Fernand Khnopff: Writings on art and artists

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Fernand Khnopff:

Writings on Art and Artists



Jeffery Howe
editor and translator
Boston College 2016

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Fernand Khnopff, c. 1900

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About this project

This compilation includes all the published writings on art by Fernand Khnopff (1858-1921), the noted Belgian Symbolist painter, that I have been able to locate. He wrote extensively for Belgian and English publications, and was also translated into German for journals in Berlin and Vienna. An invaluable guide to Khnopff's writings is the extensive bibliography in the catalog raisonné of his works published in 1987: Robert Delevoy, Catherine De Croës, and Giselle Ollinger-Zinque. *Fernand Khnopff. Catalogue de l'œuvre* (Brussels: Lebeer Hossmann, 1987). A significant number of articles has been added to their list. Some of Khnopff's public lectures were extensively reported in the press, and these summaries have been included also.

Fernand Khnopff will be one of the featured artists in the exhibition at the McMullen Museum of Art at Boston College, "The Spirit of the Land: Tradition and Innovation in Belgian Landscape Painting" in the fall of 2017. Khnopff's writings are a valuable source of information about many of the artists included in this exhibition.

An introductory essay by the editor, "**The Artist as Critic: Fernand Khnopff on Art and Artists**," introduces the major sections of this compilation.

Articles originally in French and German have been translated by the editor; the translations are marked with a different font color, and follow the transcribed articles. The editor cheerfully admits to not being a professional translator, so the reader is encouraged to consult the original texts.

Careful readers may wish to verify the accuracy of transcription and study the original typography in the layout of the pages, which often reflects the aesthetics of Art Nouveau. Many of these journals are now available online. A list of sources is provided on the next page.

Thumbnail images are included in the transcribed articles for the convenience of the reader. Some have been replaced with color images in the public domain.

The **index** of names mentioned in Khnopff's essays is extensive, and should be useful to scholars of the art of this era.

I owe a considerable debt of gratitude to my undergraduate research assistant, Jean Bower, for her industry and acumen in transcribing many of these articles, some of which were scanned from decades-old photocopies that I made as a student.

The digital specialists at Boston College's O'Neill library, particularly Anna Kijas and Emily Toner, have been invaluable in the process of creating this online publication.

Sources for original scanned images of Fernand Khnopff's writings on art:

The growing digitization of historic journals has revolutionized the study of late nineteenth century art. Online access has made even rare journals accessible to all.

The full series of *l'Art Moderne* is available on the web site of the Université Libre de Bruxelles:
http://digitheque.ulb.ac.be/fr/digitheque-revues-litteraires-belges/periodiques-numerises/index.html#c11373

The University of Heidelberg has made available high resolution images of the complete run of *The Studio*:
http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/studio?sid=a36d95b2472af15d6e3ab03d944aca14

A high resolution scan of *Ver Sacrum* can be found at the University of Heidelberg; the December 1898 issue designed by Khnopff is here:
http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/vs1898/0379?sid=952b005516dfee98c7359264d15d9876

The Hathi Trust has digitized copies of the *Bulletin de la Classe des beaux-arts* of the Académie Royale de Belgique:
https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008881434

The Hathi Trust also has digitized copies of *The Magazine of Art*:
https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000049695
and the *Wiener Rundschau*: https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000506111
and *Le Flambeau*: https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000497539

The Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) has digitized many periodicals of the era, including *La Jeune Belgique*:
http://digitheque.ulb.ac.be/fr/digitheque-revues-litteraires-belges/periodiques-numerises/index.html#c12716

The Artist as Critic: Fernand Khnopff on Art and Artists

Fernand Khnopff (1858-1921) is one of the most fascinating and enigmatic of late-nineteenth century Symbolist artists.[1] Born into a wealthy family at Grembergen-lez-Termonde, near Brussels, he lived for several years in Bruges as a child, then resided in Brussels for the rest of his life. At this time, Brussels was one of the most vibrant international centers of experimental art and literature, with a flourishing cohort of journals dedicated to the new art.

Khnopff was exceptionally well educated in the history of art and culture, and this is amply demonstrated in the reviews and commentaries on art that he published for over thirty-five years. He was active in many of the leading avant-garde art associations in Brussels, such as Les XX (1883-1893) and La Libre Esthétique (1893-1914). The breadth of his artistic interests in astonishing—he wrote on everything from English art to street decorations, the history of printmaking to theater. He was particularly fond of Shakespeare, and lectured on Hamlet a number of times in the 1890s, and wrote two long commentaries on that play for a Viennese publication (*Die Zeit*) in 1899.

Although often mistakenly characterized as an isolated aesthete, Khnopff was eminently social. He knew everyone, and had an opinion on everything. Sometimes he was harshly critical, as in his denunciations of the private organization devoted to *l'Œuvre Nationale de l'Art applique à la Rue* in 1896.[2] Mostly, however, he chose to be an enthusiastic proponent for the flourishing art movements in Belgium, devoting extensive articles on artists quite different from himself, such as Constantin Meunier and Léon Frederic. Quality was his primary focus, as well as art which engaged with the social currents of the day.

This was an era of great vitality, with significant artistic movements in painting, sculpture and the decorative arts. Khnopff critiqued them all, from German and Viennese architecture and interior design to sculpted medals and even lace-making. His

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[1] Monographs on Khnopff include: Michel Draguet, *Fernand Khnopff ou l'ambigu poétique* (Ghent and Brussels: Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1995), Jeffery W. Howe, The Symbolist Art of Fernand Khnopff (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982), and Louis Dumont-Wilden, *Fernand Khnopff* (Brussels: G. Van Oest & Cie., 1907). Major exhibition catalogs include *Fernand Khnopff 1858-1921* (Paris, Brussels, Hamburg, 1979), and Frederik Leen, Dominique Marechal, Sophie van Vliet, et al., *Fernand Khnopff 1858-1921*, (Brussels: Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, 2004).

[2] To encourage artistic improvements of the urban context, the organization *l'Œuvre Nationale de l'Art applique à la Rue* was founded in 1894 by Eugene Broerman in Brussels. The group organized competitions for new signage in the city, architectural restorations, and lighting in public squares. Khnopff, along with other artists, responded skeptically to a questionnaire about this group in 1896. For more on the activities of this group, see Charles Mulford Robinson, "Belgium's Art Crusade*," Harper's Monthly Magazine*, 104 (February 1902), 443-452.

own house reflected Viennese design principles, and during the first World War he provided designs for lace manufacturers.[3]

Khnopff was deeply interested in the history of art in Belgium, and he lectured and wrote about the great artists from the Burgundian and Baroque eras, including Jan van Eyck and Peter-Paul Rubens.

Khnopff's first published comments on his art were occasioned by a sensational controversy involving the popular French opera singer Rose Caron (1857-1930). In 1884-85 Khnopff created several designs for the self-styled Sâr Joséphin Péladan's novel *Le Vice Suprême*, one of which was titled *la Sphinge*. Khnopff tore this up and threw it at the feet of Mme. Caron, who was incensed by what she perceived as a libelous portrait of herself when she saw the picture at the exhibition of Les XX in 1885. This incident was widely discussed in the Belgian press; the story was so sensational that at first *L'Indépendance Belge* accused *La Réforme* of having invented the story to boost circulation.[4] A glance at a contemporary photograph of Rose Caron suggests that Mme. Caron may well have perceived a resemblance to herself in the *Sphinge,* for she shares the type of English beauty which had become Khnopff's decided preference. Mme. Caron was not satisfied with Khnopff's explanation; a letter recently sold in Brussels expressed her continuing anger and demand for an apology.[5]



Rose Caron, postcard c. 1905.

[3] See Marguerite Coppens, "Les Commandes dentellières de L'Union patriotique des femmes belges et du Comité de la dentelle à Fernand Khnopff," *Revue belge d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art,* 64 (1995), 71-83.

[4] This incident was widely reported in the Belgian press: Jacques Champsal, "Incident Khnopff-Caron," *La Basoche,* (Brussels), vol. 1, 18S5, 202; Gustave Lagye, "Au XX," *La Fédération Artistique,* (Brussels), 20 (Feb. 28, 1885), 157; Gustave Lagye, "Encore l'incident Khnopff," *La Fédération Artistique,* 21 , (March 7, 1885), 165-166. Madeleine Octave Maus recapitulated the event in *Trente Années de Lutte pour l'Art,1884-1914,* (Brussels, 1926), 35-36.

[5] http://www.bibliorare.com/products/khnopff-caron-rose-lettre-autographe-avec-signature-datee-du-25-fevrier-1885-adressee-au-docteur-max-au-theatre-royal-de-la-monnaie-bruxelles-2-p-8-enveloppe-timbree-jointe-petit/



Fernand Khnopff: *D'après Joséphin Péladan: Le Vice Suprême*, 1885. Private collection.

His next publications were letters in *l'Art Moderne* in 1890, the art newspaper first associated with Les XX and later La Libre Esthétique.

Inspired by the efforts of British Arts and Crafts pioneers such as William Morris and John Ruskin to improve society and the plight of the workers through artistic endeavors, Khnopff participated in the Section d'Art of the Brussels Maison du Peuple in Brussels. The Section d'Art was an educational branch of this workers' association.[6] Khnopff was one of the directors of the Section d'Art of this organization and lectured to the workers on English and early Flemish art; see the report in *L'Art Moderne* (1893) transcribed elsewhere in this document. He also wrote and lectured about William Morris (1896) and Walter Crane (1894), leaders of the Arts and Crafts movement. The conclusion of his lecture on Walter Crane, an extended description of a pageant of flowers, reveals his passion for allegory and symbolic imagery. It was repeated in translation in 1898 in the Viennese journal *Ver Sacrum*.

Khnopff's passion for British art is particularly evident in his long memorial articles on Sir Edward Burne-Jones (1898, reprised in 1915) and Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema (1915).

In 1895 Khnopff became a regular reviewer for the British art journal *The Studio*, and until the first World War he published many feature articles and an almost monthly column for their "Studio-Talk" section.[7] He was a tireless champion of contemporary

[6] The activities of the *Section d'Art* are discussed in Eugenia W. Herbert*, The Artist and Social Reform in Belgium and France, 1885-1898* (New Haven, 1961) 31; and in Donald Drew Egbert, *Social Radicalism and the Arts* (New York, 1970), 604-9.

[7] *The Studio* was founded in 1893, and was a leader in introducing photomechanical reproductions in its articles. See Gerry Beegan, "*The Studio*: Photomechanical Reproduction and the Changing Status of Design," *Design Issues*, 23, 4 (Autumn, 2007), 46-61.

Belgian art, and generously supported his fellow artists, as can be seen in his many feature articles and reviews. He was particularly eloquent in his tributes to Alfred Stevens (1906), Léon Frederic and Victor Rousseau (1907), and Constantin Meunier (1905), among others. His "Studio-Talk" reviews are very straightforward, but his writing style could be elliptical in some of the longer features. He frequently quoted other authors to lend an air of authority to his opinions, and often revealed a droll and sometimes sarcastic sense of humor.

Although his articles focus on other artists, he also discussed his own art on occasion, and some revealing statements are found in these articles. A short essay on his own house, a major work of art itself which was tragically demolished in 1939, is particularly important.[8]

Khnopff was very cosmopolitan; he published important articles in *The Magazine of Art* (London). He had a major impact on the experimental art in Austria. In 1898 he was asked to design the December issue of the new Viennese journal *Ver Sacrum*¸ which was richly illustrated with his art.[9]

Fernand Khnopff was elected a member of the Classe des Beaux-Arts of the Académie Royale de Belgique in 1907, and contributed motions and articles to their *Bulletin* from 1912-1920. Publication of this journal was interrupted during WWI, but a supplement published in 1919 included numerous works written between 1915-18. Among them is a passionate argument for artistic reparations for the damage caused to Belgian cities by the German occupation, including the return of the missing panels from the Ghent Altarpiece from the Berlin Museum.

His last published article was in 1921 on the works of art inspired by Dante, tracing the artistic representation of the major texts of the Italian writer by artists from Botticelli to Rodin. This gave him ample opportunity to praise one of the British Pre-Raphaelites whom he most admired, Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

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[8] Fernand Khnopff, "Mein Haus," *Die Zeit*, 37-38, 483 (2 Jan. 1904), 9. This article was identified by Clément Dessy, "La maison d'artiste en portrait, manifeste et sanctuaire. L'exemple de Fernand Khnopff," in *The Aesthetics of Matter: Modernism, the Avante-Garde and Material Exchange*, ed. By Sarah Posman, Anne Reverseau, David Ayers, Sascha Bru, Benedikt Hjartarson (Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2013). 235-248. Professor Dessy has announced a publication of Khnopff's complete writings, but it has not yet appeared. It should make a useful complement to this study. See http://difusion.ulb.ac.be/vufind/Record/ULB-DIPOT:oai:dipot.ulb.ac.be:2013/171823/Details

[9] See Geoffrey Simmins, "Fernand Khnopff and *Ver Sacrum*," *Canadian Journal of Netherlandic Studies. Revue canadienne d'etudes neérlandaises,* 17, 1-2 (Spring-Fall 1996), 75-98.

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(Summary of lecture.)

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1885

Khnopff, Fernand, « Lettre adressée à *La Réforme, » La Réforme*, no. 56 (25 février 1885).

Letter from Fernand Khnopff to *La Réforme*

Lundi soir

Monsieur,

Vous écrivez dans *la Réforme* du 23:

« M. Khnopff a pris, pour incarner Léonora, la tête, d'une frappante ressemblance, d'une de nos artistes lyriques les plus belles et les plus applaudis. »

C'est faux.

J'ai trouvé dans la description éparai de Joséphin Péladan (entre pages 2, 23, 69, etc.) les traits caractéristiques de ma figure; lorsque j'ai été averti de la ressemblance, j'ai fait tout ce qui était possible pour l'atténuer et si, à l'exposition, je n'ai pas retiré le dessin, c'est qu'on était loin de s'accorder sur la « frappante ressemblance. »

Quant au reproche, venant d'autre part, d' « avoir abusé de la complaisance de Mme. Caron pour exposer aux tableau dont elle repousse tout espèce de collaboration, alors que j'étais venu chez elle pour faire son portrait en tenue de ville, » il est absolument ridicule.

Le portrait—commandé—est vu d'un tout autre coté que le dessin, et si j'avais voulu « prendre la tête » de Mme. Caron, il eut été plus facile et surtout plus rapide de me servir d'une photographe.

Veuillez, Monsieur, insérer dans votre prochain numéro ces explications définitives et agréer l'expression de mes sentiments distingués.

Fernand Khnopff

P.S. Dans l'intérêt de l'art, je conseille à Félicien Rops de ne pas risquer, en ce moment, un exposition de son œuvre, ou ne se comptant plus les « têtes, d'une frappante ressemblance, d'une de nos artistes lyriques les plus belles et les plus applaudis. »

Khnopff, Fernand, « Lettre adressée à *La Réforme, » La Réforme*, no. 56 (25 février 1885).

Letter from Fernand Khnopff to *La Réforme*

Translation :

Monday evening

Sir,

You write in *la Réforme* on the 23rd: “Mr. Khnopff, to embody Léonora, has taken the head, with a striking likeness, of one of our finest and most acclaimed lyrical artists.”

This is false.

I found the characteristic features of my figure in the scattered descriptions of Joséphin Péladan (between pages 2, 23, 69, etc.). When I was warned of the resemblance, I did everything that was possible to mitigate it and if I did not remove the drawing at the exhibition, it is that we were far from agreeing on the “striking likeness.”

With respect to the complaint, coming from elsewhere, “of having abused the kindness of Mrs. Caron to exhibit her in a painting for which she rejected all collaboration, made while I came to her to paint her portrait in her street clothes,” it is absolutely ridiculous.

The portrait—commissioned—is seen from a completely different side than the drawing, and if I wanted to “take the head” by Mrs. Caron, it would have been easier and certainly faster for me to use a photograph.

Please, sir, insert in your next issue these definitive explanations. Sincerely,

Fernand Khnopff

P.S. In the interest of art, I advise Félicien Rops to not risk at this moment an exhibition of his work without counting the “heads, with a striking likeness, of one of our finest and most acclaimed lyrical artists.”

L'Indépendance Belge (24 février 1885), 2.

Account of the original Khnopff-Caron incident.

La Réforme rapporte les curieux incidents que voici:

« On expose en ce moment aux *XX* trois dessins destinés à illustrer *le Vice suprême* de Joséphin Péladan, ce livre étrange et pénétrant plein de choses absurdes et de pages superbes où flamboie comme une sentence de menace le *Finis Latinorum.*

« M. Khnopff a pris pour sujet le chapitre XIII du roman; *La fille du divin Hercule.* Nue et blanche comme une vision, Léonora d'Este fait un geste comme pour s'arrêter au bord d'un gouffre; ses yeux de sybille se fixent comme tournés en elle-même; la superbe, la perverse par pensée vient encore une fois de refréner son désir et, derrière elle, radieux et blancs comme son corps de neige, deux lis montent leur tige orgueilleuse.

« M. Khnopff a pris, pour incarner Léonora, la tête, d'une frappante ressemblance, d'une de nos artistes lyrique et les plus belles et les plus applaudies. L'intérêt artistique de ce merveilleux dessin où Fernand Khnopff a mis tout son grand talent, se doublera donc d'un intérêt de curiosité, et, qui sait ? de scandale et de colère aussi. Nous sommes convaincus que la belle cantatrice ignore cette glorification un peu… nue de sa personne, mais les mauvaises langues sont très mauvaises chez nous, et quoiqu'elle soit filante (pour Paris), on pourrait injustement rejeter sur l'étoile le caprice artistique d'un peintre aussi indépendant de caractère que religieux de son art.

« Hier, vers trois heures et demie, Mme. Caron se trouvant à l'exposition, accompagnée de Mlle. Legault et de M. Anspach, s'approcha da dessin et, s'étant reconnue, s'adressa vivement a la secrétaire des *XX* en lui reprochant d'avoir toléré cette exhibition qui l'offensait profondément dans sa dignité de femme. Elle exigea immédiatement qu'on retirât le cadre; M. Maus répondit qu'il devait attendre pour cela les ordres de M. Khnopff; Mme. Caron voulut alors enlever l'œuvre violemment; le jeune secrétaire des *XX* dût céder à l'injonction; à l'heure qu'il est le tableau a disparu.

« *P.S.*—Deuxième incident.—Nous les serons par tranches là mesure qu'ils nous arrivent.

« Au moment où Mme. Caron allait quitter le Salon des *XX,* M. Fernand Khnopff est entré.

« Mme. Caron lui dit quelques paroles saccadées, à la suite desquelles l'artiste prit son dessin et, devant la diva le déchira en mille morceaux. Nous n'apprécions point la conduite du peintre non plus que celle de Mme. Caron; nous les comprenons également; M. Khnopff a agi en galant homme pour réparer les torts qui lui étaient reprochés; nous sommes désolé seulement que le dessin de M. Khnopff, que nous considérons comme son œuvre la plus parfaite, soit détruite à tout jamais. Nous parlons en artiste—non en homme, et ne concluons point. »

L'Indépendance Belge (24 février 1885), 2.
Account of the original Khnopff-Caron incident.

Translation:

La Réforme reports the curious incidents that we report here:

"At this moment there are three drawings exhibited at the *XX* [les Vingt] intended to illustrate *The Supreme Vice* of Joséphin Péladan, that strange and penetrating book full of absurd things and wonderful pages where the menacing threat of the *Finis Latinorum* blazes.

"Mr. Khnopff took his subject from chapter XIII of the novel, *The Daughter the Divine Hercules.* Nude and white as a vision, Léonora Este makes a gesture as if to stop at the edge of an abyss; her sybilene eyes are fixed and turned in to herself; the superb, the perverse by thought comes again to curb her desire and, behind her, radiant and pale as her snow-white body, two lilies surmount their proud stem.

To embody Leonora, Mr. Khnopff has taken the head, with a striking resemblance, of one of our most beautiful and most applauded lyric artists. The artistic interest of this wonderful of drawing, in which Fernand Khnopff put all of his great talent, therefore is doubled in interest from curiosity, and who knows? scandal and anger also. We are convinced that the beautiful singer is unaware of this glorification somewhat... nude in her person, but the evil tongues are very evil among us, and however free-running it might be (for Paris), here one might unfairly throw it back on the star for the artistic whim of a painter who is as independent in character as he is religious towards his art.

"Yesterday, at about half past three, Mrs. Caron was at the exhibition, accompanied by Miss Legault and Mr. Anspach, approaching the drawing and, having recognized her likeness, spoke strongly to Secretary of the *XX* blaming him for having tolerated this exhibition which deeply offended her dignity as a woman. She demanded that the artwork be withdrawn immediately; Mr. Maus responded that he must wait for orders from Mr. Khnopff to do this; Ms. Caron then attempted to violently remove the artwork; the young Secretary of *XX* was forced to give in to the injunction; at this time the painting has disappeared.

"*P.S.*—Second incident.—We will give them by slices in the measure as they arrived.

"At the moment when Mrs. Caron was leaving the Salon of *XX,* Mr. Fernand Khnopff entered.

"Mrs. Caron said a few staccato words, at the end of which the artist took his drawing and tore it in a thousand pieces before the diva. We do not appreciate the conduct of the painter nor that of Mme. Caron; we understand them equally; Mr. Khnopff acted as a gentleman to make amends for the error for which he was reproached; we are only sorry that the design of Mr. Khnopff, which we consider as his most perfect work, was destroyed forever. We are speaking of the artist—not the man, and draw no conclusions."

1890

Khnopff, Fernand, « Referendum artistique, » *L'Art Moderne*, 10, 52 (28 décembre 1890), 411.

Fernand Khnopff, « Referendum artistique ».

MON CHER AMI,

Être classé maître du genre, sans avoir jamais exposé d'aquarelle et après en avoir à peu près terminé deux, me semble trop flatteur pour ne pas répondre à ton questionnaire.

« Words, words », disait Hamlet, et un autre, plus d'aujourd'hui, précisait: « Se taire, se taire et agir en conséquence ». Cela posé: toutes ces « considérations » ne peuvent aboutir qu'au plus étroit maniérisme. Le procédé est peu; l'impression est tout.

Le plus récemment, sous l'influence japonaise trop rapide et superficielle, « on a trouvé » que l'aquarelle devait être « spontanée et primesautière »; ce que défendirent avec acharnement, d'abord les artistes de nature spontanée et primesautière; ensuite, avec plus d'acharnement encore, ceux à qui des études primesautières ne permettaient que le spontané.

C'était à prévoir.

Mais, n'avait-on pas aussi trouvé déjà que le pastel ne convenait qu'à des fadeurs « genre XVIIIe siècle », l'eau-forte à des griffonnages et la lithographie à des « entête de factures »?

On (le même, toujours) a pu voir depuis, dans ces trois genres, des œuvres remarquables, quoique absolument indépendantes de ces « traditions ».

Et, pour terminer: Gustave Moreau n'a-t-il pas exécuté des aquarelles aussi « définitives » que ses plus belles toiles?

Au revoir.

FERNAND KHNOPFF,
des XX.

Khnopff, Fernand, « Referendum artistique, » *L'Art Moderne*, 10, 52 (28 décembre 1890), 411.

Translation:

FERNAND KHNOPFF, « Referendum artistique ».

My dear friend,

To be ranked as a master of the genre, without ever having exhibited a watercolor and after creating roughly two, seems too flattering to not reply to your questionnaire.

"Words, words," said Hamlet, and another, more contemporary, clarifies: "be slient, be silent and act accordingly. Thus posed: all these "considerations" can lead to the narrowest mannerism. The process is little; the impression is everything.

Recently, under a hasty and superficial Japanese influence, "one finds that" watercolor must be "spontaneous and impulsive;" this is tenaciously argued primarily by spontaneous and impulsive artists; and then, even more strenuously, by those for whom their impulsive studies only permit the spontaneous.

It was to be expected.

But, hasn't one also found already that pastel is only suitable for the insipid "18th century style", and that etching is for doodlers and lithography for "stubborn brushwork"?

One (always the same) could have seen since then outstanding works in these three genres, although absolutely independent of these "traditions."

And to conclude: has not Gustave Moreau executed watercolors as "definitive" as his finest paintings?

Good bye.

Fernand Khnopff
[member] of the XX

1892

« Conférence de M. Fernand Khnopff au *Cercle des Arts et de la Presse*, à propos de l'Exposition de photographies de Hollyer, d'après G.-F. Watts, F.-M. Brown, D.-G. Rossetti et E. Burne-Jones, » *l'Art moderne*, 12, 11 (13 mars 1892), 84-85.

Conférence de M. Fernand Khnopff au *Cercle des Arts et de la Presse*, à propos de l'Exposition de photographies de Hollyer, d'après G.-F. Watts, F.-M. Brown, D.-G. Rossetti et E. Burne-Jones.

Le conférencier, dont c'était le début, a commencé par l'étude des caractères distinctifs de l'art anglais contemporain, qu'il place en tête du mouvement artistique actuel. Il en apprécie le côté aristocratique, et intellectuel, dont il indique quelques causes sociales ou climatériques. « On y pourrait ajouter, dit-il, voyant les choses de très haut, que dans le grand mouvement de civilisation venu du sud-est, de l'Inde, et se dirigeant vers le nord-ouest, après avoir passé par l'Asie-Mineure, la Grèce, l'Italie et la France, l'heure est arrivée pour les Anglais d'être les plus forts.

Il y a aussi à remarquer qu'en Angleterre, le gouvernement s'occupe fort peu des artistes pour les former (ou déformer) et les entretenir. L'art qui y existe a ainsi sa *raison d'être* et ne souffre pas de cette plaie de l'école française, le tableau de musée, celle chose bâtarde, inutile, encombrante, qui se fait dans l'intention unique de remplir, au Salon, tel grand panneau du Palais de l'Industrie, et que l'Etat, responsable en définitive de son exécution, se croit obligé d'acheter pour en couvrir les murs de quelque musée de province, construit lui-même d'ailleurs pour abriter les manifestations de cet art monumental en chambre. »

Puis, à propos d'une visite chez Watts, après avoir fait un croquis de dimanche à Londres, il a exprimé toute son admiration pour l'auteur de ces chefs-d'œuvre : L'Amour et la vie, L'Amour et la mort. « Ce qui constitue le trait caractéristique de l'art de Watts, dit-il, c'est un effort continu vers l'idéal, une recherche anxieuse d'exprimer dignement un sentiment élevé, » et cela sans négliger le charme pictural : la grandeur de la ligne et la richesse de la couleur.

Ensuite, après une courte histoire du mouvement préraphaélite, le conférencier en a expliqué les recherches d'exactitude, si différentes cependant du réalisme français, à cause d'un esprit presque religieux.

Il a parlé de Ford-Madox Brown comme initiateur du mouvement, de la fondation du P. R. B. et du Germ, son journal, dont il a cité un extrait d'une étude de M. F. Stephens : « L'objet que nous nous sommes proposé en écrivant sur l'art, c'est un effort pour encourager et stimuler une adhésion complète à la simplicité naturelle ; et aussi, comme moyen auxiliaire, de diriger l'attention sur les oeuvres relativement peu nombreuses que l'art actuel produit dans cet esprit. On a dit qu'il y a, dans ce mouvement de l'école moderne, présomption, manque de déférence aux autorités

établies, abandon des anciennes traditions du pays. A cela on peut répondre qu'il n'y a rien de plus humble que la prétention à l'observation des faits seulement et que l'essai de les rendre dans leur vérité ».

Alors est venue la partie la plus intéressante, peut-être, de la conférence : la vie de Rossetti, sa rencontre avec Elisabeth Siddal ; la mort de cette femme qu'il adorait et l'enterrement avec elle de ses manuscrits, suivi, sept ans après, de l'exhumation si dramatique.

Les poèmes et les tableaux de Rossetti ont été étudiés, après cela, dans leurs ressemblances d'inspiration et leurs différences de technique. L'analyse de l'œuvre de E. Burne-Jones a suivi ; elle était plutôt générale, à part la description de deux tableaux *: Le Chant d'amour* et *Le Roi Cophetua et la Mendiante*.

Le conférencier-peintre a terminé son étude en reprochant à une certaine école de critique de juger toutes les œuvres d'art, de quelque tendance qu'elles soient, d'après quelques mêmes « principes », et il a cité, pour conclure, une phrase d'un critique anglais, M. Walter Pater : « La lutte ne doit pas être des écoles ou des tendances d'art entre elles; mais de toutes les écoles contre la stupidité, qui est morte pour l'esprit, et contre la vulgarité, qui est morte pour la forme ».

Translation:

« Conférence de M. Fernand Khnopff au *Cercle des Arts et de la Presse*, à propos de l'Exposition de photographies de Hollyer, d'après G.-F. Watts, F.-M. Brown, D.-G. Rossetti et E. Burne-Jones, » *l'Art moderne*, 12, 11 (13 mars 1892), 84-85.

Mr. Fernand Khnopff Lecture at the *Circle of Arts and the Press* about the exhibition of photographs by Hollyer of works by G.-F. Watts, F.-M. Brown, D.G. Rossetti and E. Burne-Jones.

The speaker, whose debut this was, began with the study of the distinguishing features of contemporary English art, which he places at the top of the current artistic movement. He appreciates the aristocratic and intellectual side, which he attributed to various social causes or climate. "One could add, he said, seeing things from very high, that in the great movement of civilization which comes from the southeast, from India, and is heading towards the northwest, after passing by the Asia Minor, Greece, Italy and France, the time has arrived for the English to be the strongest.

He also noted that in England, the Government makes little effort to train (or distort) artists or to support them. Art which exists there has thus a *raison d'être* and does not suffer from that plague of the French school, the museum painting, that bastard, unnecessary, cumbersome, thing which is solely intended to fill walls at the Salon or as backdrop to the Palace of industry, and the State, responsible ultimately for its execution, feels forced to buy them to cover the walls of some provincial museum, itself built to house the manifestations of this monumental art."

Then, in regard to a visit to Watts, after sketching a picture of Sunday in London he expressed his admiration for the author of these masterpieces: *Love and Life, Love and Death*. "The characteristic feature of the art of Watts, he says, is an continual effort towards the ideal, anxiously searching to express an elevated sentiment with dignity," and this without neglecting the pictorial charm: the grandeur of the line and the richness of the color.

Then, after a short history of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, the speaker explained their search for accuracy, so different however from French Realism, due to an almost religious spirit.

He spoke of Ford-Madox Brown as an initiator of the movement, the foundation of the P.R.B. and the *Germ*, its journal, from which he quoted a study of Mr. F. Stephens: "The object that we propose in writing about art, is an effort to encourage and stimulate a complete adherence to natural simplicity; and also, as auxiliary means, to direct attention to the relatively few works of contemporary art produced in this spirit. It has been said that there is presumption in the modern school movement, a lack of deference to the established authorities, and abandonment of the ancient traditions of the country. To this one can be answer that there is nothing more humble than the claim to observe only the facts and to try to render them in their verity."

Then came the most interesting part of the conference: the life of Rossetti, his meeting with Elisabeth Siddal; the death of the woman he loved and her burial with his manuscripts, followed seven years later, by a dramatic exhumation.

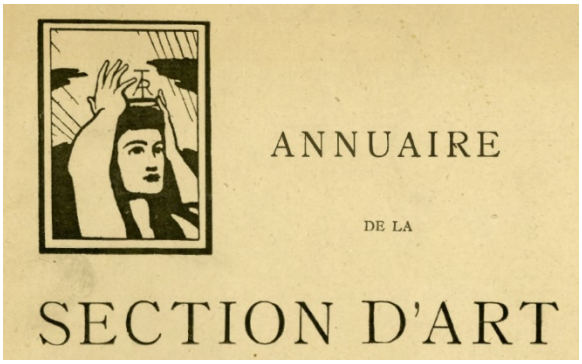
Poems and paintings by Rossetti were then studied in their similarities of inspiration and their differences in technique. The analysis of the work of E. Burne-Jones followed; it was rather general, apart from the description of two paintings: *The Chant d'Amour* and *King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid*.

The speaker-painter completed his study in reproaching a certain school of criticism to judge all works of art, of whatever trend that they may be, according to some same 'principles,' and to conclude he cited a phrase by an English critic, Mr. Walter Pater: "The struggle must not be between schools or trends of art between them; but of all schools against stupidity, which is death for the spirit, and against vulgarity, which is death for the form."

1893

Khnopff, Fernand, "L'Art anglais," *Annuaire de la Section d'art de la Maison du peuple* (Bruxelles, E. Blondiau, 1893), 30.

[Khnopff also designed illustrations for the front and back covers.]



Fernand Khnopff: Illustration on the front cover of the *Annuaire de la Section d'Art*, 1893.

L'Art anglais

L'art anglais parait être le plus intéressant en ce moment.

Aux expositions internationales, dans les Salles de la Grande Bretagne, on se sent surpris et en présence d'une force essentielle et originale.

Les traces d'influences, quoique nombreuses et variées, sont bientôt effacées; car, si les artistes anglais sont les plus cosmopolites des artistes, sa grande puissance d'assimilation est un des côtés les plus typiques du caractère anglais.

En voyant les choses de très-haut, on peut dire que dans le grand mouvement de civilisation venu du Sud-est, de l'Inde, et se dirigeant vers le Nord-ouest, après avoir passé par l'Asie-Mineure, la Grèce, l'Italie et la France, l'heure est arrivée pour les Anglais d'être les plus forts.

Mais il faut remarquer aussi, qu'en Angleterre, tout se passe plus « directement »; le gouvernement ne se charge pas de former les artistes et de les entretenir. L'art qui y existe a ainsi sa raison d'être et ne souffre pas de cette plaie de l'école française: le tableau de Musée; cette production batarde, inutile, encombrante, qui se fait dans l'intention unique de remplir, au Salon, tel grand panneau du Palais de l'Industrie et que l'État, responsable, en définitive, de son exécution, se croit oblige d'acheter pour en couvrir les murs de quelque Musée de province,—construit lui-même, d'ailleurs, pour abriter les manifestations de cet art monumental en chambre.

En Angleterre, au contraire, les œuvres d'art, de tous genres, ont leur destination immédiate.

L’art anglais fait partie de la Vie anglaise et c’est là, sa force.

FERNAND KHNOPFF.



Fernand Khnopff: Illustration on the back cover of the *Annuaire de la Section d’Art*, 1893.

Khnopff, Fernand, ”L’Art anglais,” *Annuaire de la Section d’art de la Maison du peuple* (Bruxelles, E. Blondiau, 1893), 30.

(Khnopff also designed illustrations for the front and back covers.)

Translation:

English Art

English art seems to be the most interesting at the moment.

At international exhibitions we feel surprised in the presence of an essential and original force in the halls of Great Britain.

The traces of influences, although many and varied, are soon forgotten; because, if English artists are the most cosmopolitan of artists, the great power of assimilation is one of the most typical sides of the English character.

Seeing things from an elevated perspective, one may say that in the great movement of civilization which came from the southeast, from India, and headed towards the northwest, after passing through Asia-Minor, Greece, Italy and France, the time has arrived for the English to be the strongest.

But it should be noted also that in England everything happens more “directly.” The Government is not charged to train artists and support them. The art which exists there has a reason for its existence, and does not suffer from the plague of the French school: the Museum painting. This bastard, unnecessary, cumbersome production, whose sole purpose is to fill the Salon with such a large panel for the Palace of Industry, and the State, ultimately responsible for its execution, feels obliged to buy it to cover the walls of some provincial Museum,—itself constructed, moreover, to house the manifestations of this monumental art in its chambers.

In England, on the contrary, works of art of all kinds have an immediate destination.

English art is integral to English life and this is its strength.

Fernand Khnopff

« A Propos d'Hamlet, » *l'Art moderne*, 1, 13 (janvier 1, 1893), 4-5.

[This is the earliest record of Khnopff speaking on Hamlet; see also the transcriptions of his lectures on "Hamlet in England" and "Hamlet in Frankreich" in *Die Zeit* in 1899.]

« A Propos d'Hamlet »

M. FERNAND KHNOPFF, des *XX*, a fait le 23 décembre au *Cercle artistique* de Bruxelles, et le mardi suivant au *Cercle artistique* de Gand, une conférence très documentée dans laquelle il a mis la précision et le vouloir qui caractérisent ses tableaux.

Après avoir parlé de la bibliographie shakespearienne et rappelé les ouvrages de l'évêque Wadworth, de lord Campbell, de Blades, R. Smith, Thorns, Paterson, etc., le peintre-conférencier a fait l'histoire du paradoxe baconien, inventé par Miss Delia Bacon et repris par le juge Holmes aux Etats-Unis et par William Smith et Mrs. Pollen Angleterre.

Il a décrit le théâtre « Le Globe » où *Hamlet* a été joué pour la première fois. Puis, après avoir cité Miss Marriott et Mlle. Lerou, il a défini la suite des acteurs qui ont joué le rôle d'Hamlet depuis le créateur Richard Burbage jusqu'à M. Beerbohm-Tree, en passant par Taylor, Hart, Betterton, Garrick, Kemble, Kean, Fechter et Irving.

De là, en parlant du rôle d'Ophélie et de Mrs. Giddons [sic—Siddons], la sœur de John Kemble, il a décrit en artiste délicat et perspicace le portrait que fit d'elle Gainsborough et qui est à la *National Gallery*:

« La grande actrice est représentée de trois-quarts, assise, devant un fond rouge, qui vient de Van Dyck mais s'est acidulé en passant sur une palette anglaise.

Le visage est clair, le regard dominateur, la lèvre charnue. L'inclinaison du grand chapeau noir découvre une masse de cheveux poudrés, presque une aile à la tempe; et des boucles descendent devant les épaules.

Au cou, un ruban noir souligne la longue mâchoire.

Un fichu bleu, d'un bleu anglais translucide et lointain, et combien diffèrent du bleu français de Lesueur, opaque et toujours trop près: un fichu, croisé sur la poitrine, se continue en de larges rubans, bleus aussi.

Les mains, près d'un manchon qu'elle lient sur les genoux.

Autour du bras, une sorte d'écharpe drapée, vieil or, et le costume même, d'un blanc verni, rayé légèrement de bleu, a quelque chose de marin.

Ce portrait est bien anglais et représente un type bien anglais aussi; ce que, honni soit qui mal y pense, on pourrait nommer la femme objet d'art. »

M. Fernand Khnopff a parlé des acteurs du continent : Rouvière, Rossi et Mounet-Sully; de la légende de l'écriteau-décor de Skakespeare [sic] (légende qui doit être, une fois

pour toutes, reculée), et a cité plusieurs auteurs, dont Oscar Wilde, qui prouvent que la mise en scène de ce temps était déjà fort compliquée.

Il a terminé en analysant et en lisant quelques passages de l'*Hamlet* de Jules Laforgue, l'une des plus belles et des plus impressionnantes de ces *Moralités légendaires* qui demeureront—tant pis pour ceux qui ne les comprennent pas—l'honneur de la littérature contemporaine.

« A Propos d'Hamlet, » *l'Art moderne*, 1, 13 (janvier 1, 1893), 4-5.

This is the earliest record of Khnopff speaking on Hamlet; see also the transcriptions of his lectures on "Hamlet in England" and "Hamlet in Frankreich" in *Die Zeit* in 1899.

Translation:

"Concerning Hamlet"

Mr. FERNAND KHNOPFF, of the *XX* [les Vingt], gave a well-documented lecture on December 23 at the *Cercle artistique* [art club] of Brussels, and the following Tuesday at the *Cercle artistique* in Ghent, to which he brought the precision and will that characterizes his paintings.

After speaking about the Shakespearean bibliography and recalling the works of Bishop Wadworth, Lord Campbell, Blades, R. Smith, Thorns, Paterson, etc., the painter-speaker gave the history of the Baconian paradox, conceived by Miss Delia Bacon and taken up by Judge Holmes in the United States and by William Smith and Mrs. Pollen in England.

He described the "Globe" theatre where *Hamlet* was played for the first time. Then, after quoting Miss Marriott and Miss. Lerou, he defined the rest of the actors who played the role of Hamlet from the creator Richard Burbage up to Mr. Beerbohm-Tree, passing by Taylor, Hart, Betterton, Garrick, Kemble, Kean, Fechter and Irving.

Then speaking of the role of Ophelia and Mrs. Giddons [sic - Siddons], the sister of John Kemble, he described the delicate and insightful artist, whose portrait by Gainsborough is now in the *National Gallery*:

"The great actress is represented in three-quarter view, sitting in front of a red background which comes from Van Dyck, but is made sharper by passing through an English palette.

The face is clear, the look dominant, the lips fleshy. The tilt of her large black hat reveals a mass of powdered hair, almost like a wing at her temple; and her curls fall in front of her shoulders.

At her neck, a black ribbon highlights her long jaw.

A blue scarf, a translucent and distant English blue, so much different from Lesueur's French blue, opaque and always too close: the scarf is crossed on the chest, and continues in wide ribbons, also blue.

Her hands are near a muff that links them to her knees.

Around one arm, a kind of draped scarf of old gold, and her glazed white, lightly striped, blue suit has something of the sea.

This portrait is certainly English and also represents an English type; that is, *honni soit qui mal y pense* [shame on those who think badly of it], one could call the woman an object of art."

Mr. Fernand Khnopff spoke of the players in the continent: Rouvière, Rossi and Mounet-Sully; of the legend of the sign-decor of Skakespeare [sic] (a legend which must be, once for all, withdrawn), and quoted several writers, including Oscar Wilde, who prove that the staging of this time was already very complicated.

He finished analyzing and reading some passages of the *Hamlet* of Jules Laforgue, one of the most beautiful and the most impressive of these *Moralités légendaires* [Moral Tales] which will remain—too bad for those who do not understand it—the pride of contemporary literature.

« Conférence de M. Fernand Khnopff à La Maison du Peuple, » *l'Art moderne*, 13, 49 (3 décembre 1893), 389.

A La Maison du Peuple
Conférence de M. Fernand Khnopff.

Inauguration de l'année nouvelle par une conférence de M. Fernand Khnopff sur les trois gothiques flamands : Jean Van Eyck, Jean Memling, Quentin Metzys.

M. Khnopff, dont l'art s'apparente bien plus avec celui des maitres du XVe siècle qu'avec celui des maitres du XVIIe siècle, a parlé avec simplicité et précision de leurs œuvres. Il les a décrites, appuyant sur leurs qualités foncières : le scrupule de la vérité et la naïveté de la vie. Il a cité un de leurs biographes, M. A.-J. Wauters, et un de leurs fervents attentifs et ingénieux, M. E. Demontegut. Son but n'a point été d'enguirlander les maitres gothiques de phrases laudatives, mais de les montrer uniquement pour les faire connaitre. Celui qui les connaitra, celui qui les pratiquera ne pourra ensuite se défendre de les aimer et de les louer en lui-même.

Au début de sa causerie M. F. Khnopff a insisté sur ce travers universel qui pousse tout le monde à parler d'art. Quand dans une réunion on parle science, la plupart se taisent. Dès qu'on aborde l'esthétique, il y a déluge d'avis et de discussions. L'art est pourtant aussi ardu à comprendre que la science et à ceux qui y sont étrangers il devrait imposer la même réserve.

La soirée s'est terminée par une série de projections photographiques : des Rubens, des Holbein, des Michel-Ange, des Velasquez, des Jordaens, des Millet ont défilé devant le publie.

Bonne soirée inauguratrice de la saison do concerts et de conférences qui s'ouvre.

« Conférence de M. Fernand Khnopff à La Maison du Peuple, » *l'Art moderne*, 13, 49 (3 décembre 1893), 389.

Translation:

At La Maison du Peuple
Lecture by M. Fernand Khnopff.

The new year was inaugurated with a lecture by Mr. Fernand Khnopff on three Flemish Gothic artists: Jan Van Eyck, Hans Memling, Quentin Metsys.

Mr. Khnopff, whose own art is much more akin to that of the masters of the 15th century than with that of the masters of the 17th century, spoke of their works with simplicity and precision. He described them, underscoring their essential qualities: scrupulous truth and the naivety of life. He cited one of their biographers, Mr. A.-J. Wauters, and one of their attentive and ingenious enthusiasts, Mr. E. Demontegut. His aim was not to garland the Gothic masters with laudatory phrases, but to present them and make them known. One who knows them, one who practices like them, cannot keep himself from loving and praising them.

At the beginning of his talk Mr. F. Khnopff insisted on the universal drive that pushes everyone to talk about art. When the discussion in a meeting is about science, most are silent. As soon as aesthetics are addressed, there is a flood of opinions and discussions. Art, however, is equally difficult to understand as science, and one should impose the same reserve on those who are strangers to it.

The evening ended with a series of photographic projections: works of Rubens, Holbein, Michelangelo, Velasquez, and Jacob Jordaens, and Millet were scrolled before the public.

A good inaugural evening for the coming season of concerts and lectures.

1894

Khnopff, Fernand, “Some English Art Works at La Libre Esthétique,” *The Studio*, 3, 13 (April 1894), 32.

Some English Art Works At The “Libre Esthétique,” At Brussels. By Fernand Khnopff.



The portrait of the Marchioness of Granby, by G. F. Watts, R.A., is the work which dominates the entire exhibition. Placed upon an easel before a bronze-green background, it appears, in its frame of gold, as a superb jewel. The blues of the robe and the blues of the mountains against which is posed the pale head with blond hair, form a harmonious *ensemble*, of a richness without parallel. The sending of George Frampton, the new A.R.A, is numerous and varied; a bust, *Mysteriarch*; two bas-reliefs, *Vision* and *St. Christina*, which have both been reproduced in THE STUDIO; a very interesting tetra-cotta study for a portrait, and a fragment of a coloured frieze. All of these are full of curious research; cleverly presented, and, above all, modelled in a scholarly and delicate fashion. I would cite only as an example, the eye in the bas-relief *Vision*, and the little angel-musicians which are placed on each side of this bas-relief.



The Glasgow school is represented by a portrait by D. Cameron, broadly posed, and by a landscape, by J. R. Murray—two canvases of value, which are painted in the subdued brown coloration affected by this group of Scotch artists. It is with the most lively admiration that connoisseurs are arrested before the beautiful books of William Morris—*The Defence of Guinevere*, *The History of Troy*, and *A Dream of John Ball*, of which the frontispiece has been designed with such distinction by Sir Edward Burne-Jones. One recognises in them the perfection of quality; and the first appearance of these works of the Kelmscott Press before the Brussels public, one can truly say, has been a real triumph. In the same case are placed the charming editions of Elkin Mathews and John Lane, where one meets with the names of such masters of black and white as Walter Crane, Laurence Housman, Charles Ricketts, and J. Illingworth Kay; and not far from these are the illustrations which Aubrey Beardsley has imagined with such

subtlety for the *Salome* of Oscar Wilde. These are of strange invention, of refined ornament, and of a rare finish of execution. Further, upon the walls of this room, one especially remarks the large lithographs composed for the Fitzroy Picture Society.

F. K.

Khnopff, Fernand, « Conférence au Cercle artistique de Walter Crane, » *L'Art Moderne*, 14, 52 (30 décembre 1894), 412-413.

Walter Crane
Conference de M. Fernand Khnopff.

M. Fernand Khnopff a fait dernièrement au Cercle artistique une conférence très applaudie sur Walter Crane. En voici la conclusion :

..... Cette fête de Flore, ce cortège de fleurs du printemps à l'hiver, c'est le joyau le plus rare de ce trésor d'imaginations ; c'est de toutes ses œuvres, en un mot, celle où Walter Crane apparaît le plus subtil et comme poète et comme peintre.

Et c'est ainsi que procède cette marche des fleurs :

Jouant de la double flûte et s'inclinant en une gaie révérence, un jeune homme, parmi le vol des hirondelles et des pétales épars, précède la reine Flore.

La Reine s'avance ; toute gracieuse, vêtue d'amples et transparentes draperies qui sont comme des ailes aux bras et des flots a ses pieds. D'un long sceptre vert, elle dirige le chœur.

Et des enfants la suivent, a peine éveillés encore, mais s'animant bien vite aux fanfares aigues des Jonquilles casquées de cuivre.

Ensuite, dans un groupe plus paisible et d'allure un peu campagnarde, la Primevère et la Violette, aimables de grâce, provinciale.

Puis, l'Aubépine ; un héraut d'armes, tout éperonné d'acier noir et empanache de blanc. Il marche devant la Couronne impériale que portent des pages, sous les flamboyantes oriflammes des Tulipes, pendant que sonnent les cloches bleues des Jacinthes. À leurs côtes les Iris héraldiques ; des pennons altièrement tenus droits par de fiers cavaliers coiffes a la florentine. Et dans les chanfreins et les selles, il y a des aspects de la fleur-sceptre, de pourpre violette ou jaune d'or.

Après la douce Marguerite, les Muguets ; des jeunes filles pales et délicates qui se drapent frileusement dans leur souple manteau vert, et d'un geste d'enfant courbent leur carillon minuscule.

D'autres passent encore. La Pivoine pompeuse, très Louis XIVe, et l'Ancolie, chère a Pisanello. La Rose, reine d'amour, aux gestes descendants de femme trop grande, d'une lourde volupté. Le Myosotis, frêle, et le Lis blanc, pur. Le gracile enlacement du Liseron et la massive opulence du Tournesol.

Puis, paraissent des dames somptueusement vêtues de brocarts oranges que décorent les Chrysanthèmes de leurs cassures allongées de paraphes.

Et, à la fin du cortège, vient une dernière fleur, la Rose de Noel, la plus exquise de toutes. Alanguie ; longue et souple ; la tête, aux traits affines et aux grands yeux rêveurs, la tête penchée sous la coiffe ouverte de pétales nacres ; les bras languissamment

étendus, gantes jusqu'au coude; le corps s'abandonnant, dans sa cambrure indifférente, sous le contact de la soyeuse robe verte. Un vert de plante d'eau, glauque, avec des bords brunis par la dissolution aqueuse.

Cette Rose de Noel est une des plus adorables créations de Walter Crane, ou plus exactement, c'est un des types le mieux exprimes de l'Anglaise esthétique, de l'Anglaise de la période du Paon, comme on dit a Kensington.

Walter Crane n'a que rarement tente de représenter l'Anglaise actuelle; plus attentive à Chicago qu'à Florence; absolue impératrice de la Mode; impérieuse et exclusive dans son goût qu'elle n'inquiète pas d'érudition. Mais il a composé, d'autre part, quelques figures qui représentent parfaitement l'apparence et la psychologie de cette Anglaise esthétique.

Les Esthétiques avaient été la suite des Préraphaélites. Ceux-ci, réunis en un groupe exclusif, avaient vécu dans une atmosphère artistique presque artificielle, et c'est ce goût de l'artificiel qu'après eux avaient cultive les esthétiques; mettant tout leur effort a ce composer la vie d'impression d'art et de cela seulement ».

La mode s'en mêla. Il y eut des imitations obtuses et des affectations ridicules; c'est vrai. Mais qu'importe cela, si l'on a vécu, ne fut-ce qu'un instant, l'espoir et la vision d'un charme prolonge et d'une grâce infinie.

> « Les songes sont des mensonges, dit un vieux proverbe; mais lorsque la dernière heure arrive et qu'il reste seulement pour ce de trop rares minutes de ce qui fut nous, d'obscures clartés ce devant les yeux que l'ombre gagne, qui dira le signe qui vous ce distingue, o souvenirs de la vie vécue, o mirages de la vie rêvée. »

Cette phrase de P. Bourget pourrait être l'épigraphe de cette œuvre si belle, anglaise aussi, *The Golden Stairs*, (l'Escalier d'or), de sir Edward Burne-Jones.

Comme nos souvenirs, fragiles et précieux, au cours de l'existence, ces idéales créatures de jeunesse et de beauté descendent, toutes, les marches inévitables.

Au début, insouciantes et rieuses; puis, l'une d'elles, inquiète déjà, contient du doigt les sonorités possibles de la longue et fine trompette d'argent. Et les tètes s'inclinent ou se redressent, et les mouvements doux multiplient, encore, les plis des crêpes frissonnants.

Elles descendent; et, au tournant des marches, au milieu, la passion contenue qu'exprime un chant de violon.

Ensuite, un glissement métallique de fines cymbales de cuivre évoque les teintes d'or triste et de pourpre fanée des couchers du soleil en automne.

Elles se détournent déjà et s'éloignent peu à peu. Mais, avant de pénétrer dans la salle imposante où se prolonge une colonnade sombre et massive, la dernière jeune fille s'arrête; elle retourne la tête pour la dernière fois et donne un sourire d'adieu.

Les songes sont des mensonges, dit-on; mais lorsque passe l'heure dernière et qu'il ne reste, devant les yeux que l'ombre lentement dévore, que de vagues lueurs de ce qui fut notre existence; pourquoi vous séparer encore, ô souvenirs vécus, ô mirages rêvés?

Note: Khnopff was discussing *Flora's Feast: A Masque of Flowers* (London, Paris, Melbourne: Cassell and Co., 1889) by Walter Crane (1845-1915).



Walter Crane: *Flora's Feast: A Masque of Flowers,* 1889

Khnopff, Fernand, « Conférence au Cercle artistique de Walter Crane, » *L'Art Moderne*, 14, 52 (30 décembre 1894), 412-413.

Translation :

Walter Crane
Lecture by Mr. Fernand Khnopff.

Mr. Fernand Khnopff recently delivered a highly acclaimed lecture on Walter Crane to the Cercle artistique. Here is the conclusion:

... This festival of flora, the procession of flowers from spring to winter, is the rarest jewel in the treasure of imagination; of all his works it is, in a word, where Walter Crane appears most subtle as poet and painter.

And so this march of the flowers proceeds:

Playing a double flute and bowing in cheerful reverence, a young man surrounded by a flight of swallows and a shower of petals precedes Queen Flora.

The Queen comes forward; full of grace, wearing loose, transparent draperies that hang on her arms like wings and flow to her feet. With a long green scepter, she directs the choir.

Children follow, still sleepy, but animatedly blowing sharp fanfares on daffodils and helmeted with copper.

Then, in a more peaceful group with a bit of rustic allure, Primrose and Violet, graceful and kind, provincial.

Then, Hawthorn; a Herald, all armored in black steel and decorated with white. He walks before the Imperial Crown carried by pages under the flaming banners of Tulips, while the blue bells of the Hyacinths sound. Alongside them the heraldic Iris; pennants held high by of proud cavaliers coiffed in Florentine style. And in the shaffrons [armored head guards of the horses] and the saddles, there are aspects of the flower-scepter, purple violet or yellow gold.

After the sweet Daisy [Marguerite], the Lily of the Valley; young girls pale and delicate who wrap themselves in their supple green coats against the cold, and with a childish gesture bend their tiny chimes.

Others continue to pass. The pompous Peony, very Louis XIVth, and Columbine, dear to Pisanello. The Rose, Queen of love, with exaggerated female gestures and a heavy sensuality. Forget-Me-Not, frail; and white Lily, pure. The graceful embrace of Morning Glory and the massive opulence of the Sunflower.

Then appear the lady Chrysanthemums, sumptuously dressed in orange brocades and ornate fringes like a signature.

And, at the end of the procession, comes a final flower, the Christmas Rose, the most exquisite of all. Weary; tall and supple; head with refined features and the wide eyes of a dreamer, the head leaning under the radiant coiffe of pearly petals; arms languidly outstretched, gloved to the elbow; the body indulging in an indifferent slouch under the silky green robe. The murky green of a water plant with edges browned by the aqueous dissolution.

This Christmas Rose is one of the most adorable creations of Walter Crane, or more accurately, it is one of the best expressed types of the aesthetic Englishwoman, the Englishwoman of the period of the Peacock, as they say in Kensington.

Walter Crane has only rarely tried to represent the current English woman; more attentive to Chicago than Florence; absolute Empress of fashion; imperious and exclusive in her taste which is undisturbed by erudition. However, he has composed a few figures that perfectly represent the appearance and the psychology of this aesthetic English woman.

The Aesthetes came after the Pre-Raphaelites. They [the Pre-Raphaelites], formed an exclusive group and lived in an almost artificial artistic atmosphere, and it is this taste for the artificial that was cultivated by the later Aesthetes; putting all their effort into "composing a life based on artistic sensation and that alone."

The mode is uneven. It is true that there were obtuse imitations and ridiculous affectations. But this is of no importance if one has experienced, if only for a moment, the hope and vision of a prolonged charm and infinite grace.

> "Dreams are lies," says an old proverb; but when the last hour arrives and there remain only these too rare minutes to that which was us, with vague clarities before the eyes that shadow will conquer, what sign will distinguish, o memories of the life lived, o mirages of the dream life.

This sentence of P. Bourget could be the epigraph of this beautiful artwork, also English, *The Golden Stairs* by Sir Edward Burne-Jones.

Like our memories, fragile and precious over the course of our existence, these ideal creatures of youth and beauty all descend the inevitable steps.

At first, carefree and laughing; then, one of them, already concerned, fingers the possible sounds of the long and fine silver trumpet. And the heads bend or straighten, and gentle movements increase, again, the shivering folds of their garments.

They descend; and, turning their steps, in the middle, the contained passion expressed in a song of the violin.

Then a metallic *glissando* of fine copper cymbals evokes the sad golden tints and hues of faded purple of sunsets in the autumn.

They begin to turn and go away little by little. But, before entering the imposing chamber where a dark and massive colonnade extends, the last girl stops; she turns her head back for the last time and gives a smile of farewell.

Dreams are lies, it is said; but when the last hour passes and nothing remains before the eyes but the slowly devouring shadow, and vague glimmerings of what was our existence; why separate you again, o memories of life, o mirages of the dream?

1895

Khnopff, Fernand, "The Revival of Ivory Carving in Belgium," *The Studio*, 4, 32 (February 1895), 150-151.

The Revival of Ivory Carving In Belgium. By Fernand Khnopff.

The Brussels Art Club (*Le Cercle Artistique de Bruxelles*) recently conceived the excellent idea of giving an adequate reception to the chryselephantine sculptures which figured in the International Exhibition at Antwerp—rather as products of the Congo than *objets d'art*. At the Brussels Club these works, placed on pedestals carved in wood, or draped in sombre velvet, stood out in relief against a sumptuous background of magnificent tapestries, epic in style and exquisite in colour. When thus exhibited these delicate examples of a revived art might be admired as they deserved. Glass cases covered the ivories to prevent them from yellowing; for this beautiful material soon loses its brilliancy and whiteness on coming into contact with air and dust. A clever ivory turner of Copenhagen, Spengler, realised that it was sufficient to encase the ivory under glass hermetically sealed and to expose it to the rays of the sun in order to give it an even more dazzling brilliancy.

When some months ago M. Van Estvelde [sic – Eetvelde], *secrétaire d'état* to the Congo Free State, invited Belgian sculptors to utilise the ivory which came to Antwerp in great quantities, his suggestion was received with enthusiasm, and this revival in Belgium of chryselephantine sculpture found at once many supporters.

The more enterprising sculptors had their names registered, in order to secure picked sections of ivory, in which the grain is more compact and tougher than in the Indian variety, and the dimensions more suitable for statues; in fact, some of the exhibits reached unusual proportions, being given the magnitude of the great African elephant's tusks. The artists set to work, and by the month of May the public were enabled to see at the first Exhibition of the *Société des Beaux Arts* at Brussels, the charming bust *Psyche*, of M. Paul de Vigne; and shortly afterwards, at the Antwerp Exhibition in the Congo section, a collection of works varying in interest—signed Vinçotte, Samuel, Dillens, de Rudder, de Tombay, Craco, Dupon, Van Beurden, Wolfers, Lagae, and Jespers.

The *Psyche* of M. Paul de Vigne is a little winged bust nicely poised on marble. The general effect is exquisite, because the strong, detailed colouring of the marble accentuates the calm, serene quality of the ivory, and the thin wings have a golden transparency which shows up the broad, free modelling of the head. This is indeed great sculpture. But out of all the exhibits, that of M. Samuel (the sculptor of the De Costa monument, reproduced in the November STUDIO)—the elegant statuette of *Fortune*—is the only one expressly composed for ivory. The artist has turned to admirable account

the shape of the tusk he was working on, without straining in any way the gesture of the figure or fall of the drapery. The Horn of Plenty so daintily uplifted is of silver and gold, which enhances greatly the radiant whiteness of the flesh.



"Psyche" An Ivory Bust by P. De Vigne | "Fortune" an Ivory Statuette by M. Samuel

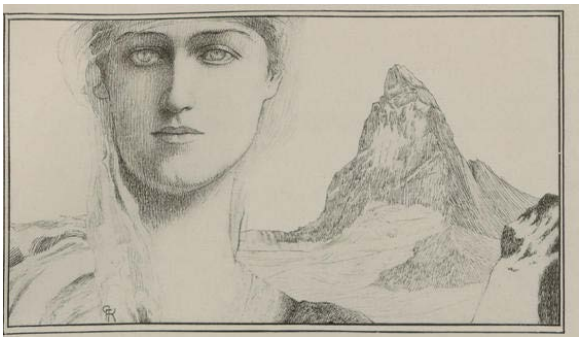
The Exhibition was a real success. Almost all the works were purchased, and many found their way to England. This renascence of ivory sculpture in Belgium will not appear extraordinary to any who know the amount of interesting work that was once produced in Flanders. The name *maître d'ivoirerie* was given to François Duquesnoy, known as Francois Flamand, whose works are remarkable for the boldness of pose, the *morbidesse* of the flesh tints, and that breadth or touch which gives life and breath to his figures of women and children. Jérôme Duquesnoy is equally celebrated. François Van Bossuyt, of Brussels, after long sojourn and serious study at Rome, returned to his native place and executed those figures of his so distinguished for their scholarly grace. "Just at this time," writes M. Albert Jacquemart in his History of Furniture, "John of Bologna and his pupils made ivory-work famous; and this pliable medium lending itself more than any other to flexible realism, the ivory workers began to follow the style of the Rubens school, and this style is so individual that *virtuosi* classify most of these works under the name of Flemish ivories. Certain facts give, moreover, an historic value to this classification. Louis XIV summoned Gerard van Opstal from Antwerp, and after commissions for beautiful ivories had been carried out, had him admitted to the Paris Academy of Sculpture and Painting." The Louvre possesses valuable pieces by this artist, and you can see at the *Musée du Cinquantenaire* at Brussels his celebrated group of the *Three Graces*, full of vigour and suppleness. One must not forget to mention the name of Lucas Faidherbe of Malines, and, indeed, many others, to say nothing of the "fathers of the craft," such as Jean Lebraellier, mentioned in the inventory of Charles V. of France, as having carved "two splendid great pictures in ivory of the *Three Maries*;" or Berthelot Heliot, *varlet de chambre* to Duke Philip le Hardy, who, according to Amyot Arnaut's accounts for 1392-1393 received 500 *livres, "pour deux grand tableaux d'ivoire a ymaiges, dont l'un d'yceux est la Passion de Notre-Seigneure et l'autre la vie de Monsieur St. Jean-Baptiste."*

The sculpturesque use of ivory in Belgium is simply then the resumption of a tradition; owing to the huge consignments from Africa, the Belgians find themselves in a position similar to that of the Dieppe people in the fifteenth century. But, at the present

moment, when great artists are interested in minor arts, and considerable efforts are made in the interests of applied art, let us hope that this beautiful material, at once so soft and chaste, may no longer be utilised for perpetrating things in a deplorable or ridiculous taste, as it has been too frequently and for too long a period.

Khnopff, Fernand, « Le Sommet, » *Pan*, 3, (September-October-November 1895), n.p.
Poem by Khnopff, with drawing.

Le Sommet



Fernand Khnopff: *Le Sommet*, in *Pan*, 1895

Superbe, dans sa forme écrasent et rigide,
Se dresse le Sommet. Aussi fier qu'indolent
Il regard passé l'Heure: un fleuve si lent
Ou les serpents tordus de la cuirasse Egide.

Devant le ciel rose, devant l'amas turgide
Des blancs nuages ou le midi violent
Devant l'or et le doux sang du soir opulent
Ou triste, toujours il est demeuré frigide.

Sous le rayonnement des astres fastueux
Dont le course est sans fin, ses flancs majestueux
S'éclairent un moment, et son albe guipure.

Mais après ce reflet qui disparait, lassé,
Le roc est aussi sombre et la neige aussi pure.
Ah! pouvoir admirer, impassible et glacé.

Khnopff, Fernand, « Le Sommet, » *Pan*, 3, (September-October-November 1895), n.p.
Poem by Khnopff, with drawing.

Translation:

The Summit

Superb, in its rigid and overwhelming form,
Rises the Summit. As proud as it is indolent
It watches the Hour pass: a stream so slow
Or the twisted serpents of the Aegis shield.

Before the rosy sky, before the turgid mass
the white clouds or the violent noon
Before the gold and the sweet blood of the evening opulent
Or sad, always it has remained frigid.

Beneath the rays of the luxurious stars
Whose courses are without end, its majestic flanks
And its white lace are illuminated for a moment.

But after the reflection which disappears, weary,
The rock is equally somber and the snow equally pure
Ah! to be able to admire, impassive and frozen.

(Fernand Khnopff), (Extracts of a letter sent from Fosset to an unknown recipient), in *Amsler & Ruthardt's Wochenberichte: illustrierte Zeitschrift für Kunst, Kunsthandel und Kunstgewerbe*, Berlin, 3, no. 40 (August 31, 1895), 280.

Extracts of Letter

Dieser kleinen biographischen Skizze, die wir zum grössten Theil einem Brief entnehmen, den uns der Künstler im vergangenen Jahr aus seiner Sommerfrische Fosset (Provinz Luxemburg) sandte, seien noch ein paar Worte hinzugefügt, mit welchen er die Art seines Arbeitens selbst charakterisiert:

„*Die Komposition meiner Werke geht sehr langsam vorwärts, ganz wie im Traum, ohne Skizzen und Entwürfe, die oft ganz zufällige Wirkungen ergeben. Schwer kann ich sagen, wenn ich mich in ein Werk hineingearbeitet habe, was mir die erste Anregung zu demselben gab. Vergeblich habe ich versucht, auf den Anfangspunkt zurückzugehen— stets kommt ein Moment, wo die Spur verschwindet! Ich sehe in der Einbildung in eine künstliche Welt, und allmählich, ganz langsam, wird das, was dort vorgeht, zur bestimmten Wirklichkeit! Dann fange ich an, dass Bild auszuführen und suche eifrig nach solchen in der Wirklichkeit existierenden Dingen, die am meisten mit den erträumten Dingen übereinstimmen. An künstlerische Ziele und Zwecke in der Darstellung und in der Technik meiner Werke denke ich wenig. Ich male, weil ich nichts Anderes thun kann, weil ich fühle, dass es meine Bestimmung ist, zu malen*.''

(Fernand Khnopff), (Extracts of a letter sent from Fosset to an unknown recipient), in *Amsler & Ruthardt's Wochenberichte: illustrierte Zeitschrift für Kunst, Kunsthandel und Kunstgewerbe*, Berlin, 3, no. 40 (August 31, 1895), 280.

Translation:

Extracts of Letter

This brief biographical sketch, which we have taken for the most part from a letter the artist sent us last year from his summer retreat in Fosset (province of Luxembourg), in which he characterizes his way of working:

"The composition of my works goes very slowly forward, completely like in a dream, without sketches and designs, which often give very random effects. It is difficult for me to say when I have completed a work what gave me the first inspiration for it. In vain I have tried to go back to the starting point—but there always comes a moment where the track disappears! I see in my imagination an artificial world, and gradually, very slowly, that which is found there becomes a distinct reality! Then I begin to render that image and search eagerly in reality for such things that most closely match the dream things. I think little of artistic goals and objectives in the representation and in the technique of my works. I paint because I can do nothing else, because I feel that it is my destiny to paint."

F. K., “Studio-Talk. Brussels,” *The Studio*, 6, no. 31 (October 1895), 55-56.

BRUSSELS.—The downfall of the Book has been predicted in many a newspaper and magazine article, and there have been those who have prophesied the same fate for the Picture and the Statue. Nevertheless the fact remains that there exists a tendency to limit no longer the possibilities of art to a certain fixed groove, but to extend its gracious influence far and wide. The interiors of our houses have unquestionably improved, and we feel a desire that their outsides shall be beautiful also. It is not enough nowadays to occupy sumptuous apartments, furnished both in form and in colour with all possible taste; as we step out of our house we expect to find that taste continued in the streets.

At one time—for there is nothing new under the sun—this *coquetterie des rues* was shown in numerous works of art, such as fountains, street signs (*enseignes*), clocks, door-knockers and a hundred other things, insignificant at first sight, but yet indispensable as aids to artistic expression and the development of a cultivated taste. Then it occurred to some one to restart the movement, and when several artists had made up their minds to give practical realisation to that which had been vaguely longed for by all, they were met with the warmest encouragement. A society was started, “L’Œuvre de l’art appliqué à la Rue,” and one of its first movements was the organisation of a competition for *enseignes* for one of the chief streets of Brussels. It must be admitted, however, that the result was not equal to expectations. There are many varieties of these signs—frescoes, ceramics, plaster, glass, enamelled iron, and especially beaten iron-work—but very few of them harmonise with the façades they are designed to adorn, or with the particular trade they are intended to symbolise.

What this first competition proved above all was that art demands continuous effort, whether in its humblest or its most ambitious demonstrations; that neither the one nor the other can be improvised; and that to produce a beautiful signboard, no less than to paint a beautiful picture, both knowledge and taste are required.

The great artistic event of the month of September in Belgium was the opening of the triennial Salon, which is held on alternate years at Brussels and Antwerp and Ghent. This year it was the turn of Ghent, whose exhibition is, all round, the most attractive of the three, the interest being largely divided in Brussels among the various private exhibitions, while the Antwerp Salon is chiefly of local importance. This year the press has unanimously proclaimed the success of the Ghent exhibition, which, as one journal remarked, “shows real progress.in management and display, as compared with former official Salons.”

F. K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 6, 32 (November 1895), 124-125.

BRUSSELS.—Following the example of the “Société des XX” (or Twenty Club), who were the first to put statuary and the applied arts on a place of equality with pictures in their exhibitions, the committee of the Ghent *salon* have set apart one entire room in a central position for the display of works of applied art. As this is quite an innovation so far as the Belgian official *salons* are concerned, the fact is worthy of mention. It happens, unfortunately, that many of the works exhibited at Ghent are already familiar, having been on view either at Brussels or Liège, but some there are which may well be seen again, and others, quite new, are not wanting. The furniture pieces by M. Serrurier-Bovy, of Liège, always interesting, are not quite so successful as usual this year; they strike one as angular in form and loud in colouring. The creations of M. Hobé, of Brussels, on the other hand, display a much quieter taste. There is plenty of bronze work. MM. Alexandre Charpentier and Carabain, of Paris, and M. Paul Dubois, of Brussels, have sent specimens of much merit, in which their respective degrees of skill in invention and modeling are seen to full advantage. It must, however, be said that the essential, practical shape of the article is often disguised in a mass of over-elaborate ornamentation. M. Vallgreu’s little bronzes are always full of interest, if only for the rare ingenuity of their oxidations, as is the stamped work of M. Pierre Roche for its extreme delicacy. Remarkable ingenuity of composition is also seen in the bell-handle by M. F. M. Taubman (representing a horseman fighting a dragon), and in the plain bronze and ivory vase by M. Charles Samuel, illustrating the Temptation of Eve.

In addition to M. Delaherche’s well-known ceramics, with their lovely velvety blues, and those of MM. Dalpuyrat and Lebros, with their bold reds, not forgetting M. Bigot’s delicate harmonies in ochre and sky-blue, we have M. Finch’s varnished pottery, somewhat rusty-looking in its brown colouring, but with the merit of cheapness—- a recommendation which cannot be applied to the work previously mentioned. M. Tiffany’s glass is really lovely. This original and valuable work takes the most graceful shapes, while its greenish colouring, blending in extreme delicacy of material with others of equal charm, makes one think of fresh fruit. As a last word I must mention Mr. William Morris’s bibliographic treasures, with Sir E. Burne-Jones’s wonderful illustrations; the cases containing them are a never-ending source of delight to visitors at the gallery.

The society known as “Le Sillon,” composed of a group of young painters and sculptors, has just opened, within the precincts of the Brussels Museum, its third annual *salon,* which starts a series of minor winter exhibitions. Taken as a whole, the collection is, relatively speaking, well chosen, and free from the mass of studies, sketches, and more or less rough attempts peculiar to young artists’ displays. Sir Edward Burne-Jones is the only foreign painter who has been invited to exhibit, and he has sent some of his beautiful drawings, both pencil and red chalk (*à la sanguine),* wherein the delicate line suffices to convey feeling of far-away legendary art.

In the February number of THE STUDIO mention was made of a sort of renascence of ivory-carving in Belgium. This revival continues to hold its own, and it would seem as though natural ivory will soon take the place of the mechanically-treated bronze, which had come to be universally used whenever something more than a simple memorial medal was required.

By way of celebrating the completion of the restoration of the Maison du Roi, one of the architectural gems in the "Grande Place" of Brussels, an ivory statuette by M. Dillens has been presented to the architect, M. Jamaer. M. Vanderstappen is at present engaged in completing a very decorative figure of St. Michael in ivory and onyx, to be presented at an approaching ceremony of inauguration.

F. K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 6, 33 (December 1895), 185-186.

BRUSSELS.—Three years ago the Belgian Government commissioned the sculptors MM. Meunier and Van der Stappen to compose a series of decorative groups for the terraces of the Botanic Gardens at Brussels. Their work was confined to sketches on a reduced scale, the execution of the groups in their full size being left for other artists. A large number of these works are now finished, and one may hope that by next spring the several groups of fancy or symbolical figures will be ready to be placed in various parts of the Botanic Gardens. In the original scheme the small fountains which now disfigure the great terrace were to be replaced by fountains on a monumental scale; but by desire of the King, who has interested himself greatly in the undertaking, two pillar candelabra will take their place. These candelabra, which measure 5 ½ metres in height, were ordered from M. Rousseau, who has just completed them. One represents the Four Ages, and the other the Four Winds. In shape they are practically alike. On the plinth of the first are four delicately executed figures—a sleeping child, a pensive girl, a placid woman on thirty, and an old man meditating on the past. The shafts of the candelabra are ornamented with finely modeled flowers, and electric lights springing from the corollas hang at the end of the branches. The philosophic owl presides over the one, which the noisy parrot, with outstretched wings, is perched on the top of the other, at the base of which are the blowing winds, represented by figures full of character and expression.

M. André Hennebicq has just finished his picture, *L’Entrée de Marie de Bourgogne à Mons*, which is intended for the Chamber or the Provincial Council of Hainaut. The execution of this painting is specially interesting, in that the artist, wishing to give his work the dead tone or a fresco, plastered his canvas, in face of all the difficulties or this process, which requires great certainty of touch. All these obstacles have been successfully overcome, and, like the good water-colourist he is, M. Hennebicq has made use of the plaster whites in his scheme of colour.

An exhibition or works of Art was held recently at Termonde (Eastern Flanders), and proved very interesting, although they were confined to natives or inhabitants or the town. This little Flemish town has produced a great number of artists—especially painters—of remarkable variety.

F. K.

1896

Khnopff, Fernand, « Lettre de M. Fernand Khnopff, » (concerning l'Art applique à la Rue), *La Ligue Artistique*, March 22, 1896.

Lettre de M. Fernand Khnopff
Monsieur le Directeur;

Je répondrai le plus brièvement possible aux questions que vous avez bien voulu m'adresser.

1. Je ne suis pas membre de la Société de «l'Art appliqué à la Rue », et je ne sais quelle est l'orientation donnée à la direction de cette Société.

L'influence de l'« Œuvre « sur l'Art est encore nulle, heureusement. Quant à ses prétentions au monopole, elles sont absolument inadmissibles.

2. Je pense que les résultats obtenus jusqu'à ce jour, sont peu considérables. Ils consistent (sans compter de nombreux banquets) en un concours—un peu tapageur—d'enseignes et le placement—fort discret—sur les arcades de la place Royale de quelques arbustes qui n'étaient vraiment pas indispensables. Ce concours d'enseignes a, grâce à l'application de figures en haut-relief et autres accessoires plutôt encombrants, attiré l'attention des passants sur l'invraisemblable platitude architecturale de quelques pauvres pignons que personne n'avait eu jusqu'alors l'occasion de remarquer.

Ce concours a montré, aussi, que, au bout de quelques semaines, les peintures murales dites inaltérables peuvent être réduites a l'état de coulées de suie. Ces deux constatations ont couté très cher.

3. L'avenir? Comme CETTE œuvre n'a pas de raison d'être, elle disparaitra avec ce trop ingénieux organisateur qui a « élevé à la hauteur d'une institution » L'Art d'inviter et de recevoir des commissions.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Directeur, l'expression de mes sentiments les plus distingués.

FERNAND KHNOPFF

Khnopff, Fernand, « Lettre de M. Fernand Khnopff, » (concerning l'Art applique à la Rue), *La Ligue Artistique*, March 22, 1896.

Translation :

Letter of Mr. Fernand Khnopff

Mr. Director;

I will respond as briefly as possible to the questions that you have kindly addressed to me.

1. I am not a member of the society of "Art Applied to the Street," and I don't know what orientation is given by the management of the company. Influence of the "Œuvre" is still null, fortunately. [The full name of the organization was *l'Œuvre Nationale de l'Art applique à la Rue*.] As to their pretensions to monopoly, they are absolutely unacceptable.

2. I think that the results obtained so far have been of little significance. They are (not counting many banquets) a competition—a bit noisy—of signs and the placement—very discreet—on the arches of the Place Royale of some shrubs that were really not necessary. This competition of signs has, through the application of figures in high relief and other rather bulky accessories, attracted the attention of passersby on the incredible architectural platitudes of some poor gables that no one had until then the opportunity to notice. This competition showed, too, that, after a few weeks, that so-called unalterable murals can be reduced to the status of rivers of soot. These two findings were very expensive.

3. the future? As THIS work has no *raison d'être*, it will disappear with this too ingenious organizer that has "elevated to the height of an institution" the Art to invite and receive commissions.

Sincerely, Mr. Director,

Fernand Khnopff

Khnopff, Fernand, « Lettre de M. Fernand Khnopff, » (concerning l'Art applique à la Rue), *La Jeune Belgique*, 2nd series, 1, 14 (April 4, 1896), 95-96.
[same letter as above]

Lettre de M. Fernand Khnopff

Monsieur le Directeur;

Je répondrai le plus brièvement possible aux questions que vous avez bien voulu m'adresser.

1. Je ne suis pas membre de la Société de «l'Art appliqué à la Rue », et je ne sais quelle est l'orientation donnée à la direction de cette Société.

L'influence de l'« Œuvre » sur l'Art est encore nulle, heureusement. Quant à ses prétentions au monopole, elles sont absolument inadmissibles.

2. Je pense que les résultats obtenus jusqu'à ce jour, sont peu considérables. Ils consistent (sans compter de nombreux banquets) en un concours—un peu tapageur—d'enseignes et le placement—fort discret—sur les arcades de la place Royale de quelques arbustes qui n'étaient vraiment pas indispensables. Ce concours d'enseignes a, grâce à l'application de figures en haut-relief et autres accessoires plutôt encombrants, attiré l'attention des passants sur l'invraisemblable platitude architecturale de quelques pauvres pignons que personne n'avait eu jusqu'alors l'occasion de remarquer.

Ce concours a montré, aussi, que, au bout de quelques semaines, les peintures murales dites inaltérables peuvent être réduites à l'état de coulées de suie. Ces deux constatations ont couté très cher.

3. L'avenir? Comme CETTE œuvre n'a pas de raison d'être, elle disparaitra avec ce trop ingénieux organisateur qui a « élevé à la hauteur d'une institution » L'Art d'inviter et de recevoir des commissions.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Directeur, l'expression de mes sentiments les plus distingués.

FERNAND KHNOPFF

Khnopff, Fernand, "Réponse à la circulaire sur l'Art applique à la Rue," *L'Émulation*, mars 1896, 36.

[identical to the above two letters]

Khnopff, Fernand, “Lettre,” *La Ligue Artistique*, 3, 9 (May 3, 1896), 3.

Lettre

3 Avril 1896

Monsieur,

Dans ma réponse au referendum sur l’Œuvre Nationale de l’Art applique à la Rue, j’avais écrite : « Comme cette œuvre n’a pas de raison d’être, elle disparaitra avec ce trop ingénieux organisateur qui a élevé à la hauteur d’une institution l’art d’inviter et de recevoir des commissions. »

M. E. Broerman a cru, m’avez-vous dit, qu’il y avait la matière a équivoque et que « recevoir des commissions » pouvait se prendre aussi dans un sens peu honorable.

Pour dissiper l’équivoque,—c’est votre expression—veuillez, Monsieur, faire savoir à M. E. Broerman que j’ai fait allusion simplement aux réceptions de comités ou de commissions qui on été si copieusement annoncées au Public, dont je suis.

Ainsi que je l’ai écrit déjà, je ne suis pas membre de l’Œuvre de l’Art applique à la Rue. Y a-t-il été question de reçu ou de réception de commissions d’une autre espèce ?

Je n’en ai, du reste, ni le devoir, ni le temps, ni le goût.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur, l’expression de mes sentiments le plus distingués,

(S.) Fernand Khnopff

P.S.—Je serai, n’est pas, Monsieur, mis au courant de la publicité qui pourrait être donnée *à ma réponse a votre visite.*

Khnopff, Fernand, “Lettre,” *La Ligue Artistique*, 3, 9 (May 3, 1896), 3.

Translation:

Letter

April 3, 1896

Sir.

In my response to the referendum on *l’Œuvre Nationale de l’Art applique à la Rue*, I had written: “As this work has no *raison d’être*, it will disappear with this too ingenious organizer who raised to the level of an institution the art of inviting and receiving commissions.”

Mr. E. Broerman believed, you have told me, that there was something ambiguous in this, in that to “receive commissions” could also be taken in a slightly less honorable sense.

To dispel this ambiguity,—this is your phrase—please, Sir, make it known to Mr. E. Broerman that I have referred simply to the receptions of committees or commissions that were so copiously announced to the Public, of which I am part.

As I wrote already, I am not member of *l’Œuvre de l’Art applique à la Rue*. Is there a question of receipt or receipt of commissions of other sorts?

I have, moreover, neither the obligation, nor the time, nor the taste.

Please accept, Sir, the expression of my most distinguished feelings,

(S.) Fernand Khnopff

P.S. - I will be, is it not true, Sir, kept aware of the publicity that could be given *to my response to your visit.*

Cantel, Robert, “Au Sillon,” *La Jeune Belgique*, 2nd series, 1, 41 (Oct. 24, 1896), 333-334. (Summary of Khnopff’s lecture on William Morris)

Au Sillon

M. Fernand Khnopff a fait samedi dernier une fort intéressante conférence sur William Morris. Il a rappelé particulièrement le rôle artistique que joua Morris en Angleterre, examinant plus brièvement ses œuvres poétiques et sociologiques.

L’un des premiers, Morris comprit la nécessité de rénover l’art décoratif. Le caractère pratique des Anglais, leur sentiment inné de la vie intime, familiale et reposante devait faciliter considérablement la tâche des Ruskin, des Morris, des Burne-Jones et de tant d’autres; l’impulsion donnée par ces grands artistes répondaient à toutes les tendances de la race anglo-saxonne; l’imperfection des ameublements anglais d’il y a quarante ans rendait sensible la nécessité d’une réforme.

« Ce qui fit le succès immense de ce mouvement de rénovation de l’art appliqué en Angleterre, dit fort justement M. Khnopff, c’est que là plus qu’ailleurs, ce furent les plus grands artistes qui en prirent la direction.

Comprenant que pour régénérer une vie sociale artistique il fallait refaire de l’ouvrier un véritable artisan, au lieu de le laisser l’esclave des machines, les Ruskin et les Morris reprirent dans leurs fabriques, tout l’outillage ancien; la plus grande initiative devait être laissée à l’ouvrier ; bientôt cet outillage fut perfectionné, mis en rapport avec les besoins de notre civilisation actuelle. Car il faut, dans une pareille réforme, ne point tomber dans les excès qui ont fait la non-valeur artistique des tentatives de l’Ecole Saint-Luc; ici, au lieu de s’inspirer des principes fondamentaux qui guidèrent les grands architectes et les grands décorateurs du Moyen-Age et de la Renaissance, on s’est borné à copier servilement leurs œuvres, à cristalliser leurs formules; c’est le règne du poncif, ce n’est plus celui de l’art.

Appliquer l’art à la décoration, c’est harmoniser d’une manière parfaite tous les objets et, toutes les choses construites ou fabriquées par l’homme: il faut, donc pour réaliser cette harmonie, tenir compte de toutes les nécessités de la civilisation du moment. Comme l’a fait fort justement remarquer M. Gust. Le Bon, « la seule architecture vraiment sincère de nos jours est celle de la maison à cinq étages, du viaduc et de la gare de chemin de fer. Cet art utilitaire correspond aux besoins et aux idées de notre civilisation. Il est aussi caractéristique d’une époque que le fut jadis l’église gothique et le château féodal».

Détruire tout ce qu’il y avait de faux et d’artificiel dans l’art appliqué, le transformer en un art rationnel et pratique, tel fut le but des Anglais, qui sont près de l’avoir réalisé.

Sur le continent, l’on s’est borné à copier servilement leurs œuvres, sans les comprendre, sans en saisir les principes. M. Khnopff a fait avec une sévérité bien mérité, justice de ces tentatives informes, et des expériences des« Ligues pour l’exploitation du sentiment esthétique en Belgique» il a montré la nécessité d’une renaissance de l’art

appliqué, et a indiqué la mesure dans laquelle il importait de suivre dans ce but le système mis en pratique par les grands artistes de l'Angleterre.

ROBERT CANTEL

Cantel, Robert, “Au Sillon,” *La Jeune Belgique*, 2nd series, 1, 41 (Oct. 24, 1896), 333-334.
(Summary of Khnopff’s lecture on William Morris)

Translation:

Au Sillon [The Sillon, or The Furrow, was an art exhibition society in Brussels]

Mr. Fernand Khnopff delivered a very interesting lecture on William Morris last Saturday. He recalled especially the artistic role played by Morris in England, considering more briefly his poetic and sociological works.

Morris was one of the first to understood the need to renovate the decorative arts. The practical English, with their innate sense of familial and relaxing private life, must have significantly facilitated the task of Ruskin, Morris, Burne-Jones and many others. The momentum generated by these great artists fulfilled all the tendencies of the Anglo-Saxon race; the imperfection of the English furniture of forty years ago made it sensitive to the need for reform.

“What made the immense success of this movement of renovation of applied art in England, says Mr. Khnopff rightly, is that there more than elsewhere, it was the greatest artists who took the lead.

Understanding that to regenerate an artistic social life required that the worker be remade as a true craftsman, instead of leaving them to be the slave of machines, Ruskin and Morris restored all the old tools in their factories; [and emphasized that] the greatest initiative should be left to the worker; soon this equipment was perfected, and applied to the needs of our current civilization. Because it is necessary in such a reform, to avoid falling into the excesses that have made the artistic attempts of the École Saint-Luc without value; Here, instead of being guided by the fundamental principles that guided the great architects and the great decorators of the middle ages and the Renaissance, one wastes time slavishly copying their works, trying to crystallize their formulas; this is the reign of stenciling, not of art.

To apply art to decoration is to harmonize in a perfect way all objects, and all things built or manufactured by humans: therefore, to achieve this harmony, one must take into account all the necessities of the civilization of the time. As rightly pointed out by Mr. Gust. Le Bon, “the only really sincere architecture of today is the five story house, the viaduct and railway station. This utilitarian art corresponds to the needs and ideas of our civilization. It is also characteristic of an era that was once built the Gothic church and the feudal Castle.”

The goal of the English was to destroy everything that it was false and artificial in applied art, and to transform it into a rational and practical art, and they are close to having achieved it.

On the continent, one merely copies their works slavishly, without comprehending or understanding their principles. Mr. Khnopff, with well-deserved severity, gave justice to these clumsy attempts, and with the experience of the “Leagues for the Exploitation of the Aesthetic Feeling in Belgium” he showed the need for a renaissance of applied art, and indicated the extent in which it was important for this purpose to follow the system put into practice by the great artists of England.

ROBERT CANTEL

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 6, 34 (January 1896), 248-249.

BRUSSELS.—The English School of Artists has been very successful at the Ghent Exhibition, where, moreover, they were particularly well hung. Nearly all their works found admirers, and one picture indeed, was bought for the Brussels Museum. This was the *Dream of Twilight (Rêve de Crépuscule)* of Mr. Macaulay Stevenson, of Glasgow, whose previous exhibits at the Société des Beaux Arts had attracted considerable attention.

At the close of the Ghent Salon a large number of pictures were, by special request, sent to the Exhibition of the “Cercle des XIII.,” at Antwerp, where one may now see the very original *Enchanted Forest (Forét Enchantée)*, by William Stott, of Oldham, the *Ravens* of Mr., and Mr. J. Guthrie’s portrait.

There is yet another—and very popular—exhibition at Antwerp in the shape of fifty landscapes by Théodore Verstraete, who, having lately been stricken with mental affliction, is unhappily no longer in a position to enjoy his great and genuine success. Verstraete was one of the most interesting of artists, by dint of his great gifts of sincerity and feeling.

The exhibition of the Société des Aquarellistes (Water-Colour Society), although it contains a large number of meritorious works, has no very special interest this year. The landscapists and seascapists are fully represented, but the absence of many figure-painters of note is to be regretted.

The Photographic Salon, admirably installed in the fine rooms of the Cercle Artistique in Brussels, is meeting with great success, after having been eagerly awaited by all amateurs of the photographic art. Quite recently the question arose in the courts at Brussels, in the course of a dispute as to some artistic property, as to whether photography was to be considered an art. Subsequently the matter came before the Appeal Court at Aix, and was decided in the affirmative—a decision which seems to be strongly enforced by the very interesting exhibition just mentioned. Professionals and amateurs, both Belgians and foreigners, take part in the display, and again and again one comes across work full of interest, and executed with the happiest results. The English exhibitors have come in for special attention, notably Mr. J. Craig Annan, who shows a score of really splendid photographs—portraits of the most delicate simplicity, and bits of scenery in great variety. Among the Belgian exhibitors, M. Alexandre is the most prominent. He sends a tasteful study of the nude, charming in its effects of light, and several military scenes of much interest. MM. Colard, Rigaux, and Hannon, also of Belgian nationality, exhibit some very successful landscapes, sea-pieces, and portraits.

M. Andre Sinet, the Parisian painter, who for some time past has been living in London, is exhibiting some of his works in Brussels. These conscientious pictures are full of varied

observation. In addition to a most characteristic portrait of the Prince de Sagan, are some truthful studies of the country-side, “bits” from the London parks, and several little Parisian interiors. Everything in his work is sober and restrained, and marked by a dignity of colour treatment which somewhat recalls the manner of the *petits maîtres* of the eighteenth century.

F. K.



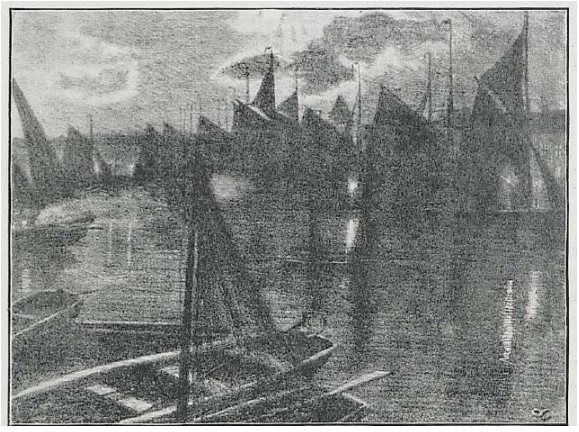
“The Camp Fire” From a Photograph by M. Alexandre
(“Exhibited at the Brussels Photographic Salon)

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 7, 35 (February 1896), 50.

BRUSSELS.—The “Maison d’Art de la Toison d’Or” was re-opened here last month, after being considerably enlarged, and the first exhibition was devoted exclusively to the works of the painter, Alfred Stevens, who showed some sixty pictures. Several of these are early productions, and some comparatively new, while nearly all of them have already been exhibited. The great point, however, is to be able to see the artist’s work at all its different periods. The exhibition in question gives yet further proof of this remarkable painter’s rare personality, and it may indeed be said of him that no one ever painted better than he. Just as Alma-Tadema is celebrated for his marbles so is Alfred Stevens for his Indian cashmeres, and there are two examples in particular at the “Maison d’Art “—one red and the other white—which are a very feast for the eyes, and as much may be said for his *Ladies in yellow, black, and green.* Such is his delicacy of tone and of treatment, that there is always interest to be found in his most fanciful productions, his slightest caprices of colour and brush work, which simply resolve themselves into lovely harmonies of glossy silk or *nacre.*

The *salon* of the “Cercle pour l’Art,” announced by a poster by M. Hannotiau, is interesting by reason of the diversity of views and temperaments among the exhibitors. The big picture by M. Omer Coppens, *Les Bassins,* representing fishing-boats in the moonlight, is a fine production, and his *Coucher de Soleil en Mer,* and his *Coins de Bruges* are very brilliant and tasteful in colouring.

F. K.



From a lithograph by Omer Coppens

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 7, 36 (March 1896), 116-117

BRUSSELS.—At the “Maison d’Art” M. Paul Dubois is now exhibiting forty pieces of sculpture and *objets d’art,* and M. Alfred Verhaeren fifty pictures—interiors, still life, landscapes, and sea-pieces. It is a pleasure to see once more the works of M. Dubois (one of the founders of “The Twenty”) already exhibited here and there, for they all display the utmost skill in modelling and grouping, and are justly admired. M. Verhaeren’s work came as a surprise to most people, and more than one influential critic had the satisfaction of “discovering” him. By general consent he is now regarded as the most powerful colourist of the Belgian school—an opinion held, until quite recently, only by a few of his artist friends. One of his pictures, an interior, has been purchased by the Government for the Brussels Museum.

M. Leveillé’s glass-work and some artistic ceramics by M. Lachenal complete the exhibition. Several of these pieces have been acquired for the Museum of Decorative Art.

M. Dondelet [sic? — Doudelet?] has been exhibiting forty works of various kinds at the Art Club in Antwerp—paintings of archaic style, curious drawings intended to illustrate M. Maeterlinck’s new volume of poetry, and illuminations based on an old Flemish legend, *Dat Liedeken van Here Halewyn.*

Another interesting display has just been organised by the “Maison d’Art” in memory of Jean Portaels, the last Director of the Brussels Academy of Fine Arts. This exhibition includes several of his chief works, and in addition there is a collection of paintings and statuary by formed private pupils of his. To get an idea of the advantages of his teaching it is enough to mention a few of the men who were students under Portaels, for instance, the painter Emile Wauters, whose reputation is world-wide; the celebrated French artist, Fernand Cormon; the sculptor, Vander Stappen; the architects Licot and Van Humbeeck; and lastly, M. Blanc-Garin, who has assumed the mantle of his master and already helped to form several artists of the future.

The exhibition by MM. Haukar [sic—Hankar], Duyck, and Crespin at the Brussels Art Club is confined to applied art. MM. Duyck and Crespin’s posters are very popular here, the former putting into them all his fertile and graceful qualities as a vignettist, and M. Crespin displaying his gifts of ingenious and clever decoration. M. Crespin also shows some designs for carpets, tapestries, *sgraffiti*, and wall-papers. Among the latter, the design called *Les Poissons* is very happily composed, and truly charming in colour. M. Haukar exhibits some very original plans and sections of houses, also some designs for stained glass, and a candlestick in wrought-iron, of unusual form—(See illustration).



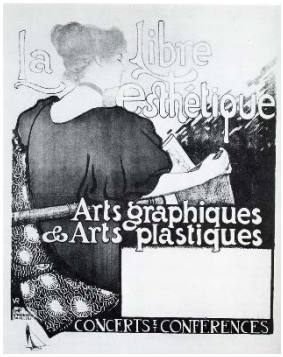
Candlestick in Wrought Iron Designed by M. Haukar [sic]

At the present moment MM. Haukar [sic] and Crespin are busily engaged in carrying out a remarkable and entirely novel scheme in connection with the Brussels Universal Exhibition of 1897. The idea is a vast one, but it must be dealt with very briefly here.

The conspicuous success of the Antwerp Exhibition of 1894 was the reconstruction of "Old Antwerp." Seeing this MM. Haukar and Crespin said to themselves, "Let us consider our own times. Why not look ahead of us, instead of at the past? Let us take into consideration the progress already achieved, and the new material at our disposal. Let us suggest the erection within the precincts of the new Exhibition of an entire *quartier* of Brussels, not of the 16th, but of the 20th century. Thereby we shall encourage the pioneer artists, who often find it hard to place the new creations of their talent." The work thus suggested is now well advanced, and the plans promise a most successful outcome of an interesting idea. MM. Haukar and Crespin proclaimed their scheme in a letter addressed to several Belgian and French art journals in July 1894, and they acted wisely in fixing the date of their enterprise, in view of piracies, which, it seems, are already looming.

F. K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio,* 7, 37 (April 1896), 181-185.





Poster by M. Van Rysselberghe | Marble Bust by M. Samuel

BRUSSELS.—At the “Exposition de la Libre Esthétique,” which was announced this year by two posters, one by M. Van Rysselberghe, and the other, smaller in size, by M. G. Combaz, the English school is represented only by the sculptors, G. Frampton, A.R.A., H. Fehr, and F.M. Taubman. The first-named artist exhibits a series of small bas-reliefs, representing the *Seven Heroines of the Morte d’Arthur*, which display all the delicacy of execution, the taste in arrangement, and the decorative faculty always distinguishing his work. *L’Amphitrite*, by M. Fehr, is prettily executed—too prettily, perhaps. M. Taubman’s display—important both in quantity and quality—attracted special attention on the part of the King when he paid his usual visit to the Exhibition. The group *Rescued* is a powerful piece of composition, and his low-relief, *Aurora,* has genuine dignity. A few busts, statuettes, and *objets d’art*, in the shape of rings and brooches, complete M. Taubman’s collection.




“Rescued” by F.M. Taubman | “Aurora” by F.M. Taubman

The productions of the French school of applied art are very numerous on this occasion; but how different from those of the English artists which were the success of the two preceding exhibitions! Whereas the latter, giving evidence of deliberate and careful work, were deeply beautiful and restrained, the Frenchmen’s productions are

evidently the outcome of a sudden caprice—a mere fashion, at once startling and disconcerting. It is really painful to see so much knowledge and talent sacrificed to the ridiculous whims of the most deplorably bad taste.

The most interesting collection in the Exhibition is that of the Liège artists, MM. Serrurier, Berchmans, Rassenfosse, and Donnay. The present art movement in Liège is remarkable for its real originality. The Liègois, who are Walloons, certainly do not possess that innate appreciation of colour which distinguishes the Flemish, but they have in a high degree that intellectual sense of form which is the most solid basis in decorative art-work.

M. A. W. Finch is doing well, and deserves encouragement. His pottery is simple in shape, and strong and sane in colour, while the ornamentation is in perfect keeping with the rustic character of the work. M. H. Vandevelde exhibits a luminous little interior—"une salle de five o'clock," and its adjoining lobby—charming in its simplicity. Mention must also be made of the tin-work of M. Paul Dubois and M. A. Charpentier; also of the beautiful stamped work of M. P. Roche, and M. Tiffany's glass.

At the Brussels Art Club two painters, M. Coppens and M. Dardenne, and M. Samuel, the sculptor, are exhibiting some of their later works in a very prettily arranged gallery. With regard to M. Samuel, special mention should be made of his marble bust, *Caresse de Chimère*, a bold piece of modeling, and a minutely worked statuette in ivory, *Les Lis*. M. Dardenne is showing, besides a variety of landscapes, a mantel-piece and a screen ornamented with curious embroideries. M. Coppens displays some sea-pieces and town scenes of charming colouring, and also several candelabra in tin-work, and bindings of most ingenious design.

Messrs. Dicksee & Co. have been appointed sole London agents for the Brussels Société des Beaux Arts.

F.K.

F. K., “Studio-Talk. Brussels,” *The Studio,* 7, 38 (May 1896), 245-246.

Brussels.—M. Melchers has been exhibiting, at the Maison d’Art here, a series of his works—paintings and drawings—which have already had some notice in THE STUDIO at the time they were shown in Paris. This collection, together with the “nightmares” of the French draughtsman, Odilon Redon, and M. Craco’s sculptures, excited a good deal of interest by its curious exoticism.

This exhibition was followed by one of M. Raffaëlli, who brought together a large number of works—oils, drawings, pastels, and statuary. Here we have bits of the Paris outskirts, with their great waste stretches and their rag-pickers’ encampments; here, again, the streets and squares of the capital itself, thronged with people and carriages; and now interiors of all sorts, and curious studies of types. The Société de Verrerie du Val St. Lambert, of Liège, has a show-case containing some artistic glass-work, including several choice specimens of most delicate colouring. The *Marque de Fabrique*, and a catalogue cover for the Val St. Lambert Society, were designed by M. A. Rassenforse [sic], of Liège.



Trademark Val St. Lambert

Among the new posters which are appearing in daily increasing numbers on the walls and in the shop-windows, those of M. Mionet [sic—Mignot] deserve a special word of mention. The design he has done for the *Cénacle* is quite a surprise in colouring, while the drawing of a second (for a fencing school) is full of character.

The Belgian Association of Photography has recently opened, in the Brussels Museum, an exhibition indicating a laudable attempt to turn the attention of photographers, both amateur and professional, towards the artistic side of their work. The names of Messrs. West, Latimer, Lodge, Thompson, and North are noticeable in the little gallery devoted to English work, while MM. Ganz, Géruzet, Macs, Rutot, Vanderkindere, and Captain Peltzer are most prominent among the Belgian exhibitors.

M. Ph. Zilcken, one of the best painter-engravers on the Continent, who has produced several famous plates “after” the brothers Maris, has just started classes for pupils. He

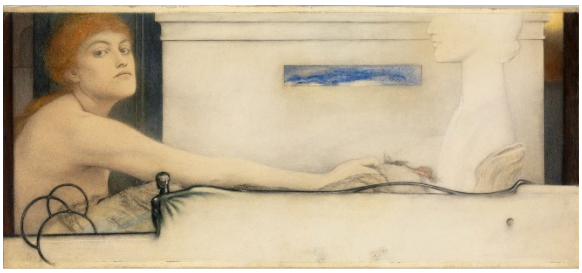
has a large circle of acquaintances, and, moreover, possesses those social qualities which are the more precious inasmuch as they seem lacking in certain of his *confrères.* He has fixed his studio at La Haye.

F. K.



Poster by M. Mionet [sic]

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 8, 39 (June 1896), 48-50



“L’Offrande” by Fernand Khnopff

BRUSSELS.—The Government has decided that from this year the Salon des Beaux-Arts of Liege shall form one of the official exhibitions, with those of Brussels, Ghent and Antwerp; and in this connection the literary review, *La Jeune Belgique,* has been inviting several of our leading artists to give their opinions on the question of official *salons.* The majority have expressed a wish for the suppression of these exhibitions, which they would like to see replaced once for all by smaller displays by clubs or associations.

The exhibition of painting, sculpture and applied art, which is about to open at Mons, will include various works of importance; among other things, several canvases by Alfred Stevens, studies of Borinage—the Belgian “Black Country”—by Constantin Meunier, a portrait by Fernand Khnopff, and his *L’Offrande* (illustrated), with a historical piece by Albrecht Devriendt, and a large composition by Courtens.

By far the most important exhibition of the year is the Salon of the Brussels Society of Fine Arts, just opened in the Museum Galleries. What we are accustomed to term “applied art “is represented there in practical fashion in the form of seats placed at the disposal of visitors, and by glass cases containing various little fragile works of art. The furnishing has been carried out by M. Hobé, whose taste and intelligence it were superfluous to praise.

In addition to one gallery devoted entirely to the Austrian school, foreigners generally are thoroughly well represented here; but this cordially fraternal hospitality would seem to have caused bitter annoyance to certain local art critics or reporters who really are carrying their rigidly protectionist ideas to extravagant lengths. When I mention, however, that one of these gentlemen (who, by the way, is on the staff of a leading Brussels paper) recently wrote that W.Q. Orchardson, R.A., was “one of Whistler’s most talented followers,” it will be understood that as a rule these writers are not over-anxious for opportunities such as these whereby to display their erudition, or their want of it!

The English school is represented by works of the highest class, such as the late Lord Leighton’s *Perseus and Andromeda,* and Sir E. Burne-Jones’s *Bride of Libano.* With the

last-named work these “critics”—who know nothing of the great artist but his name, which, indeed, they sometimes write “John Burns “!—express some disappointment. So much the better. Real admirers of the master are at least spared the irritation of hearing the stupid praise and more than doubtful reverence commonly expressed for his work. William Stott of Oldham exhibits his great picture *The Two Sisters,* full of poetical feeling and delicate colouring; Macaulay-Stevenson has a powerful landscape, and J. Lavery, Paterson and A. Roche all contribute uncommonly good bits of painting, while Mrs. Stanhope-Forbes sends two interesting little studies. G. F. Watts, R.A., is seen in a portrait drawing of intense character.

In the French section the most notable things are the delightful portrait of Mlle. Bartet, of the Comedie Française, by Dagnan-Bouveret; Desvalliere’s characteristic pastel *Les Chasseurs;* E. R. Menard’s *Adam and Eve,* a truly great work; and oils and pastels by L. Simon, J. Béraud, A. Sinet, and P. Carrier-Belleuse.

German art is seen in powerful work by A. Boecklin (the subject of a recent article in THE STUDIO), H. Thoma, Leibl and F. Stuck. There are also some extraordinarily clever drawings by A. Menzel, and several pastels by Liebermann. Nor must I forget—to go back for a moment to the foreign schools generally—the portrait of Sarah Bernhardt by Gandara, the landscapes of Thaulow, the sea-pieces by W. Mesdag and Haverman’s drawings.

The exhibition also contains a few ivory carvings, certainly the most remarkable being the little figure by J. Dillens (illustrated), presented by the City of Brussels to Jamaert, the architect, who restored the Maison du Roi.



Ivory Statuette by J. Dillens

The French medallists, Dupuis and Roty, send some important work, as does the Belgian medallist, F. Dubois; but the gem of the show in the sculpture section is the almost complete collection of the work of Jean Carriès, kindly lent by M. Hoentschel. It would take too long to mention in detail all these wonderful pieces, infinitely delicate in modelling, perfect in oxidation, and exquisite in colour, a very “feast for the eyes.”

In the Austrian section are landscapes by MM. Schindler, Ribarz and de Hörmann, portraits by MM. Hynais, Horowitz, von Angeli, and Matejka, and sculpture by M. Aug. Kuehne, with *genre* pictures by MM. Pettenkofen and Müller.
I must conclude with the names of the following Belgian exhibitors: MM. Claus, F. Courtens, Duyck, L. Frédéric, Fernand Khnopff, de Lalaing, Charles Mertens, A. Struys, A. Verhaeren, Emile Wauters, C. Vanderstappen, T. ç, and the assiduous secretary of the society, M. P. Lambotte.

I notice that by a slip of the pen last month I misspelt the name of the designer of the "Cénacle" poster. It should, of course, be Mignot, instead of Mionet.

F. K.

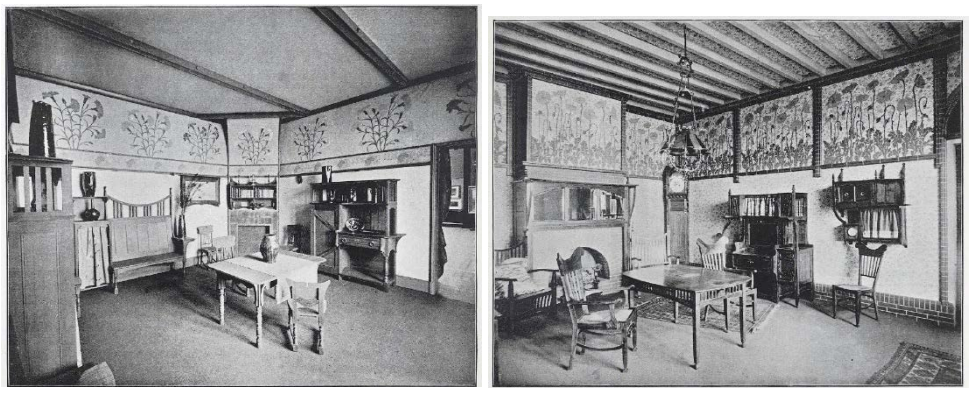
F. K., “Studio-Talk. Brussels,” *The Studio,* 8, 40 (July 1896), 116 -122.

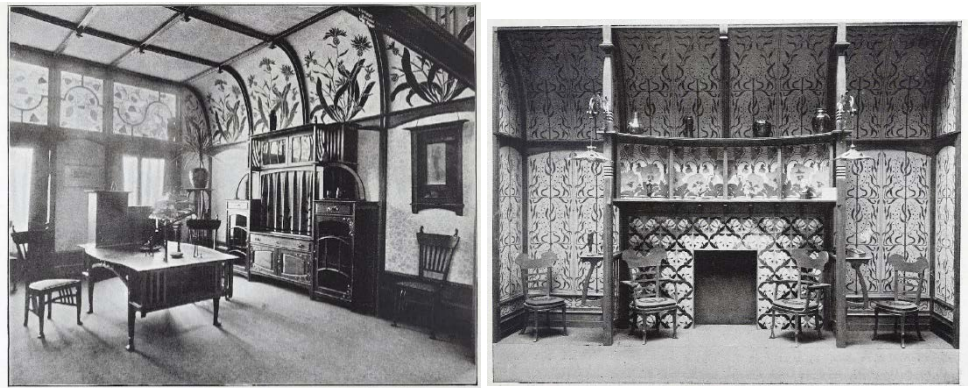




Poster by A. Donnay | Poster by E. Berchmans

BRUSSELS.—The little group of Liège artists, mention of whom was made in THE STUDIO recently, have distinguished themselves at the Liège Salon, as they did at the Exhibition of Posters at the Maison d’Art, and at the Salon of the Champ de Mars in Paris. At the last-named exhibition M. G. Serrurier is represented by one of those ingenious “interiors” of his, such as he showed in the galleries of the Exposition de la Libre-Esthétique. Visitors will remember his charming worktable (1894) in polished orange-coloured wood, and his frieze of large poppies; also in 1895 his “chambre d’artisan,” very interesting in its fresh and bright simplicity. But M. Alexandre’s excellent photographs speak for themselves, and render any further description superfluous.

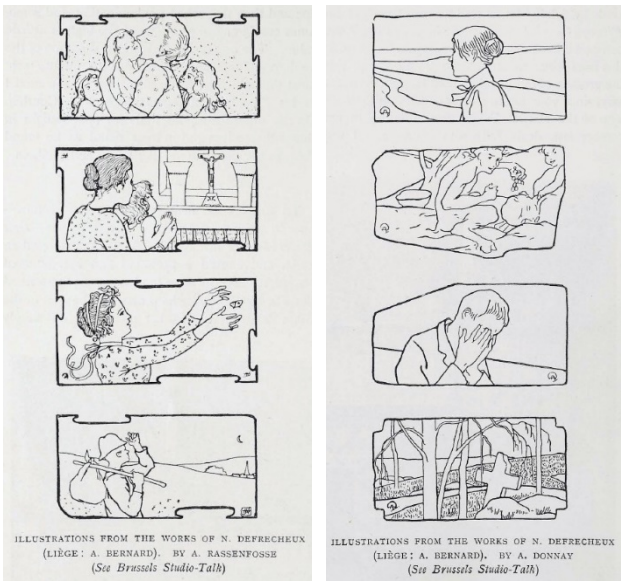

“Une Chambre d’Artisan” and “Une Chambre de Travail,” Designed by G. Serrurier
(From a Photograph by Alexandre)



"Un Cabinet de Travail" and "Inglenook," Designed by G. Serrurier
(From a Photograph by Alexandre)

It was in a publication called *Caprice-Revue,* managed by M. Maurice Siville, and edited by M. A. Bernard, that MM. E. Berchmans, A. Donnay, and A. Rassenfosse, made, so to speak, their first appearance; and after that they worked together on a curious magazine styled *Floréal.* The experience thus gained soon developed the qualities required for the utilisation of their natural talents. M. Berchmans' beautiful poster for the Liège Salon (see page 117) is very striking, with its bold colouring in blues and reds; and in another for the" Exposition de L'Art Indépendant" he has cleverly utilised the light-brown shade of the paper for his flesh tints. M. Donnay's poster for the Salon Photographique (see page 116) is equally successful in its colouring. It is worth remarking that these are real posters, intended to be stuck on the walls, and seen by the passer-by, and not, as so many are, simply enlarged vignettes intended chiefly for the collector's album.

The little drawings made by MM. A. Donnay and A. Rassenfosse to illustrate the works of N. Defrecheux (see page 122) , published by A. Bernard, of Liège, have just the style suited to stories and popular verses such as these. And the same remark applies to the drawings executed by them for the little volume of poems by M.E. Rassenfosse—"Dit un page."



Illustrations from the works of N. Defrecheux (Liège: A. Bernard).
By A. Rassenfosse (L) and A. Donnay (R)

M. Donnay's latest work attracted a good deal of attention at the recent Poster Exhibition at the Maison d'Art. It is a design for the third of a series of posters being prepared under the direction of M. Siville for an Insurance Company. The second of the series, by M.E. Berchmans, is also a great success. Needless to attempt to enumerate the great quantity of work of all kinds produced by these three artists—drawings, oils, etchings, engravings in *vernis-mou* and lithographs.

It is worthy of note that this art-movement in Liège is due not to any new-fangled caprice or any stale tradition, but is really the sincere expression of a true and original conception of decorative art.

F.K.

F.K., "Studio-Talk Brussels," *The Studio*, 8, 41 (August 1896), 177-78.

Brussels.—A very artistic and most effective poster, by M. Henri Meunier, nephew of the celebrated painter and sculptor, Constantin Meunier, has just appeared, having been prepared for the Casino of Blankenberghe. It is broad in its drawing, and deep in colour, and in arrangement most quaintly conceived. M. Henri Meunier had done some interesting posters before, in which apparently he sought after conciseness of form and boldness of colouring; but this last work of his places him in the front rank as a designer of *affiches.*



Poster by Henri Meunier

The first prize in the competition recently arranged for a poster announcing the Brussels Kermesse has quite rightly been awarded to M. Victor Mignot, whose admirable poster for the *Cénacle* was reproduced a month or two ago in THE STUDIO. His new design, which is already conspicuous on all the walls in the city, is very original and full of movement, and possesses the further essential quality of showing clearly the purpose for which it is intended. The colouring too is uncommon and full of distinction, and attracts the eye at once by its brightness and gaiety.

M. Lyon-Claessen, the publisher, has been exhibiting at the Cercle Artistique here a series of 200 Dutch water-colours of the end of the 16th century, all representing flowers. The care bestowed on his work by the unknown painter of these studies is truly extraordinary. One cannot imagine anything more scrupulously, more religiously, exact. The colours moreover are for the most part of marvellous freshness, the tulips being particularly worthy of notice on this account.

A very respectable collection of the works of the well-known French sculptor, J. B. Carpeaux, has been brought together at the Maison d'Art, in Brussels. They all speak eloquently of the period of the Second Empire, with its receptions at Compiègne, and its *fêtes* at the Tuileries. The more important pieces, destined for the decoration of public monuments, display a quite exceptional gift of expressing movement, and in all a sureness of touch is accompanied by much grace of attitude and charm of line.

Ixelles, one of the suburbs of Brussels, has just concluded its competitive display of *façades* and signboards, which has proved decidedly superior to the similar competition

arranged about a year ago in Brussels itself. There is still too great display of colour, however, and far too much wrought-iron work. These signboards or lamps, twisted in all sorts of horrible shapes, and hanging dangerously over the cornices from the gaping jaws of fantastic animals, are apt to inspire alarm rather than admiration. Two of the *façades* attract special attention. One of them, very brilliant in colour, too brilliant perhaps, and certainly with too much gilding about it, is the work of M. Legraive; while the other, a modest decoration for a baker's shop, has been produced by MM. Hankar and Crespin. In the centre of the design is an allegorical figure, Ceres, while the wheat-sheaves, and corn-flowers and poppies around, make up a body of simple colouring. The windows and the doorway are gracefully framed in blue, and over the door is suspended a long-handled shovel for putting the bread in the oven. This piece of decoration gained the first prize for artistic execution.

F. K.



Baker's Shop at Ixelles. Decorated by MM. Hankar and Crespin

F. K., “Studio-Talk. Brussels,” *The Studio,* 8, 42 (September 1896), 248-249.

Brussels.—Important changes have been effected at the “Musée Ancien” here, MM. A. Wauters and Cardon having been entrusted with the rehanging and the proper classification of the canvases in our National Gallery, in order to show them to full advantage. The first part of the undertaking was to rearrange the works of Rubens, Jordaens, Van Dyck, and the other Flemish painters of their day, and the result has shown how necessary the work was. These pictures have now been hung together in the galleries, and in the big hall will be placed the works of the early Flemish school. Quentyn Metsys’ large *Triptych,* the gem of the collection, will be put in the centre of the great panel, and it is hoped that permission will be given to have the two compartments sawn through, so that visitors may see at a glance the entire work thoroughly displayed.

M. Isidore de Rudder, one of our foremost sculptors in Brussels, has just completed some work for the large Salle des Mariages in the Hotel de Ville, in the shape of a model for electric light apparatus in gilded bronze, representing St. Michael, patron of the town, overcoming Satan. These *girandoles* are perfectly adapted to the decoration of the hall, which is Gothic in style. M. de Rudder has also been commissioned to execute two ornamental inkstands for this apartment.

Madame I. de Rudder, whose embroidered panels attracted great attention at the Cercle Artistique last year, has received an order from the Communal Council for a set of large embroideries, also intended for the decoration of the Salle des Mariages. The work will include a canopy, ornamented with life-size figures and medallions, and a large table-cloth.



Porcelain Panels by Isidore de Rudder

Of all the Belgian sculptors, M. de Rudder devotes himself most to applied art. Not content with designing several remarkable pieces of gold- smith’s work, and producing works of art in tin, like his *confrères,* he has devoted special study to ceramics. His four large panels in hard porcelain, illustrated here, measuring three metres high by one metre wide, are very delicate and subdued in colour. Some of his busts and vases are also worthy of mention, particularly one of the latter, measuring one metre high, in hard

biscuit porcelain. The white tone is simply exquisite, and the water-lily shape most graceful. On one side may be seen a dim figure of Ophelia.

M. de Rudder is anxiously endeavouring to find a stoneware capable of resisting the worst inclemencies of weather, which would be of immense value in architectural decoration.

F. K.

F. K., “Studio-Talk. Brussels,” *The Studio*, 9, no. 44 (November 1896), 144-145.

BRUSSELS.—Some time ago THE STUDIO reproduced the decorative paintings ordered by the municipality of Birmingham from the ablest students at the School of Art in that town. Following this example the Communal Council of Antwerp has just approved a scheme for the practical encouragement of the young prize-winners in the Academy of Fine Arts there. The painter, Frans Van Kuick, who carried out the reconstruction of “Old Antwerp,” which was the success of the 1894 Exhibition, has made the following proposal, in his capacity of *échevin,* or Sheriff of Fine Arts in the town of Antwerp:—”That the communal executive give instructions that the decoration of one or two classrooms in the communal schools be entrusted annually to several of the most talented among the students at the Institute of Fine Arts. The most promising pupil in the department of architectural decoration to be selected to work in collaboration with the student chosen for the figure painting, and the pair to work out the *ensemble* of their scheme together.” By this means painters and architects will be brought into touch at the outset of their careers, while still students. Working together in this way on the same task, the results will be of double value, inasmuch as they will serve for the instruction of the school children, after having been a source of exercise and instruction to the students in the higher grades of the Institute of Fine Arts.

