CHAPTER XI

THE UFFIZI: REMAINING ROOMS

Gentile da Fabriano—Piero della Francesca—Bronzino—Lorenzo di Credi—Raphael—Michelangelo and Luca Signorelli—Correggio—A window with a view—The Venetians—Giorgione—Titian—Bellini—Van der Goes—Flemish Art—Rubens—Vittoria della Rovere—French pictures—Medusa's head—Dutch Art—Gerard of the Night—The Self-Portraits—The Sala di Niobe—Many Statues—Drawings of great hands.

PASSING from the Sala di Botticelli, we come to the seventh Florentine room, which is dominated by Andrea del Sarto (1486-1531), whose "Madonna and Child with S. Francis and S. John the Evangelist"—No. 1577—is certainly the favourite picture here, as it is, in reproduction, in so many homes; but, apart from the Child, I like far better the "S. Giacomo"—No. 1583—so sympathetic and rich in colour, which is reproduced in this volume. Another good Andrea is No. 516—a soft and misty apparition of Christ to the Magdalen. The two Ridolfo Ghirlandaios (1483-1561) near it are interesting as representing, with much hard force, scenes in the story of S. Zenobius, of Florence, of whom we read in Chapter II. In one he restores life to the dead child in the midst of a Florentine crowd; in the other his bier, passing the Baptistery, reanimates the dead tree. Giotto's tower and the tower of the Palazzo Vecchio are to be seen on the left.

Between the Zenobius pictures is that touching meeting of the Virgin and S. Elizabeth by Albertinelli. Other works here are a finely drawn figure of Venus by Lorenzo di Credi and a very pretty "Adoration" by the same sweet hand; a religious scene by that old Pagan, Piero di Cosimo; and a great altar-piece, rich and well grouped, with an attractive Christ Child by Fra Bartolommeo. This room is also proof that one should never neglect predellas. There are three here, and each is fascinating in its own way. Look at the central scene in No. 1586—how peaceful and tender—and at the kneeling angel in the right-hand panel of No. 877. This predella tells the exciting story of S. Acasio, of whom I know nothing.

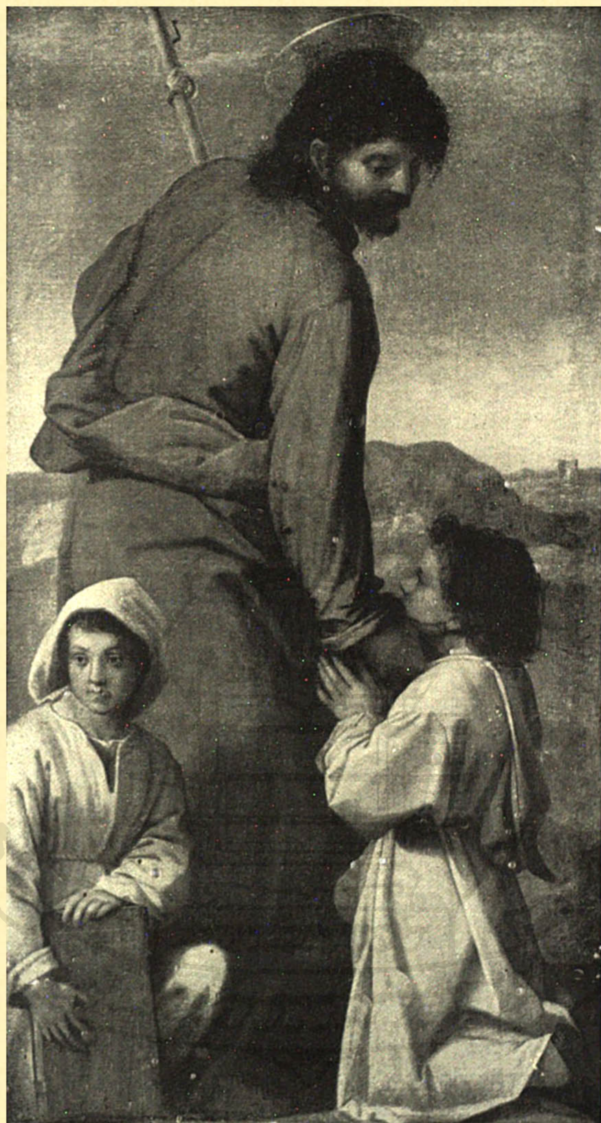
A long walk brings us to Room VIII—to the school of Umbria and Siena in the fifteenth century, with more predellas of the deepest interest and one of the most fascinating works by an early master—an "Adoration of the Magi," by Gentile da Fabriano, an artist of whom one sees too little. His full name was Gentile di Niccolò di Giovanni Massi, and he was born at Fabriano between 1360 and 1370, some twenty years before Fra Angelico. According to Vasari he was Fra Angelico's master, but that is now considered doubtful, and yet the three little scenes from the life of Christ in the predella of this picture are nearer Fra Angelico in spirit and charm than any, not by a follower, that I have seen. Gentile did much work at Venice before he came to Florence, in 1422, and this picture, which is considered his masterpiece, was painted in 1423 for S. Trinità. He died four years later. Gentile was charming rather than great, and to this work might be applied Ruskin's sarcastic description of poor Ghirlandaio's frescoes, that they are mere goldsmith's work; and yet it is much more, for it has gaiety and sweetness

