A SCULPTOR WHO IS ALSO A CRAFTSMAN:
BY KATHARINE ELISE CHAPMAN

PAUL WAYLAND BARTLETT, whose reputation in America rests at present largely upon the execution of the equestrian statue of Lafayette, erected in France as a tribute to that hero by the school children of America, has decided to settle permanently in his native country. It is, in many ways, a happy choice. His compatriots will become more familiar with one of their own artists, not the less American because his gift has developed in foreign lands and dealt with foreign ideals. The artist, on his part, will find an abundant inspiration among his countrymen, whose most adequate expression has been in commercial activity rather than in the development of aesthetic standards best suited to his peculiar vision.

As true art shows the source of creative spirit, so Mr. Bartlett’s work suggests a truly American genuineness and directness of treatment which throws into fuller relief the intellectual subtlety and singularly limpid sympathy that characterizes all his subjects. Here also the careful observer feels the unwearying demand for its own fullest measure of technical attainment which marks the art of a master, for, as a sculptor Mr. Bartlett possesses in the highest degree that whole-hearted devotion which counts no detail of technique too trivial for its minutest attention. Such solicitude for the craft as well as the art was doubtless strengthened by early influences, for, like Samuel, he grew up in the very temple courts. In his father’s studio while at Paris, in the garden at Marly, where, a boy of ten, his first attempts at modeling were directed by the illustrious Frémiet, in the Jardin des Plantes, in the studios of famous sculptors with whom as a lad he earned his bread by modeling animals, the achievement of sculpture was always before him. Rodin, Gaudez, Paul Dubois and many others might have claimed him for a pupil. His training was more like that of a craftsman of the Renaissance than falls to the lot of modern artists.

Between the Cerberus of the Luxembourg and the Lafayette of the Louvre lies a period of something more than a quarter of a century, and it has been filled to overflowing with the products of the many phases of his inspiration. He is the craftsman as well as the artist—at home in the blouse and familiar with the leather apron; he handles the chisel; he works in his own foundry; he gives to the world those seductive, iridescent patinas which compel the Japanese to acknowledge him a master in their art; he revives after more than a century the “lost wax” process of the ancients; he studies the minutiae of costume—in short, his is a vivid and restless mental
activity and a Puritan conscientiousness investigating to the last detail the subject in hand.

His more important works show a steady advance in well-defined steps: the firmer grasp on technique, the larger conception of his art, the deeper insight into life; each unfolding in turn new vistas before him. And at every step in each creation there is real achievement.

"The Ghost Dance" and "The Bohemian Bear Tamer" may be classed with the boy sculpture period. The latter was executed at the age of twenty and, considering his age, extraordinarily well executed. One is diverted by the contrast between the technique and the theme—the masterly handling, and the boy's delight in an interesting reality. Imagination is at work here; but in the "Ghost Dance" it is further enhanced by expanding sympathy. The sculptor has entered into the turbulent abandon of this young Indian's soul. Exhibited in the Salon in eighteen hundred and eighty-nine, the venerable savant of twenty-four, its creator, was made one of the Jury of Awards in the Paris exposition, where, contrary to rule, he was awarded the gold medal of honor.

The period of the small bronzes was the next expression of his art. The "Wounded Lion," modeled at twenty-six, shows a sensibility both refined and impressive in the blending of sentiment with the lower forms of life. The figure of "Grief" which followed in apparently natural sequence, rises to greater dignity. Here the artist's deeper hold upon life and art is set forth in the interpretation of human passion.

But at last, the pulsing power of Paul Bartlett's native land, the interest of her history, her awakening self-consciousness laid its compelling hand upon this hitherto willing exile, and with the historical period in his work, he entered into a fuller possession of his heritage of native inspiration. After the equestrian statue of Washington, made in eighteen hundred and ninety-five, he took part in a competition for the modeling of the Sherman statue and received the prize. The statues of "Law," and Columbus for the Congressional Library at Washington were followed in eighteen hundred and ninety-eight by the statue of Michael Angelo. In the figure of Columbus we find the trim expertness and aestheticism of French art which had previously influenced his style, expanding into a more human and vehement expression of imagination.

The Michael Angelo first offered to other sculptors and declined, either through indifference or distrust in their own critical powers, has at last taken its place among the representative statues of the world. Wherever seen, it seems to stand alone, so inexorable is its
"THE BOHEMIAN BEAR TAMER."
PAUL BARTLETT, SCULPTOR.
COLUMBUS: IN THE CONGRESSIONAL LIBRARY AT WASHINGTON, D. C.: PAUL BARTLETT, SCULPTOR.
JOHN WINTHROP, JUNIOR: STATE HOUSE FACADE,
HARTFORD, CONN.: PAUL BARTLETT, SCULPTOR.
LAFAYETTE: A GIFT TO FRANCE BY THE SCHOOL CHILDREN OF AMERICA: ERECTED IN THE GRAND COURT OF THE LOUVRE: PAUL BARTLETT, SCULPTOR.
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attracting power. At first glance it might appear the somewhat slender figure of an artificer, standing, chisel in hand—but then, the hand! It thinks, feels, quivers through sensitive nerves to the very finger tips. In the face is the quality of the soul, striving, longing, attaining, yet always with supremest ideal unattained—a nature unappeased, insatiate.

The new statue of Lafayette, the fruit of eight years of labor and ripening experience, was placed in the Grand Court of the Louvre during June of last year. This work is the consummation of a steady progress in power toward the point where the artist has begun to express in his work the rare exalted moments of life. The passionate recognition of that multitudinous demand for freedom, equality and the rights of humanity that made Lafayette a leader among men who were fighting for the actual possession of these principles, seems to thrill through this buoyant, youthful figure. To this statue of Lafayette, as to all his other representations of historical characters, the sculptor has imparted a distinct and appealing personality.

Mr. Bartlett is primarily a sculptor of the specific. What he most delights in is the presentation of actual characters of history or of definite emotions. His central theme is unembellished by winged victories or cupids, or any symbolical figure such as sculptors often use to make their conceptions more obvious. The appeal that his sculpture makes is the intrinsic appeal of the subject, illuminating the skilfully handled marble. Thus his statues are never mere portraits, because behind the obvious expression of the marble form there is this subtle grasp of the personality, the keen emotion, the lofty vision which made the individuality of the character. The world regards the portrayal of abstract ideas and emotions as the highest reach of power in sculpture. Yet, to infuse a single figure with so great a thought that it becomes salient is surely also one of the triumphs of art.

It is not difficult to predict the future of an artist already crowned with achievements like these. With such breadth of training as has been his fortune and such sweep of vision as is his by nature, he is in little danger of sinking into narrow mannerism. A growth into a great and peculiar excellence seems the inevitable goal of his present course.