

OLIN WARNER, SCULPTOR.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM HIS WORK.



INDIVIDUAL or nation, it is well to stop now and then to ask one's self candidly, Whither away? Not that man can more than guess the path that person or nation will tread; but it interests and sometimes profits to determine, so far as the signs permit, the goal towards which we tend. The experience of one artist cannot be said to settle definitely a matter so wide-reaching as the trend of sculpture in a community which outwardly is like those of Europe, but differs from them in many important respects. Still, it teaches something, and may direct us to the right view. In matters of the fine arts painting so takes the eye that we are hardly conscious of the extent to which the art of the statuary is called to play a part in the decoration of cities. Comparatively few persons heed the parks of Washington, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and those other cities where statues are amassed. By private efforts for the most part, and only to some degree by the aid of legislatures, our land is gradually becoming peopled with a nation of silent effigies in granite, bronze, and marble. The papers have paragraphs and notices, and faithful reports of ceremonies at the unveiling of memorials get into print; but most of us fail to note how frequent these have become, how large a factor in the landscape of our great cities is the statue. This is true of Great Britain and Ireland, and of France on a yet more comprehensive scale. In these lands the Government is more active than individuals; especially in France does the state actively engage in the support of schools and scholars, grant rewards to merit, and systematically encourage its sculptors and architects, while withholding nothing of these benefits from workmen of other nationalities in the largest and most intelligent way. Perhaps it is because with us the evolution of sculpture is more spontaneous and from the people, so far as it goes, that we are apt to misread the signs of what is too closely bound up with our lives, just as one is likely to be uncertain of the pictures of one's own face and character. This spontaneity, this unfostered quality in American work, should be borne in mind when we come to speak of the future of sculpture here. Meantime it is a truism to say that we cannot be too careful what is the grade of the statuary we put up. To cap it, let another truism be forgiven—the sculptor himself, how necessary

that we should understand and appreciate the man to whom such work is intrusted!

Olin Levi Warner was born somewhat more than forty years ago in Suffield, a little Connecticut town where deacons are powerful and where his descent from a hero of the Revolution is oftener heard of than it would be in the city of New York, once the town of Tories. His life has been uneventful in the picturesque sense; hard labor, disappointments, meager pay, and meager existence are not sensational matters to any one except him who suffers them. Artisan, telegraph operator, pupil, graduate of a fine-arts school, workman for trades, sculptor—Olin Warner has been each of these in succession, and in each case has done his duty manfully. Very difficult has it been for him to reach the point where recognition was possible; very slow but sure has been his evolution. The school-boy who astonished his mates by “whittling”—observe the trait which is now hardly more than a tradition of the stage Yankee—little figures out of wood, chalk, or plaster was succeeded by the youth of nineteen who determined to test his artistic force after a delightfully ignorant but robust method to decide therefrom whether or not he would devote himself to sculpture. He procured a barrel of plaster, set it solid, removed the staves, and set to work manfully to whittle from the ungrateful mass a portrait of his father. A medallion of his father and mother, made at a much later period, is given in the woodcut to recall this turning-point of his career. For on the success of this his future hung. Luckily for him, perhaps more luckily for us, it was voted a capital likeness; great was the sensation in the small circle in Vermont where his parents then lived. He was dubbed a genius, and a famous future was predicted for him. But nobody came forward with practical aid to enable him to study sculpture. In this dilemma Warner acted with a resolution characteristic of many Americans, and thereby assured himself of eventual success, though at the loss of precious years. He deferred his further education in art until by his own unaided efforts he could collect money with which to live abroad. By learning the trade of an operator on the telegraph he not only supported himself for six years, but laid aside enough to take him to Paris. The heroism of a struggle like that can never be measured, because artistic natures suffer more

than ordinary people from the little miseries of life and the great misery of that hope deferred which sickens the heart.

