Michael Angelo  
Giorgio Vasari's Lives of the Artists

IN 1474, under a lucky star, was born a son to Lodovico di Lionardo Buonarroti Simoni, descended, it is said, from the ancient and noble family of the Counts of Canossa. This Lodovico was Podesta that year of Chiusi and Caprese, near Vernia, where S. Francis received the stigmata, and, as I have said, there was born to him on Sunday the 6th of March, in the eighth hour of the night, a son, to whom he gave the name of Michael Angelo, perceiving that he was something greater than usual, Mercury and Venus at his birth being in the second house of Jove, which demonstrated that he would produce marvellous and stupendous works of art and genius. Lodovico, his time of office being finished, returned to Florence to Settignano, three miles from the city, where he had a small estate. The place was rich in a hard stone, which was constantly being worked by stoncutters, mostly born in the place, and the wife of one of these stoncutters was made nurse to Michael Angelo. Speaking of this once to Vasari, Michael Angelo said jestingly, "Giorgio, if I have anything of genius, it came to me from being born in the subtle air of your country of Arezzo, while from my nurse I got the chisel and hammer with which I make my figures."

As in time many sons were born to Lodovico, and his revenues were small, he set them to the woollen and silk trades, Michael Angelo, who was already growing up, being placed at school with Master Francesco da Urbino. But his inclination to the arts of design being strong, he spent all his time in drawing, as far as he could do so secretly, for he was often scolded by his father and those who were over him, and sometimes beaten for it, they supposing, perhaps, that it was a low thing, and unworthy of his ancient house. At that time Michael Angelo made friends with Francesco Granacci, who, being then a youth, had been placed with Domenico del Ghirlandajo to learn painting; and Granacci loving Michael Angelo, and seeing him clever at drawing, used to give him every day drawings of Ghirlandajo's, who was esteemed not only in Florence but through all Italy as one of the best masters then living. By this means the desire grew stronger every day in Michael Angelo, and Lodovico, seeing there was no help for it, by the advice of his friends determined to put him with Ghirlandajo.

Michael Angelo was at this time fourteen years old, and he made such progress that he astonished Domenico, who saw that he not only surpassed his other pupils, of whom he had a great number, but often equalled the things he did himself. It happened once that one of the boys who was learning there had copied with a pen some women out of one of Ghirlandajo's works, and Michael Angelo, taking the paper, with a thicker pen outlined one of the women again, as she should have been drawn; and it is a wonderful thing to see the difference, and consider the courage of the youth who was daring enough to correct his master's things. I have this drawing still, as a relic, having received it from Granaccio; and in the year 1550, when he was in Rome, Giorgio showed it to Michael Angelo, who recognised it and was glad to see it, saying modestly that he knew more of the art when he was a boy than now he was old.

At that time the magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici had filled his garden on the Piazza of S. Marco with ancient and good sculpture, so that the terraces and alleys were adorned with good antique figures in marble, and with pictures and other things by the best masters in Italy and elsewhere. And not only were they a great ornament to the garden, but they became a school and academy for young painters and sculptors, particularly for young nobles; for Lorenzo held that those who are born of noble blood can more easily attain perfection in anything than those who come of low birth. Lorenzo therefore always favoured men of talent, but particularly nobles who had any inclination to art; so it is no wond'er that some came forth from
that school to astound the world. Besides this, he not only provided food and clothing for those who being poor could not afford time for study, but he also offered rewards for those who excelled in anything, that the youths by competing together might become more perfect. The head of this academy was Bertoldo, an old Florentine sculptor and a pupil of Donatello's. He taught the youths, and at the same time had the care of the things in the garden, and many drawings, cartoons, and models from the hand of Donatello, Brunellesco, Masaccio, Paolo Uccello, Fra Giovanni, and other masters native and foreign. And, indeed, these arts cannot be learned except by long study and by copying good works, and he who has not the opportunity, although he may be greatly endowed by nature, will be long in attaining perfection.

Lorenzo, therefore, lamenting that there were no great sculptors in his time, though there were many painters of the greatest fame, asked Domenico Ghirlandajo if he had in his workshop any youths who were inclined to sculpture, to send them to his garden. Now Domenico held Michael Angelo and Francesco Granacci to be the best of his pupils. So these two going to the garden, found young Torrigiano there working upon some figures in clay as Bertoldo had directed him. This Torrigiano was by nature very proud and choleric, and being robust and fierce and courageous, he domineered over all the others. His principal occupation was sculpture, but he also worked in clay in a very beautiful manner. He could not endure, however, that any one should ever surpass him, and would with his own hands injure any work of another which he could not equal; and if the other resented it, they often came to something more than words about it. He took a particular dislike to Michael Angelo, for no other reason than because he saw that he worked studiously, and knew that he drew at home secretly at night and on feast days, by which means he surpassed all the others in the garden, and was much in favour with the great Lorenzo. Therefore, moved by envy, he was always seeking to offend him in word or deed, and having one day come to blows, Torrigiano gave Michael Angelo such a blow with his fist on his nose that he broke it, and Michael Angelo bore the mark of it as long as he lived. The thing having come to the ears of Lorenzo, he was so angry that if Torrigiano had not fled from Florence he would have been severely punished. He fled to Rome, and was employed by Alexander VI. in the building of the Borgia tower, but being led astray by some Florentine youths, he turned soldier, and joining the Duke Valentino, bore himself valiantly in the war in Romagna. He was afterwards in the war of Pisa, and was with Pietro de' Medici in the deed of arms on the Garigliano, where he obtained a pair of colours and earned the name of the brave standardbearer. But finding he was never likely to attain to the rank of captain, and had not advanced his own affairs by war, but had rather lost his time, he returned to sculpture. He made some little figures in marble and bronze for some Florentine merchants, and was by them brought to England. There he worked for the king many things in marble, bronze, and wood, competing with the masters of that land, all of whom he surpassed; and he earned such honours and rewards that if he had not been a person without any selfcontrol, he would have lived and died there quietly.

