

son criticised the youthful appearance of the Virgin, and captiously asked where a mother could be found, like this one, younger than her son, the painter answered, "In Paradise."

"The love and care," says Vasari, "which Michael Angelo had given to this group were such that he there left his name — a thing he never did again for any work — on the cincture which girdles the robe of Our Lady; for it happened one day that Michael Angelo, entering the place where it was erected, found a large assemblage of strangers from Lombardy there, who were praising it highly; one of them, asking who had done it, was told, 'Our Hunchback of Milan;' hearing which, Michael Angelo remained silent, although surprised that his work should be attributed to another. But one night he repaired to St. Peter's with a light and his chisels, to engrave his name on the figure, which seems to breathe a spirit as perfect as her form and countenance."

Michael Angelo was now urged by his father and brother to return to Florence. Lodovico, his father, writes him: "Buonarotto tells me that you live with great economy, or rather penury. Economy is good, but penury is bad, because it is a vice displeasing to God and to the people of this world, and, besides, will do harm both to soul and body."

However, when his son returned, after four years in Rome, carrying the money he had saved to establish his brothers in business, the proud father was not displeased with the "penury." This self-

denial the great artist practised through life for his not always grateful or appreciative family. He said in his old age, "Rich as I am, I have always lived like a poor man."

Matters had greatly changed in Florence. Savonarola and his two principal followers, excommunicated by Pope Alexander VI., because they had preached against the corruptions of Rome, calling his court the Romish Babylon, had been burned at the stake.

While the mob had assisted at the death of the great and good friar, the people of Florence were sad at heart. Michael Angelo, who loved him and deeply loved republican Florence, was sad also, and perhaps thereby wrought all the more earnestly, never being frivolous either in thought or work.

Upon his return to Florence, Cardinal Piccolomini, afterwards Pius III., made a contract with him for fifteen statues of Carrara marble to embellish the family chapel in the cathedral of Siena. Three years were allowed for this work. The artist finished but four statues, Peter, Paul, Gregory, and Pius, because of other labors which were pressed upon him.

The marble Madonna in the Church of Notre Dame at Bruges was carved about this time. "This," says Grimm, "is one of Michael Angelo's finest works. It is life-size. She sits there enveloped in the softest drapery; the child stands between her knees, leaning on the left one, the foot of which rests on a block of stone, so that it is



raised a little higher than the right. On this stone the child also stands, and seems about to step down. His mother holds him back with her left hand, while the right rests on her lap with a book. She is looking straight forward; a handkerchief is placed across her hair, and falls softly, on both sides, on her neck and shoulders. In her countenance, in her look, there is a wonderful majesty, a queenly gravity, as if she felt the thousand pious glances of the people who look up to her on the altar."

An opportunity now presented itself for the already famous sculptor to distinguish himself in his own city. Years before a marble block, eighteen feet high, had been brought from Carrara to Florence, from which the wool-weavers' guild intended to have a prophet made for Santa Maria del Fiore. One sculptor had attempted and failed. Others to whom it was offered said nothing could be done with the one block, but more pieces of marble should be added.

Michael Angelo was willing to undertake the making of a statue. He was allowed two years in which to complete it, with a monthly salary of six gold florins. His only preparation for the work was a little wax model which he moulded, now in the Uffizi. He worked untiringly, so that he often slept with his clothes on, to be ready for his beloved statue as soon as the morning dawned. He had shut himself away from the public gaze by planks and masonry, and worked alone, not intrust-

ing a stroke to other hands. He felt what Emerson preached years later, that "society is fatal." The great essayist urged that while we may keep our hands in society "we must keep our head in solitude." Great thoughts are not born usually in the whirl of social life.

Finally, when the statue was finished in January, 1504, and the colossal David stood unveiled before the people, they said: "It is as great a miracle as if a dead body had been raised to life." Vasari says Michael Angelo intended, by this work, to teach the Florentines that as David "had defended his people and governed justly, so they who were then ruling that city should defend it with courage and govern it uprightly."

The statue weighed eighteen thousand pounds, and required forty men four days to drag it by ropes a quarter of a mile to the place where it was to stand in the Piazza della Signoria. Notwithstanding that the praise of the sculptor was on every lip, still there was so much jealousy among the artists that some of their followers threw stones at the statue during the nights when it was being carried to the Piazza, and eight persons were arrested and put in prison.

