

II. THE SCULPTOR ST. GAUDENS.

I.

THE «Shaw» was finished and ready for the bronze-founders. As I sat in the studio of the sculptor, one afternoon in the autumn of 1896, I read aloud the inscription on the base of the monument. «The 10th of October!» I exclaimed. «This is Shaw's birthday.» And the coincidence that the last touch had been put on the memorial on that anniversary morning led me to ask Mr. St. Gaudens about the time he had spent upon it. It has been said in some quarters that Mr. St. Gaudens takes a good deal of time to finish a work, and he has even been charged with being dilatory. He told me, as we sat looking at the «Shaw,» that he had received the commission twelve years before, but had spent only two years and a half in actual work on it. During the period between the time he received the commission and the autumn of 1896, when the memorial was finished, he produced, with the exception of the statues of Farragut and Randall and some other less important works, all the sculpture that has made his reputation. It was not the actual execution of the Shaw memorial that took the time, but the thinking about it. The artist, modifying his original sketch, made many changes. The original idea of the equestrian figure with the troops in the background has always been adhered to; but the horseman and the

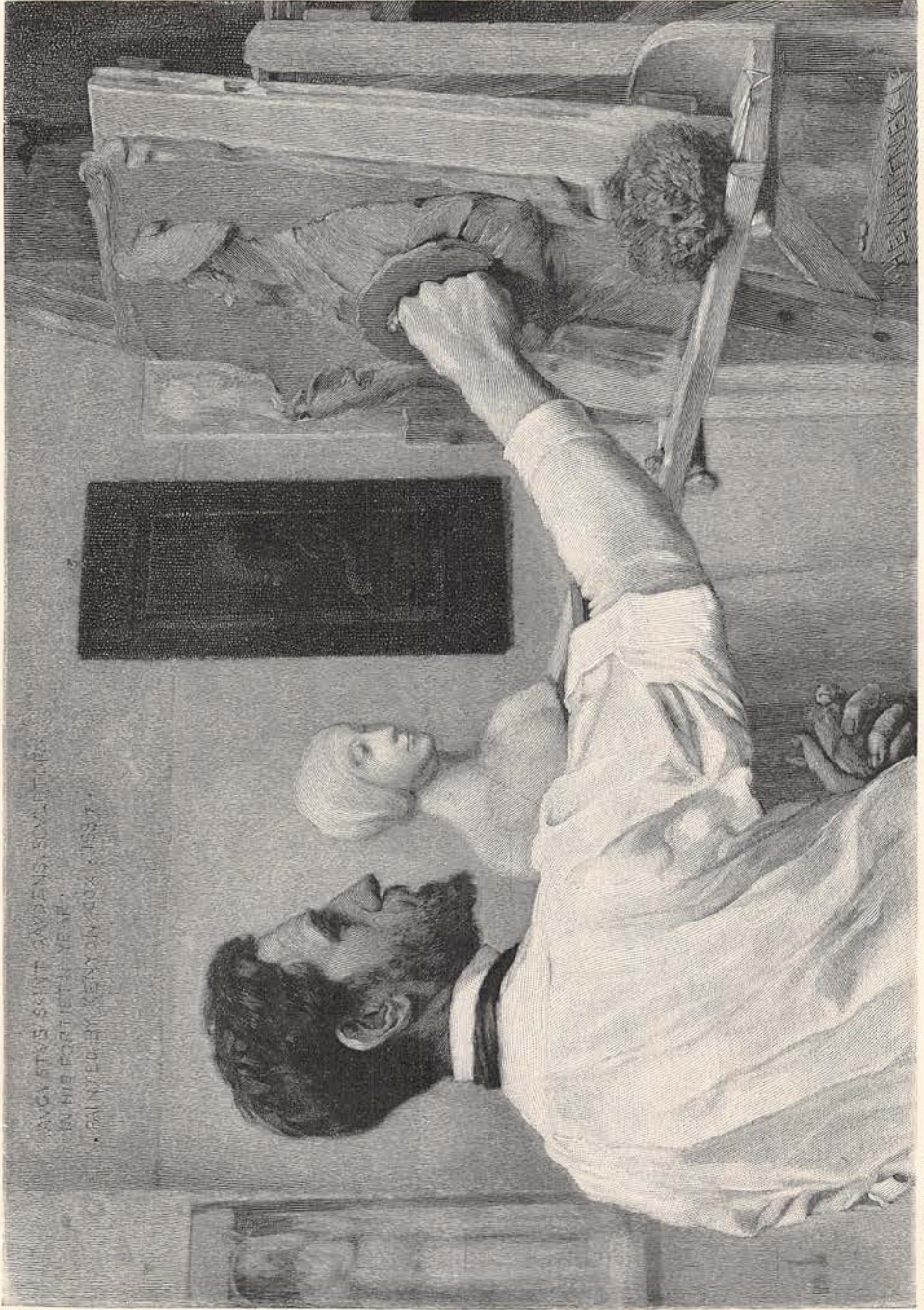
soldiers have been almost entirely modeled before in lower relief, and the work thus designed, with a different general scheme from that which it presents in its completed state, was almost finished more than once and pulled down again.

