

**A PRIMER OF  
SCULPTURE;  
PP. 1-107**

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A Primer of Sculpture; pp. 1-107 by E. Roscoe Mullins

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**E. ROSCOE MULLINS**

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FRAMEWORK FOR FULL-LENGTH FIGURE (see p. 28).



A  
PRIMER OF SCULPTURE.

BY  
E. ROSCOE MULLINS.

With Illustrations.



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# PRIMER OF SCULPTURE.

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## INTRODUCTORY.

I HAVE undertaken to write a short treatise on the rudiments of Sculpture to serve as a practical guide to beginners. But I would have it understood at the outset that, just as a medical card hung up in a nursery serves to supply information in small ailments, and to give directions where simple remedies are needed—advising arnica here, and lint and ointment there, but at the same time, when matters prove to be serious, ordering that a doctor shall be called in—so only in this way can words of mine help the student wishing to learn the mysteries of the art of sculpture.

I can give a few hints at starting, clear away some difficulties that may have seemed serious, and bring matters down to a practical working basis, by showing that, though the effect produced may be wonderful and overmastering as we see it from the hands of the great masters of the art, the means by which that end is reached are entirely simple and capable of being taught.

But I insist also upon the fact, that no book-learning nor theory will make a sculptor. For, as the help of a doctor is required in important cases, so is the

actual practical teaching of a sculptor necessary in the art of sculpture ; and the place to learn in is—the studio.

I do not intend in these pages to investigate the origin of the art, nor to trace its progress through the centuries, nor its connection with the sister art of painting. There are several books that do this admirably ; among them may be mentioned Lübke's "History of Sculpture," which is translated into English, Overbeck's "Geschichte der Griechischen Plastik," W. C. Perry's "Introduction to the History of Greek and Roman Sculpture," and the same author's "Descriptive Catalogue of the Collection of Casts from the Antique" in the South Kensington Museum (price 6d.), Upcott's "Introduction to Greek Sculpture," in which are catalogued various other authorities, and finally Lessing's "Laocoon," which is almost too well known to need mention.

Interesting though of course it is to know the various stages through which the art has passed, the ornament used in this or that period, and the meaning of its different forms ; the slow development of the figure from the rude limbless block of the early Egyptian sculptures, and all the various ways in which man's eyes have looked on Nature, and his mind with ever-growing clearness and beauty reproduced her natural forms : yet this is the historical aspect of sculpture, and it is not a knowledge of history that is needed to produce a Flaxman or an Alfred Stevens.

My Primer is also only intended to be a practical guide to those who wish to model or carve. On the

other branch of the art—metal-casting—I do not purpose long to dwell, for its success really depends more on a knowledge of scientific than of artistic principles; and moreover that branch alone requires almost the devotion of a lifetime to insure success, and is, after all, the reproduction of an artistic form in a durable material, rather than in itself a work of art; standing, that is, somewhat on the same ground as plaster casting, where success is measured by the exactness of the copy.

With carving it is slightly different, as no exact facsimile is attempted, and the transparency of the material requires often a different touch from that required by clay, to obtain the same effect.

Although I am not dealing with the history of the art, I should like to say a few words about the so-called schools, before entering upon the practical side of my subject.

The term "classical," for instance, which is used to denote a school of itself in opposition to Gothic art, or to work of a realistic character, is a very misleading term, and used always in a loose and vague way. In literature the use of the word is more limited and its sense better defined; but nevertheless even here there is in some sense a vagueness about its application.

We find all the great men who have been dead some years are styled "classical," however widely their work may differ, and in spite of the fact that many of them laboured in active and conscious revolt against what had come to be a false and unnatural bondage to the ideals of another age. The