As a sort of compromise between the poster and the *ex libris,* both greatly in vogue at the present moment, M. Crespin has introduced a little advertisement-placard, less minute in point of execution than the book-plate, and more subdued in style than the poster. His inventiveness and his precision are valuable qualities in work of this kind.

A philanthropic institution, known as “La Feuille d’Etain,” recently organized an exhibition, and succeeded in securing the assistance of several of our sculptors, who sent specimens of their tinwork, which are now on view in Brussels. Among these interesting productions a special word of mention is due to M. J. Dillens’ *La Fortune*, to M. Gaspar’s majestic *Tigre,* to M. Herain’s expressive *Martyre,* and to M. Samuel’s *La Nèle.* Other graceful pieces of work of various kinds, beautifully chased dishes and plates and so on, are to be sold for the benefit of the charity.

Victor Lagye, the painter, and Professor at the Institute of Fine Arts in Antwerp, who died recently, was the pupil and friend of Henry Leys, whom he assisted in his superb decorative paintings in the Hôtel de Ville, Antwerp.

Within the last few years Victor Lagye had been engaged on an important piece of decorative work, which consisted in executing an order received from the town of Antwerp, to paint for the Salle des Mariages in the Hotel de Ville, a series of large canvases depicting the history of the nuptial ceremony in the various ages. He lived to complete his work with entire success.

The art exhibition season has just been inaugurated here by a display of work at the Musée Moderne by members of the new society, known as “Le Sillon.” In this well-appointed little “Salon” are several works of interest. One cannot fail to note a reaction

against some of the ultra-literary and over-scientific experiments of recent years; but this reaction itself has in some instances been carried to excess, and owing to an injudicious use of materials, especially varnish, a great number of these works look like pictures “faked” by unscrupulous dealers.

M. Gustave M. Stevens, however, who designed the poster announcing the exhibition, sends work remarkable for freshness of colouring and sincerity of workmanship; and M. Janssens, in his interiors and in his portrait, like M. Verdussen in his landscapes, displays very delicate gifts. MM. Bastien, Blick and Toussaint all show talent, but they are evidently working under the influence of an older colleague, and there is far too much of the *virtuoso* about them. M. H. Meunier exhibits some painstaking drawings, and M. Mignot sends the two posters recently reproduced in THE STUDIO.

Mr. W.E.F. Britten was the only foreign artist invited to exhibit, and his display, interesting though it may be, is hardly what one had hoped to see. One misses especially those charming decorative studies in which his characteristic style is displayed to so much advantage.

M. Hankar, the architect, who is a member of the “Sillon” Society, is not represented at the exhibition; but he has lately completed the installation of a shop in Brussels, with M. Crespin as his decorative collaborator. Nothing of its kind so charming and at the same time so practical has ever been done here before. The scheme is tasteful and subdued, with the rare distinction of being novel and yet not altogether English. The warm tone of the mahogany is in perfect harmony with the bluish-greens and the pale yellows in the carpet, the ceiling and the frieze, the chestnut leaves in the latter forming the chief ornamental *motif.*

A lecture on William Morris was given quite recently in connection with the “Sillon” exhibition. There was a very large audience to hear M. Fernand Khnopff speak on the subject of the deceased English artist and poet.

F. K.

F. K., “Studio-Talk. Brussels,” *The Studio*, 9, 45 (December 1896), 212-214.

Brussels—The commission for the large poster which is to announce the Brussels Universal Exhibition of 1897 has recently been given by the committee of management to M. Privat-Livemont. For a long time past this artist’s posters have attracted the admiration of amateurs, by reason of their rare—at times even their excessive—elegance. His latest production of this kind is a complete success, very careful in design, and charming in its colouring of pale green and warm yellow. This poster, which has been printed with the utmost care by M. Goffart, is reproduced on page 212.



Poster by Privat-Livemont

The Brussels public are always glad to come across any of their favourite artists at the Exhibition of the Water Colour Society. This year the general display seems to be better than that of 1895. Professor Herkomer’s little portrait of his brother artist Mr. Stacey Marks is a remarkably clever piece of work. Miss Clara Montalba—whom a well-informed critic describes as *une parisienne au goût raffiné*—sends some of her Venetian scenes, whose rich colouring one never ceases to admire. Among the Dutch exhibitors one notes, and should remember, the name of M. P. Rink, whose work is full of interest; and among the Frenchmen a curiously fanciful production by M. Detouche.

The members of the Society whose work is attracting most attention include MM. J. De Vriendt, Fernand Khnopff, and A. Lynen, figure painters, and MM. Binjé, Cassiers, Hagemans, Stacquet, Uytterschant and Hoeterickz, landscapists and seascapists; not forgetting M. Titz, who here makes his first appearance as a designer of posters.

The Water-Colour Society has lately lost two of its members, M. Delperée and M. Jan Verhas. The picture by the latter, called *La Revue des Ecoles* became popular, and, under the evident influence of Alma Tadema, he did several very pretty interiors.

The directors of the Maison d'Art in Brussels have opened an exhibition of landscapes by Belgian painters, among other interesting works being a superb picture by Louis Dubois, entitled *Le Chevreuil Mort,* a very curious production by Félicien Rops, and oils, pastels and water-colours by MM. Asselbergs, Heymans, Baron, Claus, Degouve de Nunques, Fernand Khnopff, Hagemans and R. Wytsman. The last-named has also tried some experiments in etching, one of which, *Le Soir à Dordrecht,* is reproduced on this page.



"Le Soir à Dordrecht" From an Etching by R. Wytsman

The collection of some forty landscapes and seapieces, exhibited by M. Hamesse at the Cercle Artistique, attracted a large number of visitors. He would seem particularly to affect under-wood studies, of which he has done some very interesting paintings and *eaux-fortes.* M. Wolfers sent to this exhibition several specimens of applied art, and M. de Rudder contributed amongst other things a beautiful bust in wood—a material which sculptors nowadays seem to despise, yet which lends itself to the most supple effects.

This exhibition was followed by M. Baertsoen's, He shows again his big picture, *Un Soir de Pèche,* which was one of the chief successes at the Champ de Mars this year. It was reproduced at the time in THE STUDIO, and was very much liked.

This large work is very effective; yet there are other canvases in this exhibition, less ambitious perhaps, but of much greater charm; for instance, several scenes from the Courtray *béguinage,* perfect of their kind, in form and colour and in drawing, and also some of these quiet little "bits" of Nieuport, which so well express the spirit of these sleepy old Flemish towns.

F. K.

1897

Khnopff, Fernand, “Fashion in Art,” *The Magazine of Art*, 20 (March 1897), 240-242.

Fashion in Art

Under the title of “Unprejudiced” that admirable artist Charles Keene once produced a drawing representing a “swell” at the Royal Academy Exhibition, his catalogue in one hand and his eyeglass in the other, saying, “Haw! 've you any ideaw what fellaw's pictchuars we've to admi-ar this ye-ar?”

Herein we have the whole history of fashion—or rather of the fashions—in art.

The superfluous and useless man of fashion who is dressed, shod, and shaved by the most eminent specialists, wishes also to apply to a thorough connoisseur for his artistic opinions. But it then inevitably happens that if a real *amateur* of art tells him his sincere opinion, the “swell,” in trying to adopt it, makes it appear perfectly ridiculous to his unfortunate instructor, who, to escape the nuisance, finds but one alternative: that of changing his opinion each time they meet. The result is an interminable hide-and-seek of which the result will be the changes of fashion in the narrowest and most superficial sense of the word. This is, no doubt, vexatious, but by way of consolation they both might remind themselves that, to put an end to it, they have only to wait and give themselves time to be sincere and just. Nothing more than that, if only that were possible! For as Eugène Delacroix wrote in his article entitled “Questions sur le Beau,” published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in 1854: “In the presence of a really beautiful object a secret instinct tells us of its merit, and compels us to admire it in spite of our prejudices and antipathies. This agreement between persons of honest purpose shows that while all men feel love, hatred, and the other passions in the same way, while they are intoxicated by the same pleasures and racked by the same pains, they are moved in the same way in the presence of beauty, and offended by the sight of ugliness, that is to say, imperfection. But he immediately adds, “It nevertheless happens that when they have had time to reconsider and to get over the first emotion, by discussing it pen in hand, these admirers, for a moment so unanimous, no longer are of one mind, even on the chief points of their admiration. School tradition, educational or national prejudice, rise to the top, and then it would almost seem that the most competent judges are the most contentious; for unpretentious folks are either less easily impressed, or remain faithful to their first enthusiasm.”

Under these different categories, Delacroix again says, we must not count what he calls the “cohort” of the envious, who are always in despair over the beautiful; and he does not even mention that other “cohort” who are never in despair over the beautiful, and among whom may be specially noted certain critics whose whole effort has been an attempt to recognise the ideal of beauty, to pursue it everywhere, to study it

persistently, and to formulate it in such a way as to render it transmissible from generation to generation like a volume of recipes.

It would be easy to mention a great number of these indefatigable theorists; but the most perfect example of the species was, beyond doubt, a French diplomatist—a painter, too, and a writer—Roger de Piles, who, in 1708, published an octavo volume under the title "A Course of Painting on Principles, with a Dissertation on the Painters' Scale." By this "Scale" he calculates with great gravity the various proportions of colour, of chiaroscuro, and of draughstmanship, of which the genius of each famous artist is compounded. Indeed, our diplomatist is very severe; for having taken twenty as a maximum, he decides that no one ever reached that pitch of perfection; Michelangelo, for instance, getting only nineteen good marks for drawing, and Raphael no more than eighteen. All this cyphering is most precise, all this chemistry very minute; and it is much to be regretted that after the amusing analysis, which weighs so scrupulously the gifts of the genius, the critic cannot recompound them to his mind. Thus, if we could borrow from Michelangelo some of the draughtmanship of which he has a superabundance, to give it to Rubens, whose qualities as a colourist are really in excess! Or Rembrandt again, often too wholly devoted to problems of light and shade; if only his attention could have been directed to Raphael's purity of outline, for instance, and if he could have benefited by it!

This, on the whole, is the impression left by this elaborate work. The worthy Roger de Piles seems firmly convinced that with a little determination and serious endeavor, each of these great artists would have succeeded in establishing an equilibrium of qualities all equally commendable, and by this means would certainly have attained more nearly what he regards as final and genuine beauty.

But is not the idea of beauty itself liable to many transformations? Have critics, or artists, ever agreed among themselves as to the essential characteristics which constitute it? To go no further back than 1721, in a discussion held at the Royal Academy of Painting in France, Coypel stated that within his own state he had seen everything contemned which was not Poussin; then the Bolognese school had supplanted Poussin in the estimation of painters, Rubens had succeeded to the Bolognese, and Rembrandt, in his turn, after Rubens.

Quite recently the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* published some notes of a tour in Italy by Montesquieu (the author of "L'Esprit des Lois"). The notes were written day by day without any view to publication, and it is interesting to compare them with the letters written ten years later by another statesman on his travels, the President des Brosses, penned each evening on the corner of an inn-table, and sent to his friends at Dijon.

We find in both certain ideas which to us seem strange enough. On the subject of Gothic architecture Montesquieu expresses himself as follows: "A Gothic building is a sort of riddle to the eye that beholds it; the soul is puzzled as when it is offered an obscure poem." The President des Brosses, on the other hand, writes: "I know not whether I am in error but to say *Gothic* is almost infallibly to say bad work." They regard the Pre-Raphaelite painters merely as relics, so to speak, of no artistic value, but

interesting from their antiquity alone. This simple and dignified art is to them a sealed book, those faces full of concentrated expression to them seem dead, and what they prefer above all else is “the fire of passion.”

So long live the Bolognese! With what enthusiasm do they expatiate on the huge canvases of the Carracci, of Guido, of Domenichino, of Guercino; they at any rate could feel and express the “fire of passion.” To des Brosses Bologna is the capital of art. He places it for above Florence; and after a visit to the Uffizi Gallery, he tells his friends that they are “not to be misled by what Vasari says in honour of his Florentine school, the least important of all—at any rate, to his taste.”

In the Campo Santo at Pisa, again, he condemns everything without exception. “There,” writes Montesquieu, “we find a fine collection of ancient paintings, because the walls of the galleries are painted in fresco, and we see fully displayed all the bad taste of the time.”

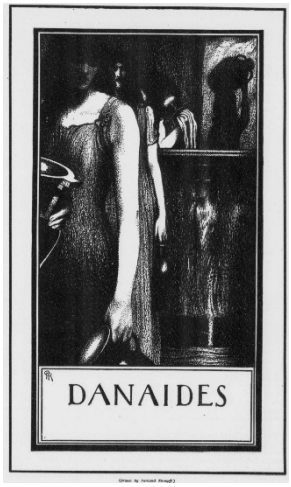
But then the question occurs, “What is bad taste?”

To this Flaubert replies: “Bad taste? It is invariable the taste of the last past age. In Ronsard’s time bad taste meant Marot; in Boileau’s it meant Ronsard; in Voltaire’s it was Corneille; and it was Voltaire in Chateaubriand’s day; while now (in 1847) a good many people are beginning to think his rather poor. O, men of taste of ages to come, I commend to you the men of taste of our time! You will laugh not a little at ,their jokes, at their lordly disdain, at their preference for veal and milk puddings, at the grimaces they make over under-done meat and over perfervid verse!”

Can it be true, as sceptics say, that in any work of art there is nothing but what we ourselves find in it; that we admire it, not for its intrinsic merit, but because it answers to certain feelings of our own, and that we seek in it only a reflection of our soul? After all it is quite possible. But this, at any rate is certain: the study of masterpieces proves that the greatest artists of all ages have expressed themselves simply, deriving inspiration from a deep feeling for all that surrounds them; this inspiration no erudition can ever counterfeit.

Those who have survived took no thought of the taste of the day, of fashionable preferences in colour or drawing; they never stopped to consider these vain distinctions. Colour and drawing were indispensable elements which they had to make use of; they made no effort to give prominence to either. It was their own natural bent which guided them inevitably, and prompted them to emphasize certain peculiar qualities.

It would be impossible to find a masterpiece of painting which does not show in certain proportions a combination of the qualities proper to the art. Every great painter has adopted the colouring and the style of drawing which belonged to his temperament, and by this means gave his work the supreme charm of which schools can tell us nothing, and which they can never teach—the poetry of form and of colour. On this common ground all great painters have met, in spite of systems, and from every school.



Drawn by Fernand Khnopff

In his notes of a journey in Scotland, Paul Bourget has complained more than ever of the odious presence of the swarms of tourists: the ugliness, the commonness of men and women, which struck him more forcibly against those horizons of tranquil waters and green woods; it was a painful effort to appreciate the exquisite beauty of the scenery beyond the travelling-caps, waterproofs, and knickerbockers of his travelling companions. But in spite of all, the visible poetry of those mountains triumphed over the exasperating sense of his immediate surroundings, and mind, as usual, rose superior to nerves. Though there, as everywhere, the tide of modern civilization effaced almost all else, the bare line of the glorious mountains will still survive and dominate over every civilization present or to come.

So we, too, may comfort ourselves by reflecting that beyond the empty verbiage of certain too assertive critics, artistic and literary, and the repeated vagaries of too ignorant innovators, the inaccessible “absolute” of art will ever soar supreme.

F. K., “Studio-Talk. Brussels,” *The Studio,* 9, 46 (January 1897), 291-292.

Brussels.—The Société des Aquafortistes have just published their Album, which contains plates—interesting from various points of view—by MM. Rassenfosse, Lowenberg, Ensor and others. A new etcher, M. Duyck, contributes an engraving of very delicate workmanship, and M. Hannotiau signs his name to a rich and powerful lithograph, which recalls the—all too few—works of this kind left behind him by that great painter, the late Henri de Braekeleer.

One of the best of our sculptors, M. Charles Vander Stappen, has been giving, by invitation, a private exhibition of his work in one of the galleries of the Salon des Beaux Arts in Vienna, and has achieved an unmistakable success there. The critics admire “his impeccable *technique,* always so nicely adjusted lo his ideas, ever springing from a. strong and lofty, and sanely human inspiration.” It is evident, moreover, that he has produced a strong impression in the Austrian capital, and that he will create a “school” there, so great has been the effect of his productions on the art students of Vienna. The things which seems particularly to have struck the Viennese is the close relation seen in his work—a matter as yet but little understood there—between high art and the art known as “decorative.” Unfortunately in Vienna there has always been a “great gulf fixed” between the Academy of Fine Arts and the School of Applied Art, and consequently there has never been much communication between them. Among Vander Stappen’s larger works may be specially noted a scheme for a large fountain to be placed at the entrance of the Brussels Exhibition of 1897; and among his smaller works, a much admired piece of low relief in bronze symbolising the *pieuvre,* or octopus, here illustrated.



The Octopus. Low relief in bronze by Charles Vander Stappen

The Cercle Artistique is now doing hospitality to a really remarkable and exceptional collection, arranged by M. Charles Sedelmeyer of Paris, who displays a number of famous works of the English School, of the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. The collection includes portraits by Sir William Beechey, Gainsborough, J. Hoppner, J. Jackson, Sir Thomas Lawrence, J. Opie, Sir Henry Raeburn, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Romney and J. Russell. In addition there are four Boningtons, eighteen Constables, two characteristic Morlands, and a beautiful sketch by Wilkie for his famous picture of John Knox, in the National Gallery, London. And one must also note two Turners, the more important of which represents the act of signaling at sea,

and is entitled *Rockets and Blue Light*. On leaving Brussels this collection will go to America, where it is sure to be as great a success as here.

F.K.

F. K., “Studio-Talk. Brussels,” *The Studio,* 10, 47 (February 1897), 58-60.

BRUSSELS.—The Exhibition of the Antwerp Royal Society of Fine Arts gives promise of being very interesting, for support has come in from all sides. It is exclusively confined to watercolours, and it is to be hoped that this time the Antwerp public, so long averse to this kind of painting, will at last understand that results quite as satisfactory as those produced by oils may be obtained by this medium. An important series of exhibits of the French school is displayed.

Now that the rearrangement of the pictures in the Musée de Bruxelles is completed to the satisfaction of all concerned, it is time to suggest a similar course of action with regard to the sculpture collection, which has lately been enriched by several works of great value. Foremost among these additions is a life-size marble figure by M. Paul Dubois of Brussels, representing a lady of the present day in ball-dress, seated, with a closed fan in her lap (see page 56).



Life-size Marble Figure by Paul Dubois

M. Paul Dubois, a pupil of M. Charles Vander Stappen, has, like his master, a strongly developed sense of the decorative in art. He has produced several things in tin and in copper-vases, candelabra, sugar-holders, &c.—of extremely graceful outline. But his chief and most characteristic successes have been in his treatment of women’s dress of to-day. This is no doubt due in a measure to the fact that, as a “society man,” he has had constant opportunities of studying the world he knows and lives in. And in this respect he differs completely from certain artists, who, after a course of “classic” study—as a matter of duty—are now, for the same reason, devoting themselves to the “modern” or the “socialistic,” simply because they fancy they must do it to be “in the swim.” Needless to say they are foredoomed to failure in whatever branch of art they undertake.

M. Paul Dubois is just completing one of the columns intended for the decoration of the Brussels Botanical Gardens. It is eight metres high, and the base is adorned with life-size figures representing the four Elements. He is also at work on a delicate piece of low-relief—a standing figure of a woman in the dress of to-day. In addition to this he has in hand, and approaching completion, numerous other works of a varied character, such as busts, medals, &c., and I hope an opportunity will occur for me to deal with these in your columns upon some future occasion.

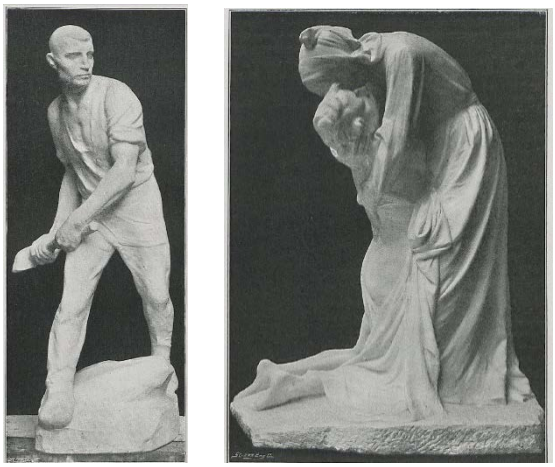
F.K.

F. K., “Studio-Talk. Brussels,” *The Studio,* 10, 48 (March 1897), 128-130.

BRUSSELS.- The fifth exhibition of the “Cercle pour l’Art,” which was advertised by a poster by M. Ciamberlani, was open at the Musée de Bruxelles from January 16 to February 15. Unquestionable by the most prominent exhibitor was Mr. Antonio de la Gandara. He sent several big portraits, a delicious little canvas called *Un coin des Tuileries,* and a large series of dainty pastels, done on greyish paper, and very slightly relieved by light colouring.

M. Storm van Gravesande, who is well-known as an engraver of the highest ability, showed himself on this occasion to be a lithographer of equal skill. Several of his plates are masterpieces of their sort, and from a technical point of view it would be very interesting to compare his treatment of the same effects of nature, first with the dry-point and then with the lithographic pencil. M. Alf. Verhaeren proved himself the same powerful colourist as ever, and MM. Omer Coppens, and Hannotiau continued their varied series of scenes from Bruges. MM. Ciamberlani, Duhem, and Ottevaere—the latter showing great progress—sent work noticeable for its rare distinction of style.

The sculptors represented were M. F. M. Taubman (whose exhibits in the “Arts and Crafts” Exhibition were illustrated in the January number of THE STUDIO), who sent a powerful group, and a delicate little figure; M. Victor Rousseau, with a fine piece of low-relief, lofty in idea and of most admirable workmanship; and M. P. Braecke, who displayed a bronze medallion very ingeniously oxidised. His marble group, *Le Pardon,* was recently placed in the Musée de Bruxelles.



“Le Carrier” by Constantin Meunier | “Le Pardon” by P. Braecke

The Brussels publisher, M. Becker-Holemans has just issued the first of a very interesting series which he is bringing out. His idea is to collect, in as complete a manner as possible, the work of some of the best artists of to-day, as has been done in the case of the old masters. As the work is being published in Belgium, M. Becker-Holemans has

decided—without, however, confining the scope of the undertaking to Belgian art—to publish first the productions of some of our native artists, and the opening series is consequently devoted to the painter-sculptor, Constantin Meunier, who has executed a *repoussé* leather binding for the publication.

By means of the photograph of *Le Carrier*, reproduced here, one is able to gain a very fair idea of Meunier's characteristic style. It is in the ordinary manifestations of the work-a-day world that he discovers the great essential forms which constitute real works of art.

M. Jan van Beers' exhibition at the Clarembaux Gallery, and that of M. Sinet at the Cercle Artistique have had the full success they deserved. M. Van Beers displayed several fanciful works marked by brush-work of extraordinary *virtuosité*; and M. Sinet showed in addition to numerous "Society" portraits, several delicate little seapieces.

The club known as "La Libre Esthétique" is in the habit of devoting one of its galleries to a collection of the works of some one artist. Last year it was Carrière and his monochrome paintings, so full of inner meaning. This year the artist selected Is Albert Besnard, a painter of almost pyrotechnic style, with all his effect on the surface. A greater contrast could not be imagined

For the rest, the chief attraction in the Applied Arts section will be a suite of rooms constructed, furnished, and decorated by the architect Horta, who hitherto has never taken part in any exhibition. In former years the arrangement and the ornamentation of these apartments have been entrusted to M. G. Serrurier, of Liège, and some time ago THE STUDIO reproduced a series of his charming interiors.

The reorganisation of the Sculpture Gallery in the Musée de Bruxelles has been completed, and it no longer wears the cold and monotonous appearance once so justly urged against it. The bronzes and terra-cotta works have been placed among the marbles; splendid Brussels tapestries of the sixteenth century form a sumptuous decoration for the walls, and two large china vases, in *cloisonné* work—the gift of Madame de Rongé—placed at either end of the gallery, in the centre of a *parterre* of foliage, add the finishing touch to a most harmonious arrangement.

It is sad to think, when admiring one of the most remarkable productions in the Museum—M. P. de Vigne's marble statue, *L'Inmortalité*—that the creator of this noble work, so fine in workmanship, and so pure in style, is lost for ever to the world of art: for a lamentable malady has completely destroyed the delicate genius which was deservedly the pride of the Belgian school of sculpture.

F.K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 10, 49 (April 1897), 194-195.

BRUSSELS.—The “Libre-Esthétique” Exhibition continues to bring before the Brussels public many interesting works of art of all kinds, and of all countries. Particularly noticeable are a number of most successful posters—among them that designed by M. Van Rysselberghe for the present exhibition, which is almost as charming as the poster announcing the last show, a work which was reproduced at the time in THE STUDIO. M. Franz Hazenplug sends a delightful little poster, designed for a Cincinnati coach-builder, and others displayed bear the signatures of F. Rops, A. Rassenfosse, Crespin, Penfield, Bird, and last, but not least, Rhead.

The painters represented are almost exclusively Belgian and French, the latter having sent a number of works of considerable importance, both as regards style and subject. M. Besnard displays in a score of canvases the astonishing dexterity and extreme flexibility of his brush. It is indeed matter for regret that he has not more frequent opportunity of developing his rare decorative qualities on some big and extended scheme. Hard by her husband’s exhibits Madame Besnard displays several life-like busts in *terra cotta,* and a graceful statue in stone.

M. J. E. Blanche sends his fine portrait of Fritz Thaulow, and some dainty paintings representing comestibles of the most appetising kind; and M. R. Ménard is exhibiting a beautiful portrait, and several admirably composed landscapes of great dignity. From M. Monet come three views of Rouen Cathedral, one in pink, one—the best—in blue, and the other in yellow. M. Cottet contributes some cloud studies, and a mourning scene.

Among the work of the Belgian artists must be noted the luminous canvases of Mlle. Bock [sic? – Boch?], and MM. Claus and Wytsman; the studies of horses by M. Delvin; M. H. de Groux’s romantic pastels, including a remarkable portrait of Baudelaire; landscapes, some mystic and some quite simple, by M. de Gouve de Nuncques; and drawings, *eaux-fortes* and lithographs by MM. F. Rops, Romberg, Lemmen, Delaunois, and Fernand Khnopff, in connection with whom may be mentioned the Dutch draughtsman, Toorop. Belgian sculpture is also well represented. M. C. Meunier displays three of his productions, including *Le Carrier;* M. Rousseau a *méditation* full of lofty sentiment; M. P. Dubois, the *figures modernes* referred to in THE STUDIO for February, and M. Samuel some beautiful decorative statues, symbolising flowers.

The hall, decorated by M. Horta, the architect, is very much admired, and is indeed worthy of the artist, who is gradually building up for himself throughout the Continent a reputation for decorative achievement. It would be interesting one of these days to make the readers of THE STUDIO acquainted with M. Horta’s work.

M. Finch’s important exhibit of decorative enamelled pottery shows still further progress in this sphere of art. His material maintains its fine and powerful qualities, while the colouring has gained in richness and effect. It is truly excellent work.

A word of mention is also due to the remarkable bronzes and jewellery sent by MM. Fernandubois [sic—Fernand Dubois] and Van Strydonch [sic], also to MM. Crespin and Lemmen's carpets, and to the decorative designs by M. Combaz.

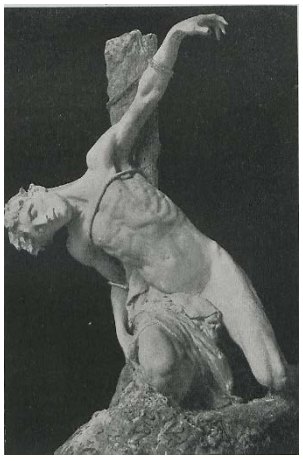
From Paris we also have some delightful *pâte de verre* by M. H. Cros; exquisite gypsographic prints by M. P. Roche; quaint knick-knacks by MM. Carabin and Charpentier; ingeniously designed bronze work and jewellery by M. H. Nocq; graceful furniture by M. Plumet, and a varied assortment of plates by MM. Grasset, Toulouse-Lautrec, Helleu, Legrand, Lunois, and Maurin.

Berlin sends some of Koepping's remarkable blown glass, and Denmark contributes ceramic work by Herman Kaehler.

In addition to an important display by the "Birmingham Guild of Handicraft," and another by the "Fitzroy Picture Society," England is represented by numerous works by MM. Voysey, Cobden-Sanderson, Alexander Fisher, G. Jack, W. de Morgan, and Rathbone, whose work it is perhaps needless to refer to in these columns. Suffice it to say that it is a most satisfactory exhibit.

M. Alf. Cluysenaar recently gave an exhibition in his studio of some of his work, both early and recent, and also showed a series of water-colours, painted by his daughter, and a piece of sculpture modelled by his son, M. André Cluysenaar. The last named work is certainly worthy of remark, on account of the care displayed in its treatment, and for the delicacy of feeling it displays. It is entitled *St. Sebastian,* and is here reproduced.

F. K.



"St. Sebastian" by André Cluysenaar

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio,* 10, 50 (May 1897), 258-60.

Brussels.—It is greatly to be regretted that pecuniary considerations have caused the abandonment of the very interesting scheme conceived by MM. Hankar and Crespin in connection with this year’s Exhibition in Brussels. It has been thought better to decide on another fanciful reconstruction of some of the old parts of the town; and thus “Brussels-Kermesse,” with its somewhat fair-like attractions, will occupy the place in the programme which was to have been filled by the “Ville Moderne,” a scheme of much greater artistic and scientific interest.

However, MM. Hankar and Crespin’s labours will not have been wasted. Their idea is so good, that some day or other it must be realized; and they are probably indifferent as to whether it be in Brussels or elsewhere, for it is to be hoped that, in common with all artists worthy of the name, they regard as of only secondary importance the petty question of patriotism.

A reproduction is given here of the poster, designed by M. Van Rysselberghe, for the last exhibition of the “Libre Esthétique.” In the open air it has a charming effect, the red and orange in the cloaks forming at a distance a very powerful piece of colour. Among other notable posters recently produced are two by M. Privat-Livemont. One was executed for the committee of the Brussels Universal Exhibition. Not long ago THE STUDIO published one of this artist’s posters, remarkable for grace of form and colouring. M. Privat-Livemont may be advised, however, to limit his admiration of a certain Parisian *affichiste*, who is evidently exercising too great an influence over his Belgian *confrère*.



Poster by M. Van Rysselberghe

The exhibition of medals and kindred objects, organized by the Brussels Society of Fine Arts, promises to be very interesting. The promoters are being strongly seconded in their efforts by generous support on the part of collectors. M. Léon Cardou, of Brussels, will exhibit his beautiful collection of civic collars—containing several splendid

specimens of a type of ornament now becoming very rare. He will also display an extremely curious plaquette in coloured pewter, representing Charles Quint on horseback. The French School of Medal Engraving will be well represented, and it will be interesting to compare this work with the Austrian exhibits, of which a goodly number are promised.

M. G. Serrurier-Bovy, of Liège, is preparing for the Congo section of the Brussels Exhibition a set of furniture in Congo wood; and I understand this indefatigable searcher after novelty will show us some entirely fresh and ingenious combinations of form and colouring.

On Monday evening, April 5, in the Salle d'Horloge, at the invitation and under the auspices of the New University, Mr. Cobden-Sanderson gave an address on "Book-binding: its Processes and Ideal." The subject of the address, a handicraft, had, Mr. Sanderson said, been chosen by him although at first sight the labour of the hands might seem to have very little to do, save in a very humble and utilitarian capacity, with the elevated functions of a university, because in his opinion the most pressing question waiting for solution at the present day was the formation of a grand Ideal of labour, an ideal which should give purpose and dignity to the lives of that vast majority whose duty and destiny it was to live by the daily labour of their hands. And as he believed, such was the most pressing question of the day, upon whom, he asked, should devolve the duty of forming that Ideal and through the spirit of its institutions and the lives of its members making attractive, and dominant, and universal, not upon the New University, whose own Ideal had been so admirably expounded in the inaugural address delivered at the opening of the session by its Rector, Monsieur de Greef was, therefore, that he had chosen handicraft, and that he proposed, in its demonstration, to indicate the outlines of an ideal, open as to its methods for realization, indeed, by every one whatever his condition or estate, but especially open for realization by the labourers who labour daily with their hands, and by their daily labour contribute to the creation, the maintenance and the amelioration of the material civilisation of mankind. And the core and central principle of his ideal, as Mr. Cobden-Sanderson hastened to explain, was this: that whereas a labour of the hands pursued in isolation is apt to appear, and in fact to be, a poor and monotonous occupation, a laying of brick upon brick and nothing more, such labour when pursued in full knowledge of the logical development of its processes, when pursued in full knowledge of its cooperative and historical associations, when followed in full knowledge of its purpose and possibilities, will be found to contain within itself the conditions of a lofty ideal, and to be, moreover, a method of admission to a vision of the universe, and a daily labour in sympathy with the sublime movements which constitute its own daily and unremitting evolution.

Mr. Cobden-Sanderson then proceeded in pursuance of his purpose to call attention to the aims and meaning of book-binding—which he defined to be the giving permanence to the expressed and otherwise fleeting thought of mankind; to its historical origins and varied development; to the processes which constitute the Binding of to-day; to the

division of books, from the point of view of decoration, into Tools or books for use, and into Books Beautiful, or books of substantive value, which alone, Mr. Sanderson said, deserve to be decorated and set apart for admiration; to the method of decoration of the Book Beautiful; to the technique and origin of gold tooling: to the technique of pattern and its modes of distribution over the covers of a book; to the great French schools of tooled decoration of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; to the decay of design and to the necessity of a return to Nature for motive and inspiration; to the essentials and purpose of decoration, which Mr. Sanderson defined to be a sort of homage paid to the genius of the writer whose own substantive work of Art was enclosed within the covers of the book enshrined in the decoration.

Finally, Mr. Cobden-Sanderson returned to his point of departure and insisted upon two things as of essential importance in the formation of an ideal of the special craft of the Bookbinder and of labour generally—viz., upon the logical and organic relation of the processes and upon the symmetrical or geometrical framework of the decoration, for it was upon these two things that depended that relation between the work of the hand and the divine work of the universe which constituted the secret of the ideal not of labour only but of life. At the outset of civilisation man had filled the void of this ignorance by the creations of his imagination, but now the world stood revealed to us in science in the plenitude of its power and beauty, and it was, Mr. Sanderson concluded, the duty and privilege of man to enter into possession of that revelation and of the workman to extend the horizons of his own special work till they touched upon and were lost in the infinitudes of the whole.

F.K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 11, 51 (June 1897), 64-65.

BRUSSELS.—The Brussels section of the Belgian Society of Photography recently arranged a most successful exhibition of the works of Mr. Craig Annan. There were several sea-pieces of special interest, also various studies of reflected effects in canal scenes, and some very remarkable portraits. One of the latter—that of *Madame Janet Burnet*—recalls in manner and in style the finest productions of the great French portrait-painter J. Elie Delaunay.

English art is carrying the day all along the line in Brussels; particularly at the International Exhibition. While the Dutch School is growing more monotonous and dull every day, the French section exhausting itself in over-large canvases of indifferent execution, and the Belgian exhibits for the most part are disfigured by great vulgarity of style, the English artists show their distinction and reticence in a series of rational productions. The few pictures on too large a scale to be seen in the British section bear evident traces of a foreign influence. What could one wish for better in their several styles—to name but a few of these works—than Burne-Jones’s *Wheel of Fortune,* superb in treatment and of truly rare and noble colouring; or Alma-Tadema’s delightful *Shrine of Venus;* or Albert Moore’s most charming *Sopha,* exquisite in arrangement and absolutely silky in colouring? And there are many more. Ford Madox Brown’s *Chaucer,* for example, a remarkable work, which can never be sufficiently praised. England may indeed be proud of artists such as these.

Edouard Duyck the painter, who has recently died in Brussels, was, with his friend Crespin, one of the first artists in Belgium to devote himself steadily to decorative art in its widest sense. He designed a great number of posters, theatrical costumes, &c., in which he gave free play to his fancy, full of unstudied grace and charm. He was an untiring worker, who disdained no sort of labour; now turning out a set of simply programmes in his facile way, now undertaking the great scheme illustrative of African customs, which adorns the large hall in the Congo section of the Brussels Exhibition. He was appointed a teacher at one of the professional schools here, and in a very short space of time produced results surpassing all expectations.

F.K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 11, 52 (July 1897), 124-126.

BRUSSELS.—The fourth annual Salon of the Society of Fine Arts in Brussels was devoted to a historical display of medals. It consisted of a contemporary section, including productions by the best of the modern medallists, and a historical section, wherein were seen several series of coins lent from celebrated collections in Belgium and abroad.

Among the ancient works the connoisseur and the artist might admire the Greek pieces in the possession of M. Auguste Delbeke, the bronze Italian medals of the 15th and 16th centuries, owned by Mme. Goldschmidt-Przibram, and others, both Italian and French, of the same periods, from the famous collection of M. Gustave Dreyfus, whose display included several bronze medallions, notably a superb “Martyrdom of St. Sebastian” by Pollaiuolo; also the medallions from the Hess collection at Frankfort, with the “Van Berckels,” owned by Baron Surmont de Volsberghe. In addition there were several Papal medals lent by M. Van Schoor, and those from the collection of M. Van den Broeck, which constitute a sort of *résumé* of Belgian history during two centuries. In addition there were two fine medallions by David d’Angers.

The modern French school was represented by contributions from MM. Bourgeois, Michel Cazin, A. and H. Dubois, Dupuis, Mouchon, Patey, and Roty. German art was seen in the works of M. Hildebrand, who displayed a very remarkable *Bismarck,* and the Viennese engravers, A. Scharff and E. Schwartz, had a notable exhibit.

Lastly, we come to the Belgian exhibitors, MM. Dillens, Fernand and Paul Dubois, de Hondt, Lagae, Lemaire, Vander Stappen, Vermeylen, and Wolfers, not forgetting M. Cardon, who exhibited, not as an artist, but as a collector, and showed some of the treasures which adorn his artistic home.

Following its general rule, the Society of Fine Arts made a point of decorating the Exhibition in the most harmonious fashion possible. The beautiful tapestries came from the well-known collection of M. Léon Somzée, who was kind enough to allow the committee to make use of such as they required.

Some of the pictures from M. Somzée’s collection held an honourable place in the Venetian Exhibition held some time ago at the New Gallery; and his exhibits would certainly figure prominently in any collection of tapestries that might be brought together.

Lieutenant Masui may be unreservedly congratulated on the entire success of his section at the Brussels-Tervueren Exhibition. He was entrusted with the organisation of the Colonial Department, and the results give equal evidence of initiative and good taste. The series of photographs which is to appear in THE STUDIO shortly will show, better than any description could do, the remarkable results he has obtained in the way of artistic decoration, and that with the simplest of means.

An international exhibition of posters, including works from the best masters of the art, was lately held at Tournai. The Tournai "Cercle Artistique," which organised the display, was able to show some 350 specimens. Several of them are of extreme rarity, on account of their age, notably some illustrated examples, printed like wall-papers, and dating from Louis Philippe's time.

The English school was well represented, Dudley Hardy and Maurice Greiffenhagen being prominent exhibitors. The big poster, *Pall Mall,* by the latter, will always be considered a masterpiece of its kind.

The "Cercle Artistique et Littéraire" of Brussels has just celebrated its fiftieth year of existence by a most successful *fête.* The galleries were ornamented with draperies and flowers, which, with the pictures and tapestries and other works of art, formed a most effective *ensemble.* The tapestries, very fine specimens, were lent by M. Somzée, while the pictures were the work of old members of the club—Navez, Gallait, Leys, De Groux, de Braekeleer, Verwee, Boulenger, and others. A special word is due to the decoration of the gardens by M. V. Keuler, the painter, who was warmly congratulated on his work.

F. K.

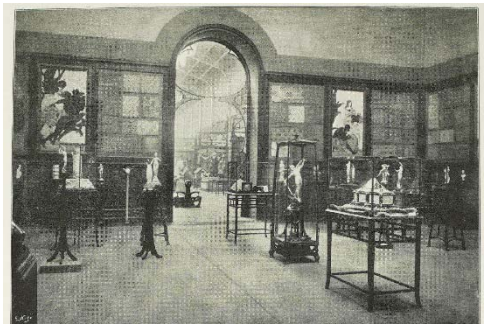
F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 11, 53 (August 1897), 200-202.

BRUSSELS.—When the Colonial section was established in the Antwerp International Exhibition of 1894, the committee paid far more attention to the practical side of the matter than to any other; and thus it was that the few works of art in ivory displayed—or at any rate deposited there made very little impression. It was quite a surprise to see them again, or rather to see them properly for the first time, at the Cercle Artistique in Brussels. About the date of the Antwerp Exhibition THE STUDIO published an article detailing this remarkable revival of a long-neglected form of sculpture.

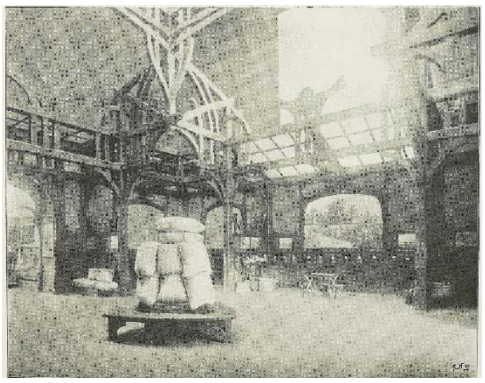
This year the Tervueren Colonial section of the Brussels Exhibition has been arranged with every regard for art, and the Secrétaire d’Etat, M. Van Eetvelde, together with Commander Liebrechts and Lieutenant Masui, cannot be too highly complimented on the success of their plans.

They have generously distributed the work of ornamenting one of the halls in the Tervueren palace among the numerous Belgian sculptors; and for the decoration of all the apartments in the building they have relied on the best of our architects and decorative artists, among the collaborators being MM. Crespin, Hankar, Hobé, Serrurier-Bovy, and Wytsman. And then the native groups placed in the Salle D’Ethnographie have been composed and carried out by artists such as MM. J. Dillens, Ch. Samuel, and J. De Rudder.

Without going into minute detail over the decorations of the various apartments, an excellent impression of which is afforded by M. Alexandre’s beautiful photographs, here reproduced, I may draw attention to the care that has been shown in devising forms matching those of the arms and implements displayed, and in utilising in the most artistic manner the materials employed—woods and hangings of all sorts.




Salon d’honneur at the Brussels Exhibition | Salle d’ethnographie at the Brussels Exhibition



Salon des Grandes Cultures at the Brussels Exhibition

In the hall set apart for the chryselephantine sculpture the panels are adorned with large embroideries, the work of Madame de Rudder, surrounded very skilfully with pieces of Kassai material. The furnishing of this hall is also very sumptuous. All the stands and supports of the numerous exhibits are in Congo wood, very interesting in its many varieties.

Among the most remarkable productions may be noted a very fine *Christ upon the Cross*, by Constantin Meunier; *L'Allegretto*, by J. Dillens, already exhibited at Antwerp; a little group by Rombaux, beautifully executed; the graceful work by Ch. Samuel; De Tombay's large figure, *Homme-Dieu au Tombeau*, in ivory and wood; *St. Michel*, by Weygers; Dupon's *Belluaire*, in ivory and bronze; a very fine medallion by De Rudder; and the large wedding casket by Fernand Dubois, representing the Ages of Man in low-relief. Also well worthy of mention are the large "Swan" vases by Wolfers, a splendid swan in bronze with its neck encircling an ivory pillar, with a spotted base. Fernand Khnopff's *Masque* in tinted ivory, bronze and enamel, on a small column; and the various figures by De Vreese, Des Enfans, Mathelin, and Le Roy.

M. Vander Stappen, whose exhibit was a little late, has sent a superb contribution. The work, which is to form the prize in connection with the forthcoming tombola at the Exhibition, consists of a female figure in ivory. The face is stern, and she raises aloft a sword incrusted with jewels. Around the silver-gilt base are coiled a dragon with a black diamond in its jaws, and a demon, symbolical of vice. He also sends a bust of a girl in a golden helmet. Her expression is full of mystery, and her finger is on her lip. The chief point of interest in this work is the ingenuity shown by the artist in combining the armour and the head-piece with such parts of the face and neck and hand as are visible, in such a way that the metal and the ivory are united without a join being seen in any part.

This also is one of the merits of M. Vinçotte's charming bust of *Madame E.* exhibited in the Fine Arts section of the Exhibition. This is one of the finest efforts of a sculptor who has no equal today in his own special branch of this art.

F.K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 11, 54 (September 1897), 268-269.

BRUSSELS.—The Fine Arts section, although disposed in a somewhat rudimentary building, is decidedly the most attractive feature of the Brussels International Exhibition. Four schools are more or less adequately represented, those, namely, of England, France, Holland, and Belgium. Italy has sent a not very remarkable display, while Scotland, Spain, Switzerland, and Germany are represented by a few works grouped together in an International Section. Speaking generally the works seem to have been well chosen and judiciously hung. This is especially noticeable in the Belgian Galleries, where the Hanging Committee, after rejecting two-thirds of the works sent in, have arranged the selected canvases with great care, always striving to avoid a second row of exhibits, and doing all in their power to place the works in satisfactory order, and in groups of similar style. Some of these rooms present a really charming appearance, such as one hardly expects to see in a universal exhibition, where, as a rule, one is chiefly impressed by the general crowding and muddle.

The English display was a great success from the outset, and never was success better deserved. Not often has one the opportunity of seeing such a combination of genuine artistic qualities, such loftiness of imagination, such sentiment, such honesty of purpose and care in execution. To arrive at this point, doubtless a great effort must have been required; there must have been moments of hesitation, false steps occasionally, and futile attempts. But now that the goal has been reached, and we see the work in fullest expansion, all this may well be forgotten; for the fact is England is at the head of the end-of-the-century art movement.

English art has seldom been better represented on the Continent than here; and the organisers of the Exhibition, together with the artists who were entrusted with the hanging—Messrs: Val Prinsep, R.A., and J. Fulleylove, R.I., with Mr. Isidore Spielmann, the honorary secretary—may be heartily congratulated on the happy result of their arduous labours.

The general display of the Belgian artists, compared as a whole with that of the Englishmen, appears at first sight to be somewhat lacking in loftiness of sentiment and refinement of execution. Works of fancy are few and far between; for the most part our portrait painters prefer to study values and tones rather than psychology; while the landscapists put before the expression of feeling a regard for effects of brush work. The result is that the most satisfactory works are those devoted to domestic animals or still life; and in justice it must be said that in this direction the Belgians have done very well, all their workmanlike gifts being displayed with the best effects—and consequently there are plenty of nice pieces of colouring, The same remark applies to the sculpture; in fact, although there are few traces of intellectual effort, at any rate the material part of the work has not been neglected, and in many instances the happiest results have been achieved.

The French school might justly feel aggrieved were we to judge it by the exhibits sent to Brussels. The display by the French artists is decidedly below the average, and yet in a way it represents only too accurately the present state of art in France. It is nothing but studied “virtuosity,” revealing a style acquired with no labour, and quite beyond control; while in form and colour and subject these works are of the “loudest” description. Almost all of them seem to have been done just to win a medal, or gain a momentary success in one of the Salons.

F. K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio,* 12, 55 (October 1897), 56-58.

BRUSSELS.—The Salon of Applied Art in the Universal Exhibition, although it has been arranged somewhat hastily, nevertheless reveals the important place artistic productions of this kind now hold in Belgium. The absence of several prominent artists is matter for regret, notably in the case of the Liège group, who would have taken a high place in the very front rank of exhibitors. However, these artists are probably reserving themselves for the forthcoming exhibition at Liège itself.

Although the English school of applied art is not directly represented in Brussels it nevertheless exercises no slight influence there. M. Crespin devotes an interesting article to the Exhibition in the *Revue de Belgique*. “There is nothing astonishing,” he remarks, “in the fact that our artists are powerfully influenced by the English. The principle of this art movement springs from logical causes producing with us effects similar to those seen in England. There is a community of feeling between the English and ourselves in our admiration of the beautiful. Their magazines keep us informed of what is being done there. Thus it is easy to make a just comparison, and to see that the really charming and meritorious work is that which embodies some new form not to be found in the original. Each of these designs has, without resembling them, a certain analogy with its fellows, but it is no longer the commonplace repetition of the styles of Louis XIV., Louis XV., or Louis XVI. It is quite evident there are many skilled workmen who now turn to THE STUDIO, just as formerly they relied on *Vignole*, or *L’Art pour Tous*. This was bound to be.”

Thanks to the spirit of emulation they have aroused among the great nations these universal Exhibitions have resulted in the realisation of a large number of ideas. The Paris Exhibition of 1889, for instance, established the decorative employment of metallurgy in architecture, to which new life had already been given by means of multi-coloured ceramic work. It is much to be regretted that the interesting “Projet de Ville Moderne,” proposed by MM. Hankar and Crespin could not be carried out; for it certainly would have been a starting-point for any number of improvements, which, it is to be feared, will now be long delayed by slow-moving routine.

Whereas the French section in the large gallery of the Exhibition is installed with the utmost taste, and with perfect delicacy of colour and form and proportion, the Belgian section on the other hand is a shocking has of extraordinary constructions. Each exhibitor seems to have been anxious to outdo his neighbor by the gorgeousness of his display; and as these efforts have been generally successful, the result of it all is disastrous in every way. One has considerable trouble in discovering the interesting specimens of decorative or applied art.

The exhibits of the Société des Cristalleries, of Val St. Lambert, are very remarkable, by reason of the lovely whiteness of the crystal, which is cut in such a manner as to bring out to its fullest extent the refractive qualities of the material. Some of the polychrome

glass is also very curious. The effects are obtained by adding, during the process of the work, successive coatings of coloured enamel and white crystal. The difficulties attending this process are many. It is no easy matter to get a strong colouring in a thin coating, or to make the enamels harmonise with the white crystal which is of different composition.

It is worthy of note that, unlike the French art glass workers, who turn out nothing but useless knick-knacks at prohibitive prices, the Val St. Lambert Society devotes its attention to articles of everyday utility, striving to put as much beauty as possible within the reach of all. The society could have no better collaborator than M. Ledru, the clever artist who designs and executes the various models, with the chemical assistance of M. Lecrernier. M. Ledru has been awarded the chief *diplôme d'honneur* in this department, and never was such reward more thoroughly deserved.

The poster reproduced on page 57 is a recent design by Mr. Theo Van Rysselberghe.

F. K.



Poster by Theo van Rysselberghe

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 12, 56 (November 1897), 126-128.

BRUSSELS.—After gaining one of the prizes offered by the City at the Venice Exhibition—for his group *Le Pardon,* reproduced a few months ago in THE STUDIO —M. Pierre Braecke, the Brussels sculptor, has, by competition, been unanimously chosen to undertake the execution of the monument to be erected in the Place du Marché-aux-Grains at Louvain, in memory of Remy, the philanthropist. He has conceived quite an original scheme, and even now it is evident we may rely upon a work of great merit.

The “Grand Prix de Rome” for sculpture has been awarded to M. Banquet, a student at the Brussels Academy, who won the second prize three years ago. At the International Exhibition this year his group, *Les Tourments de L’Amour,* obtained a medal of the second class.

For a wonder the subject of the competition for the Prix de Rome this year was neither Greek, nor Roman, nor Biblical! The idea was: “Thor, King of the Thunders, fighting and killing the Great Serpent, but dying himself from the poison emitted by the Monster” (Northern Mythology, “The Twilight of the Gods”).

Like the group just referred to, M. Banquet’s figure for the “Rome” contest is full of power and movement, and displays remarkable force of expression.

The Brussels sculptor, Guillaume Charlier, recently gave a display in his vast well-lighted studio, of a collection of his own works, together with the principal paintings, sketches, and studies of his friend, Theodore Verstraete, the landscapist, whose work has unhappily been stopped by a serious illness. The numerous admirers of this sincere and feeling artist have thus had an opportunity of renewing acquaintance with his work, which is that of a genuine painter, and most original colourist and draughtsman.

Verstraete has treated landscape not from the colourist’s point of view alone. He has grasped and recorded the spirit of the soil in its subtlest aspects and in his most characteristic manner, and with all possible delicacy and intensity of feeling revealed the close connection between Man and the Earth he inhabits. What Segantini (whose work was recently dealt with in THE STUDIO) has done for the Italian Alps, that Verstraete has done for the neighbourhood of Antwerp, where he has lived and worked.

Charlier’s works are of all kinds, showing in every variety the utmost technical skill not only in applied art, such as his ingenious writing-desk in pewter, but also in his more important productions. Among the latter may be noted his *Sortie de L’Eglise,* showing two groups of beggars, life-size, on the steps in front of a church door—a consumptive, with a fever-stricken child in his arms, and two women squatting in their rags. This work has been keenly discussed, and it is objected that the architectural portion, by occupying too much space, has had the effect of detracting from the importance of the

figures. However, despite all this, it is a work of great personality, thought out and executed with the most scrupulous care.

In addition to numerous busts, including those of the Queen of the Belgians, and A. Struys the painter, and several works of lesser importance, M. Charlier displayed his beautiful low-reliefs, *Pécheurs halant leur barque* and *Pécheurs revenant du Port,* which form portion of a scheme for a series of *bas-reliefs,* to be surmounted by a *Statue of a Fisherman,* in honour of the "Toilers of the Sea."

F. K.



"A la sortie de l'eglise" (Fragment) by G. Charlier | "Pecheurs halant leur Barque" by G. Charlier

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 12, 57 (December 1897), 197-198.

BRUSSELS.—The removal, tardy though it be, or the flags, large and small, the gilded plaster figures, the masts and other more or less decorative objects which were supposed to adorn the streets or Brussels during the Exhibition, has been a real relief to the inhabitants; and even the newspapers which expressed the greatest enthusiasm for the promoters of “applied art in the streets,” and this the latest manifestation of their inexhaustible resource, have been obliged to admit that “it was high time. this deplorable display of discoloured rags and rubbish was put out of sight”; with the further remark that “the experiment is final, and a lesson to the organisers of our fêtes.”

One cannot but regret, however, that the lesson should have been somewhat expensive. More than 100,000 francs, it is said, were squandered on this “experiment,” despite the fact that the lamentable result had been foreseen by every one, and that the previous exploits of the same promoters of “applied art in the streets” were not such as to inspire much confidence. It is to be hoped that the question is now thoroughly understood, and that there will be no repetition of the error.

The “Musée Moderne” has been rearranged by a committee consisting of MM. Robie, A. J. Wauters, and L. Cardon. The change is undoubtedly for the better, and several of the galleries, notably those containing the masterpieces of painting signed “H. Leys” and “Alfred Stevens,” present a really excellent appearance. M. L. Cardon has presented to the Museum three valuable pictures—a quaint portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence, a portrait by J. Lies of his confrère H. Leys, and an open-air picture by M. Leopold Stevens, a son of Alfred Stevens.





“Poverella” by Paul Devigne |Poster by V. Mignot

In the sculpture department of the “Musée Moderne” there has been placed a work by M. Paul Devigne. It is a life-size marble figure, called *Poverella.* Like all the productions

of this unfortunate artist, whose illness has put a stop to his labours, the present work is marked by the greatest care, and shows profound knowledge of form and treatment.

The series of winter Exhibitions has been commenced by the Club known as “Le SilIon,” in the few available rooms at the “Musée Moderne.” These apartments are being steadily occupied, and the time will soon come when Brussels, the capital, will have no place to offer to the newer artistic associations whose slender means compel them to ask the hospitality of the State.

The exhibition, announced by M. V. Mignot’s poster, is interesting as showing the work of a group of young artists, trained together, so to speak, under the same influence, yet expressing their ideas diversely according to their individual temperament. It shows, moreover, how swift and fleeting are the changes of fashion, even in the matter of art. In the exhibitions of recent years everything was bright and clear; now there is nothing but sombreness and gloom. A little while ago, to be “in the movement” one was obliged to go in for *plein air,* the natural result being that the artists of no special originality, who were in the habit of following the lead of others, set themselves to imitate posters, as being the type of picture mostly seen in the open. Thence sprang a series of crude, glaring productions; but now the “old Flemish School” is all the rage; and the artists scarcely ever stir out of the art galleries.

“Somebody,” remarks M. Solvay, one of the ablest critics in Brussels, dealing with this subject, “somebody once proposed that all the galleries should be closed for a few years, in order to prevent our young artists from seeking inspiration from any source save that of Nature itself. Now, here we have quite a group of artists, who have taken possession of these galleries, and will not budge an inch. The deplorable part of it all is, that they are reviving some of those old methods of painting employed during a disastrous art period by artists who suffered severely in consequence. They have revived the use of the odious bitumen, the dense blacks which produce easy ‘effects,’ but burden and darken the palette to a deplorable degree. Poor fellows! One would think they were painting with syrup in a cellar!”

A happy exception must be made in the case of MM. R. Janssens and Verdussen, whose genuine and conscientious abilities are displayed in several interesting portraits, interiors, and landscapes ; and the same may be said of M. G. M. Stevens, whose distinction and freshness of style are noticeable in a remarkable little portrait executed after the manner of Memling.

Mention should also be made of an expressive portrait by M. Servais-Detillieux; a beautiful landscape by M. Mathieu; some drawings by MM. Coulon, H. Meunier, and V. Mignot; sculptures by MM. Marin and Mascré; and finally the exhibits of two “guests,” MM. J. Lambeaux and J. Stobbaerts.

F.K.

1898

Khnopff, Fernand, "*The New Gallery,*" *The Magazine of Art*; 22, (January 1898), 427-431.



"The Mill-Stream"
(*From the Painting by John R. Reid, in the New Gallery*)

The New Gallery.
By Fernand Khnopff

It is possible, or even probable, that the habitual visitors to the New Gallery are so much used to the charm of that delightful little place as to lose their appreciation of the sober-toned marble and metal work, and the refined decoration which make the most satisfactory setting imaginable for the works of art exhibited there. But to one who is still haunted by the acutely painful memory of the indescribably hideous rooms which gave shelter to the fine-arts section at the Brussels exhibition last year, the pleasure of seeing the New Gallery has all the charm of a fresh impression.

The success, the triumph, it might be said of the English school at Brussels was beyond question; and if it was not at once proclaimed by all, the was the result of vexation rather than of any misapprehension. Its most dissimilar characteristics were represented by works of the highest class, the works of men of perennial distinction; and yet, in all these pictures, however unlike each other from a certain point of view, the most striking qualities of English art were discernible: a lofty aim in conception, and reverent purpose in execution.

It is interesting to meet most of these painters once more in the New Gallery, represented by characteristic works, each a synthesis, as it were, of the master's aesthetic views. Indeed, the three pictures which most immediately arrest the visitor's attention: "Saint George," by Sir Edward Burne-Jones; "Can these Bones Live ?" by Mr. G. F. Watts and the "Portrait of Mrs. Thursby," by Mr. J. Sargent—are all the more important as being, each in its If, the marked outcome of a distinct artistic individuality. The "Saint George" is representative of the principle of "Art for Art's sake;" "Can these bones live?" is moral art—art as a means of utterance; the portrait of Mrs. Thursby is pure "impressionism." And this word impressionism must be taken in its original meaning, as it was first used (by Monet, if I am not mistaken) to mean the direct noting

from Nature—a permanent record of transient effects. The word has since run a triumphant career, and its use has been extended till it has lost all accurate meaning; at this moment there is hardly an artist living who has not once in his life, at least, been described as an impressionist.



"Too Late!"
(*From the Painting by Geo*rge *Harcourt*.)

Those who like to work back to the origin of things must admit that, in fact, the first and truest of impressionists—without knowing it, to be sure—was Velasquez. Stevens, the famous Belgian painter, once said that it was the anaemic royal blood of Spain that had taught Velasquez his delicate flesh tints; it may be added, I think, that it was royal impatience that gave him his impressionist brush-work. But what distinguishes his "impressionist" touch is that it is genuinely the outcome of an impression; it is sincerity which, as sincerity always must, gives it such a depth of power and beauty. His imitators—like all imitators who see only the surface of things—wished to improve upon it, and thought they could do so by trying to seem yet more expert in the use of the brush, and by displaying a sweep of touch which was to look at once spontaneous and final. But the inevitable result could only be intolerable mannerism and irritating pretentiousness. Such imitators remind us of the wits who work up their choice sallies in the ante-room before going into the drawing-room, or of the poet of whom Boileau wrote that he polished up five impromptus every morning.

Mr. J. Sargent is beyond comparison the greatest master of brush-work and of colour-material now living. Though the placing of a touch may sometimes seem a little forced, a little too artificially instantaneous, and though the attitude of his figures s often one of unstable equilibrium, we cannot, on the other hand, too highly praise certain "condensed effects," if I may say so, which are really quite marvelous. For instance, in his "Portrait" of Mrs. Thursby, the violet dress is painted in one tone of pure colour so wonderfully fused that we fancy we see every play of light and shade; in the pale blue curtain that forms the background, the shadow of the folds, also laid on in pure colour, is toned to the precise amount of complementary orange with extraordinary precision and dexterity. Again, in his "Portrait" of Mrs. Franklin, note the attractive expression of the eyes; in that of Mrs. Cohen the cleverly rendered movement of the finger twirling the eye-glasses; and finally, in that of Mrs. Anstruther Thomson, the fine quality of tone in the black dress.



Mrs. Ernest Franklin.
(From the Painting by John S. Sargent, R.A.)



A "Mute Inglorious Milton."
(From the Painting by J. Frank Bramley, A.R.A.)

Mr. G. F. Watts's large picture is a powerful work, an imposing composition, expressively coloured. It reminds us of another work by the same painter, "Sic Transit," exhibited at the New Gallery a few years since, and reproduced at the time in The Magazine of Art; it now hangs in the Tate Gallery. In "Sic Transit" the predominant horizontal arrangement gives a sense of peace and rest, enhanced by the pearl-grey hue of the long-drawn winding sheet, and the faded colouring of accessories once resplendent. In the present work, on the contrary, the ponderous yellow drapery with its angular folds, the branches broken by the storm, the ominous confusion of bones seen in lurid shade with a strange spark of colour among them here and there—sick gems, as one might fancy—all this forces itself on the attention of the most sceptical, and compels the mind to deep and gloomy meditation.

But does not this coercive effect on the mind divert it too much from the consideration of the work itself? Does it not lead us to regard the picture as no more than a fulcrum, or as the vivid spot which induces hypnotised sleep, rather than as a gem of refined art that has a value of its own and the charm of subtle beauty? We have here an inexhaustible subject for discussion. Too many volumes have already been written on it, and more will be written yet; it is inevitable. There is however a proverb: *Bien faire et laisser dire"* ("Do well and let the world talk"). Now these pictures of Mr. Watts's are very "well done"; is it not wise, then, to admire in silence? That, at any rate, is my opinion.

In Mr. R. de la Sizeranne's very interesting book on "Contemporary English Art,' he says of Sir Edward Burne-Jones that he is one of the few painters of our day who know how to set forth the line of a picture *(établir la ligne d'un tableau,).* The "Saint George" in the New Gallery is fresh proof of this statement. In a mysterious legendary land Saint George, the Knight, the conqueror of the Dragon, stands erect and motionless, in fine armour of black steel. In his right hand he holds the staff of the standard of the Cross; on his left arm hangs his long-shaped buckler. Behind him the carcase of the vanquished Dragon lies in livid coils; by his feet blossom a few pale iris-flowers like a message of peace. Of the struggle, now overpast, only a memory remains in an image mirrored on the polished face of the shield, where we see the Princess Saba in an attitude of despair, hardly hoping to escape the monster which has already cast its coils about her.

This work is full of extraordinary charm; a sense of absolute harmony gradually and delightfully enwraps and penetrates the spectator. Must we really try to analyse this charm, and to discover the means by which the spell is cast? Must we dissect the decorative sense with which the scene is composed—the long vertical lines so exquisitely combined with certain curves of secondary importance; the subtle blending of sheeny rose-colour with sober blue and metallic reflections? To what end ? Let us rather yield to the purely artistic fascination of this work; a work one would fain live with, and of which the presence would be a sweet and lofty consolation in the darkest days. Is not this the highest praise that can be given to a work of art, and ought not that to be its purpose?

In Sir Edward Burne-Jones's other picture, the predominant colour, an intense blue, would seem to have been borrowed from some Brazilian butterfly.

It would carry me too far to mention even, much more to dwell upon, all the meritorious work which is to be seen in abundance on the walls of the New Gallery. Still, mention must be made of the exquisite little portrait by Mr. Alma Tadema, and the not less exquisite small picture by Mrs. Tadema; of a portrait by Mr. H. Tuke, of which the tone, faintly glazed with green, reminds us of Whistler's fine portrait in the Luxembourg; the very clever, but very eccentric, portrait by Mr. Byam Shaw; the pretty picture, by Mr. J. J. Shannon, of Miss Berthe des Clazes; the powerful portrait of a child by Mr. G. F. Watts, and the Marchioness of Granby's graceful drawings. Again a portrait, on too large a scale, by Mr. Harcourt, which looks as if it had been painted for the Paris Salon; the ingeniously composed pictures exhibited by Mr. Abbey, Mr. Walter Crane, Mr. Strudwick, and Mr. C. Halle. The curiously archaic-looking work of Messrs. H. Hunt, Gaskin, Gere and Southall; landscapes by Messrs. Alfred East, Parsons, E. Stott and B. Haughton.

In the hall we notice busts by Mr. Onslow Ford and Mr. Toft; M. Taubman's group, and some enamels by Miss Hallé and Mr. Alex. Fisher.

Finally, among the works of foreigners who enjoy the generous hospitality of the New Gallery, I may name the "Ruins," by M. Billotte, and the "Rainbow," by A. Demont.

Note.—We are happy to publish this article by so distinguished an artist as M. Khnopff on the exhibition to which he is a notable contributor. It becomes necessary to add, by way of postscript, that M. Khnopff's own works, two in number, to which he has here made no reference, are admirable example of his refined sense of delicate colour, and prove once more how restrained and quiet elegance can assert themselves among their neighbours as well as the noisiest picture that ever screamed from the walls. M. Khnopff is supposed to be a "symbolist": most of his symbolism takes the elementary form of suggesting the beauty of an ideal and the hopelessness of attaining it. But it is in the delicacy of the eclectic colour-harmonie that his chief merit lies, as well as in the simplicity of his poetic thought and the delightful grace of his handling.

Khnopff, Fernand, “In Memoriam Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Bart. A Tribute from Belgium,” *The Magazine of Art*, 22 (1898), 520-526.

In Memoriam Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Bart. A Tribute from Belgium.

The scene was Paris, in 1889, at the height of the hurly-burly of that enormous World’s Fair—an interminable international fair—the Universal Exhibition. Even on its outermost fringe the most unexpected buildings mingled medieval styles, elaborate or ominous, with the fragile and gaudy elegance of Oriental workmanship. The effect was violently extravagant, with no attempt at transitions the picturesque was insisted on, dragged in at any sacrifice by this melodramatic archaeology and exotic medley.

After following the crowd under the tall arches of the Eiffel Tower, and along the wide lawns and ample basins of the Champ de Mars, if you went at length into the Palais des Beaux-Arts, by degrees peace seemed to grow around you. The public stood in crowds, indeed, before military or *genre* pictures it was attracted by the cheap fascinations of an amusing subject or pretty story but it was very evidently thinner the number of chance visitors grew less and less. As you went on from room to room reverent hush was felt, till at last, in the central hall of the English section which contained, among other works, those of Lord Leighton, of Millais, of Alma-Tadema, and Orchardson, and on one side the strong crimsons of Watts’s “Mammon,” and the cruelly far-away blue of his “Hope” there appeared, like queen, supreme and glorious, the lovely picture by Burne-Jones, “King Cophetua and the Beggar-Maid,” in the place of honour, the centre of a panel, with its beautiful frame of pale gold pilasters ornamented with scrolls.



The Days Of Creation: “The First Day” And “The Sixth Day.’
(In the Collection of Alexander Henderson, Esq.)



The Heart Of The Rose. (in the Collection of William Connal, Esq., Junr.)

Before the pallid beggar-maid, still shivering in her little grey gown, sits the king clad in brilliant black armour, who, having surrendered to her his throne of might, has taken lower place on the steps of the dais. He holds on his knees the finely modelled crown of dark metal lighted up with the scarlet of rubies and coral, and his face, in clear-cut profile, is raised in silent contemplation. The scene is incredibly sumptuous: costly stuffs glisten and gleam, luxurious pillows of purple brocade shine in front of the chased gold panelling, and the polished metal reflects the beggar-maid's exquisite feet, adorable feet—their ivory whiteness enhanced by contrast with the scarlet anemones that lie here and there. Two chorister-boys perched above are singing softly, and in the distance, between the hanging curtains, is seen a dream, so to speak, of an autumn landscape, its tender sky already dusk, expressing all sweet regret, all hope in vain for the things that are no more, the things that can never be. In this exquisite setting the two figures remain motionless, isolated in their absorbed reverie, wrapped in the interior life.

How perfectly delightful were the hours spent in long contemplation of this work of intense beauty One by one the tender and precious memories were revived, the recondite emotions of past art and life, making one more and more in love with their superb realisation in this marvellous picture. The spectator was enwrapped by this living atmosphere of dream-love and of spiritualised fire, carried away to happy intoxication of soul, dizziness that clutched the spirit and bore it high up, far, far away, too far to be any longer conscious of the brutal presence of the crowd, the mob of sightseers amid whom the body fought its way out again through the doors. This artist's dream, deliciously bewildering, had become the real and at this moment it was the elbowing and struggling reality that seemed a dream, or rather a nightmare.

Truly we cannot help loving with all our heart and mind the great and generous artists who can give us such an illusion of happiness, who can light up the future with such radiance of bliss, whose spirit is powerful enough to bear up their souls to the threshold of the Absolute, whence they send us messengers of hope and angels of peace.



Love Among The Ruins
(From the destroyed picture.)

For are not these angels, indeed, envoys from the farthest beyond, the exquisite beings who appear in this master's work? —these knights, noble ideals of valiancy and virtue, the fine frames of heroes hidden under the shining metal of their dark armour; these legendary princesses in such sumptuous garments heavy with embroidery and gems, dignified or languid in gesture, their magnificent hair framing faces of perfect loveliness these women whose goddess-like figures have subtle fascination of grace in the long flowing lines and the pale flesh, ivory and gold; above all, these maidens, in purest robes, so finely pleated, virgin forms of delicate and pensive gesture, with light, soft hair, pure and gracious and sweet of aspect, the exquisite curve of innocence on their lips, and deep loving-kindness in their limpid gaze.



Idleness And The Pilgrim Of Love (In the Collection of William Connal, Esq., Junr.)

And the "light that never was on sea or shore" irradiates the beautiful scenery light that seems to be wholly composed of subtle reflections harmonised to exquisite twilight it shines on these legendary palaces vast deserted courtyards, elaborate stairways, mysterious nooks on those broad landscapes framed in walls of rock or distant hills on those bosky woods, those shores of spreading, slowly-creeping rivers, or of pools starred with myriads of tiny flowers; on those ruins, austere and silent.

As M. G. Mourey well says in *Au-delà du Détroit*": "The sounds of life sink and die on the brink of his visions their echo is enough to link the world to the beings he evokes." And again: "He is an Italian of the fifteenth century, with the same fervent worship of beauty, and, above all, with the same high purpose of seeing through the transient life of the real, and rendering nothing but the imperishable presence of the soul with the same bent towards the art of expressing under the perfection of form that delights us as so divine in the early masters of the Renaissance, in the masters who lived before the development of the sentiment compounded of indolence, infidelity, sensuality, and frivolous pride which, according to John Ruskin, characterised the followers of Raphael in such men as Masaccio, Fra Filippo Lippi, Benozzo Gozzoli, Pollaiuolo, Botticelli, Luca Signorelli, and Mantegna. He has striven to form his soul and eye to the same standard, the same strong sensibility, as theirs; he has tried to feel and see as they did, with ardent sincerity and the intense loftiness of heart and sense that the quattro-centisti brought to the accomplishment of their art. As to their mere formula, only those who are imperfectly acquainted with his work will accuse him of servile imitation, of sacrificing to them the free expansion of his individuality and temperament.

"Of all the men who rallied round Dante Rossetti it must be confessed that the painter of 'The Six Days of Creation,' of 'The Mirror of Venus,' of 'The Golden Stairs,' has produced the noblest and completest work. We may prefer the true refined sentiment, the Dantesque imaginings of Rossetti; but how can we deny the superiority of Burne-Jones as draughtsman and painter In addition to his intensity of insight, exceptional in the history of art, he has the gift of creating forms, giving life and expression, and vitalising symbolism. Is not this the endowment of the greatest?

"Yes, a fifteenth-century Italian but with the added inheritance of suffering and moral distressfulness which falls to the sad lot of the men of the nineteenth century haunted by the same ideal as pursues us all, and the craving even to bleed in the clutch of a Chimaera, if only so we may escape through dreams from the horrors of reality."

"'Dreams are but lies,' says an old maxim; but when our last hour is at hand, and but few brief minutes are left to what was '*I*,' pale lights before the eyes that are fast growing dim, who can tell by what mark to distinguish you, memories of the actual life, from you, mirages of the dream-life These words of M. Paul Bourget might well serve as an epigraph to the lovely picture of "The Golden Stairs." Like the array of our most tender and precious memories in the progress of life, these ideal beings of youth and beauty are coming down, down, the inevitable steps. At first heedless and smiling; then one of them, already anxious, stops with her finger the possible sound of her long and dainty silver trumpet the others bow their heads, or hold them high, and their soft motions stir the myriad pleats of rippling crape. Down they come as they descend the winding stair the suppressed passion of it all finds utterance in the plaint of violin. Behind, the metallic gleam of light cymbals introduces the saddened hues of dim gold and fading purple like the glow of an autumn sunset. They turn away to depart, but before going off into the great hall, through the solemn colonnade, the last of the maidens stops, and turning her head once more, sheds smile of farewell.

The works remain—the man is no more—the man whom those who loved him were so glad and proud to call on in his home in West Kensington, where they always found cordial welcome.

Those visits to The Grange are indeed a precious memory: the reception in the hall, where, at the very entrance, smiled the lovely portrait of the painter's daughter—a portrait of which one could never sufficiently admire the simple grace and fine colouring the freedom and gaiety of the meal the talk in the drawing-room; and then, after crossing the garden over the green lawn, there was the door into the big studio. On the wall, framed under glass, hung the panels illustrating the Story of Perseus; at the end "The Triumph of Love," a magnificent youth enthroned, amid a hurricane of drapery, on chariot with heavy grinding wheels. Studies and sketches on every side; a number of legendary subjects, derived from the "Romaunt of the Rose," "Venus Concordia," "Venus Discordia," the "Masque of Cupid," the procession of Love's Victims, seen by Britomart, as represented in tapestries in the castle of Busirane. And in the house-studios, delightful designs for tapestry, exquisite drawings, and small picture of perfect execution "The Magic Mirror."



The Pilgrim Of Love. (From a Photograph by Hollyer.)

And then, in a studio not far away, there was another work on large scale approaching its termination, "The Morte d'Arthur." There lies the king, asleep under the trees of Avalon, between the hills and the sea no breath stirs the myriad leaves nor bends the heraldic fleurs-de-lys the queens are watching in silence, the watchman does not stir the whole scene is full of peaceful waiting.

And now the light in the East has risen for the Artist himself for him the hour has come.

But he did not leave us till he had produced vast amount of work, all stamped with the seal of brilliant individuality—not till the world had given him not merely the most universal celebrity, but even, alas had granted him popularity.

And yet the master's earlier works were scouted as ridiculous then by degrees, as always happens, some of the choicer spirits, whose distinguished worth might make up for their small number, gathered round him. In due time the public followed suit, though showing, of course, as is ever the case, more goodwill than understanding. And finally he had the proclaimed glory of the head of school. The name of Burne-Jones became a watch-word, a standard hailed with the enthusiasm of younger men in the new effort for idealism, the most vigorous artistic movement of later days.

I am proud to have been chosen to write for these pages these few lines of intense and reverent admiration and of deep gratitude for the great artist who was led by his high ideal to produce such noble and beautiful work—work which will always be supreme joy to those who are able to liberate their sensations and ideas from the hampering weight of material hindrances and bonds, and to uplift them to those higher spheres where subtle intelligence can find and purify the very essence of those sensations and ideas.



Mosaic Decoration In The Apse Of The American Church At Rome.

Khnopff, Fernand, “Belgian Book-Plates,” *The Studio*, special winter number 1898-1899 (Modern Book-Plates and their Designers), 73-78.

Belgian Book-Plates

During the course of the renaissance, or the popularising of the applied arts—a movement which was the natural outcome of English example, and is now flourishing everywhere—Belgium's share in the work was an ample contribution of pottery, pewter, and posters. Our painters concentrated their energies in the study of ceramics, our sculptors—and not the least considered among them—devoted their gifts of modelling and composition to the production of works in pewter, while the Belgian poster school (or rather schools) achieved a great reputation by designing several of the recognised masterpieces of their kind. The Belgian poster occupies a prominent place in the special publications devoted to this branch of art; indeed, more than one volume has been entirely devoted to the efforts of the Belgian postermakers. Nothing, therefore, would be easier than to write a complete historical study of the poster in Belgium. But when we come to the question of book-plates, especially those of to-day, it is quite another matter. The revival of the *ex libris* in England and in Germany, whereby several artists have obtained a wide celebrity, has had no counterpart in this country. Belgian book-plates have always been scarce, and those that exist, moreover, are but little known, the public collections containing none of them. Private collections there are, it is true—including those of M. Hippert, M. Claessens the art binder, Dr. Van den Corput, Comte de Ghellinck, M. Pol de Mont, and Comte de Limburg-Stirum—but they are somewhat difficult of access and, from various causes, generally incomplete, especially so far as the most recent productions are concerned.

Some of our national artists give evidence of real talent for this kind of work. First of all comes the late Félicien Rops, the astonishing draughtsman, the consummate engraver, with a wit as keen as his needle's point, who was better qualified, perhaps, than any one alive for the task. But no one thought of going to him. The catalogue of his works, so ably edited, under the pseudonym of Erastène Ramiro, by the Parisian advocate, M. Eugene Rodrigues, mentions *lettrines* (initials) and “marks,” but not a single *ex libris*. But while the absence of the typical Walloon master from the list of book-plate designers must be keenly regretted, it is satisfactory to note in the first rank the names of those who were either his direct disciples, or who, by displaying his identical racial qualities, may be said to have continued the work he himself performed with so much force and originality. I have often had pleasure in referring in THE STUDIO to the interesting and meritorious group of Liège artists, whose essential decorative gifts are of so refined and “intellectual” a character—if so I may term it: I refer to MM. A. Donnay, A. Rassenfosse, and E. Berchmans, the creators of the best of Belgian posters and also of our best *ex libris*. In the latter as in the former they display, without any parade of virtuosity, the well-balanced and logical style, allied to the soundest and most serious craftsmanship, which is their distinguishing characteristic. To their ranks on this occasion I would add

yet another Liège draughtsman, M. de Witte—albeit his manner is somewhat different—who has designed a book-plate of great merit for M. Terme.

In default of other virtues, the book-plates of Brussels may boast of their comparative numerical superiority and their diversity of style; nevertheless the names of several artists which we would certainly expect to see are wanting from the list, notably those of MM. Crespin, H. Vandevelde, and Hannotiau, whose absence is greatly to be deplored. On the other hand, we find several amateurs who, wholly or in part, have executed their own book-plates, such as the Duc d'Ursel, President of the Société des Beaux-Arts of Brussels, M. Hippert, President of the Société des Aquafortistes Beiges, and Comte Alberic du Chatel, who has engraved, with light and delicate touch, a charming *ex libris* in the eighteenth-century style. Numerous *ex libris* have been composed and engraved by M. J. Schavye, the art binder, who in point of fertility holds the "record," as the sporting phrase goes, for works of this sort. Certainly he has occasionally been obliged by his patrons to execute heraldic compositions of barbarous appearance and other designs of decidedly commercial aspect; but the beautiful plate he designed and completed for M. Montefiore shows him capable of producing true art work when unfettered by restrictions. M. Schavye it was who composed the bookplates for M. de Bonne, M. Edm. Picard the advocate, M. J. Van Volxem, Baron Van den Bergh, and M. R. Chalon, the learned and laughter-loving bibliophile, whose practical jokes were famous in their time. M. J. Weckesser [sic], another art binder, has also done some interesting plates, especially note-worthy being that of Count Leopold de Beauffort, whose celebrated library contains copies of several remarkable works on the chase. This particular bookplate has several times been incorporated into the scheme of the binding, which certain book-lovers declare to be its rational place.



By Fernand Khnopff

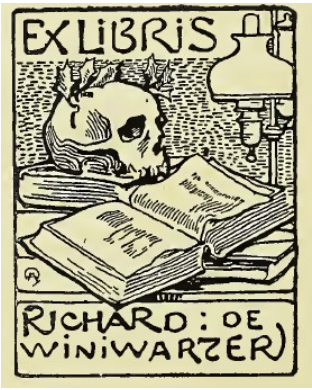
Among the Brussels artists who have designed book-plates may be mentioned A. Lynen, most thoroughgoing of Bruxellois, who executed a work of this kind for M. G. Schoenfeld the advocate; G. M. Stevens, author of his own "mark"; H. Meunier, of poster fame, who has executed *ex libris* for Madame H. Meunier, and for MM. Campion and G. Fuss; G. Lemmen, most "modern" of book illustrators, his plates being intended for Comte Harry von Kessler of Berlin, Herr Curt von Mutzenbecher of the same city, and M. J. Meier-Graefe of Paris. M. A. Verhaegen, on behalf of M. J. Nève, Director des Beaux-Arts, has designed a plate which has been executed in admirable fashion by M.

Vermorcken the engraver. Finally there is the writer himself, several of whose *ex libris* were reproduced some time ago in THE STUDIO, and who has since composed one for the library of the Brussels Bar.

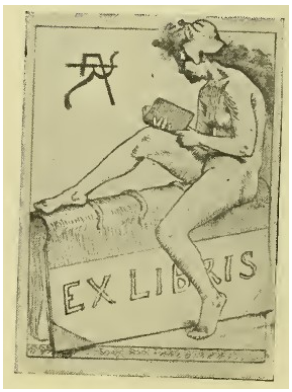
“In Antwerp,” writes M. Ch. Dumercy, keenest of art amateurs, advocate, and man of letters, “the book-plate nowadays has fallen from its former high estate. So far as I am aware this is an exact statement of how things stand. I know three Antwerp bibliophiles who possess *ex libris*. When I say “I know,” you must regard this as a manner of speaking, for one of the three is myself, whom I scarcely know at all. My *ex libris*, which, strictly speaking, is a 'character' formed of two initials and innocent of device, was designed and engraved on the wood of the pear-tree by my friend Max Elskamp, who is not content to be simply a great poet.”

M. Fernand Donnet, Director of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp, had a bookplate designed for himself which was touched up and completed by F. Pellens, the engraver, a student of the Institut Supérieur des Beaux-Arts. Lastly, M. Pol de Mont, the poet, has a very beautiful specimen, invented and designed by M. Charles Dondelet, the quaint draughtsman of Ghent, whose learned talent and rich archaic style were admirably adapted for the production of this work. Other Ghent artists have also designed book-plates, in—comparatively—large numbers.

The erudite and amiable librarian of the University of Ghent, M. F. Vander Haeghen, writes: “Here is the result of my researches with respect to *ex libris* in this library. I find book-plates owned by MM. Heremans, Voituron, and Gantrelle, designed and engraved by Armand Heins; one belonging to M. Massy, designed by Em. Coemans and engraved by N. Heins; one, the property of M. J. Roulez, engraved by V. Lemaire from a little sketch by myself; a plate of my own for an Erasmian collection, engraved by N. Heins after a drawing by J. de Keghel; two more, belonging to me, one designed and engraved by N. Heins, the other engraved by C. Onghena from a design of my own; and one owned by M. Charles Hulin and designed and engraved by P. Allaert. In addition must be remembered the little *ex libris* of the University library.”

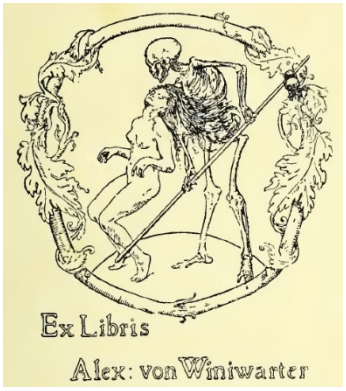


By Donnay



By A. Rassenfosse

This collection has certainly the merit of variety, tor side by side with examples of the simplest style of illustration we find portraits—somewhat photographic portraits—of book-lovers, while large-sized plates are in company with “marks” so small that they would be highly esteemed by M. H. Beraldi, once described by M. Octave Uzanne as “chief of the New School of Orthodox Bibliophiles.”



By A. Rassenfosse

M. Beraldi, in a note attached to his work entitled “Graveurs,” is very severe on book-plates generally, and insists that they shall be as small and as simple as possible. May one not even contend that the *ex libris*, however small it be, placed inside a volume, is calculated to destroy the harmony of the work, and that a “mark” of this sort should properly figure on the outside of the book and form part of the ornamental binding?

Then comes this question: Can an orthodox book-lover interfere with the binding of his book? And this: Should he remove from a volume the *ex libris* already attached to it? The last-named question has been so clearly and delicately handled by Mr. H. G. Ashbee that I am constrained to quote his opinion.

“But what,” he asks,” shall be said about the removing of a book-plate from the volume to which it belongs, and to which it imparts a character, a historic and personal value?” His answer is as follows: “For my own part I do not remove the book-plates from the volumes which I place on my shelves; I like to leave in the books I use any plates which they may contain, and to contemplate 'in my mind's eye' the owner or owners through

whose hands they may have passed; nor do I (as is sometimes done) paste my *ex libris* over the one already there. But I frankly own that I do not hesitate for one moment to abstract a book-plate from a worthless or an odd volume, or even to take any plate out of a long set, and add it to my collection of *ex libris*."

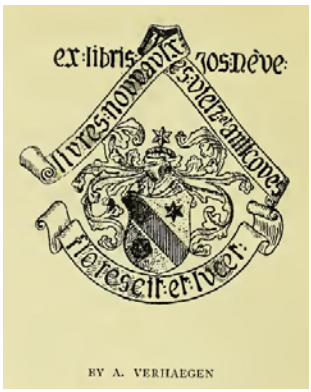
A book-plate is a unique thing, unpretentious in point of size, and of definite character; something that must be specially commissioned, and, moreover, cannot decently exist or be displayed without justification—or, in other words, without a library of books for it to be placed in. For it is only a Victor Hugo who can be allowed, without exciting ridicule, to own a superb and imposing *ex libris*, while possessing a library consisting of little more than fifty volumes. To put it briefly, a book-plate does not "represent," as we say here, the money it costs. It is for this reason especially that the return to fashion of the book-owner's mark, as seen in England and in Germany, seems scarcely possible in Belgium. The beautiful libraries of our old families have their fixed heraldic book-plates; and more often than not the new race of bibliophiles has been satisfied with copying some old mark, or has grown accustomed to defer his choice from day to day, or has thought it safer to entrust the matter to some working engraver, more or less a specialist, sometimes a foreigner, who, with no responsibility on his shoulders, has not scrupled to fabricate any sort of work. These productions are sometimes such as almost to justify a certain Comte C., of Brussels, one of whose numerous eccentricities was that he used his *ex libris* alternately to denote ownership in his books and in his hats!



By E. Pellens



By Donnay



By A. Verhaegen

A word on the question of the origin of book-plates. Mr. William Bolton has given his opinion on this subject with great clearness in an early number of the “Journal of the Ex Libris Society.”

Says the writer: “It is a fact painfully apparent to nearly every one who owns a library that there are in the world a great many outwardly respectable people who have but very lax ideas of morality regarding the return of borrowed books, and who quietly treat as their own property any volume which, unluckily for its rightful owner, has by means of a loan fallen into their hands. This form of book stealing (for in reality it is nothing short of that) is no modern invention. Our ancestors, more than three centuries ago, suffered from these characteristic depredations as keenly as we do to-day, and for their own protection, very soon after the introduction of printing, seem to have adopted a plan, which has survived until the present time, of affixing to every volume their library contained an engraved mark of proprietorship, as a means of insuring the return of the book so labelled, in the event of its being lent, lost, or stolen. Such a label we now, somewhat perhaps inappropriately, call a 'book-plate.'“

To conclude in patriotic fashion an article which, I fear, is incomplete, chiefly by reason of the somewhat involuntary modesty of our bibliophiles, I would beg my readers to believe that, while the scarcity of book-plates in Belgium is remarkable, it is no less so than the honesty of our book borrowers. So mote it be!

Fernand Khnopff.

Khnopff, Fernand, “Some Artists at Liège,” *The Studio*, 13, 61 (April 1898), 178-185.

Some Artists at Liège. By Fernand Khnopff.

At the opening of a most interesting and exhaustive article entitled “Les Lettres Françaises en Belgique,” M. Albert Mockel, the graceful poet and equally delicate art critic, wrote the other day the following lines, which I am glad to repeat: “Every one knows the land of Belgium is composed of two quite distinct parts Flanders and Wallonia. The Flemish—a robust and tranquil race, mostly lymphatic, with a sanguine leaven here and there—are to be found in Bruges, Ghent, and Antwerp; while the Walloons, of livelier and more nervous temperament, inhabit Liège, Namur, and all the country as far as Mons. The Gallo-Frank, or Walloon, with the same blood in him as the French of the Ardennes, is full of ardour, and energy, tempered, nevertheless, by a slight touch of idleness. He is certainly a man of action, but a certain dreamy tendency deprives him of that patient plodding spirit which constitutes the strength of the Flemish. The great defect of the Walloon—and at the same time his chief merit, whence all the other virtues spring—is his extreme nervous sensibility, especially among the cultured classes, while one is astonished to find traces of it even among the country folk. This peculiarity endows these big dark men with a sort of secret tenderness which brings them into close communion with Nature, but at the same time it is the cause of the traditional hot-headedness of the Liègois, and the consequent failure of collective effort among them. The Walloon is inventive by nature, but easily discouraged when the hour of realisation comes. Frequently intellectual, at times over-analytical, and something of a reasoner, he broods over his work, one fancies, with too much subtlety, instead of simply plodding on as his fancy directs him, like the Flamand. He is capable of proving a sculptor or a draughtsman, with force of expression and style to boot, and he understands perfectly well the art of decoration, for in all these things his faculties of abstraction stand him in good stead; but he generally fails at easel-painting, because he is no colourist. His hilly land, often wrapped in fine bluish mist, offers him no limpid atmosphere, no soft outlines like those of the Flemish plains, with their free play of light. But, this material consideration apart, there is a moral element in the matter, which is this—as a rule the Walloon artist grasps things by his sentiments rather than by his senses.”

I have thought it well to give this quotation at length, because the words express, better than any words of mine, something which I recognise to be a truth, and because they summarise that truth in the completest manner. It is necessary, moreover, to remember these pregnant remarks in order properly to understand the transitions and the circumstances generally amid which what we may term “the Liège School” has been formed.

The characteristic feature of this school is, indeed, easily defined. It consists of this—a truly remarkable sense of the expressive value of lines and their decorative application. The Liege artist looks chiefly to his line; the colour is always something additional,

something put in apparently after realisation of the fact that it can add to the effect of the line work.

These Walloons have not that natural instinct for colour which particularly distinguishes the Flemish; but happily they are mindful of it, and thus avoid the dangers of this defect. After a good many attempts—some of them full of interest—most of these artists have given up easel-work, realising that they are not at home in that branch of art; and one and all, they have, without much hesitation or delay, found the means and the manner of giving expression to their ideas.

At one time things had become critical—as M. Mockel tells us—and they might have fallen into despair but for the timely arrival of the Maecenas, the ideal patron, without whom it had been impossible for them to do themselves justice. This benefactor appeared in the person of M. A. Bénard, the art publisher, who took under his wing MM. Berchmans, Donnay, and Rassenfosse. He saw at once they were full of real originality, although the public knew nothing of it, and at the same time he realised it was his duty, so to speak, to aid and to guide them. Accordingly he entrusted them with the illustration of his books and publications, and with the composition of his posters. Without in any way thwarting their aims he succeeded by degrees in initiating his collaborators into all the mysteries of typographical technique, an art which he himself knows most thoroughly from having gone through every stage of it."



"La Toilette" from a soft- ground etching by A. Rassenfosse

M. Bénard has often been commended for having brought out "books which, in a material sense, are real works of art." And I am not afraid to go further, and say this—he has frequently attained absolute perfection. As an example I need only mention certain pages in the "Sangahall," by M. Sauvenière, which, in the arrangement of the text, in the size of the margins, in the well-grasped typographic style of M. E. Berchmans' drawings, in the excellence of the ink and the paper, even in the manner in which the paging is clone, are really perfection itself.



Publisher's Mark by E. Berchmans

M. Bénard's house is adorned with many works produced by his collaborators; and in the photograph reproduced here, representing one side of his dining-room, may be seen a large decorative panel by M. Donnay and a painting by M. Ledru (*Flowers*), bas-reliefs by M. O. Berchmans, ornamenting the doors of a sideboard designed by the architect M. Jaspar, and some lovely vases produced at the Val St. Lambert Works by M. Ledru, whose great success at the Brussels Exhibition was recently recorded in THE STUDIO.

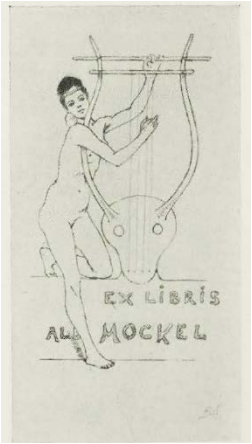
M. Ledru was at first an easel-painter, and it was M. Georges Depret, the alert and cultured manager of the Val St. Lambert Works, who, by his delicate counsel, succeeded in turning him into the recognised designer of the firm's models. These models, as we know, are genuine well-thought-out efforts intended for glass work and glass work alone, a fact worth remarking and appreciating in these days when so many *bibelots* are turned out in the most haphazard fashion.



Stationery Heading by A. Rassenfosse

An exhibition of applied art—the most complete yet seen in Belgium—was held at Liège in 1895 under the style of "L'Oeuvre Artistique." Belgium, France, Holland, Germany, Scotland, and England were represented by their foremost artists; but the little group of Liègeois who organised the Salon attracted most attention by the novelty of their work. They were M. G. Serrurier-Bovy, whose assistance proved quite invaluable, MM. E. and O. Berchmans, A. Donnay, and A. Rassenfosse. Since that date they have proceeded on

their road, developing and increasing their powers, with the result that at the present time they are the leading artists of their kind in Belgium.



Book plate by A. Rassenfosse



An Auto-Lithograph By Armand Rassenfosse

In July 1896, THE STUDIO published a series of photographs by M. Alexandre, of Brussels, of the charming “interiors” designed and carried out by M. Serrurier-Bovy. There were also published at the same time reproductions of some posters by MM. Donnay and Berchmans, and drawings by MM. Donnay and Rassenfosse done for a volume of popular poems published by M. Bénard. The drawings of various kinds published now will give a still better idea of the characteristics of each of these artists.



Silver belt buckle by A. Rassenfosse

In the excellent design for an illustration to the publication entitled “Folklore,'' by M. A. Donnay (see page 186), one must admire—apart from the intelligent grasp of the subject and the ingeniously condensed composition—the sense of real grandeur which marks his interpretation of form and line. M. E. Berchmans is more “elegant.” He is fond of the extended line and the choicest colouring ; moreover be is the truest “painter” in the little group, a fact that is demonstrated by some remarkable “bits” in his *Baigneuses*, which is the property of M. Bénard.

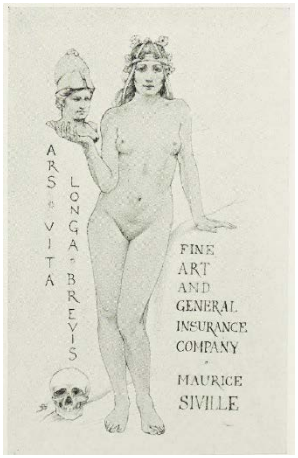
M. O. Berchmans' bas-reliefs ornamenting M. Bénard's sideboard (see page 184) suffice to reveal his technical knowledge, which he displays with equal success in his boxes, his waist-buckles, and his seals.



Initial Letter by A. Donnay

Finally I come to M. A. Rassenfosse; and if I place him last it is only that I may discuss his personality in greater detail, for he perhaps more than any of his fellows may be taken as the true type of the little group of artists with whom we are now concerned. M. Rassenfosse was intended by his parents to go into trade-to carry on their own business, in fact ; but, feeling the attraction of art, he began to devote himself to drawing, working pluckily at night-time and alone, with no guide save the model he was striving to copy. He also tried his hand at etching, and produced his first impressions with the aid of a rolling-pin! Several years in advance of the lately deceased French engraver, H. Guérard, he attempted *pyrogravure* and used the process in furniture decoration. By dint of unceasing effort towards the improvement and refinement of his workmanship he succeeded in a few years in obtaining most satisfactory results. Thereupon he decided definitely to give up business, und to devote himself entirely to the work he loved. This meant, however, that he was henceforth left to his own resources, and must

contrive to earn a living. He passed with dignity and courage through this trying period, and eventually, while on a visit to Paris, went to call on Rops. The great Walloon artist received Rassenfosse as he always receives his young fellow-workers, and soon declared there was nothing further he could teach him!



Stationery heading by A. Rassenfosse


Portion of M. Bénard's Dining-Room

To-day, were he not of so modest a disposition, M. Rassenfosse might justly deem himself *arrivé*; for his engravings-etchings, *vernis-mou*, and dry points—are among the chiefest treasures in the albums of the Brussels Society of Aquafortists; his illustrations, showing a remarkable literary grasp, are highly esteemed by the great publishers ; and his drawings, curiously tinted in pastel style, depart one by one, to adorn the collections of the rich amateur.

But M. Rassenfosse himself is a delicate connoisseur, and occasionally he cannot resist the temptation to indulge in the purchase of some rare edition or some costly piece of work, such, for instance, as his truly marvellous “foukousa,” by Nishimoro, or his seal by M. O. Berchmans, the history of which is worth recording, by way of conclusion. M. Rassenfosse was anxious to have a “handy” seal. Holding a piece of modelling wax in his hand, he made the gesture of using the stamp, and handed the lump of wax thus

“shaped” to M. O. Berchmans. The sculptor's eye discovered the semblance of a head in it with the mouth closed by a bandage, and eventually turned it into an excellent bit of applied art.

Other Liège artists there may be who have produced work of more material value—to themselves—than the artists I have enumerated, but few there are, I firmly believe, whose principles are more sound, whose workmanship is more honest, or who have more regard for their dignity, both personal and artistic. In reply to absolute “official” indifference, coupled with marked hostility on the part of their fellow citizens, they have been content to produce their beautiful works in silence. For my part, I am happy to have been able to assist, to the best of my power, in making them and their efforts known.

F.K.



Furniture by G. Serrurier-Bovy

Khnopff, F. ”Schlussfragment eines Vortrages über Walter Crane im “Cercle Artistique” zu Brüssel,” *Ver Sacrum*, 1,12, (December 1898), 7-10. Translated by Paul von Berthof.

Note: this is a translation of the lecture Khnopff delivered in 1894; a version was printed in *l'Art Moderne* on December30, 1894; see the translation given earlier.

Schlussfragment eines Vortrages über Walter Crane im “Cercle Artistique

Das Fest der Flora, jenes Grabgeleite der Blumen, das der Frühling dem Winter bereitet, ist das köstlichste Juwel aus diesem Schatz von Phantasien; es ist mit einem Worte von all seinen Werken dasjenige, in dem Walter Crane als Dichter wie als Maler am erlesensten erscheint.

Und dieser Zug der Blumen entwickelt sich folgendermassen:

Die Doppelflöte spielend, sich lächelnd verneigend geht ein Jüngling, von Schwalben und verwehten Blüten umflattert, der Königin Flora voran.

Dann kommt die Königin, voller Huld, in üppige, durchsichtige Faltengewänder gekleidet, die an den Armen gleich Flügeln und wie Wellen um die Füsse sind. Mit einem langen, grünen Scepter leitet sie den Chor.

Und Kinder folgen ihr; sie sind noch kaum erwacht, beleben sich aber rasch bei den schmetternden Fanfaren der Narcissen, die blinkende Helme tragen.

Danach in einer Gruppe von schlichtem, etwas ländlichem Ansehen die Primel und das Veilchen, in liebenswürdiger, kleinbürgerlicher Anmuth. Dann der Hagedorn, ein Wappen-Herold, in dunklem Stahl geharnischt, mit weissem Helmbusch geziert. Er schreitet vor der königlichen Krone, die von Pagen unter den flackernden Oriflammen der Tulpen getragen wird, während die blauen Glocken der Hyacinthen läuten. Ihnen zur Seite die heraldischen Schwertlilien, stolze Ritter mit florentinischem Kopfputz, die Wappenschilder hoch und steif in den Händen. Und auf den Stirnblechen und Satteldecken der Pferde schimmern die Embleme des Wappens in violettem Purpur oder goldigem Gelb.

Hierauf das holde Massliebchen und das Schneeglöckchen, zierliche, blasse, junge Mädchen, die sich fröstelnd in ihre weiten, grünen Mäntel hüllen und mit kindlichen Gesten ihre winzigen Glöckchen klingen lassen.

Noch andere kommen vorüber: Die prunkende Pfingstrose, ganz à la Louis XlV, und die Glockenblume, die dem Pisanello so lieb war. Die Rose, Königin der Liebe, mit den herablassende Bewegungen einer zu grossen Frau von schwellender Üppigkeit. Das zarte Vergissmeinnicht und die reine, weisse Lilie; die geschmeidige Grazie der Winde und die derbe Stattlichkeit der Sonnenblume.

Dann erscheinen einige Damen, die prächtig in orangegelben Brocat gekleidet sind, den Chrysanthemen mit den schlanken Schnörkeln ihrer Blätter ädern.

Und am Ende des Zuges wandelt eine, die erlesenste von allen: die Schneerose. Hoch, schlank und biegsam, mit einem feinlinigen, schmachtenden Antlitz und grossen, träumerischen Augen, hält sie den Kopf leicht gesenkt unter der offenen Haube aus weissen, irisierenden Blumenblättern; die bis zum Ellbogen behandschuhten Arme hängen müde nieder; der Körper mit seinem lässigen Schwung versinkt schlaff unter der Berührung eines seidigen, grünen Kleides, vom stumpfen, trüben Grün einer Wasserpflanze, mit dem bräunlichen Schimmer der Verwesung an den Rändern. Diese Schneerose ist eine der entzückendsten Schöpfungen des Walter Crane, oder eigentlich, es ist eine der trefflichsten Typen der englischen Ästhetin, der Engländerin aus der Zeit des Pfaus, wie man in Kensington sagt.

Walter Crane hat nur selten versucht, die moderne Engländerin darzustellen, die sich mehr nach Chicago als nach Florenz richtet, die willkürlich im Reiche der Mode gebietet, und von herrischem und exclusivem Geschmack, nichts nach gelehrten Traditionen fragt. Aber er hat dagegen ein paar Gestalten geschaffen, die ganz unübertrefflich die Erscheinung und die Psychologie der englischen Ästhetin verkörpern.

Die „Ästheten" waren die Folge der Prärafaliten gewesen. Diese, zu einer exclusiven Gruppe vereinigt, hatten in einer künstlerischen, beinahe künstlichen Atmosphäre gelebt, und es ist jener Geschmack am Künstlichen, den nach ihnen die Ästheten pflegten, indem sie ihr ganzes Streben darauf richteten, „das Leben aus Kunsteindrücken und nur aus diesen zusammenzusetzen".

Es wurde Modesache. Es kam zu plumpen Nachahmungen, zu lächerlichen Zierereien. Das ist wahr. Aber was liegt dahin, wenn man dafür, und wäre es nur während eines Momentes, die Hoffnung, die Vision eines beständigen Zaubers, einer nicht endenden Anmuth erlebt hat!

„Träume sind Schäume," sagt ein altes Sprichwort; „aber wenn die letzte Stunde kommt und für nur allzukurze Augenblicke von dem, was unser Leben war, bloss ein vager Schimmer vor den Augen bleibt, in denen der Schatten trübend aufsteigt—wer vermöchte dann die Zeichen zu nennen, die euch unterscheiden. O! Erinnerungen des Erlebten! O! Spiegelungen des erträumten Lebens!

Dieser Satz des Bourget könnte die Überschrift jenes anderen so schönen, gleichfalls englischen Werkes „Die goldene Stiege" von Sir Edward Burne Jones, bilden.

Wie unsere zarten und theueren Illusionen im Laufe des Lebens, so steigen jene idealen Gestalten der Jugend und der Schönheit die unvermeidlichen Stufen der Treppe hernieder.

Im Anfang sind sie lachend und sorglos; dann legt eine davon schon beunruhigt die Finger über die lange, feine, silberne Trompete, um ihren vollen Klang zu dämpfen. Und die Köpfe neigen sich oder richten sich auf und die sanften Bewegungen vermehren noch die Falten der fliessenden, durchsichtigen Gewänder. Sie schreiten herab und an der Wendung der Stiege, in ihrer Mitte, verbildlicht das Klingen einer Violine die verhaltene Leidenschaft.

Dann erweckt das metallische Tongeriesel zarter, kupferner Cymbeln das Bild eines Sonnenunterganges im Herbst, mit seinen Färbungen von trübem Gold und verblasstem Purpur.

Schon wenden sie sich ab und entfernen sich langsam; aber ehe es den mächtigen Saal betritt, wo ein dunkler und dichter Säulengang sich anreiht, bleibt das letzte der jungen Mädchen stehen; es wendet noch einmal den Kopf und sendet einen lächelnden Abschiedsgruss zuruck.

„Träume sind Schäume," sagt man; aber wenn die letzte Stunde kommt, und vor unseren Augen, die allmählich der Schatten umzieht, nur noch ein vager Schimmer dessen bleibt, was unser Leben war—warum dann noch euch trennen? O! Erinnerungen des Erlebten! O! Spiegelungen des Erträumten!

F. Khnopff

Khnopff, Fernand, “Eine Londoner Erinnerung” *Die Zeit*, 15, 194 (June 18, 1898), 184-185.

Eine Londoner Errinerung.
Von Fernand Khnopff (Brüssel)

Sucht man den Ausgangspunkt der gewaltigen Entwickelung der decorativen Künste in England, dann stellt es sich sofort deutlich dar, dass der Anstoss dazu von der Gruppe der präraphaelitischen Maler gegeben wurde und dass es jene kleine Schar bedeutender, nur ihrem künstlerischen Gewissen folgender Männer war, die ohne sonstiges Ziel als ihr hohes Ideal, das sie schliesslich durch die Arbeit auch erreichten, ihrem Lande ihre glorreiche Kunstanschauung aufnöthigten.

Wie es bei allen so bedeutsamen Umwandlungen geht, vollzog sich auch diese nicht nur allmählich, sondern bereitete sich schon länger langsam vor, und es ist leicht genug, ihre einzelnen Phasen zu vervolgen.

Auf dem Continent hatte die romantische Bewegung, in ihrem Kampf gegen den Classicismus des Südens, die Aufmerksamkeit der Künstler auf die heimatliche Kunst von einst gelenkt, die so sehr in Vergessenheit und Misscredit gerathen war.

Es war ein Wiedererkennen.

Dann kamen die grossen Weltausstellungen. England, das seine Unzulänglichkeit erkannt hatte, begann sich zu bekümmern, zu organisieren. Museen wurden gegründet, und die Architekten lieferten als die Ersten den Beweis, dass die Bemühung keine vergebliche gewesen war.

Damals sah man am Ufer der Themse das Parlamentsgebäude in seinen schönen nordischen Umrissen sich erheben. Endlich war die classische Tradition gebrochen, die pseudogriechische und pseudoromanische durch eine nationale Kunst entthront, jene wundersame Kunst des mittelalterlichen England.

Gleichwohl eignete sich jener allzu ausgesprochene Archaismus einer neubelebten Gothik nur für den Bau von Kirchen und gewissen öffentlichen Gebäuden, und es vollzog sich eine Reaction, die den Stil aus der Zeit der Königen Anna zur Geltung brachte. Es war auch das ein Zurückgreifen auf eine Form der heimatlichen Kunst, aber auf eine, die uns naher liegt und sich besser als die Gothik den modernen Bedürfnissen und dem modernen Geschmack anpasste. Und dies ist das echt englische Haus, das liebe, intime Haus, dessen Grundton der Ziegel bildet mit seinem schönen lebendigen Roth, das sich von den üppigen grünen Hintergründen leuchtend abhebt und so hell durch den Rauch, den Nebel und den Regen schimmert.

Neben den Architekten meldeten sich noch andere Vorläufer, deren man gleichfalls gedenken muss. So unter anderen John Ruskin, der, an die grossen Epochen erinnernd, lebhaft dafür eintrat, dass es unmöglich sei, einen Stil zu schaffen, ohne eingehendes Verständnis fur alle Formen der Kunstbethätigung in ihrem Zusammenhang.

Schon Alfred Stevens war da mit dem Beisspiel vorangegangen; er war zugleich Maler, Architekt und vor allem Bildhauer; aber trotz seiner sehr ausgebreiteten Kenntnisse und einer völligen Hingabe an die von ihm erträumte künstlerische Mission war er nicht imstande, die Rolle, die ihm zugekommen wäre, auszufüllen, infolge des allzutiefen Eindrucks, den ein längerer Aufenthalt in Italien auf ihn machte.

Denn darin liegt der höchste Vorzug des William Morris, der nach ihm kam: dass er durch und durch ein Nordländer war, der bald erkannte, dass sich die Kunst in den nördlichen Ländern nach innen richten müsse und nicht nach aussen, wie im Süden: dass hier nicht Marmorstatuen in Gärten, Fresken an den Mauern und äusserer Schmuck im Freien am Platz seien, sondern dass es vor allem gelte, die Wohnung, das „Home“ zu zieren, zu erhellen und freundlich zu gestalten damit es wirklich der „Freund“ in trüben Tagen werde.

Und in jenem Moment war es, wo der Einfluss der Präraphaeliten zutage trat; denn um dieser Kunstbewegung die Richtung zu geben, bedurft es nicht so sehr eines Ideals und weise erwählter Grundlehren, als vielmehr einiger Männer von Geschmack, die zugleich Männer der That und von der Leidenschaft für das Schöne erfüllt waren und vor dem Kampfe nicht zurückschreckten, der unvermeidlich war; denn ihre Neuerungen mussten eine ganze Reihe festgegründeter Principien der decorativen Kunst in ihrem Lande umstürzen oder hinwegräumen.

Es war mir eines Tages beschieden, diese Schar erlesener Künstler in einem heraufbeschworenen Bilde deutlich zu schauen, und die Erinnerung daran wird immer unauslöschlich immer leben.

Es war vor nun schon ein paar Jahren in London, an einem Nachmittag im Mai; ich hatte den alten Meister Ford Madox Brown aufgesucht, der sehr weit draussen, in der Nähe von Primrose Hill, jenseits von Regents Park, wohnte.[1]

Das Wetter war bedeckt, und unter jenem merkwürdigen Londoner Himmel, jenem geschlossenen Bilderhimmel, der keinen Glanz und keine Tiefe hat, aber so ausgesprochen und milde ist, erstreckten sich die weiten, sammtenen Rasenflachen des Parks bis zu einem köstlichen blassblauen Nebel, in dem die Kronen der hohen Bäume verschwammen. Auf dem Teiche glitten die Schwäne langsam dahin.

Der Maler zeigte mir das Werk, an dem er gerade arbeitete; es war eines der decorativen Bilder, die zur Ausschmückung des Rathhauses von Manchester bestimmt waren. Dann giengen wir hinab, um den Thee zu nehmen, und allmählich sprach er nun von seinen Erinnerungen, den Erinnerungen an seine Kinderzeit in Brügge, das uns beiden so innig lieb war und uns nun so ferne und wie aus alten Zeiten erschien. Dann von seinen Aufenthalten in Antwerpen, in Paris und Rom, endlich von seiner Rückkehr

[1] The following description is repeated in Fernand, Khnopff, « Des souvenirs à propos de Sir Edward Burne-Jones » (lu à la séance du 5 aout 1915), *Annexe aux Bulletins de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*. Communications présentées à la Classe en 1915-1918 (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, 1919), 35-42.

nach London, seiner Begegnung mit Rossetti und seinem Beziehungen zu Morris: „Zwei Männer von Genie“, sagt er, „den grössten die England in diesem Jahrhundert besass.“

Ueber den kleinen Salon, der ehrfürchtig zahlreiche Skizzen und Zeichnungen, Andenken von verschollenen oder entschwundenen Freunden, vereinte, senkte sich unmerklich die Dämmerung; am Fenster sitzend, das noch sein üppiges Haar und seinen langen, weissen Bart beleuchtete, beschwor der alte Meister mit seiner klanglosen Stimme und seiner langsamen Rede das Leben der präraphaelitischen Bruderschaft vor mir herauf. Ab und zu stand er auf, nahm ein Bild von der Wand und und zeigte mir beim letzten Schein des sterbendes Tages eine oder die andere kunstvolle, scharfe Zeichnung von J.E. Millais oder eine Studie von Rossetti mit der überraschend prächtigen Ueppigkeit der Linienführung oder ein Bild der schon fast sagenhaften Elisabeth Siddal, wahrhaft seltsame Werke, von hartem, heftigem Colorit und beängstigendem Ausdruck: oder endlich, sehr bewegt, Bilder seines Sohnes Olivier M. Brown, der so früh dahin gegangen und auf den der arme Vater so stolz war.

So sprach er noch lange, lange fort. Es war Nacht geworden und ich kehrte nach London zurück, nach Oxford Street mit dem blenden Lichterglanz, dem ewigen Wagengerassel, dem Auf- und Niederwogen der Passanten, erfüllt von den Empfindung, dein paar unvergessliche Stunden in einer anderen Welt gelebt zu haben, versunken in einen köstlichen Rausch der Seele.

Khnopff, Fernand, “Eine Londoner Erinnerung” *Die Zeit*, 15, 194 (June 18, 1898), 184-185.

Translation:

A London Reminiscence.
By Fernand Khnopff (Brussels)

When we examine the point of origin of the enormous development of the decorative arts in England, it is immediately clear that the impetus was given by the group of Pre-Raphaelite painters and that this eminent little group was made up of men following only their artistic conscience, with no other goal than their high ideal, which they finally reached through their works and forced their glorious view of art on their land.

As with all such momentous transformations, this not only took place gradually, but was slowly prepared for some time, and it is easy enough to follow its individual phases.

On the continent the Romantic movement, in its fight against the classicism of the south, had directed the attention of the artist to the national art of the past, which had fallen into oblivion and much discredit.

It was a rediscovery.

Then the great world exhibitions came. England, which had recognized its inadequacy began to be concerned, and to organize. Museums were founded, and the architects provided the first proof that the effort had not been futile.

At that time one saw the Parliament building with its beautiful northern outlines rise along the River Thames. At last the classical tradition was broken, the pseudo-Greek and pseudo-Roman dethroned by a national art, this wondrous art of medieval England.

Nevertheless the too pronounced archaism of the revitalized Gothic was only appropriate for the construction of churches and certain public buildings, a reaction took place that brought the style from the time of Queen Anne. It was also a return to a form of national art, but one that is closer to our era and better suited for adapting to modern needs and modern taste than the Gothic. And this is the real English house, the beloved intimate house whose keynote of brick built with a beautiful vibrant red makes bright contrasts with the lush green backgrounds and shines so bright through the smoke, the fog and the rain.

In addition to the architects previously reported, there were other precursors of whom one must also think. Among others, John Ruskin, who, remembering the great epochs, clearly realized that it was impossible to create a style without a thorough understanding of all forms of artistic activities in their context.

Alfred Stevens was already there as a pioneering example; he was at the same time a painter, architect and above all a sculptor; but despite his very broad knowledge and complete dedication to the artistic mission he dreamed of, he was unable the fill the role that would have come to him, as a result of the overwhelming impression that a long stay in Italy had made on him.

In this lies the highest distinction of William Morris, who came after him: that he was through and through a northerner, who soon realized that art in the northern countries should address itself to the interior and not to the exterior, as in the south: that here there are no marble statues in gardens, frescoes on the walls, and exterior decorations on the square, but art should be applied above all to the residence, the "Home," to grace, to brighten, and make it friendly so it really will be the "Friend" in gloomy days.

And it was at that moment that the influence of the Pre-Raphaelites became apparent; and to give this art movement direction, it was not necessary to have ideal and fundamental doctrines, but rather a few men of taste who were also men of action, filled with the passion for beauty and who would not shrink from the inevitable struggle; because their innovations had to overturn or clear away a whole series of firmly established principles of decorative art.

It was granted to me one day to have a clear look into an evocative image of this band of fine artists, and the memory of it will always be forever indelible.

It was already a few years ago in London, one afternoon in May; I had gone to visit the old master Ford Madox Brown, who lived very far out, near Primrose Hill, beyond Regent's Park.[2]

The weather was overcast, and under that memorable London sky, that closed sky from a picture that has no shine and no depth, but which is so pronounced and mild, the wide velvety lawns of the park stretched up to a delicious pale blue mist in which the crowns of tall trees were blurred. On the pond the swans glided slowly along.

The artist showed me the painting on which he was working; it was one of decorative panels that were intended to decorate the city hall of Manchester. Then we went down to take tea, and then gradually he spoke of his memories, memories of his childhood in Bruges, which the two had us so intimately loved and which now seemed so far away in ancient times. Then he spoke of his stays in Antwerp, Paris and Rome, finally of his return to London, his encounter with Rossetti and his relations with Morris: "Two men of genius," he said, "the greatest that England possessed in this century."

Above the small salon, which united numerous revered sketches and drawings, souvenirs of lost or vanished friends, the twilight descended imperceptibly; sitting by the window, which still illuminated his luxuriant hair and his long, white beard, the old

[2] The following description is repeated in Fernand, Khnopff, « Des souvenirs à propos de Sir Edward Burne-Jones » (lu à la séance du 5 aout 1915), *Annexe aux Bulletins de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*. Communications présentées à la Classe en 1915-1918 (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, 1919), 35-42.

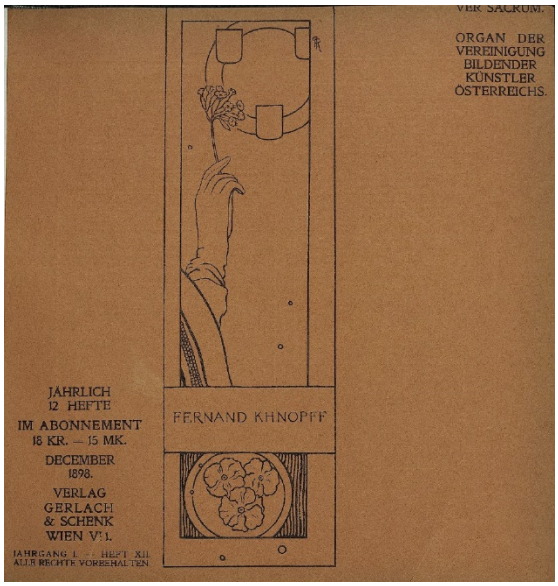
master with his quiet voice and his slow speech conjured up the life of the pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood before me. Now and then he stood up, took a picture off the wall and, showing me in the last glow of the dying day, one or the other of the artful, sharp drawings of J. E. Millais, or a study by Rossetti with a surprisingly splendid luxuriance of lines, or an image of the almost legendary Elisabeth Siddal, truly strange works of hard, violent coloring and frightening expression, or finally, with great emotion, images of his son Oliver M. Brown, taken so early from us and of whom the poor father was so proud.

