GIOTTO

AND HIS WORKS IN PADUA.

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GIOTTO

AND HIS WORKS IN PADUA:

BEING

An Explanatory Notice of the Series of Woodcuts

Executed for the Arundel Society

After the Frescoes in the Arena Chapel.

By JOHN RUSKIN.

Parts I, II. & III.

PRINTED FOR THE ARUNDEL SOCIETY.

1854.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following notice of Giotto has not been drawn up with any idea of attempting a hiſtory of his life. That hiſtory could only be written after a careful ſearch through the libraries of Italy for all documents relating to the years during which he worked. I have no time for ſuch ſearch, or even for the examination of well-known and publiſhed materials; and have therefore merely collected, from the ſources neareſt at hand, ſuch information as appeared abſolutely neceſſary to render the ſeries of Plates now publiſhed by the Arundel Society intelligible and intereſting to thoſe among its Members who have not devoted much time to the examination of mediæval works. I have prefixed a few remarks on the relation of the art of Giotto to former and ſubſequent efforts; which I hope may be uſeful in preventing the general reader from either looking for what the painter never intended to give, or miſſing the points to which his endeavours were really directed.

J. R.

GIOTTO.

AND HIS WORKS IN PADUA.

TOWARDS the cloſe of the thirteenth century, Enrico Scrovigno, a noble Paduan, purchaſed, in his native city, the remains of the Roman Amphitheatre or Arena from the family of the Deleſmanini, to whom thoſe remains had been granted by the Emperor Henry III. of Germany in 1090. For the power of making this purchaſe, Scrovigno was in all probability indebted to his father, Reginald, who, for his avarice, is placed by Dante in the ſeventh circle of the *Inferno*, and regarded apparently as the chief of the uſurers there, ſince he is the only one who addreſſes Dante.* The ſon,

* "Noting the viſages of ſome who lay
"Beneath the pelting of that dolorous fire,
"One of them all I knew not; but perceived
"That pendent from his neck each bore a pouch,
"With colours and with emblems various marked,
"On which it ſeemed as if their eye did feed.
"And when amongſt them looking round I came,
"A yellow purſe I ſaw, with azure wrought,
"That wore a lion's countenance and port.

having poſſeſſed himſelf of the Roman ruin, or of the ſite which it had occupied, built himſelf a fortified palace upon the ground, and a chapel dedicated to the Annunciate Virgin.

" Then, ſtill my ſight purſuing its career,
" Another I beheld, than blood more red,
" A gooſe diſplay of whiter wing than curd.
" *And one who bore a fat and azure ſwine*
" *Pictured on his white ſcrip, addreſſed me thus:*
" What doſt thou in this deep? Go now and know,
" Since yet thou liveſt, that my neighbour here,
" Vitaliano, on my left ſhall ſit.
" A Paduan with theſe Florentines am I.
" Oftimes they thunder in mine ears, exclaiming,
" Oh! haſte that noble knight, he who the pouch
" With the three goats will bring. This ſaid, he writhed
" The mouth, and lolled the tongue out, like an ox
" That licks his noſtrils." *Canto* xvii.

This paſſage of Cary's Dante is not quite ſo clear as that tranſlator's work uſually is. " One of them all I knew not" is an awkward periphraſis for " I knew none of them." Dante's indignant expreſſion of the effect of avarice in withering away diſtinctions of character, and the prophecy of Scrovigno, that his neighbour Vitaliano, then living, ſhould ſoon be with him, to ſit on his left hand, is rendered a little obſcure by the tranſpoſition of the word " here." Cary has alſo been afraid of the exceſſive homelineſs of Dante's imagery; " whiter wing than curd" being in the original " whiter than butter." The attachment of the purſe to the neck, as a badge of ſhame, in the Inferno, is found before Dante's time; as, for inſtance, in the windows of Bourges cathedral (ſee Plate iii. of MM. Martin and Cahier's beautiful work). And the building of the Arena Chapel by the ſon, as a kind of atonement for the avarice of the father, is very characteriſtic of the period, in which the uſe of money for the building of churches was conſidered juſt as meritorious as its unjuſt accumulation was criminal. I have ſeen, in a MS. Church-ſervice of the thirteenth century, an illumination repreſenting Church-Conſecration, illuſtrating the words, " Fundata eſt domus Domini ſupra verticem montium," ſurrounded, for the purpoſe of contraſt, by a groteſque, conſiſting of a picture of a miſer's death-bed, a demon drawing his ſoul out of his mouth, while his attendants are ſearching in his cheſts for his treaſures.

This chapel, built in or about the year 1303,* appears to have been intended to replace one which had long exiſted on the ſpot; and in which, from the year 1278, an annual feſtival had been held on Lady-day, in which the Annunciation was repreſented in the manner of our Engliſh myſteries (and under the ſame title: "una ſacra rappreſentazione di quel *miſtero*"), with dialogue, and muſic both vocal and inſtrumental. Scrovegno's purchaſe of the ground could not be allowed to interfere with the national cuſtom; but he is reported by ſome writers to have rebuilt the chapel with greater coſtlineſs, in order, as far as poſſible, to efface the memory of his father's unhappy life. But Federici, in his hiſtory of the Cavalieri Godenti, ſuppoſes that Scrovegno was a member of that body, and was aſſiſted by them in decorating the new edifice. The order of Cavalieri Godenti was inſtituted in the beginning of the thirteenth century, to defend the "exiſtence," as Selvatico ſtates it, but more accurately the dignity, of the Virgin, againſt the various heretics by whom it was beginning to be aſſailed. Her knights were first called Cavaliers of St. Mary; but ſoon increaſed in power and riches to ſuch a degree, that, from their general habits of life, they received the nickname of the "Merry Brothers." Federici gives forcible reaſons for his opinion that the Arena Chapel was employed in the ceremonies of their order; and Lord Lindſay obſerves, that the fulneſs with which the hiſtory of the Virgin is recounted on its walls, adds to the plauſibility of his ſuppoſition.

* For theſe hiſtorical details I am chiefly indebted to the very careful treatiſe of Selvatico, *Sulla Cappellina degli Scrovegni nell' Arena di Padova.* Padua, 1836.

Enrico Scrovegno was, however, towards the cloſe of his life, driven into exile, and died at Venice in 1320. But he was buried in the chapel he had built; and has one ſmall monument in the ſacriſty, as the founder of the building, in which he is repreſented under a Gothic niche, ſtanding, with his hands claſped and his eyes raiſed; while behind the altar is his tomb, on which, as uſual at the period, is a recumbent ſtatue of him. The chapel itſelf may not unwarrantably be conſidered as one of the firſt efforts of Popery in reſiſtance of the Reformation: for the Reformation, though not victorious till the ſixteenth, began in reality in the thirteenth century; and the remonſtrances of ſuch biſhops as our own Groſſteſte, the martyrdoms of the Albigenſes in the Dominican cruſades, and the murmurs of thoſe "heretics" againſt whoſe aſperſions of the majeſty of the Virgin this chivalrous order of the Cavalieri Godenti was inſtituted, were as truly the ſigns of the approach of a new era in religion, as the opponent work of Giotto on the walls of the Arena was a ſign of the approach of a new era in art.

The chapel having been founded, as ſtated above, in 1303, Giotto appears to have been ſummoned to decorate its interior walls about the year 1306, — ſummoned, as being at that time the acknowledged maſter of painting in Italy. By what ſteps he had riſen to this unqueſtioned eminence it is difficult to trace; for the records of his life, ſtrictly examined, and freed from the verbiage and conjecture of artiſtical hiſtory, nearly reduce themſelves to a liſt of the cities of Italy where he painted, and to a few anecdotes, of little meaning in themſelves, and doubly pointleſs

in the fact of moſt of them being inheritances of the whole race of painters, and related ſucceſſively of all in whoſe biographies the public have deigned to take an intereſt. There is even queſtion as to the date of his birth; Vaſari ſtating him to have been born in 1276, while Baldinucci, on the internal evidence derived from Vaſari's own narrative, throws the date back ten years.* I believe, however, that Vaſari is moſt probably accurate in his firſt main ſtatement; and that his errors, always numerous, are in the ſubſequent and minor particulars. It is at leaſt undoubted truth that Giotto was born, and paſſed the years of childhood, at Veſpignano, about fourteen miles north of Florence, on the road to Bologna. Few travellers can forget the peculiar landſcape of that diſtrict of the Apennine. As they aſcend the hill which riſes from Florence to the loweſt break in the ridge of Fieſole, they paſs continually beneath the walls of villas bright in perfect luxury, and beſide cypreſs-hedges, encloſing fair terraced gardens, where the maſſes of oleander and magnolia, motionleſs as leaves in a picture, inlay alternately upon the blue sky their branching lightneſs of pale roſe-colour, and deep green breadth of ſhade, ſtudded with balls of budding ſilver, and ſhowing at intervals through their framework of rich leaf and rubied flower, the far-away bends of the Arno beneath its ſlopes of olive, and the purple peaks of the Carrara mountains, toſſing themſelves againſt the weſtern diſtance, where the ſtreaks of motionleſs clouds burn above the Piſan ſea. The traveller paſſes the Fiesolan ridge, and all is changed. The country is on a ſudden lonely. Here

* Lord Lindſay, *Chriſtian Art*, vol. ii. p. 166.

and there indeed are ſeen the ſcattered houſes of a farm grouped gracefully upon the hill-ſides,—here and there a fragment of tower upon a diſtant rock; but neither gardens, nor flowers, nor glittering palace-walls, only a grey extent of mountain-ground, tufted irregularly with ilex and olive: a ſcene not ſublime, for its forms are ſubdued and low; not deſolate, for its valleys are full of ſown fields and tended paſtures; not rich nor lovely, but ſunburnt and ſorrowful; becoming wilder every inſtant as the road winds into its receſſes, aſcending still, until the higher woods, now partly oak and partly pine, drooping back from the central creſt of the Apennine, leave a paſtoral wilderneſs of ſcathed rock and arid graſs, withered away here by froſt, and there by ſtrange lambent tongues of earth-fed fire.* Giotto paſſed the firſt ten years of his life, a ſhepherd-boy, among theſe hills; was found by Cimabue, near his native village, drawing one of his ſheep upon a ſmooth ſtone; was yielded up by his father, "a ſimple perſon, a labourer of the earth," to the guardianſhip of the painter, who, by his own work, had already made the ſtreets of Florence ring with joy; attended him to Florence, and became his diſciple.

We may fancy the glance of the boy, when he and Cimabue ſtood ſide by ſide on the ridge of Fieſole, and for the firſt time he ſaw the flowering thickets of the Val d'Arno; and deep beneath, the innumerable towers of the City of the Lily, the depths of his own heart yet hiding

* At Pietra Mala. The flames riſe two or three feet above the ſtony ground out of which they ſpring, white and fierce enough to be viſible in the intenſe rays even of the morning ſun.

the faireſt of them all. Another ten years paſſed over him, and he was choſen from among the painters of Italy to decorate the Vatican.

The account given us by Vaſari of the mode of his competition on this occaſion, is one of the few anecdotes of him which ſeem to be authentic (eſpecially as having given riſe to an Italian proverb), and it has alſo great point and value. I tranſlate Vaſari's words literally.

"This work (his paintings in the Campo Santo of "Piſa) acquired for him, both in the city and externally, "ſo much fame, that the Pope Benedict IX. ſent a certain "one of his courtiers into Tuſcany, to ſee what ſort of a "man Giotto was, and what was the quality of his works, "he (the pope) intending to have ſome paintings executed "in St. Peter's; which courtier, coming to ſee Giotto, "and hearing that there were other maſters in Florence "who excelled in painting and in moſaic, ſpoke, in Siena, "to many maſters; then, having received drawings from "them, he came to Florence; and having gone one morn-"ing into Giotto's ſhop as he was at work, explained the "pope's mind to him, and in what way he wiſhed to "avail himſelf of his powers, and finally requeſted from "him a little piece of drawing to ſend to his Holineſs. "Giotto, who was moſt courteous, took a leaf (of vellum?), "and upon this, with a bruſh dipped in red, fixing his "arm to his ſide, to make it as the limb of a pair of com-"paſſes, and turning his hand, made a circle ſo perfect in "meaſure and outline, that it was a wonder to ſee: which "having done, he ſaid to the courtier, with a ſmile, 'There "is the drawing.' He, thinking himſelf mocked, ſaid,

" 'Shall I have no other drawing than this?' 'This is " enough, and too much,' anſwered Giotto; 'ſend it with " the others: you will ſee if it will be underſtood.' The " ambaſſador, ſeeing that he could not get any thing elſe, " took his leave with ſmall ſatisfaction, doubting whether " he had not been made a jeſt of. However, when he " ſent to the pope the other drawings, and the names of " thoſe who had made them, he ſent alſo that of Giotto, " relating the way in which he had held himſelf in draw- " ing his circle, without moving his arm, and without " compaſſes. Whence the pope, and many intelligent " courtiers, knew how much Giotto overpaſſed in excel- " lence all the other painters of his time. Afterwards, " the thing becoming known, the proverb aroſe from it: " 'Thou art rounder than the O of Giotto;' which it is " ſtill in cuſtom to ſay to men of the groſſer clay; for the " proverb is pretty, not only on account of the accident of " its origin, but becauſe it has a double meaning, 'round' " being taken in Tuſcany to expreſs not only circular form, " but ſlowneſs and groſſineſs of wit."

Such is the account of Vaſari, which, at the firſt read- ing, might be gravely called into queſtion, ſeeing that the paintings at Piſa, to which he aſcribes the ſudden extent of Giotto's reputation, have been proved to be the work of Franceſco da Volterra;* and ſince, moreover, Vaſari has even miſtaken the name of the pope, and written Boniface IX. for Boniface VIII. But the ſtory itſelf muſt, I think, be true; and, rightly underſtood, it is ſingularly intereſting.

* At leaſt Lord Lindſay ſeems to conſider the evidence collected by Förſter on this ſubject concluſive. *Chriſtian Art*, vol. ii. p. 168.

I ſay, rightly underſtood; for Lord Lindſay ſuppoſes the circle to have been mechanically drawn by turning the ſheet of vellum under the hand, as now conſtantly done for the ſake of ſpeed at ſchools. But neither do Vaſari's words bear this conſtruction, nor would the drawing ſo made have borne the ſlighteſt teſtimony to Giotto's power. Vaſari ſays diſtinctly, "and turning his hand" (or, as I ſhould rather read it, "with a ſweep of his hand"), not "turning the vellum;" neither would a circle produced in ſo mechanical a manner have borne diſtinct witneſs to any thing except the draughtſman's mechanical ingenuity; and Giotto had too much common ſenſe, and too much courteſy, to ſend the pope a drawing which did not really contain the evidence he required. Lord Lindſay has been miſled alſo by his own careleſs tranſlation of "pennello tinto di roſſo" ("a *bruſh* dipped in red,") by the word "crayon." It is eaſy to draw the mechanical circle with a crayon, but by no means eaſy with a bruſh. I have not the ſlighteſt doubt that Giotto drew the circle as a painter naturally would draw it; that is to ſay, that he ſet the vellum upright on the wall or panel before him, and then ſteadying his arm firmly againſt his ſide, drew the circular line with one ſweeping but firm revolution of his hand, holding the bruſh long. Such a feat as this is completely poſſible to a well-diſciplined painter's hand, but utterly impoſſible to any other; and the circle ſo drawn was the moſt convincing proof Giotto could give of his deciſion of eye and perfectneſs of practice.

Still, even when thus underſtood, there is much in the anecdote very curious. Here is a painter requeſted by the

head of the Church to execute certain religious paintings, and the only qualification for the taſk of which he deigns to demonſtrate his poſſeſſion is executive ſkill. Nothing is ſaid, and nothing appears to be thought, of expreſſion, or invention, or devotional ſentiment. Nothing is required but firmneſs of hand. And here ariſes the important queſtion: Did Giotto know that this was all that was looked for by his religious patrons? and is there occult ſatire in the example of his art which he ſends them?—or does the founder of ſacred painting mean to tell us that he holds his own power to conſiſt merely in firmneſs of hand, ſecured by long practice? I cannot ſatisfy myſelf on this point: but yet it ſeems to me that we may ſafely gather two concluſions from the words of the maſter, "It is enough, and more than enough." The firſt, that Giotto had indeed a profound feeling of the value of *preciſion* in all art; and that we may uſe the full force of his authority to preſs the truth, of which it is ſo difficult to perſuade the haſty workmen of modern times, that the difference between right and wrong lies within the breadth of a line; and that the moſt perfect power and genius are ſhown by the accuracy which diſdains error, and the faithfulneſs which fears it.