On his arrival in Paris, at the age of twenty-five, Olin Warner was lucky in meeting several generous young Frenchmen who counseled him wisely and put him in the way of an immediate practical acquaintance with tools, processes, and work. When he entered the *École des Beaux-Arts* he was already something of a modeler, and avoided a vast amount of routine through which the ordinary scholar wades without understanding why. He was three and a half years in Paris, and always speaks with gratitude of the aid he received there from French fellow-students and masters. While in Paris he modeled a slender girlish dancing figure called "May," which he was forced through poverty to sell to a firm of dealers in artistic gas-burners. Returning to America, he found New York the city most likely to help him, and here for five years more he struggled and starved until recognition came. During this dismal period he worked for manufacturers of silver and plated ware, bronze mantel ornaments, and such matters. Perhaps it is Mr. Daniel Cottier to whom we owe the fact that his courage was not completely overthrown and he forced to give up sculpture. By granting him the use of a room, and encouraging him with his cheery and acute criticism, Mr. Cottier in all probability saved Warner to the fine arts. Others also recognized his honest, earnest character, and among the young founders of the Society of American Artists none was better liked personally, none more esteemed for the quality of his workmanship, than this blunt young sculptor. The period of Indian statuary through which all our sculptors must pass with the regularity of a disease of children brought him no further harm than a statuette, conceived in no petty spirit, in which an Indian brave has a panther down which he is dispatching with his tomahawk in a position that leaves little hope of life to the victor. At the Centennial Exhibition a colossal medallion of Edwin Forrest made an impression, not entirely because it was spirited and because the name was still beloved and admired by old frequenters of the theater, but rather owing to its peculiar broadness and boldness in relief. The effect is anything but soft, nor is it pleasing,—it is almost brutal,—and the modeling makes one think of the French sculptor Rude. Only on remembering the nature and dramatic style of Forrest is one reconciled to such a portrait. But it is the real man. An opposite of opposites was the bust of President Hayes, ordered by Mr. McCormick, the chairman in the campaign that elected Mr. Hayes, and given to the Union League

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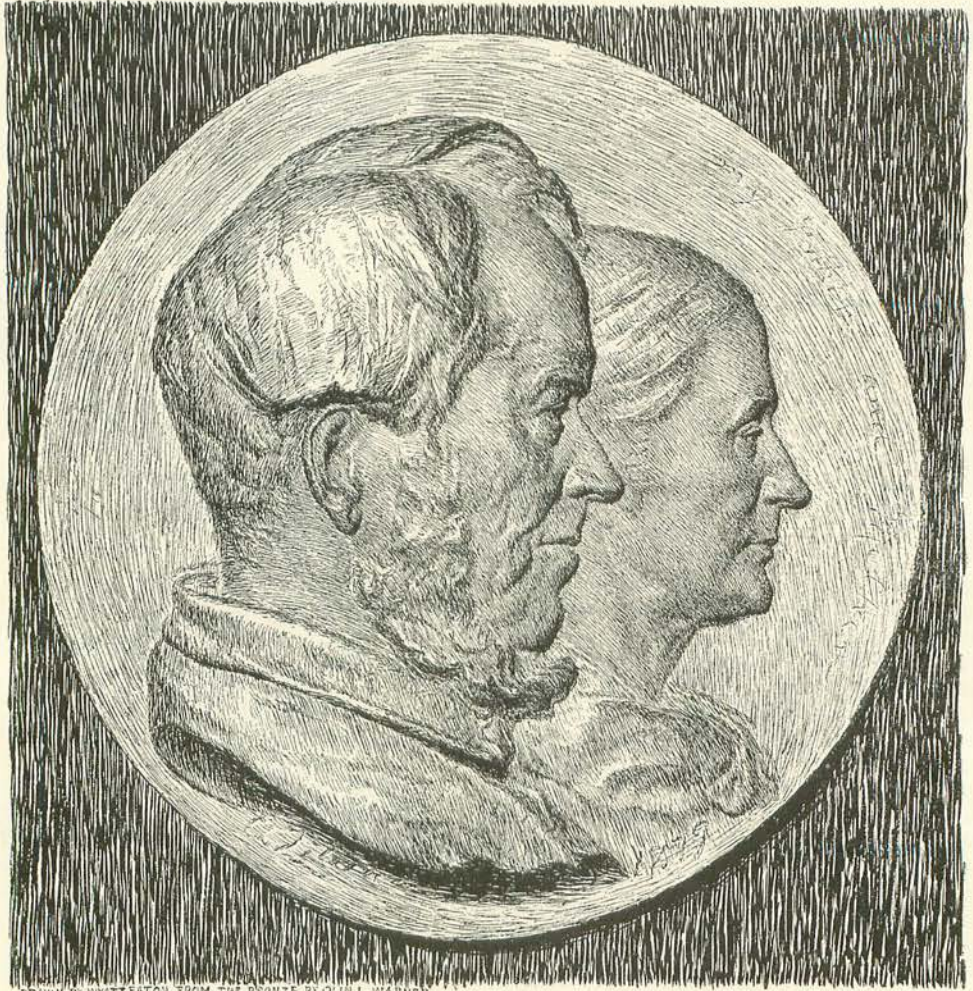
KC after O.L.W.