and the nice thoughtfulness that made the Child, a real child, interested like a child in the bald head of the kneeling mage; while the predella is not to be excelled in its modest, tender beauty by any in Florence; and predellas, I may remark again, should never be overlooked, strong as the tendency is to miss them. Many a painter has failed in the large space or made only a perfunctory success, but in the small has achieved real feeling. Gentile's Holy Family on its way to Egypt is never to be forgotten: charming both in personages and landscape; while the city to which Joseph leads the donkey (again without reins) is the most perfect thing out of fairyland.

Here also are some beautiful Peruginos, chief of them being the famous "Assumption" with the Archangel Michael among the saints below—that comely mediæval figure which in so many English homes stands for romance and chivalry.

I postpone reference to the very beautiful Luca Signorelli—No. 502—(which I reproduce) that hangs in Room VIII until we reach the Michelangelo room, for reasons which will be made clear then; but here let me draw attention to No. 8568 for its curious qualities of realism, strength and depth of feeling. It has also very unusual colouring.

From Room VIII, a little room is gained which I advise all tired visitors to the Uffizi to make their harbour of refuge and recuperation; for it has only three or four pictures in it and three or four pieces of sculpture and some pleasant maps and tapestry on the walls, and from its windows you look across the brown-red tiles to S. Miniato. The pictures, although so few, are peculiarly attractive, being the work of two very rare hands, Piero della Francesca (? 1398-1492) and Melozzo da Forli (1438-1494). Melozzo has here a very charming Annunciation in two



SAN GIACOMO

FROM THE PAINTING BY ANDREA DEL SARTO IN THE UFFIZI

panels, the fascination of which I cannot describe. That they are fascinating there is, however, no doubt. We have symbolical figures by him in our National Gallery—again hanging near Piero della Francesca—but they are not the equal of these in charm, although very charming. These grow more attractive with every visit: the eager advancing angel with his lily, and the timid little Virgin in her green dress, with folded hands.

The two Pieros are, of course, superb. Piero never painted anything that was not distinguished and liquid, and here he gives us of his best: portraits of Federigo da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, and Battista, his second Duchess, with classical scenes behind them. Piero della Francesca has ever been one of my favourite painters, and here he is wholly a joy. Of his works Florence has but few, since he was not a Florentine, nor did he work here, being engaged chiefly at Urbino, Ferrara, Arezzo, and Rome. His life ended sadly, for he became totally blind. In addition to his painting he was a mathematician of much repute. The Duke of Urbino here depicted is Federigo da Montefeltro, who ruled from 1444 to 1482, and in 1459 married as his second wife a daughter of Alessandro Sforza, of Pesaro, the wedding being the occasion of Piero's pictures. The duke stands out among the many Italian lords of that time as a humane and beneficent ruler and collector, and eager to administer well. He was a born fighter, and it was owing to the loss of his right eye and the fracture of his noble old nose that he is seen here in such a determined profile against the lovely light over the Umbrian hills. The symbolical chariots in the landscape at the back represent respectively the Triumph of Fame (the Duke's) and the Triumph of Chastity (that of the Duchess). The Duke's companions are Victory, Prudence, Fortitude, Justice, and

Temperance; the little Duchess's are Love, Hope, Faith, Charity, and Innocence; and if these are not exquisite pictures I never saw any.