In the very beginning, before any definite plan was settled upon, the projectors of the



A DETAIL OF THE SHAW MEMORIAL.

monument thought it should take the form of an equestrian statue on a high pedestal: but the family of Colonel Shaw felt that this would give too much importance to the single figure, the idea of the memorial being



AUGUSTUS ST. GAUDENS IN HIS STUDIO.
1878. THE FIRST. NEW YORK.
PAINTED BY KENYON COX.

ENGRAVED BY J. H. E. WHITNEY.

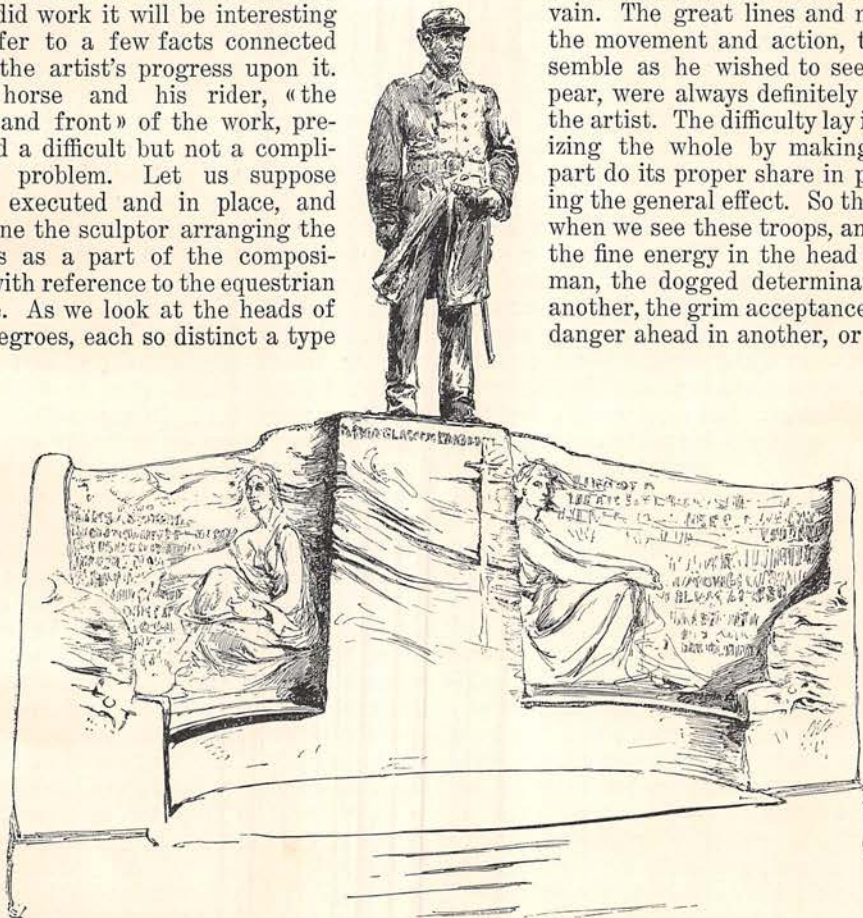
AUGUSTUS ST. GAUDENS.

