

MONOGRAPHS

ON ARTISTS

LEONARDO DA VINCI

BY

ADOLF ROSENBERG

TRANSLATED BY J. LOHSE.



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EDITED, AND WRITTEN IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHER AUTHORS,

BY

H. KNACKFUSS

VII.

LEONARDO DA VINCI

BIELEFELD AND LEIPZIG
VELHAGEN & KLASING

1903

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ADOLF ROSENBERG

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WITH 128 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PICTURES AND DRAWINGS



BIELEFELD AND LEIPZIG
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1903

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LEONARDO DA VINCI.

Portrait in the Uffizi at Florence.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co. Dornach and Paris.)

LEONARDO DA VINCI.

IF, with the help of the memorials which have come down to us, we wish to represent to ourselves the bodily image of the Master of the Italian Renaissance, who ruled supreme in every domain of art, and in whom we admire the noblest union of creative power with the science of a thoughtful and inquiring mind, we have in reality to glance at one type, — that of a mind looking keenly into the distance from eyes deep set under a high bald forehead with long waving hair falling over the shoulders, and a beard half covering the chest. In his old age Leonardo himself thus drew his picture (now in the Royal Library of Turin, Fig. 1), and all the others take their origin from this self-portrait which is more than a picture; it is the revelation of his own self, the mirror of a life full of renunciations, of disappointments, of unsatisfied hopes and wishes, and yet of an unbroken desire for research which continued till he drew his last breath. Even the ideal picture in the portrait gallery of the Uffizi, considered there as a self-portrait of the Master, is based upon this one; but it is only an attempt of an enthusiastic admirer of Leonardo to fill a gap in that gallery (see the Frontispiece). Nevertheless this portrait has a certain value. He who painted it tried to reproduce from the drawing of the old man the picture of one in the prime of life, and he has had the satisfaction that his portrait of Leonardo has become a characteristic picture to later generations. Pietro Magni took it as his model for his statue of Leonardo on the Piazza della Scala at Milan, and indeed, no other portrait is so well adapted to show us the image of the Italian “Doctor Faust”, as we may well call this magician of the physical, mathematical and mechanical sciences. Thus we picture to ourselves the man who at the outset did not find favour with a Lorenzo de’ Medici, on account of his unproductive, restless, many-sided nature, who later on became indispensable to Lodovico Sforza on account of those self-same qualities, and who, after many wanderings, always groping with Faust-like impulses after the unattainable, found his last resting place in a foreign land.



Fig. 1. PORTRAIT OF LEONARDO BY HIMSELF. In the Royal Library of Turin.

The unrest within him entered into all who attempted to follow his arts and sciences practised openly or in secret. And in our days when research in art with its hairsplitting criticism enters into the minutest details, the contention about what has remained to us of the works of Leonardo

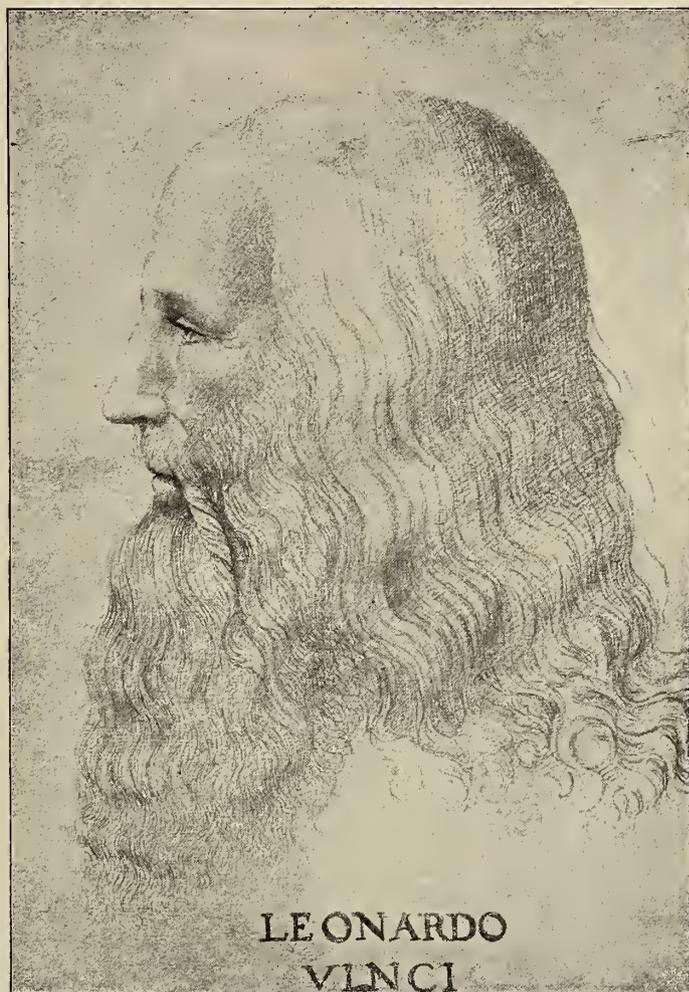
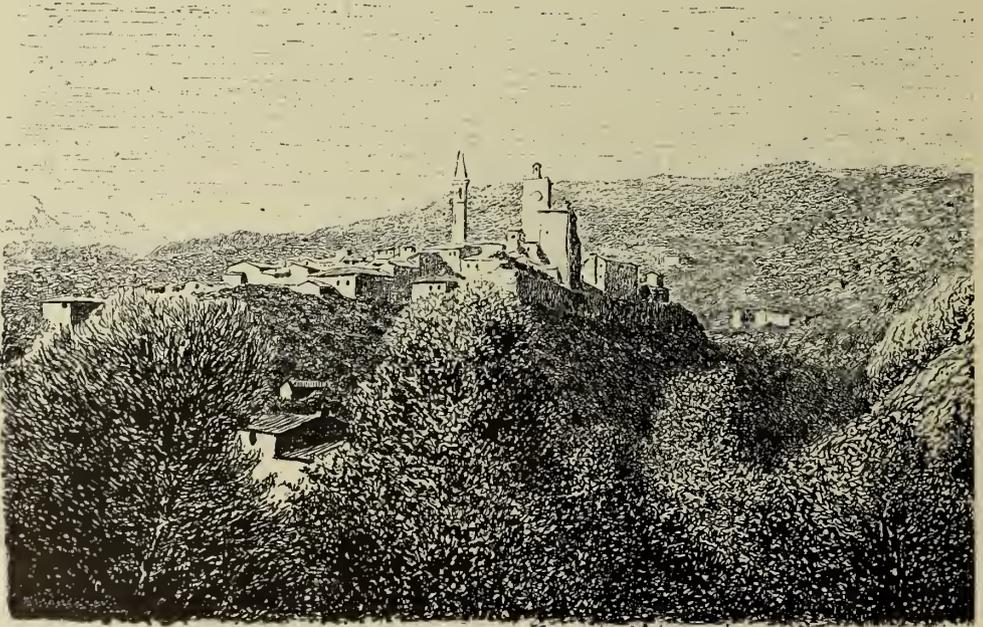


Fig. 2. PROFILE PORTRAIT OF LEONARDO IN HIS OLD AGE. Drawing in the Ambrosian Library at Milan.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

is as violent as ever. In spite of this we still stand before the portrait of Leonardo as before a stone sphinx of the old Egyptians, whose rigid features have no answer for anyone asking a question. In the face of the sphinx, bearing the name of Leonardo, every inquirer must rely on his own discernment, never forgetting that to this Master whom not only his contemporaries and the sad remains of his works, but above all the writings

which he left, proclaim as a man who had by far outgrown the average measure of the men of his time, nothing unworthy must be attributed. We must therefore on the very threshold of this attempt to draw a new characteristic sketch of the Master, decline to consider as authentic the profile portrait in the Ambrosiana at Milan (Fig. 2). It is a well meant production of a pupil or imitator with untrained eyes who believed he saw in the first, often copied self-portrait in Turin, with that dæmonic look or a prophet, the features of a worthy citizen who is quietly enjoying his old age. In the course of this study we shall at every step come upon the works of pupils, imitators, and falsifiers who heaped rubbish and dirt on the name of the great man. Only by dint of taking pains, and sometimes not even then, shall we succeed in finding the traces of the true handwriting of the Master, as an expert in deciphering old palimpsests comes in the end upon a blank or upon a hopelessly obliterated passage. At all events it is instructive to show by drastic instances how great was the power of Leonardo in inspiring his pupils to follow him, how many imitators were tempted to exercise their feeble talent, and forgers induced to practise their dark trade by trying to replace by their own handiwork lost works of Leonardo of which the world still knew through literary tradition, and who were most successful in perpetrating such deceit. The often diametrically opposed judgment of the cleverest and most discerning art students of our days, and the strife of opinions constitute perhaps the most difficult task



[Fig. 3. VINCI NEAR EMPOLI, LEONARDO'S BIRTHPLACE.
From Müller-Walde.

of the biographers of Leonardo, the task of gaining at least a sufficiently secure basis on which they may build.

* * *

Leonardo was born in the year 1452 in the little mountain village Vinci near Empoli, rising with its fortified castle and white houses from dark woods on a hill west of Monte Albano (Fig. 3). He was, as one



Fig. 4. TWO ANGELS FROM THE "BAPTISM OF CHRIST" BY ANDREA DEL VERROCCHIO.
In the Academy at Florence.

(After a Photograph from the original by G. Brogi, Florence.)

would say to-day, "a child of free love", and the spirit of the time, of the second half of the fifteenth century, was so akin to the present, that no one seems to have taken umbrage that the notary of the Signoria of Florence, Ser Piero da Vinci, a man of twenty-five, who, in the stormy passion of youth had for a while made love to Caterina, a peasant girl of the village, had intrusted the fruit of that love, young Leonardo, to the care of his parents who enjoyed their restful old age at a country seat in

Vinci. He married the same year a girl belonging by birth and education to his own class, and Caterina in her turn married a peasant whose name, Accatabriga di Piero del Vacca, the Archives have preserved with superfluous care, whilst we know nothing more of Caterina and her further destiny. Hence Leonardo is not an instance of the modern theory of heredity, the less so, because his father of whom we know much, but very little in which we can rejoice, was only a man of ordinary intellect. He married three times, but had only children of the second or third marriage—(the Archives do not state this quite clearly)—whose number grew to eleven. When the first was born, Leonardo was already over twenty years old. As



Fig. 5. HEAD OF MEDUSA. In the Uffizi at Florence.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

his grandparents had educated him with loving pride, notwithstanding his illegitimate birth, and as his father had moreover placed him in a position which allowed him to lead the free life of a wealthy nobleman, it was a sore trial to him when, after the death of his father, the legitimate children waged bitter war against the illegitimate son claiming his share in the inheritance.

The study of the Archives is a scientific necessity; but unfortunately it often makes revelations to us which exceed the beautiful words of the poet:

“No man is perfect; thus we may rejoice
That we in sages and great heroes dare
To find some shadows on their shield of light,
Revealing the immortal’s mortal share”¹⁾.

¹⁾ Translated from the German by Olga von Gerstfeldt.

We learn to our sorrow that the great Masters of the Italian Renaissance whose creations call forth the most ardent devotion and kindle intense enthusiasm within us, were during their human existence anything but great. They were often mean, and their hearts so much bent upon gaining money, that they forgot what the modern man calls his personal dignity. If one does not want to give up all one's illusions, one must gradually get



Fig 6. FEMALE PORTRAIT. In the Pitti Palace at Florence.
(After a Photograph from the original by G. Brogi, Florence.)

accustomed to this ignoble meanness in their mode of life, and this is rendered easy to the traveller who visits modern Italy, because their descendants, as far as the great majority is concerned and not the small community of the educated class, seem only to have inherited the belittling qualities of greed and selfishness, the longing to make money as fast as possible, though of course under the cloak of perfect civility and compliance.

Perhaps this verdict may seem hard to many admirers of sunny Italy

and its inhabitants who appear to be so amiable; but let them read the correspondence of Michelangelo with his friends and relatives, let them investigate his everlasting contentions with those who gave him commissions, with his competitors and his greedy relatives,—let them follow the intrigues to which Titian stooped, when he wished to obtain a remunerative sinecure from the Council of Venice or any other advantage,—let them glance at the autobiography of the passionate Cellini, who, if one believed his own



Fig. 7. PORTRAIT OF A YOUTH. In the Uffizi at Florence.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

words, often dictated by immoderate love of boasting, would seem to be much less an artist than one of the greatest bandits of his time. Such was the temperament of these men who on the one hand lavished on their contemporaries the highest gifts of their noble minds, and showed on the other hand the same energy in the tenacious defence of material advantages. Leonardo was no exception. We believe however we may say in his favour that in the lawsuit with his two stepbrothers which lasted for two years, he was only guided by his wounded sense of justice. This seems however



Fig. 8. ANNUNCIATION. In the Uffizi at Florence.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co, Dornach and Paris.)



Fig. 9. ANNUNCIATION. AN EARLY WORK BY LEONARDO. In the Louvre at Paris.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

to have been satisfied after the long strife carried on by either side with equal bitterness, for in his Will Leonardo bequeathed "to his own brothers living in Florence" an investment of 400 Scudi with the compound interest dating from the year 1513, and some landed property in Fiesole. From the wording of this Will it has been rightly inferred that Leonardo had been adopted by his father as a legitimate son, because otherwise Leonardo would not have dared to speak of "his own brothers", and above all he would not have been compelled to assign to them a portion by his Will. There is also documentary evidence that he lived in his father's house in 1470, and probably till 1480.

Having got an insight into the life of Florence, such as it was in those days, he entered with all the impetuosity of youth into those circles where the pulsations of that life were strongest and produced its best results,



Fig. 10. STUDY OF DRAPERY FOR A KNEELING FIGURE.
In the Louvre at Paris.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)



Fig. 11. STUDY OF DRAPERY FOR A KNEELING FIGURE.
In Windsor Castle.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

into the haunts of artists towards whom he felt drawn by his restless desire for knowledge. Already in his early youth he felt the impulse to commit to paper in drawing or writing the innermost feelings of his soul, and in doing so, he developed all his rich gifts in harmonious proportion. The artist always kept an even pace with the scientific investigator, and for this very reason later research will never succeed in proving positively which was the greater in Leonardo, the artist or the man of science. One thing is however an undeniable fact: The man of science whose ingenious discoveries, confirmed, praised, and admired, though surpassed in later times, wronged the artist to such a degree, that we must acknowledge we should gladly have done without the man of science, if the artist had allowed himself more leisure to finish the creations which in spite of their damaged condition, will yet have a great influence during many centuries.

Even as a young man Leonardo must have been a restless spirit. There is no domain of creative art in which he did not try his hand, but he never produced finished works, although after the first manifestations of his genius he was overwhelmed with commissions by dignitaries of churches



Fig. 14. PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG WOMAN. In the Gallery of Prince Liechtenstein, Vienna.
(After a Photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstaengl, Munich.)

clay, in bronze, and in marble; but he also was a goldsmith, skilled in executing the finest works in gold and silver, in making cast and chiselled reliefs. It is moreover stated that he was a painter. Only a few of his pictures are still existing, but these are so well authenticated, that there is no room for doubt. It is true that modern research has discovered a series of pictures which, by comparing them with Verrocchio's sculptures and drawings, are believed to be works of his hand or at least of his school, and we endorse the opinion that Verrocchio must have enjoyed a certain reputation as a painter. If it were not so, Leonardo would not have gone to him. Though, like all Florentines of his time, Leonardo saw and drew everything from the standpoint of plastic art, he never worked seriously nor for any length of time as a sculptor; it was only at a much later period that he drew with the painter's eye. The single instance of his skill in the plastic art is the equestrian statue which he began to model later on

in Milan. He had offered to do so in a letter to the ruler of that city, Lodovico il Moro, in which he makes the most of all his artistic and technical powers. This remains a fact, although Vasari, his oldest biographer, who was more nearly his contemporary than any of his other biographers, relates that already in the days of his youth, before he became an apprentice of Verrocchio, he not only drew, but also made reliefs. According to Vasari, Leonardo did not go to Verrocchio's studio from his own choice, but owing to the circumstance that his father, Ser Piero, was an intimate friend of Verrocchio. When Ser Piero felt at last convinced that the artistic talent of his son deserved to be encouraged, he went one day to Verrocchio with a few of his drawings, and entreated him to say whether he thought it worth while that his son's talent for drawing should be further cultivated. Master Andrea was astonished at the drawings, and advised Ser Piero to have him taught. Thus it came to pass that Leonardo entered the workshop of Verrocchio. Vasari relates further how he modelled in clay the heads of women smiling, and "the heads of children which seem to be the handiwork of a Master". Another biographer

of Leonardo, belonging to the sixteenth century, the painter Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo (1538—1588) who collected the traditions of the Milanese artists about Leonardo in his "Treatise on Painting", just as Vasari collected those current amongst the Florentine artists, gives an account of the works of the young man in sculpture. He praises amongst others the small head of an infant Christ for its truly childlike and yet clever and majestic expression, and also mentions the relief of a horse. Like the equestrian statue, to which we shall refer again later on, all these works have disappeared, and the attempt made by modern critics to fill in a measure this gap in our knowledge of Leonardo, by ascribing to him a relief

ROSENBERG, Leonardo da Vinci.



Fig. 15. STUDY OF HANDS. ABOVE ON THE LEFT A CARICATURE.
In the Uffizi at Florence.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co.,
Dornach and Paris.)



Fig. 14. PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG WOMAN. In the Gallery of Prince Liechtenstein, Vienna.
(After a Photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstaengl, Munich.)

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Fig. 15. STUDY OF HANDS. ABOVE ON THE LEFT A CARICATURE
In the Uffizi at Florence.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co.,
Dornach and Paris.)



Fig. 16. BACCIO BANDINI. AFTER EXECUTION. In possession of the Painter Bonnat in Paris.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

in stucco, now in the Kensington Museum, the numerous figures of which are an allegoric representation of discord, seems to us so ill founded, that we can devote no more time and space to this small mutilated work. Besides this, Vasari himself says in summing up Leonardo's many artistic accomplishments, in which he seems however to confuse his later works with his earlier ones, that his real vocation was painting, and that his plastic works were only means towards an end, preparatory studies for his drawings and his pictures.

Whilst modern research has tried to compensate us for the loss of Leonardo's plastic works, it has on the other hand robbed us of an illusion. Vasari relates that during his boyhood, before he was apprenticed to Verrocchio, he used to busy himself with many pursuits, but soon abandoned them again. In this way he also took up music, and decided in the end to cultivate the lute,—“and nature having bestowed on him a lofty and graceful mind, he improvised charming songs for the lute”. Lomazzo fancied he possessed one of these songs, and he quotes it in his Treatise. The thoughts contained in this Sonnet are not unworthy of a mind like Leonardo's, given to deep and searching investigations, and therefore we give it here:

“He who can do not what he wills, should try
To will what he can do; for since 'tis vain
To will what can't be compassed, to abstain
From idle wishing is philosophy.

Lo, all our happiness and grief imply
Knowledge or not of will's ability:
They therefore can, who will what ought to be,
Nor wrest true reason from her seat awry.

Nor what a man can, should he always will:
Oft seemeth sweet what after is not so;
And what I wished, when had, hath cost a tear.

Then, reader of these lines, if thou wouldst still
Be helpful to thyself, to others dear,
Will to can alway what thou ought to do”¹).

¹) Quoted from “The Renaissance in Italy” by J. A. Symonds (Vol. III page 229) who translated this Sonnet into English “with such closeness to the original words as he found possible”.

This ingenious play with thoughts and words had, as modern research has proved from Manuscripts dating from the fifteenth century, existed already before Leonardo was born, and in most Manuscripts a certain Antonio di Matteo di Meglio, who died in Florence in 1446 as herald of the Signoria, is named as its author.

With respect to art, we must therefore limit ourselves to reliable discoveries of Leonardo's works as a designer and painter, and indeed, in the first definite account Vasari gives us of Leonardo, it is mentioned that he helped to paint a great picture. Vasari speaks so positively about this, that hitherto no one has doubted his story. When Verrocchio received the commission to paint a Baptism of Christ for the Convent of San Salvi, he asked his pupil Leonardo to work with him. This picture, now in the Academy of Florence, consists of four figures: In the foreground of a landscape, showing a river winding through strange rocky formations, we see on the right St. John the Baptist, who, overshadowed by the Holy Ghost descending under the image of a dove, pours water from a basin on the head of Him who is to be baptised, and who stands in the centre in the shallow water of the river, praying with uplifted hands. On the left, kneeling on the bank before a palm-tree, are two angels, one of whom looks out of the picture into space with indifferent eyes, whilst the other, holding the garment of Christ over his right arm, watches the sacred rite with heartfelt devotion, yea, with a rapt expression (Fig. 4 with both angels and part of the figure of Christ). "For this picture," Va-



Fig. 17. YOUTH ON HORSEBACK. Drawing in the Library of Windsor Castle.
(After a Photograph
from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

sari relates, "Leonardo painted an angel carrying a few garments, and although he was still very young, he did his work so perfectly, that the angel of Leonardo looked much better than the figures of Andrea. This was the reason why the latter no longer wished to touch colours, for he was vexed, because a child understood more than he."

This story sounds however so much like an artists' anecdote invented at a later period, that we cannot attach faith to it. Leonardo was the pupil and companion of Verrocchio, as such it was his duty to help his



Fig. 18. PORTRAIT OF SAVONAROLA.

In the Albertina at Vienna.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co.,
Dornach and Paris.)

master in all his works, and the better he painted, the more pleased his master must have been with the fact that the work of his apprentice was accepted as his own. Probably the difference between the two angels only struck a later generation, when Leonardo had become the prototype of all artistic perfection. Most likely no one noticed the difference between the two angels when the picture came into the possession of the monks of San Salvi. Perhaps there may even have been an intentional contrast in the circumstance that, like the choristers in church, one of the angels plays his part with indifferent dullness, whilst the other does so with the greatest devotion to his pious office.

The grain of truth, which appears nevertheless to be in Vasari's story, we can no longer discover in the picture, because,—we wish to judge mildly,—it is in a doubtful condition. We use a guarded expression, for



Fig. 19. MADONNA AND CHILD. In the Old Pinakothek, Munich.
(After a Photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängel, Munich.)

this condition of the picture has not only given rise to bitter contention amongst those who believe themselves to be in the right, but also to the most ingenious and clever examinations and theories. The picture was originally painted in tempera, that is in colours mixed with glue, a process which was universal in Florence in 1470, and it seems to belong to that time. Now the picture distinctly shows that it was painted over with colours mixed with oil or a similar substance. This retouching is ascribed to Leonardo by the advocates of Vasari's story, and one of them goes so far as to maintain that the palm-tree on the left, the last touches in the landscape, and other details are the handiwork of Leonardo who in later years finished the works left incomplete by his master. The late Senator Morelli, one of the most distinguished judges of old Italian pictures, maintained on the contrary that the story of Vasari was a mere legend, and the retouching the work of a modern restorer who covered the picture, which had already suffered very much when it was taken to the Academy, "with a yellowish oily mixture" which was afterwards removed again from the right side of the picture.

The ground on which we are treading is therefore so insecure, that it will be better for us to search for more accredited records. In the first place Vasari tells us of some early works of Leonardo which he had seen himself. Leonardo received the commission to draw a cartoon representing the Fall in Paradise, after which a tapestry was to be woven in Flanders for the King of Portugal. According to the description of Vasari who saw the cartoon in the palace of Ottaviano de' Medici, the cartoon was painted in grisaille, and the lights put in in white. The landscape had been done throughout with infinite pains,—the meadow with luxuriant herbage, a few animals, and some trees amongst which he specially describes a fig-tree and a palm, their branches and foliage. "Only the patience and the genius of Leonardo could produce such a work." Indeed, one of the most characteristic peculiarities of Leonardo, which he had however in common with the other Florentine Masters of the second half of the fifteenth century, was the great care he bestowed on all the details of the landscape. In his case this thorough knowledge of nature was due to his scientific studies; this is proved by many drawings found in his manuscripts, and by many detached designs existing in collections. Vasari relates a marvellous story of another early work of Leonardo. During a stay his father made at his country-seat a peasant he employed brought him one day a circular piece of wood cut from a fig-tree, and requested him to have something painted on it in Florence. Ser Piero gave the piece of wood to his son, and having had it smoothed by a turner, Leonardo had the idea to paint something on it which should have the same effect on the beholder as a shield with the head of the Medusa. To reach this end as nearly as possible, he caught tiny lizards, great and small crickets, snakes, locusts, bats, and other strange creatures, and shut them up in a room which no one but himself entered. After having studied these animals he painted a frightful monster issuing



Fig. 20. STUDY FOR THE ADORATION OF THE THREE KINGS.

In the Galichon Collection at Paris.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

forth from a dark den, exhaling poison from its open jaws, its eyes aglow with fire, and its nostrils steaming. When the father, inquiring what had become of the shield, happened to see the work of his son, he was at first terrified, but soon recognised how excellent the work was, and kept it for himself. The peasant was indemnified by another work, and later on Ser Piero secretly sold the picture for a hundred ducats to some Florentine merchants who in their turn handed it over to the Duke of Milan for 300 ducats.

Leonardo painted however a real head of the Medusa in oil, which Vasari saw in the palace of Duke Cosimo in Florence, together with the

head of an angel; he calls it "the strangest and most weird contrivance one can imagine". Leonardo was however in no hurry to work at the picture, and hence it remained unfinished like nearly all his things. These juvenile works of the Master, mentioned by Vasari, having disappeared, a forger attempted to make up for this loss by painting a picture of the Madonna according to the description of Vasari. It was later on taken to the Gallery of the Uffizi where it was considered as a work of the Master till modern criticism discovered the fraud (Fig. 5). The picture is in so far interesting as it shows what bold attempts have been made to explore a great name at the cost of credulous hero-worshippers. In this case we have not even a copy, but a product of imagination manufactured during the second half of the sixteenth century.

The Florentine Galleries have had the ill luck of several spurious Leonardo pictures being introduced into them. Neither the so-called "Nun" by Leonardo in the Palazzo Pitti (Fig. 6), nor the "Goldsmith", nor the



Fig. 21. ADORATION OF THE KINGS. In the Uffizi at Florence.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)



Fig. 22. STUDY FOR THE ADORATION OF THE KINGS. In the Uffizi at Florence.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

“Youth” in the Uffizi with long wavy hair, looking straight before him (Fig. 7) are worthy of his name. Of these pictures the “Goldsmith” alone is a work of art; the two others are by “mediocre sons of this world” who during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries occupied the position of the photographers of our days. Notice that the painter of the so-called “Nun” who, to judge from her dress, was wrongly named, knew how to shape the landscape in the back-ground so richly and pleasantly, that one recognises how deeply this manner of bringing nature and man into a living mutual relation, had entered into the views on art of the Florentine Painters of the fifteenth century, and hence it must not be considered as the characteristic peculiarity of one master.

