

but amidst the glitter it was impossible not to perceive the decline of art and the conventionalism to which it was hurrying.

The solia, or quadrangle, forming the centre of the nave and transept, was ornamented on four sides with mosaics. On the face of the arch leading into the sanctuary in full flight and exaggerated action, contrasting greatly with the calm heavenly messengers of Santa Maria Maggiore at Rome, two angels held between them a medallion enclosing the symbol of the Cross; and at their feet Jerusalem and Bethlehem sparkled with gems. An ornament of vine tendrils issuing from vases and animated by birds filled the upper part of the space. An arch of the same dimensions divided the solia from the nave and in the archivolt the Saviour, of the usual type and form, wearing a stole over his purple tunic, was represented in a medallion with twelve apostles in similar frames below him; and last, the S.S. Protasius and Gervasius. The screens of the solia under whose arches the spectator might wander into the transepts were adorned with the prefigurative episodes of the old testament. In the recess above the lower course of arches to the right, Abel in the antique shepherd costume — a skin and red cloak — offered up the firstling lamb, at a table upon which the wine stood in a vase, whilst Melchisedek nimbed seemed to have issued from a temple behind him and to call the blessing upon the bread which he raised aloft. The presence of the Eternal was indicated by the hand appearing in a cloud. The form of Abel well proportioned in the nude was roughly but simply lined and his head not remarkable for beauty. The movement of Melchisedek was energetic and not ill rendered. A landscape and a sky with red clouds completed the picture. On the face of the arch Moses as a shepherd petting a lamb, and again untying his sandals at the bidding of the Lord whose hand appeared above him, Isaiah prophesying, filled the spaces; and these episodes were crowned by two angels in flight and holding between them the medallion of the Cross. Above the arches of the gallery on the same side the Evangelists Mark and John were depicted and the rest of the wall was filled with an ornament of vases and doves. In the screen to the left and similarly distributed, Abraham was seen carrying food to the three angels, whilst Sara in the form of an antique matron stood laughing at the door. Again the sacrifice of Isaac was arrested by the hand of the Lord. On the wall above, Jeremiah stood prophesying and Moses received the