

executed with such excellence and conducted with such majesty that it deserved, and would doubtless have received, an honorable reward, had not the emulation, or rather the envy of artists, and the favour extended by certain gentlemen to foreign painters caused matters to take a different turn. The result was that the unfortunate Antonio returned humbled to Florence, and resolved not only to abandon Venice for ever, but to make Florence his home. Having thus taken his resolution and fixed his abode in the city, he painted on an arch of the cloisters in S. Spirito, Christ calling Peter and Andrew from their nets, and Zebedee and his sons, and, beneath the three arcades adorned by Stefano, the miracle of the loaves and fishes, in which he exhibited the greatest diligence and care, giving to the face of the Saviour features impressed with compassion for the crowd about him and an ardent charity in dispensing the bread. Admirable in the same picture was the gesture of an apostle, who with wonderful tenderness, wearied himself in the distribution of the bread in a basket. Artists might, indeed, learn from this work that figures should ever be painted as if conversing, failing which they cannot please. This Antonio again demonstrated in a fresco on the front of the same edifice, in which he executed the incident of the Manna with such diligence and such care of finish that it deserved truly to be called excellent. At a later period he painted in a predella for the high altar, in S. Stefano al Ponte Vecchio, scenes of the life of S. Stephen with such tenderness that it is not possible to find more graceful or finer figures even were they in miniatures. He also painted the arch above the entrance to S. Antonio al Ponte alla Carraia.<sup>1</sup>

This narrative written with Vasari's usual elegance and choice of expression can not be accepted with implicit confidence. It may be true that Antonio had to submit to humiliation and trouble at Venice. Local historians are, however, silent with respect to him, and the frescos of the council hall are no longer in existence. Of the works mentioned in Florence not one remains. The dates of Antonio's employment at Sienna and in Pisa reveal a contemporary, hardly a pupil, of Agnolo Gaddi, and the truth of this theory is confirmed by the examination of

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<sup>1</sup> Vas. Vol. II. p. 171 to 173.