What forgers and copyists had attempted by dishonest means, honest art-critics wished on the other hand to supply by dint of scientific sifting of the existing treasures of art. According to tradition, Leonardo must already have painted a great deal in the workshop of Verrocchio. What has become of it all? An ingenious friend of art, Baron Liphart, a collector who lived for a long time in Florence, made one day the discovery that a picture at the Uffizi, an “Annunciation of the Virgin Mary”, which had recently been taken into that Gallery from the convent church of Monte Oliveto near Florence under the name of Ghirlandajo, might prove to be one of the early works of Leonardo. This rebaptism was generally accepted, for such a discovery is always an event in the world of artists and friends of art, especially in Florence where the great galleries are a mighty factor in the prosperity of the town, now deprived of its political importance. A clever critical examination of the picture has however proved that in this

instance a flattering illusion must be done away with. In his Treatise on Painting in which Leonardo has transmitted the bulk of his own experiences to his pupils and to posterity, he emphatically warns young painters never to imitate the manner of another master,—“because, if he does so, the imitator will, as far as art is concerned, only be called a grandson, not a son of nature . . .” Such a “grandson of nature” we behold in every feature of the picture in the Uffizi (Fig. 8). The painter of this Annunciation did not study from life neither the landscape in the background, nor the three cypresses with the firs and the deciduous trees which, in helpless perplexity, he placed between them, but on the contrary, he copied mechanically from the pictures of other artists without possessing himself a deeper understanding of the forms of nature. The angel of this Annunciation and the Virgin Mary who rises with a startled gesture, though her face be perfectly serene, are figures not drawn from life, but borrowed. Animated by the impulse of the scientific inquirer, Leonardo had already in his earlier years drawn trees, shrubs, and leaves from nature, and he had done so with a discernment, which penetrated into the structure of every leaf, and this he drew with a pen or a pointed red pencil, rendering all its intricate network, as if he had already known the microscope. Indeed, magnifying glasses did exist long before the days of Leonardo, and it is most probable that the artist who thoroughly understood the laws of optics, had made a magnifying glass for his own use which almost served him as a microscope in the modern acceptance of the word. Without such an instrument his analysis of leaves and flowers is incomprehensible to us; it enters into the minutest details, and has caused modern naturalists to recognise in him the founder of the anatomy and physiology of plants. If these and many other discoveries in all branches of knowledge now known under the universal name of “natural science” and “technic” remained a dead letter for posterity, the cause lay in the personality of the author. Leonardo was, as it were, possessed by a demon, which never permitted him to say to the present moment: “Remain, for thou art so beautiful!” If he made a discovery which appeared to all men of an ordinary understanding as something extraordinary and superhuman, the spirit moved him to aim at a greater perfection, and this explains why he never made up his mind to have one of his extensive treatises on painting, mechanics, optics, engineering, and natural sciences printed, to make them thereby the universal property of the men of his time, and to spur them on to further research. It is nevertheless possible that, especially during his two sojourns in Milan, some of his verbal teaching penetrated into wider circles. There are however very few proofs of this, and they are mostly limited to fantastic trifles.

By the study of the extant manuscripts of Leonardo which his indistinct and often abbreviated writing renders one of the hardest tasks of modern research, chiefly because the Master generally wrote obliquely from right to left, our time gets at last a deeper insight into the extent of his far reaching and manifold scientific work. These studies are not yet terminated,



Fig. 23. STUDY OF FIGURES FOR THE ADORATION OF THE KINGS.
In the Louvre at Paris.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

and therefore we can only refer briefly to this side of Leonardo's activity. It is however certain that his artistic creations lost by his devoting so much time to his scientific pursuits. We must hence dwell longer on those works hallowed by the inspiration of his genius.

We feel sure that to these works the "Annunciation" in the Uffizi at Florence does not belong, for other reasons than those mentioned already. It is known from the writings of Vasari and others that, in studying drapery, Leonardo dipped linen and other materials into liquid stucco, and then arranged the folds of these stuffs in greater and smaller masses. He used nails, wooden pegs, and other supports for this purpose; but he would never have transferred such a make-shift to his pictures, and hence we

recognise in the author of the picture in Florence who threw part of the garment of the Madonna over the back of the seat, because he did not know how to master the arrangement of the folds, only a "grandson of nature", an imitator of Leonardo. It was probably Ridolfo Ghirlandajo, who always lived by the imitation of others. A verdict of the Master



Fig. 24. STUDIES OF FIGURES FOR THE ADORATION OF THE KINGS.
In the possession of Mr. Malcolm.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

himself condemns this picture. In his "Treatise on Painting" he blames the manner of certain masters who represent the Madonna as so much frightened by the appearance of the Angel of the Annunciation, that she looks as if fear might induce her to jump out of the window. It is true, the Madonna in the Uffizi is not in a state of such violent agitation, but her gesture cannot be reconciled with the criticism of Leonardo.

The latter did however paint an Annunciation; but instead of looking

for it in Florence, we must go to the Gallery of the Louvre in Paris, where it was for a long time considered as a work by Lorenzo di Credi, till all art critics agreed as to its being an early work of Leonardo, dating from about 1470 (Fig. 9). In this picture we see already the germs of all those characteristic traits of Leonardo, which, a few years after, produced magnificent results: the humble posture, the lovely gracefulness of his female heads unconscious of their charms; the small delicate hands; the drapery carried to perfection by unwearied studies and observation, its careful arrangement which betrays the sculptor who has learned to study every-



Fig. 25. STUDIES OF FIGURES FOR THE ADORATION OF THE KINGS. In the possession of Monsieur Armand in Paris.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

thing corporeal; the landscape which, notwithstanding all the care bestowed on its details, is treated as a secondary thing only, as a foil for the figures; the use of certain local colours which predominate again in his later pictures, &c. One need only look at the many studies of drapery, which are to be found on detached sheets in public galleries or in books of manuscripts by Leonardo, in order to understand why the Master left so few finished pictures,—in his own opinion perhaps not one. The German master, Albrecht Dürer, alone has come up to him as regards the endless patience with which he studied the picturesque disorder of the drapery, the folds of different material, the lustre on the back of the folds, the reflex on the broader surfaces, and the chiaroscuro in the depths. In this work he was always guided by a greatness of perception which caused



Fig. 26. STUDY OF A HEAD. At Windsor Castle.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co.,
Dornach and Paris.)

him to avoid the littleness of his immediate predecessors and prototypes in Florence, the creases and crumples of their drapery. One must not lose sight of these characteristics, if one wants to distinguish the genuine studies of drapery by Leonardo from those which wrongfully bear his name. Although these studies were to him means towards an end, and furthered his own improvement, he may now and then have contemplated making use of them later on, as for instance of his magnificent studies of draperies in the Louvre and in the Collection at Windsor (Fig. 10 and 11). Those belonging to the kneeling women might very well serve for a Madonna listening to the message of the angel or for the angel himself. The drapery in the Louvre (Fig. 12), spread

out in majestic folds over the knees of a sitting person, makes us think of a Madonna with the holy infant in her arms. As a contrast to this, one has only to glance at the toilsome attempt of a beginner in the Albertina at Vienna, dignified by the name of Leonardo; he has thrown a damp drapery over a clay figure, and arranged it in little folds which he has rendered in the same paltry way by an excess of white lights (Fig. 13).

Further inquiries after the early works of Leonardo have led to the discovery of a female head in the Gallery of Prince Liechtenstein in Vienna, supposed to have been painted at the time the Master stayed in Florence, from 1470 to 1480 (Fig. 14). It certainly bears the stamp of this time and also that of a Florentine Master; but we fail to discover in this portrait of a woman, devoid of all outward charm, any of the features which, as we know from his designs, marked already at this early period the handiwork of the young Leonardo. He had even then a way of his own in brightening the most unsympathetic countenance by a touch of gracefulness; if it had not been in his power to bestow it on this dull face, he would surely not have neglected to make up, by a refined delineation of the hands, for what he could not read in the face. What progress he had

already at that time made in studying hands is proved by a drawing in the Louvre representing the two hands of a woman; the peculiar arrangement of these reminds us of certain female busts by Verrocchio, and it may be that this study was made under the direct influence of that master (Fig. 15). There is moreover no really authentic picture by Leonardo in which the hands are wanting, and in one of his instructive treatises he himself gives the precept that in portraits the arms must be so placed, that the one rests on the other. He was of course the first to act on this precept.

The undisputed works of Leonardo's youth are few, and so are the documentary records of himself. We only learn that in 1472 at the age of twenty, his name was entered in the red-letter book of the Florentine Guild of Painters. Thanks to the prosperous circumstances of his father,



Fig. 27. ST. JEROME. In the Gallery of the Vatican, Rome.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)



Fig. 28. EXPLOSION OF A BOMB. SOLDIERS ATTACKING AND DEFENDING THEMSELVES.
 After a drawing in private possession, Paris.
 (After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

he did not depend upon the money he earned, and therefore he seems to have yielded to his half scientific, half artistic inclinations. Perhaps he continued for a while to work under Verrocchio and to help the master in executing his numerous commissions. This is proved from documents about an accusation made against Leonardo in the year 1476, which may probably be ascribed to the denunciation of an envious fellow-artist. Leonardo had been accused of immoral conduct subject to severe penalties; but he was able to justify himself so completely, that he was acquitted. We know hence that at this period he was still in the workshop of Verrocchio; but he seems soon after to have established himself on his own account. We moreover learn that on the 10th of January 1478 he received his first great commission, and this was what we should call a government commission. The Signoria of Florence made a compact with him, according to which he undertook to paint a picture for the Chapel of St. Bernard in the Palace of the Signoria. But the only thing he accomplished with respect to this transaction was that on the 16th of March of the same year he asked for an advance of twenty-five gold ducats. Most likely, as was so often the case in his life, he pondered so much over the composition, that he never got beyond the first sketch and the preliminary studies, because he drew with more care and rapidity than he painted.

Unfortunately two drawings only may with certainty be traced to

Leonardo's first stay in Florence. On the one which is in the Uffizi he himself wrote the date: "On the day of St. Mary in the Snow, the 5th of August 1473". It is a landscape which may have attracted him so much by its characteristic beauty during one of his journeys through Tuscany, that he made a drawing of it in his sketch book, indicating all its details with the utmost care. From an eminence one looks down upon a lovely valley, surrounded towards the horizon by mountain ranges; in the foreground on the right is a rock from which flows a rushing streamlet; on the left a mountain stretching far into the valley, and on its summit a strong castle with walls and turrets. A learned Italian, a student of Leonardo, believes he recognises in this Sketch part of the Val d'Arno near Montelupo with the mountains of Pisa in the background.

The second of these drawings refers to a political event which in April 1478 threatened to upset the Government of Florence, and the sad consequences of which were felt for many years after. With

the tacit consent of Pope Sixtus IV, his ambitious and greedy relative, Girolamo Riario, jealous of the growing popularity and power of the Medici in Florence, had set on foot a conspiracy amongst the Florentine families who felt injured by the rise of the former banker and his sons. The aim of this conspiracy was the removal of the brothers Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici by assassination. At the head of the conspiracy were Francesco de' Pazzi and some members of his family together with others, who, like the Pazzi, had

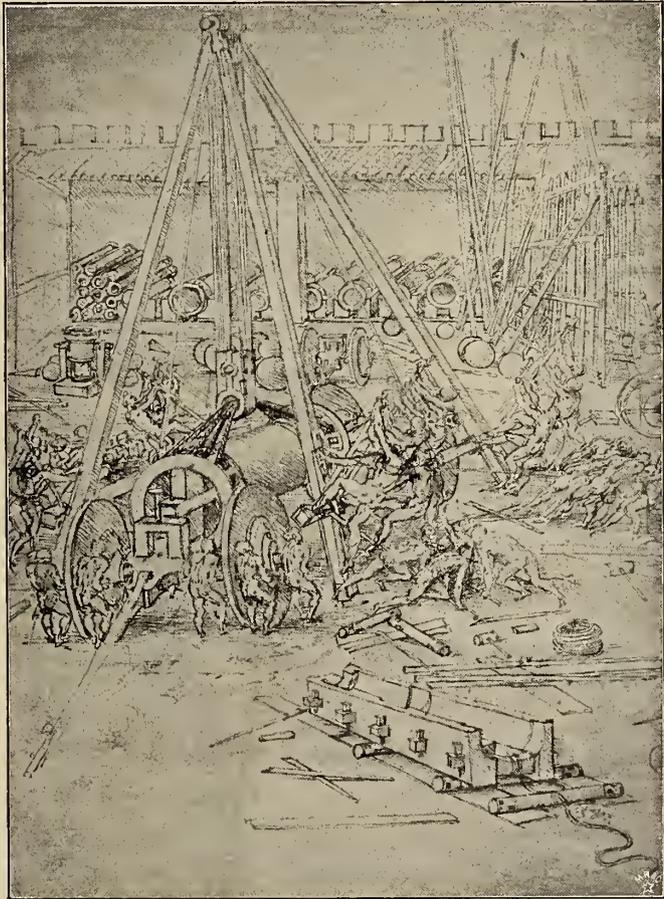


Fig. 29. COURT YARD OF A CANNON-FOUNDRY.
From a drawing in the Library of Windsor Castle.
(After a Photograph
from the original by Braun, Clément und Co., Dornach and Paris.)

yielded to an illusion regarding the frame of mind of the Florentine people. This criminal attempt was to be made on Sunday the 26th of April during a mass in the Duomo at which the Medici were to be present. Giuliano who was a general favourite, was the only victim of the conspirators who were all seized by the angry people, and hanged from the windows of the Palazzo Vecchio, after having endured frightful tortures. Only one of them escaped, a certain Bernardo Bandini, the very man who had dealt Giuliano the death blow. He fled to Turkey, to Constantinople; but already in those days the arm of the Medici reached very far. Lorenzo knew how to induce the Sultan Mahomed II. through an ambassador to give up the assassin who was taken back to Florence and hanged on the 29th of December 1479. Leonardo was present at the execution on the Piazza della Signoria, and the proceedings interested him so vividly, that he not only made a pen and ink sketch of the hanged man (Fig. 16); but also noted down with all the care of a public recorder, the material and the colour of his clothes. At the foot of the sheet of paper he once more drew the head of the executed man in larger size. Did he do so from the mere impulse of the student? Or did Leonardo count on a commission from Lorenzo who, as an expression of gratitude for having been saved from great danger, had resolved to present several works of art to the city of Florence? Amongst others the hanged conspirators were to be painted, with their heads downward, on the walls of the tower of the Bargello, the strong hold of the police. It may be that Leonardo wished to prepare himself for this commission which was afterwards given to Sandro Botticelli.

Further proofs of Leonardo's relation to the political and local history of Florence do not exist. A younger Leonardo student, Paul Müller-Walde, has tried to connect a few drawings, amongst others that of a young cavalier on a prancing steed (Fig. 17), with a brilliant tournament, which Giuliano de' Medici gave in 1475 on the Piazza Santa Croce. The young man looks however more like a sportsman than like a knight riding into the lists, and bent upon challenging armed adversaries to break a lance with him. These drawings show anyhow the touch of Leonardo, whilst a picture of Savonarola in Vienna is rendered very doubtful by its frame alone (Fig. 18). It is true this picture agrees in all its features with the authentic portraits of the fanatic reformer, and though Leonardo lived in Milan at the time Savonarola struggled in Florence, conquering first and perishing in the end, he visited Florence repeatedly. There is not the least doubt that he got to know the fearless preacher who exhorted men to virtue, and in whom he recognised a kindred spirit. For this very reason we cannot admit that this profile drawing, which only renders well known pictures with exaggerated details, can be by Leonardo. He who was intellectually his equal would have given us a different portrait of this remarkable man.

Besides the picture which the Council of Florence had commissioned him to paint, but which he never seems to have begun in good earnest, two others occupied him in 1478. We learn this from a study of two male

heads now in the Uffizi at Florence, which belonged perhaps to a sketch-book into which Leonardo also entered diary notes. There we read that during one of the last three months (we have only the last three letters of the names of the months) of the year 1478 he began "the two pictures of the Virgin Mary". According to this, he must again have had commissions in view. We do not know what has become of these pictures of the Madonna, if he really did paint them; they were presumably representations of the Madonna in the stricter sense of the word, which after the older Florentine manner only contained the Virgin with the Child. It has been attempted to fill this



Fig. 30. STUDY FOR THE EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF FRANCESCO SFORZA.
In the Library of Windsor Castle.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co.,
Dornach and Paris.)

gap by more than one ingenious hypothesis. Most of the Madonna pictures, great or small, which have at all times been known in public and private Galleries under the name of Leonardo, bear however so decidedly the stamp of the Milanese School, that it is impossible to connect them with that note on the study of 1478. Only very recently a picture of a Madonna bought for the Gallery at Munich under the name of Albrecht Dürer (Fig. 19) has been claimed as an early work of Leonardo, dating from his first stay in Florence. In this picture, as in the Annunciation in the Uffizi, we do not however recognise the artist who had at a very early period gained a great mastery in the treatment of drapery. Leonardo would never have arranged his folds so artificially as we see them in the cloak of the Madonna, and to him, the great anatomist, who knew the structure of the human form so well, we cannot attribute a malformation like the one we see in the body of the naked child. Even if we do not go so far as Senator Morelli who believes he recognises in the picture the hand of one of the Dutch imitators



Fig. 31. STUDY FOR AN EQUESTRIAN STATUE. In the Library of Windsor Castle.
 (After a Photograph from the original
 by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

of Verrocchio, we are inclined to maintain that the work is altogether unworthy of a great artist, and that hence it is not worth while to search for a name.

In spite of the procrastination Leonardo showed in executing commissions, he received another in the year 1481. The monks of the Convent of San Donato in Scopeto outside the Porta Romana in Florence, made a contract with him in July 1481 in which it was stipulated that for the sum of three hundred gold ducats he should within thirty months at the latest, paint a picture for their high altar. The document says as little about the subject of the picture as does the contract between Leonardo and the Signoria. From the fact that sixteen years later Filippino Lippi painted an "Adoration of the Kings" for the monks who had so long been waiting in vain for the work of Leonardo, it has been concluded that the latter also had undertaken to represent the same subject. There is at the Uffizi in Florence an "Adoration of the Kings" left unfinished after the first brown paint had been put on, and this is verified, not only as an authentic work from his hand, but also by a number of preliminary studies, drawings, and



Fig. 32. STUDIES OF HORSES. In the Library of Windsor Castle.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

plans for composition. Whether this picture is identical with the one ordered by the monks of Scopeto or, as others think, with that destined for the Chapel of St. Bernard in the Palazzo della Signoria, is indifferent. It is of far greater importance that by means of this picture which, in its very unfinished state, has but little attraction for those not versed in art, and by means of the studies belonging to it, we get an insight into the working of Leonardo, which, though slow, is based upon the highest artistic contemplation.

The primary thought underlying this composition we get to know from a drawing in the possession of Monsieur Louis Galichon of Paris, who,

between 1870 and 1880, paid 12900 Francs for the insignificant looking sheet of paper (Fig. 20). In every part of it we still discover the hand that is feeling its way; but even at that time the artist was so sure of himself, as to some cardinal points, that he carried them out in the undertone of the colouring which was the first and, alas, the last step towards its definite execution (Fig. 21). There are in the first place the architectural surroundings,—not the modest inn at Bethlehem, but the ruins of a magnificent palace under the dilapidated roof of which the Madonna with the Child is seated on a raised platform to which several outer steps are leading. On the right there is an imposing structure the meaning of which is not quite clear, but evidently destined to render the architectural background still grander. On the ground floor the structure opens out through several arches towards the ruined palace and the court-yard at the back of it; two open flights of stairs lead to the upper storey. These open flights of stairs remained unaltered, however much his original plan was modified during the years which passed away, whilst he worked at this picture. In some of the sketches made according to the drawing in the possession of Monsieur Galichon, he has gone so far as to transform even the architectural background. The fantastic

halls were placed further to the left into the foreground, and the ruined palace into the background (Fig. 22). The two open flights of stairs were however kept, and on these the busy crowd forming the retinue of the three Kings from the East was to be represented. This would perhaps have rendered too insignificant the chief group in the foreground, for which but little room had remained amongst the new architectural features, owing to the many figures in the background, and to a camel resting on the left which was meant to indicate the far off land whence the caravan had come. In like manner Paul Veronese painted it two generations later in pictures representing festive meals mentioned in Holy Scripture and graced by the presence of Christ. Leonardo rejected the thought again, and decided at last to transpose the scene of the adoration into the open air, and only to break the natural back-



Fig. 33. BATTLES BETWEEN HORSEMEN AND MONSTERS.
Drawing in the Ambrosian Library at Milan.
(After a Photograph from the
original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

ground by a ruin of which one can still trace the lower structure with the arches. In this plan the two open flights of stairs leading to the upper structure that has disappeared, remain.

Is this only an architectural fancy of Leonardo's or the free artistic use of old Roman ruins the Master had seen somewhere? At any rate Leonardo could not study such ruins in Florence and its surroundings, and for this reason the supposition of one of the younger art critics that Leonardo had already gone for the first time to Rome in 1480 does not appear improbable. Two-storeyed arcades, like those in the background of the picture of the "Adoration of the Kings", were at that time only seen in Rome and in the Campagna. They remind one of the ruined arches of the aqueducts stretching far out into the Campagna, of certain parts of the Colosseum, and especially of the Palaces of the Caesars on the Palatine, which were only in the course of the sixteenth century transformed into the sad ruins we see to-day, by the building mania of the Popes, who took their material from thence.

In the study in possession of Monsieur Galichon the action and posture of the oldest of the three Kings who presents the precious vase with myrrh to the infant Christ, has been adhered to in its general features. One sees in it how he mounts the steps, supporting himself with his left arm, and raising the vase with the right. Afterwards Leonardo altered the left arm, and raised it so much that it acts together with the right one in presenting the vessel. A sketch at the Uffizi in Florence and two others in private English and French collections (Fig. 23—25) show how carefully he studied the action of the worshipping King and of his companions after the nude or lightly dressed model, and how he tried again and again to render it perfect till he felt satisfied as to his ultimate plan. We may assume that Leonardo, the first anatomist in plastic art, introduced the practice in Florence of studying every figure naked before representing it clothed. Convinced of the excellency of this method, Raphael became his follower. He also studied the figures of his Madonnas first from naked models, before he adapted the drapery to the lines of the figures.

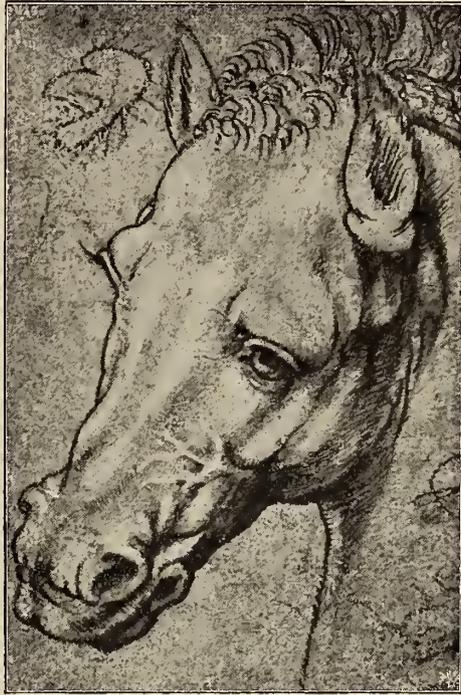


Fig. 34. HORSE'S HEAD.
Drawing in the Ambrosian Library at Milan.
(After a Photograph from the
original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

In the unfinished picture in brown colour the King also draws near to the Madonna on his knees, supporting himself with his left hand resting on the ground; with the right he offers the vessel to the child, to whom he looks up with timid reverence and devotion. The astonishment at the divine miracle is vividly shown by his own followers and those of the other Kings kneeling on the left. They have approached in crowded groups on foot and on horseback, and it seems as if they could not gaze enough at the lovely child. The eye of the beholder is however most captivated by the figure and the look of the Madonna. She shows already so strongly the mature genius of Leonardo, the classical type of his women with the peculiar inclination of the head towards one side, and the beatific smile playing round the nobly formed lips, that one feels inclined to believe Leonardo worked again at this picture which had remained in Florence, when he returned there after his first stay in Milan. There is a drawing in the library at Windsor (Fig. 26) bearing such a striking resemblance to the head of the Madonna in the unfinished picture, that one might consider it as a preliminary study which was used with slight modifications for the veil covering the head, and the carriage of the head itself.

A second unfinished picture in the Gallery of the Vatican (Fig. 27) has up to now been universally ascribed to the first Florentine period of Leonardo. This picture is less attractive than the "Adoration of the Kings", nay, actually repelling, and in all its details much more characteristic of the work of a man of mature age than of a youth. It represents St. Jerome in his cave mortifying the flesh in the presence of his lion; but it is in reality an anatomic study of an emaciated old man, terribly true to nature, for which the name of the Saint is only a pious pretext. We know from Vasari's account, confirmed by what Leonardo relates in his own writings, that he only undertook deeper anatomical studies during his stay in Milan with the help of Marcantonio della Torre, a doctor who had become his friend, and hence it is more correct to consider the strange picture in the Vatican as a result of those occupations, combined with zealous studies on light and shade in painting.

In the year 1482 Leonardo went for the first time to Milan, charged with a commission by Lorenzo de' Medici whose attention seems to have been drawn to the young artist at an early period. It is however doubtful whether, strictly speaking, Leonardo did not owe this distinction to his social talents rather than to his artistic genius. We know at least that the object of the mission intrusted to Leonardo was not a work of art, but a precious lute believed to have been constructed either by himself or under his directions, and which he and the musician, Atalante Migliorotti, the best lute player of his time, were to deliver to the "Governor" or rather to the Tyrant of Milan, Lodovico il Moro, as a present from Lorenzo. Thanks to the acute intuition which had always distinguished the Medici, Lorenzo had recognised that he ought not to lose time in making a friend of the unscrupulous tyrant who did not shrink from any deed in order to

reach the aims of his insatiable ambition. Though less cruel than Lodovico, Lorenzo felt the necessity common to all upstarts to cling to those in the same position in order to maintain the usurped power in a case of need. In those days Lodovico had already achieved his first political stratagem. Having suddenly entered the strong Castle of Milan, shortly after the death of his brother Galeazzo Maria Sforza, he soon learned to insinuate himself by cunning and hypocrisy into the confidence of his sister-in-law Bona, who was regent for her son Gian Galeazzo. He carried this so far, that he succeeded in separating from her and in putting out of the way her faithful minister Cecco Simonetta, and soon after, in the year 1481, he forced her to confer upon him the guardianship of her son. It is true, he only took the title "Governor of Milan" in the name of his nephew; but in reality he ruled supreme, and even in later years he did not allow any one to deprive him of his power.

Like all tyrants great and small of that remarkable time, in which the highest culture and the noblest artistic taste were coupled with cold-blooded cruelty and insatiable thirst for revenge and for blood, Lodovico also endeavoured to stifle the remembrance of his crimes by magnanimity, love of splendour and the culture of all arts on a large scale. He satisfied the love of pleasure of the people by brilliant entertainments, and surrounded himself by artists who only saw in him the liberal Mæcenas, not the infamous despot. Leonardo also was dazzled by the splendour of the Milanese court, and it is possible that even at that time he tried to draw profit from his extensive knowledge and abilities by offering his services to the ruler who knew beforehand that he would have a hard fight in defending the dukedom he had gained so easily. Conversing with Lodovico, Leonardo most likely offered him his services as military engineer and artist. The



Fig. 35. KNIGHT ON HORSEBACK.
Drawing in the Ambrosian Library at Milan.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co.,
Dornach and Paris.)

contents of a strange document point to such conversations. It is amongst the extant Manuscripts of Leonardo in the celebrated Codex Atlanticus of the Ambrosian Library in Milan, and may be considered as the draft of a letter written by Leonardo to the ruler as an ample justification of the promises given to the latter.

The young artist writes: "My gracious Lord, Having seen and fully



Fig. 36. HALF LENGTH PORTRAIT OF A WARRIOR. In the possession of Mr. Malcolm, Paris.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

examined all the works of those who are considered as masters and inventors of instruments of war, but whose discoveries, together with the working of the aforesaid instruments, do not at all differ from those generally used, I shall endeavour, without detriment to any one, to explain my secret inventions to Your Excellency, and exhibit these at the command of Your Excellency at an opportune time; I hope all those things shortly enumerated in this letter will meet with good success.

1. I have the means of constructing very light bridges, which may be carried about easily, and with which one may pursue enemies as well as escape from them according

to one's need. And I have others which are fireproof and cannot be injured during battle; they can be removed and put up again easily and without trouble. I have moreover the means of setting fire to the bridges of the enemy and of destroying them.

