

A SCULPTOR'S LOVE STORY.

The capital of Anjou is preparing to do honor to one of its most illustrious children. The sculptor David is to be commemorated by a statue, the work of a M. Noel, who obtained the first prize in the competition organized by the town of Angers. Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire has been deputed to represent the Government at the inaugural ceremony, and the occasion will probably be seized to put forward a species of ministerial programme. The life of David of Angers forms a fitting subject for republican panegyric, as he suffered persecution and banishment for the good cause. Posthumous reward has come at last, and on the spot where the embryo artist solicited the charity of passers-by to take home a few sous to his mother, the features of the powerful genius as he developed in after years will serve to remind future generations of Angevins that the path of glory, if it leads but to the grave, does not always close there.

The story of the struggling sculptor's privations, trials and ultimate success in the great city whither he betook himself, will doubtless be retold once more. To gain a scanty pittance he was obliged to accept mason's work, in which capacity he has left some marks of his powers in stone in the front of the Tuileries. Hearing of the hardships of their young townsman, the municipality in Angers voted him a moderate annuity of 500 francs, or \$100. This sufficed to keep David from actual want, and the force of his character and aptitudes for art soon enabled him not only to sustain his head above water but also to emerge into notoriety. He received a commission to execute an emblematic figure of France on the portal of the Pantheon, which is esteemed a masterpiece. The revolution of 1848 afforded him all opening to public life, and the very decided way in which he protested against the admission of Prince Napoleon caused him to be proscribed and very nearly cost him his life in 1852. It may, perhaps, be an exaggeration to speak of David of Angers as the French Michael Angelo, but in his chief work, which has been called a national *epopee*, he certainly approached that great master. The history of this statue, "La Jeune Grecque," which was designed to portray a young girl bending over a marble tomb and spelling the hero's name of Marcos Botzaris, the victim of Nauphie and savior of Missolonghi, has been recounted by Jules Claretie. The young artist, inspired by this tale, burned with desire to raise a monument to its hero. One day, when casting about for a subject of composition, he perceived a little girl in a cemetery, kneeling over a tomb and spelling out the letters of the inscription chiselled there by the aid of her fingers. Nothing could be more simple or more touching.

"He deciphering with a lisp the secret of death." The next step was to seek a model. While on his way to dine with Victor Hugo, at the house of the Mere Saguet, in the Rue du Montparnasse, he discovered a maiden of fourteen, in rags but charming therein. "Now I have my model," David confided to his friend the poet, after he had taken the address of the girl. Slim and delicate, bearing in her face the signs of a precocious struggle for existence, the child was nevertheless beautiful, and seemed at that moment to incarnate Greece oppressed. Her frail body was destined to live in the marble of the statuaries; but all that her unworthy parent thought of was the ration of brandy which her daughter's pure form procured her in the present.

There was in David's atelier, in the Rue de Fleurus a crucifix in bronze which attracted his model's attention. One day, at the close of a sitting, she ventured to ask the sculptor if he would consent to part with it, in return for her services, until the debt was wiped out.

"A Christ like that in our loft would be beautiful, and then it would console me, and might sustain me," entreated the girl.

Without a moment's hesitation, David went and unhooked the coveted object, saying, in his curt but not unkindly tones: "All right; you wish it; very well, take it, then; and if ever you are tempted to do wrong, look at it and think of him who gave it you."

"For nothing?" demanded the child, whose name was Clementine. Her joy was profound, and David went on with feverish inspiration to complete his marble effigy of the young Grecian maiden spelling the name of Botzaris. "All his pious passed into the representation of this delicate creature, and all the feelings of the patriot were expressed in its clay. When he had finished, the author apostrophized his handiwork like Pygmalion addressing Galatea, "But as parent, not as lover."

"Thou art ended now, dear child, and art about to quit our shores for the beautiful country of Greece—thou whom I loved so much. Ah! how I love thee, as a tender father loves his daughter, in spite of the faults which he knows so well. Thou art about to quit the land of noble inspirations and great works for the country which gave them birth. May the sun of Attica, whose rosy rays are but faintly reflected here, warm thee. When the star shall mount in the firmament, like a thought of the Christ, one of its rays shall rest on thy melancholy brow; for thou art very sad, my poor child."

The statue of "La Jeune Grecque" was sent off to Greece, and in spite of this gloomy invocation, we are told that the artist probably thought no more of it than of its prototype, being engrossed with other works. One

evening, on quitting a company at M. de Gisor's, the architect of Luxembourg, David was accosted by an unknown person, who dealt him two terrible blows from behind, which laid bare his skull. But for the help of a passing workman he might have bled to death by the wayside. With difficulty the sculptor dragged himself to his abode. His attempted assassin remained undiscovered, although David always suspected a rival against whom he voted in a competition, and who afterwards died mad. A few years later, when the episode had been nearly forgotten by its victim, David of Angers (as he is called) received a letter inviting him to repair, between midnight and one o'clock, to a certain house in the Faubourg St. Jaques, near the hospital Val de Grace. A sign, understood by "patriots," was traced on the cover. David, fancying that it referred to a convocation of some political refugees, prepared to start without any misgivings. The note stated that the house had no concierge and that the bearer must go provided with a covered lantern. On the fourth story he would see a cross chalked on the door, which would be opened on knocking. Somebody would be there to receive him. The proposal sounded mysterious, not to say suspicious, but the recipient of this strange missive was young; and the romantic school, with friend Hugo at the head, was just at its dawn. He set off, arriving at the house indicated a little after midnight.

On reaching the fourth floor David perceived the chalk cross, when he knocked as instructed, without any misgivings. No answer. He knocked again, with the same result, until, thinking he had been made the dupe of some practical joke, the midnight visitor was about to descend and wend his way homeward. All of a sudden the opposite door opened, when a young woman appeared with a light in her hand. Recognizing David, she became pale, exclaiming in a terrified voice, "What! is it you? You, Monsieur David!"

The sculptor, in his turn, stood stupefied as he saw before him, still beautiful, though trembling, the little street girl of the Rue Montparnasse, the young Greek of the tomb of Botzaris.

"Go away from here as quick as you can," she cried in supplicating tones. "If you stay you are a dead man. And be sure not to say a word about it, else we shall be undone, my mother and I. Ah! Mon Dieu! I did know it was you. Be off at once, I beg of you, Monsieur David."

"Be it so," responded the sculptor, feeling that alone, without arms, he would be no match for his hidden enemies. Descending rapidly the staircase, he gained the street, and posted himself a few doors off in the entrance to the court. A few minutes later several men approached, who disappeared stealthily in the house he had just quitted. "I fancied" said the sculptor, "that I recognized my assassin among them."

Many years elapsed, when one day David was impelled by the desire to revisit the site. Knocking at the door where the girl had appeared, he obtained no answer. Asking a workman on the stair for Mlle. Clementine, "Don't know her," was the gruff reply. Nobody in the place had ever heard of a woman of that name. Disappeared, doubtless, the lassie of 1837, who had incarnated such a beautiful dream. In the month of August, 1843, following the obsequies of his comrade Cortot, of whom he said, "His sculpture is of ice—an honest tradesman, who puts the right weight in the scales, neither more nor less," David desisted, lounging along the Quai Malaquais, his old model, grown to womanhood, still beautiful, though miserable. Under her arms she carried the Christ, the same which the sculptor gave her with the exhortation, "You shall think of it when you are tempted to go wrong." For a moment he thought of leaving the procession to follow the woman on her errand to the bric-a-brac dealers of the quarter, and for months afterwards he scanned the windows of these curiosity shops, to spy, if possible, this bronze figure of the Savior. Five or six years subsequently the artist once more stumbled across his young vision. Alas! how changed and fallen. David saw her disappear in one of the hideous dens of vice, in company with a noted bully. "This creature, bearing already at forty the stigma of decrepitude, was the maiden whom the sculptor and the poet had met, who had for a moment impregnated their dreams of art with the genius of liberty—Greece, ever young and ever fair."

But this was not the last time the pair were fated to encounter each other. In July, 1847, a figure drew timidly towards David as he was passing along the Rue des Bouchers. "You do not remember me, M. David," she said. "Oh, yes; I am so changed. I was prettier the first day when I came to you. Oh! I could not pose any more for *la Jeune Grecque* now." David shuddered, dropped into the woman's hand a piece, and the next instant saw her taken off to jail by the police. "It would be difficult to invent a more poignant story," adds the chronicler; but the end was not yet come.

David, of Angers, exiled by the *coup d'etat* repaired to Greece, accompanied by his daughter. He wanted to behold with his own eyes, under the pure sky of Attica, the chief work of his youth. He must go to Missolonghi, to visit the tomb of Marco Botzaris. Some one said to him, "Do not go." "Why not?" inquired the traveler. He was soon to know the reason. Approaching the strip of land where Byron died, at the foot

of the bastion where Botzaris fell, the sculptor described the young Greek. "Methought I saw her thrill at the sight of her creator a generation ago." The next moment he gave vent to a cry of rage and despair. The statue was broken; the right hand smashed; the pointed finger gone. The face was mutilated like the visage of its model, as struck by her brutal protector. Roving tourists—English among the number—had defaced the pedestal, and other infamies had been committed. David never fully recovered from the stroke, and returned soon afterwards to his native town to die. His heart bled at the thought of the outrage inflicted by those barbarians. Alas! for our shattered idols! These barbarians were Greeks.

Stock Items.

[Husbandman.]

Some cotemporaries think the story of sheep being starved until they eat each other's wool incredible, but it is not. A number of the wool growers of this valley are cognizant of this fact and have seen it demonstrated during the past month.

The Musselshell flock-masters, so far as we have been able to learn, have had remarkable good luck with their flocks during the three months of severe winter just passed. They all report light losses and their testimony is corroborated by the mail carrier; who says that but few dead sheep are to be seen about their premises.

We are informed by a reliable gentleman who made a trip through the big bottom on Smith River from the forks to Birch Creek that he did not find more than a dozen dead animals and they were mostly calves dropped since the fall round up, as they were not branded. There were a few yearlings and he noticed one three year old heifer that had suckled a calf, and one cow fifteen years old. This seems almost incredible after the stories we have heard about there being nearly 3,000 head congregated there which were dying so rapidly, yet it is true. He says the loss of sheep does not show so lightly as he noticed a number of piles of dead ones on Birch creek.

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