

many cities and towns throughout Lombardy for this purpose, and carefully studying the canals of Egypt under the Ptolemies. He studied ancient architecture also. In his epitaph, composed in his lifetime, he calls himself, "The admirer of the ancients, and their grateful disciple. One thing is lacking to me, their science of proportion. I have done what I could; may posterity pardon me."

He designed a palace for Count Giovanni Melzi, at Vaprio, which became a favorite home for him, especially in the time of war — the residence of his beloved pupil, Francesco Melzi.

In 1492, after Leonardo had been eleven years at the Court of Milan, Lodovico, unscrupulous and immoral, married the gentle and saintly Beatrice d'Este. Leonardo conducted the grand wedding festivities, and designed and decorated the bride's apartments in the Castello della Rocca, making a beautiful bath-room in the garden, adorned with colored marbles and a statue of Diana. While the regent in no wise discontinued his profligate habits, he yet desired to please his wife, by gratifying her taste for religious things. As she had shown an especial fondness for the Dominican church and convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie, Lodovico ordered them reconstructed and embellished for her. In the refectory, the artist painted kneeling portraits of Beatrice, her husband, and their two little children, Maximilian and Francesco; but they have long since faded.

About the year 1496, Leonardo began his im-

mortal work in the refectory, The "Last Supper." Here, where daily the sweet and broken-hearted wife came to remain for hours in meditation and prayer before the tomb of the Duchess Bianca, from which she sometimes had to be removed by force, Leonardo came daily to his masterpiece. Sometimes he would go to his work at daybreak, and never think of descending from his scaffolding to eat or drink till night, so completely absorbed was he in his work. "At other times," says Bando, "he would remain three or four days without touching it, only coming for an hour or two, and remaining with crossed arms contemplating his figures, as if criticising them himself. I have also seen him at midday, when the sun in the zenith causes all the streets of Milan to be deserted, set out in all haste from the citadel, where he was modelling his colossal horse, and, without seeking the shade, take the shortest road to the convent, where he would add a few strokes to one of his heads, and then return immediately."

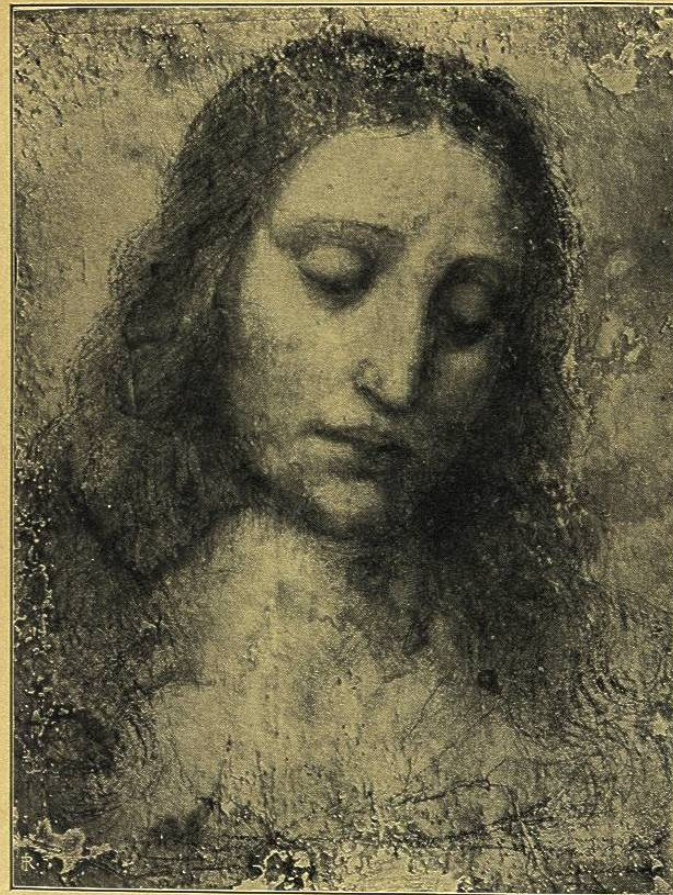
Leonardo made a cartoon of the whole picture, and separate studies of each figure. Ten of these are now in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg.

He was long absorbed in his head of Christ. He used to say that his hand trembled whenever he attempted to paint it. At last, in despair, he asked counsel of a friend, Bernardo Zenale, who comforted him by saying, "Oh, Leonardo, the error into which thou hast fallen is one from which only the Divine Being himself can deliver

thee; for it is not in thy power nor in that of any one else to give greater divinity and beauty to any figures than thou hast done to these of James the Greater and the Less; therefore, be of good cheer, and leave the Christ imperfect, for thou wilt never be able to accomplish the Christ after such apostles."

