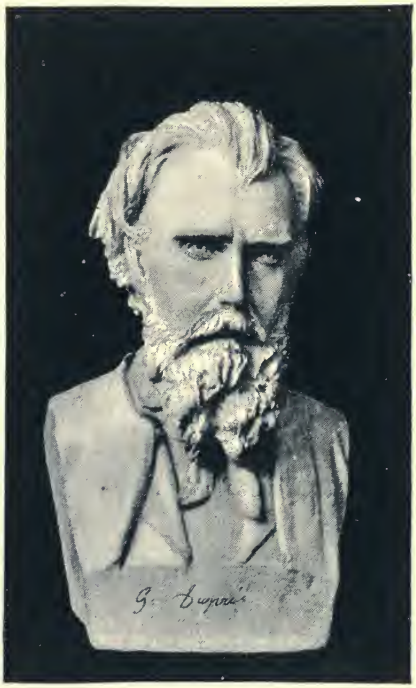
GIOVANNI DUPRÈ



GIOVANNI DUPRÈ.

Frontispiece.

GIOVANNI DUPRÈ

BY

HENRY SIMMONS FRIEZE

WITH TWO DIALOGUES ON ART

FROM THE ITALIAN OF

AUGUSTO CONTI

SECOND EDITION

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PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE 'Two Dialogues on Art' which form the second part of this volume were published several years ago among the minor works of Augusto Conti, now Professor of Philosophy in the University of Florence, President of the Academy della Crusca, and author of an important series of works, embracing the whole field of philosophy.[1]

My attention was first called to the sculptor

[1] The following are the titles of these works:—1, *Storia della Filosofia* (History of Philosophy; published also in French); 2, *il Bello nel Vero* (Æsthetics); 3, *il Buono nel Vero* (Ethics); 4, *il Vero nel Ordine* (Dialectics); 5, *l'Armonia delle Cose* (Cosmology, Anthropology, and Rational Theology); 6, *Evidenza, Amore, e Fede* (Evidence, Love, and Faith). Besides these, some works of an elementary character, including an Elementary Philosophy (by Conti and Santini) extensively used in the schools of Italy.

Giovanni Duprè by the reading of these Dialogues of Conti. They constitute in fact a valuable essay on Art, theoretical and practical ; *una cosa stupenda* they are called by some of the Italian critics. Having translated them into English for the benefit of some young friends interested in the study of art, and, looking for some brief account of Duprè's life as an introduction, I found, what is very rarely found in the life of an artist, material in his own writings, abundant and interesting, for the complete portraiture of his life and character. And thus what was intended to be a brief introductory notice easily grew into this little volume of Art Biography.

Those who may have the patience to read it through will find that it is not, as some of the 'book-notices' have assumed, a mere epitome of Duprè's *Ricordi Biografichi ;* but a careful study of his art life, not only from these delightful 'Reminiscences,' but also from his posthumous letters and papers, as well as from notices of him written by his friends and admirers at the time of his death. The whole of the last part of the Biography is necessarily derived from these latter sources.

The book is by no means intended as a substitute for the *Ricordi Biografichi* of Duprè, now made accessible to English and American readers in the elegant translation of Madame Peruzzi. Indeed, I should feel well repaid for this humble tribute to the memory of an eminent Italian sculptor, at once great in his art, fascinating and instructive as a writer, and simple and pure in character, if it might lead to the more general circulation and appreciation of his own work; a Book which stands alone as the autobiography of a modern Italian artist, and may be said to have formed an era in the art literature of Italy.

No country, so much visited, is so little known as the Italy of to-day. Our 'tourists' hurry through the museums and galleries, and survey for a moment the excavated places and remarkable old buildings, but, as a rule, come away with little or no knowledge of Italy as it is. And yet its present movement in all the work of civilisation, whether in politics, in education, in literature, or art, deserves our interest, not less than its achievements in ancient and mediæval times, and in those of the Renaissance. And it is

much to be wished, as far at least as regards its language, literature, and art, that this land, still peopled by men of the same blood as Dante and Michelangelo, might share in some reasonable degree the attention so exclusively given in these days to France and Germany.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN,
July, 1887.

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GIOVANNI DUPRÈ.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction—The father and mother, Francesco and Vittoria, and their influence on the character of Giovanni—The child's instinct for art—His figures carved in wood for a puppet theatre—His attempts at drawing discountenanced by his father—Is put to the trade of wood-carving—Self-teaching in art studies.

In walking about the old Tuscan town of Siena you will find on the front of a house in the Via San Salvadore the following memorial: 'This humble abode in which was born Giovanni Duprè, honour of art and of Italy, may teach the sons of the people what height can be reached by the power of genius and of will;' and in Florence, on a house just above the Fortezza and the grounds of the Pitti Palace, also this inscription: 'The Municipality of Florence, in whose council sat Giovanni Duprè, has placed this memorial on the house in which for twenty years lived the great sculptor, glory of Italy and of art,

and in which he died on the tenth day of eighteen hundred and eighty-two.'

The sculptor whose name is thus honoured by the city of his birth and by that of his adoption, to whom Italy has justly given a place among the first of her great artists, also won additional distinction in the latter years of his life by his valuable contributions to the literature of art. The most notable of these is the *Ricordi Biografichi*;[1] a volume of reminiscences written with all the charming simplicity of the old Italian *novelle*, and abounding in agreeable anecdote, in lively sketches of character, and in just thoughts on art. Besides this autobiography, he published several articles on art topics; and these, together with a selection of his letters, have been edited since his death by Luigi Venturi, who has prefaced the volume with a biographical notice of the deceased sculptor. From the last Italian edition of the *Ricordi*, and from the papers and letters and the biographical memoir published by Venturi, has been drawn the following account of Duprè's life and works.

Giovanni Duprè was born at Siena on the 1st of

[1] An English translation of this book of Duprè by E. M. Peruzzi was published by Blackwood, Edinburgh, 1884. This translation, which I find favourably noticed in *The Academy*, and which was published several months after my MS. was completed, I have not yet seen.

March 1817. His father, Francesco Duprè, belonged to a Sienese family of French descent, once in affluent circumstances, but by financial reverses suddenly reduced to poverty. By this misfortune the education of Francesco was interrupted, and he was put to the comparatively humble trade of *intaglio* or wood-carving. The change in his prospects and the want of any genial interest in his calling seem to have bred in him an habitual despondency, perhaps increased by an early marriage, the burden of a large family, and the difficulty of earning a support. He was good at heart, a constant reader of the Bible, and scrupulous in religious observances; but his temperament was of the kind that derives from the teachings of the Bible severe and gloomy notions of religious duty rather than the sweet cheerfulness and content that are their legitimate end; and the child Giovanni was called upon to endure much hardship from this kind of Puritanical spirit—never losing, however, his reverence for a parent whose religion he knew to be sincere. Francesco married Vittoria Lombardi, one of the fairest maidens of Siena, a city famed for the beauty of its women. As pure and lovely in spirit as fair in person, she was known among her townsmen as 'the beautiful lady;' and her religious devotion, not less earnest than that of her husband, but acting upon a more

cheerful spirit, served to increase in her that natural sweetness and serenity which relieved in some measure the depression and gloom of a poverty-stricken house. We think of this brave mother, as we catch her image from the words of Duprè here and there in his *Ricordi*, as a woman sweet and saintly in character and feature, like one of the Madonnas that Perugino or Sassoferrato loved to portray. There was in her piety something so simple and sincere, and in her treatment of her children such gentleness mingled with firmness, that all of them, and Giovanni more than the rest, received from her an impulse to goodness and virtue. In him this influence no doubt was so much the greater as he had inherited from his mother a remarkably sensitive nature joined with the same disposition to religious fervour. Indeed, his affection for her amounted almost to idolatry, and it was manifested in several incidents of his childhood and youth, two of which, related in the *Ricordi*, I will introduce here, though a little out of the order of time.

Francesco had found his work as an *intagliatore* so unremunerative in Siena that he had removed his family to Florence, and secured employment in Pistoia, twenty miles distant. Giovanni, then but five years old, was destined to learn his father's

trade, and so accompanied him to the shop at Pistoia, where the father and child lived together in a hired room, now and then spending a Sunday with the family at Florence. But Francesco not unfrequently made these visits alone, and left the child behind, to spend the day and two nights in solitude, dreaming of home and longing for *la mamma.* This dreary life continued for three years. No wonder that natural feeling became too strong for filial obedience: 'So once,' says he, 'when I was about seven years old, I ran away from the house in Pistoia, and made my way on foot to Florence; though I knew very well that I should pay dearly for the kiss and caress of my mother with a whipping from *il babbo.* . . . In fact he punished me and took me back with him to the shop.'

Two years later Francesco once more found work in his native Siena. Thither he was accompanied by Giovanni, who was placed in the Academy of Siena to study drawing, the family remaining as before in Florence. Here again distance and absence from home soon became insupportable; especially as Francesco had promised to take him home at Easter, and then for some reason had given up the visit. On the Saturday morning of Holy Week Giovanni got up at an early hour and hurried away, expecting with his nine-year-old legs to make a jour-

ney of more than thirty miles in a day. 'Passing through the Porta Cammollia,' he says, 'with a piece of bread in his wallet, he started off on the road in the childish hope of spending the Easter with his mother.' At the end of twenty miles his strength, in spite of hope and excitement, gave out, and no wonder. He sank down by the roadside, and after a little rose up and dragged himself a short distance farther. 'Sad thoughts passed through his weary little head, one after another—now of his mother, now of his father—the latter probably seeking him in vain through all Siena.' A kind peasant family in a roadside cabin took him in, listened pitifully to his story, *specialmente la donna;* gave him food and wine, and were preparing his bed for the night, when a stage coach came rumbling along the highway, and the driver listening to the account of the boy, eagerly given by his new friends, needed no further entreaty, but helped up Giovanni to a place by his side, and at midnight put him down near the home of the Duprès at Florence in the Via Toscanella. He knocked at the door; his mother came to the window, knew his voice, and uttered a cry of surprise. 'The rest I cannot describe,' writes Duprè; 'he who has a heart can understand all.' The father arrived the next day full of wrath; 'but *la mamma* with unspeakable affection clasped me in her arms, look-

ing reproachfully at *il babbo*, without speaking a word. The stern parent controlled himself, and a long lecture followed on the duty of obedience, and of submission to the sacred authority of parents, and on the weak indulgence and folly of mothers; whereupon I asked his forgiveness and all was over.'

This fond devotion of the boy to his mother was not merely beautiful; it opened in his young heart a sympathy which made her religion and piety lovely and heavenly in his eyes; and it thus inspired in him that kindred fervour which gave to him as an artist the chief element of his power. Sadly enough for Giovanni, in a few years this best of mothers was overtaken with blindness; and only through description could she imagine and enjoy the beautiful works of his hands.

Most of the incidents of boyhood recalled by Duprè relate, of course, to the development of his gift for art. The very earliest of these shows him at the shop in Pistoia learning with his childish hands the use of the tools, wearied with his task-work of *intaglio*, and seeking amusement in his first attempts to shape out 'figures' in wood. And the first works of the great sculptor in the way of statuary were the wooden heads and arms of manikins for a puppet theatre. Canini, the proprietor of a

show of this kind, like many other stage-managers, had been left in the lurch by the breaking down of one of his star actors on the eve of a great sensational opening; and he came to his friend Francesco, the father of Giovanni, in the hope that the important personage lacking just at the wrong time might be shaped out—that is, as to head and hands—by the poor wood-carver. But Francesco 'could not do it; did not know how, had never made a figure.' The child Giovanni heard the conversation, felt all the gravity of the situation, 'boldly proposed to make the wooden head and hands; and, while Canini doubted, trembled, and hoped, and *il babbo* manifested a certain complacence, set himself to the task, and that with such good success that this was the most beautiful personage of the company.' And thus he was inspired with confidence to renew the whole dramatic corps (*tutti i personaggi*). But 'personages' of a lower order were also needed; and these were ducks; for in this 'grand spectacular drama' there was to be an aquatic scene. In making these the little Giovanni not only manifested his instinct for art, but also a profound knowledge of hydrostatics. 'I also made some ducks of corkwood, which were to figure in a pond, and were to be moved about here and there by means of invisible threads of silk. It was a delight to see these *bestioline*, and they

were quite a success with their touch of naturalness ; because in the court of the house there were real ducks ; and so I had a chance to copy them from life. Oh, living nature! *Oh, il vero!*—not only a great help, but the fundamental principle of art.'

No boy ever takes kindly to employment laid on him as taskwork. On this account the art of mere decorative carving, though it might under other circumstances have interested the mind of Giovanni, became distasteful and irksome ; but this first success in fashioning with his tiny hands a whole troupe of actors,—the stars, the stock company, and the *corps de ballet*, had stirred in him an ambition to attempt other things outside of his trade. At Prato, where his father found work for a time, after leaving Pistoia, Giovanni fell in with a maker and peddler of painted plaster images ; these caught his fancy, and he tried to make something similar, but always more life-like. Then among his father's old pattern-drawings and other papers, he lighted upon some wonderful prints representing the building of Solomon's temple, and also upon a variety of costume pictures ; and he tried his hand at drawing them. 'My little pate was full of these images. I first tried to copy the print that had struck my fancy more than the others, but I failed ; I wept with disappointment ; I wept, too, because my father did not look at my

efforts with a friendly eye, thinking them of no use in the practice of *intaglio;* thus I was compelled to carry on my work in advanced hours, and almost in secret.' Failing in the 'Solomon's temple,' which was 'too complicated' for his untutored hand, he made a study of some of the costume figures; and these he laboured over when his father had gone to bed and to sleep; 'and sometimes I, too, fell asleep over my drawings, and woke up in the dark, to find the lamp burned out.' This practice, however, kept up daily and with boyish enthusiasm, gave his hand freedom of movement, and his eye a nicer discrimination; so that his drawings at last were made with few or no corrections. At Prato, as before at Pistoia, Francesco was in the habit of making occasional visits to the family in Florence, and of leaving Giovanni, then about eight years old, to take care of the shop. 'Yearnings and entreaties were of no avail;' the father persisted in this hard treatment; the boy submitted, dried his tears, and pursued his solitary work. In recalling these bitter experiences, Duprè says, 'I do not wish to blame my father, but neither then nor afterwards was I able to comprehend his way of thinking. . . . However, this life of hardship, trial, and disappointed yearning and affection formed my character, gave me the habit of suffering, of persevering, of obeying, without,

however, quenching in me the longings and the affections that my conscience assured me were good.'

But this discipline came near costing him his life. What with hard work at the bench, close study at unseasonable hours, and sadness and homesickness, he pined away. He had always been slender and delicate, and now he became so wasted that they called him *il morticino.* A doctor was called in, and the father was frightened into more rational treatment. The boy was no longer hurried up from his bed at daybreak ; milk warm from the goat was brought to his chamber before rising ; his diet was improved : he grew rapidly better, and was no longer *il morticino.* For the goat that deserved the chief credit of this resurrection of 'the little corpse' 'he retained a feeling, even half a century afterwards, that he could not well define.' When he had regained health and strength, his mother, with the consent of Francesco, placed him with two skilful wood-carvers of Florence, named Ammanati and Pierecini ; but he had not been with them long before he attracted the attention of Paolo Sani, another *intagliatore* of note, and proprietor of an extensive business, who proposed that Giovanni should be sent for a few months to the Academy of Fine Arts in Siena to study drawing ; with the understanding that he should then work in the

establishment of Sani at Florence. Francesco accepted the offer the more readily, as he was now himself employed again at Siena, and could have the boy under his own care while studying there. It was then that Giovanni was overcome by the temptation to run away and be with his mother at Easter, ending in the childish escapade before described. After this adventure, and after his father's wrath had cooled, he thought it best that Giovanni's strong affection for home should be crossed no more, and he therefore left him with his mother, and returned to Siena alone. The boy was taken at once into the employment of Sani, happy to work where he could live *colla mamma.*

In his new place he enjoyed comparative freedom in the exercise of his natural bent. His figures, carved in wood, rapidly became known for their remarkable grace and for their lifelike and individual character—an excellence which he attained by pursuing, without knowing it, the method of Leonardo da Vinci ; for he had provided himself with a sketch-book, and drew off-hand, as he had opportunity, whatever he found characteristic in the features and forms of his shopmates and others—at first awkwardly, but with more perfection by persistent practice. 'I did not weary, and in time acquired so much freedom that with a few lines I obtained a

fair portrait.' Of course, the passion or habit was not laid off with his working cap and apron. It kept him busy at home, too, and might have tried too much the patience even of *la bella donna* Vittoria, especially if she had seen the walls of the kitchen gradually converted into a gallery of charcoal sketches; but the poor dear mother was blind. '*La mamma, poverina, era cieca,* my father was away, and I was the oldest of the children, and so lord of the house.'

He was doing well at the wood-carving, but he thirsted for something better. He had heard of the Academy; he knew it was the place where youth were taught the arts of painting and sculpture. 'Heavens! what a glorious thing to be able to make statues!' He had caught sight of the drawings of one or two of the fortunate pupils; they seemed *stupendissimi.* He had golden dreams of this great institution; its door was the portal of the temple of fame. Could not his master Sani get him admitted to it?

The poor blind mother, weeping in sympathy with the pleading of the boy, walked with him to the shop and begged Sani to use his influence. 'The Signor Sani (I shall never forget the scene) sternly fixing his eyes upon me, still more terrible from behind his great silver-bowed spectacles, made

answer that "for all the requirements of his trade it was enough for me to remain in the shop, and be willing to learn; nothing more certain. Study in the Academy? No; it would but encourage desires and hopes never to be satisfied. The poverty of your family would put it out of the question, even if you were supposed to have the gifts to carry you through. Then there is the danger of the companionship." My mother said nothing in reply; but in her sightless eyes I saw the inward pain. She returned home, and I repaired to my work-bench.'

CHAPTER II.

A fortunate disappointment—Beauty of Giovanni's wood-carving—Bartolini mistakes it for work of the sixteenth century—His wooing and marriage at nineteen.

To Giovanni this was a bitter disappointment, and moreover a rebuff very hard to put up with. And yet in the end, as often turns out with seeming misfortunes, it was infinitely better than would have been the gratification of his desire. The Academy of Florence, under the influence then prevailing in the school of sculpture, would probably have made him, if he had been admitted to its classes, an imitator of the ancient masters, with a certain degree of elegance—nothing more. It would have been apt to dry out all his freshness and repress all originality. For the Florentine Academy had for some time been in that unprogressive state to which all academies are liable; that, namely, in which individual freedom is hedged in by traditional canons. Instead of fostering genial development, it had become a Procrustean bed, effectually bringing all erratic growths

to a dead average. It said to the pupil: Look at the classical figure not only for your elementary lessons, but for your guidance through your whole art training and art career. Even if you employ a living model, you must correct your copy by reference to the classical exemplar. If nature differ from the traditional art, so much the worse for nature. This is the spirit of *classicism:* a widely different thing, be it noted, from the spirit of the classic himself, whether artist or writer. The 'classic,' so called because he is genuine and great, and therefore inevitably stands as an exemplar for all time, unhappily becomes by that very fact the unconscious and innocent authority for sundry rules and canons, sometimes found in the mere accidents of his work, and mistaken for essential laws. Thus a Homer, a Pheidias, a Bach, or a Mozart, who should be the inspiration of genius, and an encouragement to the free exercise of inborn strength, is made to stand as a stern giant in the way of all progress and invention. Thus the very freedom that in the past created fresh and characteristic beauties becomes a source of restraint and bondage. For the academy hunts up and formulates in its rules the individualities that have sprung from the exercise of perfect liberty, and by these very rules makes that liberty for its own pupils impossible. Thus the school comes to that state of lethargy and

dead formality in which there remains not a breath of living nature or of living beauty. And thus it remains until, perchance, some irrepressible genius breaks out into rebellion against its decrees, wins honour in defiance of its condemnation, works a reform, and is justified by the world. Then the staid academy is aroused from its slumber, accepts 'the new school,' makes new canons, and enters upon another cycle of progress and decay. Such is history. Such a revolution, and quite a violent one, was effected in the school of sculpture of the Florentine Academy a few years later by that great, commanding, and erratic genius, Bartolini. But at the present moment it was under the incubus of false classicism; and it may well have been unfortunate in the end for Giovanni Duprè if wealth or privilege had given him admission to the enchanted castle. The department of sculpture was at that time under the presidency of Stefano Ricci, and its condition is thus described by Duprè in the *Ricordi:*

'The school of Ricci was nothing more than a long and tedious exercise in copying without discrimination the antique statues, good and bad; and so much the worse, that even in the studies made from nature, that is from the nude, antique art was referred to as the criterion; the peculiar traits of ancient statues took precedence of those that nature

had impressed upon the living models. In the contours they added or retrenched with an assurance that was even comical; they enlarged the lateral muscles of the abdomen, and contracted the lower part in order to give force and elegance to the figure. The head, too, so far from following the model, was diminished in size; the neck at the same time was made more muscular; and so the form as a whole appeared taller and more robust, but it was not true to nature; and if the figures possessed any character, they were all after one type, and that purely traditional. This correcting of nature by reducing all figures derived from living models to conformity with a uniform type led directly to conventionalism; and this track once entered upon, this working from memory, always keeping in view the pre-existing type, withdrew the eyes of the artist from nature itself, and from all its varied beauties; and in fact he ceased to care for them—nay, rather, he became suspicious of nature, holding that she was always defective, and must always be corrected; that precisely in this correction lay the secret of art.'

Duprè adds that it was this very extravagance of servile classicism that led Bartolini, on succeeding to the place of Ricci, to push things to the other extreme; to banish altogether the study of the antique, and to allow only that of living nature.

Bartolini, in order to emphasise his principle, went so far as to place before the students as their nude model a hunchback; for, he said, even deformity, if living and real, was preferable to the conventional figures that hitherto had usurped the place of nature.

The outcome of this conflict between the extremes of conservatism and radicalism was a healthful mean, and a new and honourable career of art production; so that, indeed, Duprè himself, with all his independence and all his love for nature, died at last a professor of the Academy. With him the watchword was always 'the beautiful in the real' (*il bello nel vero*). As we have seen, the intuition even of childhood had led him to this path, and the experience of riper years made this intuition his practical philosophy of art.

Nothing remained for him now as the apprentice of Sani but to forget his dreams of the Academy and the glory of being a sculptor, and to apply himself steadily to his wood-carving—the chiselling of house decorations and of saints and angels. But this art was not so bad after all; he learned to love it, especially the figure-making, and his works soon became marvels of beauty. Some of them he recalls in after years, and especially two of them in connection with his anecdotes of Bartolini. The first of

these he describes as a small casket, or coffer of wood designed in the style of the *cinquecento.* It had been placed in the art rooms of the brothers Pacetti, by whom Giovanni was employed at the time, and attracted the attention, among others, of the Marchioness Poldi of Milan. The name of the maker had been purposely suppressed, that the work might be taken for a genuine 'antique;' and Duprè in the *Ricordi* expresses his regret for having connived at the deception. As Bartolini was executing for the Marchioness at this time his group of Astyanax, he was in the habit of making occasional calls upon her. During one of these she asked his opinion of the beautiful wooden casket for sale at Pacetti's. Bartolini praised it highly, and pronounced it one of the works that Tasso the *intagliatore* executed after the design of his friend Benvenuto Cellini. On hearing this judgment she did not hesitate to buy the work, though at an extravagant price. A few years afterwards, when Duprè had suddenly risen to fame as a sculptor, the Marchioness called at his studio, and after some inquiries about his past life, and learning his former trade of wood-carving, told him 'that she possessed a magnificent work of the famous wood-carver Tasso, and that this work, though in wood, was conceived and executed with so much grace and excellence, that it could be justly called a genuine

work of art;' adding that these were the very words of Bartolini. 'The reader can imagine,' says Duprè, 'whether I felt elated with such praise. Partly because of this, and partly to clear my conscience, I said, Signora Marchesa, I beg your pardon, but that work is mine. "No matter," she replied; "I shall prize it so much the more." I begged her to say nothing on the subject to Bartolini.'

The other work was a figure of Christ on the Cross, executed some time before the casket, but brought to the notice of Bartolini several years later. It had come into the possession of a wealthy and cultivated Florentine gentleman by the name of Emanuel Fenzi. His house was a favourite evening resort of literary men and artists, and of Bartolini and Duprè among the rest. 'One of these evenings,' says Duprè, 'after dinner, the drawing-room of Fenzi's house was filled with callers, and alive with pleasant and varied conversation; and this, as was natural, presently turned upon art. Bartolini, in his ready and somewhat imperious manner, gave various reasons for asserting that art had reached a stage of decline; first on account of lack of enthusiasm in the people and the nobility—for the people had sunk into a kind of stupor, and the nobility into the *dolce far niente;* next because artists, turning away from the only right path, the imitation of the beautiful in

nature, had been led astray by an insane passion for a chimera which they called the *beau ideal;* and finally because the vices of high and low, not excepting the artists themselves, had taken the place of the virtues of our ancestors; for apathy, luxury, and avarice had driven from our beautiful land the old-fashioned virtues of industry, temperance, modesty, and liberality; and he cited from the past various examples of modesty and temperance. While he was talking in this strain, Fenzi stepped into the chamber of his son Orazio, and brought out my figure of Christ. It had now the look of an antique, partly on account of the long period since I had made it, and partly, perhaps, on account of the kisses so often bestowed upon it by the pious Lady Emilia. The host held it up before the *maestro* and said: "Look at this work." And Bartolini, taking it into his hands and looking at it attentively, continued in this wise: "The proof that our old artists were not less gifted than modest can be seen even in this work; for the artist that made it, who was probably a mere wood-carver, must have been capable of making a statue such as perhaps no one in our time could make."

'To this Fenzi, smiling, answered: "Excuse me, but you are labouring under a mistake; for this is a modern work, and there is the author of it;" pointing

to me, as I happened to be entering the room at that moment. Bartolini put down the Christ and said no more.'

But this scene occurred after Duprè had won his first laurels, and was already a favourite in cultivated society. Between this and the apprenticeship at Sani's there had been an interval of several years, clouded with much trial; and to that part of his story we must return.

Giovanni, now a youth in his nineteenth year, had come to be the foreman of Sani's establishment, and a general favourite with his fellows; true to his master, kind to his young brothers and sisters, and full of tender affection for his blind mother. But he does not claim to have been a saint; on the contrary, the somewhat rough comrades with whom his occupation brought him in contact had already begun to exercise a dangerous influence upon his susceptible and impulsive nature. Accident, however, gave his thoughts a new direction, and saved him. One day, while at work at his bench, he chanced to look out from his window when a well-shaped maidenly figure, plainly and neatly dressed, was passing along the street with a quiet and modest step. There was something in her form and gait that fascinated the eyes of Giovanni. He hoped and watched to see her pass again, but in vain.

Some time afterwards, when he was attending the mass at the feast of roses in the church of the Apostles, in the midst of the devotions he looked up and saw kneeling opposite him the well-remembered form. 'Her head was bowed; the light was a little dim, and she was in the shade; but the outline of her face and the expression were pure and sweet. I was held as if by enchantment—captivated by that figure in its humble, fixed, and serene attitude.'

It is needless to say where all his thoughts ran now; 'comrades, suppers, billiards, all were abandoned.' Afterwards he caught sight of his new love two or three times in the streets, and followed at discreet distance: but once ventured so near that the little lady was startled: and no longer the meek kneeling saint, but flushed with maidenly indignation, she says, 'I want no one behind me.' Giovanni faltered out some apology, he knew not what, but it seemed to be intelligible to her, for she checked her hurrying steps long enough to say, 'Go to the house of my mother, and do not stop me on the street.' 'I thanked her with my eyes and we parted; then I returned to the shop, my heart bounding with joy and hope.'

He speedily found out her name, Maria Mecocci; found out the humble abode where she lived with her widowed mother, whom Giovanni took a fancy

to call by her first name *Regina.* The youth with simple ingenuousness, 'his heart speaking,' made known his desire to become acquainted with mother and daughter, 'opened his mind and told the whole story.' Such simple folk know little of formality. '*La Regina,*' he continues, 'heard me to the end, neither pleased nor angry, and only blamed me for having stopped her daughter in the street; adding that she would think of it, but meantime could not conceal from me her feeling that I seemed too young.' In short, Giovanni was allowed to call from time to time; both mothers came together, and finding no impediment but youth, put the lover under probation for a year, at the end of which period Giovanni and Maria became man and wife.

CHAPTER III.