However, leaving England, he went to Spain, where he produced many works which are much esteemed, and was charged by the Duke of Arcos to make a Madonna and Child for him, the duke making him such fine promises that he thought he should be rich for ever. Having finished the work, the duke paid him in those coins which are called *maravedis*, which are worth little or nothing; but Torrigiano, seeing two men laden with money come to his house, was fully persuaded that he was very rich. When, however, he had had it counted by one of his Florentine friends, and reduced to Italian money, he found there was not quite thirty ducats. Upon this, supposing himself to have been cheated, he went and destroyed in his fury the statue he had made for the duke. The Spaniard in his turn, considering himself insulted, accused Torrigiano of heresy. He was taken to prison, and brought up day after day, being sent from one inquisitor to another, and finally adjudged worthy of the gravest punishment. But meanwhile Torrigiano had fallen into a state of melancholy, and passed several days without eating, by which he brought himself to such weakness that he died, saving himself thus from shame, for it is said he had been condemned to death.
Another of the students in the garden of the Medici was Giuliano Bugiardini, who was united in close and intimate friendship with Michael Angelo, and loved him much. Michael Angelo returned his love, not because he saw anything very profound in him, but because he bore so much love to art. There was a certain natural goodness and simplicity in him, without any envy or malice, which pleased Buonarroti infinitely. He had no other fault than loving his own works too much. For though this is a common fault with men, he passed all bounds; for which reason Michael Angelo used to call him blessed, because he was content with what he knew, and himself unhappy because his works never satisfied him fully.

Ottaviano de' Medici having secretly asked him to draw Michael Angelo, he set to work, and having kept him still for two hours, for he was fond of his conversation, he said to him, "Michael Angelo, if you would like to see yourself, come here, for I have just caught your look." Michael Angelo got up, and looking at the portrait said, "What have you done? you have put one of my eyes in my temple; look and see." Giuliano looked at it several times, and said, "It does not seem so to me; but sit down and I shall see a little better how it is." Buonarroti, who saw what the mistake was, sat down laughing, and Giuliano looked again and again at Michael Angelo and the portrait, and then getting up at last said, "It seems that the thing is exactly as I have drawn it." "Then," answered Buonarroti, "it is a defect of nature; go on, and do not spare pencils or art."

M. Palla Rucellai had given him a picture to paint for his altar in S. Maria Novella, and Giuliano began the martyrdom of S. Catherine; but he kept it on hand for twelve years, not having invention or knowledge enough for such a work. But Rucellai pressing for it to be done, he resolved one day to take Michael Angelo to see it, and having told him with what trouble he had made the lightning coming down from heaven and breaking the wheel, and the sun coming out of a cloud, he prayed Michael Angelo, who could not help laughing at his troubles, to tell him how to do eight or ten principal figures of the soldiers standing in file on guard, for he could not see how to foreshorten them so that they should appear all in a row, or how he could find room for them in so narrow a place. Buonarroti, feeling compassion for the poor man, took up a piece of charcoal and sketched a file of naked figures with all the judgment and excellence proper to him, and went away with many thanks from Giuliano. Not long after, the latter brought II Tribolo his friend to see what Buonarroti had done, and told him all about it; but because Buonarroti had only sketched them in outline, without any shadow, Bugiardini could not carry them out; so II Tribolo resolved to help him and he made some rough models in clay, giving them all that rough force which Michael Angelo had put into the drawing; and so he brought them to Giuliano. But this manner did not please Bugiardini's smooth fancy, and as soon as II Tribolo was gone he took a brush and, dipping it in water, smoothed them all down. II Tribolo, hearing about it from Giuliano himself, laughed at his honest simplicity, and the work was at last finished, so that none would have known that Michael Angelo had ever looked at it.

Giuliano, when he was old and poor, and doing little work, took great pains over a Pieta in a tabernacle which was to go to Spain. To represent the darkness at the death of the Saviour, he made a Night on a black ground, copying the figure from Michael Angelo's in the sacristy of S. Lorenzo. But that statue having no emblem but an owl, Giuliano added his own conceits--a net with a lantern for catching thrushes at night, a little vessel with a candle in it, besides nightcaps and pillows and bats. And when Michael Angelo saw the work he nearly killed himself with laughing at the strange things with which Bugiardini had enriched his Night.

Giuliano was once telling II Bronzino how he had seen a very beautiful woman, and after he had praised her a great deal, II Bronzino asked, "Do you know her?" "No," he replied; "but she is very beautiful. Think she is like a picture of mine, and that is enough."
But to return to Michael Angelo in the garden. When he saw Torrigiano's work in clay he was fired with emulation. He set himself to imitate an ancient head of an old faun, and although he had never touched marble or a chisel before, he succeeded so well that Lorenzo was quite astonished. Seeing that out of his own fancy he had opened the mouth and shown the tongue and teeth, De' Medici said in jest, but speaking gravely, as was his wont, "You ought to know that old men never have all their teeth, but have always lost some." Michael Angelo, with his simple respect and love for this lord, thought he spoke in earnest, and no sooner was he departed than he broke away a tooth and altered the gum to look as if he had lost it, and waited with desire the return of his Magnificence. He, when he came and saw the simplicity of Michael Angelo, laughed much, telling the story to his friends. But desiring to assist him, he sent for Lodovico his father, and prayed him to give him his son, promising that he would treat him like a son of his own. And he willingly consenting Lorenzo gave him a room in his house, and he eat continually at his table with his sons and the noble persons who were around his Magnificence.

This was in the year after he had gone to Domenico, when he was about fifteen or sixteen years old, and he stayed in that house four years, until the death of the magnificent Lorenzo.

