CHAPTER VI

S. LORENZO AND MICHELANGELO

A forlorn façade—The church of the Medici—Cosimo's parents' tomb—Donatello's cantoria and pulpits—Brunelleschi's sacristy—Donatello again—The palace of the dead Grand Dukes—Costly intarsia—Michelangelo's sacristy—A weary Titan's life—The victim of capricious pontiffs—The Medici tombs—Memento mori—The Casa Buonarroti—Brunelleschi's cloisters—A model library.

ARCHITECTURALLY S. Lorenzo may not attract as S. Croce and S. Maria Novella do; but certain treasures of sculpture make it unique. Yet it is a cool scene of noble grey arches, and the ceiling is very happily picked out with gold and colour. Savonarola preached some of his most important sermons here; here Lorenzo the Magnificent was married.

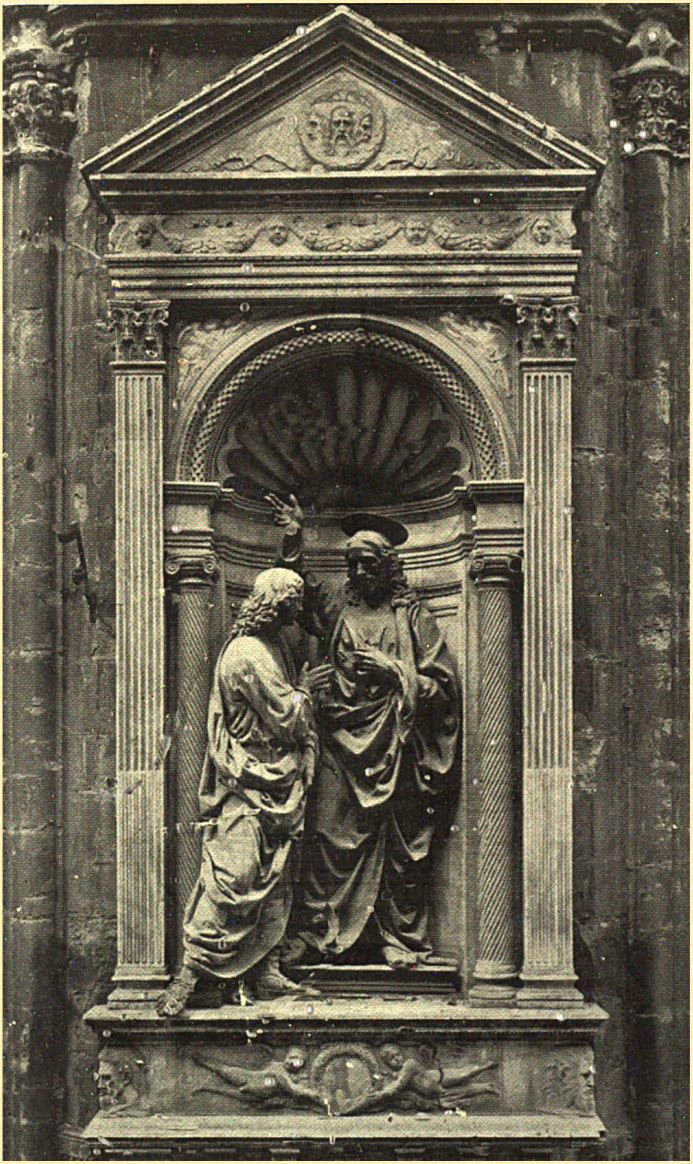
The façade has never yet been finished: it is just ragged brickwork waiting for its marble. Not very far away, in the Via Ghibellina, is a house which contains some rough plans by a master hand for this façade, drawn some four hundred years ago—the hand of none other than Michelangelo, whose scheme was to make it not only a wonder of architecture but a wonder also of statuary, the façade having many niches, each to be filled with a sacred figure. But Michelangelo always dreamed on a scale utterly dispropor-

tionate to the foolish little span of life allotted to us, and the S. Lorenzo façade was never even begun.

The piazza which these untidy bricks overlook is now given up to stalls and is the centre of the cheap clothing district. Looking diagonally across it from the church one sees the great walls of the courtyard of what is now the Riccardi palace, but was in the great days the Medici palace; and at the corner, facing the Borgo S. Lorenzo, is Giovanni delle Bande Nere, in stone, by the impossible Bandinelli, looking at least twenty years older than he ever lived to be and rather like Signor D'Annunzio.

