

from that of the Emperor Constantine. Vasari, writing many years later, assigns the whole of these works to "Tommaso di Stefano called Giottino,¹ born in 1324, and a pupil of his father Stefano." Having thus affirmed that Tommaso is the son of Stefano, he adds: "some believed he was the son of Giotto, which is not true, it being certain, or rather generally believed (for in such matters who shall ever dare to affirm) that he was the son of the painter Stefano Fiorentino." Without, for the present, attempting to fathom the contradictions of Vasari, who a little further adds that Giottino "was more perfect than his master Giotto," it is best to pass at once to the consideration of the only work which remains of those assigned by Ghiberti to Maso and by Vasari to Tommaso called Giottino. This work is the series of frescos which decorates the chapel of S. Silvestro in S. Croce at Florence. They represent the miracles of S. Silvester as related in the Golden Legend. It is affirmed there:

"that, the Emperor Constantine being afflicted with a sore leprosy, three thousand boys were brought together for slaughter, that a bath of their warm blood might assist in curing him. Moved, however, by the wails of the mothers, and in this, of more tender frame than Herod, he declared himself ready to die rather than be cured by such means. In the night, S. Peter and S. Paul appeared to the Emperor, telling him that they were sent by the Lord Jesus Christ, to reward him for his holy horror of human blood, and to inform him that if he were bathed in water by Sylvester, bishop of Rome, he should be cured of his leprosy. Sylvester who had prudently retired from Rome for fear of persecution returned thither at Constantine's desire, and, being told by the Emperor that he had seen two Gods in a dream, replied that those he had seen must be the apostles Peter and Paul. Of this Constantine was convinced when Sylvester showed him portraits of the apostles, and he then consented to be baptized.² Helen congratulated Constantine

¹ Vas. Vol. II. p. 140.

² The bath in which Constantine was cured of his leprosy was of porphyry; and it was a charge

against Rienzi that he had sacrilegiously used it. The legend was believed till much later.