Afterwards Michael Angelo returned to his father's house, but Piero de' Medici, Lorenzo's heir, often sent for him, and one winter when it snowed heavily in Florence, he made him make a statue of snow in his courtyard, which was most beautiful. When the Medici were driven out of Florence, Michael Angelo had gone to Bologna and Venice, having left some weeks before, for he feared some evil would befall him from his intimacy with that house, seeing the insolence and bad government of Piero de' Medici. He tarried in Bologna a year and then returned to Florence, where he made a sleeping Cupid, which being shown by Baldassari del Milanese to Lorenzo di Pier Francesco de' Medici, he said, "If you were to bury it till it looked old, and then sent it to Rome, I am sure it would pass for an antique, and you would get much more for it than if you sold it here." Some say that Michael Angelo did so, making it look old, and others that Milanese carried it to Rome and buried it in one of his vineyards, and then sold it as an antique for two hundred ducats to the Cardinal S. Giorgio. However it may be, it brought such reputation to Michael Angelo that he was summoned to Rome by the Cardinal S. Giorgio, and tarried there a year, but the cardinal, knowing little of art, gave him nothing to do. Nevertheless during his stay in Rome he made much progress in the study of art, and the Cardinal de S. Denis, desiring to leave some worthy memorial of himself in so famous a city, caused him to make a Pieta in marble for the chapel of the Virgin in S. Peter's. To this work Michael Angelo bore such love that he inscribed his name on the girdle of our Lady, a thing he never did again. For one day Michael Angelo, entering the place where it stood, found a number of Lombard strangers there. And as they were giving it great praise, one of them asked another who had made it, and he answered, "Our hunchback from Milan." Michael Angelo remained silent, but it seemed strange to him that his labours should be attributed to another. And one night he shut himself into the place with a light and cut his name upon it.

At this time some of his friends wrote to him advising him to come back to Florence, because there was some talk of having the great piece of marble which was lying spoilt made into a statue, and Piero Soderini the Gonfaloniere had talked of giving it to Lionardo da Vinci, and now was preparing to give it to Andrea Contucci. Michael Angelo had desired to have it many years before; so he returned to Florence, and tried for it. It was a piece of marble nine braccia in size, out of which a Master Simone da Fiesole had begun to carve a giant, and had managed it so badly that the heads of the works at S. Maria del Fiore, without caring to have it finished, had abandoned it, and it had been lying thus for many years. Michael Angelo measured it again, and examined it to see if a reasonable figure could be cut out of the rock by accommodating its attitude to the maimed condition in which Master Simone had left it, and resolved to make request for it.
from the architects and Soderini. They, considering it a useless thing, granted it to him, thinking that anything would be better than the state it was in. Then Michael Angelo made a model in wax of a young David with a sling in his hand, and began to work in S. Maria del Fiore, setting up a hoarding round the marble, and working at it continually without any seeing it until he had brought it to perfection. Master Simone had so spoil the marble that in some places there was not enough left for Michael Angelo’s purpose, and certainly it was a miracle restoring thus one that was dead.

When Piero Soderini saw it, it pleased him much, but he said to Michael Angelo, who was engaged in retouching it in certain places, that he thought the nose was too thick. Michael Angelo, perceiving that the Gonfaloniere was below the statue, and could not see it truly, to satisfy him went up the scaffold, taking a chisel in his left hand with a little marble dust, and began to work with his chisel, letting a little dust fall now and then, but not touching the nose. Then looking down to the Gonfaloniere, who was watching, he said, "Look at it now." "It pleases me better," said the Gonfaloniere; "you have given it life." So Michael Angelo came down pitying those who make a show of understanding matters about which they really know nothing. Michael Angelo received from Soderini for the statue four hundred crowns, and it was set up in the year 1504.

Lionardo da Vinci was now occupied in painting the great Council Hall, and Pietro Soderini assigned one part of it to Michael Angelo, who chose for his subject the war of Pisa. He took a room in the dyers' hospital at S. Onofrio, and began a great cartoon, which he would not allow any one to see. He covered it with nude figures of the soldiers bathing in the river Arno and suddenly called to arms, the enemy making an assault. Some are coming out of the water, others are hastening to arm themselves and go to the help of their companions, buckling on their cuirasses and their other arms. When it was shown, many said that such a thing had never been seen before, either from his hand or another's. And indeed this must be true, for all who have studied this cartoon have become men excellent in the art. And because it became thus a study for artists it was carried to the Medici palace, and was left in too great security in the hands of the artists. For during the sickness of Duke Giuliano, when no one was thinking of the matter, it was torn and cut into many pieces, and dispersed in many places, some pieces being to be seen now in Mantua.

Michael Angelo's fame was grown so great that in the year 1503, when he was twenty-nine years of age, Julius II. sent for him to come and build his tomb. Therefore he proceeded to Rome, and after many months he completed a design which in beauty, ornament, and the number of the statues surpassed every ancient or imperial sepulchre. Thereupon Pope Julius enlarged his projects, and resolved to rebuild the church of S. Peter's that it might contain it. So Michael Angelo set to work and went to Carrara with two of his youths to obtain the marble, and spent in those mountains eight months. Having chosen a quantity of marble, he caused it to be carried to the sea and thence to Rome, where it filled half the Piazza of S. Peter's, and the part round S. Caterina, and the space between the church and the corridor that goes to the castle, where Michael Angelo had made a room in which to work at the statues and the rest of the tomb. And that the Pope might easily come and see the work, he had a drawbridge made from the corridor to the room. Being treated with such familiarity he became exposed to great persecution, and much envy was aroused among the artists.

Of this work Michael Angelo finished four statues and began eight more. Some of the marble was carried to Florence, where he worked for some time to escape the bad air of Rome. In Rome he made the two Captives, and the Moses, which no other modern work will ever equal in beauty. Meanwhile the rest of the marble, which had been left at Carrara, arrived, and was carried to the Piazza of S. Peter's, and it being necessary to pay those who had brought it, Michael Angelo went as usual to the Pope, but finding that his Holiness was occupied with important business concerning the affairs of Bologna, he returned home and
paid for the marble himself. He returned another day to speak of it to the Pope, but found difficulty in obtaining admission, one of the lacqueys biding him have patience, for he had orders not to let him in. A bishop said to the lacquey "Perhaps you do not know this man;" but he answered, "I know him too well, but I am here to do what my superiors and the Pope command me." This displeased Michael Angelo, and thinking it treatment contrary to what he had before experienced, he replied in anger to the Pope's lacquey, bidding him say, when his Holiness asked for him, that he had gone elsewhere. He returned home and set off in haste at two o'clock of the night, leaving two servants with orders to sell all the things in the house to the Jews, and to follow him to Florence. He journeyed on till he reached Poggibonsi, a place in the Florentine district. It was not long before five couriers arrived with letters from the Pope to bring him back; but he would listen neither to their prayers nor to the letters, which commanded him to return to Rome under pain of disgrace. At last the couriers' entreaties induced him to write a few words to his Holiness, saying that he must pardon him for not returning to his presence since he had been driven away, that his faithful service had not deserved such treatment, and therefore his Holiness must seek elsewhere for one to serve him. And so coming to Florence he set himself to finish the cartoon for the Great Hall, which Pier Soderini greatly desired he should execute. In the meantime there came three briefs to the Signory, commanding them to send back Michael Angelo to Rome.

