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# Meta Warrick a Promising Sculptor

By FLORENCE LEWIS BENTLEY



S FAR back as 1865, when Edmonia Lewis exhibited her first piece of sculpture in Boston, Negro artists have counted in their ranks at least one woman sculptor. The works of this artist were well known to the last generation, but she has lived so long abroad, and, being very old now, has so long since given up all work, that she is almost forgotten in America, except by a faithful few.



MISS META VAUX WARRICK

In her place has risen, of late years, a young woman sculptor who bids fair to leave, in her turn, the kind of work which will make it impossible for the ruthless years to consign her name to oblivion,—work, in which the highest authorities have detected that imperishable element which, for a better name, we call *genius*. Miss Meta Warrick, of Philadelphia, is the young woman whose works reveal an originality of conception and

mastery of technique which bid fair to make her an enduring name.

Through the insatiable human desire to find a cause for every effect, we are continually prodding around seeking to find the springs of genius. The repeated evidences of history have failed to teach us that genius is the unaccountable, the unclassified, appearing in places of its own selection, in such a manner as to throw out all our nice rulings as to heredity, environment and such things.

Meta Warrick was born in Philadelphia of well-to-do, thrifty parents. Her father was a very prosperous barber in the days when that work was largely in the hands of colored men. Her mother, too, was a hairdresser, a money maker and a shrewd business woman. Yet in this comfortable household, where the inclination seemed entirely towards that industrialism which meant tangible material profits, the three children blossomed out and away from the accustomed line into the world of ideas and of dreams—ideas that have since taken form and dreams that have "come true." The only brother, following his bent, is now a very successful physician and surgeon, and the two sisters early showed an artistic impulse, which the younger has developed to such an exceptional extent. The older, Blanche, now Mrs. Frank Cardoza, of Washington, D. C., worked cleverly in water-color, and her carved wood and beaten brass was far above the amateur class. It was from this older sister that the little girl received the first help in fostering her innate love of the beautiful in art, and even before her school days she modeled in bits of clay begged from the older sister in her work room.

When she entered the public schools, her work in drawing was of such excellence that, at the close of her school life, her teachers induced her to send her name to the Board of Public Education for an examination at the Philadelphia School of Industrial Art. (In Philadelphia the School Board annually sends a limited number of pupils to that fine Art School.) Miss Warrick took the examination and was granted a scholarship for three years. As is the rule in this school, she studied all

branches of industrial art and at the end of the schooling was able to choose the branch for which she was best fitted, in selecting a specialty. At the end of the term her work entitled her to a post-graduate course, free of tuition, and she took up the normal course, devoting the rest of the time to sculpture.

"For the first six months," she says, "I studied drawing under Raphael Collin, on the advice of a conscientious sculptor, who thought it necessary. But I found at the end of that time that, while I had improved in drawing, it had no effect whatever on my modeling. After that I modeled after an-



"THE WRETCHED"—Cast in Bronze for a Park in Paris

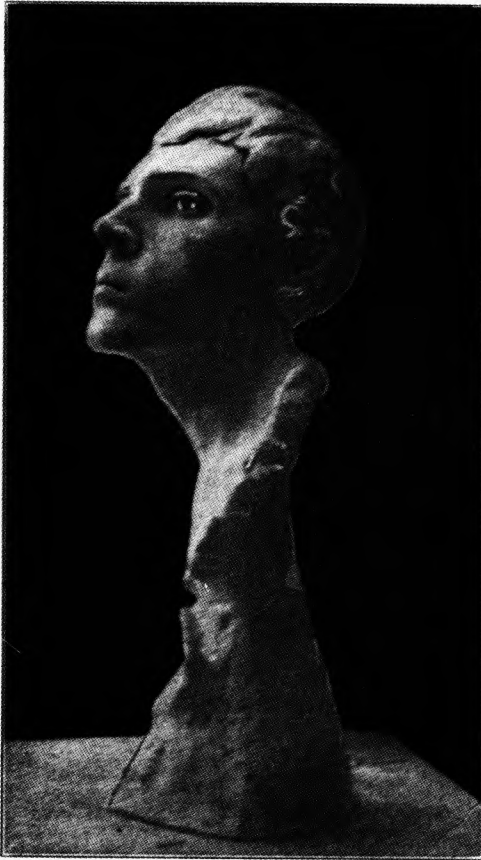
The free scholarship carried with it one condition, namely, that something be done in the interest of the school. Miss Warrick's selection was a bas-relief frieze representing the arts and crafts, made up of a total of thirty-seven figures in procession, in mediæval costume. It won the prize, and this may be said to have settled definitely her determination to make sculpture her life work.

