Daniel, who saw the ‘Ancient of Days,’ whose ‘throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand



thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened' (Daniel vii. 9, 10). The bodies also, in the Greek form, are not rising from the earth only, but are being given back piecemeal from the jaws of fishes and sea monsters—'For the sea gave up the dead that were in it'—and also from those of lions and tigers, or whatever animals have preyed on mankind. The archangel Michael also stands between the two ranks, weighing the souls in a balance. And, finally, one conspicuous feature is a great angel, who is folding up a mighty scroll, on which is seen the sun, moon, and stars: 'And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together' (Rev. vi. 14). These are the distinguishing features, as seen in the ancient Church of Murano, executed by a Greek artist in the 12th century,<sup>1</sup> and preserved with amplifications and exaggerations in the Art of Mount Athos to the present day.

The subject of the Last Judgment has tested the powers of some of the greatest and most opposite masters, both North and South of the Alps. Giotto appropriately led the way, with the now ruined wall-painting in the Chapel of the Arena, at Padua—part of 'the Judgment' being believed, however, to be the work of his scholars. The solemn Orgagna followed in the Campo Santo. The painter most distinct in character from each—Fra Angelico—has left several versions of the subject, two in the Accademia, at Florence, one in the Corsini Palace, at Rome, the picture whence we take our etching, belonging to Lord Dudley, and a small panel which has perished lately.<sup>2</sup> Luca Signorelli derives much of his reputation from his scenes of the Last Judgment at Orvieto. Michael Angelo stands alone here, as in every subject on which he set the stamp of his paganised time and his *maniera terribile*. Rogier van der Weyden, the mournful painter of Brussels, treated the subject with great dignity and reticence, in a picture at the monastery at Beaune, in Burgundy. Memling is now believed to have executed the great picture at Dantzic, formerly attributed to Van Eyck; while Rubens, like Michael Angelo, has made the subject rather an occasion for displaying his

<sup>1</sup> Lord Lindsay's 'Christian Art,' vol. i. p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> Discovered at Ravenna, and lost at sea on its way to England, 1860.

peculiar powers, than an illustration of the most awful chapter in Christian Art.

But before entering upon closer description, it is as well to interpose a short explanation in order to meet objections usually raised in presence of such representations, which, however trivial, are plausible in character. It appears probable that the two opposite scenes of the Blessed and the Condemned, though given, from the necessary conditions of Art, as a simultaneous whole, were originally intended to be consecutive in time. According to the words of St. Paul in 1 Thessalonians iv. 16, 'And the dead in Christ shall rise first,' it is not absolutely necessary to suppose that the sentences on each side are being pronounced by the Judge at the same moment. This may be taken as one answer to the objection urged at the apparent anomaly of the Apostles seated, and the angels hovering with looks of unconcern above the sad spectacle offered by despairing sinners. But the more proper reply is, that the moral and pathos of such religious pictures are meant for us, and not for those represented in them. No painter has therefore ever ventured to make the Blessed look, like Lot's wife, behind them, or acknowledging in any way the vicinity of their unhappy brethren. In this, Art asserts her distinction from other forms of expression. For poetry may dwell on the mystery of faithful hearts to whom the joys of heaven may be supposed to be darkened by the sense of those lost, yet dear; though even Poetry, as we read in the following lines, may not push the speculation too far:—

Yet pause—if on a castaway  
 Thy deep affections rest,  
 And memory live unchanged, could'st thou  
 In highest heaven be blest?  
 Yearning eternally for one  
 Lost, lost—beyond relief,  
 Thou in thy light and happiness,  
 He in his gulf of grief.

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Away, dark thought! too deep and high  
 For our mind's mortal scan,  
 Meting the eternal mysteries  
 With measures made by man.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Dark Thought. Lines and Leaves,' by Mrs. Acton Tindal.

We will now take the subject of the Last Judgment according to the Latin type, considering it in its different parts, which have each a character and interest peculiar to school and time. We begin with the Person of our Lord.

The idea of Christ in the character of Judge is unapproachable by the power of imagination, in proportion as it is undeniable to that of faith. There is no form or expression of mercy, pity, or long-suffering, which the mind or the mind's eye may not successfully invoke in picturing the relations of Christ to man; nay, the sterner passages of His course on earth, conveying warning and reproof, may be sympathetically dealt with, for we know that love mingled with them all. But it is not in poet or painter to conceive Him stript of this all-pervading quality, and converted from the friend of sinners into the minister of that terrible justice which it is otherwise His blessed part to avert. It is on this account, from the very impossibility of thus transforming the object of the Christian's trust, that the consistent image of Christ as Judge is the most difficult that an artist can approach. No human feeling must enter into his conception of this character, not even that sorrow which becomes an earthly judge at sight of condemned criminals of the same nature as himself. For the Judge of the whole earth may as little grieve over those who have trodden Him under foot as He may exult; otherwise the very fundamental ideas of divine justice, wisdom, and bliss become unsettled. Christ, therefore, sitting in judgment, the gentle Son of man transformed into that all-powerful impersonation of the inexorable and the impartial by which we endeavour to define the idea of divine justice, is an abstraction to which the human mind can give no form. Thus it is that the earlier representations buried in old manuscripts, or mouldering and mutilated on church walls, which, either from incapacity of hand, or sense of the difficulty, have no expression at all, are far more appropriate, and therefore grand, than the highest refinements of riper Art.

