The abbey church of St Denis possesses the largest collec­tion of French 13th-century monumental effigies, a large number of which, with supposed portraits of the early kings, were made during the rebuilding of the church in 1264; some of them appear to be “archaistic” copies of older contemporary statues. @@1

In the 14th century French sculpture began to decline, though much beautiful plastic work was still produced. Some of the reliefs on the choir screen of Notre Dame at Paris belong to this period, as does also much fine sculp­ture on the transepts of Rouen cathedral and the west end of Lyons. At the end of this century an able sculptor from the Netherlands, called Claux Sluter, executed much fine work, especially at Dijon, under the patronage of Philip the Bold, for whose newly founded Carthusian monastery in 1399 he sculptured the great “Moses foun­tain ” in the cloister, with six life-sized statues of prophets in stone, painted and gilt in the usual mediæval fashion. Not long before his death in 1411 Sluter completed a very magnificent altar tomb for Philip the Bold, now in the museum at Dijon. It is of white marble, surrounded with arcading, which contains about forty small alabaster figures representing mourners of all classes, executed with much dramatic power. The recumbent portrait effigy of Philip in his ducal mantle with folded hands is a work of great power and delicacy of treatment.

The latter part of the 15th century in France was a time of transition from the mediæval style, which had gradually been deteriorating, to the more florid and real­istic taste of the Renaissance. To this period belong a number of rich reliefs and statues on the choir-screen of Chartres cathedral. Those on the screen at Amiens are later still, and exhibit the rapid ad­

vance of the new style. Fig. 11 shows a statuette in the costume of the end of the 15th century, a characteristic example of the later mediæval method of treating saints in a realistic way.

In the 16th century Italian influ­ence, especially that of Benvenuto Cel­lini, was paramount in France. Jean Goujon (d. 1572) was the ablest French sculptor of the time ; he combined great technical skill and refinement of modelling with the florid and affected style of the age. His nude figure of Diana reclining by a Stag, now in the Louvre, is a graceful and vigorous piece of work, superior in sculpturesque breadth to the somewhat similar bronze relief of a nymph by Cellini. Between 1540 and 1552 Goujon executed the fine monument at Rouen to Duke Louis de Brézé, and from 1555 to 1562 was mainly occupied in decorating the Louvre with sculpture. One of the most pleas­ing and graceful works of this period, thoroughly Italian in style, is the marble group of the Three Graces bearing on their heads an urn containing the heart of Henry II., executed in 1560 by Germain Pilon for Catherine de’ Medici. The monument of Catherine and Henry II. at St Denis, by the same sculptor, is an inferior and coarser work. Maître Ponce, probably the same as the Italian Ponce Jacquio, chiselled the noble monument of Albert of Carpi (1535), now in the Louvre. Another very fine portrait effigy of about 1570, a recumbent figure in full armour of the duke of Montmorency, preserved in the Louvre, is the work of

Barthélemy Prieur. François Duquesnoy of Brussels (1594-1644), usually known as Il Fiamingo, was a clever sculptor, thoroughly French in style, though he mostly worked in Italy. His large statues are very poor, but his reliefs in ivory of boys and cupids are modelled with won­derfully soft realistic power and graceful fancy.

No sculptor of any great merit appears to have arisen in France during the 17th century, though some, such as the two Coustous,

had great techni­cal skill. Pierre Puget(1622-1694) produced vigor­ous but coarse and tasteless work, such as his Milo de­voured by a Lion.

Other sculptors of the time were Simon Guillain,

François and Mi­chel Anguier, and Chas. Ant. Coyze- vox (1640-1720), the last a sculptor of Lyons who pro­duced some fine portrait busts.

Fig. 12 shows a group by Clodion, whose real name was Claude Michel (c. 1745-1814).

He worked largely in terra-cotta, and modelled with great spirit and invention, though in the sensual unsculpturesque manner prevalent in his time.

In the following century Jean Antoine Houdon (1740- 1828), a sculptor of most exceptional power, produced' some works of the highest merit at a time when the plastic ' arts had reached a very low ebb. His standing colossal statue of S. Bruno in S. Maria degli Angeli at Rome is a most noble and stately piece of portraiture, full of commanding dignity and expression. His seated statue of Voltaire in the *foyer* of the Théâtre Français, though sculpturesque in treatment, is a most striking piece of lifelike realism. Houdon may in fact be regarded as the precursor of the modern school of French sculpture of the better sort. About the middle of the 18th century a revolution was brought about in the style of sculpture by the suddenly revived taste for antique art. A period of dull pseudo-classicism succeeded, which in most cases stifled all original talent and reduced the plastic arts to a lifeless form of archæology. Regarded even as imitations the works of this period are very unsuccessful : the sculptors got hold merely of the dry bones not of the spirit of classic art; and their study of the subject was so shallow and unintelligent that they mostly picked out what was third- rate for special admiration and ignored the glorious beauty of the best works of true Hellenic art. Thus in sculpture, as in painting and architecture, a study which might have been stimulating and useful in the highest degree became a serious hindrance to the development of modern art, and this not only in France but in the other countries of Europe; in France, however, the victories of Napoleon I. and his arrogant pretension to create a Gaulish empire on the model of that of ancient Rome caused the taste for

@@@1 See Félibien, *Histoire de l'Abbaye de Saint-Denys,* Paris, 1706.