LEONARDO

Wm. Campbell Johnston

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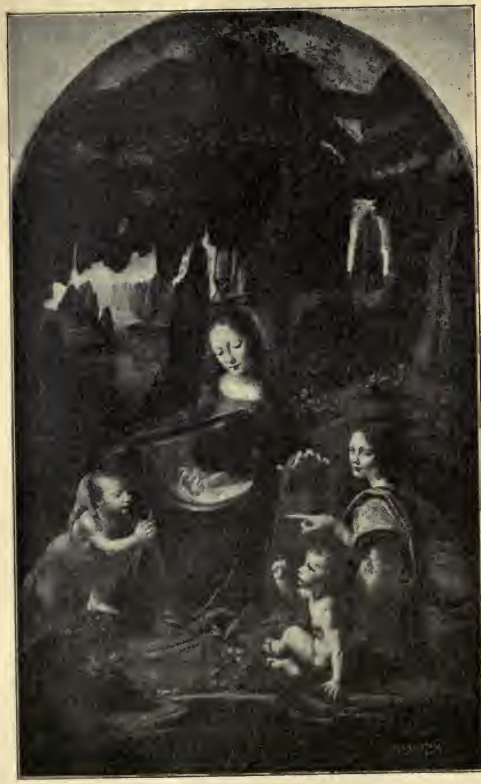

LA VIERGE AUX ROCHERS (OR, VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS). (LOUVRE)

Photograph, Braun, Clement & Cie, Dornach, Paris ana New York

LEONARDO DA VINCI

BY

DR GEORG GRONAU

AUTHOR OF
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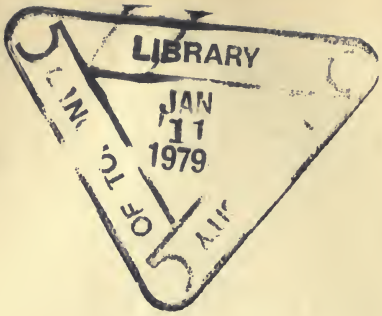

Translated from Dr Gronau's German MS.
by Frederic Pledge.

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PREFACE

Whoever to-day undertakes to speak of Leonardo, of his life and art, must be conscious that he has only fragments to offer. Fragmentary indeed is all that we positively know of the external conditions under which he produced his works. Fragmentary too is all that we possess of his artistic legacy. And the most precious treasures that Leonardo left behind him—his drawings—have neither been reproduced collectively by the resources of modern skill, nor adequately examined from the critical point of view.

In a book intended to be read by such as find pleasure in art, there is no place for the many controversies which have arisen over the authenticity of some of his works. The critical questions the author was obliged to settle for himself and to state his own views as actual facts.

Moreover, the other side of this genius—his

scientific work—could not be considered here. But the publication of Leonardo's collected manuscripts, which will shortly be completed, has enabled everyone to gain an insight into the colossal speculations of his great mind.

I feel myself under the most sincere obligation to Mr Bernhard Berenson for the valuable aid which he has rendered me in my work. To him is due the interesting conjecture that Leonardo has left behind his own portrait in the *Adoration of the Kings*. Mr Berenson has also kindly placed at my disposal the photographs taken specially for him. I have to thank furthermore Dr J. P. Richter for permission to reproduce some of the plates from his book, "The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci."

GEORG GRONAU.

FIESOLE, *June* 1902.

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LEONARDO'S LIFE

Not far from the place where the Val d' Arno widens, and the territories of the Republics of Florence and Siena adjoin, lies the little village of Vinci. It is built on hills, which enclose a richly cultivated plain, and the tower of an old fortalice frowns above it. Here, according to the best traditions, Leonardo was born in the year 1452.

The family to which his father, Ser Piero, belonged, can be traced back to the first half of the fourteenth century. From it issued a long line of notaries, and Leonardo's father himself was a member of the legal profession. In later years he repeatedly acted as notary to the Signoria of Florence. Ser Piero was about four-and-twenty years old, when he formed an illicit union with a girl named Caterina. Leonardo was the child of their love. His mother was afterwards married to a villager of Vinci. Ser Piero returned to

Florence, where he married four wives. But it was not until late in life that he had a fairly numerous issue.

In Florence the family dwelt close to the Signorial Palace, in a house built on the spot where Giuliano da San Gallo's masterpiece—the Palazzo Gondi—now stands. How that place and its vicinity then appeared, is faithfully shown in the picture of *Savonarola's Death* in the Museo San Marco.

The boy grew up in Florence in the society of his aged grandparents, his father, his father's wife, and an uncle. Quite early in life he must have displayed exceptional gifts, and doubtless received the form of education which was then customary. Moreover, at an unusually early age, the fancy of the boy awoke and surrounded him with its images. "The first remembrance of my childhood," he wrote later, "is that, as I lay in my cradle, methought a kite came flying to me, and opened my mouth with his tail; wherewith he smote me many times on the lips." Was it that the awakening of his genius appeared to him in after reflections under the form of a messenger sent from above?

His mental powers might have induced his father to give him a learned calling. But his artistic talent was so pronounced that he was entrusted to the charge of an artist. In which year this took place is unknown to us. He was probably still quite a child, about ten years old. His master was Andrea del Verrocchio.

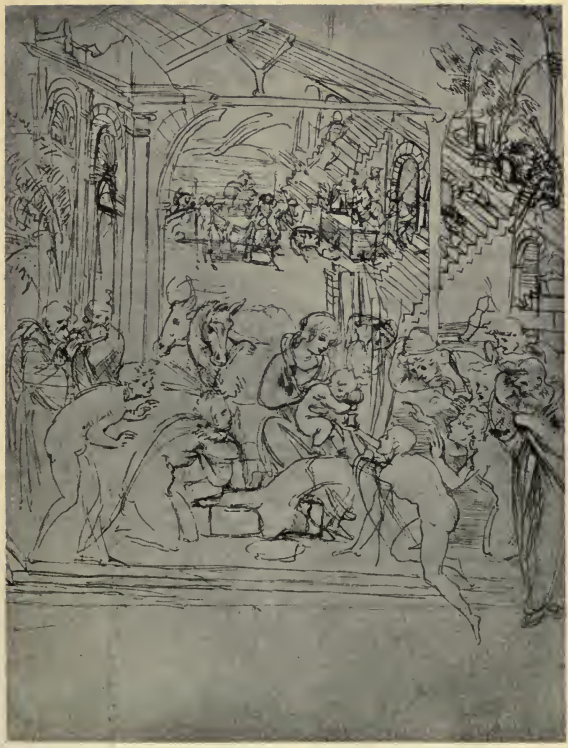
Verrocchio himself was still quite young, and had not yet created any of the works which established his later fame. He had perhaps only just made the step from goldsmith to sculptor in the grand style. But already his studio was filled with numerous pupils, evidently drawn thither by his minute and extensive knowledge of the various branches of art of which he was a master. His teaching embraced painting and sculpture alike. The most notable of his pupils, however, became painters; besides Leonardo, in particular Verrocchio's favourite pupil, Lorenzo di Credi and Perugino.

In the year 1472, at the age of twenty, Leonardo was admitted into the Guild of Painters. But he remained in Verrocchio's studio, and was still with his master in 1476.

Even without express evidence, we may assume that he took a certain part in the great artistic undertakings of Verrocchio, who at that time was executing his *David* and his *Unbelieving Thomas.* A tradition, reaching back to the days of Leonardo, simply informs us that he painted one angel in the picture of *The Baptism of Christ* in San Salvi (now in the Florentine Academy). The present state of this significant altarpiece does not allow us to express a definite opinion on this difficult question.

The earliest works of Leonardo to which dates can be assigned, are a pen and ink drawing of 1473 (in the Uffizi), representing a wide view over a plain intersected by a river, and a Madonna, holding on her lap the Child, who is playing with a cat. Of this Madonna many studies are in existence, differing widely from each other. It must be one of the two compositions mentioned by Leonardo on a sketch showing two studies of heads (in the Uffizi): ". . . . bre (one of the last four months of the year is meant) 1478, incominciai le 2 Vergine Marie."

In the meantime, an important commission had been given him by the State. On the 10th



ADORATION OF THE MAGI. (LOUVRE)

Photograph, Braun, Clement & Cie, Dornach, Paris and New York

of January 1478 he received an order for an altarpiece for the chapel in the Signorial Palace, dedicated to St Bernard. At the same time the contract made shortly before with Pietro Pollaiuolo was cancelled. The question is, did Leonardo ever touch this picture? After his departure from Florence in 1483 the work was passed on to Ghirlandajo, who did equally little to it; and finally the canvas was carried out by Filippino.

In December 1479 he produced the pen and ink sketch of a political execution. Possibly in accordance with a well-known Florentine custom, Leonardo was deputed to commemorate in painting the end of Bernardo Bandini and the murder of Giuliano de Medici; and the drawing, which is now in the Bonnat collection at Paris, was made on the spot for that purpose. At any rate, Leonardo has noted on the margin the details of the offender's dress.

In 1481 Leonardo undertook to paint an altarpiece for the monks of San Donato a Scopeto. A series of payments, partly in kind, are recorded in the books of the Convent. This time the artist at least began his work,

and the ground colouring of the *Adoration of the Kings* (in the Uffizi) is the chief evidence of his artistic activity in his early years. For it is in the highest degree probable that this composition was intended for the monks of San Donato. At all events Filippino's picture, which ultimately took its place, deals with the same subject and plainly reveals an acquaintance with Leonardo's picture.

Vasari has handed down to us a record of other works by the young master. But, as often, his account lapses into mere anecdote and fable. So his stories of the wooden shield covered with all kinds of beasts, and of the appallingly realistic Medusa's head, will be accepted as true or false according as the reader believes or disbelieves the biographer. A study for a picture of Adam and Eve, intended to be woven in silk in Flanders, but afterwards abandoned, has long since disappeared.

That Leonardo remained at Florence until far into the year 1481, is proved by the fact that as late as the 28th of September he received a cask of red wine sent to him from the monastery. From that time we lose all

trace of his abode in his native city, which he must have left soon after.

What had driven him from Florence among aliens? Most probably the desire to create on a grand scale, and to find a field better fitted for his many-sided talents. How many there were who left Florence at that time; Verrocchio, for instance, and the brothers Pollaiuolo! For a time, too, almost all the others who had any standing in Florence. It was a period of international artistry. Where great opportunities were offered, there the artist found his home and country. Leonardo had cast his eye on the mighty city of northern Italy, and on the prince who for a time held the first position in Italy—on Milan, and on Lodovico il Moro of the house of Sforza.

* * * *

In February 1482 we first get tidings of Leonardo's presence in Milan. He must then already have been engaged for some time on the work which occupied him for the next sixteen years—the equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza. For just at this time a Neapolitan

poet, Arrigoni, sent to Lodovico Moro some epigrams for the monument.

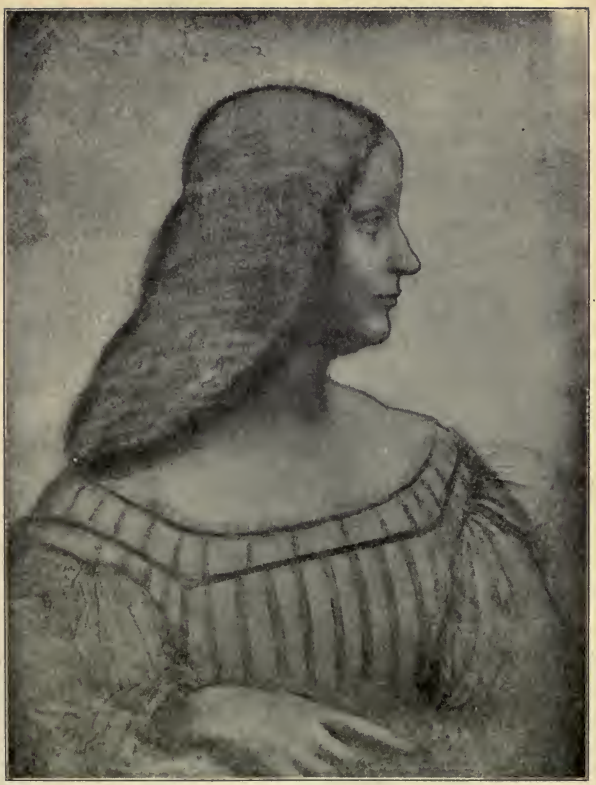
The migration of Leonardo and its immediate circumstances are variously recorded. The oldest anonymous biographer tells us that Lorenzo the Magnificent knew the artist well, and sent him, when he was thirty years old, to convey a lyre to the Duke of Milan, "as Leonardo played this instrument quite remarkably." On the other hand, a note in Leonardo's writing can be read in the "Codex Atlanticus," wherein he speaks of himself as "the man whom my Lord the Duke summoned from Florence to carry out this his work."

Leonardo offered his services to the Duke in one of the most remarkable documents that a genius ever composed about his own powers. He set forth in detail all he could do in engineering science and in the production of the appliances of war, and then, in the tenth clause, he went on to say: "In time of peace, I believe that I could equal any other as regard works in architecture, both public and private. I can likewise conduct water from one place to another. Furthermore, I can execute works in sculpture, marble, bronze or

terra-cotta. In painting also I can do what can be done as well as any other, be he who he may. Moreover, I can undertake the making of the bronze horse, which is a monument that will be to the perpetual glory and immortal honour of my lord your father, of happy memory, and the illustrious house of Sforza."

In these last words he alludes to the execution of the great work which was probably Lodovico Moro's main reason for summoning Leonardo. Already ten years before, the Duke Galeazzo Maria had formed the plan of erecting an equestrian monument in honour of the founder of his dynasty. This first attempt miscarried. And Lodovico Moro intended to execute the plan as a legacy of his predecessor.

Unfortunately we do not possess sufficient evidence as regards the various incidents which took place during the progress of the work. Only here and there a short note sheds uncertain light on the course of events. The mind of the Duke was bent on achieving something extraordinary. "His Excellency desires something superlative" (una cosa in superla-



PORTRAIT OF ISABELLA D' ESTE (?) (LOUVRE)

Photograph, Braun, Clément & Cie, Dornach, Paris and New York

tivo grado), wrote a correspondent to Lorenzo de Medici in 1489. Doubtless he intended to surpass all the equestrian statues then known, especially those of more recent date in Ferrara and Padua, and the one in course of preparation in Venice. The recorded height of more than seven metres, and the amount of metal to be used in casting it, speak to that effect.

Long before its completion, men of letters began to sing the praises of the prince who had undertaken such a work. Finally towards the end of this decade the monument seems to have been so far advanced, that Leonardo could ask a poet about an inscription, which was destined for it. At the last moment, however, a dispute must have arisen between the patron and the artist. This one perceives from a letter which Petrus Alamannus, by order of Lodovico Moro, addressed to Lorenzo de Medici. "Would his Magnificence be pleased to send one or two qualified artists to Milan. For, although the Duke had given the commission to Leonardo, he was apparently uncertain whether that artist would be able to complete it for him." The letter is dated July the 22nd, 1489.

We read in Vasari's life of Antonio Pollaiuolo

that, "after his death a drawing and a model were found, which he had made for Ludovico Sforza, for the equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan. Two variations of this drawing are to be found in our book." One of these studies of Antonio Pollainolo may be identified in a drawing in Munich. Has this co-operation of the eminent sculptor in bronze on the monument any connection with the letter of 1489, and so with the dispute which threatened Leonardo's work? Up to the present we do not know.

"On the 23rd of April 1490, I began this book and started the horse afresh." So runs a note in Leonardo's handwriting in one of the Paris Manuscripts. The Duke therefore abandoned his plans, and came to an understanding with Leonardo. The latter recommenced his work. Once more the same comedy was played. The poets sang in epigrams the praises of the Duke Francesco, of il Moro, and of the artist. In anticipation, Lancino Curzio described most happily the festive moment when the ore would pour into the mould and the divine work would be presented to the eyes of the people.

Expectant animi, molemque futuram
Suspiciunt ; fluat aes ; vox erit " Ecce deus."

The model was finished. But the times were not fit for its execution in bronze. Lodovico Moro, ever more and more harassed by the political situation, had not the means to complete the work, which was to tell posterity of the glories of the house of Sforza. In the fragment of a letter to the Duke, Leonardo says, " I will not speak of the horse, for I know the times." He was resigned.

The model survived the overthrow of the Duke and the beginning of the French domination in Milan. It must have been in good condition as late as 1501. For in September of that year the Duke of Ferrara, Ercole d' Este, who wished to adorn a square of his capital with an equestrian figure, applied to his envoy in Milan to secure Leonardo's model for that purpose. But he received an evasive answer. This is the last that is heard of Leonardo's masterpiece in the domain of sculpture. The best tradition declares that the Gascon archers used it as a target. Who can say whether this is truth, or the invention of political hate? Besides, what does it matter

how this work perished, since as regards posterity it is lost once and for all? It is a tragic fate that, of the two works on which the two most gifted men in Italy expended their finest powers, one — Michel Angelo's Julius monument — was only partially completed and has come down to us in mutilated form; while the other — Leonardo's Sforza monument — can scarcely be reconstructed even with the help of the preliminary studies.

But what bitterness must Leonardo have felt once in Florence, when Michel Angelo, thinking that he had been mocked by the elder man, who had proposed him as the interpreter of a passage in Dante, called out in derision, "thou hast designed an equestrian figure, and hast wished to cast it in bronze, but since thou couldst not, thou must retire in shame and dishonour."

* * * *

As regards many of the other artistic works which Leonardo executed by command of Lodovico Moro, only trifling information has reached us. Perhaps one of the first commissions of il Moro was that for a Madonna for Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary, which

is mentioned in a despatch of April 13th, 1485, sent to the ambassador at that king's court. The picture of the Madonna is missing, and it is entirely unknown whether it was completed and sent to Matthias Corvinus or not. Similarly the portraits of the two ladies who were successive objects of the Duke's favour —Cecilia Gallerani, and Lucrezia Crivelli— have not hitherto been identified.

Concerning the portrait of "la Gallerani," we possess an interesting correspondence which passed between Isabella d' Este, the refined Marchesa of Mantua, and the Milanese lady. Several fine portraits from the brush of Giovanni Bellini had arrived in Mantua. This fact called forth remarks on the art of Leonardo, and produced a keen desire to see pictures of both masters side by side. Accordingly Isabella sent a courier to Milan to Donna Cecilia, begging her to lend her portrait by Leonardo for a short time. The Marchesa made this request in a note of April the 26th, 1498. In return the lady replied that she would gladly send the picture, which, however, no longer resembled her; not indeed through any fault of the master, whose

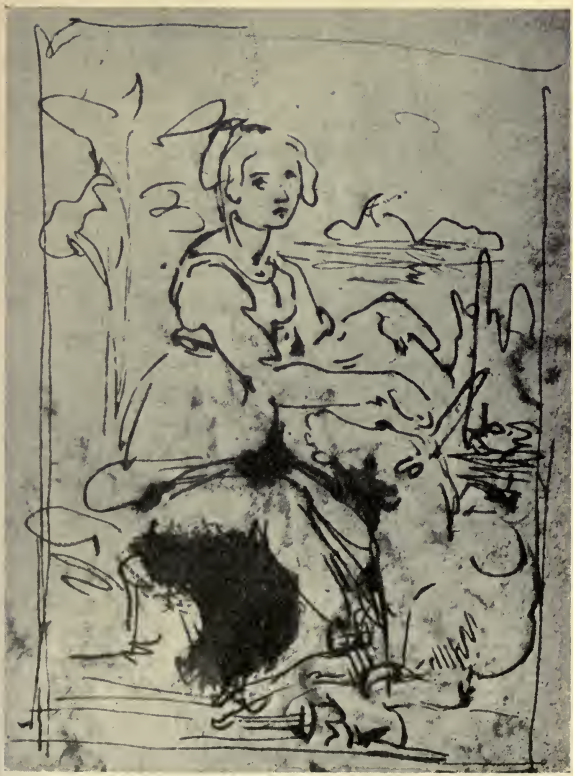


FIGURE OF A SAINT. (British Museum)

LV*b*

equal, in her opinion, could not be found, but owing to the fact that the portrait had been painted at an age when she was still undeveloped, and that she had greatly changed since. This correspondence admits the inference that Leonardo must have painted that portrait at the beginning of his career in Milan.

Even in the absence of direct evidence, it must have been assumed that Lodovico employed the greatest artist at his court on the works which served to decorate the Castello Sforzesco in Milan. As it is, we possess direct and important notices of Leonardo's activity in this sphere in the reports of the Ducal officials to Moro. From them we learn that, during the years 1495-1498, the painter worked in several rooms — in the Saletta negra, the Sala del Tesoro, and the Camera grande delle asse (so-called from the wood-panelling of the walls). During the work, a deep annoyance on the part of Leonardo, traces of which may be found in casual remarks in his manuscripts, must have given rise to a violent outburst. For, on June the 8th, 1496, Lodovico wrote to Arcimboldi, Archbishop of

Milan, who was staying in Venice, that the artist who was painting the rooms for him had on that day made a great uproar, and in consequence had departed. Would his Reverence communicate with Pietro Perugino, who was reported to be in Venice, and ask him whether he was ready to enter the Duke's service, etc. . . . But the Archbishop could only reply that the desired painter had already left Venice six months before. Lodovico, however, was not yet satisfied, and in the following year addressed himself in two letters to the Baglioni of Perugia. Would they be good enough to induce Perugino to come to Milan, as he wished to employ him on certain works which he had in mind.

It is, of course, by no means necessary to determine from this the duration of the quarrel between the prince and the painter. Leonardo was at this very time busily engaged on the *Last Supper*. On that account, perhaps, the works in the rooms of the Castello were for a time at a standstill.

Not until 1498 do we again hear of the rooms. Then the official can at length inform the Duke (April the 21st) that "no time will

be lost on the Saletta negra, and on Monday the scaffold will be taken down in the Camera grande delle asse. Messer Leonardo promises to complete them by the end of September." With this note the direct tidings cease.