PORTRAIT BY KENYON COX.

that it should typify patriotic devotion, and embody a modern spirit with heroic attributes. Young Shaw was chosen as the type to illustrate the idea; but he was to be thought of as a commander of troops, a man associated with other young officers, and, at their head, marching to war for his country. Mr. St. Gaudens finally decided upon a composition in which, with the commander in high relief, almost in the round, and the troops behind him in high relief, the elements of the conception might be bound together. When he explained it to the memorial committee, it received their approval, and he made his first sketch.

Artists understand the difficulties that are inherent in the creation of a work of art. It is not shown to the public until it is finished, and then, seen in its completeness, there is nothing to tell—as there should not be—of the trials through which perfection was attained. But in the case of this splendid work it will be interesting to refer to a few facts connected with the artist's progress upon it. The horse and his rider, «the head and front» of the work, presented a difficult but not a complicated problem. Let us suppose them executed and in place, and imagine the sculptor arranging the troops as a part of the composition with reference to the equestrian figure. As we look at the heads of the negroes, each so distinct a type

and so natural, it might be supposed that, having found a suitable model and having made a satisfactory study, the sculptor had only to put such a figure in a given place and go on to the next one. But though he had many models, and though he found many heads that pleased him on account of one or another quality or characteristic, though he made heads in which he obtained all that he sought to achieve, he found over and over again that he could not use them. The study while isolated was admirable; placed in the niche intended for it, it «threw out» all the rest, and could not be used. It could not be modified in many cases, and there was nothing to do but to cast it aside and begin anew. Let it be borne in mind that there was no haphazard selection, but that each study was made with a definite conception in view. It was the difficulty of harmonizing, of making the whole work unified and yet characteristic, that made these essays vain. The great lines and masses, the movement and action, the ensemble as he wished to see it appear, were always definitely before the artist. The difficulty lay in realizing the whole by making each part do its proper share in producing the general effect. So that now when we see these troops, and note the fine energy in the head of one man, the dogged determination in another, the grim acceptance of the danger ahead in another, or in yet



DRAWN BY ROBERT BLUM.

THE FARRAGUT MONUMENT, MADISON SQUARE, NEW YORK CITY.

another the careless look born of the martial sound of fife and drum, it is worth while remembering that others quite as fine in themselves were tried, only with the result of abandoning them. Here is the part of the artist's task that is unknown to the uninitiated; here, in the realization of a grand conception, are satisfaction and keen pleasure when we see a result that shows a positive triumph over difficulties—difficulties that we know existed, and yet show no trace in the completed work of having arisen at all.

It was not always easy to get the models the sculptor wanted for his types. One snowy night when he was standing on the platform of a crowded Broadway car he saw passing under the bright gas-lights in Madison Square a negro whose head, as he caught a glimpse of it, struck him as being just what he wanted for one of his figures. He jumped off and accosted him, and secured him as a model. But his experiences were not always so lucky. At first when he met a man in the streets that he thought would serve his purpose, he used to ask: « Would you like to have your picture made? Come along with me, and I'll pay you;» and the negro would follow, with apparent willingness in most cases, but would manage to slip off somehow on the way to the studio. They had in mind a fiction implicitly believed by some of their race concerning the methods employed by medical students to obtain subjects for dissection; and the sculptor soon adopted another form of introducing the question, simply saying: « Do you want a job? Well, then, come to this address to-morrow morning.» This generally secured his man. Many and many a day, too, the horse model, with his saddle and trappings, stood and champed his bit in the studio in Thirty-sixth street, while the sculptor looked and studied, measured his proportions, and noted his action in movement, climbing up and down the platform steps to add a bit of clay here or to take away another there. Even the disposition of the horse's mane and tail have been changed and modified several times to meet the requirements of the sculptor's ideal for a perfect ensemble.

The Shaw memorial monument has been placed on Boston Common, opposite the State House. The site was prepared by removing fifty feet ten inches of the wall inclosing the Common on Beacon street, and building out the ground into the space beyond, making it level with the street, the surface of the Common being here considerably below the level of Beacon street. The plateau forming the site of the monument is held in

place by a retaining-wall built up on three sides from the level of the Common. Two large elms which stood in the plot have been preserved by sinking wells around their trunks, so that, looking at the face of the monument from Beacon street, it is seen between the two trees, which are about thirty feet apart. A stone bench surrounds the base of the monument, and there are other stone benches on each side of the plateau. The distance from the curb of the sidewalk on Beacon street to the base of the monument is twenty-five feet six inches. In this arrangement of the site, and in the well-proportioned, dignified, and beautiful architectural frame and base for Mr. St. Gaudens's sculpture, Mr. Charles F. McKim has again given evidence of his excellent taste and his artistic feeling in composition.

