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ENGRAVED BY G. KRULL

MICHAEL ANGELO.

MICHAEL ANGELO

A Dramatic Poem

BY

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

7

Michel, più che mortal, Angel divino

ARIOSTO

Similamente operando all' artista

Ch' a l'abito, dell' arte e man che trema

DANTE, *Par.* xiii., st. 77

ILLUSTRATED



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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
DEDICATION	5
PART FIRST.	
I. PROLOGUE AT ISCHIA	7
II. MONOLOGUE	17
III. SAN SILVESTRO	20
IV. CARDINAL IPPOLITO	27
V. BORGO DELLE VERGINE AT NAPLES	43
VI. VITTORIA COLONNA	56
PART SECOND.	
I. MONOLOGUE	73
II. VITERBO	76
III. MICHAEL ANGELO AND BENVENUTO CELLINI	77
IV. FRA SEBASTIANO DEL PIOMBO	90
V. MICHAEL ANGELO AND TITIAN: PALAZZO BELVEDERE	103
VI. PALAZZO CESARINI	113
PART THIRD.	
I. MONOLOGUE: MACELLO DE' CORVI	123
II. VIGNA DI PAPA GIULIO	125
III. BINDO ALTOVITI	137
IV. IN THE COLISEUM	142
V. BENEVENUTO AGAIN: MACELLO DE' CORVI	148
VI. URBINO'S FORTUNE	164
VII. THE OAKS OF MONTE LUCA	168
VIII. THE DEAD CHRIST	174
NOTES ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS	181

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	ARTIST.	PAGE
PORTRAIT OF MICHAEL ANGELO. After a recent French engraving		<i>Frontispiece.</i>
HALF TITLE	S. L. SMITH	3
DEDICATION	S. L. SMITH	5
HEAD-PIECE PART FIRST	S. L. SMITH	7
PORTRAIT OF JULIA GONZAGA. From the engraving "Saint Agatha"	MRS. F. C. HOUSTON	10
VITTORIA COLONNA AND JULIA GONZAGA. On the castle terrace. <i>"I will go with you ; for I would not lose One hour of your dear presence"</i>	WALTER SHIRLAW	13
MICHAEL ANGELO IN HIS STUDIO. <i>"What is it guides my hand, what thoughts possess me, That I have drawn her face among the angels"</i>	THOMAS HOVENDEN	18
VITTORIA COLONNA, MICHAEL ANGELO, AND OTHERS. In the Chapel of San Silvestro. <i>"If friends of yours, then are they friends of mine. Pardon me, gentlemen. But when I entered I saw but the Marchesa"</i>	F. D. MILLET	23
CARDINAL IPPOLITO. From a steel engraving of the portrait by Titian		28
DUKE ALESSANDRO. From a medal by Benvenuto Cellini. <i>"The Duke, my cousin, the black Alessandro, Whose mother was a Moorish slave"</i>		32
MICHAEL ANGELO. From Buonasoni's portrait. <i>"All art and artists of the present day Centre in him"</i>		36
CARDINAL IPPOLITO AND FRA SEBASTIAN DEL PIOMBO. <i>"Now unsheathe it. 'T is a Damascus blade ; you see the inscription In Arabia : La Allah illa Allah"</i>	T. DE THULSTRUP	39
JULIA GONZAGA AND VALDESSO. <i>"This warrants me in saying You think you can win heaven by compromise, And not by verdict"</i>	WALTER SHIRLAW	51

VESUVIUS.

<i>"The dim, mysterious sea in silence sleeps ; And straight into the air Vesuvius lifts His plume of smoke"</i>		ROSS TURNER	55
ISCHIA.	The home of Vittoria Colonna	W. H. GIBSON	61
HEAD.	Considered by many to be a likeness of Vittoria Colonna. It was drawn in black chalk by Michael An- gelo		67
HALF TITLE.	PART SECOND	S. L. SMITH	71
FLORENCE		F. B. SCHELL	79
<i>"As a youth I walked with Ghirlandajo in the gardens Of the Medici"</i>		LOUIS RITTER	82
CELLINI AT THE SIEGE OF ROME.			
<i>"And firing at him with due aim and range, I cut the gay Hidalgo in two pieces"</i>		T. DE THULSTRUP	85
FRA SEBASTIAN DEL PIOMBO.	From the portrait by Gio- gio Vasari		91
FRA SEBASTIAN'S PORTRAIT OF VITTORIA COLONNA			96
<i>"See how hard the outline, Sharp-cut and clear, not rounded into shadow. Yet that is nature"</i>		ROSS TURNER	98
VENICE.			
<i>"Your still lagoons, Your City of Silence floating in the sea"</i>		THEODORE WENDELL	103
TITIAN.	After the etching by Angostino Carracci		105
MICHAEL ANGELO'S VISIT TO TITIAN'S STUDIO.			
<i>"And now, Maestro, pray unveil your picture Of Danaë, of which I hear such praise"</i>		WALTER SHIRLAW	107
GIORGIO VASARI.	After an old print	ROBERT LEWIS	111
JULIA GONZAGA AND MICHAEL ANGELO AT THE DEATH OF VITTORIA COLONNA.			
<i>"Alas ! yes, she is dead ! Even death itself in her fair face seems fair"</i>		WALTER SHIRLAW	117
HALF TITLE.	PART THIRD	S. L. SMITH	121
MICHAEL ANGELO'S SEAL			124
VENICE AT NIGHT		ROSS TURNER	131
MICHAEL ANGELO AND BINDO ALTOVITI.			
<i>"The same reason That keeps you standing sentinel at your door"</i>		T. DE THULSTRUP	139
MICHAEL ANGELO AND TOMASO DE CAVALIERI IN THE COLISEUM.			
<i>"Oh, I am put to shame, when I consider How mean our work is, when compared with theirs"</i>		F. D. MILLET	145
BENVENUTO CELLINI.	From the portrait by Giorgio Vasari		150

CELLINI CASTING THE STATUE.

"And cast them one by one into the furnace

To liquefy the mass"

WALTER SHIRLAW 155

MICHAEL ANGELO AND HIS AGED SERVANT URBINO.

"Take this purse,

Two thousand crowns in gold"

T. DE THULSTRUP 167

MICHAEL ANGELO AND THE MONK. The Valley of Clitumnus below.

"Were it a cross

That had been laid upon me, I could bear it,

Or full with it"

F. D. MILLET 171

MICHAEL ANGELO BEFORE HIS GROUP. "The Dead Christ."

"O Death, why is it I cannot portray

Thy form and features? Do I stand too near thee?"

THOMAS HOVENDEN 175

FINIS

S. L. SMITH 179

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

THE Dramatic Poem of Michael Angelo was written by Mr. Longfellow mainly about ten years before his death, but was kept by him for occasional revision, and printed after his death in THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY from his final copy. It had been his wish that the poem, when published as a book, should be accompanied by illustrations, and the Publishers have accordingly reserved it for this form. In the plan of its illustration they have followed so far as they could the spirit in which the poet composed it, making the designs descriptive of the historical and biographical features of the poem, for the most part, and studying to render them accurate in their interpretation of the facts. They have added a few notes for the reader's convenience, since the portraits, which form the chief subject of the notes, could not be referred to except by recourse to a variety of works.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

VITTORIA COLONNA.

JULIA GONZAGA.

FRA SEBASTIANO DEL PIOMBO.

BENVENUTO CELLINI.

TITIAN.

POPE JULIUS III.

CARDINAL IPPOLITO.

CARDINAL SALVIATI.

CARDINAL MARCELLO.

GIOVANNI VALDESSO.

GIORGIO VASARI.

BINDO ALTOVITI.

TOMASO DE' CAVALIERI.

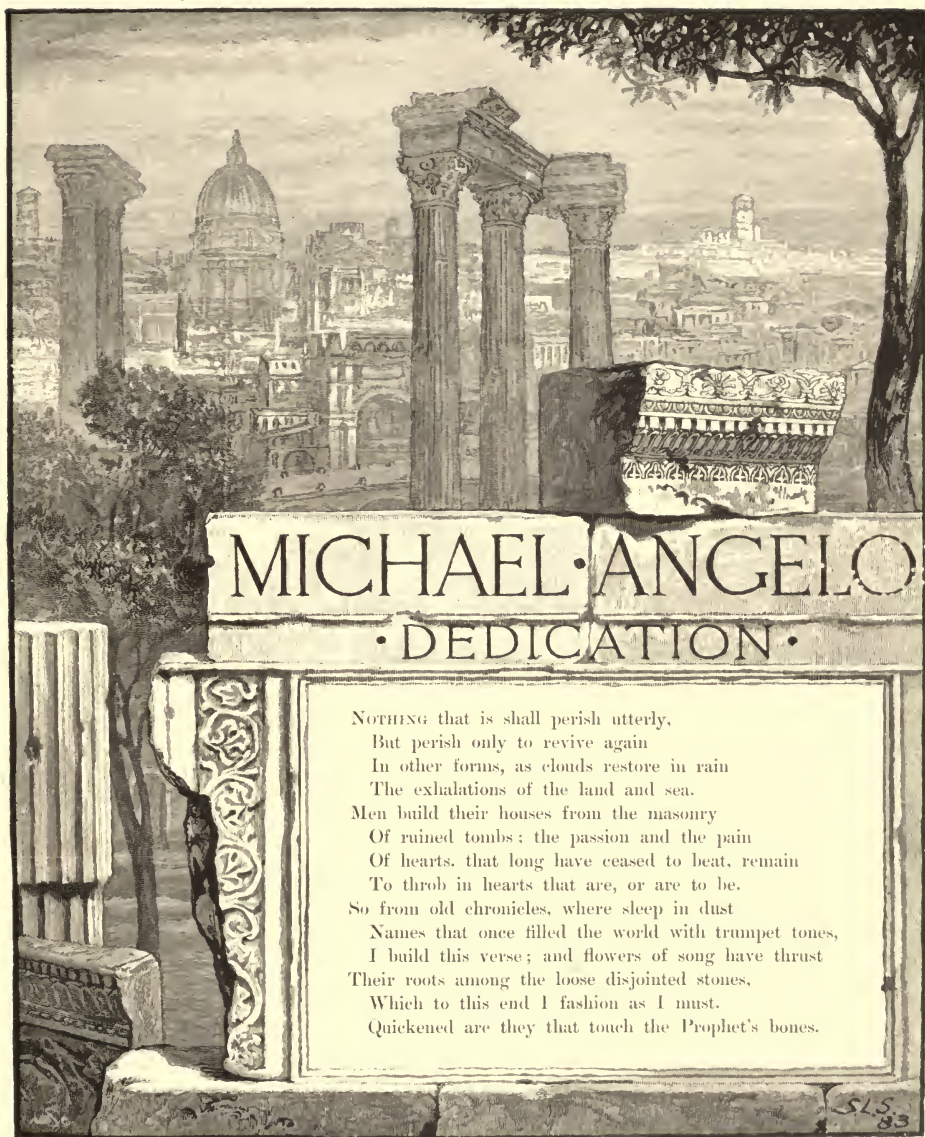
CLAUDIO TOLOMMEL.

JACOPO NARDI.

URBINO.

A MONK.





MICHAEL ANGELO
• DEDICATION •

Nothing that is shall perish utterly,
But perish only to revive again
In other forms, as clouds restore in rain
The exhalations of the land and sea.
Men build their houses from the masonry
Of ruined tombs; the passion and the pain
Of hearts, that long have ceased to beat, remain
To throb in hearts that are, or are to be.
So from old chronicles, where sleep in dust
Names that once filled the world with trumpet tones,
I build this verse; and flowers of song have thrust
Their roots among the loose disjointed stones,
Which to this end I fashion as I must.
Quickened are they that touch the Prophet's bones.

S.L.S.
83

MICHAEL ANGELO



PART FIRST

I.

PROLOGUE AT ISCHIA.

The Castle Terrace. VITTORIA COLONNA, and JULIA GONZAGA.

VITTORIA.

Will you then leave me, Julia, and so soon,
To pace alone this terrace like a ghost ?

JULIA.

To-morrow, dearest.

VITTORIA.

Do not say to-morrow.
A whole month of to-morrows were too soon.
You must not go. You are a part of me.

JULIA.

I must return to Fondi.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

VITTORIA.

The old castle
 Needs not your presence. No one waits for you.
 Stay one day longer with me. They who go
 Feel not the pain of parting; it is they
 Who stay behind that suffer. I was thinking
 But yesterday how like and how unlike
 Have been, and are, our destinies. Your husband,
 The good Vespasian, an old man, who seemed
 A father to you rather than a husband,
 Died in your arms; but mine, in all the flower
 And promise of his youth, was taken from me
 As by a rushing wind. The breath of battle
 Breathed on him, and I saw his face no more,
 Save as in dreams it haunts me. As our love
 Was for these men, so is our sorrow for them.
 Yours a child's sorrow, smiling through its tears;
 But mine the grief of an impassioned woman,
 Who drank her life up in one draught of love.

JULIA.

Behold this locket. This is the white hair
 Of my Vespasian. This the flower-of-love,
 The amaranth, and beneath it the device,
Non moritura. Thus my heart remains
 True to his memory; and the ancient castle,
 Where we have lived together, where he died,
 Is dear to me as Ischia is to you.

VITTORIA.

I did not mean to chide you.

JULIA.

Let your heart

Find, if it can, some poor apology
 For one who is too young, and feels too keenly
 The joy of life, to give up all her days
 To sorrow for the dead. While I am true
 To the remembrance of the man I loved
 And mourn for still, I do not make a show
 Of all the grief I feel, nor live secluded
 And, like Veronica da Gámbara,
 Drape my whole house in mourning, and drive forth
 In coach of sable drawn by sable horses,
 As if I were a corpse. Ah, one to-day
 Is worth for me a thousand yesterdays.

VITTORIA.

Dear Julia! Friendship has its jealousies
 As well as love. Who waits for you at Fondi?

JULIA.

A friend of mine and yours; a friend and friar.
 You have at Naples your Fra Bernardino;
 And I at Fondi have my Fra Bastiano,
 The famous artist, who has come from Rome
 To paint my portrait. That is not a sin.

VITTORIA.

Only a vanity.

JULIA.

He painted yours.

VITTORIA.

Do not call up to me those days departed,
 When I was young, and all was bright about me,
 And the vicissitudes of life were things
 But to be read of in old histories,



Though as pertaining unto me or mine
 Impossible. Ah, then I dreamed your dreams,
 And now, grown older, I look back and see
 They were illusions.

JULIA.

Yet without illusions
 What would our lives become, what we ourselves?
 Dreams or illusions, call them what you will,
 They lift us from the commonplace of life
 To better things.

VITTORIA.

Are there no brighter dreams,
 No higher aspirations, than the wish
 To please and to be pleased?

JULIA.

For you there are :
 I am no saint ; I feel the world we live in

Comes before that which is to be hereafter,
And must be dealt with first.

VITTORIA.

But in what way ?

JULIA.

Let the soft wind that wafts to us the odor
Of orange blossoms, let the laughing sea
And the bright sunshine bathing all the world,
Answer the question.

VITTORIA.

And for whom is meant
This portrait that you speak of ?

JULIA.

For my friend
The Cardinal Ippolito.

VITTORIA.

For him ?

JULIA.

Yes, for Ippolito the Magnificent.
'T is always flattering to a woman's pride
To be admired by one whom all admire.

VITTORIA.

Ah, Julia, she that makes herself a dove
Is eaten by the hawk. Be on your guard.
He is a Cardinal ; and his adoration
Should be elsewhere directed.

JULIA.

You forget

The horror of that night, when Barbarossa,
 The Moorish corsair, landed on our coast
 To seize me for the Sultan Soliman ;
 How in the dead of night, when all were sleeping,
 He scaled the castle wall ; how I escaped,
 And in my night-dress, mounting a swift steed,
 Fled to the mountains, and took refuge there
 Among the brigands. Then of all my friends
 The Cardinal Ippolito was first
 To come with his retainers to my rescue.
 Could I refuse the only boon he asked
 At such a time, my portrait ?

VITTORIA.

I have heard

Strange stories of the splendors of his palace,
 And how, apparelled like a Spanish Prince,
 He rides through Rome with a long retinue
 Of Ethiopians and Numidians
 And Turks and Tartars, in fantastic dresses,
 Making a gallant show. Is this the way
 A Cardinal should live ?

JULIA.

He is so young ;

Hardly of age, or little more than that ;
 Beautiful, generous, fond of arts and letters,
 A poet, a musician, and a scholar ;
 Master of many languages, and a player
 On many instruments. In Rome, his palace
 Is the asylum of all men distinguished
 In art or science, and all Florentines



Escaping from the tyranny of his cousin,
Duke Alessandro.

VITTORIA.

I have seen his portrait,
Painted by Titian.. You have painted it
In brighter colors.

JULIA.

And my Cardinal,
At Itri, in the courtyard of his palace,
Keeps a tame lion !

VITTORIA.

And so counterfeits
St. Mark, the Evangelist !

JULIA.

Ah, your tame lion
Is Michael Angelo.

VITTORIA.

You speak a name
That always thrills me with a noble sound,
As of a trumpet ! Michael Angelo !
A lion all men fear and none can tame ;
A man that all men honor, and the model
That all should follow ; one who works and prays,
For work is prayer, and consecrates his life
To the sublime ideal of his art,
Till art and life are one ; a man who holds
Such place in all men's thoughts, that when they speak
Of great things done, or to be done, his name
Is ever on their lips.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

JULIA.

You too can paint
 The portrait of your hero, and in colors
 Brighter than Titian's ; I might warn you also
 Against the dangers that beset your path ;
 But I forbear.

VITTORIA.

If I were made of marble,
 Of Fior di Persico or Pavonazzo,
 He might admire me : being but flesh and blood,
 I am no more to him than other women ;
 That is, am nothing.

JULIA.

Does he ride through Rome
 Upon his little mule, as he was wont,
 With his slouched hat, and boots of Cordovan,
 As when I saw him last ?

VITTORIA.

Pray do not jest.
 I cannot couple with his noble name
 A trivial word ! Look, how the setting sun
 Lights up Castel-a-mare and Sorrento,
 And changes Capri to a purple cloud !
 And there Vesuvius with its plume of smoke,
 And the great city stretched upon the shore
 As in a dream !

JULIA.

Parthenope the Siren !

VITTORIA.

And yon long line of lights, those sun-lit windows
 Blaze like the torches carried in procession
 To do her honor ! It is beautiful !

JULIA.

I have no heart to feel the beauty of it !
 My feet are weary, pacing up and down
 These level flags, and wearier still my thoughts
 Treading the broken pavement of the Past.
 It is too sad. I will go in and rest,
 And make me ready for to-morrow's journey.

VITTORIA.

I will go with you ; for I would not lose
 One hour of your dear presence. 'T is enough
 Only to be in the same room with you.
 I need not speak to you, nor hear you speak ;
 If I but see you, I am satisfied

[*They go in.*]

II.

MONOLOGUE.

MICHAEL ANGELO'S *Studio*. *He is at work on the cartoon of the Last Judgment.*

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Why did the Pope and his ten Cardinals
 Come here to lay this heavy task upon me ?
 Were not the paintings on the Sistine ceiling
 Enough for them ? They saw the Hebrew leader
 Waiting, and clutching his tempestuous beard,
 But heeded not. The bones of Julius
 Shook in their sepulchre. I heard the sound ;
 They only heard the sound of their own voices.