PORTRAIT BUST OF MISS MAUD MORGAN.

Club, where it now is. Indian heads and heads of beasts in high relief, medallion fashion, were made for the Long Island Historical Society and decorate the façades of the Brooklyn building. In vigorous modeling they recall the Forrest portrait. An order from Mr. I. T. Williams permitted Warner to attack quite another problem. "Twilight" is a half-draped ideal figure of a woman who holds her robe before her face. When this delicate and difficult piece of sculpture was put in marble

it caused no small sensation among those who can separate the fine from the commonplace in the handiwork of sculptors. Doubtless many who had settled in their minds that Mr. Warner was a robust, impressionistic, perhaps a theatrical, modeler, with few traces of refinement, were not a little surprised at the tenderness and grace of this figure. Instead of robust-

small circle of artists and amateurs. Other orders brought him into a line which is eagerly sought by the most inexperienced of the profession, but in their hands is for the most part sterile and productive of public contempt. To reach it there was no hurried bound forward; it came to him naturally under the pressure of regular business. In painting it is often held that



DRAWN BY WATT EATON FROM THE BRONZE BY OLIN L. WARNER

MEDALLION OF THE SCULPTOR'S PARENTS.

ness, there is refinement of contour; in place of theatrical effect to please on a distant view, there are restraint and loveliness fitted for close examination.

But the strong characteristic of movement is not lacking: the finely modeled legs and feet are in the expectancy of movement, as a dancer trembles almost imperceptibly on the eve of taking the step. Yet knowledge of these triumphs, though they may prove the most profitable of all, because they belong to the coming advance in sculpture, was restricted to a

the portrait is the summit test of an artist's power; if he has the talent to make a likeness and a piece of fine art at the same time, so that the friends of the sitter are not disappointed while others cherish the canvas for its intrinsic art, then indeed is he held a master capable of the highest flights. Among the artists Mr. Warner's bust of Mr. Cottier produced the greatest enthusiasm, for in that he seemed to hit the combination of breadth and delicacy that is classical, and yet neglected nothing essential in the likeness. On all sides one heard the praise

of this Greek work. It is, indeed, a genial thing, not without a suspicion of humor, as if Pan had touched his elbow as he wrought the clay and Bacchus and the Fauns had stood about. It was soon followed by the bust of a young performer on the harp. The sculptor appeared to wish to show that he was master of the feminine face as well as the masculine, and could combine dignity and simplicity with beauty in one rounded piece of art. A lovely grace bathed this figure with a charm that literally and without exaggeration recalled the great antiques. A plaster replica was bought by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Then came a charming bust of Miss Cottier and the virile, beautiful head of J. Alden Weir the painter, which Mr. Kenyon Cox has drawn. A series of bas-relief portraits belongs to this period, comprising his father and mother on one field in profile, likenesses of artist and writer friends, including the admirable medallion of Mr. Wyatt Eaton for which the sitter has supplied the pen-and-ink sketch, and—ghastly pot-boilers!—busts of the dead recalled from photographs to such poor life as we have to be content with when our dear ones are no more. Likenesses of one sort or another afford an income to the sculptor who neither lives in a country devoted passionately to the fine arts nor has yet won fame. It is so in France, which comes nearest to a land of art. Normally, and on this line, Warner has risen to his present eminence.