The figure of Colonel Shaw on his horse heads to the right of the spectator. He appears riding at the side of the troops, who march in the same direction. Overhead in the field of the composition floats a figure in half relief, beckoning to the men with her left hand. In her right hand she holds the palms of glory. Her right arm is held close to her body, clasping her drapery and poppies, the symbol of death; the heads of one or two poppies only are seen. The drapery of the figure flows closely over one leg, and floats in a whirl where it reaches the feet. The head is fine in type, and shows the nobility characteristic of the sculptor's ideal work. Above this figure, in the arch of the frame, are caissons, which were introduced as decorative points and to bind together the figure and the architecture. In each caisson is a star, although four immediately over the figure are concealed. There are eleven on the right and nineteen on the left. The number of thirty-four was finally decided upon, though a lesser number would have sufficed for the architectural exigencies, because there were thirty-four States in the Union at the time the troops went to the front. In the field to the right of the figure is the inscription, «*Omnia relinquat servare rempublicam*,» the motto of the Society of the Cincinnati. Colonel Shaw by right of descent was a member of the society. The dimensions of Mr. St. Gaudens's work—the sculptured composition—are eleven feet from the base-line to the center of the arched top, and fourteen feet in width.

Colonel Shaw, as represented in the St. Gaudens memorial, wears the uniform of campaign, with the fatigue-cap, and, with his right arm extended downward, holds in



CHARLES C. BEAMAN.
FRANCIS D. MILLET.
D. MAITLAND ARMSTRONG.

GENERAL SHERMAN.
MISS PAGE.
WILLIAM A. CHANLER.

WILLIAM M. EVARTS.
HOMER ST. GAUDENS.
GEORGE W. MAYNARD.

his hand his naked sword. His head is firmly set on his shoulders, and is quiet of aspect, determined, and straightforward of type. It is purely American, with features which suggest Scandinavian race characteristics. The expression of the face is noble and reposeful. His chest is broad, but not too swelling; his arm is admirably felt under the sleeve of his coat, and suggests muscular tension, but not rigidity; his leg in his boot fits the horse's side with firm but springy action. On his saddle before him are the holsters holding his pistols, and his left hand holds the bridle-rein. The horse, deep-chested and strong in neck and shoulder, carries his head high up; and while big and simple in type, and so modeled as to have an almost classic grandeur, is truly American, and does not suggest the Greek or the Spanish conformations which characterize many good equestrian statues. He is strong and massive; but in his well-turned body, in the strength of his legs, in the majestic lift of his feet, are alertness and nervous force befitting the rider. The sweep of his long tail around and behind his legs is not unrestful, and is sufficiently sculpturesque in form to carry its naturalness of movement. The officer and his steed are one in the grim but light-hearted march to war.

Now look at the drummer-boy and the grizzled old man in the front ranks, at the one who is third from the nearest in the first row of soldiers, at him who comes first behind the horse, and the next one, with the Arab cast of features, and the three together in the last file. See what variety of type and what gradations of expression are shown in these heads, and note the rhythm of the march, the individuality of the bodies, of the arms and legs and hands and feet. Every part of the relief bears testimony to the skill of the sculptor and to his analytical powers. But stand back and look at the work as a whole. How the equestrian figure dominates the composition, and yet how essentially a part of one's impression is the presence of the troops! How unified and complete it is! With what force is the general effect brought to one, making him feel the grandeur of the whole! Technically the work abounds in fine *morceaux*. The head of Shaw is admirably modeled. The arm is a remarkable piece of movement felt through concealing drapery. The horse in every part is simple in rendering and broadly treated as to surface texture, nervous, strong, and shapely in all his lines. The treatment of the troops, the way in which reality is embodied in sculptural

form, the moderation of what would be too prominent as details if they were not so well subordinated by giving each object a place where it will tell and not tell too much,— matters purely artistic, matters concerning the sculptor's art in line, mass, and relief,— are masterly. No poet's dream of heroism, glory, or devotion, however fine in conception it might be, could be realized in material form as this is, except through the art that goes to the bottom of the elements and arranges them one by one, but always with their effect altogether in mind, according to the space they may occupy, their length, breadth, and thickness, their strength or fineness of line, their weight or delicacy of mass, their coarseness or refinement of texture, their proportion, their direction, their value in relief under the light and the shadows they cast. Yet I have touched but lightly on the things that go to make up this beautiful work of art.