The statues in the room should not be missed, particularly the little Genius of Love, the Bacchus and Ampelos, and the spoilt little comely boy supposed to represent—and quite conceivably—the infant Nero.

Crossing Room VIII again, we come in Room IX to the Umbrians and Sienese of the sixteenth century; more Peruginos, all portraits; and such painters as Beccafumi and Brescianino, who are to be found at their best in Siena. The Perugino heads are very beautiful.

And now we enter the Tribuna, where a selection of the choicest pictures of all schools, Italian and foreign, used to hang, but which is now largely given to Bronzino's lucid and severe portraits, among them the famous Eleanora of Toledo, wife of Cosimo I, in a rich brocade (in which she was buried), with the little staring Ferdinand I beside her. Eleanora, as we saw in Chapter V, was the first mistress of the Pitti palace, and the lady who so disliked Cellini and got him into such trouble through his lying tongue. Bronzino's little Maria de' Medici—No. 1164—is more pleasing, for the other picture has a sinister air. This child, the first-born of Cosimo I and Eleanora, died when only sixteen. Here also one may see how Vasari, the biographer and critic of painters, painted himself. The marble Venus de' Medici stands in the midst, as of old, and the Knife Sharpener is also here.

In the next room, No. XII, are more Florentine paintings of the sixteenth century, and here also is a window with a view of S. Croce near by and mountains in the distance. One wall is given to Lorenzo di Credi, chief of the pictures being No. 1597, an Annunciation, an artificial work full

of nice thoughts and touches, with the prettiest little blue Virgin imaginable, a heavenly landscape, and a predella in monochrome, in one scene of which Eve rises from the side of the sleeping Adam with extraordinary realism. The announcing Gabriel is deferential but positive; Mary is questioning but not wholly surprised. In any collection of Annunciations this picture would find a prominent place.

Other painters represented here are Piero di Cosimo with scenes from the story of Perseus and Andromeda, Fra Bartolommeo, and Filippino Lippi with the portrait of a shrewd old man of God saved from a fresco.

The next room belongs to Raphael and Michelangelo, the magnet being No. 1447, the "Madonna del Cardellino" of Raphael, so called from the goldfinch that the little boys are caressing. This, one is forced to consider one of the perfect pictures of the world, even though others may communicate more pleasure. The landscape is so exquisite and the mild sweetness of the whole work so complete; and yet, although the technical mastery is almost thrilling, the "Madonna del Pozzo" by Andrea del Sarto's friend Franciabigio, close by—No. 1445—arouses infinitely livelier feelings in the observer, so much movement and happiness has it. Raphael is perfect but cold; Franciabigio is less perfect (although exceedingly accomplished) but warm with life. The charm of this picture is as notable as the skill of Raphael's: it is wholly joyous, and the little Madonna really once lived. Both are reproduced in this volume.

Raphael's neighbouring youthful "John the Baptist" is almost a Giorgione for richness, but is truly Raphael.

In connexion with the greatest picture here, the "Holy Family" of Michelangelo, we ought to retrace our steps to Room VIII, for there is a picture there by Luca Signorelli

to be studied at the same time. The "Holy Family" of Michelangelo is the only finished easel picture that exists from his brush. It is also his one work in oils, for he afterwards despised that medium as being fit "only for children". The frame is contemporary and was made for it, the whole being commissioned by Angelo Doni, a wealthy connoisseur, whose portrait by Raphael we shall see in the Pitti, and who, according to Vasari, did his best to get it cheaper than his bargain, and had in the end to pay dearer. The period of the picture is about 1503, while the great David was in progress, when the painter was twenty-eight. That it is masterly and superb there can be no doubt, but, like so much of Michelangelo's work, it suffers from its author's greatness. There is an austerity of power here that ill consorts with the tender domesticity of the scene, and the Child is a young Hercules. The nude figures in the background introduce an alien element and suggest the conflict between Christianity and paganism, the new religion and the old: in short, the Twilight of the Gods. Whether Michelangelo intended this we shall not know; but there it is. The prevailing impression left by the picture is immense power and virtuosity and no religion.

