

BOTTICELLI

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Botticelli by A. Streeter

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A. STREETER

BOTTICELLI

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10

11

12

13

14

15

16



Illustration of the Chigi Madonna

The 'Chigi' Madonna
From the painting by Botticelli in the possession of
M^{rs} J. L. Gardner Boston. N.Y.

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218

PREFACE

IN attempting to treat of Botticelli's works in a chronological order, I feel that I have undertaken a somewhat venturesome task. All the more so as I have no fresh documentary evidence to bring forward in support of the order in which I have here placed them.

Some system of classification was, however, indispensable; and I have been induced to adopt a chronological system because it seems to me that a classification according to *period* (though in the case of this artist's works it is beset with difficulties) is clearer and more critical than a classification according to *subject*. The latter plan—which has been followed by several of Botticelli's biographers, who have dealt with his pictures under the headings of religious works, allegorical works, historical works, portraits, etc.—is attended by serious disadvantages. It obliges the writer to treat of early works side by side with late ones; to overlook all the affinities of type, style, and feeling which link certain pictures together as productions of the same period; and to relinquish the effort to reconstruct the artist's life-work in the order of its natural development.

Although there is as yet no direct clue to the dates of the majority of Botticelli's pictures, yet the dates of a few of them have been ascertained either by docu-