At the present day, it is impossible to form an adequate notion of Leonardo's productions in this line. Recent researches have disclosed flying Loves on the ceiling of one room, and in another a large fresco painting, with a male figure in the middle painted in antique style. But these works differ too widely from the recognised pictures of the Master to be attributed to him with certainty.

The decoration of the walls and ceiling in the Sala delle asse is certainly conceived in Leonardo's style. It represents lofty trees, whose closely interlaced branches are entwined with golden cords, while their leaves form a dense canopy on the ceiling. This charming scheme of decoration has lately been appreciatively restored.

When did Leonardo execute that great work which has invested his name with enduring renown? On this point too we have only scanty information. It is clear that a

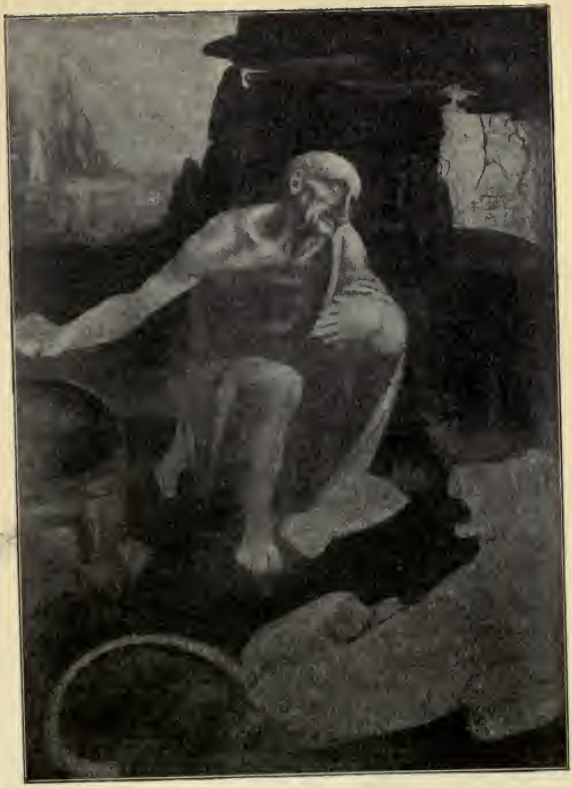
composition like the *Last Supper*, with its myriad refinements in the portrayal of character, must in any case represent the result of several years' work; especially if we take into account Leonardo's natural predisposition to work slowly, and to allow longer and longer pauses to intervene, in order that each picture might be fully matured.

A novel of Bandello records for us the genesis of the *Last Supper*, and introduces us with graphic description into the very scene of the painter's work. One day several noblemen were standing in the refectory of Santa Maria delle Grazie, contemplating the work in progress, when the old Cardinal of Gurk, who at that time was residing in the monastery, came in. They began to discuss art subjects; and in the course of conversation his eminence asked the artist what pay he was receiving from the Duke. Leonardo named a sum which to the Cardinal appeared very great. On his departure, Leonardo recounted an adventure which had befallen Fra Filippo Lippi. This very story Bandello has incorporated in his collection of novels. There must be some truth in the anecdote with which he invested

it, as in fact the Cardinal was dwelling incognito in the Monastery delle Grazie at the end of January 1497.

In this same year we have other news of Leonardo's work in the refectory. On June the 29th, 1497, Lodovico Moro writes to his secretary as follows: "Further, remind Leonardo, the Florentine, to complete the work that he has begun in the refectory of Santa Maria delle Grazie, in order that he may thereafter begin work on the other wall of the refectory. Make arrangements with him in writing, which he is to sign with his own hand, obliging him to finish the work at the time agreed on." In the same year may be found a payment to an architect "for work in the refectory, where Leonardo is painting the Apostle, with a window."

Princely patrons do not like waiting. They would like to see works of art rise as from the touch of a wizard's hands. Just in this point lies so often the cause of disputes between the Maecenas and the artist. Leonardo was less fitted than any other to submit to impatience and pressure. Evidently the Duke had had many disagreeable experiences, and believed



ST JEROME. (VATICAN)

From a photograph by Anderson, Rome

that only a written engagement could bind the artist to steady work. Was he deceived? We know not, but are forced to suppose that the *Last Supper* was finished at the beginning of 1498, if an allusion to the work in the dedication of Luca Pacioli's "de divina proportione" is to be taken literally.

How it came about that the *Last Supper* fell to ruin has been told often and exhaustively. All too soon, even in Leonardo's lifetime, external influences and the defects inherent in the technique employed asserted themselves, so that Vasari already saw nothing but "a dull blur." The indifference and ignorance of mankind have left nothing undone to increase the evil. It was not until the nineteenth century that any effort was made to preserve the remains as much as possible in the same state, in order that the precious inheritance may not utterly perish.

* * * *

Besides these chief works for the Duke, the services of the artist were claimed elsewhere. He evidently undertook similar private commissions to gain the necessary means of subsistence for himself and his helpers, when

the payments from the State Exchequer were not forthcoming. "For two years," he was once obliged to complain, "I have received no payment." The most important picture, next to the *Last Supper,* which Leonardo executed in Milan, manifestly did not owe its existence to a commission from his princely patron. This picture is the famous *Vierge aux rochers.* Together with Ambrogio de Predis, the master had undertaken it as an altar decoration for the Brotherhood of the Conception in San Francesco. It was to consist of a richly gilded relief with figures, a picture of the Madonna and two pictures of angels.

But the artists and patrons came to a dispute over the question of payment. In consequence, the former appealed to the arbitration of the Duke. Their petition is extant, but unfortunately undated. From this it appears that the picture of the Madonna had been done by the Florentine painter, who demanded one hundred ducats for it from the other party. They on their side estimated its value at only a quarter of this amount. The petitioners claimed from the Duke either a court of arbitration or the return of the

picture. As to the outcome of this affair we have no documentary evidence. But from the fact that two copies of the *Vierge aux rochers* exist, one of which betrays Leonardo's own hand, while the other must have been painted under his eyes, we may conclude that they did not come to an agreement, and that the artist took back his work to dispose of it to one of those who were willing to pay the price demanded. This copy passed soon after into the possession of the King of France, and is now one of the finest gems in the gallery of the Louvre. The monks, however, bethought themselves later and secured a reproduction of the picture for their altar. This second version remained in that very spot right up to the end of the eighteenth century, and then by a devious course reached the National Gallery. Probability in the interpretation of the facts, and the evidence of the eye, obtained by a careful scrutiny of both pictures, alike sanction this conclusion.

* * * *

During Leonardo's residence in Milan, the question of completing the Cathedral again entered on an acute stage. This time the

subject under discussion was the dome, and the ablest architects were drawn to Milan to give professional opinions or to make models. In a matter of this kind, in which technical questions played a decisive part, it was inevitable that the voice of Leonardo would have great weight. For he had by preference busied himself with such subjects. In fact he was called upon to send in a model, for which payments may be found recorded in the papers of the Cathedral Building Committee (1487). Three years later Leonardo secured the return of this model, but immediately after he received payments for a new model of a dome. How far he completed this cannot be clearly ascertained.

In the same year (1490) in which this question was discussed, Leonardo journeyed to Pavia in the company of the great architect Francesco di Giorgio. The object of their journey was to give professional advice on the continuation of the Cathedral. In the "Codex Atlanticus" are to be found not a few architectural sketches—elevations, transverse sections, and ground plans—which plainly belong to the Lombardic order. For us these represent

the only trace of the intense energy which Leonardo bestowed on two of the most imposing buildings of his adopted state.

* * * *

As sculptor, as painter, as architect, he thus found a rich field for his activity at Moro's court. At the same time he had to find leisure, when required, to use his inventive skill in devising amusements for the princely circle. We have accounts of two such occasions. Early in February 1489, at the marriage of Gian Galeazzo Sforza and Isabella, daughter of Alphonso of Naples, took place the masque of "Paradise." It is so called in a contemporary description, "because through the genius and art of Leonardo, Paradise, with the seven planets, was shown, the planets being represented by men attired as the poets describe them." Two years later Leonardo managed a tournament in the house of Galeazzo San Severino. All that we know of this is that several lacqueys took part in it, clad as savages.

* * * *

Hitherto we have spoken of the public

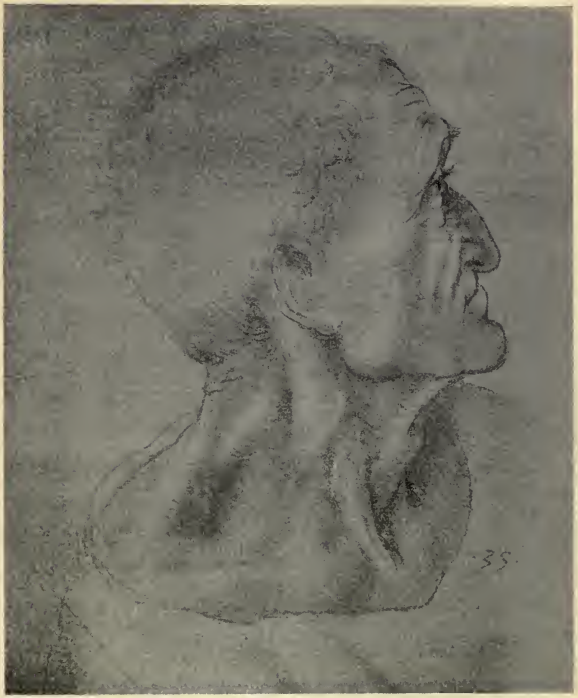
career of Leonardo. Its practical side—his highly important work on the canalisation of Lombardy—cannot be dealt with in this book. Of his private life, and of his intense activity in all branches of science, his own writings tell us. During the years he spent in Milan he wrote his "Treatise on painting"—the most important theoretical work on Art that ever came from the hand of an artist. At that time too he wrote "on the human figure" and much besides. He sought the society of the learned, especially that of the medical lecturers in Pavia, and of mathematicians and philosophers.

But if we consider the art works which Leonardo executed in Milan during sixteen years of his life's prime, his splendid and incomparable powers seem to have been wasted and inadequately employed through the ill-will of Fate. He made his model for the equestrian statue; he painted the *Last Supper* and the *Vierge aux rochers*, perhaps also several decorations in the Castello. But his main work which had cost the most time, was fashioned only in a perishable material and was all too soon destroyed. How fortunate in the plenitude of his creations appears even

Michel Angelo's tragic figure, compared with Leonardo!

That he did not accomplish more was due partly to his intense thirst for knowledge in every form, partly to the Duke and the fateful events which in the end brought about his downfall. The man who invited the foreigner into Italy was finally caught in his own trap. The year 1499 saw the outburst of the storm whose threatening signs had long before appeared in the political sky. Leonardo had already experienced the malice of events in the irregularity of his pay. For this the Duke, who was by nature a generous prince, tried to compensate him by gifts of land near Milan.

Lodovico's power collapsed when the French army descended into Lombardy. The Duke fled and his state fell without a struggle into the hands of the victor. Only six months later followed the tragic conclusion—Lodovico's imprisonment. Already it was clear to people of discernment that the period of splendour was over. For the artists and men of letters whom the Duke had assembled at his court, nothing remained but to seek a new position elsewhere.



HEAD OF JUDAS (Windsor Library)

Leonardo sent his savings, amounting to several hundred ducats, to Florence, to the Hospital of Santa Maria Nuova (December the 14th, 1499). He himself, before returning to his native city, went eastwards to Venice. Regarding his first residence in Milan and Lodovico's undertakings, Leonardo has written: "The Duke lost state, possessions and liberty, and no work was completed for him." What a bitter summary of a period, on which he had entered full of hope, ready to accomplish wonders!

* * * *

The return of his old lord to Milan, to a rule which lasted little more then two months, did not induce Leonardo to resume his abandoned work. In March he was in Venice. But before that he had made a stay in Mantua, where he had sketched the portrait of the young princess who represents for posterity the climax of æsthetic culture in Italy at the beginning of the High Renaissance. Isabella d' Este, whose ambition it was to hold relations with all the eminent artists of her country, who surrounded herself with pictures by Mantegna, Bellini, Perugino, Correggio and Costa,

and sat for her portrait to the best masters, had not failed to take advantage of the brief stay of the Florentine, with whom she had been acquainted in earlier years in Milan. On the 13th March 1500, a confidential correspondent wrote to the Princess from Venice, "Leonardo Vinci is here, and has shown me a portrait of your Highness which is extremely life-like. It could not have been done better."

Shortly after Leonardo must have returned to his native city. The moment was favourable for him. Of the eminent artists of the older generation many were dead, and the others aged. Not one was able to enliven the decaying style of the Quattrocento with new ideas. But instead of using this most advantageous moment to secure the primacy of art in Florence, Leonardo turned his back on art and devoted himself to his manifold scientific studies, especially to mathematics and to technical engineering questions such as the regulation of the Arno.

A year had passed since his visit to Venice, when Isabella d' Este applied to a priest of the Carmelite order, whom she knew (March the 17th, 1501). She wished to know what manner

of life Leonardo was leading, whether it was true that he had begun a work and of what kind it was. The holy father was to ascertain "whether he is inclined to paint a picture in our studio. If he consents, we will leave the invention and the time to his decision. If he is reluctant, try at least to induce him to paint for us a small picture of the Madonna, pious and sweet, as is his style. And then ask him to send us a new sketch (Schizzo) of our portrait. For his Highness, our consort, has given away the one which he left for us here."

Isabella rarely showed so much complaisance to an artist as she did to Leonardo. For as a rule, she plagued the greatest masters with the impossible task of putting her quaint allegorical ideas into artistic form. She probably anticipated that a man of Leonardo's character would otherwise refuse to do anything for her.

The answer that she received is one of the most important documents on Leonardo's mode of life, while at the same time it throws light on one of his masterpieces. Accordingly it may find place here unabridged: "Leonardo's life is changeful and uncertain; it is thought

that he lives only for the day. Since he has been in Florence, he has worked only on one cartoon. This represents an infant Christ of about one year, who freeing Himself from His mother's arms, seizes a lamb and seems to clasp it. The Mother is rising from the lap of St Anna to catch the Child and part Him from the lamb—the victim, which signifies the Passion. St Anna is just rising from her seat, as though she would restrain her daughter from parting the lamb and the Child. This perhaps signifies the Church, which will not that Christ's passion be hindered. The figures are of life size, but form only a small sketch, as they are all sitting or stooping, and one stands to the left front of the other. The study is not yet complete. He has done nothing else, except that he now and then touches one or other of the portraits which his two assistants are painting. He is entirely wrapped up in geometry and has no patience for painting."

Vasari also speaks of the making of this cartoon. According to him, Leonardo wished to paint the picture for the high altar of the Church of the Annunciation. On this Filippino,

who had already received a commission for the work, retired, and Leonardo began his cartoon of St Anna. When it was finished, the room where it stood was crowded for two days by men and women, old and young, who were amazed at the marvellous work. So far Vasari. Leonardo, however, failed to complete the altar-piece. Thereupon the monks returned to Filippino, who then began his *Descent from the Cross,* but did not finish it, as death struck the brush from his hand. His picture was completed by Perugino, and now hangs in the Florentine Academy.

Almost exactly a year later the Carmelite could inform Isabella of a visit which he paid to Leonardo on Easter Wednesday, April the 4th, 1502. He had been introduced by Leonardo's most confidential pupil, Salai, and by several other of his intimate friends. The artist showed himself ready to serve the Princess. He must, however, get free from his engagement to the French King, without falling into disgrace. This he hoped to be able to do within a month at most. As soon as he had finished a small picture which he was painting for a certain Robertet, the French King's

favourite, he would straightway take the portrait in hand and send it to her Excellency. "The small picture that he is painting is a Madonna sitting as if she is spinning. The Child is putting His foot in the spinning basket. He has seized the reel and is attentively regarding the four spokes, which stand in the form of a cross, and laughing as though He would have the cross. He holds it fast and will not give it back to His Mother, who wishes to take it away from Him."

Leonardo, however, never got further than promises. Isabella received then just as little as she did several years later (1504-1506), when she was anxious to get a twelve year old Christ from the painter, whom she—fruitlessly—reminded of the promise made to her on his visit to Mantua.

* * * *

From the quiet of an existence filled with artistic and scientific work, Leonardo is suddenly found transported to the loud turmoil and violent agitation of the political arena. In May 1502 he was still in Florence. Already by the end of July he was travelling in Umbria and the marches in the service of the man whose

name filled all Italy with terror—the Duke Valentino, better known äs Cesare Borgia. Where had these two most extraordinary figures of the Renaissance met—men in whom all the aspirations of the epoch appear united? When Louis XII. entered Milan, the Borgia was in his train. At that time Leonardo had not yet left the city. For only there could he have entered into relations with the French King, with whose favour he would not trifle, as he informed Isabella's commissioner. Vasari tells of a visit of the King to the refectory of Santa Maria delle Grazie, and of his admiration for the *Last Supper*. Perhaps Cesare Borgia was at that time also near the French King and had learned in how many things the painter was versed.

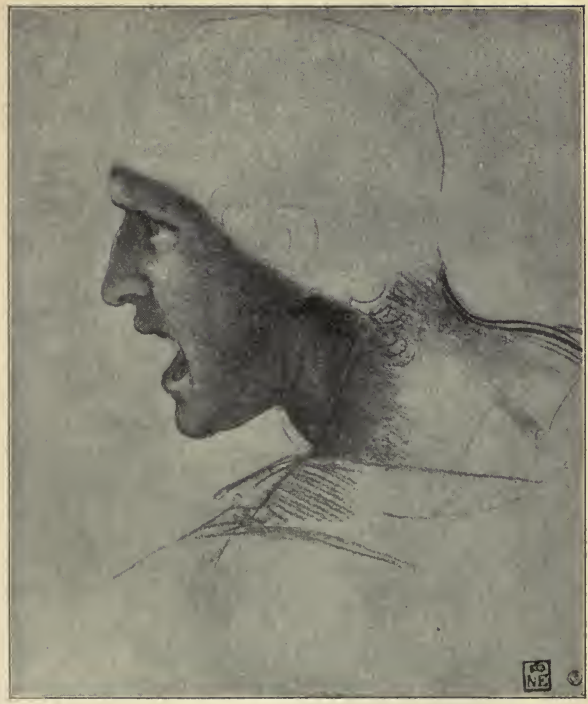
Admiration for genius must have been their bond of union. For on Cesare Borgia also Nature had bestowed unusual gifts, even if the perversion of the same into just as many vices makes his figure appear only terrible to posterity. They might have stood in the same relation as did Michel Angelo and Julius II. a few years later, each full of respect for that which gave importance to the other.

The order is still extant which Cesare Borgia gave the Florentine for his journey, commending him to the commandants of his fortresses and to his chief officers in the field. From this we learn that he had commissioned Leonardo to inspect the strongholds of the state. He describes him as "prestantissimo et dilectissimo familiare architetto et ingegnere generale." In a short time Leonardo traversed the whole of Central Italy from the Adriatic to the Tyrrhenian Sea. But his activity in the service of the Borgia was not destined to be of long duration. In April 1503 at the latest he was back in Florence.

Now at length the citizens of his native city bethought themselves of the duty they owed to such remarkable artistic powers, and resolved to give them a chance of proving themselves publicly. Piero Soderini, the Gonfaloniere, had conceived the notion of having the great Council Chamber of the Signorial Palace decorated with paintings. It was intended to begin with a work by Leonardo, and to assign the second fresco to Michel Angelo. The theme chosen for representation was the battle of Anghiari (1440), in which the

Florentines had routed the Milanese troops under the famous condottiere Niccolò Piccinino. Leonardo seems to have worked with great zest on the cartoon, which he had engaged to finish before the end of February 1505. Scarcely was it completed, when he began to paint a group taken from it on the wall of the Chamber. This group was *The Struggle for the Standard*. The payments, which are recorded, begin on April the 1st, 1504, and last until the second half of the year 1505.

The task assigned him suited his talents admirably and must have interested him more than anything else that he had ever done. Nevertheless, though he had prepared it in numerous studies, the work remained unfinished. For what reason? Perhaps his zeal cooled from the moment that the cartoon was ended; perhaps also there were technical difficulties which he could not master; or perhaps his restless spirit drove him to some other occupation. The picture he began was to be seen for a long time after in the great hall. Though merely a fragment, it awakened amazement in all who saw it; and as late as 1513 a scaffold was ordered by the Signoria to



STUDY FOR THE HEAD OF A WARRIOR
(BUDAPESTH GALLERY)

Photograph, Braun, Clément & Cie, Paris, Alsace and New York

protect the figures. When it entirely perished is unknown. Perhaps the main features of the work were still visible, when Vasari was commissioned to carry out what Leonardo and Michel Angelo had failed to complete. A few old copies give at least an approximate idea of the central group. But it is no longer possible to gain a notion of the whole picture, as the cartoon perished, we know not when or how; while of the many who studied it, not one, it seems, ever took the trouble to convey the whole to posterity.

* * * *

The years which Leonardo spent at this time in Florence, namely from the beginning of the year 1503 to the spring of 1506, must be regarded as the period in which his artistic genius produced its richest fruits. In addition to his chief work, which was well fitted to absorb the energy of the man who surpassed all others in continuous toil, he completed several other pictures, entirely different in subject and style. Of the portrait of Ginevra Benci, biographers speak with high admiration, which unfortunately is confined to terms too vague to give us any idea of this

famous picture. At the same time too he painted the portrait of Mona Lisa, wife of Francesco del Giocondo, on which, if Vasari has rightly informed us, the artist worked for four years.

Just at this time also in Florence he must have made the first sketch of his half-length figure of Saint John, and designed his *Leda.* She is shown standing near the Swan, who is nestling close to her. Curiously enough, only slight information about this work is found recorded in Leonardo's native city. In those days, however, there was staying in Florence a young stranger, who had come from his home in Urbino to study painting, fascinated by the art of Leonardo and Michel Angelo, and qualified as none other among the greatest artists. The young Raphael then drew a pen and ink sketch after the *Leda,* which affords us sure ground for fixing the approximate date of that composition.