Are there no other artists here in Rome
 To do this work, that they must needs seek me ?
 Fra Bastian, my Fra Bastian, might have done it ;
 But he is lost to art. The Papal Seals,

Like leaden weights upon a dead man's eyes,
Press down his lids ; and so the burden falls
On Michael Angelo, Chief Architect
And Painter of the Apostolic Palace.
That is the title they cajole me with,
To make me do their work and leave my own ;
But having once begun, I turn not back.
Blow, ye bright angels, on your golden trumpets
To the four corners of the earth, and wake
The dead to judgment ! Ye recording angels,
Open your books and read ! Ye dead, awake !
Rise from your graves, drowsy and drugged with death,
As men who suddenly aroused from sleep
Look round amazed, and know not where they are !

In happy hours, when the imagination
Wakes like a wind at midnight, and the soul



Trembles in all its leaves, it is a joy
To be uplifted on its wings, and listen,
To the prophetic voices in the air
That call us onward. Then the work we do
Is a delight, and the obedient hand
Never grows weary. But how different is it
In the disconsolate, discouraged hours,
When all the wisdom of the world appears
As trivial as the gossip of a nurse
In a sick-room, and all our work seems useless.

What is it guides my hand, what thoughts possess me,
That I have drawn her face among the angels,
Where she will be hereafter? O sweet dreams,
That through the vacant chambers of my heart
Walk in the silence, as familiar phantoms
Frequent an ancient house, what will ye with me?
'T is said that Emperors write their names in green
When under age, but when of age in purple.
So Love, the greatest Emperor of them all,
Writes his in green at first, but afterwards
In the imperial purple of our blood.
First love or last love, — which of these two passions
Is more omnipotent? Which is more fair,
The star of morning or the evening star?
The sunrise or the sunset of the heart?
The hour when we look forth to the unknown,
And the advancing day consumes the shadows,
Or that when all the landscape of our lives
Lies stretched behind us, and familiar places
Gleam in the distance, and sweet memories
Rise like a tender haze, and magnify
The objects we behold, that soon must vanish?

What matters it to me, whose countenance
 Is like Laocoön's, full of pain ; whose forehead
 Is a ploughed harvest-field, where threescore years
 Have sown in sorrow and have reaped in anguish ;
 To me, the artisan, to whom all women
 Have been as if they were not, or at most
 A sudden rush of pigeons in the air,
 A flutter of wings, a sound, and then a silence ?
 I am too old for love ; I am too old
 To flatter and delude myself with visions
 Of never-ending friendship with fair women,
 Imaginations, fantasies, illusions,
 In which the things that cannot be take shape,
 And seem to be, and for the moment are. [*Convent bells ring.*]

Distant and near and low and loud the bells,
 Dominican, Benedictine, and Franciscan,
 Jangle and wrangle in their airy towers,
 Discordant as the brotherhoods themselves
 In their dim cloisters. The descending sun
 Seems to caress the city that he loves,
 And crowns it with the aureole of a saint.
 I will go forth and breathe the air a while.

III.

SAN SILVESTRO.

A Chapel in the Church of San Silvestro on Monte Cavallo.

VITTORIA COLONNA, CLAUDIO TOLOMMEL, and others.

VITTORIA.

Here let us rest awhile, until the crowd
 Has left the church. I have already sent
 For Michael Angelo to join us here.

MESSER CLAUDIO.

After Fra Bernardino's wise discourse
 On the Pauline Epistles, certainly
 Some words of Michael Angelo on Art
 Were not amiss, to bring us back to earth.

MICHAEL ANGELO, *at the door.*

How like a Saint or Goddess she appears;
 Diana or Madonna, which I know not!
 In attitude and aspect formed to be
 At once the artist's worship and despair!

VITTORIA.

Welcome, Maestro. We were waiting for you.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

I met your messenger upon the way,
 And hastened hither.

VITTORIA.

It is kind of you
 To come to us, who linger here like gossips
 Wasting the afternoon in idle talk.
 These are all friends of mine and friends of yours.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

If friends of yours, then are they friends of mine
 Pardon me, gentlemen. But when I entered
 I saw but the Marchesa.

VITTORIA.

Take this seat
 Between me and Ser Claudio Tolommei,
 Who still maintains that our Italian tongue

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Should be called Tuscan. But for that offence
We will not quarrel with him.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Eccellenza —

VITTORIA.

Ser Claudio has banished Eccellenza
And all such titles from the Tuscan tongue.

MESSER CLAUDIO.

'T is the abuse of them and not the use
I deprecate.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

The use or the abuse,
It matters not. Let them all go together,
As empty phrases and frivolities,
And common as gold-lace upon the collar
Of an obsequious lackey.

VITTORIA.

That may be,
But something of politeness would go with them ;
We should lose something of the stately manners
Of the old school.

MESSER CLAUDIO.

Undoubtedly.

VITTORIA.

But that
Is not what occupies my thoughts at present,
Nor why I sent for you, Messer Michele.
It was to counsel me. His Holiness
Has granted me permission, long desired,



To build a convent in this neighborhood,
 Where the old tower is standing, from whose top
 Nero looked down upon the burning city.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

It is an inspiration !

VITTORIA.

I am doubtful
 How I shall build ; how large to make the convent,
 And which way fronting.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Ah, to build, to build !
 That is the noblest art of all the arts.
 Painting and sculpture are but images,
 Are merely shadows cast by outward things
 On stone or canvas, having in themselves
 No separate existence. Architecture,
 Existing in itself, and not in seeming
 A something it is not, surpasses them
 As substance shadow. Long, long years ago,
 Standing one morning near the Baths of Titus,
 I saw the statue of Laocoön
 Rise from its grave of centuries, like a ghost
 Writhing in pain ; and as it tore away
 The knotted serpents from its limbs, I heard,
 Or seemed to hear, the cry of agony
 From its white, parted lips. And still I marvel
 At the three Rhodian artists, by whose hands
 This miracle was wrought. Yet he beholds
 Far nobler works who looks upon the ruins
 Of temples in the Forum here in Rome.
 If God should give me power in my old age

To build for Him a temple half as grand
 As those were in their glory, I should count
 My age more excellent than youth itself,
 And all that I have hitherto accomplished
 As only vanity.

VITTORIA.

I understand you.

Art is the gift of God, and must be used
 Unto His glory. That in art is highest
 Which aims at this. When St. Hilarion blessed
 The horses of Italicus, they won
 The race at Gaza, for his benediction
 O'erpowered all magic; and the people shouted
 That Christ had conquered Marnas. So that art
 Which bears the consecration and the seal
 Of holiness upon it will prevail
 Over all others. Those few words of yours
 Inspire me with new confidence to build.
 What think you? The old walls might serve, perhaps,
 Some purpose still. The tower can hold the bells.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

If strong enough.

VITTORIA.

If not, it can be strengthened.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

I see no bar nor drawback to this building,
 And on our homeward way, if it shall please you,
 We may together view the site.

VITTORIA.

I thank you.

I did not venture to request so much.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Let us now go to the old walls you spake of,
Vossignoria —

VITTORIA.

What, again, Maestro ?

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Pardon me, Messer Claudio, if once more
I use the ancient courtesies of speech.
I am too old to change.

IV.

CARDINAL IPPOLITO.

A richly furnished apartment in the Palace of CARDINAL IPPOLITO. Night.

JACOPO NARDI, an old man, alone.

NARDI.

I am bewildered. These Numidian slaves,
In strange attire ; these endless antechambers ;
This lighted hall, with all its golden splendors,
Pictures, and statues ! Can this be the dwelling
Of a disciple of that lowly Man
Who had not where to lay his head ? These statues
Are not of Saints ; nor is this a Madonna,
This lovely face, that with such tender eyes
Looks down upon me from the painted canvas.
My heart begins to fail me. What can he
Who lives in boundless luxury at Rome
Care for the imperilled liberties of Florence,
Her people, her Republic ? Ah, the rich
Feel not the pangs of banishment. All doors
Are open to them, and all hands extended.
The poor alone are outcasts ; they who risked



All they possessed for liberty, and lost ;
 And wander through the world without a friend,
 Sick, comfortless, distressed, unknown, uncared for.

Enter CARDINAL IPPOLITO, in Spanish cloak and slouched hat.

IPPOLITO.

I pray you pardon me that I have kept you
 Waiting so long alone.

NARDI.

I wait to see

The Cardinal.

IPPOLITO.

I am the Cardinal ;

And you ?

NARDI.

Jacopo Nardi.

IPPOLITO.

You are welcome.

I was expecting you. Philippo Strozzi
Had told me of your coming.

NARDI.

'T was his son
That brought me to your door.

IPPOLITO.

Pray you, be seated.

You seem astonished at the garb I wear,
But at my time of life, and with my habits,
The petticoats of a Cardinal would be —
Troublesome ; I could neither ride nor walk,
Nor do a thousand things, if I were dressed
Like an old dowager. It were putting wine
Young as the young Astyanax into goblets
As old as Priam.

NARDI.

Oh, your Eminence
Knows best what you should wear.

IPPOLITO.

Dear Messer Nardi,

You are no stranger to me. I have read
Your excellent translation of the books
Of Titus Livius, the historian
Of Rome, and model of all historians
That shall come after him. It does you honor ;
But greater honor still the love you bear

To Florence, our dear country, and whose annals
I hope your hand will write, in happier days
Than we now see.

NARDI.

Your Eminence will pardon
The lateness of the hour.

IPPOLITO.

The hours I count not
As a sun-dial ; but am like a clock,
That tells the time as well by night as day.
So, no excuse. I know what brings you here.
You come to speak of Florence.

NARDI.

And her woes.

IPPOLITO.

The Duke, my cousin, the black Alessandro,
Whose mother was a Moorish slave, that fed
The sheep upon Lorenzo's farm, still lives
And reigns.

NARDI.

Alas, that such a scourge
Should fall on such a city !

IPPOLITO.

When he dies,
The Wild Boar in the gardens of Lorenzo,
The beast obscene, should be the monument
Of this bad man.

NARDI.

He walks the streets at night
With revellers, insulting honest men.
No house is sacred from his lusts. The convents

Are turned by him to brothels, and the honor
 Of women and all ancient pious customs
 Are quite forgotten now. The offices
 Of the Priori and Gonfalonieri
 Have been abolished. All the magistrates
 Are now his creatures. Liberty is dead.
 The very memory of all honest living
 Is wiped away, and even our Tuscan tongue
 Corrupted to a Lombard dialect.

IPPOLITO.

And worst of all his impious hand has broken
 The Martinella, — our great battle bell,
 That, sounding through three centuries, has led
 The Florentines to victory, — lest its voice
 Should waken in their souls some memory
 Of far-off times of glory.

NARDI.

What a change
 Ten little years have made! We all remember
 Those better days, when Niccola Capponi,
 The Gonfaloniere, from the windows
 Of the Old Palace, with the blast of trumpets,
 Proclaimed to the inhabitants that Christ
 Was chosen King of Florence; and already
 Christ is dethroned, and slain, and in his stead
 Reigns Lucifer! Alas, alas, for Florence!

IPPOLITO.

Lilies with lilies, said Savonarola;
 Florence and France! But I say Florence only,
 Or only with the Emperor's hand to help us
 In sweeping out the rubbish.



NARDI.

Little hope
Of help is there from him. He has betrothed
His daughter Margaret to this shameless Duke.
What hope have we from such an Emperor ?

IPPOLITO.

Baccio Valori and Philippo Strozzi,
Once the Duke's friends and intimates, are with us,
And Cardinals Salvati and Ridolfi.
We shall soon see, then, as Valori says,
Whether the Duke can best spare honest men,
Or honest men the Duke.

NARDI.

We have determined
To send ambassadors to Spain, and lay
Our griefs before the Emperor, though I fear
More than I hope.

IPPOLITO.

The Emperor is busy
With this new war against the Algerines,
And has no time to listen to complaints

From our ambassadors ; nor will I trust them,
 But go myself. All is in readiness
 For my departure, and to-morrow morning
 I shall go down to Itri, where I meet
 Dante da Castiglione and some others,
 Republicans and fugitives from Florence,
 And then take ship at Gaëta, and go
 To join the Emperor in his new crusade
 Against the Turk. I shall have time enough
 And opportunity to plead our cause.

NARDI, *rising*.

It is an inspiration, and I hail it
 As of good omen. May the power that sends it
 Bless our beloved country, and restore
 Its banished citizens. The soul of Florence
 Is now outside its gates. What lies within
 Is but a corpse, corrupted and corrupting.
 Heaven help us all. I will not tarry longer,
 For you have need of rest. Good-night.

IPPOLITO.

Good-night !

Enter FRA SEBASTIANO ; Turkish Attendants.

IPPOLITO.

Fra Bastiano, how your portly presence
 Contrasts with that of the spare Florentine
 Who has just left me !

FRA SEBASTIANO.

As we passed each other,
 I saw that he was weeping.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

IPPOLITO.

Poor old man !

FRA SEBASTIANO.

Who is he ?

IPPOLITO.

Jacopo Nardi. A brave soul ;
 One of the Fuorusciti, and the best
 And noblest of them all ; but he has made me
 Sad with his sadness. As I look on you
 My heart grows lighter. I behold a man
 Who lives in an ideal world, apart
 From all the rude collisions of our life,
 In a calm atmosphere.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

Your Eminence
 Is surely jesting. If you knew the life
 Of artists as I know it, you might think
 Far otherwise.

IPPOLITO.

But wherefore should I jest ?
 The world of art is an ideal world, —
 The world I love, and that I fain would live in ;
 So speak to me of artists and of art,
 Of all the painters, sculptors, and musicians
 That now illustrate Rome.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

Of the musicians,
 I know but Goudimel, the brave maestro
 And chapel-master of his Holiness,
 Who trains the Papal choir.

IPPOLITO.

In church this morning,
I listened to a mass of Goudimel,
Divinely chanted. In the Incarnatus,
In lieu of Latin words, the tenor sang
With infinite tenderness, in plain Italian,
A Neapolitan love-song.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

You amaze me.
Was it a wanton song ?

IPPOLITO.

Not a divine one.
I am not over-scrupulous, as you know,
In word or deed, yet such a song as that,
Sung by the tenor of the Papal choir,
And in a Papal mass, seemed out of place ;
There 's something wrong in it.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

There 's something wrong
In everything. We cannot make the world
Go right. 'T is not my business to reform
The Papal choir.

IPPOLITO.

Nor mine, thank Heaven !
Then tell me of the artists.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

Naming one
I name them all ; for there is only one :
His name is Messer Michael Angelo.



All art and artists of the present day
Centre in him.

IPPOLITO.

You count yourself as nothing ?

FRA SEBASTIANO.

Or less than nothing, since I am at best
Only a portrait-painter ; one who draws
With greater or less skill, as best he may,
The features of a face.

IPPOLITO.

And you have had
The honor, nay, the glory, of portraying
Julia Gonzaga ! Do you count as nothing
A privilege like that ? See there the portrait
Rebuking you with its divine expression.

Are you not penitent? He whose skilful hand
 Painted that lovely picture has not right
 To vilipend the art of portrait-painting.
 But what of Michael Angelo?

FRA SEBASTIANO.

But lately,
 Strolling together down the crowded Corso,
 We stopped, well pleased, to see your Eminence
 Pass on an Arab steed, a noble creature,
 Which Michael Angelo, who is a lover
 Of all things beautiful, especially
 When they are Arab horses, much admired,
 And could not praise enough.

IPPOLITO, *to an attendant.*

Hassan, to-morrow,
 When I am gone, but not till I am gone, —
 Be careful about that, — take Barbarossa
 To Messer Michael Angelo, the sculptor,
 Who lives there at Macello dei Corvi,
 Near to the Capitol; and take besides
 Some ten mule-loads of provender, and say
 Your master sends them to him as a present.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

A princely gift. Though Michael Angelo
 Refuses presents from his Holiness,
 Yours he will not refuse.

IPPOLITO.

You think him like
 Thymœtes, who received the wooden horse
 Into the walls of Troy. That book of Virgil

Have I translated in Italian verse,
 And shall, some day, when we have leisure for it,
 Be pleased to read you. When I speak of Troy
 I am reminded of another town
 And of a lovelier Helen, our dear Countess
 Julia Gonzaga. You remember, surely,
 The adventure with the corsair Barbarossa,
 And all that followed ?

FRA SEBASTIANO.

A most strange adventure ;
 A tale as marvellous and full of wonder
 As any in Boccaccio or Sacchetti ;
 Almost incredible !

IPPOLITO.

Were I a painter
 I should not want a better theme than that :
 The lovely lady fleeing through the night
 In wild disorder ; and the brigands' camp
 With the red fire-light on their swarthy faces.
 Could you not paint it for me ?

FRA SEBASTIANO.

No, not I.
 It is not in my line.

IPPOLITO.

Then you shall paint
 The portrait of the corsair, when we bring him
 A prisoner chained to Naples ; for I feel
 Something like admiration for a man
 Who dared this strange adventure.



FRA SEBASTIANO.

I will do it.

But catch the corsair first.

IPPOLITO.

You may begin
 To-morrow with the sword. Hassan, come hither ;
 Bring me the Turkish scimitar that hangs
 Beneath the picture yonder. Now unsheathe it.
 'T is a Damascus blade ; you see the inscription
 In Arabic : *La Allah illa Allah*, —
 There is no God but God.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

How beautiful
 In fashion and in finish ! It is perfect.
 The Arsenal of Venice cannot boast
 A finer sword.

IPPOLITO.

You like it ? It is yours.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

You do not mean it.

IPPOLITO.

I am not a Spaniard,
 To say that it is yours and not to mean it.
 I have at Itri a whole armory
 Full of such weapons. When you paint the portrait
 Of Barbarossa, it will be of use.
 You have not been rewarded as you should be
 For painting the Gonzaga. Throw this bauble
 Into the scale, and make the balance equal.

Till then suspend it in your studio ;
 You artists like such trifles.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

I will keep it
 In memory of the donor. Many thanks.

IPPOLITO.

Fra Bastian, I am growing tired of Rome,
 The old dead city, with the old dead people ;
 Priests everywhere, like shadows on a wall,
 And morning, noon, and night the ceaseless sound
 Of convent bells. I must be gone from here ;
 Though Ovid somewhere says that Rome is worthy
 To be the dwelling-place of all the Gods,
 I must be gone from here. To-morrow morning
 I start for Itri, and go thence by sea
 To join the Emperor, who is making war
 Upon the Algerines ; perhaps to sink
 Some Turkish galleys, and bring back in chains
 The famous corsair. Thus would I avenge
 The beautiful Gonzaga.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

An achievement
 Worthy of Charlemagne, or of Orlando.
 Berni and Ariosto both shall add
 A canto to their poems, and describe you
 As Furioso and Innamorato.
 Now I must say good-night.

IPPOLITO.

You must not go ;
 First you shall sup with me. My seneschal,

Giovan Andrea dal Borgo a San Sepolero, —
 I like to give the whole sonorous name,
 It sounds so like a verse of the Æneid, —
 Has brought me eels fresh from the Lake of Fondi,
 And Lucrine oysters cradled in their shells :
 These, with red Fondi wine, the Cæcuban
 That Horace speaks of, under a hundred keys
 Kept safe, until the heir of Posthumus
 Shall stain the pavement with it, make a feast
 Fit for Lucullus, or Fra Bastian even ;
 So we will go to supper, and be merry.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

Beware ! Remember that Bolsena's eels
 And Vernage wine once killed a Pope of Rome !

IPPOLITO.

'T was a French Pope ; and then so long ago ;
 Who knows ? — perhaps the story is not true.

V.

BORGO DELLE VERGINE AT NAPLES.

Room in the Palace of JULIA GONZAGA. Night.