The war for the Union found in Connecticut a good, perhaps a great, governor. His face and figure have been reconstructed by the best of Connecticut sculptors, and Buckingham now sits in his curule chair surrounded by the battle flags held and won in that struggle of fratricides. Warner is at a high mark in this subject,—none too grateful, be it said, owing to the hideous clothes with which modern man disfigures himself,—for he brings out the solid worth of Buckingham, his massive proportions and not ignoble presence, and brings them out not coarsely or with melodrama, but soberly, plainly, discreetly. The civil war was precipitated by an agitator of agitators who made slavery his anathema: the statue of William Lloyd Garrison has now been added to the growing list of thorough works of art for which we have to thank Warner. It stands on Commonwealth Avenue, Boston. Something in the ascetic face reminds one of Emerson and Wendell Phillips, as it leans slightly forward over the chest of a man the reverse of athletic—the chest of a type-setter—



PORTRAIT BUST.

while the right hand clutches a roll of paper forcibly, as if the man was inwardly moved, while self-control keeps the features calm, even benignant. The crushed paper represents that press which made possible his struggle with the slave interest at the North and the South. The pose is quiet, easy, dignified; the action pent-up, not gesticulatory; the head and face venerable and intelligent. Under the chair are bound volumes of "The Liberator," artfully adjusted so as to fill gaps, and to carry the eye over

the whole statue, the result sought being what is termed the monumental in statuary rather than the picturesque, which is more befitting to the statuette. Turning from the Buckingham to the Garrison one is more than ever impressed with the narrowness of the range to which the sculptor is restricted. Here are two elderly men of the same period, each wearing the same hideous garb, each seated, each bare-headed, each more connected with books than with weapons,— though in either case a belligerent position had to be taken,— each engaged

ular gaze. Without recourse to banalities that breed weariness, he has achieved the difficult task of making two quite distinct works of art on a plan which is nearly identical.

Nevertheless too much stress should not be put on these colossal portraits. For reasons about to be advanced, consider rather the five typical heads of human races which decorate the façade of the Pennsylvania Railroad station in Philadelphia, or an original, well-composed bas-relief of Venus leaning over to caress Cupid, the two figures managed so as to leave the



BRONZE MEDALLION OF WYATT EATON.

in the same general warfare as a non-combatant in the ordinary sense, yet each must be originally and individually managed. A separate stamp must be felt in each, so that they who know neither name nor fame of him should gain from the statue some inkling of the services for which he is honored. The picturesque way is to tell the story by accessories; for example, a printing-press for Garrison—a Hartford capitol in miniature for Buckingham. Or the fact that the latter was ex-officio commander of the Connecticut militia might warrant a uniform, while Garrison might have been picturesquely treated with a slave and fetters as accompaniment. But in both cases the strong feeling for the monumental as opposed to the picturesque caused Warner to waive such easy methods of capturing the pop-

least of the field unoccupied, after the fashion of ancient Greek coins, cameos, and intaglios. The past ten years of hard work for Mr. Warner have been lightened by one trip to the Mediterranean, Italy, and Spain, in company with the ideal colorist Albert Ryder and others of his intimacy. Few sketches were made, except a wax sketch of a Chioggia fisherwoman of the old Venetian peasant stock as she stands in the village street spinning yarn with her primitive spindle and bobbin. The impression must have been strong, for Warner is not a facile, ready sketcher, and the figure has certainly caught a vivid look that shines out through the apparently hopeless confusion of the bits of wax.

The latest work from Olin Warner has

crossed the continent without having had a proper showing here. The general view of the fountain at Portland, Oregon, reveals the fact that it is finer in parts than as a whole. The caryatids which keep the bowl from slipping from its central support are noble and exquisite maidens, who reduce the architectural part of the fountain to a minimum by their size and beauty instead of being subordinate to the architecture—like the Greek caryatid. The lip of the bowl is channeled so that thin streams of water form a veil round figures thus raised from the slavery of the caryatid to the more dignified position of Naiads. Observe in the woodcut the way in which the sculptor has filled the difficult gap where the straight shaft meets the round of the bowl. Bent head and arms with elbows forward give a mass analogous to the capital of a column, which also serves as a transition for the eye between the column proper and the entablature. To come on work like this in a new Western town must prove a charming surprise. Here is somebody, one might say, who has discovered in Asia Minor two beautiful draped figures and cleverly disposed of them to decorate a fountain in his town! The men of Portland may well be proud of their fountain, the gift of the late Mr. Skidmore and his friends, for there is nothing so beautiful in statuary westward from Chicago. San Francisco has costlier fountains, and Mr. Story's monument to Key, but nothing to compare with this. Other work completed recently is the portrait of Dr. Morgan for St. Thomas's Church, New York.

