

A WOMAN'S LETTER FROM WASHINGTON. UNVEILING OF THE FARRAGUT STATUE.

BY MARY CLEMMER.

WASHINGTON takes most kindly to a holiday, and no city on the continent can show quite so cosmopolitan and picturesque a multitude as the Capital City on one of its great gala days. A Summer sun suddenly looked forth on Farragut's Day. The entrancing days of gradation that make the long-drawn-out charm of the Northern Spring are almost unknown in this latitude. Who does not recall with ever-lingering delight those days or days, full of youth, full of the first faint monitions of later fruition, of the advancing Summer's triumph of blossoms? Those days of long May walks, when the pale pink bloom of the arbutus first peered through the dead leaves of the last year; when the swelling buds overhead stirred with the first thrill of awakening life, and the lingering coolness of the air, shot with sunshine, reached us still from the breath of the slowly-retreating Winter? Here "Winter lingers in the lap of Spring" till, some morning, Summer suddenly asserts herself, and, full armed with leaves and blossoms, with no note of warning, abruptly takes possession of the world. Thus we awake some day and find the branches, bare the evening before, waving banners of young leaves, our gardens brave with blossoms, the air fervid with heat, and the world without moving on under umbrellas, fragile silken and cotton barriers lifted against sun-strokes. Such a day was yesterday, when even two brawny "middies" fainted by the way on the gala march. The city followed Nature, and blossomed out in banners. Congress adjourned. The departments were closed and the entire population was abroad. Diversity of race adds to the picturesque aspect of a great Washington gala crowd. The many commingled shades of the colored race; the varied physiognomies of Europeans—the Celt, the Slav, the Teuton, the Turk; the distinctive contours and profiles which mark the natives of widely separated states, from Maine to California; to say nothing of the diversified attire, repeating every hue and tint of Nature, altogether make a great Washington assembly one of the gayest and most cosmopolitan in the world. I said last week that we love our heroes, and one is never so sure of it as when we see the people come forth to decorate their graves or to unveil monuments to their memory. Washington is rapidly becoming a city of monuments and statues. One hundred years hence, the American may walk through it a marvelously beautiful acropolis of the past. Even Sara Bernhardt laments that we are

"so young." But, without the rich accretions of the centuries lying at our back, that Europe has, never did a people crowd into one hundred years of existence such wealth of material, energy, and of heroic memory as the union of the States has garnered. How pale and poor are words to paint for you the picture of yesterday—the bannered city; the marching army and navy; the applauding populace of every shade and phase of life, of race, of costume! Farragut Square, at the west end of the city, a few years since an open waste, is to day encircled with splendid homes, many of them triumphs of architectural art. Around it, the morning of the unveiling, cannon were massed, and a vast concourse of people pressed for blocks away. The central figure of the Square was the heroic statue, veiled in the national colors and surrounded by towering potted plants, in full bloom. Men had worked all day Sunday and all night to complete the pedestal on which the statue stood. It was finished early Monday morning. The four bronze mortars stood on their four sub-pedestals.

The President and Mrs. Garfield and party arrived before one o'clock, and were escorted through the Square to the seats assigned them by Secretary of the Navy Hunt. Soon afterward the officers of the navy, headed by Admiral Porter, and the officers of the army, marshaled by General Sherman, arrived; and the President held an impromptu army and navy reception on the stand, as every officer upon his arrival at once hastened to pay his respects to the Chief Magistrate.