And the ſecond concluſion is, that whatever Giotto's imaginative powers might be, he was proud to be a good *workman*, and willing to be conſidered by others only as ſuch. There might lurk, as has been ſuggeſted, ſome ſatire in the meſſage to the pope, and ſome conſciouſneſs in his own mind of faculties higher than thoſe of draughtſmanſhip. I cannot tell how far theſe hidden feelings ex-

iſted; but the more I ſee of living artiſts, and learn of departed ones, the more I am convinced that the higheſt ſtrength of genius is generally marked by ſtrange unconſciouſneſs of its own modes of operation, and often by no ſmall ſcorn of the beſt reſults of its exertion. The inferior mind intently watches its own proceſſes, and dearly values its own produce; the maſter-mind is intent on other things than itſelf, and cares little for the fruits of a toil which it is apt to undertake rather as a law of life than a means of immortality. It will ſing at a feaſt, or retouch an old play, or paint a dark wall, for its daily bread, anxious only to be honeſt in its fulfilment of its pledges or its duty, and careleſs that future ages will rank it among the gods.

I think it unneceſſary to repeat here any other of the anecdotes commonly related of Giotto, as, ſeparately taken, they are quite valueleſs. Yet much may be gathered from their general *tone*. It is remarkable that they are, almoſt without exception, records of good-humoured jeſts, involving or illuſtrating ſome point of practical good ſenſe: and by comparing this general colour of the reputation of Giotto with the actual character of his deſigns, there cannot remain the ſmalleſt doubt that his mind was one of the moſt healthy, kind, and active, that ever informed a human frame. His love of beauty was entirely free from weakneſs; his love of truth untinged by ſeverity; his induſtry conſtant, without impatience; his workmanſhip accurate, without formaliſm; his temper ſerene, and yet playful; his imagination exhauſtleſs, without extravagance; and his faith firm, without ſuperſtition. I do not know,

in the annals of art, ſuch another example of happy, practical, unerring, and benevolent power.

I am certain that this is the eſtimate of his character which muſt be arrived at by an attentive ſtudy of his works, and of the few data which remain reſpecting his life; but I ſhall not here endeavour to give proof of its truth, becauſe I believe the ſubject has been exhauſtively treated by Rumohr and Förſter, whoſe eſſays on the works and character of Giotto will doubtleſs be tranſlated into Engliſh, as the intereſt of the Engliſh public in mediæval art increaſes. I ſhall therefore here only endeavour briefly to ſketch the relation which Giotto held to the artiſts who preceded and followed him, a relation ſtill imperfectly underſtood; and then, as briefly, to indicate the general courſe of his labours in Italy, as far as may be neceſſary for underſtanding the value of the ſeries in the Arena Chapel.

The art of Europe, between the fifth and thirteenth centuries, divides itſelf eſſentially into two great branches, one ſpringing from, the other grafted on, the old Roman ſtock. The firſt is the Roman art itſelf, prolonged in a languid and degraded condition, and becoming at laſt a mere formal ſyſtem, centered at the ſeat of Eaſtern empire, and thence generally called Byzantine. The other is the barbarous and incipient art of the Gothic nations, more or leſs coloured by Roman or Byzantine influence, and gradually increaſing in life and power.

Generally ſpeaking, the Byzantine art, although manifeſting itſelf only in perpetual repetitions, becoming every day more cold and formal, yet preſerved reminiſcences of

deſign originally noble, and traditions of execution originally perfect.

Generally ſpeaking, the Gothic art, although becoming every day more powerful, preſented the moſt ludicrous experiments of infantile imagination, and the most rude efforts of untaught manipulation.

Hence, if any ſuperior mind aroſe in Byzantine art, it had before it models which ſuggeſted or recorded a perfection they did not themſelves poſſeſs; and the ſuperiority of the individual mind would probably be ſhown in a more ſincere and living treatment of the ſubjects ordained for repetition by the canons of the ſchools.

In the art of the Goth, the choice of ſubject was unlimited, and the ſtyle of deſign ſo remote from all perfection, as not always even to point out clearly the direction in which advance could be made. The ſtrongeſt minds which appear in that art are therefore generally manifeſted by redundance of imagination, and ſudden refinement of touch, whether of pencil or chiſel, together with unexpected ſtarts of effort or flaſhes of knowledge in accidental directions, gradually forming various national ſtyles.

Of theſe comparatively independent branches of art, the greateſt is, as far as I know, the French ſculpture of the thirteenth century. No words can give any idea of the magnificent redundance of its imaginative power, or of the perpetual beauty of even its ſmalleſt incidental deſigns. But this very richneſs of ſculptural invention prevented the French from cultivating their powers of painting, except in illumination (of which art they were the acknowledged maſters), and in glaſs-painting. Their

exquiſite gift of fretting their ſtone-work with inexhauſtible wealth of ſculpture, prevented their feeling the need of figure-deſign on coloured ſurfaces.

The ſtyle of architecture prevalent in Italy at the ſame period, preſented, on the contrary, large blank ſurfaces, which could only be rendered intereſting by covering them with moſaic or painting.

The Italians were not at the time capable of doing this for themſelves, and moſaiciſts were brought from Conſtantinople, who covered the churches of Italy with a ſublime monotony of Byzantine traditions. But the Gothic blood was burning in the Italian veins; and the Florentines and Piſans could not reſt content in the formaliſm of the Eaſtern ſplendour. The firſt innovator was, I believe, Giunta of Piſa, the ſecond Cimabue, the third Giotto; the laſt only being a man of power enough to effect a complete revolution in the artiſtic principles of his time.

He, however, began, like his maſter Cimabue, with a perfect reſpect for his Byzantine models; and his paintings for a long time conſiſted only of repetitions of the Byzantine ſubjects, ſoftened in treatment, enriched in number of figures, and enlivened in geſture. Afterwards he invented ſubjects of his own. The manner and degree of the changes which he at firſt effected could only be properly underſtood by actual compariſon of his deſigns with the Byzantine originals;* but in default of the means of ſuch

* It might not, I think, be a work unworthy of the Arundel Society, to collect and engrave in outline the complete ſeries of theſe Byzantine originals of the ſubjects of the Arena Chapel, in order to facilitate this compariſon. The Greek MSS. in the Britiſh Muſeum would, I think, be amply ſufficient; the Harleian MS. numbered

a compariſon, it may be generally ſtated that the innovations of Giotto conſiſted in the introduction, A, of gayer or lighter colours; B, of broader maſſes; and, C, of more careful imitation of nature than exiſted in the works of his predeceſſors.

A. *Greater lightneſs of colour.* This was partly in compliance with a tendency which was beginning to manifeſt itſelf even before Giotto's time. Over the whole of northern Europe, the colouring of the eleventh and early twelfth centuries had been pale: in manuſcripts, principally compoſed of pale red, green, and yellow, blue being ſparingly introduced (earlier ſtill, in the eighth and ninth centuries, the letters had often been coloured with black and yellow only). Then, in the cloſe of the twelfth and throughout the thirteenth century, the great ſyſtem of perfect colour was in uſe; ſolemn and deep; compoſed ſtrictly, in all its leading maſſes, of the colours revealed by God from Sinai as the nobleſt;—blue, purple, and ſcarlet, with gold (other hues, chiefly green, with white and black, being uſed in points or ſmall maſſes, to relieve the main colours). In the early part of the fourteenth century the colours begin to grow paler; about 1330 the ſtyle is already completely modified; and at the cloſe of the fourteenth century the colour is quite pale and delicate.

I have not carefully examined the colouring of early Byzantine work; but it ſeems always to have been com-

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1810 alone furniſhing a conſiderable number of ſubjects, and eſpecially a Death of the Virgin, with the St. John thrown into the peculiar and violent geſture of grief afterwards adopted by Giotto in the Entombment of the Arena Chapel.

paratively dark, and in manuſcripts is remarkably ſo; Giotto's paler colouring, therefore, though only part of the great European ſyſtem, was rendered notable by its ſtronger contraſt with the Byzantine examples.

B. *Greater breadth of maſs.* It had been the habit of the Byzantines to break up their draperies by a large number of minute folds. Norman and Romaneſque ſculpture ſhowed much of the ſame character. Giotto melted all theſe folds into broad maſſes of colour; ſo that his compoſitions have ſometimes almoſt a Titianeſque look in this particular. This innovation was a healthy one, and led to very noble reſults when followed up by ſucceeding artiſts: but in many of Giotto's compoſitions the figures become ludicrouſly cumbrous, from the exceeding ſimplicity of the terminal lines, and maſſiveneſs of unbroken form. The manner was copied in illuminated manuscripts with great diſadvantage, as it was unfavourable to minute ornamentation. The French never adopted it in either branch of art, nor did any other Northern ſchool; minute and ſharp folds of the robes remaining characteriſtic of Northern (more eſpecially of Flemiſh and German) deſign down to the lateſt times, giving a great ſuperiority to the French and Flemiſh illuminated work, and cauſing a proportionate inferiority in their large pictorial efforts. Even Rubens and Vandyke cannot free themſelves from a certain meanneſs and minuteneſs in diſpoſition of drapery.

C. *Cloſe imitation of nature.* In this one principle lay Giotto's great ſtrength, and the entire ſecret of the revolution he effected. It was not by greater learning, not by the diſcovery of new theories of art, not by greater taſte,

nor by "ideal" principles of ſelection, that he became the head of the progreſſive ſchools of Italy. It was ſimply by being intereſted in what was going on around him, by ſubſtituting the geſtures of living men for conventional attitudes, and portraits of living men for conventional faces, and incidents of every-day life for conventional circumſtances, that he became great, and the maſter of the great. Giotto was to his contemporaries preciſely what Millais is to *his* contemporaries,—a daring naturaliſt, in defiance of tradition, idealiſm, and formaliſm. The Giotteſque movement in the fourteenth, and Pre-Raphaelite movement in the nineteenth centuries, are preciſely ſimilar in bearing and meaning: both being the proteſts of vitality againſt mortality, of ſpirit againſt letter, and of truth againſt tradition: and both, which is the more ſingular, literally links in one unbroken chain of feeling; for exactly as Niccola Piſano and Giotto were helped by the claſſical ſculptures diſcovered in their time, the Pre-Raphaelites have been helped by the works of Niccola and Giotto at Piſa and Florence: and thus the fiery croſs of truth has been delivered from ſpirit to ſpirit, over the duſt of intervening generations.

But what, it may be ſaid by the reader, is the uſe of the works of Giotto to *us?* They may indeed have been wonderful for their time, and of infinite uſe in that time; but ſince, after Giotto, came Leonardo and Correggio, what is the uſe of going back to the ruder art, and republiſhing it in the year 1854? Why ſhould we fret ourſelves to dig down to the root of the tree, when we may at once enjoy its fruit and foliage? I anſwer, firſt, that in all matters relating

to human intellect, it is a great thing to have hold of the root: that at leaſt we ought to ſee it, and taſte it, and handle it; for it often happens that the root is wholeſome when the leaves, however fair, are uſeleſs or poiſonous. In nine caſes out of ten, the firſt expreſſion of an idea is the moſt valuable: the idea may afterwards be poliſhed and ſoftened, and made more attractive to the general eye; but the firſt expreſſion of it has a freſhneſs and brightneſs, like the flaſh of a native cryſtal compared to the luſtre of glaſs that has been melted and cut. And in the ſecond place, we ought to meaſure the value of art leſs by its executive than by its moral power. Giotto was not indeed one of the moſt accompliſhed painters, but he was one of the greateſt men, who ever lived. He was the firſt maſter of his time, in architecture as well as in painting; he was the friend of Dante, and the undiſputed interpreter of religious truth, by means of painting, over the whole of Italy. The works of ſuch a man may not be the beſt to ſet before children in order to teach them drawing; but they aſſuredly ſhould be ſtudied with the greateſt care by all who are intereſted in the hiſtory of the human mind.

One point more remains to be noticed reſpecting him. As far as I am aware, he never painted profane ſubjects. All his important exiſting works are excluſively devoted to the illuſtration of Chriſtianity. This was not a reſult of his own peculiar feeling or determination; it was a neceſſity of the period. Giotto appears to have conſidered himſelf ſimply as a workman, at the command of any employer, for any kind of work, however humble. " In the ſixty-third " novel of Franco Sacchetti we read that a ſtranger, ſuddenly

" entering Giotto's ſtudy, threw down a ſhield, and departed,
" ſaying, 'Paint me my arms on that ſhield.' Giotto look-
" ing after him, exclaimed, 'Who is he? what is he? He
" ſays, 'Paint me my arms,' as if he was one of the BARDI.
" What arms does he bear?' "* But at the time of Giotto's eminence, art was never employed on a great ſcale except in the ſervice of religion; nor has it ever been otherwiſe employed, except in declining periods. I do not mean to draw any ſevere concluſion from this fact; but it is a fact nevertheleſs, which ought to be very diſtinctly ſtated, and very carefully conſidered. All *progreſſive* art hitherto has been religious art; and commencements of the periods of decline are accurately marked, in illumination, by its employment on romances inſtead of pſalters; and in painting, by its employment on mythology or profane hiſtory inſtead of ſacred hiſtory. Yet perhaps I ſhould rather have ſaid, on *heathen mythology* inſtead of *Chriſtian mythology;* for this latter term—firſt uſed, I believe, by Lord Lindſay—is more applicable to the ſubjects of the early painters than that of "ſacred *hiſtory*." Of all the virtues commonly found in the higher orders of human mind, that of a ſtern and juſt reſpect for truth ſeems to be the rareſt; ſo that while ſelf-denial, and courage, and charity, and religious zeal, are diſplayed in their utmoſt degrees by myriads of ſaints and heroes, it is only once in a century that a man appears whoſe word may be implicitly truſted, and who, in the relation of a plain fact, will not allow his prejudices or his pleaſure to tempt him to ſome colouring or diſtortion of it. Hence the portions of ſacred hiſtory

* Notes to Rogers' *Italy*.

which have been the conſtant ſubjects of fond popular contemplation have, in the lapſe of ages, been encumbered with fictitious detail; and their various hiſtorians ſeem to have conſidered the exerciſe of their imagination innocent, and even meritorious, if they could increaſe either the vividneſs of conception or the ſincerity of belief in their readers. A due conſideration of that well-known weakneſs of the popular mind, which renders a ſtatement credible in proportion to the multitude of local and circumſtantial details which accompany it, may lead us to look with ſome indulgence on the errors, however fatal in their iſſue to the cauſe they were intended to advance, of thoſe weak teachers, who thought the acceptance of their general ſtatements of Chriſtian doctrine cheaply won by the help of ſome ſimple (and generally abſurd) inventions of detail reſpecting the life of the Virgin or the Apoſtles.

Indeed, I can hardly imagine the Bible to be ever read with true intereſt, unleſs, in our reading, we feel ſome longing for further knowledge of the minute incidents of the life of Chriſt,—for ſome records of thoſe things, which "if they had been written every one," the world could not have contained the books that ſhould be written: and they who have once felt this thirſt for further truth, may ſurely both conceive and pardon the earneſt queſtioning of ſimple diſciples (who knew not, as we do, how much had been indeed revealed), and meaſure with ſome juſtice the ſtrength of the temptation which betrayed theſe teachers into adding to the word of Revelation. Together with this ſpecious and ſubtle influence, we muſt allow for the inſtinct of imagination exerting itſelf in the acknowledged

embelliſhment of beloved truths. If we reflect how much, even in this age of accurate knowledge, the viſions of Milton have become confuſed in the minds of many perſons with ſcriptural facts, we ſhall rather be ſurpriſed, that in an age of legends ſo little ſhould be added to the Bible, than that occaſionally we ſhould be informed of important circumſtances in ſacred hiſtory with the collateral warning, "This Moſes ſpak not of."*

More eſpecially in the domain of painting, it is ſurpriſing to ſee how ſtrictly the early workmen confined themſelves to repreſentations of the ſame ſeries of ſcenes; how little of pictorial embelliſhment they uſually added; and how, even in the poſitions and geſtures of figures, they ſtrove to give the idea rather of their having ſeen the *fact*, than imagined a pictureſque treatment of it. Often, in examining early art, we miſtake conſcientiouſneſs for ſervility, and attribute to the abſence of invention what was indeed the reſult of the earneſtneſs of faith.

Nor, in a merely artiſtical point of view, is it leſs important to note, that the greateſt advance in power was made when painters had few ſubjects to treat. The day has perhaps come when genius ſhould be ſhown in the diſcovery of perpetually various intereſt amidſt the incidents of actual life; and the abſence of inventive capacity is very aſſuredly proved by the narrow ſelection of ſubjects which commonly appear on the walls of our exhibitions. But yet it is to be always remembered, that more originality may

* Theſe words are gravely added to ſome ſingular particulars reſpecting the life of Adam, related in a MS. of the ſixteenth century preſerved in the Heralds' College.

be ſhown in giving intereſt to a well-known ſubject than in diſcovering a new one; that the greateſt poets whom the world has ſeen have been contented to retouch and exalt the creations of their predeceſſors; and that the painters of the middle ages reached their utmoſt power by unwearied treading a narrow circle of ſacred ſubjects.