S. Lorenzo was a very old church in the time of Giovanni de' Medici, the first great man of the family, and had already been restored once, in the eleventh century, but it was his favourite church, chosen by him for his own resting-place, and he spent great sums in improving it. All this with the assistance of Brunelleschi, who is responsible for the interior as we now see it, and would, had he lived, have completed the façade. After Giovanni came Cosimo, who also devoted great sums to the glory of this church, not only assisting Brunelleschi with his work but inducing Donatello to lavish his genius upon it; and the church was thus established as the family vault of the Medici race. Giovanni lies here; Cosimo lies here; and Piero, while Lorenzo the Magnificent and Giuliano and certain descendants were buried in the Michelangelo sacristy, and all the Grand Dukes in the ostentatious chapel behind the altar.

Cosimo is buried beneath the floor in front of the high altar, in obedience to his wish, and by the special permission of the Roman Church; and in the same vault lies Donatello. Cosimo, who was buried with all simplicity on August 22nd, 1464, in his last illness recommended Donatello, who was then seventy-eight, to his son Piero. The old



CHRIST AND S. THOMAS

BY VERROCCHIO

(In a niche by Donatello and Michelozzo in the wall of Or San Michele)

sculptor survived his illustrious patron and friend only two and a half years, declining gently into the grave, and his body was brought here in December, 1466. A monument to his memory was erected in the church in 1896. Piero (the Gouty), who survived until 1469, lies close by, his bronze monument, with that of his brother, being that between the sacristy and the adjoining chapel, in an imposing porphyry and bronze casket, the work of Verrocchio, one of the richest and most impressive of all the memorial sculptures of the Renaissance. The marble pediment is supported by four tortoises, such as support the monoliths in the Piazza S. Maria Novella. The iron rope work that divides the sacristy from the chapel is a marvel of workmanship.

But we go too fast: the church before the sacristy, and the glories of the church are Donatello's. We have seen his cantoria in the Museum of the Cathedral. Here is another, not so rio'ous and jocund in spirit, but in its own way hardly less satisfying. The Museum cantoria has the wonderful frieze of dancing figures; this is an exercise in [illegible] intarsia. It has the same row of pillars with little specks of mosaic gold; but its beauty is that of delicate proportions and soft tones. The cantoria is in the left aisle, in its original place; the two bronze pulpits are in the nave. These have a double interest as being not only Donatello's work but his latest work. They were incomplete at his death, and were finished by his pupil Bertoldo (1410-1491), and since, as we shall see, Bertoldo became the master of Michelangelo, when he was a lad of fifteen and Bertoldo an old man of eighty, these pulpits may be said to form a link between the two great S. Lorenzo sculptors. How fine and free and spirited Bertoldo could be, alone, we shall see at the Bargello. The S. Lorenzo

pulpits are very difficult to study: nothing wants a stronger light than a bronze relief, and in Florence students of bronze reliefs are accustomed to it, since the most famous of all—the Ghiberti doors—are in the open air. Only in course of time can one discern the scenes here. The left pulpit is the finer, for it contains the "Crucifixion" and the "Deposition," which to me form the most striking of the panels.

The other piece of sculpture in the church itself is a ciborium by Desiderio da Settignano, in the chapel at the end of the right transept—an exquisite work by this rare and playful and distinguished hand. It is fitting that Desiderio should be here, for he was Donatello's favourite pupil. The S. Lorenzo ciborium is wholly charming, although there is a "Deposition" upon it; the little Boy is adorable; but one sees it with the greatest difficulty owing to the crowded state of the altar and the dim light. The altar picture in the Martelli chapel, where the sympathetic Donatello monument (in the same medium as his "Annunciation" at S. Croce) is found—on the way to the Library—is by Lippo Lippi, and is notable for the Virgin receiving the angel's news. There is nice colour in the predella.

As I have said in the first chapter, we are too prone to ignore the architect. We look at the jewels and forget the casket. Brunelleschi is a far greater maker of Florence than either Donatello or Michelangelo; but one thinks of him rather as an abstraction than a man or forgets him altogether. Yet the S. Lorenzo sacristy is one of the few perfect things in the world. What most people, however, remember is its tombs, its doors, and its reliefs: the proportions escape them. I think its shallow easy dome beyond description beautiful. Brunelleschi, who had an

investigating genius, himself painted the quaint constellations in the ceiling over the altar. At the Pazzi chapel we shall find similar architecture; but there extraneous colour was allowed to come in. Here such reliefs as were admitted are white too.

