THE TYPICAL AMERICAN INDIAN IN BRONZE: WORK OF A YOUNG CALIFORNIAN SCULPTOR.
BY J. MAYNE BALTIMORE.

It seems to have fallen to the lot of a young Californian sculptor, Arthur Putnam by name, to perpetuate in bronze the typical American Indian as he was in the days when none disputed his right to range and rule over the western plains. Mr. Putnam’s statue is of heroic size, and he has caught the spirit, expression and attitude of the Indian as not another half-dozen sculptors in the world have done. Instead of the usual theatrical conception of the “noble red man” in full panoply of war, posed as impressively as possible and looking like an illustration from one of Fenimore Cooper’s novels, this statue represents an Indian who typifies, as unconsciously as a forest animal, the native poise and dignity of mind, as well as the grace and strength of body, of man untrammeled by civilization.

This Indian has been on the trail, and a mountain lion, the spoil of his bow and arrow, lies on the boulder against which he leans. The limp carcass of the big beast, flung like a discarded blanket over the rock, is a perfect foil to the lithe strength of the figure, so vital in its repose, that leans against it. The hunter is nude, save for the breech-clout of the southern Indian, and every line of his stalwart frame, lean, compact and muscular as that of a panther, tells the story of simple fare, hard exercise and natural living. His attitude is one of rest, yet he is hardly conscious of being tired. Given even the slightest arousing impulse, and every nerve and muscle would flash into alert action so instantaneously that it would be almost impossible to note the transition from repose. He is gazing at a far distant horizon, but his look is one of musing rather than watchfulness,—the musing of one who is in absolute and unconscious harmony with the world that bounds his life.

The statue, which is attracting wide attention, was made at the instance of a wealthy citizen of San Diego. It is destined for a gift to that city, and will stand in the Plaza, where, from its lofty pedestal, it may keep silent ward over the broad border lands once owned by men of like free and stately seeming.