Nothing is indeed more notable in the hiſtory of art than the exact balance of its point of excellence, in all things, midway between ſervitude and licenſe. Thus, in choice and treatment of ſubject, it became paralyſed among the Byzantines, by being mercileſsly confined to a given ſeries of ſcenes, and to a given mode of repreſenting them. Giotto gave it partial liberty and incipient life; by the artiſts who ſucceeded him the range of its ſcenery was continually extended, and the ſeverity of its ſtyle ſlowly ſoftened to perfection. But the range was ſtill, in ſome degree, limited by the neceſſity of its continual ſubordination to religious purpoſes; and the ſtyle, though ſoftened, was ſtill chaſte, and though tender, ſelf-reſtrained. At laſt came the period of licenſe: the artiſt choſe his ſubjects from the loweſt ſcenes of human life, and let looſe his paſſions in their portraiture. And the kingdom of art paſſed away.

As if to direct us to the obſervation of this great law, there is a curious viſible type of it in the progreſs of ornamentation in manuſcripts, correſponding with the various changes in the higher branch of art. In the courſe of the 12th and early 13th centuries, the ornamentation, though often full of high feeling and fantaſy, is ſternly encloſed within limiting border-lines;—at firſt, ſevere ſquares, oblongs, or triangles. As the grace of the ornamentation

advances, theſe border-lines are ſoftened and broken into various curves, and the inner deſign begins here and there to overpaſs them. Gradually this emergence becomes more conſtant, and the lines which thus eſcape throw themſelves into curvatures expreſſive of the moſt exquiſite concurrence of freedom with ſelf-reſtraint. At length the reſtraint vaniſhes, the freedom changes conſequently into licenſe, and the page is covered with exuberant, irregular, and fooliſh extravagances of leafage and line.

It only remains to be noticed, that the circumſtances of the time at which Giotto appeared were peculiarly favourable to the development of genius; owing partly to the ſimplicity of the methods of practice, and partly to the naïveté with which art was commonly regarded. Giotto, like all the great painters of the period, was merely a travelling decorator of walls, at so much a day; having at Florence a *bottèga*, or workſhop, for the production and ſale of ſmall tempera pictures. There were no ſuch things as "ſtudios" in thoſe days. An artiſt's "ſtudies" were over by the time he was eighteen; after that he was a *lavoratore*, "labourer," a man who knew his buſineſs, and produced certain works of known value for a known price; being troubled with no philoſophical abſtractions, ſhutting himſelf up in no wiſe for the reception of inſpirations; receiving, indeed, a good many, as a matter of courſe,—juſt as he received the ſunbeams which came in at his window, the light which he worked by;—in either caſe, without mouthing about it, or much concerning himſelf as to the nature of it. Not troubled by critics either; ſatisfied that his work was well done, and that people would find it out to be well done;

but not vain of it, nor more profoundly vexed at its being found fault with, than a good ſaddler would be by ſome one's ſaying his laſt ſaddle was uneaſy in the ſeat. Not, on the whole, much moleſted by critics, but generally underſtood by the men of ſenſe, his neighbours and friends, and permitted to have his own way with the walls he had to paint, as being, on the whole, an authority about walls; receiving at the ſame time a good deal of daily encouragement and comfort in the ſimple admiration of the populace, and in the general ſenſe of having done good, and painted what no man could look upon without being the better for it.

Thus he went, a ſerene labourer, throughout the length and breadth of Italy. For the firſt ten years of his life, a ſhepherd; then a ſtudent, perhaps for five or ſix; then already in Florence, ſetting himſelf to his life's taſk; and called as a maſter to Rome when he was only twenty. There he painted the principal chapel of St. Peter's, and worked in moſaic alſo; no handicrafts, that had colour or form for their objects, ſeeming unknown to him. Then returning to Florence, he painted Dante, about the year 1300,* the 35th year of Dante's life, the 24th of his own; and deſigned the façade of the Duomo, on the death of its former architect, Arnolfo. Some ſix years afterwards he went to Padua, there painting the chapel which is the ſubject of our preſent ſtudy, and many other churches. Thence ſouth

* Lord Lindſay's evidence on this point (*Chriſtian Art*, vol. ii. p. 174) ſeems quite concluſive. It is impoſſible to overrate the value of the work of Giotto in the Bargello, both for its own intrinſic beauty, and as being executed in this year, which is not only that in which the Divina Commedia opens, but, as I think, the culminating period in the hiſtory of the art of the middle ages.

again, to Aſſiſi, where he painted half the walls and vaults of the great convent that ſtretches itſelf along the ſlopes of the Perugian hills, and various other minor works on his way there and back to Florence. Staying in his native city but a little while, he engaged himſelf in other taſks at Ferrara, Verona, and Ravenna, and at laſt at Avignon, where he became acquainted with Petrarch—working there for ſome three years, from 1324 to 1327;* and then paſſed rapidly through Florence and Orvieto on his way to Naples, where "he received the kindeſt welcome from the good king "Robert. The king, ever partial to men of mind and "genius, took eſpecial delight in Giotto's ſociety, and uſed "frequently to viſit him while working in the Caſtello "dell' Uovo, taking pleaſure in watching his pencil and "liſtening to his diſcourſe; 'and Giotto,' ſays Vaſari, 'who "had ever his repartee and bon-mot ready, held him there, "faſcinated at once with the magic of his pencil and plea-"ſantry of his tongue.' We are not told the length of his "ſojourn at Naples, but it muſt have been for a conſiderable "period, judging from the quantity of works he executed "there. He had certainly returned to Florence in 1332." There he was immediately appointed "chief maſter" of the works of the Duomo, then in progreſs, "with a yearly "ſalary of one hundred gold florins, and the privilege of "citizenſhip." He deſigned the Campanile, in a more perfect form than that which now exiſts; for his intended ſpire, 150 feet in height, never was erected. He, however, modelled the bas-reliefs for the baſe of the building, and ſculptured two of them with his own hand. It was after-

* *Chriſtian Art*, vol. ii. p. 242.

wards completed, with the exception of the ſpire, according to his deſign; but he only ſaw its foundations laid, and its firſt marble ſtory riſe. He died at Florence, on the 8th of January, 1337, full of honour; happy, perhaps, in departing at the zenith of his ſtrength, when his eye had not become dim, nor his natural force abated. He was buried in the cathedral, at the angle neareſt his campanile; and thus the tower, which is the chief grace of his native city, may be regarded as his own ſepulchral monument.

I may refer the reader to the cloſe of Lord Lindſay's letter on Giotto,* from which I have drawn moſt of the particulars above ſtated, for a very beautiful ſketch of his character and his art. Of the real rank of that art, in the abſtract, I do not feel myſelf capable of judging accurately, having not ſeen his fineſt works (at Aſſiſi and Naples), nor carefully ſtudied even thoſe at Florence. But I may be permitted to point out one or two peculiar characteriſtics in it which have always ſtruck me forcibly.

In the firſt place, Giotto never finiſhed highly. He was not, indeed, a looſe or ſketchy painter, but he was by no means a delicate one. His lines, as the ſtory of the circle would lead us to expect, are always firm, but they are never fine. Even in his ſmalleſt tempera pictures the touch is bold and ſomewhat heavy: in his freſco work the handling is much broader than that of contemporary painters, correſponding ſomewhat to the character of many of the figures, repreſenting plain, maſculine kind of people, and never reaching any thing like the ideal refinement of the conceptions even of Benozzo Gozzoli, far leſs of An-

* *Chriſtian Art*, p. 260.

gelico or Francia. For this reaſon, the character of his painting is better expreſſed by bold wood-engravings than in general it is likely to be by any other means.

Again, he was a very noble colouriſt; and in his peculiar feeling for breadth of hue reſembled Titian more than any other of the Florentine ſchool. That is to ſay, had he been born two centuries later, when the art of painting was fully known, I believe he would have treated his ſubjects much more like Titian than like Raphael; in fact, the freſcoes of Titian in the chapel beſide the church of St. Antonio at Padua, are, in all technical qualities, and in many of their conceptions, almoſt exactly what I believe Giotto would have done, had he lived in Titian's time. As it was, he of courſe never attained either richneſs or truth of colour; but in ſerene brilliancy he is not eaſily rivalled; invariably maſſing his hues in large fields, limiting them firmly, and then filling them with ſubtle gradation. He had the Venetian fondneſs for bars and ſtripes, not unfrequently caſting barred colours obliquely acroſs the draperies of an upright figure, from ſide to ſide (as very notably in the dreſs of one of the muſicians who are playing to the dancing of Herodias' daughter, in one of his freſcoes at Santa Croce); and this predilection was mingled with the truly mediæval love of *quartering*.* The figure of the Madonna in the ſmall tempera pictures in the Academy at Florence is always completely divided into two narrow ſegments by her dark-blue robe.

* I uſe this heraldic word in an inaccurate ſenſe, knowing no other that will expreſs what I mean,—the diviſion of the picture into quaint ſegments of alternating colour, more marked than any of the figure outlines.

And this is always to be remembered in looking at any engravings from the works of Giotto; for the injury they ſuſtain in being deprived of their colour is far greater than in the caſe of later deſigners. All works produced in the fourteenth century agree in being more or leſs decorative; they were intended in moſt inſtances to be ſubſervient to architectural effect, and were executed in the manner beſt calculated to produce a ſtriking impreſſion when they were ſeen in a maſs. The painted wall and the painted window were part and parcel of one magnificent whole; and it is as unjuſt to the work of Giotto, or of any contemporary artiſt, to take out a ſingle feature from the ſeries, and repreſent it in black and white on a ſeparate page, as it would be to take out a compartment of a noble coloured window, and engrave it in the ſame manner. What is at once refined and effective, if ſeen at the intended diſtance in uniſon with the reſt of the work, becomes coarſe and inſipid when ſeen iſolated and near; and the more ſkilfully the deſign is arranged, ſo as to give full value to the colours which are introduced in it, the more blank and cold will it become when it is deprived of them.

In our modern art we have indeed loſt ſight of one great principle which regulated that of the middle ages, namely, that chiaroſcuro and colour are incompatible in their higheſt degrees. Wherever chiaroſcuro enters, colour muſt loſe ſome of its brilliancy. There is no *ſhade* in a rainbow, nor in an opal, nor in a piece of mother-of-pearl, nor in a well-deſigned painted window; only various hues of perfect colour, The beſt pictures, by ſubduing their colour and conventionaliſing their chiaroſcuro, reconcile

both in their diminiſhed degrees; but a perfect light and ſhade cannot be given without conſiderable loſs of livelineſs in colour. Hence the ſuppoſed inferiority of Tintoret to Titian. Tintoret is, in reality, the greater colouriſt of the two; but he could not bear to falſify his light and ſhadow enough to ſet off his colour. Titian nearly ſtrikes the exact mean between the painted glaſs of the 13th century and Rembrandt; while Giotto cloſely approaches the ſyſtem of painted glaſs, and hence his compoſitions loſe grievouſly by being tranſlated into black and white.

But even his chiaroſcuro, however ſubdued, is not without a peculiar charm; and the accompanying engravings poſſeſs a marked ſuperiority over all that have hitherto been made from the works of this painter, in rendering this chiaroſcuro, as far as poſſible, together with the effect of the local colours. The true appreciation of art has been retarded for many years by the habit of truſting to outlines as a ſufficient expreſſion of the ſentiment of compoſitions; whereas in all truly great deſigns, of whatever age, it is never the outline, but the diſpoſition of the maſſes, whether of ſhade or colour, on which the real power of the work depends. For inſtance, in Plate III. (The Angel appears to Anna), the intereſt of the compoſition depends entirely upon the broad ſhadows which fill the ſpaces of the chamber, and of the external paſſage in which the attendant is ſitting. This ſhade explains the whole ſcene in a moment: gives prominence to the curtain and coverlid of the homely bed, and the rude cheſt and treſtles which form the poor furniture of the houſe; and conducts the eye eaſily and

inſtantly to the three figures, which, had the ſcene been expreſſed in outline only, we ſhould have had to trace out with ſome care and difficulty among the pillars of the loggia and folds of the curtains. So alſo the relief of the faces in light againſt the dark ſky is of peculiar value in the compoſitions No. X. and No. XII.

The *drawing* of Giotto is, of courſe, exceedingly faulty. His knowledge of the human figure is deficient; and this, the neceſſary drawback in all works of the period, occaſions an extreme difficulty in rendering them faithfully in an engraving. For wherever there is good and legitimate drawing, the ordinary education of a modern draughtſman enables him to copy it with tolerable accuracy; but when once the true forms of nature are departed from, it is by no means eaſy to expreſs *exactly* the error, and *no more than* the error, of his original. In moſt caſes modern copyiſts try to modify or hide the weakneſſes of the old art,—by which procedure they very often wholly loſe its ſpirit, and only half redeem its defects; the reſults being, of courſe, at once falſe as repreſentations, and intrinſically valueleſs. And juſt as it requires great courage and ſkill in an interpreter to ſpeak out honeſtly all the rough and rude words of the firſt ſpeaker, and to tranſlate deliberately and reſolutely, in the face of attentive men, the expreſſions of his weakneſs or impatience; ſo it requires at once the utmoſt courage and ſkill in a copyiſt to trace faithfully the failures of an imperfect maſter, in the front of modern criticiſm, and againſt the inborn inſtincts of his own hand and eye. And let him do the beſt he can, he will ſtill find that the grace and life of his original are

continually flying off like a vapour, while all the faults he has ſo diligently copied ſit rigidly ſtaring him in the face, —a terrible *caput mortuum.* It is very neceſſary that this ſhould be well underſtood by the members of the Arundel Society, when they hear their engravings ſeverely criticiſed. It is eaſy to produce an agreeable engraving by graceful infidelities; but the entire endeavour of the draughtſmen employed by this ſociety has been to obtain accurately the character of the original: and he who never propoſes to himſelf to riſe *above* the work he is copying, muſt moſt aſſuredly often fall beneath it. Such fall is the inherent and inevitable penalty on all abſolute copyiſm; and wherever the copy is made with ſincerity, the fall muſt be endured with patience. It will never be an utter or a degrading fall; that is reſerved for thoſe who, like vulgar tranſlators, wilfully quit the hand of their maſter, and have no ſtrength of their own.

Laſtly. It is eſpecially to be noticed that theſe works of Giotto, in common with all others of the period, are independent of all the inferior ſources of pictorial intereſt. They never ſhow the ſlighteſt attempt at imitative realiſation: they are ſimple ſuggeſtions of ideas, claiming no regard except for the inherent value of the thoughts. There is no filling of the landſcape with variety of ſcenery, architecture, or incident, as in the works of Benozzo Gozzoli or Perugino; no wealth of jewellery and gold ſpent on the dreſſes of the figures, as in the delicate labours of Angelico or Gentile da Fabriano. The background is never more than a few gloomy maſſes of rock, with a tree or two, and perhaps a fountain; the architec-

ture is merely what is neceſſary to explain the ſcene; the dreſſes are painted ſternly on the "heroic" principle of Sir Joſhua Reynolds—that drapery is to be "drapery, and nothing more,"—there is no ſilk, nor velvet, nor diſtinguiſhable material of any kind: the whole power of the picture is reſted on the three ſimple eſſentials of painting—pure Colour, noble Form, noble Thought.

We moderns, educated in reality far more under the influence of the Dutch maſters than the Italian, and taught to look for realiſation in all things, have been in the habit of caſting ſcorn on theſe early Italian works, as if their ſimplicity were the reſult of ignorance merely. When we know a little more of art in general, we ſhall begin to ſuſpect that a man of Giotto's power of mind did not altogether ſuppoſe his cluſters of formal trees, or diminutive maſſes of architecture, to be perfect repreſentations of the woods of Judea, or of the ſtreets of Jeruſalem: we ſhall begin to underſtand that there is a ſymbolical art which addreſſes the imagination, as well as a realiſt art which ſuperſedes it; and that the powers of contemplation and conception which could be ſatisfied or excited by theſe ſimple types of natural things, were infinitely more majeſtic than thoſe which are ſo dependent on the completeneſs of what is preſented to them as to be paralyſed by an error in perſpective, or ſtifled by the abſence of atmoſphere.