In the beautiful work by Luca Signorelli—No. 502 in Room VIII—we find at once a curious similarity and difference. The Madonna and Child only are in the foreground, a not too radiant but very tender couple; in the background are male figures, nearly nude: not quite, as Michelangelo made them, and suggesting no discord as in his picture. Luca was born in 1441, and was thus thirty-four years older than Michelangelo. This picture is perhaps that one presented by Luca to Lorenzo de' Medici, of which Vasari tells, and if so it was probably on a wall in the Medici palace when Michelangelo as a

THE MADONNA DEL CARDELLINO (OF THE GOLDFINCH)

FROM THE PAINTING BY RAPHAEL IN THE UFFIZI

boy was taught with Lorenzo's sons. Luca's sweetness was alien to Michelangelo, but not his melancholy or his sense of composition; while Luca's devotion to the human form as the unit of expression was in Michelangelo carried out to its highest power. Vasari, who was a relative of Luca's and a pupil of Michelangelo's, says that his master had the greatest admiration for Luca's genius.

Luca Signorelli was born at Cortona, and was instructed by Piero della Francesca, whose one Uffizi painting is in a later room. His chief work is at Cortona, at Rome (in the Sixtine Chapel), and at Orvieto. His fame was sufficient in Florence in 1491 for him to be made one of the judges of the designs for the façade of the Duomo. Luca lived to a great age, not dying till 1524, and was much beloved. He was magnificent in his habits and loved fine clothes, was very kindly and helpful in disposition, and the influence of his naturalness and sincerity upon art was great. One very pretty sad story is told of him, to the effect that when his son, whom he had dearly loved, was killed at Cortona, he caused the body to be stripped, and painted it with the utmost exactitude, that through his own handiwork he might be able to contemplate that treasure of which fate had robbed him.

Perhaps the most beautiful or at any rate the most idiosyncratic thing in the picture before us—No. 502—is its wayside flowers. These come out but poorly in the photograph, but in the painting they are exquisite both in form and in detail. Luca painted them as if he loved them. (There is a hint of the same thoughtful care in the flowers in No. 1133, by Luca, in our National Gallery; but these at Florence are the best.) No. 502 is in tempera; his "Holy Family," a work at once powerful, rich and sweet, is in oil. Here, again, we may trace an influence on

Michelangelo, for the child is shown deprecating a book which his mother is displaying, while in the beautiful marble tondo of the "Madonna and Child" by Michelangelo, which we are soon to see in the Bargello, a reading lesson is in progress, and the child wearying of it.

We now leave Tuscany and come to Lombardy—to the disciples of Leonardo and to Correggio. The pick of this room—No. XIV—is the Correggio on the entrance wall. "The Repose in Egypt" is its title, but Correggio was concerned less to make a Biblical illustration than to devise a soft and sumptuous and lovely thing; which he has done. This picture is not only arresting and soothing in itself but it seems to foreshadow so much of the painting that was to follow that its influence may hardly be said to be over yet. Vermeer is in it, Corot is in it, Millet is in it. Opposite is Correggio's "Adoration," over a Baby so truly adorable as to compensate for the rather theatrical Mother. Next is a strange, almost sinister, work by Parmigiánino, which has, however, a curious charm, and suggests El Greco tamed. An exquisite if syrupy Luini and a very self-conscious Sodoma are noticeable too.

In the two rooms that follow, XV and XVI, I have no interest, for they are devoted to Italian art in its decay, when hands might still have been masterly but the spirit was lacking: to Guido Reni and Guercino, to the Caracci and Spagnoletto.

In the tiny Gem Room at the end of the corridor are wonders of the lapidary's art—and here is the famous intaglio portrait of Savonarola—but they want better treatment. The vases and other ornaments should have the light all round them, as in the Galerie d'Apollon at the Louvre. These are packed together in wall cases and are hard to see.

