

**MEMORANDA ON FIFTY
PICTURES, SELECTED FROM
A COLLECTION OF WORKS
OF THE ANCIENT MASTERS**

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Memoranda on fifty pictures, selected from a collection of works of the ancient Masters by J. C. Robinson

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J. C. ROBINSON

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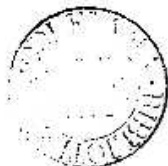
Memoranda on Fifty Pictures,

*Selected from a Collection of Works of
the Ancient Masters.*

*With Notices of some Italian, Spanish, German,
Flemish and Dutch Painters.*



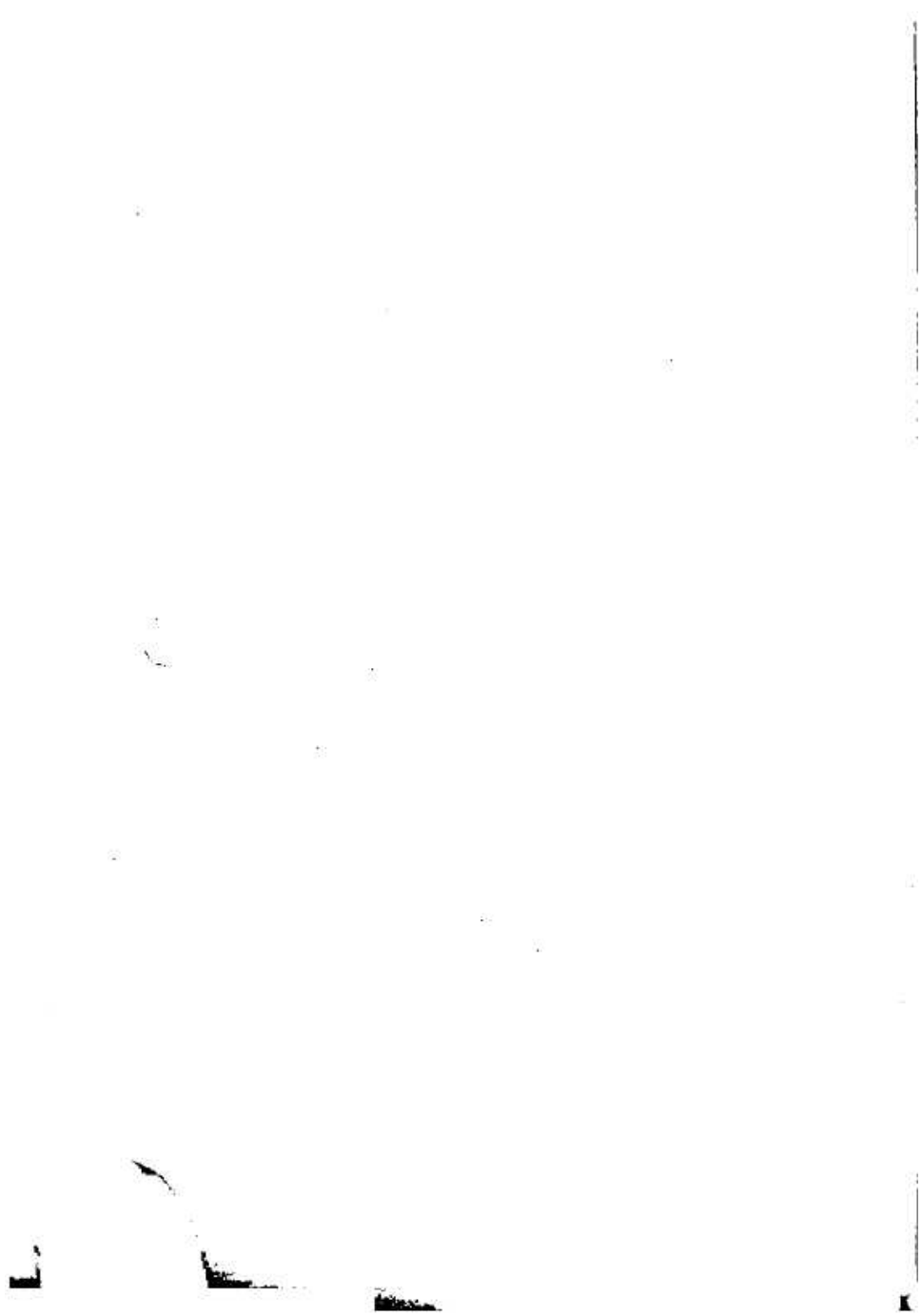
BY J. C. ROBINSON.



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PICTURES OF THE ITALIAN
SCHOOLS.

No. 1.

Lorenzo Monaco, Florence, painted circa
1400, (or Taddeo di Bartolo).

THE Virgin and Child. Height of the
picture, including the tabernacle work,
4 ft. 6 in., width 2 ft. 1 in.