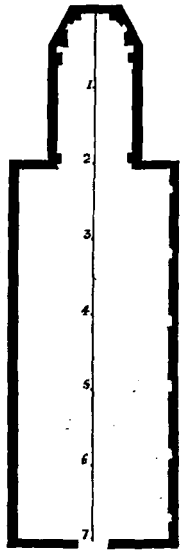
Nor is the healthy ſimplicity of the period leſs marked in the ſelection than in the treatment of ſubjects. It has in theſe days become neceſſary for the painter who deſires popularity to accumulate on his canvas whatever is ſtartling

in aſpect or emotion, and to drain, even to exhauſtion, the vulgar ſources of the pathetic. Modern ſentiment, at once feveriſh and feeble, remains unawakened except by the violences of gaiety or gloom; and the eye refuſes to pauſe, except when it is tempted by the luxury of beauty, or faſcinated by the excitement of terror. It ought not, therefore, to be without a reſpectful admiration that we find the maſters of the fourteenth century dwelling on moments of the moſt ſubdued and tender feeling, and leaving the ſpectator to trace the under-currents of thought which link them with future events of mightier intereſt, and fill with a prophetic power and myſtery ſcenes in themſelves ſo ſimple as the meeting of a maſter with his herdſmen among the hills, or the return of a betrothed virgin to her houſe.

It is, however, to be remembered that this quietneſs in character of ſubject was much more poſſible to an early painter, owing to the connection in which his works were to be ſeen. A modern picture, iſolated and portable, muſt reſt all its claims to attention on its own actual ſubject: but the pictures of the early maſters were nearly always parts of a conſecutive and ſtable ſeries, in which many were ſubdued, like the connecting paſſages of a prolonged poem, in order to enhance the value or meaning of others. The arrangement of the ſubjects in the Arena Chapel is in this reſpect peculiarly ſkilful; and to that arrangement we muſt now direct our attention.

It was before noticed that the chapel was built between 1300 and 1306. The architecture of Italy in

the beginning of the fourteenth century is always pure, and often ſevere; but this chapel is remarkable, even among the ſevereſt forms, for the abſence of decoration. Its plan, ſeen in the marginal figure, is a pure oblong, with a narrow advanced tribune, terminating in a trilateral apſe. Selvatico quotes from the German writer Stieglitz ſome curious obſervations on the apparent derivation of its proportions, in common with thoſe of other buildings of the time, from the number of ſides of its apſe. Without entering into theſe particulars, it may be noted that the apſe is juſt one-half the width of the body of the chapel, and that the length from the extremity of the tribune to the weſt end is juſt ſeven times the width of the apſe. The whole of the body of the chapel was painted by Giotto; the walls and roof being entirely covered either with his figure-deſigns, or with various ſubordinate decorations connecting and encloſing them.



The woodcut oppoſite repreſents the arrangement of the freſcoes on the ſides, extremities, and roof of the chapel. The ſpectator is ſuppoſed to be looking from the weſtern entrance towards the tribune, having on his right the ſouth ſide, which is pierced by ſix tall windows, and on which the freſcoes are therefore reduced in number. The north

INTERIOR OF THE ARENA CHAPEL, PADUA, LOOKING EASTWARD.

ſide is pierced by no windows, and on it therefore the freſcoes are continuous, lighted from the ſouth windows. The ſeveral ſpaces numbered 1 to 38 are occupied by a continuous ſeries of ſubjects, repreſenting the life of the Virgin and of Chriſt; the narrow panels below, marked *a*, *b*, *c*, &c., are filled by figures of the cardinal virtues and their opponent vices: on the lunette above the tribune is painted a Chriſt in glory, and at the weſtern extremity the Laſt Judgment. Thus the walls of the chapel are covered with a continuous meditative poem on the myſtery of the Incarnation, the acts of Redemption, the vices and virtues of mankind as proceeding from their ſcorn or acceptance of that Redemption, and their final judgment.

The firſt twelve pictures of the ſeries are excluſively devoted to the apocryphal hiſtory of the birth and life of the Virgin. This the Proteſtant ſpectator will obſerve, perhaps, with little favour, more eſpecially as only two compartments are given to the miniſtry of Chriſt, between his Baptiſm and Entry into Jeruſalem. Due weight is, however, to be allowed to Lord Lindſay's remark, that the legendary hiſtory of the Virgin was of peculiar importance in this chapel, as eſpecially dedicated to her ſervice; and I think alſo that Giotto deſired to unite the ſeries of compoſitions in one continuous action, feeling that to have enlarged on the ſeparate miracles of Chriſt's miniſtry would have interrupted the onward courſe of thought. As it is, the mind is led from the firſt humiliation of Joachim to the Aſcenſion of Chriſt in one unbroken and progreſſive chain of ſcenes; the miniſtry of Chriſt being completely typified by his firſt and laſt conſpicuous miracle: while

the very unimportance of ſome of the ſubjects, as for inſtance that of the Watching the Rods, is uſeful in directing the ſpectator rather to purſue the courſe of the narrative, than to pauſe in ſatisfied meditation upon any ſingle incident. And it can hardly be doubted that Giotto had alſo a peculiar pleaſure in dwelling on the circumſtances of the ſhepherd life of the father of the Virgin, owing to its reſemblance to that of his own early years.

The incidents repreſented in theſe firſt twelve paintings are recorded in the two apocryphal goſpels known as the "Protevangelion" and "Goſpel of St. Mary."* But on comparing the ſtatements in theſe writings (which, by the by, are in nowiſe conſiſtent with each other) with the paintings in the Arena Chapel, it appeared to me that Giotto muſt occaſionally have followed ſome more detailed traditions than are furniſhed by either of them; ſeeing that of one or two ſubjects the apocryphal goſpels gave no diſtinct or ſufficient explanation. Fortunately, however, in the courſe of ſome other reſearches, I met with a manuſcript in the Britiſh Muſeum (Harl. 3571,) containing

* It has always appeared ſtrange to me, that eccleſiaſtical hiſtory ſhould poſſeſs no more authentic records of the life of the Virgin, before the period at which the narrative of St. Luke commences, than theſe apocryphal goſpels, which are as wretched in ſtyle as untruſtworthy in matter; and are evidently nothing more than a collection, in rude imitation of the ſtyle of the Evangeliſts, of ſuch floating traditions as became current among the weak Chriſtians of the earlier ages, when their inquiries reſpecting the hiſtory of Mary were met by the obſcurity under which the Divine will had veiled her humble perſon and character. There muſt always be ſomething painful, to thoſe who are familiar with the Scriptures, in reading theſe feeble and fooliſh mockeries of the manner of the inſpired writers; but it will be proper, nevertheleſs, to give the exact words in which the ſcenes repreſented by Giotto were recorded to *him*.

a complete "Hiſtory of the moſt Holy Family," written in Northern Italian of about the middle of the 14th century; and appearing to be one of the forms of the legend which Giotto has occaſionally followed in preference to the ſtatements of the Protevangelion. I have therefore, in illuſtration of the paintings, given, when it ſeemed uſeful, ſome portions of this manuſcript; and theſe, with one or two verſes of the commonly received accounts, will be found generally enough to interpret ſufficiently the meaning of the painter.

The following complete liſt of the ſubjects will at once enable the reader to refer any of them to its place in the ſeries, and on the walls of the building; and I have only now to remind him in concluſion, that within thoſe walls the greateſt painter and greateſt poet of mediæval Italy held happy companionſhip during the time when the freſcoes were executed. "It is not difficult," ſays the writer already ſo often quoted, Lord Lindſay, "gazing on theſe ſilent but "eloquent walls, to repeople them with the group once, as "we know, five hundred years ago, aſſembled within them: "Giotto intent upon his work, his wife Ciuta admiring his "progreſs; and Dante, with abſtracted eye, alternately con- "verſing with his friend, and watching the gambols of the "children playing on the graſs before the door."

SERIES OF SUBJECTS.

1. The Rejection of Joachim's Offering.
2. Joachim retires to the Sheepfold.
3. The Angel appears to Anna.
4. The Sacrifice of Joachim.
5. The Vision of Joachim.
6. The Meeting at the Golden Gate.
7. The Birth of the Virgin.
8. The Presentation of the Virgin.
9. The Rods are brought to the High Priest.
10. The Watching of the Rods.
11. The Betrothal of the Virgin.
12. The Virgin returns to her House.
13. The Angel Gabriel.
14. The Virgin Annunciate.
15. The Salutation.
16. The Angel appearing to the Shepherds.
17. The Wise Men's Offering.
18. The Presentation in the Temple.
19. The Flight into Egypt.
20. The Massacre of the Innocents.
21. The Young Christ in the Temple.
22. The Baptism of Christ.
23. The Marriage in Cana.
24. The Raising of Lazarus.
25. The Entry into Jerusalem.
26. The Expulsion from the Temple.
27. The Hiring of Judas.

28. The Laſt Supper.
29. The Waſhing of the Feet.
30. The Kiſs of Judas.
31. Chriſt before Caiaphas.
32. The Scourging of Chriſt.
33. Chriſt bearing his Croſs.
34. The Crucifixion.
35. The Entombment.
36. The Reſurrection.
37. The Aſcenſion.
38. The Deſcent of the Holy Spirit.

I.

THE REJECTION OF JOACHIM'S OFFERING.

" At that time, there was a man of perfect holineſs, " named Joachim, of the tribe of Juda, and of the city of " Jeruſalem. And this Joachim had in contempt the " riches and honours of the world; and for greater deſpite " to them, he kept his flocks, with his ſhepherds.

" * * * And he, being ſo holy and juſt, di- " vided the fruits which he received from his flocks into " three parts: a third part—wool, and lambs, and ſuch " like—he gave to God, that is to ſay, to thoſe who ſerved " God, and who miniſtered in the temple of God; another " third part he gave to widows, orphans, and pilgrims; the " remaining third he kept for himſelf and his family. " And he perſevering in this, God ſo multiplied and in- " creaſed his goods that there was no man like him in the " land of Iſrael. * * * And having come to " the age of twenty years, he took to wife Anna, the " daughter of Yſaya, of his own tribe, and of the lineage " of David.

" This precious St. Anna had always perſevered in " the ſervice of God with great wiſdom and ſincerity;

" * * * and having received Joachim for her " huſband, was ſubject to him, and gave him honour " and reverence, living in the fear of God. And Jo- " achim having lived with his wife Anna for twenty " years, yet having no child, and there being a great " ſolemnity in Jeruſalem, all the men of the city went " to offer in the temple of God, which Solomon had " built; and Joachim entering the temple with (in- " cenſe ?) and other gifts to offer on the altar, and " Joachim having made his offering, the miniſter of " the temple, whoſe name was Iſſachar, threw Joachim's " offering from off the altar, and drove Joachim out " of the temple, ſaying, 'Thou, Joachim, art not worthy " to enter into the temple, ſeeing that God has not " added his bleſſing to you, as in your life you have " had no ſeed.' Thus Joachim received a great inſult in " the ſight of all the people; and he being all aſhamed, " returned to his houſe, weeping and lamenting moſt bit- " terly." (MS. Harl.)

The Goſpel of St. Mary differs from this MS. in its ſtatement of the reſpective cities of Joachim and Anna, ſaying that the family of the Virgin's father "was of Gali- " lee and of the city of Nazareth, the family of her mother " was of Bethlehem." It is leſs intereſting in details; but gives a better, or at leaſt more graceful, account of Joachim's repulſe, ſaying that Iſſachar "deſpiſed Joachim " and his offerings, and aſked him why he, who had no " children, would preſume to appear among thoſe who " had: adding, that his offerings could never be accept- " able to God, ſince he had been judged by Him unworthy

" to have children; the Scripture having ſaid, Curſed is " every one who ſhall not beget a male in Iſrael."

Giotto ſeems to have followed this latter account, as the figure of the high prieſt is far from being either ignoble or ungentle.

The temple is repreſented by the two moſt important portions of a Byzantine church; namely, the ciborium which covered the altar, and the pulpit or reading-deſk; with the low ſcreen in front of the altar encloſing the part of the church called the " cancellum." Lord Lindſay ſpeaks of the prieſt within this encloſure as " confeſſing a young man who kneels at his feet." It ſeems to me, rather, that he is meant to be accepting the offering of another worſhipper, ſo as to mark the rejection of Joachim more diſtinctly.

II.

JOACHIM RETIRES TO THE SHEEPFOLD.

" Then Joachim, in the following night, reſolved to " ſeparate himſelf from companionſhip; to go to the de- " ſert places among the mountains, with his flocks; and to " inhabit thoſe mountains, in order not to hear ſuch inſults. " And immediately Joachim roſe from his bed, and called " about him all his ſervants and ſhepherds, and cauſed to " be gathered together all his flocks, and goats, and horſes, " and oxen, and what other beaſts he had, and went with " them and with the ſhepherds into the hills; and Anna " his wife remained at home diſconſolate, and mourning " for her huſband, who had departed from her in ſuch " ſorrow." (MS. Harl.)

" But upon inquiry, he found that all the righteous " had raiſed up ſeed in Iſrael. Then he called to mind " the patriarch Abraham,—how that God in the end of his " life had given him his ſon Iſaac: upon which he was " exceedingly diſtreſſed, and would not be ſeen by his wife; " but retired into the wilderneſs and fixed his tent there, " and faſted forty days and forty nights, ſaying to himſelf, " 'I will not go down to eat or drink till the Lord my " God ſhall look down upon me; but prayer ſhall be my " meat and drink.'" (Protevangelion, chap. i.)

Giotto ſeems here alſo to have followed the ordinary

tradition, as he has repreſented Joachim retiring unattended, —but met by two of his ſhepherds, who are ſpeaking to each other, uncertain what to do or how to receive their maſter. The dog haſtens to meet him with joy. The figure of Joachim is ſingularly beautiful in its penſiveneſs and ſlow motion; and the ignobleneſs of the herdſmen's figures is curiouſly marked in oppoſition to the dignity of their maſter.

III.

THE ANGEL APPEARS TO ANNA.

" Afterwards the angel appeared to Anna his wife, " ſaying, ' Fear not, neither think that which you ſee is a " ſpirit. For I am that angel who hath offered up your " prayers and alms before God, and am now ſent to tell " you that a daughter will be born unto you. * * * " Ariſe, therefore, and go up to Jeruſalem; and when " you ſhall come to that which is called the Golden Gate " (becauſe it is gilt with gold), as a ſign of what I have " told you, you ſhall meet your huſband, for whoſe ſafety " you have been ſo much concerned.'" (Goſpel of St. Mary, " chap. iii. 1-7.)

The accounts in the Protevangelion and in the Harleian MS. are much expanded: relating how Anna feared her huſband was dead, he having been abſent from her five months; and how Judith, her maid, taunted her with her childleſſneſs; and how, going then into her garden, ſhe ſaw a ſparrow's neſt, full of young, upon a laurel-tree, and mourning within herſelf, ſaid, " I am not " comparable to the very beaſts of the earth, for even they " are fruitful before thee, O Lord. * * * I am " not comparable to the very earth, for the earth produces " its fruits to praiſe thee. Then the angel of the Lord " ſtood by her," &c.

Both the Protevangelion and Harleian MS. agree in placing the viſion in the garden; the latter adding, that ſhe fled "into her chamber in great fear, and fell upon "her bed, and lay as in a trance all that day and all that "night, but did not tell the viſion to her maid, becauſe "of her bitter anſwering." Giotto has deviated from both accounts in making the viſion appear to Anna in her chamber, while the maid, evidently being conſidered an important perſonage, is at work in the paſſage. Apart from all reference to the legends, there is ſomething peculiarly beautiful in the ſimplicity of Giotto's conception, and in the way in which he has ſhown the angel entering at the window, without the leaſt endeavour to impreſs our imagination by darkneſs, or light, or clouds, or any other acceſſory; as though believing that angels might appear any where, and any day, and to all men, as a matter of courſe, if we would aſk them, or were fit company for them.

IV.

THE SACRIFICE OF JOACHIM.

