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Lauren K. Lessing
Colby College, llessing@colby.edu

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Angels in the Home:

Adelicia Acklen's Sculpture Collection at Belmont Mansion,
Nashville, Tennessee

Lauren Lessing

Following the Civil War, the wealthy plantation owner Adelicia Acklen redecorated her villa, Belmont, near Nashville, Tennessee, with white marble ideal sculptures by the American sculptors Randolph Rogers, Chauncey Ives, Joseph Mozier, and William Rinehart. During the war, Acklen had compromised her reputation as a genteel Southern lady by bargaining with Union officers in order to sell her cotton at exorbitant wartime rates. By purchasing and displaying a collection of statues that embodied the ideal of true womanhood, Acklen hoped to publicly redomesticate both her home and herself and to express her affinity for the ideology of the Lost Cause.

IN JUNE of 1865, Adelicia Acklen, a forty-six-year-old widow from Tennessee, traveled to Europe for the first time in her life. After stopping briefly in London to collect money for the cotton she had sold the previous year, she embarked on a grand tour of the Continent. From Rome that winter she wrote to her mother, "For the last day or two, I have visited a number of artists' studios. At each place I have had to climb three or four flights of stairs!"¹ Specifically, Acklen visited the studios of expatriate sculptors, which had become standard stops for American tourists in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Acklen had come to Italy with more than just a

passing curiosity about American sculpture. She was planning to redecorate her palatial Italianate villa, Belmont, which had been occupied by Union troops during the war. As she trudged up and down flights of stairs and met with sculptors, she carefully selected the artworks that would be the focal points of her decor.

Dianne Macleod has proposed that nineteenth-century American women art collectors were motivated more by personal than public concerns. Unlike their male counterparts, she argues, "women collectors perceived interior space as a central structure in the psychological landscapes of their lives and valued the aesthetic commodities they placed in this space more for their intrinsic 'use value' than for their 'exchange value' or extrinsic worth as signifiers of luxury."² There is little doubt that Acklen derived pleasure from her sculptures' beauty and identified personally with their associated sentimental narratives. However, she also greatly valued these artworks as signifiers not only of luxury but also of her loyalty to certain cherished cultural ideals—most notably the ideal of true womanhood, which many Southerners associated after the Civil War with the ideology of the Lost Cause. Acklen was understandably anxious about her reputation after the war. Her social standing was

Lauren Lessing is the Mirken Curator of Education, Colby College Museum of Art.

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¹ Letter from Adelicia Acklen to her mother from Rome, February 25, 1866, Belmont Mansion curatorial files, Nashville. I am grateful to Mark Brown and John Lancaster, the curator and former registrar of Belmont Mansion, for their extensive and excellent assistance and for the trove of historical information they have gathered, organized, and analyzed.

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² Dianne Sachko Macleod, *Enchanted Lives, Enchanted Objects: American Women Collectors and the Making of Culture, 1800-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 8.

damaged and her quest for a husband hampered by the fact that she had traded military information to the Yankees and subsequently reaped a fortune in black-market gold, making fools of her neighbors in the process. By investing some of her lucre in ideal statues that—paradoxically—presented her as passive, domestic, and angelically pure, she hoped to obscure the origins of her postwar wealth and rehabilitate her reputation.

Although Acklen was one of the few Southerners wealthy enough to assemble a domestic sculpture collection immediately after the Civil War, by doing so she was following a cultural trend. As Lori Merish has argued, the mid-nineteenth century saw the rise of modern consumer psychology, in which individuals express themselves through consumption and identify with the objects they display on their persons and in their homes.³ At midcentury, the homes of affluent Americans became larger, grander, and more theatrical than ever before. Taking advantage of improved transportation, those with means traveled widely and saw more of the world than had earlier generations. Flocks of tourists returned from Europe with aristocratic châteaux and villas fresh in their minds and, through their own homes, they sought to render their wealth visible, confirm their cultural credentials, and lend an air of stability to their (all-too-often tenuous) prosperity. Through the tasteful elaboration of their domestic interiors, middle- and upper-class Americans also hoped to define themselves favorably and reinforce desired aspects of their identities. In her 1990 book *Marble Queens and Captives*, Joy Kasson defined ideal sculptures as “three-dimensional, figurative works, usually marble, life-sized or slightly smaller, portraying (usually female) subjects drawn from literature, history, the Bible or mythology.”⁴ As domestic interiors grew larger and more complex, the market for such sculptures boomed, leading the American art critic James Jackson Jarves to refer to them derisively in his 1869 book *Art Thoughts* as “ordinary parlor statues, Eves, Greek Slaves, Judiths and the like.”⁵ After the Civil War, wealthy tourists often bought more than just a single “parlor statue” for their homes. Some,

³ Lori Merish, *Sentimental Materialism: Gender, Commodity Culture, and Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 2–3.

⁴ Joy Kasson, *Marble Queens and Captives: Women in Nineteenth-Century American Sculpture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 24–25.

⁵ James Jackson Jarves, *Art Thoughts: The Experience and Observation of an American Amateur in Europe* (New York: Hurd & Houghton, 1869), 306.

like Acklen, purchased groups of thematically related works.⁶ In order to be successful in a highly competitive market, sculptors had to understand—and cater to—their buyers’ desires to construct idealized versions of themselves through their domestic decor.

Probably around the time of her third marriage in June of 1867, Acklen hired the Nashville photographer C. C. Giers to make a series of stereographs of her villa.⁷ Several of these images that survive depict Belmont’s entrance hall and expansive grand salon. Together with an account of Belmont that appeared in Elisabeth Ellet’s book *The Queens of American Society* and several other published descriptions, Giers’s stereographs document the original locations and surroundings of Acklen’s five American ideal sculptures.⁸ Four of these statues remain at the Belmont Mansion Museum in or near their original locations. Using these sources, I will show how Acklen sought to redomesticate both her home and herself in the wake of the Civil War by redecorating her villa with sculptures that emphasized her identity as a dutiful wife, mother, and Christian. I will also explore the limits of Acklen’s self-fashioning for, despite her considerable investment in refurbishing her image, she never entirely lived down her reputation as a “woman of the world” who challenged the dominance of the men around her by aggressively pursuing her own interests.

Adelicia Acklen and Ideal Southern Womanhood

By 1852, when Acklen was thirty-five years old, she had been widowed and remarried, had broken her

⁶ For instance, just as Acklen was assembling her domestic sculpture collection in Tennessee, the Connecticut financier and railroad magnate Legrand Lockwood acquired a similar collection—including sculptures depicting Queen Isabella, Christopher Columbus, and Pocahontas—that touted his affiliation with the ideology of manifest destiny.

⁷ Carl C. Giers had a Union Street studio in Nashville in 1867. Giers’s stereographs of Belmont differ from stereographs he produced for commercial distribution in that they are stamped only with the name “C. C. Giers” and the location “Nashville, Tennessee,” instead of with the full studio address, date, and copyright information. This suggests that they were privately commissioned, most likely by Acklen. See James A. Hoobler, *Nashville, from the Collection of Carl and Otto Giers* (Charleston, SC: Acadia, 1999).

⁸ Descriptions of Belmont after the war can be found in Elisabeth Ellet, *The Queens of American Society* (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1867), 417–20; Thérèse Yelverton, *Teresina in America* (London: Bentley & Son, 1875), 1:250–57; John W. Kiser, “Scion of Belmont, Part I,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 38 (Spring 1979): 37–39; O. O. S., “A Lovely Spot,” *Louisville Courier-Journal*, May 18, 1881, reprinted in Albert W. Wardin and Bob Schatz, *Belmont Mansion: The Home of Joseph and Adelicia Acklen* (Nashville: Historic Belmont Association, 1981), 28–29. In addition, extant reinforcements under the floor mark the precise original location of Acklen’s version of *Ruth Gleaning* by Randolph Rogers.



Fig. 1. John Wood Dodge, *Adelicia Acklen*, Nashville, Tennessee, 1852. Miniature; oil on ivory. (Belmont Mansion Association.)

late husband's will in court and gained control of his vast estates (including plantations in three states and more than 750 slaves), and had given birth to seven children, four of whom had died. An intelligent and strong-willed woman, she had demonstrated a talent for the supposedly masculine endeavors of business and law. Yet, a miniature portrait painted that year by John Dodge depicts Acklen

as soft and sweet (fig. 1). The corresponding portrait of her second husband, Joseph Acklen, shows him with his chin slightly lifted, his mouth firm, his gaze steady and direct, and his right hand resolutely clasping his lapel (fig. 2). Adelicia, on the other hand, appears tentative, almost shy. Her cheeks are slightly flushed, her eyes wide and gentle. With her right hand, she delicately fingers the edge of



Fig. 2. John Wood Dodge, *Joseph A. S. Acklen*, Nashville, Tennessee, 1851. Miniature; oil on ivory. (Belmont Mansion Association.)

her velvet wrap. These intimate little portraits, made for the family, are conventional and also telling. They present idealized images of a husband and wife as those social categories were defined at midcentury. Joseph is strong and capable, Adelia beautiful and loving. There was no way for Dodge, using the current imagery of femininity, to show Adelia's iron will or keen, pragmatic mind nor, probably, would she have wanted these qualities to become part of her persona.

As many scholars have argued, the ideal of the Southern lady as fair skinned, sweet, domestic, pure, pious, and dependent was central to Southern planters' justification of their position at the top of a rigid social hierarchy.⁹ This ideal allowed elite women to define themselves as naturally genteel and elite men to define themselves as chivalrous protectors of the weak, definitions crucial to

⁹ See, e.g., Virginia Kent Anderson Leslie, "The Myth of the Southern Lady: Antebellum Proslavery Rhetoric and the Proper Place of Women," *Sociological Spectrum* 6 (1986): 31–49; Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

their sense of personal honor and entitlement. Particularly in the tense decades surrounding the Civil War, ideal Southern womanhood became an emblem of Southern culture. Authors brandished it like a flag, comparing the instinctively delicate "true women" of the South to shrewish, masculine, fame-seeking female reformers in the North. One author noted, in reference to such reformers, "Our ladies blush that their sisters *anywhere* descend to such things. Our ordinary women much prefer to follow the example of genuinely womanly feeling, set them by the ladies around them, than that set by Northern ladies, and so they are above [them]."¹⁰ As Donald Matthews has pointed out, Southern Protestant ministers preached that God himself endowed women with graceful submissiveness; passive fortitude; and tender, loving natures. Such arguments made any deviation from female gender norms seem not only subversive but also sacrilegious.¹¹ The biographies of Southern women living during the middle decades of the nineteenth century show the extent to which they accepted, rejected, or modified the ideal of the Southern lady—an ideal that shaped cultural expectations of them and, to some degree, their own expectations of themselves.

A number of scholars have argued that the Civil War created a "crisis in gender" for elite Southern women, forcing them into more assertive, public roles than they had previously occupied.¹² However, decades before the war many women like Acklen were already asserting themselves in ways that deviated from the passive, selfless, feminine ideal. As Alexis Giradon Brown has noted, elite Southern women were expected to appear feminine and dainty but also to manage plantation households—a role that required them to be tough and commanding. "For the purpose of survival," she argues, "women began to explore their own ways of avoiding the prescriptions of society while remaining within the pleasing set of feminine ideals."¹³ Throughout her adult life, Acklen struggled to exercise power within a patriarchal society. At age twenty-two she

¹⁰ B., "The New Social Propositions," *Southern Literary Messenger* 20 (May 1854): 300.

¹¹ Donald G. Matthews, *Religion in the Old South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 169–70.

¹² See, e.g., Catherine Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress: Women's World in the Old South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982); Anne Firor Scott, *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830–1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Jacqueline Glass Campbell, *When Sherman Marched North from the Sea: Resistance on the Confederate Home Front* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

¹³ Alexis Giradon Brown, "The Women Left Behind: Transformation of the Southern Belle, 1840–1880," *Historian* 62 (Summer 2000): 765.

took the lead in courting her first husband, Isaac Franklin—a man more than twice her age. In 1849, three years after he died, she married again but required her second husband, a lawyer named Joseph Acklen, to sign a firm prenuptial agreement. Franklin's will stipulated that, upon Adelicia's remarriage, her portion of his estate would become a school for poor children; however, she and her new husband filed suit against the will in 1851, arguing that it established a perpetuity and deprived Franklin's last living child, Adelicia's seven-year-old daughter Emma, of her full and rightful inheritance. Both the Louisiana Supreme Court and the Tennessee Supreme Court ruled that the terms of Franklin's will were invalid. When Emma died in 1858, Adelicia inherited the remainder of Franklin's property and became one of the wealthiest women in the South and one of the few married women in Tennessee at that time with full control of her own property and income.¹⁴ As Acklen must have been aware, Southern ladies who strayed too far from the elite feminine ideal risked their own and their families' honor.¹⁵ For this reason, she carefully observed all the social niceties expected of a genteel Southern lady, and she relied on her considerable personal charm to shield her from criticism. Her younger sister later recalled that Acklen "could talk a bird out of a tree."¹⁶

At the end of the Civil War, Acklen's identity as a "true woman" was threatened on two fronts.¹⁷

¹⁴ The legal term "perpetuity" refers to an annuity that has no definite end. In many states (including Louisiana and Tennessee) such annuities are illegal. For the Franklin will case, see "Succession of Franklin—Adelicia Acklen, and her Minor Child Emma, v. J. W. Franklin et al. Trustees, &c.," *Reports of Cases Argued and Determined in the Supreme Court of Louisiana* 7 (June 1852): 395–440; "William Franklin et al. vs. John Armfield et al.," *Reports of Cases Argued and Determined in the Supreme Court of Tennessee During the Years 1854–55* (Nashville: W. F. Bang, 1856), 305–59.

¹⁵ For the centrality of honor in antebellum Southern society, see Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (London: Oxford University Press, 1982). While Wyatt-Brown discussed Southern honor as a primarily male attribute, Giselle Brown has recently argued that women laid claim to their own brand of honor by embodying, as nearly as possible, the Southern feminine ideal. See Giselle Brown, *The Confederate Belle* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003), 4.