He, perceiving the fury of the Pope, meditated going to Constantinople to serve the Turk, who desired to have him to construct a bridge from Constantinople to Pera. At last Pier Soderini persuaded him against his will to go back to the Pope, sending him back as a public person, with the title of ambassador of the city, and recommending him to his brother, Cardinal Soderini. So he came to Bologna, whither his Holiness had come from Rome.

Some tell the story of his departure from Rome in another manner, and say that the Pope was angry with Michael Angelo because he would not let him see his work, and that he came more than once disguised when Michael Angelo was not at home, and corrupted his lads with money to let him in to see the chapel of Sixtus his uncle, which he was painting, and that once Michael Angelo, doubting his boys, hid himself and let something fall upon the Pope as he entered the chapel, which made him rush out in a fury.

However it was, as soon as he reached Bologna before he had taken off his boots, he was conducted by the Pope's servant to his Holiness accompanied by a bishop from Cardinal Soderini the cardinal himself being ill. Arrived in the Pope's presence, Michael Angelo knelt down and his Holiness looked at him severely as if in anger, saying, "Instead of coming to us, you have waited for us to come to you," meaning that Bologna was nearer to Florence than Rome. Michael Angelo humbly begged pardon, saying he had not done it to offend, but that he could not endure to be driven away in such a manner. And the bishop who had brought him in began to excuse him, saying that such men were ignorant, except in matters of art, and were not like other men. Upon this the Pope grew angry, and with a stick he had in his hand he struck the bishop, saying, "It is you who are ignorant and speak evil of him, which we did not do." So the bishop was driven out from his presence by the lacquey, and the Pope, having vented his anger upon him, blessed Michael Angelo, and showered upon him gifts and promises.

He was employed to make a bronze statue of Pope Julius, five braccia high, for the city of Bologna. The attitude is most beautiful, having great dignity, and in the drapery there is richness and magnificence, and in the countenance vivacity and force, promptness and terrible majesty. It was set up in a niche over the gate of S. Petronio. It is said that while Michael Angelo was working upon it, Francia the goldsmith and also a most excellent painter came to see it, having heard much of him and his works, and never having seen any of them. Gazing upon the work with astonishment, he was asked by Michael Angelo what he thought of it, and he answered that it was a very beautiful cast and a fine material. Michael Angelo, thinking that he was
praising the bronze rather than the artist, said, "I am as much obliged to Pope Julius who gave it to me as you are to the men from whom you get your colours for painting," adding before some gentlemen that he was a fool.

Michael Angelo finished this statue in clay before the Pope left Bologna for Rome, and his Holiness went to see it. He asked what was to be in his left hand, and whether the right hand, which was raised with so haughty a gesture, was blessing or cursing. Michael Angelo replied that he was advising the people of Bologna to conduct themselves well, and prayed him to decide if he should put a book in his left hand, but he answered, "Put a sword, for I am not a man of letters." This statue was afterwards destroyed by Bentivogli, and the bronze sold to Duke Alphonso of Ferrara, who made it into a cannon called the Julia, but the head is still preserved.

When the Pope was returned to Rome, Bramante (a friend of Raffaello's, and therefore little a friend to Michael Angelo) tried to turn his mind from finishing his sepulchre, saying it was an evil augury and seemed like hastening his death to make his own grave; and he persuaded him that on Michael Angelo's return he should set him to paint the ceiling of the chapel in the palace, in memory of Sixtus his uncle. For Bramante and Michael Angelo's other rivals thought to draw him away from sculpture, in which they saw he was perfect, and make him produce less worthy works, not to be compared with Raffaello's, knowing he had had no experience in painting in fresco. So when he was returned and proposed to the Pope to finish his tomb, he desired him instead to paint the ceiling of the chapel. Michael Angelo sought in every way to shift the load off his back, proposing Raffaello instead. But the more he excused himself, the more impetuous the Pope became. So seeing that his Holiness persevered, he resolved to do it, and the Pope ordered Bramante to make the scaffold. He made it hanging by ropes passed through holes in the ceiling, which when Michael Angelo saw, he asked Bramante how the holes were to be stopped up when the painting was finished. He answered, "We must think of that afterwards, but there is no other way." So Michael Angelo knew that either Bramante was worth little or that he was no friend to him, and he went to the Pope and told him the scaffolding would not do. So he told him to do it his own way. He therefore ordered it to be made on supports, not touching the wall, and he gave to a poor carpenter who made it so many of the useless ropes that by the sale of them he obtained a dowry for one of his daughters.

The Pope having resolved that the pictures which had been painted there by the masters before him in the time of Sixtus should be destroyed, Michael Angelo was forced by the greatness of the undertaking to ask aid, and sent to Florence for men. And having begun and finished the cartoons, and never having coloured before in fresco, he brought from Florence some of his friends to aid him, and that he might see their method of working in fresco, among whom were Granacci, Bugiarini, and others. So he set them to begin the work, but their efforts being far from satisfying him, one morning he resolved to destroy all that they had done, and shutting himself up in the chapel, would not open the door for them, nor show himself to them at home. They therefore, after this had gone on some time, were offended, and took leave and went back to Florence with shame. Then Michael Angelo prepared to do the whole work himself, and brought it to a successful termination with great labour and study, nor would he let any one see it, by which means the desire grew strong in all. When the half was done and uncovered, all Rome went to see it, the Pope the first; and Raffaello da Urbino, who was excellent in imitating, having seen it, changed his manner. Then Bramante sought to persuade the Pope to give the other half to Raffaello. But the Pope, seeing every day the powers of Michael Angelo, judged that he should finish the other half. So he brought it to an end in twenty months by himself without even the help of a man to grind the colours. Michael Angelo complained that from the haste of the Pope he could not finish it as he would, for the Pope constantly asked him when it would be finished. Once he answered, "It will be finished when I have satisfied myself." "But we will,"
replied the Popes "that you should satisfy us in our desire to have it quickly." And he added that if it was not done soon he would have him thrown from his scaffold. The Pope used often to tell Michael Angelo to make the chapel rich in colour and gold, but Michael Angelo would answer the Holy Father, "In those times men did not wear gold, and those whom I am painting were never very rich, but holy men despising riches."

