

1909

Picture study, "Lincoln" : Augustus Saint-Gaudens

Charles A. Kent

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PICTURE STUDY, "LINCOLN."

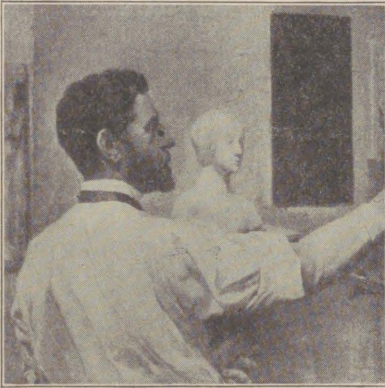
AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS.

BY CHARLES A. KENT, AUDUBON SCHOOL, CHICAGO, ILL.

Original, A Heroic Bronze, south end Lincoln Park, Chicago.

Sculptor, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Born 1848; died 1907.

Catalog Numbers, Turner, 359F; Perry, 1421.



OTHER WORKS BY THIS
SCULPTOR:

Farragut Monument,
Madison Square, New
York City.

"The Puritan,"
(Deacon Chapin),
Springfield, Mass.

Phillips Brooks Bas-
Relief, Trinity Church,
Boston.

Robert Louis Steven-
son, St. Giles' Cathedral,
Edinburgh, Scotland.

Sherman Equestrian

Statue, Central Park, New York City.

Peter Cooper Statue, near Cooper Union, New York
City.

Parnell Statue, Dublin, Ireland.

Shaw Memorial, near State House, Boston Common,
Boston.

Logan Monument, Lake Front, Chicago.

Holland Monument, Bridge St. Cemetery, Springfield,
Mass.

Bas-Relief of Bastien-Lepage, in possession of Mrs.
Saint-Gaudens.

Lincoln (Seated), planned for entrance to Crerar
Library, Grant Park, Chicago.

Gold U. S. Eagle and Double Eagle.

Garfield Monument, Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, Pa.

"Grief" or "Nirvana," Rock Creek Cemetery, Wash-
ington, D. C.

"Diana" (detail) top of Madison Square Garden, New
York City.

Medal for Columbian Exposition, 1893.

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Reading References:

- Century Magazine, LIII: p. 689; pp. 695-714.
 Scribner's Monthly, XXII: pp. 161-167.
 Century Magazine, XV: pp. 569-577.
 Century Magazine, XXXV: pp. 28-39.
 Century Magazine, LII: pp. 968-969.
 The Outlook, Sept. 22, 1906, pp. 199-208.
 Atlantic Monthly, March, 1908.
 Caffin's "American Masters of Sculpture," pp. 1-17.
 (Doubleday, Page & Co.)
 Taft's "History of American Sculpture," pp. 279-309.
 (McMillian's.)
 Kenyon Cox's "Old Masters and New," pp. 266-285.
 (Fox, Duffield & Co.)
 Hind's "Augustus Saint-Gaudens" (John Lane Co.,
 New York).

THE SCULPTOR'S LIFE:

The father of Augustus Saint-Gaudens was from Aspet, a small town in the Pyrenees Mountains in France a short distance from the town of Saint-Gaudens. He went afterward to Ireland and married a Dublin girl, and their son, the future sculptor, was born there. The family moved to Boston when the child was less than a year old, and, after staying there three months, selected New York City as their home. There at thirteen Augustus was apprenticed to a cameo-cutter, Louis Avet by name, said to have been the first cameo-cutter in this country. For six years he worked faithfully at this trying occupation, in addition thereto studying drawing and design at Cooper Union, and later at the National Academy of Design.

His very first work was a portrait-bust of his father. In 1867 he went to Paris to study sculpture in earnest. He was now nineteen years old. A year later he entered the great school of the Beaux Arts, and was a pupil of Jouffrey, a great teacher of plastic art, who, along with Dubois, and Rodin, and Bayre, created what has



been called the third and present-existing French school of sculpture. Paul Dubois's great statue of "St. John the Baptist" had been exhibited in the Paris Salon in 1863, and the next year after going to Paris, Saint-Gaudens was charmed and stirred by Dubois's beautiful "Florentine Singer," exhibited that year at the Paris Universal Exposition, which breathed the very spirit of the Florentine Renaissance, and inspired the young Irish-American to set his standard high.

The outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870 made study much less agreeable in Paris and Saint-Gaudens went to Rome, remaining three years. He concluded not to return to Paris, and resolved to establish himself in America, the land of his adoption. Accordingly in 1874 he set up a studio in New York City. In 1877 he married Augusta F. Homer, and in 1885 they began their leisure life in a summer home at Cornish, New Hampshire. From 1874 to 1897 he worked faithfully at his tasks in and about New York City, occasionally taking a short run over to Rome or Paris. His first great reputation was established with the setting up of his Farragut Statue in New York City. He had been given the commission to design the work in 1876, at the age of twenty-eight. It was the first attempt to break away from conventional standards in sculpture, in that it embodied the principle of low-relief, and less conventionality than had hitherto obtained. In his work as a cameo-cutter he had attained a keenness of vision and delicacy of touch that gave him a marvelous command of technique, and while his subjects take on the more modest impress in low-relief, the accuracy of detail in his work marvelously compensated, and added much to his renown and the appreciation of his work. In 1887 was unveiled at Chicago his "Lincoln," everywhere hailed as the greatest portrait-statue in the United States. In 1897 he went to Paris and spent three years at work on the Sherman Equestrian statue which was to be set at the entrance to Central

Park, New York. After 1900 he battled with failing health, working far more than his strength warranted, to finish many set tasks he had undertaken, and these, with the aid of his family and friends were completed before his death, August 3, 1907.

During life he was the recipient of endless honors, memberships, degrees, medals, etc., and at his death two continents vied in his honor.

The greatest men are the most perfect personification of their age. Every real genius is to some extent what Michelet called the elder Dumas, "Not a man, but one of the forces of nature." Real, thinking, leading sculptors have in all times afforded in their works an expression, a mirror of the national life and ideals of their times. Whether intended or not, their works are the records of the spirit of their day and age. So, Saint-Gaudens, born in a far land, brought to this country in very youth, has grown up to live and promote the noble aspects of American patriotism, and American culture, and, in his sphere as truly as the great characters he has set into everlasting bronze, typifies the spirit of the later Americanism, its ambitions, its development, its triumph.

THE LINCOLN STATUE, CHICAGO, DESCRIBED:

It is a hundred years since Lincoln was born, nearly a half century since his untimely death and the close of his active career, and we are each year loving him better, honoring him more deeply, and cherishing his counsels more sacredly.

But with all the inspiration of the theme, it is idle to say that it is impossible for a sculptor to fail with such a subject as Lincoln before him. Some have failed; others have been successful in varying degrees, but only Saint-Gaudens has caught the very idea of the stature of Lincoln as the national and beloved hero, the rugged power and sweetness of the face, the emotional angularities of the large body, and the sense of will controlled by the simple nobility of character.

Picture Study, "Lincoln."

When this statue was unveiled in 1887 it was declared joyfully that the perfect ideal in statue-portraiture had been reached in the United States. It has remained so. From the exalted occupation of the man to the last detail of the simple accessories it is a masterpiece. There is introduced the striking adjunct of a large chair, from which the President is presumed to have risen. Before it stands the gaunt figure with bowed head as though lost in thought or preparing to address a multitude. The left foot is well advanced; the left hand grasps the lapel of the coat in a familiar gesture; the right hand is behind the back, affording an agreeable but inconspicuous counter-balance to the droop of the head. It is the expression of that strange, almost grotesquely plain, yet beautiful face, crowned with tumbled locks, which arrests and holds the gaze. The gnarled form has a grace all its own, the "inward grace" which a profound master has caught and made visible. It is strangely powerful in this, that while the world has statues seated and statues standing, a figure just risen from his seat is rare, and serves to give us that added feeling that this is a man of deeds, that perhaps no other work of modern or ancient art transmits.

Again it is a strange power this quiet figure sways over him who stands before it, in that while not a hand is lifted or a look is addressed your way, there seems within a power to thrill which is denied the most dramatic works planned expressly for emotional appeal!

There stands the man with his feet firmly planted, his body erect, his shoulders squared, standing as one accustomed to face the people and sway them at his will, while the slightly drooped head, and the quiet, yet not passive hands express the mediativeness, the self-control, the conscientiousness of the philosopher who reflected well before he spoke, of the moralist who realized fully the responsibilities of what he had to say. The dignity of the man, and his simplicity; his strength, his inflexibility

and his tenderness; his goodness and his courage; his intellectual confidence and his humility of soul; the poetic cast of his thought, the homely rigor of his manner and the underlying sadness of his spirit,—all these may be read in the lines of this wonderful sculpture.

The statue has the immense advantage of a generous and dignified setting, far from the confusion of downtown streets. Paths sweep gracefully toward the broad structure, which is upon a slight rise of ground near the south end of Lincoln Park, Chicago, and is backed by trees. The great exedra or circular rest sixty feet across is flanked by two large globes of bronze lettered with the "Gettysburg Address" on the left one, (west) spangled by a graceful laurel, while the right (east) one bears a beautiful oak leaf on one side, and a long extract from Lincoln's First Inaugural Address opposite. Around the interior wall of the exedra in letters over a foot high, cut in the granite are "MDCCCIX—ABRAHAM LINCOLN—MDCCCLXV"—birth, name, and death. Just below the statue, on the front of the pedestal proper are the modest words, "Gift of Eli Bates," showing merely the name of the generous donor of the statue to Chicago.

One wall of the exedra bears the words, "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to know the right, let us strive on." Opposite to this one can read from the Cooper Union speech: "Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it."

The statue proper is of bronze, eleven and one-half feet in height.

Millet painted the French peasantry as he saw them in his boyhood home; Della Robbia and Donatella made statues of Italian children; Rosa Bonheur painted animals that came near her home to the old well to drink; and each was a faithful delineator of the life of his age.

It has remained for Saint-Gaudens to put in imperishable bronze features of American childhood, and to shape with fingers of incomparable skill and devotion the figures of our American Heroes, teachers and statesmen.

QUESTIONS ABOUT SAINT-GAUDENS.

When and where was he born? When and where did he die? In what two European cities did he study his art?

With what great sculptor did he study? What first work of a kind that helped him in sculpture did he do? What is cameo-cutting? Who was the first man of that occupation in the United States? Name two works of Paul Dubois. Which one did Saint-Gaudens see, and where? What was the first piece he attempted? What year did the sculptor come to the United States to live? What year to set up in his work as a sculptor? Where did he set up a studio? What was his first reputable public work? Where is it set up?

What is meant by low-relief? How does it differ from most of the older types of statuary? What year was the "Lincoln" unveiled? Who gave the statue to Chicago, or who was the donor? What is a portrait-statue? What two continents vied with each other in his honor? How can we say that the work of Saint-Gaudens was "Patriotic"?

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SCULPTURE "LINCOLN"

What in this statue would give the impression that Lincoln was a great man? What attributes of character does the face express? What does the presence of a chair near to and in the rear of the President suggest? Is there anything about the portrait to show that the man is thoughtful? That he is full of simplicity? What imparts dignity to the figure? Strength? What in the posture indicates that the man was used to addressing audiences? Repeat the inscriptions on the exedra of the monument. Is there anything familiar in the gesture of the left hand? Where does the statue stand? What is its height? Describe the "exedra." What inscriptions are on the great bronze balls? Who presented this monument to Chicago? Describe the location of the monument.