The tomb under the great marble and porphyry table in the centre is that of Giovanni di Bicci, the father, and Piccarda, the mother, of Cosimo Pater Patriæ, and is usually attributed to Buggiano, the adopted son of Brunelleschi, but other authorities give it either to Donatello alone or to Donatello with Michelozzo: both from the evidence of the design and because it is unlikely that Cosimo would ask any one else than one of these two friends of his to carry out a commission so near his heart. The table is part of the scheme and not a chance covering. I think the porphyry centre ought to be movable, so that the beautiful flying figures on the sarcophagus could be seen. But Donatello's most striking achievement here is the bronze doors, which are at once so simple and so strong and so surprising by the activity of the virile and spirited holy men, all contending each other, thereon depicted. These doors could not well be more different from Ghiberti's, in the casting of which Donatello assisted; those in such high relief, these so low; those so fluid and placid, and these so vigorous.

Donatello presides over this room (under Brunelleschi). The vivacious, almost speaking terra-cotta bust of the young S. Lorenzo is his; the altar railing is probably his; the frieze of terra-cotta cherubs may be his; the four low reliefs in the spandrels, which it is so difficult to discern but which photographs prove to be wonderful scenes in the life of S. John the Evangelist—so like, as one peers up at them, plastic Piranesis, with their fine masonry—are

his. The other reliefs are Donatello's too; but the lavabo in the inner sacristy is Verrocchio's, and Verrocchio's tomb of Piero can never be overlooked even amid such a wealth of the greater master's work.

From this fascinating room—fascinating both in itself and in its possessions—we pass, after distributing the necessary largesse to the sacristan, to a turnstile which admits, on payment of a fee, to the Chapel of the Princes and to Michelangelo's sacristy. Here is contrast, indeed: the sacristy, austere and classic, and the chapel a very exhibition building of floridity and coloured ornateness, dating from the seventeenth century and not finished yet. In paying the necessary fee to see these buildings one thinks again what the feelings of Giovanni and Cosimo and Lorenzo the Magnificent, and even of Cosimo I, all such generous patrons of Florence, would be, if they could see the present feverish collection of lire in their beautiful city.

Of the Chapel of the Princes I have little to say. To pass from Michelangelo's sacristy to this is an error; see it, if see it you must, first. While the façade of S. Lorenzo was left neglected and the cornice of Brunelleschi's dome unfinished, the floor of this lapidary's showroom was for many years swallowing up millions of lire. But now (1922) the work seems to have stopped. An enthusiastic custodian gave me a list of the stones which were used in the designs of the coats of arms of Tuscan cities, of which that of Fiesole is the most attractive:—Sicily jasper, French jasper, Tuscany jasper, petrified wood, white and yellow, Corsican granite, Corsican jasper, Oriental alabaster, French marble, lapis lazuli, verde antico, African marble, Siena marble, Carrara marble, rose agate, mother of pearl and coral. The names of the

Medici are in porphyry and ivory. It is all very marvellous and occasionally beautiful; but . . .

This pretentious building was designed by a natural son of Cosimo I in 1604, and was begun as the state mausoleum of the Grand Dukes; and all lie here. All the Grand Duchesses too, save Bianca Capella, wife of Francis I, who was buried none knows where! It is strange to realize as one stands here that this pavement covers all those ladies, buried in their wonderful clothes. We shall see Eleanor of Toledo, wife of Cosimo I, in Bronzino's famous picture at the Uffizi, in an amazing brocaded dress: it is that dress in which she reposes beneath us! They had their jewels too, and each Grand Duke his crown and sceptre; but these, with one or two exceptions, were stolen during the French occupation of Tuscany, 1801-1814.

Let us forget all these florid pretensions now and pass into what might without much danger be called the most perfect temple in the world. To go further and say the most beautiful might perhaps lead one into discussions too passionate; but for certain moods I would risk it. I refer to Michelangelo's chapel, called the New Sacristy, begun for Leo X and finished for Giulio de' Medici, illegitimate son of the murdered Giuliano and afterwards Pope Clement VII. The great artist followed Brunelleschi's design for the Old Sacristy but made it more severe. This, one would feel to be the very home of dead princes even if there were no statues, no intimations. The only colours are the white of the walls and the brown of the pillars and windows; the dome was to have been painted, but it fortunately escaped.

