

which the figures stand. But, whilst doing so, he grasped at the same time the maxims which Giotto had laid down, and remembered that progress in art is summed up in the experience of the past as well as in the emulation of the present. The artistic eye of Vasari once attributed to him a picture which hung in the studio of Uccelli, and was intended to remind the spectator how much the greatness of cotemporary art owed to bygone times. Giotto, Brunelleschi, Donatello, Paolo himself, and Giovanni Manetti were grouped together,¹ the first as the guide and prime cause of the grandeur of Italian art, the second as the genius of architecture, the third as presiding over sculpture, the fourth as the creator of perspective, the last as the mathematician who had applied the laws of Euclid to the improvement of design. The absence of Masaccio from the group might have been explained by supposing that modesty forbade him to introduce his own person amongst the cotemporaries to whom he had been no unworthy competitor. But Vasari was induced, after a time, to correct his opinion as to the authorship of this work, which had wandered in the sixteenth century into the study of Giuliano di S. Gallo; and he afterwards assigned it to Paolo Uccelli himself.² Paolo might forget or ignore the genius of a youth, who struggled for fame in poverty and debt, but Brunelleschi, to whom Masaccio owed some of his acquirements in perspective, exhibited towards him the interest of a friend, and at his death lamented his untimely loss.³

Masaccio was the son of a notary, Ser Giovanni di Simone Guidi, of the family of the Scheggia which had its possessions, if not its residence, in Castel S. Giovanni di

¹ A picture with portraits of these persons is in the Louvre under the name of Uccelli and is said to be that mentioned by Vasari, No. 184 of Catalogue, but see postea.

² In his first edition Vasari gives the authorship to Masaccio,

in the last to Uccelli. See Vasari, ub. sup. Vol. III. p. 97.

³ Vas. Vol. III. p.p. 197 and 163. Leon Batista Alberti also knew and admired the talents of Masaccio. See *Elementi*, vulgarized by Cosimo Bartoli. The passage is in Vasari, comment. on L. B. Alberti. Vol. IV. p. 64.