¹⁶ Quoted in Albert W. Wardin and Bob Schatz, *Belmont Mansion: The Home of Joseph and Adelicia Acklen* (Nashville: Historic Belmont Association, 1981), 1. This book and an earlier edition of the same title published in 1981, as well as a day-by-day account of Acklen's life compiled by Mark Brown and John Lancaster, have served as my main sources of biographical information about Acklen. Subsequent citations to Wardin are to the 2002 edition unless specified otherwise. Mark Brown and John Lancaster, "Chronology of Adelicia Hayes Franklin Acklen's Life," unpublished manuscript, Belmont Mansion curatorial files, Nashville.

¹⁷ For a seminal discussion of the phrase "true woman," which was common in the nineteenth century, see Barbara Welter, "The

Throughout the war years, the Northern press presented Southern women as strident, spoiled, and shrewish (much the same way the Southern press presented Northern women). For instance, an engraving published in the May 1863 issue of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* depicts Confederate ladies hounding their men to war in order to satisfy their own fury and pride. In the companion engraving, the trappings of class and gender have been completely stripped away from them, revealing a mob of savage harridans rioting for bread (fig. 3). Many of the Union soldiers who would occupy Nashville for the next ten years and the Northern businessmen and their families who poured into town after the war must have regarded Acklen's position as a recent Confederate slave owner as incompatible with the sweetness and moral rectitude of a genteel Christian lady. A Union officer stationed in Nashville in 1862 noted, "[Mr. Acklen's] wife well fills his place ... so far as rebellion sympathies and hate can extend."¹⁸

Graver still for Acklen was the reaction of her Southern neighbors to her and her husband's wartime actions, which preserved much of their wealth. As Stephen V. Ash has noted, white society in the middle Tennessee region reacted to the outbreak of the war and the subsequent Federal invasion and occupation by standing "shoulder to shoulder in resolute hostility and resistance to the Yankees." Members of this already cohesive society closed ranks, bending over backward to support one another and risking their lives to aid Confederate troops while shunning Union soldiers and anyone who demonstrated the least sympathy with them. Women in Nashville held their noses as they passed Union officers in the street and spit at those suspected of being collaborators. Ministers denounced scalawags from the pulpit, and congregants subsequently denied these men and women both charity and civility. After the Confederate defeat, as Union troops struggled to assert control over countryside and town alike, white Tennesseans frequently assaulted both former slaves and anyone perceived to be allied with the Yankees. The Ku Klux Klan was founded in Pulaski, Tennessee, a three-day ride

Cult of True Womanhood: 1820–1860," *American Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (1966): 151–74. In the past thirty years, a number of scholars have questioned the degree to which women actually conformed to the ideal Welter described; however, it is precisely because there was no consensus about women's nature and proper role that the ideal of "true womanhood" was a powerful cultural tool—it presented the viewpoint of the white bourgeois elite as natural and universal.

¹⁸ John Fitch, *Annals of the Army of the Cumberland* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1864), 635.



Fig. 3. "Sowing and Reaping," 1863. From *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, May 23, 1863, detail of 141. (Winterthur Library Printed Book and Periodical Collection; Winterthur photos, Jim Schneck.)

south of Nashville, in 1866.¹⁹ While Acklen probably felt insulted by the Northerners who questioned her position as a true woman, by the end of the war she may actually have feared her Southern neighbors.

When Tennessee seceded from the Union in June 1861, the Acklens took a firm Confederate stand. They donated \$30,000 to the Confederacy, and Adelia joined the Ladies' Soldiers Friend Society. On the eve of Nashville's occupation by Union forces in February 1862, Joseph fled at Adelia's urging to the Acklens' cotton plantations in Louisiana. Several months later, after Union troops captured New Orleans and Baton Rouge and began moving up the Mississippi River, he found himself pinned between opposing Union and Confederate lines. Fearful that Confederate soldiers would burn his cotton to prevent its falling into enemy hands, he appealed to Union officers.

¹⁹ Stephen V. Ash, *Middle Tennessee Society Transformed, 1860–1870: War and Peace in the Upper South* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006), 143–175, 194. See also George C. Rable, *But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984).

Although Acklen refused overt Federal protection (no doubt fearing reprisal), Lieutenant R. B. Lowry of the U. S. Navy reported that Acklen renounced his oath of allegiance to the Confederacy and provided useful information on Confederate naval operations near his land.²⁰ Acklen, who had but recently been an outspoken and published advocate of slavery, wrote to his wife, "I am done with nigger labour. I never had much fancy for it as you know but now I am fully satisfied. I have suffered all kinds of deprivations and been subjected to all kinds of lies and slanders that malice could invent."²¹ Joseph may have intended this letter to

²⁰ *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*, ser. 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1904), 18:126–27.

²¹ Letter from Joseph Acklen, Angola Plantation, Louisiana, to Adelia Acklen, August 20, 1863, copy in Belmont Mansion curatorial files of the original in the manuscripts section, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA. According to the Acklens' son, William Hayes Ackland, Joseph had been, before the outbreak of the war, "desirous of showing the world the better side of slavery in an ideal plantation life." See Kiser, "Scion of Belmont, Part I," 43. Joseph Acklen published a two-part article

be intercepted and read by Union soldiers. His sprawling, unsteady signature suggests he was already ill with the malaria that would kill him a month later.

With characteristic resolve, Adelicia took charge of the situation. Accompanied by a hired guard and a cousin who was a Confederate war widow, she traveled to Louisiana and took up residence at her Angola plantation.²² There, she began playing what one Union officer referred to as “a very deep game.”²³ While her cousin traveled back and forth, bargaining with Confederate officers to save the cotton, Acklen entertained Union officers in the plantation house. After two months, the Confederate General Leonidas Polk signed an order allowing Acklen to move her cotton to New Orleans. Acklen also obtained permission from Rear Admiral David Dixon Porter, Commander of the Union’s Mississippi fleet, to ship her cotton down river and, ultimately, past the Federal blockade to Liverpool, England. Somehow, Acklen even arranged to haul her cotton to the river on Union army wagons with Confederate soldiers standing by as guards. In England, she sold it at exorbitant wartime rates, making a profit of roughly three-quarters of a million dollars in gold.

Just how Acklen managed to accomplish this feat remains shrouded in mystery. It is likely that she, like her husband, offered military information to Union officers while her cousin, Sarah Grant, offered similar information to the Confederates. Leonidas Polk, the Confederate general in command of the Army of Mississippi, was a family friend of Acklen’s, and some of his relatives in Nashville may have been in debt to her.²⁴ In addition, Adelicia had a crucial advantage over her husband when it came to negotiations. Both she and her cousin were able to play on their position as ladies and recent widows to gain sympathy and respect. Elite Southern widows—who were easily distinguishable by their mourning costumes—were able to walk on both sides of the gender line, exercising male authority while portraying themselves as dutiful, selfless guardians of their late husbands’ wishes and their children’s needs. As a result, widows could operate

beyond the pale of ladylike behavior and still expect to be treated with deference.²⁵ Even after a Confederate colonel discerned what Acklen was doing, he delayed taking action to prevent her from moving her cotton to the river “for fear an injustice should be done to Mrs. A.”²⁶ In the end, Acklen was held for only two days by the Confederate army for shipping cotton illegally, then she was released unscathed. Leaving one of her brothers in charge of her Louisiana plantations, she took a steamship from New Orleans and returned to Nashville by way of New York in August 1864.²⁷

Despite her status as a widow, Acklen’s exploit damaged her reputation at home. In saving her cotton, she had decisively stepped outside the proper sphere of a genteel Southern lady and had done so for materialistic rather than patriotic or filial reasons. In the process, she had made fools of Confederate officers, at least one of whom was a well-respected member of a prominent Nashville family. Furthermore, Acklen (who was acutely aware of the war’s inevitable outcome) renewed ties to her Northern relatives in 1864. She even sent her oldest son, Joseph, to boarding school in New Jersey in order to keep him out of harm’s way. While many of her neighbors’ houses were badly damaged or completely destroyed during the Battle of Nashville, Acklen’s house and grounds, which served as a Union army headquarters, were looted but left otherwise unscathed. Finally, her niece and ward Sally Acklen became engaged to one of the occupying Union officers, and the couple were married in New York in 1866. All of these factors combined to make Acklen’s social position in postwar Nashville tenuous. She lamented in a letter to her brother that Northerners and Southerners alike condemned her.²⁸ Acklen briefly considered leaving Nashville permanently but in the end decided to make a stand and stay. Her trip to New York and Europe, which she began in June of 1865, was a crucial part of her plan to regain her former social position in Nashville. It allowed her to collect the money for her cotton and to buy carpets, wallpaper, drapery, furniture, and art for the renovation of her house.

in which he attempted to do just that. See Joseph Acklen, “Rules and Management of a Southern Estate,” *Debow’s Review* 21 (December 1856): 617–20 (pt. 1), and 22 (April 1857): 376–81 (pt. 2).

²² The most accurate account of Acklen’s actions to save her cotton can be found in Brown and Lancaster, “Chronology of Adelicia Hayes Franklin Acklen’s Life.”

²³ Lieutenant-Commander Kidder Randolph Breese, journal entry dated April 22, 1864, quoted in Wardin, *Belmont Mansion*, 17.

²⁴ I am grateful to Mark Brown for this insight.

²⁵ Kirsten E. Wood, “Broken Reeds and Competent Farmers: Slaveholding Widows in the Southeastern United States, 1783–1861,” *Journal of Women’s History* 13 (Summer 2001): 34–57.

²⁶ Letter from Colonel Frank Powers to Lieutenant Colonel Jones S. Hamilton, May 11, 1864, quoted in Wardin, *Belmont Mansion*, 16–17.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Letter from Adelicia Acklen to Addison Hayes, August 27, 1864, quoted in Brown and Lancaster, “Chronology of Adelicia Hayes Franklin Acklen’s Life.”



Fig. 4. A. S. Morse, *Belmont Mansion from the Water Tower*, Nashville, Tennessee, ca. 1864. Carte de visite. (Belmont Mansion Association.)

By redecorating and by marrying as well and as quickly as possible, Acklen hoped to publicly re-domesticate both her home and herself.

Belmont

In 1853, Adelia and her second husband Joseph Acklen used the money they had recently recovered in the Franklin will case to build the elaborate house and grounds they called Belmont two miles southwest of Nashville. The estate had several formal gardens, numerous fountains, a water tower, conservatory, deer park, art gallery, and zoological garden (fig. 4). The house itself is Italianate in style, finished with reddish-brown stucco and white trim (fig. 5). Lacy, cast-iron balconies originally extended above the recessed entrance and along the second story of each wing. Italianate houses were built by the thousands by middle- and upper-class Americans

throughout the 1850s. The most popular type featured irregular “picturesque” massing, an asymmetrical facade, an L-shaped plan, and a square tower. Belmont is atypical in that it has a symmetrical facade and plan, Corinthian columns and pilasters, and a cupola that rises from the center of the house. It resembles the model “Anglo-Grecian Villa” in an 1848 article in *Godey’s Lady’s Book* (fig. 6). Adelia’s son later recalled that his mother was a devotee of the *Lady’s Book*.²⁹ It is possible that she showed this elevation and the accompanying description and plan to the German-born architect Adolphus Heiman, who probably designed Belmont in 1850.³⁰

²⁹ Kiser, “Scion of Belmont, Part I,” 41.

³⁰ Although it is not certain that Heiman designed Belmont, he did design later remodeling and additions. As the most prominent architect working in Nashville at the time the house was built, he would have been a likely choice. In their choice of a design for their villa, the Acklens may also have been influenced by the midcentury Italianate architecture of New Orleans, which (unlike its Northern manifestation) was characterized by verticality, regularity, and symmetry.



Fig. 5. Attributed to Adolphus Heiman, Belmont Mansion, built 1853, addition 1860. (Belmont Mansion Association.)

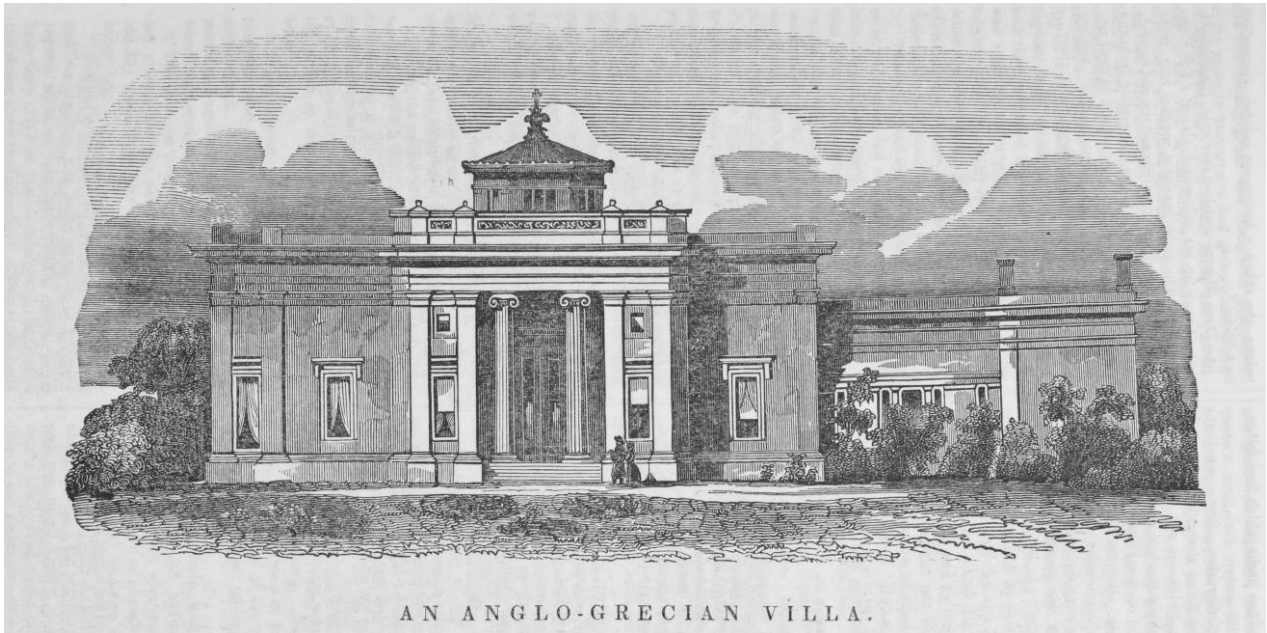


Fig. 6. "An Anglo-Grecian Villa," 1848. From *Godey's Lady's Book and Ladies' American Magazine* 37 (November 1848): detail of 308. (Winterthur Library Printed Book and Periodical Collection.)