2. During the siege of a place I know how to cut off the water in the moats, and how to construct by means of steps all manner of bridges as well as other instruments which are required in such an undertaking.

3. If during a siege bombs cannot be used, because of the height of a rampart or the strong fortifications of a place, I have means to destroy every tower or any other fortress, unless it be founded on a rock.

4. I know of another kind of bomb, light and carried without trouble, and with which a hailstorm of missiles may be projected. The smoke produced thereby causes great terror amongst the enemy to his hurt and confusion.

5. In like manner I know how to construct subterraneous caverns and narrow winding passages, which can be made without noise, and through which one may reach a definite aim, even if one had to pass under ditches as under a river.

6. I also make safe covered chariots which cannot be injured; if with their artillery they get amongst the enemy, the largest armies may give way before them, and then the infantry may follow securely and without any opposition.

7. If necessary, I can make bombs, mortar-pieces, and light field guns, beautiful and practical as to shape and not at all known in general use.

8. Where bombs cannot be used, I am able to construct engines throwing stones, slings, battering rams, and other instruments of marvellous effect and extraordinary kind; in one word, I can construct various weapons of offence as necessity demands.

9. And if required, I know of many instruments for use on sea, well adapted for offensive and defensive warfare, and I know ships able to resist the largest bombs, and which can also create dust and smoke.

10. I believe I may say that in times of peace I may vie with any one in architecture, in the erection of public as well as private buildings, and also in making aqueducts from one place to another.

In works of marble, bronze, and terra-cotta, as well as in painting, I shall do whatever can be done by any one whosoever he may be. I shall yet be able to work at the bronze horse, which will be an immortal glory and everlasting monument to the blessed memory of His Lordship, Your father, and of the celebrated house of Sforza.

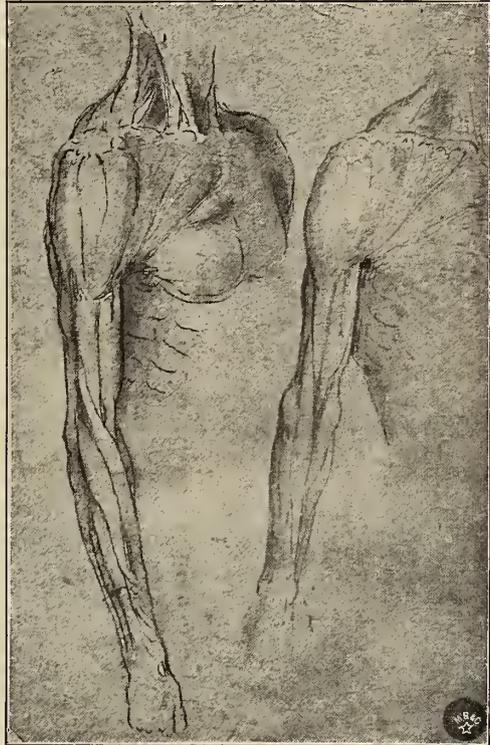


Fig. 37. ANATOMICAL STUDIES. In the Academy at Venice.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

And if any of the aforesaid things appear impossible and impracticable to any one, I am ready and most willing to make the experiment in your park or in any other place agreeable to Your Excellency, to whom I recommend myself with the utmost devotion."

Unfortunately the letter of which, as we mentioned above, a rough draft only exists, does not bear a date. Some expressions indicate however that Leonardo must have written it immediately after his return to Florence, in order to explain more fully certain subjects already touched upon in conversation, and to induce the ruler of Milan by great promises to give him an appointment as soon as possible. Lodovico's aim in those days was to secure his sovereignty by founding a strong military power, and to protect it above all from outside attacks; but on the other hand he wished to strengthen his dynasty, if not in the hearts of the people, at least in their eyes, by erecting a magnificent monument to his father, the chivalrous Francesco Sforza, in the shape of an equestrian statue. About such matters of war and of peace Lodovico may have spoken during his conversations with the young Florentine, and that the latter was indeed the man to carry out his promises we gather from the great number of drawings contained in the Manuscripts of Leonardo which are preserved in Milan, Paris, and London. Various documents referring to instruments of war, to engines and weapons of defence and attack, to all the details of constructing fortifications, mines, and aqueducts, to the art of engineering and constructing



Fig. 38. A DRAGON FIGHTING WITH A LION. In the Uffizi at Florence.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)



Fig. 39. STUDY OF ACTION. In the Ambrosian Library at Milan.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

machines, all of which are enumerated in the Memorandum of Leonardo, are found amongst his writings and his artistic remains, and prove the truth of his statements. We know how Leonardo spent a great part of his time in France, and why those who gave him commissions had to wait in vain for the pictures they had ordered. Whilst he observed the works of the Creator with timid reverence, and studied every animal, every flower, every plant, and every leaf, in order to penetrate as it were into the innermost secrets of nature, his brain was at the same time busy inventing the most fearful murderous tools and instruments of destruction, and to this end he used steam-power. Some of his drawings actually show that he tried to construct ships which could be propelled by steam.

It is beyond the scope of this essay to enter more fully into the importance of Leonardo as inventor, military engineer, mechanic, naturalist &c., all the more so, because his deep and penetrating investigations were hardly ever of practical use, and did not bear fruit in later times; his writings have only become more widely known in our days by being printed. We learn from them that Leonardo knew many things which only became the common property of mankind three centuries later. He shares the fate of many discoverers whose discontent with themselves or the unpropitious times in which they lived rendered their inventions practically useless. Only as a proof that the promises Leonardo gave the ruler of Milan were really based upon the results of long and tedious studies and experiments, we reproduce two of the extant drawings, which may at the same time serve as illustrations of some of the paragraphs in Leonardo's

Memorandum. One of them (Fig. 28) refers to the fourth paragraph of the letter, in which he speaks of easily transportable bombs which throw small bullets into the distance when they explode, and hence cause great panic amongst the enemy. On the left one also sees a hollow ball explode, and below in the handwriting of Leonardo this explanation: "Ball which runs by itself and throws out sheaves of fire to a distance of six yards." Terrified warriors who are running away show the effect of the bombshell whose diameter is given on the right of the drawing with the further explanation: "Inner structure of the ball throwing out sheaves of fire while revolving". The second drawing (Fig. 29) is most likely connected with the seventh paragraph of Leonardo's letter in which he speaks of mortar-pieces and field guns. We look into the court yard of a gun-foundry in the background of which are a large number of finished gun-barrels of various dimension, the larger ones on their stands ready to be transported to their destination. One of these gun-stands, lying on rollers, we see in the foreground, and in the centre many men are busy drawing up a huge gun-barrel by means of a machine with pulleys and levers, in order to place it on a cart that is to take it away.



Fig. 40. STUDY OF ACTION. In the Ambrosian Library, Milan.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

We do not yet know which nor how many of his daring plans Leonardo executed in the service of Lodovico, because the Manuscripts of the Master have not yet been examined sufficiently. From what we know at present we gather that the sovereign Lord of Milan gave him no rest, and that all the descriptions of Leonardo, leading the pleasant life of a courtier in Milan basking in the favour of the prince, and being moreover the head of a kind of Academy of Art, must be rejected as belonging to the realm of fables. From those manuscripts which have been thoroughly studied, we learn on the contrary



Fig. 41. LA BELLE FÉRONNIÈRE. In the Louvre at Paris.
 (After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

that in order to remain in favour with the prince, Leonardo often had a hard struggle with the envious Milanese artists whom he heartily despised, — that he was frequently obliged to fritter away his time on all sorts of commissions given to him by Lodovico, on the execution of festive decorations, paintings on walls and ceilings, and on mechanical contrivances &c., and that for the sake of such things he neglected his chief work, the monument of Francesco Sforza, so much, that serious differences arose between him and the prince. This went so far, that Leonardo caused inquiries to be made in Florence with a view to finding a sculptor who was to execute the equestrian statue.

As the documents we possess at present fix the year 1487 as the time of his stay in Milan, it has been attempted to fill the gap between 1482

and 1487 by a journey of Leonardo to the East as far as Cairo, and supposed proofs from his writings have been adduced in support of this theory. A careful examination of those passages which refer, it is true, to events and people in Constantinople, Armenia, and Egypt, has however shown that, in his zeal for collecting matters of interest, Leonardo took



FIG. 42. LADY WITH THE WEASEL. In the Gallery of Prince Czartoryski, Cracow.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

those notes from descriptions of travels written by others, and perhaps also from verbal accounts of travellers. On the other hand there is evidence given by contemporaries, which renders it probable that Leonardo settled in Milan at the latest in 1483, in order to devote or rather to waste his powers in the service of Lodovico. Of all his plans, of all the commissions he received, one and one only was carried out: the celebrated Last Supper in the Refectory of the Convent near Santa Maria delle Grazie.



The equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza was never finished, chiefly owing to the unfortunate desire of Leonardo to bring a work to such perfection, that it should not only surpass everything done before his time, but should never be surpassed by future generations. According to a contemporary, a Maltese Knight called Sabba Castiglione, who was an enthusiastic admirer of Leonardo, the Master worked sixteen years at this



Fig. 44. THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD by Marco d'Oggionno.
In the Borghese Gallery at Rome.
(After a Photograph by Anderson, Rome.)

monument, till he was obliged to abandon his task in 1499, when calamity overtook Lodovico. It is said that he even made two models for it which are both lost. The second from which he was to have worked, still existed when the French troops took Milan in 1500. The archers of Gascogne are reported to have destroyed it wantonly by using the model, which appears to have been a gigantic horse, as a target. How much the Master had this work at heart is proved by the numerous sketches and studies found amongst his notes and scattered folios. He hesitated for a long time

whether he would represent the steed in an attitude of excitement rearing over a conquered enemy, or quietly walking, and it seems that in the end he decided to represent a horse stepping calmly onward. He also studied the shape of the high pedestal thoroughly from every side after his own fashion, slowly feeling his way, and whilst he did these preliminary works, he forgot the principal thing, as he had done so often, suddenly discovering that his first duty was to study the anatomy of the horse, which he did so minutely, that in the end the horse, and not the rider, became his principal subject. From the large number of his designs for the monument and from the preparatory studies we reproduce a few, especially those which refer to the movements and the anatomy of the horse (Fig. 30—35). They also show how the imagination of the artist which soared so high, had to wage constant war with his insatiable thirst for knowledge and for truth. Whilst his pen caused horse and rider to leap about wildly, he tried at the same time, by studying living models, to understand how such bold movements could be brought into harmony with nature. If we look at the drawing at Windsor Castle (Fig. 32), the conclusion is forced upon us that Leonardo studied in a riding school or on a spot where loose horses were playing about. His imagination soon carried him beyond what he really saw before his eyes. Only in combat could the magnificent creatures fully display their noble qualities, and here we already find on that sheet, amongst the mere studies from life, riders fighting with monsters, winged and without wings, such as from his early youth Leonardo's imagination revelled in, though he always clung in a certain sense to nature, forming his strange conceptions from different parts of real animals. Two such fights between riders and monsters we find on a sheet at the Ambrosian Library in Milan (Fig. 33).

Similar studies of minor importance occupied Leonardo constantly, and for a considerable time he could not rest unless he was inventing fantastic animals. This reminds one of the stories told by Vasari, according to which, even during his stay in Florence, Leonardo used to construct strange animals which he could set in motion by mechanical contrivances, and which he let loose in the taverns in order to make merry at the terror of the peasants. The drawing at the Uffizi in Florence (Fig. 38) which represents the fight between a dragon and a lion, was most likely the result of such occupations. If, as some critics maintain, it be not by Leonardo himself, it may surely be traced either to an original or to a sketch from his own hand.

Leonardo's studies of horses are not only based on his observations as an artist and on his free hand drawing, as we should say in our days, but have a strictly scientific foundation. Vasari relates that from his early youth he always had a passion for beautiful horses, and used to keep some in his own stable. The structure of the bones and the anatomy of horses he did however not study thoroughly till he stayed in Milan. In the neighbouring town of Pavia he had gained a friend in Professor Marcantonio della Torre whom we mentioned already, and with whom he soon worked in common. Leonardo made the drawings illustrating della Torre's works

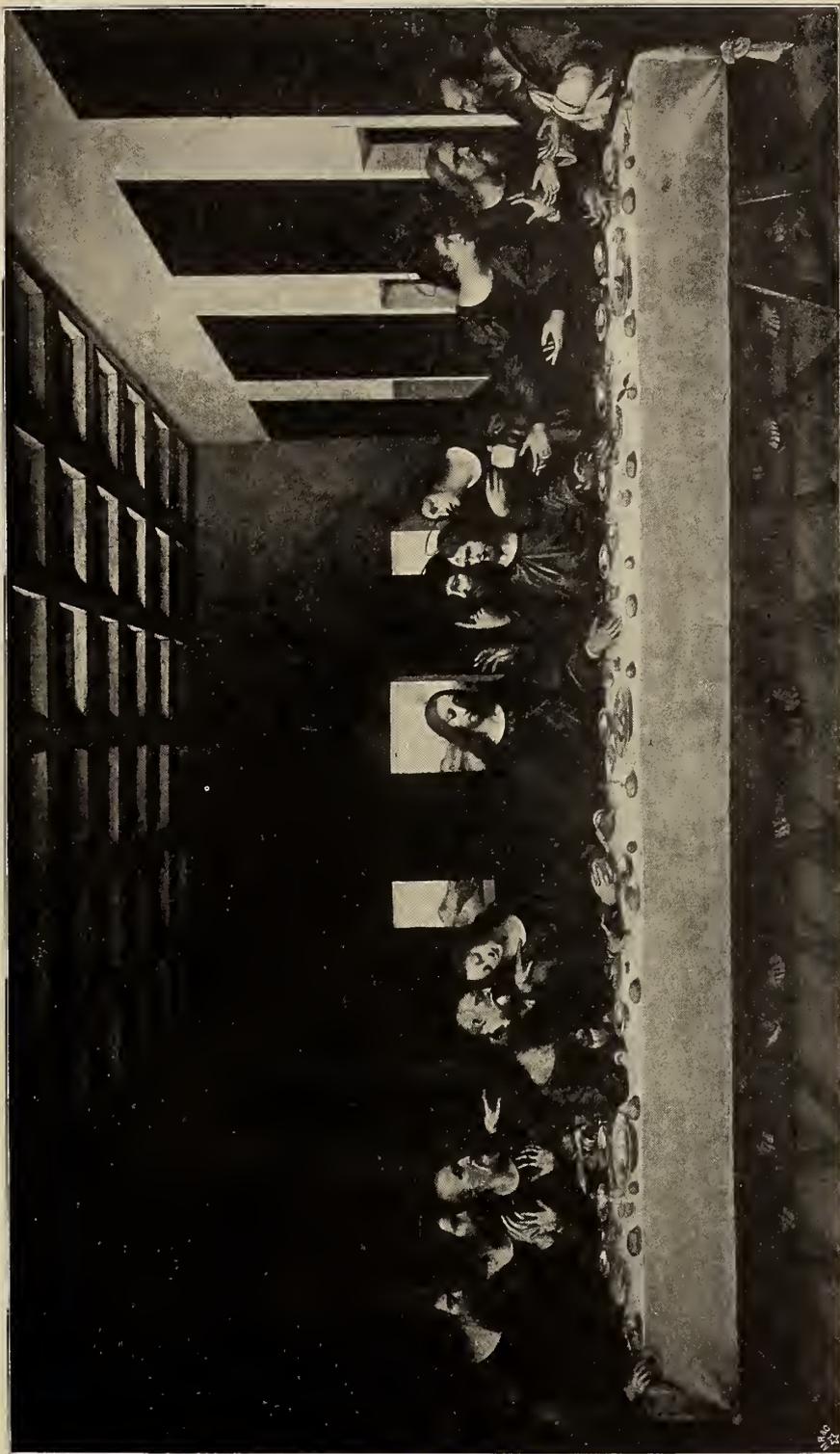


Fig. 45. THE LAST SUPPER. Copy of Leonardo da Vinci. In the Hermitage of St. Petersburg.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

on the structure of the horse and the anatomy of horses and men, and thus he became, as the physicians of our century have gratefully acknowledged, the founder of the school of anatomical design. The horse's head (Fig. 34) and the two anatomic studies of muscles (Fig. 37) are proofs of these works, from which resulted such excellent studies of models as shown by the Figures 39 and 40.

Perhaps the sketch of an armed rider who holds in his right hand a lance such as was used in tournaments (Fig. 35), and the profile picture of a defiant looking warrior with a magnificent helmet (Fig. 36) are also connected with the Sforza monument. The physiognomy of the warrior is so individual, so minutely worked out in all its details, that the main feature is not the helmet, as a Leonardo critic has surmised, but the man under it. This is not a sketch for a splendid helmet, such as Lorenzo de' Medici or Lodovico might have wished to present to some one, but a personality inspiring fear, one of the Condottieri of the type of Colleoni whose equestrian statue, ordered by Venice, had been gradually fashioned under Leonardo's eye in the workshop of Verrocchio. He wished to create something akin to it, but verging on the superhuman.

To the historian who wants to rely on monumental records, the Sforza statue is of psychological importance, but not as a means enabling us to judge of Leonardo's skill as a sculptor. We can no more prove what Leonardo accomplished as an architect. Having induced artists like Leonardo and Bramante to come to his court, Lodovico was obliged to give them commission after commission for the sake of peace, because Leonardo did by no means belong to the most peaceable. He mistrusted every one, and alas, we see from his notes that his suspicions were but too well founded. His servants and apprentices robbed the careless bachelor, who only lived for his studies and his works, in the most impudent way, and Leonardo was too much of an Italian and not enough of a philosopher, to be above minding such trifles and to possess his soul in patience. His diary notes still betray how bitterly he felt the knavish tricks of a servant or an apprentice. A boy of ten, called Giacomo, caused him great vexation. He once robbed his master of a Turkish skin which had been presented to him to have a pair of boots made out of it; when Leonardo missed it, he found that the little thief had sold the skin to a bootmaker for twenty soldi, and bought aniseed cakes with the money. Another time Giacomo played the part of a pick-pocket in a strange house. The Duke and all his relatives not only made use of Leonardo as an artist, but as an organiser of festivities of all kinds, for which he had to make plans of decorations, erect temporary buildings, invent machines, design costumes, and superintend the carrying out of all details. In January 1489 he was occupied in this way in the house of Galeazzo Sanseverino, the son-in-law of Duke Lodovico, and directed the preparations for a tournament at which some grooms had to appear got up as savages. Whilst these were undressing in order to try on their costumes, Giacomo meddled with the clothes of one of them,

and stole money from the pocket. Similar annoyances fell, even later on, so often to the share of Leonardo, that one cannot wonder at his soon becoming a misanthrope with a contempt for men, and avoiding every kind of conviviality. At the great festivities which were arranged and directed by Leonardo at short intervals, at the wedding of Gian Galeazzo Sforza, the nephew of Lodovico, again in 1491 at the marriage of the ruler himself with Beatrice d'Este, and in 1493, when Lodovico resorted to the chief stratagem of his policy, the marriage of the German Emperor Maximilian with his niece, Bianca Maria Sforza, the Master stood in the background as the manager who had to pull all the wires. Hardly any notice was taken of him, and as to being paid, he often had great difficulties, because Lodovico was in want of ready money, and he therefore liked to pay his servants by bills of exchange on tolls which they had afterwards to collect themselves.

In the meantime the building of the Cathedral did not advance, and if Leonardo had a share in it, as is stated in documents, he only gave estimates for it as others did. At that time the first architect of Milan was Bramante, the leader of the Renaissance in Lombardy. He was, like Leonardo, a great character, a lonely man thrown back upon himself, and it appears that the two great men rather repelled than attracted each other.

In the notes of Leonardo we have, so far at least, not found one single word about Bramante, though he carefully wrote down the names of every one with whom he came into contact. From one he wishes to buy a book, from another he wants to have a mathematical calculation, and from a third a pair of pincers for drawing out nails. Of distinguished fellow-workers in art one learns nothing from his notes. Only in his lamentations he sometimes grumbles about people who are nameless to him, who can do nothing, and amongst these the obstinate man, conscious of his great power, may also have reckoned Bramante.

In spite of this, Müller-Walde who made the study of the works of Leonardo the chief task of his life, believed he had discovered evidence pointing to work done in common by the two masters. After having overcome great difficulties, he discovered in the old Castle of Milan, the residence of Lodovico, which served for a long time as barracks and is now a museum of the city, some remains of wall-paintings covered by white-wash, some of the figures of which he ascribes to Leonardo, whilst he is of opinion that the architectural division of the walls as well as the decorative frame work round the figures are by Bramante. The principal feature in those paintings is the large figure of a Mercury who, his left hand resting on a staff resembling a lance, leans against a wall of the „Sala del Tesoro“ (the treasury where the guns and other valuable things were shown), and watches as it were over the precious hoard. This carefully modelled figure revealing a thorough knowledge of the human body, would indeed be worthy of a Leonardo; but unfortunately the head, which is always the distinctive mark of Leonardo's handiwork, has been completely destroyed, and hence this must remain an open question till the wall-paintings, which are however

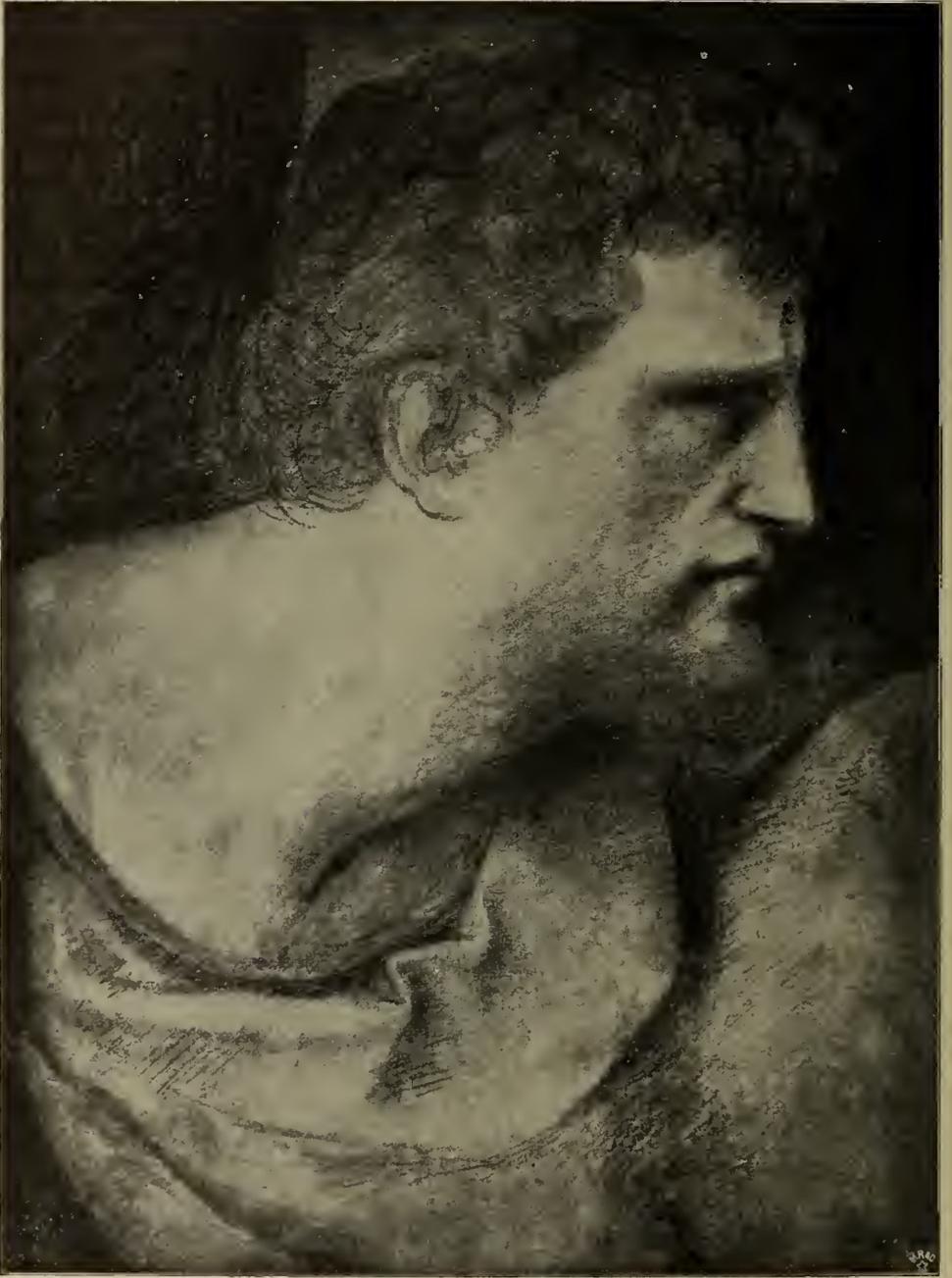


Fig. 46. ST. BARTHOLOMEW.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)



Fig. 47. ST. JAMES THE LESS.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

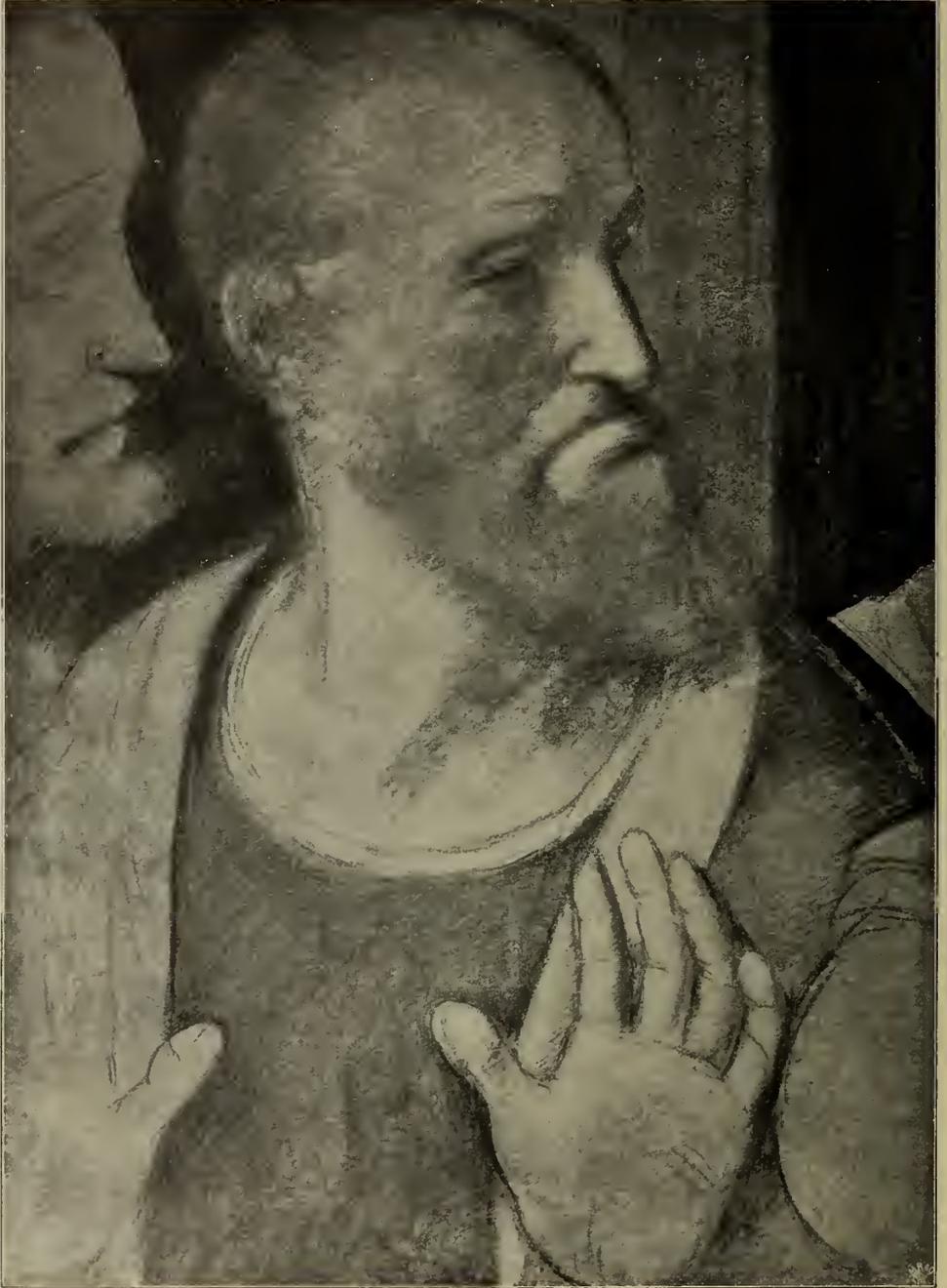


Fig. 48. ST. ANDREW.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

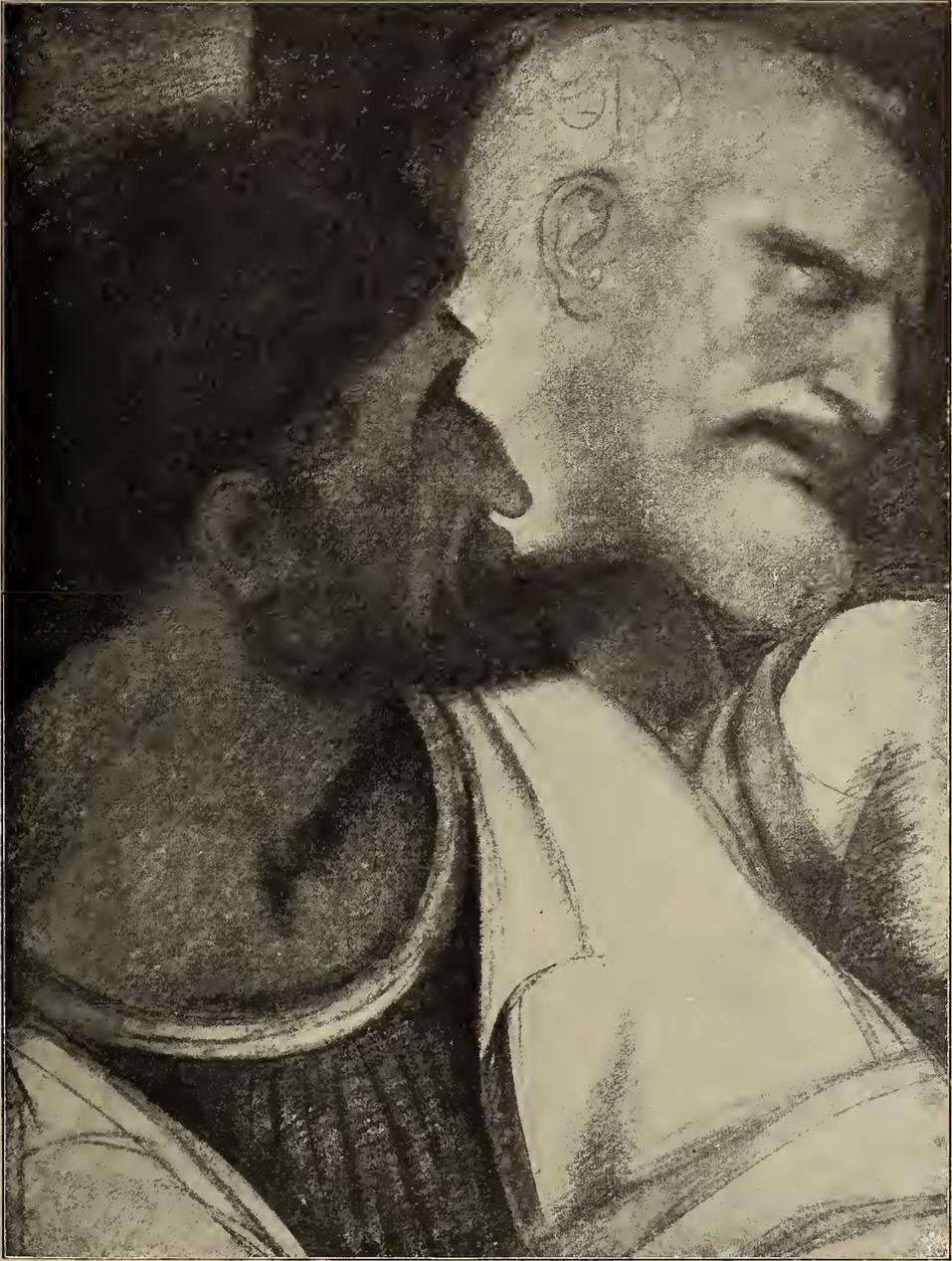


Fig. 49. JUDAS AND ST. PETER.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

erected in a manner anything but durable, have been entirely laid bare. Also in another room of the castle, in a so-called „Cabinet of Cupids“, Müller-Walde has found a group of eight amoretti, and he states that seven of these must be from Leonardo's own hand.

That Lodovico, who was of an inconsiderate nature, took a mean advantage of a talent like Leonardo's cannot be doubted, and it is therefore most probable that the Master had also to take his share in the decorations of the interior of the Castle¹). Some notes in his diary seem to point directly to this; but as he was wont to express himself very enigmatically, we cannot yet arrive at positive conclusions, and therefore a delineation of his work based on certain knowledge, must not include anything doubtful. This refers even to the pictures Leonardo is reported to have painted during his first stay in Milan. The gallantries of the Duke of Milan also came here into play; like all the great and small tyrants of the period of the Renaissance, he was very fickle in his affections. Although he is said to have loved his wife, Beatrice d'Este, whom he lost after seven years' marriage, most tenderly, and to have been inconsolable at her death, he sought diversion near other ladies, and the names of two are known: Emilia Gallerani and Lucrezia Crivelli. By the portrait of the former Leonardo is said to have gained the favour of Lodovico even to a greater degree than by his more important works. That he really did paint her we learn from a letter of the Marchesa Isabella of Mantua of the House of Este, who was so free from prejudice, that in 1498 she begged Emilia Gallerani, the rival of her sister, to let her see her portrait painted by Leonardo. It has been maintained that Leonardo also took the portrait of Beatrice herself and of Lucrezia Crivelli, but this has not been proved. In the Ambrosian Library in Milan there are two portraits: a three quarter profile of a beardless youth, and a profile of a woman with eyes timidly cast down. These were long considered as genuine works of Leonardo. The female portrait is said by some to represent Isabella of Aragon, the wife of the nephew of Lodovico, Gian Galeazzo Sforza, — according to others it is the sister of the latter, Bianca Maria Sforza, who in 1493 was married with great pomp to the Emperor Maximilian. The portrait of the young man was formerly considered as a portrait of Lodovico il Moro. The identity of the personalities they represent has no more been proved than the authorship of Leonardo. The pictures — that of the man is unfinished — are not even by one and the same hand, and though that of the woman be not wanting in much gracefulness of conception and delicacy of execution, it does not come up to the perfection Leonardo had already reached at the time he was in Milan. According to the opinion of Morelli this picture is by a certain Ambrogio de Predis, who was portrait-painter to the court, and

¹) See the recently published work on the Castello Sforzesco by Luca Beltrami, the great Milanese Architect, who proves that Leonardo decorated the Sala delle Asse. See also Luca Beltrami's interesting Article in the *Marzocco* No. 19, published in Florence, May 11. 1902. J. L.



Fig. 50. ST. JOHN.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

who, though of the same age as Leonardo, was like most of the Milanese painters, strongly influenced by him.

What Leonardo could do as a portrait-painter at that period of his life is shown by the world-famed portrait of a woman in the Louvre, known under the name of "la belle Féronnière", around which legends have spun their threads as around the woman's portrait in the Ambrosiana (Fig. 41). She is said to have been the beloved of King Francis I. of France, in whose possession the picture was, and it has been named after her husband, a certain Féron; but when Leonardo went to France, she was already dead. According to another legend that is equally unreliable, the portrait is stated to be that of Isabella of Mantua; according to a third, it is the mistress of Lodovico, Lucrezia Crivelli, a spirited person, with whom the Duke had for a second time entered into a close relationship after the death of his wife, Beatrice, in 1497. There are, however, certain characteristics pointing to the fact that, at the time Leonardo painted the portrait, he still clung to the traditions of the Florentine School. It must therefore have been painted in the beginning of the decade 1480—1490, soon after Leonardo's arrival in Milan. In spite of certain sharp lines in the modelling which are more characteristic of plastic art than of painting, and in spite of the hardness of the colours which are not well graduated, which do not yet show any trace of the celebrated "sfumato" of Leonardo, of the blending of colours, of the absorption of contours in a mist of light, this picture is a masterpiece in itself. He who thinks, not of the Leonardo of later days, but of his surroundings in Florence and Milan, will find it difficult to name a master capable of looking so deeply into a human soul, and then revealing it in the eyes, as Leonardo succeeded in doing when he took the portrait of this woman with that enchanting look that irresistibly captivates everyone who sees it, and leaves an ineffable impression. The position of the eyes looking towards the right which seem to follow the beholder even after he has turned away, partly explains this wonderful effect; but there is also an expression indicating graciousness and a happy calm temperament which marks a woman of an elevated mind. The fact that the portrait does not show the hands also betokens its early date. We learn from Leonardo's Treatise on Painting that only at a later period during his stay in Milan, he understood clearly what one might call the intellectual cooperation of hands in a picture.

A pupil or imitator of Leonardo has tried to remedy this want by making a copy of this portrait, a feeble watery picture which might be taken for an inferior actress or a chamber-maid, and in this he placed a weasel in the arms of the young woman (Fig. 42). Up to now the animal has been called a weasel. Perhaps it would be more correct to take it for an ermine, which was considered as a symbol of purity and innocence; we see this animal clinging to the breast of the woman who, in Lorenzo Lotto's celebrated picture "The Triumph of Chastity", puts her naked adversary to flight. This picture is of very small size.



Fig. 51. ST. THOMAS AND ST. JAMES THE ELDER.

Fig. 46—51 after the pastel drawings in the grand-ducal castle at Weimar.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

As to the loss of so many works and the doubtful condition of the few still extant, we have the consolation that an echo of former beauty and grandeur has at least remained of the chief work of his career in Milan and of his whole life, a work which has carried Leonardo's renown from century to century, and copies of which have edified and raised multitudes, and caused them to lift up their hearts in pious devotion. With the tragedy of the Sforza monument we may compare the tragedy of the Last Supper which Leonardo painted on the narrow northern wall of the Refectory belonging to the former Dominican Convent Santa Maria delle Grazie. We do not know exactly how much time Leonardo spent in painting this magnificent work — (it is nine metres long and four and a half metres high) — but it is probable that he was working at it all the time he spent in Milan, and that he only finished it shortly before 1499, previous to the fall of Lodovico. In that year a vineyard measuring sixteen perches, and situated outside the gate of Vercelli, was presented to him, and it is believed that this gift was the last reward of the Duke for the completion of the Last Supper. This long space of time accounts for the complaints the monks constantly made about the slowness of Leonardo who aimed also in this work at the highest ideals, and felt as if he could not bestow sufficient attention on all the details. Those complaints appear hence to be fully justified.

The fact that to-day we only see a ruin before us, reflecting the splendour of former greatness, as if through a grey veil, is partly due to the outer part of the wall being exposed to injuries wrought by inclement weather, and to the nature of the material of which it was built, and partly to Leonardo's love of experimenting with new technical means of working, but chiefly to the ignorance, the neglect, and the cruel rage for destruction of later centuries. The wall was built of stones containing nitre which absorbed the damp, and therefore injured the picture from behind; this radical defect was rendered worse by floods penetrating as far as the refectory. As Leonardo boasted that his was to be a work of extraordinary beauty by which he meant to throw all his Milanese rivals into the shade, he did not rest satisfied with the simple but reliable technic of a fresco, but made use of oil which had never before been done in a wall-painting of such magnitude, because he held that in an oil-painting alone he could reach the pure and delicate effects of chiaroscuro, the beautifully graduated softness in the modelling of the heads and in their harmony with the background, points which were already at that time his ideal of colouring. That he reached this ideal has been proved by the general enthusiasm of his contemporaries, and by the large number of copies which the pupils and imitators of Leonardo made even during the first decades of the nineteenth century. For a time the picture does not seem to have lost its original beauty of colouring. Francis I., the noble patron of Leonardo, admired it in all its splendour when he entered Milan as a conqueror on the 16th of October 1515, and in spite of his uncertain position the enthusiastic collector conceived the bold plan, unheard of in those days, of

detaching it from the wall in order to transfer it on canvas and take it to France. We learn from Leonardo's Milanese biographer Lomazzo that the injuries done to it by the damp wall and the want of durability of the materials became already very perceptible towards the middle of the sixteenth century, and when Vasari saw the Last Supper in 1566, he called it a "tarnished patch of colours". If there was already an inner germ of

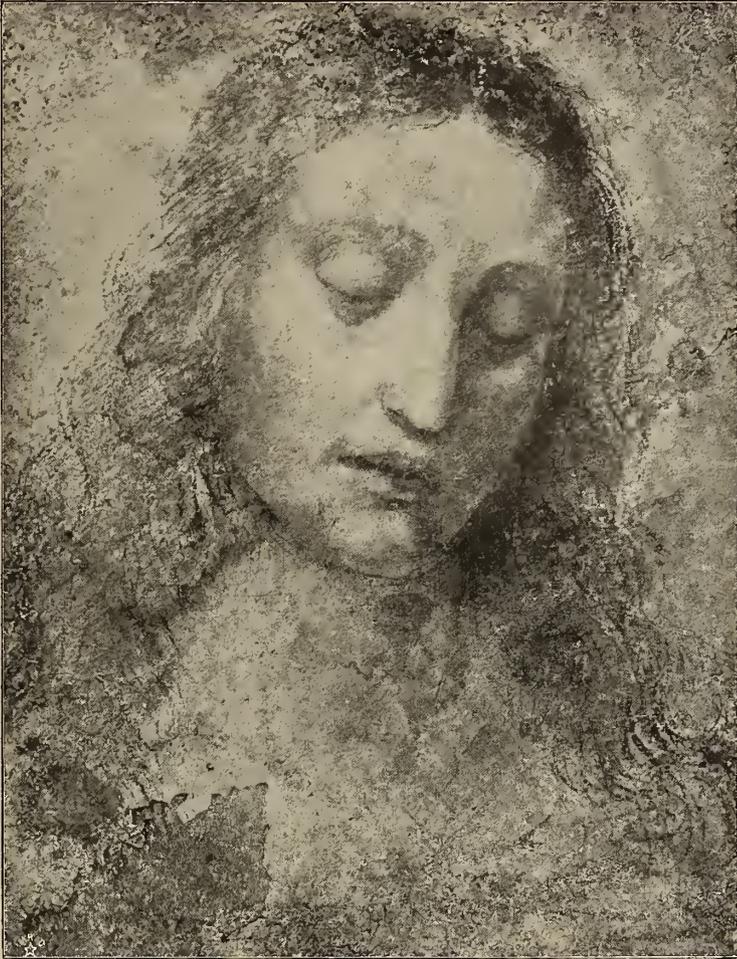


Fig. 52. HEAD OF CHRIST. After the pastel drawing in the Brera at Milan.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

destruction in the work itself, deeds of violence from without accelerated it. One cannot comprehend how the monks themselves could be the first to injure it by ordering a door to be made just below the figure of Christ in order to have greater facility in communicating with the kitchen. By breaking through this wall, they not only destroyed the feet of the Saviour, but damaged the whole picture. Later on an Imperial Scutcheon was nailed

over the door, covering the figure of the Saviour entirely or at least the larger part of it. From 1726 to 1870 the picture was a prey to inefficient restorers who removed the still existing remains of Leonardo's oil-colours. When the French entered Milan in 1796, they used the refectory at first as a stable for their horses, afterwards as a barn and as a prison, although Napoleon is said to have expressly recommended his soldiers to protect the work. It thus came to pass that the descendants of the French archers who had destroyed the model for the Sforza Monument three centuries before, were destined to deal a last blow to the second masterpiece of Leonardo. In our century the wreck has been spared further ill-treatment. Restorations have indeed been attempted repeatedly; but these were chiefly limited to removing the paint of former restorers, and to the preservation of that which still remains by preventing any dampness penetrating to the wall. The irony of fate has willed that the large Crucifixion which a mediocre Milanese painter of the old school, Giovanni Donato Montorfano, painted in 1495 on the south wall, opposite the ruined masterpiece of Leonardo, has been well preserved in all its details, but especially as regards the effect of the colouring. Beneath this crucifixion Leonardo did, however, paint the portraits of Duke Lodovico, of his wife Beatrice, and of their two sons, and Vasari says they were "divinely painted". We cannot enjoy these neither, because they have disappeared, except a few traces which have recently been covered by a wainscot.

If therefore only a shadow of the original picture (Fig. 43) remains to us, the many copies which still exist, and of which we have spoken already, are all the more valuable, because they help us in a certain degree to reconstruct the composition as well as the colouring of the original. The best are those ascribed to Marco d'Oggionno who is stated to have already begun to make those copies in 1510. This Marco d'Oggionno who lived from 1470 to 1540, was a pupil of Leonardo during his first stay in Milan, and the influence his Master had on him was so strong, that he never learned to work independently nor became a distinctive personality. Nevertheless he was honoured by the fact that one of his pictures, a youthful "Salvator mundi" holding "his ball, the earth"¹⁾ in his left hand, and raising his right in blessing, has for three centuries been considered as one of the masterpieces of Leonardo (Fig. 44). Already towards the middle

¹⁾ I thus translate "Erdkugel", taking the words from the American poet, J. B. Tabb, who writes:

Out of Bounds.

"A little Boy of heavenly birth,
But far from home to-day,
Comes down to find His ball, the Earth,
That Sin has cast away.
O comrades, let us one and all
Join in to get Him back His ball!"

of the sixteenth century complaints were made about the rarity of pictures by Leonardo, and the mildness and grandeur one sees in this noble young face, cause one to understand how it came to pass that such an honour was bestowed on this picture. Pope Paul V. had ordered it to be hung over his bed, and he considered it a great sacrifice when he parted with this gem, and presented it to his nephew, Cardinal Scipio Borghese, the founder of the celebrated Gallery who was bent on having a Leonardo.



Fig. 53. STUDY OF THE HEAD OF JUDAS FOR THE LAST SUPPER.

From the drawing in Windsor Castle.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

Circumstances like these make us feel all the more assured as to the copies of the Last Supper by Marco d'Oggionno of which there are more than half a dozen. The London Academy possesses one of the same size as the original; but this one has of late been ascribed to Boltraffio, another pupil of Leonardo. A second smaller one is in the Louvre in Paris; two others in a convent and in the Ospedale Maggiore, and a fifth in the Brera at Milan. The sixth which we have chosen for reproduction (Fig. 45) is in the Hermitage at St. Petersburg. Another copy dating from the middle of the sixteenth century is of great importance to us, because everyone



Fig. 54. STUDY OF THE HEAD OF ST. PHILIP FOR THE LAST SUPPER.
 From the drawing in Windsor Castle.
 (After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

of the Apostles has been named in it. It is a fresco in the Church of Ponte Capriosca in the Canton of Ticino. Notwithstanding Leonardo's great power of expressing character, we should be at a loss in pointing out everyone of the disciples, if it were not for the help of a painter who was still in touch with tradition. The contemporaries of Leonardo had no doubt whatsoever regarding this point. An ingenious historian of art has justly remarked that they had not yet been so much estranged from individual saints as we. "Their legends were known, and definite ideas and qualities coupled with their names."

Besides the copies of the whole composition we still have other means of entering more fully into the spirit of the original. These are the celebrated ten heads and half length figures of the Apostles drawn in pastel on eight sheets which are in the grand-ducal castle at Weimar; from the collection of King William II. of the Netherlands they came into the possession of his

daughter, the grand-duchess of Saxe-Weimar, who died not long ago (Fig. 46—51). At a period which was less critical, but for that very reason more enthusiastic than ours, they were considered as Leonardo's own studies for his picture, and it was always regretted that the chief figure, that of Christ himself, was wanting. The enthusiasm was so great, that it was entirely overlooked how on some of these sheets the hands and shoulders of the neighbouring figures overlap, and that these drawings can therefore not be preparatory studies by Leonardo, but only later copies, the authors of which may not even have seen the original picture itself. A short time ago rivals of these drawings appeared in the shape of six coloured cartoons treated in the same manner, which like those at Weimar, came from English owners to the Gallery of the city of Strasburg. These cartoons are infinitely superior to the drawings at Weimar, because they not only contain the half length figure of Christ, but are also of a higher artistic value. A minute comparison has shown that the heads at Weimar are probably comparatively late and perhaps even modern copies of the Strasburg ones, the date of which comes very near to that of the original. We may presume that they are the work of one of the pupils of Leonardo who was in the habit of making similar sketches for copies in oil from the original painting.

It is strange that the Strasburg Christ is beardless, whilst in the original he has a thin beard on the chin, and that there is also in the Brera at Milan a beardless head of Christ in pastel which in other respects agrees with the originals of Leonardo (Fig. 52). It was always considered as a preparatory study from Leonardo's own hand, and only since the latest modern criticism has raised so

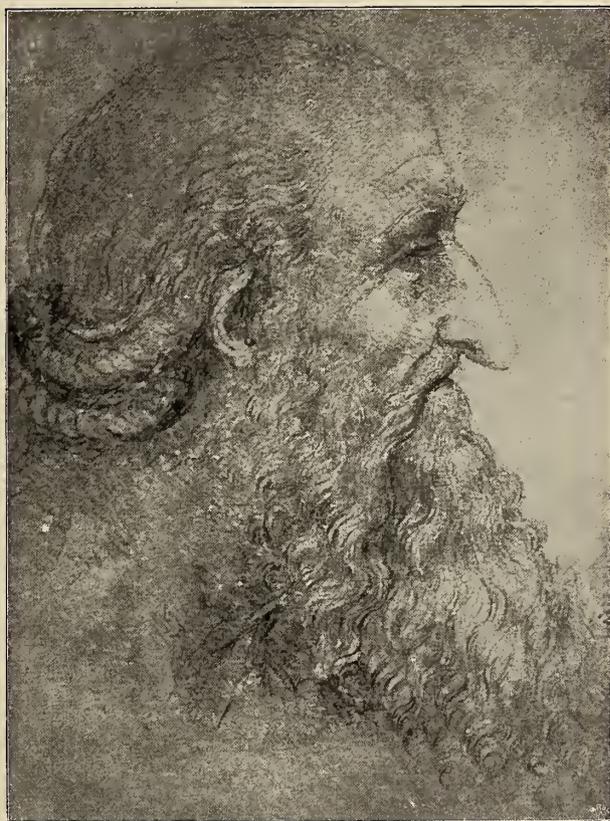


Fig. 55. STUDY OF THE HEAD OF AN APOSTLE.

From a drawing in Windsor Castle.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co.,
Dornach and Paris.)

many objections against this head being an original, has the opinion of art-students begun to waver. It is thought that the lines are too weak and indistinct, and although other hands may be responsible for this, because they have committed the sacrilege of retouching this charming study, there is a reliable tradition which speaks against the supposition that this ideal Christ of the drawing at Milan, such as we see it now, was a creation of Leonardo. If, as was most unusual with him, he had really made such detailed studies for the Last Supper as the heads of the Apostles and the portrait of Christ represent, it would be impossible for us to understand why he worked so long at the Last Supper. There is even undoubted evidence against the existence of such preliminary studies. Vasari relates that he left the head of Christ unfinished, because he did not venture to render the heavenly divinity which ought to mark the portrait of Christ, and the Milanese painter Lomazzo was told by contemporaries of the Master that he used to tremble with agitation when he worked at the head of Christ. Still more important is the account given by an eye witness, the Milanese novelist Bandello, who often visited Leonardo whilst he worked at the Last Supper. According to his statement, he liked his friends and pupils to come and see him, and to tell him candidly what they thought of his picture. Bandello relates further: "I have often seen him come very early and watched him mount the scaffolding — because the Last Supper is somewhat high above the floor — and then he would not put down his brush from sunrise till the night set in, yes, he forgot eating and drinking,



Fig. 56. STUDY FOR THE LAST SUPPER. From a drawing in the Academy at Venice.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)



Fig. 57. THE LAST SUPPER. A.F.



Engraving by Raphael Morghen.





Fig. 58. CARICATURES. From a drawing in the Collection at Windsor Castle.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

and painted without ceasing. Then two, three or four days would pass without his doing anything, and yet he spent daily one or two hours before the picture, lost in contemplation, examining, comparing, and gauging his figures. I have also seen him at midday during the greatest heat, prompted by a whim or fancy, leave the old castle where he was modelling his wonderful equestrian statue, and hasten to Santa Maria delle Grazie. There he would mount the scaffolding, take up his brush, do one or two strokes to one of the figures, and then turn his back and go away."

According to this testimony of a man who thoroughly understood the secrets of creative art, the long passive struggle that goes on in the soul of an artist, and the inspiration, swift as lightning, which follows, we may also accept the anecdotes related by Vasari from the verbal tradition



Fig. 59. CARICATURE OF AN OLD WOMAN. From a drawing in the Collection at Windsor Castle.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

work, because their intellect invents and shapes the ideals which their hands afterwards delineate and work out. He added that he still wanted two heads for his picture: that of Christ, for which he could not find a model on earth, and that of Judas, which still gave him a great deal to do, because he could not devise a countenance to represent the face of him who, after all the benefits he had received, shamefully betrays his Lord, the Creator of the world. He said he would not look for one any longer; if he did not happen to come upon one, he might always fall back on the head of the Prior for his model. Lodovico smiled, and the Prior took care not to complain any more for fear of becoming known to posterity under such a questionable figure. By a curious chance the preliminary study for the head of Judas has come down to us; it is a chalk drawing which represents the traitor in the position he occupies in the picture, though still without a beard (Fig. 53). Leonardo must surely have wished to express a deep symbolical meaning in his picture by placing this head in the shade, whilst on all the others a bright light falls from above. Leonardo who always thought and painted according to logic, also tried to show why he painted this shadow of which one cannot tell whence it comes, by making the head of Judas bend further across the table than the heads of his companions; the sharply accentuated turn of the head towards Christ, which only shows the profile of the traitor, also justifies the contrast with the bright light on the other heads.

which had remained alive in Milan. He also says that Leonardo had often spent half a day before his picture, lost in contemplation, without taking up his brush; this inaction offended the Prior, and receiving no answer to his remonstrances from Leonardo, this dignitary who was accustomed to see workmen do their daily task, went to the Duke and laid complaints against the idle painter. The Duke admonished the latter, but gave him to understand that he only did so to please the Prior. Leonardo got angry, and knowing that Lodovico was a sensible and intelligent man, he explained to him that great minds accomplish all the more, the less they appear to

Besides the head of Judas very few have hitherto been found among the drawings of Leonardo of which we are certain that they belong to the Last Supper. Strictly speaking the head of the youthful Philip alone, now in the Windsor Collection (Fig. 54) is authentic. In the picture he is the third on the left of the Saviour, and points with both hands to his breast, as if to say that there is no guile in his heart, which is amply proved by the open and almost childlike countenance of the young man. Perhaps another sketch in the same collection, the head of a bearded old man of a characteristic semitic type (Fig. 55) may also have served as a preparatory sketch for one of the older apostles of the Last Supper. Apart from these we must mention some pen and ink sketches and red chalk drawings in the Louvre at Paris, in the Windsor Collection, and in the Academy of Venice. The two latter are of special interest, because they show the vast difference between these preparatory studies and the finished picture, and this difference was only bridged over by the mighty power of genius. In both sketches the composition still follows the old Florentine tradition, according to which Judas was already branded as a traitor by being placed apart from the others on the inner side of the table opposite the Saviour, turning his back to the spectator. In the Windsor Sketch Leonardo had moreover selected a moment for the representation different from the one he afterwards chose. One of the sketches — there are two on one sheet lightly sketched with the pen — shows how Christ raises the cup containing the wine, and, as St. Matthew relates, pronounces the words of the consecration: "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Near it the figure of Christ is sketched once more; but here, according to the Gospel of St. John, he gives the sop dipped into the wine to Judas in order to point out the traitor. Judas has risen from his seat and approached the Saviour, burdened with his guilt. In the sketch in



Fig. 60. CARICATURE OF AN OLD MAN. In the Ambrosian Library at Milan.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

Venice (Fig. 56), Christ has already pronounced the momentous word which has become the chief motive in the picture on the wall of the refectory, and fallen like a thunderbolt amongst the unsuspecting disciples: "Verily, verily, I say unto you that one of you shall betray me." The inclination of the head, in which calm resignation to the will of the Father in Heaven has found a truly ideal expression, is already marked.