The work was done in great discomfort from constantly looking up, and it so injured his sight that he could only read or look at drawings in the same position, an effect which lasted many months. But in the ardour of labour he felt no fatigue and cared for no discomfort. The work has been, indeed, a light of our art, illuminating the world which had been so many centuries in darkness. Oh, truly happy age, and oh, blessed artists, who at such a fountain can purge away the dark films from your eyes. Give thanks to Heaven, and imitate Michael Angelo in all things.

So when it was uncovered every one from every part ran to see it, and gazed in silent astonishment; and the Pope, inspired by it and encouraged to greater undertakings, rewarded him liberally with money and rich gifts. The great favours that the Pope showed him proved that he recognised his talents, and if sometimes he did him an injury, he healed it with gifts and signal favours; as when, for instance, Michael Angelo once asked leave of him to go to work in S. Giovanni in Florence, and requested money for the purpose, and he said, "Well, and this chapel, when will it be finished?" "When I can, Holy Father." The Pope having a stick in his hand struck Michael Angelo, saying, "When I can! when I can! I will make you finish it!" Michael Angelo therefore returned to his house and prepared to leave for Florence, but the Pope in haste sent his chamberlain after him with five hundred crowns to pacify him, and ordered him to make his excuses and say it was all done in love and kindness. And he, seeing it was the nature of the Pope and really loving him, took it in good part and laughed at it, finding also that it turned to his profit, for the Pope would do anything to keep him his friend.

But when the chapel was finished, and before the Pope died, he gave orders to Cardinal Santiquattro and Cardinal Aginense, his nephew, that in the case of his death they were to complete his monument, but after a less magnificent design than the first. So Michael Angelo returned again to his work upon the tomb, hoping to carry it out to the end without hindrance, but it was to him the cause of more annoyance and trouble than anything else he did in his life. At that time befell the death of Julius, and the whole plan was abandoned upon the creation of Pope Leo X For he having a mind and talents no less splendid than those of Julius, desired to leave in his native city, of which he was the first pontiff, such a marvellous work in memory of himself and of the divine artist, his fellowcitizen, as a great prince like himself was able to produce. So he gave orders that the facade of S. Lorenzo in Florence, a church built by the house of Medici, should be erected, and he commanded that the sepulchre of Julius should be abandoned that Michael Angelo might prepare plans and designs for this work. Michael Angelo made all the resistance he could, alleging that he was bound to Santiquattro and Aginense for the tomb. But the Pope replied that he was not to think about that, for he had already considered that, and had procured their consent to his departure. So the matter was settled to the displeasure both of the cardinals and Michael Angelo, and he departed weeping. He consumed many years in procuring marble, though in the meantime he made models in wax and other things for the work; but the matter was so delayed that the money set apart for it was consumed in the war of Lombardy, and the work was left unfinished at the death of Leo.

At this time, in the year 1525, Giorgio Vasari was brought as a boy to Florence by the Cardinal of Cortona and put with Michael Angelo to learn the art. But he being called by Pope Clement VII to Rome, determined that Vasari should go to Andrea del Sarto, and went himself to Andrea's workshop to recommend him to his care.
When Clement VII was made pope he sent for Michael Angelo, and he agreed with the Pope to finish the sacristy and library of S. Lorenzo, and to make four tombs for the bodies of the fathers of the two Popes, Lorenzo and Giuliano, his brother, and for Giuliano, brother of Leo, and Duke Lorenzo, his nephew. At this time befell the sack of Rome and the banishment of the Medici from Florence. Those who governed the city desired to refortify it, and made Michael Angelo commissarygeneral of all the fortifications. He surrounded the hill of S. Miniato with bastions and fortified the city in many places, and he was sent to Ferrara to view the fortifications of Duke Alfonso, who received him with much courtesy, and prayed him at his leisure to make some work of art for him. Returning to Florence, and engaged again upon the fortifications, he nevertheless found time both to make a painting of Leda in tempera for the duke, and to work upon the statues for the monument in S. Lorenzo. Of this monument, partly finished, there are seven statues. The first is Our Lady, and though it is not finished, the excellence of the work may be seen. Then there are the four statues of Night and Day, Dawn and Twilight, most beautiful, and sufficient of themselves, if art were lost, to restore it to light. The other statues are the two armed captains, the one the pensive Duke Lorenzo, and the other the proud Duke Giuliano.

Meanwhile the siege of Florence began, and the enemy closing round the city, and the hope of aid failing, Michael Angelo determined to leave Florence and go to Venice. So he departed secretly without any one knowing of it, taking with him Antonio Mini his pupil, and his faithful friend Piloto the goldsmith, wearing each one their money in their quilted doublets. And they came to Ferrara and rested there. And it happened because of the war that Duke Alfonso had given orders that the names of those who were at the inns and of all strangers should be brought him every day. So it came about that Michael Angelo's coming was made known to the duke. And he sent some of the chief men of his court to bring him to the palace, with his horses and all he had, and give him good lodging. So Michael Angelo, finding himself in the power of another, was forced to obey and went to the duke. And the duke received him with great honour, and making him rich gifts, desired him to tarry in Ferrara. But he would not remain, though the duke, praying him not to depart while the war lasted, offered him all in his power. Then Michael Angelo, not willing to be outdone in courtesy, thanked him much, and turning to his two companions, said that he had brought to Ferrara twelve thousand crowns, and that they were quite at his service.