Belmont was surrounded by plantations belonging to Adelia's family, but it was not itself a plantation house. Rather, it was a country villa of the type described and popularized by the American architect Andrew Jackson Downing in his 1850 book *The Architecture of Country Houses*.³¹ According to Downing, "the villa, or country house proper ... is the most refined home of America—the home of its most leisurely and educated class of citizens. Nature and art both lend it their happiest influence. Amid the serenity and peace of sylvan scenes, surrounded by the perennial freshness of nature, enriched without and within by objects of universal beauty and interest—objects that touch the heart and awaken the understanding—it is in such a house that we should look for the happiest social and moral development of our people."³² Like the picturesque mansions built by New York merchants and industrialists along the Hudson River, Belmont seemed to offer a haven from the world of labor. Unlike Fairvue, the working Tennessee plantation house where Adelia had lived with her first husband, Belmont was a whimsical retreat, situated far from the Acklens' slave-worked Louisiana and Texas cotton fields. Although the Acklens initially intended Belmont to be a summer home, by the late 1850s the family was spending nine months of every year there.³³

As Downing and other nineteenth-century writers on domestic architecture argued, the successful country house functioned as a simulacrum for its owners, expressing their "habits, education, tastes and manners," as well as their moral character.³⁴ Thus, Belmont's symmetry was intended to suggest rectitude and common sense, while its proximity to nature revealed sentiment and deep feeling. Even the name Belmont, which the Acklens took from Shakespeare's play *A Merchant of Venice*, is self-referential. In the play, Belmont is the villa belonging to Portia, a wise and virtuous heiress. When Portia marries the noble but impoverished Leonides, she bestows her great wealth upon him and vows absolute submission to his will—a vow that does not prevent her from subsequently disguising herself as a lawyer and successfully defending her hus-

band's friend in court. The name Belmont created a concrete link between the villa and Adelia herself, whose recent demonstration of legal prowess in the Franklin will case had made her and her second husband very wealthy.

As Belmont's similarity to the model home in *Godey's Lady's Book* and the idealized country houses described by Downing make clear, the Acklens' villa was also conceived as an ideal domestic space. Whereas in the North the rhetoric of domesticity focused on the nuclear family, Southern domestic ideology placed a greater emphasis on extended family and social relations.³⁵ When Belmont became the Acklens' primary residence, they added two wings and a long "grand salon" along the back. These large interior spaces made it possible for the family to offer the expansive hospitality that was an integral part of the Southern domestic ideal. Adelia's son William Ackland later recalled both the extravagant parties his mother hosted at Belmont and the almost constant presence of houseguests. "Relatives came with servants and children for indefinite stays—often weeks at a time. ... There was always a welcome so long as there was a vacant bed or seat at the table and it was never known before hand how many would be seated at meals."³⁶

Frances Walsh, the director of the convent school that Sally Acklen attended in the early 1860s, recalled that the mansion "comprised the leading characteristics of the old southern home, spacious with appointments adapted to generous hospitality, but it surpassed them all in expensive ornamentation."³⁷ Although Walsh noted disapprovingly that Belmont's extravagant decor lent it an air of "oriental luxury," Adelia and Joseph Acklen probably viewed their art, furniture, and other domestic embellishments as perfectly in line with the stipulations of writers like Downing, who insisted the ideal house be "enriched without and within by objects of universal beauty and interest ... that touch the heart and awaken the understanding." Even Catherine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, writing for a middle-class audience, stressed that, "the aesthetic element ... contributes much to the education of the entire household in refinement, intellectual development and moral sensibility." Because of the emphasis domestic writers placed on decor as a beneficial moral influence, homeowners like the

³¹ Andrew Jackson Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses* (New York: D. Appleton, 1852). Downing recommended the Italianate style as most suitable for villas in "the middle and southern states" (see 274).

³² *Ibid.*, 258.

³³ At this time, the Acklens were still not planning to make Belmont their primary residence. Rather, they were planning to build an even larger house in Louisiana. Mark Brown, e-mail correspondence to the author, April 1, 2006.

³⁴ Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses*, 261–62.

³⁵ Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress*, 36–39.

³⁶ Kiser, "Scion of Belmont, Part I," 42.

³⁷ Mother Frances Walsh, "The Annals of St. Cecilia Convent, 1860–1888," unpublished manuscript, Belmont Mansion curatorial files, Nashville, 33.

Acklens could display their wealth and good taste while simultaneously demonstrating proper domestic behavior.³⁸

Belmont's aura of lavish domesticity was shattered when the 4th Union Army Corps occupied the house and grounds in December 1864. A soldier in the 64th Ohio Volunteer Infantry recalled, "Our line of works here at Nashville were run right through a princely mansion on our company front. The fine lace curtains on gilded windows, with costly upholstery, rich furniture and Brussels carpets, all spoke of great wealth. Our officers occupied the principle rooms for offices."³⁹ A Union officer noted, "We, on the outside [of the villa], were equally well off, for the spacious grounds were surrounded by nicely built stone walls that were worked into chimneys. ... The ornamental trees did not make first-rate fire wood on account of being green, but we had not time for them to dry, and had to get along with them as best we could."⁴⁰ Acklen, who had taken refuge with her family and many of her valuables at former First Lady Mrs. James K. Polk's house in Nashville, returned after the Battle of Nashville to find her home standing but a shambles, with the art gallery east of the house badly damaged. She was still so discouraged by its state three months later that she wrote to her brother of her plans to rent it out or turn it into a hotel.⁴¹ By June, though, when she embarked on her European sojourn, she had decided to stay and renovate the house.

Acklen returned to Tennessee determined to reestablish herself as the reigning queen of Nashville society. Within months of her homecoming, Belmont's gardens had been replanted and the house redecorated with new carpets, drapery, wallpaper, and furniture. Acklen also had the art gallery to the east of the main house torn down, and she transferred her extensive collection of paintings to her home, making it resemble, in the words of one visitor, "a house insecurely built of pictures."⁴²

³⁸ A. J. Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses, Including Designs for Cottages, Farm-Houses, and Villas* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1852), 258; Catharine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The American Woman's Home* (New York: J. B. Ford, 1869), 84. See also Clifford Edward Clark, Jr. *The American Family Home, 1800–1960* (Chapel Hill and London, 1986), 59.

³⁹ G. W. Lewis, *The Campaigns of the 124th Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry, with Roster and Roll of Honor* (Akron, OH: Werner Co., 1894), quoted in Wardin, *Belmont Mansion*, 19.

⁴⁰ Quoted in *ibid.*

⁴¹ Transcript of letter from Adelicia Acklen to Addison Hayes, March 14, 1865, Belmont Mansion curatorial files, Nashville.

⁴² Yelverton, *Teresina in America*, 1:251. It is important to note that Thérèse Yelverton (the scandalously divorced Viscountess Avonmore) was a traveling English aristocrat whose views of American culture were generally caustic.

In December 1866, Acklen held a reception at Belmont for the Alabama socialite Octavia LeVert that was attended by several hundred guests. A reporter for the *Nashville Union* referred to the event as "one of the most princely and brilliant occasions of the character ever enjoyed in this region."⁴³ The LeVert reception marked Belmont's reopening and Acklen's reentry onto the Nashville social scene; however, Acklen found that merely demonstrating her wealth, taste, and sumptuous hospitality was not enough to restore her to the good graces of her neighbors. In fact, the reception may have worked against her purposes. When she began a courtship with a former Confederate general (another member of the extensive Polk family), his relations quickly put an end to the match. One of his daughters wrote to her sister, "[Mrs. Acklen] may be a very fine woman for aught I know the contrary, but she is not the sort of woman that would make Father happy. ... She is a complete woman of the world and very fond of making a display of her wealth which is very parvenuish I think."⁴⁴ As Dinah Maria Mulock Craik had explained in 1859, "to be a 'woman of the world,' though not essentially a criminal accusation, implies a state of being not natural. ... She is like certain stamped-out bronze ornaments, an admirable imitation of real womanhood—till you walk around her to the other side."⁴⁵ By calling Acklen a woman of the world, Sarah Polk Jones implied that she was not a true woman but merely a cheap, hollow imitation.

In the wake of the war, the ideal of true womanhood became more powerful than ever in the South. According to George Rable, elite Southern women worked to keep the ideal alive so that they could maintain their social standing in the unstable, post-war world. LeeAnn Whites has argued that Southern women also wanted to soothe the wounded masculinity of defeated Confederate soldiers. By accepting (at least outwardly) an image of themselves as fragile and dependent, they allowed Southern men to once again define themselves as strong and capable.⁴⁶ Women's loyalty to the antebellum

⁴³ "The Reception at Bellevue [sic]," *Nashville Union*, December 20, 1866, 3.

⁴⁴ Letter from Sarah Rachel Polk Jones to Emily Donelson Polk Williams, February 18, 1867, cited in Wardin, *Belmont Mansion*, 27.

⁴⁵ Dinah Maria Mulock Craik, *A Woman's Thoughts on Women* (New York: Rudd & Carleton, 1859), 199–201.

⁴⁶ George Rable, *Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989); LeeAnn Whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender: Augusta, Georgia, 1860–1890* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995). See also Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

feminine ideal became an outward sign of their enduring loyalty to the Southern cause. In order to mend her reputation in the fraught atmosphere of postwar Tennessee, Acklen knew she would have to demonstrate her conformity to this ideal of true Southern womanhood. To this end, she carefully assembled a collection of ideal sculptures that celebrated the feminine virtues of submissiveness, motherly affection, piety, and repentance.

Acklen's Sculptures

It is very unlikely that all five (if any) of the marble statues Acklen purchased during her recent trip to Europe and New York were installed in time for the LeVert reception; however, several were likely in place by the time she celebrated her wedding to Dr. William Cheatham six months later. Once installed at Belmont, they marked her as a person of means and taste and also reinforced her identity as a virtuous lady—an identity that was, of course, further reinforced by her respectable marriage to a prominent Nashville physician. Not only had Cheatham served the Confederacy as a physician during the war, his first wife (a Confederate spy) had died in a Union prison, and his brother-in-law was the Confederate General John Hunt Morgan. A biographical sketch of Acklen that appeared in Elisabeth Ellet's 1867 book *The Queens of American Society* emphasizes the new Mrs. Cheatham's identity as a beloved and dutiful wife and also reveals her sculptures' importance to her new persona. More than half of the four-page sketch is taken up with a discussion of Belmont, which the author describes as both a "princely abode" and "a home full of the sanctities of love." After describing Adelia as "the light of this abode" and "the pride and joy of her husband," Ellet went on to describe all five of her American ideal statues in their domestic settings.⁴⁷ Acklen herself concocted this flattering biography. In an 1866 letter to Acklen, Octavia LeVert wrote, "This morning's post brought me your note of April 26 in the same envelope of the sketch. It contains all the items Mrs. Ellet requires to write a Biographical sketch of you. . . . She drapes these in her own language, making [them] entirely her own."⁴⁸ Through her description of her house and her sculpture collection, Acklen propagated an image of herself as both regal and domestic. Two

later biographies that appeared in newspapers in the 1870s, when her son Joseph Hayes Acklen was serving as a United States Congressman from Louisiana, give equal attention to her marriages, her sumptuous villa, and her sculpture collection.⁴⁹

Visitors approached Belmont's south-facing front entrance by climbing a flight of stairs up from a circular drive. The drive is positioned between the house and its sloping lawn, which in 1865 was laid out in three circular gardens terminating with the conservatory and water tower several hundred yards to the south. Large marble urns, cast-iron lions, and a pair of white Corinthian columns flanked the recessed entrance. The villa's entrance hall is a square room measuring twenty feet on each side. Its walls were papered with a design of alternating flowers and vertical stripes and the floor covered with a flowered Brussels carpet. Directly before visitors as they passed through the front door was a life-size version of Randolph Rogers's first ideal sculpture, *Ruth Gleaning*, atop an octagonal green and white marble pedestal (fig. 7). Just to the left was William Rinehart's similarly life-size *Sleeping Children* (fig. 8). Other marble figures on display included a *Sleeping Cupid*, copied after a sculpture by the Flemish artist Laurent Delvaux (1695–1778), and statuettes of *Atalanta Adjusting Her Robes*, *Venus Stepping into Her Bath*, and *St. John*. On the west wall, above the *Sleeping Children*, was a large portrait of Acklen with her daughter Emma Franklin by the Kentucky painter Joseph Henry Bush (1794–1865). Bush's companion portrait of Joseph Acklen hung on the east wall. Through the east doorway, which opened into the library, visitors could probably see a two-thirds scale reduction of Chauncey Bradley Ives's *Rebecca at the Well* (fig. 9). Through the opposite doorway, it may have been possible to glimpse Ives's smaller sculpture of a little girl, *Sans Souci*, in the central parlor (fig. 10). The profusion of sculpture in and around Belmont's entrance hall led one visitor to comment caustically, "I made a most ungraceful entrée over a *Petit Samuel* at prayer on the floor. Fortunately, as we afterwards discovered, there was no one in the room. The negro servant having left us, we groped about for a seat, afraid of sitting on some one's lap or getting impaled on the antlers of a stag."⁵⁰

Standing in the restored Belmont Mansion Museum (now part of Belmont University), it is possible

⁴⁷ Ellet, *The Queens of American Society*, 417–20.