The decisive step from a dead art, which still fettered its votaries by its traditions, into the new world of the highest artistic perfection, was only



Fig. 61. CARICATURE OF AN OLD MAN. In the Ambrosian Library at Milan.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

accomplished when Leonardo stood before that wall in Milan, on which his masterpiece was to be executed. When he saw that space before him, he made up his mind that his picture should, as it were, break through the wall and become an ideal expansion of the refectory, in order to let the eyes of the monks look into the distance, into eternity, whilst they were enjoying things earthly. The architectural frame of his picture aims at expanding the real space. The great master of the laws of perspective lets the side walls incline at an obtuse angle towards the wall in the background, in which are three windows with a view of a mountain landscape of Lombardy in the soft evening light. This is the ideal background for the heroic resignation of the Saviour who stands there like a rock amongst the breakers

raging around him. Every one of the disciples shows his temperament, his disposition, his innermost feelings, not only in the face but also by the hands stretched out towards his Lord and Master. Leonardo has striven to study the character of every one of these men from the writings of the Apostles, the Evangelists, the Fathers of the Church, and has taken into account the most insignificant traits in order to gain a living individuality. The very movements of the hands distinguish the man ready to commit a rash and angry deed, from the gentle sufferer who is willing to follow his Master even unto death,—the man of a sanguine temperament who cannot bring himself to believe in the

monstrous crime, from the sceptic who foresaw everything, and now feels a certain satisfaction in seeing his dark forebodings fulfilled. The eloquence of the hands which, since the days of Leonardo, is no longer an enigma, is enhanced to the highest degree by the expression of the features. Every face is a mirror reflecting the drama of the soul. Every emotion is



Fig. 62. CARICATURES. In the Ambrosian Library at Milan.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co.,
Dornach and Paris.)

touched, from the lovely idyl of innocence and singleness of heart; from the strongest passion to the fall into the lowest depths, where even tragic pity for a calamitous fate incurred undeservedly, or leaving room for extenuation, loses its reconciling power. Many sins have been forgiven and forgotten; but the fearful guilt of Judas goes like a restless spectre of the night through the history of every nation, and no language on earth has an expression for the most wicked of all crimes, which is more annihilating than the name of Judas. Not one of all the masters who tried their skill in painting the Last Supper, has struck this sinner to the very marrow as Leonardo has done. And yet the latter was not satisfied; he therefore put the bag with the shekels into the hand of the traitor. It is the only outward symbol Leonardo used in this greatest of pictures delineating the soul; it is at the same time the only mark forming a link between this picture of the Last Supper and the earlier representations of the subject. In the convulsive agitation with which Judas holds the bag when his treason has been revealed, he has upset the salt-cellar with his right arm. From the time of the old Romans this has been an evil omen with those partaking of a meal; it points to approaching discord and trouble. Who studies the picture more closely will find other delicate allusions which call forth ever increasing admiration of the greatness of Leonardo's mind. In the extended forefinger and thumb of the left hand of Judas, lifted against his accuser, one also finds a repetition of the gesture with which the old Romans and their descendants, down to our day, tried and still try to ward off everything inimical, repugnant, and vexatious. If we look at the angry Peter who had been seated near Judas, but



Fig. 63. CARICATURES. In the Ambrosian Library at Milan.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

had risen instantly, ready for the combat, pressing his hand with the knife against his side, and asking John, the beloved disciple of our Lord, whom the Master really meant, — then and then only we understand the fear which seized the trembling Judas when he saw the violent agitation of the man ready at any moment to draw the sword against anyone in order to protect his Master.

In 1874 the engraver Rudolf Stang of Düsseldorf made his studies of the original in Milan, of which, to the lasting enjoyment of lovers of art, he published an engraving of the highest merit after thirteen years' work. Although he examined the surface of the wall most minutely, he could not find under the arm of Judas any traces of the salt-cellar which had been upset. This salt-cellar has hence been considered an arbitrary addition of copyists, especially of the one who made the copy in the Brera, after which Raphael Morghen executed his celebrated engraving. If one looks however with a magnifying glass at the large photograph of the original from which our reproduction (Fig. 43) was taken, one does nevertheless see a round object which is nothing but what remains of the salt-cellar, and this symbol is fully in accordance with the contemplative mind of Leonardo, under whose hands even the smallest trifles gained significance.

Vasari and also Lomazzo maintain that Leonardo had left the head of Christ unfinished, because in the end he was unable to carry out the ideal he had before his eyes; the fact that the head of Christ amongst the Strasburg Copies which we mentioned already, is not only beardless, but also unfinished in other respects, is in favour of their statement. This



Fig. 64. CARICATURE AND CHARACTER STUDY. In the Ambrosian Library at Milan.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)



Fig. 65. CARICATURES. In the Albertina at Vienna.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

argument may, however, be refuted: In the original, Christ is represented with a beard, and probably this was only added by Leonardo during his second stay in Milan, after the Strasburg copies had already been made. At that time Leonardo went over the whole picture again and corrected many things as it seemed necessary to his more mature mind. The objection has been justly raised against Vasari and Lomazzo that the tradition they followed only arose from a misunderstanding of Leonardo's intentions. Thausing has explained very ingeniously that Leonardo represented the



Fig. 66. HEAD OF A YOUTH AND A CARICATURE. In the Louvre at Paris.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

head of Christ in a lighter and more undefined colouring in order to let it appear transfigured, and that he had an additional reason for doing so. Whilst the heads of the Apostles stand out in relief against the dark tapestry of the wall which shows a red trellis-pattern on a green ground, "the head of Christ is placed before the broad middle window of the background, and hence he alone appears surrounded by the bright celestial light as by a natural halo. The head of the Lord had therefore to be painted in very light transparent colours to prevent the bright celestial light of the background from being darkened". Thus we learn again that the creations of Leonardo were not sudden inspirations of genius, as he tried to make Duke Lodovico and the Prior of the Dominican Convent believe, but far more frequently the results of long consideration, of acute calculation and innumerable technical experiments. In the end the creations of the hand and mind were so closely blended, that we can only in rare instances define the influence of the one on the other. The impression produced on the spectator by the Last Supper is so great, that he only perceives by degrees the thoughtful plan of the whole, the strictly symmetrical arrangement of the Apostles in groups, each one of three figures, equally distributed on either side of the Saviour. The austere symmetry soon vanishes, owing to the diversity in the gestures, not one of which has been repeated, and in this "equipoise between symmetry and variety" lies one of the secrets

of the great impression the masterpiece of Leonardo will always produce. "Like a sacred shadow this picture goes continually through the whole world and through the memory of men."

It is true, the memory of it is kept alive by graphic reproductions from the hands of artists. A photograph only mars the pleasure of looking at it. The clearer it is, the more mercilessly it discloses the injuries done to the original. Those who wish to have a purely aesthetic enjoyment will be obliged to cling to the engravings on copper, amongst which that of Raphael Morghen still occupies the first place, in spite of many inaccuracies as to details (Fig. 57).

Leonardo's way of observing and of working is shown very clearly, if one connects the heads of the Apostles in the Last Supper, which represent as it were all the types of the human character and temperament, with the celebrated caricatures existing in nearly all the collections of Europe, caricatures which have occupied a whole army of imitators and copyists who made drawings and engravings, amongst others an engraver like Wenzel Hollar. Vasari speaks already of these drawings of which he himself owned some. He does, however, not believe them to be products of Leonardo's fantastic moods, but drawn from nature. If he happened to see a strange face that interested him, he would sometimes follow the owner a whole day, till the features were so impressed on his mind, that he would draw them from memory on reaching home. Lomazzo who adds still more details relates the same. Leonardo once wished to paint a picture with laughing peasants, and he chose some people he



Fig. 67. STUDIES OF HEADS AND A CARICATURE.

In the Ambrosian Library at Milan.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

thought well adapted for this purpose. He took them to his house, and having made them feel at home, he prepared a feast to which he invited several friends. Whilst they were at table, he related the maddest and funniest things he could imagine, causing them to laugh uproariously; meanwhile he most carefully observed their looks and the contortions of their faces. After they had left, he went into his room and drew such a true likeness of them, that no one could look at them without laughing also. It seems indeed as if this anecdote were true, because there exist such caricatures, on which the names of those they represent are written in the Milanese dialect. Leonardo must therefore have drawn these strange misshapen faces and heads from life. In executing them he worked in a similar way as he did when he fashioned his fabulous monsters, by putting together, according to organic laws, the parts of different real animals. By a gross exaggeration in drawing the nose, the chin, the upper and lower lip, the forehead or the ear in a face or head which was strangely characteristic, he created a deformity, and then a caricature by uniting several deformities of this kind in one face. His chief aim was by no means to make people laugh. These caricatures were only studies of physiognomy "according to



Fig. 68. CHARACTER STUDY. In the Collection at Windsor Castle.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

certain principles of contrast“ carried to extremes. He appears to have thought that he could only fathom a human character by modelling the head, in which we trace the outward expression of character, like soft wax, and by trying thus what he could make of it. Only by bearing constantly in mind this thoroughly scientific and artistic method of investigation, which was strictly speaking experimental in the modern sense, one can understand how a serious mind like Leonardo could spend much of his time in drawing caricatures, partly ridiculous and partly repulsive, such as we give amongst our reproductions (Fig. 58 to 65). Some of them are undoubtedly drawings from the Master's own hand; others belong at least to the number of those representations to which Vasari and Lomazzo refer. A folio in the



Fig. 69. CHARACTER STUDY OF AN OLD MAN'S HEAD.
In the British Museum, London.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co.,
Dornach and Paris.)

Collection of the Louvre (Fig. 66) proves that his passion for research into the problem of physiognomy did not even let him rest when he was delighted with the beauty of a young face, and that he saw nothing incongruous in drawing two heads near that noble profile, one of which shows all the characteristic features of the latter with that exaggeration which we call caricature. We see the same on a folio in the Ambrosiana at Milan (Fig. 67).

Leonardo took great pleasure in painting heads of beautiful young men adorned by rich waving hair. There is an account of a poor boy, named Andrea Salai, whom Leonardo took into his house and treated like his own child, only because he was a pretty boy with beautiful curly hair. Salai, known in the history of art under the name of Salaino (the little Salai) wished to learn painting under Leonardo; but he does not seem to have excelled in this art. Up to now no picture has been found which may with any certainty be ascribed to him. He nevertheless rejoiced in the love of his Master till the latter died. Leonardo gave his sister a dowry on her marriage, and in his Will he made Salai the joint-heir of his vineyards near Milan. From the same keen sense of beauty sprang Leonardo's love for the young nobleman, Francesco Melzi; the bonds of an intimate

intellectual friendship and communion of souls united the two in later life. Vasari who knew Melzi as an old man, praises his beauty and his lovable character.

If therefore those caricatures were nothing but means towards a higher end, steps on the road to the greatest perfection, others are not wanting amongst the drawings of Leonardo, in which it appears to us he reached this end, the study of the human physiognomy, penetrating into its deepest and most delicate lines. Not by looking at his pictures, most of which have

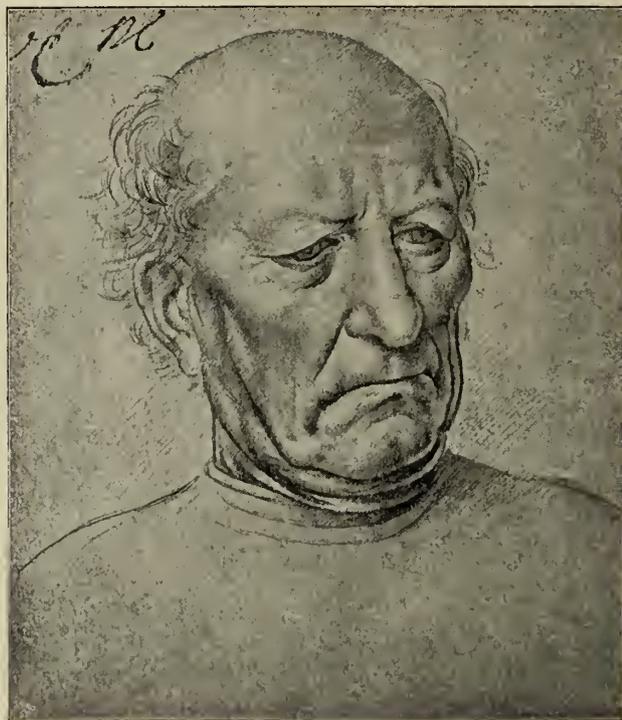


Fig. 70. HEAD OF AN OLD MAN. In the Louvre at Paris.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

come down to us injured or unfinished, but by studying his sketches does one learn to understand how great an artist Leonardo was, and what a powerful influence he had on his contemporaries. In heads, such as we reproduce under Fig. 68 to 70, Leonardo had followed creative nature to such a degree, that to the painters among whom he lived, they appeared as an ideal that could not be realised, and indeed, since his days no artist's hand has surpassed the skill of this greatest of masters. These drawings had in the end become an object in themselves to Leonardo. He did not mean to make use of them for any picture, and, even whilst he was in Milan, painting had become a burdensome work to him, taking up too much of his time; for this reason he was glad to leave it to his pupils.

Under these circumstances it is difficult to believe that during his first sojourn in Milan, where Duke Lodovico on one side, and the Prior on the



Fig. 71. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. In the Royal Gallery of Berlin.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

other, vied in tormenting him, he produced a picture in oil, so carefully painted in every detail as the great Resurrection of Christ, belonging to the Gallery of Berlin (Fig. 71), which has recently been the subject of a violent

controversy. The history of the picture is almost of greater interest than the picture itself. It had been bought with the Solly Collection for the Museum in Berlin, and at the opening of the Gallery in 1830 it was put into its place marked "Milanese School under the influence of Leonardo da Vinci", after having previously been considered, now as a work by Francesco Melzi or Cesare da Sesto, now as a work by Bernardino de' Conti.



Fig. 72. STUDY FOR A CHRIST BEARING THE CROSS.

From a drawing in the Academy at Venice.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

Later on it was removed from the Gallery, owing to new purchases, and put into the storehouse, from which it was taken in 1884 by the present Director of the Gallery, Wilhelm Bode, in order that, after careful restoration, it might again be placed in the Gallery under the name of the Master himself. Judging from its style, Bode felt convinced that this oil-painting on wood must be a work from Leonardo's own hand, painted during his first sojourn at Milan. Later art critics have made further researches, and believe they have discovered studies by Leonardo on some sheets containing



Fig. 73. PORTRAIT OF ISABELLA D'ESTE. From a Cartoon in the Louvre at Paris.
 (After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

sketches; these studies may have been preparatory work for the picture. The most important result of the researches is the discovery that in the beginning of the eighteenth century it was in a church in Milan, Santa Liberata, and considered as a work of Bramantino who did, in fact, paint

after the manner of Leonardo between the years 1520 and 1530. This discovery does away with the supposition that Leonardo himself worked at the picture. How is it possible that such an important picture, by a master whose works were already eagerly sought after during his life time, was for centuries an altarpiece in a church at Milan, without any one of his contemporaries or of those who came after him having remembered it, especially Lomazzo or Vasari who knew every one of his early works, his



Fig. 74. ISABELLA D'ESTE. From a drawing in the Uffizi at Florence.
(After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

little models in clay, his drawings, his instruments and mechanical toys? The picture as a whole as well as in its separate parts does indeed bear the stamp of the School of Leonardo, especially the landscape and the two Saints who are kneeling in the foreground:—San Leonardo who is known by the fetters lying near his feet as the patron saint of prisoners, and Santa Lucia who carries her eyes, which were put out, on a dish as a symbol of her martyrdom. It is also probable that the author of this picture availed himself of Leonardo's studies, especially for the adjustment of the drapery in both figures, and for the magnificent cast of the folds. For the figure



Fig. 75. ST. ANNA SELBDRITT. From a picture in the Louvre at Paris.
(After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

of the Saviour ascending from the tomb into Heaven with the banner of victory, and also for the cloak floating around him, the author had to rely on his own insignificant powers. In the part of the cloak extended on the right, one still discerns the make shift in the studio, where this lappet was fastened against the wall by a nail, because the painter was not able to draw from memory a piece of stuff fluttering freely in the wind; the mean and crumpled drapery also betrays the weakness of the author. What is most conclusive against the authorship of Leonardo is the vacant look, the want of expression in the face of Christ, and the awkward almost symmetrical attitude of both his arms, an attitude which a man of such an inexhaustible imaginative power as Leonardo could not have brought himself to choose for a work of art, all the more so at a time when he was already working at the Last Supper, and when the face of Christ constantly occupied his thoughts. And lastly, would not the Duke and the Prior have been angry with him, if he had spent his time on an altarpiece for an insignificant church, instead of devoting it to the service of his master who was the patron of the convent, and who desired ardently to see the picture of the Last Supper finished? Even if we do not go so far as Morelli who believes the "Resurrection of Christ" to be a work of one of the many artists of the Dutch School, who studied and imitated Leonardo in Milan towards the middle of the sixteenth century, the number of the doubtful works of the Master ought not to be increased by this one which bears the stamp of a pupil who adorned himself with borrowed plumes. What a noble and sublime conception of his Saviour Leonardo had already, before he realised his ideal in the Refectory of the Convent in Milan, is proved by a Sketch in the Academy at Venice (Fig. 72) which is supposed to have been drawn in Florence, and which shows clearly that it must have served as a study for a "Christ bearing the Cross", for a hand clutching some of his wavy hair is seen behind his neck.

The completion of the Last Supper also coincides very nearly with the end of Leonardo's first stay in Milan. It was a tragic end. The usurper who had for many years worked and schemed successfully was caught in the snares he had laid for himself. He had in vain sought the friendship and courted the favour of the Emperor Maximilian I., to whom he also presented amongst other things a picture by Leonardo da Vinci of which an anonymous biographer of the Master reports that it was one of the rarest and most beautiful things that had ever been made. It represented a "Birth of Christ" and is also praised by Vasari. Like so many other works of Leonardo it has perished. The marriage of Lodovico's niece, Bianca Maria Sforza, with Maximilian, a marriage planned by him, had also led to nothing. When he saw that the Emperor would not help him in securing his dominion, he endeavoured to get support from the French. He induced Charles VIII. to undertake an adventurous expedition to Naples which ended in a thorough defeat of the French. When Charles VIII. died in 1498, and his cousin Louis XII. mounted the French throne, the tables

were completely turned, Louis was the grandson of a Visconti, a member of the ducal family of Milan, whom the father of Lodovico had succeeded after the death of the last male descendant Francesco Sforza. Now King Louis himself claimed the dukedom of Milan as an heir of the Visconti, and asserted his rights all the more forcibly, because Lodovico had meanwhile joined the league against France.



Fig. 76. STUDY FOR THE PICTURE OF ST. ANNA SELBDRITT.
Drawing in the Uffizi at Florence.

(After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

During this stormy time the artists were in sore distress, and amongst them Leonardo. We learn this from a letter of the Master to the Duke. Unfortunately there exists only a fragment of this; it belongs to a private collection in England. The letter appears to have been written before the outbreak of the war with France, for in his petition Leonardo speaks of the great anxieties which were at that time weighing on the Duke himself. He declares that he wishes to have every consideration for him; but that his own embarrassment compels him to remind the Duke of the salary which has remained unpaid for years. He says that having no commissions,

he intends taking up another trade in order to earn at least his living, and that, in spite of this distress, he has gone on working at the equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza and paid out of his own pocket two assistants who also worked at it. Lodovico had no money left to help the petitioner; but it seems that he indemnified him for these and other claims connected with the Last Supper by presenting to him the vineyards which we have mentioned already.

In 1499, the very same year he made this gift, the disaster he dreaded befell Lodovico. Already on the 2^d of September he had to flee before the approaching army of the French who had but slight trouble in conquering the dukedom, and on the 6th of September the French leader Trivulzio and Cesare Borgia, the ally of the King of France, entered the capital. As Trivulzio punished any deeds of violence committed by his mercenary soldiers, with the utmost severity, and as tranquillity prevailed

everywhere, after Louis XII. had entered Milan in October, Leonardo had at that time no reason to leave Milan, more especially because he hoped that better times would come for him also by the French dominion being strengthened.

When however in November a large proportion of the French army went into Romagna, to carry out Cesare Borgia's plans for further conquests, the friends of Lodovico began to stir up the population of Milan, and therefore Leonardo who still possessed six hundred gold ducats, deemed it wise to collect his money and convert it through bankers into drafts on Florence, in order to turn his back on the disturbed country. In



Fig. 77. HEAD OF SAINT ANNA SELEDRITT (a Study).

Drawing in the Louvre at Paris.

(After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)



Fig. 78. STUDY FOR THE PICTURE OF ST. ANNA SELBDRITT.
Drawing in the Albertina at Vienna.

(After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

the company of his friend, the mathematician Luca Pacioli, he departed during the second half of December 1499. His precaution proved wise. Lodovico returned to Milan on the 4th of February 1500 with an army of Swiss and Austrian mercenaries. His reign was however of short duration. On the 10th of April of the same year he was defeated by the French at Novara, and taken as a prisoner to France where he died in 1508. When Leonardo heard of his having been taken prisoner, he wrote in his diary: "The Duke lost his land, his property and his freedom, and not one of the works he began was finished by him." With this epigram Leonardo ended the most important episode of his life.

After his departure from Milan he wandered about for a while, and we hear of his doings through documents in the Archives of the Gonzaga in Mantua. He went first of all to Venice; but on his way there he remained a few days at Mantua, the residence of Isabella d'Este, who, during her stay in Milan with her sister Beatrice had become a zealous admirer of his art. At her request he drew her portrait in charcoal on cartoon paper, and also promised to paint an oil-portrait from it, if he ever returned. The cartoon



Fig. 79. HEAD OF A YOUNG WOMAN. From a drawing in the Collection at Windsor Castle.
(After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

remained in Mantua, but Leonardo took a sketch with him or rather a small study he had used for the cartoon which was executed on a large scale. We learn this from a letter dated Venice March 13th 1500, written by one of the agents and correspondents whom Isabella d'Este employed in all the principal cities of Italy with a view to enriching her art collections. At that time Leonardo was already there, for the confidential agent of the duchess writes: "Leonardo da Vinci is in Venice, and has shown me a portrait of Your Excellency which is very true to nature, and seems to me as perfect as possible." That was perhaps the sketch Leonardo had kept for himself. It seems that, owing to a lucky chance, both pictures have come down to us. We must therefore be satisfied, even if we cannot prove which of the two had remained in the possession of the Duchess, and which in Leonardo's. One of them is in the Louvre, a large cartoon drawn in charcoal on which the outlines of the drawing are pricked through with pins to facilitate its being transferred on canvass or on wood, when the portrait was to be painted (Fig. 73). It is a picture which, in spite of its being only drawn in profile, is spirited and full of life; we can trace in it the spirit of

Leonardo who strove to rouse the feelings and intellect of his models, and to enliven them by animated conversation, by music and songs. Hence a happy smile brightens the face of Isabella, who was by no means of an indolent mind. It seems as if she were listening with eager attention to a clever speaker, as if her lips were about to move in order to answer her companion in words full of high-spirited grace and playfulness. The second picture of Isabella shows even greater animation; and this as well as a few technicalities in the working distinguish it from the cartoon in the Louvre; it is a red chalk drawing at the Uffizi in Florence (Fig. 74). For this very reason one feels inclined to identify it as the sketch Leonardo took with him to Venice.

The picture he gave to the Marchesa of Mantua did not remain long in her possession. Her husband presented it to some one, we do not know to whom, and Isabella hastened to replace it by writing on the 22^d of March 1501 to a friend amongst the clergy in Florence, Fra Petrus Nuvolaria, General of the Order of the Carmelites. In this letter she asks him to act on her behalf, in case Leonardo had returned to Florence, and obtain some picture from him, if only a small picture of the Madonna "full of gentle, sweet, and fervent faith, such as it is in his nature to produce". She says she would also like to have another sketch of her portrait, because her husband had given away the one he had taken at Mantua. She was destined to wait in vain for her picture or for any other compensation from the hand of Leonardo. The correspondence which resulted from her request is however of great value to us, because it gives us an insight into Leonardo's life after 1500. Till the end of this year he seems to have remained in Venice, from whence he made several expeditions, as we gather from his notes. In the beginning of the following year he was in Florence; he felt always



Fig. 80. STUDY OF A HEAD FROM THE ANNA CARTOON IN LONDON.
(Perhaps by Luini.)

Drawing in the Academy at Venice.

(After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co.,
Dornach and Paris.)

drawn there by the powerful influence of home-ties, in spite of personal injuries and all the disappointments he had had in his artistic career. What he was doing in Florence we learn from the answer of the above mentioned ecclesiastic to the Marchesa Isabella: "I shall try and carry out your commissions carefully and speedily; but from what I have heard I gather that the life of Leonardo is subject to change and to great fluctuations. It appears that he is living recklessly. Since his return to Florence he has



Fig. 81. WOMAN'S HEAD. Preliminary study for St. Anna Selbdritt.
From a drawing in the Windsor Collection.
(After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

only drawn one cartoon. It represents the Child Christ, hardly one year old, who bends down from the arm of his mother in order to seize a lamb and embrace it. The mother half rising from the knees of St. Anna, endeavours to separate the little one from the lamb. St. Anna seems to make a movement as if to keep back her daughter. The figures are of life size, and yet they only occupy a small space, because they are all seated or bending forward; on the left side of the picture one is drawn over the



Fig. 82. STUDIES OF FEET FOR ST. ANNA SELBDRITT. In the Collection of the Library of Windsor Castle. (After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

other. This sketch is still unfinished. He has done nothing but this. Two of his pupils are painting portraits, and he now and then puts his hand to one or the other. As regards painting, he shows little patience; he devotes himself entirely to the study of geometry." This did not discourage Isabella. Till the end of 1504 she persisted in her endeavours to procure some picture of Leonardo's, leaving it to him to fix the price; but she did not succeed, although in May 1504 she herself wrote a letter to him in which she begged him urgently, though most politely, to grant her request. At that time Leonardo had other plans, and to paint a twelve years old Christ which Isabella wished for was not an attractive task.