Leonardo finished the work in about three years. Beatrice, as might have been expected from such an ill-assorted union, died of sorrow in five years after her marriage. Lodovico, as has been often the case before and since in the world's history, realized too late the wrong he had done, and now strove to remedy it by causing a hundred masses a day to be said for her soul, shutting himself up in remorse for two weeks in a chamber hung with black, only coming forth to do penance at the sanctuaries where his lovely and neglected wife had worshipped. He now wished to make her last resting-place, Santa Maria delle Grazie, as beautiful as possible, and hastened Leonardo at his work on the "Last Supper" that he might see it completed, meantime raising a magnificent tomb to the memory of his neglected Beatrice.

The prior of the convent could not understand why Leonardo should meditate over his work, and, likewise in haste to have the picture finished, complained to Lodovico, who courteously entreated the artist to go on as rapidly as possible. Vasari says, "Leonardo, knowing the prince to be intelligent and judicious, determined to explain himself



CARTOON OF THE HEAD OF CHRIST FOR THE FRESCO OF THE
LAST SUPPER.

(Pastel drawing.) Brera, Milan. Leonardo da Vinci.

fully on the subject with him, although he had never chosen to do so with the prior. He therefore discoursed with him at some length respecting art, and made it perfectly manifest to his comprehension that men of genius are sometimes producing most when they seem to be laboring least, their minds being occupied in the elucidation of their ideas, and in the completion of those conceptions to which they afterwards give form and expression with the hand. He further informed the duke that there were still wanting to him two heads, one of which, that of the Saviour, he could not hope to find on earth. . . .

“The second head still wanting was that of Judas, which also caused him some anxiety, since he did not think it possible to imagine a form of feature that should properly render the countenance of a man who, after so many benefits received from his Master, had possessed a heart so depraved as to be capable of betraying his Lord, and the Creator of the world; with regard to that second, however, he would make search, and after all — if he could find no better — he need never be at any great loss, for there would always be the head of that troublesome and impertinent prior. This made the duke laugh with all his heart; he declared Leonardo to be completely in the right: and the poor prior, utterly confounded, went away to drive on the digging in his garden, and left Leonardo in peace.”

The “Last Supper” was painted in oils instead

of fresco, and soon began to fade. In 1515, when Francis I. was in Milan, he was so impressed with the picture that he determined to carry it back to France, and tried to find architects who could secure it from injury by defences of wood and iron so that it could be transported, but none could be found able to do it, and the project was abandoned. The painting was soon damaged by the refectory lying for some time under water. Later one of the monks made a doorway through it, cutting off the feet of Christ. In 1726 an artist named Belotti restored (?) it, leaving nothing untouched but the sky. His work proved unsatisfactory, and Mazza repainted everything except the heads of Matthew, Thaddeus, and Simon. The indignant people soon compelled him to cease, and the prior who had permitted it was banished from the convent.

In 1796, when Napoleon entered Italy, the troops used the refectory as a stable. Three or four years later, it again lay under water for two weeks. At present, one is able to perceive only the general design as the work of Leonardo. Excellent copies were made by Da Vinci's pupils, so that the great picture has found its way into thousands of homes.

The Saviour and his apostles are seated at a long table, in a stately hall. On the left is Bartholomew; next, James the Less; then Andrew, Peter, Judas holding the money-bag, John, with Christ in the centre, Thomas on his right hand, then James the Greater, Philip, Matthew, Thaddeus, and Simon.

The moment chosen by the painter is that given by Matthew: "And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?"

Mrs. C. W. Heaton says of this picture, in her valuable life of Da Vinci, "In his dramatic rendering of the disciples, Leonardo has shown the boldest and grandest naturalism. They are all of them real, living men with passions like unto us—passions called for the moment by the fearful words of the Master, 'One of you shall betray me,' into full and various play."

Most who visit Milan to see the lace-work in stone of its exquisite cathedral, go also to the famous painting which tells alike the story of a great artist struggling to put immortal thoughts into his faces, and the story of the remorse of a human being in breaking the heart of a lovely woman. Had it not been to atone to Beatrice, probably the "Last Supper" would never have been painted in Santa Maria delle Grazie. Thus strangely has the bitterness of one soul led to the joy and inspiration of thousands!

In 1498, Louis XII. came to the throne of France, and laid claim to the duchy of Milan, enforcing his claim by arms. Lodovico fled, but was captured by the French, and kept a prisoner for ten years, until his death. Leonardo went back to his old home in Florence, taking with him two persons, his friend Luca Paciolo, who had

lived with him three years at Milan, the author of *De Divina Proportione*, for which book the artist made sixty drawings; and his beautiful pupil Salaï, his son as he called him, "a youth of singular grace and beauty of person, with curling and wavy hair, a feature of personal beauty by which Leonardo was greatly pleased." From this dear disciple the artist painted many of his angels' heads.