After peeping at the jewels we may loiter in the gallery at the end, where there are statues—the beautiful Matrona is there and the original of the Mercato wild boar—and where there are views. To the right the courtyard of the Uffizi, the Palazzo Vecchio, with its colossi, and then Brunelleschi's dome over all; to the left the Arno, and from the window by the Matron the Ponte Vecchio, the Trinità bridge and the Apennines. And so we enter the second long corridor.

The first rooms are dedicated to the splendour and sumptuousness of the Venetians, but of these pictures I shall say less than might perhaps be expected, not because I do not intensely admire them but because I feel that the chief space in a Florentine book should be given to Florentine or Tuscan things. The chief treasures are the Titians, the Giorgiones, the Mantegnas, the Carpaccio, and the Bellini allegory. These alone would make the Uffizi a Mecca of connoisseurs. Giorgione is to be found in his richest perfection at the Pitti, in his one unforgettable work that is preserved there, but here he is wonderful too, with his Cavalier of Malta, black and golden, and the two rich scenes, nominally from Scripture, but really from romantic Italy. To me these three are the jewels of the Venetian collection. To describe them is impossible: enough to say that some glowing genius produced them; and whatever the experts admit, personally I prefer to consider that genius Giorgione. Giorgione, who was born in 1477 and died young—at thirty-three—was, like Titian, the pupil of Bellini, but was greatly influenced by Leonardo da Vinci. Later he became Titian's master. He was passionately devoted to music and to ladies, and it was indeed from a lady that he had his early death, for he continued to kiss her after she had taken the plague. (No

bad way to die, either; for to be in the power of an emotion that sways one to such foolishness is surely better than to live the lukewarm calculating lives of most of us.) Giorgione's claim to distinction is that not only was he a glorious colourist and master of light and shade, but he may be said to have invented small genre pictures that could be carried about and hung in this or that room at pleasure—such pictures as many of the best Dutch painters were to bend their genius to almost exclusively—his favourite subjects being music parties and picnics. These "Moses" and "Solomon" pictures in the Uffizi are of course only a pretext for gloriously coloured arrangements of people, with rich scenic backgrounds. The "Solomon" is the finer. The way in which the baby is being held in the other indicates how little Giorgione thought of verisimilitude. The colour was the thing.

After the Giorgiones the Titians, chief of which is "The Madonna and Child with S. John and S. Anthony," sometimes called the "Madonna of the Roses," a work which throws a pallor over all Tuscan pictures. The golden Flora, who glows more gloriously every moment (whom we shall see again, at the Pitti, as the Magdalen); the Duke and Duchess of Urbino, the Duchess set at a window with what looks so curiously like a deep blue Surrey landscape through it and a village spire in the midst; and an unfinished Madonna and Child in which the Master's methods can be followed. The Child, completed save for the final bath of light, is a miracle of draughtsmanship.

The triptych by Andrea Mantegna (1451-1506) is of inexhaustible interest, for here, as ever, Mantegna is full of thought and purpose. The left panel represents the Ascension, Christ being borne upwards by eleven cherubim in a solid cloud; the right panel—by far the best, I think—shows the Circumcision, where the painter has set himself various difficulties of architecture and goldsmith's work

PRIMAVERA (SPRING)

FROM THE PAINTING BY BOTTICELLI IN THE UFFIZI

for the pleasure of overcoming them, every detail being painted with Dutch minuteness and yet leaving the picture big; while the middle panel, which is concave, depicts an Adoration of the Magi that will bear much study. The whole effect is very northern: not much less so than our own National Gallery Mabuse. Mantegna also has a charming Madonna and Child, with pleasing pastoral and stone-quarrying activities in the distance.

Another fascinating picture is the so-called Carpaccio (1450-1519), a confused but glorious mêlée of youths and halberds, reds and yellows and browns, very modern and splendid and totally unlike anything else in the whole gallery. Uccello may possibly be recalled, but only for subject. Finally there is Giovanni Bellini (1426-1516), master of Titian and Giorgione, with his "Sacra Conversazione," which means I know not what but has a haunting quality.* In an earlier room we saw a picture by Michelangelo which has been accused of blending Christianity and paganism; but Bellini's sole purpose was to do this. We have children from the Bacchic vase and the crowned Virgin; two naked saints and a Venetian lady; and a centaur watching a hermit. The foreground is a mosaic terrace; the background is rocks and water. It is all bizarre and very curious and memorable and quite unique.