The contrast between Michelangelo's dome and Brunelleschi's is complete—Brunelleschi's so suave and gentle in its rise, with its grey lines to help the eye, and this soaring so boldly to its lantern, with its rigid device of diminishing

squares. The odd thing is that with these two domes to teach him better the designer of the Chapel of the Princes should have indulged in such floridity.

Such is the force of the architecture in the sacristy that one is profoundly conscious of being in melancholy's most perfect home; and the building is so much a part of Michelangelo's life and it contains such marvels from his hand that I choose it as a place to tell his story. Michelangelo Buonarroti was born on March 6th, 1475, at Caprese, of which town his father was Podestà. At that time Brunelleschi had been dead twenty-nine years, Fra Angelico twenty years, Donatello nine years, Leonardo da Vinci was twenty-three years old, and Raphael was not yet born. Lorenzo the Magnificent had been on what was virtually the throne of Florence since 1469 and was a young man of twenty-six. For foster-mother the child had the wife of a stone-mason at Settignano, whither the family soon moved, and Michelangelo used to say that it was with her milk that he imbibed the stone-cutting art. It was from the air too, for Settignano's principal industry was sculpture. The village being only three miles from Florence, from it the boy could see the city very much as we see it now—its Duomo, its campanile, with the same attendant spires. He was sent to Florence to school and intended for either the wool or silk trade, as so many Florentines were; but displaying artistic ability, he induced his father to apprentice him, at the age of thirteen, to a famous goldsmith and painter of Florence who had a busy atelier—no other than Domenico Ghirlandaio, who was then a man of thirty-nine.

Michelangelo remained with him for three years and although his power and imagination were already greater than his master's, he learned much, and would never have

made his Sixtine Chapel frescoes with the ease he did but for this early grounding. For Ghirlandaio, although not of the first rank of painters in genius, was pre-eminently there in thoroughness, while he was good for the boy too in spirit, having a large way with him. The first work of Ghirlandaio which the boy saw in the making was the beautiful "Adoration of the Magi," in the Church of the Spedale degli Innocenti, completed in 1488, and the S. Maria Novella frescoes, and it is reasonable to suppose that he helped with the frescoes in colour grinding, even if he did not, as some have said, paint with his own hand the beggar sitting on the steps in the scene representing the "Presentation of the Virgin". That he was already clever with his pencil, we know, for he had made some caricatures and corrected a drawing or two.

The three years with Ghirlandaio were reduced eventually to one, the boy having the good fortune to be chosen as one of enough promise to be worth instruction, both by precept and example, in the famous Medici garden. Here he was more at home than in a painting room, for plastic art was his passion, and not only had Lorenzo the Magnificent gathered together there many of those masterpieces of ancient sculpture which we shall see at the Uffizi, but Bertoldo, the aged head of this informal school, was the possessor of a private collection of Donatellos and other Renaissance work of extraordinary beauty and worth. Donatello's influence on the boy held long enough for him to make the low relief of the Madonna, much in his style, which is now preserved in the Casa Buonarroti, while the plaque of the battle of the Centaurs and Lapithae which is also there shows Bertoldo's influence.

The boy's first encounter with Lorenzo occurred while he was modelling the head of an aged faun. His mag-

nificent patron stopped to watch him, pointing out that so old a creature would probably not have such a fine set of teeth, and Michelangelo, taking the hint, in a moment had not only knocked out a tooth or two but—and here his observation told—hollowed the gums and cheeks a little in sympathy. Lorenzo was so pleased with his quickness and skill that he received him into his house as the companion of his three sons: of Piero, who was so soon and so disastrously to succeed his father, but was now a high-spirited youth; of Giovanni, who, as Pope Leo X many years after, was to give Michelangelo the commission for this very sacristy; and of Giuliano, who lies beneath one of the tombs. As their companion he enjoyed the advantage of sharing their lessons under Poliziano, the poet, and of hearing the conversation of Pico della Mirandola, who was usually with Lorenzo; and to these early fastidious and intellectual surroundings the artist owed much.

That he read much, we know, the Bible and Dante being constant companions; and we know also that in addition to modelling and copying under Bertoldo, he was assiduous in studying Masaccio's frescoes at the church of the Carmine across the river, which had become a school of painting. It was there that his fellow-pupil Pietro Torrigiano, who was always his enemy and a bully, broke his nose with one blow and flew to Rome from the rage of Lorenzo.