⁴⁸ Transcript of letter from Octavia LeVert to Adelia Acklen, May 4, 1867, Belmont Mansion curatorial files, Nashville.

⁴⁹ "Society Gossip," *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, August 3, 1876, 5; "Congressman Acklen, Brief History of Early Life and Training," *New York Herald*, January 2, 1879, 5.

⁵⁰ Yelverton, *Teresina in America*, 1:251–52.

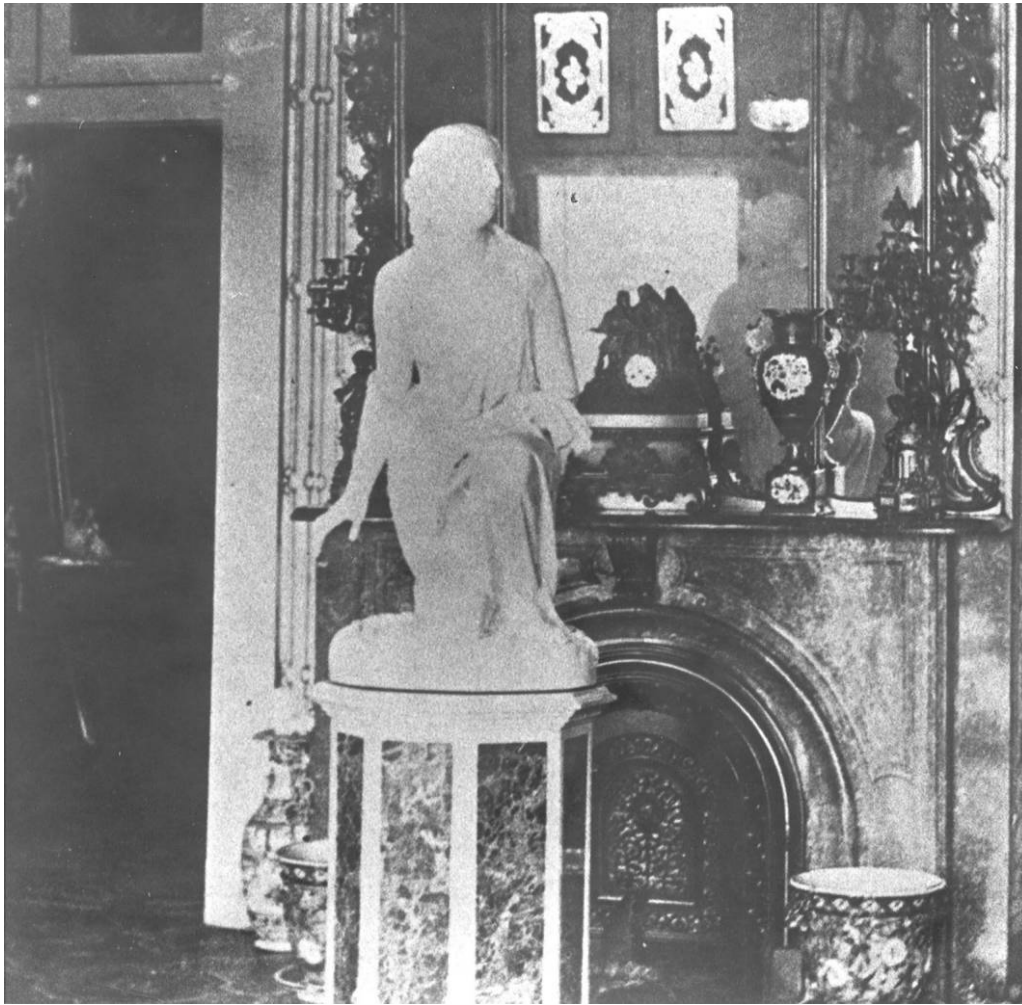


Fig. 7. Carl C. Giers, front hall, Belmont Mansion, ca. 1867. Stereograph. (Belmont Mansion Association.)

to partially reconstruct the original context of Acklen's ideal sculptures. At the back of the entrance hall, directly facing the heavy walnut door, is a white Carrara marble fireplace over which hangs a large, three-part, gold-framed mirror, original to the house. On either side of the fireplace are doorways leading north into the central stair hall and, beyond a row of Corinthian columns, to the grand salon at the back of the house. Panels of etched, rose-colored venetian glass fill the transepts above each of these doorways and frame the south-facing entrance. During daylight hours, a warm, rosy glow streams through the colored glass into the hall. A gasolier hangs from the ceiling in the center of the room, and it too originally had shades of colored glass. It is unlikely, however, that Acklen used it for formal occasions. Gaslight, which was relatively cheap, had become a nearly ubiquitous feature of middle-class homes by the 1860s; however,

writers on domestic decoration complained that it was a "common" form of lighting that distorted the appearance of objects in a room and produced an unpleasant odor.⁵¹ For evening entertainments, Acklen lit Belmont with hundreds of wax candles. The entrance hall was also illuminated by the flickering light of a fire on the hearth. Firelight and candlelight in the evening and rose-tinted sunlight during the day imparted a lifelike warmth and softness to Acklen's white marble sculptures, animating their features and heightening their impact on visitors.

Entrance halls had a complex and important function within nineteenth-century homes. They were transitional spaces, mediating between the public, outside world and private domestic interiors.

⁵¹ See Sara Milan, "Refracting the Gasolier: Understanding Victorian Responses to Domestic Gas Lighting," in *Domestic Space: Reading the Nineteenth-Century Interior*, ed. Inga Bryden and Janet Floyd (New York: Manchester University Press, 1999), 84–102.

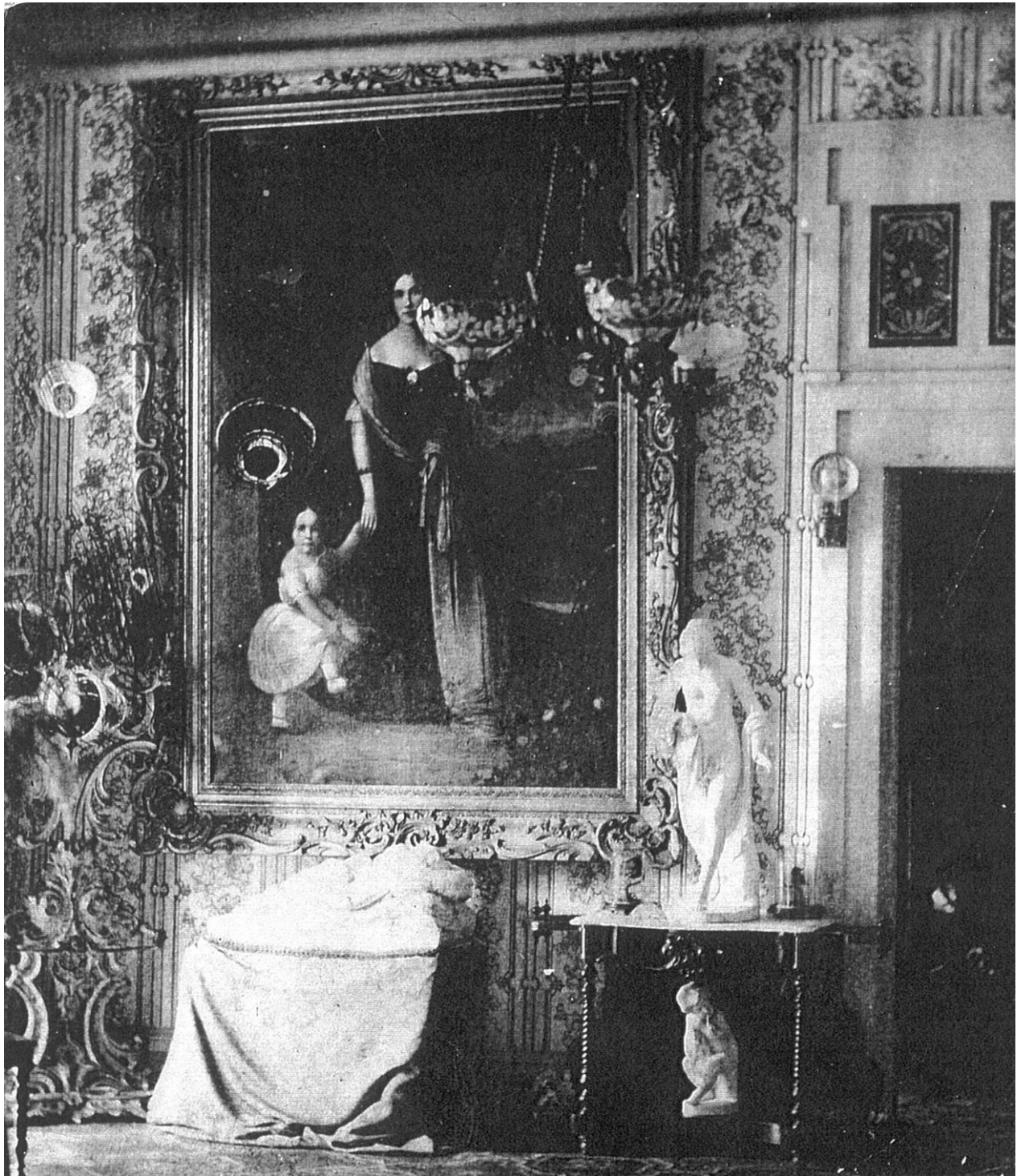


Fig. 8. Carl C. Giers, front hall, Belmont Mansion, ca. 1867. Cabinet card. (Belmont Mansion Association.)

In them, visitors were carefully screened and first impressions made.⁵² Although the social ritual of calling

⁵² See Kenneth L. Ames, *Death in the Dining Room and Other Tales of Victorian Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 7-43.

was generally less rigidly observed in rural settings, William Ackland recalled that his mother drove to Nashville every morning to pay calls.⁵³ She was also

⁵³ John Kiser, "Scion of Belmont, Part II," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 38 (Spring 1979): 188-203.



Fig. 9. Chauncey B. Ives, *Rebecca at the Well*, 1854 (this version 1866). Marble; H. 50". (Belmont Mansion Association.)

“at home” to receive calls herself once a week. Visitors came frequently to Belmont. Whether they were paying calls during the day or attending an evening dinner or party, the villa’s entry hall provided a space in which they could wait until they were formally received into the house as guests. Acklen’s desire to make a good first impression probably explains her placement of so many marble sculptures in and around her entrance hall. Of these, the largest and most significant was the centrally placed *Ruth Gleaning* by Rogers (fig. 11).

Rogers, who grew up in Ann Arbor, Michigan, modeled *Ruth* in Florence in 1851, after complet-



Fig. 10. Chauncey B. Ives. *Sans Souci*, 1863 (this version 1866). Marble; H. 37". (Belmont Mansion Association, on loan from the Noel family.)

ing an apprenticeship with the Italian sculptor Lorenzo Bartolini (1777–1850).⁵⁴ Like most sculptors working in Italy at this time, Rogers modeled his ideal figure in clay. He then created a plaster cast of his clay model and inserted metal “points” at even intervals across its surface. Using a device called a pointing machine, he measured the distance of each of these points from a perimeter drawn around the cast. The resulting set of measurements described the surface of the cast precisely. Each measurement could then be recreated on a block of marble by drilling down the required distance. When the block was chiseled down to these drilled points, a rough recreation of the plaster model resulted. All that remained to be done was

⁵⁴ For three informative discussions of Rogers’s *Ruth*, see Millard F. Rogers Jr., *Randolph Rogers, American Sculptor in Rome* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1971), 3–19; H. Nichols B. Clark, *A Marble Quarry: The James H. Ricau Collection of Sculpture at the Chrysler Museum of Art* (New York: Hudson Hills, 1997), 206–9; Laurretta Dimmick, “Ruth Gleaning,” in *American Sculpture in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, ed. Thayer Tolles (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998), 1:115–17.



Fig. 11. Randolph Rogers, *Ruth Gleaning*, 1853 (this version 1866). Marble; H. 45 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". (Belmont Mansion Association.)

fine carving and polishing. Under Rogers's supervision, a team of skilled stonemasons did most of the actual carving. This method allowed popular ideal figures like *Ruth* to be reproduced many times. It also had a significant impact on the look of ideal statues. Because these works were conceived in clay and only later translated into marble, they retained soft, flowing, complex surfaces. The goal of sculptors like Rogers was to make marble seem as much like flesh, cloth, and hair as possible.

Rogers oversaw the carving of the first marble version of *Ruth* in his new studio in Rome in 1852–53. The popularity of *Ruth* as a subject for ideal sculpture in the United States at the time prompted an English critic to complain that American sculptors were afflicted with "Ruth fever."⁵⁵ Although Rogers was a young, virtually unknown sculptor, his innovative version of the subject quickly

⁵⁵ Florentia, "A Walk through the Studios of Rome," *Art Journal* (London) 1 (June 1, 1854): 186. Edward Sheffield Bartholomew, Henry Kirke Brown, Richard Greenough, and Chauncey Bradley Ives also created ideal sculptures of *Ruth*.

became popular. He sold at least thirty copies of *Ruth Gleaning* in two sizes (life-size and a two-thirds scale reduction).⁵⁶ Formally, Rogers's models are readily apparent. *Ruth*'s kneeling legs and feet are positioned like those of the much-copied, ancient Roman *Kneeling Venus* in the Vatican's Museo Pio-Clementino, and her shoulders, long neck, and gracefully upturned head recall several figures by Bartolini, particularly *Faith in God* (1834, Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan). Rogers's innovation lay in his characteristic ability to capture a fleeting, dramatic moment—in this case the moment when, gazing up from her gleaning, *Ruth* first beholds her future husband. So rapt is *Ruth*'s attention on Boaz that she has unconsciously (or coyly) allowed her robe to slip down over one shoulder, exposing her upper arm and breast. "There is a peculiar expression imparted by her eager eyes and her half-open mouth," the nineteenth-century critic William J. Clark noted, "as if she were hesitating between hope and fear with regard to the result of her scheme for securing the protection of her rich kinsman."⁵⁷

When Acklen visited Rogers's studio in 1866, she must have seen several of his later ideal figures, including *Nydia, the Blind Flower Girl of Pompeii* (fig. 12), which he first carved in 1856, and *Merope, the Lost Pleiad*, which he was in the process of modeling. By the time of her visit, copies of the extremely popular *Nydia* were outselling copies of *Ruth* by a ratio of two to one.⁵⁸ Though the two sculptures were placed side by side in the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, a critic noted that, "The *Ruth* ... did not attract a tithe of the attention that the *Nydia* did, and did not awaken a tithe of the admiration."⁵⁹ The fact that Acklen chose the earlier, more conservative sculpture for her home reveals much about her taste and motivations. Specifically, her choice suggests that she wished to avoid works of art that might remind viewers of her own propensity for bold action and preferred those that instead presented a pleasing, passive, domestic feminine ideal. Executed in a neobaroque style, both *Nydia* and *Merope* depict active women struggling against their surroundings. Rogers's mature works

⁵⁶ The number of copies of *Ruth* that Rogers produced is impossible to determine exactly. Accounts listed in Rogers's journals include mention of thirty-one copies, but his journals do not cover the years before 1868. Dimmick suggests the number was close to fifty, but given *Ruth*'s popularity in the years before 1868, there may have been as many as one hundred copies made. Rogers, *Randolph Rogers*, 198–99; Dimmick, "Ruth Gleaning," 115.

