



Chauncey B. Ives

## MASTERS OF ART AND LITERATURE.

Fifteenth Article.

## CHAUNCEY B. IVES.

IT is a remark, now become trite in Europe, that American sculptors in Italy are representatives of a high order of genius. Their studios are among the finest in Rome and Florence—their works are in almost constant demand—their society is sought by all classes; and, as men and women, they wield an influence which it is very pleasant to contemplate. Miss Cushman, in her late visit to the Seven-Hilled City, commanded much attention, but, quite as much from the fact of her friendship for and constant association with Miss Hosmer, Miss Lander, Miss Stebbins, as from her own greatness in the world of dramatic art. The late Thomas Crawford and Bartholomew were men whose influence was acknowledged

and whose works found the highest favor in the best quarters. At this moment the estimation in which Mr. Powers, Mr. Hart, Mr. Ives, and Miss Hosmer, are held, is such as to flatter our national vanity; while the rising reputation of Paul Akers, Mozier, Miss Stebbins, Miss Lander, Galt, Billings, etc., serves to excite a continued interest in our peculiar genius for expression in marble. Mr. Palmer and his confrères (referred to in another place\*) have won a *home* reputation which exalts their profession to an estimation never before conceded to sculpture, by our intelligent classes.

From these facts we can draw but one inference, namely, that the spirit of our institutions—the freedom of our associations—are highly favorable to the development of a taste for the “severe dignity” of Sculpture; and we are, hence, encouraged to believe that the triumphs of our artists, in modelling and marble-working, will eventually place our genius near to

that of the Hellenes, the remnants of whose works prove how matchless must have been their creations in marble.

Among those now in the full tide of success, whose name and fame have become remarked in those circles where reputations are made, the subject of this sketch holds a prominent place. Mr. Ives, though still on the sunny side of forty, has given to the world many works which the world will not willingly let die; but they are, we must think, only the preludes to a greater and nobler accomplishment in the future.

Chauncey B. Ives was born in Hamden, Conn., and was one of seven children. His early years were passed on his father's farm, in hardy toil by summer and in attending the good local schools in winter. The spirit of restlessness stirred in him at an early age; and, at seventeen, we find him in Boston, looking in at studios, studying the treasures of the Athenæum, and forming art-projects of his own. Without understanding the processes of marble-cutting, he extemporized tools, and, having secretly transferred to his room a fine block of marble, he made his first essay at sculpture, cutting away at the block with no model or other aid than his own perceptions of form and expression. That first work was a bust of Sir Walter Scott—a copy from recollection of the Athenæum bust. It was eventually finished, and proved so much of a success that it was purchased by the old “Apollo Association,” of New-York, and formed one of their prizes for the year 1839.

Five busts were then modelled, which served to give the boy-artist quite a local fame. He proceeded to New-Haven, Conn., where he modelled, among others, the heads of Noah Webster, Judge Daggett, and the architect, Ethiel Town—all of which added to his reputation, and, what was of more *material* consequence, added to the number of his commissions. He found himself favored with orders from high sources. We may here mention, as among those whose heads the artist put in marble previous to 1844—President Day, Prof. Silliman, Sr., and Rev. Dr. Taylor, all of Yale College; Bishop Brownell, Gen'l Scott, Mr. Seward, many Members of Congress, several Governors, Sully, the artist, etc., etc.

In 1844, Mr. Ives went abroad for study, being encouraged to take the step through the assistance of the late Charles Chauncey, Esq., of Philadelphia, and his friends.

\* “Sculpture and Sculptors,” page 18

Wm. H. Dillingham and Chas. McAllister. He proceeded to Florence and remained there until 1851, when he went to Rome. There he remained up to the fall of 1859, when he returned to this country upon a visit, leaving his large studio still open, however, in charge of his assistants. He returns to Rome in November of the present year, and doubtless will long continue to make it his abiding place.

His labors in Florence were, in addition to a large number of busts:

- 1st. Group: Boy and Dead Dove; for Mr. Sanford, of Brooklyn, N. Y.
- 2d. Cupid, statue; for George Hastings, Esq., of New-York.
- 3d. Pandora, statue; for Major Karney, U. S. A.
- 4th. Duplicate of same; for Thomas Winans, Esq., of Baltimore.
- 5th. Bacchante, ideal bust; for John Wolf, of New-York.
- 6th. Ruth, ideal bust; for Chas. Butler, of New-York.
- 7th. Flora, ideal bust; for Gov. Hoppin, of Rhode Island.

Several of these ideal busts have been duplicated.

