

hidden charm in them, which comes to light the oftener it is studied.

Of all the characters of this age, none stands out in such huge, vivid, violent relief as Michael-Angelo Buanorrotti. He came of a noble Florentine family, and at birth was put out to a stone mason's wife to nurse. So that afterwards he used to say, it was not strange that he loved to cut in stone, for he had drunk in a taste for it with his mother's milk. And of the child, astrologers foretold, that since Mercury and Venus were then on friendly terms in the mansion of Jupiter, 'his works of art whether conceived in the spirit, or performed by the hand, would be admirable and stupendous.'

Now from an early age Angelo showed his love of art, and studied at it despite the opposition of his parents. At length he was permitted to be apprenticed to Domenico Ghirlandajo, at that time one of the foremost artists in Florence. And while with this master, he received a blow, from a fellow-student, which broke his nose and disfigured him for life. Nor did he learn much from Ghirlandajo, except the bare technique of his profession.

However, Buanorrotti soon caught the eye of Lorenzo Medici, a man ever-mindful of genius, with whom he formed a firm, lasting friendship. Now this relationship benefitted the young artist, not only in the pursuit of art, but also in the chance it gave to improve and broaden his mind. And Angelo knew well how to seize opportunities. He was a severe worker. Whatever task was before him, he attacked with so great vigour that it might have been thought the last, supreme effort of his life. When sculpturing a block of marble, he used to fly at it with such fury as to threaten its further existence. In all directions the chips were showered. And spectators wondered if any stone would be left when the onslaught ceased. All his life he worked—and worked furiously.

In form, Michael-Angelo was neither of good feature, nor of good figure; yet all who met him were impressed by his innate dignity and nobleness. He was slight, but strong, and broad in the shoulders. His nose was distorted, having been broken in youth; his forehead was high and broad, with small, bright, piercing eyes beneath. And although living in an active, pleasure-loving age, he avoided society and lived only for his art. Indeed when asked why he had never married, he replied, that he was already wedded to art, and she was too much for him. At a time when men went to an excess either of pleasure, or asceticism, he lived an ordinary life, plainly and frugally. In Angelo's works is seen a shell of Greek form, vitalized by his own genius—a genius "spiritualized by the reverie of the middle ages." And as a sculptor he is not light, nor graceful, nor beautiful: he shapes rather the grand, the stern, the forcible truths of human nature. A sculptor is a 'master of live stone,' and this in every sense Michael-Angelo was.

Among the great Buanorrotti's productions are the David, a colossal statue, weighing eighteen hundred pounds; the impressive figures of the two