It was when Michelangelo was seventeen that Lorenzo died, at the early age of forty-two, and although the garden still existed and the Medici palace was still open to the youth, the spirit had passed. Piero, who succeeded his father, had none of his ability or sagacity, and in two years was a refugee from the city while the treasures of the garden were disposed by auction, and Michelangelo too

PUTTO WITH DOLPHIN

FROM THE BRONZE BY VERROCCHIO IN THE PALAZZO VECCHIO

conspicuous as a Medici protégé to be safe, hurried away to Bologna. He was now nineteen.

Of his travels I say nothing here, for we must keep to Florence, whither he thought it safe to return in 1495. The city was now governed by the Great Council and the Medici banished. Michelangelo remained only a brief time and then went to Rome, where he made his first Pietà, at which he was working during the trial and execution of Savonarola, whom he admired and reverenced, and where he remained until 1501, when, aged twenty-six, he returned to Florence to do some of his most famous work. The Medici were still in exile.

It was in August, 1501, that the authorities of the cathedral asked Michelangelo to do what he could with a great block of marble on their hands, from which he carved that statue of David of which I tell the story in chapter XVI. This established his pre-eminence as a sculptor. Other commissions for statues poured in, and in 1504 he was invited to design a cartoon for the Palazzo Vecchio, to accompany one by Leonardo, and a studio was given him in the Via Guelfa for the purpose. This cartoon, when finished, so far established him also as the greatest of painters that the Masaccios in the Carmine were deserted by young artists in order that this might be studied instead. The cartoon, as I relate in the chapter on the Palazzo Vecchio, no longer exists.

The next year, 1505, Michelangelo, nearing his thirtieth birthday, returned to Rome and entered upon the second and tragic period of his life, for he arrived there only to receive the order for the Julius tomb which poisoned his remaining years, and of which more is said in the chapter on the Accademia, where we see so many vestiges of it both in marble and plaster. But I might remark here that this

vain and capricious pontiff, whose pride and indecision robbed the world of no one can ever say what glorious work from Michelangelo's hand, is the benevolent-looking old man whose portrait by Raphael is in the Pitti and Uffizi in colour, in the Corsini Palace in charcoal, and again in our own National Gallery in colour.

Of Michelangelo at Rome and Carrara, whither he went to superintend in person the quarrying of the marble that was to be transferred to life and where he had endless vexations and mortifications, I say nothing. Enough that the election of his boy friend Giovanni de' Medici as Pope Leo X in 1513 brought him again to Florence, the Pope having a strong wish that Michelangelo should complete the façade of the Medici family church, S. Lorenzo, where we now are. As we know, the scheme was not carried out, but in 1520 the Pope substituted another and more attractive one: namely, a chapel to contain the tombs not only of his father the Magnificent, and his uncle, who had been murdered in the Duomo many years before, but also his nephew Piero de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, who had just died, in 1519, and his younger brother (and Michelangelo's early playmate) Giuliano de' Medici, Duke of Nemours, who had died in 1516. These were not Medici of the highest class, but family pride was strong. It is, however, odd that no memorial of Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici, who had been drowned at the age of twenty-two in 1503, was required; perhaps it may have been that since it was Piero's folly that had brought the Medici into such disgrace in 1494, the less thought of him the better.

Michelangelo took fire at once, and again hastened to Carrara to arrange for marble to be sent to his studio in the Via Mozzi, now the Via S. Zenobi; while the building stone was brought from Fiesole. Leo X lived

only to know that the great man had begun, the new patron being Giulio de' Medici, natural son of the murdered Giuliano, now a cardinal, and soon, in 1523, to become Pope Clement VII. This Pope showed deep interest in the project, but wished not only to add tombs of himself and Pope Leo X, but also to build a library for the Laurentian collection, which Michelangelo must design. A little later he had decided that he would prefer to lie in the choir of the church, and Leo X with him, and instead therefore of tombs Michelangelo might merely make a colossal statue of him to stand in the piazza before the church. The sculptor's temper had not been improved by his many years' experience of papal caprice, and he replied to this suggestion with a letter unique even in the annals of infuriated artists. Let the statue be made, of course, he said, but let it be useful as well as ornamental: the lower portion to be also a barber's shop, and the head, since it would be empty, a greengrocer's. The Pope allowed himself to be rebuked, and abandoned the statue, writing a mild and even pathetic reply.