⁵⁷ William J. Clark Jr., *Great American Sculptors* (Philadelphia: George Barrie, 1876), 75.

⁵⁸ Rogers, *Randolph Rogers*, 202–3.

⁵⁹ Clark, *Great American Sculptors*, 75.



Fig. 12. Randolph Rogers, *Nydia, the Blind Flower Girl of Pompeii*, ca. 1853–54 (this version 1859). Marble; H. 54". (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, gift of James Douglas; photo, Jerry L. Thompson, image © Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource, New York.)

were so dramatic that one critic complained that he had “sacrificed delicacy to force.”⁶⁰ The opposite could be said of *Ruth*. With her graceful, downward flowing lines and her face raised in adoring supplication, she appears as soft and pliant as the wheat she holds. Viewers were, like Boaz himself, struck by her beauty and impressed by her kind and filial nature.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Dr. Samuel Osgood, “American Sculptors in Rome,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 41 (August 1870): 422.

⁶¹ See, e.g., S., “American Artists in Florence,” *Bulletin of the American Art-Union* 8 (April 1, 1851): 13.

Nineteenth-century interpretations of the biblical story of Ruth focused on her submissiveness and virtuous devotion to family—in short, her identity as a true woman. A poem of 1857 reads, in part, “sweet Ruth among the meadows!/Stay awhile, true heart, and teach us,/Pausing in thy matron beauty,/Care of elders, love of kindred,/All unselfish thought and duty.”⁶² Writing in 1858, the Reverend John Angell James, a popular Congregationalist minister and domestic advice writer, held Ruth up as an example to modern widows, urging them to follow in her footsteps by submitting to God’s will and rejecting worldly pursuits in favor of domestic devotions.⁶³ Rogers’s presentation of Ruth is very much in line with such interpretations. Noting that versions of Rogers’s sculpture “adorn some of the most tasteful American homes,” Earl Shinn emphasized *Ruth*’s aura of sweet femininity and noted its capacity to elicit pious thoughts in the viewer: “The lovely Moabite, ‘heart-sick amid the alien corn,’ kneels to Boaz on the barley-field of that good Jew. Across her arm lies a handful of ripened ears, and she looks up half desolate and half hopeful, as his words of kindness fall upon her wistful ear. ... Let not the visitor, who pauses in admiration before this fair marble, forget that Ruth is especially interesting as the only heathen woman introduced into the ancestry of Christ!”⁶⁴

Positioned symbolically before a hearth, *Ruth* invited sympathy and admiration. The rotating base on which the sculpture rests also invited viewers to interact with it. Using the handle that projects from the base at *Ruth*’s feet, a viewer can easily turn the figure this way and that, admiring the play of light across its surface and adding a dynamic, temporal dimension to its composition. Such bases, which were common accoutrements for ideal sculpture by the 1860s, contradict Kasson’s contention that ideal statues faded passively into the background of the domestic interiors that housed them.⁶⁵ *Ruth* also invited male viewers to place themselves in the position of Boaz—Ruth’s patron and future husband. Like Ruth, Boaz was idealized in nineteenth-century, sentimental literature. Gail Hamilton wrote a novelized Book of Ruth in which Boaz appears as a “gentleman ... whose bearing toward the lovely Moabite widow was the true courtly politeness which would have dignified a prince.” A reviewer for *Godey’s*

⁶² “Ruth,” *The Living Age* 53 (May 9, 1857): 351.

⁶³ John Angell James, *The Widow Directed to the Widow’s God* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1858): 113–15.

⁶⁴ Edward Strahan [Earl Shinn], *The Masterpieces of the Centennial International Exhibition Illustrated* (Philadelphia: Gebbie & Barrie, 1876), 1:127–28.

⁶⁵ Kasson, *Marble Queens and Captives*, 23–25.

Lady's Book presented this novel as a potential “home lesson” on proper domestic behavior.⁶⁶

It is significant that white marble was the preferred medium for ideal sculptures. Although a few American sculptors (including Rogers) did cast ideal figures in bronze, these works were not as commercially successful as figures carved from marble nor did they enjoy the same elevated status in the United States until the 1880s. Similarly, sculptors who tinted their marble figures were roundly criticized. Even the natural, colored veining that sometimes appeared during the carving process could force a sculptor to abandon a half-carved block of marble because it lowered the value of the finished work below the cost of labor. Middle-class consumers shared this affinity for white sculpture. The figurines and sculptural reproductions most prized in the nineteenth century were those made of parian, a biscuit porcelain named for the pure, cream-colored, Italian marble it emulates. Many viewers erroneously believed that antique Greek and Roman statues had originally been white, and they perceived white to be a more spiritual, less earthbound color. The popularity of white marble also rested, however, on the fact that it allowed viewers to associate the genteel, spiritual, and domestic qualities that ideal sculptures embodied with white skin.⁶⁷ Acklen's version of *Ruth*, which is carved from a block of pure white Carrara marble, is a case in point. Bathed in warm, rosy light from the tinted window glass above, the sculpture's translucent surface mimics the pale, unblemished skin that elite ladies prized as a sign of breeding and refinement.

To the right of *Ruth*, through the doorway to the library, stood Chauncey Ives's *Rebecca at the Well*, modeled in 1854. Like Rogers, Ives first served an apprenticeship in Florence before setting up a studio in Rome in 1851.⁶⁸ By the time Acklen visited his studio early in 1866, he was one of the most popular American sculptors in Italy. Henry Tuckerman noted that “Mr. Ives is well-known in New York through several fine works of classic statuary which adorn some of her most elegant private mansions.”⁶⁹

⁶⁶ “Summer Reading,” *Godey's Lady's Book* (August 1865): 174.

⁶⁷ See Mary Cathryn Cain, “The Art and Politics of Looking White,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 42 (Spring 2008): 27–50. On nineteenth-century racial hierarchy and marble sculpture, see also Jennifer DeVere Brody, “Shading Meaning,” in *Performing the Body, Performing the Text*, ed. Amelia Jones and Andrew Stephenson (London: Routledge, 1999), 83–99.

⁶⁸ For biographical information about Ives, see Henry T. Tuckerman, *Book of the Artists: American Artist Life* (New York: G. P. Putnam & Son, 1867), 582–83; Clark, *A Marble Quarry*, 98–121; Tolles, *American Sculpture in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 26–29.

⁶⁹ Tuckerman, *Book of the Artists*, 582.

A partial list of Ives's commissions, drawn from his studio book, reveals that his popularity extended to all parts of the country.⁷⁰ Both of the sculptures Acklen ordered from Ives were listed among his most important works in a guidebook published for American travelers in Europe in 1865.⁷¹ A correspondent for the *London Daily News*, who saw the sculpture in Ives's studio, described *Rebecca at the Well* as “full of grace and beauty.”⁷² When a version was exhibited in New York in 1860, a critic for the *Cosmopolitan Art Journal* wrote that the sculpture was “full of tenderness and grace, but earnest, calm and sustained as a queen.”⁷³ Calm was a prized quality in ideal female figures, particularly in the decades before the Civil War. To nineteenth-century viewers, a calm demeanor communicated refinement, self-mastery, and unshakable religious faith. Ives expressed these qualities in his sculpture in several ways. *Rebecca's* head is turned to her left, and her face is tilted in a listening attitude. Though attentive, her expression is relaxed, as is her posture. Leaning against the stack of stones that Ives used to signify a well, *Rebecca* stands at ease. Her right hand holds an empty water jug propped on the lip of the well, while her left hand pulls her skirt back from her extended right leg in a gesture that suggests the beginning of a curtsy. Ives, who lacked Rogers's skill with the figure, struggled with *Rebecca's* contrapposto pose, and her chunky legs extend awkwardly from her short-skirted robe; nevertheless, *Rebecca* radiates a dignified calm that is remarkable considering the startling, life-altering news she is supposedly receiving.

Like *Ruth*, Ives's *Rebecca* looks up to face her future husband—not in person but in the guise of his emissary, sent to fetch her away from home and family. In his *Historical and Descriptive Sketches of Women from the Bible* of 1851, the Congregationalist minister Phineas Camp Headley gave *Rebecca's* story a sentimental inflection by describing how the girl “hung upon her mother's neck in tears” when she received the news of her betrothal. Nevertheless, Headley related, “[*Rebecca*] was prepared by a higher communion than that with kindred, and the heroism of cheerful piety, to answer unhesitatingly, ‘I will

⁷⁰ Transcript of Chauncey Bradley Ives's studio book, unpublished manuscript, curatorial files, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City.

⁷¹ William Pembroke Fetridge, *The American Traveler's Guide* (New York: Fetridge, 1866), 569.

⁷² Quoted in “Rome,” *The Living Age* 53 (April 4, 1857): 62.

⁷³ “Masters of Art and Literature: Chauncey B. Ives,” *Cosmopolitan Art Journal* 4, no. 44 (1860): 164.

go.”⁷⁴ Like Headley, Ives made Rebecca's sacrifice more poignant by portraying her as an adolescent girl. By giving her a calm and dignified demeanor, he emphasized her piety and selfless heroism. Popular evangelical writers like James and Headley used sentimental retellings of Old Testament stories to demonstrate “God's eternal purpose borne onwards by the unostentatious incidents of a touching domestic scene.”⁷⁵ In this way, they sacralized the domestic sphere and the activities that occurred within it. A writer for *Godey's Lady's Book* reminded readers in 1842 that “Rebecca was performing a household service, filling her pitcher at the well, when she was met by the pious servant of Abraham; and in that simple act of kindness, ‘Drink, I pray thee, and I will draw water that thy camels may drink also,’ she was unconsciously fulfilling an appointment of the Lord.”⁷⁶ Many middle- and upper-class American women embraced this vision of their domestic duties because it conferred a ministerial authority upon them.⁷⁷ By following in the footsteps of evangelical authors, sculptors like Rogers and Ives catered to the tastes of American women, who comprised a significant share of their patron base. Their idealized depictions of biblical heroines were perfectly suited to ornament Christian homes. Not only did such sculptures purportedly exert a positive moral influence on the family, they also publicly affirmed their owners' piety and confirmed the sacred role of women within the household. Acklen made *Rebecca's* educational role explicit by displaying the sculpture near a painting, now lost, that depicted “a child dreaming; an angel with a hand in hers is beckoning her toward heaven with the other hand.”⁷⁸

Ruth's and *Rebecca's* tranquil, submissive acceptance of their changed circumstances also echoed the behavior attributed to true women in the South in the wake of the Civil War. An 1866 editorial in the *Nashville Union* reads, in part, “As a general rule, Southern women have accepted the strange and onerous duties imposed upon them by a new condition of things with a quiet, uncomplaining dignity—

there has been little outcry or complaint, no impotent railing against adverse destiny, no eating of dust and rending of garments under the feet of the conquerors, nor any act, hidden or overt, which could cast remotest reproach upon the memory of those whose dust they delight to honor.”⁷⁹ By displaying biblical figures embodying contemporary feminine ideals, Acklen presented these ideals as divinely ordained and expressed her solidarity with them. Viewed together in their domestic setting, the sculptures *Ruth* and *Rebecca* framed Acklen as a virtuous Southern wife and widow.

Acklen probably intended the smaller female figures she displayed in her entrance hall to complement the ideal presented by *Ruth* and *Rebecca*. For instance, she exhibited a marble statuette of the celebrated ancient *Diane de Gabies*, now in the Louvre, which is believed to be a Roman copy of a sculpture of the Greek goddess of the hunt, Artemis. It depicts a short-skirted and sandaled young woman peering toward her right shoulder as she fastens her tunic with a brooch. With her other hand, she modestly raises a fold of her cloak to cover herself. Interestingly, Acklen misidentified the subject of this sculpture, calling it *Atalanta Adjusting Her Robes*. In Greek mythology, the beautiful, strong, and swift-footed Atalanta hunts boars and kills centaurs. She avoided unwanted suitors by setting the following terms: any man who wishes to wed her must outrun her; any man whom she outruns will be put to death. Though no man can match Atalanta's speed, Hippomenes eventually outwits her by throwing three golden apples (gifts from Aphrodite) across her path. Drawn by their beauty, Atalanta stops to pick each one up, allowing Hippomenes to win the race. Acklen's misidentification of her small sculpture was probably intentional. Unlike the unattainable virgin Artemis, Atalanta is a strong woman who is nevertheless unable to resist the power of romantic love or escape her conjugal fate. The exact original location of *Atalanta* within Belmont's entrance hall is unknown, but a stereograph by Giers shows a marble or parian statuette of *Venus Stepping into Her Bath*, copied after a late eighteenth-century sculpture by the Swedish artist Johan Niklas Byström, resting on a marble-topped umbrella stand, just beneath and to the right of Bush's portrait of Adelicia Acklen. There, it created an obvious visual parallel between Acklen and the Roman goddess of beauty and romantic love. While in her portrait Acklen is of course properly clothed, the nude *Venus*—who stands

⁷⁴ C. Headley, *Historical and Descriptive Sketches of Women in the Bible, from Eve of the Old to Mary of the New Testament* (Auburn, NY: Derby, Miller, 1851), 52–54.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁷⁶ Mrs. S. E. Farley, “Domestic and Social Claims on Women,” *Godey's Lady's Book* 24 (March 1842): 148.

