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THE TRIUMPH OF THE CHURCH.

Altar-piece by John Van Eyck, in the Santa Trinita Museum at Madrid.

see page 92.

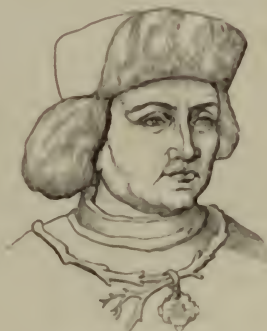
THE
EARLY FLEMISH PAINTERS:

NOTICES OF
Their Lives and Works.

BY J. A. CROWE AND G. B. CAVALCASELLE.



JOHN VAN EYCK.



HUBERT VAN EYCK.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
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PREFACE.

Two great Schools of Art, illustrating the fourteenth century, rose to robust and healthy vigour; the first under the warm and genial sun of Italy, the second under the colder and more clouded atmosphere of Belgium. The latter, unduly slighted by some, unfairly elevated by others, is the subject of this volume. Inferior to the Italian in the great features of design and sentiment, it has superior claims to attention from an early tendency towards a new mode of colour. Influenced in this, as much by clime as by other causes, it brought to perfection a system which soon extended itself to all the Schools of the world, embracing in its progress the early painters of Venice, and laying the foundation of the future greatness of those masters. In tracing the progress of the painters of Bruges, from their early efforts to their decline and fall, we have not neglected to note the influences which they exercised abroad; and we have found it necessary to include amongst the pupils

of Van Eyck, Antonello da Messina, who formed the link between the schools of Bruges and Venice. In this we have acted not without precedent; and were it otherwise, we should find good reason for such a course in the interest thereby added to the general history of Flemish art.

In the endeavour to bring together the scattered and imperfect notices of the first Flemish artists and their labours, we have had to contend with many difficulties. The paucity of materials, and the dispersion of pictures throughout the Galleries of Europe, rendered the classification of Schools a task not easy of performance. The most valuable additions to our old authorities on the subject of Flemish art have been but recently made. Before their discovery, the most trustworthy had been Vasari, Sanderus, Vaernewyk, and Van Mander; the first of whom, though a stranger, is entitled to the gratitude of the Belgians, for having, in the midst of the slighting humour of his countrymen, rendered to the Van Eycks and their cotemporaries their fair meed of praise. Vaernewyk and Van Mander took Vasari for their guide, and their remarks are little more than repetitions from his book. They had, apparently, no access to the records of the guilds and noble families of Belgium from which they might have derived more exact knowledge; and they added to the general information only lists of pictures extant in their time, and a few dates and inscriptions. Numerous authors followed them.

Descamps, in 1753, wrote afresh the lives of these painters. He did not, however, add much that was new. On the contrary, he confused a history which was already sufficiently obscure. He failed to discover the error of Van Mander, who made two painters out of the old Roger Van der Weyden; and he changed the name of Memling to Hemmelinck, thereby laying the foundation of much subsequent controversy. Having visited Bruges and seen the pictures of the hospital, he sought to repair the neglect of history by writing a legend. Thus altered and falsified, the history of early Flemish art remained for some time, not forgotten, it is true, but still obscure.

In the early part of the present century, successful efforts were made to raise a corner of the veil that covered this interesting subject. In Germany, Mr. Kugler, and the writers of the *Kunstblatt*,—foremost amongst whom we should mention Dr. Waagen and Mr. Passavant, in Belgium, the contributors to the *Messager des Sciences et des Arts de Belgique*, such as M. de Bast, Mr. Délepierre, and Mr. Van Lokeren,—combined to throw light on doubtful points by notices of pictures visited, or of documents found in the pages of forgotten authorities. Slight but valuable details derived from documentary evidence, discovered at various periods, were published at intervals, and revealed the existence of more that might be obtained with labour and perseverance;

whilst Mr. de Reiffenberg, in his Appendix to Barantes' History of the Dukes of Burgundy, Mr. Gachard, in his "Documents inédits concernant l'Histoire de Belgique," Mr. Wauters, and M. Schayes, added to our increasing stock of knowledge.

Mme. Schopenhauer, with the taste of a lady for the poetic in art, and a vivid feeling for the beauties of early Belgian pictures, seen in the Netherlands, and in the Boisserée Collections, shed a gleam of interest on the question by incomplete but enthusiastic criticisms. Schnaase, Förster, Reumont, and other German writers, added the fruit of their observations. But it was evident that in the archives of the palaces of the Dukes of Burgundy, in the records of the guilds, and the chapters of the convents and churches, much valuable information remained in store. Mr. de Stoop, Mr. Goetghebuer, and Abbé Carton, discovered many of these hidden documents, and published them in the "Annales de la Société d'Emulation" of Bruges, and in the "Bulletins" of the Academy of Arts and Sciences of Brussels. Mr. Le Glay made known to us several old inventories of pictures; but all these efforts were partial, and produced in a fragmentary form. The search, though diligently made, had been hitherto of too slight a nature, and too much impeded by official immobility, to be satisfactory.

Besides this, there was a marked absence of order in the records that survived to the present time. The

civil wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had acted as stimulants to this disorder, which reached its height when Belgium was invaded by France, at the close of the last century. Parchment was considered by the blockaded French as an invaluable natural material for cartridges. The archives of the old cities and convents, of the guilds and churches, were pounced upon with avidity, and the greater part expended in the muskets and cannons of numerous armies. Those records which were saved from destruction partly perished from neglect and rot. There was a residue, however, and that might have been examined. The Belgian Government, anxious at last to perform what might be considered a national duty, commissioned Mr. Michiels to write the history of Belgian art, for which he had fitted himself by a knowledge of the masterpieces of his own country, and a comparison with most of the early works of the Schools of Germany. Unfortunately for that gentleman, the Government, whilst entrusting him with so important a commission, neglected or refused to give him the authority for searching the hidden records that still remained in Belgium; and could not, or would not, afford him the means of examining and classifying pictures scattered through the Galleries of Europe. His book, though it contained much that was hitherto unknown, was imperfect in many essential parts; it lacked precise information on points of fact, and failed in the classification of the Schools.

from the impediments to his seeing all the pictures of the men whose lives he purposed to write.

Then Sir Charles Eastlake, in his valuable work on the rise of oil-painting, called attention more forcibly than ever to Flemish art, and invited research into a subject which had hitherto received so little real light. In the meantime, fresh sources of information were opened by Mr. De Laborde, in whom was vested by the French Government the necessary authority for searching the records of the House of Burgundy, of which the remnants still lumbered the shelves of the offices. His account of the state in which many valuable documents were found is startling, and proves the neglect which had followed the wholesale destruction of the last century. His search was rewarded by the discovery of most interesting passages in the lives of the ducal painters, entries of money paid for the elaboration of certain pictures, lists and names of artists hitherto unknown, but who had figured in no mean way in the early years of which they were the ornament. The Belgian Government at the same time caused searches to be made, which had been denied to Michiels; and private enterprise led to the discovery of more valuable information.

The result has been the production of a vast amount of curious details elucidating the history of early Flemish art. To bring together and collate these have been the aim and labour of the authors

of this volume; the materials, though less complete than they may yet become, were sufficient for tracing the course of painting in Belgium, not merely from the time of the Van Eycks, but from a much earlier period. It has been our endeavour to combine all these materials together for the first time, and to form a connected narrative. More fortunate, perhaps, than our predecessors, we have been able to visit and compare most of the masterpieces of the artists of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, dispersed throughout the continent of Europe. Belgium, Holland, Germany, France, Italy, and Spain, have all been visited for this object; and the result of a personal inspection of all these pictures, as well as of most of those which have found their way to this country, has been a classification of schools under their several heads, such as would have been otherwise unattainable.

ERRATA.

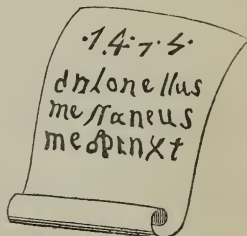
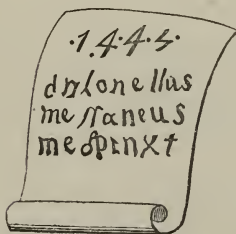
- Page 16, line 14, *for* "Salutation" *read* "Visitation."
 Page 64, line 18, *for* "Quos" *read* "Quis;" line 21, after the word "fictor" insert the word "et."
 Page 65, last line, *for* 1416 *read* 1516; *for* 1424 *read* 1524.
 Page 79, line 21, *for* "three" *read* "several."
 Page 83, line 14, *for* "previous to" *read* "in the early years subsequent to."
 Page 117, line 17, *for* 1451 *read* 1449.
 Page 120, line 6, *for* 1451 *read* 1452.
 Page 138, line 2, *for* "The Saviour on the Cross" *read* "St. John the Baptist."
 Page 218, line 7, *for* "answers the description" *read* "answers in part only the description."
 Page 283, line 12, *for* "Stow" *read* "Stoke."

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EARLY FLEMISH ART.

THE SCHOOL OF BRUGES.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY EFFORTS.

THE records of early art in the Netherlands are exceedingly obscure, not only because innumerable pictures have perished, but because historians preferred to dwell on the stirring political struggles of their time rather than on the relation of pictorial triumphs. Municipal freedom, successful commerce, and aristocratic splendour, are the themes on which they lavished their attention. They had leisure to describe the strife of jealous *communes*, the wars of foreign and native princes, the long intrigues and cruel stratagems, the vanities and ambition of contending parties. They chronicled with pride the wealth and love of show of duke or burgher, but they neglected art and its efforts; leaving to posterity to seek its traces through the obscurity of ages. Whilst the lives of eminent painters thus remained untold, the works of these men were subjected to all the vicissitudes of civil and religious warfare, and the greater part of them were consequently lost. No school of art, in truth, has flourished so little known as that of Bruges. We

know more of the painted wonders of Assyria and of Egypt than we do of the works of the Van Eycks. The massive productions of the East have withstood the attacks of time, whilst the perishable remains of Belgian art have been destroyed by foreign armies, by revolutionists or religious fanatics. Few of the written records of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are preserved, and the galleries of Europe possess comparatively few pictures of those times. It is, therefore, a noble aim to write a history of early Flemish art; and that aim is made yet nobler by other and higher considerations. Art is one of those developments of human genius which can never be confined to one peculiar country. England should excel in it; for art has always been the produce of those qualities and means which she essentially possesses. Civic freedom and commercial wealth have always been the forerunners, if not the concomitants, of greatness in art; and those England has attained to a degree and with a perfection unknown to past history. Albeit these circumstances are insufficient, as we well know, to produce a school; perhaps by examining how such an one sprang up in a country free and commercial like our own, we may discover other ingredients and means wanting here. The Low Countries have a climate akin to our own. Their development as a manufacturing and commercial people resembles ours. It cannot fail, therefore, to be useful, or at least interesting, to trace the rise of painting in that country which was one of its cradles, from the first rude efforts that marked its birth to the gorgeous splendour that gave it fame.

The fine arts, which had fallen so low all over Europe that even in the eleventh century scarce a trace of them remained, were slow in gaining ground in Belgium. The early manner of the Pisans and Siennese, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, found no followers in Flanders till the thirteenth; and when it did, the effort was a feeble and ill-directed one. It had the imperfection and rigidity of the oldest models without simplicity or breadth, and mingled with the old traditions the realistic tendencies of a more material art. The Saviour, depicted on the walls of the Hospital of La Biloque, at Ghent, in the act of blessing Joan of Constantinople, is a curious instance of this. The painter clothed the figure of Christ in modern garb, and dressed the Saviour's head with a hunting cap and feather. Again, when he attempted to represent St. Christopher, he marked the passage of the saint through water by rude and somewhat quaint outlines of fishes.

The figures, of colossal stature, are coloured like illuminated parchment, and much in the same manner as the Apostles in the church of St. Ursula at Cologne.¹ Their remarkable size causes their imperfection to be particularly visible.

A somewhat similar example of this early manner is the Tomb of Robert of Bethune, in the church of St. Martin at Yprès, one side of which was adorned with a kneeling

¹ The paintings in La Biloque were discovered in 1832.

The Apostles of the church of St. Ursula at Cologne are inscribed with the date of 1224. The pictures of La Biloque are stated to have been painted in the thirteenth century. See on this subject, *Messenger des Sciences et des Arts de Belgique*, 1832, p. 206. *Messenger des Sciences Historiques de Belgique*, 1842, p. 204.

figure dressed in cloth of gold, embroidered with arms. It is difficult to form a correct judgment respecting this picture, on account of the modern retouching it has received ; but the Tomb dates as far back as 1322, when Robert of Bethune died.¹

Imperfectly preserved as are these records of early art, they are interesting as the productions of artists who immediately preceded a class recognised in the fourteenth century, and sufficiently numerous to form corporations. Patronized by the Counts of Flanders, these corporations were not confined to artists who painted pictures, but comprised all those who used the brush or pencil. Painters, illuminators, and glass-stainers, therefore, formed part of them ; and art became, from the first moment of its rise in Flanders, more a secular than a religious occupation. The Netherlands, no doubt, produced in her convents men who wrote and illuminated manuscripts ; but the monks who followed these pursuits copied and recopied the same subjects, and were as poor in ideas of design as feeble in their notions of colour. Progress was less rapid amongst them, because they lacked elements which were developed with far greater force by competition and emulation. The arts in Belgium were, perhaps, forced onwards in a peculiar path by the early formation of companies of masons, as they called themselves, which, coming from the borders of the Rhine, established themselves in Flanders, asserted their superiority over the old monks, who had till then monopolized the dump and level, and even brought painting under a species of subjection to architecture, which renders the school

¹ Kuntsblatt, No. 54, 1843.

to this day distinguishable. In fact, the early works of the fourteenth century in Flanders appear, from what remains of them, to have been a mixture of architecture, sculpture, and painting. Every one who has visited the Amiens cathedral, for instance, may remember the highly relieved figures grouped in squares or Gothic niches, on which remains of painting may be seen. This habit of decorating sculptured figures with colour was one for which the latter portion of the thirteenth, and the greater part of the fourteenth, century were remarkable. It was general in most of the cities of the Netherlands, where the colour used was mixed in oil, as many documents still prove. For instance, the Tomb of John III., Duke of Brabant, at Tournay, was erected, in 1341, by the sculptor Wuillaume du Gardin, with proviso that the statues should be painted or illuminated with oil-painting, or, as they called it, "de pointure de bonnes couleurs à ole."¹ The Chapel of the Stoffeerne of Damme, in the town-hall of Bruges, was decorated in the same manner by Jan van der Leye, *den schildere*, or the painter. The statutes of the sculptors (*tailleurs d'ymaiges*), illuminators, and painters of Paris for the year 1391, continually refer to this mode of painting, which remained in fashion till the beginning of the fifteenth century.² But, frequent as was the use of

¹ Dumortier, Archives de Tournay. Ap. De Laborde. "Les Ducs de Bourgogne." Preuves. Paris, 1849. Svo. Vol. i. Introd. p. 64.

² Archives municipales de Bruges. "Jan van der Leye, den schildere van der Capelle to Stoffeerne ten Damme in der Steden Huus van Brügge, van goude van zelve en allen maniere van olye vaerwe dier vaerwe dier too behoerde, et eenen waireman, van

oil-colours for the purposes we have described, it would seem as if, in the painting of pictures on panel, the ancient process of tempera was always preferred, or considered indispensable. The colouring of sculptured figures has frequently been confounded with genuine painter's work. For instance, the author of the commentary to the life of Antonello da Messina, in the last edition of Vasari, dwells upon the discovery of oil-painting in the fourteenth century, quoting the instance of Jehan Coste, who produced certain pieces in the Castle of Val de Rueil in 1355. It would seem that the subjects painted by Jehan Coste were in sculptured work, adorned with gold and colours.¹

CXXV. dach wercken up syn selve cost . . . CII. pont.—*De Laborde, ut sup.*, vol. i. Introd. note to page lxiv. See also, on the use of oil in colours, a Letter from Baron Vernazza to the Giornale di Pisa of 1794, on the subject of a painting at Pinerolo of 1325, in Sir C. Eastlake's *Materials for a History of Oil Painting*, Lond. 1847, p. 46, and in Vasari, Ed. of 1848, Florence, vol. iv. p. 86.

¹ C'est l'ordonnance de ce que je Gerart d'Orleans ai cautié à fere par Jehan Coste, au chastel de Vail de Rueil, sur les ouvrages de peinture qui y sont à parfaire, tant en la salle comme ailleurs, du coñdement de M. S. le Duc de Normandie, l'an de grace mil. ccc. cinquante et cinq le jour de la Nostre Dame en Mars.

Premièrement, pour la salle assouvir en la manière que celle est commenciée au mieux; c'est assavoir: parfaire l'ystoire de la vie Cesar et au dessoux, en la derrenière liste, une liste de bestes et d'images, ainsi comme est commenciée. Item, la galerie à l'entrée de la salle, en laquelle est la chauce, parfaire ainsi comme est commenciée. Item, La grant chapelle fere des ystoires de Notre Dame, de Saint Anne et la Paission en tour l'autel, ce qui en y pourra être fet. Item, pour le dossier au table dessus l'autel III. hystoires; c'est assavoir: au milieu, la Trinité, et en l'un des costez une hystoire de Saint Nicolas et en l'autre de Saint Loys; et audessouz de l'hystoire du tour de la chapelle, parfaire de la manière de marbré ensi comme il est commencié. Item l'entreclos, qui est en au milieu de la chapelle, estanceler et noter de plusieurs couleurs estancelées. Item, l'oratoire que joint à la chapelle parfaire, c'est assavoir: le

A document, which we quote below in support of this view, speaks of Coste as using une "buche à ardoir," in allusion, perhaps, to some mode of heating and drying the imperfectly siccative oil-colours. But this mode of painting and adornment was not practised solely on the sculpture of a tomb, a church, or an apartment; it was frequently applied to the wooden carving of the altar-pieces which formed a part of the treasures of kings and princes. These wooden altar-pieces lost their value, or sunk in public estimation, as the art progressed; but they formed the staple of the old inventories. That of the Duke of Orleans, in 1396, for instance, comprised "unqs grants tableau cloans et ouvrans, à un Mont Calvaire dedens en un costé et en l'autre une ymage de Nostre Dame tout pourtrait;" "une fleur de lis de bois dorée dehors, cloant et ouvrant la ou il a dedans en hault un crucifiement et

couronnement qui est au pignon avec grant quantité d'anges et l'Annunciation, qui est à l'autre costé. Et en VII arches qui y sont, VII ymages, c'est assavoir en chacun archet un ymage, et les visages qui sont commenciez parfaire, tant de taille comme de couleurs et des draps diaprez nuer et parfaire; et une pièce de merrien qui est audessous des archez armoier de bonne armoieries au de chose qui le vaille. Et toutes ces choses dessus devisées seront fetes de fines couleurs à l'huile et les champs de fin or enlevé et les vestemens de Nostre Dame de fin azur et bien laidment toutes ces choses vernissées et assouviens entièrement sans aucun deflaute. Et fera le dit Jehan Coste toutes les œuvres dessus dictes, et trouvera toutes les choses nécessaires à ce excepté buche à ardoir et lit pour hosteler ly et sens gens en la manière que l'en ly a trouvé ou temps passé. Et pour ce faire doit avoir six cens moutons, desquiez el aura les deux cens à présent sur le terme des Pasques et deux cens à la Saint Michel prochainement venant, et les autres deux cens au terme de Pasques après ensuivant. Accordé et commendé par M. S. le Duc de Normandie, au Vail de Rueil le XXV^e jour de Mars MCCCLV.—*De Laborde, Archives Municipales d'Orleans.* Vol. iii. pp. 460—62.

Nostre Dame et Sainte Anne ;” and “deux tableaux de boys a pignon et à arest, argentez dehors. . . à une annunciacion dedens et un dieu en croe.”¹ These were the old princely monuments of art, as also were illuminated missals and painted windows.

Gradually the process of oil-painting was made to serve other purposes in the colouring of standards and pennons, on which were represented the device and arms of those for whom they were prepared, the figures frequently exhibiting skill in movement and design. In the records of Lille and Brussels frequent entries are discovered which relate to this particular branch of art ; and there are proofs that it was carried on not only in the Netherlands, but throughout France and Italy.² The oldest archives of the town of Asti contain details of the modé in practice amongst the painters of that country. The materials used were gum, glue, and wax ; a portion of which, if mixed together, would produce a thick and glutinous

¹ De Laborde, ut sup., pp. 126, 127, vol. iii. Arch. Nat., 1396.

² We find the following in the accounts of the Stewards of the Duke of Orleans, at Asti:—“Johanni Imperatio, civi Astensi, pictori, pro XII banderiis quarum sex depicte fuerunt ad arma dominis ducis Turonie, et alie sex ad dicta arma et domine ducisse transmittendis et portandis ad loca bacuarum sancti Albanie et Trinitatis, jurisdictionis domini episcopi subjecta, per gentes principis Achaye ab ipso oblata &c. XII solidos, VI denarios Astenses. Dicto Johanni Imperatio pro facture et pictura dictarum XII banderarium XIX l. VII s. ast.—*De Lab. ut sup.*, vol. iii., p. 29. *Extr. from the Archives Nat.*, 16 Mai, 1387.

Again:—“A Chatelani Bonneret de Milan, peintre pour la vente et délivrance de XXXIII bannières, aux armes de M. le Duc par lui baillées et délivrées au dit Cautelon du commandement et ordonnance de Mds. de Coucy. LXXIII l. XIII. s.—*Ib.* p. 75, *Arch. Nat.* 6. *Fevrier*, 1393.

medium.¹ The Belgisch Museum, a Flemish publication, contains engravings of some of these ancient banners, showing the style in which they were completed.²

That some more skilful artist than the rest should have arisen, amongst the number who practised painting in the French and Belgian cities, was natural. They formed themselves by competition and emulation. Whilst in Paris they gained sufficient influence to form a guild, of which the rules and privileges were sanctioned by Charles

The records of Lille contain the following:—"Comptes Jaquemont depuis le derrain jour d'Oct. MCCCIII¹ à Oct. MCCCIII²II.

"A maistre Jehan Mannin peintre, pour la faction des dites bannierettes et puignons."

Comptes Jehan Viète p. et au nom de la ville de Lille du jour de Toussaint de l'an de grace MCCCIII¹II jusques le derrain jour du mois d'Oct nuit et Toussaint l'an de grace MCCCIII¹III.

"Aoust,—A maistre Jehan Maunin (ou Mauvin) peintre, pour avoir painturé de couleurs à ole ix cappes de ploom servans à le porte Saint Sauveur, et les pumialz et benierettes, la aussi servans, payet pour certain marquié (marché) de ce fait à lui LIII l. III s."—*De Lab. ut sup.*, vol. i. *Introd.* p. lxvi.

The accounts of Anthoine, Duke of Brabant's Stewards, for the year 1411—12, contain this entry, amongst others, relative to painting:—"Item. Christoffle Besaen, myns voirscreven heer, scildere, om twee bannieren, II wimple, VI bannieren . . . met finen goude ende met olyen op zeden laben."—*Comptes de l'hotel d'Ant. d. Brabant. De Lab. ut. sup.*, vol. ii., p. 292.

¹ Anthonio Bellono, civi Astensi, speciario pro III^c VIII peciis auri fini batuti; pro gomma, tela nigra, candelis, cere, laurio, pertico, auro pigmento necessario pro factione trium banneriarium ad arma dominis ducis XXV l. I. s.

Johanni Alumniaco, mecerio, civi Ast. pro XI rasis seu brassis cendati, pertiti et jalni, et pro serico seu seyta et certis aliis necessariis pro dictis banneriis XXXVIII l. X s.

Christoforo de Almanzia, magistro brodure factione dictarum trium banneriarium XVII l. III s. Pro eadem per bulletam mandamenti gubernatoris datam III die Aprilis III¹I l. XV s.—*Arch. Nat. Fov.* 1388—89. *De Lab.* vol. iii. pp. 37, 38.

² Belgisch Museum. 8vo. Ghent. Vol. iii. pp. 37—9.

the Fifth,¹ they formed in Bruges the corporation of St. Luke, of which the first foundation is not distinctly known. It is supposed, however, to owe its origin to Louis de Maele, Count of Flanders, who, during many years of peace preceding the great outbreak in which he was expelled, consecrated his leisure moments to the patronage of art.

Jean de Hasselt had a place of "Paintre de MS." at the court of Louis.² His name suggests that he was born at Hasselt, not far distant from the birthplace of Hubert and John van Eyck.

The paintings of Jean de Hasselt are not preserved, but records of them still remain. The following entry in the Comptes de Flandres indicates his services and their value:—"Item, à maistre Jehan de Hasselt, pointeur pour plusieurs estoffes qu'il avait mis hors, du command. MS. pour faire une image de Notre Dame à la maison MS. à le Walle, ainsi que par lettres MS. et cédule des maistres d'hotel appartient, LXVI. l. XI. s. VIII. den."³ This entry of the year 1378 shows that Jehan was officially employed in his profession by Louis de Maele. After the death of this prince, in 1384, Jehan continued to hold the office, and painted for Philip the Hardy in 1386, "un taveliau d'autel," for the church of

¹ Charles the Fifth, of France, granted to the Academy of St. Luke, of Paris, in 1390, immunity from "taille" and subsidy, and from all necessity of "garde de ports" and "guet." Charles VI. confirmed these privileges, in 1391.—*Lenoir. Musée des Mon. Fran.* Paris. 4to. 1800. Vol. iii. pp. 9, 11.

² Jean de Hasselt had a yearly pension of twenty l. de gros.—*Michiels. Peintres Brugeois.* 8vo. Brux. 1846, p. 13.

³ Comptes de Flandres—Compte de Henry Lippin, Mars 1378 jusqu. Mars 1380, apud. Laborde, ut sup., vol. i. Introd. p. 50.

the "Cordeliers" at Ghent. The price was forty livres.¹ From that date forward the name of Jehan de Hasselt ceases to appear in the records of the period, and is succeeded by that of Melchior Broederlain, or Broedlain, "peintre de MS. de Bourgogne, et varlet de chambre."

The Dukes of Burgundy, on their accession to the title of Counts of Flanders and Artois, brought with them to Bruges the luxurious habits of the Parisian court. Whilst the citizens of Belgium exhibited their wealth in cloths of rich texture, the dukes embroidered their mantles with gold to vie with and surpass the citizens. Truly says De Laborde, quoting Martial of Auvergne, "on s'harnachaît d'orfaverie." Not only were the mantles of the dukes and nobles covered with frosted work of gold and silver, but sideboards groined with plate, and the ducal treasuries were filled with countless figures carved in precious metal, and sparkling with the diamond and ruby. These noble treasures of the chiselled art were more valuable for the beauty of their form than for the metal in which they were wrought; they served to bribe a lukewarm prince, conciliate enemies, or, when broken up and melted, to pay knights and archers. The obvious use to which these ornaments might be put suggested the necessity of a continual supply. Goldsmiths, therefore,

¹ Premier compte de Jaque Sereyhem, receveur général, depuis le dimanche XVI jour de Mars, l'an MCCCIII^{xx} et cinq jusqu'au X jour de Mars, l'an IIII^{xx} et VI inclus.

A Jehan de Hasselt, peintre, par lettres MS. données le XXV d'Aoust IIII^{xx} et VI pour I taveliau d'autel qu'il avait fait au commandement M.S. en l'église des Cordeliers à Gand LX franchs. Payé à lui en rabat de la dite somme XL fr.—*De Lab. ut sup., Recette de Fland.* vol. i. p. 6.

naturally became clever artists and wealthy men, whose attachment it was the policy of the dukes to gain by the gift of places, the duties of which, though not defined, were ever a pretext for gratuities and constant pay. The ducal goldsmiths, and then the ducal painters, were thus early classed as "varlets," though their functions were not menial,—the title coming from France,—and ceasing to be in force only when the dukes and princes abandoned the patronage of art. The dignity of painters suffered nothing from the name of "varlet," the artist at that time being as much a man of note as he is now.

If ever prince was proud of show and splendour, Philip, called the Hardy, was the man. He took constant pleasure in making presents of gold and silver images, pictures, diamonds and pearls, to friends and relatives, and even to foes.

"In 1389," says Planchet, "Duke Philip, being then in Flanders, sent the king a new year's present of a purse (fermail) of gold, with a lady in an orchard on it, holding in her hand a diamond worth six hundred livres. He sent the queen a golden picture of the Burial of the Lord, with our Lady near him, and the Duke of Berri a St. Catherine of gold."¹

To soothe England's anger against France, he sends the royal family sets of costly tapestry. "To the Duke of Lancaster, the History of Clovis;" "to the Duke of Gloucester, the Story of the Virgin;"—presents received with grateful sense of the honour conferred, but insufficient

¹ Planchet. *benedictin. Hist. de Bourgogne. fol. Dijon, 1739, vol iii. p. 117.*

“to soften or to gain the English mind,” or turn it towards a peace.¹

When his pictures and his sculptures failed to make a friend of England, they were used to ransom prisoners of note. When John the Fearless, Count of Nevers, was taken at Nikopoli, on the Danube, the goldsmith Digne Raponde advanced 200,000 ducats: and the King of Mitylene, coming with good tidings, had a cup of gold carved with figures of the Virgin.*

Peace being signed with England, forthwith the Duke presented the British King with a splendid book, containing a picture of St. George; and gave the Duke of Gloucester an image of St. Anthony.³

Fine arts at this time contributed to display. In them the taste of princes was exhibited. But they also served a pious purpose; and the sacristies of churches were thus enriched with chiselled cups and shrines, and the chapels with pictures given by princes to adorn their walls. Art, it is thus discovered, rose from a sentiment of luxury as much as from religion; and this explains why the Flemings lacked that elevated sentiment which can arise alone from the deepest fervour and a strong religious feeling.

In 1383, Philip the Hardy laid the first stone of the Carthusian convent near Dijon. That convent, although now in ruins, still remains a noble relic of his taste and wealth. In it he not only spent money in profusion, but he gave ornaments of gold and silver, and covered the walls with paintings and the windows with choice

¹ Planchet. benedictin. ut sup., vol. iii. p. 136.

² Ibid. vol. iii. p. 164.

³ Ibid. vol. iii. p. 159.

coloured glass. He caused two great shrines or altarpieces to be erected and sculptured by a Fleming, and adorned them with pictures by Broederlain. The walls of the edifice were painted by another of his artists and "varlets," Jean Malouel.¹ Of the latter, however, no pictures remain, whilst the shrines of Broederlain are still preserved, and form a landmark in the history of Flemish art.

Melchior, it may now be remarked, was a Fleming, and not a painter brought from France by Philip. He had been employed by Louis de Maele in subordinate capacities, as painter of banners and pennons; receiving, according to the "recette de Flandres," seventy-two livres, fifteen sols., and three dens., "for several works of his profession, and stuffs which he had purchased for the preparation and the finish of these pennons and banners."² Philip of Burgundy took him into his service immediately on his accession, at a yearly pension of 200 livres.³ Broederlain at first appears to have confined himself to common labour, such as painting banners

¹ Courtépée. Desc. Topog. et Hist. du Duché de Bourgogne, —vol. ii. p. 246. De Salles, benedictin, Etat des officiers et domestiques des Ducs de Bourgogne. Mem. p. servir à l'Hist. de France et de Bourgogne, 4to. Paris, 1729, pp. 137-8. De Lab. ut sup., vol. i. p. 565.

² "A Melchior, le peintre MS. pour plusieurs ouvrages de son mestier, et estoffes echatées par li pour MS. pour faire banières et pignons. LXXII l. XV. s. IIIId."—*Recette de Fland. Arch. de Lille.—Quart compte. Henry Luppin. de l'an MCCCIII^{xx}II jusque May MCCCIII^{xx}III. De Labord. ut sup., vol. i. p. 1.*

³ "A Melchior Broedlain, pointre de MS. de Bourgogne et varlet de chambre, lequel pointre MS. a retenu à II^c francs de pension par an tant comme il lui plaira."—*Recette de Fland. même Compte. 1385. De Lab. ut sup., p. 4.*

for the Duke ;¹ but, in 1398, he produced those shrines which still remain as records of his skill. When the monasteries were suppressed in France, pictures and valuables were carefully removed, and these, amongst the rest, were carried to a place of safety in the cathedral of Dijon. They have been since taken to their present place in the museum. They afford a curious instance of the changes which the arts had undergone between the time when La Biloque was painted, and the fourteenth century. Sculpture, architecture, and painting were here commingled. The central portions of the shrines were sculptured subjects, enclosed in Gothic tabernacles. The wings contained the stark and lengthy figures of holy men in pointed niches; and on the outer side were painted scripture subjects in distemper. One of these shrines has suffered much from time—which acted on the gesso and swept away all trace of painting. Fortunately, the pictures of the second are preserved. The central portion

¹ “A. Melchior Broedlain, pointre MS. . . . 1386 pour plusieurs estoffes à lui commandées.” . . . —*Comptes de Jacques Sercyhem*, 1385-6. *Recette de Flandres. De Lab. ut sup.*, vol. i. p. 6.

“A. Melchior Broederlain, peintre, à Claus, le tamburier et ménestrier de MS.” XL l. —*Ibid.* p. 9. 1387.

“A. Melchior Broederlain.” . . . —*Comptes Pierre Adorne*. 1393-4. *Ibid.* p. 11.

“A. Melchior Broederlain, varlet de chambre et peintre de MS. le Duc de Bourgogne, Comte de Flandres, auquel Mds. a fait paier et délivrer la somme de IIII^{xx}III fr. et IIII sols. parisis, monnoie de France p. les parties cy après déclarées, lesquelles il avait p. command^t. et ordonnance de Mds. faites et délivrées au S. de Diequemmes, pour partir ou voiage de Frize . . . et p. faire deux estandarts de satin, de bateure de fin or, à oille de la devise de Mds. de Bourgogne.—*Tiers compte Pierre Adorne. Féb. MCCCIII^{xx}XV au derrain jour de Janv. MCCCIII^{xx}XVI. De Lab. ut sup.*, vol. i. p. 11.

of this altar-piece is eight feet long, and five feet and a-half high. The sculptured subjects are the Calvary, with no less than twenty figures; the Adoration of the Magi with nine, and the Burial with eight. These, together with the saints in Gothic niches at the sides, are coloured according to the oldest fashion, and exhibit a fair amount of attainments in the author. The carver is Jacques de la Baerse, sculptor of Dendermonde, who laboured in 1391.¹ The painting of the sculptures, as well as the pictures on the wings, were first entrusted to Malouel, who was then at Dijon; but his work being considered unsatisfactory, Melchior Broederlain undertook the task, depicting on the wings the Angel appearing to Mary, the Salutation, the Presentation in the Temple, and the Flight into Egypt, and, above them, God the Father, with the triple crown and angels near him.

The style and manner of these pictures lead us to consider what may have been the teaching and the sentiment which cast their impress on this early painter.

Of surrounding schools, none, in proximity to Flanders, were likely to exercise a greater influence in the fourteenth century than those of the Rhine. That of Cologne seems, from what relics we possess of it, to have been animated by a religious sentiment calculated to ennoble its cultivators. A certain ideal also seemed to guide its artists in their pursuits. Penetrated with similar ideas, the Flemings might, under similar circumstances, have risen to a sweet and dignified conception of nature; and

¹ Comptes d'Annot Arnaut. Arch. de Dijon.—Plusieurs mémoires tirés de la chambre des comptes de Dijon et des Arch. de la Chartreuse. 2 vol. 4°. *ap. De Laborde*, vol. i. Introd. p. lxxiii.



The Sanctuary

The Baptism

The Marriage

The Last Supper

Illustrations by the artist of the scenes of the life of Christ

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St. Elizabeth



St. Michael



ANGEL OF THE ANNUNCIATION

From the Altarpiece by *Agostino Diakroko* in the Museum of Turin.



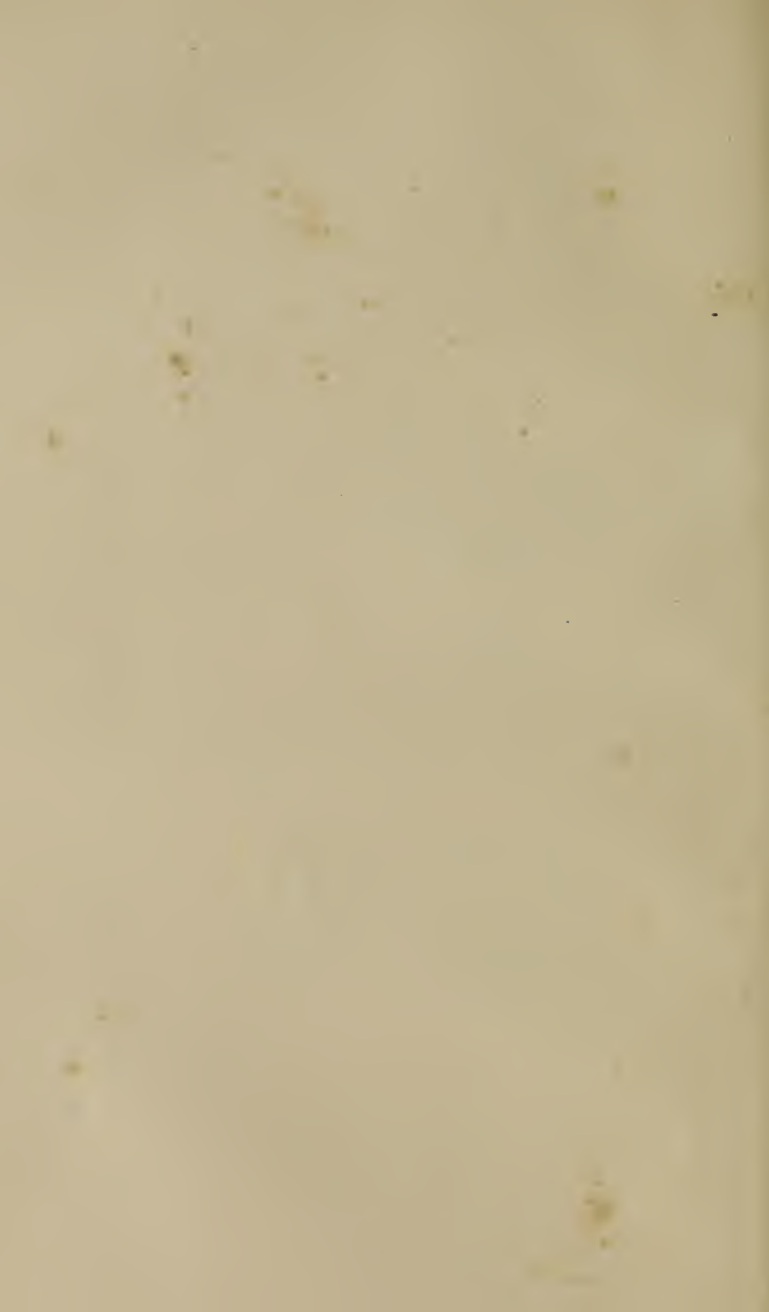
THE VIRGIN OF THE ANNUNCIATION

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Die Heilige Familie

aus der Werkstatt des Meisters Martin in der Werkstatt von ...



if we fail to discover that they attained this aim, we must attribute the failure to causes peculiar to Flanders. Amongst these we may class the social status of the Flemish painters, whose positions in the household of princes subjected them, perhaps, to caprices unfavourable to the development of high aspirations, or to the contemplation and free communion with self which are the soul of art. Be this as it may, the attainments of Broederlain are inferior to those of the Cologne school, and possess more of those belonging to the Westphalian. His pictures are chiefly remarkable for clear and light flesh tints, want of vigour, abruptness of light and shade, thinness and meagreness of colour, and lack of *chiaroscuro*, all special characteristics of the old Westphalian school. The heads are flat and unrelieved, and the features are repulsive; the general aspect of the composition is marred by the ugliness and length of the hands and feet, the awkward and thickset look of some figures, and the unpleasant type of the infant Christ. Whilst in these particulars Melchior's style is characterised by the fault of the Westphalian, in others it is marked by the simple and graceful mode of drapery peculiar to the early painters of Cologne. No contrast can be more striking, in this sense, than the ease and cleverness of the action and arrangement of the *Madonnah* and Saviour in the panel of the Flight, and the awkwardness of the figure and features of St. Joseph. The painter struggled evidently between the desire of giving a material imitation and the inspirations of graceful teachers, like those of Cologne.

But although Melchior's style was founded on the study of the painters of the Rhine, his composition was similar

to the later productions of the Flemish school. A tendency to realism already marks this early Fleming, and is the distinctive feature of a manner in which the painter strives to imitate nature in its most material forms. Idealism and noble types are lacking, but Broederlain is a fair imitator of the truth. Distinctive combination and choice of colours in draperies, and vigorous tone, characterise him as they do the early works at Bruges, Gand, and other cities of the Netherlands, which may be judged by his standard.

The school of Bruges, and perhaps that of Limburg, in which the first Van Eyck was reared, were secondary ones, derived from those of the Rhine, in which all the Flemish artists and German painters were inspired. The Flemings first improved themselves there, and rescued their paintings from much that was ignoble and repulsive. And in their own country they formed a body of respectable attainments when the Van Eycks came to Flanders. This explains and clears up many doubtful points in the history of Flemish art. We can scarcely understand why Van der Meire, the first pupil of Hubert Van Eyck, was so feeble and so unlike him. In truth, Van der Meire's manner was that of the earliest artists, before the genius of Hubert ennobled the Flemish manner.

There are other works also which, like those of Melchior, afford an idea of the early state of Flemish art. The *Salle des Marguilliers* of the cathedral of Bruges contains an altar-piece representing Christ upon the Cross, in which the head is leaning to one side, and three angels, painted blue, are receiving the blood which flows from his wounds; while, to the right of the cross, the

Virgin is fainting in the arms of St. John and two women. Beyond is seen St. Barbara with her symbol—the tower. On the left are four figures, one of which, wearing the *dalmatica*,¹ points to the Saviour, with these words engraved on a gold ground, *Veri Dei filius iste*. In the distance St. Catherine, holding in one hand her wheel, in the other a sword, tramples under her feet the figure of a king. This picture, once in the possession of the Corporation of Tanners at Bruges, and presented to the cathedral of Bruges by one of the *marguilliers*, or care-takers, Mr. I. J. Vermeiren Van Damme, bears a strong resemblance to the works of the Cologne school of the fourteenth century. The figure of the Saviour is lank and meagre—faulty in the hands and feet—and generally, indeed, in details; yet, after contemplating it for a time, we are struck with a certain truthfulness, interesting when we consider the period. The female figures are not wanting in expression, elegance, and simplicity of attitude; the drapery, particularly that of the Madonnah, is good. But the male figures are inferior; they are short and thickset, and that of the centurion is truly trivial in conception. The clear pale tone of the flesh tints are deficient in transparency and *chiaro-seuro*; the outlines are not well defined—defects characteristic of the school of Westphalia. On the other hand, the broad and powerful colours of the garments mark the Flemish school.

The museum at Valencia contains a small panel, which bears some resemblance in manner to those of Broederlain.

¹ The *dalmatica* is a vestment worn by deacons and sub-deacons of the Roman Catholic faith.

It certainly belongs to the same school, and is equally remarkable for the simplicity of its draperies, and for the contrasts already remarked between the picture of Dijon and that of Bruges—between the broad and powerful colours of the garments, and the clear pale tones of the flesh tints. It represents Christ's dead body seated on a tomb, supported by an angel, with various figures kneeling round him; on the right a woman and two girls, on the left a man and two boys, evidently members of one family. The library at Berlin also contains some small compositions on wood, which seem to have been studies for pictures rather than finished productions, but which are quite in the style of Broederlain.¹

If we turn from viewing these pictures as productions of art, and examine them more particularly with reference to the means by which they were produced, we shall discover much that is extremely worthy of remark, and much that throws a light upon the introduction of oil in the production of pictures. The documentary evidence which fills the preceding pages proves how frequent was the use of oil in painting sculptures and banners. We now come to a point where oil-colours are used in the minor or less important portions of pictures, of which the chief parts were completed in distemper.

But before proceeding, it may be necessary to compare for a few moments the early paintings of the Flemish with those of other schools, in order to see whether, in the practice of tempera painting itself, there may not

¹ See *Entwürfe und Studien eines Niederländischen Meisters aus den XV. Jahrhundert, &c.* Berlin, 1830. Humblot. Druck^e. des Koni^e. Acad^e. der Wissenschaften.

have been causes which led the former to feel the necessity of improving the modes most commonly in use. It is clear that climate has had great influence in all countries on the progress of art, and that the means employed in warm countries will be found unsuitable for the more variable atmosphere of those in a colder latitude. The painters of the Netherlands, perhaps, from the first felt the necessity of turning their attention to the means of preserving their paintings from the effects of climate, and rendering their colours and varnishes more durable. The Flemings may have found, also at an early period, that they could not with impunity leave pictures exposed to the air, and have felt, at the same time, that the medium employed by the Italians for the preservation of paintings so exposed must be insufficient in a damper atmosphere. Van Mander says that "painting with glue and egg was first brought to the Netherlands from Italy."¹ The Flemings cannot but have been aware that in the practice of tempera the Italians themselves differed essentially, according to the degree of warmth of the climate in which they lived. The glutinous or drying matters, such as glue and egg, were used in greater or smaller quantities as vehicle—they were rendered less drying by the use of honey, or of the milky juice of the fig-tree,² diluted to a less viscous consistency by vinegar, beer, and wine, according to necessity. All these materials were known to the tempera painters of every clime, and used as the case required or necessity compelled them. In colouring

¹ V. Mander. *Schilderboek*, 4to. Haerlem, 1604, p. 199.

² *Lattificio del fico*: Cennini, cap. xc.

miniatures on parchment or paper, the painters, who knew the care with which such productions were treasured, did not expend much time in rendering the tints impervious to the effects of the atmosphere. They covered the water-colour simply with a coat of varnish—*una mano di colla*; and miniatures thus treated remained for ages without alteration in central Italy, where the warmth of the climate enabled the greatest painters to execute, in the open air, the most colossal paintings on the walls and in the cloisters of churches, and in the *Campo Santi*. But these simple means were insufficient in the north of Italy. The painters of the school of Padua, such as Squarcione, Mantegna, and their followers, painted mural pictures in exposed places; but they did not last, and in many spots where they were executed they speedily perished. The same causes operated in Venice; and this partly explains how the painters of Northern Italy made more frequent use of canvas than those of the south. Further, in the use of tempera they employed a mixture of colours more tenacious and more lasting than that of the men of central Italy. A careful examination of the works of such painters as Mantegna, Cosimo Tura, Marco Zoppo, Crivelli, and some of the Vivarini, will prove that their pictures were painted with a tempera of far less thickness or body, and on cloths of greater tenacity, than those of their more southern brethren. Of these facts the Flemings cannot but have been cognisant, and the necessity for increased attention to the durability of their materials must have been forced upon them with double power. They seldom appear to have attempted mural painting. Van Mander has noticed none, and few ves-

tiges of such works are preserved. The climate would scarcely permit of such productions; and the Flemings, bending their art to the necessities of the weather, substituted painting on canvas for that on walls. They laboured, too, with a tempera of little body, as the least likely to crackle and fall off; and they completed their pictures, as was usual with all the old masters, by glazing them with a coat of a coloured oleo resinous varnish, which served at once to give tone and vigour to the subject, and close the tempera against the contact of the outward air. The remarkable contrast which exists between the pale flesh tints of the picture of Dijon and the vigorous colours of the drapery, appears to have been produced by another peculiarity, not confined to the painters of the Netherlands, but which shows them acquainted with the greatest variety of modes of painting. It may be inferred that the more vigorous colouring noticeable in the draperies was produced by the use of oil in those portions of the picture; and an attentive examination of the panels of St. Sauveur at Bruges leads us to similar conclusions with regard to that picture. In all the subjects of these pictures the tempera employed is hard, and devoid of transparency, unlike that of the school of Cologne, which appears to receive its polish and clearness from the mixture of wax and honey; and also unlike that of Gentile da Fabriano, a painter who gave a softness and clearness to the tempera he employed which is not commonly found among his Italian cotemporaries. If any resemblance can be found between these tempera paintings and those of other schools, it is discoverable in the productions of Crivelli, Mantegna, and

other artists of Northern Italy, which appear to have been executed with a medium but little dissimilar in body and surface. As regards the use of a coloured varnish by Broederlain, the fact appears to admit of no doubt. The partial flaying which the panels have undergone has laid bare large spaces where the old varnish has disappeared. Wherever this has occurred, the colour is pale and grey ; so that, according as the parts are in a better or worse state of preservation, the picture is more or less powerful in tone. This use of coloured varnishes in the pictures of the early Flemish school, and the effect which their removal produced on pictures, explain, to a certain extent, why we possess so many old pictures of the period strikingly cold and grey in tone. Nothing is more likely than that, in the process of cleaning, the varnish which acted as glazing has been removed, and the colours have been changed from the tone which they were originally intended to possess.

A few sentences will close this record of the painters who immediately preceded Hubert, John, and Margaret Van Eyck.

Whilst Broederlain contributed to the pictorial riches of the Carthusians of Dijon, Jehan Malouel was busily employed in the adornment of its walls.

Jehan Malouel appears to have been a colourist of sculpture rather than a painter. We have said that he failed in the shrines of De la Baerse. He seems, however, to have succeeded better with other works. He coloured and gilt five wooden altar-pieces for the Carthusians of Dijon : he composed a wooden picture of the Virgin, with St. John, St. Peter, and St. Anthony, and he

ornamented a quantity of jousting harness for a tilt. He performed these minor services in the lifetime of the first of the French dukes, and was assisted in his labours by a painter named Hermann of Cologne.¹ On the succession of John to the ducal crown he was promoted, and figures in the lists as "paintre de M. D. S. et varlet de chambre," his salary being twenty livres a month.² We find him at Paris and Compiègne in 1406, painting tilting harness for John the Duke,³ and in the following year again in Burgundy, and at his labours in the convent near Dijon.⁴ He had the honour, in 1415, of painting his master's likeness, which was sent by special messenger to the King of Portugal.⁵ Jehan Malouel then disappears from the ducal accounts, and is succeeded by Henry Bellechose de Brabant, Jehan le Voleur, and Hue de Boulogne, of whom we shall treat hereafter.

¹ De Laborde. *Table Alphabet*, vol. iii. pp. 551, 565.

² "A Jehan Malouel, paintre et varlet de chambre de M. S. le Duc, III.^cXL livres qui deuz lui estoient pour ses gaiges de XX livres par mois. III.^cXL liv."—*Compte de Robert de Bailleux*, 1411—1412. *De Laborde. ut sup.*, vol. i. p. 23-4.

³ "A Jehan Malouel, paintre et varlet de M. D. S. auquel M. D. S. en récompense de ce qu'il avait demeuré devers lui à ses frais et despens tant à Paris comme à Compiègne par l'espace de cinq mois, commenciés au mois d'avril MCCCC et six, et finis continuellement, tant pour aider à faire plusieurs harnois de joustes pour le dit seigneur et aucuns de ses gens, pour joster à la feste des nopces de M. S. le Duc de Thouraine, et de M. S. le Conte d'Angoulesme, nagaires faictes audit Compiègne, comme pour plusieurs autres choses de son mestier que M. D. S. lui fit faire, la somme de XL. escus d'or."—*Compte de J. Chousat. De Lab. ut sup.*, vol. i. p. 17.

⁴ *Comptes de Jean de Noident*, 1407. De Salles, *ut sup.* p. 161.

⁵ *Comptes de Jean de Noident*, 1415. De Salles, *ut sup.*, pp. 137-8.

CHAPTER II.

HUBERT VAN EYCK.

JEAN SANS PEUR, who succeeded his father in the Duchy of Burgundy, did not inherit the sentiment of art for which that prince was famous. He sold costly miniatures and gold and silver statues to pay his debts, and found no lack of a better painter at his court than Jean Malouel, whose abilities were not of a high order, and whose labours never rose in character above the most ordinary level. Pride, and perhaps some filial affection, led Jean Sans Peur to order that a suitable monument should be raised to his father's memory, and the sculptors, Claux de Vernes and Claux Sluter, produced a tomb which for many years remained in the Chartreuse of Dijon. A glance at the numerous figures which decorate this monument will convince even the superficial observer that, however well the sculptors may have understood the picturesque in the general features of their work, they were worthy of less notice as artists of feeling and sentiment. Their figures express, in most instances, physical suffering, intended for gravity or melancholy. Short and overclad bodies are defective in attitude, and questionable taste pervades the subject generally. Art in such hands as these, or under such patronage as that of Jean Sans Peur,

could scarcely be said to progress. It remained, indeed, almost stationary at Bruges and in Burgundy; whilst far away, in the Pays de Liège and in the republican town of Ghent, it flourished among the Van Eycks.

The family of Van Eyck had its origin in the Duchy of Limburg, on the banks of the Meuse, where numerous cities, free and powerful like those of Flanders, prospered and increased. It arose and progressed there, deriving vigour and experience from the earlier efforts of miniature painters and illuminators. As far back as the fifteenth century, the Duchy of Limburg sent forth to foreign lands men whose names are preserved in the annals of art, and whose fame inspired the following verses to a contemporary chronicler:—

“Es hætten kein Maler zu Kœln oder Maastricht,
(So gibt die Aventure bericht,)
Eine Kriegergestalt gemalt so schoen,
Als der Knap zu Ross war anzusehn.”¹

One of these men was Pol van Limburg, who, in company of his two brothers, entered the service of John, Duke of Berry,—a prince whose fame reposes upon his patronage of art and literature, and who, favoured by the countenance of Charles the VIth of France, his brother, rebuilt the palace of Bicêtre, which had previously been the residence of the English bishop of Winchester. The manuscript of Josephus at the “Bibliothèque Nationale,” in Paris, is filled with miniatures executed by these brethren, and is the sole remaining monument of their

¹ Parcival, Ritter Gedicht. By W. von Eschenbach, fol. Augsburg 1477, not paged.—*Brit. Mus.*

skill.¹ Hasselt in Limburg was, we believe, the birth-place of Jean de Hasselt, painter and "varlet" of the Count of Flanders; and Liège was that of Hennequin de Liège, who built the tomb of Charles V. at Rouen.²

The family of Van Eyck cannot be traced with certainty higher than Hubert, who first brought it to renown. He was born at Maaseyck in 1366.³ Probably the oldest members of his line are Joes Van Eyck and Margaret Van den Huutfanghe his wife, whose names were registered in the Guild of Painters at Ghent in 1391.⁴ Hubert became a member of the fraternity in 1412, and Margaret his sister in 1418.⁵ Many suppose that Joes and

¹ Pol Van Limburg was in the service of Jean de Berry from 1400 to 1416. The inventory of property left at his death by that prince in the latter year is preserved in the Bib. S^{te} Geneviève in Paris, and contains the following entry: "Folio 267 verso. Item: un livre contrefait d'une pièce de bois peint en semblance d'un livre ou il n'y a nul feuilletz, couverts de veluzan et blanc à deux fermoers d'argent esmaillé aux armes de Monseigneur, lequel livre Pol de Limbourg et ses frères donnèrent à mondit seigneur aux estraines mil CCCC. et dix. Pris. XL. l. paris." "Item, une layette, plusieurs cayers d'une très riche heures que faisait Pol et ses frères très richement historiées et enluminées." Pris. V^c. Liv. *De Labord. La Renaiss. des Arts.* 8^{vo}. Paris 1850, p. 165.

² De Laborde, les Ducs de Bourg. Mandt. du roi, vol. i. p. xxii.

³ V. Mander. ut sup. p. 199. Van Vaernewyk, *Historie van Belgis*, fol. Ghendt, 1574, c. 47, p. 119.

⁴ Mr. Goetghebuer, of Ghent, notes the entry as follows: "Vide Carton, *Annales de la société d'émulation de Bruges pour l'étude de l'histoire et des antiquités de la Flandre.* Tom. v. 2^e Serie, Nos. 3, 4, 8^{vo}. Bruges, 1847, p. 325." "Sont inscrits comme confrères: Un Meester Joes Van Hyke, y est admis en 1391, avec sa femme Mergriete van den Huutfanghe."

⁵ Ibid. p. 268, "Sente Bamesse anno xiii^e. en xij. was Hubrecht Van Eycke, Guldebroeder van Het Onser Vrouwe gulden up de rade van den chore van Sint Jans te Ghend." Ibid. p. 325, "Meester Hubrech Van Hyke y est inscrit sous la date de 1412, et en 1418, sa sœur Mergrieta Van Hyke."

Margaret were the parents of Hubert and his brethren, and insist that the family was originally settled in Ghent; but this last supposition rests only upon the desire of the Gantois to claim for their city the fame of having been John Van Eyck's birth-place. It is far more probable that Ghent became the ordinary residence of Hubert Van Eyck's parents on or before the year 1391, when the Pays de Liège became extremely disturbed. If it be admitted that Joes Van Eyck was the father of Hubert, which is by no means unlikely, we trace the art of painting one generation further back in the Netherlands, and may suppose, without being accused of exaggeration, that painting being the profession of the parents, was transmitted to the children, who brought it gradually to perfection. The most conscientious search does not enable us to ascertain what were the occupations of Hubert Van Eyck during the long series of years which preceded his admission to the Guild of Painters at Ghent. We only know from Van Mander that he perfected the art-education of his brother John Van Eyck, and that he painted more than one picture in the old method of tempera.¹ He cannot but have taken a part in the education of his sister Margaret, and his youngest brother Lambert; and possibly he had a share in the original efforts made to bring oil medium into practical use in the Netherlands. This subject we treat more at length in the life of John Van Eyck; and it is only necessary here to note, that the discoveries attributed to the latter took place, according to Vasari and Van Mander, in 1410,

¹ Van Mander, *ut sup.*, pp. 199, 200.

at a time when Hubert was in the vigour of manhood, and John was comparatively young.¹

Hubert at Ghent had apparently no princely patron to protect him. Of his early pictures, whether produced during his stay in Maaseyck and the Pays de Liège, or during his residence in Flanders, we have no trace. The rebellions and consequent destruction of the towns of Limburg doubtless had the most fatal effect on works of art. Hubert's native city, Maaseyck, was in the rudest and most warlike portion of the Duchy, which produced so many rude and warlike men. The old historians call it the "ruudt Kempen land,"² or "Kempenia tetrarchia Brabantiae et Limburgae."³

The character of Hubert was probably influenced by association in the feuds of the warlike communes, fostered by men whose hands were always ready to grasp the sword in search of vengeance or redress. Considerable difference exists in the incidents of the lives of the two brothers. Whilst John Van Eyck led the life of courts and followed princes, Hubert's name is not remembered or recorded in the lists of "varlets" or of courtiers. His style of painting bears the stamp of a free and independent mind. It may not be ideal, but it has the nobleness and the vigour of a proud unbending nature. Hubert was the painter of the "commune," John the painter of the court. Hubert shows in his works far more virile talents than his brother, and was a master in the use of the medium,

¹ Van Mander, ut sup., p. 202.

² Vaernewyk, ut sup., c. 47, p. 119.

³ F. Laet. *Belgica Descriptio*. in 24°. Amsterdam, 1630, p. 337, "La Campine du Pays de Liège." *Les Delices des Pays Bas*, 8vo. Brussels, 1711, tit. "Hollandia."—*Brit. Mus.*

which his brother is said to have discovered. Nor can it be concealed that amongst the numerous artists whose pictures show the study of the school, many preferred the rich and powerful talent of Hubert to the softer models of his brother. Petrus Cristus was one of the first to carry to Cologne the fruits of Hubert's teaching. Hugo Van der Goes followed the same school, whilst Justus of Ghent took to Italy the fruits of his early labours under the same master. The brothers Van der Meire exhibit some signs of the same inspiration, mingled with others derived apparently from the old school of Melchior Broederlain.

The only man whose name is connected with Hubert's stay at Ghent, is Jodocus Vyts, "seigneur de Pamèle," a person related by marriage to the celebrated family of the Burluuts, whose name is familiar in the history of civic struggles. The Burluuts owed their fame to the courage of an ancestor at the battle of the Spurs; John Burluut having issued from the town of Ghent, on the eve of the combat, and contributed, by diverting for a moment the tide of battle, to the victory of his friends on the morrow.¹ His relations prospered in their native city; and Jerome Burluut, for many successive years, filled the office of "magnus prætor."² This wealthy family founded, in 1299, the convent of Augustine friars in the town of Ghent, and there the doughty John was buried, with this inscription—

Johannes jacet hic, miles fortissimus olim.
De Borluut dictus, nullo certamine victus.³

¹ Voisin. Guide de Gand. 12mo. 1831. P. 17.

² Sanderus. Flandria Illustrata. Fol. Hag. 1735, vol. ii. p. 319.

³ Voisin, pp. 211, 212. Sanderus. ut sup.

Jodocus Vydt, who married Isabella, Jerome's daughter, founded, in St. Bavon, a chapel, in which the mortal remains of the founder's family were buried.¹ The chapel was built and adorned with sculptures and painted windows, on which were emblazoned the arms of the united families.² An altar-piece alone was wanting, and Jodocus commissioned Hubert to paint it.

There were at that time, indeed, many painters at Ghent, though none of such note as Hubert. Like Bruges, that city had its guild, in which men who worked in miniature (*verlichters*) were thought unworthy of companionship,³ and some of whom were artists far above mediocrity in the eyes of their cotemporaries.

Wilhelm Van Axpoele, and John Maertens, licensed painters, (*vrie schilders*), were employed, in 1419, to paint, "in good oil-colours, unmixed with any corrosive substance," several important pieces for the town-hall,⁴—John Van Coudenberg and Marc Van Gestele, to adorn, in 1430, the church of Roselede, with four great Prophets, "a *vif*," with "the Death of our Lady," "our Saviour in the sun's rays," "the Last Judgment," and "the Baptism of Christ;" all which aforesaid pictures (*portraytenen*) the said John and Marc were bound to finish for eleven livres.⁵ Marc again, in 1445, painted for the church of St. Martin at Courtrai. Nabor Martin

¹ Voisin, *ut sup.*, p. 187. De Bast. Ueber. Hub. & Joh. V. Eyck. 8vo. Ghent, 1825. Translated from Dr. Waagen. Note.

² Vydt bore, Or, the fesses chequered azure. Burluut bore, Azure, Three Stags in course Or.

³ Diericx Mem. s. la ville de Gand. 8vo. Ghendt. 1814-15. vol. ii. p. 73.

⁴ *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 73.

⁵ Diericx. *ut sup.* vol. ii. pp. 111—115.

executed a Last Judgment, in 1444, for a gentleman named Sneevoet, and, later, a large picture for the church of Lede. Cleerbout Van Westvelde produced a great altar-piece for the church of Wachtebeke, and Saladin Van Scoenere, in 1434, engaged himself to paint in oil the altar-piece of the chapel of the minor brotherhood in Ghent, and repaint thereon "Count Louis, the citizens with their arms and followers."¹ These are but faint traces, but we possess none other.

Some curious customs, in connexion with these early painters, will find a place in the life of Van der Weyden.

Hubert being entrusted with the execution of this great altar-piece, was, as a preliminary formality and honour, appointed to be member of the guild of our Lady, on the proposal of the choir of St. John of Ghent.²

The subject which he chose, as fittest to adorn his chapel, was a series of the striking scenes from revelation, painted on the panels of a folding altar-piece.

On one of them, which represents the Apparition of the Angel to the Virgin, is an open window, which discloses a perspective view in Ghent. With the happy carelessness of painters, it seemed no greater incongruity to make the holy apparition figure in a Flemish chamber, than to cap the semblance of Eternity with the papal tiara, or give Godfrey of Bouillon the armour of the fifteenth century.

¹ Dierix. ut sup. vol. ii. p. 255.

² Sente Bamesse, anno. XIII^e en XXII was Hubrecht V. Eyeke, gulde broeder van het Onser Vrouwe Gulden, up de rade van den chore van Sint Jans te Ghend. Register of the brotherhood O. V. Ghent, communicated by M. Goetghebuer.—See Carton, *Annales de Bruges*, *infra*, p. 28. St. John is the old name of the church of St. Bavon.

The view appears to have been one from nature, for its site and features still in part exist. On the right is the steeple of the Weaver's church, and behind it a gate, since destroyed, bearing the name of "Walpoorte." On the left is the "St. Martin's Straet," and the "Steen van Papeghem." In a spirit of adventure somewhat difficult to share, the Gantois now pretend that the view was from Van Eyck's own window, No. 26, Koey Straat, where, accordingly, medallion portraits of the painters have been placed.

Hubert left the Mystic Lamb unfinished. He had only completed its upper portion when he died, in 1426.¹ He was buried, on the 18th of September, in a vault below the crypt of the chapel of Burluuts and Vydt's.² The following translation of his epitaph exhibits the pious spirit of the painter and his times.

"Take warning from me, ye who walk over me; I was as you are, but am now buried dead beneath you. Thus it appears that neither art nor medicine availed me; art, honour, wisdom, power, affluence are spared not when death arrives. I was called Hubert van Eyck. I am now food for worms. Formerly known and highly honoured in painting, this all was shortly after turned to nothing.

¹ Van Mander, pp. 200, 203. Vaernewyk, p. 119. Lucas de Heere, ap v. Mr. p. 202. The records of the tax paid by strangers to the city of Ghent contain an entry for this year, of VI sous paid by Hubert's heirs. The entry runs thus—"1426, Van den hoire van Lubrecht van Eyke VI s. g." This is a confirmation of the date of the painter's death, and a proof that his family was not native of Ghent. *Carton, ut sup.*

² Van Mander, p. 203. Vaernewyk, p. 119. Sanderus, (A.) De Brug. Erud. Clar. Lib. i. p. 39. "Decessit Gandavi, et sepultus in latere sinistra anterioris partis Ecc. S. Joh. Bapt."

It was in the year of the Lord, one thousand four hundred and twenty six, on the 18th day of September, that I rendered up my soul to God, in suffering. Pray God for me, ye who love art, that I may attain to his sight. Flee sin, turn to the best (objects), for you must follow me at last.”¹

The arm with which he wielded so remarkably the pencil and the brush, was severed from Hubert's body, and suspended in a casket above the portal of St. Bavon, where it still remained in the sixteenth century.²

¹ Spieghelt u an my, die op my treden,
 Ick was als ghy, nu ben beneden
 Begraven doot, als is an schÿne,
 Mÿns hulpraedt, Const, noch medicine
 Const, eer, wÿsheÿt, macht, rÿckheit groot
 Is onghespaert, als comt de Doot.
 Hubrecht van Eyck was ick Ghenant,
 Nu spitse der wormen voormals bekant.
 In Schilderye Seer hooghe gheert:
 Corts na was yet in niete verkeert.
 In't jaer des Herren, des zÿt ghewes,
 Duÿsent, vier hondert, twintich en ses,
 In de maendt September achtzien daghen viel
 Dat ick mit pÿnen todt gaf mÿn Ziel.
 Bidt Godt voor my die Const minnen,
 Dat ick zien ansicht moet ghewinnen,
 En vliedt zonde, Keert u ten besten;
 I Baut ghy my volghen moet ten lesten.—

V. Mander, ut sup., p. 202. Vaernewyck, p. 119, c. xlvii.

² Vaernewyck. Hist. v. Belgis, p. 119.

CHAPTER III.

JOHN VAN EYCK.

WE have every reason to believe that John Van Eyck was born between the years 1382 and 1386, at Maaseyck, where his family first resided.¹ His early education was given by Hubert, who employed the young man in his labours, and taught him painting, drawing, and chemistry, —all of which were common to the oldest schools of art in Flanders, Germany, and Italy. Facio informs us that John studied geometry, and had many literary attainments. "He gained," says this author,² "proficiency in manipulating colours from the examples of Pliny."³ His first patron and friend was John, bishop of Liège, a prelate whose reign was short and disturbed.

Van Eyck was hardly out of infancy when John's predecessor, Arnold de Horne, expired. Wenceslaus, the sup-

¹ Vaernewyk, *ut sup.*, p. 119. V. Mander, *ut sup.*, p. 199. Vaernewyk, and after him Van Mander, describe two figures in the altar-piece of the Pascal Lamb at Ghent, which they assert are portraits of the brothers Hubert and John Van Eyck. They have always been considered so, for Lampsonius has engraved them. The apparent difference of age in both is twenty years. "John," says V. Mander, "was younger than his brother, who lived to be an older man than him." Hubert died in 1426, aged sixty. John died in 1440-41, and must therefore have been born after 1382. Were he born in 1382, he would have reached his fifty-ninth year at his death, and would thus have been younger at his death than Hubert.

² Facius (Bart.) *De Viris Illust.* 4to. Flor. 1715, p. 46.