Until 1527 Michelangelo worked away at the building and the tombs, always secretly, behind impenetrable barriers; and then came the troubles which led to the siege of Florence, following upon the banishment of Alessandro, Duke of Urbino, natural son of the very Lorenzo whom the sculptor was to dignify for all time. By the Emperor Charles V and Pope Clement VII the city was attacked, and Michelangelo was called away from Clement's sacristy to fortify Florence against Clement's soldiers. Part of his ramparts at S. Miniato still remain, and he strengthened all the gates; but, feeling himself slighted and hating the whole affair, he suddenly disappeared. One story is that he hid in the church tower of S. Niccolò, below what is

now the Piazzale dedicated to his memory. Wherever he was, he was proclaimed an outlaw, and then, on Florence finding that she could not do without him, was pardoned, and so returned, the city meanwhile having surrendered and the Medici again being restored to power.

The Pope showed either fine magnanimity or compounded with facts in the interest of the sacristy; for he encouraged Michelangelo to proceed, and the pacific work was taken up once more after the martial interregnum, and in a desultory way he was busy at it, always secretly and moodily, until 1533, when he tired completely and never touched it again. A year later Clement VII died, having seen only drawings of the tombs, if those.

But though left unfinished, the sacristy is wholly satisfying—more indeed than satisfying, conquering. Whatever help Michelangelo may have had from his assistants, it is known that the symbolical figures on the tombs and the two seated Medici are from his hand. Of the two finished or practically finished tombs—to my mind as finished as they should be—that of Lorenzo is the finer. The presentment of Lorenzo in armour brooding and planning is more splendid than that of Giuliano; while the old man, whose head anticipates everything that is considered most original in Rodin's work, is among the best of Michelangelo's statuary. Much speculation has been indulged in as to the meaning of the symbolism of these tombs, and having no theory of my own to offer, I am glad to borrow Mr. Gerald S. Davies' summary from his monograph on Michelangelo. The figure of Giuliano typifies energy and leadership in repose; while the man on his tomb typifies Day and the woman Night, or the man Action and the woman the sleep and rest that produce Action. The figure of Lorenzo typifies Contemplation,

the woman Dawn, and the man Twilight, the states which lie between light and darkness, action and rest (see opposite page 50). What Michelangelo—who owed nothing to any Medici save the Magnificent and had seen the best years of his life frittered away in the service of them and other proud princes—may also have intended we shall never know; but he was a saturnine man with a long memory, and he might easily have made the tombs a vehicle for criticism. One would not have another touch of the chisel on either of the symbolical male figures.

Although a tomb to Lorenzo the Magnificent by Michelangelo would surely have been a wonderful thing, there is something startling and arresting in the circumstance that he has none at all from any hand, but lies here unrecorded. His grandfather, in the church itself, rests beneath a plain slab, which aimed so consciously at modesty as thereby to achieve special distinction; Lorenzo, leaving no such directions, has nothing, while in the same room are monuments to two common-place descendants to thrill the soul. The disparity is in itself monumental. That Michelangelo's Madonna and Child are on the slab which covers the dust of Lorenzo and his brother is a chance. The saints on either side are S. Cosimo and S. Damian, the patron saints of old Cosimo de' Medici, and are by Michelangelo's assistants. The Madonna was intended for the altar of the sacristy. Into this work the sculptor put much of his melancholy and, one feels, disappointment. The face of the Madonna is already sad and hopeless; but the Child is perhaps the most splendid and determined of any in all Renaissance sculpture. He may, if we like, symbolize the new generation that is always deriving sustenance from the old, without care or thought of what the old has to suffer; he

crushes his head against his mother's breast in a very passion of vigorous dependence.[1]

Whatever was originally intended, it is certain that in Michelangelo's sacristy disillusionment reigns as well as death. But how beautiful it is!

In a little room leading from the sacristy I was shown by a smiling custodian Lorenzo the Magnificent's coffin, crumbling away, and photographs of the skulls of the two brothers: Giuliano's with one of Francesco de' Pazzi's dagger wounds in it, and Lorenzo's, ghastly in its decay. I gave the man half a lira.

