

## CHAPTER VIII.

## BERNARDINO PINTURICCHIO.

Pinturicchio, the partner of Pietro Perugino, has been described by Vasari with unusual bitterness as more favoured by fortune than gifted by nature or education.<sup>1</sup> Rumohr mitigates the severity of this judgment, at the expense of Pinturicchio's character, and says, we must discriminate between the fresh creations of his early time, and the empty dexterity of a later period in which everything is sacrificed to the lucre of gain.<sup>2</sup> Yet, his youthful productions are missing and there are no clear traces of works undertaken on his sole account previous to the completion of the Sistine chapel.<sup>3</sup> No certainty is attainable regarding his birth, unless we accept Vasari's statement that he was fifty-nine years of age when he died.<sup>4</sup> Assuming this, he was born in 1454, and his independent career began at thirty. He was christened Bernardino, to which were added Betti (Benedicti) Biagi; but his acquaintance often called him Sordicchio because of a deafness and the paltriness of his appearance.<sup>5</sup> He was best known, however, as Pinturicchio; and he probably commended the use of this alias, in order that he might

<sup>1</sup> Vas. V. 264.

<sup>2</sup> Rumohr (Forsch. ub. sup. II. 331).

<sup>3</sup> Rosini (stor. della Pitt. ub. sup. III. 182) assigns to Pinturicchio's early time a figure of S. Ansano in S. Antonio e Jacopo (S. Caterina) at Assisi. This figure and two others,

near a fresco representing an incident from the life of S. James, are however by a painter who lived after Pinturicchio (see antea p. 124 in Pietro Antonio).

<sup>4</sup> Vas. V. 274.

<sup>5</sup> Francesco Maturanzio, chron. Verm. vita ub. sup. 29.