

A NEW AMERICAN SCULPTOR.

GEORGE GREY BARNARD.



«BOY.»

AT the Salon of the Champ de Mars in 1894 a very prominent place was given to a group of works by a sculptor whose name was new to the Paris public. The chief work was a colossal group bearing the title «*Je sens deux hommes en moi,*» taken from one of Victor Hugo's poems, and generally given in

English as «I feel two natures struggling within me.» The other sculptures were a single figure, «Boy»; two fragments of a Norwegian stove showing in decorative relief the struggle between man and the elements as described in the Scandinavian sagas; a group called «Brotherly Love»; a portrait

bust of an elderly lady modeled from memory; and a portrait bust of a man. The «Two Natures,» «Brotherly Love,» and the bust of a lady were sculptured in marble; the bust of a man was cast in bronze. These works were acclaimed by the jury of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, and the sculptor was elected an associate member. His success was instantaneous with the artists, the critics, who wrote of the work with enthusiasm, and that portion of the public which gives the word for or against a newcomer in the Paris world of art. It was soon learned that the sculptor, George Grey Barnard, was a young American, a pupil of M. Cavelier, and that he had come to Paris a few years before, a novice in the art in which he then showed such masterly ability. He was totally unknown in America, for, although he had been a pupil in the Chicago Art School, he had not gone far enough in his studies to feel like exhibiting, and he had no acquaintance in the art coteries of the Eastern cities. In the

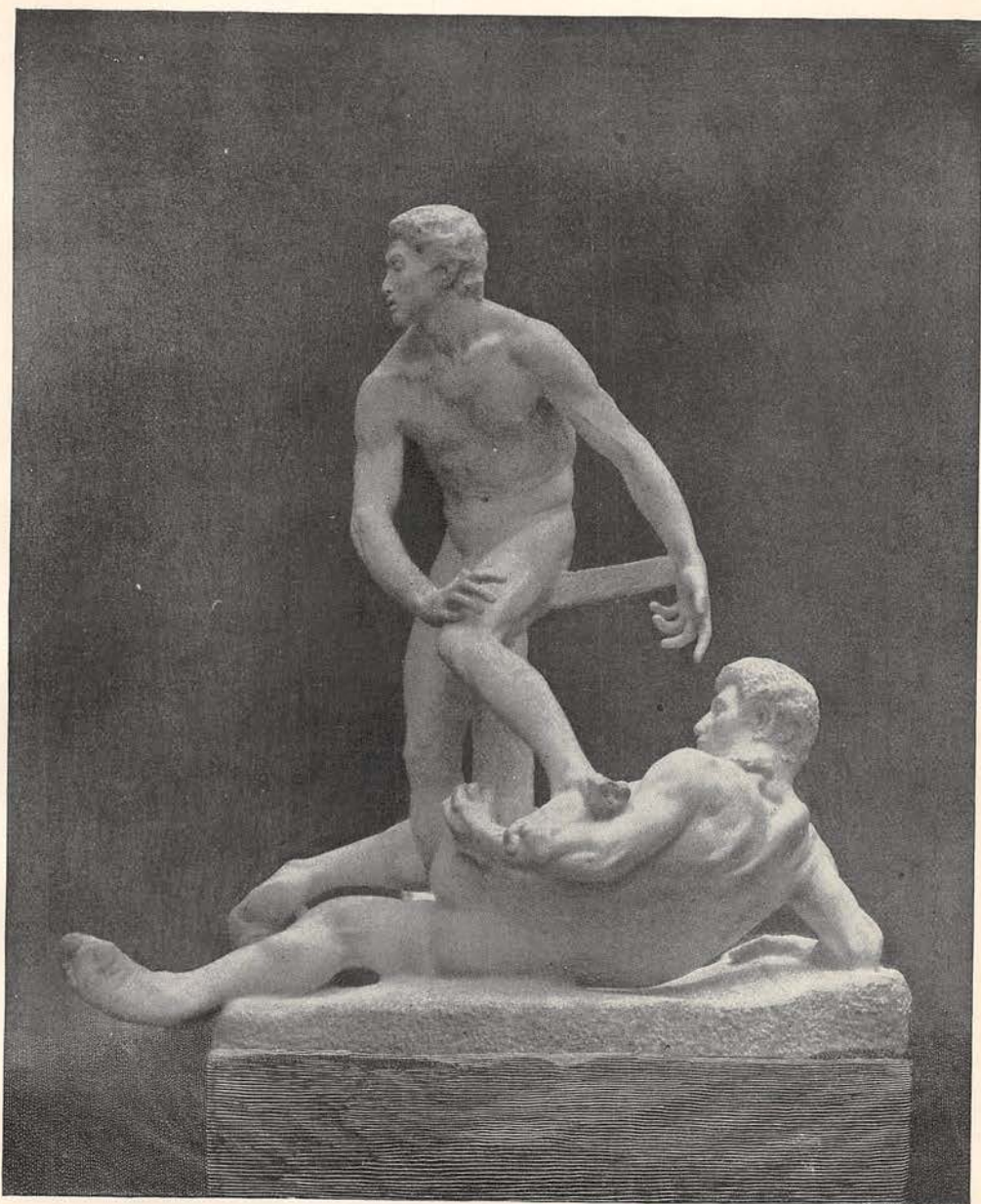
autumn of 1896 Mr. Barnard showed this same group of works, with some additional pieces, in New York, at the Logerot in Eighteenth street; and during the three or four weeks that it was open the exhibition was visited by a large number of people. His sculpture was widely discussed in art circles, but did not receive much appreciative comment from the press. The artists, I think, pretty generally admitted his power, and some of them spoke in superlative terms. The young sculptor now stands at the threshold of a career in his own country, and it is to be hoped that his remarkable talent will receive full recognition and encouragement.

