

# ACERVO DIGITAL FUNDAJ

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Joaquim Nabuco Brazilian

ambassador at the

Memorial Meeting of

the American Institute

of Architects at

the Corcoran Gallery

of Art, Washington,

December 15, 1908.

**Fundação Joaquim Nabuco**

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## SAINT-GAUDENS

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Ladies and Gentlemen :

I may well understand why no American genius ever dreams of another immortality than that which his own country could assure to his name. But, like science, art is one and a name to live forever in art is bound to conquer the world. I believe Saint-Gaudens will live forever, and that his conquest has already begun.

It is not difficult to recognize immortality at first sight. From Plato and Phidias to Emerson and Saint-Gaudens every immortal mind caused that impression from the first. I recollect the first time I came in contact with Saint-Gaudens, the day I landed in New York, when I saw his Sherman. I did not even know by whom the statue was, but I at once realized that I was in face of one of the most inspiring symbols of triumph that art had ever conceived. I had again the feeling which one always experiences at the sight of an unexpected masterpiece, when I found myself in a drawing-room of this city before the Wayne MacVeagh tablet. It was so simple, yet never to be forgotten. Going later to the Rock Creek Cemetery, I went sure that I would meet an immortal work ; but how could I have expected that apparition ? No doubt was any longer possible. Only genius can express eternity.



Of all modern creations that is the one to be associated with the Night of Michelangelo. They are very different in form, but both are reflections of the same dark ray of mystery, which borders and, for the mind, outglares, the whole light of Creation. Here, however, the impression might have been a suggestion; the first two were direct revelations.

Do not believe that glory is in the dispensation of the critics. It existed long before them. It flows from its own source. Glory is chiefly distributed by the emulation and the despair of men of the same craft struggling in vain to reach the perfection another has attained. The "Lives of Painters" of Vasari tell how fame is awarded in the profession, sometimes by generous rivalry, other times by envy, even by hatred. The artists, however, would be impotent by themselves to consecrate the work of genius; it is necessary that their knowledge be completed by the emotion of the masses, whose heart pulsates in it. We are drops in the ocean; nevertheless we all try to have the conscience of the ocean, and not only that of the drop. In each of us here, amidst these glorious surroundings of his, that conscience reflects the image of the great American sculptor. This is glory; this is immortality.