³ Vaernewyk, *ut sup.*, p. 119. V. Mand. pp. 119-200.

porter of the house of Horne, was at that time Emperor of Germany; but Albert of Bavaria, son of the old Emperor Ludwig V., and Count of Hainault, Holland, and Zeland, was a formidable antagonist to the pretensions of that house, being supported by John of Burgundy, who had married his daughter. The pretensions of the house of Horne paled before the exertions of that of Albert, who succeeded in appointing his second son John to the bishopric (1390). The foundation of a feud was thus laid between the two. John of Bavaria was then a youth of seventeen, fond of pleasure, and unfit to hold an office which required vigour and steadiness of demeanour. He was a boy prince-bishop, and his rule, like that of most prince-bishops, was a stormy one. The canons of St. Lambert, a senate of laymen, controlled the bishop and kept down the people; and the latter rarely failed to rise against their lords and senate when they thought they might succeed or do it with impunity. The bishop's jurisdiction stretched along the Meuse to Maestricht, Hasselt, and Ruremonde, to Huy, Namur, and Dinant; and as these towns constantly contested the authority of the bishop, that prince was frequently engaged in expeditions to reduce them to obedience. In his temporary absence, the people of his city usually followed the example of other towns; and when the bishop had fought and conquered Huy or Tongres, he found on his return that he had to conquer Liège.¹

¹ For John of Bavaria, we have consulted Foullon, *Hist. Leod.* Leod. fol. 1730; the *Chronicles of Enguerrand de Monstrelet*, fol. Paris, 1595; and Polain's *Modern History of Liège*. John Van Eyck became painter and "varlet de chambre" of John of Bavaria, but at what time is uncertain.—Vide p. 51.

No prince-bishop of the number who succeeded each other on the throne of Liège appears to have incurred so much dislike or obloquy as John of Bavaria, the youthful, pleasure-loving, and cruel prince-bishop of 1390. We wish his private character had been better, were it only for the reason that he appears as the first of the patrons of John Van Eyck. We do not, however, ascertain when John Van Eyck was first connected with him, or whether he followed his fortunes during the vicissitudes of his earlier career.

John of Bavaria promised, on succeeding to the mitre and sword of office, to enter holy orders. But he postponed this step so often, that the people of Liège used it as a pretext to depose him. They chose the time of his expedition against Huy to set up in his stead a bishop of the house of Horne. The movement was well timed, for an antipope was then at Avignon; and as the pope of Rome supported John, the antipope took part for him of Horne.

John took refuge in the town of Maestricht, and was soon besieged there by the men of Liège. A war ensued. In 1408, however, with the aid of John of Burgundy, and his brother William, Count of Holland,¹ John was fortunate in fighting a decisive battle at Othée, near Maestricht, in which the towns were beaten, their self-elected bishop and his son destroyed, and the house of Holland reinstated in its rights at Liège. It was in this battle of Othée that John of Burgundy gained his surname of Sans Peur: whilst the bishop obtained the nickname of

¹ William, eldest son of Albert of Bavaria, had by this time succeeded to the countries of Holland, Hainault, and Zeland.

Sans Pitié, by killing, without mercy, men and women, in cold blood, on his entrance into Liège.

For nine years subsequent to this the rule of John of Liège was uncontested in the capital. Van Eyck, perhaps, became his painter at this time, and followed him to Luxembourg, where he abdicated in 1417. William, Count of Holland, died that year, and left his large possessions to his daughter Jacqueline. John, determined to deprive his niece of her dominions, made war upon her, and might have been successful, but that she espoused a prince of Burgundy. The war raged a year at least, and John Sans Peur despatched the Count of Charolois to mediate between the parties. The Count, however, failed in his attempts at peace; but he, perhaps, became acquainted there with John Van Eyck. The ex-bishop of Liège, frustrated in his wish to wrest his niece's rights from her, married the dowager Duchess of Brabant, whilst Jacqueline espoused the reigning Duke of the same country, and peace was thus forced on all parties. It is not too great a stretch of imagination to attribute to this period the portraits painted by Van Eyck, of Jacqueline and Jean Sans Peur. The ex-bishop of Liège did not long enjoy the Duchy of Luxembourg, which he had gained by marriage. He died in 1419.

The portrait of Jacqueline is now at Copenhagen. That of Jean Sans Peur is lost. We have seen neither of them, and are unable to say in what manner they were painted; but the question of the discovery and improvements of oil medium had already been in part decided, and doubtless had been for many previous years discussed and experimented on within the walls of the school of the

Van Eycks. This question of discovery and improvement is one on which much has been written, and great clearness thrown of late by the studies of our eminent art-historian, Sir Charles Eastlake.¹ It is not necessary for us to enter into any discussion of the properties of matters added to oil-colours for the purposes of painting, or of the means in practice for purifying oils and glutinous substances. These questions have been sufficiently discussed elsewhere. It suffices that it has been shown already within these pages how the oldest schools of art used oil in the colouring of portions of tempera pictures, and coloured oleo resinous varnishes, in the final glazing and preservation of the tempera. It will suffice to notice, in a few words, the statement of Vasari, on which Van Mander founds his story as to how the invention of oil-painting was first made by John Van Eyck.

That painter, says Vasari :¹

“ Having once, among others, expended great pains in painting a panel, after he had brought it to a conclusion with much diligence, gave it the varnish, and placed it to dry in the sun, as is the custom. But either because the heat was violent and the wood ill-joined or ill-seasoned, the panel opened at the joints in a very bad manner. Whereupon Giovanni, having seen the damage which the heat of the sun had done to him, considered how to act so that the sun should never again do so much damage to his works.”

We pause merely to notice that Vasari here gives us

¹ Materials for a History of Oil Painting. London, 1847.

² Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori*, &c. 8vo. Firenze, 1845. Vita d' Antonello da Messina, vol. iv. p. 74. V. Mander, p. 200.

the proof of a varnish, probably the old coloured oleo resinous one, being used by John Van Eyck over the tempera of his picture. As regards the accident, he gives no certain cause of the damage, which he attributes either to the badness of the wood, or the badness of the joint, or its ill-seasoning. We know that the practice of exposing panels to the sun was followed by all the old painters, even previous to the closing of the tempera by the passage of varnish, and that this practice is even now followed as of old by painters in Italy, where the sun is so much more powerful than in Flanders.

Vasari continues :

“ And being displeased no less with the varnish than with the painting in tempera, he (Van Eyck) began to think of finding means to make a sort of varnish which should dry in the shade, without putting his pictures in the sun.”

It would appear from this passage that the painter, according to Vasari, considered not only his varnish but the method of tempera as defective ; and the accident alluded to may have been owing as much to the badness of the tempera method as to the use of the varnish.

Vasari proceeds :

“ Then after having made experiments of many things, both single and mixed together, at last he found that linseed and nut oils, amongst all that he had tested, were more drying than all the others. These, therefore, boiled with other mixtures of his, made him the varnish which he and all the painters of the world had for a long time desired.”

It would be wrong to infer from this passage that the

drying qualities of linseed and nut oils were unknown to Van Eyck and the world previous to the experiments here referred to ; and it is almost impossible that Vasari should have intended to convey such a meaning, when we know that he was perfectly acquainted with the treatise of Ghiberti, in which it is affirmed that " Giotto painted on the wall, painted in oils, and painted on panel."¹ Nor can we consider him to have been ignorant of the labours of Cennino Cennini, the pupil of Gaddi, who wrote in 1437 his treatise on painting, in which so many chapters are exclusively devoted to the subject of oils used in colours. He must have intended to express, not that Van Eyck discovered the qualities of linseed and nut oils, but, after repeated experiments, found that none were more drying than those, a fact of which he was not previously certain. His efforts would, therefore, be at first in one particular direction ; namely, to make linseed and nut oils as siccative as possible. When he had obtained this, he mingled these oils with certain mixtures, and he obtained a more drying varnish. Thus the first grand step was gained.

The next, according to Vasari, was this :—

" After having made experiments of many other things, he saw that the mixing of the colour with these sorts of oils gave it a much stronger tempera, and that it dried, and not only did it not dread water, but it increased the vigour of the colour so much, that it gave it lustre of its own without varnish, and, what seemed most marvellous, it mingled infinitely better than tempera."

In these latter sentences are evidently condensed the

¹ Vide Ghiberti in Vasari, ut sup., vol. i. p. xviii.

experiments and discoveries of years. The really great thing which was done was the mingling of the new medium with colours. But the result of doing so is curious, and has not, perhaps, been dwelt on sufficiently. The mixture of the new medium with colours rendered their tones more vigorous, so that the necessity of the *coloured* varnish must have been superseded. The object of Van Eyck, which was first to obtain a more drying coloured varnish, was at last to obtain a colourless medium; for the vigour which was given to tempera by the last coat of preservative oleo resinous varnish was obtained without that means. From the very time, therefore, when the medium was employed mixed with colours, the old coloured varnish was superseded, and it became necessary to obtain, as a preservative, a pure and colourless medium. The final studies of John Van Eyck must then of necessity have been to liquefy, as well as to purify his medium. It was evident that the old varnish, which was laid on tempera with a sponge, or with the hand, was far too viscous to be useful in mixing colours, and must, therefore, be liquefied. By means of its use the proceedings of the old painters were changed; and from tempera pictures partially painted in oil, no doubt there was a change to oil pictures partially painted in tempera.

It is needless to say a word as to the mixtures which Vasari says were used by Van Eyck. They were, doubtless, resinous substances, of which it is impossible to state the species or the combination.

We come now to the contested point,—how far was John Van Eyck the discoverer of these improvements, and what was the share which Hubert Van Eyck had in them?

It must be admitted, that although Vasari, and after him Van Mander, fix the date of the occurrences first described in 1410, the talent of the family must have been known before that time, and the experiments and accidents mentioned have covered a very great number of years. The means of painting and preserving pictures from a variable climate, imperfectly known to the painters who preceded the Van Eycks, and even to their contemporaries, must have been a source of early study in the studio of Hubert Van Eyck. It was a question, indeed, which was agitated in Germany and Flanders long before it arose in Italy. The testimony of Cennini, of Filarete, and of Summonzio, is in favour of this statement, and the results obtained in Flanders are almost a proof of it. Assuming, however, for a moment, that the date be a correct one, and certainly the improvements in question must have been partially made about that time, we find Hubert Van Eyck older by about twenty years than his brother, head of a school in Ghent two years after, and admittedly having expended his utmost endeavours to give his brother John an education worthy of them both. John Van Eyck, on the other hand, can hardly have attained his nineteenth year, and may not have been older than fifteen. Hubert, at that time full of years and experience, no doubt directed his school, and may have left the manipulation of experiments to his pupils. Among these, no doubt, was John, who, though young, must have been of precocious and clear mind, and was an adept, as we are told, in science. But even though the material manipulations of these experiments may have belonged to the younger man, the directing

mind was that of the elder, and to him we must look for the earliest applications of improvements in the use of oil. Chemistry was a necessary part of the daily labour of the old schools of art, where the painters had to provide their own materials and make them up for use; and, no doubt, John Van Eyck laboured in that branch, and learned practically to conquer those difficulties, and complete the system which time and long experience only brought to maturity.

The first practical example of the new manner, it must be borne in mind, is a picture by Petrus Cristus, of the year 1417, painted in a manner which convinces the spectator that the author of it was the pupil of Hubert Van Eyck.¹ If it be assumed that the earlier improvements were complete in 1410, then Cristus would have had five or six years to perfect himself in them. It is not till 1420 that John Van Eyck became connected by fame with the discoveries of oil-painting.² It was in that year, and not earlier, that he was present at a gathering of painters in Antwerp, where he exhibited in triumph a picture representing the Saviour; upon the beauty of which he received the utmost compliment, not only because of its intrinsic merit, but because it was painted in oil-colours. But the admiration of the Antwerp

¹ See further, *Life of Petrus Cristus*, p. 120.

² In't jaer 1549 is er doer den Antwerpshen adel enen driek-beker vereert aen deze school. . . . Waerop verbéeld waren Jan Van Eyck, in het jaer 1420 ni eene vergaeding een hoofelt toonde, door hem met Olie vermengde verf gemackt, waer over hy gecomp-limentiert is Geworden. . . ."—*Extract from the registers of the Brotherhood of St. Luke, Antwerp. Van Kirckhoff. Notice sur l'Académie d'Anvers, 1824, in Michiels (A.) Histoire de la peinture flamande et hollandaise, Bruxelles, 1845, vol. ii. p. 148.*

painters may have been owing less to the novelty of the discovery, than to some notable improvement introduced by John in the practice of the new system of painting in oil; and we may safely suppose that at last, and after the death of Hubert, the practical difficulties of the question were finally resolved, and that for this John Van Eyck was hailed everywhere as the discoverer.

The panels of Hubert Van Eyck are an evidence of his superiority. It was not till he died that John became the first in art. He admits this himself in the epitaph to his brother, which is found on the picture of the Mystic Lamb. John Van Eyck completed that picture after his brother's death, and showed his inferiority in immediate contrast. There is no picture in the school which possesses such vigour of conception and colour as those parts which are executed by Hubert. But the method in which the panels are painted prove also that John Van Eyck became more perfect in the mechanical and chemical portion of his art. John Van Eyck's panels indisputably offer to us a greater knowledge of the fusion of tints, greater finish and accuracy in the minutiae than those of his brother. They have a less brown and less dark tinge of shadow, which proves that progress had been made in the discoloration of varnishes; and these improvements he, no doubt, made and successfully carried out. It is, perhaps, for these reasons that Facio, the friend and follower of Alphonzo, king of Naples, called him¹ "prince of all the painters of his age; and not merely great in art, but also learned in

¹ Facius (Bartolomeus) De Viris Illustrib. 4to. Flor. 1745. P. 46.

geometry and all the arts which appertain to the ornament of painting, because he had discovered many things in the properties of colour, of which he had found the source amongst the ancients by the reading of Pliny and other authors." Facio, it must be recollected, was a contemporary of John Van Eyck, whose pictures he, no doubt, admired in the palace of his master. Giovanni Santi, the father of Raphael, wrote a chronicle in rhyme, in which he praised Van Eyck;¹—the verses run as follows:—

"A Bruggia fu tra gli altri piu lodato;
Il gran Jannes, e'l discepol Rugero."

Santi was fully qualified to speak upon the subject. He lived at Urbino, when Justus of Ghent, a pupil of the elder Van Eyck, painted for the Duke of Montefeltro. Filarete, the architect of Florence, whose treatise we have noticed, and which is still preserved in manuscript at Florence, at the Magliabecchiana library, says:—"In Flanders, they work extremely well in oil, but the painters who have used these colours best are Giovanni da Bruggia and Maestro Ruggiero."² Filarete was a contemporary of John Van Eyck. Many Flemish authors also give similar testimony. Marchant wrote, in 1596, before Van Mander, and spoke, in his description of the Netherlands, of "*Joannes Vaneichus, summi nominis, qui primus oleo ex lini seminibus extuso, cepit picturæ colores Brugæ miscere, ac perpetuare.*"³ Vaernewyk, the author

¹ Ottobon MSS. Vatican at Rome, apud Pungileone *Elogio storico de Giov. Santi*. Urbino, 1822. Pp. 72—74.

² Vasari, *ut sup.* Com. alla vita d' Anton. da Messina. Tom. v. p. 99. Filarete's treatise was written about the years 1460-64.

³ Marchantius. *Flandria Descripta*, p. 132.

of a history of Belgium, often quoted here, wrote in a similar strain, as likewise did Sanderus, and the chronicler Opmeer.

Tradition also preserves his fame for inventive genius in chemicals. Le Vieil, the glass painter, says,¹ that he discovered the secret of enamel colour applied to glass, and the method of abrading the coloured surface of coated glass. He did this so as to expose the whole substratum, whenever it was necessary to obtain white or yellow glass surrounded with colour, without leading in a piece of white. As regards enamel, Van Eyck's invention may be doubted; but as regards abrading surfaces of coated glass, there is no doubt that the discovery was made in his time, and it may therefore be his.

In the meanwhile a period had arrived, as we have said, when the patronage of art could scarcely remain confined to princes and noblesse. The wealthy corporations of the Belgian cities vied with them in splendour and in riches, and pursued the arts which seemed a medium for display with a vigour and pertinacity even greater than was exhibited by their princely rivals.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Belgian cities had risen to great commercial wealth. The ports were neutral by general consent; and Ghent and Yprès manufactured what Bruges imported. Here the French, the English, the Italians, traded and exchanged commodities; whilst the arts, developed by accumulated capital, vied with manufactures to please the public taste. A middle class rose up, devoted to the wants of the

¹ Le Vieil. *Der kunst auf glas, aus der Französischen*. Nurenberg, 1779. 4to. Pp. 69, 70.

noble and the rich, yet strong enough to hold political and social independence,—and sufficiently powerful to gain by stratagem, or wrest by force from their princely rulers, such grants and confirmation of their privileges as tended in those days to give art more development and proficiency than the ruder science—politics.

At the period immediately under notice, Ghent had somewhat fallen from its high estate. D'Artevelde the younger and Dubois had ruined it by ill-judged resistance; and John the Fearless had humbled its haughty citizens, and destroyed its walls. Bruges, superior at that time to Yprès, thus occupied the pinnacle of commercial and political superiority.¹

The old travellers who described this thriving city in the time of its prosperity would scarcely recognise it now in its period of decay. Contemplative minds may still be struck by the beauty and grandeur of monuments, but derive a painful contrast from desert streets and stagnant waters. Bruges, no longer open to the sea, is but the shadow of its ancient name. The great canal that stretched from its walls to the port of Sluys, and floated ships of the greatest size, is now silted up; and on the shores of the sea may still be traced the ancient works, which were the ornament and defence of this commercial capital. The quays, which once were piled with British wool and Eastern silks, are empty. The Turks, the Greeks, the English, and Italians, no longer throng there; and all is silent, still, and lonely.

¹ "Pulchra sunt oppida, Gandavum, Antverpia, Bruxella, Lovanium, Mechlinia, sed nihil ad Brugas."—*Jacobi Marchantii. Flandriæ Descriptio*. 12mo. Antv. 1596, p. 77.

In those remote times, when cities were the only refuge from the inroads of the nobles or free companions, they fostered art, by concentrating freedom, wealth, and power into their own hands. Bruges, by doing this, succeeded in first creating a school of art within the Netherlands.

Hubert Van Eyck did not expire without knowing that his brother had been raised to a higher position at the Court of Burgundy, than he had occupied at that of Liège. Philip the Good succeeded to the ducal throne on the murder of his father, and, notoriously fond of art, he chose the courtier painter for his "*varlet de chambre.*" The appointment, which is dated May 1425, is couched in the most elaborate terms of praise of John Van Eyck, and describes him as well-known for his talent and sufficiency as a painter not merely by common fame, but of the Duke's own knowledge. His emolument was fixed at 100 liv. paris, ¹ and a caution was given to the trea-

¹ "A Jehan de Heik, jadis pointre et varlet de chambre de feu M. S. le duc Jehan de Bayvière, lequel M.D.S., pour l'abileté et souffisance que par la relacion de plusieurs de ses gens, il avait oy et meismes savait et cognoissoit estre de fait de peinture en la personne dudit Jehan de Heick. Icellui Jehan, confiant de la loyauté et preuddommie, a retenu en son pointre et varlet de chambre, aux honneurs, prérogatives, franchises, libertés, drois, prouffis, et émolumens accoutumez, et qui y appartiennent. Et affin qu'il soit tenu d'ouvrer pour lui de peinture toutes les fois qu'il lui plaira, lui a ordonné prendre et avoir de lui sur sa recepte générale de Flandres, la somme de C liv. p. monnoie de Flandrez, à deux termes par an, moitié au Noel et l'autre moitié à la St. Jehan dont il veult estre le premier ensuivant, et ainsi d'an en an et de terme en terme, tant qu'il lui plaira. En mandant aux maistres de son hotel et autres, ses officiers quelconques, que d'icelle sa présente retenue ensamble des honneurs prérogatives, drois, prouffis et émolumens dessus diz facent et laissent le dit Jehan paisiblement joir, sans empeschement ou destourbier, mandant en outre à sondit receveur général de

surers to be regular in their payment of that sum in two instalments every year.

Philip, who obtained the name of Good from his contemporaries, was perhaps the ablest statesman of his day. Versed in all the subtleties of politics, he was also a competent judge of art. He was proud with his superiors, but kind and courteous to those below him; the latter a quality so rare, that it roused the jealousy of men who did not see the use to which he turned it.¹ The nobles of his court complained that he took the council of his varlets rather than of them; but the men he did employ were zealous in his service, and performed their duty with skill and secrecy. His most trusty servant and confidant was John Van Eyck, whom he employed in various missions, both delicate and secret. The painter, as we have said, though "*varlet*," did honourable duty, being served in his own person by domestics in livery. "My Lord Duke," said Philip in an order to his household, Flandres présent et à venir, que la dicte somme de C livres p. par an il paye, baille, et délivre audit Jehan son pointre et varlet de chambre aux termes dessus déclairez comme de tout ce que dit est peut plus à plain apparoir par lettres patentes de mon avant dit S. sur ce scellées et ordonnées en sa ville de Bruges le XIX^e jour de May l'an Mil CCCCXXV.

"Pour cecy par vertu d'icelles dont 'vidimus' est cy acourt pour le terme de Noel Mil CCCCXXV par sa quittance qui sert à la partie ensuivante cy rendu acourt. A luy pour semblable et les termes de la Saint Jehan et Noel Mil CCCCXXVI par sa quittance cy acourt . . . c. liv.

"Quatrième compte de Gautier Poulain depuis le 1^{er} Janvier MCCCXXIV jusqu'au dernier jour de Décembre MCCCXXV."—*De Lab. ut sup., Les Ducs de Bourgogne, Preuves*, vol. i. pp. 206, 207.

¹ "Avait de condition encore qu'en chambre se tenoit clos souvent avec valets et s'en indignaient nobles hommes."—*Esloge de Chastelain — Buchon. Collection de Documents*, vol. xlii. 8vo. Paris, p. 29.

“shall have as many ‘varlets,’ and as divers as he pleases; and each of them shall serve in turn three times with the first varlet; and they shall have each of them two horses at their service, and a varlet in livery.”¹ The difference between a varlet and a varlet in livery was here distinctly marked, and proves that, though Van Eyck was honoured with no high title, his services were not menial. Van Eyck’s first important mission was in August 1426, when he performed “a certain distant pilgrimage and secret journey, of which no further mention need be made.” It would be tedious and scarcely necessary to trace the object of these secret missions. It suffices to enumerate them in their order. On the first occasion, John Van Eyck was paid 90 livres.²

¹ VARLETS DE CHAMBRE. “M.D.S. aura des varlets de chambre tels qu’il lui plaira lesquels serviront à tour à chacun fois III, avec le premier varlet de chambre et seront contez, chacun d’eux deux chevaux à gages et un varlet à livrée.”—Ordonnance faite par M. S. le Duc de Bourgogne, &c. par l’avis de son conseil sur le règlement de son hostel en l’an Mil CCCXXVI à Bruges le 14 Dec.—*De Laborde, Les Ducs de Bourgogne, ut sup.* Introd. vol. i. p. xl.

² “A Johannes de Eik, varlet de chambre et peintre de M.D.S., la somme de quatre vingt onze livres, cinq sols, du prix de XL gros monnoie de Flandres la livre, laquelle du commandement et ordonnance de M.D.S. leur à esté paiée, baillée et deslivrée comptant, tant pour faire certain pèlerinage que M.D.S. pour lui et en son nom lui a ordonné faire, dont autre déclaration il n’en veut estre faite comme sur ce que par icelui S. lui parait estre deu à cause de certain loingtain voiaige secret que semblablement il lui a ordonné faire en certains lieux que aussi ne veut aultrement déclarer. Si comme il appert par mandement de descharge de M.D.S. sur ce fait.—Donné à Leyden le XXVI^e jour d’Aoust l’an MCCCCXXVI. . . IIII^{xx}XI l. Vs. ob. X s.”—Compte de Guy Guilbaut du III^e jour d’Octobre l’an Mil CCC vingt et cinq, et fenist au III^e jour d’Octobre l’an Mil CCC vint six.—*De Lab. ut sup., Les Ducs de Bourgogne*, vol. i. p. 225.

In October 1426 he made another journey;¹ and in 1428 he went to Portugal.

Philip had been married twice, and lost, successively, Michelle de France, his first wife, and Bonne d'Artois, his second. In 1428, his father's treasurer, André de Thoulongeon, was sent to Spain to obtain the hand of Isabel of Arragon, and failed in his attempt. He proceeded to Portugal, from whence he sent so glowing a description of Isabel of Portugal, that Philip sought her alliance. Hue de Lannoy, Lord of Saintes, and the Sire de Roubaix, both of them confidants and friends of Philip, were chosen as ambassadors, and were accompanied by John Van Eyck, who was to paint the likeness of the princess and send it home. They sailed from Bruges in 1428, and were driven by bad weather on the coasts of England. They put in to Sandwich, Plymouth, and Falmouth, in succession, but made good their landing at Castrées, on the 18th of December. At Lisbon, negotiations having been successful, Van Eyck painted "bien au vif" the portrait of the youthful Isabel, and sent it to Bruges in the February following.

Having concluded these labours, he went with the ambassadors on a pleasure trip through Portugal and

¹ "A Johannes de Eick, varlet de chambre et peintre de M. D. S., la somme de trois cens soixante livres du pris de XI gros, monnoie de Flandres la livre, laquelle M. S. lui a ordonné estre baillée comptant pour certain compte, traictié et appointment fait avec lui pour la parpaye de tout ce qu'il lui peut estre deu à cause de certains loingtains voyaiges secrets que M. D. S. lui a pieça ordonné faire en certains lieux, dont il ne veult autre déclaration estre faite. Donnée à Bruges le XXVII jour d'Octobre l'an Mil CCCXXVI garny de quittance dudit Johannes . . . III^eLX liv."—Compte de Guy Guibaut p. 3 mois du IIII Oct. 1426 au 31 Dec. ensuivant.—*De Laborde, Les Ducs de B., ut sup.* vol. i. p. 242-3.

Spain. He visited the cities of Galicia and Castile, paused in the Alhambra, and was brilliantly received by the people of those countries. The picture of "La Belle Portugalaïse" was, no doubt, painted at this time.¹ Three months were spent in these enjoyments; when the ducal messengers returned and brought their lord's assent to the marriage. It took place by proxy, in July, and the feasting and rejoicing lasted till September; when the bride, accompanied by her brother and a numerous suite, embarked. The squadron, consisting of no less than fourteen sail, met with adverse winds on this as on the first voyage. A storm more severe than that which beset the fleet on its outward passage, assailed it on its return to Bruges. For forty days the ships were driven on and off the coast of Spain, the weather so affecting the Sire de Roubaix, that he kept the expedition for a fortnight in the little harbour of Ribadeo, in Galicia. From thence the squadron set sail, and was scattered by the winds,—the *infanta*, with but two remaining ships, being driven into Plymouth; from whence she made her way with difficulty to Bruges on Christmas-day.

The ceremonies of the landing were of a noble kind. The merchants of Bruges vied with each other in giving them splendour. The road through which the procession passed was lined with tapestries of splendid workmanship. Four and sixty trumpeters, bearing silver instruments, led the way, whilst deputations from the states and trades displayed their gorgeous dresses.² The marriage cere-

¹ Inventaire des tableaux de Marguerite d'Autriche.—*De Laborde*. 8vo. Paris, 1850, p. 26. This picture still existed in 1516.

² Marchantius, p. 284.

mony was solemnised with every kind of brilliancy. The order of the Golden Fleece was founded on the occasion, and the Sires de Roubaix and de Lannoy obtained, amongst the rest, the honour of a knighthood.¹ Van Eyck, the “excellent maistre, en art de peinture,” received, in payment for the portrait and his confidential services, (certains services secrez,) the sum of one hundred and fifty livres,²—a pleasing tribute to his talents as diplomatist and painter.

His latest journeys on secret service were in 1430, when he went to Hesdin, the pleasure palace of the Duke, on a sudden call ;³ in 1434, when he travelled on business for the Duke and Duchess ;⁴ and in 1436, when he took

¹ Guicciardini. 8vo. Amst. 1641. Translation of P. du Mont, p. 95.

² Gachard (L.P.) Collection de Documents inédits concernant l'hist. de Belgiq. Fol. Brux. 1833-34, pp. 63—91. The entry of expenses for this journey in the Comptes de Lille is as follows:—“A Johannes de Eik, varlet de chambre et peintre de M.D.S. que icelui S. luy a donné tant pour considération des services qu'il lui a faitz, journellement et espoire que encore fera au tems à venir au fait de son dit office, comme autrement, comme en recompensacion de certains voyaiges secrez que par l'ordonnance et pour les affaires d'icelui S. il a fait, et du voyage qu'il fait présentement avec et en la compagnie de M.D.S. de Roubaix dont il ne veult aucune déclaration estre faite, comme appert par la quittance sur ce. . . . VIII^{xx} liv.” Compte Guy Guilbaut, dep. 1 Janv. 1427, jusqu'au 31 Dec. 1428.—*De Laborde, Les Ducs de B., ut sup.*, vol. i. p. 251.

³ “A Johannes Deik, peintre, que M. S. a sémblablement ordonné lui estre baillié et délivré comptant, pour estre venu par son commandement et ordonnance de sa ville de Bruges à Hesdin devers lui, auquel lieu il l'avait mandé pour aucunes besognes esquelles il le vouloit employer. Pour ce et pour son retour comme appert par sa quittance sur ce rendu . . . XIX fr.” Compte de J. Abonnel, dep. le 1^{er} Jan. 1430, jusqu'au 31 Dec. 1431.—*De Laborde, Les Ducs de B., ut sup.* vol. i. p. 257.

⁴ “A Johannes Van Eyck que M.D.S. lui a donné pour composicion a lui faite pour plusieurs journées par lui vacquées par l'ordonnance

with him seven hundred livres, of which he only spent three hundred.¹

The kindness and the *bonhomie* of Philip towards Van Eyck was proved on more than one occasion. Whilst Hubert lived at Ghent, John kept house at Bruges, and Philip paid the rent.² When state necessity and an empty treasury rendered it incumbent on Philip to stop the wages of his servants, he exempted John by special letters from the force of that necessity.³ "To John Van

et commandement de M.D.S. et Madame la Duchesse, pour les besognes et affaires plus à plain contenues en sa quittance sur ce faite LXXXVI liv. Compte de J. Abonnel, du 1 Jan. 1433, jusqu'au 31 Dec. 1434."—*De Laborde, ut sup.* vol. i. p. 339.

¹ "A Johannes Deick v^t. de che. et peintre de M.D.S. p. aller en certains voiaiges loingtains et estrangères marchés ou M.D.S. l'a envoie p. aucunes matières secrètes, dont il ne veut aultre déclaration estre faiste cy VI^c phins (sic.) valent VII^cXX fr. . . ." In other ink, "Seulement III^cLX fr. Emp ipm̃ Johēm Deick ad compon^d. dont il rend cy quittance de III^cLX. fr. seulement et le surplus montant à semblable somme de III^cLX fr. rayé p. defaut de quittance. Compte de Jeh. Abonnel du 1^{er} Jan. 1435 au 31 Dec. 1436."—*De Laborde, ut sup.*, vol. i. p. 350.

² "A Miquiel Ranary pour le louage d'une maison en laquelle Johannes de Eyck varlet de chambre et peintre de M.D.S. a par l'ordonnance et commandement de icelui S. demouré par deux années, finissant au jour St. Jehan Baptiste dernier passé, comme appert par quittance du dit Michiel, et certification de M.D.S. de Croy, sur ce XLVI fr. IIII s. Compte de Guy Guilbaut, 1^{er} Janv. 1427, jusqu'au 31 Dec. 1428."—*De Laborde, Les Ducs de B., ut sup.* vol. i. pp. 255, 256.

³ "A Jehan de Heick, pointre et varlet de chambre de M.S. le Duc, lequel iceluy S. a retenu au gaiges de C livres parisis monnoie de Flandres par an et pour les causes contenues tant en ses lettres sur ce scellées, comme au compte précédent. Et lesquels gaiges M.D.S. non obstant que par certains ses ordonnances scellées le XIII^e jour de Dec. 1426 a entre autres choses révoqué les pensions et gaiges d'aucuns ses officiers et serviteurs qu'il prenoit à luy, non exprimés ses lettres de sa nouvelle ordonnance, commençant icelle

Eyck," says the accountant, "though by certain orders, sealed in 1426, the wages and the pensions of the servants of my lord have been revoked, and it is not my lord's intention that his *ordonnance* should touch the wages of his painter, it is ordered and decreed there shall be given customary payment of his pension."

The Duke was also in the habit of visiting the painter's workshop, where his coming was considered as a welcome honour. Having his father's and grandfather's love of show, he was known on these occasions to shower on Van Eyck's apprentices all the silver which his purse contained.¹ Nor was his hand less ready in the case of John himself, who frequently received, besides his pay, the gift of sums of money.²

le premier jour de Janvier Mil CCCC vint six, toute fuoys son entension n'est pas que esdites ordonnances soit comprinse la pension que prenoit de lui son dit peintre, mais au regard de ce, veult et ordonne que les paiemens de la dite pension, d'aller en avant tant comme il lui plaira, soit entretenu. En mandant à son dit receveur, que icelle pension il paie aux termes accoutumés qui sont moittié à la Saint Jehan, et l'autre moittié au Noel comme il appert par ses lettres patentes sur ce scellées et données en sa ville de Bruges le III^e jour de Mars mil CCCXXVII servant tant pour le dit peintre comme pour la pension de la demoiselle de Berkin cy après. Pour ce p. vertu d'icelles lettres cy rendu avec quittance dudit J. de Heick, p. sadite pension et les termes de la St. Jehan et Noel 1427 la dite some de C liv. Compte de G. Poulain Janv. 1426 à Dec. 1427."—*De Laborde, Les Ducs de B.*, vol. i. pp. 246, 247.

¹ "Aux varlets de Johannes Deyk peintre aussi pour don par M.S. à iceulx fait quant M.D.S. a esté en son hostel veoir certain ouvraige fait par le dit Johannes XXV sols.—Compte de Jehan Abonnel, Jan. 1432, à Dec. 1433."—*De Laborde, Les Ducs de B. ut sup.*, vol. i. p. 266.

² "A Johannes de Heecht peintre de M.D.S. que iceluy seigneur a donné pour considéracion des bons et agréables services qu'il lui a faictz de son mestier et autrement comme appert par sa quittance . . . XX l.—Compte de Guy Guilbaut, 1426-27."—*De Laborde, Les Ducs de B. ut sup.*, vol. ii. p. 390.

"A

The treasurers of Philip seem to have been slow, however, in conforming to his orders in the payments which he periodically authorized his painter to receive. On two several occasions he has to reprimand them for neglect;—"the retention of his pension being likely to expel the painter from his service, which would cause him (the Duke) much displeasure." In 1434, he thus formally expresses himself at Dijon.

"To my well beloved and *féaultz*, the people of our accounts at Lille, by order of the Duke of Brabant and Limburg, Count of Flanders, of Artois, and Burgundy, of Haynau, of Holland, of Zellande, and Namur.

"Trusty and well beloved, we have heard that you make difficulties in verifying certain of our letters of pension for life, by us owing and ordered to our well beloved varlet de chambre and painter Jehan Van Eyck, for which reason he cannot be paid the said pension, and it will be necessary for him to abandon our service, whereat we should have great displeasure, for we desire to entertain him for certain great works in which we shall occupy him hereafter, and we should not find his equal at our will, nor so excellent in his art and science. And for this we will, and we expressly command you that, incontinently on the sight of these, you do verify and confirm the said letters of pension, and cause to be paid the said

"A Jehannes Eyk varlet de chambre et peintre de M.D.S. que icellui seigneur lui a donné tant pour considération des bons et agreables services qu'il lui a faitz, tant en fait de son dit office, comme autrement, et pour le aidier et soustenir et à avoir ses nécessitez à fin plus honorablement il le peusz servir comme appert par sa quittance, C. l.—Meme compte."—*De Lab., Les Ducs de B. u sup.*, vol. ii. p. 392.

Jehan Van Eyck the said pension, according to the contents of the said letters, without any further speech or argument, without delay, *cunctation*, variation, or difficulty whatever, from fear of disobeying or angering, and so act this once for all that it shall not be necessary for us to write again upon this matter, as we should take it much in displeasure. Trusty and well beloved, may the Holy Spirit hold you in its holy keeping.

“Written in our city of Dijon, the 13th day of March, 1434.

“Signed, PHILIPPE.

“Countersigned, ROUESSEAU.”¹

No further difficulty appears to have been felt by John in obtaining from the treasurers the usual payment of his salary.

On his return from Lisbon, John Van Eyck took up his final residence in Bruges, having purchased from the chapter of St. Donat, a house upon the Torrenbrugskén, or Tower-bridge, where he lived until his death.²

That of Hubert interrupted the progress of the altar-piece in the chapel of St. Bavon. But Jodocus Vyds losing him, gave the commission to John. Much controversy has taken place as to the share of Hubert in this vast undertaking, and that of John after Hubert's death. The oldest writers seek to claim for John Van Eyck a greater fame and talent than that of Hubert; and pos-

¹ De Laborde, *Les Ducs de Bourg.*, ut sup., vol. i. *Introd.* p. liii.

² “Purchased in 1430 of Jan Van Milanen.”—*Account books of the chapter of St. Donat.* “Receptum anno 1440 in certis redditibus novi libri infra villam in officii Sancti Nicolai. Johannes Van Eyck XXX sol. par.”—*C. Carton. Ann. de la Soci. d'Emulation de Bruges*, tom v. sec. 2, No. 34, p. 271.

sibly the name he made by his improvements—a name which spread not merely throughout Belgium, but throughout Italy and Germany—contributed to cast the greater genius of his brother in the shade. Van Mander seems to have been blinded in this way, and does not hesitate to contradict a general tradition for the purpose of swelling the triumph of his favourite. Accordingly he says, of the great altar-piece of the Mystic Lamb, “Some people say that Hubert began this work, which was only finished by his brother John; I hold that they both began it.”¹ Tradition here was right, and Van Mander wrong; for a signature, which long remained concealed beneath a coat of colour, has been since recovered, and proves that Hubert did commence the picture which was finished by his brother.² The altar-piece was certainly less than half completed when Hubert died.

The Mystic Lamb, however, appears to have been long on hand, and to have been painted at considerable leisure in the town of Bruges.³ It would otherwise be difficult to understand why the picture was so long unfinished. Portions of it were, doubtless, completed previous to the Lisbon journey, and the rest after the return. Two or three among the number appear to be of a warmer colour, and filled with more swarthy figures; whilst distances

¹ Van Mander, p. 200.

² Were this testimony wanting, we have that of Vaernewyk, who, in his *Historie v. Belgis*, remarks, “Hubert Van Eyck was also a remarkable painter, who first began the picture in St. John’s church.”—*Hist. v. Belgis, ut sup.*, p. 109.

³ We have no means of ascertaining whether John went to Ghent after the death of his brother. We know, however, that he lived continuously at Bruges, where the panels were perhaps painted, and then carried to their resting-place in the chapel of Jodocus Vydt.

reveal the orange and the palm, faithfully and elegantly copied from nature. Landscapes, it is true, were always a feature in the productions of John Van Eyck, and they have been admired at all times for their faithfulness to nature and their aërial perspective. This last quality, depending more on the innate sentiment and perception of colour than the observance of mathematical rules, certainly forms one of the charms of John Van Eyck's pictures. But great as are these charms, they do not entitle the possessor to the name of inventor of perspective. That Van Eyck did not possess completely the rules of linear perspective, is evident from the examination of his human figures, which are remarkable for vivid colouring rather than for the perfect comprehension of the rules of light and shade, which produce relief or rotundity. These rules were better known and practised by Paolo Uccello, who produced by lines the effects which Van Eyck obtained by colour.¹ The former went so far as to foreshorten figures by the rules of perspective ;² the

¹ An example of the progress which perspective had made in Italy, during the lifetime of John Van Eyck, is the interesting book of drawings of Jacopo Bellini, the father of Gentile and Giovanni Bellini, now in the British Museum. It is of this work that Mr. Von Rumohr says, in a letter annexed to the volume, "that Jacopo notably promoted perspective, being among the first of those who sought to carry out the system in naked figures." Jacopo Bellini, we need scarcely remark, was a contemporary of John Van Eyck.

² Vasari admired, amongst other things remarkable for their perspective in Uccello's pictures of Santa Maria Novella, at Florence, a figure of the Eternal, which he describes in these words : "This figure," he says, "is the most difficult of any that Paolo Uccello executed, because it is represented flying towards the wall, and with the head foreshortened, and has such vigour that the figure by its relief presses through and divides it."

latter, in the copy of nature and its minutiae, produced perspective views of which the colour is the chief illusion. His perspective, true in landscape backgrounds, was defective in the figures of the foreground; thus rendering the latter subservient to the former. There is not an instance of Van Eyck producing foreshortened figures, true to the rules of perspective; but his great sagacity and talent enabled him to gain a knowledge of aerial perspective, as much, perhaps, from a faithful and minute observation of nature as from science. It is, indeed, extremely doubtful whether he ever reduced perspective to geometrical rules. His works were, in all likelihood, not the result of his possessing linear perspective reduced to a demonstrative art; and this view is confirmed by the productions of his pupils, who, after his death, ceased to progress in that very branch of the art—one of the facts to which we attribute the immediate decline of the Flemish school. To the progress of perspective as a demonstrative art, on the contrary, is, in a great measure, owing the rise of the Italian schools. The first attempt in that direction was made by Stefano Fiorentino, a pupil of Giotto. Next came Paolo Uccello, the contemporary of Van Eyck;¹ and Mantegna, a few years later, carried

¹ In Paolo Uccello we find examples the very reverse of those afforded by John Van Eyck. Uccello's works are mostly executed in one single colour, a sort of chiaro-scuro, made of terra verde. When he attempted to colour them he failed, or succeeded but imperfectly. Paolo, in fact, lacked the sense and perception of colour, and obtained effect in his paintings by reducing his lines to the test of perspective rules, and by the gradations of light and shade; that is, chiaro-scuro. To this Vasari himself bears testimony, whilst those parts of Uccello's works which remain in the

out a system, imperfect in many respects, but sufficiently complete to enable Pietro della Francesca to take it up, and Fra Luca Pacioli to reduce it to a compendious form. Leonardo da Vinci, at a later period, brought the precepts of the art to a still greater degree of perfection. By following these, the Italians progressed and became great, whilst the Flemings, being inattentive or careless of them, retrograded.

The Mystic Lamb was completed in 1432; and the consecration of the chapel for which it was executed was splendidly solemnized. The ceremony took place in May, before admiring crowds; the story and the date of the

convent of St. Maria Novella are a proof of it. Vasari lauds the perspective science of the painter, affirming that previous to his time perspective "was made by chance;" but he criticises Paolo's colour, saying "that he made his fields blue, his cities red, and the buildings various, as best suited his fancy; wherein he committed an error; for," adds Vasari, "whatever we intend to be stone cannot and should not be tinted of other colours." Vasari goes further, however. He expresses his meaning still more distinctly when he writes that, "by due arrangement and proportion of lines, the level space, which really is small, and closely bounded, may be made to appear extensive, and acquire the semblance of distance; and he who, after securing this, shall be capable of judiciously distributing his lights and shadows in their proper places with colours, will, doubtless, produce the effect of a more complete illusion to the eyes, cause his pictures to have greater relieve, and give them a more exact resemblance to life and reality." We therefore find in Paolo Uccello and John Van Eyck, severally, the qualities which, united, give pictures the complete appearance of life and rotundity: in Paolo, relief without colour; and in Van Eyck, colour with insufficient relief. We agree with Vasari, in thinking the latter the master and founder of the modern mode of colouring, and superior therein to all his contemporaries; but we join, at the same time, in the praises he awards to the former as the great promoter of perspective reduced to a scientific and demonstrative art.

completion being publicly made known by the following inscription upon the frame:—

“Pictor Hubertus ab Eyck, major quo nemo repertus,
Incepit; pondus, quod Johes, arte secundus,
Frater, perfectus, Judoci Vyd prece fretus,
VersV seXta MaI Vos CoLLoCat aCta tVerI.”

The last verse of this inscription is a chronostic which indicates that the altar-piece was completed on the 6th of May, 1432.¹

Van Mander, who did not see this writing on the panels of the Agnus Dei, assumed erroneously that Philip, Duke of Burgundy, had given the commission for it; but the portraits on the outer portion of the altar-piece, not being those of Philip or any of his wives, might have led him to pause.

The fact was known to Vrientius when he strung these rhymes:—

“Quos Deus ob *vitium* paradiso exegit, Apelles
Eyckius hos *vitii* reddidit ære patres.
Arte, modoque pari—pariter concurrere visi
Æmulus huic pictor, fctor inde Deus.”²

A manuscript of this period contains a narrative of the consecration of the altar-piece, and describes the crowds which flocked to see the ceremony—crowds which are

¹ Dr. Waagen. Ueber Hub. & Joh. v. Eyck, p. 27. Mr. de Bast, Dr. Waagen's annotator and translator, discovered the inscription in a book written by an old author, a lawyer named Van Huerne. It had been daubed over, and is now recovered by Dr. Waagen.

² Vrientius in Sanderus (Ant.) De Brug. Erud. clar. lib. i. p. 39. Sanderus also says (Flandria Illustrata): “Picturæ etiam variæ . . . Triumphus agnus cœlestis est qui Joh. et Hubertus picturæ coryphæi, Justo Vitio domino de Pamele patricio Gandavense pretium solvente . . .”

compared, for density and numbers, to swarms of bees.¹ The people were seldom gratified by a sight so wonderful, except on solemn festivals ; and “ lords alone could bribe the keeper with a sum sufficient to induce him to expose it.”²

Van Eyck had other patrons besides the Duke and Josse Vydt. The greatest in importance and in wealth was Rollin, chancellor of Philip, obscure in birth but cunning in finance ; who amassed a fortune in a manner which excited jealousy at the ducal court, but who never lost his master’s favour. John Van Eyck painted his portrait, kneeling to the Virgin and Saviour. Rollin gave the picture to the church of Autun.³

Nor did John contemn the orders of less noble or less courtly people. Amongst the men who figure in the records of the ducal treasurers is Jehan Arnoulphin, partner and factor of Marc Guidecon, merchant and draper of Lucca.⁴ Arnoulphin lived at Bruges, and John Van Eyck painted both his and his wife’s likenesses. The catalogue of Margaret of Austria’s gallery contains a notice of this picture,—“ An exquisite piece, closing with two shutters, and in which are represented a lady and gentleman standing in a chamber, and holding each other’s hand.” The name of this man in the inventory of 1416 is Hernoult le Fin, and in that of 1424, Arnoult.⁵

¹ De Bast, note to Dr. Waagen. Ueber Hub. & Joh. v. Eyck, ut sup., p. 35. V. Mander, p. 201.

² V. Mander, p. 201.

³ See further, Works of John Van Eyck.

⁴ Recettes Gener. de Flandres. Archives de Lille. De Laborde, Les Ducs de B. ut sup., vol. i. p. 209.

⁵ Inventaire de Marguerite d’Autriche. De Laborde, ut sup. p. 24. Le Glay. Invent. de M. d’Autriche.

The picture in our National Gallery coincides with this description, but the wings are wanting. If it be the same, it was produced in 1434. It has been supposed, however, and with some appearance of probability, that the figures in the National Gallery are the portraits of John Van Eyck and his wife; and the likeness between the female face and the portrait of the painter's wife at Bruges bears out this supposition. It must also be remarked, that the marriage of Van Eyck appears to have occurred about the year just mentioned; for on the 30th of June we find the Duke of Burgundy godfather to the painter's infant daughter; the child being held in church by the Lord of Chargny. The Duke, on the occasion, presented to Van Eyck a gift of six silver cups.¹

Amongst the latest patrons of John Van Eyck, during his stay at Bruges, were George van der Paele, and Roger van Meyer, canon and president of the chapter of St. Donat, for whom he painted a well-known picture—the Sire van Leeuw, whose portrait may still be seen at Vienna, and others whose names are not preserved. His

¹ "A Jehan Pantin, orfèvre, demourant à Bruges, la somme de quatre vins sèze livres douze sols du pris de XL gros, monnoie de Flandres la livre, que deue lui étoit pour la vendue et délivrance de six tasses d'argent pesans ensemble douze marcs, du prix de 8 francs, ung sol le marc, lesquelles M.D.S. a de lui fait prendre et acheter pour lui, de par icelui S. donner et présenter au baptesment de l'enfant Johannes van Eik, son paintre et varlet de chambre, lequel il a fait tenir sur fons, en son nom, par le S. de Chargny, pour ce comme plus à plain peut apparoitre par mandement de M. D.S. sur ce fait et donné en sa ville de Brouxelles le dernier jour de juing 1434. Quittance dudit Jehan Pantin et certification dudit S. de Chargny sur les pris, achats et délivrance des dittes parties cy rendues IIII^{xx}XVI. f. XII. s.—Compte de Jean Abonnel, de Janv. 1433, à Dec. 1434."—*De Laborde, Les Ducs de B., ut sup.* vol. i. p. 341-2.

pallet was last employed, according to Vaernewyk, at Yprès, where he left unfinished an altar-piece of varied subjects, commissioned of him by the abbot of St. Martin's monastery, in that town.¹

His death took place at Bruges, in 1440-41; and we learn, from the registers of the chapter, that he was buried in the cemetery outside the church of St. Donat; that his funeral cost the large sum of 12 livres parisis; that the ringing of the bells in his honour cost 24 sols parisis; and that on the 21st March, 1441, his body was moved out of the cemetery into the church itself, at the request of his brother Lambert, and placed in a vault near the font.² His will was proved in 1442.

¹ *Annales d'Ypres*—accounts of the brotherhood of Grey Friars (Graeuwe Broeders), in *De Bast. Appendix to Dr. Waagen, Ueb. Hub. & Joh. v. Eyck*. “Anno 1445, heeft meester Joannes van Eycken eene befaemden schilder, binnen Yper geschildert dat overtreffelick tafereel, t'welcke gestellt wiert in den choor van St. Maertens, tot een gedachtenis van den eerwaardigen heere n. m. v. Maelbeke, abt ofte proost v. S. Maert. Kloster die dar voor begraven ligt.” The date 1445 is probably a clerical error. It leads some writers, however, to the belief that another John Van Eyck lived in 1445, of which we have no proof.

² “*Computatio Johannis civis, canonici, de bonis fabricæ ecclesie beati Donatiani Brugensis, anni 1440, facto capitulo, anno 1441.*

Receptum ex sepulturis mortuorum, et redemptione funeralium.

Item.—Pro sepultura magistri Johannis Eyck pictoris XII lib. par.

Receptum ex campanis mortuorum.

Item.—Ex campana magistri Johannis Eyck pictoris XXIII sol par.”

Extract from the Acts Capitular of St. Donat of Bruges. *C. Carton, ut sup.*, pp. 274-5.

“*Eadem die (21 Martii, 1441) ad preces Lamberti fratris quondam Johannes de Eyck, solempnissimi pictoris domini mei, concesserunt quod corpus ipsius, quod jam sepultum in ecclesie ambitu, transferatur, de licentiâ episcopi, et ponatur in ecclesia juxta fontes salvo jure anniversarii et fabricæ.”*

In the margin are these words:—“*Concessio sepulturæ Johanni pictori.*”—*Carton, ut sup.*, p. 287.

Margaret was born after John Van Eyck,¹ but remained a student and assistant in the school of Hubert Van Eyck at Ghent. The same record which discovered to us the name of Hubert as connected with the guild of painters at Ghent, in 1412, contains the notice of Margaret's admission in 1418. She may have devoted her brush more to miniatures than to pictures on panel; but her works have perished, and her name is not discovered on any of the paintings of the period. Lucas de Heere and Van Mander say that Margaret died very shortly after Hubert, and was buried by his side. She had devoted herself to art, "preserving her spinsterhood through life" for it.²

John's widow lived in the Torrenbrugsken for two years after the painter's death, and then sold the house. It passed from her to one Hermann Reyssenburg, from him to one Gerard Pluvier (1477), and, finally, to the present holders, the Serveytens' family.³ The records of Bruges preserve one notice of the widow of Van Eyck—a payment of 2 livres for a lottery drawn in Feb. 1445.⁴

¹ V. Mander, *ut sup.*, p. 199. Vaernewyk, *ut sup.*, p. 119.

² V. Mander, p. 202.

³ "Computatio Gualteri Diedolf, presbyteris canonici de bonis fabrice ecclesie Sancti Donatiani Brugensis, anni 1442, facto capitulo 1443.

Receptum ex testamentis et legatis fidelium defunctorum.

Item.—Ex testamento Johannis Eyck, pictoris XLVIII sol par."

Same entry until 1443. Extract from acc. *ut supra*. *Carton, ut sup.*, pp. 276-7.

"Computatio bonorum officii obedientie beati Donatiani Brugensis pro anno 1440 facto capitulo secundum custum antiqui et novi librorum antiquis impa . . . extractis et deductis per Jacobum monachi capellañum et receptorum officii prædicti in anno 1441.

Item.—Receptum anno 1441 Victua Johannis de Eycke XXX sol par." Communication of Mr. De Stoop.

⁴ *Messenger des Sciences et des Arts*. 8vo. Gand. 1824. p. 51.

She seems to have died about 1448, when her daughter, Lyennie Van Eyck, retires to a convent in her father's native town of Maaseyck. "A Lyennie (? Hyennie) van der Eecke fille de Jehan van der Eicke," says G. Pousset in his account for 1448-49, "jadis peintre et valet de chambre de M.D.S. pour don que M.D.S. lui a fait pour une fois pour Dieu et eulmosne, pour say aidier à mettre religieuse en l'église et monestère de Mazeck au pays de Liège . . . XXIII fr."¹

Lambert Van Eyck, whose name appears in the accounts of 1431, as employed on certain business for the Duke of Burgundy, ceases to be noticed after 1441.² The dispersion of the painter's family seems, therefore, to have been complete. The name of Van Eyck appears, however, to have been common even in the household of the Dukes. We find, in 1427, "Jehan van Heyk, escuier; 1434-35, Hayne v. Heyk, horse-dealer; 1435-36, Henry Deick, Simon van d. Eyke, cutler; besides Peter, John, Gerard, Engelbert, Michel, Jacques, Rudolph, and a second Henry van Eyck."³

Abbé Carton, whose praiseworthy researches have been most useful, found the name of Van Eyck no less frequent in other places.⁴ In the records of the booksellers and illuminators of Bruges are Claeys van den Eyck, member

¹ De Laborde, *Les Ducs de B.*, ut sup. vol. i. p. 395-6.

² "A Lambert de Heck frère de Johannes de Heck p. de M.D.S. pour avoir esté à plusieurs fois devers M.S. p. aucunes besongnes que M.S. voulait faire . . . VII l. IX s."—*De Lab.*, ut sup. vol. i. p. 257. Gachard, *Rapport sur les arch. de l'ancienne chambre des Comptes de Flandres à Lille*, p. 268.

³ De Laborde, ut sup. vol. i. *Introd.* p. xxxvii.

⁴ C. Carton, *Annales de la Société d'Emulation de Bruges*, tom. v. 2^e Serie, No. 3-4, p. 263.

of the guild in 1458-59; De vrouw v. d. Eyck, a member in 1478-79; and Hendric v. d. Eech, in 1481-82. Mr. Goetghebuer discovered one Jan van Hyke, receiver of the hospital of St. Bavon, lez Gand, in 1346. The name of Van der Eyken is still more common. The only records which have not been noticed in reference to John Van Eyck, are two; one of salary paid, in 1432,¹ the other of money given by him to an illuminator of Bruges for a MS. for the Duke.²

The epitaph of John Van Eyck still stood in the sixteenth century, in St. Donat, and was inscribed as follows, on a pillar in that church:—

“Hic jacet eximiâ clarus virtute Joannes,
 In quo picturæ gratia mira fuit;
 Spirantes formas, et humum florentibus herbis
 Pinxit, et ad vivum quodlibet egit opus.
 Quippe ille Phidias et cedere debet Apelles:
 Arte illi inferior ac Polycletus erat,
 Crudeles igitur, crudeles dicite parcas.
 Quæ nobis talem eripuerunt virum.
 Actum sit lacrymis incommutabile fatum;
 Vivat ut in cœlis jam deprecare Deum.”³

Funeral masses for the repose of the painter's soul were celebrated yearly in St. Donat; and the custom was still kept up in each July for upwards of three centuries after his death, till the first French revolution put an end to this, amongst other ceremonies, which produced an annual revenue to the church of 34 gros.⁴

¹ De Laborde, ut sup. vol. i. p. 259. C. Carton, ut sup. p. 269.

² Ib. Ib. p. 358.

³ Vaernewyk, ut sup. c. 47, p. 119. V. Mander, p. 203.

⁴ Délepierre, Galerie d'artistes Brugeois. 8vo. Bruges, 1840, p. 11.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WORKS OF HUBERT AND JOHN VAN EYCK.

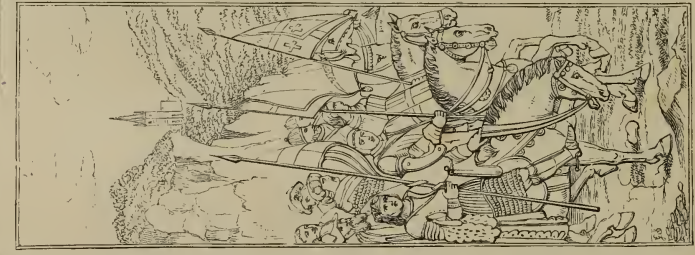
THERE are no towns or monuments on the Continent containing such slight traces of schools of art as those which crowd the Netherlands. In Italy palaces and churches tell the history of painting. Divided among petty states and principalities, at a time when art progressed, Italian cities had each a school which expended its energies where it was nurtured,—the chiefs alone wandering from place to place, as fancy struck them, or the fame of their talent made them welcome. The pictures which they produced, and the buildings which they adorned, are in great part entire. No envious hands have destroyed or overthrown them. And when we visit church and palace in the order of the schools, their progress, their perfection and decline, are told before us. Not so in Belgium. Its cities and its monuments afford no clue to the history of painting. Foreign despotism, the fury of religious wars, the fanaticism of intolerant sectarians, have weighed upon the country, destroyed the landmarks, and led to the disappearance of pictures. Art in Belgium is represented by cathedrals and town-halls, but little else remaining.

This result may be attributed to numerous causes. We have said elsewhere that mural painting was little known, or practised, in the Netherlands as it had been in

Italy. The fate of pictures was consequently not involved in that of monuments. In Italy, to destroy them was to overturn a church or a palace. The paintings of Giotto, or Simone di Martino, were no more removable than the walls which they adorned. The sole resource of the Vandal at that time was whitewash, which he used freely ; but in Belgium, the panels of an altar-piece or a hall of justice were removable at pleasure, and the canvases which Van der Weyden and Van der Goes painted in tempera, and suspended in churches and cloisters, were easily carried away.

The result of this has been to lessen the number of great pieces in the monuments and houses of the Netherlands ; and these vicissitudes have fallen on none of the early painters so fatally as on Hubert Van Eyck.

Hubert Van Eyck was sacrificed for centuries to the fame which John Van Eyck succeeded in engrossing by final improvements in the oil mediums and varnishes. No neglect was more unjust than this ; for Hubert transcended in genius both John Van Eyck and every other painter of the Netherlands. His grand characteristic, as chief of the Flemish school, was severity and nobleness of expression. His great quality was colour ; but he failed in idealism. The gravity and pensiveness which marked his Saints was not in every instance coupled with a sentiment of holiness and that elevated type which Scripture would impress ; and, though he never proved himself a trivial or a vulgar painter, his mind was not above some weakening conceits. Had he possessed the entire gift of simplicity, he would not have laden the broad and sweeping folds of his drapery with



THE MYSTIC LAMB

Wings of the Altarpiece of Ghent, by Hubert and John Van Eyck.

the superfluous ornaments which profusely cover them. With these exceptions, nothing is wanting in the pictures of Hubert Van Eyck. Few men of his time in Italy, none in the Netherlands, have proved themselves as perfect as he was in anatomy and in the perspective of the human frame. But where he most excelled was, as we have said, in colour. His works are vivid, powerful, and harmonious; and had Hubert's pupils been Italians instead of Flemings, had Venice and not Bruges become his resting-place, he would have been the founder of a school of colour. But the tendency to realism which marked his works became exaggerated in his pupils, who, seeking for perfection more in patient arts than by superior genius, fell at once into a lower rank, and never afterwards arose from it.

The noble talents exhibited by Hubert deserved to leave more memorable fruits, but, from the various causes assigned, he has left behind him but one authentic picture, and that is the Mystic Lamb of Ghent, of which the portions which he painted are dispersed, and part preserved at Ghent and at Berlin.

In its complete and finished form the altar-piece deserved the great and lasting admiration which it excited. It not only formed a splendid harmony within itself, but, being executed for the place in which it stood, it harmonized with all around it. Chapels and churches were then vastly different from what they are at present, or were a little later. The walls were covered here with tapestries, there with stuffs of various sorts; numerous votive pictures hung around, and the space was crowded where it is now empty.¹ The chapel of Jodocus Vydt's

¹ Vitet. Notre Dame de Noyon, p. 31.

was devoted to setting off a splendid picture; and nothing can be well imagined finer than the open altar-piece, at the moment of the mass, unadorned by candles, flowers, or aught that carries off the eye; for these adornments were only introduced a little later. The subject, too, was grand and well-conceived, suited to the feelings of the people, and in harmony with the fervour of religion common to the age. It was taken from Revelations, then a fertile source of inspiration to the sculptor and the painter, from which at first, indeed, the former took the incidents which adorned the painted portals of the convents and cathedrals. There sat enthroned the figure of God the Father, holding up his fingers to bless the world, with the papal tiara on his head, John the Baptist on his left, and the Virgin Mary on his right. At his feet stood the Lamb; and round the altar where he bled were all the angels,—all the saints and martyrs peculiarly made holy by the Church of Rome. There were popes and bishops, and female saints, hermits, and holy pilgrims, crusaders and heroes of the early Christian legends, all advancing to adore the Lamb,—all converging to one central point, through varied landscapes, on foot with staves, on horseback, clad in simple tunic or sable armour. Nor, whilst the symbols of eternal happiness were thus paraded before the people, did the painter hesitate to place before them those of punishment; for on the socket of the altar-piece was seen a picture of the tortured down below, according to the old established custom, which made the monks of old Greek churches paint that subject upon the porticoes as emblematic of the hapless state which waits on those who kept without the



THE VIRGIN.

From the Altar-piece of Ghent, by Hubert Van Eyck.

pale of the mother church. He represented also on the altar-piece the sybils who foretold the coming of our Saviour, the Annunciation and the Evangelists, Adam, Eve, Cain and Abel, in prominent positions, impressing on the mind of the spectator the enormity of mortal sin, destined to be purified by the sacrifice of the Lamb.

The three great figures of the Father, Mary, and St. John, those of Adam and Eve, all in perfect preservation, are undoubted works of Hubert, exhibiting the qualities and faults which characterise his manner.¹ Two groups of choristers, one on each side, cannot be said with the same certainty to be by Hubert. St. John the Baptist was never painted with more austere expression or of more splendid form. The Virgin never was more pensively depicted. Her long light hair flowing on her shoulders, her graceful hands, holding the book, have all the truth of nature with elegance superadded. The figure of the Eternal is grand and solemn, although the painter, literally construing Scripture, overloaded the vestments with precious stones. The colour is of that strong and vigorous stamp which Hubert alone possessed. The tones are rich and brown, and free from all appearance of tedious workmanship. The ground is gold, and covered with inscriptions. In Adam is expressed the painter's sound knowledge of anatomy, and his study of the principles of perspective applied to the human form; and though the figure, on the whole, is not of noble shape, the head has dignity and the body fair proportions. Eve

¹ The figure of Adam has two or three spots of a lighter tone than the rest of the panel. We are told that these were caused by an attempted cleaning.

is not so happily depicted. The firm intelligence of outline and beauty of hand and wrist, which mark the painter, are to be found in her as in the Virgin; but the head is over large, the body slightly protrudes, and the legs are too spare. The varied movements of the lips and eyes among the Choristers are singularly natural; but the intonation of the parts is less powerful than was usual in Hubert,—a result which may be attributed to restoration.¹ A few outlines slightly weakened may have been altered by the same means.

The manner of John Van Eyck is seen most plainly in the central panel, where the Lamb is bleeding on the altar. Karl Van Mander affirms that he painted it; we believe he also executed the remainder of the outer as well as inner scenes of the altar-piece, with the exception, perhaps, of the Evangelists in chiaro-'scuro, which seem to be the work of pupils. How talented John Van Eyck showed himself in design and execution may be seen in the centre and wings of this altar-piece, where he almost ascended to a level with his brother. Still even here, although less conspicuously than in other pictures, his knowledge of anatomy was less than that of Hubert. In his figures he exhibited a tendency to feebler outlines, thinner limbs, smaller and less graceful hands, and harder or more angular draperies. These, it must be borne in

¹ Not only are these choristers out of harmony with the parts painted by Hubert, but with those portions also which are the work of John; such as the central composition and the panels of the knights and pilgrims on the lower portion of the wings. By restoration is here meant the process of cleaning and consequent weakening of the surface and parts of the outline.

mind, are comparisons in which John Van Eyck appears to a disadvantage only by the side of Hubert. It is almost needless to say, that in all these points he far surpassed his pupils and followers. At the same time, he was less a colourist than his brother, and rarely produced the true harmonies for which Hubert is remarkable. He lacked vigour and warmth in his shadows, and was unable to conceal at all times the traces of manipulation. But, notwithstanding all, the picture of the *Agnus Dei*, though not exempt from retouching, is a vivid and powerful one. It is almost impossible to do complete justice to its excellence; and it requires no mean powers of description to give a faint idea of its beauties,—to tell the fervid piety that animates the saints, and hermits, and crusaders; the simpler sentiments expressed upon the faces of the splendid band which St. Agnes and St. Barbara are leading; the nature of the landscapes and their varied features, the harmony and finish of the meadows and sparkling fountains, the numberless flowers, that give a summer aspect to the scene; and the genius which could make a vast and splendid whole out of so many divers parts.

Comparisons between the life-size portraits of Jodocus Vydt's and Isabella Burluut and the life-size figures described as Hubert's, are hardly fair. But no one can deny the able treatment of these likenesses, the power of *chiaro-scuro*—greater here, perhaps, than ever—and the breadth with which the vestments have been handled by John Van Eyck. In making this division of the work of the two brothers on the altar-piece of the *Agnus Dei*, our only real guide has been the characteristic features of the style of each. Some of the lower scenes which form a

portion of the open picture are, as we have said, almost as powerful as Hubert's. Of these, perhaps, it may be said that the younger brother finished what the elder left undone. And as for the landscapes, some of them exhibit tints so much warmer and more southern than others, that they probably were painted after John Van Eyck's return from Portugal.

The first great portion of this *chef-d'œuvre* that fell a prey to Vandalism was the panel representing the tortures of the condemned, which, being painted à tempera, was washed out before Van Mander's time. Then the painters Schoreel and Lancelot Blondel attempted to restore the altar-piece in 1550, and "washed it so that they brought out afresh a portion which dirt had partially concealed."¹ As they were painters of some note, perhaps their restoration did but little harm. It pleased the canons of St. Bavon, who approved of their success, and gave Jan Schoreel a silver cup.

Philip II. of Spain, who, during the civil wars, succeeded in depriving Belgium of many pictures, contented himself with an able copy by Michel Coxie, for which he paid 4,000 ducats; a larger sum, perhaps, than the original produced.² Another copy still exists, besides the one obtained from Coxie. Narrowly escaping from destruction by the image breakers in 1566, and by fire in 1641, the Agnus Dei owes its chief dismemberment to Joseph II. of Austria, who paid it a visit, and expressed disgust at the naked figures of Adam and Eve. The altar-piece, in consequence of this, remained closed and

¹ Vaernewyk, ut sup.

² Vaernewyk, p. 219. V. Mander, p. 201. Guicciardini, ut sup.

shrouded from view from 1785 to 1794, when it was carried off in part by the picture-fanciers of the French revolution, and restored a few years later at the peace. Squeamish notions still prevailing, the wings were taken to a cellar, and not restored to their original position. They were sold at last, by an ignorant priest, for little or nothing, to Mr. Nieuwenhuys, against whom an action was brought for their recovery. This, however, failed; the wings were sold to Mr. Solly, a London amateur, for 4,000*l.*, and by him to the present King of Prussia.¹ The panels of Adam and Eve are the only portions of the wings preserved at Ghent, where they may still be viewed in the cellars of the cathedral. The original designs for the Adam and Eve of the *Agnus Dei* are in the collection of drawings of the Louvre. They are of a small size and on paper. The figure of Adam is a small facsimile of the picture. That of Eve is somewhat different, the head more in profile, and the form a faithful copy of a bad model. On the back of the drawings is a representation of a man seated at a desk or bench, writing. On the same sheet are also three heads of women in caps, designed from nature. We owe the discovery of these drawings to the activity of M. de Reiset, the conservator of the drawings of the Louvre.²

Hubert Van Eyck, in the *Agnus Dei*, is the founder of a type or class of subject, which his brother imitated and

¹ Michiels, vol. ii. p. 102.

