

The Fine Arts.

SCULPTURE IN AMERICA.

There is much in the progress of affairs today to show that efforts are being made in every field of endeavor to carry out artistic ideals and bring into everyday life more that is beautiful and uplifting. Quite naturally the sculptor's art is one of the most essential in realizing these ideals, and whether it be public works or private enterprises his talent is called more and more frequently into play. In the construction of public buildings, of residences, and of what might be called castles of finance and industry, as well as in the erection of memorials to the good and great the "artist-artisan" and the sculptor are growing to be more in demand every year.

The municipal improvement societies forming in various cities are significant of the tendency in this direction. They differ in scope according to locality and circumstances, but all have as their general aim the realization of artistic ideals in the building of cities and their adornment. The great international expositions are influences of inestimable importance in the same direction. Those of late years have given splendid object-lessons as to how beautiful cities may be created. It is no wonder that with the picture of the "Rainbow City" still fresh in memory there was organized in the "Pan-American City" a few weeks ago the "Society for Beautifying Buffalo." New York, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland, and some other large cities possess similar organizations.

The younger sculptors, especially, realize the character of this movement and the field it opens for their art. For instance, when Isidore Konti conceived and modeled the sculpture for the Temple of Music at the Pan-American he gave an object lesson in what may be done through the use of sculpture not merely to adorn a public building but to

express in symbolic form its purpose and meaning. Given a commission to model a few pieces of statuary for this building he went ahead and without extra cost to the Exposition executed a complete and symmetrical sculptural scheme of his own for the Temple of Music which not only made it more beautiful but gave the building as a whole a greater educational influence. It is needless to add that a similar idea might often be carried out in connection with buildings of permanent character, either public or private, but more especially in the case of public buildings.

The new Appellate Court House in New York City is an instance of the realization of this idea upon an elaborate scale. Sculpture and mural paintings have been employed here to portray in allegorical manner the ideas associated with the administration of justice. The Appellate Court House contains, for instance, statues of Alfred the Great, the Anglo-Saxon lawgiver as well as king, by Jonathan Scott Hartley; Lycurgus, the Greek lawgiver, by George E. Bissell; Mohammed, the Moslem lawgiver, by Charles Albert Lopez; and sculpture of symbolic character such as that typifying "Peace," by Karl Bitter, "Justice," by Daniel C. French, and "Force," by F. W. Ruckstuhl. The symbolic idea is still further amplified in the ornamentation of the building so as to develop its educational influence by mural paintings representing such subjects as "The Power of the Law" and "The Laws of Nations." Another new public building whose ornamentation is a proof of the tendency of which I speak is the Boston Public Library, with its mural paintings and other decorations by Edwin A. Abbey, John S. Sargent, and other artists of international reputation. The paintings by Mr. Abbey, for instance, some of which were recently exhibited in New York City, prior to being sent to Boston to be placed in the Public Library, are a series of splendid

pictures, beautiful in themselves and impressing the beholder with the sentiment of the story they tell, and fitted also to add greatly to the attractive and educational character of the building in which they are to be placed.

Architecture is making more and more opportunity for plastic decoration and adornment that may be called sculptural in character. While this ornamentation is not always of a high order of merit, and while it may not always call for original modeling and the services of those who may properly be designated as sculptors, the tendency is in that direction. It is significant in this connection that the rules of the Architectural League of New York provide that one of its vice-presidents must be a sculptor and the other a mural painter, and sculptors are quite numerous and influential in the membership of this society which, while devoted to architecture primarily, seeks to promote also "the allied arts."

The career of Karl Bitter is an illustration of the influence of great international expositions in linking architecture and sculpture, and in giving employment as well as inspiration to sculptors and all kinds of workers in plastic arts. Mr. Bitter's fame is associated especially with expositions, though he has done notable work not intended for the ornamentation of such enterprises, as, for instance, the statue of "Peace" for the Appellate Court House, already mentioned, the Trinity Church Memorial Gates, his sculpture for the Dewey Arch, and the monument to Dr. William Pepper, Provost of the University of Pennsylvania. Mr. Bitter was born in Vienna, Austria, in 1867, and when as a youth he studied under Professor Helmer at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts he took, in addition to this course, practical lessons as an artisan on public buildings then in the course of construction in his native city. It was not long after his arrival in New York in 1889 that his services were in demand by architects who wished decorative work on buildings they were constructing, and his success in the competition for the Trinity Church Memorial

Gates gave him a recognized position in the artistic world.

