

AMERICAN ARTISTS IN ROME.

We take from a recent letter of Grace Greenwood's to the National Era, the following account of what the American artists, who have been in Rome this winter, are doing in the way of sculpture and painting:

Undoubtedly the most interesting and important work of art now being executed in Rome (to Americans at least) is the Washington Monument, by Mr. Crawford, ordered, to her honor, by Virginia, and destined to be the chief ornament and pride of her handsome capital. The entire height of the monument is to be sixty feet. This includes the equitabian statue of Washington, sixteen feet in height. Below this, which is treated as a square pedestal, sculptured with some admirable bas-reliefs, are ranged the statues of six of Virginia's noblest sons—Marshall, Mason, Allen, Lee, Jefferson, and Patrick Henry. These figures are to be twelve feet in height. On the lower range of steps, surrounding the monument, are to be placed six eagle's five feet in height.

The only figure now finished are the statues of Patrick Henry and Jefferson, and these are surely remarkable exhibitions of power—absolute triumph of genius. Henry is represented in the lofty passion of his fervid and magnetic eloquence—in the height of that "outburst" of freedom and patriotism which electrified the land, and will yet thrill like a trumpet-call through the hearts of his countrymen, while they prize their dear-bought liberties, or reverence the heroic past. You see no sorrow in this face the fire and the force of the impassioned orator, but the sustaining strength of the hero and the presence of the prophet.

In striking contrast with this animated and powerful figure is that of Jefferson. He stands in an attitude of calm, deep thought, girt about with all the native majesty of greatness—with all the dignity of the statesman and patriot. He looks here what he was—the sternness of the profound political and moral truth ever proclaimed to the world. You recognize in him the molding power and the controlling will of government, and you seem to read in his face, not alone the deep speculations of the philosopher and the large projects of the statesman, but the gentleness of nature.

The display in both these noble figures is wonderfully well managed. The costume of the time of the revolution, though far enough from the classic, was yet far less stiff and meagre than that of our day, and the artist has here achieved or concealed much of the more ungraceful detail by a skilful introduction of the cloak.

Separately and together these statues strike me as among the finest productions of modern sculpture—marked by most impressive dignity, by originality, force, and grandeur of sentiment. They are about being cut in bronze at Munich. Mr. Crawford is to make use of Hood's base of Washington as the most reliable likeness he has, though yet in a very rough state, proceeds to be a magnificent work. It is represented as just ruffled up from a rest, not tearing-fall of strength and fire, but not rebellious—a steel fully worthy of his rider, and one which will inevitably suggest comparisons decidedly unfavorable to a certain weak-killed charger who holds his thin nose in the air from the top of Hyde Park Gate.

The small statues for the remaining figures of this monument strike me as happy and truthful presentations of character, are important parts of a noble whole, and form a grand circle of support and accessories to that perfect principal. Nothing ever so impressed me with the greatness of Washington as seeing such figures as these placed subordinate to him, and feeling the entire fitness of such an arrangement.

The last finished work of Mr. Crawford is a Flora—an exceedingly careful and beautiful figure. He is now putting into marble a charming group of the Babes in the Wood.

Mr. Story is engaged upon a labor of love, in modeling the statue of his father, the late Justice Story. He seems to me to be making a noble work of it. The head is exceedingly fine; the face wears a mingled expression of benignity and strength, of calm thought and genial kindness, peculiarly beautiful. The figure is sitting; the attitude has the dignity of the judge, without rigidity of sternness; the judicial robe is managed most judiciously, and forms drapery as graceful as imposing.

Mr. Story has in his studio a little study for an ideal statue, the subject taken, I believe, from Spenser—an Arcadian shepherd boy piping. I am delighted with the youthful grace of the figure, and with the sentiment of the pure primal music, if I may so express it, which speaks not alone in face, but in form and attitude even.

Mr. Richard Greenough is now modeling a striking and original group—a disabled boy straddled while robbing an eagle's nest, and defending himself against the enraged eagle. The youth is crouched upon one knee, and is just about to plunge his knife into the body of the bird, who has alighted on his shoulder. His attitude is full of spirit, and his face has a fine expression of strength and courage. I trust that Mr. Greenough's late and loss, in compelling him to return to America, will not oblige him long to abandon a work which promises so much.