Two events of this date deserve particular prominence. At the end of January 1504 took place the memorable gathering of artists who were to decide on a site for Michel Angelo's David. Of the older masters might

be seen Andrea della Robbia, Rosselli, Filippino Lippi, Botticelli, Perugino, Credi and many others. Leonardo could not be absent from such an illustrious assembly. Besides in the extant minutes his opinion is recorded, giving his support to Giuliano da San Gallo, who proposed that the David should be placed in the Loggia dei Signori—known later as the Loggia dei Lanzi.

Another noteworthy fact is the death of Leonardo's father on July the 9th, 1504. Ser Piero and his son must always have remained on good terms. A fragment of a letter is preserved in the "Codex Atlanticus" which reveals the son's good relations with his father. In the same collection also is found the entry, "Wednesday, July 9th, 1504, at seven o'clock died Ser Piero da Vinci."

In the midst of his active labours Leonardo received a summons from Milan. The call to the artist seems to have come from Carle d' Amboise, the governor of the town. Before he could get away, Leonardo was obliged to come to an agreement with the Signoria of Florence. The terms were settled by a contract, drawn up in due form (May

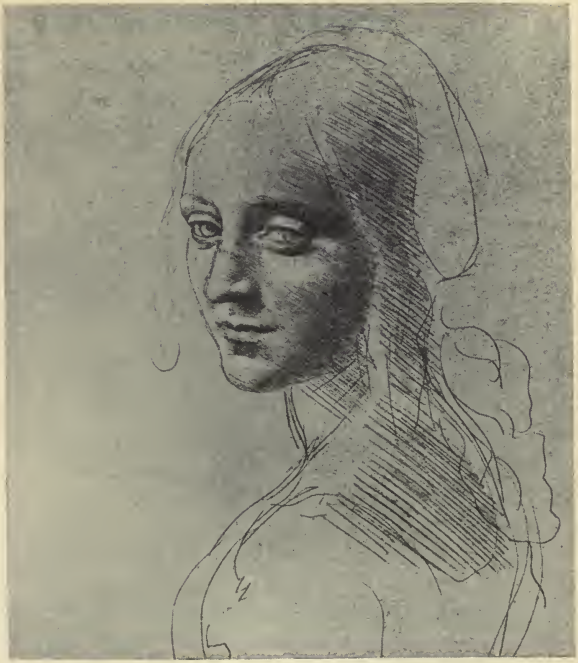
30th, 1506), whereby after three months he was again to place himself at the service of the Signoria, under penalty of a fine. But in August, d' Amboise applied to his masters in Florence, requesting permission to extend the time to September, in order that the artist might complete a work which he had begun for him. The appointed time elapsed. Instead of the painter came a renewal of the request. This time an angry refusal was sent in answer by Soderini, who felt reponsible to the state, as probably he had proposed Leonardo as painter of the fresco in the Signorial Palace. At length in the middle of December Leonardo was ready to return home. D' Amboise gave him a letter of recommendation, couched in terms of the highest praise, perhaps with a view to protect him from punishment.

But again a delay occurred. A small picture by Leonardo had been sent to the French court and, coming under the notice of Louis XII., awoke in the King a wish to employ the artist on his own account. He desired to have pictures of the Madonna and other works, while he even thought of having his own portrait painted by him. The Florentine

envoy at the Court of Blois, Pandolfini, at once wrote to the Signoria (January the 12th, 1507) to acquaint them with the wish of the sovereign. A few days later the King himself addressed the Signoria with the request that they would command Leonardo not to leave Milan until his own arrival there. Accordingly nothing was left to the Florentines but to write to Leonardo to this effect on January the 22nd. Still, more than half a year passed before the Master came back to his native city. He had spent part of the time preceding his return in the country near Milan at Vaprio, the home of Francesco Melzi, the favourite pupil of his later years.

* * * *

Of the fortunes of Leonardo during the period of his decline, we are not so accurately informed as we could wish, in order to have light thrown on even the most important occurrences. With just as little certainty do we know what artistic work Leonardo really did at that time in Milan, and the nature of his work for D' Amboise. We may probably assign this date to a sketch in the grandest style—the plan of a splendid tomb in marble and bronze,



HEAD OF ANGEL. (TURIN)

By permission of Dr Richter and Messrs Sampson, Low & Co.

surmounted by an equestrian statue, destined for the French Marshal Gian Giacomo Trivulzio. Numerous studies bear witness of its origin in Leonardo's mind. But it is impossible to settle exactly the time when he was engaged on this work, or to decide how far the plan advanced.

Leonardo's return to Florence was brought about by a lawsuit with his brothers, which arose through the will of an uncle. Already at his father's death the brothers had excluded the eldest son, and now sought to gain advantage over him in the same way. Leonardo appeared at home, supported by a letter from Louis XII. to the Signoria, who were therein requested to expedite the business as much as possible. Carle d' Amboise supported the painter equally warmly. Nevertheless Leonardo further appealed, in a letter from Florence, dated September the 18th, 1507, to the Cardinal Hippolito d' Este—then Archbishop of Milan—begging him to use his influence with the official in whose hands the affair rested.

During his detention in Florence on this business, he took up his abode in the Casa

Martelli, to whose owner, Piero di Braccio Martelli, he was bound by a common interest in mathematics. There, on the 22nd of March 1508, he began one of his manuscripts—a species of transcript from various other of his Collectanea, put together without order, with the intention of sorting the materials when opportunity offered. The anonymous biographer of Leonardo, who plainly had reliable information about his life, tells us that Leonardo lived in the Via Martelli, in the house of Giovanni Francesco Rustici, the sculptor. Vasari informs us that Leonardo helped him, at least with advice, in the casting of the three figures which were destined to adorn the Baptistery. Still these vague statements receive a certain amount of confirmation from the fact that Rustici was actually engaged on the group at the time of Leonardo's stay in Florence. He had received the commission for it at the end of 1506. Its style betrays a singularly intimate acquaintance with Leonardo's forms and types. So there is no reason to deny that Rustici received some assistance, which of course may have been limited to verbal criticism and advice.

Without doubt Leonardo himself worked in Florence for his then patron, the King of France. But it is doubtful whether he had really taken with him the canvas, mentioned by d' Amboise in his letter, through which the painter found the greatest difficulty in obtaining leave to travel. Equally uncertain is the question whether the three drafts of letters in the "Codex Atlanticus," in which Leonardo speaks of two pictures of the Madonna that he had begun, belong to this year or must be assigned a later date. Not until the autumn of the year 1508 is Leonardo again traceable in Milan.

Deeper and deeper is the darkness which shrouds the incidents of Leonardo's life; ever more scanty becomes the extant information about his work. It appears that the "peintre du Roy" had been busy with the question of utilising hydraulic power. He himself had received the concession of a certain water power from the King. In October 1510 his artistic advice was again solicited by the Cathedral Building Committee on the subject of the choir stalls.

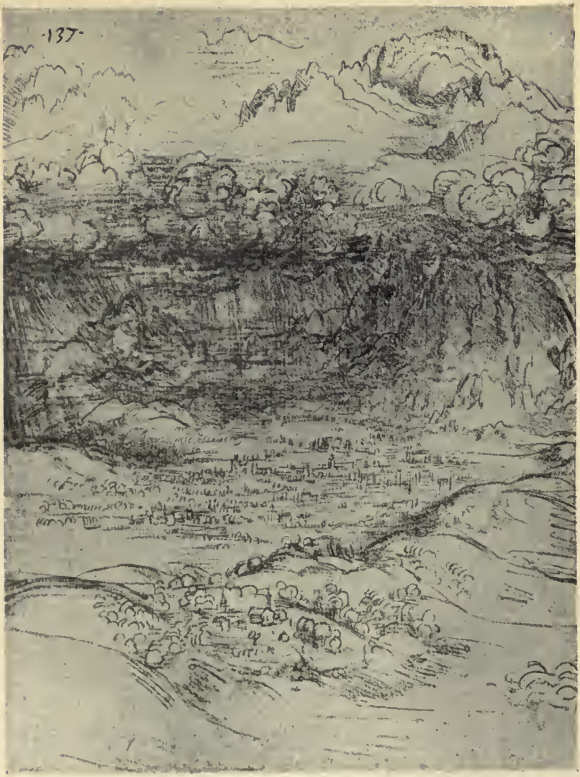
Once more Milan became the apple of

discord between the nations. Finally, for the last time a scion of the house of Sforza —Lodovico Moro's son Maximilian—entered the capital of Lombardy as ruler (1512). We are ignorant of the attitude adopted by Leonardo towards the son of his earlier master. He was now official court painter to the King of France. But apparently he was on the look-out for a change of position. On September the 24th, 1513, he left Milan for Rome, accompanied by four faithful friends, among whom were Melzi and Salai. Probably he knew the city from an earlier visit, as a note seems to imply that he had been there in 1505. This time, however, his stay extended over a year and a half. The reception which Leonardo met with in Rome, where the Florentine Giovanni de Medici sat on the throne of St Peter under the title of Leo X., seems to have been worthy of that great name. Rooms were prepared for him in the Belvedere —Bramante's creation, which his amazed contemporaries regarded as the sanctuary of Art. Giuliano Medici, who was scientifically inclined, laid greater claim to Leonardo's artistic powers than his brother the Pope. But what did he

execute for the young prince? We only know for certain of the portrait of a Florentine lady, which a few years later found its way to France with Leonardo. Geometrical studies rather than artistic questions absorbed him.

Vasari mentions two pictures which he painted at that time for the Papal Almoner, Baldassare Turini—a Madonna and a small picture of a Child. The Aretine saw both of them later in Pescia. Moreover, he is said to have begun a picture for the Pope, marked by the studied care and accuracy which were peculiar to him. None of these pictures can be traced at the present time.

On January the 9th, 1515, the news of the death of Louis XII. of France reached Rome. On the same day Giuliano Medici left the city on a journey to Savoy, where he married the Princess Filiberta. Both events were noted down by Leonardo. On the return of the young couple to Rome the brilliant court life received new impulse, and Leonardo was to be found in the princely circle. Then he left Rome and casual notes give a clue to his wanderings. He appears at Piacenza. He seems to have been present at the meet-



LANDSCAPE. (WINDSOR LIBRARY)

By permission of Dr Richter and Messrs Sampson, Low & Co.

ing between Leo X. and Francis I. at Bologna (December 1515). The name of Leonardo must have sounded familiar in the ear of the young French King. Nothing was more natural than the desire to attach him closely to his own person as his predecessor had done. For the last time Leonardo stopped in Milan. His stay was very brief, and he prepared for his journey over the Alps into a foreign land. He left Italy for the first time, never to set foot on its soil again.

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In the train of the young King the grey-haired artist travelled over the mountains in January 1516, and hastened with him through France. The Château of Cloux near Amboise was assigned him for a residence, and a really princely provision was made for him. Francis I., a sincere admirer of genius, often visited Leonardo to enjoy his conversation. Even in later years he spoke of Leonardo's many-sided artistic and philosophical talents with lively appreciation. So at least Cellini declares in his autobiography.

Devoted to scientific studies, Leonardo spent

his days in perfecting works begun in earlier life to the order of Francis I. This conclusion of his life would be for us a rather colourless picture, had not the account of a visit which the Cardinal of Aragon paid in Cloux on October the 10th, 1517, been handed down to us by one who was present, and so preserved for us a vivid idea of the great man's existence. "We visited Messer Leonardo Vinci of Florence, a grey-beard of more than seventy years, the most eminent painter of our time, who showed to his Eminence the Cardinal three pictures. One represents a Florentine lady, painted from life, for the late lord Juliano de Medici; the second is a youthful John the Baptist; and the third, a Madonna with the Child sitting on the lap of Saint Anna; all of the highest perfection. One cannot indeed expect anything more of special merit from his brush, as his right hand is crippled by paralysis. But he has a pupil, a Milanese, who works very well: and although Messer Leonardo can no longer paint with the beauty that was peculiar to him, he can still draw and instruct others. This gentleman has written quite exhaustively on anatomy, with

illustrations" . . . (here follow further remarks on Leonardo's manuscripts).

The Milanese pupil is Francesco Melzi, who in his later years accompanied the Master everywhere. Two servants attended to Leonardo's personal wants. His other faithful pupil, Salai, had remained behind in Milan.

Of the three above-mentioned pictures it is not possible to identify the lady's portrait with any certainty. The *Youthful John* must be the half-length figure in the Louvre—the final treatment of a subject which had long engrossed Leonardo's attention. In the same gallery also may be found the fine representation in colour of the famous cartoon of Saint Anna, already begun in 1501.

The paralysis which crippled his right hand and prevented him from using his brush, must ultimately have put an end to Leonardo's life. When the Master felt that death was at hand, he summoned a notary, on April the 23rd, 1519. He ordained that his body should be buried in the Church of Saint Florentin at Amboise. To his brothers he bequeathed the money deposited in the Hospital of Santa Maria Nuova at Florence. Salai and his

servants were not forgotten, nor were the poor to the number of sixty, who were to follow him to the grave with torches. But his most precious possessions—his manuscripts and the appliances of his craft—he bequeathed to Francesco Melzi, "as a recognition of the welcome services which he had rendered him in the past." Leonardo attained the age of 67 years. "He departed this life," wrote Melzi to his brothers, "on the 2nd of May, after receiving the sacraments of the Church, perfectly resigned. May God Almighty grant him His eternal peace! Everyone laments the loss of a man, whose like Nature cannot produce a second time." Three months later Leonardo was laid to rest at Amboise in the tomb which he had himself chosen.

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In 1517 Leonardo seemed to his visitors an old man of over seventy years of age; whereas, in fact, he was at that time about sixty-four years old. But if we closely inspect the red pastel portrait drawn by his own hand, which must represent the Master during his last years, we shall not be surprised at the error of our eyewitness. For in this drawing

Leonardo appears to us as a patriarch, as a man whose term of life had far exceeded the average. Unremitting mental toil must have furrowed his countenance beyond his actual years.

Beneath shaggy eyebrows, large impressive eyes shine out from a face adorned with long flowing hair and beard. The first glance, no less than a protracted study of the drawing, reveals to us an extraordinary personality. So must he have impressed his contemporaries in earlier days, and popular report soon invested this brilliant genius with further striking qualities. Stories were told of his immense bodily strength and of his remarkable physical dexterity. His style of dress, which differed widely from the fashion of the day—he wore a short coat instead of a long one, as others did—his long and well kept hair, attracted the regard of all eyes and survived in the memory of posterity. There was something princely and magnificent in his bearing; he loved fine horses and found pleasure in the company of handsome men. Vasari extols the physical beauty both of Salai and of Melzi.

An undoubtedly authentic picture, which

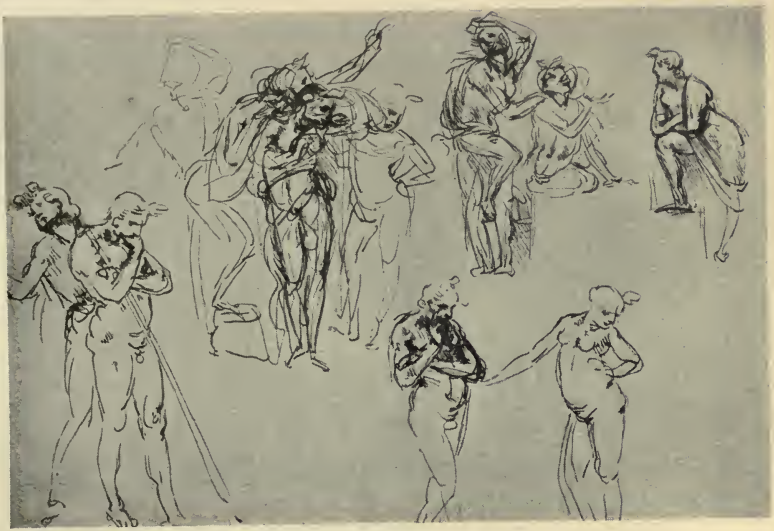
represented Leonardo in his earlier years, has not come down to us. The portrait in the Uffizi collection is a later, spiritless production, devoid of historical merit. The profile portrait marked by the carefully curled hair, of which several copies exist (*e.g.* at Windsor), may be traced to a good contemporary Milanese original.

The imagination of his own and later generations had no need to invest this man with singular powers: for Nature herself had over-richly endowed him, as if she had intended to present in one model an ideal standard for all time. In this profusion of talents, however, in this extraordinary versatility, may be found the real reason why this genius left behind a relatively small number of art creations. Again and again speculative meditations enticed him from his creative activity, and of this fact without doubt his diverse and divided interests must be given as the cause.

In the case of many artists it is needful to mention the destruction of numerous works to explain the surprisingly small number of those that survive. But in the case of Leonardo,

we are fairly well informed by the accounts of his contemporaries, that the number of his works can never have been very great. At times his scientific studies made him positively detest his connection with Art. "His mathematical experiments have withdrawn him from painting to such an extent, that he cannot endure the sight of a brush," so Pietro da Novellara informed Isabella d' Este in 1502. Nevertheless at frequent intervals objects must have appeared on the scene which, despite his scientific reflections, most powerfully attracted his vision and directly stimulated his fancy. In his manuscripts, on the margin or wherever possible, are to be found hurried jottings of things seen at the moment, or the first conceptions of works of art. For example, between the sentences of the "Codex Atlanticus" may be seen a diminutive first sketch of the *Standing Leda*; in like manner everywhere are heads, animal forms, details of the human figure depicted in certain momentary actions. From this it is easy to understand how this mighty genius in an instant leapt from one occupation to another.

But from conception to execution was for



STUDIES OF NUDE FIGURES (ARMAND COLLECTION)

Photograph, Braun Clément & Cie, Dornach, Paris and New York

Leonardo a long course. The ideal alone seemed to him worthy of attainment. Accordingly he sought to compass his subject from all sides, to make trial of all its possibilities in order to choose the most fruitful motive for his picture. How numerous, for instance, are the studies for the Madonna with the cat, where so many other—and by no means the least able—artists in Florence were content with a few designs sanctified by tradition. Likewise for several of his works we possess preliminary sketches which widely differ from each other in details. And yet the completed picture would not satisfy this artist, who, if we may believe Vasari, after four years' work gave away the picture of Mona Lisa as unfinished.

Even in his early days this peculiarity of never arriving at the end of his work struck his contemporaries. Already in the Quattrocento a Florentine poet had celebrated Leonardo as the man who "perhaps excels all others, yet cannot tear himself away from a picture, and in many years scarce brings one to completion." A singular conscientiousness prevented him from completing anything

quickly. Therefore all his really finished works represent the result of countless individual observations; and in truth, if we definitely grasp this fact, we can realise how years might often elapse between the first hastily penned sketch and its perfection.

One vivid and distinct notion of the manner in which Leonardo worked has been given us by Bandello in an already-quoted novel, wherein he describes the genesis of the *Last Supper*. "He was wont," records this writer, "as I myself have often seen, to mount the scaffolding early in the morning, and work until the approach of night, and in the interest of painting he forgot both meat and drink. Then came two, three, or even four days when he did not stir a hand, but spent an hour or two in contemplating his work, examining and criticising his figures. I have seen him too at noon, when the sun stood in the sign of Leo, leave the Corte Vecchia (in the centre of the town) where he was engaged on his equestrian statue, and go straight to Santa Maria delle Grazie, mount the scaffolding, seize a brush, add two or three touches to a single figure, and return forthwith."

The Master, who worked with such intensity, even when he was to all appearance inactive, might well reply to the importunity of the monks of the convent, that not a day passed on which he did not devote two full hours to his work. This energy, it must be owned, was often of the most abstract character, and a work that he had begun did not seem to make the least advance until it was finally matured in his mind.

If the life of Leonardo be regarded in its main features, it will be found that apart from the conditions arising from the temper of his mind, an outward circumstance had crippled his creative activity. Leonardo never found the sphere of action equal to his vast powers. The only man that might have satisfied his requirements, Ludovico Moro—who in a relatively short space of time left behind in Milan indelible traces of splendid art patronage—was by the malice of destiny prevented from carrying out his designs. Of all the great artists of the Renaissance, none was so neglected in this respect as Leonardo. Even Correggio, within the narrow limits of his provincial life, found a wide field for his

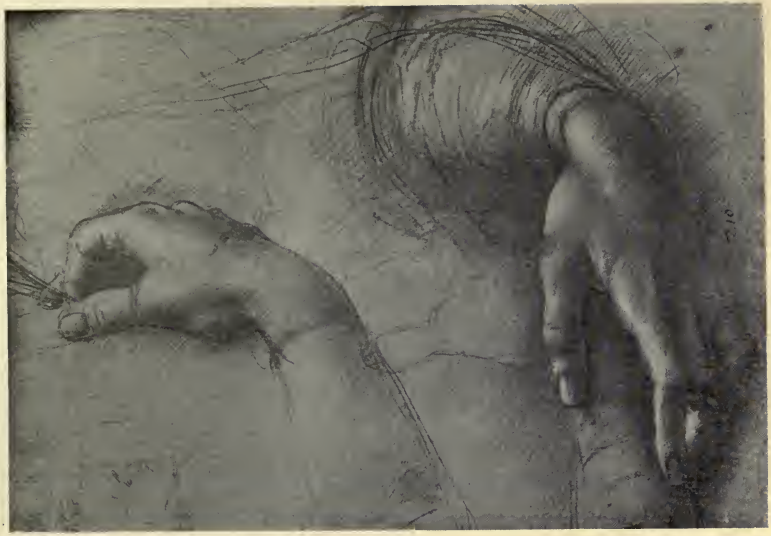
invention, to say nothing of Michel Angelo, Raphael, Titian and others.

What would we not give if we could divine how his life's work appeared to the old man, when far from his native home he surveyed his career, if he compared what he was actually leaving behind with what he might have done. At all times he held the highest opinion of himself and of his powers. He has spoken thereof with the candour and assurance of the man who has adjudged himself to be of the most exalted merit. The letter to Ludovico Moro, in which he recounts his varied qualifications, is the grandest testimony that genius ever bore to itself; and there exists also the skeleton of a "letter to the Building Committee of the Cathedral of Piacenza," in which he discusses the proposal that they should entrust the execution of the design for the Cathedral doors to an eminent master. "But I can assure you," he writes, "that in this country you will obtain only commonplace work done by inferior, unskilled artists. There is no one of any worth (you may believe me) with the exception of the Florentine Leonardo, who is mak-

ing the bronze monument of the Duke Francesco. . . ."