In the letter of the General of the Carmelites, a work by Leonardo, a cartoon, representing St. Anna with Mary and the Child Christ, known in Germany under the name "St. Anna Selbdritt", is described so minutely, that Nuvo-laria himself must have seen this picture. There is hence no room for doubt as to its having existed. The cartoon has not come down to us; but there is an oil painting



Fig. 83. STUDY OF A CHILD'S HEAD. Drawing in the Louvre at Paris (After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

which coincides exactly with the description of the cartoon in that letter. Till 1629 it was in Lombardy, and then became the property of Cardinal Richelieu; it is now in the Louvre (Fig. 75). Vasari reports that Leonardo received the commission for the picture, which was to be executed after the cartoon, from the monks of the Convent of the Servites who wished



Fig. 84. STUDIES OF CHILDREN FOR THE PICTURE OF ST. ANNA SELBDRITT.
Drawing in the Collection of the Duke d'Aumale at Chantilly.
(After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

to adorn the High Altar of their church, the Santissima Annunziata, with it. This commission had originally been intrusted to Filippino Lippi; but it is said that he drew back of his own accord, when he heard Leonardo was disposed to paint the picture.

Vasari relates further that when it was finished, the cartoon was so much admired, that crowds of Florentines went to the room in the Convent

which the monks had given to the Master and his pupils and servants as a studio and dwelling. The artists especially studied the cartoon with great zeal.

The whole picture was not only copied frequently, but single figures and groups from it were reproduced by eminent artists like Bernardino Luni

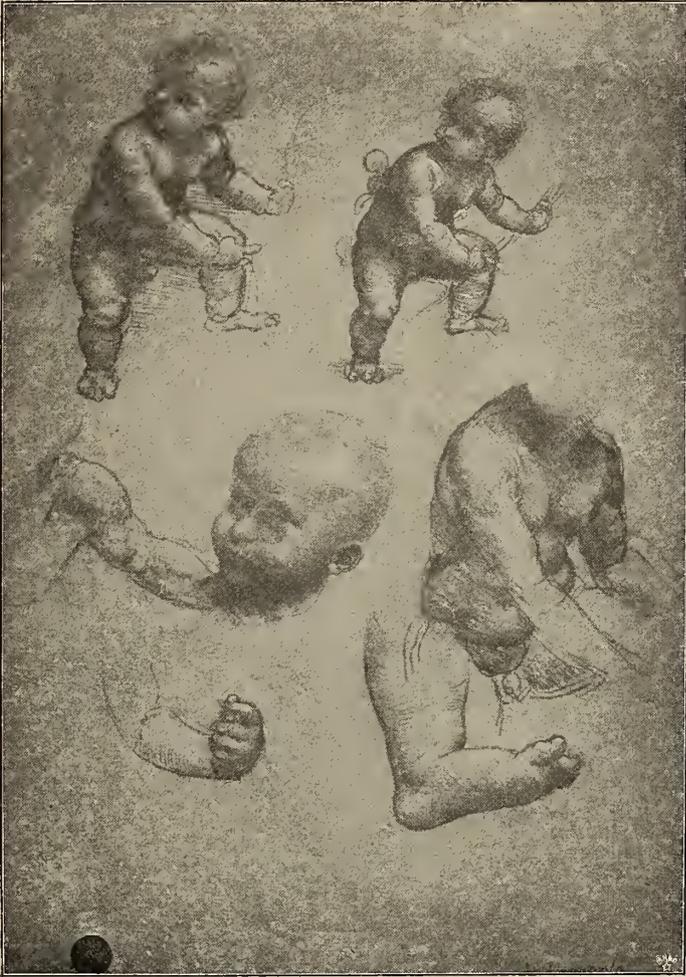


Fig. 85. STUDIES FROM LIFE. Drawing in the Academy of Venice.
(After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

in their own creations. Even Raphael was under the influence of this cartoon from which he got the inspiration for his "Madonna with the Lamb" at Madrid, in which the gesture of the Child Christ coincides with that seen on the cartoon of Leonardo, or better on the picture in the Louvre executed from it. May we consider this picture as Leonardo's own handiwork?

It is very difficult to answer this question, because the picture has been

sadly injured. The majority of art students are however of opinion that the hand of the Master may still be recognised in it, and that it was at any rate painted under his supervision and with his help. He had reached his aim when he finished the cartoon,—as usual he did not care to execute it in colours, and in the end he left Florence in order to take up other works which for the moment were more attractive to his adventurous spirit. The monks lost patience, and in 1503 they once more applied to Filippino Lippi who undertook the work; they had however chosen another subject, a Descent from the Cross. Filippino died a year later, and Pietro Perugino finished the picture.

The following years brought no peace nor rest to Leonardo, and soon he had also to give his attention to a new artistic work of great importance. It is therefore probable that the picture in the Louvre was only executed in Milan, after the Master had settled there a second time for a prolonged stay. Also in Milan it must have been copied diligently, like every creation of Leonardo, and the study of it was considered a sort of education which exercised perhaps a greater influence than the legendary Academy Lodovico il Moro is said to have founded and named after Leonardo. This



Fig. 86. STUDIES OF CHILDREN. In the Collection of Windsor Castle.
(After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)



Fig. 87. SAINT ANNA SELBDRITT.

From the Cartoon in the Collection of the Royal Academy at London.

would account for the large number of drawings in nearly all the great Collections of Italy, France, and England, which are more or less closely connected with the picture of St. Anna, and only very few of which can be considered as preparatory studies by Leonardo's own hand. We may for instance take it for granted that there are such copies amongst the drawings at the Uffizi in Florence and in the Louvre (Fig. 76—78), whilst others appear to have only been slightly influenced by the picture or turn out to be works of imitators, who changed the heavenly serenity we see in Leonardo's faces into a conventional smile (Fig. 79 and 80). The noble head veiled in delicate drapery and the two studies of feet in the Windsor Collection (Fig. 81 and 82), the head of a child with chubby cheeks, drawn in an accentuated profile now in the Louvre (Fig. 83) and the folio with studies of children in the Collection of the Duke d'Aumale (Fig. 84) of which a similar study in Venice only seems to be a feeble copy (Fig. 85),

give one on the contrary the impression of being genuine. Another folio in the Windsor Collection with studies of naked children, whose gestures resemble those of the little Christ in the picture at the Louvre, does not show the crisp firm outlines nor the distinct modelling, which remind one of the sculptor who works in clay, such as we see in the authentic drawings of Leonardo (Fig. 86). The ingenious Morelli believed this study to be the work of Leonardo's Milanese pupil, Cesare da Sesto.

Though Leonardo was in no hurry to finish his Florentine cartoon, he spent much time and thought upon it, according to his wont. Perhaps he felt that, in spite of the freedom and variety in the gestures and in their rhythmic action, in spite of the depth and loveliness in the expression of the faces of both women in the composition, being in accordance with the traditional type, there was something formal in it. This he tried to overcome by an entirely new arrangement in the sketch; he abandoned the pyramidal design of the group and placed both female figures at nearly the same height, and in order to re-establish the harmony of the composition, he added the figure of the little St. John. This second plan for the composition has fortunately come down to us; the cartoon of the Master in black chalk relieved by white lights is at the Royal Academy of London (Fig. 87). Though it be sadly injured, we can still see in the faces of both women that expression which Leonardo sought so long and found at last, which he



Fig. 88. BATTLE ROUND A STANDARD. From the Cartoon of the Battle of Anghiari.
Drawing by P. P. Rubens in the Louvre at Paris.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co, Dornach and Paris.)



Fig. 89. PORTRAIT OF MONA LISA (LA GIOCONDA).

From the picture in the Louvre at Paris.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

knew how to impart with masterly touches and in an infinite variety,—that expression which Morelli has defined so beautifully as “the smile of inward happiness, the enchanting power of the soul”. This charm Leonardo has carried to the greatest perfection in the portrait of Mona Lisa, the masterpiece of his second Florentine stay. For valid reasons given by Anton Springer, the cartoon in London must however date from a later period, perhaps from the beginning of his second stay at Milan, and at that time Luini may have faithfully executed from it the picture which is now in the Ambrosiana at Milan (Cf. Fig. 80).

What prevented Leonardo finishing his Cartoon for the Servite Brethren, apart from his dislike to painting in colours, which greatly taxed his patience, was the same inclination which ten years sooner had induced him to enter the service of the despot of Milan. After Lodovico had disappeared, a new and brilliant star had arisen in Cesare Borgia, the newly created Duke of Valentino, who, besides the patronage of his father, Pope Alexander VI, also rejoiced in the still more powerful support of the King of France. This bold leader of mercenary soldiers who did not shrink from any risk nor from any cruelty, cunning or treason, but who was at the same time open to noble impulses and of a refined culture, wished to found a kingdom in Central Italy with the help of French soldiers. The whole Romagna was already in his power, and he had conquered the Duchy of Urbino, when in 1502 Leonardo entered his service as military architect and engineer. Leonardo could not possibly know that the schemes of conquest of the former condottiere also aimed at the subjugation of Florence. The Florentines themselves had offered auxiliary troops to the Duke of Valentino for his campaign against Urbino, and the plans of Cesare Borgia were for a time in abeyance, because his patron, King Louis of France, was favourably disposed towards the Florentines on account of their loyalty and of the neutrality which they had always strictly observed. Leonardo does therefore not deserve to be reproached, because he served the Duke with zeal, and went to inspect the fortifications of Umbria, of the Marches, and of Southern Tuscany, in order to examine their state of defence, and propose plans for strengthening them. There is evidence that in 1502 he visited Urbino, Pesaro, Rimini, Cesena, and other places, drawing plans and taking measurements. In the beginning of the following year he was again in Florence. On the 23rd of January there was a consultation regarding the place on which Michelangelo's recently finished David was to stand, and the Consuls of the Guild of Woolweavers, who had ordered the statue, had invited the most eminent artists of Florence to attend, and amongst them Leonardo. Whilst most of them made long speeches, Leonardo briefly expressed his opinion that a place under the Loggia dei Lanzi appeared to him the most appropriate. This opinion which others shared, did however not prevail. The colossus was erected near the main portal of the Palazzo Vecchio in the open air. It seems that already in those days there was a misunderstanding between the two greatest artists Florence possessed. In the courtyard of the building where the works for



Fig. 90. FEMALE PORTRAIT. In the Hermitage of St. Petersburg.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

the Cathedral were being executed, a block of marble 5 metres 22 cm. high had for many years been lying unused. Andrea Sansovino had offered to make something of it; but the Consuls of the Guild of Woolweavers to whom the Church of Santa Maria del Fiore belonged, first applied to Michelangelo, and he promised to make use of the block. According to Vasari, Leonardo also had his eye on it, and he felt hurt when the decision was in favour of Michelangelo. That two men like Leonardo and Michelangelo could not long live in peace in the same place was the natural result of the difference between their talents, their temperaments, their characters. Leonardo who was still under fifty, when he came to Florence from Milan, was a man of noble presence on whom nature had lavished her richest gifts. He loved splendour, dressed elegantly, and liked to appear with a train of followers. Michelangelo was not comely in figure, and in his youth had the misfortune to quarrel with a fellow pupil who broke his nose by a blow from his fist, and thus disfigured his face for ever. Both were ambitious and both were sensitive. Leonardo's irritability had been heightened by the painful disappointments he had experienced in Milan, and Michelangelo was not long in seizing an opportunity of attacking him on his most vulnerable point. "One day," relates the anonymous biographer of Leonardo who wrote during the first quarter of the sixteenth century, "Leonardo passed with a certain Gavini near the church of Santa Trinità in front of the banking house of the Spini where a number of distinguished men happened to be sitting together disputing on a passage of Dante. When they saw Leonardo, they called him and asked him to explain the passage to them. It so happened that Michelangelo also went past, and Leonardo who had only just been called, answered: 'Michelangelo will explain it to you.' Michelangelo to whom this sounded as if Leonardo had wished to ridicule him, called out furiously: 'Explain it to them thyself, thou who didst want to make an equestrian statue in bronze, and hast not been able to cast it, who hast abandoned it to thy hurt and shame.' After these words he turned his back upon them, and Leonardo grew red." His haughtiness and the consciousness Michelangelo had of his superiority, at least as a sculptor, over the celebrated Leonardo had prompted him to allude to the tragedy of Leonardo's life, and the same biographer relates that he did so again and again on a later occasion, when he laughed at "those blockheads of Milanese" who had allowed themselves to be caught by Leonardo and put faith in him.

This skirmish between the two Masters who were known as great Dante scholars, was to be followed by a more serious episode. In the course of the year 1503 they became rivals in their profession, and fate would have it that the two opponents had henceforth nothing to reproach each other with as regards finishing their works. In the first place Leonardo was however to prove his powers as an engineer in the service of his own town. When Charles VIII. of France entered upon his warlike adventures in Italy in 1494, Pisa which had a grudge against Florence and only bore its rule reluctantly, seized the opportunity of declaring itself independent, and with the help of



Fig. 91. THE YOUNG BACCHUS.

In the Louvre at Paris.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

the enemies of Florence the town succeeded in maintaining its independence for a while. When in 1502 rest, peace, and a firm rule had been re-established, owing to Piero Soderini being appointed Gonfaloniere for life, one of the first aims of the head of the state was to conquer Pisa again. The town was besieged, but the heroic courage and spirit of sacrifice of



Fig. 92. STUDY OF A FEMALE HEAD. From a Drawing in the Borghese Gallery in Rome.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

its citizens held out against the assaults of the Florentines, who conceived in the end the bold plan of forcing the town to surrender owing to want of water, and this was to be brought about by digging a new bed for the Arno, and thereby deviating its waters from the town. In July 1503 the Signoria sent Leonardo in great haste to the Florentine encampment near Pisa. We see from an account which is still existing that he was driven to Pisa in a carriage drawn by six horses. He was to give his opinion about

the possibility of carrying out this project and the preparatory works already begun, and then take these into his own hands. We do not know how this matter ended; but it is certain that Leonardo must have eagerly accepted this offer, which placed him, as he said himself, in his own element.

In the meantime the Signoria of Florence did not rest satisfied with



Fig. 93. STUDY OF A FEMALE HEAD. From a Drawing in the Louvre at Paris.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

doing their utmost to further the expedition against Pisa. They wished to rouse the courage of the citizens permanently by reminding them of the heroic deeds of bygone days, and to this end they resolved to adorn the two long walls of the Sala del Consiglio Grande in the Palazzo Vecchio with pictures destined to exalt two prominent feats of arms of the old Florentines. It seems that the Gonfaloniere Soderini who was favourably disposed towards Leonardo, had entrusted the execution of a wall-picture



Fig. 94. STUDY OF A HEAD. From a Drawing in the Ambrosian Library in Milan. (After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

to him, and that only later on he thought of Michelangelo to whom the second wall was assigned. The subject of Leonardo's picture was to be the battle of Anghiari which had taken place on the 29th of June between the commander in chief of the Duke of Milan, Niccolo Piccinino and the Florentines. After a terrible struggle, during which the chances of war fluctuated several times, the Florentines gained the day, and hence they might well count this battle, in which so much valour and perseverance was shown, and which was fraught with

happy results, amongst their most brilliant deeds of arms.

With his habitual thoroughness Leonardo set to work. He began by making researches in the Chronicles and other documents to make sure of the way in which the battle was fought, and then worked out a memorial which was to give information to the Gonfaloniere and the Signoria, and to guide him in his work. In it he described minutely all the phases of the battle till sunset, pointing out several episodes which appeared to him most worthy of being represented, and which in his opinion ought not to be left out in the picture. His memorial does not tell us which of the incidents, especially emphasized by him, he would choose in the end, and the descriptions of the first cartoon, which he began and finished in the Sala del Papa in the Church of Santa Maria Novella, are couched in such vague and ordinary

language, that one does not gather from them how far Leonardo adhered to the historic accounts he had collected. From the minute description of Vasari it follows however that one of those battles between horsemen, repeatedly mentioned by Leonardo in his Memorial, was the central subject of his cartoon. Vasari's description only refers to two or three groups, the most prominent of which consisted of horsemen fighting so furiously for a standard, that even the horses did gnash and bite one another, fighting as stubbornly as their riders. Leonardo had not worked in vain when he studied horses in motion and at rest, their inner and outer bodily structure, at the time he began to model the Sforza Monument. He now wanted to reap the fruits of these studies and be honoured in the most privileged spot of his own town; he longed to do so in the face of a scorner like Michelangelo whom the Gonfaloniere had in the meantime commissioned to paint the opposite wall, although in those days Michelangelo had not yet proved himself as a painter. Benvenuto Cellini who also mentions the Cartoon in his autobiography, relates that the Master had represented an "Encounter between Horsemen during

which a few standards are captured, as divinely wrought as one can possibly imagine." Hence the Cartoon must have represented a whole battle, a combat between horsemen and horsemen, and an attack of the Florentine cavalry on the infantry of the enemy. According to the Memorial of Leonardo, it is however probable that still more was to be seen on the Cartoon. It states that a bridge formed the chief point of support in the position the Florentines occupied, and around this bridge the battle raged. Besides this the Patriarch of Aquileia whom the Pope had asked to accompany the Florentine army, played a



Fig. 95. GIRL'S HEAD. From a Drawing in the Ambrosian Library at Milan.
(After a Photograph
from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

chief part in it. He was for the Florentines a kind of Providence who kept alive their league with the heavenly powers, but at the same time a commander in chief, watching from a mountain the movements of the enemy and ordering the tactics of the Florentines accordingly. When he prayed to God for victory, St. Peter appeared to him from a cloud and spoke to him. Hence two incidents are represented: On the left the Patriarch and his followers on the mountain; in the centre the struggle round the bridge. To render the picture complete, the flight of the Milanese troops was probably shown on the right. If we consider Leonardo's own description, from which the main points of the composition naturally result, we are inclined to think of Raphael's "Battle of Constantine" which resembles it in being divided into three chief episodes. Raphael belongs to those who studied and drew in Florence from the Cartoons of Leonardo and Michelangelo. Cellini writes: "One of these Cartoons was hanging in the Palace of the Medici, another in the Sala del Papa, and as long as they were there, they formed the school of the world." It is therefore probable that in Raphael's "Battle of



Fig. 96. STUDY OF A FEMALE HEAD. From a Drawing in the Uffizi at Florence.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)



Fig. 97. STUDY OF A HEAD. From a Drawing in Windsor Castle.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

Constantine" we see a reflection of Leonardo's composition, for Raphael was very susceptible to outside influences.

For how long the Cartoons were exhibited to the public we do not know. That of Michelangelo represented a scene from the battles between the Florentines and the Pisans, specially from the Battle of Cascina in which Florentine soldiers, who were bathing in the Arno, were surprised by the

Pisans, hastily put on their clothes and faced the enemy. We can trace this Cartoon, at least to a certain extent, till the beginning of the seventeenth century, when some fragments of it were at Mantua. Rubens, the court-painter of Duke Federigo, used them as studies for a Baptism of Christ. As to the fate of Leonardo's Cartoon, we know nothing, and the studies and designs which are supposed to belong to it, are so doubtful and undefined, that we cannot judge from them what the composition of the Cartoon must



Fig. 98. STUDY OF A HEAD. From a Drawing in Windsor Castle.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

have been. Cellini evidently saw it himself; but we are not sure that Vasari who was more than ten years younger, ever set eyes on it. His description contains a passage from which we assume that he only knew the group which, as we shall see later on, was really executed in colours by Leonardo on the wall of the Sala del Consiglio Grande. He speaks in his description of a soldier holding in one hand the staff of a standard, and raising his sword with the other in order to deal a blow, adding that he wears *a red cap*. This proves that he did not describe the colourless Cartoon, but the fragment painted on the wall.

Indeed, Leonardo began his work after he had finished the Cartoon, whilst his rival did nothing; as with the Last Supper, his mania for making experiments not only hindered him in his work, but it seems that it also deprived him of the desire to continue it. He is said to have tried painting in melted wax, and then burned it in after the encaustic method of the ancients. When this attempt proved a failure, he once more began to paint in oil, and, as a biographer relates, in nut oil. According to Vasari the plaster put on the wall for the ground of his picture was so coarse, that the grain showed, and this so disgusted him, that he did not continue his work.

There must however have been other reasons for this, because in the year 1510 the finished part was still in such good preservation, that precautions were taken to prevent the fragment being ruined.

A representation of the same group, described by Vasari, has by chance been preserved and is now in the Louvre. It is a sketch which has, since



Fig 99. STUDY OF A HEAD FOR THE MADONNA LITTA. From a Drawing in the Louvre at Paris.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

the eighteenth century, been looked upon as a work by Rubens (Fig. 88). It has become generally known through a magnificent engraving by Edelinck who, however, only gives the name of Leonardo. The style of the drawing shows throughout that the tradition is right, and the Master of Antwerp, who always aimed at a dramatic element in his art, naturally desired to take home with him such a precious copy after his sojourn in Italy. In the same



Fig. 100. STUDY OF A HEAD. From a Drawing in Windsor Castle.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach
and Paris.)

way, in which Michelangelo's Cartoon of the Bathing Soldiers inspired him when he painted his Baptism of Christ, the "Combat between Horsemen" by Leonardo wrought on his imagination when he caused the fiercest passions of men and animals to spend their rage in his "Lion-Hunts" and in his "Battle of the Amazons".

The first interruption in his work seems to have been caused by a journey to Rome which Leonardo undertook in the beginning of the year 1505, with what object we do not know. We only learn from an account of the Signoria that a small sum had been paid on his behalf as custom house duty for a parcel of clothes sent to him after his return from Rome. For his work in the Sala del

Consiglio Grande Leonardo received a monthly salary of fifteen gold ducats. In his studio at home he was by no means idle, for he had at least to occupy pupils mentioned in the letter of the Carmelite Father to the Marchesa Isabella of Mantua. It seems indeed that from his own drawings and cartoons he made them paint portraits and perhaps also small pictures of the Madonna, which afterwards found purchasers as works from his own hand. Family circumstances which caused him a great deal of annoyance, also contributed to interrupt his work in the Sala del Consiglio Grande. His father had died on the 7th of July 1504, and when two years later, on the 30th of April 1506, the inheritance was divided amongst the family, Leonardo saw that he had been entirely passed over. Imbittered by this slight, he began those lawsuits with his brothers which dragged on for many years, and greatly enhanced his misanthropy. He certainly did not care for material gain which could not be very great, as Piero da Vinci had left a

large family of children. He merely wished to fight for his just claim, and the litigations which had become still more complicated by a second lawsuit about an inheritance, owing to the death of an uncle, ended in a verdict in his favour.

According to Vasari, Leonardo painted two more female portraits, besides the works mentioned already, during these years of his second stay in Florence. One was the portrait of Ginevra, the wife of Amerigo Benci. Like so many others it has been lost, and Vasari does not appear to have seen the picture himself, for he speaks of it laconically as "cosa bellissima". He has much more to say of the second portrait, that of Mona Lisa, the third wife of Francesco del Giocondo; under the name "La Gioconda" (la Joconde) it has its place amongst the greatest gems of the Salon Carré in the Louvre where it was taken from the Collection of King Francis I. (Fig. 89). Vasari says that it took Leonardo four years to paint it, and that nevertheless he left it unfinished, — that is to say, according to his own opinion, — because in this portrait he intended to solve a problem as to colouring, and he was not satisfied

with the result of his labours, although to us the portrait is the highest revelation of his genius as a painter, and a landmark in the history of colouring. In describing this picture Vasari dwells with enthusiastic admiration on all its details. He praises the brightness and humidity of the eyes only seen in living beings, perfections which the Greeks extolled in the works of Praxiteles, next the slight tinge of red and blue around the eyes, the delicate eyelashes which seem to grow now thin now more thickly set from the skin,



Fig. 101. STUDY OF A FEMALE HEAD.

From a Drawing in the Ambrosian Library at Milan.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

the nose, the mouth, the exquisite harmony between the red of the lips and the flesh colour of the whole face, and so on. Vasari further states that, in order to produce this marvel of a portrait, so true to life in the highest sense of the word, Leonardo always took care to have singers or musicians or jesters present whilst he painted, in order to keep the lady who was sitting for him in a cheerful frame of mind, and to prevent any melancholy or wearied expression stealing over her face, and being reflected in the picture. Leonardo succeeded indeed in giving a winning smile to this face, which, Vasari says in his enthusiasm, was more divine than human.

Unfortunately we can no longer share all the enthusiasm of Vasari. An injudicious restorer has painted over the face of the lovely Florentine lady to such a degree, that the harmony in the colouring, the warmth of the flesh tints have disappeared completely, and the head only gives the impression of having been painted in grey on grey. The hands alone have remained nearly intact, and they are to us a valuable testimony against all who do not shrink from dishonouring the memory of the great Master by

ascribing to him inferior works. Also the landscape of the Dolomites in the near background through which streams and rivulets are winding between weird rocky banks, still shows in its gentle gradations from a dull brown to a lighter green, and finally to a bright blue, the hand of Leonardo, his thorough knowledge of the perspective of the atmosphere and of the tints which become more and more faint in the far off distance. The most marvellous feature of the picture is however the mellowness in the treatment of the design, the chiaroscuro around the whole figure shedding a brilliancy of colour over the features, blending them as it were, and thus divesting them



Fig. 102. STUDY OF A HEAD.

From a Drawing in the Uffizi at Florence.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

of the plastic hardness which was till then the characteristic peculiarity of Florentine art. Leonardo opposes it for the first time consciously in this picture. In Milan he had become a painter in the true sense of the word, and he proved himself as such to the Florentines, none of whom could paint, not even the proud ambitious Michelangelo. Whilst the latter obstinately refused to adopt the new method, all the younger artists applauded the great Master, and in this new school a youth born in Umbria, timid but eager to learn, became a painter,—it was the young Raphael.

Like Raphael's Sistine Madonna, Leonardo's Mona Lisa is one of the few works done by human hands which do not show how they were brought to such per-



Fig. 103. STUDY FOR A PORTRAIT.

From a Drawing in the Uffizi at Florence.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co.,
Dornach and Paris.)

fection. The act of creating is so completely lost sight of in the creation, that no trace of it has remained, and we do not understand, how Leonardo, the restless, reckless seeker after truth, could say also of this work that it was unfinished. What Hermann Grimm with the delicate intuition of the poet says of the masterpieces of Leonardo, holds especially true of this picture: "He possesses the secret of letting us as it were see the beating of the heart in the face of those he represents. He seems to see nature in the everlasting splendour of its festive garments, he does not see it under another aspect. As our senses get gradually dulled, and as we see our friends sharing the same fate, the conviction is forced upon us that the fresh, pure look which both nature and life wore in spring time, when we were children, had only been an illusion of happiness, and that in the less vivid light in which we see them later on they bear the truer aspect. Let us

however look at the finest works of Leonardo, and our dreams of an ideal existence will once more become natural and full of meaning!"

When at a later period the matchless picture had passed from the ownership of those who ordered it, into strange hands, Leonardo himself bought it for 4000 gold ducats (about 1800 Pounds Sterling) on behalf of his royal patron, Francis I. of France, who tried to purchase whatever he could still get of Leonardo's handiwork. The existence of several contemporaneous copies proves how the picture was already prized at the time from which it dates. Up to now eight copies have been found; one of these, at present in the Prado Museum at Madrid, is so excellent, that it has been ascribed to the hand of Leonardo. Perhaps it is one of those pictures painted under Leonardo's eye by his pupils, and retouched by his own hand.

The almost nude, half size female figure in the Hermitage at St. Petersburg, which represents a free rendering of the Mona Lisa (Fig. 90), may also be traced to one of the pupils of Leonardo. The carriage and the whole arrangement of the figure are akin to Mona Lisa, and the resemblance between the landscapes in the background is still greater. A marked contrast to the smile, hovering like a ray of sunshine around the face of Mona Lisa, is the set smile on the features of the lady of St. Petersburg who is fully aware how beautiful and charming she is; the stiff drawing and the lifeless modelling also betray the pupil. This picture is perhaps by the same artist who painted the youthful Bacchus in the Louvre from a drawing or a cartoon of Leonardo. He is sitting on an eminence in the foreground of a mountainous landscape (Fig. 91) holding a thyrsus in one hand, and having a panther skin girt around his loins. A chalk drawing by Leonardo, a study for the beauty of St. Petersburg, is said to be in the Collection of the Duke d'Aumale.

