



[National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh]

WAX MODEL FOR STATUE OF GIULIANO DE' MEDICI

pletely carried out of all Michael Angelo's statues, it has the defect of appearing somewhat contracted. This may be owing to the shape and size of the block of marble from which it was hewn, and it should also be remembered that we do not see it in the position in which Buonarroti had intended to place it. In his original design it stood higher. The right side of the *Moses* is almost perpendicular, owing to the fact that originally it was intended to stand at one of the corners of the monuments. It is interesting to recall that Buonarroti would often work upon this statue at night, his only light being the wax candle stuck in the brim of his paper cap.

The two life-size statues, now in the Louvre, called *The Slaves*, formed a portion of the original plan of the Julian tomb. Of these the finer and more complete is that with the left arm thrown back: it is one of the most perfect things in modern sculpture. There is no apparent reason for calling these figures "Slaves," and by some writers they are supposed to typify the Liberal Arts enslaved and incapable of further action, owing to the death of their protector, Julius II. These captive youths were intended, it is thought, to stand below the sentinel figure of Moses, together with other emblematical statues, some of which represented conquered provinces, with the recumbent figure of the Pope above, supported by angels at the head and feet, the whole being crowned by the Madonna and Child in glory.

In a grotto in the Boboli Gardens at Florence there are four rough and unfinished marble figures of men which are believed to have formed part of the tomb; but they cannot be compared with the statues in Paris.

Michael Angelo's next great sculptural work was the

statues in the Sacristy of San Lorenzo. Of these there are seven, of which the *Madonna and Child* is one of Buonarroti's noblest conceptions, but it has been left unfinished. The face of the Madonna is one of great majesty: the Child turns his head from the spectator as if unable to bear the sight of poor humanity. Buonarroti's verses commencing "*Caro m'è 'l sonno e più l'esser di sasso*," have caused the names of *Night, Day, Dawn* and *Twilight* to be given to the four figures at the feet of the two seated ducal figures. Occupying narrow niches above the sarcophagi are the statues representing the two dukes, Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici; the former, Duke of Urbino, and nephew of Leo X., the latter, titular Duke of Nemours, and brother of Leo X. The face of Lorenzo is in shadow, cast by a peaked helmet; that of Giuliano is of the type the master made his own, and closely resembles the *David* and the *Victory* of the Bargello. There is the same treatment in the modelling of the hair, the same distended nostril, the same finely-cut mouth and chin. Giuliano, who was one of the best members of his family—not that that gives him very high praise—has a look of placid repose. The costume of both dukes is fantastic, being partly that of a Roman Emperor and partly that of a Gonfaloniere of the Church. Especially to be noted is the elaborate modelling of the hands of both these statues. It was the recumbent figure that lies under the effigy of Giuliano that inspired the famous quatrain of Giovan Battista Strozzi:

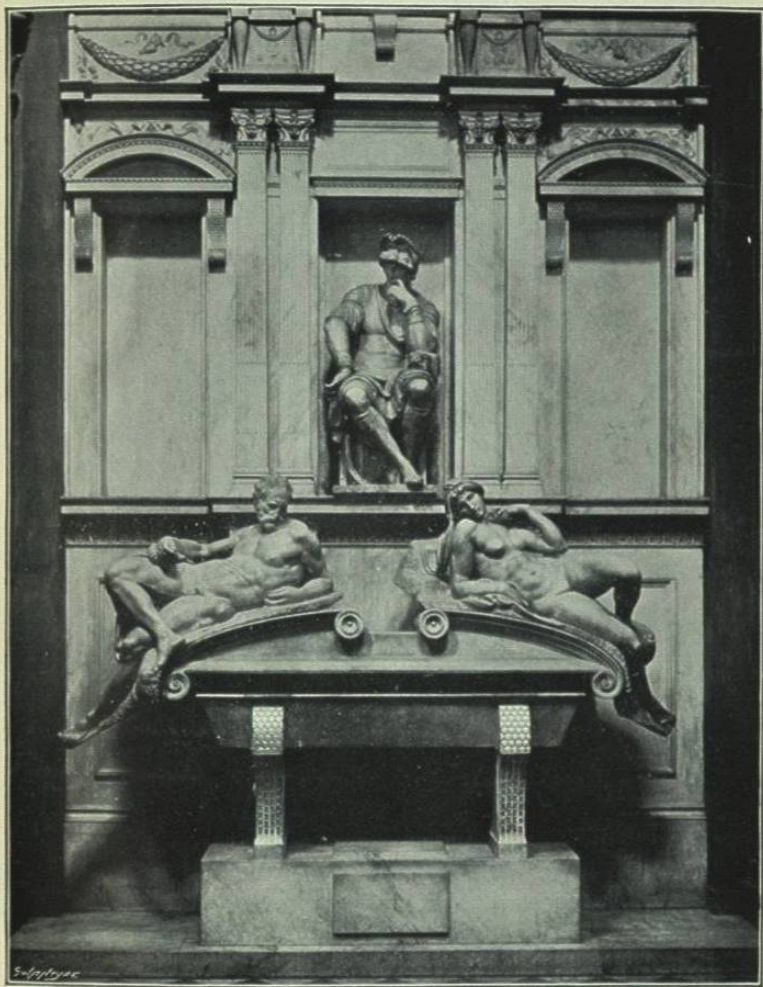
"La notte, che tu vedi in sì dolci atti
Dormir, fu da un Angelo scolpita
In questo sasso e perchè dorme ha vita,
Desta la, se nol credi, e parleratti."



Anderson photo]

[San Lorenzo, Florence

TOMB OF GIULIANO DE' MEDICI



Anderson photo

[San Lorenzo, Florence

TOMB OF LORENZO DE' MEDICI

Which translated runs :

"The Night thou seest here, posed gracefully
In act of slumber, was by an Angel wrought
Out of this stone ; sleeping, with life she's fraught :
Wake her, incredulous wight ; she'll speak to thee."

To this Michael Angelo answered in the name of the figure of Sleep :

"Caro m'è'l sonno, e più l'esser di sasso
Mentre che'l danno e la vergogna dura :
Non veder, non sentir, mi è gran ventura ;
Però non mi destar, deh ! parlo basso."

These lines have been also translated by J. A. Symonds thus :

"Dear is my sleep, but more to be mere stone,
So long as ruin and dishonour reign ;
To hear naught, to feel naught, is my great gain ;
Then wake me not : speak in an undertone."

The figure of *Day* is unfinished. Some writers have thought that this incompleteness was intended by the sculptor with the idea of adding effect to the group of statues by the contrast between the highly-polished and the rough-hewn figures. There is no other explanation why some parts are highly finished whilst others are left with the marks of the chisel upon them.

To appreciate these marble forms fully, they must be studied at San Lorenzo itself ; no cast giving anything but an imperfect idea of their strange and fascinating glamour when seen in the position and the light in which they were placed by their creator. These particular works of Michael Angelo are without an equal in modern art, nor can they be surpassed by any sculpture

of the ancients. The banker poet Rogers has in a few words happily expressed the effect made upon him by the Penseroso Duke Lorenzo, "The sight fascinates and is intolerable," he says.

