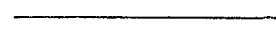


ANTOINE-LOUIS BARYE.



FROM THE FRENCH OF A. GENEVAY.



## A. L. BARYE.

1796-1875.

In the year 1875, France lost from the ranks of her painters Millet and Corot, and French sculpture made even a more irreparable loss in the death of Antoine Louis Barye, the great bronze master.

He was born in Paris, in 1796. His father came from Lyons, and established himself as a master silversmith in Paris, where he married Mlle. Clarapède, who survived her husband long enough to see the success of her son. She does not seem to have exercised any great control over him. He had more of his father's character, and must have lacked that maternal influence which often plays so important a part in forming the characters of men destined to be great.

Whether through indifference on the part of his parents, or through the independence of his own character, or for other cause, he was not a student at any college; almost from his cradle he

displayed an inclination for the arts. For years his family preserved paper animals which, as a child, he used to cut with scissors, and many a reprimand he received for drawing on the walls with a brick dipped in water.

It is perhaps foolish to revive these childish marks of early aspirations, but the human mind always finds pleasure, and likes to point out, in vague and unformed essays, the germ of future works.

With Barye, these early aspirations will be more fittingly found in the care he displayed to acquire the instruction which he lacked. Not satisfied with studying arduously everything connected with art, in which he was destined to become a master, he acquired both deep and extended knowledge in history, geography, archæology, and the principal branches of the natural sciences. He had a fine memory, which remained true to him to the end of his life, although he sometimes complained of forgetting dates. His youth, indeed his whole life, was honorable and laborious; work was to him both a duty and a pleasure, nature had endowed him with that excellent quality found in all true men of art. With James Watt, he might have taken for device the word *observare*, he saw everything

quickly and justly, he studied scrupulously the object which attracted him and knew how to preserve an exact impression of it. To this extent he was a *realist*, but only in the noble sense of the word, never falling into its trivial or ignoble dangers; the animals which he reproduced were reproductions of their attitudes and characters. He never believed that art was the research after ugliness; on the contrary, he knew always where to find in his models the beauty proper to them. He treated alike, with the same respect, with the same sentiment of truth, both men and animals, and was most happy in always finding their best plastic points and conditions. Thus, in his *Theseus and the Minotaur*, it is questionable whether the hero or the brute is the more perfect in beauty of execution and excellence of form. In this mighty struggle each actor has the perfections of his race; the brute is a powerful brute, and Theseus a demi-god.

But let us return to our biography and follow the child. The first studies, or rather the first career to which he was attracted, was engraving. He entered the shop of the engraver Fourier, whose work consisted principally of ornamenting the military trappings so much in vogue at this time. He also executed several steel moulds for

the repoussé work of a very successful silversmith named Biennais. During this serious apprenticeship he learned to handle the graver, but it was not until later that he touched the boaster. Unfortunately the Empire, already upon its inevitable decline, was daily calling for recruits; men, and even boys, were enlisted as food for its incessant battles. Barye, in 1812, was conscripted, but was so fortunate as to be assigned to the topographical engineers, where, to some extent, he was able to pursue his studies. It is said that he modelled several of the plans in relief now preserved in the War Ministry Office. But upon speaking of this to his family, they tell me he never mentioned the fact, which renders the question at least uncertain. Upon leaving the topographical corps he passed into the battalion of sappers, and in 1814, when came the fall of Napoleon, he laid aside his war tools to assume once more those of his first profession. He was now eighteen years old, a mere child of the period, destined in his still unrecognized genius to join the "*Sacred Spring*," whose budding forth in 1830 was so glorious for France, and marked the new modern departure in literature, science and art. Shorn of the glory of battles, she found one, more lasting, in the search for truth and in the noble development of thought.

She had fallen, but only to rise again higher. It was with the arts that Greece, conquered by the Romans, mastered their victors. This same fortune was reserved for France.

Barye having returned to engraving, was tormented by a restless demon; he wished to be more than an engraver, he was longing to be a sculptor. But he did not deceive himself, he recognized fully what was wanting before he could enter the dreamed-of career.

At this time he was a member of the "National Guard," and in his company he had found a sculptor with whom he counselled, and by whom he was doubtless encouraged, as in after years he often referred to these conversations which had guided his resolutions to important action. It was as if a living spark had dropped upon the ready coals.

He entered both the studio of the then much esteemed Bosio, and of the noted painter Gros. We do not wish to detract from the reputation of the first of these masters, but his style was too finished, too distinguished, his elegance too affected and too roguish, to give Barye lessons which suited his temperament, aside from the mere technicalities of work. There was too great

a gulf between them, and we may feel happy that the teacher did not spoil the scholar.

To illustrate the wide line of demarcation between them, suppose that Barye had been commissioned instead of Bosio to make the statue of the youthful "Henri IV." Think you it would have resembled that of Bosio? Instead of a page decked in the court costume, half Valois, half Louis XIV, we should have had the rustic "Béarnais," the son of Jeanne the Huguenot, the child with the eagle's nose, climbing the peaks, scaling the passes of the Pyrenees, preparing himself for the role of adventurer, of winner of battles. France would have better recognized the picture, but, I must confess, it would have been ill-received at the Tuileries, where the condition of success in official art patronized by the Court was not the true, but the false.

"Do not torment yourself about my likeness," said Napoleon to David, "but make me as I wish to be seen."

The influence of Gros upon Barye was no doubt more felt and more lasting. Devoted to the traditions of the school which taught him, worshipping his master David with the devotion of the fetich, especially after the Restoration,



when he was thrown into exile, Gros could see nothing greater than the brush which produced the "Leonidas" and the "Sabines."

Contrary to the teaching of David, who avoided imposing his own ideas upon his pupils, Gros, his disciple, preached the classic only. Fortunately, he was often unfaithful to himself, for neither Greeks nor Romans would see anything in his *Pestilence*, his *Battle of Eylau*, or his *Visit to St. Denis*, which taught lessons more valuable than his oral teachings.

What must especially have pleased Barye in his master was the strength, the ardor, the boldness of his execution, and we can well see that he could not pass through Gros' studio without great advantages, at the same time that he retained his own strong individuality. It was here that, by hard work, he acquired that freedom of execution which we find in his wonderful drawings and powerful aquarelles.

About this same period Barye presented himself at the annual "concours" for the medal offered by the Beaux Arts for engraving. The subject given, "*Milon of Croton devoured by the Lion*," was well chosen as offering good scope to the skill of the graver.

M. G. Planche says: "I have before me this

work of 1819, the first to mark the life of Barye, the first durable trace of the strong qualities which assured later the great popularity of his talent. The subject, treated by Pierre Puget in the XVIIth century with such power and energy, was grasped by Fourier's pupil with a marvellous precision. The lion gnawing the thigh of the athlete is rendered with a skill rarely found in a student of the Academy. Both the head and attitude of Milon express eloquently the struggle between his courage and his suffering."

The connoisseurs voted the palm to Barye, but he only obtained the second prize. The jury awarded the first to Vatinelle.

In 1820, when he had followed the classes of Bosio only one year, Barye presented himself for the "concours" in statuary. The subject given was "*Cain hearing the voice of the Eternal*," and not only did he gain a good standing, but he almost carried off the prize. The head of his Cain, full of shame and powerless rage, was very fine, and the body of the fratricide was good in action. Once again the public voice pronounced in his favor, but the official judges gave him only second place, naming before him M. Jacquot.

The next year, 1821, he again appeared in the breach, but I must confess I have not even looked

up his "*Alexandre dans la ville des Oxidraques*"; not that I doubt its fine qualities, if it still exists, but on account of the strangeness of the subject inflicted upon the competitors. This year M. Lemaire received the prize.

Barye was not discouraged. In 1822, the well worn subject of "*The Robe of Joseph brought by his Brothers to Jacob*," was presented, and again Barye failed, the palm being awarded to the younger M. Seurre. In 1823 he again presented himself, but the "concours" was adjudged so weak that no prize was given. Finally, the following year, Barye did not even receive a mention, and probably his friends advised him to abandon sculpture. We should not be surprised, for did not Guérin counsel Géricault to give up painting? At all events, Barye never again competed, and it may be questionable whether art should regret that they did not send him to that Roman school where so many hopes have been swallowed up. Doubtless, with his intense originality and ardent love of work, he would not have fallen asleep upon the young laurels so often destructive, but who could be sure he would have escaped dangerous influences, or the "malaria" which so long cursed the "villa" of our Roman school?

Our great satisfaction is that Barye rose from his academic struggle without a vestige of discouragement, or the least doubt as to the nature of his vocation. Even more severe upon himself than were his judges, he redoubled his efforts, and the year 1823 ushered in the great labor of his life. Driven by the necessity of living, he worked until 1831 for Fauconnier, the jeweller of the Duchess d'Angoulême. He composed for him exquisite little marvels, some of which later he signed at the instance of the family of Fauconnier. Animals, which he modelled for this work, display already the wonderful qualities found in his most renowned bronzes. He passed whole hours in front of his models, studying their habits, their customs, comparing them together, becoming familiar with their forms and seizing every trait of character. He would not only draw, but paint them, reviving their colors, and searching continually for works which treated of their structure or told of their habits. He was a faithful listener at the lectures given at the "Jardin des Plantes," and the books by Buffon, Lacépède and Cuvier never had a more earnest reader. He followed assiduously all the courses of anatomy, studied the history of events, of men, of art, of costumes, of discoveries, of travels;

learned all the delicate operations required in casting metals, and thus acquired a mass of knowledge which his memory, constantly exercised, never after lost.

He was always fixed in the opinion that the artist who knew nothing but his art soon became a simple machine, and that science, far from killing the imagination, was its proper guardian and guide. Imagination was not wanting in Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Raphael, Rubens, Van Dyck, Lesueur, Poussin, and who would dare state that these men were lacking in knowledge and information? In the human brain all the cells are united, they are contiguous and related, they mutually strengthen and fortify each other.

Barye sent to the Exposition of 1827, two busts and several medallions. Doubtless the public, at this time small in number, saw them, as did also the critics, but nowhere can we find an expression of opinion about them. It is, moreover, curious to note how at this date criticism exercised its prerogative, into what hands the unfortunate artists had fallen, and with what slender baggage these art critics held their places. And yet you can hardly conceive what judicial haughtiness they displayed, and actually exercised, to the great

detriment, to the mortal agony, of the man who dared to seek an untrodden path, and refused to stumble along in the footprints of the imitators of that school of the Empire which was the bare shadow cast by the painters of the Revolution. Alas, how many generous and gushing springs have been dried up by these fathers of families, who, with tranquil minds, scribbled their criticisms; how many promising lives and hopes have been crushed by their juries!

Omitting MM. Thiers, Stendhal and a few kindred spirits, who dared timidly to sustain Delacroix, Ary Scheffer and the landscapists who had the pretension to paint nature as the light of heaven revealed it to them, all the others in a mob were hunting and howling against the innovators. We have said there were a few rare exceptions, and we will soon find one of them.

At the Exposition of 1831, Barye appeared, in the shape we so much admire, with a *Saint Sebastian*, and his group of *a Tiger Devouring a Crocodile*. The former was much admired. It was noble and touching in expression, well conceived, good in action, most happy in its anatomy, and lacking those *rooty legs* so much affected, and which filled poor Stendhal with unmixed horror. But the great event of the Salon

was *The Tiger and Crocodile*, which was received with universal plaudits.

The position of art critic on the "Journal des Débats" was filled by an old pupil of David, who was a better draughtsman than painter, who has written a good romance, and who was sufficiently independent in his opinions to deny the genius of the Abbé Delille, then in all his glory. Let us repeat the words of his judgment:

"As to the *Tiger Devouring a Crocodile* (wrote M. Delécluze), this singular composition is by M. Barye, who also made the model of the *St. Sebastian*, remarkable for its natural pose and great truth to details. But this tiger hugging the crocodile in his paws, and the reptile, in fear and agony doubling on himself, form a group so true, so dreadful, that it is difficult to distract your attention, once fixed upon it. And, although the beings here represented belong to a lower creation, *life* is rendered with such force and passion in these two animals, that we do not hesitate to pronounce the group which they form, the strongest and best work of sculpture in the Salon." Thus M. Delécluze placed this group of Barye above the works of Duseigneur, Dumont, Duret, Foyatier, Marochetti and David d'Angers, and he was right.

In Paris very often a first success is attributed to good luck, by those who are distrustful or jealous, and artists are cited who have been only once lucky. Was Barye to be ranked among this number? Was his brilliant success to prove only a flash? In answer to this question he sent to the Salon of 1833: *A Bust of the Duke of Orleans*; *A Stag Borne Down by Two Hounds* (large); *A Horse Overthrown by a Lion*; *Charles VI in the Forest of Maintz*; *A Cavalier of the XVth Century*; *The Lion and Serpent*; *A Russian Bear*; *A Bear of the Alps*; *A Fight between two Bears* (of America and of India); *An Elephant of Asia*; *A Dead Gazelle*, and a frame of *Medallions*.

And not satisfied with exhibiting as a sculptor only, he also submitted to the public a series of aquarelles: *Two Jaguars of Perou*; *A Tiger Devouring a Lion*; *A Panther of India*; *A Panther of Morocco*; *Two Young Lions from the Cape*; and *Two Tigers of Bengal*—all works worthy to have been signed by Eugene Delacroix. Truly France possessed in him a great master, as versatile as he was prolific.

Ah, that other artists would follow his example! Barye only gained his reputation, after *twenty-four years* of effort, by most determined work,



and in the face of what material disadvantages ! Never did *improbis labor* have a truer exponent. The press was almost unanimous in its praise of Barye's exposition. In an article signed "N," "Le National" of April 21st says : " From men let us pass to animals, and what shall we say of Barye, their wonderful interpreter ? What shall be said of the little dramas he makes them play, dramas so simple yet so deep in effect ? What death of a human being, in this Salon, stirs more the soul than the death of this little gazelle, only as long as your hand, lying so languishingly upon the sod as if drawing its last breath ? What assassination appeals to you more than this wounded stag fighting the dogs for its rest of life, or this horse overthrown by a lion ? What face could express more horror and fear than this lion crushing the serpent ? Who could make you laugh with jollier will than this bear on his hind legs waiting for you to throw him a chunk of bread ? Who does not remember seeing, at the Jardin des Plantes, two little twin bears tumble each other over with the same horrible grace and unarmed paws as the two bears of M. Barye ? To such a man art is far more than culture, it is the joy of his whole life. With gifts so rare, with such facility, such skill, such mind, such

sentiment, with the whole world to explore, such an artist should be happy. If he is not, then genius is a lie, and we, the public, are mere barbarians."

In 1833 there were many barbarians, just as there are to-day, who repeated, "What do all these paper-weights mean? What is all this hunting and dining-room sculpture? What has become of the majestic lines and monumental composition, the true attributes and glory of great art?"

Gustave Planche said: "The Lion exhibited at the Louvre in 1833 called forth a general cry of astonishment among the partisans of academic sculpture. And very soon this astonishment was succeeded by rage, as the public, regardless of the remonstrances of the Professors and of those who followed their maxims, continued to praise Barye as both a happy and skillful artist. And when this model was purchased by the government, and the bronze, cast with such rare skill by Honoré Gonon from the *cire perdue*, was placed in the Tuileries, it is said a well-known artist exclaimed with ingenuous rage: 'Since when has the Tuileries been made a menagerie?' And after all the good man had good reason to complain, for what was to become of the numerous family of

the lions of Plantard, so round and fat, with their eyes like billiard-balls and bedecked with the wig of Louis XIV? Their day was gone, henceforth no one could pass them without a smile.

“What a gulf between these and the living bronzes of Barye! His Lion crushes a serpent in his paws and awaits a chance to devour him. The expression of the eye, the movement of the shoulders, the whole attitude, all admirably conspire to tell the story . . . . In spite of the want of intelligence in placing this monument where the eye first loses itself under the shoulder of the lion, instead of being on a level with it, there is such knowledge and skill in rendering the details, that the sight of this work inspires a sort of awe . . . It is a marvel of energy and realism.”

At the period we have now reached Barye was fortunate in securing the protection, or rather the good will, of a certain official world, headed by the Duke of Orleans and his brothers, who were all amateurs of the new progressive art. The royal prince already possessed several of his works, among them the *Bear in the Trough*, an admirable little thing, so delicate and pleasing in composition that one can hardly see it and suppress a smile.

The Duke of Orleans wished to have a series of ornaments for his dining-table from the hand of the great artist, just as the Popes and the Emperors of the Renaissance ordered dishes and cups from Benvenuto Cellini. The desire was certainly a most worthy one, and yet to what works more worthy of the genius of Barye might his hand have been turned ! Upon this subject Décamp has written : “ I do not place myself upon the same level with Barye, but our lot has been the same. His genius, keen and original, full of special studies and adaptiveness, which would have decorated our public places with monuments unique in the world, must needs content itself within the meagre proportions of a table service which it will render useless. How sad to bear evidence that this talent, which alone perhaps could have enriched our country with a truly original monument, is reduced to the fabrication of paper-weights.”

Whilst we quite agree with Décamp, that Barye should have been employed upon larger works, and that he should been given to decorate our monuments, our fountains, our public places and gardens, still we do not consider that size is a necessary or indispensable condition of art. We recognize and bow to him as equally and

surely in figures of a few inches as in colossal compositions; whatever he touches becomes large and elevated. What care we to what use the object finished by his triumphant hands is destined? Are we to consider as unworthy our delicate taste the candelabras executed by Michael Angelo and Raphael, the plates of Bernard Palissy, the corner guards and gates forged by the artists of the Renaissance? Are we troubled or stopped by the lowliness of their destination?

Art has stamped and ennobled them, and to them we open our museums and our galleries, where they will remain as an eternal theme for our study and respectful admiration.

It was certainly with just such ideas that Barye undertook the nine groups he placed upon the table of the Duke of Orleans. Five are mounted hunts, and the other four, whilst less important, are nevertheless of great beauty. These five hunts which have become so celebrated are: *The Tiger Hunt*; *The Wild Bull Hunt*; *The Bear Hunt*; *The Lion Hunt*, and *The Elk Hunt*.

In the first of these, two tigers, wonderfully supple, are hanging upon the flanks of an elephant, who carries upon his back two Indian hunters. The giant calmly walks along, certain that his masters will deliver him from the teeth

and claws which strive in vain to pierce his thick hide. His action and expression are superb; superb also is the coolness of the Indians. They feel the very breath of the monster, yet are sure of their victory. The tigers, inevitably stricken to death, will soon roll upon the ground. The two felines are admirable. Never has any artist rendered like Barye, the supple spine, the undulating movements, the ferocious grace of these cats of the jungle, or their glossy skin or clubbed muzzle, resembling, when they glare in rage, the gigantic head of a striking viper.

In the *Hunt of the Wild Bull*, the violent, stupid brute, after a tiring chase, indicated in every detail, stands at bay with lowered head and threatens two cavaliers in hunting costumes of Francis the First. You feel that the bull, firmly planted upon his legs, with glaring eye and threatening horns, will inevitably rip open the first horse bearing down upon him, unless by a sudden movement the cavalier turns him aside to safety ; and so thorough was the knowledge of the artist (not even surpassed by Géricault) of the structure of the horse, that something tells you the cavalier has already imparted the swerving to his steed which will save him. This wonderful quality of unseen action in the scenes invented

by his caprice, is so living that they become dramas of intense interest. How wonderfully his riders sit in their saddle, and with what thoughtful relation in composition, his men, horses and bull, separated but united, are bound together to make unity in the group!

If you consult the dictionaries of fraudulent *schools* you will find words which are noble and others which are not; and so also with sculpture. Reproduce a dog, horse, lion, tiger, serpent, or even a lizard—these animals we find even among the antiques—but, a bear . . . . And yet see what Barye has made in hunting him! How vigorously these horsemen of the time of Charles VII pursue him! Who dares to say the bear, so understood, so studied and rendered, in all his clumsiness and brutal ferocity, is not a theme worthy of our artist?

The *Lion Hunt*, properly speaking, is not a hunt. In it a lion has overpowered a buffalo, and several Arab cavaliers, their bournous flying in the wind, sweep down to rescue him. Mounted upon their "air-drinkers," they hover around the ferocious beast and his expiring victim. How striking the contrast between their elegance and the two mighty bodies writhing in such rude embrace! Regard them from any side, nothing is sacrificed,

everything is equally finished, turn it as you please. This is true realism; cavaliers, horses, robes, trappings, murderers, victims, all are scrupulously exact. Barye, indeed, can write with Shakspeare upon his dramas, "Here all is truth."

The *Elk Hunt* is no less remarkable; the same fury in *mouvement* without any disorder of lines, the same life in the beings, the same scrupulous truth in details, and the same free yet studied execution.

Revolutions, which sometimes respect and often destroy *chefs-d'œuvre*, did not injure this magnificent table service; but when the Empire had exercised its will of confiscation, and during the very week when Napoleon III was married (February, 1853), the widow of the Duke of Orleans sold her gallery at Paris, and the works of Barye were dispersed. At this auction sale M. Demidoff purchased the *Tiger*, *Bear* and *Elk Hunts*; M. Lutteroth the *Bull* or *Buffalo*, and M. Montessier the *Lion Hunt*. At the same sale other works of Barye passed under the hammer.

Before leaving the history of this famous service we will mention a characteristic anecdote. When the Duke saw these *chefs-d'œuvre* he was



astounded, and at once insisted that Barye should exhibit them at the Exposition. But Barye, having good reason to complain of the jury, refused to take the necessary steps, whereupon the royal duke replied, "Very well, I will undertake it myself." These admirable bronzes were nevertheless refused, and the duke sought at once the king. "What can I do?" said Louis Philippe; "I have created a jury; I cannot force them to accept *chefs-d'œuvre*."

But we have digressed. We had left Barye just after the Exposition of 1833. Whilst working for the Duke of Orleans, the indefatigable artist sent to the Salon of 1834, *the Dead Gazelle*; *the Bear in his Trough* (which belonged to the royal prince); *the Elephant* (made for the Duke de Nemours), *a Young Lion attacked by a Horse* (for the Duke de Luynes), *a Panther and Gazelle*, *a Bear*, *a Stag and Lynx*, and a series of *aquarelles*, studies of animals. In 1835 he sent a tiger which is at Lyons in stone, and of which he made a bronze, from *cire perdue*, the property of M. Thiers. And finally in 1836 he sent his celebrated bronze known as the *Lion in Repose* or *Sitting*; this now stands upon the left of the doorway of the Tuileries leading to the Quay, the one on the right being a mechanical reproduction, much to

the disgust of our sculptor. I defy any one, no matter how small his art perceptions, to pass without stopping before this living image of force in majestic repose. Would that it also had been cast from *cire perdue* as was the *Lion and Serpent*.

Aside from the works he was to execute later in completing the Louvre, many critical amateurs consider this *Lion in Repose*, Barye's finest work. In this, however, we cannot agree. None admire it more than ourselves in its imposing beauty, lordliness and grandeur. Had ancient Rome possessed it she would have confided to it the guarding of her Capitol. But we distinctly prefer the *Theseus and Minotaur*. If this bronze had been discovered in the excavations in Greece, or on the fields of Pestum, and have been carried to Jules II or Leo X, what a fête would have been at the Vatican!

In undertaking this work he could not fail to have in mind the Theseus of the Parthenon; but he did not fear to confront such a comparison; this man who, according to his detractors, was incapable of reproducing the human form or the nude. His resolution proved itself right, for this work will not pale before the most noble remnants of antiquity. To be sure, its dimensions are small,

but if in looking at the Theseus you will separate it from the surroundings, it will at once assume colossal proportions, as large as the statues of Phidias, or even the Milon of Puget. The figure of Theseus always recalls to me one of the combatants placed upon the temple of Egina, so proud in his attitude, so strong in his action, and at the same time so calm. The powerful movement of his right hand holding his blade reversed, makes you feel it is to be plunged to the very hilt in the body of the monster.

Nor is the Minotaur unworthy of the hero about to conquer him. He fights both as bull and man; with head bent forward, his weight thrown upon his left leg, he strives with his right to break his adversary's foothold.

It would be wasting words to praise any display of anatomical science in a master who always worked by mathematics, and who never permitted the slightest neglect nor the least approach to trickery. How well Barye has presented the double nature of the son of Pasiphaë, in his bending back and powerful legs! . . . To us *Theseus and the Minotaur* will ever remain (aside from the groups on the Louvre), Barye's *chef-d'œuvre* and one of the most noble efforts of art.

Together with the *Lion in Repose*, our sculptor

had sent several little bronzes to the Salon. The jury refused them, adding no doubt the complaint, afterwards taken up by the critic M——— “that this inroad of beasts into sculpture was owing to their being so easy to produce and to be retailed out.” Easy indeed! Then where are Barye’s rivals? And if they are so easy to retail, where is the great fortune the master must have left? These critics are sadly mistaken; the sculpture which retails well is that which offends no one, and which in its poor mediocrity dishonors many of our monuments.

This injustice of the jury hurt Barye’s pride, and until 1850 he disappeared from the Salon, but only to labor steadily and quietly at home upon those works which, if they did not create, at least elevated amongst us the art of the bronze workers. Thanks to him, to day every country in the world is tributary to us, and there exists in America a museum where each year they set aside a certain sum for the purchase of Barye’s bronzes, desiring to obtain a complete collection. These were the works made, cast and sold by the hands of the master-sculptor himself, which in 1867 drew to him the unanimous award of the *Great Gold Medal* at the Universal Exposition of Paris. We should like to

enumerate them all, but time and space would be wanting.

Among the best productions of Barye never exposed are an *Elephant Overturning a Tiger*; *Angelica and Roger on the Hippogryph*, and the *Candelabra with nine Figures*. In the last two of these compositions it is evident that Barye was inspired with the genius of the Renaissance, making it subservient to his own originality. What could be more beautiful than Angelica's nude figure in its youth and fullness, with love in her eyes and a smile upon her lips, pressing close against Roger?

An enthusiastic admirer of Rubens, superb engravings of whose paintings he possessed, Barye, in modelling the hips and breasts of Angelica, must have had the Flemish painter before him; and yet every detail of the work bears his own imprint, he alone was capable of translating this voluptuous episode of Ariosto. The *Candelabra* might well have been signed by Jean Goujon or Germain Pilon. At its base are seated the three great goddesses; half-way up are writhing three chimeras, and on top stand the three nude graces, their arms gracefully raised and holding the lights.

These jewels belong to the Duke de Mont-

pensier, -whose name recalls an event which should have been mentioned sooner, as it occurred during the reign of Louis Philippe. When the Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile was finished, the royal soldier of Jemmapes in his old age was suddenly seized with an imprudent love for the glories of the Empire. In this he was seconded by his minister M. Thiers, who later abandoned this love. But he was a great friend of the arts, and wished to crown the triumphal monument erected to the *great army* with some worthy theme. He addressed himself to Barye as the only one capable of understanding and carrying out such an idea. The project of the artist was soon fixed. A gigantic bronze eagle, over twenty metres, represented with outspread wings, alighting at the end of its flight upon a mass of cannons, of escutcheons of cities, of *spolia opima*, was to cover the summit of the Arc de Triomphe. Both the King and M. Thiers received the project with enthusiasm, but others feared to ruffle the susceptibilities of neighboring nations, and Barye lost the unique occasion which fortune had offered him "de faire grand."

The Revolution of February overturned the jury, and Barye reappeared in the Salon of 1850 with his *Centaur and the Lapithæ*. As usual this

group was made the object of many criticisms. We spurn them all. Whether the knees of the powerful Lapithæ who has audaciously hurled himself upon the back of the destroyer of maidens, do or do not make sharp angles, we care not, but the very exaggeration of action seems to us necessary; for without this violent hold, like that of the tiger upon his prey, how could the cavalier attach himself? We, moreover, again repeat that Barye is our authority upon anatomical science. What we especially admire in this group is the energy of the composition, the violence of the action expressed in the head of the Centaur drawn back to be crushed by the club of his adversary.

In 1852 the *Jaguar devouring a Hare* was exhibited and is another *chef-d'œuvre*. It was exposed in bronze at the Universal Exposition, and is now in the Luxembourg. See with what intoxication the brute drinks the blood; his veins seem gorged with pleasure, his lips quiver and his tail stiffens, his spine undulates, his sides palpitate, his ears flatten, his nostrils dilate, his very flesh creeps! Never was there a picture of the satiated cravings of the murderer rendered with such fearful intensity and by so energetic a hand.

How unfortunate that Barye has bequeathed

his great science to none. He had no scholars. A number of artists followed the course of drawing he gave at the Jardin des Plantes, but no one ever lived within the precincts of his studio, under his immediate supervision, in full communion with him. He worked alone and talked but little . . . .

A gentleman who professes the greatest admiration for his genius, and who also had the fortune to receive from him much good advice, which he has followed in his works, has kindly furnished me with some information as to Barye's manner of working. He was at the time executing the pediments of the Louvre. "You probably know," writes M. Moulin, "that large clay models are held together by a skeleton of iron placed in the interior and entirely covered over. In these four groups, which Barye is composing, such is not the case. The different parts are held in place by iron or wooden supports, entirely on the exterior, like a vessel on the ways. By this method each member can be removed, and Barye, in a long apron, not unlike old Fischer of Nurembourg, was continually removing, and remodelling this or that member, seated before it lying on his work table. I was much bothered to understand how the great artist could proceed in this way, when my eye fell upon the table, which was



covered with notes, sketches of arms, legs, heads, and trunks, and each sketch crossed with vertical and horizontal lines bearing figures which told the exact relation of the particular part to the whole. Here was the key to Barye's wonderful execution: like the sculptors of Greece he allied mathematics with his art."

He knew the exact dimensions of the bones of every creature, from the humming-bird to the elephant, and his first labor in composing a group was to make the proportional reduction in every member. Hence all of his actors are in exact relation of size.

Barye was always notified immediately upon the death of an animal at the Jardin des Plantes, and at once came with his pencil and rule to make sketches, upon which he noted all measurements. (These priceless truths should be deposited in the Ecole des Beaux Arts.)