The works executed in Rome are, besides a large number of busts of eminent persons—

- 8th. Flora, statue; now in Dusseldorf Gallery, New-York.
- 9th. Cupid, as a Fisher Boy; for J. Hunt Adams, Norwich, Conn.
- 10th. Rebecca at the Well, statuette; for J. Davis, Jr., Boston.
- 11th. Dog and Boy Sleeping; for Patterson Allen, Esq., Richmond, Va.
- 12th. Portrait Statue of daughter of Isaac M. Phelps, New-York.
- 13th. Monumental Group: Mother and Child; for Mr. Stone, Chicago.
- 14th. Group of two, life-size: subject from "Excelsior," of Longfellow; done for Thomas S. Young, Esq., New-York.
- 15th. Portrait Statue of daughter of Marshal O. Roberts, New-York.
- 16th. Undine, statue; for Marshal O. Roberts, New-York.
- 17th. Shepherd Boy and Kid, group; still in Rome.
- 18th. Ariadne, ideal bust; in Dusseldorf Gallery, New-York.
- 19th. The Little Piper; done only in clay; now in Rome.

The "Rebecca at the Well" has been duplicated.

It will be seen by this record that the artist has been a busy man; and it is creditable to our countryman that none of the productions named have had to seek a foreign market. Commissions, in most all cases, have preceded the execution of the work.

The varied character of these several productions shows the artist's versatility of invention. There is no sameness—no barrenness—no reproduction of any stereotype feature, form, or expression—

all are originals, from no type save the ideals in his own mind.

The leading characteristic of the artist's style is a unity of beauty and dignity, which, while it gives to his faces the expression of high ideality, still leaves them human, possible, loving. It is as if the old Greeks had become Christianized and *practical*—as if Praxiteles had given his cunning into the keeping of one who sought the avenues to the heart rather than those to the mind. We have in the "Undine" and "Pandora" two exquisitely ideal creations, yet they are not impossible beauties. "Undine" has just arisen from the depths of the river and is gazing upon us from her water-drapery with a face at once divine yet human—a grace modulating like the lambent waters, yet not too ethereal for actual life. The action decided, spirited, impressive—the expression full of sweetness, though touched with the consciousness of her divinity. Had the statue been dropped recently in the Tiber, and then pulled forth by some explorer after ancient masterpieces, the world would not have hesitated in regarding the work as by a Greek. The "Pandora" is less classic and more human than the "Undine." The semi-nude figure is of almost faultless anatomy—its *posé* is at once graceful and striking—its action is clearly defined—its expression of hesitant, half-formed determination to open the fatal box, is all that the language requires. Compared with, for instance, the "Greek Slave" of Hiram Powers, it is equal to it in anatomical symmetry, superior to it in grace and disposition, and much above it in ideality and power of rendering emotion.

The ideal busts are all pervaded with a commingling of severity with sweetness which is really remarkable. "Ruth" is Diana's dignity transfused with human tenderness and womanly confidence. "Bacchante" is no gross devotee of the feast and revel, but the type of one loving the Samian wine for the exquisite sensations it produced. The statuette, "Rebecca at the Well" is one of the purest embodiments of the pensive Jewish beauty which we ever looked upon—full of tenderness and grace, but earnest, calm, and sustained as a queen.

The busts and portrait statues of Mr. Ives are all that could be asked for truthfulness, while, superadded, is that indefinable presence which we call spirituality for want of a more definite term, though

it really is the artist's own individuality impressed in the marble.

The artist has composed in sketch a group of three, whose execution in model and marble will test his powers for the highest range of composition. The subject is chosen from Bancroft's History, Vol. V., wherein it is related how some white maidens, stolen by the Indians and adopted by the savages as wives, refused, for the love they bore their forest masters, to return to their parents' arms and civilized homes. The group represents a splendid Indian, standing six feet two inches in his moccasins; a young white female clasping his left arm and hanging on to it in confidence; on the right, a female kneeling, supplicating with upturned, clasped hands for her daughter to return to her. The Indian's face is in the calmest of dignified repose—the daughter's face is one of the commingled emotions of resolve to resist appeal and pain from mental disquietude—the mother's face is one of pleading, agonizing tenderness. All is to be done life-size; and, if wrought with the artist's evident skill, it will place him among the greatest of modern sculptors.

Mr. Ives returns to Rome with several valuable commissions, from the Cosmopolitan Art Association, from a gentleman in St. Louis, and from New-York gentlemen, several of whom already have works of the sculptor in their possession.

AUGUSTA J. EVANS.



HE recent conquests of Southern ladies, in the field of fiction, is a subject of agreeable remark in literary circles. Three of the most popular novels ever issued on this side of the Atlantic, written by Americans, are "Beulah," by Miss Evans; "Nemesis," by Mrs. Terhune (Marion Harland); and, "The Household of Bouverie," by Mrs. Catherine A. Warfield—all women from the Southern States. These single instances silence, forever, the absurd assertion of many newspaper critics, that the South produces no writers of excellence: beyond question, "Beulah," and "The Household of Bouverie," are among the most *intellectually* original of any novels yet produced by American authors. We record these triumphs with the greater pleasure, because, in certain quarters.