On the face of the pedestal of the memorial, directly under the horse and figure, are inscriptions, to the right and left of which are sculptured wreaths of bay-leaves. The inscriptions are as follows:

ROBERT GOULD SHAW

COLONEL OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH REGIMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS INFANTRY BORN IN BOSTON OCTOBER X MDCCCXXXVII KILLED WHILE LEADING THE ASSAULT ON FORT WAGNER SOUTH CAROLINA JULY XVIII MDCCCLXIII

RIGHT IN THE VAN ON THE RED RAMPART'S SLIPPERY SWELL,
WITH HEARTS THAT BEAT A CHARGE HE FELL
FOEWARD AS FITS A MAN,
BUT THE HIGH SOUL BURNS ON TO LIGHT MEN'S FEET
WHERE DEATH FOR NOBLE ENDS MAKES DYING SWEET.

These fine lines by Lowell were not, of course, written for the monument, but were inspired by the circumstances of Shaw's death. On the back of the monument are other inscriptions. That written by President Eliot of Harvard is as follows:

TO THE FIFTY-FOURTH REGIMENT OF
MASSACHUSETTS INFANTRY.

THE WHITE OFFICERS

TAKING LIFE AND HONOR IN THEIR HANDS CAST IN
THEIR LOT WITH MEN OF THE DESPISED RACE UN-
PROVED IN WAR AND RISKED DEATH AS INCITERS
OF SERVILLE INSURRECTION IF TAKEN PRISONERS
BESIDES ENCOUNTERING ALL THE COMMON PERILS
OF CAMP MARCH AND BATTLE



ENGRAVED BY J. H. E. WHITNEY.

STATUE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN, LINCOLN PARK, CHICAGO.

THE BLACK RANK AND FILE

VOLUNTEERED WHEN DISASTER CLOUDED THE UNION CAUSE SERVED WITHOUT PAY FOR EIGHTEEN MONTHS TILL GIVEN THAT OF WHITE TROOPS FACED THREATENED ENSLAVEMENT IF CAPTURED WERE BRAVE IN ACTION PATIENT UNDER HEAVY AND DANGEROUS LABORS AND CHEERFUL AMID HARDSHIPS AND PRIVATIONS

TOGETHER

THEY GAVE TO THE NATION AND THE WORLD UNDYING PROOF THAT AMERICANS OF AFRICAN DESCENT POSSESS THE PRIDE COURAGE AND DEVOTION OF THE PATRIOT SOLDIER ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY THOUSAND SUCH AMERICANS ENLISTED UNDER THE UNION FLAG IN MDCCCLXIII—MDCCCLXV

The names of the officers who were killed in the assault are also on the back, each within a wreath: Cabot Jackson Russell, William Harris Simpkins, Edward Lewis Stevens, Frederick Hedge Webster, David Reid. Other inscriptions will be put on the back, on a bronze plate. In spite of the nobility of the lines by Lowell, it would have been, I think, more fitting from the artistic point of view to have had nothing carved on the face of the pedestal but the simple inscription. President Eliot's fine and exalted words are divided into three parts, an arrangement by which the white officers and what is said of them come in one division, the colored troops and their praise in the second, and in the third their achievements together.

II.