It will be seen from what has gone before that Olin Warner is still to a large extent an unknown quantity, for he has not yet obtained a commission sufficiently important to bring out all the power of which he gives promise. He excels in treating the nude in a way that elevates, having naturally chosen in France the dignified and noble side of French sculpture rather than that which obtains temporary notoriety by an odious suggestiveness. An essay for a Diana was shown at one of the Prize Fund exhibitions in the American Galleries which tested his power



PORTRAIT BUST OF J. ALDEN WEIR.

to model purity in the nude. It was a Diana with a crescent in her hair, rousing up at the approach of Actæon and holding an arrow in one hand. A little more than half the size of life, this statuette showed that thoroughness, that resolve to remain within the traditional limits of the sculptor's art which forms part of Mr. Warner's character. With all his good humor he is obstinate when it comes to a question of violating the principles of his pro-

fession. He knows that there is no demand here for nude figures, yet he puts his genial patience into a statuette that does not represent a commission with all the determination of the man who can afford to wait. Some day the silly *embargo* that effaces the highest work, because men are too dull to discriminate, will be lifted, and the labor he has spent on studies of this kind will bring him a rich harvest of power.

of the cold, stiff statues standing, sitting, and crouching in Central Park, on Boston Common, in Fairmount! How little we think of them, how seldom we so much as raise our eyes to them, if chance throws them in our way! Why is this? Why else, but that the movement to people squares with statues is only in part based on real love for art? Why else, but that, most humanly, we are anxious



STATUE OF WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON, COMMONWEALTH AVENUE, BOSTON.

Sturdiness is one characteristic of his work, and sturdiness is expressed by the man himself; but there comes a pleasant shock when extreme delicacy, reserve, and nobility of art expression are observed in one who seems ill fitted for the finer graces of sculpture. Such traits render him most proper for employment on some *magnum opus* which shall allow him to express his ideals in sculpture on a large scale unhampered by the amateur advice of those who control the purse-strings.

In talking of Warner's life and character we have wandered far from the point which was put at the beginning, namely, that it is well occasionally to ask, Whither away? But we have wandered designedly, in order to see whether in Warner's case it is not possible to detect a certain tendency in statuary. Good sculptors are few, and their excellence not readily acknowledged. Bad public statues are the rule, so that a good one is hailed with infinite relief. How remote from all our lives are most

for the glory of outsides before we know how to be decorative within? Why else, but that we are not ready for so many great statues and monuments, because we have not had time to cultivate widely an intimate love for and appreciation of that branch of the plastic arts? This is not Greece, not Italy at all, not even France. We live indoors far more than outdoors. Home, family life, and the association of the sexes not of one family only in sitting-rooms and parlors, are carried to a farther point than in any other country. Now, the decoration of our houses within and without seems destined to encourage a more sensible, well-founded, and healthy statuary than colossal or heroic Washingtons, statues of great men or effigies of little. Indeed, since a review of the public monuments reveals very few worth a regard, very many positively ugly and without redeeming trait, is it not our duty boldly to acknowledge that we have begun at the wrong end? It is manifestly impossible

