

## CHAPTER XIII.

## TADDEO GADDI.

It is the privilege of a commanding genius to absorb all inferior but congenial elements and mould them into a form conducive to its own development. As the satellites, gravitating round a planet's orbit, reflect more dimly the lustre of the parent star, so the artists of Italy reflected the genius of Giotto. He had concentrated round him the minor talents of his country, moulded them to his will and used them for his purposes. But when he died, the light which he imparted to them disappeared; and art, without progress, languished for a time. For twenty four years, Taddeo the son of Gaddo Gaddi had been the constant helpmate of Giotto<sup>1</sup> and was bound to him by the bond of service, the friendship of Gaddo, and the ties of daily social intercourse. Giotto was his godfather. How often had Taddeo, following the instructions of his friend and teacher, laid in the drawing and colour of a fresco which awaited only the final touch of the master to become the work of Giotto? What was Taddeo's art but the dim reflex of the genius of the latter? When left to pursue alone his unaided fancy, what may have been his feelings? "Art has fallen very low since the death of Giotto" said Taddeo, when asked to name the greatest painter of Italy.<sup>2</sup> Impartial history confirms the words and admits their truth. Yet it was no hopeless struggle that now commenced. Those who had

<sup>1</sup> See Cennino Cennini's remark to that effect, most easily found in Vas. Vol. II. p. 158.

<sup>2</sup> Sacchetti ub. sup. Vol. II. p. 221. Nov. CXXXVI.