Becomes a sculptor—The prize for his first bas-relief announced to his dying mother—The statue of Abel—A triumph embittered by the detraction of jealous rivals—A statue too perfect to be thought a genuine work of art.

A POOR *intagliatore*, nineteen years old, the chief dependence of a poverty-stricken family, adding to his heavy load by marrying a wife! Surely no genius can rise under such a burden; we shall never hear of him more. Such would be the natural conclusion; such in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred would be the outcome; though by no means is an early marriage unhappy for all that. It may cheat fame; but it may also offset the unrest of ambition by the sweet contentment of a life of industry wholly domestic. But in the case of young Duprè, aspiration was rather stimulated than repressed. 'Settled in my new existence, I thought seriously of carrying into effect and making a reality the dream of my whole life; in short, I decided to become a sculptor.' His father objected, quoting in Latin the sacred

proverb, 'Many are called, but few chosen;' his mother, as usual, was in sympathy with his wish; his young wife could not see why his present employment was not good enough; but when he gave his reasons, she said, gently smiling, 'It is well.' And while he still toiled at his bench, and pursued at odd hours the studies preliminary to the execution of works in marble, he was comforted and sustained both by wife and mother. He delights to dwell upon the virtues of his Maria, his *santa donna*, as he often calls her. He ascribes to her counsels and to her efforts and wise management, his emergence from poverty, and largely his good success in his artist life.

After many discouragements growing out of the want of means to provide himself with a studio and materials, and also the want of time for the extra labour required in his new art, befriended, however, by some who understood his remarkable gifts, and especially encouraged through all the struggle by the 'good Maria,' he succeeded in winning the first prize of the Academy in 1840. The successful work was a bas-relief representing the Judgment of Paris. He had already executed as studies under the direction of his friend Luigi Magi some small figures and one or two busts in marble; but this bas-relief was the first of his productions that was designed for a competitive exhibition.

Most sad for Giovanni, at the moment when the decision of the Academy was announced to him, his mother was lying at the point of death—the dear blind mother, who had entered so tenderly into his young aspirations, who had wept with him at the stern rebuff of Sani, who had listened to his account of the progress of his work from day to day, 'as she sat in her quiet corner at home silently spinning,' and had longed and prayed for his triumph. 'No sooner had I heard the announcement of the award than I ran to my mother, whom I had left for a moment; and I had some faint hope that on hearing the joyful news she would revive; and, indeed, at my words her face became all radiant, her cheeks were flushed, her eyes that dimly saw the light became animated, and seemed to look at me; then, stretching out her arms and clasping me to herself, she said, "Now I am willing to die." She lived a few days and then expired, comforted with the sacraments of our holy religion.'

Francesco, the father, still survived, now incapacitated for work, spending much of his time seated in the studio and watching the labour of his son, or reading the Bible. He was cared for tenderly and reverently by Giovanni, who describes his last sickness in the pages of the *Ricordi.* He died of cholera in the epidemic of 1854.

The young artist now hoped to get assistance from the Academy, at least in an indirect way. It was the custom of the ducal government to furnish deserving pupils of the Academy with rooms for studios gratuitously. Though Duprè was not a student of the Academy, he thought that as a successful competitor for one of its prizes he might be also thus favoured. Accordingly he presented himself to Montalvo, the President, in the hope of obtaining a good word from that dignitary in favour of his petition. But he was not kindly received. 'No,' said the Signor President; 'you have no right to ask for a studio; the grace of the Sovereign grants this only to those who have completed their studies in the Academy of Fine Arts.' And when Giovanni added some words by way of arguing the question, Montalvo flew into a passion, and dismissed him without further ceremony. However, he retained no ill-will against the President, but always esteemed him 'a good and excellent gentleman, though subject to some infirmities.' He recalls an incident illustrating one of these. Montalvo was somewhat deficient in artistic discrimination, but at the same time was ambitious to be thought a critic. A few months after the above-mentioned interview, and when Duprè's acknowledged ability made the President regret the rough reception he had given

him, he called with a friend at the young sculptor's studio to look at his new statue, then in progress. 'In matters of art,' says Duprè, 'he was a judge merely of general effect, but not of details. His office, however, as director of the royal galleries, and still more, as President of the Academy of Fine Arts, made him feel that he must keep up a reputation for critical taste. What I know at present in this regard I was not then so well aware of, though I suspected his weakness from his way of examining my statue, and from his complimentary remarks, made up of common phrases, the established formulas and the jargon of the Academy. But for fear he might seem to find everything in my statue perfect, he thought he must point out some defect; and it was this: The left ear seemed too far back, and the space thus left in front of it made the jaw disproportionately large.

'I have promised from the beginning, to tell the truth, and I will tell it, please God, to the end; and so I must here confess myself an arrant hypocrite. Instead of answering honestly: No, it doesn't seem so to me, but, out of respect for your judgment, I will examine it again, I replied that he was right, and I thanked him. And that was not the worst; when he favoured me with a second visit, and had hardly entered the studio, I said: Look at the ear.'

'Have you corrected it,' he asked.

'Yes.'

'Have you brought it forward?'

'Certainly; how do you like it?'

'Ah, now it is all right.'

In his reminiscences Duprè severely reprehends this deception, and suspects there may have been in it a little malice; but it served to win the goodwill of the President, who continued henceforth his fast friend and warm admirer. And though the artist reproaches himself for this wanton freak of his early years, his readers will be more apt to sympathise with the mischievous humour of Duprè the youth than with the moral scruples of Duprè the old man. The story is similar to that of Michelangelo brushing the marble dust from the nose of the David, that he had pretended to file down a little to suit the keen eye of Soderini; and it may well be that the history of other studios, ancient and modern, if all were known, would reveal similar experiences, or rather similar experiments. Indeed, something kindred to this again happened to Duprè himself quite late in life. He consented on one occasion, after much entreaty on the part of a certain lady, to make a portrait bust of one of her relatives whom he had never seen, and who had died in a foreign land. With the help of a mask in plaster and of an in-

different photograph, he moulded a portrait in clay; and then invited the lady, with any friends she might wish to bring with her, to come and pass judgment upon it. The friends, after looking at the portrait a moment, smiled, declared it a failure, and went away. The lady, however, remained, and presently remarked that she was entirely satisfied with it, excepting only one point. 'I should like to have a little alteration made in this part of the face (pointing at it with her finger), if you can do it.'

'But, *signora*, the features that I find in the mask are precisely these, and I should be sorry to make it worse.'

'Pardon me, but I think the change I propose would make it infinitely better.'

Duprè reflected a moment, and then said: 'Very well; I wish you to be satisfied; but be kind enough to give me two hours, and you will find it ready.'

The lady retired, and meantime Duprè occupied himself with some other work. At the appointed hour she returned. 'Now look at it,' said he; 'what do you think of it now?'

She examined it again and again; and then with some hesitation replied:

'What shall I say? It seems to me now that the effect was better at first.'

'Really?'

'Really.'

'Well, then?'

'Should I be too unreasonable if I asked you to make it just as it was before?'

'No; I will restore it; but I must ask you again the favour of leaving me two hours at liberty.'

Duprè, of course, did nothing, and the lady returning, and examining the portrait once more, turned to him delighted, and exclaimed: 'Now it is right—exactly right. I am perfectly satisfied; make no other; just finish this in marble.'

Venturi, who relates this story, says that Duprè frequently laughed over it, calling it up also as an example to show how easily we are deceived in judging of the truth; and how it happens almost invariably that one and the same model, placed before several scholars, is seen by them with different eyes, and represented in their drawings with very different characteristics.

Giovanni regarded his bas-relief of the Judgment of Paris merely as a first essay in his new art, and as a step towards something more nearly approaching to his ideal. We now come to the history of the Abel, the masterpiece that brought the young sculptor suddenly before the world as one of the princes of art.

He had not yet wholly abandoned his trade of wood-carving, but by working at it half of his time he managed to earn a scanty support for his family, and a few francs daily for the rent of a small studio; and also for the purchase of tools and materials, and what was equally indispensable, for the hire of a living model. And now the question was, What should be his subject? 'I had almost fixed upon the Dead Christ with the Weeping Mother (a *Pietà*), and had begun to turn over in my mind a design for the composition; and certainly the *Cristo Morto* is, and always will be one of the sublimest themes; yet I was not satisfied; for I preferred to handle a subject entirely new; and as I had been a constant reader of the Bible, very naturally the death of Abel suggested itself to my mind, and I accepted it with ready confidence.'

But the beginning of this new work came near being the end. 'It was Shrove Tuesday in 1842, and all who could and desired were walking up and down the Corso. I and the model were shut up in that little studio, and it was a miracle that that day was not our last. Poor Brina, however, is still alive, an old man like me, and still serving as a model in the Academy.'

In brief, while he was studying the nude form of *il povero Brina*, the pan of charcoal that he had

kindled to keep the boy comfortable had filled the little hive of a studio with gas, and both were already becoming stupefied. 'All at once I saw the model make a slight movement, fetch a long heavy breath, while his eyes and the colour of his cheeks were fast waning. I tried to rush to his help, but my legs gave way; I seemed lost, my sight was failing; I made an effort to reach the door and fell prostrate.' But by one desperate effort Giovanni reached the latch, pulled the door partially open, and was revived by the current of fresh air. Then he dashed water in the face of Brina, and 'brought him to.'

Much depended upon the new statue being ready for the next exposition of the Academy; and yet it was quite impossible for poor Giovanni to make satisfactory progress with the modelling, so long as the principal part of the day was spent at his old employment; while if he devoted all his hours to the statue, his family must starve. It seemed as if the fates were against him. But the Florentines inherit the love of art as well as sympathy with struggling merit. Not a few of them, and among these some distinguished citizens, had already become acquainted with the young artist's works in *intaglio* and with his recent bas-relief in marble. These kind people united in a pledge to contribute monthly certain sums to make up the amount needed to

carry him through. 'Thanks to the timely help of these generous friends,' he says, 'whose names I can never mention without grateful emotion, my modelling now progressed daily in good imitation and just expression.'

The same friends occasionally dropped into the studio.

On one occasion Bartolini himself was among the visitors. He spoke approvingly, and also made one criticism: 'Observe,' said he, 'the face is gentle in expression, and such as is natural in one who dies and forgives; and the parts are generally in keeping with this sentiment; only one is discordant—the left hand. Why have you closed that, while the right is open, and very properly so?'

'I closed it,' said I, 'for a certain variety.'

'Variety,' answered the *maestro*, 'is good when it does not contradict unity; but you will do well to open it like the other; and that is all I have to say.'

Giovanni, however, was eager to hear more. 'And the imitation, the character, the form?' he persisted.

'The imitation, the character, and the form,' answered Bartolini, 'show that you are not of the Academy.'

The statue was completed in time for the exhibition of September 1842. Giovanni was allowed

his choice of places in the apartments. Thirty-seven years later he thus recalls the event: 'When the exposition was opened people gathered around my work. The imitation of the truth, the just expression, the newness and the pathetic nature of the subject awakened a deep interest. The crowd around it increased from day to day. But (and here comes the most bitter of all the trials of his life) it began to be asserted, at first quietly, soon boldly and openly, that my statue was an imposture; that it was not a creation of art, but the mechanical work of a moulder; that I was seeking to impose upon the Academy, masters, scholars, and the public. It should be thrown out of the exposition; for it was dishonestly thrust in there as a work of art, when in fact it was only a cast made by laying the soft plaster upon the living form.

'And this misrepresentation, I know not whether more absurd or malignant, was started among the artists, and especially the sculptors. At last they went so far as to strip my model Antonio Petrai, in order to prove the fraud. He was made to lie down in the position of the statue, and his body and limbs were measured in length and breadth with compasses and strips of paper. Of course, the measurements did not agree with those of the statue; for without any design or thought about it, I had

made my figure four fingers longer than the body of the model, and two fingers less across the broadest part of the back. This amiable experiment was made in the evening; and the President, Montalvo, who accidentally surprised them in the act, was full of indignation, and in his rebuke did not spare those professors of the Academy who had taken part in the performance.'

Duprè was not the first sculptor who had excited envious suspicion by the very perfection of his work. The same charge of mechanical copying from the nude had been brought against Canova himself when exhibiting his first important work, the Daedalus and Icarus. Quite recently, too, a young sculptor of Naples has been subjected to the same suspicion; but his defenders have replied that the most delicate and difficult of all things to imitate, the expression, namely, of emotion in the countenance, is precisely that which can by no possibility be obtained from the process of moulding on the flesh; and yet this is the part of the statue in which the Neapolitan artist, according to the critics who defend him, has most perfectly represented nature. This, too, might justly have been one of the arguments in defence of Duprè at this time, had he and his friends thought it necessary to meet his base rivals with any proofs at all. But Bartolini and others who had witnessed

the progress of the work in the studio, treated the charges of the Academicians with contempt; and Antonio, the model, with whose body they tried to prove the charge, 'laughed in their faces.' Yet they had not the manhood to publish to the world the result of their experimental measurements, and thus to atone, so far as possible, for the grievous wrong they had done to the poor young sculptor. Time, indeed, was sure to repair the mischief; but for a few months the unhappiness thus brought upon him and indirectly upon his family was hard to bear. The praise bestowed upon his work while in progress at the studio had given assurance of a success that would establish his reputation and, what at this time was even more important, bring him profitable employment. To be sure, he longed for fame, but not less for the means of lifting his family out of its wretchedness. And just as his sun was rising, it was suddenly overcast. No wonder he fell into despondency, almost despair. But the young wife, the *santa donna*, tried to comfort him. '*Non ti confondere*, don't be troubled, don't mind them, Nanni (this was the diminutive for Giovanni); they are spiteful, because you have done better than they. Talk they will, and still talk; and by and by they will stop talking.'

'*Si, si, mia buona Maria*, they will stop talking;

but meantime they have done me great mischief. Some one, perhaps, would have ordered the statue—I have learned that—but this silly and malicious babble brings it under suspicion, and my chance is gone! I am crippled and bound at the very moment when I was about to become known, and might have opened for myself an honourable career. I know that I shall not be able to make another statue like this; not for the lack of will, but how could I bear the expense? My wages, I am sure cannot maintain my family and at the same time pay for a model, a studio and material, and the expense of the casting.'

'Be not troubled, Nanni,' again replied *la santa donna*, and said no more; but her eyes sparkled through her tears.

Strangely enough, the perfection of the Abel subjected it again to the same suspicion when it was placed in the first French exposition at Paris in 1855. The jury, with the exception of the Italian member, the sculptor Calamatta, insisted that a work so true to nature must have been produced by making a mould upon the living form itself. But Calamatta earnestly took up the defence of Duprè, though formerly when on a visit to his studio in Florence he had sharply criticised the young sculptor for his naturalism, and was by no means partial to any that were not of the

Academy. He made it clear to the jury that it was a genuine work of art; pointing out those things in it that never could have been produced by a mechanical cast, and especially the head and the expression of the features. Convinced that they had erred in attributing its exquisite perfection to fraud, or a kind of stealing from nature, the jury now awarded to it the gold medal of the first class.

Too perfect to have been created by the free hand of an artist! What greater praise could have been bestowed than this unconscious verdict, first, of the Florentine Academicians, and, thirteen years later, of the jury of the French exposition?

CHAPTER IV.

A friend in need—The statue of Cain—A new departure in Italian art —Compared with that of the so-called pre-Raphaelites—The Giotto —Giovanni is bewildered by learned critics and endangered by flatterers—And displeased with the works he executes under such influences—His studio visited by the Emperor Nicholas—And by a phenomenal genius from America.

MEANTIME Duprè was not without the sympathy of many of his townsmen; and one of these speedily came to his relief. 'Without knowing it, I had a friend—a true friend and benefactor—the Count Francesco del Benino. From the time I was a youth in the shop of Sani, when I worked in *intaglio*, and later, when I was with the Pacetti, up to the beginning of my Abel, for which he was one of the most liberal contributors, he had not lost sight of me—often calling when I was modelling the statue, and expressing himself pleased with it, and certain of my future. Hearing now of the intrigue and detraction that were striving to put me down, he was stirred with indignation, and coming in upon me at the moment of my deepest de-

spondency, when I knew not what saint to turn to, with his usual salutation, *Sor Giovanni, che fa?* seated himself in my only chair; then seeing me downcast in spite of his cheerful good morning, went on to say:

'Come, come, courage, man! Do you know how these asses are braying? They need a sound beating with a good cudgel. You have no idea, but I know well what I say. I am often in their studios, and see and hear the cowardly war they are making on you. We must not delay, but give them blow for blow. I have heard one of them—no matter who—I have heard one of these noodles say with a scornful laugh, Yes, he could make the Abel well enough—it was only a reclining figure; but a standing one he is not up to; he will not be able to do that either this year or next. And the rest joined in the laugh. This I heard a few moments ago; and I have come to tell you that you must silence these yelping curs. Now, my dear Giovanni, you must make another statue; this time one on foot; and—now, be still—you must do it at once. I know what you want to say—I understand it all—and I say, you must leave this studio; it is too small for an upright statue; find another at once; order the trestles you want; fix upon the form of your statue, and the money you will need. The money I will furnish; you know

where I live; come to me; put down on paper the sum you require, with your receipt to it; and when you get orders for your works, as you will be sure to do by and by, and have plenty of funds in hand, you can repay the amount of the loan. Now be still; no thanks at all. In the first place, this shall not be a gift; in the second place, I shall get all the pay I desire in the opportunity you will give me by and by to laugh in the faces of this miserable rabble. They are mocking just now not less at me than you; for I tell them your Abel is genuine, and that I have seen you at work upon it. And so you see, I am an interested party; for without the cost of a cent I am getting a revenge that all my money could not buy. And now, dear Giovanni, *a riveder la;* I expect you to call upon me for all you need; be quick, keep up a good heart, and count me your most sincere friend.'

The good old bachelor Count, of course, had no idea of receiving any of his money back again; he was only smoothing the way over Giovanni's pride. Duprè hastened home to make the *santa donna* a participant in his joyful surprise; then found and rented a new studio, hired his model, and purchased his equipment. What now should be the subject of his new statue—not to be lying down, but 'on foot'? Naturally the counterpart of the Abel, the

conscience-smitten Cain, fleeing in terror from the scene of his awful deed, dreading the wrath both of God and man.

Scarcely had he entered upon his new work when his fortunes began to brighten. Proposals were made to him for copies of the Abel; and while these were pending, an unlooked-for purchaser appeared both for the Abel and for the statue of Cain, now in progress. The Grand Duchess Maria, daughter of the Emperor Nicholas, and wife of Prince Leuchtenberg, while visiting Florence, heard of the Abel and the controversy about it, and called at the studio to see this remarkable work. Then 'she looked at the Cain that I had hardly begun, and exchanged some words with the Prince. Finally the Grand Duchess, grasping my hand, said: The Abel and the Cain are mine.' The price received for the Abel was fifteen hundred scudi, and that to be paid for the Cain was two thousand.

The first thought of Duprè was to pay his debt to the good Count del Benino. Accordingly he presented himself at the residence of his kind patron, and being received with the usual cheery good morning, thus made known his purpose: '*Signor Conte*, I have come to make payment of the generous loan with which you have enabled me to commence the model of the Cain; and, thank God, the work

has excited the interest of the Grand Duchess Maria.' Then he told the story of the interview, and closed his speech by saying, 'Your aid, so timely, has been to me a second life; without it, who knows what would have become of me? While I was speaking,' he continues, 'the habitual sunshine of the Count's face faded away; and when I got through he looked at me with a perplexed and grieved expression that I could not understand. "There is time enough for this," he said at last; "be in no hurry; a thousand things will be needed."' But when Giovanni persisted the Count looked still more troubled. Finally he exclaimed: 'Leave me, my Giovanni, this satisfaction;' and he tore up the receipt and threw the pieces into a waste-basket.

'I was mortified,' adds Duprè, 'and was almost offended; but I was overcome by the expression of kindness in the countenance of this good man. He took my hand and said: "Do not take it ill; leave me the consolation of having contributed even in the least degree to your success, and, as you say, to your future career; and I know how honourable that is destined to be. I have received from you ample payment; I have the sweet satisfaction of knowing that this trifling sum has opened to you a prosperous future."' Such a man well deserves a place in the history of art by the side of the Florentine citizens

and princes of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The Cain was completed and exhibited a year after the Abel. The two were repeatedly copied in marble and bronze; the first copies in bronze were ordered by the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and are now in the gallery of the Pitti Palace. To be properly appreciated they should be seen, as in that museum, placed side by side; though the Abel does not need the contrast so much as its companion piece. The Abel in his saintly and unresisting meekness is the type of all martyred victims of unrighteous violence. He is represented as a youth just on the verge of manhood, with a face expressive of the perfect innocence that had been incapable of an evil thought or of a suspicion of harm. But the features of Cain, while noble by nature, have become hardened and brutalised by the indulgence of fierce passion, and at this moment they are distorted by the agitation of guilt and fear, as he rushes away full of terror, and striving to shut out from his eyes the image of his murdered brother. The new statue, though the expression of an idea that awakens far different emotions, was regarded by the critics as even a greater masterpiece, and a more remarkable proof of genius than the Abel. Bartolini pronounced it a severer test of artistic power and skill. 'Duprè,'

he remarked, 'had felicitously overcome in this work difficulties a thousand times greater than in the Abel.' Andrea Maffei, in a notice of the statue, calls attention to the remarkable resemblance of Duprè's conception to that of Lord Byron in his tragedy of *Cain.* 'The feeling of terror and remorse,' says he, 'with which the first homicide rushes from the scene of his crime, has been sculptured by the artist with the same marvellous power that characterises the description of the poet.' Yet Duprè had no knowledge of the English poet; he had, like Lord Byron, fashioned in his mind a fierce image corresponding to his conception of the character, and he had embodied this image in his statue. With literature, even that of his own language, he had at this time very little acquaintance; though indeed he knew almost by heart the Bible and the *Divina Commedia*—the two books that have given their impress to nearly all of his best and most characteristic works.

These two statues placed Duprè at once in the front rank of artists. But more than this, they marked a new era in Italian sculpture: they were the symbol of a genuine *new birth*—not a 'renaissance' in the ordinary sense; not a *reproduction*, or rather an imitation of the types of art created by a former age—but a new birth fresh from nature herself; for the young sculptor might justly be called

in his art a child of nature. He had carefully studied, it is true, the fundamental principles, and he had acquired the use of the tools; but from early childhood he had sought in living nature alone the forms, the features, the movements, and expressions, that were to be embodied in his statues. From the influences that favoured the reproduction of classical types he had been shut off by the very circumstances of his life; excluded from the Academy and without opportunities for regular instruction, he had been left chiefly to his own impulses and intuitions.

A few years after Duprè had entered upon this new path, or rather, had found, 'without knowing it,' the old and true path, a movement in the same direction, but a conscious and studied movement, a kind of protest or revolt against the prescription of the schools, was instituted in the sister art of painting. This was the so-called pre-Raphaelite movement, begun in England by certain students of the Royal Academy who had become restive under the traditional usages of the school that insisted upon the examples of Raphael as the absolute canon of art.

In Duprè, however, the preference for nature was not a conscious revolt or protest against some false system of teaching; it was, as we have seen, original and spontaneous. And here lies the difference between him and the 'pre-Raphaelites;' for

their very name implied an effort to study and imitate certain methods and examples of painting anterior to Raphael; but Duprè at this time recognised no epochs, and was not conscious of imitating any master or style. 'Without knowing it,' he had fallen into the ways of Giotto, of Donatello, and even of Raphael himself; for these were all close students of nature, and Raphael not less, nay, even more than his predecessors; though seeing, perhaps, with different eyes, and perhaps, too, with larger view and deeper insight. Had Duprè been admitted to the Academy, and pursued for a time his studies there, without losing all independence, perhaps, like Hunt or Millais, he might have been led by the yearning for a better way to break loose from time-honoured methods; but then, like them, he would have been obliged to go through the hard process of casting off habits acquired, and of *making himself natural;* but he had no habits to unlearn, nothing conventional to correct and reform; he was under no necessity of striving to be natural, or of striving to be like those who were supposed to be natural. It is true, as we shall presently see, that for a brief period after the fame of his first works had drawn many admirers and cultivated critics around him, he was tempted to give up his first convictions, and to seek after something which he was made to believe

a more elegant style; but we shall find that this temporary lapse only served to make him in the end more loyal than ever to his first love.

Henceforth he was busily employed. There were orders for copies of the Abel and Cain, commissions for new historical or ideal statues, or for portrait busts. Gradually, too, pupils and assistants were gathered about him, and after a few years his work began to be remunerative; so that in the end he had the happiness of seeing his family beyond the reach of want. His third important statue, the Giotto, made by the order of the Grand Duchess of Tuscany, was completed immediately after the Cain, and was placed among the other statues of historical personages that adorn the Loggie of the Uffizi.

Up to this time he had worked with an unquestioning, we may say, with an unconscious faith in his own intuitions. But now he had become too well known to be left shut up alone; his studio at once became the resort of scholars and critics. The rude child of nature was a genius worth teaching; they must discourse to him of the philosophy of art. So the youth was in great danger of being led astray; and, of course, he was at the same time in danger of being perverted by flattery. Some of his visitors were men of learning and of high character, such as Giusti, Thouar, Montazio, Farina, and

Niccolini; but the diversity of their opinions only confused Giovanni, though the general drift was in favour of academic ideas, and tended to shake his faith in his own natural, simple ways. He knew nothing about 'the philosophy of art' or the 'canons of criticism;' but the flippant discourse of these cultivated gentlemen, full of sounding phrases, either addressed to him directly, or carried on in his presence as he plied his work, filled his mind with 'a certain awe;' and he found his former convictions yielding to the authority of profound learning. 'Now, therefore,' says he, 'my little brain began to be bewildered; I began to be suspicious of nature, and to fear her imperfections and her vulgarities.' One of these distinguished visitors, Giusti, had more discretion than the rest, and, as Duprè remarked in later years, might have given a right direction to his judgment; but Giusti became impatient of all this talk; he feared the effect of criticism, and still more that of adulation upon the inexperienced mind of Giovanni; and he ceased to make his appearance at the studio. He thought the young man, like many other young geniuses just coming into view, would be ruined by the cumbrous learning and fulsome praises of his new admirers; and in a letter to a friend he remarked, 'that Duprè was surrounded with a coterie of flatterers who were corrupting his mind; and un-

less he should once more shut himself up in his studio, as at the first, he would never more produce anything worthy to be spoken of.' Fortunately his strength of character and his faith in the principles with which he had set out, aided by favouring circumstances, brought him at last safely through these perils; and the fears of Giusti were happily disappointed; but the few statues that he produced under such untoward influences were less marked in character or more conventional than the preceding, and they were looked upon by the artist himself in after years with always increasing dissatisfaction, and even with disgust. He speaks of three of them in the *Ricordi* and in some of his letters with special irritation. These were the Piccolomini or Pius II., the Innocenza, and the Purità. The first was ordered by his native Siena, partly in memory of the Pope, who was born there, and partly to honour the young sculptor himself, whom the Sienese were proud to call their townsman. The Innocenza and the Purità were ideal figures of the size of life; the first came into the possession of the Grand Duke Constantine of Russia, and the other was purchased by Prince Metternich, and placed in the Museum of Vienna. Many years later Duprè, when attending the exposition in that city, came upon his old statue one day while walking through the museum, and wrote

to his wife, that 'among the modern statues there, he had found standing near some works of Canova his own *brutta Purità*.' 'Brutta' is his favourite word for a statue that lacks the intelligence, thought, and individuality that are essential to good art. Of these three works he writes in the *Ricordi:* 'The Pius II., the Innocence, and the Purità are the mirror, so to speak, in which are reflected those three years of artistic temptation, when my spirit without faith and full of doubt was well-nigh smothered.'

And while his mind during those 'years of temptation' was more or less mystified by the 'philosophy' with which his new acquaintances filled the atmosphere of his studio, he was receiving from all parts of the country eulogistic notices of the press. It is no wonder he well-nigh lost his head. 'Figure to yourself, my gentle reader,' he says, 'an inexperienced youth, ardent, enthusiastic, imaginative, just taking his first steps in art, suddenly hearing it said, and seeing it blazoned in print, that he has surpassed all others, that he has begun where they have ended, that he is born, perhaps, to take the prize from Grecian chisels, that he is Michelangelo descended from his pedestal, and ever so much more twaddle of this kind; at the same time imagine him placed side by side with the jealous Maevii, and beset with the studied and gilded flatteries of worldlings, the more

dangerous as they are more fascinating in their well-bred urbanity; and you will not wonder that he is turned aside for a time from the right way—God's mercy that he is not hopelessly perverted and ruined.' The Academy, too, extended to the artist its patronising hand by giving him a professorship—now that such an appointment was rather an honour to the institution than an honour and help to him; and this connection possibly produced in him a tendency, unconsciously to himself, to fall in more or less during these same years with that mannerism which was abhorrent to his better judgment.