Mrs. Farragut, the widow of the Admiral, was honored with similar ceremony. In the row immediately behind the speaker's stand sat General Sherman and Admiral Porter, on the right; President Garfield; then Mrs. Farragut, a lady with a winning face, about fifty years of age, who was attired in mourning; Mrs. Garfield; Mr. Loyall Farragut, son of the Admiral, and his beautiful wife, a daughter of Dr. Metcalf, of New York; Lieutenant and Mrs. Hoxie; and Commander J. C. Watson, who was Admiral Farragut's flag-officer and who attended the ceremonies as Mrs. Farragut's special escort, having been sent to New York to perform that pleasant service. Among the other distinguished persons present were the members of the Cabinet, Mr. Blaine, who is away from the city, being the only absentee; Sir Edward Thornton and daughter; General Banks; ex-Speaker Raudall; ex-Governor Rice, of Massachusetts; Mr. and Mrs. Ream, the father and mother of the sculptor; Mr. Bancroft, the historian; Vice-Admiral Rowan, Rear-Admiral G. R. P. Rodgers, John Rodgers, R. H. Wyman, T. H. Patterson, J. L. Worden, E. T. Nichols, G. B. Bulch, D. M. Fairfax, L. M. Powell, T. O. Selfridge, T. Turner, C. H. Poor, W. Radford, S. P. Lee, G. H. Scott, Melancthon Smith, C. S. Boggs, B. F. Sands, T. A. Jenkins, G. F. Emmons, J. H. Strong, J. J. Almy, R. M. Stembel, J. E. M. Mullany, Edward Middleton, and W. E. Meloy, ex-Medical Director Palmer, Medical Director Lonsdale, and many other navy and army officers.

The officers present included some who were very near and intimate with Admiral Farragut. Among these were Captain James E. Jouett, who commanded the "Metacomet," the consort of the "Hartford," who was especially commended by the Admiral for his prompt action in cap-

during the "Selma," and Commander J. C. Watson, the flag-lieutenant of Admiral Farragut and the nearest and dearest of his official household. Admiral Thornton A. Jenkins, the second in command at Mobile Bay, and who was specially commended for his untiring energy and faithfulness, was also present. Admiral Jenkins was a warm friend of the Admiral and Mrs. Farragut. The brave Mullany, who volunteered to go into the fight, and commanded the "Onecida" so gallantly, losing a forearm, sat near by the official household. Mr. John H. Brooks, who served as Admiral Farragut's steward on the "Hartford," was present, at the special request of Mrs. Farragut, and received marked attention. He enjoyed the distinction of being the only colored man on the stand. Commander Watson and Mr. Brooks were the only two survivors of the Admiral's official household present. The procession having arrived on the ground a little after one o'clock, the ceremonies began. At this time the neighborhood was densely packed with people.

The unveiling exercises were opened with prayer by Rev. Arthur Brooks. Meanwhile six weather-beaten sailors had ranged themselves around the statue. When the prayer was over, Lieutenant Dunlap gave a signal. Quartermaster Knowles, who was Farragut's signal quartermaster on the "Hartford" and who lashed the Admiral in the rigging, pulled the rope, and the flag fell away from the statue into the hands of the six brawny sailors. As the sunlight fell upon the polished bronze, there was a great shout from the people, the Marine Band played "Hail to the Chief," an admiral's salute of seventeen guns was fired from Lafayette Square, and an admiral's flag was hoisted to the masthead at the corner of the north stand by Bartholomew Diggins, one of the crew of Admiral Farragut's gig. The five sailors who helped Knowles unveil the statue were all Farragut veterans. They were James Marion, who served on the "Brooklyn"; Alexander H. Truett, who served on the "Hartford"; Peter Breen, who served on the "Pembina"; James Wyley, who served on the mortar fleet; and Thomas Byrnes, who served on the "Miami." After the unveiling, these five battle-smoked veterans, with Knowles, sat on the ledge of the pedestal and listened to the orations with the deepest interest. The statue faces the southeast, looking down Connecticut Avenue. It represents the Admiral standing, with telescopic glass in hand, and his right foot resting on a tackle block, as though looking over the scene.