² The copy of the *Agnus Dei*, sold at the breaking up of Mr. Ader's gallery in London, is in possession of a gentleman, the brother-in-law of Mr. Green, who has a collection at Hadley, near Barnet.

his pupils varied *ad infinitum*. It is strange, however, that, with his vast and splendid talents, he should have left a name so long obscure. Although the pictures of both brothers found their way to Italy through the traffic of those wealthy traders of the Middle Ages, the Lombard merchants, before, perhaps, the younger had completed his improvements, Hubert remained unnoticed. He was unknown even to Vasari, who in his first complete edition omitted mention of him, and repaired his first neglect, in part only, in the late publication of 1568. The omission had been pointed out to him by Lambert Lombard, the well-known painter of the school of Liège, who at that time was intimately acquainted with the literary men and artists of Europe. This tardy recognition was but just, yet failed to restore the honours which Hubert so much deserved. A masterpiece, attributed by many to him, may be seen in the Borbonico at Naples, where it appears under the name of Colantonio del Fiore. The intimate connexion of the Flemish and Neapolitan painters is well known. The picture given to Colantonio has no resemblance with his other works, but, on the contrary, bears the marks of the genius of the Van Eycks. It represents St. Jerome dressed in cardinal's robes, a skull-cap on his head, stretching forward, and with two hands extracting a thorn from a lion's paw. The scene is laid in a studio, where ponderous folios adorn the shelves, and instruments for writing are spread upon a desk. The lion is grand in design. St. Jerome is, in beauty and nobleness of style, akin to Saint John the Baptist in the Agnus Dei; and the broad and simple turn of drapery, with the able drawing and the good proportion of the

hands, might also be adduced as proofs of Hubert's manner. But, more than all, the dark and powerful colour of the general tone recal to mind the style of the first Van Eyck, so vivid and rich is it in parts.¹

A curious record, discovered not long since, has put us on the scent of a panel, produced by Hubert Van Eyck. M. Coremans, a Belgian author, lately published the accounts of Blaise Hütter, first "varlet de chambre" and confidential secretary of the Archduke Ernest, and the inventory of the treasures left by that prince at his death in 1595. In the latter is the following entry:—"Saint Mary with the Infant; near her is an Angel, and St. Bernard. By Rupert Van Eyck." This, probably, was a picture by Hubert, whose name is misspelt.²

None of the pictures remaining under the name of Hubert can be assigned to him with any truth. They are very inferior productions, such as the "Virgin with the donor" in the Antwerp Gallery,³—a picture weaker in execution than those of Dieric Stuerbout, to whom some connoisseurs have lately given it.

A charming modesty of look is all that marks "St.

¹ The first person who mentioned this picture, in connexion with Hubert's name, is Dr. Waagen, who, in his work entitled "Ueber Hubert und J. Van Eyck," says, he can assign the panel described in the text "with certainty" to our artist. Mr. Passavant, in the *Kunstblatt*, No. 47, 1843, although he does not affirm that the picture is by Hubert Van Eyck, thinks that it was painted by Colantonio "entirely in the Van Eyck style." The commentators of the last edit. of Vasari attribute this picture (note to p. 163, *Introd.* vol. i.) to John Van Eyck, supposing it to be the same mentioned by their author as belonging of old to Lorenzo de Medici.

² Coremans, *ap. De Laborde*, ut sup., vol. i. *Introd.* p. cxiii.

³ No. 4 of Antwerp Catalogue, 0.29 met. by 0.19, French measure.

Catherine" of the Belvedere, at Vienna;¹ but the painting is unlike that of Hubert in style; nor is it like that of his brother John, but of a later date, and by an imitator;² the ornaments being coarse, the flesh tints grey, and modelled without delicacy. A picture by Hubert Van Eyck is described in catalogues as belonging to one M. de Kronstern, at Nembs, near Ploen, Holstein. We have not seen it.

A triptic in the Lichtenstein Gallery represents the Adoration of the Magi. The Virgin, in a blue mantle, holds the Infant on her knee, and the donor is at her feet, clothed in a red mantle, an old king near him. Two shepherds are looking through the window, and to the right are a few oxen and an ass. On the left wing are the young king and the Moor; on the right, a canon supported by St. Stephen. The work is highly finished and minute; but neither Hubert nor John Van Eyck are the painters of those cold grey shadows. This, we believe, is a picture of the Van Eyck school, painted at the latter end of the fifteenth century.³

A portrait, said to be that of Rollin, in the Museum of Dijon, is attributed to Hubert, but is clearly of a later date, viz. the close of the fifteenth century.⁴

An *Ecce Homo*, or head of the Saviour, in the Kensington Gallery, attributed to Hubert Van Eyck, is as distant from the style of that painter as from that of John

¹ No. 16, Catalogue of Vienna, Belv. 1845, chamb. 2. Wood, 7" by 4½", Austrian measure.

² Vide *infra*.

³ Mr. Passavant attributes this picture to John Van Eyck. *Kunstblatt*, 1841, p. 304.

⁴ No. 284, Dijon. Cat. o. m. 81 centi. by o. m. 62 c.

Van Eyck. The type of the countenance, in itself repulsive, leaves everything to be desired as regards character and expression. Feeble in design and colour, it possesses none of the good qualities of the great master whose name it bears.¹ It is one of the numerous dry imitations of the head of the Saviour painted by John Van Eyck, now in the Berlin Museum.²

That Hubert's latest pictures in Bruges or Ghent have all perished is due, no doubt, to the image-breakers of 1566, and the plundering habits of the Spanish troops during the wars of the Duke of Alva; but his first productions have also disappeared; and it is as difficult to find a picture by him previous to the first years of the fifteenth century, as to discover any executed previous to 1400. The loss of these must be assigned to the unsettled state of the Duchies of Brabant and Limburg and the Pays de Liège, during the whole of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the territory of which they form a part having fallen into the hands of Philip the Good on the failure of male heirs, the issue of Philip the Hardy, his grandfather. As no succession in these times was peacefully obtained, this, amongst the rest, was long contested between the warlike people of the cities on the Meuse, and the no less warlike will of the second Philip. Not long before his death, when old and hoary, this prince, too weak to lead an army, was present, with his son, at the overthrow of Dinant, of which not a single house was allowed to remain standing, that the Dukes might

¹ No. 52, Gallery of Prince Wallerstein, Kensington Palace. On wood, 1 ft. by 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. English.

² No. 528, Berlin Museum.

satisfy their truculent desire, and say they granted the request to found a city where "Dinant once had stood." But this was not a solitary instance of revenge. Numerous towns were pillaged and destroyed on the same occasion; and, at a later period, a repetition of offence produced similar results; for when Charles the Bold succeeded in acquiring from Arnold, the parricide Duke of Gueldres, seignorial rights upon the people of the duchy, the latter rose against him; and Maaseyck, with thirteen other cities, was destroyed. Liège is well known also to have braved the anger of the redoubted Charles, and to have suffered terrible retribution. Pictures and monuments, no doubt, perished at that period; and the loss of the early pictures of Hubert Van Eyck may be assigned to that cause.

John has suffered less severely; and we have many panels bearing authentic signatures and dates. Remarkable, however, yet unavoidable, on examining them, is the reflection that, after the completion of the altar-piece of St. Bavon, John Van Eyck progressed in the secondary parts of his art only; minuteness and finish becoming more marked features in his productions, at the same time that he continued to improve, as we have previously had occasion to remark, in the handling of the new oil medium.

A careful examination of the panels authenticated by his name, in the order of their dates, shows that the finest colour, the firmest outline, the most powerful whole are to be found in the first productions after the death of Hubert. Amongst these, the turbaned portrait of the National Gallery, painted in 1433, and signed with

John's own name, is remarkable.¹ In manner it resembles the Jodocus Vydt's of the Agnus Dei of St. Bavon. Its preservation is good, execution firm, colour rich and powerful, and the marks of manipulation, which are found in later pieces, do not obtrude.

A Newly Married Couple, in the National Gallery, is the next picture in years and beauty.² The pair are represented in state costume, with joined hands; the lady wearing a wedding-ring half way up the finger, according to the custom of this period. At their feet is a terrier of wondrous workmanship. Whilst in this wonderful picture we find, in a measure, harder outlines and clearer general tones than mark the painter's previous works, in no single instance has John Van Eyck expressed with more perfection, by the aid of colour, the sense of depth and atmosphere. He nowhere blended colours more carefully, nor produced more transparent shadows. The carnation tints of the man's visage are extremely remarkable for these peculiar qualities,—more so, perhaps, than any in other works of the master. On the other hand, the draperies have not a noble flow, and are even angular in parts. The movements of the figures want grace, and the hands, of the female figure especially, are small and awkward. These, however, are but slight faults; the finish of the parts is marvellous, and the preservation of

¹ No. 222, Nat. Gal. Cat. Wood, 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. by 7 $\frac{1}{2}$, signed "Johēs de Eyck, me fecit año MCCCC 33 Oct. 21, Als ikh kan." Bought of Lord Middleton.

² No. 186 of the Nat. Gal. Cat. This picture is signed "Johannes de Eyck fuit hic. 1434," found by Major-General Hay, in his lodgings at Brussels, after the battle of Waterloo, in 1815. 2 ft. 9 in. by 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft. Wood.

the picture perfect ; and there are few things more wonderful than the chandelier which hangs above the pair, the bed and chairs, the floor and pattens, or the concave looking-glass, in which the figures are reflected, round the frame of which are painted ten circular scenes from the Passion of Christ.

Perhaps this was the picture so curiously purchased, as Van Mander tells us, by Mary, sister of Charles the Fifth, and regent of the Netherlands, in a barber's shop in Ghent, for a place of a hundred florins a year.¹ Some variation, it is true, may be noticed in the description of the panel by Van Mander, for he says that the figures of the man and woman were united by fidelity ; but the dog is emblematic of that sentiment, and may convey his meaning allegorically. There is no denying, whatever opinion may be held respecting the male figure, that the female is, to a certain extent, similar in features and in character to that of Van Eyck's wife, now at Bruges. The signature of the painter, "Johannes de Eyck fuit hic," tends to confirm the opinion that the male figure is a portrait of John himself, albeit having no resemblance to the received portrait of Van Eyck in the wing of the Ghent pictures now in the Berlin Museum.

The Virgin and St. Donat, painted for Canon Van der Paele and President de Meyer—a picture now in the Academy of Bruges²—was executed two years later than

¹ Van Mander, p. 203. Vaernewyk, p. 119.

² No. 1 of the Catalogue of the Academy of Bruges. Signed, "Hoc op^s fecit fieri ma^gr Georgi de Pala, hu^j eccles^e canoni p Johanne de Eyck pictor, et fundavit hic duas capellias de g^rmio (gremio) Chori domini MCCCC XXX IIII. c^pt añ 1436." 1 mètre 20 by 1 mètre 54, French measure.

the last (1436). Cleaning and retouching by bad restorers, impair its value and beauty ; but, apart from this, the colour has not been used with the painter's usual breadth, and traces of manipulation obtrude in all parts. The figures are drawn with less than usual ability ; most of the faces are insipid in expression, and the hands are stiff and long. Tints no longer melting into each other, the colour, instead of being rich and giving to the flesh a plump and pleasant aspect, has a hard and red appearance. The figure of the Virgin is certainly the most displeasing of those undoubtedly painted by Van Eyck, and the child exhibits the usual peculiarities of shortness and thinness, with features in which the painter, seeking to express the Holy Spirit, only succeeded in expressing age, incompatible with the smallness of the Infant's size and the feebleness of its proportions. St. Donat is the most remarkable of the persons in the composition. His pious and noble head keeps the eye riveted, withholding it from the overloaded ornaments of a splendid cope and stole ; but the figure of St. George is trivial and awkward. The background here is well preserved, but the draperies are partially destroyed.

The portrait of Jan de Leeuw, at Vienna, painted, like the last, in 1436, is of a red tone, similar to that which renders the Virgin of St. Donat unpleasant to the eye.¹

¹ No. 12, second room, Gallery of Belvedere, at Vienna. This panel is signed on a salient border, "Jan de Leeuw (Leeuw figured by a drawing of a lion) op Sant Orselen Daen dat claer eerst met oghen saen 1401. Ghe conterfeit nu heeft mi Jan Van Eyck wel blÿct wannert begā 1436." 1' by 10", Austrian measure.

¹ Another portrait, described as that of "Jodocus Vydt, at an advanced age, bareheaded, clothed in a red dress, turned up with white," does not display the little grey eyes, the nose, or the expression of that person; but it has that same vigorous tone of colouring, that decision of outline which we perceive in the portrait of the National Gallery, and in that of Jan de Leeuw. The original beautiful design may be seen in the collection of drawings at Dresden.

We shall speak hereafter of other pictures in this gallery attributed to Van Eyck, which we do not consider authentic.

² St. Barbara, in a landscape, a picture left unfinished by the master in 1437, is interesting as affording a clue to the mode in which Van Eyck proceeded. The Saint is represented sitting on the ground reading in a book, of which she pensively turns the leaves. In her right hand she holds a palm. Her ample robe, spread about her, lies in folds around. In the background the landscape is adorned with a distant tower, trees and hills beyond, and the sky alone is coloured. The design of every part is complete, not a detail being omitted. The dress, with its numerous folds, the figures at work in the distant tower, the foliage and boughs of the trees, are most minute; and prove how carefully and correctly the early artists, like

¹ No. 39, second room, Belvedere Gallery. Wood. 1' 1" by 11", Austrian measure.

² This picture may be one of which Van Mander says, "His dead colourings were much more clear and sharp than the finished works of other masters. I have seen in the possession of my master, Lucas de Heere, one in which is painted a young woman sitting in a landscape."—*V. Mander*, p. 203.

Van Eyck, drew in their compositions, leaving nothing to chance after the outlines were defined.¹

It was the custom of early painters, as Mr. Didron proves by numerous examples,² to represent the figure of the Eternal under the younger features of the Saviour. There is some difficulty in ascertaining whether Hubert meant to represent God the Father or the Saviour in the altar-piece of the Agnus Dei; but the head of our Saviour, painted by John Van Eyck, in 1438, tends to show that the features of the Redeemer were meant to be depicted at St. Bavon; for in both the same solemnity and age are given, the same attempt is made to render the spiritual idea by rigidity of gaze and immobility of expression. John, however, in attempting to depict a subject far above his strength, is less successful even than his brother, and fails to impart the noble bearing and solemnity which mark the figure in the Agnus Dei.³

John Van Eyck's portrait of his wife is a far more pleasing picture, though by no means a flattering likeness. He finished it in 1439; and it may be cited as a marvellous instance of the painter's talent for finish and

¹ No. 5, of the Antwerp Catalogue. This picture is signed "Johēs de Eyck me fecit 1437." It belonged to the well-known printers Enschede, of Haarlem, who had an engraving made of it in 1769. In 1786 they sold it to a dealer named P. Yver, who sold it again to Mr. Ploos Van Amstel, in whose collection it remained for a long time. Sold from thence into the hands of a Mr. Oyen, the widow of that gentleman parted with it to the Antwerp Collection. 0.32 metres by 0.19, French measure.

² *Iconologie chrétienne*.

³ No. 528, of Berlin Catalogue. Signed, "Johēs de Eyck, me fecit et appleviit anno 1438, 31 January." Wood, 1 foot 7 z. by 1 foot 3 z., Prussian measure.

minuteness in ornaments. The hand is, perhaps, the most complete and perfect one he ever executed. Much of the disagreeable impression of this portrait is owing to the want of grace in the costume, which stripped the forehead of hair and placed it under two small horns, near the temples.¹ A Virgin and Child, of the same period, may be noticed for the red and opaque quality of tone already observed elsewhere. The energies of Van Eyck were declining when he made the forms of the infant Christ so puny. Nor can the draperies be praised for their flow, nor the outlines for aught but hardness and rigidity. Finish and minuteness characterise the panel in a marked manner. But its chief feature of interest is distinct from the appreciation of execution.² We find in it the only point of contact between the school of Bruges and that of Cologne. In Hubert Van Eyck it was impossible to trace this; but this Virgin and Child seems

¹ No. 2, of Bruges Academy Catalogue. Signed, "Conjux n̄s Johēs me aplevit 1439, mense Junii." "Etas mea triginta tria añorum. Als ikh kan." Given to the Academy in 1808, by M. Pierre Van Lede, and was formerly in the painter's chapel in the Noorzand Straet, now the chapel of the convent of the Liguorist sisterhood.

² No. 6, of Antwerp Catalogue. Signed, "Johēs de Eyck me fecit, aplevit año 1439." Bought by M. V. Ertborn, in 1838, of the curate of Dikkelvenne, in Flanders.

This picture answers to the description of the following, in the inventory of pictures belonging to Margaret of Austria, at Malines, in 1524, "Un petit tableau de Nostre Dame tenant son enfant lequel tient un petit paternostre de corail en sa main, forte antique, ayant une fontaine auprès elle et deux anges tenans aux drapt d'or figuré derrière elle."—*De Laborde, ut sup.*, p. 26. 0.19 metres by 0.12, French measure.

A copy of this picture, said to be by Van Eyck himself, has been lately discovered in a village church near Nantes, and purchased for seventeen francs.—*De Lab., Les Ducs de B., ut sup.*, Introd. vol. i. p. L.

inspired after a larger picture at Cologne, painted, we believe, by the celebrated Wilhelm, of more than life-size, and with a nature and nobleness of expression, a tenderness of feeling, which even John Van Eyck was not successful in imparting. Sentiment and grace are peculiarly a feature of Wilhelm and his school; and when we trace the influence which his teaching exercised, and his pupils afterwards received by mingling with the Flemings, the qualities and faults which mark his manner may be more particularly dwelt on. The picture of Cologne represents the Virgin standing in a niche, and holding to her breast the infant Christ, whom she affectionately presses, leaning her head forward towards it with beautiful benignity.¹ Not only has John Van Eyck taken his inspiration from this composition, but he sought, without success, to give the draperies that easy, simple flow, which characterises Wilhelm. The same may be said of another panel, now in the Stædel Gallery, in Francfort,² representing a Virgin and Child. Here, however, the figure is seated beneath a dais, instead of standing; but the sentiment and manner are of the same period as that of Antwerp.

A pretty picture, authenticated by a signature, is the tryptic of the Dresden Gallery, where the Virgin and Child are supported on one side by the Archangel Michael, and on the other by Saint Catherine; whilst the obverse represents the Annunciation, in the same

¹ In the Seminary at Cologne.

² This picture is from the collection of the late King of Holland. It is called the Virgin of Lucca, having been of old in the gallery of the Duke of Lucca. Not catalogued. Wood, height $23\frac{1}{2}$ by $17\frac{1}{2}$.

sentiment, though not in the exact form of the Agnus Dei of St. Bavon.¹

Another panel which may be mentioned here is the Annunciation of the Virgin, now in the possession of the Emperor of Russia. The Virgin is represented kneeling before a desk in the interior of a temple adorned with columns, the capitals of which are elegantly carved. The Holy Ghost descends towards her, and the words "Ecce Ancilla" are inscribed on a scroll. On the left, the Angel Gabriel kneels, and holds in his left hand a sceptre, pointing with his right to the Holy Ghost, and uttering the words, "Ave gratiâ plenâ."²

Another smaller panel, representing the Virgin enthroned and leaning her head over the infant Christ, was lately in the hands of Mr. Nieuwenhuys. In the upper portion of the picture are the words—

"Domus Dei est et porta cœli."

Below—

"Ipsa est quam preparavit
Domus filio divi mei."³

The noblest of John Van Eyck's great works, commanding our attention, by its importance as a composition, and the splendour of its design and execution, is the altar-piece of the Santa Trinita Museum of Madrid. Antonio Ponz saw this picture in 1786, in the chapel of San

¹ No. 445, Dresden Gal. Cat. 2' by 2', Austrian measure. The Virgin is standing, whilst in the Agnus Dei she kneels.

² Painted, according to tradition, for Philip the Good, and destined to adorn a monument of Dijon. In 1819 it was transferred from Dijon to Paris, and sold to the King of Holland. It was afterwards purchased for the Emperor of Russia, for 5,375 florins (about 537*l.* 10*s.*) Wood, 33 in. by 12 $\frac{3}{4}$.

³ Wood 20 $\frac{3}{4}$ by 11. Bought by M. Nieuwenhuys for 800 flor. (80*l.*)

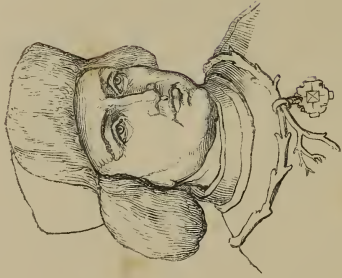
Jeronymo at Palencia, and described it as follows in his "Viage :"¹ "Divers chapels of the church of Palencia contain upon the altars a species of oratory, before which it is the custom to celebrate the mass. In that of St. Jeronymo I saw a painting of singularly fine preservation and infinite completeness, which struck me as superior to any that can be seen in the ancient German style or manner of Durero, as my knowledge of the works of this celebrated master enabled me to know. It is extremely difficult to understand the composition or what it represents on a superficial examination ; but it seems to mean the accomplishment of the prophecy, the destruction of the synagogue and the foundation of the law of Grace. On one side is a priest of the old creed with a broken standard, and divers doctors or rabbins, with sad countenances. On the other are the doctors of the Greek and Latin Church. Above, the Holy Trinity is visible ; and, on each side, the Virgin, St. John the Baptist,² and other figures. A small stream contains the wafers of the host, which flow into a fountain, and other allegorical subjects are represented which need not be mentioned. This is a rare and excellent painting, of which I have seen some copies in Castile ; very far, however, from rivalling in completeness this remarkable piece."

This splendid altar-piece, which seems to have been carried, after Ponz's time, from Palencia to Segovia, where

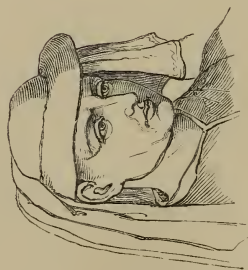
¹ Antonio Ponz, *Viage de España*. Madrid. 10°. 1785—87. p. 145. vol. xi.

² Ponz appears to have mistaken St. John the Evangelist for St. John the Baptist. The figure represented is in the act of writing in the book upon his knees. An ink-horn hangs at his girdle. These do not indicate the Baptist, but rather the Evangelist.

a bad copy of it still exists, is exactly similar in spirit and composition to the *Agnus Dei* of St. Bavon, and finished in the style and manner which characterised that period of the life of John Van Eyck; and though it has been damaged by repeated moving and repairs, is a fine outpouring of his genius. The subject is, in fact, the triumph of the Greek and Latin Church over that of the Jews; the field of victory being a mediæval court, of which the centre is a spire, in the pointed style of St. Laurent of Nuremberg,—the purest form, perhaps, in which that architecture has been exhibited,—the filmy tracery of whose numerous spindles darts into the air with wondrous elegance, in all the glory of profuse and chosen ornament. This graceful spire, of open tracery, forms a dais, in which is the throne from whence the Saviour contemplates the victory; whilst the Virgin Mary and St. John the Evangelist, in the attitude and vestments consecrated to them, sit upon each side. The Lamb is at the Saviour's feet, and the symbols of the four Evangelists are on the throne, from the foot of which seem to flow the crystal streams of the fountains of grace. The shallow current runs clear and limpid, and crowded with the wafers of the host down three successive steps or planes into which the picture is divided, then falls in tiny jets from a Gothic fountain on the foreground. Two light pointed spires also of open work, in whose airy spaces are depicted angels, flank the throne, and give symmetry to the scene which they enclose. The sacred choristers sing their glorious psalms beneath the Saviour, sitting in a flowery meadow, yielding strawberries in plenty. The fountain separates the Greek and Latin Church from that



HUBERT VAN EYCK



JOEN VAN EYCK

From the Altar-piece in the Santa Trinita Museum at Madrid.

of Moses. A pope with the tiara triumphantly points to the wafers of the host, and holds the flag of hope; his followers,—a cardinal, at whose feet an emperor is kneeling, a bishop, and others in secular costume, foremost amongst whom we notice Hubert and John Van Eyck—looking gravely on. The figure of the former is on the left of the group, kneeling in an attitude of adoration, clothed in a red mantle turned with grey fur, a blue bonnet lined with fur on his head. An order hangs over his shoulder, and a belt keeps in the folds of his dress. The features are similar to those of Hubert in the altar-piece of St. Bavon. The figure of the latter stands somewhat in rear on the extreme left. The dress is black, and the head is covered with a cap. Here, also, the features resemble those of John Van Eyck in the *Agnus Dei*, but the likeness is not so striking as that of Hubert. Opposite to them are closely huddled the despairing figures of the Jews. The high priest, with the broken staff, turns away his head from the revivifying fountain, although his blindness is depicted by a handkerchief which shrouds his eyes. Another Jewish priest is falling in consternation, whilst a third has taken to his heels, and another runs away with his hand to his ears. A fifth is observed tearing his breast, and the group expresses terror and despair, as ably depicted as is the deep and solemn, yet cheerful gravity of the princes of the Greek and Latin Church.

For power of conception, creation, and distribution, there is no picture of the Flemish school which approaches this, except the *Agnus Dei* of St. Bavon. It is the labour of a single hand, and the figures are all of similar stature, but of proportions less than those of

John Van Eyck, in the central panel of the Agnus Dei. The colour is too powerful for a pupil or contemporary of the painter. Van der Weyden was softer and more pale in colour, and had not this power of expression and design, nor did his mode of grouping in the least resemble that of John Van Eyck. Memling it could not be, for sentiment in him was stronger than expression. The pictures of Petrus Cristus, such as the Virgin in the Stædel Gallery at Francfort, are less powerful in execution, although that painter was most faithful to Hubert's manner. Hugo Van der Goes, with his dark shadows, cannot be the author; and as for Flemish painters in Spain, none could be named in the same breath with the Van Eycks.

The figure of the Saviour in this altar-piece is a repetition of that of St. Bavon, with this exception, that the head resembles the Christ already noticed in the Gallery of Berlin. The choristers have the same round cast of head as the female saints of the first Agnus Dei, and the general tone—the reddish flesh tints—recal to mind the greatest efforts of the master.

A splendid specimen of John Van Eyck's early and most powerful manner is at the Louvre.¹ Chancellor Rollin is there represented kneeling, with a missal, before the Virgin and Child. An angel with splendid wings places a crown upon the Virgin's head. The scene is laid in a chamber of Saxon architecture, with open windows, through which are seen two figures peeping through the apertures of a crenelated tower on a city divided by a

¹ No. 162, Louvre Cat. Wood. 0.66 m. by 0.62. On the border of the Virgin's dress, the words *Exultata sum in Libano*.

river into two parts. The towers and spires are not unlike those of Bruges; but the river and the snow-clad mountains in the distance have led to the belief that the place represented is Lyons. Probably the painter meant to depict Jerusalem. Filhol says that the picture long adorned the sacristy of the cathedral at Autun, and Courtépée adds other information. He says:—"An original picture may be seen in the sacristy of Notre Dame d'Autun, in which the Chancellor Rollin, in vestments of ceremony, is represented kneeling at the feet of the Virgin. The background of the picture shows us the city of Bruges in perspective, and more than 2,000 figures, of which the variety and attitudes can only be perceived with the assistance of a magnifying glass."¹ There are, probably, less than 2,000 figures in this picture, but their number is certainly remarkable. The beauty of this picture's finish, and the severity of its manner, make it almost equal to the large productions of Hubert.

The most curiously preserved of the painter's works is that which Vasari describes as having been sent to King Alphonzo at Naples, by Van Eyck himself.² This, amongst other panels, perhaps, found its way to the south of Italy through the Lombard merchants who traded with those parts. It now hangs in the church of Santa Barbara, in Castel Nuovo, at Naples, behind the altar. The subject represents the Adoration of the Magi, and was considered for many years as the production of Zingaro or the Donzelli,

¹ Courtépée, *Descrip. Hist. et Topogr. du Duché de Bourgogne*, vol. iii. p. 451.

² Vasari, *ut sup.*, *Introd. c. 7*, vol. i. p. 163.

because the portraits of Alphonzo and his son had been painted in oil over those of two Magi; but the substitution is curiously explained by a passage in the works of Massimo Stanzioni, a Neapolitan artist, who wrote with dislike of the Flemish painters, assuming that they never had a claim to the fame of painting with improved medium. Amongst other things, he said:—"The picture given by Giovanni (John Van Eyck) to Alphonzo the First, called the picture 'degli tre Magi,' made no great noise in Italy; and this is so far true that the figures were restored by Il Zingaro and the Donzelli, with many things that had been spoiled in the carriage; when they took occasion to repaint upon the faces of the Magi the portraits of Alphonzo and his son."¹

This picture has, undoubtedly, received some damage, but it still retains the traces of the Flemish manner, and of the hand of John Van Eyck. It is one of the few productions of the master which survives in Italy.

A very fine and authentic piece by John Van Eyck is in the possession of the Rothschild family in Paris. The Virgin, standing under a richly embroidered canopy, holds in her arms the Infant Jesus, who is blessing a Dominican kneeling before him. A female saint stands by, and a nun holds the Virgin's crown. A distant landscape representing a town, a river, and a bridge, is seen through the aisles.²

Another authentic picture by John Van Eyck, is the property of a gentleman at Antwerp. It represents the

¹ *Dominici, Vite dei pittori scultori Napolitani*, p. 205, 8vo. Naples, 1840—8. Stanzioni was born in 1585.

² Wood, 14 in. by 19 in.

Holy Women going to visit the tomb of Christ, whose Resurrection is announced to them by the angels. Three guards sleep at the foot of the tomb, and the numerous details of their armour are given with extreme care. The scene of the picture is a rich landscape, with an imaginary view of Jerusalem in the distance.¹

Johanna Schopenhauer, an enthusiast in art,—a friend of Goethe,—describes a picture of the Last Day at Danzig, which she assigns to John Van Eyck, but which is now attributed to Van der Goes. It represents the Saviour, with the Virgin Mary and St. John by his side, and beneath them the Archangel with the scales of Justice in his grasp—the wicked going down to perdition on one hand, and the righteous proceeding to heaven through the aisles of a Gothic edifice. The manner in which this picture found its way to Danzig is strange enough. The Chronicle of Schöppen says that, in “1473, one Pael Venecke, a privateer of Danzig, carried a Dutch galley in which this celebrated piece was found.” It was placed in the church soon after, and considered as a miraculous prize.² The date of 1467 appears on the panel; but still M^{me}. Schopenhauer did not hesitate to class the picture amongst the finest of Van Eyck’s, founding her judgment on its resemblance to the St. Luke of the Munich Gallery.³ She did not know that this last mentioned picture was by Van der Weyden. Passavant, on a first view, believed that it was by Ouwater; being, as

¹ Wood, 2½ feet by 1½. We owe to the kindness of our friend, Otto Mündler, the notices of these two pictures.

² Hirsch, quot. by Passavant. Kunstblatt, No. 32, 1st July, 1847.

³ No. 42, Cab. III. of Munich Gallery. Wood 4' 4" by 3' 5" 6".

he thought, like the Descent from the Cross in the Vienna Gallery, attributed to Van Eyck.¹ But, on a second visit, he leans to the belief that the picture is by Memling.² It was necessary to give these details, as we had not visited this Danzig altar-piece.

Dr. Waagen attributes to John Van Eyck the Virgin and Child of the Doria Gallery, known there under the name of Duerer; and two portraits, male and female, in the gallery of Count Demidoff in Paris. He also describes a Marriage of St. Catherine in possession of a picture-dealer, M. Weber of Antwerp, signed "Joanes Van Eyck." Opposite St. Catherine, who holds a sword, is another female saint and St. Ursula. M. Verhelst's collection at Ghent contains a large-sized copy of the same picture.

Dr. Waagen also assures us that M. Nieuwenhuys, of Brussels, had an Annunciation by John Van Eyck, much in the style of painting of the Virgin of La Pala at Bruges, and describes a copy of the same picture in the house of M. Joly de Bammeville in Paris. We have not seen the first of these pictures. The second was sold at the death of M. de Bammeville in 1854, and bought by M. Nieuwenhuys. It has all the character of a picture by John Van Eyck.³

The sacerdotal ornaments made by order of Philip the Good, for the Chapter of the Golden Fleece, are now preserved at Vienna; and Dr. Waagen describes them as being adorned with many figures, drawn, he doubts not, from the cartoons of John Van Eyck.⁴

¹ Passavant, *Kunstblatt*, No. 10, 1841.

² *Ibid*, No. 32, 1847.

³ Dr. Waagen, *Kunstblatt*, 1847, Aug. 24.

⁴ Wood, 10½ in. by 8.

Facio relates that a remarkable tryptic was preserved in the palace of Alphonzo, in which the Annunciation was represented with St. John the Baptist and St. Jerome on each wing, whilst on the outer side were portraits of the donor, Baptista Lomellinus, and his wife.¹ Of this tryptic no trace remains. Sansovino describes an altar-piece in the church of Santa Maria di Servi at Venice, containing the Adoration of the Magi, of which nothing further is known.²

There are two pictures mentioned in the inventory of Margaret of Austria, as forming part of her gallery at Malines in 1524: a portrait of a lady,³ "accoustrée à la mode du Portugal," in a red habit, turned with sable, and, above her, a figure of St. Nicolas. The picture was called "La Belle Portugaise," and was probably one of those which John Van Eyck produced at the time he went to Lisbon. The inventory of 1516 describes this picture as being painted by Johannes (Van Eyck), and given to the Regent by "Don Diego."⁴ The same inventory also contains "a picture of Our Lady and the Duke Philip, which came from Millardet, covered with satin . . . done by the hand of Johannes."⁵

Two other pictures are also mentioned as by "Maistre Jehan" the painter, one of which is the Virgin, and the other Monseigneur de Ligne.⁶ All these figures are at present not discoverable.

¹ Facio. (Bart.) *De Viris Illustribus*, 4to. Florence, 1715, p. 46.

² Sansovino (*Descrizione di Venezia*). Ven. 1580, p. 57.

³ De Laborde, *ut sup.*, p. 24.

⁴ Le Glay, *ut supra*.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ De Laborde, *ut sup.*, p. 31.

Notwithstanding the small demand for pictures representing other than sacred subjects, in the fourteenth century, and necessary as it seemed for artists to vary, as best they might, the scenes from Holy Writ or legendary history, which served to ornament the churches or the palaces of the clergy and the nobles, they deigned at times to wander from the heights of their solemnity, and paint profane compositions; productions of which kind met with most success in Italy, where they appear to have been exclusively desired. Frederic of Urbino, the first and only duke¹ of that name, adorned a bath-room with them.² Ottaviano degli Ottaviani, a luxurious cardinal, likewise had some pictures of this kind, in which were women of splendid form emerging from the bath, slightly veiled to hide their sex;—an old woman perspiring in a corner of the room, which showed that the bath was hot; a dog lapping water in a distant landscape; and the never-failing mirror. Other pieces of this kind were to be found in various towns of Italy at the beginning of the sixteenth century. In the gallery of Niccolo Lampognano, at Milan, was exhibited “the Patron and his Agent,” half figures;³ and in the house of Leonico Tomeo, “filosofho,” an Otter Hunt, on canvas, a picture a foot high, with various figures in a landscape.⁴ The most curious of these pictures must, however, have been that produced by John Van Eyck for Philip the Good, representing the

¹ Vasari, *ut sup.*, vol. i. p. 163.

² Facio, *ut sup.*, p. 46.

³ Notizie d'opere di disegno nella prima metà del secolo XVI. scritte da un Anonimo.—Ed. J. Morelli. 8vo. Bassano, 1800, p. 45.

⁴ Anonimo di Morelli, *ut sup.*, p. 14. If this picture was authentic, it is Van Eyck's only production on canvas.

world in its spherical shape, pointing out accurately distant sites and places.¹

The unfinished altar-piece of St. Martin's cloister at Yprès is only known by an old copy of it in possession of M. Bogaert Dumortier, at Bruges. It represented, as Vaernewyk informs us, "the Virgin and Child, before whom knelt the abbot of St. Martin's:" The wings, which were unfinished, contained the burning bush, Gideon's fleece, Ezekiel's gate, and Aaron's rod—subjects "executed apparently more by spiritual means than by men's hands."²

Amongst the vast number of pictures which bear the name of John Van Eyck in the catalogues of public and private collections, it is but natural that many should be falsely assigned to that painter. Those who fail to trace a master's hand upon a real picture, are more at fault in giving names to paintings of which the trace is not discoverable in history; and thus we find that, whilst John Van Eyck has been ignored in the noble altar-piece of the Santa Trinita Museum, at Madrid, his name has been attached to pieces not resembling in execution or in sentiment panels of undoubted authenticity. It may seem, indeed, a bold assertion to declare, that the Munich Galleries contain no real picture by Van Eyck; still more so to say, that panels, with the signature and date complete, are false, and only forgeries; yet such, undoubtedly, is the case in more than one instance.

In 1788 a gentleman named Busschere presented to the Bruges Academy a "Head of Christ," apparently

¹ Facio, ut sup., p. 46.

² Vaernewyk, ut sup., p. 133: V. Mander, p. 202.

a fac-simile, though smaller, of that which John Van Eyck produced in 1438, authenticated, as it seemed, by the signature and mark of Van Eyck himself. This head was evidently devoid of all that characterised the master, being a superficial imitation—a cold, hard, and lifeless mask, painted without art or sentiment, and without the broad impasto or the skilful glazings of the original, yet the signature removed all doubt respecting its authenticity; the only question with the critics being as to whether 1440 or 1420 was the real date; those who argued for the latter expressing their firm belief that this must be the very Head of Christ which John exhibited at Antwerp, to the astonishment and pleasure of the Artist Corporation. The signature and date, however, were more suspicious than the picture itself; their tenor, “Johēs de Eyck, inventor, anno 1440, 30 January,” being, at least, unusual. It can scarcely be conceived, indeed, how, for the first time, at fifty-nine, John Van Eyck should write himself “inventor,” when the fame of his discoveries and talents had gone the round of every country on the Continent, still less that he should paint a picture so little in his own manner, so dull and poor as this, at the very moment when he produced the splendid portrait of his wife. In spite, therefore, of the signature, we do not hesitate to deny its genuineness.¹

The so-called Van Eycks in the Pinakothek of Munich will be found elsewhere. St. Luke painting the portrait of the Virgin,² and the Adoration of the Magi, with wings which represent the Annunciation and the Presentation

¹ No. 3, Cat. of Bruges.

² No. 42, Cab. III. Munich Catalogue.

in the Temple,¹ will be classed amongst the fine productions of Van der Weyden. The "Offerings of the Magi,"² in the same gallery, must be placed much lower, and as the work of an imitator, both of Memling and Van Eyck, in the early half of the sixteenth century.

The Virgin and Child, with St. Joachim and St. Anne, at Dresden,³ is, perhaps, of the period of Van Eyck, but by an inferior pupil.

The Adoration of the Magi, now in the Brussels' Museum, and lately the property of M. Van Rotterdam, will be found hereafter amongst the works of another pupil of that master.⁴

It will scarcely be necessary to enter into a disquisition upon the origin of the supposed Van Eycks lately exhibited in the Lyversberg Collection at Cologne, which belong to the school of Kalkar. They will find a place elsewhere. There are, however, some pictures which bear the name of John Van Eyck, and which, although they are too feebly executed for the master, are yet worthy of mention.

Two panels attributed to John Van Eyck, in the Madrid Museum,⁵ belong to the school, and recal to mind the manner, of Petrus Cristus.⁶

The portrait of the Cardinal de Bourbon, in the Moritz

¹ No. 35, 36, 37, Cab. III. Munich Catalogue.

² No. 45, Room I. Munich Catalogue.

³ No. 442, Dresden Catalogue, 2' 3½" by 1' 8".

⁴ This is the picture described by Guarienti, in his Dictionary of Painters, as a splendid Van Eyck, dated 1416. No such date is on it now. See also Roscoe's Lanzi, ed. 1847, vol. i. p. 81.

⁵ Nos. 1401 and 1403, Madrid Catalogue.

⁶ See *infra*, p. 119.

Kapelle, at Nuremberg, cannot chronologically be given to Van Eyck.¹

With respect to the Descent from the Cross, in the Belvedere, at Vienna, it is obviously a picture of much later date than the period of the Van Eycks, and belongs to the school of Leyden, about the year 1500. Some of the details of the subject would do honour to any school. The picture, however, is very small.²

The catalogues of the Belvedere Gallery also attribute to John Van Eyck a Madonna with the Infant Christ at her breast. The Virgin is clothed, as usual, in blue, and wears a crown. She stands before a throne magnificently decorated with Gothic architecture. This panel is not by John Van Eyck, but by an imitator of his manner. The flesh tints are grey, and the modelling of its parts lack delicacy of handling. The Infant, more than any other portion of the composition, recalls to mind the manner of Van Eyck. The general style and execution of the whole remind one of the so-called Van Eyck of the late Mr. Rogers' Collection.³

Similar characteristics mark a panel also in the Belvedere representing St. Catherine, erroneously attributed to Hubert Van Eyck, and by the same hand as this imitation of John Van Eyck.⁴

Two panels, which apparently once formed part of a single picture, are separated, and hang in the galleries of

¹ No. 22, Catalogue of the Moritz Kapelle, 1' 1" by 10".

² No. 10, second room, Belvedere Catalogue. Wood, 1' 1" by 8½", Austrian measure.

³ No. 15, Belvedere Catalogue, chamber second. Wood, 7" by 4½".

⁴ See *supra*, p. 82.

Lord Ward and Mr. Baring. The first is a scene in the interior of a cathedral, where a priest is elevating the host before a pious crowd.¹ The outlines of the figures are firm, but there is much monotony in the execution. The parts most worthy of commendation are the architecture and accessories. There is a strong contrast visible between the red shadows and the pale lights. On the back of the panel is a chiaro-scuro figure of a bishop. The second panel represents St. Giles, in a landscape, extracting the arrow from the back of his favourite fawn. A prince, attended by a bishop, kneels as if asking pardon for the death of the fawn. This panel, like that of Lord Ward's Collection, is not by Van Eyck, but by an imitator of his manner, after his death. In the movement of the figures, the design, and the form of the hands, which are short and contracted, the two pictures are similar. The subject of St. Giles is painted with great body of colour, and is somewhat cold in tone. This is, perhaps, ascribable to the removal of the reddish tint which covered the picture, as was the custom amongst Flemish painters, and especially amongst the imitators of Van Eyck, who sought to obtain the vigour of colour of their master, without possessing the same means or the same cleverness. Behind this panel, as in that of Lord Ward's Collection, is a chiaro-scuro figure of St. Peter.² We know how the imitators of Van Eyck varied in the style of their productions, and often exhibited two

¹ Lord Ward's Collection, Egyptian Hall. Wood, $23\frac{1}{4}$ inches by $17\frac{3}{4}$ inches, with a monogram behind not unlike a P.

² Now in Mr. Baring's Collection. Sold at Christies' in 1854, from the Collection of T. Emerson, Esq. Wood, $23\frac{1}{4}$ inches by $17\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

different manners in parts of the same picture. We are, therefore, induced to believe that these two pictures are by the same painter, and that they once formed part of one tryptic. We certainly consider them works of the same period, and executed by an imitator of the mode of colouring practised by the Van Eycks.

Amongst a collection of valuable portraits in Stafford House is one which represents a half figure of a man, with a black cap and dark brown habit, showing beneath it a white vest, clasped with a jewel. The figure is painted on a green ground, and has the attitude of one looking out of a window. On the back of the portrait is painted a badge, surrounded by flames, with the war-cry or motto, "*Nul ne si frote.*" The portrait is recognised from this and from an engraving in Montfaucon to be that of Anthony, bastard of Burgundy, natural brother of Philip the Good. Mr. Planché supposes the Bastard to have been between forty and fifty years of age when the portrait was painted; and after considering the dates of his birth and death, comes to the conclusion that the picture was executed between 1465 and 1467,—that is, twenty-five or twenty-seven years after the death of John Van Eyck.¹ These data coincide exactly with those which may be derived from the examination of the picture itself. It is doubtless one of the fine productions of the period subsequent to John Van Eyck. One need but compare it with that of the latter master in the

¹ Planché, *Archeologia*, Appendix to vol. xxvii., who quotes Montfaucon, *Monarchie Française*, p. 142. This portrait, says Mr. Planché, a Polish nobleman said, had formerly belonged to Count Sierakowski, of Warsaw.

National Gallery, and the pictures of Memling, in the late Mr. Rogers' Collection, to come to the conclusion that the "Bastard" is painted by a man combining the style of Van Eyck and Memling.

A small panel in the Lichtenstein Gallery represents also the Elevation of the Host, and is attributed to John Van Eyck; but it has every mark of being a German production of the sixteenth century.

A Virgin and Child, attributed to Van Eyck, in the Wallerstein Collection at Kensington Palace, is more in the style of Memling than in that of the founder of the school of Bruges.¹

Two portraits of Hubert and John Van Eyck, in the Museum of Dijon, are copies of those in the altar-piece at Ghent.²

Of the genuine pictures by the Van Eycks, there are old and valuable copies. That by Coxie of the Agnus Dei of St. Bavon, found its way back from Spain to Belgium, and is now in part at the Hague, in part at Berlin and Munich. Another copy on canvas is at Hadley, near Barnet. A fac-simile is also preserved at Antwerp, of Van Eyck's Virgin and Child, executed for Canon de la Pala, but it is considerably damaged.³

Of one picture intimately connected with the life of John Van Eyck, we have hitherto hesitated to speak; although many circumstances would lead to the belief that it was one of the earliest productions of the master.

¹ Wallerstein Collection, Kensington Palace, No. 53. 1 ft. 4 in. by 11 in.

² No. 225, Dijon Catalogue.

³ No. 7, Ant. Mus. Cat. 1 m. 20 by 1 m. 54.

The signature is dated 1421, previous to which time we possess no panel bearing the author's name. The picture itself, however, does not show indisputable marks of his well-known hand; and we are reduced to conjectures as to the authorship in spite of the apparent authenticity of the signature. Thomas à Becket consecrated by Bishops, is, according to Mr. Dallaway's notes to Walpole, the subject represented; and if the traditions connected with this panel are worthy of belief, the subject was executed by John Van Eyck for the Duke of Bedford, Regent of France, and given by him to Henry V.¹ The date of 1421 coincides with the period of Bedford's rule in France; and additional force is given to the tradition by the well-known fact that Philip the Good, of Burgundy, was father-in-law to the Duke of Bedford, and that consequently a natural connexion might exist between Van Eyck and the Regent.

From the consideration of the traditional authenticity of this picture, in so far as plausible historical data may conduct us, we now turn to that more reliable source which the intrinsic merits of the panel itself may afford. In the interior of a mediæval church a solemn ceremony is proceeding. A bishop, supposed to be no less a personage than Thomas à Becket, is in the act of receiving consecration, standing in pontifical robes, and joining his hands in prayer. A priest, kneeling before him, holds up an open book; whilst three bishops, also in pontifical robes, surround him. Of these, two on each hand are placing the archiepiscopal mitre on his head. On the

¹ This picture, painted on panel, is at Chatsworth, the Duke of Devonshire's palace.

right of this group a king looks on, with crown and sceptre to mark his rank, and numerous attendants. This king is supposed to be Henry II. On the left of the principal scene are crowded groups of inferior clergy. Above the bishops hangs a canopy of an oval shape, on the borders of which are emblazoned, alternately, a coat of arms and two keys crossed. Behind the canopy a green cloth is suspended; whilst from the canopy itself hangs a medal, bearing a figure in its centre; then a crown or mitre, with another medal in the midst,—and, lower still, the emblem of the Holy Ghost, a dove encircled by rays of light, floats above the head of the bishop. The scene is viewed from under an arch of the same style as the interior edifice, painted on the panel, at the base of which the following inscription appears:—

JOHĒS-DE-eyCK-FELIT * ĀÑO - ḡCCCC - ŽĪ-
 30 - OCTOBRIS.

This picture, of the utmost importance, as showing Van Eyck's method of painting in oil, as far back as 1421, seriously disappointed our expectations. It was evident that the heads of all the figures had been in a great measure repainted, probably at a distant date, when the panel received repairs, now distinctly visible. But the composition is faulty, and the figures marshalled above each other contrary to all the sound rules of art. Add to this, the bad arrangement of the dove and rays, and the crown or mitre with the medal in the midst, all of which are so clouded by age as to be almost invisible. The dais which covers the whole, and the mass of the

background, exhibit an absence of linear and aerial perspective, the latter one of the chief qualities of John Van Eyck. Of all the parts just mentioned, perhaps the dais alone is of the fine-toned red which characterises similar ornaments in other pictures of the master. But the figures do not stand as we are accustomed to see them, and they are long and thin, without that dignified bearing so remarkable in the "Married Couple" of the National Gallery, and other capital productions of the painter. They remind us more of Van der Weyden than of Van Eyck; their position, thinness, and rigidity being more characteristic of the followers of the master, than of the master himself. The utmost difficulty is encountered on the examination of the picture. The heads of the figures baffle all judgment, in consequence of their being repainted.

But were we to hazard conjecture, it might be said that the part most like Van Eyck, as regards character of features, is the countenance of the figure near the king, and to the right of the archbishop; and amongst the clergy, that on the left, bearing the cross. The remainder have indubitably the Flemish type, but not positively that peculiar to John Van Eyck. Whatever portions of the original design may remain, there is little to be seen of the original colour, which now appears reddish, dark, and monotonous, probably in part because of retouching. But from whatever cause this may be, we cannot discover the fine qualities remarkable in the great productions of the Lamb. Even in parts of the vestments we fail to find the force and vigour of colour to which we are accustomed, and in the dais alone it is slightly to be

traced. These remarks are not less applicable to the details than to the mass of the picture—the figures sinking under the weight of their long clothing, which falls in folds of that angular and unnatural fashion which is the failing of many followers of Van Eyck.

In truth, had it not been for the signature of this panel, we should never have suspected it to be a production of the great Flemish master. We should have conceived it to be the feeble effort of an old painter, and not even the early picture of a promising artist; for in the latter one generally finds simplicity of composition, combined with poor or timid execution, and here are rather the failings of a man old in the exercise of his profession. This picture, indeed, is inferior not only as regards colour, but as regards design and composition, to the *Petrus Cristus* of 1417. In 1420 Van Eyck had already excited the admiration of the artists of Antwerp, by the beauty of the picture exhibited to them; nay, so intense and so general was this feeling, that the mass gave the invention and perfection of oil-painting to him. It is difficult to conceive so much enthusiasm, if the performances were no better than this of 1421. The conclusion we feel inclined to come to, supposing the signature genuine, is, that the picture was begun by Van Eyck, and finished at a later period by some other Flemish painter. We know that Van Eyck signed his name to pictures long before they approached completion; and we have a sufficiently striking example of the fact in the picture of *St. Barbara* of the Antwerp Gallery, which, though uncoloured, is still signed by the painter. It is for these reasons that we class this amongst the uncertain pictures of John Van Eyck.

It has been said that Margaret Van Eyck was more likely to have devoted herself to miniatures than oil-paintings. It has been remarked also, that the name of the sister of the Van Eycks was not found attached to any pictures; but it will, we hope, not be considered presumptuous to mention certain miniatures which bear the impress of the manner of the Van Eycks, and which may be due to the pencil of their sister. The Missal of the Duke of Bedford, at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, is the work we refer to.¹ The miniatures which it contains have not only the character of works by the Van Eycks, but resemble some of their pictures. The largest and finest of them cover the whole page of the Missal; and in these such a resemblance is discoverable, as might almost cause us to assign them to John; but the merit is not great in all, some lacking character, whilst others lack vigour of colour. Some are executed in a cold and monotonous tone, and differ from the rest in the manner of depicting drapery, the vestments flowing in the first, and angular in the last. The smallest miniatures, which are the capitals, are inferior to the rest, and were painted also by various hands. It may not be far wrong to suppose that the best of these miniatures are by Margaret Van Eyck, painting under the direction of her brother.

A small number of pictures are attributed to Margaret Van Eyck, which, albeit inferior to those of her brother, yet have some likeness of style to them. The principal merit of these pictures consists in the accurate and diligent care with which they are laboured. They are remarkable for coldness of tone, and want of power in

¹ Breviarium Sarisberiens, No. 273, MSS.

the execution. They lack character, vigour, and expression; wants which are more likely to be found in a miniature painter of that time than in any other artist. An example of our meaning may be found in the Wallerstein Collection at Kensington Palace, in a picture attributed to Margaret Van Eyck, representing the Virgin and Child.¹

¹ Wallerstein Collection, Kensington Palace, No. 54. On wood, 8 inches by 6 inches, Engl.

CHAPTER V.

PUPILS OF HUBERT AND JOHN VAN EYCK.—PETRUS CRISTUS
AND VAN DER MEIRE.

WHEN Hubert and John Van Eyck took up their residence at Bruges and Ghent, they found their art established in those cities under rules and regulations common to other guilds. Young aspirants to celebrity were bound apprentices in this as in every other trade ; and thus the painter's sanctuaries, as we may call them, were shrouded from public view with the same success as those of architects or glass painters. Artists thus preserved amongst themselves the knowledge of improvements, which became the envy of foreign craftsmen, whilst the secrets of manipulation were committed to those alone who had an interest in keeping them.

It was by this means alone, and not by affectations of concealment, that these secrets were preserved. They justify Vasari, who remarked that Giovanni Van Eyck divulged them only in old age ;¹ and Van Mander, who asserted that the secret of oil-painting was preserved from Italian painters till Antonello came to Bruges.² It is true, however, that Van der Weyden first brought to central Italy the secrets of oil-painting, and communicated them to artists when Antonello is said to have returned to Venice. In the meanwhile, a number of apprentices and pupils had spread the teaching of the Flemish masters throughout the Netherlands.

¹ Vasari, *ut sup.*, vol. i. p. 163.

² Van Mander, p. 202.

Petrus Cristus, or Christophsen, the first of these, was born about 1393, and is called by the Italians Pietro Christa.¹ He was the first to follow John Van Eyck in the practice of oil-painting, and received, no doubt, the lessons of the elder brother also, whose style he followed much more faithfully than that of John. He painted, in 1417, a Madonna and Child, which for grace may rival John, and for power Hubert, remarkable for being the oldest picture of the school, and executed previously to any of the authentic works of Hubert or of John.

From Bruges he went to Cologne, the seat of a noble school of art, degenerating into prettiness, which changed his manner. Some traces of his stay there, in 1438, are still preserved. He soon returned to Flanders, however, where he seems to have resided alternately at Bruges and Antwerp. In 1450 he was member of the painter's brotherhood of St. Luke, at Bruges;² and in 1451 he painted the well-known altar-piece of Mr. Oppenheim's Collection at Cologne, for the Antwerp guild of goldsmiths. He then obtained the patronage of the Count d'Etampes, who gave him a commission for some works at Cambrai. A supernatural degree of sanctity was then attached to pictures of the Virgin, said to be produced by one of the apostles. A picture of this kind was brought from Rome to Cambrai in 1451, and Cristus was chosen to make copies of it. He produced three; and one of them is still preserved in the hospital of Cambrai.

¹ Guicciardini calls him Pierre Creste. Guicciardini trad. Pierre Dumont, Descr. de tous les pays Bas. 8vo. Amst. 1641. From the original published in 1566, p. 124.

² He is there called Pierre Cristus. A painter of the same name, Bart. Cristus, appears on the register for the years 1470—80.

The original is even now considered to possess peculiar sanctity, and is carried in procession every year with much parade and ceremony.¹

Cristus returned a few years after to Cologne, and by degrees fell into exaggerated imitation of the Rhenish manner. His name appears in the chronicle of Michael Mörkens, who mentions an altar-piece in a chapel called the Holy Angels, belonging to the convent of Carthusians in that city, which was finished by a painter named Christophorus in 1471. Cristus and Christophorus may be the same artist, but proof is difficult, because the picture thus described is lost.²

The first production from the pencil of Cristus is the finest extant, the last which he composed, the feeblest. Retrograding with the painters of Cologne, he became weaker as he advanced in years. A pupil of Hubert Van Eyck, he had some features peculiar to John. He was, however, inferior to the elder in colour and design, and feebler than the younger in sentiment and spirit. He used his colours freely, but of a sombre and untransparent hue. When in his later years his manner changed under the influence of the school of Cologne, he chose to imitate the least agreeable features in the pictures of the master of the Dom, preferring them to the works of

¹ Actes Capitul. de Cambrai. ap. De Laborde, ut sup., vol. i. Introd. p. cxxvi. "Concluserunt domini imaginem b̄e. V̄gs. quē legavit M̄gr. Fursens du Bruille, archid. Valenchem ponenda esse in capella St̄e. trinitat." (Sitting of August 13, 1451.)

² "Ad requisitionem illustris diu comitis de Stampis, Petrus Cristus, pictor incola Brugen. Tornacen. Dioc. dep̄xit tres imagines ad similitudinem illius imaginis b̄e. Mar et Sanct̄e Virg. quē in cappella est trinitat. collocata." (Sitting of April 24, 1454.)

Wilhelm, whose graceful and noble inspirations were less to his mind than the pretty but more material forms of the later painter. Not so John Van Eyck, who, when he took an inspiration from the school, chose it from the nobler painter, giving an example which, at a later period, Memling followed with advantage.

The picture of 1417, which represents the Virgin playing with the Infant Christ upon her knee, and offering him flowers, with two full-length figures of St. Jerome and St. Francis at its sides,¹ shows the painter to have been completely Flemish. His tones, though sombre, were powerful; his outlines somewhat hard. His flesh tints, though dark in shadow, were not unpleasant.

The same characteristics are observable in a picture of the Madrid Museum, divided into four compartments, representing the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Birth of our Lord, and the Adoration of the Magi. Each of these subjects is in a Gothic arch, carved with subjects from the Passion. In some of the figures we trace a resemblance to those in a Last Judgment of Cristus, at Berlin, but their colouring and execution are more akin to the picture of Francfort. Unfortunately, the panels have been somewhat injured by age.²

St. Elisius, offering the ring to a youthful couple, now in the possession of Mr. Oppenheim, at Cologne, taxed the powers of Cristus, as compositions of a large size generally taxed the Flemish painters of the fifteenth century, not

¹ No. 402, Stædel Gallery, Francfort. Purchased from the Aders' Collection, signed, "Petrus Xpr̄. me fecit, 1417." Wood, 16" 3'" by 15" 9'", Austrian measure.

² No. 454, Madrid Museum Catalogue. Wood, 2 feet 10 inches 6 lignes by 3 feet 10 inches, Spanish measure.

perhaps to a great extent, but sufficiently to make the effort visible, betraying symptoms of decline in his powers. Marked by hard outlines, and a tone more sombre and opaque than usual, its disagreeable features are rendered striking by its size.¹

The picture of 1451, more ambitious in subject than the last, is similar in scene and composition to the altar-piece at Danzig. The Saviour, surrounded by saints, presides in an exalted seat over the Last Judgment, the Archangel weighing the righteous and unrighteous in a balance. Beneath the latter are represented, as usual, the tortures of the condemned. The companion to this panel includes two scenes from Scripture,—the Annunciation and the Birth of our Lord. The latter are productions of a less pleasing description than are the previous efforts of the master, and exaggerate the defects already noticed. The Virgin, no longer in the same attitude as she was usually represented by the Flemings, recalls to mind, by rotundity of head and a fashion of turning the hair round the ear, the graceful productions of Stephen of Cologne. But in these, as in the draperies, *Cristus* lacks the elegance of the master of the *Dom*.²

The Last Judgment comprises all the disagreeable features of *Cristus*' style, with general feebleness of composition, and frightfully imaginative monstrosities adorning the infernal regions,—a prelude, apparently, to the exaggerated vagaries of Jerome Bosch.

¹ Signed, "Petr̃. Xpĩ. me fecit a^o. 1449."

² No. 529A, and 529B, Berlin Catalogue. Signed partly on one wing, partly on the other, "Petrus Xpĩ. me fecit anno domini 1452." Wood, 4 ft. 7 z. by 1 ft. 9½ z., Prussian measure.

The Archangel in the last-mentioned composition is repeated in a panel of the Belvedere Gallery at Vienna, and classed amongst the works of unknown painters. It is, without doubt, a copy by Cristus himself.¹

The "Portrait of a Lady of the Family of Talbot," now in the Berlin Museum, is less authentic; its soft and clear tones differing from the known examples of the painter's manner.² Nor would it be fair to assign to him the San Jeronimo in the Antwerp Gallery, which, bearing no mark of his style, seems rather to be a feeble production of the Flemish school, at a later period.³

Two or three pictures in Cologne, forming part of the ex-Lyversberg collection, were attributed to that Christophorus who painted the altar-piece of the Carthusian convent; but this appears to have been done without good authority. It is enough to state that these compositions are of a much later date than Petrus Cristus, and appear to be the work of a painter having the faults peculiar to the secondary schools of Westphalia in 1500, and caricaturing the manner of Lucas of Leyden, whose name has been given to pictures in that style in various galleries.

The Madrid Museum contains a representation of a clerical functionary of Cologne in prayer, attended by St. John the Baptist, who holds the Lamb and book. The Virgin, close by, sits on a couch.⁴ The picture, attributed

¹ No. 76, room second, Belvedere Catalogue. 1' 6" high by 11", Austrian measure.

² No. 532, Berlin Cat. Wood, 11 z. by 9 z. On the frame, no longer there, was said to be the inscription, "Opus Petri Christophori."

³ No. 9, Antw. Cat. Wood, 0.29 m. by 0.19 French measure.

⁴ Nos. 1401—1403, Madrid Catalogue. Signed "Año milleno C.

to Van Eyck, is rather after the manner of Petrus Cristus, whose hard outlines are here visible. The damage done to the panel increases this last-mentioned defect. The head of the Virgin, round, after the fashion of the painters of Cologne, shows the study of their school; whilst the lengthy extremities are characteristic of the scholars of John Van Eyck. The legs of St. John the Baptist are designed with truth, notwithstanding their exaggerated thinness. Another feature, which appears to be a reminiscence of the Van Eyck school, is that of the convex looking-glass, the chandelier, and furniture, which are entirely of Flemish character. This panel most resembles that of St. Elisius—in those parts, at least, which are not too much damaged.

Were it on any real evidence that the name of Gerard Van der Meire is given to three or four bad pictures at Ghent, Antwerp, and elsewhere, we should have little reason to congratulate Hubert Van Eyck upon the education of this pupil. Nothing can well be scantier than the notices of this early painter. Van Mander says, that some short time later than John Van Eyck, Gerard Van der Meire lived at Ghent;¹ and a manuscript chronicle of the fifteenth century speaks of him as the disciple of Hubert;² neither of these authorities, how-

quater X̃ter et o. hic fecit—m̃ister Henricus Werlis m̃gr. coloñ." Wood, 3 f. 7 by 1 f. 8, Spanish measure. This signature is much damaged; and where a blank is left are the remnants on the panel of a word.

¹ V. Mander, p. 205.

² Chronique manuscrite du 15^e siècle appartenant à Mr. Delbecq de Gand. *Messenger des Sc. et Arts de Belg.* 1824, p. 132. Passavant, *Kunstreise*, p. 379.

ever, inform us who was Gerard, where he was born, or where and when he died. Both Van Mander and the chronicler, as well as Sanderus, praise his style of painting in no ordinary words. The first describes him as "having an extremely neat handling;"¹ the second says, that "the pearl of the old masterpieces was the 'Maria-bild' in the church of St. John, now St. Bavon, at Ghent, painted by Gerard Van der Méire of that city;"² and Sanderus, that amongst his finest productions was "an image of Lucretia, which was taken from Ghent into Holland, by Livinus Tayarpus, and which passed into the hands of Jacob Ravaert, of Amsterdam, a great admirer of elegant works."³ The portrait of a nun, who died in the convent of the *Œrme Claren* (Ghent), in 1447, is described in the chronicle just referred to as painted by Gerard, and then sent to Picardy.⁴ This is a date which connects the painter with the age of the Van Eycks; but none of the pictures named in history have been preserved; and those to which his name is now affixed are scarcely worthy of a pupil of Van Eyck. The best of them is to be seen in a chapel of St. Bavon, at Ghent, and represents the Crucifixion, with the striking of the rock on one side, and the brazen serpent on the other. The style faintly recalls to mind the school of the Van Eycks; but the panels want atmosphere and distance, as well as sentiment and expression, and skilful design. As regards colour, nothing indicates the study of the first Van Eyck;

¹ V. Mander, p. 205.

² Chronique manuscrite, ut sup., *Kunstreise*, p. 381.

³ Sanderus (*Ant.*) de Gandav. *Erud. clar.*, p. 47. *Antv.* 1625. V. Mander, p. 205.

⁴ Passavant, *Kunstreise*, p. 379.

for it is light and opaque with shadows and mezzotints of blue and grey, and no vigour of chiaro-'scuro. The costumes are those of the fifteenth century, it is true, but singularly angular, minute, and ungraceful in the fold. The general character of the forms is length and rigidity, coupled with meagreness—faults which are but too conspicuous in the body and limbs of the crucified Saviour. The signature, "Ger. Van der Meeren," on these panels, is modern, and apparently added by a restorer of the name of S. Lorent, who notes the period of his labours as 1824.

We have seen a picture in the gallery of Mr. Krüger, at Minden,¹ representing a Carmelite monk, supported by a mitred figure bearing a crozier, which is attributed to Van der Meire. We believe this picture not to have been painted in the manner of the Van Eycks, but in the old method of tempera and oil mixed, which is to be found in the pictures of Broederlain and others of his time. The face of the Carmelite kneeling is soft, and may very properly be marked amongst the happiest efforts of a master, whose rich ornamentations, common to the artists of this school, are worthy of much notice,—the more so as the picture is extremely well preserved.

An altar-piece at Bruges, in the church of St. Sauveur, bearing the spurious inscription, "Meeren, 1500," is in a wretched condition, the painting dropping off in sundry places. The subjects are the Crucifixion, Christ carrying the Cross, and the Descent from the Cross; but their design, sentiment, and colour are inferior to those of the altar-piece at Ghent, and their tone paler and colder.

¹ No. 264, Nat. Gal. Cat. Wood, 2f. 4½ in. by 9 inches.

The galleries of Antwerp and Berlin contain several panels, of which the style and manner are not dissimilar from those of the altar-piece of Bruges. On a tryptic which represents the Carrying of the Cross, the Presentation in the Temple, and Christ among the Doctors, are the Gothic initials D. B. A. S.,¹ which are not indicative of any name in history. This tryptic, together with a dyptic representing the Mater Dolorosa and the Donor,² and two pictures severally containing Christ on the Cross,³ and Christ in the Tomb,⁴ are from the church of Hoogstraaten, and bear no marks of being authentic works of Van der Meire.

The two panels in the Berlin Museum, attributed to Gerard Van der Meire, are an unpleasant Adoration of the Magi, not unlike the pictures of the Antwerp Gallery;⁵ and a Virgin with the Donor; an Abbot, of which the style is more pleasing, and marked by profuse and finished ornaments.⁶

An Annunciation, attributed to a scholar of Van Eyck, in the Madrid Museum, partakes of these characteristics.⁷

A celebrated Breviary in the library of St. Mark, Venice, once the property of Cardinal Grimani, contains miniatures assigned to Memling, Gerard of Ghent, Lieven de Witte, and other painters. Gerard of Ghent is said to have

¹ No. 19, Antw. Cat. The first 0.92 m. by 0.64, French measure. The second and third 0.92 by 0.31.

² No. 20, Antw. Cat. 0.76 m. by 0.60, French measure.

³ No. 21, Antw. Cat. 0.92 m. by 0.65, French measure.

⁴ No. 22, Antw. Cat. 1.03 m. by 0.32, French measure.

⁵ No. 527, Berlin Cat. 1 f. 10 z. by 1 f. 8½ z., Prussian measure.

⁶ No. 542, Berlin Cat. 1 f. 10 z. by 1 f. 8 z., Prussian measure.

⁷ No. 408, Madrid Cat. 2 f. 8 i. 6 l. by 2 f. 6 i., Spanish measure.

executed no less than 125 of these miniatures;¹ and some writers assume that he is identical with Gerard Van der Meire. We doubt whether Van der Meire, the pupil of Hubert Van Eyck, could paint in conjunction with, or in continuation of, Memling. But there were other Gerards natives of Ghent besides him. Horenbaut of that name, whose style is much in the formal and finished one of the early miniaturists, is more likely to be the painter alluded to;² and in this we are the more confirmed by finding, on examination of the miniatures themselves, that those which are not by Memling are of a more modern hand than his. Horenbaut is well known to have lived as late as the year 1533, and is therefore more likely to have been the painter than Gerard Van der Meire. Lievin de Witte, who laboured in the pages of the Breviary, is also undoubtedly an artist of the sixteenth century; and we therefore have no hesitation in rejecting these miniatures as works of Van der Meire.

¹ Anonimo di Morelli, ut sup., p. 78.

