THE MEMPHIS DAILY APPEAL.

BY M'CLANAHAN, TROUSDALE & DILL. MEMPHIS, SUNDAY, JANUARY 15, 1860. VOLUME XI.--NUMBER 12.

Daily Appeal.

THE SCULPTOR'S TRIUMPH.

TO WHOM CAN IT INTERESTS.

FROM THE FLORENTINE JOURNAL.

In the palmiest days of art in Florence, one of its greatest masters, known by proclamation that he would produce, and to the statues which adorned the palaces, a representation of Mary, the pattern of women, modelling the Savior's feet, which the last sculptor with her mantle had left unfinished, and finishing the Mary's hair. The papers of our city was allowed for the creation of a Mary Queen. Three venerable professors were appointed by lot to aid in the inspiration of the sculptor, who, on the expiration of the allotted time, was more commissioned to visit the atelier of every of the professors, who, with the aid of Mary to offer, and the sculptor's genius, were worthy of being sent to the Ducal palace for further examination. Three the final selection was to be made by thirty-four judges. The sculptor was allowed a marble Mary of equalizing beauty, was to receive the sum of 1,000 for his labor. But many gold mutterers were in the city, who had a Mary of marble which caused a brilliant career to the successful sculptor.

Now we remember the artists who were competitors for the invaluable distinction!

The day previous to the one fixed for the exhibition arrived—the day upon which the three judges made their reports, and granted permission for the approved to enter the palace of the Signory.

Many a heart in Florence grew sick with anxiety and was filled with despair as he recognized the conditions that existed between his school and the judges, who alone highest reached by the liberal conception. Many others, gifted with the elegantly seen which to other the blonde of genius, carried in the eye of the world for her lover. Many unequivocally by the judges, expressive merits, imparted to the young sculptor.

There was no likelihood of their appearance before noon—yet he did not dare to absent himself from the palace even to break his fast. He sat with his head leaning in his hands, lost in thought, and, while he mused, the gates of fancy opened to another fantastic fear that presented itself for admission.

Hour after hour passed, and now he began to start at every step that approached his door, he heart palpitated and his breath come thick, but the steps passed carelessly on, as though no one were conscious of his existence. The gaiety high began to soften and fade—surely it must be evening! An Andrea suffered at the terrible possibility that he had been wholly forgotten.

A hand rap on the door put to flight this last tormenting fear. The judge had come. As they entered Andrea thought they glanced around the bare apartment with an expression of undisguised scorn.

He faltered out, "You are very welcome—it was so late, I almost feared—"

One of the judges interrupted him, and answered grufly, "Yes, we are here—we have made the rounds of the studios, and a fatiguing time we have had of it; this is the last—we must get through quickly while the light serves."

His tone expressed not merely impatience, but the conviction that they could meet with no artistic achievement in that locality which would requite much examination, or give rise to any pecuniary reward.

Andrea seized the crimson curtain with a convulsive grasp threw it aside, and turned away, that he might not see the mortifying countenance of his merciless critics. Large drops of dew started from his brow; a cold tremor ran through his frame. His heart sank as with the pangs of death. Suddenly the door which opened to admit those stern unfeeling old men had let out his last hope. His spirit sprang from its lair, as though to defy condemnation like a man; his only wish that the interview might be quickly over.

For a few moments deep silence followed the disclosure of the statue. The stillness was broken by an exclamation from the elder of the visitors. Andrea turned incoherently. The features of the old man were lighted with emotion, as with piercing, uncompromising eye, he intently surveyed the marble form. It was not admirable his countenance expressed—it was the antagonist—her disapproval—it was absolute error.

In the looks of the other two judges the most casual observer could have read wonder and delight. They whispered together for a moment, then turned to Andrea.

It is a noble work—full of power—full of genius!" exclaimed one of these two, with enthusiasm.

"I was never more astonished! I expected nothing like this!" ejaculated the other.

"Will he consent to the exhibition, then to-morrow?" asked Andrea, eagerly.

"Admitted," replied the judge who had first spoken. "Young man, it will win the prize! Is not that your opinion?" turning to his companion.

"Decidedly the best thing we have seen yet. It will be the delight of the people. Do you not say so?" said the latter addressing the oldest of the party, who still stood silently glancing from the statue to Andrea with a puzzled air.

"If it should be seen at the exhibition—yes, but—"

"But, Signor?" interrupted Andrea, "I intend to send it there—that is, if your permission will be granted."

"That is yours," said one of the old men, who had seated himself at the table, and was now writing. He held out the order of admission. "Send the statue between to-morrow—the doors will be open by ten."

Andrea scarcely had his trembling hand for the paper—his lips moved inarticulately—the quick revulsion from despair to ecstacy had rendered him speechless. He was unnerved at his happiness—yet its suddenness caused him to suffer intensely. At that moment he felt that he knew what the sensations of dying with joy must be.

"Are you satisfied with your work? Is it perfect? Do you not see that I am in despair?"

"Perfect! I see also that it is perfect! But since you are dissatisfied with your work I must ask for your once more. It will be the last time, for the judgment the studio, Bellini, and all else—the statue will be admitted into the palace."

Before Andrea could reply, Contesina had burst from her station of the antechamber, and was rushing to her side, her bosom heaving above the white robe, clothed loosely around her flexible waist, and her exquisite marble form; over which her dark ringlets fell in undulating outlines. Her long hair confined her like a golden cloud. With one arm she encircled the form herself into the image of the sculptor Mary, and remained motionless. Andrea contemplated her in silent admiration, then took up the pencil and gave a few light touches to the statue—then drew back, and gazed upon the living form, glowing with life and beauty, and vying in intimate copy. Carried away by an irresistible emotion, he suddenly dropped the chisel and hurl into tears.

Confidence sprang up and hastened to his side—but his agitation was so violent that he seemed unconscious of her presence. With gentle force she drew away the hands that covered his face, and gathered up her flowing tresses as though to wipe his eyes. Well might the subdued archness and poetry of the action make him smile.

"Your Mary will win the prize, Andrea! I am sure of it!"

"Will it win both prizes—this above all?" renewed Andrea, taking her hand.

"Yes—one now, and the other in time. Perhaps," she added, laughing, "when there are a few wrinkles here for you to add to your Mary's brow, that the likeness may be retained. But see how the sun is marching up the heavens! Come, Bellini, it warns us to be on our way!"

The attendant and her beloved young mistress retired again and quickly returned, Contesina wearing her scarlet cloak.

"Farewell, Andrea; to-morrow morning I will come again to learn what the judges have said. To leave? Oh! you continued, gaily, "why I can perhaps be of service! I shall hear nothing to learn, only a sweet confirmation to hear. Do you shake your head—I am sure of their verdict—farewell!"

The tantalizing laughter of the young lover was hardly as warm as might have been expected. They clasped hands—she with trustful, yet tearless smile—he with respectful reverence. Such had ever been the reserved character of their intercourse.

As the door closed, the young sculptor turned again to his Mary. A thousand glaring defects became suddenly apparent to his excited imagination—all the features were distorted—the lines were faulty—the whole expression was tame—cowardly! He could not endure the sight of his work, and tumultuously drew the crimson curtain, vowing that he would not throw back its folds until the judge arrived.

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