To the superficial glance, the earliest forms of Christ as Judge may be mistaken for that of Christ in glory (see p. 353). In both instances He is seen raised above the earth, seated on the rainbow, or on a throne within a glory. But here the similarity ceases, for Christ as Judge is not blessing or holding the book, nor is He

ever accompanied by the symbols of the Four Evangelists. They have no place on an occasion which proves that their mission of reconciliation is past. But the chief distinction in the Person of Christ consists in His showing His wounds, according to the passage in Revelation i. 7, 'Behold, He cometh with clouds ; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him.' For this purpose His side is generally left bare, and the two hands are



274 Christ as Judge. (French MS., 12th century. British Museum.)

equally raised, with their pierced palms turned each exactly alike to the spectator (woodcut, No. 274). In this was set forth the great theological idea, never absent from the Person of Christ as Judge, whether in Greek or Latin, early or modern Art—the meaning being that the wounds conveyed their respective sentences to the assembled children of men, according as they had previously accepted or rejected these signs of the Atonement—‘to the one the savour of death unto death, to the others of life unto life’—the outward aspect of the Judge being the same to each. This greatly contributed to give that grand abstract air which befits the embodiment of divine justice. There is something indescribably fine and awful in this rigid

full-front figure, which looks neither to the right nor the left—shows no favour and no resentment—but operates as a natural law, either to the salvation or confusion of those who behold Him. This was the type of the 11th or 12th century. We give an illustration from a French manuscript in the British Museum (Nero, C. IV.) We see here the ancient origin of Raphael's figure of the Saviour in the *Disputa*.

A lunette, *alto relievo*, which still exists in the porch of the Cathedral of Autun, is one of the first instances of the subject, being supposed to date from the early part of the 11th century. Here the Christ is fully clothed, so as to cover His side, and the two hands are simply extended downwards. The head is gone, but we may be sure it corresponded with the solemn impartiality of the hands.



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The 13th century saw a change, slight but important in this type, derived from the Greek Church, and observable in the mosaics in the roof of the Baptistery at Florence, by Andrea Tafi. Here the Judge is no longer the same outwardly to each, and the difference in the two parties simply that of previous acceptance or rejection of Him, but it is He who is accepting the one and rejecting the other—for one hand is open to welcome, ‘Come, ye blessed of my Father’ (woodcut, No. 275); and the other ‘pronated,’ as if to repulse, ‘Depart from me, ye cursed’ (woodcut, No. 276). This was an aim at closer literal adherence to a particular text, but the larger Scriptural idea has suffered by it. It opened the door also to changes for which no Scripture can be alleged. In the 14th and 15th centuries, and from that time till now, our Lord's Person has been invested with actions and sentiments totally at variance with the primary idea of impartiality. In Giotto, Orgagna, and even in Fra Angelico, He is a Prosecutor, not a Judge. Each of these painters makes him turning with more or less severity towards the

Condemned; His right hand, by a curious inversion of the Greek arrangement, being lifted in anger against them instead of in favour to the Blessed. Christ, in short, has here declined from a grand abstraction into an individual Person. He is splendidly drawn in Orgagna, where He sits like a Judge in wrath; He is exquisitely pathetic in Fra Angelico, who conceives Him as a Judge in sorrow—His heavenly pomp is increased—He is surrounded with a glory of myriads of angels—Art lavishes her ripening powers to do Him homage; yet, in proportion as she invests Him with personal feelings towards those before Him, does the solemnity and reality of the occasion diminish. Strange conclusions, indeed, might be drawn as to the administration of earthly tribunals, when the chief teachers of the simple could thus conceive the Almighty Judge of the Universe as an interested party, and further interested only in adding to the misery of those who are already punished ‘with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.’

These were the degenerate tendencies, as regards Christ’s Person, on the South side of the Alps. On the North, they neither erred so grossly, nor so magnificently. Christ shows no personal feeling either ways in Rogier van der Weyden, or in Memling, except that expressed by the upraised right and the depressed left hand. But He is invested with a mixture of reality and symbolism very much at cross purposes. The Italian halo of angelic forms is replaced by an over-natural rainbow, which, in its primary colours and complementary gradations, is no longer a seat for a Being in human form to which the imagination consents. This is the more striking from the introduction of symbolic features, always a disfiguring solecism in Northern conceptions of the subject. We mean the sword projecting on the left, and the lily on the right, as in Memling’s picture, intended, it may be supposed, as emblems of the guilt and innocence of those over whom they are respectively suspended. These generally add to their inherent incongruity the further crime of gigantic size, being larger than the angels around them, giving a theatrical air to the scene, which points to their probable derivation—the religious plays of the contemporary period. The inscriptions also, ‘Venite benedicti patris mei,’ &c., and ‘Discendite a me maledicti,’ &c., on each side, and of the same exaggerated dimensions, are doubtless traceable to the same source.