He spoke for a long, long time. Night came and I returned to London, to Oxford Street with the dazzling bright lights, the eternal rumble of traffic, the up and down waves of passersby, filled with the sensation of having lived some unforgettable hours in another world, lost in a delicious intoxication of soul.

Khnopff, Fernand, Special issue of *Ver Sacrum*, 1, 12 (December 1898). Issue designed by Khnopff.

See the high resolution scan at the University of Heidelberg:

http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/vs1898/0379?sid=952b005516dfee98c7359264d15d9876



F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 12, 58 (January 1898), 271-275.

Brussels.—The monument to Jules Anspach has recently been unveiled here. Anspach was the burgomaster of Brussels who, a quarter of a century ago, transformed the city, and, among other improvements, constructed the new central *boulevards.* The work was entrusted to M. Janlet, the architect, and M. P. Devigne, the sculptor, but the illness of the latter delayed matters, and eventually the sculptural part of the memorial had to be divided among several artists.

The chief defect in the monument is its want of unity, which is not surprising, seeing how many hands have been engaged upon it. The general scheme is M. Janlet’s. The low reliefs in white marble, showing Anspach in profile and a figure symbolising the river Senne, were executed by M. Aerts from models prepared by M. Devigne. The two side figures in bronze are by M. J. Dillens, and the St. Michael in gilded bronze, which crowns the memorial, is the work of M. Braecke, after M. Devigne's design. M. Braecke also did the bronze masks for the upper basin; and the six bronze chimeras (somewhat over-contorted) on the chief basin are by M. Devreese. The use of all this white marble, bronze, gilded bronze, blue and grey stone and red Norwegian granite, produces an effect of richness somewhat too glaring at present, perhaps, and needing time to tone it down.

The new album published by the Brussels Society of Aquafortists is one of the best in this most interesting collection. There is a notable improvement in the plates generally, and some of them, particularly those by MM. Baertsoen and Rassenfosse, are truly remarkable.

The beautiful “Fontaine des Chimères” by the sculptor Vander Stappen, which adorned the great central basin at the Brussels Exhibition, is not to remain in the state originally projected. The Government has decided that its final form shall be in bronze.

M. Rosseels, the well-known landscapist, and head of the Academy of Fine Arts at Termonde, has given an exhibition of his work in the Salle Verlat, at Antwerp. He is among those Belgian landscape-painters who have been most strongly opposed to the romantic, bituminous school, and certainly some of his canvases are excellent examples of a sincere treatment of nature.

The Salon of the Water-colour Society has been tastefully arranged as usual, and the general effect is distinguished by what we call *tenue,* or style. There were numerous abstentions among the members of the society, but for all that the exhibitors and the regular “guests” once more display their customary skill; while the public appear to greet their old favourites as cordially as ever.

Among the new names one notes that of Mr. C. W. Bartlett, whose touch and colouring, especially his yellow and red ochres, are strongly suggestive of Brangwyn. M. Jungmann

also attracts attention. His brushwork recalls the work of Raffaëlli about fifteen years ago.

The English school is represented by two productions of Professor Herkomer, one of which, a portrait miniature, reveals very skillful work ; some shimmering sea-pieces by Miss Clara Montalba; landscapes of fine effect and velvety colouring by Mr. Nisbet; and a fanciful submarine study, cleverly executed, by Mr. Weguelin. One can only hope the contingent of English water-colourists may each year become more numerous, in order to show the superiority of honest, careful work over that known as “powerful” or “striking,” which, oftener than not, is simply a disguise for ignorance of drawing and trickiness of execution.

F. K.



Fernand Khnopff

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio,* 13, 59 (February 1898), 49-50.

BRUSSELS.—The album of nine etchings published by M. Omer Coppens will certainly satisfy those who are interested in the career of this sound artist, one of whose lithographs was reproduced some time ago in THE STUDIO. Several of these plates represent scenes in Bruges, whose faithful delineator he is, never tiring in his efforts to paint or draw or engrave its squares, its canals, its solemn, silent quays. The bindings by M. Coppens exhibited in the Applied Arts department of the Brussels Exhibition attracted considerable notice, being noteworthy both in execution and in design.

The high reputation of that remarkable artist, the late Joseph Stevens, has been considerably added to by the exhibition of thirty of his works at the Maison d’Art in Brussels. In his day people looked for a “pretty bit of painting,” precise and solid in drawing, with colours rich and delicate, and cunningly applied. And although in some of his works—*Le Grand Marché aux Chiens*, for instance, in the Brussels Gallery—one recognises the influence of Courbet and Decamps, and in others that of his brother Alfred, they are nevertheless entirely personal in point of *technique*, notably *Le Chien à la Mouche*, from the Marlier collection, which is truly wonderful. All the canvases by Stevens exhibited on this occasion come from private collections, for the most part inaccessible to the public, and the committee of the Maison d’Art may sincerely be congratulated on having brought them together in this way.



“Le Grande Marché aux Chiens,” From a Painting by Joseph Stevens

On many an occasion one has had good cause to commend M. Buls, the present Burgomaster of Brussels, for his zeal in preserving or embellishing the picturesque and characteristic aspects of the capital. To him is due the restoration of the “Grand’ Place,” while the completion of the ornamentation of the Hôtel de Ville and the rebuilding of the “Maison du Roi” may also be placed to his credit. In order to show their gratitude for his constant artistic feeling shown by the Burgomaster, a number or artists have opened a subscription, on the initiative of the “Cercle pour l'Art,” for the purpose or presenting M. Buls with a commemorative work of art.

The small exhibitions, which are rapidly following one another this winter in the galleries of the Brussels Art Club, are, generally speaking, of little interest. There is too much evidence of commercial feeling in them all, and one thinks with lively regret or the

collection of early nineteenth-century English work shown last year by M. Sedelmeyer, and of that most interesting and instructive display of Walter Crane's productions which some time back attracted crowds—artists and public alike to the club premises.

M. A. Hannotiau, the excellent lithographer and designer or posters, whose advertisement for the "Cercle pour l'Art" was reproduced in THE STUDIO, has recently produced two charming little posters. The drawing is very graceful, but the colouring, which is perhaps somewhat too delicate, renders reproduction next to impossible. One of M. Hannotiau's lithographs, which appeared in the last album published by the Etchers' Society of Brussels, is worthy of its predecessors, from its breadth of execution and the deepness of its blacks.

F.K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 13, 60 (March 1898), 117-119.

BRUSSELS.—Some of the numerous posters published lately are worthy of remark, one of the most prominent being that designed by M. H. Meunier for a Salon de Thé, known as *Le Rajah*. It is a piece of very skilful and sober colouring, with a charming scheme happily condensed, and the essential lines full of expression. It is not perhaps so original as *Le Casino de Blankenberghe*, reproduced some time ago in THE STUDIO, but it is worthy nevertheless of bearing comparison with the excellent posters by the Liège artists, for it has the same great merits as these in its strong simplicity and evenly balanced composition.

M. Privat-Livemont’s latest poster affords fresh proof of the artist’s skill in its accurate draughtsmanship and graceful colouring. Also deserving of mention is the little placard announcing the Exhibition of the Cercle pour l’Art, an ingenious and a very artistic production by the president of the club, M.O. Coppens, a painter-engraver of great ability, whose pewter work and bindings are eagerly sought after by connoisseurs.

The general appearance of the Exhibition of the Cercle pour l’Art is distinctly restful. The mere *machine à effet*, the sensational first production, is not to be found here. Many of the exhibits on the other hand are of considerable importance, and not a few of the artists proclaim their individuality in striking fashion.

M. V. Rousseau we all know as a sculptor of pure and delicate style; his recent works on a large scale testified to his thorough mastery of his art, but never yet had he “let himself go” so completely as in the little bronze figures which he now offers for our admiration. They are really delightful in their grace, exquisite in form and perfect in point of workmanship.

M. O. Coppens in his *Nocturnes* very skilfully suggests the hardness produced by certain moonlight effects, which he has been studying for some time past. M. R. Janssens (who, by the way, is exhibiting at the Cercle Artistique some score or so of pictures and studies all marked by honesty and simplicity of treatment) displays an excellent portrait of an old lady. M. Hannotiau sends some “bits” of various old-fashioned towns, treated in rich warm tones. M. Ottevaere shows his twilight woodland scenes; MM. Ciamberlani and Fabry contribute nude studies of the best sort; M. O. Dierickx has on view a scholarly but somewhat cold composition entitled *L'age d'or;* and lastly, M. Braecke, the sculptor, exhibits a *Christ* of curious appearance, and very interesting in execution.

After having hitherto shown a preference for the display of English and French applied art, the Libre Esthétique Society is now going to exhibit a selection of German work of this kind. The list of contributors is far from being complete; one misses the names of several very prominent artists of great influence, whose work has often been reproduced and described in THE STUDIO. However the productions of the Danish ceramic school, the Tiffany glass work, and that of M. Evaldre, a Brussels artist, together with the

paintings of MM. Van Rysselberghe, Verhaeren, Frédéric, Claus, Heymans, L. Simon and others, will certainly draw a large number of visitors to this most varied and interesting exhibition.

F. K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 13, 61 (April 1898), 199-200.

Brussels.—The numerous visitors at last year's Exhibition will remember that, after the Fine Arts Section of Great Britain, the best feature of the entire undertaking was the Colonial Exhibition at Tervueren; and they will be glad to hear that Lieutenant Masui, who has the management of it, has been officially appointed to arrange the Congo Free State Pavilion at the Paris Exhibition of 1900, while the actual work of erecting the pavilion itself has been entrusted to our able young architect, M. Horta.

M. Horta, an appreciation of whose work would interest the readers of THE STUDIO, is one of a group of young Brussels architects whose ingenious methods, after having at first completely puzzled our “aesthetes”—as we call them here—are now gradually compelling admiration. Other young architects there are in plenty who strive to be Hortas, but fail to achieve anything beyond the most superficial imitations. This, however, is inevitable.

The Liège engraver, F. Maréchal, has acquired a great and well-deserved reputation among amateurs and artists alike by his recent exhibition of work at the Cercle Artistique of Brussels. Hitherto he had been known only by the engravings published years ago, and preserved in the album of the Société des Aquafortistes Belges; and this latest display of his came quite as a revelation. M. Maréchal has since been invited to exhibit at Antwerp and at Munich.

Among the latest posters calling for notice is one of small dimensions, designed by M. G. Combaz for the Exhibition of the “Libre-Esthétique” at Brussels. It is excellent in composition, with the lettering ingeniously disposed; the somewhat heavy design and the harmonious colouring being suggestive of Eastern ceramic work. This poster is printed in six colours. Another interesting poster of entirely different style has been executed by M.A. Rassenfosse, of Liège. It is of great size, and intended to announce the *bals publics*. It represents a pair of *pierrettes*, one in red, the other in black, dancing together.

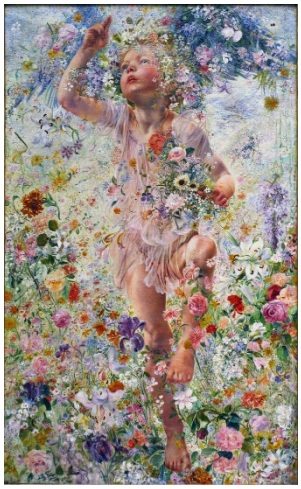
F.K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 13, 62 (May 1898), 272-277.

BRUSSELS. —The Salon of the “Libre Esthétique,'' one of the most interesting art exhibitions in Brussels, has been opened for the fifteenth time—if one may include the displays by the old “Cercle des XX.,” the traditions of which have been carried on by the “Libre Esthétique” Club, with no modifications to speak of. The exhibition is full of interest, from the merit of the works it contains, and from the way in which they have been arranged. The most important works of applied art have practically been all collected in the first room, a sort of corridor, in which, thanks to the softened light produced by M. Evaldre's glass, they produce a most favourable effect on the visitor. Here we find at once M. Louis C. Tiffany's exhibit-vases, flagons, and dishes in favrile-glass. But it is needless to discuss these wonderful works further, after the recent article in THE STUDIO from the pen of Mrs. Cecilia Waern. Enough to say that they constitute the *clou* of the whole Exhibition, for there is nothing more truly deserving of attention than these superb productions.



“Femme Lisant” by Georges Morren



“Le Printemps” From a painting by Léon Frédéric




"Soir en Province (Flandre) from a painting by Albert Baertson |
"Ferme de Zuid, Beveland" from a painting by Emile Claus

In neighbouring cases are displayed the delicate, pale-tinted porcelains from the Royal Manufactory, Copenhagen, together with the ingenious pewter work of M. Karl Gross, of Munich; vases, dishes, and works of ceramic art by MM. Bing and Groendahl, of Copenhagen; the extensive exhibits of the "Société Danoise du Livre"; the embroideries of Mlles. Ida and Carlotta Brinckmann, of Hamburg; and the *batiks* by M. J. Thornprikker, of La Haye. Proceeding further we come upon the bronzes (vases, figures, and animals) by Mr. P. Weyland Bartlett, most ingenious and skilful in composition and admirably oxidised; the bronze statuettes by M. V. Vallgren; the pewter work of M. J. Desbois, and the bronze *plaquettes* by M. A. Charpentier, whose style is growing more and more refined.

Other notable productions are the wrought-iron brackets by M. Otto Eckmann, of Berlin, displaying an *ensemble* of charming lines; M. Fritz Rentsch's (Dresden) richly coloured tapestries, both embroidered and painted; the delicate objects of applied art by MM. Plumet and Selmersheim, of Paris; and lastly, the "schemes" and "designs" by Mlle. Huez and M. G. Combaz, of Brussels. The poster, by M. Combaz, announcing the opening of this Salon, is most happily conceived, and shows genuine progress on the part of the designer.

In the picture galleries one of the finest canvases is M. Alfred Verhaeren's *Intérieur d'Eglise.* This is a superb production, admirable in colour, of masterly execution and profound feeling. M. Frédéric's *La Nature,* in spite of the fact that it is overloaded with detail, is nevertheless remarkable for the skilful handling of this very detail, which constitutes one of the chief merits of this important and laborious work.

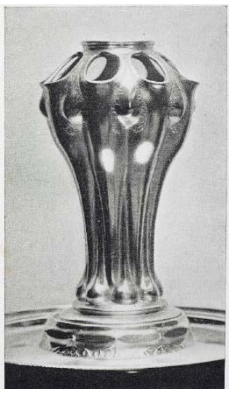
Among the other Belgian productions are the large and brilliantly coloured *Soir en province* by M. A. Baertsoen; the *Ferme de Zuid, Beveland,* by M. E. Claus; a delightful little painting, *Zélandaises,* by M. Mertens; and the plentiful display by M. Van Rysselberghe, which comprises portraits, figures, landscapes, seascapes, drawings, and pastels, the latter including a charming portrait of a little girl. The German school is represented by paintings by Mlle. Dora Hitz, M. A. Illies, M. Curt Hermann, and M. W. Leistikow, in which a regard for colouring appears to be the chief object in view. The French school sends portraits by M. L. Simon, dreamy paintings from the brush of M. Le Sidaner, and a delicate picture by M. Maurice Denis.




"Filette" by Theo van Rysselberghe | Embroidered panel by Mdlle. L.G. Van Maltemburgh



Frieze by Gisbert Combaz

Design for a Poster, by G. Combaz | Metal vase by Karl Gross

A word must also be said for the Dutch studies by MM. Charles W. Bartlett and N. Jungmann; the drawings, etchings, and lithographs of MM. M. Cazin, G. Morren, whose charming *Femme Lisant* is reproduced upon page 272, F. Liebermann, Van Hoytema and Deysselhof; M. Fritz Thaulow's Venetian scenes; the graceful colour schemes of MM. Alexander and Childe Hassam; M. Welden Hawkins's landscapes; M. C. Meunier's exhibit, full of interest, as usual; and lastly, the works of the young Belgian sculptor, G. Minne—expressive little figures in bronze and blue-stone. His figure in blue-stone is altogether a most remarkable work.

F.K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio,* 14, 63 (June 1898), 66-69.

BRUSSELS.—Among the plethora of little exhibitions at the Cercle Artistique a word must be given to the recent display by MM. O. Coppens and Hannotiau, who for a long time past have taken a delight in showing us in their paintings and drawings scenes from the old city of Bruges. They accomplish their object in widely differing fashion. M. Coppens loves to reproduce the strong effects of sunlight or moonlight on the placid waters of the canals, and on the ancient buildings around. M. Hannotiau, however, is less precise. He aims chiefly at expressing the “soul of things” in his antique houses with their cleft gables, in his gothic churches, in his silent streets, with dark-robed women passing to and fro. On the same occasion M. L. Van Strydonck exhibited some remarkable jewellery work, very successful in point of colouring and in oxidation.

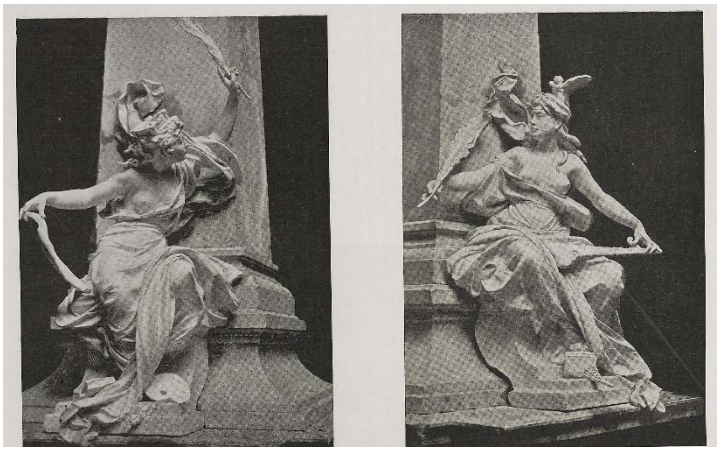
The town of Brussels has commissioned M. P. Dubois, the sculptor, to execute the monument to be raised on the Place des Martyrs in memory of Frédéric de Mérode. Some time ago THE STUDIO reproduced a marble statue by this artist—a seated figure of a woman—now in the Brussels Gallery.

The third “Salon d’Art Idéaliste” at the Maison d’Art is far superior to its two predecessors. There are many works of great merit, while the absurdly pretentious element is almost entirely absent. M. J. Delville’s large painting, *L’Ecole de Platon,* is a work which may be warmly praised for its grace and lofty style. M. A. Point sends exhibits many and various. He is the founder of a society the aims and objects of which are thus expressed in the catalogue:—”‘Haute-Claire’ is a new association of artists and craftsmen desirous of establishing a fixed style—a tradition—in industrial art. Jewellery, enamelling, sculpture, binding, furniture-making and pottery—all these branches will be undertaken by the Haute-Claire Society, in respectful observance of the master-works of the past, and in accordance with those laws of beauty and rhythm and harmony which constitute Nature herself. Every piece of work produced by the Haute-Claire Association will be executed exclusively by the members, and will bear the letters ‘H.C.,’ with the sign of a sword between two iris flowers.”

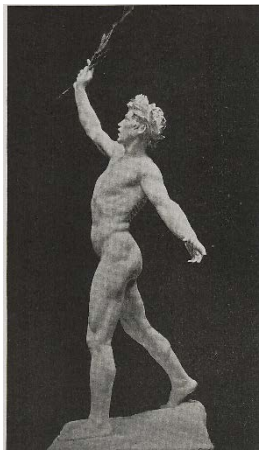
The paintings of M. Rion—most interesting in their sincerity of expression—are also worthy of note; also those of M. G.M. Stevens, equally remarkable for their colouring; together with M. de Rudder’s animated group of statuary, and the plaster “sketch” of M. J. Dillens’ large figure—*Le Silence de la Tombe*, which adorns the entrance of one of the chief Brussels cemeteries.



"Le Silence de la Tombe" by J. Dillens



"La Ville de Bruxelles Reconnaissant" by J. Dillens | "La Magistrature Communale" by J. Dillens



Portion of the "Le Laurier" Group by J. Dillens

Some of this admirable sculptor's latest decorative works must certainly be counted as among his best. They include two bronze statues for the Anspach monument—recently described in THE STUDIO —representing *La Ville de Bruxelles reconnaissante* and *La Magistrature Communale*, and the group symbolising *Le Laurier,* and forming part of the

decorative scheme for the ornamentation of the Brussels Botanical Gardens. This group consists of a young man holding aloft in triumph a branch of bay-leaves, with an eagle with outstretched wings. The skilful arrangement of his draperies, the ingenuity of his composition, and the harmonious arrangement of his work are very striking. Beyond all question, M. J. Dillens has produced some of the finest work in contemporary Belgian sculpture.

lt is to be hoped M. Ch. Vanderstappen, our chief professor of sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts, and a director of that same institution, may, in his last-named capacity, be able speedily to bring about the reforms which have become absolutely necessary if the reputation of this school of instruction is to be maintained. As a teacher, M. Vanderstappen has undeniable ability; most of the young Belgian sculptors whose work has attracted notice at recent exhibitions have been his pupils; yet none of them has renounced his own individuality in favour of even the remotest imitation of his master. Moreover, with a keen regard for the future of his pupils, he has always been specially careful not to allow them to stray in wrong directions, and has never hesitated to divert from the pursuit of High Art those who, having no special aptitude in that direction, yet seem destined to make a mark in what are known as “the minor arts.” This means a saving of a good many disillusions and failures at any rate!

The Cercle Artistique de Bruxelles concluded its series of little winter displays by an exhibition of recent work by M. F. Courtens, the landscapist, together with various copies, after painters of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, done in Italy by M. Guffens. These copies are conscientiously painted, while the landscapes show their author’s habitual strength and solidity. This interesting exhibition, good as it was, scarcely sufficed, however, to atone for some of its predecessors in the same galleries during the past few months displays of the “trade” or “amateur” description. It is to be hoped that rigorous measures may be taken to put a stop to this abuse.

F. K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 14, 65 (August, 1898), 203-208.

BRUSSELS.—The decoration of the Botanic Gardens here will soon be complete. In addition to a new set of bronzes—statues and candelabras two electric poles—the work of MM. Paul Dubois and J. Lagae, and a large allegorical group by M. Ch. Vanderstappen, are to be erected. The oxidation of the first series of statues was unquestionably too dark, losing all its decorative value amid the surrounding foliage; accordingly the artists who are carrying out the new scheme have been endeavouring to give a lighter tone to their bronzes, one more nearly akin to the antique.




“La Ville de Gand” by J. Lagae | The Brussels Exhibition Medal by J. Lagae


Bas-relief by C. Samuel

M. J. Lagae has lately produced several decorative works, among the more notable being a medal for the Brussels Exhibition of 1897, and the monument erected in memory of the poet, Ledeganck, author of a poem on the three Flemish towns, Antwerp, Bruges, and Ghent. The base of the memorial is adorned with low-relief figures personifying the three towns. In the intervals of this work M. Lagae has been busy modelling various solid and carefully studied portrait busts.

The committee of the “Artists' Demonstration” in honour of M. Buls, Burgomaster of Brussels, have decided to devote the funds subscribed to the execution of a carved seat,

surmounted by a fresco, to be erected under the arcade of the “Maison de l'Etoile,” forming part of the quaint Grand’ Place, which M. Buls did so much—and so wisely and intelligently—to restore. Another souvenir of the occasion will be placed in the Hôtel de Ville, in the shape of a work by Bernard Van Orley, the great Brussels artist of the sixteenth century, presented to the town by M. Louis Cardou. It is a tapestry cartoon representing a scene in the life of St. Paul. Van Orley was famous as a designer of glasswork and tapestry; yet this is the only example of this side of his genius now possessed by the town of Brussels. M. Louis Cardou's gift is thus of great value for more reasons than one.

In addition to a number of remarkable works of various kinds the Salon of the Société des Beaux-Arts of Brussels offered to the public two special and very interesting attractions: first, a selection of works of art from the famous collection of the Berlin amateur, Ernst Seeger; and secondly, a display, such as one rarely sees, of sculpture by the leading artists of Belgium. M. Seeger's exhibit included examples of the German and the English schools, each represented by a large painting—*Le Sermon sur la Montagne,* by F. von Uhde, and *Les Rois Mages,* by F. Brangwyn, which is quite delightful in its pensive expression and its harmonious twilight effects. Mr. Walter Crane's graceful fancy and inexhaustible imaginativeness are displayed in six works of various styles; and two masterly studies reveal the deep and sound craftsmanship of Mr. J. M. Swan. Then we have to note a delightful watercolour by C. Walton, a landscape by Macaulay Stevenson, some dogs by G. Pirie, and two paintings in delicate greenish tints by R. Fowler, which complete the English exhibits. The Germans were also strongly represented, their chief exhibitors being W. Leibl and Adolf Menzel, who sent a lot of careful, industrious work, of remarkable technique. Had one the space one would like to mention *seriatim* the seventeen works contributed by Leibl, all full of interest from their wonderful sureness of touch and their subdued intensity of effect, no less that the twelve productions displayed by Menzel, quite extraordinary in their acuteness of vision and their suppleness of execution. F. von Lenbach was represented by a little portrait of Wagner; A. Boecklin by an exuberant canvas styled *La Chasseresse*; M. Liebermann by ten works in various styles and methods; V. Defregger by a beautiful study of a head; Max Klinger by a large pen-drawing of astonishing dexterity; and MM. Von Schennis, G. Jahn, and Müller by some notable engravings.

Among the Belgian exhibits unquestionably the most remarkable in the whole Salon was *Le Désespéré* by A. Struys, whose great success in Paris last year has not been forgotten. There were also on view several interesting portraits, apart from those of the French pastellist, R. Gilbert, and landscapes and seascapes, mostly of large dimensions, from many members of the society.

In sculpture C. Meunier exhibited a work in high relief, *Mater Dolorosa;* J. Dillens several decorative pieces, some of which were reproduced in the June number of THE STUDIO; Ch. Samuel a *bas-relief* for the tomb of Edouard Duyck, the painter, who died last year; J. Lambeaux a large bust, *Diane;* M. Vinçotte a series of carefully studied busts

in marble and bronze; and J. de Lalaing a bust of fine, bold outline, with two cleverly designed tigers in bronze. Three large figures, lately completed by M. de Lalaing, and representing *La Force brutale, Le Droit,* and *L'Inspiration,* are to be placed in one of the new squares in Brussels, not far from the Parc du Cinquantenaire, where they will undoubtedly show to great effect.



"Le Droit" | "L'Inspiration" | "La Force Brutale" by J. De Lalaing

The "Association Belge de Photographie" celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of its foundation by a grand exhibition held in the galleries of the Cercle Artistique de Bruxelles. The catalogue contained a list of 638 exhibits, the work of over 200 amateurs and professionals. The chief aim of most of the exhibitors would seem to have been to discover and to perfect sundry little matters of process and printing, which they have been careful to keep to themselves, in order to invest their work with something of originality and personal feeling. But art has nothing to gain by all this, while photography has everything to lose. The most notable productions here, both from the artistic and the purely photographic standpoints, were those of M. Alexandre, of Brussels, who exhibited various portraits, landscapes, and groups well worthy of his reputation, which, moreover, is no unknown quantity to the readers of THE STUDIO. The display of the Paris Photo Club kept away several important exhibitors; nevertheless the foreign work was so plentiful that it is quite impossible to discuss it in detail. I must content myself in conclusion with the bare mention of a few exhibitors, members of the Association Belge de Photographie—MM. E. Hannon, R. Deman, M. Hanssens, J. Maes, J. Casier, V. Delva, C. Puttemans, J. Vanderborght, and M. Vanderkindere, the secretary of the association, whose amiability and energy during the exhibition were greatly appreciated.

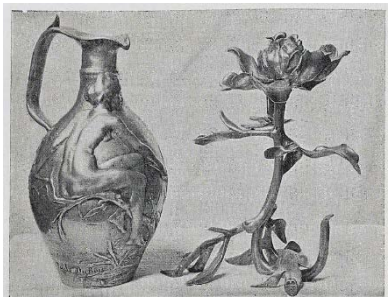
F. K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 15, 67 (October 1898), 55-56.

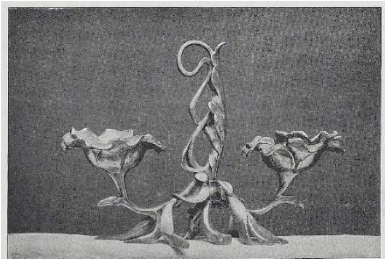
Brussels.—A long-called-for reform has just been accomplished. The architectural classes at the Brussels Academy of Fine Arts have been completely reorganised, and M. Ernest Acker has been appointed chief professor. A better choice could not have been made. M. Acker has not dabbled in that ultra-modernity which frequently has but an ephemeral success; but no one can accuse him of conventionality. By virtue of his sound knowledge, his pure and delicate taste, he deserves to be classed among the foremost of our young Belgian architects, and one may confidently predict that his teaching will be sound and valuable.

Of all the Belgian sculptors who, in addition to their monumental work, have taken up applied art, the most successful is unquestionably M. Paul Dubois, of Brussels. His candelabra, salt-cellars, bon-bon boxes, &c., are at once artistic in appearance and well adapted for everyday use, two qualities not often found in combination. Moreover, accustomed as he is to studying the beauties of bronze, and all its possibilities in the way of oxidation, M. Dubois has sought and found all sorts of effects obtainable in pewter, the material he affects. The photographs reproduced here show more effectually than any written description the grace of line and flexibility of modelling which mark this clever artist's work.





Plaquette in Pewter by Paul Dubois | Jug and Candlestick in Pewter by Paul Dubois



Vase in Pewter by Paul Dubois

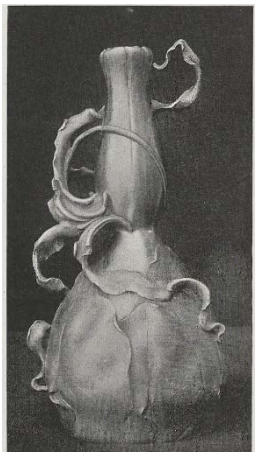
A committee has been formed at Louvain to arrange an exhibition of posters. Artists and collectors have been invited to co-operate in order that such material may be collected as will enable the committee to reconstitute the history of the illustrated poster from its origin.

F. K.

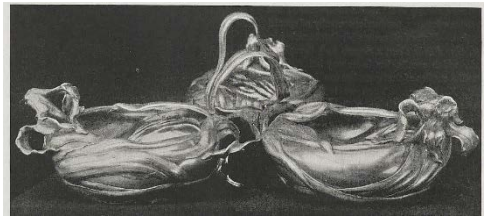
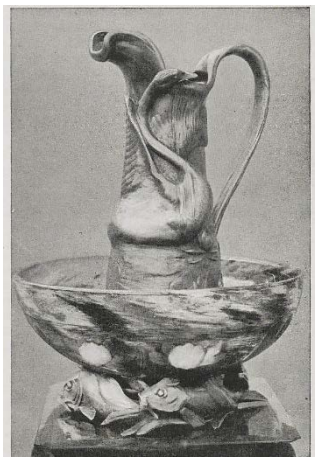
F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 15, 68 (November 1898), 134-136.

Brussels.—Among the numerous exhibitions opened in the provinces that at Charleroi is the most interesting. To be sure, a large proportion of the paintings and sculptures displayed reveal too much of a commercial spirit; and, moreover, the majority of the works have been seen already in Brussels and elsewhere; but there are a few new productions worthy of special mention. First of all comes M. Ottevaere's picture, *Un Vieille Cour,* a sincere and thoughtful work, which recalls, but in no way imitates, the beautiful studies of that great but too little known artist, X. Mellery. Then we have two landscapes by M. Ter Linden, of bold and spirited colouring and broad and skilful design; and, finally, a beautiful female bust in marble, by M. Vinçotte.

The Applied Arts section is of considerable size. Here we see the poster designs of MM. Crespin and H. Meunier, the stoneware masks of M. de Rudder, the embroideries done by Mlle. Huez, the bindings of M. O. Coppens, the ceramic work of M. Diffloth (of the firm of Boch Frères), M. P. Dubois' pewters (comprising inkstand, some chandeliers, a bonbon-box, a salt-cellar, an ash-pan, a jar, and several goblets), the merits of which have already been appreciated in THE STUDIO, M. L. Van Strydonck's goldsmith's work, and numerous exhibits from M. P. Wolfers, vases (ivory and silver), a ewer (silvered and gilded bronze), a comfit-box in *repoussé* silver, a *timbale* in the same metal, and a bouquet-holder in gilded silver and crystal. The workmanship of these last-named exhibits is somewhat laboured, but the richness of the material used is very strikingly displayed.

Vase in Silver by Philippe Wolfers | Vase in Silver by Philippe Wolfers

Comfit-Dish in Silver by Philippe Wolfers | Silvered and Gilded Bronze Ewer by Philippe Wolfers

Hitherto the club known as “Le Sillon” had always opened the series of winter exhibitions in Brussels; but now a new society, “Le Labeur,'' is first in the field, and has occupied the Musée since September. The general aspect of the exhibition is dark and gloomy. There are evidences of the return—to which I have previously referred—of some of our young painters to the bituminous manner dear to the romantic school of 1830—the obvious reaction against the recent tendency in the direction of excessive brightness. Unquestionably the cleverest of these artists is Konrad Starke, whose productions reveal the “interesting exactitude” which characterises the works of Menzel's followers. There is something attractive, too, in the dark and obscure work of M. Oleffe—something which will lead to greater things later on. M. Herbays, who sends a large number of sculptures, shows a marked advance. The large plaster cast by M. Lambeaux, which is only a fragment of a colossal work, cannot be properly appreciated at present. In conclusion, I should mention the poster announcing the exhibition by M. Tytgat, a work curiously condensed and most skilfully designed.

The International Exhibition of Posters at Louvain contains more than 1500 examples. lt is specially interesting, as it displays for the first time—so far as Belgium is concerned—the work of various Danish, German, and Russian artists. Altogether the exhibition is a complete success, on which we may congratulate the chief organiser, M. Boels, president of the club styled “La Table Ronde.”

F. K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 15, 69 (December 1898), 203-204.

BRUSSELS.—M. A. Bénard, the Liège publisher, whose salutary artistic influence cannot be too highly appreciated, issued some time ago an “Illustrated Tourist's Guide to Ypres and its Neighbourhood.” Quite recently he has published a work of the same kind, “Promenades dans Bruges.” These volumes inspire one with a desire to visit these old Flemish cities, and they will certainly assist in popularising their charms. As usual, M. Bénard has “turned out” these little books with all possible care.

The first of the Winter Exhibitions organised in the galleries of the Cercle Artistique de Bruxelles takes the form of a collection of the works of the late Eduoard Duyck, the young painter who died last year, just when his paintings and decorations were beginning to command attention. The Brussels poster owes its origin to the zealous and unremitting efforts of Eduoard Duyck and A. Crespin (who were known as the “Siamese twins”).

One can only regret that circumstances prevented Edouard Duyck from devoting his delightful gifts as a draughtsman to book illustration.

Immediately after the opening of this exhibition tbe monument erected to Duyck's memory was inaugurated in the cemetery of St. Gilles, near Brussels. lt consists of an architectural *cadre* by M. Dumont, with a marble *bas-relief* by M. Samuel, a reproduction of which appeared in THE STUDIO for August last.

Léon Mignon, the sculptor, has just died in Brussels, at the age of fifty-one. His group, *Le Dompteur de Taureau,* erected in the square of the Ile du Commerce, Liège, is a very remarkable piece of work. He started on his career under the happiest auspices, but evil days soon overtook him, and he struggled in vain against poverty and trouble. One of the most important of his later works is to be seen in the balusters of the staircase at the Brussels Museum. It represents the *Labours of Hercules,* and reveals great ingenuity of composition and profound technical knowledge.

F.K.

1899

Khnopff, Fernand, “August Rodin,” *Wiener Rundschau*, 3, 16 (1899), 375-77.

Auguste Rodin.
Von Fernand Khnopff (Brüssel).

In der grossen Halle, den Sälen und Galerien der »Maison d’Art« in Brüssel wurde im Monat Juni eine Rodin Ausstellung veranstaltet.

Der Eindruck des Künstlerischen dieser Ausstellung war nicht nur bei den Künstlern—die schon eine grosse Zahl dieser Werke kannten und sie dennoch immer in langen und eingehenden Discussionen studierten—, ein tiefer, sondern auch beim »Publicum«, der »compacten Masse«, die meist jeder Neuerung feindlich ist und in dieser Feindseligkeit durch den Krämergeist gewisser sogenannter Künstler unterstützt wird, welche, um »Carriere zu machen« und »hinaufzukommen«, in ihren periodischen Ausstellungen, die eher aus dem Kramladen als aus dem Maleratelier zu stammen scheinen, der Sehträgheit, der Unwissenheit und dem schlechten Geschmacke huldigen.

Besucher, die als gleichgiltige Spaziergänger in das Ausstellungshaus eingetreten waren, kamen—bewegt, gerührt und unter dem Banne jenes Staunens heraus, das oft der Bewunderung knapp voran schreitet. Sie sind überrascht und gerührt gewesen; vor allem durch jene vollkommene Gleichgiltigkeit dem Einförmig Fertigen gegenüber, jene gründliche Verachtung des »angenehmen und hübschen Anblickes«, der der schläfrigen Schauge wohnheit des Philisters so lieb ist; dann durch die wirkliche Bedeutung, jene mächtige Bejahung und besonders die wunderbare Fähigkeit, die flüchtigsten Bewegungsäusserungen des menschlichen Körpers darzustellen.

Diese Rodin-Ausstellung war nicht die Ausstellung aller Werke des grossen französischen Bildhauers; es kam nur das, was man sein Atelier nennen kann, d. h. was bei ihm in dem Augenblick verfügbar war, in dem er gebeten wurde, in Brüssel seine letzten Arbeiten gemeinsam auszustellen.

Der Meister kam selbst nach Brüssel, wo ihm ein bewundernder und ehrerbietiger Empfang seitens der Berufsgenossen und Freunde wurde, wo er aber auch die bitter-süsse Wehmuth alter Erinnerungen wiederfand. Während der schrecklichen Tage der Commune war er arm und unbekannt hierher gekommen. Die Stadt verwandelte sich damals: man zog neue Strassen durch die alten Stadtviertel; über der eingewölbten Senne errichtete man die »neuen Boulevards« im Centrum; man erbaute die »neue Börse« und alle die hohen Bauten im Pariser Stil des Second Empire.

Den Bildhauern bot sich reichlich Arbeit, und Rodin erhielt zahlreiche Bestellungen. So arbeitete er an einem grossen Theil der Ausschmückung der Börse mit und führte nebst anderen bemerkenswerten Stücken zwei jener Gruppen aus, die das Thürgesimse in der

Rue de la Bourse zieren, und alle Karyatiden im Innern. Auf dem Boulevard Anspach schuf er die staunenerregenden Karyatiden am Gebäude des Credit Lyonnais, die schmerzgekrampfte Musculaturen zeigen, und noch andere, heute verschwundene, an der Ecke der Rue des Pierres. Er schmückte die Mauer des Gartens, der den Akademie-palast umgibt, mit zwei wunderbaren Gruppen: dem Belvederetorso, die Vereinigung verschiedenster Attribute beherrschend, und mit einem kräftig modellierten Amor. Schliesslich zierte er unweit von hier den Gang des Palais Royal de Bruxelles mit einer Serie der neuen belgischen Provinzen.

Die Rodin-Ausstellung in der »Maison d'Art« enthielt Unveröffentlichtes, und zwar namentlich eine Sammlung von Zeichnungen, die im ersten Stock der Galerie zu sehen waren.

Diese Skizzen sind bewunderungswürdig: von einfachem und beständigem Strich, ohne Verbesserung, unbekümmert um Correctheit und Genauigkeit, einzig und allein in dem Gedanken gefertigt, den so flüchtigen Eindruck einer Bewegungslinie, einer durch Anstrengung hervorgerufenen Muskelschwellung oder einer zögernden Geberde wiederzugeben. Sie sind von aussergewöhnlicher Wahrheit. Man konnte auch die elegant ausgestattete Sammlung von 142 Zeichnungen sehen, die jüngst auf Kosten eines Freundes des Meisters, Herrn Maurice Fenailles, herausgegeben wurden; ferner verstärkten noch eine lange Reihe von Photographien seiner Monumentalsculpturen, von verschiedenen Seiten aufgenommen, und eine zahlreiche Sammlung von Sculpturen, die fast alle die ursprüngliche, kühne Weisse des frischen Gipses trugen, die Wirkung einiger schöner Bronzen mit reicher, mächtiger Patina. Dort, in der Mitte der Halle, war die »Eva« postiert, jene wunderbare, so grossartig wahre Statue, die in drückender Gewissensqual den Kopf auf die schamvoll und schmerzlich gekreuzten Arme neigt; dort auch Porträts, u. a. Puvis de Chavannes, Rochefort, Falguières, alle lange studiert und kraftvoll durch geführt; dann eine stolze und drohende Bellonabüste; die Köpfe der »Bürger von Calais« mit eigensinnigen Stirnen und zähen Backenknocken; der Frühling, wunderbar in zärtlicher Empfindung; eine unter der zu schweren Last zerschmettert hingesunkene Karyatide; der Denker Dante, auf den Ellbogen gestützt und der Entfaltung seiner Träume zu sehend; und schliesslich der tragische Kopf des heiligen Johannes, jenes Vorläufers, dessen Stimme in der weiten Wüste wieder hallt, dessen Blick aber in der inneren Vision des verhängnisvollen Zusammenhangs der Dinge verloren ist.———

Dann dort und da sonderbare Untersuchungen, unerwartete Resultate, Fragmente von köstlich oder grausam sinnlicher Grazie, sicherer und gedrängter Modellierung oder in unbestimmter, wankender Linie, und schliesslich das in so schönem Gedankenreichthum erdachte Monument Victor Hugos, das vor zwei Jahren bei der Ausstellung in Paris so lebhaft um stritten wurde.

Es mag hier wohl interessant sein, zwei Beurtheilungen dieses Werkes zu erwähnen, die nicht etwa von Fanatikern der böswilligen Kritik einer-, oder des Lobes andererseits stammen, sondern von einflussreichen, im Ausdrucke gemässigten Kunstkritikern. Herr E. Rod schrieb in der »Gazette des Beaux Arts«: »Welcher Weg ist da zurückgelegt von

dieser Maske (dem Manne mit der zerquetschten Nase), die nur eine mächtige Studie ist, bis zu dem mit tiefem Kunstverständnis durch gearbeiteten Werke, welches das für den Luxembourg bestimmte Monument Victor Hugos ist! Der Dichter—wirklich es handelt sich hier nicht mehr um Victor Hugo, sondern um das Genie, und das Antlitz nimmt einen ganz symbolischen Ausdruck an—sitzt nackt wie ein Gott, in wohlstudierter und harmonischer Stellung; hinter ihm flüstert die tragische Muse, die Muse der Dramen und der »Châtiments« , ihm ihre Flammenreime zu; neben ihm harrt die Alltagsmuse, jene der »Voix interieures« , der »Feuilles d'automne«, der »Chants du Crepuscule«, in demüthiger, unterwürfiger Haltung der Worte, die sie sammeln will. Vereinzelt gestellt, würden diese, wenn auch mit unvergleichlicher Meisterschaft ausgeführten Figuren unvollständig bleiben. Vereint bilden sie eine Gesammtheit von imponierendster Majestät, eine Synthese grosser Linien, die unter dem Wehen eines Orkans sich zu beugen scheinen. Was man uns hier zeigt, ist das Genie in voller Thätigkeit, eine unbewusste Kraft, die wie Wind und Leidenschaft hervorbricht, wo sie will . . .«

Andererseits schrieb Herr G. Lafenestre in der »Revue des deux Mondes«:

»Wir wollen nur der Erinnerung halber von der Gipsgruppe Victor Hugos von Rodin sprechen, die so viel Lärm machte. Dieses Werk ist im jetzigen Zustande nur ein verrenktes unzusammenhängendes Modell, über welches ein Urtheil zu fällen wohl verfrüht wäre. Der Katalog hat die Güte, uns mitzutheilen, dass in dieser kolossalen Skizze ein unvollendeter Frauenarm ist; welch optimistischer Katalog! Ach! wenn nur ein Arm unvollständig wäre; ein anderer Arm ist allerdings von unverhältnismässiger Länge; aber bietet dies einen Ersatz? In der That ist nur eine einzige Figur, die des nackt auf einem Felsen am Meeresufer sitzenden und mit dem gestreckten Arm einen quälenden Gedanken abwehrenden Dichters, genug weit ausgearbeitet, dass man an ihr in der summarischen, aber kräftigen, leidenschaftlichen, ausdrucksvollen Behandlung der Formen die mächtigen Eigenschaften erkennen kann, die Herrn Rodin schon bei einigen vereinzelten Stücken Beifall eintrugen. Wenn Herr Rodin mit mehr Genauigkeit und Correctheit die beiden allegorischen Figuren, welche die Bedeutung der Gruppe vervollständigen sollen, bestimmt und sie durch besser gerathene Linien und Massenvertheilung mit der Hauptfigur verbunden haben wird, werden wir vielleicht, wie wir es wünschen, in diesem heroischen Werke das endgiltige Meister werk begrüssen können, das die Freunde des Bildhauers uns seit einiger Zeit ankündigen; bis nun aber sind wir wohl gezwungen, bei den Hoffnungen zu bleiben, so wie er bei Versprechungen bleibt.« Und er, der grosse Künstler, sagte indes in vollkommener Heiterkeit: »Ich habe viele Mühe gehabt, ich habe ganz sachte gewagt. Angesichts der Natur habe ich mich, je besser ich sie verstand, je kühner ich, um sie zu lieben, die Vorurtheile abschüttelte, entschlossen, ich habe versucht. Das Studium der Antike hat mich ermuthigt und auch die Sculptur des Mittelalters, die ebenso schön ist wie die der Griechen.—Jeder deutet die Natur in dem Sinne, den er liebt; ich habe mir schliesslich den meinen klar gemacht.« Und über den so arg zugerichteten Balzac sagte er noch einem Schriftsteller, Herrn Mauclair, der die Worte aufschrieb: »Ich fühlte in meinem Innern, dass ich recht hatte, und wäre ich allein gegen alle gestanden. Meine hauptsächlichsten

Modellierungen sind darin enthalten, was man auch sagen möge, und sie wären weniger darin, wenn ich äusserlich mehr beendigte. Und was das Ausmeisseln und Wiederausmeisseln der Zehen oder Haarlocken anbetrifft, so hat das in meinen Augen gar keinen Wert, es beeinträchtigt die Hauptidee, die grosse Linie, die Seele dessen, was ich machen wollte, und ich habe dem Publicum darüber nichts weiter zu sagen. Hier ist die Grenzlinie zwischen ihm und mir, zwischen dem Glauben, den es mir zu bewahren hat, und den Concessionen, die ich ihm nicht machen darf«.

Im ganzen ist Rodins Kunst ausschliesslich modern durch jene unbewusste Combination von realistischen Versuchen und mystischen Elementen, von Sinnlichkeit und Geistigkeit, jenem—vielleicht ewigen—Dualismus der menschlichen Natur. Er hat den grellen Eindruck wiedergegeben, den der Reiz zitternden, warmen Fleisches und der glatten, geschmeidigen Haut hinterlässt; aber auch den tiefen Eindruck, den die Betrachtung der Brauen eines Denkers oder der Wimpern eines Träumers erzeugt.

Weil Rodin aufmerksamen Auges die unendliche Manigfaltigkeit der Natur beobachtet und weil seine gewandten Finger die Hilfsquellen der Kunst kennen, hat er sich nicht auf immer in eine Formel verschlossen.

Er gehört nicht zu jenen, die man in wenigen Worten genauer Eintheilung definieren kann. Er hat Formen, Stellungen, Bewegungen gründlich studiert und aufrichtig wiedergegeben; er konnte so der Wahrheit, der grossen Synthese, nahekommen, und wenn man die Empfindungen zusammenfassen wollte, welche diese so einfache und zugleich complicierte, so raffinierte und so barbarische, so harmonische und so sprunghafte Kunst erweckt, so könnte man es nicht besser als durch die Wiederholung eines einzigen Satzes von Eugène Carrière, einem ebenfalls sehr grossen Künstler:

»Rodin verschafft uns das wunderbare Schauspiel eines Wesens, das in vollständiger Übereinstimmung mit den Naturkräften steht.«*

Brüssel, im Juni 1899.

* Aus dem Manuscript für die »Wiener Rund« übersetzt von Clara Theumann.

Khnopff, Fernand, “August Rodin,” *Wiener Rundschau*, 3, 16 (1899), 375-77.

Translation:

Auguste Rodin.
By Fernand Khnopff (Brussels).

In the great Hall and in the rooms and galleries of the “Maison d’Art” in Brussels a Rodin exhibition was held in the month of June.

The artistic impact of this exhibition was not only deeply felt by artists—who knew a large number of these works and had studied them in long and detailed ongoing discussions—but also by the “publicum,” the “compact mass,” which is hostile to almost every innovation and in this hostility is supported by some so-called artists with the spirit of a shopkeeper, who seek to “make a career” and to build a reputation in their periodic exhibitions, which appear to come more from the general store than from the studio of the painter, paying homage to inertia, ignorance and bad taste.

Visitors who came into the exhibition as indifferent strollers,—were moved, stirred and under that spell of wonder which often just precedes admiration. They were surprised and touched above all by the complete indifference to uniform production, that thorough contempt for the “pleasant and beautiful sights,” which are so dear to the Philistines in the typical boring exhibition; and then through the real meaning, that powerful affirmation and particularly the wonderful ability to represent the most fleeting movements manifest in the human body.

This Rodin exhibition was not a retrospective of all the works of the great French sculptor; it was only from those that one could find in his studio, i.e., what was available to him at the moment when he was asked to exhibit his recent work in Brussels.

The master himself came to Brussels, where he was given an admiring and respectful reception by his professional comrades and friends, and where he also rediscovered the bitter-sweet pangs of old memories. He had come here during the terrible days of the Paris Commune, poor and unknown. The city was being transformed at the time: new roads driven through the old quarter of the city; above the covered river Senne “new boulevards” were built in the city center; and the “new Bourse [stock exchange]” was constructed along with tall buildings in the Second Empire style of Paris.

There was much work for sculptors, and Rodin received many commissions. Thus he worked on a large part of the decoration of the stock exchange and created two groups which graced the door cornice in the Rue de la Bourse, and all the caryatids on the inside, in addition to other remarkable pieces. On the Boulevard Anspach, he created the astonishing caryatids on the building of the Credit Lyonnais, which show musculature contorted in pain, and others, lost today, on the corner of the rue des

Pierres. He decorated the walls of the garden which surrounds the Academy Palace with two wonderful groups: the Belvedere torso dominating the union of different attributes and a vigorously modelled Amor. Finally, he graced the hall of the Royal Palace of Brussels with a series of new Belgian provinces.

The Rodin exhibition in the "Maison d'Art" contained works never shown publicly, notably a collection of drawings which could be seen on the first floor of the gallery.

These sketches are worthy of wonder: with simple and steady lines, without refinement, unconcerned with correctness and accuracy, produced solely by thought alone, to represent the fleeting impression of moving contours, muscles swelling with effort, or a hesitant gesture. They are of extraordinary truth. One could also see the elegantly appointed collection of 142 drawings recently published at the expense of a friend of the master, Mr. Maurice Fenailles, enriched by a large series of photographs of his monumental sculptures, taken from different sides, and a numerous collection of sculptures that almost all wore the original bold white of fresh plaster, the effect of some beautiful bronzes with richer, more powerful patina. There, in the middle of the Hall, "Eve" was stationed, this wonderful, so magnificently true statue, who bows her head in remorse, with arms crossed in shame and pain; there are also portraits, including those of Puvis de Chavannes, Rochefort, Falguières, all deeply studied and powerfully executed; then a proud and threatening bust of Bellona; the heads of the "Burghers of Calais" with their stubborn foreheads and strong cheekbones; Spring, a wonderfully tender sensation; a Caryatid crushed under her heavy load; the thinker Dante, leaning on his elbow and watching the unfolding of his dreams; and finally the tragic head of John the Baptist, the precursor, whose voice echoes in the vast desert, and whose gaze into the inner vision of the fatal relationship of things is lost.———

Then here and there curious investigations, unexpected results, fragments of delicious or cruel sensual grace, confident and compact modeling, or indefinite wavering lines, and finally in the beautifully conceived wealth of ideas in the monument to Victor Hugo, that was so controversial at the exhibition in Paris two years ago.

It may be interesting to mention here two assessments of this work, not by fanatics of malicious criticism, or of praise on the other hand, but from influential art critics who are moderate in their expression. Mr. E. Rod wrote in the *Gazette des Beaux Arts*: "What route is traveled from this Mask (the Man with the Broken Nose), which is just a powerful study, to the works crafted with deep artistic understanding for the monument of Victor Hugo for the Luxembourg! The poet really is here no longer Victor Hugo, but genius itself, and the face takes a very symbolic expression—sitting nude like a God, in a carefully studied and harmonious position; behind him the tragic Muse whispers, the Muse of the dramas and the "Châtiments" [*Punishments*, 1853], their flames rhyme to him; next to him the daily Muse waits with a humble, submissive attitude, for the words which she wants to collect of the "Interior Voices," the "Autumn Leaves," the "Songs of Twilight." In isolation, these figures would remain incomplete, even if executed with unparalleled majesty mastery. Together they provide a unified majesty, a synthesis of great lines that seem to bend in the throes of a hurricane. What

one shows us here is genius in full activity, an unconscious force that erupts like wind and passion, where she wants to go...»

On the other hand, Mr. G. Lafenestre wrote in the *Revue des deux Mondes*:

“We want to speak only of the memory of half of Rodin’s gypsum group of Victor Hugo which caused so much noise. This work is in its current state only a twisted, disjointed model to which judgement is probably forthcoming. The catalog has the goodness to tell us that there is an unfinished woman’s arm in this colossal sketch; what an optimistic catalog! Ah! If it were only one arm that was incomplete. However, another arm is certainly disproportionate in length; but is this offered as a replacement? In any case, it is only a single figure sitting naked on a rock by the sea with the poet’s outstretched arm fending off a tormenting thought, sufficiently developed that one can recognize in the summary but powerful, suffering, expressive treatment of the forms in some isolated pieces for which Mr. Rodin has received scattered applause. If Mr. Rodin were to finish the two allegorical figures which should complete the meaning of the group with more accuracy and correctness, and connect them with the main character through better chosen lines and distribution of the masses; perhaps we would, as we wish, recognize in these heroic works the conclusive masterpiece that the friends of the sculptor have announced us for some time until now but we are probably forced to continue to hope, as he continues to promise.” And the great artist said, however, in perfect serenity: “I have had many troubles, I have very gently dared. In the face of nature I have tried to love her more boldly, determined to shake off prejudices, as I understood her ever better. The study of the ancient world has emboldened me and also the sculpture of the middle ages, which is as beautiful as that of the Greeks.—Everyone interprets nature in the sense that he loves; I’ve finally made mine clear to me.” And about the so badly dressed Balzac, he said to Mr. Mauclair, who recorded his words: “I felt within me that I was right, and even if alone I would stand against all. My main models are included in that, whatever you may say, and they would be less so if I made them superficially more complete. And as far as I am concerned the carving and recarving of the toes or locks of hair has no value in my eyes, it affects the main idea, the big line, the soul of what I wanted to do, and I have nothing more to say to the public. Here is the border line between him and me, between the faith that keeps me, and the concessions I cannot make for him.”

Rodin’s art is exclusively modern through those unconscious combination of realistic experiments and mystical elements, of sensuality and spirituality, that—perhaps eternal—dualism of human nature. He has represented the lurid impression left by the allure of trembling, warm flesh, and the smooth, supple skin; but also the deep impression generated by the contemplation of the brows of a thinker or the eyelashes of a dreamer.

Because Rodin watches with an attentive eye the infinite many-sidedness of nature, and because his skillful fingers know the resources of art, he has never fallen into a formula.

He is not among those which can be defined accurately in a few words. He has thoroughly studied shapes, positions, movements, and sincerely represented them; he

could get close to the truth, the great synthesis, and if you wanted to summarize the sensations aroused by this art that is so simple and at the same time complicated, so sophisticated and so barbaric, so harmonious and so volatile, you could do no better than to repeat a single sentence of Eugène Carrière, also a very great artist:

“Rodin gives us the wonderful spectacle of a being that is in full agreement with the forces of nature.” *

Brussels, June 1899.

* From the manuscript for the *Wiener Rund,* translated by Clara Theumann.

Khnopff, Fernand, “Hamlet in England,” *Die Zeit* (Wien), 19, 235 (April 1, 1899), 8-10.

Hamlet in England

Hätte Jules de Goncourt das unaufhörliche Anwachsen der Bücher, Flugschriften und Artikel sehen können, die seit einem Jahrzehnt über Shakespeares Werke geschrieben wurden, dann hätte er vermuthlich sein berühmtes Wort, das Altherthum sei dazu geschaffen worden, um den Gelehrten von heute Brot zu geben, mit einer Variante versehen. Denn mit einem Eifer, der an die Aneignung des neu erschlossenen amerikanischen Contintents erinnert, haben die Erläuterer sich dieses ungeheuren Werkes bemächtigt, haben versucht es in Provinzen einzutheilen, und sich Gebiete von verschiedener Art und Ausdehnnung zugemessen.

Es ist eines der bezeichnenden Merkmale dieses gewaltigen Genies, dass sich alle leidenschaftlich in ihm suchen, und dass sich schliesslich auch wirklich jeder in ihm wiederfindet. Sein Geist scheint alle Richtungen des menschlichen Denkens umfasst zu haben, und seine Werke sind eine kostbare Encyclopädie, ein Sammelwerk des Wissens. Die häufige Anwendung technischer Aufdrücke in seinem Dramen und ganz specialler Bezeichnungen hatte denn auch eine stattliche Reihe von Schriften zur Folge, deren Schreiber zu beweisen versuchten, dass der Dichter nothwendig zum mindesten ein Dutzend Gewerbe und Berufsarten betrieben haben müsse. So hat unter anderen der Bischof Wadworth sich lediglich damit beschäftigt, Shakespeares verblüffende biblische Gelehrsamkeit nachzuweisen. Lord Campbell hat seine juridsichen Kenntnisse untersucht und einem trefflichen Rechtsgelehrten in ihm gefunden, der mit allen Gebrauchen der damaligen Gerichtsbarkeit und mit ihrer (wie es scheint, sehr schwierigen) Amtssprache wohl vertraut war. Blades sagt, er habe das umständliche Gewerbe des Buchdruckens eingehend verstanden. Paterson schreibt unter dem Titel „Shakespeare’sche Entomologie” die Naturgeschichte aller Insecten, die der Dichter genannt hat. Thoms macht aus ihm einen bedeutenden Strategen, R. Smith einem tüchtigen Agronomen, wieder andere einem Gärtner, einen Botaniker, ja selbst einen Fleischer, einen Seemann, einen Schulmeister oder Reitlehrer. Und nun gar die Astronomie! Denn Cäsar spricht schon davon, dass der Polarstern ein Fixstern ist. Und die Physik! Denn schon Cressida führt das Gesetz der Schwere und das der Anziehung an. Dagegen muss man wieder zugestehen, dass Desdemona etwas spät an den Folgen einer Erstickung stirbt; Bohmen hat einen Meerestrand, und Delphi wird zu einer Insel; Hector gar citiert den Aristoteles. Die Statue der Hermione im „Wintermärchen” wird dem Giulio Romano zugeschrieben, einem Maler, der wohl zugleich Ingenieur und Architekt war, aber keine Bildhauerwerke hinterlassen hat. Und es is dies überdies der einzige „Bildhauer”, den Shakespeare erwähnt! Bezüglich der Malerei endlich ist er ganz unwissend. In einer englischen Kunstzeitschrift hat Mr. Fenn einmal versucht, dies nachzuweisen, und zwar so eingehend und nachdrücklich, mit so schlecht verhehlter Freude, dass man glauben könnte, er sei selbst ein Maler. Denn die Maler sind (wie man übrigens schon oft bemerkt hat) sehr eifersüchtig auf ihre Kunst. Am Ende, weil sie ihrer so wenig gewiss sind? Vielleicht.

Lange Zeit hindurch war über den Menschen, den dieser so mächtige und so durchgebildete Geist erfüllte, wenig mehr bekannt, als ein paar verschwommene Ueberlieferungen und allzu pikante Anekdoten. Es hiess gewöhnlich, sein Vater sei ein Bauer aus Warwick-Shire gewesen; er selbst sei auf der Suche nach Erwerb nach London gekommen, habe dort von der Hand in den Mund gelebt, sei erst ein sehr mittelmässiger Schauspieler und dann der berühmte Dichter geworden; dann, nachdem er etwas Vermögen erworben, sei er gestorben, ohne seine Werke gesammelt oder auch nur alle herausgegeben zu haben. Mit so ungenauen Angaben konnte man sich nicht begnügen. So begann man zu vermuthen, dass die ganze Geschichte erfunden sei, und vor etwa dreissig Jahren entstand infolge des auffallenden Gegensatzes zwischen dem glänzenden Ruf der Werke und dem tiefen Dunkel, das die Person des Autors umgab, das seltsame Paradoxon: Shakespeare sei nur ein Pseudonym, der unbedeutende Schauspieler könne unmöglich die Comödien, die Dramen und die Gedichte geschrieben haben, die seinem Namen trugen; man habe es da mit einer dreihundertjahrigen Mystification zu thun, und der wahre, der einzig wirkliche Autor all dieser Wunderwerke sei der grosse Philosoph und Schriftsteller Francis Bacon. Wenn er sie unter dem Namen eines Schauspielers herausgegeben, so war es—sagte man—um der Missachtung zu entgehen, die sich damals an dier Veröffentlichung von Bühnenwerken knüpfte. Durch ein seltsames Zusammentreffen war es gerade eine Miss Bacon—Miss Delia Bacon—die diese Hypothese aufstellte. „Sie war ein verträumter, phantastischer Kopf," sagt ein Biograph von ihr, „und man erfahrt mit Bedauern, aber ohne Ueberraschung, dass sie in einem Irrenhaus geendet."

Diese Annahme wurde in den Vereinigten Staaten vom Richter Holms und in England von William Smith mit einigem Erfolg verbreitet, dann stellte Mrs. Pott, die propagandistiche „Trachtätchen" verbreitet und die Bacon-Gesellschaft gründen half, ihre zweiundreissig Argumente auf, deren einige so berühmt sind, dass sie eigene Namen erhielten, ganz wie der berühmten Syllogismen der alten Scholastik.

Immerhin hat dies Paradoxen dazu gedient, die Aufmerksamkeit, und zwar eine eingehende Aufmerksamkeit, nicht nur auf die Werke und das Leben Shakespeares, sondern auch auf einige Persönlichkeiten und mehrere Bücher aus seiner Zeit zu lenken. Heute sind die Nebelschleier der Zeit und der Legende gelüftet; und klar zeigt sich aufs neue und für immer das wahre Antlitz des Dichters. Alles, was sich auf ihn beziehen konnte, wurde sorgsam verzeichnet. Um nur ein Beisspiel anzuführen, weiss man heute, dass „im April 1552 John Shakespeare, der Vater, zu einer Geldstrafe von 12 Pence verurtheilt wurde, weil er es versäumt hatte, die häuslichen Scherben in das städtische Depot zu schaffen, das (so fügt der Bericht als erschwerenden Umstand hinzu) kaum einen Steinwurf von seinem Hause entfernt war." Vielleicht hiess das das Forschen nach genauen Documenten zu weit treiben, aber ein derart geduldiges und spitzfindiges Untersuchen war unbedingt nothwendig geworben, wie die Bacon-Hypothese bewiesen hat.

Taine will Shakespeare mit dem Hamlet identificieren, während Gervinus und die Mehrzahl der deutschen Kritiker behaupten dass Heinrich V. diejenige Gestalt sei, die am meisten Aehnlichkeit mit dem Schöpfer aufweist. Um alle Parteien in einer Frage von

solcher Bedeutung zufriedenzustellen, machte man es wie mit den beiden Schädeln des Dichters, dir zur Erinnerung an den grossen Mann aufbewahrt werden, und in deren einem man seine Jugend, in deren anderen man ein späteres Lebensalter erkennen will. Man verständigte sich, indem man versicherte, Heinrich V. Verkörpere den Frühling— Hamlet den Herbst in Shakespeares Leben. Aber immer hat man den Hamlet studiert, um Shakespeare zu sehen, und immer hat man sich auf diesem Grunde für das rein Persönliche der Figur interessiert. Eindringlich hat man danach geforscht, wie als er eigentlich war, wie er aussah, wie sein Temperament beschaffen war. Aber hat man auch das Genaueste über seine Person erfahren, so hat man doch trotz der umfangreichen Arbeiten berühmter Psychiater, wie der Doctoren Bucknill und Kellog, seinen Geisteszustand nicht genau festzustellen vermocht.

Prinz Hamlet ist, als ein Nordländer, blond und tragt schwarze Trauerkleider; er ist kaum dem Jünglingsalter entwachsen, hat seine Studien in Wittenberg gemacht und vergnügt sich gern mit dem Fechten; aber nicht lange, denn er verliert leicht den Athem. Sein Antlitz, wohl noch jung, aber doch schon erschlafft, ist eher vornehm als schön. Er ist kalt im Verkehr, aber manchmal wieder lässt er sich vollig gehen, und derselbe Widerspruch zeigt sich auch in seiner Kleidung, die correct und nachlässig zugleich ist. Was er über alles fürchtet, ist: dupiert zu werden; darum schwankt er beständig zwischen hoffärtigem Wesen und Vertraulichkeit, zwischen Offenheit und misstrauen; daher jene gewisse, ganz äusserliche Falschheit, die er seiner Ehrlichkeit als Mantel umhängt. Sich selbst gegenüber ist er merkwürdig unentschlossen. Sein Uebermass an Selbstbeobachtung und Zergliederung lähmt alle Willenskraft in ihm, indem es ihm die Abgründe seines Gewissens enthüllt. Die hohe Entwicklung seiner Persönlichkeit hat ihn dazu verleitet, sich als über dem Leben stehend zu betrachten, und er ist zu einem Grab von Skepsis gelangt, der ihn zu Dingen unfähig macht, die der Gewöhnlichste mühelos zustande brachte. Diese Seite seines Wesens hat neuerdings die Aufmerksamkeit der Kritiker am lebhaftesten erregt; jene Zartheit der Empfindung, die fasst an Unvermögen grenzt, jene verträumte, fast hysterische Art steht so wenig im Einklang mit seinem ehrgeizigen Wünschen und grossen Plänen, deren Verwirklichung Thatkraft fordert, dass man sich die Frage vorgelegt, ob diese Rolle nicht von einer Frau dargestellt werden sollte, und es hat sich sogar ein Ausleger gefunden, der behauptete, der Prinz Hamlet sei eigentlich eine Prinzessin. Ein derartiger Versuch wurde auch auf der Bühne, und zwar mit Erfolg, von Miss Mariott in Glasgow und von Mlle. Lerou in Paris und Brüssel angestellt.[3] Aber so sonderbar dies Bühnenexperiment erscheinen mag, so gab es doch eins, das vielleicht noch merkwürdiger und sicherlich wesentlich einfacher war: In seinen Erinnerungen erzählt der irische Romancier Grattan, wie er zum erstenmale am Theater zu Waterford Kean auftreten sah, und erwähnt, dass auf der Anzeige „Hamlet mit allen Personen" verheissen wurde. Diese letzten Worte verkündigten, dass diesmal der Held des Stückes, der Prinz von Dänemark selber, nicht wegbleiben würde, wie das nur zu oft geschah, und zwar nicht etwa geschah aus Mangel an einem entsprechenden

[3] Neuestens, wie man weiss, auch von Sarah Bernhardt.

Darsteller, sondern mit der originellen Begründung, dass es eine parasitische Rolle sei, die im Ganzen keinen Zweck für das Stück habe.

Das wiederholt veränderte und umgeschriebene Werk wurde 1602 beendigt und gedruckt und auf der Bühne des „Globe" aufgeführt. Dies Theater zeigte von aussen eine achteckige Gestalt. Die Mitte war ungedeckt unter freien Himmel: die Bühne und die Galerien waren durch ein Strohdach geschützt. Ueber der Thüre das Aushangschild: Hercules, der den Erdball tragt, sammt der Inschrift: „*Totus mundus agit histrionem*." Das Innere des Theaters hatte die Form einer Null und wies drei Galerien auf. Im untersten Rang waren die „Rooms" (zu einem Schilling der Sitz) sehr beliebt, aber den angesehensten Platz stellten die Sitze zu beiden Seiten der Bühne dar. Dort zeigten sich die Mitglieder der *jeunesse doré* und die adeligen Beschützer des Dichters. Im geräumigen, unbedeckten Parterre drangen sich: vorne die Mitglieder des Hauses, die Schriftsteller, die Kritiker und die unbeschäftigten Schauspieler; hinter diesen die Schreiber und die Handwerker auf der ersten Galerie sassen die anständigen Frauen (die Larve vor dem Gesicht) neben den berühmten Courtisanen des Tages. Es gab zwei, durch einen Vorhang getrennte Bühnen und im Hintergrund eine Art Balkon, der auf Säulen ruhte. Die erste Bühne diente der einfachen Declamation. Dann, wenn eine Handlung dargestellt werden sollte, theilte sich der Vorhang, und man erblickte die zweite Bühne mit dem gemalten Decorationen. Gegen ein Uhr verkündete ein Trompetenstoss den Beginn der Vorstellung. Im Hause herrschte grosser Lärm; Verkäufer boten Aepfel, Nüsse und Bier aus; auf den Galerien wurde von Buchhändlergehilften das gedruckte Stück ausgerufen, „das soeben erschienen": man plauderte, rauchte, würfelte und spielte Karten. Wieder ein Trompetenstoss; der Lärm dauerte fort. Endlich ein drittes Signal. Nun verstummte der Spectakel und alles wandte sich der Bühne zu.

Das Spiel der Darsteller war heftig und sehr ungebunden: ihre Declamation schwülstig, fast immer wurde die komische Seite hervorgehoben. Eine Einzelheit der Hamlet-Vorstellung, die bis auf uns gekommen ist, mag einen Begriff davon geben, was bei dem Theaterpublicum des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts Ankland fand: der Todtengräber legte, ehe er sich an die Arbeit machte, ein Dutzend Toppen ab, die er über einander angezogen hatte, und bei jeder einzelnen erfolgte, wie es heisst, ein schallendes Gelächter.

Von vielen berühmten Schauspielern dargestellt, haben sich auf der englischen Bühne zwei scharf geschiedene Hamlet-Typen entwickelt: Der Hamlet des Richard Burbage und der des David Garrick. Richard Burbage, ein College und Freund Shakespeares, schuf die Rolle. Er spielte sie auf eine seltsame und absonderliche Art, trug eine liederliche Haltung zur Schau, erzürnte sich mit heftigen Geberden, verwirrten Haaren und zerstörter Kleidung und suchte vor allem durch befremdende Extravaganzen zu wirken. Im dritten Act zum Beispiel, wo Hamlet, nachdem er den Polonius getödtet, mit seiner Mutter allein ist, schnellte Burbage, im Augenblick, wo der Geist erscheint, von seinem Sitze auf und stiess ihn um: und im fünften Act sprang er in die Grabe, die man für Ophelia gegraben. Von Burbage gieng die Rolle auf Taylor, von Taylor auf Hart und von diesem auf Betterton über. Von diesem erzählt man, dass er beim Anblick des

Gespenstes einem so entsetzten Blick des Schauderns auf dasselbe richtete, dass dem Geist angst und bang wurde und er ein paar Minuten lang kein Wort hervorbringen konnte.

Der zweite, der Garrick Typus ist in England classische Tradition geblieben. Garrick war in Frankreich gewesen; er stand unter dem Einfluss einer für ihn neuen, endgiltig formulierten literarischen Kunst, und dieser Einfluss war es, den er nach England heimbrachte. Sein Geschmack hatte sich geläutert, und er glaubte sich einige Aenderungen und Kurzungen erlauben zu dürfen. So tilgte er: die Reise nach England, das Begräbnis der Ophelia, die philosophischen Abschweifungen Hamlets und die derben Witze der Todtengräber. Er stellte Gesetze auf, gründete dadurch förmlich eine Schule, und aus dieser Schule giengen die Kembles hervor.

Von John Kemble sagte der Marquis von Lansdowne: „Er war ein Prinz. Ich sehe ihn noch mit dem blauen Ordensband, das sich lebhaft von dem schwarzen Wams abhob, auch noch in den Augenblicken der völligen Verstörtheit seine erlesene Vornehmheit und Eleganz bewahrend. Das war Hamlet, Shakespeare und zugleich der Cavalier vom Hofe der Elizabeth, und ich kann mir gar nicht denken, dass man diese Figur auch anders darstellen könnte." Aber trotzdem er sich und die Garrick'sche Tradition hielt, fügte Kemble doch einige neue Nuancen hinzu. Zunächst kniete er vor dem Geist von Hamlets Vater nieder; im zweiten Act, da ihn Polonius fragt: „Ich meine, was in dem Buche, das Ihr leset, steht, mein Prinz" und Hamlet antwortet: „Verleumdungen," riss Kemble, um seiner geheuchelten Erregung mehr Nachdruck zu geben, die Seite heftig heraus. Und weiterhin während der Aufführung, wie der König ihn fragt: „Wird es kein Aergenis geben?", wies er mit der Spitze des geschlossenen Fächers nach der Bühne und sagte mit grimmigen Spott: „Nein, nein, sie spassen nur; vergiften im Spass; kein Aergernis in der Welt."

Nach ihm spielte Kean den Hamlet, mit Leidenschaft, mit jener sprichwörtlichen Leidenschaft, die ihn immer und überall mit fortriss; und späterhin schuf Fechter einen seltsamen Hamlet, von archaistischer Erscheinung. In der Shakespeare'schen Gestalt wollte er den scandinavischen Helden der barbarischen Vorzeit durchschimmern lassen, und so stellte er ihn kräftig und gelassen, aber bleich unter den langen, hellblonden Haaren dar.

Dem letzten Darsteller der Rolle in London, Beerbohm-Tree von Haymarket-Theatre, hat man seine etwas eintönige Schwermuth vorgeworfen und im allgemeinen wird ihn Sir Henry Irving vorgezogen. Dieser sprach den Monolog langsam, als entstünden die Gedanken, die er ausdruckt, erst allmählich und unverhofft in seinem Gehirn. In der Scene des Schauspiels, wie der König, von Gewissensbissen befallen, plötzlich den Saal verlasst, stürzte sich Irving mit einem wilden Aufschrei auf den leergewordenen Thron. Und zumal während der letzten Scene war er schön in seiner tieftraurigen und zugleich ironischen Weise. Man kommt ihm anzuzeigen, dass die Königen, der König und der Hofstaat im Begriffe stehen, in den Saal zu kommen, um dem besprochenen Waffengang mit Laertes anzuwohnen. „Wenn Eurem Gemüth irgend etwas widersteht," sagt ihm Horatio, „so gehorcht ihm; ich will ihrer Hierherkunft zuvorkommen und sagen,

dass Ihr nicht aufgelegt seid." Und es lag wie eine völlige Offenbarung von Hamlets Character in dem Ausdruck, den Irving den Shakespeare'schen Worten gab, indem er antwortete: „Nicht im geringsten. Ich trotze allen Vorbedeutungen: es waltet eine besondere Vorsehung über dem Fall eines Sperlings. Geschieht es jetzt, so geschieht es nicht in Zukunft; geschieht es nicht in Zukunft, so geschieht es jetzt; geschieht es jetzt nicht, so geschieht es doch einmal in Zukunft. In Bereitschaft sein ist alles. Da kein Mensch weiss, was er verlässt, was kommt darauf an, frühzeitig zu verlassen? Mag's sein."

Auch die anderen Rollen des Stückes haben sich in einigen hervorragenden Künstlern dauernd verkörpert. Von allen, die den Geist des Vaters dargestellt, soll keiner dem Booth gleichgekommen sein an Feierlichkeit der Stimme und unirdischer Erscheinung; und ein einzigesmal wurde die Wahnsinnsscene der Ophelia mit unseliger Treue von Mrs. Montford gespielt, der berühmten Schauspielerin, die dem Dichter Gan die Ballade „Susanna mit den schwarzen Augen" eingab. Sie war aus Liebesgram verrückt geworden und befand sich in Gewahrsam. Eines Abends, in einem lichten Augenblicke, erfährt sie, dass man den Hamlet gibt: die Rolle der Ophelia fällt ihr ein und mit der bekannten Schlauheit der Irren weiss sie ins Theater zu gelangen und erscheint in dem Moment, wo die Schauspielerin, die bis dahin die Ophelia gegeben, auftreten soll, auf der Bühne. Der Eindruck war ein überwältigender, aber Mrs. Montford starb wenige Tage darauf.

In dieser Rolle der Ophelia herrscht die Erinnerung an Mrs. Sarah Siddons, die Schwester von John Kemble, vor, denn niemand scheint an die Grösse ihrer Darstellung herangereicht zu haben. Es gibt von ihr zwei berühmte Porträts, characteristiche Werke von Sir Joshua Reynolds und Thomas Gainsborough, worin jeder sich in seinem persönlichen Stil zeigt. Das Bild Gainsboroughs, das porträtartigere von den beiden, befindet sich in London in der National Gallery. Die grosse Schauspielerin sitzt im Dreiviertelprofil vor einem rothen Hintergrund, der von Van Dyck stammt, sich aber auf seinem Wege über eine Englische Palette versäuert hat. Das Antlitz ist hell, der Blick gebietend, die Lippe voll. Die Neigung des grossen schwarzen Hutes enthüllt eine Fülle gepuderter Haare, die an der Schläfe fast wie an Flügel abstehen, und vorne auf die Büste fallen lange Locken. Am Hals hebt ein schwarzes Band die Linie des langen Unterkiefers noch schärfer hervor. Ein blaues Fichu von jenem transparenten, fernschwimmernden, englischen Blau, das von dem undurchsichtigen, immer zu nahen, französischen Blau des Lesueur so verschieden ist! Es ist kreuzweis auf die Brust geschlungen und setzt sich in langen, schmalen, gleichfall blauen Enden fort. Die Hände umschliessen einen Muff, den sie auf dem Schoss hält, um die Arme schlingt sich eine geraffte, altgoldene Schärfe; und das Kleid von glänzendem Weiss, mit zarten blauen Streifen, hat etwas von einem Matrosengewand.

Dieses Porträt ist ausgesprochen englisch und stellt auch einen specifisch englischen Typus dar, das was man—*honny soit qui mal y pense*—"" nennen könnte. Unter dem Londoner Himmel (jenem geschlossenen Bilderhimmel, der keinen Glanz und keine Tiefe hat, aber so klar und mild ist) da lebt dieser Typus. Gross und von unerschütterlicher Gelassenheit, von langen, geraden Falten umkleidet, mit üppigen Schultern und schmalen Hüften; mit sparsamen Gesten von strenger Eleganz. Das Haar von jener

ungewissen Farbe (*auburn*), in der goldnes Blond neben kupferigen, tiefrothen Schatten erschimmert, und im Gegensatz dazu manchmal schwarze Wimpern und Brauen. Auch in den Linien der Frisur unbestimmt, scheinen die Haare dieser Frauen von vorne gesehen kurz geschnitten, während sie im Profil gesehen bis zu dem Fersen reichen. Ihre Augen schillern grünlich, die Lippen zeigen eisige Geringschatzung, das Kinn ist eigenwillig.

Bei den „Private Views" der Kunstausstellungen schreitet sie an die Werken voll eindringlicher Gewalt der Farbe oder Empfindung vorüber, fast unbewusst des Zaubers, der von ihnen ausgehend jene Räume der stillen Pracht durchdringt, wo der matte Marmor, das kupferige Gold und das dunkle Laubwerk nur gleichsam als begleitende Accorde mittönen. Dann, wenn es Abend wird unter dem weiten, dunkelnden Himmel, kann man von der Strasse in eines ihrer Häuser geräth—in ihrem Home, wo die erlesenen Farben und die Reinheit der Linien eine vollkommene Harmonie schaffen, wo die Lampen, gleich grossen leuchtenden Blumen, ein mattes Licht entsenden, wo aus Falten und Farbentönen, wie aus duftenden Essenzen, ein subtiler Zauber strömt, ein Rahmen, der sich um ihre Bewegungen—ihre langsamen und nonchalanten Bewegungen—schmiegt. Und man gedenkt dabei der einfachen Worte des Keats: „*A thing of beauty is a joy for ever*."

Brüssel.
Fernand Khnopff

Khnopff, Fernand, “Hamlet in England,” *Die Zeit* (Wien), 19, 235 (April 1, 1899), 8-10.

Translation:

Hamlet in England

If Jules de Goncourt had been able to see the incessant growth of books, pamphlets and articles that have been written in the last decade on the works of Shakespeare, then he would have probably revised his famous saying that antiquity had been created to provide bread for the scholars of today. Because it is with a fervor reminiscent of the appropriation of the newly opened American continents that analysts have taken possession of this immense work, have tried to divide it into provinces, and cut it into areas of various kinds and extents.

It is one of the distinctive characteristics of this mighty genius, that all passionately seek themselves in him, and in the end all actually rediscover themselves in him. His mind seems to have encompassed all directions of human thought, and his works are a precious encyclopedia, a compilation of knowledge. The frequent use of technical impressions in his dramas and very specialized descriptions have since been studied by an impressive number of journals, their writers trying to prove that the poet must have pursued at least a dozen trades and professions. Among others, Bishop Wadworth has attempted to demonstrate Shakespeare’s startling biblical scholarship. Lord Campbell has studied his legal knowledge and found him to be an excellent jurist and that he was familiar with all the usages of justice and with its (as it seems very difficult) official language. Blades says he understood in detail the complicated trade of book printing. Paterson wrote under the title of “Shakespearean Entomology” the natural history of all the insects that were named by the poet. Thoms makes him a major strategist, R. Smith an able agronomist, others a gardener, botanist, or even a butcher, a sailor, a schoolmaster or riding instructor. And now even astronomy! Because Caesar said that the North Star is a fixed star. And physics! Because even Cressida leads the law of gravity and attraction. Against that, one must concede again that Desdemona dies a little late as a result of suffocation; Bohemia has a sea beach, and Delphi is an island; Hector even quoted Aristotle. The statue of Hermione in “The Winter's Tale” is attributed to Giulio Romano, a painter who was probably also an engineer and architect, but did not leave any sculpted works. And it is this, by the way, the only “sculptor” that Shakespeare ever mentioned! Regarding painting he is in the end completely ignorant. In an English art magazine Mr. Fenn has tried to prove this, and in such detail and so strongly, and with such ill-concealed pleasure, that one could believe that he was himself a painter. For the painters as has incidentally been often remarked) very jealous of their art. At the end, is it because they are so little sure of themselves? Perhaps.

For a long time little more was known about the man who filled these so powerful and so educated minds than some vague traditions and too spicy anecdotes. It was usually said that his father was a farmer from Warwickshire; and that he himself had come in search of a profession to London, where he lived from hand to mouth, was at first only a

very mediocre actor and then became the famous poet; then, after he acquired some assets, he died without having collected his works or even having published them all. With such inaccurate information one could not be contented. So they began to suspect that the whole story was invented, and some thirty years ago, the strange paradox of the striking contrast between the shining reputation of the works and the deep darkness which surrounded the person of the author led to the theory that Shakespeare was merely a pseudonym, since the insignificant actor could not possibly have written the comedies, dramas and poems that bore his name; one is dealing with a three-century old mystification, and that the true, the only real author of all these marvels is the great philosopher and writer Francis Bacon. When he published these under the name of an actor, it was—one says—to avoid the contempt which was then tied to the publishing of theatrical works. By a strange coincidence it was a Miss Bacon—Miss Delia Bacon—who put forward this hypothesis. “She was a dreamy, fantastic head,” says a biographer of her, “and you learn with regret but without surprise that she ended up in an insane asylum.”

This assumption has been spread with some success in the United States by Justice Holmes and in England by William Smith, then Mrs. Pott, helped by the Bacon Society, spread and established the propagandistic “Little Treatises”, her thirty-two arguments, some of which are so famous that they were given their own names, just like the famous syllogisms of the old scholasticism.

At any rate, this paradox has served to draw attention, and actually an intensive attention, not only to the works and life of Shakespeare, but also to some of the personalities and several books of his time. Today the mists of time and legend are cleared; and the true face of the poet clearly shows anew and forever. Everything that could relate to him was recorded carefully. To cite just one example, we now know that “John Shakespeare, his father, was sentenced in April 1552 to a fine of 12 pence because he had failed to deposit the household debris in the municipal depot which (so the report adds as an aggravating fact) was a stone's throw from his house.” Perhaps this search for exact documents went too far, but such a patient and hair-splitting examination was absolutely necessary, as the Bacon hypothesis proved.

Taine sought to identify Shakespeare with Hamlet while Gervinus and the majority of German critics claim that Henry V was the one figure who has the most resemblance to the author. To satisfy all parties on an issue of such importance, one makes it as with the two skulls of the poet, which have been preserved in memory of the great man, and in which his youth is recognized, and in the other one is recognized his later age. One agrees, in that one affirms, that Henry V embodies the spring—and Hamlet the autumn in Shakespeare's life. But one has always studied Hamlet to see Shakespeare, and one has always for this reason been interested in the pure personality of the figure. Insistently then has one researched what he was really like, what he looked like, and how his temper was designed. But if one has learned the most precise details of his person, no one has been able to determine exactly his state of mind, despite the important work of famous psychiatrists, such as the doctors Bucknill and Kellog.

Prince Hamlet is, as a Northerner, blond and wears black mourning clothes; he is barely out of the age of youth, he has studied in Wittenberg and likes playing at fencing; not for long, though, because he easily loses his breath. His face, although still young, already slackens, but is elegant rather than attractive. He is cold in relationships, but sometimes he lets himself go completely, and the same contradiction is also evident in his clothes, both correct and careless at the same time. What he fears above all, is to be duped; therefore he fluctuates constantly between courtly manners and confidentiality, between openness and distrust; therefore that certain, completely external, falsehood that he wears his sincerity like a cloak. Against it he himself is strangely undecided. His excessive introspection and analysis paralyzes all willpower in him by revealing to him the depths of his conscience. The high development of his personality has persuaded him to consider himself to be above life, and he has reached a fatal skepticism that makes him incapable of things that most usual achieve effortlessly. This side of his nature has recently attracted the most vivid attention of critics; that tenderness of feeling, which borders on inability, that dreamy, almost hysterical style is so little in accordance with his ambitious desires and big plans, whose realization challenges ability, that one is presented with the question of whether this role should not be represented by a woman, and an interpreter has even been found who claimed the prince Hamlet was actually a princess. One such attempt was made on stage, with success, by Miss Mariott in Glasgow and of Mlle. Lerou in Paris and Brussels.[4] But strange as this stage experiment may appear, there was nevertheless one that was perhaps even more remarkable, and certainly much easier: In his memoirs the Irish novelist Grattan told of how he saw Kean perform for the first time at the theater in Waterford, and mentioned that the advertisement promised “Hamlet With All Characters.” These last words proclaimed that this time the hero of the play, the Prince of Denmark himself, would not be omitted, as too often happened, not for lack of an appropriate performer, but with the original justification that it was a parasitic role that had no purpose in the piece as a whole.

The repeatedly altered and rewritten work was finished in 1602 and published and performed on stage at the “Globe”. The exterior of this theater was octagonal in shape. The center was uncovered to the open air: the stage and the galleries were protected by a thatched roof. Above the door the hanging sign showed Hercules carrying the globe, together with the inscription: “Totus mundus agit histrionem” [all the world’s a stage]. The interior of the theater was in the form of a zero and had three galleries above. In the lowest rank were the “Rooms” (a shilling the seat) which were very popular, but the most prestigious place were the seats set on either side of the stage. There were seen the members of the *jeunesse doré* and the noble protector of the poet. The spacious, uncovered floor was crowded: in front the members of the house, the writer, the critics and the unemployed actor; behind them, the scribes and the artisans; in the first gallery sat the decent women (with faces veiled) next to the famous courtesans of the day. There were two stages, separated by a curtain and in the background a kind of balcony

[4] Most recently, as you know, by Sarah Bernhardt.

which rested on pillars. The first stage was for simple declamation. Then, when an action should be shown, the curtain parted and you saw the second stage with its painted decorations. Around one o'clock a trumpet blast announced the beginning of the performance. In the house there was great noise; sellers offered apples, nuts and beer; in the galleries bookseller's assistants hawked the latest printed piece, "the just released": they chatted, smoked, played dice and cards. Another trumpet blast; the noise continued. Finally a third signal. Now the uproar was silenced and all turned to the stage.

The performance of the actors was fierce and very independent: their declamation was bombastic, almost always emphasizing the ridiculous side. A detail which Ankland found of the Hamlet performance that has come down to us, gives an idea of what took place with the theater public in the sixteenth century: before the gravedigger got down to work, he pulled off a dozen top hats that he had worn on top of each other, and with each one was followed by, as it is called, a resounding guffaw.

As presented by many famous actors, two sharply different Hamlet types have developed on the English stage: The Hamlet of Richard Burbage and that of David Garrick. Richard Burbage, a colleague and friend of Shakespeare, created the role. He played it a strange and peculiar style, wearing a slovenly attitude, irritated with broad gestures, with tangled hair and tattered clothes and sought to act by strange extravagances throughout. In the third act, for example, where Hamlet after having killed Polonius, is alone with his mother, Burbage raced from his seat at the moment when the ghost appears, and joined it: and in the fifth Act he jumped into the grave that had been dug for Ophelia. From Burbage the role went on to Taylor, Taylor to Hart and from there to Betterton. Of this one it is said that he gave such a horrified look at the sight of the ghost, shuddering the same time, that became spirit became anxious and afraid and could not utter a word for a few minutes.

The second, the Garrick type, has continued in the English classical tradition. Garrick had been in France where he came under the influence of a conclusively formulated literary art, new for him, and he brought this influence home to England. Its taste was refined, and he believed he could afford to make some changes and cuts. So he deleted: the trip to England, the burial of Ophelia, the philosophical digressions of Hamlet and the bawdy jokes of the gravediggers. He introduced principles, formally founded a school, and from this school went forth Kemble.

Of John Kemble, the Marquis of Lansdowne said: "He was a prince. I can still see him with the blue ribbon, that stood out vividly against his black doublet, preserving even in the moments of utter bewilderment its refined gentility and elegance. That was Hamlet, Shakespeare and also the Cavalier from the court of Elizabeth, and I cannot imagine that you could represent this figure differently. "Although still he kept to the tradition of Garrick, Kemble added some new nuances. First, he knelt before the ghost of Hamlet's father in the second act when he asks Polonius: "I mean, what is in the book which ye read, my prince" and Hamlet replies: "slander," and Kemble tore the page violently out to bolster his feigned excitement. And still during the performance, as the king asked

him, “Will there be no offense?” he pointed to the stage with the tip of his closed fan and said with grim mockery: “No, no, they are just joking around; to poison in fun; no offense in the world.”

According to him, Kean played Hamlet with passion, with that proverbial passion which always and everywhere with continued drove him; and Fechter later created a strange Hamlet of archaic appearance. In the Shakespearean figure he wanted the barbaric past of the Scandinavian hero to shine through, and so he made him strong and calm, but pale under his long, light blond hair.

The last performer of the role in London, Beerbohm-Tree of the Haymarket Theatre, has been accused of somewhat monotonous melancholy, and generally Sir Henry Irving is preferred to him. This one speaks the monologue slowly, as if incur the thoughts that impress him will only gradually and unexpectedly occur in his brain. In the scene of the play when the king suddenly leaves the room, overcome with pangs of conscience, Irving rushes with a wild outcry to the vacated throne. And especially during the last scene he was beautiful in his deeply tragic, yet ironic manner. Someone comes to tell him that the queen, the king and the royal household are to come into the hall to live, and discuss terms of conflict with Laertes. “If your mind any resists something” Horatio tells him, “so it obeys; I want to anticipate your background and say that you are not in the mood.” And it was such a complete revelation of Hamlet's character in the expression that Irving gave by answering the Shakespearean words: “Not in the least. I defy all auguries: it manages a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it is happening now, so it will not happen in the future; if it does not happen in the future, it will be now; if it does not happens now, so it does happen again in the future. Readiness is all. Since no one knows what he leaves, what does it mean to leave early? Perhaps.”

The other roles of the play have been permanently embodied in some outstanding artists. Of all those who represented the Ghost of the Father, no one could equal the solemnity of voice and unearthly appearance of Booth; and the madness Scene of Ophelia was played uniquely with unfortunate fidelity by Mrs. Montford, the famous actress, for whom the poet Gan wrote the ballad “Susanna with the black eyes.” She was mad for love and grief was taken in custody. One evening, in a bright moment, she learns that one gives to Hamlet: the role of Ophelia occurs to her and with the known cunning of the insane she knows how to get to the theater and appears at the moment, where the actress who until then had been given the role of Ophelia, should appear on stage. The impression was overwhelming, but Mrs. Montford died a few days later.

In the role of Ophelia, reigns the memory of Mrs. Sarah Siddons, the sister of John Kemble, because no one seems to have matched the greatness of her original performance. There are two famous portraits of her, characteristic works by Sir Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough, wherein each is reflects his personal style. The image of Gainsborough which more portrait-like of the two, is in London at the National Gallery. The great actress sits in three-quarter profile against a red background, derived from Van Dyck, but which has become more acidic in passing through a English palette. The face is bright, the gaze commanding, and the lips are full. The tilt of her big black hat

reveals an abundance powdered hair that stick out almost like wings on at her temple, and long curls fall to the front of her bust. On her neck, a black band highlights the line of her long lower jaw more sharply. A blue scarf of a transparent, remote shimmering, English blue, which is so different from the opaque, always close, French blue of Lesueur! It is wound crosswise on the chest and continues in long, narrow, equal falling blue ends. Her hands hold a muff which she holds on her lap to the arms wraps a gathered old gold scarf; and her dress is brilliant white, with delicate blue stripes, and has something of a sailor outfit.

This portrait is very English and also represents a specifically English type, what one—*honny soit qui mal y pense*—could call "woman as an art object." Under the London sky (that closed pictures sky that has no shine and no depth, but is so clear and mild) because living this type. Great and imperturbable serenity of long, straight folds, with lush shoulders and narrow hips; with few gestures of strict elegance. The hair of that uncertain color (auburn), in the golden blond shimmers next coppery, deep red shade, and in contrast, sometimes black eyelashes and eyebrows. Also in the lines of hair indeterminate hair of women seen from the front seem cut short as she saw the profile extend to the heel. Her eyes shimmer greenish lips show icy low estimation, the chin is idiosyncratic.

In the "Private Views" art exhibitions it proceeds to the works fully penetrating power of color or sensation over, almost unconscious of the spell, the starting penetrates those rooms the quiet splendor of them where the dull marble, the coppery gold and the dark foliage just as it harmonizes as accompanying chords. Then, when evening falls under the wide, darkening sky, you can from the road in one of their homes falls—in their home, where the exquisite colors and the purity of the lines create a perfect harmony, where the lamps, the same big bright flowers, sending a faint light, which flows out wrinkles and color tones, like fragrant essences, a subtle magic, a frame around her movements—their slow and nonchalant movements—nestles. And one thinks here of the simple words of Keats: "*A thing of beauty is a joy for ever*."

Brussels
Fernand Khnopff

Khnopff, Fernand, “Hamlet in Frankreich,” *Die Zeit* (Wien), 21, 262 (Oct. 7, 1899), 8-9.

Hamlet in Frankreich
Von Fernand Khnopff (Brüssel)

Unter den zahlreichen Schauspielern romanischer Rasse, die es—wie die Engländer sagen—auf dem Continente versuchten, die Rolle des Hamlet darzustellen, scheinen besonders drei hervorgeragt zu haben: es find dies Rouvière, Rossi und Mounet-Sully.

Rouvière war ein echter „Romantiker,”; er war es, der, als er den Othello spielen wollte, Studien an den Tigern des „Jardin des Plantes” anstellte. Er war wenig correct; aber selten, sagt man, wurde sarkastische Seite der Gestalt besser aufgefasst. Rouvière war zu Burbage’schen Tradition zurückgekehrt, vielleicht jedoch ganz unbewusst, da bei ihm der Instinct das Studium bei weitem überwog.

Rossi erinnerte eher an den von Fechter geschaffenen Typus: ein dänisher Prinz, der durch seine philosophische Geistesrichtung lebhaft von seiner noch barbarischen Umgebung abstach.

Mounet-Sully verkörpterte den Prinzen in unvergleichlicher Weise.

Diese Wiederaufnahme des Hamlet an der „Comédie française” brachte übrigens bei dem Publicum nicht das hervor, was man gemeinhin einen vortheilhaften Eindrück nennt; und in der „Revue des Deux-Mondes” schilderte M. Ganderay die Stimmung der Première sehr hübsch folgendermassen:

„Die Zuschauer reden im Zwischenact sehr vorsichtig mit einander, da keiner sich zuerst blossstellen will.

‚Nun?‘

‚Nun?‘

‚O! Ich! Ich finde es sehr interessant!‘

‚O! Ich natürlich auch!‘

‚Mounet-Sully is grossartig!‘

‚Herrlich!‘

‚Und die Ausstättung, die Costume!‘

‚Perrins wurdig!‘

Von dem Stück spricht wahrend der ersten Zwischenacte niemand. Wahrend der letzten—er hatte da den Muth gehabt, sich vor den anderen auszusprechen? Niemand; aber alle Welt wurden von Gähnen befallen. Die Gespräche lauten nun ein wenig anders.

‚—Mounet-Sully?‘

‚Ja, nach wie vor!‘

‚Na, aber das Stück!‘

‚Hm! hm! nun ja!‘

‚O! ja!‘“

Es wurden denn auch von den Müssiggängern, welche die Herren des alltäglichen Theaters sind (und die man „Sammtsitze” nennen könnte, wie man die Beamten „Schreibmappen” nennt) entschieden, dass in Hamlet nur die Darstellung, die Ausstättung und die Costüme einen Erfolg erzielt hätten. Die Kritiker dagegen benützten den Anlass, um sich neuerdings über die Frage der Inscenierung auseinanderzusetzten.

Da es sich um ein Werk von Shakespeare handelte, so war es ein geeigneter Anlass, die Geschichte von die Aufschriften, welche bei Shakespeare die Decorationen ersetzten, aufs neue aufzutischen. Aber diese Legende passt nicht mehr in unser Jahrhundert und muss endgiltig abgethan werden.

Die Inscenierung war zu Shakespeares Zeiten durchaus nicht so armselig, wie man im allgemeinen annimmt. Der Apparat der Mysterien, die der Dichter in seiner ersten Kindheit gesehen haben muss, war schon ein sehr umständlicher.

In seinem „Leben Shakespeares” sagt M. Cochin: „Aus ganz Mittel-England kamen grosse Menschenmengen nach Coventry, wo die Mysterien mit grosser Prachtentfaltung und Feierlichkeit aufgeführt wurden. Aber die Schauspieler von Coventry schleppten ihren riesigen Bühnenkarren auch durch die Städte und Märkte und machten überall Halt, wo die Frömmigkeit und Neugier der Bevölkerung ihnen eine lohnende Einnahme verhiess. Dort stellten sie den Karren auf, der eine recht geräumige, zweistockige Bühne bot, von der nur der obere Theil sichtbar war; der untere Theil war der Maschinenraum. Es gab da Versenkungen, Flugmaschinen und Kunstgriffe aller Art, Vorrichtungen, um in den Himmel hinauf oder zur Hölle niederzufahren; Apparate, die so compliciert waren, wie die eines Schiffes, Wolken und Triumphwagen. Das Theater war mit Teppichen und Wandbekleidungen behangen, deren Bilder den Ort der Handlung darstellten. Es gab gewisse feststehende, allgemein bekannte Ausstattungsstücke: so war der Eingang in die Hölle ein riesiger Kopf mit leuchtenden Augen und einer riesigen, feuerrothen Nase; der Mund war mit zwei Reihen scharfer Zähne bewaffnet, die Kinnlade war beweglich, aus der Kehle schlugen Flammen, und im Innern dieses Rachens gewahrte man die dunklen Köpfe der Verdammten und ihre buntscheckigen Leiber. Auch die Costüme waren nach einer bestimmten Tradition zusammengestellt: Adam und Eva trugen lederne Kleider, Pilatus hatte einen grünen Mantel; Herodes hatte rothe Handschuhe, ein vielfärbiges Costüm und schwang wüthend einen grossen Säbel. Er machte immer grossen Effect, und gerade in „Hamlet” hat Shakespeare ein Wort darüber geprägt, indem er von dem übertriebenen Spiel eines Darstellers tadelnd sagt, er wolle den „Herodes überheroden”.

Andere und vielleicht entscheidendere Beweisgründe wurden aus dem Werke des Dichters selbst geschöpft und von Oscar Wilde, in dem 5. Essay seines Buches „Intentionen”, geistvoll entwickelt. Er citiert August Vacquerie, der von Racine sagt: „Racine lässt sich nicht dazu herab, sich mit den Costümen zu besassen. Wäre man auf

seine Angaben angewiesen, dann wäre Agamemnon mit einem Scepter bekleidet und Achilles mit einem Schwert." Shakespeare dagegen gibt nicht nur jedes Detail fur die Costüme und die Inscenierung seiner Zahlreichen Aufzüge und Maskeraden an, sondern bringt sogar vielfach den dramatischen Effect seiner Stücke durch die Costüme oder Einzelnheiten Inscenierung hervor.—

Sarah Bernhardt war es sich schuldig, gleichfalls den Versuch zu wagen, jene räthselhafteste Bühnengestalt aller Zeiten zu verkörpern, und sie wollte auch ihrerseits zeigen, wie sich ihr diese seltsame und subtile Seele darstellte, welche die allzu zahlreichen Verhältnisse, die auf sie einstürmen, verwirren, erschrecken oder belustigen.

Die grosse Sarah konnte begreiflicher Weise nicht bloss die Wiederholung eines schon bestehenden Typus sein. Die originellen Züge ihrer Darstellung wurden in jüngster Zeit zu oft besprochen, um hier neuerdings darauf einzugehen.[5]) Und es ist vielleicht am besten, einfach den schönen Eindruck Edmond Picards zu setzen:

„Die königliche Tragödin erhalt den Zuschauer und Zuhörer in bestandiger athemloser Spannung. Ihre anfänglich schwankende Stimme und declamierende Sprache, die befürchten liess, dass sie nicht an ihre erhabenen Vorgänger heranreichen würde, festigt sich bald, und sie überlässt sich prächtig den warmen und zauberkräftigen Impulsen ihres wunderbaren Instinctes. Gerade in jenem Augenblicken, wo sie so ganz in der Rolle aufgeht, dass ihre eigene Persönlichkeit verschwimmt und ungewiss zerfliesst, offenbart sich die Schönheit ihrer Darstellung in all ihrer erschütternden Pracht. Dies is nicht mehr Sarah Bernhardt, nur allzu sehr dieselbe in den vielen conventionellen Rollen, welche lediglich gewandte Bühnendichter für sie schufen, um die Frau und die kategorisierte Schauspielererin zur Geltung zu bringen—es ist Hamlet, endlich einmal die legendarische, lebendige, schmerzlich berühmte, unzerstörbare Gestalt, die und bei Herz und Hirn packt und—selbst das Opfer eines tragischen Geschickes—uns führt, wohin ihrer tragischen Phantasie beliebt, es ist Hamlet, der uns zwingt mit ihm zu philosophieren, zu lieben, zu leiden, zu brüllen, zu heulen, zu spotten in den Tiefen unseres gesteigerten, geadelten, zuckenden Denkens. O, wie fern, wie vergessen, wie ausgelöscht, in die Hölle gefahren sind da die Tosca und Feodora, Gismonda, Theodora, die Cameliendame, Alexandre Dumas und Victorien Sardou!"

Zum Schluss sei noch einer literarischen Interpretation des Hamlet gedacht: einer Nachdichtung von Jules Laforgue, der ersten seiner „*Moralités legendaires*".

Auf den ersten Blick scheint eine Mystification, ein Scherz vorzuliegen, eine Art von „*Hamlet up to date*", „*Hamlet fin de siècle.*" Der Stil scheint sprunghaft: ein absichtliches Gemisch von Sinn und Unsinn, von Gelehrsamkeit und Anachronismen. Aber aus all dem lösen sich allmählich eine tiefe Psychologie, eine stürmische Ehrlichkeit der Empfindung und jene vage Trauer der Abenddämmerung im Herbst unter einem entzückenden

[5] Auch wird man in Wien jetzt Sarah Bernhard als Hamlet zu sehen bekommen!
D. Reb.

Himmel, einem jene Himmel, von denen, nach Baudelaires Wort, die wehmüthigen Erinnerungen in Scharen herniedersteigen.

Dieser Hamlet ist weit entfernt von dem ritterlichen Auftreten, dem theatricalischen Faltenwurf des Shakespeare'schen; weit entfernt von jener königlichen Müdigkeit, jenem fürstlichen Wesen, das ihm, allem zum Trotz, bis zum Schluss treu bleibt; fern sind noch die grossen Flügel des Wahnsinns, die ihn ungleichmässig, immer näher und näher, umrauschen. Der Hamlet des Jules Laforgue ist mehr aus unsern Tagen. Er wird verrückt werden, ja, er weiss es auch; aber es ist ihm ganz gleichgiltig; er hat sich damit abgefunden, und indem er das Ende, irgend ein Ende erwartet, unterhalt er sich so gut er kann. Er versucht zu radieren, zu modellieren, zu schriftstellern. Er hält sich fast für ein dichterisches Genie, und er ist es, der das rächerische Stück verfasst hat, das vor dem König und der Königen aufgeführt werden soll. Aber während er dessen Aufführung vorbereitet, verliebt er sich in Schauspielerin Kate, den Stern der Truppe, einen „Typus", den er schon lange sucht; und sobald die Effectscene gespielt ist, lässt er sein Rachewerk im Stich, lässt seine Pferde satteln und entführt seine neuendeckte Weib-Offenbarung. Sie kommen am Friedhof vorüber; Hamlet will Ophelias Graben besuchen und trifft den Laertes, der ihn tödtet.

Einige Stellen daraus dürften gewiss interessieren; vor allem der Titel:

„Hamlet, oder die Folgen der kindlichen Liebe"

Und das Motto:

„c'est plus fort que moi."

Oder weiterhin die Stelle :

„In Schwarz gekleidet, den kurzen Degen an der Seite, den Sombrero auf dem Kopfe, blickt Hamlet, im Fenster liegend, auf den Sund, den breiten, betriebsamen Sund, der gewohnheitsmässig gleichgiltige Wellen abrollt, und wartet auf den Wind und die Stunde, um in Gebieterlaune mit den armseligen Fischerbarken zu tändeln (dem einzigen Gefühl, dessen er under dem Drucke des Verhängnisses, das auf im lastet, noch fähig ist). Hamlet ist in diesem Augenblicke in besonders gereizter Stimmung, den er wartet auf die Schauspieler, die immer noch nicht kommen und auf die er so tragisch rechnet; überdies hat er soeben die Briefe der Ophelia zerrissen, die seit dem Tag zuvor verschwunden ist; die Briefe waren in kleinbürgerlicher Eleganz auf braunem, holländischem Papier geschrieben, das so zäh ist, dass Hamlets Finger vom Zerreissen noch heftig davon brennen.

‚Wo mag sie nur um diese Stunde sein? Gewiss bei Verwandten auf dem Lande. Sie wird wohl zurück kommen; sie kennt ja den Weg. Uebrigens hätte sie mich auch niemals verstanden. Wenn ich so tödtlich sensitiv sein—wenn man nur genügend kratzte, kam doch die Engländerin zum Vorschein, die sich Kindheit and mit der selbstüchtigen Philosophie des Hobbes vollgesogen hatte. Des Hobbes, der da sagt: Nichts freut uns mehr an unserem Besitz, als der Gedanke, dass er dem anderen überlegen ist. In dieser Weise hatte Ophelia mich geliebt, als ihr Eigenthum, und weil ich social und moralisch

den Besitzthümern ihrer kleinen Freundinnen überlegen war. Und die kleinen Reden uber Wohlbehagen und Comfort, die ihr um die Zeit, wo man die Lampen anzündet, entschlüpften! Ein behaglicher Hamlet! Entsetzlich! Und dennoch, Ophelia, lieber kleiner Schatz! Komm‘ doch zurück! Ich beschwöre dich! Ich will nicht mehr davon anfangen!‘“

Und noch weiter:

„‚Hamlet steckt dem Todtengräber einen Thaler in die Hand und verschwindet mit schleppender, correcter Haltung zwischen den Cypressen und den Grabmälern; von seinen Schicksalen, niedergedrückt, weiss er nicht recht, wie er seine Rolle halbwegs anständig wieder aufnehmen soll..., Ich habe vielleicht noch zwanzig, noch dreissig Jahre zu leben, dann werde ich wie die andern dran glauben müssen! Wie die andern?—Ich und sterben? Ach was, wir sprechen später davon: wir haben ja noch Zeit. Sterben! Das steht fest. Man stirbt ohne es zu merken, wie man jeden Abend einschläft. Man ist sich des Uebergangs, der vom letzten klaren Gedanken in den Schlaf, in die Ohnmacht, in den Tod hinüberführt, nicht bewusst. Das ist zugegeben! Aber nicht mehr sein, nicht mehr dabei sein, nicht mehr dazu gehören!—Nicht einmal mehr imstande sein, irgend einmal eines Abends die unsterbliche Traurigkeit an sein menschliches Herz zu pressen, die in einem einzigen kleinen musikalischen Accord enthalten ist!‘“

Und der Schlusssatz: „Und alles kommt wieder in des Steife; ein Hamlet weniger; das Geschlecht is darum nicht verloren, das sage man sich.”

Im ganzen genommen hat Jules Laforgue, indem er uns seinen „Hamlet” gab, daraus ein Echo unserer Gedanken, unserer Gefühle, unserer Möglichkeiten fur eine Einsamkeits-Existenz gemacht. Er hat, wie einer seiner Biographen meinte, einen Baudelaireschen Hamlet geschaffen, ja noch etwas darüber. Die Rasse sei nicht ausgestorben, sagt er. Wahrlich nicht! Wir sehen sie heute vervielfacht zur Regeln geworden. Lauter Hamlets—die Schriftsteller, Träumer, die auf dem Altar des modernen Lebens stehen, and das trübe Geländer der Langeweile, der Unthätigkeit, der Zwecklosigkeit des Daseins gelehnt... Ein französischer, von den englisch Nebeln weniger episch, weniger exaltiert als der andere; dagegen willenskräftiger, ironischer, geistvoller, gelehrter, hoffnungsloser und bewusster dem Untergang zusteuernd.

Die Shakespeare’shce Schöpfung ist genial Freske, dies hier eine nuancierte, gleichfalls geniale Studie.

Khnopff, Fernand, “Hamlet in Frankreich,” *Die Zeit* (Wien), 21, 262 (Oct. 7, 1899), 8-9.

Translation:

Hamlet in France
By Fernand Khnopff (Brussels)

Among the numerous actors of the Latin race—as the English say—that have attempted to present the role of Hamlet on the continent, three seem to have particularly excelled: they are Rouvière, Rossi and Mounet-Sully.

Rouvière was a real “Romantic;” he was the one who, when he wanted to play Othello, studied the Tigers in the “Jardin des Plantes.” He was not very correct; but rarely, they say, has the sarcastic side of the figure been better understood. Rouvière returned to the tradition of Burbage, perhaps unconsciously, because with him instinct far outweighed studying.

Rossi looked more like the type created by Fechter: a Danish prince whose philosophical turn of mind vividly contrasted with his barbarous environment.

Mounet-Sully embodied the prince in an incomparable way.

This revival of Hamlet at the “Comédie française” did not bring from the Publicum that which is commonly called an advantageous impression; and in the “Revue des Deux-Mondes” M. Ganderax beautifully described the sentiment at the première as follows:

“The audience speaks in the intermission very careful with each other, because no one wants to be the first to embarrass themselves.

‚Now?'

‚Now?'

‚O! I! I think it's very interesting!'

‚O! Me too of course!'

‚ Mounet-Sully is great! '

‚ Wonderful! '

‚ And the sets, the costumes! '

‚ Worthy of Perrins! '

Nobody speaks of the play during the first intermission. During the last—he since had the courage in speaking out against the other? No one; but all the world were yawning. The conversation is a little different.

‚—Mounet-Sully? '
Yes, still! '
‚ Well, but the play! '

‚Hm! Hm! Well yes!'
‚O! Yes!'“
It was also decided by the idlers who are the masters of everyday theater (and one could call them “seat sharers” as one calls officials “briefcases”) that in Hamlet only the performance, decor and the costumes have achieved a success. Critics on the other hand have also recently used the opportunity to again raise questions about the production.

Because it was a work of Shakespeare, it was an appropriate occasion to serve up anew the story of the inscriptions which replaced the decor in Shakespeare. But this legend does not pass in this century and must finally be done away with.

The production in Shakespeare's time was by no means so poor as it is generally assumed. The apparatus of the Mysteries that the poet would have seen in his early childhood was already very elaborate.

In his “Life of Shakespeare” M. Cochin says: “From all of central England large crowds came to Coventry, where the Mysteries were performed with great pomp and solemnity. But the actors of Coventry also dragged their huge stage carts through the cities and villages, making stops everywhere, where the piety and curiosity of the people promised them a profitable revenue. There they set up the carts, which offered a fairly spacious, two-story stage, of which only the upper part was visible; the lower part was the engine room. There were trap doors, flying machines and artifices of all kinds, devices to rise up to heaven or to descend into hell; complicated apparatuses that could make a ship, clouds and chariot. The theater was draped with carpets and tapestries whose paintings depicted the scene of the action. There were certain fixed, well-known pieces of equipment: the entrance to hell was a huge head with glowing eyes and a huge, fire-red nose; the mouth was armed with two rows of sharp teeth, its jaw was movable, flames whipped from the throat, and in the interior of this throat one could see the dark heads of the damned and their mottled bodies. The costumes were put together after a certain tradition: Adam and Eve wore leather garments, Pilate had a green coat; Herod had red gloves, a multicolored costume and furiously brandished large saber. He always had a great effect, and Shakespeare has said a word about this directly in “Hamlet”, saying of the exaggerated performance of an actor, that he wanted to “out-Herod Herod.”

Other and perhaps more decisive arguments were drawn from the works of the poet himself and, ingeniously developed by Oscar Wilde, in the fifth essay of his book “Intentions.” He quoted August Vacquerie, who says of Racine: “Racine did not deign to occupy himself with costumes. If one were to rely on his information, then Agamemnon would wear only a scepter and Achilles a sword. “Shakespeare on the other hand not only gives every detail for the costumes and the production with his numerous lifts and masquerades, but often brings out the dramatic effect of his plays by the costumes or details of the production.—

Sarah Bernhardt was guilty of also attempting to embody this most mysterious stage figure of all time, and for her part she wanted to show her interpretation of this strange

and subtle soul, assailed by the all too numerous circumstances, was confused, frightened or amused.

The great Sarah understandably could not merely be the repetition of an existing type. The original features of her presentation were recently discussed too often around here to go into it.) And it is perhaps best simply to set out the good impression of Edmond Picard:

“The royal tragedian kept the spectators and listeners in continuous breathless suspense. Her initially wavering voice and declaiming language, which allowed the fear that she would not match her exalted predecessors, consolidated soon, and she unleashed the magnificent warm and magical impulses of her wonderful instinct. Just at the moment where she was so completely absorbed in the role that her own personality blurs and vaguely dissolves, revealing the beauty of her presentation in all its shocking splendor. This is no longer Sarah Bernhardt, only too much the same in many conventional roles, which were created for her by ordinary playwrights to bring money to the woman and categorized actress—it is Hamlet, at last for once the legendary, lively, painful, famous indestructible figure, who grabs at the heart and brain—himself the victim of a tragic destiny—and leads us where her tragic imagination desires, it is Hamlet, who forces us to philosophize with him, to love, to suffer, to roar, to howl, to mock in the depths of our enhanced, ennobled, twitching thinking. O, how far, how forgotten, how extinguished, and to hell are now gone Tosca and Feodora, Gismonda, Theodora, the Lady of Camelias, Alexandre Dumas and Victorien Sardou!”

In conclusion, there is one more literary interpretation of Hamlet to be considered: an adaptation by Jules Laforgue, the first of his “*Moralités legendaires* [Moral Tales].”

At first glance it seems to be a mystification, a joke played, a kind of “*Hamlet up to date,*” a “*Hamlet fin de siècle.”* The style seems erratic: a deliberate mixture of sense and nonsense, of erudition and anachronisms. But out of it all a deep psychology gradually emerges, a stormy honesty of sensation and those vague sadness at dusk in autumn under a delightful sky, a sky from which, according to Baudelaire's word, sorrowful memories descend in droves.

This Hamlet is far from the chivalrous appearance, the theatrical pleated curtains of Shakespeare’s version; far removed from the royal weariness, that princely nature, which remains true to him to the end, despite everything that spites him; still far away are the big wings of madness, flow around him unevenly, always closer and closer. The Hamlet of Jules Laforgue is more of our day. He will become mad, yes, he knows it well; but it is quite indifferent to him; he has come to terms with it, and while awaiting the end, any end, he amusing himself as best he can. He tries to etch, to sculpt, to write. He considers himself almost a poetic genius, and he is the one who wrote the avenging innovative piece to be performed before the king and the kings. But while he prepared his performance, he falls in love with the actress Kate, the star of the troupe, a “type”, which he has sought for a long time; and once the effect scene is played, lets his stab of vengeance, he lets his horse be saddled and abducts his newfound woman-revelation.

They come to the cemetery; Hamlet wants to visit Ophelia's grave visit and meets Laertes, and kills him.

Some points that should create certain interest; especially the title:

"Hamlet, or the consequences of filial love"

And the slogan:

"C'est plus fort que moi."

Or continue to the point:

"Dressed in black, his short sword at his side, a sombrero on his head, lying in the window Hamlet gazes out on the sound, the wide, busy sound, which rolls with habitually indifferent waves, and waits for the wind and for the hour, to dally with the poor fishing-boats in whims of command (the only feeling he is still capable of, under the pressure of the disasters that weigh on him). Hamlet is at this moment in a particularly irritable mood, he waits for the actor, who still does not come, and on whom he so tragically counts; moreover, he has just torn up the letters of Ophelia, who has been missing since the day before; the letters were written in petty bourgeois elegance on brown Dutch paper that is so tough that Hamlet's finger still burns fiercely from tearing it.

'Where can she may be at this hour? Certainly with relatives in the countryside. She will probably come back; she knows the way. Besides, she has never understood me. If I am so mortally sensitive—if you scraped her just enough, the Englishwoman that had absorbed the selfish philosophy of Hobbes from childhood came to light. This Hobbes, who says: Nothing pleases us more in the possession of our own pieces of property, as the thought that they are superior to those of others. In this way, Ophelia had loved me as her property, and because I was socially and morally superior to the possessions of her little girlfriends. And the small talk about well-being and comfort that she escapes to at the time when you light the lamps! A homey Hamlet! Dreadful! And yet, Ophelia, dear little treasure! Come back yet! I implore you! I do not want to start over again!'"

And even further:

"Hamlet puts a coin in the hand of the gravedigger and disappears between the cypresses and the tombs with a slower, more correct attitude; weighed down by his destinies, he does not really know how to take up his role halfway decently again ... I have perhaps twenty, even thirty years to live, then I will have to go like the others! Like the others?— and I can die? Oh, we will talk about it later: we still have time. To die! That's for sure. One dies without noticing it, just as you fall asleep each night. One is unaware of the transition, which leads from the last clear thought to sleep, in the impotence, death, unaware. Admittedly, that is! But no more, no longer be here, no longer to belong!—Not even to be able at some time one evening to press the immortal sadness of his human heart, which is contained in one small musical accord!'"