JULIA GONZAGA, GIOVANNI VALDESSO.

JULIA.

Do not go yet.

VALDESSO.

The night is far advanced ;
 I fear to stay too late, and weary you
 With these discussions.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

JULIA.

I have much to say.
 I speak to you, Valdesso, with that frankness
 Which is the greatest privilege of friendship, —
 Speak as I hardly would to my confessor,
 Such is my confidence in you.

VALDESSO.

Dear Countess,
 If loyalty to friendship be a claim
 Upon your confidence, then I may claim it.

JULIA.

Then sit again, and listen unto things
 That nearer are to me than life itself.

VALDESSO.

In all things I am happy to obey you,
 And happiest then when you command me most.

JULIA.

Laying aside all useless rhetoric,
 That is superfluous between us two,
 I come at once unto the point, and say,
 You know my outward life, my rank and fortune ;
 Countess of Fondi, Duchess of Trajetto,
 A widow rich and flattered, for whose hand
 In marriage princes ask, and ask it only
 To be rejected. All the world can offer
 Lies at my feet. If I remind you of it,
 It is not in the way of idle boasting,
 But only to the better understanding
 Of what comes after.

•
VALDESSO.

God hath given you also
Beauty and intellect ; and the signal grace
To lead a spotless life amid temptations,
That others yield to.

JULIA.

But the inward life, —
That you know not ; 't is known but to myself,
And is to me a mystery and a pain.
A soul disquieted, and ill at ease,
A mind perplexed with doubts and apprehensions,
A heart dissatisfied with all around me,
And with myself, so that sometimes I weep,
Discouraged and disgusted with the world.

VALDESSO.

Whene'er we cross a river at a ford,
If we would pass in safety, we must keep
Our eyes fixed steadfast on the shore beyond,
For if we cast them on the flowing stream,
The head swims with it ; so if we would cross
The running flood of things here in the world,
Our souls must not look down, but fix their sight
On the firm land beyond.

JULIA.

I comprehend you.
You think I am too worldly ; that my head
Swims with the giddy whirl of life about me.
Is that your meaning ?

VALDESSO.

Yes ; your meditations

Are more of this world and its vanities
Than of the world to come.

JULIA.

Between the two
I am confused.

VALDESSO.

Yet have I seen you listen
Enraptured when Fra Bernardino preached
Of faith and hope and charity.

JULIA.

I listen,
But only as to music without meaning.
It moves me for the moment, and I think
How beautiful it is to be a saint,
As dear Vittoria is ; but I am weak
And wayward, and I soon fall back again
To my old ways, so very easily.
There are too many week-days for one Sunday.

VALDESSO.

Then take the Sunday with you through the week,
And sweeten with it all the other days.

JULIA.

In part I do so ; for to put a stop
To idle tongues, what men might say of me
If I lived all alone here in my palace,
And not from a vocation that I feel
For the monastic life, I now am living
With Sister Caterina at the convent
Of Santa Chiara, and I come here only

On certain days, for my affairs, or visits
Of ceremony, or to be with friends.
For I confess, to live among my friends
Is Paradise to me ; my Purgatory
Is living among people I dislike.
And so I pass my life in these two worlds,
This palace and the convent.

VALDESSO.

It was then
The fear of man, and not the love of God,
That led you to this step. Why will you not
Give all your heart to God ?

JULIA.

If God commands it,
Wherefore hath He not made me capable
Of doing for Him what I wish to do
As easily as I could offer Him
This jewel from my hand, this gown I wear,
Or aught else that is mine ?

VALDESSO.

The hindrance lies
In that original sin, by which all fell.

JULIA.

Ah me, I cannot bring my troubled mind
To wish well to that Adam, our first parent,
Who by his sin lost Paradise for us,
And brought such ills upon us.

VALDESSO.

We ourselves,

MICHAEL ANGELO.

When we commit a sin, lose Paradise,
As much as he did. Let us think of this,
And how we may regain it.

JULIA.

Teach me, then,
To harmonize the discord of my life,
And stop the painful jangle of these wires.

VALDESSO.

That is a task impossible, until
You tune your heart-strings to a higher key
Than earthly melodies.

JULIA.

How shall I do it ?
Point out to me the way of this perfection,
And I will follow you ; for you have made
My soul enamored with it, and I cannot
Rest satisfied until I find it out.
But lead me privately, so that the world
Hear not my steps ; I would not give occasion
For talk among the people.

VALDESSO.

Now at last
I understand you fully. Then, what need
Is there for us to beat about the bush ?
I know what you desire of me.

JULIA.

What rudeness !
If you already know it, why not tell me ?

VALDESSO.

Because I rather wait for you to ask it
With your own lips.

JULIA.

Do me the kindness, then,
To speak without reserve ; and with all frankness,
If you divine the truth, will I confess it.

VALDESSO.

I am content.

JULIA.

Then speak.

VALDESSO.

You would be free
From the vexatious thoughts that come and go
Through your imagination, and would have me
Point out some royal road and lady-like
Which you may walk in, and not wound your feet ;
You would attain to the divine perfection,
And yet not turn your back upon the world ;
You would possess humility within,
But not reveal it in your outward actions ;
You would have patience, but without the rude
Occasions that require its exercise ;
You would despise the world, but in such fashion
The world should not despise you in return ;
Would clothe the soul with all the Christian graces,
Yet not despoil the body of its gauds ;
Would feed the soul with spiritual food,
Yet not deprive the body of its feasts ;
Would seem angelic in the sight of God,
Yet not too saint-like in the eyes of men ;

In short, would lead a holy Christian life
 In such a way that even your nearest friend
 Would not detect therein one circumstance
 To show a change from what it was before.
 Have I divined your secret ?

JULIA.

You have drawn
 The portrait of my inner self as truly
 As the most skilful painter ever painted
 A human face.

VALDESSO.

This warrants me in saying
 You think you can win heaven by compromise,
 And not by verdict.

JULIA.

You have often told me
 That a bad compromise was better even
 Than a good verdict.

VALDESSO.

Yes, in suits at law ;
 Not in religion. With the human soul
 There is no compromise. By faith alone
 Can man be justified.

JULIA.

Hush, dear Valdesso ;
 That is a heresy. Do not, I pray you,
 Proclaim it from the house-top, but preserve it
 As something precious, hidden in your heart,
 As I, who half believe and tremble at it.



VALDESSO.

I must proclaim the truth.

JULIA.

Enthusiast !

Why must you ? You imperil both yourself
 And friends by your imprudence. Pray, be patient
 You have occasion now to show that virtue
 Which you lay stress upon. Let us return
 To our lost pathway. Show me by what steps
 I shall walk in it. *[Convent bells are heard.]*

VALDESSO.

Hark ! the convent bells
 Are ringing ; it is midnight ; I must leave you.
 And yet I linger. Pardon me, dear Countess,
 Since you to-night have made me your confessor,
 If I so far may venture, I will warn you
 Upon one point.

JULIA.

What is it ? Speak, I pray you,
 For I have no concealments in my conduct ;
 All is as open as the light of day.
 What is it you would warn me of ?

VALDESSO.

Your friendship

With Cardinal Ippolito.

JULIA.

What is there
 To cause suspicion or alarm in that,
 More than in friendships that I entertain
 With you and others ? I ne'er sat with him

Alone at night, as I am sitting now
With you, Valdesso.

VALDESSO.

Pardon me ; the portrait
That Fra Bastiano painted was for him.
Is that quite prudent ?

JULIA.

That is the same question
Vittoria put to me, when I last saw her.
I make you the same answer. That was not
A pledge of love, but of pure gratitude.
Recall the adventure of that dreadful night
When Barbarossa with two thousand Moors
Landed upon the coast, and in the darkness
Attacked my castle. Then, without delay,
The Cardinal came hurrying down from Rome
To rescue and protect me. Was it wrong
That in an hour like that I did not weigh
Too nicely this or that, but granted him
A boon that pleased him, and that flattered me ?

VALDESSO.

Only beware lest, in disguise of friendship,
Another corsair, worse than Barbarossa,
Steal in and seize the castle, not by storm
But strategy. And now I take my leave.

JULIA.

Farewell ; but ere you go look forth and see
How night hath hushed the clamor and the stir
Of the tumultuous streets. The cloudless moon
Roofs the whole city as with tiles of silver ;



The dim, mysterious sea in silence sleeps ;
And straight into the air Vesuvius lifts
His plume of smoke. How beautiful it is !

[*Voices in the street.*]

GIOVAN ANDREA.

Poisoned at Itri.

ANOTHER VOICE.

Poisoned ? Who is poisoned ?

GIOVAN ANDREA.

The Cardinal Ippolito, my master.
Call it malaria. It was very sudden.

[*Julia swoons.*]

VI.

VITTORIA COLONNA.

A room in the Torre Argentina.

VITTORIA COLONNA and JULIA GONZAGA.

VITTORIA.

Come to my arms and to my heart once more ;
 My soul goes out to meet you and embrace you,
 For we are of the sisterhood of sorrow.
 I know what you have suffered.

JULIA.

Name it not.

Let me forget it.

VITTORIA.

I will say no more.
 Let me look at you. What a joy it is
 To see your face, to hear your voice again !
 You bring with you a breath as of the morn,
 A memory of the far-off happy days
 When we were young. When did you come from Fondi ?

JULIA.

I have not been at Fondi since —

VITTORIA.

Ah me !

You need not speak the word ; I understand you.

JULIA.

I came from Naples by the lovely valley,
 The Terra di Lavoro.

VITTORIA.

And you find me
But just returned from a long journey northward.
I have been staying with that noble woman
Renée of France, the Duchess of Ferrara.

JULIA.

Oh, tell me of the Duchess. I have heard
Flaminio speak her praises with such warmth
That I am eager to hear more of her
And of her brilliant court.

VITTORIA.

You shall hear all.
But first sit down and listen patiently
While I confess myself.

JULIA.

What deadly sin
Have you committed ?

VITTORIA.

Not a sin ; a folly.
I chid you once at Ischia, when you told me
That brave Fra Bastian was to paint your portrait.

JULIA.

Well I remember it.

VITTORIA.

Then chide me now,
For I confess to something still more strange.
Old as I am, I have at last consented
To the entreaties and the supplications
Of Michael Angelo —

MICHAEL ANGELO.

JULIA.

To marry him ?

VITTORIA.

I pray you, do not jest with me ! You know,
 Or you should know, that never such a thought
 Entered my breast. I am already married.
 The Marquis of Pescara is my husband,
 And death has not divorced us.

JULIA.

Pardon me.

Have I offended you ?

VITTORIA.

No, but have hurt me.

Unto my buried lord I give myself,
 Unto my friend the shadow of myself,
 My portrait. It is not from vanity,
 But for the love I bear him.

JULIA.

I rejoice

To hear these words. Oh, this will be a portrait
 Worthy of both of you !

[*A knock.*]

VITTORIA.

Hark ! he is coming.

JULIA.

And shall I go or stay ?

VITTORIA.

By all means, stay.

The drawing will be better for your presence ;
You will enliven me.

JULIA.

I shall not speak ;
The presence of great men doth take from me
All power of speech. I only gaze at them
In silent wonder, as if they were gods,
Or the inhabitants of some other planet.

Enter MICHAEL ANGELO.

VITTORIA.

Come in.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

I fear my visit is ill-timed ;
I interrupt you.

VITTORIA.

No ; this is a friend
Of yours as well as mine, — the Lady Julia,
The Duchess of Trajetto.

MICHAEL ANGELO *to* JULIA.

I salute you.
'T is long since I have seen your face, my lady ;
Pardon me if I say that having seen it,
One never can forget it.

JULIA.

You are kind
To keep me in your memory.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

It is

MICHAEL ANGELO.

The privilege of age to speak with frankness.
 You will not be offended when I say
 That never was your beauty more divine.

JULIA.

When Michael Angelo condescends to flatter
 Or praise me, I am proud, and not offended.

VITTORIA.

Now this is gallantry enough for one ;
 Show me a little.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Ah, my gracious lady,
 You know I have not words to speak your praise.
 I think of you in silence. You conceal
 Your manifold perfections from all eyes,
 And make yourself more saint-like day by day,
 And day by day men worship you the more.
 But now your hour of martyrdom has come.
 You know why I am here.

VITTORIA.

Ah yes, I know it ;
 And meet my fate with fortitude. You find me
 Surrounded by the labors of your hands :
 The Woman of Samaria at the Well,
 The Mater Dolorosa, and the Christ
 Upon the Cross, beneath which you have written
 Those memorable words of Alighieri,
 " Men have forgotten how much blood it costs."

MICHAEL ANGELO.

And now I come to add one labor more,



If you will call that labor which is pleasure,
And only pleasure.

VITTORIA.

How shall I be seated?

MICHAEL ANGELO, *opening his portfolio.*

Just as you are. The light falls well upon you.

VITTORIA.

I am ashamed to steal the time from you
That should be given to the Sistine Chapel.
How does that work go on?

MICHAEL ANGELO, *drawing.*

But tardily.
Old men work slowly. Brain and hand alike
Are dull and torpid. To die young is best,
And not to be remembered as old men
Tottering about in their decrepitude.

VITTORIA.

My dear Maestro! have you, then, forgotten
The story of Sophocles in his old age?

MICHAEL ANGELO.

What story is it?

VITTORIA.

When his sons accused him,
Before the Areopagus, of dotage,
For all defence, he read there to his judges
The tragedy of Œdipus Coloneus, —
The work of his old age.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

'T is an illusion,
A fabulous story, that will lead old men
Into a thousand follies and conceits.

VITTORIA.

So you may show to cavillers your painting
Of the Last Judgment in the Sistine Chapel.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Now you and Lady Julia shall resume
The conversation that I interrupted.

VITTORIA.

It was of no great import ; nothing more
Nor less than my late visit to Ferrara,
And what I saw there in the ducal palace.
Will it not interrupt you ?

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Not the least.

VITTORIA.

Well, first, then, of Duke Ercole : a man
Cold in his manners, and reserved and silent,
And yet magnificent in all his ways ;
Not hospitable unto new ideas,
But from state policy, and certain reasons
Concerning the investiture of the duchy,
A partisan of Rome, and consequently
Intolerant of all the new opinions.

JULIA.

I should not like the Duke. These silent men,

Who only look and listen, are like wells
That have no water in them, deep and empty.
How could the daughter of a king of France
Wed such a duke ?

MICHAEL ANGELO.

The men that women marry,
And why they marry them, will always be
A marvel and a mystery to the world.

VITTORIA.

And then the Duchess, — how shall I describe her,
Or tell the merits of that happy nature,
Which pleases most when least it thinks of pleasing ?
Not beautiful, perhaps, in form and feature,
Yet with an inward beauty, that shines through
Each look and attitude and word and gesture ;
A kindly grace of manner and behavior,
A something in her presence and her ways
That makes her beautiful beyond the reach
Of mere external beauty ; and in heart
So noble and devoted to the truth,
And so in sympathy with all who strive
After the higher life.

JULIA.

She draws me to her
As much as her Duke Ereole repels me.

VITTORIA.

Then the devout and honorable women
That grace her court, and make it good to be there ;
Francesca Bueyronia, the true-hearted,
Lavinia della Rovere and the Orsini,

MICHAEL ANGELO.

The Magdalena and the Cherubina,
 And Anne de Parthenai, who sings so sweetly ;
 All lovely women, full of noble thoughts
 And aspirations after noble things.

JULIA.

Boccaccio would have envied you such dames.

VITTORIA.

No ; his Fiammettas and his Philomenas
 Are fitter company for Ser Giovanni ;
 I fear he hardly would have comprehended
 The women that I speak of.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Yet he wrote

The story of Griselda. That is something
 To set down in his favor.

VITTORIA.

With these ladies

Was a young girl, Olympia Morata,
 Daughter of Fulvio, the learned scholar,
 Famous in all the universities :
 A marvellous child, who at the spinning-wheel,
 And in the daily round of household cares,
 Hath learned both Greek and Latin ; and is now
 A favorite of the Duchess and companion
 Of Princess Anne. This beautiful young Sappho
 Sometimes recited to us Grecian odes
 That she had written, with a voice whose sadness
 Thrilled and o'ermastered me, and made me look
 Into the future time, and ask myself
 What destiny will be hers.

JULIA.

A sad one, surely.
Frost kills the flowers that blossom out of season ;
And these precocious intellects portend
A life of sorrow or an early death.

VITTORIA.

About the court were many learned men ;
Chilian Sinapius from beyond the Alps,



And Celio Curione, and Manzolli,
The Duke's physician ; and a pale young man,
Charles d'Espeville of Geneva, whom the Duchess
Doth much delight to talk with and to read,
For he hath written a book of Institutes
The Duchess greatly praises, though some call it
The Koran of the heretics.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

JULIA.

And what poets
Were there to sing you madrigals and praise
Olympia's eyes and Cherubina's tresses ?

VITTORIA.

None ; for great Ariosto is no more.
The voice that filled those halls with melody
Has long been hushed in death.

JULIA.

You should have made
A pilgrimage unto the poet's tomb,
And laid a wreath upon it, for the words
He spake of you.

VITTORIA.

And of yourself no less,
And of our master, Michael Angelo.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Of me ?

VITTORIA.

Have you forgotten that he calls you
Michael, less man than angel, and divine ?
You are ungrateful.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

A mere play on words.
That adjective he wanted for a rhyme,
To match with Gian Bellino and Urbino.

VITTORIA.

Bernardo Tasso is no longer there.

Nor the gay troubadour of Gascony,
Clement Marot, surnamed by flatterers
The Prince of Poets and the Poet of Princes,
Who, being looked upon with much disfavor
By the Duke Ercole, has fled to Venice.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

There let him stay with Pietro Aretino,
The Scourge of Princes, also called Divine.
The title is so common in our mouths,
That even the Pifferari of Abruzzi,
Who play their bag-pipes in the streets of Rome
At the Epiphany, will bear it soon,
And will deserve it better than some poets.

VITTORIA.

What bee hath stung you ?

MICHAEL ANGELO.

One that makes no honey ;
One that comes buzzing in through every window,
And stabs men with his sting. A bitter thought
Passed through my mind, but it is gone again ;
I spake too hastily.

JULIA.

I pray you, show me
What you have done.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Not yet ; it is not finished.



PART SECOND.

I.

MONOLOGUE.

A room in MICHAEL ANGELO'S house.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

FLED to Viterbo, the old Papal city
Where once an Emperor, humbled in his pride,
Held the Pope's stirrup, as his Holiness
Alighted from his mule ! A fugitive
From Cardinal Caraffa's hate, who hurls
His thunders at the house of the Colonna,
With endless bitterness ! — Among the nuns
In Santa Catarina's convent hidden,
Herself in soul a nun ! And now she chides me
For my too frequent letters, that disturb
Her meditations, and that hinder me
And keep me from my work ; now graciously
She thanks me for the crucifix I sent her,
And says that she will keep it : with one hand
Inflicts a wound, and with the other heals it. [*Reading.*

“ Profoundly I believed that God would grant you
A supernatural faith to paint this Christ ;
I wished for that which now I see fulfilled
So marvellously, exceeding all my wishes.
Nor more could be desired, or even so much.
And greatly I rejoice that you have made
The angel on the right so beautiful ;
For the Archangel Michael will place you,
You, Michael Angelo, on that new day,

Upon the Lord's right hand ! And waiting that,
 How can I better serve you than to pray
 To this sweet Christ for you, and to beseech you
 To hold me altogether yours in all things."