Then, also, there was the pronounced approbation of the nobility and even of crowned heads; a thing that might have dazed even a more mature and less simple mind. One of these princely personages was no less than the Emperor Nicholas, at that time the acknowledged chief among the sovereigns of Europe. 'The Emperor of Russia,' he writes in the *Ricordi*, 'passing through Florence, wished to do me the honour of a visit. I had been expecting him the whole day; but in the afternoon, an hour before nightfall, I dressed myself to leave the studio, not thinking it possible that he would come at that late hour. I was just stepping out of the door, when lo, a confused din, a rumbling of carriages, tramping of horses! and I saw the Emperor stop before the

studio. It was nearly night. I took my resolution; before he got down, I hastened to the carriage-step and said: "*Maestà*, I am highly honoured by your visit to my studio; but I fear your majesty cannot satisfy your wish to see the Cain, because it is almost dark, and I should prefer to show the work in a more favourable light."

'The street was filled by this time with a crowd of eager spectators, and the studios of all my artist neighbours were open, while the inmates stood gazing from the doors; and meantime the members of the Emperor's suite thrust their heads from their carriage-windows to see why he did not get out, and with whom he was talking.

'"You are a thousand times right," he said; "it is impossible to see well now; I will return to-morrow afternoon."

'The next day he returned with all his suite; hardly alighted, he asked: "Vous parlez français?"

'"Très mal, majesté."

'"Ah, well, I speak a little Italian; we'll talk in both."

'The Emperor was accompanied by General Menzikoff, Count Orloff, and others whose names I do not remember. Hardly within the studio, he took off his cap—to the great wonder of his attendants, who hastened to do likewise; and he remained

uncovered throughout the interview. His figure was colossal, and its proportions faultless. He was at that time of mature age, but looked as if in the prime of life. In speaking and listening his manner was earnest, and he seemed interested to learn the ground of my artistic conceptions.'

Finally he fell into familiar conversation. 'He manifested a desire to know something about me besides the studies and works that he was inspecting; and I satisfied his curiosity. Nor is it any wonder that a potentate like him should take an interest in the particulars of a humble domestic life; for he was, as I afterwards learned, a good husband and a good father. Good husband, good father!—pity he cannot be called a good sovereign! The cruel wrongs he inflicted upon unhappy Poland, especially in proscribing her religious freedom, and even her language, a nation's first birthright, are a stain upon that patriarchal figure not easily washed out.'

With reference to the danger from flattery, especially with reference to that class of young artists who have a certain amount of talent, accompanied with a kind of stupid conceit which makes them feel superior to the necessity of learning anything from observation, Duprè describes a call with which his studio was honoured, of a widely different character from the foregoing.

'One day a certain gentleman came to see me, accompanied by a youth who had perhaps a quarter of a century on his shoulders; well shaped, with shoulders broad and a little bent, perhaps on account of this burden of twenty-five years; a black beard, brown complexion, restless eyes, looking all about without seeing anything. Without seeing anything, I say, because he bestowed the same amount of attention upon all objects in my studio indifferently, whether upon the head of the colossus of Monte Cavallo that stood on one of my shelves, or upon my cat, or upon the cast of my Abel, or upon my work-bench. He did not speak a word of Italian or of French; but the person who attended him, a very proper gentleman in every respect, spoke for him, or rather advertised him; for he, the youth, never opened his mouth,—except indeed that he kept it half-open all the time, even when looking at the cat; but he did not utter a syllable. The very polite companion therefore said: "I beg pardon, *signor professore*, for interrupting you a few moments; but I could do no less than favour you with a visit and the acquaintance of this young sculptor who is on his way to Rome—not indeed to perfect himself there, but to exercise his splendid attainment in art, so wonderfully illustrative of his genius. And as he has been born undoubtedly to make his name

heard in all the world, I desired to bring him to you and enable you to know him personally, so that you may have the opportunity to say hereafter: I have seen him and have spoken with him."

'I was petrified; I looked at the youth, and at the person who had made me this speech; then I replied: Pray, tell me, does this gentleman speak, or, at least, understand Italian?

'"Oh no, he speaks only English, and he is an American."

'God be thanked! I said to myself; this poor youth has understood none of this. But the polite gentleman, mistaking the drift of my inquiry, resumed: "Now I will tell him at once all that I have said to you?"

'And he began to spin out in English the narrative he had spun out to me; and that genius of a youth at every phrase said *yes* with his head, looking at me, at the bench, and at the cat.'

CHAPTER V.

He comes back to his first love and faith, or to nature, in his statue of Antonino—The brief revolution of '48, and the speedy restoration of the old government—Insomnia, interruption of his work, and health recovered by a visit to Naples and Rome—His faith in nature confirmed by certain statues of Canova in St. Peter's at Rome—Also by the sight of a living 'Venus of Milo' in the Trastevere—Periods of development or transition in the lives of artists and poets, as Raphael, Beethoven, Schiller.

THE three years which Giovanni Duprè calls his years of temptation, the period of trial that most men of genius or of enthusiasm pass through,—their experience in 'vanity fair' and the captivity of 'doubting castle,'—left him at last unscathed and free. He points out as the occasion that brought about his deliverance, the long and persistent, and finally successful effort to model his next historical statue in accordance with his first ideas; to recover his former ground of 'the beautiful in the natural;' neither accepting the *beau-ideal* of the Academy, nor the rude and minute realism of the other extreme. This was the statue of Saint Antonino, ordered by

the Grand Duchess Maria, and to be placed, like the Giotto, in the court of the Uffizi. 'This model,' he says, 'cost me unspeakable fatigue. The subject demanded character, attitude, and a style altogether natural, like the statue of Giotto; but, fearing the censure of the classicists, I made and unmade it a thousand ways, not only in the miniature model, but in that of the full size; all to no purpose. It is necessary to be decided—secure in the possession of a fixed idea.' The last of these miniature models in clay he always preserved as a pleasing reminder of an eminent musical composer. 'It is precious,' he says, 'for the bit of wood that supports it, which is no other than the pen of Giuseppe Verdi.' This illustrious musician and composer of opera was a frequent visitor at Duprè's studio when in Florence.

Our artist's work was suddenly interrupted by the revolution of '48. Like all Italians, young and old, he was stirred with the hope of national liberty; especially of deliverance from Austrian domination. 'There was no petition to the government,' he says, 'or representation to the Grand Duke in which I did not take part. The effect of these agitations was to withdraw me from my studies and from my labour in the studio; and, in a word, there was much enthusiasm for country, little work, small gain.'

Then he was abandoned by friends, some of whom blamed him for not proceeding with them to more violent extremes, others for going too far; though what he had done was not disapproved by the government. Finally, with the departure of the Grand Duke, who had been a generous patron of artists, Duprè suffered in common with the rest for the want of employment. But political reaction soon followed; Leopold returned to power, and the Florentine studios were no longer deserted. Had the change of government effected by the revolutionary movement been permanent, the arts of peace, though temporarily interrupted, would have speedily adjusted themselves to the new state of things, and would have soon recovered from their brief depression; but the old dynasty was restored in too short a time to allow such results to manifest themselves. Hence the ducal government stands before us in the amiable attitude of the vindicator of art against the ruinous influences of revolution.

The rank that Giovanni had now attained as a sculptor may be inferred from the fact that, on the death of Bartolini in 1850, he was employed to finish two of the works of that great master, which had not only been left incomplete, but scarcely yet shaped out in the clay. One of these was the Nymph of the Scorpion, for the Emperor of Russia;

the other was the Nymph of the Serpent, for the Marquis Ala-Ponzoni of Milan.

The fortunes of our sculptor had scarcely begun to smile again when he was overtaken with a malady that threatened to bring his artistic career, if not his life, to a premature end; it was the sudden prostration always to be apprehended from excess of mental effort and nervous strain: physical exhaustion, vertigo, fearful insomnia, deepening melancholy, dread of something worse than death. He must drop the chisel; absolute rest was prescribed. He must go away from Florence, attended by the *santa donna* and the children. The good Duke Leopold furnished the means, and Naples was the place chosen. Change of air, perfect rest, above all, change of scene, after several months of anxious suspense, brought back his strength and vigour, and with them revived hope and cheerfulness.

As it turned out, this dangerous passage of our artist's life was the best thing that could have happened to him; it removed him for a time from an atmosphere of æsthetic scholasticism, and it gave him opportunity to reflect upon his future course, and to reassure himself of his early convictions. Especially it gave him occasion on his way home to Florence, to make a brief sojourn in Rome, where he found almost by accident that encouragement of

a high example which the young artist so much needed to make him feel strong and bold in carrying out his own ideas and methods. For, believing that the true way of art was intermediate between extreme realism and extreme idealism, yet finding himself pursuing this way almost alone, he could not but feel occasional misgivings. And it is noteworthy that the authority which he there discovered, the example that served to confirm his faith and to make his steps hereafter fearless and firm, he found in the monumental works of Canova ; the sculptor whom of all others he had regarded as the chief of classical idealists ; a devotee of the *beau-ideal.* In St. Peter's at Rome there is a work of Canova's thought by some to be his best, and so much the more remarkable, because it is one of the very few sculptural monuments in that vast basilica that possess any artistic value. This is the well-known monument executed by Canova in 1792 in memory of Pope Clement XIII., whose family name was Rezzonico. While none can fail to be impressed with its imposing grandeur, and with the beauty of its lines, and the grace and finish of its parts, but few visitors bring away any vivid and enduring recollection of the various figures that adorn it, excepting only those of the famous 'lions of Canova' reposing on the pedestal. But in contemplating the

figure of the Pope, and in comparing it with the other statues of the monument Duprè discovered, what the ordinary visitor in his haste and weariness loses sight of, and what Duprè himself had not before observed, that this figure is characterised by a living individuality, while all the others are purely conventional; and so in this majestic form, at once beautiful and natural, coming from the chisel of the greatest of modern Italian sculptors, he found the exemplification and the complete justification of his own cardinal principle, 'the beautiful in the real.' 'The decision,' says he, in recalling this visit, 'that was destined to end all my uncertainties, came to me from an idealist, let me say rather, from an imitator of Grecian art; through one of his works, however, that was not inspired by idealism, but by truth. I was walking about one morning in St. Peter's, glancing indifferently from one object to another, when my eyes were arrested by the figure of Pope Rezzonico. How many times before had I passed by this grand monument with hardly a look! But now I noticed for the first time in its form and attitude, and in its expression of rapt devotion, that Canova had here manifested a feeling for the imitation of nature at once profound and free from minute servility. It filled me with surprise, and this so much the greater, as I had the opportunity of con-

trasting it with the other figures of the same monument, all patterned after the antique. This contrast conveyed to me a lesson that no critical treatise could have taught; and at last I seemed to hear a voice speaking to me from the monument itself in these words: "See how much effort, how much skill, Canova has bestowed upon these statues! and yet they do not speak to your heart like the supplicating figure of the Pope; what is this? reflect."' And Giovanni did reflect; and he found that this great master in most of his works had been carried away by his prevailing passion for the *beau-ideal;* but in this noble statue of Rezzonico, so different from the conventionalised figures decorating the lower part of the monument, he saw Canova's first love for genuine nature once more, and for a moment, asserting itself. It was 'a ray of that light under which the great artist, when still a youth, free in his inspiration, uncorrupted by theories, precepts, and praises, had conceived and executed the stupendous group of the Icarus.' In like manner he found the naturalness of Canova's earlier art reproduced in his Pius VI. The fresh confidence that the sight of these works inspired in him he recalled several years afterwards in a conversation with Augusto Conti, recorded by the latter in the second of the *Dialogues:* 'But when returning from Naples, where I had spent

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IN ST. PETER'S.

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some time in the recovery of my health, I passed through Rome, I saw in St. Peter's some works of Canova—not statues of finical elegance gotten up as it were with stays and corsets; but his Pius VI. kneeling at the tomb of the Apostles, and his Pope Rezzonico — forms in which genuine nature is resplendent with eternal ideality; and feeling now once more the inspiration of my Abel, I said: Here, even here is art! Nor since that moment have I ever departed from it.'

In his rambles about Rome, during this brief sojourn, looking at every object with an artist's eye, he thought he saw in the men and women of the ancient quarters of the city, especially in the Trastevere, a physical development much more after the type of the old Greek and Roman statues than the forms he was wont to see about him in the streets of Florence. He found also the living models employed by the Roman artists, for example, by his friends Minardi and Tenerani, more rotund, more robust, with better necks and shoulders than those of Florence. Then he began to think that perhaps the ancient sculptors had worked more closely to nature than he had been taught to believe. But the following incident from the *Ricordi* shows that his enthusiasm for his art led him to pursue these observations on the bodily traits of the des-

cendants of ancient Rome to a somewhat perilous extreme :

'Any one familiar with the population of Rome must have observed the remarkable difference between the common people, especially those of the Trastevere, and the more wealthy and cultivated classes. The latter are more slender in form, have a more delicate complexion, and not unfrequently chestnut-coloured hair. On the contrary, the former are characterised by dark eyes, hair, and skin, and by speech and manner rough and blunt. They come to blows with slight provocation, and blood runs more readily than tears. It is easy to see in these people the lineal descendants of the fiery legionaries who planted their eagles all over the world. The blood of the women is not different from that of the men ; and if the latter carry knives in their pockets, the women wear a stiletto in their hair—conspicuous with its silver handle sticking out from the masses of jet-black braids ; and this weapon they know how to wield on occasion to the peril of any poor wight who has even innocently incurred their wrath.'

While passing through this quarter one Sunday afternoon by himself, surveying the picturesque groups of young men and women, and noticing in the forms of the latter, especially in the well-shaped

necks and in the carriage of the head, something that reminded him of the old statuary, such as the Minervas, the Polyhymnias, and the rest, he was struck with wonder by the figure and movement of one of the young women in particular that seemed to him the living model of the Venus of Milo. 'There were three maidens,' he says, 'two of them short, one taller; the latter walking between the other two; she moved with a stately tread as she chatted with her companions. A huntsman who has caught sight of a hare, a creditor suddenly falling in with his debtor, a friend who beholds a friend he had supposed long dead, give but a feeble idea of my excitement at the sight of this magnificent young creature. My dear reader, I do not exaggerate in the least; I seemed to be looking at the Venus of Milo. The head, the neck, all that was visible in this girl appeared so much like that statue, that two drops of water are not more alike. I stood bewildered; I turned round to catch another view, and it would have been well for me if I had been contented with that; but once more was not enough; and the damsel, who had no idea by a thousand times what I was trying to find out, or that I was busy in correcting an æsthetic judgment of immense importance to art, suddenly stopped, and drawing the stiletto from her hair, made a step towards me,

exclaiming: "So, Mr. Cockney, you want to let out some of that bad blood, do you!" I took to my heels, not minding which way I ran, and reaching my quarters in safety, told the story to my wife. And she gently reproached me for not carrying on my studies with better choice of time and place.'

On the whole, reflecting upon this and many other living examples, not only in the Trastevere but in many places besides, and especially when he remembered that the nude form was everywhere exposed to the view of Grecian sculptors, our lover of nature became convinced that the great classical types of statuary are by no means so entirely ideal as we fancy them to be, and that the extreme conventionalism to which they have given occasion in modern art is not justly inferred; that, on the contrary, if we were to study nature as scrupulously as did the Greeks themselves, with attention to things essential and the omission of indifferent matters of detail, she would still be the best and safest guide to the best and highest in art.

Duprè reached his home with restored health, and with all the enthusiasm of his early days; he was strengthened by the examples he had discovered at Rome, and greatly encouraged by the words of his friend, the veteran Tenerani. Nor did he forget the classical figure of the warlike damsel of the

Trastevere. 'The discovery of that wonderful neck and head had cured me of the notion that the ancients had undertaken to reform nature according to some conceit of their own, wholly ideal and fanciful.' And the following interpretation which he now put upon the works of the past is worthy of the attention of all students of art: 'Before confining myself once more to the studio, I desired to survey and study again our monuments of art under the light of my new convictions. I made the circuit of the churches, the palaces, the public and private galleries, as if I had been a stranger to them; and for many reasons I might truly have called myself a stranger; for some of them I had never visited at all, and the few I had seen I had looked at superficially. But from the examination I now made, I came to perceive clearly that the artists of all periods had studied the artists before them, and had always, at the same time, imitated nature; always selecting from nature in the first place those traits that corresponded most nearly to the conception of the subject previously formed in the artist's thought. Henceforth my way was plain, lighted up by the rays of truth. The objects of art I looked at now presented themselves to me distinctly in their real significance. Never had the veil that hides the subtle and deeplying principles of the beautiful been so completely

withdrawn; I felt myself calm, contented, and strong.' And so as the result of groping about during these latter years in the dimness of art scholasticism, and as the end of the struggle between straightforward instinct and bewildering authority, Giovanni Duprè the man discovered logically what Giovanni the boy had known intuitively—that art is, after all, but the best in nature, and that the artist has only to follow her leading with simple docility. For in the kingdom of art it is also true, that except one become as a little child, he can by no means enter therein. To this truth, when each recurring cycle of conventional art or of false classicism has had its day, men must ever return.

In the course of this new survey of the galleries of Florence, before settling down to his work, a singular incident revealed to our artist in a startling manner what the public had understood to be the terrible nature of his recent malady.

'I was in the gallery of the Pitti Palace one day, and passing through the hall where the statues of Cain and Abel had been placed, I saw a young man copying the latter in crayon. He appeared to be a foreigner, and I wished to assure myself of this by speaking to him. I also felt pleased to see him at work on a statue of mine, and I thought this enjoyment would be enhanced by a little talk

with him; a feeling quite excusable, certainly, in a young artist. Therefore, stepping up to him, I said:

'"Are you pleased with that statue?"

'"*Oui, beaucoup;* and it is for that reason I am copying it."

'Seeing that he did not know me, I continued:

'"It seems to be a modern work; is it not?"

'"Certainly; so modern that the author is still living, though one might say he is dead."

'"What! I don't understand; how can one call him dead if he is still living?" And I could hardly keep down the wonder and emotion that these strange words excited in me.

'"Indeed," he replied, "the fact is very sad, and it is spoken of with a certain hesitation; but it seems the poor young artist, so young, and so brave——"

'"*Eh, bien!*" I exclaimed, interrupting his words.

'"It seems he is becoming insane."

'This was a fearful shock; I remained speechless. His words reminded me that in the course of my sickness I had often dreaded the loss of my reason, but I had not dreamed that others entertained any such suspicion.'

But this peril was happily over, and with it the mist of uncertainty that had so long befogged his pathway. In short, he was rid of the temptation to

become somebody else instead of Giovanni Duprè. His confidence was restored, his sight was clear, and he returned to his studio with all the ardour of his first years.

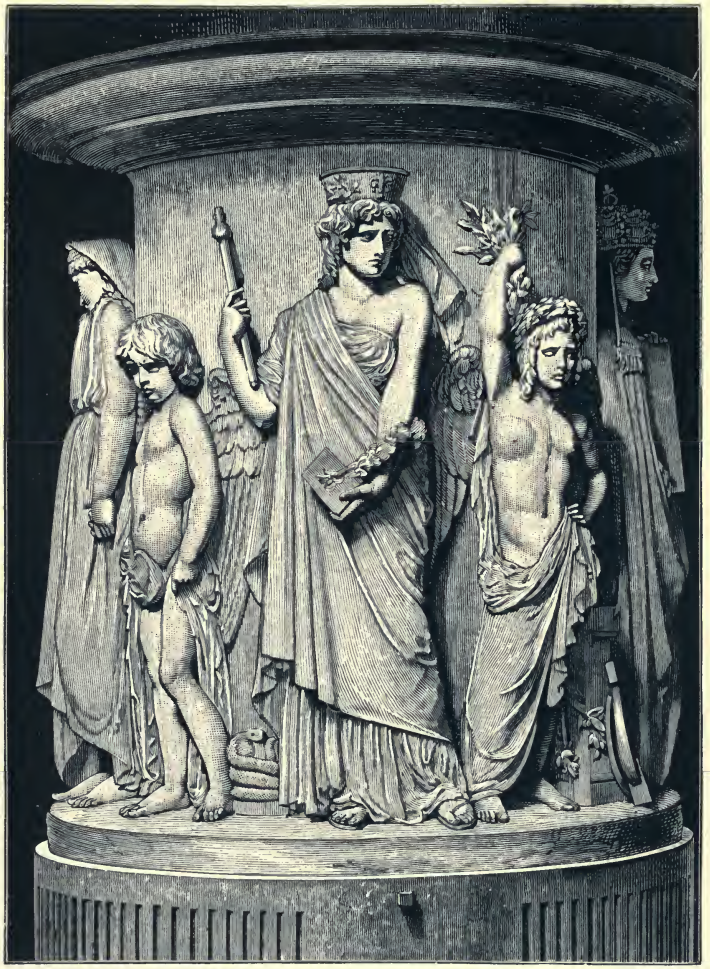
Those who have written the lives of men of genius have sometimes found in them certain stages of development that have led to the division of their biographies into characteristic periods. Marked examples are Raphael and Beethoven, in whose lives three such stages are very easily distinguishable; for they both started off at the first with ideas and characteristics derived more or less from the great masters of the day, but soon manifested the force of an independent and creative power, and finally mounted clear of all traditions, and discovered an individuality all their own. In this respect Raphael and Beethoven are remarkably similar; the one in his first works following the types of Perugino, the other those of Mozart; the one passing from his first paintings of the Umbrian school, through a second period or one of transition, to that of the Cartoons, the Sistine Madonna, and the Transfiguration; the other not less rapidly from the first Sonatas and the Septuor, to the Appassionata, and the Pastoral and Choral Symphonies. The life of Schiller, too, is marked by kindred changes, but he did not leave them to be traced out by his biog-

raphers alone; we find them clearly defined and accounted for by the poet himself. His first stage of authorship produced quite spontaneously the Robbers, the Fiesco, and the Don Carlos; but he then fell into philosophising over the æsthetic of Kant, and this led him to self-watching. Then he became hampered by too much criticism of his own work, and by the inner consciousness of his own mental processes; 'seeing himself create and form; watching the play of inspiration, while his fancy knew that she was not without witnesses of her own operations, and no longer moved with equal freedom.'[1] His only hope now was that he might ultimately 'advance so far that art should become a second nature, and that imagination then would regain her former freedom, and submit to none but voluntary limitations.'[2] And so in fact he worked out his way to that third and last period of the creation of the Wallenstein and the Maid of Orleans.

Something analogous to this we find in the life of Duprè, especially in his 'period of temptation;' but the conditions that produced these kindred results were widely different. A man of his education, or want of education, could not be disturbed, like Schiller, with Kantian speculations about the

[1] Carlyle's *Life of Schiller.* [2] *Ibid.*

æsthetic ground of the beautiful, nor shaken in his simple faith by any misgivings from within ; his temptation, as we have seen, came wholly from without ; it was the trembling before human authority.



THEBES. TUSCANY. PAPAL ROME.

THE TAZZA.

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CHAPTER VI.

Fruits of his restored faith—The Tazza—Design for the Wellington monument—A visit to London—Gets into trouble with the police at the Sydenham Palace—An art-study in the midst of an English banquet—Ristori, and other Italian friends in London—Paris ; at the villa of Rossini—Return to Florence—The Ferrari monument—The Sappho, and Conti's notice of it—Abdication of the Grand Duke Leopold in 1859, and Duprè's letters to him.

IN the *Ricordi* Duprè dwells upon comparatively few of the works that he now produced in rapid succession. The first of those that he has thought it worth while to mention, and one that well illustrates the restored life and vigour of the artist, is the so-called 'Tazza.' The commission for this work was given by the Grand Duke Leopold, and was the last received by Duprè from that unfortunate sovereign before his abdication in 1859. It took its designation from a colossal Egyptian tazza, or vase of porphyry, which it was designed to support as a pedestal. This antique Tazza was found among the ruins of Rome more than four centuries ago, and was afterwards presented by Pope Clement VII.

to Cosmo de' Medici. It thus became one of the treasures inherited by the ducal family of Tuscany, and was finally placed in the gallery of the Pitti Palace. The design of Duprè was a series of allegorical figures typifying the strange wanderings of the Tazza from the ancient home of the Pharaohs to the palace of the Medici at Florence. They are grouped around a cylindrical shaft resting upon a quadrangular plinth. 'The vase,' says Duprè, 'once adorned the garden of the Pharaohs; it had been carried by the conquering Romans with the other spoils of Egypt to the eternal city; then it had descended to the papal government, and now, at last, was one of the art treasures of Tuscany. To represent this history, I imagined four groups symbolising Thebes with the Genius of building, imperial Rome with the Genius of conquest, papal Rome with the Genius of religion, and Tuscany with the Genius of art.' The figure that personifies Thebes is conceived as sadly contemplating her grand monuments and past glories, suggested by the broken compass in the hands of the Genius. Imperial Rome crowned with oak leaves, and wearing a lion's skin, grasps the fasces, while her Genius bears a spear and a fire-brand; papal Rome wears the triple tiara and the sacerdotal robes, and the accompanying Genius holds a cross resting upon the

TUSCANY. PAPAL ROME. IMPERIAL ROME.

THE TAZZA.

To face page 79.

ground, and tramples upon a serpent; Tuscany bears a sceptre in one hand, and in the other the Palladium of the arts; and her Genius holds in his hand garlands of laurel as the rewards of merit, and rests upon a cippus containing the symbols of poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture, and music. The olive leaves are the sign of peace that fosters the arts.

This was the first of those allegorical designs, full of thought and beauty, that became characteristic of Duprè. One of these, completed about the same period in plaster, but unfortunately not preserved, was that of a proposed monument to the Duke of Wellington. The British government had thrown open the competition for the plan of this monument to foreign artists, and Duprè among other Italian sculptors was induced to enter the lists. Here, too, he indulged his taste for allegory by placing at the corners of the lower base four figures representing respectively Military and Political Science, Temperance, and Fortitude; on the higher base was the statue of Wellington attended by Victory and Peace. The commissioners finally gave the preference to the design of a native sculptor, Mr. A. G. Stephens, whose work now stands in St. Paul's Cathedral; yet Duprè was honoured with a first premium.

In order to exhibit the casts made for this work he visited London. He had never before seen the

world beyond the Alps, and, indeed, but little of Italy itself. Some of his experiences in London and Paris are given in his letters, and some are recalled in the *Ricordi.* The taste of the English in art he found less simple, severe, and pure than he had been led to expect; but he found much to admire and study in the galleries and museums, and he was filled with wonder at the munificent provision made for the public in the way of parks and places for popular recreation, and, of course, at the vastness of London itself. 'No one, even of those who were born there, has seen the whole of it; not even the oldest of the hack-drivers.' The Kew Gardens, which he describes in a letter to Amalia,—and he takes care to inform her that the name is pronounced 'Chiu,'—he thinks more extensive and beautiful than the Cascine of Florence. At Hampton Court he finds the visitors more interested in the sumptuous furniture of the royal chambers than in the masterpieces of painting. Of these the most important were Mantegna's Triumph of Cæsar and the Cartoons of Raphael (since then removed to the Kensington Museum). 'He who has not seen these Cartoons,' says Duprè, 'has no idea of the power of Raphael in that grand and bold style which was first introduced by Michelangelo.'

At the Sydenham Palace his constitutional im-

pulsiveness betrayed him for a moment into difficulty. Among the numerous copies of ancient and modern statues, illustrating the history of sculpture, he suddenly came upon his own first work. 'I knew,' says he, 'that this must be the copy of the Abel in plaster made for Papi, and kept in his possession until a casting had been taken from it in bronze; and when I saw it among these masterpieces as one of the examples of modern art, I felt a certain degree of complacency, which I hope is pardonable. But this satisfaction was not a little disturbed when I discovered a broken finger on the left hand incorrectly restored—not only clumsy but deformed; for the workman had made the last joint too short. Exasperated by the sight of that ugly joint, I gave it a rap with my cane, and it fell to the ground. Ill-luck would have it that one of the guards was in sight, and he immediately took me into custody.' The culprit artist was taken forthwith to the commissioner of the palace, before whom he endeavoured to defend himself in French, which the officer understood imperfectly and spoke still worse. Duprè urged that the finger had been awkwardly mended, that it was in fact a botch, and that it ought to be broken off; finally, he was ready to pay for another. All would not do; he was on the point of being put into the guard-house.

