

THE LA SALLE STATUE.

Views of an Admirer of Judge Tree's Noble Gift to Lincoln Park.

The following was received last night, and explains itself:

CHICAGO, Oct. 14.—[Editor of The Tribune.]—I am wondering if your art critic ever tried to make his way through ten miles of virgin forest, or if he ever got lost in the wilderness, and, after a day's wandering, suddenly caught a glimpse of some long looked for river or lake? He probably never had such experience. It is not an essential part of an education in art or of a training in criticism. I find he criticises in THE SUNDAY TRIBUNE what he terms the "injurious pose" which the famous Belgian sculptor has given to the Lincoln park statue of La Salle. That lifted foot, with the leg at an acute angle, perhaps may make a pose that is "the reverse of easy and comfortable," but why should the sculptor try to put the nervous, dashing, energetic explorer into an easy and comfortable position, when by all accounts La Salle was never at ease or in repose except when he slept? While I find no fault with your critic's ideal of La Salle as a hero, I beg you to allow me to express my hearty approval of Sculptor De Laue's conception of La Salle, the actual man, the fearless explorer, the restless but noble adventurer, the great "hustler" who got out on these plains 200 years ago, 100 years before this nation of "hustlers" was born. The statue which has been placed in Lincoln park through the public-spirited generosity of the Hon. Lambert Tree was not intended to represent merely a man "absorbed by a great idea." La Salle was never absorbed by ideas of any kind. The preëminent quality of the man was determination, will, love of action. It would have been a crime against history, if not an outrage upon art, to have fixed him in the eternal outlines of sculpture in a loose muscled, contemplative attitude. If your critic had ever for a day experienced the hardships, the disappointments, and the delightful surprises incident to such a life as La Salle's he would doubtless admit, and that without turning realist, that the position of the statue's right leg is most natural, felicitous, and typical.

As for the impression which the statue makes upon the beholder I cannot conceive how the artist could have wrought a deeper or more appropriate effect out of his subject. La Salle was a Frenchman, and he has here a Frenchman's body—slender, sinewy in appearance, but not heroic in its proportions. The neck might have been larger and the chest of greater girth, but La Salle was neither an Englishman nor an athlete. As it stands in Lincoln park the statue, were its pedestal uninscribed, would fill the spectator with an overpowering sense of intelligent, sweeping energy and unselfish ambition—just the qualities which marked the whole of La Salle's career. If the sculptor had framed him like an Apollo and posed him like a dancing master that wily, nervy Frenchman, if he now cherishes any respect for his mundane achievements, would turn in his grave.

But, after all, sculptors need not try to please the critics. They can't do it. The critics don't like the Lincoln statue because it wears a long-tailed coat, and the Jackson statue at New Orleans is inartistic because the horse is pawing the air with both its fore feet. No matter if the general did despise a horse that would ever let its four feet touch the ground at once—a work of art, while suggesting a grand idea, must be restful. That may be a canon of art, but if so then art must broaden its scope before it can reproduce a La Salle. If I were a critic I could make but one suggestion for the improvement of Judge Tree's beautiful gift. I believe the effect of the statue would be intensified and at the same time justly softened if it were placed on a loftier pedestal. But the change is not necessary. The statue seems to me a beautiful work of art as it

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ceremonies to begin is had assembled on form erected near the he Chicago Historical societies. Among William C. Goudy and Park Board, General Andrew E. Leight and Bruwaert, Consul of edin, president of the Edward Bohe, president of Chicago," Alfred caise," Senator C. B. Scammon, Ex-Mayor McClurg, Hempstead Thomas, Charles F. ong, Honorable J. K. A. Enander, E. S. budfoot, and a large