Whoever wants to find out the method by which Leonardo reached the sfumato and morbidezza, the chiaroscuro vanishing as it were in vapour and mist, the picturesque softness of Mona Lisa, must look around amongst his studies of female heads many of which are still extant. Even these, like everything else connected with the name of Leonardo, must however be studied with great precaution, because sketches which are quite unworthy of him, and which show an eye for nature totally different from his, have always been ascribed to the Master and are still positively asserted to be by him. Amongst those is the female head in the Borghese Gallery at Rome (Fig. 92) about which there has been endless controversy, and of which it is impossible to tell to what period of Leonardo's career it belongs. The eyeballs protrude from under the heavy lids which seem to be made of brass, and the manner of painting the hair which looks like wire, proves still more that this sketch cannot be by Leonardo. The whole treatment shows a method which is far too coarse, and cold, and flat for a young man, and the touch of the Master Leonardo was far more free than the touch of this artist who laid stress on trifles, and by whom are also the



Fig. 104. MADONNA FROM THE HOUSE OF LITTA. In the Hermitage, St. Petersburg.
 (After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

two female heads in the Louvre and in the Ambrosiana at Milan, which show the same qualities (Fig. 93 and 94). We believe however we recognise the hand of the young Leonardo who had studied zealously from life during his stay in Florence, and who already at that period had surpassed his fellow-students and his contemporaries, in those charming heads of girls and women shown in Figures 95—103. The two first (Fig. 95 and 96)

betray in their crisp draughtsmanship, in their severe plastic treatment of forms the pupil of a Master who was above all a sculptor, or rather a modeller for casting in bronze, though, like Verrocchio, he was also willing to execute commissions for pictures. There are great lines and broad surfaces with mirrorlike reflections, but from this brilliancy gradually arises the necessity for picturesque modelling. If one looks at the three female heads



Fig. 105. STUDY FOR A PORTRAIT. From a Drawing in the Ambrosian Library at Milan.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co, Dornach and Paris.)

in the Windsor Collection and in the Louvre (Fig. 97—99), the technical treatment of which is closely akin, one perceives how the hardness of the plastic modelling has already given way to the delicate softness (*morbidezza*) of colours. Leonardo paints even with his pencil. He tries to counterbalance the hardness of the outlines by light and shade, and one sees already that his chief aim is to dissolve the plastic forms into picturesque chiaroscuro.

The female head reproduced in Fig. 99 is of special importance, because,

apart from a few alterations, it has been used for a picture known under the name of "the Madonna of the House of Litta", and considered for a



Fig. 106. STUDY FOR A PORTRAIT. From a Drawing in the Ambrosian Library at Milan.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

long time as a work by Leonardo. This head may with certainty be ascribed to the first Florentine period of the Master, but not the picture, the execution

of which is so delicate, careful, and almost smooth, that it bears the stamp of the Milanese School, in which the sense of colour developed much sooner than in the Florentine. One may even say that as a painter Leonardo did and could learn something from the Milanese when he came for the first time to the capital of Lombardy. Waagen has ascribed the Madonna to the first Milanese period of Leonardo. The technicalities of painting in this Madonna of St. Petersburg (Fig. 104) point however to a later period when the Milanese School of Leonardo was most flourishing; and this school developed after the Master had left Florence for the second time. It must have been painted about 1510, and assuredly by one of his most distinguished pupils who made use of the sketches done by the Master. The ingenious critic Morelli believes this picture to be by Bernardino de' Conti, a painter whose characteristics as an artist are not yet sufficiently known to enable us to form a true opinion. If he really painted this work, he created one of the most charming pictures of the Madonna of his time, and it is not unworthy of the great name it has borne for so long.

The female heads reproduced in Fig. 100—102 point to a later stage in Leonardo's career. They reveal that the Master had already discovered the magic by which he knew how to banish from the appearance of those whose portraits he took, the stiffness he so much disliked. We see how the heavenly smile of Leonardo's heads becomes more lively, more charming, and more gracious, till it reaches at last that divine perfection which beams upon us from the countenance of Mona Lisa, and from a celebrated sketch at the Uffizi (Fig. 103), which must belong to the same time as that most lovely of all the portraits of women painted by Leonardo.

Together with those three female portraits, reproduced in Fig. 92—94, a number of pictures in pastel at the Ambrosiana in Milan which still bear Leonardo's name, will have to be taken from the list of his works. We admit that they are pictures of a serious conception and grandeur of form (Fig. 105 and 106); but they are devoid of the deeper physiognomic charm, of the vital spark from within, which Leonardo was bent upon imparting, and did impart, to his portrait-studies, because to him they were chiefly means towards an end; they mark a certain step towards an aim he had in view. According to Morelli's opinion, shared by other art-critics, these pictures are works of Giovanni Antonio Beltraffio, a Milanese of noble family (1467—1516) who only took up art at a mature age, and who was a pupil of Leonardo till 1490 during his first Milanese period. A celebrated fresco in the Convent of Sant' Onofrio in Rome, which was formerly considered as an authentic masterpiece of Leonardo, is now generally ascribed to Beltraffio or Boltraffio. This fresco is on the first floor of the convent, in a passage leading to the cell which became the refuge of Torquato Tasso, and in which he died insane. It is between the door of the cell and the window, and represents on a gold ground the Madonna with the Child blessing the founder (Fig. 107). The drawing of a head of Bacchus, crowned with vine leaves, is also attributed to Beltraffio; it belongs any-

how to the School of Leonardo (Fig. 108), and may be a copy from an original drawing of the Master. The same is supposed to hold true of many other sketches existing in public galleries under the collective name of Leonardo (Fig. 109—112).

* * *

We broke off in our narrative of the later life and work of the Master at the point when the first interruptions occurred, whilst he was painting the



Fig. 107. MADONNA WITH THE DONOR BY BOLTRAFFIO.

From the Fresco of the Convent of Sant' Onofrio, Rome.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

Battle of Anghiari on the wall of the Sala del Consiglio Grande. More fatal to the completion of the work was a journey of Leonardo to Milan for which Soderini who was still his wellwisher, gave him a three months' leave on the 30th of May 1506, but under the condition that he would have to pay a fine of one hundred and fifty gold ducats, if he did not return in good time. We do not know what induced him to go to Milan. Müller-Walde believes he can prove from the manuscripts and drawings of Leonardo that he was once more called there respecting a commission for an equestrian statue. It was the intention of Louis XII. to erect such a monument in memory of his victorious field-marshal Trivulzio, and to place it on his



Fig. 108. STUDY OF A BACCHUS.
From a Drawing in the Academy at Venice.
(After a Photograph from the original
by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

grave at Milan. No one was so well qualified for this work as Leonardo who had for many years worked at such a monument and had already gained the admiration of the Milanese by his preparatory studies. From the manuscripts of Leonardo on which Müller-Walde bases his belief, we see that Leonardo did work indeed at a second equestrian statue differing from the Sforza Monument, and that he had made an exact estimate of its cost. As this project was however abandoned after the first steps, any further discussion on this subject would be useless as regards other works of Leonardo. Whether this or any other commission took him back to Milan, life in that city had become so pleasant to him, after rule and order had been re-established under the French dominion, that he did all he could to free himself from his obligations to the Signoria of Florence. He was valiantly upheld by the French authorities who must have been very anxious to keep Leonardo in Milan, but who had also good reasons to remain on friendly terms with the Signoria of Florence, who maintained during the wars that convulsed Italy, a neutrality favourable to the French. Before the expiration of the leave granted to the artist, a brisk correspondence arose between the authorities of Milan and of Florence, during which both parties defended their claim upon Leonardo, indulging in a superabundance of courtesies and explanations. Undoubtedly Piero Soderini was in the right; he had not only to defend the claims of the Signoria, and to answer for the instalments of money advanced already to Leonardo, but being full of good will towards him, he felt disappointed and hurt by his slowness. On the other hand Chaumont, the Governor General of the King of France, expressed himself in his letters in very vague terms as to the causes which still kept Leonardo in Milan, saying he only wished him to finish a work he had begun, and asking first of all that his leave might be extended for one month. In a letter written by Chaumont to the Signoria of Florence in December 1506, Leonardo's return to that city is mentioned again. He did however not go back till September 1507, after Chaumont had given him a special safe-conduct, in which he calls him "the painter of His Most Christian Majesty" and recommends him urgently to the Signoria on account of business

matters about an inheritance he had to settle with his brothers. Leonardo had already in the course of the year 1507 entered the service of King Louis XII. as court-painter and accepted a fixed salary.

That safe-conduct was not sufficient for the distrustful Leonardo who had moreover a bad conscience as far as the Signoria of Florence was concerned. To make sure of greater safety he applied to one of his former patrons in Milan, Cardinal Ippolito d'Este of Ferrara, who was a friend of an influential man in Florence, a certain Raffaello Iheronymo, captain of the Signoria. Leonardo's letter, dated September 18th, is characteristic as regards his feeling of justice and his tenacity in defending his rights. "A few days ago", he writes to the Cardinal from Florence, "I arrived here from Milan, and as one of my brothers refuses to execute the Will my father made three years ago, at the time of his death, I cannot forbear applying to Your Eminence for fear of any prejudice to myself in a matter which is very important to me. Although justice be on my side, I beg of Your Eminence to give me a letter to Ser Raffaello Iheronymo who is at present one of our highest dignitaries, before whom my case will come in court, and who has besides been specially commissioned by His Excellency the Gonfaloniere to attend to my suit, which must be decided and terminated before the feast of All-Saints. Therefore, Monsignore, I entreat Your Eminence as urgently as possible, to write a letter to Ser Raffaello and to recommend to him Leonardo da Vinci who has always been and always will be your devoted servant, and to request Ser Raffaello not only to do me justice, but to give a decision in my favour. After all the reports I have received I cannot



Fig. 109. STUDY FOR A MADONNA. From a Drawing in the Uffizi at Florence. (After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

doubt that Ser Raffaello who is greatly attached to Your Eminence, will give such a turn to the matter as I desire, and I should of course ascribe a favourable decision to the letter of Your Eminence to whom I have again the honour of recommending myself. Et bene valeat! Your most devoted servant Leonardus Vincius pictor."

For a time no letters of recommendation were of any use. The lawsuit was prolonged, perhaps intentionally, because it was in the interest of the Signoria to induce Leonardo to finish the work he had begun, and the only prospect of making him do so was that he should come from Milan to Florence as often as possible. Leonardo's tenacity however equalled the slowness of the Florentine administration of justice. He did not mind travelling again and again from Milan to Florence and back, and it must have ended in his having a studio in both towns where he worked according to the demands his lawsuit made upon his time. It appears that whilst in Milan he had first to work as engineer and hydraulic architect, and that he had resumed works which he had already begun during the reign of Lodovico Sforza. He continued the works at the Martesana Canal, constructing new ones, and as again under the rule of the French he was not always paid in ready money, a privilege was granted to him on the Canal San Cristoforo. He was allowed to conduct twelve inches of water to a certain distance, and to sell the water thus gained to the peasants who wanted it for watering their fields. Leonardo constructed sluices in order to obtain the necessary supply of water, and also carried on navigation on his own canal which he encouraged by building storehouses.

The great idealist who painted the Last Supper of Christ, and exalted it into an everlasting emblem for all humanity, was in private life a realist, a man of business. His activity and acuteness, and his skill as an inventor would have sufficed for the nineteenth century. The prophetic spirit in which he pointed out the paths, which were only rediscovered three hundred years after his death, would have led to the greatest results. Already in 1507 he knew how to induce Chaumont to ratify his possession of the vineyards presented to him in 1497 with absolute power to dispose of them in his life time or to bequeath them, and when in 1509 King Louis XII. entered Milan, Leonardo was according to his wont occupied in preparing for this great occasion the triumphal arches and other decorations he knew how to arrange with exquisite artistic taste. Thanks to his many and varied talents, he gained ever increasing power over all those with whom he had intercourse. In one of the letters Chaumont wrote to the Signoria of Florence he states that, like himself, the writer of the letter, all those who had seen the works of Leonardo had conceived a great affection for him; but that, after having enjoyed his society in Milan, and proved by experience his manifold virtues, he was quite convinced that the reputation he had gained as a painter was thrown into the shade by the virtues dwelling within him. He said he had given splendid proofs of his skill in everything he undertook, in drawing, in architecture &c. In fact during

those stirring times Leonardo's advice was asked about the works for the completion of the Cathedral of Milan. During the rule of Lodovico he belonged already to the architects of the Cathedral, and is said to have made a model for the construction of a cupola. On the 21st of October 1510 the architects of the Cathedral held a conference, at which Leonardo was present, to consider what steps should be taken to go on with the building of the cupola. It stands to reason that such occupations and his continual journeys between Milan and Florence caused him to postpone the execution of pictures King Louis wished to have. He must however have finished something from time to time, since his patrons in France and at Milan did not lose patience, but always continued to show him kindness



Fig. 110. STUDY FOR A MADONNA. From a Drawing in the Ambrosian Library at Milan.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

and good will. In one letter a picture of a Madonna is mentioned, and Leonardo himself speaks in two letters written at Florence in the beginning of the year 1511, of two pictures of a Madonna. He made a stay in Florence on account of his lawsuit, and those letters were addressed to the Governor of the King, Girolamo Cusano—(Chaumont had died shortly before)—and to the Prefect of Milan, the head of the town council. The first of these two letters, whose contents are the same, runs as follows: "I fear that my poor recognition of the great benefits which I have received from Your Magnificence, has rendered you dissatisfied with me, and that hence I have never received an answer to the many letters I have written to Your Magnificence. Now I am sending Salai to Your Magnificence in order to say that the lawsuit with my brothers is nearly over, and that I hope to be there (i. e. in Milan) at Easter, and to bring with me two pictures of the Holy Virgin of different sizes, which were painted for our

most Christian King or for any one else agreeable to Your Magnificence. On my return there I should be very glad to know where my dwelling is to be, because I should not like to inconvenience Your Magnificence, and also whether or not my salary will continue to be paid, because after all I have worked for the Most Christian King.

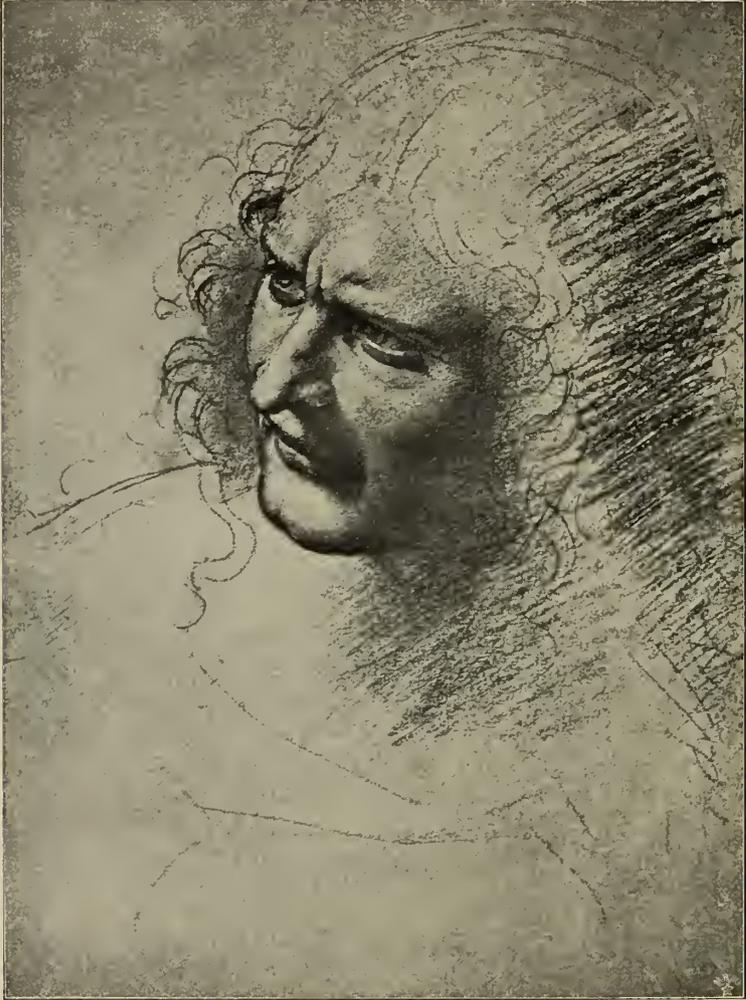


Fig. 111. STUDY OF PHYSIOGNOMY. From a Drawing in the Louvre at Paris.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

“I am writing to the Prefect about the water the King presented to me, but into the possession of which I have not yet entered, because at that time there was not sufficient water in the canal on account of the great drought, and its openings had not yet been regulated. He assured me however that, after these regulations had been made, I might enter into possession. I hence beseech Your Magnificence once more, now that these

openings have been adjusted, not to mind the trouble of bringing my permit once more to the notice of the president, that is to say, of giving me possession of the aforementioned water, because on my arrival I intend erecting machines and other things on it, which will give great pleasure to our Most Christian King."

As in the other letters of Leonardo which have come down to us, the anxieties for the necessities of daily life and the litigations about property



Fig. 112. STUDY OF A HEAD. From a Drawing in the Ambrosian Library at Milan.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

outweigh all other interests; even the interests of art are placed in the background for the sake of hydraulic and mechanical works, partly play-things destined to amuse great lords. What he says about two pictures of the Madonna finished in Florence, is so vague, that it does not in the least enable us to identify them with any of the works of Leonardo which still exist. The fact that at this time, when he made a longer stay in Florence, he had his pupil and assistant Salai with him, who acted also as his servant, causes us however to assume that from Leonardo's Cartoons he, and perhaps other scholars, executed pictures in oil which Leonardo

retouched, as he had done in former days, and both pictures of the Madonna may have belonged to these.

Besides the Madonna Litta, there are others in public and private collections to which the name of Leonardo has been wrongly attributed; but they are so closely connected with him, that the supposition of their having been painted from his cartoons by his pupils, and sent out into the world as his own pictures, seems to be justified. The most beautiful of these pictures of the Madonna, in the widest sense of the word, is the Holy Family with St. Katharine in the Hermitage of St. Petersburg (Fig. 113). Morelli discovered that in the year 1595 this picture was in the possession of the Senator Galeazzo Visconti in Milan and considered at that time as a work by Cesare da Sesto. This conclusion is fully justified, because the work coincides with other pictures of this artist who was born in 1480 at Sesto Calende near the Lago Maggiore; he went to Milan in about 1507, consequently at the same time as Leonardo, and worked there till about 1512 under the direction of the Master; in later years the influence of Raphael told on his work. In the head of the Madonna as well as in that of the Child the type of face peculiar to Leonardo is still perfectly pure. The sketch rendered on Pag. 96 (Fig. 86) which Morelli also ascribes to Cesare da Sesto, has evidently served as a study for the child. A picture of the Madonna by the same artist painted a little earlier, is still more closely connected with Leonardo; it is at the Louvre and known under the name "La Vierge aux Balances" (Fig. 114). Besides the Madonna we see Saint Elizabeth and the Archangel Michael who holds a pair of scales with which the Child is playing. The rocky foreground with a grotto having an opening on one side like a window, in order to give us a glimpse of the distant landscape, is the scene of this idyllic family group which is not without symbolic and dogmatic meaning. This is proved by the presence of the Archangel Michael who is holding the scales for the future Judge of the World, in which he will weigh the fate of the blessed ones and of those doomed to eternal punishment. The head of the Madonna, with beautiful wavy hair, and the transparent veil falling down on her shoulders, reminds us in every feature of prototypes of Leonardo.

A second Madonna in the Louvre (Fig. 115) points to a prototype by Leonardo, to the composition of Saint Anna Selbdritt from which the figure of the Madonna, sitting in the foreground of a landscape, and bending over the two children who are embracing each other, has been taken without any material alteration. A picture not unlike this one, in which instead of the two children the infant Saviour appears alone playing with a lamb, is in the Poldi-Pezzoli Museum at Milan. Modern research has proved it to be a work of Giovanni Pietro Ricci, called Giampetrino, who may also have been the author of the picture in the Louvre. Giampetrino was one of Leonardo's own pupils during his second stay at Milan, and it is said that there he kept up more than any one else the tradition of Leonardo's art. Morelli supposes that his studio was a meeting place of the painters



Fig. 113. HOLY FAMILY WITH ST. KATHARINE. From a Picture in the Hermitage, St. Petersburg.
 (After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

from the Netherlands who came to Italy after the death of Leonardo in order to study his works, to copy or to imitate them freely. In many copies from Leonardo and other Italian Masters Morelli recognises the hands of these painters, and if in some instances he went too far, he was right in many others. A classical instance of these Flemish imitations of Leonardo's

style we see in the Gallery at Munich; it is a Madonna (Fig. 116) which is now positively ascribed to the painter, Bernaert van Orley of Brussels, who was in Italy from 1510 to 1515.

The Madonna in the Grotto by Cesare da Sesto leads us to one of Leonardo's masterpieces, the celebrated "Madonna delle Rocce" (La Vierge aux Rochers) which the Master executed and completed during the second period of his stay at Milan, and which seems to mark at the same time the end of his career as an artist. For many years the work has been the subject of a hot contention amongst art-critics, arising in the first instance from the fact that there are duplicates of this picture. The one in the Louvre (Fig. 117) may claim an illustrious history. It belonged to King Francis I of France who, according to tradition, received it from Leonardo himself, and for a long time it adorned the famous "golden cabinet" in the Castle of Fontainebleau. From there it was taken to Versailles towards the end of the seventeenth century, and finally it was placed in the Louvre. An excellent engraving by Desnoyers, signed "La Vierge aux Rochers", made the picture known in wider circles. The first who doubted its being authentic was the German art-critic, G. J. Waagen, the greatest judge of pictures in his time. He pronounced the picture in the Louvre to be a copy, for he had seen a much better one in the Collection of Lord Suffolk at Charlton Park in England, which he however did not consider as being altogether Leonardo's own handiwork. Only in the heads he recognised the hand of Leonardo. He also felt convinced that Leonardo himself had painted very little, and that in most instances he had only drawn the cartoons for his pictures, leaving the execution in oil to his pupils.

Since Lord Suffolk's copy came into the possession of the National Gallery in London (Fig. 117), it has been accessible to the examination of critics, and this has been rendered all the more easy by Braun's photographs of both pictures of which we give reproductions on opposite pages. The picture in London also has its history. It was in the Church of St. Francis in Milan when in 1796¹ the English art-dealer, Gavin Hamilton, bought it for thirty ducats from the monks in order to sell it soon after to Lord Suffolk. Lomazzo, the Milanese biographer of Leonardo whose Treatise on Painting appeared in 1584, also speaks of this picture, adding that it is to be found in the Chapel of the Conception in the above mentioned church. If his description seems in one way to point to the picture in the Louvre, this work can no longer have been in Milan at the time Lomazzo wrote his Treatise, because it was already in the possession of Francis I. Hence there remains only the supposition that the picture in the Church of St. Francis must have been a second work on the same subject done under Leonardo's supervision or a later copy.

That the French defend their gem with passionate zeal stands to reason,

¹ The Catalogue of the National Gallery, London, states that the picture was purchased in or about 1777, and brought to England.



Fig. 114. MADONNA WITH THE SCALES BY CESARE DA SESTO (?). From the Picture in the Louvre at Paris.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

and this fact does therefore not fall heavily into the scale; but all the more heavily falls the decision arrived at by so clear-sighted a man as Morelli who declares the picture in the Louvre to be the authentic one. Even so cautious a critic as Karl Woermann is certain that he recognised Leonardo's

touch in it. Other German critics are on the contrary decidedly in favour of the picture in London, and Anton Springer even tried to reconcile both theories by pronouncing the London copy to be the product of original and strong inspiration, whilst, owing to its didactic trait, the picture in the Louvre showed signs of being the work of the artist's later years. Now it has however been proved that the London copy was from the very beginning destined to be an altarpiece in the ecclesiastic sense of the word. Without considering its having been taken from a church and the halos encircling the heads of the three holy figures, which are said to have been added at a later date, this is proved by the circumstance that originally two Angels formed side-pieces to this picture. They are now in the possession of Duke Giovanni Melzi¹, a descendant of Francesco Melzi, who was during the last twelve years of Leonardo's life his most faithful friend, pupil, and companion.

The most striking difference between the two pictures consists in the attitude and action of the guardian angel kneeling behind the Infant Saviour. In the London picture he supports the child he is protecting with both hands, and rests contented to look at the little St. John with heartfelt delight. In the picture at the Louvre he makes on the contrary a gesture full of significance with the right hand which is almost horizontally outstretched. With the forefinger he points to the playfellow who is approaching, and looks out of the picture, as if he wished to draw the attention of the beholder to the deep earnest meaning of the lovely idyl, to the fact that the little worshipper will one day be the hero in the prelude of the great tragedy of the life, the suffering, and the death of the Redeemer. This action of the hand has been defined as didactic, as the result of cool reflection, as inartistic; but it is most characteristic of Leonardo's thoughtful and deliberate treatment to add force to the expressions of the face by the not less emphatic action of the hands. In every one of the three figures the action of the hands is full of significance. The Madonna especially who does not see the heavenly messenger, holds the left hand instinctively over the divine Child as if to protect it. Is it possible that the angel alone did not share in this action? The hand with the outstretched forefinger was a favourite feature in the pictures of Leonardo who, as we know, used to study hands with the greatest zeal (cf. the drawing Fig. 119). It also seems to us that the two heads of the children in the picture of the Louvre have a stronger touch of naive and childlike ease than the picture in London. The St. John of the latter has the stamp of studied elegance which, as a rule, we do not see in pictures and drawings by Leonardo.

The advocates of the genuineness of the London picture have interpreted these and other less important deviations in their favour, and they have moreover the advantage of their picture being much better preserved than that of the Louvre which has lost its original clearness and brilliancy

¹ A few years ago two angels, said to have been these side-pieces, and attributed to De Predis, were placed near the Vergine delle Rocce in the National Gallery of London. J. L.

by cleaning. As the extant studies of Leonardo (Fig. 120) for this composition do not help us in this controversy, it must, like many other Leonardo questions, be in abeyance till further discoveries, which depend chiefly upon a careful study of his manuscripts, throw more light upon it. The contro-



Fig. 115. MADONNA WITH THE CHILD AND THE LITTLE ST. JOHN.
From the Picture in the Louvre at Paris.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

very is of minor importance, if we limit ourselves to the study of the composition and the colouring of Leonardo which both pictures show clearly.

From his youth upward, whilst he pursued his first studies in the Val d'Arno, Leonardo had loved the fantastic forms of nature, the steep mountains with their jagged peaks rising abruptly from the plains, with rivers winding

between them. This love had grown stronger after he had seen the beauty of the Dolomites in their sublime solitudes, and from that time forth those mountain scenes formed the background of his pictures. This love forms the romantic element of his nature and of his art, but he always subordinates it to his thirst for scientific knowledge, to his veneration for the forms of nature. He always endeavours to render the rocks and cliffs in all their details, to treat them as it were individually, and in harmony with this he depicts every flower, every little plant, yea, nearly every blade of grass in the foreground of his landscapes like something individual, worthy of the most delicate execution. Thus he had worked all his life, and to this principle he still remained faithful in creating the work to which he devoted all his intellectual and artistic powers. The highest technical problem he wished to solve was however to render the chiaroscuro as perfect as possible, and he did so by placing the four figures of the "Vergine delle Rocce" in the foreground in a grotto, and letting a bright light stream through the broken background. He thus increased intentionally the difficulties he wished to conquer. It is as if he had wished to illustrate a certain passage in his *Treatise on Painting*, which we may take for granted was written such as it stands now at the time of his second stay in Milan. In this work he says: "The first aim of the painter must be to give to the smooth surface of his picture the appearance of a relief standing out from the background. He who surpasses all the others in this point deserves to be called the greatest. This perfection, this highest principle of art is attained by the just and natural distribution of shadows and lights, by that which is called chiaroscuro. If a painter is afraid of putting the shadows where they are necessary, he will reap dishonour and render his work contemptible to intelligent minds in order to insinuate himself into the false esteem of the great multitude and of ignorant men who, in looking at a picture, only consider the false gloss of the colouring without thinking of the relief."