And the duke took him through his palace and showed him all his treasures, especially his portrait by the hand of Titian, which Michael Angelo commended much; but he would not stop at the palace, and returned to the inn, and the host where he lodged received from the duke an infinite number of things with which to do him honour, and command to take nothing from him for his lodging.

He proceeded thence to Venice, but many desiring to make his acquaintance, for which he had no wish, he departed from the Giudecca where he had lodged. It is said that he made a design for the bridge of the Rialto at the request of the Doge Gritti, a design most rare for invention and ornament.

But Michael Angelo was recalled by his native city, and earnestly implored not to abandon her, and they sent him a safe conduct. At last, overcome by his love for her, he returned, not without peril of his life. He restored the tower of S. Miniato, which did much injury to the enemy, so they battered it with great cannon, and would have overthrown it, but Michael Angelo defended it, hanging bales of wool and mattresses to shield it.

When the peace was made, Baccio Valore was commissioned by the Pope to seize some of the ringleaders, and they sought for Michael Angelo, but he had fled secretly to the house of a friend, where he lay hid many days. When his anger was passed, Pope Clement remembered his great worth, and bade them seek him, ordering them to say nothing to him, but that he should have his usual provision and should go on with
his work at S. Lorenzo.

Then Duke Alfonso of Ferrara, having heard that he had completed a rare piece of work for him, sent one of his gentlemen to him that he might not lose such a jewel, and he came to Florence and presented his letters of credence. Then Michael Angelo showed him the Leda, and Castor and Pollux coming out of the egg but the messenger of the duke thought he ought to have produced some great work, not understanding the skill and excellence of the thing, and he said to Michael Angelo, "Oh, this is a little thing." Then Michael Angelo asked him what was his trade, for he knew that none are such good judges of a thing as those who have some skill in it themselves. He replied contemptuously, "I am a merchant," thinking that Michael Angelo did not know he was a gentleman; and so, being rather offended by the question, he expressed some contempt for the industry of the Florentines. Michael Angelo, who perfectly understood his meaning, answered, "You have shown yourself a bad merchant this time, and to your master's damage; take yourself off." Afterwards, Anton Mini, his pupil, having two sisters about to be married, asked him for the picture, and he gave it to him willingly, together with the greater part of his drawings and cartoons, and also two chests of models. And when Mini went into France he took them with him there, and the Leda he sold to King Francis, but the cartoons and drawings were lost, for he died in a short time and they were stolen.

Afterwards the Pope desired Michael Angelo to come to him in Rome and paint the walls of the Sistine Chapel. Clement wished that he should paint the Last Judgment and Lucifer driven out of heaven for his pride, for which many years before he had made sketches and designs. However, in 1533 followed the death of Pope Clement, and Michael Angelo again thought himself free to finish the tomb of Julius II. But when Paul III was made pope, it was not long before he sent for him, and desired him to come into his service. Then Michael Angelo refused, saying he was bound by contract to the Duke of Urbino to finish the tomb of Julius II. But the Pope in anger cried out, "I have desired this for thirty years, and now that I am Pope I will not give it up. I will destroy the contract, and am determined that you shall serve me." Michael Angelo thought of departing from Rome, but fearing the greatness of the Pope, and seeing him so old, thought to satisfy him with words. And the Pope came one clay to his house with ten cardinals, and desired to see all the statues for the tomb of Julius, and they appeared to him miraculous, particularly the Moses; and the Cardinal of Mantua said this figure alone was enough to do honour to Pope Julius. And when he saw the cartoons and drawings for the chapel, the Pope urged him again to come into his service, promising to order matters so that the Duke of Urbino should be contented with three statues the others being made from his designs by good masters. The new contract, therefore, being confirmed by the duke, the work was completed and set up, a most excellent work, but very far from the first design; and Michael Angelo since he could do no other, resolved to serve Pope Paul, who desired him to carry out the commands of Clement without altering anything. When Michael Angelo had completed about three quarters of the work, Pope Paul went to see it, and Messer Biagio da Cesena, the master of the ceremonies, was with him, and when he was asked what he thought of it, he answered that he thought it not right to have so many naked figures in the Pope's chapel. This displeased Michael Angelo, and to revenge himself, as soon as he was departed, he painted him in the character of Minos with a great serpent twisted round his legs. Nor did Messer Biagio's entreaties either to the Pope or to Michael Angelo himself, avail to persuade him to take it away. At this time it happened that the master fell from the scaffold, from no little height, and hurt one of his legs, but would not be doctored for it. Thereupon Master Baccio Rontini, the Florentine, his friend and a clever doctor, feeling pity for him, went one day and knocked at his door, and receiving no answer, made his way to the room of Michael Angelo, who had been given over, and would not leave him until he was cured. When he was healed, returning to his painting, he worked at it continually, until in a few months it was brought to an end, and the words of Dante verified, "The dead seem dead and the living living." And when this Last Judgment was uncovered, he was seen to have vanquished not only all the painters who had worked there before, but
even to have surpassed his own work on the ceiling. He laboured at this work eight years, and uncovered it in the year 1541, on Christmas Day, I think, to the marvel of all Rome, or rather all the world; and I who went that year to Rome was astounded.

Afterwards he painted for Pope Paul the Conversion of S. Paul and the Crucifixion of S. Peter. These were the last pictures he painted, at the age of seventyfive, and with great fatigue, as he told me; for painting, and especially working in fresco, is not an art for old men. But his spirit could not remain without doing something, and since he could not paint, he set to work upon a piece of marble, to bring out of it four figures larger than life, for his amusement and pastime, and as he said, because working with the hammer kept him healthy in body. It represented the dead Christ, and was left unfinished, although he had intended it to be placed over his grave.