The Virgin, seated on a cushion, holds the Infant Saviour on her knee; he is in the act of benediction, and holds out a scroll in his left hand. Painted in tempera on a gold background. This picture is the centre compartment of a small retable or altar-piece, and still retains its "Gothic" canopied framework and predella; the latter contains in the centre a medallion, with a small painted figure of our Saviour in the sepulchre, flanked with two kite-shaped shields, each bearing three maces,—the arms of the Florentine family, Gondi (?)—and in the pediment above is a bust, or half-length figure of our Saviour, in the act of benediction. This picture

was formerly at Wolcorton, in the collection of the late Earl of Orford, by whom it was acquired in Italy. It is noticed by Waagen ("Art Treasures," vol. iii. p. 436), in the following terms: "Taddeo di Bartolo. The Virgin and Child: an excellent picture, especially in the expression of melancholy in the head of the Virgin. I am not aware to what master the picture is here attributed."

Signor G. B. Cavalcaselle, who has seen this picture more recently in the possession of the writer, ascribes it most positively to Lorenzo Monaco.

No. 2.

Giovanni di Paolo, (Siena, painted circa
1423-50.)

The Annunciation. Width 1 ft. 6 in., height
1 ft. 3½ in.

In the centre, the principal subject represents the announcing angel appearing to the Virgin, within an elaborate interior of richly-decorated 15th century architecture. On the right, in a separate compartment, St. Joseph is seen seated near a fire, and on the opposite side in the background, is represented the garden of Eden, with the expulsion of Adam and Eve. A highly finished tempera picture on panel, probably a compartment of a predella,—acquired from the late Mr. Farrer. Signor Cavalcaselle notices this picture ("New History of Painting in Italy," vol. iii. p. 80,) as follows: "A panel (small) by Giovanni di Paolo is (under the name of Gentile di Fabriano) in possession of Mr. Farrer in London. Subject, the Annunciation and the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. In the same style is an Adoration of the Magi, from the Northwick collection, now belonging to Mr. Fuller Maitland."

No. 3.

Sandro Botticelli, (*Alessandro Filipepi*,
Florence, 1447-1515.)

The Virgin and Child, and St. John. Diameter 2 ft. 10 in. A "Tondo" or circular panel picture, painted in tempera, retaining its ancient carved and gilded frame of fruit and flowers.

The Virgin standing, her countenance marked with an expression of melancholy foreboding, tenderly embraces the infant Saviour, whom she holds in her arms. She is clad in blue drapery, and over her head and shoulders is thrown a transparent veil. On the left the infant St. John bends forward in an attitude of adoration. Landscape background, an extended country, with a lake or river and a city in the distance. Acquired in Florence.

No. 4.

Fra Bartolommeo (*Baccio della Porta*,
Florence, 1469-1517.)

The Virgin and Child. Panel. Height $6\frac{3}{4}$ in.,
width $5\frac{1}{2}$ in.

The Virgin, clad in blue and red drapery (a three-quarter figure, seen nearly down to the feet), is seated on a throne betwixt two pilasters. She holds an opened book, the leaves of which the Infant Saviour, seated in her lap, is turning over with both hands. The deep-toned transparent colouring

and powerful chiar-oscuro of the master are characteristically displayed in this work, which is moreover executed in the most careful manner. Although of unusually small dimensions, it was obviously a devotional picture complete in itself. The carved and gilded frame of this picture is of Spanish 17th century origin.

No. 5.

Mariotto Albertinelli, (Florence,
1477-1520.)

Four small panels, united in the same frame, painted in oil on a gold ground. Dimensions of each, 6 in. long by 5 in. high.

The subjects represent respectively; *A Sacra Conversazione*.—The Virgin and Child seated on a throne, with St. Anthony and St. James standing one on each side. *The Crucifixion*, with the Virgin and St. John. *The Martyrdom of St. Stephen* and *the Martyrdom of St. Sebastian*. These small pictures, painted nevertheless, with all the breadth of manner of the great works of the master, were acquired in Florence, and the writer has more recently seen in that city several other small compositions, which seem originally to have formed part of the same series; but some of these were by another and inferior master, perhaps Il Francia Bigio. All the last-named pictures, however, were unfortunately in so damaged a condition as to render their acquisition undesirable. The four now described, on the contrary, are in their pristine state. They appear originally to have formed part of a continuous band or framework of small panels, surrounding a larger

devotional picture, probably removed from one of the churches of Florence or the neighbourhood. They are of the mature period of the painter, and they strongly recall the manner of his friend and fellow-worker, Fra Bartolommeo: the physiognomic type of the figures and other peculiarities, however, identify them as the work of Albertinelli.

No. 6.

Marcello Venusti, after Michael Angelo.

(1515-76; worked in Rome.)

The Holy Family, called "Il Silenzio." Panel.

Height $6\frac{3}{4}$ in., width $5\frac{1}{4}$ in.

The Virgin is seated on a stone bench, at one end of which is a recess containing an hour-glass, her right hand rests on an opened book, and she is looking down upon the Infant Saviour, who lies asleep by her side, his head and arms resting on her knee. Behind, on the right, Joseph leans forward, his head supported on his hand, and resting on the raised back of the bench, and on the opposite side the young St. John also bends forward with his finger to his lips. This beautiful composition of the great Florentine "Capo Scuola" has been frequently repeated by his scholars, both painters and engravers. The original work, by Michael Angelo, was probably a drawing or cartoon, no longer extant. The present highly finished little picture offers a typical example of the works of the "little masters," the copyists of Michael Angelo, of whom Marcello Venusti and Giulio Clovio stand at the head.