

THE EARLY PAINTERS OF FRANCE 11

impossible that one man should have suddenly attained such excellence, and it would indeed be interesting to find the connecting links between this drawing and the frescoes upon the walls of some French churches. So far as painting is concerned we are close to the awakening; and the influence of the Flemings becomes apparent. The great masters of Bruges and Ghent, the two van Eycks, were working a revolution north of the Alps, and even in Italy itself were leaving their mark upon art. Many of their followers emigrated from their own country and found employment in France and Burgundy, where they imparted their principles to the natives, so that it is exceedingly difficult to differentiate between Flemish and French painting at this period, at any rate as far as the work of these men who had left Flanders is concerned. They naturally, too, came into contact with Italian influence, which by this time was pushing its way north. The styles met in the neighbourhood of Avignon, and in the few extant examples of the works of artists of this district at that period both may be seen struggling for supremacy. It was a difficult time for art in France. The country was torn asunder by war, and whenever a school of painting had been established in some centre