² Horenbaut painted long at Ghent; amongst others for Lievin Huguenois, abbot of St. Bavon, a great patron of artists.

CHAPTER VI.

HUGO VAN DER GOES.

OLIVIER DE LA MARCHE, in his *Memoirs*, gives a detailed account of the wedding of Margaret of York and Charles of Burgundy in 1468; saying not only that the ingenuity of mechanics was exhausted in inventing mysteries for the pleasure and amusement of the assembled guests, but that the streets and houses of Bruges, as well as the Palace of the Prince, were adorned with pictures, stretched on frames, painted by the skilful artists of the Belgian cities. Gay festivities, eating, drinking, jousts, and spouting, are the staple of the story told by De la Marche; and he enthusiastically admires everything except that for which we feel a special interest, omitting to name the pictures that gave a transient splendour to the scene.¹ The story of the wedding, and the progress of the new princess from Damme to Bruges, scarcely need repeating here; but a single point regarding it deserves attention. Amongst the rich and noted persons who accompanied Charles were the burgesses and merchants of the city, the various guilds of trade, and merchants of the foreign companies, the wealthiest of whom was Thomaso Portinari, agent of the Medici at Bruges, who rode in the procession at the head of the company of Florentines,

¹ *Memoires de la Marche*, 8vo. Ghent, 1566, p. 524.

attired in the dress of counsellor of the Duke in virtue of his place. "The agents of the Medici," says Comines, "have always had such credit under cover of their name, that it would be marvellous could we believe all that I have heard and seen respecting them. One whose name is Thomas Portunary, I have known to stand as pledge between King Edward and Duke Charles of Burgundy for 50,000 pieces (*escus*) on one occasion, and 80,000 on another."¹ Folco Portinari, father of the Beatrice whose youthful beauty won the heart of Dante, was the founder of Santa Maria Nuova, in Florence, in 1285. He was buried there in 1289, and left to his family the patronage of that foundation.² Thomaso Portinari, the direct descendant of this Folco, is known in fine art history as the patron of Hugo Van der Goes. The wealthy families of Bruges, and the Flemings generally—unable, as we have seen, to adorn their mansions or the chapels which they founded with frescoes, on account of the dampness of the air, and, perhaps, as in the case of Venice, the vicinity of the sea—preferred distemper canvases, which took the place of fresco. Of this kind chiefly were the early productions of Hugo Van der Goes. Vaernewyk describes the churches and the palaces of Bruges as being full of Hugo's pictures in this style;³ and we are told that he produced many for great occasions, such as the installation of Duke Charles, at Ghent, in 1467,⁴ and the wedding of Margaret of York.⁵ On

¹ Mémoires de Comines. ² Reumont, *Kunstblatt*, No. 40, 1841.

³ Vaernewyk, *ut sup.*, p. 133.

⁴ *Messenger des Sciences et des Arts*, *ut sup.*, 1826, p. 128.

⁵ Appendix to Reiffenberg's edition of Barante's *Hist. de Bourgogne*. *Comptes de Fastré Hollet*.

this last occasion he was employed for nearly eleven days, at a salary of fourteen sous per diem, taking a part in the production of what the stewards of the Dukes are pleased to call "les entremetz,"—a word intended, at that period, to denote certain ingenious exhibitions by which the attention of the guests was cleverly engrossed during the removal of the courses.

Although Sanderus says that Hugo was of Bruges,¹ we have documentary evidence, of incontestable authority, to prove that he was born at Ghent.² A person of his name, called Mathias Van der Goes, a member of the Antwerp guild of painters, is supposed to have been a relative of Hugo, whom Vasari calls d'Anversa.³ Van Mander says that Hugo studied under John Van Eyck;⁴ but he formed his manner as much from that of Hubert as from that of John; and the truth may be that he studied under both those brothers. He had the vigour and perfect finish that marked their style, without their noble sentiment, beauty of expression, or knowledge of the human form. Rising to eminence after the death of his master, he shared with Van der Weyden the patronage of the rich Burgundian court, noblesse, and citizens.

He painted for Thomaso Portinari the altar-piece of Santa Maria Nuova, which Vasari mentions as a proof of his ability;⁵ and was besides permanently employed by the corporation of Ghent on those numerous occasions when they displayed their wealth and taste in public ceremonies, as at the Jubilee of 1473, and at the various

¹ Sanderus, *Flandria Illustrata*, vol. i. p. 13.

² Vide infra, p. 132.

³ Vasari, vol. i. p. 163.

⁴ Van Mander, p. 203.

⁵ Vasari, vol. i. p. 163.

festivities which occurred between that and 1480. It is supposed that he retired early to a convent, in which he spent the latter days of his life.¹

Hugo loved the daughter of Jacob Weytens, a gentleman of birth in Charles's time, as Marchantius tells us, depicting her as Abigail, and himself under the garb of David riding on a horse. A bevy of fair damsels accompanied the lady, which Van Mander and De Heere describe as graceful and pretty. Hugo's treatment by the fair Abigail is not recorded by historians, but his retirement and holy vows suffice to tell the tale. He took the cowl in Rooden Clooster, a convent of Augustine monks, near Brussels. There is every reason to believe that he was called to Paris by Louis XI., after his novitiate, to paint the Crucifixion of the chapel of the parliament-house. The only proof connecting Van der Goes with this Crucifixion is the style and finish of the picture; but the scene itself being laid in Paris, and the Louvre being represented in the distance, Hugo, if he painted it, must have come to Paris. Amongst the persons on the foreground are Charlemagne and St. Louis, whose statues were also placed, by order of the king, in the chapel of the parliament.²

¹ *Messenger des Sciences et des Arts*, 1826. *Kunstblatt*, 1826, p. 243.

² "A Robert Cailletel pour employer es ouvrages de maçonnerie, menuiserie, tabernacle, verrières, peintures et autres choses ordonnées estre fait le plus honnêtement et richement que faire se peult en la chapelle estant au bout de la grant salle à Paris ou messieurs le parlement oyent la messe, en laquelle le roy a voulu estre mis et posez les images de Nostre Dame, de Mons. St. Charlemagne et Saint Loys, 1130l. 11 s."—*Compte de Pierre Lailly*, 1479. *De Laborde, La Renaiss. des Arts, ut sup.* p. 54.

There is no improbability in supposing that Louis XI. sent to Belgium for the painter. His desire for a good production was evidenced on more than one occasion. In 1468, journeying to Peronne, he stopped for an hour at Noyon to visit the cathedral. There he saw a very ancient picture of the crowning of Charlemagne, so old and venerable that he expressed a desire to have a copy of it, and he requested that he might have "ung pourtraict de ce pourtraict." The canons, but too anxious to do his pleasure, acceded to his wish, and record the act as follows: "Anno 1468, capitulo facto, die ultima Augusti, declaretur per operarios convocandos expensa pro imagine Caroli Magni collocanda in capella Sancti Eligii, retro chorum in fronte ecclesiæ, et describatum in papyrum pro ostendendo domino regi (Ludovico undecimo) ut ipse petiit et voluit fieri."¹ His confidence in the painters of his country was slight, as we know from his efforts to obtain a good portrait of himself. He first tried Foucquet, a quaint old imitator of the Flemings, who failed. The task was then entrusted to a sculptor, who also failed. Michel Colombe was set aside as well as Foucquet, and Colin d'Amiens was chosen.

"Mestre Colin," says Gaignières, addressing an order from his master to the Amiens' painter, "you must make the portraiture of our sire the king; that is to say, you shall show him kneeling on a flag and his dog near him; let him have his hat between his hands, and let his hands be joined in prayer, and his sword be hanging by his side. Let his *cornet* hang behind his shoulders, showing both its ends. You must let him have, besides, his feet in buskins

¹ Vitet. Notre Dame de Noyon, fol. Paris, 1845, pp. 21, 22.

and not in hosen ; all this as honestly as is possible. Let him be dressed as a huntsman, with the finest face that you can give him, so as he shall be both young and plump, the nose a little long and somewhat high, as you well know, and you must not make him bald. Your order, therefore, must be this :—

The nose aquiline ;
 The hair a little long behind ;
 The collar somewhat low ;
 The order very long, and St. Michael well made out.
 Item, the *cornet* scarfwise ;
 The sword a little short, in fashion of arms.
 Item, the thumbs erect, and the hat well down.”¹

Evidently Louis feared to sit, lest the painter might not make him fat and plump, and might forget he must not make him bald. However, had a Fleming been chosen for the task, he could scarcely hope to have been flattered.

The picture of Van der Goes is still in Paris, in the Cour d'Appel of the Palais de Justice.

In 1478, Hugo Van der Goes was chosen as umpire by the heirs of the painter Stuerbout, to settle what sum they might be entitled to for a picture left unfinished by their father.² He died soon after in the Roodendaele,

¹ Gaignières ap. De Laborde, Renaissance des Arts, ut sup., pp. 59, 60.

² Schayes, Archives de Louvain. “Daer voer hem ende zynen kinderen vergouwen ende betaelt kleft, ter estumacien ende scatingen van eenen der notabelsten scildere die men binnen den lande hier omtrent wiste te vindene die gheboren es van der Stad van Ghendt, ende nu voonechtig es inden Rooden Clooster in Zuemien de Somme van guldens vorscreve III^cXI gul. XXXVI. pl.”

and was buried by his brother Augustines. They placed an epitaph as follows on his grave :—

“ Pictor Hugo v. der Goes humatus hic quiescit
Dolet ars cum similem sibi modo nescit.”¹

The death of Hugo was certainly a loss to the art in Belgium. He had upheld in a great measure the severe and manly style of Hubert, though he lacked the genius and powerful execution of that master. Austere expression, breadth and simplicity, deep and vigorous colour, marked his works, as they mark the masterpieces of Hubert Van Eyck. But he was also known for hardness of outline, a dark system of shadow, a certain want of chiaro-scuro or relief and transparency in his carnations. These were symptoms of decline rather than of progress. He exaggerated one of Hubert's peculiarities,—that of surcharging vestments and accessory parts with ornaments of various kinds ; but a good feature in his manner was the drawing of the human face and head, which, like some masters of his time, he made stout and round ; thus imparting somewhat of a happy though vulgar cast to them. His design was masterly, especially in portraits, or where he sought no ideal, and in the rendering of hands and feet. In his mode of colouring, he wandered sometimes to extremes, being dark and brown in one part, whilst he was clear in light and grey in shadow in another. These two extremes are even found to meet in the various portions of a single picture ; for instance, in the altar-piece of the Portinari in Santa Maria Nuova. This, the painter's masterpiece, was once the ornament of

¹ Sweertius, *Monum. Sepulca^a. Brabantia^e*, 12°. Antv. 1613, p. 323.

the high altar in the church, but is now dismembered, the centre portion being in the left hand aisle, the wings in the right hand aisle.

The conception and composition of the subject are common to Van der Goes and Van der Weyden. The Virgin Mary kneels in adoration before the Infant Christ, whom St. Joseph and the shepherds likewise worship. A choir of angels fills the heavens, the scene being lighted by the rays which emanate from the Infant. Two kneeling angels pray upon one side, whilst five upon the other sing the Sanctus, of which the verses are depicted on their splendid raiment. An ox and ass are in the stable, from whose manger the Infant has been taken, and in the distance is an angel appearing to the shepherds. Nothing can surpass the finish and delicacy of portions of this pleasantly composed and effective picture. The Virgin and the angels have clear and brilliant lights with cool blue shadows, contrasted with dark tones and brown shadows in the faces of St. Joseph and the shepherds. In parts the hands and heads are delicately painted, but the ornamental portion is overcharged. A vase and cups with flowers, besides a number of minutiae, are finished with the care and cleverness of John Van Eyck; the gems, the diamonds, and embroideries with the patience of a Fleming. The splendid preservation of the picture renders it the best example of Hugo's style. The wings are not so perfect. On one of them appear St. Matthew and St. Anthony, with Portinari and his sons before them. On the other, St. Margaret and Mary Magdalen, with Portinari's wife and daughters. Numerous small figures crowd the landscape in both these

wings, the outer sides of which represent the Annunciation in chiaro-'scuro.

The Pitti palace contains a portrait of the same Thomaso Portinari who figures in the altar-piece of Santa Maria, called by local guide-books Folco Portinari.

Florence is the only city where the works of Hugo Van der Goes can be studied with effect. His pictures have been also found in Germany, but not a single one of them remains in Belgium, his native country; another proof, if it were wanted, that Belgian art cannot be studied in the Netherlands.

The sweetest and most delicate of Hugo's works is the Virgin and Child of the Uffizi, where St. Catherine kneeling before the Infant, sitting upon his mother's knee, enthroned beneath a splendid dais, offers him a flower; and another female saint, decked out in all the splendid ugliness of the dresses of the period, appears in adoration. Two beautiful angels hold a crown above the Virgin's head. St. Catherine wears a coronet like that of Hubert's Virgin, and the Infant Christ is clothed in Van der Weyden's manner. Although somewhat hard in its outlines, this picture in some parts exhibits the painter's best attainments. The beauty and delicate shape of the hands and arms, the comparatively simple folds of the drapery, are worthy of the masters of the Flemish school; whilst nothing can be finer than the ornaments of the carpet and the dais, the collars of pearls and diamonds, and the splendid and crowded landscape.¹

A Virgin and Child in the Puccini palace, at Pistoia, is

¹ Gallery of the Uffizi; 2 feet 6 inches 10 lignes by 2 feet 1 inch 8 lignes.

also a favourable example of the master. The Virgin, adored by the donor and donatrix, is surrounded by a glory of angels. As usual with Van der Goes, the Annunciation in *chiaro-scuro* is painted on the outer surface of the wings, and the monogram H. G. is on the panel.

St. John the Baptist in the Desert, a solitary figure, signed by the artist and executed in 1472, is the only authentic panel now to be found at Munich.¹ It is in the painter's dark and vigorous manner; the attitude of the body and the draperies being not unlike Hubert, whilst the landscape by its wildness reminds one of the *Agnus Dei* of St. Bavon. The drawing of many portions of this figure is far from the careful style of Hugo in the pictures of the Florence gallery and church.

Mary lamenting, surrounded by Holy Women, and St. John, in the same gallery, is a dark, displeasing, and doubtful panel.² Still less good is the Annunciation,³ somewhat in the manner of the master.

A Virgin and Child, enthroned beneath a portico,⁴ is of the same character.

The panels at Berlin attributed to Hugo may all be classed as doubtful; for though they bear some traces of his hand, their cold grey shadows and opaque and clouded lights are not unlike attempts at imitating and exag-

¹ No. 105, Cab. VI. Munich Cat. Signed "Hugo V. d. Goes, 1472." Wood, 11" 6''' by 9", Bavarian measure.

² No. 66, Cab. IV. Munich Gal. Cat. Wood, 1' 6" by 1' 2", Bavarian measure.

³ No. 43, Cab. III. Munich Gal. Cat. Wood, 3' 8" by 3' 5", Bavarian measure.

⁴ No. 119, Cab. VI. Munich Cat. Wood, 2' 2" by 1' 7", Bavarian measure.

generating his style. Such, in general, are the characteristics of the "Virgin and naked Child;"¹ "the Annunciation,"² twice repeated; "St. Augustine and the donor, with St. John the Baptist;"³ "Christ in a purple mantle,"⁴ "St. John the Evangelist;"⁵ and a "Head of Christ."⁶

The Saviour, enthroned with the Virgin, and St. John the Baptist,⁷ have no likeness to his works in manner, design, or colour; and in the latter especially the figures are long and thin, which is unlike Van der Goes, and rather after the manner of the pupils of Petrus Cristus.

The Crucifixion of the Cour d'Appel in Paris, depicts the Saviour crucified, and Mary fainting; St. John the Baptist and St. Louis in contemplation on one side, and St. John the Evangelist, St. Denis, and St. Charlemagne standing on the other. A mountainous landscape, with numerous figures in the distance, completes a clever composition, in which the attitudes of the various actors exhibit the style and character of Van der Goes, with a portion of that severity which he gained from Hubert. The outline has the firmness of the latter with the hardness of the pupil. The vestments are covered, as was customary, with quantities of ornaments. A half figure of God the Father is painted in a niche above the crucifix.

¹ No. 529, Berlin Cat. Wood, 2 f. 7 z. by 1 f. 9¼ z., Prussian measure.

² No. 530, Berlin Cat. Wood, 3 f. by 1 f. 11½ z., Prussian measure.
No. 548, Berlin Cat. Wood, 6 z. by 3½ z., Prussian measure.

³ No. 540, Berlin Cat. Wood, 2 f. by 1 f. 5 z., Prussian measure.

⁴ No. 541, Berlin Cat. Wood, 1 f. 3 z. by 11 z., Prussian measure.

⁵ No. 549, Berlin Cat. Wood, 9 z. by 4 z., Prussian measure.

⁶ No. 553, Berlin Cat. Wood, 11¾ z. by 11 z., Prussian measure.

⁷ No. 600, Berlin Cat. Wood, 2 f. 2 z. by 1 f. 2 z., Prussian measure.

In colour this painting is powerful and red, and somewhat lacks *chiaro-scuro*. The Saviour on the Cross is one of the finest portions of it, and may well be called a masterpiece. It is curious to note upon the foreground a dog, a death's head and cross-bones.¹

The Belvedere Museum contains two figures of Adam and Eve, apparently copies from those of the *Agnus Dei* of St. Bavon. They are attributed to Van der Goes, although below the standard of his powers.²

His name is also given, without sufficient evidence, to a *Virgin and Child*, adored by a figure holding a viol.³ This composition, in the Belvedere Gallery, is very much in the spirit of Memling's picture representing the same subject in the gallery of the Uffizi, at Florence. The panel is not remarkable for the delicacy characterising Memling, and appears to be a copy by a pupil of that master. The wings of the picture are separated from the centre composition, and confirm the supposition of these panels being by a pupil of Memling.⁴ St. John the Baptist holding the Lamb, and St. John the Evangelist carrying the Chalice, are copied from the *Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine* at Bruges, or the *Chiswick altar-piece*.

A picture by Van der Goes of the *Madonna and Child* s described as being in the *Bologna Gallery*.⁵

¹ Wood, 3 m. 30 by 2 m. 28, French measure.

² No. 3, second room, Vienna, Belvedere Cat. Wood, 2' 2" by 1' 7", Austrian measure.

³ No. 9, second room, Belvedere Cat. Wood, 2' 2" by 1' 5½", Austrian measure.

⁴ No. 13, second room, Belvedere Cat. Wood, 2' 2", together 1' 5½", Austrian measure.

⁵ No. 282, Bologn. Pinak.

The greater part of Hugo's works in Belgium were destroyed in 1575 by iconoclasts. His pictures in the church of Vasselaere were burnt on the 4th of October in that year.¹ The Story of St. Catherine, two panels, painted for the Carmelites of Ghent, have also perished.² David and Abigail, and the Mariabild, a memorial painting on the tomb of Wouter Gaultier, in St. James of Ghent, have disappeared;³ but the greatest loss appears to be the Crucifixion, or Christ between the Thieves, which long adorned that edifice. It was saved from the grasp of image-burners, but fell soon after into the hands of Calvinists, who took possession of the Church, and laid the subject under a coat of colour, on which they placed the Ten Commandments. The church was afterwards restored to the Roman Catholic worship, and the picture to its original state, but it has since been lost.⁴

Like John Van Eyck and most of the Belgian painters, Hugo Van der Goes was often in request for compositions to be drawn on painted glass. Van Mander tells us of a window in St. James of Ghent, the design of which he made, and which seemed so talented that he doubted whether it was not by John Van Eyck. Such are the remaining traces of a clever painter, whose style and talent were more grandiose than sentimental, and whose compositions possessed more energy than grace.

¹ *Messenger des Sciences Historiques*. Gand. 8vo. 1845, pp. 117—145.

² Vaernewyk, *ut sup.*, p. 100. Van Mander, p. 204.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Van Mander, p. 204.

CHAPTER VII.

JUSTUS OR JODOCUS OF GHENT.

THE earliest records of Justus or Jodocus of Ghent connect him with the teaching of Hubert Van Eyck. But the partial and imperfect nature of the information transmitted to us hardly justifies the conclusion, unsupported as it is by a knowledge of the early works of the painter. Serious difficulties, in truth, beset us in the endeavour to give a connected narrative of his life and labours. Through the whole period of his youth,—during the time of his tuition under Hubert Van Eyck,—and for twenty-five years subsequent to the death of that master,—we are unable to trace the name of Justus, except as the author of a lost picture of the Decollation of St. John the Baptist.¹

But our difficulty ends not here. In 1451, one Justus d'Allamagna lived and laboured in the Dominican convent of Santa Maria di Castello, at Genoa, painting in its cloisters the Annunciation of the Virgin on the wall. Was

¹ “En Jodocus van Gent, discipel van Hubertus van Eyck, een tafereel verbeeldende St. Jans Onthoofdinge.” Extract from Mr. Delbecq’s manuscript, ut sup.—*Passavant, Kunstreise*, p. 381. *De Bast, Mess. des Sci. et des Arts. de Belgique*, 1824, p. 132. “Furono similmente de primi . . . maestro Martino e Giusto da Guanto, che fece la tavola della communion del Duca d’Urbino ed altre pitture.”—*Vasari, ut sup.* vol. i. Introd., c. vii. p. 163. “Jodocus Gandavensis, pict. nobilissimus, Huberti Eyck discipulus.”—*Sanderus, ut sup., De Gand. Erud. Clar.*, lib. ii. fol. 79.



THE ANNUNCIATION.

Mural Picture, by Justus d'Allamagna, in Santa Maria di Castello, at Genoa.

this Justus d'Allamagna the same artist who, during his stay in Flanders, produced the picture of St. John the Baptist? or was he an artist of the same name, coming to Italy, and settling at Genoa for the rest of his days? We are inclined to the latter supposition; although history is silent on this important point. We cannot, it is true, infer from the signature of the picture of Santa Maria di Castello, that the painter was more a German than a Fleming; because the inscription—

“Justus d'Alla-
-magna pinx-
-it, 1451,”—

adds nothing to the argument, as the Netherlands and parts of the Rhine country were called *Alemania* by the geographers of this period; but the information withheld from us by history is of less moment, if from the examination of the picture itself we can come to a conclusion as to the country in which the painter was educated.

The Annunciation of Justus d'Allamagna, in Santa Maria di Castello, deserves a minute and careful description, not only because of its importance as the work of a Flemish or German artist in Italy, but because it is one of the few remaining examples of a tempera picture on the wall.¹ Painted on the side of the cloisters in which

¹ The whole work is 13 palms, about 9 ft. 9 in. square, including the arch which contains the representation of the Eternal. The Annunciation, taken alone, is 9 ft. 9 in. by 7 ft. 6 in. The whole picture is entirely under glass, for its better preservation; portions of it, such as the gold work of the dresses of the two principal figures, being partially effaced, and the blue of the Virgin's dress darkened by age. The landscapes also have become slightly indistinct.

the Dominicans spend their leisure hours, it stands in a brilliant light thrown upon it from an opposite window looking upon the sea. The sacred scene, thrown into three irregular spaces, formed by two slight colonnets, is laid within an apartment seen through a highly ornamented Gothic arch, with an opening in which the figure of God the Father is placed. The Virgin, standing on the right in a pensive attitude, seems to listen. Her head, leaning gracefully towards the angel, is covered with a transparent veil, through which her golden hair shines brightly. A beautiful blue tunic gracefully falling from the head to the shoulders, and surrounded by a nimbus, is fastened below the neck, and opens out to show the hands delicately crossed at the bosom. Then forming full and sweeping folds, it fills the foreground, and impinges on the central space. The inner dress, seen beneath the mantle fringed with golden embroidered letters, is of rich gold stuff. A painted receptacle of stone covered with a red cloth stands at the Virgin's side, and is filled with books. An arch of stones, alternately coloured black and white, opens behind, and golden rays fall upon the figure from the glory that surrounds the Eternal.

The announcing angel, dressed in a gorgeous golden tabard, with broad edges, containing figures of the Apostles, occupies the central and left portion of the picture, and, kneeling at some distance back, holds out one hand, and grasps a delicate mace in the other. The inner dress of white falls in folds on a chequered brown and white floor, leaving bare the naked feet. In a recess stands a basin, above which hangs an ewer. A bird dips

its beak into the water, and a lily in a vase stands on the window-sill. Three open arches permit the distant landscape to appear,—the eye wandering over distant hills, where faint traces of episodes in sacred history may yet be seen. Similar characteristic particularities may be noticed in a landscape opening behind a window on the left. A bright orange-tree impedes a portion of the view ; and on the frame of a high window is a small square card, on which the painter inscribed his name.

The Eternal, looking down from the midst of the carved and fretted work that surrounds him, has the benignant aspect of age—silvery hair and beard. The colonnets which divide the picture are canopied in stone, and form niches on each side of the Eternal, in which are small and expressive figures of saints.

Numerous considerations proceeding from the analysis of this composition lead us to the belief that Justus d'Allamagna was not taught under the particular discipline of Hubert, nor even under that of his brother John Van Eyck. The aspect of the work, it is true, is that of a painting of Flemish character, but with an admixture of peculiarities marking the school of Cologne. The elements of comparison between the great Flemish pictures, executed in oil, and this produced *à tempera* on the wall, are wanting here, and prevent us from entering into the discussion of the question of colour ; because *tempera* does not possess the vigour of tone, choice, and power of contrast, and transparency of medium, which distinguish oil-paintings — and especially those of the Van Eycks ; but if we turn to other considerations in reference to this mural painting—if we examine its finished treatment and

execution—we do not find them differ from tempera paintings on panel ; and we do not, amongst the latter, find any that so nearly approximate, in method and use of colours, as those of the school of Cologne ; whose artists, as we shall have occasion to show, were marked by the nice blending of their tints, the clearness of their lights, the paleness of their shadows, and want of relief and *chiaro-scuro*.

Small scope for remark is to be found in the choice of such a subject as the Annunciation, common to every school of the world ; but the general distribution of this composition, and its combination of figures with low arches, rich in carved ornament and detail, are more characteristic of the Rhenish school, than of that of Bruges. With respect to the character of the figures ; if they are executed with less artistic mastery of form than those of the Flemings, they are marked by a softness and religious sentiment peculiar to the Rhenish school. The figure of the Madonna essentially illustrates this view, being placed in an attitude of considerable grace, and surrounded by draperies which tend to give her elegance of attitude. Nor is the impression thus made diminished by any angularity of fold, such as we too frequently remark in the Flemings. The round and sweet outline and form of the head, the hair covered with a veil, are amongst the pleasing features, and recal to our mind the Virgin of Stephen of Cologne.

The announcing angel, although more in the Flemish manner than the rest of the picture, has a cast of countenance different from those of the Van Eycks, and in some points resembles those of the Rhenish school. The

custom of gilding the vestments was peculiarly remarkable in the painters of the Rhine, and is found in this Justus d'Allamagna.

But we trace Flemish methods and inspirations with more certainty than elsewhere in the background of the picture, which, instead of being a golden surface, surrounded by architecture, is made to represent space and depth by depicting the interior of an apartment, with windows looking out upon landscapes such as we have described as in the Flemish fashion. The painter's knowledge of the science of linear perspective is, however, slight.

We may, finally, come to the conclusion, that Justus d'Allamagna was a painter, partaking of the Flemish and Rhenish manners, and exhibiting the religious sentiment of the latter, combined with the more material tendency of the former to imitate nature. We cannot conceive him to have been a pupil of the Van Eycks, with whose pictures and method this mural painting has nothing to do. We do not believe him to have known the methods of the Van Eycks; because, forty-one years after the alleged discovery of oil medium—namely, in 1451, when Roger Van der Weyden was so well received in Italy in consequence of knowing it—Justus d'Allamagna, had he been Van Eyck's pupil, would have known and practised oils, and would, doubtless, have preferred to exhibit his talent in the new practice, rather than in the old manner of tempera, in which the Italians excelled.¹

¹ Another painter, called Johannes Alamannus, seems to have painted with Antonio Vivarini in 1445, and in 1496. He exhibits somewhat of the Rhenish manner in sentiment and in the nice blending of flesh tints, but especially in the architectural parts of his composition.

It is curious, however, that no other trace of this artist should be found at Genoa. In Paris is a picture coming from that city, exhibited in the Louvre, and divided into three parts—the centre representing the Annunciation; the wings, St. Benedict and St. Augustin, and St. Stephen and St. Angelo.¹ This composition is similar in character, as regards faces and figures, to that of Justus d'Allamagna; but the composition has less his calm and religious manner, than one characterised by another sentiment. The Virgin shrinks tremulously, and supports herself against a column, whilst the angel is represented in the air. The Virgin is dressed in a golden garment, covered with a black drapery. The types of the faces resemble those of the Annunciation at Genoa, and the background is an Italian landscape. The flesh tints are in chiaro-scuro or grey, and unrelieved, so that they really seem unfinished. This is a picture either by Justus d'Allamagna, or by one of his pupils. The Flemish character is less visible in the composition on the wings, which are not by the same painter as the central panel.

There were many painters of Germany, or the Low Countries, at Genoa, in the fifteenth century, to whose names we might turn in seeking for the authorship of the panel of the Louvre. Padre Spotorno, who wrote the literary history of Liguria in 1824, published some interesting facts, illustrating the early school of painting in Genoa. Amongst the men who migrated to Italy in the

¹ No. 258, Louv. Cat. The central panel, 1 met. 56 by 1·07. The panels of the wings, 0 met. 98 by 0·48. This picture formed part of Louis the Eighteenth's Collection, and had been executed for an oratory at Genoa.

fifteenth century, was one Corrado d'Alemania, who lived and laboured at Taggia in 1477. Spotorno supposes, not improbably, that Corrado came to Italy with Justus d'Allamagna, and held a subordinate position in the workshop of that artist, as Memling did in that of Van der Weyden. It was in Taggia that Padre Dom^o. E. Maccari and Lodovico Brea, of Nice, also flourished; and Spotorno conceived it not improbable that these men, who exhibited Flemish tendencies in their works, might be pupils of Corrado d'Alemania; doing so from some resemblance discoverable between the works of these masters. The only picture remaining of Maccari is at Taggia; and of Brea the first known work is as late as 1480. The foreign character of Brea's pictures was noticed by all who saw them. His composition, the attitude of his figures, the hardness of his design and the angular nature of his draperies, his partiality to ornamentation, proclaimed a painter influenced by the Flemings. It is possible that these characteristic features of his style may have been obtained from Corrado, who painted at Taggia in 1477, and Justus d'Allamagna, who painted at Genoa in 1451. Baldinucci and Lanzi, who notice Brea's foreign style, say that he founded the Genoese school; but Spotorno, who searched the records of Genoa, discovered the names of twenty-six painters previous to Brea on the chronological register of the old painters of that city; one, Oberto, having professed the art as far back as 1368. The influence of the Flemings at Genoa did not last. It ceased after Maccari and Brea; and Semino and Piaggio, pupils of the latter, abandoned his manner after

they had seen the pictures of Carlo di Mantegna and Pier Francesco Sacco.¹

No such doubts as those which arise respecting the connexion of the picture at Genoa with Justus of Ghent beset us in considering an altar-piece in Santa Agatha, at Urbino, executed in 1468-74. It was painted by Giusto da Guanto, for the brotherhood of Corpus Christi, and paid for by a charitable subscription raised for the purpose; Federico di Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, contributing his share in the good work. The registers of accounts preserved in the convent furnish full and interesting details of the manner in which the subscription was raised, and the money spent in the production of the altar-piece. One Giovanni da Luca, or Zaccagna, is described as contributing 33 florins and 22 bolognini; Gostino Santucci, three sums of divers amounts; the Duke of Urbino, 15 florins of gold. The remaining sums are not specified; but the expenses of the altar-piece are distinctly stated; 300 florins being paid for its production, and 40 florins 33½ bolognini for the gold leaf of the background.²

¹ See Padre Spotorno (G. B.), *Storia Letteraria della Liguria*, 8vo. Genova, 1824-6.

² "1465. Marzo 31. Giovanni da Luca, altram. Zaccagna, deve dare fiorini 33 e bol. 22. della promessa che fece per la tavola."

"1468. Tre partite pagate per l'elemosyna promessa per la tavola a conto di Battista (di Maestro Gostino Santucci Medico)."

"1474. Marzo 7. Fiorini 15 d'oro dati dal Conte Federico per aiuto della spesa della tavola a Guido Mengaccio per la fraternita."

"1474. Ottobre 25. Fiorini 40 e bologn. 33½, spesi in pezzi 4,700 d'oro battuto per la tavola."

"Adi d° Fiorini 300 . . A M^{stro} Giusto da Guanto depintore

The Duke of Urbino appears to have taken a special interest in the production of this altar-piece, as it was intended to illustrate a curious incident in the late years of his reign. Ussum Cassan, Shah of Persia, being desirous of assistance in a war he was waging against the Turks, sent to Italy to raise funds and troops amongst the people of those States. Caterino Zeno, an agent of Venice in the East, was entrusted with this mission, and came to Urbino to solicit the aid of the Duke di Montefeltro in 1471, when Justus of Ghent was commissioned to execute the altar-piece of the Corpus Domini. Federico did honour to the ambassador by causing him to be painted by Justus in company of himself, as spectator of the Lord's Supper.¹ In 1474 the picture was completed, after which we have but one further record of the stay of Justus at Urbino; and that is an entry in the registers of the brotherhood of Corpus Christi, respecting a piece of canvas purchased for a banner to be painted by the artist.²

per fiorini 250 d'oro a lui promessi per sua fatica per depingere la tavola della fraternita."

"Adi d° Fiorini 250 d'oro. Li d. sono per tanti che Guido di Mengaccio ha dato contanti a Maestro Giusto da Quanto depintore per la promessa gli fú fatta per dipingere la tavola. Avemone el queto per mano di Ser Francesco di Pietro da Spelle, et anche e accesa la scripta tra noi e Mtro Giusto, et è in mano di Giovanni di Luca perchè non fece il dovere, e da noi fu intieramente pagato a conto di Guido in questo a carte 73, Lire 600."—*Pungileoni (L.), Elogio Storico di Giovanni Santi*, 8vo. Urbino, 1822, p. 66.

¹ Don Andrea Lazari, arciprete, "Compendio Storico Delle Chiese e delle pitture esistenti in esse," Urbino, 1801. *Pungileoni, ut sup.*, p. 46.

² "1475. Giugno . . . E piú tela a Mstro Giusto depintore che diceva voler fare un insegna bella per la fraternita."—*Pungileoni, ut sup.*, p. 66.

The Last Supper of Santa Agatha having been removed from its original position, and suspended high up above a large picture on the great altar of the church, is not in such a satisfactory state of preservation as to enable us to form a perfect judgment of its merits; nor are criticism and examination satisfactory when a picture is seen at such a distance as this, notwithstanding the size of the whole—about 10 feet square—and the stature of the figures about half the size of nature.

The Saviour, clothed in long rich vestments, is represented at a table, leaning forward and breaking bread with his disciples, who kneel around him in a large edifice not unlike a church. St. John is absent from the feast, carrying the wine. Judas alone looks round to avoid the glance of the Saviour, and two winged angels, in long white dresses, float in the upper space. Federico, on the right of the picture, accompanied by two of his suite—one of them supposed to be the portrait of the painter—seems to converse with the bearded and turbaned figure of Zeno, enforcing his words by touching the ambassador on the left arm. A woman and child are spectators of the scene, from an opening in the distance. The old frame of the altar-piece, said to have contained representations of the miracles, no longer encloses the picture.¹

The few observations that we feel justified in making respecting this masterpiece, the only known and authentic one of Justus of Ghent, are these: that the painter was one of those who upheld the fame of Flemish art with no less power than Van der Goes, imprinting on his works many of the characteristic features of that great

¹ Pungileoni, *ut sup.*, p. 66.

artist. Of fair attainments in the art of composition, he exhibited the quality of good arrangement, without surpassing in this other masters of the school. His figures of Apostles, whilst they were natural and true in attitude and features, were, perhaps, more than usually exempt from the charge of vulgarity. Of the Saviour less should be said in praise, because the face lacks holiness ; and the attitude, rigidly and stiffly presented, is deprived of grace by an over-abundance of drapery in the somewhat angular character of fold peculiar to the Flemings. Freed from the care which weighed upon him in representing the sacred character, Justus, like his contemporaries, painted with nature and effect the portraits of Federico and his company, which are faithful delineations from nature, less hard and dry than we are accustomed to find even amongst Flemish painters of the schools. He drew the hands and feet of his figures with delicate accuracy, and of fair proportions ; and thus gave to his picture, as a whole, an aspect of great completeness.

With regard to the general system of colour pursued by Justus of Ghent—in so far, at least, as the unsatisfactory state of preservation in which the picture remains will allow—we are inclined to believe him as vigorous in general intonation as Van der Goes, but browner and more transparent in his shadows than that master. In comparison with Petrus Cristus, he was free from the fault of sombreness, and a reddish tinge overspreads his flesh tints.

The presence of Justus of Ghent at Urbino, his stay there for a period of years, and the patronage which he seems to have received from a powerful religious body like the brotherhood of Corpus Christi, and a talented

prince like Federico di Montefeltro, might lead us to infer that he was possessed of some claims to attention superior to those of the numerous painters whom the Duke of Urbino attracted to his court. It is, however, but fair to the painters of Italy to suppose, that Justus was employed in consequence of his knowledge of oil medium, and not because of any surpassing talents in art. That such men as Pietro della Francesca, Paolo Uccello, Fra Carnevale, Melozzo da Forlì, and Luca Signorelli, should always have painted in the old and well-known method of tempera is easily conceived, when we consider the facility with which they used it, and their high attainments in art; and we are inclined to think that they looked with less jealousy upon the followers of the new system than has been generally supposed. The neglect of Giovanni Santi to mention the names of Justus and Van der Goes in his verses in praise of John Van Eyck and Roger Van der Weyden, may be explained by supposing that he intended only to notice the greatest men of art in each country. To accuse him of neglecting Justus because of jealous feelings towards that painter, on account of his secretly practising oil medium, is to suppose that the improvements were considered of such paramount importance as to have become a necessity in Italy; whereas, the history of art proves to us that amongst the painters of central Italy the sincere admiration for the minuteness and patience of the Flemings did not proceed so far as to create the immediate desire to use their improvements, the majority rather shrinking from a style which was opposed, in more than one sense, to all their previous teaching. This feeling was so strong

that the Tuscan schools long held aloof even from that of Venice, which, in their view, sacrificed the great aims of composition and design to the secondary one of colour.

We cannot, in truth, discover in Urbino a single example of a painter influenced by the Flemish manner, or the teaching of Justus of Ghent. If, however, a certain similitude of feeling is to be noticed between Flemish and Umbrian painters, we should point to the production of draperies of a certain angular form, such as are to be found in Giovanni Santi. This peculiarity, however, we believe attributable in this painter to the influence of Melozzo da Forlî, who, notwithstanding the teaching of Pietro della Francesca, was characterised by some of the manner of Mantegna. In the painters of that period in Italy we already find the tendency to abandon the simplicity of the early Italian artists; and, in search of greater detail of form, to fall into a certain dryness and angularity of fold. The Italians, however, escaped from this unfavourable impression after they became masters of the form, which they idealized; but the Flemings never made a step in that direction.

We now turn to the consideration of a picture in the possession of Sir C. Eastlake, attributed to Justus of Ghent, and one of the best that issued from the school of the Van Eycks. The subject (for of that we must first speak) is the sepulture of a holy personage, whose mitre proclaims him to be a high dignitary of the Church. The body of this figure, clothed in full costume, and wearing the purple, is partially lowered into a tomb by two uncowed monks, surrounded by princes of the Church and others, both clerical and lay. A bishop waves the censer over

his feet, whilst a silent crowd of Churchmen and others looks on in pious silence. The scene of this solemn ceremony is laid in a Gothic church dedicated to St. Peter, as appears from the statue of that saint standing in a niche above the altar. This portion of the sacred building is itself adorned with a large bronze reliquary, in which St. Hubert is enshrined, and is surmounted by a Crucifixion in chiaro-scuro. The stone railing which surrounds the altar is sufficiently wide to allow spectators a view of the ceremony, and curious heads are visible at each interstice, looking with varied expressions at the burial. On the pinnacles of the columns which support the arches of the choir are statues of the Apostles. More than one quality seems to constitute the excellence of this picture, and place it amongst the best of the Flemish school of the Van Eycks. These qualities are to be found in the composition and perspective of the whole, the types and character of the heads, the intelligence of form, as well as the variety and truth which mark the painter, and cause him to rival, in some instances, John Van Eyck himself. Besides this, the artist has exhibited a degree of nature in the movements and grouping of his figures rarely to be found in other productions of the school of the Van Eycks.

We have often noticed the peculiarities that distinguish the pupils of Hubert Van Eyck from those of John. The picture before us is marked by a fresh and luminous colour, and an even and well-blended series of tints ; not by the dark, compact, and reddish tone peculiar to the pupils of Hubert. The manner of using the pencil—the execution, in fact, is more remarkable for ease of handling than

for the dry, hard, and marked outline so common in the works of the artists just mentioned. Nor do we discover other features peculiar to these men, such as the imperfect mode of using oil-colours. On the contrary, here we find the execution improved, as regards the practical use of colour to the standard of John Van Eyck.

In truth, the painter can only be said to have followed Hubert's manner, if we suppose him afterwards to have gone over to John's, learning by the change all the improvements peculiar to the latter. This is possible; and were it otherwise, this picture would be the first example of its kind—that of a production from the hand of a pupil of Hubert, versed in the improvements of John. That Van der Goes and Cristus remained faithful to the manner of Hubert we know; but not so the painter of the picture before us, which not only has some of the features of John Van Eyck, but many of those peculiar to Van der Weyden.

Van der Weyden is to John Van Eyck what the pupils of the elder brother were to Hubert. We must invert the terms, however. Whilst Hubert's scholars exaggerated his style by making their painting reddish, and heavy in tone, and dark in shadow, Roger Van der Weyden exaggerated on the other side, being less powerful in colour and weaker in tint and tone than his master. In this particularity, the picture attributed to Justus more resembles Van der Weyden than John Van Eyck. In local tones it lacks the vigour and force of the latter master, being clearer, more vague and transparent in shadow, whilst in the general intonation of the whole there is more lightness. These points are dwelt on for the sake of showing

that, whilst the practical difficulties of oil-painting as regards chemical materials and manipulation have been overcome by the artist, he has been unable to rival John Van Eyck in the application of the principles of colour, as well as other essential qualities in art. The treatment of accessory parts, the touch of the pencil exhibited in the mode of finishing beards and hair, inferior as they are to similar parts in John Van Eyck, make a nearer approach to Van der Weyden's manner than to that of Hubert's pupils. Indeed, the clearness and transparence of the painting lead to the belief that the first covering may have been *à tempera*, and the last in oil—a method practised not unfrequently, it is believed, by Roger Van der Weyden.

Notwithstanding these points of resemblance, however, between the attributes of the author of this picture and Roger Van der Weyden, especially as regards the practical parts of handling and colour, there are great features peculiar to the former, which remind us more of Van der Goes and Justus of Ghent—the latter especially being characterised by the good composition, truthful distribution of groups, variety, and nice proportion of forms, energy of design, and nature of attitude, which we discover in the picture of Sir Charles Eastlake.¹ For these qualities, doubtless, Dr. Waagen and Mr. Passavant were led to the same conclusions as ourselves; but we are inclined to dissent from the former in his opinion that there is a resemblance of style and execution between this picture and the Last Supper of St. Pierre at Louvain.

¹ Wood, 3 ft. $\frac{1}{2}$ square.

In conclusion, it may be remarked, in reference to the life and labours of Justus, that if we have been unable to throw much light upon it, we have endeavoured, as far as lay in our power, to dispel some of the obscurity which overhung it. We can only trust that future researches may yet bring to light such details as will lead to a better knowledge of a painter whose claims to attention are evidently great.

The pictures painted by Justus of Ghent for the church of St. Jacques in that city—namely, the Crucifixion of St. Peter, and the Beheading of St. Paul—were still in perfect preservation in 1763, when Mensaert wrote his “*Peintre amateur.*” They have since disappeared.

Justus is not, in our opinion, the author of the “*Invention of the Cross,*” a picture in the collection of the late Mr. Huyvetter of Ghent; nor is he that of the panel assigned to him in the Antwerp Gallery.

CHAPTER VIII.

VAN DER WEYDEN.

LAMBERT LOMBARD, writing to Vasari, in 1565, complains that the followers of Van Eyck and Van der Weyden neglected to ennoble and improve the old traditions of those masters.¹ He might have added, that Van der Weyden himself, in his efforts to equal or rival them, fell far short of the Van Eycks. Deeply imbued with the forms of his faith, he relied on certain defined and conventional compositions for effect, rather than upon nobleness of sentiment and expression. In doing so he achieved success, and rose to great and well-deserved fame. Graceful and harmonious in his compositions, he formed the elegant and delicate style of Memling; and if we cannot award to him the palm of excellence over the Van Eycks, we grant him the glory of having founded a manner which exercised a greater influence throughout the Netherlands than any other of which we have record.

Roger of Bruges and Van der Weyden were long considered two persons; but later researches have produced a different conviction. Roger Van der Weyden was born at Brussels early in the fifteenth century,² of Flemish parents,

¹ Gaye (G.), *Carteggio inedito d'artisti dei Secoli XIV. XV. e XVI.* vol. iii. 8vo. Firenze, 1839, pp. 176-77.

² Van Mander, p. 207.

and was apprenticed to John Van Eyck,¹ with whom he painted many panels and canvases at Bruges. His diligence and pertinacity were extreme, and his early works numerous, as we know from Marc v. Vaernewyk and Van Mander, who wrote that in their time the churches and the private mansions of the capital were full of his productions.²

Having abandoned Van Eyck's tuition, he sought employment in his native city, Brussels, where the municipality entrusted him with important commissions. Public works were at that time actively pursued, and Jean Van Ruysbroeck was building the town-hall, which promised to be worthy of a city favoured by the dukes of Brabant and Burgundy. Himself a member of the corporation, promoted to the rank of sheriff in return for his activity in the overthrow of a faction, Van Ruysbroeck may, perhaps, have had a share in naming Roger to the office of painter of the city,³ at a salary in kind of a *deerdendeel* or third of cloth of a certain kind, of finer texture than the *twierendeel* or quarter worn by architects. The privilege of his place was that of wearing his cloak on the right shoulder; whilst his labourers and varlets wore theirs upon the left. The privilege not extending to architects, proves that the sumptuary laws of the corporation were highly honourable to painters.⁴

¹ Van Mander, p. 203; Facio, ut sup., p. 48; Vasari, ut sup., vol. i. p. 163; vol. iv. p. 76; Guicciardini, Descrip. ut sup., p. 124.

² Van Mander, p. 203; Vaernewyk, p. 133.

³ "Portrateur der Stad,"—Archives of Brussels (A Wauters), Messag. des Sc. hist., 1846, p. 131.

⁴ Wauters, Recherches sur l'hotel de Ville de Bruxelles. Messag. des Sc. hist., 1841, p. 205—248.

For the town-hall Van der Weyden painted four of the largest pictures ascribed to him by his biographers. They were destined to remind the judges in the hall of justice of the value of integrity and truth; and their legend in Latin was inscribed as follows on the wall beneath the picture:—

“Herkenbald the magnificent, the powerful and illustrious, excepted no one when he sat in judgment; and ever tried, with equal justice, the cause of rich or poor, of a relative or a stranger.

“Whilst recumbent on his couch one day, he heard a tumult in a neighbouring apartment, the piercing shrieks of a woman being most audible. Inquiring the cause, the truth at first was hidden from him. But at length, one more frightened than the rest confessed. ‘I will answer, Lord; your sister’s son, who is feared and honoured second only to yourself, is pressing a girl against her will, and hence the clamour.’ Hearing this, and satisfied with its truth, the elder ordered his nephew, who was dear to him, to be instantly hung. But the senescal, to whom the order was transmitted, feigned obedience, and set the culprit free, charging him to seek a hiding-place; then, proceeding to Herkenbald, declared the sentence to have been carried out. On the fifth day, however, the youth, thinking that his uncle had forgotten his offence, came into his open door. The judge, on seeing him, beckoned him with kindly words; and seizing him by the hair, and with a knife in his right hand, severed the head from the body. In his zeal for justice he killed him. Herkenbald then perceived that his health was failing; and sending for his bishop, confessed to him all

his sins with many tears, and great contrition ; omitting, however, the act by which he had deprived his nephew of life a few days before ; upon which the bishop said : ‘ Wherefore dost thou conceal the homicide by which thou didst deprive thy nephew of his life ? ’ The old judge retorting : ‘ I consider this no sin, nor that it is a crime to be remitted by Heaven. ’ On which the bishop replied : ‘ Confess this crime, and God will take compassion on thee ; else canst thou not partake of the Sacrament of the Lord. ’ But the noble man said to him : ‘ I take God to witness that no hatred, but zeal for justice made me kill my nephew, who was dear to me ; and though thou deniest me the viaticum on that account, I hope to have communion by the Spirit. ’ Hearing this, the bishop then retired, without administering to the dying man the consolations of religion. Being soon recalled, however, the judge then said to him : ‘ See if the Sacrament of the body of Christ be in its resting-place ; ’ and when it appeared that it was not in the open pyx, the sick man subjoined : ‘ Behold that which thou broughtest with thee and deniedst me hath not been refused ; ’ and then he showed him openly, before all, the host, which he held in his mouth and between his teeth ; which, when the bishop saw, magnifying God for so great a miracle, he no longer doubted that it had taken place as the reward of justice.”¹

Herkenbald was one of the judges of Brussels in the eleventh century. The legend concerning him was depicted

¹ “In *Ædibus* [Senatoriis.” Sweertius, *Monumenta sepulc. Brabantiae*, pp. 309—11.

in the centre of a tryptic, on the wings of which were painted other subjects, pointing each their moral of truth and justice. There was Trajan halting at the head of his army to hear the complaint of a widow for the loss of her son, and her cry for vengeance on his murderer. Then the execution of the criminal. Again, Pope Gregory imploring pardon for so truthful and so just a Pagan emperor ; the same pontiff in prayer before the tomb of Trajan, and contemplating what remained amongst his ashes—namely, his tongue, that never told a lie.

The reputation of these pictures was so immense that countless travellers came to see them. Albert Duerer, amongst others, stopped to visit and give them his meed of praise ; whilst the great Lampsonius never tired of admiring and lauding them.

Like John v. Ruysbroeck, who laboured for the church of St. Gudule, and for Philip the Good, and who served at once the commune, the clergy, and the duke, Van der Weyden also painted for the churches and the court. He finished, in 1430, a well-known altar-piece, which Martin the Fifth—a Colonna and Pope—in that year became possessed of.¹

Then a long time elapses, during which we know nothing of his life. One of his pictures was given, in 1446, to the Carmelites of Brussels—the donor and his family being painted kneeling before the Virgin and the Infant Saviour.² But the noblest patron of the Brussels painter was the Chancellor Rollin, who founded the hos-

¹ Martin V. was made Pope in 1418, and died in 1431.

² Sanderus, *Chronogr. Sacræ Brabantiæ*, 1593, vol. ii. p. 293.

pital of Beaune, in remembrance of the desolating plague that ravaged that city. Pope Eugenius the Fourth had granted his request to found the building under the invocation of St. Anthony, and he laid its first stone in 1443.¹ Van der Weyden painted for him, and for the adornment of that edifice, the largest altar-piece now extant, perhaps, with the exception of the Agnus Dei of St. Bavon; Rollin and his wife, Guigonne de Salins, figuring there as donors. That Philip the Good was also painted in this altar-piece, might lead us to infer that John Van Eyck being dead, Van der Weyden had succeeded to his honours; but we cannot trace his title to the place of varlet in any of the records of the time. The gallery of Margaret of Austria contained a likeness by him of Charles the Rash; ² a proof that he was employed by the princes of Burgundy.

In 1449, Van der Weyden went to Italy, being one of the first Flemish painters who is recorded to have done so. We are at a loss to know the road he took thither. Ferrara was the first place he visited; and Lionel d'Este, one of those who bought his pictures. Ciriaco Anconitano, who saw his "Expulsion from Paradise" in the palace at Ferrara, writes that Roger Van der Weyden came there in 1449, in the third year of Nicolas the Fifth's pontificate, and taught the secret of oil-painting to Angelo Parrasio of Sienna, and Galasso Galassi—two painters who had been struck with the "ingenuity of finish and the artifice of colour" exhibited in the work of

¹ Gandelot, *Hist. de Beaune*, 4to. Dijon, 1772, p. 111.

² *Le Glay*, ut sup.

the Fleming.¹ That they failed or neglected to practise that mode of colour, we believe; for we find no pictures by Angelo or Galasso other than fresco; and this is considered by Italians as a proof that Van der Weyden did not communicate his art to them.²

From Ferrara to Florence was, doubtless, Van der Weyden's next step; but we want direct testimony to that effect. It is highly improbable, however, that he should pass by Florence on his way to Rome without stopping to examine the masterpieces of Italian art in that city. It is true that Van Eyck's improvements in oil-painting were unlikely to excite there the attention which they received elsewhere, for the city was full of the finest achievements of art from the period of Giotto to that of Beato Angelico; but however little the painters of Florence may have valued mechanical improvements in the vehicle of painting, Van der Weyden must have felt it incumbent on him to see at least the chapel of the Brancacci where Masolino di Panicale had worked and Masaccio laboured,—a spot since honoured by the studies of Raffael, Michael Angelo, and Leonardo, who strengthened their own noble inspirations by continued contemplation of the masterpieces finished by Filippino Lippi.

That Van der Weyden did visit Florence is rendered almost certain by his picture of the Gallery of Francfort. It represents the Virgin, and the patron saints of Florence,

¹ Facio (B.), *De Viris Illust. ut sup.*, p. 167. Scalamenti, *Vita di Ciriaco Anconitano*, ap. Colucci, *Antichite Picene*, vol. xv. p. 143.

² Vasari, *ut sup.*, *Vita di Nicolò di Piero d'Arezzo*, vol. iii. p. 4, and *Vita di Galasso Galassi*, vol. iv. note to p. 214.

and the Medici. The heads of St. Cosmo and St. Damian are even said to have been likenesses of Piero and Giovanni de Medici, and the arms of the family are on a scutcheon in the picture. It is not improbable from this evidence that Roger painted for the ducal family of Florence, that he tarried in that city, and thus became acquainted with Lippi and Ghiberti.

In the year of Jubilee, 1450, Roger went to Rome, and visited the churches and curiosities abounding there. His favourite amongst the painters of the capital was Gentile da Fabriano, of whom he is recorded to have said, when he visited his chapel in St. John of the Lateran, that he was the greatest painter of Italy. We can only explain this exclusive admiration of Van der Weyden for Gentile, by supposing that that master's style struck some sensitive chord in the artistic organization of the Fleming, and that his exclamation of pleasure was caused by the discovery in the work of Gentile of that soft and blended manner which we have already referred to, and which led Michael Angelo to say of him, that his painting was like his name (*gentile*).¹

From Rome Van der Weyden returned to Flanders; his pictures having found their way to Naples and Genoa, where he does not seem to have wandered.²

His patrons, on his return to Belgium, were Pierre Bladelin and Jean, abbot of Cambrai.

Pierre Bladelin was treasurer of the order of the Golden Fleece, having risen to that eminence by industry and

¹ "Nel dipignere aveva avuto la mano simile al nome."—*Vasari, Vit. di Gentile da Fabriano, ut sup.*, vol. iv. p. 154.

² Facio, *De Viris Illust.* pp. 48-9.

perseverance. Although at first but a burgess of Bruges, his family was ancient and respected in the neighbourhood of Furnes ; and he married Margaret Van de Vageviere, a rich heiress of Bruges,¹ and of a noble race whose members held high rank at court.² He rose from a subordinate place in the household, to be Philip's governor of finance and keeper of the purse,—much indeed to the disgust of numbers who grumbled at his nearness and integrity. The collectors of the revenue specially detested him, as he knew and checked their dishonesty. His revenues were six thousand golden pieces, and Philip gave him as much more.³ His influence was just as great on Charles the Rash as it had been on Philip, and he made a rapid fortune without incurring charges of rapacity.

Pierre Bladelin laid out his money in purchases of land belonging to a monastery near Ardemburg ; and on that land he built a town, a church, and a castellated mansion. The church he dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul, and adorned with a tryptic by Van der Weyden. The mansion he inhabited himself, and the town he gave to the Dinantois, whose dwellings had all been razed by the Duke of Burgundy, and who at once gave trade to Middelburg by their copper manufacture. The town, the church, and the castle, were commenced in 1444, and completed in 1450, and the place is thriving yet.

¹ "Sub eo (Lodovicus Malanus) commemoratur virum nobilem. Nicolaum Bladelinum, ob Gravelingam contra Anglos fortiter sed infauste defensam."—*Marchantius, ut sup.*, p. 260.

² Comp. Chron. Episc. Brug. p. 170—183. *Messenger des Sciences et des Arts de Belgique*, 1835, pp. 333—348.

³ *Chronique de Chastelain*, ch. 164, p. 47, in Buchon, *Collection de Documents*, vol. xlvii.

Roger Van der Weyden having finished Bladelin's commission, and painted "bien au vif" that wealthy personage, received another from the abbot of Cambrai, who came on purpose to give it him. Here it is, in the bishop's own words :—

"On the 16th of June of the year -55, I, John, abbot, bargained with Master Roger Van der Weyden, the master-workman in painting at Brussels, to make a picture, five feet square, having eleven stories of such device as the work will show. These were made at various times ; and the said picture was six and a half feet high and five feet large ; which picture was finished on the day of Trinity, in the year -59, and cost in principal 80 golden pieces, of 43 sols 4 den. each, money of Cambrai, all of which was paid at divers times. And was likewise paid to his wife and workmen, when the picture was brought, two pieces of gold of 4 livres 20 den. ; and it was brought by the carman, Gillot de Gónguelieu du Roquier, in the first week of June, in the year -59, on a cart with three horses."¹

Here we see the picture, finished at Brussels, taken to Cambrai by the painter's wife and workmen.

Jean, abbot of Cambrai, was a jovial fellow, and a man of the world, as his own amusing accounts of the visits of Jean de Bourgogne, his bishop, and Philip the Good, will show. Philip the Good and he had drinking matches,

¹ Archives de Cambrai, apud De Laborde, ut sup. Les Ducs de Bourgogne, vol. i. Introd. p. 58. Van der Weyden is here called Roger de la Pasture, which is the French translation of his name.

both getting gloriously tipsy, and Philip boasting that he made the abbot roll under the table.

Van der Weyden lived at this time with his wife and family in the Cantersteen¹ at Brussels. Her name was Goffaert. Their life was pious and exemplary; and we know from Lampsonius that Roger spent a portion of his earnings in charity, and left large legacies to the poor of the town.² His name and his position as a painter there are acknowledged to have been those of the greatest painter of the time. In 1461, he was chosen arbitrator between Pierre Coustain, the painter of the duke, and the treasurers, to fix the amount to which that person was entitled, for having painted and worked two images in stone of St. Philip and St. Isabel, for the palace at Brussels.³

It is as yet uncertain whether Van der Weyden went to or stayed any time at Louvain; but he painted a cele-

The account is headed,—“1459. Pour I tableau de peinture fait à Bruxelles assis en l’église de chéans.”

¹ A. Wauters, *Mess. des Sc. et des Arts*, 1835, pp. 333—348. Extract from the “Roedt Statüt boek, Arch. of Brux.”

² Lampsonius, *Pict. aliquot celeb.*, ut sup., p. 100.

³ “A Pierre Coustain, peintre et varlet de chambre de M. D. S., la somme de IIII^{xx}. livres de XL. gros, monnoie de Flandres, la livre qui deue lui estoit. Assavoir, qui lui a été taxé et ordonné par maître Rogier, aussi peintre, en présence de Messire Michault de Changy, chevalier, maistre d’hotel de M. D. S. et de feu le gruyer de Brabant, pour avoir peint et ouvré deux ymaiges de pierre, l’un de la représentation de Ste. Philippe, et l’autre de Ste. Elisabeth, lesquelles M. D. S. a fait mettre et asseoir en son hostel au dit lieu de Bruxelles auprès de la chambre devant la porte par ou l’on va au parc . . . VIII^{xx}. liv. Compte de Robert de la Bouvrée.”—*De Laborde, ut sup.*, *Les Ducs de Bourgogne*, vol. i. p. 479.

brated Descent from the Cross for the church of "Our Lady without the Walls," there ; a picture to which, at a later period, Mary of Hungary took so great a liking that she obtained it, on condition that she furnished a copy by Coxie. She sent it to Spain ; but it met with a serious accident on the passage. The ship which contained it was threatened by a storm, and the picture and numerous valuables were thrown into the sea to ease her. The latter were irrecoverably lost ; but the picture in its case was cast ashore, and saved in perfect preservation.¹

Van der Weyden died at Brussels on the 16th of June, 1464, and was buried in the nave of the church of Ste. Gudule,² where the body of his wife, who survived him many years, was also placed ; a blue stone covering them both. His epitaph was as follows :—

" Exanimis saxo recubas, ROGERE, sub isto,
 Qui rerum formas pingere doctus eras ;
 Morte tua Bruxella dolet, quod in arte peritum,
 Artificem similem non reperire timet.
 Ars etiam mœret tanto viduata magistro
 Cui par pingendi, nullus in arte fuit."³

The following is the amusing mixture of Latin and Flemish, in which the joint resting-place of Roger and his wife is described in the register of burials of Ste. Gudule :—

" Magister Rogerus Van der Weyden, excellens pictor, cum uxore, liggen voor Ste. Câtelynen antaer onder eenen blauwen steen."⁴

¹ Van Mander.

² Sweertius, ut sup., p. 284.

³ Ibid.

⁴ A. Wauters, Registre des sépultures. Messag. des Sc. hist., 1845, p. 145.

Yearly masses for the soul of Van der Weyden were founded by his wife. Part of a pension paid to her by the corporation of Brussels, as the widow of their "portraiteur" (20 gold peeters), she gave in 1477 to her relative Henrich Goffaert, Canon of Coudenberg, to spend in masses for the repose of her own and her husband's souls.¹

After the death of Roger, the magistrates of Brussels decided that they should have no painter.²

Of his children no trace is left, but of his relatives some notices remain. One Goswyn Van der Weyden was free master of the Guild of St. Luke, at Antwerp, in 1503, and is described in the Liggere or record of that institution as having pupils: in 1504, Peerken Bovelandt and Simon Portugalloys; in 1507, Aerdt Van Vekene; in 1512, Metken Van Bergen and Frans Dreyselere; and in 1513, Inghels Inghelsoone. In 1514, he became dean or elder of the Guild, and had as pupil, in 1517, Hennen Simonz. In 1530, he was again appointed elder; and after that time his name no longer appears. This, probably, is the painter who executed eleven pictures in the Brussels Museum, given there to Roger, one of which, the tryptic representing the Circumcision, still bears upon it the words "Te Brusselle."³

This picture, according to the testimony of one Canon Heylen, quoted by the compilers of the Antwerp Catalogue,

¹ A. Wauters, *Cartulaire des Archives de l'abbaye de Coudenberg*. Messag. des Sc. hist., 1845, p. 144.

² A. Wauters, "*Het roedt Statüt Boek*." Records of Brussels. Messag. des Sc. hist., 1845, p. 131.

³ This inscription is on the edge of a piece of tapestry.

bore a large inscription, stating that it was painted by commission of the Abbot Streyten, for the church of Tongerlo, in 1535, at which time the artist was seventy years of age. The Antwerp Liggere also contains the name of one Roger Van der Weyden, who was chosen free master of the Guild in 1428.¹

¹ Antwerp Catalogue, p. 381.

CHAPTER IX.

THE WORKS OF VAN DER WEYDEN.

VAN DER WEYDEN was less indebted to his pictures for celebrity than to the influence which his religious conceptions exercised in distant schools, and the talents which he helped to form. His name, sustained on one side by his connexion with Van Eyck, and on the other by his art-education of Memling, was pronounced with reverence as that of a master, although his works did not always support the high and well-earned character of Flemish art. Germany must own, however, that it took from him a portion of the elements which formed the school of Dürer; for Albert, though he learnt the art from Wohlgemuth, rather fashioned his style on that of Martin Schön,¹ a pupil of Van der Weyden, equally harmonious in the use of colour, and possessed of greater vigour of design. Were this the only triumph of Van der Weyden, his claims to notice would be ample; but he had others. He imparted his peculiar manner not only to the School of Bruges, through Memling, but to that of Louvain through Dierick Stuerbout. Cologne and its degenerate

¹ Gaye, *Carteggio inedito*, ut sup., vol. iii. p. 1767. Vasari calls Martin Schön Martino d'Olanda. (Terza parte, ed., 1468.) Zani (Abate), in his *Enciclopedia Metodica*, gives the name of Martin in thirty different manners, as it is written in various authors.

painters of the fifteenth century came in for a share of it ; and the mixture of the three produced the bastard school, from which at last arose no less a man than Quintin Massys.

In the progress of years, during which he laboured indefatigably, Van der Weyden remained unchanged in manner, and true to a certain standard of excellence. When he visited Italy, and saw the masterpieces of the Tuscans, he returned unaltered, gaining, perhaps, a certain warmth of colour, but nothing more. His pictures on that account possess an uniformity of style which makes them easy of distinction ; painting in a graceful and beautiful feeling, without possessing sufficient genius or power to express himself completely, Roger Van der Weyden was an artist of some qualities, marred by many imperfections. Harmonious in composition, finished in design, possessed of a fair knowledge of anatomy, and happy in the reproduction of the real in nature, he abounded in varied and good expression, and was as free from flattery as any painter of the Netherlands. But his conceptions were rarely noble ; he failed to impart idealism, when he sought for it in the heads of the Virgin and Saviour. He exaggerated the idea of length, not only in the human figure, but in its component parts—the face, the body, limbs, hands, and feet ; his knowledge of anatomy extending only so far as to enable him to render the form correctly, but not guarding him in its choice. Lacking majesty and elegance in the disposal of draperies, he generally spoilt the effect of his pictures by the hard outlines of the parts, and the angularity of the folds, at times even marring a good attitude

by it. Of these, however, whilst some were good, many were so disposed as to exhibit exaggerated grief or joy by unnatural action. And in the application of linear perspective to the human form he was far behind his master.

Clear and luminous in tone, painted with a profusion of colour nicely blended and softened down, the pictures of Van der Weyden were more than usually free from marked contrasts of light and shade. Their blooming flesh tints and pale shadows, suggestive of the use of tempera rather than of oil, cannot easily be recognised as those of a painter who laboured under John Van Eyck. Still history is there to prove the connexion of the two, and strengthens the opinion that Van der Weyden, possessing all the means wielded by his master, failed to equal him in power. Nor is this less noticeable in the comparison of colour than in other important parts, such as the quality of aërial perspective. Well acquainted with the use of the various keys of colour, Van der Weyden was, nevertheless, lacking in the rendering of space and atmosphere; and although his backgrounds are in general highly-finished landscapes, they want the truth and nature of those which adorn the pictures of Van Eyck. Another and final feature of dissimilarity is Van der Weyden's chariness of ornamentation, differing much in this from his cotemporaries and predecessors.

The earliest pictures which divulge the manner of Roger are the Pietà, of the Pontiff Martin the Fifth, and the scenes from the life of St. John the Baptist—compositions in three compartments, preserved at Berlin. In the first of these the subjects are taken from the life

of the Saviour, the panel on the left representing the Virgin watching the Infant Christ on her knee, and St. Joseph asleep, whilst a blue angel hovers above them. The central panel depicts Mary wailing over the Crucified Saviour, whose body she holds on her knees. St. John and St. Joseph are near her. A violet angel flies above them. On the right Christ appears to his mother : and this group, also, is adorned with a blue angel floating in the air. The two last scenes are laid in open landscapes : the first in an apartment having a background of gold brocade. Few of the qualities which Van der Weyden possessed are to be found in these pictures, which are marked by rigidity and angularity of outline. The Crucified Saviour on the knees of his mother is dead, starved, and reduced ; and the struggles of agony from pain, hunger, and cold are depicted there. But was the dead Christ to be so treated ? or is the mere physical imitation of nature sufficient for such a subject ? The Infant on the Virgin's knee is another instance of this. Unlike Van Eyck, who endeavoured to deify the Saviour by an appearance of age out of keeping with his form, Van der Weyden only copied a thin ungraceful child, with large broad head, hands and feet, and a puny body. It may be said, indeed, that in the composition of these scenes the painter was not unmindful of harmony and grace ; but this does not suffice to make them pleasing.¹

¹ No. 534 A, Berlin Cat. Wood ; each panel 2 f. $3\frac{1}{2}$ z. by 1 f. $4\frac{1}{2}$ z. Martin the Fifth gave this tryptic to John the Second of Spain, who sent it to the convent of Miraflores. Charles the Fifth used it as a travelling altar-piece, and carried it with him. Margaret of Austria had a copy of this picture, of which the wings were by Memling. Albert Dürer saw the altar-piece of Charles the Fifth in the

The scenes from the life of John the Baptist are the birth and presentation to Zachariah ; the baptism of the Saviour, with the Eternal looking down from heaven ; and the beheading—all of them presented, like those of the Pietà, under Gothic arches, carved profusely with sacred figures. They are so similar in execution and sentiment to the Pietà, that the remarks made upon it will fully answer for the others ; and any doubts which might arise, as to their being productions of Van der Weyden, must fall before the contemplation of them.¹ Yet these are the subjects said by Ponz, in his *Viage*, to have been painted for the Carthusians of Miraflores, by Juan Flamenco. Ponz, however, asserts that Juan painted five scenes from the life of John the Baptist. Here are three only, obviously executed in Roger's early days, and not in 1495 and 1499, the period assigned by Ponz to the works of Juan Flamenco. It is strange, too, that these three panels were purchased from the Carthusians of Miraflores.² The Städel Gallery at Francfort has copies of the same subject by an inferior pupil,³ which were found near Milan.