AUGUSTUS ST. GAUDENS was born in Dublin, March 1, 1848. His father was born in France, near Saint-Gaudens, a town of Haute-Garonne in the Pyrenees; and his mother, whose maiden name was McGuinness, was a native of Dublin. Mr. St. Gaudens came to America with his wife and family when Augustus, the third child, was six months old. After spending three months in Boston, he came to New York and settled here. So St. Gaudens is truly a son of New York. He attended school until he was thirteen, when he went to work with a cameo-cutter named Avet, and served a three years' apprenticeship. Avet was a Savoyard, and the first stone cameo-cutter in the United States. Seals were cut before his time, but he did the first work in relief. Stone cameos are cut with a lathe. When he was seventeen St. Gaudens had a quarrel with Avet, and received his walking-papers. He thought he had lost three good years, and that, indeed, the end of the world had come; but when overtures were made by Avet to his parents looking to his coming back to work

with him, he utterly refused to do so. His parents took a calm view of the situation, and St. Gaudens went to work with a shell cameo-cutter named Le Breton. He spent three years with him. During all the time that he was working at cameo-cutting in the daytime he studied drawing at night. The first four years he attended the classes at Cooper Union, the last two those at the National Academy of Design. In 1867 he went to Paris, and entered the sculpture atelier of M. Jouffroy in the École des Beaux-Arts, where he worked until 1870. He then went to Italy, and spent about three years in Rome, where he was closely associated with the prizemen of the French Academy. Mercié the sculptor, and Luc-Olivier Merson and Joseph Blanc the painters, were his most intimate companions. While at Rome St. Gaudens made his statue of «Hiawatha,» which was bought by Governor Morgan of New York, and for another New York patron the figure called «Silence.» He received also at Rome, at the time that the Geneva tribunal was sitting, an order to make a bust of William M. Evarts. He executed this on his return to New York, which followed his sojourn in Italy. Mr. St. Gaudens returned to Europe in 1878. One of the objects of his trip was to perform his duties as a member of the international jury for fine arts at the Paris Universal Exposition held that year. He carried with him commissions for the statue of Farragut, which stands in Madison Square, and for that of Governor Randall at Sailors' Snug Harbor. He modeled both in Paris, and the «Farragut» was exhibited in plaster at the Salon of 1880. From this point in his career to the present time, St. Gaudens has been working constantly at his studio in New York; and it is difficult to place his works in chronological order. He has had several statues, monuments, and decorative projects under way at all times, commissions coming to him so fast that they almost blocked his headway. The commissions to execute the «Lincoln» for Chicago; the statue of Deacon Chapin, called «The Puritan,» for Springfield, Massachusetts; the portrait relief of Dr. McCosh for Princeton University; that of Dr. Bellows, the monuments to Peter Cooper and General Sherman for New York; the bust of Garfield for Philadelphia, placed on a tall pedestal designed by Stanford White, with a figure of America in front of it; the Shaw memorial, and the two groups of three figures each to be placed before the Public Library in Boston; and the equestrian statue of General Logan



THE FIGURE IN ROCK CREEK CEMETERY, WASHINGTON.



JAMES McCOSH, PRINCETON, N. J.