The account of this ſacrifice is only given clearly in the Harleian MS.; but even this differs from Giotto's ſeries in the order of the viſions, as the ſubject of the *next* plate is recorded firſt in this MS., under the curious heading, "*Diſſe Sancto Theofilo* como l'angelo de Dio aperſe a Joachim lo qual li anuntia la nativita della vergene Maria;" while the record of this vision and ſacrifice is headed, "Como l'angelo de Dio aparſe *anchora* a Joachim." It then proceeds thus: "At this very moment of the day" (when the angel appeared to Anna), "there appeared a moſt beautiful youth (*unno belitiſſimo zovene*) among the mountains there, where Joachim was, and ſaid to Joachim, "'Wherefore doſt thou not return to thy wife?' And Joachim anſwered, 'Theſe twenty years God has given me no fruit of her, wherefore I was chaſed from the temple with infinite ſhame. * * * And, as long as I live, I will give alms of my flocks to widows and pilgrims.' * * * And theſe words being finiſhed, the youth anſwered, 'I am the angel of God who appeared to thee the other time for a ſign; and appeared to thy wife Anna, who always abides in prayer, weeping day and night; and I have conſoled her; wherefore I command thee to

" obſerve the commandments of God, and his will, which
" I tell you truly, that of thee ſhall be born a daughter,
" and that thou ſhalt offer her to the temple of God, and
" the Holy Spirit ſhall reſt upon her, and her bleſſedneſs
" ſhall be above the bleſſedneſs of all virgins, and her
" holineſs ſo great that human nature will not be able to
" comprehend it.' * * * * * *

" Then Joachim fell upon the earth, ſaying, 'My lord,
" I pray thee to pray God for me, and to enter into this
" my tabernacle, and bleſs me, thy ſervant.' The angel
" anſwered, 'We are all the ſervants of God: and know
" that my eating would be inviſible, and my drinking
" could not be ſeen by all the men in the world; but
" of all that thou wouldeſt give to me, do thou make
" ſacrifice to God.' Then Joachim took a lamb without
" ſpot or blemiſh * * * * ; and when he had
" made ſacrifice of it, the angel of the Lord diſappeared
" and aſcended into heaven; and Joachim fell upon the
" earth in great fear, and lay from the ſixth hour until
" the evening."

This is evidently nothing more than a very vapid imitation of the ſcriptural narrative of the appearances of angels to Abraham and Manoah. But Giotto has put life into it;

* This paſſage in the old Italian of the MS. may intereſt ſome readers: " E " complice queſte parole lo zovene reſpoxe, dignando, Io ſon l' angelo de Dio, lo quale " ſi te aparſe l' altra fiada, in ſegno, e aparſe a toa mulier Anna chæ ſempre ſta in oration " plauzando di e note, e ſi lo conſolada; unde io te comando che tu debie obſervare " li comandimenti de Dio, ela ſoua volunta che io te dico veramente, che de la toa ſo- " menza inſera una fiola, e queſta offrila al templo de Dio, e lo Spirito ſanto repoſera in " ley, ela ſoa beatitudine ſera ſovera tute le altre verzene, ela ſoua ſantita ſera ſi grande " che natura humana non la pora comprendere."

and I am aware of no other compoſition in which ſo much intereſt and awe has been given to the literal "burnt ſacrifice." In all other repreſentations of ſuch offerings which I remember, the intereſt is concentrated in the *ſlaying* of the victim. But Giotto has faſtened on the *burning* of it; ſhowing the white ſkeleton left on the altar, and the fire ſtill hurtling up round it, typical of the Divine wrath, which is "as a conſuming fire;" and thus rendering the ſacrifice a more clear and fearful type not merely of the outward wounds and death of Chriſt, but of his ſoul-ſuffering. "All my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it "is melted in the midſt of my bowels."*

The hand of the Deity is ſeen in the heavens—the ſign of the Divine Preſence.

* (Note by a friend):—"To me the moſt ſtriking part of it is, that the ſkeleton is *entire* ('a bone of him ſhall not be broken'), and that the head ſtands up ſtill looking to the ſkies: is it too fanciful to ſee a meaning in this?"

V.

THE ANGEL (RAPHAEL) APPEARS TO JOACHIM.

" Now Joachim being in this pain, the Lord God, " Father of mercy, who abandons not his ſervants, nor " ever fails to conſole them in their diſtreſſes, if they pray " for his grace and pity, had compaſſion on Joachim, and " heard his prayer, and ſent the angel Raphael from " heaven to earth to conſole him, and announce to him " the nativity of the Virgin Mary. Therefore the angel " Raphael appeared to Joachim, and comforted him with " much peace, and foretold to him the birth of the Virgin " in that glory and gladneſs, ſaying, 'God ſave you, " O friend of God, O Joachim! the Lord has ſent me " to declare to you an everlaſting joy, and a hope that ſhall " have no end.' * * * * And having " finiſhed theſe words, the angel of the Lord diſappeared " from him, and aſcended into the heaven." (MS. Harl.)

The paſſage which I have omitted is merely one of the ordinary Romaniſt accounts of the immaculate conception of the Virgin, put into the form of prophecy. There are no ſufficient details of this part of the legend either in the Protevangelion or Goſpel of St. Mary; but it is quite clear that Giotto followed it, and that he has endeavoured to mark a diſtinction in character be-

tween the angels Gabriel and Raphael* in the two ſubjects,—the form of Raphael melting back into the heaven, and being diſtinctly recogniſed as angelic, while Gabriel appears inveſted with perfect humanity. It is intereſting to obſerve that the ſhepherds, who of courſe are not ſuppoſed to ſee the form of the Angel (his manifeſtation being only granted to Joachim during his ſleep), are yet evidently under the influence of a certain degree of awe and expectation, as being conſcious of ſome preſence other than they can perceive, while the animals are unconſcious altogether.

* The MS. makes the angel Raphael the only meſſenger. Giotto clearly adopts the figure of Gabriel from the Protevangelion.

VI.

THE MEETING AT THE GOLDEN GATE.

"And Joachim went down with the ſhepherds, and "Anna ſtood by the gate, and ſaw Joachim coming with "the ſhepherds. And ſhe ran, and hanging about his "neck, ſaid, 'Now I know that the Lord hath greatly "bleſſed me.'" (Protevangelion, iv. 8, 9.)

This is one of the moſt celebrated of Giotto's compoſitions, and deſervedly ſo, being full of the moſt ſolemn grace and tenderneſs. The face of St. Anna, half ſeen, is moſt touching in its depth of expreſſion; and it is very intereſting to obſerve how Giotto has enhanced its ſweetneſs, by giving a harder and groſſer character than is uſual with him to the heads of the other two principal female figures (not but that this caſt of feature is found frequently in the figures of ſomewhat earlier art), and by the rough and weather-beaten countenance of the entering ſhepherd. In like manner, the falling lines of the draperies owe a great part of their value to the abrupt and ugly oblongs of the horizontal maſonry which adjoins them.

VII.

THE BIRTH OF THE VIRGIN.

" And Joachim ſaid, 'Now I know that the Lord is " propitious to me, and hath taken away all my ſins.' " And he went down from the temple of the Lord juſtified, " and went to his own houſe.

" And when nine months were fulfilled to Anna, ſhe " brought forth, and ſaid to the midwife, 'What have I " brought forth?' And ſhe told her, a girl.

" Then Anna ſaid, 'The Lord hath this day magnified " my ſoul.' And ſhe laid her in the bed." (Protevangelion, v. 4-8.)

The compoſition is very characteriſtic of Giotto in two reſpects: firſt, in its natural homelineſs and ſimplicity (in older deſigns of the ſame ſubject the little Madonna is repreſented as born with a golden crown on her head); and ſecondly, in the ſmallneſs of the breaſt and head of the ſitting figure on the right,—a fault of proportion often obſervable in Giotto's figures of children or young girls.

For the firſt time, alſo, in this ſeries, we have here two ſucceſſive periods of the ſcene repreſented ſimultaneouſly, the babe being painted twice. This practice was frequent among the early painters, and muſt neceſſarily become ſo wherever painting undertakes the taſk of length-

ened narrative. Much abſurd diſcuſſion has taken place reſpecting its propriety; the whole queſtion being ſimply whether the human mind can or cannot paſs from the contemplation of one event to that of another, without repoſing itſelf on an intermediate gilt frame.

VIII.

THE PRESENTATION OF THE VIRGIN.

" And when three years were expired, and the time " of her weaning complete, they brought the Virgin to " the temple of the Lord with offerings.

" And there were about the temple, according to the " fifteen Pſalms of Degrees, fifteen ſtairs to aſcend.

" The parents of the bleſſed Virgin and infant Mary " put her upon one of theſe ſtairs; but while they were " putting off their clothes in which they had travelled, in " the meantime, the Virgin of the Lord in ſuch a manner " went up all the ſtairs, one after another, without the help " of any one to lead her or lift her, that any one would " have judged from hence that ſhe was of perfect age." (Goſpel of St. Mary, iv. 1-6.)

There ſeems nothing very miraculous in a child's walking up ſtairs at three years old; but this incident is a favourite one among the Roman-Catholic painters of every period: generally, however, repreſenting the child as older than in the legend, and dwelling rather on the ſolemn feeling with which ſhe preſents herſelf to the high-prieſt, than on the mere fact of her being able to walk alone. Giotto has clearly regarded the incident entirely in this light; for St. Anna touches the child's arm as if to ſupport

her; ſo that the ſo-called miraculous walking is not even hinted at.

Lord Lindſay particularly notices that the Virgin is "a dwarf woman inſtead of a child;—the delineation of "childhood was one of the lateſt triumphs of art." Even in the time of thoſe lateſt triumphs, however, the ſame fault was committed in another way; and a boy of eight or ten was commonly repreſented—even by Raffaelle himſelf—as a dwarf Hercules, with all the gladiatorial muſcles already viſible in ſtunted rotundity. Giotto probably felt he had not power enough to give dignity to a child of three years old, and intended the womanly form to be rather typical of the Virgin's advanced mind, than an actual repreſentation of her perſon.

IX.

THE RODS ARE BROUGHT TO THE HIGH-PRIEST.

" Then he (the high-prieſt) appointed that all the men " of the houſe and family of David who were marriageable, " and not married, ſhould bring their ſeveral rods to the " altar. And out of whatſoever perſon's rod, after it was " brought, a flower ſhould bud forth, and on the top of " it the Spirit of the Lord ſhould ſit in the appearance " of a dove, he ſhould be the man to whom the Virgin " ſhould be given, and be betrothed to her." (Goſpel of St. Mary, v. 16, 17.)

There has originally been very little intereſt in this compoſition; and the injuries which it has ſuffered have rendered it impoſſible for the draftſman to diſtinguiſh the true folds of the draperies amidſt the defaced and worn colours of the freſco, ſo that the character of the central figure is loſt. The only points requiring notice are, firſt, the manner in which St. Joſeph holds his rod, depreſſing and half-concealing it,* while the other ſuitors preſent theirs boldly; and ſecondly, the graceful though monotonous grouping of the heads of the crowd behind him. This mode of rendering the preſence of a large multitude,

* In the next chapter, it is ſaid that "Joſeph drew back his rod when every one elſe preſented his."

ſhowing only the crowns of the heads in complicated perſpective, was long practiſed in moſaics and illuminations before the time of Giotto, and always poſſeſſes a certain degree of ſublimity in its power of ſuggeſting perfect unity of feeling and movement among the crowd.

X.

THE WATCHING OF THE RODS AT THE ALTAR.

" After the high-prieſt had received their rods, he " went into the temple to pray.

" And when he had finiſhed his prayer, he took the " rods and went forth and diſtributed them; and there " no miracle attended them.

" The laſt rod was taken by Joſeph; and, behold, a " dove proceeded out of the rod, and flew upon the head " of Joſeph." (Protevangelion, viii. 9-11.)

This is among the leaſt graceful deſigns of the ſeries; though the clumſineſs in the contours of the leading figures is indeed a fault which often occurs in the painter's beſt works, but it is here unredeemed by the reſt of the compoſition. The group of the ſuitors, however, repreſented as waiting at the outſide of the temple, is very beautiful in its earneſtneſs, more eſpecially in the paſſionate expreſſion of the figure in front. It is difficult to look long at the picture without feeling a degree of anxiety, and ſtrong ſympathy with the ſilent watching of the ſuitors; and this is a ſign of no ſmall power in the work. The head of Joſeph is ſeen far back on the extreme left; thus indicating by its poſition his humility, and deſire to withdraw from the trial.

XI.

THE BETROTHAL OF THE VIRGIN.

There is no diſtinct notice of this event in the apocryphal Goſpel: the traditional repreſentation of it is nearly always more or leſs ſimilar. Lord Lindſay's account of the compoſition before us is as follows:

"The high-prieſt, ſtanding in front of the altar, joins "their hands; behind the Virgin ſtand her brideſmaids; "behind St. Joſeph the unſucceſsful ſuitors, one of whom "ſteps forward to ſtrike him, and another breaks his rod "on his knee. Joſeph bears his own rod, on the flower "of which the Holy Spirit reſts in the ſemblance of a "dove."

The development of this ſubject by Perugino (for Raffaelle's picture in the Brera is little more than a modified copy of Perugino's, now at Caen,) is well known; but notwithſtanding all its beauty, there is not, I think, any thing in the action of the diſappointed ſuitors ſo perfectly true or touching as that of the youth breaking his rod in this compoſition of Giotto's; nor is there among any of the figures the expreſſion of ſolemn earneſtneſs and intentneſs on the event which is marked among the attendants here, and in the countenances of the officiating prieſts.

XII.

THE VIRGIN MARY RETURNS TO HER HOUSE.

" Accordingly, the uſual ceremonies of betrothing " being over, he (Joſeph) returned to his own city of " Bethlehem to ſet his houſe in order, and to make the " needful proviſions for the marriage. But the Virgin of " the Lord, Mary, with ſeven other virgins of the ſame " age, who had been weaned at the ſame time, and who " had been appointed to attend her by the prieſt, returned " to her parents' houſe in Galilee." (Goſpel of St. Mary, vi. 6, 7.)

Of all the compoſitions in the Arena Chapel I think this the moſt characteriſtic of the noble time in which it was done. It is not ſo notable as exhibiting the mind of Giotto, which is perhaps more fully ſeen in ſubjects repreſenting varied emotion, as in the ſimplicity and repoſe which were peculiar to the compoſitions of the early fourteenth century. In order to judge of it fairly, it ought firſt to be compared with any claſſical compoſition—with a portion, for inſtance, of the Elgin frieze,—which would inſtantly make manifeſt in it a ſtrange ſerioufneſs and dignity and flowneſs of motion, reſulting chiefly from the exceſſive ſimplicity of all its terminal lines. Obſerve, for inſtance, the pure wave from the back of the Virgin's head

to the ground; and again, the delicate ſwelling line along her ſhoulder and left arm, oppoſed to the nearly unbroken fall of the drapery of the figure in front. It ſhould then be compared with an Egyptian or Ninevite ſeries of figures, which, by contraſt, would bring out its perfect ſweetneſs and grace, as well as its variety of expreſſion: finally, it ſhould be compared with any compoſition ſubſequent to the time of Raffaelle, in order to feel its noble freedom from pictorial artifice and attitude. Theſe three compariſons cannot be made carefully without a ſenſe of profound reverence for the national ſpirit* which could produce a deſign ſo majeſtic, and yet remain content with one ſo ſimple.

The ſmall *loggia* of the Virgin's houſe is noticeable, as being different from the architecture introduced in the other pictures, and more accurately repreſenting the Italian Gothic of the dwelling-houſe of the period. The arches of the windows have no capitals; but this omiſſion is either to ſave time, or to prevent the background from becoming too conſpicuous. All the real buildings deſigned by Giotto have the capital completely developed.

* *National*, becauſe Giotto's works are properly to be looked on as the *fruit* of their own age, and the *food* of that which followed.

XIII.

THE ANNUNCIATION.—THE ANGEL GABRIEL.

This figure is placed on one ſide of the arch at the eaſt end of the body of the chapel; the correſponding figure of the Virgin being ſet on the other ſide. It was a conſtant practice of the mediæval artiſts thus to divide this ſubject; which, indeed, was ſo often painted, that the meaning of the ſeparated figures of the Angel and Mary was as well underſtood as when they were ſeen in juxtapoſition. Indeed, on the two ſides of this arch they would hardly be conſidered as ſeparated, ſince very frequently they were ſet to anſwer to each other from the oppoſite extremities of a large ſpace of architecture.*

The figure of the Angel is notable chiefly for its ſerenity, as oppoſed to the late conceptions of the ſcene, in which he ſails into the chamber upon the wing, like a ſtooping falcon.

The building above is more developed than in any other of the Arena paintings; but it muſt always remain a matter of queſtion, why ſo exquiſite a deſigner of architecture as Giotto ſhould introduce forms ſo harſh and meagre into his backgrounds. Poſſibly he felt that

* As, for inſtance, on the two oppoſite angles of the façade of the Cathedral of Rheims.

the very faults of the architecture enhanced the grace and increaſed the importance of the figures; at leaſt, the proceeding ſeems to me inexplicable on any other theory.*

* (Note by a friend :) "I ſuppoſe you will not admit as an explanation, that he had not yet turned his mind to architectural compoſition, the Campanile being ſome thirty years later?"

XIV.

THE ANNUNCIATION.—THE VIRGIN MARY.

