

**THE GREAT MASTERS IN
PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE.
ANDREA DEL SARTO**

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The Great Masters in Painting and Sculpture. Andrea Del Sarto by H. Guinness & G. C. Williamson

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ANDREA DEL SARTO

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PREFACE

THE following pages on the life and work of del Sarto are but a portion of a larger intention, the purpose of which was to present, in illustrated form, and with full particulars, all the known or accredited works of the master in European Galleries. For the moment the hope of publishing so large a collection of illustrations has had to be relinquished.

Andrea, more than any other artist of the Renaissance in Tuscany, demands close and intimate study direct from his creations, and more especially from those in Florence.

If the French are right in saying "*le style c'est l'homme*," it is in his works these words are best verified. Pre-occupied with no sterile reasoning, busy with no research after philosophic ideas, never seeking in literature the inspiration of his art, he is above all and before all—*painter*—who approaches nature with a frank sincerity before which she opens to him her most profound secrets, while he interprets them with a force so completely victorious over every difficulty of technique that the effort appears to be to him but as child's-play, and his utterances but a further manifestation of her intimate mysteries.

Del Sarto is represented in most European capitals; but the greater number of his pictures have been so much

retouched, if not repainted, that very little of their original spirit remains.

In Berlin, Paris, and Madrid an unmistakable local touch has found insidious place and metamorphosed his pre-eminently Florentine genius, giving to it here a German character, there a French, and to the Madrid pictures a Spanish air, which is wholly alien to their original being.

It is in Florence alone that del Sarto can be judged, because there only he is seen in all his splendour, in the Cloister of the Scalzo, and the Convent of S. Salvi.

Of several hundred pictures by him, it is here possible to give forty-one only, but they have been chosen with care as being chiefly characteristic of his style.

Hitherto the real greatness of del Sarto has been too little understood in its simplicity and frankness and naturalness; and for the most part the public, who are not themselves artists, will always remain more or less ignorant of what is revealed in his vast field of colour and technique, where the laws of aerial perspective, the treatment of chiaroscuro, the maintenance of the central point of interest, are kept in such powerful equilibrium.

It is too much the habit of the spectator to place himself before a work of art with the thought, "This pleases me," or "That does not please me." In so doing he covers himself with the shadow of his own personality, which, as a mountain, obscures his vision. It is far better to put such aside, and with psychic and intellectual effort to seek to follow where the artist leads.