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THE BARTHOLOI STATUE.

STORY OF HOW THE IDEA ORIGINATED.

How the Work was Begun and Carried Out—Description of the Statue.

New York World.

Bartholdi's colossal statue of "Liberty Enlightening the World" is to be erected on the banks of the Hudson river, at the foot of the mountain which is the outcome of individual impulse, but a popular token of the unbroken friendship of the French nation for the United States, during the latter's first century of existence, and an earnest of the continuance of the same friendly relations in the future between the two great republics of the old and the new worlds. France is the only nation to which the United States owes a distinct debt of gratitude—Louis XVI. was the first monarch who had the moral courage to sleep out of the ranks of his royal order and recognize America as an independent State. Of the influences that carried on the revolutionary war to success, the French alliance was a large and noble element. The troops furnished by France during the revolutionary struggle amounted to over thirteen thousand. The vessels furnished by the same government for the transport of the young republic are set down as forty-five ships of the line, besides frigates. But money was even more necessary than men or vessels at certain periods of the contest, and when the check-book of Congress was empty and the paper issues had ceased to represent any positive value, loans were advanced by the French government amounting to over seven millions of dollars. Nor was this all, for we find another account of three ships despatched from France to this country, laden with military stores, including 200 pieces of artillery, 4,000 tents and clothing for 30,000 men. Add to this the moral effect of the French alliance on the struggling Americans and on the European despots, the diversion of the war of France with England created in our favor, and we can realize the decisive assistance rendered by France in the establishment of our national independence.

ORIGIN OF THE IDEA.

It was to commemorate the friendship of the American and French people that the great statue was undertaken. M. Bartholdi relates the circumstances of its origin: One evening, twenty years ago, he was dining at the residence of M. Laboulaye, a friend of his, and a member of the United States and whose influence in preventing Napoleon III. from interfering in our affairs during the late civil war are well known. There were also present several eminent statesmen and letters, and the conversation having turned on international relations, some one remarked that gratitude could not exist among nations, and added that France, for example, could not count on the remembrance of the past to retain the friendship of the United States. Laboulaye argued that the American nation had more to thank France than for any other European nation, based upon the remembrance of the community of thoughts and of struggles sustained with common enemies. They had beaten together, friendly feeling always remains among nations as among individuals. The political action of the government of France, and even the treaty of Versaille, might not be popularly known in America, but Lafayette was, and if a monument were to be built in America as a memorial of the friendship of the two nations, it would be very natural if it were built by united effort—if it were a common work of both nations.

These remarks of M. Laboulaye were eagerly listened to by M. Bartholdi, and remained fixed in his memory. Five years passed by; the Franco-German war came, and Bartholdi was in the army of the Emperor. While superintending the reception of some arms and munitions just arrived from America, he says he heard with pain the officers of the vessel speak of the demonstrations of the United States in favor of Germany, but he was told that these rejoicings of German-Americans were an expression in favor of a union of the two nations, and a prohibition of hostility towards France.

BARTHOLOI'S VISIT TO AMERICA.

The war over, Bartholdi could not go to his native province of Alsace, held by the Germans. France and civil war was raging. He resolved to take a journey to withdraw his mind from the painful impressions through which he had passed, and to visit America. He visited his friend Laboulaye, whom he had not seen for so many dolorous months, at Versailles, and there met a number of distinguished men whose sympathies towards the United States were well known. They again talked of the American demonstrations of the American people, and the rejoicings that prevailed in America. Laboulaye again declared his views, and added that without any doubt there would be at the one hundredth anniversary of the independence of the United States a public demonstration of affection for France. "Go to see that country," said he to Bartholdi. "You will study it; you will bring back your impressions. Propose to our friends over there to make with us a monument, a common work, in remembrance of the ancient friendship of France and the United States. We will take up a subscription in France. If you find a happy idea, a plan that will excite public enthusiasm, we are convinced that it will be successful in both countries, and we will do our best to have a far-reaching moral effect."

It was in these convictions of M. Bartholdi that the germ of the monument was formed. Bartholdi started for America, and in the way formed some conceptions of a plan of a monument. But it was not until he had returned to the harbor of New York that the definite plan was made clear to the mind of the artist. The superb spectacle inspired him, and he exclaimed: "I will do it. The Statue of Liberty grand as the idea which it embodies, radiant upon the two worlds."

M. Bartholdi made a five months' artistic tour through the United States, from the East to the West and from the North to the South, painting and designing and finding acquaintances everywhere. He met Longfellow, Sumner, Grant, Peter Cooper and a number of other notable men

in every sphere of life, and received everywhere such an encouragement that he returned home convinced that when they should begin the carrying out of the idea in France the United States would second them, and that the draft drawn by M. Bartholdi, Lafayette, Henri Martin and their friends upon American sentiments should not be protested."

THE MEETING AT M. LABOULAYE'S.

On his return M. Laboulaye called a meeting of his friends at his house, and imparted the results of his journey, his impressions, the welcome he had received, the co-laborers on whom he could count, and presented the plan of the monument he had made. Henri Martin, whose place has recently been filled in the French Academy by De Lesseps, speaking of this meeting in an official address, said:

"It was painful for us to discover a thought in harmony with the object to be attained. The artist presented it to us in a form that bore the stamp of genius. He had conceived the celebration of the centenary of independence, applying to it a sublime phrase which sums up the progress of modern times: 'Liberty Enlightening the World.' M. Bartholdi proposed to represent this great idea by a statue of colossal proportions which would surpass all that have ever existed in the world. He had conceived the idea of a monument to be erected in America, and he had associated himself in the enterprise, and the movement which had started from the most modest origin became a genuine national demonstration."

The plan of the French-American Union, the society which has undertaken the carrying out of the colossal Statue of Liberty, was not inaugurated upon the public until 1874. Up to that time it had been organized, the means had been prepared and the first mode of the statue had been made. Subscription lists were circulated throughout France, bearing at the head the following, prepared by M. Laboulaye:

"The monument will be executed in common by the two peoples associated in this fraternal work, as they were of old in establishing independence. In this way we declare by an imperishable memorial the friendship that the blood spilled by our fathers of our old sealed between the two nations. It is a treaty of friendship which should be signed by all hearts which feel the love of their country."

This appeal met with a ready response. The birth of the work was celebrated on June 6, 1874, in