

Disunited in composition and betraying the absence of those severe laws of distribution which prevailed in the fourteenth century, this scene displays, in spite of extensive damage and restoring, beauty in the groups, study of the foreshortening of form, and some realism. The figure of the Saviour, in an attitude which still reminds the spectator of the Giottesque time, is fairly proportioned, and shows a certain mastery of the nude. The pendent and lissom body of the penitent thief, with the legs crossed over each other, though imperfectly foreshortened, is still remarkable for research of anatomy, and for a boldness only equalled or surpassed at that period in the works of Masaccio himself.

The four scenes about the window of the wall to the right are devoted to the life of some unknown saint.<sup>1</sup>

The opposite wall illustrates the legend of S. Catherine of Alexandria, her defeat of the doctors before Maxentius, her rejection of the pagan idol, her conversion of the Queen from the window of her cell, the vanity of her torture by the wheel, the decapitation of the Queen, and her own. In the first of these episodes, S. Catherine, standing in the centre of a hall, at whose sides eight doctors are seated, propounds and enforces her arguments by the action of one hand on the other. Her reasoning seems chiefly directed to one on the foreseat to the left, who looks up, whilst his arms are crossed on a book resting on his knee. Maxentius sits on a throne at the bottom of the room in an attitude of majestic repose, and his face is affected by surprise.

In this, the finest composition of the series, and that which has suffered the least damage, the grandeur and simplicity, the spirit and gravity which strike the behol-

<sup>1</sup> His birth, his appearance in the midst of a crowd of soldiers and pointed out by a child, one of his miracles during an inundation, and his death. In one of these, an aged person lies in bed and accompanies his speech with a gesture of the right arm; whilst at the side of the couch, a priest in red with his head resting on his right arm, is seated on the

ground, recalling to the student's memory a similar figure in the dream of the archbishop of Assisi represented by Giotto in the Bardi chapel at S. Croce. Most writers describe these scenes as taken from the life of S. Catherine, others as from that of S. Clemente. They are not to be traced, however, in the legends of those saints.