Leonardo, whose genius dared to soar into the infinite, far above the ideas of his age, was filled with the desire once in his life to allow mankind to see the vast range of his mental powers. For many years he had devoted his earnest attention to the flight of birds, and had rendered himself familiar with every single characteristic of wing action. In consequence, the conviction grew upon him that it must be possible for men to raise themselves above the earth on wings. Leonardo felt sure of success. The sentences which he wrote thereon ring with a trumpet flourish of triumph: "the huge bird will take his first flight high aloft on the ridge of his great Ceceri (the mountain between Fiesole and Majano); he will fill the universe with wonder and all writings with his fame, and will give deathless renown to the nest which witnessed his birth." And thereafter nothing further is heard on the subject. It had been a veritable flight of Icarus.

To the observer, who looks for attainment and not aspiration, this man, to whom Nature had lent every gift, appears in the tragic light



STUDIES OF HANDS. (WINDSOR LIBRARY)

which plays around the most illustrious spirits. The destiny of solitude was vouchsafed them, but in return the shadows of their existence dominate the ages, conspicuous from afar like the giant mountains which tower into the blue of Heaven.

EARLY WORKS

One studies with special interest the early development of a great artist. For one straightway expects to find in his youthful works the key to his character. Since it is the peculiarity of youth to show itself as it really is, to reveal itself more directly and freely than in the later years of maturity, when the intellect and the will stand more prominently in the foreground and the original qualities appear more veiled. There is no doubt too that in the works of youth the new spirit, which is called into being on the appearance of a great artist, comes at once into view, sometimes diffidently, often in strong natures with the lively exuberance of a mountain torrent.

Again these first efforts bear the stamp of the system of training which the young genius has received. It is just this mixture of two artistic tendencies, of the acquired and of the innate, which often gives to such early efforts a subtle, incomparable charm.

He who examines the youthful works of a great artist must bear in mind these general conditions in order to guard against disappointments to which one is here more than ever exposed. But in all cases the greatest delicacy of perception must hold sway in the criticism which can distinguish between youthful immaturity and artistic incapacity. There are certain faculties in art which can be acquired: even the genius needs an apprenticeship to master them. Accordingly those works which fall in the years of learning will not be free from defects of skill, which mean nothing more than lack of experience and practice. Less gifted artists, on the contrary, often combine with great routine, which may be delusive, a want of originality and a lack of independent ideas of form, which always prevent them from rising above mediocrity.

On this distinction, which may be described in a word as the distinction between genius and talent, rests the decision of that much disputed (yet at bottom perfectly clear) question of the respective shares of Masaccio and Masolino in the Brancacci Chapel. One must bear this point in mind in order not to confound Leonardo with Verrocchio, his master, or with Credi, his fellow pupil.

Only on a single picture have opinions agreed, and recognised it as an early work of Leonardo. This is the small long-shaped panel of *The Annunciation* in the Louvre. In earlier times Filippo Lippi had shown a certain predilection for this scene. But he almost always painted it in upright form with the figures erect, the composition being suited for the frame of an altar. Leonardo makes use of the shape of his canvas to paint both figures kneeling. This produces the delightful undulating lines in the two figures, which incline towards each other. To the right some architecture is lightly traced. On the left is a stretch of turf bright with flowers. Above the wall are dark tree stems, with a perspective of clear evening sky. The whole is painted in

THE ANNUNCIATION. (LOUVRE)

Photograph, Braun, Clément & Cie, Dornach, Paris and New York

faint colours and represents the still calm of a highly solemn hour.

He who steps before the picture, even without fore-knowledge, will straightway recognise the hand of a very young artist. The picture is childlike and naïve, timid and cheerful at once. In the form of the heads, in the style of drapery, in the details of the design one recognises the school of Verrocchio. It lacks, however, the hardness, sometimes rising to harshness, which never left that master. It lacks also the ungraceful heaviness that marks even the more pleasing of Credi's early pictures. With what promising talents this boy sketches and paints! How skilfully already he distributes light and shade! Moreover, in the grace of the angel's profile and the right hand of the Madonna shyly appears the Master of the *Vierge aux rochers* and the *Mona Lisa*.

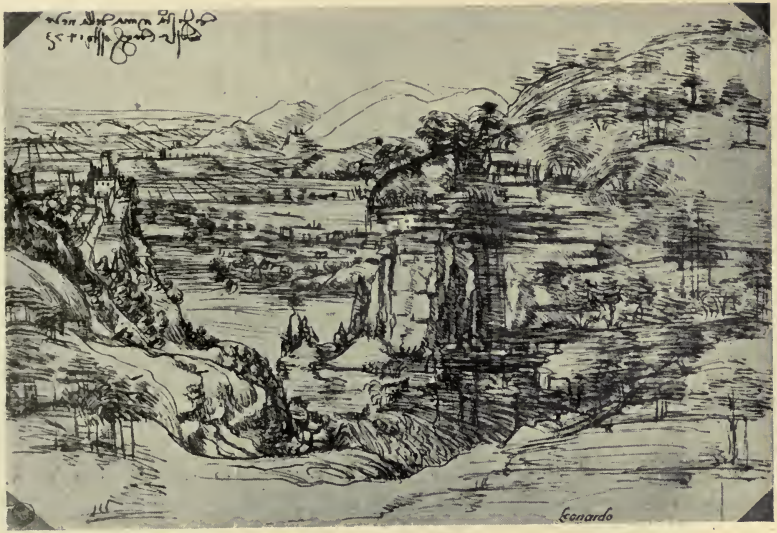
One may suppose with the greatest probability that Leonardo painted this small picture at the age of about seventeen years. We possess no other picture by him of the same period, and even the sketches that we know were drawn by young Leonardo, were

made several years later. When he was one-and-twenty years old he drew the landscape now in the Uffizzi—the earliest attempt in Italy to reproduce a definite scene in its main features. Only in the backgrounds of Pollaiuolo's pictures (in London and Florence) are found such wide prospects, embracing plain, river and mountain. Perhaps he who could depict these scenes with such fidelity to nature had made earlier landscape studies. But nothing of the kind has come down to us. Leonardo's sketch, therefore, possesses high historical value. While from the artistic point of view several immaturities in details are conspicuous, especially to the modern trained eye; for example, in the false fantastic rendering of the rocks.

The young Leonardo seems to have used the pen by preference in his drawing. He has used it, for instance, in his sketch representing Bandini's execution by hanging, in the sheet of head studies in the Uffizzi, in his many studies for a Madonna, and the drawings which were made for the *Adoration of the Kings.*

It is not very probable that Leonardo ever

finished the two pictures of the Madonna which he began at the end of the year 1478. At any rate, not a single notice of such a work is to be found in the literature of the period. Yet the artist repeatedly considered one of these pictures and sought to give finish and polish to the composition. The Madonna was to be represented with the Child on her lap playing with a cat; a simple *genre* motive. Here one meets with an eminently modern effort of a beginner, for hitherto the portrayal of the Mother of God had made only the most timid approaches towards the sphere of common humanity. Filippo Lippi in this respect was the first to break with the rigid form bequeathed by the Trecento. The more so, as he gave the Madonna the form of a certain contemporary Florentine model (particularly his *tondo* in the Palazzo Pitti). Botticelli follows him on this path, but gives to the Virgin Mary as well as to the infant Christ a spiritual expression so intense that it does not leave the spectator for a moment in doubt that the subject of the picture is, not simply a mother with her child, but Godhood clad in human form. With

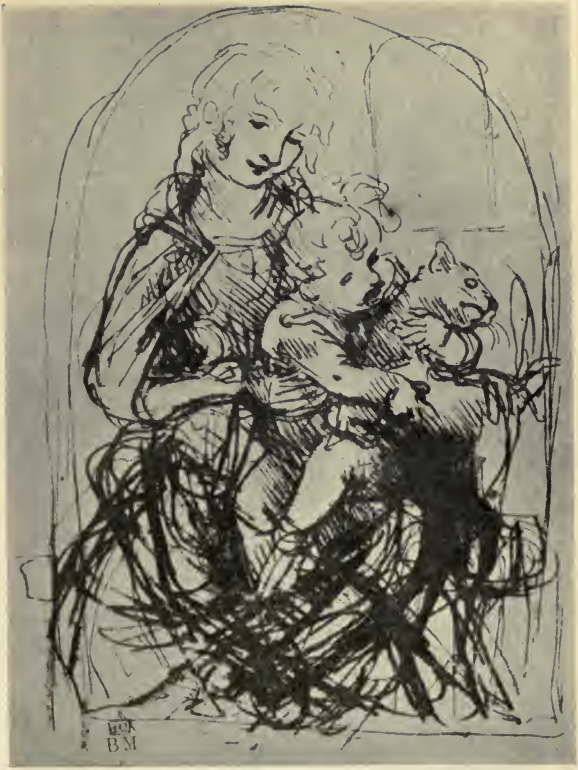


LANDSCAPE. (DATED 1473. UFFIZZI)

Photograph, Alinari, Florence

Leonardo, on the contrary, the Child is playing with a cat, teasing the animal in childish fashion. He presses it to Him with all the strength of His little arms, so that it struggles to get free. While the Mother looks down on her frolicsome infant with a smile, holding Him fast round the waist that He may not slip from her lap in His game. For a moment only does Leonardo appear to have thought of another scene, where the Mother is suckling the Child who, however, still plays with the cat. He has drawn the figures in profile and has given to the Madonna that heroic form which Donatello had first introduced in Florence.

A charming scene like the *Madonna with the cat* could have been painted by no one more serenely and sweetly than by Leonardo. The Child has the strength of infancy, with stout healthy body, chubby cheeks and fluttering curls. The Madonna is maidenly modest, with eyes meekly cast down. The picture is overpowering by its grace. In two studies Leonardo has given the group the actual form of a picture. It is rounded at the top, and the composition is cast in the shape of an acute angled triangle. Never has an artist found

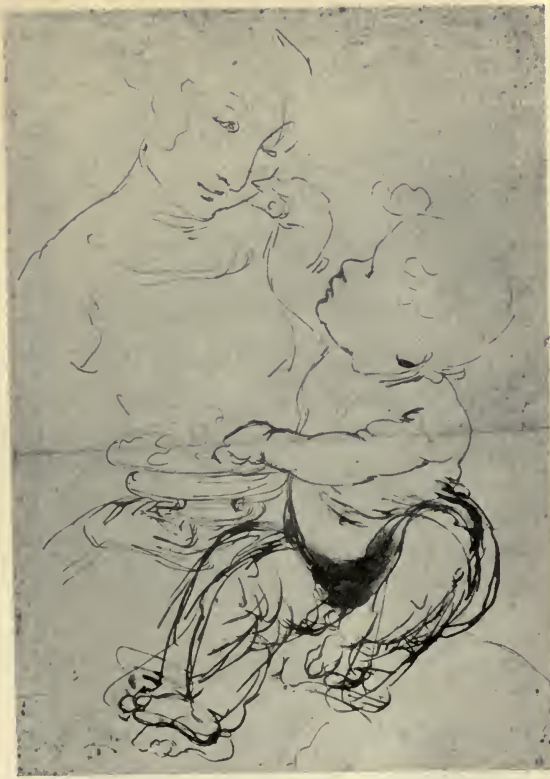


STUDY FOR THE VIRGIN WITH THE CAT
(British Museum)

with more grace ever new variations of a theme essentially so simple and so often handled.

We know less about the second picture of the Madonna. Can it possibly be that exquisite big sheet in the Louvre, which long bore the name of Raphael, where the Child is thrusting His hand into a bowl, which the mother holds out to Him, while He gazes tenderly at her and strokes her cheek with His hand? Or can it be that group in which John the Baptist as a boy is approaching the pair with reverence? Here we have a single instance of a theme, hit upon by Leonardo, from which a quarter of a century later a young artist derived inspiration, which he varied in creations regarded by mankind as the most radiant glorification of a mother's joy. The young artist was Raphael.

On Leonardo's remarkable sketch in Windsor, which suggested and inspired Raphael's *Esterhazy Madonna*, the *Madonna in Green* and *la Belle Jardinière*, are drawn several heads in profile, of children, young men and maidens. Similar profiles, or figures seen in profile, are to be found at this time (about 1478-1480) repeatedly, one may even say exclusively, in



VIRGIN AND CHILD. (LOUVRE)

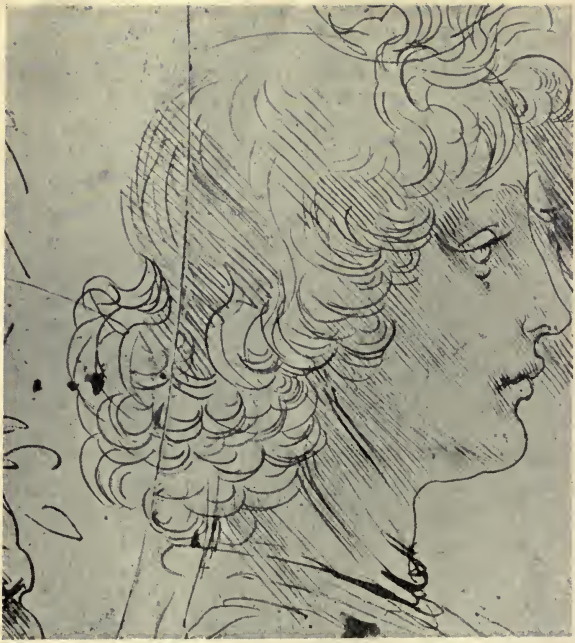
From a photograph by Giraudon

Leonardo's sketches. The finest of them are at Windsor. He constantly puts such heads on paper as if he were conscious that his hand could draw the contour from the brow to the neck with indescribable grace. There are only a few oft recurring types, gracefully finished, with clear wide open eyes, characteristically surrounded by a few strokes of the pen. Besides the youthful heads, we here meet for the first time remarkable, deeply impressive heads of old men, with high-arched foreheads, aquiline noses whose tips sink towards the mouth, projecting underlips and firm chins. These significant types, whose peculiarities are not yet so strongly emphasised as to become caricatures, Leonardo apparently derived from antique models, such as coins of Imperial Rome: Galba, for example, Vespasian and Titus are thus represented.

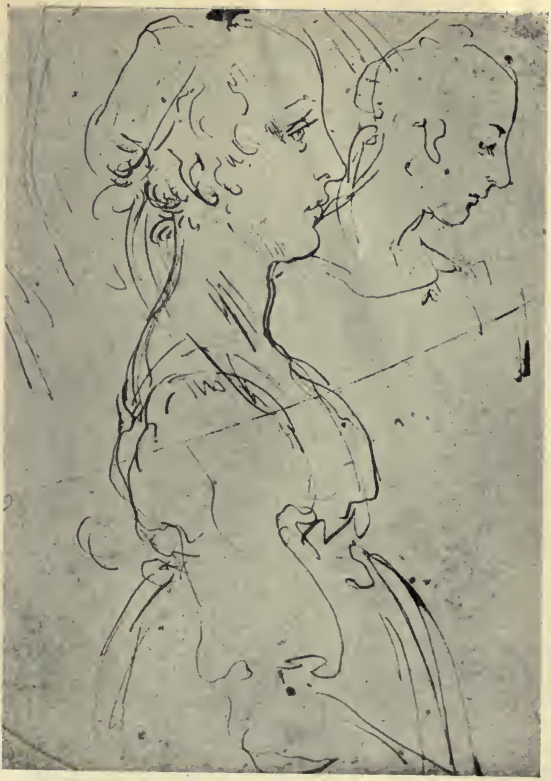
Whether Leonardo intended to use these charming or peculiar types in any of his pictures, does not appear with certainty in any of his sketches. Only one sheet forms an exception—a famous cartoon of the erstwhile Malcolm collection, now in the British Museum. On it is the half-length figure of a

warrior, in left profile, traced with the utmost care. This figure appears in helmet and armour which are most richly adorned. He is conceived as the warrior type, with threatening glance, like a general surveying the field of battle. One is involuntarily reminded of Verrocchio's Colleoni, which gazes into the distance with the same expression. The drawing must have been made at the very time when Leonardo's master was engaged on the plan of his monument. Does it represent an effort of the pupil to show his master how he himself would handle the task? At all events if one wishes to compare anything with the Colleoni, as regards a concentrated expression of will, there is nothing so worthy of comparison as the drawing of Leonardo, except Dürer's Knight from the renowned engraving showing Death and the Devil.

But not in this drawing only is one reminded of Leonardo's apprenticeship. The sketches of the Madonna, despite all their freedom of design, betray the school. The infant Christ, as the young master depicts Him, is cast in exactly the same form as Verrocchio's cherubic *Boy with the Fish*, or the Christ



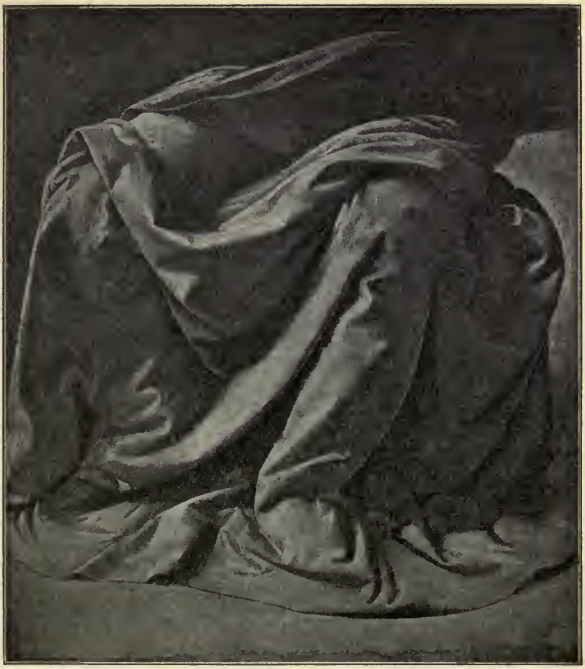
STUDY OF A HEAD. (WINDSOR LIBRARY)



STUDY OF A HEAD. (WINDSOR LIBRARY)

Child on the relief of Santa Maria Nuova, which, by the way, may be pronounced to be the most finely executed presentment of the Madonna in Florentine art of the Quattrocento, and at the same time the most graceful plastic treatment of the same simple theme.

In still another respect Leonardo remains subject to his master. Verrocchio, in all his works, bestowed particular care on his drapery. He painted the garments surrounding the body with the greatest minuteness, so that occasionally he becomes almost lost in excess of detail. For instance, the accumulation of drapery in the *Unbelieving Thomas* almost suggests a work of the Baroque style. In the studio of Verrocchio, drapery studies appear to have been quite a species of sport. Sketches of that kind were drawn, it seems, simply for their own sake, without any intention of using them in pictures; just as one draws from the nude for the sake of study. Numerous works of this kind which may be traced to Verrocchio's studio, are in existence. They are sketched on fine linen with the brush—grey on a grey ground, with the lights in strong relief. It is the more difficult to determine whose hand



STUDY OF DRAPERY. (Louvre)

Photograph, Braun, Clement & Cie, Dornach, Paris ana New York

painted them, inasmuch as we learn from Vasari that in these matters Credi was a conscious imitator of Leonardo. The majority of such vesture studies can in fact be traced to Credi. There are, however, some among them that in clearness of execution, in emphasis of the main lines and in general linear beauty, far exceed Credi's powers. These perhaps may be attributed to Leonardo. By far the most beautiful sheet of this kind is the study of a cloak in the Louvre, designed for a sitting figure. It envelopes the lower portion of the body, and at once suggests the figure of an enthroned Madonna, as she is usually represented in altarpieces of the fifteenth century.

But in later years, when he wrote his treatise on painting, Leonardo expressed himself very decidedly against drawing this sort of drapery study as an end in itself. In this work he lays especial stress on simplicity, which one at once misses in the sketches made in Verrocchio's studio. Several fine drapery studies (for the kneeling angel in the *Vierge aux rochers,* and the Mary in the *Saint Anna* picture) illustrate better than his words how, as a matured artist, he wished drapery to be treated in painting.

THE ADORATION OF THE KINGS

THREE times was the oft-repeated theme of the "Adoration of the Kings" dealt with in a strikingly original fashion in Florence during the Quattrocento. When, in the year 1423, the solemnly serene altarpiece of Gentile da Fabriano was set up in Santa Trinita, the criterion was found for a long time. The influence of this composition, with its skilful and tasteful use of the advantages offered by the subject in its rich variety of figures and movements, may be observed in many other pictures. Fra Filippo has most beautifully transformed the composition to suit the round picture (in the Cook collection at Richmond).

The other two pictures must have appeared almost at the same time, about 1480; one perhaps somewhat earlier, the other a very little later. Among Botticelli's altarpieces the first place is held by his *Adoration*, famous on account of the portraits of the Medici family. Never is the drawing with him so impressive and at the same time so simple. On no other occasion has he brought

together such a crowd of significant figures in a narrow space. He broke completely with traditional forms, which had treated the Adoration and the array of the princely following as two scenes of equal pictorial importance and set them side by side. Botticelli also *treated* the subject in this way in his early work, now in the National Gallery. *In the later picture* the nobles have taken up positions on the right and left in solemn uniformity and regard the proceedings with calm dignity.

Leonardo and Botticelli must have known each other well. Separated only by a few years in point of age, they were the most closely related of all the young Florentines in their artistic aims. Later, it must be owned, in his "Trattato della pittura," Leonardo has spoken sarcastically of Botticelli as a landscape painter. He may not have seen, however, the landscape portions of the *Spring*.

Leonardo carefully prepared his picture of the *Adoration* in numerous studies. For a short time he seems to have contemplated an *Adoration of the Shepherds*, as the latter appear in one of these studies (in the Bonnat Collection at Paris). This composition is in

THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI. (UFFIZI)

From a photograph by Houghton, Florence

the usual Florentine form, which later became still more common, chiefly through its use by Credi, whose principal picture is in the Florentine Academy. The change of subject gave Leonardo the advantage of vastly increasing the number of characters in the picture and also of introducing mounted figures among them.

