

What an impression the Eternal city must have made on the sensitive artistic nature of the youth of twenty-one! Could he anticipate in looking over the revered city, that one day its central feature would be the product of his own genius—the marvellous dome—so perfect in design that it has served as a model for the multitude of similar buildings around it? The characteristic work of this youthful period was "La Pieta," an exquisite group which to-day is almost hidden in the vast shadows of St. Peter's. The Subject of the Divine Mother and the Holy Child have been used with such telling effect. The position of the body of Christ, the beautiful face of the Mother so full of unutterable grief, awaken an emotion which all other representations have failed to do. From the time that it was given to the world, Michael Angelo's reputation as the first sculptor in Italy was virtually established. But his deep love for Florence did not permit him to remain long away from that city. Soon after his return an opportunity arose by which new glory was added to his name.

For many years, a beautiful block of marble, disfigured by the attempts of some unskilful workman, had lain outside the city wall. The authorities now decided that it must be used, and Michael Angelo was chosen as the artist. That their confidence in their countryman was not misplaced is shown by the colossal statue "David." The gigantic figure represents a youth so full of life and motion, that we, following the direction of his keen glance, almost expect to see the stone hurled from the sling in his hand. It is indeed the shepherd boy true to life. The "David" is now in the Academy of Fine Arts, but for many centuries it stood in front of the ducal palace, a solitary guard so grand in its simplicity, that even persons less superstitious than the Florentines, felt that to change its position would be an evil omen.

The next period in the life of the artist was at once the most fruitful and the most sorrowful.

Michael Angelo now came into contact with a man whose disposition was very like his own. Pope Julius II Laugthy, impatient, domineering, called the Florentine to Rome and ordered him to begin work on a mausoleum for himself which would accord with his own ideas of splendor. With honorable pride the sculptor selected his marble and began his labor. But the two natures soon clashed. The artist would brook no interference, listen to no advice; the pope was constantly off ending him in both ways. There could be but one result. After having been refused admittance to the palace, the artist gave up his work, left Rome, and not until the pope had literally gone half way to meet him, could he be persuaded to return. By this time Julius had other plans for Michael Angelo, and forty years elapsed before he found time to go back to this, his favorite work. The mausoleum was never completed according to the original design, but the magnificent statue, "Moses," stands as a monument to the man whom the great Florentine really loved.