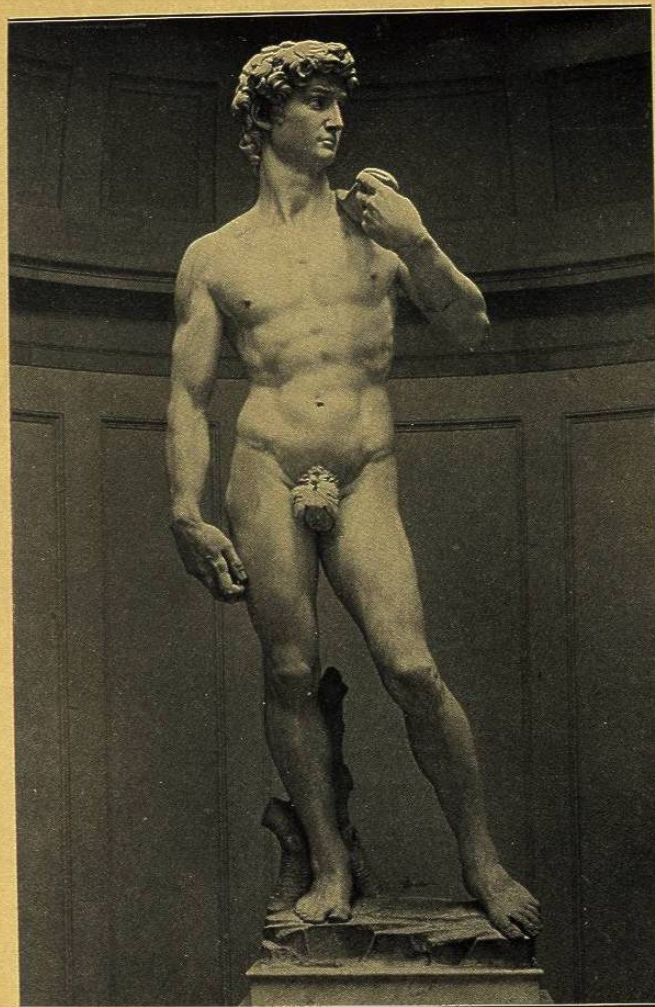
Vasari tells a story which, whether true or false, illustrates the character of those who profess much because they know little. "When the statue was set up, it chanced that Soderini, whom it greatly pleased, came to look at it while Michael Angelo was retouching it at certain points, and told the



artist that he thought the nose too short. Michael Angelo perceived that Soderini was in such a position beneath the figure that he could not see it conveniently; yet, to satisfy him, he mounted the scaffold with his chisel and a little powder gathered from the floor in his hand, when striking lightly with the chisel, but without altering the nose, he suffered a little of the powder to fall, and then said to the gonfaloniere, who stood below, 'Look at it now.'

"I like it better now," was the reply; 'you have given it life.' Michael Angelo then descended, not without compassion for those who desire to appear good judges of matters whereof they know nothing." But the artist very wisely made no remarks, and thus retained the friendship of Soderini. In 1873, after nearly four centuries, this famous statue was removed to the Academy of Fine Arts in the old Monastery of St. Mark, lest in the distant future it should be injured by exposure.

Work now poured in upon Michael Angelo. In three years he received commissions to carve thirty-seven statues. For the cathedral of Florence he promised colossal statues of the twelve apostles, but was able to attempt only one, St. Matthew, now in the Florentine Academy. For Agnolo Doni he painted a Madonna, now in the Tribune at Florence. The price was sixty ducats, but the parsimonious Agnolo said he would give but forty, though he knew it was worth more. Michael Angelo at once sent a messenger demanding a hundred ducats or



DAVID.

Colossal marble statue. Academy, Florence. Michaelangelo.



the picture, but, not inclined to lose so valuable a work by a famous artist, Agnolo gladly offered the sixty which he at first refused to pay. Offended by such penuriousness, Michael Angelo demanded and received one hundred and forty ducats!

In 1504, Gonfaloniere Soderini desired to adorn the great Municipal Hall with the paintings of two masters, Leonardo da Vinci and Michael Angelo. The latter was only twenty-nine, while Da Vinci was over fifty. He had recently come from Milan, where he had been painting the "Last Supper," which, Grimm says, "in moments of admiration, forces from us the assertion that it is the finest and sublimest composition ever produced by an Italian master."

And now with this "first painter in Italy" the first sculptor, Michael Angelo, was asked to compete, and he dared to accept the offer.

He chose for his subject an incident of the Pisan war. As the weather was very warm, the Florentines had laid aside their armor and were bathing in the Arno. Sir John Hawkwood, the commander of the opposing forces, seized this moment to make the attack. The bathers rushed to the shore, and Michael Angelo has depicted them climbing the bank, buckling on their armor, and with all haste returning the assault.