The statue of the *Christ holding the Cross*, in the Church of the Minerva in Rome, although designed by Michael Angelo, has little of his handiwork, for although it was blocked out by him in the quarries at Carrara, it was completed by one of his pupils after being sent to Rome. Pietro Urbano, also worked upon it, but the two made a poor result, and it was given to another pupil, Frizzi, to finish. This statue has been treated with similar devotion to that which has been lavished upon the bronze figure of St. Peter in the great Basilica, with the result that the right foot of the Christ became so worn that it had to be encased in a bronze sandal. Even in the sculptor's lifetime the Christ in the *Minerva* was not considered a success, and Vasari states Michael Angelo offered to make another statue of the same subject for Metello Vari dei Porcari, by whom it had been ordered; the latter, however, declared that he was quite satisfied. Metello Vari was one of Buonarroti's chief friends in Rome, and even if he had not been satisfied with the work he probably would have hesitated to put the sculptor to the trouble of repeating his work. Although there is dignity in the figure, this Christ of the *Minerva* can scarcely be regarded as "a mutilated masterpiece," the appellation given to it by J. A. Symonds. Another writer on the master, Mr. Heath Wilson, says: "Considered as a work of expression and religious art, it is in both respects without a parallel in its irreverence." On the other hand, the German art critic, Gsell-Fels,

considers this statue to be "in movement and physique one of the greatest masterpieces; as a Christ-ideal, the heroic conception of a humanist." Thus do writers and critics differ in their judgements.

To me the Christ of the *Minerva* appears simply the splendid figure of an athlete, there being nothing in its conception to typify the Saviour except the uplifted Cross. Vasari dismisses this statue summarily, merely calling it "a most admirable work."

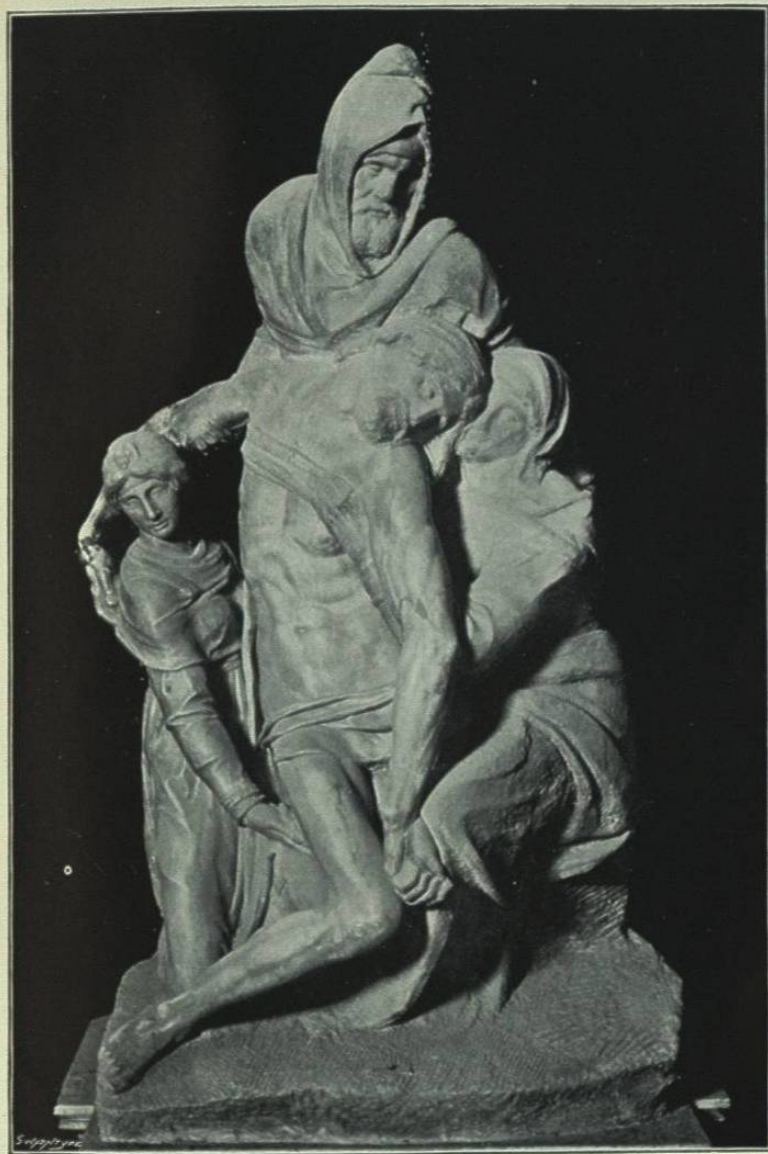
The *Apollino* and the bust of *Brutus*, in the Bargello Museum, belong to this period. The former is somewhat sketchy in treatment but graceful in line, and has the quiet dignity so conspicuous in the so-called *Slaves* in the Louvre. The bust of Brutus is also unfinished, the head being an imaginary one, though Vasari states that it was taken from an antique carnelian intaglio. It has a strong, determined, defiant expression, and recalls some of Houdon's animated busts, and might also pass for a portrait of Danton. Symonds regards this bust as one of Michael Angelo's finest works, placing its date at 1539, when Lorenzino de' Medici gained the nickname of Brutus amongst the Florentine exiles. Buonarroti is said to have handed this bust to his pupil, Tiberio Calcagni, to finish. Calcagni, however, who acted as his secretary as well as assistant in the studio, had the good taste to decline to touch the marble, feeling that it would be a sacrilege to attempt to complete a work left unfinished by his master. To the same pupil was intrusted the *Pietà* in the cathedral in Florence, but in this instance also Calcagni refrained from tampering with Buonarroti's handiwork.