Leonardo has brought the chief group into the immediate foreground, in opposition to Botticelli, who assigned it a raised position in the centre ground. In front of it on the right and left stand only the three principal persons—the kings. All the others group themselves in a half circle behind the Madonna. Here is a lively diversity both of figures and gestures in contrast to the gravity and repose in front. So many sharply-defined and individual types—which, however, are not distinct portraits of known people—have never been brought together by anyone else. The attention of all is fixed on the centre; and the striking gestures of their hands betray the strong psychical emotion which all feel.

One may regard the whole picture as an endeavour to paralyse a surging throng of

emotions by means of points of calm repose. Of greatest importance to the picture are the two figures set forward in the two corners, where the half circle of the centre ground ends. They give an architectural touch as it were to the picture. They stand there like the pillars of a tabernacle on which the arch rests. To them more than all the others has the artist given strikingly splendid forms. One, an old man, stands closely wrapped in his cloak, lost in deep thought: a figure like that of St Paul in Raphael's picture of *St Cecilia* in Bologna or in Dürer's picture of the Apostle. The other is knightly and heroic, clad in glistening armour, dowered with the beauty of youth. It is the sole figure which looks out from the picture. Since one finds on the same spot in Botticelli's picture the artist's own portrait, likewise with the glance directed towards the spectator, one cannot reject the idea that in this figure Leonardo too has painted his own image.

In all pictures of the Adoration the hut, usually represented as a ruined palace, stands in full view of the onlooker, directly behind the Madonna. Leonardo breaks with this

custom. But he has introduced two trees near the Madonna in order to emphasise more strongly the chief figures and to relieve the empty space in the upper part of the composition.

The background is filled up partly with a quaint piece of architecture, partly with a rural landscape, and affords opportunity for introducing numerous figures. Here are shown in busy movement the mounted retainers of the kings. Two are engaged in a joust: the horses are rearing while the riders half-standing in the stirrups lean forward in the saddle. Figures like these appear again in Leonardo's picture of the *Battle of Anghiari.*

Other figures are under the portico on the left, standing on the peculiar double staircase, of which Leonardo had made a careful study beforehand in a drawing, now in the Uffizi. These men are depicted in various spirited attitudes and characteristic movements. Some are only faintly traced in the ground-colouring.

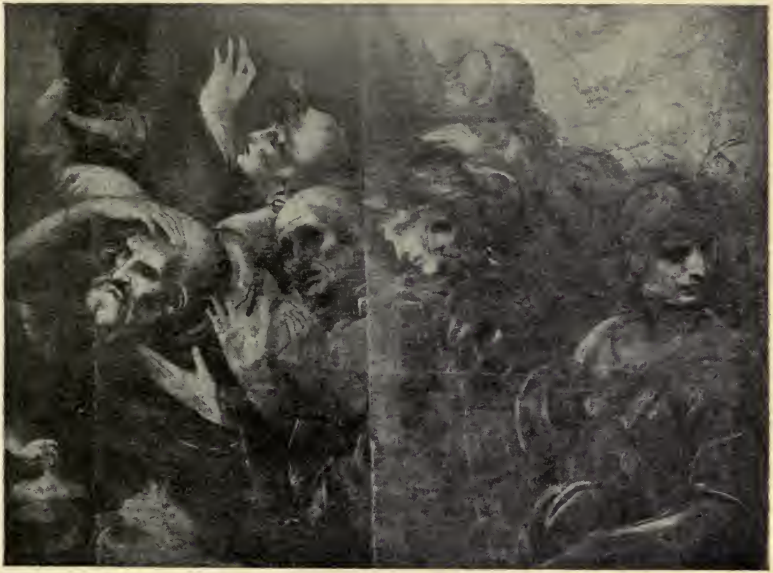
Among the numerous figures in the picture —and owing to the widespread animation of the movements one expects to see even more than there actually are—a single character is

specially prominent. On the extreme left, behind the figure of the old man, stands a rider, whose body is partly hidden by a horse's head. The head is of the peculiar type that can be seen in many sketches by Leonardo. The knight points with a gesture of his hand towards the middle group, while he turns towards the outside. Thus he unites, as it were, the picture of the ideal with the real world beyond.

The picture in the form in which we see it to-day, must be the outcome of endless thought. For every single feature is artistically fine and fraught with meaning. How different is the drawing in the Louvre—one of the most beautiful drawings in existence, and altogether one of the most charming sheets by Leonardo—from the later work, in which scarcely a single detail has been exactly reproduced. The majority of the studies are intended to fix the motive of single figures. One sees clearly that the artist has not intended to draw a study of the nude. It is indeed surprising, particularly so in an artist brought up in Florence, that among Leonardo's early drawings no studies from the nude are

to be found. One observes in his early drawings, as in Greek statues, that the psychical character of a figure is interpreted by the collective action of the body. In his sketches the artist considers the whole effect. Every single item is thought of in regard to this. "Let your figures have such movements as show sufficiently what each figure means." So teaches Leonardo as theorist.

The spirit, in which this picture is conceived is no longer simply the spirit of the Quattrocento. The Quattrocentist neither has this freedom of perception, which is far removed from rigid copying of the model; nor can he bring together so many motives complete in themselves, as to let the whole arise from the parts. Even the best in Florence, even Antonio Pollaiuolo, despite all his powerful and passionate delineation of the human body, falls into the second rank compared with Leonardo. And a comparison with Botticelli's picture of the *Adoration*, magnificent as this is in many respects, on the whole turns in favour of Leonardo's creation. With this picture, with the year 1480 therefore, begins the period of Classical Art in the Cinquecento



DETAIL OF THE "ADORATION OF THE MAGI." (UFFIZI)

From a photograph by Houghton, Florence

sense. Even after this, however, more than two decades were required to follow the swift advance of Leonardo.

Leonardo has not completely finished his picture. It hangs to-day in the ground-colouring in one of the Tuscan rooms of the Uffizi. He has painted in the figures in a greenish hue on a brownish ground, and has already begun to apply light and shade. The main group stands out light against the darkness of the centre and the right corner. From the left a broad band of light streams to the front, but the old man stands out dark against it. Whether it was Leonardo's peculiar temperament or his departure for Milan that prevented its completion, we know not. But the artistic aim stands out clear as day even in this unfinished picture. Unfortunately the somewhat unattractive sameness of colour at first sight hinders many from making a detailed inspection of the picture. And this is to be regretted in the highest degree. For it is one of the greatest monuments of Florentine painting, and one of the rare and wholly original creations of Leonardo, which, in addition, has come down to us intact.

Whoever examines the picture in all its details, contemplates each figure separately and inquires into its import for the whole, to him without doubt the significance of the work becomes apparent. Then it may easily happen that, in the presence of the dull tones of this work, the other gaily coloured pictures in the same room—even Sarto's *Madonna of the Harpies* or Sodoma's *Sebastian*—will grow pale.

Closely related, in point of style, to this picture of the *Adoration,* is the *Saint Jerome* in the Vatican Gallery. Like the *Adoration* it is only completed in the ground colouring. Passionate devotion and reverence animate this figure, which stands before a rugged background of rocks—a first draught of the landscape of the *Vierge aux rochers.* When Leonardo wrote in his treatise on painting, "that figure is not good which does not express through its gesture the passions of its soul," he had already created in his figure of St Jerome a picture in which artistic intention and attainment found themselves in perfect harmony. That is and will always remain the deciding quality in high artistic work.

EQUESTRIAN MONUMENTS

In his treatise on painting, Leonardo has contrasted the relative values of painting and sculpture, and in this comparison has given unqualified preference to the former. According to him sculpture has no advantage over it except in its greater durability. He goes so far as to assert that it is a highly mechanical art and requires the application of less genius than painting.

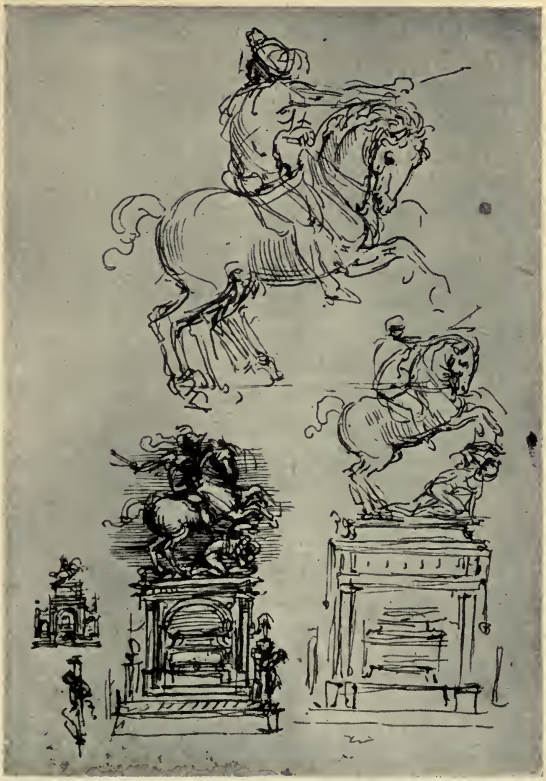
Remarkable words in the mouth of a man who could say of himself, "as I am no less versed in sculpture than in painting, and practise both arts in equal measure, it seems to me that without incurring the charge of presumption, I may give judgment as to the difficulty and perfection of the two arts, and decide which of the two requires the more genius." Still more noteworthy, it must be owned, are his remarks if one considers that he had grown up in the studio of an artist who was specially active as a sculptor, and that for many years he was engaged mainly on great plastic undertakings.

No authentic sculptural work of Leonardo has come down to us, although there has been no lack of works ascribed to him. And even concerning his two chief efforts in the domain of sculpture—the equestrian monuments of Francesco Sforza and of Gian Giacomo Trivulzio—we are not so accurately informed that we can settle what was the final shape each took in Leonardo's imagination. Only the most recent researches have been able to throw light on these very intricate questions, and have divided what up to the present appeared to be different forms of one and the same work into two distinct groups. Happily many of Leonardo's sketches are extant. They alone disclose to any extent the artist's inmost thoughts in this connection.

To an age in which renown was an essential factor of life, the equestrian monument seemed to be the only worthy form in which to transmit to posterity the true importance of their greatest men. Two such monuments (in Rome and Pavia) had been handed down from antiquity, and were admired as models of the grand style. The fifteenth century was proud to be able to place at their side some creations of their own.

All these monuments alike are characterised by the restful pose of the whole figure. The horses are pacing with slow tread. The demeanour of the riders is in keeping with the calm pace of their chargers. Even Verocchio's Colleoni with its vigorous movement has an iron steadfastness and repose about it. Violent unrest in such a position, on a high pedestal, may easily produce an unpleasing effect. What is destined to endure unshaken the assault of centuries must not try to perpetuate a moment. Leonardo had already seen Verrocchio's model with his own eyes in Florence. Before he left his native city it was ready for transport to Venice. So when he himself undertook a similar task, he entered into direct rivalry with his master.

It was inherent in his soaring genius, to which the apparently impossible seemed attainable and worthy of effort, that he should soon depart from the customary form, retained in all known equestrian monuments. He had at first a slow-stepping horse. But casting in bronze offers possibilities which execution in marble denies. For a group can be mounted on a relatively small base without endangering



PROJECTS FOR THE TRIVULZIO MONUMENT
(WINDSOR LIBRARY)

the safety of the monument. Leonardo was not afraid to be the first to represent the horse rearing, and thus throw on its hind legs the full weight both of steed and rider.

The motive is here a rearing horse. To give it a natural look, in front of the base was placed a warrior covering himself with his shield to ward off the danger of being trampled on. The monument gained thereby from the ideal point of view, in that a natural motive was afforded for the violent action of the horse. So also there was the material gain of securing a support for the fore hoofs, a point certainly valuable to Leonardo as a technician.

If one asks himself the question, which type was ultimately chosen in the definite version of the model, he can just as little find an answer to it as to the other questions concerning the details, which, nevertheless, are so important. The Duke is represented in one case as a general with a baton in his outstretched right hand, which is pointing rearwards—a noble conception of the glorified figure of a prince. In the other case he is represented as a warrior in the midst of the battle, swinging a heavy mace as if he meant in the next moment to let

it descend with a thud on the head of his recumbent foe.

These general notions concerning the motive seem to have pursued Leonardo long after the abandonment of his work on the Sforza monument. For in the studies, which are now supposed to have been made for the Trivulzio monument, the same motives recur: namely, the quietly stepping horse, and the rearing charger; and in keeping with them the rider is conceived either as a marshal leading and reviewing his troops in the field, or as a grim warrior in the press of battle.

But in the monument for Trivulzio the steed and rider were only part of a magnificent plan. Here the verbal account and the sketches complement each other in an unusually harmonious way. In the "Codex Atlanticus" is to be found under the heading—"Tomb for Messer Giovanni Giacomo Trivulzio," a careful estimate of the cost which at once considers two alternatives—the execution of the equestrian figure in bronze, or in marble. Further it appears from this that the statue was to rest on a substructure of eight stone pillars with bronze capitals: the open space be-

tween them was intended for a sarcophagus with a figure of the dead above it. Around the base of the equestrian statue were to be eight figures; and there was also rich sculptural ornament, consisting of festoons and trophies, designed for the architectural portions.

In many of the studies (which are nearly all to be found in the Royal Library at Windsor) these ideas can be recognised, either carried out almost exactly in accordance with the plan, or varied. The lower portion of the structure is invariably designed as a tomb which serves as a strong pediment for the equestrian statue. This occurs in both forms—not only for the calmly majestic figure, but also for the fiercely excited warrior. The contrast of the restful sleeping corpse beneath and the warrior storming in all the rapture of life above seems to have exercised a particular charm on Leonardo's fancy.

The architecture appears in manifold variations: sometimes as a circular temple surrounded by pillars which reminds one of Bramante's Tempietto in Rome, sometimes in the form beloved by the High Renaissance for altar frames. As regards the accessories,

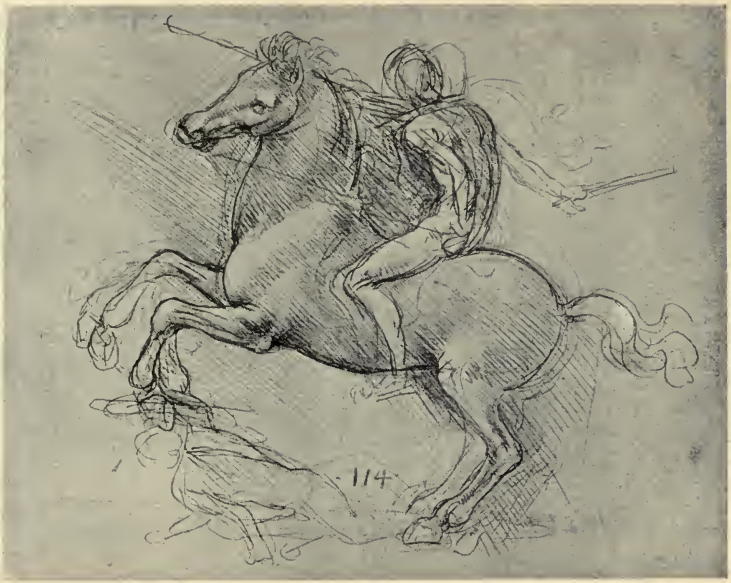
one can only imagine the figures sitting round the base from hastily penned sketches. A small space is left for them, and portions of their bodies rise far above the architecture. One leg is drawn up towards the breast, the other hangs down. In these sketches are found postures which only a short time after were adopted by a congenial master, but in painting. The figures of the youths on the ceiling of the Sistine chapel—the figures which are sitting opposite to each other, resting on the false architecture—may be said to have been anticipated in these studies of Leonardo. Like Michel Angelo's creations, Leonardo's figures may be called "slaves." But it is certain that they were not meant to symbolise submission to the power and the will of the Marshal galloping above their heads. They owe their origin simply to the soaring imagination of an artist who thought in men's forms.

Even if we are thus fairly well informed about the main designs of these monuments, still many of the details remain dim for us. Above all we have no means of gaining an idea of the sculptural execution, as we possess

no work by Leonardo's hand which enlightens us as to his treatment of plastic form.

However, many other fundamental questions arise and remain unanswered. How does Leonardo stand as regards faithful portraiture? Has he, like Verrocchio, taken no pains to make a true copy of the exact features, and only expressed in the imposing figure of a ruler the general tenor of the life of the person represented? Certainly this is the best mode of solving such a problem—namely to start with the individual, and divest him of his accidental form, and so glorify the type alone. In the failure to rise to this level is mainly founded the weakness of most modern monuments.

How has Leonardo dealt with the costume? In some of the sketches the rider is a naked figure of youthful and heroic form, with a cloak fluttering behind. It is improbable that a patron like Lodovico Moro would have allowed such a statue to be raised in honour of his ancestor. But the costume would probably not have been a faithful copy of the armour of the period. The mail encircling the breast would most likely have been



SKETCH FOR A STATUE. (WINDSOR LIBRARY

adorned with fantastic ornaments, in combination with weapons of antique design.

Again and again can one become absorbed in Leonardo's preparatory sketches, which give us a key to his restlessly active imagination. They have their value not only for the man who loves to carry his thoughts back to things of the past, but they also contain abundant stimulus. If an artist could be found, capable of high ideals, he might with the help of Leonardo's studies present to mankind an equestrian statue destined to be the highest type of that form of art. One is readily captivated by the thought that centuries after a Milanese Duke had planned such a work and the greatest genius had sketched it, it might at last appear in the pure form of bronze.

"Fluat aes; vox erit, 'Ecce deus.'"

LA VIERGE AUX ROCHERS

For altarpieces representing the Madonna, the fifteenth century favoured a severely proportioned design in keeping with the architectural form of the altar frame. In this a place is set apart for a saint on each side of the Madonna who is enthroned in the centre. It was the privilege of the sixteenth century to enliven with new ideas this type which had long been faithfully adhered to. But much earlier Leonardo created in his *Vierge aux rochers* an altarpiece which has no equal in that sphere.

The Madonna, however, was not always depicted on a throne. Sometimes a scene was chosen in which Mary herself appears as the chief worshipper of the Holy Child. Fra Filippo was the pioneer in this path, and painted with as much naïveté as grace the Virgin kneeling on a flowery lawn amid the mysterious twilight of a fairy forest. How often does one find variations of this in after times! Leonardo's fellow pupil, Credi, used this fruitful idea more than any other

Florentine; one might almost say that he used it like a manufacturer.

Leonardo's creation differs remarkably from this Florentine theme. He enriches the group and diminishes it at the same time. John the Baptist as a boy, and an angel appear together with the Madonna and the infant Christ as essential factors of a wonderfully designed picture. But he has avoided the stop-gap figures which so often occur in the pictures of Credi and others. The clearly pronounced form of an isosceles triangle encloses the four figures, the head of the Madonna forming the apex. So much for the outline. As far as is possible in a picture, the figures are united by gestures and looks. The Madonna is extending her hand in blessing over the head of the infant Christ. At the same time her right hand clasps the kneeling boy John, as if she would take her son's forerunner under her protection. This thought is rendered more apparent by reason of her widespread cloak. Beneath her drooping eyelids the glance of the Madonna seems to wander from one to the other. Again the children are closely connected by the reverence of the one and the

benediction on the part of the other. How humble and yet how trustful John appears! How wise is the look in the open eyes of Christ!

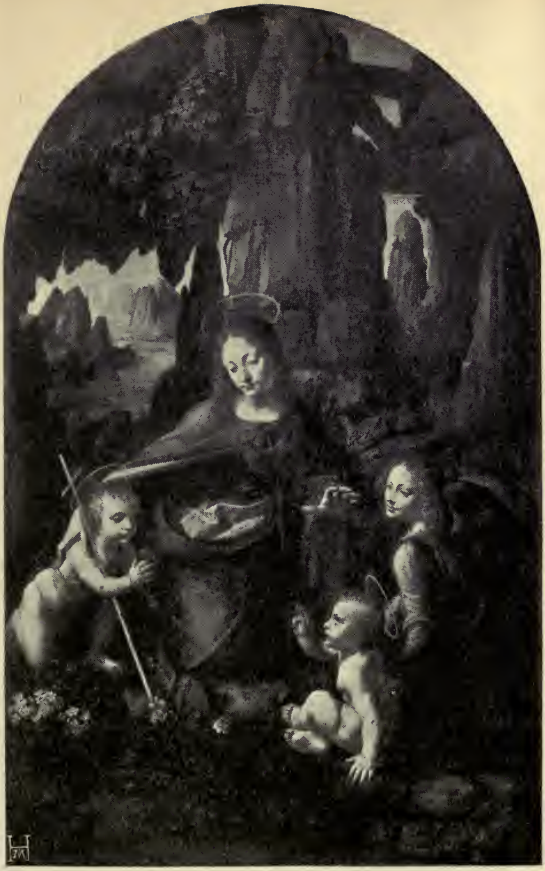
The harmony of the group is to some extent broken by the figure of the angel who supports the infant Christ and directs the spectator's attention to the young John. His hand with the outstretched forefinger seems to be out of place between the head of Christ and the hand of the Mother who is blessing Him. These two motives, namely the outward glance and the pointing hand, are intimately connected. They have a meaning, perhaps not quite comprehensible, unless we suppose that Leonardo's effort to give each figure its own peculiar and expressive effect has here led him a step too far.

In face of the finished picture Leonardo himself must have felt that this attitude had a disturbing effect. Only on this ground can be explained the fact that in the second version of the picture—now in the National Gallery—an important alteration was made. In this work the angel uses both hands to support the Child and looks towards the little John. There

is no doubt that the composition thereby gained in point of harmony. But strictly speaking the angel has become superfluous, and serves only as a stop-gap to round off the linear ground form of the picture.