The sacred persons surrounding the Lord next claim attention. The Apostles are seen from the earliest times seated on thrones on each side, according to the text. In a MS. in the British Museum, where the scene of the Last Judgment occupies several pages, the Apostles are given in an arbitrary arrangement, so as to compress them into the required space. This shows how necessary their presence was considered, even when the component parts could only be given piecemeal. In Orgagna they appear in their due places, seated formally and at reverent distance on each side below Christ—solemn lay figures, grandly draped, each, excepting St. Peter, with a book in hand. Here they preserve their impartial judicial character far better than the principal figure. The same propriety marks their bearing in Fra Angelico's several pictures. In Rogier van der Weyden's Last Judgment, at Beaune, they seem to forget the intention with which they were thus elevated, the second Apostle on the left expressing, with upraised hands and drooping eyelids, his deep commiseration for the sinners below. Generally, however, they sit ranged behind the Judge, as with Memling, apparently conferring together, sometimes so comfortably disposed as to remind us rather too forcibly of spectators in an amphitheatre. Under Michael Angelo's all-transforming hand alone, do the Apostles utterly lose their sacred character, and appear literally and metaphorically *unfrocked*. We seek in vain for any expression of their peaceful calling in these naked pugilists, who gather round their equally undraped and gigantic chief, as if waiting his dismissal on errands of violence. Magnificent as specimens of bone and muscle, knowledge and drawing, are this apostolic band; but, in the sense of Christian Art, very unfit company for the Virgin, who shrinks back, as if more in terror of them than of the scenes going on below.

As to their order of arrangement there seems to be no traditional rule, except that St. Peter, known by his keys, is always first on the right hand of Christ. By the 15th century other saints alone, or the whole hierarchy of patriarchs, prophets, saints, martyrs, &c., are introduced with them. In our etching from Lord Dudley's picture, St. Stephen, the protomartyr, and St. Dominic, are seen on one side, and a pope, probably St. Gregory, on the other. In Fra Angelico's larger Last Judgment, in the Accademia at Florence,

the patriarchs and prophets sit in the highest row, headed by Adam on one side, and by Abel with his lamb on the other, while St. Dominic and St. Francis terminate the lower row occupied by the Apostles. In Rogier van der Weyden's picture, the ranks of judges are rather prematurely swelled by some who had still to be judged themselves, namely, by living persons—Pope Eugenius IV., Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, his Duchess, and other individuals not known to fame, even in this world.

The presence of the Virgin on the right of her Son, and of St. John the Baptist on the left, is derived from the same Scriptural authority which places other sacred personages there, 'The saints shall judge the world.' The Virgin is not invariably seen in early examples—as, for instance, not in the MS. alluded to before in the British Museum, but she precedes St. John in date, who never appears without her. Art gives ample evidence that it is in the character of colleague in judgment, or, as it is called, 'Assessor,' and not in that subsequently adopted of Intercessor, that she occupies the highest place after our Lord. In Orgagna's fresco her position as judge is unmistakeable: she sits on the rainbow, invested with equal radiance, and in a glory only smaller than that of her Son. One hand is meekly laid on her breast, the other in her lap. Her whole action is expressive of deference towards Him, and not of personal feeling towards the Condemned. Here John the Baptist appears among the Elect below. It may be considered that the incongruity of this elevation was felt even in the 14th century, for the Virgin does not appear in any other instance that we are aware of in the same equality of position. In the Last Judgment by Fra Angelico, she is always seated on the right hand of Christ, on a level with the Apostles; St. John is always introduced opposite to her on the left by this painter, nor does he ever fail afterwards where the Virgin appears. By this time the expression of the sacred personages surrounding Christ seems to have merged from a judicial into an adoring intention—the position of the Virgin and St. John with folded palms, or hands crossed on the breast, being, like that of the Apostles and saints, indicative of Worship and Praise. This change may account for the prominence henceforth given to the Baptist, who, as the Precursor, belongs to scenes where the glorification of Christ is intended. It would be



difficult to say where precisely the further change from the attitude of Praise to that of Intercession began; doubtless the alteration in the character of Christ Himself led to it, for till He appears as Prosecutor, instead of Judge, no room for intercession could be found. Once introduced, however, the idea became so stereotyped, that even where the judicial and impartial aspect is restored to our Lord, the Virgin and Baptist show by actions of supplication the eager desire to alter the Divine decrees. This, like all heresies in doctrine, acts greatly to the prejudice of Art; it is no longer the *Last Judgment*, where two figures thus appeal against the verdict of the Judge. On some occasions even the Virgin is represented exposing her breast to the sight of Christ, and also to that of the spectator—as in the subject called Intercession (p. 382); but here still more indefensibly, as it is for the purpose of diverting the course of Divine law. It would be highly presumptuous to claim this as Protestant criticism—on the contrary, pious writers of the Roman Catholic Church have not failed, here as well as in other instances, to defend the sacred Mother of God from the imputation thus cast on her, and remind painters that the Last Judgment will be a place not for mercy but for justice.<sup>1</sup>

