

O fate, unheeding my impassioned cries!
 O hopes fallacious! O thou spirit of grace,
 Where art thou now? Earth holds in its embrace
 Thy lovely limbs, thy holy thoughts the skies.
 Vainly did cruel Death attempt to stay
 The rumor of thy virtuous renown,
 That Lethe's waters could not wash away!
 A thousand leaves, since he hath stricken thee down,
 Speak of thee, nor to thee would heaven convey,
 Except through death, a refuge and a crown."

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

The monument of Julius had at last been completed, and placed in the Church of San Pietro in Vincola. In 1546, Antonio di San Gallo, the director of the building of St. Peter's, died, and Michael Angelo was commissioned to carry forward the work. Fortunately Vittoria lived to see this honor conferred upon him.

He was now seventy-one years old. For the remaining eighteen years of his life, he devoted himself to this great labor, without compensation. When Paul III., with Cardinal Marcello, summoned Michael Angelo to talk over some alleged defects, the aged artist boldly replied to the cardinal, "I am not nor will I consent to be obliged to tell, to your eminence or any one else, what I ought or wish to do. Your office is to bring money and guard it from thieves, and the designing of the building is left to me." Then he said to the pope, "Holy Father, you see what I gain; if these fatigues which I endure do not benefit my soul, I lose both time and labor." The pope, who loved him, placed

his hands on his shoulders, saying, "You benefit both soul and body: do not doubt."

When asked if the new dome would not surpass that of the Duomo of Florence, by Brunelleschi, he said, "It will be more grand, but not more beautiful."

Michael Angelo lived very simply in Rome, though he had amassed a large property, most of which he left to his nephew Leonardo, to whom and his family he was tenderly attached. When this nephew was married, the sculptor wrote him "not to care about a great dowry, but that you should look to a healthy mind, a healthy body, good blood, and good education, and what sort of family it is. . . . Above all, seek the counsel of God, for it is a great step."

Michael Angelo was devotedly attached to Urbino, who had been his servant for twenty-six years, and who loved him so much, says Vasari, "that he had nursed him in sickness, and slept at night in his clothes beside him, the better to watch for his comforts." One day the artist said to him, "When I die, what wilt thou do?" — "Serve some one else," was the reply. "Thou poor creature, I must save thee from that," said the sculptor, and immediately gave him two thousand crowns.

At Urbino's death, when his master was about eighty, Michael Angelo wrote Vasari, in deep grief, of his "infinite loss." "Nor have I now left any other hope than that of rejoining him in Paradise. But of this God has given me a foretaste, in the

most blessed death that he has died; his own departure did not grieve him, as did the leaving me in this treacherous world, with so many troubles. Truly is the best part of my being gone with him, nor is anything now left me except an infinite sorrow."

The artist was again and again urged to return to Florence, by the reigning dukes, but he replied, "You must see by my handwriting that I touch the twenty-fourth hour, and no thought is now born in my mind in which death is not mixed."

He was implored on every side to carve statues and paint pictures. He promised Francis I. of France a work in marble, in bronze, and in painting. "Should death interrupt this desire," said Michael Angelo, "then, if it be possible to sculpture or paint in the other world, I shall not fail to do so, where no one becomes old."

He furnished plans for several Roman gates which Pius IV., who succeeded Paul IV., wished to rebuild, and made designs for various other buildings and public squares. He erected the Church of St. Mary of the Angels, amid the ruins of the Baths of Diocletian. "Nothing exists in architecture," says Mr. Heath Wilson, "which exceeds the plan of this church in beauty and variety of form. The general proportions are so harmonious, the lines of the plan so gracefully disposed, the form of the whole so original, that, without looking at the elevations, the eye is delighted by the evidence on all sides of the imagination, taste, and skill

shown by the venerable architect in this superb work."

The great sculptor never ceased to work or to study. When old he drew a picture representing himself as an aged man in a cart, with these words underneath: *Ancora imparo* (still learning). He painted but two portraits, one of Vittoria Colonna, and one of young Tommaso dei Cavalieri, whom he tenderly loved. To this youth, whom Varchi, the Florentine professor and court scholar, declared to be the most attractive young man he had ever known, Michael Angelo wrote this beautiful sonnet:—

"Through thee I catch a gleam of tender glow,
Which with my own eyes I had failed to see;
And walking onward step by step with thee,
The once oppressing burdens lighter grow.
With thee, my grovelling thoughts I heavenward raise,
Borne upward by thy bold, aspiring wing;
I follow where thou wilt, — a helpless thing,
Cold in the sun, and warm in winter days.
My will, my friend, rests only upon thine;
Thy heart must every thought of mine supply;
My mind expression finds in thee alone.
Thus like the moonlight's silver ray I shine:
We only see her beams on the far sky,
When the sun's fiery rays are o'er her thrown."

His last work was a group of the Virgin and the dead Christ, which he intended should be placed on an altar over his own tomb; but it was left unfinished from a flaw in the marble, and is now in the cathedral in Florence. Vasari found the aged artist working at it late at night, when he had

arisen from his bed because he could not sleep. A tallow candle was placed in his pasteboard cap, so as to leave his hands free for work. Once, as they were looking at the statue, Michael Angelo suffered the lantern which he held in his hand to fall, and they were left in darkness. He remarked, "I am so old that Death often pulls me by the cape, and bids me go with him; some day I shall fall myself, like this lamp, and the light of life will be extinguished."

To the last Michael Angelo was always learning. He used often to visit the Vatican to study the Torso Belvedere, which he declared had been of the greatest benefit to him.

In 1563-64 he was elected vice-president of the Florentine Academy of Fine Arts. That winter his strength failed rapidly, though all was done for him that love and honor could possibly do, for he had many devoted friends among all classes, and was constantly aiding artists and others. He did not fear death, for he said, "If life be a pleasure, since death also is sent by the hand of the same master, neither should that displease us."

Between three and four o'clock in the afternoon of the 18th of February, 1564, the same month in which Vittoria died, the great man passed away, in the ninetieth year of his age. Daniele da Volterra, Condivi, and Cavalieri stood by his bedside. His last words to them were, "I give my soul to God, my body to the earth, and my worldly possessions to my nearest of kin."

The pope and the Romans were determined to

keep the dead Michael Angelo in Rome; but his wish had been to lie in Florence. The body, therefore, was conveyed to the latter city, disguised as a bale of merchandise, and buried in Santa Croce, on Sunday night, March 12th, the Tuscan artists following with their lighted torches, accompanied by thousands of citizens. In the month of July a grand memorial service was held, in the Church of San Lorenzo, for the illustrious dead, paintings and statuary surrounding a catafalque fifty-four feet high.

After thirty years of voluntary exile, the melancholy, solitary, great-souled man lay in his native Florence. He had loved liberty and uprightness. He had been ambitious, and devoted to his masterly work, with the will-power and intensity which belong to genius. He had allowed no obstacles to stand in his path, — neither lack of money nor jealousy of artists. He had faith in himself. He spoke sometimes too plainly, but almost always justly. Cold and unapproachable though he was, children loved him, and for them he would stop and make sketches on the street. He had the fearlessness of one who rightly counts manhood above all titles. He was too noble to be trifling, or petty, or self-indulgent. Great in sculpture, painting, poetry, architecture, engineering, character, he has left an imperishable name. Taine says, "There are four men in the world of art and of literature exalted above all others, and to such a degree as to seem to belong to another race; namely, Dante, Shakespeare, Beethoven, and Michael Angelo."