Undoubtedly, the greatest production of Van der Weyden is the altar-piece at Beaune ; remarkable for the beauty of many parts, though, perhaps, composed with

Rathhaus at Bruges ; and when it was restored to Miraflores, it remained there till General d'Armagnac removed it. Considerable injury has been done to this picture by restoring.

¹ Antonio Ponz, *Viage*, ut sup., vol. xii. p. 50.

² No. 534 B, Berlin Cat. Wood ; each panel 2 f. 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ z. by 1 f. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ z. This tryptic was made to remain open, the wings being of the same size as the centre panels.

³ No. 120, Städel Gallery Catalogue. Wood, 15" 9''' by 9" 9'''.



THE LAST JUDGMENT.

Interior of the Altar-piece by Roger Van der Weyden, in the Hospital of Beaune.

less success than other pieces. Like that of St. Bavon, the altar-piece consists of numerous panels, of which all the subjects are relative, and form a complete picture. The central panel, superior to the rest in height, exhibits the Saviour in glory resting on the world. Whilst below him the archangel weighs the souls of the departed in a balance. On each side are six panels, of which the upper and the lower portion are divided by *nebulæ*. Beneath these, on one hand, are the condemned in the divers phases of perdition; and, on the other, the good souls on the way to heaven. The third panel on each side represents heaven and hell, with angels in the one, and horrid figures of the condemned in the other.

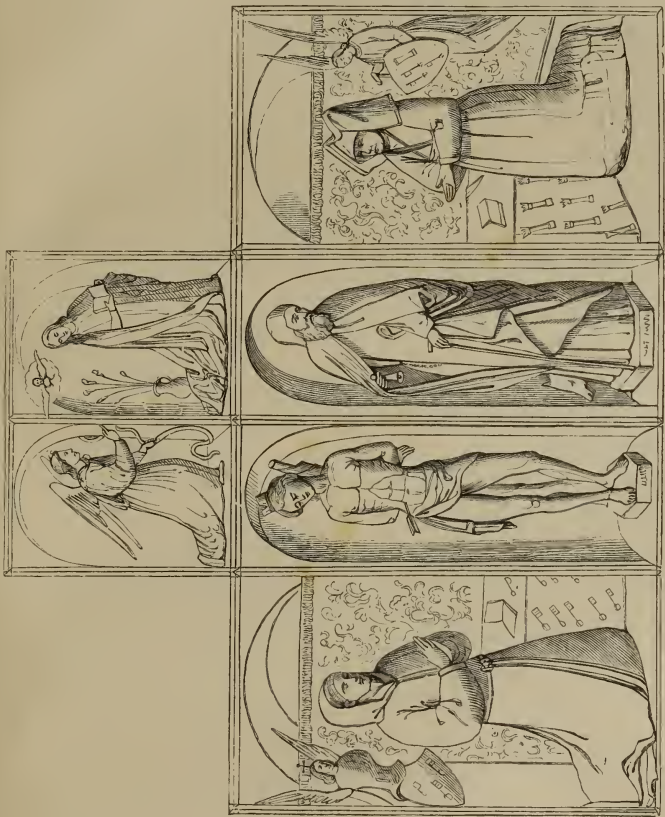
Above the *nebulæ*, and advancing towards the Saviour on each hand, are St. Peter and numerous saints, headed by the Virgin, and kings and queens, headed by St. John.

The composition of the central panel is, perhaps, the most faulty portion of this picture, the glory and the foreground being crowded together, instead of being properly parted; but the distribution of the saints in glory is extremely good; the lines they form are agreeable, and in perspective, well grouped together, and animated in motion. The choice of expression in the various faces of the saints shows a good perception and command of character. St. Peter is proud and energetic, the Madonna full of affectionate and maternal sentiment. And St. John, with the figures accompanying him, is amongst the finest of the school, the attitudes being far more bold than we usually find them in the Flemish painters.

The choice or harmony of the colours of the vestments is kindly, vigorous, and successful ; nor are the folds as angular as we find them in other pictures of the master. Although the character of the figure of Christ is not excellent, it recalls most forcibly to mind the representations of the same subject by John Van Eyck ; in truth, this great altar-piece, which no real judge will hesitate to assign to Van der Weyden, is one of the best productions of the Flemish school.

In the external portions of the picture, St. Sebastian, in *chiaro-scuro*, is long and thin, exaggerated in motion, as usual with Van der Weyden, but executed with the utmost care and diligence. It is almost needless to add, that the hands and feet are long and meagre. The neighbouring figure of St. Anthony, with his bell and pig, may be classed, without exaggeration, amongst the noblest of the Flemish school ; being one which Martin Schön studied and copied, endeavouring to imitate its vigour and movement. It is in such masterpieces as these, indeed, that one must study the school where the germ of Memling's manner is traced in parts, with almost as great certainty as that of Martin Schön.

The most truthful imitations of nature, however, are the portraits of Rollin and his wife, which are complete and splendid studies of reality, without flattery or idealism. These and other portraits already noticed are amongst the admirable portions of the work. One fault peculiar to Roger here must not pass unnoticed ; and that is, a tendency to sameness in the features of personages ; but this is a defect not peculiar to him. The



Exterior of the Altar-piece by Rogier Van der Weyden, in the Hospital of Beaune.

altar-piece has suffered much from restoration, the naked figures having been at some period painted over in certain parts by ignorant and squeamish persons. Although most of this has since been taken away, much extraneous and disagreeable colour remains and disfigures the panels.

In comparing the portrait of Rollin at Beaune with that of Rollin in the Louvre, we find the energetic financier of John Van Eyck's picture much older, and less grand in attitude. The comparison also serves to show the difference which existed between the mode of colouring used by the two painters. The altar-piece of Beaune is certainly the masterpiece of Roger Van der Weyden.

Amongst the good productions of his pencil is a tryptic with half figures, in the Marquis of Westminster's Collection at Grosvenor House. Surrounded by its old oaken frame, and covered with its ancient scriptural inscriptions, it seems to have been a votive picture destined to adorn a sepulchral monument.¹ The outer surface of the tryptic, instead of having a Scripture subject, such as the Annunciation, depicted there, contains a wooden cross, with the words, "O mors quam amara est memoria tua hom̄. injusto et pacē habenti in substātiis suis, viro quieto et cujus vitæ directæ sunt in om̄ibus et adhuc valenti accipere cibū. Eccl. xli." Above the cross, near a shield containing arms, is the motto, "Bracque et Brabant." A large skull is also represented, with the epitaph of the person whose death is intended to be commemorated.

¹ A votive picture of this sort is described in the Life of Van der Goes. Vide sup., p. 139.

This epitaph, to the following effect, reminds us of that of Hubert Van Eyck. It is written in French :—

“ Mirez vous ci orgueilleux et avers
Mon corps fu beaux ore est viande a . . .”

The rest of the words, probably “aux vers,” are obliterated by time.

The funereal and solemn tenor of these inscriptions is borne out by the subjects represented. In the centre of the tryptic, surrounded by a *nimbus*, merging from red into yellow, is the Saviour holding a brazen ball and cross, emblematic of universal rule ; the Virgin, with hands joined in prayer, looks towards him on the left, and the Evangelist, holding the chalice, contemplates him on the right. On the wing, near the Evangelist, is Mary Magdalen ; on that near the Virgin is St. John the Baptist. The Saviour, in a dark-brown habit, holds up his right hand, and extends his two fingers in the act of blessing. His long hair, parted in the centre, falls upon his shoulders, encircling, with a small and double-pointed beard, a dark-toned face, full of heavy muscular developments, broad, overhanging cheeks, eyes so immovable as to impart an air of ferocity to the countenance, and a heavy underlip, of which the drooping corners express no sentiment of dignity. The shadows of this unpleasant type of divine solemnity are oppressively dark and sad. The Virgin, on the other hand, is full of soft and benign sentiment. A drapery of white encircles her face, which is modelled with copious colour, nicely blended, of a pale-white tone. St. John the Evangelist contrasts with the Virgin by its vigorous colour and transparence. The face is soft, and beams with a calm sentiment of resigna-

tion. St. John the Baptist is not as ably depicted. It is austere, not noble. Through the half-closed lips the teeth appear, and this trivial detail helps to mar the face. The Magdalen in tears is the most elegant and graceful figure in the whole composition. The head is covered with a white turban, from which a delicate veil depends, passing under the chin and leaving the neck exposed. A low, grey dress, tightly laced in front, exhibits all the forms, and is scarcely covered in any part by a blue drapery. In the Magdalen's hand is the cup of ointment. Great harmony and modelling may be noticed in the flesh tints, which are delicately and elegantly painted. The hand holding the ointment is graceful and well proportioned, and contrasts favourably with those of all the other figures, which are thin, ill-jointed, and ill-designed. It is characteristic, indeed, that we find in parts such as the extremities a feeble knowledge of anatomy; whilst in others, as in the neck and bosom of this Magdalen and the throat of the Evangelist, we find considerable attainment in the same study. The general aspect of the draperies is broader and less angular than that of Van der Weyden generally. They are painted with a breadth and profusion of colour which mark them as a late production of the master's hand. Nor can we fail to notice that, in the execution of a varied landscape background, Van der Weyden has been here more than usually successful. Behind the Baptist, Jerusalem, with Jordan, in which the baptism is taking place, forms a landscape marked by good aerial perspective, enhanced and strengthened in effect by the favourable lines of the meandering river. The light upon these landscapes is that of early morning, the

twilight casting its white colour on distant snow mountains, not unlike those in Van Eyck's picture at the Louvre.

This votive altar-piece, in its style and mode of execution, reminds us of that of Beaune, the Saviour in both having much the same character. St. John the Baptist also possesses similar features of resemblance. In the figure of the Magdalen we see the original of more than one of Memling's sentimental female saints, the feature of the altar-piece being particularly this, that the female figures surpass the male in a marked manner. Nothing, indeed, in this picture is more striking than the execution and preservation of the Magdalen. In some of the male faces and hands the shadows of the flesh tints have partially suffered from over-painting; but, with these exceptions, the picture is in excellent preservation.

In the Catalogue of the Grosvenor Gallery this altar-piece is attributed to Memling; but the characteristic features which we have noticed will suffice to show that Van der Weyden, and not Memling, was the painter. The latter combined more sentiment and grace in his productions, with a parsimony of colour which is not noticeable here. And, although we trace a more than usually happy effort in the production of the landscape, we cannot even here remark the peculiarities of Memling, the touch of pencil or brush being much more full than was usual with him. The types of the Baptist and the Evangelist may also be cited as examples of Van der Weyden's own manner; differing, as they do, in all the essentials, from those of Memling.¹

¹ Grosvenor Collect. Wood, centre, 21 inches by 15, each wing 10½ inches by 15. On the sky above the Saviour these words, "Ego sum

The collection of drawings at the British Museum contains a fac-simile outline of the Magdalen, under the name of John of Bruges. This drawing, half the size of the painted figure, is complete, with the exception of the hand and cup of ointment.¹

The warmer colour and softer mode of painting which characterised Roger after his journey to Italy, may be noticed in the tryptic of the Medici at Francfort. The Virgin stands in the centre of the composition, under a dais, affectionately clasping the Infant Saviour. On her right St. Peter and St. John stand in contemplation, whilst on her left are St. Cosmo and St. Damian. In graceful sentiment this composition rivals all those of the master; whilst in its execution, whether or not owing to the smallness of its dimensions, which are more favourable to the development of the artist's manner than the large designs of the Beaune altar-piece, the utmost effect is produced. The head of St. Peter is noble and severe, and the draperies which surround him and St. John are of a broad character, which is not always one of the features of the master. The other figures illustrate the ableness of Van der Weyden in painting portraits. Luminous and finished colour, used with much body and boldness, com-

panis vivus qui de cœlo descendi. Joh. vi. 51." Above the Virgin, "Magnificat anima mea Dominum et exultavit sp̄s (spiritus) meus in Deo salv. Luc. i. 46, 47." Above the Evangelist, "Et verbū caro factū est et habitavit in nobis. Joh. i. 14." Above the Magdalen, "Maria ergo accepit libram unguēti nardi pistici preciosi et ũxit pedes J̄su. Joh. xii. 3." Above the Baptist, "Ecce Agnus Dei qui tollit peccata mundi. Joh. i. 29."

¹ Brit. Mus. 7 inches by 5¼ inches.

bine to render this the most pleasing picture of the master with which we are acquainted.¹

His fine qualities are also seen in Bladelin's altar-piece. Belgium was deprived of this picture some few years ago, when the curate of the church of Middelburg sold it. It was then supposed to be the work of Memling. The adoration here is represented in a manner unusual with the Flemings. The Infant Saviour on the ground gives light to the surrounding group. Mary kneels before him, with Bladelin and St. Joseph. In the distance is the adoration of the shepherds. Here, again, we trace the fashion, which earlier Flemish painters imitated and exaggerated, of completing their pictures by episodes painted in the distance. On one of the wings is Mary with the Infant Christ appearing to the Emperor, or the fulfilment of the Sybil's prophecy. Unfortunately, the Emperor is dressed like the Duke of Burgundy. The subject of the second wing is the Adoration of the Magi, and the Infant Saviour in the clouds.²

This altar-piece, one of the finest works of Van der Weyden, is almost equalled by the Adoration of the Magi,³ and the Virgin and St. Luke, in the Munich Gallery—two pictures which have long been attributed to John Van Eyck, but which bear indubitable traces of the hand of Van der Weyden.

The Adoration is a perfect composition, but disagree-

¹ No. 139, Stædel Gallery. Wood, 20" by 14".

² No. 535, Berlin Cat. Centre panel, wood, 2f. 11½ z. by 2f. 11 z.; wings, wood, 2f. 11½ z. by 1f. 3¾ z.

³ Nos. 35, 36, 37, Pinak. Cat. Cab. III. Centre panel, 4' high by 4' 10" broad, wood; wings, 4' 4" high by 2' 3" broad, wood.

able in its colour, which, though clear, is glassy. When closed, the tryptic exhibits the Annunciation; when open, the Adoration, the Annunciation, and the Presentation in the Temple; a series and form of subject which, like that of distant episodes, was copied by numerous followers of this painter; and, amongst the rest, by Memling in his picture of the Hospital of Bruges, by the author of a panel in the depôt of the Madrid Museum, and by others too numerous to mention.

St. Luke and the Virgin sitting to him,¹ is a subject that was seldom treated by the Flemings. The Madonna on her throne has peculiarly the type of Van der Weyden's virgins. One need but observe the thinness of the Infant, its meagre limbs, and large hands and feet, the angular and heavy draperies, the hardness of the outline, to be convinced that this was not the manner of Van Eyck. The picture, indeed, has all Van der Weyden's faults, with his usual pleasing quality—soft and harmonious colour. The distant landscape, with its numerous figures, is a counterpart of that which is in the Rollin votive picture at the Louvre, and may thus have led to its false appellation. An old copy of this piece is to be seen in the Santa Trinita Museum. It once belonged to the Infante Sebastian.

The remarkable influence of Van der Weyden upon his cotemporaries and followers has been already mentioned, but may be seen more fully in the numerous copies and imitations of his last great picture—that which he painted for Notre Dame, "hors des murs," at Louvain. The great original of this masterpiece is at Madrid, where it hangs

¹ No. 42, Cab. III. Pinak. Cat. Wood, 4' 4" high by 3' 5" 6''' broad.

so high that one can scarcely see it.¹ The body of the Saviour is in the act of being taken from the Cross. It is handed down by the executioner and supported by Joseph of Arimathea. Mary Magdalen looks on and wrings her hands with the wildest signs of grief; Van der Weyden here exhibiting his peculiarities of exaggerating grief and joy by unnatural action. Near her is St. Peter, the Virgin swooning at his feet, and the third Mary, with other saints, close by. This celebrated picture is remarkable for its composition, and justifies the numerous copies which were made of it, not only by the painter's own immediate followers, but by successive generations of artists. But the figures being life-size, exhibit in a proportionate degree the failings of Van der Weyden,—his hardness of outline, his meagreness of form, his want of sentiment increased by a certain knowledge of anatomy, and his lack of noble feeling. The Saviour's head is fine, but the group of Mary swooning and the figures round her are the chief attraction,—the blooming flesh tints and harmonious colour contrasting with the livid hues of the crucified body. Michel Coxie made a copy of this picture for Margaret of Austria, of which no tidings can be learnt, but numerous imitations of it exist besides. One of them is in the Escorial,² given there to Albert Dürer, but painted by one of Roger's pupils, grey in tone and harder of line than the original; another is in the Santa Trinita Museum of Madrid, by a stranger to the Flemish school.

¹ No. 1046, Madrid Mus. Cat. 1850. 7 f. 2 in. high by 9 f. 5 in. Wood, gilt-ground.

² No. 3. Hist. y descr. del Escorial. D. Jos. Quevedo. Madrid, 1849, p. 288.

It lacks all sentiment of grace or colour, and is heavy, dark, and red. A fourth is in the Berlin Museum, and has suffered much from cleaning and restoring, but is an old copy.¹ A tryptic, the central portion of which exhibits features not dissimilar from those of the Descent from the Cross of Berlin—such as the composition, grouping, and attitude of the figures—is in the Liverpool Gallery.² A sixth, diminutive in size, is still in the cathedral of Louvain, with wings, on which are portraits of the donor and his family. This, perhaps, is the most unfavourable presentment of the subject, and indicates a painter who flourished during the decline of art in Belgium, in proof of which the lifeless aspect of the figures, their large round eyes, and the picture's dark and dreary colour and want of *chiaro-scuro*, may be mentioned. But the repetitions and imitations of this subject are yet more numerous. For half a century it was recopied in all the schools of Germany and Holland; and taste, as usual, becoming slave to fashion, the subject was reproduced and changed *ad infinitum*. A curious instance of exaggerated imitation is the panel in the Cologne Museum representing the Descent from the Cross, dated 1480, and attributed by some to Israel Meckenen, and others to Albert van Ouwater.³ In truth, the picture is by neither of those artists, but more properly belongs to a secondary school of the Rhine; the painter

¹ No. 534, Berlin Cat. given to "Roger v. d. Weyden der jüngere, 1529." Dated 1488. Wood, 4 f. $8\frac{3}{4}$ z. high by 8 f. $5\frac{1}{2}$ z. broad.

² No. 42, Liverpool Gall Cat. 1851. Wood, 4 f. by 2. On the wing St. Julian and St. John the Baptist. Ascribed to Roger v. der Weyden the younger.

³ Because of a mutilated signature which still comprises the letters O W A.

showing that he had their trick of colour, but exaggerating the attitude and gestures of the figures painted by Van der Weyden.

A striking altar-piece in the Belvedere Museum, at Vienna, must be mentioned amongst the few works of Van der Weyden, although it is classified under the name of Martin Schön. The picture clearly exhibits the practised hand of an anatomist, and is remarkable for the affected air of the heads. The same wan forms—the same thinly-coloured landscapes, pale in light, and transparent brown in shadow—the same foregrounds intersected by crevices, and covered with vegetation on the surface—the same large eyes, with their thin eyelids, which characterise the pictures at Berlin—may be noticed here. The centre of this picture represents the Saviour on the Cross, the Virgin at its foot, supported by St. John. The donors, a man and a woman, kneel on each side. On the wings are St. Veronica and the Magdalen.¹

The pictures which may be assigned with certainty to Van der Weyden are thus not numerous. Those which are falsely attributed to him are more so.

“The Seven Sacraments,” at Antwerp, does not exhibit, in its feebly marshalled groups, the talent of Roger for composition; the Magdalen at the Cross reminds us of the master, but nothing more.²

There is no reason for attributing to this painter two panels which bear his name in the Belvedere Collection.

¹ No. 81, room 1, Belv. Cat. Wood, centre, 3' 2" by 2' 2"; the wings severally 1' 1" broad, Austrian measure.

² No. 23, Ant. Cat. Wood, 2 m. high by 0.97 m. broad, French measure. Painted for a dignitary of the chapter of Tournai, of the family of Boonem.

Of these the first represents the Virgin and Child, St. Anne kneeling, two little dogs in the foreground, and a hedge of roses, behind which is a landscape and a city. The Eternal soars above in the clouds.¹ This picture is an imitation of the master, and a feeble one. The second panel represents the Adoration of the Magi, and is a poor production of a later date.²

The strongest sign of want of knowledge as to the master's style and manner was betrayed, however, by those who attributed to him the picture of Berlin, signed "Sumus Rugerii manus."³ The story of the picture is this :—

Zanetti, in his book "Pittura Veneziana,"⁴ describes it as suspended, at the time he wrote (1771), in a passage leading from San Gregorio, at Venice, to a neighbouring convent. He thought, at first, that it must be a work by that "noted pupil of John Van Eyck, Ruggieri;" but doubts arose upon this point when he found that the panel was Venetian fir, and not the oak in use amongst the Flemings. At a later period Lanzi saw this picture in the Nani Palace at Venice, and repeated Zanetti's statement.⁵ Some persons are inclined to put but little stress on this objection, saying, that probably the pupil of Van Eyck visited Venice when he came to Italy, and naturally painted with the materials afforded by the country; and those who held such an opinion thought it

¹ No. 21, room 2, Belv. Cat. Wood, 1' by 8½", Aust. measure.

² No. 38, room 2, Belv. Cat. Wood, 2' 2" by 1' 8".

³ No. 1163, Berlin Cat. Centre, 4 f. 8¼ z. high by 1 f. 5¼ z. broad, wood; wings, each 4 f. 8¼ z. high by 1 f. 4½ z. broad.

⁴ Zanetti, *Pittura Veneziana*, 1771, lib. i. p. 31.

⁵ Lanzi, vol. iii. *Scuola Venez.*, Epoca prima, p. 37.

more entitled to belief, because the Anonimo di Morelli describes a portrait of Van der Weyden in the house of Marco Zuanne Ram at Venice, in 1531, painted in oils by Roger himself, and dated 1462. This would not prove that Roger was in Venice.¹ The Anonimo did not say, as Mr. Michiels pretends, that the portrait was signed in Italian fashion, "Rugerio da Bruxelles," but distinctly that it was "from the hand of Rugerio da Burselles;"² and we know that the family of Ram was one of wealthy traders established at Venice for purposes of trade,³ and likely to have had this portrait brought from Flanders. But all such speculations, were they even founded, as we believe them not to be, must fall before the simple view of the style and manner of the picture. The subject is San Girolamo on a throne; to the right Mary Magdalen, and to the left St. Catherine; the style, Italian of the sixteenth century, and the wood on which it is executed peculiar to the Venetian painters. From the attitude and motion of the figures, and the character of the heads, which not only differ from Van der Weyden, but all the Flemish school, it must be pretty certain that the picture was executed by a painter of the school of Padua. The figures have the sveltness (to coin a word), and the features the aquiline expression which Flemings never had; and though

¹ There is a curious coincidence of date between the portrait mentioned by the Anonimo and that of the late Mr. Rogers's Collection, said to be a portrait of Memling. This portrait was in the Ader's Collection. "In casa de M. Zuanne Ram a S. Stefano (in Venice) 1531. El ritratto de Rugerio da Burselles, pittor antico celebre in un quadretto de tavola a oglio, fin al petto, fù de mano de l' istesso Rugerio, fatto al specchio nel 1462," ut sup., p. 78.

² Anonimo di Morelli, ut sup., p. 78.

³ Ibid. p. 140.

the outline, drapery, and large round form of eye are hard, the whole exhibits considerable research. The colour has the thinness which characterised the school of Mantegna. That painter himself was not exempt from it. When he was a scholar of Squarcione, he, first amongst his fellows, made the Greeks his study, and applied perspective to the human form with such success as to found the science, and reduce it almost to a certainty. This classicism produced in him a want of sentiment, and made him fall into a course of faults peculiar to the school of Padua, and which are quite distinguishable in the picture now before us.

Supposing, therefore, even that Van der Weyden came to Venice, and that his coming and departure had remained a secret from historians; supposing that he, and not Antonello, had carried thither the secret of oil-painting; supposing, in fact, a mass of improbable circumstances, it still remains a certainty that this is not a picture produced by him, but the work of some Rugero unknown to fame. Dr. Waagen has, very properly, classed this picture in the Lombard and Venetian school.

The Gallery of Munich contains but one picture to which the name of Van der Weyden is attached:¹ "Christ crowned with thorns;" but it is not unlike the weak production of a pupil of Quintin Massys.

The character of this school is more visible, indeed, in the "Annunciation" of the Antwerp Gallery,²—a diminutive panel, painted with great care and finish, and not

¹ No. 65, Pinak. Cat. Cab. IV. Wood, 1' 9" high by 1' 2" 6''' broad.

² No. 24, Antw. Gal. Cat. Wood, 0.20 m. high by 0.12 m. broad.

dissimilar in execution from one in the Louvre, attributed to Lucas Van Leyden, and of old supposed to be the work of Memling.¹

It is not quite certain that the portrait said to be that of Philip the Good, in the same collection,² is a likeness of that prince, though we know that Louys engraved it for the Collection of the Dukes and Princes of the House of Burgundy, by Jonas Sinderhof. It was purchased at Besançon, in 1827, and once belonged to Colbert, the minister of Louis the Fourteenth. In style it is hard and dry, in character like a neighbouring picture of a monk, attributed to Memling. In the Academy of Bruges are two pictures, not by the master, though given to him. The first is the Adoration of the Magi,³ the second the Adoration of the Shepherds,⁴ a night scene; both of half a century later than Van der Weyden. Mr. Ignace Van Houthem at Bruges is supposed to possess three pictures by Roger, which once adorned the abbey of Flemalle, and represent severally the Trinity, St. Veronica, and the Virgin and Child.⁵

A Deposition from the Cross, in the Kensington Collection,⁶ representing Joseph of Arimathea sustaining the body of Christ, which has just been taken from the Cross, and the Virgin embracing the lifeless form, with deep

¹ No. 595, Louvre Cat. Now classed in the school of Memling.

² No. 25, Antw. Cat. 0.38 m. high, 0.22 m. broad. Wood.

³ No. 4, Bruges Acad. Cat. Wood.

⁴ No. 5, Bruges Acad. Cat. Wood.

⁵ Messag. des sc. Hist., 1846, p. 149. The same subject, uncatalogued, is in the Francfort Gallery. It is in the manner of Van der Weyden, and by a pupil.

⁶ No. 56, Wallerstein's Collection. Wood, 2 f. 6½ in. by 1 f. 8 in.

affliction, is a picture of an imitator of his composition, without his manner.

The catalogue which has now been given of the pictures, real or fictitious, still existing, by Van der Weyden, shows that many of his celebrated pictures are no longer extant. The canvases of the town-hall at Brussels perished in the bombardment of 1695. All the pictures in Italy are lost:—the Woman Bathing, at Genoa; the Adam and Eve, at Ferrara; and the pictures of Alphonzo of Naples. The portrait in the Gallery of Zuanne Ram, at Venice, may, as we have just remarked, be that which goes under the name of Memling in the late Mr. Rogers's Gallery. If it be so, it is not a real one of the master. A Virgin and Child, full length, in a temple, the property of Gabriel Vendramin, at Venice,¹ and the panels of Cambrai, have also perished. The pictures of the Gallery of Margaret of Austria—the Trinity, a small piece; the portrait of Charles the Rash; and a Crucifixion, with St. Gregory—are no longer to be found.² The altar-piece of the Carmelites of Brussels has disappeared, together with numerous canvases which adorned the convent of Groenendaele in the forest of Soigne,³ and the picture in the Collection of Archduke Ernest, in 1593.⁴

Of the painters who bear the name of Van der Weyden

¹ Anonimo di Morelli, *ut sup.*, p. 81.

² “Ung autre double tableau. En l'ung est Nostre Seigneur pendant en croix et Nostre Dame embrassant le pied de la croix, et en autre l'histoire de la Messe M. S. Saint Grégoire.” The inventory of 1516 adds, “fait de la main de Rogier.”—*Inventaire de Marg. d'Autriche, De Laborde, ut sup.*, p. 29.

³ Sanderus, *Flandria Illust.* vol. ii. p. 39.

⁴ “Marie embrassant son fils de Rogier de Bruxelles.”—*Inventaire; ap. De Lab., Les Ducs de Bourg. ut sup.*, vol. i. *Introd.* p. 113.

no certain works are known. The pictures in the Brussels Gallery, to which reference has been made, if they be really by Goswyn Van der Weyden, are very distant in manner and execution from those of Roger Van der Weyden; and it is evident that his example did not stir the soul of the later painter. These pictures lack both sentiment and composition, although, perhaps, they are entitled to a place above the lowest rank of paintings executed in the decline of art in Belgium. Here and there in public galleries the name of Roger Van der Weyden the younger is given to productions, because of a certain rude similitude to the manner of the "portraiteur" of Brussels; but these exhibit so poor a spirit, and so weak a hand, that they cannot be attributed to so fine a master without disgrace to him. The better plan would be to give such works no name, but class them in the list of those produced by artists unknown to history. It will, in truth, be found that many panels, apparently imitations in a poor manner of the pictures by the great Roger Van der Weyden, have been mentioned in portions of this work, but classified without reference to the existence of Roger Van der Weyden the younger, of whom we have no distinct traces.

CHAPTER X.

ANTONELLO DA MESSINA.

ANTONELLO DA MESSINA was born at Messina in the early part of the fifteenth century, probably about the year 1414.¹ His family had furnished more than one generation of painters, illustrating, under the name of the Antonii, the sacred places of its native city. Antonio d'Antonio, whose Martyrdom of Saint Placido, in the Cathedral of Messina, is mentioned in the "Memorie," was Antonello's grandfather, and Jacobello d'Antonio his uncle.² The latter is mentioned as the author of several large altarpieces, such as "Thomas Aquinas and the Doctors," for the Church of San Domenico of Messina,³ and the Virgin

¹ "Domenico Veneziano, pupil of Antonello, died when Antonello was forty-nine years of age."—*Sandart, Der Teutsch. Academie.* 2d Ed. Nurem. 1675, p. 77. Domenico died in 1463.

² *Memorie de' Pittori Messinesi.* 8vo. Mess. 1821, p. 2. Antonello of Messina was so frequently confounded with Antonio Gagino, the architect and sculptor of Palermo, that "Il Gagino Redivivo" was written by Auria in vindication of Gagino's fame. Auria said, "Ma perchè alla chiarezza della sua patria s'è frapposto una non so qual nebbia, o di calunnia, o d'ignoranza, confondendolo con Antonello da Messina, famoso pittore, come appresso mostrerò; sarà il primo scopo di questo discorso il disgombrar un sì fatto ostacolo."—*Il Gagino Redivivo, ab v. J. D. D. Vincentio Auria.* 8vo. Palermo, 1653, p. 2. "Fu Messinese Antonello degli Antonii eccellentissim pittore de' suoi tempi."—*Padre Placido Samperi, Iconologia de Maria Vergine*, lib. i. cap. 5, fol. 41. *Auria, ut sup.*, p. 14.

³ *Memorie de' Pittori Messinesi*, pp. 4, 5.

Mary for the Church of Spirito Santo.¹ Salvadore d'Antonio, brother of Jacobello, and father of Antonello, was an architect as well as a painter, and laboured sometimes in company with his relative, but more frequently alone.² A joint production of both painters, an altar-piece for San Michele at Messina, is mentioned by the author of the "Memorie," in addition to three other works executed by Salvadore alone,—such as an altar-piece for the Immacolata in the Church of Santa Anna, St. Francis of Assisi, for the Church of San Niccoló, and the Virgin with St. Jerome for the Annunziata.³ Salvadore having taught his son the first rudiments of art, sent him at an early period to Rome to complete his studies.⁴ The exact period of his stay we cannot decide, but we are inclined to believe that he went there about the year 1429; at which time the painters of the Tuscan and Siennese Schools had left a noble impress of their genius in various works adorning the holy city. Whether or not Antonello studied these masterpieces of Christian art, or the more perfect ones of the old Greeks and Romans, it is difficult to say; for although we have it on the authority of Vasari that he remained many years in Rome, we can trace no symptoms of a study of the great classical models in the pictures which he produced. Perhaps the genius of Antonello had already thus early shown itself, and led him to

¹ Note to Vasari, *ut sup.*, Vita d'Antonello da Messina, vol. iv. p. 77.

² Guida per la città di Messina. 12mo. Mess. 1826, pp. 6, 14, 18, 28, 86, 89.

³ Storia dell' Archiconfraternita di nostra Santa del Rosario, 39. Memorie de' Pittori Messinesi, *ut sup.*, p. 13.

⁴ Vasari, *ut sup.*, Vita d'Antonello da Messina, vol. iv. p. 78.

neglect the great examples of design for the pursuit of colour.

From Rome he went to Sicily,¹ stopping, as he passed, at Palermo,² where Alphonzo of Aragon held his court. Nothing, however, remains there of the master; although not improbably it was in that place he painted a picture, mentioned with admiration by Maurolyco, representing an old man and woman provoking one another to laughter. This piece was executed with such truth and ingenuity that, whoever beheld it, fell heartily into laughter also.³ He left Palermo for Messina, where, we think, he painted "à tempera" the panel⁴ now placed in the Museo Peloritano of that city, representing the Virgin and Child in a landscape. His talent at this time exhibited itself in the execution of animal life.⁵ In the meanwhile, changes had taken place in art, which exercised an influence on Antonello's career. He came to Naples, perhaps, about 1438, and became the pupil of Colantonio del Fiore, and fellow-labourer with Antonio Solario, generally known as Il Zingaro.⁶

The Neapolitan school, of which those painters were the chiefs, had not at that time a character peculiar to itself, but partook, in some sort, of the uncertain temper of the times. Two rulers, Alphonzo of Aragon, and René of

¹ Vasari, ut sup., Vita d'Antonello da Messina, vol. iv. p. 78.

² Memorie de' Pittori Messinesi, p. 13.

³ "Sicanicarum rerum compendium." Clar. Francisco Maurolyco. 2d Ed. Messina, 1716, p. 200.

⁴ Memorie de' Pittori Messinesi, p. 7.

⁵ Guida per la città di Messina, p. 33.

⁶ Memorie de' Pittori Messinesi, p. 11. Summonzio, Letter written to M. Michele, at Venice, March 20, 1524. Puccini, p. 37.

Anjou, had succeeded each other on the throne of Naples between 1438 and 1442. The first had been called the Good; and the second, the Magnanimous. Both were patrons of literature and art, yet neither were able to foster art or literature with any marked success. In truth, these princes were too much occupied in political antagonism to do anything great in aid of art at Naples; though both, in their respective kingdoms, where no intestine wars prevailed, were noted for their love of letters and of pictures. René and Alphonzo were competitors for the throne of Naples; the former claiming it as being left to him by the will of Joan the Second at her death; the second, by reason of adoption previous to her death;—an act, as he declared, which could only be invalidated by mutual consent. René had right, perhaps, on his side, without the means of urging it; for whilst Alphonzo, in his palace of Palermo, entertained men of letters, and bought pictures of the painters of his time, the poor ex-King of Anjou languished in confinement within the walls of Bracon;¹ where his captivity was not without its solace to a prince who preferred the arts to reigning, and who, with the consent of Philip of Burgundy, gave himself in leisure undisturbed to his viol and his brush. In his prison he produced on glass the portraits of Philip and his son, which the Duke ordered to be placed in the chapel of the Carthusians, and he drew his own portrait for the windows of the ducal chapel at Dijon. Probably he learnt to paint in oils without, perhaps, attaining to the improvements which the medium had been brought to by Van Eyck.

¹ Near Salins, at no great distance from the town of Dijon.

Colantonio del Fiore was the best master of Naples at the time of Antonello's arrival in that city. Even he felt the desire of proceeding to Flanders to perfect himself. "His manner," says Summonzio, "at this period was the manner of Flanders, and the method of colouring of that country, to which he was so much given, that he thought of journeying thither, but he was retained by King René, with a promise of teaching him the practice and tempera of this mode of colouring."¹

King René, as we have seen, had learnt to paint during his captivity, and was himself "much given to the study according to the manner of Flanders."² This manner of Flanders, practised by René, and communicated to Colantonio, was not that used exclusively by John Van Eyck, but rather one which was customary amongst the mass of painters of his time. The Van Eycks, like most great masters, had a method of their own, so superior even to that of their pupils, that their works were always distinct. Their scholars did not lack the knowledge of the tempera, the materials, oils, gums, and resins generally in use, and their properties, but the mastery and talent, without which they were comparatively useless. Colantonio, who had been taught by René, and Antonello, whom Vasari describes as of clever character, ("desto ingegno,") must

¹ Letter addressed by Summonzio, in March 20, 1524, to Marcantonio Michele, a gentleman of Venice: "La professione de Colantonio era, siccome portava quel tempo in lavoro di Fiandra, e lo colorito di quel paese, al che era tanto dedito che aveva deliberato d'andarvi, ma il re Raniero lo ritenne quà col mostrargli ipso la pratica e la tempera di tal colore."—*Puccini, Memorie d'Antonello da Messina*, p. 37; *apud Vasari, ut sup.*, p. 95, vol. iv. Tom. v. Vit. d'Antonello da Messina.

² *Ibid.*

have known the properties of all the materials of painting in use in their time ; but certainly they knew not the exact manner practised by the Van Eycks. To prove it, we need but consult the pictures of Villeneuve lez Avignon, attributed to King René, executed apparently in the old method of tempera, and covered with the oleo-resinous varnish. Antonello, having seen a picture by John Van Eyck, doubtless came to the speedy conclusion, that the improvements of Flemish painting were quite another thing in the hands of that master from what they were in those of Colantonio and René. He must have felt that the voice and example of Van Eyck were required to communicate what he sought. Indeed, Vasari admits that, although the pictures of the Van Eycks exhaled a strong odour which came from the mixture of the oils and colours, especially when they were new—and it seemed easy from this to discover the manner in which they were executed—yet did years elapse before this took place.¹ The Flemish manner of Colantonio and his followers was not that of the Van Eycks, as regards colour, but showed itself in peculiarities of composition and design. The Neapolitan school, indeed, was at that time unworthy of study except for its connexion with the painters of the Netherlands. The commercial relations which long existed between those countries and Italy—the ease with which the works of Flanders were carried to the various marts of trade, explain this influence. It was so strong as to counterbalance the effects of teaching by the masters of Italian schools, as is clearly proved by the frescoes of the fifteenth century at Naples, which were sufficient, had no other

¹ Vasari, *Vita d'Antonello da Messina*, vol. iv. p. 77.

influence been exercised, to found a school on the basis of the Tuscan; but the pictures of the Flemish masters were numerous,¹ and they were studied in part to the exclusion of those which clime and sentiment might have shown to be more useful.

Colantonio del Fiore was the pupil of Simone, who flourished in the fourteenth century. Very few of his works remain, except that which he produced in 1371, in the Church of Sant' Antonio del Borgo. This, it must be owned, exhibits little sign of its author's study of the Flemings. But, between the years 1371 and 1438, Del Fiore, doubtless, fell under the Flemish influence, which he transmitted to his pupils—Zingaro, the Donzelli, and Antonello da Messina. The "Tre Magi," a picture of Van Eyck's, at Naples, was for this reason assigned to Zingaro and the Donzelli; a supposition which the pictures of those artists confirmed.

A panel in the Gallery of Berlin,² which, if not by Zingaro, bears the stamp of his manner, illustrates this, although it is uninteresting in subject, and produced without genius of composition. St. Jerome is represented sitting on a stump, conversing with St. Benedict; whilst St. Martin, behind them, stops his horse to share his cloak with a needy person. The landscape, overcharged with accessories, contains a series of scenes from the legend of St. Jerome, adding little to the interest or beauty of the picture. In the foreground, heaps of brambles, underwood, dead trunks and boughs, disturb the general effect

¹ Guida per la città di Messina, p. 122.

² No. 116, Berlin Cat., under the name of Zingaro. Wood, 6 ft. 4 z. by 4 ft. 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ z.

by the hardness of their outlines ; and other peculiarities, at the same time, mark the manner of Zingaro,—such as a serpent starting from a hollow, a bird, and other small things. Though the distant houses in the landscape are Italian, the figures have no local character : their meagreness, coupled with immobility of muscles and joints, giving a look of stiffness and want of rest to them which may sometimes be observed in a milder form in the elder Van Eyck.

The numerous frescoes of Il Zingaro exhibit similar defects, attributable to the influence of the Flemings. They also bear the marks of the various schools in which the Neapolitan painter studied, such as that of Bicci, Pisanello, and others. Nowhere did the Zingaro exhibit genius or originality. He imitated others, without having a manner of his own. As regards colour, nothing can be said of this picture, or the manner in which it was executed ; the surface being hard and crackled like some oil-paintings, but low in key like tempera.

Whilst Zingaro thus took at Naples that Flemish bias for which he is remarkable, Antonello, like Colantonio, determined to see the masterpieces of the Flemish school. Vasari says, that, “proceeding once on business from Sicily to Naples, Antonello found a picture by John of Bruges in possession of Alphonzo, King of Naples ; and having seen it, so admired its liveliness of colour and the evenness and beauty of its painting, that he put aside all other things and went to Flanders ; and, having come to Bruges, became familiar with Giovanni.”¹

The picture seen by Antonello was more probably one

¹ Vasari, *ut sup.*, *Vita d'Antonello da Messina*, vol. iv. p. 78.

in the possession of King René of Anjou, than one in that of Alphonzo. King René, at the time of Antonello's stay in Naples, was the reigning sovereign of the country, whilst Alphonzo held Sicily, which he had conquered. But Antonello may not improbably have seen pictures by Van Eyck at the palace of Palermo, where Facio, his cotemporary, noticed a number of them. It is difficult to conceive how Antonello could have returned to Sicily after having remained in Naples during the period of René's rule, the two kings being enemies. It is likely that Antonello either saw one of John Van Eyck's pictures at Palermo before going to Naples, or saw a panel of the master in the possession of René at Naples.

Vasari's statement requires this explanation. He asserts that Antonello saw a picture by John Van Eyck at Naples, and that it belonged to King Alphonzo. He then adds, that Antonello went to Flanders and became the friend of John Van Eyck in his old age. The two statements involve a confusion of dates. Alphonzo drove René from the throne of Naples in 1442, and at that time Van Eyck was dead. With such data it is impossible to conceive how Antonello could have gone to the Netherlands so late as 1442; and we are inclined to think that he did so three or four years earlier, when René, and not Alphonzo, resided in Naples.

Some Italian authors have presumed from these discrepancies, that Antonello never went to Belgium at all; and they found upon them a claim for the painter of Messina as the discoverer of oil-painting; but traces of Antonello's stay abroad are found in Belgium, where a manuscript, of which several portions cast a light upon

the history of Flemish art, notices him as follows:—
 “Antonello Van Sicilien would not leave Flanders without bequeathing to it an example of the mode of colouring in oil which he learnt from John Van Eyck. It is said, that he presented a picture to the church of St. John (St. Bavon of Ghent) for this reason.”¹

These are the words of an old and authentic manuscript, which alone would suffice to prove that John Van Eyck was the teacher of Antonello, and taught him the perfections of oil medium. The journey of the Italian painter to the Netherlands must, therefore, of necessity have taken place before 1442, when Alphonzo was as yet only King of Naples by name. Vasari, after all, is only guilty of a chronological error, which does not invalidate the truth of his account of the visit.

After the death of Van Eyck, Antonello returned to Messina, where he remained but a few months,² and then proceeded to Venice. His manner had been remarkably influenced by the study and example of Van Eyck, and would alone have betrayed that he learnt from the master's own teaching. None even of the pupils of Hubert or John Van Eyck seem to have seized the peculiarities and principle of colouring inherent in these

¹ “Antonello Van Sicilien wilde Vlaenderen niet verlaeten zonder dat hy daer een teeken liet van geheugenis van zyne konste in dit landt, om de maniere van schildren met olieverwe van Meester Jan Van Eyck te leeren. Men wilt dat hy ae. St. Jans Kerke om deze reden een tafereel tot geschenk zonde gegeven hebben.”—Extract from a manuscript belonging to Ch. Van Rym., lord of Bellem, in 1636, and transcribed to a blank book in possession of the late Mr. Van der Beke, Secretary of the town of Ghent. Vide De Bast, *Messagers des Sciences et des Arts*, an^o. 1824-5, p. 133.

² Vasari, *Vita d'Antonello da Messina*, vol. iv. p. 78.

masters as Antonello did ; a proof that the Cristus's, Van der Goes, and Van der Weydens had no part in the education of the Messinese. The pupils of Hubert, in truth, were imperfect in the practice of oil medium ; and they, as well as the men who learnt the improvements of John, were less talented than their masters,—a failing which cannot be urged against Antonello. Roger Van der Weyden, who is said to have inherited the method, and practice, and talent of John Van Eyck, really understood and studied his master less than Memling ; and it will be curious to mark, hereafter, how the pictures of Antonello and Memling are confounded.¹

The first picture known to us which Antonello painted in oil, is dated 1445,² and finished in the minute manner of Van Eyck. It was probably the first production of his pencil after his arrival in Venice. It was in that capital that he now laboured successfully,—varying his work by the enjoyment of the pleasures of the city.

The nobles came to him to have their portraits painted ; and his pictures were noticed for the beauty of their finish and their brilliancy of colour.³ It was greatly to his praise, indeed, that, unlike the Zingaro, he had the talent of assuming all the qualities of the Flemish school, and of avoiding many of its faults. He took from the Van Eycks the finish and minuteness of their practice, improved upon them in simplicity of tints, and excelled them in beauty of intonation.

¹ As, for instance, the portrait in the Antwerp Gallery and the portrait in the Gallery of the Uffizi at Florence.

² No. 18, Berlin Cat. Signed, "1445, Antonellus Messaneus me pinxit."

³ Vasari, vol. iv. p. 79.

The School of Venice, even at this early time, had shown itself a school of colour. It rose upon the island of Murano, which furnished the Venetians with generations of good painters. The Vivarini lived there; but the founders of the art were Quirico and Bernardino da Murano, who lived in the fourteenth century, and Andrea, whose works are quoted by Zanetti and by Lanzi.

The family of Vivarini improved the art, and became less hard of outline, whilst their colour gained in warmth and delicacy. With the early artists of the family we notice a painter called Johannes Alamanus, whose name has already been mentioned in connexion with some possible Rhenish influence in Italy in the fifteenth century. This Johannes painted in 1445¹ and 1496, in company with Antonio Vivarini, two pictures, the first of which, executed for San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice, is lost; the second, finished for the school of the Carità, now hangs in the Academy of Arts at Venice.² Although we find this work seriously damaged and over-painted, we may still discover a characteristic type of figures and form of drapery peculiar to the Rhenish schools; nor can we fail to notice as in their spirit the Gothic forms of architecture for which the artists of the Rhine were known. The mode of colour also, so far at least as we can judge from the present state of the picture, has something of the Cologne manner, being more carefully blended than that which is found in the Venetians of the period. The latter, whose aim was the production of

¹ Zanetti, *Della pittura Veniziana*. Ven. 1771.

² No. 23, p. 8, *Cat. of the Academ. Venice*, 1855. Wood, 3 met. 35 centim. by 4 met. 30 centim., French measure. Signed, "Johannes Alamanus Antonius da Muriano Fe —."

colour, may have adopted some method or practice of tempera from this German painter ; but we do not find him exercising an influence in any of the principal features of art. The man who really was the first to do this was Gentile da Fabriano, whose mode of colouring was in that blended and soft style on which we have previously remarked, as approximating to that of the Rhenish school. This manner of Gentile, however, was probably derived from the study of miniature-painting, and not from any other source. He imparted some of it to his cotemporaries at Venice ; making, by this means, a visible improvement in the pictures of the Vivarini, and those of the first Bellini, who, according to Vasari, called his eldest son Gentile, because of the pleasure he felt in Fabriano's friendship. Antonello succeeded to these men, and gave the Venetian school the finish and minuteness which he owed to study in the Netherlands, influencing Gentile and Giovanni, whose works exhibit traces of his manner of colouring, whilst they excel his in breadth and unity. His first and last picture, and those of the Bellini, were, so to speak, the links of a perfect chain. The Italian nature of Antonello grew as he increased in years, his latest picture being the least Flemish, and the most like those of the Bellini. Then they, casting aside the last remnant of minuteness and rigidity which marked the crowning efforts of Antonello, gave the finishing touch to his manner. From that to the perfection of Giorgione and of Titian was but a step. How Antonello influenced the Bellini may be noticed in the portrait of the National Gallery by Giovanni, where warmth of colour and finish of design unite to make the

picture pleasing. It is the style of Antonello softened, and, if we may coin a word, Italianized.

However much the Messinese may have been given to the pleasures of the town, he certainly laboured hard, his numerous pictures testifying that he seldom left his easel. Vasari tells us that he taught Domenico Veneziano to paint in oils after the Flemish fashion;¹ and that Castagno, who worked with him and Baldovinetti, in Santa Maria Nuova at Florence, killed Domenico from envy at his possessing the secret of that method.² Baldovinetti is also described by Vasari, as well as Pesello, seeking how to make oil medium to replace distemper;³ but it may well be doubted whether the death of Domenico is not attributable to jealousy in Andrea at his superior talent; and as for Baldovinetti and Pesello, they survived the coming of Roger Van der Weyden to Italy, the first almost half a century,⁴ and the second about ten years.⁵ We have no trace of paintings produced in oil by Domenico Veneziano, by Andrea dal Castagno, Baldovinetti, or Pesello; but this is probably attributable to the fact, that they preferred the tempera medium, in which they had great practice, to the uncertainties of oil, with which they were not acquainted thoroughly, or of which they had not attained the perfect process.

¹ Vasari, vol. iv. p. 80.

² Ibid. vol. iv. p. 148, *Vite d'Andrea dal Castagno e Domenico Veneziano*.

³ Ibid. vol. iv. p. 74, *Vita d'Antonello da Messina*.

⁴ Vasari says, that Alesso Baldovinetti died in 1448; but Manni states, that the death of that painter was registered in the records of Florence as on 29th August, 1499.—Note to Vas. *Vita d'Alesso Baldovinetti*, vol. iv. p. 106.

⁵ Pesello died in 1457.

Antonello resided in Venice until 1465, when he again returned to Sicily, and had disciples in his native town, the best of whom were his son or nephew, Salvo d'Antonio, Pietro Oliva, Pino da Messina, and Giovanni Borghese.¹ His largest compositions and numerous Virgins were executed at this time. It was then he finished a celebrated picture of the Virgin and Saviour in the Carmine of Messina;² an "Ecce Homo" for the Agliata family, at Palermo, dated 1470;³ and his greatest altarpiece, that of the Immacolata Vergine, in St. Anna, dated 1473, and till lately preserved in the monastery of San Gregorio at Messina.⁴

In 1473, Antonello finally abandoned Sicily; and, passing through Palermo, where he stayed some months, came to Venice,⁵ where he produced the finest of his portraits. He was likewise employed on a Madonna and Holy Infant with St. Michael for San Cassiano of Venice, which Vasari mentions as held in high repute for "the novelty, the beauty, and fine design" with which the figures were executed,⁶ and Sabellico describes as the labour of a man to whom no trick of art could be unknown.⁷

Meanwhile, the Seignory of Venice heard the name of Antonello; and notwithstanding the efforts of the Duke of Mantua to supplant him in their favour, and replace him by his favourite Francesco di Monsignore of

¹ Mem. de' Pittori Messinesi, p. 14.

² Ibid. quoted from Gallo, *Annali Mess.* t. i. p. 183.

³ Auria, *Il Gagino Redivivo*, ut sup., p. 17.

⁴ Mem. de' Pittori Messinesi, p. 15.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Vasari, vol. iv. *Vita d'Antonello da Messina*, p. 80.

⁷ Ridolfi, p. 48.

Verona, they entrusted him with an important and honourable commission,—that of painting a part of the ducal palace, restored in 1493. It seems, however, that he never finished that commission. It is not known when he stayed at Milan; but Maurolyco writes, in his chronicle, that he was celebrated in that city.¹ In 1489-90, he spent some time at Treviso, working for Caterina Cornaro, by whose marriage into the house of Lusignan the republic of Venice gained the island of Cyprus. She had been forced by the Council of Ten to abdicate her throne, and she took refuge in Treviso. Her daughter, whose hand was sought in marriage by various parties intriguing against each other, was, at last, espoused by Rambaldo Avogaro of Treviso; and Caterina commissioned Antonello to paint a picture of the Madonna and Holy Infant, which she presented to her daughter as a gift² on her wedding-day. His presence in Treviso was considered, doubtless, an occasion not to be neglected; and the nobles of that city employed him during 1490 on the frescoes of the tomb of the senator Agostino Onigo.³ He returned to Venice, where he died about 1493, before he had been able to touch the pictures of the ducal palace.⁴

¹ Maurolyco, *ut sup.*, p. 200. "Mediolani quoque fuit percelebris."

² Ridolfi, *Le Maraviglie dell' Arte. Venezia*, 1648, p. 48.

³ *Ibid.* Zanetti, *Della pittura Veneziana*. Ven. 1771, p. 21.

⁴ Vasari, p. 80. The author of "*Memorie de' Pittori Messinesi*" says (p. 19), "In the church of the PP. Reformati, outside Catania, is one of the most exquisite works of one Antonellus. This picture is about four palmi by three in size. It represents, with the greatest sentiment and diligence, a Madonna with the Infant; and at the foot of it are the words, 'Antonellus Messenius, 1497.'" The notice of this picture is declared in a note to have been communicated by that great amateur of the fine arts, Dr. D. Carlo Gagliani

He died of a heart-disease, and was buried with pomp by the artists of the city, who celebrated his name in the following epitaph :—

“ D. O. M.

“ Antonius pictor, præcipuum Messanæ suæ et Siciliae totius ornamentum, hac humo contegitur. Non solum suis picturis, in quibus singulare artificium et venustas fuit, sed et quod coloribus oleo miscendis splendorem et perpetuitatem primus Italicæ picturæ contulit, summo semper artificum studio celebratus.”¹

Thus the artists of his time celebrated Antonello as the first of those who brought to Italy the improvements in oil-painting which he had learnt from John Van Eyck. The man who most regretted him at his death was Andrea Riccio, a sculptor, well known as the author of several statues in the Church of San Cassiano, of whom Vasari mentions the naked figures of Adam and Eve in the ducal palace.² Little credit can be given to the story of an interview said to have taken place between Antonello and Giovanni Bellini, and described by Ridolfi. It is said that Bellini was desirous of discovering Antonello's secret of painting in oil, and that he introduced himself into the house of the Messinese in the garb of a nobleman desirous of having his likeness taken. Antonello,

di Catania. Though the description was circumstantial, it seemed so like an error, that we referred this matter to a friend of Mr. Domenico Gagliani, son of Dr. D. Carlo Gagliani, who wrote to his father, and obtained the following reply :—“The picture of the P. P. Reformati at Catania, lately in the private chapel of the convent, is now in the church, and has the following signature in large letters : ‘Antonellus de Saliba Messinensis, 1697.’ This Antonello was one of the later members of the family of the great artist who went to Flanders to learn the art of painting in oil.”

¹ Vasari, ut sup., p. 81.

² Ibid..

seeing him dressed in the Venetian toga, mistook him for the character which he assumed, and thus betrayed his secret to Bellini.¹

Salvo d'Antonio, one of Antonello's pupils, afterwards became a disciple of Leonardo da Vinci.

¹ Ridolfi, *ut sup.*, p. 48.

CHAPTER XI.

THE WORKS OF ANTONELLO DA MESSINA.

WHILST the uncertainties of art history and the conflict-stories of writers involve us in doubt as to the great features of Antonello's career, and especially as to his visit to Flanders, we are relieved from perplexity by the straightforward evidence of his pictures, which are too vividly impressed with a Flemish influence to leave any doubts of the master's personal contact with John Van Eyck.

From the solitary example we possess of his early manner we are unable to derive much knowledge of Antonello's style after his return from Rome and his study in the school of Colantonio. But, even in late productions, we can still detect points of resemblance between him and the Neapolitans in a certain arrangement of the composition and details of foreground. The qualities which generally distinguished him were simplicity and nature, derived from his Italian education; but, in more than one instance, the patience with which he sought to render truth and finish overshadowed these great qualities, and flung him back into the ranks of the realistic and minute schools of Belgium. From that source he drew his occasional hardness of outline, a tendency to prefer the real to the ideal in the choice of a type of countenance, and to fall below the

standard of nobleness and grace in attitude and expression which mark the primitive schools of Italy. It was not, however, without many a struggle that Antonello surrendered himself to these tendencies. His pictures are a sufficient evidence of the endeavour to substitute some of the finer features of Italian character for those less pleasing ones which he had engrafted on his manner in Flanders. Thus, whilst his draperies maintained, in a measure, the character of those seen in the pictures of Van Eyck, they gained markedly in elegance of form and fold; and whilst his landscapes kept the episodic style of the Flemings, they were less than usually obtrusive or destructive of general effect.

His most excellent quality, however, was colour, which he derived from the Van Eycks. Not always free even here from the fault of minuteness when it became necessary to depict such details as the hairs of a beard, he used his colours with a firm and flowing brush, of a bright transparent yet powerful tone, modelled with great softness and blending, and as even in touch as those of the Bellini. But in colour and in design he was not at all times successful, as we possess more than one example of dark opaque tones in pictures where, at the same time, he failed of nobleness in expression, especially in the attempt to render ideal character. In portraits, however, he was exempt at all times from these failings, being full of strong and expressive character, noble and severe in attitude, intelligent in form, and fine in design, ennobling the reality, and creating that type of portraiture in which the Venetian school outshone all others. That he possessed the art of giving perspective harmony to the figures and accessories

of his pieces may be judged from his landscapes and figures, which never, by want of softness or imperfection of tone, marred the beauty of the whole.

The Virgin and Child of the Museo Peloritano at Messina is the sole remaining tempera picture by Antonello. Of it this much may be said, that it is an example of great truth and finish. A long period then elapses, during which we have no illustration of Antonello's manner,—the first picture in the new method communicated by Van Eyck being signed and dated, "Antonellus Messaneus, 1445."¹ A black cap shows off a head full of character. The cap falls back over a black dress, covered by a pelisse lined with fur. A distant landscape completes the picture. The finish of this piece, the hardness of its outline, and a certain thinness of colouring, indicate a man less practised in painting than Antonello subsequently became; but simplicity and grandeur still mark the features.

The Crucifixion of Antwerp,² which appears to have been executed in the same year, is a far more striking and remarkable picture, developing Antonello's Italian character far more than the portrait. Were it not almost conclusively proved that the date of the inscription is 1445, and not 1475, we should have felt inclined to class the Crucifixion amongst the late efforts of Antonello. The scene is laid in a sunny Italian landscape, lighted by a genial sky. The two thieves are crucified on the branches

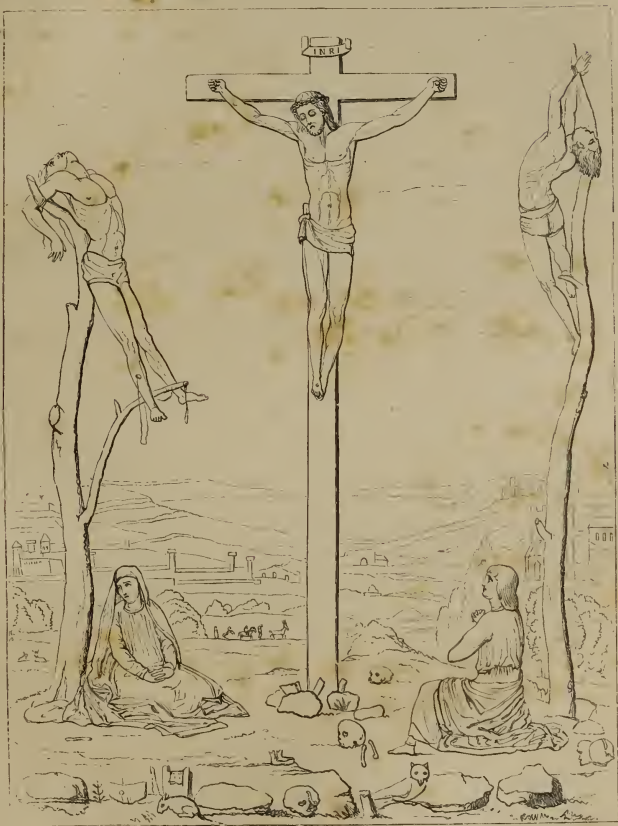
¹ No. 18, Berlin Cat. Signed "1455, Antonellus Messaneus me pinxit," inscribed with the words, "Prosperans modestus esto. Infortunatus vero prudens." Wood, 8 z. high by 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ z. broad.

² No. 17, Ant. Cat. Wood, 0.58 met. high by 0.42 met. broad.

of trees, and remind us of the figures of crucified saints painted by Carpaccio, Antonello's cotemporary.¹ The noble features of the Saviour's head are also more Italian than Flemish. On the other hand, the lower portion of the picture, such as the Virgin at the foot of the Cross on the left, and St. John, are Flemish in manner. The distance contains little figures of men and women, with horses and other animals, illustrating one of Antonello's favourite studies; whilst the skulls and other details of the foreground are characteristic of the manner of Zingaro. The quiet agony of the repentant thief, contrasting with the writhing torture of the other, is an instance of the painter's judgment. The colour of this piece is proportionately vigorous and good compared to that of the portrait in the Berlin Gallery. It might, indeed, be more so but for extensive cleansings; to which, indeed, are attributed the partial destruction of the inscription. The picture had the following words written on a scroll, "1445. *Antonellus Messaneus me O° pinxit.*" The third cipher, as it appears at present, is undoubtedly a seven; but being smaller than the rest, and the testimony of Mr. de Bast being clearly to the effect that, previous to the cleansing of the panel, the upper portion of the four was rubbed out, there seems no reason to doubt the reading of this signature as given by that gentleman, and by the writers of the Antwerp Catalogue.² The word "O°" is generally admitted to mean *oleo*, the intention being apparently

¹ No. 33, Seconda Sala Nuova, p. 35. Cat. of the Acad. Ven.

² De Bast, *Messenger des Sciences et des Arts*, &c. 1824-25, pp. 344-45.



THE CRUCIFIXION.

By Antonello da Messina, in the Antwerp Museum.

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to convey that Antonello, having completed the picture successfully, according to the improvements of Van Eyck, thought himself justified in noticing that important fact. This, in addition to the evidence adduced by Mr. de Bast, would lead to the conclusion, again, that the earlier date assigned is the most correct; for Antonello would scarcely have used the word "oleo" in 1475, when he was in the most glorious part of his career. But, in truth, this question of dates is not so important to us as to those who found upon it a superstructure of argument in support, or disproof, of the earlier or later birth of Antonello; ¹ as, in all the pictures of this master, we remark the cleverness with which the flesh-tints are modelled with a thin surface of colour unknown to the Van Eycks. On the other hand, the Flemish failing, which consisted in giving importance to landscape distances, is here visible.

Between the years 1445 and 1474 a gap occurs, and we possess no pictures; the first panel, in the order of dates, being one mentioned by Lanzi, dated 1474. This portrait is that of a young man, with overhanging hair, a black dress and cap, and a red drapery falling from the head to the shoulders. Fine and noble, and in good preservation, it is vigorous in tone, and exhibits the changes which may be supposed to have taken place in Antonello as he left further behind him his Flemish reminiscences.²

¹ "This picture, which, according to tradition, came from Italy, was purchased in the year 1826, at the sale of the Dowager Lady v. Maelcamp, in whose family it had remained for years."—Ant. Cat. No. 17.

² Signed, "Antonellus Messanus me pinxit, 1474." Sold to the Duke of Hamilton in 1801, by J. M. Sasso. Now at the Duke's seat near Glasgow. Lanzi, tom. iii. *Epoca pr.* p. 36. De Bast, *Messenger des Sciences et des Arts*, 1824-25, p. 54. Wood, 15 in. by 13½ in.

The Anonimo di Morelli mentions two portraits described as being, in 1529, in the Collection of Antonio Pasqualino, at Venice; both of them signed and dated "1475;" the first being the likeness of Alvise Antonio, Pasqualino's father; the second, that of Michel Vianello. The former was represented bareheaded, in a scarlet vest,¹ and answers the description of the portrait belonging to the late Count Pourtales, in Paris. This portrait is the masterpiece of Antonello in that branch of his art, being remarkable for an evenness and simplicity of tint almost equal to those of the portraits of Bellini, and for the firmness of touch and vivid colouring which were his particular characteristics. Were it not, indeed, for the minute care with which the hairs of the beard are touched, and a slight hardness that still marks the outline, we should fail to discover the Flemish influence in this portrait.²

Great truth and nature are noticeable in a portrait of an Old Man lately in the Rinuccini at Florence. This portrait is one year later in date than that of the late Count Pourtales, representing a man of shaggy eyebrow, wearing a species of turban.³ A portrait in the Gallery of the Uffizi at Florence, though somewhat in the manner of Memling, reminds us of the likenesses painted by Antonello.⁴

¹ Anonimo, ut sup., p. 59.

² Lanzi was supposed by Count Pourtales to allude to this picture when he speaks of the portrait late in the Martinengo family's Collection at Venice. The date of 1474, given by Lanzi, would make us suppose he meant the picture of that date at the Duke of Hamilton's.

³ Signed, "1476. Antonellus Messaneus me pinsyt." Now in the Gallery of the Marquis Trivulzi, at Milan.

⁴ Bought of the Abate Celotti some years ago. Passavant, Kuntsblatt, 1841. No. 5.

One of the Bellinesque representations of the master, as regards costume and colour, is a portrait of a young man in the Manfrini Gallery at Venice. The features are fine and expressive; the hair falling over the eyebrows and ears in the Italian fashion,—a black cap covering the head, whilst the body is clothed in a black dress, over which the white collar slightly shows at the neck. Rich in colour and perfectly blended and soft, this picture, although not authenticated by a signature, is a perfect and well-preserved specimen of Antonello's skill.¹

A picture in the Belvedere Gallery,² formerly in Venice, where it was preserved in the Hall of the Council of Ten, represents the Saviour supported on his tomb by three angels, one of whom partakes of the manner and expression of those in the Agnus Dei of St. Bavon. The type of the Saviour's head is noble, but the painter has been less happy in colour than usual. The Pietà, however, is interesting, as exhibiting traces of the Flemish manner, combined with a form of composition reproduced by the painters of the later Venetian School. "Christ at the Column," in the Manfrini Gallery, is also a fine production of the master's brush,—powerful in tone and highly finished in detail. The hair is marvellously minute; the features express pain without much elevation of sentiment.³

The "Addolorata" of the Venice Academy,—a portrait of a Nun in tears,—may be remarked for the possession of a truly Italian class of features, and a style of drapery characteristic of ease. The puckered folds of a white

¹ Half size of nature. Wood.

² No. 59, Belvedere Cat., room seven, Ital. School. Wood, 4' 3" by 3' 4". Signed, "Antonius Messanēsis."

³ Wood, half size of nature.

neckerchief, on the other hand, are Flemish in method and execution. The general colour of the flesh-tints is less transparent and blended than usual:—the hands, joined in prayer, are fine.¹

The “Virgin reading,” in the same Gallery, signed by the painter, is inferior to the “Addolorata” in the choice of features, but more in the soft and blended colour peculiar to Antonello. The head is covered with a blue drapery, executed in a broader manner than we are accustomed to:—the hands are fine. The picture, however, has been extensively cleaned.²

Several panels, signed “Antonellus Messaneus,” fail to please, because of their dark opaque colour, and a certain repulsiveness of features, combined with a marked hardness of outline. Such is, for example, the life-size St. Sebastian of the Berlin Gallery, of which we possess two repetitions elsewhere,³ and the Madonna and Child of the same Collection. In the latter, particularly, we notice the least pleasing features of Antonello: the Madonna being feeble, the Saviour lacking grace and flexibility, whilst the general intonation is marked by dark and opaque tones.⁴

¹ No. 76, Venice Acad. Cat. p. 26. Wood, almost life-size, 0.46 met. by 0.29, French measure. Presented by the late Cav. Molin.