"It is not possible," says Grimm, "to describe all the separate figures, the fore-shortenings, the boldness with which the most difficult attitude is ever chosen, or the art with which it is depicted.



This cartoon was the school for a whole generation of artists, who made their first studies from it."

Da Vinci's painting represented a scene at the battle of Anghiari, where the Florentines had defeated the Milanese in 1440. "While these cartoons thus hung opposite to each other," says Benvenuto Cellini, "they formed the school of the world." Raphael, Andrea del Sarto, and others made studies from them. Da Vinci's faded, and Michael Angelo's was cut in pieces by some enemy.

Before the artist had finished his painting he was summoned to Rome by Pope Julius II., the great patron of art and literature, who desired a monument for himself in St. Peter's. The mausoleum was to be three stories high; with sixteen statues of the captive liberal arts, and ten statues of Victory treading upon conquered provinces, for the first story; the sarcophagus of the pope, with his statue and attendant angels, for the second; and, above all, more cherubs and apostles.

"It will cost a hundred thousand crowns," said the artist.

"Let it cost twice that sum," said the pope.

At once Michael Angelo hastened to the marble quarries of Carrara, in the most northern part of Tuscany, where he remained for eight months. His task was a difficult one. He wrote to his father after he had gone back to Rome, "I should be quite contented here if only my marble would come. I am unhappy about it; for not for two days only, but as long as I have been here, we have had good

weather. A few days ago, a bark, which has just arrived, was within a hair's-breadth of perishing. When from bad weather the blocks were conveyed by land, the river overflowed, and placed them under water; so that up to this day I have been able to do nothing. I must endeavor to keep the pope in good humor by empty words, so that his good temper may not fail. I hope all may soon be in order, and that I may begin my work. God grant it!"

When the marble reached Rome, the people were astonished, for there seemed enough to build a temple, instead of a tomb. The sculptor resided in a house near the Vatican, a covered way being constructed by the pope between the *atelier* and the palace, that he might visit the artist familiarly and see him at his work.

Meantime an envious artist was whispering in the ears of Julius that it was an evil omen to build one's monument in one's lifetime, and that he would be apt to die early. This was not agreeable news, and when Michael Angelo returned from a second journey to Carrara the pope refused to advance any money, and even gave orders that he should not be admitted to the palace.

With commendable pride the artist left Rome at once, and hastened to Florence, leaving a letter in which he said, "Most Holy Father, — If you require me in the future, you can seek me elsewhere than in Rome."

The proud Julius at once perceived his mistake,



and sent a messenger to bid him return, on pain of his displeasure. But Michael Angelo paid no attention to the mandate. Then Julius II. applied to Soderini the Gonfaloniere, who said to the sculptor, "You have treated the pope in a manner such as the King of France would not have done! There must be an end of trifling with him now. We will not for your sake begin a war with the pope, and risk the safety of the state."

The Sultan Bajazet II., who had heard of Michael Angelo's fame, now urged him to come to Turkey and build a bridge between Constantinople and Pera, across the Golden Horn. Soderini tried to persuade him that he had better "die siding with the pope, than live passing over to the Turk," and meantime wrote Julius that he could do nothing with him. The pope saw that kindness alone would win back the self-reliant and independent artist, and finally prevailed upon him to return to Rome.

When he arrived, Julius, half angry, said, "You have waited thus long, it seems, till we should ourselves come to seek you."

An ecclesiastic standing near officiously begged his Holiness not to be too severe with Michael Angelo, as he was a man of no education, and as artists did not know how to behave except where their own art was concerned.

The pope was now fully angry, and exclaimed, "Do you venture to say things to this man which I would not have said to him myself? You are

yourself a man of no education, a miserable fellow, and this he is not. Leave our presence." The man was borne out of the hall, nearly fainting.

Michael Angelo was at once commissioned to make a bronze statue of Julius, fourteen feet high, to be placed before the Church of St. Petronio, in Bologna. When the pope wished to know the cost, the artist told him he thought it would be about three thousand ducats, but was not sure whether the cast would succeed.

"You will mould it until it succeeds," said the pope, "and you shall be paid as much as you require."

When the clay model was ready for the pope to look at, he was asked if he would like to be represented holding a book in his left hand.

"Give me a sword!" he exclaimed; "I am no scholar. And what does the raised right hand denote? Am I dispensing a curse, or a blessing?"

"You are advising the people of Bologna to be wise," replied Michael Angelo.

The bronze statue was a difficult work. The first cast was unsuccessful. The sculptor wrote home, "If I had a second time to undertake this intense work, which gives me no rest night or day, I scarcely think I should be able to accomplish it. I am convinced that no one else upon whom this immense task might have been imposed would have persevered. My belief is that your prayers have kept me sustained and well. For no one in Bologna, not even after the successful issue of the



cast, thought that I should finish the statue satisfactorily; before that no one thought that the cast would succeed."