And the final sentence: "And everything comes back to order; one Hamlet less; the race is therefore not lost, one tells oneself. "

Taken as a whole, Jules Laforgue has by giving us his “Hamlet” made it an echo of our thoughts, our feelings, our options for a existence of solitude. He has, as one of his biographers said, created a Baudelairean Hamlet, yes even slightly more. The race is not extinct, he says. Certainly not! We see today how the rules have multiplied. Just for Hamlet—the writers, dreamers, who stand on the altar of modern life, and the gloomy boredom of the railing, inactivity, leaning on the futility of existence... A Frenchman, who finds the English fogs less epic, less exalted than the other; in contrast strong willed, powerful, ironic, witty, erudite, hopeless and aware he is steering towards a downfall.

The Shakespearean creation is an ingenious fresco, so here is an equally nuanced, ingenious study.

Khnopff, Fernand, "Is Photography Among The Fine Arts?—A Symposium," *The Magazine of Art,* 23 (1899), 156-158.

Is Photography Among the Fine Arts ?—A Symposium. 2.
By Fernand Khnopff.

So long ago as 1882, an article in THE MAGAZINE OF ART announced to artists that photography could supply them with some valuable methods of record a few months later the pictorial representation of the action of the horse was contrasted with its actual movements as shown in the instantaneous photographs taken by Mr. Muybridge. Again, in 1891, in a paper entitled "The artistic aspects of figure photography," Mr. P. H. Emerson discussed and studied with much judgment the individuality and limitations of the photographer as an artist. And now, within the last few months, there is not an art-review, whether illustrated or not, which not contain various articles on the subject.

The greater number of these lucubrations are of the nature of electoral manifestoes or statements of claim expressed in high-flown language, the usual style of sentimental phraseology by which non-professionals try to prove their passion for art. But this is all "leather or prunella!—the soul of Nature, the sentiment of art in photography—*lachrymae rerum* [world of tears].

But, in truth, it may be asked, "Why should there be no really artistic photography now that we have art-pottery, art-advertisements, art-lead-casting, art-stoneware, to say nothing of art-furniture, artistic dress, and the rest; now that artists, mere painters of pictures, mere sculptors of sculpture, are being classed by some persons as useless individuals, rather in the way, unworthy of "our day," and fated ere long to disappear—with the rhinoceros, the dodo, and the ornithorhynchus?

May I be allowed to reply?



From a Photograph by E. Hannon.

Well, then, I would point out with due diffidence that the designers of artistic advertisements are too often misled into aiming at producing cartoon, work for the print-collector's gallery rather than a conspicuous object on wall by the roadside; that the potters—art potters, of course—try to decorate their pots, but more often overload them with statuettes and other work in relief; that their vases will not always hold water, and often scarcely stand up; that corresponding facts are to be found in every branch of art industry, and that this kind of applied art may be summed up and symbolised by the famous parasol—an art-parasol, no doubt—which was of a very, *very* sweet colour, but much too delicate to stand exposure to the open air.

In all these more or less courteous discussions the question is, in point of fact, merely one of the frontier line," as diplomatists say; and in this, as in many other cases, a buffer State is sometimes desirable. What is most interesting in all this campaign in defence of "art-photographers" is to see their pretensions so warmly upheld by that high]y-competent critic, Monsieur R. de la Sizeranne, a man as well known in England as on the Continent. He defended their case with all the brilliancy of his pen and elegance of literary style in long article contributed to the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in December, 1897.

The conclusion to which he came was "that artists would do well to admit to their exhibitions of 'black and white' those unpretending but enthusiastic seekers who. travelling by different road. aim at the same ideal." The ideal is the same, no doubt: the presentment of Nature (with the largest possible N). The roads are indeed different—utterly different; and may add, for my own part, that the countries traversed are altogether distinct; they may touch at certain points, but they must never be confounded.

I have no prejudice for or against photography: the photographer may facilitate the mere notation of facts for the artist; the artist may refine the taste of the photographer. As to the technical side of photography, my ignorance is far greater than M. de la Sizeranne's; but what he puts forward as new fact seems to me no more than reaction—the other extreme of the swing of the pendulum. The influence of photography on art had been too marked, and an excessive influence of art on photography was bound to follow. Such reaction is inevitable; and in proportion as we had at one time, in every exhibition, epileptic horses, impossible perspective, and microscopical details. so we now see. in exhibitions of photographs (l apologise—of art-photography) imitations of charcoal-stump work, sham red-chalk studies, sham washed drawings, as well as the most palpably made-up compositions, or rather compilations, of figure and landscape subjects.

Happily, with these we still occasionally find specimens produced by photographers of sound taste: and quite lately at Brussels, in the twenty fifth anniversary exhibition ot the Belgian Society of Photographers, M. Alexandre and M. Hannon contributed excellent work, not to mention several others.

The bichromate gelatine process, regarded as the most *artistic*, allows, we are told, of the direct intervention of the art-photographer at three different stages, thus influencing the results mechanically produced.



M. Ray Nyst, From a Photograph by Alexandre.

First, when the subject is selected and the figures grouped; and here. with reference to the anecdote quoted, it is worth noticing that though Bertin chose the best point of view, it was Corot who painted the finest work of art. The importance of the composition of picture is undeniable, but this particular influence of the artist's mind ought to be felt in all—absolutely *all*—the details and elements of the composition. For the oversight of single line, of single spot of light here or there, at the last moment is enough to destroy the effect of the whole; and all the more effectually in proportion as the work has been laboriously elaborated. Thus the direct influence of the "art-photographer" is the most to be commended when it is of the least importance and has had to deal with only very limited number of details.

During the second stage of the operation the interference of the "art-photographer" is restricted to tampering with the light and shade; this is not much—but it is too much.

Then comes the third stage—the printing. This is the climax. After minutely describing the process and, as he asserts, its advantages, M. de la Sizeranne exclaims: "Is this mere photography? Surely not!?

No, this in fact has almost ceased to be photography: but is it painting or drawing? Surely not! Then what is it? Well, possibly it is no more than pleasing occupation for an amateur, such as painting "picture-book" is to a child.

It will be necessary, therefore, once more to set forth what are the potentialities of the artist and what the pretensions of the art photographer for there is in this matter, as must reiterate, nothing but vain question of frontier-line.

The artist creates. He is the master of his work in the strictest sense; it is his creature. He can do what he pleases with it—improve, it and alter it to the last moment, in obedience to his personal impulse. The photographer, on the contrary, finds in the subject he borrows from Nature far from submissive co-operating factor, whose co-operation is, in fact, far more potent than his own from the point of view of art. The intervention of the "art-photographer" consists for the most part in reducing his figures

to machines fixed in stiff attitudes, like *tableaux vivants*; then in confusing the lights and shadows, mixing up their relations, destroying the modelling, and making the whole effect heavy; as amply shown by the prints before and after the gelatine treatment which certain manipulators have rashly and vaingloriously exhibited. But the most skilful art-photographer," do what he will, can never eliminate the line or the spot; he is to the end the slave of his model, and finds himself in the predicament of the soldier who called out to his captain that he had taken prisoner. "Bring him here, then," said the captain. "I can't," replied the soldier; "he will not let me go!"

As Professor Fred Brown wrote in reply to an open question proposed for discussion in another Magazine in 1893, "Art and photography run on entirely different lines." And these lines are surely Realism for photography, and Idealism for art. Realism, with its superficial aspect of life in action; idealism, with its personal interpretation of the deepest dreams.

In cinematography we may see rapid processions of cavalry really artistically finer than this or that famous battle-piece, which is positively irritating in its transfixed vehemence. This, in fact, is the exclusive province of photography.

On the other hand, there is, for instance, in the Louvre head of Christ by Rembrandt of which the *real* expression of profound and far away vision could never be achieved by the most ingeniously "made-up" living face, reproduced by the most docile co-operation of the most bichromatised gelatine ever invented. Only an artist can do this—an independent artist, alone with himself, the absolute master of his work and of his art.

I will conclude these brief remarks by quoting way two passages, one from the article alluded to above, by Mr. P.-E. [sic] Emerson:—

"Every reader with slight knowledge of photography will have gathered from what have written that, in all probability at no very distant date, the taking of perfectly satisfactory negative will be matter of scientific certainty and accuracy—in short, science easily learned. Such is the truth, unwelcome as this truth may be to the photographer; all that will be left to his 'taste' will be the selection of the view, for even the printing-papers will be scientifically adjusted to the negatives. That knowledge which proclaims the true artist—viz. analysis, omission of certain details, emphasis of tones or details, the adjustment of harmonies, etc.—is, and will always be, quite beyond his control. In fact, all his medium will prove is that he has good taste,' such as any tourist may have who does not take photograph at all. If photographer with 'good taste '—there are a few—wishes to become an artist, he must learn one of the graphic arts, and use his 'tasty' photographs as hints for movement, and as the raw material for his art."

And, finally, the close of an address by M. Davanne, President of the French Photographic Society, at the dinner given after the late exhibition at Brussels commemorating the twenty-fifth year of the Belgian Society:—

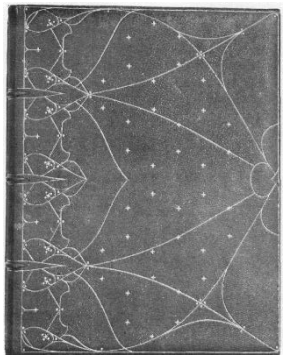
"The application of photography to what are called artistic purposes is only one aspect of photography; it has many others at least equally important; and since it does not lend itself to every fancy, it must not be diverted from its own line of work, which is accuracy,

authenticity, perfection of detail, and truth with beauty. Photography has won such wide recognition in the world that it has every right to be Itself, without attempting to ape anything else. We should be the first to forgive its mistakes and caprices, but it must not sacrifice what ought to be its very essence, its life, its one superiority over any work done by hand—that is, its literal truth."

Fernand Khnopff, “Belgian Bookbinding,” *The Studio*, special winter number 1899-1900, (Modern Bookbindings and their Designers), 68-73.

Belgian Bookbinding. By Fernand Khnopff.

AT the Antwerp Exhibition of 1885, the important exhibits of Josse Schavye were summed up in the catalogue in the following terms: “Specimens of binding illustrative of the various epochs of development of the art from the beginning of the Christian era to the present day, including varnished boards, bindings in filigree with antique applique work in ivory and uncut gems and what are known as catenati, the covers of alms boxes, purses, and jewel cases, dating from the sixteenth century, ladies' reticules, etc.”

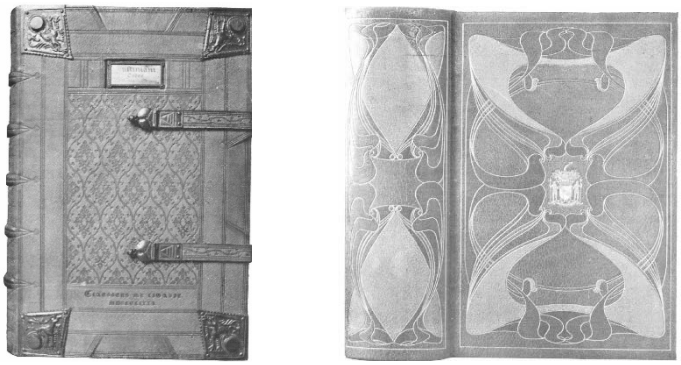




Designed and Executed by J.A. Loeber | Designed by H. Ottevaere, Executed by Ryckers

The delegate appointed to report on the Exhibition pronounced a regular eulogy on this quaint assortment of articles, winding up in the following terms: “The reproductions of ancient bindings by Josse Schavye are full of character and in admirable condition; it is, however, very much to be regretted that he did not see fit to complete the series with examples of modern and contemporary, bindings.”

Amongst the few pupils who learnt their art in the atelier of Josse Schavye who have gained distinction, the best known are Messrs. Desamblanx and Waekesser, who have recently won very favourable notice from those most competent to judge, for the excellence of their workmanship. The elder Schavye, father of Josse, was also rather reluctant to receive pupils, and very few binders of note learned their trade, or rather their profession, in his atelier. To atone for this, however, he exercised a very considerable indirect influence on the binding of his day, setting, moreover, a most wholesome example of a life devoted to art and to good works. In fact many young craftsmen owed much to his counsels, for he was ever ready to give them his advice without fee or reward. He himself knew from experience how valuable such help was, for in his own young days the well-known collector of books, M. De Jonghe of Brussels, aided him greatly by his encouragement and timely counsels. From 1845-1850 P. C. Schavye was constantly with M. De Jonghe, for whom, to the last, he had a great affection and respect.



Executed by L. Claessens, Père | Designed by H. Vandevelde, Executed by P. Claessens

Another noted binder contemporary with the elder Schavye was Charles Duquesne, whose beautiful book covers in pigskin are amongst the treasures of the library at Ghent, and he too found a faithful friend and patron in the learned and warm-hearted bibliophile, M. F. van der Haeghen, of Ghent, who extended to him the same kind of help and encouragement as M. De Jonghe had given to the more celebrated Schavye. The first half of the nineteenth century was indeed rich in patrons who took a direct and intelligent interest in the development of bookbinding, looking upon it as an art, not what it so often becomes in these later days of keen competition and over-production, a mere mechanical craft.



Designed and Executed by G. Ryckers | Designed by H. Ottevaere, Executed by M. Jacob

Speaking at the "Conference du Livre," held at Antwerp in 1890, the Minister, J. van den Peereboom, whose competence as a judge of bookbinding is recognised by all, made the following well-founded remarks:—

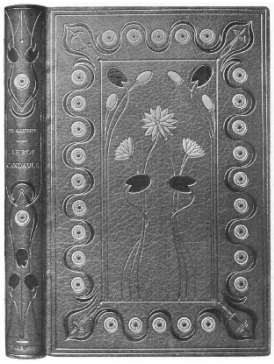
"The progress of the art of binding in Belgium has of late made rapid strides. P. C. Schavye had a pupil who surpassed his master. This pupil was Claessens, of Brussels, side by side with whom I worked myself for no less than ten years. I have got him to bind some of the volumes of my collection of books, notably my incunabula. I said to him, do not let us attempt to do better than the old masters of binding; let us be content with imitating them. This was what he did. He imitated old bindings; in a manner which can only be called brilliant, and his work has been exhibited at Ghent, at Paris, and at Brussels. Although, perhaps, his bindings in morocco leather have not yet attained to the perfection of those produced by Parisian craftsmen, they run them very

close. In fact he takes quite the highest rank in his reproductions of fifteenth-century bindings, not only in the opinion of his fellow countrymen, but of foreigners. I have seen bindings executed by the most skilled craftsmen in Paris and elsewhere, by no means superior in richness of design to those of Claessens."

In 1850 Claessens founded a binding atelier, and soon after that Oliver and Van Trigt started the libraries bearing their names, forming with the studio of Claessens a kind of triumvirate, under the auspices of which grew up many of the most unique collections of books of the present century, now, alas! most of them dispersed. Amongst the libraries which owed their initiative to Claessens, Oliver, and Van Trigt, were those of the Duke of Arenberg and of Messrs. Capron, Koffoed, Veydt, Vergauwen, René della Faille, Thomas Westwood, the Chevalier van Havre, M. van den Peereboom, and many others. It was, in fact, a golden time or collectors of ancient books and of illustrated works dating from the eighteenth century. To give but one instance of the prices realised, the so-called *Patissier Français* fetched 4,500 francs at the Capron sale, held on the premises of the bookseller Oliver mentioned above, whereas now the highest sum which would be likely to be given for it would be from 500 to 1,000 francs.

For some thirty years Claessens has been engaged in the production of an important series of works of the highest artistic value, which are greatly appreciated by connoisseurs who had previously preferred to go to French craftsmen for their bindings.

In 1878 the elder Claessens was joined by his son P. Claessens, who proved a worthy coadjutor of his father, and praise could certainly go no further. Together they worked for many happy years, giving special attention to the reproduction of ancient designs, but at the same time never failing to keep their eyes open to the tendencies of the day, for they recognised that the art of binding, like every other decorative art, was approaching a new departure with which it behooved every intelligent craftsman to be in touch.



Designed and Executed by Desamblanx and Waekesser

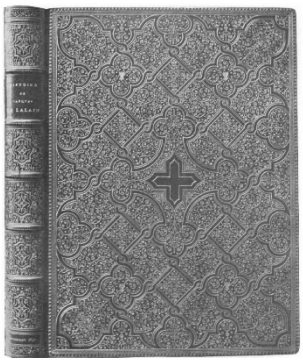
Many well-known and most successful artists were much attracted by the work of the elder Claessens, and he interested them greatly in his methods. Amongst them may be especially mentioned that most modern of modern decorators, H. Van de Velde, who made many clever and beautiful binding designs for the master craftsmen, some of which have already been described in THE STUDIO for October, 1896. Other artists of note

who have worked for or with Claessens are G. Lemmen, who made many good drawings for reproduction by him and the painter, O. Coppens, for whom the great binder has executed various bindings after original mosaic designs by the artist himself.

At the “Conférence du Livre” of 1890, already referred to, M. P. Claessens, in conjunction with M. J. Destrée, expressed an earnest desire to witness the foundation at Brussels of a school of binding conducted on the same lines as the ateliers already in existence in Paris, London, Berlin, and Copenhagen. With a view to the realisation of this most worthy ambition, the well-known binder gives up all his evenings to an institution of the kind which is still in its infancy, and is, of course, set about by all the difficulties inseparable from the inauguration of any enterprise. From it, however, great things are hoped, alike for the leaders and the craftsmen of what may now be justly called the profession of binding.

It is only fair to add in this connection that the question of the giving of competent instruction to binders has long occupied the attention of another great Belgian master of the craft, the well-known E. Bosquet, who won universal recognition at the Industrial Exhibition of Brussels in 1874, and at that of Paris in 1878, by the very fine examples shown by him of bindings produced in his atelier. He devoted himself especially to the technical difficulties connected with the production of good work which are, as every practical binder knows, many and great, though few outsiders, who only see the decorative designs shown under glass at exhibitions, realise what skill is needed to produce a thoroughly satisfactory piece of work. M. E. Bosquet's two books *L'Art du Relieur*, published by the Polytechnic Library, and *La Reliure*, with the sub-title *Étude d’un Praticien sur Part du relieur doreur*, are ranked by specialists as the very best works of the kind which have hitherto been issued.

The son of this accomplished scholar and craftsman, M. P. Bosquet, has, since 1885, successfully carried on the atelier founded by his father, and at the Antwerp Exhibition of 1885, and that of Brussels of 1897, it was very well represented by some twenty volumes in diverse styles, the beautiful designs and fine workmanship of which were most justly admired. Amongst other fine designs M. P. Bosquet has produced many bindings with what is technically known as pyrographic ornamentation, notably those of the cover of *La Dame aux Camélias* and of the album presented to M. Seguin, the popular actor of the part of Wotan in the “Walküre” at the Theatre de la Monnaie.

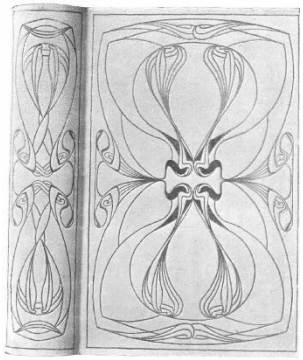


Designed By P. Claessens; Executed By L. Claessens, Père

Another very celebrated binder of Belgian nationality is Desamblanx, who bound the beautiful edition of “Salammbô” illustrated by the equally well-known artist Titz, which is now in the fine library of the American DeForest, and is alluded to in terms of the highest praise by H. Pène du Bois in his very interesting and brightly written book, *Four Private Libraries of New York*.

As will be readily remarked in the illustrations accompanying this article, what specially distinguishes the work of these two skilled craftsmen is the appropriateness of the design to the book to which the binding belongs, the ingenuity of the ornamentation, and what may perhaps be characterised as a well-chosen symbolism.

The Belgian house known as that of G. Ryckers is now managed by the son of the founder, and it has been very well represented at the various exhibitions which have taken place between 1880 and 1897, the interesting work shown winning many medals. Some of the designs were of a very complicated character, and the workmanship was in every case of a high class. To give but a few examples: the binding of Levy's *History of Painting on Glass* of some of Octave Uzanne's charming volumes, and of *La Dame aux Camelias* were especially noteworthy. One copy of *La Frontière* was actually bound in human skin by Ryckers for M. J. Clarétie, the French flag, worked in mosaics, forming the design, after a drawing by the painter H. Ottevaere, who made the cartoons for two volumes of the works of the eccentric genius Edgar Allan Poe, which were bound in morocco leather, with mosaic designs in relief. The painter himself executed the pyrographic work, in which the tooling is done with a heated tool—to quote his own words: “with an electric pencil connected by a copper wire with a battery, and insulated by means of a glass tube.” A later cartoon by Ottevaere for the binding of *Blanche, Claire et Candide*, illustrated by Am. Lynen, was recently executed by Jacob. An illustration of this somewhat remarkable binding appears on p. 70.



Designed by H. Van de Velde, Executed by P. Claessens

In concluding this hastily written *résumé* of the principal art binders of Belgium, I must quote yet another sentence from the speech of the Minister Van der Peereboom at the Antwerp “Conférence du Livre,” already more than once referred to. “Hitherto,” he said, “we have had absolutely no history of the binding of our country. I hope that one of you now present may some day write such a history. Perhaps, when I am myself free from the multifarious duties now occupying me, I may accomplish a brief account of it.”

As a matter of fact, that time has already come, for M. Van der Peereboom is now no longer so overworked, and I heartily supplement his hope with my own that he may be induced at no distant date to supply the want he so justly deplores.

FERNAND KHNOPFF.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 16, 71 (February 1899), 61-64.

BRUSSELS.—A novel idea has just been most successfully realised in Brussels. By way of celebrating the professional jubilee of Dr. Héger, his old pupils decided to decorate in his honour the lecture theatre at the Institut Solvay, and for this purpose they commissioned M. Crespin, who has carried out the work in his usual clever and resourceful manner. He has chosen a colour scheme of green and brown tints, and his line effects are based on floral and geometrical models. Above the Professor's seat is a bas-relief by M. Dillens: Physiology, personified by an aged man noting the pulsations of the heart (page 64). Over the doors are two scrolls with the legends, “*Experientia fides nostra”* and *“Veritas suprema lex.”* In other parts of the hall are displayed five more *cartouches* with inscriptions of names and dates, tracing the evolution of physiological science from the days of Pythagoras to those of Helmholtz; and the scheme of ornamentation extends to the ceilings, the door-frames, and the windows. It is to be hoped this most happy and original idea may be emulated by other art-loving students.

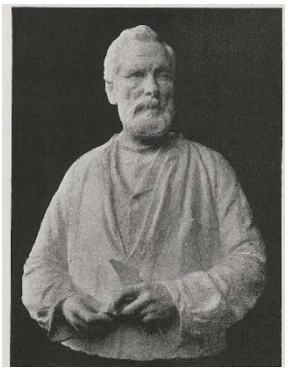
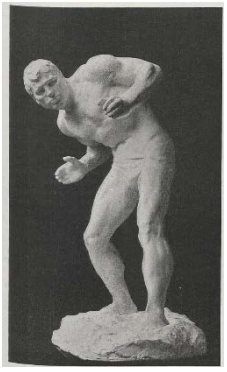
M. Gabriel Mourey has been delivering a course of lectures on “Decorative Art” before large and appreciative audiences in Brussels (at the Cercle Artistique), Antwerp, Ghent, and Liège.



“Thais” Ivory Statuette by G. Devreese

The latest productions of the Brussels sculptor, G. Devreese, show marked progress, his extreme care in adapting his style of treatment to the necessities of the material being especially praiseworthy. Whereas in his little ivory figure, *Thais* (a souvenir of Madame Georgettes Leblanc's interpretation of the heroine's part in Massenet's opera), his modelling is all suppleness and grace, in his wooden bust of a *Vieux Pêcheur* it is rugged and compact; while simple and strong in the portrait of his father, in stone, it is refined and precise in the medal done in silver for the Provincial Council of Brabant (page 64). This medal is cleverly composed. The province of Brabant is personified by a lace-worker, a woman whose figure, seen in profile, makes an admirable centre for its circular setting, while the lightly-suggested window in no way spoils the harmony of the design, but rather adds to its effectiveness. This work betrays the influence of the French medallists recently dealt with in THE STUDIO ; but while admitting this, one may

fairly claim for the Brussels sculptor that he has adapted the teachings of his neighbours and *confrères* without any sacrifice of his individual gift of observation, without detriment to his own solid workmanship.

Bust of the Sculptor's Father by G. Devreese | "Lutteur en garde" by G. Devreese

The Committee of the Belgian Society of Water-Colour Painters should strive, without further delay, to raise the standard of their exhibitions, and, while improving the quality, largely reduce the quantity of the works displayed. The sight of these two hundred and fifty water-colours hanging on the walls in the vast galleries of the Musée de Bruxelles is quite painful, and gives one a feeling of lassitude and *ennui;* whereas a well-selected score of these works artistically displayed in some small, nicely-proportioned room, would form a charming little Salon such as one would willingly visit again and again.



Medal by G. Devreese



Bas-Relief by J. Dillens

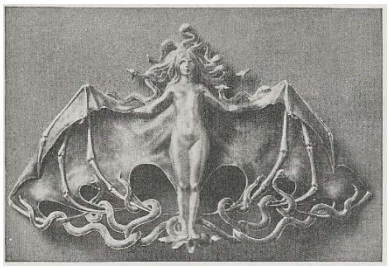
The *clou* of the Exhibition is unquestionably the remarkable painting by Mr. C. W. Bartlett, *Mère et Enfant,* a fine, bold work of sober colouring, in which a scheme of blue plays an effective part: His subdued and broadly treated *Portrait* is also admirable. Another noteworthy exhibit is that sent by the French painter, G. La Touche, whose fantastic style and strange, phosphorescent colours arouse the liveliest interest. Of the Belgian exhibitors, M. Delaunois deserves a special word of mention, and excellent work of various sorts is also contributed by M. Cassiers, M. A. Lynen, M. Stacquet, and M. Hagemans.

F.K.

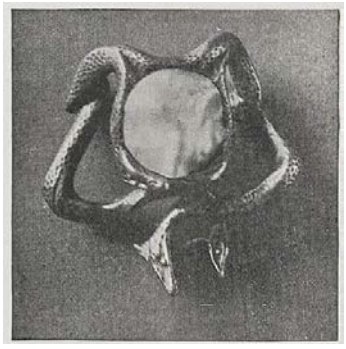
F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 16, 72 (March 1899), 134-139.

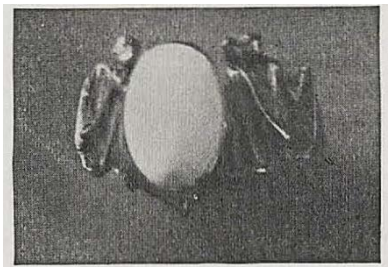
BRUSSELS.—We have been having a succession of diverse exhibitions at the Cercle Artistique. After a display of landscapes by M. Verdussen (who affects sombre verdure beneath a rainy, lowering sky) we saw the bright, decorative canvases of M. Richir and the charming Dutch landscapes of MM. Hermanus and Mayné. Next M. X. Mellery displayed various paintings and several of small drawings. The productions of this rare artist are always interesting. His portrait, at the entrance of the gallery, is full of intense expression, absolutely simple in attitude, and grave in aspect. The chief charm lies in the face, which compels attention by the deep sentiment it reveals. Close by were several decorative works done in the freshest and most original manner—tall figures symbolical of Right and Greatness standing out in dark *silhouettes* against a background of gold. Also two remarkable works, almost ghostly in their suggestion of silence, which riveted one's attention and long retained it. The *motifs* are nuns praying in a chapel at nightfall, and an old broken-down carriage in a deserted garden under the tall, leafless trees. This last is truly a masterpiece, unique and perfect.

The young Brussels painter, G. M. Stevens, has been exhibiting a large number of drawings and paintings at the Maison d'Art. The majority of these works had already been on view at the “Sillon” displays and at the official salons, where their many merits attracted much attention. His more recent paintings reveal great progress.

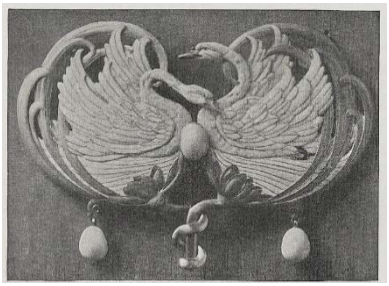
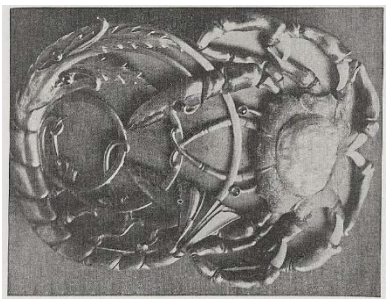


“The Vampire” by P. Wolfers

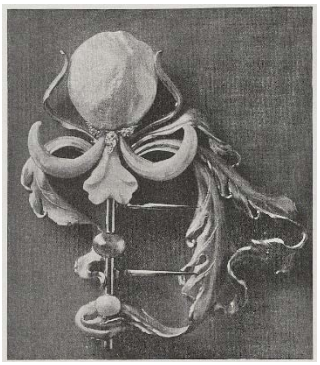




Brooch by P. Wolfers | Ring by P. Wolfers

Clasp by P. Wolfers | Belt-Buckle by P. Wolfers



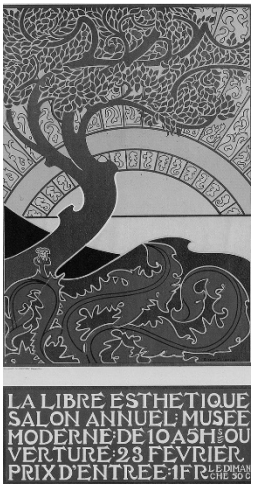
Belt-Buckle by P. Wolfers

The seventh exhibition of the “Cercle pour l'Art,'' at the Musée de Bruxelles, contains several quite remarkable works by the Brussels sculptor, V. Rousseau, whose talents have already found recognition in these columns. His new study, *Demeter*, is not only a work of the highest merit, but may possibly form a fresh starting-point in Belgian sculpture. His small bust of a child and his gold bracelet are delightful, and his pen-drawing, *Beethoven*, really superb. Among the other exhibitors are MM. F. Baes, Coppens, Janssens, Hannotiau, Ottevaere, A. de Gandara, and Ph. Wolfers (some of whose work is here reproduced), all of whom send admirable work in their various departments.

F. K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 16, 73 (April 1899), 210-211.

BRUSSELS.—At the Maison d'Art we have had a collection of works by M. Laermans, an artist of great power as a colourist, although his drawings habitually verge on caricature; at the Rubens Club some new paintings by M. and Mme. Wytsman, both displaying marked progress in their conscientious draughtsmanship, which adds greatly to the charm of their bright colouring; at the Cercle Artistique Mlle. Heger's landscape studies, Mlle. Art's and MM. Cluysenaar, Uytterschaut and Stacquet's pleasing water-colours and pastels, delicate landscapes by MM. Verheyden and Meyers, and several fine oils by that powerful colourist, M. Verhaeren.




Poster by G. Combaz | “Veilleuse” by Paul Dubois

The Salon of the Libre-Esthétique is, as usual, full of interest. It is remarkable on this occasion for the fact that the works which are attracting most attention are those based on direct observation of the Old Masters, some of whom indeed are strikingly suggested. For instance, M. Motte’s large and important canvas inevitably recalls the studied attitudes and the somewhat metallic tints of Botticelli; while in M. Roche's charming portrait we may discover the style peculiar to the English portrait-painters of the end of the eighteenth century. M. Jacob-Smits in his work betrays the influence of Rembrandt's manner; M. E. Carrière carries us back to Velasquez; M. Anquetin seems haunted by the Franco-Italian artists of the Fontainebleau school; and in Mr. Greiffenhagen's *Annunciation* we find once more the amplitude and the warm colouring of Titian. Mr. Greiffenhagen's great abilities are well-known to the readers of THE STUDIO, and it suffices therefore to say that his exhibit was the success of the Salon. Equally superfluous would it be to expatiate on the recent and very remarkable work of MM. Cottet and Charpentier, so fully treated in these pages by M. Mourey; to praise once more the grand productions of C. Meunier, or to do more than to mention the work of such artists as X. Meilery, Mlle. Boch, De Gouves de Nuncques [sic], Combaz (who designed the poster for the exhibition), Lemmen, Rafaëlli, V. Rousseau, F. Brangwyn, L. Von Hofmann, G. Minne, or Moreau-Nélaton.

The exhibition, arranged by the director of the Libre-Esthétique, of the “exposable” works of the late Félicien Rops, has enabled the amateur to see this remarkable artist's productions in something like completeness; and near at hand one may see the beautiful series of engravings for Baudelaire's “Fleurs du Mal,” by M. Rassenfosse, also the noble compositions of M. Donnay for the last “Almanach des Poètes.” M. Berchmans exhibits several delicately coloured pastels; M. Leveque sundry heads; MM. Artot and V. Bernard various drawings and paintings of great purity of outline; M. P. Dubois a bronze bust of Vieuxtemps, the violinist, together with medals and works of applied art; M. W. Finch (who for some months has been living in Finland) a collection of admirable pottery.

Mention must also be made of the paintings by MM. F. Hens, Von Zumbusch, De Grubicÿ, and Innes; of the monotypes in colours by MM. F. Jourdain and Koopman, the caricatures of Leo Jo; the elaborately treated medals by M. Fernan-dubois [sic – Fernand Dubois]; the little marble bust by Mlle. G. Descressonnières; the glass-work by M. F. Zitzmann; the bindings by MM. Desamblanx and Wekesser; the copper work by Mlles. De Brouckère and Holbach; the bronzed and *cloisonné* enamels of M. C. Heaton; the jewels by M. Colonna; and the embroideries by Mlle. Huez.

A final word is due to the large exhibit by the members of the Munich Society known as the “Vereinigte Werkstätten for Kunst im Handwerk.” Many of these works have been reproduced at various times in the pages of THE STUDIO, and it is unnecessary to refer to them now in detail. Altogether this Salon has proved a triumph for the Libre-Esthétique.

F. K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 16, 74 (May 1899), 282-283.

BRUSSELS.—The private exhibitions of C. W. Bartlett and J. Ensor brought to a close the series of little winter shows organised by the Cercle Artistique. Mr. Bartlett displayed an imposing collection of oils and water-colours. He is at his best in depicting Dutch scenery, and no one has succeeded so well as he in portraying this particular style of landscape, with its interminable green plains intersected by long canals tapering away to the horizon. From his drawing and his colouring it is evident he has studied Japanese art, and studied it right back to its fundamental principles, not contenting himself, as so many others have done, with imitating, more or less cleverly, certain of its curious but superficial aspects.

J. Ensor, on the other hand, is a quaint and fanciful artist, with a sort of grim humour, who, side by side with landscapes, sea-pieces, and portraits, showing great skill and delicacy of handling, exhibits a number of wild and incoherent caricatures.

M. Edmond Verstraeten at the same time exhibited a series of landscapes—remarkable, if sometimes too hasty, studies of light effects.

To conclude, the smaller exhibitions at the Cercle Artistique during the season just closed were undoubtedly of more serious interest than those of the previous winter.

M. Leempoels has been showing at the Maison d'Art a collection of pictures-many that have already been on view, together with several recent portraits. His works display much ability and a minuteness of execution as remarkable as it is uniform. One must regret, however, that the artist's persistent endeavour to secure this scrupulously finished result forces him at times to sacrifice something of his attractive delicacy in the process.

A Salon of religious art, organised by the Catholic review *Durendal,* will be opened in Brussels during the month of December in the Galleries of the Musée Moderne, which have been set apart for artistic displays of this sort. The promoters of this Salon were anxious to hold it at this particular place in order the better to show the modern spirit of their enterprise. Hitherto all exhibitions of religious art have been confined to retrospective work. “To gather together, without regard to nationality or manner or school, works of art inspired by religious feeling or dealing with the subject of worship; to open up to those artists who for one reason or another have neglected it, the fairest field for the display' of their talents, a field the fertility of which has been proclaimed in the past by numberless masterpieces, a field which nowadays, despite a valiant effort here and there, seems to be given over almost entirely to mediocrity and commercialism; to teach the masses and the clergy alike that there exist painters and sculptors and ironworkers and carvers capable, if only the opportunity be afforded them, of bringing their influence to bear on that prevailing spirit of decadence which all admit and all deplore—such is the primary justification, such would be the immediate

advantage, of an artistic manifestation which must enlist the sympathies of every lover of the Beautiful."

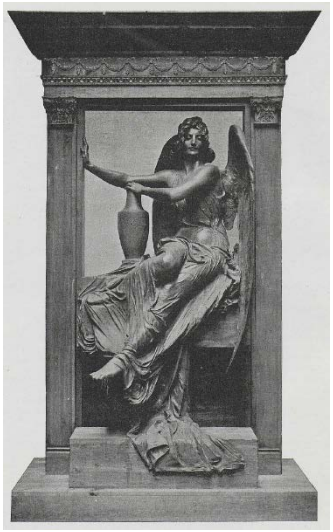
In these terms the organisers formulate their programme, and we may hope that artists of all countries will, by sending work such as is here suggested, help to further the realisation of the scheme.

F.K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 17, 75 (June 1899), 58-60.

BRUSSELS.—The exhibition of the “Sillon” is now on view at the Musée de Bruxelles. At the first glance the visitor is conscious of nothing but a number of colossal nudes, gigantic portraits, and harsh, massive landscapes, all “turned out” in much the same fashion. One might easily confound the works of MM. Bastien, Smeers, Moerenhout, Blieck, and Wagemans; for they all display the same loudness of colouring, the same commonplace methods, the same overloading of varnish. MM. Gouweloos, Matthieu, and Verdussen also seem attracted by these cheap effects, but the fascination will probably not last long. The charming portrait exhibited by M. G. De La Perche claims one’s attention and soothes the eye by its delicate qualities, as do also the pictures by MM. G. M. Stevens, Delgouffre, and H. Meunier. As for the sculptors, they are all under the influence of M. Lambeaux, and are careful to imitate his defects. The bust by M. Nocquet, however, is well and clearly modelled.

The display of large pieces of sculpture being impractical in the rooms available at the Musée, the committee of the Société des Beaux Arts de Bruxelles have been compelled this year to install their Salon in the large galleries of the Cercle Artistique. The arrangement of this exhibition has met with universal approval, and it contains many works of high merit. Foreign schools are well represented, and there are many new Belgian works of considerable importance. The charming composition *Dawn*, by F. Dicksee, R.A., D. Murray’s large landscape *The Angler*. And W. Holman Hunt’s remarkable work *May-Day at Magdalen Tower, Oxford*, occupy prominent positions, and serve to emphasise once more the sincerity and the dignity of modern English painting. French painting is represented by M. E. R. Menard, who contributes the finest portrait in the whole exhibition—*Portrait de ma mère*—and a *Jugement de Paris,* a fine work, somewhat suggestive of Watteau. M. Segantini sends a number of Alpine scenes; M. E. Wauters, the celebrated Belgian painter, exhibits several broadly-handled pastels and a large oil-painting. The Belgian landscapists are many and various—among them being MM. Ter Linden, Claus, R. Wytsman, Courtens, Gilsoul, and Binjé. MM. Verhaeren, Frédéric and Janssens contribute some delicate interiors, M. Pokitonow, a Russian landscapist, some microscopic paintings, and M. Delvin a study of a horse.



"Figure Tombale" by J. De Lalaing

As was the case last year the Belgian sculptors have sent a good deal of notable work, from which we may select for special mention the graceful *Figure Tombale* by M. J. Le Lalaing. Other prominent exhibitors are MM. V. Rousseau, Lagaë, Vinçotte, Samuel, Dillens, and Lambeaux. Especially admirable are the three little bronzes by F. Stuck, the famous Munich artist. This is the best sculpture in the exhibition.

F.K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 17, 77 (August 1899), 200-202.

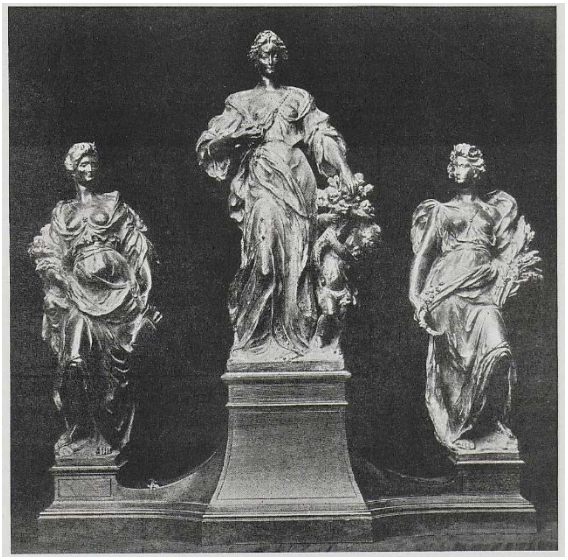
BRUSSELS.—The great Belgian artist, Félicien Rops; recently dead, is at last represented at the Musée de Bruxelles by a characteristic drawing, styled *La Parisine* [sic]*,* a work lately forming part of the de Goncourt collection. It bears this inscription: “À Messieurs Edmond et Jules de Goncourt, après Manette Salomon.” This is a black-and-white work of the highest order, nervous and clear in drawing, and in colouring of tragic strength.

The new “Maison du Peuple” is completed. This interesting structure reflects honour on its architect, M. Horta, who has succeeded in realising to the full the art principles to which he is devoted. This vast, plain *façade* of horizontal lines is puzzling to those accustomed to over-ornamented gables and to rows of useless pillars. M. Horta was invited to construct a House for the People—that is to say, a place where the working classes might meet and make their plans; accordingly the architect has proceeded logically by building not a Palace but a House, in which the necessary interior comfort has in no way been sacrificed for the sake of deceptive external effect. Nevertheless M. Horta has succeeded in investing his plain and simple edifice with true artistic merit.

F.K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 17, 78 (September 1899), 276-277.

BRUSSELS.—The work of restoring the Grande Place is slowly drawing to a close. M. C. Samuel has executed in “pierre d'Euville” three decorative figures for the “Maison du Cygne” once in the occupation of the Guild of Butchers, and erected from the proceeds of the wool sales. The figures represent *Ceres, Plenty,* and *The Butcher's Art*—otherwise *La Boucherie.* M. Samuel has striven to reproduce in these compositions the somewhat mannered style of the late Flemish renaissance, and his work will certainly produce an excellent effect as part of the richly ornamented *façade.*



Decorative Figures for the “Maison du Cygne,” Brussels by C. Samuel

“The Lay Figure,” who, in the July number of THE STUDIO, was deploring the lack of “local patriotism,” would have been delighted to see the exhibition at the Cercle Artistique at Termonde. The display was restricted to the works of artists born or residing in the city of Termonde, or in the immediate neighbourhood, and was universally voted one of the most successful displays of Belgian art seen throughout the season. There were five galleries, one containing seventeen landscapes by F. Courtens, and another fifty-four works by Fernand Khnopff (paintings, drawings, engravings, and sculptures); while elsewhere could be seen panels by Rosseels, Wystman [sic], and J. Verhas, together with exhibits by Meyers, De Beul, and others, the whole carefully selected and displayed just as well as they could have been at the best exhibitions in the capital itself. It is to be hoped the excellent example set by Termonde may have the effect of improving the average provincial displays, wherein it seems to be the one idea of the committee to crowd from floor to ceiling the greatest possible number of “works for sale.”

Various new posters, designed and printed in Belgium, have appeared recently; several are worthy of note, especially that done by M. H. Cassiers for the “Red Star” line, which may be recommended to collectors. On the yellow background of a sunset sky is seen

the dark outline of an Atlantic liner, which, as it passes, is an object of wonder to a crowd of women and children, dressed in Zeeland costumes of strong and vivid colours. It is a real work of art, composed with great care, its broad surfaces drawn with much simplicity, and its flat colouring most harmoniously disposed. Evidently M. Cassiers is under the influence of his co-workers, C. W. Bartlett and N. Jungmann, who have inspired him most happily.

Illustrated post-cards are very popular at present in Belgium, as elsewhere, and the number of series published by M. Dietrich of Brussels is steadily increasing. The fact that these cards are being produced by artists such as Cassiers, Combaz, and H. Meunier, is proof enough of their artistic merit and variety.

F. K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 18, 79 (October 1899), 64-66.

BRUSSELS.—The monument erected by the town of Nivelles in Brabant to the memory of the late J. de Burlet, Minister of State, is the work of the Brussels sculptor, J. de Lalaing. The sculptural portion consists of a bronze bust of the former minister surmounting two bronze high-reliefs, the one representing a wrestler, typical of Combativeness, and the other a young woman, symbolising Eloquence. This new work by M. de Lalaing has neither the elegance of line nor the felicitous composition of his funeral monument lately exhibited in Brussels, and reproduced in the June number of THE STUDIO; at the same time it is very finely executed in parts, and reveals once more the wide knowledge and the lofty sentiment of this truly remarkable artist.

Among the usual exhibitions which mark the end of the year at the numerous professional schools in Brussels, that of the Ecole Bisschofsheim is deserving of notice. The most careful instruction in drawing, together with its ornamental application, is specially considered, and the works displayed were on the whole most interesting. M. Crespin is the lecturer on decorative composition, the excellence of his method being manifest in the work of these young girls. The fact that the greater number of the exhibits bear the stamp of individuality is due to this: that, from the outset, M. Crespin's young pupils are taught on clear and rational principles, and from the moment they know how to use their pencils they are not obliged slavishly to reproduce a set of old copies, but are encouraged, on the contrary, to give vent to their own initiative in the way of combination and invention, by expanding the simple themes submitted to them. Mlles. Boeykens, Levert, and Lemonnier are worthy of special mention. Another interesting point should be noted. During the winter, when it is difficult to procure fresh flowers as models, M. Crespin borrows dried specimens, many of which offer linear effects full of ornamental meaning.

F.K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 18, 80 (November 1899), 143.

BRUSSELS.—The great official Belgian Salon was held this year at Ghent. As was the case in 1895, the organising committee did not confine itself to classing and placing the more or less interesting works of Belgian artists of established or of budding reputation, but also sent special invitations to a few carefully selected foreign artists. By this means a large number of French, Dutch, German, English, and Scotch works were brought together, and these unquestionably constitute the chief interest of the Salon.

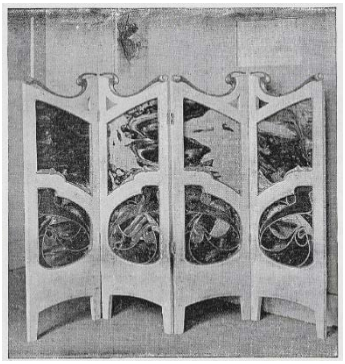
Two paintings stand out prominently from among the rest, namely, Fantin-Latour's portrait group, *La Leçon de Dessin,* and the big picture by Struys—*Désespéré.* The first of these, which was done a score of years ago, is one of those strong and simple creations which impress one by their calm nobility and the grave harmony of their execution. M. Struys' canvas is already famous, having made a triumphant tour through Paris, Munich, and Brussels, and, seeing it again, one must continue to admire its bold and dashing style.

The Brussels painter, E. Motte, has just published a work of elementary instruction in art, under the title of “Une Heure d'Art; pour aider a l'education du peuple et de la jeunesse, par un Peintre Flamand.” The *brochure* contains a simple exposition of the principles of aesthetics and a closely condensed series of “tableaux chronologiques.” Says the author, by way of conclusion: “May these few pages, hastily written, with no pretension beyond that of being useful, help to spread a love of the Beautiful in the heart of the people. To every man is given the ability to perfect himself, to improve, and the regular contemplation of works of art is a powerful aid towards this end. Let the people become worthy of governing themselves. Art is not merely the privilege of the few, it is part of the common heritage of humanity, and speedily to attain to this noble inheritance will be the lot of those who earnestly desire it. Yes, a noble inheritance it is, for all else is fleeting. A few vestiges of art are all that remain of the history of mankind in the flight of the ages.”

F.K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 18, 81 (December 1899), 207-208.

BRUSSELS.—The fertility of that very modern decorator, M. Henry Vandevelde, is becoming more and more conspicuous; quite recently he has undertaken important work for Brussels, Berlin, and Paris, and we shall, therefore, soon see the result in the shape of other sets of furniture conceived and constructed in the solid, simple, and ingenious manner for which he is famous. He has just completed, for Count Kessler of Berlin, a *mobilier* in white lacquered wood, ornamented with tin *appliques,* the effect both of colour and of line being most happy.




Screen by H. Vandevelde | Sideboard by H. Vandevelde

Among the purchases—both numerous and judicious—made by the Belgian Government from the Ghent Salon, especially noteworthy is Fantin-Latour's superb canvas, *La Leçon de Dessin,* which, in its grave style and honest execution, should set a most salutary example. There are several English works too, among them J. Lavery's *The Night after the Battle of Langside,* already exhibited in Brussels; a very delicately coloured landscape by J. Paterson; and G. Sauter's *Music,* which was reproduced in THE STUDIO last year.

The Belgian Society of Aquafortists is preparing an exhibition of Belgian engravings to be held in the galleries of our Cercle Artistique early next year. A few engravers of established reputation exhibit regularly at the “Official” Salons; but others there are, more retiring or more independent, who rarely show their productions to the public. This is the case with M. F. Maréchal, the interesting Liège artist—soon to form the subject of a study in these columns—whose remarkable plates are unknown to all save a few collectors, by whom, however, the artist’s high gifts are fully appreciated.

F.K.

1900

Khnopff, Fernand, "François Maréchal, a Liège Etcher," *The Studio*, 20, 88 (July, 1900), 102-107.

François Maréchal, A Liège Etcher. By Fernand Khnopff.

In the year 1893 I saw in the album of the Brussels Society of Aquafortists a number of panoramic views of Liège, signed "F. Maréchal." I was struck at the time by their skilful composition, their somewhat rough but solid touch, and by their air of truthfulness and sincerity. Since then I had come across nothing bearing the same signature, until in the studio of M. Rassenfosse I saw it again on an extraordinarily varied series of etchings, representing "bits" and types from the outlying suburbs, and numerous night scenes on the quays, with the trembling lights reflected in the waters of the Meuse. To a sense of admiration for the works themselves was added a strong desire to see their author.

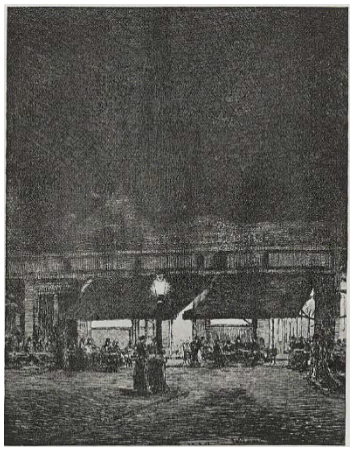


An Old Walk, Suburb of Liège. From an Etching by F. Maréchal

Shortly afterwards I was accordingly introduced to him, and found myself in the presence of a man, still young, of very interesting appearance, small, spare and wiry, with short thin features, bright and piercing glance, and the full forehead of a man of strong will and concentrative power—in a word, a native of the Ardennes. A modest room in a simple inn, commanding a view of the broad river and the town, served as his studio, which, by way of furniture, boasted nothing beyond a couple of seats, a large press, bottles and phials of every sort of shape, a fine grey cat, and notably a rich and splendid collection of butterflies, carefully pinned inside their glass-lidded boxes, and, in their superb, intact condition, glistening like so many marvellous gems. I hastened to accept the offer made to show me his portfolios, wherein, elaborately classed and numbered, were stored his drawings and engravings. These drawings—mostly from the nude—were serious, complete works, and cruel, so to speak, in their pitiless accuracy; while the engravings, rather heavy in touch at the outset, but growing more refined by

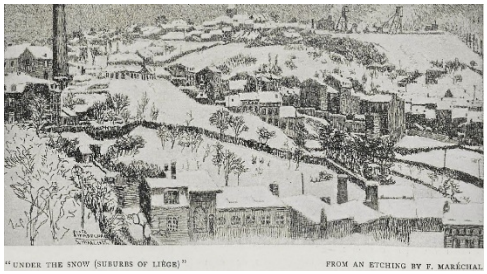
degrees, developed at length extraordinary lightness and flexibility, without any sacrifice, moreover, of the artist's truly scientific precision.

I observed that as the strokes upon the meta! became more supple, those on the paper grew more and more hard, to such an extent that some of the drawings had the appearance of those sculptors' designs in which the substance, the “volume,” is skilfully suggested, while the contour is rough and awkward. Thus the dominant passion of the engraver was plainly visible in his work, the obstinate striving after the faultless technique he must attain at any price.



“The Liège Boulevards, Evening” From an Etching by F. Maréchal

M. Maréchal first studied oil-painting, regularly attending the classes at the Liège Academy of Fine Arts, and not without success, for he won a prize for an historical subject; he also devoted himself to landscape. In all he did there was evidence of undoubted hard work and a desire to succeed ; but after all it was only experimental, for the “process” he bad chosen was not adapted to his vision of things; there was, in fact, a want of harmony between the workmanship and the style. When things were at this stage he began to study engraving with the help and guidance of M. Rassenfosse, whose great talent is equalled only by his generous and fraternal spirit. To the young engraver the new method came as a revelation of himself. Full of enthusiasm he abandoned painting to devote himself wholly to the engraving in which he delighted. His keenness for work, always great, became quite extraordinary. He produced plates literally in heaps, and thus in a short time succeeded in acquiring remarkable sureness of touch.



“Under the Snow (Suburbs of Liège)” from an etching by F. Maréchal

The danger was that this very dexterity—which was only a means to an end—might be regarded by the artist as the ultimate aim of his labour; that he might waste his ability on mere feats of skill. Happily the crisis was of short duration. The period of manual exercise was succeeded by one of intellectual work. He read, and watched and pondered, and then, when face to face with nature, he realised that he was equipped to understand and to depict it.

The works by M. Maréchal, reproduced here, show how he loves - one may almost say adores these varied and interesting regions around Liège, with their long perspectives of tall chimneys, and their old deserted roads, lit only by some antique lamp.



An Old Pathway, Suburb of Liège. From an Etching by F. Maréchal.

A word more to conclude. Maréchal had become accustomed to engrave direct from nature, and the public at first failed to recognise the Liège scenes, naturally reversed in the printing, and refused to buy plates which to their eyes represented nothing! Connoisseurs, however, were not slow to see that, although the faithfulness of the "view" might suffer somewhat thereby, the engraving gained greatly in point of suppleness and life. François Maréchal is to-day in the plenitude of his powers, the possessor of honest original talent, and, I feel sure, will again and again afford us the opportunity of admiring his conscientiousness and his energy.

F. K.

Khnopff, Fernand, “Belgian Pen-Drawings,” *The Studio*, special winter number 1900-1901, 176-183.

Belgian Pen-Drawings. By Fernand Khnopff.



CERTAINLY among living Belgian artists, Joseph Middeleer, the Brussels painter, has produced and published the largest number of pen-drawings. He it was who was commissioned by M. Boitte, the publisher, to illustrate the voluminous text of M. Jules Du Jardin's “L'Art Flamand.” This work is now completed, and the artist may well be satisfied with his performance. The paintings and drawings, by masters past and present, which he had to reproduce m the course of this undertaking, have been represented by him in clever and skilful fashion, for he has realised their variety, and adapted his manner to the interpretation of the several styles.

WHEN about to start writing “L'Art Flamand,” M. Du Jardin, desiring to be furnished with the most authentic “documents,” asked the artists, whose life and works he was to examine, to give him “a few notes on their productions to aid him in his labours.”

THE most amusing of the replies received was, says the author, “a long and delicious autobiography from Amédée Lynen, the Brussels draughtsman.” Lynen is a true Flamand, or rather a true Brabancon, or, better still, a true Bruxellois of a bye-gone age. He loves the old customs of the “*bas de la ville*”—the end of the town—the winding streets, with their lofty gables, and the smoky *cabarets*, where one may meet all those essentially Brusselian types which he depicts in so personal a manner, and with such witty, laughing realism and good humour. It delights him also to illustrate at his leisure the works of his favourite authors, even to the extent of doing the text itself and its accompanying ornamentation. He has still in his possession works by Ch. Decoster, Ch. Deulin, and Emile Verhaeren; and he is continually increasing the number of these precious manuscripts.

“IN the evening—at night—I set myself to draw” (so he wrote to M. Du Jardin) “just what I saw, just what I thought, whether natural or fanciful. An exhibition of these things drew attention to me, and the Press announced with joy the advent of an illustrator in Belgium.” Then comes this funny episode:—

“I WAS working on the 'Illustration Nationale,' when one day the manager sent for me. 'I want you,' said he, ‘to go to Bruges at once, and do a drawing of the new École

Normale. It must be done quickly, as we have to publish it in the next number: Off I go by the first train, and, jumping into a cab on arriving at Bruges, tell the driver to take me to the new École Normale. After going right across the town the cabman stops, and, pointing to a piece of waste land, remarks: 'That's where they talk about building it.' To cut a long story short, the architect, greatly flattered, was good enough to give me a copy of his plans, which I sent to my friend Louis Titz, who, at my request, did me a perspective sketch of the future building. 'Leave me a corner,' said I, 'so that I can put in a tree!' The manager, on seeing our handiwork, exclaimed: 'At last we have a good drawing! Excellent, M. Lynen! I congratulate you! It's splendid—except the tree! . . .' From that day Titz became an illustrator.''



A Study
J. Middeleer

AT the beginning of his career, M. Louis Titz did designs for ornament makers and architects, together with decorative work and scene painting; but since 1885 he has devoted his energies to water-colours and illustrations, of which he knows every process to perfection. His numerous drawings, which have been reproduced in “La Belgique Illustrée,'' “Bruxelles à Travers les Ages,” “Anvers à Travers les Ages,” and other big works, are remarkable for their skilful precision, and their sharpness of execution.

THE strong, firm pen-stroke of M. F. Gaillard, a young Brussels painter, recalls that of the early drawings done by Daniel Vierge, the prodigious Spanish draughtsman, for the “Monde Illustré” of Paris. M. Gaillard has illustrated ten volumes for M. Lebègue, the Brussels publisher, about the same number for the firm of Kistemaeckers, and has done work for the following papers—”The Graphic,” “The Illustrated London News,” “Le Patriote Illustré,” “L'lllustration Européenne,”“ Le National lllustré,” “De Vlaming,” and “Le Petit Bleu.''

M. H. MEUNIER, whose posters, reproduced in THE STUDIO, have plainly shown his gift of bold design and effective composition, has drawn for “Le Petit Bleu,” of Brussels, an incalculable number of powerful pen sketches, and he has acquired the knack of adapting his style exactly to meet the requirements of artistic reproduction in the daily press. To the “Daily Graphic” he has been a large contributor, and he has designed an ingenious frontispiece for a book by M. A. Vierset—”Vers les Lointains.”



The Dreamer
Fernand Khnopff

AMONG other Brussels artists demanding mention are M. Romberg, who has illustrated Mr. R. Walter Harris's volume, “To Tafilet,” and has executed many drawings for the “Monde lllustré,” “L'Illustration,” “L'Univers Illustré,” of Paris, and “The Illustrated London News”; MM. Alfred Ronner, and Cesare Dell' Acqua, illustrators of tales and stories; MM. Léon Dardenne, and V. Mignot, whose rapid sketches and amusing caricatures have carried laughter far and wide; the landscapists, MM. Wytsman, Cassiers, and Hamesse; the military painter, Major A. Hubert; M. G. Lemmen, the assiduous searcher after synthetical and definite lines; M. Van Rysselberghe, who in 1895 composed and drew a most artistic calendar for the Brussels firm of Dietrich; M. Hannotiau, who on the margins of choice copies did illustrations for Flaubert's “La Tentation de St. Antoine,” Richepin's “La Chanson des Gueux,” and Baudelaire's “Les Fleurs du Mal;” V. Rousseau, the sculptor, author of an expressive head of Beethoven, a work of long study, and most curious in execution. Among other sculptors, MM. Van der Stappen, Dillens, and De Rudder; and, finally, the writer of these notes, who has done a design for the Berlin magazine, “Pan,” two or three ·drawings for English journals, and a frontispiece for M. Pol de Mont's book, “Iris.”

GHENT boasts two pen artists, widely divergent in style—MM. Armand Heins, and Charles Doudelet. The first named—son of an engraver and brought up in a family of artists—-attended the classes at the Academy of Ghent at a very early age, and as far back as 1876, when but twenty years old, he was working on the Paris journal,” L'Illustration.” His technical cleverness and his facility for work are extraordinary, as is the number of drawings he has done for Camille Lemonnier's “La Belgique,” and for various series of albums representing scenes in the Ardennes, and “bits” of Flemish towns, particularly Ghent, for which he has a filial veneration.

CHARLES DOUDELET is, in the best sense of the word, what is called a “literary” painter. On the occasion of a private display of his works at Antwerp in 1 896, he expressed his views in the following terms:—”At all times I have kept myself acquainted with modern literature, and from the very birth of the Young Belgian School, I have been its constant reader, often its admirer. Thus it was that in the course of my reading I came to know the works of Maurice Maeterlinck. At once he captured my whole admiration. I illustrate

his works with conviction, with delight. I experience inconceivable pleasure in getting to understand, in grasping completely, the poet's ideas, in turning them into visible form. Have I succeeded therein? Who shall say ? At least one tribute has been paid to my efforts—one which surpasses all other praise, and effaces all the sarcasms with which I have been bespattered. The young writer himself has shown his appreciation of them, My line is essentially 'primitive' in style; nevertheless, it is my own creation. Every detail of these drawings is intended to suggest the idea of the *au-delà.*"



Strike in Brussels
H. Meunier

THE Liège draughtsmen, MM. A. Donnay, A. Rassenfosse, and F. Berchmans, were favourably criticised in an article ("Some Liège Artists") which appeared in THE STUDIO in 1898, and recently there has been published an appreciation of the works of M. F. Maréchal in the same magazine. Other two artists of Liège should now be mentioned—M. A, de Witte; who has done several quite remarkable pen-drawings, representing Liège types, in a spirit of delicate virtuosity, akin to that of the Hispano-Italian School of Fortuny; and M. L. Moreels, the dainty miniaturist, whose clever drawings are published day by day in the Brussels journal "La Réforme."

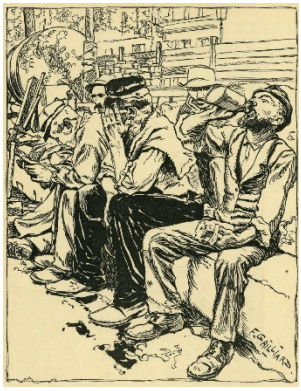
AT Antwerp we find M. Van Neste, who, it appears, is the official poster-designer of the town, and M. E. Van Offel, an eccentric draughtsman, with an archaic, singular touch and a queer imagination, which recall the mannerisms of Bresdin, the French engraver, whose plates are so curiously described by J, K. Huysmans in "A rebours."

A FINAL word, to mention two Parisianised Belgian artists, M. Jan Van Beers, who has drawn several figures for a volume of poetry by G. Rodenbach; and M. Fraipont, to whom we owe a number of pretty pen-sketches.

FERNAND KHNOPFF.



"A Cavalier" By A. Van Neste
(By permission of M. Buschmann)



Workmen at Dinner
F. Gailliard

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 19, 83 (February 1900), 61-63.

Brussels.—The series of winter *Salonnets* at the Cercle Artistique began with a display of paintings by the young Brussels artists, H. Huklenbrok and the late H. Evenepoel. Both received their art training in Paris, in the studio of Gustave Moreau, where they would appear to have learnt nothing beyond the cultivation of rare tones and delicacy of execution; for their realistic interpretation of nature in no way suggests the highly formulated style of the great French realist, but rather reminds one of the manner of certain caricaturists or “characteristics” greatly in vogue in Paris at the moment. M. Evenepoel brought back from Algeria a number of studies—now charming in point of colour (as, for example, his little scene on the quay of Algiers), now full of amusing observation, such as his Arab market scenes and his negro dances. He also exhibited several remarkable portraits, and some curiously coloured etchings. In short, Mr. Evenepoel was a colourist of much power, and an expressive draughtsman, and his unexpected death is an undoubted loss to the Belgian school. M. Huklenbrok sent some studies of light effects from Holland, and a little portrait well and firmly drawn. Altogether the season at the Cercle may be said to have opened satisfactorily with this exhibition.

The Belgian Society of Water-Colourists (of Brussels) worthily celebrated its fortieth anniversary by a very appropriate exhibition at the Musée de Bruxelles. The works were limited in number on this occasion, and the hanging was consequently much more satisfactory than usual. There was agreat variety of style—works by Eugène Smits, Uyterschaut, Marcette, and Stacquet mingling with those of the stylists or “intellectuels”—Meunier, X. Mellery, Fernand Khnopff, and Delaunois; and variety is charming in a display of this sort. Among the foreign exhibits must be noted the excellent examples of C. W. Bartlett, G. La Touche, Skarbina, and Clara Montalba—the *Vue de Venise* by the last named being simply exquisite.

An exhibition of about 1,400 photographs, mostly “after” Italian frescoes of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, has been arranged at the Musée du Cinquantenaire by the manager, M. van Overloop. An annotated catalogue gives the visitor much interesting information concerning the exhibits.

The Brussels sculptor, J. Lambeaux, has now practically completed his gigantic marble *bas-relief,* which he calls *Les Passions Humaines ou le Calvaire de l’Humanité.* The work in its entirety cannot be criticised yet; but even now one cannot repress a feeling of admiration for the artist's immense and divers labours in this vast undertaking.

R. Janssens, the Brussels painter, has opened an exhibition of his latest productions in the quaint studio built for him by the architect Hankar. He shows us portraits of relatives and friends, church interiors, and particularly several interesting “bits” of that old Brussels which is disappearing little by little, as the trans- formation of the city proceeds.

Here M. Janssens is at his best, for he excels in suggesting the special characteristics of those antique and placid buildings.



"Le Vieux Logis" by René Jannsens

Collectors of posters will probably be glad to learn that a "Belgian Society of Affichophiles" has been started with the object of facilitating the exchange of artistic posters among amateurs. The Director of the Society is M. L. Defize, of Liège, and the Treasurer and Secretary, M.H. Grell, of Antwerp. The official organ of the Society is styled the "Bulletin mensuel des Echangistes réunis et de l'affiche artistique."

M. F. [sic – E.] Motte, whose large picture (portrait of a family under the protection of St. George and St. Catherine) attracted much notice last year at the Libre Esthétique exhibition and at the Paris Salon, has been appointed Director and Professor of Painting at the Academy of Fine Arts at Mons. A painter of much talent, M. Motte is also a man of considerable force of character, and his influence may be expected to prove of great benefit to those who enjoy the advantage of his instruction and advice.

F.K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 19, 84 (March 1900), 135-136.

BRUSSELS.—Ch. Samuel, the sculptor, opened recently, in the new and most ingeniously arranged studio constructed for him by the architect Van Humbeeck, an exhibition of his latest works. Of these the most important is the model of the Frère-Orban monument, which he was commissioned to execute as the result of a competition. At present all that need be said is that the monument in its general aspect is in conformity with the character of the man whose memory it is destined to preserve. M. Samuel also displayed a large number of graceful statuettes and thoughtfully composed busts, among which the most notable were those of the artist's mother and a group of children.




Group of Children by C. Samuel | Bust by C. Samuel

What Amsterdam did for Rembrandt, Dresden for Cranach, and, more recently, Antwerp for Van Dyck, will shortly be done by Brussels for the Flemish painters from Van Eyck to Bernard Van Orley. This exhibition of their works, which will be held from May to September, is due to the initiative of the young Brussels archaeologist, M. P. Wytsman, who last year published a most interesting book, wherein he drew the attention of our art critics to the existence of a great number of little known Flemish paintings of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

M. H. Meunier, the Brussels draughtsman, whose work has more than once been reproduced and critically examined in THE STUDIO, has designed a pack of “aesthetic cards,” marked by all the reserve and ingenuity characteristic of his well-known decorative compositions.

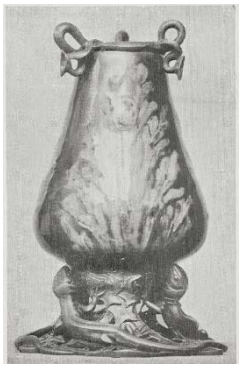
F.K.

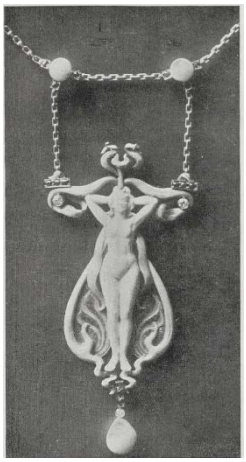
F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 19, 85 (April 1900), 196-198.

Brussels.—The original idea of a Religious Art Salon, organised by the committee of the “Durendal” literary review, seemed interesting, for we had heard for years past loud protests against the “École de S. Luc,'' which has long been striving tyrannically to turn religious art in the direction of a clumsy imitation of the Gothic.

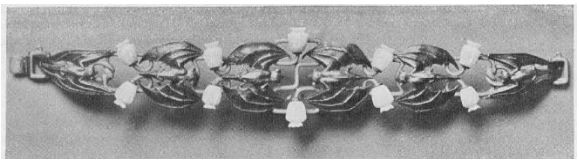
Unhappily the exhibition in question showed only too clearly how modern religious art has descended to the deepest depths of hypocrisy, both in feeling and in execution. Nevetheless, this exposure should assist the renovation movement on foot, and it is to be hoped the Abbé Moeller may soon be able to renew his praiseworthy efforts.

Very justly has it been said of the Salon of the “Cercle pour l'Art,'' that its chief characteristics are sincerity and seriousness. Here we find no mere “official” daubs, no loud *debuts,* none of the customary works of commerce, triple-varnished and gorgeously framed. Nearly every exhibitor is a true and sincere artist. Among the most notable exhibits are those of M. A. Verhaeren, M. F. Baes, M. Jannsens, M. Coppens, M. Hannotaux, M. Ottevaere, M. Laermans, M. Lynen, M. Vandeneeckhondt, and M. Fabry; not forgetting the clever and delicate sculptures of M. V. Rousseau, the embroideries of Mme. de Rudder, and the dainty jewellery of M. O. Wolfers.

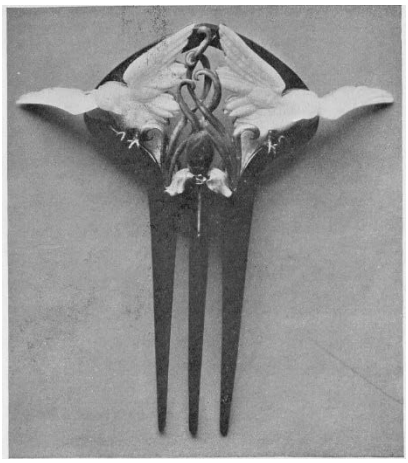




Vase by O. Wolfers | Pendant by O. Wolfers



Bracelet by O. Wolfers



Hair-Comb by O. Wolfers

At a meeting held at the Cercle Artistique de Bruxelles, M. Gabriel Mourey lectured recently in clear and characteristic fashion on the art of the great French artist, Puvis de Chavannes, for whom he expressed the utmost admiration.

F.K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 19, 86 (May 1900, 280-282.

BRUSSELS.—Once more the Salon of the “Libre Esthétique,” installed in the galleries of the Musée de Bruxelles, has achieved its customary success. The numerous visitors found there the wherewithal to satisfy all tastes in matters artistic, for the work of selection had been carried out in the broadest spirit of eclecticism, and all “tendencies” were represented, from idealism of the most literary type to realism of the most scientific. First of all we must do homage to the last productions of Henry Evenepoel the young Brussels painter, who passed away so sadly in Paris a few months ago just when his talents were beginning to command respect. Before all else he was a painter; he understood our modern life in all its reality, and he has left behind several canvases of great merit, among them being the *Espagnol à Paris,* which has been purchased for the Ghent museum.



Espagnol à Paris by H. Evenepoel

M. J. Delvins [sic- Delvin] contributed several remarkable works which aroused much attention. His bull- fight scenes are full of vigour, bold in drawing and vivid in colour. Spain, too, is the theme chosen by M. Ignacio Zuloaga; but his vision of things is sombre, his colour harsh, and his drawing hard. One of these pictures, the *Portrait du Maire de Rio-Moro et de sa femme,* was exhibited at the last Salon at Ghent, and was purchased by the Government, but refused by the Commission des Musées. M. Zuloaga's big picture, *La Veille de la Course de Taureaux,* is a noble work, and worthily carries on the true traditions of Spanish art.
The large display of jewellery and goldsmith's work by M. Henry Van de Velde is one of the *clous* of the Exhibition. It is impossible at the present moment to analyse this remarkable collection, but later an interesting article might well be written on this artist and his work.

Another attraction is the series of twelve landscapes by M. A. J. Heymans, which are profoundly charming in their poetic sentiment and their delightfully clear colouring. The landscapes of MM. F. [sic] Claus and G. Buysse are equally attractive, by reason of their

sincerity and their freedom of expression. Worthy of special mention also are the precise and thoughtful landscapes of MM. Frédéric and W. MacAdam, and the curious works of M. F. Melchers.

The sculptors are not so well represented as usual this year, but the catalogue contains the well-known names of C. Meunier, P. Dubois, Charpentier, Bourdelle, Dejean, G. Morren, and Mlle. Cornette.

The characteristic drawings of M. Milcendeau and the etchings of Mme. Destrée-Danse and M. Kieuwenkamp are worthy of careful study.

Lastly, mention should be made of the glass-work of H. Powell, the potteries and ceramics of Mme. Schmidt-Pecht; not forgetting the displays by M. Serrurier-Bovy and the Rorstrand porcelain factory. Then we have to note the lithographs in colour by MM. Rhead and Rivière, and the posters designed for the “Libre Esthétique” exhibition by M. Combaz and Mdlle. Léo Jo.

F. K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 20, 87 (June 1900), 59-60.

Brussels.—The arrangement of the Salon of the Société des Beaux Arts of Brussels in the galleries of the Musée is far from equaling that of last year at the Cercle Artistique, and the disposal of the works of art displayed seems to have been made somewhat hurriedly. Moreover the chief interest of the exhibition consists in the works of a few great foreign artists. One is attracted immediately by the delicate charm of Gustave Moreau’s *St. Sébastien secouru par Irène.* This picture, of small dimensions, at once rich and refined in colour, and altogether done in the “grand style,” is entirely worthy to stand as representative of the superb art of this curious master. Then we have the portrait of *Mrs. Ian Hamilton* by J. S. Sargent, R.A., which, by its supreme grace and cleverness of treatment, quite dominates the Salon. Mr. Sargent's works and gifts have been so recently considered in the pages of THE STUDIO that it would be superfluous to enlarge upon them now. The important exhibit by M. Fantin-Latour includes seven works of various sizes and styles. Among them are *La Lecture, Siegfried et les filles du Rhin, La Déposition de Croix, and Vénus et ses amours,* and they all reveal the characteristic manner of this essentially French painter, of whom a critic has remarked: “his Siegfried is a Siegfried such as Racine might have conceived him, a Siegfried with nothing of German about him save his name.” One never tires of admiring the simplicity of his style, the ease of his drawing, the sobriety of his tones, or the earnestness of his execution.

The astonishing dexterity of “the Glasgow boys” is marred, perhaps, by an apparent lack of sincerity, and their extreme cleverness in utilizing all the most subtle combinations of paint and glazing is somewhat too evident. The members of the Glasgow school are abundantly represented here. We have, for example, portraits by J. Guthrie, J. Lavery, and Walton; landscapes by Macaulay Stevenson and G. Thomas; flowers by Stuart Park, and animals by G. Pirie.

The bronze bust of *M. W.* by J. de Lalaing is the most remarkable Belgian work in the Salon. The other sculptors have sent simply replicas or unimportant “bits;” moreover, these galleries are ill adapted for sculpture exhibits.

The Belgian paintings displayed are nearly all landscapes, among the contributors being Claus, Courtens, Frédéric, Linden, and Wytsmann. Mention must also be made of a picture by Mdlle. d'Anethan—*Les saintes femmes au tombeau—and* of the clever drawings by Mertens and Gilbert.

M. Pol de Mont, the well-known poet, of Antwerp, has just had published in Vienna a series of studies styled “Études sur quelques artistes belges d'aujourd'hui,” the artists concerned being A. Lynen, A. Heins , F. Maréchal, J. Ensor and Fernand Khnopff. These studies are worthy of the reputation won by M. Pol de Mont in his capacity of art critic. They are illustrated by numerous reproductions, executed with extraordinary care by the “Gesellschaft für Vervielfältigende Kunst in Wien,” to whom they do full credit.



Pottery-Ware by Schmidt-Pecht

We have pleasure in giving, on page 59, an illustration of some admirable pottery by M. Schmidt-Pecht.

F. K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 20, 88 (July 1900), 123, 125-126.

BRUSSELS.—Several important works, lately acquired by the Government, have been placed in the Musée Moderne. They consist of the late Alfred Verwée's celebrated painting, *L’Embouchure de l’Escaut*; a large pastel by Fernand Khnopff, entitled *Memories*, representing girls playing tennis; a little picture by Joseph Stevens, *à la Forge*, and a lovely thing by Alfred Stevens—*Fleurs d’Automne,* the gift of M. Ch. Cardon.

The Government has also purchased three judiciously-chosen pictures by the deceased landscapist, Th. Baron, from among his works recently exhibited in the two galleries of the Cercle Artistique. They worthily represent the artist's strong and earnest manner.

This remarkable exhibition was the last of a long series, displayed from week to week at the Cercle. Among the best things to be seen there were the studies by the architect, Van Ysendyck, for the restoration of the Église du Sablon, in Brussels; the decorative sketches by Professor Stallaert (of whom M. Vautier has painted a life-like portrait); the numerous and varied landscapes of MM. Blieck, Matthieu, Gilsoul, Wytsman and Kegeljean; the portraits by MM. Vanaise and Gouweloos; the sculptures by MM. Dillens and De Tombay; the drawings by J. B. Meunier, the engraver; and a new work by G. M. Stevens—*Filles de Rois*—quaint and uncommon in colouring; also several portraits and landscapes from the same hand, seen recently at M. Stevens’s exhibition at the Maison d’Art.

The sudden death of the well-known Brussels landscapist, F. Binjé, has been a sad blow to his fellow artists, with whom he was very popular. After his first amateur efforts, M. Binjé soon took a prominent place among our water-colourists, side by side with his friends Stacquet and Uytterschaut. A few years since he began to paint in oils, with marked success. His work is distinguished by delicacy of sentiment and bold colouring.

On page 123 is reproduced a very beautiful picture by P.J. Clays, who died recently, at the age of 83, and whose fame as a painter of calm water and quaint boats is known to everybody who loves art.



Night Effect on the Scheldt, from a painting by P.J. Clays

A monument is to be erected in memory of the animal-painter, Alf. Verwée. It will be executed by the sculptor Ch. Vanderstappen, Director of the Brussels Academy of Fine Arts. The memorial will be composed of white stone and Scotch granite.

F.K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 20, 90 (September 1900), 276-277.

BRUSSELS.—The album published this year by the Brussels Society of Aquafortists is a better production than that of last year. Forty etchings and dry-points were sent in for acceptance and it was only after long deliberation that the judges decided to take the fifteen plates by MM. Elle, Fernand Khnopff, O. Coppens, A. Rassenfosse, A. Heins, Boulenger, H. Meunier, Werleman, Gaillard, Bernier, Cambier, Huygens, Voortman, and Gandy.

The Brussels sculptor, J. de Lalaing, has been commissioned by the Belgian Government and the town of Ostend to do an equestrian statue of King Leopold the First, to be placed at the entrance to the Park. The pedestal will be composed of columns of pink marble, with low-relief work in bronze.

A sale of the works left behind by P. J. Clays, the celebrated marine painter, who died recently at the age of eighty-three, took place a few weeks ago at the Maison d'Art. He was the first seascapist in Belgium, and indeed in all Europe, to break away from the traditional storms and shipwrecks, whose wild lines and extraordinary colouring had so strong an attraction for his old master, Gudin; the first to set himself to paint quite simply the tranquil aspects of the waters, the life of the quays, in clear tones altogether unlike the dark, bituminous productions of other days. The big galleries of Europe and America contain important works by this artist; but the general public had no knowledge of the interesting collection of studies, freshly-painted from Nature, which covered from top to bottom the walls of his vast studio.

A new association, styled the “Société Nationale des Aquarellistes et Pastellistes de Belgique,” has opened its first exhibition in the Musée de Bruxelles. There is a superabundance of work by amateurs striving to imitate the “professional” style in vogue at the moment, and also too much “professional” stuff which we have seen, and seen again, elsewhere. Among the new work—the *inédit*—should be noted that of Mlle. Art and M. Herremans.

F. K.



A Belgian Grenadier by E. Ganz [discussed in next issue – ed.]

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 21, 91 (October 1900), 67-68.

BRUSSELS.—The professional school founded in Brussels by the syndicate of working carvers and jewellers has been exhibiting in the Palais du Midi an interesting collection of the work produced under the instruction of its teachers. It is not exactly a professional school, however, for the students receive technical training in the various *ateliers* in which they are working. “It is,” to quote a recent description, “a school of applied art devoted to jewellery, wherein the chief object is to teach the students to compose for themselves, and to develop their fancy and their inventiveness. Apart from the essential composition classes directed by MM. Van Strydonck and Fernand Dubois, there is an historical art class for jewellers' apprentices, under the charge of M. Titz, who strives to imbue his pupils with that general artistic sense which, unfortunately, is lacking in most of our craftsmen.”

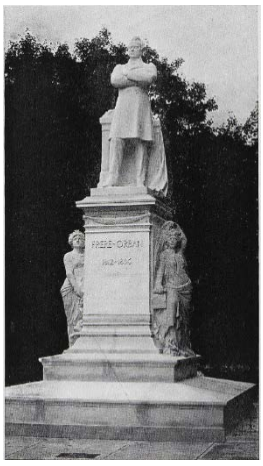
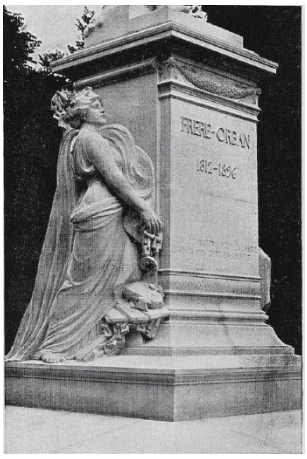
The various jewels and mouldings displayed by the students afford ample evidence of the excellent training available to those who have sufficient imagination and ability to profit thereby.

Mr. F. [sic] Ganz, a young Swiss painter Jiving in Brussels, has just finished a large canvas on which he has been working for three years. It depicts an episode in the Belgian army maneuvers—*Prince Albert's Grenadiers advancing to the Assault of Montaigu.* The studies of the work, reproduced in the September STUDIO, show how careful Mr. Ganz has been to obtain complete accuracy in his picture.

Once more the display by the students of the Bisschoffsheim School has been eminently successful. In the Industrial Art Section, happily revealing manifest evidence of the influence of the professor, M. Crespin, visitors have had the opportunity of admiring a large collection of wall-papers, carpets, glass-work, and embroideries, all treated ingeniously in the most simple and natural fashion. Nothing attracted more attention than the delicately original productions of Mlle. Brandenburg.

M. Cassiers, not content with being one of the most popular of our Brussels water-colourists, determined to take his place as a designer of posters, and has succeeded therein without delay. His recent maritime efforts are truly remarkable—ingenious and “right” in composition, rich and strong in colour, and broadly and firmly drawn.

The Frère-Orban monument, executed by the Brussels sculptor, M. Ch. Samuel, has been erected here in the Place de la Société Civile. The work is quite simple. The characteristics of the eloquent Liberal Minister have been portrayed with the due amplification demanded in monumental work of this sort, and the figures around the pedestal; symbolising the triumph of political and economic liberty, are thoroughly in keeping with the rest, the general effect being admirable.

Monument Frère-Orban by C. Samuel | Detail of the Monument Frère-Orban by C. Samuel

The eighth of a series of International Art Exhibitions will be held at Munich in 1901, under the auspices of the Munich Artists' Club and the Plastic Art Union.

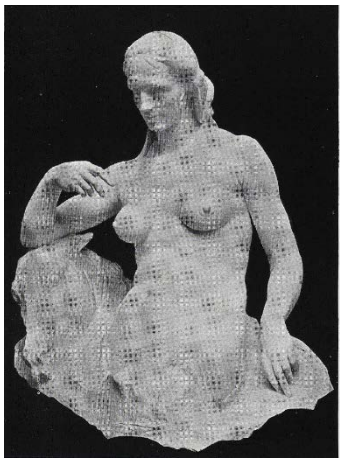
F. K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 22, 92 (November 1900), 140-142.

Brussels.—The Triennial Brussels Salon is being held on the premises of the “Palais du Cinquantenaire,” which, during the summer, have been utilised for the purposes of the Horse Show. Every effort has been made to make the vast hall as ornamental as possible. The sculpture is very well arranged in an imitation garden, but the paintings—especially the few examples of delicate tones—suffer greatly from insufficiency of light. The foreign exhibits are few and unimportant; they include works by MM. Lavery and Clausen, F. Stuck of Munich, Ch. Moll, President of the Vienna Secession, Cottet, La Touche, and Pointelin of Paris, and Bauer, the Dutch engraver.

Moreover, a large number of Belgian artists have abstained from exhibiting, the private displays appearing to be much more attractive than big general exhibitions of this sort. The large display by M. Emile Wauters includes the best piece of painting in the Salon—a portrait of Dr. de Cyon, broadly drawn, warm in tone, and painted with the utmost care and skill.

M. Lévêque, of Brussels, whose *Le Triomphe de la Mort* attracted attention at the last Paris Salon, has sent a varied selection of works, including symbolical triptychs, portraits, and fresco designs, unequal, doubtless, in point of merit, but always revealing a strange and interesting artist, more draughtsman than painter, with a keen decorative sense, and a wonderful eye for form. Some of his things are truly masterly.



“Demeter” by Victor Rousseau

Among the numerous portraits, the oils of MM. H. Evenepoel, Richir, Verheyden, Cluysenaar, Vanaise, and Vautier demand special attention, as do the pastels by Madame la Baronne Lambert and M. Wolles. M. E. Motte contributes a fanciful piece of archaism, very delicately and charmingly treated ; M. Frédéric a symbolical peasant scene, very crudely coloured; and M. Ciamberlani a broad and powerful decorative work. M. Courtens sends some solidly painted landscapes, while those displayed by Madame Wytsman and MM. Claus and Van den Eckhoudt are delicious m their clear

colouring. Other things worth noting are M. Janssens' “interiors,” M. Marcette’s skies, and Mlle. A. Ronner's and M. G. M. Stevens' careful studies of flowers. Finally, one has to deplore the growing tendency of the “young men” of Brussels in the direction of bitumen and “syrups.” The work which dominates the entire Salon stands in the centre of the Sculpture Garden—the *Demeter* of Victor Rousseau, a statue of great dignity, nobly conceived and executed. Let us hope it may soon be displayed in marble, to the admiration of all, in the Musée de Bruxelles.

M. Van der Stappen, director of the Brussels Academy of Fine Arts, exhibits thirteen of his productions, which show his great gifts in all their ingenious variety. Among other interesting *morceaux* are eight studies for the *Monument de l'Infinie Bonté*—a large and beautiful conception, which does honour alike to the artist and the man. M. Lambeaux figures in the catalogue with his colossal group, still unfinished; M. C. Meunier sends a new figure of *Christ* in ivory; and mention must also be made of the groups by MM. Charlier and Van Biesbroeck, the busts and medals by J. Dillens and P. Dubois, the double bust by Samuel, the little marble *bas-relief* by Rombaux, and Morren's bronzes.

In the engraving department the most noteworthy things are the productions of MM. Lenain and Danse; while the decorative effect of the lovely old tapestries lent by MM. Empain and Cardon should not be overlooked.

F. K.

1901

Khnopff, Fernand, « Discours prononcé, au nom du Cercle artistique et littéraire (à l'occasion de la mort de Paul Hankar), » *L'Emulation* (Louvain), (Février, 1901), 7.

Discours prononcé au nom du Cercle Artistique et Littéraire
Par M. Fernand Khnopff

Messieurs,

Au nom du Cercle artistique et littéraire de Bruxelles, je viens saluer la dernière présence parmi nous d'un artiste jeune qui disparait au moment où la Renommée semblait se promettre à lui, et j'ai l'honneur de pouvoir exprimer ici mon admiration et mon respect pour cet homme d'art original et d'honneur essentiel.

D'autres, avec plus d'autorité, viendront apprécier les qualités techniques de Paul Hankar et pourront déterminer dès aujourd'hui la place qu'aura ce courageux artiste dans l'histoire de l'école belge d'architecture. Nous pouvons cependant assurer que cette place sera considérable: car les efforts qu'il avait faits pour réaliser ses chères idées de rénovation et de progrès avaient toujours été réels et dignes de remarque; ils avaient suscité, après les inévitables moqueries des ignorants de la première heure, les études discrètement attentives des intéresses de la deuxième heure. Et souvent déjà ce que l'inventeur avait jugé n'être que d'incomplets préparations a des recherches plus approfondies avait été offert par d'effrontés copistes comme des créations définitives de leur art nouveau et de leur style moderne. Ils obtinrent ainsi de ces succès que l'on oubli; mais lui, a laissé de ces œuvres qui restent. Dans l'avenir ceux qui étudieront ces œuvres y reconnaitront dès l'abord les qualités de l'artiste original et instruit dont nous admirions le travail quotidien; et bientôt aussi ils comprendront alors l'âme de l'homme droit, honnête et dévoué dont nous avons pu voir l'existence exemplaire—et que nous regretterons toujours profondément.

Adieu, Paul Hankar, cher compagnon d'autrefois,
adieu?

[Hankar died Jan. 1901]



Paul Hankar: Ciamberliani house, rue de Faqz, Brussels, 1897. [recent photograph by ed.]

Khnopff, Fernand, « Discours prononcé, au nom du Cercle artistique et littéraire (à l'occasion de la mort de Paul Hankar), » *L'Emulation* (Louvain), (Février, 1901), 7.

Translation :

Speech given on behalf of the *Cercle artistique et littéraire*
by Mr. Fernand Khnopff

Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Cercle artistique et Littéraire in Brussels, I come to salute the last presence among us of a young artist who disappeared at the moment when fame seemed promised to him, and I have the honour to express here my admiration and my respect for this man of original art and essential honour.

Others, with greater authority, will come to appreciate the technical qualities of Paul Hankar and can determine what place this brave artist will occupy in the history of the Belgian school of architecture. We can, however, be sure that this place will be considerable: since his efforts to realise his treasured ideas for renovation and progress had always been real and worthy of note; they had raised, after the inevitable ridicule of the ignorant of the first hour, the discreetly attentive and interested studies by the second hour. And often that which the inventor had considered no more than incomplete preparations for more profound studies have been offered by of cheeky copyists as definitive creations of their art nouveau and modern style. They thus gained such success that is forgotten; but the works he has left will remain. In the future those who will study these works will recognize at the outset the qualities of the original and educated artist whom we admired in his daily work; and soon they will then understand the soul of the right, honest and dedicated man whose exemplary existence we could see—and that we will always regret deeply.

Farewell, Paul Hankar, dear companion of the past,
farewell?

Khnopff, Fernand, « Discours prononcé, au nom du Cercle artistique et littéraire (à l'occasion de la mort de Paul Hankar), » *La Ligue artistique*, 8, 3 (3 février 1901), 2.
Unlocated by me; presumably same as above.

Khnopff, Fernand, « L'eau-forte et la pointe sèche (première partie), » *L'Art moderne*, 21, 19 (12 mai 1901), 164-165.

L'Eau-forte et la Pointe-sèche (1).

(1) Conférence faite le 3 mai au Salon de la Société des Aquafortistes belges.

MESDAMES, MESSIEURS,

Les artistes exposants, que des fonctions administratives ou des obligations mondaines mettent souvent en contact avec le public des visiteurs de salons d'art, ont pu constater que depuis quelques années déjà la façon de s'exprimer ou de se conduire de ce public s'est modifiée fortement.

Il n'y avait autrefois que les grands salons officiels, les foires aux huiles, comme on les a irrévérencieusement nommés, où les œuvres se superposaient à l'infini, s'efforçant d'attirer l'attention par des formats *ultra* considérables ou des sujets *très* intéressants; le morceau simplement bien exécuté y était perdu.

En ces circonstances, une étude sérieuse n'était pas possible de la part du public, et l'on n'entendait aussi que vagues et insignifiantes formules d'appréciation: « Ça sortait du cadre, c'était bien trouvé, » pour les visiteurs bienveillants; « c'étaient des croûtes, des navets, des chromos, » pour les autres.

Mais plus tard s'organisèrent des expositions plus spéciales et plus curieuses; l'attention du public fut attirée vers des aspects d'art non encore remarqués; il voulut se rendre compte de l'exécution, y parvint plus ou moins et il veut, à présent, l'apprécier en se servant des termes convenables ou convenus.

Peut-être y a-t-il en cela un peu de snobisme, le malin plaisir de parler argot et l'innocente vanité de paraître initié. Mais peu importe! L'intention est louable, après tout et, en somme, les visiteurs des salons d'art sont actuellement et plus nombreux et plus attentifs.

Cependant, cet effort de placer le plus souvent possible le mot technique est dangereux; c'est un genre de virtuosité qui n'admet pas l'à-peu-près; il faut être exact et précis, et il est inexcusable en citant, par exemple, Hobbema, d'ajouter qu'il est probablement un artiste italien, comme son nom l'indique d'ailleurs, ou de critiquer l'uniformité de facture de certains marbres, en leur reprochant d'être tous coulés dans le même moule, ou encore de craindre l'humidité pour le travail de la gravure à la pointe sèche.

J'en passe et des meilleurs.

Je raconterai cependant ce qui advint à un sculpteur de mes amis, qui faisait à une grande dame les honneurs d'un salon où il exposait un buste en cire.

La grande dame avait autrefois vaguement entendu parler de fonte à cire perdue; elle avait retenu les mots si elle n'avait compris le fait; croyant le moment venu de faire

montre de savoir, elle dit, avec son plus aimable sourire (elle en a plusieurs): « N'est-ce donc pas là, cher maître, ce qu'on appelle de la cire perdue ? »

« Je le crains, chère Madame, » répondit modestement le cher maître, qui passe depuis lors pour un être distrait et manquant d'à-propos.

Que la possibilité d'autres aimables et légères confusions de ce genre excuse un peu la probable inutilité de cette lecture. L'étude des origines de la gravure a été le sujet d'interminables discussions et de formidables publications; se contenter de rapporter simplement les opinions émises par les savants spéciaux serait une besogne aussi longue que fastidieuse, car chacune des nations à traditions antiques a pris part à la compétition et de tous côtés les critiques les plus éminents se sont faits-les représentants actifs des ambitions locales.

« L'amour-propre national, » a écrit M. Duplessis, de Paris, « l'amour-propre national s'en est mêlé bien souvent et la discussion eût couru risque de s'envenimer si, au lieu d'être aux mains de travailleurs sérieux, elle fut descendue dans le domaine des personnalités. Nous autres, Français, nous avons d'autant plus de facilité à discuter les opinions diverses, exprimées en cette occurrence, que nous avons moins de titres à faire valoir en faveur de l'invention proprement dite. Non pas que nous n'ayons dit notre mot dans la discussion, et que nous n'ayons voulu voir dans un certain Bernard Milnet, artiste dont le nom même est plus que problématique, le plus ancien graveur.

« Mais un examen quelque peu attentif a fait justice de cette opinion, abandonnée aujourd'hui par tout le monde et même par ceux qui s'en étaient fait tout d'abord les parrains. » C'est là un genre de travaux historiques qui fait, surtout, songer à cette jolie boutade du *Journal des Goncourt*: L'antiquité a peut-être été faite pour être le pain des professeurs.

En principe, il n'existe que deux procédés de gravure, qui sont fort différents dans l'exécution, mais paraissent assez semblables par leurs résultats; ce sont: la gravure sur bois et la gravure sur métal.

Le travail de la gravure sur métal, nommé également gravure en creux ou en taille douce, consiste à dessiner en creux dans le métal tout ce qui doit être fixé sur le papier.

Le travail de la gravure sur bois, nommé également gravure en relief ou en taille d'épargne, est d'un faire tout opposé; les traits, au lieu d'être creusés, sont réservés et font saillie, tandis qu'on enlève toutes les parties qui doivent donner les surfaces claires à l'impression.

De toutes les manières de graver, la gravure sur bois est la plus ancienne; elle précéda l'imprimerie proprement dite, en ce sens que l'on grava des caractères sur des planches de bois avant que les caractères mobiles eussent été inventés.

On fait ordinairement remonter l'invention de la gravure sur métal à 1452. Dans un des recueils du « Cabinet des estampes » de Paris, l'abbé Zani, un amateur de la fin du XVIIIe siècle, retrouva une épreuve de la *Paix de Florence*, exécutée par Maso Finiguerra en 1452, d'après les registres officiels. Jusqu'alors les érudits allemands avaient considéré

Martin Schongauer comme le véritable inventeur de la gravure en taille douce et ils citaient en témoignage quelques pièces exécutées probablement vers 1460.

Cependant les recherches continuent, et les archives retournées en tous sens et dépouillées avec une prudente minutie présenteront peut-être encore quelque incontestable document devant lequel devront reculer toutes les ambitions.

« Mais il serait surprenant (a fort bien dit M. Duplessis) que de toutes ces recherches patientes il sortît autre chose que la connaissance d'un fait matériel et nous serions bien trompés si une œuvre d'art, véritablement digne de ce nom, venait à détruire notre opinion bien arrêtée que ce fut en 1452, en Italie, à Florence, que parut la première manifestation tout à fait significative de l'art de la gravure, manifestation assez éclatante pour avoir à elle seule les proportions d'un événement et d'une date historique. »

Le graveur en taille douce procède, je le répète, d'une façon tout opposée à celle du graveur sur bois. Celui-ci laisse en relief les traits qui devront s'indiquer en noir sur l'épreuve; au contraire, pour la taille douce les traits sont gravés en creux sur la planche de métal et le papier humide, soumis à une forte pression, va chercher l'encre au fond des tailles.

La gravure en creux ou en taille douce comprend, de façon générale, la gravure au burin et la gravure à l'eau-forte. La gravure au burin, assez simple dans son procédé manuel, exige cependant, de la part de l'artiste qui s'y est adonné, une habileté toute spéciale, produite pour un travail lent et pénible, par des études préliminaires fort compliquées.

Ce genre de gravure consiste à former le dessin dans la substance du métal au moyen de tailles différemment mais régulièrement entrecroisées. Le burin, qui sert à entailler profondément le cuivre, est un petit barreau d'acier trempé dont l'extrémité est coupée en biais pour pouvoir présenter une pointe allongée et aiguë; les doigts servent à diriger la pointe du burin qui reçoit l'impulsion du bras tout entier.

FERNAND KHNOPFF

(La fin prochainement)

Khnopff, Fernand, « L'eau-forte et la pointe sèche (première partie), » *L'Art moderne*, 21, 19 (12 mai 1901), 164-165.

Translation:

Etchings and Drypoints (1)

(1) Lecture given on the 3 May at the Salon of the Belgian Watercolor Society

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Exhibiting artists, who through administrative functions or mundane obligations are often placed in contact with public visitors to art shows, can attest that for some years now that the manner of how that audience speaks and behaves has changed greatly.

At one time there were only the large official salons, or fairs for oils, as they were irreverently called, where works were stacked to infinity, striving to attract attention by ultra large formats or very interesting subjects; the simply well executed piece was lost.

In these circumstances, a serious study was not possible on the part of the public, and only vague and insignificant forms of assessment were to be heard: "it came out of the frame, it was well done," from your benevolent visitors; "it was daubs, rubbish, chromos," from others.

But later more special and more unusual exhibitions were organized; the attention of the public was attracted to hitherto unnoticed aspects of art; the public wanted to evaluate the execution, and it more or less succeeded; and now it wants to appreciate it using suitable or agreed terminology.

Perhaps there was a little bit of snobbery, the perverse pleasure of using slang and the innocent vanity of wanting to appear an insider. But no matter! The intention is laudable, after all, and in short, visitors to the art salons are currently the most numerous and most attentive.

However, this effort to use the technical word as often as possible is dangerous; it is a kind of virtuosity that does not admit guesswork; one must be accurate and precise, and it is inexcusable in citing, for example, Hobbema, to add that he is probably an Italian artist, as his name implies, or to criticize the consistency of surface in some marbles, reproaching them all as being cast in the same mold, or to fear moisture in making a drypoint engraving.

I could add even better examples.

However, I will tell what happened to a sculptor friend of mine, who gave a great lady a tour of a salon where he was exhibiting a bust in wax.

The great lady had once vaguely heard of the lost wax process; she had retained the words even if she did not understand the meaning; believing that the moment had come to demonstrate her knowledge, she said, with her kindest smile (she has several): “Is this not, dear master, that which is called lost wax?”

“I am afraid so, dear Madam,” replied the dear master modestly, who since then has seemed a mad man lacking any sense of appropriateness.

The possibility of other amiable and minor confusions of this kind excuse somewhat the probable futility of this essay. The study of the origins of engraving has been the subject of endless discussions and great publications; just to simply report the opinions issued by specialists would be a task as long as it is tedious, because each nation with ancient traditions took part in the competition and from all sides eminent critics became the active representatives of local ambitions.

“National self-esteem,” wrote Mr. Duplessis of Paris, “national self-esteem is often muddled and the discussion had run the risk of becoming inflamed if, instead of being in the hands of serious workers, it was left to the domain of personalities.” We, the other French, find it easier to discuss the various views expressed in this case, since we have less title to argue in favor of a claim to invention. Not that we have not had our say in the discussion, and we have wanted to see in a certain Bernard Milnet, an artist even whose name is more than problematic, as the oldest engraver.

“But a somewhat careful examination has done justice to this opinion, today abandoned by everyone and even by those who had been its first sponsors.” This is the kind of historical research which makes one, above all, think of this amusing quip of the *Journal des Goncourt*: Antiquity was perhaps made to be the bread of teachers.

In principle there are only two methods of printmaking, which are very different in execution, but appear fairly similar by their results; these are: carving on wood and engraving on metal.

The work of metal engraving, also called hollow engraving or intaglio printing, consists of carving into the metal everything that must appear on the paper.

Working in woodcut, also called relief printing or raised printing, is just the opposite; lines, instead of being dug out, are left raised and protrude, while all the areas which must result in blank surfaces in the print are removed.

Of all the ways to make a print, the woodcut is the oldest; It preceded actual printing in the sense that one carved characters on wooden blocks before movable type had been invented.

Usually the invention of engraving on metal is traced to 1452. In one of the collections of the "Cabinet des estampes" in Paris, that of the Abbé Zani, an amateur from the end of the 18th century, is found a print of the *Peace of Florence*, executed by Maso Finiguerra in 1452, according to official records. Until then German scholars had seen Martin Schongauer as the true inventor of intaglio printing and they cited as evidence a few pieces probably executed around 1460.

However, research continues, and the archives will be turned upside down and searched with a careful attention to detail which will perhaps yield still some incontrovertible document which should settle all the claims.

"But it would be surprising (Mr. Duplessis emphasized) that if from all this patient research anything emerged other than knowledge of a material fact and we would be much deceived if a work of art, truly worthy of the name, came to destroy our well established opinion that it was in 1452 in Florence, Italy that the first significant demonstration of the art of engraving appeared, a manifesto brilliant enough to have it assume the proportions of an historic event and date."

The intaglio engraver proceeds, I repeat, in a manner exactly opposite to that of the printmaker on wood. The woodblock is left with raised marks that will show in black on the proof; instead, the intaglio lines are carved into the metal plate and wet paper is subjected to strong pressure and will seek out the ink at the bottom of the grooves.

Making an intaglio print or engraving includes, generally speaking, engraving with a burin or etching with acid. Engraving with a burin, although rather simple in its manual process, requires a special skill on the part of the devoted artist, and is produced by slow and painful labor, with highly complicated preliminary studies.

This type of engraving consists of forming the drawing in the substance of the metal through grooves of different sizes but regularly intersecting. The burin, which serves to cut deeply into the copper, is a small bar of hardened steel in which the end is cut at an angle in order to make a sharp elongated point; the fingers are used to direct the tip of the burin which receives the force of the entire arm.

FERNAND KHNOPFF

(to be continued)

Khnopff, Fernand, « L'eau-forte et la pointe sèche (deuxième partie), » *L'Art moderne*, 21, 21 (26 mai 1901), 180-182.

L'Eau-forte et la Pointe-sèche (1).

(1) Suite et fin. V. notre avant-dernier numéro.

Les bons auteurs en la matière écrivent que « la gravure au burin, qui oblige à une sage lenteur dans l'exécution et réclame un fini absolu, convient principalement aux compositions de style élevé, aux sujets d'un ordre supérieur ».

Quant à l'eau-forte, elle est propre aux sujets intimes et familiers. Mais ces auteurs s'empressent d'ajouter qu'« il ne faudrait pourtant pas en conclure qu'entre les mains d'artistes de génie elle ne saurait s'appliquer aux inventions de haut style et grandioses ».

Le nom de Rembrandt s'impose aussitôt et en même temps le souvenir revient à l'esprit de ces pages de critique exquise et subtile qu'écrivit Fromentin dans les *Maîtres d'autrefois*. Sa pénétrante étude du grand maître hollandais parait, pour ainsi dire, définitive et j'ai cru pouvoir en transcrire ici la conclusion qui, de plus, concerne très spécialement notre sujet.

« En procédant comme Rembrandt procédait lui-même, en extrayant de cet œuvre si vaste et de ce multiple génie ce qui le représente en son principe, en le réduisant à ses éléments natifs, en éliminant sa palette, ses pinceaux, ses huiles colorantes, ses glacis, ses empâtements, tout le mécanisme du peintre, on en arriverait enfin à saisir l'essence première de l'artiste dans le graveur.

« Rembrandt est tout entier dans ses eaux fortes: Esprit, tendances, imaginations, rêveries, bon sens, chimères, difficultés de rendre l'impossible, réalités dans le rien.

« Vingt eaux-fortes de lui le révèlent, font pressentir le peintre et mieux encore l'expliquent. A les bien confronter je ne vois nulle différence entre le *Tobie* du Louvre et telle planche gravée. Il n'est personne qui ne mette le graveur au-dessus de tous les graveurs. Sans aller aussi loin quand il s'agit de sa peinture, il serait bon de penser plus souvent à la célèbre planche *La Pièce aux cent flo[r]ins* lorsqu'on hésite à le comprendre en ses tableaux. On verrait que toutes les scories de cet art, un des plus difficiles à épurer qu'il y ait au monde, n'altèrent en rien la flamme incomparablement belle qui brûle au dedans. A le prendre ainsi, tout Rembrandt s'explique: sa vie, son œuvre, ses penchants, ses conceptions, sa méthode, ses procédés et jusqu'à la patine de sa peinture qui n'est qu'une spiritualisation audacieuse et cherchée des éléments matériels de son métier. »

D'autre part, en la préface d'un traité de gravure à l'eau-forte pour les peintres, Théophile Gauthier [sic] avait écrit que « nul moyen n'est plus simple, plus direct, plus personnel que l'eau-forte. Une planche de cuivre, enfumée d'un vernis, un poinçon quelconque, une bouteille d'acide, voilà tout l'outillage. L'acide ronge les parties de métal mises à nu et creuse des tailles qui reproduisent exactement chaque trait dessiné

par l'artiste. La morsure réussie, la planche est faite; on peut la tirer et l'on a l'idée même du maître, toute pétillante de vie et de spontanéité, sans l'intermédiaire d'aucune traduction. Chaque eau-forte est un dessin original et cette rapide et facile gravure a immortalisé des croquis dont le papier ne garderait pas trace.

« Avec ses ressources en apparence si bornées, elle a su fournir à Rembrandt les lumières tremblotantes, les pénombres mystérieuses et les noirs profonds dont il avait besoin pour ses philosophes et ses alchimistes, pour ses synagogues d'architecture salomonique, ses Christ ressuscitant des morts, ses paysages traversés d'ombres et de rayons et toutes les fantasmagories de son imagination songeuse, puissante et bizarre. Sa palette, si riche pourtant, ne lui a pas donné une gamme d'effets plus étendue. »

On ne peut, dirait-on dans la métropole des arts, rêver pour l'eau-forte de plus belles réclames.

Mais il advint cependant que, s'appuyant lui aussi sur l'exemple de Rembrandt, un artiste anglais, M. Mortimer Mempès, en un fort intéressant article publié dans le *Magazine of Art*, s'efforça d'établir la supériorité de la gravure à la pointe sèche sur la gravure à l'eau-forte.

« Ce renseignement seul, » écrivait-il, « devrait suffire à décider le choix: c'est que Rembrandt, le roi des graveurs, après avoir travaillé à l'eau-forte seule d'abord, se mit à combiner ensuite le travail de l'eau-forte et de la pointe sèche et enfin ne se servit que de la pointe sèche.

Cette progression montre bien que la définitive croyance du superbe artiste était en la supériorité du travail à la pointe sèche.

Le procédé de la gravure à la pointe sèche est certainement le plus simple en son genre. L'artiste dessine directement, sans préparation, sur le cuivre nu au moyen d'une pointe fort aiguë. Il obtient ainsi ce que, en terme technique, on nomme des barbes, effet de travail très délicat produit par le trait même de la pointe. Chaque trait à la pointe sèche n'enlève pas le métal, mais le repousse. De chaque côté du trait s'élèvent de petites saillies de cuivre irrégulières que l'on a joliment comparées à des mottes minuscules soulevées par le soc d'une charrue liliputienne. Ce sont ces saillies, ou barbes, qui au moment de l'impression produisent, en arrêtant l'encre, ces beaux noirs veloutés qui sont une des plus grandes qualités des planches gravées à la pointe sèche. Après une première épreuve on peut, si certaines parties sont venues trop noires, les alléger au moyen d'un brunissoir ou grattoir, qui enlève les barbes; et ensuite le trait ne se traduit plus à l'impression que par un gris.

Le graveur à la pointe sèche peut aussi mieux suivre son travail que le graveur à l'eau-forte; on pourrait, en se servant du jargon de la photographie, dire de la gravure à la pointe sèche qu'elle est un procédé positif. La plaque de cuivre est comme la feuille de papier, la pointe comme le crayon et les traits offrent l'apparence ordinaire de noir sur blanc; tandis que d'autre part, dans le travail de la gravure à l'eau forte, le cuivre mis à découvert par la pointe éblouit, brillant dans le vernis noir et il présente ainsi cet effet inverse et inaccoutumé du négatif photographique: blanc sur noir.

La gravure à l'eau-forte consiste à creuser le métal par l'action de l'acide nitrique.

La plaque de cuivre, placée sur un réchaud, est recouverte (au moyen d'un tampon de soie) d'un vernis qui, amolli par la chaleur, s'étend facilement à sa surface. Ce vernis est ensuite coloré au noir de fumée.

Sur ce vernis le graveur trace son dessin au moyen d'une pointe. Le vernis est donc entamé par la pointe partout où l'artiste veut que l'épreuve donne des traits apparents. Le métal reste au contraire protégé par le vernis dans les parties destinées à être présentées en blanc à l'impression.

Ce travail de la pointe sur le cuivre verni doit être ensuite complété par la morsure de l'eau-forte. A cet effet la plaque est entourée d'un rebord de cire et dans le petit bassin ainsi formé on verse l'acide nitrique étendu d'eau afin d'éviter qu'il attaque trop le métal. Lorsque l'acide a fait son effet, lorsqu'on croit percevoir que les traits sont assez profondément mordus, on déverse l'acide.

Puis, pour débarrasser la planche de son vernis, on la nettoyé au moyen d'un chiffon imbibé d'essence de térébenthine, et le dessin, qu'au début on voyait seulement sur le vernis, apparaît à présent gravé en creux sur le métal. La planche est remise alors à l'imprimeur qui en tire une épreuve, sur laquelle l'artiste se rend compte de son travail.

On peut réparer, sans trop de difficultés, les défauts d'une première morsure au moyen de revernissages partiels et de remorsures graduées.

Tant de facilités d'exécution devraient séduire les peintres, et si quelques-uns se contentèrent de l'élégante réserve du blanc et noir, d'autres voulurent obtenir les chatoiements et les violences mêmes des couleurs. Les curieux articles de M. G. Mourey, publiés dans le *Studio*, concernant « les estampes françaises en couleurs », ont été assez remarqués pour qu'ils ne soient que cités ici.

M. Mourey y critiquait fort judicieusement les œuvres et expliquait fort clairement les procédés d'exécution.

Ils sont deux, également intéressants et expressifs.

L'un (le coloriage à la poupée) consiste en la mise en couleurs d'une seule planche au moyen des doigts et d'un petit paquet de chiffon, la poupée.

L'autre (le coloriage par superposition) comprend la superposition de plusieurs plaques, minutieusement repérées, et pouvant porter chacune jusque trois couleurs, pourvu que les surfaces des couleurs soient nettement délimitées.

Il y a, incontestablement, plus d'harmonieuse délicatesse, plus de souplesse de coloris dans le coloriage à la poupée; mais l'autre procédé exige de la part de l'artiste une connaissance plus profonde du *métier* de graveur et il a l'avantage d'être plus sûr à l'impression. L'imprimeur peut obtenir les effets voulus avec une parfaite certitude.

L'impression des gravures, quel que soit leur genre, exige de nombreuses précautions. Pour la gravure en taille douce, tout ce qui doit apparaître à l'épreuve étant gravé en creux, il faut que le papier, préalablement humecté, reçoive une pression telle qu'elle

puisse aller chercher l'encre dans les tailles les plus profondes. Pour l'encrage, après avoir légèrement chauffé le cuivre, l'imprimeur charge d'encre toutes les parties de la planche, n'en épargnant aucune. Puis, il essuyé la planche soigneusement, au moyen d'un tampon de mousseline, pour mieux enlever l'encre partout où elle n'est pas utile.

C'est alors que l'imprimeur, opérant sous les yeux de l'artiste, peut lui être quelquefois d'un grand secours en faisant rendre aux planches, par d'habiles tours de mains et retroussis de chiffons, des effets particuliers et inattendus.

On abuse même un peu de ces effets inattendus, car les nombreuses ressources du retroussage peuvent donner, superficiellement, quelque aspect agréable à des planches, dont, à part cela, le seul mérite est d'être lourdement surchargées de traits inutiles et maladroits.

Comme l'exprimait parfaitement M. Mempès, dans son article du *Magazine of Art*: « On ne peut trop répéter aux jeunes artistes que cette tendance presque générale à surcharger la plaque de travaux inexpressifs est une des causes les plus fréquentes d'insuccès en cet art charmant. La moindre griffe qui n'a pas sa raison d'être est une faute et l'on ne comprend pas assez que la surface de métal laissée intacte dans l'œuvre d'un artiste délicat et subtil donne mieux la sensation profonde de la nature, que la mêlée de traits confus et inutiles dont l'amateur, consciencieux mais ignorant, défigure sa plaque de cuivre.

« Se souvenir de cela et ne tracer sur le métal que les lignes significatives des objets dont la composition forme l'œuvre, c'est tout l'art de la gravure. »

S'il est dangereux, pour qui n'est pas du métier, de vouloir en termes techniques préciser les appréciations d'œuvres d'art, il l'est presque autant pour les gens du métier, de vouloir trop préciser les conseils techniques dans les questions d'art pur. Cela peut conduire tout aussi rapidement à paraître ridicule ainsi que le montre d'ailleurs cette leçon de paysage racontée par Henri Murger dans un de ses romans de la vie d'artiste.

La scène, comme on dit, se passe à Marlotte, dans la forêt de Fontainebleau. C'était au milieu du jour; un groupe de jeunes gens arrivait sur le plateau. Un âne, guidé par un paysan, était chargé de chevalets, de boites de couleurs et de havresacs.

Au milieu de ce groupe marchait un personnage qui paraissait plus âgé que ses compagnons et à qui ceux-ci semblaient témoigner une respectueuse attention.

Mais le maître, imposant, s'arrête; d'une main il tenait sa montre, de l'autre main il indiquait autour de lui, le paysage rendu incandescent par l'ardeur du soleil, et alors, avec un ton de souveraine autorité: « Messieurs, dit-il, il est midi; c'est l'heure où le jaune de chrome règne dans la nature. »

MESDAMES, MESSIEURS,

Vous avez bien voulu nous honorer de votre attention pour entendre quelques renseignements techniques concernant l'art de la gravure à l'eau-forte et à la pointe sèche.

Nous n’avons pas, pour donner ensuite quelques conseils d’art à ce sujet, l’autorité qui s’impose.

Cependant, ce genre spécial de la gravure permet de conclure ici par un conse[i]l qui, exceptionnellement, n’est pas compromettant pour celui qui l’offre, mais qui est aussi définitif que pratique pour ceux qui voudront bien l’accepter:

C’est que, plus encore qu’aucun autre artiste, un graveur à la pointe sèche ou à l’eau-forte doit chercher avant tout à faire une bonne impression.

FERNAND KHNOPFF

Khnopff, Fernand, « L'eau-forte et la pointe sèche (deuxième partie), » *L'Art moderne*, 21, 21 (26 mai 1901), 180-182.

Translation:

Etchings and Drypoints

(1) Conclusion; see our issue previous to the last.

The best authors in the field write that "engraving with the burin, which requires a careful slowness in execution and seeks absolute finish, is mainly appropriate for compositions of elevated style and subjects of a higher order."

As for etching, it is suitable for intimate and familiar topics. But these authors are quick to add that "should however not conclude that the hands of artists of genius it cannot apply to inventions of high and grandiose style."

The name of Rembrandt arises immediately and at the same time memory returns to the spirit of the exquisite and subtle pages of criticism written by Fromentin in his *Masters of the Past*. One could say that his penetrating study of the great Dutch master appears definitive and I thought I might transcribe here his conclusion that especially concerns our topic.

"Proceeding in the manner of Rembrandt himself, by extracting its principle from this work so vast and which represents such multiple genius, reducing it to its native elements, by eliminating his palette, brushes, his oil colors, his glazes, his impasto, the entire mechanism of the painter, one would finally grasp the primary essence of the artist in the printmaker."

"Rembrandt is complete in his etchings: Spirit, tendencies, imagination, daydreams, common sense, chimeras, difficulties of making the impossible, realities from nothing."

"Twenty of his etchings reveal him, and anticipate the painter and explain him even better. Comparing the two, I see no difference between the *Tobias* of the Louvre and such an etched print.There is no one who does not put the printmaker above all others. Without going so far when it comes to his painting, it would be good to think most often of his famous *Hundred Guilder Print* when we hesitate to understand his paintings. We would see that all the dross of art, one of the most difficult to purify that there is in the world, do not affect the incomparably beautiful flame that burns inside. Taken this way, all of Rembrandt is explained: his life, his work, his inclinations, his conceptions, his processes and even the patina of his painting which is a nothing but a bold spiritualization and research into the materials of his craft."

On the other hand, in the preface of a treatise on etching for painters, Théophile Gauthier [sic] has written that "no manner is simpler, more direct, more personal than etching. A plate of copper, smoked with varnish, some sort of needle, a bottle of acid, this is all that is required. Acid corrodes the parts of metal which have been scratched bare and hollows out the grooves which exactly reproduce each line drawn by the artist.

With a successful bite [of the acid bath], the plate is finished; one can print it and one has the idea of the master, all sparkling life and spontaneity, without the intermediary of any translation. Each etching is an original drawing and this fast and easy printing immortalized the sketches which the paper alone would not preserve.

“With such seemingly minimal resources, the medium was able to provide Rembrandt the flickering lights, mysterious penumbras and the deep blacks he needed for his philosophers and his alchemists, for his synagogues of Solomonic architecture, his Christ raising the dead, his landscapes traversed with shadows and sunlight and all the phantasmagoria of his dreaming, powerful and bizarre imagination. His palette, despite its richness, could not give him a wider range of effects.”

One cannot, as one would say in the metropolis of the arts, imagine a more beautiful advertisement for etching.

However it happens that, also using the example of Rembrandt, an English artist, Mr. Mortimer Mempes, has endeavored to establish the superiority of drypoint engraving over etching in an interesting article published in the *Magazine of Art*.

“This information alone,” he wrote, “should be sufficient to decide the matter: it is that Rembrandt, the king of engravers, after having worked at first only in etching, then began to combine the process of etching and drypoint and finally used only drypoint.”

This progression clearly shows that the final belief of the great artist was in the superiority of drypoint work.

The drypoint engraving process is certainly the simplest of its kind. The artist draws directly without preparation on the bare copper with a very sharp point. He thus obtains, in technical terms, so-called burrs, the effect of the very delicate work produced by the stroke of the tip. Each stroke of the drypoint tool does not remove metal, but pushes it to the side. On each side of the line are raised small irregular projections of copper that have been nicely compared to the tiny clumps raised by a Liliputian plough. By stopping the ink, these projections, or burrs, produce at the time of printing the velvety beautiful blacks which are one of the greatest qualities of drypoint prints. After an initial proof, if some areas have become too black, one can alleviate this with a burnisher or scraper, which removes the burrs; and then the stroke results in no more than a gray impression.

The drypoint printmaker can also follow his work better than the etcher; one could, using the jargon of photography, say that drypoint engraving is a positive process. The copper plate is like the sheet of paper, the tip like the pencil and the lines offer the regular appearance of black and white; while on the other hand, in etching with acid, the copper uncovered by the tip dazzles, brilliant against the black varnish and it presents this reverse and unusual photographic negative effect: white on black.

Printmaking by etching consists of removing the metal through the action of nitric acid.

The copper plate, heated on a stove, is covered (by the means of a silk pad) with a varnish which, softened by the heat, spreads easily on its surface. This varnish is then colored with black smoke.

On this polished surface the engraver traces his design by means of a needle. The varnish is therefore cut into by the needle wherever the artist wants the print to show visible marks.The varnish remains to protect the metal for those areas intended to be left white in the print.

This work of the needle on the varnished copper must be then completed by the bite of the etching process. Therefore the plate is surrounded by a rim of wax and nitric acid is poured into the basin thus formed, diluted with water to avoid attacking the metal too strongly. When the acid has had its effect, and when one believes that the lines are sufficiently deeply etched, one pours the acid out.

Then to remove the varnish from the plate, one cleans it using a cloth moistened with turpentine, and the drawing, which at first we saw only on the varnish, now appears engraved into the metal. The plate is then given to the printer who pulls a proof print, from which the artist can evaluate his work.

One may correct, without too much difficulty, a first bite through partial re-varnishing and gradual re-etching.

Such ease of execution must seduce the painters, and though some were satisfied with the elegant reserve of white and black, others wanted to get the same shimmering and violence of colors. The unusual articles by Mr. G. Mourey in THE STUDIO, on “French Prints in Colors,” were widely noticed so they are only cited here.

Mr. Mourey has quite judiciously critiqued works of art and explained very clearly the processes of execution.

They are two, equally interesting and expressive.

One (coloring with the doll) consists of applying colors to a single plate using fingers and a small packet of cloth, the doll.

The other (coloring by superposition) includes layering of several plates, carefully labeled, and each bearing up to three colors, provided that surfaces of the colors are clearly demarcated.

There is undoubtedly more harmonious delicacy and more flexibility of color in the coloring with the doll [poupée]; but the alternative procedure requires a deeper knowledge of the *practice* of engraving on the part of the artist and it has the advantage of being more secure in the printing. The printer can achieve the desired effects with perfect certainty.

Printmaking, regardless of the kind, requires many precautions. For intaglio prints, everything that will appear in the proof is engraved into the plate, and previously moistened paper must receive such pressure that it can pick up the ink in the deepest grooves. For inking, after slightly heating the copper, the printer loads ink all over the

plate, sparing no area. Then he wipes the plate carefully, using a chiffon pad, to remove ink wherever it is not useful.

Then the printer, operating under the eye of the artist, can sometimes be of great help by giving special and unexpected effects to the plate, by some clever tricks and folded cloths.

It is easy to abuse these unexpected effects, because the many resources of *retroussage* [or bringing up] can superficially provide a pleasing appearance to plates, where apart from that, the only merit is to be heavily overloaded with unnecessary and clumsy features.

M. Mempes, expressed it perfectly in his article in the *Magazine of Art*: “you can’t repeat too often to young artists that this almost general tendency to overload the plate with inexpressive work is one of the most common causes of failure in this charming art. Any mark that doesn’t have its *raison d’être* is a fault and it is not sufficiently understood that the surface of metal left intact in a delicate and subtle artistic work better gives the deep feeling of nature, while the *mêlée* of confusing and unnecessary marks of the amateur, conscientious but ignorant, disfigures his copper plate.

“Remember this and only draw on the metal the significant lines of objects whose composition forms the artwork, that is the whole art of engraving.”

If it is dangerous for those not skilled in the art to want to use technical terms to specify their appraisals of works of art, it is almost as much for the professionals to want to be too pricise with their technical advice in matters of pure art. This can also quickly become ridiculous as shown elsewhere in the landscape lesson recounted by Henri Murger in one of his novels of the artist’s life.

The scene, it is said, is happening in Marlotte, in the forest of Fontainebleau. It was in the middle of the day; a group of young people arrived on the plateau. A donkey, guided by a peasant, was loaded with easels and boxes of colors and knapsacks.

Into the middle of this group walked a character who seemed older than his companions and to whom they appeared to display a respectful attention.

But the imposing master stops; with one hand he held his watch, on the other hand he pointed around him, the landscape made incandescent by the heat of the sun, and then, with a tone of sovereign authority: “Gentlemen, he said, it is noon; this is the time when chrome yellow reigns in nature.”

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

You have kindly honored us with your attention to hear some technical information about the art of etching and drypoint engraving.

We have not the authority that is necessary to follow up with any artistic advice in this regard.

However, this special genre of printmaking permits me to conclude here with a suggestion which, unusually, is not compromising for the one which offers it, but which is also as definitive as it is practical for those who wish to accept it:

It is that, more than for any other artist, the printmaker of drypoints or etchings must seek above all to make a good impression.

FERNAND KHNOPFF

Khnopff, Fernand, “Josef Hoffmann. Architect and Decorator,” *The Studio*, 22, 98 (March 1901), 261-267.

Josef Hoffmann—Architect And Decorator. By Fernand Khnopff.

THE advantages and the disadvantages of the great Universal Exhibitions have often been considered; indeed, the subject might be discussed to eternity. In any case, these big international gatherings afford occasion for many notable displays such as would otherwise be impossible. Thus, at the Paris Exhibition, the remarkable show made by Austria brought right to the front a group of Viennese artists—Secessionists—whose curious works had only too often aroused at home both animosity and ridicule. Nevertheless, their success was complete on this occasion, and from all quarters came evidence of frank admiration.

In the November issue of THE STUDIO M. Gabriel Mourey praised, as it deserved, the intelligent arrangement of the Austrian section, the frank modernity of its various sections, notably that of the Beaux Arts, in the Grand Palais des Champs Elysées, which he described as a model of its kind. And in a special number of the “Figaro lllustré” M. Arsène Alexandre was impelled to write in these terms:—”The Secession sought to give the whole world a lesson in elegance, in the respect due to works of art, and in their proper disposition. In this it was entirely successful, and the atmosphere of this section was so delicate, so harmonious, that from first to last these two delightful galleries never failed to call forth unanimous exclamations of pleasure.”





Fittings of the Secessionists’ Exhibition Hall, Vienna. Designed by Josef Hoffmann | “Ver Sacrum Zimmer” at the first exhibition of the Vienna Secessionists. Designed by Joseph Hoffmann

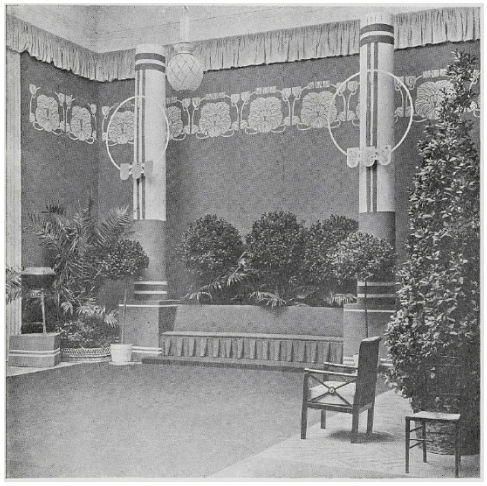
The arrangement of the two galleries was the work of the architect, Mr. Josef Hoffmann, now vice-president of the Vienna Secession, his plans being executed by the Viennese firm of J. W. Müller and Carl Giani, jun.

On the walls was stretched a sort of *toile-à-voile* of light greenish grey, ornamented with yellow and white *applications*. The wood-work was in plain oak, stained dark brown-

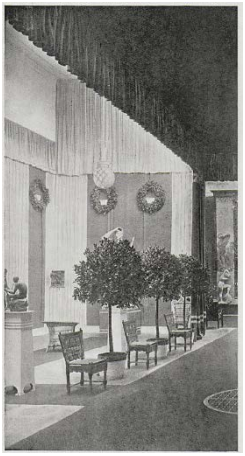
purple; while the yellow-gold silk tapestries used for the *portières* and the sofas was made in Vienna by the firm of J. Backhausen and Son, from a design by M. K. Moser, an active Secessionist and a very charming and skilful decorator. The walls of the little room devoted to water-colours and drawings were hung with bluish-green draperies, and the wood-work and the furniture was of white polished maple. The same exquisite finish was seen, even in the frames—old gold for the paintings, and varnished white for the water-colours and drawings.

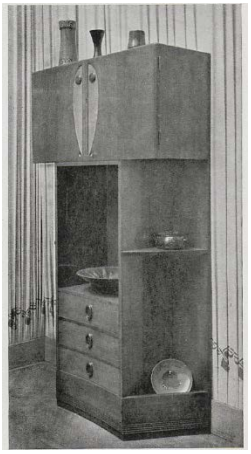


Dining Room Designed by Josef Hoffmann



Decorations for the Secessionists' Exhibition Hall. By J. Hoffmann





Portion of Sculpture Gallery Designed by Josef Hoffmann | Cabinet Designed by Josef Hoffmann

All this produced a charming general effect, and testified unmistakably to the refined taste and skilful ingenuity of Josef Hoffmann, who revealed himself both decorator and architect. lt recalled in the pleasantest manner the superb arrangements seen at the exhibitions of the Secession in Vienna, so well and fully described in the Secessionist organ “Ver Sacrum.” In this magazine those who seek may find in the May-June issue of 1898 an admirable description of the “Ver Sacrum Zimmer,” the secretary’s sanctum at the first Secession Exhibition; in the July and September numbers of the same year models of frames and flower-holders of most ingenious form, together with architectural studies and plans, and designs for initial letters and other typographical ornamentations ; and other numbers, even taken at random, will be found equally full of artistic matter as interesting as it is varied. But good as are all these “documents,” they can, after all, give but a faint idea of the special charm of modern Viennese decoration, which was certainly seen at its best in the recent Paris Exhibition, and attracted the immediate and close attention of the judicious visitor.

What is called “the new art,” or “the modern style,” is no longer on its trial. From all quarters have come praise and blame—both frequently excessive; but it is certain that this interesting experiment has produced mariy things which are quite inadmissible. Some writers have bluntly declared that nothing has come of the new style: what was beautiful was not new, and what was new was not beautiful ! “The modern style,” it has been said, “is essentially a submarine style, because the only forms which appear really novel belong, as the submarine animals do, to the invertebrate class.”



Middle Hall of the Seventh Exhibition of the Vienna Secession. By J. Hoffmann





Fire-Place by Josef Hoffmann | Cabinet by Josef Hoffmann



Sale-Room at a Candle Factory. Designed by Josef Hoffmann

Hoffmann's works cannot be criticised in this fashion. He is essentially rational and reasonable in all he does. His compositions are never extravagant, never intentionally loud, as are those of some of his more western *confrères*. He confines himself to studying proportion and decoration, and thus is enabled to add to the beauty of the original lines of construction without addition and without alteration. One's first impression on arriving in London is a realisation of the still-prevailing Roman influence, which extends far beyond the Metropolis itself—the sense of dominion and conquest, of power, in a word. Vienna, on the other hand, immediately suggests Byzantium—an open-air Byzantium. The word that exactly describes it is *fesch*, of which the nearest rendering perhaps is *chic*—for everything in Vienna produces a sensation of sensuousness, soft and delicate and sumptuous. Undoubtedly the art of the Secessionist decorators is "*ganz fesch*." Take for instance the *appartement* of M.P.—in the Sühnhaus, which has been decorated by three Secessionists, MM. Olbrich, Auchentaller and Josef Hoffmann. It is absolutely a delight to the eyes—the very essence of elegance and luxury.

To conclude: In his article (already quoted) published in the "Figaro Illustre," M. Arsène Alexandre wrote as follows:" Nowhere have the new ideas of decoration been so

favourably received as in Austria; and it must be admitted that her artists have made the most of them by adapting these novel *formulae* to suit the spirit of the race, which we, for our part, have not succeeded in doing as yet."

FERNAND KHNOPFF.

Khnopff, Fernand, “Modern Belgian Jewellery and Fans,” *The Studio*, special number (Modern Design Jewellery and Fans) Winter 1901-1902, 1-4.

Modern Belgian Jewellery And Fans. By F. Khnopff.



Recent *Salons* in Belgium have been notoriously unsuccessful, and it cannot be disputed that the public is becoming less and less interested in the large exhibitions of Fine Arts. Notable artists have been conspicuously absent; new works have been as scarce as old ones have been abundant; and, lastly, the general arrangements have been altogether lacking in attractiveness. Despite the violent opposition of interested persons, official and otherwise, the type of display started some time ago in Brussels by the “XX” club, and continued by the “Libre Esthétique and “Pour L’Art” societies, has succeeded in attracting the attention of *connoisseurs* and art lovers generally, with, apparently, every prospect of retaining it.

The combination of works of painting and sculpture with the most exquisite productions of ceramic art, glass-ware, and all that is most delicate in jewellery and goldsmith’s work, adds special attraction to these exhibitions, which are always looked for with the utmost interest. It is, indeed, the jewellers, who, among all our Belgian art workers, have succeeded in making themselves and their productions the best known and most widely appreciated the more so as in their case one was able to compare their Works closely and determine their relative merits. It may truly be said that their most notable characteristic is diversity—a diversity which is shown, not only by the amateurs, so to speak, but also among the professionals.

No remarks on Belgian sculpture—particularly in its decorative sense—are complete without mention being made of Charles Van der Stappen. True, he has executed but small number of detached ornaments, but in the arrangement of the hair in his exquisitely fanciful busts he has lavished wealth of fine modelling, the influence of which is still widely felt.

In the Works of M. Paul Dubois we discover the sculptor modelling the details of his buckles and clasps as he would so many powerful muscles. M. Fernand Dubois seems to

be *chercheur* of a more subtle kind but this very excess of ingenuity sometimes mars the plastic effect of his jewels.

From Victor Rousseau we have had so far nothing more than a gold bracelet. The subject is quite simple-two hands holding pearl; but the work is in every way worthy of the young Brussels artist, whom regard as one of the most remarkable personalities in the domain of contemporary Belgian sculpture.

The decorator Van de Velde, who has left Brussels, and is now settled in Berlin, exhibited at some of the "Libre Esthétique" salons a series of jewels remarkable for their firm and consistent construction.

The jewels displayed recently by M. Feys are distinguished by grace and felicitous appropriateness but even more striking is the perfection of their execution, which is really extraordinary in its suggestion of suppleness.

Other jewels displayed recently at the Libre Esthétique by M. Morten and Mlle. de Bronckère also deserve notice.

In the course of a very interesting study on M. Ph. Wolfers, M. Sander Pièrron, the sagacious Brussels critic, thus described the work of this remarkable specialist in the "Revue des Arts Décoratifs":—

"M. Wolfers seeks his inspiration in the study of the nature and the forms of his marvellous domain, and his vision of things is specially defined in his jewels. The detail therein contributes largely to the spirit of the entire work, which borrows its character from the decoration itself or from the subject of that decoration. He never allows himself to stray into the regions of fancy; at most, he permits his imagination to approach the confines of ornamental abstraction. Nevertheless, he interprets Nature, but is never dominated by it. He has too true, too exact a sense of the decorative principle to conform to the absolute reality of the things he admires and reproduces. His art, by virtue of this rule, is thus modified translation of real forms. He has too much taste to introduce into the composition of one and the same jewel flowers or animals which have no parallel symbol or, at least, some family likeness or significance. He will associate swans with water-lilies—the flowers which frame, as it were, the life of those grand poetic birds; or he will put the owl or the bat with the poppy—that triple evocation of Night and Mystery; or the heron with the eel symbols of distant, melancholy streams. He rightly judges that in art one must endeavour to reconcile everything, both the idea and the materials whereby one tries to make that idea live and speak. Inspired, doubtless, by the fact that the ancients chose black stones for the carving of the infernal or fatal deities, M. Wolfers uses dark amethyst for his owls, which gives them special significance. The Grecians used the aqua-marina exclusively for the engraving of their marine gods, by reason of its similarity to the colour of the sea, just as

they never carved the features of Bacchus in anything but amethyst—that stone whose essence suggests the purple flow of wine."

M. Van Strydonck expresses himself to me in the following terms on the subject of his art:—

"I am of opinion that the jewel can be produced without the aid of stones, enamels, etc. I do not exclude them entirely, but they should not be used unless it be to give the finishing touch, or occasionally to relieve an *ensemble* lacking in vigour of colour. My preference is for oxydations, for in general effect they are more harmonious to the eye, and by careful seeking one can find all the tones required. I think you will share my opinion that it is much easier to use enamels, by means of which one's object is instantly attained. Yet it is seldom one produces a beautiful symphony of colour. Enamel can only be employed in small quantities. Why? Because, in the first place, he who uses it must have profound knowledge of colours and special colourist's eye; he must remember, moreover, that he is appealing to *clientèle* composed principally of ladies, who in most cases regard the jewel simply as means to complete such and such toilette.

"It seems to me, indeed," continues M. van Strydonck, "that translucent enamel is the most suitable because it simply serves as an auxiliary—a basis necessary to the completion of the *ensemble*—and adds value to workmanship and design; and there is nothing to prevent its alliance with the beautiful oxydations which come almost naturally from gold."

Note how, little by little, enamel is being abandoned in favour of stones, such as onyx, agate, and malachite, materials of no special value, which can be cut in different ways, and whose colour gives fine effects infinitely preferable to those of inferior enamels.

Of course, I do not despise the fine stone, which, by its bold colour, often relieves the work, but this is not altogether the object of the jewel, unless profit be the sole object of the maker; and I ought to add that the revival of the jewel in recent years has not been favourably regarded by certain firms, who saw therein distinct diminution of gain, the fact being that their large stock of fine stones—beautiful in themselves, but out of place in works such as have mentioned—threatens to remain on their hands.

One cannot truly say that Belgian *eventaillistes* exist, for it is only very occasionally that such water-colour painters as MM. Cassiers, Stacquet, and Uytterschaut carry out their delightful landscapes and seascapes in the shape required for a fan.

Something has been done in lace-work in connection with the fan, and on this point I should mention in terms of praise M. Van Cutsem, a Brussels designer, who has made numerous models for M. Bart and M. Sacré, amongst which may be noted several happy experiments in the direction of the "modern style."

To conclude, let me refer to the lace by Mlle. Bienaimé, admirably mounted by M. Goosens, of Brussels.



A Fan Painted on Silk by H. Cassiers
Plate 1



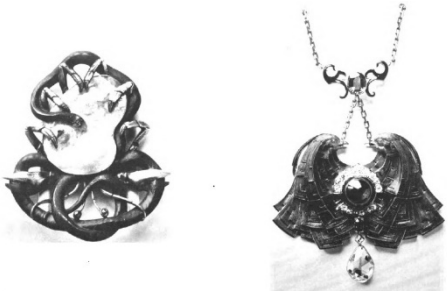
Design for a Necklet in Silver and Enamel, L. Van Stydonck Plate 2 | Pendant with Chain. The mask is an Iris with red Enamel for the hair. The Orchid's petals are in translucent Enamel of opalescent tones, Ph. Wolfers Plate 3



Pendant and Chain set with Brilliants and Pearls. The Figure in Gold, the Serpent in black and brown Enamel, Ph. Wolfers Plate 4 | Necklet, with Ornaments of transparent Enamel, Ph. Wolfers Plate 5



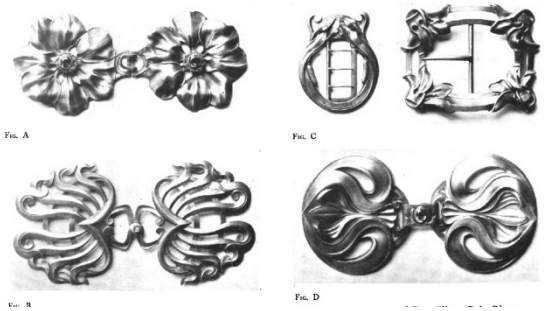
Parure de Corsage, set with Emeralds, Brilliants and transparent Pearls, Ph. Wolfers
Plate 6



A. Waistband Buckle. The Serpent in green Bronze, the Crab in Silver-gilt
B. Pendant. The Pheasants in green and yellow-brown Enamel, the centre Stone a pale-green Ceylon Sapphire, Ph. Wolfers
Plate 7



Coiffure, set with Brilliants; the petals in Opal, the Serpent in Gold touched with a slight patina, Ph. Wolfers
Plate 8



A, B, and D Silver Belt-Clasps. C. Silver Buckles
Paul Dubois. Plate 9

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 22, 95 (February 1901), 54-56.

Brussels.—Although the Exhibition of the “Sillon” Club was less sombre in appearance than usual this year, one nevertheless felt that there was still too much imitation of old pictures—imitation achieved by means of skilfully-mixed varnishes.

M. A. Bastien, while always faithful to the memory of the warm colourings affected by the “romantic” painters of 1830, has notably brightened his palette. M. Smeers, who seems to have taken his inspiration from the *Espagnol à Paris* of the late H. Evenepoel, has painted a large full-length portrait which in its way is a remarkable effort. And M. Wagemans is as clever in his work as M. Smeers.

Others there are, however, who show more sincerity—M. G. M. Stevens, who exhibited a very interesting set of views of the Chateau de Freyr; M. Verdussen, whose *Vieux Logis* are full of quaint observation and well painted to boot; M. Bernier, with several finely-executed little studies of dogs and horses; and M. Deglume, whose *Brume sur l'Escaut* is a work of very delicate tone.

M. Coulon sent some drawings eccentrically designed and executed, and M. V. Mignot an album of Parisian types (published under the direction of M. Octave Uzanne). Several boldly-painted landscapes by the late J. de Greef were also included in the Exhibition. M. Nocquet, the sculptor, sent a large and notable series of works; and, it should be added in conclusion, M. Smeers was responsible for the poster of the Exhibition.



Poster by F. Smeers

The “Exposition Centennale” of the Brussels Academy of Fine Arts was arranged in the best possible manner under the superintendence of its director, Mr. C. Van der Stappen, the sculptor. In this very interesting exhibition, which comprised about 300 pictures and 200 drawings and works of sculpture, one recognised again the fact, as revealed by the diversity and the independence of style of these productions, that academic teaching cannot stop the true expression of genuine artistic personality. Perhaps the chief attraction of an exceptional Salon was the exact and appreciable evidence it gave of the

successive transformations of Belgian art—its evolution from the classic formula to those of modern times. Among the exhibits was Fernand Khnopff's pastel *Solitude,* now reproduced.



"Solitude" from the pastel by Fernand Khnopff

C. Meunier's group, *Le Cheval à l'Abreuvoir,* was recently placed on the pedestal prepared to receive it in the Square Ambiorix. The fine and expressive outline of this group, which was the subject of comment in THE STUDIO more than a year since, produces a highly decorative effect.

The small winter displays of the Cercle Artistique de Bruxelles continue to attract many visitors. They succeed one another every ten days, and are often interesting. M. Hermanus lately showed a series of Dutch views very prettily handled.

MM. G. and L. van Strydonck had a joint exhibition, composed of paintings by the first and jewellery by the last-named. The paintings—portraits, landscapes, and seapieces—show a keen sense of clearness and exactitude; but one's attention was chiefly drawn to a pastel portrait, simply and feelingly interpreted. The jewels, consisting of brooches, buckles, combs, pins, chains, etc., are most skilfully worked and display real appreciation of the possibilities of the goldsmith's work. The delicate colours in the *patines* are especially worthy of remark, by reason of their ingenious appropriateness.

F.K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 22, 96 (March 1901), 133-134.

Brussels.—The third annual Salon of the art club known as “Le Labeur,” in the galleries of the Musée de Bruxelles, contained several works of interest, notably a fine drawing by M. Vanderstraeten *(La Cathédrale, le soir);* a study of a peasant, and a large collection of drawings by M. Werlemann; curiously-executed paintings by M. Oleffe; some landscapes from M. Cambier's rather too facile brush: *La Barge,* by M. Madiol, fils; and M. Collin's *Le Village.*

Among the sculpture we specially remarked that of MM. Baudrenghien and Grandmoulin, who seem haunted by the remembrance of certain artists very much in fashion at the present moment; also the vast group, *L’Inspiration*, by M. Herbays, one of those numerous disciples of M. Lambeaux who appear to be unaware of the fact that their master, years ago, at the outset of his career, produced works of pure sculpture, carefully and precisely modelled—as, for example, the group called *Le Baiser,* one of the loveliest things in the Antwerp Museum. Finally, I should mention the poster of the Salon, ingeniously designed by M. Cosyns.

At the re-opening of the Brussels Free University a *bas-relief* in memory of the late Professor of Law, M. Rivier, was uncovered. The memorial is the work of M. C. Samuel, the sculptor, and M. Horta, the architect. It has a very decorative appearance, and is cleverly designed.



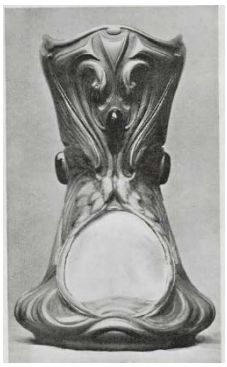
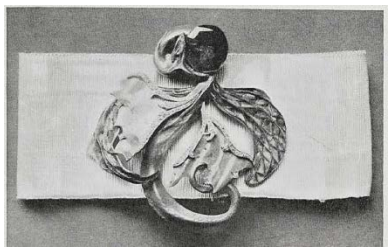
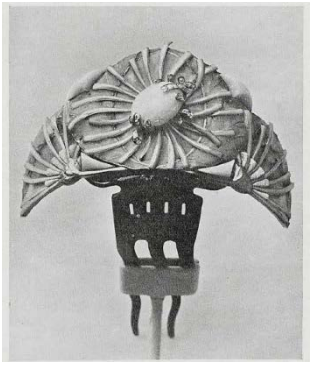
Seascape by H. Stacquet

We have pleasure in giving an illustration of an admirable seascape by M. H. Stacquet.

F. K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 22, 98 (May 1901), 284-288.

Brussels.—The club known as “Le Cercle pour l’Art” recently gave a most interesting display in the galleries of the Musée de Bruxelles. Specially remarkable was the exhibit of V. Rousseau, the sculptor, which included a charming group of two sisters, a life-like bust, a statuette of a youth, and an expressive fragment, called *Le Drame Humain*. M. Braecke contributed a group of fisherwomen; M. de Rudder a series of earthenware masks and a skillfully-designed commemorative *plaquette*. M. Ph. Wolfers had several show-cases, containing waist-belt buckles, hair ornaments, combs, neck-pendants, necklaces, etc., together with a vase and an electric lamp, in the form of an ivory statuette, enriched with gold and enamels.

Vase by Ph. Wolfers | Waist-Belt Buckle by Ph. Wolfers | Hair Ornament by Ph. Wolfers

The painters, R. Janssens, A. Hannotiau, and O. Coppens showed their well-known studies of Flemish houses, silent and well-ordered; MM. F. Baes and Vanden Eeckhoudt contributed portraits; MM. Vierin, Viandier, and Hamesse, landscapes; M. A. Lynen, typic illustrations; and M. Ottevaere a delicate water-colour. A tapestry design by M. Fabry showed great skill in design, while a panel, *brodé au passé,* by Madame de Rudder, had much merit in its brilliant colouring.

The weekly exhibitions of the “Cercle Artistique de Bruxelles” continue to attract numerous visitors. Prominent among the works displayed have been the bright *morceaux* by M. D. Oyens, the landscapes by M. Jeffreys, the brilliant flower-pieces by Mlle. Rouner [sic] , the sea-pieces and sky-studies by M. Marcette, the animals and portraits by M. and Mme. Bernier, the clever and sparkling watercolours by MM. Stacquet and Uytterschaut, and the paintings—gay or grave—of MM. Charpentier and Speekaert.

Great was the success of the annual exhibition of the Brussels Society of Water-Colourists in the galleries of the Musée. The critics were unanimous in their opinion that never before had they seen so remarkable a display. Among the works shown were many of great merit, notably those of MM. C. W. Bartlett and G. La Touche. Perhaps the best painting in the exhibition was *L'Enterrement,* by the first-named, a work which has been bought by the Belgian Government for the Brussels Gallery. *La Tasse de The* and

the *Portrait d'Octave Usanne,* [sic] by La Touche, displayed the sumptuous sense of colour which characterises his work.

Among the other foreign artists who habitually exhibit at these salons were Mme. Clara Montalba, with several of her delicate Venetian scenes, M. Van der Waay, and M. H. Von Bartels, whose water-colours have all the effect of oils.

Several effective members of the Society were also seen to advantage, notably M. Henry Stacquet with his *Marine à Scheveningue,* reproduced in the March number; M. Constantin Meunier, M. Fernand Khnopff, abstruse as usual; M. M. H. Cassiers, M. A. Delaunoy, M. Hegemans, MM. Uytterschaut and Titz, together with MM. Claus Marcette, Lynen, van Leenputten, Pecquerant, Smits, J. and the late A. Devriendt—the last-named being the lamented Director of the Society, exhibiting for the last time.

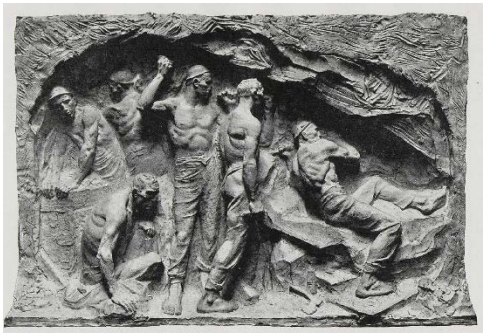
Two new effective members of the Society, MM. Baertsoen and F. Charlet, made a sensational first appearance. The first-named showed some Dutch scenes, rich and striking in colouring, while the other was represented by several Flemish studies treated in impressively sombre manner.
At the last Salon of the "Libre Esthétique" the space reserved for works of applied art was considerably diminished; nevertheless, small as it was, the display contained much that was interesting, notably the ceramics of Bing and Grondhal, and those from the "Art Nouveau" and the "Amstelhoek"; the enamels on copper by Rapoport; the glass-work by Kolo Moser, the Viennese Secessionist; the bindings by Miss Agnes Ashbee; and the well- known medallions by A. Charpentier. These were the foreign representatives, while from Belgium came the incised and coloured leathers, very rich and striking in effect, by M.H. Gérard and Mme. C. Voortman; the somewhat labored jewellery of MM. Feys and Strydonck, and the tin and bronze work of Mlle. J. Lorrain, whose display was quite remarkable for a newcomer.

The Director of the Exhibition, M. Maus, had got from Paris a large number of excellent works, including three Monets (among them his superb painting, *L'Inondation*), four Vuillards (finely-toned and agreeably treated interiors), several C. Pissaros (works of extreme sincerity); and there were examples of M. Denis, Cézanne, d'Espagnat, and Lebourg. From Paris also came a noteworthy collection from from the studio of the Belgian artist, Th. Van Rysselberghe—paintings done in bright and joyous colours, but at times rather too systematic in execution, and a number of careful engravings and drawings.

M. E. Claus contributed numerous landscapes, luminous and clear as ever, including the large canvas *Le Passage des Vaches,* of which a reproduction appeared recently in THE STUDIO. M. Baertsoen exhibited several broadly painted scenes from provincial towns, while M. Delaunois displayed a dramatically handled *Intérieur d'Eglise.*

The drawings were many and varied, and included specimens by G. Lemmen, Donnay, Mertens, Mlle. Dause, and Herman-Paul. One also noticed some decorative designs by M. Combaz, and several curious little fired ceramics by Mlle. Boch.





Bust in Ivory and Silver by P. Dubois | “La Mine,” by C. Meunier

That admirable sculptor, V. Rousseau, showed his pure and delicate style in an exquisitely beautiful bronze statuette, and in other works; and M.P. Dubois was represented by a fanciful bust in ivory and silver (now reproduced) and a powerful portrait bust in marble. But the most remarkable thing in the way of sculpture was C. Meunier’s high-relief, *La Mine*, a portion of his *Monument au travail*, of which an illustration is also given. The great artist has been exclusively engaged on this work for some years past. When finished it will form the fitting crown of a laborious life.

F.K.

[unsigned], “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 23, 100 (July 1901), 138-139.

BRUSSELS.—We have pleasure in giving an illustration of a fine bust by M. C. Samuel, which was on view at the Société des Beaux-Arts, in Brussels.



Marble Bust by C. Samuel

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 23, 101 (August 1901), 220.

Brussels.—The organisers of the last Salon of the Society of Fine Arts here have been somewhat roughly handled by critics and artists alike. And, indeed, there never was a more incoherent assemblage of works of art, and never were hanging and arrangement so clumsy and so unsatisfactory. Interesting works by young painters were simply sacrificed to considerations of precedent or expediency—both absolutely foreign to art. For instance, the honest and luminous landscapes of M. and Madame Wytsman, the placid interiors of M. Janssens, and the portraits of MM. G. M. Stevens and Gouwellos were carelessly “shoved” into obscure corners, while M. J. Delvin's vigorous *Combat d'Étalons flamands* was completely hidden behind an enormous massive bronze group by M. J. Lambeaux. Moreover, it was doubtful wisdom to give a retrospective exhibition of the work of Ch. Degroux, who died in 1870; doubtful, too, was the choice of the works of Chintreuil (dead in 1873), of Jongkind (dead in 1891), and of several more or less “exotic” portrait-painters, who are in great favour at the moment in “high society.”

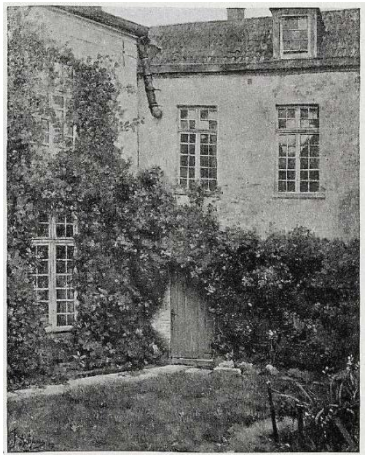
Happily, the exhibition included three admirable bits of painting by the great Belgian, A. Stevens—*Avant le Spectacle, Tous les Bonheurs* (formerly in the famous Van Praet Collection), and *Souveniers et Regrets*, this last a marvel of supple handling and delicacy of *nuances*, while the Brussels painters, MM. Courtens, Verhaeren and X. Mellery sent large selections of their work.

Remarkable among the new sculpture was an excellent bust of M. Mesdach de ter Kiele, by Ch. Samuel; the patiently-composed bust of the Archbishop of Malines, by J. Lagae; and the fanciful decorative busts by MM. J. de Lalaing and J. Dillens. The clever architect, M. Hobé, displayed plans and views of seaside villas.

F. K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 24, 103 (October 1901), 71-74.

BRUSSELS.—Several displays—of interest by reason of their honest and serious intent—have been held recently at the Cercle Artistique. Mdlle. Art showed a fresh series of pastels of bold design and charming colour. M. R. Janssens was well represented by a large collection of his *Coins de vieilles villes et vieux logis*. The numerous display of portraits and landscapes by M. Verheyden gave emphatic proof of simplicity of vision and well-controlled technique, while extreme delicacy was the prevailing quality in the work of the late M. Binjé. M. Otteraere [sic] exhibited several poetically-conceived scenes—parks and cathedrals; and M. V. Rousseau, who is certainly the most interesting personality in the young Belgian school of sculpture, delighted everyone by his exquisitely beautiful little bronze groups.

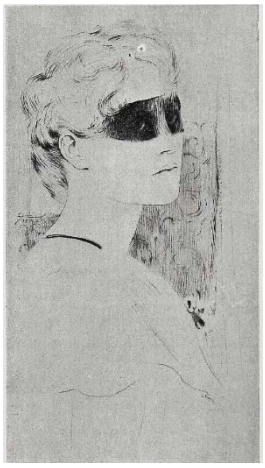


“An Old Garden” by René Janssens

The exhibition of the Société des Aquafortistes Belges was also held at the Cercle Artistique, and proved a complete success. The public, already interested by the articles in THE STUDIO devoted to the experiments in colour engraving made recently in France, had an opportunity of seeing for themselves the works so ably and so acutely criticised by M. G. Mourey. Germany, represented by MM. Klinger and Koepping, sent works of extraordinary cleverness; while Holland, in the persons of MM. Zilcken, Bauer, Bosch, Nieuwenkamp, Storm Van Gravesande, and others, was seen to great advantage. M. M. E. Orlik, an Austrian, sent several vivid and life-like sketches; and the English exhibitors included Messrs. Herkomer, Cameron, Alfred East, and Laing. Spain had for its representative M. Egusquiza, and Portugal M. Quintella de Sampayo.

The exhibits from Belgium were many and various. Prominent among them was that of H.R.H. the Countess of Flanders; and mention should also be made of the boldly-treated etchings by MM. Baertsoen, Wytsman, Van Rysselberghe H. Meunier, and Hens, not forgetting the *fantaisies*—coarse though they be sometimes—of MM. Ensor, Delaunois, and, Laermans; or the delicate sketches of MM. Romberg, Heins, and Van Bastelaer; the dry-points of Fernand Khnopff; the “interpretations” of celebrated works by MM. Dause and Bernier and Mdlles. Dause and Wesmael; the interesting colour-printings of MM.

Titz, Schlobach, Coppens, and Evenpoel; and lastly, the remarkable display by the Liège artists, MM. Rassenfosse, Donnay, and Maréchal.



"Un Masque" from a dry-point by Fernand Khnopff

The exhibition of recent work given by the painter, J. Middeleer, at the Rubens Club, was keenly appreciated by public and artists alike.

F. K.

1902

Khnopff, Fernand, “Opinions belges rue le campanile de Venise,” *La Meuse* 1, (August 8, 1902), 3. Letter.

[the campanile in St. Mark’s Square in Venice collapsed on July 14, 1902. It was rebuilt in 1912. Khnopff had taken part in the Venice Bienale in 1901.]

Opinions belges rue le campanile de Venise

M. Fernand Khnopff: « Je suis franchement oppose à la reconstruction :

1º Parce que le campanile est mort irrémissiblement. Après une fin « aussi cinquième acte, » il ne faut l’exposer à une nouvelle existence.

2 º Parce que la nouvelle architecture ne s’harmoniserait pas avec les monuments précieux et délicats qui l’entourent. Ni le style, ni les matériaux ne seraient faits pour voisiner ensemble. Il a perdu son unique raison d’être… en n’étant plus. »

Translation:

Belgian Opinions on the campanile of Venice

Mr. Fernand Khnopff "I am frankly opposed to the reconstruction:

1st Because the campanile is irrevocably dead. After such a finish "as the fifth act," we must not expose it to a new existence.

2nd Because the new architecture will not harmonize with the precious and delicate monuments that surround it. Neither the style nor the materials would be made for being side by side together. It has lost its unique reason for being... and is no longer."

Khnopff, Fernand, “Modern Etching and Engraving in Belgium,” *The Studio*, special summer number, *Modern Etching and Engraving,* 1902, 1-4, with 8 pages of illustrations.

Modern Etching & Engraving In Belgium.
By Fernand Khnopff.



Belgian etchers held an Exhibition in 1901 in the Galleries of the Cercle Artistique at Brussels, at which were received examples of the work of all artists interested in etching whether with the dry-point or what the French call *eau forte*.

In holding this remarkable Exhibition the primary aim of the Belgian Society of Etchers was to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of its foundation, and to prove the success of its efforts to recover the position it formerly held under the management of Félicien Rops.

To found in Belgium an International Society of Etchers was the great ambition of Rops but his success had been long delayed by material difficulties. He did, however, at last manage to constitute the Society, and it was decided to issue an album with a portfolio of etchings, the first number of which appeared in 1875.

Her Royal Highness the Countess of Flanders had accepted the position of Honorary President of the International Society of Etchers, and the two plates she successively published in the album deservedly rank among the best of the many fine etchings which appeared in that publication.

The greater number of those who exhibited at the Salon of the Society of Etchers were painters as well as etchers, and it was very interesting to note the great variety of their styles. Some few had insisted on going through what might almost be called classic training, mastering to begin with every traditional process of the craft. Others had endeavoured to adapt the processes of etching to their own particular mode of painting; yet others had set to work to discover new methods, using their etching tools in a haphazard way and trying experiments in biting in on grounds never before used; whilst others contented themselves with merely transferring some study to copper.

The etchings of M. Baertsoen take rank amongst the most remarkable of the works exhibited. They are characterised by broad masses of light and shade, and their execution is thoroughly suited to the effect of chiaroscuro which it was evidently the aim of the artist to produce. It cannot be denied that there is now and then something almost coarse and harsh about the execution, but this very peculiarity results in the

better distribution of the ink when the impressions are being struck off, and enables M. Baertsoen to secure effects by the *retroussage* on which he sets such store and turns to such good account, without going to the extremes indulged in by so many of his fellow etchers.

Messieurs Wytsman and Van Rysselberghe, on the other hand, appear to scorn to avail themselves of the too skilful aid of the printer, and when their well-prepared and carefully-executed drawings have been reproduced, they have all the value of conscientious work. In his etchings M. Wytsman gives proof of his thorough study of the landscape scenery of Brabant, and delights in representing the noble and dignified lines of the grand masses of forest trees characteristic of the undulating country districts. M. Van Rysselberghe, too, in his portraits and sea-pieces avoids all superficial expedients, and endeavours in every case to faithfully interpret his subject.

It is qualities similar to these which give value to the works of Messrs. Coppens and Bartholomé. M. Ensor has already won considerable reputation as an engraver, and his etchings of sea-pieces and landscapes, inspired by the scenery of Ostende and its neighbourhood, are remarkable for delicacy of touch, which does full justice to the subtle effects of silvery light so characteristic of the Belgian sea-board.

The works of Messrs. Laermans and Delaunois are remarkable for their very crude appearance. The etchings of M. Laermans, indeed, give the impression of having been engraved with the aid of a very old nail, while those of M. Delaunois do not appear to have been bitten in, but to have been vitriolised. For all that, however, the engravings of both these celebrated artists have, so far as art essentials are concerned, the same fine qualities as their paintings. It is the same with the Antwerp master, M. Hens, whose sea-pieces, in spite of their somewhat rough execution, are full of luminous brightness, and attracted special attention at the Exhibition of the Society of Etchers.

Messrs. Heins, Gailliard, Mignot, Romberg, Titz, and H. Meunier have all brought to bear upon their work with the etching needle that same facility of execution which they have gained by practice in making drawings for book illustration or in designing posters.

Lastly, there is only one Belgian painter-etcher who cultivates exclusively the process known as dry-point, and that one is the writer of these notes, who has engraved in that medium several drawings or studies in outline or shade.

In his “History of the Fine Arts in Belgium” Camille Lemonnier defines very accurately that which specially distinguishes Messrs. Belgian G. Biot and A. Danse, who may be said to be at the present time the two engravers by profession who dominate the Society of Etchers:

“From the very first time he exhibited, Biot manifested those qualities of distinction and grace which have since gradually developed into completed individual style of great distinction. Delicacy, balance, and simplicity of effect, grace of sentiment, with something of timidity and reserve in the general scheme, these are the salient features of an art which is at the same time pleasing and severe, modifying classic stiffness by its contact with grace altogether modern.”

“The art of Danse, on the contrary, is comparatively coarse, passionate, feverish. The hasty dashiness of the sketch is retained even in his completed work; he loves tones which clash with one another, unrelieved black, sharp effects of light, rugged execution. Of the school of J. B. Meunier, on whose style he formed his own, he has retained nothing but the decision of stroke of the burin, with certain grasp of the processes employed and some skill of handling. With him the etching needle is almost always pressed into the service as supplementary to the graver or burin it is it which gives to his plates their sharpness of line and richness of tone even to his most severely correct engravings it lends certain capriciousness which would be repudiated by those who use the burin pure and simple.”

M. Danse, however, is not content with producing vast number of engravings, he also aspires to forming engravers; and whilst he was Professor of Drawing at the Royal Academy of Mons in 1871 he founded school of engraving in that town at his own expense. From this school issued, amongst others, Messrs. Lenain, Bernier, L. Greuze, and Lucq, with Melles. Weiler, Wesmael, L. Danse, and Mme. Destrée-Danse, the two last named the daughters of the master.

M. Lenain may justly be said to take first rank amongst contemporary line-engravers. He handles the rigid graving tool with ease and subtlety, resulting sometimes in the production of effects more varied than those to be obtained in etching. A long study of the masterpieces of French engraving has done much to aid him in the development of his peculiar excellence delicacy of execution. Moreover, certain indefinable natural instinct, the result of his nationality, has led him to interpret well the grand production of the painters of the Flemish Renaissance, and he has begun series of fine engravings after the works of Rubens.

The works of the engraver, F. Maréchal, of Liège, have already been criticised in THE STUDIO in an article published two years ago, and in another article which came out in the same magazine Belgian in 1898, under the heading, “Some Artists of Liège,” the remarkable art-talent of M. A. Rassenfosse, the faithful friend and devoted disciple of the extraordinary genius Félicien Rops, was commented upon with considerable appreciation, and attention was drawn to his profound knowledge of all the processes of the engraver's craft.

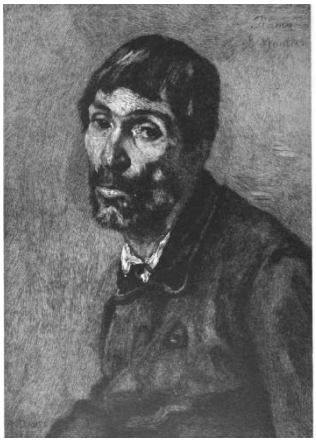
Two other artists of Liège, Messrs. Donnay and De Witte, have attracted attention by some etchings full of originality and character.

Amongst the engravers who have turned their attention to taking impressions in colour must be named, as especially successful, M. Q. De Sampayo, an artist of Portuguese extraction, who may be fitly included in this article on living Belgian engravers on account of his having studied under M. Rassenfosse and produced most of his work in Brussels. M. De Sampayo has himself carefully superintended the translation into colour of his etchings, and with the aid of M. Van Campenhout, the skilful printer to the Society of Etchers, he has coloured several delicate plates *à la poupée.*

It was also by means of this process that the plates of Messrs. Romberg, Coppens, Gaudy, and those of the author of these notes were coloured, whereas those of Messrs. Titz and Schlobach were printed and coloured by what is known as the super-position process, that is to say, by the use of succession of several plates, each marked with the most minute care and capable of bearing as many as three colours, provided those colours are very strictly deliminated. No doubt this process is decidedly easier for the printer, but, on the other hand, it is certain that greater delicacy and subtlety of colouring can be obtained by the process *à la poupée*.

Fernand Khnopff.





"A Dutch Windmill" from the etching by H. Cassiers, Plate 1 |
"A Roman Outcast," from the engraving by A. Danse, after the painting by E. Wauters, Plate 2

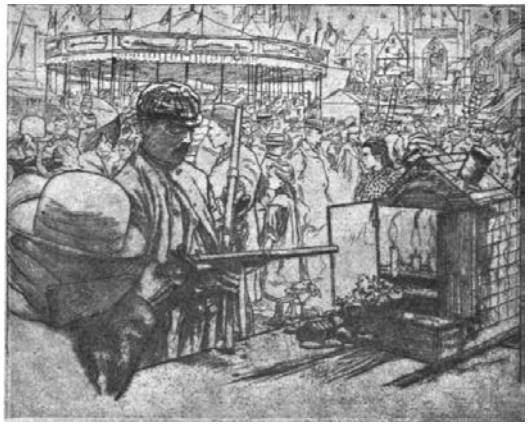




Plate 3—"Three Shots for a Penny," from the etching by F. Gailliard |
Plate 4—"Fantasia," from the dry-point by M. Romberg





Plate 5—"A Bleak Landscape" from the etching by H. Meunier | Plate 6—"A Stormy Evening, Brabant" from the etching by R. Wytsman



"The Little Port of Ter Neuzen" from the etching by A. Baertson, Plate 7





Plate 8—"A Study" from the aquatint by L. Titze |
Plate 9—"L'heure du Salut" from the etching by O. Coppens

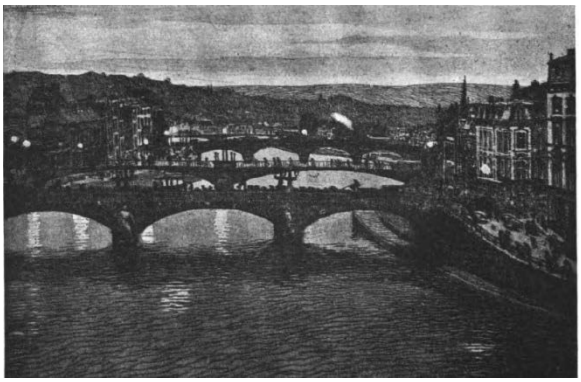


Plate 10—"A Bridge Over the Meuse" from the etching by F. Marechal

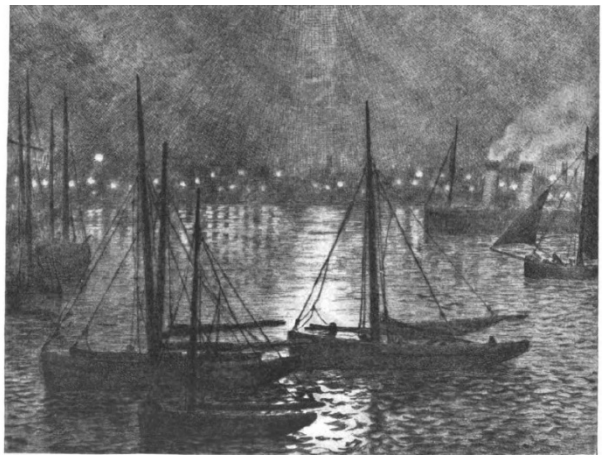




Plate 11—"Nocturne" from the engraving by T. Van Rysselberghe |
Plate 12—"Village Politicians" from the etchng by E. Laermans



Plate 13 "Un geste de respecte" from the dry-point of Fernand Khnopff

Khnopff, Fernand, “A Belgian Painter: Henri Cassiers,” *The Studio*, 18, 65 (July 1902), 2-13.

A Belgian Painter: Henri Cassiers

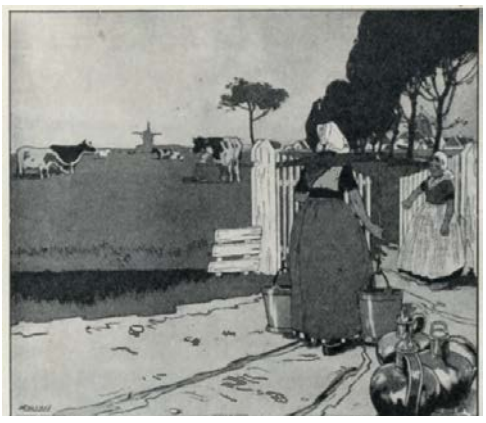
It is curious that an artist who loves painting as Henri Cassiers loves it, a brilliant colourist such as the designer of the beautiful fan reproduced in the special Winter Number of THE STUDIO, should hitherto have been content with water-colour as the habitual medium in which to express his artistic conceptions.



“In the Snow,” from the water-colour by H. Cassiers

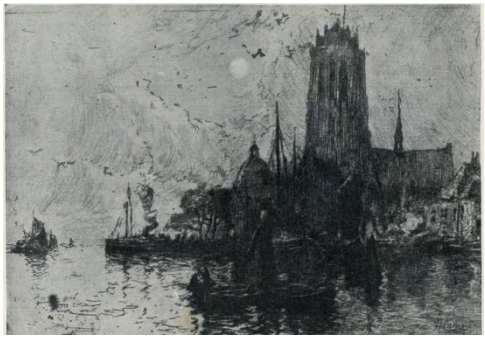
This is, however, really, after all, a mere accident of his education. Henri Cassiers was born at Antwerp in 1858, but he only remained there till he was six months old, when he was taken to Brussels, where his boyhood and early youth were spent. When he left school he was placed by his parents, who wished to secure a career for him, with a popular architect, in whose office he worked for seven years, turning out the usual regulation black-and-white or tinted architectural drawings in his working hours, but giving up every spare moment to making sketches from Nature in watercolour. This will sufficiently explain the extraordinary fidelity with which he has stuck to that medium throughout his art career.





“A Street in Veere” from a chalk drawing by H. Cassiers | “Dutch Milkmaids” by H. Cassiers
(Published by MM. Dietrich et Cie., Brussels)

Every day in the summer, directly his compulsory work as a pupil in an architect's office was done, he used to rush to the station, where he met his friend, the artist Stacquet (who is now Director of the Belgian Society of Painters in Water-Colour), and went with him to some suburban locality, where the two would deftly wash in a few skilful notes of the delicate but evanescent effects of colour observed by them. In the winter, on the other hand, young Cassiers would go every evening to draw at the Free Academy, known as that of the *Patte de Dindon*, or the "Turkey's Foot," so called after the sign of the old inn in which the classes were held, still to be seen, with its sumptuously decorated from loaded with ornamental sculptures and gilding, on the Grande Place of Brussels. The building belonged to the Communal authorities, who not only authorized the meeting in it of the Free Academy, but also supplied that institution with firing and lighting for the three winter months. The club fees of the members of the Free Academy sufficed to pay for the necessary models. Here used to meet on equal terms profession and amateur artists, all friends together, who, whilst really working seriously, enjoyed each other's company and smoked their pipes and drank their glass of national beer.




"Dordrecht" by H. Cassiers | "Windmills on the River Schie," from the water-colour by H. Cassiers

Under these conditions Henri Cassiers made rapid progress, and his comrades were astonished at the ease of his execution and the wonderful facility with which he assimilated ideas. When he at last decided to exhibit, his work at once attracted notice, every fresh show marking an advance on the last, and he quickly became celebrated for his skill of execution, his delicacy of colouring and cleverness of composition, which placed him in the first rank amongst exponents of black-and-white and water-colour art. Being now able to devote himself entirely to painting, he resolved to live as much as possible in the country, and spent several winters at Knocke, a little sea-side village of Belgium where a group of artists bad taken up their residence, attracted by the charm of the wide-spreading dunes, with their fine atmospheric effects, subdued colouring, and delicate chiaroscuro. He also travelled in Brittany, and made trips to Holland, Italy, and as far north as Scotland; but it was to Holland he returned most frequently, enamoured as he was with the constant humidity of the atmosphere, resulting in ever-varying effects of mist; the massive clouds, always shifting, always changing; the wide horizons, the quivering, vibrating undulations of colour; the picturesque houses and cottages in

town and village, with their quaintly decorated fronts, their fascinating interiors, full of old-world furniture; and the peasants in their costumes of a time gone by.

M. Cassiers' style would now seem to be definitively and finally formed. He is everywhere recognised as a clever artist whose work is full of spirituality, and he has, so to speak, got into a habit of pleasing us all. He is unrivalled for fascination, distinction, and skill in catching effect; his Brabant landscapes, his sketches of Flemish or Dutch villages, have all alike a unique, an indefinable charm; they have been characterised as "a caress and a delight to the eyes."





"Au Bord de la Meuse" from an etching by H. Cassiers | "Katwyk" from an etching by H. Cassiers

It was during a sojourn in Holland that he met the English artist, C. W. Bartlett, with whom he became intimate, and who exercised a considerable influence on his work. The example of the talented English painter acted as a stimulant upon the Belgian master, and led to the evolution, or, rather, the recognition, of new qualities in the latter, for henceforth the work of Cassiers displayed a solidity of tone, an independence of execution, a profundity of sentiment, and what may perhaps be called an obstinate conscientiousness hitherto foreign to it.

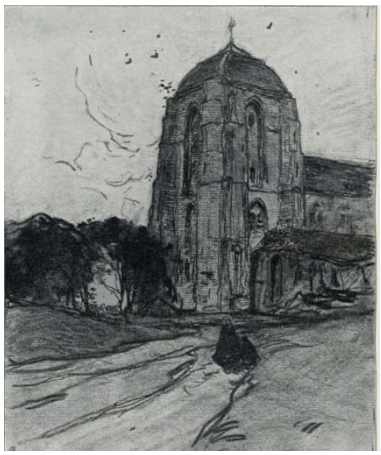


"Returning from Market." From the water colour by H. Cassiers.

The exhibition of the work of the Belgian artist in the *Salle du Cercle Artistique* at Brussels, which took place after this fortunate meeting with Mr. Bartlett, was a revelation alike to the public and the critics, and voice was given to the surprise felt by all who saw the new pictures—in an able article which appeared in the well-known Belgian journal *Le Petit Bleu*: “A well-known painter in watercolour, who has already taken high rank in the art world, and seemed to have reached the full development of his own particular style, is holding an exhibition at the Cercle Artistique. The visitor who expects to meet with a new and original sensation is, as a rule, singularly disappointed; but if he will be content with a brief but very delightful impression of really beautiful art, of a really fresh impression of Nature, he will have no cause of complaint. As usual, M. Cassiers will be found to have proved himself a skilful and appreciative painter in water-colour, whose skilful and sensitive interpretations of the fresh landscapes of Holland and Flanders are full of distinction and charm. He excels in rendering the soft and misty effects, the tender and delicate colouring of those low-lying districts, in catching the fleeting impressions of the evening and the morning, and, with his wonderfully true eye for colour, he now and then gives a transcript of some natural scene full of the tenderest sentiment, which simply vibrates with sentient charm. This artist, who had already, as the French say, 'arrived'—and had, indeed, almost received the stamp of official recognition—has in this case taken a completely new departure. This pleasing artist has shown himself all of a sudden to be a master—an excellent master—in painting. He has acquired a force, a certainty of touch and a solidity of tone which generally appears to be incompatible with the medium of water-colour. He has, moreover, at the same time become more profound, more susceptible to transient feeling—we may even say more religious—in his work.”



“A Bridge at Rotterdam” by H. Cassiers | “Winter in Holland” by H. Cassiers

"Zomerdag" by H. Cassiers (*Published by MM. Dietrich et Cie., Brussels*) | "The Church at Veere" from a drawing by H. Cassiers




"On the Quay." From the water colour by H. Cassiers. | "Dutch Milkmaids" by H. Cassiers (*Published by MM. Dietrich et Cie., Brussels*)



Poster by H. Cassiers

When pictorial post-cards became the fashion in Belgium, Mr. Dietrich, the publisher, of Brussels, was not slow to suggest to Cassiers that he should execute a series of them,

and very soon appeared, amongst others, the *Dutch Landscapes, Dutch Costumes,* the two series of *Delft Cards* in blue, which were quickly succeeded by the facsimiles of the water-colours known as the *Big Mill, Evening Effect, View of Dordrecht, The Four Windmills,* and the engravings, full of artistic feeling, of the *Dutch Milkmaids,* two large plates printed in colour. The great success of all these charming compositions is well-known, as is also that of the few posters by this versatile artist, which are admirable in the humour of their design and the force and brightness of their colouring.

Fernand Khnopff.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 25, 110 (May 1902), 290-295.

Brussels.—In an article published in THE STUDIO for May, 1900, M.O. Maus described the rare collection of antique stuffs formed by Madame Isabelle Errera, of Brussels. This collection—several specimens of which attracted great attention at the recent Exposition Internationale des Arts du Tissu at Rouen—is soon to be presented to the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Brussels. The public and, to still a greater extent, artists themselves will find interesting teaching therein, and serious subject for study. In order to make the work complete, and before parting with her collection, the generous donor decided to issue a detailed catalogue of it; and this important task has been accomplished with infinite care and trouble. No research has been spared, and innumerable comparisons are made; while, to crown all, Madame Errera has enriched the catalogue with 420 photogravures illustrating the collection. The charming cover is a most faithful presentation of a Sicilian fabric of the twelfth century—one of the rarest pieces of work in her possession. In fact, this catalogue, the full title of which is “Catalogue d’étoffes anciennes réunies et décrites par Mme. Isabelle Errera,” constitutes a real “document.”

The Cercle Artistique of Brussels, wishing to render a last tribute to the lamented sculptor, P. Devigne, untimely removed from the sphere he so greatly honoured, lately arranged an exhibition of some forty of his works and studies. This display impressed one strongly, yet subtly, for the deceased artist had a *métier* which was incomparably certain.

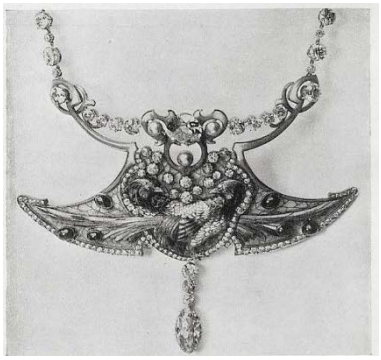
Paul Devigne produced many important works, notably the Breydel and Deconinck monument in Bruges; the group on the *façade* of the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels; and the funereal monument of the Metdepenningen family in Ghent. At the same time it is certain that he expressed himself best in his less-known, his more *intime,* work. At the exhibition in question, one saw a graceful figure, *L'Immortalité* (the marble is in the Musée de Bruxelles); the charming bust *Psyche* (of which the replica in ivory was reproduced some years since in THE STUDIO); several studies—young Romans of proud and graceful demeanour, old Flemish men with hard, coarse faces—and finally (the most remarkable thing in a most interesting exhibition), the bust of the Brussels painter, Eugene Smits, which is simply a masterpiece.

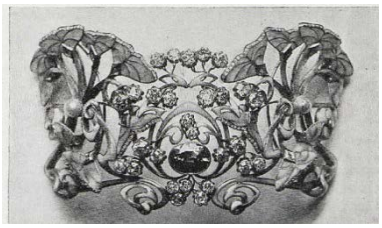
The annual exhibition of the Belgian Society of Water-Colours was held in the galleries of the Musée de Bruxelles, and attracted a large number of visitors. As a whole, it was a remarkable display, and it included several works of a high order. French art was represented by two ardent colourists, MM. G. La Touche and Luigini; German art by two enterprising personalities, MM. Dettmann and Skarbina; and English art by Mr. C. W. Bartlett, faithful to all that is Dutch. M. Nico Jungmann exhibited his *Procession de Pélerins de Kevelar,* which was reproduced some time since in THE STUDIO. Notable

among the works of foreign exhibitors were the interesting landscapes by M. F. de Myrbach and M. P. Rink's fishermen.

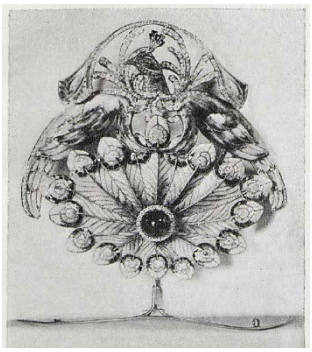
But the chief merit of the exhibition lay in the Belgian display, particularly in the works sent in by MM. Stacquet, Fernand Khnopff, A. Marcette, Th. Hannon, and Titz, which have been purchased by the Government for the Musée de Bruxelles.

MM. Cassiers, Hagemans, Uytterschaut, and Van Leemputten sent interesting landscapes of Holland and Belgium; M. Delaunois contributed some of his churches, impressive by their deep gloom; M. F. Charlet, his coloured interiors; M. Jacob Smits, portraits and religious scenes; M. C. Meunier, a picture of a miner; and finally, MM. D. Oyens and Eugène Smits sent several delicate and *intime* things.





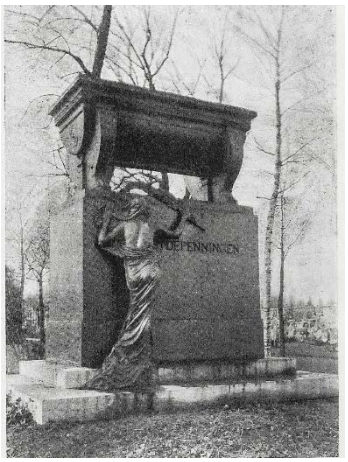
Bijou de Corsage by Philippe Wolfers | Neck Ornament by Philippe Wolfers





Diadem for the Hair by Philippe Wolfers | Pendant by Philippe Wolfers

The "Cercle pour l'Art" celebrated its tenth anniversary by a very interesting exhibition, the members keeping their newest and best work for the occasion. Dominating all else was the exhibit by V. Rousseau, the sculptor, who sent a monumental group of three figures, *Les Sœurs de l'Illusion* (intended for the adornment of a fountain), an equestrian statuette and the bust of a young woman. The group is quite masterly, skillfully and clearly composed, calm and grand in its sentiment, but as far removed from the academic as it is from the coarseness of conception and treatment which marks so much of our modern Belgian sculpture.



Monument at Ghent by P. De Vigne

M. Laermans showed his firm qualities as a colourist in two canvases which attracted much attention. The exhibits of MM. Fabry (decorative panels), Baes, Coppens (landscapes and Flemish “interiors”), and Ottevaere (a triptych) showed the good results due to honest work. The usual excellence was seen in the paintings sent in by Verhaeren, Janssens, Vandeneeckhoudt, and Vierin; and prominent among the sculptors were Braecke, De Rudder, and Boncquet. M. Ph. Wolfers displayed a large number of things all remarkable for their delicate colouring; while M. A. Lynen—a draughtsman essentially of the true Brussels type, and deserving of more detailed notice in these pages some day—sent a drawing full of charm and retrospective sentiment, *Yperdamme,* and a set of illustrations for a story by himself, entitled “Le Jacquemart de la Tour du Pré-Rouge.”

F. K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 27, 115 (October 1902), 65-67.

BRUSSELS.—In the galleries of the Musée de Bruxelles exhibitions “se suivent et ne se ressemblent pas.” While the director of the Libre-Esthétique strives, on the one hand, to “give a show” to the new tendencies and the new artists, the management of the Société des Beaux-Arts, on the other hand, seems devoted to retrospective methods and to those artists who have “arrived.”

A collection of twenty-six paintings at the Libre-Esthétique revealed the fact that Willy Schlobach, one of the founders of the “Cercle des XX,” who for ten years past has been quietly working unobserved, has extraordinary gifts as a colourist. M. F. J. Delvin exhibited a powerfully-drawn pastel, representing a bull-fight scene. Mr. G. Stevens showed distinct advance in a curiously original work, styled *Tristan and Isolde.*

M. Heymans expresses a deep feeling of Nature in his *Nuit d'Orage.* The Flemish landscapes by M. Buysse and Mdlle. Boch's *Côtes de Bretagne* impressed one by their sincerity; the paintings of MM. Laermans and Coppieters by their solid colouring, and the drawings of M. Fernand Khnopff by their refined composition.

The bust of *M. L.*., exhibited by M. Lagae, may fairly be styled a masterpiece. The large collection sent by M. P. Dubois included busts of various sorts, and jewellery, examples of which were reproduced in the last Winter Number of THE STUDIO. MM. C. Meunier and Ch. Vanderstappen exhibited some important pieces of monumental sculpture.

The paintings by M. Anglada impressed one by their exquisite colouring; those of M. Nils Kreuger by their essentially Northern sentiment of melancholy; those of M.R. Pichot, on the other hand, by their thoroughly Southern exuberance; the portraits of M. Roussel by their carefully-studied composition; M.P. Dupont’s engravings by their style; those of Mdlle. K. Kollwitz by their keen sentiment; and the little sculptures of M. Voulot by their graceful attitudes.

Finally, let me mention MM. Rodin, Thaulow, Lerolle, Le Sidaner, Moreau-Nelaton, B. Priestman, A. Charpentier, Toorop, A. Robinson, Conder, Boutet de Monvel, and Feuillatre, all of whom were well represented.

The *clou* of the exhibition of the Société des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles was a collection of the works of the great Brussels landscapist, H. Boulenger, who died in 1874—works admirable in the delicacy of their colouring and in suppleness of line.

M. A. Struys sent a curious view of the *Béguinage de Malines;* M. X. Mellery, a considerable collection, including portraits and dark interiors; M. Mertens, a large study, entitled *Une Famille Zélandaise;* MM. Rossuls, Verheyden, Gilsoul, and Hermanns, landscapes of various kinds; MM. Samuel [,] Dillens, De Lalaing, and Vinçotte, official or “society” busts and decorative fragments.





Plaquette" by G. Devreese | "The Potter—Bas Relief" by G. Devreese

The Brussels sculptor, M. G. Devreese, has executed, to the order of the communal administration of Tournai, a token which will be presented to the members of the communal council as a souvenir of their magistracy. In the medal for the provincial council of Brabant the artist represented a Brussels lace-maker—*La Dentellière Bruxelloise*—which has been reproduced in these columns. M. Devreese's new work depicts a Tournaisian ceramist of the fifteenth century working in an atelier, whence one may see the famous "chong clotiers"—or five bells-of the Walloon city.



Monument of "The Battle of the Golden Spurs" by G. Devreese

M. Devreese has also done a medal, inscribed: "A M. Buls, la ville de Bruxelles reconnaissante"; and a little *plaquette* for "Les amis de la Médaille d'Art." The remarkable scheme designed by him for the *Monument of the Battle of the Golden Spurs* has been definitely accepted after long discussion, and the artist will start on the work soon.

F.K.

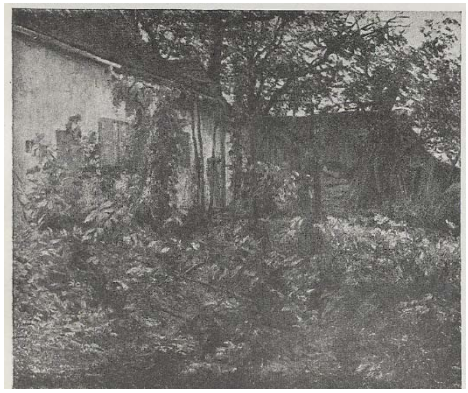
Khnopff, Fernand, “Studio-Talk. Ghent,” *The Studio*, 27, 116 (November 1902), 138-141.

GHENT.—The committees of the Ghent Salons have always been distinguished among their fellows of the “official” salons of Belgium for their “modern” and international tendencies, and for the efforts they have made to give a worthy display of works selected by a severely critical jury.

This year's Salon has been installed in the recently completed buildings of the New Museum, the rational arrangement and simple construction of which are worthy of all praise. The works by British painters are many and notable—the Glasgow School is represented by most of its best artists—and lend a very special air of grace to the display.

The most prominent French and foreign painters of the day at the Champ de Mars have sent either their latest successes or old and favourite works, as, for instance, Fantin-Latour's youthful portrait ot himself.

The clear landscapes by MM. Claus and Heymans are the most admired among the paintings by Belgian artists, and one may hope the effect of these works will prove powerful in opposition to the brownish colourings of those landscapists who bow before “official” tradition, if one may so express it.




“An Old Farm in Brabant” by Madame J. Wytsman | Portrait by Charles Samuel

Other Belgians who have contributed good work are the painters J. Delvin and G. Buysse of Ghent, A. Struys and C. Mertens of Antwerp, C. Hermans, A. Verhaeren, A. Marcette, W. Schlobach, Fernand Khnopff, R. Janssens, G. M. Stevens, Bastien, Blieck, and R. and Madame J. Wytsman of Brussels; and the sculptors C. Meunier, C. Van der Stappen, V. Rousseau, C. Samuel and J. Lagae.

F.K.

1903

Khnopff, Fernand, (Lettre adressée à Camille David et Fernand Larcier), in *L'Idée Libre*, V, (Bruxelles, janvier-juillet 1903), 68-69.

de L'Art et la Pornographie

Fernand KHNOPFF, artiste-peintre :

1° Il n'est pas possible, on l'état actuel de ces mots, de « délimiter l'art vis-à-vis de la pornographie ».

2° Il y a là des questions très délicates de conscience, d'une part, et d'appréciation, de l'autre.

3° La loi Woeste[1] peut avoir des défauts ; mais, en ce temps de pornographie éhontée, elle a le mérite d'avoir enfin attire vivement l'attention de tous sur ce pénible sujet.

FERNAND KHNOPFF

[1] Charles Woeste (1837-1922) was a conservative Catholic politician, named Minister of State in Belgium in 1891.

Khnopff, Fernand, (Lettre adressée à Camille David et Fernand Larcier), in *L'Idée Libre*, V, (Bruxelles, janvier-juillet 1903), 68-69.

Translation:

On Art and Pornography

Fernand KHNOPFF, painter:

1 ° it is not possible, on the current state of these words, to “delineate the relationship of art in relation to pornography.”

2 ° there are very delicate issues of conscience, on the one hand, and appreciation on the other.

3 ° the Woeste[2] Act may have flaws; but, in this time of shameless pornography, it has the merit of finally having drawn the strong attention of all to this painful subject.

FERNAND KHNOPFF

[2] Charles Woeste (1837-1922) was a conservative Catholic politician, named Minister of State in Belgium in 1891.

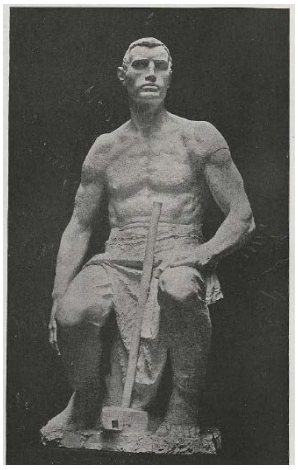
F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 28, 119 (February 1903), 58-60.

BRUSSELS.—The Artists' Club of Brussels began its series of winter exhibitions by a really magnificent display of the principal works of C. Meunier, collected in the great room, where they produced an impression of a life of toil and struggle crowned by triumphant and solid success.

The greater number of the works exhibited at the Club were well known, but by bringing them together their great qualities were enhanced and their real importance confirmed. It was seen, too, that after many years of hard work this great artist has shown in his latest productions no loss of power or enthusiasm.

His last work, the large seated figure of *The Blacksmith,* which is to occupy one of the angles of the *Monument to Labour,* is, perhaps, his most finished effort. It is fine, simple, dignified, and at the same time noble and full of life.

The *Monument to Labour* consists of four bas-reliefs, which are already famous: the toilers of the *Soil*, the *Mine*, the *Seaport*, and the *Foundry*; in addition to four figures at the corners, including *The Blacksmith* and *Motherhood*, and at the top the colossal statue of the *Sower*.




“The Blacksmith” by C. Meunier | “Motherhood,” by C. Meunier

This important work is, in fact, the complete expression of the artistic dream of a modern mind, a man of the time; and the exhibition at the Artists' Club of the model of the monument as a whole roused the public to extraordinary enthusiasm. The Government hesitated to commission the artist to execute it, and when it became known that a great Danish patron of the arts, Mr. Jacobsen, intended presenting it to the City of Copenhagen, some members of the Artists' Club opened a subscription list, and names were rapidly added. It may, indeed, be said that never before in Belgium has such unanimous admiration been shown for any work of art.

At the Exhibition of the Brussels Club, calling itself “Le Labeur,” which was held in the rooms of the Modern Museum, M. Cambier's contributions were worthy of note; so also were those of M. Othmann, whose colour schemes are bright and refreshing.

Finally, we have had the exhibition of the “Sillon” Club. Here M. Wagemans was this year conspicuous. He uses a very heavy impasto, with, perhaps, too evident cleverness. M. Smeers and M. Swyncop also try to paint powerfully, while the landscapes by M. Deglume please by their sincerity.

The *Man or Sorrows,* a sketch for a tomb by, M. Kemmerich, is broadly conceived and vigorously executed.

F. K.

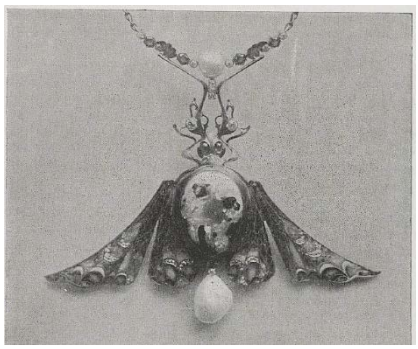
F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 29, 123 (June 1903), 70-71.

BRUSSELS.—The eleventh annual exhibition of the Brussels club *Pour l'Art* was noteworthy for a distinctly loftier vein of feeling and more careful execution than of yore, as seen especially in the examples sent by the painted A. Ciamberlani and the sculptor V. Rousseau.

M. Ciamberlani exhibited a series of good studies as well as the large painting called *Life Serene*, a very poetical and essentially decorative work, broadly and at the same time carefully painted. Among the various pieces sent by M. Rousseau what appears to have most captivated the public is a dainty statuette, *The Woman with a Hat*, wonderfully free and delicate in the modeling.

Of the monumental figures exhibited by M. Braecke and M. Derudder, that by M. Braecke was remarkable for its architectural simplicity of line, that by M. Derudder for dramatic emphasis. Among the painters, M. A. Verhaeren’s studies of still life, very sumptuous in colour, attracted much attention; M. R. Janssens exhibited a fine *Interior of a Church;* M. O. Coppens some faithful studies of Flemish landscape; MM. Baes and Van den Eeckhoudt various pastel and charcoal studies; M. A Lynen some extraordinary drawings, full of bold and happy fancy; M. Fabry, decoration.

The screen representing *Penelope,* embroidered by Madame Derudder, and the jewellery, of every variety, executed by M. Ph. Wolfers, once more showed with what skill these artists handle precious and decorative materials.

Pendant by P. Wolfers | Pendant by P. Wolfers

Some interesting exhibitions have recently been held in the rooms of the Cercle Artistique at Brussels: a collection of landscapes by M. A. J. Heymans, the finest of the Belgian landscape painters now living; and one of the works and studies of G. M. Stevens, including genre, portraits, landscapes and flowers, drawings and engravings. A series of landscapes, too, by M. Rul and M. Sohie; and *Scenes of Genre* by M. Jacobi.

M. J. Delvin, a painter of Ghent, whose work has often been praised in THE STUDIO, has been appointed Director of the Academy of Fine Arts at Ghent. It has been said with truth that “no better choice could have been made. To his merits as an artist M. Delvin

adds qualifications as a professor, which give great hopes as to the prospects of the school under his guidance."

F.K.

1904

Fernand Khnopff, “Mein Haus,” *Die Zeit*, 37-38, 483 (2 Jan. 1904), 9.

Mein Haus
Von Fernand Khnopff (Brüssel)

Als ich neulich die freundliche Aufforderung erhielt, der Wochenschrift „Die Zeit“ eine Schilderung meines Hauses zu geben, da zögerte ich, wie ich gestehen will, ein wenig, darauf einzugehen, denn es ist immer eine missliche Sache von sich selbst zu sprechen, und nun gar zu schreiben. Aber ich rief mir ein Wort Walter Cranes in Erinnerung: „Die Idee, dass ein bildender Künstler es unternimmt, eine Erläuterung zu seinem eigen Werk zu schreiben, wird seltsam erscheinen; indessen kann man es zugeben, wenn diese Arbeit sich auf das beschränkt, was man die Naturgeschichte dieses Werkes nennen kann, also auf die Quellen, die Einflüsse, das Ziel und das Ideal.“

Schliesslich muss ich auch noch hinzufügen, dass ich unklug genug gewesen war, dem Herrn, der mich aufforderte, oft von den reizenden Erinnerungen zu erzählen, die mir von meinem Besuchen in Wien verblieben sind, und er hat in ganz hinterlistiger Weise diese meine Vorliebe benützt, um mich zu bestimmen.

Ich werde mich damit begnügen, zwei Notizen des Brüsseler „Petit Bleu“ und des „Echo de Paris“ anzuführen und sie zu ergänzen, zu erläutern und zu berichtigen.[3]

Vor einigen Monaten brachte der „Petit Bleu“ ein Feuilleton: „Die Sezessionskirche.“ Dort hiess es: „Am Rande des Bois, an der Ecke der Avenue Jeanne und der Avenue des Courses erhebt sich ganz weiss, umgeben von grünem Laubwerk das Haus von Fernand Khnopff. Es ist rätselhaft und kalt, mit den sein Monogramm tragenden, goldig vergitterten runden Luken, seinen schwarzen Türen, seinen stummen Fenstern und seiner in goldenen Buchstaben schimmernden Zuschrift: „Vergangenheit—Zukunft:, das sonderbare Motto eines Idealisten, der Ohne Zweifel am liebsten die Gegenwart nicht kennen möchte. Die finsteren Mauern gebieten in starrer Vollendung Stille und Sammlung, und nur die schönen Rosen des Gartens bringen ein wenig Phantasie in dieses bewüsste hinzielen auf eine hieratische Schönheit. An einem Tempel fühlt man sich erinnert, an das Grab und sogar und das Gefängnis, an das Gefängnis eines Traumes

[3] Anonymous [Louis Dumont-Wilden], « L’Église de l’Esthétique », *Le Petit Bleu du matin* (vendredi 14 aout 1903), Sparklet [Flament, Albert], « Le Trottoir roulant. Mardi 1er décembre » , L’Écho de Paris (6 décembre 1903), 1. These articles were identified by Clément Dessy, “La maison d’artiste en portrait, manifeste et sanctuaire. L’exemple de Fernand Khnopff," in *The Aesthetics of Matter: Modernism, the Avante-Garde and Material Exchange*, ed. By Sarah Posman, Anne Reverseau, David Ayers, Sascha Bru, Benedikt Hjartarson (Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2013. 235-248.

nämlich. Die spitzfindige Schönheit von Khnopffs Gemälden hat nicht aufgehört, in den Ausstellungen das Publikum in Erstaunen zu setzen, und man begreift deshalb, dass die Vorübergehenden sich in ähnlicher Weise über die Schönheit dieses Wohngebäudes verwundern, das wirklich wie ein „Khnopff in Stein“ aussieht. Was is das? Fragen die Passanten. Eine Kirche? Der Tempel irgendeiner seltenen und feinen Religion? Das Museum eines Dilettanten? Ein Strassenjunge fand neulich die richtige Definition. Als eine Gruppen von Spaziergängern, sich verwundernd, stehen blieb, rief er aus: ‚Ich weiss, was das ist, das ist die Sezessionskirche!‘“

So sieht es von aussen aus. Und nun das Innere, in das man schwer hereinkommt, wie ich versichern kann. Auf eine amüsante Weise wurde es in dem „rollenden Trottoir“ des „Echo de Paris“ beschrieben. Aber diese Schilderung war eine indirekte. „Die Mehrzahl der Freunde Erneste Chaussons war nach Brüssel gereist, um der ersten Aufführung des „König Arthur“ beizuwohnen. Unter ihnen befanden sich Besnard und seine Frau, der Maler Lerolle, Maurice Denis, Odilon Redon und andere Maler. Noch immer gilt das Wort Théophile Gautiers: ‚Nur sie lieben die Musik.‘ Ein Maler sich lasse hier eine gar zu schmeichelhafte Bezeichnungen weg. Der Verfasser – Fernand Khnopff hat die Kostüme zu „König Arthur“ gezeichnet. O, das Interieur von Khnopff, seine Vorhalle mit den weissen Fliesen und weissen Mauern, sein weisser Speisesaal mit dem Tisch für zwei Personen und dem Ruhesessel mit einem Sitz! Khnopffs Atelier, noch staunenerweckender also alles übrige in seiner Mondenblässe, das Atelier, dessen Diele durch einem grossen goldenen Kreis veredelt wird, in den der Künstler das Bild hineinstellt, dem er Ehre erweissen will!“

Die Beschreibung des Äusseren war von jemand gemacht, der oft bei mir vorüberkommt, die des Innern stammt aus den unvollständigen Eindrücken eines kurzen Besuches.

Ich will hier nichts von den Einzelheiten des Baues und der Ausschmückung erzählen, ich weiss, dass eine deutsche Kunstzeitschrift die Absicht hat eine reiche illustrierte Beschreibung zu bringen, und wen es interessiert, den verweisse ich darauf.[4] Ich will hier nur sozusagen von dem moralischen Gefügen meiner Wohnung sprechen.

Nun also, von vornherein, diese Wohnung is so wenig einladen wie möglich, und schon vom Vorzimmer aus und in hochmütiger Haltung ein indischer Pfau steht, kann man in dem funkelnden Stuck die aus Kupfernageln bestehende Zuschrift „Soi“ lesen. Sie befindet sich ganz allein auf einer Wand, und man wird sie noch mehreremale an anderen Stellen sehen.

Die Halle aus weissem Marmor und weissem Stuck ist durch mattblauseidene Portieren dreigeteilt. In einer Nische des ersten Teils befindet sich der wundervolle, vornübergeneigte Kopf der antiken Psyche. In dem zweiten sieht man einige weiss und hellgolden gerahmte Zeichnungen, in einer etwas tieferen Nische ein blaues Kelchglas

[4] Wolfram Waldschmidt, "Das Heim eines Symbolisten," *Dekorative Kunst* (Jan. 1906), 158-166. Translated as: Wolfram Waldschmidt, "The House of a Symbolist," *House and Garden*, 10, 2 (August 1906), 87-90.

aus venetianischem Kristall auf einem blauen Säulchen vor einem blaugoldenen japanischen Gewebe. Endlich in dem dritten Abteil befindet sich ganz allein in einem schwarzen Rahmen, den die goldene österreichische Kaiserkrone ziert, eine Wiederholung meine Bildes der Kaiserin Elizabeth, die Originalzeichnung ist in der Wiener Hofburg.

Der Speisesaal ist aus weissem Marmor. Im Hintergrund, vor einem blau-und goldgegossenen Glasfenster habe ich eine weisse Statuette der Hoffnung mit goldenem Strahlenglanz aufgestellt.

Eine Treppe aus weissem Marmor führt ins Atelier hinauf längs eines ebenfalls aus weissem Marmor gefertigten Bassins, das in einem auch weissem Marmor zusammengesetzten Mosaik steht. Dieses schmücken drei grosse goldene Kreise.

Gegenüber dem Eingang erblickt man eine Art Altar und auf ihm eine von mir entworfene Umgestaltung des antiken „Kopfes mit einem Flügel“ – Hypnos – aus dem Britischen Museum. Die Augen sind aus Schmelzglas, und eine innen befindliche Nachtlampe lässt sie in der Dunkelheit leuchten. An den drei Stockwerken dieses Altars sind die Buchstaben angebracht, aus denen sich die Inschrift: „ON NE A QUE SOI“ zusammensetzt. Nur dieses letzte Wort ist vergoldet auf einem Plättchen aus blauem Lasierglas.

Ich unterlasse es, den Anblick der verschiedenen Atelierecken zu schildern oder all die Gegenstände und die Namen meiner Werke aufzuführen, die dort ihren endgültigen Platz gefunden haben. Nur eine sehr schöne Base aus altem Glas will ich erwähnen, die ich einmal bei Bakalowitz gekauft habe, und meine Studien zu dem Bild: „Liebkosungen“, das ich eines Abends zu meiner grossen Freuden in einem prachtvollsten Paläste der Alleegasse wiederfand.

In den ersten Stock steigt man auf einer bogenförmigen Treppen aus weissem Stuck, und durch eine vergoldete Metalltür tritt man in ein Ruhezimmer, auch dieses Blau und Gold. Durch eine breite Glassöffnung, die durchsichtige gestickte Vorhänge verschleiern, kann man von hier aus ins Atelier blicken.

Lang herunterhängende Vorhänge verhüllen übrigens alle Fenster in diesem „Gefängnis eine Traumes“, wie man so treffend diese Wohnung des Schweigens und der Einsamkeit genannt hat. So oft wie möglich hoffe ich, mich hier mit dem Eindruck zu erfüllen, anderswo zu sein, diesem so süssen, aber auch so entsetzlichen schwindelweckenden Gefühl des „anywhere out of the world.“ [5]

[5] Charles Baudelaire, “Anywhere Out of the World,” *Petits Poèmes en prose*, 1869. [titled in English]

Translation:

Fernand Khnopff, “Mein Haus,” *Die Zeit*, 37-38, 483 (2 Jan. 1904), 9.

My House
By Fernand Khnopff (Brussels)

When I recently received a friendly invitation from the weekly journal "Die Zeit" to give a description of my house, I will confess that I hesitated a little to accept, because it is always an awkward thing to talk of one’s self, and even more to write about one’s self. But I recalled in my memory a saying of Walter Crane: "The idea that a visual artist takes it upon himself to write an explanation of his own work will seem strange; however, one can accept it if this work is confined to what may be called the natural history of these artworks, that is the sources, the influences, the goal and the ideal."

Finally, I must also add that I had often been unwise enough to tell the gentleman who invited me of the lovely memories that have stayed with me from my visit in Vienna, and he has completely used my affection in this sneaky way to convince me.

I will content myself to begin with two notes from the Brussels "Petit Bleu" and the "Echo de Paris" and to expand on these, to explain and clarify.[6]

A few months ago the "Petit Bleu" published a feature: "The Secession Church." There it was said: "On the edge of the Bois, at the corner of the Avenue Jeanne and the Avenue des Courses rises the house of Fernand Khnopff, entirely white, surrounded by green foliage. It is puzzling and cold, bearing his golden monogram in the bars of the round window, with its black doors, its silent windows and the message: "Past—Future” shimmering in golden letters, the strange motto of an idealist who undoubtedly prefers not to know the present. The dark walls command silence and composure in their rigid perfection, and only the beautiful roses of the garden bring a little fantasy to this conscious striving for a hieratic beauty. One is reminded of a temple, a grave, and even a prison, the prison of a dream. The subtle beauty of Khnopff’s paintings has not stopped the amazement of the audience at the exhibitions, and one understands why passersby similarly wonder about the beauty of this residential building that really looks like a “Khnopff in stone.” What is that? Asks the passersby. A church? The temple of some exotic and fine religion? The museum of a dilettante? A street urchin recently

[6] Anonymous [Louis Dumont-Wilden], « L’Église de l’Esthétique », *Le Petit Bleu du matin* (vendredi 14 aout 1903), Sparklet [Flament, Albert], « Le Trottoir roulant. Mardi 1er décembre » , L’Écho de Paris (6 décembre 1903), 1. These articles were identified by Clément Dessy, “La maison d’artiste en portrait, manifeste et sanctuaire. L’exemple de Fernand Khnopff,” in *The Aesthetics of Matter: Modernism, the Avante-Garde and Material Exchange*, ed. By Sarah Posman, Anne Reverseau, David Ayers, Sascha Bru, Benedikt Hjartarson (Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2013. 235-248.

found the right definition. As a group of walkers, stood marveling, he cried out, ‘I know what this is, this is the Secession Church!’”

So it looks from the outside. And now for the interior, which I make sure that one enters with difficulty. It was described in an amusing manner in the "Le Trottoir roulant" column of the "Echo de Paris." But this description was indirect. "The majority of the friends of Ernest Chausson had traveled to Brussels to attend the first performance of "King Arthur." Among them were Besnard and his wife, the painter Lerolle, Maurice Denis, Odilon Redon and other painters also. Still the phrase of Théophile Gautier applies: ‘Only they love the music.' A painter would come away with a too flattering description. The creator—Fernand Khnopff has drawn the costumes for "King Arthur." O, the interiors of Khnopff, the entrance hall with its white tiles and white walls, the white dining room with the table for two and the easy chair with an ottoman! Khnopff's studio, still inspiring amazement with everything else in its lunar pallor, the studio whose floor is enhanced by a large golden circle in which the artist displays the picture that he wants to honor!"

The description of the exterior was made by someone who often comes to visit me, and that of the interior comes from the incomplete impressions of a short visit.

I will not recount the details of construction and the decoration here, as I know that a German art magazine intends to bring out a richly illustrated description, and I would refer those interested to it.[7] I wish to speak here only of the moral structures of my dwelling.

So now, from the outset this residence is as little inviting as possible, and already in the antechamber an Indian peacock stands with arrogant attitude, and one can read in the sparkling stucco a message "Soi" [self] composed of copper nails. It is all alone on a wall, and you will see it several times in other places.

The hall is made of white marble and white stucco and is divided into three parts by matte blue silk curtains. In a niche of the first part is the wonderful, prone head of the ancient Psyche. In the second, one sees several white and pale golden framed drawings and in a slightly deeper niche, a blue goblet of Venetian crystal on a blue pillar in front of a blue and gold Japanese weaving. Finally in the third compartment, quite alone in a black frame, adorned with the golden Austrian Imperial Crown, is a copy of my portrait of the Empress Elizabeth, the original drawing being in the Hofburg in Vienna.

The dining room is made of white marble. In the background, in front of blue and gold stained glass windows, I have set up a white statuette of Hope with a golden radiance.

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[7] Wolfram Waldschmidt, “Das Heim eines Symbolisten,” *Dekorative Kunst* (Jan. 1906), 158-166. Appeared in translation as: Wolfram Waldschmidt, “The House of a Symbolist,” *House and Garden*, 10, 2 (August 1906), 87-90.

A staircase of white marble leads up to the studio, along a basin also made of white marble, which contains a white marble inlaid mosaic. This is decorated with three large golden circles.

Opposite the entrance one sees a kind of altar, and on it is my transformed design of the ancient "head with a wing"—Hypnos—from the British Museum. The eyes are made of fired glass, and with an internal night light they can glow in the dark. On the three levels of this altar, letters are attached which compose the inscription: "ON NE A QUE SOI" [One has only one's self]. This last word alone is on a small plate of blue etched glass.

I will refrain from describing the sight of various corners of the studio or to name all of the objects and the titles of my works which have found their final place there. I only want to mention a very nice base from old glass that I once bought from Bakalowitz, and my studies for the picture: "The Caresses," which to my great joy I rediscovered in a most magnificent palace of the Alleegasse [a street in Vienna].

To get to the first floor [second floor in the US] you climb a curved staircase made of white stucco, and one enters through a gilded metal door into a sitting room, which is also blue and gold. Through a wide glass opening, concealed by the transparent embroidered curtains, one can look down into the studio.

Long hanging curtains conceal all the windows in this "prison of a dream," as this dwelling of silence and solitude has been so aptly called. As often as possible I hope to experience here the impression of being somewhere else, this very sweet, but also so terrible, vertigo awakening feeling of being "anywhere out of the world."[8]

[8] Charles Baudelaire, "Anywhere Out of the World," *Petits Poèmes en prose*, 1869. [titled in English]

Khnopff, Fernand, « Enquête sur l'impressionnisme » (Letter adressed to Octave Maus), *L'Art Moderne*, 24, 13 (27 mars 1904), 100.

Enquête sur l'Impressionnisme

M. Fernand Khnopff

Cher Ami,

C'y les réponses à ton questionnaire:

1. L'impressionnisme est une de ces inévitables modifications de tendance qui se produisent périodiquement dans la représentation artistique de l'insaisissable Nature « aux multiples aspects ». L'impressionnisme s'est oppose aux excès de l'Académisme ; toujours, la balance entre l'observation directe et la stylisation traditionnelle.

2. Son « influence » a été « bonne » comme celle de tout effort sincère vers la Vérité.

3. La renommée de l'École belge doit à l'impressionnisme les œuvres les plus exquises de Heymans, le développement d'artistes tels que R. et J. Wytsman et sa révélation, peut-on dire, à Émile Claus. J'ajoute que le organisation de ce Salon a été parfaite ; et il est incroyable, vraiment, qu'elle ait été aussi mal comprise.

Il était impossible, en somme, de procéder par un classement qui ne pouvait être qu'approximatif et arbitraire. Il n'y avait, absolument, qu'à montrer le groupe d'origine tel qu'il existe actuellement à Paris.

Mais tu connais la formule: Bien faire et laisser dire.

Fernand Khnopff

Khnopff, Fernand, « Enquête sur l'impressionnisme » (Letter adressed to Octave Maus), *L'Art Moderne*, 24, 13 (27 mars 1904), 100.

Translation:

Inquiry on Impressionnism

Mr. Fernand Khnopff

Dear Friend,

Here are responses to your questionnaire:

1. Impressionism is one of these inevitable stylistic changes that occur periodically in the artistic representation of the elusive Nature "in multiple aspects." Impressionism is opposed to the excesses of Academism; always, the balance between direct observation and traditional stylization.

2. Its "influence" has been as "good" as that of any sincere effort toward the truth.

3. The reputation of the Belgian school owes to Impressionism the most exquisite works of Heymans, the development of artists such as R. and J. Wytsman and the revelation, one may say, of Émile Claus. I would add that the organisation of this exhibition was perfect; and it is truly amazing that it was so poorly understood.

It was impossible, in sum, to proceed by a classification which could only be approximate and arbitrary. It was absolutely not intended to show the original group as they currently exist in Paris.

But you know the formula: do well and let others speak.

Fernand Khnopff

Fernand Khnopff, (Lettre à Frederic de Smet, directeur de *La Tribune Artistique*), in *La Tribune Artistique* (Gand), 1, 8 (20 juillet 1904), 106.

(Reponse to a questionnaire published in *La Tribune Artistique*, 20 juin 1904, 77-84, concerning an effort to reform the juries for the triennial Salons)

Lettre

Voici maintenant une idée émise par M. Fernand Knoppf [sic], et qui mérite de fixer l'attention:

« J'ai lu votre travail avec d'autant plus d'intérêt que déjà pendant l'installation du dernier salon de Bruxelles, j'avais songé à des remaniements possibles de l'organisation des expositions « nationales ». Il est très difficile autant pour les « collectionneurs » belges que pour les étrangers de juger l'école belge dans son ensemble, les salons triennaux n'ayant plus l'importance d'autrefois et le manque de locaux faisant que dans la capitale les salons de cercles ne peuvent avoir lieu simultanément. On pourrait, me semble t-il, conserver les salons triennaux pour Gand Anvers et Liège, en accentuant leur caractère local, et avoir à Bruxelles un grand salon annuel ouvert en même temps que de les salons Paris et de Londres, ce qui permettrait la visite des étrangers « magnifiques » qu'attirent ces « foires aux huiles ».

« Pour la disposition des salles, le meilleur système me paraît être celui des grandes expositions internationales « quaternales » de Munich où sont réunis des groupes « indépendants » et pour ainsi dire « responsables ». C'est avec un très grand plaisir que j'ai retrouvé ces vagues projets actuellement précisés et soigneusement appropriés par vous, Monsieur, dans de multiples détails. Je termine en vous adressant mes vives félicitations en vous souhaitant prompte réalisation de vos intéressantes propositions. »

Fernand Khnopff, (Lettre à Frederic de Smet, directeur de *La Tribune Artistique*), in *La Tribune Artistique* (Gand), 1, 8 (20 juillet 1904), 106.

(Reponse to a questionnaire published in *La Tribune Artistique*, 20 juin 1904, 77-84, concerning an effort to reform the juries for the triennial Salons)

Translation:

Letter

Here now a suggestion by Mr. Fernand Knoppf [sic] which deserves attention:

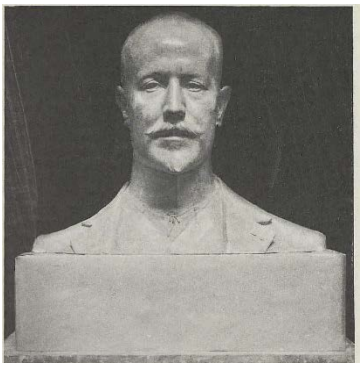
“I read your work with more interest than ever during the installation of the last exhibition in Brussels, when I thought of possible restructuring of the organization of the ‘national’ exhibitions. It is very difficult, both for Belgian ‘collectors’ and for foreigners, to judge the Belgian school in its whole, as the triennial exhibitions no longer have the importance they had in earlier times and the lack of premises makes it impossible for salons of the art clubs to take place simultaneously in the capital. One could, it seems to me, keep the triennial exhibitions at Ghent, Antwerp and Liège, highlighting their local character, and having a great annual show open in Brussels at the same time as the salons of Paris and London, which would allow the visit of ‘magnificent’ foreigners who are attracted to these 'fairs for oils’.”

“For the layout of the rooms, the best system seems be that of the great international ‘quaternales’ exhibitions in Munich which bring together groups of 'independents' and so to speak ‘responsibles.’ It is with great pleasure that I found these vague current projects to be clarified and made suitable by you, sir, in multiple details. I finish by sending my warmest congratulations wishing you the speedy realization of your interesting proposals.”

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 31, 134 (May 1904), 357-358.

BRUSSELS.—To sum up as briefly as possible the most noteworthy features of the successive exhibitions held in the Musée, it is enough to state that the ever-interesting Salon Pour l’Art showed, with other works of great originality, a number of fine sculptures by Victor Rousseau, and that the chief feature of the Salon de la Société des Beaux Arts was the exhibition for the first time in Brussels of three pictures by Sir W. B. Richmond, two of which were portraits.

According to the general opinion of critics, the exhibition of the Salon de Bruxelles was the very worst ever yet seen. I noted, however, an interesting new work by Jean Delville and a brilliant first exhibit by a young artist named Thomas. It was in the section of applied art, organised under the superintendence of M. Fierens-Gevaert, that the best things were shown; amongst which, in addition to the usual triumphs of skill sent by such experts as Horta, Wolfers, and Madame de Rudder, were some fine examples of the work of the decorative painter Fabry and the jeweller Feys.




“Bust of Fernand Khnopff” by Ch. Samuel | “Interior at Antwerp” by R. Janssens

At the Cercle Artistique exhibition after exhibition, all totally unlike, succeed each other. That which seemed to interest the public most was the show of the paintings of R. Janssens, the sculptures of Ch. Samuel, and the drawings of Fernand Khnopff. The exhibition of the works of O. Coppens and F. Baes also attracted a great many visitors.

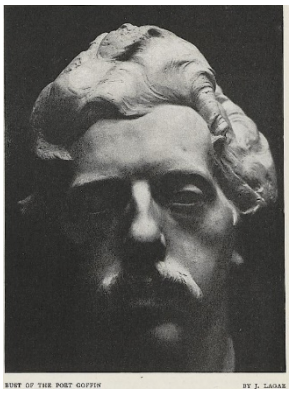
F. K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 32, 138 (September 1904), 358-360.

BRUSSELS.—The success of the exhibition of the Libre-Esthétique Society has been more remarkable this year than ever. The director, M. O. Maus, had organised a show of impressionist work; but as the exact meaning of that term is not even yet defined, he made no attempt to class the pictures included, for he could only have done so in an approximate and, to some extent, arbitrary manner. He therefore contented himself with selecting examples of the leaders in the movement as accepted in Paris. The following is the list of artists who were represented: Camille Pissaro, Edouard Manet, Alfred Sisley, Berthe Morisot, Paul Gauguin, Vincent Van Gogh, Georges Seurat, H**.** de Toulouse-Lautrec, Edgar Degas, Paul Cézanne, Claude Monet, Armand Guillaumin, Auguste Renoir, Mary Cassatt, Henry E. Cross, Maximilien Luce, Theo. Van Rysselberghe, Paul Signac, Pierre Bonnard, K. X. Roussel, Léon Voltat, Edouard Vuillard, Albert André, Maurice Denis, Georges D'Espagnat, and Charles Guérin.

The arrangement of the exhibition—indeed, its very *raison d'etre*—was*,* however, greatly misunderstood by certain notable persons, who seem to have been attacked with an acute form of nationalism, for they called attention to the fact that only one Belgian artist, and that one a resident in Paris, was represented at a show taking place in galleries belonging to the State, with the result that endless discussions have been held on the subject, and the matter has even been the theme of an interpellation in Parliament.

The exhibition of the Société des Beaux-Arts was far less interesting than that of the Libre-Esthétique. It really seemed as if chance alone had governed the choice of the works collected. Some, it is true, were excellent, others quite second-rate, and others even less satisfactory. Those who admired the first were naturally disposed to ask why they should have to look at the others, and what can have been the aim of the committee of management in getting together such a heterogeneous set of examples of modern work! The very best picture was, without doubt, the portrait of the pianist L. De la Fosse by J. S. Sargent, R.A., which was reproduced in THE STUDIO in 1900; and the finest piece of sculpture was the bust of the poet Goffin by J. Lagae. We are specially glad to be able to reproduce it (see page 357), as it was placed in as bad a position as possible at the exhibition.



Bust of the Poet Goffin by J. Lagae

We must also mention *Le Mineur* by C. Meunier, *L'Automne* by E. Claus, *Les Derniers Rayons* by F. Courtens, *A Portrait* by Blanche, the charming coloured group by Desvallières, the busts by J. de Laing [sic] and J. Dillens, and, lastly, the numerous exhibits of Vinçotte and Gilsoul.

There were also very interesting exhibitions at the Cercle Artistique, including some portraits by Richier, some decorative work by Montald, and some landscapes by Verdyen, which attracted many admiring visitors.

F.K.

[unsigned], “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 33, 140 (November 1904), 179-180.

BRUSSELS.—The “Société Royale des Aquarellistes” (the last exhibition of which took place in December) has sometimes been accused of being too exclusive, but the “Société Nationale des Aquarellistes et Pastellistes” (whose exhibition was opened last June) might with equal justice be reproached for acceding too readily to the many requests for admission to its ranks. The number of incompetent amateurs on the roll of the society is really far too great, and their valueless contributions militate very much against the general effect of the Salon. In spite or this, however, there are some few remarkable exhibits. To name but two, the works of MM. F. Gailliard and W. Delsaux are very fine. THE STUDIO has already reproduced several drawings of market scenes by the former, and the latter has exhibited some Zealand landscapes of varying merit, but all interesting and full of character.




“Le Violoniste” from the etching by F. Gailliard | “Forains” from the etching by F. Gailliard

The controversy aroused by the last exhibition of the “Libre-Esthetique” Society, resulted in the formation of a new group of artists who call themselves the *Peintres independants.* They will hold an exhibition every year at Brussels, and every three years at Antwerp, Ghent, and Liège. Amongst the names of the members are those of MM. Heymans Clans [sic—, Claus], Morren, Ensor Buysse, and Lemmen, with that of Mdlle. Boch.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 33, 141 (December 1904), 263-265.

BRUSSELS.—The name of the Brussels sculptor Godefroid Devreese has often been mentioned in these pages, and some of his works have been reproduced here: among others some characteristic busts and the design for the great monument to commemorate the battle of Courtrai. On the present occasion it is as a medallist that we have to consider him.

Godefroid Devreese was born at Courtrai in 1861. From the age of fifteen he practised sculpture in the studio of his father, Constant Devreese, who executed the statues of the Counts of Flanders which adorn the façade of the Hotel de Ville at Courtrai. In 1881 the young artist came to Brussels to attend the Académie des Beaux- Arts, and he worked diligently there for several years under the direction of the admirable Brussels sculptor, Charles Vander Stappen, whose remarkable qualities as an executant are equalled by his gifts as a teacher.





Medal by G. Devreese | Medal by G. Devreese

The great success achieved by his *Lace-maker* in 1898 has led Godefroid Devreese able sculptor though he is, to devote a considerable portion of his time to the execution of medals and plaques. He has had the honour of being the first Belgian medallist represented at the Musée du Luxembourg, whose eminent curator, M. Léonce Bénédite, obtained some specimens of his work in 1899.

The catalogue of his works published in 1903 by the French “Gazette Numismatique” already comprised nearly thirty examples.

His first plaque was modelled in 1895; the three that followed did not appear till 1898, among them being the *Lace-maker,* the badge of the members of the Provincial Council of Brabant. The artist thus personified the province of Brabant by means of its best known artistic industry, Brussels lace.

Two other plaques were executed in 1899, and in 1900 the *Young Polish Girl.* In 1901 he completed six medals, ornaments, and plaques, of which one was the medallion of M. Charles Buls, burgomaster of Brussels from December 1881 to December 1899, the

Communal Council having unanimously decided to present him with a portrait-medallion. This was a remarkably successful piece of work.

In 1902 he produced a larger number still: 12 medals and plaques, comprising among them one for the Belgian Photographic Association; the medal presented by the Belgian exhibitors to the art critic, M. Fierens-Gevaert, Commissioner-General for Belgium at the Turin Exhibition in 1902; the medallion (this one is cast, the others were struck), of M. Alphonse de Witte, Secretary of the Royal Numismatical Society of Belgium, and President of the Dutch and Belgian Société des Amis de la Médaille d'Art; and the medal made to celebrate the golden wedding of Baron de Vos van Steenwyk. All these showed an advance in the medallist's powers.




Medal by G. Devreese | Medal by G. Devreese




Medal by G. Devreese | Medal by G. Devreese

Further, in 1904 we have the extremely clever medal presented to M. G. van den Broeck, late Treasurer of the Royal Numismatical Society of Belgium.

The work of Devreese the medallist is remarkable for various qualities: the characteristic construction of the faces; the clean cutting of the profiles; ingenuity of invention in composition; and sureness in the placing of the subject. It is to be hoped that the numerous proofs he has given of these qualities will induce the official authorities to entrust him with the execution of their numismatic work.

F K.

1905

Khnopff, Fernand, "A Great Belgian Sculptor: Constantin Meunier," *The Studio*, 35, 147 (June 1905), 3-11.

A Great Belgian Sculptor: Constantin Meunier. By Fernand Khnopff.

In the early morning of Tuesday, April 4, Constantin Meunier died at Brussels, in his house in the Rue de l'Abbaye, where he had freely lived his noble life of work illuminated by fame. He had suffered for several months from cardiac trouble, and painful seizures had many times surprised him in the midst of his family, themselves harassed by ills from which he suffered in mind as much as he did from his own illness; but his great fortitude, his invincible determination to live and to work, had always got the upper hand. He had passed the whole of Monday in his studio, and had received a visit from the pianist Raoul Pugno, whose bust he had expressed the intention of modelling. Next day, towards six o'clock, he was suddenly attacked by suffocation, and passed peacefully away in the seventy-fourth year of his age.

"The art of our country has lost its crown," said M. Verlant, the director of the Fine Arts, in the fine discourse which he pronounced over the mortal remains of the great artist. It is not, however, merely one of the greatest artists of Belgium who has disappeared, but one of the greatest artists of all lands and of all time. Meunier's glory is not of a nation, but of mankind.

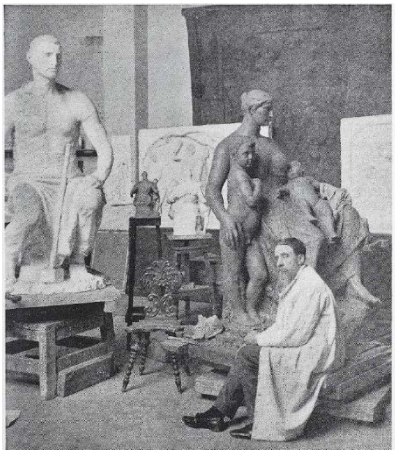
"A light of universal art has been extinguished," wrote M. O. Maus, in *L'Art Moderne*; "the nobility of his aesthetic philosophy, the grave beauty of the figures he has modelled, the pity which is breathed from his work, had borne his name to the ends of the world. No one, perhaps, before him had, after days of such gloomy experience, attained a more widespread renown. He worked hard, he suffered in his tenderest affections, his weak health obliged him more than once to take rest which was very irksome to his impatient activity. But nothing, from the day when the sunshine of fame first irradiated his life, arrested his slow and sure progress towards the conquest of hearts. When he died he had completely attained a recognition which he owed as much to the loyalty and simplicity of his life as to the magnificence of his art."

Camille Lemonnier writes in his fine work dedicated to Meunier:—"The mark of that true greatness which history will assign to him, is that he has noted the eternal amongst that which is transitory, and the type amid human generalities."

Constantin Meunier is *par excellence*, the painter, and above all the sculptor of the working-man. Without being guided by any systematic considerations of literature or of politics, but led by an instinct as potent as it was simple, he was the first to perceive new elements of beauty in the deeper strata of popular life, and he saw that it was his business to make this known.

The art of Meunier is a sincere expression of beautiful pity or of compassionate beauty.

As M. Dumont-Wilden (one of our finest art critics) has justly written:—"This is an exact picture of labouring humanity, the splendid presentment of the eternal struggle of man against natural fatalities—that great dolorous drama which is of all time, but that our times, with their huge industries and congested, overheated centres of work, see, perhaps, under a grander and more terrible aspect than did bygone ages. To find an element of beauty in the factory; to discover the harmonious rhythm of a body beneath the miner's working-jacket; to conjure up the artistic emotion which lurks beneath the rough exterior of a *coron*, or in the dismal oppressiveness of an industrial town: what a singular and gigantic task is this, when one comes to think of it! What marvellous intuition in an artist whom destiny seems to have formed expressly for this task! And, indeed, the life of Constantin Meunier, harmonious, sad and simple, like one of his works, was but a slow preparation for the splendid fruition of his later years."





Constantin Meunier in his Studio from a photograph by M. Duyk |
"Les Mineurs" by Constantin Meunier (Photograph by P. Becker)

Constantin Emile Meunier was born on April 12th, 1831, at Etterbeck, a suburb of Brussels. "His father, Louis," writes M. J. Du Jardin in his important work, "L'Art Flamand," "was a tax collector, and his mother, *née* Charlotte Filemont, had borne her husband six children, three boys and three girls. Shortly after the birth of the future artist his father died. The resources of Mme. Meunier were reduced to her widow's pension, quite inadequate for the bringing up of her children. She owned a house in the Place du petit Sablon, and she left Etterbeck to settle in the town. She there opened a *magasin de modes*, let apartments, and was thus able to think of the future without apprehension. Her young daughters (one of whom married later the engraver Auguste Danse), were soon able to help her in the business; her eldest son, Jean-Baptiste, obtained work at a printer's as a typographer, the second was employed in a government office, whilst the youngest, Constantin, was still occupied with his elementary schooling. By what concatenation of circumstances, however, did the artistic vocation reveal itself in Jean-Baptiste and in his brother? Théodore Fournois (the great Brussels landscapist) had come to live at Mme. Meunier's. He it was, perhaps, who gave them a taste for art. However that may be, Jean-Baptiste shortly afterwards became a

pupil of Calamatta (who directed the school of engraving at Brussels), with the intention of learning to wield the burin; then he in turn developed the germ of art in his younger brother, and it must have been interesting to see the journeyman-printer, burdened with a double labour, that of the workshop as well as that of engraving (for he continued to practise his trade), correcting the first attempts of the great painter-sculptor whose work is now before us.




"Anvers" by Constantin Meunier | "Le Pudleur" by Constantin Meunier (Photographs by P. Becker)

The young man set himself to work enthusiastically at drawing; and when, shortly after, he presented himself at the studio of the sculptor Fraikin, the latter received him with the words:- "Thank goodness, *you* can draw!" "But with Fraikin," as Meunier used to relate, "my time was passed in moulding or preparing the plastic clay which the master needed for his work. Occasionally I received a casual lesson in modelling; and nevertheless I looked upon my professor as a god! To please him, to get into his good graces, I made no objection to anything; for I did all the odd jobs, and even lighted the stove with infinite care."



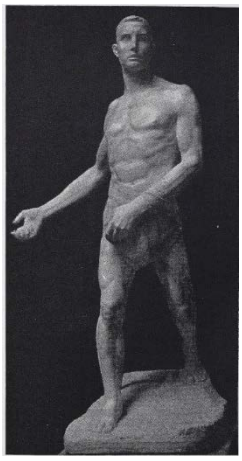

"Le Pécheur" by Constantin Meunier | "Une Hiercheuse" by Constantin Meunier (Photographs by P. Becker)

In 1851, at the age of twenty, Meunier exhibited a plaster sketch, *La Guirlande*, at the Brussels Salon. This was but an attempt, which could not satisfy him; he aspired to a more direct study of Nature, to the observation of a model who does not pose. He entered the Atelier St. Luc, one of those private studios where a few young artists club

together to pay for a model and for lighting. He there met friends, enthusiastic, independent comrades, and the painters attracted him towards painting. Led by Ch. Degroux, “the painter of realistic sorrows,” he decided to abandon the chisel for the brush. A certain amount of success encouraged him at the outset; but this success did not make much noise, and, above all, was not very lucrative. Constantin Meunier had married young; his family was numerous, and the anxieties of material existence often tormented his working hours. He had to bring himself to accept many distasteful tasks, and was even reduced to “drawing saints for printed handkerchiefs.”

At last, after long years of struggle, his appointment as director of the Académie des Beaux-Arts at Louvain allowed him some rest.





“L’Industrie” by Constantin Meunier | “Le Travailleur des Champs” by Constantin Meunier | “Le Semeur” (Photographs by P. Becker)

It then came about that Camille Lemonnier, who was commissioned to describe Belgium for the French review “Le Tour du Monde,” asked Constantin Meunier to illustrate the pages devoted to the workers in factories and mines. This was like a revelation to him; he had, so to speak, a sudden intuition of the new aesthetic vision which he was to bestow on his country and on his age; the aesthetics of the people, “the aesthetics of work” “From this moment,” wrote M. Dumont-Wilden, in the “Petit Bleu,” “it was a new Meunier who was evolved. It seemed as though his whole previous life had been but a long preparation, an unconscious apprenticeship. From this moment forward his work developed with surprising and methodical rapidity. The grief caused by the death of his two sons, far from breaking the artist’s strength, threw him entirely upon his work, and made his art deeper, sadder, more human than ever. After various pictures, water colours and drawings, he returned to sculpture; and then—first in his studio at Louvain, and afterwards (when he had quitted that official post, which soon became a burden) in his studio in the Rue Albert de Latour, there was feverish and yet regular work, work which occupied every moment, and was in a few years to result in an immense achievement.

It is unnecessary to recall to my readers' memory the greater number of these noteworthy productions; they may almost be called popular. But we cannot do better than conclude this brief notice by quoting the end of the funeral oration pronounced by M. Verlant:—

"Constantin Meunier, passing on one occasion beyond the bounds of his realistic art, determined to consecrate its expression in a mystic symbol. And he sculptured the Man of Sorrows, the Christ of the humiliated and despised: the poor emaciated body, as the old Gothic masters depicted it; the head, heavy with all its vicarious agony, bowed down in an overwhelming depression as though he were never to hear in heaven the promise of redemption." In this supreme achievement we find once more asserted the sombre character of Constantin Meunier's work, considered as a whole, as it may in the future, or even already, be studied in its integral development at the Brussels Museum." The grave, which his serious cast of thought made him bear ever in mind, will to-day receive his mortal remains. But we confidently believe that the man who was so dear to us, so good and so great, has not worked, has not striven, has not suffered in vain. Though dead he is not lost to us; he has but become a glorious source of light."



"La Glèbe" by Constantin Meunier (Photograph by P. Becker)

1906

Khnopff, Fernand, “The Art of the Late Alfred Stevens, Belgian Painter,” *The Studio*, 39, 165 (December 1906), 211-224.

The Art Of The Late Alfred Stevens, Belgian Painter. By Fernand Khnopff.

When in February, 1900, a group of French painters in Paris, under the presidency of the Comtesse Greffulhe, the *grande dame* of Art, obtained for the Belgian painter, Alfred Stevens, the honour (hitherto without precedent for a living artist) of an exhibition at the École des Beaux-Arts, that subtle poet, the Comte Robert de Montesquiou, wrote a preface for the catalogue in which he formulated his delicate appreciation of the master in so definite a fashion that I cannot do better than simply transcribe it here in great part:

“Alfred Stevens; the last—and perhaps the first—of those lesser Flemish masters who were great masters, since he surpasses Terburg and yields in no point to Vermeer.

“Stevens, whom I would willingly call the *sonnettiste* of painting, for the art with which, in his exquisite panels, he combines so harmoniously all the sheen of mirrors and satins, of lacquers and enamels, of eyes and of gems.



The Late Alfred Stevens from a photograph by Dornac, Paris

“Stevens, concerning whom the present sovereign of Flanders might have repeated, on sending him to France (a gift precious above all others!), the Duke of Burgundy’s words about Van Eyck: ‘I send you my best workman!’

“Among the many claims of this subtle monographist of the eternal feminine to our admiration I would signalise the art with which, in his skilful and refined pictures, he varies the *motif* of Woman and Love under the form of that *billet-doux*, so often torn and scattered to the winds like the petals of a white rose; till Stevens might almost be called the ‘*peintre aux billets*,’ as an old Swiss master was once the ‘*peintre aux œillets*.’

“I claim another merit for him—for that future of his which already exists in the present—in his contribution to the history of costume. In the retrospective view of Alfred Stevens’s canvases we find the curious fashions of the Second Empire, and

especially those Indian cashmere shawls of which Stevens will ever remain the unique painter, as was his master, Van der Meer [Vermeer] of Delft, of those vast unrolled maps which hang azure oceans and many-coloured continents on the peaceful walls of Dutch interiors."

Alfred-Émile-Léopold-Joseph-Victor-Ghislain Stevens was born at Brussels on May 11, 1823; His father, Jean-François-Léopold, had been an orderly officer of William I., King of the Netherlands. His mother was Cathérine-Victoire Dufoy. Three sons, Joseph, Alfred and Arthur, with a daughter who died young, were born of the marriage. "The eldest was that other great painter who (as Camille Lemonnier has said in his fine monograph on Alfred Stevens) deserves a place by the side of Decamps and Troyon as a marvellous animal-painter; to his contemporaries the youngest was the ambassador of Rousseau, çand Corot, then still subjects of discussion and almost obscure."

The father of the future master loved pictures passionately, buying and selling them from predilection; it is therefore no matter for surprise that while still quite a child, attending the courses at the Athenée in Brussels, Alfred Stevens worked on Thursday afternoons (his holiday) in the studio of François-Joseph Navez, devoting himself solely to drawing, because the master categorically forbade his pupils to paint until they had thoroughly acquired the science of form. "One day," writes the painter of the *Dame en Rose* to M. Jules Du Jardin (the learned author of "L'Art Flamand," a valuable work which yields us much information), "one day we were told that M. Navez would not come to correct the studies of his pupils. I begged a little money from my grandmother, Mme. Dufoy, and I painted a large head from nature. As it chanced M. Navez came after all, towards evening. 'Who painted this head?' he demanded, on seeing my work, hastily thrust into a corner. 'Little Stevens,' someone replied. 'Put on your cap, I shall take you to your grandfather,' said the classical painter, and he took me by the hand. I confess that I was trembling all over when we arrived at the house of M. Dufoy, a worthy and honest man of commerce. But my fright turned to stupefaction when I heard Navez inform Dufoy: 'I have come to tell you that your grandson is going to be a great painter some day.' And I still possess that study of a head, my first success in painting. I don't know why, but it suggests Géricault; for many French artists, and not unimportant ones either, have said to me: 'What a fine thing of Géricault's you have there!'"

The artistic vocation which revealed itself thus suddenly in the child corresponded fully with the secret desires of his parents, who were little inclined to oppose it. Alfred was entered for the evening drawing courses at the Brussels Académie, and his rapid progress was remarked. In 1844 he went to Paris, where he continued his studies under the painter Camille Roqueplan, a friend of his father. Roqueplan soon fell ill, however, and had to go to the south of France. The young man thereupon gained admission to the École des Beaux-Arts, entering sixteenth among a large number of candidates. He thus enjoyed the teaching of many celebrities of the French school, notably that of Ingres, concerning whom he liked to relate that the old master, recognising how thoroughly versed he was in osteology, advised him one day, when correcting one of his

drawings from nature, to look upon what, for example, was really a kneecap, as a mere stone, for fear of conventionality.




"Le Sphinx Parisien," from the painting in the Musée d'Anvers by Alfred Stevens (Photo by P. Becker) | "La Visite Matinale" by Alfred Stevens. (In A. Sarens' collection. Photo, P. Becker, Brussels)

A family bereavement—the death of Mme. Dufoy—recalled the student to Brussels, and it was in Belgium, after this event, that he painted his first picture, *Un Soldat Malheureux*. It was purchased from him by M. Godecharle, a picture-dealer and a son of the celebrated sculptor. Towards the end of 1849 Alfred Stevens returned to Paris, but being unable to afford the rent of a studio for himself alone, he established himself in that of his compatriot, Florent Willems, and prepared for his *début* as an artist. This he achieved in a brilliant manner, and his first works attracted much attention. In the "Revue de l'Exposition Générale de Bruxelles de 1851" was to be read as follows: "Although the latest comer, M. Alfred Stevens is among those who have *arrived* the first. We place him at the head of genre painters for his three charming little pictures, *Soldat Huguenot*, *Regrets de la Patrie*, and *L'Amour de l'Or*. They are three exquisite pearls, the value of which has been speedily recognised by connoisseurs."




"Désespéré" by Alfred Stevens (Musée d'Anvers. Photo by P. Becker) | "Une Conversation à la Campagne" from the painting in the Marlier Collection by Alfred Stevens. (Photo by P. Becker)

But before proceeding further our readers must be assured that it is useless to attempt to describe the works achieved by Alfred Stevens during the best years of his life (towards the end of his long career embarrassed circumstances sometimes forced hasty and superabundant production upon him). These beautiful paintings do not lend themselves to "literary transposition;" for their essential technical beauty surpasses all comparison; they must be seen and admired in their actuality. We shall therefore content ourselves with collecting various fragments of criticism which help to show how and by whom these memorable achievements were appreciated. Alfred Stevens's career had opened brilliantly, and his subsequent success never failed. In 1853, he exhibited the *Matin du Mercredi des Cendres* in Paris. This canvas was bought by the French Government, and presented to the Musée of Marseilles. In the same Salon he had also *Le Découragement de l'Artiste*, and a scene studied from nature—the spectacle of a man found assassinated at Montmartre, painted in the historical style, according to advice given the young master by Troyon. This painting won him the first medal. In 1855 he obtained another medal at the Exposition Universelle for the picture named *Chez Soi*; and in the same year, at the Antwerp Exhibition, he was given the cross of the Order of Leopold—thanks to the influence of Henry Leys. Two years later *La Consolation* won such admiration in the Paris Salon that Gustave Planche, the famous critic of "La Presse,'' would not deign to bestow a word on anyone save Alfred Stevens and Gustave Courbet.

At the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867 Alfred Stevens triumphed afresh; he exhibited eighteen works—marvels that in his "Salons" Thoré Burger qualified in these terms: "The *Dame en Rose* . . . shines amid the elegant company like the finest flower in the centre of a fresh bouquet. This painting, and some others by M. Alfred Stevens, exhale a sort of perfume. There is certainly much analogy between colours and odours. The *Dame en Rose* smells a little of the camellia. The young woman in pale lemon-colour smells of amber. . . . In *Tous les Bonheurs* a beautiful woman in garnet-coloured velvet is suckling her child. After the pink lady and the lemon-yellow lady, one of the most fascinating is the pearl coloured lady. She stands in profile beside a table, upon which is a vase of *Fleurs d'Automne*: she has flaxen hair, and a black mantilla over her dress, flat grey in tone. All in a minor key, as we should say in music; all 'broken,' as we may say in painting. The great colourist Velazquez played on such gamuts of harmony. Another young girl admires *L'Inde à Paris*—a little elephant of precious materials. Another hangs a branch of box over a portrait. Another reads a letter which brings her *Une douloureuse Certitude*. Another looks out of the window to see whether *Le Temps incertain* will prevent her from going out. . Another . . . but you see very well that what they are doing is a matter of indifference. They are living the lives of 'women of quality.' The insignificance of the 'subject' in these pictures by Alfred Stevens possesses therefore its own significance, perfectly expressing the ways of aristocratic society—even of middle-class society. . . . Ever it is the rule that the subject scarcely matters, provided that the artist has rendered well what he has chosen to depict. M. Alfred Stevens chooses women of elegance for his subjects; and no one paints better the new and rich stuffs,

the embroidered cashmeres, the carpets and the small details of luxurious dwellings. He draws and models correctly figures, heads, arms and hands, a rare achievement among painters of miniature figures. His execution has that breadth which we demand in pictures of large dimensions."

In 1869 the master travelled in Spain and afterwards in Holland. It never occurred to him to visit either Germany or Italy.

During the war of 1870 Alfred Stevens would not leave Paris, and on September 4, 1871, he wrote to General Trochu for permission to enter a regiment of French cavalry; to which (writes M. J. Du Jardin) the general replied that two reasons militated against the realisation of his desire—the first, his being an alien; the second, his talent as an artist. But fight he must, nevertheless! He wrote next to his acquaintance, Étienne Arago, mayor of Paris (who tells the story in his "Histoire du Siège de Paris," holding up this Belgian as an example to those Frenchmen who had left their country in the hour of danger), and having obtained permission to bear arms and to join the Garde Nationale, he sent his wife and children to Brussels, and himself remained in Paris alone with his mother. He remained in France after the peace, and his renown and his genius were still growing.

At the historic exhibition of Belgian art at Brussels in 1880 Stevens had a triumph.





"La Dame en Rose" by Alfred Stevens (*Musée de Bruxelles. Photo P. Becker*) | "La Dernier Jour du Veuvage" by Alfred Stevens (*In the Warocque Collection. Photo P. Becker*)

Again at the exhibition of portraits of the century, at Brussels, his great past portraits of women made a sensation; as did also his sketches for the panorama of the history of the century, painted on the occasion of the Exposition Universelle at Paris in 1889 (with the collaboration of H. Gervex, and the assistance of some meritorious young artists, among whom we may mention Stevens's son, Léopold, P. Sinibaldi, Gilbert, Picard, and the architect Cugnet).

"In December, 1895," says M. J. Du Jardin, "there was a feast for the eyes in the Maison d'Art, Avenue de la Toison d'Or, Brussels: here were to be found collected together the greater number of the works of the celebrated artist. He has obtained—let us put it on

record—all the highest distinctions and official honours, to which he attaches great importance, while honestly doubting whether he has deserved them."

And this was indeed an entire feminine world, which justified the following noteworthy remarks by Camille Lemonnier:—"I recognise two great painters of womanhood in the present century-Alfred Stevens and François Millet. Poles asunder as they are in their points of view, they have in their two methods of understanding her summed up the modern woman from one extreme to the other. Millet's woman does not live; she gives life to others. Stevens's lives herself, and gives death to others. The atmosphere breathed by the former is eternally refreshed by the winds, and is bounded only by the great open firmament. The latter, on the contrary, breathing an atmosphere of poison, stifles in mystery; pain, and perfumes….Alfred Stevens and François Millet open out in their women great vistas into the unknown. They each present the problem of woman, and pose her in the attitude of the ancient Sphinx. The world of woman touches the world of man, moreover, at so many points that to paint woman is to paint us all, from the cradle to the grave. It will be the characteristic mark of the art of this century that it has approached contemporary life through woman. Woman really forms the transition between the painting of the past and the painting of the future."





"L'Atelier." By Alfred Stevens. (*Musée de Bruxelles. Photo P. Becker*) | "La Visite." by Alfred Stevens (*In Ve. Cardon's Collection. Photo P. Becker*)

If the work of Alfred Stevens has inspired pages in this grand style from the pen of such a powerful writer, it has also produced from the painter himself certain remarks, ranging in tone from gay to grave, and generally of profound interest to his brother-artists. It is for their benefit that we have selected a few of these "Impressions":



"Tous les Bonheurs" by Alfred Stevens (*Musée de Bruxelles. Photo P. Becker*)

"I. We must be of our own time: we must submit to the influence of the sun, of the country in which we dwell, of our early education.—II. A man does not understand his art well under a certain age.—IV. One should learn to draw with the brush as soon as possible.—XIII. Nobody is a great painter save on condition of being a master workman.—XIV. Execution is style in painting.—XX. An even mediocre painter who paints his own period will be more interesting to futurity than one who, with more talent, has only painted times which he has never seen.—XXXVII. A picture cannot be judged justly until ten years after its execution.—XLII. Painters who depict their own time become historians.—XLVII. Woe to the painter who receives approbation only from women!—L. We can judge an artist's sensibility from a flower that he has painted.—LXIII. In the art of painting one must first of all be a painter; the thinker comes afterwards.—LXXIll. A picture should not, as is commonly said, stand out from its frame; the very opposite should be said.—XC. Time beautifies sound painting and destroys bad.—XCI. Bad painting cracks in stars; good painting becomes like fine crackle china.—CXV. To paint modern costume does not constitute a modernist. The artist attracted by modernity must above all be impregnated with a modern feeling.—CXXIV. There should be quinquennial exhibitions in which each artist should only be permitted to exhibit one single figure that said nothing.—CXXVII. By looking at the palette of a painter, we may know with whom we have to reckon.—CXLVI. A fine picture of which one admires the effect at a distance should equally support closer scrutiny.—CCIV. The execution of a fine painting is agreeable to the touch.—CCV. A true painter is always a thinker.—CCVIII. Certain Dutch masters seem to have painted with precious stones ground into powder.—CCXLVII. To have a master's picture retouched is a crime that ought to be severely punished by law.—CCLII. Nothing is pardoned in a single figure picture; many things are excused in a picture with several figures.—CCLVI. Painting is not done for exhibitions: refined work is smothered at the Salon; "shouters" come off better.—CCLXVII. The sincere approbation of his brother-artists is the most flattering reward a painter can have.—CCLXVIII. Nothing can equal the happiness felt by a painter when, after a day's labour, he is satisfied with the work accomplished; but in the contrary case what despair is his!—CCXClV. The Flemings and the Dutch are the first painters in the world.—CCXCV. An arm by Rembrandt, though perhaps too short, is yet alive; an arm by

the proficient in theory, though exact in proportion, remains inert.—CCXCVI. Rubens has often been of harm to the Flemish School; while Van Eyck has never been anything but its benefactor."

FERNAND KHNOPFF.

1907

Khnopff, Fernand, “A Belgian Painter: Léon Frederic,” *The Studio*, 40, 169 (April 1907), 170-181.

A Belgian Painter: Léon Frederic.
By Fernand Khnopff.



“En Pays Flamand.” By Léon Frederic.

“The work of Léon Frederic asserts itself with force; it is at once homogeneous and varied; it springs from a supreme conscientiousness. The sacred rhythms of labour endow it with the religious significance of a sort of perpetual pantheist festival, magnifying the two forces—God and his creatures—in relation to Earth. Thence his work takes the fulness and the unity of those productions wherein one recognises the hand of a great artist. And although he may not have created a concrete type of art, after the manner of a Millet or a Meunier, his lucid spirit of observation has enabled him to realise in their general truth and their essential physiognomical particularities the Walloon and the soil he inhabits.”

Thus it is that M. Camille Lemonnier, in his fine literary and critical work, “The Belgian School of Painting: 1830-1895,” sums up his appreciation of the works of the Brussels painter. Léon Frederic was born in Brussels on the 26th of August, 1856. His father, a jeweller by trade, lived in the Rue de la Madeleine, in the centre of the town, his house being so small that it would not comfortably hold his numerous family, consisting of five children, four of them boys. His business had improved rapidly; consequently it was necessary, little by little, to devote almost the whole place to the purposes of the workshop which was, in fact, what the whole house eventually became. The household was thus called upon to sacrifice its comforts and its pleasure, and the children had to be sent away—some to boarding-school, and others to stay with relatives in the country.

Little Léon, when less than six years old, was first sent to Uccle, a village in the neighbourhood of Brussels, and then to Melle, near Ghent, where he was taught at the Institut des Joséphites, remaining a pupil at that institution till he had reached the age of fifteen.




“La Pensée qui s’éveille” by Léon Frederic | “La Cerisier Fleurie” by Léon Frederic

The visits of his parents were necessarily few and brief. The child soon began to suffer keenly from his loneliness, and his character became strongly concentrated. He grew timorous and silent, and remained indifferent to the attractions of the life of his fellows. Meanwhile, recalling his early years spent in the country, he felt growing within him a profound admiration of Nature, as revealed to him on all sides.

“At last” (writes M. Du Jardin, in his important work on Flemish Art) “the lad reached his fifteenth year. The father, like all business men a positive type of person, then began to think of a career for his son. The boy has already shown some inclination towards art. Good. Nothing could be better! He should become a painter-decorator. At once he made him a pupil-apprentice of Charles Albert, a Brussels decorator, well known at the time. But his apprenticeship was not destined to be of long duration. Alexandre Robert, the 'romantic' painter, was a friend of the Frederic family, and said he to the father: 'Make your boy a decorator if you like, but for goodness sake let him learn the elements of decoration, that is to say, drawing; and I know of no better school to teach him the art of drawing, which is of the first importance, than the Académie.' Thus it came about that for a couple of years Léon Frederic attended the Academy classes. At that period Jean Portaels had under his charge a second set of pupils, who attended his *atelier libre*. And it was under the discipline of Portaels that Frederic learned to paint, until the time when the class was disbanded. Then he was free to continue his artistic education with Ernest Slingeneyer.”

Frederic then went up for the Prix de Rome, but was “ploughed” in the preliminary. Nevertheless, his father, being of opinion that a stay in Italy was the complement of all artistic education, gave him permission to visit the classic home of painting, and his visit had a considerable influence over the young artist. As Octave Maus in “L'Art Moderne” very justly remarks: “If I had to fix the spiritual ancestry of Léon Frederic I should be inclined to seek it, on the one hand, among the Italian masters of the sixteenth century—Botticelli, Ghirlandajo, or some other such painter equally frank and thoughtful; on the other, among the old Flemish painters who were passionately fond of the direct study of Nature, and who, from sheer joy of painting, discovered in the intimate life around them sources of inspiration which were constantly being renewed.

The Italians would seem to have bequeathed to him, together with a regard for harmony of setting, an inclination in the direction of the mystic charm of womanly and childish beauty. From the others he derives that love of the beings and the things around him, which he reproduces unceasingly with the most scrupulous exactitude, being convinced that in point of beauty Nature is unsurpassable, and that the greatest work of art cannot attain to the splendour of an open flower, a field of corn waving in the breeze, a bird of variegated plumage, a hurrying of the clouds, a stream flowing between grassy banks. Eugène Fromentin, in 'Les Maîtres d'Autrefois,' has observed that Italian art is 'at home' throughout Europe, save in Belgium, whose spirit it has distinctly influenced but never conquered, and in Holland, which formerly made a semblance of consulting it, and finally passed it by. This is true in so far as it relates to Mabuse, the first Flemish painter to visit Italy, to Van Orley, to Floris, to Coxie, and it was the same with regard to Frederic. The double, and apparently contradictory, influence he underwent invests his art with a very special character. At once idealistic, and yet strongly impregnated with reality, it expresses eternal symbols in the most ordinary language of life. The types by which he is inspired are taken at random and placed on the canvas in all their simple truth of attitude and gesture and feature, with a savour of rusticity at times somewhat acrid, in strong contrast with the nobility of the parts assigned to them. As a poet, Léon Frederic mentally transposes the visions which Nature offers, and, doubtless, when a young mother appears before him in the fields, some inconscient phenomenon reveals to him the ingenuous silhouette of the Madonna."

One may see in the first works of Frederic exhibited since 1878 traces of the manner of Emile Wauters, whose famous picture, *La folie d'Hugo van der Goes*, had created a profound impression shortly before in the art-world of Brussels. His painting was remarkable at that time for the somewhat theatrical character of its composition, for its fulness of tone, and particularly for its full and simple drawing and touch. But after 1881 his manner changed, under another influence; his drawing became more minute, more precise, his shades of colour more delicate, his executive work less apparent. It was then that appeared the first triptych of the *Legend of St. Francis*.



"Les Marchands de Craie" by Léon Frederic (Brussels Gallery)

The model he used most frequently at that time was a wretched wayfarer, struggling from morn till eve to earn a living for himself and his children by selling chalk in the outskirts. The story of this miserable life inspired the artist to create his great triptych,

Les Marchands de Craie, which is now in the Brussels Gallery. It is generally regarded as his masterpiece. On the left panel the painter shows the start in the misty morning; in the centre the family meal by the roadside; on the right the return in the dusk of night. Thenceforward Frederic's intimate knowledge of the life of the poor impelled him to compose a series of pictures, most tender and touching in expression. Then came an event—a very simple event in a man's life, a mere excursion—which had the effect of suggesting to him new subjects of study. A relative, affianced to a teacher at Nafraiture, a little village in Belgian Luxembourg, invited Frederic to go with her and her "intended" on an excursion to that spot. Thus he had the opportunity of visiting the gently mountainous Ardenne, and of studying the simple manners of the inhabitants. Forthwith he produced, among many remarkable works, the *Repas des Funérailles* (1886) and *Les Ages du Paysan* (1887), which are to be seen in the Brussels Gallery.

"Ah, ces Ages!" exclaimed one writer. "Five big pictures, rough and idyllic in their reality, showing peasants—heavy, clumsy, and ugly, if you like—in all the beauty of their true honest naturalness. Here we have the whole people of the fields, from the decrepit, shrivelled-up old folk to the mature and healthy fathers and mothers; the glorious young men and maidens, strolling, affianced, hand-in-hand; the lusty, well-fleshed children and babies, regarding the world with eyes clear and penetrating—some curiously, others with mischief. They are all there simply displayed, seated on chairs, or standing hand-in-hand or couched on the flowery turf. It is infinitely simple this long succession of primitive beings, their eyes showing the graduations of the country life, and recalling the soil of which they are the natural and the august fruit, just as are the crops, the cattle, the birds, and the trees."




"Le Lin" by Léon Frederic | "Le Lin" by Léon Frederic

The two sets of drawings, *Le Lin* and *Le Blé* (1888-1889), are, so to speak, parallel poems expressive of the simple beauty of the plants containing the principles of the clothing and the nourishment of mankind. In these two series of clever works Frederic represents the successive transformations of the two things necessary to life: linen and bread; and each of these transformations is the subject of a scene, now joyous and animated, now silent and sad.

To complete the cycle of the “Life of the Fields” Léon Frederic placed between the two sets of compositions an Allegory of the Earth and the twelve Months of the Year.



“Le Ruisseau,” by Léon Frederic

“Colossal in its vital strength”—adds the writer—”is his presentment of the Earth!—a peasant woman, heavily handsome. Her breasts hang huge—breasts which themselves are Worlds. And, grovelling at her feet, with outstretched arms, clinging in groups to her body, are men, represented as plump, red-haired children, of almost too robust health, but astonishing in their vitality.” Right and left in the background the artist has recalled the principal episodes connected with linen and corn. On the one side, the rolling, the in-gathering, the steeping of the flax; on the other the sowing of the grain, the harrowing and the harvest.



“L’Arc-en-Ciel,” by Léon Frederic

There were also painted in this little village of Ardenne a very curious open-air study, *Le Viellard qui bénit* (1889), and a work of somewhat strange appearance, entitled *La Pensée qui s'éveille* (1891). At that period certain novel ideas would seem to have developed in the artist's mind: his conception of art appears to have become enlarged, his sympathy for the sorrows of the poor to have taken a more deliberate form. His dream was that the disinherited of the earth should have their fair share of happiness; and he painted a work great in point of effort, but lacking in realisation, *Le Peuple verra un jour le lever du soleil* (1891). About the same period Frederic painted a triptych of the Holy Trinity for the village church of Nafraiture, the panels representing God the Father (the Last Judgment), the Holy Ghost (Adam and Eve turned out of the terrestrial Paradise), while on the central panel are depicted two angels bearing the Countenance,

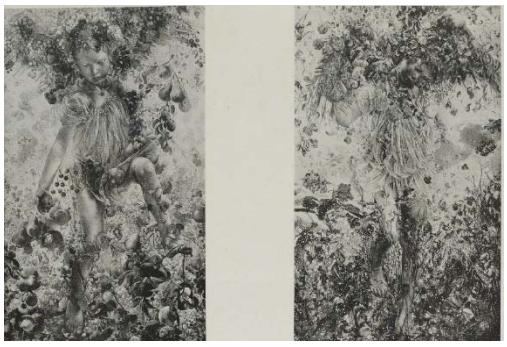
reproduced on the veil of Véronique. The angels are crowned with thorns, and the bloodstains are abloom with roses.



Central Panel of “La Nature” by Léon Frederic

From that date forth allegorical and symbolical works alternate with what may be termed “documentary” studies. In 1892 we have *La Vanité des Grandeurs, La Route Zélandaise*; in 1893 *La Salutation Angelique*; in 1894, *Tout est Mort*, an unfinished polyptych, in which the artist describes symbolically the failure of Justice, Religion and Love. Then *La Nature*, a pentaptych in which each of the Seasons is allegorically represented in the guise of a child in an extraordinary mingling of flowers and fruit, birds and insects.





“La Nature: Le Printemps” by Léon Frederic | “La Nature: Le Printemps” by Léon Frederic | “La Nature: L’Automne” by Léon Frederic | “La Nature: L’Hiver” by Léon Frederic

In 1896 appeared the *Récureuses de Chaudrons*, a charming group of young Zélandaises, painted in a luminous landscape; the *Arc-en-Ciel*; the *Peleuses de Pommes de Terre*, three young girls dressed in red. In 1897 came *Les Ages de l'Ouvrier*, a large triptych which is one of the painter's chief works, and is now in the Luxembourg Gallery in Paris. In 1900 Frederic painted the *Conscrits*, a big composition commissioned by the civic authorities of Brussels to adorn the *Salle des Milices* of the Hotel de Ville; also *Le Ruisseau*, a large triptych containing *L'Eau qui chante*, *L'Eau qui tombe*, and *L'Eau qui dort*; the uncommonly graceful *Cerisier fleuri*; the *Clair de Lune*, a polyptych exhibited at the Salon of the Libre Esthétique, where it was purchased by the State for the Brussels Gallery. Then, in 1905, came *La Mort du paysan*, which hangs in the Liège Gallery; and

lastly, in 1906, a *Scène de la Vie Villageoise en Ardenne*, displayed at the Ghent Salon, and acquired for the gallery of that town.

In a word, Léon Frederic is indeed a painter of our own time, who has employed to express himself such of the traditional methods as he has judged to be best adapted to his work.



"Les Récureuses de Chaudrons" by Léon Frederic

In the toilsome life of the peasant and the labourer he has discovered numberless subjects for profound study, because beneath the superficial exterior of his chosen models, beneath the rough skin and the coarse clothing, he has discovered and depicted the human sensations which he understands naturally. His peasants of Ardenne and his workmen of the Brussels *banlieue*, while represented with all possible exactitude, have been used by him to express the activity, the hopes and the struggles of the whole people. His tender sympathy for the poor has impelled him in turn to paint the peaceful, almost solemn, labour of the man of the fields and the lamentable misery of the town beggar. To him the country always appears gentle and smiling, the town always dreadful and desolate. This explains the two aspects of the symbolism which appears in his latest works: on the one hand a goodness, a candour almost childlike; on the other a tender, silent pity.

The art of Léon Frederic, made up as it is of idealistic expression and exact observation, represents a personality in the Belgian School demanding all respect. While some were incredulous as to his work, no one was ever indifferent, and already his influence is extending to the new generation. "All Frederic's works,'' writes Octave Maus in "L'Art Moderne,'' "are conceived and carried out with a conscientiousness worthy of all praise. From the first sketch to the last stroke of the brush all are handled with placid assurance, with uniform certainty. If they are lacking in fancy, in *imprévu*, in passion, the artistic probity they reveal calls for sympathy and admiration. They reflect the artist's pensive soul, his love of truth and justice, the charity of his mind. Therein one finds an echo of the feelings which, in this age of ours, inspire all manly hearts."

F. K.

(The half-tone reproductions of M. Frederic's works accompanying this article are from photographs by Alexandre of Brussels.)

Khnopff, Fernand, “Alexandre Struys, a Belgian Painter,” *The Studio*, 41, 174 (September 1907), 283-289.

Alexandre Struys, A Belgian Painter. By Fernand Khnopff.

Those who delight in classification might find some interest in determining on the one hand the different kinds of works of art that have achieved success, and on the other the different kinds of success achieved by works of art. They would soon become aware that there are what may be called national successes, due to the local influence, more or less political in character of interested persons or of narrow coteries; international successes, due to more or less diplomatic relations, and to a subservient consideration for foreign fashions in art; and lastly there is success (the rarest kind of all) due to the intrinsic merits of the work itself.

It is a success of this last description that Alexandre Struys’s latest works have achieved. It is seldom nowadays, in fact, that one finds painting which so completely expresses the entire individuality of an artist. Struys’s individuality only came to the surface after long and painful hesitation, after numerous and grievous misconceptions; but from that very circumstance has resulted his strong and definite sincerity, which touches the heart deeply, leaving a permanent impression.

Alexandre Théodore Honoré Struys was born at Berchem, near Antwerp, on January 24, 1852. His grandfather had been an artist; his father, a native of Gulenborg, in Holland, was a notable painter on glass, and had come to finish his artistic education at the Academy of Antwerp. When he returned to his own country he sent his son Alexandre to the communal school at Dordrecht, where his master soon noticed his astonishing talent for drawing. The parents had no desire to thwart this evident vocation; and thus it came about that at the age of six Alexandre Struys was already regularly attending the drawing classes at the Academy of Dordrecht. This course of instruction was not, however, of long duration; he subsequently entered the studio of the painter Canta, at Rotterdam, as a pupil, and also—as was still the custom—in the capacity of general help. But neither did this phase last long: the glass-painter went to live in Antwerp again, and sent his twelve-year-old son to the Academy of Fine Arts, which was then directed by N. de Keyser, and had for its principals Professors Beaufaux and Van Lerius, painters of the most official type.

The academic successes of Alexandre Struys were not extraordinary; but he worked with commendable diligence under the direction of his masters from 1866 to l871.

Just at this time Jan van Beers, the wayward painter of ultra-Parisian whimsicalities, and J. Lambeaux, the powerful sculptor of Flemish *grossièretés*, simultaneously terminated their studies at the Antwerp Academy. Jan van Beers was already attracting attention by his exuberant independence of spirit and by eccentricities that had become notorious. He made great friends with Struys, whom he persuaded to join him in a studio he had taken in the heart of Antwerp. In 1871, while still attending the higher classes at the

Academy, Struys had exhibited *A Young Girl returning from School* in the Salon at Ghent; in Jan van Beers' studio he painted a series of humorous pictures, facile and ordinary in character, which obtained no greater success with the public than did the extravagances which his friend invented in order to attract the notice of buyers.



"L'Enfante Malade" by A. Struys

Certainly "things were going badly,'' as the saying is.

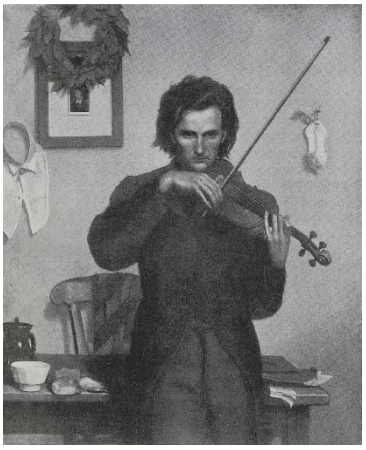
"It was at this juncture,'' writes M. E. de Taeye, in "Les Artistes Belges Contemporains," "that Struys proposed to Van Beers to set out for London, after having completed a series of pictures which would be certain, in that great cosmopolitan city, to transmute themselves into a respectable number of pounds sterling!

"Unfortunately, 'Bohemia' proposes and reality disposes. Doubtless the two friends were noticed in London, where their big hats, *à la* Rubens, and their wide cloaks flapping in the wind made some sensation; but in spite of that the picture-dealers to whom they addressed themselves did not manage to sell their famous works. The situation of the good citizens of Antwerp became critical when their funds, slender enough at the outset, were reduced to a few silver coins. They thought of returning to their own country; but how was that plan to be brought off?

"They now set to work simultaneously, one starting from the right and the other from the left, on a colossal canvas representing a magnificent view in Switzerland. Somebody had told them that the English public liked this hackneyed style of picture, and they had gone off instantly to a photograph shop to choose their 'site'! The work progressed swimmingly, and the two friends had every reason to feel satisfied. They had hashed up a splendid Swiss landscape; no doubt somewhat flattered; exaggerated in colour, perhaps; but gorgeous to behold. Nothing was omitted: neither classic mountains, nor beautiful sky, nor limpid little lakes! Having both signed this *chef-d'œuvre* the two friends repaired to their picture-dealer, who congratulated them, and offered them £30 on the spot! Can you doubt that the offer was eagerly accepted? At last they had money! At last they could think of leaving England!

Once back in their own studio, "Sander" and "Jan" each began an important work; and while the future painter of *The Siren* was finishing his *Fiat Lux*, a big symbolical

representation of Christ, Struys for his part was giving the final touches to his *Perhaps?*—a poor violinist in his garret, for whom Van Beers himself had served as model."



"Peut-être?" by A. Struys

This picture, exhibited in 1873, was very favourably noticed. There was, indeed, more than mere promise in the work; the figure of the poor violinist, tormented with thoughts of his future, was masterly in treatment. This was Struys's real *début*, and henceforth he was classed among the young Antwerp painters "of whom great things were to be expected." A quarrel finally separated Struys and Van Beers; for some time, however, this separation had been foreseen, the natures of the two men being too different for perfect sympathy to exist between them.

Struys now went to live with the painter H. Bource, whom he had known for a long time. The mournful sentimentality of this artist consorted better with Struys's native melancholy than had the fantastic extravagance of his former companion. He next painted a picture, old-fashioned and romantic in character, entitled *The Two Victims* (now in the Dordrecht Museum), representing a deserted mother with her child fleeing from misery. His next work, *An Eater of Mussels*, a broadly-executed painting, showed considerable progress.

Struys's real celebrity dates from 1876. An uncle of the painter had been persuaded by the Jesuits to make over his property to them. The artist saw the possibilities of such a subject, and painted his *Roofvogels* (Birds of Prey), two Jesuits forcing a dying man to make his will. The effect made by this picture was enhanced by the fact that political strife between Liberals and Clericals was then running very high in Belgium. The work in itself was remarkable, and was exhibited everywhere—in Germany and in England; but for political reasons it could not be admitted to the Paris Exhibition of 1878, the Belgian committee of selection refusing it even in Brussels, "because" (wrote Prince Caraman-Chimay, president of the committee, to the artist) "the subject was calculated to offend the susceptibilities of the general public."

The picture's success was immense, and gained for its author not only European renown, but also an unexpected piece of good fortune. The Director of the Academy at

Weimar offered the young Belgian painter of twenty-three the professorship which had been left vacant by the departure of Charles Verlat.

Struys accepted this flattering proposal, and remained at Weimar until 1883. But during these six years, spent in a too solemn and too artificial German *milieu*, the pleasures of society and successes at Court once more weakened and perverted his true individuality. The artist suspected this vaguely himself, and was convinced of the truth after some cruel disillusionments in connection with certain pictures painted at this time: *Alpha and Omega*, The *Death of Luther*, and *Christian II*.

Towards the end of 1882 Struys quitted Weimar and went to the Hague; but subsequently he decided to return to Belgium, either to Antwerp or to Brussels. In 1884 we find him at Malines, looking for some peaceful corner not too far from Brussels and Antwerp, wherein he might select a definite place of abode for the future. But at this time he was in a very dejected state, feeling himself gone astray and enfeebled, and he only perforce listened to the advice of J. Lambeaux, whom he had met again in Brussels. An attempt at *peinture claire*, made in accordance with this advice, was the occasion of some ill-natured criticism. Raging internally, Struys thereupon shut himself up at Malines, refusing to see anyone, in order that in silence and solitude he might slowly recover his damaged individuality—a noble effort which eventually gave us works that are deeply touching in their strong and genuine feeling: *Death* (1886), *The Breadwinner* (1887), *The Sick Child* (1888), *Comforting the Afflicted* (1889), *The Month of Mary* (1890), *Trust in God* (1891), *Despair* (1897), *The Lacemaker of Malines* (1900).

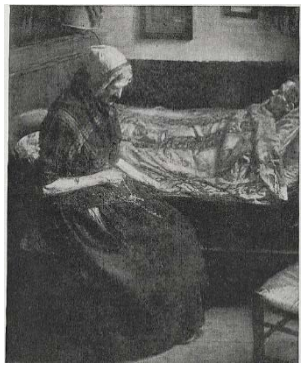



"Le Gagne-Pain" by A. Struys | "Le Mois de Marie" by A. Struys

"And here," writes M. J. du Jardin, in his "Art Flamand," "we have the work of Alexandre Struys. He aspires to the portrayal of suffering—the suffering of the poor, for whom he has a tender compassion: he shows them in the midst of their hard life, which haunts him continually. He points out to the priests—the comforters of the afflicted—their duties towards the poor and wretched, who are as lovable as the rich, or more so. And, besides a very precise conception of his task, he possesses a keen desire for truthfulness in the setting of his subjects, for suitable accessories and models: so much so, that he frequently takes his model to the scene he has selected; and when several persons are

to figure together on his canvas, he makes the various models pose at the same time. Such anxiety for realistic correctness, therefore, gives this master a very distinct individuality. No; his style does not bear any resemblance to that of his compeers, either in the present or in the past, who have chosen to recount the miseries of Fortune's disinherited. He has, indeed, been compared to Charles Degroux more especially, and to Constantin Meunier, painters of this type. But for anyone who notes the differences of ideal existent among artists (differences of ideal that are sometimes very slight in the main), there are many characteristic shades of distinction between their art and his. These shades of distinction may be very correctly determined thus: Degroux and Meunier leave more room for the imagination in their works than does Struys in his; and this particular fact, I repeat, justifies us in asserting that the latter is endowed with a very definite individuality, and that there is no reason to confound his canvases—crying vengeance as they do (whether he intends it so or not) upon social iniquities—with the canvases of any other artist.

F. K.

"La Visite au Malade" by A. Struys | "La Confiance en Dieu" by A. Struys



"Désespéré" by A. Struys

Khnopff, Fernand, "A Walloon Sculptor: Victor Rousseau," *The Studio*, 42, 176 (November 1907), 102-108.

A Walloon Sculptor: Victor Rousseau. By Fernand Khnopff.

In the introduction to his study on the "Renaissance of Sculpture in Belgium" ("The Portfolio," November, 1895), M. G. O. Destrée brought out the fact, little known by the public, that Belgian sculpture during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance was not exclusively Flemish; that, on the contrary, its appearance and its early development occurred in the Walloon provinces, and, further, that this Walloon school, which remained very brilliant till the end of the sixteenth century, created an individual style. The writer added that the school in question seemed likely to be revived in the persons of three young sculptors whose work he proposed to examine—MM. Achille Chainaye, Jean-Marie Gaspar, and Victor Rousseau.

Again, in 1904, in an article on Rousseau contributed to the magazine "L'Art Flamand et Hollandais," M. Paul Lambotte writes: "In Belgium a wrong comprehension of Flemish traditions, an absurd misapprehension of the temperament of the race, have led many artists astray. Marvellous but uncultivated technicians, incapable of deep thought, they know not what to do with their talent; and relieve the necessity to produce by which they are tormented in the realisation of pleasing, aimless works, such as fine animal forms (should they be sculptors), or, in the case of painters, in pictures of sumptuous colouring like a rich piece of still life. All this is nought but a sterile side of art, and our artists have proved it abundantly in the past."

The precise characteristic of the art of Victor Rousseau is that he has never been content with easy production of this sort; but has always striven to present the plastic expression of some lofty idea. He declines to give but the empty form, the simple *morceau bien venu;* each of his works must grip the attention, and charm not alone, by its beauty of execution, but also, by its well-thought-out composition provoking meditation. Nevertheless, as it has been well said, each *morceau* from the hands of Victor Rousseau displays an attempt to achieve an invariable perfection; the artist is no less a producer of fine work (what we term *bel ouvrier),* than a sculptor of inventiveness and profound thought. The fear of spoiling the *ensemble* effect, the mystery, the savour of a work by carrying his details to its extreme limits is a thing unknown to him. He possesses the capacity to remain broad and great without *fignolage*, while modelling with impeccable touch the most delicate extremities of a statuette no higher than one's fist.

Victor Rousseau was born at Feluy-Arquennes, a village in the province of Hainaut (Belgium), on December 16, 1865. His father was a stonemason.

"From my earliest years" (he writes to M. Du Jardin, author of "L'Art Flamand") "I was set to study my father's calling. It was not till I was nearly fifteen that I began to attend the night classes at the Brussels Academy, then going to the drawing school at St. Josse-ten-Noode (one of the suburbs of the capital) in order to learn ornamental sculpture, for

during the daytime I used to carve stone and marble until I had nearly reached the age of nineteen. At that time, having attracted the notice of Houtstont, the sculptor-decorator, I entered his modelling rooms, and did not leave them till 1890.



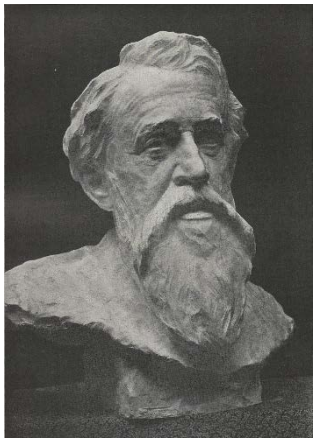
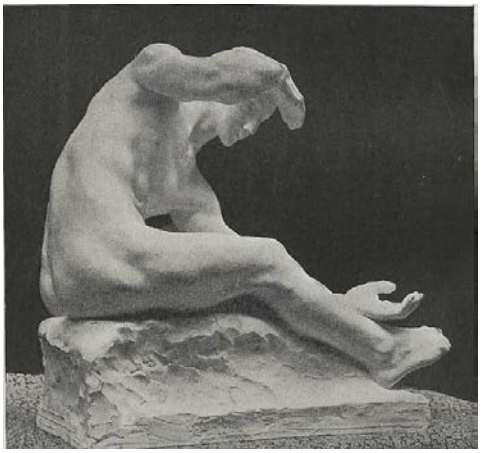
"L'Offrande" by Victor Rousseau

"In my odd moments, from the year 1887, I had devoted myself to the study of statuary; and thus it was I became the pupil of Vanderstappen at the Brussels Academy in 1888-9, and laureate of his class in my first year. This, I may say, was the first figure class I had attended. But for three consecutive years I followed the dissecting course at the University, and I drew a good deal. I won the 'Godecharles' prize (a travelling scholarship) with my *Tourmente de la Pensée* at the Brussels triennial Salon in 1890, and in that same year I married François Delceul. Then, during the years 1891, 1892 and 1893, I travelled in England, France and Italy, and exhibited successively in the Salons of the 'Pour l'Art' club the following works: *Puberté* (torso of a young girl); *L'Amour Virginal* (a low relief, which appeared also at the Brussels triennial Salon of 1893; this was the first of my works to attract the notice of artists and connoisseurs); *Cantique d'Amour, Orphée,* the *Liseur*, *Demeter*, and (in bronze) the *Coupe des Voluptés, Danse Antique*; some candelabras intended for the Botanical Gardens in Brussels, and two statues, *Le Jeu* and *Le Vent.* I devoted myself to the restoration of the 'Maison des Boulangers,' one of the gems of the Grande Place, Brussels, and I am responsible for the commemorative *plaque* in connection with the restoration of the ancient house in the Grande Place. This *plaque,* which the artists dedicated to M. Charles Buls, the burgomaster, is incrusted in the wall of one of the houses in the Rue Charles Buls, facing the Hôtel de Ville."

In 1902 appeared *Les Sœurs de l'Illusion,* the fruit of several years of labour, and, so far, the young artist's most important work. This group of three young women, of rather more than life size, symbolises the Past, the Present, and the Future. The figures are seated, and are united in a most harmonious movement.

"The eldest of the three" (writes M. Lambotte), "suffering already from the realities of life, takes refuge in the sadness of her deception. Full of bitterness, and living again in an irrecoverable past, she bends forward, motionless, with all the scorn of her useless

strength, and, nobly resigned, is the incarnation of the contemplative life. The second woman is represented in an instantaneous gesture: leaning towards her younger companion, she counsels an active life; but the maiden with eyes closed to the external world remains wrapped in her inviolate dreaming. The whole future, in all its force, lies beneath her smooth brow, her fair illusions are not yet vanished, the *brutalité* of the present, no less than the rancour of the past, has no effect upon her hopes. This work combines with beauty of imagination a perfection which is quite astonishing. The accuracy of proportions, the nobility of gesture, the aristocracy of the types, the harmony and the amplitude of the grouping, together with the technical knowledge shown in the realisation, combine to make up an *ensemble* the charm of which is undeniable."

Bust of Constantin Meunier by Victor Rousseau | "L'Été" by Victor Rousseau

No less remarkable than his imaginative works, the portraits—and they are many—already produced by Victor Rousseau, proclaim the deep and virile nature of his marvellous talent. Without exception these portraits reveal something more than a mere superficial and passing aspect; they form—it has been well said—"plastic interpretation of brains and temperaments, and they have a generalised but definite resemblance which counts for much more than mechanical observation."

One of his first successes was the truly masterly bust he did of Madame Françoise Rousseau—"the companion with the great heart and the lofty mind, who sustains and aids the artist's efforts with admirable conscience."

In his busts of children the subtle sculptor has taken a pleasure, one may say, in following the complex modelling of these faces, with their outlines at once so precise and so indefinite. In his busts of women he has gladly emphasised the delicacy of the features and the suppleness of their movements, always displaying proof of a most personal method of interpretation. If, for instance, the small bust of Madame de Gerlache in terracotta and onyx, in its mode of presentation, recalls the French art of the eighteenth century, it is nevertheless impossible to assert that it brings back the memory of any particular work of that period.

The same with a little bust of a young girl, intended to form part of a decorative *ensemble* in the style of the Italian Renaissance. It is so ingeniously composed in all its parts that it never brings to the mind any suggestion of copying or of imitation.



"Les Adolescents" by Victor Rousseau

In the reproduction of the bust of Mlle. S. now given (p. 108), one sees with what pleasure the artist has displayed in definite fashion the curious beauty of this young girl, the strange charm of her ingenuous features, the suppleness of the graceful curve of her neck.





Bust of Mdlle. S. by Victor Rousseau | Bust by Victor Rousseau

But it is in the very fine bust of Constantin Meunier, also reproduced here, that the young sculptor has risen to the greatest height. Meunier is indeed here, and forever, the good and great artist who was beloved by all who knew him. Here is his face, infinitely "respectable," with his brow all wrinkled by the effort of thought and the weight of care, with the pale eyes so kind and so firm in their gaze, the strong lips, whence came the low, soft speech, the broad shoulders sunken with the burden of toil and of existence. Indeed, artist and model were worthy the one of the other.

At the same time—as M. Lambotte has most judiciously remarked—the works most characteristic of Victor Rousseau's talent-one might even say of his manner—are those of small dimensions, and generally executed in bronze; they are rendered infinitely precious by the refinement and the precision of their execution. These works, which

form a numerous and very varied series, seem all akin, by reason of the artist's constant care to achieve a definite composition, a consecutive form, a suppleness of line and a *facture* at once minute and broad of faces and extremities. One may discover therein also a certain predilection for two very special types—a young man of supreme grace of proportions and movements, and young girl, of ingenuous grace and charm.

The *Coupe des Voluptés* is perhaps the marvel among this series of little marvels, which includes—to name but a few—*Vers la Vie* (Brussels Gallery), *Les Curieuses, Sous Les Etoiles, La Femme au Chapeau,* and *L'Étè.*

By way of concluding this short notice one cannot do better than again borrow from M. Lambotte, and employ the terms in which he himself sums up his subject: "Victor Rousseau constitutes an individuality clearly characterised. Like Rodin, and like Lambeaux, but in another way and with his own means, a form restrained and everywhere definite, with no concession to the unexpected, the incomplete, he realises masterpieces of palpitating life, of dreamy intellectuality. He in his turn ranks among the masters of our marvellous present school of sculpture: he is himself, and indeed one of us, despite his clear conciseness and his conception of a sober beauty."

F. K.

1908

Khnopff, Fernand, “A Flemish Painter: Franz Courtens,” *The Studio*, 43, 179 (February 1908), 23-31.

A Flemish Painter: Franz Courtens. By Fernand Khnopff.

Two well-defined tendencies may be noted in the present progress of the Belgian Landscape School. On the one hand we find a striving towards novelty in the observation of the phenomena of light, and in the study of the processes of representation. The artists forming this group are akin to the French painters; their experiments are sometimes extravagant. Their chief is Emile Claus.

On the other hand one may observe a respect for definite pictorial traditions, and the employment of processes which have been well tried, and, in their certainty, lead at times to commercialism. The artists of this group are allied to the Dutch School, and their head is Franz Courtens. The art of Emile Claus was considered some time ago in THE STUDIO by M. Gabriel Mourey, who devoted a very interesting article to the subject; thus it is the more fitting that the readers of this magazine should now be made acquainted with the work of Franz Courtens, who has lately been feted with extraordinary enthusiasm in his native town.



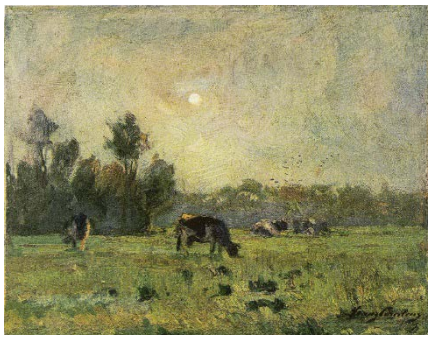
“Dans la Forêt” by Franz Courtens

François Edouard Marie (known as Franz) Courtens was born on the 4th of February, 1854, at Termonde, a little town in Eastern Flanders, situated on the right bank of the Scheldt, at the mouth of the Dendre, nearly equidistant from Ghent and Antwerp.

The town, once so flourishing, but now without any trade of importance, is very picturesque. The country is flat, but the river, in changing its course, has formed vast “polders” extending to the east and to the west; thus the atmosphere is saturated with moisture. “Here,” it has been said, “one sees a town wherein all is colour, with surroundings which are all colour too. Here is a spectacle of nature eminently calculated to develop the instincts of a colourist such as the Master in question—a brilliant painter, disposed to see the sumptuous side of everything.”

The portrait of Franz Courtens has been very accurately and brilliantly limned by M. J. du Jardin in “L’Art Flamand.” “The man,” he writes, “is of ordinary build, and his manner

reveals a temperament cold and nervous. His pointed beard gives him a sort of sly appearance, accentuated by his glance, which is keen and sparkling, restless and inquisitive. And yet this curious physiognomy betrays at once an indomitable energy, which becomes the more characteristic from the fact that while the speech of Franz Courtens is French of a sort, it is mingled with Flemish—the accent of the soil—and with a volubility and a deliberate exaggeration of language and gesture so marked that the master's short pipe—his inseparable companion—is almost always out."

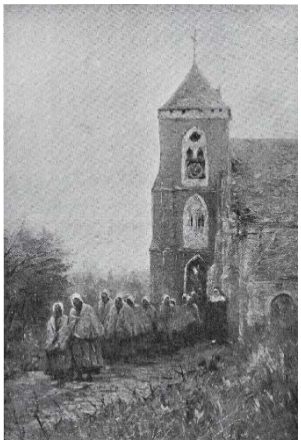



"La Retour de la Traite" from a charcoal drawing by Franz Courtens | "Matin, Novembre" from the oil painting by Franz Courtens

In what is he most keenly interested? In painting, of course. But he is not much inclined to long dissertations. Very curtly he emits his ideas by displaying his canvases one by one before his interlocutor. His works, even the most important, are hurriedly inspected; the artist and his factotum, "Jef," throw them aside in one direction or another, giving one the barest time to see them; and when they are all gone the visitor feels that there must be more somewhere—in the studio, in the hall, in the drawing-room, even in the garret. Then, as though quite worn out—as he might well be with less exercise—when peradventure his visitor chances to be agreeable, which is always the case, seeing that the master is careful to exclude the bore, will come the command: "Jef, go and fetch a bottle of champagne," and we drink the wine as rapidly as we had seen the pictures; and we talk—or, rather, Franz Courtens talks—no longer of his feverish painting, but of the miscarriage of justice of which he declares himself to be the victim; of the off-hand way in which artists are treated in Belgium; of the successes he has won abroad; of his connections with foreign Courts—especially the little German Courts; of the decorations bestowed upon him (quite unimportant things, to his mind); of the superb, astounding, colossal sales he has had in Germany, England and France.

From his childhood he was attracted by the pleasure of drawing and painting. His father was somewhat uneasy about this distraction, which the mother, on the other hand, quietly encouraged. About this period the two excellent landscape painters, Jacques Rosseels and Isidore Meyers, were acting as professors at the Academy of Fine Arts at Termonde, and young Courtens obtained permission to attend the Sunday class only. In a very short time his parents found themselves unable to repress him further, and they decided to let him go entirely in the direction of his favourite study. But there came a day when the father, on the death of one of his sons who had been his chief help in the

business, found it necessary to replace him. Thereupon he summoned young Franz, and told him it was time he devoted himself to serious things and gave up “the pleasures of the chase.” The “chase,” to the paternal mind, meant the visits of his little son to the country, whither, painter’s kit in hand, he would betake himself, and, face to face with Nature, obstinately demand from her the secrets of light and the means whereby to fix that light on his canvas. Franz made no reply, but his mind was made up on the spot. Packing his bag immediately, he borrowed twenty francs from a friend, and started for Brussels, wherein he had never set foot. Then began the hard, almost desperate, struggle for existence.

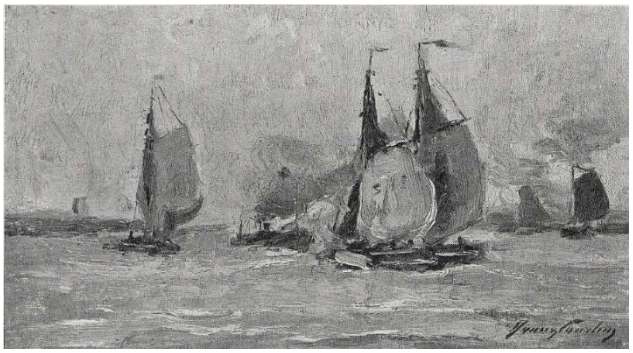



“Le Retour du Salut” by Franz Courtens | “Les Vielles de Schiedam” by Franz Courtens

A garret in some sort of house at the end of an avenue in the outskirts was his first abode, where he cooked his own humble meals. But he set to work bravely, and, by a lucky chance, made the acquaintance of Stacquet, the water-colourist, who bought his first picture. Soon after another was sold at the Cercle Artistique for twelve hundred francs, which meant a fortune! Thereupon Courtens left his hovel, and set up in a real *atelier* in Brussels. This was a rather bold step for a young painter with no resources beyond the products of his brush, *plus* a fixed determination to strike an independent line of art for himself. But he was not long in making himself known. At the Ghent Salon of 1874 he exhibited a canvas, described in the catalogue as *Bords de Canal*, which gave him some encouragement. His fine virtuosity and his brilliant colouring were gladly recognised. Nevertheless it was not till the Brussels Salon of 1884, where he exhibited *La Sortie de l’Office* (now the property of the Brussels Gallery) and *Les Barques à moules*, that he won celebrity. A few years later, at the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1889, he won his apotheosis in the shape of a *première médaille*, this honour being confirmed soon after by other similar distinctions at other important artistic tourneys, notably that of the Brussels Universal Exhibition of 1897. One of the master’s best works seen at this Exhibition has been thus described in the “Revue de l’ Art Ancien et Moderne” by M. Fierens-Gevaert:—

“In his *Neige*, a work of fairly large dimensions, representing a glade fringed by beeches and elms, Courtens has recovered all the best of his qualities. Complete grasp of the great decorative harmonies, suppleness of technique-now vigorous, as in the handling

of the tree trunks, now delicate as possible in the bluish transparency of the bare branches—perfect exactitude in the difficult matter of harmonising the relative parts in a white symphony of this sort—everything in this masterly canvas proclaims the skilled hand, the certain instinct of the born landscapist, and it is certainly a long time since we have been given the opportunity of admiring a piece of work so free and so rich in its savour."

"Dans l'Étable" from a charcoal drawing by Franz Courtens | "Temps Gris sur l'Escaut" by Franz Courtens

Success such as this having been won, it followed of course that pupils and imitators, both numerous and respectful, made haste to follow in the master's steps. Some of them were quite remarkable people, the best being MM. Apol, Blieck, Gilsoul, Gorus, Merckaert, and young Herman Courtens, whose success gave great delight to his father. But how far behind Franz Courtens leaves them all! While a few among them succeeded in acquiring, under his direction, certain technical qualities and some ability in the *mise-en-page*—the presentment of their efforts—not one can be really compared with him. Not one of them in the conception of his works suggests that feeling of power and grandeur which characterises the author of the *Pluie d'Or*; not one of them contrives to master the manipulation of his material with the ease and vigour of him who painted the *Barques à moules*.

FERNAND KHNOPFF.

1910

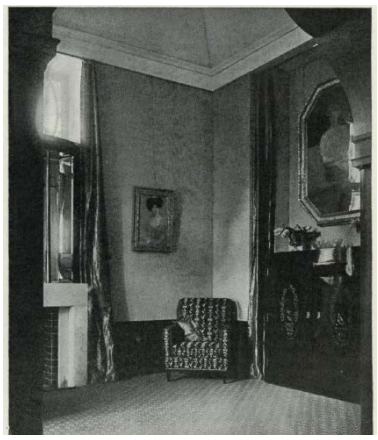
Khnopff, Fernand, “The Brussels Exhibition I: Some Furnished Interiors,” *The Studio*, 50, 210 (Sept 15, 1910), 308-317.

The Brussels Exhibition: I. Some Furnished Interiors.
By Fernand Khnopff.

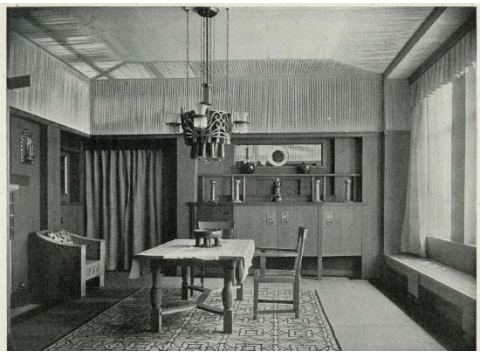
IN the organisation of universal exhibitions it is in the nature of a tradition to erect vast palaces, with huge porticoes leading into interminable colonnades, and with immense galleries capped with excessively ornate decorative devices. The whole effect of such constructions is purely external; in their totality they are merely façades, and often enough the extravagance of conception to which they bear witness is equalled only by the incoherence of the realisation.

Let me hasten to affirm that nothing of this kind could be alleged of the beautiful palace which, until that ill-fated Sunday last month when it perished with practically all its treasures in the flames, formed the principal building of the Universal Exhibition organised by the Belgian Government. This palace, the design of which emanated from the eminent Brussels architect, M. Ernest Acker, was indeed a work of most refined taste; its long façade in the Classic style running parallel with the Bois de la Cambre, and its elegant lineaments and dainty decoration harmonised perfectly with the sylvan scenery of the immediate neighbourhood. Given the style selected by the architect, the conditions imposed could not have been better fulfilled in the circumstances.

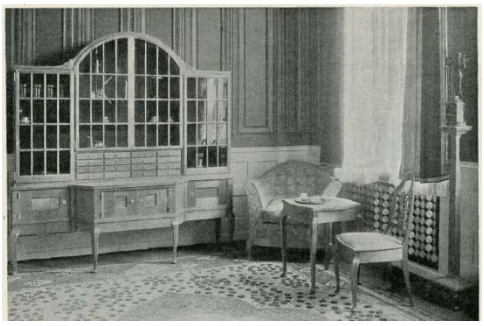
At the same time it must be acknowledged that the galleries which these façades encompassed had one principal defect: the uniformity of setting to which the various nations invited to participate had perforce to submit their products left them no scope for displaying themselves in the intimacy of a national environment. Germany alone has set an example in this respect. This country, as has been very rightly remarked, “in bringing together on ‘German soil’ her machines, her sumptuary arts, and her arts of design—that is to say, in giving an opportunity for forming a synoptic judgment of these as the expressions of a certain mental status, has shown particularly that every intellectual manifestation ought, if it is to have its full effect, to be presented in its proper *milieu* and maintain its relative value.”



A Corner in the Ladies Room of the German Pavilion (Deutsches Haus), Brussels Exhibition.
Designed by Prof. Emanuel Von Seidl.
Executed by Ballin's Hofmöbelfabrik, Munich.



Breakfast Room Designed by Prof. Max Läuger
(Executed by Billing & Zoller, Karlsruhe).



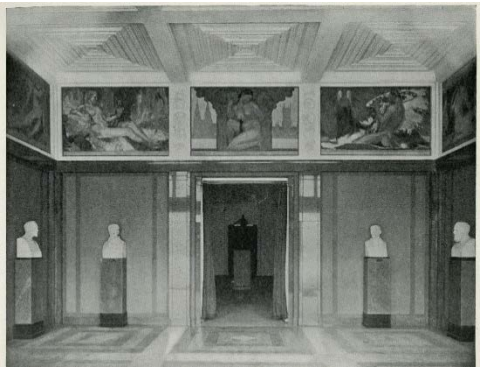
Lady's Room Designed by Prof. R. Riemerschmid
Executed by the Deutsche Werkstätten, Dresden-Hellerau.

The German section, which from its isolated position at a considerable distance from the scene of last month's conflagration was happily not involved in that disaster, is installed in buildings of its own, designed by German architects and carried out by German contractors and German workmen. Thus the German section, with its nine halls, its German pavilion (Deutsches Haus), its restaurants and gardens, constitutes; within the limits of the Universal Exhibition an entity quite distinct from all the rest, and one that is truly national in character. The Munich architect, Prof. Emanuel von Seidl, is the author of the general plan, and as an artist he has succeeded in composing a fine

architectural ensemble. He has varied the design of these buildings to suit their particular purposes, but in their general effect they are all of the same type as the "Deutsches Haus." This edifice is the most conspicuous object in the entire range of buildings forming the German section, its ascending lines producing a vertical break in the horizontal disposition of the general scheme in which it forms a central and culminating point that unites its various members into one coherent whole. The designer has further striven to establish as far as possible a harmony between the character of his designs and the features of the Parc du Solbosch in the immediate vicinity of which the buildings have been erected, and in the gardens surrounding these he has aimed to provide an appropriate setting. The exterior of the buildings has been finished in white, with black for the columns and grey tiles for the roofs, a small amount of plastic decoration being added here and there, part of which is relieved by gilding.

Within, we find the halls devoted to a wide variety of objects; several are occupied with machinery and manufactures; one, the "Kultushalle," with numerous sub-divisions, is set apart for education, and another is consecrated to art as applied to the interior equipment of houses and the manifold objects which subserve both useful and ornamental functions in daily life. It is with this division that we are here concerned, although a passing word should be spared for certain rooms in the "Kultushalle," in which the whole of the arts and crafts connected with book-production are represented under various classifications, notable among them being a room in which the work of some of the principal book-illustrators of Germany is displayed.

The chief centre of interest in the hall labelled "Raumkunst and Kunstgewerbe,'' is an extensive suite of rooms completely furnished with tables, chairs, cabinets, carpets, hangings, table services, metal implements and apparatus, and many of them fitted with wainscot panelling. Of this suite of rooms, eleven answer exactly to their description as the rooms of a "vornehmes Haus"—that is, a gentleman's residence—and they comprise every variety of apartment, except domestic offices, to be found in the houses of the well-to-do. There is, for instance, a study or smoking-room for the master of the house, a drawing-room or "Gesellschafts-salon," a lady's boudoir, a breakfast-room, a dining-room, a bedroom and a night nursery, a bath-room with sumptuous appointments and fittings of diverse kinds, a dressing-room communicating with a bath-room, besides ante-chambers and lobbies.



Vestibule In German Applied Art Section, Brussels Exhibition
Designed by Prof. Bruno Paul
(Executed by Vereinigte Werkstätten für Kunst im Handwerk A- G., Munich;
Decorative paintings by Prof. Adolf Münzer)



Dining Room for a Club
Designed by Prof. Albin Müller;
Executed by Th. Encke, Magdeburg

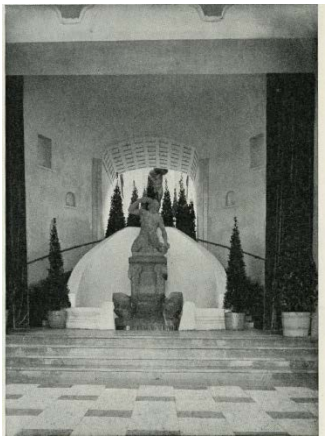
These, however, are not the only examples of interior furnishing which are offered to the visitor in this hall. There are, in addition, a small number of domestic interiors, more or less akin in general style to the others, but with a less expensive equipment, these including a couple of dining-rooms, one by Karl Bertsch, and the other by Prof. Riemerschmid, both of Munich, and a ladies' room by the latter. Further, we find a suite of four rooms for a club, including the dining room by Prof. Albin Müller, of which an illustration is given above; three rooms designed for a sanatorium—an operating room, a waiting-room, and a consultation room. And then, finally, there are various rooms intended for use as offices of sundry kinds, such as a small hall for the Rathaus at Karlsruhe, by Prof. Hoffacker, Director of the School for Applied Art in that city; a "Trauzimmer" for marriage ceremonies; a private office for the President of the German Committee at the Exhibition; a press room; a reading-room for illustrated periodicals, a series of rooms designated as those of a "Kunstfreund" or art-patron, in which is displayed a choice collection of works of art-paintings, sculpture, drawings, &c.—by some of the leading German artists of the modern school.

At first sight, if the visitor be a cultured man of the Latin race, all this manifestation of German decoration and furnishing will perhaps clash with his taste and habits; but the determined energy which the whole reveals, and the effort of realisation, are such that

the feeling of disturbance he may have experienced at first will quickly give place to one of admiration and astonishment: as one gets accustomed to a thing one understands it better, and ends by taking account of the necessity of it all, as one might say.



Lobby in German Applied Art Section, Brussels Exhibition
Designed by Prof. Bruno Paul
Sculpture by Prof. Paul Peterich

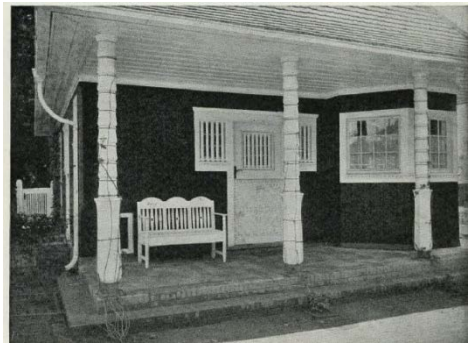


Vestibule of German Pavilion (Deutsches Haus}, Brussels Exhibition
Designed by Prof. Emanuel Von Seidl
Fountain by Prof. A. Von Hildebrand



Two Artisans' Cottages at The Brussels Exhibition.
Designed by G. Metzendorf.
Constructed by A. Siebel, Düsseldorf.

An eminent French critic has remarked—it seems to me with a good deal of truth—that we have here a *mélange* of forms in which the classicism of the middle ages and German times massive, and some of the colours are hard, but the end that is always kept in view is to administer to a rational and practical state of comfort. Gothicism are combined with elements derived from the Far East in varying proportions. But this modern style of furniture, which, with diverse modifications, has been in vogue in all countries during the past twenty years, Germany is striving to reinforce from new sources, and she is setting herself the task of imparting to it health and strength. The venture is at once interesting and bold, and is being pursued with that thought and tenacity so characteristic of the German people. The forms are at times massive, and some of the colours are hard, but the end that is always kept in view is to administer to a rational and practical state of comfort.



Portico of Artisan's Cottage at Brussels Exhibition
Designed by G. Metzendorf

In the details one frequently finds introduced ingenious and dainty refinements; the materials—wood, metal, glass, clay—are utilised to advantage and so as to secure the full measure of their decorative effect; and as to the workmanship, that is carried to the point of minute care, everything savouring of trashiness or triviality being scrupulously avoided. Art can be brought to bear even on the very smallest things.

While acknowledging that this German display of furniture and decoration strikes one as a little sombre, we must bear in mind that we have to do here with a northern race, and that if Germany is intent on creating for her "Heim" a style adapted to the habits of her

people and the climate of the country, far from being a reproach to her, it is, on the contrary, a movement calling for the highest praise.

It is hardly possible to mention here the names of all those who have collaborated so happily in this enterprise. Most of them, like Emanuel von Seidl and Bruno Paul (who have taken the principal share in it), Max Läuger, Peter Behrens, Richard Riemerschmid, Albin Müller, Schultze-Naumburg, Hermann Billing, Wilhelm Kreis, Karl Bertsch, Max Heidrich, and others, need no introduction to readers of this magazine. In the various rooms arranged by these architects are to be found examples of decorative painting and of sculpture in stone or wood by prominent artists, such as Adolf Münzer, Paul Peterich, W. Schmarje, Josef Wackerle, Fritz Erler, C. A. Bermann. Of the numerous designers who are represented in the galleries where the multitudinous objects of pottery and porcelain, metal work, &c., are displayed, I must speak on another occasion when dealing with these classes of work.



Kitchen in Artisan's Cottage
Designed by G. Metzendorf, architect
Furniture executed by Gebr. Schürmann, Essen.
Stove by Drüner & Hattenburg

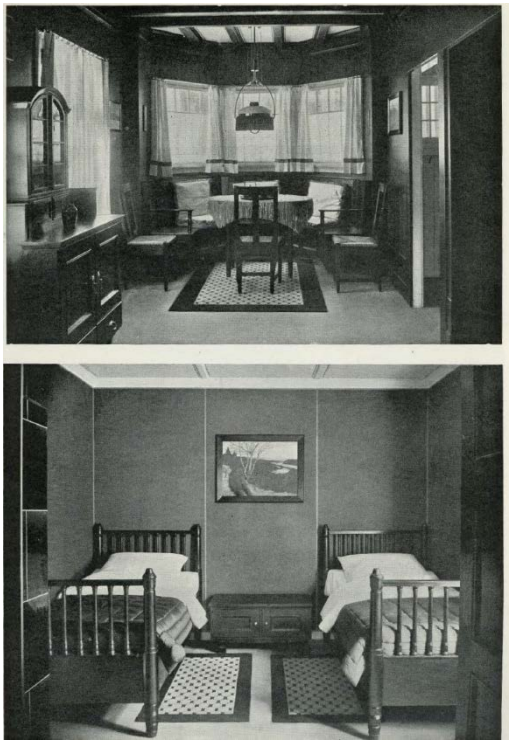
Before quitting the subject of domestic interiors, I should like to draw attention to the two fully furnished specimens of artisans' houses which have been set up in close proximity to the principal buildings of the German section. The architect of these is Herr George Metzendorf, who, like numerous other talented architects in Germany, has devoted much time and thought to the planning, construction, and equipment of dwellings of this character. The two cottages, which are constructed of wood in sections to admit of transportation, have been designed by him as architect of the Margarethe Krupp Stiftung or Trust, and are intended for the workers of the Rhenish-Westphalian manufacturing region. Both are admirably planned, and though small, are far from being "poky." That is largely due to the excellent design of the furniture, which has been specially adapted by the architect for the rooms in which it is placed. This furniture is very substantially made, yet inexpensive, and has been carefully designed, not only with a view to durability, but also with an eye to comfort and economy of labour. Especially is this the case with the appointments in the rooms or offices where the operations of cooking and washing are carried on. Here everything looks neat and wholesome; the appliances are so ingeniously contrived as to excite our admiration for the thought and care bestowed on their forms and functions.

A few words must suffice for the interiors exhibited in the other national sections. Here there is nothing approaching in magnitude to the German display. In the French section there are shown a few modem interiors, notably a dining room by Dufrène, and another by Lambert, in both of which there is in evidence more gaiety in the general design than one observes in the German interiors, but as, contrasted with the florid decoration which characterizes so much of the French work these show considerable restraint. I must also name a delightful boudoir by M. Follot, and a very pleasant smoking room by M. Selmersheim. In the British section, which suffered so disastrously from the fire of August 14, there was no modern furniture of particular significance; the complete interiors shown belonged to the "antique" class—Elizabethan, Georgian, Chinese, Chippendale, and so on—and these perished in the flames. In the Dutch section the modern interiors reveal the same qualities and defects as those in the neighbouring German section; and in the Belgian section—practically all reduced to ashes last month—the special pavilions of MM. Serrurier and Van de Voorde contained all that was of special interest to us. Great, however, as was the destruction wrought by the fire, I hope to fulfil my intention to speak in a subsequent article of the principal works of applied art in the various sections.

F.K.



Sitting Room Furniture for Artisan's Cottage
Designed By G. Metzendorf, architect
Executed By Gebr. Schürmann, Essen



Sitiing Room Bay and Childrens Bedroom in Artisans Cottage
Designed by G. Metzendorf
Furniture executed by Gebr. Schürmann, Essen

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 48, 202 (January 1910), 330-331.

BRUSSELS.—It appears that the rooms at the Art Gallery are no longer sufficient to contain all the numerous productions of the painters and sculptors of Brussels, and already several exhibitions have been organised successfully in the Salle Boute; but so far I have seen no show there which could compare in interest with the recent one, in which we had an opportunity of seeing the work of the figure painters, A. Cluysenaar, G. Lemmen, and G. M. Stevens; of the landscapists, W. Finch, Hazledine, and W. Schlobach; and of the sculptors, P. Dubois and Gaspar. Mons. Cluysenaar's pictures were of considerable importance, and comprised female portraits, portraits of children, studies, and a few landscapes. One hears it said frequently of his painting that it is *solide et savoureuse,* but it should also be added that there are inherent in it qualities of bold draughtsmanship, strong colouring and a refined sentiment such as is a characteristic of the art of the contemporary Scottish school of painting. The talent of G. M. Stevens was once again evinced in delightful pictures of graceful femininity, among which *Le départ pour le tennis* was particularly worthy of notice. G. Lemmen, who exhibited a large and very varied selection—studies from the nude, landscapes, and flower-pieces—must be classed in the foremost rank of painters of rare talent and unexpected and charming colouring. The rugged Finnish landscapes of W. Finch; the English landscapes of Hazledine; the cool orchards of W. Schlobach, with some fine statuettes; a beautiful group by P. Dubois, and patient studies of animals by Gaspar, completed an exhibition of exceptional charm.




Portrait by A. Cluysenaar | “Étude” by M. Van Andringa

In the “Cercle Artistique de Bruxelles,” a Dutch artist, M. van Andringa, showed recently a collection of pictures and drawings which attracted a large number of lovers of good painting to these galleries. This artist, who is above all a colourist, seeks always for decorative effect. His large panel, *Des Coquelicots,* is consummately composed and of very sumptuous colouring.

F. K.

F. K., “Studio-Talk. Brussels,”*The Studio*, 49, no. 204, March 1910, 145-146.

BRUSSELS.—The sculptor, Ch. Samuel, of Brussels, some of whose works in ivory have already appeared in THE STUDIO (Nov. 1902 and May, 1904), exhibited recently a statuette, *Une danseuse antique* (reproduced on p. 146), which undoubtedly deserves to rank as his most important achievement in this *genre.* The general line of the composition is graceful and harmonious, and the details of the work—of the hands especially—have been executed with consummate finish. The modelling, also, of a memorial plaquette to the Baron F. A. Gevaert has been entrusted to M. Samuel. M. Fonson, the publisher, has undertaken, very courageously and without official support, to have medals struck in memory of illustrious Belgians, and the occasion of the death of the eminent Director of the Brussels Conservatoire seemed to him a fitting one to inaugurate the series. The very characteristic profile of the “master,” with his ironical smile, has been reproduced by the sculptor with remarkable fidelity. In his design for the reverse of the medal, an illustration of which is given on this page, M. Samuel has introduced the bas-relief with which the much-regretted sculptor, Paul de Vigne, ornamented the tomb of Madame Gevaert, adding to it an appropriate verse from the Psalms, *In salicibus suspendimus organa nostra.*



Reverse of Memorial Plaquette to Baron F.A. Gevaert by Ch. Samuel | Ivory Statuette “Une Danseuse Antique” by Ch. Samuel

F. K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 49, 206 (May 1910), 325-326.

BRUSSELS.—The Société Royale Belge des Aquarellistes has held its fiftieth exhibition. That implies a long career for a society of artists who devote themselves to the practice of only one branch of art. While recently celebrating the jubilee of its foundation the Society organised a retrospective exhibition, showing the historic evolution of water-colour drawing during the second half of the nineteenth century. The development of the art as shown in this exhibition has been extremely interesting—one feels in the work of practically all the artists who employ this medium a striving to escape from the restrictions and limitations which the *genre* would seem to impose; and to the freshness and fluidity of the early wash-drawings the artists of to-day are seeking, and with success, to add something of the richness and solidity of oil painting. The Society has endeavoured furthermore to commemorate this anniversary by offering an excellent and complete exhibition of its own active members—which is in every way an entire success.



“Le Dernier Baiser” (Légende d’Orphée) by Paul Dubois

The Belgian sculptor Paul Dubois, who has been showing at the Bonte galleries some of his most recent works, worthy successors of his earlier achievements, by reason of their sound knowledge of form and supple modeling, has added to his success as a master of the plastic art success also as a teacher, for it is a pupil of his, M. Rau, who has been unanimously selected for the Prix de Rome. This is the first time M. Rau has entered for a competition, and he was the youngest of the competitors.

F.K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 50, 207 (June 1910), 70-71.

Brussels.—The art circle *L’Estampe* recently opened its fourth annual Salon, and already its exhibitions have taken a premier place among shows of the kind. The organiser of these Salons, M.R. Sand, has realised that in such a case “protection” would be out of place, and notwithstanding that the principal etchers and engravers belong to the *cercle,* and more or less hold the success of its exhibitions in their hands, has never hesitated to give each year a great part of the space to retrospective collections and foreign works. About a score of admirably selected works represented the *œuvre* of Jan Luyken, the Dutch engraver of the seventeenth century, celebrated by J. K. Huysmans in his famous book “À Rebours.” Among the foreign artists' works one noticed several wonderful pen drawings by the Italian, Alberto Martini, illustrations to the stories of Edgar Allen Poe; also superb lithographs by M. Belleroche; sombre etchings by M. Cottet; and some curious coloured wood-engravings by M. Arthur Jacquin. Among the Belgians, after the ensemble of drawings and engravings by Charles De Groux, the friend of the poor and afflicted, one noticed a masterpiece by that excellent engraver A. Danse, after Watteau's *Embarquement pour Cythère;* some landscapes of deep and powerful rusticity by Marc-Henri Meunier; lithographs by Claus, as luminous as his paintings; drawings by Fernand Khnopff, including one commissioned from him to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Université libre de Bruxelles; works by H. De Groux, Ensor, Hazledine, Durian and Thysbaert; etchings in colours by MM. Charlet, Van der Loo, V. Mignot; and women artists achieved triumph in the successful exhibits of Mmes. L. Danse, Wesmael and Franchomme.

F. K.

[unsigned], “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 50, 209 (August 1910), 244-247.

BRUSSELS.—The great event of the present year in Brussels is of course the International and Universal Exhibition, located on a large site close to the picturesque Bois de la Cambre. Applied or decorative art is in one or other shape and in varying degrees a feature of the different national sections, but in the British section the chief interest centres in the ceramic exhibits, which collectively demonstrate the high position held by British products of this class. The cases containing the articles sent over by the Pilkington Company, Wedgwoods, the Ruskin Pottery Works, Doulton, and other potteries have attracted much attention, and, to judge by the number of tickets bearing the word “Vendu,” purchasers also. In other branches of applied art, however, the British section is disappointing in its meagreness, and, taken as a whole, it cannot be said that the contemporary arts and crafts of Great Britain are at all worthily represented. No blame for this attaches to those to whom the organisation of the section was entrusted, for the grant made by the Treasury for this and the Italian exhibition to be held next year necessarily entailed limitations.

The German Government, however, has been more generous, and the result is that a far more comprehensive representation of modern German decorative and applied art is to be found in their section, which has the advantage of an independent suite of buildings specially designed for the occasion by the eminent architect, Prof. Emanuel von Seidl. These buildings, with their rough-cast walls and dark tiled roofs, are characteristically German, and form a marked contrast to the other buildings of the exhibition. Nor has there been any stint in the application of distinguished talent to the fitting out of the interiors. For most of these Prof. Bruno Paul, the leading exponent of “Raumkunst” in Berlin, is responsible, others who have been entrusted with the interior arrangements being Architect Otto Walter, of Berlin, Prof. Peter Behrens, Prof. M. Dülfer and Architect Oskar Menzel, of Dresden, Prof. Seeck, of Steglitz. Here again the designs are significant of the aims which the leading modern architects of Germany are seeking to realise, and about which something was said in the last volume of THE STUDIO YEAR BOOK OF DECORATIVE ART. For the artist-craftsman, however, the feature of principal interest in the German section is the extensive suite of furnished rooms designed by leading architects, and the rooms in which are displayed the products of German porcelain factories and potteries, metal-work, and other branches of “Kunstgewerbe.” These testify to the great forward strides which are being made in these directions by German workers. When reviewing the various manifestations of artistic activity at this exhibition, as we propose to later, we shall refer more fully to this display; here we will only say that it is one which all who are interested in the future of British applied art should see for themselves. It is generally recognised by German writers on applied art, as it is in the official catalogue of their section, that it was from England that the ideas which underlie the modern development of arts and crafts in Germany came to them; but the question is whether the lead taken by Britain has not been lost, or, at all events, will not soon be lost.

Except for a small display of pictures, sculpture, etchings, and so forth in the German section, fine art is not represented at the Exposition Universelle, but in the fine galleries of the Palais du Cinquantenaire, in another quarter of the town, there is an extensive collection of paintings and sculpture by modern artists of various nationalities. Prominence is naturally given to the Belgian group, which affords ample proof of the vigour and independence of the artists of this country. The French rooms, too, are very interesting, and the works, representing the most diverse elements in French art at the present day, are admirably displayed. Much good work is also to be found in the Dutch rooms, but with some of the national contributions we were not impressed very greatly, though here and there one comes across an example of more than usual interest. The British group is one of the smallest of all and far from representative. A novelty in this exhibition is a special Salon devoted to medals and plaquettes by artists of all nationalities. Of this unique little Salon, which the organisers have striven to make fully representative, we hope to say more later.

An adjacent wing of the Palais du Cinquantenaire is consecrated to a remarkable display of paintings, drawings, sculpture, and applied art belonging to the 17th century. The paintings of the old masters, numbering more than 600, include over a hundred by Rubens, nearly as many by Van Dyck, and numerous examples by Adrian Brouwer, Jordaens, Pourbus the younger, F. Snyders, Teniers the younger, and others, contributed from many sources, public and private, including many important foreign collections. The exhibits of decorative art include, along with many other items of interest, the fine series of Brussels tapestries designed by Rubens to illustrate the history of Constantine.

[H.F and] F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 51, 211 (October 1910), 66-69.

BRUSSELS.—This year is the first occasion upon which a special section in an International Exhibition has been devoted to the art of the medal, and much praise is due to M. de Witte and to the Vicomte de Jonghe for having organised the section at the Palais du Cinquantenaire dealing with this subject, and which has all through the summer enjoyed such lively success. It is not my province here to speak of the very interesting display of medals from Germany, Belgium, Denmark or Spain; I may only say a few words concerning the collection got together by France. The organisation of this exhibit was entrusted to M. Mazerolle, the keeper of the records at the Mint, who is one of the best authorities upon the evolution of the medal in France. Thanks to this gentleman's influence and his efforts, all, or almost all, of the French *médailleurs* responded to this appeal by the French Government, and now the most notable productions of recent years may be seen grouped together in a charming hall decorated with a frieze by Dufrène.

Roty, who is the acknowledged master of the art of engraving medals, shows three cases forming a very representative exhibit of his work. Among the deceased artists there is represented Ponscarme, the great innovator, Chaplain, Alexandre Charpentier, and Daniel-Dupuy. Besides this work there are excellent examples by Vernon, Degeorge, Yencesse, Mme. Mérignac, Theunissen, Patey, Legastelois, Loiseau-Bailly, Doctor Paul Richer, Vernier, Dautel, Mlle. Granger, and that fine artist, J. M. Cazin.
H. F.

At the International Art Exhibition organised in connection with the Universal Exhibition, to which reference has already been made, the lack of any central scheme of organisation diminishes to a great extent the interest which the comparison of the different contemporary schools would have afforded. Besides the Belgian school, those of France, Italy, Holland and Spain are represented in a fairly complete manner. On the other hand, it is not possible to judge of the artistic tendencies of Great Britain, of Russia, or of the countries of Scandinavia from the collections of works—many of which are certainly very remarkable—which the artists of those lands have contributed. The Belgian Salon of 1910 ought to have shown us a synthesis of our artists' different manners and styles, comprehending and explaining their beauty. Instead of this it is nothing more than an ordinary salon, rather badly organised, extremely badly housed, and, what is even worse, encumbered with a quantity of second-rate work. All the same it does not the less vividly reveal the worth of the school of painting in our country, and if, in the imagination, one makes some necessary eliminations and judiciously replaces them by certain choice works, one gets from the *ensemble* an excellent idea of Belgian art.

The most attractive picture in this Belgian collection is the large winter landscape by A. J. Heymans, whose dignified talent dominates the Belgian school of landscape painting. Camille Lemonnier has called him “l'evocateur solennel et attendri des matins du monde.” There are also important landscapes by E. Claus, A. Baertsoen, R. and J. Wytsman, by F. Courtens, V. Gilsoul and Matthieu. The work of MM. Oleffe and Jefferys, two young artists, has achieved considerable success. Among the portraits one must mention the work of E. Wauters, Devriend, Frederic Wollès, Cluysenaar, De la Hoese, Van Holder and Artot; and among the figure painters Gouweloos, Michel, Thomas, Middeleer (whose curious painting, *La Procession des Aveugles à Bruges*, is very badly hung), and G. M. Stevens, whose picture was recently acquired for the Musée de Bruxelles. Among the painters of still life I must mention A. Verhaeren, Mdlle. A. Ronner, Ensor, Van Zevenberghe, and Morren.

In a special room are placed all the large paintings, all those destined for mural decoration, and here one finds work by Ciamberlani, Delville, Montald, Langaskens, Motte and Mertens. I must also mention the contributions from the principal members of the Société royale des Aquarellistes and of the Cercle de l'Estampe, H. Cassiers, Fernand Khnopff, A. Danse, H. Meunier, Marcette, Delaunois, Baseleer, Hagemans, Rassenfosse, Lenain.




Portrait bust of Mme. Willens by P. Dubois | “L’Automne” by V. Rousseau



“La Procession des Aveugles” by J. Middeleer

Among the sculpture should be noticed a marble bust, *L'Automne,* by V. Rousseau, full of exquisite sentiment, as indeed is all the delicate work that this master produces. A work of great importance, which attracts attention by its ingenious composition and the ease of its execution, is the monument by J. Lagae, which is to be erected at Buenos Ayres; Ch. Samuel exhibits a monumental group; J. de Lalaing an elegantly designed fountain; T. Vinçotte a torso full of life and energy; H. Wolfers a strikingly attractive group; P. Dubois a charming bust in marble of Madame Willens, which has been acquired for the Musée de Bruxelles, and which must certainly be regarded as one of the finest achievements of this able artist; and lastly, I must not omit to mention a young man, M. d'Haveloose, who exhibits a delightful group full of grace and youth, entitled *La Toilette*. The exhibition remains open till the end of next month.

F. K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 51, 213 (December 15, 1910), 246-49.

The Belgian Committee of the Congrès International de Numismatique et d'art de la médaille having been inspired by a wish to see included in the exhibition of Fine Arts at the Palais du Cinquantenaire an international Salon devoted to the art of the medal, laid their proposal before the Commission de Patronage, by whom their suggestion was favourably received, and the idea unanimously adopted. The Government Department of Fine Arts therefore made of the art of engraving medals a special “class.” “This step”—(I translate the words of M. Tourneur in his preface to the Catalogue)—”of which it is impossible at once to appreciate the significance, is one of exceeding importance, for it implies the official recognition of the contemporary art of the medal as a special branch of plastic art.”

The contribution of the French artists to the Salon has been already dealt with in the October number of THE STUDIO. It only remains to add that this exhibition proved once again the great superiority of French work in this branch. “La France,” writes M. Buls, the President of the Société hollando-belge des Amis de la Médaille d'Art, “a montré depuis trois-quarts de siècle une efflorescence de cet art de la médaille qui n'a été surpassée à aucune époque.” And before passing on to more detailed consideration of the exhibits of the Belgian artists I must draw attention to the very interesting effort of the German school towards the creation of a characteristic style, and also to the qualities of careful observation exemplified in the Austrian work.

The sculptor, G. Devreese, of Brussels, stands in the forefront of the group of Belgian medallers, and our readers will remember that THE STUDIO has on many occasions given reproductions of his work. In the three frames and the revolving glass case which contained his numerous exhibits one had the pleasure of seeing again among the older works *La Dentellière, Le Photographe, Le Potier,* so very characteristic, the delicate profile of the *Polonaise,* the portraits of *MM. de Witte, Buls, Van den Broeck,* to mention only a few*;* while among his recent productions was the plaquette reproduced last year in THE STUDIO (Sept., 1909, page 316) representing *MM. Kufferath and Guidé,* the artist-directors of the Théâtre de la Monnaie; the charming features of the delightful dancer, J. Cerny as *Salomé;* the seal of the Université libre de Bruxelles; also a medal showing a mounted herald announcing the Exhibition of 1910; the badge of the Councillors of the Province of Hainault, showing on the reverse an apprentice being instructed in his work by his Master, a most appropriate design for a Province which contains so many technical schools. Since the opening of the Salon M. Devreese has been able to complete yet another piece of work, the medal for the Beaux-Arts. This represents the struggle of mankind towards the ideal in art, despite the difficulties of existence.

Two cases contained the work of the sculptor, Ch. Samuel; he has executed several remarkable plaquettes, among others one commissioned by the Société Royale d'Architecture de Belgique, and numerous portrait medals and plaquettes, among which we have chosen for reproduction that of *M. Vergote,* a former Governor of Brabant, of *Count Goblet d’Alviella,* and of *Baron Gevaert.* We had occasion lately, apropos of this

last plaquette, to refer to the courageous enterprise of the publisher Fonson, of Brussels, who wishes to perpetuate, in a series of medals, the names of distinguished Belgians. The last work published in this way is a portrait of the poet Max Waller, the founder of the Jeune-Belgique. M. Devreese has caught the likeness and engraved admirably the noble and sympathetic features of the young writer.





Plaquette: “L’Enseignement.” By P. Wissaert | Medal by A. De Smeth | Medal: The Artist’s Parents by P. Wissaerts



Councillor’s Badge of Office. By G. Devreese





Plaquette: Baron Gevaert by Ch. Samuel | Medal: Count Goblet d’Alviella by Ch. Samuel




Plaquette by Ch. Samuel | Plaquette: M. Vergote by Ch. Samuel

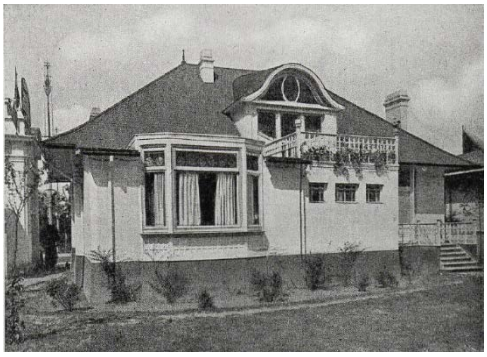
Those prolific sculptors of Brussels, P. Dubois and P. Braecke, M. Devillez, who does such delicate work, the medallers, F. Dubois and L. Dupuis, all contributed largely to the success of the Belgian section of the Salon, and in concluding our survey of it we would draw attention to the work of two young men—namely, M. de Smeth, a pupil of Devreese, who showed a *Jeune Nantaise,* and M. P. Wissaert, a pupil of Van der Stappen, who exhibited his charming plaquette *l'Enseignement,* of most remarkable cleverness of composition, elegance of design, and showing special knowledge of the art of modelling in bas relief, also the plaquette destined to commemorate the voyage of the then Prince Albert to the Congo, and a large medal of the artist's parents.

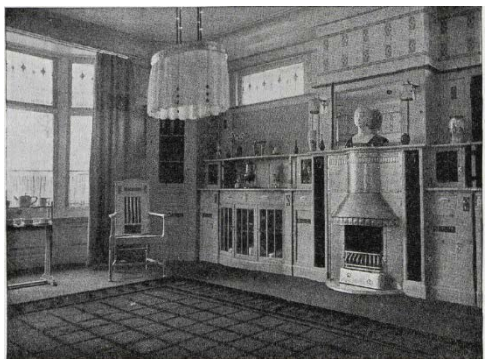
F. K.

1911

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 51, 214 (January 1911), 324-328.

BRUSSELS.—After the striking victories gained at Turin in 1902, and at Milan in 1906, by the representatives of modern art in Belgium, one had hoped for similar triumphs at the Brussels Exhibition of 1910, and it is as incomprehensible as it is deplorable that this modern school of Belgian art, whose influence has been felt in all the countries of Europe, should have been unrepresented there. As M. Robe has written in “L'Art Moderne,” “Now or never was the moment to appeal to the public for a verdict upon our work. I grant that the authorities have rather looked askance at the products of our brains, and so far have not entrusted to us the elaboration of plans for public works and buildings which are destined to form permanent records of their day. But here we had a unique occasion to make a display of our talent, and even had the result been disastrous, if it is indeed true that our work is destined to have but an ephemeral existence, the evil could not have been permanent or lasting, as is the case with so many of the monuments and buildings which deface our public squares.” On the other hand, the preface to the catalogue of the German section begins as follows:— “At the moment when our Art Industry is about to give an account of itself . . . of its aims and capabilities, it is only seemly that, before going on to speak of the work of our own country, we should remind ourselves of what our German artists and craftsmen owe to their Belgian confreres.” The writer of the preface then proceeds to mention the names of Lemmen, Finch, Serrurier-Bovy, Horta, and goes on to explain the influence of and the exact position occupied by Henri Van de Velde, “whose name stands as a monument, so to speak, of the sympathy existing between German and Belgian genius.”

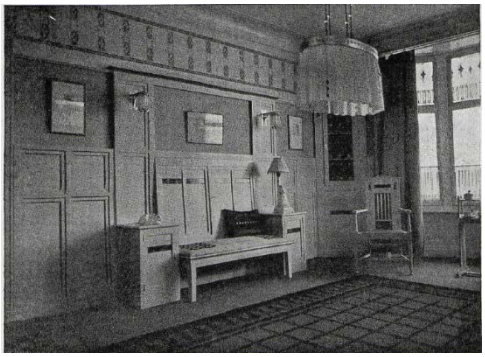




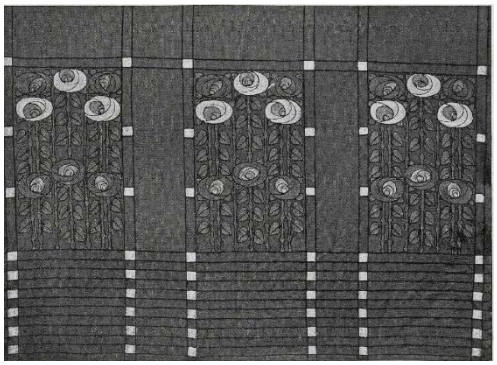
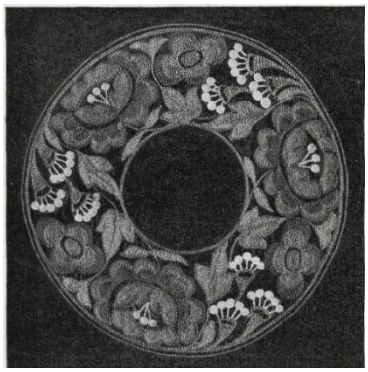
Furnished Cottage Exhibited at the recent International Exhibition, Brussels, by M. Van de Voorde, architect | M. Van de Voorde’s Cottage: The Dining Room

MM. Serrurier-Bovy, of Liège, and Van de Voorde, of Ghent, exhibited at the Brussels Exhibition at their own private expense. In THE STUDIO of April 1898, in an article entitled, “Some Artists at Liège,” I endeavoured to show the very interesting effort made by M. Serrurier-Bovy to modernise the art of furnishing. “Building,” he says, “upon those

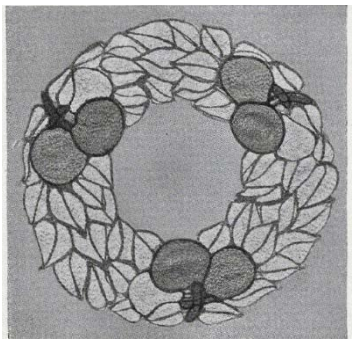
principles which, I am convinced, form the only durable foundation for a new art, I have sought merely to study, to refine, and, above all, to simplify." The plans of the different rooms in the Serrurier pavilion were purposely commonplace in the extreme; they were, in fact, just such rooms as would be met with in the most ordinary house; there was no adroit dovetailing of one room into another, so as to give little odd corners capable of picturesque arrangement. In simple rectangular rooms the various interiors were arranged, their furniture was such as would look equally well in other surroundings, the mural decoration such as admitted of its being applied elsewhere with the same success. The general effect was obtained by the pieces of furniture themselves, with the wall and ceiling decorations offering pleasing harmonies of colour and form. The cottage of M. Van de Voorde was distinguished by its admirable proportions and by the agreeable air of light and homeliness it gave. The architect was fortunate in obtaining the co-operation of Mme. D'Angotte, who chose and arranged artistically the various useful and ornamental articles; of Mlles. Mabel Elwes and Meta Budry, who designed and executed the mural decorations and embroideries; and of M. Acke, who made the furniture.



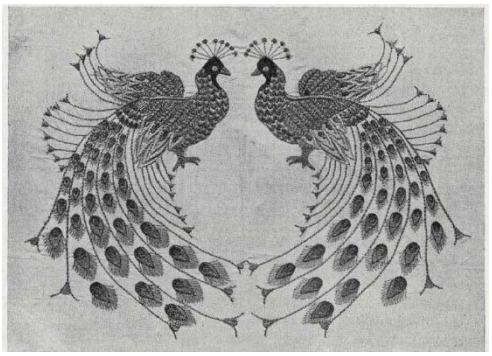

M. Van de Voorde's Cottage: The Dining Room | M. Van de Voorde's Cottage: The Kitchen

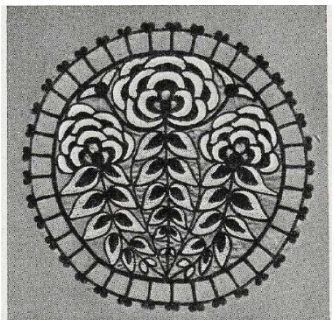



Curtain Machine Embroidered on Golden-Brown Ground. Designed and Executed by Mabel Elwes | Cushion Cover Embroidered on Royal Blue Ground. Designed and Executed by Mabel Elwes



Cushion Cover, Machine Embroidered on Orange Ground. Designed and Executed by Mabel Elwes





Hand-Embroidered Bedspread. Designed and Executed by Mabel Elwes | Cushion Cover Embroidered on a Green-Blue Ground. Designed and Executed by Mabel Elwes

In previous articles upon the Exhibition we were only able to refer very briefly to the charming exhibits in the Salon Français des Arts Décoratifs, of which M. du Bousquet had the organisation, and M. Lambert the control of the architectural features and of the general scheme of decoration. In the section of Fine Arts, the French Commissioner, M. A. Saglio, and his coadjutor, M. Fritsch-Estrangin, made a superb display of their national art, and had one been compelled to give a single prize for excellence in the Section of Decorative Art, it must have been unhesitatingly awarded to the designer and executor of the very numerous and wonderful pieces, to the refined work of that master of his craft, M. Lalique, who materialised his beautiful visions in the exquisite little Salon of the perfumer Coty.

F. K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 53, 219 (June 1911), 74-76.

BRUSSELS.—The eminent sculptor of Brussels, Charles van der Stappen, died recently while yet his fine talents seemed to promise still greater and more powerful achievements. He had a considerable influence upon the evolution of the Belgian School, not only by reason of the value of his productions, but also on account of the force of his teaching. This son of a simple workman, a common plasterer, was able, thanks to his indomitable will, to elevate himself to the summit of his art, and one is astounded to learn that this highly cultured artist, this brilliant conversationalist whose utterances rested upon a foundation of solid knowledge, was hardly able to be given a board-school education.

Fortuitous circumstances brought the young men to the studio of the painter, Jean Portaels, where at that time E. Wauters, Agneesens, and Verheyden were working, and it was owing, perhaps, to this that he escaped from the conventionality resultant at that period from an erroneous comprehension of antique sculpture. He was one of the first to join that group of sculptors in France, P. Dubois, Mercié, Chapu, who sought in Florentine Renaissance work for their refined observation and elegant execution; but the Brussels artist never lost the rugged qualities of his race, and so came to avoid the dangers of affectation.



“Le Dévouement: Portion of the “Monument de l’Infinie Bonté” by Charles Van der Stappen

The fine and instructive qualities in Van der Stappen's work come from a close study of all aspects and manifestations of life and of their application to decorative art. Later one recognizes in several of his important works the effect of that democratic tendency which was so magnificently expressed by his friend, C. Meunier. Van der Stappen was unquestionably the most prolific and varied of all Belgian sculptors; ever interested in new materials and new methods of work, astounding us always by the prodigious activity of his imagination and his insatiable thirst for knowledge, he undertook with the same enthusiasm and almost always with equal success, the making of sculptures and works of plastic art the most diverse in nature. He was also a remarkable teacher and

set himself to reorganise art teaching in his country and to accord to the crafts and to applied art generally their due measure of value and importance. Certain of our most prominent sculptors owe a great deal of their success to him, in common with Rousseau, Rombaux, and P. Dubois.

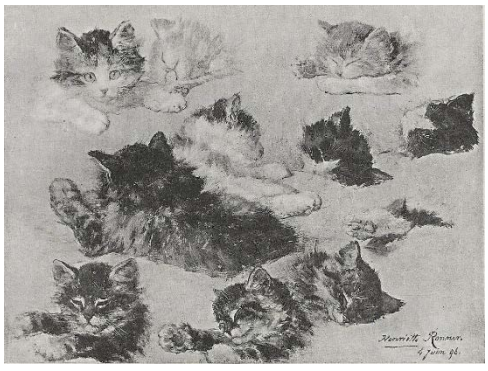
F. K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 54, 224 (November 1911), 158-160.

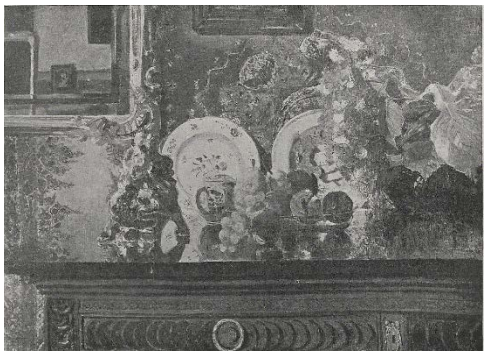
BRUSSELS.—We give some reproductions of the work of the celebrated painter Henriette Ronner, whose studies and paintings were to be seen recently on exhibition at the Cercle Artistique of Brussels. Henriette Knip (her maiden name) was born at Amsterdam in 1821; her father, himself an artist of repute, was the son of a painter, and both her brother and one of her sisters painted also. Hence it is not surprising that Mme. Ronner’s vocation should have been marked out for her from infancy, and in fact she made her first artistic *début* at Düsseldorf when only fifteen years of age. In 1850 she married and came to live in Brussels, where she died recently. She owed her earliest successes to her studies of dogs, “but,” writes one of her biographers, Henri Havard, “it happened that one day a cat strayed into the studio and aroused her curiosity by its unfamiliar attitudes and its startled glances, gradually absorbed her attention and finally achieved the conquest of the artist. Soon she submitted to the tyranny of the intruder to the extent of devoting all her time and all her ability henceforward to a study of the animal's attitudes and characteristics. Mme. Ronner has left a permanent record of all the peculiar traits, all those subtleties of expression, all the sly and malicious postures which form a never-ceasing source of interest and amusement to the observer, and for this we owe her thanks.” Two of the artist's children have adopted artistic careers: Alfred Ronner, who died unfortunately before his talents had achieved their full development, and Alice Ronner, who is decidedly one of our finest painters of still-life subjects, and those whose work we give a reproduction. She has technical ability of a very high order, her skill in composition, her drawing and her colour are remarkable, and all her work has an attractiveness that is in truth quite masterly.

F.K.





Mme. Henriette Ronner in her Atelier | “Etude de Chats” by Mme. Henriette Ronner



Still-Life by Mlle. Alice Ronner

Khnopff, Fernand, “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 54, 225 (December 1911), 238-43.

BRUSSELS.—The exhibition which has been held during the past few months at Charleroi presented with its art galleries and its machinery halls a very interesting panorama of art and industry. The fantastic extravagance which was occasionally to be met within the Brussels Exhibition here gave place to a sober and logical arrangement which allowed one to appreciate to the full the true character of the country; for the exhibition was in every sense thoroughly representative of the district. It gave, as it were, a bird’s-eye view of the whole of the enormous industrial activity of the Walloon province, and in particular in the region of fine art one was enabled to see how much more eloquent and expressive is the work of Constantin Meunier when viewed amid surroundings such as it had in the Industrial sections at Charleroi.




“Jeunesse” by Pierre Paulus | “Hauts Fourneaux” by Pierre Paulus

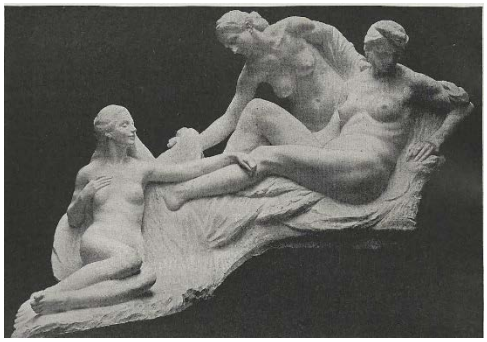
Elsewhere in the exhibition the sculptures, whether in stone, metal or wood, were displayed in galleries hung round with pictures, and the name of some great master, bestowed as title to the room, fixed more definitely the exact character of a period or the precise significance of a certain phase of art.

Constantin Meunier represented, so to speak, the pulsating heart of the exhibition; his *salle* formed the axis of all the others and seemed to express the essential and living soul of the country in its double characteristics of art and industry. I doubt whether his work has ever before been seen to such advantage or exhibited in a manner to so emphatically accentuate its intimate relationship with the humanity whence this art is sprung. A single room seemed, however, disproportionate to the needs in his case, and so we found works by Meunier displayed throughout the entire nave of the Machinery Hall. His *Monument au Travail* stood out from a background of furnaces, amidst the rumbling of machinery and of vibrating engines with wheels rapidly revolving close to the passing crowds; it alone stood immovable and eternal as a symbol.

In ten different picture galleries the ancient art of Wallonie was represented by chosen works by the great masters, in the first rank of whom was Roger de la Pasture (Van der

Weyden), with Gossart de Maubeuge, Patenier, Blés. In one room, containing glass cases filled with examples of pottery of Andenne and of Tournai, was hung the *Toilette* by Watteau (from the Arenberg Collection) and the *Nid de Tourterelles* by Pater, lent by the Musée de Valenciennes. Of artists of the nineteenth century, round Navez (who was born at Charleroi) were grouped Gallait, Wiertz, Degroux, Fournois, Rops, Boulenger, Baron, and Hennebicq.

If the exhibition of ancient art was more specially Walloon in character than was that of contemporary work—by far the best *ensemble,* however, this year—nevertheless a great deal of space was reserved to work which was Walloon either in authorship or in subject, in order that as far as possible the indigenous character of this artistic manifestation should be maintained.



"Les Sœurs de l'Illusion" by Victor Rousseau

A whole room was set apart for the work of the sculptor Victor Rousseau, the painter Anna Boch, and the etcher Auguste Danse. In THE STUDIO for November 1907 there appeared an appreciative article devoted to the work of Victor Rousseau (in which detailed reference was made to *Les Sœurs de l'Illusion,* now reproduced) and dealing with the various characteristics of his fine talent. In the section of ancient art the visitor could admire the charming grace of composition, the elegance and perfect technique of the work of the sculptor Jacques Dubrœucq. "This same firm gracefulness," writes that sympathetic critic L. Dumont Wilden, "this same instinctive science of modelling is to be found in Rousseau's work, and possibly by a comparison of these two artists' achievements we may find out what it is that Rousseau owes to his race. But whatever admiration we feel for the old artist, we find an even more rich and powerful sensibility in the work of our contemporary."

Mlle. Boch long ago conquered for herself a prominent place among landscapists who revel in problems of light in many different lands. The active life and the considerable *œuvre* of the veritable master-graver Auguste Danse were analysed at length in the Special Number of THE STUDIO of 1902 devoted to Modern Etching and Engraving. He is still, as always, the energetic artist and the revered master whose wise and enthusiastic teaching has been so valuable a factor in the training of the Belgian School.



"Etude de Nu." From a dry-point by Auguste Danse

Two other Walloon painters deserve mention for their important contributions—Auguste Donnay, who depicts in an exquisite and restrained manner the dreamy and mysterious charm of the Ardennes, and Pierre Paulus, a new-comer (introduced to the public by his recent exhibition in the Cercle Artistique of Brussels), who sent a large number of works "breathing the spirit of this industrial land," as L. Dumont Wilden has remarked, "and reminiscent evidently of Meunier—for is not his name inseparable from this uncompromising and severe modern art—but which, none the less, have their own accent of individuality, and reveal a bold and sincere artist full of imagination." Finally, it is impossible to make any reference to the section of Fine Art at the Exhibition of Charleroi without mentioning the admirable work of organisation so splendidly carried out by the indefatigable M. Jules Destrée.

Fernand Khnopff.

1912

Khnopff, Fernand, « Rapport concernant 'L'origine de la parure' par Georges Van Wetter, » *Bulletins de la Classe des Beaux-Arts* (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, séance du 4 juillet 1912), 466-467.

Rapport de M. Fernand Khnopff, second commissaire.

« Le manuscrit relatif aux origines de la parure que M. Van Wetter a fait parvenir à la Classe des beaux-arts nous a paru intéressant et, ainsi que l'a écrit le premier commissaire, digne d'être inséré dans notre *Bulletin*.

L'auteur explique comment l'idée de parure prit naissance lorsque, à l'aurore du paléolithique, la taille du silex devint manifestement intentionnelle et comment l'arme de réserve, utilitaire au début, se transforma, peu à peu, en un objet de pure décoration.

« Le possesseur de cette première pierre trouée se sera montré fier de son œuvre devant ses compagnons moins industrieux; il aura, bien vite, passé pour terrible et magnifique. Il avait su joindre l'habileté à la force et se montrait par-là mieux armé et capable de ruses nouvelles. Son prestige se sera rehaussé et il aura probablement répondu dans une certaine mesure à l'obscur instinct esthétique de ses contemporains. D'ailleurs, notre conception actuelle de la beauté commence à s'orienter de nouveau vers la bonne adaptation. C'est ainsi qu'une machine à électricité ou à vapeur dont toutes les parties concordent parfaitement et le plus simplement possible à la destination nous paraîtra harmonieuse et admirable, d'une beauté qui aurait échappé à nos pères. »

L'auteur a, ici, résisté à la tentation de transcrire le passage de: *A rebours* où J.-K. Huysmans exalte « le type éblouissant et splendide des deux locomotives adoptées sur la ligne du chemin de fer du Nord: la « Crampton », adorable blonde, et l' « Engerth », monumentale et sombre brune ».

Mais M. Van Wetter a mis une certaine coquetterie à ne « s'appuyer, selon son expression, que sur l'autorité de M. Rutot, le sagace conservateur de la section préhistorique de Bruxelles ». Il eût pu montrer une écriture plus « artiste », il eût pu orner son travail de souvenirs littéraires: citer ou critiquer les curieuses reconstitutions de J.-H. Rosny et de Ray Nyst, rappeler que, lors de la mise à la scène de *Chantecler*, auteur, directeurs et interprètes furent d'accord pour travestir la Faisane en Faisan.

Cela, après avoir écrit: « cette idée de parure nous parait aujourd'hui essentiellement féminine, mais elle fut, à l'origine, un apanage tout masculin. D'ailleurs, les preuves naturelles viennent corroborer cette assertion: parmi les animaux, c'est au mâle qu'est dévolue la plus éclatante parure. Le monde ornithologique en est l'exemple le plus frappant, et chez certains peuples primitifs contemporains l'ornementation est si bien

réservée aux hommes, qu'une femme qui se pare semble aller à l'encontre de certaines lois établies. »

Un écrivain parisien, M. Henry Bidou, écrivait un jour: « Le goût des femmes pour la parure est un grand mystère: dans toute la nature, l'élégance et l'éclat sont l'attribut du mâle. Le coq, vernissé, oxydé, décoré comme une majolique, efface l'humble poule rousse. Le lion, beau jusqu'au ridicule, porte avec majesté la crinière brune qui double son volume, tandis que la maigre lionne s'en va nue. Toute la chamarrure de l'univers est faite pour inspirer à la femelle sans ornements l'amour et l'effroi de son seigneur. Seule, l'espèce humaine, ou du moins ses races les plus civilisées, ont changé les rôles. »

Quand et comment s'est produite cette modification? Il y a là un problème intéressant que M. Van Wetter nous parait destiné à résoudre et nous croyons pouvoir lui proposer de nous en donner bientôt la solution définitive. »

—Adopté.

Khnopff, Fernand, « Rapport concernant 'L'origine de la parure' par Georges Van Wetter, » *Bulletins de la Classe des Beaux-Arts* (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, séance du 4 juillet 1912), 466-467.

Translation:

Report of Mr. Fernand Khnopff, second Commissioner.

"The manuscript on the origins of ornament that M. Van Wetter has sent to the fine arts class seemed interesting to us, and as the first Commissioner has written, worthy to be inserted in our *Bulletin*.

The author explains how the idea of ornament originated when, at the dawn of the Paleolithic era, the sharpened flint became clearly intentional and how the spare weapon, strictly utilitarian at the beginning, turned, little by little, into a purely decorative object.

The owner of this first pierced stone would have been proud of his work before his less industrious fellows; he would soon be seen as terrible and magnificent. He knew how to join skill to force and was therefore better armed and capable of new tricks. His prestige would be enhanced and it probably responded to some extent to the obscure aesthetic instincts of his contemporaries. Moreover, our current conception of beauty begins to move again towards the good adaptation. Thus an electric or steam engine in which all parts combine perfectly and as simply as possible to their purpose appears harmonious and admirable to us, a beauty that would have escaped to our fathers."

Here, the author resisted the temptation to transcribe the passage from *Against Nature* [*A Rebours*] where J.-K. Huysmans exalts "the dazzling and splendid type of the two locomotives on the northern railway line: the 'Crampton', an adorable blonde, and the 'Engerth', monumental and dark brown."

But Mr. Van Wetter has shown a certain coquetry to not "rely, in his words, on any but the authority of Mr. Rutot, the sagacious curator of prehistoric section of Brussels." He could have displayed a more "artistic" writing, he could have adorned his work with literary memories: to cite or criticize the curious reconstructions of J.-H. Rosny and Ray Nyst, recalling the scene from *Chantecler*, in which the author, directors and performers agree to disguise the Hen Pheasant as a male Pheasant.

This, after writing: "the idea of ornament appears to us today essentially feminine, but it was originally an all-male preserve. Moreover, the evidence of nature corroborates this assertion: among animals, it is the male that is vested with the brightest ornament. The ornithological world is the most striking example, and in some contemporary primitive peoples ornamentation is so much reserved to men, that a woman who adorns herself seems to go against some established laws."

A Parisian writer, Mr. Henry Bidou, once wrote: "the taste of women for adornment is a great mystery: in all of nature, elegance and brilliance are the attribute of the male." The cock, glazed, oxidized, decorated like majolica, effaces the humble red hen. The

lion, almost ridiculously beautiful, bears with majesty the brown mane that doubles its volume, while the lean lioness goes nude. All the rich decoration of the universe is made to inspire the unadorned female to love and awe of her Lord. Only one, the human species, or at least its more civilized races, have changed roles."

How and when was this modification produced? This is an interesting problem that Mr. Van Wetter appears destined to resolve and we believe we can expect him to give us the definitive solution soon."

- Adopted.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 56, 233 (August 1912), 248-251.

BRUSSELS.—In the Cercle Artistique of Brussels the painter M. Blieck has recently shown a varied collection of works. He delights to depict the great furnaces, the clocks, the quays, the life and bustle of great cities, and he possesses the gift of always achieving a powerful effect with at the same time sober harmonies; he understands how to express with his colour all the impressions of a scene in such a way as to justify our calling M. Blieck a “bon peintre” in the full acceptation of the term.



“The Haymarket, London.” From the painting by M. Blieck

The present and past pupils of Jean Guillaume Rosier, the director of the Académie de Malines, desirous of presenting their master with some token of their esteem and admiration, invited M. De Wouters de Bouchout to write a complimentary address, which was reproduced in a very tastefully illuminated album. The writer composed as it were a kind of sketch of the simple life of this artist, who after twenty-five years of teaching has not ceased himself to be a student still. “But,” he concludes, “may these words of mine be but the preface to a career still long and brilliant, and may the day be very far distant when an authorised biographer shall take up and complete this modest sketch.”



Portrait of a Lady. By Jean Guillaume Rosier

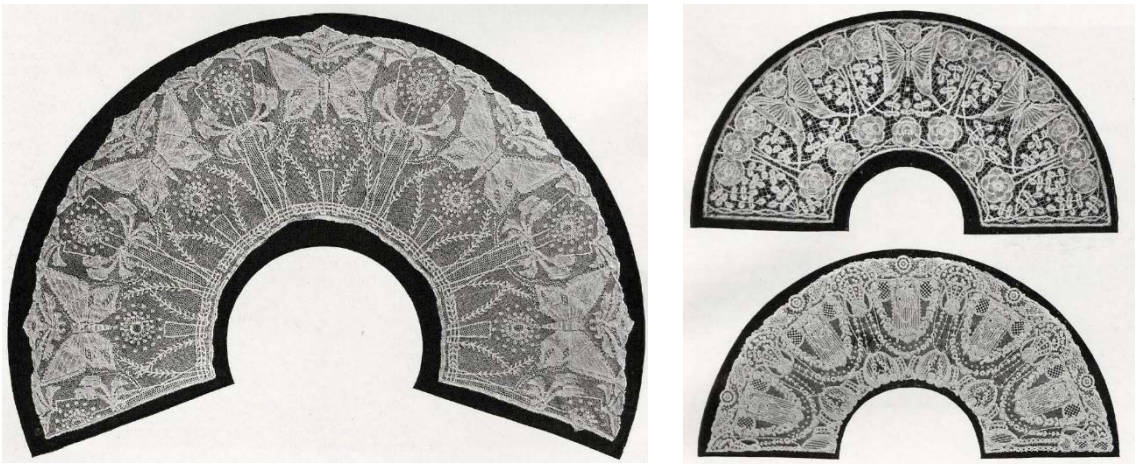
After his brilliant studies at the Antwerp Academy under Ch. Verlat, and his visits to Paris and to London, M. J. G. Rosier settled in Antwerp, and soon drew the attention of collectors, juries, and the public authorities upon himself and his numerous works. He was nominated professor at the Académie des Beaux-Arts at Antwerp, gained medals at Antwerp, Cologne, Munich, and Paris, and in 1892 was appointed director of the Academy at Mechlin (Malines). He was now at the height of the success which explained the unanimous approbation with which his nomination was received, but the friends of the painter could not but regard with apprehension his acceptance of this absorbing charge; they knew him to be capable of taking this duty so much to heart as to sacrifice to it his artistic career. These premonitions were happily not to be realised in their pessimism.