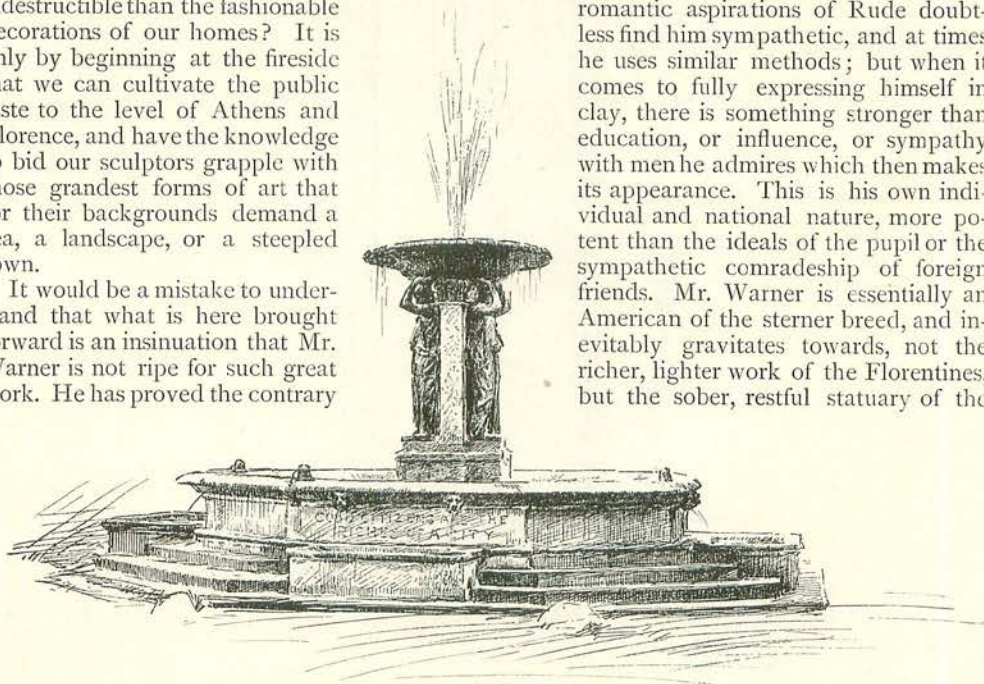
to expect any quick improvement in works the juries of award for which are of the ordinary kind. Amateurs, not committees who control monument funds, will continue to advance the art of the statuary. The house, not the public square, will be the scene of its triumphs. Fanciful, picturesque ideals and artistic portraiture, not large and costly figures of the dead in bronze on their elaborate pedestals, will be its topics. And to this end Warner, together with contemporaries good, bad, or indifferent, seems unconsciously moving. Sculpture must first be a commonplace, a fashionable necessity in the home life, before it can flourish greatly and nationally in a commonwealth like ours. The field of the sculptor as the rival of the painter in the daily affections of amateurs is practically unworked, scarcely suspected; yet the signs of its presence are on all sides. One straw is the removal of an old prejudice against plaster casts, used in lieu of costlier materials. As to what is now called sculpture — backed as it is by no large mass of trained, cultivated fosterers — the silent nation of marble and bronze statues which men think of when sculpture is mentioned becomes already oppressive. Our parks will soon offer the cluttered chaos of the cemetery and become a derision. But will not then a wider taste, wearying of easel pictures and pictures on the wall, carved woods and bric-à-brac, turn to statuary for agreeable, companionable forms of art, at once calmer in temperament and more indestructible than the fashionable decorations of our homes? It is only by beginning at the fireside that we can cultivate the public taste to the level of Athens and Florence, and have the knowledge to bid our sculptors grapple with those grandest forms of art that for their backgrounds demand a sea, a landscape, or a steeped town.

It would be a mistake to understand that what is here brought forward is an insinuation that Mr. Warner is not ripe for such great work. He has proved the contrary


so far as he has been allowed to, and I have pointed out how fitted he is for such work. It is the public that needs to study, not Warner and several other American sculptors of his rank. I ask in the interest of art that people use sculpture at the fireside, so that they may live with this noble branch of art and thus learn to understand statues and monuments and avoid the monstrosities that now infest our parks. When they do there will be work for twenty Warners, and the United States will lead the world in sculpture. But that moment seems far off.

In no time and no country have artists of the first rank abounded, and there is no reason why they should with us at the present time. The United States has a few that may fairly be placed among eminent sculptors and perhaps one day will be recognized as men of genius. Among the few stands Olin Warner.