For the rest, I should mention two charming Guardis; a rich little Canaletto; a nice scene of sheep by Jacopo Bassano; and Tintoretto's daring "Abraham and Isaac".

And then there are the Venetian portraits, chief among them being a red-headed Tintoretto burning furiously, and Titian's sly and sinister Caterina Cornaro in her gorgeous dress; Piombo's "L'Uomo Ammalato"; Tinto-

* The theory has been recently put forward, and very plausibly supported, that the picture illustrates the second part of a religious poem of the 14th century written by a French Cistercian monk, Guillaume de Deguileville. Everything in the picture is symbolic. Thus, the centaur represents man's lower nature; the Eastern figure, unbelief.

retto's Jacopo Sansovino, the sculptor, the grave old man, holding his calipers, who built much of Venice and made that wonderful Greek Bacchus at the Bargello; Schiavone's ripe, bearded "Ignoto," and, perhaps above all, the black and grey Moroni. There is also Paolo Veronese's "Holy Family with S. Catherine," superbly masterly and golden but suggesting the Rialto rather than Nazareth.

The next doorway in the long corridor leads to the passage to the Pitti. We now come to one of the most remarkable rooms in the gallery, where every picture is a gem; but since all are northern pictures, imported, I give no reproductions. This is the Sala di Van der Goes, so called from the great work here, the triptych, painted in 1474 to 1477 by Hugo van der Goes, who died in 1482, and was born at Ghent or Leyden about 1405. This painter, of whose genius there can be no question, is supposed to have been a pupil of the Van Eycks. Not much is known of him save that he painted at Bruges and Ghent, and in 1476 entered a convent at Brussels, where he was allowed to dine with distinguished strangers who came to see him, and where he drank so much wine that his natural excitability turned to insanity. He seems, however, to have recovered, and if ever a picture showed few signs of a deranged or inflamed mind it is this, which was painted for the agent of the Medici bank at Bruges, Tommaso Portinari, who presented it to the Hospital of S. Maria Nuova in his native city of Florence, which had been founded by his ancestor Folco, the father of Dante's Beatrice. The left panel shows Tommaso praying with his two sons Antonio and Pigallo, the right his wife Maria Portinari and their adorably quaint little daughter with her charming head-dress and costume. The flowers in the centre panel are among the most beautiful

THE REPOSE IN EGYPT

FROM THE PAINTING BY CORREGGIO IN THE UFFIZI

things in any Forentine picture: not wild and wayward like Luca Signorelli's, but most exquisitely done: irises, red lilies, columbines and dark red clove pinks—all unexpected and all very unlikely to be in such a wintry landscape at all. On the ground are violets. The whole work is grave, austere, cool, and as different as can be from the Tuscan spirit; yet it is said to have had a deep influence on the painters of the time and must have drawn throngs to the hospital to see it.

The other Flemish and German pictures in the room are all remarkable and all warmer in tone. No. 1237, an unknown work, is perhaps the finest: a Crucifixion, which might have borrowed its richness from the Carpaccio in the Venetian room. There is a fine Adoration of the Magi, by Gerard David (1460-1523); an unknown portrait of Pierantonio Baroncelli and his wife, with a lovely landscape; a jewel of paint by Hans Memling (1425-1492)—No. 1024—the Madonna Enthroned; an austere and poignant Transportation of Christ to the Sepulchre, by Roger van der Weyden (1400-1464); and several very beautiful portraits by Memling, notably Nos. 1090 and 1102 with their lovely evening light. Memling, indeed, I never liked better than here. Other notable pictures are a Spanish prince by Lucas van Leyden; a young husband and wife by Joost van Cleef the elder; and a curious realistic "Raising of Lazarus" by Fromeri Niccola of Avignon who painted in Florence, in the Flemish manner, in 1467-1476. The room is interesting both for itself and also as showing how the Flemish brushes were working at the time so many of the great Italians were engaged on similar themes.