Teaching had no detrimental effect upon the quality of the artist's work, though the cares of his directorship brought about a reduction in the quantity as compared with his preceding activity. However, the Mechlin Academy, one of the oldest in the country, gained considerably in influence, thanks to the application of and the practical programme elaborated by its devoted principal, who made it his task to install classes which should have a more intimate bearing and effect upon the improvement of artistic industries. Mechlin contains many thousands of carvers and furniture-workers, metal-chasers, brass-workers, basse-lisse (or low warp) tapestry weavers, and jewellers, all of them in need of artisans in whom a training as draughtsmen is as indispensable as technical ability. The tact and zeal with which the director has fulfilled his *rôle* and the remarkable progress of the school have attracted the attention of the inspectors of academies and schools of drawing in Belgium, who have demanded and succeeded in their desire that M. Rosier should be nominated their colleague.

F. K.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 56, 234 (September 1912), 324-326.

BRUSSELS.—The question of lace-making is one that is prominent at the present moment, for there are many who are seeking for a practical means to bring this exquisite art into vogue again. Without going back to the golden clays in the history of lace-making, says the writer of an article published in “Le Soir,” it is sufficient to note the falling off in the last few years of the income this craft brought to the country. The number of its practitioners, once very numerous, being now reduced to a few aged workers, the young lace-makers who have succeeded them have lost the secret of their predecessors' technical perfection. For the want of expert craftswomen certain of the “points” have been lost, and others are rapidly falling into disuse; thus it is with Grammont lace, so fine in quality, in which one admires the *forms de clarté* on an almost invisible net. This abandonment of the art has been brought about by the smallness of the wages earned, owing to the competition of machine-made lace; but this competition can only affect the output of hand-made lace of common design and inferior workmanship. Machine-made lace can do nothing against artistic productions which are original in design and perfect in technique; such works require the collaboration of designers and practitioners of the highest order.



Fan in Bobbin Lace by Irène D’Olszowska | Fans in Flanders Lace and Needlepoint by Irène D’Olszowska

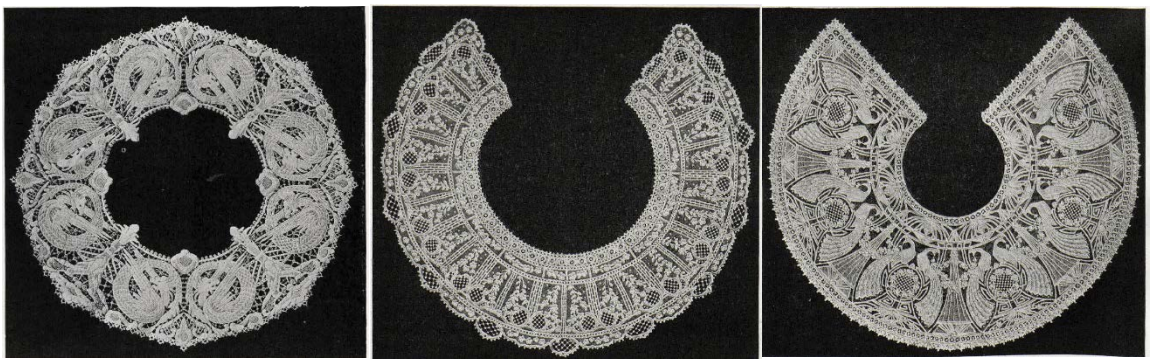


Table-Center in Point de Venise by Irène D’Olszowska | Collar in Needlepoint Lace by Irène D’Olszowska | Collar in Needlepoint Lace by Irène D’Olszowska

It is with the idea of training these workers that, thanks to the initiative of Mme. Philippson, a new course of lace-making has been opened in connection with “Les Arts de la Femme” at Brussels, and already the results achieved have been remarkable. In a recent exhibition visitors were able to admire an interesting collection of designs for lace together with the actual work of the pupils, and at the same time a scarf in Malines lace executed to the designs of Mlle. Irène D'Olszowska, in fulfilment of a commission which the society “Les Arts de la Femme” received from Queen Elizabeth of Belgium. The scarf was intended for presentation to Mme. Fallières as a souvenir of her visit to Paris, and her Majesty, who takes an especial interest in this revival of the lace industry in Belgium, ordered it to be worked after the design which carried off the petition she herself promoted. The best laceworkers of Turnhout, an important centre of the industry known as Malines lace, were at work for more than eight months on this wonderful piece. Mlle. Irène D'Olszowska, a pupil of Prof. A. Crespin, whose very sane teaching has already borne some remarkable results, has also made designs for some pieces of lace offered to the Queen of Holland. The reproductions give a proof of her knowledge of the different “points” and of the technique generally of this art.

F. K.

1913

Khnopff, Fernand, « Discours prononcé le 7 décembre 1912 aux funérailles de M. Eugène Smits, » *Bulletins de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*, (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, séance du 9 janvier 1913), 22-24.

Discours prononcé le 7 décembre 1912 aux funérailles de M. Eugène Smits, membre titulaire; par M. Fernand Khnopff, correspondant de l'Académie.

Au nom de l'Académie royale de Belgique, nous venons saluer pour la dernière fois le Maître que nous aimions, nous venons dire quelle peine profonde est pour nous le départ de cette belle figure de douce noblesse et d'austère élégance.

Eugène Smits[1] était un artiste de race, un être d'exception tout dévoué à son idéal.

« Je ne suis heureux que lorsque je peins », disait-il souvent, et ses œuvres vivent de sa vie, ce sont elles qui prolongeront la durée de son souvenir parmi nous et parmi ceux qui viendront après nous.

Ainsi l'Art récompense à leur insu les fidèles qui lui ont entièrement consacré leur existence en ce monde.

Alors, peut-être, que l'essence de celui que nous pleurons est déjà loin de nous, ses œuvres—ses enfants—sont ici pour nous consoler et, au premier rang de cette belle assemblée, nous croyons voir trois d'entre elles qui représentent tout l'art du Maître disparu.

La première, *Roma*, du Palais royal de Bruxelles. C'est un tableau d'histoire au vrai sens du mot. Comme certaines impressions intenses donnent immédiatement la sensation lointaine du souvenir, cette peinture a fixé l'aspect définitif de son époque, et son exécution est à la hauteur de sa conception; la composition est, à la fois, savante et libre, le dessin grand et simple, la couleur puissante et fine. L'art belge n'a pas produit de peinture plus belle.

C'est ensuite *Perdita*: une charmante figurine sur un petit panneau où l'on voit des blonds carminés, délicieux comme une soyeuse relique vénitienne, et des noirs aux profondeurs dorées telles qu'en offrent les plus riches laques du Japon.

C'est enfin *La Marche des Saisons*, ce joyau du Musée de Bruxelles, cortège harmonieusement rythmé dans lequel la jeunesse fleurie du Printemps, enveloppée de voiles rosés, salue gracieusement la pâleur triomphale de l'Été, qui s'avance, calme, sous l'or de son chapeau de paille et devant la sérénité bleue d'un ciel splendide.

[1] Eugène Smits (1826-1912), was a Belgian artist and one of the founders of the Société libre des beaux-arts in 1868.

L’Automne apporte ensuite la somptuosité de ses rouges cuivrés, sonores comme des fanfares, et l’Hiver parait enfin dans des draperies de deuil.

Mais sa vieillesse n’est pas méprisée, car un être jeune l’accompagne doucement de son dévouement discret.

De même, au déclin de sa longue existence, le Maître fut toujours entouré d’affection sincère et d’admiration respectueuse.

Il eut cette joie suprême, et les paroles d’adieu que nous avons l’honneur et la douleur de prononcer en ce moment sont le dernier écho des sentiments que la beauté et la bonté de son âme avaient pu, jusqu’à son dernier jour, faire naître autour de lui.

Khnopff, Fernand, « Discours prononcé le 7 décembre 1912 aux funérailles de M. Eugène Smits, » *Bulletins de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*, (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, séance du 9 janvier 1913), 22-24.

Translation:

Speech delivered on 7 December 1912 at the funeral of Mr Eugène Smits, Member*;* by M. Fernand Khnopff, correspondent of the Academy.

On behalf of the Royal Academy of Belgium, we come to salute for the last time the master that we loved, we come to say what a profound loss the departure of this beautiful figure of gentle nobility and austere elegance is for us.

Eugène Smits[2] was a noble artist, an exceptional being completely devoted to his ideal.

"I am only happy when I paint," he often said, and his works continue his life, and will extend the length of his memory among us and those who will come after us.

Thus, unbeknownst to them, Art rewards the faithful who have fully devoted their existence in this world to it.

Then, perhaps, although the essence of him whom we mourn is already taken from us, his works—his children—are here to comfort us and, in the first rank of in this beautiful assembly, we believe three of them represent the art of the lost master.

The first, *Roma*, in the royal palace in Brussels. It is a history painting in the true sense of the word. As certain intense impressions immediately give the distant sensation of memory, this painting has defined the appearance of its epoque, and its execution is at the height of its conception; the composition is at once knowing and free, the drawing grand and simple, the color powerful and fine. Belgian art has not produced a more beautiful painting.

Then *Perdita*: a charming figurine on a small panel where we see reddish blond colors, delicious as a silky Venetian relic, and blacks with golden depths such as are offered by the richest lacquers of Japan.

Finally, *The March of the Seasons*, this jewel of the Museum in Brussels, a harmoniously rhythmic procession in which youth in the flower of Spring, wrapped in pink veils, graciously greets the triumphant pallor of summer, which calmly advances under the gold of his straw hat before the blue serenity of a beautiful sky.

Autumn provides the sumptuousness of red brass, sonorous as fanfares, and Winter finally appears in its drapery of mourning.

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[2] Eugène Smits (1826-1912), was a Belgian artist and one of the founders of the Société libre des beaux-arts in 1868.

His old age is not despised, as a youth gently accompanies him with discreet devotion.

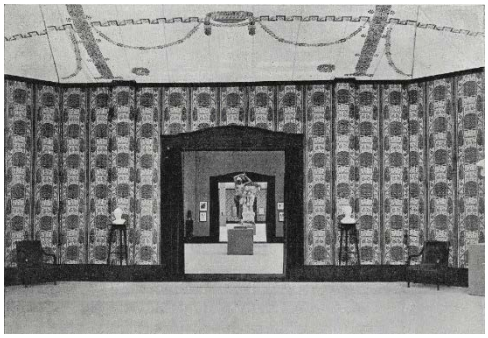
Similarly, in the decline of his long existence, the Master was always surrounded by sincere affection and respectful admiration.

He had this supreme joy, and the words of farewell we have the honor and the sorrow to pronounce at this moment are the last echo of the sentiments that the beauty and goodness of his soul had, until his last day, created around him.

F.K., “Studio-Talk. Ghent,” *The Studio*, 59, 245 (August 1913), 239-242.

GHENT.—The Ghent Exhibition deserves largely the encomiums which have been bestowed upon it. Everything is clear and well arranged, and the visitor is filled with unceasing astonishment at an achievement of such magnitude. Before studying the Belgian Section it is only proper to felicitate the architect Vandevoorde of Ghent who planned and supervised the erection of the exhibition buildings. His work, “de style Louis XVI vaguement Viennois” as it has been described, is elegant, well conceived, and rich without excess of ornament. On the occasion of the opening of the exhibition the Floral Fête occupied almost entirely the attention of the visitors, which was fortunate, as apart from the French Section, no branch of the exhibition was completely ready. In other respects as well the French section was particularly superior to its rivals.

The exhibition of the Ville de Paris, arranged by M. G. Cain, is in the nature of an extension, most delightfully adapted, of the Musée Carnavalet. The section devoted to dress is “one of the most sensational attractions!” and indeed one hardly knows which to admire the more, the creations of these *maîtres du chiffon* or the refined art with which they are displayed. Evidence of the live æsthetic spirit underlying the French style is afforded by the fact that the same taste which reigns in the dress section is apparent also in the rooms devoted to the fine arts. Here we have indeed the *clou* of the exhibition. Organised by M. Saglio, it shows the French school in all its variety, combining without any suggestion of incongruity the characteristics of the Institut and of the Salon d'Automne.

The French Section at the Ghent Exhibition




The French Section at the Ghent Exhibition

As that excellent critic of art, M. Louis Dumont-Wilden has written in “L'Eventail”: “That which forms the really exceptional charm of this exhibit, that which enables it so decisively to express what it is meant to show, is the manner in which it is arranged; and with reference to this we do not know how to praise too highly the initiative of M. Saglio, himself an artist of taste and imagination. The decoration of the *salles* is at one and the same time very daring, very modern and very traditional. The majority of the rooms are hung with yellow damask of an elaborate modernised Louis XIV design; the wide mahogany skirting and mahogany surrounds to the entrances frame the damask and enhance its artistic effect; the ceiling of each room is draped with a velum or awning decorated with green garlands and bright-hued flowers designed by Jeaulme; a light grey carpet edged with dark brown deadens the sound of footsteps; and tapestries and furniture upholstered in violet velvet complete this unconventional harmony, brilliant but soft, yet not prejudicial to a single picture. The large central salon is still more daring in its colour-scheme; it is hung with a flowered material, also designed by Jeaulme, and in this environment the pictures—perhaps because of their careful selection—show to the very best advantage. On the opening day the decoration of this *salle* achieved the most unqualified success, and the sole objection raised was the exclamation, ‘C'est allemand!’ How quickly was the comment made! Just because the Germans have been the first not to invent the new decorative styles, but to evince their readiness to adopt new decorative methods, it does not therefore follow that all that is new in decoration must necessarily be of German origin. The fact is that after the distressing eccentricities of the ‘modern style,’ Germans, Austrians and Frenchmen alike have returned to the same sources of inspiration, that is to say to the last really great decorative styles which flourished in Europe, to the French styles of Louis XVI and the Empire, simplifying them, modifying them, and reviving them according to their own particular tastes. One may feel a partiality for the German manner, dogmatic, systematic, and spontaneous, as it is; or on the other hand one may prefer the French manner, so much more imaginative, and so much more refined in taste.”

F. K.

Khnopff, Fernand, “Studio-Talk. Ghent,” *The Studio*, 60, 247 (October 1913), 78-82.

Ghent.—The very great success achieved by the British Section of applied art in the Ghent Exhibition is not really so astounding when one realizes that never before has so complete and so important a collection of this kind been presented. THE STUDIO has already illustrated in connection with the recent exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Society at the Grosvenor Gallery in London a large number of the works shown here; and in the last June issue an article was devoted to the room containing the mural decorations and furniture designed by Mr. Frank Brangwyn. So therefore we think it will suffice if we show now some general views of the section, from which it may to some extent be appreciated with what care and with what taste this section has been arranged.

On the occasion of the Exhibition of Religious Art organized last year by M. Fierens-Gevaert at the Salon de Bruxelles, Belgian connoisseurs and *amateurs d'art* made the acquaintance of the great English artist-decorator Henry Wilson. The chapel or temple which he has constructed here and the wonderful pieces of work shown in a special glass show-case have served to confirm his new admirers and friends in their appreciation of his talents. Enamels and jewellery by Messrs. Fisher, Stabler, Cooper, Nelson Dawson and Mr. and Mrs. Gaskin are to be found in cases near by. Walter Crane and R. Anning Bell, those fertile artists who have brought so much of art into daily life, are represented here by paintings, sculpture and reliefs in painted gesso, cartoons for stained glass, designs for book illustrations and for ex-libris.



Interior of Church Arranged by Henry Wilson in the British Arts and Crafts Section at the Ghent International Exhibition

The sculptors, Sir George Frampton, Sir W. Goscombe John, Derwent Wood, Alfred Drury, and Gilbert Bayes contribute various works all of which are agreeably disposed in the exhibition. There are also drawings, cartoons and paintings by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Sir L. Alma-Tadema, Prof. Gerald Moira, F. Cadogan Cowper, Henry A. Payne, and Karl Parsons; embroideries by Miss Una A. Taylor, Miss Ann Macbeth and Miss May Morris; ceramics by William de Morgan, the Pilkington Company, Bernard Moore, Alfred H. Powell, F. D. Ewbank, W. Howson Taylor of Ruskin Pottery fame, and the Martin

Brothers, some wonderful glassware by Powell and Sons, leatherwork by Harrison, wall-papers by Jeffrey and Co., leadwork by G. P. Bankart, fans by Conder and Sheringham, sumptuous stuffs by Morris, and furniture by Morris, Gimson and Heal.




British Arts and Crafts Section, Ghent International Exhibition

Lastly, the important section of books comprises manuscripts by Graily Hewitt, A. Vigers, Miss Harper and Miss Frost; illustrations by Walter Crane, Anning Bell, Edmund J. Sullivan, Charles Robinson, Edmund Dulac; bookbindings by Cobden Sanderson, D. Cockerell, Miss Prideaux, Miss Adams, and exhibits by the Kelmscott Press, the Eragny Press of M. Pissarro, and the Riccardi Press. In conclusion let me add that to aid the public in the study of the exhibits the section has two admirable commissioners, Mr. A. A. Longden and Mr. Palgrave Simpson, representing the Exhibitions Branch of the Board of Trade, whose zeal and courtesy are most highly commended by all visitors to the exhibition.

FERNAND KHNOPFF.

1914

Khnopff, Fernand, « Note bibliographique, » *Bulletins de la Classe des Beaux-Arts* (2 juillet 1914), 464-465.

Note Bibliographique.

J'ai l'honneur de faire hommage à la Classe d'un recueil de Pensées d'Eugène Smits. Ces pensées ont été trouvées dans sa correspondance et ses notes de travail.

« Toutes vibrent d'un lointain écho de l'âme candide et haute du grand artiste.

» Après l'émouvante lecture de quelques aphorismes et de quelques notations poétiques—écrits selon la fortune des jours et sur des feuillets de papier de rencontre, mais contenant des reflets de toutes les préoccupations et de tous les sentiments de Eugène Smits—ses amis, s'enviant le bonheur de posséder ce délicat trésor de tendresse et de sincérité, décidèrent de le faire reproduire. »

C'est pourquoi, une copie religieusement faite, en fut confiée à un imprimeur, qui en tira un nombre restreint d'exemplaires destinés seulement aux amis et aux dévôts du grand artiste et qui ne furent pas livrés au public. »

Ces pensées feront comprendre mieux encore le culte que les amis du maître ont voué à sa mémoire.

FERNAND KHNOPFF.

Khnopff, Fernand, « Note bibliographique, » *Bulletins de la Classe des Beaux-Arts* (2 juillet 1914), 464-465.

Translation:

Bibliographic Note

I have the honour to pay tribute to the Class of a collection of the Thoughts of Eugène Smits. These thoughts were found in his correspondence and his working notes.

“All vibrates to a distant echo of the candid and elevated soul of the great artist.”

“After the moving reading of a few aphorisms and a few poetic notations—written according to the fortunes of the day and on sheets of used paper, but containing reflections of all the concerns and all the feelings of Eugène Smits—his friends, envying the joy of owning this delicate treasure of tenderness and sincerity, decided to have it reproduced.”

This is why a religiously made copy was entrusted to a printer, who produced a small number of copies only for friends and devotees of the great artist, and not offered to the public.”

These thoughts will make one better understand the worship that the friends of the master have devoted to his memory.

FERNAND KHNOPFF.

F.K., “Studio-Talk Brussels,” *The Studio*, 62, 254 (June 1914), 72-75.

BRUSSELS.—Since the publication of the Special Winter numbers of THE STUDIO of 1900-1 and 1902, respectively devoted to Modern Pen Drawing and Modern Etchings, the art of Black and White in Belgium has achieved a considerable importance. Certain of the artists whose work was illustrated in those two volumes have developed or have altered the direction of their efforts, while others have come forward bringing new perfections of technique or novel interpretations of what the great poet Emile Verhaeren calls the *Multiple Splendeur.*

It would be unjust not to refer in the first place to the important part which has been played in this remarkable development by the annual Salons of L'Estampe, so admirably organised by Robert Sand. The founding of the *cercle* bearing this title has been a happy event for Belgian art, for it has grouped together the isolated efforts of several artists of first rank, of whom the public at large was entirely ignorant, for the reason that in large exhibitions the Black and White section is, as a rule, relegated to an unimportant position.

The *cercle* of L'Estampe maintains an excellent custom of exhibiting each year, side by side with the works of its members, the productions of certain of the masters of the past or of some of the eminent contemporary foreign artists. This year two names were inscribed at the head of the catalogue—J. B. Corot and J. Pennell. The etched work of Corot is but little known to the public, yet nevertheless it is equal to his painting—with which all are familiar—in elegance, in style and even in colour. It is through the Salons of L'Estampe that connoisseurs in Brussels have become acquainted with that great artist Joseph Pennell. Following upon his series of factories and great industrial enterprises, and his views of modern cities, he showed on this occasion visions of an epic and grandiose archaism.





“Les Pins du Hâvre de Rotheneuf, Bretagne” etching by Albert Delstanche | “Sous le Château des Comtes à Gand.” From an etching by De Bruycker

In the forefront of those artists whose work in this branch has not already been dealt with in the articles in the Special numbers of THE STUDIO, we must mention De Bruycker, Delstanche, Mignot and Duriau. The contributions of the Ghent etcher, De Bruycker, were remarkable. "His large plate *Sous le château des Comtes à Gand"* wrote the regular critic of l'Art Moderne, "is one of his most surprising and most impressive achievements. With this amazingly gifted artist his handling of the medium has rapidly increased in dexterity, up to such a point as to become concealed; it disappears beneath the impression which emanates from the work as a whole, and one forgets to scrutinise the technique in complete abandonment to the extraordinary charm which radiates from these strange and moving compositions." De Bruycker seems at times to draw inspiration from the picturesque romanticism of Gustave Doré, and in his way of magnifying portions of architecture he adopts something of the Brangwyn manner, but by his own natural gifts this Ghent artist dominates these reminiscences and his individuality seems to be more apparent in each successive work.

The large plates by Albert Delstanche, his *Pins du hâvre de Rotheneuf* in particular, show the great progress he has made, as do also his charmingly ingenious coloured wood-prints. The contribution of V. Mignot was, as usual, composed of a variety of works. Few Belgian etchers possess his familiarity with different techniques and so wide a choice of styles and themes. One cannot forget that *Le Bassin de Versailles* is perhaps the finest colour etching produced in Belgium. Lastly, one of the best pupils of the master-graver A. Danse, the etcher Duriau, collected a large ensemble of works, comprising portraits drawn with care and Italian scenes selected with discernment, proving the talent and sincerity of this meritorious artist.

F.K.

1915

Khnopff, Fernand, « Des souvenirs à propos de Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema » (lu à la séance du 4 mars 1915), *Annexe aux Bulletins de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*. Communications présentées à la Classe en 1915-1918 (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, 1919), 9-16.

Des souvenirs à propos de Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema,

par FERNAND KHNOPFF, membre de l'Académie (1).

(1) Lu à la séance du 4 mars 1915.



Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema (*Galerie des Offices, Florence.*)

Une étonnante faculté d'assimilation est le côté remarquable du caractère anglais.

Nulle part il n'y a d'intelligences plus ouvertes à tout et les artistes y sont essentiellement cosmopolites. Tous, ils ont parcouru l'Italie, la France, les Pays-Bas, l'Orient; ils y étudient et ils y retournent.

Pour n'en citer qu'un seul, lord Leighton, le président idéal de la R. A., avait 30 ans quand il s' établit en Angleterre, après avoir séjourné à Rome, à Florence, à Francfort, à Paris et à Bruxelles, où il exécuta son premier tableau: *Giotto trouvé par Cimabue dans la campagne de Florence*.

Et malgré cela, partout, tous restent Anglais et ce qu'ils peuvent ou savent acquérir ne fait que contribuer au perfectionnement de leur moi. Il y a même plus, les étrangers deviennent Anglais là-bas, ne pouvant résister à cette sorte de fascination, et récemment deux des peintres qui paraissaient exprimer le mieux la pensée anglaise étaient deux continentaux naturalises: sir Lawrence Alma Tadema, un Hollandais formé à l'école belge, et le Bavarois sir Hubert von Herkomer.

À quoi tient ce phénomène? M. G. Lafenestre, dans un article sur la peinture étrangère à l'Exposition de Paris de 1889, répond ainsi:

« En partie à la conscience opiniâtre que les Anglais mettent a bien faire tout ce qu'ils entreprennent; en partie à l'amour profond qu'ils portent à la nature extérieure, en partie aussi à ce sens moral et pratique qui ne leur permet de considérer aucune œuvre de l'homme, moins encore l'œuvre d'art, comme indifférente et inutile. Lorsqu'un Anglais peint ou lorsqu'il écrit, c'est qu'il a quelque chose à dire; il le dit comme il peut, le plus fortement qu'il peut, insistant sur tous les détails, torturant la palette comme le vocabulaire, sans souci des formes convenues; mais créant, à chaque instant, des formes inattendues. De là, dans leurs peintures, ces inégalités d' exécution qui surprennent, ces maladresses de touche qui font sourire, ces aigreurs de coloration qui blessent la vue: de la, aussi, cette précision soutenue et touchante, presque religieuse, dans l'observation analytique, ces accents incorrects et hardis d'une sensibilité délicate ou fière, ces éclats d'harmonie audacieux et profonds qu'on chercherait vainement ailleurs. Moins sûrs de leur main et moins ambitieux, comme ouvriers du pinceau, que les ouvriers de Paris, ils se risquent peu dans les grandes toiles, mais ils remplissent jusqu'aux bords des cadres bien proportionnés ils se renferment et se concentrent. »

Au total, le champ d'observation de l'art anglais est fort étendu, car, depuis l'étude délicate des mœurs, l'interprétation religieuse de la nature, la restitution ingénieuse de l'antiquité, il va jusqu'au symbolisme le plus lyrique ou le plus précieux. Mais, rarement, dans l'école, on peint pour le plaisir de peindre; les questions de technique, ailleurs si gênantes, n'y ont qu'une importance secondaire, et l'on peut dire même qu'aucune œuvre n'y est franchement naturaliste.

L'art anglais est un art de raffinement, de luxe et d'optimisme, et fort exactement on a pu dire de lui: C' est une fleur qui veut ignorer sa tige.

Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema peut être mis au premier rang des étrangers de marque qui se fixèrent à Londres et que l'Angleterre revendique a bon droit comme siens.

Aucun artiste n'y fut plus populaire, et le secret de ce constant succès n' est pas difficile à découvrir: sa peinture était d'une habileté de métier extraordinaire et les sujets de ses œuvres plaisaient par leur clarté.

On lui a reproché de manquer d'invention; il nous parait cependant qu'il avait un remarquable don d'imagination, mais qu'il ne l'appliquait qu'aux faits. On peut dire, en somme, qu'il possédait une faculté aigue de la perception des faits combinée avec celle de les reproduire.

En dépit de son long séjour en Angleterre, les tendances picturales d'Alma Tadema étaient restées essentiellement hollandaises.

« Tandis,—a écrit un de ses biographes, M. Cosmo Monkhouse,—tandis qu'il appartient intellectuellement au mouvement général de son temps et non à une nation en particulier, ses instincts purement artistiques et ses tendances de technique dérivent évidemment de ses propres ancêtres hollandais. Cette préférence marquée pour les

intérieurs et les cours avec leurs effets subtils et compliques de lumière reflétée; cette étonnante habileté dans la représentation de toutes sortes de matières; ce plaisir dans la belle couleur modifiée et infiniment graduée par les intensités différentes de l'éclairage; cet amour du fini et du détail; dans toutes ces prédilections, Alma Tadema montre sa nationalité. Au lieu de la Hollande, il nous donne l'latine; au lieu d'allées de briques, des cours de marbre; mais il a dans le sang l'esprit de Terburg, de Metzu et de De Hoogh. »

J'ai conservé de ma première visite chez Alma Tadema un souvenir précieux de vie heureuse.

C'étaient, par une belle journée de mai, avec le soleil brumeux de l'été londonnien qui estompe les horizons et agrandit indéfiniment l'immense ville, la profonde rumeur de roulement des larges rues, puis des parcs bleuâtres avec leurs longues pelouses veloutées; ensuite, précédées de jardinets bien tenus, ces coquettes maisons qui font rêver, en passant, a des existences heureuses, impossibles; allant et venant, passaient des dames en toilettes de haut style, des jeunes filles au type adorable et ces petites filles si étrangement costumées, des hommes (de grandes fleurs à la boutonnière), des garçons en chapeau de haute forme. Tout cela sous ce ciel de Londres, un ciel de tableau, un ciel fermé, sans éclat, sans profondeur, mais si doux et si définitif.

La demeure d'Alma Tadema était située dans le paisible quartier de St John's Wood où se trouvent encore d'anciennes résidences entourées de jardins.

C'était le jour de réception, et les honneurs du home étaient faits, de façon charmante, par le maître, sa femme et ses deux filles.

Dès l'entrée, on remarquait dans l'atelier les marches de cuivre poli, la grande abside en aluminium, dont les teintes perlées étaient rendues plus délicates encore par les somptueux carmins du velours de Venise qui décorait sa base. Puis les regards étaient attirés de tous côtés par des points de vue ingénieusement disposés.

Dans un coin de l'atelier, mystérieusement éclaire par des plaques d'onyx mexicain aux transparences lourdement dorées, était placé, sur une sorte d'estrade, un grand piano incruste d'ivoire; derrière lui, une merveilleuse broderie où rayonnaient les nimbes dorés d'une multitude de divinités d'Extrême-Orient; la aussi était placée la peinture préférée du maître: *La mort du premier-né.—La plaie d'Égypte*.

D'un autre côté de l'atelier, le regard plongeait dans le hall blanc, dont les panneaux étaient ornés d'une série de peintures, en format allongé de coupe-papier, offertes à lady Tadema par les confrères-amis de la maison.

Puis on admirait l'atelier de lady Tadema, dans le goût de la Renaissance hollandaise, avec ses bois sculptés sombres et ses vitraux colorés.

Mais ce qui charmait partout, c'était l'harmonie de l' ensemble et ce sentiment de la composition qui se remarque chez l'artiste autant pour l'arrangement de ses objets familiers que pour le choix des éléments de ses œuvres.

Ce sentiment de la parfaite mise en scène devait conduire Sir Lawrence à s'intéresser au théâtre et il collabora activement avec sir Henry Irving, sir Herbert Beerboom Tree et M. Benson.

J'ai conservé le souvenir de la plantation du décor du Forum dans Jules César; les premiers portants représentaient des monuments en construction aux échafaudages desquels étaient accrochées des grappes de figurants bien stylés, et le maître m'a conté souvent ses peines à réaliser exactement les gestes et les draperies de ses interprètes.

Cependant les œuvres d'Alma Tadema sont l'exemple le plus évident de l'influence inévitable du Moderne ou, pour mieux dire, de la Mode moderne.

Quoiqu'il ait cherche à être toujours le plus exact possible dans ses restitutions historiques, pour les attitudes de ses figures et leurs ajustements, il est toutefois facile de déterminer la date de ses œuvres, non seulement d'après quelque détail, mais aussi par l'aspect d'ensemble qui rappelle le milieu et le temps du peintre.

Il y a un siècle se trouvait encore à Bruxelles une œuvre capitale de l'école flamande, le portrait de Jean Arnolfini et de Jeanne de Chenany, sa femme, signé Johannes de Eyck, fuit hic, 1434.

Le major général Hay, blessé à la bataille de Waterloo, avait découvert ce tableau dans l'appartement où il avait été transporté, l'avait acquis et emporte à Londres où il entra à la National Gallery.

Je me rappelle que sir J.E. Millais me raconta qu'au beau temps de la confrérie préraphaélite, ses membres allaient tous les jours religieusement admirer cette belle œuvre de sincérité.

Le portrait représente les deux époux se tenant par la main, debout au milieu de la chambre. Au fond on voit un lit, un miroir et une fenêtre en partie ouverte; les objets dans la chambre sont distinctement reflétés dans le miroir.

Or, je vis un jour, place sur un chevalet, dans l'atelier d'Alma Tadema, une reproduction fort exacte de ce miroir. Comme je le reconnaissais sans hésiter: « Savez-vous, me dit le maître, que l' auteur du chef-d'œuvre y a oublié un détail? » J'avouai mon ignorance, et je fus condamne à retrouver moi-même ce détail. Je me rendis aussitôt au Musée et constatai que sur la tablette de la fenêtre étaient placées des pommes dont le reflet (la grosseur d'une tête d'épingle) était peint dans le miroir; mais sur le siège au-dessous étaient placées des oranges dont le reflet avait été oublié.

Le soir même, je contais à sir Edward Burne Jones, dont j'étais l'hôte, cet oubli qu'il n'avait jamais remarque et, vers la fin du repas, comme le voyant distrait, je lui demandais le sujet de sa rêverie: « Je songe, me répondit-il, au malheureux maître qui peut-être à présent encore se retourne dans son tombeau et supplie le Seigneur de pouvoir aller ajouter le reflet qu'il a oublié. »

A un ami qui lui demandait ce qu'il avait gagné à se faire naturaliser Anglais, le peintre français Alphonse Legros répondit plaisamment: *La bataille de Waterloo*.

Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema eut l'occasion de répondre plus officiellement à une question du même genre, au banquet qui lui fut offert lorsqu'il reçut de S. M. la reine Victoria le titre de chevalier. Il déclara qu' en alliant son art à celui de l'Angleterre, il en avait reçu un grand bénéfice; car il croyait qu'au cours de ses études dans l'école anglaise il avait développé une plus grande recherche de beauté.

La dernière fois que je vis le maître, il était seul dans son atelier, terminant une œuvre importante qui lui prit plusieurs années d'un travail continu.

Elle était intitulée: *Caracalla et Geta* et devait porter le n° 382. Alma Tadema numérotait ses œuvres comme un musicien. Certes la précaution est bonne contre les faussaires, mais elle a l'inconvénient grave de limiter pour l'avenir la production de l'auteur; car chacun sait, à présent, que la fécondité pour un artiste est une qualité posthume.

Caracalla et Geta représentait ce que ce connaisseur érudit de la civilisation romaine devait être tente de peindre un jour: le Colisée en fête rempli par une vaste assemblée et avec le spectacle de l'arène en pleine action. La scène est prise de la loge impériale où se tient Septime-Sévère et sa seconde femme Julia Domna, Geta se trouve entre ses deux sœurs et Bassianus n'est pas loin.

Le maître parut se plaire à m'expliquer, en détail, la destination de certaines parties de la construction,—points contestés qu'il avait résolus simplement par l'application du bon sens. Il me raconta que dans la partie du public contenue dans le tableau, il n'y avait pas moins de 2,500 personnes, toutes étudiées avec soin, et que ce public lui était aussi familier que celui d'une grande première de nos jours.

Puis, au cours de la conversation, je lui demandai son avis au sujet de la question des prix de Rome—qui était à l'ordre du jour en Belgique. Cet avis fut très net: « A quoi bon, me répondit-il, greffer une branche chargée de fruits sur un sujet, si ce sujet n'a pas de tronc? Rubens a suivi le bon principe; aussi, après avoir tiré d' un voyage à l'étranger tout ce qu'il pouvait, il est reste Rubens. Que serait-il survenu s'il était parti plus tôt? Je crois qu'un élève-étudiant ne doit pas voyager. Quand il est devenu un artiste, conscient de sa destinée, de ses besoins, il profitera certainement de voir les œuvres des grands maîtres, parce que, alors, il sera à même de les comprendre et, si c'est nécessaire, d'en prendre ce qui pourra lui servir. A part quelques exceptions, les prix de Rome ne sont pas parvenus au premier rang. Meissonier, Gérome, Leys sont restés chez eux jusqu'à leur maturité. Rembrandt n'a jamais quitté Amsterdam et Rubens, quand il traversait l'Italie, fit, d'après Le Vinci, des copies qui étaient déjà des Rubens. De même Van Dyck et Velasquez ne voyagèrent que lorsqu'ils étaient déjà Van Dyck et Velasquez » .

En sortant, comme j'admirais les merveilleuses fleurs de sa serre, sir Lawrence me montra l'inscription qui ornait la porte de son atelier:

L'art colore la vie comme le soleil colore les fleurs.

et je me dis que cette formule était digne de cet optimiste impénitent dont les œuvres expriment son amour du clair soleil et du bien-être physique et moral et de qui un biographe a écrit: « Personne n'a peint mieux que lui ces idylles méridionales qu'il a

répétées si souvent et l’ on pourrait le nommer le peintre de la joie et du bonheur de vivre. »

Khnopff, Fernand, « Des souvenirs à propos de Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema » (lu à la séance du 4 mars 1915), *Annexe aux Bulletins de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*. Communications présentées à la Classe en 1915-1918 (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, 1919), 9-16.

Translation :

Memories of Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema,
by FERNAND KHNOPFF, Member of the Academy (1).
(1) read at the meeting of March 4, 1915.

An astonishing faculty of assimilation is one of the most remarkable aspects of the English character.

Nowhere do we find intelligences more open to everything, and all the artists are essentially cosmopolitan. They have all have toured Italy, France, the Netherlands and the East; they study there and they return.

To cite only one, Lord Leighton, the ideal president of the R. A., was 30 years old when he settled in England after having sojourned in Rome, Florence, Frankfurt, Paris and Brussels, where he executed his first painting: *Giotto Found by Cimabue in the Countryside of Florence*.

And despite this, wherever they go, they all remain English and all that they can do or know how to acquire only contributes to the improvement of their selves. Even further, foreigners become English over there, unable to withstand this kind of fascination, and recently two painters who appeared to be the best exemplars of English thought were two naturalized continentals: Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema, a Dutchman trained in the Belgian school, and the Bavarian Sir Hubert von Herkomer.

What accounts for this phenomenon? Mr. G. Lafenestre, in an article about the foreign paintings at the 1889 Paris exhibition, responds in this way:

“In part due to the stubborn mental attitude that the English use to do everything well that they undertake; in part due to the deep love they bear for external nature, partly also the moral sense and practice that allows them to consider no work of man, much less a work of art, as unimportant and unnecessary. When an Englishman paints or when he writes it is because he has something to say; he speaks as well as he can, as strongly as he can, insisting on all details, torturing the palette as he does the vocabulary, without worrying about the conventional forms; but at every moment creating unexpected forms. Thus, in their paintings, we find a surprising unevenness of execution, and blunders of touch that make one smile, sour colorings that hurt the eye: thus also, this sustained and touching precision, almost religious, in analytical observation, these incorrect and bold accents of a delicate or proud sensibility, these bursts of bold and profound harmony which one seeks vainly elsewhere. Less certain of their hand and less ambitious as workers of the brush than workers in Paris, they risk

little in large canvases, but they fill to the edges the well proportioned frames which contain and focus them."

In total, the field of observation of English art is widely extended, since in the delicate study of customs, the religious interpretation of nature and the ingenious recreation of antiquity, it approaches the most lyrical or most valuable symbolism. But rarely in this school does one paint for the pleasure of painting; questions of technique, elsewhere so vexing, are only of secondary importance here, and it can be said that no artwork is completely naturalist.

English art is an art of refinement, luxury and optimism, and very correctly one could say of it: It is a flower which wants to ignore its stem.

Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema can be put at the forefront of noted foreigners who settled in London and whom England rightly claims as its own.

No artist was more popular, and the secret of this constant success is not hard to find: his paintings were of an extraordinary technical ability and the clarity of the subjects of his works was pleasing.

He has been criticized for lacking invention; it seems to me, however, that he had a remarkable gift of imagination, but that he applied it to facts. We can say, in short, that he possessed the faculty of acute perception of facts combined with the skill to reproduce them.

Despite his long stay in England, the pictorial tendencies of Alma Tadema remained essentially Dutch.

"While,—says one of his biographers, Mr. Cosmo Monkhouse,—while he belonged intellectually to the general movement of his time and not to a particular nation, his purely artistic instincts and his technical tendencies derive obviously from his own Dutch ancestors. This preference for interiors and courtyards with their subtle effects and complicated reflected light; this amazing skill in the representation of all kinds of materials; this pleasure in beautiful color as modified and infinitely graduated by the different intensities of lighting; this love of the finish and detail; in all these predilections, Alma Tadema shows his nationality. Instead of Holland, he gives us Latin; instead of aisles of bricks, marble courtyards; but he has the spirit of Terburg, Metzu and De Hoogh in his blood."

I have preserved a precious souvenir of happy life from my first visit with Alma Tadema.

It was a beautiful day in May, with the foggy sun of the London summer which blurs the horizons and expands the huge city indefinitely, the deep rumbling of traffic in the wide streets, followed by bluish parks with their long velvety lawns; then, preceded by well-maintained little gardens, these pretty houses which make one dream in passing of impossibly happy lives; going and coming, ladies in high style fashions pass by, adorable young girls and little girls so strangely costumed, men (with large flowers in their buttonhole), boys in top hats. All this under the skies of London, the sky of a painting, a closed sky, without brightness, without depth, but so sweet and so definitive.

The home of Alma Tadema was located in the peaceful area of St John's Wood where one can still find old residences surrounded by gardens.

It was reception day, and the honors of the home were charmingly made by the master, his wife and two daughters.

Upon entering, one noticed the polished copper steps in the studio, the large apse in aluminum, whose pearly tints were made even more delicate by the sumptuous reds of Venetian velvet that decorated its base. Then one's gaze was attracted by ingeniously arranged points of view from all sides.

In a corner of the studio, mysteriously lit by panels of Mexican onyx of heavily golden transparency, a grand piano inlaid with ivory was placed on a sort of stage. Behind it, a wonderful embroidery where the golden nimbuses of a multitude of deities from the Far East radiated; here was also placed the favorite painting of the master: *The Death of the Firstborn—the Plague of Egypt*.

On the other side of the studio, the view plunged in the white hall, whose panels were adorned with a series of paintings in the elongated format of a letter opener, offered to Lady Tadema by the fellow-friends of the House.

Then one admired the studio of Lady Tadema, in the style of the Dutch Renaissance, with its dark wood carvings and stained glass windows.

But what charmed above all was the harmony of the ensemble and the sense of composition which distinguished the artist as much for his arrangement of familiar objects as for the choice of elements of his works.

This feeling of perfect staging would lead Sir Lawrence to become interested in the theater and he collaborated actively with Sir Henry Irving, Sir Herbert Beerboom Tree and Mr. Benson.

I have kept the memory of the stage set of the Forum of Julius Caesar; the first sketches representing the monuments under construction with scaffolding from which stylish extras hung in clusters, and the master often told me of his struggles to achieve the exact gestures and draperies of his performers.

However, the works of Alma Tadema are the most obvious example of the inevitable influence of the Modern or, more exactly, of modern fashion.

Even though he always sought to be as accurate as possible in his historical reconstructions, in the attitudes of its characters and their adjustments, it is nonetheless easy to determine the date of his works, not only according to some detail, but also the aspect of the whole which reminds one of the environment and time of the painter.

A century ago a key work of the Flemish school was still in Brussels, the portrait of Giovanni Arnolfini and Jeanne de Chenany, his wife, signed Johannes de Eyck fuit hic, 1434.

Major General Hay, wounded at the battle of Waterloo, having discovered this painting in the apartment where he had been transported, acquired it and brought it to London where it entered the National Gallery.

I remember that Sir J.E. Millais told me that in the heyday of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, its members went every day to religiously admire this beautiful masterpiece of sincerity.

The portrait represents the couple holding hands, standing in the middle of the room. In the background one sees a bed, a mirror and a window partly opened; the objects in the room are clearly reflected in the mirror.

Now, one day I saw a very accurate reproduction of this mirror placed on an easel in the studio of Alma Tadema. As I recognized it without hesitation: “Do you know,” the master told me, “that the author of this masterpiece has forgotten a detail?” I confessed my ignorance, and I was forced to find this detail for myself. I immediately went to the museum and noticed that on the window sill were placed apples whose reflections (the size of a pinhead) were painted in the mirror; but on the seat below were placed oranges whose reflection had been forgotten.

That same evening, I told Sir Edward Burne-Jones, of whom I was the guest, of this oversight which he also had never noted, and towards the end of the meal, as he seemed distracted, I asked him the subject of his reverie: “I am dreaming, he replied, of the unfortunate master who might now still be turning in his grave and begging the Lord to let him go and add the reflection that he forgot.”

To a friend who asked him what he had gained by being naturalized as English, the French painter Alphonse Legros replied pleasantly: *The Battle of Waterloo*.

Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema had the opportunity to respond more formally to a question of the same kind at the banquet which was offered when he received the title of Knight from her Majesty Queen Victoria. He said that allying his art to that of England, he had received a great benefit; because he believed that during his studies in the English school he had developed a greater search for beauty.

The last time that I saw the master, he was alone in his workshop, completing an important work which had taken him several years of continuous labor.

It was entitled: *Caracalla and Geta* and bore no. 382. Alma Tadema labeled his work like a musician. Certainly the precaution is useful against counterfeiters, but it has the serious disadvantage of limiting the future production of the author; because everyone knows now that fertility for an artist is a posthumous quality.

Caracalla and Geta represented that which this erudite connoisseur of Roman civilization needed to try to paint one day: a festival at the Coliseum filled by a large assembly and the spectacle of the arena in full action. The scene is depicted from the imperial house where Severus stands with his second wife Julia Domna, Geta is found between two sisters and Bassianus is not far away.

The master appeared to be pleased to explain to me in detail, the destination of some parts of the construction,—disputed points that he had resolved simply by the application of common sense. He told me that in the area of the public contained in the painting there were no fewer than 2,500 people, all studied with care, and that this public was as familiar to him as that of a grand premiere of today.

Then, during the conversation, I asked him for his opinion on the question of the prix de Rome—which was the order of the day in Belgium. This opinion was very clear: “What good is it, he replied, to graft a branch heavy with fruit to a subject, if the subject has no trunk? Rubens followed a good principle; consequently, after having extracted everything that he could from a trip abroad, he still remained Rubens. What would have occurred if he had gone earlier? I think that a student does not need to travel. When he becomes an artist, aware of his destiny and his needs, he will certainly benefit by seeing the works of the great masters, because then he will be able to understand them and, if necessary, to take what may serve him. Apart from a few exceptions, winners of the prix de Rome have never attained the first rank. Meissonier, Gérome, Leys remained at home until their maturity. Rembrandt never left Amsterdam and Rubens, when he crossed Italy, made copies after da Vinci that were already clearly by Rubens. Similarly, Van Dyck and Velasquez did not travel until they already were Van Dyck and Velasquez.”

Leaving, as I admired the wonderful flowers of his greenhouse, Sir Lawrence showed me the inscription adorning his workshop door:

Art colors life as the sun colors flowers.

and I tell myself that this formula was worthy of this impenitent optimist whose works express his love of the bright sun and the physical and moral well-being and of whom a biographer wrote: “No one has ever painted better than he the southern idylls that he has repeated so often that one could call him the painter of joy and the joy of living.“

Khnopff, Fernand, « Des souvenirs à propos de Sir Edward Burne-Jones » (lu à la séance du 5 aout 1915), *Annexe aux Bulletins de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*. Communications présentées à la Classe en 1915-1918 (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, 1919), 35-42.

Souvenirs à propos de Sir Edward Burne-Jones,

par FERNAND KHNOPFF, membre de l'Académie.[3]

C'était à Paris, en 1889. Dans cette immense World's Fair, l'Exposition universelle.

L'effort avait été violent pour parvenir à un effet de pittoresque outré par tous les moyens de l'archéologie et de l'exotisme et, de toutes parts, les constructions les plus imprévues mêlaient les styles frustes ou compliqués du moyen âge à la riche ou frêle élégance de l'art oriental.

Après avoir suivi la foule agitée sous les arches formidables de la Tour Eiffel, le long des interminables pelouses et des vastes bassins du Champ-de-Mars, si l'on pénétrait dans le Palais des Beaux-Arts le calme, par degré, renaissait.

Le public se massait encore devant les « sujets » anecdotiques ou militaires, mais il se dispersait peu à peu; le bruit des exclamations et des pas diminuait; enfin, c'était le silence respectueux dans la salle centrale de la section anglaise où étaient disposées avec un remarquable souci d'harmonie des œuvres de sir F. Leighton, de sir J. E. Millais, d'Alma Tadema et d'Orchardson, et, à la place d'honneur, au milieu du panneau, entre les rouges violents du *Mammon* de Watts et les bleus cruellement lointains de son *Espérance*, apparaissait, suprême et glorieuse, dans son beau cadre à pilastres d'or clair, la belle peinture de E. Burne-Jones: *Le Roi Cophetua et la mendiante*.

Devant la pâle mendiante, encore frissonnante dans sa mince robe grise, est assis le Roi, revêtu d'une brillante armure d'acier sombre. Il lui a cédé le siège du pouvoir et s'est abaissé sur les marches du trône. Il tient sur les genoux la couronne de métal noir qu'éclairent les rouges des coraux et des rubis, et son visage, au profil découpé, se lève en une contemplation silencieuse.

L'aspect est somptueux; les tissus précieux scintillent et luisent, des coussins de brocards sont disposés sur les panneaux d'or ciselé, et le métal poli reflète les pieds charmants de la mendiante, ces pieds adorables dont des anémones éparses, pourpres et carminées, font pâlir encore l'ivoire délicat.

Debout dans la galerie qui surmonte le trône, deux jeunes pages chantent doucement, et au loin, dans l'écartement des rideaux, paraît le songe, pourrait-on dire, d'un paysage

[3] The first part of this essay is similar to the memorial tribute that Khnopff published in 1898: Fernand Khnopff, "In Memoriam Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Bart. A Tribute from Belgium," *The Magazine of Art*, 22 (1898), 520-526.

automnal dont le ciel crépusculaire exprime tous les longs regrets, tous les vains espoirs des choses qui ne sont plus et qui n'ont pu être.

Cependant, les deux figures restent immobiles, complètement isolées dans leur intense rêverie.

Quelles heures parfaitement délicieuses passèrent dans la contemplation de cette œuvre de beauté. L'un après l'autre les tendres et précieux souvenirs de vie et d'art renaissaient, s'avivant à la superbe réalisation de cette merveilleuse peinture.

Le spectateur se sentait ravi dans une atmosphère de bonheur rêvé, et cette ivresse de l'âme l'emportait si haut et si loin qu'il n'avait plus conscience de la foule qu'il fallait, au départ, traverser coude à coude pour gagner la sortie de l'Exposition.

Le rêve de l'artiste était devenu la réalité et c'était la réalité violente et brutale qui était devenue le rêve ou plutôt le cauchemar.

Vraiment, on doit aimer de tout son être le grand et généreux et grand artiste qui peut donner une telle illusion de bonheur et dont l'esprit est assez puissant pour parvenir jusqu'au seuil de l'absolu d'où il nous envoie des messagers de l'espoir et des anges de la paix.

Car ne sont-ce pas des envoyés de l'au-delà, ces créatures exquises qui apparaissent dans les œuvres du maître? ces chevaliers, nobles d'idéale vaillance, dans leurs armures ciselées; ces princesses de légende dans leurs somptueux vêtements lourds de joyaux et de broderies; ces femmes étranges qui charment par la grâce fascinante de leurs lignes onduleuses et de leur chair pâle; et, surtout, ces jeunes filles aux gestes lents et pensifs et aux vêtements fins et purs, si délicatement plissés. Une lumière surnaturelle éclaire ce inonde rêvé, une lumière qui semble faite de subtils reflets de crépuscule; elle se répand sur ces palais légendaires, ces cours désertes, ces escaliers compliqués, ces recoins mystérieux; sur ces paysages étendus, fermés par des murs de rochers ou des collines distantes; sur ces bois ombreux, sur ces bords de rivières au cours lent, sur ces étangs étoilés de myriades de fleurs, sur ces ruines austères et silencieuses.

Sir Edward Burne-Jones naquit en 1833, dans la très peu artistique ville de Birmingham; à 11 ans il avait été mis à l'école Roi-Édouard. Il s'était adonné, avec plaisir, aux études classiques et avait appris à connaître ces légendes et ces mythes qu'il devait interpréter plus tard de si curieuse façon.

Comme le père de l'artiste le destinait à l'ordination, il l'envoya ensuite à Oxford, à Exeter College; le jeune homme rencontra là William Morris et ils se lièrent bientôt d'une grande amitié.

On sait qu'un jour la vue d'un dessin de Rossetti les décida à se vouer à l'art.

Ce que Rossetti avait, en 1848, demandé à F. M. Brown, la confiance en soi et le pouvoir de se confirmer dans sa vocation, les deux jeunes gens allèrent, en 1855, à la Noël, le demander à Rossetti.

Il les reçut avec bienveillance, les fit travailler avec succès et le, présenta à ses amis Tennyson, Browning, Watts et Ruskin.

Il me fut donné, un jour, d'avoir la vision précise de ce groupe admirable d'hommes supérieurs. C'était à Londres, il y a longtemps déjà, en mai, l'après-midi; j'étais allé revoir le vieux peintre F. M. Brown, le précurseur de cette rénovation picturale, connue sous le nom de préraphaélisme; il habitait fort loin, au-delà de Regent's Park, près de Primrose-Hill.

Le temps était couvert, et sous ce merveilleux ciel de Londres, ce ciel de tableau, les grandes pelouses veloutées du Park, s'étendaient longuement jusqu'en une pâle vapeur bleue où se fondaient les masses des hauts arbres. Sur le lac, les cygnes glissaient lentement.

Le peintre me montra, dans son atelier, l'œuvre à laquelle il travaillait; c'était une des peintures destinées à l'Hôtel de ville de Manchester.

Puis nous descendîmes prendre le thé et, peu à peu, il me dit, ses souvenirs, les souvenirs de son enfance à Bruges (si profondément chère à tous deux et à présent nous apparaissant d'autrefois et lointaine) ensuite, de sa jeunesse et de ses séjours d'étude à Anvers, à Paris, à Rome, enfin son retour à Londres; sa rencontre avec Rossetti et ses relations avec Morris: « deux hommes de génie, dit-il, les plus grands de l'Angleterre en ce siècle ».

Dans le petit salon où étaient pieusement réunis tant d'esquisses et de dessins, souvenirs d'amis oublieux ou perdus, l'obscurité descendait insensiblement. Assis près de la fenêtre qui éclairait encore sa forte chevelure et sa longue barbe blanche, le vieux maître évoqua pour moi, de sa parole lente et de sa voix sourde, la vie de la confrérie préraphaélite; se levant quelquefois pour décrocher et me faire voir aux dernières lueurs du jour qui mourait, quelque dessin savant et précis de John E. Millais, ou quelque étude de Rossetti au geste imprévu d'ampleur somptueuse, ou quelque peinture de la déjà légendaire Élisabeth Siddal, une œuvre vraiment étrange d'un coloris dur et poignant et d'une expression angoissante, ou aussi, et avec émotion, des tableaux de son fils Oliver M. Brown, mort si jeune et dont le malheureux père était si fier.

Il parla longtemps encore, la nuit était venue, et je rentrai à Londres, dans Oxford Street, dans l'éblouissement des lumières, le roulement continu des voitures, l'incessant va et vient des passants, avec la sensation que pendant quelques heures inoubliables j'avais vécu une autre existence, plongé dans une délicieuse ivresse de souvenir.

La demeure de sir E. Burne-Jones était située à Kensington. On la nommait *The Grange*. C'était une vieille maison de briques, célèbre déjà, car Richardson y avait écrit ses romans fameux et le Dr Johnson et Hogarth avaient été souvent reçus sous ce toit.

Mais si cette maison de campagne d'autrefois avait été peu à peu prise par l'agrandissement de la grande ville, elle avait conservé cependant son jardin et son verger, où fleurissaient, devant le rideau de lierre sombre, les riantes bordures d'iris, de lis, de tournesols et de roses trémières.

Quels précieux souvenirs encore que les visites à la Grange!

La réception dans le hall où, dès l'entrée, en face du beau portrait du maître par Watts, souriait le gracieux portrait de Miss Margaret, Burne-Jones par son père, une œuvre exquise de sentiment et de coloris; puis, le repas charmant de cordiale simplicité; puis, après la conversation dans le salon, la traversée du jardin et l'entrée dans le grand atelier. Là se trouvaient, encadrée et sous verre, la série des panneaux du mythe de Persée; à une extrémité de l'atelier, en cours d'exécution, Le *Triomphe de l'amour*: un superbe adolescent trônant dans un ouragan de draperie sur un char aux roues énormes; de tous côtés, de précieux accessoires d'atelier: la petite armure en acier de Persée; la nef en chêne et en cuivre de la Table ronde; des esquisses et des études; les sujets tirés du roman de la Rose *Vénus Concordia, Vénus Discordia, Le Cortège des victimes de l'amour*, comme le vit Britomart en tapisserie dans le château de Busirane.

Dans le petit atelier, situé au premier étage de la maison, se trouvaient encore des projets de tapisserie, des dessins délicats, des portraits et une peinture de petit format: *Le Miroir magique*.

Dans un troisième atelier, loué dans les environs, avait été transporté, peu de temps avant la mort du maître, un tableau de grande dimension près d'être terminé: *La mort d'Arthur*. Le roi est couché, endormi sous les arbres d'Avalon, entre les collines et la mer; aucun souffle ne touche le feuillage profond, ni les héraldiques fleurs de lys; les reines veillent; le veilleur est immobile; toute la scène est remplie d'une silencieuse attente.

Mais c'est pour l'artiste que la lumière apparut à l'Est; c'est pour lui que l'heure est venue.

Peu de temps après la mort du maître, une exposition—qui fut triomphale—réunit à la New-Gallery un grand nombre de ses œuvres. On pouvait admirer là: les colorations somptueuses de *Laus Veneris*, les nuances nacrées des *Jours de la Création*, les blondeurs pâles de *L'Escalier d'or*, les bleus d'acier de *Merlin et Viviane*, le paysage ému où s'agenouille *Le Chevalier miséricordieux*, les armures sombres et les chairs claires de la série, le *Persée*, et *La mort d'Arthur*, l'œuvre inachevée.

La New-Gallery où Burne-Jones exposa jusqu'à la fin de sa vie, avait remplacé la Grosvenor Gallery où son apparition en 1877 fut une date dans l'histoire de la peinture anglaise.

Il n'exposa qu'une seule fois et un seul tableau à la Royal Academy en 1886. L'Academy l'avait cette année élu par acclamations sans qu'il ait jamais présenté d'œuvre à l'illustre corporation. Mais il était resté cependant fidèle à la Grosvenor Gallery où il avait envoyé

trois peintures, parmi lesquelles une petite toile intitulée: *Flamma Vestalis,* dont le correspondant de la *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* donna alors cette description:

« Exquise étude de jeune fille, vue debout et de profil sur un fond composé d'un paysage de fantaisie, dans le genre de ce qu'affectionnaient les Vénitiens de la fin du XVème siècle.

« Le titre de cette toile, est: *Flamma Vestalis*. C'est bien là l'idée qu'exprime le peintre par ce type en même temps chaste et fait pour éveiller les rêves passionnés.

« La coloration des draperies est d'un bleu ravissant et pour ainsi dire inédit, pareil à celui de certaines fleurs sauvages, discrètement avivé par les tons pourpres de l'anémone et par un autre bleu délicieux tournant au lilas.

« La recherche est neuve et vraiment charmante. »

Cette figure de *Flamma Vestalis* est une des plus adorables créations de Burne-Jones; c'est un des types le mieux exprimés de l'anglaise esthétique, de l'anglaise de la période du Paon, comme on dit à Kensington.

Burne-Jones n'a tenté que dans des portraits, de représenter l'anglaise actuelle, plus attentive à New-York qu'à Florence, absolue impératrice de la mode, impérieuse et exclusive dans son goût qu'elle n'inquiète pas d'érudition; mais il a composé quelques figures qui représentent parfaitement l'apparence et la psychologie de cette anglaise esthétique.

Les esthétiques avaient été la suite des préraphaélites; ceux-ci, réunis en un groupe exclusif, avaient vécu dans une atmosphère artistique presque artificielle, et c'est ce goût de l'artificiel qu'après eux avaient cultivé les esthétiques, mettant tout leur effort à composer la vie d'impressions d'art et de cela seulement.

La mode s'en mêla; il y eut des imitations obtuses et des affectations ridicules, c'est vrai; mais qu'importe cela, si l'on a vécu, ne fût-ce qu'un instant, l'espoir et la vision d'un charme prolongé et d'une grâce infinie.

« Les songes sont des mensonges, dit un vieux proverbe, mais lorsque la dernière heure arrive et qu'il reste seulement pour de trop rares minutes de ce qui fut nous, d'obscures clartés devant les yeux que l'ombre gagne, qui dira le signe qui vous distingue, Ô souvenirs de la vie vécue, ô mirages de la vie rêvée. »

Cette phrase de P. Bourget pourrait être l'épigraphe de cette œuvre si belle de Burne-Jones: *The Golden Stairs*, « L'Escalier d'or ».

Comme nos souvenirs, fragiles et précieux, au cours de l'existence, ces idéales créatures de jeunesse et de beauté descendent toutes les marches inévitables. Au début elles sont insouciantes et rieuses, puis, l'une d'elles, inquiète déjà, contient du doigt les sonorités

possibles de la longue et fine trompette d’argent, et les têtes s’inclinent ou se redressent, et les mouvements doux multiplient encore les plis des crêpes frissonnants.

Elles descendent; et au tournant des marches, au milieu, la passion contenue qu’exprime un chant de violon.

Ensuite un glissement métallique de fines cymbales de cuivre, évoque les teintes d’or triste et de pourpre fanée des couchers du soleil en automne.

Elles se détournent déjà et s’éloignent peu à peu; mais, avant de pénétrer dans la salle imposante où se prolonge une colonnade sombre et massive, la dernière jeune fille s’arrête; elle retourne, la tête pour la dernière fois et donne un sourire d’adieu.

Les songes sont des mensonges, dit-on, mais lorsque passe l’heure dernière et qu’il ne reste, devant les yeux, que l’ombre lentement dévore, que de vagues lueurs de ce que fut notre existence; pourquoi vous séparer encore, ô souvenirs vécus, ô mirages rêvés.



Edward Burne-Jones: *The Golden Stairs*, 1880.

Khnopff, Fernand, « Des souvenirs à propos de Sir Edward Burne-Jones » (lu à la séance du 5 aout 1915), *Annexe aux Bulletins de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*. Communications présentées à la Classe en 1915-1918 (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, 1919), 35-42.

Translation:

Memories of Sir Edward Burne-Jones,
by FERNAND KHNOPFF, Member of the Academy. [4]

It was in Paris, in 1889. In that immense World's Fair, the International Exposition.

Strenuous efforts had been made to achieve an effect of excessive picturesqueness by all the means of archaeology and exoticism, and from all sides the most unexpected constructions mingled both unsophisticated and complicated styles from the middle ages with the rich or fragile elegance of Oriental art.

After following the restless crowd under the tall arches of the Eiffel tower, along the endless lawns and ample basins of the Champ-de-Mars, if you entered the Palais des Beaux-Arts, by degrees peace seemed to grow around you.

The public still massed before *genre* or military "subjects," but it dispersed little by little; the noise of exclamations and footsteps decreased; finally, there was respectful silence in the central room of the English section where the works of Sir F. Leighton, Sir J. E. Millais, Alma Tadema and Orchardson were arranged with a remarkable attention to harmony, and, in the center of a panel in the place of honor, between the violent red of the *Mammon* of Watts and the cruelly distant blues of his *Hope*, appeared, supreme and glorious in its beautiful frame of pale gold pilasters, the beautiful painting by E. Burne-Jones: *King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid*.

In front of the pale beggar maid, still shivering in her thin grey gown, sits the King, clad in brilliant dark steel armor. He has given her the seat of power and descended to sit on the steps of the throne. He holds on his knees the black metal crown which sparkles with red coral and rubies, and his face, in clear-cut profile looks up in silent contemplation.

The effect is sumptuous; precious fabrics sparkle and shine, brocaded cushions are arranged on the panels chased with gold, and polished metal reflects the beautiful feet of the beggar, these adorable feet made even more pale than delicate ivory by contrast with purple and crimson anemones scattered about.

[4] The first part of this essay is similar to the memorial tribute that Khnopff published in 1898: Fernand Khnopff, "In Memoriam Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Bart. A Tribute from Belgium," *The Magazine of Art*, 22 (1898), 520-526.

Standing in the gallery which surmounts the throne, two young pages sing gently, and far away, in the parting of the curtains, appears the dream, so to speak, of an autumnal landscape in which the twilight sky expresses all long regrets, all vain hopes of things that are no more and things which could never be. Meanwhile, the two figures remain motionless, completely isolated in their intense reverie.

How perfectly delightful were the hours spent in contemplation of this work of beauty. One after another the tender and precious memories of life and art are reborn, bringing to life the superb achievement of this wonderful painting.

The viewer is ravished by the atmosphere of perfect happiness, and this intoxication of the soul carried him away so high and so far away that he was no longer aware of the crowd that he must traverse to the exit of the Exposition, jostling him elbow to elbow.

The artist's dream had become reality and it was the violent and brutal reality that became the dream or rather the nightmare.

Truly, one must love with his entire being the great and generous artists who can give us such an illusion of happiness and whose spirit is powerful enough to reach the threshold of the absolute whence they send us messengers of hope and the angels of peace.

Because are these not envoys from the beyond, these exquisite creatures that appear in the works of the master? These knights, of noble ideal valor, in their chiseled armor; these legendary princesses of in their sumptuous garments, heavy with jewels and embroidery; these strange women who charm by the fascinating grace of their flowing lines and pale flesh; and, above all, these girls with slow and thoughtful gestures and fine and pure clothing, so delicately pleated. A supernatural light illuminates this flooded dream, a light that seems made of subtle reflections of twilight; it spreads on these legendary palaces, these deserted courtyards, these complicated stairs, these mysterious nooks, on these broad landscapes, framed by walls of rocks or distant hills; on these shadowy woods, on the banks of slow rivers and on these ponds starred with myriads of flowers, on these austere and silent ruins.

Sir Edward Burne-Jones was born in 1833, in the unartistic city of Birmingham; at age 11 he was sent to the King Edward school. He was pleasurably devoted to classical studies, and studied these stories and myths that he would later interpret in such a unique way.

As the father of the artist intended him for ordination, he then sent him to Exeter College, Oxford; here the young man then met William Morris and they were soon bound by a great friendship.

It is known that one day the sight of a drawing by Rossetti made them decide to dedicate themselves to art.

That which Rossetti had asked of F. M. Brown in 1848, self-confidence and the strength to confirm himself in his vocation, the two young men went to demand of Rossetti at Christmas in 1855.

He received them kindly, helped them to work successfully and presented them to his friends Tennyson, Browning, Watts and Ruskin.

It was given to me one day to have a precise vision of this admirable group of superior men. It was a long time ago already, in London on a May afternoon; I had gone once more to see the aged painter F. M. Brown, the precursor of this pictorial renovation known under the name of Pre-Raphaelitism. He lived very far beyond Regent's Park, near Primrose Hill.

The weather was overcast and under that wonderful sky of London, the sky of a painting, the large velvety lawns of the Park stretched into the distance where a pale blue haze met the masses of tall trees. On the lake, swans slowly glided.

In his studio, the painter showed me the work on which he was engaged; it was one of the paintings for the Manchester Town Hall.

Then we went down to tea and, little by little, he shared with me his memories, memories of his childhood in Bruges (so deeply dear to both of us and which seemed to us now to be long ago and distant), then, of his youth and his study trips to Antwerp, Paris, and Rome, finally returning to London; his meeting with Rossetti and his relationship with Morris: "two men of genius," he said, "the greatest in Britain in this century."

In the small chamber where so many sketches and drawings were piously gathered, memories of friends lost or forgotten, darkness was descending imperceptibly. Sitting near the window which still illuminated his thick hair and long white beard, the old master evoked for me, speaking slowly and with muffled voice, the life of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood; getting up occasionally to pick up and let me see by the last light of the dying day some learned and precise drawing by John E. Millais, or some sketch by Rossetti with an unexpected gesture or sumptuous scale, or some painting by the already legendary Elisabeth Siddal, a really strange work with an agonizing expression and a hard and poignant color, or also with great emotion the paintings by his son Oliver M. Brown, who died so young and of whom the unfortunate father was so proud.

He spoke for a long time, but the night came and I went to London, to Oxford Street in the glare of the lights, the continuous rolling of the cars, the constant coming and going of passers-by, with the feeling that for a few unforgettable hours I had lived another existence, plunged into a delicious intoxication of memory.

The home of Sir E. Burne-Jones was located in Kensington. It was called *The Grange*. It was an old brick house, already celebrated because Richardson had written his famous novels here and Dr. Johnson and Hogarth were often received under this roof.

But if this country house of the past had been gradually overtaken by the expansion of the big city, it had nonetheless retained its garden and orchard, where the charming borders of iris, lilies, sunflowers and hollyhocks flourished before the dark curtain of ivy.

What precious memories still remain of these visits to the Grange!

The reception in the hall where, upon entry, opposite the beautiful portrait of the master by Watts, smiled the graceful portrait of Miss Margaret Burne-Jones by her father, an exquisite work of feeling and color; then, the charming meal of warm simplicity; then, after conversation in the lounge, crossing the garden to enter the large studio. There one found, framed and under glass, the series of panels of the Perseus myth; at one end of the studio, still in the course of execution, the *Triumph of Love*: a beautiful teenager enthroned in a hurricane of drapery on a chariot with huge wheels; on all sides, precious accessories of the studio: the small steel armor of Perseus; the oak and copper nave of the Round Table; sketches and studies; subjects drawn from the Romance of the Rose *Venus Concordia, Venus Discordia, The Procession of Victims of Love*, such as Britomart viewed in the tapestry in the castle of Busirane.

In the small studio, located on the first floor of the house, were more tapestry projects, delicate drawings, portraits and a small painting: *The Magic Mirror*.

In a third studio, rented in the vicinity, a large nearly finished painting had been transported shortly before the death of the master: *The Death of Arthur*. The King is lying asleep under the trees of Avalon, between the hills and the sea; no breath touches the deep foliage, nor the heraldic lilies; the queens keep vigil; the guard is motionless; the entire scene is filled with a silent expectation.

But it was for the artist that the light appeared in the East; it was his time that had come.

Shortly after the death of the master, an exhibition—which was triumphant—brought together a large number of his works at the New Gallery. One could admire there: the sumptuous color of *Laus Veneris*, the pearly nuances of the *Days of Creation*, the pale blondes of *The Golden Stairs*, the steely blues of *Merlin and Viviane*, the moving landscape where *The Merciful Knight* kneels, the dark armor and clear flesh of the *Perseus* series, and the unfinished work *The Death of Arthur*.

The New Gallery where Burne-Jones exhibited until the end of his life had replaced the Grosvenor Gallery where his appearance in 1877 was a milestone in the history of English painting.

He exhibited only once at the Royal Academy with a single painting in 1886. The Academy had that year elected him by acclamation even though he had never submitted work to the illustrious corporation. But he remained faithful to the Grosvenor Gallery where he had sent three paintings, including a small canvas entitled: *Flamma Vestalis,* to which the correspondent of the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* gave this description:

“An exquisite study of a girl, seen standing in profile on a background consisting of a fantasy landscape, in the genre loved by Venetians at the end of the fifteenth century.

The title of this painting is: *Flamma Vestalis*. It is the idea expressed by the painter by this type both chaste and at the same time made to arouse passionate dreams.

The coloring of the draperies is a ravishing and virtually unknown blue, similar to that of certain wild flowers, discreetly sparked by purple anemone tones and another delicious blue turning to lilac.

The research is new and really charming.”

This figure of *Flamma Vestalis* is one of the most adorable creations of Burne-Jones; she is one of the figures who best represents the aesthetic Englishwoman, the Englishwoman from the period of the Peacock, as they say in Kensington.

Only in portraits did Burne-Jones try to represent the contemporary English woman, more attentive to New York City than to Florence, the absolute Empress of fashion, imperious and exclusive in her taste which is undisturbed by erudition; but he composed a few figures that represent perfectly the appearance and the psychology of this aesthetic Englishwoman.

The Aesthetes were the followers of the Pre-Raphaelites; these had gathered in an exclusive group, had lived in an almost artificial artistic atmosphere, and it was this taste for the artificial that the Aesthetes after them had cultivated, putting all their effort to build a life of impressions of art and of that alone.

The mode was mixed; there were obtuse imitations and ridiculous affectations, it is true; but what does this matter, if one has lived, even for a moment, in the hope and the vision of a prolonged charm and infinite grace.

“Dreams are but lies, says an old proverb, but when the last hour comes and that there are only too few minutes left to what was us, pale lights before the eyes that shadows will conquer, who can tell what sign will distinguish you, O memories of the actual life from you, O mirages of the dream life.”

This sentence of P. Bourget could be the motto of this beautiful work by Burne-Jones: *The Golden Stairs*.

Like our fragile and precious memories in the course of life, these ideal creatures of youth and beauty descend all the inevitable steps. At first they are carefree and laughing, then one of them, already anxious stops with her finger the possible sound of her long and fine silver trumpet, and the other heads bend or straighten, and their soft movements stir the folds in their drapery.

They descend; and at the turn of the steps, in the middle, the suppressed passion is expressed in a song of a violin.

Then a metal slide of fine copper cymbals, evokes the sad golden tints and the faded purple hues of an autumn sunset.

They turn away to depart little by little; but before entering the imposing hall where a dark and massive colonnade extends, the last young girl stops; she turns her head for the last time and gives a smile of farewell.

Dreams are lies, it is said, but when the last hour comes and nothing remains before the eyes than a slowly devouring shadow, than the vague glimmerings of what was our existence; why separate you again, o lived memories, o mirages of the dream.

1916

Khnopff, Fernand, « Quelques notes sur la chapelle de la Station missionnaire américaine de l'Église de la Nouvelle Jérusalem à Ixelles » (lu à la séance du 2 mars 1916), *Annexe aux Bulletins de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*. Communications présentées à la Classe en 1915-1918 (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, 1919), 83-86.

Quelques notes sur la chapelle de la Station missionnaire américaine de l'Église de la Nouvelle Jérusalem, à Ixelles,

par FERNAND KHNOPFF, membre de l'Académie (1).

(1) Lu a la séance du 2 mars 1916.

Quelques privilégiés recevaient, à la fin de l'an dernier, une carte d'invitation d'aspect imprévu: sur un fond jaune clair, des lignes blanches auréolaient de leurs ondulations un livre ouvert ou se trouvait une inscription hébraïque; au-dessous on pouvait lire, en caractères noirs:

« Le peintre J.-J. Gailliard a décoré la chapelle de la Station missionnaire américaine de l'Église de la Nouvelle Jérusalem, rue Gachard, 33. Il vous invite à venir la visiter. »

On savait que cette station missionnaire avait été établie à Ixelles en 1912.

L'Église de la Nouvelle Jérusalem est fondée sur la Parole de Dieu, contenue dans les livres canoniques de l'Ancien Testament, dans les quatre Évangiles et l' Apocalypse et dans le Écrits théologiques d'Emmanuel Swedenborg (Stockholm, 1682- Londres, 1772).

Swedenborg est le dernier des Prophètes et l'Évangéliste de la Dispensation latine.

L'Église fut organisée des 1788.

Étant en possession d'une nouvelle Révélation, la Parole latine, cette Église croit ne pas être une secte parmi les nombreuses sectes catholiques et protestantes; elle est la «Nouvelle Église », l'Église de l'avenir, prédite et décrite anciennement par les Prophètes sous le nom de Nouvelle Jérusalem.

Cette religion se distingue des autres par son principe fondamental qui, tout en étant chrétien, est strictement monothéiste et unitaire.

A ceux qui recherchent les investigations de l'esprit et a ceux dont les aspiration religieuses ne sont pas satisfaites par les dogmes et les formules des vieilles Églises, la Nouvelle Église offre:

1° Des connaissances rationnelles sur Dieu, sur ses Attributs et sur les Lois de son Ordre;

2° La révélation du Sens interne de la Parole, et la doctrine du Vrai réel, qui font du sens littéral de la Parole comme un clair miroir reflétant Dieu et les cieux;

3° La merveilleuse et antique Science des correspondances restaurée, qui est la clef de la Bible et de toutes les mythologies anciennes;

4° La doctrine des Degrés qui explique la création et rend possible la conception de l'immanence de Dieu dans la nature, sans confondre Dieu avec la nature;

5° Enfin, l'exposition systématique du Monde spirituel et des vues précises, les plus consolantes, sur la vie de l'homme après la mort.

L'annonce de cette décoration nous fit apparaitre le souvenir de William Blake, le peintre-poète visionnaire.

Dans son histoire de la peinture anglaise; M. E. Chesneau écrivait: « William Blake (1777- 1827), peintre visionnaire, issu du grand mouvement teutonique qui a rallié, sous la terreur inspirée par Napoléon, toutes les fractions de la souche scandinave.

« Ce mouvement a communiqué à l'Angleterre une partie des éléments mystiques du Nord extrême.

» Blake a voulu faire du Swedenborg en peinture » .

D'autre part, la belle revue anglaise, *The Port folio* [sic], consacrait sa livraison d'octobre 1905 a une étude de William Blake, peintre et poète, écrite par M. Richard Garnett, conservateur des livres imprimes au British Museum.

De plus, le peintre anglais, sir William Blake Richmond, que j'avais vu à Londres et revu à Bruxelles où il était venu exécuter quelques portraits, nous avait souvent raconte combien grande avait été l'influence de l'artiste visionnaire, son parrain, sur la société d'Elite qui se réunissait dans la demeure de son père, le peintre G. Richmond.

Je ne citerai qu'un détail: la vénération de ses disciples était si profonde que, lorsqu'ils allaient visiter le maître dans la petite chambre qu'il habitait au troisième étage du n° 3, Fountain Court, Strand, ils donnaient, avec dévotion, un respectueux baiser au modeste pommeau de la sonnette, avant de le toucher de la main.

L'œuvre de J.-J. Gailliard ne rappelle en rien le souvenir de celle de William Blake, simplement parce que le jeune peintre bruxellois ignorait jusqu'à l'existence du visionnaire anglais.

La chapelle de la rue Gachard est installée au rez-de-chaussée d'une petite maison bourgeoise, où elle occupe les divisions ordinairement destinées à la salle à manger et a la véranda.

Dès l'entrée, l'œil est ravi par une sensation d'heureuse et bienveillante clarté, qui correspond parfaitement à l'essence de l'œuvre de Swedenborg, laquelle dégage le plus radieux optimisme.

Je ne m'attarderai pas à décrire des peintures que vous pourrez voir bientôt, d'autant moins que l'artiste a bien voulu mettre à ma disposition des études qui vous prépareront a cette visite. Mais je crois devoir encore vous lire la nomenclature des panneaux décoratifs :

Le Veau ailé prosterne devant le Livre ;

Le Chandelier a sept branches surmonte des sept Etoiles;

Le Lion aile et couronne portant la clé de la connaissance ;

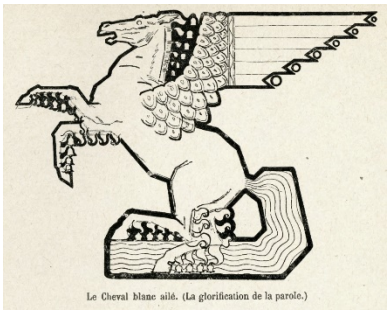
L' Aigle grand, long d' envergure, plein de plumes a façon de broderie ;

L' Ange ou Les Trois Cieux proclamant le Règne du Seigneur ;

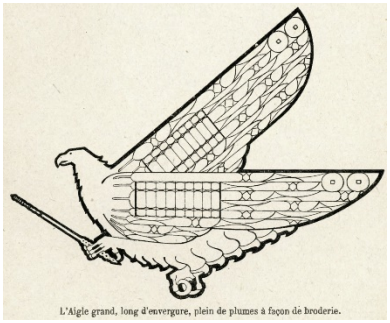
Le Cheval blanc ailé;

La Glorification de la Parole.

[two illustrations]



Le Cheval blanc ailé. (La glorification de la parole.)



L'Aigle grand, long d'envergure, plein de plumes à façon de broderie.

Khnopff, Fernand, « Quelques notes sur la chapelle de la Station missionnaire américaine de l'Église de la Nouvelle Jérusalem à Ixelles » (lu à la séance du 2 mars 1916), *Annexe aux Bulletins de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*. Communications présentées à la Classe en 1915-1918 (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, 1919), 83-86.

Translation :

Some notes on the chapel of the American missionary Station of the Church of the new Jerusalem, in Ixelles,

by FERNAND KHNOPFF, Member of the Academy (1).

(1) read at the meeting of 2 March 1916.

At the end of last year, a privileged few received an unexpected invitation card: on a light yellow background, with white undulating lines making a halo around an open book with where one found a Hebrew inscription; below that one could read, in black lettering:

“The painter J.-J. Gailliard has decorated the chapel of the Station American missionary of the Church of the New Jerusalem, rue Gachard, 33. He invites you to visit.”

We know that this mission station was established in Ixelles in 1912.

The Church of the new Jerusalem is based on the word of God contained in the canonical books of the Old Testament, the four Gospels and the Apocalypse and in the theological writings of Emmanuel Swedenborg (Stockholm, 1682-London, 1772).

Swedenborg is the last of the prophets and the Evangelist of the Latin Dispensation.

The Church was organized in 1788.

Being in possession of a new Revelation, the Latin word, this Church believes that it is not one sect among the many Catholic and Protestant sects; it is the “New Church,” the Church of the future, predicted and formerly described by the prophets under the name of the New Jerusalem.

This religion is distinguished from others by its fundamental principle which, while being completely Christian, is strictly monotheistic and unitary.

Those seeking investigations of the spirit and those which the religious aspiration are not satisfied by the dogmas and formulas of the old churches, the New Church offers:

1 ° The rational knowledge on God, his Attributes and the Laws of his agenda;

2 ° The revelation of the internal meaning of the Word, and the doctrine of the True reality, which is found in the literal sense of the Word as a clear mirror reflecting God and heaven;

3 ° The wonderful and ancient Science of Correspondences restored, which is the key to the Bible and all ancient mythologies;

4 ° The doctrine of Degrees which explains the creation and makes possible the conception of the immanence of God in nature, without confusing God with nature;

5 ° Finally, the systematic exposition of the Spiritual World and specific views, the more comforting, on the life of man after death.

The announcement of this decoration brought to us the memory of William Blake, the visionary painter-poet.

In his history of English painting, Mr. E. Chesneau wrote: “William Blake (1777-1827), visionary painter, resulting from the great Teutonic movement that has rallied all fractions of the Scandinavian strain under the terror inspired by Napoleon.”

“This movement provided England a part of the mystical elements of the extreme North.”

“Blake wanted to be the Swedenborg of painting.”

On the other hand, the beautiful English journal, *The Port folio* [sic], devoted its issue of October 1905 to a study of William Blake, painter and poet, written by Mr. Richard Garnett, curator of printed books in the British Museum.

In addition, the English painter, Sir William Blake Richmond, whom I had seen in London and saw again in Brussels where he had come to execute a few portraits, often told us how great had been the influence of the visionary artist, his godfather, on the society of the Elite that met in the home of his father, the painter G. Richmond.

I will mention just one detail: the worship of his followers was so profound that when they went to visit the master in the small room he lived on the third floor of no. 3, Fountain Court, Strand, they gave with devotion a respectful kiss to modest doorbell before touching it with their hands.

The work of J.-J. Gailliard in no way recalls the memory of the works of William Blake, simply because the young Brussels painter was unaware even of the existence of the English visionary.

The chapel of the rue Gachard is installed on the ground floor of a small house, where it occupies the spaces usually destined for the dining room and veranda.

From the entrance, the eye is ravished by a feeling of happy and benevolent clarity, which is a perfect match was the essence of the work of Swedenborg, which releases the most radiant optimism.

I will not dwell to describe paintings that you will soon see, still less that the artist has kindly put at my disposal the studies that will prepare you for this visit. But I think I should still read you the titles of the decorative panels:

The winged Calf prostrate before the book;

The Candlestick has seven branches overcomes seven stars;

The Lion wing and crowned with the key of knowledge;

The large Eagle, long scale, full of feathers in the manner of embroidery;

The Angel or the Three Heavens proclaiming the Reign of the Lord;

The winged white Horse;

The Glorification of the Lord.

Khnopff, Fernand, “A propos de la photographie dite d’art (lu à la séance du 8 juin 1916),” *Annexe aux Bulletins de la Classe des Beaux-arts. Communications présentées à la Classe en 1915-1918*, (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, 1919), 93-99.

A propos de la photographie dite d’art,
par FERNAND KHNOPFF, membre de l’Académie (1).

(1) Lu à la séance du 8 juin 1916.

Sans doute il est trop tard pour parler encore d’elle.[5]

Ce vers célèbre pourrait servir d’épigraphe à ces notes, car plus que les quinze jours du poète ont passé depuis le moment de vogue de la photographie dite d’art.

Le point culminant de son succès fut marqué par l’article de M. R. de la Sizeranne publié dans la *Revue des Deux Mondes*, en décembre 1897. Puis en un élégant in-4° copieusement illustré, édité chez Hachette en 1899 et intitulé: *La Photographie est-elle un art?* M. de la Sizeranne reprit le sujet et répondit a la question qui lui servait de titre avec l’habileté et le charme de son talent.

Déjà en 1898 l’éditeur du *Magazine of Art*, M. M.-H. Spielman, avait eu l’idée d’un symposium ou il avait convie quelques personnes, parmi lesquelles nous eûmes l’honneur d’être, à exposer leur opinion sur cette question, à ce moment à l’ordre du jour[6]:

Peut-être il est trop tard pour parler encore d’elle.

Mais un autre vers célèbre pourrait aussi servir d’épigraphe à ces notes :

Il est des morts qu’il faut qu’on tue.[7]

Et comme la photographie dite d’art est un des plus sûrs refuges de l’irrépressible amateurisme, nous croyons qu’il pourrait être intéressant de prouver une fois de plus la vanité de ses prétentions.

En 1882, un article du *Magazine of Art* montrait, à côté de représentations de l’action du cheval tirées d’œuvres d’art de contrées et d’époques diverses, les photographies instantanées prises par M. Muybridge.

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[5] This is the opening line to the poem “A la Malibran” (1836) by Alfred de Musset, dedicated to the singer Maria Malibran who had been dead for fifteen days.
[6] See Fernand Khnopff, “Is Photography Among The Fine Arts?—A Symposium,” *The Magazine of Art*, 23 (1899), 156-158.
[7] From an 1858 poem by Ferdinand Desnoyers (1828-1869); the verse has become a proverb.

Puis en 1891, dans un article intitulé: *Les aspects artistiques de la photographie de la figure*, M. P.-E. [sic] Emerson déterminait de façon très judicieuse à quoi pouvaient se limiter les prétentions artistiques des photographes.

Enfin, vers 1898, il n'y avait pas de revue d'art, illustrée ou non, qui ne contint quelque article sur ce sujet si palpitant alors.

Ces élucubrations avaient, pour la plupart, des allures de manifestes électoraux ou des envolées de ce lyrisme encombrant au moyen duquel les non-professionnels s'efforcent de prouver leur amour pour l'art. Ce n'était que « l'Ame de la Nature, le sentiment d'art en photographie, *lacrym*œ *rerum*, etc. ».

Mais, pourrait-on dire, pourquoi n'y aurait-il pas de photographie d'art, comme il y a la poterie d'art, l'affiche d'art, toutes les variétés du meuble et du vêtement d'art, et que l'artiste, simple peintre de peintures et sculpteur de sculptures, est à peu près classé comme un être indigne de ce temps et destine à disparaitre bientôt ainsi que le rhinocéros et l'ornithorynque?

Remarquons cependant que trop souvent l'auteur d'affiches d'art travaille plus pour le collectionneur que pour le mur; que le potier d'art surcharge de figurines superflues des vases qui ne tiennent pas toujours l'eau, et se tiennent à peine debout; que l'on constate des imperfections analogues dans toutes les industries d'art, et qu'elles peuvent être résumées en ce fameux parasol—un parasol d'art assurément—qui était d'une coloration si délicate, mais si délicate, qu'il ne pouvait être exposé en plein air.

Dans des discussions, plus ou moins courtoises, de ce genre, on oublie souvent qu'il ne s'agit que d'une question de frontière et que la formation d'un état-tampon, comme disent les diplomates, est la seule solution convenable.

Ce qui fut surtout inattendu dans cette campagne pour la défense des photographes d'art, ce fut de voir leurs prétentions si chaudement soutenues par M. de la Sizeranne.

Il terminait son article de la *Revue des Deux Mondes*, en conseillant aux artistes d'admettre, à leurs expositions de blanc et noir, ces chercheurs qui, voyageant par des routes différentes, se dirigeaient vers le même but idéal.

L'idéal est le même, sans doute: la représentation de la Nature (avec le plus grand N possible), mais les voies sont absolument différentes; elles se rapprochent quelquefois, mais ne se confondent jamais.

Nous n'avons pas de parti pris pour ou contre la photographie. Le photographe peut faciliter la documentation de I 'artiste; l'artiste peut affiner le goût du photographe. Quant à la partie technique de la photographie, notre ignorance est plus grande encore que celle de M. de la Sizeranne.

Mais ce qu'il présenta comme un fait nouveau ne nous parait avoir été qu'une réaction, l'autre extrémité du mouvement de pendule. L'influence de la photographie sur l'art avait été excessive; l'influence excessive de l'art sur la photographie devait suivre, et autant nous avions vu aux expositions d'art de chevaux épileptiques, de perspectives impossibles et de détails microscopiques, autant nous vîmes aux expositions de

photographies d'art de simili-fusains, de simili-sanguines, de simili-lavis, sans oublier les compositions trop évidemment truquées de sujets d'intérieur ou de plein air.

Le procédé à la gomme bichromatée, estime le plus artistique, permet, assure-t-on, l'intervention directe du photographe d'art, à trois moments, pour modifier le résultat mécaniquement obtenu.

C'est, en premier lieu, le choix du sujet, le groupement des figures.

La grande importance de la composition dans une œuvre d'art est incontestable; mais l'autorité de l'artiste doit se faire sentir sur tous les éléments et tous les détails de sa composition, et il suffit d'avoir négligé une ligne ou un point lumineux, çà ou là, au dernier moment, pour détruire l'effet de l'ensemble, et cela d'autant plus que l'œuvre a été laborieusement construite.

Aussi remarque-t-on généralement que le photographe d'art s'efforce de réduire au minimum le nombre des éléments et des détails de sa composition.

Pendant la deuxième phase de l'opération, l'ingérence du photographe d'art consiste à modifier légèrement les valeurs d'ombre et de lumière. C'est peu, assure-t-on toujours, mais c'est encore trop.

Enfin vient la troisième phase, l'impression.

Alors, c'est le déchainement de la vaniteuse ignorance; le délirant triomphe de l'amateur qui se croit parvenu à l'art à travers la photographie.

Et après avoir minutieusement décrit le procède, et ce qu'il considère comme ses avantages, M. de la Sizeranne s'écrie:

« N'est-ce là que de la photographie? Certainement non! »

Non, en effet, ce n'est plus de la photographie, mais est-ce du dessin ou de la peinture? Certainement non!

Qu'est-ce alors?

Mais tout simplement un agréable passe-temps pour un oisif, comme pour un enfant un livre d'images à mettre en couleurs, et cela rappelle le souvenir de ce vieil oncle d'un roman de Daudet qui s'occupait à colorier des grammaires espagnoles.

On ne peut trop souvent le répéter. Il y a des différences essentielles entre les pouvoirs de l'artiste et les prétentions du photographe d'art.

L'artiste crée; il est le maître de son œuvre dans toute la force du terme: c'est sa créature; il en peut faire ce qu'il veut, la modifier dans toutes ses parties jusqu'au dernier moment, selon sa propre volonté.

Le photographe, au contraire, a dans le sujet qu'il emprunte à la Nature, un collaborateur très indépendant, dont la part de collaboration est de très loin plus importante que la sienne au point de vue artistique.

L'intervention du photographe d'art est réduite à immobiliser ses modelés en des attitudes de *tableaux vivants*; puis, lors de l'impression de son cliché, à déranger les lumières et les ombres, brouiller leurs relations, détruire le modelé, alourdir tout l'effet. Ainsi que le prouvent, à l'évidence, les épreuves avant et après le procède à la gomme bichromatée, que certains manipulateurs ont rageusement ou glorieusement exposées.

Mais le plus habile photographe d'art aura beau faire, il ne pourra jamais parvenir à dominer la forme et la lumière que lui impose son modèle; il en est jusqu'au bout l'esclave, et se trouve dans la situation du soldat qui criait a son capitaine qu'il avait fait un prisonnier.

—Amenez-le donc! répondit le capitaine.

—Je ne peux pas, il ne veut pas me lâcher.

Encore une fois, les propres moyens et domaines de l'art et de la photographie sont essentiellement différents : c'est le réalisme pour celle-ci , avec ses aspects superficiels de la vie en action; c'est l'idéalisme pour celui-là avec son interprétation personnelle des rêves les plus profonds.

Au cinéma, nous pouvons voir des charges de cavalerie plus artistiquement belles que telle célèbre peinture militaire qui agace par sa véhémence figée.

Voilà le domaine de la photographie.

D'autre part, il y a, par excemple [sic], au Louvre, avec les pèlerins d'Emmaüs, le Christ de Rembrandt, dont la *réelle* expression de vision lointaine ne pourra jamais être obtenue par le modèle le mieux « mécanise », ni reproduite par la plus docile coopération de la gomme la plus bichromatée qui fut jamais.

Seul un artiste pouvait produire cela; un artiste indépendant, seul avec lui-même, maître absolu de son œuvre et de son art.

Nous terminerons ces remarques en citant deux passages, l'un tiré de l'article de M. P.-E. [sic] Emerson :

« Le temps viendra bientôt, écrit-il, ou tout le monde pourra obtenir avec certitude lm bon cliché. Alors tout ce qui sera laisse au goût du photographe sera le choix du sujet; car la science, en quoi consiste le sens artistique, c'est-à-dire l'analyse, l'omission de certains détails, la disposition des harmonies, est et sera toujours hors de son atteinte.

» En somme tout son travail pourra prouver qu'il a du goût; autant, d'ailleurs, que le touriste qui ne prend pas de photographie du tout.

» Si un photographe de goût—il y en a—désire devenir un artiste, il doit apprendre un des arts graphiques, et il pourra ensuite utiliser ses photographies « de goût » en qualité de documents pour son art. »

D'autre part, au banquet qui suivit une exposition de photographies à Bruxelles, M. Davanne, président de la Société française de photographie, termina ainsi son discours:

« L'application de la photographie à des effets artistiques, n'est qu'un des aspects de la photographie; elle en a bien d'autres et de plus importants, et ne doit pas être distraite de son vrai but, qui est le souci scientifique, l'exactitude et la précision des détails, la vérité et la beauté.

» La photographie est assez forte pour ne vouloir être qu'elle-même et ne pas vouloir tendre à imiter quoi que ce soit.

» Nous sommes les premiers à lui pardonner quelques erreurs et quelques caprices, mais il faut qu'elle n'oublie pas que sa raison d'être, sa supériorité sur tout autre travail humain, doit être son exacte vérité. »

MESSIEURS,

Lorsque j'écrivais ces notes, J'espérais, à leur lecture, la présence de notre confrère M. Francotte.

Personne, mieux que lui, n'avait les qualités qu'indiquaient les auteurs cités, et j 'aurais répété à celui qui nous offrit si souvent le don de son travail et de son talent, l'éloge que lui avait dit notre directeur, M. Brunfaut, après sa dernière conférence.

Autant qu'un savant remarquable, M. Francotte était un technicien parfait et un artiste de goût.

Je m'excuse, Messieurs, de raviver vos regrets en rappelant ce souvenir; mais je crois qu'une lecture du genre de celle que vous avez bien voulu entendre aujourd'hui, ne pouvait se terminer que par un hommage de gratitude à celui qui fut notre si aimable et si sympathique confrère.

Khnopff, Fernand, "A propos de la photographie dite d'art (lu à la séance du 8 juin 1916)," *Annexe aux Bulletins de la Classe des Beaux-arts. Communications présentées à la Classe en 1915-1918*, (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, 1919), 93-99.

Translation:

Concerning Photography Called Art,
by FERNAND KHNOPFF, Member of the Academy (1).

(1) read at the meeting of June 8, 1916.

No doubt it is too late to even talk about her.[8]

This famous verse could serve as an epigraph for these notes, because more than fifteen days of the poet have passed from the time of the vogue for so-called art photography.

The highest point of its success was marked by an article by Mr. R. de la Sizeranne published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, in December 1897. Then in an elegant copiously illustrated quarto, published by Hachette in 1899 and entitled: *Is Photography An Art?* Mr. de la Sizeranne returned to the topic and answered the question which served as its title with the skill and charm of his talent.

In 1898 the editor of the *Magazine of Art*, Mr. M.-H. Spielman, had the idea of a symposium and he invited a few people, among whom we had the honor to be, to give their opinion on this issue, at this point in the agenda[9]:

Perhaps it is too late to even talk about her.

But another celebrated verse could also serve as an epigraph to these notes:

It is the dead that one must kill.[10]

And as so-called art photography is one of the safest refuges of irrepressible amateurism, we believe that it might be interesting to prove once more the vanity of its pretentions.

In 1882, an article from the *Magazine of Art* showed the instant photographs taken by Mr. Muybridge next to representations of the action of the horse drawn from works of art from diverse countries and periods.

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[8] This is the opening line to the poem "A la Malibran" (1836) by Alfred de Musset, dedicated to the singer Maria Malibran who had been dead for fifteen days.
[9] See Fernand Khnopff, "Is Photography Among The Fine Arts?—A Symposium," *The Magazine of Art*, 23 (1899), 156-158.
10 From an 1858 poem by Ferdinand Desnoyers (1828-1869); the verse has become a proverb.

Then in 1891, in an article entitled: *Artistic Figure Photography*, Mr. P.- E. [sic] Emerson determined very wisely the limitations of the artistic pretensions of photographers.

Finally, by 1898 there was no review of art, illustrated or not, which did not contain some article on this subject which was then so exciting.

These lucubrations were mostly of the nature of electoral manifestos or the flights of the encumbered lyricism by which non-professionals try to prove their love for art. It was all "the soul of Nature, the sentiment of art in photography, *lacrymae rerum* [the world of tears], etc.

But it may be asked, why should there be no art photography, now that we have art pottery, art posters, and all varieties of art furniture and art clothing; now that the artist, a mere painter of pictures and sculptor of sculptures, is nearly ready to be classified as being unworthy of this time and destined to disappear soon with the rhinoceros and the ornithorhyncus [platypus]?

Note, however, that too often the designer of art posters works more for the print-collector than the wall; the art potter overloads his vases with superfluous figurines which do not always hold water and can scarcely stand up; that one finds similar flaws in all the industries of art, and they can be symbolized in the famous umbrella—an artistic umbrella no doubt—that was delicately colored, so delicate that it could not be exposed to the open air.

In the more or less courteous discussions of this kind we often forget that it is only a question of borders and that the formation of a buffer state, as diplomats say, is the only suitable solution.

What was particularly unexpected in this campaign for the defense of the art photographers was to see their pretentions so warmly supported by Mr. de la Sizeranne.

He ended his article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* by advising artists to admit into their exhibitions of black and white works, those seekers who, though travelling by different roads, are directed towards the same ideal goal.

The ideal is the same, no doubt: the representation of Nature (with the largest possible N), but the roads are absolutely different; they sometimes touch, but must never be confounded.

We have no bias for or against photography. The photographer may facilitate the documentation of the artist; the artist may refine the taste of the photographer. As for the technical part of photography, our ignorance is even larger than that of Mr. de la Sizeranne.

But what he presented as a new fact appears to us have been but one reaction, the other extrene of the pendulum movement. The influence of photography on art had been excessive; the excessive influence of art on photography was bound to follow, and thus we have all seen in the art exhibitions epileptic horses, impossible perspectives and microscopic details, so we now see in the exhibitions of art photography imitations of

charcoal stump-work, sham red chalk drawings, sham wash drawings, without forgetting the too obviously rigged up indoor or outdoor compositions.

The gum bichromate process, considered the most artistic, allows, we are assured, the direct intervention of the art photographer at three moments to modify the mechanically obtained result.

In the first place, it is the choice of the subject, the arrangement of figures.

The great importance of composition in a work of art is undeniable; but the authority of the artist should be felt on all elements and all the details of its composition, and it is enough to neglect a line or a point of light, here or there, to destroy the effect of the whole at the last moment, and even more when the work was laboriously constructed.

Also we generally note that the art photographer strives to minimize the number of elements and the details of his composition.

During the second phase of the operation, the intervention of the art photographer is to slightly modify the values of light and shadow. It is little, we are always assured, but it is still too much.

Finally comes the third phase, the making of the print.

Then vain ignorance is unleashed; the delusional triumph of the amateur who believes himself to have attained to art through photography.

After carefully describing procedure, and what he sees as its benefits, Mr. de la Sizeranne exclaims:

“Is this not photography? Certainly not!”

No, indeed, this is no longer photography, but is it drawing or painting? Certainly not!

What is it then?

Simply a pleasant hobby for an idler, as for a child to color a picture book, and it recalls the memory of an old uncle in a novel by Daudet who occupied himself with coloring in Spanish grammar books.

One cannot repeat it too often. There are essential differences between the powers of the artist and the pretensions of the art photographer.

The artist creates; he is the master of his work in all the force of the term: it is his creature; he can do with it what he wants, change any of its parts until the last moment, according to his own will.

The photographer, on the contrary, has a very independent collaborator in the subject that he borrows from Nature, whose share in the collaboration is far more important than his own artistic point of view.

The intervention of the art photographer is restricted to immobilizing his models in poses of *tableaux vivants*; then, with the impression of his print, to modify the lights and shadows, blurring their relations, destroying the modeling, making the effect heavier.

This is proved by the evidence of prints made before and after the gum bichromate process, that some manipulators have angrily or gloriously exhibited.

But however well the most skilled art photographer can do, he will never be able to dominate the form and light that his model imposes; he has to end up a slave, and is in the same situation of the soldier who shouted to his captain that he had taken a prisoner.

—Bring him here! answered the captain.

—I can't, he won't let me go.

Once again, the proper means and domains of art and photography are essentially different: it is the realism for one, with its superficial aspects of life in action; It is idealism for the other with his personal interpretation of the deepest dreams.

In cinema, we see cavalry charges which are more artistically beautiful than the ones that a famous military painter annoys by his rigid vehemence.

This then is the field of photography.

On the other hand, there are, for example, at the Louvre, with the pilgrims of Emmaus, the Christ by Rembrandt, including the *real* expression of distant vision which will never be obtained by the best "mechanized" model, or reproduced by the more docile cooperation of the greatest gum bichromate that was ever made.

Only an artist could produce it; an independent artist, alone with himself, absolute master of his work and his art.

We will finish these remarks by quoting two passages, one taken from the article by Mr. P.-E. [sic] Emerson:

"The time will come soon, he writes, or everyone will be able to achieve with certainty a good print. Then all that will be left to the taste of the photographer will be the choice of the subject; because science, in what its artistic sense consists, that is to say analysis, the omission of some details, the arrangement of the harmonies, is and will always be beyond its reach."

"In sum all his work can prove is that he has taste; as much, moreover, as the tourist who doesn't take any photograph at all."

"If a photographer with taste—there are some—wants to become an artist, he must learn one of the graphic arts, and he can then use his photographs "of taste" in the capacity of documents for his art."

On the other hand, at the banquet that followed a photography exhibition in Brussels, Mr. Davanne, president of the French society of photography, finished his speech in this way:

"The application of photography to artistic effects is just one of the aspects of photography; she has many others and more important, and should not be distracted

from its real purpose, which is the scientific concern, the accuracy and the precision of the details, truth and beauty."

"Photography is strong enough to not want to be other than herself and not to strive to imitate anything."

"We are the first to forgive it a few errors and a few caprices, but it must never forget that its *raison d'être*, its superiority over any other human endeavor, must be its exact truth."

GENTLEMEN.

When I was writing these notes, I was hoping to read them in the presence of our colleague Mr. Francotte.

No one more than he had the qualities indicated by the authors cited above, and I would have repeated to him who so often offered us the gift of his work and his talent, the praise that our Director, Mr. Brunfaut, gave him after his last lecture.

As well as a remarkable scientist, Mr. Francotte was a perfect technician and an artist of taste.

Excuse me, gentlemen, to revive your regrets recalling this memory; but I believe that a reading of the kind that you kindly hear today, could only end with a tribute of gratitude to one who was our so friendly and so sympathetic colleague.

1919

Khnopff, Fernand, « L'Enchantement de Merlin, » *Bulletin de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*, 1919, 1-3, (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, séance du 9 janvier 1919), 13-18.

L'Enchantement de Merlin,

par FERNAND KHNOPFF, membre de l'Académie.

L'Enchantement de Merlin par Viviane est la première œuvre de Burne-Jones qui parut sur le continent.

C'était à l'Exposition universelle de Paris en 1878. Elle était placée au milieu d'un des principaux panneaux de la section et, dès le premier abord, dans son haut encadrement de style et sous la glace qui complète habituellement les cadres anglais, elle fascinait par l'étrangeté de son aspect et l'allure mystérieuse de ses personnages.

Viviane, grande et souple, est debout devant la blanche floraison d'un buisson d'aubépine; c'est une femme de beauté serpentine, précieusement enserrée dans un vêtement bleu d'acier aux plis enroulés et multiples. Elle s'écarte, en un glissement lent, de sa victime déchue, et manie, d'un geste subtil, le livre magique qu'elle a dérobé.

Merlin, réduit à l'impuissance, est languissamment couché dans les basses branches. Ses mains pendent inertes; dans ses yeux vitreux passe une dernière lueur de haine et de désespoir; son pâle et triste sourire semble exprimer un lointain retour de pensée vers sa force perdue, et l'intense émotion de ce drame silencieux paraît enchâssée dans le scintillement fleuri de l'arbuste en fête.

Le travail de cette peinture, commencé en 1870 (d'après la biographie très détaillée de Mme Fortunée de Lisle), fut interrompu plusieurs fois jusqu'en 1872, repris sur une nouvelle toile en 1873, et l'œuvre terminée fut une des huit qui, à l'ouverture historique de la « Grosvenor Gallery », le 30 avril 1877, fit connaître au grand public anglais le nom triomphant de ce nouveau maître.

La belle revue française *L'Art* contribua, dès ce moment, à populariser, même en Angleterre, cette superbe peinture par une remarquable reproduction à l'eau-forte qu'elle avait commandée au graveur Lalauze.

Elle était destinée à accompagner l'étude que M. Comyns Carr, le correspondant de la revue à Londres, avait faite de la « Grosvenor Gallery », et lorsque, l'année suivante, l'*Enchantement de Merlin* fut exposé au Champ-de-Mars, le directeur de *L'Art*, notre regretté confrère Charles Tardieu, écrivit à ce sujet quelques pages intéressantes où se

montrent, de façon parfaite, la subtilité particulière de sa tournure d'esprit et l'exacte prévision de son sens critique.

« Edgar Quinet, disait-il, a écrit sous ce titre: *Merlin l'Enchanteur*, un livre curieux qui n'a peut-être pas obtenu tout le succès qu'avait rêvé l'auteur. »

» C'est une de ces conceptions poétiques et symboliques, prophétiques et apocalyptiques, qui faisaient dire à Sainte Beuve: « J'appelle Quinet le Vaticinateur. »

» Voici quelques passages de la préface:

» Oserai-je dire que je tente ici d'ouvrir de nouvelles routes à l'imagination? Si c'est là une ambition trop grande, je dois m'en excuser dès la première ligne. Il y a près de trente ans que le plan de cet ouvrage est fait. J'étais tout imbu des traditions de notre ancienne poésie française alors inédite. Je pensais qu'on peut encore renouveler l'imagination française dans les sources nationales.

» Cette idée ne m'a plus quitté.

» Merlin, le premier patron de la France, est devenu le mien. La légende de l'âme humaine jusque dans la mort et par delà la mort: voilà mon sujet. Il n'en est pas de plus grand.

» Concilier toutes les légendes en les ramenant à une seule; trouver dans le cœur humain le lien intime de toutes les traditions populaires et nationales, les enchaîner en une même action sereine, relier entre eux les mondes discordants que l'imagination des peuples a enchantés, c'est là ce que j'ai osé entreprendre.

» Nous avons devant nous une grande lyre dont les cordes ont été détrempées et faussées par le temps, il s'agit d'y remettre l'accord. »

Ainsi parla Edgar Quinet.

« M. E. Burne-Jones est l'auteur d'un tableau *Merlin et Viviane* qui fut exposé l'an dernier à Londres pour la première fois et qui est un des envois les plus intéressants de l'Angleterre, indice caractéristique et saisissant des recherches stylistes que poursuit un groupe important de son école actuelle de peinture.

» Transposez du français en anglais, et du littéraire au pittoresque, la phraséologie lyrique et philosophique d'E. Quinet, et vous aurez, à la condition de tenir compte de quelques nuances, l'idée mère de ce tableau et le principe même de l'œuvre entier de M. Burne-Jones, remarquable dans tous les cas par l'unité de la conception et la fixité de la tendance.

» Ouvrir de nouvelles routes à l'imagination et surtout à la peinture anglaise, la contraindre à remonter, non pas seulement aux sources de la poésie nationale—Merlin, pour être le premier patron de la France, n'en est pas moins, d'après la légende, un Calédonien,—mais encore aux origines de l'art moderne; relier entre eux deux mondes discordants, la poésie anglo-saxonne et l'art de la Renaissance italienne, tâcher de les harmoniser en évitant de les neutraliser, emprunter à l'une la vibration romantique des inspirations locales, à l'autre l'élégance et la pureté des formes;—telle est l'idée, tel est

le principe de cet art, qu'on pourrait comparer à une pousse de la forêt de Brocéliande qui se serait développée au Louvre dans la salle des primitifs italiens transformée en serre chaude.

» Cette idée se manifeste dans la peinture de M. Burne-Jones à l'état d'instinct plutôt que de système. Ce n'en est pas le moindre mérite. Aussi faut-il se bien garder de confondre avec le parti pris absolu du préraphaélitisme défunt la spontanéité de cet art à la fois composite et personnel, où la naïveté du sentiment fait refleurir le pastiche, où l'étude attentive et intelligente des anciens maîtres féconde une inspiration originale.

» Si l'on interrogeait le peintre, il répondrait peut-être comme la Viviane de Quinet: « Qui je suis? Je l'avais oublié. Pourquoi me le rappeler? Demande-le, si tu veux, aux roseaux et aux aigles. Ils le savent peut-être. Moi, je ne le dirai pas. »

» Nous dirions volontiers qu'il y a en lui de l'aigle et du roseau; le vol haut et planant, une vision très nette de ce qu'il entend s'approprier, telle est la part de l'aigle; une singulière souplesse, une flexibilité remarquable, mais en même temps une certaine gracilité, voilà celle du roseau. »

Ainsi parla Charles Tardieu.

Ce sujet de *l'Enchantement de Merlin par Viviane* ou *Nimué* (les deux noms s'appliquent au même personnage dans les anciens romans de chevalerie) avait déjà depuis longtemps fixé l'attention de Burne-Jones.

En août 1857, il s'était joint, avec William Morris, à Rossetti et à quelques jeunes artistes pour tenter de décorer de peintures les murs de la salle de l'Union à Oxford. Les sujets devaient être tirés de la *Mort d'Arthur* de Malory, dont Rossetti disait qu'avec la Bible, c'étaient les deux plus grands livres du monde. Burne-Jones avait choisi Merlin et Nimué, et représenté l'Enchanteur conduit à sa perte par la grande Nimué vêtue de rouge, qui le regarde, immobile, alors qu'il s'approche du puits maudit qui sera bientôt sa prison. Malheureusement, ces jeunes enthousiastes manquaient trop d'expérience dans les procédés de la peinture à fresque et, au bout de six mois, leurs œuvres n'étaient plus que de lamentables ruines; les couleurs s'étaient assombries et s'écaillaient.

En 1861, Burne-Jones reprit le même sujet et en fit une aquarelle d'aspect somptueux qui se trouve actuellement au Musée Victoria et Albert.

Nimué y est pâle et hautaine. Ses yeux clairs suivent Merlin de leurs regards sinistres. Sa chevelure, divisée au haut du front, encadre son visage de ses masses d'un blond froid. Elle porte une robe rouge et un manteau jaune d'or, ample et soyeux.

Dans ses mains blanches, elle tient le livre fatal, et ses lèvres terribles, à peine entr'ouvertes, lisent la malédiction.

Sur une bande de ciel blafard, taché de nuages jaunâtres, se découpent d'âpres profils de collines d'un bleu dur et profond. A leur pied, des feuillages d'automne entourent un lac sombre où se reflète ce livide paysage parmi les rides et les roseaux.

Le charme agit. Déjà la pierre mortelle se soulève et laisse voir une lueur froide et bleue; deux clefs apparaissent suspendues, une vipère rampe lentement.

Merlin se sent attiré par une force magique, irrésistiblement. D'une main, il arrête les battements de son cœur; l'autre, en un geste désespéré, est crispée sur ses vêtements d'un rouge vineux; son visage sombre est mystérieux et fatal.

Un petit chien noir en le tirant par son manteau s'efforce de l'arrêter et de le sauver.

Mais la décision de Nimué est inexorable.

Lorsqu'en 1870 il reprit le sujet pour la troisième fois, Burne-Jones ne s'inspira plus de la *Mort d'Arthur*. Comme l'avait fait Tennyson pour son poème, c'est dans la *Romance of Merlin* qu'il trouva Viviane, et le passage qu'en contenait le catalogue de la « Grosvenor Gallery » montre avec quelle fidélité le peintre avait suivi les indications du vieil écrivain.

« Or il advint qu'un jour ils entrèrent dans la forêt qu'on appelle la « Forêt de Broceliande » et trouvèrent un bois superbe d'aubépine blanche, très haute et toute en fleurs; et c'est là qu'ils s'assirent à l'ombre. Et Merlin s'endormit, et lorsqu'elle vit qu'il dormait, elle se leva doucement et commença ses enchantements, suivant les leçons de Merlin, traçant neuf fois le cercle magique et par neuf fois procédant aux enchantements.

« Et alors il regarda autour de lui; et il lui semblait être enfermé dans une tour, la plus haute qui fût au monde et la plus puissante: non pas une tour en fer ou en acier, en bois ou en pierre, mais une tour faite d'air subtil et rien de plus, et en vérité, cette tour est si solide qu'elle ne pourra jamais être détruite tant que le monde durera. »

Enfin, d'après une autre tradition, on raconte que Merlin fut, par les artifices de l'astucieuse Viviane, enfermé dans un arbre que personne n'a pu ni ne pourra retrouver, et j'écrivis autrefois, à ce propos, un sonnet qui, si vous le voulez bien, terminera cette lecture.

VIVIANE.

Sous l'ombre verte de Broceliande, pâle
Et dure, Viviane en silence a dansé.
Merlin le Sage est pris. Le charme cadencé
Fait s'empourprer de sang ses deux tempes d'opale.
D'un long regard, il suit l'attirante spirale
Et l'ondulation du beau corps balancé.
Elle voit l'Enchanteur—au savoir condensé
Céder à sa puissance et se perdre en un râle.
Sur le mage vaincu dont la volonté dort,
Par le mince iris bleu, par le haut genêt d'or,
Par la ronce multiple et tenace qui rampe,
Par le chêne rugueux et tors comme un foret,
Par le hêtre droit et lisse comme une hampe,
Lentement, à jamais, s'agrandit la forêt.



Edward Burne-Jones: *The Beguiling of Merlin*, 1877.

Khnopff, Fernand, « L'Enchantement de Merlin, » *Bulletin de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*, 1919, 1-3, (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, séance du 9 janvier 1919), 13-18.

Translation:

The enchantment of Merlin
by FERNAND KHNOPFF, Member of the Academy.

The Enchantment of Merlin by Viviane was the first work by Burne-Jones which appeared on the continent.

It was at the universal exhibition in Paris in 1878. The work was placed in the middle of one of the main panels of the section, and from first sight it fascinated by the strangeness of its appearance and the mysterious allure of its personages framed in high style, under the glass that usually completes English frames.

Viviane, tall and supple, stands in front the white flowering of a hawthorn bush; she is a woman of serpentine beauty, carefully enclosed in a steel blue garment wrapped with multiple folds. She departs in a slow glide from her fallen victim and with a subtle gesture manipulates the book of magic that she stole.

Merlin, reduced to impotence, lies languidly in the low branches. His hands hang inert; a last glimmer of hatred and despair flickers in his glassy eyes; his pale and sad smile seems to express a distant thought of his lost strength, and the intense emotion of this silent tragedy seems enshrined in the glittering flowers of the shrub in full bloom.

Work on this painting was begun in 1870 (based on the very detailed biography of Mme. Fortunée de Lisle), and interrupted several times until 1872; it was resumed on a new canvas in 1873, and the completed work was one of eight which made the name of this new master triumphantly known to the larger English public at the historic opening of the “Grosvenor Gallery” on April 30, 1877.

The beautiful French journal *L'Art* helped at this time to popularize, even in England, this beautiful painting with a remarkable reproduction etching that it had commissioned from the engraver Lalauze.

It was intended to accompany the study on the “Grosvenor Gallery” which Mr. Comyns Carr, the correspondent of the magazine in London had made, and when in the following year *The Enchantment of Merlin* was exposed on the Champ-de-Mars, the director of *L'Art*, our late colleague Charles Tardieu, wrote a few interesting pages about this which perfectly show the subtlety of his mindset and the accurate foresight of his critical sense.

> “Edgar Quinet,” he said, “wrote under the title *Merlin the Enchanter*, a curious book that perhaps has not obtained all the success that the author had dreamed of.''

"This is one of these poetic and symbolic, prophetic and apocalyptic, conceptions that led Sainte Beuve to say: 'I declare Quinet to be a Prophet.'

Here are a few lines from the preface:

Dare I say I try here to open new routes to the imagination? If this is too much ambition, I must apologize from the first line. The plan of this work has been in progress for nearly thirty years. I was completely imbued with the traditions of our ancient French poetry, then unpublished. I thought that one could still renew the French imagination in national sources.

This idea has never left me.

Merlin, the first patron of France, became mine. The legend of the human soul even unto death and beyond death: this is my topic. There is nothing more grand.

To reconcile all legends and gather them into one; to find the intimate relationship of popular and national traditions in the human heart, stringing them together in the same serene action, linking the discordant worlds that the imagination of the people has enchanted, that is what I dared to undertake.

We have before us a large lyre of which the strings were loosened and distorted by time, it is now for us to put it back in accord."

Thus spake Edgar Quinet.

"Mr. E. Burne-Jones is the author of a painting of *Merlin and Viviane* that was exhibited last year in London for the first time and which is one of the most interesting envoys from England, characteristically indicating and seizing the stylistic research pursued by an important group of its current school of painting.

Transpose from French into English, and the literary into the picturesque, of Quinet's lyrical and philosophical phraseology, and you will have, accounting for some nuances, the mother idea this painting and the principle even of the complete work of Mr. Burne-Jones, remarkable in all aspects by the unity of the conception and the fixity of its trend.