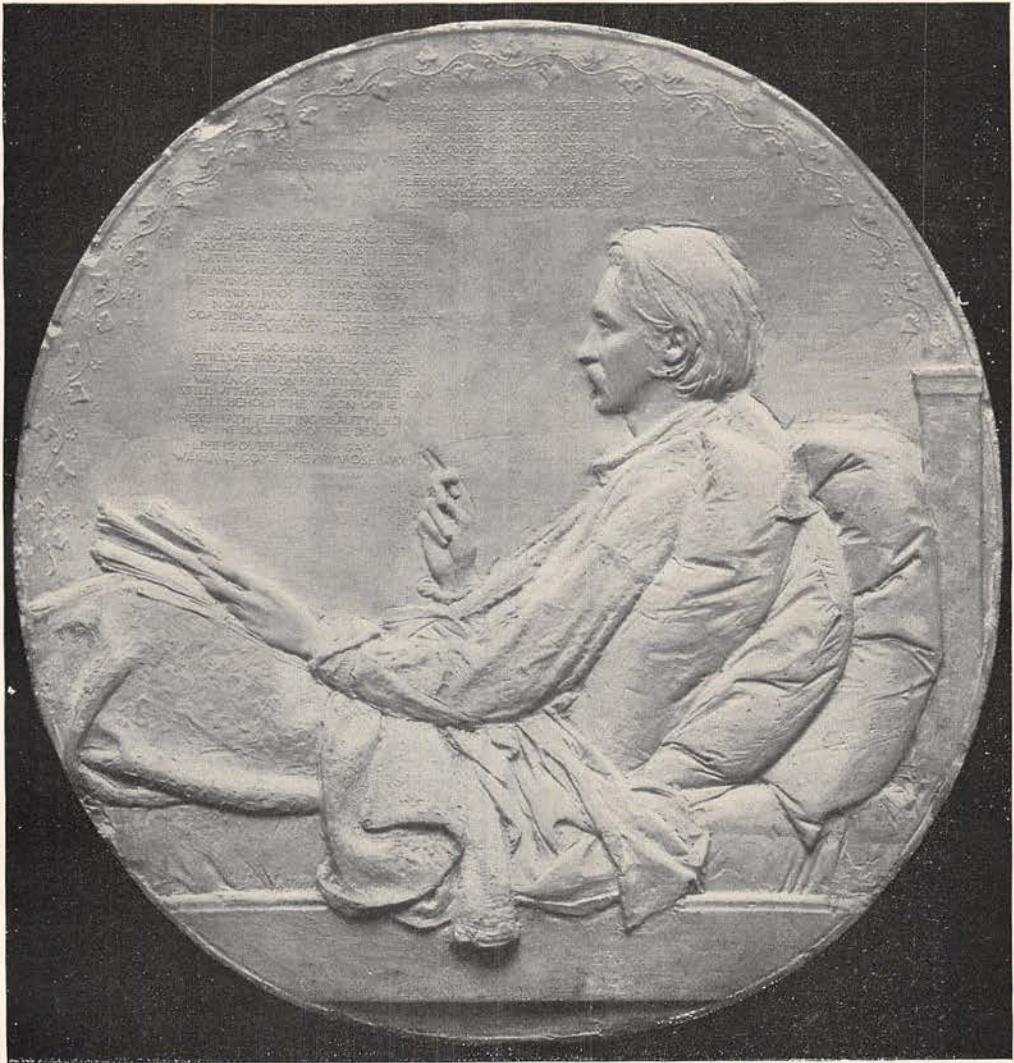
HENRY W. BELLOWS, D. D., CHURCH OF ALL SOULS
(UNITARIAN), NEW YORK CITY.



ANGEL WITH THE TABLET, MORGAN TOMB,
HARTFORD, CONN.



THE PURITAN, SPRINGFIELD, MASS.



ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON, MODELED IN BAS-RELIEF BY AUGUSTUS ST. GAUDENS IN 1887,
DURING STEVENSON'S ILLNESS IN NEW YORK.

for Chicago, are the most important. All of these, except the groups for Boston and the «Sherman,» have been finished. The groups for Boston will represent Law and Labor. The figures will be seated. Law will be flanked by Power and Religion, Labor by Science and Art. The Sherman monument will be an equestrian figure, with a female figure symbolizing Fame leading the war-horse. When these two works are finished the sculptor will begin the monument to Phillips Brooks for Boston.

During this period from 1880 onward Mr. St. Gaudens has also produced some of his finest and most individual works, but they have not been public projects. His three

angels chanting at the foot of the cross, for the Morgan monument at Hartford, met a most unfortunate fate. The scaffolding surrounding the tomb took fire, and the figures were completely destroyed. The sculptor deeply regrets this loss of his work; for the angels were, in his opinion, among the best of all his creations. The mysterious figure which has been called «The Peace of God,» in the Rock Creek Cemetery, Washington, is one of the finest of his works in the round produced in this period, and one of the most original and beautiful of his conceptions. While working on the «Lincoln» he modeled the portrait low-relief of the children of Jacob H. Schiff, and at other times finished



PORTRAIT IN BAS-RELIEF OF THE CHILDREN OF PRESCOTT HALL BUTLER.