Vaſari, in his notice of one of Giotto's Annunciations, praiſes him for having juſtly rendered the *fear* of the Virgin at the addreſs of the Angel. If he ever treated the ſubject in ſuch a manner, he departed from all the traditions of his time; for I am aware of no painting of this ſcene, during the courſe of the thirteenth and following centuries, which does not repreſent the Virgin as perfectly tranquil, receiving the meſſage of the Angel in ſolemn thought and gentle humility, but without a ſhadow of fear. It was reſerved for the painters of the ſixteenth and ſeventeenth centuries to change angelic majeſty into reckleſs impetuoſity, and maiden meditation into panic dread.

The face of the Virgin is ſlightly diſappointing. Giotto never reached a very high ſtandard of beauty in feature; depending much on diſtant effect in all his works, and therefore more on general arrangement of colour and ſincerity of geſture, than on refinement of drawing in the countenance.

XV.

THE SALUTATION.

This picture, placed beneath the figure of the Virgin Annunciate at the eaſt end of the chapel, and neceſſarily ſmall, (as will be ſeen by the plan,) in conſequence of the ſpace occupied by the arch which it flanks, begins the ſecond or lower ſeries of freſcoes; being, at the ſame time, the firſt of the great chain of more familiar ſubjects, in which we have the power of comparing the conceptions of Giotto not only with the deſigns of earlier ages, but with the efforts which ſubſequent maſters have made to exalt or vary the ideas of the principal ſcenes in the life of the Virgin and of Chriſt. The two paintings of the Angel Gabriel and the Virgin Annunciate hardly provoke ſuch a compariſon, being almoſt ſtatue-like in the calm ſubjection of all dramatic intereſt to the ſymmetrical dignity and beauty of the two figures, leading, as they do, the whole ſyſtem of the decoration of the chapel; but this of the Salutation is treated with no ſuch reference to the architecture, and at once challenges compariſon with the works of later maſters.

Nor is the challenge feebly maintained. I have no heſitation in ſaying, that, among all the renderings of this ſcene which now exiſt, I remember none which gives the

pure depth and plain facts of it ſo perfectly as this of Giotto's. Of majeſtic women bowing themſelves to beautiful and meek girls, both wearing gorgeous robes, in the midſt of lovely ſcenery, or at the doors of Palladian palaces, we have enough; but I do not know any picture which ſeems to me to give ſo truthful an idea of the action with which Elizabeth and Mary muſt actually have met,—which gives ſo exactly the way in which Elizabeth would ſtretch her arms, and ſtoop and gaze into Mary's face, and the way in which Mary's hand would ſlip beneath Elizabeth's arms, and raiſe her up to kiſs her. I know not any Elizabeth ſo full of intenſe love, and joy, and humbleneſs; hardly any Madonna in which tenderneſs and dignity are ſo quietly blended. She not leſs humble, and yet accepting the reverence of Elizabeth as her appointed portion, ſaying, in her ſimplicity and truth, "He that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is His name." The longer that this group is looked upon, the more it will be felt that Giotto has done well to withdraw from it nearly all acceſſories of landſcape and adornment, and to truſt it to the power of its own deep expreſſion. We may gaze upon the two ſilent figures until their ſilence ſeems to be broken, and the words of the queſtion and reply ſound in our ears, low, as if from far away:

"Whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord ſhould come to me?"

"My ſoul doth magnify the Lord, and my ſpirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

XVI.

THE NATIVITY.

I am not ſure whether I ſhall do well or kindly in telling the reader any thing about this beautiful deſign. Perhaps the leſs he knows about early art or early traditions, the more deeply he will feel its purity and truth; for there is ſcarcely an incident here, or any thing in the manner of repreſenting the incidents, which is not mentioned or juſtified in Scripture. The bold hilly background reminds us that Bethlehem was in the hill-country of Judah. But it may ſeem to have two purpoſes beſides this literal one: the firſt, that it increaſes the idea of *expoſure* and lonelineſs in the birth of Chriſt; the ſecond, that the maſſes of the great hills, with the angels floating round them in the horizontal clouds, may in ſome ſort repreſent to our thoughts the power and ſpace of that heaven and earth whoſe Lord is being laid in the manger-cradle.

There is an exquiſite truth and ſweetneſs in the way the Virgin turns upon the couch, in order herſelf to aſſiſt in laying the Child down. Giotto is in this exactly faithful to the ſcriptural words: "*She* wrapped the Child in ſwaddling-clothes, and *laid* Him in a manger." Joſeph ſits beneath in meditation; above, the angels, all exulting, and, as it were, confuſed with joy, flutter and circle in the

air like birds,—three looking up to the Father's throne with praiſe and thankfulneſs, one ſtooping to adore the Prince of Peace, one flying to tell the ſhepherds. There is ſomething to me peculiarly affecting in this diſorder of theirs; even angels, as it were, breaking their ranks with wonder, and not knowing how to utter their gladneſs and paſſion of praiſe. There is noticeable here, as in all works of this early time, a certain confidence in the way in which the angels truſt to their wings, very characteriſtic of a period of bold and ſimple conception. Modern ſcience has taught us that a wing cannot be anatomically joined to a ſhoulder; and in proportion as painters approach more and more to the ſcientific, as diſtinguiſhed from the contemplative ſtate of mind, they put the wings of their angels on more timidly, and dwell with greater emphaſis upon the human form, and with leſs upon the wings, until theſe laſt become a ſpecies of decorative appendage,—a mere *ſign* of an angel. But in Giotto's time an angel was a complete creature, as much believed in as a bird; and the way in which it would or might caſt itſelf into the air, and lean hither and thither upon its plumes, was as naturally apprehended as the manner of flight of a chough or a ſtarling. Hence Dante's ſimple and moſt exquiſite ſynonym for angel, "Bird of God;" and hence alſo a variety and pictureſqueneſs in the expreſſion of the movements of the heavenly hierarchies by the earlier painters, ill replaced by the powers of foreſhortening, and throwing naked limbs into fantaſtic poſitions, which appear in the cherubic groups of later times.

It is needleſs to point out the frank aſſociation of the

two events,—the Nativity, and appearance of the Angel to the Shepherds. They are conſtantly thus joined; but I do not remember any other example in which they are joined ſo boldly. Uſually the ſhepherds are ſeen in the diſtance, or are introduced in ſome ornamental border, or other inferior place. The view of painting as a mode of ſuggeſting relative or conſecutive thoughts, rather than a realiſation of any one ſcene, is ſeldom ſo fearleſſly aſſerted, even by Giotto, as here, in placing the flocks of the ſhepherds at the foot of the Virgin's bed.

This bed, it will be noticed, is on a ſhelf of rock. This is in compliance with the idea founded on the Protevangelion and the apocryphal book known as the Goſpel of Infancy, that our Saviour was born in a cave, aſſociated with the ſcriptural ſtatement that He was laid in a manger, of which the apocryphal goſpels do not ſpeak.

The vain endeavour to exalt the awe of the moment of the Saviour's birth has turned, in theſe goſpels, the outhouſe of the inn into a ſpecies of ſubterranean chapel, full of incenſe and candles. "It was after ſunſet, when "the old woman (the midwife), and Joſeph with her, "reached the cave; and they both went into it. And be- "hold, it was all filled with light, greater than the light "of lamps and candles, and greater than the light of the "ſun itſelf." (Infancy, i. 9.) "Then a bright cloud "overſhadowed the cave, and the midwife ſaid: This day "my ſoul is magnified." (Protevangelion, xiv. 10.) The thirteenth chapter of the Protevangelion is, however, a little more ſkilful in this attempt at exaltation. "And leaving her and his ſons in the cave, Joſeph went

" forth to ſeek a Hebrew midwife in the village of Beth-
" lehem. But as I was going, ſaid Joſeph, I looked up
" into the air, and I ſaw the clouds aſtoniſhed, and the
" fowls of the air ſtopping in the midſt of their flight
" And I looked down towards the earth and ſaw a table
" ſpread, and working-people ſitting around it; but their
" hands were on the table, and they did not move to eat.
" But all their faces were fixed upwards." (Protevange-
lion, xiii. 1-7.)

It would, of courſe, be abſurd to endeavour to inſti-
tute any compariſon between the various pictures of this
ſubject, innumerable as they are; but I muſt at leaſt
deprecate Lord Lindſay's characteriſing this deſign of
Giotto's merely as the "Byzantine compoſition." It
contains, indeed, nothing more than the materials of the
Byzantine compoſition; but I know no Byzantine Na-
tivity which at all reſembles it in the grace and life of its
action. And, for full a century after Giotto's time, in
northern Europe, the Nativity was repreſented in a far
more conventional manner than this;—uſually only the
heads of the ox and aſs are ſeen, and they are arranging,
or holding with their mouths, the drapery of the couch of
the Child, who is not being laid in it by the Virgin, but
raiſed upon a kind of tablet high above her in the centre
of the group. All theſe early deſigns, without exception,
however, agree in expreſſing a certain degree of languor
in the figure of the Virgin, and in making her recumbent
on the bed. It is not till the fifteenth century that ſhe is
repreſented as exempt from ſuffering, and immediately
kneeling in adoration before the Child.

XVII.

THE WISE MEN'S OFFERING.

This is a ſubject which has been ſo great a favourite with the painters of later periods, and on which ſo much rich incidental invention has been laviſhed, that Giotto's rendering of it cannot but be felt to be barren. It is, in fact, perhaps the leaſt powerful of all the ſeries; and its effect is further marred by what Lord Lindſay has partly noted, the appearance—perhaps accidental, but if ſo, exceedingly unſkilful—of matronly corpulence in the figure of the Madonna. The unfortunate failure in the repreſentation of the legs and cheſts of the camels, and the awkwardneſs of the attempt to render the action of kneeling in the foremoſt king, put the whole compoſition into the claſs—not in itſelf an unintereſting one—of the ſlips or ſhortcomings of great maſters. One incident in it only is worth obſerving. In other compoſitions of this time, and in many later ones, the kings are generally preſenting their offerings themſelves, and the Child takes them in His hand, or ſmiles at them. The painters who thought this an undignified conception left the preſents in the hands of the attendants of the Magi. But Giotto conſiders how preſents would be received by an actual

king; and as what has been offered to a monarch is delivered to the care of his attendants, Giotto puts a waiting angel to receive the gifts, as not worthy to be placed in the hands of the Infant.

XVIII.

THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

This deſign is one of thoſe which are peculiarly characteriſtic of Giotto as the head of the Naturaliſti.* No painter before his time would have dared to repreſent the Child Jeſus as deſiring to quit the arms of Simeon, or the Virgin as in ſome ſort interfering with the prophet's earneſt contemplation of the Child by ſtretching her arms to receive Him. The idea is evidently a falſe one, quite unworthy of the higher painters of the religious ſchool; and it is a matter of peculiar intereſt to ſee what muſt have been the ſtrength of Giotto's love of plain facts, which could force him to ſtoop ſo low in the conception of this moſt touching ſcene. The Child does not, it will be obſerved, merely ſtretch its arm to the Madonna, but is even ſtruggling to eſcape, violently raiſing the left foot. But there is another incident in the compoſition, witneſſing as notably to Giotto's powerful graſp of all the facts of his ſubject as this does to his ſomewhat hard and plain manner of graſping them;—I mean the angel approaching Simeon, as if with a meſſage. The peculiar intereſt of the Preſentation is for the moſt part inadequately repreſented in painting, becauſe it is impoſſible to

* See account of his principles above, p. 22, head C.

imply the fact of Simeon's having waited ſo long in the hope of beholding his Lord, or to inform the ſpectator of the feeling in which he utters the ſong of hope fulfilled. Giotto has, it ſeems to me, done all that he could to make us remember this peculiar meaning of the ſcene; for I think I cannot be deceived in interpreting the flying angel, with its branch of palm or lily, to be the Angel of Death, ſent in viſible fulfilment of the thankful words of Simeon: "Lord, now letteſt Thou Thy ſervant depart in peace." The figure of Anna is poor and unintereſting; that of the attendant, on the extreme left, very beautiful, both in its drapery and in the ſevere and elevated character of the features and head-dreſs.

XIX.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

Giotto again ſhows, in his treatment of this ſubject, a juſter underſtanding of the probable facts than moſt other painters. It becomes the almoſt univerſal habit of later artiſts to regard the flight as both ſudden and ſecret, undertaken by Joſeph and Mary, unattended, in the dawn of the morning, or "by night," ſo ſoon as Joſeph had awaked from ſleep. (Matt. ii. 14.) Without a continuous miracle, which it is unneceſſary in this caſe to ſuppoſe, ſuch a lonely journey would have been nearly impracticable. Nor was inſtant flight neceſſary; for Herod's order for the maſſacre could not be iſſued until he had been convinced, by the protracted abſence of the Wiſe Men, that he was "mocked of them." In all probability the exact nature and extent of the danger was revealed to Joſeph; and he would make the neceſſary preparations for his journey with ſuch ſpeed as he could, and depart "by night" indeed, but not in the inſtant of awakening from his dream. The ordinary impreſſion ſeems to have been received from the words of the Goſpel of Infancy: "Go into Egypt *as ſoon as the cock crows.*" And the intereſt of the flight is rendered more thrilling, in late compoſitions, by the introduction of armed purſuers.

Giotto has given a far more quiet, deliberate, and probable character to the whole ſcene, while he has fully marked the fact of divine protection and command in the figure of the guiding angel. Nor is the picture leſs intereſting in its marked expreſſion of the night. The figures are all diſtinctly ſeen, and there is no broad diſtribution of the gloom; but the vigorous blackneſs of the dreſs of the attendant who holds the bridle, and the ſcattered glitter of the lights on the Madonna's robe, are enough to produce the required effect on the mind.

The figure of the Virgin is ſingularly dignified: the broad and ſevere curves traced by the hem and deepeſt folds of her dreſs materially conducing to the nobleneſs of the group. The Child is partly ſuſtained by a band faſtened round the Madonna's neck. The quaint and delicate pattern on this band, together with that of the embroidered edges of the dreſs, is of great value in oppoſing and making more manifeſt the ſevere and grave outlines of the whole figure, whoſe impreſſiveneſs is alſo partly increaſed by the riſe of the mountain juſt above it, like a tent. A vulgar compoſer would have moved this peak to the right or left, and loſt its power.

This mountain background is alſo of great uſe in deepening the ſenſe of gloom and danger on the deſert road. The trees repreſented as growing on the heights have probably been rendered indiſtinct by time. In early manuſcripts ſuch portions are invariably thoſe which ſuffer moſt; the green (on which the leaves were once drawn with dark colours) mouldering away, and the lines of drawing with it. But even in what is here left there is

noticeable more careful ſtudy of the diſtinction between the trees with thick ſpreading foliage, the group of two with light branches and few leaves, and the tree ſtripped and dead at the bottom of the ravine, than an hiſtorical painter would now think it conſiſtent with his dignity to beſtow.

XX.

MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS.

Of all the ſeries, this compoſition is the one which exhibits moſt of Giotto's weakneſſes. All early work is apt to fail in the rendering of violent action: but Giotto is, in this inſtance, inferior not only to his ſucceſſors, but to the feebleſt of the miniature-painters of the thirteenth century; while his imperfect drawing is ſeen at its worſt in the nude figures of the children. It is, in fact, almoſt impoſſible to underſtand how any Italian, familiar with the eager geſticulations of the lower orders of his countrywomen on the ſmalleſt points of diſpute with each other, ſhould have been incapable of giving more adequate expreſſion of true action and paſſion to the group of mothers; and, if I were not afraid of being accuſed of ſpecial pleading, I might inſiſt at ſome length on a dim faith of my own, that Giotto thought the actual agony and ſtrivings of the probable ſcene unfit for pictorial treatment, or for common contemplation; and that he choſe rather to give motionleſs types and perſonifications of the ſoldiers and women, than to uſe his ſtrength and realiſtic faculty in bringing before the vulgar eye the unſeemly ſtruggle or unſpeakable pain. The formal arrangement of the heap of corpſes in the centre of the group; the crowded

ſtanding of the mothers, as in a choir of ſorrow; the actual preſence of Herod, to whom ſome of them appear to be appealing,—all ſeem to me to mark this intention; and to make the compoſition only a ſymbol or ſhadow of the great deed of maſſacre, not a realiſation of its viſible continuance at any moment. I will not preſs this conjecture; but will only add, that if it be ſo, I think Giotto was perfectly right; and that a picture thus conceived might have been deeply impreſſive, had it been more ſucceſsfully executed; and a calmer, more continuous, comfortleſs grief expreſſed in the countenances of the women. Far better thus, than with the horrible analyſis of agony, and detail of deſpair, with which this ſame ſcene, one which ought never to have been made the ſubject of painting at all, has been gloated over by artiſts of more degraded times.

XXI.

THE YOUNG CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE.