Well, I will write less often, or no more,
 But wait her coming. No one born in Rome
 Can live elsewhere ; but he must pine for Rome,
 And must return to it. I, who am born
 And bred a Tuscan and a Florentine,
 Feel the attraction, and I linger here
 As if I were a pebble in the pavement
 Trodden by priestly feet. This I endure,
 Because I breathe in Rome an atmosphere
 Heavy with odors of the laurel leaves
 That crowned great heroes of the sword and pen,
 In ages past. I feel myself exalted
 To walk the streets in which a Virgil walked,
 Or Trajan rode in triumph ; but far more,
 And most of all, because the great Colonna
 Breathes the same air I breathe, and is to me
 An inspiration. Now that she is gone,
 Rome is no longer Rome till she return.
 This feeling overmasters me. I know not
 If it be love, this strong desire to be
 Forever in her presence ; but I know
 That I, who was the friend of solitude,
 And ever was best pleased when most alone,
 Now weary grow of my own company.
 For the first time old age seems lonely to me.

[Opening the *Divina Commedia*.

I turn for consolation to the leaves
 Of the great master of our Tuscan tongue,
 Whose words, like colored garnet-shirls in lava,

Betray the heat in which they were engendered.
 A mendicant, he ate the bitter bread
 Of others, but repaid their meagre gifts
 With immortality. In courts of princes
 He was a by-word, and in streets of towns
 Was mocked by children, like the Hebrew prophet,
 Himself a prophet. I too know the cry,
 Go up, thou bald head ! from a generation
 That, wanting reverence, wanteth the best food
 The soul can feed on. There 's not room enough
 For age and youth upon this little planet.
 Age must give way. There was not room enough
 Even for this great poet. In his song
 I hear reverberate the gates of Florence,
 Closing upon him, never more to open ;
 But mingled with the sound are melodies
 Celestial from the gates of paradise.
 He came, and he is gone. The people knew not
 What manner of man was passing by their doors,
 Until he passed no more ; but in his vision
 He saw the torments and beatitudes
 Of souls condemned or pardoned, and hath left
 Behind him this sublime Apocalypse.

I strive in vain to draw here on the margin
 The face of Beatrice. It is not hers,
 But the Colonna's. Each hath his ideal,
 The image of some woman excellent,
 That is his guide. No Grecian art, nor Roman,
 Hath yet revealed such loveliness as hers.

II.

VITERBO.

VITTORIA COLONNA *at the convent window.*

VITTORIA.

Parting with friends is temporary death,
 As all death is. We see no more their faces,
 Nor hear their voices, save in memory ;
 But messages of love give us assurance
 That we are not forgotten. Who shall say
 That from the world of spirits comes no greeting,
 No message of remembrance ? It may be
 The thoughts that visit us, we know not whence,
 Sudden as inspiration, are the whispers
 Of disembodied spirits, speaking to us
 As friends, who wait outside a prison wall,
 Through the barred windows speak to those within.

[*A pause.*]

As quiet as the lake that lies beneath me,
 As quiet as the tranquil sky above me,
 As quiet as a heart that beats no more,
 This convent seems. Above, below, all peace !
 Silence and solitude, the soul's best friends,
 Are with me here, and the tumultuous world
 Makes no more noise than the remotest planet.
 O gentle spirit, unto the third circle
 Of heaven among the blessed souls ascended,
 Who, living in the faith and dying for it,
 Have gone to their reward, I do not sigh
 For thee as being dead, but for myself
 That I am still alive. Turn those dear eyes,

Once so benignant to me, upon mine,
 That open to their tears such uncontrolled
 And such continual issue. Still awhile
 Have patience ; I will come to thee at last.
 A few more goings in and out these doors,
 A few more chimings of these convent bells,
 A few more prayers, a few more sighs and tears,
 And the long agony of this life will end,
 And I shall be with thee. If I am wanting
 To thy well-being, as thou art to mine,
 Have patience ; I will come to thee at last.
 Ye minds that loiter in these cloister gardens,
 Or wander far above the city walls,
 Bear unto him this message, that I ever
 Or speak or think of him, or weep for him.

By unseen hands uplifted in the light
 Of sunset, yonder solitary cloud
 Floats, with its white apparel blown abroad,
 And wafted up to heaven. It fades away,
 And melts into the air. Ah, would that I
 Could thus be wafted unto thee, Francesco,
 A cloud of white, an incorporeal spirit !

III.

MICHAEL ANGELO AND BENVENUTO CELLINI.

MICHAEL ANGELO, BENVENUTO CELLINI *in gay attire.*

BENVENUTO.

A good day and good year to the divine
 Maestro Michael Angelo, the sculptor !

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Welcome, my Benvenuto.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

BENVENUTO.

That is what
 My father said, the first time he beheld
 This handsome face. But say farewell, not welcome.
 I come to take my leave. I start for Florence
 As fast as horse can carry me. I long
 To set once more upon its level flags
 These feet, made sore by your vile Roman pavements.
 Come with me ; you are wanted there in Florence.
 The Sacristy is not finished.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Speak not of it !
 How damp and cold it was ! How my bones ached
 And my head reeled, when I was working there !
 I am too old. I will stay here in Rome,
 Where all is old and crumbling, like myself,
 To hopeless ruin. All roads lead to Rome.

BENVENUTO.

And all lead out of it.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

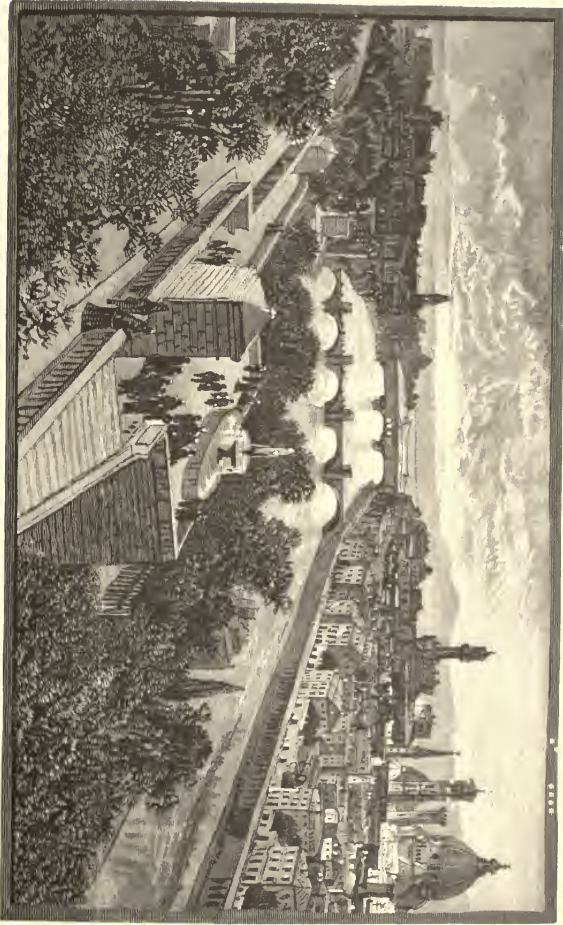
There is a charm,
 A certain something in the atmosphere,
 That all men feel, and no man can describe.

BENVENUTO.

Malaria ?

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Yes, malaria of the mind,
 Out of this tomb of the majestic Past ;
 The fever to accomplish some great work



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

That will not let us sleep. I must go on
Until I die.

BENVENUTO.

Do you ne'er think of Florence ?

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Yes ; whenever
I think of anything beside my work,
I think of Florence. I remember, too,
The bitter days I passed among the quarries
Of Seravezza and Pietrasanta ;
Road-building in the marshes ; stupid people,
And cold and rain incessant, and mad gusts
Of mountain wind, like howling dervishes,
That spun and whirled the eddying snow about them
As if it were a garment ; aye, vexations
And troubles of all kinds, that ended only
In loss of time and money.

BENVENUTO.

True, Maestro ;
But that was not in Florence. You should leave
Such work to others. Sweeter memories
Cluster about you, in the pleasant city
Upon the Arno.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

In my waking dreams
I see the marvellous dome of Brunelleschi,
Ghiberti's gates of bronze, and Giotto's tower ;
And Ghirlandajo's lovely Benci glides
With folded hands amid my troubled thoughts,
A splendid vision ! Time rides with the old

At a great pace. As travellers on swift steeds
See the near landscape fly and flow behind them,
While the remoter fields and dim horizons
Go with them, and seem wheeling round to meet them,
So in old age things near us slip away,
And distant things go with us. Pleasantly
Come back to me the days when, as a youth,
I walked with Ghirlandajo in the gardens
Of Medici, and saw the antique statues,
The forms august of gods and godlike men,
And the great world of art revealed itself
To my young eyes. Then all that man hath done
Seemed possible to me. Alas! how little
Of all I dreamed of has my hand achieved!

BENVENUTO.

Nay, let the Night and Morning, let Lorenzo
And Julian in the Sacristy at Florence,
Prophets and Sibyls in the Sistine Chapel,
And the Last Judgment answer. Is it finished?



MICHAEL ANGELO.

The work is nearly done. But this Last Judgment
Has been the cause of more vexation to me
Than it will be of honor. Ser Biagio,
Master of ceremonies at the Papal court,
A man punctilious and over nice,
Calls it improper ; says that those nude forms,
Showing their nakedness in such shameless fashion,
Are better suited to a common bagnio,
Or wayside wine-shop, than a Papal Chapel.
To punish him I painted him as Minos
And leave him there as master of ceremonies
In the Infernal Regions. What would you
Have done to such a man ?

BENVENUTO.

I would have killed him.
When any one insults me, if I can
I kill him, kill him.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Oh, you gentlemen,
Who dress in silks and velvets, and wear swords,
Are ready with your weapons, and have all
A taste for homicide.

BENVENUTO.

I learned that lesson
Under Pope Clement at the siege of Rome,
Some twenty years ago. As I was standing
Upon the ramparts of the Campo Santo
With Alessandro Bene, I beheld
A sea of fog, that covered all the plain,
And hid from us the foe ; when suddenly,

A misty figure, like an apparition,
 Rose up above the fog, as if on horseback.
 At this I aimed my arquebus, and fired.
 The figure vanished ; and there rose a cry
 Out of the darkness, long and fierce and loud,
 With imprecations in all languages.
 It was the Constable of France, the Bourbon,
 That I had slain.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Rome should be grateful to you.

BENVENUTO.

But has not been ; you shall hear presently.
 During the siege I served as bombardier,
 There in St. Angelo. His Holiness,
 One day, was walking with his Cardinals
 On the round bastion, while I stood above
 Among my falconets. All thought and feeling,
 All skill in art and all desire of fame,
 Were swallowed up in the delightful music
 Of that artillery. I saw far off,
 Within the enemy's trenches on the Prati,
 A Spanish cavalier in scarlet cloak ;
 And firing at him with due aim and range,
 I cut the gay Hidalgo in two pieces.
 The eyes are dry that wept for him in Spain.
 His Holiness, delighted beyond measure
 With such display of gunnery, and amazed
 To see the man in scarlet cut in two,
 Gave me his benediction, and absolved me
 From all the homicides I had committed
 In service of the Apostolic Church,
 Or should commit thereafter. From that day

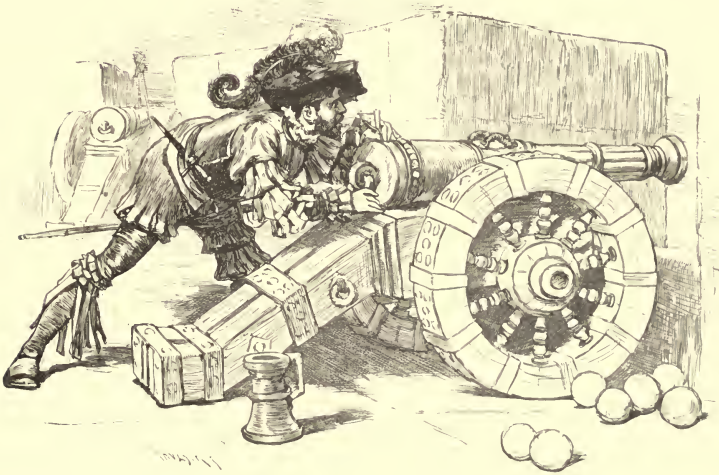
I have not held in very high esteem
The life of man.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

And who absolved Pope Clement?
Now let us speak of Art.

BENVENUTO.

Of what you will.



MICHAEL ANGELO.

Say, have you seen our friend Fra Bastian lately,
Since by a turn of fortune he became
Friar of the Signet?

BENVENUTO.

Faith, a pretty artist
To pass his days in stamping leaden seals
On Papal bulls!

MICHAEL ANGELO.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

He has grown fat and lazy,
 As if the lead clung to him like a sinker.
 He paints no more, since he was sent to Fondi
 By Cardinal Ippolito to paint
 The fair Gonzaga. Ah, you should have seen him
 As I did, riding through the city gate,
 In his brown hood, attended by four horsemen,
 Completely armed, to frighten the banditti.
 I think he would have frightened them alone,
 For he was rounder than the O of Giotto.

BENVENUTO.

He must have looked more like a sack of meal
 Than a great painter.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Well, he is not great,
 But still I like him greatly. Benvenuto,
 Have faith in nothing but in industry.
 Be at it late and early ; persevere,
 And work right on through censure and applause,
 Or else abandon Art.

BENVENUTO.

No man works harder
 Than I do. I am not a moment idle.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

And what have you to show me ?

BENVENUTO.

This gold ring,
 Made for his Holiness, — my latest work,

And I am proud of it. A single diamond,
Presented by the Emperor to the Pope.
Targhetta of Venice set and tinted it ;
I have reset it, and retinted it
Divinely, as you see. The jewellers
Say I've surpassed Targhetta.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Let me see it.

A pretty jewel.

BENVENUTO.

That is not the expression.
Pretty is not a very pretty word
To be applied to such a precious stone,
Given by an Emperor to a Pope, and set
By Benvenuto !

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Messer Benvenuto,
I lose all patience with you ; for the gifts
That God hath given you are of such a kind,
They should be put to far more noble uses
Than setting diamonds for the Pope of Rome.
You can do greater things.

BENVENUTO.

The God who made me
Knows why he made me what I am, — a goldsmith,
A mere artificer.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Oh no ; an artist,
Richly endowed by nature, but who wraps

MICHAEL ANGELO.

His talent in a napkin, and consumes
His life in vanities.

BENVENUTO.

Michael Angelo

May say what Benvenuto would not bear
From any other man. He speaks the truth.
I know my life is wasted and consumed
In vanities ; but I have better hours
And higher aspirations than you think.
Once, when a prisoner at St. Angelo,
Fasting and praying in the midnight darkness,
In a celestial vision I beheld
A crucifix in the sun, of the same substance
As is the sun itself. And since that hour
There is a splendor round about my head,
That may be seen at sunrise and at sunset
Above my shadow on the grass. And now
I know that I am in the grace of God,
And none henceforth can harm me.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

None but one, —

None but yourself, who are your greatest foe.
He that respects himself is safe from others ;
He wears a coat of mail that none can pierce.

BENVENUTO.

I always wear one.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

O incorrigible !

At least, forget not the celestial vision.
Man must have something higher than himself
To think of.

BENVENUTO.

That I know full well. Now listen.

I have been sent for into France, where grow
 The Lilies that illumine heaven and earth,
 And carry in mine equipage the model
 Of a most marvellous golden salt-cellar
 For the king's table ; and here in my brain
 A statue of Mars Armipotent for the fountain
 Of Fontainebleau, colossal, wonderful.
 I go a goldsmith, to return a sculptor.
 And so farewell, great Master. Think of me
 As one who, in the midst of all his follies,
 Had also his ambition, and aspired
 To better things.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Do not forget the vision.

[Sitting down again to the Divina Commedia.]

Now in what circle of his poem sacred
 Would the great Florentine have placed this man ?
 Whether in Phlegethon, the river of blood,
 Or in the fiery belt of Purgatory,
 I know not, but most surely not with those
 Who walk in leaden cloaks. Though he is one
 Whose passions, like a potent alkahest,
 Dissolve his better nature, he is not
 That despicable thing, a hypocrite ;
 He doth not cloak his vices, nor deny them.
 Come back, my thoughts, from him to Paradise.

IV.

FRA SEBASTIANO DEL PIOMBO.

MICHAEL ANGELO; FRA SEBASTIANO DEL PIOMBO.

MICHAEL ANGELO, *not turning round.*

Who is it?

FRA SEBASTIANO.

Wait, for I am out of breath
In climbing your steep stairs.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Ah, my Bastiano,
If you went up and down as many stairs
As I do still, and climbed as many ladders,
It would be better for you. Pray sit down.
Your idle and luxurious way of living
Will one day take your breath away entirely,
And you will never find it.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

Well, what then?
That would be better, in my apprehension,
Than falling from a scaffold.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

That was nothing.
It did not kill me; only lamed me slightly;
I am quite well again.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

But why, dear Master,
Why do you live so high up in your house,
When you could live below and have a garden,
As I do?

MICHAEL ANGELO.

From this window I can look
On many gardens ; o'er the city roofs
See the Campagna and the Alban hills :
And all are mine.



FRA SEBASTIANO.

Can you sit down in them,
On summer afternoons, and play the lute,
Or sing, or sleep the time away ?

MICHAEL ANGELO.

I never
Sleep in the day-time ; scarcely sleep at night.
I have not time. Did you meet Benvenuto
As you came up the stair ?

MICHAEL ANGELO.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

He ran against me
 On the first landing, going at full speed ;
 Dressed like the Spanish captain in a play,
 With his long rapier and his short red cloak.
 Why hurry through the world at such a pace ?
 Life will not be too long.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

It is his nature, —
 A restless spirit, that consumes itself
 With useless agitations. He o'erleaps
 The goal he aims at. Patience is a plant
 That grows not in all gardens. You are made
 Of quite another clay.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

And thank God for it.
 And now, being somewhat rested, I will tell you
 Why I have climbed these formidable stairs.
 I have a friend, Francesco Berni, here,
 A very charming poet and companion,
 Who greatly honors you and all your doings,
 And you must sup with us.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Not I, indeed.
 I know too well what artists' suppers are.
 You must excuse me.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

I will not excuse you.
 You need repose from your incessant work ;
 Some recreation, some bright hours of pleasure.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

To me, what you and other men call pleasure
Is only pain. Work is my recreation,
The play of faculty ; a delight like that
Which a bird feels in flying, or a fish
In darting through the water, — nothing more
I cannot go. The Sibylline leaves of life
Grow precious now, when only few remain.
I cannot go.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

Berni, perhaps, will read
A canto of the Orlando Inamorato.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

That is another reason for not going.
If aught is tedious and intolerable,
It is a poet reading his own verses.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

Berni thinks somewhat better of your verses
Than you of his. He says that you speak things,
And other poets words. So, pray you, come.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

If it were now the Improvisatore,
Luigi Pulci, whom I used to hear
With Benvenuto, in the streets of Florence,
I might be tempted. I was younger then,
And singing in the open air was pleasant.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

There is a Frenchman here, named Rabelais,
Once a Franciscan friar, and now a doctor,

MICHAEL ANGELO.

And secretary to the embassy :
 A learned man, who speaks all languages,
 And wittiest of men ; who wrote a book
 Of the Adventures of Gargantua,
 So full of strange conceits one roars with laughter
 At every page ; a jovial boon-companion
 And lover of much wine. He too is coming.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Then you will not want me, who am not witty,
 And have no sense of mirth, and love not wine.
 I should be like a dead man at your banquet.
 Why should I seek this Frenchman, Rabelais ?
 And wherefore go to hear Francesco Berni,
 When I have Dante Alighieri here,
 The greatest of all poets ?