We next consider the angels who attend this scene in different capacities. They may be divided into three classes—the one holding the instruments of the Passion, the other with their trumpets calling the dead from their graves, and the third standing in the centre holding the balance, or adjudging the bodies as they emerge to their allotted sides. The first were intended originally to assist the theological idea by which the dead were judged according to their previous acceptance or rejection of our Lord's Cross and Passion. In early forms of Art they stand on clouds with folded wings, in solemn rows beneath the Judge, holding forth the crown of thorns, the nails, the scourge, the spear and lance, and even the bucket which held the vinegar. This soon gave way to their more picturesque treatment above the judgment-seat, where they hover, in airy forms, to the better rounding of the picture, though still intent on displaying the insignia of the Passion. This, however, depended on the space over the Judge. In Fra Angelico, where the heavenly conclave mount to the top of the

<sup>1</sup> Molanus de Historia SS. Imaginum, p. 524.

composition, an angel with the Cross alone—as an epitome of all the instruments of the Passion—stands below the feet of Christ. As Art expanded in material forms and degenerated in sentiment,



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Angels in Last Judgment. (Orgagna. Campo Santo, Pisa.)

the office of these angels became more burdensome or more frolicsome. Instead of the mere typical forms of our Lord's suffering, a cross large enough to have borne Him and a column of equal dimension are hoisted into the air, either to their evident embarrassment or to their boisterous delight. Both effects are visible in Michael Angelo's Last Judgment.

More awful to the imagination are those angelic beings who, hovering in headlong postures between earth and heaven, sound the resistless Trump of Doom. These are never absent from the true type of the Last Judgment, summoning from the four winds the scattered millions of the human family, who cannot rise till they hear that sound. Sometimes two only are seen with their diverging instruments, immediately under the foot of the Judge—as in Orgagna (woodcut, No. 277) and Fra Angelico. Sometimes they bray forth their terrific notes directly over the graves, which yawn obedient to the sound. No painter has ever imagined a sublimer group of that mingled spiritual power and earthly feeling of which the finest touches of Art are composed than this we here give, so often described, by Orgagna. Above is the grand angel of Judgment, holding forth the scrolls inscribed with welcome and repulse. On each side are two winged messengers poised headlong with their tubes of fierce reveillée, and below is a form of tremendous import—an angel unnerved with what man has to endure, and cowering like a noble and frightened animal at the sights and sounds below him. In this figure the painter, consciously or unconsciously, has embodied the awe of his own mind at the scene he had conjured up.

And now we turn to the spectacle of the rising and risen dead—the true centre of interest to us, for, however grotesque and extravagant the scene, we seldom fail to make good their affinity to us, were it only by the curiosity with which we gaze upon them. They are emerging from the earth, whether a grave or a tomb, the simple idea of the Resurrection being all that Western Art seeks to express. According to ancient tradition, the dead were to rise in the valley of Jehoshaphat—the schoolmen, however, thus disposed of the particular locality: ‘Does not a valley imply a neighbouring mountain?’ says St. Thomas Aquinas, question 88; ‘the valley of Jehoshaphat therefore means the earth, and the mountain heaven.’ In sculpture, where no scenery can be given, the Resurrection is most intelligibly expressed by the opening of tombs and monuments. Thus in Orvieto we see the upper slabs of the monuments upheaved by the movement of the suddenly reanimated creatures beneath them; some of them already out, some in the act of emerging. The same appears in the sculpture on the West

front of Wells Cathedral—the grandest form of the Resurrection, perhaps, that Art has preserved—executed by an unknown hand nearly a century before that of Orvieto—being completed in 1242. These works will bear comparison with Niccolo Pisano, who was born in 1200, and are far superior to those by Giovanni Pisano, the sculptor of Orvieto. Their remarkable beauty was first pointed out by Flaxman, and has since been the subject of the late Mr. Cockerell's learned and elegant pen.<sup>1</sup> The rising dead here, with grand simplicity of architectonic arrangement, occupy a series of niches running in a rich band along the front of the building, and around the North and South towers. Each niche contains a tomb with one or more figures, forming a separate and perfect whole. Thus the idea of individual responsibility has been better preserved than in the crowded juxtaposition seen in most pictures; while, at the same time, little episodes appear not often observable elsewhere. Thus a tomb is represented where three have slept together—one flings his arms aloft in the first comprehension of his bliss; the second piously helps the third figure to rise, the imagination is left to suggest the earthly bond thus fondly remembered and renewed, for the figures, according to a convention always observable in Last Judgments, present no great diversity of age. It was decided by the schoolmen that infancy and old age would alike disappear from the awful scene, and that the bodies would all belong to that *mezzo termine* in life when humanity has ceased to acquire strength and not begun to lose it.<sup>2</sup>

In painting, the commoner idea of the graveyard prevails. The straight formal perspective of open pits down the centre of the picture in Fra Angelico, shows the familiar forms of the convent cemetery. In Orgagna a few irregular holes are seen in the foreground. Over these stand the archangels clad in heavenly armour, who, with prince-like gestures, grandly courteous, or haughtily severe, yet in each devoid of all personal feeling, assign the rising dead to their respective sides (woodcut, No. 278). No chance that any unsanctified soul should elude their angelic penetration, and enter Paradise without the wedding garment. A reprobate soul, only half-way risen on the right, is sternly motioned to cross over to the left. A

<sup>1</sup> Iconography of the West front of Wells Cathedral, by Charles Robert Cockerell, R.A.