Mr. Mazer has in progress several ideal works. The one farthest advanced is a figure of Silence, which, as yet, is hardly remarkable for the lightness and gracefulness of its drapery.

A very pleasing composition is a group called "Rejected Address"—a sitting figure of a little girl, holding her kitten, which a dog at her knee is striving in vain to conclude. The attitude and look of the little girl are very pretty and arch, but the group is yet hardly in a state to be described in detail.

With some of the works of Mr. Ives I have been much pleased. If not an enthusiast, he seems a competent student in his art. If he does not produce works startlingly powerful and original, whatever he does does well. His models with taste, feeling, and careful finish. His portrait busts seem to me remarkably good, and some of his ideal busts are exceedingly fine. Of the latter, I like, especially, a head of Achilles—full of beauty of a noble character.

Mr. Rodgers—a young sculptor of much talent and promise—has lately executed, in marble, a figure of Ruth, which is very lovely, and one of a charming, and, I think, entirely original subject—a little, slender, making one of his first essays on the side. This last, which is called "The Transit," delights me greatly by a certain freshness of feeling there is about it, and by its grace, novelty, and naturalness.

Mr. Bartholomew has two ideal figures, lately completed, which cannot yet be judged of, except by their studies, which are very pleasing. This artist seems to excel in bas-reliefs. He has in his studio a beautiful monumental group, and a Homer with his young guide, which is marked by force, grace, and delicate feeling.

Mr. Page is here painting some admirable pictures, and talking grandly on art to his critics and friends. He has concerning portrait painting. He desires to leave well his surface life for his pictures, which he makes a study of character, a revelation of soul, as compared with other portraits, a reality, instead of a likeness; a living presence, in place of a haunting, unmeaning shadow. His pictures have about them that uncovers something of the sentiment and the vital, which makes you half believe that the artist has created the creative secret from the radiant heart of Nature. You look to see the rich light, a stir in the hair, the lips breaking into smiles, the breast softly heaved, the very blood beating along the veins.

Mr. Page has in his studio several copies from Titian, so marvellously true to that great master that it is difficult to believe them by any other hand than his. I am convinced that we have no painter possessed of an clearer and profounder knowledge of his art as Mr. Page. He lives in it, and through it, wanting the passionate energy of personal ambition, he does not pursue it ardently, but studies it with all the powers of a subtle intellect,

and contemplates it with the calm devotion of a reverential spirit. By bringing so much thought and power to bear upon portrait painting, Mr. Page has done much to ennoble that branch of his art; but we yet look to see manifestations of his genius more original in character and universal in interest—something which shall be a full and worthy expression of himself—in which the artist will live as sole creator and first cause. One who can produce such ideal works as he has produced should not be absorbed for any length of time in mere portraiture—merging the imaginative in the actual, the creative in the imitative.

Mr. Terry has in his studio several beautiful pictures, mostly on scriptural subjects, all of which, I am happy to hear, are to go to America. Mr. Terry's coloring is brilliant, but soft and rich; his composition is very effective, without being studiedly so, and his spirit is evidently pure and religious.

Into the studio of Mr. Gibson, Miss Hosmer [the young American sculptor] has been admitted as a pupil, and receives from that artist, a most admirable master, all the advice she needs, all the encouragement a generous heart can bestow. She has already modeled the head of the Venus of Milo, a beautiful antique torso, and is now engaged on the Cupid of Praxiteles. It may gratify her many American friends to hear that great interest is felt in her, and warm admiration expressed for her genius, not alone by Mr. Gibson, but by many of the first artists in Rome. She is a marvel to them for her industry, her modest confidence, her quiet enthusiasm; for her fine feeling for and knowledge of her art. They all say that the copies she has made—which by the way have been chosen as difficult studies—have been executed not alone with ease, and taste, and faithfulness, but in the truest and highest style of art. With the full consent of Mr. Gibson, she is soon to model some of her own ideal compositions.