

When he was upwards of sixty years old he received a commission to finish the decoration of the Sistine Chapel. It was then he painted *The Last Judgment*, an altar-piece forty-seven feet high and forty-three wide. Between seven and eight years were given to this picture. The subject afforded him scope to depict with the power of his masterful hand the deepest and most terrible emotions of the human soul. The work is universally adjudged to be a marvellous effort of human skill, yet inferior in beauty to the paintings on the vaulted ceiling.

Though he decorated other chapels the greatest of the productions of his brush are in the Sistine. The dome of St. Peter's and the Capitol with its picturesque group of buildings are among the monuments of his architectural skill, though he did not live to see the dome of the great cathedral entirely completed. Italy at this period was again stirred with religious thought and emotion, roused by the preaching of Peter Martyr. Michael Angelo felt the influence of Martyr's crusade, and doubtless many of his grand subjects were inspired by it. In the opinion of critics, boldness, vigor and mastery of form are combined in this great artist above all others. It has been said of him that his women are female men and his children diminutive giants. Raphael thanked God that he was born in the days of Michael Angelo: and Sir Joshua Reynolds, the first president of the Royal Academy of Art, said of him as a painter, that "to kiss the hem of his garment, to catch the slightest of his perfections would be glory and distinction enough for one ambitious man." The finest modern sculptures are also by his hand. Indeed he equally excelled in the sister arts of sculpture, architecture and painting. The energy, strength and dignity of Michael Angelo's work were a true expression of his sterling principles and massive character. Though he spent the greater portion of his life within the circle of a base and intriguing court, he ever preserved his self-respect and lofty ideals of life. He died in Rome in his eighty-ninth year, leaving this simple will, "I bequeath my soul to God, my body to the earth, and my possessions to my nearest relatives." His body lies in the Church of Santa Croce, Florence. Like Leonardi he was a poet, and poetic justice seems to require that I should add one of his sonnets also. It is addressed to the Supreme Being. The translation is by Wordsworth: