

*The Athenæum
of Philadelphia*



ALBERT BRUCE JOY.

(From a Photograph by H. P. Robinson, Tunbridge Wells).

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ALBERT BRUCE JOY.



HE eminent sculptor whose portrait adorns our front page, was born in Dublin in 1842. He was the son of Dr. W. Bruce Joy, for some years physician to the Dublin General Dispensary. Although settled in Antrim since 1612, the family was originally English, Captain Thomas

Joy, of Barnstaple, the ancestor of the Irish branch, having accompanied Sir Arthur Chichester (the ancestor of the Londonderry family) to Ireland in the above year. The family has produced several famous men, perhaps the most noteworthy being Francis Joy, who in 1737 started the *Belfast News Letter*, the second oldest paper in Ireland, and still a power in the land.

At the age of nine young Bruce Joy was sent to the school of Dr. Becker (author of "Becker's Grammar") at Offenbach, near Frankfort-on-the-Main, Germany. He was subsequently for a short time at school in Paris; then for two years under Dr. Hill (afterwards head-master of Magdalen College School, Oxford) ultimately attending lectures at King's College, London.

Bruce Joy had from an early age shown manifestations of taste in an artistic direction, and at the age of seventeen he finally decided to commit himself to an Art career, and became a student at the South Kensington Schools of Art. He made such rapid progress there, under the direction of Dalow, one of the ablest sculptors who ever had that department under his charge at South Kensington, that in the course of two or three years he was enabled to enter Foley's studio as a pupil. For four years he worked under that eminent artist, attending at the same time the Royal Academy Schools. In 1866, at the age of twenty-four, he went to Rome to perfect his studies, and remained there for three years. It was in the same year (1866) that the young sculptor had the pleasure of seeing his first work in the Royal Academy Exhibition. Since then he has not missed a single year, having in all exhibited well on to a hundred works there.

Mr. Bruce Joy's special talent lies in portrait statuary, and his power of seizing and giving expression to moral vigour

and intellectual strength is quite exceptional. In this department, indeed, he has few living compeers, and seems in this respect to have been the recipient of the mantle of his great master, Foley. He had previously done many busts, but in 1876 he received his first commission for a colossal statue, namely that of Dr. Robert Graves, for the Royal College of Physicians, Dublin. About the same time, however, he was commissioned to execute a statue of the late Mr. John Laird, of Birmingham, to be erected in the Square in front of the Town Hall of that town; and this was the first large work of his unveiled. It is justly considered one of the finest modern works of the kind in the Kingdom.

The commission for this monument Mr. Bruce Joy obtained by competition, his two models being placed first and second out of sixteen sent in. Since that time the sculptor's hands have generally been so full that he has not had the time or inclination to enter competitions, except in the case of the Harvey Tercentenary Statue for the Lees at Folkestone. This beautiful work was executed by Mr. Bruce Joy in 1879, and was unveiled in 1881.

The Graves statue, unveiled in 1877, proved an equally satisfactory work to that of the Laird monument. One who knew the man represented, spoke of the sculptor's work in these terms:—"Furnished only with a couple of imperfect photographs, and a cast taken from the face when it was deformed by disease and death, he has set before us a good likeness of a man whom we honoured and loved. He was, indeed, helped in the progress of his work by the criticisms and suggestions of the friends and relations of Robert Graves. But I also give him credit for having been able, under the influence of an artistic intuition, to translate into marble what he had heard and read of the spirit and genius of the man." That is a high, though well-merited tribute.

Amongst Mr. Bruce Joy's other chief works may be named the statue of Lord Chief Justice Whiteside, in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, and the statue of Mr. Christopher Bushell, in the Public Library and Museum, Liverpool. These were followed by the Gladstone statue erected in front of Bow Church, at the east end of London. This, and his statues of John Bright, namely, the one erected for the Birmingham Liberal Association, and placed in the New Art Gallery opened by the Prince of Wales in 1886, and the one upon which he is now

engaged for erection in Manchester, will probably be the works by which his name will be best known to posterity. Of the Gladstone statue the praise was unanimous, and one can hardly frame better words to characterise the work than those made use of by the *Scotsman*: "While thoroughly realistic, as befits a work intended to convey to posterity the personal appearance



"FORSAKEN."—By A. Bruce Joy.

of a remarkable public man, the statue has none the less been conceived in a large and reposeful style, breathing the true spirit of the sculptor's art."