'Then,' he continues, 'I was forced to make myself known. At first he was not ready to accept my declaration; his look seemed to say: "That's a strange story—cannot be—I don't believe it." Thereupon he replied, "The fact that you are the author, even granting you to be so, gave you no right to do what you have done; but we will see at once whether it is true. If you are the maker of the statue, replace the finger." This was enough; I was inwardly amused with the judgment of this new Solomon, as simple as just. Finding a young plaster-worker in the palace, and giving him directions, while doing a little of the work myself, I made good the damage. So ended this adventure, that reminded me of the tavern proverb, He must pay that breaks the crockery.'

Of course, many of the ways of the English seemed strange to our untravelled sculptor; among other things, the toasts and after-dinner speeches at public banquets. He attended one of these, over which Lord Derby presided, and understanding hardly a word of English, he could only guess by the eye the meaning of what he saw and heard—except that his young friend William, or 'Mino' Spence, gave him now and then an explanation. As everywhere his art was with him, so even here he was making a study of the noble figure and

bearing of an officer of the East Indian army who had risen to a toast. This gentleman, a colonel in the service, had noticed with alarm the signs of a speedy revolt in India, and was persuaded that it could only be averted by an immediate change in the policy of the government; and he seized this opportunity of an after-dinner speech to impress his fears upon the ministry, and to give timely warning. But while reprehending the errors of the colonial administration, he made mention several times of her Majesty the Queen—a gross violation of the English sense of propriety, that elicited overwhelming cries of disapprobation. 'With us,' said Mino Spence, in explaining the scene to the wondering artist, 'whatever the question may be, no one ever names the Queen. Neither the grave import of the officer's statements, nor his denunciation, so damaging to the government, would in the least have touched our sensitive fibre, had he not been wanting so much in tact and prudence as to make allusions to her Majesty.' And so, because her Majesty was mentioned, though with entire respect and reverence, the warning of the stranger was drowned amidst indignant clamours. 'But,' says Duprè, 'in five short months from the day when this poor Indian colonel tried to make known the truth, demonstrating the existing evils and their consequences, and suggesting the remedy,

the telegraph announced the revolt (of '57), the peril of the English, and the cry for help.'

That, however, which dwelt in the mind of the artist was the striking figure of the man, and his unruffled calmness in the midst of this storm of indignation. 'That form left in me a feeling of profound admiration; and even to this day I see that grand figure standing there in all its masculine tranquillity.' And if any one should object that the description of such incidents is out of place in the reminiscences of a sculptor, he has an answer: 'The essential thing that we require and that we regard as beautiful and precious in a work of art, is the just expression of the affections and emotions in the different characters we are to represent. This propriety of expression is sought for in vain in our hired models. The model serves for all that is external—attitude, proportions, physical traits, beauty of form—but it cannot give us the turn of the head, the glance of the eye, the curl of the lip, the dilating of the nostrils, and the thousand other signs of mental conflict. For such involuntary manifestations of feeling the artist must be on the watch amidst the scenes of real life.'

He was never quite happy away from Florence; but in London his home-sickness, his longing, as he says in his letters, 'to return to his beautiful

Florence, his family, his studio,' was alleviated by the presence there of many Italian friends whom he had become familiar with at home. Besides the Tuscan minister at London, Count Piero Guicciardini, and other persons of rank, there were many Italian artists of note, including the sculptors Fedi, Monti, and Marrochetti; and there were Ristori and Piccolomini among the brilliant representatives of the stage, the former with her Mary Stuart awakening a new and almost unprecedented enthusiasm for the tragic drama, and the latter fascinating the London public with her Traviata; 'in short, a veritable colony of Italians.'

At Paris also, on the way home, he found many Italian friends. Chief among these was the veteran composer Rossini, who had in former years been much in Florence, and had there become attached to the young sculptor; indeed Rossini had been the first to announce to Duprè the success of his Abel at the Paris exposition of 1855. Rossini had long ago given up the labour of composing, and was passing a delightful old age at his home in the Parisian suburb of Passy, in the midst of an admiring circle of artists and literary friends; free from all ambition, and taking warmly by the hand every youthful genius whom he found struggling for recognition. Verdi's *Sicilian Vespers* had been recently

presented on the Parisian stage, and of course had not escaped rough handling on the part of musical critics. Duprè was with Rossini one day at dinner, and, as usual, many callers dropped in from time to time in the evening; among them two young acquaintances of the old *maestro* whom Duprè took to be musicians. Passing by Madame Olimpia with a brief salutation, they at once asked the host if he had read the criticism on Verdi's last opera in the *Revue des Deux Mondes;* and they quoted some passages of the savage article, with the notion often entertained by people of small calibre, that strictures on a competitor for fame would be agreeable to one who had already won his laurels. 'But,' says Duprè, 'Rossini interrupted them with these words: "That is no way to write a criticism on Verdi; that is not the right kind of ink for him; I can only laugh at it. For my part I should like to find any composer who could write as well; but as none has yet put in an appearance, we must be satisfied with the music of Verdi, and we must applaud him (and the old man made a show of clapping his hands) when he does well, and counsel him as a brother where we think he could do better." In saying this he manifested no little irritation, evidently provoked that they should have tried to lead him into some remark in the hostile spirit

THE ANGEL OF THE RESURRECTION.

From the Ferrari Monument. In San Lorenzo.

To face page 87.

of the review. Thereupon he turned the conversation.'

Duprè became associated with Rossini a few years later as a member of the French Institute, and, on the death of the great composer in 1868, was chosen to succeed him as corresponding member—the highest honour bestowed upon foreigners by the Institute of France.

The first work undertaken by our artist after his return to Florence was that which is known as the Ferrari Monument, made in honour of Bertha, wife of Count Ferrari Corbelli, and placed in the Church of San Lorenzo. It consists of a base and an urn or sarcophagus, above which are the figures of Modesty and Charity, characteristic virtues of the deceased Countess, and between them the Angel of the Resurrection bearing her spirit to heaven.

While employed on this monument he also modelled the statue of Sappho, which he subsequently copied in marble and exhibited at the Florentine Academy in 1863 ; a work which Augusto Conti has made the subject of one of the articles in his volume entitled *Things of Art and History.* The description and interpretation given in this article are characterised by the author's wonted acuteness and precision. 'Works of art,' he says, 'first lead us to their inner idea, and in turn the

idea makes us perceive the manner in which it has generated out of itself the external form. The statue of Duprè reveals to us at the first glance a young woman overwhelmed with an immense sorrow; calm, nevertheless, and self-possessed in the very security of despair. This you see in her posture as she sits in total abandonment, with her head inclined, with a fixed gaze, and with an expression on the brow and in the lips and eyes of unutterable sadness. The lineaments are those that we habitually associate with the Grecian face, especially the outline of the nose and forehead—not absolutely straight (for this is a kind of mannerism that is false to nature), but nearly straight. The fashion of the tunic and mantle, thrown round the middle of the figure, also indicates that she is a Greek. By her side rests a lyre with broken strings, a sign that the instrument is forgotten in the anguish that possesses her soul. She is therefore a Greek poetess. Where, now, is she seated? On a cliff by the seashore; and her eyes look out upon the waves. Then, the garments thrown off from the shoulders, as if to leave the movements of the body free from all restraint, lead us to divine that she is about to spring from the rock. No doubt it is Sappho. So clear is the indication of the subject that it cannot be mistaken for any other; every one,

SAPPHO IN DESPAIR. *To face page* 88.

even of moderate intelligence, can understand what is represented—prime excellence in a work of art.' The artist's idea, therefore, was the love, the despair, and the suicide of Sappho. And how did he proceed from this idea to his particular conception and outward expression of it? He must select a moment at once well known by tradition and propitious to his art. This could not be, as it might have been, perhaps, in painting, the fatal leap itself—an action incompatible with the conditions of statuary—but it must be, to resume the words of Conti, 'the moment just prior to that action; when Sappho, firmly resolved and ready for death, yet lingers an instant on the threshold of life, to give one thought of tender anguish to the dear and terrible image that at once holds her to the world and impels her to leave it.' The negligence, self-forgetfulness, and utter abandonment expressed in the whole figure, in every member and in every detail, are in perfect keeping with this motive. It is the unity characteristic of true art. The execution and handling are not less admirable than the artistic form, and the work in all its parts bears the impress of a hand free from all the trammels of prescriptive usage. 'The breast, the torso, the shoulders, arms, hands, and feet, and finally the face, exhibit no trace of mannerism or, as we now say, conventionalism; they show us that the artist is

a disciple of beautiful nature ; in Dante's words, the master turned pupil (*discente il maestro*).'

After Duprè had modelled the Sappho, and long before he had made the marble copy which elicited the above critical notice of Conti, occurred the great national crisis that ended in the abdication of the Grand Duke Leopold II. This event could not be otherwise than unfortunate, for a moment, at least, to the Florentine artists who had been so generously patronised by the ducal government, and particularly to Duprè, however much he may have rejoiced in the deliverance of his country from Austrian rule, and in the near prospect of a union of the states of Italy. That the immediate disadvantage to him in his personal interests was very great, can be inferred from the account he gives us of the commissions that he had just then received from the Grand Duke. One of these was to design and superintend the decoration of a chapel of the Madonna in Leghorn, and to execute himself the sculptural work that he might introduce into the general plan, while he was to choose and direct all the artists he might need to carry out the architectural and pictorial parts of his design. Besides this, the Duke had ordered from him monuments to his father Ferdinand III., his brother, his sister, and several deceased children. These were to be placed in one of the chapels of

San Lorenzo. The designs prepared by our artist for all these works, and also for the decoration of the chapel in which the family monuments were to be erected, had already been accepted by Leopold, and their execution ordered, when, says Duprè, 'the 27th of April 1859, foreseen by many, unexpected by few, came upon us, and brought all these plans to nothing.' The aged Leopold on his abdication retired to Austria, where he died in 1870.

Ingratitude is impossible in a nature like Duprè's; in fact, that sensibility which is an essential element of the character of a truly great artist can hardly fail to show itself in all the relations of life—especially to make him keenly alive to favours received, and true to those who have helped him in dark hours. Such a man cannot be a mere courtier of sunshiny days, 'fleeing with the faithless crowd when fortune deserts the house;' such, at any rate, was not Duprè to the Grand Duke Leopold. While he accepted like all other patriotic Italians the great political change that made Italy a united kingdom, he did not forget his personal obligation to the dethroned Sovereign, nor lose any opportunity of avowing his admiration and love for a Prince who had been devoted to the welfare of his subjects, liberal in the patronage of art, and full of kindness for Duprè in his early trials. There are two letters

of our artist written to Leopold when residing in Vienna, soon after his abdication, from which I give the following passages expressing his undying attachment both to the Grand Duke and to his Duchess, Maria: 'At the end of the honoured letter of your Highness you say that you would be happy if it were allowed you to employ my hand in some work that would do honour to our country. This wish of yours has affected me with lively emotion, and has at once reminded me of the many labours with which I have been commissioned by your Highness—the Abel, the Cain, the pedestal of the Tazza, that of the Tavola,[1] and others. But my memory does not stop there; I recall the deplorable state of health to which I was reduced in '53—a condition which without the succour given by your Highness would undoubtedly have led to my death—even by the confession of the physicians questioned by me after my recovery. The memory of that time and of that peril makes me look upon your help as help from the Lord, who had ordained that I should still live; and all the other works that I have made since that recovery, even these can be said to have been made by virtue of your kindness. I desire your Highness to believe that this thought always abides in me,

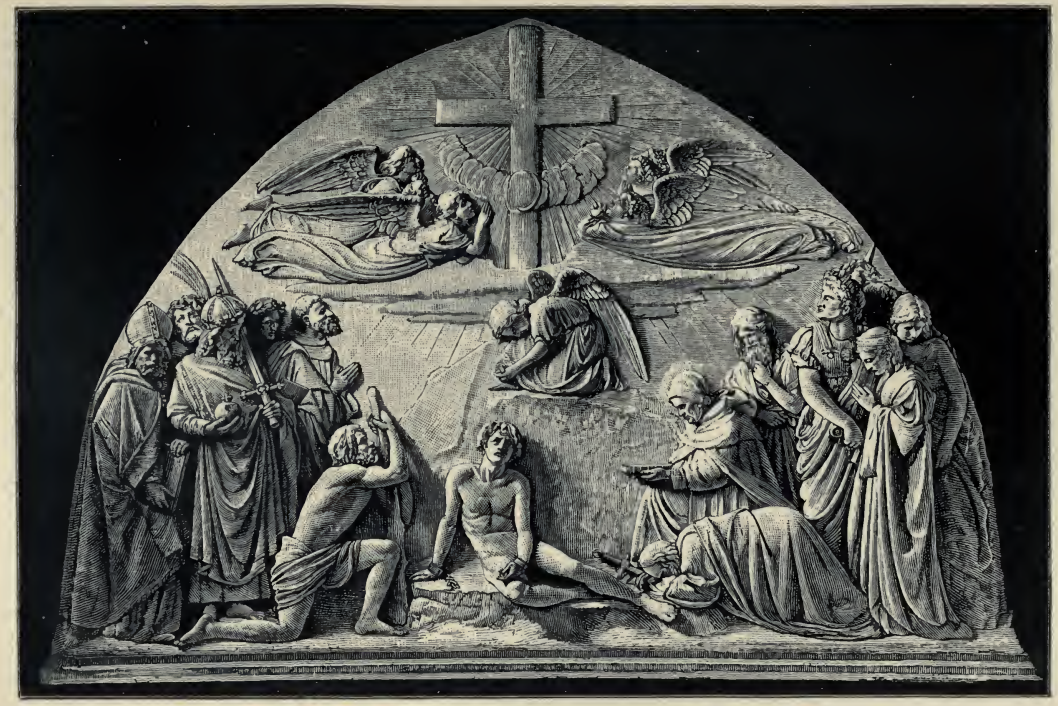
[1] A table of Florentine mosaic, called the 'Table of the Muses,' for which Duprè had made a pedestal ornamented with figures in bronze.

whatever work I am ending, whatever new work I am beginning; because I am conscious that your generous aid, rendered at that moment, is always the cause, humanly speaking, of every work of mine!' And of Leopold's wife, who had come to his help earlier than Leopold himself, he writes: 'I beg to extend my respectful greeting to the Grand Duchess. It was she who ordered from me the Giotto at a moment when I was in great difficulty—the moment of the famous criticism upon my Abel, which aimed to place the work of my hand on a level with that of a common moulder. It was a blow ruthlessly struck at my reputation, though the truth broke its force, or rather turned it back on my assailants. But yet at that time there were not wanting some who gave credit to the story. And just then the Grand Duchess had the courage to order from me the Giotto.'

CHAPTER VII.

Florence the capital of Italy—Architectural and sculptural adornment of the old churches—Aided by English residents—Duprè's bas-relief of the Triumph of the Cross made for Santa Croce by order of Sir Francis Sloane—The Pietà and the Christ Risen—Shattered health, and a second visit to Naples and Rome—The beautiful form of a Pompeian girl left moulded in the hardened slime of Vesuvius—Art lesson from this—Recovery of health—At Paris with his daughter Amalia in 1867—Grand medal of honour—Reception of Napoleon III. at the Tuileries—Meets a would-be patroness—Once more at Rossini's villa.

THE interruption to the arts of peace occasioned by the events of ''59' was after all but momentary, and perhaps no city had so little cause for complaint as Florence; for it became for several years the capital of the new kingdom of Italy, and its local interests received a powerful impulse from the relations it thus assumed to the court, the parliament, and the country at large. Art, of course, was not suffered to languish, nor could Duprè, now the foremost of Florentine sculptors, be left unoccupied. It happened, too, that an enterprise was just then on foot that called for the exercise of his art in a sphere



THE TRIUMPH OF THE CROSS.—On the Façade of Santa Croce.

which he preferred to all others. The restoration of the architectural monuments of Italy, so long exposed to the injuries of time and violence, and the completion of those that have stood for centuries unfinished, have of late years deeply interested not only the Italian municipalities, but also the many English residents of the country. One enterprise of this kind in Florence was the building of the façade of Santa Croce, or Church of the Holy Cross, completed according to the plans of the architect Niccola Matas in 1863; and another, that of the Cathedral or Duomo, the Church of Santa Maria del Fiore, begun in 1867 by the late Emilio de Fabris, and still in progress. Both of these grand edifices, as well as the Church of San Lorenzo, had stood for centuries with their principal fronts 'in the rough,' unfinished, unsightly, and in painful contrast to the beauty of their interiors.

The new fronts were so designed as to call for a great number of sculptural works either in the form of bas-reliefs or statues, and thus afforded to the sculptors of Italy an opportunity of associating their art and their names with two of the most venerable architectural monuments of Europe. In the sculptural designs for both buildings the chief place was given to Duprè. To him were assigned the colossal figures of the Virgin, to be placed in the

tabernacles above the central portals of the two churches, and also several of the historical statues for the niches in the façade of the Cathedral. The Madonna for the Cathedral, and the other statues he was expected to make for that building, he did not live to execute; but in 1860, soon after the abdication of Leopold, he commenced the work for Santa Croce. The figure of the Virgin for the façade he modelled as the *Madonna addolorata*, the weeping mother of Christ. When he had finished the model, and before he had put his hands to the marble, he was solicited by an English gentleman, Sir Francis Sloane, a member of the building commission, and the most generous contributor to its funds, to furnish also the works in bas-relief embraced in the design of the same façade. There were to be three of these, one over each of the portals. Duprè was unwilling to undertake the whole series, but he consented to make the central and principal one, and to superintend the execution of the other two, if they should be assigned to his former pupils Sarrocchi and Zocchi; a proposition which Sir Francis readily accepted. The subjects of the three were selected with reference to the name of the church; that of Sarrocchi was the Discovery of the Cross, by Saint Helena; that of Zocchi, Constantine's Vision of the Cross; and that of Duprè, The Triumph of the Cross.

On such a theme our artist was at home; his inbred religious feeling and his reverent admiration for those whom he regarded as the heroes of Christianity, a sentiment fostered in his mind by the habitual reading of Dante, could find here full and free expression. He says: 'The Triumph of the Cross seemed to me a subject that must be represented in sculpture by historical and typical personages that had been won and subdued by its divine love.' Starting off with this idea, he has found expression for it in an assemblage of figures, historical and allegorical, which in arrangement, form, and attitude, in harmony of lines, in unity of thought, in nobility of character, in beauty and sublimity of general effect, has never been surpassed in modern art. He has left in the *Ricordi* his own interpretation of the design; substantially the same which he gave in the course of familiar conversations to Augusto Conti, and which the latter has introduced into his first *Dialogue* as the basis of his profound remarks on the underlying principles of art. Here it will only be necessary to give a brief summary of the artist's description.

The cross appears in the upper part of the field, emitting rays of light, and surrounded with adoring angels; the kneeling angel, on the mountain-top below the cloud, is the symbol of intercessory prayer,

or of petitions ascending to God, and of His grace communicated to men. On the right is a group made up of the figures of St. Paul, prostrate under the light of the cross; St. Thomas Aquinas offering his book of the Summa; Heraclius, Emperor of the eastern empire, whom tradition represents to have recovered the cross from the Persians; Constantine, drawing his sword, ready to fight under the new banner; lastly, the Countess Matilda and, at the extreme right, Mary Magdalene. The group on the left consists of five figures: St. Augustine, wearing the episcopal mitre; then Charlemagne, bearing the globe and the sword; next, the poet Dante; at the end St. Francis of Assisi; and, in the rear, the figure of a Christian martyr, over whose head appears a palm as the token of martyrdom. These two principal groups are brought into artistic connection by two exceedingly interesting figures, the one on the left, a barbarian just coming under the influence of the cross, and the one in the centre, a slave set free; the two representing respectively the deliverance of the world from barbarism and from slavery under the benign and sure, though gradual, working of Christianity. Such are the characters that in the mind of Duprè best represented the glory of the cross. What forms, what expression, what purity, what individuality, diversity, unity!

We discover at once in this grand bas-relief the same fervour of devotion that inspired the works of Masaccio and Fra Angelico, combined with the breadth of treatment and the depth of meaning that characterise the art of the Raphaelitic age. To be properly appreciated, indeed, it must be looked at, just like the works of those earlier centuries, from the religious standpoint of the artist, born and bred not only in the bosom of the papal church, but in Italy, the centre and home of the papacy. Hence he naturally singles out as the historical representatives of the progress and development of Christian civilisation, chiefly those personages who have been conspicuous not merely in the Christian world at large, but especially in their relation to the history of Rome and of Italy.

The Triumph of the Cross was soon followed by two works of a kindred nature, reflecting still more perfectly, if possible, the devotional spirit of the earlier periods of the renaissance. These were the Pietà and the Risen Christ; the first made for a mortuary chapel in Siena, the other for a similar chapel in Buti. Duprè was unwilling for the present to take any new commissions; and he had good reason. Most of the works he had undertaken during the last five years were still on his hands, and in different stages of progress, from the crayon

sketch to the final copy in marble; his thoughts were running upon them by night as well as by day, and at last, in the winter of 1863, he found himself prostrated by the same nervous malady that had overtaken him ten years before. Again he resorted with his family to Naples, and with the same happy result. Withdrawal from the excitement of the studio, the balmy atmosphere, and the cheerful life of Naples, solicitous attentions of his artist friends, and the tender offices of his own family, soon lifted him out of this state of depression. Meantime one of the figures upon which he had been long engaged, and one only, haunted him even here. This was the mourning mother of Christ in the group of the Pietà, the head of which he had left in the studio just formed in clay. 'This alone of all,' he says, 'came up before me as in a vision;' and he writes in reply to the Marquis Ruspoli, who had visited the studio in Duprè's absence: 'You say that the head of the Madonna moved you to tears, and I am not surprised; I myself have wept in making it, and it is impossible that my emotion should not be transferred to a heart like yours. I confess to you, this work has cost me much and intense feeling; so that scarcely a day passes that I do not see it in my mind. The Madonna I saw before making it, just as I have made it.'

He now once more visited Pompeii, but this time with Fiorelli, the eminent scholar and engineer, who had lately taken charge of the excavations, and was conducting the work with great energy, and with very interesting results. And, singularly enough, our artist found here, as he thought, new ground for his belief in *Grecian naturalism;* and it was in the beautiful form of one of the casts that Fiorelli had obtained by running plaster in the moulds left by skeletons in the hardened mixture of volcanic ashes and mud. Four of these had been made from a group of two men and two women recently found. In a letter to Venturi, after speaking of the rest, Duprè says, 'The younger of the women has a form so beautiful, and feet so small and graceful, that we can no longer be permitted to say that Greek statues were absolutely ideal. No—again and again, no—they selected; and they knew how to portray nature with breadth and simplicity.' Here was confirmation of the faith inspired ten years before by that living and lively example in the Trastevere at Rome; but here at Pompeii our sculptor could stand before the silent form of this poor maiden of eighteen hundred years ago, and study it at his leisure with no fear of her resentment or of any keen stiletto.

After a rest of about two months he returned to Florence, stopping at Rome a few days on the way.

Of course he went to the Vatican; but thoughtful inspection of the masterpieces there was a little too 'trying' for an invalid, or rather, a convalescent; therefore he determined to look at them this time, as he says, 'English fashion;' meaning, no doubt, the manner of sight-seeing practised by the average English and American tourist, with a guide-book in hand, checking each capital article as fast as it is 'done,' as if verifying the items of a bill of sale. Accordingly Giovanni walked through the halls in the tourist manner, and found his brain entirely untasked. In a letter from Rome he says to Venturi: 'I am better, I repeat it, but I find that any close attention to things of art affects me unpleasantly. The other day I undertook to spend some time in the halls of the Vatican and in the Sistine Chapel, and those masterpieces occasioned me severe pain in the head, trembling, and nervous agitation. Thereupon I made up my mind to look at these wonders of art *all' Inglese*, rather than in my own way. I enjoy them less, to be sure, but I escape the pain; that is all.'

His next letter is dated from the studio in Florence, where, he says, he has resumed his work with the feeling almost of a new man, as he looks upon that statue which he had abandoned in such a state of deep despondency. 'That Madonna's head

which, when I left it, seemed to be grieving also for me, appeared to me now to express so well the mourning Madonna that I made no alteration in it; it remained, and is such as I left it, when I was tortured with that fearful, insupportable confusion and rumbling that crazed my head. My cheeks were wet with tears of love and gratitude before that head of clay, and full of confidence I entered again upon my labours. My thoughts went back to the days of my suffering, when the fear of losing my reason filled me with dread, and when I did not care to look at my children and my dear wife; and these memories increased the joy I felt in the consciousness of my present condition, and I thanked the Lord from the depth of my heart.'

The Tazza, the Triumph of the Cross, the Pietà, and the Risen Christ were the works chosen by Duprè to represent his studio at the French exposition of 1867. On this occasion he made a second visit to Paris, taking with him his daughter Amalia, who also had become favourably known through her graceful works in sculpture. This was the first of the great world expositions that Duprè had visited; six years later he was present also at the similar exposition of Vienna. In both he served as one of the jury on sculpture, and in the latter as president of the jury. His opinion of the worth of such

gigantic displays of art and industry was somewhat in advance of public sentiment. The vast accumulation of objects of every conceivable kind, from all countries, forcing upon our attention 'all that human knowledge and ingenuity have invented from Adam down,' the ever-moving stream of the many-tongued multitude, bewilder the sight and the brain; 'the senses are overwhelmed; our eyes lose all power of discernment, and the mind is afloat in a boundless sea. Confusion and weariness unfit us for intelligent observation; we cease to be even amused.' Duprè very justly thinks that such surroundings are especially unfavourable to the study and the proper estimate of works of art. 'At first we look at them one by one;' but soon discouraged, 'we take them two by two,' and so on. 'World expositions are great fairs, great markets; for the advancement of the fine arts they serve no good purpose whatever; they vitiate art, vitiate the public taste.'

And this judgment was not at all the outcome of disappointed hopes, or of wounded pride. An unsuccessful exhibitor might very naturally have said something like this in the bitterness of defeat; but Duprè received at the Paris exposition of 1867 the highest of all the honours bestowed upon the Italian sculptors. The number of pieces of statuary exhibited was upwards of six hundred, chiefly from

France, Bavaria, Prussia, Austria, and Italy. The premiums were only thirty-six, and of these, six went to Italy ; to Duprè was awarded the grand medal of honour. He had believed that the eminent sculptor Vela, of Milan, would win this distinction, and said in one of his letters to his family, 'It seems certain that one of the grand medals will be given to my friend Vela, and he certainly deserves it ; the other three, perhaps, will be awarded to France and Prussia.' But there was a potent influence at work in favour of Duprè, that neither he nor his competitors had reckoned upon. His children at home were praying to the Virgin in behalf of *babbo.* Of this he was assured by his daughter Beppina in one of her letters, and *babbo* in his answer says, '*Mia cara Beppina*, I am just now from the sitting of the jury, and hasten at once to answer your sweet letter. It is true that the Napoleon I. of Vela is a beautiful statue ; there is always a crowd around it, and consequently everybody said it would get the highest award, and I have given him my vote ; but the public, and I, and you, my dear Beppina, were wrong ; for the first premium has come to me—to me, *tuo padre!* Vela received two votes besides mine. You see, *mia cara figlia*, how the Holy Virgin has heard your prayer.'

While attending a reception of Napoleon III., given at the Tuileries in honour of the foreign

visitors at the exposition, our artist took part in a scene that proved him a very ill-trained courtier. To make his reader understand the incident, he is obliged to premise the following occurrence of an earlier date: The Princess Matilda, sister of Jerome Bonaparte, had often visited the studio of the young sculptor in the days of his poverty, and had taken much of his time in sitting for a portrait statue; but just before her divorce from Prince Demidoff, she had hurried away from Florence, promising Duprè either to return and resume the sittings, or to compensate him for the labour already performed. The artist, however, had heard nothing further from the lady, though he had sent to her as a present and as a delicate reminder, some time after her departure for Paris, a statuette copy of one of his works. But this courtesy on his part had elicited no word of acknowledgment; and for twelve years she had ignored his existence. But now the sculptor had become conspicuous enough to be recognised even by princely eyes. 'I was presented by our Minister Nigra to the Emperor, who had upon his arm the Princess Matilda. As soon as she caught sight of me she said, "Ah, we have known each other for a long time!" Now I, calling to mind her shabby treatment of me, made a show of not knowing anything at all about her; and the Emperor with his

sleepy eyes gazed upon me with an expression that seemed to mean either that he thought me wonderfully forgetful or a wonderful simpleton. The Princess passed on without giving me another look.'