It was an inspiring sight. Besides the vast multitude of civilians; the host of soldiers and sailors, in their glittering uniforms; the rainbow hues of the Spring appareling of thousands of women; the decorated houses surrounding the Square, glistening with flags and filled with bright faces from basement to roof—all were framed in the delicate interlacing of the young-leaved trees and mounted by the snowy tracery of the delicate clouds, that fluttered like feathers against the warm blue of the April sky. President Garfield's speech was happy, as his speeches always are. I give it entire:

"*Fellow-Citizens*.—It is the singular province of art to break down the limitations which separate the generations of men from each other, and allow those of past generations to be comrades and associates of those now living. This capital is silently being filled up with the heroes of other times. Men of three wars have taken their places in silent eloquence as guardians and guards of the nation they loved so well, and as the years pass on these squares and public places will be rendered more and more populous, more and more eloquent by the presence of dead heroes of other days. From all quarters of the country, from all generations of its life, from all portions of its service these heroes come, by the ministry and mystery of art, to take their places and stand as permanent guardians of our nation's glory. To-day we come to hail this hero who comes from the sea down from the shrubs of his flag-ship, wreathed with the smoke and glory of victory, bringing sixty years of national life and honor, to take his place as an honored compatriot and perpetual guardian of his nation's glory. In the name of the nation, I accept this noble statue, and his country will guard it as he guarded his country."

The speeches of Hon. Horace Maynard and of Senator Voorhees were equally ad-

mirable, the latter remarkable for its conspicuous eloquence. Mr. Voorhees said of the statue and its artist:

"This figure of bronze, so faithful in likeness and so familiar in features to those who knew and loved him best, is the tribute of the American people. It is also of American origin and workmanship. Who but an American artist should have modeled the great American Admiral? Nor does it lessen the pride of this great demonstration to remember that this statue will commemorate for all time to come the genius, the courage, and the educated skill of an American woman, as well as the manly virtues and undying fame of an American hero. It is the just compensation of the artist for years of anxious toil to witness her work received and displayed as a work of fidelity to art and worthy the proud character it is designed to perpetuate. This day will also be memorable in American history. A hundred years have passed away since our Independence was achieved. The American navy, in five different wars, has studied the history of the Republic with the most brilliant illustrations of patriotism, genius, and valor. Its officers and seamen have dwarfed the naval victories of other nations and ages, and made them look tame and commonplace by comparison; and yet we are looking now upon the first statue ever erected to a naval character by the Government of the United States."

Mr. Maynard said of the religious faith of Farragut:

"No Puritan of Cromwell's army trusted more implicitly in an overruling Providence, or looked upon himself more humbly as an instrument in the Divine hand for the accomplishment of the eternal purposes. God was in all his thoughts. The temper of his religion was cheerful and genial—gentle in spirit, almost to woman's tenderness. While he was magnanimous, sagacious, and bold, he was also faithful, candid, and just. For his personal qualities, no less than for his warlike deeds, the old hero is conspicuous on the roll which his countrymen will keep in lasting remembrance. The voice of antiquity redoubles itself to-day. *Pulchrum est benefacere reipublice*—blessed, thrice blessed are the benefactors of the republic."

It has its own significance—the fact that this statue of an American hero, which is to go down to posterity, was chosen by a woman and wrought by a woman. When, ten years ago, it was decided by Congress that a statue should be erected to keep living and present before coming generations the presence and person of the great Admiral, many masters in art sent their models from different parts of the world, each hoping to be the chosen competitor. After prolonged deliberation and discussion, the committee of selection accepted the model preferred and chosen by Mrs. Farragut—a full-length portrait figure, untouched of allegory; just the man himself, the Admiral, with one foot lifted; leaning slightly forward, yet with head erect; with face attent; glass in hand, as he had stood many hundred times, gazing out over distant seas. In the words of Horace Maynard: "A maiden artist was chosen by widowed affection, who detected in her handiwork the most exact reproduction of the loved and idolized original."

The last sentence indicates the exact truth concerning the statue. It is simply Farragut. Not Farragut idealized, or sublimated, or artistically heroic; but just the man himself—alert, vigilant, strong-eyed, strong-nerved, compact, a hero, without embellishment or fine feathers of any sort. "The common people" of later generations, gazing up at this man on a pedestal, may say: "Why, he is one of us!" The strong, wiry, keen-eyed man will gaze and simply say: "A MAN! He is my brother." Not even the image of a horse stands between him and the people. Just a man on watch, a man on duty, with the true heart of a patriot in his breast, the unflinching eyes of a sailor in his head, and the undaunted front of a hero, ready to die, if needs be, for his country. Thus Farragut, in the statue wrought by Vinnie Ream, goes down to posterity.

