

THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER I.

LUCA SIGNORELLI.

Luca Signorelli was born, as there is reason to believe, in 1441, at Cortona;¹ but his earliest impressions of art seem to have been obtained at Perugia, where he imbibed a tincture of the style peculiar to Bonfigli, Fiorenzo, and Pinturicchio.²

We may conceive it possible that a man of his talent should in the course of time have curbed the impetuosity of his nature and assumed the staid tenderness of the Umbrians; although it is not easy to believe that he would then have risen to fame. But his temper was not put to so hard a trial; and an early transfer into a wider field developed the full powers of his mind.

Cortona and Arezzo were both inhabited in the middle of the fifteenth century by branches of a family to which Luca

¹ The date of Signorelli's birth is not ascertained. But Vasari says he died aged 82 (Vas. VI. 147); and the death is all but proved to have occurred in 1523. Signorelli's full name is Luca d' Egidio di Ventura.

² There is some probability in Rumohr's belief (Forsch. ub. sup. II.

333) that Signorelli studied with Fiorenzo di Lorenzo. At all events we may consider that he derived from a Perugian the small portion of Umbrian feeling apparent in the character of his curly headed children or in the type and action of angels.