Once more he enjoyed for a few days the society of Rossini and his friends. The old composer was still overflowing with melody, and even now he occasionally entertained his visitors with something new. 'He gave musical evenings,' Duprè writes, 'and sometimes sat at the piano himself and accompanied his unpublished romances. I recall two of singular beauty, one of them touchingly sad in the subject and words as well as the notes: it was a father robbed of his child, the lament, full of pathos and tenderness, ending every strophe: "Ah, who, who, hath found my child?" The words, I was told, were from the Roman poet Castellani. The other was a brilliant aria, bold and full of fire, a burst of passionate love, with a Tyrolese refrain; and it was sung by that most imaginative genius Gustave Doré. Such,' he continues, 'were the elegant reunions, fruitful, instructive, full of life and sweetness, from which one returned with the mind more elevated and the heart more glowing; but, oh!——' In a few short months that charming circle was dissolved by the death of the illustrious *maestro;* and how few of those who were wont to assemble there are still

surviving! Rossini's villa, too, at Passy stands now a ghastly ruin, shattered by the cannon of the besiegers and the besieged of 1870.

This was the painful thought, no doubt, that cut short the sentence.

CHAPTER VIII.

Engages to make a portrait bust before knowing the sitter—Honour from his native Siena—At the exposition of Vienna in 1873 made president of the jury on sculpture—German music—Returning, completes the monument of Count Cavour—Relations to Pius IX. —Death of his daughter Luisina—And that of his wife, Maria.

AFTER an absence of only a few weeks at the exposition, the artist was again in his studio, where, however, the work was never intermitted even when the master was abroad. Monumental, ideal, or portrait statuary was always in progress under the hands of his assistants. Like other sculptors he was often employed in making portrait busts or statues while executing works of a higher order. Some of these he mentions in the *Ricordi,* and one in particular was made under such peculiar circumstances that he gives a full account of it. In fact it was the bust of a personage hated by all patriotic Italians, not excepting Duprè himself —which most likely he would not have undertaken, unless he had found himself involved in a

promise to do it before he had learned the name of the subject.

'One day a gentleman asked to speak with me. He was about sixty years old, tall and spare, with very deep-set eyes, heavy and shaggy eyebrows, and long moustaches; he was quick in movement and proud in bearing. His features had that marked individuality which instantly catches the eye of an artist, and inspires him with the desire of making them a study. This *signore* says to me:

'"Would it be agreeable to you to make my portrait?"

'"Yes," I reply.

'"How many sittings will be necessary for the model?"

'"Six, or eight, or more, according to their length."

'"When can you begin?"

'"The first of next week."

'"Very well; I will be with you Monday—at what hour?"

'"At nine in the morning, if not inconvenient."

'"*Addio*, till Monday. Do you know who I am?"

'"I have not that honour."

'"I am Marshal Haynau."

'He went away, and there was I! Should I say that I felt pleased on hearing that name I should be false to myself; and yet the remarkable character

of that face, the curiosity to learn by conversation something of the savageness and ferocity of such a man, and, last of all, the engagement I had made, would not permit me to give up the work. I need not say how much censure it called forth from my friends, and still more from those who were not my friends. His talk with me at the sittings made him appear to be a man without fierce passion or savage cruelty, though severe in military discipline, and inexorable in the punishment of rebel soldiers. Of such punishments he made no secret. The names of the Hungarian generals and civilians he had ordered to be shot he mentioned to me with as much indifference as if it had been the most natural thing in the world; and when I reproached him for such inhumanity, he replied that nothing else could possibly be done with rebels, and that if he had acted otherwise he would himself have been punished. But when I charged him with the cruel treatment of women and children, and of all sorts of harmless persons, accounts of which I had seen in the newspapers, he denied it altogether, and also added the following anecdote, the truth of which, of course, I cannot vouch for: When he gained his victory at Pesth, and had in his hands the chiefs of the revolution, a council of war condemned them all to death. Among them were the Archbishop of Pesth and the

Count Karoli. Haynau was clothed with supreme authority as the *alter ego*, and consequently had no need of the Emperor's sanction. The Archbishop, however, as well as Karoli, had powerful adherents and friends at Vienna, who brought their influence to bear so effectually that just one hour before the appointed time of the execution their pardon came from the Emperor. But as the Marshal believed them, on account of their rank, to be the most guilty of all, and thought it unjust to spare them and sacrifice the others, he had all the prisoners summoned before him, and announcing to the two fortunate ones the imperial pardon, added these words: "It is my conviction, by reason of the evidence in my hands, which has been examined by the council of war, that the Archbishop and the Count Karoli are the most guilty of you all; but since our most gracious Sovereign has saved them from the penalty they have deserved, it is not just that the less guilty should suffer it; therefore, in virtue of the power of the *alter ego* with which I am invested, I grant life and pardon to you all."' Duprè says he has preserved in this narrative the very words of Haynau.

The Austrian Marshal urged him, when the bust had been finished, to execute a full-length statue also; but the artist declined to make any further

contribution to the immortality of such a man. What he had already done was repugnant to his patriotism, though not to his artistic spirit. Of course his motive was not understood, and his reputation as an Italian citizen, for the time, was somewhat prejudiced; yet he found zealous defenders, and among them the painter Bezzuoli. 'An artist,' said the latter, in vindication of Duprè, 'when making a portrait, deals with his art, not with politics. If the person whose likeness is sculptured is a villain, he remains a villain, portrait or no portrait. Such are Tiberius and Nero, and other beasts like them, whose statues, nevertheless, are a delight to the eye.' The remark of Bezzuoli has reference to such portraits as the magnificent sitting statue of Tiberius in the Vatican.

Not long after Duprè's second visit to Paris, the municipal council of Siena employed Tito Sarrocchi, his old pupil, to execute a bust of his former master. Another was made some time afterwards by Amalia Duprè for the church in the parish of Onda where the sculptor was born. Underneath the former was placed this inscription: 'To Giovanni Duprè, of Siena, who has added to the glories of Italian art by the wonders of his chisel, and new and immortal glory to the city of Siena: XII July MDCCCLXVII.'

By such acts and expressions Italian cities mani-

fest the generous estimate put upon their great artists, and thus they furnish incentives to art production.

At Vienna in 1873 Italian sculptors exhibited two hundred and fifteen statues. At this exposition Duprè, as before remarked, was made president of the jury on sculpture, and he took advantage of his authority to call the members frequently together, and to have their report ready at an early day; for he had very soon tired of 'that perfect Babel,' and was impatient to be at home again, and in the studio. The labour of the jury was greatly increased by the bad arrangement of the statuary; not being brought together at one point in a common department of art, but scattered about through the vast area of 'the world show,' amongst the different nationalities. So much the more time and self-sacrifice, therefore, were required on the part of the commissioners, and so much greater was the difficulty of keeping them at work. 'You may be sure,' he writes to his daughters, 'I have made these gentlemen trot about. As you may easily imagine, some of them are bent on amusement, and would gladly spin out the examination for many days, making frequent excursions, and having a good time; but I have been rather hard on them. *No, signori,* I said; we are here on this business, and it must be

brought to an end promptly; this done, as much rest and pleasure as you wish.'

Now and then he found relief from the labours of the commission in the grateful and solemn quiet of the Cathedral, and especially in the singing he heard there. Never before had he known anything about German music—its rich and varied harmonies and its wonderful execution. His letters contain many expressions of the new emotion of delight awakened in him by a kind of music which, he says, was 'a revelation.' To his family he writes: 'My dearest ones, I have been to the mass at St. Stephen's, which is the Cathedral, a fine church, Gothic, of course, a little smaller than our Duomo. Before, during, and after the mass there were hymns sung with organ accompaniment alone, but more perfect than I can express—*musica stupenda*—sad and sweet, too—few choir singers, but accompanied by the whole people in a subdued voice. It seemed to me like the sighing of angels, tender and loving. Music so beautiful, and sung with such deep and thoughtful devotion, is a thing of heaven; and I could almost say, the most spiritual of the arts, the most direct and lively manifestation of the divine essence. Never before have I heard this kind of music or this kind of singing.' And not less wonderful did he find the perfection to which the Germans

had brought the execution of operatic and orchestral music. During his visit the *Lohengrin* of Wagner was produced, and he attended the performance. Here, too, he gained new ideas of the capabilities of musical art. 'The harmony of sounds is something deeper, more ultimate, more mysterious than the harmony of lines and colours. As the harmonious relation or affinity of external things that constitutes the beautiful pertains not only to their material nature but still more to the spirit that breathes from within, therefore the beauty that emanates from the divine harmony of sound has a more subtle and living quality, because in this the soul manifests itself directly and without any intervening material veil. Our mind is drawn to it by a strong impulse of affection, because the mind is also a part of immortal beauty, and has an irresistible longing to be united with it.' He clearly grasps the truth that the several arts of the beautiful have one common source in our spiritual nature, that they stand on the same ground and are one in essence; and he suspects, that if there be any difference in excellence, the highest, as being the most spiritual, is music. Strange that so many learned and elaborate histories of art should contain not a chapter, not a word on the art which is the purest, highest, and most enduring of all.

A few weeks after his return from Vienna, Duprè

completed a work upon which he had been employed more or less constantly during the last eight years. This was the monument to Count Cavour, erected at Turin, and unveiled in November 1873—the most elaborate and imposing of all his works. Many artists had presented designs for this monument in the competition invited by the national commissioners; but Duprè had not been one of the number; in fact, when the designs first offered had all been rejected, he had been appointed as one of a new jury to decide upon a second competition; but when this also failed to secure any satisfactory plan, the commission invited Duprè himself to design and execute the monument according to his own judgment, 'leaving him free to determine its size, the treatment of the subject, the material to be employed, and the place where it should stand.'

He had several reasons for declining: 'First, because a subject of entirely political significance was difficult and foreign to his nature and to his studies; then, because it seemed to him a delicate matter to accept the work, as he had been one of the judges in the competition; finally, because the plan presented by Vela (which Duprè had voted for on the jury) seemed to him good enough. But,' says he, 'my refusal and my reasons for it were not sufficient to prevent their urging me persistently to undertake

the task ; which, indeed, while it involved difficulties of treatment great and even hazardous, at the same time afforded an opportunity for distinction that seldom occurs, and that might well have tempted artists of higher expectations than I had been wont to cherish. However, I should have persisted in my refusal, if a gentle and most noble lady had not added her personal entreaties, touching also upon certain family ties and affections, that always find in me an echo of assent.' In his letter finally accepting the commission he expresses the hope 'that he may conceive a monument that will at once possess beauty of form, and speak to the multitudes the language of liberty and of national honour, while commemorating the services and the achievements of the great statesman.'

He asked eight years for the completion of the work, and found in the end that this long period, while other engagements were pending, was barely sufficient. The expense was provided for by the contributions of the provinces of the new and united Italy, as an expression of the admiration and gratitude felt by the whole country for its great statesman and diplomatist.

The following explanation of the design is substantially that which is given by the sculptor himself in the *Ricordi* :—Cavour is represented standing

THE MONUMENT TO COUNT CAVOUR.—In Turin.

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enveloped in his funeral robes, as if prepared for death ; manifesting in his calm and cheerful countenance the consciousness that his life-work is well ended. In his left hand he holds a scroll on which are visible the words of his famous motto : *Libera chiesa in libero stato* (a free church in a free state) ; and the right hand rests on the figure of Italy, who is lifting herself from her prostrate position and presenting the civic crown to her deliverer. In her look and movement there is a mingling of gratitude and of tender anxiety. Resting on the lower base are several allegorical figures. In front is the personification of Right just rising from the earth, with one hand resting upon a broken yoke, and the other drawn back and ready to strike. His lion-skin garment is a symbol of the strength inherent in a righteous cause. In the rear is Duty crowned with olive, to signify that public office faithfully discharged secures the national peace. This figure rests upon a rock which is sculptured with bas-reliefs typifying, as characteristic duties of government, the punishment of crime, the rewarding of civil virtues, and the fostering of industry. The group on the right flank of the pedestal consists of three figures—Statesmanship, with the Genius of Diplomacy and the Genius of Revolution ; the former holding up to view the treaties of 1815, and the latter threaten-

ing to hurl the torch. In the corresponding group on the left flank, the principal figure represents Independence wearing the Roman helmet, and in the act of casting away the broken chain of foreign despotism; while she holds tightly clasped the Genius of the Provinces, at whose feet lies the ring of captivity. The Genius standing on her left side represents Italian Unity, crowned with a wreath of oak leaves, and supporting the *fasces*, or bundle of rods, as the symbol of union and strength. On the panels of the lower base are two bas-reliefs in bronze; one representing the return of the Sardinian troops from the Crimea; for it was through the policy of Cavour that Sardinia took part with England and France in the Crimean campaigns against Russia; the other, the congress of Paris of 1856, where, for the first time, and that through the influence and in the person of Cavour, the voice of Italy was heard in the great councils of the European powers. On the front is the inscription: 'To Camillo Cavour, born in Turin the tenth of August 1810, died the sixth of June 1861;' on the right, over the figure of Statesmanship, 'Prudent Audacity;' on the left, over that of Independence, 'Italy made free;' on the panel in the rear, 'The Italians, Turin leading on'—the last in allusion to the fact that the citizens of Turin took the initiative among

the Italian cities in raising the fund for the erection of the monument.

No work of this kind, however beautiful, escapes criticism, especially on the part of contemporaries. The strictures made upon this were directed chiefly, as it would seem from the letters of Duprè, against the nude statues in the two groups on the pedestal. But he says in a letter to Giuseppe Martinengo, 'The nudity of my statues cannot awaken in the least any improper feeling. Entirely nude are only two Geniuses conceived to be of about the age of seven years; and the attitude and expression of these children are wholly foreign to any suggestion of impurity.' Among those who made such criticisms was Duprè's intimate friend Conti, who had made a similar objection to the nude child of Charity in the Ferrari monument. He did not differ from Duprè so much on the general question of the use of nude figures as on the proper subject and place for their employment. His opinions on questions of art were highly valued by Duprè, who calls them 'profound and conscientious,' and they were always accepted by the artist, even when they took the form of strictures, in the friendly spirit in which they were given. And, indeed, this was the disposition of our artist towards all candid and discriminating criticism of his own works; for he was not at all 'thin-

skinned.' On the question of the nude, we find in the *Ricordi* such observations as we might expect from Duprè's simple good sense, and such as are perfectly exemplified in his own works. 'It is not the nudity of figures that gives offence to modesty; if that were so, we should be obliged to condemn nearly all the works of Michelangelo;' no, it is 'their conception, their expression, their attitude; in a word, the mind, the idea, the inner state of the artist, while he works.' And so 'figures that are completely draped, even a nun like the saint Teresa of Bernini, may bear the impress of sensuality,' and on the other hand, 'a wholly nude statue, like the Capitoline Venus, may fill the beholder with a sentiment of reverent admiration.'

Duprè's own impression of the merit of this monument he gives in the *Ricordi*, when describing a visit to Turin in company with Amalia seven years after it was erected. Having contemplated it some time in silence, he turned to her and said, 'I am satisfied with this work; and, believe me, it is a very difficult thing for an artist to look at one of his productions after an intervening period of time, without finding anything to correct.' Some time afterwards, on a journey from Florence to Milan, the sculptor and his daughter happened to be in the same car with two strangers who were conversing

upon matters of literature and art. One of them turned out to be a distinguished professor and contributor to the reviews. After speaking of several monuments recently erected, he said, 'For example, that of Cavour at Turin.' . . . Duprè, dreading on Amalia's account as well as his own some unpleasant criticism of his work, at once interrupted him by saying, 'Excuse me, sir; that monument is a work of mine.' But the professor without the least embarrassment replied, 'That matters not; I can proceed with my remarks.' And with perfect composure, and without change of tone, a fact that proved the sincerity of his words, he praised the composition, the beauty of the figures, the style, the harmony of the lines, and in short held it up as an example of grand monumental sculpture. 'This,' says Venturi, in relating the incident, 'was for Duprè one of the greatest consolations of his artist life.'

It is a curious fact, and one that illustrates the peculiar state of Italian politics at this time, that Duprè, who had been hitherto a special favourite of Pius IX., incurred his displeasure on account of this Cavour monument—to such a degree, indeed, that he would not vouchsafe to the artist a sitting for a portrait bust which the Marquis del Monte desired him to make for the Cathedral of Florence. When

the Marquis requested the favour of a sitting without giving the name of the proposed sculptor, his Holiness expressed himself perfectly willing; 'but when,' says Duprè, 'he heard my name, he peremptorily refused; for he did not wish that I should make his portrait, because I had made the monument of Cavour. To tell the truth,' he continues, 'this kind of censure on the part of the Pope was not pleasant to me.' And he wrote a letter to one of the papal secretaries, protesting against such illiberality, a part of which, he thinks, was read by his Holiness; for, as the following passage shows, he gave Duprè and his daughter a very friendly reception some time afterwards, when they were passing through Rome on their way to the exposition at Naples in 1877. 'He turned to me benignantly and said: "Dear Duprè, what beautiful works are you making now?" I, who do not usually find myself embarrassed in speaking to any one, was now completely tongue-tied, and could not make out to articulate two words; and the poor, saintly old man, to relieve my hesitation, continued: "I feel for you; political changes, rumours of war, distract the mind of the artist, and, moreover, are inimical to the development of his genius." Then turning to my daughter he said: "And you too, my brave sculptress, I give my blessing to you and at

the same time to your father." It was peculiarly affecting to hear for the last time that kindly voice. My heart told me it would soon be heard no more; and, indeed, hardly eight months later he died, a few days after the King (Victor Emanuel), to whom he had sent his benediction.'

It was while the Cavour monument was in progress, and a year before it was completed, that Duprè lost his youngest daughter, Luisina. She died at the age of twenty-two. Of this sore bereavement he writes in the *Ricordi;* 'This affliction that God was pleased to bring upon us broke down my self-confidence, spread a veil of sadness over my family, shattered the health, and perhaps hastened the departure of my loved Maria. Ah, most mighty God of Israel, lover of faithful souls, look upon the trial of thy servant!' It was naturally his first thought to erect a worthy monument to his lost *Angioletto Luisina.* This he would have done himself, 'had grief permitted,' but the father's hand was unequal to the task; it was undertaken by Amalia. 'The memory of this sweet and beautiful daughter has been immortalised by the monument designed and executed by her loving sister Amalia, and put up in the family chapel at Fiesole. In a niche, on a level with the pavement, stands a sepulchral urn, and reposing upon it as if in peaceful

sleep, holding a crucifix upon her breast, is sculptured the form of the dear sister. The figure is of the size of life. That poor Amalia suffered much in executing her sad task every one can understand and none better than I; and I tried to dissuade her from the painful duty she had imposed upon herself; but her tender devotion to the memory of the lost Luisina whispered to her heart, perhaps, that in this offering of her art her grief would find its sweetest consolation.'

Three years later the mother of this amiable family, *la buonissima Maria, la santa donna*, was laid to rest with Luisina. The artist, again heart-stricken, writes a few days afterwards to his sympathising friend, the Marquis of Capponi: 'I am a poor wayfarer, wearied and disheartened on the journey I have still to travel before I can join my sweet companion. I am not alone — I have my two children with me, and I am striving for courage to bear the hardship that remains. The memory of my loved one, who for almost forty years has kept me good companionship with her spirit, gentle, simple, right, weighs heavy upon my heart, and keeps me in tears; and but for the sight of my children I should also be forced to cry out: It is enough, O Lord; take now my life, because I have no more strength than my fathers had.' And to the Countess

of Baiveri: 'God has ordered it thus; may His heavenly will be ever fulfilled. The blow that has smitten us is terrible, the wound deep, and hard to bear; but out of grief love is born; because the anguish of grief finds vent in tears, and by tears our poor hearts are softened and purified. I thank you for your sweet words; and with you I thank my good, gentle, dear Marietta, who one day said to me, "God is good! Happy they that love Him, for they shall find consolation." And I look for consolation, while asking with my whole heart for grace to love Him and serve Him worthily.'

Without knowing the earnest nature of Duprè, incapable as it was of affected sentiment, we might mistake these sad words for the usual utterances of fervid, but often momentary grief, not countenanced, perhaps, by the previous history of the husband and wife; but his was no common and evanescent sorrow; he mourned for one whose life had become a part of his own. Here are some words addressed to her in a letter from Turin a year and a half before her death: 'My dear wife, when I reflect that I owe in great part my not ill-success in art to you, because if I had had a suspicious, or vain or worldly wife, my artist career would have been difficult, hindered, or, perhaps, altogether defeated, I cannot but bless and thank the Lord for His favour to me in uniting me

to you, and in giving you to me, and in filling my heart with grateful love and esteem for you. This love of thirty-eight years has been strengthened by the memory of our common suffering, endured by you with constancy and patience; strengthened, too, by my respect for your virtue and by your affection for me and for our offspring; by your wise discretion in the management of the household, and by your example of purity and modesty, which have been a school for our children, and, thanks to God, have greatly profited them.'

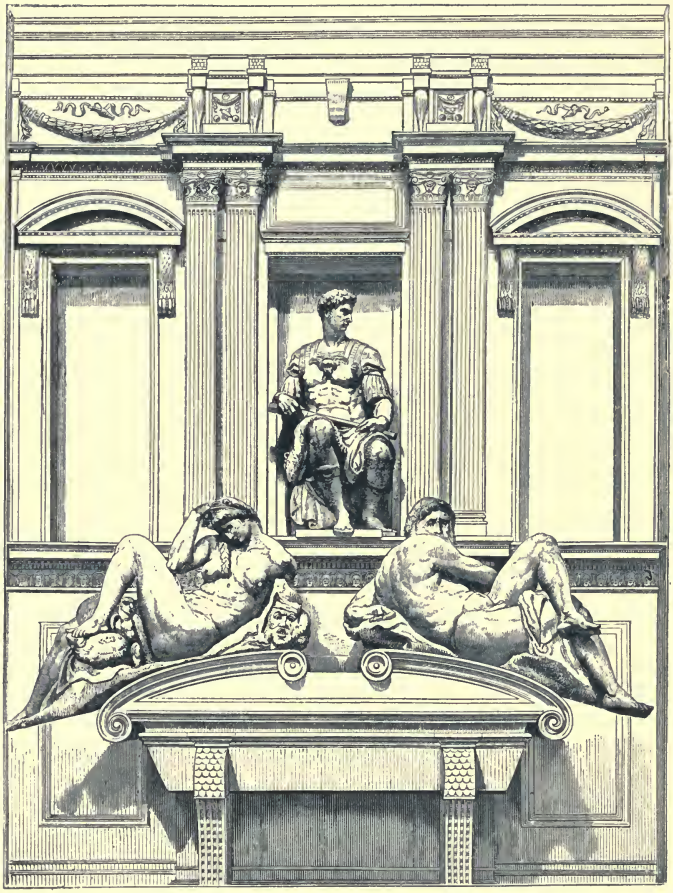
Life affords nothing more beautiful than a family perfectly one in love and sympathy; nothing more sad than such a family invaded at last, and broken up by death; when 'the tender bonds of the household are dissolved for ever, and she who had been the mother of the house now dwells in the shadowland.' Henceforth our poor artist can only look back with regret and vain longing upon the past, fraught with memories the more tender because made up so much of suffering mingled with felicity. 'Oh, how time has changed everything!' he writes in a letter to Signora Felice Ciantelli. 'What a charming resort, and that not long ago, was my beautiful villa of San Giovanni! There I had around me, with Amalia and Beppina, my dear sweet Luisina, and the sainted companion who had shared the toils

and pains of my youthful days; who left me at the moment when I had secured for her a happy and tranquil repose. But God granted to her a rest that is far better.'

His studio, his art, his ambition, the life that has hitherto seemed full of meaning, are now for a time utterly vapid, unsatisfying, and dreary. Amalia, too, sits in 'sad, mute monotony of woe; prostrated in strength, without courage or will.' It was fortunate however, for both father and daughter that the demands of the studio would not suffer them to remain long in this helpless despondency. Mind and hand were soon compelled to be busy again upon the interrupted work; and thought, becoming insensibly interested in their beautiful art, was withdrawn from the contemplation of their bereavement; and thus the benign necessity of things, as usual, allayed the pain and healed the wound, though it could not bring back the joy. The sculptor placed a medallion portrait of his wife on the wall of the chapel opposite to the tomb of Luisina, intending to erect a monument to her at a later day, corresponding to that of the deceased daughter. On the medallion he sculptured a twig of oak leaves: a symbol of the fortitude exhibited by Maria Duprè through all the trials of her life; and underneath the portrait he inscribed these words, simple and sen-

tentious, like the sepulchral inscriptions of the old Romans themselves: 'A good wife and mother, for that she loved and feared God: lived sixty years, and died the twentieth of May 1875: sculptured by the husband weeping and praying.'

It was about this time that our artist was made a Knight and Counsellor of the Civil Order of Savoy. His election to the Institute of France has already been mentioned. Many other public honours at various times were conferred upon him, both at home and abroad; he was a Knight of the Tuscan Order of Merit and of the Legion of Honour of France, an Officer of the Brazilian Order of the Rose, Commendatore of the Crown of Italy, and of several other Orders, Associate of the Roman Academy of Saint Luke, and of the other principal Italian and Foreign Academies.



TOMB OF GIULIANO DE' MEDICI, YOUNGER SON OF LORENZO IL MAGNIFICO,
WITH THE ALLEGORICAL FIGURES OF "NIGHT" AND "DAY."
In the New Sacristy of San Lorenzo, Florence

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CHAPTER IX.

Duprè as a writer and critic—Papers read and published at the fourth centennial of the birth of Michelangelo in 1875.

In September 1875 Florence celebrated with great enthusiasm and splendour the fourth centennial of the birthday of Michelangelo. Among the many observances of the day there was a grand assembly in the aula of the ancient senate house, consisting of the members of the Academy of Fine Arts and of the Academy della Crusca, with many distinguished citizens and literary men. The Presidents of the two Academies, Emilio de Fabris and Augusto Conti, pronounced discourses, one on Michelangelo as an architect, the other upon his merits as a philosopher, poet, and citizen; and Giovanni Duprè read an address upon Michelangelo the sculptor. This was a new *rôle* for Duprè, and when invited to undertake it, he had shrunk at first with natural timidity from a task so formidable to one who had never opened his lips in a public assembly; however, on second thought, he 'threw together with the pen

some few ideas, and gave them to his friend Luigi Venturi to read.' Encouraged by the latter, he ventured to appear with the other speakers on this occasion. Overcoming the well-known tremor of the first moment, he became at once self-possessed, and 'read his discourse better than he had read it before to Amalia.' In fact, it was greeted with such hearty applause that the modest speaker was overwhelmed with surprise. And he was still more astonished when in a few days he found it noticed by the press throughout the country in terms of unmeasured praise; so that the artist remarks in a letter to Venturi, 'that he has received more commendation for these few words than for many of the statues upon which he had exhausted his strength.' It was the interest manifested by the public in this essay that suggested to him the first thought of doing something for art by writing his reminiscences. He writes to Giovanni Cozza of Perugia: 'It is a curious thing that these words, I do not say improvised, for that would be untrue, but certainly not studied, should have attracted general approbation, and especially that of literary men. I am amazed and at the same time happy over it; and perhaps circumstances will induce me to go on, and to leave some ideas about art, and some facts concerning myself for the instruction of future young

artists.' And these words give us the motive of the *Ricordi.*

Connected with the same centennial a memorial volume was published, made up of articles on the life and works of Michelangelo, contributed by several distinguished writers. One of these papers was furnished by Duprè. It was a notice of the celebrated sculptural monuments in the New Sacristy of the Church of San Lorenzo at Florence, executed by Michelangelo in memory of Julian de' Medici, Duke of Nemours, and of Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino; one the brother and the other the nephew of Leo X., by whose request they were made. This paper and the discourse above referred to are both contained in the volume of Duprè's *Scritti Minori.* Both productions are marked by such clear insight and by such freshness and vigour as to make us regret that the author was not called upon to exercise his latent gift for art criticism at an earlier day. None can see so distinctly in art as they whose knowledge comes, in part at least, from the practice of it. To them more clearly than to others is the intention of the artist visible in his creations; for they have in mind their own mental processes and struggles, and they, too, from their own experience can understand better than others the treatment necessitated by the nature

of each subject, the advantages seized upon, the difficulties overcome, the merits and defects of execution. Thus, what the literary critic can scarcely more than guess at, the artist critic, looking at the works of kindred artists, past or present, with the eye of kindred experience, can interpret almost as if it were the offspring of his own thought. He undertook the paper on the Medicean monuments of Michelangelo with the same hesitating modesty as the discourse delivered before the two Academies. 'But,' says he, 'I thought to myself, how many times have I spoken of the works of that godlike man with my fellow-artists, with my friends, and above all, as it was my duty to do, with my pupils? And why could I not recall those words, now that we were renewing our memory and love of him, and our admiration for his immortal works? For the utterance of truth we require not much fatigue and study—a little courage is all we need—and I accepted the task.'

