

## CHAPTER XV.

## FRANCIA BIGIO.

Francesco di Cristofano, commonly called Francia Bigio, was a more finished artist, and did more honour to the teaching of Mariotto Albertinelli than Bugiardini. He was born in 1482,<sup>1</sup> and studied at the Brancacci. But when Michael Angelo exhibited his cartoon of the "War of Pisa" in the Sala del Papa at Florence in 1505, Francia Bigio swelled the current of the crowd which flocked there with easel and portfolio. The acquaintance of Andrea del Sarto which he then made subsequently ripened into friendship; though circumstances kept the youths for a time in the workshops of different masters. The first frequented the atelier of Piero di Cosimo; the second visited that of Albertinelli; and the result was the infusion of different elements into their respective styles.<sup>2</sup>

Francia Bigio is generally known by a manner resembling that of his friend; but an extant panel amongst those assigned to his early period would prove that his original tendency was to imitate Albertinelli, so as in some respects to resemble Giuliano Bugiardini. Of two subjects which were once preserved in S. Piero Maggiore at Florence, one is the Annunciation recently purchased for the Museum of Turin,<sup>3</sup> in which Vasari admires the

<sup>1</sup> Vasari (IX. 103) says, Francia Bigio died aged 42. The death is in the register of Florence sub anno 1525 (Jan. 14<sup>th</sup>). Tav. alfab. ub. sup.

<sup>2</sup> Vasari says that Francia Bigio

only learnt for some months from Mariotto. The effect at all events was powerful and lasting.

<sup>3</sup> Turin Museum. No. 588. Figures half the size of life.