It happened in 1546 that Antonio de Sangallo died, and one being wanted in his place to superintend the building of S. Peter's, his Holiness sent for Michael Angelo and desired to put him in the office, but he refused, saying that architecture was not his proper art. Finally, entreaties availing nothing, the Pope commanded him to accept it, and so, to his great displeasure and against his will, he was obliged to enter upon this office. Then one day going to S. Peter's to see the model of wood which Sangallo had made, he found the whole Sangallo party there. They coming up to him said they were glad that the charge of the work was to be his, adding that the model was a field which would never fail to provide pasture. "You say the truth," answered Michael Angelo, meaning to infer, as he told a friend, "for sheep and oxen, who do not understand art." And he used to say publicly that Sangallo held more to the German manner than to the good antique, and besides that fifty years' labour might be spared and 300,000 crowns' expense, and yet the building might be carried out with more grandeur and majesty. And he showed what he meant in a model which made every one acknowledge his words to be true. This model cost him twentyfive crowns, and was made in fifteen days. Sangallo's model cost more than four thousand, it is said, and took many years to make, for he seemed to think that this building was a way of making money, to be carried on with no intention of its being finished. This seemed to Michael Angelo dishonest, and when the Pope was urging him to become the architect, he said one day openly to all those connected with the building, that they had better do everything to prevent him having the care of it, for he would have none of them in the building; but these words, as may be supposed, did him much harm, and made him many enemies, who were always seeking to hinder him. But at last the Pope issued his commands, and created him the head of the building with all authority. Then Michael Angelo, seeing the Pope's trust in him, desired that it should be put into the agreement that he served for the love of God and without any reward. But when a new Pope was made, the set that was opposed to him in Rome began again to trouble him; therefore the Duke Cosimo desired that he should leave Rome and return to Florence, but he, being sick and infirm, could not travel. At that time Paul IV thought to have the Last Judgment amended which when Michael Angelo heard he bade them tell the Pope that this was a little matter, and might easily be amended; let him amend the world, and then the pictures would soon amend themselves.

The same year befell the death of Urbino his servant, or rather, to speak more truly, his companion. He had come to him in Florence after the siege in 1530, and during twentysix years served him with such faithfulness that Michael Angelo made him rich, and loved him so much that when he was ill he nursed him and lay all night in his clothes to watch him. After he was dead, Vasari wrote to him to comfort him, and he replied in these words:-

"MY DEAR MESSER GIORCIO,-It is hard for me to write; nevertheless, in reply to your letter, I will say something. You know that Urbino is dead, to my great loss and infinite grief, but in the great mercy of God. The mercy is that dying he has taught me how to die, not in sorrow, but with desire of death. I have had him
twenty-six years, and have found him most rare and faithful; and now that I had made him rich, and hoped
that he would have been the support of my old age, he has left me, and nothing remains but the hope of
meeting him again in Paradise. And of this God gave me promise in the happy death he died, for he
regretted, far more than death, leaving me in this treacherous world with so many infirmities, although the
chief part of me is gone with him, and nothing remains but infinite misery."

Until this time Michael Angelo worked almost every day at that stone of which we have spoken before, with
the four figures, but now he broke it, either because the stone was hard or because his judgment was now so
ripe that nothing he did contented him. His finished statues were chiefly made in his youth; most of the
others were left unfinished, for if he discovered a mistake, however small, he gave up the work and applied
himself to another piece of marble. He often said this was the reason why he had finished so few statues and
pictures. This Pieta, broken as it was, he gave to Francesco Bandini. Tiberio Calcagni, the Florentine
sculptor, had become a great friend of Michael Angelo's through Bandini, and being one day in Michael
Angelo's house, and seeing this Pieta broken, he asked him why he had broken it, and spoilt so much
marvellous work. He answered it was because of his servant Urbino's importunity, who was always urging
him to finish it, and besides that, among other things, he had broken a piece off the Virgin's arm, and before
that he had taken a dislike to it, having many misfortunes because of a crack there was in it; so at last,
losing patience, he had broken it, and would have destroyed it altogether if his servant Antonio had not
begged him to give it him as it was. Then Tiberio spoke to Bandini about it, for Bandini desired to have a
work of Michael Angelo's, and he prayed Michael Angelo to allow Tiberio to finish it for him, promising
that Antonio should have two hundred crowns of gold, and he being content, made them a present of it. So
Tiberio took it away and joined it together, but it was left unfinished at his death. However, it was necessary
for Michael Angelo to get another piece of marble, that he might do a little carving every day.

The architect Pirro Ligorio had entered the service of Paul IV, and was the cause of renewed vexation to
Michael Angelo, for he went about everywhere saying that he was becoming childish. Indignant at this
treatment, Michael Angelo would willingly have returned to Florence, and Giorgio urged him to do so. But
he felt he was getting old, having already reached the age of eighty-one, and he wrote to Vasari saying he
knew he was at the end of his life, as it were in the twenty-fourth hour, and that no thought arose in his mind
on which death was not carved. He sent also a sonnet, by which it may be seen that his mind was turning
more and more towards God, and away from the cares of his art. Duke Cosimo also commanded Vasari to
encourage him to return to his native place; but though his will was ready, his infirmity of body kept him in
Rome.

Many of his friends, seeing that the work at S. Peter's proceeded but slowly, urged him at least to leave a
model behind him. He was for many months undecided about it, but at last he began, and little by little
made a small clay model, from which, with the help of his plans and designs, Giovanni Franzese made a
larger one of wood.

When Pius V became pope, he showed Michael Angelo much favour, and employed him in many works,
particularly in making the design of a monument for the Marquis Marignano, his brother. The work was
entrusted by his Holiness to Lione Lioni, a great friend of Michael Angelo's, and about the same time Lione
pourtrayed Michael Angelo on a medallion, putting at his wish on the reverse a blind man led by a dog, with
the words, "Docebo iniquos vias tuas, et impii ad te convertentur," and because the thing pleased him much,
Michael Angelo gave him a model in wax of Hercules and Antaeus. There are only two painted portraits of
Michael Angelo, the one by Bugiardini and the other by Jacopo del Conte, besides one in bronze by
Daniello Ricciarelli, and this one of Lione's, of which there have been so many copies made that I have
seen a great number in Italy and elsewhere.
About a year before his death, Vasari, seeing that Michael Angelo was much shaken, prevailed upon the Pope to give orders concerning the care of him, and concerning his drawings and other things, in case anything should befall him. His nephew Lionardo desired to come to Rome that Lent, as if foreboding that Michael Angelo was near his end, and when he fell sick of a slow fever, he wrote for him to come. But the sickness increasing, in the presence of his physician and other friends, in perfect consciousness, he made his will in three words, leaving his soul in the hands of God, his body to the earth, and his goods to his nearest relations, charging his friends when passing out of this life to remember the sufferings of Jesus Christ; and so, on the seventeenth day of February, at twentythree o'clock of the year 1563, according to the Florentine style, which after the Roman would be 1564, he expired to go to a better life.