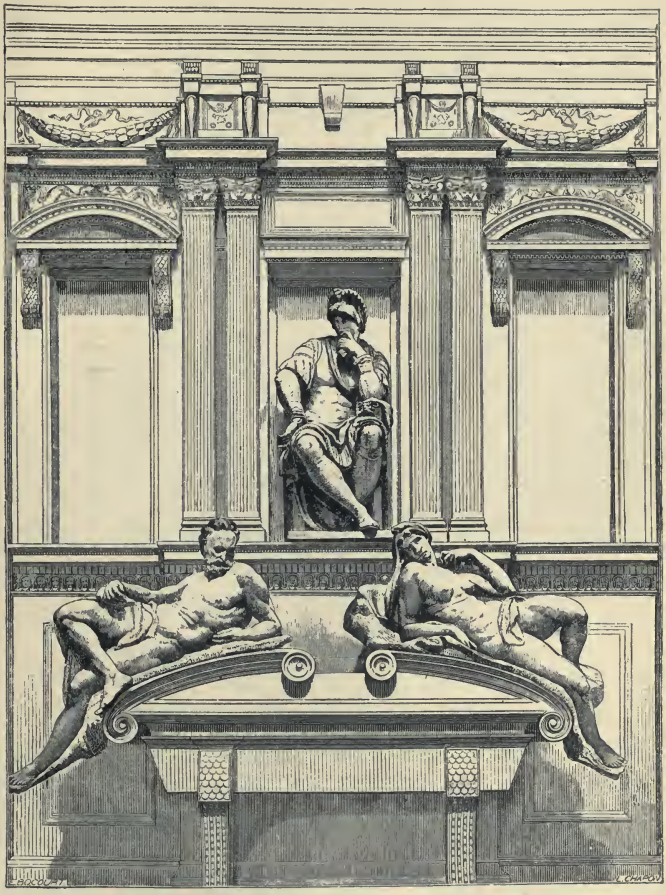
From these two articles, so bright, so appreciative, so full of reverence for that noble spirit and mighty genius, I will quote in form or in substance some characteristic passages that will fully justify to the reader the lively interest they awakened in Italian circles of art and literature.

Duprè, in speaking of the statues of Julian and Lorenzo, naturally gave a thought to the question

that has puzzled so many, why a sculptor like Michelangelo, 'a lover of his country's institutions, and a man of austere nature,' should have consented to take as subjects of his chisel these two unworthy descendants of his early friend Lorenzo the Magnificent; two personages not only of little historical significance, but also far from possessing any claim to the respect of a patriotic Florentine. 'But,' says Duprè (and it reminds us of his defence of his portrait bust of Marshal Haynau), 'whoever will keep in mind the love that every artist has for his art, that even an ungrateful theme may be attractive from an objective point of view, or from its form, and that without forfeiting his dignity and honour, he can embody a thought that may reveal and satisfy his own soul, will cease to be surprised at this seeming inconsistency, and, on the contrary, will learn to esteem the man and admire the artist.'

The two monuments are placed on opposite sides of the New Sacristy, in the Church of San Lorenzo. They are similar in design: each consists of a funeral urn of sufficient dimensions to support two colossal figures reclining upon the top; those on one of the urns representing Day and Night, on the other, Dawn and Twilight. Above these, in niches recessed in the wall, are seated the marble statues of the two Dukes, Julian and Lorenzo. The latter has

become known the world over as *il Pensiero*, or *il Pensieroso*, Thought, or the Thoughtful; 'and,' says Duprè, 'in the attitude of complete abstraction, in the profound meditative look, in the shadowy gloom enveloping, as it were, that whole figure, there is thought indeed; but it is of trouble, of torture, as of one at war with himself. Lorenzo has forfeited the joy of friendship that animates the soul; old and trustful comrades, deceived and wronged, have fled, and have left him alone with his guilty conscience; and it is well; the just penalty of ingratitude is remorse. This it is that Michelangelo has sculptured here with the divine hand of the philosopher, the Christian, and the artist.' The *Pensiero* is over the urn on which repose the forms of Dawn and Twilight. Over those of Day and Night is placed the statue of Julian. 'The figure of the Duke of Nemours,' Duprè continues, 'with its expression of tranquil dignity, with half-averted look, gazing into distance, seems to think of the evanescence of life and the emptiness of human hopes.' Kindred to this is the idea conveyed by the allegorical figures of Day and Night, Dawn and Twilight; all conspiring to impress one sole thought—the brevity of life and the flitting career of human greatness. And in them all is visible at the same time the struggle and fretting of the soul of the sculptor himself. These wonderful sculptures, in



TOMB OF LORENZO DE' MEDICI (IL PENSIEROSO), GRANDSON OF LORENZO IL MAGNIFICO,
WITH THE ALLEGORICAL FIGURES OF "DAWN" AND "EVENING."
In the New Sacristy of San Lorenzo, Florence.

To face page 136.

which the grandest in art was subsidised to perpetuate the fame of two very commonplace characters, remain, in fact, enduring monuments of the greatness of the artist himself; 'and perhaps this Lorenzo and this Julian would be names quite unknown, if Michelangelo had not made them illustrious by the splendid monuments of San Lorenzo.'

In the address before the Academies Duprè characterises Michelangelo as 'a sculptor absolutely original, terribly severe in conception and form.' His art was in keeping with his spirit and life; 'he thought, lived, and worked almost solitary in the midst of his contemporaries, who were in great part pagans in their studies and habits.' A rough verdict upon the age of the Medici, in which Duprè, I scarcely need remark, by no means stands alone.

It has been said of Michelangelo, in allusion to his gifts as a sculptor, painter, architect, and poet, that he was a man of four minds or of fourfold genius; and yet everywhere, according to the judgment of Duprè, even in painting and architecture, nay, even in poetry, his conceptions are distinctively plastic. In whatever art either choice or necessity has led him to embody his thought, he always reveals more or less the characteristic traits of the sculptor. 'The stupendous composition of the Last Judgment is like an immense work in relief, sculp-

tured upon a fearfully sombre and mystic background, illuminated here and there with an indescribable light.' The figures and groups of the sublime vision seem to have been moulded by the plastic hand, or to have been incised with the chisel. So with the grand designs on the vault of the Sistine Chapel, particularly the Jeremiah, the Delphic Sibyl, and the group of the creation of man; for these would be even more beautiful if worked out in relief. Colour with Michelangelo was mainly light and shade, giving the harmonious effects that are characteristic of statuary.

Not less in architecture also is manifested his predilection for sculptural types. While adapting to his purposes the general principles and leading forms of the classical style, he rejects all that seems to him inconsistent with severe simplicity; preferring 'Dantesque chiseling to Vergilian colouring.' Finally, we have even in his poems, according to the fancy of Duprè, 'the physiognomy of the sculptor;' for in these also can be perceived an 'austerity of conception,' a certain bold directness of style, brief and incisive, like his strokes upon the marble. 'As an example,' he says, 'may suffice the famous stanza of four lines on his statue of Night.'

The lines referred to by Duprè are those composed by Michelangelo in reply to the verses of

Gianbattista Strozzi playing upon the sculptor's name :

> 'La Notte che tu vedi in si dolci atti
> Dormire, fù da un Angelo scolpita
> In questo sasso ; e perchè dorme, ha vita ;
> Destala, se no'l credi, e parleratti.'

> 'The Night thou see'st thus sleeping quietly,
> Was in this marble by an Angel wrought ;
> She sweetly sleeps, and still with life is fraught ;
> Believ'st thou not ? speak, and she'll speak to thee.'

But the stern sculptor saw not in his Night the sweet sleep of a quiet mind ; it was rather the sleep that would fain seek oblivion of the country's shame ; of the wrongs brought upon her in part by these very Medici, unworthy scions of a noble house, whose character he hates, though his hand has chiseled their portraits. Therefore in the spirit of a republican and of a patriot, who has been fighting in vain for the liberty of Florence, he puts into the lips of his Night, as a reply, and as a rebuke to Strozzi, these words, so full of his own blunt impetuosity, struck off, as it were, with hammer and chisel :

> 'Grato m'è 'l sonno, e più l'esser di sasso !
> Mentre che 'l danno e la vergogna dura ;
> Non veder, non sentir m'è gran ventura,
> Però non mi destar ; deh parla basso.'

'I'm glad to sleep, thrice glad to be of stone!
While all is lost, and but dishonour reigns,
Not see, not feel, sole happiness remains;
So wake me not; ah, speak in lowest tone.'

And what was the secret of his power? It was, as Duprè thinks, the marvellous blending in his spirit of an unconquerable will with the purest and deepest affection. That nature, fierce and untamable, so gigantic in conception, in execution so impetuous, was yet tender and susceptible in the relations of domestic life; and it was capable of love purely intellectual, such as his attachment to Vittoria Colonna. Men like him know nothing of merely emotional sentiment, 'the stagnant and dead water,' says Duprè, 'that vitiates our nature and swamps all manliness.' In Michelangelo 'strong love and strong will produced a character at once benignant and powerful.' He was like David, that Bible hero whom he has chosen as the subject of one of his noblest creations. 'The youthful son of Jesse, the kind and gentle shepherd, David, became the invincible soldier, saviour of his people, king and prophet, and yet, in the midst of his greatness, gave utterance to those tender words: "And I weep for thee, Jonathan, my brother, beautiful above all men, and more lovely than the loveliness of maidens; as a mother loves her only son, so did I love thee."'

So this most ungentle of all artists, the fierce sculptor of the Medicean colossi, this wild man, this 'terrible man,' as Pope Julius calls him, who habitually shunned society, nevertheless had a place in his heart for the truest love and friendship; and he not only loved the Marchioness Vittoria Colonna as he alone could love, but he sat whole nights by the sick-bed of his servant Urbino, and after his death, 'wrote in his memory words of such tenderness, that we know not whether more to love the man or to admire the artist.' And 'these two forces,' these two elements of character, earnest love and invincible purpose, made him Michelangelo.

But in all his admiration of the great master Duprè is not blind to his defects. Of the colossal figures of the Medicean monuments he observes: 'As to their artistic merit I must say, though with a feeling of profound reverence, that their herculean forms have undoubtedly a forced expression and a distorted movement.' And yet even this fault he is compelled in some measure to justify: 'Their extravagance, however, while overstepping the bounds of common nature and the reach of ordinary imagination, is penetrated with a marvellous and inexpressible beauty. The two elements are here inseparable; for without this very exaggeration the work would no longer appear, what in truth it is,

terribly sublime.' And further: 'It has been said that Michelangelo has done more harm than good to art by misleading his imitators; but this he himself foresaw and feared, and he did not hesitate to say so. Imitation was, and is an error; it is a path by which we cannot arrive at true art, while in it we lose art's most precious attribute, originality. In the morally good, imitation is necessary, for the good is absolute; but in the beautiful it is not so, because this in its infinite diversity manifests itself in the most varied modes, according to the gifts of the one who admires and feels it.'

The picture of Michelangelo at work is not unfamiliar to most readers, but Duprè imparts to it new animation and interest. 'Impatient to realise the conceptions once vividly formed in his imagination, he could not brook the delay of the usual methods. He trod ways unknown, disdaining the ordinary processes of the art. He made no models in plaster, nor employed the three points of breadth, length, and depth; a system even at that time understood, though never regarded by him. But having completed his miniature model of clay, he placed it before him near the block of marble and his living model, and having ascertained the extreme points, he contemplated thoughtfully that stony mass in which his statue lay hid; then marking the

chief lines of the contour with charcoal, he took his chisel in hand, and assailing the solid block with rapid blows, chipped off the surface. The scales darted off like hailstones ; the chisel struck fire, and each stroke was attended with the hard-fetched breath. Then a brief pause ; a quick glance at all sides of his clay model and of the marble. It seemed as if with every deep-drawn breath the sculptor were breathing life into the hard material ; and as the marble insensibly grew into the image of his thought, his fervour became more glowing, and the conception in his fancy more luminous. Each day he returned to the work with the same ardour, with the same clearness of vision, with the same tenacity ; and at length with strokes more deliberate and cautious, though with not less decision, he plied the several tools of his art, the dog-tooth, the chisel, and file, in rounding the surfaces, moulding the parts, giving expression to the features and life to the eyes. The marble seemed to acknowledge the power of its conqueror, and, yielding little by little, to unveil itself in the form determined by his will. Such was Michelangelo in his practical method of sculpture, one of fearful boldness and danger, never ventured upon before or after.

'Yet at times a cloud of sadness overshadowed the joy of victory. Was it the consciousness of a

higher and more vivid conception, constantly pursued, and not yet attained? Or was it that the fiery impatience of the sculptor, driving the steel into the viscera of the marble, had pushed it beyond the proper bound, and mutilated the form he had desired to see unprisoned from the stone, all pure and intact? Perhaps both the one and the other.

'As for me,' says Duprè in conclusion, 'leaving criticism to others, I will say this only: that the generation which can penetrate with the mental eye the depth of thought in Michelangelo, is, perhaps, yet unborn. Towards the works of that great artist each one must direct his eyes with whatever power he may possess; Buonarroti fixed his own upon the eternal light, and catching a ray from this, tranfused it into his immortal creations. The conceited and envious with their arrogant and vain hostility will renew in him the suffering of Prometheus; but his heart is restored from day to day, for he has in himself that which cannot die; the divine spark of the beautiful in union with the good. The malignant cannot endure to behold it; for the eagle, secure and joyous, fixes his look upon the sun, while the bats and owls are blinded by its rays.'

CHAPTER X.

Statues of Pope Pius IX., of Victor Emanuel, and of Raimondo Lullo—St. Francis of Assisi modelled in clay—Duprè's last sickness, calm and peaceful death—Amalia succeeds to the studio—The St. Francis executed by her in marble, and unveiled at Assisi on the seventh centennial of the birth of the saint, in October 1882.

THE last three years of the life of Duprè were not less busily employed than those of which he has left an account in the *Ricordi.* Amalia was ever at his side, and from the hand both of the sculptor and of his daughter continually went forth new contributions to the art treasures of Italy. Work for a livelihood had long ceased to be a necessity. Financially our artist had prospered to such a degrée that his fortune, compared with the poverty of those early days, when he was forced to beg a few *lire* to obtain the materials for finishing his Abel, might be called even princely. No longer dwelling in a wretched tenement, nor confined to an insufficient studio, he owned, besides his permanent residence in the Costa di San Giorgio, another house in the

Via Pinti, a villa in the Pergole, near Fiesole, and also the elegant Medicean Villa di Lappeggi; while his work was carried on in a studio of almost palatial dimensions, and peopled with copies of the statuary that had in all these years come forth from his hand.

In these last years he executed a statue of Pope Pius IX. for the Cathedral of Piacenza, one of Victor Emanuel, erected in the principal square of Trapani, in Sicily, and an ideal historical statue of Raimondo Lullo for a chapel in the island of Majorca. He had also engaged (as above mentioned) to execute a colossal figure of the Madonna for the new front of the Cathedral of Florence, and he longed to complete this work in honour of the Virgin of the Lily, the 'Queen of Florence,' for the adornment of the church which forms the chief architectural monument of the city; but his desire was not destined to be gratified.

The last work which he moulded with his own hands was the statue of St. Francis. The authorities of the diocese of Assisi had determined to honour the memory of the saint on the seventh centennial of his birth, the 1st of October 1882, by erecting a statue of him, at least an ideal one, in front of the Cathedral of Assisi. The interior of this venerable Basilica had been adorned more than five centuries

before with the great frescoes of Giotto, depicting the life of St. Francis. There, too, the poet Dante had often stood by to watch the progress of the work, as his friend brought to view with his magic pencil, one after another, the scenes of that holy life. It was fitting that a sculptor should now be chosen worthiest of all to be the follower of Giotto. The invitation was given to Duprè. No subject could have been proposed to him more congenial to his taste and his habits of thought. The preference for religious themes, manifested at the beginning of his career, had been confirmed by advancing years, and especially by his recent sorrows. Besides this, he had learned in the habitual reading of Dante to look upon Francis of Assisi as the purest reformer and the most Christian of all Christians of the mediæval times; and for this reason he had placed him among the typical figures in his Triumph of the Cross. The attractiveness of the subject, therefore, did not permit him to hesitate. In his reply to the authorities he says: 'I am most happy that the commission has thought of me; not so much on account of what little talent I may possess as for the love I bear to religious art.' He at once entered upon the studies that he thought necessary to make the statue worthy of such an exalted character and of such a place.

Francis of Assisi was in the thirteenth century the representative of that spirit of reform which, from time to time, and at epochs more or less distant, has been called forth not more by the corruption of the church than by the insolence of the powerful, and the degradation of the poor. 'In an age,' says Luigi Venturi, 'intoxicated with riches and with sensual pleasures, he suddenly came forth to preach poverty and self-denial; and in the times of Ezzelino and Frederick II., while Italy was distracted and lacerated by bloody factions, he made himself the herald of a gospel of charity and good will, proclaimed without the help of rhetorical phrase or of secular learning. He laboured effectively for the emancipation of the serfs of the soil, at that time still in bondage, and founded an order to which he gave the name of the Minorites, kindred to the popular institution of the Communes, so much hated by the feudal nobility; and this order he established upon a basis hitherto unknown—that of fraternity and love. He commended and enforced his divine teachings by his own example of absolute self-denial, long-suffering, and devoted benevolence; everywhere seeking to calm the fury of hostile factions, and bring all men to councils of peace. *Pax vobiscum* was always the beginning of discourse with him and his barefooted disciples, wherever they wandered in

Europe, in Egypt, or in Syria. When he sent them forth he said: "My sons, scatter yourselves through the world, and proclaim peace to all men!"'

Dante in the eleventh book of the *Paradise* sings of St. Francis as 'the sun that had risen upon the world, and even when not distant from his rising, had begun to bless the earth;' for in the prime of life he had abandoned his hopes of worldly advancement for the sake of doing his work of charity. 'He had wedded himself to poverty as to his bride—whom no other had chosen as companion since the Holy One who had not where to lay His head had passed from His state of self-humiliation to His heavenly glory.' To the poet in his vision the saint 'was like a seraph in the glowing fervour of devotion,' and 'his marvellous life was worthy to be sung in the heights empyreal.'

Duprè perfected his model of the statue in clay, and completed the plaster cast, but did not live to execute it in marble. He had already found a block of excellent quality. In a letter dated Easter 1881 he writes to Andrea Ulli, Vicar-General of Assisi: 'I have found beautiful marble for the San Francesco; it will have a good effect in that sweet piazzetta of San Rufino, with the dark wall of the church as a background, under that clear sky, in that subdued light, in that sacred silence.' Those who

saw the cast when finished by Duprè, were struck with the fitness of the features and expression to represent the Saviour Himself. One day when this was remarked by two visitors from Assisi, he replied 'that it had made the same impression upon others;' and one of them adding 'that this work would be a triumph for him, and a new glory for Assisi,' he said: 'Who knows that this may not be my last?' It was only a few days later that he was overtaken by those acute paroxysms of pain in the abdomen that soon terminated fatally. He writes to Monsignore Andrea Ulli, that he is recovering from the second of these attacks. 'The doctor has no longer any doubt of my getting well, and we hope that in a few days he will let me return to my studio. But how much have I suffered!—doubly suffered in being deprived of my most delightful occupation. This is all my joy, all my life. What a happy day it will be for me when I can place my feet once more in my studio, and resume my work and my Francesco!' He seemed to have regained his health, and was enjoying once more his art and the society of his friends, when on the New Year's Day of 1882 his disorder returned with increased violence, and on the 10th he expired.

During the last hours his two surviving daughters, Amalia and Beppina, were by his side. Inspired

with a faith that was clearer as his end drew near, he spoke of his approaching death with a certainty that filled their poor hearts with dread. 'Father,' exclaimed Amalia, 'it cannot be so!' 'Thou knowest not, my child,' he replied, 'what can be seen by the mind of one who suffers.' After receiving the sacrament from the hands of the Archbishop of Florence, and joining earnestly in the last prayers, turning to Amalia, he said: 'It is the hour, thou knowest, I have been preparing for—even from the death of Luisina and thy mother. *O cara Luisina, O cara Maria*, soon shall I see you again!' Then thinking of the statue of the Virgin he had hoped to finish for the Duomo, he added: 'I only regret that I shall not make the Madonna.' 'Thou hast made it,' replied Amalia, 'so beautiful!—the *Addolorata* for Santa Croce.' Placing his hand lovingly upon her head, he answered, 'Yes, but I desired to make her as queen of Florence.' At the last moment Augusto Conti, kneeling at the bedside, began to repeat the prayer, 'Our Father, who art in heaven;' and the dying sculptor took up the words and accompanied him to the end; then added fervently, 'Our Father; yes, yes, our Father,' and spoke no more.

Seldom has the death of any one called forth such deep and universal regret. Giovanni Duprè

had outlived all envy, triumphed over all detraction, placed himself at the head of his profession, made himself dear to his countrymen, and his art a part of their national glory. 'Multitudes,' says Venturi, 'flocked to the door of his house, bewailing their irretrievable loss; mourning the amiable *maestro*, the steadfast friend, kind adviser, generous benefactor. At the sad announcement all Italy was moved. Senators, deputies, nobles, literary men, scientists, artists, together with the humble classes, by a common impulse of devoted affection, united in performing the last obsequies to the deceased, and in following his remains to the church.' Funeral solemnities in honour of the dead artist were celebrated not only in Florence, but also in Siena, Fiesole, Antella, and Agnone. His body was finally deposited in the family chapel at Fiesole, where Amalia and Beppina have placed over his tomb a marble copy of his own group of the Pietà.

'It is not an artist, but an art that dies to-day; great art, the art of beautiful lines and of pure inspirations.' These words of one of the leading journals of Florence briefly express the sentiment that was echoed from the newspaper press and from the periodicals of the whole country; and it had already been uttered by the Roman poet Girolamo

Buonazia in a sonnet written at the very moment when the spirit of the great sculptor was passing away. On the 9th of January, when Duprè was dying, and at the hour when the news was telegraphed to Rome, it happened that the Italian Court and Parliament, and many of the citizens of Rome and of Italy were assembled in the Pantheon or 'Rotonda' to celebrate with funeral solemnities the anniversary of the death of Victor Emanuel; for the body of the late King rests in that ancient sanctuary. Buonazia, deeply impressed with the sad coincidence, and despondent in regard to the future of his country, under the shadow of the gloomy forebodings suggested by the occasion, wrote these words:—

'È nato alla memoria ed al dolore
Questo giorno funesto; e l'ampie vôlte
Della Rotonda ingombra un sacro orrore
Fra le ghirlande di gramaglia avvolte.
Cadono i grandi, e al bacio del Signore
Si affrettan per la pura aura disciolte
L'anime elette; a noi resta l'errore
E il vacillare delle mente stolte.
Cadono ad uno ad uno; e la novella
Età non sente la stagion nemica,
Che l'opre e gli esemplari alti cancella.
Tu cadi d'arte e di virtude antica
Immacolato esempio; e sorge quella
Che nell' orgia gavazza arte impudica.'

This day was destined to sad memory
And grief; now gloom and solemn dread pervade
The vast Rotunda's depths of vaulted shade,
And twined with black hang wreaths of victory.
Our great are falling; through the pure air fly
Their chosen spirits, free, and swift conveyed
Up to the embrace of God; their work is laid
On us, in error wavering helplessly.
Yes, one by one they fall, and we unwise,
A new age, see not ills by which undone
Are their examples high and grand emprise.
And thou, of art and ancient worth the one
Example pure, dost fall; and now will rise
The art that shameless joys in sense alone.

Happily, this forecast of evil, so far, at least, as the future of Italy is concerned, does not seem destined to be fulfilled; on the contrary, the new and united Italy is daily gaining strength and stability; but it was natural that such a scene, and the memory it awakened of the recent loss of the King, on whom the hope of the nation had so long rested, should excite new fears in the mind of the poet and of the whole mourning assembly; and the announcement just then that another 'elect spirit' was taking its flight could not but deepen the dark thoughts of the hour.

Giovanni Duprè, as we have seen, had been the champion of the art that is at once realistic, beautiful, and pure; and he had earnestly opposed the tendency

of his contemporaries to the realism that is either gross or meretricious. The sentiment of his motto, so often repeated, *il bello nel vero*, had never ceased to control his conceptions and to guide his hand. The influence of his living voice and example, and that which of late he had begun to exercise so effectively with his pen, was now to be lost; but what he has contributed to the great sum of art creation cannot be lost; and if, as the poet fears, art shall be led by vicious times and fashions into strange and false ways, such works as Duprè's, in common with those of all true artists, ancient and modern, will still point it to the right path, and, sooner or later, bring it back again to good aims and principles.

In his career of forty years our artist produced about a hundred works in statuary and relief, besides a considerable number of busts and statuettes. His studio in Florence, filled with the original casts of most of these productions, remains, like that of Schwanthaler in Munich, a monument and witness of the achievements of his remarkable life; but, unlike the silent studio of Schwanthaler, long given up to the past and to memory, that of Duprè has been inherited by one who has taken up lovingly the chisel of the departed sculptor. Amalia Duprè has worked out with her own hand the designs he left

unfinished, and is adding to these from time to time new works of her own, not unworthy of such companionship.

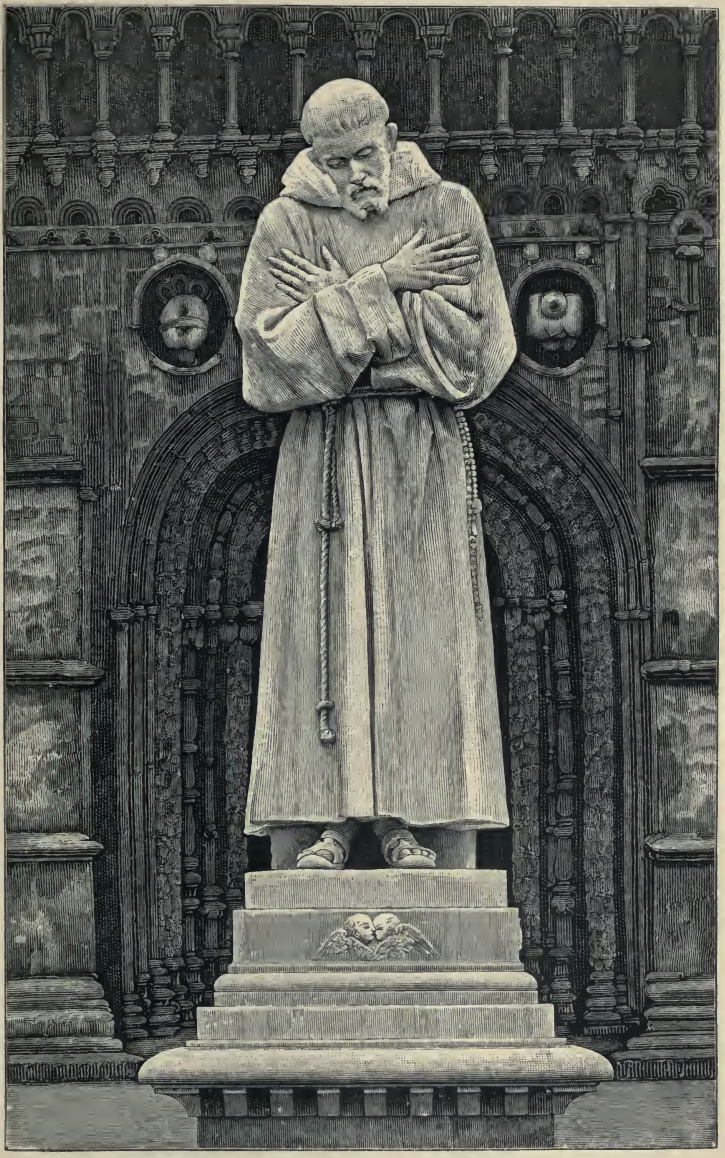
It was many days after his death before Amalia could summon resolution to open the doors of the place where it seemed that she must still see the dear form and hear the familiar voice. Accompanied by tender friends, she moved about for a time through the desolated apartments, not restraining tears. In a few days, finding herself calm enough to resume the work, she completed what little had been left undone on the statue of Raimondo Lullo; then she began to execute in marble the St. Francis, which her father had perfectly moulded in plaster. She wrote to Andrea Ulli: 'I have returned to the studio without my father; the Lord has given me strength; I have looked at the St. Francis; I have given the finishing touches to a statue[1] nearly completed by my father, on which, always so kind, he felt pleased to have me help him. And I shall complete the St. Francis, the last model my father made. I cannot tell you how much the figure is admired by every one. I shall finish it entirely with my own hand, and with the help of God I hope to give to the marble the life and expression of the model. My father will pray for me and aid me from above.'