<sup>2</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas. Quest. 81. Hagenbach, p. 131.

graceful youth, risen on the left, is taken gently by the arm and shown his blessed destiny on the right. In the centre rises a bearded and crowned figure, of whose fate we are left uncertain. It is King Solomon, the wisest of men, the latter days of whom are a mystery in the annals of grace. The painter, it is said, wished to



show his perplexity as to his destiny, yet a slight inclination of the figure to the right gives hope of his election. In Luca Signorelli's Last Judgment—in the Chapel of the Madonna di S. Brizio, in the Cathedral at Orvieto—the rising dead show that freedom from conventional forms which may be looked for from a painter of such originality, while the display of his own peculiar powers naturally dictated the arrangement. The dead are here straining and

struggling, with fine anatomical development, to extricate themselves from the earth. It is a task of strength, and each a Hercules, as he bends his freshly-awakened forces to it. Here, too, is an original thought which has further favoured the great master's power; for, while all are nude, some of the dead are not even clothed with flesh, but rise in empty skeleton forms—some, grim figures, standing whole-length; others with only the skull protruding from the ground, and the sightless caverns of the eye already turned upward to the heavenly summons. Among Michael Angelo's rising dead also the skeleton is seen, though not so frequently.

Luca Signorelli's Last Judgment has the peculiarity of having been commenced more than half a century before by the painter the most opposite in character of Art to himself—namely, by Fra Angelico, who executed the figure of Christ. The distance between the two painters is increased by this figure, which is more than usually tame, and not happy in expression. For Christ raises His right hand with a reprobating gesture, while the other is embarrassed with a globe so large as to give the look of considerable inconvenience to the bearer. Michael Angelo is supposed to have derived the action of the right hand of his Christ from this figure, though giving to it a violence and a vindictiveness which would have startled the pious Dominican brother. Michael Angelo's conception of the Divine Judge may be considered the *ne plus ultra* of all that is most opposed to a Christian's idea, for even the dignity of a pagan deity is lost in the muscular vehemence of the figure. His Last Judgment, however, has been too often and well described to need more than general allusion here.

To return to the rising Dead. In this place, over the opening graves in the centre, is usually seen the archangel Michael, whose office it is to weigh the souls. This is taken from Byzantine Art, where it still continues a stereotyped idea. The Northern schools adopted it. It is seen in Rogier van der Weyden and Memling. In the picture by the latter a soul is in each balance—one in attitude of praise, as the scale sinks heavy with our Lord's imputed merits; the other with gestures of despair, as it rises 'light as vanity on the weights.'

In the Cathedral at Autun, the balance is held by the hand of the Father emerging from the clouds. An angel stands by, with looks

of ineffable tenderness, ready to receive the ransomed, while a gigantic demon helps the light side to kick the beam. We will follow at first the sad fate of those souls who find themselves in that terrible category from which there is no escape. The dramatic power of Orgagna tells with awful vividness in this portion of the great picture. Angel and archangel, with lightning motion and swords of flames, are barring the passage of the weeping and wailing sinners, and driving them to their fiery doom. Here are kings and potentates—probably intended for ‘those who made Israel to sin’—wringing their hands. A High Priest, Caiaphas-like, is tearing his garments. Here are monks and nuns, guilty couples, hiding their faces, the weaker vessel upbraiding the stronger; while fearful hooks and dreadful claws, projected from the fiery abyss, fasten upon those nearest. Thus, a female figure, who clings vainly to a man for help, is caught behind by those coils of hair with which she had lured souls to destruction; again, in the foreground, a commanding-looking regal woman with both hands seeks to release her daughter, it may be, on whose dress behind two monster-hands have fastened.

As for Fra Angelico, there is a simplicity even in his conception of the Condemned, which tells of the man. Many of them, as we see in the etching, are like naughty children, roaring and crying, and fighting too. For in the centre are a man and woman, who in life did each other no good, each clutching the other by the hair in unmistakable hostility. The great clerical crime of his time is told by the bags of money suspended round the necks of three different churchmen, who are being hurried to their doom by demons, one of whom has grappled a priest thus laden, and holds up his cardinal’s hat in exultation. But even the demons are not malicious-looking enough for their tasks, being little more than the magnified cats and dogs of S. Marco, painted in different colours to disguise them. One of them appears strictly to have caught a Tartar—for a figure, seemingly that of a soldier, and armed with a sword, has turned upon his tormentor, a fat fiend, who is quite thrown off his guard by the novelty of the proceeding. This strange feature occurs in the larger Last Judgment in the Accademia at Florence.

