

194-195
a note
on the stationery of
I Tatti, Settignano, Florence
'Copy to New York Copy to London
X-96¹
Detroit Institute of Art, Crivelli, Pietà'

<Friday> May 11, 1917

Dear Messrs. Duveen

I am truly pleased to hear that you have acquired the noble Pietà by Crivelli that **I remember so well from my early days when it was still in the Dudley Collection.**

In the five and twenty years that have passed,² my admiration for this work [1.2] and its painter have increased with the growth of my own taste and knowledge. I am delighted to think that this Pietà too will probably join three others already in America. I only regret that my book on *Venetian Painting in America* came out before I could include this lunette, as the earliest of all in point of date, and [1.3] the only one in America treated in breadth as a lunette instead of in height as an arch. It is at the same time the earliest, of all Crivelli's Pietà now extant, and the only one of this shape among his early works.

It has the advantage over Mr. Johnson's, over Mrs. Gardner's, and over the Metropolitan Museum Pietà in being more spacious with more air between [1.4] the figures, and more elbow room laterally.

¹ Note the reference to this item in the X Book

² Bernhard's opinions of the paintings of Crivelli in 1892 were recorded by Katharine Bradley (the 'Michael' of Michael Field, 1846-1914) in the diary *Works and Days* 1892, f. 14, now in the British Library:

'Approved Pictures belonging to the Dudley Gallery ...

3. A Pietà by Crivelli — passionate and beautiful ...
and again on f. 22v:

'Pictures of worth belonging to Lord Dudley
in the Exhibition of Old Masters at Burlington House 1892
Pietà, Carlo Crivelli
...'

Mary to Hannah, Paris, June 28, 1892: Dearest Mother, Thank thee for the dress, the drawers, and still more for **the most interesting and important Dudley catalogue.** I am very grateful for them all.

The copy of the Dudley catalogue which Mary received from her mother Hannah is preserved at I Tatti: Christie, Manson & Woods, *Catalogue of the highly important gallery of pictures of the late Rt. Hon. Earl of Dudley, Date of sale: June 25, 1892, Place of sale: London.*
Biblioteca Berenson Special Collections Auction OMD/P Eng Chris 1892 06/25



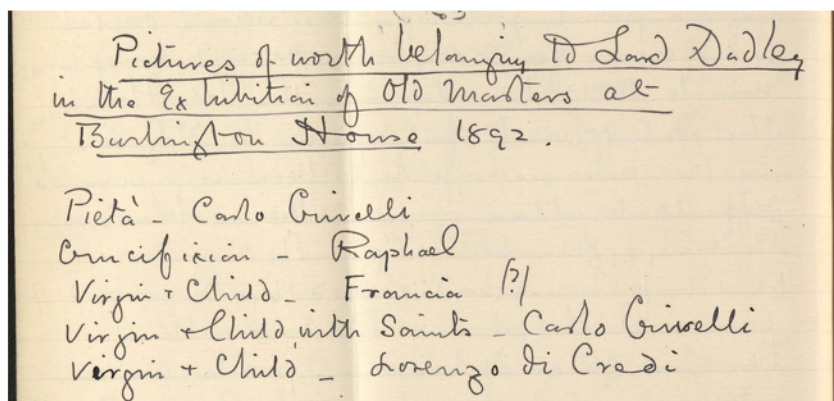
With all this however there is no less in passion, pathos, or dramatic concentration. In all these qualities, no Renaissance Italian went so far as Crivelli.

For its incisive line, saturated but flat colour, and severe intensive modelling, this Crivelli takes rank with the best of that noble master's works, and with the best done in Italy at the time.

Truly yours
B. Berenson

Michael Field, *Works and Days* 1892, f. 22v.³

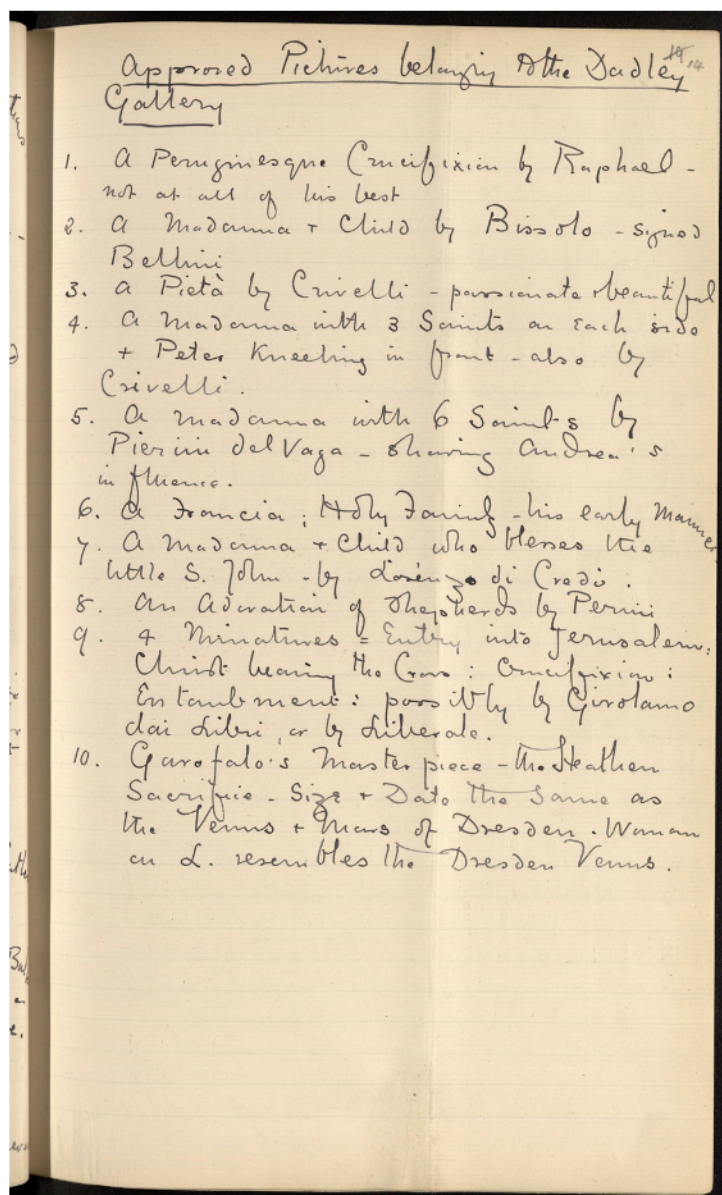
Pictures of worth belonging to Lord Dudley
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³ <https://michaelfielddiary.dartmouth.edu/page-view/5/54>



Bernhard Berenson in Michael Field, *Works and Days* 1892, f. 14:⁴
 Approved Pictures belonging to the Dudley Gallery
 3. A Pietà by Crivelli — passionate and beautiful



⁴ <https://michaelfielddiary.dartmouth.edu/page-view/5/37>