It is plain to be seen that Mr. Barnard's ideas and those formulas and principles generally accepted as essential parts of beauty of form and composition do not agree. Like Rodin, he seems to delight in the natural and the accidental, and to be more susceptible to impressions of force than of grace. The «Two Natures» has an uncouth, rugged aspect

as a whole. It is soon seen, when the group is looked at in detail, that it is amazingly good in technical treatment, and that characterization in the heads of the two figures has been thoughtfully conceived and truthfully rendered. The great lines of the group cannot be said to build up well, and the effect is not unified. The standing figure presents a long perpendicular line on one side that is not balanced by any other. The under figure in the struggle, half raised up and supported by one arm, is full of movement, as in life. The group gives an impression of unrest that entirely befits the motive of the title, it is true; but we are accustomed, and rightly accustomed, to expect repose or dignity, or some quality that is not disturbing, in sculpture. But this conception or choice of subject may be excused, because the sculptor has made of it a means of showing such masterly treatment of marble with the chisel as few men have shown us. It is pure modeling without tricks, and it is varied, firm, vigorous, and skilful all at once. I should say, in looking at this group and the other pieces in the exhibition, that the sculptor has a hundred ways of expressing texture, color, and effect, and that



«BROTHERLY LOVE.»

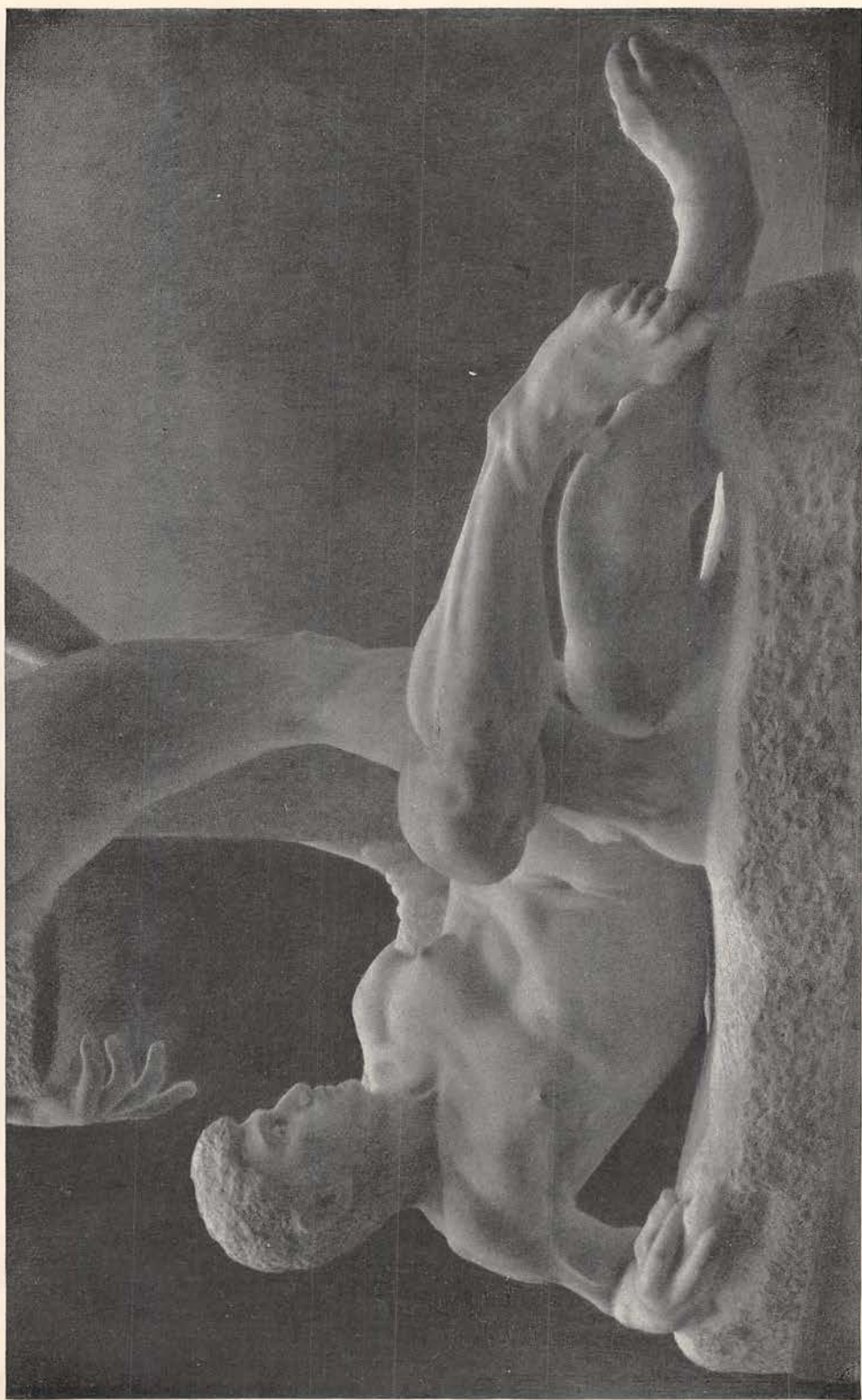


«I FEEL TWO NATURES STRUGGLING WITHIN ME.»

he must have made a special study of his art in this respect. He has painted a good deal, and has evidently brought the knowledge gained in that way to bear on his modeling without permitting it to lead him into elaboration of detail.

The «Boy» is in every way admirable; it is complete and it is beautiful. The «Brotherly Love» violates some of our traditions, but it is beautiful, too, and possesses a weird, indescribable charm. It is a group intended

for a tomb, and shows the nude figures of two young men whose heads are partly buried in the roughly hewn marble which forms the bulk of the monument, and whose hands seem to have forced their way through it and to be searching each other's grasp. I suppose that the marble mass may typify rock or darkness or eternity, or something else tangible or intangible, and that the brothers are groping through it to join each other after death. I did not think to ask the sculptor



