

herd, carrying the Lamb, and surrounded by an ornament of tendrils and Cupids.<sup>1</sup> Such from the feeble traces that remain, were the paintings of the third or fourth century in the vault usually called Stanza delle Pecorelle,<sup>2</sup> where the Redeemer was depicted in the lunette as the good shepherd, carrying the Lamb,<sup>3</sup> accompanied by two figures and a flock; whilst below, Moses strikes the rock and Jonah is swallowed by the whale. Here indeed the attitudes were not without grandeur, in so far as simple lines can render the human form; nor were the masses of light and shade without breadth, the colour without harmony or the drapery without simplicity.<sup>4</sup>

Yet if painters still hesitated to imitate the features of the God-man as he might have existed after reaching the age of adolescence, no such scruple affected them when it was necessary to depict him as an infant on the knees of his mother. The Virgin herself, though less venerable to the early Christians than to the later followers of the Gospel, was already in honour in the third and fourth centuries and might be seen enthroned and either receiving the offerings of the Magi or attended by those prophets of the old testament who had foretold her coming. Amongst the very earliest catacomb pictures is one in San Calisto which represents the Virgin sitting in profile on a throne holding the infant Saviour and receiving the offerings of the Magi who stand before her in Phrygian caps and dresses. In the medallion centre of the roof sits the good

<sup>1</sup> Traces of the head, legs and body of the principal figure remain.

<sup>2</sup> S.S. Nero e Achilleo, late S. Calixtus.

<sup>3</sup> Similar examples of the good pastor may be found in old Sarcophagi for instance in Sarc. No. 76 in the Campo Santo of Pisa where the sandalled Saviour is represented beardless, youthful and with the face of Apollo.

<sup>4</sup> A careful analysis of the technical process in use at Rome in

the 3<sup>d</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century may be obtained from these wall-paintings. On a light ground a general warm yellow red tone was thrown over the whole of the flesh parts of a figure. The shadows were worked in with a deeper and thicker tint of the same warm colour in broad masses and without detail. The outline was rapidly drawn in black as were likewise the eyes, nose and mouth. The draperies were coloured in the primary keys and with tolerable knowledge of the laws of harmony.