After the statue was completed, Michael Angelo, at the earnest request of the helpless Buonarrotti family, went back to Florence, and carried there what he had earned. Grimm naïvely remarks, "I could almost suppose that it had been designed by Fate, as may be often observed in similar cases, to compensate for Michael Angelo's extraordinary gifts by a corresponding lack of them in the family." The case of Galileo, struggling through life for helpless relatives, is similar to that of Michael Angelo.

He was soon summoned again to Rome, not to complete the monument, as he had hoped, but to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. He hesitated to undertake so important a work in painting, and begged that Raphael be chosen; but the pope would not consent.

He therefore began to make designs, and sent for some of his boyhood friends to aid him, Granacci and others. His method was to make the first draught in red or black chalk on a very small scale. From this he marked out the full-sized cartoons or working drawings, nailing these to the wall, and cutting away the paper around the figures. He soon found that his assistants were a hinderance rather than a help, and, unable to wound their feelings by telling them, he shut up the chapel and went away. They understood it, and, if some were

hurt or offended, Granacci was not, but always remained an earnest friend.

Michael Angelo now worked alone, seeing nobody except his color-grinder and the pope. His eyes became so injured by holding his head back for his work that for a long period afterwards he could read only by keeping the page above his head. After he had painted for some time the walls began to mould, and, discouraged, he hastened to the pope, saying, "I told your Holiness, from the first, that painting was not my profession; all that I have painted is destroyed. If you do not believe it, send and let some one else see." It was soon found that he had made the plaster too wet, but that no harm would result.

He worked now so constantly that he scarcely took time to eat or sleep, and became ill from over-exertion. In the midst of his labors and illness, he writes his father, "Do not lose courage, and let not a trace of inward sadness gain ground in you; for, if you have lost your property, life is not lost, and I will do more for you than all you have lost. Still, do not rely upon it; it is always a doubtful matter. Use, rather, all possible precaution; and thank God that, as this chastisement of heaven was to come, it came at a time when you could better extricate yourself from it than you would perhaps have been earlier able to do. Take care of your health, and rather part with all your possessions than impose privations on yourself. For it is of greater consequence to me that you should



remain alive, although a poor man, than that you should perish for the sake of all the money in the world.  
Your MICHAEL ANGELO."

He writes also to his younger brother, Giovanni Simone, who appears to have spent much and earned little: "If you will take care to do well, and to honor and revere your father, I will aid you like the others and will soon establish you in a good shop. . . . I have gone about through all Italy for twelve years, leading a dog's life; bearing all manner of insults, enduring all sorts of drudgery, lacerating my body with many toils, placing my life itself under a thousand perils, solely to aid my family; and now that I have commenced to raise it up a little, thou alone wishest to do that which shall confound and ruin in an hour everything that I have done in so many years and with so many fatigues."

Meantime the pope, as eager as a child to see the painting which he knew would help to immortalize himself, urged the artist to work faster, and continually asked when it would be finished and the scaffolding taken down. "When I can, holy father," replied the artist. "When I can — when I can! I'll make thee finish it, and quickly, as thou shalt see!" And he struck Michael Angelo with the staff which he held in his hand.

The sculptor at once left the painting and started for Florence. But Julius sent after him, and gave him five hundred crowns to pacify him. It cer-

tainly would have been a pecuniary saving to the pontiff not to have given way to his temper and used his staff!

When half the ceiling was completed, at Julius's request the scaffolding was removed, and all Rome crowded to see the wonderful work on All Saints' Day, 1509.

Kugler says, "The ceiling of the Sistine Chapel contains the most perfect works done by Michael Angelo in his long and active life. Here his great spirit appears in its noblest dignity, in its highest purity; here the attention is not disturbed by that arbitrary display to which his great power not unfrequently seduced him in other works."

The paintings represent God the Father separating the light from the darkness; he creates the sun and moon; surrounded by angels, he commands the waters to bring forth all kinds of animals which can live in the sea; he breathes into man the breath of life; he forms Eve; both are driven from the garden; Abel is sacrificed; the flood comes; Noah and his family are saved in the ark.

Grimm thus describes a portion of this marvelous painting: "Adam lies on a dark mountain summit. His formation is finished; nothing more remains than that he should rise, and feel for the first time what life and waking are. It is as if the first emotion of his new condition thrilled through him; as if, still lying almost in a dream, he divined what was passing around him. God hovers slowly down over him from above, softly descending like