[1] Raimondo Lullo.

On the 1st of October 1882, the seventh centennial of the birth of St. Francis, this last work of Giovanni Duprè was unveiled at Assisi. Augusto Conti in fitting and eloquent words pronounced the inaugural address, commemorating at once the virtues of the mediæval reformer and the genius of the lamented sculptor. To judge properly of this statue, and to appreciate its extreme simplicity, we must keep in mind that the sculptor aimed at no idealisation of the Saint but rather to present him as the plain monk, in the costume that he himself had worn and prescribed to his followers To have made him otherwise would have been a violation both of history and of good art. And so, says Venturi, 'there stands the mendicant (*il poverello*) of Assisi, habited in the coarse wool, having his loins girt about with the humble cord, his head shaven, inclined a little to one side, with downcast eyes, with lips half-closed and seeming to breathe forth a prayer; while the feet are brought together nearly parallel, the indication of gentleness and modesty, and the arms are crossed with the open palms upon the breast. The arms and hands thus folded are the characteristic sign of the Franciscan order, and Duprè, in seizing upon this trait, has rendered it impossible for the figure to be mistaken for that of any other personage. Now the invention of this

attitude, so simple, may seem easy, just like that of Brunellesco in making the egg stand on end; but it is precisely the kind of easy thing that reveals a genius; it is the simplicity that is found in truth.'

It was well that the last statue from the hand of Duprè, who had always and earnestly read Dante, and worked in the spirit of Giotto, should have been made in honour of the saintly personage whom Dante had immortalised in verse, and Giotto in painting; and that it should be placed on the spot where these two walked and communed together. At Assisi, with the memory of St. Francis, will abide that of the three who have glorified his name in poetry, painting, and sculpture: Dante, Giotto, and Duprè.



ST. FRANCIS.—In Front of the Cathedral of Assisi.

To face page 158.

GIOVANNI DUPRÈ

OR

THOUGHTS ON ART

TWO DIALOGUES FROM THE ITALIAN OF

AUGUSTO CONTI

From Conti to Duprè.

Dear Duprè—I have undertaken to write about certain works of yours that seemed to me marvels of art. Strange task for me, you will say; and, indeed, it was not easy. But I said to myself, many times have we talked together, Duprè and I, as well of art in general as of his own works in particular; could I not therefore recall these conversations, and make a dialogue that should bring them into a kind of dramatic unity? In this way I should more easily avoid the prevailing error of dwelling upon general ideas, and of never descending to particulars, or rather, of never ascending from the specific to the general, and the contrary; for this transition from one to the other a good method requires, and in a living dialogue it is actually secured. And I should also avoid another fault: I should not assume on my own authority to say things either not understood, or partially obscured amidst remote abstractions; for you yourself have talked to me of your art, and I should aim to put into your mouth again your own

observations. This seemed to me best, and this I have attempted. Yet one doubt remained: May I not have failed to give the thoughts of Duprè with exactness and truth? Therefore it occurred to me that I ought to send these dialogues to you for your perusal and approbation, before I offered them to the public. 'This is a delicate matter,' you will say; 'do you wish me to approve of my own praises, if, as I surmise, you have here and there given place to them?' But, dear Giovanni, that concerns me, not you. I desire you only to say whether I have represented your actual thoughts, and have brought forward facts of real importance. And so I beg you, without any regard to the praises I may have bestowed upon your works, or to the interchange of courtesies, simply to answer these questions: Is that which I say of art, in your judgment, true or false? And where do you think I have erred, and where hit the mark? With your consent I will publish your reply, and my readers will trust to you rather than to me.—May you love me as I love you, and live happy. Your

AUGUSTO CONTI.

MONTUI, NEAR FLORENCE,
23d July 1865.

From Duprè to Conti.

My dear Conti—I have read the dialogues you have written on my poor works, and as you desire me to give my opinion without stopping to protest against the praises you bestow upon me, have your wish, and my heartfelt thanks as well. The things, then, that you say in discoursing upon art are true; and you make me, poor ignorant mortal, much too fine a figure. Again I thank you; and if you choose to publish these lines, do it by all means, and be assured of the affection of your most loving friend,

G. Duprè.

24th July 1865.

DIALOGUE FIRST.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE CROSS.

Amico. In your studio at every step we come to something wonderful.

Duprè. I am glad you find anything to approve.

Amico. Here, as we enter your own apartment, lies the Abel. Ah! what a statue; so delicately moulded in every part; how innocent and lovely—beautiful, yet in its beauty what strength and vigour! In the features there is a look of grief and pity; not a trace of fear or anger; and in the body itself, cast naked on the ground, there is an expression of chaste meekness and modesty.

Duprè. Meekness and forgiveness are precisely what I aimed to express in the murdered Abel, who is the type of Jesus and of all the saints. Do you know the correction suggested to me by Bartolini?

Amico. What was it?

Duprè. Before I sculptured the statue in marble,

I showed Bartolini this plaster model. Now do you observe the seam on the right arm?

Amico. Yes.

Duprè. Though habitually slow to praise, he did praise the statue in few words, but emphatically. And yet, pointing to the right hand of the Abel, he made a certain gesture; and I said: I understand, I will make the change.

Amico. And what did he find to criticise?

Duprè. That hand was clenched, as if in a paroxysm of pain or anger, not in keeping with the gentleness of Abel. Therefore I cut off the hand and wrist, and put on another which is open and passive, as of one in peaceful sleep. At the same time I slackened in due proportion the muscles and tendons of the arm.

Amico. So true is it that every work of art is pervaded in all its parts by one controlling idea, like the air in the pipes of an organ; and from this it takes its whole form and character. But let us look at the bas-relief, so generously ordered from you by Sir Francis Sloane for the front of Santa Croce, and which, I am told, is now finished.

Duprè. As the Triumph of the Cross is to be placed in the open air, I have given it the last touches out yonder in the court; we will go and look at it there.

Amico. Wonderful! A poem written in marble!

Duprè. Something grand indeed I aimed to make it; and if I have only succeeded, it is all I could wish.

Amico. I should like to learn from you the idea that flashed upon your mind, and how you went on working out the thought in its parts and as a whole; thus you would teach me in your own person as an artist the process of art creation, which, indeed, must be the same, excepting difference of material, in all the beautiful arts.

Duprè. The idea came to me from the subject, nor can it ever come from any other source.

Amico. Certainly.

Duprè. But some, lacking knowledge or talent, make compositions or figures that say nothing which the subject required them to say; others, loving novelty or striking effects, torture the subject for thoughts or representations ingenious or strange, or wholly unessential, to make their admirers exclaim: Oh! who would have thought of that? How original! But I think 'bread should always be called bread,' and that a subject should always be made to say that which it is in fact, and be represented in its inmost and essential nature.

Amico. No doubt you are right.

Duprè. Thus, while these task their invention to

make a show of novelty, the true artist is content if the thing seems natural or born of itself, and so obvious that all men seem capable of inventing it.

Amico. But yet, few do actually invent, because invention requires the gift and the habit of fixing the mind on the inner qualities of things; though, indeed, when once a truth has been ascertained by any one, all men, following his lead, easily recognise it; then it seems easy.

Duprè. Yes, it is easy to draw the water when the well has been dug.

Amico. Simple truth in works of art seems easy, because it is nature; the strange and unusual, produced by the caprice of fancy, astonishes the multitude, as if difficult of achievement; but, on the contrary, all such things are easy for every one. It is easier to draw a crooked line than a straight one, to paint a hideous than a beautiful person, to make a caricature than a portrait; and to adhere to the just bound is always more difficult than to come short or to go beyond; thus universally, the irregular is easier than the regular, because the rule is simple and one, whereas the ways of violating it are many; and the rule is nature. Observe that in literature the same holds true; and in the sciences also, where a simple truth simply stated costs us more

time, and is worth far more, than a web-work of theories.

Duprè. I think so too. But now, coming to your question about the bas-relief, this is what I said to myself: The subject given to me is the Triumph of the Cross; to represent, that is, the power of Christianity. It will be my task, therefore, to indicate in sculpture the effects of this power that have been most wonderful, or rather, most visible and most universal. Such is the generic and controlling idea of my subject.

Amico. That is true. It remained for you then to determine these effects, and to select from them those that were best adapted to your theme and to your art.

Duprè. I went back in thought through the history of the church, and chose events and personages that seemed to me the most universal types both of the evils overcome by the cross and of the blessings created by it: on the one side, the errors, vices, and miseries that are coming to an end; on the other, the knowledge, the virtues, and the consolations that are springing up in the light of Christ.

Amico. What simplicity!

Duprè. This, if you think of it, suggested spontaneously an arrangement of the bas-relief at once clear and well-disposed, and hence the most beautiful.

Amico. How?

Duprè. At the top, the cross in its triumph, towering over all; in the lower part, those who have submitted themselves to the cross, and who symbolise its victory.

Amico. Excellent! Thus to the true responds the beautiful, and internal order unfolds itself in external harmony.

Duprè. Yes; and on the other hand, the external conditions of art suggest to you things involved in your subject, and therefore beautiful.

Amico. So in good writers the ideas determine the words; then the necessity of seeking words brings about a better disposition of the ideas, and even suggests new ones.

Duprè. For instance, the space between the lower part of the design and the cross was unoccupied; and there in the centre I placed the Angel of Prayer, the messenger of peace between God and men.

Amico. Thus the intermediate space, uniting the extremes, became a symbol of union.

Duprè. The figures, again, that occupy the ground beneath the cross, I thought best to arrange in two groups, united by a lower figure in the middle, so that the two, each with an outline verging towards the centre, might form a kind of semicircle; thus the arrangement becomes distinct, broad, and at the

same time pleasing to the eye; giving the impression of repose and sublimity, but without monotony; while by contrast it renders more conspicuous the highest point of the composition, that is the cross, around the base of which this semicircle forms a kind of corona. Now observe, the general idea in my mind suggested to my fancy this indefinite image of the whole, before I could arrive at the more specific ideas; then these, springing up in their turn, created the individual images.

Amico. What ideas? Pray explain.

Duprè. As to the top of the bas-relief, I reflected that the bare cross alone would not satisfy either the mind or the eye. I set myself, therefore, to consider the mystery of the cross; and thence sprang up thoughts and images in abundance. Jesus, the God-man, is figured by the winding curve of clouds that pass around the shaft of the cross, veiling the eternal nature of the Word. Toward this, six angels, three on either side, direct their gaze in rapt devotion. These represent the heavenly host contemplating the mysteries of redemption. From the cross itself shoot rays of glory, bathing those angelic forms in light, and falling upon the groups below; for the Word is the light that illuminates every mind, and scatters darkness from the earth. Finally, under the cross an angel kneels upon a rock with one knee,

while he clasps the other with his arms and hands, bowing his head with meek devotion and with an expression of sadness; thus representing in his person all the sorrows and all the supplications of the world; and while uniting men to God by prayer, uniting also by his bowed and curving form, both to our thought and to our sight, the upper and lower members of the composition.

Amico. Beauty is the radiance of truth, said Plato; and here it is.

Duprè. Observe, also, the long and slender forms of the worshipping angels, suggestive of their spiritual nature, which is not burdened with the weight of terrestrial bodies.

Amico. Well thought of. Things that transcend the human are fitly represented by images more ideal; which, however, should not fail to speak to the senses, and to appear probable. The improbable, as, for example, the sphinxes and other eastern myths, may speak, perhaps, to our intelligence, even if unpleasing to our taste; and I have said *perhaps*, because that which departs from beauty is deformity, generally violating our intelligence and denoting error; like some hermaphrodite gods of Asia and Greece. But go on, if you please.

Duprè. First, on the right, is St. Augustine, who represents the wisdom of the fathers; then comes

Charlemagne, with the unsheathed sword held in one hand and resting firmly against his shoulder, while the other hand holds the globe surmounted by a cross; all this to show not only the unity of the Christian empire (first created by the Popes in order to harmonise the discords of the world, and afterwards sung by Dante[1]), but still more to symbolise the mission of Christianity, which fashions, and must continue to fashion, states and laws in conformity with itself, bringing in its train justice and charity.

Amico. What majesty, what an aspect of command! How nobly conceived are the form and posture, indicating firmness, security, and vigour! Then, again, what strength of character, what depth of thought in the shape of the mouth and the firmly-compressed lips, and in the eyebrows cast down with a look of profound repose!

Duprè. Between the figures of St. Augustine and Charlemagne appears the head of a martyr (notice the palm); and this one stands for all martyrs that have been, or ever shall be. I cannot tell you whether I thought of it before, but now I perceive that the martyr comes in well between Christian learning and imperial authority; for by dying, and by teaching others to suffer death, Christ, the Captain of the martyrs, secured the triumph of truth and justice.

[1] *Paradise*, vi. 94.

Amico. Well have you said you cannot tell; for when a subject has been well thought out, the spontaneous and rapid connection of ideas and images brings with itself certain beautiful impressions of which the artist either has no consciousness, or so little that he can give no account of them. But the secret of this lies in having reflected upon the subject; otherwise, ideas cannot spring up one from another in this spontaneous manner, just as there can be no echo where there is no first sound. As for the rest, your martyr exhibits suffering in his countenance, and hope in his upturned eyes. But what name has he?

Duprè. You may give him a name after your own fancy; as when they find in the catacombs at Rome the bones of a Christian, accompanied with a martyr's emblems, they baptize him anew with a name to suit themselves.

Amico. You mean, I see, that this martyr of yours is the individual image of a general idea; and you have expressed it more plainly in saying that he stands both for himself and for all martyrs.

Duprè. Again, between Charlemagne and the poor[1] monk of Assisi, is Dante.

Amico. That group is divine!

[1] Dante, *Paradise*, xi. 69. St. Francis and his followers took a vow of perpetual *poverty*.

Duprè. Charlemagne reminded me of Dante, who loved the empire for bringing peace to the world, and especially to Italy;[1] Dante reminded me of St. Francis, whom he celebrated as one of the princes of Providence,[2] ordained to guide the Bride of Christ; thus Dante rises between the imperial power and the church, distinct but not separate, and he typifies their union. Dante should not be omitted from my bas-relief, because he is the chief of Christian poets, and because in the third part of his poem is described the triumph of Christ,[3] and 'for the gathering of this harvest,' he says, 'every sphere of heaven circles round.'

Amico. You are at home with Dante.

Duprè. I have said to you before now, I think, that often, when I have laid aside the chisel, I read the *Divina Commedia.* Observe, Dante stands there not only in place of all Christian poets, but of all Christian literature, or, rather, of all Christian art. There beneath his mantle are hid poets and artists; and under its outer border I, too, find a hiding-place.

Amico. I am glad you have made your Dante thoughtful, not morose; and that, while you preserve the traditional features, you do not follow the custom of giving to him that distorted, old woman's face,

[1] *Paradise*, vi. 94. [2] *Ib.* ix. 35. [3] *Ib.* xxiii. 19.

not found in the original portraits, but due to the exaggerations of a later age.

Duprè. Doesn't it seem to you that St. Francis, clasping his hands and fixing his eyes in love and devotion on the cross, appears, as Dante calls him,[1] 'all seraphic in ardour'?

Amico. And I am glad, too, that you have preserved the thin and meagre visage, sharp-featured, plain and sorrowful, that painters and sculptors from age to age have given him. It is proper that the arts of design should observe this rule; just as the poets who understand their art, whether in poetry or in the drama, never change anything essential in the facts of history or tradition. Thus the reader or the spectator recognises at once things already familiar; and it gives him pleasure to see them present before him, invested, as it were, with new life by the imagination of the artist.

Duprè. And this rule is the more reasonable, because it does not preclude invention; for that consists not in the introduction of things absolutely new, but in clothing them with our own ideas and fancies, and thus through the creative activity of thought endowing with new life that which had been lying in memory passive and unquickened. The work of poets and artists seems to me kindred

[1] *Paradise*, xi. 37.

to the operation of the soul in the human face ; this of itself has no expression, and remains physically always the same ; but the affections and thoughts of the mind change it without cessation ; not otherwise the artist breathes into the images received from the external world his own ideas and his own affections, giving them life and action. Thus that St. Francis of mine bears a general resemblance to every other, but yet it is mine, because in the composition I have given it a meaning of my own, and a corresponding action.

Amico. So it is. Observe, too, the man who reads a story, and images to himself events, persons, and places according to the narrative, is an artist more or less. But let us go on. The remaining figure of the group, almost nude, with stalwart limbs, in a kneeling posture, resting his strong arm on a club, and looking at the cross with a countenance at once wild and gentle, indicating fierceness just subdued, seems to me to represent a barbarian.

Duprè. He is, indeed, one who has lived outside of the pale of civilisation, and now contemplating the cross is redeemed by its power from his former state. The mediæval emperor, poet, and saint made me think of the barbarians whose condition was ameliorated by Christianity; neither could I think of

any triumph more deserving to be called a triumph than this, nor, as I believe, have men ever beheld its equal. I desired that the mute figure of my barbarian should say to every beholder: Without Christianity either civilisation does not exist or it perishes. This is the general idea; my statue says it in a determinate and living form.

Amico. And you know how to make it say this, because upon your head also the cross has thrown its light.

Duprè. A certain lady of rank asked of me some design for her album. I drew the figure of a cross, and under it wrote: *Ave crux, salve spes unica!*

Amico. His limbs look like iron; the muscles, however, are not swollen, knotted, all in action at once, and against nature; a fault that Michelangelo's imitators, and even better artists, would scarcely know how to shun. One would say that the light of Christ is already humanising even his rude limbs. Their bold action contrasts them wonderfully with those of that other figure, placed in the middle between the groups that occupy the right and left of the bas-relief. His form is soft and delicate; slightly emaciated, and not without a trace of suffering—a lovely figure, and of perfect beauty! —not inferior to your Abel. The nude form gives no offence, because with your Christian feeling you

have imparted to it a spiritual significance that controls the senses of every one who looks at it. Corporeal beauty, to you as to him who made it, is a symbol of the mind. Therefore our thought, not resting upon it, penetrates beyond.

Duprè. I have been censured because in my Ferrari monument in San Lorenzo the body of the youth is almost nude.

Amico. Bear it patiently, Giovanni. In that instance the critics are right. If the statue of the mother at his side could speak, she would say to her son: Cover your shame. This utterance of the people tells the whole; especially for sacred places. As for the rest, 'who makes not, errs not.'

Duprè. I erred in not considering that sculptors do not see with the same eyes as other men.

Amico. Returning to the beautiful statue in the centre, it seems to me like a slave that does not yet feel sure of his freedom, though his manacles are broken, and with mingled joy and pain he is lifting himself from the rock where he lay.

Duprè. My idea was to place side by side the victory over barbarism and the emancipation of the slave.

Amico. Yes; for Christian brotherhood brought about the life of civilised society, and, with the advancement of this, also liberty.

Duprè. Moreover, since Christianity, calling slavery an error and an evil, teaches that 'the truth makes us free,' I conceived of the emancipated slave as a type of the deliverance of man in every sense, both as to the body and the soul; and he is placed there in the middle of the bas-relief to give the composition unity both of thought and of outward form. I wished, also, that his countenance should express at once his past suffering and his present joy; then, as he lifts himself slowly to a sitting posture, irresolutely and with a look of pain, he symbolises the transition from slavery to freedom; and moreover, his eyes are turned upwards toward the cross, while the right arm props up the still languid frame, and the other falls listlessly at his side.

Amico. To represent a state of feeling that blends together two different conditions, one preceding the other—that is, two series of affections, more or less remote—is a thing difficult even in speech, but it is still more difficult in artistic design, which is fixed and unchangeable; yet precisely this is the gift of the great masters. They know how to bring many thoughts into small compass, and thus to follow nature—for she exhibits to us the passions for the most part in the mixed and transitional state, and seldom pure and sharply defined, as, for example,

perfect joy or perfect woe—but artists of only average capacity prefer the most violent passions, and of these even the extreme manifestations; and, not content with this, they exaggerate them still further by the extravagances of art, of all things in the world the easiest and cheapest, the most unnatural and ungraceful, and the most repugnant to good sense; and they call this sublime.

Duprè. Just so; and I think the design should show the order of kindred emotions; for this gives beauty. Moreover, one affection passing into another is a movement that breeds grace of expression. Neither can I endure exaggeration and excess; for they are the spasmodic effort either of ill-regulated force or of weak imbecility, and they can only end in deformity. But do you not ask me what names I have given to the slave and to the barbarian?

Amico. No, indeed; I asked that question in regard to the martyr, because among the martyrs there may have been one well known to history, whom you might have chosen as a type of martyrdom; but it could not well be thus among barbarians and slaves.

Duprè. And yet, one of our learned scholars, not an artist indeed, thought I was wrong in placing these 'allegorical' figures among the personages of history.

Amico. And what was your answer?

Duprè. I replied that they were not allegories.

Amico. And you were entirely right. Allegories are abstractions embodied in images more or less analogous to truth, but in themselves impossible; as if a sculptor should symbolise barbarism or slavery by the figure of a woman; a kind of representation, by the way, which is cold and unnatural, especially in connection with matters of history; even in poetry, to say nothing of fine art, it is best to deal with allegory cautiously; employing it only to a limited extent, and in forms consistent with the subject and the context. But your case is different; you invent conceptions of things which may have been, or may be, in actuality; as, for example, a man in servitude, or a man outside of civilisation. The arts of the beautiful always represent universal ideas, but this through individual images; names are given to these either by history or tradition, if, indeed, there are any names illustrious enough to call up before us a whole order of facts and events; as, for instance, Dante in place of all Christian poets; but if such a name fail us, either because unknown, or not fitted to our subject (Attila, for example, would not do for your bas-relief), then the artist invents the figure of an angel, a man, or some other being, to serve as the individual representative of a class; a slave among

slaves, a savage among savages, an angel among angels, and so on.

Duprè. You enter completely into my thought.

Amico. Accordingly there is no essential difference, so far as relates to art, between the personages that the artist takes from history and those of his own invention; for they all alike symbolise as individuals some universal idea; but the first have characteristics fixed by history and represented by their very names, while to the second the artist himself attributes characteristics pertaining to certain classes of men, or growing out of certain conditions of life.

Duprè. Thus it is. But let us proceed. I had now to invent the left-hand portion of the bas-relief, and to arrange it with grace and dignity. Memory supplied me with many conceptions; but I chose St. Paul, that figure nearest to the slave, then St. Thomas Aquinas, kneeling and offering to Christ his book of the *Summa;* next to them, the Emperors Heraclius and Constantine; and finally, the penitent Mary Magdalene and the Countess Matilda.

Amico. I understand, of course, that you were obliged to make some choice, and that among many others, these characters were the most conspicuous in your thoughts; but I should like to know your special reasons.

Duprè. You see St. Paul prostrate on his face in the attitude of adoration; an attitude that calls to our minds his falling from his horse while persecuting the Christians, the overpowering light and the voice of Christ bringing him into subjection to the cross. Between St. Paul and the Christian Emperors is St. Thomas Aquinas; for it was fitting that the 'Doctor of the Doctors' should appear in the bas-relief not less than Augustine, the 'Father of the Fathers;' and so much the more, as St. Thomas narrated to Dante in *Paradise* 'the wonderful life' of Francis, the saint of poverty;[1] and placed here opposite to each other they typify the two most remarkable of the mendicant orders.[2] Besides, I gained in artistic effect by placing St. Thomas at this point; for, as it was proper to represent him kneeling in the act of offering his book, between St. Paul on one side prostrate upon the ground, and the two Emperors standing on the other side, I was thus able to give the whole group a pleasing inclination, rendered still more agreeable to the eye by the posture of Heraclius, who bows his head in meditation, while his left hand supports his face and beard.

Amico. Nor did your subject require the strict order of history; hence, you could intermingle different periods of time.

[1] *Paradise*, xi. [2] The Franciscans and Dominicans.

Duprè. Constantine as an armed warrior, bold and confident, looks at the cross as if even now he heard issuing from it: WITH THIS SIGN SHALT THOU CONQUER.

Amico. What prompt and resolute decision in the face and in the arching breast! What energy and force of bodily frame! Like your own art, he is gracefully vigorous.

Duprè. Constantine represents conquered paganism, as Paul conquered Judaism.

Amico. Conquered; but the Roman unity thus transformed itself into a union of charity, and the Hebrew priesthood into a universal apostleship. Thus the conquered became conquerors with Christ.

Duprè. And these facts you will find impersonated in Heraclius, who conveyed the cross from Jerusalem to Rome, where, as the ensign of redemption, it succeeded to the ensign of conquest.

Amico. Such doubtless is the truth.

Duprè. But my work could not be called complete without showing the influence of Christianity on the condition of woman; how it has given to her sex a new dignity and a purer beauty.

Amico. That would have been to leave out the sweetest flower of Christian civilisation.

Duprè. I did not think it proper to place here the Madonna as one of a group, and as only equal

to the rest; I chose rather the Magdalene and Matilda—one of them a subject dear to the painter and sculptor, the other a favourite of Dante Alighieri.

Amico. Well, I see in general what led you to think of these two names; but now explain to me more fully your reasons.

Duprè. The Magdalene is a splendid example of a woman raised by Christianity from a life of sensuality to a life purely spiritual; Matilda, on the other hand, if we accept tradition, is an example of lifelong virgin purity.

Amico. And so you made Matilda with features not prominent and bold, but expressive of purity, delicacy, and sweetness, with a form slender, or rather, light and ethereal, as if not encumbering the spirit, and with eyes cast down in chaste humility, while she prays silently with clasped hands in almost childlike simplicity; yet I see in her a woman of earnest thought and of firm resolve; not without a loving nature, though without passion. In your Magdalene, the beautiful arms, the well-turned feet, and the fair breast still suggest her former life of pleasure, and she bows her penitent face as if not yet at rest, and shrinks in an attitude of timidity and confusion behind the virgin Matilda, as if desiring that our eyes should rest only on that form of purity and peace.

Duprè. Precisely so. The Magdalene also furnished me with an example of ardent love for Christ, Matilda for the church of Christ and its Pontiffs. It has been remarked that I have glorified the woman who gave to the Popes their temporal power, and that those who are opposed to this might therefore feel unfriendly to the illustrious Countess and to her sculptor.

Amico. And what do you say to that?

Duprè. I say that the passions, and, above all, those of political parties confound everything; for in all questions they exaggerate the interest of one side and forget the other.

Amico. I understand; you had it in mind that the Germans of that period were aiming to bring Italy and the church into vassalage; assuming to bestow the ring upon her bishops, the triple crown upon her Popes, and to subject Christendom to the yoke of despotic Germany; and that it was the great Italian Countess who drove the invaders from Italy, and who increased the possessions of the papacy in order to guarantee its liberties against the Suabian dominion; lo, that is Matilda, of whom every one should be more ready to speak evil than we of Italy.

Duprè. I neither admit nor deny the imputation; I only say, I thought to glorify in Matilda the

liberty of the church, and, with that, the liberty of our country.

Amico. Bravo! Bold thinkers look at things from above, and therefore get a commanding view. And so we come back to the subject in its unity; for the cross in its triumph will give us freedom—a unity that you have maintained amidst so much variety. Both of them, indeed, I discover in the style of your work, where, never losing sight of your central thought, you have nevertheless characterised different periods of time by diversity of art, suggested at once by the personages you represent and by the ideas they symbolise.