Florence had changed since he went away, scarcely more than a boy. Now he was in middle life, forty-eight years old, the famous painter of the "Last Supper," the polished and renowned scholar. His first work on his return was an altarpiece for the Annunciata Church,—the Madonna, St. Anna, and the infant Christ. The cartoon, now in the Royal Academy at London, caused the greatest delight. "When finished, the chamber wherein it stood was crowded for two days by men and women, old and young, as if going to a solemn festival, all hastening to behold this marvel of Leonardo's, which amazed the whole population."

He now painted two noble Florentine ladies, Ginevra Benci, a famous beauty, and the Mona Lisa, the third wife of Francesco del Giocondo, the latter of whom it is conjectured that Leonardo loved.

Vasari says, "Whoever shall desire to see how far art can imitate nature, may do so to perfection in this head, wherein every peculiarity that could be depicted by the utmost subtlety of the pencil has been faithfully reproduced. The eyes have

the lustrous brightness and moisture which is seen in life, and around them are those pale, red, and slightly livid circles, also proper to nature, with the lashes, which can only be copied as these are with the greatest difficulty; the eyebrows also are represented with the closest exactitude, where fuller and where more thinly set, with the separate hairs delineated as they issue from the skin, every turn being followed and all the pores exhibited in a manner that could not be more natural than it is; the nose, with its beautiful and delicately roseate nostrils, might be easily believed to be alive; the mouth, admirable in its outline, has the lips uniting the rose-tints of their color with that of the face in the utmost perfection, and the carnation of the cheek does not appear to be painted, but truly of flesh and blood; he who looks earnestly at the pit of the throat cannot but believe that he sees the beating of the pulses, and it may be truly said that this work is painted in a manner well calculated to make the boldest master tremble, and astonishes all who behold it, however well accustomed to the marvels of art.

"Mona Lisa was exceedingly beautiful; and while Leonardo was painting her portrait, he took the precaution of keeping some one constantly near her, to sing or play on instruments, or to jest and otherwise amuse her, to the end that she might continue cheerful, and so that her face might not exhibit the melancholy expression often imparted by painters to the likenesses they take. In this

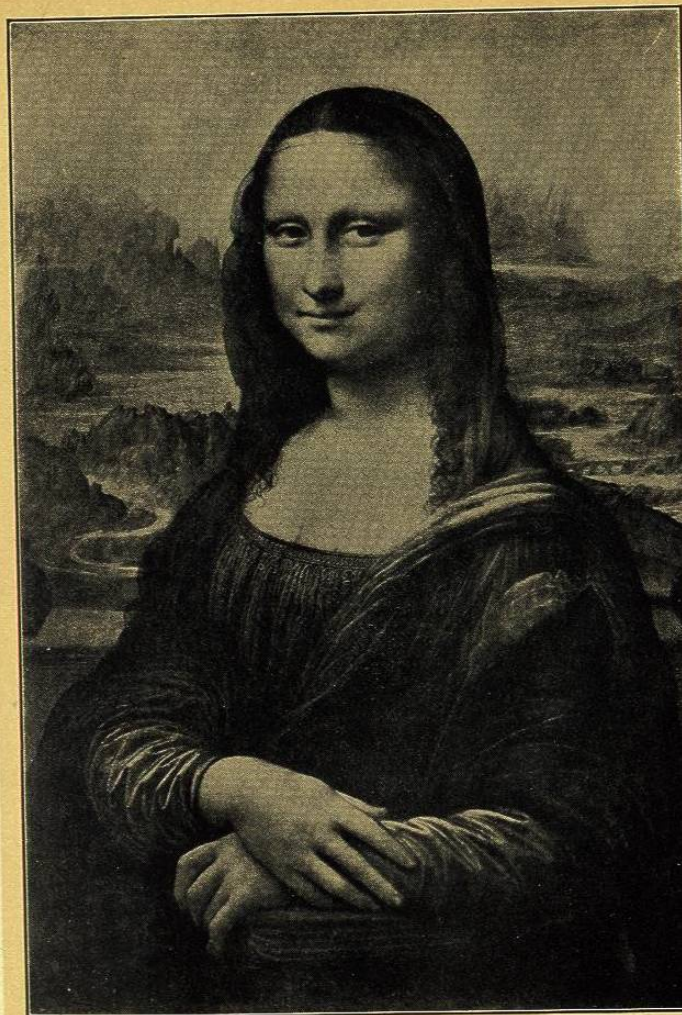
portrait of Leonardo's, on the contrary, there is so pleasing an expression, and a smile so sweet, that while looking at it one thinks it rather divine than human, and it has ever been esteemed a wonderful work, since life itself could exhibit no other appearance."