FRA SEBASTIANO.

And the dullest ;
 And only to be read in episodes.
 His day is past. Petrarca is our poet.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Petrarca is for women and for lovers,
 And for those soft Abati, who delight
 To wander down long garden walks in summer,
 Tinkling their little sonnets all day long,
 As lap-dogs do their bells.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

I love Petrarca.
 How sweetly of his absent love he sings,
 When journeying in the forest of Ardennes !
 " I seem to hear her, hearing the boughs and breezes

And leaves and birds lamenting, and the waters
Murmuring flee along the verdant herbage."

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Enough. It is all seeming, and no being.
If you would know how a man speaks in earnest,
Read here this passage, where St. Peter thunders
In Paradise against degenerate Popes
And the corruptions of the church, till all
The heaven about him blushes like a sunset.
I beg you to take note of what he says
About the Papal seals, for that concerns
Your office and yourself.

FRA SEBASTIANO, *reading*.

Is this the passage?

"Nor I be made the figure of a seal
To privileges venal and mendacious;
Whereat I often redden and flash with fire!" —
That is not poetry.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

What is it, then?

FRA SEBASTIANO.

Vituperation; gall that might have spirted
From Aretino's pen.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Name not that man!

A profligate, whom your Francesco Berni
Describes as having one foot in the brothel
And the other in the hospital; who lives
By flattering or maligning, as best serves



His purpose at the time. He writes to me
 With easy arrogance of my Last Judgment,
 In such familiar tone that one would say
 The great event already had occurred,
 And he was present, and from observation
 Informed me how the picture should be painted.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

What unassuming, unobtrusive men
 These critics are! Now, to have Aretino
 Aiming his shafts at you brings back to mind
 The Gascon archers in the square of Milan,
 Shooting their arrows at Duke Sforza's statue,
 By Leonardo, and the foolish rabble
 Of envious Florentines, that at your David
 Threw stones at night. But Aretino praised you.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

His praises were ironical. He knows
 How to use words as weapons, and to wound
 While seeming to defend. But look, Bastiano,
 See how the setting sun lights up that picture!

FRA SEBASTIANO.

My portrait of Vittoria Colonna.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

It makes her look as she will look hereafter,
When she becomes a saint !

FRA SEBASTIANO.

A noble woman !

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Ah, these old hands can fashion fairer shapes
In marble, and can paint diviner pictures,
Since I have known her.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

And you like this picture ;
And yet it is in oils, which you detest.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

When that barbarian Jan Van Eyck discovered
The use of oil in painting, he degraded
His art into a handiwork, and made it
Sign-painting, merely, for a country inn
Or wayside wine-shop. 'T is an art for women,
Or for such leisurely and idle people
As you, Fra Bastiano. Nature paints not
In oils, but frescoes the great dome of heaven
With sunsets, and the lovely forms of clouds
And flying vapors.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

And how soon they fade !
Behold yon line of roofs and bellies painted

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Upon the golden background of the sky,
 Like a Byzantine picture, or a portrait
 Of Cimabue. See how hard the outline,
 Sharp-cut and clear, not rounded into shadow.
 Yet that is nature.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

She is always right.
 The picture that approaches sculpture nearest
 Is the best picture.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

Leonardo thinks
 The open air too bright. We ought to paint
 As if the sun were shining through a mist.
 'T is easier done in oil than in distemper.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Do not revive again the old dispute ;
 I have an excellent memory for forgetting,



But I still feel the hurt. Wounds are not healed
By the unbending of the bow that made them.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

So say Petrarca and the ancient proverb.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

But that is past. Now I am angry with you,
Not that you paint in oils, but that, grown fat
And indolent, you do not paint at all.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

Why should I paint ? Why should I toil and sweat,
Who now am rich enough to live at ease,
And take my pleasure ?

MICHAEL ANGELO.

When Pope Leo died,
He who had been so lavish of the wealth
His predecessors left him, who received
A basket of gold-pieces every morning,
Which every night was empty, left behind
Hardly enough to pay his funeral.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

I care for banquets, not for funerals,
As did his Holiness. I have forbidden
All tapers at my burial, and procession
Of priests and friars and monks ; and have provided
The cost thereof be given to the poor !

MICHAEL ANGELO.

You have done wisely, but of that I speak not.
Ghiberti left behind him wealth and children ;

MICHAEL ANGELO.

But who to-day would know that he had lived,
 If he had never made those gates of bronze
 In the old Baptistery, — those gates of bronze,
 Worthy to be the gates of Paradise.
 His wealth is scattered to the winds ; his children
 Are long since dead ; but those celestial gates
 Survive, and keep his name and memory green.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

But why should I fatigue myself ? I think
 That all things it is possible to paint
 Have been already painted ; and if not,
 Why, there are painters in the world at present
 Who can accomplish more in two short months
 Than I could in two years ; so it is well
 That some one is contented to do nothing,
 And leave the field to others.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

O blasphemer !
 Not without reason do the people call you
 Sebastian del Piombo, for the lead
 Of all the Papal bulls is heavy upon you,
 And wraps you like a shroud.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

Misericordia !
 Sharp is the vinegar of sweet wine, and sharp
 The words you speak, because the heart within you
 Is sweet unto the core.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

How changed you are
 From the Sebastiano I once knew,

When poor, laborious, emulous to excel,
You strove in rivalry with Badassare
And Raphael Sanzio.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

Raphael is dead ;
He is but dust and ashes in his grave,
While I am living and enjoying life,
And so am victor. One live Pope is worth
A dozen dead ones.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Raphael is not dead ;
He doth but sleep ; for how can he be dead
Who lives immortal in the hearts of men ?
He only drank the precious wine of youth,
The outbreak of the grapes, before the vintage
Was trodden to bitterness by the feet of men.
The gods have given him sleep. We never were
Nor could be foes, although our followers,
Who are distorted shadows of ourselves,
Have striven to make us so ; but each one worked
Unconsciously upon the other's thoughts,
Both giving and receiving. He perchance
Caught strength from me, and I some greater sweetness
And tenderness from his more gentle nature.
I have but words of praise and admiration
For his great genius ; and the world is fairer
That he lived in it.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

We at least are friends ;
So come with me.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

No, no ; I am best pleased
 When I 'm not asked to banquets. I have reached
 A time of life when daily walks are shortened,
 And even the houses of our dearest friends,
 That used to be so near, seem far away.

FRA SEBASTIANO.

Then we must sup without you. We shall laugh
 At those who toil for fame, and make their lives
 A tedious martyrdom, that they may live
 A little longer in the mouths of men !
 And so, good-night.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Good-night, my Fra Bastiano.

[*Returning to his work.*]

How will men speak of me when I am gone,
 When all this colorless, sad life is ended,
 And I am dust ? They will remember only
 The wrinkled forehead, the marred countenance,
 The rudeness of my speech, and my rough manners,
 And never dream that underneath them all
 There was a woman's heart of tenderness.
 They will not know the secret of my life,
 Locked up in silence, or but vaguely hinted
 In uncouth rhymes, that may perchance survive
 Some little space in memories of men !
 Each one performs his life-work, and then leaves it ;
 Those that come after him will estimate
 His influence on the age in which he lived.

V.

MICHAEL ANGELO AND TITIAN: PALAZZO BELVEDERE.

TITIAN'S studio. *A painting of Danaë with a curtain before it.* TITIAN, MICHAEL ANGELO,
and GIORGIO VASARI.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

So you have left at last your still lagoons,
Your City of Silence floating in the sea,
And come to us in Rome.

TITIAN.

I come to learn,
But I have come too late. I should have seen
Rome in my youth, when all my mind was open
To new impressions. Our Vasari here
Leads me about, a blind man, groping darkly
Among the marvels of the past. I touch them,
But do not see them.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

There are things in Rome



That one might walk bare-footed here from Venice
But to see once, and then to die content.

TITIAN.

I must confess that these majestic ruins
Oppress me with their gloom. I feel as one
Who in the twilight stumbles among tombs,
And cannot read the inscriptions carved upon them.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

I felt so once ; but I have grown familiar
With desolation, and it has become
No more a pain to me, but a delight.

TITIAN.

I could not live here. I must have the sea,
And the sea-mist, with sunshine interwoven
Like cloth of gold ; must have beneath my windows
The laughter of the waves, and at my door
Their pattering footsteps, or I am not happy.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Then tell me of your city in the sea,
Paved with red basalt of the Paduan hills.
Tell me of art in Venice. Three great names,
Giorgione, Titian, and the Tintoretto,
Illustrate your Venetian school, and send
A challenge to the world. The first is dead,
But Tintoretto lives.

TITIAN.

And paints with fire,
Sudden and splendid, as the lightning paints
The cloudy vault of heaven.



GIORGIO.

Does he still keep
Above his door the arrogant inscription
That once was painted there, — “ The color of Titian,
With the design of Michael Angelo ” ?

TITIAN.

Indeed, I know not. ’T was a foolish boast,
And does no harm to any but himself.
Perhaps he has grown wiser.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

When you two
Are gone, who is there that remains behind
To seize the pencil falling from your fingers ?

GIORGIO.

Oh, there are many hands upraised already
To clutch at such a prize, which hardly wait
For death to loose your grasp, — a hundred of them :
Schiaivone, Bonifazio, Campagnola,

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Moretto, and Moroni ; who can count them,
Or measure their ambition ?

TITIAN.

When we are gone,
The generation that comes after us
Will have far other thoughts than ours. Our ruins
Will serve to build their palaces or tombs.
They will possess the world that we think ours,
And fashion it far otherwise.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

I hear
Your son Orazio and your nephew Marco
Mentioned with honor.

TITIAN.

Ay, brave lads, brave lads.
But time will show. There is a youth in Venice,
One Paul Cagliari, called the Veronese,
Still a mere stripling, but of such rare promise
That we must guard our laurels, or may lose them.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

These are good tidings ; for I sometimes fear
That, when we die, with us all art will die.
'T is but a fancy. Nature will provide
Others to take our places. I rejoice
To see the young spring forward in the race,
Eager as we were, and as full of hope
And the sublime audacity of youth.

TITIAN.

Men die and are forgotten. The great world



Goes on the same. Among the myriads
 Of men that live, or have lived, or shall live,
 What is a single life, or thine or mine,
 That we should think all nature would stand still
 If we were gone? We must make room for others.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

And now, Maestro, pray unveil your picture
 Of Danaë, of which I hear such praise.

TITIAN, *drawing back the curtain.*

What think you?

MICHAEL ANGELO.

That Acrisius did well
 To lock such beauty in a brazen tower,
 And hide it from all eyes.

TITIAN.

The model truly
 Was beautiful.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

And more, that you were present,
 And saw the showery Jove from high Olympus
 Descend in all his splendor.

TITIAN.

From your lips
 Such words are full of sweetness.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

You have caught
 These golden hues from your Venetian sunsets.

TITIAN.

Possibly.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Or from sunshine through a shower
 On the lagoons, or the broad Adriatic.
 Nature reveals herself in all our arts.
 The pavements and the palaces of cities
 Hint at the nature of the neighboring hills.
 Red lavas from the Euganean quarries
 Of Padua pave your streets ; your palaces
 Are the white stones of Istria, and gleam
 Reflected in your waters and your pictures.
 And thus the works of every artist show
 Something of his surroundings and his habits.
 The uttermost that can be reached by color
 Is here accomplished. Warmth and light and softness
 Mingle together. Never yet was flesh
 Painted by hand of artist, dead or living,
 With such divine perfection.

TITIAN.

I am grateful
 For so much praise from you, who are a master ;
 While mostly those who praise and those who blame
 Know nothing of the matter, so that mainly
 Their censure sounds like praise, their praise like censure

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Wonderful ! wonderful ! The charm of color
 Fascinates me the more that in myself
 The gift is wanting. I am not a painter.

GIORGIO.

Messer Michele, all the arts are yours,



Not one alone ; and therefore I may venture
To put a question to you.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Well, speak on.

GIORGIO.

Two nephews of the Cardinal Farnese
Have made me umpire in dispute between them
Which is the greater of the sister arts,
Painting or sculpture. Solve for me the doubt.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Sculpture and painting have a common goal,
And whosoever would attain to it,
Whichever path he take, will find that goal
Equally hard to reach.

GIORGIO.

No doubt, no doubt ;
But you evade the question.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

When I stand
 In presence of this picture, I concede
 That painting has attained its uttermost ;
 But in the presence of my sculptured figures
 I feel that my conception soars beyond
 All limit I have reached.

GIORGIO.

You still evade me.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Giorgio Vasari, I have often said
 That I account that painting as the best
 Which most resembles sculpture. Here before us
 We have the proof. Behold those rounded limbs !
 How from the canvas they detach themselves,
 Till they deceive the eye, and one would say,
 It is a statue with a screen behind it !

TITIAN.

Signori, pardon me ; but all such questions
 Seem to me idle.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Idle as the wind.
 And now, Maestro, I will say once more
 How admirable I esteem your work,
 And leave you, without further interruption.

TITIAN.

Your friendly visit hath much honored me.

GIORGIO.

Farewell.

MICHAEL ANGELO *to* GIORGIO. *going out.*

If the Venetian painters knew
But half as much of drawing as of color,
They would indeed work miracles in art,
And the world see what it hath never seen.

VI.

PALAZZO CESARINI.

VITTORIA COLONNA, *seated in an arm chair*; JULIA GONZAGA, *standing near her.*

JULIA.

It grieves me that I find you still so weak
And suffering.

VITTORIA.

No, not suffering; only dying.
Death is the chillness that precedes the dawn;
We shudder for a moment, then awake
In the broad sunshine of the other life.
I am a shadow, merely, and these hands,
These cheeks, these eyes, these tresses that my husband
Once thought so beautiful, and I was proud of
Because he thought them so, are faded quite, —
All beauty gone from them.

JULIA.

Ah, no, not that.
Paler you are, but not less beautiful.

VITTORIA.

Hand me the mirror. I would fain behold
What change comes o'er our features when we die.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Thank you. And now sit down beside me here.
 How glad I am that you have come to-day,
 Above all other days, and at the hour
 When most I need you !

JULIA.

Do you ever need me ?

VITTORIA.

Always, and most of all to-day and now.
 Do you remember, Julia, when we walked,
 One afternoon, upon the castle terrace
 At Ischia, on the day before you left me ?

JULIA.

Well I remember ; but it seems to me
 Something unreal, that has never been, —
 Something that I have read of in a book,
 Or heard of some one else.

VITTORIA.

Ten years and more
 Have passed since then ; and many things have happened
 In those ten years, and many friends have died :
 Marco Flaminio, whom we all admired
 And loved as our Catullus ; dear Valdesso,
 The noble champion of free thought and speech ;
 And Cardinal Ippolito, your friend.

JULIA.

Oh, do not speak of him ! His sudden death
 O'ercomes me now, as it o'ercame me then.
 Let me forget it ; for my memory
 Serves me too often as an unkind friend,

And I remember things I would forget,
While I forget the things I would remember.

VITTORIA.

Forgive me ; I will speak of him no more.
The good Fra Bernardino has departed,
Has fled from Italy, and crossed the Alps,
Fearing Caraffa's wrath, because he taught
That He who made us all without our help
Could also save us without aid of ours.
Renée of France, the Duchess of Ferrara,
That Lily of the Loire, is bowed by winds
That blow from Rome ; Olympia Morata
Banished from court because of this new doctrine.
Therefore be cautious. Keep your secret thought
Locked in your breast.

JULIA.

I will be very prudent.
But speak no more, I pray ; it wearies you.

VITTORIA.

Yes, I am very weary. Read to me.

JULIA.

Most willingly. What shall I read ?

VITTORIA.

Petrarca's
Triumph of Death. The book lies on the table ;
Beside the casket there. Read where you find
The leaf turned down. 'T was there I left off reading.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

JULIA, *reads.*

"Not as a flame that by some force is spent,
 But one that of itself consumeth quite,
 Departed hence in peace the soul content,
 In fashion of a soft and lucent light
 Whose nutriment by slow gradation goes,
 Keeping until the end its lustre bright.
 Not pale, but whiter than the sheet of snows
 That without wind on some fair hill-top flies,
 Her weary body seemed to find repose.
 Like a sweet slumber in her lovely eyes,
 When now the spirit was no longer there,
 Was what is dying called by the unwise.
 E'en Death itself in her fair face seemed fair." —

Is it of Laura that he here is speaking?
 She doth not answer, yet is not asleep;
 Her eyes are full of light and fixed on something
 Above her in the air. I can see naught
 Except the painted angels on the ceiling.
 Vittoria! speak! What is it? Answer me! —
 She only smiles, and stretches out her hands.

[*The mirror falls and breaks.*]

VITTORIA.

Not disobedient to the heavenly vision!
 Pescara! my Pescara!

[*Dies.*]

JULIA.

Holy Virgin!
 Her body sinks together, — she is dead!

[*Kneels, and hides her face in Vittoria's lap.*]

Enter MICHAEL ANGELO.

JULIA.

Hush! make no noise.



MICHAEL ANGELO.

How is she ?

JULIA.

Never better.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Then she is dead !

JULIA.

Alas ! yes, she is dead !

Even death itself in her fair face seems fair.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

How wonderful ! The light upon her face
Shines from the windows of another world.
Saints only have such faces. Holy angels !
Bear her like sainted Catherine to her rest !

[Kisses Vittoria's hand.]



·PART THIRD·

PART THIRD.

I.

MONOLOGUE : MACELLO DE' CORVI.

A room in MICHAEL ANGELO'S house. MICHAEL ANGELO standing before a model of St. Peter's.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

BETTER than thou I cannot, Brunelleschi,
And less than thou I will not ! If the thought
Could, like a windlass, lift the ponderous stones,
And swing them to their places ; if a breath
Could blow this rounded dome into the air,
As if it were a bubble, and these statues
Spring at a signal to their sacred stations,
As sentinels mount guard upon a wall,
Then were my task completed. Now, alas !
Naught am I but a Saint Sebaldus, holding
Upon his hand the model of a church,
As German artists paint him ; and what years,
What weary years, must drag themselves along,
Ere this be turned to stone ! What hindrances
Must block the way ; what idle interferences
Of Cardinals and Canons of St. Peter's,
Who nothing know of art beyond the color
Of cloaks and stockings, nor of any building
Save that of their own fortunes ! And what then ?
I must then the short-coming of my means
Piece out by stepping forward, as the Spartan
Was told to add a step to his short sword. [A pause.

And is Fra Bastian dead ? Is all that light
Gone out, that sunshine darkened ; all that music

And merriment, that used to make our lives
Less melancholy, swallowed up in silence,
Like madrigals sung in the street at night
By passing revellers? It is strange indeed
That he should die before me. 'T is against
The law of nature that the young should die,
And the old live; unless it be that some
Have long been dead who think themselves alive,
Because not buried. Well, what matters it,
Since now that greater light, that was my sun,
Is set, and all is darkness, all is darkness!
Death's lightnings strike to right and left of me,
And, like a ruined wall, the world around me
Crumbles away, and I am left alone.
I have no friends, and want none. My own thoughts
Are now my sole companions, — thoughts of her,
That like a benediction from the skies
Come to me in my solitude and soothe me.
When men are old, the incessant thought of Death
Follows them like their shadow; sits with them
At every meal; sleeps with them when they sleep;
And when they wake already is awake,
And standing by their bedside. Then, what folly
It is in us to make an enemy
Of this importunate follower, not a friend!
To me a friend, and not an enemy,
Has he become since all my friends are dead.



II.

VIGNA DI PAPA GIULIO.