After the restrained and sincere work of these northerners it is a change to enter the Sala di Rubens and find that

luxuriant giant—their compatriot, but how different!—once more. In the Uffizi, Rubens seems more foreign, far, than any one, so fleshly pagan is he. In Antwerp Cathedral his "Descent from the Cross," although its bravura is, as always with him, more noticeable than its piety, might be called a religious picture, but I doubt if even that would seem so here. At any rate his Uffizi works are all secular, while his "Holy Family" in the Pitti is merely domestic and robust. His Florentine masterpieces are the beautiful portrait of his wife and the two Henri IV pictures in this room, "Henri IV at Ivry," magnificent if not war, and "Henri's entry into Paris after Ivry," with its confusing muddle of naked warriors and spears.

Here also are one or two fine Sustermans (1597-1681), that imported painter whom we shall find in such rare form at the Pitti. Here, for example, is Ferdinand II, who did so much for the Uffizi and so little for Galileo, whose head hangs close by; and his cousin and wife Vittoria della Rovere, daughter of Claudia de' Medici and Federigo della Rovere, Duke of Urbino. This silly, plump lady had been married at the age of fourteen, and she brought her husband a little money and many pictures from Urbino, notably those delightful portraits of an earlier Duke and Duchess of Urbino by Piero della Francesca which we have just seen, and also the two Titian "Venuses". Ferdinand II and his Grand Duchess were on bad terms for most of their lives, and she behaved foolishly, and brought up her son Cosimo III foolishly, and altogether was a misfortune to Florence. Sustermans, the painter, she held in the highest esteem, and in return he painted her not only as herself but in various unlikely characters, among them a Vestal Virgin and even the Madonna.

Here also is No. 1436, Van Dyck's splendid portrait of

Giovanni Montfort; and next it, No. 3141, a vividly-painted elderly widow by Jordaens (1593-1678).

A series of four rooms devoted to other foreign schools comes next. The first is French, and is notable for three delicious Nattiers borrowed from the Pitti. There are also a pretty Boucher, nominally religious but in reality not so, two Claudes and two characteristic works by that very soft and pleasing painter, Alexis Grimon. The glory of the next room is Dürer, with several varied masterpieces, perhaps the most remarkable being the drawing of the road to Calvary. The same subject is treated more realistically on the opposite wall by Old Breughel, who has also a fine landscape with festive peasants—No. 1249. There are the usual Adams and Eves of the early German school and some other good work of Lucas Cranach.

But no doubt to many persons the most interesting picture here is the Medusa's head, which used to be called a Leonardo and quite satisfied Ruskin of its genuineness, but is now attributed to the Flemish school. The head, at any rate, would seem to be very similar to that of which Vasari speaks, painted by Leonardo for a peasant, but retained by his father. Time has dealt hardly with the paint, and one has to study minutely before Medusa's horrors are visible. Whether Leonardo's or not, it is not uninteresting to read how the picture affected Shelley when he saw it here in 1819 :—

> . . . Its Horror and its Beauty are divine.
> Upon its lips and eyelids seem to lie
> Loveliness like a shadow from which shine,
> Fiery and lurid, struggling underneath,
> The agonies of anguish and of death.

The two rooms that follow—the Dutch School—are extraordinarily satisfying. There is nothing bad and

much that is perfect. The masterpieces of the first room are the landscape by Hercules Seghers, that rare painter, Rembrandt's friend; Rembrandt's portrait of an old man from the Pitti, now permanently here; the supreme Ruysdael landscape, No. 1201; and the Metsu, No. 1296. In the next room will be found the miraculous hands of Mieris and Dou at their marvellous minute work. There are also a fine Jan Steen, No. 1301; Hendrik Pot, No. 1284; and Gaspare Netscher, No. 1288.