Michael Angelo's imagination was so perfect that, not being able to express with his hands his great and terrible conceptions, he often abandoned his works and destroyed many of them. I know that a little before his death he burnt a great number of drawings and sketches. It should appear strange to none that Michael Angelo delighted in solitude, being as it were in love with art. Nevertheless he held dear the friendship of many great and learned persons, among whom were many cardinals and bishops. The great Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici loved him much, and once, having heard that Michael Angelo was greatly pleased with a Turkish horse of his, he sent it to him as a gift with ten mules' burden of hay and a servant to keep it. He loved the society of artists, and held intercourse with them; and those who say he would not teach are wrong, for he was ready to give counsel to any one who asked. But he was unfortunate with those pupils who lived in his house; for Piero Urbano was a man of talent, but would never do anything to tire himself; Antonio Mini would have done anything, but he had not a brain capable of much, and when the wax is hard you cannot get a good impression; Ascanio dalla Ripa Transone worked very hard, but nothing came of it: he spent years over a picture of which Michael Angelo had given him the drawing, but at last all the great expectations that had been formed of him went off into smoke, and I remember Michael Angelo had so much compassion for his difficulty in painting that he helped him with his own hand.

He has often said to me that he would have written something for the help of artists, but feared not being able to express in writing what he wished. But he delighted much in reading the poets, particularly Dante and Petrarcha, and in making madrigals and sonnets. And he sent much, both in rhyme and prose, to the illustrious Marchioness of Pescara, of whose virtues he was greatly enamoured, and she of his. Many times she went from Viterbo to Rome to visit him, and Michael Angelo made many things for her. He delighted much in the sacred scriptures, like the good Christian he was, and held in veneration the works of Fr. Girolamo Savonarola, having heard him preach. In his manner of life he was most abstemious, being content when young with a little bread and wine while at his work, and until he had finished the Last Judgment he always waited for refreshment till the evening, when he had done his work. Though rich he lived poorly, never taking presents from any one. He took little sleep, but often at night he would rise to work, having made himself a paper cap, in the middle of which he could fix his candle, so that he could have the use of his hands. Vasari, who often saw this cap, noticed that he did not use wax candles, but candles made of goats' tallow, and so he sent him four bundles, which would be 40 lbs. His servant took them to him in the evening, and when Michael Angelo refused to take them, he answered, "Sir, carrying them here has almost broken my arms, and I will not carry them back again; but there is some thick mud before your door in which they will stand straight enough, and I will set light to them all." Upon which Michael Angelo answered, "Put them down here, then, for I will not have you playing tricks before my door." He told me that often in his youth he had slept in his clothes, too worn out with his labours to undress himself. Some have accused him of being avaricious, but they are mistaken, for he freely gave away his drawings and models and pictures, for which he might have obtained thousands of crowns. And then, as for the money earned by the sweat of his brow, by his own study and labour-can any one be called avaricious who
He felt very strongly against those who had done him an injury, but he never had recourse to vengeance. His conversation was full of wisdom and gravity, mixed with clever or humorous sayings. Many of these have been noted down, and I will give some. A friend of his was once talking to him about death, and saying that he must dread it very much because he was so continually labouring in his art; but he answered, "All that was nothing, and if life pleased us, death was a work from the hand of the same Master, and ought not to displease us." A citizen found him once at Orsanmichele in Florence, looking at the statue of S. Mark by Donatello, and asked him what he thought of it. He answered that he had never seen a more honest face, and that if S. Mark was like that, we might believe all that he had written. A painter had painted a picture in which the best thing was an ox, and some one asked why it was that the painter had made the ox more lifelike than anything else? Michael Angelo answered, "Every painter can pourtray himself well."

He took pleasure in certain men like Il Menighella, a common painter, who would come to him and get him to make a drawing for a S. Rocco or a S. Antonio, which he was to paint for some peasant. And Michael Angelo, who could hardly be persuaded to work for kings, would at once lay aside his work, and make simple designs suited to Il Menighella's wishes. He was also attached to Topolino, a stonemason, who fancied himself a sculptor of worth. He resided for many years in the mountains of Carrara for the purpose of sending marble to Michael Angelo, and he never sent a boatload without three or four roughly hewn figures of his own carving, which used to make Michael Angelo die with laughing. After he came back from Carrara he set himself to finish a Mercury which he had begun in marble, and one day, when it was nearly completed, he asked Michael Angelo to look at it and give him his opinion on it. "You are a fool," said Michael Angelo, "to try to make figures. Don't you see that this Mercury is the third part of a braccio too short from the knee to the foot—that you have made him a lame dwarf?" "Oh, that is nothing! If that is all, I will soon remedy that." Michael Angelo laughed again at his simplicity, but when he was gone Topolino took a piece of marble, and having cut Mercury under the knees, inserted the marble, joining it neatly, and giving Mercury a pair of boots, the top of which hid the join. When he showed his work to Michael Angelo he laughed again, but marvelled that ignorant fellows like him, when driven by necessity, should be capable of doing daring things which sculptors of real worth would not think of.

Michael Angelo was a very healthy man, thin and muscular, although as a boy he was sickly. When grown up he had also two serious illnesses; nevertheless he could support any amount of fatigue. He was of middle height, wide across the shoulders, but the rest of his body in good proportion.

Certainly he was sent into the world to be an example to men of art, that they should learn from his life and from his works; and I, who have to thank God for felicity rare among men of our profession, count among my greatest blessings that I was born in the time when Michael Angelo was alive, and was counted worthy
to have him for my master, and to be treated by him as a familiar friend, as every one knows.