² No. 94, Ven. Acad. Cat. p. 27. Wood, 0.45 met. by 0.33, French measure. Half size of nature. Signed, “Antonellus Mesanius pinxit.” From the room of the Anticollegio.

³ No. 8, Berl. Cat. Wood, 1 ft. 6½ z. high by 1 ft. 1½ z. broad. Signed, “Antonellus Mesaneus.” A copy is in the Collection of Count Lochis at Bergamo. Another is in the Stædel Gallery; No. 30, St. Cat. Wood, 18" 6''' by 13". In the pictures thus marked by inferiority, it might be fair to suppose that Antonello left the chief portions of his work to be executed by his pupils.

⁴ No. 13, Berlin. Cat. Wood, 2 ft. 2½ z. by 1 ft. 8½ z. Signed, “Antonellus Mesanensis.”

“Christ crowned,” in the Spinola Gallery at Genoa, may be classed in the same catalogue, on account of the want of blending and general sombreness of its intonation. The expression of the features is grief rendered in a vulgar manner,—the mouth falling at the sides, and looking more contemptuous than moved by grief. The hardness of outline peculiar to the whole,—a front face and bust without hands,—is increased by cleaning and retouching.¹

Notwithstanding the assertion of Federici, that Antonello did not paint the tomb of the Senator Onigo at Treviso, there is now no doubt on this point. Federici supposed that Onigo died in 1491, after Antonello, but Onigo really died in 1490, three years before the painter.² Federici is also mistaken in noticing the subjects as foreshortened figures; they are really standing figures of two soldiers, from the remains of which, after the repairs of the edifice in which the tomb was placed, we are of opinion that these figures were really produced by Antonello. They are simple and grand, and recal to mind the manner of the Bellini.

The last picture to be noticed, in connexion with the name of Antonello, is one which represents St. Jerome sitting in the centre of an apartment, and surrounded by shelves and articles of furniture; the apartment itself having apertures looking out upon an Italian sky and landscape, of which the turrets resemble those in the Crucifixion at Antwerp.³ This picture is in the Collection of

¹ Half size of nature. Wood.

² See the Epitaph of Onigo in Burchelati (B.), *Historiæ Tervisinae*, 4°. 1616. Tervisi, p. 323.

³ No. 17, Ant. Cat. ut sup.

Mr. Baring in London, and was lately at Stratton. It is that picture which the Anonimo di Morelli describes as being in his time at Venice.

“ In the house of Marc Antonio Pasqualino (1529) was a small picture of St. Jeronimo in a studio, reading, dressed in cardinal’s robes. Some believe it to have been from the hand of Antonello da Messina; but the majority, with most likelihood, attribute it to Gianes (Van Eyck), or to Memelin, an old Ponentino (Western, or Flemish) painter. It exhibits, indeed, that manner, although the countenance is finished in the Italian fashion, as it would seem, from the hand of Jacometto. The edifices are *alla Ponentina* (in the Flemish character). The landscape is natural, minute, and finished; and, besides, one sees a window and a door, in good perspective, and the whole work is perfect for subtlety of colour, vigour of design, and relief. There are depicted a peacock, a quail, and a barber’s basin. On the desk a scroll is imitated, and fastened open. It appears to contain the name of the master; yet, if one looks closely, it contains no letters, but is all counterfeit. Others think that the figure was repainted by Jacometto Veniziano.”¹

Three painters are named in the description given by the Anonimo,—Antonello, Van Eyck, and Memling; and as it is supposed that the face of the Cardinal is repainted in the Italian fashion, Jacometto is said to have retouched the picture. We cannot, for our part, discover the trace of two hands in any portion of the panel, although we notice the mixed Flemish and Italian manner in various places. Jacometto, indeed, or rather Jacobello del Fiore,

¹ Anonimo di Morelli, ut sup., p. 74.

can hardly have touched it; for he lived many years before Antonello, having been the chief of the School of Venice in 1415, and a painter who laboured à tempera in the old Venetian fashion.¹ The picture of St. Jerome, on the other hand, dates as far back only as the close of the fifteenth century, and is rather the production of an Italian master who studied the Flemish manner and Van Eyck's mode of colouring, than of a Flemish master seeking to imitate the Italians. The picture, in fact, is superior to the productions of Flemish masters of that time, when the pupils of Van Eyck no longer maintained their art at the high standard to which he had raised it. We can hardly wonder at the doubts expressed by the Anonimo as to the respective claims of Antonello and Memling to the authorship of the St. Jerome, when we find the panels of those two masters alternately attributed to each of them, as if it had been impossible for judges to discern between the two; nor is it strange that the name of John Van Eyck should arise in the discussion, when we know how frequently Antonello rivalled his master in the production of colour. The St. Jerome is, indeed, painted on the principle of Van Eyck, but with that peculiar difference which renders the pictures of a late period so distinct,—namely, an improvement in the technical details. The tones of the flesh-tints are not so vigorous or powerful as those of John Van Eyck, who employed his colours with more body; and the flesh-tints, in the face of the Saint, have somewhat of a softness and fusion in them, being modelled with more facility and breadth than are met in

¹ Sier Jacomello de Fior, gastoldo dei Pentori, 1415. Zanetti, della Pittura Veneziana, p. 18.

the pictures of the Flemish master. This, indeed, is a point which struck the Anonimo himself, and induced him to believe in the existence of a manner and sentiment presenting more of Italian than Flemish characteristics. Other powerful arguments, in support of our opinion, may be derived from a further study of Van Eyck's pictures, in which the local tones of colours are more powerful than they are in St. Jerome, and the passages from parts in light to parts in shadow are more strongly marked. In the St. Jerome, so far from perceiving such a feature, we notice, on the contrary, a nice blending of the colours, and far greater harmony in the general intonation of the work, than can be met in John Van Eyck. This nice blending and harmony, this softness and plenitude of *chiaro-scuro*, are qualities which deeply characterise the school founded by Antonello in Venice. In all his pictures, it is true, the Sicilian painter mingled Flemish traits with his own Italian manner. The noble attitude and features of the Saint are of the latter, as the drapery and its form of fold are of the former. Indeed, the sleeves of the figure are peculiarly Flemish and laboured, after the manner of John Van Eyck; but they are not more so, after all, than are other details of the same kind in divers panels by Antonello. Again, on the other hand, the picture is remarkable for firmness of design, without the usual amount of dry and hard outline peculiar to the Flemings; but the Flemish fashion of introducing numerous small articles about the room and furniture is not omitted, although, it may be remarked, that it is less than usually obtrusive. Indeed, in all these parts, we are more forcibly reminded of the soft and deli-

cate manner of Memling than of that which marks Van Eyck; but, above all, we note the parsimony of the colours, which was the peculiarity of the early Venetians. The touch of Van Eyck's brush was more diversified and firm than this; his colours are laid on with greater impasto than are visible here; and the accessories are touched so as to place them strongly in relief,—a peculiarity not to be found in such a degree in the St. Jerome. Finally, we consider the picture, as a whole, to possess rather the characteristics of Antonello's manner than those of any other masters.

The Laughing Heads, of which Maurolyco has left us the description, are amongst the catalogue of pictures of which we find no trace,—a list which now comprises the “*Ecce Homo*” of the Casa Agliata, signed and dated 1470; the “*Virgin and Child*” of San Gregorio at Messina; the “*Madonna*” of San Cassiano, which, according to Sansovino, was in its place in 1580,¹ but disappeared in 1646, when Ridolfi wrote his book;² the “*Madonna*” of the Carmine at Messina, described by Gallo;³ that of the Cornaro family at Treviso;⁴ portraits of two persons, “*a Dominican and Franciscan*,” mentioned by Vasari as belonging to Messer Bernardo Vecchietti, a Florentine, and sold out of Italy about fifty years ago;⁵ “*St. Christopher*,” painted for the

¹ Sansovino (F. R.), *Venezia descritta*, 4°. Venetia 1663, p. 225.

² Ridolfi, *ut sup.*, p. 48.

³ Gallo, tom. i. p. 183, in *Memorie de' Pittori Mess.* p. 15. Twenty years since sold to a merchant of Quinto, near Treviso, and then to an Englishman.

⁴ Still at Treviso in 1771. Zanetti, p. 21.

⁵ Vasari, *Vit. d'Ant. da Mess.* vol. iv. p. 80. Sir C. Eastlake says, “This picture was lately in London, in possession of Mr. Woodburn.” *Materials*, *ut sup.*, p. 211.

Pazzi in San Giuliano at Venice;¹ and a portrait of a "Venetian gentleman," signed by the author, dated 1478, —first in the possession of the patrician family of Vidman, and later, in 1771, in the Gallery of Bartolommeo Vitturi, at Venice. There is likewise no trace of "the Virgin," which Ridolfi described as in the Contarini Palace, afterwards carried by one Van Veerle to Antwerp; the "Dead Saviour and the three Marys," painted, according to Boschini, for the Brotherhood of the Holy Trinity in Venice; the "Virgin with a book before her," in the house of the Baron Ottavio Tassi in the same city.²

The influence of Antonello on the style of Domenico Veneziano is difficult to trace, on account of the loss of the paintings in Santa Maria Nuova at Florence, which renders it impossible to test the accuracy of Vasari as to their being painted in oil. The pictures of Domenico remaining to us as examples of his manner, not only prove to have been painted *à tempera*, but exhibit a truly Italian manner. Strangely enough, however, the traces of Flemish art are visible in the works of Andrea dal Castagno. We find in him a sentiment of pride akin to that severity which gave solemnity to the figures of the Agnus Dei of St. Bavon,—a hardness of outline, and an overcharging of distances, which are less characteristic of the Italians than the Flemings. Some have also thought they saw a similar influence in the style of the brothers Pollaiolo; but, if it really existed, it showed itself, in a secondary manner, in the number of jewelled ornaments

¹ Zanetti, p. 21.

² There is here coincidence of subject with the picture, No. 94 of the Venice Academy.

with which they filled their vestments. It must be borne in mind, however, that the Pollaioli might derive this failing from their first apprenticeship as *orafi*, or chisellers of gold and silver,—an art in which almost all the great Florentine masters of that time were also educated. In the secondary parts of pictures, the Flemish influence is likewise to be distinguished in the works of second-rate painters of the schools of Florence and of Lombardy, who imitated Memling and Van der Weyden; one of whom is Ambrogio Borgognone,—a cold and lifeless copyist, of whom a picture in the Berlin Museum may be mentioned as an example.

CHAPTER XII.

COTEMPORARIES OF THE VAN EYCKS.

WHEN John Van Eyck became "varlet de chambre" of Philip of Burgundy, a change was made in the functions of the ducal painters; and whilst the arts were honoured in his person by increased respect and pay, the common labour of the ducal court,—such as painting standards, pennons, and banners,—was entrusted to a lower class of men. When Jehan Malouel had ceased to live, in 1415, his place was filled by Bellechose of Brabant.¹ Bellechose, however, was employed exclusively in Burgundy, and is only known to have painted for the convent of Carthusians at Dijon two altar-pieces, representing scenes from the lives of St. Denis and the Virgin.²

In Flanders, Jehan le Voleur was Jehan Malouel's colleague as "peintre" and "varlet de chambre," and filled a post of honour in the pleasure castle of the Duke at Hesdin. Jehan le Voleur's skill consisted only in manufacturing standards, banners, and pennons. At his death, in 1417, he was succeeded in the place of governor of Hesdin by Hue de Boulogne. Colin, or Colart le Voleur, the son of Jehan, obtained employment for many years

¹ "Bellechose (Henry) de Brabant, peintre de M. S. le Duc aux gages de huit gros par jour, par lettres datées du 5 Avril, 1419."—*De Salles, Mémoires p. servir*, ut sup., p. 242.

² *Mémoriaux*—"C'est le livre des mémoires de la chambre des Comptes."—*Apud De Laborde, Les Ducs de Bourgogne*, vol. i. *Introd.* p. 69.

in the same capacity as his father. The castle, or chastel d'Hesdin, was a favourite resort of Philip of Burgundy, and a place of rest to which he retired to amuse himself at his leisure. It contrasted strangely with the pleasure palace of Louis the Eleventh near Tours, where the grounds were known to bristle with various deadly instruments intended to maim trespassers. Hesdin was as full of pitfalls and trap-doors as a modern theatre ; but they only served to perpetrate the coarse though harmless jokes, in which the fun of the Middle Ages consisted. They seem, indeed, to have only suited the robust and healthy constitutions of the people of those days. A few examples, taken from the records of the castle, may not be uninteresting. A stranger issuing, for instance, from a gallery into a neighbouring passage, was startled by the sudden apparition of a wooden figure spouting water. A wetting and a fright were the necessary consequences. But when the joke was carried furthest, a set of brushes were put in motion, and the patient emerged with a white or a black face, as the case might be. Another still more powerful engine was one which seized a man and thrashed him soundly.

In the centre of the great gallery was a trap, and near it the figure of a hermit who prophesied. Ladies were his most frequent victims. They no sooner felt an interest in the telling of their fortune than the ceiling opened and poured forth rain ; thunder-claps followed in quick succession, preceded by appropriate lightning ; and, as the air grew colder, snow fell. Taking refuge from the storm, the patient entered a dangerous shelter above a pitfall leading into a sack of feathers, from which escape at last was permitted.

The castle of Hesdin was full of tricks of this description. Besides the pitfalls just described, there was in the great gallery a bridge which dropped saunterers into the water. In various places there were engines which spouted water when they were touched. Six figures stood in the hall spouting water, and wetting people in various ways. At the entrance of a gallery were eight water-jets rushing upwards, which wetted people passing, and three small pipes were so fixed close by as to cover them with flour. If the panic-stricken victims rushed up to a window and opened it, up came a figure wetting them, and closing the frame. If a splendid missal on a desk caught a curious eye, the person who went up to it was either covered with soot or dirt. A mirror close at hand betrayed the trick ; but whilst the victim wondered at the blackness of his face, out rushed a flour-dredger that made him white.

The most elaborate of all these tricks was one combining almost every species of deception. A figure of a man was made to start in the great gallery, frightening people by talking or crying. At the noise, the loungers in other rooms rushed in, upon which a number of figures, armed with sticks, came forth, driving every one pell-mell to the bridge, where they fell, of course, into the water.

Such were the rude and practical pastimes of our regal forefathers of the fifteenth century.

Colart le Voleur was the author of all these mechanical jokes, for which the Duke requited him with a sum of a thousand livres. He, together with Hue de Boulogne, however, was generally employed in painting banners and pennons. The name of Colart le Voleur disappears from the

ducal records in 1443, and Hue de Boulogne died in 1449; when hisson, Jehan de Boulogne, succeeded him as "paintre" and "varlet de chambre." But the post of governor of Hesdin was given to Pierre Coustain, who took the title of "paintre des princes," and appears upon the register of the Corporation of St. Luke, under that name, in 1450.

Pierre Coustain and Jâcques Hennecart were "paintres de M. D. S.," and managers of the "entremetz" at Bruges, when Charles the Rash was married, in 1468.¹ Olivier de la Marche has given us a glowing account of these "entremetz," which startled lords and ladies by their cumbrous mechanism. His enthusiastic pen describes the famous lions who roared so well, without hurting the company, and the beauteous shepherdess who turned her compliment so elegantly to the new princess; but he forgets the arts, and despises pictures. He recollected upwards of ten "histories" in the streets that led to Charles's palace; but their subjects had escaped him, with the exception of two representing Eve and Adam in Paradise, and the Marriage of (!) Alexander and Cleopatra. He tells us of two figures painted as supporters to the arms of Burgundy—one St. Andrew, and the next St. George; but mentions no pictorial work produced by any of the painters present at that time as being worthy of record or admiration.² Van der Goes, we know, was one of these, and his well-known talents might have elicited something worthy of remark; but silence reigns upon that point. It seems that Tournay, Gand, Yprès,

¹ See, for all these court painters, De Laborde, *Les Ducs de Bourgogne*, ut sup., vols. i. and ii.

² Olivier de la Marche, *Mémoires*, 8°, Gand. 1566, p. 524.

Cambrai, Arras, Douai, Valenciennes, Louvain, Antwerp, Brussels, Bois le Duc, Dordrecht, Gorcum, each furnished painters, sculptors, or workmen for the occasion. One Amand Regnault was paid 10 sols per diem for running to Ghent, to Audenarde, and other "good towns," in search of the best workmen in the country—"painters as well as others." Jâques Daret, master-painter of Tournay, leader of other painters, is one of those who received the highest pay, having had for sixteen days' work, at the "entremetz," 27 sols per diem. The pay of others varied from 6 to 24 sols, and more; the wages being paid according to a tariff made out for the occasion by the elders and juries of the corporation of painters in Bruges.¹ Out of a list of upwards of three hundred thus employed and paid, but a few are remembered at this day except Van der Goes; of him no notice has been taken by De la Marche.

The earlier painters of Haarlem are almost as unknown as those whom De la Marche omitted to record. Franz Mostert, who lived in Haarlem in 1550, was ignorant of the artists who first practised there;² and it is only to Van Mander that we owe the preservation of the names of Albert Van Ouwater and Gerard of St. John. Albert Van Ouwater was the author of an altar-piece in the chapel of the Romans of Haarlem Cathedral, founded by the pilgrims to St. Peter's. The subject of the altar-piece was illustrative of the founders, and represented pilgrims, in a landscape, in the various stages of their

¹ Reiffenberg, *ut sup.*, Appendix. De Laborde, *Les Ducs de Bourgogne*, *ut sup.*

² Van Mander, p. 206.

progress to the holy city. Two life-size figures of St. Peter and St. Paul were also depicted there. Van Mander describes the distance as skilful; saying that, according to the testimony of the oldest painters of Haarlem, the best style of landscape in the Netherlands was practised in their city. Among the admirers of Ouwater was Heemskerk; but the proof that Ouwater's talent was more in the fashion of his landscape than in other descriptions of painting is the testimony of the Anonimo di Morelli, who says that many pictures of landscapes in the Collection of Cardinal Grimani were by Alberto d'Olanda. Van Mander adds, however, that Ouwater was a fair master of the naked form, and mentions a "Raising of Lazarus," of which he saw a copy, and admired the naked figures. The draperies, the faces, hands, and feet, were also, he said, skilfully rendered.¹ The pictures of Van Ouwater having disappeared, and Van Mander neglecting or unable to give the dates of his birth or death, it is impossible to speak of any of his productions. Attempts have been made to attribute panels to this master; but, in most instances, without sufficient grounds. The "Descent from the Cross," of the Wallraff Collection at Cologne, bearing the mutilated inscription, "O W A," is assigned to him, and has some resemblance to the productions of the mixed schools of Van der Weyden, Cologne, and Nuremberg. The "Dead Christ," in his meagre forms, and long attenuated frame, painfully ex-

¹ "The picture of Lazarus represented the saint near a temple with colonnades—the Jews and people on one side, and the apostles on the other. This was the picture which Heemskerk is said to have admired."—*Van Mander*, p. 206.

aggerates the disagreeable peculiarities of Van der Weyden, whilst the figure of the man who holds the Saviour's shoulders is remarkable for the ill-shapen leg and foot of the followers of Stephen of Cologne. Other parts of the picture remind us of Wohlgemuth. This panel bears the date of 1480 ;¹ and if it be by Van Ouwater, it stamps that painter as one of the numerous imitators who thronged the Netherlands and the Rhine at the beginning of the sixteenth century. But we can scarcely conceive how Van Mander could call such a man clever in landscape and anatomy. Another point to be noticed is this, that had Van Ouwater lived as late as the year 1480, he could scarcely be forgotten so soon as he appears to have been at Haarlem. We are inclined to suppose, therefore, that Van Ouwater is an earlier painter than the author of the "Descent from the Cross" of Cologne ; and, assuming this, he must no longer be admitted as the author of other pictures which various writers have assigned to him. It is remarkable, indeed, that none of the pictures attributed to Van Ouwater are like each other in style and manner. The "Crucifixion" of Berlin, given to him by Hotho, is unlike, and superior to the "Christ" of Cologne, and may be classed amongst the works of an artist who imitated Memling.² The "Crucifixion" of the Belvedere Gallery, at Vienna, is of the school founded by Lucas of Leyden.³ Passavant, in 1841, supposed that the Danzig altar-piece

¹ The wings of this picture bear the date 1499. See *infra*, "Influence of Flemish Art abroad."

² No. 573, Berlin Cat. See *infra*, "Imitations of Memling and Van Eyck."

³ No. 10, room second, Belvedere Cat. See *supra*, p. 106.

must be attributed to Van Ouwater, because of its likeness to the "Crucifixion" at Vienna.¹ The final result of this examination is, that a painter once lived at Haarlem whose name is preserved, but whose works are lost.

Similar uncertainty marks the period when Gerard of St. John lived and died. "Gerard of St. John," says Van Mander, "was the pupil of Albert Van Ouwater, and took his name from the monastery of the Knights of St. John at Haarlem, where he usually resided. He died at the early age of twenty-eight."² Albert Dürer, at sight of a picture by him, is reported to have said, he must have been born a painter.³ Gerard is stated by Van Mander to have painted a large tryptic for the Cathedral of Haarlem; the centre representing the Crucifixion, the wings scenes from the life of the Saviour.⁴ Gerard also painted for Haarlem Cathedral a view of the interior of that edifice. These, together with other works of the master—one amongst the rest executed for the convent of Regulars, near Haarlem—and many that were preserved in the Collection of Cardinal Grimani, in Venice, are no longer known.⁵ Two panels, which once formed a wing of the tryptic at Haarlem (so say Michiels and other authors),⁶ are now in the Belvedere Gallery at Vienna. They represent the "Descent from the Cross" in the grouping and composition—of which subject we remark the study of Van der Weyden's manner—and the Life and Death of St. John

¹ Passavant, *Kunstblatt*, 1841, No. 10.

² Van Mander, *ut sup.*, p. 206.

³ A. Dürer, *Reliq. v. Campe*, *ut sup.*

⁴ Van Mander, p. 206.

⁵ Anonimo di Morelli, p. 76.

⁶ Michiels, *ut sup.*, p. 239, vol. ii. Hotho, *apud Michiels*.

the Baptist. These pictures, if they really are productions of Gerard of St. John, suffice to show that he was a painter, living as late as the sixteenth century ; painting with brownish tones, drawing with a certain firmness, yet without a good knowledge of anatomy, and following, apparently, the school of Quintin Massys, whose traces are distinguished in the ill-shapen faces and prominent noses of the principal figures. The tradition respecting these pictures is, that they were taken from the monastery of the Knights of St. John by the Spaniards. They were afterwards in the Collection of our Charles the First, as is proved by the following inscription :—“ This is the second piece, being one of the five pictures which were presented to the king at St. James’s by the State, their ambassadors.”¹

Three pictures, forming one tryptic, are exhibited in the Munich Pinakothek under Gerard’s name. They are of the same late date as the others, but feeble in execution.²

Whilst such was the state of art at Haarlem, its progress seems to have been slight also at Leyden, where we find no trace of oil-painting in the early part of the fifteenth century. Engelbert, an engraver, whose plates are found, dated 1466-7, lived at that time at Leyden, and was the master of Engelbrechtzen, who afterwards taught Lucas of Leyden.

¹ No. 31, Belvedere Cat., and No. 34, room second ; both 5’ 6” by 4’ 5”. Wood.

² Nos. 84, 85, 86, Munich Pin. Cat., Wood.—“ Christ leaving his Mother,” the “ Descent from the Cross,” and “ The Resurrection.”

CHAPTER XIII.

HANS MEMLING.

It is a strange, but not unnatural result of the position held by painters of the fifteenth century, that very little interest attached to their personal history, though much was usually felt in contemplation of their works. The feelings, the enthusiasm, the education of the painter, were beyond the ken of his employer. Artists had the countenance of their patron, to whom more praise and flattery accrued, perhaps, for fostering their talent, than was awarded to the humble owners of it. To this we may, in part, ascribe the want of records illustrative of the lives of early Flemish painters. As in the history of Venetian art, however, we find much more recorded of the Bellini than of Giorgione; so in that of Belgian art, much less is known of Memling than even of his master. His pictures were admired and praised; but where he was born, or where he lived, were equally uncertain. Bruges, which should erect a monument in honour of his name, whose ancient buildings are adorned with his graceful pictures, knows nothing of his early life, and is the seat of a legend worthless to historians. So slight was the remembrance of a painter whose works were sought in Italy, and Germany, and Spain, that Van

Mander, a hundred years later, raised him from oblivion, by saying:—"Respecting some of our painters, whose existence is more known to me from looking at their pictures than from knowledge of the period in which they lived, I would mention first — of Bruges—a celebrated master in the early times, named Hans Memmelinck."¹

A few lines are given to his works; and Memling is dismissed from view, to make room for Martin Heemskerck or Van Orlay, men who made a trade of painting without much honour to their country.

Posterity, however, recognised the talents of the painter; but spent its energies less in descanting on his merits than in useless arguments respecting the mode of spelling his name. No one doubts, at the present time, that his proper title is Memling. Not only was he called so by Van Mander, but by other authors, such as the Anonimo di Morelli, who turns him into Memelino;² and Golzius, a well-known painter and engraver of the seventeenth century, one of whose plates, representing a Crucifixion, contains the inscription—"Joan Memmlinck inv. Jul. Golzius fec. Vrindts excudit, 1656."³ Descamps first asserted that the name was Hemmelinck, founding his assertion doubtless on the signatures of the panels in the hospital at Bruges.⁴ The first and third letters are certainly different in each of these signatures; but this can hardly be called

¹ Van Mander, *ut sup.*, p. 205. The edition of Van Mander by De Yoogh, takes unwarrantable liberties with the text of the first edition. We quote from the first throughout this work.

² Anonimo di Morelli, *ut sup.*, p. 74—8.

³ Frenzel (J. G. A.), *Sammlung der kupferstiche Sternberg*, 8°. Dresden, 1836-42, p. 13.

⁴ Descamps, "*Voyage pittoresque*," 8°. Paris, 1753.

a proof; for we find the letter M written in both fashions in the records of the hospital itself, as well as in various coins and inscriptions of the period.

The Germans, who claim this painter as their own, are eager for the truth of Descamp's version. They possess the pedigree of a family of Hemlings who lived at Constance, and assume that Hans belonged to it. They found their theory, again, upon a passage in the "Nieuw Tractat" of Vaernewyck,—a history of Belgium in the inharmonious tones of Low Dutch verse, in which the author says:—"The houses of the town of Bruges are filled with paintings by 'der Deutschen Hans.'" "Der Deutschen Hans," however, is not Hans Memling; but, as Van Mander proves, Hans Zinger, a painter, born at Zinger, in Hessen, who was free master in the Guild of Antwerp in 1543.

Whether born at Bruges, as some infer from Van Mander's words, or at Damme, as Descamps asserts, without assigning his authority, Memling became the pupil of Van der Weyden, and, as such, seems to have spent his early days at Brussels rather than elsewhere. Vasari describes him as Ausse in one place, and Hauesse in the other—disciple of Rugiero;¹ and the Catalogue of pictures of Margaret of Austria, at Malines, mentions an altar-piece, of which the centre was by Roger, and the wings by "master Hans."² Memling, therefore, laboured for a time, conjointly with his master, assisting him, and receiving his lessons. We have a picture said to be his

¹ Vasari, ut sup., *Introd.* vol. i. p. 163; vol. iv. *Vit. d'Ant. da Mess.* p. 76. *Parte terza*, Edit. of 1568.

² Le Glay; De Laborde, "*Inventaire des Tableaux, &c., de Marguérite d'Autriche*," ut sup., p. 24.

portrait, painted in 1462, where the person represented seems to have reached about his thirtieth year ; but the execution of this work does not, in our opinion, belong to Memling ; and we feel inclined to doubt the propriety of calling it his portrait.¹

We might also be led to doubt the statement of the Anonimo di Morelli, when he says, that the Gallery of Cardinal Grimani, at Venice, contained a portrait of Isabella, wife of Philip, Duke of Burgundy, executed by Zuan Memelino in 1450.² It was at this time that Van der Weyden was in his prime, and Memling's talent only rising. Why should the court have employed the pupil instead of the master to paint the portrait of the Duchess of Burgundy, whom Van Eyck had limned in her youth, and Roger might have transferred to canvas in her older time, and whom such men as Van der Goes and others might have had to sit for them ? We also doubt whether Memling went to Italy either as the pupil of Van der

¹ Passavant says of this portrait, lately in Mr. Rogers's Gallery, and once the property of Mr. Aders,—“ It should be the portrait of Memling himself as he appeared in the hospital. No one in Bruges knew of it ; nor does Descamps mention it. It is painted quite in the style of Memling, and I doubt not from his hand. If it be admitted that it represents himself, the wounded arm and the date, 1462, determine when Memling was in the hospital.”—*Kunstreise*, p. 94. It is necessary to observe that all authorities, from Descamps upwards, have fixed the date of Memling's illness as 1477. The dress of the portrait is not so much a costume peculiar to the Hospital of St. John as one common to the period. In the Adoration of the Magi, by Memling, a spectator is depicted with a long beard and an orange cap. This is said to be the portrait of Memling in the hospital dress—a different one from that of the portrait of 1462. Vide Bruges' Cat., p. 37.

² Anonimo di Morelli, ut sup., p. 75.

Weyden or on his own account ; for his pictures preserved in Vasari's time in Italy were painted in his latest and most perfect manner ;¹ and he shows, in no department of the art, such tendencies as might have been derived from a study of Italian schools. At all events, he could not have painted the portrait of Isabel of Portugal in 1450, and accompany Van der Weyden, who was at Rome in that year. He was employed at court, as we are led to infer from the catalogue of the Gallery of Margaret of Austria, which notices a Madonna with St. John, and St. Barbara on the wings, painted by Master Hans.² Tradition says, that he followed Charles the Rash in his campaigns ; and Descamps states, that he enrolled himself as a common soldier, having lost his character and means by libertinage. On this a wondrous legend is repeated, which has a certain kindly interest.

It appears that, shortly after Charles the Rash perished before Nancy, the scattered remnants of his army found their way to Flanders. Amongst them was no less a man than Memling, wounded, wayworn, and hungry. It was on a winter's night, in 1477, that he was seen, in

¹ Michiels insists that Memling must have been to Italy, because he represented on a picture a distant view of the Coliseum. But it is not a faithful representation of that monument. Again, he says he copied the old bronze Venetian horses in the Martyrdom of St. Hippolytus. We can see no likeness between these horses and those of Venice. Besides, we doubt that Memling can be the author of this picture.—See Michiels, *Peinture Flamande*, vol. ii. p. 293.

² Le Glay, *ut sup.* *Kunstblatt*, Passavant, 1843, No. 62. De Laborde, *Inventaire des tab. de Marg. d'Autriche*, *ut sup.* p. 25.

a piteous plight, crawling into Bruges, and ringing at the gate of the Hospital of St. John.¹

This ancient building, of which the first foundation was laid in ages long gone by, was raised for the relief of the poor and helpless sick of Bruges, and Maldeghem, a neighbouring suburb. Venerable sisters tended female patients, while the males were in the care of monks. The entrance to this Hospital, which may still be seen, is through an arch and rotten doorway, from a street ill-paved with pebbles, and overgrown with grass.

On entering the gate, we pass a small court-yard where sickly wasted forms are seen seeking repose and shade under a few puny linden trees. Turning to the left, another doorway leads into a hall with galleries like cloisters, filled with beds on which the patients lie. The large old-fashioned grates and columns, the venerable nuns, recal to mind remote and distant times; but the monks are gone, and male and female patients are attended by women only. In a portion of the building are the treasures of the Hospital—the shrine of St. Ursula, and the pictures painted by Hans Memling. Here the painter came in his distress; he scarcely had strength to ring the bell; but falling senseless at the gate, he was raised and taken in by the brethren.² The Belgian writers assert, with much complacency, that Hans was taken in at once, because he was a native of the city; and it was contrary to the foundation to receive a patient not of Bruges or Maldeghem; but as they also say that Hans was so

¹ Catalogue of Bruges Hospital, 3d. Ed. Bruges, 1850, p. 10. Michiels, *ut sup*, pp. 303, 304.

² Michiels, p. 204.

completely altered and disfigured by his wound and by fatigue that he could not be recognised, he must have been harboured without question. It was not till he improved in health that the brethren discovered him. When his sickness left him, he asked for brushes, painted the picture of the Sibyl Zambeth, and revealed his name; and then, from a sense of gratitude, he painted all the pictures of the Hospital.

That Memling followed Charles the Rash in his campaigns is not impossible; but those who say that the picture of the Sibyl Zambeth is the labour of his convalescent leisure, presume on public ignorance.¹ The Sibyl Zambeth is a work of Memling's early days, and Memling must have been employed by the Superior of the Hospital long before the fatal year which ended with the death of Charles the Rash at Nancy. Two portraits of the Morel family seem painted at this time.

Some late discoveries, however, have proved that, though Memling was distressed and poor in 1477, his presence at the camp of Charles the Rash is more than problematical. A contract is preserved in the records of Bruges, in which the name of Memling appears. The document contains an inventory of the goods belonging to the corporation of the *librariers*, in which we find the following: ²—

“And then their picture, with four wings, in which are

¹ Michiels, p. 305, vol. i. Hospital Catalogue, p. 11.

² “Noch bovendien huerliedder autaeer tafte metten vier dueren daer aen zynde daer Willem Vreland ende zyn wyf zaligher gedachte in ghecontrofeit zyn, ghemaect by der hand van wylen Meestre Hans.”—*C. Carton, Annales de la Soc. d'Emulat. de Bruges*, tom. v. 2^e Ser. Nos. 3, 4, p. 331.

Guillaume Vreland and his wife of pious memory, painted by the hand of the late Meestre Hans.”

The inventory was taken in 1499 ; at which time it is evident that Memling was no longer living. The records of the company of *librarians* further contain the following :—

“Anno 1477.—Item, given to the carpenter V sc. gr. (*escalins*), to wit: two sc. for the wings which I lent Meestre Hans for the corporation.”¹

From this it would appear that Meestre Hans was poor enough to want a very small sum, and had so little credit that he could not get the wings without assistance. Again, we find the following :—

“Item, expended at the place of Willem Vreland twelve gros, when Meestre Hans commenced to paint the wings.”

These expenses, be it borne in mind, were made in 1477, when historians say that Memling was on a bed of sickness. Again, same page :—

“Item, paid again to the carpenter for two other wings, 4 sc.”

“Item, advanced to Meestre Hans on the two wings he has to paint for us, one lib. gr.”

Memling, it is evident, was too ill off to paint without advances.

Further, in the records we find subscriptions opened for the payment of the altar-piece, which produce 30 sc. ; and in the account for the year 1478 :—

¹ “Item, ghegheven den scrinewerker V sc. gr. te weten II sc. voor 1 cassyn van onse taflee, en III sc. van de duerkins dien ic Meestre Hans hebbe gheleend van de ghilde weghe.”—*C. Carton*, ut sup., p. 331.

“Item, given to Meestre Hans in all and at once, 3 liv. 11 sch.”¹

Such is the abject state in which we find Memling in 1477-78.

Although the Sposalizio in the Hospital of Bruges is marked 1479, it may be of another year; for the signature is certainly a forgery, and, indeed, admitted to be so by Mr. de Bast. Its style is not so perfect or advanced in practice as that of the Adoration of the Kings in the same Gallery. It is remarkable that the signature and date of the Sposalizio should have been tampered with; and not unlikely that, if the old inscription were to be found, some further argument might be discovered refuting all the stories of the sickness and recovery of Memling. It is said that brother Floreins, gauger of the order, was the man who chiefly patronised the painter, whilst he laboured at the Hospital;² but this is proved by no distinct document; and the Sposalizio itself, besides containing the portrait of that functionary with gauge in hand amongst his barrels, has on its outer surface full-length portraits of Jacques de Keuninckx, bursar, and Antony Seghers, “master director” of the Hospital, attended by their patrons, St. James of Compostella and St. Anthony the Hermit; and similar likenesses of Agnes Cazenbroed, superior, and

¹ “It., verleid tot Willem Vreland XII g. als de duerkins van onse tafle waren Meestre Hans besteet te makene.

“Item, noch. bet. de scrinewerker van 2 and. duerkins IV sch. g.

“Item, bet. Meestre Hans up de 2 duerkins die hy heeft van ons te makene 1 lib. gr.

“Item, gegheven Meestre Hans al samen in een III lib II sch.”—*C. Carton*, ut sup., p. 332.

² Michiels, vol. ii. p. 305. *Catalogue of the Hospital*, p. 16.

Claire von Hultem, with their patrons, St. Agnes and St. Clara.¹ The monogram on the frame is said to represent the gauge in use by brother Floreins, but this can scarcely be admitted as a proof that he gave the commission for this altar-piece. The portraits of the superiors certainly occupy the most honourable positions in the picture,—those assigned by the common practice of the artists of the Netherlands to the donors.

In truth, the painter must have worked indifferently for the whole establishment; for, in 1479, he painted the Adoration of the Magi, in which brother Floreins is the donor.²

In 1480, Adrian Reims, Superior of the Hospital, commissioned him to execute the subjects destined for the ornament of the shrine of St. Ursula. It is said, that after Memling finished the Sibyl Zambeth, brother Floreins conceived the happy notion of making him depict upon a shrine a series of scenes from the life of St. Ursula and her companions. Passavant, however, says, that in 1843 he obtained some facts from the then Superior of the Hospital, derived, she said, from records to which she would not give him access. Their purport was, that Adrian Reims, Superior of the Hospital, commissioned Memling, in 1480, to paint the shrine, and furnished him with funds to travel to Cologne, that he journeyed there on two occasions, and that the panels were completed in 1486.³

¹ Catalogue of the Hospital, p. 23.

² Ibid. p. 36.

³ Passavant, Kunstblatt, No. 62, 1843. Michiels says: "In 1477, our artist, in all likelihood, painted the Sibyl already mentioned, and then commenced the reliquary."—P. 335.

These facts have not been contradicted, and, in a measure, shake the strong assertions of historians who declare that Memling never had a livre for the pictures at the Hospital. It was so evident that Memling painted views from nature, of Cologne, Mayence, and Bâle, that all the Belgians say he visited the Rhine; but they attribute his knowledge of the country to a journey there in early youth. The fact, in truth, was, that his visit to Cologne and Bâle was undertaken at the bidding of his patron, Adrian Reims.

Memling made some stay upon the Rhine, and sketched the cities on its banks. He, doubtless, studied the old pictures of the early Rhenish schools,—the German character being visible in the figures of the shrine,—a proof that he also took note of the features of the people of those countries.

In depicting on the panels of the *Châsse* the startling scenes which marked the journey of St. Ursula and her companions, he discarded the fabulous, and adopted the more likely version of the legend, which confines the number of attendant virgins to eleven. He could not have acted otherwise, for the monks and nuns of Bruges were confident that they alone possessed the bones of St. Ursula and her companions, and therefore put no faith in legends which assigned to her the leading of eleven thousand. Ernest, Duke of Saxony, in his memoir of a journey through France and Belgium in 1613, says, that the bones and skulls exhibited in St. Ursula of Cologne (where they may still be seen), as the relics of the saint and her companions, were the remnants of an excavation in a cemetery of Cologne.

The passage of the mountains by the pious cohort would enable Memling, had he crossed the Alps, to represent with accuracy the snow-clad mountains on the road. But he did not do so; and Bâle appears to be the farthest point he visited. Those who think he went to Italy solve this difficulty by supposing that he went through France.¹

Soon after the completion of the *Châsse*, or, as the Flemings call it, the *Rijve*, Memling received commissions from another hospital of Bruges, that of St. Julian.² The picture of St. Christopher in the Bruges Academy, though dated 1484, may have been painted later, as the signature has been evidently tampered with. The picture is amongst the finest of the master, though considerably damaged and retouched. There were others still in Bruges in 1780, which show that Memling was not exclusively employed by the Hospital of St. John. Pierre Bultynck, of the corporation of curriers, obtained, in 1480, a copy of the Adoration of the Magi, of 1479, and placed it in the Curriers' Chapel in Notre Dame of Bruges. The portraits of Pierre Bultynck and his wife Catherine Van Ryebeck were on the wings. The curriers sold the picture, which, when last heard of, in 1780, belonged to Mr. Van Cock, a picture dealer of Antwerp.³

In 1487 he again produced a dyptic for the Hospital of St. Julian at Bruges, ordered by one Martin Van Nieuwenhoven, who became sheriff of the city in 1492.⁴

Numerous pictures by Juan Flamenco have caused

¹ Michiels, vol. ii. p. 295.

² Catalogue of the Hospital, p. 12. Michiels, vol. ii. p. 309.

³ Catalogue of the Hospital, pp. 13, 14.

⁴ Ibid. pp. 12, 13.

Hans Memling to be considered the same person as that painter. Antonio Ponz, in his *Viage de España*, remarked five pictures in the choir of Los Legos, in the convent of Carthusians at Miraflores, representing episodes from the life and martyrdom of St. John the Baptist. They had long been attributed to Lucas of Leyden. Ponz discovered, in the records of the monastery, that the "*Bautismo*" (baptism) in the choir of Los Legos was commenced by Master Juan Flamenco, in the year 1496, in the convent itself, and finished by him in 1499. Without counting the board and lodging of the painter, it cost the sum of 27,735 maravedis.¹ These pictures have been lost; nowhere have we seen five episodes from the life of St. John the Baptist. At Berlin there are three pictures representing scenes of that description, and at Francfort a copy of the same. The pictures at Berlin were taken, it appears, from the very convent of which we speak; but they are works of Van der Weyden. It is impossible, in consequence, to tell whether Juan Flamenco is the painter of the Hospital of Bruges. In truth, the number of Flemish painters with the name of Juan is very large. If, as M^{me}. Schopenhauer states, Memling is the painter of the Burgos convent, he might, with similar propriety, be called the painter of Palencia; for a chapel in the Cathedral of that town possessed eleven paintings, the work of Juan de Flandes, who, in 1509, according to the records, bound himself to finish them in three years for 500 ducats.² But the latest writer on Flemish painters disbelieves the fact of Memling's journey into Spain on other

¹ Ponz, *Viage de España*, vol. xii. p. 50.

² *Kunstblatt*, Passavant, No. 61, 1843.

grounds. He thinks he may have painted all the pictures mentioned in the *Viage*, and sent them to Spain. He never went to Burgos ; for a charming dyptic, painted for the convent of the Dunes, in 1499, by Memling, is a proof that he was still in Flanders at that time,—the very period when, according to the records of *Miraflores*, the picture of *Los Legos* was completed.¹ But the charming dyptic of 1499 is not by Memling, as any one may see by visiting the Antwerp Gallery.² The only proof of the picture's authenticity is its execution, and that is not in Memling's manner. And besides, there is no doubt, from the records already referred to, that in some portion of 1499 Memling had ceased to exist.³ The numerous pictures which remain of him, on which no signature or date is found, but which are still recognisable by their touch and mode of colour and design, would tend to show that Memling was not a libertine, and that the hand of the man who traced those delicate and highly-finished compositions was not that of a soldier. It must be doubted that Memling ever served as such. He seems, indeed, to have enjoyed the patronage of many noble families. The *Cliffords*, painted in the altar-piece at *Chiswick*, are his handiwork, not that of *John Van Eyck*. The panels in the Galleries of *Vienna*, *Munich*, *Florence*, and *Turin*, all prove that the painter's time was long and patiently employed in painting, and not in fighting.

¹ *Michiels*, vol. ii. pp. 311, 312.

² No. 28, *Antwerp Catalogue*.

³ *Vide p. 244.*

CHAPTER XIV.

MEMLING'S MASTERPIECES.

THE great characteristic feature of Memling was his grace and poetry of delineation. His pictures were lyrics, not epics, like Van Eyck's; but Memling had a master who sought the graceful—not, like John Van Eyck, a teacher of ascetic tendencies. Memling, under Van der Weyden's teaching, succeeded in perfecting, or in realizing much that was but in part achieved, and more that was only promised, by his master. The tall and rigid forms of Roger retained their height, but gained in elegance with Memling. Van der Weyden's mazes of angular drapery became simple and flowing in the hands of his pupil; he perfected his teacher, in fact, where improvement was possible. His groups became highly symmetrical; and his landscapes were filled with distant episodes. He was so elegant and simple in the broader features of the art, his landscapes were so autumnal and warm in tone, that the faults of studied symmetry and over-crowding can scarcely be said to have been obtrusive. In truth, he preserved to a greater extent than Van der Weyden the effect of space and distance, showing that he possessed a truer sentiment of colour and aerial perspective. In the linear portion of the science, however, Memling made no pro-

gress beyond the point attained by his master, and did not even advance to that which had been gained by John Van Eyck. In this essential part of art-education—the indispensable guide of every student—he gained no perfection, leaving the science in the same imperfect state and uncertainty in which it remained under the pupils of the Van Eycks. Although he failed to seize, from amongst the various models with which he was acquainted, a noble or ideal type, a soft, meek beauty is to be found in most of his delineations; and he showed an elevated taste in depicting the Madonna, with her yellow hair sweeping down her shoulders, fastened to her high and noble forehead with a diadem, or turning round the ear in graceful locks—her grave and lofty mien expressing dignity and religion.

As for the Infant Saviour, though his naked form assumed the elongated shape and somewhat awkward limbs of those produced by Van der Weyden, he succeeded in imparting to him a more natural flesh, a better colour, a nobler and happier cast of countenance, and finer eyes and forehead than his master, without that look of age for which Van Eyck was known. The men whom Memling painted were merely men—intelligent and truthful portraits, but nothing more. He was skilful in contrasting their expressions, and depicted quite as ably the grave asceticism of St. John the Baptist as the soft and hopeful features of St. John the Evangelist; but his talent was more conspicuous in female than in male portraiture.

The method of colour peculiar to Memling, exhibited especially in his latest works, leads us to think that he studied John Van Eyck in that portion of his art with

more fruit than Van der Weyden. Still, his clear and lucid tones were owing to an early study under the latter painter of the old time-honoured mode of tempera-painting. Tempera can only gain the necessary vigour by successive applications ; the first of which are light, and succeeding ones dark. The nicest calculation was required to judge what real tone the colour would assume when it was dry and varnished ; light clear tints were, therefore, a necessity in tempera, and they were used by Memling, probably from habit, when he worked in oil. He was always sparing in the use of vehicle, and his colour was so thin that the drawing still appears beneath it. His pictures bear the fruits of such a system, and sometimes lack relief.

The loss of Memling's early pictures, at the time of his schooling under Van der Weyden, deprives us of the means of ascertaining the development of his powers. If the assertion of the Anonimo respecting the portrait of Isabel of Portugal, painted in 1450, were well founded, we might suppose Memling to have reached considerable attainments at that time. But we are left in doubt by the absence of the picture. With respect to the portrait of the Ader's and Rogers' Collection, dated 1462,¹ we cannot say that it adds to our knowledge, because we doubt the propriety of assigning it to Memling. The face is that of a man of thirty, dressed in a purple red dress, covered with the conical cap of the time, of a purple red hue. The hands are crossed over each other, and seem to lean on a window or desk. A minute landscape is seen through an opening

¹ Lately in the Collection of the deceased Mr. Rogers. Wood, 12 in. by 7 $\frac{1}{2}$. See Anon^o. p. 76, for a portrait of Memling, aged 65.

on the left. The dull flat colour, with its hard and glassy surface, and unrelieved character, is very different from that of the masterpieces of Memling. Nor can we trace the graceful sentiment of the master in the rigid expression of eye and immobility of attitude which the whole figure possesses. The hands are clumsily jointed; and this also is a fault we cannot find in Memling. The picture generally lacks delicacy and softness of outline; and is marked by the peculiarities of a school imitating both Van Eyck and Memling.¹ We find the qualities of the master markedly developed, on the other hand, in the Sibyl Zambeth of the Bruges Hospital, and in the portraits of Mr. Van der Schriek at Louvain, although in all of these we trace the efforts of a young hand striving to attain perfection, rather than the work of a finished painter. The Sybil Zambeth is dressed in the costume of the fifteenth century, having a conical cap, from which a white transparent veil depends. Her dark dress is relieved by a white scarf crossed over the breast. The hands are superposed. Here we have a clear, thin, flat colour, unrelieved by marked shadow, but great delicacy of finish.² The same characteristics mark the portraits of Mr. Van der Schriek. These represent a male and female figure in prayer, as if placed at a window with landscapes behind them, seen over balustrades. The male figure, whose name and arms are on the panel, is Guglielmo Morel. He has short hair, cut straight across the forehead, and a dark dress closed at the neck. The female, whose name and

¹ See further, the pictures of the School of Louvain. Dr. Waagen doubts also the propriety of assigning this portrait to Memling.

² No. 5, Cat. of Bruges Hosp., 0·27 m. by 0·38 m., wood, Fr. meas.

arms are signed as those of Anna Samicelle, has the conical cap and veil of the period, a dark dress, and a collar of pearls.¹

From the immatured productions of that comparatively early period to the perfection of the Sposalizio,² there is a great step. Mrs. Jameson has so pleasantly described this picture that we shall give her words to illustrate this subject :—

“The altar-piece painted for the charitable sisterhood of St. John’s Hospital at Bruges depicts the Virgin seated under a porch, and her throne decorated with rich tapestry. Two graceful angels hold a crown over her head. On the right, St. Catherine, superbly arrayed as a princess, kneels at her side, and the beautiful Infant Christ bends forward and places the bridal ring on her finger. Behind her a charming angel playing on the organ celebrates the espousals with hymns of joy ; and beyond stands St. John the Baptist with his Lamb. On the left of the Virgin kneels St. Barbara, reading intently ; behind her an angel with a book ; and beyond stands St. John the Evangelist, youthful, mild, and pensive. Through the arcades of the porch is seen a landscape background, with incidents picturesquely treated from the lives of the Baptist and the Evangelist. The two wings represent on one side the beheading of St. John the Baptist ; on the other, St. John the Evangelist in Patmos, and the vision of the Apocalypse. The object was to do honour to the patrons of the Hospital—the two St. Johns—and, at the same time, to

¹ These names and arms are on the back of the panel.

² No. 1. Hosp. Cat. Centre, 1.74 met. by 1.74 ; wings, 1.74 met. high by 0.80 broad. Wood.

express the piety of the charitable sisters, who, like St. Catherine, were consecrated and espoused to Christ, and were, like St. Barbara, dedicated to good works." ¹

The composition of the Spozalizio is symmetrical to a fault. The group of the Virgin and Child is admirable, and the countenance of the Infant Saviour the most beautiful ever depicted by Memling; and this, coupled with the mild resignation in the faces of the two St. Johns, combines to render the effect of the whole picture most powerful. Still, it is not easy to dismiss other impressions which are formed, at the same moment, by the lengthy shape of the neck and face of the Virgin and Saints around her, and an appearance of rigidity in some other figures. It is almost a pity that the playing Angel should have been retouched since Memling's time; for, were some modern blemishes not apparent, the figure might be called perfection,—the features being expressive beyond the usual measure. The fine head of St. John the Baptist is an instance of the painter's truth and attention to nature; and we can but regret that the general effect of his grave and pensive attitude should be marred by little episodes crowding the space behind him. Yet, if these little subjects be taken separately, they show how happy was the painter's handling in the finish of small figures. Herodias dancing before Herod—one of them—is a little picture by itself; but, standing where it does, mars the general effect, and wearies the eye. In the other wing, which figures the Vision of Patmos, this feature is less objectionable; but the restorer has been hard at work and destroyed the foreground, the water, and portions of the sky.

¹ Mrs. Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna*, p. 97.

Painters of the present day may study with advantage the soft and truthful harmonies of which the colour is composed. They form a fine chord which throws into the distance the faults inherent in the master—want of *chiaroscuro* and thinness of colour.

The restoration of a portion of the inner surface of this picture is nothing to that which the outer has suffered. Not only has the frame been repainted black, and a forged signature been placed upon it, but the figures of the donors and their patron saints have been extensively cleaned off and retouched.¹

The votive pictures, once attributed to Van Eyck, in the Duke of Devonshire's villa at Chiswick, may be said, with tolerable accuracy, to have followed the *Sposalizio*. With the exception of some slight scaling of the surface, this tryptic, now united into one picture, is in perfect preservation. Round the Virgin, sitting in a porch, are the family of Clifford, the lord and lady and the children on each side, St. Barbara and St. Agnes supporting them. An angel kneels before the Infant Christ, offering a piece of fruit. The two St. Johns are placed upon panels which of old were portions of the wings: the Baptist, with the Lamb, austere in countenance; the Evangelist with mild and youthful countenance. The landscape background is finished with excessive care. It contains a water-mill, with a little miller, a man on horseback, a cow, and swans—the very landscape, in fact, which ornaments the Madonna of the Gallery of the Uffizi at Florence, the portrait by Antonello da Messina in the Gallery at Antwerp, and numerous small pictures by later imitators, who copied

¹ This altar-piece, No. 1 of the Catalogue of the Hospital, is signed "Opus IOHANNIS MEMLING. ANNO MCCCCLXXIX."

Leonardo's Virgins and Memling's distances. The donors and the saints appear in costumes similar to those which people wore when Memling painted. The long-peaked cap—a sugar-loaf in shape—seems less awkward in this splendid picture than books of cotemporary costume have made it. A thin transparent veil falls gracefully to the ground; and this, with other peculiarities of dress, are wondrous instances of Memling's truth and delicacy. In St. Barbara and St. Agnes may be seen the tendency to sveltness or length of the human form, which Van der Weyden had in a greater measure, and which later painters afterwards were prone to copy and exaggerate. These two pictures—the Sposalizio and the Clifford altar-piece—appear to have been painted earlier than the Adoration of the Magi in the Hospital of Bruges, which is a work of 1479.¹ In the composition of the latter subject, Memling followed Van der Weyden, and the groups are formed and the figures placed almost exactly as they stand in the Adoration of the Kings in the Munich Gallery.² The only difference, in truth, is one of subject. In the wings, instead of the Annunciation we find the Adoration of the Virgin. The scene is more naturally arranged and less symmetrical than that of previous panels, the figures smaller, the tone more deep in harmonies, and more vigorous in chiaro-'scuro.

In no picture, however, did Memling develop greater nature, grace, or life in motion than in the shrine of

¹ No. 3. Wood; centre 0·58 by 0·47. Wings, 0·25 by 0·47. Signed, "OPUS . JOHANNIS . HEMLING . Dit . werck . dede . maken . broeder . Jan . Floreins . alias Van . der . Rüst . broeder . profes . van . de . hospitale van . Sint . Jans . in . Brugghe . anno . MCCCCLXXIX."

² Vide ante, p. 185. This Adoration is No. 35, 36, 37, third Cab. Pinak. Cat.



DEATH OF ST. URSULA.

From the Shrine by Memling, in the Hospital of Bruges.

St. Ursula ; and we have only to deplore the losses caused to art by the fatal manner in which it has been painted or rubbed down. The reliquary in appearance most resembles the nave of a Gothic edifice,—the outer part of which contains three windows or compartments, each forming a recess, in which an episode is painted ; a picture adorns each end of the shrine, and three medallions are placed on each side of the mimic roof. The pictures are, therefore, eight in number, and the medallions six.

The legend of St. Ursula has been told in ancient chronicles with many variations. It is agreed, however, that St. Ursula was the daughter of a Christian British king, and that she was courted by a Pagan prince, her neighbour. The will of Heaven was revealed to her in a dream, and she was ordered to abandon England rather than offend the Christian faith by such an union. Accompanied by knights and virgins, St. Ursula set sail ; and entering the Rhine, came to Colonia Agrippina, where, by the orders of the Roman emperor, Alexander Severus, the Christian faith was tolerated. There a holy vision told the princess to prepare for her journey to Rome. Accordingly, she sailed again, and came to Bâle, then crossed the Alps, and reached the Holy City, where the Pope received her. Cyriacus, according to the legend, then occupied the papal chair ; and inspired, doubtless, by a dream, he resolved to join the pious St. Ursula and her companions in their journey homewards. But, meanwhile, the reign of tolerance had ended at Cologne ; and the Pope, the Virgins, and St. Ursula were massacred by the lieutenants of the Pagan emperor Julian.

This legend had been painted many years before the time of Memling by some old artist of Cologne; but surely with less grace and sentiment. In scene the first is St. Ursula landing at Cologne, of which the old unfinished tower and crane may be seen with the steeples of St. Severus, St. Cunibert, St. Peter, and St. Paul, and the Beyen Thurm. The painter's ingenuity appears in the mode of telling events. Whilst the principal scenes depict the landing, St. Ursula is also visible through a window at rest, and in the act of dreaming of her journey; the vision of the Holy Father and her companions appearing to her. In scene the second, the princess lands at Bâle; and in the third, arrives at Rome. The fourth scene is the return to Bâle; and the fifth, the massacre at Cologne. The sixth, which is the sequel of the fifth, exhibits St. Ursula unhurt, and living after the massacre; but about to perish by the arrow of an aged person, who draws a bow upon her.

Memling's masterpiece amongst these compositions is that of the reception at Rome, which, for grouping and design, is superior to the rest; and is further remarkable for the truth and nature of the figures, and harmony of the colours. The next in importance is the sixth, in which the princess stands awaiting the fatal arrow. Numerous figures are painted in modern polished armour, reflecting surrounding objects with such fidelity as a Fleming alone possessed. When Giorgione asserted to his contradictors that painting was preferable to sculpture, because the divers views of the same object could be depicted on the same canvas without necessitating motion, he illustrated his arguments by representing the same

figure in a neighbouring fountain, a looking-glass, and a polished piece of armour. Memling represented various groups on divers armours—a work of great complexity, performed with extraordinary skill. Nor must we omit to praise the painter for his ability in varying features, postures, and types of countenance. That Memling studied Germans and Flemings, in all their varieties, is evident from this shrine alone; but, in studying at Cologne, he also derived a certain portion of his sweetness and graceful elegance from the panels of the painter Wilhelm, which he preferred to the pretty but far less simple beauty of the later Stephen. The study of the former by the Fleming may be traced with certainty in the panel representing St. Ursula, with the host of her companions round her, in a cloak, in which the saint is tall and thin in person, with a head too large for good proportion. It may be also found more strongly marked in the Virgin with the Infant Saviour, on the opposite panel, which is full of sweetness and elegance.

The *Rÿve* of St. Ursula, which at later times the painter Porbus looked upon with envy, which the picture-stealers of the last French revolution were unable to discover or steal away, is, in truth, one of the finest of Memling's latest pieces.

The altar-piece of St. Christopher, in the Bruges Academy,¹ is only less engaging because the figures are much larger, and because the damage done by restoration has been great. In this, as in the *Rÿve*, the painter's manner was bold, and his composition true: he sacrificed less to symmetry, or that species of theatrical arrangement which is found in the Spozalizio. St. Christopher, sinking

¹ No. 10, Bruges Acad. Cat. Wood. At the base, "Anno. Dñ. 1484."

beneath the weight of the Infant Christ, supports himself with the assistance of a pole. On his right St. Benedict advances, and on the left is St. Elisius. The wings contain the portraits of the donors and their family. Outside are chiaro-'scuro figures of St. John the Baptist and St. George. In many places the colour and design of the master have been removed or altered by ignorant and presumptuous restorers. The figure of St. John the Baptist, amongst the rest, is certainly repainted; the fingers of the hand, caressing a lamb, are lengthened; the thumb shortened; and the original form is still distinctly visible beneath these modern vandalisms. It is only to the flaying of the surface that we can attribute the coldness of the general tone in this remarkable specimen of Memling's talent.

Of his skill in portraiture, the panel representing Martin Van Nieuwenhoven, in the Hospital at Bruges, is a notable instance; the Virgin and Child accompanying it do not much vary from those of other votive pictures by the painter, whose name is wanting to complete its entire authentication.¹ An equally fine portrait of the same year is that of the Gallery of the Uffizi at Florence, marked with the date of 1487, which represents a man in prayer, full of life and nature. The hands especially are elegant. A splendidly preserved Madonna and Child is also to be seen at the Gallery of the Uffizi, and may well have been the altar-piece of which Vasari speaks as in possession of Cosmo de Medici, Grand Duke of Florence, and painted for the Portinari.² The Madonna here reminds us of that of the Sposalizio; and two pretty angels who

¹ No. 4, Hosp. Cat. "Hoc OPVS FIERI FECIT MARTINVS D. NEUWENHOVEN. Anno DM. 1487, anno vero ætatis 23." Wood; each wing, 0'34 by 0'45.

² Vasari, ut sup., c. vii. p. 163, vol. i.

soar above, and hold a crown, are in his tasteliest manner. The background is similar to that noticed in the Adoration of the Magi of the Hospital, and the Chiswick votive altarpiece. A word of praise is due to the splendid Angel with a viol offering a piece of fruit to the Infant Saviour, and the other Angel kneeling with the harp. St. Benedict, a single figure in this Gallery, is likewise a work of Memling.

The "Seven Joys of the Virgin," in the Pinakothek at Munich,¹ must be mentioned as an undoubted painting of the master, equally well-executed and preserved, but ill-arranged and over-crowded. The point of sight is placed too high to make the picture pleasant, and it somewhat fails in perspective,—the various planes on which the subjects are depicted being kept at improper distances. But if the Seven Joys is not a perfect picture, each little subject is quite a gem of finish.

The Museum of Turin possesses a picture by Memling, illustrative of scenes from the Passion, in a style of composition and execution similar to that of the Seven Joys of the Virgin Mary at Munich. The picture has been named "Seven Grievs of Mary." The portraits of the donor and donatrix are on the foreground at each side; the panel is in beautiful preservation, highly tinted, but parsimonious in colour.²

There are numerous productions of Memling in private

¹ Munich Cat., No. 63, Cab. iv. Wood 2' 6" high by 6' broad.

² No. 318, Turin Gall. Cat. Wood, 0 met. 92 by 0·56, French measure. "According to Dr. Waagen," says Passavant, "this panel in the Gallery of Turin is probably the masterpiece mentioned by Vasari as having belonged to the Portinari, and once in the Santa Maria Nuova, Florence."—*Kunstblatt*, No. 62, 1843. More probably the picture of the "Passion of Christ" at Careggi, mentioned by Vasari in the third part of the edition of 1568.

hands in most of the capitals of Europe. Mr. Catteaux, Member of the Institute of France, has one of the fine pictures of the master, representing the Madonna and Child. The Infant Saviour offers the ring to St. Catherine, who sits before him, supported by St. Agnes with the Lamb, St. Cecilia, St. Barbara, St. Margaret with the Dragon, and St. Lucy with two eyes on a plate. The distance is one of Memling's pleasant landscapes. Three Cherubs float in the air above the group. The whole is executed with that truthfulness and precision which characterise Memling's works. The subject, also, is of those dimensions which were best adapted to conceal the defects of the painter's style.¹

The Louvre contains two small and very beautiful subjects—St. John the Baptist and Mary Magdalen. Episodes from the lives of each encumber the distance. They are exactly of the same dimension as two panels in the palace of the King of Holland, which represent St. Stephen and St. Christopher. The thin wood suggests the idea that these four pictures were once wings of a triptic, and have been divided by the saw.² In addition to this, the Gallery of the King of Holland comprised, till lately, a portrait of a Lady—the head covered with a linen cap, the body clothed in black, and surrounded by a yellow waistband ;³ the “Repose in Egypt ;” the Virgin

¹ We have to thank M. de Reiset for calling attention to this picture. The size is 0·26 met. by 0·15. Mr. Catteaux lives in Paris.

² Nos. 288, 289, Louv. Cat. Wood, 0·48 by 0·12. The first of these panels formed part of Lucien Bonaparte's Gallery, and was engraved as Van Eyck. It subsequently belonged to William the Second of Holland, having been purchased, with its companion, by Baron de Fagel for 11,728 fr. in 1815.

³ Wood, 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. by 14 $\frac{1}{2}$. Purchased at the sale of the Orange Collection for 450 florins. Signed “OBYT. ANº. DM̄, 1479.”

holding the Infant Christ, whilst St. Joseph picks hazelnuts in the distance.¹

Amongst the fine productions of Memling may be cited the two wings of an altar-piece formerly in possession of Miss Rogers, and afterwards in the Collection of the late Mr. Samuel Rogers. An old woman kneels on the one side in a noble attitude, supported by a young female saint. A man with a prayer-book kneels opposite, and is supported by his patron saint in armour.² We do not find in these compositions the meagreness of outline and coldness of colour which marked the first productions of the master after he left Van der Weyden. He seems in them, on the contrary, to have been emancipated, in a great measure, from the influence of his old master, and to approach, in severity of character and vigour of expression, as well as in powerful and vivid colour, the great efforts of John Van Eyck. The attitude of the old patroness is natural, and the head full of expression, animation, and life; whilst the female saint combines all the sweetness which the master was able to bestow. The portrait of the man is equally pleasing; but the armed saint less so, because it is in that style which Memling obtained from Van der Weyden, and from which he never entirely freed himself. The landscapes in both these panels are wonderfully minute and sunny. These pictures are amongst the pleasing ones of the Flemish school.³

¹ Wood, 17½ in. by 10 in.; supposed to have been purchased for the Rothschild family; price 2,600 florins.

² 32 in. by 12 in.; wood. These two wings are similar to those of an altar-piece in the Academy of the Fine Arts at Venice, No. 41, p. 24, assigned to Cornelius Engelbrechtzen.

³ The sky, as well as parts of the figures, have somewhat suffered from restoration.

A portrait in the Hampton Court Gallery, long catalogued as being of an unknown author, strikes us as a careful effort of Memling in the earlier and cold manner which he took from Van der Weyden. It represents a young man of rather spare features, with his hair divided in the middle.¹ In the Gallery of Francfort, not catalogued, is a portrait which we suppose to have come from the Ader's Collection. It represents a young man, one-third of the life size, having all the characteristics of Memling's manner. The head is covered with the long cap of the period, and the hands are joined together before the figure, of which only half is visible.

Another portrait, of smaller size, in Prince Wallerstein's Gallery at Kensington, is a vivid and truthful one, not, however, in the delicate manner so often noticed in other pictures. The character of the hands is coarse, which is also strange for Memling. The portrait has suffered a little from cleaning; and the face is less coloured, in consequence, than the landscape and vestments.²

Amongst other pictures which have marked features of the manner of Memling, is a Virgin and Child, also in the Wallerstein Collection at Kensington. This picture is attributed to Van Eyck, whose style it does not in the least recal to mind. The painting is much damaged, especially in the figure of the Saviour, which has lost much of its freshness, and is in part retouched; but the

¹ No. 299, Hampton Court Cat. Wood. Under the name of Sir A. More.

² No. 59, Wallerstein Coll. Cat. Wood, 1 ft. 3½ in. by 10¾ in. Stated to be the portrait of Floreins Van der Rüst.

character and type of the picture are quite those of Memling.¹

The altar-piece representing incidents from the life of St. Bertin, next claims our attention, being that from which Mr. Michiels derives his opinion that Memling painted for the monastery of Sithiu, near St. Omer. In our opinion it is inferior to the productions of Memling. The greater number of the panels are now at the Royal Palace of the Hague, with the exception of two which are in Paris. These pictures originally formed two wings, which, when closed, covered a gilt altar-piece, adorned with a profusion of precious stones. Their form was such that, when shut, there was a projection, of oblong form, at the top. These portions were cut off from the rest, and are now in the Collection of Mr. Baucousin, in Paris, who thus describes them:—"In one of the fragments are painted several angels, some playing on various instruments, others singing chants. This fragment was situated above the first portion of the work, in which are depicted, within Gothic arches, the bishop who presented them, and the birth of St. Bertin. In the other fragment two angels are carrying the saint to heaven. This portion was situated above the second panel on the right, and over the last compartment, which contained the death of the saint."²

The King of Holland's two pictures represent each five subjects from the life of St. Bertin. In the first arcade two ecclesiastics are praying; in the second, is the birth of St.

¹ No. 53, Wallerstein Cat. Wood, 1 ft. 4 in. by 11 in.

² Bought of Mr. Nieuwenhuys, sen., at Brussels, who had separated them from the altar-piece. Wood. Each wing, 20 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. by 52 $\frac{3}{4}$.

Bertin ; in the third, the saint is taking the vows in the interior of a church ; in the fourth, he is on a pilgrimage ; in the fifth, the scene is a mountainous country, with the saint and his companions on their knees before a person of distinction, who holds out his hand with respect. The latter is accompanied by four others, one of whom carries a parchment. The second picture is also divided into arcades. In the first, St. Bertin works the miracle of the conversion of water into wine ; in the second, he is preaching ; in the third, he is conversing with a bishop ; in the fourth and fifth, he is dying, and receiving the last succours of religion.

The portions in the possession of Mr. Baucousin show that the wings were painted on both sides. They were, however, so much injured, that of the painting on one side there was but a trace left, and that has been entirely removed ; the remainder having also lost a part of its freshness and finish.