No wonder Grimm says, "He who has seen the Mona Lisa smile is followed forever by this smile, just as he is followed by Lear's fury, Macbeth's ambition, Hamlet's melancholy, and Iphigenia's touching purity."

Pater says of the Mona Lisa, "'La Gioconda' is, in the truest sense, Leonardo's masterpiece, the revealing instance of his mode of thought and work. In suggestiveness, only the 'Melancholia' of Dürer is comparable to it; and no crude symbolism disturbs the effect of its subdued and graceful mystery. We all know the face and hands of the figure, set in its marble chair, in that cirque of fantastic webs, as in some faint light under sea. Perhaps of all ancient pictures time has chilled it least.

"The fancy of a perpetual life, sweeping together ten thousand experiences, is an old one; and modern thought has conceived the idea of humanity as wrought upon by, and summing up in itself, all modes of thought and life. Certainly Lady Lisa might stand as the embodiment of the old fancy, the symbol of the modern idea."

One feels with Michelet, when he says, "It



MONA LISA (LA JOCONDE).
Paris, Louvre. Leonardo da Vinci.

fascinates and absorbs me. I go to it in spite of myself, as the bird is drawn to the serpent." I have found myself going day after day to the Louvre to linger before two masterpieces; to grow better through the womanhood of the Venus de Milo, and to rest in the peaceful, contented smile of the Mona Lisa. Nobody can forget the perfect hand. One seems to feel the delicacy of the loving touch which Leonardo gave as he painted through those long yet short four years, leaving the portrait, as he declared, unfinished, because of his high ideal of what a painting should be. The husband did not purchase the picture of the artist — did he not value the beauty? It was finally sold to Francis I., for four thousand gold crowns, an enormous sum at that day.

After Da Vinci had been two years in Florence, Cæsar Borgia, the son of Pope Alexander VI., appointed him architect and general engineer. He travelled through Central Italy, making ramparts and stairways for the citadel of Urbino, machinery at Pesaro, designing a house and better methods of transporting grapes at Cesena, and finer gates at Cesenatico. At one place he lingered to enjoy the regular cadence of the waves beating on the shore; at another, his soul filled with music, he was soothed by the murmur of the fountains. But Cæsar was soon obliged to flee into Spain, and Leonardo could no longer hold the position of engineer.

Pietro Soderini, who had been elected gonfalo-

niere for life, was the friend of both Leonardo and Michael Angelo. He wished to have these two greatest artists paint each a wall in the Hall of the Palazzo Vecchio. Michael Angelo chose for his subject a group of soldiers surprised by the enemy while bathing in the Arno; Leonardo, a troop of horsemen fighting round a standard, a scene from the battle of Anghiari, fought by the Florentines against the North Italians. Vasari says, "Not only are rage, disdain, and the desire for revenge apparent in the men, but in the horses also; two of those animals, with their fore-legs intertwined, are attacking each other with their teeth, no less fiercely than do the cavaliers who are fighting for the standard."

Vasari thinks it "scarcely possible adequately to describe . . . the wonderful mastery he exhibits in the forms and movements of the horses. . . . The muscular development, the animation of their movements, and their exquisite beauty, are rendered with the utmost fidelity."

When the rival cartoons of Michael Angelo and Da Vinci were publicly exhibited, the excitement was great between the followers of each artist. When Da Vinci began to paint upon the wall, in oils, as in the "Last Supper," the colors so sank into it that he abandoned the work. Soderini accused him of having received money and not rendering an equivalent, which so wounded the pride, of the artist that his friends raised the amount which had been advanced to him, and offered it to the

gonfaloniere, who generously refused to accept it. Da Vinci had already become offended with Soderini's treasurer, who offered him a portion of his pay in copper money. Leonardo would not take it, saying, "I am no penny-painter."

In 1504, Da Vinci's father died, and the artist became involved in lawsuits with the other twelve children, who seem to have disputed his share in the property.

At this time Leonardo made drawings for the raising of the Church of San Giovanni (the Baptistery), and the placing of steps beneath it. "He supported his assertions with reasons so persuasive that while he spoke the undertaking seemed feasible, although every one of his hearers, when he had departed, could see for himself that such a thing was impossible." They could not understand that they had a genius in their midst some centuries in advance of his age. He made three bronze figures over the portal of the Baptistery, "without doubt the most beautiful castings that have been seen in these latter days."

Tired of lawsuits, and his ineffectual efforts toward the raising of the Baptistery, he gladly went back to Milan, having been invited thither by Maréchal de Chaumont, the French governor, after an absence in Florence of six years. He seems to have been straitened in circumstances, for he had but thirty crowns left, and of these he generously gave thirteen to make up the marriage portion of the sister of his beloved Salai.