A FIGURE FROM «TWO NATURES.»

the meaning, or if it had any. The meaning is unimportant, and it would add nothing to my delight in looking at the work to know what it is beyond what I conjecture. I should like it still better if the hands were a little more manly in character, and I should mention the fact that certain small indentations which appear in several places are not eccentricities of modeling, but are due to errors in «pointing»; for the «Brotherly Love» exhibited in New York is a reduction of the original, which has been put in place in Norway. The fragments of the sculptured decoration of a Norwegian stove show much originality of conception, and the illustrative quality of the work is interesting. Man is shown struggling in the waters with the elements, typified by a great serpent, the *Hidhoegur* of the sagas. The uncanny types that the artist has represented, and the fine decorative way in which the work is treated, produce a fascinating effect. The handling is very broad; but in parts, as in the heads of man, the modeling is of the subtlest and most sensitive sort. The great figure of Pan, designed when cast in bronze to surmount a fountain, possesses many of the virile qualities of the «Two Natures,» but is even more simply treated. The head of Pan, with one ear raised and the other flopping down, the eyes aslant, and the great mustaches turned up, revealing the grin which distorts the lines of the mouth and the base of the nose, is unlike any other Pan, and extremely individual. The characterization as shown in this head, in the noble type of the good nature, and in the evil, lethargic head of the bad nature, is one of Mr. Barnard's strongest merits outside of his masterly treatment of surfaces with the chisel. The possession of this faculty, joined to his able equipment in technical expression, constitutes a good omen for his future work, in that it will enable him to go far in the realm of subjective creation. Among the works shown in New York by this young sculptor, none was more complete in itself or more enjoyable than the small bust of a Norwegian lady. If it has any defect, it is a lack of precise construction; but it was modeled from memory, and no doubt is more tentative than it would have been if it had been done from life. It is a marvel of treatment of facial texture and color with the chisel. The cheeks are absolutely flesh-like, the forehead suggests the thinly covered skull, and the hair is unmistakably white; yet the modeling is superlatively simple.