Altogether, the structure and physiognomy of the demon world,

as conceived in most representations of the Last Judgment, do not show a very deep philosophy as to the expression of evil; horns and tail, talons and tusks, were traditional and easy; but, for true malignity, there is nothing like the human face and figure through which all the demon glares. This was the view taken by Luca Signorelli and Michael Angelo, who modified the horror or the burlesque of the theme in proportion as they applied to it the extraneous interest of artistic power. If scenes of wretched beings in the grasp of fiends can be tolerable to the eye, it stands to reason that it can only be for the sake of the Art in which they are



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Group from Last Judgment. (Luca Signorelli. Orvieto.)

invested. With both these great masters this portion is a trophy of their particular excellence, though at the same time it must be remembered that the germ of most of their thoughts may be traced to works of an earlier time. Luca Signorelli led the way in falling figures of stupendous power, hurled below by the fiat of the archangel. On the same level are demons with bat-like wings taking charge with terrible irony of the weaker sex (woodcut, No. 279). We give an illustration of one group, unsurpassed in Satanic invention. This fair sinner is only thus carefully conveyed to be cast below among the crowd of struggling Condemned who are being bound by their captors previous to the last fatal plunge. In front lies a wretched woman, perhaps intended for the same as seen above on the demon's back, whom, with one foot on her head,



her tormentor is about to splice like a bundle in a running noose (woodcut, No. 280.)

Michael Angelo has also groups of demons bearing the Condemned below, which are unsurpassable in power, and which are among those subjects to which his tremendous Art was most sympatheti-



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Group from Last Judgment. (Luca Signorelli. Orvieto.)

cally applied. They are well known; nevertheless we remind the reader of one group which hangs above the boat steered by Charon across the flood. Michael Angelo's Last Judgment may be instanced as the only one which in this portion of the composition is taken directly from Dante.

We pass on unwillingly to the extreme left side, which may be said to have gone out of fashion at the period of Luca Signorelli

and Michael Angelo; but which, previously to these great masters, was too often occupied by a class of composition scripturally, morally, and pictorially indefensible, and which the last reason alone should have sufficed to forbid to painters. That such disgusting horrors as are embodied in the so-called 'Inferno,' which represents the last of the Four 'Novissima,' are not warranted by a single word of Scripture, may be safely declared without provoking any controversial criticism. Morally speaking, they are equally unjustifiable. We may be sure that in those normal instincts which inspire emotion, human nature was the same when these pictures were executed as it is now. We still look (those who glance beyond the surface at all) into the joys of these Blessed, and the despair of these Rejected, with an interest and sympathy not affected by the flight of time and the passing of this world's fashion; but who was ever edified, or even frightened, at the hideous hobgoblinery of what the Church was pleased to set forth as the Christian idea of hell? Far more probably have such representations helped to swell the very ranks of perdition, by fostering the natural cruelty of the unregenerate eye, and by ministering to the relish always felt by the lowest of mankind for sights of brutality and horror. That such forms of Art should have grown up among Orientals, proverbially indifferent to human life and suffering, is intelligible, however detestable; but how such abominable revelries of wickedness should have found favour in the more civilised West, and painters have been persuaded to degrade themselves by their perpetration, is difficult to comprehend. The climax of the abuse of Art in this form, by Taddeo Bartoli, in the Duomo at S. Gimignano, has called down the severe rebukes of the Canonico Pecori.<sup>1</sup> As regards Orgagna, he may be said to have vindicated his dignity by leaving the Inferno to his inferior brother, Bernardo; while Fra Angelico, who is the last who gave it in any work of importance (see etching), stands excused for his somewhat mitigated Chamber of Horrors on the score of obedience.

Dante is generally made accountable for this portion of the Last Judgment. But it would be, in the first place, the greatest error to conclude that any painter is justified in taking from any source subjects which the instincts of his particular Art command

<sup>1</sup> Storia di S. Gimignano, p. 509.

him to reject; and, secondly, the grossest insult to the divine poet, as it is the purest falsity to assert that these pictorial atrocities were derived from him. For there is evidence from remains still existing that they were imported into Western Art more than a century before Dante was born.<sup>1</sup> It was he rather who recognised in the pictures and brutal popular representations of hell in his day,<sup>2</sup> materials—transposed and re-created by his genius—adapted to the highest order of Poetry. Dante here followed his instincts, as much as the painters belied theirs—thus giving to their scandalous positive images the legitimate sublimity and decorum of the horrible in necessarily vague, however circumstantial description. Instead, therefore, of these subjects being taken from him, the only interest they can excite in a pure mind is the fact of their being in a partial sense illustrated by his words. It is thus only that we can endure to look on the three-faced giant Lucifer with a sinner in each jaw, of which Judas is the chief; or on the cleft bodies of Arius and Mahomet thus punished for their sins of schism; or on the different compartments of infernal torments in which Orgagna, Fra Angelico, and others have stored the ‘avaricious,’ the ‘gluttonous,’ the ‘irascible,’ &c., whom Dante, with a far higher sense of moral justice, has placed only in Purgatory. Nor even with this source of collateral interest can we endure to look at them long. Where so many glorious and pious works have been hidden under white-wash, or more completely destroyed by the Church at whose behest they were executed, it is strange that such pictures as these should have been preserved, to the disgrace of Art, the scandal of the pious, and, it must be added, the corruption of the simple.