POPE JULIUS III. seated by the Fountain of *Acqua Vergine*, surrounded by Cardinals.

JULIUS.

Tell me, why is it ye are discontent,
 You, Cardinals Salviati and Marcello,
 With Michael Angelo? What has he done,
 Or left undone, that ye are set against him?
 When one Pope dies, another is soon made;
 And I can make a dozen Cardinals,
 But cannot make one Michael Angelo.

CARDINAL SALVIATI.

Your Holiness, we are not set against him;
 We but deplore his incapacity.
 He is too old.

JULIUS.

You, Cardinal Salviati,
 Are an old man. Are you incapable?
 'T is the old ox that draws the straightest furrow.

CARDINAL MARCELLO.

Your Holiness remembers he was charged
 With the repairs upon St. Mary's bridge;
 Made cofferdams, and heaped up load on load
 Of timber and travertine; and yet for years
 The bridge remained unfinished, till we gave it
 To Baccio Bigio.

JULIUS.

Always Baccio Bigio!

Is there no other architect on earth ?
 Was it not he that sometime had in charge
 The harbor of Ancona ?

CARDINAL MARCELLO.

Ay, the same.

JULIUS.

Then let me tell you that your Baccio Bigio
 Did greater damage in a single day
 To that fair harbor than the sea had done
 Or would do in ten years. And him you think
 To put in place of Michael Angelo,
 In building the Basilica of St. Peter !
 The ass that thinks himself a stag discovers
 His error when he comes to leap the ditch.

CARDINAL MARCELLO.

He does not build ; he but demolishes
 The labors of Bramante and San Gallo.

JULIUS.

Only to build more grandly.

CARDINAL MARCELLO.

But time passes :
 Year after year goes by, and yet the work
 Is not completed. Michael Angelo
 Is a great sculptor, but no architect.
 His plans are faulty.

JULIUS.

I have seen his model,
 And have approved it. But here comes the artist.

Beware of him. He may make Persians of you,
To carry burdens on your backs forever.

The same: MICHAEL ANGELO.

JULIUS.

Come forward, dear Maestro! In these gardens
All ceremonies of our court are banished.
Sit down beside me here.

MICHAEL ANGELO, *sitting down.*

How graciously
Your Holiness commiserates old age
And its infirmities!

JULIUS.

Say its privileges.
Art I respect. The building of this palace
And laying out these pleasant garden walks
Are my delight, and if I have not asked
Your aid in this, it is that I forbear
To lay new burdens on you at an age
When you need rest. Here I escape from Rome
To be at peace. The tumult of the city
Scarcely reaches here.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

How beautiful it is,
And quiet almost as a hermitage!

JULIUS.

We live as hermits here; and from these heights
O'erlook all Rome, and see the yellow Tiber
Cleaving in twain the city, like a sword,
As far below there as St. Mary's bridge.
What think you of that bridge?

MICHAEL ANGELO.

MICHAEL ANGELO

I would advise
Your Holiness not to cross it, or not often ;
It is not safe.

JULIUS.

It was repaired of late.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Some morning you will look for it in vain ;
It will be gone. The current of the river
Is undermining it.

JULIUS.

But you repaired it.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

I strengthened all its piers, and paved its road
With travertine. He who came after me
Removed the stone, and sold it, and filled in
The space with gravel.

JULIUS.

Cardinal Salviati
And Cardinal Marcello, do you listen ?
This is your famous Nanni Baccio Bigio.

MICHAEL ANGELO, *aside.*

There is some mystery here. These Cardinals
Stand lowering at me with unfriendly eyes.

JULIUS.

Now let us come to what concerns us more
Than bridge or gardens. Some complaints are made

MICHAEL ANGELO.

CARDINAL MARCELLO.

We regret
 You have departed from Bramante's plan,
 And from San Gallo's.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Since the ancient time
 No greater architect has lived on earth
 Than Lazzari Bramante. His design,
 Without confusion, simple, clear, well-lighted,
 Merits all praise, and to depart from it
 Would be departing from the truth. San Gallo,
 Building about with columns, took all light
 Out of this plan ; left in the choir dark corners
 For infinite ribaldries, and lurking places
 For rogues and robbers ; so that when the church
 Was shut at night, not five and twenty men
 Could find them out. It was San Gallo, then,
 That left the church in darkness, and not I.

CARDINAL MARCELLO.

Excuse me ; but in each of the Three Chapels
 Is but a single window.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Monsignore,
 Perhaps you do not know that in the vaulting
 Above there are to go three other windows.

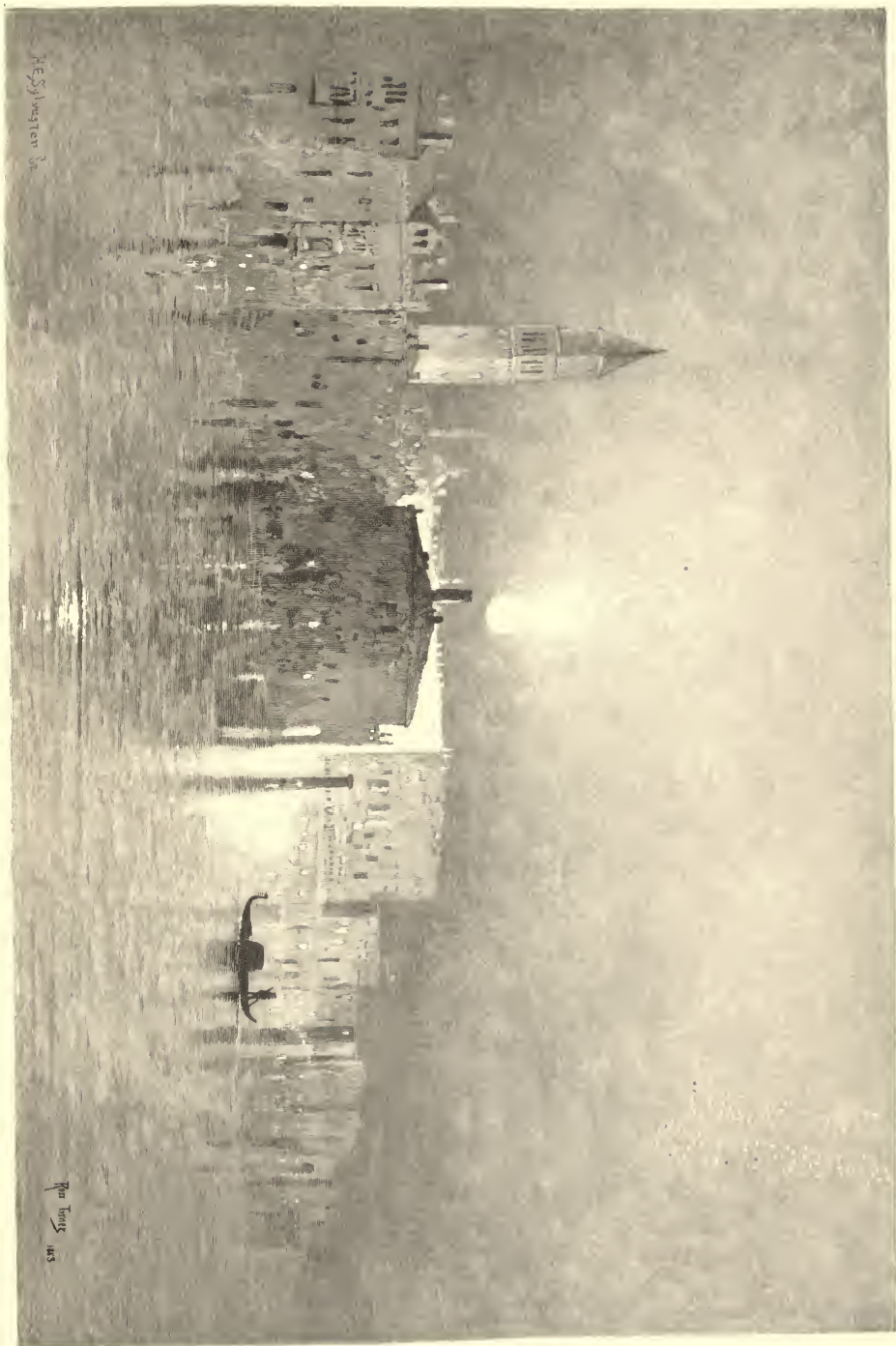
CARDINAL SALVIATI.

How should we know ? You never told us of it.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

I neither am obliged, nor will I be,

H. S. Weston Sc.



For Tour 1853

To tell your Eminence or any other
 What I intend or ought to do. Your office
 Is to provide the means, and see that thieves
 Do not lay hands upon them. The designs
 Must all be left to me.

CARDINAL MARCELLO.

Sir architect,
 You do forget yourself, to speak thus rudely
 In presence of his Holiness, and to us
 Who are his cardinals.

MICHAEL ANGELO, *putting on his hat.*

I do not forget
 I am descended from the Counts Canossa,
 Linked with the Imperial line, and with Matilda,
 Who gave the Church Saint Peter's Patrimony.
 I, too, am proud to give unto the Church
 The labor of these hands, and what of life
 Remains to me. My father Buonarotti
 Was Podestà of Chiusi and Caprese.
 I am not used to have men speak to me
 As if I were a mason, hired to build
 A garden wall, and paid on Saturdays
 So much an hour.

CARDINAL SALVIATI, *aside.*

No wonder that Pope Clement
 Never sat down in presence of this man,
 Lest he should do the same; and always bade him
 Put on his hat, lest he unasked should do it!

MICHAEL ANGELO.

If any man could die of grief and shame,

MICHAEL ANGELO.

I should. This labor was imposed upon me ;
 I did not seek it ; and if I assumed it,
 'T was not for love of fame or love of gain,
 But for the love of God. Perhaps old age
 Deceived me, or self-interest, or ambition ;
 I may be doing harm instead of good.
 Therefore, I pray your Holiness, release me ;
 Take off from me the burden of this work ;
 Let me go back to Florence.

JULIUS.

Never, never,

While I am living.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Doth your Holiness
 Remember what the Holy Scriptures say
 Of the inevitable time, when those
 Who look out of the windows shall be darkened,
 And the almond-tree shall flourish ?

JULIUS.

That is in

Ecclesiastes.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

And the grasshopper
 Shall be a burden, and desire shall fail,
 Because man goeth unto his long home.
 Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher ; all
 Is vanity.

JULIUS.

Ah, were to do a thing
 As easy as to dream of doing it,

We should not want for artists. But the men
 Who carry out in act their great designs
 Are few in number ; ay, they may be counted
 Upon the fingers of this hand. Your place
 Is at St. Peter's.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

I have had my dream,
 And cannot carry out my great conception,
 And put it into act.

JULIUS.

Then who can do it ?
 You would but leave it to some Baccio Bigio
 To mangle and deface.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Rather than that,
 I will still bear the burden on my shoulders
 A little longer. If your Holiness
 Will keep the world in order, and will leave
 The building of the church to me, the work
 Will go on better for it. Holy Father,
 If all the labors that I have endured,
 And shall endure, advantage not my soul,
 I am but losing time.

JULIUS, *laying his hands on MICHAEL ANGELO'S shoulders.*

You will be gainer
 Both for your soul and body.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Not events
 Exasperate me, but the purest conclusions

I draw from these events ; the sure decline
 Of art, and all the meaning of that word ;
 All that embellishes and sweetens life,
 And lifts it from the level of low cares
 Into the purer atmosphere of beauty ;
 The faith in the Ideal ; the inspiration
 That made the canons of the church of Seville
 Say, " Let us build, so that all men hereafter
 Will say that we were madmen." Holy Father,
 I beg permission to retire from here.

JULIUS.

Go ; and my benediction be upon you.

[Michael Angelo goes out.]

My Cardinals, this Michael Angelo
 Must not be dealt with as a common mason.
 He comes of noble blood, and for his crest
 Bears two bull's horns ; and he has given us proof
 That he can toss with them. From this day forth
 Unto the end of time, let no man utter
 The name of Baccio Bigio in my presence.
 All great achievements are the natural fruits
 Of a great character. As trees bear not
 Their fruits of the same size and quality,
 But each one in its kind with equal ease,
 So are great deeds as natural to great men
 As mean things are to small ones. By his work
 We know the master. Let us not perplex him.

III.

BINDO ALTOVITI.

A street in Rome. BINDO ALTOVITI, *standing at the door of his house.* MICHAEL ANGELO, *passing.*

BINDO.

Good-morning, Messer Michael Angelo !

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Good-morning, Messer Bindo Altoviti !

BINDO.

What brings you forth so early ?

MICHAEL ANGELO.

The same reason
That keeps you standing sentinel at your door, —
The air of this delicious summer morning.
What news have you from Florence ?

BINDO.

Nothing new ;
The same old tale of violence and wrong.
Since the disastrous day at Monte Murlo,
When in procession, through San Gallo's gate,
Bareheaded, clothed in rags, on sorry steeds,
Philippo Strozzi and the good Valori
Were led as prisoners down the streets of Florence,
Amid the shouts of an ungrateful people,
Hope is no more, and liberty no more.
Duke Cosimo, the tyrant, reigns supreme.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Florence is dead : her houses are but tombs ;
Silence and solitude are in her streets.

BINDO.

Ah yes ; and often I repeat the words
You wrote upon your statue of the Night,
There in the Sacristy of San Lorenzo :
“ Grateful to me is sleep ; to be of stone
More grateful, while the wrong and shame endure ;
To see not, feel not, is a benediction ;
Therefore awake me not ; oh, speak in whispers.”

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Ah, Messer Bindo, the calamities,
The fallen fortunes, and the desolation
Of Florence are to me a tragedy
Deeper than words, and darker than despair.
I, who have worshipped freedom from my cradle,
Have loved her with the passion of a lover,
And clothed her with all lovely attributes
That the imagination can conceive,
Or the heart conjure up, now see her dead,
And trodden in the dust beneath the feet
Of an adventurer ! It is a grief
Too great for me to bear in my old age.

BINDO.

I say no news from Florence : I am wrong,
For Benvenuto writes that he is coming
To be my guest in Rome.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Those are good tidings.
He hath been many years away from us.



BINDO.

Pray you, come in.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

I have not time to stay,
 And yet I will. I see from here your house
 Is filled with works of art. That bust in bronze
 Is of yourself. Tell me, who is the master
 That works in such an admirable way,
 And with such power and feeling ?

BINDO.

Benvenuto.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Ah ? Benvenuto ? 'T is a masterpiece !
 It pleases me as much, and even more,
 Than the antiques about it ; and yet they
 Are of the best one sees. But you have placed it
 By far too high. The light comes from below,
 And injures the expression. Were these windows
 Above and not beneath it, then indeed
 It would maintain its own among these works
 Of the old masters, noble as they are.
 I will go in and study it more closely.
 I always prophesied that Benvenuto,
 With all his follies and fantastic ways,
 Would show his genius in some work of art
 That would amaze the world, and be a challenge
 Unto all other artists of his time.

[*They go in.*]

IV.

IN THE COLISEUM.

MICHAEL ANGELO *and* TOMASO DE' CAVALIERI.

CAVALIERI.

What have you here alone, Messer Michele ?

MICHAEL ANGELO.

I come to learn.

CAVALIERI.

You are already master,
And teach all other men.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Nay, I know nothing ;
Not even my own ignorance, as some
Philosopher hath said. I am a school-boy
Who hath not learned his lesson, and who stands
Ashamed and silent in the awful presence
Of the great master of antiquity
Who built these walls cyclopean.

CAVALIERI.

Gaudentius
His name was, I remember. His reward
Was to be thrown alive to the wild beasts
Here where we now are standing.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Idle tales.

CAVALIERI.

But you are greater than Gaudentius was,
And your work nobler.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Silence, I beseech you.

CAVALIERI.

Tradition says that fifteen thousand men
Were toiling for ten years incessantly
Upon this amphitheatre.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Behold

How wonderful it is ! The queen of flowers,
The marble rose of Rome ! Its petals torn
By wind and rain of thrice five hundred years ;
Its mossy sheath half rent away, and sold
To ornament our palaces and churches,
Or to be trodden under feet of man
Upon the Tiber's bank ; yet what remains
Still opening its fair bosom to the sun,
And to the constellations that at night
Hang poised above it like a swarm of bees.

CAVALIERI.

The rose of Rome, but not of Paradise ;
Not the white rose our Tuscan poet saw,
With saints for petals. When this rose was perfect
Its hundred thousand petals were not saints,
But senators in their Thessalian caps,
And all the roaring populace of Rome ;
And even an Empress and the Vestal Virgins,
Who came to see the gladiators die,
Could not give sweetness to a rose like this.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

I spake not of its uses, but its beauty.

CAVALIERI.

The sand beneath our feet is saturate
 With blood of martyrs ; and these rifted stones
 Are awful witnesses against a people
 Whose pleasure was the pain of dying men.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Tomaso Cavalieri, on my word,
 You should have been a preacher, not a painter !
 Think you that I approve such cruelties,
 Because I marvel at the architects
 Who built these walls, and curved these noble arches ?
 Oh, I am put to shame, when I consider
 How mean our work is, when compared with theirs !
 Look at these walls about us and above us !
 They have been shaken by earthquakes, have been made
 A fortress, and been battered by long sieges ;
 The iron clamps, that held the stones together,
 Have been wrenched from them ; but they stand erect
 And firm, as if they had been hewn and hollowed
 Out of the solid rock, and were a part
 Of the foundations of the world itself.

CAVALIERI.

Your work, I say again, is nobler work,
 In so far as its end and aim are nobler ;
 And this is but a ruin, like the rest.
 Its vaulted passages are made the caverns
 Of robbers, and are haunted by the ghosts
 Of murdered men.



MICHAEL ANGELO.

A thousand wild flowers bloom
From every chink, and the birds build their nests
Among the ruined arches, and suggest
New thoughts of beauty to the architect.
Now let us climb the broken stairs that lead
Into the corridors above, and study
The marvel and the mystery of that art
In which I am a pupil, not a master.
All things must have an end; the world itself
Must have an end, as in a dream I saw it.
There came a great hand out of heaven, and touched
The earth, and stopped it in its course. The seas
Leaped, a vast cataract, into the abyss;
The forests and the fields slid off, and floated
Like wooded islands in the air. The dead
Were hurled forth from their sepulchres; the living
Were mingled with them, and themselves were dead,—
All being dead; and the fair shining cities
Dropped out like jewels from a broken crown.
Naught but the core of the great globe remained,
A skeleton of stone. And over it
The wrack of matter drifted like a cloud,
And then recoiled upon itself, and fell
Back on the empty world, that with the weight
Reeled, staggered, righted, and then headlong plunged
Into the darkness, as a ship, when struck
By a great sea, throws off the waves at first
On either side, then settles and goes down
Into the dark abyss, with her dead crew.

CAVALIERI.

But the earth does not move.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Who knows ? who knows ?

There are great truths that pitch their shining tents
 Outside our walls, and though but dimly seen
 In the gray dawn, they will be manifest
 When the light widens into perfect day.
 A certain man, Copernicus by name,
 Sometime professor here in Rome, has whispered
 It is the earth, and not the sun, that moves.
 What I beheld was only in a dream,
 Yet dreams sometimes anticipate events,
 Being unsubstantial images of things
 As yet unscen.

V.

BENVENUTO AGAIN : MACELLO DE' CORVI.

MICHAEL ANGELO, BENVENUTO CELLINI.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

So, Benvenuto, you return once more
 To the Eternal City. 'T is the centre
 To which all gravitates. One finds no rest
 Elsewhere than here. There may be other cities
 That please us for a while, but Rome alone
 Completely satisfies. It becomes to all
 A second native land by predilection,
 And not by accident of birth alone.

