

Val d'Arno.¹ He was born in 1402, and according to a tradition which in the sixteenth century still assigned to him certain infantine productions in his native place, he displayed from childhood an inclination for the study of design. In 1421, at the precocious age of nineteen, he was enrolled in the guild of the *Speziali* at Florence.² His apprenticeship had no doubt already closed at that time, and if it should hereafter be confirmed by records, as it is supposed from a conformity of technical processes and feeling, that he studied under Masolino,³ it will appear that he entered the guild of the *Speziali* before his master. A year after Masolino was enrolled in that corporation, Masaccio was balloted into the guild of painters.⁴ Vasari, after a notice of several frescos executed in Florence, the greater part of which have perished, describes Masaccio's journey to Rome and a commission from Cardinal S. Clemente to him to paint a chapel⁵ in the church which bears his name. There, he completed a crucifixion and scenes from the lives of the Cardinal's patron saint and S. Catherine, a work which may be considered as one of his most youthful efforts.

On the wall facing the entrance, the Saviour may be seen in the centre, crucified between the two thieves. The Magdalen grasps the foot of the cross. Soldiers in armour and on horseback are scattered in a line across the picture in various attitudes as they wind along a serpentine path about the cross. On the foreground to the left, four persons are grouped, and converse as they look at the execution. One of them, evidently Judas with a purse, has a menacing expression. In the same line, and nearer the centre of the foreground, the Virgin in a swoon is held erect by the three Marys,⁶ S. John Evangelist standing by.

¹ Baldinucci, *ub. sup.* Vol. V. p. 291. Vas. Vol. III. p. 154.

² So in Baldinucci. But some have read 1423. Vide Baldinucci, *ub. sup.* Vol. V. p. 293.

³ "Masolino da Panicale stato suo maestro." Vas. Vol. III. p. 159.

⁴ He is registered there in 1424 as "Maso di Ser Giovanni di Castello S. Giovanni".

⁵ The first chapel to the right as you enter the church of S. Clemente at Rome is that assigned by Vasari to Masaccio. Vas. Vol. III. p. 158.

⁶ This damaged group reveals a fixed intention, carried out with such power that Perugino did not disdain to copy it.