Let us now return to that blessed company of just men made perfect, far more calculated to win to paths of virtue than those just contemplated are to scare from ways of destruction.

Once admitted on the elect side, the blissful scene begins. No one has expressed this first sense of salvation with such tender

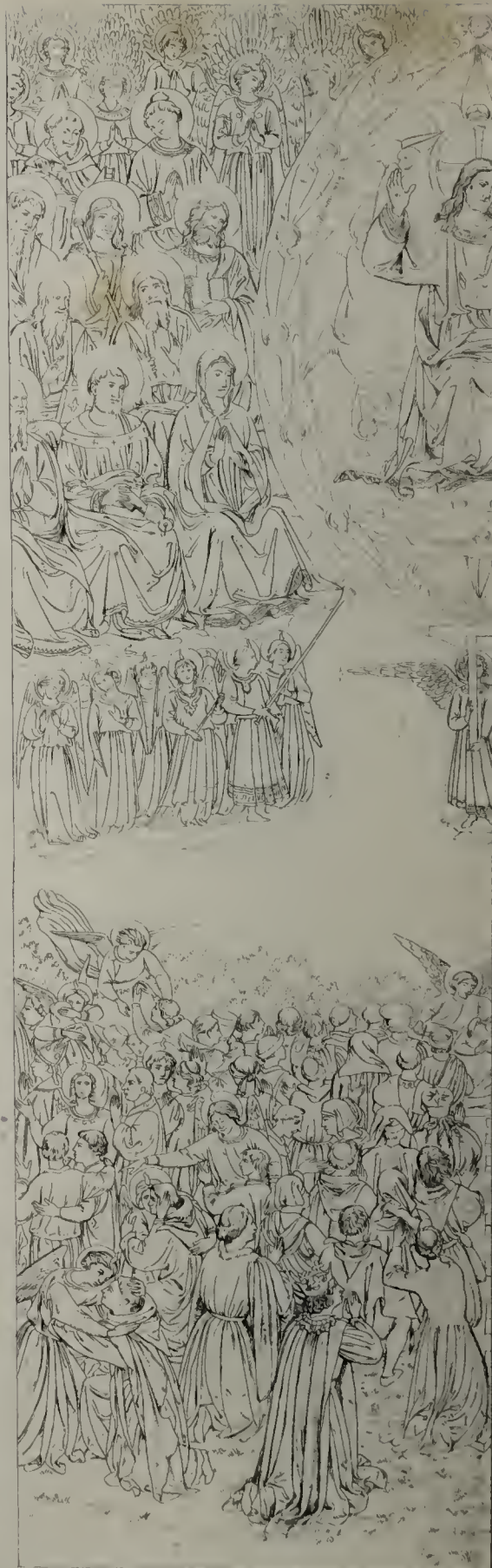
<sup>1</sup> The same class of Inferno is seen on the Cathedral of Ferrara, and in churches in France. See Mr. Scharf's lecture on a picture in Gloucester Cathedral. *Archæologia*, vol. xxxvi.

