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Albert Bruce-Joy, R.H.A., F.R.G.S.

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A GREAT sculptor's studio, with that strange momentous stillness, that sense of reserve, of fervor, that constraining earnestness—the more irresistible in its latent suggestiveness because it is calm, simple, and severe in itself—electrifies one's imagination. The eye is drawn successively to masterpiece after masterpiece grouped round lofty walls, and the contemplation of statue after statue of England's greatest men fills one with the spirit that breathed and worked for her "common good." Such is the feeling that I experienced when I stood for the first time in Mr. Bruce-Joy's studio.

High and austere, the walls were hung with nothing that one felt belonged to less than a strong conviction, a great purpose, an indomitable will. Ideal art there was, as well as realistic; highest flights of imagination had been recorded but the impression of most of the artist's statues was that of strength of purpose—a presentation of the contest of mind over matter. Intellect and graciousness, our century's civilization and every great man's individuality, stamp in the highest degree the artist's work in each personality he has portrayed. There seemed to me scarcely an example in all the collection that fell short of what Socrates (himself a trained sculptor) held to be the essence of his art—"the representation of what is most engaging, most

lovely and most desirable in the person—I mean the disposition of the soul."

There is no flattery about the work. The great master's theory, that a representation can only captivate, in fancy and imagination, when it does no violence to nature, is here lucidly expounded and upheld. It is the mark of genius, the "infinite capacity for taking pains," that enables the artist to immortalize in marble, with such fidelity, the attributes and qualities of human nature. Exquisite and engaging sweetness of childhood, real intensity and passion in a tragic group, gauge the possibilities of Mr. Bruce-Joy's art. But he has moved beyond the merely emotional sphere. If Ruskin is right in saying that "a greater thing was never given artist than to portray a noble face," Mr. Bruce-Joy has undoubtedly fulfilled his mission. Coupled with that instinct for close and detailed observation which is dominant in every true artist's nature, that receptivity which feeds upon surroundings, and reflects the actuality of existing things, comes this rarest of all gifts—a true and living mysterious instinct for divining character, and a quite marvellous power of giving life and soul to inanimate matter. As a contemporary writer once said, "the thing is—we cannot fathom the cause; but this circumstance does not lessen one's pleasure in the