This compoſition has ſuffered ſo grievouſly by time, that even the portions of it which remain are ſeen to the greateſt diſadvantage. Little more than various conditions of ſcar and ſtain can be now traced, where were once the draperies of the figures in the ſhade, and the ſuſpended garland and arches on the right hand of the ſpectator; and in endeavouring not to repreſent more than there is authority for, the draughtſman and engraver have neceſſarily produced a leſs ſatisfactory plate than moſt others of the ſeries. But Giotto has also himſelf fallen conſiderably below his uſual ſtandard. The faces appear to be cold and hard; and the attitudes are as little graceful as expreſſive either of attention or ſurpriſe. The Madonna's action, ſtretching her arms to embrace her Son, is pretty; but, on the whole, the picture has no value; and this is the more remarkable, as there were fewer precedents of treatment in this caſe than in any of the others; and it might have been anticipated that Giotto would have put himſelf to ſome pains when the field of thought was comparatively new. The ſubject of Chriſt teaching in the Temple rarely occurs in manuſcripts; but all the others were perpetually repeated in the ſervice-books of the period.

XXII.

THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST.

This is a more intereſting work than the laſt; but it is alſo gravely and ſtrangely deficient in power of entering into the ſubject; and this, I think, is common with nearly all efforts that have hitherto been made at its repreſentation. I have never ſeen a picture of the Baptiſm, by any painter whatever, which was not below the average power of the painter; and in this conception of Giotto's, the humility of St. John is entirely unexpreſſed, and the geſture of Chriſt has hardly any meaning: it neither is in harmony with the words, "Suffer it to be ſo now," which muſt have been uttered before the moment of actual baptiſm, nor does it in the ſlighteſt degree indicate the ſenſe in the Redeemer of now entering upon the great work of His miniſtry. In the earlier repreſentations of the ſubject, the humility of St. John is never loſt ſight of; there will be ſeen, for inſtance, an effort at expreſſing it by the ſlightly ſtooping attitude and bent knee, even in the very rude deſign given in outline on the oppoſite page. I have thought it worth while to ſet before the reader in this outline one example of the ſort of traditional repreſentations which were current throughout Chriſtendom before

Giotto aroſe. This inſtance is taken from a large choir-book, probably of French, certainly of Northern execution, towards the cloſe of the thirteenth century;* and it is a very fair average example of the manner of deſign in the illuminated work of the period. The introduction of the ſcroll, with the legend, "This is My beloved Son," is both more true to the ſcriptural words, "Lo, a voice from heaven," and more reverent, than Giotto's introduction of the viſible figure, as a type of the Firſt Perſon of the Trinity. The boldneſs with which this type is introduced increaſes preciſely as the religious ſentiment of art decreaſes; in the fifteenth century it becomes utterly revolting.

I have given this woodcut for another reaſon alſo: to explain more clearly the mode in which Giotto deduced the ſtrange form which he has given to the ſtream of the Jordan. In the earlier Northern works it is merely a green wave, riſing to the Saviour's waiſt, as ſeen in the woodcut. Giotto, for the ſake of getting ſtanding-ground for his figures, gives *ſhores* to this wave, retaining its ſwelling form in the centre,—a very painful and unſucceſsful attempt at reconciling typical drawing with laws of perſpective. Or perhaps it is leſs to be regarded as an effort at progreſs, than as an awkward combination of the Eaſtern and Weſtern types of the Jordan. In the difference between theſe types there is matter of ſome intereſt. Lord Lindſay, who merely characteriſes this work of

* The exact date, 1290, is given in the title-page of the volume.

Giotto's as "the Byzantine compoſition," thus deſcribes the uſual Byzantine manner of repreſenting the Baptiſm:

"The Saviour ſtands immerſed to the middle in Jordan (*flowing between two deep and rocky banks*), on one of which ſtands St. John, pouring the water on His head, and on the other two angels hold His robes. The Holy Spirit deſcends upon Him as a dove, in a ſtream of light, from God the Father, uſually repreſented by a hand from Heaven. Two of John's diſciples ſtand behind him as ſpectators. Frequently *the river-god of Jordan* reclines with his oars in the corner. * * * In the Baptiſtery at Ravenna, the robe is ſupported, not by an angel, but by the river-deity *Jordann* (Iordanes?), who holds in his left hand a reed as his ſceptre."

Now in this mode of repreſenting rivers there is ſomething more than the mere Pagan tradition lingering through the wrecks of the Eaſtern Empire. A river, in the Eaſt and South, is neceſſarily recogniſed more diſtinctly as a beneficent power than in the Weſt and North. The narroweſt and feebleſt ſtream is felt to have an influence on the life of mankind; and is counted among the poſſeſſions, or honoured among the deities, of the people who dwell beſide it. Hence the importance given, in the Byzantine compoſitions, to the name and ſpeciality of the Jordan ſtream. In the North ſuch peculiar definiteneſs and importance can never be attached to the name of any ſingle fountain. Water, in its various forms of ſtreamlet, rain, or river, is felt as an univerſal gift of heaven, not as an inheritance of a particular ſpot of earth. Hence,

with the Gothic artiſts generally, the perſonality of the Jordan is loſt in the green and nameleſs wave; and the ſimple rite of the Baptiſm is dwelt upon, without endeavouring, as Giotto has done, to draw the attention to the rocky ſhores of Bethabara and Ænon, or to the fact that "there was much water there."

XXIII.

THE MARRIAGE IN CANA.

It is ſtrange that the ſweet ſignificance of this firſt of the miracles ſhould have been loſt ſight of by nearly all artiſts after Giotto; and that no effort was made by them to conceive the circumſtances of it in ſimplicity. The poverty of the family in which the marriage took place, —proved ſufficiently by the fact that a carpenter's wife not only was aſked as a chief gueſt, but even had authority over the ſervants,—is ſhown further to have been diſtreſsful, or at leaſt embarraſſed, poverty by their want of wine on ſuch an occaſion. It was not certainly to remedy an accident of careleſs proviſion, but to ſupply a need ſorrowfully betraying the narrow circumſtances of His hoſts, that our Lord wrought the beginning of miracles. Many myſtic meanings have been ſought in the act, which, though there is no need to deny, there is little evidence to certify: but we may joyfully accept, as its firſt indiſputable meaning, that of ſimple kindneſs; the wine being provided here, when needed, as the bread and fiſh were afterwards for the hungry multitudes. The whole value of the miracle, in its ſerviceable tenderneſs, is at once effaced when the marriage is ſuppoſed, as by Veroneſe and other artiſts of later times, to have taken place at the

houſe of a rich man. For the reſt, Giotto ſufficiently implies, by the lifted hand of the Madonna, and the action of the fingers of the bridegroom, as if they held ſacramental bread, that there lay a deeper meaning under the miracle for thoſe who could accept it. How all miracle *is* accepted by common humanity, he has alſo ſhown in the figure of the ruler of the feaſt, drinking. This unregarding forgetfulneſs of preſent ſpiritual power is ſimilarly marked by Veroneſe, by placing the figure of a fool with his bauble immediately underneath that of Chriſt, and by making a cat play with her ſhadow in one of the wine-vaſes.

It is to be remembered, however, in examining all pictures of this ſubject, that the miracle was not made manifeſt to all the gueſts;—to none indeed, ſeemingly, except Chriſt's own diſciples: the ruler of the feaſt, and probably moſt of thoſe preſent (except the ſervants who drew the water), knew or obſerved nothing of what was paſſing, and merely thought the good wine had been "kept until now."

XXIV.

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

In conſequence of the intermediate poſition which Giotto occupies between the Byzantine and Naturaliſt ſchools, two relations of treatment are to be generally noted in his work. As compared with the Byzantines, he is a realiſt, whoſe power conſiſts in the introduction of living character and various incidents, modifying the formerly received Byzantine ſymbols. So far as he has to do this, he is a realiſt of the pureſt kind, endeavouring always to conceive events preciſely as they were likely to have happened; not to idealiſe them into forms artfully impreſſive to the ſpectator. But in ſo far as he was compelled to retain, or did not wiſh to reject, the figurative character of the Byzantine ſymbols, he ſtands oppoſed to ſucceeding realiſts, in the quantity of meaning which probably lies hidden in any compoſition, as well as in the ſimplicity with which he will probably treat it, in order to enforce or guide to this meaning: the figures being often letters of a hieroglyphic, which he will not multiply, leſt he ſhould loſe in force of ſuggeſtion what he gained in dramatic intereſt.

None of the compoſitions diſplay more clearly this typical and reflective character than that of the Raiſing of

Lazarus. Later deſigners dwell on vulgar conditions of wonder or horror, ſuch as they could conceive likely to attend the reſuſcitation of a corpſe; but with Giotto the phyſical reanimation is the type of a ſpiritual one, and, though ſhown to be miraculous, is yet in all its deeper aſpects unperturbed, and calm in awfulneſs. It is alſo viſibly gradual. "His face was bound about with a napkin." The neareſt Apoſtle has withdrawn the covering from the face, and looks for the command which ſhall reſtore it from waſted corruption, and ſealed blindneſs, to living power and light.

Nor is it, I believe, without meaning, that the two Apoſtles, if indeed they are intended for Apoſtles, who ſtand at Lazarus' ſide, wear a different dreſs from thoſe who follow Chriſt. I ſuppoſe them to be intended for images of the Chriſtian and Jewiſh Churches in their miniſtration to the dead ſoul: the one removing its bonds, but looking to Chriſt for the word and power of life; the other inactive and helpleſs—the veil upon its face—in dread; while the principal figure fulfils the order it receives in fearleſs ſimplicity.

XXV.

THE ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

This deſign ſuffers much from loſs of colour in tranſlation. Its decorative effect depends on the deep blue ground, relieving the delicate foliage and the local colours of dreſſes and architecture. It is alſo one of thoſe which are moſt directly oppoſed to modern feeling: the ſympathy of the ſpectator with the paſſion of the crowd being ſomewhat rudely checked by the groteſque action of two of the foremoſt figures. We ought, however, rather to envy the deep ſerioufneſs which could not be moved from dwelling on the real power of the ſcene by any ungracefulneſs or familiarity of circumſtance. Among men whoſe minds are rightly toned, nothing is ludicrous: it muſt, if an act, be either right or wrong, noble or baſe; if a thing ſeen, it muſt either be ugly or beautiful: and what is either wrong or deformed is not, among noble perſons, in anywiſe ſubject for laughter; but, in the preciſe degree of its wrongneſs or deformity, a ſubject of horror. All perception of what, in the modern European mind, falls under the general head of the ludicrous, is either childiſh or profane; often healthy, as indicative of vigorous animal life, but always degraded in its relation to manly con-

ditions of thought. It has a ſecondary uſe in its power of detecting vulgar impoſture; but it only obtains this power by denying the higheſt truths.

XXVI.

THE EXPULSION FROM THE TEMPLE.

More properly, the Expulſion from the outer Court of the Temple (Court of Gentiles), as Giotto has indicated by placing the porch of the Temple itſelf in the background.

The deſign ſhows, as clearly as that of the Maſſacre of the Innocents, Giotto's want of power, and partly of deſire, to repreſent rapid or forceful action. The raiſing of the right hand, not holding any ſcourge, reſembles the action afterwards adopted by Oreagna, and finally by Michael Angelo in his Laſt Judgment: and my belief is, that Giotto conſidered this act of Chriſt's as partly typical of the final judgment, the Phariſees being placed on the left hand, and the diſciples on the right. From the faded remains of the freſco, the draftſman could not determine what animals are intended by thoſe on the left hand. But the moſt curious incident (ſo far as I know, found only in this deſign of the Expulſion, no ſubſequent painter repeating it,) is the ſheltering of the two children, one of them carrying a dove, under the arm and cloak of two diſciples. Many meanings might eaſily be ſuggeſted in this; but I ſee no evidence for the adoption of any diſtinct one.

XXVII.

THE HIRING OF JUDAS.

The only point of material intereſt preſented by this deſign is the decrepit and diſtorted ſhadow of the demon, reſpecting which it may be well to remind the reader that all the great Italian thinkers concurred in aſſuming decrepitude or diſeaſe, as well as uglineſs, to be a characteriſtic of all natures of evil. Whatever the extent of the power granted to evil ſpirits, it was always abominable and contemptible; no element of beauty or heroiſm was ever allowed to remain, however obſcured, in the aſpect of a fallen angel. Alſo, the demoniacal nature was ſhown in acts of betrayal, torture, or wanton hoſtility; never in valiancy or perſeverance of conteſt. I recollect no mediæval demon who ſhows as much inſulting, reſiſting, or contending power as Bunyan's Apollyon. They can only cheat, undermine, and mock; never overthrow. Judas, as we ſhould naturally anticipate, has not in this ſcene the nimbus of an Apoſtle; yet we ſhall find it reſtored to him in the next deſign. We ſhall diſcover the reaſon of this only by a careful conſideration of the meaning of that freſco.

XXVIII.

THE LAST SUPPER.

I have not examined the original freſco with care enough to be able to ſay whether the unintereſting quietneſs of its deſign is redeemed by more than ordinary attention to expreſſion; it is one of the leaſt attractive ſubjects in the Arena Chapel, and always ſure to be paſſed over in any general obſervation of the ſeries: nevertheleſs, however unfavourably it may at firſt contraſt with the deſigns of later maſters, and eſpecially with Leonardo's, the reader ſhould not fail to obſerve that Giotto's aim, had it been ſucceſsful, was the higher of the two, as giving truer rendering of the probable fact. There is no diſtinct evidence, in the ſacred text, of the annunciation of coming treachery having produced among the diſciples the violent ſurpriſe and agitation repreſented by Leonardo. Naturally, they would not at firſt underſtand what was meant. They knew nothing diſtinctly of the machinations of the prieſts; and ſo little of the character or purpoſes of Judas, that even after he had received the ſop which was to point him out to the others as falſe;—and after they had heard the injunction, "That thou doeſt, do quickly," —the other diſciples had ſtill no conception of the ſignificance, either of the ſaying, or the act: they thought that

Chriſt meant he was to buy ſomething for the feaſt. Nay, Judas himſelf, ſo far from ſtarting, as a convicted traitor, and thereby betraying himſelf, as in Leonardo's picture, had not, when Chriſt's firſt words were uttered, any immediately active intention formed. The devil had not entered into him until he received the ſop. The paſſage in St. John's account is a curious one, and little noticed; but it marks very diſtinctly the paralyſed ſtate of the man's mind. He had talked with the prieſts, covenanted with them, and even ſought opportunity to bring Jeſus into their hands; but while ſuch opportunity was wanting, the act had never preſented itſelf fully to him for adoption or rejection. He had toyed with it, dreamed over it, heſitated, and procraſtinated over it, as a ſtupid and cowardly perſon would, ſuch as traitors are apt to be. But the way of retreat was yet open; the conqueſt of the tempter not complete. Only after receiving the ſop the idea *finally* preſented itſelf clearly, and was accepted, "To-night, while He is in the garden, I can do it; and I will." And Giotto has indicated this diſtinctly by giving Judas ſtill the Apoſtle's nimbus, both in this ſubject and in that of the Waſhing of the Feet; while it is taken away in the previous ſubject of the Hiring, and the following one of the Seizure: thus it fluctuates, expires, and reillumines itſelf, until his fall is conſummated. This being the general ſtate of the Apoſtles' knowledge, the words, "One of you ſhall betray me," would excite no feeling in their minds correſpondent to that with which we now read the prophetic ſentence. What this "giving up" of their Maſter meant became a queſtion of bitter and ſelf-ſearching

thought with them,—gradually of intenſe ſorrow and queſtioning. But had they underſtood it in the ſenſe we now underſtand it, they would never have each aſked, "Lord, is it I?" Peter believed himſelf incapable even of *denying* Chriſt: and of giving Him up to death for money, every one of His true diſciples *knew* themſelves incapable; the thought never occurred to them. In ſlowly-increaſing wonder and ſorrow (ἤρξαντο λυπεῖσθαι, Mark xiv. 19), not knowing what was meant, they aſked one by one, with pauſes between, "Is it I?" and another, "Is it I?" and this ſo quietly and timidly that the one who was lying on Chriſt's breaſt never ſtirred from his place; and Peter, afraid to ſpeak, ſigned to him to aſk who it was. One further circumſtance, ſhowing that this was the real ſtate of their minds, we ſhall find Giotto take cogniſance of in the next freſco.

XXIX.

THE WASHING OF THE FEET.

In this deſign, it will be obſerved, there are ſtill the twelve diſciples, and the nimbus is yet given to Judas (though, as it were, ſetting, his face not being ſeen).