BENVENUTO.

I am but just arrived, and am now lodging
 With Bindo Altoviti. I have been
 To kiss the feet of our most Holy Father,

And now am come in haste to kiss the hands
Of my miraculous Master.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

And to find him
Grown very old.

BENVENUTO.

You know that precious stones
Never grow old.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Half sunk beneath the horizon,
And yet not gone. Twelve years are a long while.
Tell me of France.

BENVENUTO.

It were too long a tale
To tell you all. Suffice in brief to say
The King received me well, and loved me well ;
Gave me the annual pension that before me
Our Leonardo had, nor more nor less,
And for my residence the Tour de Nesle,
Upon the river-side.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

A princely lodging.

BENVENUTO.

What in return I did now matters not,
For there are other things of greater moment,
I wish to speak of. First of all, the letter
You wrote me, not long since, about my bust
Of Bindo Altoviti, here in Rome. You said,



“ My Benvenuto, I for many years
 Have known you as the greatest of all goldsmiths,
 And now I know you as no less a sculptor.”
 Ah, generous Master ! How shall I e'er thank you
 For such kind language ?

MICHAEL ANGELO.

By believing it.
 I saw the bust at Messer Bindo's house,
 And thought it worthy of the ancient masters,
 And said so. That is all.

BENVENUTO.

It is too much ;
 And I should stand abashed here in your presence,
 Had I done nothing worthier of your praise
 Than Bindo's bust.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

What have you done that's better ?

BENVENUTO.

When I left Rome for Paris, you remember
I promised you that if I went a goldsmith
I would return a sculptor. I have kept
The promise I then made.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Dear Benvenuto,
I recognized the latent genius in you,
But feared your vices.

BENVENUTO.

I have turned them all
To virtues. My impatient, wayward nature,
That made me quick in quarrel, now has served me
Where meekness could not, and where patience could not,
As you shall hear now. I have cast in bronze
A statue of Perseus, holding thus aloft
In his left hand the head of the Medusa,
And in his right the sword that severed it;
His right foot planted on the lifeless corse;
His face superb and pitiful, with eyes
Down-looking on the victim of his vengeance.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

I see it as it should be.

BENVENUTO.

As it will be
When it is placed upon the Ducal Square,
Half-way between your David and the Judith
Of Donatello.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Rival of them both!

MICHAEL ANGELO.

BENVENUTO.

But ah, what infinite trouble have I had
 With Bandinello, and that stupid beast,
 The major-domo of Duke Cosimo,
 Francesco Ricci, and their wretched agent
 Gorini, who came crawling round about me
 Like a black spider, with his whining voice
 That sounded like the buzz of a mosquito !
 Oh, I have wept in utter desperation,
 And wished a thousand times I had not left
 My Tour de Nesle, nor e'er returned to Florence,
 Or thought of Perseus. What malignant falsehoods
 They told the Grand Duke, to impede my work,
 And make me desperate !

MICHAEL ANGELO.

The nimble lie
 Is like the second-hand upon a clock ;
 We see it fly ; while the hour-hand of truth
 Seems to stand still, and yet it moves unseen,
 And wins at last, for the clock will not strike
 Till it has reached the goal.

BENVENUTO.

My obstinacy
 Stood me in stead, and helped me to o'ercome
 The hindrances that envy and ill-will
 Put in my way.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

When anything is done,
 People see not the patient doing of it,
 Nor think how great would be the loss to man
 If it had not been done. As in a building

Stone rests on stone, and wanting the foundation
 All would be wanting, so in human life
 Each action rests on the foregone event,
 That made it possible, but is forgotten
 And buried in the earth.

BENVENUTO.

Even Bandinello,
 Who never yet spake well of anything,
 Speaks well of this ; and yet he told the Duke
 That, though I cast small figures well enough,
 I never could cast this.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

But you have done it,
 And proved Ser Bandinello a false prophet.
 That is the wisest way.

BENVENUTO.

And ah, that casting !
 What a wild scene it was, as late at night,
 A night of wind and rain, we heaped the furnace
 With pine of Serristori, till the flames
 Caught in the rafters over us, and threatened
 To send the burning roof upon our heads ;
 And from the garden side the wind and rain
 Poured in upon us, and half quenched our fires.
 I was beside myself with desperation.
 A shudder came upon me, then a fever ;
 I thought that I was dying, and was forced
 To leave the work-shop, and to throw myself
 Upon my bed, as one who has no hope.
 And as I lay there, a deformed old man
 Appeared before me, and with dismal voice,

Like one who doth exhort a criminal
 Led forth to death, exclaimed, " Poor Benvenuto,
 Thy work is spoiled ! There is no remedy !"
 Then, with a cry so loud it might have reached
 The heaven of fire, I bounded to my feet,
 And rushed back to my workmen. They all stood
 Bewildered and desponding ; and I looked
 Into the furnace, and beheld the mass
 Half molten only, and in my despair
 I fed the fire with oak, whose terrible heat
 Soon made the sluggish metal shine and sparkle.
 Then followed a bright flash, and an explosion,
 As if a thunderbolt had fallen among us.
 The covering of the furnace had been rent
 Asunder, and the bronze was flowing over ;
 So that I straightway opened all the sluices
 To fill the mould. The metal ran like lava,
 Sluggish and heavy ; and I sent my workmen
 To ransack the whole house, and bring together
 My pewter plates and pans, two hundred of them,
 And cast them one by one into the furnace
 To liquefy the mass, and in a moment
 The mould was filled ! I fell upon my knees
 And thanked the Lord ; and then we ate and drank
 And went to bed, all hearty and contented.
 It was two hours before the break of day.
 My fever was quite gone.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

A strange adventure,
 That could have happened to no man alive
 But you, my Benvenuto.



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BENVENUTO.

As my workmen said
To major-domo Ricci afterward,
When he inquired of them : “ ’T was not a man,
But an express great devil.”

MICHAEL ANGELO.

And the statue ?

BENVENUTO.

Perfect in every part, save the right foot
Of Perseus, as I had foretold the Duke.
There was just bronze enough to fill the mould ;
Not a drop over, not a drop too little.
I looked upon it as a miracle
Wrought by the hand of God.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

And now I see
How you have turned your vices into virtues.

BENVENUTO.

But wherefore do I prate of this ? I came
To speak of other things. Duke Cosimo
Through me invites you to return to Florence,
And offers you great honors, even to make you
One of the Forty-Eight, his Senators.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

His Senators ! That is enough. Since Florence
Was changed by Clement Seventh from a Republic
Into a Dukedom, I no longer wish
To be a Florentine. That dream is ended.
The Grand Duke Cosimo now reigns supreme ;

All liberty is dead. Ah, woe is me !
 I hoped to see my country rise to heights
 Of happiness and freedom yet unreached
 By other nations, but the climbing wave
 Pauses, lets go its hold, and slides again
 Back to the common level, with a hoarse
 Death-rattle in its throat. I am too old
 To hope for better days. I will stay here
 And die in Rome. The very weeds, that grow
 Among the broken fragments of her ruins,
 Are sweeter to me than the garden flowers
 Of other cities ; and the desolate ring
 Of the Campagna round about her walls
 Fairer than all the villas that encircle
 The towns of Tuscany.

BENVENUTO.

But your old friends !

MICHAEL ANGELO.

All dead by violence. Baccio Valori
 Has been beheaded ; Guicciardini poisoned ;
 Filippo Strozzi strangled in his prison.
 Is Florence then a place for honest men
 To flourish in ? What is there to prevent
 My sharing the same fate ?

BENVENUTO.

Why, this : if all
 Your friends are dead, so are your enemies.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Is Aretino dead ?

BENVENUTO.

He lives in Venice,
And not in Florence.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

'T is the same to me.
This wretched mountebank, whom flatterers
Call the Divine, as if to make the word
Unpleasant in the mouths of those who speak it
And in the ears of those who hear it, sends me
A letter written for the public eye,
And with such subtle and infernal malice,
I wonder at his wickedness. 'T is he
Is the express great devil, and not you.
Some years ago he told me how to paint
The scenes of the Last Judgment.

BENVENUTO.

I remember.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Well, now he writes to me that, as a Christian,
He is ashamed of the unbounded freedom
With which I represent it.

BENVENUTO.

Hypocrite!

MICHAEL ANGELO.

He says I show mankind that I am wanting
In piety and religion, in proportion
As I profess perfection in my art.
Profess perfection? Why, 't is only men
Like Bugiardini who are satisfied

With what they do. I never am content,
 But always see the labors of my hand
 Fall short of my conception.

BENVENUTO.

I perceive
 The malice of this creature. He would taint you
 With heresy, and in a time like this !
 'T is infamous !

MICHAEL ANGELO.

I represent the angels
 Without their heavenly glory, and the saints
 Without a trace of earthly modesty.

BENVENUTO.

Incredible audacity !

MICHAEL ANGELO.

The heathen
 Veiled their Diana with some drapery,
 And when they represented Venus naked
 They made her, by her modest attitude,
 Appear half clothed. But I, who am a Christian,
 Do so subordinate belief to art
 That I have made the very violation
 Of modesty in martyrs and in virgins
 A spectacle at which all men would gaze
 With half-averted eyes, even in a brothel.

BENVENUTO.

He is at home there, and he ought to know
 What men avert their eyes from in such places ;
 From the Last Judgment chiefly, I imagine.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

But divine Providence will never leave
 The boldness of my marvellous work unpunished ;
 And the more marvellous it is, the more
 'T is sure to prove the ruin of my fame !
 And finally, if in this composition
 I had pursued the instructions that he gave me
 Concerning heaven and hell and paradise,
 In that same letter, known to all the world,
 Nature would not be forced, as she is now,
 To feel ashamed that she invested me
 With such great talent ; that I stand myself
 A very idol in the world of art.
 He taunts me also with the Mausoleum
 Of Julius, still unfinished, for the reason
 That men persuaded the inane old man
 It was of evil augury to build
 His tomb while he was living ; and he speaks
 Of heaps of gold this Pope bequeathed to me,
 And calls it robbery ; — that is what he says.
 What prompted such a letter ?

BENVENUTO.

Vanity.

He is a clever writer, and he likes
 To draw his pen, and flourish it in the face
 Of every honest man, as swordsmen do
 Their rapiers on occasion, but to show
 How skilfully they do it. Had you followed
 The advice he gave, or even thanked him for it,
 You would have seen another style of fence.
 'T is but his wounded vanity, and the wish
 To see his name in print. So give it not
 A moment's thought ; it soon will be forgotten.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

I will not think of it, but let it pass
 For a rude speech* thrown at me in the street,
 As boys threw stones at Dante.

BENVENUTO.

And what answer

Shall I take back to Grand Duke Cosimo?
 He does not ask your labor or your service;
 Only your presence in the city of Florence,
 With such advice upon his work in hand
 As he may ask, and you may choose to give.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

You have my answer. Nothing he can offer
 Shall tempt me to leave Rome. My work is here,
 And only here, the building of St. Peter's.
 What other things I hitherto have done
 Have fallen from me, are no longer mine;
 I have passed on beyond them, and have left them
 As milestones on the way. What lies before me,
 That is still mine, and while it is unfinished
 No one shall draw me from it, or persuade me,
 By promises of ease, or wealth, or honor,
 Till I behold the finished dome uprise
 Complete, as now I see it in my thought.

BENVENUTO.

And will you paint no more?

MICHAEL ANGELO.

No more.

BENVENUTO.

"T is well.

Sculpture is more divine, and more like Nature,
 That fashions all her works in high relief,
 And that is sculpture. This vast ball, the Earth,
 Was moulded out of clay, and baked in fire ;
 Men, women, and all animals that breathe
 Are statues, and not paintings. Even the plants,
 The flowers, the fruits, the grasses, were first sculptured,
 And colored later. Painting is a lie,
 A shadow merely.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Truly, as you say,
 Sculpture is more than painting. It is greater
 To raise the dead to life than to create
 Phantoms that seem to live. The most majestic
 Of the three sister arts is that which builds ;
 The eldest of them all, to whom the others
 Are but the hand-maids and the servitors,
 Being but imitation, not creation.
 Henceforth I dedicate myself to her.

BENVENUTO.

And no more from the marble hew those forms
 That fill us all with wonder ?

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Many statues
 Will there be room for in my work. Their station
 Already is assigned them in my mind.
 But things move slowly. There are hindrances,
 Want of material, want of means, delays
 And interruptions, endless interference

Of Cardinal Commissioners, and disputes
 And jealousies of artists, that annoy me.
 But I will persevere until the work
 Is wholly finished, or till I sink down
 Surprised by death, that unexpected guest,
 Who waits for no man's leisure, but steps in,
 Unasked and unannounced, to put a stop
 To all our occupations and designs.
 And then perhaps I may go back to Florence ;
 This is my answer to Duke Cosimo.

VI.

URBINO'S FORTUNE.

MICHAEL ANGELO'S *Studio*. MICHAEL ANGELO *and* URBINO.

MICHAEL ANGELO, *pausing in his work*.

Urbino, thou and I are both old men.
 My strength begins to fail me.

URBINO.

Eccellenza,
 That is impossible. Do I not see you
 Attack the marble blocks with the same fury
 As twenty years ago ?

MICHAEL ANGELO.

'T is an old habit.
 I must have learned it early from my nurse
 At Setignano, the stone-mason's wife ;
 For the first sounds I heard were of the chisel
 Chipping away the stone.

URBINO.

At every stroke
You strike fire with your chisel.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Ay, because
The marble is too hard.

URBINO.

It is a block
That Topolino sent you from Carrara.
He is a judge of marble.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

I remember.
With it he sent me something of his making, —
A Mercury, with long body and short legs,
As if by any possibility
A messenger of the gods could have short legs.
It was no more like Mercury than you are,
But rather like those little plaster figures
That peddlers hawk about the villages,
As images of saints. But luckily
For Topolino, there are many people
Who see no difference between what is best
And what is only good, or not even good ;
So that poor artists stand in their esteem
On the same level with the best, or higher.

URBINO.

How Eccellenza laughed !

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Poor Topolino !

MICHAEL ANGELO.

All men are not born artists, nor will labor
E'er make them artists.

URBINO.

No, no more
Than Emperors, or Popes, or Cardinals.
One must be chosen for it. I have been
Your color-grinder six and twenty years,
And am not yet an artist.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Some have eyes
That see not; but in every block of marble
I see a statue, — see it as distinctly
As if it stood before me shaped and perfect
In attitude and action. I have only
To hew away the stone walls that imprison
The lovely apparition, and reveal it
To other eyes as mine already see it.
But I grow old and weak. What wilt thou do
When I am dead, Urbino?

URBINO.

Eccellenza,
I must then serve another master.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Never!
Bitter is servitude at best. Already
So many years hast thou been serving me;
But rather as a friend than as a servant.
We have grown old together. Dost thou think
So meanly of this Michael Angelo
As to imagine he would let thee serve,

When he is free from service ? Take this purse,
Two thousand crowns in gold.

URBINO.

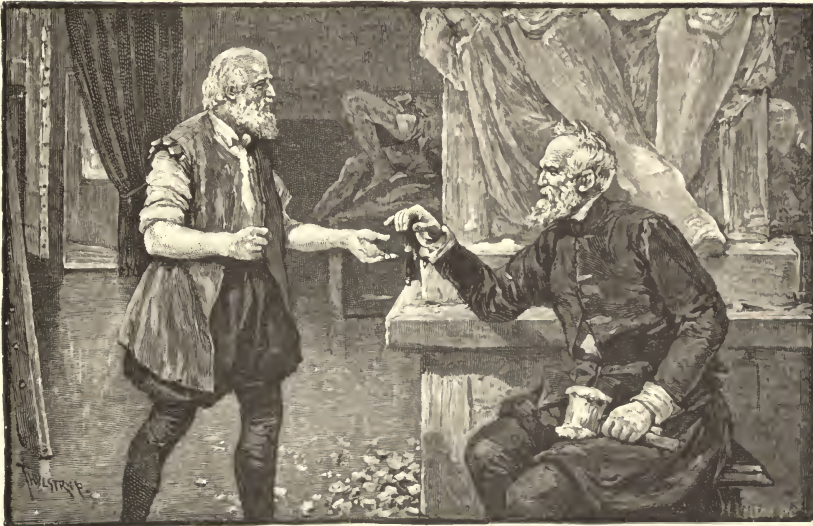
Two thousand crowns !

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Ay, it will make thee rich. Thou shalt not die
A beggar in a hospital.

URBINO.

Oh, Master !



MICHAEL ANGELO.

I cannot have them with me on the journey
That I am undertaking. The last garment
That men will make for me will have no pockets.

URBINO, *kissing the hand of* MICHAEL ANGELO.

My generous master !

MICHAEL ANGELO.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Hush!

URBINO.

My Providence!

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Not a word more. Go now to bed, old man.
 Thou hast served Michael Angelo. Remember,
 Henceforward thou shalt serve no other master.

VII.

THE OAKS OF MONTE LUCA.

MICHAEL ANGELO, alone in the woods.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

How still it is among these ancient oaks!
 Surges and undulations of the air
 Uplift the leafy boughs, and let them fall
 With scarce a sound. Such sylvan quietudes
 Become old age. These huge centennial oaks,
 That may have heard in infancy the trumpets
 Of Barbarossa's cavalry, deride
 Man's brief existence, that with all his strength
 He cannot stretch beyond the hundredth year.
 This little acorn, turbaned like the Turk,
 Which with my foot I spurn, may be an oak
 Hereafter, feeding with its bitter mast
 The fierce wild boar, and tossing in its arms
 The cradled nests of birds, when all the men
 That now inhabit this vast universe,
 They and their children, and their children's children,

Shall be but dust and mould, and nothing more.
 Through openings in the trees I see below me
 The valley of Clitumnus, with its farms
 And snow-white oxen grazing in the shade
 Of the tall poplars on the river's brink.
 O Nature, gentle mother, tender nurse!
 I, who have never loved thee as I ought,
 But wasted all my years immured in cities,
 And breathed the stifling atmosphere of streets,
 Now come to thee for refuge. Here is peace.
 Yonder I see the little hermitages
 Dotting the mountain side with points of light,
 And here St. Julian's convent, like a nest
 Of curlews, clinging to some windy cliff.
 Beyond the broad, illimitable plain
 Down sinks the sun, red as Apollo's quoit,
 That, by the envious zephyr blown aside,
 Struck Hyacinthus dead, and stained the earth
 With his young blood, that blossomed into flowers.
 And now, instead of these fair deities,
 Dread demons haunt the earth; hermits inhabit
 The leafy homes of sylvan Hamadryads;
 And jovial friars, rotund and rubicund,
 Replace the old Silenus with his ass.

Here underneath these venerable oaks,
 Wrinkled and brown and gnarled like them with age,
 A brother of the monastery sits,
 Lost in his meditations. What may be
 The questions that perplex, the hopes that cheer him?
 Good-evening, holy father.

MONK.

God be with you.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Pardon a stranger if he interrupt
Your meditations.

MONK.

It was but a dream, —
The old, old dream, that never will come true ;
The dream that all my life I have been dreaming,
And yet is still a dream.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

All men have dreams.
I have had mine ; but none of them came true ;
They were but vanity. Sometimes I think
The happiness of man lies in pursuing,
Not in possessing ; for the things possessed
Lose half their value. Tell me of your dream.

MONK.

The yearning of my heart, my sole desire,
That like the sheaf of Joseph stands upright,
While all the others bend and bow to it ;
The passion that torments me, and that breathes
New meaning into the dead forms of prayer,
Is that with mortal eyes I may behold
The Eternal City.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Rome ?

