

THE ALTOVITI APHRODITE

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The Altoviti Aphrodite by Welles Bosworth

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**THE ALTOVITI
APHRODITE**



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Bosworth, William Wines

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FOREWORD

THIS monograph on the Altoviti Aphrodite, which adorns the marble temple in the gardens of Mr. John D. Rockefeller at his country seat "Kijkuit" on the Hudson, has been compiled and edited from information and notes furnished by Mr. Charles de Kay of New York City, who was the first to point out the artistic merit of the Aphrodite and through whose efforts the statue was brought to the attention of critics in Europe and America.

WELLES BOSWORTH.



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THE APHRODITE IN THE MARBLE TEMPLE AT "KIJKUIT"

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THE ALTOVITI APHRODITE

I

TWO statues had long stood, how long we do not know, in the courtyard of the famous Palazzo Montalvo-Altoviti on the Borgo d'Albizzi in Florence. One of them, the Aphrodite which is the subject of this monograph, was esteemed by its owner as of little worth, while the other, attributed to Jan di Bologna, was highly prized. In 1892 Signor Gustavo Volterra, a dealer in antiques, walking down the street, noticed the two statues through the carriage archway. The Aphrodite stood at the rear of the courtyard against a stable wall, which had been decorated with frescoed fruits and flowers as a background by some sympathetic person who may have dimly realized the statue's beauty through the many coats of thick, rough paint with which it had long before been ignorantly and thoughtlessly covered.

Signor Volterra bought the statue for an insignificant sum, for neither he nor its owner, the Marchesa Matteucci, a descendant of the Montalvos, had a true appreciation of its beauty and value. With soap and water he removed the covering of paint from its surface. The Director of the Uffizi Gallery now wished to buy the statue, but for so low a sum that Signor Volterra, declining the offer, sent the marble to London. Thereupon it came into the posses-

