

liest development is to be found in the youthful and somewhat feeble Nativity at the Vatican, called the Madonna della Spineta from the convent near Todi, for which it was commissioned.¹

There is very little in this composition calling for special remark. The infant, lying on the foreground, with its fingers in its mouth; S. Joseph to the left, on one knee, expressing surprise by startled action; the Virgin to the right, resigned and in prayer; two angels in rear between them and a third in immediate attendance behind the mother of Christ, form the principal group. In the middle distance, two shepherds, and others on foot and on horseback in a landscape; to the right, the penthouse and cattle; in the air, three angels, erect, singing from a long scroll — this is all. The peculiar traits in the piece which distinguish Spagna, are the long head, neck, and shoulderless frame of S. Joseph, the square and lanky shape of angels, curt proportions of hand and foot, and overcharged drapery. Superadded are, gravity of demeanour, an ashen grey coolness of tone, equal finish of parts in fore and background, minuteness of detail without great relief by light and shade. The picture, though painted in oil, looks washy and pale. It is the first impression of an arrangement repeated with variations in the altarpiece of the Ancajani at the Berlin Museum². The annexed outline of the abraded distemper-

¹ No. 29. Gallery of the Vatican assigned by Vermiglioli (Bernardino ub. sup. p. 42) to Pinturicchio, by Orsini (life of Perugino ub. sup. p. 104) to Vannucci, and in descriptions of the Vatican, to Perugino, Pinturicchio and Raphael. The latter theory seems countenanced by Passavant (II. 5 449) when describing a head of S. Joseph amongst the drawings of the British Museum. The drawing, however, cannot be by Raphael (it is numbered No. 44. ex-Reynold's collection) being too loose. On the back of the sheet is a figure of

S. Sebastian, in which Spagna's hand, following the style of Perugino is more apparent. But caution is required before assigning either the head or the S. Sebastian to Spagna. The former is not exactly the same as the head of S. Joseph in the Spineta altarpiece.

² Berlin Mus. No. 150. under the name of Raphael. Its removal from S. Pietro in the monastery of Ferentillo and subsequent peregrinations are related by Pungileoni (Raphael ub. sup. p. 18), and by Passavant (Raphael, I. p. 66. and II. p. 16).