Conſidering the deep intereſt and importance of every circumſtance of the Laſt Supper, I cannot underſtand how preachers and commentators paſs by the difficulty of clearly underſtanding the periods indicated in St. John's account of it. It ſeems that Chriſt muſt have riſen while they were ſtill eating, muſt have waſhed their feet as they ſate or reclined at the table, juſt as the Magdalen had waſhed His own feet in the Phariſee's houſe; that, this done, He returned to the table, and the diſciples continuing to eat, preſently gave the ſop to Judas. For St. John ſays, that he having received the ſop, went *immediately* out; yet that Chriſt had waſhed his feet is certain, from the words, "Ye are clean, but not all." Whatever view the reader may, on deliberation, chooſe to accept, Giotto's is clear, namely, that though not cleanſed by the baptiſm, Judas was yet capable of being cleanſed. The devil had not entered into him at the time of the waſhing of the feet, and he retains the ſign of an Apoſtle.

The compoſition is one of the moſt beautiful of the ſeries, eſpecially owing to the ſubmiſſive grace of the two ſtanding figures.

XXX.

THE KISS OF JUDAS.

For the firſt time we have Giotto's idea of the face of the traitor clearly ſhown. It is not, I think, traceable through any of the previous ſeries; and it has often ſurpriſed me to obſerve how impoſſible it was in the works of almoſt any of the ſacred painters to determine by the mere caſt of feature which was meant for the falſe Apoſtle. Here, however, Giotto's theory of phyſiognomy, and together with it his idea of the character of Judas, are perceivable enough. It is evident that he looks upon Judas mainly as a ſenſual dullard, and foul-brained fool; a man in no reſpect exalted in bad eminence of treachery above the maſs of common traitors, but merely a diſtinct type of the eternal treachery to good, in vulgar men, which ſtoops beneath, and oppoſes in its appointed meaſure, the life and efforts of all noble perſons, their natural enemies in this world; as the ſlime lies under a clear ſtream running through an earthy meadow. Our careleſs and thoughtleſs Engliſh uſe of the word into which the Greek "Diabolos" has been ſhortened, blinds us in general to the meaning of "Devilry," which, in its eſſence, is nothing elſe than ſlander, or traitorhood;—the accuſing and giving up of good. In particular it has

blinded us to the meaning of Chriſt's words, "Have not I choſen you twelve, and one of you is a traitor and accuſer?" and led us to think that the "one of you is a devil" indicated ſome greater than human wickedneſs in Judas; whereas the practical meaning of the entire fact of Judas' miniſtry and fall is, that out of any twelve men choſen for the forwarding of any purpoſe,—or, much more, out of any twelve men we meet,—one, probably, is or will be a Judas.

The modern German renderings of all the ſcenes of Chriſt's life in which the traitor is conſpicuous are very curious in their vulgar miſunderſtanding of the hiſtory, and their conſequent endeavours to repreſent Judas as more diabolic than ſelfiſh, treacherous, and ſtupid men are in all their generations. They paint him uſually projected againſt ſtrong effects of light, in lurid chiaroſcuro;—enlarging the whites of his eyes, and making him frown, grin, and gnaſh his teeth on all occaſions, ſo as to appear among the other Apoſtles invariably in the aſpect of a Gorgon.

How much more deeply Giotto has fathomed the fact, I believe all men will admit who have ſufficient purity and abhorrence of falſehood to recogniſe it in its daily preſence, and who know how the devil's ſtrongeſt work is done for him by men who are too beſtial to underſtand what they betray.

XXXI.

CHRIST BEFORE CAIAPHAS.

Little is to be obſerved in this deſign of any diſtinctive merit; it is only a ſomewhat completer verſion of the ordinary repreſentation given in illuminated miſſals and other conventual work, ſuggeſting, as if they had happened at the ſame moment, the anſwer, "If I have ſpoken evil, bear witneſs of the evil," and the accuſation of blaſphemy which cauſes the high-prieſt to rend his clothes.

Apparently diſtruſtful of his power of obtaining intereſt of a higher kind, Giotto has treated the enrichments more carefully than uſual, down even to the ſteps of the high-prieſt's ſeat. The torch and barred ſhutters conſpicuouſly indicate its being now dead of night. That the torch is darker than the chamber, if not an error in the drawing, is probably the conſequence of a darkening alteration in the yellow colours uſed for the flame.

XXXII.

THE SCOURGING OF CHRIST.

It is characteriſtic of Giotto's rational and human view of all ſubjects admitting ſuch aſpect, that he has inſiſted here chiefly on the dejection and humiliation of Chriſt, making no attempt to ſuggeſt to the ſpectator any other divinity than that of patience made perfect through ſuffering. Angelico's conception of the ſame ſubject is higher and more myſtical. He takes the moment when Chriſt is blindfolded, and exaggerates almoſt into monſtroſity the vileneſs of feature and bitterneſs of ſneer in the queſtioners, "Propheſy unto us, who is he that ſmote thee;" but the bearing of the perſon of Chriſt is entirely calm and unmoved; and his eyes, open, are ſeen through the blinding veil, indicating the ceaſeleſs omniſcience.

This myſtical rendering is, again, rejected by the later realiſtic painters; but while the earlier deſigners, with Giotto at their head, dwelt chiefly on the humiliation and the mockery, later painters dwelt on the phyſical pain. In Titian's great picture of this ſubject in the Louvre, one of the executioners is thruſting the thorn-crown down upon the brow with his rod, and the action of Chriſt is that of a perſon ſuffering extreme phyſical agony.

No repreſentations of the ſcene exiſt, to my know-

ledge, in which the mockery is either ſuſtained with indifference, or rebuked by any ſtern or appealing expreſſion of feature; yet one of theſe two forms of endurance would appear, to a modern habit of thought, the moſt natural and probable.

XXXIII.

CHRIST BEARING HIS CROSS.

This deſign is one of great nobleneſs and ſolemnity in the iſolation of the principal figure, and removal of all motives of intereſt depending on acceſſories, or merely temporary incidents. Even the Virgin and her attendant women are kept in the background; all appeal for ſympathy through phyſical ſuffering is diſdained. Chriſt is not repreſented as borne down by the weight of the Croſs, nor as urged forward by the impatience of the executioners. The thing to be ſhown,—the unſpeakable myſtery,—is the ſimple fact, the Bearing of the Croſs by the Redeemer. It would be vain to compare the reſpective merits or value of a deſign thus treated, and of one like Veroneſe's of this ſame ſubject, in which every eſſential acceſſory and probable incident is completely conceived. The abſtract and ſymbolical ſuggeſtion will always appeal to one order of minds, the dramatic completeneſs to another. Unqueſtionably, the laſt is the greater achievement of intellect, but the manner and habit of thought are perhaps loftier in Giotto. Veroneſe leads us to perceive the reality of the act, and Giotto to underſtand its intention.

XXXIV.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

The treatment of this ſubject was, in Giotto's time, ſo rigidly fixed by tradition that it was out of his power to diſplay any of his own ſpecial modes of thought; and, as in the Bearing of the Croſs, ſo here, but yet more diſtinctly, the temporary circumſtances are little regarded, the ſignificance of the event being alone cared for. But even long after this time, in all the pictures of the Crucifixion by the great maſters, with the ſingle exception perhaps of that by Tintoret in the Church of San Caſſano at Venice, there is a tendency to treat the painting as a ſymmetrical image, or collective ſymbol of ſacred myſteries, rather than as a dramatic repreſentation. Even in Tintoret's great Crucifixion in the School of St. Roch, the group of fainting women forms a kind of pedeſtal for the Croſs. The flying angels in the compoſition before us are thus alſo treated with a reſtraint hardly paſſing the limits of decorative ſymboliſm. The fading away of their figures into flame-like cloud may perhaps be founded on the verſe, "He maketh His angels ſpirits; His miniſters a flame of fire" (though erroneouſly, the right reading of that verſe being, "He maketh the winds His meſſengers, and the flaming fire His ſervant"); but it ſeems to me to give a greater ſenſe of poſſible truth than the entire figures, treading the clouds with naked feet, of Perugino and his ſucceſſors.

XXXV.

THE ENTOMBMENT.

I do not conſider that in fulfilling the taſk of interpreter intruſted to me, with reſpect to this ſeries of engravings, I may in general permit myſelf to unite with it the duty of a critic. But in the execution of a laborious ſeries of engravings, ſome muſt of courſe be better, ſome worſe; and it would be unjuſt, no leſs to the reader than to Giotto, if I allowed this plate to paſs without ſome admiſſion of its inadequacy. It may poſſibly have been treated with a little leſs care than the reſt, in the knowledge that the finiſhed plate, already in the poſſeſſion of the members of the Arundel Society, ſuperſeded any effort with inferior means; be that as it may, the tenderneſs of Giotto's compoſition is, in the engraving before us, loſt to an unuſual degree.

It may be generally obſerved that the paſſionateneſs of the ſorrow both of the Virgin and diſciples, is repreſented by Giotto and all great following deſigners as reaching its criſis at the Entombment, not at the Crucifixion. The expectation that, after experiencing every form of human ſuffering, Chriſt would yet come down from the croſs, or in ſome other viſible and immediate manner achieve for Himſelf the victory, might be conceived to have ſupported

in a meaſure the minds of thoſe among His diſciples who watched by His croſs. But when the agony was cloſed by actual death, and the full ſtrain was put upon their faith, by their laying in the ſepulchre, wrapped in His grave-clothes, Him in whom they truſted, "that it had been He which ſhould have redeemed Iſrael," their ſorrow became ſuddenly hopeleſs; a gulf of horror opened, almoſt at unawares, under their feet; and in the poignancy of her aſtonied deſpair, it was no marvel that the agony of the Madonna in the "Pietà" became ſubordinately aſſociated in the mind of the early Church with that of their Lord Himſelf;—a type of conſummate human ſuffering.

XXXVI.

THE RESURRECTION.

Quite one of the loveliest deſigns of the ſeries. It was a favourite ſubject with Giotto; meeting, in all its conditions, his love of what was moſt myſterious, yet moſt comforting and full of hope, in the doctrines of his religion. His joy in the fact of the Reſurrection, his ſenſe of its function, as the key and primal truth of Chriſtianity, was far too deep to allow him to dwell on any of its minor circumſtances, as later deſigners did, repreſenting the moment of burſting the tomb, and the ſuppoſed terror of its guards. With Giotto the leading thought is not of phyſical reanimation, nor of the momentarily exerted power of breaking the bars of the grave; but the conſummation of Chriſt's work in the firſt manifeſting to human eyes, and the eyes of one who had loved Him and believed in Him, His power to take again the life He had laid down. This firſt appearance to her out of whom He had caſt ſeven devils is indeed the very central fact of the Reſurrection. The keepers had not ſeen Chriſt; they had ſeen only the angel deſcending, whoſe countenance was like lightning: for fear of him they became as dead; yet this fear, though great enough to cauſe them to ſwoon, was ſo far conquered at the return of morning, that they were ready to take

money-payment for giving a falſe report of the circumſtances. The Magdalen, therefore, is the firſt witneſs of the Reſurrection; to the love, for whoſe ſake much had been forgiven, this gift is alſo firſt given; and as the firſt witneſs of the truth, ſo ſhe is the firſt meſſenger of the Goſpel. To the Apoſtles it was granted to proclaim the Reſurrection to all nations; but the Magdalen was bidden to proclaim it to the Apoſtles.

In the chapel of the Bargello, Giotto has rendered this ſcene with yet more paſſionate ſympathy. Here, however, its ſignificance is more thoughtfully indicated through all the acceſſories, down even to the withered trees above the ſepulchre, while thoſe of the garden burſt into leaf. This could hardly eſcape notice, when the barren boughs were compared by the ſpectator with the rich foliage of the neighbouring deſigns, though, in the detached plate, it might eaſily be loſt ſight of.

XXXVII.

THE ASCENSION.

Giotto continues to exert all his ſtrength on theſe cloſing ſubjects. None of the Byzantine or earlier Italian painters ventured to introduce the entire figure of Chriſt in this ſcene: they ſhowed the feet only, concealing the body; according to the text, "a cloud received Him out of their ſight." This compoſition, graceful as it is daring, conveys the idea of aſcending motion more forcibly than any that I remember by other than Venetian painters. Much of its power depends on the continuity of line obtained by the half-floating figures of the two warning angels.

I cannot underſtand why this ſubject was ſo ſeldom treated by religious painters: for the harmony of Chriſtian creed depends as much upon it as on the Reſurrection itſelf; while the circumſtances of the Aſcenſion, in their brightneſs, promiſe, miraculouſneſs, and direct appeal to all the aſſembled Apoſtles, ſeem more fitted to attract the joyful contemplation of all who received the faith. How morbid, and how deeply to be mourned, was the temper of the Church which could not be ſatiſfied without perpetual repreſentation of the tortures of Chriſt; but rarely dwelt on His triumph! How more than ſtrange the con-

ceſſions to this feebleneſs by its greateſt teachers; ſuch as that of Titian, who, though he paints the Aſſumption of the Madonna rather than a Pietà, paints the Scourging and the Entombment of Chriſt, with his beſt power,—but never the Aſcenſion!

XXXVIII.

THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

This laſt ſubject of the ſeries, the quieteſt and leaſt intereſting in treatment, yet illuſtrates ſadly, and forcibly, the vital difference between ancient and modern art.

The worſt characters of modern work reſult from its conſtant appeal to our deſire of change, and pathetic excitement; while the beſt features of the elder art appealed to love of contemplation. It would appear to be the object of the trueſt artiſts to give permanence to images ſuch as we ſhould always deſire to behold, and might behold without agitation; while the inferior branches of deſign are concerned with the acuter paſſions which depend on the turn of a narrative, or the courſe of an emotion. Where it is poſſible to unite theſe two ſources of pleaſure, and, as in the Aſſumption of Titian, an action of abſorbing intereſt is united with perfect and perpetual elements of beauty, the higheſt point of conception would appear to have been touched: but in the degree in which the intereſt of action *ſuperſedes* beauty of form and colour, the art is lowered; and where real deformity enters, in any other degree than as a momentary ſhadow or oppoſing force, the art is illegitimate. Such art can exiſt only by accident, when a nation has forgotten or betrayed the eternal purpoſes of its

genius, and gives birth to painters whom it cannot teach, and to teachers whom it will not hear. The beſt talents of all our Engliſh painters have been ſpent either in endeavours to find room for the expreſſion of feelings which no maſter guided to a worthy end, or to obtain the attention of a public whoſe mind was dead to natural beauty, by ſharpneſs of ſatire, or variety of dramatic circumſtance.

The work to which England is now devoting herſelf withdraws her eyes from beauty, as her heart from reſt; nor do I conceive any revival of great art to be poſſible among us while the nation continues in its preſent temper. As long as it can bear to ſee miſery and ſqualor in its ſtreets, it can neither invent nor accept human beauty in its pictures; and ſo long as in paſſion of rivalry, or thirſt of gain, it cruſhes the roots of happineſs, and forſakes the ways of peace, the great ſouls whom it may chance to produce will all paſs away from it helpleſs, in error, in wrath, or in ſilence. Amiable viſionaries may retire into the delight of devotional abſtraction, ſtrong men of the world may yet hope to do ſervice by their rebuke or their ſatire; but for the clear ſight of Love there will be no horizon, for its quiet words no anſwer; nor any place for the art which alone is faithfully Religious, becauſe it is Lovely and True.

The ſeries of engravings thus completed, while they preſent no characters on which the members of the Arundel Society can juſtifiably pride themſelves, have,

nevertheleſs, a real and effective value, if conſidered as a ſeries of maps of the Arena freſcoes. Few artiſts of eminence paſs through Padua without making ſtudies of detached portions of the decoration of this Chapel, while no artiſt has time to complete drawings of the whole. Such fragmentary ſtudies might now at any time be engraved with advantage, their place in the ſeries being at once determinable by reference to the woodcuts; while qualities of expreſſion could often be obtained in engravings of ſingle figures, which are ſure to be loſt in an entire ſubject. The moſt refined character is occaſionally dependent on a few happy and light touches, which, in a ſingle head, are effective, but are too feeble to bear due part in an entire compoſition, while, in the endeavour to reinforce them, their vitality is loſt. I believe the members of the Arundel Society will perceive, eventually, that no copies of works of great art are worthily repreſentative of them but ſuch as are made freely, and for their own purpoſes, by great painters: the beſt reſults obtainable by mechanical effort will only be charts or plans of pictures, not mirrors of them. Such charts it is well to command in as great number as poſſible, and with all attainable completeneſs; but the Society cannot be conſidered as having entered on its true functions until it has obtained the hearty co-operation of European artiſts, and by the increaſe of its members, the further power of repreſenting the ſubtle ſtudies of maſterly painters by the aid of exquiſite engraving.

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