Unfortunately this is not always the spirit in which artists approach their subjects; there are numberless recent examples.

in London of portrait-busts of men that are as untrue to nature as they are false to the first principles of the sculptor's art.

As to the Bright statue at Birmingham, those who have seen it, and who had also the pleasure of knowing the subject of it, admit it to be an admirable likeness. What Mr. Bright himself thought of the sculptor may be inferred from the following letter, written to Mr. Alfred Illingworth in 1886 :—

MY DEAR ILLINGWORTH,—

Some of my Birmingham friends have employed Mr. Bruce Joy to make a statue of me to be placed in Birmingham. I think highly of him. He made an admirable figure of Mr. Gladstone. His statue is close to West Kensington Station in Beaumont Road, I think. Canon Farrar recommended him to me. If you call at the studio you may see what he has done for me, and can judge as to his powers. I know no other artist to whom I can recommend you to go.

Always sincerely yours,

JOHN BRIGHT.

The new statue of the famous Tribune to be erected somewhere in Manchester is still in process of execution at the artist's studio. The full-size model is complete, and a good idea may therefore be obtained of what it will be like when finished. The venerable statesman, in the habit as he lived, is standing in an easy but dignified position, with one arm hanging down loosely, and the other hand holding papers. There are few finer heads for artistic purposes than that of Mr. Bright, and the treatment is in every way worthy of the subject. It is full of life and earnestness, and evinces a loving care of his subject on the part of the artist, which is more than half the secret of success.

Amongst other well-known works by the sculptor are the statue of Lord Frederick Cavendish, which stands in front of the Town Hall at Barrow-in-Furness; the bust of Mark Firth, for the Firth College, Sheffield; the memorial of Admiral Sir E. Codrington (of Navarino) in St. Paul's Cathedral; Canon Selwyn's bust in the Divinity Schools at Cambridge; a medallion of the late Duke of Albany (from sittings given about two years prior to his death); busts of the Marquess of Salisbury, Miss Mary Anderson, etc. His more recent works include a colossal statue of Sir Matthew Wilson, of Bradford; the colossal statue of Mr. Alexander Balfour, erected in St. John's churchyard, Liverpool; the recumbent statue of the celebrated Bishop Berkeley, placed but a few weeks ago in Cloyne Cathedral; the bust of Sir T. Erskine May (Lord Farnborough) recently

unveiled in the House of Commons ; and the busts of Professor Huxley, Earl Cairns, Professor Adams (the astronomer), General Sir Frederick Roberts, and the late Colonel Akroyd.

Of Mr. Bruce Joy's many ideal works we can only mention two or three ; foremost amongst these are his " Young Apollo " (exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1870) ; the " Fairy Tale " (a figure-portrait of the daughter of Lord Cranbrook) in the Royal Academy of 1875 ; his " Forsaken," in the Royal Academy of the same year, and afterwards in the Manchester Exhibition ; and " The First Flight," exhibited in the Royal Academy of 1877, and described in the *Times* as " a girl letting fly one of a nestful of captive birds, than which it is long since we have seen plastic work more instinct with loveliness and life," and as " the most graceful and imaginative figure of the year." The idea seems to have been suggested by Tennyson's lines :—

" What does little birdie say
In her nest at peep of day ?
' Let me fly,' says little birdie,
' Let me fly away ! "

A number of other works are equally worthy of mention, did space permit ; but we ought not to omit all reference to the " Pets " (girl and dog) exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1884, and exhibiting some of the best features of his art.