M. Lefuel, who succeeded Visconti as architect of the Louvre, had the honor to understand the value of such a man of genius, who, recognized by the artists and the public, had so long been despised by the administration of the Beaux Arts. Lefuel commissioned him to execute the four decorative groups for the Pavillons opening on the Carrousel. Alas! these *chefs-d'œuvre*

are at such a height that the eye can hardly see them. In reference to them, I extract literally from the note-book of an artist :

"I went yesterday to the Louvre, and climbed the scaffold to see the Barye groups which are just being finished. Nothing save Nature herself could have so moved me. They positively made me tremble. As I came in front of the War the sun was setting, and its golden rays fell obliquely upon the group and illumined the head of the warrior. I continually see the powerful movement of his arm seeking the hilt of his sword. I continue to hear the trumpet-blast of the child and the neighing of the steed.

"In front of the first group I had met a single figure. It was that of Guillaume, the sculptor of the *Gracchi*, and he stood with bowed head, completely absorbed in its contemplation."

Later Barye was also commissioned to make an equestrian statue in relief of Napoleon III, which was placed on the front of the Louvre towards the Quay. This work was not a success. The figure was not happy. They had imposed conditions against which the artist inveighed in vain. He demanded higher relief, but received the reply that a projection would injure the architectural profile. Barye had to obey, and

the Napoleon III became a mere plaque. But the two figures upon the brackets above are admirable, although jealous eyes will never see them.

The master was now growing old; many years and many glories had been heaped upon his head, but his old age resembled that of Titians; he retained his productive genius, which we all recognize in his *Arab Riding a Camel*, the last work finished by his hands.

Nature had made him of materials which did not waste away little by little; he was destined to die but once, and all at once. He was of medium size, with large shoulders; his head was at the same time large and well shaped, his eyes piercing, the lower part of his face was full of tenacity and will, his forehead high and his hair light-brown. His clothes were always large and well adjusted, and this, combined with his attitudes, gave him the appearance of an English country gentleman. He never spoke of the works of his confrères, and rarely of his own; had few distractions, the most pleasant of which was to find himself with a few artists, Francais, Chevanard and other *painters*, rarely sculptors. Like the true art-spirits of his time, he was at home at Barbizon. He was very intimate with Millet,

and admired Corot with his whole heart; both of these preceded him to the tomb.

Officer of the Legion of Honor, member of the Institute of France, named by the artists among the first as member of the Jury of the Universal Exposition of Paris and of London, Professor at the Jardin des Plantes, all these honors never changed his simplicity. Twice married, by his first wife he had two daughters, whose portraits he painted in two celebrated aquarelles; from his second marriage he leaves eight children and a widow proud of bearing his name. After passing through many long years of struggles he died without fortune, never having regarded money as worthy of strife. He was both proud and uncompromising in his probity. A few years before his death, one of our most noted bronze manufacturers, his friend, desired to commission him to execute a large vase around which was to circle the combat of the Centaurs and Lapithæ. This work, unlimited in price, not only pleased but attracted him. But after painful hesitations, he refused to undertake it, saying, "I will not have time enough left me to finish it, and my broken promise would cause you a loss." In vain did they try

to change this decision, dictated by his honesty of purpose.

We were quite anxious to know if he had the conviction of his own worth, for it always seems sad to see a great artist expire unconscious of the glory that is to surround his name. A little anecdote, however, reassured us. He was already attacked with the affliction of the heart which took him from us. Mme. Barye was going and coming about the arm-chair in which he sat with bowed head. She was dusting the bronzes in the room, and desiring to distract his mind, said, "Mon ami, when you are well you must be more careful to see that the signature upon your works is more readable." After a moment's silence, raising slightly his head, he replied, "Fear not, in twenty years it will be looked for with a magnifying glass." Barye knew that he was of those who do not die. His renown did not have to wait the twenty years. The bronzes bearing his signature are now called proofs, and fetch four and five times their early prices.

They concealed Corot's death from him. His suffering ceased on the 25th of June at nine in the evening.

A. GENEVAY.

Another incident very characteristic of the master occurred as late as 1873. Two gentlemen called at his home and were met at the door by his wife, who, replying to their inquiry for him, threw up her hands and exclaimed : “ Mon Dieu, gentlemen, he will not be at home for a week—a new tiger has just been received at the Jardin des Plantes.”