More probable than the supposition that in pictures like the *Madonna delle Rocce* Leonardo wished to illustrate these or other passages from his *Treatise on Painting*, is the conclusion that he only arrived at these general principles after his many experiments in drawing and painting. We find for instance in other passages of his *Treatise on Painting* prescriptions which show clearly that they are the results of the studies he made for the *Battle of Anghiari*. "In representing history", he advises his pupils, "make foreshortenings of every kind, as seems best to you, especially in battles, for perpetual contortions and bendings of the bodies of those who take part in such fighting, or rather let me say in the most brutish madness, are quite necessary." In another passage he even touches upon certain subjects he made use of in sketching the *Struggle round the Standard*: "An angry figure must be represented as holding another by the hair, twisting his head towards the ground, and pressing a knee into his ribs. Let him raise a dagger with the right arm." He next gives minute directions how an atmosphere consisting of air, dust, smoke and vapour, suitable for the picture of a battle is to be represented.

It is remarkable how the human feeling within Leonardo revolts when he is speaking of war. He, the theorist, who invented coldbloodedly the most cruel destructive machines, calls a battle "the most brutish madness!"

The Gallery of the Louvre possesses a second picture of the later period of Leonardo, which represents the youthful St. John the Baptist in half



Fig. 116. MADONNA WITH THE CHILD JESUS. Supposed Copy from Leonardo da Vinci by B. van Orley (?).
From the Picture in the Pinakothek, Munich.
(After a Photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich.)

size, smiling as he points, with his right hand uplifted, to the cross of reed he is holding in his left (Fig. 121). It is true, this smile is too bewitching for the precursor of the Saviour. Leonardo did however not intend painting a devotional picture for religious edification. He only wanted to try the effect of chiaroscuro and the smile of the Gioconda in a beautiful youth. It was a matter of indifference to him whom this youth represented. A



Fig. 117. MADONNA DELLE ROCCE. From the Picture in the National Gallery, London.
(After a Photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich.)



Fig. 118. MADONNA DELLE ROCCE. From the Picture in the Louvre, Paris.
After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

French art-critic has justly said that he might have made a Bacchus of him, if, instead of the lambskin, he had put a skin of a panther around his body, and placed a thyrsus into his hand instead of the cross. How different the study of action, intended for a St. John, looks which Leonardo drew in his early years in Florence, and which really represents the man who fed in the desert upon locusts and wild honey! (Fig. 122.)

Like the *Madonna delle Rocce* the youthful St. John was already in the Collection of King Francis I, a proof of its being Leonardo's own work. Louis XIII presented it however to King Charles I of England, and when the art collections of this king were sold after his death, the banker Jabach of Cologne who resided in Paris, bought it for 3500 Livres, for which sum he later on ceded it to Louis XIV.

According to the accounts of Leonardo's biographer Lomazzo, whom we have mentioned more than once, and who got his information from pupils of the Master, the latter painted during his last stay in Milan a *Leda* and a *Pomona*. He says Leonardo represented the *Pomona* smiling, "on one side covered by three veils, a most difficult thing in this art." The *Leda* was, as Lomazzo reports in his *Treatise on the Art of Painting*, "quite naked with the swan in her lap and looking down with bashful eyes. In another work he again speaks of *Leda*, and adds that this picture had also been in the Castle of Fontainebleau in the possession of Francis I. Not a trace of either picture has been found; but it is not improbable that we may have Leonardo's design of *Leda* with her swan on her knees in the celebrated picture of Correggio in the Berlin Gallery. It appears however that Leonardo also painted a *Leda* in a standing attitude with the swan on her left side, and the little *Castor* and *Pollux* playing on a flowery meadow on her right. Several pictures on this subject, dating from the first half of the sixteenth century, clearly point to a prototype by Leonardo, and Müller-Walde also found on a sheet with studies belonging to the *Codex Atlanticus*, the little pen and ink sketch of the nude figure of a woman whose attitude and movements correspond exactly with the pictures of *Leda* mentioned above. The one which is best known may be seen in the *Borghese Gallery* at Rome (Fig. 123). With this or another *Leda* picture by Leonardo are also associated a few sketches (Fig. 124 and 125) which some art-critics consider as originals by the Master, whilst Morelli does not hesitate in declaring them to be studies by Giovanni Antonio Bazzi, called *Sodoma*, who during the last years of the fifteenth century was a pupil of Leonardo in Milan or worked there under his influence. The female head with the pretty, plaited hair (Fig. 125) seems on the contrary to be from Leonardo's own hand, and it is also very characteristic of Leonardo that on the same sheet of the *Windsor Collection*, on which this head is drawn, the peculiar arrangement of the hair from the back and the sides of the face is still shown, because according to his custom Leonardo wanted to understand these curious plaits thoroughly.

During his second period in Milan the young nobleman, Francesco Melzi,

was nearest to his heart. The family had an estate at Vaprio near Milan, and it is said that, already during the rule of Lodovico il Moro, Leonardo had intercourse with the Melzi. In the Villa Melzi which still exists, a large fresco of a Madonna is shown as a work of Leonardo, but it can only be by a pupil. Some art critics feel sure that the fresco is by Sodoma. When Leonardo settled for the second time at Milan, Francesco Melzi was sixteen or seventeen years old. We learn this from a drawing in the Ambrosiana, which represents the head of an elderly man in profile and bears two inscriptions stating that Francesco da Melzo drew this head from a relief on the 14th of August 1510, at the age of seventeen. Morelli, who was the first to draw attention to this sheet, believed he recognised corrections by the hand of Leonardo on the ear and in the lines of the contours. This



Fig. 119. STUDY OF FOLDED HANDS. From a Drawing in Windsor Castle.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

drawing, perhaps a first attempt, which the youth considered a success, is however the only authenticated work of Melzi, and it is also probable that he was only a dilettante in art. He had learned drawing with Leonardo, because at that time it belonged of necessity to the accomplishments of a young nobleman. Vasari who got to know him in 1566, says nothing about his having been a painter, and Lomazzo is the first who relates that Melzi had reached great perfection in the art of painting miniatures. Leonardo felt strongly drawn towards the young man by his beauty and his culture; his thirst for knowledge and his receptive mind seem to have fascinated him. The pupil soon became the friend and confidant of Leonardo who

considered him alone worthy to be the heir and guardian of the documents relating to his scientific researches. A letter of the ambassador of Ferrara in Milan to his master, the enthusiastic lover of art, Duke Alfonso d'Este, written in 1523, shows that Melzi was also believed to know many of the secrets of Leonardo.

Francesco Melzi accompanied Leonardo in the travels he undertook whilst he was in Milan. The political position in that town had however changed again, after Louis XII of France had been compelled by the Holy League to surrender the city. Supported by powerful allies, Massimiliano Sforza, a son of Lodovico, had in December 1512 assumed the government of the city and succeeded in remaining in power for a few years. This change in the government and the disorders caused by it, may have induced Leonardo to try his fortune in Rome where art had begun to flourish after Pope Leo X came to the throne. On the 24th of September 1513 Leonardo left Milan accompanied by Francesco Melzi and the faithful Salai. According to Vasari Leonardo travelled with Duke Giuliano de' Medici by whom he was perhaps introduced to the Pope who took great interest in alchemy and other occult sciences. Vasari further relates that at first Leonardo created astonishment in Rome by his mechanical contrivances and other artifices. He made small animals filled with air, which flew about as long as the air blown into them sufficed. One of the vine-dressers in the Belvedere found a curious lizard, and to this Leonardo fixed wings injected with quicksilver, which were set in motion when the animal ran about. He moreover provided it with artificial eyes, horns, and a beard, and shut the monster up in a box; when he showed it suddenly to his friends, they fled in terror. Another time he took the intestines of a sheep and blew into them with such force by means of bellows, that they filled the whole room.

Leo X is said to have given him a commission for a picture. Before Leonardo set to work he is reported to have mixed oil and herbs in order to prepare a varnish for it. When the Pope heard of this, he exclaimed: "Oh! he will do nothing, because he thinks of the end, before he has begun the work." It is possible that the artist who was easily hurt, heard of this, and that therefore he took no further trouble about the commission of the Pope. According to Vasari he painted however two small pictures for Baldassare Turini, the Datario (i. e. collector of benefices) of the Pope: a Madonna with the Infant Jesus, and the portrait of a little child. Vasari himself saw the pictures in the house of the descendants of Turini, but he adds that the picture of the Madonna had probably been sadly spoiled by the well known experiments in colours made by Leonardo. Both these pictures are lost. During his stay in Rome Leonardo seems however to have striven zealously to improve his knowledge and his technical skill by intercourse with experienced men. We see for instance from his notes that he frequented the society of a German worker in iron, presumably in order to learn something of his art.



Fig. 120. TWO ANGELS' HEADS.

The one on the right is a study for the Angel in the *Madonna delle Rocce*, Louvre.
From a Drawing in the Ambrosian Library at Milan.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

Already in the autumn of the year 1514 Leonardo seems to have gone away from Rome without leaving behind him any trace of his artistic work. He is the only one of the great artists of the Italian Renaissance to whom Rome seems to have given nothing as regards either substantial goods or artistic inspirations. If it be true, as has been maintained, that he had already been in Rome soon after 1480, this stay can only have been of very short duration, and when in later years he twice made a longer stay there, as has now been proved, his artistic nature was already so completely formed, and he ranked so high above all his brethren in art, that he could no longer receive, but only give. By way of Parma and Florence where he still had business to settle, he returned to Milan, probably at the end of 1514 or in the beginning of 1515, where the political situation was soon improved for the partisans of the French dominion by the death of Louis XII, which took place on the 1st of January 1515, and by the coming to the throne of the youthful Francis I, distinguished by his chivalrous bearing and his love of art. One of the first aims of the young King was to regain the footing in Upper Italy, lost by his predecessor and cousin, by reconquering Milan. After he had on the 13th and 14th of September gained a brilliant victory at Marignano over the army of Swiss mercenaries who had advanced to meet him, and to protect Milan, Duke Massimiliano gave up every further resistance. On the 4th of October he surrendered Milan to the French King for 30000 gold ducats, and Francis I. entered the city. On this occasion

Leonardo most likely proved again his well known talent for festive decorations, and it is reported that at a great festival in Pavia he paid a delicate homage to King Francis by his cleverness in constructing mechanical contrivances. He made a lion which could walk, and as it was going round the hall it stopped in front of the King. Its breast opened, and a quantity of lilies, the emblem of the House of Bourbon, fell out. Perhaps Francis I. had already at that time ratified the bestowal of landed property to Leonardo, and also engaged him as court painter. We learn from the autobiography of Cellini that the liberal prince gave an annuity of seven hundred gold scudi to the Master, besides various additional revenues and advantages. From this time forth he also accompanied the King during all his expeditions in Italy. He was at Bologna when, on the 19th of December 1515, Francis I. made a Concordat with Pope Leo X.

These new experiences which, we may be sure, caused his embittered heart to rejoice again in hope and faith, did not prevent him attending to his own affairs. This is proved by a curious letter of Leonardo to the manager of his vineyards, from which we learn that this universal genius also understood agriculture. "The last four bottles", he writes to the manager who was in charge of the estate outside the gates of Milan, were not at all according to my expectations, and I have been vexed about it. If the vines sent from Florence were better cultivated, they would provide our Italy with the most beautiful wine such as Ser Ottavio de' Medici of Florence produces. You know I told you already that you must improve the land by putting broken rubbish or mortar of ruined walls into the soil; this protects the roots from damp, and both stem and leaves can thus draw from the air the substances necessary for the perfection of the grapes. Another great mistake is that now-a-days we make wine in open vessels; this causes the very essence to evaporate in the air, and nothing remains but a tasteless fluid coloured by the skins and the pips. It is also a mistake not to pour the wine as often as necessary from one cask into another; by neglecting this it becomes dim and causes indigestion. If you and the others would follow these directions, we should be able to drink an excellent wine. God be with you!"

Even in Milan Leonardo did not want to be without the good wine he was accustomed to drink at home; hence he had ordered vines from Florence to be planted in his vineyards. Whilst he thus gave his attention to the improved culture of his vines, an utter change in his life was about to take place. Francis I. made him the offer to accompany him to France, and when at the end of January 1516 the King left Milan, Leonardo joined him with his friend and pupil, Francesco Melzi, with his servant Maturina, and his man, Battista de Vilanis. We know from the account of Cellini that even during times of peace Francis I. travelled with a suite of eighteen thousand men, of whom twelve thousand were mounted; hence the painter of the King too could appear as befitted his dignity and his age. In France he also enjoyed the hospitality of the King who gave him and his friends

and servants an apartment in the Castle of Cloux near Amboise. There he spent the last years of his life, probably in quiet rest and contemplation, giving his thoughts to the scientific problems, the solution of which seems to have occupied him till his death. Perhaps he may not till then have found leisure to write scientific treatises, as for instance that on the flight



Fig. 121. ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST. From the Picture in the Louvre at Paris.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

of birds. King Francis was satisfied to grant this leisure to the great artist. Special services in matters of art he may no longer have demanded from him, except perhaps that he consulted him as to his plans for building. He rejoiced that through Leonardo himself he succeeded in securing as many of his works as possible for France.

Leonardo was not to enjoy this leisure for long. After the hardships of his unsettled life, during which he had never known joy that was not

dimmed by sorrow, his strong constitution broke down at last, and as old age drew near, the remembrance of all the mortifications he had suffered during his whole life, gnawed at his heart. In the spring of 1519 the messenger of death came, and on the 23rd of April he made his Will in which he not only left the minutest directions as to the distribution of his property, but also as to his burial. He ordered a funeral which corresponded in every respect with the love of splendour which dominated the living man. After having commended his soul to God, to the Virgin Mary, to Saint Michael and All Angels, and the Saints in Paradise, he states that he wants to be buried in the Church of St. Florentinus at Amboise. His body is to be carried there by the Chaplains of this Church, accompanied by the rest of the clergy belonging to it, by the Chaplains of the Church of St. Dionysius, and by the Minorite Monks of St. Amboise. Before the funeral three High Masses are to be celebrated in the three Churches. Sixty poor men are to be paid for carrying torches, and apart from this a fixed sum is to be paid to the poor of two hospitals. The churches also receive rich gifts of wax tapers. He appoints as his chief heir "Messer Francesco da Melzo, nobleman of Milan, as a reward for the pleasant services rendered to me in the past." To him he bequeaths not only his ready money and the remainder of his salary, his clothes etc., but also "each



Fig. 122. ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

From a Drawing in the Library at Windsor Castle.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun,
Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

and all of my books which I possess at present, as well as the instruments and manuscripts connected with my art and my vocation as painter." He also appoints Francesco Melzi to be the Executor of his Will. His vineyard outside the gates of Milan is divided between his servants Salai and Battista de Vilanis, and he also bequeaths to the latter the right on the water from the Canal of San Cristoforo which King Louis XII had given him. In conclusion he bequeaths "to my own brothers living in Florence" the sum of 400 Scudi which he had deposited one day in October 1513 with the treasurer of Santa Maria Nuova in Florence, and moreover the accumulated interest. Considering Leonardo's character and mode of thinking, we may conclude from this legacy that the lawsuit about the inheritance, the result of which is not known, was at last decided in his favour, and that his



Fig. 123. LEDA. From the Picture in the Borghese Gallery, Rome.

ambition and his sense of justice having been satisfied, he once more allowed his innate magnanimity to prevail.

A few days after he made this Will, Leonardo died on the 2nd of May 1519, not, as Vasari relates, in the arms of King Francis who was that day at Saint-Germain en Laye, but in the presence of his faithful Melzi who informed the King and Leonardo's brothers in Florence of the death of his

friend who had been a father to him. Melzi's letter to Leonardo's brothers which is extant, is a touching proof of grateful love and fidelity, and it proves at the same time that Francesco Melzi fully understood what a loss the death of this man, who was without an equal, meant to the world. "It is impossible," he writes to the brothers in Florence, "to express the grief his death has caused me, and as long as I live I shall be inconsolable, and justly so, because he daily showed me a heartfelt and ardent love. Every one grieves over the death of such a man, *whom it is no longer within the power of nature to create*. May Almighty God now give him eternal rest. He departed from this life on the 2nd of May, well prepared, and with all the rites of the Holy Mother Church.

In the year 1863 the French Government ordered excavations to be made with a view to finding the body of Leonardo, but without any success. From the middle of the sixteenth century Amboise had frequently been the scene of struggles followed by devastations during which not even the churches were spared. Already before the year 1789 there remained no tombstone of note in the church where Leonardo was buried, and in 1808 it was demolished. The last tombstones were sold, and the leaden coffins in which the bones of the dead were lying, melted down. Before the church

was destroyed, a search for the remains of Leonardo which, according to tradition, had been buried in the choir had been made; but again in vain. Also in the Castle of Cloux, now called Clos-Lucé, no token of Leonardo's sojourn remains.

Leonardo's Manuscripts were taken back to Milan by Melzi; it is said that they consisted of fifteen volumes, and it appears that he kept them carefully till his death in 1568. Later on they were however scattered, because his family did not understand their value. Ten of these volumes came gradually into the possession of the sculptor



Fig. 124. STUDY FOR A LEDA.

From a Drawing in the Collection of the Duke of Devonshire, Chatsworth.

(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co, Dornach and Paris.)

and founder in bronze, Pompeo Leoni who died in 1610. He did not let these volumes remain untouched, but tried to enlarge them by adding designs by Leonardo which he had found elsewhere, as well as copies and perhaps intentional forgeries. Out of part of these volumes the so-called Codex Atlanticus was formed, which, after various vicissitudes came into the possession of the Ambrosian Library of Milan in 1637. Another part forms a second large Codex which was bought for King Charles I. of England; it is at present in the library of Windsor Castle. In the year 1796 the Codex Atlanticus was taken to Paris by the



Fig. 125. STUDY FOR A HEAD OF LEDA.
In the Collection at Windsor Castle.
(After a Photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co.,
Dornach and Paris.)

French together with twelve smaller manuscripts; but it was restored to the Ambrosiana in 1815. The shorter manuscripts remained in Paris where they are kept in the Library of the French Institute. A fourth Collection of Manuscripts by Leonardo is in the possession of Prince Trivulzio of Milan. The short Treatise on the Flight of Birds was presented by the former owner, the Russian Sabashnikoff to the King of Italy.

* * *

After Leonardo left Milan, his School still continued to flourish there and throughout Lombardy. Those of his pupils who were nearest to his heart and enjoyed daily intercourse with him, Francesco Melzi and Salai, were however the most unproductive. Salai who had remained in Milan, appears in the end to have given up his art, for in his Will Leonardo calls him his servant. As he had built himself a house on Leonardo's vineyard, one half of which fell to his share, he perhaps only devoted himself to agriculture during his later years. Much more distinguished than these two were those already mentioned in this essay, Boltraffio, Marco d'Oggionno, Cesare da Sesto, Giampetrino (Giovanni Pedrini), and Giovanni Antonio Bazzi, called Sodoma, who belong to the pupils of Leonardo in the stricter sense

of the word, that is to say, to those whom the Master himself initiated into the technicalities of his art and into his views of nature. To his pupils in a wider sense, i. e. to the painters who were only influenced by him as regards æsthetics, and who only adopted the main features of his individual style, belong Bernardino de' Conti, Andrea Solario, Gaudenzio Ferrari, and above all Bernardino Luini who, by his many wall-paintings and other pictures, spread the manner of Leonardo through all Northern Italy to the Southern foot of the Alps as far as Lugano, and transmitted it again through his pupils to the third generation. To the South of Milan his influence told upon that precocious genius whom we generally call after his birthplace, Correggio. The graceful and delicate modelling of his figures and the charm of the chiaroscuro on which Antonio Allegri's fame in after ages is based, is an inspiration which came to the young Antonio by the study of the works of Leonardo. He alone worked out independently one of the principles of Leonardo's art, and carried it to the highest perfection which an Italian under his bright sky could attain. Correggio sowed the seed which bore fruit when Rembrandt, the greatest Northern painter of chiaroscuro, under his own dull sky was victorious in the struggle between light and shade.

Already in the beginning of the sixteenth century painters from the Netherlands came in large numbers across the Alps to Italy, where they made Milan their first stopping place, and naturally tried to find real or supposed works by Leonardo, in order to take copies of them and carry them home as models for their future work. Leonardo was however only one of the Masters worthy of being studied, and when those travelling artists who visited Italy reached Rome, Raphael and Michelangelo became their guiding stars. These varied influences rapidly developed a School of Painters which predominated in the Netherlands for nearly a century. Their pictures were to their contemporaries a revelation of the true Italian style. To our more trained eyes these shallow imitations are a horror, for we see in them a decline of the Dutch School from its own hardly earned artistic style. The same falling off, the same degeneration to a distasteful mannerism also spread in Italy with an appalling rapidity. The imitators of Leonardo became more and more superficial as they deviated from their exalted type. The last traces of the art of Leonardo we still see in the half size figure of a Christ bearing the Cross, in the Gallery of Prince Liechtenstein in Vienna (Fig. 126), and in the picture of a Saint Katharine in Windsor Castle. It is true, the drapery of the first was arranged by an underling, but the noble cast of the face, the distinguished bearing of the sufferer, the careful design of the hands show that some model from the workshop of Leonardo must have influenced the painter of this sacred picture, destined for the Chapel of a noble family, in which the sight of the Man of Sorrows was to bring no violent emotion, but peace to the worshippers.

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Fig. 126. CHRIST BEARING THE CROSS.

From the School of Leonardo. From a Picture in the Gallery of Prince Liechtenstein at Vienna.
(After a Photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich.)

The thorough and diligent examination of the manuscripts of Leonardo, which was only begun in good earnest within the last few years, and is by no means ended, is sure to render more complete in various respects the picture of this man "whose like nature has indeed never produced again". We have still much to learn about his scientific researches, about his philosophical and perhaps also about his religious views. Personally he had outgrown the tenets of the Church of his age. This is proved by several passages of his own writings. Like a cautious man who did not want to

give provocation to any of the ruling powers, he kept his opinions to himself or only confided them to his most trusted friends who also bear witness to them. One of them, Jacopo Andrea of Ferrara, was decapitated and quartered in 1506 at the Castle of Milan on account of heresy. If Leonardo's opinions had not remained concealed in his manuscripts, which were illegible



Fig. 127. SAINT KATHARINE.
From the School of Leonardo. From the Picture in Windsor Castle.
(After a Photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich.)

to any outsider, he might perhaps have had a similar fate. Before the tribunal of judges who only give a sentence according to the letter of the canonical law, he would have been convicted as a heretic worthy of death. His scientific investigations had been the very means which had led him to the highest admiration and veneration of the creative, the divine power. He may hence be called a precursor of the pantheistic principles of belief, in so far as he recognised the Hand of God in the smallest productions

of nature. He made a kind of philosophical confession of faith on a sheet with anatomical drawings, which is now in the Windsor Library; like all his other didactic writings, this was destined for posterity: "And thou, oh man, who through this work of mine learnest to understand the marvellous works of nature, if thou believest it to be a crime to dissect the human body, consider how infinitely more wicked it is to take the life of a man; and if his outer form appears to be wonderfully made, consider that it is like nothing in comparison with the soul that dwells in this body, for this, whatever it may be, is a thing of God. Let it therefore dwell in His work according to His will and good pleasure, and do not let your anger or your wickedness destroy a life; for verily, he who does not value life, does not deserve to possess it." These are golden words, dictated by true love of humanity, which sound to us like good tidings. After nearly four hundred years' work philosophy has not advanced much more.

Leonardo has been reproached with having submitted again to the coercion of the Church during the last years of his life, contrary to his philosophical convictions, by insisting in his Will on the most careful observance of her precepts. Perhaps already in his day Leonardo had arrived at the hopeless final results of natural philosophers of modern times, at the hard conclusion: "Ignorabimus!" (We shall never know anything). Perhaps the knowledge had already dawned upon him that the end of all philosophy is "to know that we must believe."

However much we may gain by further research amongst Leonardo's writings,—we shall probably have to renounce for ever the thought that new discoveries may give us a more distinct picture of the artist, and especially of the painter. What Jacob Burckhardt has said of the whole personality of the mighty man holds also true of the painter: "The grand outlines of Leonardo's nature can for all time only be divined from afar."

Literature.

The older Leonardo Literature up to about 1875, has been superseded by modern research, and we therefore only mention recent publications which have been used as a basis for this biography. The first characteristic sketch of the Master which is critically correct and still of value, was written by Carl Brun for Dohmes "Kunst und Künstler des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit." Bd. III. Nr. 61 (Leipzig 1879). The documentary matter has been collected and worked out in a comprehensive way by Gustavo Uzielli in the "Ricerche intorno a Leonardo da Vinci" (2 Vols. Florence and Rome 1872 and 1884; second enlarged edition of the first volume. Turin 1896). In the second edition of the first volume the published editions of the Manuscripts of Leonardo are also enumerated. To this has been added a publication of the anatomical drawings in Windsor Castle, with the text by Giovanni Piumati at the expense of the Russian Sabashnikoff. A very extensively planned Biography by Paul Müller-Walde: "Leonardo da Vinci. Lebensskizze und Forschungen über sein Verhältniss zur florentinischen Kunst und zu Raffael" (München 1889—1890) has remained unfinished. Of greater value are the "Beiträge zur Kenntniss des Leonardo da Vinci" im Jahrbuch der königlich preussischen Kunstsammlungen. Bd. XVIII (Berlin 1897) by the same author. The foundation for critical studies of the pictures and drawings attributed to Leonardo, and of the works of his pupils, Senator Giovanni Morelli (Ivan Lermolieff) has given us in his "Kunst-kritische Studien über italienische Malerei" (3 Bde., Leipzig 1890—1893). Of importance are also the Essays by W. Bode, J. Strzygowski, G. Dehio, and others in the "Jahrbuch der königlich preussischen Kunstsammlungen" since 1882. Also the Essays by Gruyer and Yriarte in the Gazette des Beaux Arts, 2. Pér. Vols XXXV—XXXVII contain useful information. Rich in ingenious and delicate observations are the three studies on Leonardo by M. Thausing in the "Wiener Kunstbriefe" (Leipzig 1884). The arguments against the authenticity of "La belle Féronnière" published by G. Frizzoni in the "Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst" N. F., V, S. 78—79, have not convinced the author of this work to such an extent, that he can concur in them. To p. 130 must be added that also W. Koopmann in the "Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft" XIV, S. 353—360 defends the authenticity of the Madonna delle Rocce in the Louvre in a detailed, ingenious essay.

The hypothesis by Müller-Walde mentioned on p. 53 has since been disproved. In an article of the "Perseveranza" of Milan of the 24th of January 1898 Professor Novati has proved that the figure believed by Müller-Walde to be a Mercury is Argus, the guardian of the treasures, as an inscription underneath indicates. Hence the reasons stated by Müller-Walde for the authorship of Leonardo, and based on notes from his manuscripts, also fall to the ground.¹

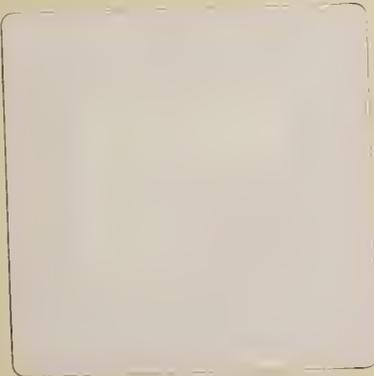
¹ See also the Note on page 58.

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