Vinnie Ream Hoxie, married now to a young lieutenant of the navy, who is her friend and helper in the nearest and highest sense, is a native of the West, and was educated in the "Christian" Female College of Missouri. Suffering through the war, her family came to Washington, where Miss Ream became a clerk, in the Agricultural Department first and afterward in the Post-office Department. During these days she bent the energy of her keen and active mind, during leisure moments, on the fur-

therance of her own education, pursuing the study of music, of the French and German languages, and going through an extensive course of historical reading. Later, she became acquainted with Clark Mills, the Washington sculptor, and, visiting his studio, then in the basement of the Capitol, she discovered first her own impulse to pursue art in the same direction. In this studio and under the tuition of this teacher she began to model in clay, and to copy profiles of the men, more or less distinguished, who were legislating for the country above her head. Her art education began in the Capitol. Her earliest subjects were the public men who roamed in and out of the basement studio. Later a studio for her own self was granted her, on the lower floor of the Capitol. For years her *petite* image, mounted on a high stool, working away at her Lincoln with bird-like swiftness and bird-like glance, was one of the unique facts of the National Capitol. During these years, at her leisure, she took casts in plaster of nearly every member of Congress in both houses, and altogether became emphatically a daughter of the Capitol.

It involves no criticism of her work to say that she might have been a greater artist than she was; but if at a greater distance, with no charm of presence and no power of personal influence to work for her, she might have applied in vain for the twenty-five thousand dollars' commission to execute the statue of Abraham Lincoln, which the many statesmen whose busts she had made gave to the charming little woman with so ardent an alacrity. Charles Sumner, whom she had never modeled in plaster, made a strenuous protest in the Senate against giving so important a commission to so young and untried an artist. The objections offered at that time by Mr. Sumner had a potency in fact which time, study, and success had removed when she was chosen by Mrs. Farragut to execute the statue of Farragut. She studied anatomy under competent teachers. She practiced modeling with untiring patience, and when, at last, the clay model of her "Lincoln" was completed, she sailed with it and her parents for Italy, where she spent several years studying and practicing her art. In Rome she became a *protégé* of Cardinal Antonelli, who, on her departure for America, gave her a miniature portrait of himself, which she still wears, in a handsome pearl-set locket. Her statue of Lincoln was executed in marble in Rome. When brought to this country, it was unveiled before a brilliant assembly, in the rotunda of the Capitol of the United States, the eloquent Carpenter pronouncing the oration on this national work of a Wisconsin girl. The statue now stands in a conspicuous place in the Hall of Statuary, in the old House of Representatives. Like her statue of Farragut, her statue of Lincoln is an absolute likeness of its original. Its reality and lack of ideality provokes criticism. Human nature loves to encircle its heroes with the aurora of imagination, to send them transfigured in the light of immortal beauty and youth down to future generations; but in this woman's image of the great Martyr we have simply, solely the man himself, the man of sorrow, acquainted with grief. In aspect Vinnie Ream Hoxie is one of the most picturesque of women. She is one of the winsome women who, if a century old, would still suggest in glance and gesture the immortal child. She is *petite*, with tiny hands and feet. She has a head like a Cupid, covered with dark, curling hair, and large, brown, bird-like eyes, both rapid and radiant of glance, which have made great havoc in the sensibilities of sensitive mortals. Her voice is remarkably sweet; she is fluent and elegant in speech and converses with great intelligence and animation, yet with a childlikeness that utterly disarms criticism. You may find all the fault you please with Vinnie's statues; but you will find it a most ungracious task to find fault with herself, as she appears before you in her white working-dress, a white turban twisted around her dark curls, perhaps the picture of Cardinal Antonelli hanging on her breast, and a pair—well, of the most "taking" eyes imaginable set upon you in affectionate appeal.

WASHINGTON, D. C., April 26th, 1881.