Nevertheless, this alteration, as being a sort of self-correction on the part of a master of Leonardo's rank, is worthy of the deepest attention. It proves also what an active part he took in the reproduction which was made by the hand of Ambrogio de Predis, his colleague in the adornment of the altar of San Francesco. Other trifling differences between the two versions may here be passed over.

The landscape which surrounds them is as original as the figures themselves. The older art too had shown a preference for a landscape as background for the *Adoration of the Child.* Sometimes it consists merely of a thick rose hedge enclosing a quiet snug nook, and preventing the external world from gazing on the private life of the Holy Family. Sometimes beautiful and gorgeous hill scenery is revealed, as in the pictures of Ghirlandajo, Credi and Perugino.



THE VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS. (National Gallery)

Photograph, Hanfstaengl

LV*b*

None of these artists would have hit upon the idea which Leonardo conceived throughout as a poet. Only Fra Filippo's mystic sylvan twilight can in any way suggest the rocky cavern which Leonardo has depicted in the background. Just as on the figures in the foreground light and shade are interchanged in the most charming fashion, so in the background the eye plunges deeper and deeper into dusk. Rocks overhang threateningly. Between them can be seen the cavern which seems to owe its existence to the whim of Nature. One can see the soft gleam of the sky, and finally wide stretches of meadow, stream and rock fading into the dim distance. It is a landscape vision such as had appeared already in the picture of *St Jerome,* and is used with consummate art in the pictures of *Mona Lisa* and *Saint Anna.*

How much of the enchantment of this picture is due merely to this fairy-like background each careful inspection will teach anew. Leonardo had penetrated deeply into the organisation of Nature, whether as a result of scientific or of artistic interest it is difficult to say. Accordingly he was able to present in

this picture a faithful image of her activity both on a grand and on a small scale. Next to the splendid formation of the rocks, we notice the minute fidelity with which he painted the flowers that spring up between the figures in the foreground, just as the Homeric fancy made flowers spring up where the gods wander.

Compared with the figures of the *Adoration of the Kings,* Leonardo's art seems to have matured wonderfully. It is at once simpler and grander. Hence the perfect grace of the figures in the various periods of life depicted. Indeed only the busts of children made in the Quattrocento can be compared to these two childish figures. All others would appear crude in comparison. Even Perugino's much-admired children would seem devoid of character and natural charm. The best of child painters must be brought into competition, among whom perhaps Correggio alone can confront Leonardo on equal terms in reproducing childlike expression.

Works, in which the graceful and the pleasing predominate, must possess a high degree of artistic greatness to escape having an insipid

and wearisome effect. Correggio's art has succumbed to this fate. This explains why the eighteenth century overrated him just as much as the following century unduly depreciated him.

Leonardo's creation, on the contrary, is full of impressive grace, yet quite free from any such weakness. In his children is exhibited an ideal type of childish innocence; in Mary is shown the perfection of motherhood; in the figure of the angel is embodied the standard of youthful beauty. Moreover in the silver point drawing in Turin, which is a study for the angel's head, a degree of beauty is attained which is almost unique in art. Even in Leonardo's works few analogies are to be found.

If one considers the high qualities of the *Vierge aux rochers,* the clear simplicity of the arrangement, the eloquence of the expression whereby a few gestures are made to reveal an active correlation between the figures, if one carefully examines the delineation of the forms, he will assign to this work a place next to the *Last Supper.* The subject is entirely different, but the artistic spirit which con-

ceived and executed both works is the same. Only a short time can have passed after the completion of the altarpiece for San Francesco before Leonardo began work on the *Last Supper*.

THE LAST SUPPER

Leonardo was between forty and fifty years of age when he created the work which already appeared to his own generation as the climax of his artistic activity. Yet neither in range of subject, nor in the number of its figures, does it occupy the first place among his paintings. Long before this the subject had begun to engage his attention—at the time that he was preparing his picture of the *Adoration of the Kings*. A drawing in the Louvre gives the key to these studies: three figures are sitting at a table engaged in animated talk; further off another is listening; a fifth is springing up from his seat; Christ Himself is shown apart, pointing to the dish. All these figures are nude and drawn with the same graceful mobility of the limbs as marks

the assembled figures on the drawings for the *Adoration of the Kings.*

In Florence to-day, pictures of the Last Supper can still often be found on the end wall of refectories fronting the doorway. Pious custom has chosen this scene as the sole ornament of the room in which the members of a conventual community assemble daily, with the purpose that it might serve as an example. The type which in time became predominant, may be seen in its most marked form in Ghirlandajo's fresco in Ognissanti (painted in the year 1480). Its chief characteristic is that Judas is isolated from the other Apostles and sits on the other side of the table with his back turned to the onlooker.

This scheme Leonardo retained in his red chalk drawing in the Venetian Academy. This study is highly impressive in the action of the figures; but is so weak, even positively bad, in the details, that it can only be regarded as a copy of a genuine sheet. Another peculiarity of the conventional form is also retained in this sketch, namely that John appears sleeping with his head on the table.

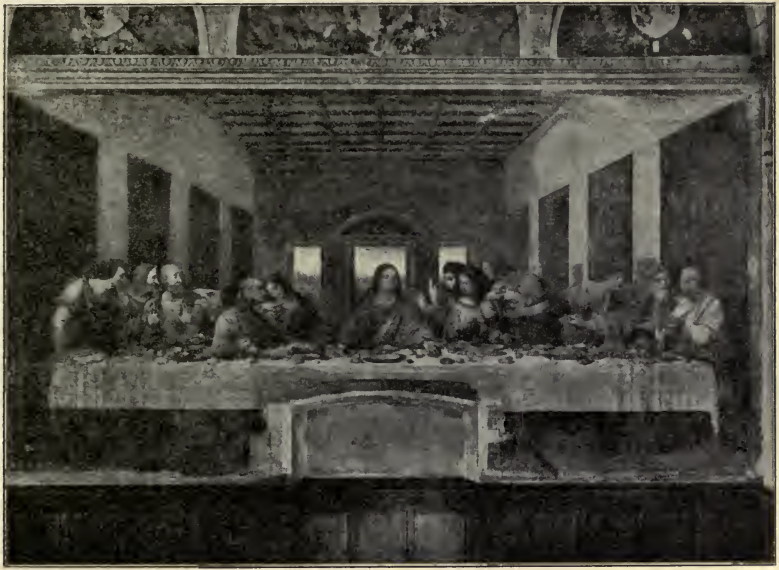
It is well known that Leonardo based his picture on Christ's words, "One of you shall betray me." But that this reproach occurred to him as the most fertile motive only after long and varied consideration is shown by a third sketch (in Windsor). In this the moment chosen seems to be that in which Judas—again in front of the table—dips his hand into the dish at the same time as Jesus, immediately after those other words of Christ—"Whosoever dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me."

The completed fresco must be compared with all earlier pictures of the Last Supper and with Leonardo's own preliminary studies. Only thus can be discerned the immense, almost inexpressible superiority of Leonardo's genius. But at the same time one can see that it was only by degrees that Leonardo broke free from the trammels of tradition and arrived at his own conception of the form. What Leonardo actually portrayed in his picture was, the effect of a word on a group of men; how the same cause affected the individual differently according to temperament and age; and lastly, how such an effect finds its visible expression in

eloquent gestures. Only once before had an artist attempted this. That artist was Andrea del Castagno, whose *Last Supper* in St Apollonia is worthy of the most careful inspection, as it is one of the most singular works of the Quattrocento. But he was too much engrossed in the effort to give natural animation to the single figures, to bring the whole into a combined effect.

Leonardo's *Last Supper* has been described countless times. Among such descriptions Goethe's stands pre-eminent, and is everywhere celebrated as one of the most remarkable appreciations of art. It may suffice here to point out which motives distinguish the composition, first catch the eye and live longest in the memory.

First of all let us consider the scene of the picture. It is most simple—merely a pictorial extension of the walls of the refectory, the monotonous white of which is broken by regular squares of tapestry. The ceiling is coffered. The end wall has three openings on the landscape. The advantage of this from an artistic point of view is that while a very dark background is gained, it is at certain



THE LAST SUPPER. (MILAN)

Photograph by Anderson, Rome

spots relieved by strong lights. The two long walls also have different light. The one on the right directly facing the sun is illumined by a gradually decreasing light. The simple straight lines of the floor lead the eye unconsciously to the depth of the scene. Each effect is here produced by the simplest means. The desired end is perfectly attained. While Castagno, despite the employment of really brilliant tricks of perspective, only produces a confused result. Leonardo had no wish to bewilder by secondary effects, like the Quattrocentist.

A great difficulty both of line and colour in the treatment of this subject must be presented by the table. For the whole picture is intersected at the centre by the parallel horizontal lines, while a large white surface is brought into the immediate foreground, and at once attracts the eye. What powers must have been exerted to neutralise these extrinsic but inevitable factors !

Everything else seems perfectly subordinate from the moment that the attention turns to the grouping of the figures. To show how a word impresses the spirit of a group of persons, and affects them in entirely different

THE LAST SUPPER. (Milan)

The Apostles St Bartholomew, St John the Younger and St Andrew

Photograph, Anderson, Rome

ways, gesture is indispensable. One must also bear in mind what meaning gesture has for the Italian, how many things he can express with a turn of the hand, while such plastic accompaniment of the spoken word is mostly denied to the Northerner.

But there is a near danger that the subject may be treated episodically, lest the individual motives arrest the attention of the onlooker too strongly and prevent him from feeling the effect of the whole. Again one may point to Andrea del Castagno's picture, in which every single figure is interesting in itself, but the inner connection is missed ; to say nothing of Ghirlandajo, whose weakness is pitilessly exposed by such comparison. But Leonardo overcomes the danger arising from his many figures by the repose of his main lines. The eye of the observer can mentally connect all the figures with one inclusive line. Such a line is even and gently undulating with regularly recurring breaks, only here and there interrupted by slight deviations to avoid wearisome regularity.

The twelve disciples of Christ fall into groups of three. None of Leonardo's pre-

decessors in painting the Last Supper had hit upon this idea. This arrangement only became possible when Judas was freed from his isolation and brought into closer connection with the other figures. Each group of three is closely knit together by line and seems to be filled with a common life. Only Judas is isolated with great subtlety; not with the coarseness of the old masters, but nevertheless with quite as much distinctness. His is the only figure, the upper part of whose body is bent far over the table. Supported on his right forearm he thrusts himself sideways to the front of the picture. Nevertheless, his glance is fixed solely on Christ.

The several groups in turn are combined in quite a natural and unobtrusive way. At two points unconnected groups come together. In ordinary course a break must have occurred in each case resembling the caesura in verses. But in what a simple, forever noteworthy fashion has Leonardo circumvented this difficulty. Philip and Matthew (the third and fourth apostles on Christ's left hand) turn to opposite sides, both with

vigorous gestures. But at the same time Matthew is pointing towards the centre, and thus three figures are brought into union with the rest of the picture. The hand which James is laying on Peter's shoulder has like importance in the composition. Thus each feature reveals unequalled subtlety.

In all older pictures John, "the disciple who lay on the Lord's breast at supper," is closely united with Christ. That makes it impossible for Christ to stand forth at once as the actual middle point, despite the fact that He naturally has a place in the centre. Here, too, by abandoning tradition, Leonardo gained an infinite advantage. Christ is the only one who is alone and apart from the rest. All movements, all gestures, however, are calculated with regard to Him. If the spectator follows the looks, and the pointing hands, his eye will ever be led back to the centre.

Another point too has an important effect. On entering a room the eye is at once unconsciously drawn to the source of light—to the window. Similarly the eye of one who sees this picture is at once mechanically attracted to the small wall with the openings, and particularly

THE LAST SUPPER. (Milan)

The Apostles St Matthew, St Thaddeus and St Simon

Photograph, Anderson, Rome

to the broader central opening which discloses a long strip of pale landscape under a clear sky. In the *chiaroscuro*, Christ's head, with long curls falling to the shoulders, stands out against this ground, whose clear light surrounds him as it were with a halo, not of dazzling brilliance, but softly radiant. The light thus also brings this figure into stronger relief than all the others.

And yet how easily the harmony of the whole effect might have been spoiled! One perceives how much is gained by the fact that all the heads are very nearly of the same height. Even the figures that appear standing lean so far forward that they scarcely rise above the level of the others' heads. The least deviation would have been enough to break the harmony. Very instructive is a glance from this picture to Sarto's *Last Supper* in San Salvi, most justly extolled on account of its magnificent details. In it three figures are standing. Thereby an entirely unjustifiable importance is given to them, although they only play the same rôle as the other ten Besides, what slight prominence is given to the figure of Christ in this picture.

THE LAST SUPPER. CHRIST. (MILAN)

Photograph, Anderson, Rome

Never again perhaps has an artist solved a problem so thoroughly and decisively as Leonardo has done here. On every occasion since that a picture of the *Last Supper* has been attempted, the unapproachable model has been reflected in individual features. Often we perceive that an artist has consciously endeavoured to express something other than that which Leonardo has done before him. But the invariable result is a feeble copy of the model.

Leonardo's *Last Supper* has come down to us in an utterly ruinous state. Besides the mutilation of the Parthenon sculptures, mankind has scarcely another loss of equal magnitude to record. Even this ruin, however, can reveal much to the eye of the intelligent observer. No copy or reproduction can give even an approximate idea of the original, which alone can teach the subtleties of *chiaroscuro*. If one, however, goes fully into its details, and regards the forms of the heads and the shape of the hands, it seems as if every trace of Leonardo's genius is lost in the copies, although some of them were made very soon after. Even to-day the original has

THE LAST SUPPER. (MILAN)

THE APOSTLES ST THOMAS, ST JOHN THE ELDER AND ST PHILIP

Photograph, Anderson, Rome

beauties to reveal, which not one of the copyists had the skill to transcribe.

But he who wishes to gain an idea how once these incomparable figures appeared to the eye, must submit the existing studies to a careful inspection. Three are extant, all in Windsor, namely the studies for Judas, Philip and Matthew. Character and beauty are combined in them with unequalled skill. An entire temperament is depicted in each. What a group of heroic figures! One can understand from them how the anecdote arose that Leonardo did not finish the Christ because he himself thought it impossible to surpass such wealth of expression and such nobility of form.

Even Judas is painted in truly splendid form; not as the paltry villain one is accustomed to see elsewhere, but as an extraordinary force. He is the Evil principle in opposition to the Good, which withstands the divine might with splendid obstinacy—a figure like Capaneus in Dante's fourteenth canto, or like Goethe's Mephistopheles. . . .

In the seventeenth century a Milanese author in a noble simile compared the wreck

THE LAST SUPPER. (MILAN)

THE APOSTLES JUDAS, ST PETER AND ST JOHN

Photograph, Anderson, Rome

of the *Last Supper* to "the sun at the close of day, whose setting beams shine with ineffectual fire, but still reveal their former power and brilliance." It lies in the inclination of men to make comparisons of works of art. But when we speak of the highest which art has created, we need a simile of nature. For the supreme creations of genius are like her, eternal and imperishable.

THE "SAINT ANNA"

Again and again the same observation can be made regarding Leonardo's compositions, namely that he arrived at the final conception only after repeated trials and changes. But in the end he gave to his pictures a form wherein the subject in each case received the happiest imaginable treatment from the artistic point of view. The *Last Supper* and the *Adoration* can be found in various earlier efforts. The case is the same with the *Saint Anna* whose final form is preserved for us by the picture in the Louvre.

In the Academy of Venice is a pen and

THE "ST ANNA." (LOUVRE)

Photograph, Braun, Clément & Cie, Dornach, Paris and New York

ink sketch by Leonardo—a *genre* piece full of dreamy grace. Mary is drawn in profile as a very young maiden. She sits on the lap of Saint Anna, tightly clasping the Child, who leans far forward to play with the Lamb. In this picture all is idyllic, and a landscape, traced with hasty strokes, forms with its soft lines the best setting for the image of bright family happiness.

This scene is drawn in the same spirit as the sketches of the *Madonna with the Cat.* It is the outcome of a perception which regards everything serene, pleasing and beautiful. Still nearer to it stands a drawing which is one of the finest that we possess by Leonardo. It represents a maiden saint with a unicorn lying at her feet. It is drawn on the back of a sheet (in the British Museum), covered with studies for the *Madonna with the Cat.* It is faintly outlined with hasty penstrokes, yet the forms are distinct and thoroughly impressive by reason of their lofty grace. This composition is enclosed by lines, and conceived quite in the form of a picture.

When Leonardo, after his return to his native city, resumed work on his picture of

Saint Anna, he must already have chosen in the cartoon which he then made, the form now familiar through the Louvre picture and numerous old copies from the school in Milan. From this form the cartoon in the London Royal Academy differs entirely. In it the Madonna is so posed that one scarcely sees that she is sitting on the lap of Saint Anna. The upper portions of the women's bodies are drawn close together and their heads are on the same level. Anna is smiling at Mary, who on her part looks down with a smile on the young John the Baptist who is doing homage to the Child. Both children are looking seriously at each other, and Christ is slowly raising His hand in blessing.

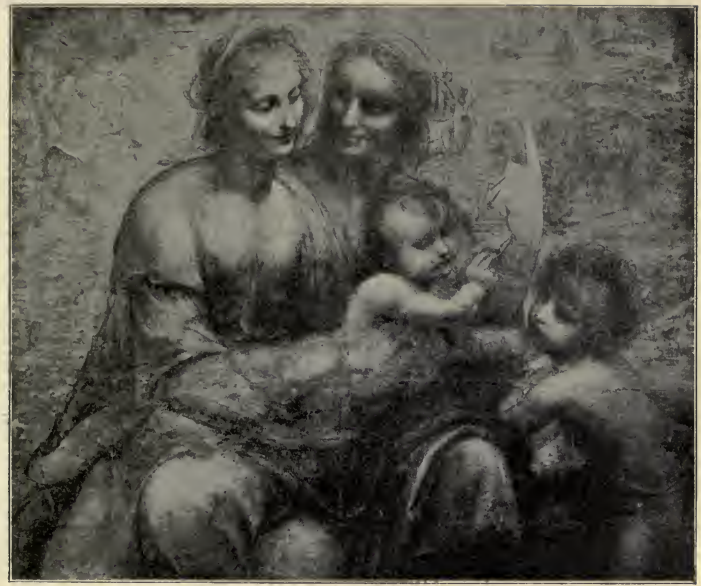
Through this motive the solemn tone of the devotional picture is awakened. One notices secondly that Anna is pointing upwards with raised hand and outstretched forefinger. The thoughts of the onlooker are transported from the earthly present to the heavenly future.

The composition is marked by the repose and purity of its forms and the charm and freedom of its drapery effects. The staid, calm expression of the heads could not easily be

surpassed. Still it cannot be denied that, owing to the addition of the figure of John, the repose of the external contour of the whole picture has been deranged. The eye is attracted too strongly to the right side; a space remains unfilled above the Child's figure; the heads of the two women are too near each other, and too much on a level. In short, the composition is not well rounded off.

If one compares this style of treatment with that on which Leonardo decided later, it seems impossible that this London cartoon can have been made after the other. But through the indisputable testimony of a contemporary, we know that the only work which Leonardo executed, on his first return to Florence, was a cartoon which in its main features must have corresponded exactly to the picture in the Louvre.

The natural æsthetic inference seems difficult to reconcile with the facts. To judge from its refined form the cartoon in London cannot well belong to an early period like the drawing in Venice. The heads of the holy women with their gentle, faintly perceptible smiles, remind us directly of the portrait of Mona



THE SAINT ANNA CARTOON—DETAIL
(DIPLOMA GALLERY, BURLINGTON HOUSE)

Lisa. The pointing hand of Anna is almost exactly like the remarkable hand of the Apostle Thomas in the *Last Supper.* One must in consequence decide, either that Leonardo had already prepared the subject for painting before he left Milan, or else that the cartoon with the young John was drawn after the picture of the Child with the Lamb. In other words, we are to assume that after Leonardo had already fixed on the chaste rounded form for his composition, he abandoned it to waste his fine powers on a far less happy scheme. Must we not then conclude that the picture of Saint Anna received the classically finished form which we see in the Louvre only after long years of work; and that the Venetian sketch is the earliest, and the London cartoon an intermediate stage in the course?

Like the *Vierge aux rochers,* in its final treatment the composition is arranged in the form of an acute-angled triangle. With wonderful skill Leonardo has softened the rigidity of the severe lines of the ground form. The lines of the landscape obviously serve to counteract their effect, especially the gently

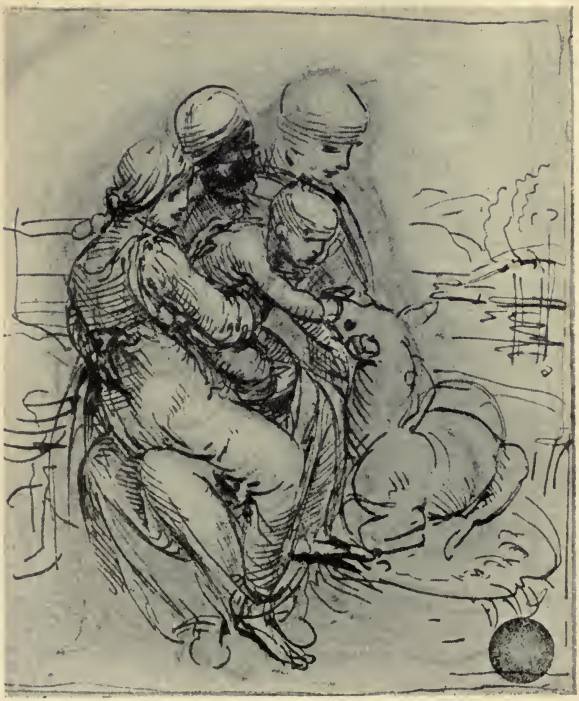
undulating horizontal line which sets off the centre ground dark against the distant background. The three figures are united in the most natural way. The Madonna and the Child find their bond of union in their merry play: they smile at each other, while above the head of Mary, St Anna looks down on the group with gentle radiant countenance. Mark carefully how finely toned is the smile in these three figures, in keeping with the age of each. In the case of the older woman, it is calm and faintly visible as in the portrait of Mona Lisa. The Madonna's smile is heartfelt, bearing witness to the mother's joy. The Child has the beaming smile of infancy.