Symonds, in his life of Michael Angelo, has called

this *Pietà* "a great poem in marble." The block from which it was cut formed the capital of a pillar in an ancient temple, and unfortunately turned out to be defective after work had been begun upon it. In consequence the sculptor left it merely roughed out. As with his *Moses*, Buonarroti was wont to work on this during the night, for he was a bad sleeper, "wearing a thick paper cap, in which he placed a lighted candle made of goat's tallow."

The *Pietà* is but dimly seen behind the High Altar in the Florentine Duomo. Deeply pathetic in treatment is this unfinished group. The sinking figure of the dead Saviour, supported by three persons, has been described by Ruskin as "the strange spectral wraith of the Florence *Pietà*, casting its pyramidal, distorted shadow, full of pain and death, among the faint purple lights that cross and perish under the obscure dome of Santa Maria del Fiore." And doubly pathetic is this group when we remember that it was the last work wrought in marble by the hand of Buonarroti, who seems to have felt unequal to completing and carrying out this task. The top of this group—pyramidal in form, as noted by Ruskin—is an aged figure supporting the dead Christ. This has been called Nicodemus. The head is half concealed by a hood, but the features recall those of Michael Angelo himself. The Mother of the Saviour and the Magdalene kneel on either side of the Christ, and help to support the lifeless form sinking at their feet. Anguish was never more keenly expressed in sculpture than in these two figures.

There is at Genoa, in the Albergo dei Poveri, a marble medallion representing the Madonna clasping the head



Brogi photo]

[Cathedral, Florence

PIETÀ

of her dead son. This medallion is attributed to Michael Angelo. If not the work of the master, it would seem, from reproductions (for I have not seen the original) to be worthy of him, and in this marble relief the head of the Christ appears to be of even finer quality than either of the two *Pietàs* in Rome or Florence. The head of the Madonna leans against the heart of her Son; the unspeakable sorrow in her countenance is rendered with an expression of suffering which only the very greatest genius could portray.

One regrets that Michael Angelo never made a bust of Vittoria Colonna, for a likeness of such a woman and such a friend from his hand would have been of the greatest interest. But he never made a portrait bust, unless the head of Paul III. in the museum at Naples is by him, and it is extremely doubtful if it is his handiwork.

I think enough has been written of the sculptural work of Buonarroti to justify giving him the place as chief of all modern sculptors. Sculpture was his chief labour, glory, and torment. No one knew better than he the difficulties of that vocation, and if at the close of life he felt discouragement, who can but respect him the more for this feeling? He had attempted to portray the human form under the influence of the deepest emotions of which the human mind is capable, and was ever conscious that his hand, consummately skilful as it was did not always realize his imagination.