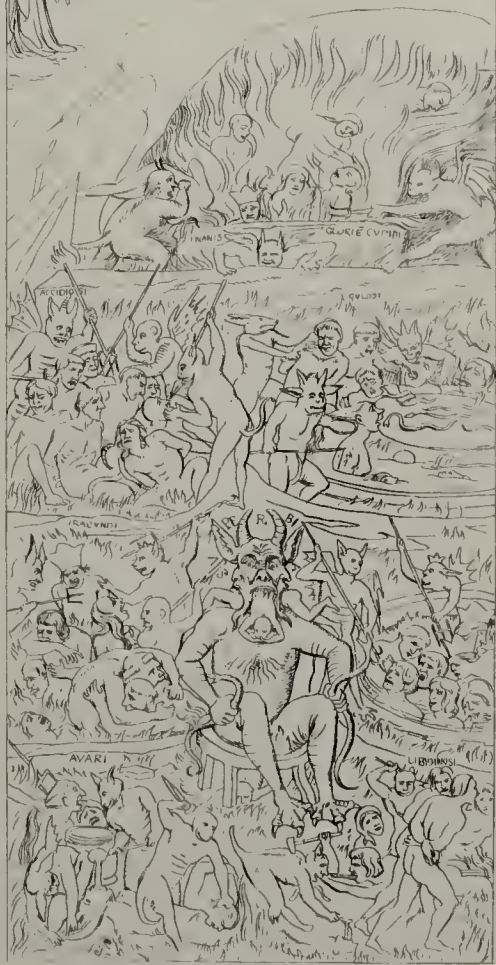
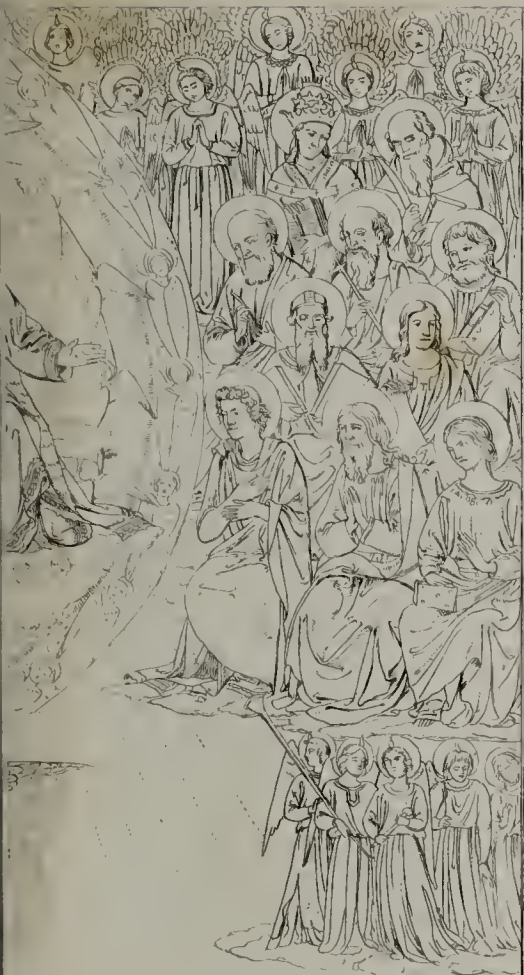
<sup>2</sup> Canto xxvi. v. 9. Dante here alludes to the fall of a wooden bridge over the Arno at Prato, where a large multitude were assembled to witness the representation of hell and of the infernal torments, in which many lives were lost.

fervour as the angelic painter of Fiesole. Surely the cell of one who could thus conceive the happiness of ransomed spirits must have been transfigured with a foretaste of ecstasy. We see here, in fact, the visions which visited the humble world-renouncing monk—angels are seen welcoming those created but little lower than themselves, with sweet gestures of kindness; but it is upon the poor Brother with shaven crown and woollen habit that the tenderer angelic embrace is bestowed. In various parts of the crowd the poor Friar is seen thus fondly received, while—by a poetic justice pardonable in one who had refused the archiepiscopate of Florence, and who affirmed that the only dignity he sought was to avoid hell and reach Paradise—cardinals and bishops are seen wending their way along the heavenward path without such rapturous demonstrations. The throng of happy spirits contains all classes—the citizen, the soldier, the crowned woman, the youthful damsel; but the most touching episodes all refer to clerical and conventual sacrifices. Here two brothers—one a priest, the other a layman—walk along, enfolded by each other's arms, rejoicing in reunion; there a youthful couple stand with looks of purest love, and palms clasped together, his shaven head and convent garb telling the tale why their hands were denied to be joined in life. But there are no tenderer ties set forth in this place of blessed meetings:—the pious monk did not dream of husbands and wives, of parents and children; or, if such visions crossed his mind, as they must have done, the needful discipline of conventual edification suppressed their utterance as inexpedient.

In the Northern schools, and in sculpture generally, the souls are represented as undraped. This admitted of another feature of Scriptural derivation. Memling and others show the Blessed as receiving their robes of righteousness at the gate of Paradise, on the extreme right, where angels stand ready to invest them. In other cases, of which Luca Signorelli is an example, a crown is given (woodcut, No. 281). In many instances St. Peter with his keys, as the proper guardian of the Celestial Gate, is welcoming them. This occurs in the Autun bas-relief, before referred to. Here, in the quaint and innocent facetiæ of the 11th century, he is lifting the naked souls represented as little children—'for of such











is the kingdom of heaven'—into the windows of a building which sets forth that Father's house, in which there are many mansions. In other cases of sculpture—the Cathedral of Ferrara, for instance—Heaven is given under the form of Abraham's bosom, who sits on the right side with little souls in his lap. In Memling's Last



Judgment the Redeemed are passing into a regular church, with angel musicians hymning their welcome from seats in the architecture above the porch. With Fra Angelico it is an Italian gateway, and the Blessed, who have been conducted so far in a demure and beautiful dance of angels, are here lifted from their feet, and seen flying towards the light through the portal.

At this portal the lessons of Christian Art are brought to an end. We have seen her in our long researches, following with pious

imagery the gracious and pathetic scheme of our 'Creation, Preservation, and Redemption.' She has here accompanied the Ransomed to the very threshold of the Celestial City; but beyond that who may venture to imagine either form or semblance? For above that portal, in characters clear to the mental vision of all Christians, is written the divine prohibition: 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them which love Him.'

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- A. J.] 1. *Eve tempted by the Serpent.*—Gen. iii. 1-7.  
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