

12. ALBERT DÜRER. Copper Engraving of
1508.

The date on this plate appears to have been altered from 1505 to 1508; presumably it was originally finished in the former year, set aside and altered in the latter. In the interval Dürer had travelled in Italy and learned much. But it is unlikely that the plate was merely begun in 1505; it must have been brought nearly to a conclusion, since the date and signature would naturally be the last thing engraved. Whether he altered much in the light of his newly-acquired knowledge may be doubted. In any case we have one of his finest compositions; and, since the facial types that he affects are not always pleasing, sometimes not even dignified, the effect is helped by the attitude, which leaves the features largely to the beholder's imagination.