These pictures are inferior to the authentic works of the master — particularly in colour and accuracy of design. Memling may have been assisted by his pupils, or even have committed to them the entire execution of the work, which exhibits those differences so easily traced between paintings executed by the hand of the master and those of a pupil. Finally, we are told by M. de Laborde, that, about the year 1500, a certain Dyrick painted for the abbey of St. Omer ; and this painter may have had a hand in the panels now before us.¹

¹ En 1528, on alloait encore X s. à Dyrick le peintre, qui avait recollé et repainct de noire une ronde tablette, estant en la sallette hault près de la chambre de M.S. En 1530 ce même artiste faisait

The *dépôt* of the Museum of Madrid contains a portable altar-piece, representing the Adoration of the Magi, with wings on which are painted the Presentation in the Temple and the Adoration of the Angels.¹ It is the very composition of Van der Weyden's altar-piece at Munich,² which Memling copied in the altar-piece of the Magi in the Hospital at Bruges, but which he varied by the substitution of the Adoration for the Annunciation. This Madrid altar-piece, which belonged to Charles the Fifth, is almost a copy of that by Memling, with only slight variations. For instance, in the central panel some figures are introduced as followers of the Magi,—the donor of the Bruges altar-piece being thus displaced; the architecture varies also; but the curious point about this votive picture appears to be the variety of hands that worked upon it. The greater part of it exhibits Memling's style and colour, but the figures introduced behind the Magi are examples of another taste in drapery and tone. The angels in the Adoration of the Virgin are much inferior to those of Memling; it would seem, in truth, as if the panels were commenced by him, and finished by a pupil. We remark, amongst other things, the head of a spectator at a window—the counterpart of that in the Adoration of the Magi at

payer V livres ung grant tableau, en platte peinture à ung Dieu de pitié, Notre Dame, Sainct Jehan, et demandait IV s. pour les deux feuillets faicts depuis audit tableau, auquel a painct en toile les armes de l'église et de M. S.—*De Laborde, ut sup.*, Introd., p. 45.

¹ Wood, not catalogued; about 4½ ft. by 4 ft. Engl. Brought from Aranjuez. We take this opportunity of thanking Don José Madrazo for his kindness in affording us facilities to see this and other pictures.

² It must still be borne in mind that this picture is catalogued under the name of Van Eyck. Vide *sup.*, pp. 105—184.

Bruges, said to be the portrait of the painter. Many of the fine qualities of this picture have been destroyed by cleaning.

A painting, in two compartments, in the Belvedere Gallery, containing the Carrying of the Cross and the Resurrection of the Saviour, bears a striking resemblance to the manner of Memling in the shrine of St. Ursula. The figures, however, have been much retouched; the extremities, such as hands and feet, appear to be treated with less than usual care, and the pictures as a whole have body of colour and little finish. These latter characteristics—those of a copyist rather than of the master himself¹—may, however, be attributed to over-painting.

A picture painted for Adrian Reims, the patron of Memling and Superior of the Hospital of St. John at Bruges, is the last of which we shall treat in this chapter on the works of Memling. It represents the Descent from the Cross—the Virgin, Mary Magdalen, and Joseph of Arimathea in tears at the feet of the Saviour. On the right wing is a portrait of Adrian Reims, kneeling before his patron saint. On the left wing is St. Barbara. The outer sides of these wings are divided into pointed arches, within which are depicted the Discovery of the Cross and Mary of Egypt crossing Jordan.² The date of 1480 on this altar-piece is apparently a late inscription. The letters "A. R.," written below the central composition, are the initials of the patron.

Conventional and theatrical in composition, this altar-

¹ No. 82, room 1, Belvedere Cat. Wood, 1' 9½" by 1' 9".

² No. 6, Hospital of St. John Cat. 0.36 broad, 0.44 high; wings, 0.14 broad, 0.44 high. Wood.

piece lacks the sentiment usual in Memling's productions—the Magdalen exhibiting her grief in the contorsive gestures peculiar to Van der Weyden's representations. A red tone prevails throughout; and the landscape is arid, and devoid of the fine qualities of the master. Still, it must be borne in mind that the whole is much damaged by cleaning and restoring.

As there are few painters who have been so frequently imitated as Memling, a greater number of pictures are attributed to him than usual. These will form the subject of separate comment. Some, assigned to Memling because of false signatures; others, because divers authors have given them to different painters, in consequence of a certain collective resemblance to Van Eyck, Van der Weyden, and Memling, will be classed amongst the imitations of those masters; whilst others, again, in which we discover the traces of the influence of the school of Louvain, we have gathered together in a chapter under that head.

Various art authorities attribute to Memling pictures which it has not been our fortune to examine. The responsibility of these attributions must be left to those who have assumed them.

Mr. Passavant says:—"The 'Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine,' in the 'Mairie' of Strasburg, is attributed in the Catalogue (No. 39) to Lucas of Leyden; but it greatly resembles the picture of that subject in the Hospital of St. John at Bruges, and is a remarkable work of Memling, half the life size. The Virgin Mary, sitting on a marble throne, holds the naked Infant Saviour, who presents a ring to St. Catherine, whilst that saint is represented kneeling, to the left of him. To the right is

St. Barbara, presenting a piece of fruit. A gold brocade, behind the throne, is similar to that which hangs in the same place in the pictures of the Florence Gallery and the Vienna Belvedere.”¹

“At Lubeck,” says Dr. Waagen, “the finest work of Memling is to be seen. It is an altar-piece in the Grevraden Chapel of the Cathedral. Externally, it represents the Annunciation. The forms of the Virgin and of the Angel are svelt and noble, the draperies are modelled with the utmost care, and the heads have the softness and the finish peculiar to Memling—one of the signs by which his pictures may be most surely recognised. The opened wings discover to us St. Blaise and St. Egidius with the doe, probably the patron saint of the founder of the altar. Next them are St. John the Baptist, with the lamb, and St. Jerome extracting a thorn from the lion’s paw. St. John has much resemblance to the Saint in the altar-piece of St. Christopher in the Munich Gallery (Nos. 48, 49, 54, Cab. IV. Munich Cat.)² As in other pictures by Memling, one sees several small subjects in the distance, in which scenes from the Passion are depicted; amongst which are Christ on the Mount, the Kiss of Judas, and the Ear of Malchus, the Entrance of Christ into Jerusalem, the Entrance of Christ into the House of Caiaphas, Christ before Pilate, the Scourging, the Crowning with Thorns, and the “*Ecce Homo*.” The central picture is the Carrying of the Cross. In the corner, on the foreground, is the figure of the donor, with

¹ Passavant, *Kunstblatt*, No. 62, 1843.

² This picture, in the Munich Gallery, is, in our opinion, not by Memling, but by another pupil of Van der Weyden.

a little dog and a frog before him. The painting, in its complete form, consists of thirty-five figures. Two persons on horseback separate the Saviour from the group of holy women. Mary is supported by John and a female saint, whilst another wrings her hands, and the Magdalen extends her arms towards the cross. The distant landscape is more blue than those of Memling. A monkey, riding behind one of the horsemen, makes grimaces because a child has stolen some fruit from it. In the distance is a part of Jerusalem. The date, 1491, on the lower border of the altar-piece, shows that it is of the master's later period. It has the greatest finish. On the left wing, the foreground contains the Burial of Christ by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, and Mary Magdalen looking on. There are also some small figures in the distance. As regards design of heads and other details, this work is best to be compared with the "Seven Joys and Griefs of the Virgin," in the Pinakothek at Munich; but is also like the picture of the "Passion," at Turin.¹

The Royal Academy of Fine Arts at Vienna possesses a series of subjects much in Memling's manner. The pictures were bequeathed by the late Count de Lamberg Springenstein, in 1835. One of them is the Coronation of the Virgin, who kneels in the foreground, whilst the Eternal sits on a throne surrounded by Angels. The drawing of this picture is correct, and the colour clear.²

¹ Dr. Waagen, *Kunstblatt*, No. 29, 1846.

² Wood, 2 ft. 9 in. high by 2 ft. 9 in. broad.

CHAPTER XV.

IMITATORS OF MEMLING AND VAN EYCK.

THE schools of Bruges, of Ghent, and of Brussels, have produced numerous imitators of Memling's manner. Some of them were servile copyists, but many were of commanding talent. It was not to be expected, however, that the latter should excel their model in art ; and we find them, accordingly, varying in some peculiarities from their master's style, excelling him in others, and falling far below him in many.

Some of those who excelled Hans Memling in landscape were unable to impart to their figures the requisite warmth and clearness of tone ; and they failed, with equal frequency, in the endeavour to preserve the harmonious and symmetrical arrangement of the master. Far from improving upon the lengthy yet elegant figures of Memling, they tended, on the contrary, towards the opposite extreme of shortness and vulgarity of stature. Their colour was inharmonious ; they left much to be desired in the necessary qualities of intelligence and arrangement of composition and design.

We agree with Dr. Waagen,¹ in his conclusions with respect to the picture of the "Baptism," in the Academy of Bruges. This fine production of an immediate follower

¹ Waagen, *Kunstblatt*, August, 1847.

of Memling represents a splendid and highly-coloured landscape, to which the figures give relief and life. The vivid colour of the background is so striking that the coldness of the figures, and the faults of their composition and design, do not at once strike the eye. The distance, it must be owned, lacks atmosphere, but this may be owing to the cleaner; and nothing can be more perfect than the execution of this part in every other particular. As regards the portions more immediately in the foreground, they are complete in every respect. The trees are highly and vigorously coloured, and finished with perfect minuteness, without detriment to the effect of the general mass. The trees preserve, individually and severally, the character of their foliage and form, and the water reflects surrounding objects with perfect harmony and perspective truth. Having gone thus far in praise, we must pause to say a word of the figures. The group of Christ Baptized by John, is not only inharmonious in colour, and feeble in composition, but tasteless and faulty in design. It is out of keeping with surrounding objects, and surcharges the plane on which the figures are placed. The more distant ones, being small, are less obtrusive. The figures, taken separately, are stout, short, and inelegant. In no picture of Memling have we seen so much impasto of colour in the vestments of figures as we do in this, and we never noticed in him such a mode of colouring as is here exhibited—yellowish flesh tints cutting sharply on grey half shade, and the latter sharp by the side of dark shadows. The sudden contrasts of brilliant colours in dresses are similar to those adopted by the school of Leyden.

These are neither the faults nor the qualities of Memling, but those of a later painter; and if we turn from the central picture to the wings where the Madonna and Infant Christ are represented, we find the stiff and affected bend of head peculiar to Van der Weyden; whilst the Child, instead of being naked, as in all the panels of Memling, is clothed like those of Van der Goes. In fact, in the picture of the Baptism is the germ of that small school of landscape which afterwards arose at Dinant,—the head of which, indubitably, is the painter of this work, and his pupils such men as Patenier and De Bles.

Many of the features which characterise the Baptism are discovered in the votive picture of the Hôtel de Ville, at Rouen.

Mrs. Jameson thus describes the subject:—

“ In the centre the Virgin is enthroned; the Child, seated on her knee, holds a bunch of grapes, symbol of the Eucharist. On the right St. Apollonia; then two lovely angels in white raiment, with lutes in their hands; and then a female head seen looking from behind, evidently a female portrait. More in front, St. Agnes, her lamb at her feet, turns with a questioning air to St. Catherine, who seems to consult her book. Behind her another member of the family,—a man with a very fine face; and more in front, St. Dorothea, looking down on a basket of roses. On the left of the Virgin is St. Agatha; then two angels in white with viols; then St. Cecilia; and near her a female head,—another family portrait; next, St. Barbara, wearing a beautiful head-dress, in front of which is worked her tower. She has a missal in her lap. St. Lucia next

appears ; then another female portrait.¹ All the heads are about one-fourth of life."

With all the symmetry of Memling, this votive altarpiece has most of the characteristics of the "Baptism." The figures are placed side by side, without aërial perspective ; and the style of the heads, in the Madonna, the Infant, and Saints, is exactly similar ; but, whilst the Virgin is rather long and graceful, and her face oval, in the manner of Memling, other figures are short, with round fat faces. The painter was evidently inspired by various schools, and perpetually falling into opposite extremes. Some of the heads are cold, others warm in tone, in proportion as the artist approached the various styles of Van der Weyden, Memling, or Van Eyck. The painter was evidently not strong in anatomy ; the limbs of his figures, as well as the hands, are defective ; the outlines dry and without feeling, hard in some places, feeble in others, and the draperies especially angular and crude. The colours are strongly contrasted, like those of the "Baptism," and the figures, in general, out of proportion, having large heads, and small bodies and limbs. The great body of colour in this picture completes its similarity to the masterpiece of Bruges.

Equal body of colour, though not the same hand, and similar lack of good composition, and an equally marked affectation in the attitude and movement of the Virgin, characterise the "Marriage of Cana" in the Louvre ; whilst the parti-coloured draperies exceed, in startling oppositions, even the great picture of the "Baptism." The subject is the "Blessing of the Cups ;"

¹ No. 196, Palais de l'Hôtel de Ville ; attributed to Van Eyck. Wood. 1 met. 20 by 2 m. 13, French measure.

the scene, a Gothic Temple; through the columns of which a square and houses are seen. A monk looks in from the outside, which is a slight anachronism; but little to be wondered at if we consider the habits of the time. The Virgin is present in adoration. The wings have the portraits of the donors on one side, and a Madonna and Child on the obverse. This picture has been ascribed to John Van Eyck,¹ but is a very poor production in the manner of an imitator.

Other painters again endeavoured to engraft upon the manner of Memling, whose symmetry of composition they exaggerated, the style of colouring which they discovered in Van Eyck. Their compositions thus became theatrical, whilst their colour remained dark and displeasing. Such are the characteristic features of an "Adoration of the Shepherds" in the Santa Trinita Museum at Madrid. The theatrical appearance of the scene is chiefly created by two large figures, almost life-size, holding back a curtain on each side of the scene. In the centre the Infant Saviour is stretched on straw, naked, with a flower in his hand. The Virgin kneels on his left, and two shepherds are in the act of entering; whilst outside a door several people are seen advancing. The Infant is surrounded by numerous angels in adoration. St. Joseph, on the right, has the ass and the ox near him. A number of wheat sheaves on the ground is a new and more modern feature. There is neither elevation nor thought in the male heads throughout this picture. The two large figures which hold back the curtain are especially ignoble. The distant figures in the landscape

¹ No. 596, now classed as unknown. Louvre Catalogue. Wood, 0.96 m. by 1.28 m.

are almost copies of those in the "Baptism." The meagre and ugly Saviour lacks animation and life, whilst all around wants relief and chiaro-'scuro. In the general intonation red and black colours prevail. The whole is laid on with the thickness of medium already noticed; but the vestments lack that sharpness of contrast which the other panels possess. This picture has been attributed to Lucas of Leyden. It has suffered much from cleaning.

Another attempt to graft upon the composition of Memling the colour of John Van Eyck, is a panel in the Munich Gallery, called the "Offerings of the Magi;"¹ only varying in subject from the picture just described in the substitution of the Magi for the shepherds. Here are no gigantic figures holding back the curtains; but the relative positions of the Virgin and the Saviour are the same; the landscape is as full of houses and of gables, and the sheaves and cattle are also there; the faults of colour and design are equally visible; and we can trace beneath the dark red prevailing tone the first grey preparation. A copy of this panel is in the Berlin Museum, under the name of an imitator of Mabuse's² first manner. The picture at Munich is ascribed to Van Eyck.

The "Crucifixion of Berlin," given to Mabuse by Dr. Waagen, and to Ouwater by Hotho, is a production of this period. With similar coldness, we find more harmony and greater knowledge of aërial perspective. With the same character of design as the "Baptism," we find more softness and harmony of colour. The landscape

¹ No. 45, room 1, Munich Pinak. Cat. Wood, 3' 10" high by 5' 1" 3''' broad.

² No. 546, Berlin Cat. Wood, 3 ft. high by 3 ft. broad.

is crowded with little episodes, and the figure of Christ is a fac-simile of that in the "Baptism." The subject is "Christ upon the Cross," the Magdalen at its base, supported by St. John and two female saints, and two soldiers with an officer. In the background the procession wends its way to Calvary. The Saviour's face is of a soft and mild nature; but is a cold imitation of nature. Its anatomy is an exaggeration of meagreness and length.¹

Another "Adoration of the Magi," painted about this time, is that of the Brussels Gallery,² under the name of John Van Eyck. A later style even than that of Memling's is traceable in the panel; but the painter evidently sought to imitate both masters;—the composition is a counterpart of that of Munich. The Virgin, sitting in a corner of the picture, receives the offering of one of the Magi, whilst a second embraces the Saviour's hand. St. Joseph, behind the Virgin, sits in front of an arch, near which the oxen, ass, and sheaves, which we have noted as a feature in the pictures of this time, are placed. The suite of the Magi occupies the right hand of the picture, and is composed of horsemen as well as men on foot. The usual distant episodes crowd the landscape, which is a counterpart of that in the "Crucifixion" at Berlin. The Virgin and the kneeling king are the same as in the Munich picture. We thus discover in the Brussels' work component parts of divers panels scattered through the Galleries of Prussia and Bavaria; yet its execution is, in most respects, superior to that of all the others. The

¹ No. 573, Berlin Cat. Wood, 4 ft. 8 z. by 3 ft. 3 z.

² No. 573, Brussels Mus. Cat. 0.98 m. high by 1.88 m. broad. Wood.

figures, though straight and stiff, are natural. The colour, grey in parts, and red in others, challenges comparison at once with Memling and Van Eyck. The draperies are easy and flowing ; the painting has much body, and lacks vigour and *chiaro-scuro*. This work, in fact, like most of those already noticed as by followers and imitators of Memling, is one of a transition period, when painters no longer contented themselves with founding their manner upon original bases,—starting under one acknowledged master,—but wandered from one style to another, losing all originality in their progress.

The panels on which the latest Flemish writers have founded their opinion, as to Memling's stay in Belgium, are in the Antwerp Gallery, signed "C. H.," and dated 1499.¹ These panels form a dyptic, and represent the Virgin standing in a Gothic edifice, and holding the Infant Christ. Behind her are two angels with a book. Kneeling on the wing is an abbot in prayer. On the obverse is the Saviour standing on a globe, and near him a kneeling Benedictine. The stiff, exaggerated posture of the Saviour, the chough of hair upon his forehead, the hard and somewhat Germanized manner in which the garments are depicted, the dull unmeaning colour, which neither calls to mind the softness and the clearness of Memling, nor the firmness and severity of Van Eyck ; all these suffice to show that the dyptic, so pertinaciously assigned to Memling, is the work of a painter so distant from him

¹ No. 28, Antwerp Catalogue; four panels, each 0.31 m. high by 0.15 m. broad. Wood. Taken from the Abbey of the Dunes lez Bruges; having been sold by the last abbot, Mr. Nicolas de Roovere, to Mr. Van Ertborn.

in style and handling, that we hesitate to class him even as a scholar. The touch has all the monotony of a copyist, and the accessories and detail the formal mechanism of a servile imitator. Such, in our judgment, is a just idea of a picture on which Michiels, and other Belgian writers, have assumed that Memling was alive in Flanders in 1499.

A picture in this country, which deserves the same remarks as these, is the pretended Memling of the late Mr. Rogers' Collection, representing the Virgin and Child—a highly-finished and minute picture, apparently from the same hand as this Antwerp dyptic. It is delicately painted, with much body of well-blended light colour.¹

Two other panels, the "St. Catherine" of the Belvedere Gallery, attributed to Hubert Van Eyck, and the "Virgin and Child," assigned to John Van Eyck, noticed in the works of those painters, strike us as possessing similar characteristics with those which mark the Madonnas of the Antwerp Gallery and the Rogers' Collection.²

In the same Gallery, but of a different manner, are two small heads painted on one panel, of a male and female—certainly of a powerful colour and much nature, firm in design, and profuse in vehicle, but exhibiting the characteristic features of a painter later in date than Van Eyck or Memling,³ and rather in the style of the former than in that of the latter.

¹ Wood, about 6 in. by 4. Ascribed by some to Memling, by others to Van Eyck.

² *Vide* for the St. Catherine, p. 82; for the Virgin and Child, p. 106.

³ Wood, 7½ in. high by 5½ in. broad.

In the Hôtel de Ville, at Dijon, is the "Birth of the Saviour."¹ Mary, in a white vestment, kneels with St. Joseph before the Infant, who lies on the ground. This panel, much damaged, is not by Memling, but by some other artist of the time. The colour of the flesh-tints is grey and dark in shadow, and is deficient in chiaro-scuro. The attitude and features of the figures are unnatural, and the type of the Infant's face repulsive. The forms are also faulty,—the flesh-tints of a dark-red tinge, similar to that which marks some pictures of the Westphalian school.

At Stow Park, amongst the pictures of the Hon. Mr. Labouchere, is one ascribed to Van Eyck, which represents a series of revelations or scenes illustrative of a dream indulged in by a figure on the right hand foreground, which kneels with its head on a desk asleep. This figure is dressed in full pontificals, and reposes under the protection of a guardian saint, who carries a crozier and mitre. The types, character, attitude and drapery of the figures in this panel are proper to the school of Van der Weyden, and not to that of Van Eyck. Its colour, so far from rivalling or approaching that of the chief of the Flemish school, is in that antique manner which we have more than once noticed in the early artists of Belgium, and from which Van der Weyden did not entirely emancipate himself. The execution of this piece is very unequal, and similar to numerous works by scholars and imitators of Van der Weyden, whose pictures are classified in various Galleries under the names of

¹ No. 239, Dijon Cat. 0 m. 87 c. by 0 m. 70 c., French measure. Wood.

Van Eyck and Memling, and are really executed by men of a very second-rate talent.

A portrait of a monk in the Antwerp Gallery is not by him, though it bears his name, and partakes of his manner. So likewise, and with no better reason, are the portraits of Philip the Good and Philippe de Croi in the same place.¹

A portable altar-piece from the Gallery of the King of Holland, supposed to have belonged to Charles the Fifth, is a mixed copy of Van der Weyden and Memling by one of their followers—the centre representing the “Adoration of the Magi;” the right wing, female saints; the left, male saints, all praying. The closed tryptic is adorned with chiaro-scuro figures of St. Anthony and St. Christopher.²

A series of pictures in the Palace of the Prince at Madrid³ may be noticed here. It consists of fifteen small panels representing scenes from the Passion of our Saviour; one of which is an exact copy of a supplementary episode in Memling’s picture of “St. John the Baptist” in the Louvre, representing the Baptism of Christ, and resembles also a composition of the same subject on the outer wing of Memling’s “Sposalizio,” in the Hospital at Bruges. Another of these panels contains figures like those upon the shrine of Memling; such, for instance, as the soldiers, clad in polished armour, reflecting surrounding objects. In fact, these pictures, small as they are in size, and minute in finish, imitate, in many

¹ No. 26, Ant. Cat. 0.39 m. high by 0.23 broad. Wood. And No. 27, Ant. Cat. 0.49 m. high by 0.31 broad. Wood.

² Purchased for 6,450 fl. Wood, 68 in. high by 43 broad.

³ See Quevedo, Hist. del Escorial, p. 354. Ascribed to Alb. Dürer.

points of costume and detail, the works of Memling ; but the colour is not that of Hans. It is thickly and evenly laid on, high in tone, and hard and glassy to the touch. The character of certain heads exhibits the study of John Van Eyck, whose firmness of hand is almost attained by this successful artist. But this appears in parts only, whilst in others both colour and design are weak and flaccid. Here and there a flag floats amongst the figures, emblazoned with the lion and the tower, which are the royal cognisance of Castile. Inscriptions are also visible here and there, but so defaced as to be illegible. The border of the garment of the Magdalen, in one of the fifteen panels, is covered with the letter H., and that of the Magdalen, in another panel, is likewise covered with the letter M. But though these letters are the initials of Memling's name, the style and manner of the pictures are not properly his. They seem, indeed, to belong more properly to a painter of the sixteenth century, who studied not merely Memling, but Van Eyck.

The names of Juan Flamenco and Jan de Flandes suggest themselves at once in connexion with these panels ; but as nothing certain is known respecting them, the matter must remain in doubt. Still, if conjecture can be rested on date, it may not be unlikely that these are the productions of Jan de Flandes, who painted eleven pictures, in 1509, for the cathedral of Palencia. As regards other imitators of Memling and Van Eyck, some painters of that time, like Mabuse, diverged into such different styles—being at one time Flemish and minute, at the next, Italian, and merely imitative—that we scarcely believe the evidence which proves that the artist is the same in

both; but when Mabuse painted in the first of these manners, he followed the style of Memling's imitators, which we think far preferable to that in which he imitated Michael Angelo.

Another painter, superior to Mabuse—Kalkar—is an instance of similar imitation. His pictures in the Church of Kalkar, his native town, show how skilfully he sought the early Flemish manner. But when he was in Italy, he imitated Titian and Giorgione with such effect, that, Vasari tells us, his pictures passed for the originals of those masters. In truth, the Flemings possessed, more than any others, the art of imitation; and we see them, after Memling, acting on an uniform principle, and merely varying in slight particulars of manner. Who these imitators were it is now impossible to say.

In the Breviary of Cardinal Grimani, now at Venice, several hundred miniatures are preserved, which the Anonimo di Morelli ascribes to Memling, Lievin of Antwerp, and Gerard of Ghent. The miniatures in this manuscript, which approach nearest to the manner of Memling, in the style peculiar to his followers, are numerous; but the most remarkable one, representing the "Offerings of the Magi," is a reduced fac-simile of the Munich "Adoration." Passavant describes another copy of this Munich "Adoration," in the Ader's Gallery, now dispersed, and notes its likeness to the miniature. The Ader's panel was signed with the initials "A. W.,"¹ which are not those of Lievin de Witte, as some assert. At Xanten on the Rhine is a picture, in the Flemish manner,

This picture is now in Mr. Greene's Collection at Hadley, near Barnet.

representing the temptation of St. Anthony, and marked on the bonnet of one of the figures with the initials "A. W.;" but the style, though Flemish, is not that of the Munich "Adoration." Thus, the question as to who are these imitators of Memling, remains involved in darkness. It is true that Lievin de Witte or d'Anversa—for, doubtless, they are one person—must have painted at this time. Van Mander describes him as a man of talent in painting, but especially of cleverness in architecture. There is, doubtless, great architectural proficiency in the paintings of these imitators, and Lievin may be the author of some of the panels which we have mentioned; but the question, it need scarce be repeated, must be considered too obscure to be solved at present.

THE SCHOOL OF LOUVAIN.

CHAPTER XVI.

DIERICK STUERBOUT.

THE fifteenth century had well-nigh closed when the city of Louvain began to possess artistic annals ; but the School which formed itself there did not realize the excellence of that of Bruges or Brussels. The rivalry which showed itself so strongly at that time between the cities of the Netherlands was keenly manifested, in its later years, between the towns of Brussels and Louvain. The rapid progress towards completion made in the town-hall of the former city raised a spirit of emulation in the municipality of Louvain, and caused it to put forth its energies in erecting a civic edifice worthy of competing by its beauty with a more imposing and larger building. Matheus de Layens, master-architect of the town, gave in plans and sections, which were approved by Pauwels, the state architect of Philip of Burgundy ; and, in 1438, the burgomaster and councillors solemnly laid the first foundation of the new town-hall. It was not completed till 1460, when the corporation determined to rival Brussels further by appointing an official painter. They chose Dierick Stuerbout, a pupil of Van der Weyden.

Very little importance attaches to the cotemporaries or predecessors of Stuerbout at Louvain. The records for

the year 1462 notice one Hubrecht, a painter, and his sons Hubeken and Gielis, whose daily salaries were 10 plecken.¹ But the most noted artist family appears to have been that of Stuerbout, which the records of Louvain first notice in 1468.

Dierick Stuerbout was born at Haarlem, where he lived for many years in the Kruis Straat, at no great distance from the Orphan's House. Van Mander knew his habitation, which he says "had an antiquated front with sculptured heads upon it."² No notice of his early studies is discoverable. In 1462, he left the town of Haarlem, and fixed his residence at Louvain. In the same year, however, he visited Bruges, where, Pierre Coustain, the painter, one of the varlets de chambre of Philip the Good, being dead, we find Dierick claiming from the Duke a paternoster from the relics of the deceased.³

Was Coustain the master of Stuerbout, or was Dierick his fellow varlet or apprentice? The manner of Stuerbout partakes too much of that of Van der Weyden and Memling to cause a moment's doubt as to his having been the pupil of the one, and the schoolfellow of the other. The first notice of his works is to be found in

¹ The plecke was the 90th part of a gulden. Schayes, *Comptes de Louvain*, ap. De Laborde, *Les Ducs de Bourgogne*, vol. i. *Introd.* p. 117.

² Van Mander, *ut sup.*, p. 207.

³ "Je Thierry de Harlem confesse avoir reçu de Pierre Bladelin, conseiller de M. S. le Duc de Bourgogne, une patenostres, lesquelles patenostres ont par eux été trouvé, entre les biens déclairiez par feu Jehan Coustain, et sont icelles patenostres à moi despiéça le 9^e jour d'Octobre, 1462."—*De Laborde, Les Ducs de Bourgogne*, *ut sup.*, vol. ii. p. 222.

Van Mander, who copies a signature on the only picture which he knew of "Dierick :"—

"In one thousand four hundred and sixty-two, Dirk, who was born at Haarlem, painted me at Loven."¹

Dierick, it seems, was actively employed at Louvain in 1462. He was not engaged, however, in the capacity of official painter till 1468, when he commenced the pictures of the town-hall, which, like those painted by Van der Weyden, were to hang in the hall of justice, and deter the judges from acts of favouritism or untruth. Stuerbout chose the subject of his pictures from the legend of King Otho. That king, says the legend, was induced, at the instigation of his wife, to cause the execution of a noble whose only crime was a virtuous refusal to comply with the wishes of the queen. The noble's wife, to whom the secret of the crime was known, appealed to all the customary ordeals to clear her husband's honour, and appeared before king Otho with her husband's head in one hand, and a burning bar of iron in the other. Having gone through the ordeal without hurt, King Otho ordered the execution of the queen as a reparation to the lady for her husband's death. This was the subject of Stuerbout's picture. In one panel he represented the ordeal, and in the other the execution. The two pictures cost, in 1468, two hundred crowns of seventy-two philipps each.²

¹ This picture, representing the Saviour with St. Peter and St. Paul, was composed of life-size figures. Van Mander, *ut sup.*, p. 207.

² *Annales et Antiquités de Louvain*, unedited manuscript of Mr. Hoorebeke at Ghent. "Anno 1468, worden II stucken schildereyen gemaect by Mr. Dierick Stuerbout, die in de Ratcamere staen,

From that time forwards, Stuerbout continued to be employed in works of art, commissioned by the corporation. In the very year in which the panels of the hall of justice were completed, he is found to have received 100 plecken for certain pictures and “*porteratueren.*” But his most important works appear to have been two large pictures, severally 12 feet long and 26 feet high, and 6 feet high and 4 feet broad.¹ The latter, representing

d'eene daer de Kaysere justitie doet doen, over eenen grave van hove voert betichten van de Keyserinne, justitie doet, metten brande doert voirseyde betichten, dat valsch bevonden wiert; die geexstimeert waeren op II.C.XXX. (230) croonen te LXII Pls. (philippus) t'stück.”—*Messenger des Sciences et des Arts de Belgique*, 1833, pp. 18, 19.

¹ *Annales et Antiquités de Louvain*, unedited manuscript of Mr. Hoorebeke at Ghent. “Anno eodem (1468) XX May heeft de Stadt van Loven verdinght, tegen den voirseyden Mr. Dierick Stuerbout sekere tafereel oft schilderye van XXVI voeten lank en XII voeten hooghe, nich nog een tafereel van Ons Heeren Ordeele van VI voeten hooghe en IV voeten breed ons ende voor VC (500) croonen, het welcke Oordeel hanckt in de Schepene Camere opt Stadthuys et Loven.”—*Messenger des Sciences et des Arts*, 1833, p. 18, 19.

“Item. Dierick Stuerboudt, scildre, van gelyken LXXXXX plecken, 1468.

“Van eender tafelen te maken van scryn houtte die Meester Dierick verdinckt heeft te makene van porteratueren ende van meer andere kleine refection, &c. 1468.

“Anno 1479-80. Item, Meester Dierick Boudts, scildere, tegen der Stad verdinght hadde te schildere viere stucken van eeder grooter tafelen die aan een dienen souden opeen sael oft camere te zettene van porteratueren ende noch van eenen dsinen tafelnelken met zynen dueren van den ordele, ende daer d'ordel inneghestels es, hangende in de raet camere.

“Daeraff, de voirscreve meester Dierick soe verve hy dis volmaect hadde gehadt, sonde hebben van de Stad de somme van Vc. cronen; d'welc alsoe niet ghiboert en es, want by binnen middelen tyden gestorven es, alsoe dat de selve binnen synen tyde niet meer vol maect. Daer voer hem ende zynen kinderen vergouwen ende betaelt heft, ter estumacien ende scattigen van eenen der nota-

the "Last Judgment," was finished by Stuerbout for 500 crowns, and hung in the Sheriff's hall. But the larger effort he was unable to complete. Whilst it was in progress, the municipal authorities went in a body to visit him, and gave gratuities to him and his apprentices. One of the most striking items in connexion with the visit, was a payment of 40 plecken to Master Janne Van Haecht, "doctoir in der godheit," for furnishing the painter with the subject and details of his picture.

Stuerbout died in 1478, before he had completed this large piece ; but his brothers and nephews, all of them painters, claimed payment for the part that was finished, and submitted their claim to an umpire. That umpire was Van der Goes, on whose award the corporation paid 406 gulden.

Nothing more is known of Dierick beyond these facts. Though his pictures betray not merely the pupil of Van der Weyden, but the cotemporary of Memling, he had characteristic traits by which he was peculiarly distinguishable. His colour, unlike that of either of those masters, was glassy, horny, and thick, laid on with a

belsten scildere die men binnen den lande hier omtrent wiste te vindene, die gheboren es van der Stad van Ghendt ende nu wonechtig es inden Rooden Clooster in Zuemien de somme van guldens vorscreve IIII^cVI guld. XXXVI pl.

"Item, ten tyden doen Meester Dierick voirscreven dit woere maecte ende Stad visenteerde tot synen huuse, werd hem gescinckt, ten bevele van den burgomesteren ende den heeren van der raede, in wyne lopende XC plecken, ende dergelicks geschinckt Meester Janne Van Haecht, Doctoir in den Godheit die der Stad de materie gaff ; unt onden zeesten die men scilden sonde was hem gescinckt tot synen huuse in wyn XCIX plecken valet te samen in guldens vorscreven III gul. XXVII p.—*Schayes, ap. Laborde, Les Ducs de Bourgogne*, Introd. vol. i. p. 117.

profusion of vehicle. The lower preparation was grey and cold, and usually visible through the clear, warm tint that covered it ; but his prevailing colour was a dull red, which pervaded the entire surface of his pictures, and deprived them of *chiaro-scuro*. His attempts to imitate Memling's gracefulness produced an awkward affectation, superadded to length of form, unnatural design, and inelegant composition. His tall, lean figures, whilst they stand immovable, with drooping shoulders and ill-set joints, were seldom animated even by expression ; and large, round eyes, and wrinkled flesh, contributed further to their rigid aspect, profuse and highly-finished ornaments making them look more stark and stiff.

The legendary pictures of the Council Chamber at Louvain¹ are still examples of these curious defects. The emperor stiffly bends his head before the lady who presents to him her husband's head, whilst a tall, lean figure of a man stands looking on in profile, and seems so slender that his sole support is the stick on which he rests. Such figures are numerous in the panels of the master, and seem to be inspired from Van der Weyden. These are exceptions, however ; for other figures, more correct in drawing, remind one, by a certain elegance of motion, of Hans Memling. Such, for instance, is that of the "Countess," holding her husband's head, who moves naturally, and is clothed in drapery of a simple form. Such, again, are the figures in the group of the execution whose forms and motion are well rendered ; but

¹ At the Hague, in the King's Palace, lately part of the Collection of the Prince of Orange, now dispersed. Nos. 22, 23, of the Cat. of that Collection. Wood, 117 inches high by 66 inches broad.

the spectators are stiff and angular, especially one, who turns his head in the direction of his back, and gazes over his shoulder in a strange and dislocated manner.

If we find in Dierick neither grace nor elegance of composition and design, we must admit the beauty of his landscapes. The followers of Memling were noted for them, as we discover in the "Baptism" at Bruges. The School of Dierick, and Dierick himself, excelled in them. They copied with fidelity the features of the country which surrounds Louvain; they gave its pleasant prospects the clear and lucid atmosphere which marks the neighbourhood of the Meuse, and transferred to their panels scenes exactly similar to those which meet the traveller's eye as he journeys on to Aix and Bonn.

The pictures of this school were frequently a cento of Van der Weyden, Memling, and Petrus Cristus. From Van der Weyden, Dierick and his disciples took their stiffness and their ornaments; from Memling, what they could of grace and elegance; and from Cristus, that hard and horny mode of colouring which marks some of his panels. The painters of Cologne had, meanwhile, been changing like those of Flanders; and after exercising considerable influence in Belgium, were themselves subdued by the greater vigour of Flemish art. Yet they no more improved themselves by this than the Flemings did in pursuit of the Italians. When the sixteenth century dawned, the painters of Cologne were following the artists of Louvain in a sort of weak and servile imitation of the style of Van der Weyden.

Dierick's legendary pictures are those in which, perhaps, he least approached the style of Memling. He came

nearer to that painter in the portrait of 1462, assigned to Memling in the late Mr. Rogers' Collection, which, by its hard and glassy colour, reminds us more of the imitation of Van Eyck and Memling, noticed in the School of Louvain, than of a genuine picture by Memling himself.

Immobility and rigidity mark this portrait, as well as other panels of the school of Dierick; and though they obtrude but slightly in small and highly finished panels, they still are traceable even there. They are distinct and strong in the "Last Supper" of the church of St. Pierre, Louvain; which, notwithstanding the signature, "Opus Johannis Memling,"—a forgery,—we believe to be by Stuerbout. The general red and horny colour, the stiff and angular heads, are Stuerbout's; but the figure of the Saviour is an inspiration from Memling, as well as the heads of two persons in the distance. Another figure in the background reminds us of Van Eyck. The present panel, indeed, has not unfrequently been attributed to the latter; but it has no more his vigour than it has Memling's sentiment. This "Last Supper" was once the centre portion of a tryptic, of which the wings are now in the Galleries of Berlin and Munich. "The Prophet Elijah wakened by an Angel,"¹ and "The Jewish Passover,"² at Berlin, "The Israelites picking Manna,"³ and "Melchisedec and Abraham,"⁴ at Munich, are four panels which,

¹ No. 533, Berlin Catalogue. Wood, 2f. 9z. high by 2f. 2½z. broad.

² No. 539, Ibid. Wood, 2f. 9z. high by 2f. 2½z. broad.

³ No. 44, Cab. IV. Munich Gallery. Wood, 2' 9" high by 2' 2" 6''' broad.

⁴ No. 55, Cab. IV. Munich Gallery. Wood, 2' 9" high by 2' 2" 6''' broad.

doubtless, once were parts of the altar-piece. They are all similar in size, and by the same hand. The landscape in the panel of "The Prophet Elijah" is an undoubted one of the School of Louvain, and the panels at Munich have similar characteristic distances. These four pictures have been assigned, in succession, to Roger Van der Weyden and Justus of Ghent, and have finally settled in the Catalogues as Memlings.

"Judas kissing the Saviour, and the Capture," is a picture in the Munich Gallery similar in style to those of Dierick, and apparently painted by him at the time when he completed the legendary pictures of Louvain, now at the Hague,¹ where they are attributed to Memling.

The character of "The Last Supper" at Louvain is distinguishable in the picture of the Leuchtenberg Collection, also assigned to Memling—"St. John the Baptist showing the Saviour to a Repentant Sinner."²

"The Resurrection," in the Moritz Kapelle at Nuremberg, seems also, from its size and execution, to have formed part of "The Capture" in the Munich Pinakothek.³

A picture of some celebrity in connexion with the name of Memling, but representing a subject foreign to the delicate and elegant sentiment of that painter in his choice of subjects, is "The Martyrdom of St. Hippolytus,"

¹ No. 58, Cab. IV. Munich Catalogue. Wood, 3' 3" 3''' high by 2' 1" 4''' broad.

² No. 104, II. Saal. Leuchtenberg Catalogue. Wood, 1' 8" high by 1' 3" 6''' broad. This Collection is now transferred to St. Petersburg.

³ No. 23, Moritz Kap. Catalogue. Wood, 3' 5" high by 2' 2" broad, Nuremberg. Assigned to Memling.

in the church of St. Sauveur at Bruges, depicting the saint stretched upon the ground, and about to be torn to pieces by four very large horses, at whose heads are men about to start them. This hideous scene, treated in the style of Memling, has furnished one of the arguments in favour of that painter's stay at Venice. The horses, it is said, are copies of the celebrated bronze ones there; but we see no resemblance to warrant such an inference; and these are neither as natural nor as well drawn as those in the Apocalypse of the Sposalizio. It must be owned, however, that the painting as a whole has been much restored and touched, and that the tone and colours may be altered here and there; but the composition is as bad as that of the weakest followers of Memling; the character of the heads and figures is radically defective, the dresses are in bad taste, and the attitudes exaggerated according to Stuerbout's custom. The figure of the saint is thin and slender, and its muscular development faulty. The wings are in better preservation: one containing a group of men being like the central panel; the other, representing a kneeling man and woman in a landscape, being cold in tone, whilst it is soft in outline, and more in Memling's style than the rest of the altar-piece. The ill-restored obverse of this tryptic represents in chiaro-scuro St. Charles, St. Hippolytus, St. Elizabeth, and St. Margaret.

The point of contact between the Schools of Louvain and Cologne at the close of the fifteenth century is visible with certainty in "The Martyrdom of St. Erasmus," at Louvain. This "Martyrdom" is also repulsive in style and subject—the saint being stretched beneath a

windlass, on which the executioner turns his bowels. The naked form is slender and thin, and the character of the painting is similar to that of St. Hippolytus, but the landscape is more truly characteristic of the school. St. Jerome, with a lion at his feet, forms the subject of the left wing, which is also adorned with a beautiful landscape. The right wing represents St. Anthony, with some monstrous animals about him.

The local colour of this panel most approaches to that of panels assigned to the painters of Cologne. It is evident that they became amalgamated about the end of the 16th century with the School of Louvain, some slight peculiarities of each remaining common. The style of painting in the Saints of the tryptic at Louvain has as much resemblance to the picture of 1417, by Cristus, in the gallery of Francfort, as the monsters in the panel of St. Anthony¹ have to those of the same master in his "Last Judgment," at Berlin.

There are numerous panels in divers galleries besides those already described, which, in some particular or other, bear the impress of the School of Stuerbout.

The "Christoffel Altarchen"² at Munich, which Dr. Waagen assigns to Memling, and compares with the altar-piece of Lubeck, is one of these. It represents the Adoration of the Magi; the wings containing the passage of St. Christopher and St. John the Baptist.

¹ Wood. Signed with the false inscription, "OPUS JOHANNIS HEMLING."

² Nos. 48, 49, 54, Cab. IV. Munich Gallery Catalogue. Wood; centre, 1' 11" high by 1' 11" broad; wings, 1' 4" 6" high by 10" broad.

There is much body of colour in this picture, which is, apparently, by various hands. Parts of it are cold and transparent; others opaque and red. The figures have the length and immobility of Stuerbout.

At Granada the chapel of Los Reyes is—we cannot say adorned—by a picture in three compartments, representing the Crucifixion, the Deposition, and the Resurrection. It is noticeable that this last, and the Resurrection at Nuremberg, are the same composition, though the figures in the panel of Granada are more exaggerated in form and darker in tone, and appear to be by an artist of the decline at Cologne. Two pictures in the sacristy of the same church are called Memling, but are of a later date.

Numbers of pictures might now be classed amongst the works of artists who made the art a trade, and who painted in the mixed and degraded manner of the amalgamated Schools of Louvain and Cologne; but the enumeration would be tedious. We need only mention a Christ taken from the Cross, at Brussels,¹ assigned to Memling, and a similar subject at the Hague, also given, and with no more reason, to Memling; a Head of Christ at Munich, copied, without intelligence, from that by Van Eyck at Berlin;³ and another Head of the Saviour, somewhat in the manner of Massys, in the same Gallery,⁴ as examples of our meaning. In the Madrid Museum there

¹ No. 573, Brussels Catalogue. 0.98 m. high by 1.88 m. broad.

² No. 60, Museum of the Hague Catalogue. Wood.

³ No. 50, Cab. IV. Munich Pinak. Catalogue. Wood, 1' 6'' 9''' high by 1' 1'' 9''' broad.

⁴ No. 51, Cab. IV. Munich Pinak. Catalogue. Wood, 1' 1'' 6''' high by 9'' 9''' broad.

is a bad copy of Memling's "Adoration of the Magi,"¹ at Bruges, which is called an original.

The Inventory of Margaret of Austria contains a picture by Dierick Stuerbout, of which the traces are lost.²

Mr. Passavant assigns to Dierick a small picture belonging to Mr. Schöff Brentano, of Francfort. It resembles the legendary panels of the Hague for style. The subjects are, "The Prophecy of the Sybil of Tybur to the Emperor Augustus;" and a Madonna and Child. The scenes are laid in an apartment of Flemish architecture. Several figures, supposed by Mr. Passavant to be portraits, surround the Virgin. The same author attributes to Stuerbout two portraits in the Naples Gallery (Nos. 381, 383), Robert of Sicily, and Duke Charles of Calabria. If these portraits, he adds, are not by Dierick, they must be by a pupil, or some artist of the School of Haarlem.³

¹ No. 467, Madrid Catalogue. 2 ft. 1 in. 6 high by 1 ft. 11 in. 6 broad; wood.

² "Une petite Nostre Dame fait de la main de Dirick."—*Inventaire de Marguérite d'Autriche, De Laborde, ut sup.*, p. 29.

³ Passavant, *Kunstblatt*, No. 11, 1841.

CHAPTER XVII.

PROGRESS OF THE ART IN FLANDERS.—ITS INFLUENCE ABROAD.

IT is tolerably clear, from our previous narrative, that the arts in Belgium began to flourish immediately after the accession of the house of France to the throne of Burgundy. But all the elements of strength existed before their time, and required but their vigour to develop them with speed. In truth, what Flanders wanted up to that time was peace, order, and cessation from intestine feuds, and this the stronghanded policy of the Dukes produced. Under Louis de Maele and his immediate predecessors, Flanders and its cities rose to great commercial and manufacturing importance; but the Counts of Flanders had neither power nor prestige to keep within due bounds the unruly spirit of their cities. They provoked it, on the contrary, by attempts to wrest from them their fairest privileges, and turned the energies of the people from the pursuit of peaceful riches to that of redressing wrongs. They had all to lose in such a struggle, threatening as it did their only source of wealth—the trade of their dominions. The Flemish *communes* were as rich as they were powerful. To have conciliated instead of exciting their hostility, should have been the aim of skilful rulers. But the principles which governed the communes were not quite reconcilable with those of

the *noblesse*. On one great question they were especially at variance; and the history of the Flemish communes is that of free trade against exclusiveness. On the Rhine, where each petty prince swelled his revenue by erecting toll-bars and impeding trade, commerce flourished, as it were, in spite of them. In Flanders, trade was in the hands of the municipalities. They manufactured the raw material, and ruled the ports. The duties levied on foreign produce enriched their coffers, and not the exchequer of the princes. To wrest these ways and means from the communes was the ceaseless effort of the Counts of Flanders. They quarrelled with their people, and then sought foreign aid for their subjection. France, ever jealous of possessing these rich and important provinces, at all times afforded them assistance. England, on the other hand, too anxious for their welfare to leave them without aid, encouraged them in struggles against their Counts and France. The Flemish nobles—consisting not alone of those who held their ground “en chasteaux forts,” as Guicciardini says; but of the citizen noblesse, which also boasted of descent—took part in general against the communes, and formed the adverse factions of the “Leliarts,” or partisans of the Lily, and the “Clauwerts,” or Wielders of Cleavers. For years the Clauwerts asserted their superiority in arms against the Leliarts. They triumphed at the battle of the Spurs, where the flower of French chivalry was routed and destroyed, and kept up their ascendancy even against Louis de Maele, their last Count.

Nothing at this time exceeded the wealth and power of the cities. Bruges, which at first was but a church upon an island, had grown at the Crusades into a fortalice,

square in shape, with battlement and drawbridge. The church of St. Donat occupied the centre, and there the Counts, like Baldwin of the Iron Arm and Guy de Dampierre, were wont to hear the mass.¹ The waters which surrounded the old fortalice, or Bourg, were formed into canals, the chief of which was broad and deep, and communicated with the port of Sluys. That port was also fortified, and the channel was deep enough to admit the largest vessels.

Philip Augustus, after his return from the Crusades, sent a powerful fleet to Sluys, and forced the entrance. The booty was so great as to astonish him. It comprised the manufactured goods of every clime, and tons of raw material. Unfortunately for him an English squadron hove in sight, and Philip burnt his fleet and plunder. But the riches which he found are a proof how wealthy were the merchants of the time. So rich were they, indeed, that Sluys recovered instantly from her disaster, and continued, with Bruges, to prosper, as the largest trading port of Europe.

England always took a special interest in Bruges, and every effort of the Counts of Flanders to coerce the communes brought the British kings to her support. The trade advantages of Bruges and Ghent were thus increased by rivalry between the communes and the princes. The first of these advantages was the importation, free, of wool from England, the mere hint of stopping which was a signal for tumult throughout the entire breadth of the country. Then came, in 1127, the privi-

¹ Histoire de Bruges. Bruges, 8°. 1850. p. 20.

lege of a Hanse.¹ This, which was called the English Hanse, because its counter was in London, was granted to the Brugeois when William of Normandy signalized himself in the attempt to deprive the Flemish cities of their fundamental rights. William of Normandy had acted in this the part of king Stork, having but a few months before been chosen to rule by the united will of the very cities which he now endeavoured to reduce to subjection.

The merchants of the Hanse were privileged to try their civil actions before arbitrators chosen amongst the merchants of the city. The president in London was a citizen of Bruges, who took the title of Count of the Hanse, and all the towns had members. Those which joined the company at first were Yprès, Damme, Lille, Bergues, Furnes, Orchies, Bailleul and Poperinghe; and later followed St. Omer, Arras Douai, Cambrai, Valenciennes, Peronne, St. Quentin, Beauvais, Abbeville, Amiens, Montreuil, Rheims, and Châlon.

This English Hanse, the Hanse Towns, the merchants of Lombardy and Venice, and those of Novgorod, kept up the prosperity of Bruges by their trade, and the erection of spacious counters there. The fair of Bruges was then what that of Leipzig is at present, crowded with traders from every country of the world.²

Torn, however, by internal dissensions, Bruges and the other Flemish cities had neither choice nor leisure to foster art and bring it to the high perfection which it

¹ Kervyn de Lettenhove, *Hist. de Flandre*, 8°. Brux. 1847, vol. ii. p. 291.

² *Ibid.* p. 299.

afterwards attained under the Dukes of Valois. Philip the Hardy, John the Fearless, and Philip the Good, wielding more powerful resources than the Counts of Flanders, and being backed by the agricultural districts of Burgundy, were enabled to quell, in a great degree, the turbulence of their cities, which enjoyed under them more lasting peace and quiet. The wealth which they had amassed was partly expended in the peaceful rivalry which arose between the noblesse and citizens, each contending who should carry off the palm of taste in art. Thus the School of Bruges progressed. It is true that previous to this time the civic authorities of Belgian cities were already known for their partiality to public exhibitions of their power and taste; but these were far less comprehensive than later efforts of the same description. The ceremonies incident to the arrival in Bruges of Thierry d'Alsace, with the relic of the Holy Blood, which for ages made the chapel of that name in St. Donat the rendezvous of countless pilgrims, were marked by a display of tapestries and banners creditable to the age in which they were produced; ¹ but public taste then showed itself more frequently in sumptuous apparel and gorgeous stuffs than in works of art. Under Louis de Maele, the public appreciation of what required a more refined attention and cultivation was increased. That prince perceived the progress of this feeling, and founded the Corporation of St. Luke, at Bruges. ²

The school which then arose so rapidly to perfection

¹ Hist. de Bruges, ut sup., p. 31.

² Delepierre (O.), Galerie d'Artiste Brugeois, 8°. Bruges, 1840, p. 6. Sanderus, Fland. Illust. ut sup., tom. ii. p. 148.

under the Dukes of Burgundy, thus owed a portion of its progress to the wealth and independent spirit of the communes. The taste, power, and cultivation of a court gave it an additional spur; and the clergy, throwing in their weight, added their support in aid of art.

The monastic orders, as we have shown, had followed art with far less fervour than their neighbours. Scarce a monk in Flanders wielded brush or pencil, when Beato Angelico filled the cities of his native country with the echo of his talent. They had even then surrendered to the lay brotherhoods, or freemasonries of architecture, the building of their churches and cathedrals, and they sought the aid of the sister art to decorate internally the countless structures which had been produced by those skilful bodies. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries had seen the rise of numerous abbeys throughout Burgundy and Flanders. In those of Burgundy the rigid system of Citeaux prevailed; but in Flanders, the monks enjoyed an easier *régime*. The wealth of these enormous abbeys consisted chiefly in their wool, with which they served, in partnership with England, the looms of the Flemish cities. Their power grew with riches, and many of these Flemish convents were more arrogant in the exhibition of it than even the noblesse. Sithiu, the abbey of St. Bertin at St. Omer, may be mentioned as an instance. Its abbots owned large tracts in Flanders. They held the town of Poperinghe, a large and wealthy manufacturing community. Their priories were to be found in many other places, and they claimed the right of consecration from no less a dignitary than a bishop. Their richly ornamented dresses, sleek mules, and obesity of aspect, proclaimed at

once their riches and their power of enjoying the good and tasteful things of this world.¹ To them the arts were much indebted for support and countenance. In the cities, the same desire to enrich their churches and cathedrals invariably procured for painters commissions from the chapters; and the guilds of art, in gratitude, invariably possessed a chapel, where the mass was sung at festivals by grateful priests. One need but point to the numerous productions ordered by the abbeys and the chapters, from the ablest painters of the period we are noticing, to show how much the arts were then indebted to them for support.

The three great powers in the state,—the court, the clergy, and the commune,—were thus enlisted in support of art in Flanders, during the rule of the house of France in Belgium.

Not alone in painting was this result obtained. The greatest monuments of civil architecture are the produce of this period; to which we owe the great town-halls, the bourses, markets, and corporation palaces of Belgium.

The civil structures of the thirteenth and preceding centuries are the "*beffrois*," at the ringing of whose bells the trades assembled in the market-place. The "*beffroi*" was the emblem of municipal freedom. It was part of the charter of incorporation of a commune that it should have a bell, and, consequently, a belfry; but later, when the powers of the corporations became administrative and more complicated, the town-halls arose, sometimes by the

¹ A. Wauters, *Les Délices de la Belgique*, 8°. Brux. 1846. Altmeyer, *Notice sur Poperinghe*. *Messenger des Sciences et des Arts*, ut sup., 1839, pp. 22—53.

belfry's side, sometimes on its site.¹ The Bruges town-hall is the earliest and most perfect specimen of this early style of building, having been raised in the fourteenth century, on the model of those old mansions called "Steene," which existed at that time throughout the country.² The latter end of the fourteenth, and beginning of the fifteenth, mark the erection of the town-halls of Brussels, Louvain and Gand; the end of the fifteenth, and beginning of the sixteenth, that of the town-halls of Audenarde, Mons, Courtrai, and Léau.

The building of many palaces in Bruges is also due to the exertions of foreign merchants. There were sixteen counters in Bruges, belonging to trading companies, which possessed palaces in which they transacted business. The finest of these was the counter of the German Hanseatic League, destroyed a little less than a century ago. Those of the Castilians, Florentines, and Genoese were remarkable for the beauty of their fronts. They were castellated and flanked with towers. The hotel of the Genoese was especially remarkable for its internal splendour.³ Portinari, of the Florentines, patronised Van der Goes. The Genoese seem to have respected the talent of Van der Weyden. The Flemish pictures in Spain show that the Castilians appreciated Flemish art; and the pictures of the School of Bruges are numerous in Bremen, Lübeck, Danzig, and other cities of the Hanseatic League.

¹ Schayes, *Hist. de l'Architecture en Belgique*, 8°. Brux. 1850, p. 12.

² *Ibid.* pp. 10—33. Wauters (A.), *Les Délices de la Belgique*.

³ Schayes, *ut sup.*, pp. 41—56. Many miniatures of this period, in the British Museum, contain drawings of these castellated towers.

Of the social state of the artists at the time of which we speak, little need be added. We can scarcely call it independent, but it was a happy one. The early formation of Guilds in all the towns shows that they had a position of importance in the country. It is to be regretted that the notices of these institutions are now so difficult of discovery. They existed in the greater number of large towns. There was one at Bruges, another at Ghent, a third at Brussels, and a fourth at Antwerp. Their organization resembled that of other corporations, consisting of "governors," empowered to tax the members for the good of the Guild. In 1450, the Guild of St. Luke at Bruges had three hundred members; and the company may be supposed to have been sufficiently rich, when we find it capable of commencing, in the middle of the fourteenth century, the erection of a chapel in the church of St. Donat.¹ In Ghent, the Guild of St. Luke existed even earlier than at Bruges; it comprised all kinds of workmen handling the brush; but, at first, excluded illuminators. These illuminators were permitted, ultimately, to join the guild in 1463. They were admitted to it on payment of one quarter of the tax imposed on other painters. At Bruges, a similar step was taken in 1454.² At Brussels, the Guild comprised the glaziers and gold-beaters; its members had, exclusively, the privilege of painting altar-pieces, and working generally in churches, and erecting tombs. Their pictures were exhibited annually in a market, and aspirants to the rank

¹ Sanderus, *Fland. Illust.*, vol. ii. p. 148.

² Diericx, *Mem. sur la ville de Gand*, ut sup., vol. ii. pp. 111-15.

of "master" were bound to submit to examinations as to their capabilities ; and this, under a regulation specially passed in the fifteenth century, to prevent strollers from coming into the town, getting orders, for which they received part payment in advance, and decamping with the proceeds of their fraud. No strange painters were permitted to practise in the city for more than thirteen days, without contributing four sols a-year to the chapel of the guild in Ste. Gudule, specially dedicated to St. Luke.¹ These regulations are, doubtless, the same that obtained in all the other guilds. Each city, it appears, was jealous of the other, and kept up a species of opposition and protection. Once, the Guild of Brussels was well-nigh ruined by litigation against the Guild of Antwerp, whose "masters" insisted on sending pictures for exhibition at the Brussels fair. The same thing happened later, between Ghent and Antwerp. The painters of the latter city, and others in the Netherlands, sent pictures to the market at Ghent ; and the sheriffs of the town ordered that no invasion of the kind should be permitted ; and that, within four years from 1653, foreign painters should be prohibited from sending pictures to any but the annual fairs.

Evelyn describes a fair at Rotterdam, "so furnished with pictures, that he was amazed." "The reason," he adds, "for this store of them, and their cheapness, proceeded from the want of land to employ stock ; so that it was an ordinary thing to find a common farmer lay out two or three thousand pounds in this commodity.

¹ Henne et Wauters, "Histoire de Bruxelles."

Their houses were full of them, and they vended them at their fairs to very great gains.”¹

Guicciardini tells us that the most ancient brotherhood of Antwerp was that of La Violière, in which there was little else but painters, and whose members were esteemed there as at Malines, amongst the most notable of all amongst the trades.² “The Pand, or market for pictures at Antwerp,” say Guicciardini and Boussingault, “was a splendid edifice.”³

It was, probably, not till the sixteenth century, that the trade in pictures became so large ; but it is evident that painters were considered the most respectable of all the members of trades. The attention paid them by princes and merchants is a proof of this ; and the account which has been given of their privileges at Brussels, in the life of Van der Weyden, shows that they obtained even superior rights to the architects of that city.

The influence which Flemish art indubitably wielded cannot be a matter of surprise, when we see the vigour of its constitution. Its great competitor and superior, Italian art, destroyed and humbled it ; but before that time, its influence was felt, as we have shown, in many portions of that country, in the Rhenish cities, in Westphalia, on the Danube, in Swabia, France, Portugal, and Spain.

It soon supplanted, in Cologne, the school which reigned there ; changing all the aspirations of religion, and superseding them by its own material sentiment.

¹ Evelyn's Diary.

² Guicciardini, *Descrip. de Tous les Pays Bas.*, ut sup., p. 123.

³ Boussingault, *Voyage des Pays Bas*, 12^e. Paris, 1677.

The pictures of the early time, in this old stronghold of Cologne, have a charm which we cannot but express. See those noble life-size figures in St. Severus. They have all the faults peculiarly inherent in an infant art. The long, stark figures that look down upon you, want the semblance of all real motion. Yet those angles and straight lines, those clumsy joints, and hands, and feet, will not remove the grand impression left upon the mind by the simple elegance and grace which mark the attitude or movement of the figures. Examine the "Crucified Saviour," and there is a force of truth in the action, which the later masters of the school were unsuccessful in approaching.

But, perhaps, the noblest form in which the talent of this early painter shows itself, is in the "Virgin" of the "Seminary;" and we confess to know no painter of that time in Germany or Flanders, who could give so much benignity or grace to the pressure of the Infant in the Virgin's arm; such simple elegance to the spare and lightly hanging folds which cover her; or to the hair, which falls in wreaths about her, leaving bare a forehead full of majesty and light.

In description, as in art, everything is comparative, and no parallel is necessary between the early painters of Cologne and those of Italy, for the latter, doubtless, far surpassed their German brethren; but if we take the masterpieces of Wilhelm, of Cologne, as a starting-point, and compare them to the works of those who followed, the praise bestowed upon him is neither exaggerated nor overdrawn. If from composition and design we turn to colour, the same result arises from the comparison.

Wilhelm was lucid and clear in colour, and his shadows so transparent, that the gold ground starts from under shadows, and gives them texture and transparency.

Though the finest work of Wilhelm is that which has been just described, there are yet others in which his manner may be traced. Of his elegance in depicting women, a fine example may be seen in the Wallraffische Museum at Cologne. His gentleness of spirit is shown in the features of the Virgin, and his elegance in the drapery that covers her head; his tendency to length, in the figures of the female saints which fill the panels on either side. But one difference may be noted between the Madonna of the Seminary and that of the Museum—that, whilst the first is remarkable for the severity of its beauty, the other is more to be admired for its elegance. It is interesting to note that John Van Eyck, when influenced by the School of Wilhelm, found an inspiration in the first, whilst Memling received one from the second.

The first disciples of the first great artist of Cologne strove in vain to imitate his manner. They used the old materials—panels primed and stretched with canvas. On these they painted with a pale and unsubstantial water-colour, which they fixed at last with a varnish, preserving and giving vigour to the picture. But they lost the grace and elegance of Wilhelm, and exaggerated his defects; and, whilst the eyes and other features of the human face became defined by unnatural lines, the work exhibited but feeble knowledge of anatomy. An instance of this may be seen in the “Crucified Saviour” of the Cologne Museum, in which the cross stands in the middle, and on each side are the Virgin and Apostles; whilst

numerous little Angels, whose wings have been shorn by the restorers, flutter about the gold ground. This picture, also, may be mentioned as an instance of the practice then so common, of combining painting with the more material art of sculpture. The figures of the saints each stand beneath a gilt Gothic niche, in high relief. The Flemish painters of the early period had this practice; but they subsequently went further, and depicted sculptured arches, pediments, and columns, with a patience and a finish which were truly wonderful.

A picture of the "Passion," now in the cathedral, may be cited amongst the feeblest efforts of the painters of this early period; but it has a claim to some attention, from the state to which it is reduced by time, exposing the mode in which these men prepared their panels and worked upon them.

Albert Dürer, in his diary, tells us:—"Item. I paid two silver pennies to have the picture opened, which master Stephen painted at Cologne."¹ Stephen of Cologne is only known by this slight entry in the diary of Dürer. Wilhelm's talents were a familiar theme. The "Limburg Chronicle" describes him as the greatest painter of his time; and some authorities inform us that Wilhelm came from Herle, where he was born, and settled at Cologne in 1370. But of Stephen we know nothing, except that he painted that great altar-piece of the "Adoration of the Magi," now in the Dom of Cologne, and once the ornament of the chapel of the Rathhaus.

The subject of this picture is a proof that its author was employed by the municipality of the city. The altar-

¹ Alb. Dürer, Reliquien, 12°. Nuremberg, 1828, p. 102.



THE ADORATION OF THE KING

Alta. p. 15. (10th) 18th. in the Cathedral of Cologne.

piece, when closed, exhibits only the "Annunciation." When opened, it exposes an "Adoration of the Magi" in the centre, and the patron saints of the city on the wings. That on the right hand contains St. Gereon and his attendants; the left, St. Ursula and eleven virgins.

No styles were more divergent than those of Wilhelm and Stephen; and we cannot tell whether the latter followed the discipline of the former. But, whilst in Wilhelm we discover length and meagreness as special characters, a small, stout class of personages figures in the panels of Stephen. As the lofty pointed style of architecture, exhibited in the cathedral, contrasts with the low and Saxon build of St. Gereon's, so the pictures of the two great painters of Cologne contrast with one another. The parallel maintains itself in every detail. Whilst Wilhelm's heads were long and grave, those of Stephen were round and happy. Where the eyes of the first appear exaggerated in their obliqueness, those of the second seem to be immensely round. In every point the later painter showed a less noble though happier tone of mind. He painted the lips pouting and rosy—the eyebrows arched and thick—the figures obese and bandy; pointing their feet downwards, as if they trod on tiptoe. The fingers of the hands were also thick and dumpy. In one great feature we see the same result in the two painters. They both excelled in female portraiture. They both gave elegance to the female head; and Stephen was successful in twisting round the hair, and setting off the female heads with its assistance. The draperies of Stephen also were more studied and finished, and were not ungracefully modelled. As to colour, Stephen painted softly,

with much body, and with considerable smoothness and rounding of tints; but he was clear, like Wilhelm, and not more vigorous in the use of chiaro-'scuro. The finest group in the altar-piece is that of the "Kneeling King," and the "Virgin and Child." Indeed, the naked form of the latter is especially deserving of attention and admiration. The Virgin of the "Annunciation" is remarkable for natural movement and graceful action; but, like all the rest, the delineation wants vigour of outline and chiaro-'scuro. Certain marks which are found upon this altar-piece have been supposed by some to represent the date of 1410; by others a later time. The style of the picture is of the first half of the fifteenth century.

There were numerous imitators of the manner of Stephen, as there were of that of Wilhelm; but all inferior to him. The only production of the master, besides the altar-piece of the Dom, is a small Madonna and Child, surrounded by numerous angels, in the Museum of Cologne, of which the draperies are peculiarly soft and pleasing. Of his imitators, a fair example is to be found in the "Last Judgment" of the same Collection.

