

certain grace. The figure though it shows the relaxed and blunted line of age has still symmetry and shapeliness. Michelangelo rather loved such paradoxical feats as forcing nobility and grace from strained attitudes and combinations which other men would have found intractable.

That is one kind of prophetic or Sibylline inspiration, the dark early Pagan, or demoniacal. Quite another is seen in his Delphic Sibyl, the young and beautiful woman who, as Euripides describes her, chants the rhythmic oracles of Apollo to mortals and represents the brighter and humaner inspiration of classic Greece. Yet in the Delphic Sibyl, too, you have some of the traits of the Cumæan—softened by the beauty and freshness of youth. She is young, fair of face and apparently little more than a medium; she looks round with parted lips and half-startled expectant eyes, as if she saw something which announced the coming of the god. But her figure which is encased in the heavy sculpturesquely modelled folds of her garment has nothing very feminine in its expression and seems almost too set and mature. The muscular anatomy of the arms also is a little too obtrusive for grace. Still they are beautiful, as is, in a yet higher degree, the superb virginal force of the face. What Michelangelo meant precisely by his Delphic Sibyl might be difficult to define. It is not lyrical inspiration, he has treated that in another form. Probably it represents some conception of oracular religion amongst the Greeks which he may often have heard discussed by the elegant scholars and Platonists who met at the table of Lorenzo the Magnificent, his early patron.

The *Jeremiah* of Michelangelo is another example, hardly less striking than the sculptured Moses, of the manner in which the strength of the artist's conception urged him beyond the modesty of nature, even when respecting her laws. The massive figure and sunken brooding head of the Hebrew prophet give at once an unusual impression of gigantic strength and bulk combined with the contemplative spirit. The whole pose and anatomy of the body express profound melancholy. The head supported by the right arm is heavily leant on the right knee. The left side, the left arm and hand, the wide relaxation of the left knee express a moment of languor and despondency. The lower limbs are enormous. Yet the outline of this huge figure is tenderly managed so as to convey the impression of a benignant strength, of a fine humanity. Nothing could be farther from the grotesque animality of a fat giant.

Those strange figures of Prophet and Sibyl illustrate how intimately the passion of idealistic thought blends with the passion of art and the passion of scientific knowledge in the work of Michelangelo. The scientific bent of his mind indeed is evident enough in other ways. He was almost as great in architectural creation and construction and in engineering as he was in sculpture and painting. He raised the dome of St. Peter's at Rome and built the fortifications of Florence. But the art that had all his heart was sculpture, the purest and most ideal representation of the human figure. The intellectual centre of his life lay in the kind of Christian Platonism which so frequently finds expression in his sonnets. It is no mortal beauty, he tells