

Much of the obscurity which envelops the life and work of the elder Clouet does not exist in relation to his son Francis. He was born at Tours before 1522, his mother being Joan Boucault. That he had achieved a considerable reputation is conclusively proved by the fact that he was appointed to succeed his father, whom he had assisted for some years before his death, and from whom he had doubtless received his artistic education. Conclusive proof is furnished in the king's letters appointing Francis to his father's office of the foreign origin of the Clouets. When a foreigner died his goods were confiscated to the crown, but the king held his painter in such esteem that he permitted the son to become possessed of his father's effects; and in the same letter not only eulogised Jehan Clouet's productions, but added that Francis had followed creditably in his footsteps, and expressed a hope that in appointing him he would proceed from good to better. This was the praise of a king who was an enthusiastic patron of art, and who did everything he could to advance its progress in his kingdom; a king whose reign was one of the most important periods in the history of French art. The tastes of the ruler were reflected through-