

CHAPTER III

THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE RENAISSANCE

THE fifteenth century was a period of great activity in France. Painting received considerable impetus from many centres, all of which were working more or less independently of one another, and the identity of the men of this epoch, whose masterpieces we admire to-day, is no longer matter for conjecture or doubt.

First and perhaps foremost we have as a painter of extraordinary talents and achievements Jehan Fouquet. He was born at Tours, the city which has given to France so much that is noteworthy in the realms of art; the date of his birth is approximately given as 1415, that of his death as about 1480. He was celebrated both as a miniaturist and as a painter. In the former capacity he has left us a unique monument in the precious "Book of Hours," the greatest treasure of the Condé museum at Chantilly. This was done for Stephen Chevalier, the treasurer of France, who throughout the