⁷⁷ Colleen McDannell, *The Christian Home in Victorian America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), xiv–xvi.

⁷⁸ Mark Brown and John Lancaster, “Catalog of Artwork at Belmont,” manuscript no. 9, Belmont Mansion curatorial files, Nashville. This painting may well have been a copy of Daniel Huntington's *Mercy's Dream* (1858; Metropolitan Museum of Art).

⁷⁹ “What Shall We Do for Servants?” *Nashville Union*, October 4, 1866, 3.



Fig. 13. William Henry Rinehart, *Sleeping Children*, 1859 (this version 1866). Marble; H. 15", W. 18", L. 37". (Belmont Mansion Association.)

in a similar pose—hints at her hidden charms and erotic allure.

In Rome, Acklen also purchased two American marble sculptures of children that, if not ideal by Kasson's definition of the term, are certainly idealized. To the left of *Ruth* and against the west wall of the entrance hall was William Rinehart's most popular work, *Sleeping Children* (fig. 13). Also to the left, through the entrance to the central parlor, was Chauncey Ives's sculpture of a blithely reclining little girl, *Sans Souci* (which translated from the French means "carefree"). These figures and the many other images of children that adorned Belmont's interior were part of a rich, mid-nineteenth-century visual culture that constructed childhood as an untroubled period of angelic innocence—a construction that, like the type of the true woman, contributed to an idealized vision of domestic life.

Rinehart, who began his career carving grave-stones in Baltimore, modeled the first version of *Sleeping Children* in 1859 as a grave marker for the twin children of a patron. He subsequently sold at least nineteen copies of the sculpture to traveling Americans. Some of these were probably also used as grave markers, but many were, like Acklen's version, displayed in domestic interiors.⁸⁰ The sculpture depicts two sleeping, curly-headed infants nestled together on a little bed, half covered with

a blanket. To enhance the illusion of bedding, Acklen covered her pedestal with drapery. One child has thrown an arm around the other and rests its head on its companion's shoulder. The babies' plump faces are relaxed and peaceful. Rinehart told prospective patrons that the models, who had been brought to his studio every afternoon for their nap so that he could model them, were the children of a friend. In Rinehart's story, the children contracted Roman fever, but both recovered.⁸¹ Despite this reassuring narrative, it is clear that he made sleep a gentle metaphor for death in his sculpture. In her 1875 memoir about her travels through Italy ten years earlier, Sallie Brock referred to *Sleeping Children* as "a pair of reclining twin babes intended for a tomb."⁸²

Acklen made the connection between sleep and death overt in her own version of *Sleeping Children* by having the names of her deceased twin daughters, Laura and Corinne, carved onto the base along with the words "twin sisters." Six of her ten children had died in the space of ten years—an uncommon figure even at a time when roughly one out of three American children did not survive to adulthood.⁸³ The emotional and psychological impact of such repeated losses must have been profound. In 1855, a month after her two-year-old twins died of scarlet

⁸¹ Rusk, *William Henry Rinehart*, 68–69.

⁸² Sallie A. Brock, "My Souvenirs—Buchanan, Read, Rinehart, Powers," *Appleton's Journal* 14 (July 7, 1875): 78.

⁸³ Michael R. Haines, "Estimated Life Tables for the United States, 1850–1910," *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History* 31 (Fall 1998): 149–69.

⁸⁰ See William Sener Rusk, *William Henry Rinehart, Sculptor* (Baltimore: Norman T. A. Munder, 1939), 68–69; Marvin Chauncey Ross and Anna Wells Rutledge, *A Catalogue of the Work of William Henry Rinehart, Maryland Sculptor, 1825–1874* (Baltimore: Trustees of the Walters Art Gallery, 1948), 33–35.

fever two weeks apart, Acklen wrote to a friend: "I should have written you soon after our return to the Plantation but for my afflictions have been sore—even now at times, it seems a terrible dream to me—and when I ask, Can it be? Is it so? That those dear lovely little ones are to gladden my sight no more in this life? Their little arms no more to twine around my neck, nor their sweet prattle to delight my ears? Oh, too sad comes the conviction that it is so. How lone and desolate feels the mother's heart."⁸⁴ When Acklen's brother, Oliver Hayes, lost an infant son ten years later, Acklen wrote to him: "Only think how much better to lose a son in infancy than after grown and entering upon the threshold of life. Our Heavenly Father ordereth all things well and wisely. My dear Oliver, do bear with Christian resignation your affliction and cheer up Emily and inspire her with fortitude. ... I can sympathize with you as not many others can. But you will find, dear brother, that nothing can comfort us at such a time or sustain us but the arm of the Almighty and his precious promises."⁸⁵

Grieving nineteenth-century parents often displayed images of sleeping children in their homes to reassure themselves that their loss was, like sleep, only temporary. Such images also reassured parents of their dead children's spiritual well being.⁸⁶ Acklen's assertion that it is better to lose a child in infancy relates to the common nineteenth-century belief that young children, being sinless, were assured of salvation. To make this point explicit, Acklen displayed a painting by Robert Gschwindt titled *The Twins: Their Resurrection* in the adjoining central parlor. Although the painting is now lost, it was quite large (five by seven feet) and depicted a pair of twins (possibly posthumous portraits of Laura and Corinne) ascending into heaven on judgment day. Rinehart's sculpture is subtler but makes essentially the same point. *Sleeping Children* is a highly idealized image. The beautiful, healthy, happy children it depicts do not suffer. They merely sleep until they can rejoin their family in heaven.

Acklen's version of *Sleeping Children* rested beneath Bush's portrait, in which she is shown holding the hand of another deceased daughter, Emma Franklin, who appears to be about two years old (see fig. 8). This depiction of Acklen in a tender, mater-

nal role defined her relationship to the sleeping figures below. At a time when the loss of a child was a nearly universal experience, few visitors to Belmont would have missed the symbolism of Rinehart's sculpture. That viewers recognized and were deeply touched by such images is evident from the poem, "Lines Suggested by the Sight of a Beautiful Statue of a Dead Child," published in *Godey's Lady's Book* in 1834. Coming upon a lifelike statue of a sleeping child, the writer laments, "I see thee in thy beauty! As I saw thee on that day—/ But the mirth that gladdened then thy home, fled with thy life away./ I see thee lying motionless, upon th'accustomed floor—/ My heart hath blinded both mine eyes—and I can see no more!"⁸⁷ It is worth noting that Acklen's copy of Laurent Delvaux's (1696–1778) eighteenth-century sculpture *Sleeping Cupid*, which shows the Greek god as a life-size, supine, chubby infant using a quiver of arrows as a pillow, was also displayed in Acklen's front hall. While images of Cupid sleeping traditionally symbolize the triumph of spiritual over carnal love, Acklen's placement of Delvaux's sculpture so close to Rinehart's *Sleeping Children* added another layer of meaning to the work. In this context, the sculpture may have alluded to Acklen's first child who, like his sisters, had died in infancy.⁸⁸

Of Ives's sculpture *Sans Souci*, Henry Tuckerman wrote, "it represents a little girl with open book clasped listlessly in one hand, while the other is thrown over her curly head, and she casts back her lithe frame in the very attitude of childish *abandon*, the smile and posture alike expressive of innocence and *naïve* enjoyment." He concluded that the figure was "remarkably adapted to ornament a drawing room."⁸⁹ Ives modeled the *Sans Souci* in 1863 and made at least twenty-two copies, of which Acklen's was the fifth. Although the sculpture is life-size, it apparently did not require reinforcements below the floor nor was it photographed. Therefore, its precise original location is unknown; however, an 1881 article that appeared in the *Louisville Courier-Journal* lists *Sans Souci* as one of the artworks in Belmont's central parlor.⁹⁰ Ives's sculpture is one of many images of happy rural children produced by American artists during or just after the Civil War. This image of a "care-free" little girl may well have served as a

⁸⁴ Letter from Adelicia Acklen to Mrs. John Heiss, February 1855, quoted in Eleanor Graham, "Belmont: Nashville Home of Adelicia Acklen," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 30 (1971): 358.

⁸⁵ Letter from Adelicia Acklen to Oliver Hayes, ca. 1865, Belmont Mansion curatorial files, Nashville.

⁸⁶ Terri Sabatos, "Images of Death and Domesticity in Victorian Britain" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 2001), 237–39.

⁸⁷ "Lines Suggested by the Sight of a Beautiful Statue of a Dead Child," *Godey's Lady's Book* 8 (September 1834): 123.

⁸⁸ I am grateful to John Lancaster for this insight.

⁸⁹ Tuckerman, *Book of the Artists*, 582–83.

⁹⁰ Transcript of Chauncey Bradley Ives's studio book, unpublished manuscript, curatorial files, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City; O. O. S., "A Lovely Spot," reprinted in Wardin, *Belmont Mansion*, 1981 ed., 28.

hopeful reminder to both Acklen and her guests that the toil, sorrow, and deprivation of the war were at an end. As Sarah Burns has argued, such images also constructed a nostalgic vision of childhood as a golden age, hermetically sealed off from the adult world of toil and worry.⁹¹ The little girl Ives modeled is completely free from the constraints of ladylike behavior that bound Acklen and other elite Southern women. She is barefoot and minimally dressed. Though she does not throw one arm behind her head as Tuckerman remembered, she does stretch out to savor the implied sunlight and a breeze, indicated by her windblown drapery and hair, and the ruffled pages of her book. Her posture and forgotten book suggest that she is shirking her studies and, by extension, the onset of adult responsibility. Like the children in Ives's related sculptures *Boy Holding a Dove* (modeled 1847; Chrysler Museum of Art) and *The Truant* (1871; New-York Historical Society), she enjoys an affinity with nature that is unmediated and sensual.

Sans Souci is so evocative of the sun-warmed countryside that Tuckerman's description of it as "remarkably adapted to ornament a drawing room" seems surprising, as does Acklen's choice to display the sculpture in the relative gloom of her central parlor. The sculpture's placement becomes more understandable, however, when one considers the function and symbolic significance of a nineteenth-century parlor. Within the home, the parlor was both a private space shared by members of a family and a semipublic space used to entertain guests. Because of its double role, visitors understood that a parlor's arrangement and decor revealed much about the private, domestic life of a family. Acklen's central parlor was one of five sitting rooms at Belmont by 1866, but its generous size and position near the front of the house (between the entrance hall and the grand salon) ensured that it was frequently used. Despite Belmont's size and grandeur, the central parlor's decor mirrored that of many middle-class American parlors. The room's walls were hung with genre scenes and family portraits. Its Brussels carpet, woven into a profusion of roses, referred to the natural world. Its piano, rococo revival center table, and marble mantle were adorned with albums, wax flowers, figurines, and souvenirs, all of which spoke of the family's tastes, history and travels. The parlor was the symbolic heart of the nineteenth-century home. More than any other room, it expressed its

⁹¹ Sarah Burns, *Pastoral Inventions: Rural Life in Nineteenth-Century American Art and Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 297–337.

occupants' refinement and symbolized the domestic function of the house as a whole.⁹²

The care and protection of children was, arguably, a home's most important function in the minds of most middle- and upper-class Americans during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. In an 1860 editorial simply titled "Children," the editor of *Godey's Lady's Book*, Sarah Hale, described her niece's home as an ideal to be emulated by her readers: "What a delightful home theirs is! My niece and nephew have a theory that all this management so much talked of is not needed, so they manage the children as little as possible, leaving Nature to form their shades of character. ... The children are allowed great freedom, and romp through the house, upsetting a chair here and scattering a few toys there, and making the old walls ring again with their shouts of laughter and merry songs. Mother and father are their companions, as well as mentors, and are always welcome at their sports."⁹³ Acklen's son later recalled that his mother embraced this Romantic view of child rearing, which is also expressed in *Sans Souci*.⁹⁴ Home often appears in late nineteenth-century art and domestic rhetoric as a haven where childish innocence and freedom could be preserved from the cares of the adult world and where even adults could lose themselves in carefree play. By placing *Sans Souci* in her parlor, Acklen (who had three young children in 1867) presented her home as just such a haven and invested both it and herself with an aura of sentimental domesticity.

Acklen's largest and most elaborate ideal sculpture was a nude, standing, winged figure by Joseph Mozier, *The Peri*, which she displayed in Belmont's grand salon (figs. 14–16). Near the center of the room, standing eight feet high on its pedestal, the sculpture presided over nearly all of Acklen's most important social functions. The subject is taken from the Irish poet Thomas Moore's 1817 poem "Lalla Rookh."⁹⁵ A story within the poem tells of a peri, or fallen angel, who longs to return to heaven. After several failed attempts to reenter paradise, she is at last admitted when she brings the correct gift to the guardian of the celestial gates—the tears of a repentant sinner. Mozier's sculpture depicts the

⁹² Katherine C. Grier, *Culture and Comfort: Parlor Making and Middle-Class Identity, 1850–1930* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), 89. See also Thad Logan, *The Victorian Parlor: A Cultural Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁹³ Sarah Josepha Hale, "Children," *Godey's Lady's Book* 60 (March 1860): 272.

⁹⁴ Kiser, "Scion of Belmont, Part I," 40–42.

⁹⁵ Thomas Moore, *Lalla Rookh, an Oriental Romance* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1817), 149–160.