Duprè. A learned critic who discusses art without a true feeling for it, might see here a confusion or agglomeration of styles; but I have sought to be universal, as Leonardo wished painters to be; and you have made me happy by noticing that feature. The change of style that art passes through in different periods proceeds from the essential nature of things, provided those periods and their art are not corrupt; and hence, as I thought upon the personages of my bas-relief, my fancy called up their faces, their attitudes, their movement and bearing, as you now see them; and if the angels with their long and slender forms resemble those of Angelico, that comes from the fact that he drew

them with such spiritual truthfulness; if Charlemagne, Dante, the friar of Assisi, Matilda, and Aquinas remind you of the fourteenth century, though I tried to be somewhat more delicate, it is because the simplicity of the art of that century corresponded to the simple grandeur of these characters; if Constantine is fashioned in a Roman style, he was actually a Roman; if in the Magdalene are united the traits both of Oriental and Hellenic beauty, it is because I thought of the luxurious woman of Magdala becoming a penitent in a Grecian colony. But the barbarian Christianised and the slave set free are suggestive of the present times, because in our own day chiefly has human benevolence been active in the emancipation of the slave and the civilisation of the savage. I believe, however, that I myself am present in every figure, because I have not made one mark on the clay, or one stroke on the marble, without first seeing clearly every image contained in the idea of my subject, and without comparing this image with its counterpart in the living book of nature.

Amico. As every piano has its own peculiar tone, but yields to the touch of the player vast and varied harmonies in proportion to the delicacy of its mechanism and the number of its strings, so every artist has his peculiar spirit and temperament,

yet derives from other minds and from external things so many more conceptions of beauty as he has in himself greater capacity, and greater power of assimilation.

Duprè. Now we will go in; the sun already strikes over the wall of the court, and might be hurtful.[1]

Amico. And I must no longer interrupt your work. I will walk about in the other rooms and look at your later statues. But I must say one thing more, and it may serve as the conclusion of your own observations: It is characteristic of you to impart to all of your figures and to all their movements a significance that carries our thoughts beyond that which we see with the eye: the figures are single, but their meaning is universal; so that each of them can be called a symbol, which, as Dante would say, has both a historical or literal sense, and a spiritual sense. Therefore, you are far removed from those who aim merely to model a statue, but have no regard to an inner meaning; such are common or *plebeian* artists. At the same time you are equally removed from those who exhaust their ingenuity in striving to make every line express something strange and far-fetched;

[1] The Italians avoid exposure to the mid-day sun, as it is supposed to cause fever.

needing indeed a glossary to explain their childish riddles. Such artistic exquisites form a school of mutual admirers and a would-be *nobility* in art. But he who utters in the language of beauty thoughts of truth and reality so as to be understood by all men, and who is in sympathy with actual life and genuine culture, this one is the *artist of humanity*. And I have in mind not the sculptor alone, but every true artist, whether poet, musician, painter, or sculptor.

Duprè. I am not so learned as to be carried away with the passion for misty allegories, nor, thank God, so ignorant as not to perceive that a statue possessing mere external beauty is a dumb effigy, like a woman of beautiful form and feature without sense or animation.

Amico. Addio.

Duprè. When my work is ended, you know, I take a turn outside of Florence. Could you not bear me company to-day; especially as Amalia does not go with me?

Amico. Why is not your gentle sculptress with you?

Duprè. She has some duties at home to-day with my other daughters.

Amico. That is well; art does not remove a woman from her proper work. Yes, I'll come and take the walk with you.

DIALOGUE SECOND.

THE PIETÀ AND THE CHRIST RISEN.

WE were walking on the hills of Bellosguardo towards the close of day. It was the sweet season of the year when the cherries are turning red amidst the green leafage; the sparrows were chirping on the elm trees, the swallows and the skylarks floating gaily in the air, and the flowers of the white bryony, the wild rose, and the hawthorn, were breathing from the hedgerows a delightful fragrance.

Amico. I have looked again and again at your Pietà and your Christ Risen, and I could not take my eyes from them. How did you learn, my Duprè, to invent such beautiful things?

Duprè. How do I know?

Amico. And who should know, then?

Duprè. Grant that they are beautiful, as you say; and as I desired them to be, and hope they are; yet, I assure you, the secret of my success I know

GROUP OF THE PIETÀ.—In the Cemetery of Siena.

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only in part; in great part I do not understand it.

Amico. How is that?

Duprè. I know perfectly well the principles that guide me, and the methods of my art; but how certain thoughts and their images arise in my mind, this to me is a mystery; just as no one can tell, as I think, the inner virtue that causes the flowers of the wild plum to burst forth in such beauty. I will add also, that it would be impossible for me, perhaps, too, for you, to draw the proper line between that which comes from nature and that which is supplied by art. At any rate it seems to me that nature without art would remain dry and thorny, like the plum-tree without spring-time.

Amico. I think so too. Thus, the water-springs well up from the ground, but the engineer makes the canals through which they irrigate the lands. But I was speaking of those beautiful statues. Oh! what holy sorrow in that Madonna of yours, resting upon one knee, and holding upon the other the body of Christ just lifted down from the cross; she clasps Him with a mother's tenderness, resting her face upon His head, while in her eyes and lips there is an expression of longing, as if she would fain bring Him back to life. And the Christ, so pure and marvellously beautiful, I have always before my eyes. Did

you find any living model for this rare perfection?

Duprè. Beautiful, of gentle nature, and with no rude mind; he had a religious feeling, and when I gave him a moment for rest, he took up a book. But by a strange and sad fortune, just when I had come to the most beautiful part of the work, he died. It was extremely difficult for me to find any one resembling him, and I was aided more by memory.

Amico. So you try to find living models adapted to the subject.

Duprè. I always instruct my scholars to choose models so adapted. It is not enough to find those that are beautiful; for no one form of beauty can be appropriated to every subject; you might as well attempt to form the word *earth* out of the letters that spell *water.*

Amico. I remember (and I relate it to you, because you have none of the petty jealousy of ordinary artists) how Fedi told me that he had looked a long time in vain for some one to represent the ferocious beauty of Pyrrhus in the Rape of Polyxena. At length he saw one morning a milkman from Lucca with such a fierce look in his eyes and in his whole countenance, that he exclaimed: 'Here is my Pyrrhus!' Accordingly he begged the milkman to

stand for his model, and the youth consented. Now it so happened, that when Fedi was working the clay to form the head of Pyrrhus, he saw on the head of this youth a large ugly scar, which, on questioning him, he learned had been left by the knife of an assailant in a fight at Lucca, occasioned by a love affair. You know very well the savageness of those bloodthirsty boys of Lucca, and their jealousies.

Duprè. Strange accident! But do you think it possible for me or Fedi, or any one else, to find in models the precise idea we wish to represent, in the same manner as we find in certain letters of the alphabet the words necessary for the expression of this or that thing?

Amico. I do not believe it, and for three good reasons: first, that men are continually changing in look and attitude, making it necessary to catch instantly in their transition the motions of the body and the expressions of the face; nor is it possible to reproduce them at pleasure; so that Leonardo advised that they should be noted down at every opportunity in a sketch-book carried for the purpose; secondly, as in nature no two things are exactly alike, though similar, so nothing external can exactly coincide with our idea and its corresponding image, although something may approximate to it more or less; for while the image is formed in us from the

affinity of the senses for nature, and therefore resembles nature, yet it is afterwards modified and completed by the active working of the mind, and according to our particular states of feeling; just as the word *God*, whoever pronounces it, is always the same, yet varies in sound with different voices and emotions; finally, while the invention of the artist is something specific or individual, yet, as you said this morning, it signifies something universal; so that the ideal conception of the artist, through indefinite universality, tends to the infinite, and, as you would say, to that excellence which in this world you do not find.

Duprè. It is exactly so. But do you believe, as one might infer from your last remark, that human art surpasses all beauty of nature, that is, the art of God?

Amico. I am in doubt.

Duprè. For my part, I believe that art does not, nor ever can make anything better than nature; indeed, that it would be great arrogance and vanity to believe it possible. So thought Bartolini, and he was right. On beholding the beauty of certain bodies or certain parts of the body, the true artist is overwhelmed with a feeling of dismay; he is tempted to throw away palette or chisel. But it is especially through the eyes and the lineaments of the

face, and in the smile and in the minutest movements of the body, that nature manifests, as with an electric flash, the thoughts and affections of the soul ; and it is this wonderful power of nature that the artist despairs of emulating.

Amico. I have in mind an incident of my youth. One day I entered the studio of Bartolini when he was sculpturing an arm after that of a lovely young girl sitting as his model. Looking at the statue, I ventured to say: *Questi son capolavori;*[1] and he, fastening his eyes on the arm of the girl, and not looking up at me, replied: *Questi son capogiri.*[2] But therefore, my dear friend, how comes it that the artist does not simply repeat nature, but aims rather to surpass her by selecting the best points of several natural objects, and adding to these something of his own?

Duprè. If he added nothing of his own he would be a servile copyist, not an inventor. It seems to me, however, you have answered your own question.

Amico. How so?

Duprè. Have you not said that the artist contemplates an idea of his own and an image corresponding thereto, with which the objects of outward nature never exactly coincide?

[1] These are *head-pieces*, or masterpieces.

[2] These are *head-swims*, or, these give me the vertigo.

Amico. Yes; and you said I was right.

Duprè. Very well; now the artist does not, and cannot surpass nature in any *absolute sense*, but only *in relation to his own idea;* for of this idea nature is never an adequate symbol, and we must seek one more precisely and more vividly expressive of our thought. Thus the Helen of Zeuxis,[1] which he painted by selecting from several women the most beautiful of their individual traits, was not more beautiful, perhaps, than any one of them in perfection of form; for in a beautiful body the parts have a mutual and natural adaptation which makes each of them indispensable to the completeness of the whole; yet the figure was new and more beautiful in this, that it alone completely expressed the conception of the artist; and this perfect harmony of idea, conception, and design is something wonderful in art; a shadow of the creative power of the Deity. Besides, the accidental defects that we not seldom find in nature, and that are made conspicuous by their connection and contrast with the entire body to which they pertain, as, for instance, when the eyes are too large for the face, the artist can leave out, selecting instead the perfections which are appropriate to the idea of his subject. Finally, ideal excellence, while not surpassing the works of creation, imparts,

[1] Pliny, *Natural History*, xxxv. 9.

nevertheless, to visible forms the deeper meaning that we find here within ourselves, and makes even natural things suggest to us the supernatural.

Amico. So that the figure designed by the sculptor is always different from the living model, though one alone be employed.

Duprè. Always. When I made the Abel, I modelled it entirely from a youth of great beauty. When I had finished the statue to my satisfaction certain critics said it was only a casting taken from the living model,[1] and no invention. Then, before giving me any hint of their purpose, they sent for the model. They measured him and found his proportions very different from those of the statue. So, also, in the Jesus of the Pietà you see the model and yet you do not.

Amico. Of what service then is the model?

Duprè. It aids in the development of our original idea. Thus, when I was engaged by the Marquis Ruspoli to make the Pietà for the Campo Santo of the Misericordia in Siena, I said: The Son of God crucified and dead, the mother mourning for Him, these are the two grand thoughts of my subject; two, but virtually forming only one. This idea, as it occurred to me, called up in my mind the image of

[1] They said it was moulded mechanically by laying plaster on the surface of the living model. See page 37.

the group, though a little confused ; then I made that first small model in clay, as you have seen it ; a painter would have made a sketch. Now, for my large group in clay suppose I had not sought living models, and those as nearly like my idea as possible ; what would have been the result? I should have depended on experience ; that is, I should have fashioned the parts one by one with the aid of memory, recalling the composition of the human body. But this memory always deals in general ideas, and is incapable of bringing before our eyes the delicate workmanship of living nature in producing the plastic flexibility of the muscles and the flesh, exquisitely varied and soft, and above all, in the harmonious transition from one member to another, and from the curve of one line to another. But those who depend on practice and memory either become hard and cold, or adopt certain conventional features that are immutable and almost geometrical; such, for example, as the oval faces of the sculptor who works out his artificial imitations of Greek statues according to the rules of the Academy, without looking to the Parthenon itself, where the grand Pheidias, in those times that were not yet degenerate, freely chiseled his statues under the guidance of the nude forms of Athenian youth continually moving around him. Thus the living

model stands before us as an example not for *copying*, but for *imitation.*

Amico. What do you mean by 'imitation'?

Duprè. Observe: one man is similar to another, and yet he is also different. Is it not so?

Amico. Yes.

Duprè. Therefore every man is an imitation of the common idea of man, but no one is a copy of another. Sons who resemble their fathers are imitations, not portraits.

Amico. That is true.

Duprè. In like manner there comes to the artist from the idea of the subject an image that at once resembles and does not resemble real things; hence his work on one side must be compared with real things, that it may be made to resemble them in fact; but, on the other hand, we should keep our thoughts fixed on our idea, that the work may also preserve its diversity from real things. This is why we can profit by the use of several models; the unity of our work is in the idea.

Amico. Singular power of the idea to combine in unity imitations of outward things with new images of the mind!

Duprè. It seems almost a miracle. You would say that the eye itself surveys the real form of the living model through the medium of a mental image,

and into this transforms the reality. For example, when Bartolini was sculpturing the Nymph that is now seen in the gardens of San Donato, one of his pupils saw him looking intently at the feet of a girl standing as his model. Her feet were not small, and yet he was making those of his statue very small and delicate; so that the scholar said: *Signor maestro*, those feet are not these; and yet Bartolini maintained that he was imitating these and no others.

Amico. Why, how could that be?

Duprè. The nude example placed before his eyes enabled him to observe the actual formation that nature gives to the feet; but his inner thought then worked out of itself its own conception and its external representation.

Amico. In short, you artists seek in the real to discover the ideal.

Duprè. Exactly so: and then we are able to avoid on the one side the insipid or purely conventional art of the idealist, and, on the other, the servility of the realist, who copies everything, even deformity. I have had to guard against these two extremes with the utmost care, because we sail between opposing seas. Bartolini, hating the rules of the Academy, which required as the fixed type of every figure that the eyes should be almond-shaped, the brows always arching, the nose always

straight, lips of the traditional angle, forehead low, eyes near together, cheeks and chin oval, was wont to say: 'Nay, rather than design from the plaster casts of the Academy, let scholars copy from the life, even if it must be from a hunchback.' But Bartolini often said that he did not mean by such remarks to countenance a crude and untaught imitation of nature, but simply to insist upon the earnest study of it; for even by her deformities she teaches more than can be learned from the Academy, so long as it adheres to purely artificial types. He added, also, that, while art must indeed imitate nature, *yet she must keep the reins in hand.* There are some, however, who will not understand his principle, either through their animosity towards him, or because of their fanaticism for 'reality.' To me, though never a student in the Academy, and wont in early days to sit at the bench as a humble woodcarver, it appeared clearer than the sun that art is learned in the book of God, and that this book cannot be read without an inner light; and there came to me an impulse, an idea, a—what shall I say?—a fancy to sculpture the Abel. I found a model, I worked with a will, and the Abel pleased. Abstract fictions or servile copies to me were equally distasteful; but as yet I had no definite principles of art fixed in my mind. Then it was

that I read certain essays on the ideal by Giuseppe Arcangeli, and these for a time led my thoughts astray; for I believed that I too must shut up the volume of nature, and design everything from the plaster casts and the antique. Then for several years I was as one dead; and I worked out statues of the approved fashion, wherein no one recognised me, nor did I know myself. But returning from Naples, where I had spent some time for my health, I stopped at Rome, and there in St. Peter's I saw some statues of Canova, not finished with excessive nicety, and, so to speak, laced and corseted, but such as that of Pius VI. kneeling at the tomb of the Apostles, and that of Pope Rezzonico: figures wherein the truest nature is resplendent with eternal ideality. And then, coming to myself, and feeling once more my earlier impulses and the inspiration of my Abel, I said: 'This, ay, this is art!' And never have I abandoned it again.

Amico. Then you gave free course to the fountains of your soul, that so long had seemed dried up, and in the short period since then you have shown that fertility of invention which has given us the Tazza, the Sappho, the Children with the Grapes,[1] the Ferrari Monument, the Dead Christ,[2] the Christ Risen, the

[1] Two Bacchini, or figures of the infant Bacchus, in an allegorical group called the Cryptogam.

[2] The Pietà.

Christ Triumphant,[1] the Mossotti Monument,[2] and many besides. To be a true artist, therefore, as I gather from your observations, and from your experience, it is necessary to prepare the mind with long study and meditation, so that it may attain correct and luminous ideas of various subjects; then, to cultivate the imagination by the observation of nature, so that it may form appropriate conceptions, and to aid it also by the use of living models adapted to the chosen theme; finally, to imitate nature under the direction and control of the preconceived idea.

Duprè. And also to have an earnest love for the chosen subject, and to keep the thoughts upon it day and night; if you would not have obscure ideas, a cold imagination, and an art producing mummies instead of living statues. You can add, moreover, the study of the great masters, to learn how they proceeded in imitating nature, the common teacher; in other words, the masters as our teachers, not our models; for these are found in nature alone. It was thus that I was instructed by the statues of Canova, and by the example and the words of Bartolini; and this is the more necessary, as every art has its particular rules; for example, of per-

[1] The Triumph of the Cross.

[2] To the late astronomer, Mossotti of Pisa.

spective, of modelling in clay, of working marble, and the like, all handed down by tradition.

Amico. Perfectly true, and your words have impressed upon me with remarkable force the great power and importance of feeling and passion; confessed, indeed, in words by every one, though few recognise it in practice; so that, indeed, science, art, and life are either without impulses, or else receive them from foreign objects.

Duprè. What do you mean by 'foreign'?

Amico. Foreign to that which one has in view. In the æsthetic arts, what is the aim? the beautiful; in the sciences? the true; in life, whether public or private? the good. Every irrelevant affection is a *foreign* impulse, not pertaining to our chief aim, therefore leading us astray; as, for example, the popular fashion, the criticism of the schools, and various other extraneous influences.

Duprè. I will say also, that if this sentiment of love for the subject does not fully possess and, as it were, flood the soul of the artist, his works have but little significance; for a moderate degree of feeling may suffice to make us enjoy the works of others, but to enjoy and to create are very different. To create works of originality and power demands a degree of feeling which is forced by its own impulse to outward expression. You feel as if the thought

of your work were consuming you ; no rest comes to your brain, until you are able to seize upon a clear idea and to design the essential parts ; then your work itself catches the ardour of your soul, and it inflames in turn those who behold it. Often, indeed, do these words of Dante come into my mind :

'. . . Love by virtue fired,
If only its pure flame shine outwardly,
In others ever kindles answering love.'[1]

Amico. You have said that the artist is consumed by the thought of his work ; and you have felt it. Ah ! give some time to rest.

Duprè. I find much rest in music, when I hear it. But to end what I desired to say, the attention fixed upon the work you have in hand sets in secret motion all the powers of the mind, and produces sooner or later, yet always by a sudden inspiration, the image you have sought for ; the mental image in which outward and sensible forms take on a new aspect. This secret labour is unremitted even in sleep ; and this sometimes on singular and most unexpected occasions startles us with the sudden revelation of the new image. I will mention an incident to you which, whenever I recall it, almost

[1] Amore,
Acceso da virtù sempr' altri accese,
Purchè la fiamma paresse fuore.—*Purgatory*, xxii. 10.

makes me tremble. I had been long meditating upon the Pietà, and was working out a small model of it which did not satisfy my idea; lines distorted, no repose, too artificial, too studied; and then I began to work out the idea again from the beginning, and was worried and consumed as if a nail were fastened in my head. One day in summer, after dinner, when reclining upon the sofa reading a newspaper, I fell asleep; and lo, I seemed to see, what I had long sought in vain, my Pietà; Jesus stretched upon the ground sustained upon the knee of the Madonna, His right arm resting upon her, the left hanging down, His head inclined gently upon His breast, while the Madonna was bending over Him with that look of unutterable woe. I woke up, and found myself lying exactly like the Christ: I ran to my studio and instantly made the new model. I tremble to think how this design, so simple, after I had in vain tried to find it by art and by long study, came to me almost of itself.

Amico. But you had prepared your mind by long application to your art; thus the notion, which, in falling asleep, you had retained of your own reclining form awakened in you, in some vague manner, the image appropriate to your subject. Spontaneity and meditation make the artist.

Duprè. And I have many times noticed that after

changing again and again, and still feeling dissatisfied, then the final stroke that gives content would seem to be the one that ought to have been the very first, because it is more simple than any other.

Amico. Thus, also, in writers, it is the form of the greatest simplicity and brevity that commends itself at last; and the more mature authors write with more simplicity than beginners. Nor can it be otherwise, because the beautiful arts use signs, that is, words or lines or musical notes; signs of a thought that becomes the more luminous the more it is meditated; and when completely meditated, then most correct is its sign; that is, most appropriate, definite, clear; neither too much nor too little—in a word, the most simple. Moreover, when art is in its glory, the signs are few, the meaning rich; when art is corrupt, there is poverty of sense with multitude of signs. He who has something to say does not lose himself in a multitude of unmeaning words, lines, notes, or compliments. Compare, if you choose, the seventeenth century with the sixteenth, or, better still, with the fifteenth, and you will see.

Duprè. Certainly great thoughts are a great power that makes much with little. Lessen the substance and you increase the show. Thus it is in all things.

Amico. But now that we touch upon signs, another thought occurs to me.

Duprè. What is that?

Amico. You have shown me that the real and the ideal are so reciprocally united that the artist beholds his idea in the real, and transmutes the real into his idea. The idea, however, is that which is essential, the thing signified; the mental image and the external design are signs of the idea; just as your statue of the Risen Christ is not the actual Christ, but rather the image or a sign of the Christ; a word, as it were, that indicates the Word-made man.

Duprè. Very true.

Amico. Because signs speak to the senses, they must be taken from the sensible and real; as language from the living utterance of the voice, musical notes from the tones determined by acoustic laws, artistic designs from natural forms; so much the more as the affinity between the aspects and qualities of sensible things and certain thoughts and feelings of the soul has been taught us by nature. We see, therefore, the necessity of a careful observation and imitation of natural things; hence, also, the necessity of keeping within the bounds that nature prescribes, and of not violating the natural conditions of art; as if any one should attempt to make music express precisely the ideas that are conveyed by words, or as if the sculptor should trespass on the sphere of the painter, and the contrary. But, again,

signs, inasmuch as they are expressive of ideas, ought to be subsidiary to the idea rather than to the outward reality; hence, they should be in kind and in force such as the idea requires for its effective presentation, not necessarily such in every particular as the types which are found in nature itself; thus the distant and azure-tinted mountains, or water gently winding through green meadows, or an oak standing upon the brow of a precipice, say more to me than a landscape copied with minute exactness; thus, also, a few lines of a beautiful form are more suggestive than the niceties of a petty and drudging imitation, a simple attitude more than strained and difficult gestures, a popular love-song more than the learned music whose every strain resembles a laboured sentence, and whose every note seeks to imitate some object, or to express some thought; in literature, also, a line of Dante says more to me than a whole poem of the present day. Indeed, it seems to me the utter corruption and ruin of the art of our times that its chief aim is sensation.

Duprè. It makes that its aim, because it is barren of living ideas.

Amico. Living?

Duprè. Yes, ideas all alive with love.

Amico. Blessed is he who possesses them; because the idea of the subject we have to handle

serves in every theme and in every art as the measure of the whole work; serves as the measure, because from it, as from an initial unit or fundamental formula, are evolved conceptions, sentiments, images, form, and style. An artist destitute of thoughts and ideas is like a hod-carrier with a title of nobility, and like one who would learn to write without knowing how to read.

Duprè. Or like one who speaks with loud voice and chance gestures, and knows not what he is talking about. Never can it be said too often how essential it is for the artist to fasten his thoughts firmly upon the controlling idea. My last experience of this was in the Dead Christ; for the mouth—but I have said too much already about my own works; and it is not my wont.

Amico. Go on, I pray you; for in thus opening yourself to me, you give me proof of your friendship. But your observations upon art recall in a very agreeable manner something I have read in Xenophon. He describes a pleasant dialogue between Parrhasius and Socrates, in which the latter taught that painters in representing a perfect human form should make it express not only external but internal beauty; and thus that they should avoid the fault of the Grecian artists after the time of Pheidias in making their figures graceful, but without any soul. Now in turn

you, a Christian sculptor, are teaching me, a disciple of Socrates, what is the soul of art.

Duprè. Not to have any strife in courtesy, I will hurry on. The mouth of the Christ, then, ought to express the gentleness of the lamb; and yet I could not find a model that gave me such a sweet and pure expression, while inclining his head towards the breast; on the contrary, the act of forcing the chin downwards made the lips project and thus look quite harsh and unsightly. You would not believe how many experiments I made on this feature, how many times I changed it; for, on the one side, I had to avoid that ugly protuberance of the lips, and on the other, a strained and unnatural expression; at last, however, I hit upon the form which the idea required, and was satisfied; and I have reason to believe that others are content with it too. Again, the body of the Dead Christ should give the impression that a living soul had dwelt therein, and would speedily return; therefore, it should seem to be nearly like a body in sleep, though forsaken of the living spirit; the limbs not too rigid, though immovable; and in the feet must not be too strongly represented the folding or bending back that is usual in paroxysms of agony and the chill of death.

Amico. And that is quite right.

Duprè. This obedience to the idea, that is

constantly expanding and growing more luminous in the mind, makes every touch, when we approach the end of the work, every addition or correction, a new creation ; because it completes the expression of our idea, or is the perfecting of it. That being attained, we do not add to the work a superficial polish, and seek to gratify a taste for empty show ; it is enough that our meaning is fully manifested—manifested through the medium of a figure that breathes and speaks from the countenance, from the hands, from the feet, from the carriage of the person, from the hair, and even from every fold of the drapery ; speaks only one thought, but one of rich variety ; so when a living person makes any gesture or movement, his whole body and all that covers it conform to the action, each thing in its own way, and harmonise with it.

Amico. Good rules for every art ; nor is the file of literary criticism any different. Not observing that the perfection of writing is to say a thing in the clearest manner possible, he who has regard chiefly to the prettiness of words often begins with one thought, and, changing his phrases again and again, comes at last without perceiving it to something quite different, or even directly opposite.

Duprè. You are right ; so also in our art, the living model may lead us away from the idea, if, in

the temptation to imitate every natural beauty, we no longer keep our attention fixed upon that which pertains exclusively to our subject. And what is the consequence? The work does not turn out beautiful, whatever elegance it may possess; not beautiful, because everything is not in harmony with the object or idea of the work. You writers may be led away by the love of a phrase, we artists by a certain external elegance. For example, I closed the right hand of my Christ Risen, so as to make it different from the left; then I perceived that the Christ ought to open both the arms and the hands, as if showing to men in His rising the hope of their own resurrection, and of being received to His bosom. However, it cannot be denied that the arts are subject to certain material necessities, the observation of which is an advantage. Thus, again, I represented the arms of the Risen Christ at first raised upwards; but then reflecting that this would interfere with the view of the head when looked at from the sides of the statue, for it was to be placed by Signor Filippi in a circular temple at Buti, I lowered the arms as if in the act of loving welcome.

Amico. It would seem that the external conditions of art must sometimes require of you to depart from your conception.

Duprè. No, it is not so; for these conditions

always result in giving it a better rendering, and, therefore, a more spiritual beauty; thus to conceal the head of the Christ is contrary to the object of the statue, and also to the idea of redemption. I will tell you another thing; the necessity of making the Christ with the arms let downwards led me to consider better the subject as a whole; because an important part of a statue cannot be altered without leading to the alteration of nearly the whole, in order to preserve the unity of the subject. In its first form, the Christ was exultant, elevated above the ground, His arms raised in triumph, the face turned toward heaven, the hair loose and flowing. But reflecting again upon my subject, I perceived that the idea was not brought out clearly, because it was not apparent whether the statue represented the ascension or the resurrection; and reflecting still further, I saw that the face turned upward was too much diminished or shortened to one looking from below. Then I gently inclined the face, thus bringing it into accord with the action of the arms and hands; I adjusted the hair, reduced the arching of the breast, and placed under the feet the shelving rock of the sepulchre, so that the Christ, while standing still, is also on the point of moving.

Amico. Divine statue!

Duprè. And here, my friend, is the chief difficulty:

to represent at once repose and motion—repose which depends upon a natural posture of the figure, and which gives it an appearance of stability, while, at the same time, it suggests movement; for it is a principle of nature that every movement has its spring in something fixed and firm, and that which is firm manifests its power by movement; the muscles of the body, for this reason, are never all distended at one moment.

Amico. Thus in beautiful speech the thought moves on, but always in calm security. A beautiful style is movement and repose. Thought hurries along animated by feeling; but thought and feeling are controlled by firm and tranquil reason.

Duprè. Thus should it be. But now we are coming into Florence. Let us change the subject.

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