The magnitude of the work of producing the decorative sculpture for a great exposition may be judged from the fact that thirty-five sculptors were employed in modeling that used in Buffalo. The work of enlargement from these models occupied five months, and over five hundred figures were produced and sent to Buffalo from the Hoboken studios in fifty large railroad cars. During these months a large force of men, many of them, no doubt, embryo sculptors, was employed in this work, which thus provided a school of training, and an opportunity for study on large and ambitious subjects that an ordinary art school could not afford. Thus we see that the educational influence upon the general public exerted by the decorative sculpture of an exposition is not the only useful purpose it serves. Its production affords employment to a large number of workers in these lines, and in this degree encourages this branch of art. It has also, as has been intimated, a most important influence in the way of pointing out how the allied arts of sculpture and architecture may be made to complement each other. This was especially true at the Pan-American, where for the first time in the history of expositions there was complete harmony between the architectural scheme and the sculptural scheme.

It is but fair to say that the remarkable success of the sculptural scheme at this Exposition was due chiefly to Mr. Bitter, whose conception of the possibilities afforded by the occasion made it feasible to accomplish a result which was a most pleasant surprise to the artistic world. It was under his direction that an enlargement or pointing machine was used at the great studios at Hoboken, the invention of a young American sculptor, Robert T. Payne, by which the work of enlargement from the original models was done with greater precision and faithfulness, and by which a considerable saving was made in the cost of purely mechanical labor. In this way and through other

methods, although the Buffalo Exposition had about as many original pieces of sculpture as that at Chicago, the cost of it was only about one-quarter the expense of that for the World's Fair. St. Louis, of course, will enjoy the fruit of this experience, and with its greater capital should be able to produce results in this direction proportionately beneficial to American art and especially to that of sculpture. Mr. F. W. Ruckstuhl, who has recently been placed in charge of the decorative sculpture for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, says that the plans for buildings provide for abundant use of such statuary.

If Mr. Bitter may be said to represent Austria among the group of young sculptors of whom I am writing, Mr. Isidore Konti might be regarded as a representative of both Austria and Hungary, for he was born in Vienna in 1862 and his father fought for Hungary's independence under General Beur. However, both Mr. Bitter and Mr. Konti have now cast in their lot with Americans. At the last exhibition of the National Academy of Design, Mr. Konti showed an ideal subject, a statuette entitled "The Awakening of Spring," which represents him at his best. It is a work exhibiting much sentiment in conception and grace in execution. Mr. Konti modeled some of the best of the statuary seen at the World's Fair in Chicago, and upon its close came to New York. Mr. Konti had been a resident of this country but a year or two when the Chicago Fair took place and had previously executed numerous public works in Vienna. Mr. Konti's work for the Dewey Arch, which included the spandrils and the group "West Indies," was much admired at the time that famous arch of triumph was attracting international attention.

F. E. Elwell is a sculptor of very original turn of mind, a sort of Thoreau among the guild of workers in this branch of art. He believes in living close to nature and not being tied up to conventionalities in the interpretation of nature and human character in art. He lives a part of the time on a farm which he owns at Sandwich, Massachusetts. He was a

pupil of Daniel C. French and of the French sculptor Falguiere. It is said that he was the first American sculptor to model a statue in America that was erected in Europe. Among his best known works of permanent character are his statue of General Hancock, a monument to Edwin Booth, "Dickens and Little Nell," and "The Orchid." One of the most talked about pieces of statuary at the Pan-American Exposition was his figure of "Chronos," for the "Fountain of Chronos."