On what grounds, may be asked, is Mr. Warner ranked among the foremost? Not by reason of the number or brilliancy of his achievements, it may be said. His large statues are not many, and his style is quite the reverse of a master's under whom he studied (Jouffroy), or of the master's master, Rude. There is nothing excited, melodramatic, or realistic in the sensational line about Warner's work. His style is almost severe compared with that of some of the men he most admired and most saw during his *burschenschaft*, such as Falguière and Carpeaux. The romantic aspirations of Rude doubtless find him sympathetic, and at times he uses similar methods; but when it comes to fully expressing himself in clay, there is something stronger than education, or influence, or sympathy with men he admires which then makes its appearance. This is his own individual and national nature, more potent than the ideals of the pupil or the sympathetic comradeship of foreign friends. Mr. Warner is essentially an American of the sterner breed, and inevitably gravitates towards, not the richer, lighter work of the Florentines, but the sober, restful statuary of the



PUBLIC FOUNTAIN IN PORTLAND, OREGON, PRESENTED BY THE LATE STEPHEN G. SKIDMORE.



KENYON COX.
1888.

AFTER
OLIN L. WARNER.

CARYATID, FROM THE FOUNTAIN IN PORTLAND, OREGON.

classical period; yet in how different a spirit from the old classicists of America who lived in Rome! The fashion of the day compels him to drape his portrait statues in modern clothes, but this is of small importance. Only superficial classicists are they who depend on togas and nudeness to show their classicism; failure to be classical is shown by much deeper

traits. And in Warner the instinct to pass by the French pseudo-classicism and the Italian Renaissance and to strike for the highest bloom of Greek statuary shows itself quite as much in the Buckingham as in the "Diana Aroused," in the "May" as in the bas-relief of "Venus consoling Cupid."

Henry Eckford.

AN AMERICAN APPRENTICE SYSTEM.



EACH year in the United States nearly six hundred thousand young men reach the age which separates the minor from the man. In this great host the idlers are few: the census states that the number of those who do not follow some "gainful calling" is too small to enumerate. A great difference exists in the way these young men are trained for the work they are to do. Health, strength, education, and the ability to do some one thing well is the outfit all require. For a small minority great efforts to secure this result have been made. To prepare them for their work scientific schools, schools of law, medicine, theology, and art, normal schools, and business colleges have been established. To give them a liberal education the land is dotted all over with colleges, while others are being founded in such numbers that their utility is questioned. To establish these schools and colleges, or to render them efficient, wealth has been bestowed with a lavish hand. The General Government, the State governments, and private liberality have provided funds of vast amount. In the year ending June, 1887, the gifts from private individuals for purposes of higher education amounted to the sum of \$12,507,000, and during the two preceding years to \$15,290,000. Unparalleled in history as these gifts for educational purposes are, they do not include the expenditures on the Stanford University in California, the amount of which has not been made public. Owing to their endowments, colleges and preparatory schools offer instruction at less than its cost. No less care is bestowed on physical development. Splendidly equipped gymnasiums are provided, where each student is given a carefully considered course of training. The young athlete, as well as the scholar, wins fame and brings credit to his alma mater.

For the many—for upward of eighty per cent. of these six hundred thousand young men—but little has been done. Hardly an endowment exists for their benefit. This lack of

care is owing not to indifference to their wants, but to the fact that until recently all that a young man starting in life required was a good education, which the public schools afforded; then with pluck, and belief in Horace Greeley's favorite advice, the West would provide for him. The West has still its openings, and there is also a new South, but in no part of this country are young men wanted unless they have a knowledge of some useful calling.

The demand for education to fit young men for their work has been gradually widening. Confined at first to a few professions, it is now deemed necessary in all. Business colleges were a novelty a short time ago; now they are attended each year by over forty thousand young men. Instruction in agriculture and the mechanic arts suited to foremen and superintendents was next begun at the land-grant colleges, in conformity with the act of Congress under which they received their endowments. Preparatory education thus far had been confined to those who might be termed the brain workers; it was now wanted by a larger class—by the handicraftsmen. To state how this want is being supplied, and the difficulties to be encountered in this extension of special instruction, these few pages are written.

The first effort that was made was in the direction of manual instruction. Hand and eye were to be developed as well as the mind. Manual instruction, which was almost unheard of in the United States until the exhibit of the Moscow Technical School at the Centennial Exhibition attracted public attention to its capabilities, is now engrafted on the public-school system of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. In nearly all the other large cities private liberality, by supporting manual training schools for a few, is showing what should be done for all. Manual training, however, is but the beginning. It makes a lad handy and observant; after that has been accomplished he needs to be prepared for some work by which he can earn a living. If he intends to be a mechanic, he must learn a trade.