While fully conscious of all this charm, we are forced to realise that we have before us the representation of a quite unpleasing theme. The subject in question is dealt with in the fashion required by tradition, and the theme is nothing less than one grown-up person sitting on the lap of another. In fact in the theme there is something ridiculous and mawkish which might seem to preclude it from artistic treatment.

From the period of the Florentine Quattro-

cento there is a picture of Saint Anna by Masaccio, which is unusually sublime. The Madonna is enthroned. Above her, one does not see exactly where, sits Anna. She blesses the Child. Thereby at least an external connection is shown between her and the group below. One sees that this arrangement is a makeshift to avoid the difficulty. It is therefore easy to explain why Masaccio in this work appears more old-fashioned and confused than in any other picture that we know by him.

Such a comparison with the work of a genius of Masaccio's standing sets Leonardo's wonderful composition in the brightest light. Not only does the pose of the figures seem to be clearly motivated and developed without constraint, but the charm of the line play is so great that the strange arrangement is only observed long after. Again and again the responsive eye will rest on the fine action of the Madonna, which is pleasingly repeated in the Child, or note the easy fall of the drapery. To speak of details in this case is more superfluous than in any picture by Leonardo, whether it be concerning the distribution of

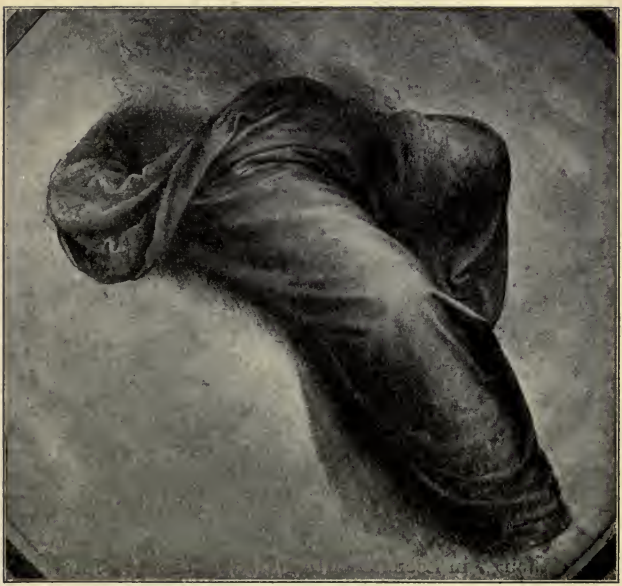


STUDY FOR THE ST ANNA. (Venice Academy)

Photograph, Alinari, Florence

light and shade on the figures, or on the landscape which fades into the calm background.

Leonardo's picture remained unfinished: not indeed to such an extent that there can be any doubt regarding the solution of the problem, but the final perfection of the details which, it may be said, played a great part in all works of the master was here omitted. In the Louvre is a drapery study for the Madonna's cloak. Here one can see with what skill Leonardo could put life into his material; how he could preserve the main features and trace the finest details, yet flood the whole with a mystic charm of light, which makes this drawing in itself a perfect work of the highest pictorial finish. On comparing this sketch with early dress studies by Leonardo, one can see how even in this respect he had risen to highest simplicity,—to classical perfection. Perhaps the only thing comparable to it among all the art treasures of the world is the drapery of the "Dew sisters" on the Parthenon pediment.



STUDY OF DRAPERY FOR THE ST ANNA PICTURE
(LOUVRE)

LEDA

In the midst of Leonardo's creations which all deal with ecclesiastical subjects, the composition of the *Leda* stands alone. Only this once has he treated a mythological subject[1] in an age of amateurs, who already showed a strong preference for such pictures as ornaments for their dwelling-rooms.

But if one turns his attention from the subject and regards only the compositional form which Leonardo gave to his picture, the *Leda* is found to be most closely related to his other Florentine works of the same period. For the same general ideas distinguish and govern it.

[1] The picture of Bacchus in the Louvre need not be mentioned here, for originally this figure represented John the Baptist. Subsequently, although in Leonardo's time, it was changed into a Bacchus, but only in outward details. Further, the picture clearly betrays the hand of one of Leonardo's pupils; and of all the pictures associated with Leonardo's name it is the most indifferent.

The final form of the *Standing Leda* must have been found after manifold essays, before he left Florence. But the cartoon, or whatever outward shape his design took, can only have been seen for a very short time in Florence. For even in Vasari's day it was quite forgotten that Leonardo ever had done such a work.

It must have been finally executed during the last years of the artist's life. The picture was hung in Fontainebleau. But later it probably fell a victim to misdirected morality. However, in addition to preliminary sketches, several old copies give us an adequate idea of the composition as a whole. The best known of these copies is to be found in the Borghese Gallery.

Leonardo's original conception must have been a naked woman kneeling in the middle of a meadow. This attitude gave a delightful opportunity for contriving a series of undulating overlapping forms. The weight of the body rests on one knee, the other leg is supported on the foot and only the arms stretch out to one side. In this earliest drawing (in Windsor) the swan seems not to have figured at all: while

the woman stretches out her hand to the left to hold or support a child. Perhaps Leonardo thought that the overlapping lines of this figure were not sufficiently reticent, and so abandoned this form of the composition.

The figure of Leda is next represented almost full face, kneeling with the left leg slightly raised. She inclines towards her children, who are in the high reeds just issuing from their shells. At the same time she turns and embraces the neck of the swan. This pose[1] reveals the beauties of her finely developed body, which is drawn in many supple curving lines. The sketch is in Weimar.

From this time onward Leonardo is possessed by a conception for which he seeks to gain an ideal solution. His object is to combine the lines of the woman's body and of the swan in undulating curves. A woman's figure offers many such lines: in the case of the swan the neck, breast and wings are just as graceful as the rest is clumsy. Hence it was necessary to give to the upper parts of his body such

[1] This "counterpoise" or turn of the figure is just what the Italians mean by the word "contraposto."

captivating movement as would draw the attention away from the rest. And the more so as the swan, being near the woman's body, must be drawn in more than natural size.

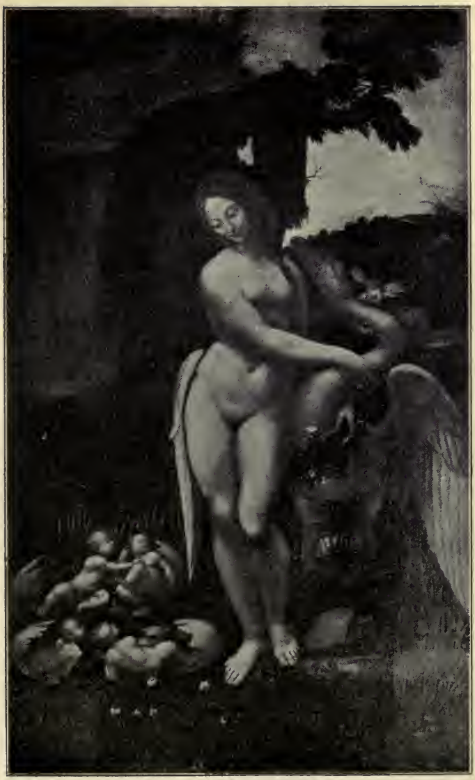
On a drawing in Chatsworth, Leda is seen half rising. She still turns, however, to the other side with a gesture of the right hand and a torsion of the lower part of her frame. Finally Leonardo gave up all movement of the body towards the children. Leda stands and clasps the neck of the swan with both arms, while he approaches her with gracefully curved neck, veiling her thighs with his plumage.

Henceforward Leonardo was almost solely engaged in the perfection of the woman's form. The legs are marked by the subtle change of the line-play. The left leg is free and, being slightly put forward, intersects with its soft curve the line of the right leg, on which the figure rests. The strong outward bend of the hips, due to the standing position, is quite in the style of Praxiteles. The lines of the neck and shoulders display a wonderful suppleness resulting from the frontward curve of the right arm. All this possesses that high degree of refined beauty which Leonardo always extracted

from the human form. The head with the downcast eyes is depicted in the way familiar to all who know the *Mona Lisa* or the *Saint Anna.* A smile illumines the features, while the eye is turned towards the children escaping from the eggs (in the Borghese picture they are already playing about). The hair is stirred by a faint breeze and flutters gracefully around the head.

Here one can learn by example how Leonardo was wont to consider each detail of the picture with the utmost care. On a sketch, in Windsor, he has drawn the head of Leda. On it can be seen distinctly how the hair is taken up and laid in coils on both temples, while only the extreme ends are left free for the wind to sport with. Not content with this, Leonardo has tried to make clear to himself how the hair must be fastened. He has drawn the same head from the back, with all the peculiar twists that are needed to keep fast the circular form of the plaits.

One has only to imagine this splendid type of female beauty painted in the finest play of light, with a flower-decked meadow in front and in the background a wide landscape, re-



LEDA. (PARIS, PRIVATE COLLECTION)

Photograph, Braun, Clément & Cie, Dornach, Paris and New York

sembling that of the *St Anna* in tone and form, to divine what has been lost with Leonardo's own creation.

In the only mythological picture that he ever painted, Leonardo dealt with the inherent difficulties of the subject in a way that could offend no one's modesty. To grasp the full elevation of Leonardo's work, one would do well to compare with it Correggio's picture of Leda (in Berlin). Leonardo here applied in practice what he had taught in theory: "Women should be represented in modest attitudes, with the legs close together and the arms folded; their heads looking downwards and leaning a little to one side."

The naked body is here handled with the purity which raises the Venus of Milo and Giorgione's Venus high above all other kindred works. Leonardo's *Leda* stands on an equal footing with these two figures of the goddess.

THE CARTOON OF "THE BATTLE OF ANGHIARI"

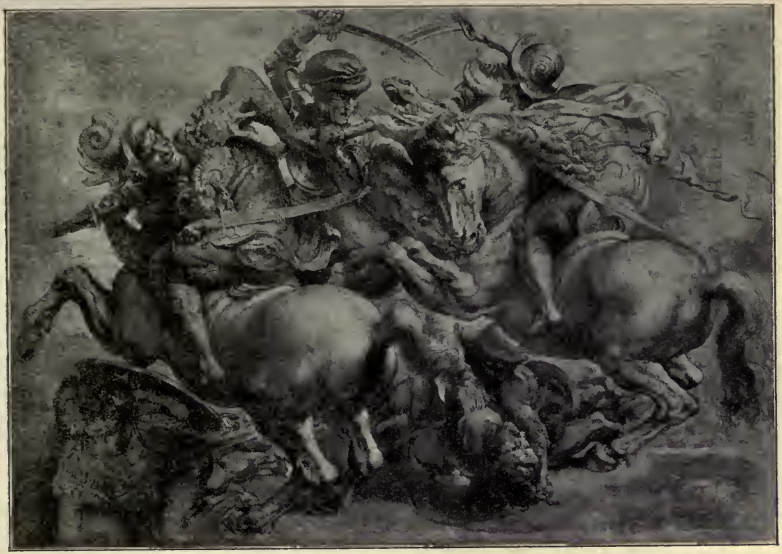
In the preparation of his battlepiece for the Council Chamber of the Signorial Palace, Leonardo's various gifts combined to form a union of the scholar and the artist. Like an historian, who strives to reproduce in all its details an event of the remote past, the artist familiarised himself with the course of the battle. The chief leaders and the chief incidents appear in the historical description preserved in the "Codex Atlanticus." A topographical sketch illustrates the scene of the battle.

But much earlier, as painter, he had sought to realise what artistic points the struggle of armies afforded, and had expressed its passions with wonderful force in the graphic description that is to be found in his "Trattato della pittura." To read this passage is to gain a distinct idea of the infinite variety of movements, figures and groups which Leonardo could conceive in a battlepiece.

No one was better fitted to design and

execute a work of this kind, in which man and horse appeared in such manifold forms. Among his contemporaries none had pursued the study of anatomy to the same extent: no one possessed anything like his intimate knowledge of the horse's body and the artistic possibilities which it offered. Already in his early work—the *Adoration of the Kings*—he had introduced many mounted groups in the background. There are depicted horses quietly pacing, galloping, rearing. Afterwards in Milan he had worked for sixteen years on end, modelling a colossal equestrian figure, and had recorded his observations in many sketches. How far superior was he in this respect to his great rival, Michel Angelo!

The picture of a battle can only be treated artistically by dissolving the action into single groups. By bringing into prominence certain natural accompaniments of battle, such as dust and smoke, which unite to form a cloudy atmosphere, the onlooker's imagination can be led to supply what in reality is not shown. All the leading painters of this class, beginning with Paolo Uccello and Piero della Francesca, confine themselves to relatively few figures.



THE FIGHT FOR THE STANDARD (CENTRAL PART OF THE "BATTLE OF ANGHIARI"). (LOUVRE)

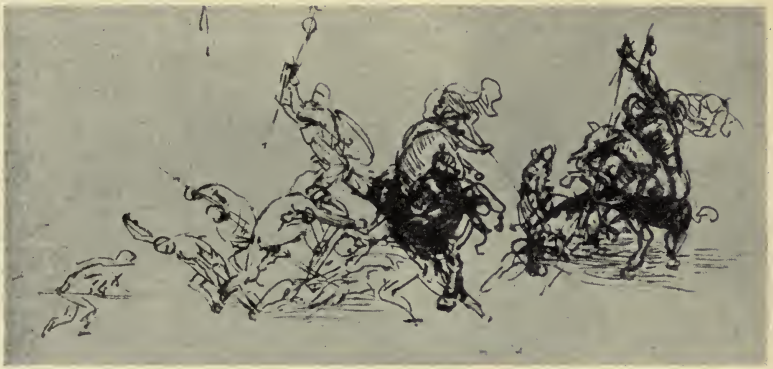
Copied by P. P. Rubens

Photograph, Braun, Clément & Cie, Dornach, Paris and New York

Bristling lances and fluttering pennons in the background are made to suggest the vast size of the army.

By a knowledge of the battlepieces of the Quattrocento, among which the works of the two above-mentioned painters rank highest, Leonardo's picture is raised to an imposing height. Uccello, for example, had made careful study of the movements which he meant to depict. Still he was unable to produce the effects which he intended. His horses are wooden. Their action is lifeless and tame, as if they had been petrified at a given moment.

Of the extant copies of the *Battle of Anghiari* not one gives us a picture of the whole composition. We cannot judge of its extent or of what groups it consisted. Only a single scene, the only one which Leonardo painted in fresco, is preserved in its main features—*The Struggle for the Standard.* This seems to have stood in the centre of the whole picture. Other incidents can be identified in the studies—mounted and foot soldiers mingled in fight, warriors rising high in their stirrups to make downward thrusts with their lances at their prostrate foes,

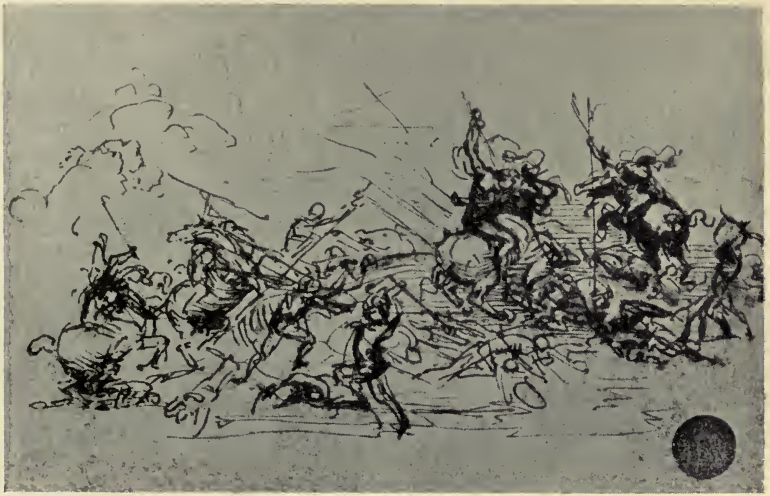


STUDY FOR THE "BATTLE OF ANGHIARI." (VENICE ACADEMY)

Photograph, Alinari, Florence

confused masses of horses and riders. Not only is there nothing in all Leonardo's works resembling the reproduction of momentary action as it is shown in several of these sketches (in Venice and London), but never again has anything like it been achieved. We are forced to believe that this man could observe with the same swiftness and accuracy that in most recent times we have learnt to know by the aid of instantaneous photography. But whereas these mechanical fixations of momentary occurrences have something rigid and unreal about them, the record made by the greatest observer of all time lends life to the most fleeting visions in such high measure that ideas are aroused which give them a past and future. Hence the flood of realism which even in the first hasty sketches streams towards the beholder.

Leonardo's observations, treasured up for years, were now scattered lavishly on the work in hand. The artist was in the prime of life and at the height of his artistic powers. And so we find among the studies which bear directly on this battle-piece, or are near to it in point of time, drawings of



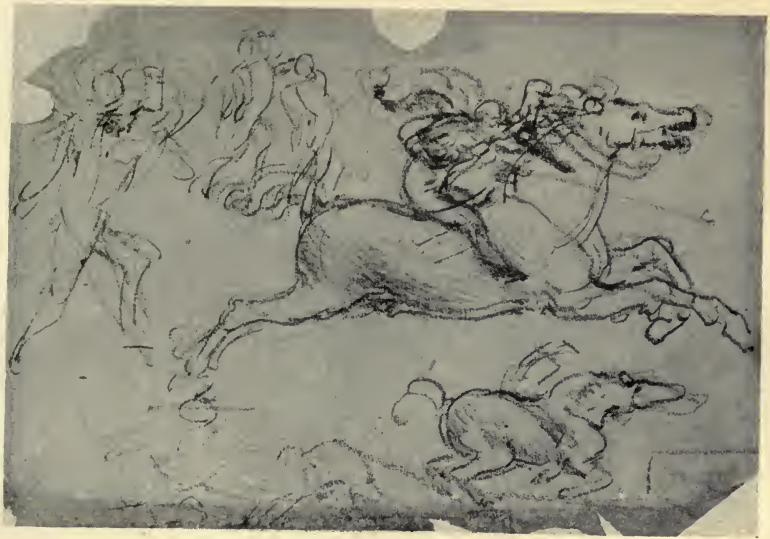
STUDY FOR THE "BATTLE OF ANGHIARI." (VENICE ACADEMY)

Photograph, Alinari, Florence

such impressive truth and beauty that there is nothing to equal them in the whole realm of art. Among his sketches of transient action, the first place is held by a red chalk drawing in Windsor of two horsemen on rearing steeds whose hind hoofs just touch the ground. The figures are naked, and man and beast are one in will and action.

Not less magnificent are the great heads in red pencil and black chalk (at Budapesth and Windsor), several of which served for the central group in the battlepiece— *The Struggle for the Standard.* From them we perceive most clearly that the repeated sketches of striking and remarkable heads with partial abnormities have had their deep artistic purpose, just as much as the study of the transitory passions which from time to time distort the human countenance. All these men open their mouths to voice their fury; the folds of their brows contract threateningly; their eyes seem to dart flames on the foemen. And yet what a refined sense of beauty marks the use of such means! Here realism never appears in the guise of ugliness.

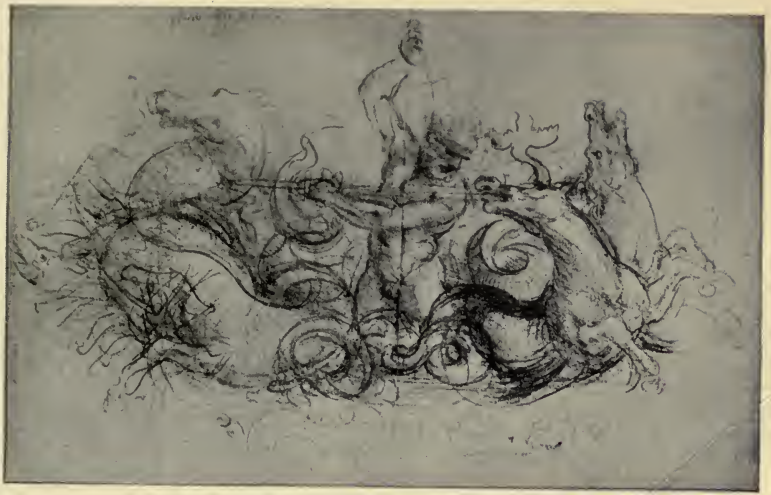
The horses are filled with the same fury



HORSEMEN AND SOLDIERS. (Windsor Library)

as their riders. Not only do they madly plunge and rear, but they fix their teeth in each other. Their nostrils dilate and their yawning mouths lay bare the bit. Thus a pen and ink drawing by Leonardo in Windsor shows us a series of efforts which make a most marked approach to the antique representation of the horse. For in certain general qualities the great artists of different ages are closely related, because the eternal truths of form are never lost, even if the idea of form may be subject to change with the times.

The only work of Leonardo with which the *Battle of Anghiari* can be compared, is a composition which must have taken shape about the same time. Leonardo sketched for a Florentine, Antonio Segni, with whom he was on terms of close friendship (according to Vasari), a picture of Neptune faring over the sea. This is preserved for us in the red chalk drawing in Windsor. In it all is treated in soft rounded lines symbolising water, and the sea-horses are so life-like, and at the same time so fancifully conceived, that it seems as if the spirit of a Greek had revived in Leonardo. Among many horizontal lines the



NEPTUNE. (WINDSOR LIBRARY)

single vertical figure of the sea-god is doubly imposing. Even this mighty god needs all his strength to check the wild passions of his team of four.

In the middle of the work Leonardo abandoned his battle picture. A fragment of it was to be seen on the wall of the Chamber and slowly perished. The cartoon is destroyed. His two monumental paintings met with a sad fate. The *Last Supper* has survived the centuries as a wreck. The *Battle of Anghiari* has not even been preserved in its entirety for posterity in a single copy. If we think of the many second and third rate works which have come down to us from the same period, we can scarcely repress a feeling of pain, seeing that mankind has been robbed of the work which would have taken the first place in the portrayal of the deepest passions and emotions.