George Grey Barnard is another young American sculptor who is strongly original and imaginative. Two instances of his work which illustrate this characteristic are the group, "The Two Natures," and his bronze statue of the god Pan. The first has been the subject of much comment since it was done several years ago for the Metropolitan Museum of Art. A reproduction in plaster shown at the Paris Salon and afterward at the Paris Exposition of 1900 received high praise from the French critics. It was also exhibited at the Pan-American Exposition. Its full title is, "I Feel Two Natures Struggling Within Me." It portrays a mighty victor standing half erect, half bending, over a prostrate foe. The figures are much larger than life, and nude. They appear from the faces to be twin brothers. Though one figure seems to have the advantage of the other, the sculptor leaves it in doubt which will eventually obtain the mastery. The two figures express so much of the struggles of life and the ever-present aspiration of men to attain the things that are highest and noblest in spite of the influences that drag them down, and there is so much in the group that appeals to the imagination and emotion that it has been regarded as a work of exceptional genius. It won a gold medal at the Paris Exposition, where it was grouped with the work of sculptors like French and MacMonnies. At the Pan-American, Mr. Barnard was assigned the task of modeling for the front of the Electric Tower groups to symbolize the power and usefulness of the waters of the Great Lakes.

One of the youngest of the group of

sculptors whose work is described in this article is Charles Albert Lopez. Mr. Lopez is represented in the sculpture of the New York Appellate Court by the statue of Mohammed, a work of much strength and character. He did two groups for the Pan-American of quite an ambitious nature, those representing "Arts" and "Sciences," placed in conspicuous positions on either side of the beautiful Court of Fountains. The composition of the groups was excellent, especially in view of the fact that being seen from all sides they had to be made interesting from different points of view. The modeling of the figures was poetical, combining beauty and dignity and telling a story sure to interest and impress as well as attract the beholder. Mr. Lopez recently completed for the South Carolina Inter-State and West Indian Exposition at Charleston a group representing the American negro, which was placed in front of the Negro Building at this Exposition. It is a group of much merit from an artistic standpoint. Mr. Lopez may be said to represent among the American sculptors the downtrodden but now free and happy Cuba. His family is one which has shed its blood copiously in behalf of Cuba Libre and young Lopez has himself had a romantic career. He began his artistic career at fourteen years of age and shortly afterward he entered the studio of that great sculptor, John Q. A. Ward. He has studied his art at Paris in the Beaux Arts and under the great Anton Falguiere. Some of his work during this period was exhibited in the Salon. Mr. Lopez recently won the first prize of the National Sculpture Society for his "Sun Dial" and the first prize of the Municipal Art Society of New York City for his bronze base for a flagstaff containing reliefs and other plastic decorations symbolic of the history of New York City.

Another of the younger generation of sculptors is Charles Grafly. His artistic career has been associated with the city of Philadelphia, where his early art education was obtained and where his fame as a sculptor has been won. He was

born in Philadelphia in 1862 and studied as a young man at the Spring Garden Institute and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. He afterward went to Paris and studied under M. Chapu and M. Damp. He obtained honorable mention in the Paris Salon of 1891 and the following year obtained the same honor from the Temple Fund. He did work for the Columbian Exposition at Chicago and the Atlanta Exposition, for which he received medals. The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts awarded him the Converse gold medal of honor in 1899. The year following he obtained a gold medal at the Paris Exposition. Mr. Grafly is a member of the faculty of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and is a member of the National Sculpture Society. The colossal statue of Admiral David D. Porter is one of the finest achievements of this sculptor. Mr. Grafly was especially happy in his work for the Pan-American, his fountain in front of the Government Building being one of the most original in conception of any group in the whole remarkable sculptural scheme of that Exposition.

Though varying widely in the character of their talent and in the methods of their work, all of these young sculptors illustrate in their achievements what was said at the beginning of this article that new and great fields are opening up for the American sculptor and his art. Henceforth with the lessons taught by the great expositions and by those who have sought to ally more closely the arts of sculpture and architecture, the use of statuary, in ways heretofore little in vogue, will become customary; indeed, this is already becoming true. It will be used more and more here in America, as it long has been in Europe, in its appropriate relation to architecture and landscape. It will not be confined, as it has been so largely in the past, to art galleries. The prosperity of the American people is indeed proving a good thing for the sculptor and his art.

EDWARD HALE BRUSH.