Federigo Baroccio (1528-1612), the hero of the next room, is one of the later Italians for whom I, at any rate, cannot feel any enthusiasm. His position in the Uffizi is due rather to the circumstance that he was a protégé of the Cardinal della Rovere at Rome, whose collection came here, than to his genius. But the most popular works here—on Sundays—are the two Gerard Honthorsts, and not without reason, for they are dramatic and bold and vivid, and there is a Baby in each that goes straight to the maternal heart. No. 157 is perhaps the more satisfying, but I have more reason to remember the larger one—the Adoration of the Shepherds—for I watched a copyist produce a most remarkable replica of it in something under a week, on the same scale. He was a short, swarthy man with a neck like a bull's, and he carried the task off with astonishing brio, never drawing a line, finishing each part as he came to it, and talking to a friend or an official the whole time. Somehow one felt him to be precisely the type of copyist that Gherardo della Notte ought to have. This painter was born at Utrecht in 1590, but went early to Italy, and settling in Rome devoted himself to mastering the methods of Amerighi, better known as Caravaggio (1569-1609), who specialized in strong contrasts of light and shade. After learning all he could in

Rome, Honthorst returned to Holland and made much money and fame, for his hand was swift and sure. Charles I engaged him to decorate Whitehall. He died in 1656. These two Honthorsts are, as I say, the most popular of the pictures on Sunday, when the Uffizi is free.

And so we are at the end of the pictures—but only to return again and again—not unwilling at the moment to enjoy the "bella vista" from the open space at the end of the corridor behind the "Laocöon," which turns out to be the roof of the Loggia de' Lanzi. From this high point one may see much of Florence and its mountains, while, on looking down, over the coping, one finds the busy Piazza della Signoria below, with all its cabs and wayfarers, and across it, far away, Fiesole.

Returning to the gallery, we come quickly on the right to the first of the neglected statuary rooms, the beautiful Sala di Niobe, which contains some interesting Medicean and other tapestries, and the sixteen statues of Niobe and her children from the temple of Apollo, which the Cardinal Ferdinand de' Medici acquired, and which were for many years at the Villa Medici at Rome. A suggested reconstruction of the group should be found by the door. I cannot pretend to a deep interest in the figures, but I like to be in the room. The famous Medicean vase is in the middle of it. All the way back to the entrance hall we can, if we like, devote ourselves to sculpture, for the Uffizi has a collection of priceless antiques which are not only beautiful but peculiarly interesting in that they can be compared with the work of Donatello, Verrocchio, and other of the Renaissance sculptors. For in such a case comparisons are anything but odious and become fascinating. There is, for example, a Mercury in marble, who is a blood relation of Donatello's bronze David in the

Bargello; and certain reliefs of merry children will be found who are cousins of the same sculptor's cantoria romps. Not that Donatello ever reproduced the antique spirit as Michelangelo nearly did in his Bacchus, and Sansovino absolutely did in his Bacchus, both at the Bargello: Donatello was of his time, and the spirit of his time animates his creations, but he had studied the Greek art in Rome and profited by his lessons, and his evenly-balanced humane mind had a warm corner for pagan joyfulness. Among other statues to note is a Sacerdotessa, wearing a marble robe with long folds, whose hands can be seen through the drapery; Bacchus and Ampelos, superbly pagan, while a sleeping Cupid is most lovely. Among the various fine heads is one of Cicero. But each thing in turn is almost the best. The trouble is that the Uffizi is so vast, and the Renaissance seems to be so eminently the only proper study of mankind when one is in Florence, that to attune oneself to the enjoyment of antique sculpture needs a special effort which not all are ready to make.

Finally there is the Ara Pacis room, by the entrance door.

The ceilings of the Uffizi rooms and corridors also are painted, thoughtfully and dexterously, in the Pompeian manner; but there are limits to the receptive capacity of travellers' eyes, and I must plead guilty to consistently neglecting them. With the tapestries alone one can spend a very amusing morning.

There is on the first landing of the staircase a room in which exhibitions of drawings of the Old Masters are held; and this is worth knowing about, not only because of the riches of the portfolios in the collection, but also because once you have passed the doors you are inside the only

THE MADONNA DEL POZZO (OF THE WELL)

FROM THE PAINTING BY FRANCIABIGIO IN THE UFFIZI

picture gallery in Florence for which no entrance fee is asked.

Let me add that there is no absolute finality in the arrangement of the Uffizi rooms; and changes are always being made. But the pictures are only shifted, not removed; and the pleasure of hunting for them out of their accustomed places is not to be despised.