THE "MONA LISA"

We know from documentary evidence that this lady was a Neapolitan by birth, that her name was Gherardini, and that she was married in 1495 to Francesco del Giocondo. She became, in consequence, named after her husband "la Gioconda" (in French "la Joconde"). When Leonardo painted her she was about thirty years old.

Vasari, who has bequeathed to us a detailed account of the lady's portrait, tells the following story. "Leonardo adopted this artifice:—Madonna Lisa was very beautiful, and while Leonardo was painting her portrait, he kept constantly near her musicians, singers and jesters, who might make her laugh, and so dispel the melancholy which is so easily imparted to painted portraits. In Leonardo's picture, therefore, there is a smile so sweet that while looking at it, one thinks it rather divine than human work; and so it has ever been deemed a wonderful work since it is to all appearance alive."

Here, as often, Vasari has shown the finest

appreciation of the work of art which he describes. In speaking thus emphatically of the smile of Mona Lisa, he has laid stress on the very point which raises this picture above all other portraits in the world. Even if the story he tells to explain the origin of this mysterious charm be perhaps untrue, it has the merit of being probable.

Before Leonardo, an artist had never tried (perhaps even had not dared) to portray a woman's smile. All the Florentine portraits of the Quattrocento, which can be brought into comparison — both single portraits and the numerous figures in frescoes—represent men's forms with singular fidelity. In them exact resemblance is striven for and emphasised. One says, "this is how the man actually looked." What Leonardo himself once said, in censure of these old painters, is true. They resemble a mirror which reflects all things without knowledge. But Leonardo has painted Mona Lisa as at times she could have looked.

Works of art require a strong sympathy on the part of the onlooker. The more significant they are, the more intense must be the sym-

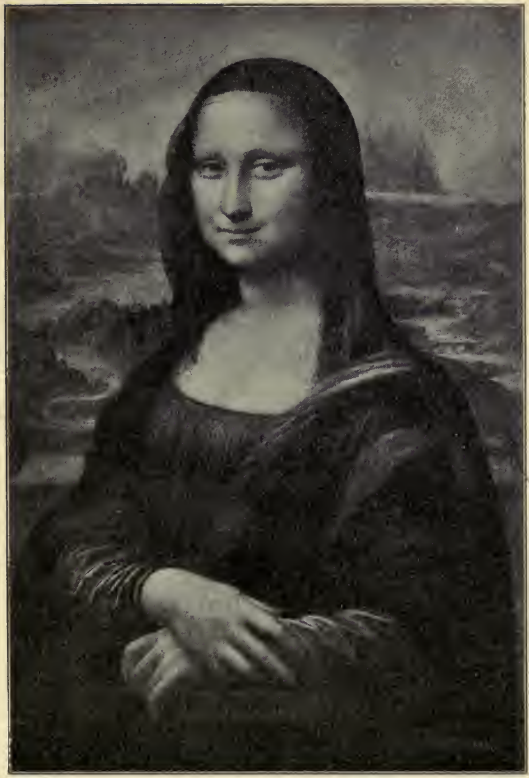
pathy. The artistic charm of the *Mona Lisa* will not reveal itself to any casual eye. So it is less familiar to the public than many other works of art, not to mention the fact that public opinion has failed to give it the place that is its due. It requires long—very long inspection. At length something in the picture begins to live. Next the smile on the lips is seen: then there is a slight, subtle, somewhat mocking, quiver about the eye. The more one lingers, the stronger becomes the impression. What Friedrich Schlegel says of the *Lucinde,* may be said of Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*:—"With the growing interest there played on her fine countenance an ever new music of spirited glances and lovely looks."

Next to this strong impression of the head, the hands—the noble, slender, proud hands—of this woman will captivate our long and lasting interest. They are laid on each other, motionless; hands of ease that have never known toil. They complete the picture as they are indispensable to its composition. From their delicate shape can be judged the careless grace of all their movements. No-

thing can mar the harmony of their beauty. An indescribably magnificent sheet (at Windsor) by Leonardo shows us kindred forms outlined in silver point.

Already in older portraits, landscape had been used as the most effective background. Usually the figure is brought to the front and rests on the very frame of the picture, the half bust being shown; behind, a wide stretch of country is seen with hills and clumps of trees. It is never clearly conceivable where the subject of the portrait can be standing to give a view of this landscape. The portraits of Memling, in which the same peculiarities can be seen, may have supplied the model for the Italian painters. The landscape has been used in the background solely with a view to decorative charm, without sufficiently considering its reality or possibility.

Leonardo did not let himself be guilty of similar offences against truth. Mona Lisa is sitting in a *loggia*, the pillars of which can be seen on the left and right of the canvas. At the bottom a stone grey parapet cuts off the background. Thus one is looking from a height on to a rich landscape, which with



PORTRAIT OF MONA LISA. (LOUVRE)

Photograph, Braun, Clément & Cie, Dornach Paris and New York

great wealth of fancy the master has painted under a serene light as the worthiest setting for the graceful lady. Once more an impression of singular beauty is felt without the eye losing itself in a maze of detail. One often speaks of a laughing landscape. This one *smiles*: it smiles as subtly, as unobtrusively as the lips and eyes of Mona Lisa.

The dress, which clothes the figure in easy fine folds, is quite simple. It is painted in greenish-grey and silvery tones. The time was past when costly stuff formed an essential factor in a picture.

Thus all the details fit into each other so as to make the whole stand forth as a perfect work of art. Owing to the simplicity of the picture the artistic calculation, which does not let the least point pass unregarded, is not apparent.

The impression made by this portrait on the art-world of Florence must have been immense. From that time onward no more portraits were painted in the old style. Never has an artistic taste so suddenly become antiquated, as the Quattrocento style of portraiture became on the appearance of

this single picture. But there was no one in Florence who could rise to this height. How *bourgeoise* and commonplace appears Raphael's *Maddalena Doni,* which clearly reveals the Urbinate's attempt to copy Leonardo, alongside of the aristocratic *Mona Lisa.* Even Sarto is left far behind. As regards the best of his successors, Pontormo and Bronzino fail so often in simplicity. Their female portraits are cold and haughty. They are in keeping with the changed conditions of the times and the invasion of Spanish etiquette.

Leonardo himself created the only rival to the *Mona Lisa.* He did not finish the portrait, and only the cartoon in Paris has preserved for us the fine features of this woman. Many have wished to recognise in them the likeness of Isabella d' Este. Recent research believes that this must be disputed. Nevertheless one can willingly picture in these fine spirited lines the lady who represents the highest type of feminine culture in the golden days that mark the beginning of the Cinquecento.

THE "JOHN THE BAPTIST"

From a dark background stands out the graceful figure of a youth, richly flooded with light. A well-rounded arm is crossed over the breast; one hand points upwards with outstretched forefinger. A smile rests on the features. Thus has Leonardo conceived the Baptist, whom the Florentines sometimes represented as a child, as the happy playfellow of the infant Christ, but more often as the man in the wilderness—haggard, clad only in skins, reduced to a wandering skeleton. Like everything that we possess by Leonardo's hand, this work also holds a place apart from all other art.

In the series of Leonardo's creations it occupies a natural place among his efforts to animate the human body by the charm of light, to produce an ideal work in "*sfumato*," comparable to the *Mona Lisa*, and to bring the soul of a human being to the surface.

The figure of John is most nearly related to the *Leda*. The oval shape of the head, the curve of the throat and the line of the shoulders,

bear the most striking resemblance to it. From the painting of John can be gained an idea of Leda's appearance in the original picture. There is also a detail perfectly in keeping with Leonardo's style, namely the hand pointing upwards. In like manner the Apostle Thomas in the *Last Supper* and Saint Anna point heavenwards. However, the subject was not at once treated in the form which the picture in the Louvre preserves for us. Much earlier already Leonardo had drawn the Baptist as a graceful slender figure like Verrocchio's David, little more than a child, standing with a cross of reeds in his hand. This drawing is in Windsor. When he first chose the form of a half-length picture the treatment was in one respect essentially different. It lacked the turn to the right; and the right hand is not crossed over the breast, which in consequence is fully exposed. The left hand too is in full view, placed against his breast, as if in solemn attestation.

Even this composition, of which several copies are known (in English private collections), has its great charm. But if it is compared with the final treatment, there will

be no hesitation in preferring the latter. Perhaps it was in the course of his work on the *Leda* that Leonardo realised the high artistic value of this pose.[1] Here in rendering the single figure he had the great advantage of passing beyond the two dimensions and of giving the appearance of depth, thereby making a most extensive call on the beholder's sense of space.

Leonardo's artistic efforts are here shown, one might almost say, in the abstract. We are forced to ask what has this supple feminine grace to do with the biblical figure of Christ's forerunner—the figure which tradition had fixed in definite harsh forms? Can this young man with the girlish head be capable of making ready the way for Godhood?

Devoted to his own peculiar conception of beauty the great artist leaves the beaten track of naturalism, and creates form, which no longer express the inmost being of him they are supposed to represent. And the smile, which spread so gently over the features of Mona Lisa, is here somewhat unpleasing in its

[1] The term used in the German MS. is "Kontrapost."

ST JOHN (Louvre)

Photograph, Braun, Clément & Cie, Dornach, Paris and New York

extravagance. It is too strongly pronounced and so loses the endless charm which it has in the lady's portrait. But probably the master's hand being crippled by paralysis, did not put the final touches to the picture, while the pupil could produce the outward effect but not the spirit.

To go beyond this point meant an actual danger. Just as Michel Angelo's imitators one and all offended when they thought to surpass that master by exaggerating his use of mighty muscles, so the Milanese pupils of Leonardo looked for his secret in supple forms and soft smiles. What had been with Leonardo the wondrous rendering of animated moments, became with them habitual, monotonous and commonplace. And so Leonardo's school straightway became banal and fell under the curse of mannerism. Even the most gifted among them struggled in vain against the towering superiority of their great prototype.

ON LEONARDO'S "TREATISE ON PAINTING"

For everything which Leonardo created in the line of art we can find theoretical groundwork and design in his "Treatise on Painting." It is impossible in these pages to present his system even in brief. It may be of much more importance to show by some chosen passages what clearness of thought he possessed in matters of art; what unusual power of language he had at his command; finally how he grasped the problems of painting in the widest sense, foreshadowing what the nineteenth century should first bring to fulfilment.

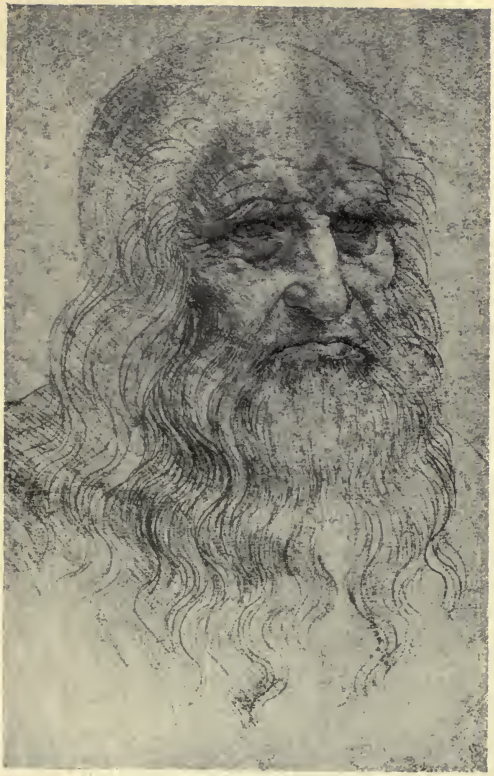
"On whom Nature bestows it not, to him one cannot teach it" (*i.e.* the art of painting). For this reason it is the noblest among all the imitative arts.

The painter is lord of all things. "Has he the will to view deep glens, or would he from high mountain tops behold wide vistas of rural scenery rolled out before him, and beyond catch glimpses of the sea's horizon, it is in his power; likewise also if he wishes from the

depth of valleys, to look up to the mountain heights, or from their summits gaze into deep gorge and chasm, he may do so. And in truth all that the universe holds, be it real and visible or but the creature of imagination, he has in spirit and later in his hands."

The learning of the art is a gradual process. The eye must first be schooled by the work of a great master, afterwards by Nature. "The young student should in the first place gain a knowledge of perspective, in order to give each object its proper dimensions. Thereafter it is needful for him to draw after a good master's hand to use him to a good style of drawing limbs. Next he should study Nature and so confirm in his mind the reason of the precepts which he has learned. He must also spend some time in viewing the works of old masters, and finally accustom himself to practise the art which he has acquired."

But an artist should never turn his back on Nature. "I say to painters that one should never copy the manner of another. For in that case, as far as his art is concerned, he cannot be called the child, but the grandchild, of Nature."



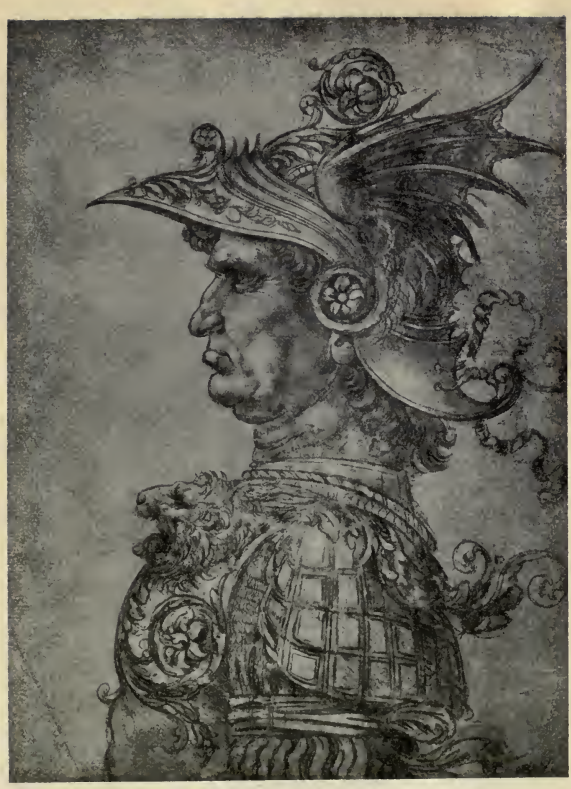
LEONARDO DA VINCI. (DRAWN BY HIMSELF)
By permission of Dr Richter and Messrs Sampson, Low & Co.

Leonardo is unreservedly in favour of universality in art. "It reflects no great honour on a painter to be able to execute only one thing well, such as a model from the nude, a head, drapery, animals, landscapes and similar specialities." He carries his reflection still further. "I have invariably noticed that, among those whose profession it is to portray faces from life, he who does it most faithfully shows himself in a sadder light than any other painter in composing historical pictures."

Like a true Florentine, Leonardo prefers the strong relief of figures to beauty of colouring. "A painting will only be wonderful for the beholder by making that which is not so appear raised and detached from the wall. But the colours only do honour to those masters who prepared them."

"By far the most important point in the whole theory of painting is to make the actions express the psychical state of each character, *e.g.* desire, disdain, anger, pity and the like."

Strongly as Leonardo urges the necessity of a painter gaining an accurate knowledge of anatomy, he protests equally earnestly against



PROFILE OF WARRIOR. (MALCOLM COLLECTION)
Photograph, Braun, Clément & Cie, Dornach, Paris and New York

showing too much of this knowledge. "O anatomical painter, beware lest a too great knowledge of bones, sinews and muscles cause you to become a wooden painter, while you strive to make your naked figures show the whole play of their muscles."

"A good painter has two chief objects to paint—man and the intention of his soul. The former is easy, the latter hard, for it must be expressed by gestures and movements of the limbs."

"Only a complete knowledge of gesture renders it possible to depict the various emotions of the soul. The artist should sketch his observations with hasty strokes. For there are in things such countless forms and attitudes that no memory can retain them."

"Sketches of historical subjects should be drawn quickly and with life, without regard to the finishing of particular members. Be content with the form and posture of the limbs." "Histories should induce the bystander to display the same emotions as the pictures are designed to represent." Above all he insists on change and variety. The repetition of any part is to be avoided at all costs.

On this head Leonardo's language sometimes rises to the highest poetic beauty. "The divinity which dwells in the painter's art brings it about that the painter's soul soars upwards till it partakes of the nature of the holy spirit. For with power and freedom it busies itself in the creation of divers animals, of all manner of beings, plants, fruits, landscapes, fields and mountain slopes; of fearsome and ghastly spots which fill the onlooker with affright; likewise of pleasant regions gracious and glad with gay-flowered meadows, which the soft breath of the wind stirs into gentle ripples that follow the fleeting stream of the breeze; of rivers which descend from the lofty mountains with rain-swollen waters, rolling in their floods uprooted trees mingled with boulders, roots, earth and mud and tearing away all that tries to stem their torrents."

"The sea with its billows wrestles and tosses in strife with the winds that challenge it. It heaves its proud waves aloft and hurls them on the storm which lashes their base. They enclose him and hold him captive. He rends them asunder, mixes with their turbid foam and vents his frenzied rage upon them."

"Before the wind's exceeding might the sea-froth flees. Madly it dashes by beetling cliffs and headlands, hither and thither, until it flies over their summits and falls into the vales beyond. Elsewhere the foam falls victim to the storm and mingles in it: part rises only to descend again like rain upon the sea, part too recoiling in surf from the steep rocky strand rolls all before it that resists its onset: but oft it meets the oncoming wave and in the shock spirts up to heaven, filling the air with mist of mud and spray. This the storm lashes to the foreland's verge, churns into cloud and casts as a prey to the victor winds."

With like power Leonardo describes the manner in which a squall or night should be painted. Splendid also is his graphic sketch of a battle scene, where the smoke of cannon mingles with the eddying dust. The faces of those who serve the guns are red. The air is filled with arrows and musket-balls. He describes how victor and vanquished should be drawn. The ground is covered with a bloody slime and full of footprints of men and horses. The whole is marked by soul-stirring interest and change.

STUDY OF A TREE. (WINDSOR LIBRARY)

An unceasing study of all that he saw enabled him to grasp things for the portrayal of which the time had not yet come. "Towards evening or in bad weather I have noticed the features of men and women in the streets and marked what grace and softness can be seen thereon."

"If you are representing figures in the open air, and the sun be overcast, they will be surrounded by a great amount of general light. But if the sun strikes upon them, then their shadows will be very dark in proportion to the lights, and the bodies as well as the cast shadows will have sharp outlines. Such shadows will vary from the light in colour. For on one side the blue of the air shines and tinges the part on which it strikes with its own hue: this is specially observable in the case of white objects. But the side which receives the light from the sun, shares also in the colour of that. This you will see very clearly when the sun is going below the horizon amid red clouds: those clouds being tinged with the colour of the body enlightening them; the redness of the clouds together with that of the sun makes everything which gets light from

them reflect red. Whereas the sides of the bodies which the red rays do not strike, remain of the colour of the air; so that whoever looks on these same bodies deems them to be twi-coloured." Do we not seem to have an impressionist picture before our eyes?

Again and again he lays stress on minute observation, yet at the same time he leaves the fullest freedom to the fancy. Everything is to be built on experience, "which never plays false." Those who plunge into the practice without gaining knowledge of the art, he likens to "mariners who put to sea without rudder and compass." But experience can only be gained by ceaseless observation. "A painter should abandon himself to solitude, and reason much within himself on all he sees, making use of the most excellent parts in each sort of object before him." With regard to a painter he readily uses the simile of a mirror, "reflecting truly the images of all things which are in front of it." "If he does so, it will become, as it were, a second nature."

To stimulate the fancy, Leonardo advises the artist to look at walls "that are bespattered with all manner of stains or at veined marbles

of various hues," or into the embers of the fire, into clouds or puddles: "there may one behold landscapes, battles, figures in lively motion, queer and wondrous forms," also things monstrous, as demons." "By confused and vague objects the inventive genius awakens to new exertions."

Here on the domain of art Leonardo's two natures interpenetrate most wonderfully, the scientific spirit of inquiry mingling with the creative impulse of the artist. We are spectators of a drama which is unique in the history of the human soul.

SOME WORKS ON LEONARDO

(It is only possible to point out some of the most important publications.)

Leonardo's Manuscripts have been published as follows:—

1. Those preserved in France, by Ravaisson-Mollien, 6 vols. (Paris 1889-1891).
2. Those in the Royal Library at Windsor, by Piumati & Sabachnikoff (Paris 1898, still in course of publication).

3. The "Codex Atlanticus" in the Ambrosian Library, Milan, by the Accademia dei Lincei (Rome 1891, still in course of publication).
4. The Codex of the Trivulzian Library, issued by L. Beltrami (Milan 1891).
5. The Codex containing the "Flight of the Birds," by Piumati & Sabachnikoff (Paris 1893).
6. The "Treatise on Painting": best edition by H. Ludwig, 3 vols. (Vienna 1882).

Extracts from the Manuscripts comprise :—

J. P. Richter, "The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci" (London 1883).

Very noteworthy also on account of the excellent illustrations.

Solmi, "Leonardo da Vinci, Frammenti letterari e filosofici" (Florence 1900).

Among the numerous biographies may be specially mentioned :—

C. Amoretti, "Memorie storiche sulla vita di Leonardo da Vinci" (Milan 1804).

E. Solmi, "Leonardo" (Florence 1900).

J. Uzielli, "Ricerche intorno a Leonardo da Vinci": serie prima (Florence 1872; enlarged edition, Turin 1896); serie seconda (Rome 1884).

J. P. Richter, "Leonardo" (London 1880, sec. edit. 1894).

E. Müntz, "Leonardo da Vinci" (Paris 1899).

G. Séailles, "Leonardo da Vinci, l'artiste et le savant" (Paris 1892).

P. Müller-Walde, "Beiträge zur Kenntnisz des Leonardo," in the year-book of the Prussian Art Collections, 1897, 1898 and 1899.

H. Wölfflin, "Die klassische Kunst" (Munich 1898).

A critical collection of Leonardo's drawings will be contained in Mr B. Berenson's forthcoming book on the Florentine drawings.