Fig. 14. Joseph Mozier, *The Peri*, Acklen Mausoleum, Mount Olivet Cemetery, Nashville, 1865. Marble. (Belmont Mansion Association.)

peri standing in a graceful contrapposto pose, her slightly upturned face transfixed by an expression of joyful reverence. With her open right hand, she presents the sinner's tears, while her left hand holds a goblet—perhaps a reference to one of her earlier gifts, a cup containing the blood of a patriotic hero who died defending his native land from invad-

ers. Her feathered wings, which extend down past her knees, are folded behind her like a mandorla. Although *The Peri*—Mozier's only nude female figure—is both voluptuous and completely unclothed, the sculptor followed nineteenth-century academic conventions by omitting genitalia and body hair. The smoothness and whiteness of the



Fig. 15. Carl C. Giers, grand salon, Belmont Mansion, ca. 1867. Stereograph. (Belmont Mansion Association.)

marble lends *The Peri* a chaste, spiritual air that, as Hiram Powers famously argued, made nudity permissible in ideal sculpture. The truncated spiral column supporting the figure is well suited to Moore's orientalizing tale of spiritual redemption. It is both a common element of Islamic architecture and a reference to the columns supporting the dome of St. Peter's basilica in the Vatican—columns that

purportedly originated in the Temple of Solomon. Inscribed on the pedestal are the words from Moore's poem, "Joy! Joy forever. My task is done. The gate is crossed and heaven is won."

Acklen examined an array of American ideal sculpture before choosing *The Peri* for her grand salon. Her son William, who accompanied her on visits to sculptors' studios, recalled that she visited Hiram



Fig. 16. Carl C. Giers, grand salon bay window, Belmont Mansion, ca. 1867. Stereograph. (Belmont Mansion Association.)

Powers's studio in Florence and looked at his standing nudes the *Greek Slave* and *California*.⁹⁶ In recounting this visit, William recalled at length his elders' reverence for the *Greek Slave* (fig. 17). Though Powers's most celebrated sculpture was somewhat out of date by 1865 (it had been modeled more than twenty years earlier), it clearly still held power for Acklen, and she was keenly aware of its capacity to move and subdue an audience. She almost certainly remembered the well-attended and publicized wedding of the wealthy Southern belle, Louise Corcoran, six years earlier, where Powers's celebrated slave had served as the altarpiece.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 54–55.

⁹⁷ Lauren Lessing, "Ties That Bind: Hiram Powers's *Greek Slave* and Nineteenth-Century Marriage," *American Art* 24 (Spring 2010): 40–65.

Although Acklen did not purchase a copy of the *Greek Slave*, she probably wanted to achieve a similar effect and, for this reason, may have wanted to purchase a nude female figure specifically.⁹⁸ In 1866, female nudes were still relatively rare subjects for American sculptors, who were cautious not to offend their patrons' sensibilities. Acklen would have seen Powers's early nude, *Eve Tempted* (modeled 1842; National Museum of American Art), and she

⁹⁸ Powers appears to have actually discouraged Acklen from purchasing a *Greek Slave*. According to William Ackland, the sculptor related that the slave's hair had been "much criticized" and steered Acklen instead toward his more recent work, *California*, of 1855. See Kiser, "Scion of Belmont, Part I," 55. This is not surprising in light of Powers's assessment of *California* "as a work of art ... much superior to the *Greek Slave*." Letter from Powers to M. M. Holloway, September 23, 1862, quoted in Tolles, *American Sculpture in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 1:20.



Fig. 17. Hiram Powers, *The Greek Slave*, 1846. Marble; H. 65". (Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, gift of William Wilson Corcoran.)

may have seen his *Eve Disconsolate* (modeled 1859–61; Cincinnati Art Museum) in plaster, although no marble version of this work existed until 1871. When she visited Chauncey Ives's studio in Rome, she would have seen his second version of *Pandora* (modeled 1864; Detroit Institute of Art), which he had recently completed in marble. She would also have seen Rinehart's *Thetis* (modeled 1861; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston) and possibly the model for his *Hero* (modeled ca. 1865; Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts), which he had not yet executed in marble. In the end, Acklen's choice was probably determined by several factors, including the sculpture's cost, the expected time for its completion and delivery, its aesthetic appeal, and—perhaps most important—its theme.

Mozier's personality appears to have had little impact on Acklen's decision to purchase *The Peri*. After abandoning a successful career as a New York

dry goods merchant, he had taken the usual path to Rome, joining the colony of American sculptors there in 1850 after having first studied in Florence with Hiram Powers. William Ackland remembered him as a "shrewd loquacious Yankee" who "was generally thought rather tiresome."⁹⁹ Still, Mozier had several crucial advantages over his competitors. First, *The Peri* was probably less expensive than a comparable work by Powers, Ives, or Rinehart because Mozier was less celebrated. Although he was prolific, critics were generally reserved in their appraisals of his work. Acklen's decision to purchase a sculpture by Mozier, therefore, suggests that the subject matter of the artworks she collected was ultimately more important to her than their cultural cachet. *The Peri* also had the rare allure of being a unique marble figure, at least for a short while. Acklen appears to have purchased the first of only two copies.¹⁰⁰ Finally, Mozier had a marble version of *The Peri* available for purchase. Although an 1873 article claimed that *The Peri* had been executed to order for Acklen, this could not have been the case. The carving of life-size ideal figures commonly took a year, and their shipping required several additional months, yet Acklen's version of *The Peri* was exhibited at the Tenth Street Studio building in New York in October and November of 1866, making it almost certain that the sculpture was completed or well under way by the time she visited Mozier's studio in February of that year.¹⁰¹ The unpredictable nature of marble carving gave sculptors with completed works available for purchase a distinct advantage; however, sculptors could rarely afford to render a figure in marble unless they were certain it would sell. Mozier's decision to begin a marble version of *The Peri* before he had a definite buyer is a testament to his faith in the sculpture.

⁹⁹ Kiser, "Scion of Belmont, Part I," 54. Ackland's assessment of Mozier jibes with that of Nathaniel Hawthorne, who compared him to "a country shopkeeper in the interior of New York or New England" who, though "keen and clever," lacked refinement. See Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The French and Italian Notebooks* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1980), 153–54.

¹⁰⁰ A second marble version of *The Peri* was sold at Mozier's posthumous studio auction in 1873. There, the New York shipbuilder William H. Webb purchased it. When Webb emigrated with his family to Australia three years later, a Mr. Carter purchased the sculpture from his estate sale. Its current location is unknown. See "Art: The Mozier Marbles," *New York Tribune*, March 14, 1873, 2; "The Webb Collection," *Brooklyn Eagle*, March 27, 1876, 2; "Sale of Celebrated Statuary," *New York Times*, March 31, 1876, 2.

¹⁰¹ Rodman J. Sheirr, "Joseph Mozier and his Handiwork," *Potter's American Monthly* 6 (January 1876): 28. For Mozier's 1866 New York exhibition, see "Mozier's Sculpture," *New York Post*, October 16, 1866, 3; "Art Matters," *American Art Journal* 5 (October 18, 1866): 408; "Art," *The Round Table* 4 (November 3, 1866): 227; "Mozier's Statuary," *New York Post*, November 7, 1866, 1.

Powers also had a finished sculpture available for purchase at the time that Acklen visited him—his second marble copy of *California* (fig. 18). Although he tried earnestly to sell Acklen this figure, probably at a reduced rate, she was not interested. Most likely, it was the sculpture's theme that left her cold. Despite her admiration for Powers, Acklen was probably not interested in owning a feminine allegory of westward expansion, particularly not one that had been described in 1855 as “cunning ... sly and cat-like ... tempting the colonist on [to disaster] by her own personal charms.”¹⁰² *The Peri*'s themes of repentance and longing for admittance into paradise, on the other hand, must have appealed to her immediately. Like Rinehart's *Sleeping Children* and a number of other artworks at Belmont, *The Peri* constructed heaven as a place of long anticipated reunion. Paradise, in Moore's poem, is the peri's true home, and her heavenly family waits within. Mozier's sculpture thus contributed to the conflation of heaven and home that was central to nineteenth-century domestic ideology. Like *Ruth* and *Rebecca*, *The Peri* is also a foreigner in a strange land. Although Acklen had been born and raised in Nashville, her exploits in Louisiana rendered her an outsider in her own native land. She must have felt an acute sense of personal affiliation with these marble representations of wandering exiles. *The Peri*, in particular, mirrored Acklen's determination to be forgiven and readmitted into the good graces of her neighbors.

Several other ideal sculptures depicting Moore's fallen angel existed at the time Mozier modeled *The Peri*. Erastus Dow Palmer created a half-length, sleeping, winged adolescent girl that he titled *Sleeping Peri* (1855; Albany Institute of History and Art), though no such scene occurs in “Lallah Rookh.” Thomas Crawford depicted a thoughtful, slender, half-draped angel in his *Peri at the Gates of Paradise* (1855; Corcoran Gallery of Art). Crawford's peri appealed to the earlier nineteenth-century taste for still, contemplative, emotionally controlled figures, while Mozier's more dramatic, emotive peri conformed to the theatrical figural style that came into vogue during the Civil War. Whereas Crawford's peri meditates mournfully on her banishment, Mozier's peri conveys the ecstasy of salvation. Furthermore, the sculpture actively involves its audience in its associated narrative. Viewers regard *The Peri* from the vantage point of the Guardian of the Celestial Gates—the angel who accepts her proffered gift and judges her worthy of redemption. Acklen almost certainly intended each viewer of her



Fig. 18. Hiram Powers, *California*, 1850–55 (this carving 1858). Marble; H. 71". (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, gift of William Backhouse Astor; photo, Jerry L. Thompson, image © Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource, New York.)

sculpture to conclude, like this sympathetic guardian: “’Tis sweet to let the Pardoned in.”¹⁰³

Reviews of *The Peri* were generally favorable, both during Mozier's 1866 Tenth Street Studio exhibition and when the second marble version appeared in his posthumous studio auction in New York in 1873. “The Peri’ is a finely modeled figure, full of expression and well conceived,” wrote a critic for the *American Art Journal*, adding humorously, “The Peri, however, is encumbered with a superfluity of tears, Moore having allowed her but one of those ‘starry bowls’ instead of three.”¹⁰⁴ A reviewer for the *Arcadian* noted “much beauty” in *The Peri*'s “sweeping lines ... combined with a certain grandeur

¹⁰² “Hiram Powers,” *The Living Age* 44 (March 17, 1855): 703.

¹⁰³ Moore, *Lalla Rookh*, 135.

¹⁰⁴ “Art Matters,” *American Art Journal* 5 (October 18, 1866): 408.

that is apt to enchain the spectator.”¹⁰⁵ An unidentified 1866 review, clipped from a newspaper and saved by the Acklen family, describes the figure as “the embodiment of one of those beautiful creations of Tom Moore, with the attributes of the angel—yet human.”¹⁰⁶ Writing of Acklen’s version of the statue in 1876, a reporter for the *Cincinnati Daily Gazette* called it “a formidable rival to Powers’ Greek Slave.”¹⁰⁷ Clarence Cook sounded the only dissenting note, caustically describing Mozier’s zaftig angel as “a robust and well-conditioned spirit, with hardly enough of the spiritual to balance her earthly substance.”¹⁰⁸

Mozier’s large, dramatic *Peri* was well suited to Acklen’s grand salon—the largest and most impressive space in her home. The room, which measures 58 by 31 feet, is separated from the original portion of the house by a row of slender Corinthian columns and from the courtyard outside by a series of triple-arched, floor-to-ceiling windows. Three of these windows extend out into a bay that once housed a fountain complete with a life-size, bronze water nymph. The ceiling—separated from the walls by a wide, ornate cornice—is vaulted. As a result, the room is imposing yet bright and airy. As Karen Halttunen has argued, by the 1850s domestic culture in the United States was becoming more theatrical. As the “sentimental posture of moral earnestness” that characterized polite parlor behavior in the 1840s gave way to a culture of unabashed self-display, spaces within private homes became larger and more stagelike.¹⁰⁹ The relative simplicity of early nineteenth-century decor blossomed into the exuberant drapery and upholstery, reflective surfaces, and rococo ornament that predominated in the fashionable, French Second Empire–inspired interiors of the 1850s and 1860s. Ideal sculpture’s evolution from thoughtful, self-contained figures to expressive, theatrical heroines followed this shift. Figures like Mozier’s *Peri*, Rogers’s *Nydia*, and Powers’s late works *Eve Disconsolate* and *The Last of the Tribes* (modeled 1871; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston), with their dramatic postures and expressions, asserted their presence in even the most elaborate setting.

¹⁰⁵ “Fine Arts: The Mozier Statues,” *The Arcadian* 1 (March 20, 1873): 10.

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in Kiser, “Scion of Belmont, Part I,” 38.

¹⁰⁷ “Society Gossip,” *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, August 3, 1876, 5.

¹⁰⁸ “Art: The Mozier Marbles,” *New York Tribune*, March 14, 1873, 5.

¹⁰⁹ Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830–1870* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982), 153–90.

Although Acklen redecorated Belmont in the mid 1860s, her tastes remained true to the prevailing styles of the 1850s. Two extant photographs of Acklen’s grand salon reveal light colored walls, tapestry rugs over a floor painted to resemble black and white tiles, ornately carved and upholstered armchairs placed here and there, a circular divan, a round parlor table covered with bibelots, and a pedal organ. Among the many framed paintings on the walls were five views of Venice by Canaletto (1697–1798), a large, sixteenth-century painting of the marriage of Jacob and Rachel, and a painting of Vulcan and Venus. Marble busts, which the *Louisville Courier-Journal* described as portraits of Antonius Pius, Emperor Hadrian, Cicero, and Demosthenes, stood on pedestals between the windows. The photographs show Mozier’s sculpture beneath an ornate, hanging gasolier. Rather than placing the figure by a wall, Acklen situated it in the center of the room facing both the entrance into the grand salon from the front hall and the stairs leading up to the second story. Placed as it was, *The Peri* became the first and most striking impression visitors received upon entering the room.