the equally effective portraits, in the same style, of Robert Louis Stevenson, of Miss Violet Sargent, sister of John S. Sargent, of Miss Lee, of Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer, of his son Homer St. Gaudens, of the children of Prescott Hall Butler, and others; and the Hollingsworth memorial for the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, a bust of General Sherman,

the decorative figure of Diana for the Madison Square Garden, the relief over the main entrance of the Boston Public Library, from which Kenyon Cox designed the library seal, and the medal for the World's Fair of 1893. The low-relief portrait of Bastien-Lepage, one of the most sensitively modeled of all those he has done, was made in Paris before his re-

turn in 1879; and sketches of work afterward executed here were prepared at that time. The low relief of Dr. Bellows was the first attempt by an artist in this country to adapt this form of sculpture to portraiture, and the method has been adopted since by many other sculptors. The angels for the monument in the cemetery at Garrisons, New York, those for Mrs. Smith's monument at Newport; the caryatides for Cornelius Vanderbilt; and the angels in St. Thomas's Church, New York, designed in collaboration with John La Farge, were produced in the earlier years of the period following 1879; and one of the most important works included in it is the Hamilton Fish monument. The colossal figure of «Art» in the rotunda of the new Congressional Library, commonly referred to as by St. Gaudens, was modeled from his sketches, under his direction, by Tonetti Dozzi, and is signed with the name of the modeler, «after sketches by Augustus St. Gaudens.» The medal commemorative of the celebration at New York in 1889 of the one-hundredth anniversary of the inauguration of George Washington as first President of the United States was modeled in the same way by Philip Martiny. Mr. St. Gaudens has also made a number of small medallion portraits, such as those of Francis D. Millet and

George W. Maynard the painters, and of the daughters of Maitland Armstrong the decorative artist. The mere enumeration of these works shows that the sculptor's productive power is great, and that his industry is quite equal to that of most eminent artists. That his creative powers are remarkable is evident when we come to consider the variety and breadth of scope of his achievements in spite of the fact that, except the «Diana,» which the sculptor counts as belonging to his decorative work only, he has produced no nude figures. I should be at a loss to name any other sculptor of a reputation so wide as that

which St. Gaudens enjoys in this country who has not at some time in his career numbered among his capital works one or more nude figures in the round.

The virility, breadth, and grasp of salient characteristics in the work of Augustus St. Gaudens are well exemplified in the statues of Farragut and Randall. These earlier works almost as much as the later ones give an impression of artistic power that belongs to



THE CHILDREN OF JACOB H. SCHIFF.

sculpture which is the product of mature thought. They are so good in this respect that the sculptor would have maintained a high standard if in the work he did afterward he had simply kept up to their level. But he has done much more than this. His works show that his conceptions have broadened while his workmanship has remained vigorous and stanch. His modeling, more delicate and more sensitive in some instances where his subject required lightness of body or elegance of line, has grown more authoritative in other instances where dignity or nobility was to be expressed. A glance at



ANGEL FOR THE TOMB OF GOVERNOR E. D. MORGAN.

the calm, spiritual faces of his angels at Newport, or at the wistful but energetic profile in the subtly felt low-relief portrait of Stevenson, is sufficient to show how well the sculptor understands the portrayal of character and expression. A look at the great *bravura* figure of General Logan shows how far he can go in the direction of spirited action and impressiveness by boldness without exaggeration. But in none of his works, in my judgment, are all his qualities so well gathered as in the statue of Lincoln at Chicago. It was no light task to make an imposing and dignified figure of the great President's somewhat ungainly form clad in the ordinary modern suit of clothes. He represented him erect and vigorous, strong like the pine-tree rather than sturdy like the oak, thoughtful, imaginative, calm, but not stern, contained, but not defiant. He made his «Lincoln» unyielding, but kindly. The head is especially fine. There is no trace of the conventionally noble features of the classic type, but there are grandeur and power in the rugged lines. The clothes are real and natural, but are so treated as to drape the figure severely and simply. The man is modern and a man of the people, yet he has the commanding dignity of a hero. He is imposing and he is lovable, the chief of a great government and the father of a free people.

What St. Gaudens will do in the future can hardly be a matter for conjecture. He seems to be now at the highest point of his creative and productive ability. The most interesting works to look forward to are the groups for the Boston Public Library, as he will in these have to do with purely abstract creations. It is safe to prophesy that his work will show no falling off; and so sincere and earnest is his general artistic purpose that we may see sculpture not only as good as anything he has yet done, but still finer. With a mind so alert and a hand and eye so well trained as his, there is no way exactly to define limitations.

William A. Coffin.



CARYATID, IN THE HOUSE OF CORNELIUS VANDERBILT.