While he was working on the tombs Michelangelo had undertaken now and then a small commission, and to this period belongs the David which we shall see in the little room on the ground floor of the Bargello. In 1534, when he finally abandoned the sacristy, and, leaving Florence for ever, settled in Rome, the Laurentian library was only begun, and he had little interest in it. He never saw it again. At Rome his time was fully occupied in painting the "Last Judgment" in the Sixtine Chapel, and in various architectural works. But Florence at any rate has two marble masterpieces that belong to the later period—the Brutus in the Bargello and the Pietà in the Duomo, which we have seen—that poignantly impressive rendering of the entombment upon which the old man was at work when he died, and which he meant for his own grave.

His death came in 1564, on February 23rd, when he was nearly eighty-nine, and his body was brought to Florence and buried amid universal grief in S. Croce, where it has a florid monument.

[1] In the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington are casts of the two Medici on the tombs and also the Madonna and Child. They are in the great gallery of the casts, together with the great David, two of the Julian tomb prisoners, the Bargello tondo and the Brutus.

MADONNA ADORING

FROM THE PAINTING BY FILIPPINO LIPPI IN THE UFFIZI

Since we are considering the life of Michelangelo, I might perhaps say here a few words about his house, which is only a few minutes' distant—at No. 64 Via Ghibellina—where certain early works and personal relics are preserved Michelangelo gave the house to his nephew Leonardo; it was decorated early in the seventeenth century with scenes in the life of the master, and finally bequeathed to the city as a heritage in 1858. It is perhaps the best example of the rapacity of the Florentines; for notwithstanding that it was left freely in this way a lira is charged for admission. The house contains more collateral curiosities, as they might be called, than those in the direct line; but there are architectural drawings from the wonderful hand, colour drawings of a Madonna, a few studies, and two early pieces of sculpture—the battle of the Lapithae and Centaurs, a relief marked by tremendous vigour and full of movement, and a Madonna and Child, also in relief, with many marks of greatness upon it. In a recess in Room IV are some personal relics of the artist, which his great nephew, the poet, who was named after him, began to collect early in the seventeenth century. As a whole the house is disappointing.

Upstairs have been arranged a quantity of prints and drawings illustrating the history of Florence.

The S. Lorenzo cloisters may be entered either from a side door in the church close to the Old Sacristy or from the piazza. Although an official in uniform keeps the piazza door, they are free. Brunelleschi is again the architect, and from the loggia at the entrance to the library you see most acceptably the whole of his cathedral dome and half of Giotto's tower. It is impossible for Florentine cloisters—or indeed any cloisters—not to have a certain beauty, and these are unusually

charming and light, seen both from the loggia and the ground.

Michelangelo's Biblioteca Laurenziana, which leads from them, is one of the most perfect of sombre buildings, the very home of well-ordered scholarship. The staircase is impressive, although perhaps a little too severe; the long room could not be more satisfying to the eye. Michelangelo died before it was finished, but it is his in design, even to the ceiling and cases for MSS. in which the library is so rich, and the rich red wood ceiling. Vasari, Michelangelo's pupil and friend and the biographer to whom we are so much indebted, carried on the work. His scheme of windows has been upset on the side opposite the cloisters by the recent addition of a rotunda leading from the main room. If ever rectangular windows were more exquisitely and nobly proportioned I should like to see them. The library is free for students, and the attendants are very good in calling stray visitors' attention to illuminated missals, old MSS., early books and so forth. One of Galileo's fingers, stolen from his body, used to be kept here, in a glass case, and may be here still; but I did not see it. I saw, however, the portraits, in an old volume, of Petrarch and his Laura.

This wonderful collection was begun by Cosimo de' Medici; others added to it until it became one of the most valuable in the world, not, however, without various vicissitudes incident to any Florentine institution: while one of its most cherished treasures, the Virgil of the fourth or fifth century, was even carried to Paris by Napoleon and not returned until the great year of restoration, 1816. Among the holograph MSS. is Cellini's "Autobiography". The library, in time, after being confiscated by the Republic and sold to the monks of S. Marco, again passed

into the possession of a Medici, Leo X, son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and then of Clement VII, and he it was who commissioned Michelangelo to house it with dignity.

An old daily custom in the cloisters of S. Lorenzo was the feeding of cats; but it has long since been dropped. If you look at Mr. Hewlett's "Earthwork out of Tuscany" you will find an entertaining description of what it used to be like.