Not only was Acklen’s grand salon the site of all her large-scale entertainments, the room was also a kind of theater, stocked with boxes of costumes and props for amateur theatricals and *tableaux vivants*.¹¹⁰ Such games became wildly popular in the United States in the 1850s and 1860s and were part of a new, broader social practice.¹¹¹ Middle- and upper-class Americans in the mid-nineteenth century began to view the self as a role to be performed before an audience. Acklen, who had a keen theatrical sense, threw herself unreservedly into her own postwar performance of identity. She returned from Europe with a diamond tiara that she wears in her engraved portrait in Ellet’s *The Queens of American Society* and wore at all large and significant social gatherings thereafter (fig. 19). Newspaper accounts of the LeVert reception and her wedding party a year later show how Acklen’s persona evolved in that brief time. While the first account makes note of the crown, the second describes it as “the gift of the Emperor and Empress of France.”¹¹² It is uncertain whether Acklen herself was the source of this undoubtedly spurious story; however, it is probably

¹¹⁰ Mrs. Spencer McHenry, “Belmont Acklen Estate,” copy in Belmont Mansion curatorial files of a manuscript in the Neil Savage Mahoney papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

¹¹¹ Halttunen, 174–75.

¹¹² See “The Reception at Bellevue [sic],” *Nashville Union*, December 20, 1866, 3; “Wedding Festivities—Dr. and Mrs. W. A. Cheatham’s Reception Last Night,” *Nashville Union*, June 28, 1867, 3.



Fig. 19. Adelicia Acklen Cheatham. From Elisabeth Ellet, *The Queens of American Society* (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1867), 416.

due to her skillful, theatrical self-fashioning that, by 1867, she was described as a crowned peer of European royalty.

Objects and settings played crucial roles in the mid-nineteenth-century dramatic performance of identity. To enhance her monarchic image, Acklen hung a copy of Thomas Sully's 1838 *Portrait of Queen Victoria in Her Coronation Robes*, possibly by Sully himself, over the landing of her staircase facing the grand salon (fig. 20). Sully's deft combination of sweet, ladylike mildness with regal dignity matched perfectly Acklen's aspirations for her own public persona following the war. *The Peri*, which faced Sully's portrait, performed an equally important role. Raised on its pedestal, the figure would have been visible from every part of the grand salon, even when the room was filled with people. It expressed repentance and the joy of reunion with the divine; however, unlike the related personages of Eve or Pandora, the peri's precise transgression is unclear. Moore never mentions it nor does Mozier allude to it. Instead, *The Peri* conveyed the idea of repentance by proffering a penitent sinner's tears to Acklen's guests, while the figure itself remains both feminine and pure. Mozier's sculpture reinforced

the ideal of the true woman as an earthbound angel—beautiful, emotional, fair skinned, and morally pure—whose missionary role ensured her ultimate return to her heavenly home. Acklen, who had always been a devout Presbyterian, increased her support of the church after the war by donating bronze bells to two Nashville congregations. The first, for the First Presbyterian Church in downtown Nashville, she commissioned at a cost of \$3,000. The second, for Moore Memorial Chapel, she removed from one of her Louisiana plantations.¹¹³

The extent to which Acklen identified with *The Peri* is evident from her will, in which she stipulated that the figure would be removed with her body to Mount Olivet Cemetery near Nashville. By the time she died in 1887 (from a heart attack suffered while shopping for furniture), the domestic ideal she had worked so hard to create at Belmont had shattered. In 1884 she fired her husband as her business manager, separated from him, and moved to Washington, DC, to be near her adult children. Nevertheless, in accordance with her wishes, she was buried near her Nashville home, and *The Peri* was placed in her gothic revival mausoleum (fig. 21). Acklen also specified her choice of “furniture for the hall of the mausoleum”—an iron chair and seat, a small marble table, and a gilt, marble-topped stand with a vase for flowers. She further stipulated that the two marble urns that once flanked Belmont's front porch be moved to the grounds of the mausoleum.¹¹⁴ In essence, Acklen re-created a domestic space around her remains, the remains of two of her husbands, and—ultimately—nine of her children. Here, *The Peri* continues to preside in perpetuity as a proverbial angel in the home.¹¹⁵

Acklen's son William recounted years after her death that, immediately after the war, his mother had “resumed her place as a social leader which was never disputed.”¹¹⁶ At least one fellow Nashvillian's description of Acklen throws doubt on his claim. In 1894, the outspoken antisuffragist and Lost Cause devotee Josephine Pearson wrote the following, heavily mythologized account of Acklen's reception for Octavia LeVert, which Pearson remembered incorrectly as having occurred in 1864, during the Union occupation of Nashville.

¹¹³ Wardin, *Belmont Mansion*, 1981 ed., 31.

¹¹⁴ Will of Adelicia Cheatham, records of Davidson County, wills and inventories, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, 30:155–64.

¹¹⁵ As of my writing, plans are underway to preserve *The Peri* from possible environmental damage by returning it to the grand salon of Belmont Mansion Museum.

¹¹⁶ Kiser, “Scion of Belmont, Part I,” 58.

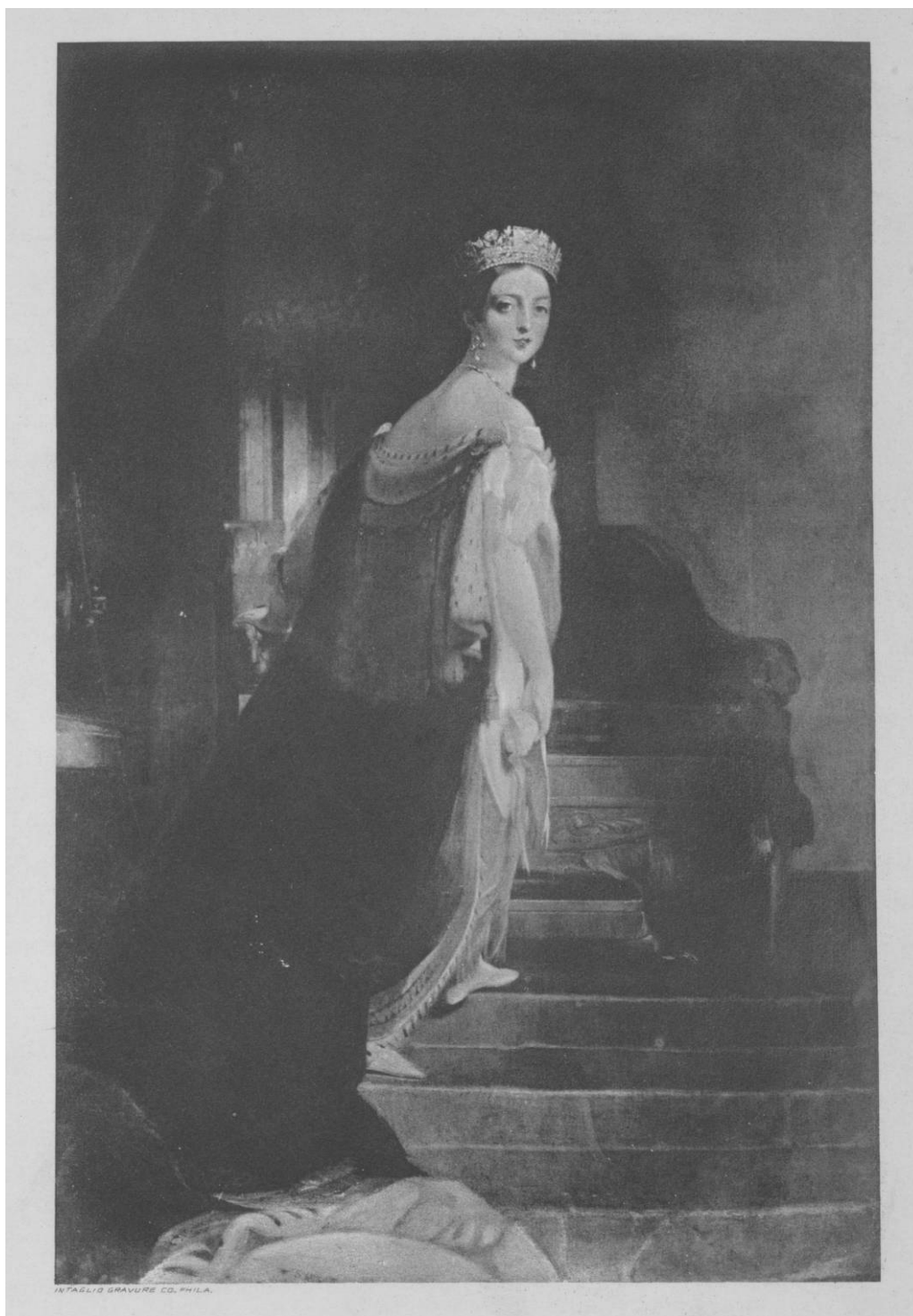


Fig. 20. After Thomas Sully, *Queen Victoria*, ca. 1850. From Edward Biddle and Mantle Fielding, *The Life and Works of Thomas Sully, 1783–1872* (Philadelphia: n.p., 1921), 46. (Winterthur Library Printed Book and Periodical Collection.)

Adelicia had a dais erected in the great hall. Seated upon it, she waved a wand like an oriental queen. All was most ostentatious. During the intermission she arose and made the following announcement. “If anyone present desires

to speak French, my guest Madame LeVert will be glad to accommodate. If anyone desires to speak Spanish, Madame LeVert’s daughter will be glad to accommodate. And if anyone desires to speak Italian, I myself will be

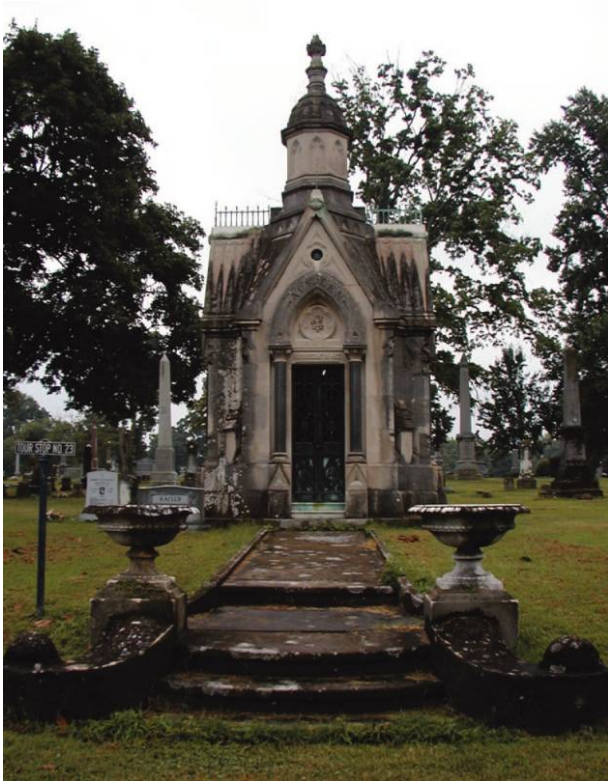


Fig. 21. Muldoon and Co., Acklen Mausoleum, 1884, Mount Olivet Cemetery, Nashville. (Photo, Lauren Lessing.)

glad to accommodate.” After a long silence, a Yankee officer tottered to the dais and offered to speak “henglish” if anyone present wanted to accommodate in that tongue.¹¹⁷

Pearson’s overwrought account of Acklen as a pretentious scalawag, entertaining Yankees in the midst of the war, reveals the limits of Acklen’s postwar self-fashioning. She simply did not buy Adelicia’s bid to reposition herself on the pedestal of true womanhood, regardless of how many bepedestaled images of angelic women she displayed. Pearson, who in her struggle against the Nineteenth Amendment stated, “The fight to preserve our ideal of Southern womanhood is a Holy War, and a crucial test of Southern rights and honor,” may have particularly hoped that her diatribe would insult Adelicia’s oldest son, the former Congressman Joseph Hayes Acklen, who in the interest of building a “New

¹¹⁷ Transcript of unidentified newspaper clipping, dated 1894, Belmont Mansion curatorial files, Nashville.

South” embraced certain progressive causes including women’s suffrage.¹¹⁸ In 1894 he was serving pro bono as the general counsel of the Tennessee Suffrage Association. By contrast, Adelicia’s younger son William—a novelist, poet, and art collector—absorbed himself in fantasies of the South’s lost antebellum grandeur.¹¹⁹ Although his nostalgic, posthumously published memoirs betray no hint of disapproval of his mother, William’s decision to change his name from “Acklen” to “Acklan” shortly after her death (and ultimately to “Ackland” by 1900) and his refusal to be buried near her suggest a lingering sense of anger or shame.

Well aware of her precarious position in post-war Nashville but determined to stand her ground, Adelicia Acklen used the decor of her home, in which her five American ideal sculptures were pre-eminent, to rehabilitate her image as a genteel Southern lady. As Acklen’s story suggests, by the 1860s ideal statues had become signifiers of more than just wealth and taste. Many buyers expected these artworks to beautify their homes while publicly affiliating them with the family values of the mid-nineteenth century: self-restraint, modesty, deference, compassion, filial love, and Christian faith. Not surprisingly, as the cult of true womanhood waned, so did the popularity of ideal sculpture. In 1914, the feminist author Charlotte Perkins Gilman used these statues as foils for the liberated New Woman. “Here she comes,” she wrote, “running, out of prison and off pedestal; chains off, crown off, halo off, just a live woman.”¹²⁰ From the early twentieth century on, ideal sculptures have been most commonly displayed in museum galleries. Removed from the private homes that once framed them, these objects are—like the subjects of Adelicia Acklen’s statues *Ruth*, *Rebecca*, and *The Peri*—exiles. It is my hope that by considering a handful of ideal sculptures in their original domestic context, I have restored some degree of their original depth and complexity.

¹¹⁸ Quoted in Edward D. C. Campbell and Kym S. Rice, eds., *A Woman’s War: Southern Women, Civil War, and the Confederate Legacy*, exhibit catalog (Richmond, VA: Museum of the Confederacy; Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 189.

¹¹⁹ See, e.g., William H. Acklan, *Sterope: The Veiled Pleiad* (Washington, DC: Gibson Brothers, 1892).

¹²⁰ Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “Is Feminism Really So Dreadful?” *Delineator* 85 (August 1914): 6.