It is interesting to hear of the boyhood and early training of this young artist, and we

find some traits of character and some facts in his occupations that have had their influence on his present development. Barnard is the son of a Presbyterian clergyman, and was born at Bellefonte; Pennsylvania, May 24, 1863. While a small boy he went to school in Bellefonte; but his father accepted a call to Chicago later on, and young Barnard met there an old sea-captain who had a fine collection of stuffed birds, shells, specimens of stone and mineral, and other natural objects. He used to offer the boy prizes of shells if he would learn and remember the Latin names of the specimens, and led him to study conchology in a systematic way. He promised his pupil a copy of Dana's «Manual of Geology» as a grand prize; and when the lad had obtained this he spent two years reading it and hunting specimens in the suburbs of Chicago. He was devoted to geology until he was ten years of age, but then began to feel that the science was too cold and unsympathetic for his taste, and, the family removing to Iowa, he experimented in taxidermy. He went to school in Iowa for three years, studying birds and nature generally meanwhile, and formed a collection of stuffed specimens, twelve hundred in number, all mounted by himself, and including all kinds of birds and animals, from a humming-bird to big deer. At thirteen he began to engrave, and made two books of plates. Then he took to modeling birds and beasts in clay. At sixteen he made a bust of his little sister, which excited the praise of the neighbors; and leaving school, he went to work to learn engraving, for it was thought that he should have a regular trade to enable him to earn his livelihood. His first master was a man who had been engraving thirty-five years, but his pupil soon surpassed him in his work. Afterward he had some lessons from the best engraver in Chicago, and did decorative designs. In 1881, when he was eighteen, he entered the Chicago Art School, where he drew from casts, but did not model. Later on he received orders for two busts, and started for Paris on the proceeds in November, 1883. He worked three years and a half in Cavalier's atelier, and then set up a studio at Vaugirard, near the Porte de Versailles. Here he worked unremittingly, and modeled his «Boy» in clay. It was seen by some of his artist friends, who praised it highly, and he received an order to execute it in marble. After his success at the Champ de Mars in 1894, with the recollection of the cheers of the jury and of the honor of several receptions given for him by great people in Paris,

he came back to America, and settled himself in a studio in the upper part of the city of New York.

There is a sufficiently wide range of subject and treatment in the group of works shown by Mr. Barnard to admit of a summing up of his qualities as a sculptor. Strength and breadth are evidently his. In interpreting his perception of what is before him in nature his hand is wonderfully skilled. He is an analyst in thought and a synthesist in execution. His work shows a decided psychological bent. He apparently cares more for force and virility than for so-called beauty. This preference has led him, in the "Two Natures," to disregard certain things that seem to me essential in the making of a great work of art, or has prevented him from feeling the necessity of their presence. It

might have been possible to give all the force and power that he has obtained in the "Two Natures," and at the same time to bring the group within lines of composition that would have produced an effect more unified and beautiful. I mean beautiful in its best sense, as relating to the ensemble, not that I could wish to see the figures themselves modified by softening or refining them in any way whatever. Delicacy and refinement are attributes much more commonly met with in the works of artists of Anglo-Saxon origin than true virility. Mr. Barnard's sculpture is full of the healthful, living force of nature, and the desire to see it include other things may be repressed for the moment, for the splendid vigor and pure artistic power of his work entitle it to be received with enthusiasm.

William A. Coffin.

EVEN AS THE WAVE.

A STORM at sea; though here, undimmed, the sun
 In silver dazzles from bright-burnished dunes,
 While, through the wooded uplands faintly spun,
 Low winds bring even to the salt lagoons
 Memories of goldenrod and yellowed leaves.
 Yet, white with wrath, the heavy-handed surf
 Lashes the beach, not heeding how it grieves
 The tender autumn day. Torn kelp and scurf
 Of thick-churned spume strew all the curving marge
 Where, blind with strife, the sand and breaker close.

Strong from mid-ocean, rolling to the charge
 A billow gathers. Darker, greener grows
 Its steepening slope, while fast the rearing crest
 Flickers to froth and foam. By sudden wind
 Whirled high in air, a misty woven vest,
 Smit with the sun's seven colors, streams behind.
 Broad-based beneath, on comes the ponderous sheet,
 Shoaling from green to emerald; arching o'er—
 Crash! The great cataract falls. A burst of sleet
 Leaps with a boom, and, seething toward the shore,
 Shimmers the wide white field of hissing foam.
 Broadening and spending, crossed with marbly bands
 Of fading surge, its whispers softer come,
 Till but a lapping ripple lips the sands
 Before my feet.

Then through my heart there stirred
 A dream of brave resolve, of strenuous deeds
 And heart-sick failure. Turning thence, I heard
 A sad-tongued sea-bird mourn among the reeds.

George De Clyver Curtis.