When art-school days were over, the talented girl's teachers and friends urged her to go to Paris and continue her studies. This she ardently desired, but it was a long time before she could get the consent of her family to go abroad. Unwavering determination, aided by the intercession of teachers and friends, finally prevailed and in the autumn of 1899 she went to Paris for a stay which lengthened itself to three busy, hard working years.

tique casts under M. Carles in the studio of a friend, and finally took a studio of my own. During the summer I studied from life again and paid frequent visits to the museums, not to look at sculpture alone, but at the paintings as well. My instructors were Mons. Ingelbert Gauqui and Rollard. I worked alone in the afternoon at sketches in clay or wax, finally continuing alone with no other criticism than that of an artist friend."

After months of hard work our young sculptor produced several figures, which not only sold well, but gave her an assured place in the French capital where competition is so keen. M. Bing, the well-known French connoisseur, thought so much of her work that he invited her to exhibit and, in order that she should do so fittingly, he threw open his great salon for her use. Here she showed twenty-two of her pieces, and M. Bing pur-

chased several which he thought the best.  
Encouraged by her success, Miss Warrick



"JOHN THE BAPTIST"  
An Unusual Conception of the Face of John.

at last ventured to go to Rodin with a piece of her work. "But, Mademoiselle," said this greatest of French sculptors, "you are a sculptor; your work is powerful." And that is just the word which best expresses her work. People who like sweet little sculptured angels, and academical work generally, will hardly be attracted by her figures, but the true lover of art instantly feels her strength and responds to the deep emotional language of her creations. For instance, her life-sized "Thief on the Cross" is almost frightful in its realism. Every line of the body shows careful anatomical study and the face, in the throes of death, is the embodiment of human terror.

Another of Miss Warrick's best pieces is a small plaster relief. "The Wretched," inspired by the lines,

"Be still sad heart and cease repining,

Behind the cloud is the sun still shining."

The relief is a cloud peopled with the suffering, the sorrowful, the despairing. Around the edge there are those who see the light and have taken courage and hope.

On her return from abroad, Miss Warrick opened a studio in Philadelphia, where she is now busily at work. She has exhibited each year in the Philadelphia Art Show, and last year received an honorable mention. She has recently received, from the Jamestown Exposition people, a commission for a piece of work illustrating the progress of the Negro since the settlement of Jamestown. That, however, is "another story" and requires a later and a separate chapter.

## Disagreement

By A. ASHBURN

Miss Daisy, I'se been bothered  
Eb'ry sence las' Sunday night;  
De way I'se lookin' at hit,  
You didn't treat me right.

Dars too many callin' on you,  
Don't stop 'em, I is done;  
Won't hab a bit er foolin'  
Want de whole hog er none.

Who yer t'ink you's foolin' wid?  
I knower t'ing er two,  
Fum now you'se got ter treat me  
Like I'se er treatin' you.

Miss Daisy, won't you 'splain yo'self?  
An' tell me what you mean?  
De way dat you am actin'  
Beats al' I'se eber seen.

Yo'll do 'jes es you please? Huh, huh!  
Knowed you couldn't be trusted.  
Mark hit down now, you gay young miss,  
My lub for you am busted.

Don't t'ink I'se holdin' on to you,  
I'se gwine ter see Miss Jinney;  
Plague take yo' little sassy time,  
You kin go to ginny!