Hitherto, we have observed the art on the Rhine original and peculiar to itself. The influence of Flemish art was not distinguishable till later. When Petrus Cristus came to Cologne, he found the school on the decline; he gave its painters some Flemish characteristics, whilst he himself assumed a few that were German. But Van der Weyden was the man whose style most tended to disturb the old traditions of the Rhenish School. We find no trace, indeed, of a direct substantial contact between the two; but a close observer will not fail to

discover how strongly Van der Weyden's compositions became impressed upon the painters of Cologne. Amongst the rest, the great "Descent from the Cross" will be found to have been copied, altered, and recopied in various forms and manners. The men of the Rhine did not, it is true, imitate servilely; but they varied, and they modified their style in course of time, until we find them reverting to imitations of those great features which a man like Wilhelm indelibly impresses on his pupils and followers. They gradually returned to the long, thin forms of their first founder, without regaining his elegance and nobleness. The school was thus reduced to awkwardness and lifelessness when the "Deposition from the Cross," which may yet be seen at the Wallraffische Museum, was painted. This picture bears the date of 1499, and has been given to Israel Meckenen and Albert Van Ouwater.¹ We have shown how difficult it would be to maintain the name of Albert. As for Israel Meckenen, let us see what grounds there are for assigning pictures to him. He was born at Mecheln, or Meckenen, a village between Zütphen and Cleves, and is known solely by his engravings of the works of Martin Schön. There is nothing in common between the pictures and him, except the period of production. The date of his birth is 1440, and that of his death 1503; and, therefore, had he been a painter, he might have produced the picture just alluded to. But there is no proof whatever, either that he painted at all, or that this particular work is his; and, in so far as the panels attributed to him can be examined and compared, there is not one of them which is not dis-

¹ Vide supra, pp. 233, 234.

tinctly of different hands and periods; though they are all of the same bastardized and soulless school. The time in which they were produced appears to have been the middle or the latter portion of the fifteenth century—at the period of transition, when the School of Bruges and that of Louvain were mingled in Cologne, and formed a vulgar cento. That the painters of Louvain and the artists of the Rhine were wont to fraternize is evident—as we have shown from their works, such as the “Martyrdom of St. Erasmus;” but the names of all these painters remain unknown. It is true that we discover a master of Cologne whose name is noticed in 1478, as that of one who did considerable honour to the school at the time in which the writer lived. This notice is discovered in the “Memorials of Zwolle,” to the following effect:—

“Eodem tempore aderat quidam devotissimus juvenis, dictus Johannis de Colonia, qui dum esset in seculo pictor fuit optimus et aurifaber.”¹ But this artist’s name is found upon no panels or pictures of that time. Numerous pieces, however, illustrate the school up to 1499, when it seems to disappear. Of these, a few are to be found at Linz, at Munich, at Minden, at Nordlingen, and Cologne. The pictures of Linz were, perhaps, the best of the transition period, and appear to have been painted in the days of Van der Weyden; those of Munich, where the schools are classified without much care, and where

¹ Archiv voor kerkelyke geschiedenis inzonderheid den Uxderlandte, Leyden, 1835, tom. ii. p. 295. Apud. De Laborde, Les Ducs de Bourgogne, ut sup., Introd. vol ii. p. 52. This John of Cologne may be the goldsmith referred to in the lines cited further, p. 331, as Jean Steclin.

the works of Wilhelm are confused with those of Stephen, are also curious. In the tryptic of the "Marriage of the Virgin" there, which bears the name of Meckenen, we remark the mixture of the Rhenish and Flemish Schools.¹ Whilst its author placed upon his panels forms of composition as eminently Flemish as his landscape distances, he coloured them in the manner of Cologne. In truth, the landscape distance of this picture is a repetition of the same portion of the "Martyrdom of St. Erasmus" at Louvain. The "Crucified Saviour," in the same Collection, may be cited as another example of Van der Weyden's style of composition.² The painter of these pictures is the same whose panels are christened in the Gallery of Lyversberg—at Cologne by the name of the "Master of the Passion;" and at Minden, by that of the "Master of Werden." The pictures of the "Master of the Passion," now belonging to Mr. Baumeister, of Cologne, since the death of Mr. Van Lyversberg, were called, till very lately, by the name of Meckenen; but have since been named from the subject which they represent:³ those at Minden, in the Collection of Councillor Krüger, representing St. Hubert, St. Augustin, St. Ludger, and St. Maurice;—the Conversion of St. Hubert, St. Jerome, St. Augustin, St. Ægidius, and a Carmelite, are named from the monastery in which they were discovered.⁴ The same hand appears to have produced the mural paintings in Santa Maria Capitolina at Cologne,

¹ Nos. 20, 21, 22, Cab. II., Pinakothek Catalogue.

² No. 27, Cab. II., Pinakothek Catalogue.

³ Catalogue of the ex-Lyversberg Collection.

⁴ Catalogue of Councillor Krüger's Gallery at Minden; Nos. 26, 27, 28, 29. Now in the National Gallery, Nos. 250 to 253.

which are also called Meckenen. As for the Crucifixion of 1499, although it also was christened with the name of the ubiquitous engraver, it exhibits a manner imitated from that of Van der Weyden, with a colour in the cold and far from pleasant tones of the latest artists of Cologne. It was, in fact, by far the weakest, and apparently the last, effort of the school.

The influence of Flemish art, which thus apparently put an end to that particular branch which flourished at Cologne, was extended farther into Germany towards the sixteenth century, and produced a style no longer similar to that which picture-fanciers called Meckenen, but which, for want of any name, was classed as that of Lucas of Leyden. Pictures of this kind, of which it is needless to define the manner, were very numerous. Many are to be found in continental galleries. As an instance, we may mention panels at Cologne, once the property of Mr. Lyversberg, and now belonging to Mr. Hamm. They represent the Incredulity of St. Thomas in the centre, Mary and St. John on one wing, St. Alfred and St. Hypopolitus on the other. Outside, are St. Simphorosa and her seven sons, and St. Felicity and her seven sons.¹ It is hardly necessary to say that this tryptic is not by Lucas of Leyden, than whom no painter has produced, or left us, a fewer number of his pictures. Lucas, in truth, was scarcely more a painter than Meckenen. His time was spent in the handling of the graver—not the brush. The painter of these pictures, who exhibits many of the special characteristics of a Fleming, with a mixture of the dry, clear German manner, was, in every likeli-

¹ Nos. 35, 36, 37, ex-Lyversberg Coll. Cat.

hood, an artist of the early portion of the sixteenth century. His composition is rich, though his figures are not marshalled in good order. It is also marked by heaviness and profusion of ornamentation. Jewellery and precious stones abound in it ; and could we trace in any way a record of its author, it might appear that, like Johannes of Cologne, he was a goldsmith "aurifaber," dragging into pictures the material fancies of another branch of art. Pollaiolo, as we have shown, was an "Orafo," and abounded in similar particularities. The painter now before us is remarkable, besides, for having had a manner of reducing figures in their stature, by increasing, beyond measure, the length and girth of the head. He also drew large hands and feet, and lacked chiaro-scuro. In colour he was cold and abrupt. There are other pictures from the painter's hand in the same Collection.¹ The Louvre contains one, where Van der Weyden's "Descent from the Cross" is again repeated, and slightly altered. The comparatively warm tone of its colour has induced the attribution of the panel to Quintin Massys, but there are no certain grounds for this.²

Whilst the Flemish influence thus extended itself in Germany, the painters of Cologne, at second hand, pursued a similar direction, and left their stamp on the artists of Westphalia and of Augsburg. In the latter city they left their impress on Holbein, the father of the friend of Erasmus and Frobenius. It was the first Holbein who took to Augsburg the Rhenish style of colouring, and who

¹ Nos. 40, 41, 42, ex-Lyversberg Coll. Cat. They represent St. John the Baptist, and St. Cecilia, and St. Alexis, and St. Agnes.

² No. 280, Louvre Cat.

founded that new manner which his son carried to perfection. The features which we note in him are those of Wilhelm of Cologne, whose softness and well-rounded flesh-tints he contrived to imitate. The youngest Holbein copied his father. He had an uncle, also a painter, who was the feeblest of the three, and proves himself to be an artist of but limited genius. It is possible that painters existed in Augsburg before the time of the oldest Holbein; but the noble character and the elegance which the latter gave to the Madonna, proves him to have studied Wilhelm of Cologne. In his composition and his groups, however, he was not unlike the later painter, Stephen. He exaggerated ornamentation, and was more red in colour than the painters of the Rhine. In the Gallery of Nuremberg may be seen a picture from his hand, signed "...S. HOLBAIN. I."¹ Another, in the Collection of the Moritz Kapelle, is dated 1499.² A third, at Augsburg, represents the "Passion" on several small panels, and is dated 1496-99, and is signed "Hans Holbã." The feeble talent of his brother, the second Holbein, may be judged by a picture in the Augsburg Gallery, representing the history of Christ, and dated 1502.³ The rising talent of the son may be noted in the "Martyrdom of St. Sebastian," in the same gallery. When we see that it was painted by the artist at the age of seventeen, it appears to be a splendid proof of his precocious talent.

The painters of Westphalia were less known than those of Augsburg, and have left no name behind them; but

¹ No. 184. Wood, Nuremberg Mus.

² No. 126, Moritz Kapelle Catalogue.

³ Nos. 41, 42, 43, Augsburg Gallery Catalogue.

the oldest convents still preserve their traces in their halls and refectories. Amongst these, the monastery of Liesborn was the most remarkable for containing numerous early pictures, which Mr. Krüger purchased for his gallery at Minden. The painter's name, by general consent, is now the Master of Liesborn. He was a limpid, feeble, and unenergetic painter, immeasurably behind the Flemings in finish, and the artists of Cologne in firmness and vigour.¹

The Swabian was another school, cotemporary with those of Wilhelm and Van Eyck, which left one painter only—Zeitbloom—to express its genius. Zeitbloom's pictures may be seen in Prussia. His "St. Peter" and "St. Anne," at Berlin, may be cited as examples,² and will show that he kept the common level below Cologne and Belgium. The paintings of this master, in the Moritz Kapelle at Nuremberg, and those at Munich, prove him to have had, perhaps, a nobler mind and broader hand than his brethren of Westphalia; for his drapery was fine and flowing; but his paintings, like the rest, are unrelieved by chiaro-'scuro.

The influence of Flemish art is slight, however, in the School of Swabia, but impressed more strongly on that of Kalkar. In the sixteenth century, there arose a painter there whose name is taken from his native city, and who finished for his parish church an altar-piece of large dimensions. Kalkar's life was curious. His early style, exemplified by the altar-piece just mentioned, was founded

¹ See the pictures of this master in our National Gallery, Nos. 254 to 261.

² No. 561 A, Berlin Cat.; No. 561 B, *ibid.*

on the early school of Leyden, as expressed by Engelbrechtzen, but improved in some respects, and ennobled by a broader flow of lines—by a riper and more generous colour.

Kalkar went, somewhat later, into Italy, and proved himself a colourist. Vasari tells us that he painted subjects in the manner of Giorgione and Titian, and so like the style and handling of those masters that their pictures were frequently confounded. On this account, no doubt, the later efforts of this painter fail us; but his early style was imitated in the neighbouring town of Xanten, where curious traces of the study of the Flemings, and chiefly that of Memling, are found. "St. Anthony's Temptation," in the cathedral, may be mentioned as a proof how closely these semi-Flemish painters followed both the School of Bruges and that of Leyden. It is a curious point connected with this picture, that we find upon it the initials "A. W.," similar to those discovered on a panel once belonging to the Ader's Collection, and not unlike, in style, the "Adoration of the Magi" at the Pinakothek of Munich.¹

The Flemish style of painting and composition, as impressed upon these lesser German schools at second-hand, and as much by the teaching of the later masters of Cologne as by that of the Flemings themselves, was directly stamped on Martin Schön, the pupil of Van der Weyden. The manner of Martin Schön may be judged in a panel now belonging to Mr. Baucousin, in Paris. The subject of this picture is a strange one—the "Burial of the

¹ No. 45, Room 1, Munich Catalogue. Vide supra, pp. 279, 286.

Virgin ;” but it serves to show how different is the impress made on men of talent by the master’s teaching, from the vulgar stamp which marks the servile imitator. Van der Weyden’s followers used his compositions, and debased his manner. Martin Schön improved it, gave it vigour, and laid the deep foundation of the later School of Nuremberg. The art of the Van Eycks leads up through Van der Weyden, and through Martin Schön, to Albert Dürer. It affected, through the School of Augsburg, the Noric painter Wohlgemuth.

The art of Belgium, which crept so slowly yet so surely into every part of Germany, invaded Spain—where legions of its painters, sculptors, architects, migrated to supplant or mingle with Italians. John Van Eyck had, doubtless, spread the desire of possessing pictures by his countrymen ; but before his time, the early School of Florence had cast its roots and shed its flowers there. Gherardo di Jacopo Starnina, pupil of Antonio di Vinezia, and born at Florence in 1354, was the first to seek employment from the kings of Spain. He enriched himself, and gained the favour of the Spanish court, and returned to Florence full of honours. But his pictures have since perished ; and though the author of the book, entitled “*Les Arts Italiens en Espagne*,”¹ describes an altar-piece of his as still in the Escorial, no such work is found there now. The subject was the “Adoration of the Magi.” Dello followed Starnina into Spain. He was a painter and a sculptor, and lived as late as 1455 ; but his pictures have been lost. He enriched himself at court, and returned to

¹ *Les Arts Italiens en Espagne*, Rome, 1825.

Florence with a knighthood. But his stay in Italy was short. He quarrelled with the seigniorship of his native city, returned to Spain, and died there. A single work of Dello is recorded in the book above referred to. It was signed "Dello Eques Florentinus," but cannot now be found. Another piece has perished also. It was a painted cloth, depicting the encounter of the Spaniards with the Moors at the battle of Higuera. Having been found in Philip the Second's time, in the Tower of Segovia, it was copied by his order; and a fresco of it was produced by the Spanish painters, Fabricio and Granelio.¹ It may still be seen in the Hall of Battles at the Escorial; but it scarcely strikes us as a copy after Dello; it appears, indeed, to be the work of the later and *baroque* period of the seventeenth century.

Had we not historic proofs that Starnina and Dello were in Spain, it is scarcely credible how faint was their impression on the artists there; for Starnina was a glory of the School of Florence, and Dello no mean artist. But the only traces of Italian art now visible are to be found in the old cathedral of Salamanca, and in the chapel of St. Blas, in the cathedral of Toledo. The walls of the latter are covered internally with the frescoes of an ancient painter of the end of the fourteenth century. The chapel itself is one of the finest in the kingdom; and the subject which adorns it is the "Passion of our Saviour."

If Italian painters failed to leave distinct impressions, not so the Flemings; for they soon invaded and monopo-

¹ Quevedo, *ut sup.*, p. 341.

lized the country. Their influence, at first commingled, formed a cento of Italian and of Belgian art. It need scarcely be said that this was tasteless; but it pleased the Spaniards of the period.

Whilst in Germany, the Flemings impressed the pupils of the native schools with the desire to imitate and rival them; here they came in person and painted for the Spaniards, who, in themselves, remained almost incapable of receiving an impression. The struggles of the Moors, and the constant state of war in which the country had remained for years, are grounds sufficient for this backwardness of Spain, since the selfsame causes are the sole excuse for the cruelties of Alva and the horrors of the Inquisition.

We see the pictures of a Van Eyck, a Cristus, Jan de Flandes, Juan Flamenco, and Juan de Borgogna, sought for and admired; but the Spaniards only followed art themselves a little later with effect; and, even when they did, their efforts were but feeble.

Lodovico Dalmãu is the first who has left his name. It figures on a picture in St. Michael of Barcelona. The Virgin was by him depicted sitting on a throne, holding in her arms the Infant Christ, and adored by civic magistrates in their robes of state. "Sub. anno MCCCCXLV. per Ludovicum Dalmãu fui depictum," is the signature on this panel. Who was Dalmãu? Where did he start from? The records of Barcelona may conceal some facts respecting him; but at present we have nothing but this picture to inform us of the life and the existence of a painter who appears to have studied in the workshop of Van Eyck. The "Madonna" and the "Infant" prove it by

their Flemish type ; and the portraits of the magistrates by their likeness to the same class of persons in the Flemish panels of the period. The paintings, further, are in oil.

Gallegos was a Spaniard, who followed Van der Weyden and Memling's manner rather than Van Eyck's. His Madonna in the chapel of St. Clement, of Salamanca, is completely in the Flemish manner ; and so are other pictures. Jacopo da Valencia follows next in order, and appears to us as an example of the mixture of Flemish and Italian styles. Jacopo first went to Venice, where he was impressed and formed his manner by that of the Bellini ; but his landscapes were completely Flemish, as may easily be seen by his pictures at Venice and Berlin. These are painted in distemper ; but, no doubt, he was acquainted with the later method ; for the crowded little groups that fill his distances are imitated from the style of Memling. He painted between 1450 and 1500.

Dalmão, Gallegos, and Jacopo da Valencia are the best painters of this time in the country ; but there are others of less note, on whom the Flemings left their mark. There are fourteen panels in St. Iago of Toledo, painted in 1498, by Juan de Segovia, Pedro Gumiel, and Sancho de Zamora, in which the faces are inanimate, the eyes black, and the colour dead, as in the worst specimens of the Belgian painters.¹

¹ "Hizose este retablo, por mandato de Doña Maria dí Luna, hija de Don Alvaro y Doña Juana ; y trabajaron en él los artistas Juan de Segovia, Pedro Gumiel y Sancho de Zamora, segun consta de la escritura otorgada en Mançanares en 1498 ; recibiendo por

Pedro da Cordova was the author of an altar-piece in the cathedral of Cordova, which bears the date of 1475. The donor was the canon Diego Sanchez de Castro, as appears from the picture's signature. The subject is the "Annunciation and various Saints;" the style, an inspiration from that of Petrus Cristus. Pedro Nuñez was the painter of a Deposition from the Cross, in the chapel of Santa Anna, of the cathedral of Seville, in which we note a similar exaggeration of the Flemish manner.

There are numerous pictures besides those produced by the above-named artists, in which the mingling of Italian and Flemish characteristics is discovered; as, for instance, Scenes from the New Testament, in the chapel of St. Eugenio at Toledo. These paintings are attributed to Juan de Borgogna—but in error. Juan de Borgogna, who is not to be confounded with Juan Flamenco, painted in the Sala Capitularia of Toledo, the stalls of which are by Cupin d'Olanda. His pictures are in fresco, and represent the history of the Virgin Mary. He is known to have received for them, in 1511, 165,000 maravedis. In him we merely see the effort to produce an imitation of the style of the great Italian masters. Sometimes his memory is with Ghirlandaio, sometimes with Perugino; but he does not much recall to mind the manner of the Flemings.

The art in Spain in the fifteenth century thus appears to have had no character of its own, but to have followed the bent of whatever school was nearest to it. Spain could boast, in the sixteenth century, of only two men, both exaggerated in their way—Bosco, who made the

su trabajo la cantidad de ciento cinco mil maravedis."—*Don José Amador de Los Rios, Toledo pintoresca*, 4^o. Madrid, 1845, p. 58.

Flemish manner ridiculous ; and Berruguete, who is an artist of mannerism. The glory of Spain is its modern school.

The Flemish art-invasion seems to have spread, not only into Spain, but into Portugal. We find the following Flemish artists there in the fifteenth century :— Master Huet, in 1430 ; Guillaume Belles, in 1448 ; Jean Anne, in 1454 ; Gil Eannes, in 1465 ; Jean, in 1485 ; Christopher of Utrecht, in 1492 ; Antony of Holland, in 1496 ; and Oliver of Ghent, in 1496.

A petition, addressed to the king of Portugal, by Garcia Henriquez, a painter, states, that in 1518, his father-in-law, Francis Henriquez, was commissioned by King Emmanuel to decorate the court of justice ; but that he died of the plague, as well as seven or eight whom he sent for from Flanders.¹

Jean Lemaire, a bad French poet of the sixteenth century, was chosen laureate, by Margaret of Austria ; he took for his theme one day the painters of the Netherlands, and broke forth in the following halting rhymes (Margaret's crown is being carved) :—

“L'ofèvre allant vers son ouvroir très riche,
 Plusieurs amis le vindrent assiéger,
 Qui tous ont bruit outre Espagne et Austriche,
 Si vont priant Mérite n'estre chiche
 De leur conter, dont il vient si leger.
 Alors Mérite estant en leur danger
 Ne peut fuyr, que tout ne leur desploye,
 Car l'un d'iceux estoit maitre Rogier,
 L'aulture Fouquet, en ce qui tout loz s'employe.

¹ See Raczinsky, *Les Arts en Portugal*, 8°. Paris, 1846.

Hugues de Gand, qui tant eut les tretz netz,
 Y fut aussi, et Dieric de Louvain
 Avec le roi des peintres Johannes,
 Duquel les faits parfaits et mignonnetz
 Ne tomberont jamais en oubli vain,
 Ni si je fusse un peu bon escripvain,
 De Marmion, prince d'enluminure,
 Dont le nom croist comme paste en levain,
 Par les effects de sa noble tournure.
 Il y survint de Bruges Maistre Hans,
 Et de Francfort, Maistre Hugues Martin,
 Tous deux ouvriers tres chers et triomphans
 Puis de peintre autres nobles enfans,
 D'Amyens Nicole, ayant bruit argentin,
 Et de Tournay, plein d'engin celestin
 Maistre Loys dont tout discret fut l'œil ;
 Et cil, qu'on prise ou soir, et ou matin,
 Faisans patrons, Baudouyn de Bailleul.
 Encore y fut Jaques Lombard de Mons,
 Accompagné de bon Lievin d'Anvers,
 Trestons lesquels, autant nous estimons,
 Que les anciens, jadis par longs sermons,
 Firent Parrhase et maints autres divers,
 Honneur les loge en ses palais couvers."

All these painters the poet supposes to be present whilst the goldsmith, in whose place they congregate, is forging the Margaritic crown. * He proceeds :—

. "Lors un Vallencenois,
 Gilles Steclin, ouvrier fort autentique,
 Luy dit aussi, Maistre, tu me cognois."

Merit here passes an eulogium on Steclin, and gives him the crown to work. The poem then proceeds :—

"Mais s'il convient, pour entente plus meure,
 Prier ton père aussi qu'il y besongne,
 Car chacun sait la main fort prompte et seure
 De Hans Stéclin, qui fut né à Coulogne."

The work is finished, and then exhibited to the spectators, who are asked their opinion :—

“ Que t'en semble t'il Adrien Mangot de Tours
 Et toi Romain, Christoffe Hiéremie,
 Porta onc roy tel richesse aux estours
 Sur son arme ? Je ne le croirais mie.
 Qu'en dira tu, Donatel de Florence,
 Et toy, petit Antoine de Bordeaux,
 Jean de Nimeghe, ouvrier plain d'apparance,
 Regarde un peu la noble transparance
 De ces dix corps tant lumineux et beaux.
 Et toy, le bruits des orfèvres nouveaux,
 Robert le Noble, illustre Bourguignon,
 Viens en juger ; Il n'y gist nulz appeaux
 Avec le bon Margeric d'Avignon.

Approche toy, orfèvre du duc Charles,
 Gentil Gantois, Corneille très habile,
 Jean de Rouen, je te pris que tu parles :
 Tu as eu bruit de Paris jusques à Arles
 En l'art fusoire, sculptoire et fabrile ;
 Melléatoire aussi te fu utile,
 D'architecture et de peinture ensemble,
 Ou te mélas par tel usage et style
 Que ton engin haut qu'humain ressemble.”

The Margaritic Crown is a strange confusion of names, dates, and places; but the rhymes are curious, because they show the interest still taken in the sixteenth century in the artists of the fifteenth, and because they are the work of a Frenchman. Nor are these the only examples of the Flemish painters being made the theme of poetry. In another place, Lemaire mentions them as follows in the legend of the Venetians, which he wrote in 1509.

“ J'ay pinceaux mille, et brosses et ostilz ;
 Et si je n'ay Parrhase ou Apelles,
 Dont le nom bruit par mémoires anciennes,

J'ay des espritz récentz et nouvelletz,
 Plus ennobliz par leur beaux pinceletz
 Que Marmion, jadis de Vallenciennes,
 Ou que Foucquet, qui tant en gloires siennes
 Ne que Poyer, Rogier, Hugues de Gand,
 Ou Johannes qui tant fût élégant."

Foucquet, whom Lemaire thus notices, is one of the first French painters who formed his manner in Flanders. Charles the Sixth and Charles the Seventh were fond of arts, and patronised its professors, founding for them the Paris Academy of Painting. The Duke of Berry and the Duke of Orleans were equally remarkable for their love of art. The latter is known to have had in his service Colart of Laon, who laboured for him in the capacity of "peintre et varlet de chambre" in 1395 and 1396. But Colart de Laon appears to have been of that class of painters who adorned wooden carved work with colour. Jean Foucquet came later; and a picture is still left us from which his manner may be judged. It is the portrait of Agnes Sorel, mistress of Charles VII., in the garb of the Virgin Mary, and surrounded by angels with red wings. This, after all, is a repulsive picture, hung up high in the Gallery of Antwerp, where the name of the master is not known, but is unmistakably Flemish in tone and execution. It is a panel which gives us an imitation of Van der Weyden, and a foretaste of Memling; but is far below the works of these masters. The figure of the Virgin has some of the softness and *élancé* manner of Memling, and the Infant Saviour the heaviness of Van Eyck's representations.¹

¹ No. 106, Antwerp Cat. 0.91 met. by 0.81 met., French measure.

Foucquet was born in 1415, and must have painted this picture before 1450, when Agnes Sorel died. Louis the Eleventh employed him to paint his likeness, in which Foucquet was unsuccessful; and Margaret of Austria seems to have prized a picture of his in her possession, which represented the "Virgin and Child." His style may be judged by the miniatures of an illuminated Josephus in the Paris National Library.

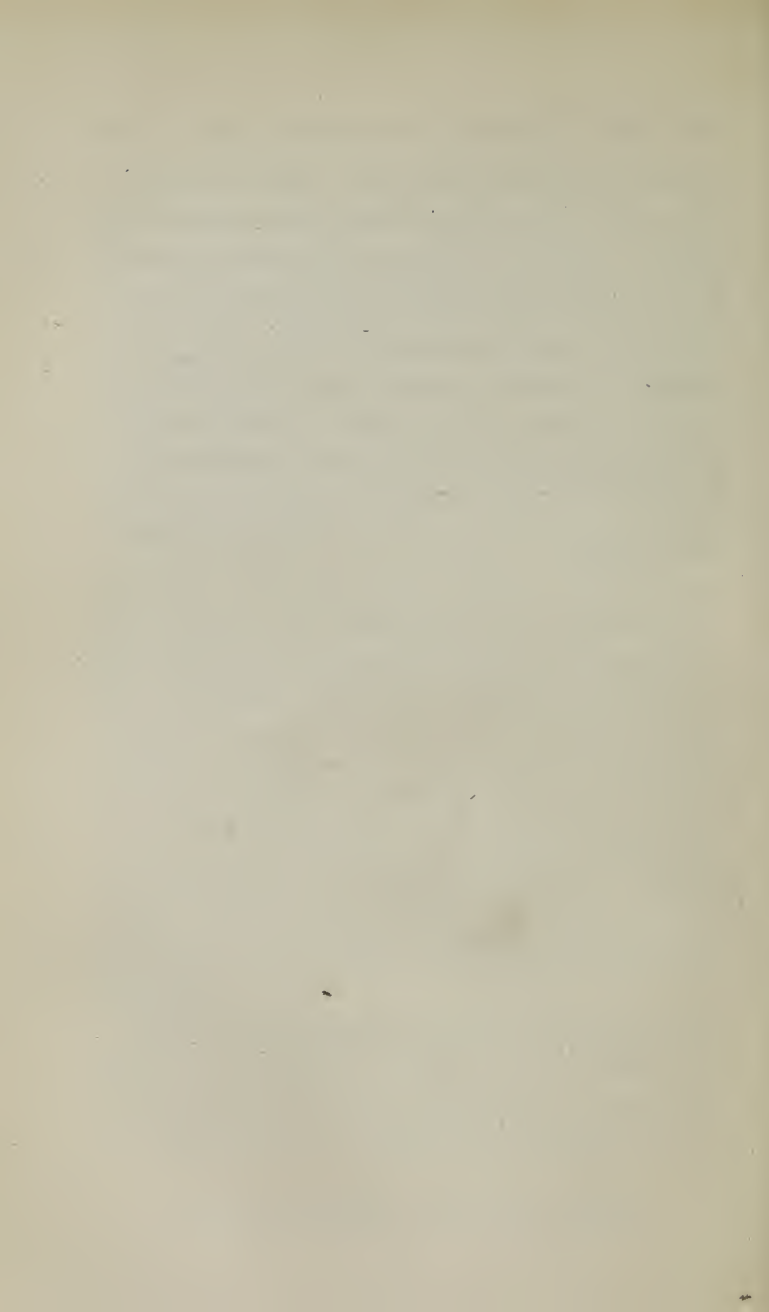
Later still in France was Jehan Cloet, a painter whom we find employed at first in the household of the Duke of Burgundy, in 1475.

The descendants of Cloet flourished in Paris for three generations. His son became painter to Francis the First; and the name of Jean having been lengthened into Jehanet, he gradually became the Jannette of our galleries. The portraits of Francis the First and his Queen, at Hampton Court, will show the style of Jehanet,¹ and the influence exercised upon the early painters of France by the Flemish School. But the love of Francis the First for art was not satisfied by having a painter whose manner had been founded on the teaching of a Fleming. He occasionally sent to Belgium for pictures, dealing, usually, with Jean Dubois, of Antwerp; to whom we find him paying, on more than one occasion, large sums for pictures.

Slight as was the influence of art in France during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it was still more so in England, where the traces of painting are so feeble that the patient research of Vertue almost failed to discover

¹ Nos. 329, 340, Hampton Court Gallery Catalogue.

anything worthy of remembrance. It was not till the latter end of the fifteenth century that Mabuse painted in England. In the following century, numerous Flemish painters migrated from Flanders, and gave themselves up chiefly to the production of portraits. The earliest painters of Belgium did not, therefore, exercise any influence in England; and the manner which Mabuse, Cornelis, and Lucas de Heere imported, and made fashionable, was no longer the old and original one inherited from the Van Eycks—but a bastard and feeble style, adulterated by commingling with the various schools of Italy and Germany.



A P P E N D I X.

Two pictures by John Van Eyck have fallen under our observation since the bulk of the present work passed through the press. They confirm the views which we had been led to take of the career of the great painter, whilst they suggest reflections of additional weight in support of our previous arguments. We had been led, by the examination of John Van Eyck's masterpieces, to the conviction that he reached the pinnacle of his greatness about the time when the altar-piece of the "Mystic Lamb" was completed. That great work was not only the finest effort of the two great masters of Belgium, but it was the noblest monument of Flemish art. After its production came the decline and fall of the School of Bruges ; and it might be said with truth that the Van Eycks were at once the Giotto's, Masaccio's, Raphael and Michael Angelo of Flanders. We were not slow, however, in giving expression to the feeling that, remarkable as was the altar-piece of the "Mystic Lamb," and deserving as were its creators of praise for its conception, it had faults which no partiality could conceal. Nor is it improbable that, in the

endeavour to explain these defects, we dwelt upon them in such a degree as to give our judgment a semblance of severity, likely at first sight to appear too great, but which was really not so. It should, in truth, be borne in mind that the elements developed in Flanders by the Van Eycks alone, and concentrated in their persons, were in Italy diffused over generations of painters. The most perfect creation of the Northern school was the production of a century in which the Southern was progressing at a gigantic speed; and the faults which may be found in the art of Belgium must, therefore, be qualified by a due consideration of the period in which the Van Eycks laboured and lived. The "Mystic Lamb" thus forming the pinnacle of Belgian art, it became interesting to ascertain whether the decline which followed its completion commenced in the person of John Van Eyck himself, or only in those of his own and his brother's immediate followers. The conviction was forced upon us, that John Van Eyck began to decline from the standard which he had himself erected, and that, as he increased in years, he proportionately lost his powers. The pictures whose dates were nearest to 1432 were the most remarkable for his peculiar qualities, whilst those executed later exhibited the progress of decay in his powers.

The two pictures by John Van Eyck of which we have now to speak, are of the former time,—one of them belonging to Mr. Weld Blundell, of Ince Blundell Hall, being dated 1432; and the second, the property of the Marquis of Exeter, at Burleigh House, though not authenticated by his signature, bearing the trace of the hand of John Van Eyck about the same year.

The marked feature of these two pictures is the smallness of their size. There is no doubt that John Van Eyck concentrated all the qualities inherent in his manner on the production of diminutive panels. He affords in this a bold contrast with the masters of the Italian school, who exhibit the great qualities of art on surfaces of considerable extent. So long as his object was confined to the elaboration of a scene of which all the parts were within the compass of the eye at the distance usual to a painter at his easel, his judgment enabled him to develop, without effort, the most pleasing features of good proportion, composition, colour, and aerial perspective. His sense of atmosphere and depth was at such times perfect, and he laboured with all the advantages consequent on his vivacity and clearness of perception. But as the field over which his eye had to wander increased in magnitude by the enlargement of his panel, that judgment and innate sense of colour, aerial perspective, and knowledge of proportion, became less available; and being insufficiently sustained by scientific knowledge, rendered his larger pieces (we except always the "Agnus Dei") less effective and pleasing than those of a small size. No effort, in truth, seems to have been made by John Van Eyck to do more than multiply, on a large scale, that which his eye had conceived in small; and the result ensued, that defects which were invisible at first became glaring by multiplication, and exposed what may be aptly enough described as the fault in the master's artistic armour.

The "Ince Madonna" is signed, "Completum anno Domini MCCCXXXII per Johannem de Eyk. Brugis,

Q 2

The Ince Madonna is now in the Melbourne National Gallery Australia.

Als ikh Kan,¹" and was, therefore, executed when John Van Eyck had completed the altar-piece of St. Bavon. The Virgin, dressed in a blue tunic and a gorgeous red mantle, whose folds cover the ground about her, holds a book before the Infant Saviour, who sits on her knee, and playfully turns the leaves ; a rich warm green daïs, copiously adorned with capricious arabesques, contrasts with the drapery near it. The scene is in one of those semi-obscure chambers lighted by tiny squares of glass, which Van Eyck was fond of depicting. A crystal vase on a table near the window is partially filled with water, and some oranges lie by its side. On a board to the left of the Virgin are a chandelier and a pot of brass. The Virgin's feet rest on a richly-coloured carpet covering a sombre floor. Were it not for a general crackling of the surface, which mars many parts, but especially the face of the Virgin, this picture might be pronounced in excellent preservation, having all the warmth and vigour of colour given to it by the master ; and retaining, in consequence, an unity and harmonious softness of tone which give it the greatest charm : a circlet of pearls holds back the brown hair of the Virgin, and makes it fall in thin wavy tresses over her shoulders ; similar ornaments cover the upper part of the blue dress. The Saviour's head has a laughing expression, and light curly locks play about his forehead, giving an airy and happy expression to his face ; a bold piece of white drapery partially covers his limbs. The Divinity is thus represented without the moody gravity which so frequently mars the faces of Van Eyck's Infants. The limbs and body are not too thin, and the

¹ Wood, 9 inches by 6.

hands and feet are fairly designed, and truthful in movement. The head of the Virgin is not free from the defect of length, but the expression of the eyes is pleasing, and the hands are delicate. If the drapery which surrounds her is too abundant, and marked by the frequent angularities of Van Eyck, these faults are greatly redeemed by the beauty of the colours and the freedom with which the whole subject is executed. We have here, in truth, a rare instance of the master's success in the production of a fine vigorous colour in good relief, and broadly handled.

If the "Ince Madonna" discloses in miniature the talents developed on a larger scale in the altar-piece of St. Bavon, in that of Burleigh House we are still more struck by the same impression, because the figures are smaller and more numerous, and the treatment of the whole is more minute and finished.

Here we no longer have a Virgin merely sitting with the Infant Saviour ; but we have a symmetrical and beautifully-ordered composition, perfectly balanced in every part—the figures being so marshalled, and the accessories so arranged, as to give the picture an uncommon degree of simplicity and grandeur.

The Virgin stands on the right hand of the spectator, holding the Saviour affectionately in her arms ; the Infant has a crystal orb in his left hand, and, with two tiny fingers of his right, blesses a kneeling monk at his feet. The hands of this person are joined in prayer, and the features piously collected and grave. He seems pleasingly recommended to notice by St. Barbara, who stands behind him, and whose right hand, holding a palm, presses his shoulder, whilst the left rests on her

emblem, the tower. The Virgin is dressed in the blue tunic and red mantle, usual to her—the latter being edged with a simple line of gold ; a diadem of pearls throws back her hair, and makes it fall over her shoulders ; a white drapery partly surrounds the Infant. The monk is uncowed and dressed in white, whilst St. Barbara, in a violet tunic, is covered completely by a warm, dark green cloak ; her hair, also, is held back by a cincture of pearls, exposing her forehead and features. Pleasing as the grouping and arrangement of the figures undoubtedly appears, there are no less interesting and agreeable features in the arrangement of the scene in which the benediction is given. Through a high arch which opens behind St. Barbara, the kneeling monk and his attendant saint appear to have entered. They pause in a high and broadly-lighted space, opening out into arcades, through which the eye wanders over immeasurable space. Above these arcades are glass windows, in front of which hangs a transparent dais of a filmy texture, fringed with red and white. The ground, composed of squares of stone, inlaid with coloured ornaments, is flooded with light, like the figures and landscape. The Virgin is so placed as to have her person relieved upon the distance, which is one of the marvels of Van Eyck's brush. Seen through the central arch, and completing the perspective lines of the foreground, it exhibits a town composed of an incredible number of houses, relieved amongst each other by judicious contrasts of blue and red, according to the substance covering their painted roofs and gables. The city fills an undulating plain, which swells into gentle eminences, and rises into distant hills clothed with vegetation. A central

street and canal, with avenues of trees, under which innumerable figures proceed, divides the city; a church stands at its extremity, and a drawbridge on the canal has figures upon it which are reflected in the water, whilst a small boat is propelled beneath it by a figure: the stream meanders on till it is lost in the horizon, and completes the perspective illusion of the lines.

Through the opening to the left of St. Barbara, a landscape, similar in minuteness to the last, is visible. It recedes from a foreground of strawberries to a middle distance, where, with a magnifying glass, may be seen a square, a cross, numberless houses and shops with goods in them, and innumerable figures; further on, a wall and a windmill;—the atmosphere is clear, the sky limpid and blue, filled with flights of birds, and relieved only by a couple of broken, fleecy clouds. In all these details not one point can be called obtrusive; and those who have seen the Paris Rollin altar-piece, with its hundreds of miniature houses and figures, will wonder when they learn that greater detail is observed in the picture of Burleigh House on a panel of a quarter the size. Nor is this minuteness confined to the distance—it is also visible in the capitals of the columns which support the arches, where are bas-reliefs and carvings of the richest kind.

The general aspect of the picture is equally pleasing as are its parts when taken separately—the composition being as remarkable for harmony of lines, as for the perfection of its chords of colours. The attitude of the Virgin and St. Barbara are as graceful as that of the kneeling monk is severe and noble. The female heads, elegant and pleasing as they are in form and expression, remind us of the saints

led by St. Barbara in the "Agnus Dei." The monk is a splendid portrait, and a marvel for nature and severity; the head being as fine in details as it is able in the mass. If the general character of John Van Eyck, in rendering the Divinity, be borne in mind, the type of the Infant Saviour strikes the spectator as a soft and agreeable one—his attitude being dignified without the exaggeration of age and gravity. Still, in the square form of the body, and somewhat heavy gathers of the flesh, as well as in the meagreness of the limbs, the thickness of the joints, and weight of the extremities, we may trace the germ of those defects which are developed in the larger representations of the same kind, during the later career of the painter. Another remarkable feature is the shortness of the hands. This, as exhibited in the kneeling figure, may be derived from a desire to copy nature faithfully; but it is found in the Virgin and St. Barbara, and must, therefore, be marked as a curious departure from the painter's ordinary rule of representing thin and long-fingered hands. The outlines of all the parts are firm without being hard; and this quality extends to the draperies, which are free from angularity, and are marked by breadth of fold and elegance of form: richness and choice of colour enhance the other qualities of the picture; and the unity of the harmonies, caused by the perfection of the contrasts, combine to give completeness to the whole. The flesh-tints are luminous and well relieved, and painted in with a firmness and mastery which cause all traces of manipulation to be invisible. Such are the characteristics of a small masterpiece, which by its minuteness creates our astonishment and admiration, and by its beauties of composition, proportion, and colour

is comparable only to the best part of the greatest work of John Van Eyck.

At page 65 will be found a notice of a picture by John Van Eyck, "in which are represented a lady and gentleman, standing in a chamber, and holding each other's hand." This production of the great Flemish painter was in the Gallery of Margaret of Austria, in 1516, as is proved by the following extract from the inventory of that date:—

"Ung grant tableau qu'on appelle Hernoult le Fin, avec sa femme, dedens une chambre, qui fut donné à Madame par Don Diego, les armes duquel sont en la couverte du dit tableau.—Fait du peintre Johannes."

Don Diego, the donor of this picture, or its original proprietor, seems to have been living when this inventory was made. In 1524, a second was drawn up, of a somewhat different tenor:—

"133. Ung autre tableau fort exquis qui se clot à deux feulletz, ou il y a painctz un homme et une femme, estants des boutz, touchantz la main l'ung de l'autre, fait de la

¹ It is supposed, at Burleigh House, that this picture was painted for the Abbot of St. Martin's, at Yprès. The fact is so stated, in the Flemish language, on the back of the panel. There is but one picture described in the earliest authors as being painted for St. Martin's, at Yprès—a large tryptic, in which the Abbot of Mælbeke kneels before the Virgin and Child. He is dressed in a cope and stole, embroidered, and edged with a band containing portraits of the Twelve Apostles; he is not supported by St. Barbara; on the wings are four scriptural subjects. The panel of the Marquis of Exeter corresponds neither in size nor in subject with that which John Van Eyck is known to have painted for the Abbot of St. Martin's, at Yprès.

main de Johannes, les armes et devise de feu Don Dieghe esdits deux feulletz—nommé le personnaige, Arnoult.”

Here, evidently, Don Diego is dead ; but no clue is given as to whom that personage may have been. In 1555, Mary of Hungary having succeeded to the regency of the Netherlands, this picture seems to have passed into her hands,—the panel already noticed being then catalogued, in the inventory of her treasures, as follows :—

“ 39. Una tabla grande, con dos puertas con que se cierra, y en ella un hombre é una muger que se toman las manos, con un espejo en que se muestran los dichos hombre é muger, y en las puertas las armas de Don Diego de Guevara ; hecha por Juanes de Hec. Año 1434.”

Here we discover that Don Diego is one of the noble family of Guevara, several of whose members resided in Belgium at the end of the fifteenth and commencement of the sixteenth centuries. Mr. Pinchart, to whom we are indebted for the last-named inventory, assumes erroneously that Don Diego de Guevara and his wife are represented on the panel ; but the extracts from the catalogues of Margaret of Austria, previously quoted, prove that Don Diego lived long after John Van Eyck, and could not have been painted by that artist. They also name the person really represented, who is Hernoult le Fin, or Arnoult. Who the latter person was, and where the picture in question now is, are matters treated of at pages 65 and 85.

The life of Van der Weyden has been further elucidated, in some of its obscure points, by the last researches of Mr. A. Wauters, from whom we transcribe a few facts of

interest; none of them, however, affecting the main features of our history.

Respecting the parentage of Roger, no certain result has been produced by the most diligent investigation; but it is proved beyond a doubt, that the name of Van der Weyden was an old and honourable one in the fifteenth century—several members of a family so called being mentioned in cotemporary records as natives of Brussels, or residents in the Duchy of Brabant. It has also been ascertained that a painter called Roegere Van Brusele lived at Ghent, in the early part of the fifteenth century; being mentioned in the accounts of the commune for the years 1410 to 1415, and affiliated to the corporation of St. Luke in 1414. This Roegere Van Brusele, whose death took place before 1417, is supposed to have been some relative of Roger Van der Weyden.¹

The period at which the latter became resident at Brussels can be traced at present as far back as 1425, at which time he was married and settled, and had a son. This child, named Cornelius, was not brought up to his father's profession, but commenced his studies at the College of Porc, in the University of Louvain, and finally took the cowl at the Carthusians of Herinne, near Enghien. Roger Van der Weyden endowed that establishment with a sum of 400 crowns, on the occasion of his son's vows; and Cornelius spent a peaceful life amongst the brethren, dying in the odour of sanctity, aged forty-eight, in October, 1473.²

¹ Wauters (A.), Roger Van der Weyden, ses œuvres apud "Revue Universelle des Arts," Sep. 1855 to Feb. 1856.

² This appears, from a passage in the "Chronicon domûs capellæ

In addition to the works of Van der Weyden already noticed at length, Mr. Wauters mentions the following :—“In 1439, Philip of Burgundy having commissioned for the church of the Récollets, at Brussels, a piece of sculpture, of white stone, representing the Virgin and two princesses of Brabant, Mary, wife of John III., and her daughter, Mary, Duchess of Gueldres, Roger Van der Weyden was chosen to colour these sculptures, for the sum of forty ridders of fifty gros of Flanders ; and, for the additional sum of six livres, to paint the arms of the Duke Philip and the Duchess on the wooden doors, or wings, which protected the sculptures.” From this it would appear that the great masters of the later period of Belgian art did not disdain to practise the merely mechanical portions of the art, after the fashion of the Malouels, Jehan de Hasselt, and others.

Another production of Van der Weyden, hitherto unknown, is mentioned as follows :—“Of old, the Carmelite Convent of Brussels contained a picture remarkable for its age and beauty. It represented the Virgin and the Infant Christ, above whom two angels supported a crown formed of stars : on the wings, on one side were monks ; on the other, a knight of the order of the Golden Fleece, and ordinis Carthusiensis juxta Angiam (Enghien),” written by Arnould Beelthen, of Thollembeck :—“Dominus Cornelius de Pascua, de Bruxellâ, monachus domûs hujus et filius magistri Rogerii, pictoris egregii.” “Anno eodem (1473), obiit in Octobri, in die fidei Virginis, dominus Cornelius de Pascuis de Bruxellâ, filius magistri Rogerii de Pascuis, egregii illius pictoris : Iste fuit monachus professus circiter viginti quatuor annis ; ante ingressum ordinis fuerat magister artium promotus Lovanii in Porco. Hic juvenis obiit circiter quadraginta octo annorum et ex parte ejus domûs hæc à patri et matre ipsius habuit plusquàm quadringenta coronas.”—Chronicon, f. 16—41.

his family. This picture had been painted in 1446, by one Roger." The Calvinists damaged it in 1581, and it was restored in 1593.

It may not be unnecessary, in order to complete what remains to be said of Roger Van der Weyden, to notice that two Belgian cities now claim him as a child of their own—Louvain and Tournay.

Mr. Ruelens, of Louvain, lately discovered a manuscript, written previously to the year 1470, by one Molanus, which contains the following :—

"Magister Rogerius, civis et pictor Lovaniensis, depinxit Lovanii, ad S. Petrum altare Edelheer, et in capellâ beatæ Mariæ summum altare, quod opus Maria Regina à sagittariis impetravit, et in Hispania vehi curavit, quamquam in mari periisse dicatur, et ejus loco dedit capellæ quingentorum florenorum organa et novum altare ad exemplar Rogerii expressum, opera Michaelis Coxenii Mechliniensis, sui pictoris. Ejus quoque artificii sunt testes picturæ que Bruxellensæ tribunal de recto Themidis cedere calle vetant. Dominicus Lampsonius."

We have had occasion to mention Van der Weyden's "Crucifixion," painted for the church of Notre Dame, "hors les murs," at Louvain—expressing, at the same time, our inability to state at what period he painted there. We find, in the quotation just made, a reference to a picture in a different part of Louvain, of which, however, it is stated, as it has been of the "Crucifixion," that the Regent Mary obtained it and sent it to Spain, giving in its stead a new altar-piece, copied from that of Roger, and an organ worth 1,500 florins. We might be led to infer, from this similarity of the details, that the different authorities

quoted allude to the same picture. Mr. Wauters expresses this doubt;¹ and contests the assertion of the writer, that Roger Van der Weyden was "a citizen and painter of Louvain." It is clear, as far as historical proof is of value in deciding such a question, that there can be no doubt of the authenticity of the documents which prove that Van der Weyden was a citizen and painter of Brussels. May he not have been a citizen of Louvain—yet a native of Brussels?

Tournay, also, claims to be Roger Van der Weyden's birthplace. Mr. Genart, in the Register of the Guild of St. Luke, at Tournay, found the following:—

"Rogelet de la Pasture, native of Tournay, commenced his apprenticeship on the 5th of March, 1426; and his master was Master Robert Campin, painter, with whom Rogelet duly finished his apprenticeship."

Elsewhere:—

"Master Rogier de la Pasture, native of Tournay, was received into the freedom of the trade of painters on the 1st day of August, 1432."

There are apparently valid reasons for believing that this Roger de la Pasture, of Tournay, is not Roger Van der Weyden, of Brussels.

Roger Van der Weyden is supposed to have had other children besides Cornelius; but there is no present certainty of this. The documents on which Mr. Wauters founds his belief in the existence of a large family of Van der

¹ We may here remark that there are two copies of the "Descent from the Cross," one at the Madrid Museum, the other in the Escorial,—the latter, as we learn from Florent le Comte (vol. ii. p. 202), was taken to Spain by Philip II. See supra, the "Life of Van der Weyden."

Weyden, are taken from the various accounts of the town of Brussels, from which the following facts are derived.

Twenty years previous to his death, Roger Van der Weyden owned a house at Brussels, in the Rue de l'Empereur, and part of a neighbouring tenement, forming the corner of the Montagne de la Cour. The latter property was rated to the poor of the parish of St. Gudule for a sum of forty-eight livres, half of which was paid off between the years 1444 and 1465 in the name of Roger the Painter (Meester Rogier, scildere). The account-books from which these details are drawn, sometimes contain the word *aldair*, which signifies that Roger lived in the house ; at other times only the painter's family name, and call him Meester Roger Van der Weyden. In the year 1443, the wife of William de Heersele paid this rate ; after the death of Roger Van der Weyden, viz. from 1466 to 1491, and from 1494 to 1498, the payment was made by her sons, who are called Meesters Rogiers oer Van der Weyden. In 1492-93, however, it was made by Peter Van der Weyden ; and from 1499 to 1539, by a person of the same name, qualified as master, who was succeeded by the widow of John Walravens.

Peter Van der Weyden, who paid the rate of 1492-93, is supposed by Mr. Wauters to be the son of Roger Van der Weyden, as other documents are in existence to prove that he lived and was married, as far back as 1484. The second Peter Van der Weyden is supposed to be a grandson of Roger, and son of the first Peter. There is no doubt that he was a painter, because he is mentioned in the accounts of 1511, as proprietor of the house in the Cantersteen, and described as "portrateur," and noted

in the list of anniversaries of St. Gudule as "Magister Petrus Van der Weyden, pictor."

We need scarcely remark, that no traces are left of productions from the hand of this Peter. With regard to Goswyn Van der Weyden, little that is new has been elicited in addition to what we have stated. We only learn that he was born at Brussels, in 1465, one year after the death of Roger. We laboured under one mistake, however, in assigning to him with certainty a series of pictures in the Brussels Museum, on one of which may still be seen the words "Te Brusele."¹ The panels which are historically traced as having originally been painted for the Church of Tongerlo, by Goswyn Van der Weyden, are those of a tryptic, representing the Burial of the Virgin, and classed in the Catalogue of the Brussels Museum under the name of Van der Meire. The following passage from a work by Mr. A. Heylen, keeper of the records at Tongerlo, is transcribed from the work of Mr. Wauters:—

"He" (that is Goswyn) "was born at Brussels, and, in 1535, being then seventy years of age, he painted the piece representing the Death and Assumption of the Virgin, which may be seen at this time, at the entrance to the convent, on the lower side of the Church of Tongerlo, and which once adorned the great altar. He represented himself on the wings with his grandfather; and above those two figures is a tablet with the following inscription:—

"Opera R. P. D.

"Arnoldi Streysterii hujus ecclesiæ abbatis hanc depinxit posteritatis monumentum tabulam Goswinus Van der Weyden, septuagenarius suâ canitie, quam infra ad vivam

¹ No. 631, Brussels Mus. Cat. Wood.

exprimit imaginem, artem sui avi Rogerii, nomen Apellis suo ævo sortiti, imitatus, redempti orbis, anno 1535.'”

Or, in English :—

“For Arnold Streyter, abbot of this church, Goswyn Van der Weyden, a septuagenarian, painted this picture—a monument for posterity, in his old age, which expresses within it, to the life, his image, imitating the art of his grandfather, Roger, called the Apelles of his age, in the year of the Redemption of the World, 1535.”

It is not our intention to enter here into a description of the picture painted by Goswyn Van der Weyden, nor to follow Mr. Van Hasselt in the effort to trace the portraits of the painter and his grandfather in the work ; but simply to state our conviction that the tryptic, as well as the eleven pictures signed “Te Brusele,” already cited, are of the same school—when painters learnt, in the end of the fifteenth and commencement of the sixteenth centuries, to exaggerate the peculiarities of Roger Van der Weyden, mixing with their own defects those of the then degenerate schools of the Rhine, and producing pictures marked, perhaps, by a certain breadth of hand, but devoid of sentiment, lacking nobleness of conception and composition, as well as softness of line, and tending to rigidity of form, coupled with grey, unblended, and earthy colours, without harmony or truth. Goswyn Van der Weyden is, therefore, a painter of the decline of art in Belgium, born after the death of Roger Van der Weyden, but a student of his manner in a school which must have produced numerous painters, and whose tendency, whether purposely or by chance, seems to have been the perpetuation of the worst errors of the primitive school which preceded the Van

Eycks, lived contemporaneously with them, and continued to exist long after their death.

Respecting these painters, no judgment can be too severe, when we consider the degree of abasement to which they reduced the Flemish school, at a period when the arts in Italy had reached the pinnacle of their greatness. Nor can we consider the tendencies of the two countries, as exemplified by their works, more strikingly than by putting this comparison—that whilst the Flemings followed the tendency to naturalism, and the reproduction of the real by innate sense rather than by science, and gradually entered the track of simple imitation, making their art one of servile portraiture—whilst, at the same time, they perfected the technical processes of colour to such a degree, that they helped to found the Venetian school—the great masters of Tuscany and Umbria founded their art on severity and perfection of form, rising to the extreme point of grandeur, in Raphael and Michael Angelo,—the last of whom never painted in oil. In the same period we see the upward and the downward course. Can men of taste be blamed for preferring the former to the lowest extreme of the latter?

In the life of Hubert Van Eyck (p. 31), we remarked that “the brothers Van der Meire exhibited some trace of inspiration from the rich and powerful talent of the chief of the Flemish school.” In the notices of Hubert’s pupils, we mentioned but one artist of the name of Gerard Van der Meire, forgetting to transcribe the following respecting Jan Van der Meire, copied from Immerzeel :—

“Jan Van der Meire was, like his brother, a pupil of the brothers Van Eyck, and completed, amongst other pictures, one for Charles the Rash, representing the Installation of the Order of the Golden Fleece. This artist was much esteemed at the court of the last Duke of Burgundy, whom he followed in his campaigns. He died at Nevers in 1471.”¹ Immerzeel does not give any authority for these statements.

With regard to Gerard Van der Meire, some new and important facts have been brought to light. He is discovered to have been free-master of the Guild of St. Luke, at Ghent, in 1452, and juror of the corporation in 1472.² The manuscript of Mr. Delbecq, frequently quoted in the course of our work, is the only authority from which we ascertained that Gerard was the pupil of Hubert Van Eyck. As Hubert died in 1426, it was difficult to conceive that Gerard should have lived till late in the century. It is ascertained, however, as we have said, that he was alive at Ghent in 1472, and we must suppose him to have entered the school of the Van Eycks at a tender age, or deny the authenticity of the Delbecq manuscript. We have been loth to take the latter course hitherto, and we have been led to doubt, in consequence, whether Gerard Van der Meire could have painted miniatures in the Breviary of Cardinal Grimani, in conjunction with Memling. The facts lately discovered prove that in this we have made a wrong inference, because, as regards dates, Gerard Van der Meire, being alive in 1472, could have painted in conjunction with Memling. We have other reasons, however, besides these, to doubt whether

¹ Immerzeel, “Hollandsche ende Vlamsche Konst,” p. 212.

² Wauters (A.), “Revue Universelle des Arts,” Jan. 1856, p. 246.

or not Van der Meire painted in miniature?—a question which we are inclined to resolve in the negative.

A portrait by Antonello da Messina, accidentally omitted in the description of the pictures by that master, requires notice here.¹ It represents a half-figure of a young man of Italian features, having a long face, and a thin, aquiline nose, small lips, and dark hair overhanging the forehead, and escaping from under a black cap, in shape like those commonly worn in the fifteenth century; a white collar appears at the neck, relieved on a close-fitting black dress; one hand is visible, holding forward a medal inscribed with the words:—“NER. CLAUD. CÆSAR. AUG. C. E. TR. P. IMPER.” The southern character of the features, as well as the medal in the hand of the figure, have, doubtless, caused it to be called Victor Pisano. It is also assumed to be the portrait of Antonello himself. These Italian characteristics are, in particular parts, however, not more distinguishable than are Flemish features in others,—for instance, in the landscape distance, which represents a lake, a water-course with a mill on it, the miller, a man on horseback, and a couple of swans, and the peculiar touch of the trees and accessories. The distance has many points of resemblance to that of Memling in the “Clifford altarpiece,” now at Chiswick; and that of the “Madonna,” of the same painter, in the Gallery of the Uffizi, at Florence. The resemblance between Memling and Antonello is developed, not only in this, but also in the parsimonious

¹ No. 18, Antwerp Gallery Catalogue. Wood, 0.29 metres by 0.21, French measure.

manner of using the colour, which is so thin in the Antwerp portrait, that the original design may be traced beneath it. There is much sentiment and intelligence in this portrait, and considerable nature and truth in its presentment. It was bought at the sale of Mr. Denon in Paris, and is not unlike one of the same character in the Gallery of the Uffizi as regards execution, being somewhat flat in tint, as Memling's pictures are at times.

The rarity of Memling's pieces in England renders their possessors doubly fortunate. Amongst those which deserve most attention are the altar-piece at Chiswick, and the votive panels of the late Mr. Rogers' Gallery. Other examples are to be met with at Kensington Palace ; but they are of minor interest, as compared with the great efforts of the master. It is, therefore, with pleasure that we notice a valuable addition to the list of pictures by Memling in this country. Mr. Herz, of Argyll Place, may be justly proud of being able to show a characteristic piece of small dimensions, it is true, but painted in Memling's happiest manner.¹ The subject, doubtless, loses some of its completeness from the fact, that the scene represented is part of a tryptic of which a large portion is absent ; but even with that disadvantage it produces the most pleasing effect. A kneeling figure,—probably that of the donor, whose arms are emblazoned at the base of the pictures,—is presented and protected by St. John the Baptist standing behind him in a richly-coloured meadow ; the lamb, in front, symbolizing the mission of the Saint. The donor's hands are joined in prayer, his head bare,

¹ Wood, 10 inches by 6.

and features composed ; his dress, a purple brown mantle, lined with fur. St. John appears in the never-failing skin which leaves his legs bare, and a violet tunic tied in a knot to his shoulder. His left hand rests on the kneeling figure, whilst his right points to the lamb. The meadow in which this principal group stands is covered with vegetation of the most varied kind ; in the midst of which the characteristic leaves of the dandelion and daisy are easily distinguished. The breadth of brush, and boldness of touch, remarkable in this foreground, contrast with the thin and transparent tones of the draperies and flesh-tints. The masterly execution of the whole induces us to believe that the picture was produced in the painter's best time—the period in which the panels of the Louvre were completed. A broad screen of trees, in front of which runs a small stream, separates the foreground from the usual episodic scenes of the middle and extreme distance. In the depths of the grove are a hare and a couple of deer. At the foot of a rock, surrounded by trees of thin foliage, St. George is killing the dragon, whilst a female figure looks on from a sheltered spot. In the distance, a lake surrounds an island, on which sits St. John the Evangelist contemplating the vision. In the heavens, the Virgin, holding the Infant, is comforted by an angel, a dragon with many heads lying at her feet. We have noticed the thin colour which marks the principal figures ; this feature characterising the flesh-tints as well as the draperies. This thinness of colour is remarkable, also, in the execution of the episodes. The head of the Baptist is noble and austere,—a quality in which Memling shows his superiority over his master, Van der Weyden. The

figure of St. George on horseback presents all the characteristics of a perfect study of nature—the leg being well down in the stirrup, and the action energetic. The episode is, in truth, so full of life that it has been frequently copied. We find it in a miniature in possession of Mr. Farrer, in London, and it may, doubtless, be discovered elsewhere. With regard to the preservation of the panel, it may be remarked that the surface has been laid bare, more especially in the background and sky, and in the head and hands of the kneeling patron; but there is no trace of over-painting, so detrimental to the value of pictures of this school in general. As for the meadow, with its flowery vegetation, it remains perfect and intact.

Space fails us to mention the “Descent from the Cross,” “St. Christopher and St. James of Compostella,” by Memling, now in possession of the Rev. J. M. Heath, of Enfield.

In our notice of the painter (Dierick Stuerbout), we had occasion to remark the paucity of information respecting his birth and parentage. Recent research has added some documentary evidence upon these points, which is not without interest. Dierick Stuerbout, the painter of the “Legend of King Otho,” was the son of Thierry Bout or Stuerbout, “a great landscape painter.” He was born in 1391, and lived to the age of eighty-seven. Dierick tells his own age in a report of an inquiry made on the 9th of December, 1467. At that time he was seventy-six years old.¹

We dwelt on Dierick’s attainments in landscape-

¹ Wauters (A.), “Revue Universelle des Arts,” 1856, p. 252.

painting. This acquirement Dierick, doubtless, owes to the study of his father, "the great landscape painter." We had ventured to assign to Dierick, on the ground of similarity of style, the "Last Supper" of the Church of St. Pierre, at Louvain, hitherto attributed to Memling, or Justus of Ghent. The following document, extracted from Molanus, the author of a manuscript lately discovered in the records of Louvain, appears to confirm our views in this respect :¹—

"Theodorici filii opus sunt in ecclesiâ D. Petri duo altaria venerabilis sacramenti quæ multum ex arte commendantur."²

According to Molanus, Dierick had a brother named Hubert, or Albert, who practised art, and was appointed painter of the town at Louvain, in 1454. He held that office until 1481. Three sons of Hubert—namely, Hubert, Gilles, and Frissen, or Frederic—followed the profession of their father and uncle.³

At his country-house of Belvedere, Erith, Kent, Sir Culling Eardley possesses a picture that ranks amongst the interesting works of the imitators of Van Eyck and Memling. The subject represents the root of Jesse, treated much in the style of all genealogies, by the symbolic representation of a tree in an arabesque style, whose

¹ Molanus (G.), the author of the manuscript lately discovered at Louvain, is mentioned by Aubertus Miræus as an erudite and indefatigable author. He died at Louvain in 1585, and was buried in St. Pierre.—*Miræus, Elogia Belgica*, 4°. Antwerp, 1609, p. 34.

² Wauters, ut sup., p. 253.

³ Van Even, "Les Artistes de l'Hôtel de Ville de Louvain," p. 74. Schayes, apud Wauters, ut sup., p. 252.

boughs, ingeniously interlaced and balanced, expand into many-coloured roses, out of which rise numerous semi-figures of saints. This tree grows in the centre of the picture from behind a stone chair, on which Jesse is seated, reading a book, and resting his right hand on the figure of the Virgin, recumbent on a richly-coloured carpet. The Infant Saviour lies in her two hands on a white cloth, holding a red rosary. Two patrons kneel in prayer on each side of the group, both dressed in black, with joined hands; the one on the right having dark hair and aquiline features, the other, fair hair and light complexion. The latter is supported by a standing figure of a high priest in front, mitred, and clothed in a dark dress, turned with ermine, covering an embroidered vest, and white drapery;—a white wand in the right hand seems a symbol of authority. The other figure is supported by David, also in a long mantle of a light shot green colour, playing the harp. The remainder of the dress is of many colours, and embroidered, and the legs are encased in yellow boots. It may be said, indeed, of this as of all the personages depicted, that their dresses are more than usually variegated, and that the painter was partial to the changing hues of shot textures. Amongst the saints, whose bodies issue in various attitudes from the roses, it is possible to recognise a few by their symbols; but the greater part are difficult to name, as time has obliterated the inscriptions on the gold ground by which each one was distinguished.¹ Some of these figures point downwards towards the Virgin we have

¹ Traces of one of these inscriptions are visible near the saint in one of the roses on the left of the chair of St. Anne.

described; whilst others look up with eagerness, joy, or veneration, at another group which crowns the upper portion of the picture, and represents the Virgin holding the Infant, affectionately receiving a book from the hands of an aged man, and the Eternal, with orb in hand and the papal crown, looking on with great solemnity.

The characteristic feature of this picture is the patience and care with which it has been executed, recalling to mind the habits of a miniature painter accustomed to lavish his efforts on the representation of arabesques and ornaments. We might point to several miniatures in this country in this sentiment; such, for instance, as that of the "Baptism of Christ," belonging to Mr. Farrer, and the numerous pages of Mr. Weld Blundell's Missal at Ince. The pictures which it most resembles are the "Baptism of Christ" at Bruges, and the "Virgin and Child" with patrons and saints, at the Town-hall of Rouen. Of these, we have had to remark that they were tasteless, and faulty in many parts of design—the figures being frequently stout, short, and inelegant, and executed without anatomical knowledge; that the limbs of the figures, as well as the hands, were defective, being hard, or feeble of outline; that the draperies were crude and angular, and the colour of the whole laid on with much impasto, and a considerable flow of vehicle. We added, that whilst some portions of the execution betrayed a student of Memling, others were marked by the influence of Van Eyck or Van der Weyden. We find the same characteristics here. The Virgin, seated near Jesse, has the type common to Van der Weyden—the small chin and neck, and falling shoulders, of that master; the

naked Infant, the form usual in Memling. Whilst these are the features of the lower group, others are remarkable in the upper. The Infant Christ there has the square trunk of Van Eyck's representations. The figure of the Eternal, the finest in the panel, recalls to mind that of God the Father by Memling, in the shrine of St. Ursula; and one of the saints in the roses, who is recognised by the chalice to be St. John the Evangelist, resembles the Saviour in the "Baptism of Bruges." In all its characteristics, however, the picture approaches most to that of the "Rouen votive altar-piece." It has the feebleness of design of which we have spoken,—visible particularly in the short stature and poverty of form of Aaron, and in the faulty attitude of the body and legs of David, in the patient elaboration of the execution, and the want of vigour in the outlines—the knotted and large development of the digital joints, and the angularity of the draperies, and the profusion of their folds, without reference to the form they cover—the profusion of vehicle employed in the colours, and the vitreous aspect there given to them.

It must be admitted, however, that the general aspect of the picture, unfavourable as it is by its arabesque arrangement to any development of composition, offers a fair arrangement in the disposal of the attitudes, so as to avoid monotony, and a good balance of harmonies, chiefly in the secondary and tertiary keys,—each figure being properly detached by the flowers forming the complement of the colours in the vestments. The flesh-tints are somewhat flat and unrelieved, of a pale, cold tint, falling to a rosy hue in the feeble shadows, as we see in

miniatures. As regards the painters whose names might be suggested by this panel, we had occasion already to express our inability to mention one with certainty, when speaking of the "Baptism" at Bruges, and Rouen altar-piece. Gerard Horenbaut, who lived in the latter part of the fifteenth and commencement of the sixteenth centuries, and Lievin de Witte, are the only two artists whose known connexion with miniatures¹ would place

¹ Gerard Horenbaut's birth has been hitherto placed too late in the fifteenth century; namely in 1498 (vide "Messager des Sciences et des Arts de Belgique," vol. i. Ghent, 1833, p. 16). Albert Dürer's Relics (Campe) correct this error; that painter stating in his diary that Gerard, who lived at Antwerp in 1521, had then a daughter named Susanna, aged eighteen, whose precocious talent he admired. Gerard Horenbaut must have been at the age of manhood in 1498. This is an additional fact in support of our argument (vide supra, p. 126), to the effect that Horenbaut, and not Van der Meire, painted miniatures in the Breviary of St. Mark. It may not be amiss, also, to correct an error, somewhat common at the present time, respecting the name of the person who presented this Breviary to Cardinal Grimani. The "Anonimo di Morelli" states (p. 77), that this Breviary was sold to Cardinal Grimani for 500 ducats, by Messer Antonio Siciliano. It has been inferred from this, that the person alluded to by the Anonimo was Antonello da Messina,—the painter whose life and works are treated of in the present volume. Morelli, in one of his notes to the Anonimo (note 100, p. 189), speaking of Antonello da Messina with reference to the portraits of Alvise Pasqualino and Michel Vianello, says, that the presence of Antonello da Messina in Venice, in 1475, is proved by a letter written from Matteo Colaccio Siciliano to Antonio Siciliano, "Rector of the artists" in Padua, and published in his work, "De Fine Oratoris," in 1486. In this letter, Colaccio mentions Antonello da Messina as follows:—"Habet vero hæc ætas Antonellum Siculum, cujus pictura Venetiis in Divi Cassiani æde magnæ est admirationi." Antonio Siciliano, to whom this letter is addressed, was one of the family of the Adinolfi, and a native of Catania; and is, therefore, a different person from Antonello da Messina. It is curious to note that the Anonimo (p. 81) speaks of the portrait of Antonio Siciliano painted by a Flemish artist.

them in the position of executing such a picture as this; but too much obscurity hangs over them, and other painters of that time, to justify any certain attribution.

A mural painting of the Root of Jesse is to be seen at Utrecht, in one of the aisles of the *Buurkerk*, executed by a painter of the middle of the fifteenth century.

Since the impression of the preceding pages, the following pictures have been changed in their numbers and positions:—

MEMLING (p. 266).—Picture at Hampton Court, changed from No. 299 to No. 305, and no longer attributed to Sir A. More, but more properly classified under the title of "School of Van Eyck."

The Gallery of the late Samuel Rogers having been sold on the 28th of April, and succeeding days, the following pictures, mentioned in the body of this work, have changed hands:—

VIRGIN AND CHILD, assigned to John Van Eyck (p. 282). Sold to Mr. Thomas Baring for 267*l.*

PORTRAIT, assigned to Memling, but more probably by Dierick Stuerbout (pp. 190, 240, 253, 295). Bought by Mr. Pierce for 90*l.* 6*s.*

MEMLING.—Wings of an altar-piece (p. 265). Sold to Mr. Vernon Smith for 178*l.* 10*s.*

IMITATOR OF MEMLING.—Two small heads (p. 282). Bought by Mr. Herz, and since sent to France. Sold for 23*l.* 10*s.*

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