MONK.

There is but one ;
The rest are merely names. I think of it
As the Celestial City, paved with gold,
And sentinelled with angels.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Would it were,
I have just fled from it. It is beleaguered
By Spanish troops and by the Duke of Alva.

MONK.

But still for me 't is the Celestial City,
And I would see it once before I die.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Each one must bear his cross.

MONK.

Were it a cross
That had been laid upon me, I could bear it,
Or fall with it. It is a crucifix ;
I am nailed hand and foot, and I am dying !

MICHAEL ANGELO.

What would you see in Rome ?



MICHAEL ANGELO.

MONK.

His Holiness.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Him that was once the Cardinal Caraffa ?
 You would but see a man of fourscore years,
 With sunken eyes, burning like carbuncles,
 Who sits at table with his friends for hours,
 Cursing the Spaniards as a race of Jews
 And miscreant Moors. And with what soldiery
 Think you he now defends the Eternal City ?

MONK.

With legions of bright angels.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

So he calls them ;
 And yet in fact these bright angelic legions
 Are only German Lutherans.

MONK, *crossing himself.*

Heaven protect us !

MICHAEL ANGELO.

What further would you see ?

MONK.

The Cardinals,
 Going in their gilt coaches to High Mass.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Men do not go to Paradise in coaches.

MONK.

The catacombs, the convents, and the churches ;
The ceremonies of the Holy Week
In all their pomp, or, at the Epiphany,
The Feast of the Santissima Bambino
At Ara Cœli. But I shall not see them.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

These pompous ceremonies of the Church
Are but an empty show to him who knows
The actors in them. Stay here in your convent,
For he who goes to Rome may see too much.
What would you further ?

MONK.

I would see the painting
Of the Last Judgment in the Sistine Chapel.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

The smoke of incense and of altar candles
Has blackened it already.

MONK.

Woe is me !
Then I would hear Allegri's Miserere,
Sung by the Papal choir.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

A dismal dirge !
I am an old, old man, and I have lived
In Rome for thirty years and more, and know
The jarring of the wheels of that great world,
Its jealousies, its discords, and its strife.
Therefore I say to you remain content

Here in your convent, here among your woods,
 Where only there is peace. Go not to Rome.
 There was of old a monk of Wittenberg
 Who went to Rome ; you may have heard of him ;
 His name was Luther ; and you know what followed.

[*The convent bell rings.*]

MONK, *rising.*

It is the convent bell ; it rings for vespers.
 Let us go in ; we both will pray for peace.

VIII.

THE DEAD CHRIST.

MICHAEL ANGELO'S *studio.* MICHAEL ANGELO, *with a light, working upon the Dead Christ.*
Midnight.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

O Death, why is it I cannot portray
 Thy form and features ? Do I stand too near thee ?
 Or dost thou hold my hand, and draw me back,
 As being thy disciple, not thy master ?
 Let him who knows not what old age is like
 Have patience till it comes, and he will know.
 I once had skill to fashion Life and Death
 And Sleep, which is the counterfeit of Death ;
 And I remember what Giovanni Strozzi
 Wrote underneath my statue of the Night
 In San Lorenzo, ah, so long ago !

Grateful to me is sleep ! More grateful now
 Than it was then ; for all my friends are dead ;
 And she is dead, the noblest of them all.



I saw her face, when the great sculptor Death,
Whom men should call Divine, had at a blow
Stricken her into marble ; and I kissed
Her cold white hand. What was it held me back
From kissing her fair forehead, and those lips,
Those dead, dumb lips ? Grateful to me is sleep !

Enter GIORGIO VASARI.

GIORGIO.

Good-evening, or good-morning, for I know not
Which of the two it is.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

How came you in ?

GIORGIO.

Why, by the door, as all men do.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Ascanio

Must have forgotten to bolt it.

GIORGIO.

Probably.

Am I a spirit, or so like a spirit,
That I could slip through bolted door or window ?
As I was passing down the street, I saw
A glimmer of light, and heard the well-known chink
Of chisel upon marble. So I entered,
To see what keeps you from your bed so late.

MICHAEL ANGELO. *coming forward with the lamp.*

You have been revelling with your boon companions,
Giorgio Vasari, and you come to me
At an untimely hour.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

GIORGIO.

The Pope hath sent me,
His Holiness desires to see again
The drawing you once showed him of the dome
Of the Basilica.

MICHAEL ANGELO.

We will look for it.

GIORGIO.

What is the marble group that glimmers there
Behind you ?

MICHAEL ANGELO.

Nothing, and yet everything, —
As one may take it. It is my own tomb,
That I am building.

GIORGIO.

Do not hide it from me.
By our long friendship and the love I bear you,
Refuse me not !

MICHAEL ANGELO, *letting fall the lamp.*

Life hath become to me
An empty theatre, — its lights extinguished,
The music silent, and the actors gone ;
And I alone sit musing on the scenes
That once have been. I am so old that Death
Oft plucks me by the cloak, to come with him ;
And some day, like this lamp, shall I fall down,
And my last spark of life will be extinguished.
Ah me ! ah me ! what darkness of despair !
So near to death, and yet so far from God !



SLS
83

NOTES.

PART FIRST.

I.

CONDIVI, in his "Vite di Michael Angelo Buonarotti," describes him, when seventy-nine years old, as "of middle height, with broad shoulders and thin legs, having a large head, a face small in proportion to the size of his skull, a square forehead, full temples, high cheek bones, and a nose made flat by the fist of that beastly and proud man Torrigiano de' Torrigiani." Torrigiani is said to have fled to England, and to have designed there, among other things, the tomb of Henry VIII. "His lips," continues Condivi, "are thin, and the lower, being the larger, appears to protrude when the face is seen in profile. His eyebrows are sparse; his eyes gray, spotted with yellow and blue lights, and ever varying; his ears of just proportion; his hair, once black, is streaked with gray, as is his thin, forked beard, which is four or five fingers' breadth in length." Vasari's description does not differ materially from this, so that the student is enabled to know with some certainty what the personal appearance of the great master was. These descriptions have unquestionably been of important service in the hands of artists who have studied to produce a satisfactory portrait of Michael Angelo. It is possible to find a large number of these portraits, and not easy to learn, even by a comparison of all the lives of the artist, which are founded upon the best authority. Mr. C. D. E. Fortnum, who owns the original medallion portrait in wax by Leo Leone, which he discovered and identified, gives in an article on the portrait, published in the "Archeological Journal" for March, 1875, a list of the only likenesses which can be considered authentic, namely: 1. A bronze bust at the Capitol, referred to by Vasari as the work by Daniel of Volterra. 2. A bust in marble from a mask taken after death. 3. Leo Leone's medal. 4. A figure in the foreground of the Assumption of the Virgin in the church at Santa Trinita at Rome. 5. A head painted by Marcello Venusti in his copy of "The Last Judgment." 6. A portrait ascribed to the same painter at Casa Buonarotti. 7. The engraving (profile) by Buonasoni. Mr. C. C. Perkins, in his "Raphael and Michael Angelo," mentions a portrait which was reproduced in the "Zeitschrift für Bildene Kunst," vol. xi., page 64, with a short article by Mr. J. E. Wessely, who claims that it was drawn and engraved by Michael Angelo, and that it is the original from which Ghisi worked.



The bronze bust.



The marble bust.



The Leone medal.



Venusti's original.

The portrait used as a frontispiece to the present volume has for its original a recent steel engraving after Venusti's portrait by an eminent French artist. A *fac-simile* of Buonasoni's profile is given on page 36, and an engraving from it is the centre of the head-piece to Part First. Francesco D'Ollanda's profile, with slouched hat and cloak, is given in the half-title to Part Third. Above is a sketch from the bronze bust in the Capitol at Rome; the marble bust; a sketch

of Venusti's portrait; and the head from the Leone medal. This head is particularly interesting from the fact that it shows the artist when eighty-eight years old, and was made by his intimate friend Leo Leone. The reverse of the medal is a blind man led by a dog. Being much pleased with the work, Michael Angelo gave Leone a wax model of his Hercules struggling with Antæus.

The portraits of *Vittoria Colonna, Marchesa de Pescara*, which are given in this volume, are referred to in the notes at the proper places. She was born in 1490, betrothed to the Marquis de Pescara in 1495, and married to him in 1509. Pescara was killed in fighting against the French under the walls of Ravenna in 1512. It is not known when or where Vittoria Colonna first met Michael Angelo, but all authorities agree that it must have been about the year 1536, when he was over sixty years of age. She did not escape the espionage of the Inquisition, but was compelled in 1541 to fly to the convent at Viterbo. Three years later, she went to the convent of Benedictines of St. Anne in Rome, and just before her death, in 1547, she was taken to the house of Giuliano Cesarini, the husband of Giulia Colonna, her only relative in Rome. It was after she fled to the convent that she began to write sonnets to and receive them from Michael Angelo, whose love for her was not capable of being concealed.



The profile of the Marquis de Pescara given here is from a medallion, an engraving of which may be found in Harford's "Life of Michael Angelo."

Julia Gonzaga, Duchess of Trajetto, was known as the most beautiful woman in all Italy, and as the intimate friend of Vittoria Colonna. She also spent the last of her days in a convent. The portrait on page 10 was drawn from Sebastiano del Piombo's painting known as "Saint Agatha." Another sketch of it, showing the veil, is given here.



With regard to Sebastian's portraits of Julia Gonzaga, the following, from Crowe and Cavalcaselli's "History of Painting in North Italy," will be interesting:—

"The real portrait of Giulia Gonzaga is supposed to exist in two different collections. In the National Gallery, we have the likeness of a lady in the character of St. Agatha, as symbolized by a nimbus and pincers. Natural pose and posture and dignified mien indicate rank. The treatment is free and bold, but the colors are not blended with the care which Sebastian would surely have bestowed in such a case. In the Stædel Museum at Frankfort, the person represented is of a noble and elegant carriage, seated, in rich attire, and holding a fan made of feathers. A pretty landscape is seen through an opening, and a rich green hanging falls behind the figure. The handling curiously reminds us of Bronzino. It is well known that the likeness of Giulia was sent to Francis the First in Paris, and was registered in Lepicie's catalogue. The canvas of the National Gallery was purchased from the Borghese palace, the panel at Frankfort from the heirlooms of the late King of Holland. A third female portrait by Del Piombo deserves to be recorded in connection with this inquiry,—that of Lord Radnor at Longford Castle, in which a lady with a crimson mantle and pearl head-dress stands in profile, resting her hands on the back of a chair. On a shawl which falls from the chair we read, '*Sunt loquei veneris cave.*' The shape is slender as that of Vittoria Colonna in the Santangelo palace at Naples, but the color is too brown in light and too red in shadow to yield a pleasing effect, and were it proved that this is really Giulia Gonzaga the picture would not deserve Vasari's eulogy."



Page 16. *Brighter than Titian's*. Titian's real name was Tiziano Vecelio, called Da Cadore. He was born in 1477 and died in 1576. He studied with Gio. Bellini, and succeeded Giorgione in his commissions. The original of the portrait on page 105 is a well-known engraving by Augustino Caracci. Herewith is given a sketch of another portrait of Titian, from Yriarte's "Venice."

II.

Page 17. *Why did the Pope and his ten Cardinals come here to lay this heavy task upon me?* "The Last Judgment" was begun in 1534, when Paul III., Alessandro Farnese, was Pope. The portrait here given was drawn from one in Platina's "Vite de Pontifici," published in 1730.



Page 17. *The bones of Julius.* This refers to Julius II., Julian della Rovere, who became Pope in 1503. The portrait is given in various publications of Raphael's works.

Page 17. *Fra Bastiana, my Fra Bastian, might have done it.* Sebastian del Piombo, whose real name was Luciano, was born in 1485 and died in 1547. At one time he placed himself under the tutorship of Michael Angelo. He first studied with Gio. Bellini and Giorgione. The portrait given on page 91 has for its original the one in Vasari's works.

III.

Page 20. *Vittoria Colonna, Claudio Tolomei, and others.* Among the others was Francesco D'Ollanda, a miniature-painter, who was sent to Rome by the King of Portugal that he might study with the great artists. To him we are indebted for descriptions of two Sundays which he spent with Vittoria Colonna and Michael Angelo in the chapel of San Sylvestro. He painted the profile portrait which is given as a centre-piece to the half-title of Part Third.

IV.

Page 30. *The Duke, my cousin, the black Alessandro.* The portrait given on page 32 was drawn from a medal by Cellini, reproduced in Plon's life of that artist.

Page 30. *The Wild Boar in the gardens of Lorenzo.* Lorenzo de' Medici. The portrait given here was drawn from one in Harford's "Life of Michael Angelo."



V.

Page 36. *And you have had the honor, nay, the glory, of portraying Julia Gonzaga.* In 1533 Cardinal Ippolito de Medici, being madly in love with Julia Gonzaga, sent Sebastian with an armed force to paint her portrait. It was accomplished in a month, and the portrait is said to have been one of Sebastian's best. It was sent to Francis I. of France.

Page 67, Head. The original of this head was drawn in black chalk by Michael Angelo. There is a difference of opinion among the authorities as to whether this is a study made from Vittoria Colonna or not. It is often referred to as a portrait, in various writings.

PART SECOND.

I.

The profile which forms the centre-piece of the half-title has for its original a drawing which has been ascribed to Michael Angelo as a study from Vittoria Colonna, but much discussion has not established this beyond doubt. It is claimed that a sonnet by Michael Angelo describes the costume in this picture so fully as to leave no doubt, and the sonnet, although not addressed to any one, is thought to be one of the many written by the great artist in praise of Vittoria Colonna. An interesting article on this subject, giving both the head and the sonnet, will be found in the "Gazette des Beaux Arts" for January, 1875.

Page 73. *A fugitive from Cardinal Caraffa's hate.* Cardinal Caraffa became Pope Paul IV. in 1555. The sketch of the portrait is taken from Platina's "Vite."



III.



Page 77. *Welcome, my Benvenuto.* Benvenuto Cellini was born in 1500 and died in 1570. His life was full of incident. At one time he was employed by Clement VII. as a musician as well as sculptor. The portrait on page 150 is the generally accepted one by Vasari. A sketch is given of the head used as a frontispiece to Plon's life of this artist.

Page 81. *I see the marvellous dome of Brunelleschi.* Filippo Brunelleschi was born in 1377 and died in 1448. He is called the father of Renaissance. The dome of the cathedral at Florence, which he completed, is the one referred to in the text. The sketch of his portrait is from Yriarte's "Florence."



Page 81. *Ghiberti's gates of bronze.* Lorenzo Ghiberti was born in 1370 and died in 1455. He was a goldsmith and sculptor. In 1400 he produced a design for the bronze gate to the baptistry at Florence, which was preferred to Brunelleschi's. Michael Angelo said, as Mr. Longfellow has made him say (p. 100), that these gates were "worthy to be the gates of Paradise." The portrait given here is from Yriarte's "Florence."

Page 81. *Giotto's tower.* Giotto di Bondone, born in 1276, died in 1336. He was a pupil of Cimabue, a painter as well as sculptor and architect. The bell tower of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence is the one meant in the text. He did not live to see it completed. The head given here is from Yriarte's "Florence."



Page 81. *And Ghirlandajo's lovely Benci glides.* Domenico di Tomaso Curadi di Doffo Bigordi was born in 1449 and died in 1494. He was called Ghirlandajo from the fact that his father, a goldsmith, made beautiful garlands for the hair, so that the name signifying "garland twister" was given to him. The portrait is from Yriarte's "Florence."

Page 83. *Under Pope Clement at the siege of Rome.* Pope Clement VII., Giulio de' Medici, was made Pope in 1523. The portrait is given in Platina's "Vite."



IV.



Page 96. *See how the setting sun lights up that picture!* The original portrait of which the head and shoulders is given in the engraving is in the museum at Florence. It was painted by Sebastian del Piombo, and has been called a portrait of Vittoria Colonna, but there seems to be no certainty of its identity. The sketch given here shows another head ascribed to Sebastian as a portrait of Vittoria Colonna.



Page 99. *When Pope Leo died.* Leo X., Giovanni de' Medici, son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, was made Pope in 1513. The head here given was drawn from an engraving of Raphael's portrait.

Page 101. *You strove in rivalry with Baldassare and Raphael Sanzio.* Baldassare Peruzzi was born in 1481 and died in 1537. He succeeded Raphael as architect of Saint Peter's. The sketch given here was drawn from an engraving of Raphael's portrait.



Raphael Sanzio was born in 1483 and died in 1520. He studied under his father, and later with Perugino. The two portraits given



are from authentic engravings of the originals.

V.

Page 103. *Our Vasari here.* Giorgio Vasari, born in 1512 and died in 1574. His reputation rests upon his "Vite de più eccellenti Pittori, Scultori et Architetto," published in 1555. His portrait will be found in Yriarte's "Florence."



Page 104. *Three great names, Giorgione, Titian, and the Tintoretto.* Giorgione di Castelfranco, whose real name was Barbarelli, was born in 1477 and died in 1511. He was the founder of the Venetian school. The portrait from which the one herewith is sketched is given in Yriarte's "Venice."

The real name of Tintoretto was Jacopo Robusti. He was called Tintoretto from the fact that his father was a dyer. He was born in 1512 and died in 1594. The portrait here given is to be found in Yriarte's "Venice."



Page 106. *One Paul Cagliari, called the Veronese.* Paul Cagliari was born in 1528 and died in 1588. He was the son of a sculptor. His portrait is given in Yriarte's "Venice."

PART THIRD.

II.

Page 125. *Pope Julius III.*, Giovanni Maria Gioeci, was elected in 1550. The original of the portrait given here is in Platina's "Vite," before quoted.



Page 126. *The labors of Bramante and San Gallo.* Donato Lazzari Bramante was born in 1444 and died about 1514. He was an architect, painter, engraver, and military engineer. He was a compatriot and perhaps relative of Raphael, and was his friend and guide. It is known that he designed for Raphael the portico that surrounds the "School of Athens." He received from Julius II. the task of rebuilding St. Peter's, and on his death-bed designated Raphael as the fit successor. The portrait given was drawn from an engraving of Raphael's portrait in the Louvre.

Antonio San Gallo was a nephew of Giuliano San Gallo. He was born in 1482 and died in 1546. His real name was Picconi. In 1509 he was one of the contractors for the wood-work in the Vatican and St. Peter's. He next became head carpenter at the castle, assistant to Raphael in 1516, and chief architect in 1520. The portrait is found in Yriarte's "Florence."



III.

Bindo Altoviti was a wealthy banker in Rome. He was born in 1491, and was related to Pope Innocent III. through his mother. He devoted his fortune to the encouragement of art. Michael Angelo, Raphael, Cellini, Sansovino, and Vasari were his intimate friends. Michael Angelo gave him the cartoon from the Sistine Chapel called "The Intoxication of Noah." Raphael painted for him a Holy Family called "Madonna dell' Impannata," now in the Pitti palace. Below is given a sketch of Raphael's portrait of Altoviti, which in costume and in the pose of the head bears a striking resemblance to the well-known portrait of Raphael as a young man. See note to page 101. A sketch of Cellini's bust of Altoviti is also given here.



Page 137. *Duke Cosimo, the tyrant, reigns supreme.* Cosimo de' Medici, called The Great, was a son of Giovanni de' Medici. He was born in 1519, and on the death of Alexander in 1537 he was declared his successor. A sketch of Cellini's bust is given from the engraving in Plon's "Life of Cellini."



The Perseus.

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