Opening new routes to the imagination and especially English painting, forcing it to rise, not only from the sources of national poetry—Merlin, to be the first patron of France, was no less, according to legend, a Caledonian—but also to the origins of modern art; linking two conflicting worlds, Anglo-Saxon poetry and the art of the Italian Renaissance, try to harmonize them without neutralizing them, to borrow from the one the romantic vibrancy of local inspiration, at the other the elegance and purity of forms;—such is the idea, such is the principle of this art, that one could compare it to a green shoot of the forest of Brocéliande, which would be developed at the Louvre in the room of Italian primitives if it were transformed into a greenhouse.

> This idea manifests itself in the painting of Mr. Burne-Jones at the level of instinct rather from a system. This has not the least merit. Also one must guard well against confusing the absolute bias of defunct Preraphaelitism for the spontaneity of this simultaneously composite and personal art, where the naivety of the feeling made the pastiche bloom again, where careful and intelligent study of the old masters fertilizes an original inspiration.
>
> If one asked the painter, he would perhaps respond like Quinet's Viviane: 'who am I? I have forgotten. Why remind me? Just ask, if you will, the reeds and the eagles. They may know. As for me, I won't say.'
>
> We would gladly say that there is in him both the eagle and the reed; the high and gliding flight, with a clear vision of what he means to appropriate, that is the share of the eagle; a unique suppleness, a remarkable flexibility, but at the same time a certain slenderness, which is that of the reed."

Thus spake Charles Tardieu.

The topic of *The Enchantment of Merlin by Viviane* or *Nimue* (both names were applied to the same character in ancient chivalric romances) had already long fixed the attention of Burne-Jones.

In August 1857, he joined with William Morris, Rossetti and some young artists to decorate the walls of the room of the Oxford Union with paintings. The subjects were to be taken from the *Mort d'Arthur* of Malory, which Rossetti said that was one of the two greatest books of the world, along with the Bible. Burne-Jones had chosen Merlin and Nimue, and represented the Enchanter led to his doom by the great Nimue dressed in red, who looks at him, motionless, while approaching the cursed wells that will soon be his prison. Unfortunately, these young enthusiasts lacked any experience in the processes of painting in fresco, and at the end of six months their works were no more than dismal ruins; their colors had deteriorated and were flaking off.

In 1861, Burne-Jones returned to the same subject and made a watercolor of sumptuous appearance which is currently at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Nimue is pale and haughty. Her clear eyes follow Merlin with sinister looks. Her hair, parted at the top of her forehead, frames her face with cold blond masses. She wears a red dress and a large silky coat of yellow gold.

In her white hands, she holds the fatal book, and her terrible lips, barely parted, reads the curse.

Cutting into a strip of pallid sky, stained with yellowish clouds, are the profiles of hard and deep blue hills. At their feet, fall foliage surrounds a dark lake where this livid landscape is reflected among the ripples and reeds.

The spell begins. Already the fatal stone rises and reveals a cold and blue light; two keys appear suspended, a viper sways slowly.

Merlin feels himself irresistibly drawn by a magical force. With one hand, he stops the beating of his heart; the other, in a desperate gesture, tightens on his wine-dark red clothes; his dark face is mysterious and fatal.

A small black dog pulling on his coat strives to stop him and save him.

But the decision of Nimue is inexorable.

When in 1870 he returned to the subject for the third time, Burne-Jones was no longer inspired by the *Mort d'Arthur*. As with Tennyson in his poem, it is in the *Romance of Merlin* that he found Viviane, and the passage contained in the catalogue of the "Grosvenor Gallery" shows how faithfully the painter had followed the indications of the old writer.

"However it happened that one day they entered the forest called the'Forest of Brocéliande'and found a beautiful wood of white hawthorn, very high and in bloom; and it is there that they sat down in the shade. Merlin fell asleep, and when she saw that he was asleep, she stood slowly and began her enchantments, following the lessons of Merlin, tracing the magic circle nine times and proceeding nine times through the spells."

"And then he looked around; and he seemed to be locked in a tower, the highest and the most powerful in the world: not a tower of iron or steel, wooden or stone, but a tower made of subtle air and nothing more, and in truth, this tower is so strong that it can never be destroyed as long as the world continues."

Finally, according to another tradition, it is said that Merlin was, through the artifices of the clever Viviane, locked in a tree that no one was able to nor will ever be able to find, and I once wrote a sonnet in this regard, which if you please, will conclude this reading.

VIVIANE.

Under the green shadows of Brocéliande, pale
And hard, Viviane silently danced.
Merlin the Wise is taken. The cadence of the charm
Makes his two opal temples purple with blood.
With a long look, he follows the attractive spiral
And rocking undulation of the beautiful body.
She sees the Enchanter—with knowledge condensed
Yield to her power and become lost with a groan.
On the defeated magician whose will sleeps,
By the thin blue iris, by high broom of gold,
By the multiple and tenacious brambles which sway,
By the rough oak, twisted like a forest,
By the beech, straight and smooth as a flagstaff,
Slowly, and forever, the forest grows.

Khnopff, Fernand, « Le Mystère de Saint-Georges, » *Bulletin de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*, 1919, 1-3, (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, séance du 9 janvier 1919), 19-37.

Le Mystère de saint Georges,
par FERNAND KHNOPFF, membre de l'Académie.

Dans son numéro de Noël de 1890, le *Harper's Magazine* publiait la troisième des comédies de Shakespeare (*As you like it*), illustrées par E. Abbey et commentées par Andrew Lang.

Ce commentaire débutait ainsi:

> « Sur cette comédie du vieux temps, j'écris à l'ombre verte de la forêt, dans un paysage de la vieille Angleterre. C'est le parc d'une grande demeure; tout à l'entour, c'est la verdure profonde des chênes et des hêtres; ce sont les daims, innocents citoyens d'une cité déserte, broutant sur ces pentes ou veillant sur les faons nouveau-nés; ce sont les appels du coucou; les roucoulements du ramier; les chants joyeux du merle.
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> » C'est un « Arden » en cette période inquiète de l'histoire de l'Angleterre. Au dehors, ce sont les mauvaises nouvelles de cette époque troublée; combien nous serions heureux si cet « Arden » était aussi éloigné de la Cour envieuse et du peuple turbulent que la forêt rêvée par Shakespeare!...
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> » De telles pensées apportent de la tristesse même dans la lecture de la pièce la plus gaie de Shakespeare; une pièce qui, en admettant qu'elle doive jamais être jouée, devrait l'être en plein air, comme elle le fut, il y a deux ou trois ans, avec un fond de forêt en guise de décor. »

Cette représentation en plein air, organisée par lady Campbell, eut un grand succès et fit longtemps parler d'elle, et, certainement, des érudits écrivirent à ce sujet des notices fort bien documentées.

Nous n'avons pas, en ce moment, le pouvoir de les retrouver et en conséquence de savoir de façon positive si les œuvres de Shakespeare furent autrefois jouées dans quelque parc seigneurial.

Le *Comus* de Milton a pu être représenté en pastorale; mais il est probable que si une représentation a été transportée du Globe dans quelque domaine « littéraire » du temps, la pièce fut jouée aux chandelles.

Aussi, sans tarder davantage, j'aborde le véritable sujet de cette lecture.

En annexe à son discours directorial, M. Brunfaut avait bien voulu me demander de traduire en raccourci la brochure du *Mystère* qu'il avait vu représenter à Hampstead près de Londres, lors du Congrès des cités-jardins.

Le Mystère du célèbre et valeureux chevalier saint Georges d'Angleterre, montrant son origine, son étrange enlèvement, alors qu'il était au berceau, et sa fameuse victoire sur le grand dragon; nouvellement rédigé et présenté par FRANK STUART MURRAY et JOHN ARMISTEAD, et joué par ceux de la banlieue—jardin de Hampstead sur la plaine de jeux, derrière Saint-Jude sur la Colline, les 20 et 27 juin 1914.

LE MYSTÈRE.

Une sonnerie de cors se fait entendre, puis le maître du Mystère se lève et prononce à haute voix ces paroles: « Que tous ceux qui sont réunis en ce lieu pour se divertir en société saluent les acteurs et les prient de présentement commencer. Que le silence soit dûment observé. »

PREMIER ACTE.

La scène représente un espace découvert en dehors de la ville où s'agite une foule de campagnards et de citadins parmi lesquels on remarque des jongleurs, des bohémiens, des colporteurs, un marchand d'orviétan, un homme des pays lointains avec un singe, un niais chevauchant un dada, d'autres encore.

Trokelowe, *le chanteur ambulant, se pousse au premier rang.*

Holà, bonnes gens, garçons et filles, bonnets plats, attrapeurs de lapins, que vous faut-il? des ballades, des lois? le roi Horn ou Gamelyn? des nouveautés de France, de Bretagne ou de Rome? Décidez-vous ou ce sera au hasard du sac!

Mat le Meunier réclame une ballade.

Oui, oui, une ballade! clame la foule, et Trokelowe s'exécute à la satisfaction générale.

Après quoi il prend le bon meunier comme but de quelques grosses plaisanteries.

On les entoure en riant et ils en viennent au simulacre comique d'un combat à armes plus ou moins courtoises, dont le succès d'hilarité est interrompu par la venue du comte de Northumberland et de sa suite, en compagnie du shérif de Northumberland, du maire de la ville, de sir Thomas Metham, sir Hugh Yelland, sir Holme de Hamelake et d'autres.

Le cortège s'arrête, et s'adressant au Comte:

Messire, dit le Shérif, et vous, dignes seigneurs, avant de rentrer dans vos demeures, je vous prie de vous arrêter un instant en ces lieux parmi cette foule heureuse. C'est à vous, messire, que ce peuple doit de pouvoir vivre en joie.

—Depuis que vous êtes notre Comte, ajoute sir Thomas Metham, hommes, femmes et enfants, chacun peut aller et venir en sécurité.

Quand le ciel rougit à l'ouest, c'est, à présent, pour le cultivateur l'indice de la fin d'une journée heureuse et non plus comme autrefois l'annonce du feu terrible des brigands.

D'année en année, la grange et le pressoir s'enrichissent.

—Le Comte remercie le Shérif de ses bonnes paroles et veut partager avec sir Thomas ces témoignages de gratitude; car, ajoute-t-il, vous avez, ainsi que ces braves chevaliers, vécu à mes côtés ces temps difficiles.

Sir THOMAS.

Oui, Messire, alors nous étions sous les armes pendant les nuits glacées et les jours brûlants, et sans cesse l'oreille tendue pour entendre sous le vent le cor des pirates. Mais nous les avons vaincus Nous respirons à présent, et si nous portons encore ces armes, c'est plus par habitude que par nécessité.

« Aussi, reprend le Shérif, nous voulons, en ces jours de jeux et de repos, fêter les sauveurs et les gardiens de ce pays si éprouvé jadis. »

Un mouvement se fait dans la foule et une troupe de bohémiennes s'avance. Après un salut d'hommage, elles s'apprêtent à danser.

« Ce sont là des païens, dit le Comte, cela est-il permis? »

« Je le crois, Messire, répond le Shérif. Ces gens, peuple d'Égypte, sont versés dans l'art de médicamenter bêtes et volailles; nos paysans les aiment bien. De plus, leurs femmes sont de rares danseuses. »

Alors Ladra la gypsie danse au son d'une musique jouée par des gens de sa tribu; mais comme la danse se termine, on entend des rumeurs d'un côté de la scène et trois jeunes filles (les trois gris enfants de Clee) traversent la foule.

Elles sont étrangement vêtues de voiles gris.

Des clameurs menaçantes s'élèvent: « A l'eau! au bûcher! ce sont des sorcières! elles jettent des sorts! elles adorent les anciens dieux! elles repoussent la croix! »

Le Shérif recommande le calme.

—Qu'un seul parle au nom de tous.

Mat le Meunier vient déclarer que ces femmes (si même ce sont des femmes) ont la réputation d'être des créatures malfaisantes, qui jettent des sorts sur bêtes et gens.

LE SHÉRIF.

Si elles font le mal, la justice du Roi les punira. Vous n'êtes pas à même de remplir ces fonctions trop lourdes. —Et s'adressant aux jeunes filles: Et vous, d'où venez-vous?

LA PREMIÈRE ENFANT.

D'un pays lointain. O vous qui donnez du pain.

LE SHÉRIF.

Êtes-vous, en vérité, autre qu'on le dit?

LA DEUXIÈME ENFANT.

Nous sommes faites comme Celui (dont le Fils a brisé l'Enfer) qui a fait tout le monde, gentil ou simple.

La PREMIÈRE ENFANT *reprend*.

« Ce que nous savons des anciens dieux, nous l'avons su, parmi les gens de notre race, au delà de l'amer sillon qui jamais ne repose.

Mais l'évêque Waltheof a croisé sur nous l'eau de la rédemption.

Nous avons une vision vague du passé et du futur; à cause de cela, grises de tristesse nous sommes souvent; »

Puis, à la question du Shérif sur la garantie de leurs dires, les trois enfants de Clee répondent, chacune, par des formules vagues et symboliques.

LE SHÉRIF.

Il se peut que vous disiez vrai. Le saint Waltheof sera votre garant et jugera. Retirez-vous sans crainte.

La première jeune fille dit encore:

« Le souffle d'un homme arrêtera le bras levé et éteindra le tison. »

La deuxième s'adressant au Shérif:

« Vous reposerez cette nuit, heureux et honoré. »

Et la troisième répond par un jeu de mots ironique à Mat le Meunier qui lui demande une prédiction.

Comme elles se retirent sans hâte, sir John Moryns se présente, portant des lettres. Il salue le Shérif et les seigneurs, et remet au Shérif une lettre du Roi lui conférant de nouveaux honneurs.

Au Comte, anxieux de nouvelles de son épouse, il apprend qu'elle est saine et sauve. Mais un songe l'inquiète, qui revient sans cesse: elle a vu sept fois, au milieu de la nuit, un horrible dragon. Ensuite c'était la vision d'un jeune garçon ayant sur la poitrine une croix, rouge comme un signe héraldique. Dans des cris et des lamentations, la vision de l'enfant disparaît et à sa place apparaît un chevalier tout armé, dans une plaine déserte dont le sol fumant est blanc de cendres.

LE COMTE.

Que dit le prêtre de Wraxby? l'a-t-on averti?

Sir JOHN.

« Oui, Messire, mais il ne sait rien expliquer. »

Alors les trois jeunes filles reviennent.

LE SHÉRIF.

Pourquoi revenez-vous? qui vous a appelées? Que cela veut-il dire?

S'adressant au Comte, les jeunes filles lui proposent successivement en termes sibyllins de donner l'explication du songe.

Le Comte refuse, et s'adressant au Shérif: « Il faut que je parte. Le jour n'est pas fini; mais nous avons à chevaucher quelques lieues avant le repas du soir. Ce rêve ne m'inquiète guère; mais je dois ne pas me laisser attendre. »

LE SHÉRIF.

Messire, que Dieu vous conduise en hâte et donne une issue heureuse à votre voyage. Souvent ce qui s'annonçait douteusement, se termine mieux que ce qui se présentait bien.

Sir THOMAS.

Messire, comprenez ce rêve comme l'annonce de quelque bonheur imprévu, un fils, peut-être, noble et aimé. Mais je m'attarde, Messire; encore une fois que Dieu vous conduise en hâte.

LE COMTE

Seigneurs, portez-vous bien. Le Comte et sa suite sortent d'un côté de la scène. De l'autre, le Shérif, les chevaliers et les trois enfants de Clee. La foule suit.

DEUXIÈME ACTE.

La scène représente, devant les murs, l'entrée du château du comte de Northumberland.

Deux archers montent la garde.

Lentement, les trois enfants de Clee paraissent *complètement* voilées de gris. L'une des jeunes filles porte un bol de cuivre; une autre, un encensoir fumant; la troisième, une branche de feuillage desséché. Leur marche est étrange et surnaturelle. Le premier archer s'avance, regarde anxieusement autour de lui et dit à son compagnon:

—Écoute donc! Tylle; n'entends-tu rien?

—Non, camarade: ce n'est que le bruit du vent sur les feuilles sèches.

Les jeunes filles passent entre eux et la troisième secoue légèrement sa branche morte; elles entrent mystérieusement dans le château.

Puis la scène s'emplit peu à peu d'une foule aux conversations animées.

UNE CAMPAGNARDE.

Je dis, voisin, que ce n'est pas bon signe pour un nouveau-né de voir le jour quand son père est au loin.

CLERK.

Propos de commère! Ne savez-vous pas que notre bon roi Édouard n'avait pas vu son père un mois avant les relevailles; et, selon le dicton, il est né avec une cuiller d'argent dans sa jolie petite bouche.

ALISON.

Il y aura grande fête, comme au bon vieux temps, si c'est un fils. J'ai là-dessus des renseignements sûrs.

CLERK.

Naturellement. Mais les dons du ciel doivent toujours être les bienvenus.

UN FORESTIER.

A-t-on des nouvelles de notre Comte? Il y a bien une bonne huitaine qu'il est parti vers le Nord.

UNE CAMPAGNARDE.

Comment se porte notre Comtesse?

ALISON.

Bien, dit-on, mais elle demande sans cesse son époux.

UNE FEMME.

On dit qu'un veilleur est placé près des neuf pierres pour épier son retour.

Des rires et des cris joyeux annoncent la venue du gai compère Trokelowe dont les facéties attirent l'attention générale.

—Demandez la bonne aventure, jolies demoiselles et nobles seigneurs. Prenez au hasard dans le sac du colporteur. Il y en a pour tout le monde. Des souliers pour les jambes de bois; des noix pour les édentés; la prévision de la fin du monde avec des détails.

ALISON.

Racontez-moi cela; je ne veux pas mourir vieille fille.

TROKELOWE.

« Écoutez: Juste un an avant que le monde prenne fin, vous aurez douze mois pour vous amender. »

Après cela, c'est au tour de Clerk d'être plaisanté, et les rires durent encore quand la femme du bailli entre, toute en émoi:

—Le Comte revient! le veilleur des neuf pierres a vu son pennon au loin.

Mais un cri retentit de l'intérieur du château, et Elleyne, la dame de chambre de la Comtesse, accourt à la poterne et annonce, dans le tumulte:

Bonne nouvelle!
Tous les bonheurs!
La Comtesse a un fils.

Et la foule de clamer:

Bonne nouvelle!
Bien dit, Elleyne!

ELLEYNE.

Ce n'est pas tout, mes amis, il y a un miracle, l'enfant porte sur la poitrine et sur le dos le signe de la sainte croix, une belle croix rouge.

Miracle! Miracle!

clame la foule; la joie est générale.

Trokelowe chante une ballade, et reparaissent alors à l'entrée du château les trois jeunes filles complètement voilées de gris.

Lentement elles se suivent.

La première porte le bol de cuivre; elle asperge le sol autour d'elle.

La deuxième porte le nouveau-né enveloppé dans ses langes.

La troisième porte l'encensoir fumant qu'elle balance doucement.

Elles passent, invisibles pour la foule bruyante, égayée par la chanson de Trokelowe.

A peine ont-elles disparu qu'une rumeur confuse s'élève de l'intérieur du château: un malheur! au secours! l'enfant est volé!

La foule est affolée; les gardes ont peine à refouler les gens qui se poussent de tous côtés.

On entend des sons de cor et le Comte et les chevaliers de sa suite s'avancent.

Le COMTE *au Chef des gardes*.

Qu'y a-t-il?

MATHIEU LAKKE.

Messire, il y a une demi-heure, notre chère Comtesse donnait le jour à un fils, beau et fort. Sur sa poitrine se voyait distinctement une croix rouge. Par méfait ou sortilège, l'enfant vient d'être enlevé, sous les yeux des femmes et des gardes. Depuis lors, la mère gît inanimée; vivante, mais immobile et insensible.

LE COMTE.

Ne me cache rien, Matthieu ! Le malheur est trop grand; la mère et le fils à la fois.

Sir Thomas MELAR.

Que pouvons-nous faire, Messire?

LE COMTE.

« Rien. Il n'y a rien à faire. C'est un coup de foudre. L'aveuglant éclair a jailli, les feuilles sont brûlées, le tronc est blanc. »

Sir Thomas serre silencieusement les mains du Comte.

Le CHEF DES GARDES.

Messire, les prêtres viennent qui portent notre chère Comtesse devant l'autel de Sainte-Freda.

Une litière où est étendue lady Merwyn est portée, suivie par les prêtre qui chantent. Les porteurs s'arrêtent; le Comte s'agenouille pendant quelques instants.

Puis il se lève et dit:

—A vous, sir Thomas, sir Hugh et sir Holme de Hamelake, je confie le gouvernement de mon comté. Je partirai en pèlerin pour la Terre sainte. Après cela, j'espère pouvoir, avec l'aide de Dieu, retrouver mon fils. J'en fais le vœu sur cette terre chérie et sur les reliques de saint Cuthbert.

Les porteurs se remettent en marche; le Comte entre dans le château; la scène se vide peu à peu.

Puis on voit reparaître le Comte portant le costume du pèlerin; il s'éloigne tandis que l'on entend encore au loin le chant des prêtres.

TROISIÈME ACTE.

Dix-huit ans se sont écoulés. La scène représente un espace découvert près des murs d'une ville, comme au premier acte.

A cheval, tout armé, le chevalier à la croix rouge, accompagné d'un écuyer et d'un page, traverse la scène et disparaît.

Après un temps, une bande de ménestrels, jouant et chantant, entre suivie d'une grande foule et, pendant que tous dansent, des varlets viennent délimiter, au moyen de mâts ornés de pennons, un emplacement réservé où ils disposent des sièges et des tapis.

Puis paraissent un héraut et deux poursuivants d'armes, chargés de contenir la foule.

La HÉRAUT.

Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! A tous faisons savoir que, aujourd'hui, fête du bienheureux saint Edmund, qui nous délivra de la peste et de la servitude.

Tous et chacun, étranger ou du pays, gentil ou simple, est libre d'aller et venir sans empêchement et d'avoir à satiété des victuailles et de la bière.

Acclamations joyeuses de la foule.

La HÉRAUT.

Personne ne doit travailler, homme, apprenti ou serviteur; pas de couvre-feu. Présentement, chacun peut en appeler en justice devant le Shérif et les chevaliers, avec toute liberté d'aller et venir.—Tous prieront de tout leur cœur pour la sauvegarde de notre bien-aimé seigneur le Comte encore en pèlerinage et pour le retour à la santé de lady Merwyn après sa longue et étrange maladie. Dieu sauve le Roi.

LA FOULE.

Les saints le protègent!

Pendant que parle le Héraut, le Shérif, les chevaliers et leurs attendants entrent dans l'enceinte réservée et prennent place.

Le Comte, sous le costume du pèlerin, entre d'un autre côté de la scène en même temps que des voyageurs, des marins et des curieux entourant Trokelowe qui se prépare à faire une nouvelle plaisanterie a son plastron ordinaire, Mat le Meunier.

Ensuite, une danse de masques, bizarrement accoutrés, occupe la scène. Des rétameurs frappant des poêlons; des bouchers, des os et des couperets; des forgerons, des fers à cheval et des marteaux. Tous chantent « twankydella «

Pendant la danse, la femme du fermier de Stainesmoor, avec son fils, se fraie un passage dans la foule. Elle parvient jusqu'au Shérif. tombe à genoux et lève la main droite.

LE SHÉRIF.

Approchez et dites votre plainte. Personne ne doit craindre de s'adresser à la justice du Comte. Que voulez-vous?

MAKYN.

A boire, à manger et un abri. Vous ne pouvez pas me rendre justice.

LE SHÉRIF.

Parlez sans crainte.

MAKYN.

Vous ne pouvez me rendre mon mari, je l'ai enterré de mes dix doigts dans la terre de Stainesmoor. Pouvez-vous faire que la forêt redevienne terre de labour? Les seigneurs ont changé les champs en terres de chasse; ils ont retiré du pays les hommes et les toits. Ses âtres se sont refroidis. Il n'y a presque plus rien à cultiver et la grille doit être fermée quand l'homme est aux champs.

Sir HUGH YELLAND.

Femme, vous allez plus vite, seule, vers le mal, qu'avec le fouet et le bridon.

Des cris de colère s'élèvent de la foule.

Sir H0LME.

N'interrompez pas les discours. Il y a encore bien des choses à dire, et des choses graves. Parlez, Madame, et soyez sans crainte.

MAKYN.

Je vous parle à vous, Messire. Depuis la Saint-Austin notre pays a été dévasté par un hideux dragon, qui approche de plus en plus, brûlant et dévorant. De ce qui avait été épargné par les seigneurs des forêts, peu de terre reste encore.

Il y a huit jours, mon mari était parti aux champs avec son bâton et son couteau; car on ne peut plus avoir d'arc à présent. Trois jours après, il rentrait, brûlé aux mains, la face pâle, sans voix et dans les yeux le souvenir d'une horreur qui le menaçait.

Il mourait le matin. Mon fils et moi, nous l'avons enterré pour le Jugement.

Et toujours, les rugissements du monstre et les lueurs sinistres du feu d'incendie approchent de plus en plus. Donnez-nous à boire et à manger; nous mourons.

Le Shérif se hâte de donner des ordres, mais sir Hugh met en doute le récit de la pauvre femme.—Aucun de nos gardes ne nous a rien dit de semblable.

Et au même moment se présente le garde des landes, avec un homme portant trois bâtons runiques.

« Vous êtes déjà au courant, dit le garde.

» J'ai perdu sept de mes meilleurs hommes d'armes et le reste renonce à la lutte.

» La région est vide et brûlée; les cadavres de gens et de bêtes gisent partout sur le sol et la trace de cendres traverse la campagne. Pendant le jour, le ciel est plein d'une fumée sombre et puants et, le soir, il est enflammé de couleur rouge-sang. Dans la trace du dragon, nous avons trouvé ces inscriptions déchiquetées et effacées. Il n'y avait rien à sauver, enfant ni meuble. »

Il remet les bâtons runiques au Shérif.

Le SHÉRIF.

Thomas, vous qui êtes savant, savez-vous ce que veulent dire ces signes?

Sir Thomas (après examen).

Devrais-je être pendu, je ne comprends rien à cela. Mais, par aventure, vous, saint pèlerin, ne sauriez-vous nous assister en ceci.

Approchez donc!

Le SHÉRIF.

La paix soit avec vous, mon père. A vous voir, vous avez dû traverser un grand nombre de pays et en avoir entendu les langages et retenu les coutumes. Que représentent ces signes? Sont-ils un bon conseil ou un mauvais sortilège?

LE COMTE.

« Laissez-moi les examiner. »

Il prend un à un les bâtons des mains du Héraut, les regarde et les rend.

LE COMTE.

C'est l'ancienne écriture de notre pays. Les mots importent peu, mais le sens est clair. Voulez-vous m'entendre?

Le SHÉRIF.

Assurément. Parlez sans retard.

LE COMTE.

Il est écrit que ceux qui tiennent la règle dévastent le pays. Cruels que vous êtes, faiseurs d'injustice, spoliateurs et insoucieux de la charge que vous a laissée votre seigneur. La plaie ne se terminera que lorsque celui qui est le plus coupable partira seul et sans arme abattre la bête.

Des murmures et des cris s'élèvent de la foule.

Sir HUGH YELLAND.

Vous nous en contez, faux prêtre, vous et cette femme.

Shérif, qu'on les enchaîne!

—Le Comte relève son capuchon et se tourne vers la foule.

« Bon peuple, me reconnaissez-vous, votre seigneur le Comte? »

Parmi les murmures de la foule, Trokelowe s'avance et regarde fixement le Comte.—Un silence mortel.—Trokelowe se retourne et crie:

Vive Egil de Northumbria!

Et la foule d'une seule voix répète:

Vive Egil de Northumbria !

Le COMTE.

Vous avez été les injustes gardiens, spoliateurs du faible, dévastateurs, lourds de main et durs de cœur. Vous avez détruit pour vos plaisirs la moitié des foyers que je vous avais confiés. Qui de vous ira contre la bête? Vous Hugh de Yelland ou vous Holme de Hamelake?

Sir HUGH.

Je ne me mêle pas de sortilège ni de magie.

Sir HOLME.

Je rencontrerai, armé, homme ou bête, qu'il y ait sortilège ou non.

LE COMTE.

« Moi seul, j'irai; je suis le plus coupable. Pour un deuil personnel, j'ai abandonné mon poste et livré mon troupeau aux loups.

Il sera fait comme je l'ai dit.

Bon peuple, priez pour moi.

Le reste, dans la volonté de Dieu, est à moi seul! »

Le Comte quitte la scène entouré de la foule.

Les seigneurs sortent les derniers.

QUATRIÈME ACTE.

La scène représente un site désolé des frontières; derrière les arbres est le repaire du dragon. De là sortent des fumées et des rugissements.

Les trois enfants de Clee, voilées de gris, entrent successivement et dansent.

Pendant leur danse, le bruit du rugissement cesse. Puis elles se retirent de différents côtés.

—Le Comte, encore en costume de pèlerin, entre avec l'évêque et des prêtres. Il s'agenouille et reçoit la bénédiction de l'évêque, qui se retire ensuite avec les prêtres, sauf un. Celui-ci se tourne vers le Comte.

LE COMTE.

Qui êtes-vous, mon frère?

LE PRÊTRE.

Je suis Matthieu Lakke.

LE COMTE, *le regardant*.

En effet, mon cher Lakke, mon fidèle compagnon! Et je ne vous reconnaissais pas, vous qui étiez la lance la plus ferme et le meilleur cavalier du pays.

LAKKE.

Pendant sept ans, mon seigneur, j'ai porté le froc; je vous attendais et je croyais à la fin ne plus revoir le visage de mon maître. Douze lances sont prêtes, dont la pointe a été trempée dans l'eau sainte. A votre signal, elles viendront à votre aide pour abattre la bête. Ne refusez pas mon assistance.

LE COMTE.

Matthieu, il m'est dur de ne pouvoir l'accepter. Écoutez: hier soir saint Dunstan m'est apparu ici ou dans les cieux, bientôt je reverrai mon fils et le pays sera délivré de sa plaie. Entre les mains de Dieu, j'ai remis mon sort. Retirez-vous donc. Adieu.

Comme Lakke se retire, les trois enfants voilées de gris apparaissent de nouveau et font autour du Comte, qui s'est assis, quelques pas de danse et quelques passes des mains qui l'endorment.

—Le chevalier à la croix rouge entre en scène, armé de pied en cap, accompagné de son écuyer et de son page. Il descend de cheval.

SAINT GEORGES.

« C'est ici, s'il faut en croire les dames voilées de gris, que se trouve le repaire de la bête. »

S'adressant à son écuyer:

« Mettez-vous à l'abri et laissez-moi. Je ne crains ni dent ni griffe. Prenez ma lance et mon bouclier. je n'ai besoin de l'un ni de l'autre dans ces broussailles et ces ronces. Adieu. »

L'écuyer et le page emmènent le cheval.

—Les rugissements du dragon augmentent. Saint Georges entre dans la forêt, l'épée à la main. La fumée et les flammes redoublent d'intensité.

Saint Georges se tient sur ses gardes.

—Le Comte se réveille et prononce les paroles du 44° psaume:

Tu nous couvris de l'ombre de la mort. Seigneur! Debout, pourquoi dors-tu? Lève-toi et ne nous abandonne pas.

Pourquoi oublies-tu notre misère et notre inquiétude? Lève-toi; viens à notre secours et délivre-nous, par grâce.

Il tombe à genoux.

—Le dragon, en poussant un horrible cri, s'abat. Saint Georges l'attaque de toutes parts. Il frappe mortellement la bête qui tombe sur lui et le renverse.

Le Comte accourt, soulève la tête du chevalier et s'écrie:

« Au secours! à moi! mon fils est en vie! »

L'écuyer et le page accourent aussi, amenant le cheval. On met le chevalier en selle; le Comte le soutient d'un côté, l'écuyer de l'autre; le page conduit le cheval. Tous quittent la scène.

—-Aussitôt après, des hommes, des femmes, des enfants se précipitent en foule.

Au milieu des cris de joie, tous entraînent, au moyen de cordes, le corps du dragon dans la forêt.

CINQUIÈME ACTE.

La scène représente un espace découvert devant le château du Comte. Les trois enfants voilées de gris entrent de différents côtés et se réunissent au milieu de la scène. L'une d'elles joue quelque musique sur un pipeau, et un étrange petit peuple courant et sautant sort de la forêt et se met à danser autour des enfants. Au chant d'un coq, tous disparaissent en un instant.

Peu à peu le peuple entre et s'assemble auprès de l'entrée du château. Alison chante une triste ballade; la litière de lady Merwyn s'avance.

Au-devant sont le Comte en tenue de cérémonie, sir Thomas Methan, sir Hugh Yelland et Holme de Hamelake; ensuite viennent l'évêque et les prêtres.

LE COMTE.

L'office saint est fini; déposez ici votre précieux fardeau. Faites-le doucement: que rien ne trouble son repos. Vénérable évêque, mon fils a, contre toute attente, survécu aux coups de la bête qu'il a finalement abattue. Nous prions, mais nous n'osons l'espérer, pour que, à sa venue, la chère créature puisse se ranimer ou au moins reposer dans la paix du tombeau.

Saint Georges paraît; son page conduit son cheval, son écuyer le suit.

Il descend et rencontre le Comte qui le conduit vers la litière et le laisse dans sa contemplation.

Après quelques instants, il se retourne tristement vers le Comte.

LE COMTE.

Elle n'est pas changée.

SAINT GEORGES.

Seigneur, aucun sentiment, aucun frisson. Cela a-t-il toujours été ainsi?

LE COMTE.

Oui, la nuit et le jour, d'année en année. Elle gisait la, vivante, si l'on peut nommer ainsi ce mortel engourdissement.

Qu'on emporte la litière.

Comme les porteurs s'apprêtent à le faire, ils reculent en criant:

Voyez! Voyez!

Tous s'arrêtent et l'on voit lady Merwyn se lever lentement et se diriger, d'un pas incertain, vers son fils.

Saint Georges s'avance et s'agenouille devant sa mère, qui pose les mains sur sa tête.

Tous les entourent et les cachent pendant quelques moments.

Puis la foule s'écarte et l'on voit lady Merwyn entre son fils et son époux.

Ils rentrent dans le château, suivis du cortège en bon ordre et de la foule heureuse; et de la musique s'entend, venant du château.

Ici finit le Mystère,

et les acteurs vous souhaitent un bon état de santé (d'où surcroît de bonheur et de richesse) et espèrent votre présence au spectacle de l'an prochain.

Au revoir.

Khnopff, Fernand, « Le Mystère de Saint-Georges, » *Bulletin de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*, 1919, 1-3, (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, séance du 9 janvier 1919), 19-37.

Translation:

The mystery of saint Georges,
by FERNAND KHNOPFF, Member of the Academy.

In its 1890 Christmas issue, *Harper's Magazine* published the third of the comedies of Shakespeare (*As you like it*), illustrated by E. Abbey and commented by Andrew Lang.

The commentary began thus:

> "Of this comedy from the old days, I write in the green shade of the forest, in the landscape of old England. It is the park of a great house; all around, is the deep greenery of oaks and beeches; there are fallow deer, innocent citizens of a deserted city, grazing on these slopes or watching over newborn fawns; the cuckoo calls; the wood-dove coos; and the blackbird sings his joyful songs.
>
> This is an 'Arden' in this anxious period of the history of England. Outside, there is the bad news of this troubled epoch; how happy we would be if this 'Arden' was as distant from the envious Court and its turbulent people as the forest of Shakespeare's dream!...
>
> Such thoughts bring a sadness even in our the reading of Shakespeare's happiest play; a piece which, if performed at all, should be acted outdoors, as it was two or three years ago, with a background of forest boughs for decoration."

This performance in the open air, organized by Lady Campbell, was a great success and caused people to talk about it for a long time, and, certainly scholars wrote about it with very well documented reviews.

We have not, at this time, the ability to retrieve them and accordingly do not know with certainty if the works of Shakespeare were previously performed in some manorial Park.

Comus by Milton could be represented in a pastoral setting; but it is likely that if a representation had been transported from the Globe [theater] to any 'literary' domain of the time, the play would have been performed by candlelight.

And so, without further delay, I turn to the real subject of this lecture.

As an annex to his directorial speech, Mr. Brunfaut had asked me to give a brief translation of the brochure of the *Mystery* that he saw performed at Hampstead near London, at the Congress of Garden Cities.

The mystery of the famous and valiant knight St. George of England, showing his origin, his strange abduction while he was in the cradle, and his famous victory over the great dragon; newly written and presented by FRANK STUART MURRAY *and* JOHN ARMISTEAD, *and played by those of the Hampstead Garden suburb on the playground, behind St. Jude on the Hill, on 20 and 27 June 1914.*

THE MYSTERY.

The sound of horns is heard, then the master of the mystery rises and speaks aloud these words: “That all those who are gathered in this place to be entertained in society welcome the actors and pray them now to start. Silence must be duly observed.”

FIRST ACT.

The scene represents a space discovered outside the city where a crowd of country people and city dwellers is found, among whom there are jugglers, gypsies, hawkers, a merchant of quack medicines, a man from a far-off country with a monkey, a simpleton straddling a hobby horse, among others.

Trokelowe, *the itinerant singer, pushes himself to the forefront.*

Hola, good people, boys and girls, flat caps, rabbit catchers, what do you need? ballads, laws? King Horn or Gamelyn? News from France, Britain or Rome? Decide or it will be chance from the bag!

Matt the Miller requests a ballad.

Yes, Yes, a ballad! calls the crowd and Trokelowe performs to general satisfaction.

After which he chose the good miller as the target of a few broad jokes.

The laughing crowd surrounds them and they come to the comic parody of a more or less courteous combat of arms, whose hilarious success is interrupted by the arrival of the Count of Northumberland and his party, in the company of the Sheriff of Northumberland, the Mayor of the town, Sir Thomas Metham, Sir Hugh Yelland, Sir Holme de Hamelake and others.

The procession stops, and addressing the Count:

Sir, said the Sheriff, and you, trustworthy Lords, before returning to your homes, I beg you to pause a moment in these places among the happy crowd. It is due to you, Sir, that these people are able to live in joy.

—Since you have been our Count, adds Sir Thomas Metham, men, women and children, everyone can come and go safely.

When the sky reddens in the West, it is now the sign at the end of a happy day for the farmer and not as before the presage of the terrible fire of robbers.

Year by year, the grange and the press are enriched.

—The Count thanks the Sheriff for his good words and would like to share these testimonials of gratitude with Sir Thomas; because, he says, you have lived at my side through these difficult times, along with these brave knights.

Sir THOMAS.

Yes, Sir, then we were under arms throughout the frigid nights and burning days, and constantly strained our ear to hear the horn of the pirates on the wind. But we defeated them. We breathe freely now, and if we still carry these weapons, it is more out of habit than necessity.

“Also, responds the Sheriff, in these days of games and repose, we want to celebrate the saviors and guardians of this once so tested country.”

A movement is made in the crowd and a troupe of gypsy girls advances. After a greeting of tribute, they get ready to dance.

“These are pagans,” said the Count, “is it allowed?”

“I believe so, Sir, replied the Sheriff. These men, people of Egypt, are versed in the art of medicine for animals and poultry; our farmers love them. In addition, their women are rare dancers.”

Then the gypsy Ladra dances to the sound of music played by people from her tribe; but as the dance ends, we hear rumbling from one side of the stage and three girls (three gray children of Clee) traverse the crowd.

They are strangely dressed in gray veils.

The menacing clamors rise: “To the water! To the stake! they are witches! they cast spells! they worship the ancient gods! they reject the cross!”

The Sheriff recommends calm.

—Let one of you speak on behalf of all.

Matt the Miller declares that these women (if in fact they are women) have a reputation for being evil creatures, who cast spells on animals and people.

THE SHERIFF.

If they do evil, the King’s justice will punish them. You are not able to perform these too weighty functions.—And speaking to the girls: and you, where do you come from?

THE FIRST CHILD.

From a far country. O you who give bread.

THE SHERIFF.

Are you, in truth, other than they say?

THE SECOND CHILD.

We are made as the One (whose Son conquered Hell) made everyone, whether gentle or simple folks.

The first child *resumes*.

“What we know of the ancient gods, we learned among the people of our race, above the bitter furrow which never rests.

But the Bishop Waltheof crossed us with the water of redemption.

We have a vague vision of the past and the future; because of this, we are often gray with sadness;”

Then, to the question of the Sheriff on the surety of their words, the three children of Clee each respond with vague and symbolic formulas.

THE SHERIFF.

May it be that you speak the truth. Saint Waltheof will be your sponsor and judge. You may go without fear.

The first girl still says:

“The breath of a man will stop your upraised arm and turn off the firebrand.”

The second addressing the Sheriff:

“You will repose tonight, happy and honored.”

And the third responds with an ironic pun to Matt the Miller who asks her for a prediction.

As they withdrew without haste, Sir John Moryns arises, bearing letters. He greets the sheriff and the Lords, and gives the Sheriff a letter from the King conferring new honors upon him.

The Count, anxious for news of his wife, learns that she is healthy and safe. But a disturbing dream keeps returning to her: seven times, in the middle of the night, she saw a horrible dragon. Then it was the vision of a young boy with a cross on his chest, red as a heraldic sign. In cries and lamentations, the vision of the child disappears and in its place appears a Knight all armed, in a deserted plain whose smoking ground is white with ash.

THE COUNT.

What says the priest of Wraxby? Have we informed him?

Sir JOHN.

“Yes, Sir, but he cannot explain it.''

Then the three girls return.

THE SHERIFF.

Why do you come back? Who called you? What does it mean?

Speaking to the Count, the girls successively offered in cryptic terms to give an explanation of the dream.

The Count refuses, and speaking to the Sheriff: “I must go. The day is not over; but we must ride a few miles before the evening meal. This dream doesn’t disturb me; but I must not delay.”

THE SHERIFF.

Messire, may God lead you in haste and give a happy outcome to your trip. Often what is announced doubtfully, ends better than that which presented itself well.

Sir THOMAS.

Messire, understand this dream as the announcement of some unexpected happiness, a son, perhaps, noble and beloved. But I delay, Messire. Once again may God lead you in haste.

THE COUNT

Lords, be well. The Count and his party exited to one side of the stage. On the other, the Sheriff, the Knights and the three children of Clee. The crowd follows.

SECOND ACT.

The scene takes place before the walls at the entrance of the castle of Northumberland County.

Two archers stand guard.

Slowly, the three children of Clee appear *completely* veiled in gray. One of the girls carries a copper bowl; another, a smoking censer; the third, a branch of dried leaves. Their gait is strange and supernatural. The first archer advances, anxiously looks around and says to his companion:

—Listen! Tylle; do you hear anything?

—No, Comrade: it is only the sound of the wind on dry leaves.

The young girls pass between them and the third slightly shakes her dead branch; mysteriously, they enter the Castle.

Then the stage fills gradually with a crowd with lively conversations.

A RUSTIC.

I say, neighbor, that is not a good sign for a newborn baby to see the day when his father is away.

CLERK.

Words of gossip! Don't you know that our good King Edward did not see his father a month before the churching ceremony; and, as the saying goes, he was born with a silver spoon in his pretty little mouth.

ALISON.

There will be a big party as in the good old days if it is a son. I have on this reliable information.

CLERK.

Naturally. But the gifts of Heaven must always be welcome.

A FORESTER.

Is there any news of our Count? It has been a good week since he went northward.

A RUSTIC.

How is our Countess?

ALISON.

Well, it is said, but she constantly asks for her husband.

A WOMAN.

It is said that a watchman is placed near the nine stones to watch for his return.

Laughter and joyful cries announce the coming of the gay companion Trokelowe whose antics attract general attention.

—Ask for a good adventure, beautiful damsels and noble Lords. Take by chance from the bag of the Peddler. There is something for everyone. Shoes for the wooden legs; nuts for the toothless; prediction of the end of the world with details.

ALISON.

Tell me about this; I do not want to die an old maid.

TROKELOWE.

“Listen: just a year before the world ends, you will have 12 months to amend yourself. ''

After that, it is the turn of Clerk to be teased, and the laughter lasts even when the wife of the bailiff enters all agitated:

—The Count is back! the watchman of the nine stones saw his pennant in the distance.

But a scream resounds from inside the Castle, and Elleyne, the lady of the chamber of the Countess, runs to the postern and announces in the turmoil:

Good news!
All happiness!
The Countess has a son.

And the crowd exclaims:

Good news!
Well said, Elleyne!

ELLEYNE.

That is not all, my friends, there is a miracle, the child bears on his chest and on his back the sign of the Holy Cross, a beautiful red cross.

Miracle! Miracle!

the crowd clamors; the joy is general.

Trokelowe sings a ballad, and then the three girls completely veiled in grey return to the entrance of the Castle.

Slowly they follow each other.

The first carries the copper bowl; she sprinkles the ground around her.

The second carries the newborn wrapped in its swaddling clothes.

The third carries the smoking censer which she gently balances.

They pass, invisible to the noisy crowd, amused by Trokelowe's song.

Hardly have they disappeared that a confused rumor rises from inside the castle: a tragedy! to the rescue! the child is stolen!

The crowd is distraught; the guards struggle to push back the people who push in from on all sides.

The sound of a horn is heard and the Count and the knights of his party come forward.

THE COUNT *with the head of the guards*.

Who is there?

MATHIEU LAKKE.

Messire, half an hour ago, our dear Countess gave to a son, beautiful and strong. On his chest was distinctly seen a red cross. By malfeasance or sorcery, the child came to be

carried off under the eyes of women and guards. Since then, the mother lies lifeless; alive but immobile and unresponsive.

THE COUNT.

Hide nothing from me, Matthew! The tragedy is too great; the mother and son at the same time.

Sir Thomas MELAR.

What can we do, Sir?

THE COUNT.

“Nothing. There is nothing to do. It is a lightning strike. The blinding flash has burst, the leaves are burned, the trunk is white.”

Sir Thomas silently shakes the hands of the Count.

The HEAD OF THE GUARDS.

Messire, the priests come carrying our dear Countess before the altar of Saint Freda.

A litter on which Lady Merwyn is laid out is carried in, followed by the chanting priest. The porters stop; the Count kneels for a few moments.

Then he stands up and says:

—To you, Sir Thomas, Sir Hugh and Sir Holme de Hamelake, I entrust the government of my County. I go as a pilgrim to the Holy land. After that, I hope, with God's help, to find my son. I make this vow on this beloved land and the relics of Saint Cuthbert.

The porters resume their march; the count enters the Castle; the stage empties slowly.

Then we see the Count reappear wearing the costume of a Pilgrim; he walks away while the chanting of priests can still be heard in the distance.

THIRD ACT.

Eighteen years have passed. The scene represents an open space near the walls of a city, as in the first act.

On horseback, fully armed, the Knight of the Red Cross, accompanied by a squire and a page, crosses the stage and disappears.

After a time, a band of minstrels, playing and singing, between followed by a large crowd and while all dance, the varlets come to mark out with mats decorated with pennants a reserved enclosure where they set out chairs and carpets.

Then a herald and two men of arms appear, charged to contain the crowd.

THE HERALD.

Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear ye! All know that, today, we celebrate the blessed saint Edmund, who delivered us from the plague and bondage.

Each and every foreigner or countryman, gentle or simple, is free to go and come without impediment and to eat food and drink beer to satiety.

Joyful cheers from the crowd.

The HERALD.

No person shall work, man, apprentice or servant; and no curfew. Right now, each may appeal in court to the sheriff and knights, with complete freedom to come and go.—All pray with all their hearts for the safeguarding of our beloved Lord the Count still on pilgrimage and for the return to health of lady Merwyn after her long and strange malady. God save the King.

THE CROWD.

The saints protect them!

While the Herald speaks, the Sheriff, the Knights and their attendants enter in the reserved enclosure and take their places.

The Count, in his pilgrim costume, enters from the other side of the scene while travellers, sailors and the curious surround Trokelowe who is preparing to make a new joke on his regular butt, Matt the Miller.

Then, a dance of masks, bizarrely got up, occupies the stage. Tinkers hit their pans; butchers hit their bones and cleavers; blacksmiths pound their horseshoes and hammers. All chant 'twankydella.'

During the dance, the wife of the farmer of Stainesmoor, with her son, makes a passage through the crowd. She reaches the Sheriff, falls to her knees, and raises her right hand.

THE SHERIFF.

Come and say your complaint. No one should be afraid to seek the justice of the Count. What do you want?

MAKYN.

Drink, eat and shelter. You cannot give me justice.

THE SHERIFF.

Speak without fear.

MAKYN.

You cannot give me my husband, I buried him with my ten fingers in the land of Stainesmoor. Can you make the forest return to a land of labor? The Lords have changed fields into hunting grounds; they have taken men and roofs from the land. The hearths are cold. There is almost nothing to cultivate and the gate must be closed when the man is in the fields.

Sir HUGH YELLAND.

Woman, you are going faster, alone, toward evil, as with the whip and bridle.

Cries of anger rise from the crowd.

Sir H0LME.

Do not interrupt the speech. There are many things still to say, and serious matters. Speak, Madam, and have no fear.

MAKYN.

I will speak to you, Sir. Since the Saint-Austin our country has been devastated by a hideous dragon, who comes closer and closer, burning and devouring. Of what had been spared by the lords of the forest, little of the land still remains.

Eight days ago, my husband went to the fields with his stick and his knife because we no longer have a bow. Three days later, he came home, his hands burned, his face pale, speechless and the memory of a threatening horror in his eyes.

He died in the morning. My son and I buried him for the Last Judgment.

And still, the roars of the monster and the sinister glimmerings of the light of his fire come closer and closer. Give us something to drink and eat; we are dying.

The Sheriff makes haste to give orders, but Sir Hugh casts doubt on the story of the poor woman.—None of our guards told us anything like this.

And at the same time comes the guard of the land, with a man bearing three Rune sticks.

“You are already up to date,” said the guard.

“I lost seven of my best men at arms and the rest gave up the fight.”

“The region is empty and burned; the corpses of people and animals lie everywhere on the ground and the marks of ash are found across the countryside. During the day, the sky is full of dark and stinking smoke, and in the evening, it blazes with a blood red color. In the trace of the dragon, we found these shredded and effaced inscriptions. There was nothing to save, neither child nor furniture.”

He hands the Rune sticks to the Sheriff.

THE SHERIFF.

Thomas, you who are learned, do you know what these signs mean?

Sir Thomas (after review).

Even if I were to be hanged, I don't understand anything of this. But peradventure, you, Holy Pilgrim, could assist us in this.

Approach therefore!

THE SHERIFF.

Peace be with you, my father. You see, you had to cross a large number of countries and have heard their languages and learned their customs. What are these signs? Are they good counsel or evil sorcery?

THE COUNT.

“Let me examine them.”

He takes one stick from the hands of the Herald, looks at it and gives it back.

THE COUNT.

It is the old script of our country. The words mean little, but the sense is clear. Do you want to hear me?

THE SHERIFF.

Surely. Speak without delay.

THE COUNT.

It is written that those who hold the rule devastate the country. Cruel you are, makers of injustice, exploitative and careless of the charge that your Lord left you. The plague will not end until the one who is most guilty will go alone and unarmed to kill the beast.

Whispers and shouts rise from the crowd.

Sir HUGH YELLAND.

You are making up stories, false priest, you and that woman.

Sheriff, chain them up!

—The Count removes his hood and turned to the crowd.

“Good people, do you acknowledge me, your Lord Count? ''

Among the murmurs of the crowd, Trokelowe advances and stares at the Count.—deathly silence.—Trokelowe turns and yells:

Long live Egil from Northumbria!

And the crowd with one voice repeats:

Long live Egil from Northumbria!

THE COUNT.

You have been unjust guardians, despoilers of the weak, devastating, heavy of hand and hard of heart. You destroyed half of the households that I had entrusted to you for your pleasures. Which of you will go against the beast? You, Hugh Yelland or you, Holme de Hamelake?

Sir HUGH.

I will not be involved with sorcery or magic.

SIR HOLME.

I will meet, armed, any man or beast, whether there is sorcery or not.

THE COUNT.

“I alone will go; I'm the most guilty. For a personal grief, I abandoned my post and delivered my flock to wolves.

It will be done as I said.

Good people, pray for me.

The rest, if God wills it, is to me alone!”

The Count leaves the stage surrounded by the crowd.

The Lords exit last.

FOURTH ACT.

The scene depicts a desolated site on the border; behind the trees is the lair of the dragon. Fumes and roars come from there.

The three children of Clee, veiled gray, enter in succession and dance.

During their dance, the noise of the roaring stops. Then they withdraw from different sides.

—The Count, still in the costume of a pilgrim, enters with the bishop and priests. He kneels and receives the blessing of the bishop, who then retreats with the priests, except one. He turns to the Count.

THE COUNT.

Who are you, my brother?

THE PRIEST.

I am Matthieu Lakke.

THE COUNT, *looking at him*.

Indeed, my dear Lakke, my faithful companion! And yet I did not recognize you who was the strongest lance and the best cavalier of the country.

LAKKE.

For seven years, my Lord, I have worn the monk's robe; I was waiting for you, and I thought at the end that I would never again see the face of my master. Twelve spears are ready, whose tips have been soaked in holy water. At your signal, they will come to your help to kill the beast. Do not deny my assistance.

THE COUNT.

Matthew, it it is hard for me not to accept it. Listen: last night Saint Dunstan appeared to me here or in the heavens, soon I will see my son again and the country will be delivered from this plague. Into the hands of God, I deliver my fate. You must withdraw. Farewell.

As Lakke withdraws, the three children veiled in gray appear again and surround the seated Count; they perform a few dance steps and make a few passes with their hands which put him to sleep.

-—The Red Cross Knight enters the scene, armed from head to toe, accompanied by his page and his squire. He descends from his horse.

SAINT GEORGE.

"It is here, if the veiled ladies of grey are to be believed, that is the lair of the beast."

Speaking to his squire:

"Take cover and leave me. I fear neither tooth nor claw. Take my spear and my shield. I have no need of one or the other in these bushes and these brambles. Farewell."

The squire and the page take the horse away.

—The roaring of the dragon increases. Saint George enters the forest, his sword in hand. Smoke and flames redouble their intensity.

Saint George is on guard.

—The Count awakens and recites the words of the 44th Psalm:

You have covered us with the shadow of death. Wake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, cast us not off forever.

Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction and our oppression?

Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies' sake.

He falls to his knees.

—The dragon, crying out with a horrible scream, strikes. Saint George attacks him from all sides. He fatally wounds the beast, which falls backwards on him.

The Count runs, raises the head of the knight and exclaims:

“To the rescue! to me! My son is alive!”

The squire and the page run too, bringing the horse. They put the knight in the saddle; the Count suppports him from one side, the squire from the other; the page leads the horse. All leave the stage.

—Immediately after, men, women and children crowd in.

With cries of joy, all drag the body of the dragon with ropes into the forest.

FIFTH ACT.

The scene takes place in an open space before the castle of the count. The three children veiled in gray come from different sides and meet in the middle of the scene. One of them plays some music on a pipe, and strange little people run and leap out of the forest and start dancing around the children. At the crowing of a rooster, all disappear in an instant.

Little by little the people enter and assemble near the entrance of the Castle. Alison sings a sad ballad; the litter of Lady Merwyn approaches.

In front are the Count in his ceremonial garb, Sir Thomas Methan, Sir Hugh Yelland and Holme de Hamelake; then come the bishop and priests.

THE COUNT.

The Holy Office is finished; set down your precious burden here. Get up slowly: that nothing disturbs her rest. Venerable Bishop, my son has, against all odds, survived the blows of the beast which he finally struck down. We pray, though we do not dare hope, that at his coming, the dear creature will revive or at least rest in the peace of the grave.

Saint George appears; his page leads his horse, his squire follows him.

He descends and meets the Count who led him to the litter and the leaves in his contemplation.

After a few moments, he sadly returns to the Count.

THE COUNT.

She is not changed.

SAINT GEORGE.

Lord, no feeling, no shivering. Has she always been thus?

THE COUNT.

Yes, night and day, year after year. She lay, alive, if this deadly numbness can be so called.

Take up her litter.

As carriers are preparing to do so, they move backwards shouting:

Look! Look!

All stop and see Lady Merwyn stand up slowly and move, with an uncertain step, towards her son.

Saint George advances and kneels before his mother, who places her hands on his head.

All surround them and hide them for a few moments.

Then the crowd departs and we see Lady Merwyn between her son and her husband.

They enter the Castle, followed by the procession in good order and the happy crowd; music is heard coming from the Castle.

Here ends the mystery,

and the actors wish you a good state of health (with the addition of happiness and wealth) and hope for your presence at the spectacle next year.

Farewell.

Khnopff, Fernand, « Les compensations pour dommages artistiques, » *Bulletin de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*, 1919, 1-3, (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, séance du 6 mars 1919), 59-66.

COMMUNICATIONS ET LECTURES

Les compensations pour dommages artistiques,

par FERNAND KHNOPFF, membre de l'Académie.

Il y a quelques semaines, nous avons salué avec joie la réouverture de l'Université de Gand.

Nous pouvons nous féliciter de la restauration complète de cette glorieuse expression de la civilisation belge qui fut effectuée malgré les menaces de mutilation et de destruction proférées contre elle par des ennemis et des traîtres.

Mais il est aussi une manifestation, plus glorieuse encore de cette civilisation belge, dont les circonstances actuelles nous permettent d'espérer l'entière reconstitution.

Dans la cathédrale de Gand ne se trouvent plus que quatre des douze panneaux de l'immortel retable, exécuté pour cette église par les frères Hubert et Jean d'Eyck-sur-Meuse.

A la fin du XIV° siècle, Liège était un centre d'art de premier ordre. C'est là que les deux peintres s'étaient formés, c'est là qu'ils avaient trouvé leur premier protecteur, le prince-évêque Jean de Bavière, et ce furent des commandes et des événements politiques qui les conduisirent ensuite à Gand et à Bruges.

Il convient donc de les proclamer les maîtres de l'école *belge*, car il faut désormais donner au très ancien et très illustre nom de belge la première place à laquelle il a droit et où l'on a fait figurer, abusivement et trop souvent, des dénominations qui le divisent et le diminuent.

On sait que en 1816, sous la domination néerlandaise, l'ignorance de gardiens indignes avait livré six des panneaux du retable de Gand à l'étranger, à l'Allemagne où ils font l'ornement le plus précieux du Musée de Berlin.

En octobre 1914, un nommé Emil Schafer publiait dans une des plus importantes revues de Berlin, *Kunst and Künstler*, un article hautement approuvé où l'on pouvait lire ceci:

> « A Liège et à Bruxelles on rend déjà la justice au nom de l'Empereur allemand. Namur est tombé, sur Malines et Anvers croisent des zeppelins; dans quelques semaines, dans quelques jours peut-être, le quartier-maître général von Stern annoncera: le royaume de Belgique a cessé d'exister.
>
> » Pour le règlement de la contribution de guerre à exiger des Belges, nous ne réclamerons pas seulement de l'or monnayé; chaque ville de ce pays a été autrefois une patrie des arts; chaque église, un sanctuaire de la peinture.

» Les petits fils des Van Eyck et des Rubens ont conservé beaucoup de tableaux qui possèdent, outre leur inappréciable valeur idéale, une valeur matérielle qui ne peut s'exprimer qu'en millions et sur cette partie aussi du patrimoine national le poing du vainqueur devra s'abattre. »

Et cette pédantesque brute énumérait ensuite, méthodiquement, les pièces les plus importantes du butin à transporter de Belgique dans les musées allemands.

« Il nous faut avant tout, écrivait-il, le glorieux retable de l'Agneau mystique dont six panneaux font déjà partie de notre Kaiser Friedrich Museum; deux autres sont au Musée de Bruxelles, d'où il va de soi qu'ils doivent être transportés à Berlin. Et les Gantois n'auront pas le droit de crier au sacrilège si nous envoyons aussi à Berlin les panneaux restés à Saint-Bavon, cela pour la commémoration de nos victoires. »

D'autre part, dans ce livre émouvant, publié en 1917*: La Guerre et les Œuvres d'art en Belgique*, le baron H. Kervyn de Lettenhove citait la réponse du premier ministre de Bavière, au baron Descamps, notre ministre des Sciences et des Arts, à propos du prêt éventuel, à l'Exposition de Bruxelles de 1910, de certains tableaux de l'ancienne Pinacothèque de Munich:

« Les œuvres des grands maîtres, écrivait-il, ne peuvent se à payer avec de l'argent; elles peuvent seulement se remplacer par des œuvres équivalentes. La perte d'un de nos tableaux doit pouvoir nous donner le droit d'en prendre d'autres d'un » même mérite, à choisir dans vos musées de Bruxelles. »

Voilà donc, posé par les Allemands eux-mêmes, le principe des compensations pour les dommages artistiques causés par leur, vandalisme, et dans un intéressant article de l'*Illustration* du 11 janvier dernier, M. Auguste Marguillier se demandait comment réaliser l'application de ce principe et sur quelles bases établir le détail de la rançon à laquelle il donne droit.

Il estime qu'on ne peut songer à dégarnir les édifices d'outre Rhin des œuvres d'art créées pour eux et qui n'auraient aucun sens pour nous, mais qu'il n'en est pas de même des pièces de collection, déjà « déracinées », surtout si notre choix porte sur des créations de notre génie national ou sur des œuvres nous ayant jadis appartenu.

Avant tout, pour rendre enfin sa splendeur première au vénérable monument de la peinture belge qu'est l'*Adoration de l'Agneau* mystique, la Belgique doit recouvrer les six panneaux exposés au Musée de Berlin.

Nous devons de même faire revenir de Berlin et de Munich les quatre panneaux de Thierry Bouts, qui formaient jadis les volets de la Cène de ce maître, échappée par miracle au criminel incendie de la collégiale Saint-Pierre de Louvain en 1914; faire revenir de Dantzig le *Jugement dernier* de Memling, qui est conservé à l'église Notre-Dame et qui, expédié de Bruges à Pise par les Portinari, avait été capturé en cours de route par les pirates prussiens de la ligue hanséatique; reprendre à Francfort les très curieuses peintures dites du « Maître de Flémalle », provenant de l'abbaye de ce nom;

remplacer, autant qu'il est possible, le Jordaens brûlé à Dixmude, cette formidable *Adoration des mages*, somptueux amoncellement d'énormes éléments pittoresques, par un des Jordaens de Cassel ou de Munich, Le *Satyre et le Paysan*, avec leurs larges plans de lumière colorée et l'équilibre massif de leurs musculatures de cuivre rouge; ramener de Munich, encore, *Les Trois Cavaliers* de ce grand paysagiste bruxellois, Louis de Vadder, trop peu connu parmi nous.

Et quel enseignement serait pour nos jeunes peintres et nos amateurs d'art la présence au Musée de Bruxelles de l'une des œuvres importantes du vieux Breughel, dont le Musée de Vienne possède un ensemble unique; des peintures admirables où le savoir le plus vrai s'agrémente de la joie la plus saine et de la fantaisie la plus divertissante.

C'est à Vienne aussi que se trouvent, à présent, des armures et des orfèvreries, qui sont des produits merveilleux de l'art belge; et à ce sujet, on trouverait des renseignements curieux en consultant un opuscule de Ch. Piot, intitulé: *Les objets précieux emportés de Belgique en Allemagne en 1794*, objets conservés—ou fondus—par les Allemands en vertu (si l'on peut ainsi dire) de certain droit d'épave.

Il faudrait marquer encore, dans les Musées de Berlin, de Munich et de Vienne, le nombreux et imposant cortège des vastes toiles sur lesquelles Rubens faisait étaler par ses élèves l'ampleur de ses imaginations décoratives et les séries, plus charmantes, des esquisses originales aux colorations perlées; le noble défilé des effigies aristocratiques dues à l'élégant pinceau du chevalier Van Dyck; les précieux ouvrages de peinture que parachevèrent, avec un patient et fervent amour de leur art, ces maîtres fameux qui furent Jehan d'Eyck, Roger de le Pasture, Hans de Memling, Thierry Bouts, Quentin Metsys, Joachim Patenier, Henri à la Chouette, le mystérieux maître de Flémalle, et cette figure étrange de l'histoire de la peinture, Hugo van der Goes, ce génial précurseur de qui notre regretté confrère, A.J. Wauters, a pu écrire: « Dans son retable des Portinari, la fillette du donateur a déjà, en germe, la grâce ingénue et la distinction innée des enfants de Van Dyck; les saints Thomas, Antoine et Joseph, l'austérité imposante, la grandeur de lignes et les vastes têtes inspirées des évangélistes de Dürer. » Sa dernière œuvre, peut-être, fut brutalement prise à l'Espagne par le Gouvernement prussien.

On connaît l'histoire de l'acquisition de cette *Adoration des bergers* que possédait le couvent de Monforte en Espagne; le Gouvernement espagnol ayant mis opposition à l'exode de cette peinture faisant partie du patrimoine national, l'Allemagne menaça de retirer son ambassadeur si cette interdiction n'était pas levée—et l'œuvre partit pour Berlin.

Notons, en passant, ce détail—relativement—flatteur pour nous, que c'est le violent désir de posséder une œuvre réputée de notre école qui poussa le soudard arrogant à faire son geste de Prussien.

Quoique fort longue déjà, cette liste vengeresse est loin d'être complète. Mais, comme on l'a très justement formulé, il convient de laisser dans les Musées allemands des œuvres belges « pour attester notre suprématie artistique et maintenir son » influence

bienfaisante », et l'on a ajouté d'autre part: « Il ne faut pas nous borner à des reprises basées sur des raisons » d'origine et d'histoire et il est juste aussi que l'Allemagne expie encore par d'autres pertes qui l'atteindraient plus au vif dans sa propre substance, les attentats qu'elle a commis, de gaîté de cœur, contre ce qui était la vivante incarnation de l'âme de nos ancêtres. »

Pour cela il y aurait à établir une autre liste dont l'élaboration serait plus longue, car elle nécessiterait une entente entre tous les Alliés.

Certes, l'art allemand est, en général, lourd et brutal; mais, à côté des férocités de rapace nocturne d'un Mathias Grünwald, qui fait songer à cette nuit, que selon Victor Hugo la bête fauve a pour âme, il montre aussi les naïvetés fondantes d'un Stephan Lochner et les curiosités cosmopolites d'un Albert Dürer. On conserve de ce dernier, à l'Académie des Beaux-Arts de Vienne, un dessin à la plume, représentant—d'un trait rapide—un vaste panorama et portant en haut, à côté de la date 1520 et du monogramme fameux, cette précieuse inscription: « Ceci est à Bruxelles le Jardin zoologique et le pavillon, vus derrière le château. »

Ne pourrait-on (c'est un vœu personnel), en souvenir de l'admiration que le maître de Nuremberg a notée dans le journal de son séjour en notre capitale, transporter de la collection Albertine dans notre Musée ancien, l'*Étude de perdrix*, qu'il avait peinte à l'aquarelle pour son tableau *Adam et Ève*? C'est une œuvre de petit format, exquise, dans laquelle l'exactitude la plus scrupuleuse se grandit au plus haut de l'art, par une émotion respectueuse et profonde devant la Nature.

M. Marguillier est plus exigeant. « Nous n'avons pas, écrit-il, la prétention de tracer à nos conservateurs un programme qu'ils sont plus qualifiés que nous pour dresser; qu'on nous permette seulement un vœu: celui de voir régner au Louvre comme il le mérite à côté de Holbein, le grand et noble artiste de Nuremberg, qui n'eut certes pas signé, lui, comme ses tristes descendants dégénérés, un manifeste tel que celui des « quatre-vingt-treize ». Il est de lui a là Pinacothèque de Munich une œuvre puissante, qui est comme son testament artistique et spirituel: les deux panneaux où il a représenté dans la diversité de leurs caractères, *Les Quatre Apôtres*, Pierre, Jean, Marc et Paul. Ne peut-on penser que par delà la tombe, l'âme du grand Dürer frémit d'horreur à l'idée que les regards des incendiaires et des sacrilèges de Nomeny et de Gerbéviller puissent se poser encore sur ces sublimes créations de son esprit? Qu'y a-t-il de commun désormais entre eux et elles? Elles seraient certes mieux à leur place parmi ceux ni se sont faits les champions du Droit, de la Justice et de la Vérité dont elles sont les immortelles incarnations. »

> « Si le remplacement des chefs-d'œuvre détruits est impossible, écrit-il encore, si même l'équilibre est irréalisable entre les pertes subies et les réparations que nous pourrions obtenir, il n'en reste pas moins nécessaire, si l'on veut que la paix revête le caractère « sévèrement juste, impitoyablement juste » qu'elle doit avoir, que l'Allemagne expie ses crimes de lèse-civilisation. »

«A la suite du bombardement par obus incendiaires, les 6 et 7 juillet 1915, du Palais Saint-Waast à Arras, qui détruisit les collections du musée et des archives qui n'avaient pu être évacuées, la Société historique du Pas-de-Calais, douloureusement émue et indignée du barbare traitement infligé, sans l'ombre d'une raison stratégique, aux vénérables monuments d'Arras, exprimait en termes éloquents cette nécessité de l'expiation: Nous ne demandons pas de représailles; nous souhaitons quelque chose de plus haut que la vengeance qui nous mettrait au niveau de nos adversaires, quelque chose aussi de plus dur: nous réclamons l'action de la justice et le châtiment. Notre vœu le plus ardent est que les ruines accumulées par eux sur notre sol et dans nos villes, soient compensées par la saisie en Austro-Allemagne des chefs-d'œuvre qui n'appartiennent pas à l'art de cette double nation et qui, pouvant être emportés, seront attribués aux régions dévastées de la France et de la Belgique. Il faut à la face de l'univers enlever aux nouveaux barbares l'honneur de monter la garde devant les manifestations sacrées de l'idéal, comme sur le front d'une armée on dégrade un soldat qui ne mérite plus de porter les armes. »

Khnopff, Fernand, « Les compensations pour dommages artistiques, » *Bulletin de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*, 1919, 1-3, (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, séance du 6 mars 1919), 59-66.

Translation:

Compensation for Artistic Damages,
by FERNAND KHNOPFF, Member of the Academy.

A few weeks ago, we welcomed with joy the reopening of the University of Ghent.

We may congratulate ourselves on the full restoration of this glorious expression of the Belgian civilization which was carried out despite the threats of dismemberment and destruction against her by enemies and traitors.

But there is also a still more glorious manifestation of this Belgian civilization, which the current circumstances allow us to hope for a complete reconstitution.

In the Cathedral of Ghent there are no more than four of the twelve panels of the immortal altarpiece executed for this church by the brothers Hubert and Jan van Eyck-sur-Meuse.

At the end of the fourteenth century, Liège was an art center of the first order. It is there that the two painters were trained, there that they found their first protector, the Prince-Bishop John of Bavaria, and commissions and political events which led them then to Ghent and Bruges.

Therefore we proclaim them masters of the *Belgian* school, because we now need to give to the very old and very illustrious name of Belgium the premier place to which it is entitled and where we had included, improperly and too often, the denominations that divide and diminish it.

We know that under Dutch rule in 1816, ignorant and unworthy guardians sent six of the panels from the Ghent Altarpiece abroad to Germany where they became the most precious ornament of the Berlin Museum.

In October 1914, someone named Emil Schafer published in *Kunst and Künstler*, one of the most important journals of Berlin, a highly acclaimed article where one could read this:

> “In Liège and Brussels we have already rendered justice on behalf of the German Emperor. Namur is pinned down, zeppelins are crossing over Mechelen and Antwerp; in a few weeks or perhaps in a few days, the quartermaster General von Stern will announce: the Kingdom of Belgium has ceased to exist.
>
> “For the settlement of the war contribution to be required of the Belgians, we will claim not only gold coins; every city in this country was once a home of the arts; each Church a sanctuary of painting.

> "The grandsons of Van Eyck and the Rubens have retained many of the paintings that have, besides their invaluable ideal value, a material value that cannot be expressed but in millions and the fist of the conqueror will also strike on this part of the national heritage."

And this pedantic brute then methodically listed the most important pieces of the spoils to be transported from Belgium to the German museums.

> "We must have above all, he wrote, the glorious altarpiece of the Mystic Lamb of which six panels are already part of our Kaiser Friedrich Museum; two others are at the Museum in Brussels, from whence it is self-evident that they must be transported to Berlin. And the citizens of Ghent will have no right to shout sacrilege if we will also send the panels remaining at Saint Bavo to Berlin for the commemoration of our victories."

On the other hand, in this poignant book published in 1917*: War and the Works of Art in Belgium*, Baron H. Kervyn de Lettenhove cited the response of the Prime Minister of Bavaria to Baron Descamps, our Minister for Sciences and Arts, about the prospective loan of certain panels of the old Pinakothek in Munich to the Brussels exhibition of 1910:

> "The works of the great masters, he wrote, cannot be paid for with money; they may only be replaced by equivalent work. The loss of one of our panels must give us the right to take others of the same merit, to be chosen in your museums in Brussels."

There we have, posed by the Germans themselves, the principle of compensation for the artistic damage caused by their vandalism, and in an interesting article in l'*Illustration* of last January 11, Mr. Auguste Marguillier wondered how to achieve the implementation of this principle and on what basis to establish details of the ransom to which he gives the right.

He thinks that one cannot think of stripping the works of art created for them from the buildings across the Rhine and which would have no meaning for us, although that is not the same for those works in their collections which are already "uprooted," especially if our choice was for creations of our national genius or are artworks we previously owned.

Above all, to at last return to its original splendor the venerable monument of Belgian painting which is the mystical *Adoration of the Lamb*, Belgium must recover the six panels exhibited in the Berlin Museum.

We must also bring back from Berlin and Munich the four panels of Thierry Bouts, which once formed the wings of the Last Supper by this master, which escaped by a miracle from the criminal fire of the Collegiate Church of Saint-Peter in Louvain in 1914; the return from Danzig of the *Last Judgment* of Memling, which is kept at the Church of our Lady and was shipped from Bruges to Pisa by the Portinaris and had been captured en route by the Prussian pirates of the Hanseatic League; take back from Frankfurt the very

curious paintings of the so-called “Master of Flémalle,” from the Abbey of that name; replace as much as possible, the Jordaens burned at Diksmuide, this great *Adoration of the Magi*, a sumptuous pile of large picturesque elements, by one of the Jordaens from Cassel or Munich, the *Satyr and the Peasant*, with their broad planes of colored light and massive balance of their copper red muscle; and take back from Munich *The Three Horsemen* of the great Brussels landscapist, Louis de Vadder, who is too little known among us.

And what an education would it be for our young painters and our art lovers to have present at the Brussels Museum of Art one of the important works of the elder Breughel, of which the Museum of Vienna has a unique set; admirable paintings where truest knowledge is complemented the most healthy joy and most entertaining fantasy.

It is in Vienna where the armor and the silverware, which are wonderful products of Belgian art, are now found; and in this regard, we would find curious information by consulting a Ch. Piot pamphlet, entitled: *Precious Objects taken from Belgium in Germany in 1794*, works kept—or melted—by the Germans in virtue (so to speak) of a certain right of salvage.

It must be noted again that in the museums of Berlin, Munich and Vienna, the numerous and impressive procession of large canvases on which Rubens and his students displayed the magnitude of his decorative imagination and the most charming series of original sketches with pearly colorations; the noble parade of aristocratic portraits due to the elegant brush of the knighted Van Dyck; the valuable works of painting that were forged with a patient and fervent love of their art, these famous masters who were Jehan d’Eyck, Roger van der Weyden, Hans Memling, Thierry Bouts, Quentin Metsys, Joachim Patenier, Henri à la Chouette, the mysterious Master of Flémalle, and this strange figure in the history of painting, Hugo van der Goes, this awesome precursor about whom our late colleague, A.J. Wauters, could write: “In his Portinari altarpiece, the daughter of the donor has already the germ of the ingenuous grace and innate distinction of the children of Van Dyck; saints Thomas, Anthony and Joseph are of imposing austerity, and the grandeur of their lines and large heads inspired the evangelists of Dürer.” His last work, perhaps, was brutally taken from Spain by the Prussian government.

We know the story of the acquisition of the *Adoration of the Shepherds* that had been owned by the convent of Monforte in Spain; the Spanish Government having raised opposition to the exodus of this painting as part of the national heritage, Germany threatened to withdraw its Ambassador if the ban was not lifted—and the work moved to Berlin.

Note, in passing, that—relatively—flattering detail for us, it is the violent desire to possess a work deemed to be of our school that prompted the arrogant boor to make his Prussian gesture.

Although quite long already, this avenging list is far from complete. But, as one has rightly put it, Belgian works should be allowed to remain in German museums “to

demonstrate our artistic supremacy and maintain their "beneficial influence;" and on the other hand one has added: "We should not simply limit ourselves to reprisals based on reasons of origin and history and it is just that the Germany still atones by other losses which would reach it more deeply in its own substance, for the attacks she has committed with light hearts against what was the living embodiment of the soul of our ancestors."

For this there would have be to established another list whose elaboration would be longer, as it would require an agreement between all the Allies.

Certainly, German art is heavy and brutal in general; but, next to the ferocities of such a nocturnal raptor as Mathias Grünwald, who makes one dream of the night which a wild animal has for a soul according to Victor Hugo, it shows also the melting naiveties of a Stephan Lochner and cosmopolitan curiosities of an Albert Dürer. Of the latter is preserved at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts a pen drawing representing—with a quick stroke—a vast panorama and bearing at the top, beside the date 1520 and his famous monogram, this valuable inscription: "This is the Brussels zoological garden and pavilion, seen behind the castle."

Could we not (it is a personal wish), in remembrance of the admiration that the master of Nuremberg noted in the journal of his stay in our capital, transport to our Museum of Ancient Art the *Study of a Partridge* from the Albertina collection that he painted in watercolor for his panel *Adam and Eve*? It is a small, exquisite work in which the most scrupulous accuracy rises to the highest level of art, with a respectful and profound emotion before Nature.

Mr. Marguillier is more demanding. "We have not, he wrote, the pretension to outline for our curators a program that they are more qualified than us to prepare; if we are allowed only one wish: it would be to see the great and noble artist from Nuremberg reign in the Louvre next to Holbein as he deserves, who certainly had not signed, as did his sad degenerate descendants, a manifesto such as that of the "ninety-three." There is a powerful work by him in the Pinakothek in Munich, which is in a sense his artistic and spiritual testament: the two panels in which he represented *The Four Apostles*, Peter, John, Mark and Paul in the diversity of their characters. Can we not imagine that beyond the grave the soul of the great Dürer shuddered with horror at the idea that the incendiaries and sacrileges of Nomeny and Gerbéviller can still pose on these sublime creations of his mind? What does he now have in common with them? They would certainly be better placed among those who were the champions of Law, Justice and Truth, of which they are the immortal incarnations.

"If replacement of the destroyed masterpieces is impossible, he writes, if even the balance is impracticable between losses and repairs that we could get, there is not less necessary, if that peace is "severely just, ruthlessly just" character that it must have, that the Germany expiates its crimes of against civilization."

"Following the bombing by incendiary shells, on 6 and July 7, 1915, of the Palace Saint-Waast at Arras which destroyed the collections of the museum and archives

which could not be evacuated, the historical society of the Pas-de-Calais, painfully moved and outraged by the barbarous treatment inflicted without a shadow of a strategic reason to the venerable monuments of Arras, expressed in eloquent terms this need for atonement: We ask no reprisals; we want something higher than the revenge which would lower us to the level of our adversaries, something even harder: we are calling for the action of justice and punishment. Our most fervent wish is that the ruins accumulated by them on our soil and in our cities, will be compensated by the seizure in Austro-Germany of the masterpieces that do not belong to the art of this double nation and which, having been imported, will be attributed to the regions devastated in France and Belgium. It is necessary in the face of the universe to remove from the new barbarians the honor of keeping guard before the sacred manifestations of the ideal, as at the front of an army one degrades a soldier who no longer deserves to bear arms."

Khnopff, Fernand, « Motion, » *Bulletin de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*, n° 4-6, (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, séance du 3 avril 1919), 72-73.

Motion

M. Khnopff fait la motion suivante: “La Belgique a eu l’honneur de faire naitre de grands écrivains qui, ayant eu le bonheur de pouvoir s’exprimer dans un langue universelle, ont été places par l’admiration de leurs confrères au premier rang de la littérature contemporaine, il en est même, je ne citerai que Verhaeren et Maeterlinck, qui dominant les lettres de ce temps, et nous pouvons ajouter, avec fierté, que nous en avons d’autres qui les valent.—On pourrait croire qu’il n’existe en Belgique aucun organisme official qui puisse accueillir leur gloire, et, à présent plus que jamais, ce serait absolument inexcusable. Notre Compagnie était, à ses débuts, une société littéraire d’expression française. Plus tard, elle comprit une Classe des belles-lettres. Aujourd’hui, dans la Classe de lettres, une majorité d’historiens et de professeurs parait avoir systématiquement fermé les portes aux artistes créateurs. Mais la place de ceux-ci n’est-elle pas plutôt parmi nous, à côté des créateurs de la musique, de l’architecture, de la sculpture, de la peinture et de gravure, et n’est-ce pas par suite d’une interprétation étroite d’un texte mal formulé, qu’ils ne peuvent être admis dans la Classe des beaux-arts? Nos aimables confrères Solvay et Le Nain, qui connaissent comme personne les traditions de notre Compagnie, ne pourraient-ils nous donner quelques renseignements à ce sujet?”

M. Solvay propose simplement de porter la question à l'ordre du jour de l'assemblée générale prochaine, sous la forme de réintégration dans la Classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques des littérateurs créateurs. En cas d'insuccès de la proposition, la création d'une nouvelle Section des belles-lettres dans la Classe des beaux-arts serait envisagée ou même proposée.

Cet objet figurera donc à l'ordre du jour de la prochaine assemblée plénière des trois Classes.

Khnopff, Fernand, « Motion, » *Bulletin de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*, n° 4-6, (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, séance du 3 avril 1919), 72-73.

Translation:

Motion

Mr. Khnopff made the following motion: “Belgium has had the honour to give birth to great writers who, being fortunate to be able to express themselves in a universal language, have been placed by the admiration of their colleagues at the forefront of contemporary literature, even so I will cite only Verhaeren and Maeterlinck, who dominate the literature of this time, and we can add with pride that we have others who are also worthy.—You would think it would be absolutely inexcusable, now more than ever, if there was no official body that can accommodate their glory in Belgium. Our company was in its beginning a literary society of French expression. Later, it included a Belles-Lettres class. Today, in the literary class, a majority of historians and teachers seems to have systematically closed the doors to creative artists. But is not their proper place here among us, beside the creators of music, architecture, sculpture, painting and engraving, and is it not the result of a narrow interpretation of a poorly formulated text, that they cannot be admitted to the class of fine arts? Our kind colleagues Solvay and Le Nain, who know better than anyone the traditions of our company, can they not give us some information on this topic?”

Mr. Solvay simply proposes to bring the issue to the agenda of the next general meeting, in the form of reintegration of creative writers into the Class of Letters and Moral and Political Sciences. In case of failure of the proposal, the creation of a new section of literature in the Class of Fine Arts would be considered or even proposed.

This object will therefore be on the agenda of the next plenary meeting of the three Classes.

Khnopff, Fernand, « Paroles liminaires, » in *Bulletin de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*, 1919, 7-12 (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, 1920), 165-169.

(Séance du 16 octobre 1919)

Paroles Liminaires

Excellence,
Messieurs,

> Léonard de Vinci, miroir profond et sombre
> Où des anges charmants, avec un doux souris
> Tout chargé de mystère, apparaissent dans l'ombre
> Des glaciers et des pins qui ferment leur pays.

Ainsi s'exprima Baudelaire, et c'est l'évocation—exquise et parfaite—de ces peintures merveilleuses qui sont la gloire du Louvre : la *Joconde*, la *Vierge aux rochers*, *Sainte Anne*, le *Précurseur*.

Parmi les tableaux du Maître, la *Joconde* paraît être l'image la plus définitive de son génie. On a dit que ce portrait d'une dame napolitaine devrait être nommé Notre-Dame du Louvre ; c'est la plus grande dame du monde, celle qui reçoit immédiatement les hommages de tous les hommes civilisés.

Quand la *Monna Lisa* disparut du Salon carré, l'émotion fut universelle : artistes et savants se sentaient également frappés; la foule elle-même s'inquiétait, comprenant vaguement que cet attentat contre une œuvre aussi supérieure était un crime de lèse-humanité, et quelqu'un rappela cette parole : « Une vertu se retire du monde lorsqu'un chef-d'œuvre se perd. »

Certes, au temps de cet essor fabuleux de la civilisation italienne, d'autres personnalités éminentes des arts et des sciences avaient collaboré avec le Vinci à l'édification de ce temple idéal consacré au culte de la Beauté ; mais si quelques-unes d'entre elles avait surpassé les autres, aucune n'avait—comme lui—fait admirer la plénitude harmonieuse du génie humain.

Léonard est plus qu'un grand artiste et qu'un grand savant; c'est l'homme à qui rien de ce qui est humain n'est étranger et qui ne s'appuie sur le Savoir que pour s'élever plus haut encore, et comme l'a écrit Gabriel Séailles, son fervent historien :

« Il est l'homme unique, le plus bel exemplaire, peut-être, que l'humanité, dans le long effort qui l'élève vers l'esprit, se soit présenté à elle-même.

» Il y a, avons-nous dit un jour, pour l'artiste digne de ce nom, des récompenses très hautes, et, après le bonheur divin d'avoir pu créer son œuvre, la plus haute c'est se sentir compris par ses égaux et croire—par l'effort de son expression sincère—prolonger sa courte existence dans celle de l'immense univers. »

Telle fut, telle est la destinée du maître de la *Cène*.

Charmés par la beauté de son corps et la splendeur de son esprit, ses contemporains l'ont considéré comme un prodige de la Nature et c'est avec une émotion presque religieuse que Vasari commence la biographie du grand peintre :

« On voit, écrit-il, les plus grands dons pleuvoir par influences célestes dans les corps humains, on voit se ramasser sans mesure en un seul corps la beauté, la grâce et le talent, et cela à tel point que de quelque côté que se tourne cet homme, il fait connaître à l'évidence qu'il agit par un don de Dieu et non par un effort de l'art humain. C'est là ce que virent les hommes en Léonard de Vinci. »

Parmi ces dons innombrables, le Maître pouvait compter des talents qui devaient irrésistiblement séduire les hommes de son temps et plaire même à la foule.

Improvisateur charmant, organisateur habile de pompeux cortèges et d'ingénieuses surprises, il était de toutes les fêtes ; les princes se disputaient sa présence, comme les amateurs ses travaux et les artistes ses conseils.

La *Cène*, la statue équestre de Milan, le carton de Florence étaient exposés à l'admiration de tous.

Ces chefs-d'œuvre n'existent plus, et cependant c'est d'aujourd'hui, c'est de demain peut-être que datera la vraie gloire de Léonard : tous les efforts sont, à présent, consacrés à l'étude de ses manuscrits, montrant le penseur et l'artiste confondus en une seule unité, qui paraît d'autant plus haute et plus belle qu'elle est mieux comprise.

Durant de longs temps, ces manuscrits avaient été jugés indéchiffrables. Leur signification se dégage peu à peu et fait constater une invraisemblable diversité d'occupations.

« Sa vie, écrivait un contemporain, est à ce point variée et indéterminée qu'il semble vivre au jour le jour. »

Mais la supériorité du Maître se manifeste par sa façon de diriger, avec la sensibilité de l'artiste, les spécialités du savant vers les principes essentiels. Science et art ne font qu'un pour lui ; dans ces deux produits de la pensée humaine, il voit le travail de la seule invention. Il sait que l'imagination est le moteur de tout progrès scientifique, comme le facteur de toute réalisation esthétique, et que le vrai savant est, comme le grand artiste, un créateur.

Si les yeux du peintre de la *Joconde* ont fixé les beautés de la vie terrestre avec une précision éthérée qui semble une exquise jouissance, son âme se sentait attirée par le mystère éternel de l'univers infini; et c'est non seulement à cause de son activité multiforme, capable d'aller de tous les genres d'art à toutes les sortes de sciences, mais aussi à cause de la forme de son intellectualité, que Léonard représente mieux que personne cette lumineuse période d'humanisme qui a vu s'organiser, après tant de siècles de destruction et de désordre, la restauration de la juste puissance du Savoir.

Léonard de Vinci est l'emblème de la Renaissance.

Le visionnaire opiomane Thomas de Quincey disait que aux seuls mots de *consul romanus* apparaissaient à son esprit les aspects grandioses de l'histoire romaine : l'autorité des chefs, vêtus des plis augustes de la toge et escortés des licteurs aux faisceaux imposants; les luttes oratoires du Forum et du Sénat; la marche des légions victorieuses vers les extrémités du monde.

Sans l'excitation morbide de la drogue funeste, à ce mot « la Renaissance », des images splendides surgissent devant nous et se développent harmonieusement,—souvenirs soudains d'œuvres, de reproductions et de descriptions célèbres,—et bientôt ces visions s'ordonnent en une procession idéale, d'allure magnifique et sacrée, au cours de laquelle se confondent le faste impérial des princes tyrans et la pompe sacerdotale des souverains pontifes. Rythmée par les chants des tribunes et les cloches des tours, elle se déroule majestueusement par de larges avenues et de vastes places, bordées de palais et d'églises, où s'érige le marbre clair des colonnades et s'étale le décor coloré des fresques et des mosaïques.

Le spectacle est superbe; partout s'admirent la beauté des nobles visages et des fières attitudes, l'ample somptuosité des vêlements et des accessoires. C'est l'orgueilleux éclat de l'or, le relief nerveux du bronze, les luisants hautains de l'acier; c'est l'opulence des brocarts, la profondeur des velours, les caresses des soies et des satins et les nuances infinies du carmin, de la pourpre et de l'azur. C'est encore la fantaisie ingénieuse des harnachements et des attelages, la structure élégante et hardie des dais et des chars où trônent des chefs-d'œuvre; c'est le luxe exalté des bannières et des cartels où se déploient, comme un vol de génies, des noms illustres, lumineux comme des phares.

Partout rayonne une intense joie de vivre.

> Et sur ce grand bonheur, le ciel en fête courbe
> L'éblouissement bleu de son arc triomphal.

Enfin, dans un suprême effort de splendeur vers la gloire, le cortège se grandit et s'élève en apothéose, salué par la clameur immense de millions de spectateurs s'unissant en un cri : Vive l'Italie!

Khnopff, Fernand, « Paroles liminaires, » in *Bulletin de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*, 1919, 7-12 (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, 1920), 165-169.

(Séance du 16 octobre 1919)

Translation:

Preliminary Remarks

Excellency,
Gentlemen.

> Leonardo da Vinci, deep and dark mirror
> Where charming angels, with a soft smile
> All charged with mystery, appear in the shadow
> Of the glaciers and pine trees that enclose their country.

Thus spoke Baudelaire, and it is the evocation—exquisite and perfect—of these wonderful paintings that are the glory of the Louvre: the *Mona Lisa*, the *Virgin of the Rocks*, *Sainte Anne*, and *John the Baptist*.

Among the paintings of the master, the *Mona Lisa* appears to be the definitive image of his genius. It has been said that this portrait of a Neapolitan lady should be named Notre-Dame du Louvre; this is Lady of the world, one that immediately receives the homage of all civilized men.

When the *Mona Lisa* disappeared from the *Salon carré* of the Louvre, the emotion was universal: artists and scientists alike felt stricken; the crowd itself was concerned, comprehending vaguely that this attack against such a superior work was a crime against humanity, and someone recalled these words: “a virtue withdraws from the world when a masterpiece is lost.”

Certainly, at the time of this fabulous flight of Italian civilization, other eminent personalities of the arts and sciences had collaborated with da Vinci in the building of this ideal temple dedicated to the cult of beauty; but if some of them had surpassed the others, none had—like him—caused us to admire the harmonious fullness of human genius.

Leonardo is more than a great artist and a great scholar; he is the man to whom nothing which is human is foreign and who does not rely on knowledge to rise higher still, and as Gabriel Séailles, his fervent historian wrote:

“He is the unique human, perhaps the most exemplary that humanity, in the long effort to elevate itself towards the spiritual, has presented to itself.

“There are,” we said one day, “for the artist worthy of the name, high rewards, and after the divine joy to have been able to create his works, the highest is to feel understood by his equals and to believe—by the effort of his sincere expression—that he has prolonged his short existence in the vast universe.”

Such was, such is, the destiny of the master of the *Last Supper*.

Charmed by the beauty of his body and the splendour of his spirit, his contemporaries regarded him as a prodigy of Nature and it is with an almost religious emotion that Vasari begins the biography of the great painter:

“One sees, he wrote, the greatest gifts rain down by celestial influences in human bodies, one sees them gathered without measure in one body the beauty, grace and talent, and this to such point that whatever side that this man turns, he makes it clearly known that it is a gift of God, not an effort to human art. This is what men saw in Leonardo da Vinci. »

Among these countless gifts, the master could count talents which irresistibly seduced the men of his time and even pleased the crowd.

Charming improviser, skilled organizer of formal processions and ingenious surprises, he designed all feasts; princes vied for his presence, as art-lovers vied for his works and artists for his advice.

The *Last Supper*, the equestrian statue of Milan, the cartoon of Florence [*The Battle of Anghiari*] were revealed to the admiration of all.

These masterpieces no longer exist, and nevertheless it is from today, or perhaps from tomorrow, that the true glory of Leonardo will date: all efforts are now devoted to the study of his manuscripts which show the thinker and the artist combined in a single unity, which seems even more elevated and more beautiful as it is better understood.

For a long time these manuscripts were considered to be indecipherable. Their meaning has emerged gradually and established an incredible diversity of occupations.

“His life, wrote a contemporary, is so varied and indefinite that he seems to live day by day.”

But the superiority of the master is manifested by his way of directing, with the sensitivity of the artist, the specialities of the scientist to essential principles. Science and art are one for him; in these two products of the human mind, he sees the workings of a single invention. He knows that imagination is the engine of scientific progress, as the factor of any aesthetic achievement, and that the true scientist is, like the great artist, a creator.

If the vision of the painter of the *Mona Lisa* has fixed the beauties of life on Earth with such ethereal precision that seems an exquisite enjoyment, his soul felt attracted to the eternal mystery of the infinite universe; and it is not only because of his multifaceted activity, able to explore all kinds of art and all kinds of science, but also because of the shape of his intellectuality, that Leonardo represents better than anyone this luminous

period of humanism which saw to organize, after so many centuries of destruction and disorder, the restoration of the right power of Knowledge.

Leonardo da Vinci is the emblem of the Renaissance.

The visionary opium addict Thomas de Quincey said that just the words *consul romanus* made the grandiose aspects of Roman history appear in his mind: the authority of the chiefs, dressed in the august folds of the robes and escorted by the lictors with towering *fasces*; the oratorical struggles of the Forum and the Senate; the march of victorious legions to the ends of the world.

Without the morbid excitement of a fatal drug, this word “Renaissance,” causes splendid images to rise up before us and develop harmoniously,—sudden memories of works, reproductions and famous descriptions,—and soon these visions are ordered in an ideal procession both magnificent and sacred in which the imperial splendour of the tyrant princes and the sacred pomp of the high priests merges. Punctuated by chants from the tribunes and the bells of the towers, it unfolds majestically through wide avenues and large squares, bordered by palaces and churches, where the clear marble colonnades stand and the colorful décor of frescos and mosaics spreads.

The spectacle is superb; everywhere the beauty of noble faces and proud attitudes is to be admired, along with the ample sumptuousness of the clothing and accessories. It is the proud brilliance of gold, nervous relief of bronze, the haughty glow of steel; it is the opulence of brocades, the depth of the velvet, the caresses of silks and of satins and the infinite shades of carmine, purple and the azure. It is even in the ingenious fantasy of harnesses and hitches, the bold and elegant structure of the dais and chariots where its masterpieces parade; it is the exalted luxury banners and cartels where unfold, like a flight of geniuses, illustrious names, bright as beacons.

Everywhere radiates an intense joy of life.

> And on this delight, the sky in festival curve
> The blue glare of his triumphal arch.

Finally, in a supreme effort from splendor to glory, the procession grows and rises in apotheosis, hailed by the immense clamor of millions of spectators joining in a shout: Long Live Italy!

Khnopff, Fernand, « A propos de l'édification d'une Salle d'exposition à Bruxelles, » *Bulletin de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*, 1919, 7-12 (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, Séance du 4 décembre 1919, 1920), 219-220.

A propos de l'édification d'une Salle d'exposition à Bruxelles,
par FERNAND KHNOPFF, membre de l'Académie.

MESSIEURS,

Vous savez que depuis quelques jours l'édification d'une salle d'exposition—confiée à notre confrère Horta—a été officiellement décidée.

La plus grande partie de l'étude dont vous aviez bien voulu autoriser la lecture en cette séance est donc devenue inutile, si j'ose ainsi parler.—

Cependant, je demande encore la parole aujourd'hui, car je désire vivement attirer votre attention sur un détail important de cette question si complexe des expositions : l'organisation d'un salon national annuel dans la capitale.

En juin 1904 , la *Tribune Artistique* de Gand publiait un referendum « sur la réformation des jurys aux triennales ».

Invité à y prendre part, j'insistai sur ce point qu'il est très difficile, autant pour les collectionneurs belges que pour les étrangers, de juger notre école dans son ensemble : les salons triennaux n'ayant plus l'importance d'autrefois, et le manque de locaux faisant que dans la capitale les salons de cercles ne peuvent avoir lieu simultanément. Je proposai de conserver les salons triennaux pour Gand, Anvers et Liège, en accentuant leur caractère local, et d'avoir à Bruxelles un grand salon annuel, ouvert en même temps que les salons de Paris et de Londres, ce qui permettrait la visite des étrangers « magnifiques » qu'attirent ces « foires aux huiles » (comme on disait alors); et pour la disposition des salles , je préconisai le système des grandes expositions internationales et quatriennales de Munich , où sont réunis des groupes indépendants et pour ainsi dire « responsables ».

Le directeur de la *Tribune* voulut bien écrire que « cette idée méritait de fixer l'attention ».

Puis, en 1907, il fit paraître un numéro de propagande, dédié à MM. les artistes et présidents des cercles d'art, dans lequel était « posé le problème et exposées les données paraissant résumer tous les aléas des triennales actuelles ».

Ainsi qu'il advient souvent de ces campagnes de presse, avec les années qui passaient, disparut le souvenir de ces fortes résolutions.

L'édification d'une salle est donc décidée à présent ; mais, le temps irréparable fuit ; la construction de ce nouvel édifice sera de longue durée et déjà s'annonce pour le printemps prochain la venue de nombreux visiteurs étrangers.

Aussi, l’utilisation d’ un local existant peut encore être mise à l’étude, et c’est pourquoi j’ai cru pouvoir présenter de nouveau l’ idée que j’avais émise autrefois, d’autant plus que nous avons l’honneur—notre aimable confrère M. Verlant me permettra d’ ajouter : et le plaisir—de compter parmi nous le directeur général des Beaux-arts, dont la compétence et l’autorité détermineront aisément la somme de possibilités de ces desiderata.

Dans sa brochure, le directeur de la Tribune étudie de près le système du placement par groupes et répond à toutes les objections ; je ne m’attarderai donc pas en ce moment à traiter ce sujet. Je me permettrai seulement d’insister encore sur le point du salon national annuel et j’espère vivement sa réalisation possible dès le printemps prochain, dans l’intérêt supérieur de l’art belge, dont il montrera équitablement les diverses expressions.



Victor Horta: Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, 1922-29. Recent photograph by ed..

Khnopff, Fernand, « A propos de l'édification d'une Salle d'exposition à Bruxelles, » *Bulletin de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*, 1919, 7-12 (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, Séance du 4 décembre 1919, 1920), 219-220.

Translation:

Regarding the Construction of an Exhibition Hall in Brussels

GENTLEMEN,

You are aware that several days ago the construction of an exhibition hall—entrusted to our colleague Horta—has been officially decided.

The largest part of the study which you kindly allowed for this meeting has therefore become unnecessary, if I may say so.—

However, I ask to speak again today because I strongly wish to draw your attention to a detail of this complex question of exhibitions: the organization of an annual national salon in the capital.

In June 1904, the Ghent *Tribune Artistique* published a referendum "on the reformation of the juries at the triennial salons."

Invited to take part, I insisted on the point that it is very difficult for Belgian collectors as well as for foreigners to judge our school as a whole: the triennial salons no longer have the importance they had in the past, and the lack of premises in the capital makes it impossible for the salons of clubs to take place simultaneously. I proposed to retain the three Salons for Ghent, Antwerp and Liège, highlighting their local character, and to have in Brussels a great annual salon, to open at the same time as the salons of Paris and London, which would allow the visit of "magnificent" foreigners attract these 'fairs for oils"(as they were called); and for the layout of the rooms, I recommended the system of major international exhibitions and quadrennials from Munich, where independent groups were united with the so-called "responsibles."

The Director of the *Tribune* wrote that "this idea deserves attention."

Then, in 1907, he published a issue of propaganda, dedicated to the artists and presidents of art clubs, which posed "the problem and exposed the facts which appear to summarize all the vagaries of the current triennials."

As often happens to these press campaigns, with the years passing, the memory of these strong resolutions disappeared.

The construction of a hall is therefore decided now; but time is irreparably fleeting; the construction of this new building will take a long time and the arrival of many foreign visitors for next spring is already announced.

Also, the use of an existing site may still be considered, and that is why I thought to be able to resubmit the suggestion that I had once put forward, especially since we have

the honour—and our friendly colleague Mr. Verlant will allow me to add: and the pleasure—to count among us the Executive Director of Fine Arts, whose competence and authority will easily determine the sum of possibilities of these wishes.

In his brochure, the director of the *Tribune* closely studied the system of placement by groups and responded to all objections; therefore I will not delay at this time to treat with this subject. I would like only to insist again on the point of the annual national show and I hope for its possible realization next spring, in the best interests of Belgian art, of which it will equitably show diverse expressions.

F. K., “Studio-Talk. Brussels,” *The Studio*, 78, 320, (Nov. 1919), 80-81.

BRUSSELS.—If the terrible years of German occupation condemned the majority of the artists of Belgium to inactivity, there were, nevertheless, a few of them who were able to continue their work, and prominent among these is the sculptor Godefroid Devreese, of this city. Circumstances compelled him, so to speak, to specialize in medal work. Examples of his pre-war productions have been reproduced in THE STUDIO from time to time, and his recent work shows that he has lost none of his characteristic qualities.

Under the title “Souvenir de Guerre,” an exhibition has lately been held at the Palais d'Egmont (formerly known as the Palais d'Arenberg) in Brussels, which comprised numerous sections of all kinds, from the fine arts to the debris of military equipment. In the hall, which at one time formed the famous Arenberg Gallery, there was displayed the collection of etchings, dry-points, aquatints, woodcuts, and lithographs presented to Belgium by Mr. Frank Brangwyn, R.A. To readers of THE STUDIO, in the successive volumes of which the career of the master may be followed, it is quite unnecessary to extol Mr. Brangwyn's achievements in their many and varied aspects. All through the war he manifested his ardent sympathy with Belgium, and particularly with those of her artists who took refuge in England. To M. Paul Lambotte, who during the war carried on his functions as Director of Fine Arts in London, he one day announced his intention of offering to Belgium a collection similar to that which he had offered to France. The exhibition of this magnificent gift in the old Arenberg Gallery has been the event of the season.

F.K.



“Three Friends of Belgium” (Mr. Brand Whitlock, President Wilson, and Mr. Hoover).
Medals by Godefroid Devreese

1920

Khnopff, Fernand, « Note bibliographique, » in *Bulletin de la Classe des Beaux-Arts,* 1920, 1-3, (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, séance du 4 mars, 1920), 19.

Note bibliographique

J'ai l'honneur de présenter à la Classe les premiers volumes de la collection d'études des Grands Belges, fondée par M. Eug. Bacha, conservateur des manuscrits à la Bibliothèque royale de Belgique. Cette collection fera connaitre, en dehors de tout esprit de parti, la vie et l'œuvre de ceux de nos compatriotes qui se sont illustrés dans le domaine de la science, des beaux-arts, de la littérature et de la politique.

Les volumes parus ont été consacrés à E. Verhaeren, C. Meunier, G. Gezelle, A. Quetelet, R. de Lassus, T. Vinçotte, J. Dillens, E. Demolder, S. E. le Cardinal Mercier, A. Wiertz, G. Demarteau.

D'autres paraitront incessamment, consacrés à A. Giraud, C. Franck, M. Maeterlinck, G. Rodenbach et J. Jordaens.

J'ai l'honneur de vous proposer d'adresser à M. E. Bacha les remerciements de la Classe pour son gracieux envoi, nos félicitations pour sa patriotique initiative et nos souhaits pour le succès de son entreprise.

F. Khnopff

Khnopff, Fernand, « Note bibliographique, » in *Bulletin de la Classe des Beaux-Arts,* 1920, 1-3, (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, séance du 4 mars, 1920), 19.

Translation:

Bibliographic Note

I have the honour to present to the class the first volumes of the collection of the studies of the Great Belgians, founded by Mr. Eug. Bacha, curator of manuscripts in the Royal Library of Belgium. This collection will make known, with no partisan bias, the life and work of those of our compatriots who have distinguished themselves in the field of science, fine arts, literature and politics.

The volumes which have appeared have been devoted to E. Verhaeren, C. Meunier, G. Gezelle, A. Quetelet, R. de Lassus, T. Vinçotte, J. Dillens, E. Demolder, His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, A. Wiertz, G. Demarteau.

Others will appear shortly, dedicated to A. Giraud, C. Franck, M. Maeterlinck, G. Rodenbach and J. Jordaens.

I have the honour to offer to Mr. E. Bacha the gratitude of the class for this gracious envoy, our congratulations for his patriotic initiative and our wishes for the success of his enterprise.

F. Khnopff

Khnopff, Fernand, « L'architecture verte, » in *Bulletin de la Classe des Beaux-Arts,* 1920, 4-5, (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, séance du 8 avril, 1920), 25-29.

(Séance du 8 avril 1920.)

L 'architecture verte

par Fernand KHNOPFF, membre de la Classe

Je me promenais un jour dans une de ces avenues ornementées d'arbres, dont les branches, d'un côté, arrêtent le passage des hauts véhicules ; de l'autre, pénètrent dans les chambres des habitations riveraines, et le souvenir m'apparut d'un amusant dessin de Marcellin, le fondateur de la *Vie parisienne*, ce délicieux journal à qui des esprits chagrins reprochent de demander trop souvent ses maximes à des dames de la même provenance.

Ce dessin ridiculisait la disproportion que l'on constate fréquemment dans les miniatures du moyen âge entre les édifices et les êtres humains.

On y voyait des personnages aux vêtements étriqués et aux gestes anguleux enjamber sans peine les pignons dentelés et compliqués parmi lesquels ils déambulaient, et la légende portait :

«Dans ces sacrées miniatures, on ne sait jamais si ce sont les bonshommes qui se promènent dans la ville ou la ville dans les bonshommes."

A voir certains effets de l'arboriculture urbaine, on peut dire aussi qu'on ne sait pas si ce sont les jardins qui s'étalent dans la cité, ou la cité dans les jardins.

L'histoire de ces végétations municipales est connue. Cela commence par l'enfoncement, dans un sol nouveau-riche, de deux pieux d'inégale longueur, unis par des liens solides et efficacement protégés contre les indiscrétions probables des passants par une forte clôture de fils de fer barbelés. Le plus long de ces pieux est surmonté de quelques virgules verdâtres qui représentent ou, pour mieux dire, suggèrent la possibilité de futures et lointaines frondaisons.

Les années passent, les lustres s'éteignent, les générations se succèdent. Le pieu le plus court (le tuteur) a été enlevé. L'autre s'est développé; il est devenu un arbuste sympathique : il grandit, il s'étend.

Aux premières tiédeurs du printemps, il s'entoure d'une légère fumée verte - selon l'expression charmante d'un très jeune poète - et il réjouit doucement les regards des promeneurs.

Déjà son feuillage accorde une ombre agréable durant les chaleurs pesantes de l'été.

Les citadins imprévoyants trouvent auprès de lui un abri contre les averses automnationales (eût dit Jules Laforgue), et lorsque vient le triste hiver, il offre l'appui de ses branches aux fragiles fantaisies décoratives de la neige.

Il y a, alors, dans la vie de cet être, un apogée que les oiseaux (ses hôtes) célèbrent avec magnificence.

Il est artiste : il contribue, par sa juste proportion, à un ensemble harmonieux, produit par la collaboration de l'œuvre humaine—l'architecture environnante—et la Nature—avec majuscule—inconsciente et organisée.

Hélas ! ce triomphe est court. L'arbre grandit encore, mais son développement devient excessif; il dépasse vraiment la mesure : ses branchages, aux allures arrogantes, s'avancent indiscrètement jusqu'aux fenêtres voisines et font régner dans les appartements une obscurité perpétuelle. L'encombrement est notoire. Les protestations s'élèvent, violentes, et, au son des acclamations de délivrance, le trop bel arbre est impitoyablement abattu.

Comme il avait été décidé autrefois d'orner d'arbres cette avenue, peu de temps après la terrible exécution (ainsi que dans l'histoire fameuse de certain petit navire), on recommence à enfoncer, dans un sol nouvellement enrichi, deux pieux d'inégale longueur.

Mais passons du plaisant au sévère.

La critique est aisée, dit-on ; dans ce cas-ci, il eût été fort aisé de l'éviter. Il est certain qu'à un instant précis les proportions des arbres en question s'accordaient avec celles des constructions parallèles et qu'il était possible, alors, de déterminer un effet décoratif, *une fois pour toutes*, au lieu de l'attendre pendant de longs temps et de le regretter ensuite.

Il suffirait pour cela d'établir une armature métallique, en forme d'arceau ou de portique, dont la disposition et l'armement seraient appropriés aux convenances diverses et sur laquelle croîtraient des plantes grimpantes, qui, à chaque renouveau, donneraient, en quelques jours, l'effet définitif soigneusement prévu.

Je n'insiste pas, car nous avons l'honneur de compter parmi nous des autorités dont la compétence retiendra de cette proposition ce qui pourrait être intéressant pour le complément réciproque de l'architecture de pierre et de l'*architecture verte*.

Le mot est de Delille.

Lorsque, vers 1700, le Roi Soleil eut tari les sources de plaisir du grand Trianon, il rayonna sur Marly, où Mansart et Lenôtre dépensèrent les trésors de leur génie.

> C'est là, chante Delille, que tout est grand, que l'art n'est point timide;
> Là tout est enchanté, c'est le palais d' Armide,
> C'est le jardin d'Alcide ou plutôt d'un héros,
> Noble dans sa retraite et grand dans son repos.
> Voyez-vous et les eaux et la terre et les bois,
> Subjugués à leur tour, obéir à ses lois;
> A ces douze palais d'élégante structure
> Ces arbres marier leur verte architecture,

Ces bronzes respirer, ces fleuves suspendus
A gros bouillons d'écume, à grands flots descendus.
Tomber, se prolonger dans des canaux superbes,
Là s'épancher en nappe, ici monter en gerbes?
... Tout bosquet est un temple et tout marbre est un dieu;
Et Louis, respirant du fracas des conquêtes,
Semble avoir invité tout l'Olympe à ses fêtes.

Louis XIV eût goûté l'emphase de ces vers comme il avait apprécié la majestueuse ordonnance de Marly, où la disposition du jardin était merveilleuse.

Mais le chef-d'œuvre de Lenôtre est Versailles.

En détailler ici les splendeurs serait, au moins, impertinent.

Qu'il nous soit permis, cependant, de rappeler le souvenir de l'émotion qu'on y ressent d'une beauté toute d'éléments humains, beauté d'architecture, faisant œuvre d'art des bois, des eaux et des nuages, aussi bien que des marbres et des bronzes.

« Les fleurs et les arbres, le gazon ou le sable des allées et les eaux vives ou dormantes des bassins obéissaient à la même loi que les pierres du grand édifice. Nulle part, à une époque où l'architecture (comme il devrait toujours être) tient le pas sur les autres arts, on ne vit plus éclatant exemple du servage de la nature.[11] »

Ainsi que le faisait remarquer M. Riat, dans *l'Art des jardins*, en écrivant : « C'est en Italie que les architectes de Louis XIV prirent le goût des jardins où l'architecture est mêlée aux arbres. »

Stendhal affirmait une opinion qui, sous sa forme absolue, ne laissait pas d'être injuste.

En étudiant les parcs italiens, Lenôtre y retrouvait l'antiquité que son esprit latin était préparé à comprendre et, en appliquant en France leur dessin général, il tirait d'elle la moelle dont se sont nourris les artistes et les écrivains classiques. L' antiquité est le fonds commun et séculaire des races latines; on ne saurait accuser ici d'imitation.

Malgré sa prétention excessive de subordonner la nature à l'architecture, le jardin de Lenôtre est une admirable invention.

« Il est devenu le jardin français comme les tragédies de Racine, adaptées de Sophocle et d'Euripide, ont été, par un travail génial d'assimilation, des tragédies françaises, où triomphent les qualités françaises d'élégance et de clarté, et le parc de Versailles, modèle du genre, se déploie sur une étendue que n'auraient pu rêver ni les Latins ni les Italiens. »

Un silence douloureux et prolongé s'attarde à présent dans ces jardins abandonnés.

C'est l'inévitable destinée des œuvres humaines qui survivent à leur raison d'être ; elles paraissent conserver un cruel regret de ce qui leur donnait l'illusion de la vie et rien ne

[11] André Peraté, *Les villes d'art célèbres*. *Versailles*.

peut dissiper cette lourde tristesse : ni les jours clairs, ni les foules joyeuses accourant pour célébrer quelque pompeuse commémoration.

Cependant, ces fastueux jardins sont encore plus beaux pour nous que pour l'autocrate superbe qui en voulut la création : à la charmille dure et précise a succédé la végétation libre ; de toutes parts s'étendent les allées hautes et ombreuses. Peu à peu, l'impression funèbre d'une majesté déchue et défunte se transforme en un sentiment de reconnaissance profonde pour la Nature bienveillante qui semble, dans un sourire infini, pardonner d'avoir été contrainte un jour; parce que cet effort d'autorité humaine avait eu pour but la Beauté.

Cette pensée, inspirée par Versailles devant le Mystère de la Mort, est noble et pure.

Combien différente du ricanement hideux des danses macabres qui enlaidissent la plupart des cimetières allemands et n'y montrent qu'ossuaires sinistres et immondes charniers !

On a dit autrefois :

> Qui nous délivrera des Grecs et des Romains ?

Disons aujourd'hui :

> Qu'on nous délivre, enfin, des Huns et des Germains!

Khnopff, Fernand, « L'architecture verte, » in *Bulletin de la Classe des Beaux-Arts,* 1920, 4-5, (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, séance du 8 avril, 1920), 25-29.

(Séance du 8 avril 1920.)

Translation :

Green Architecture

I was walking one day in one of those ornate avenues of trees, whose branches on one side block the passage of high vehicles; on the other, they enter the rooms of riverside homes, and a memory recurred to me of a amusing drawing by Marcellin, the founder of *Vie parisienne*, a delicious journal which killjoys reproach for too often turning to ladies of the same provenance for its maxims.

This drawing ridiculed the disproportion between buildings and human beings which is frequently observed in medieval miniatures.

One saw characters in skimpy clothing and angular gestures effortlessly stride over the complicated stepped gables over which they wandered, and the caption was:

"In these sacred miniatures, you never know if these are men that roam in the city or the city in the men."

Seeing some of the effects of urban arboriculture, one might also say that it is not known if these are gardens that are spread across the city, or the city in the gardens.

The history of such municipal vegetation is known. It starts with the sinking, in a newly enriched ground, two poles of unequal length, united by strong ties and effectively protected against probable indiscretions of passers-by by a high barbed wire fence. The longest of these poles is surmounted some greenish commas that represent or, to choose a better word, suggest the possibility of future and distant foliage.

The years go by, the lights are extinguished, generations succeed one another. The shorter pole (the guardian) has been removed. The other has developed; it turned into a nice shrub: it grows, it spreads out.

In the first warmth of spring, it is surrounded by a little green smoke—in the charming words of a very young poet—and it gently delights the eyes of strollers.

Already its foliage gives a pleasant shade during the heavy summer heat.

Unprepared citizens find shelter under it against the autumnational rains (as Jules Laforgue would have said), and when the sad winter comes, it offers the support of its branches to fragile decorative fantasies of snow.

There is then in the life of this being, an apogee that the birds (its guests) magnificently celebrate.

It is an artist: it contributes, by its proportionality in a harmonious whole, produced by the collaboration of the work of humans—the surrounding architecture—and Nature—with a capital N—unconscious and organized.

Alas! This triumph is short. The tree still grows, but its development becomes excessive; it really exceeds the limit: its branches, with arrogant allure, indiscreetly advance up to the nearby windows and create a perpetual darkness in the apartments. Congestion is notorious. Violent protests are raised, and to the sound of cheers of deliverance, the too beautiful tree is mercilessly chopped down.

As it had been once decided to adorn this avenue with trees, shortly after the terrible execution (as well as in the famous history of a certain small vessel), one begins again to plant two poles of unequal length in the newly enriched soil.

But let us pass from the pleasant to the severe.

To criticize is easy, one says; in this case, it would have been very easy to avoid. It is certain that at one moment the proportions of the trees in question agreed with those of the parallel constructions and that it was possible then to determine a decorative effect *once and for all*, instead of waiting for a long time and then regretting it.

It would have been sufficient to establish a metal frame in the form of an arch or portico, whose layout and armature would be appropriate to the various requirements and on which the climbing plants would grow, and at each renewal would give the carefully planned final effect in a few days.

I do not insist, because we are honored to count among us the authorities whose competence will retain from this proposal that which could be of interest for the reciprocal complement of stone architecture and *green architecture*.

The term is that of Delille.

When, around 1700, the Sun King had exhausted the sources of pleasure of the Grand Trianon, he shone on Marly where Mansart and Lenôtre expended the treasures of their genius.

> It is there, sings Delille, that everything is grand, that art is not timid;
> There everything is enchanted, it is the Palace of Armida.
> It is the garden of Alcide or rather of that of a hero,
> Noble in his retreat and great in his rest.
> You see water and earth and wood,
> Captivated in turn, obey its laws;
> At these twelve elegant palace structures
> These trees marry their green architecture,.
> These bronzes breathe, these suspended rivers
> A great boil of foam, descending in large waves.
> Fall, and flow out in great canals,
> There to pour out in layers, here rising in spray?
> ... Every grove is a temple and all marble is a God;

And Louis, breathing the crash of his conquests,
Seems to have invited all of Olympus to his feasts.

Louis XIV would have savored the emphasis of these verses as he appreciated the majestic order of Marly, where the layout of the garden was wonderful.

But the masterpiece of Lenôtre is Versailles.

To detail here its splendors would be, at the very least, impertinent.

If we may be permitted, however, to recall the memory of emotion that one feels here from the beauty of all the human elements, the beauty of the architecture, making an artwork of woods, water and clouds, as well as marbles and bronzes.

"Flowers and trees, grass or sand from the *allées* and running or still waters of the basin obey the same law as the stones of a great building. Nowhere, at a time when architecture (as it always should) takes precedence over the other arts, do we see a more vivid example of the serfdom of nature." [12]

As noted by M. Riat in the *Art of Gardens*, in writing: "It was from Italy that the architects of Louis XIV took the taste for gardens where the architecture is blended with trees."

Stendhal expressed an opinion which, in its absolute form, would not be unfair.

In studying Italian parks, Lenôtre found the antiquity which his Latin spirit was prepared to understand and, by applying their general design in France, he drew from her the marrow which fed the artists and classical writers. Antiquity is the common secular foundation of the Latin races; one cannot be accused of imitation here.

Despite his excessive claim to subordinate nature to architecture, the garden of Lenôtre is an admirable invention.

"It became a French garden just as the tragedies of Racine, though adapted from Sophocles and Euripides, became through a brilliant work of assimilation, French tragedies, where the qualities of French elegance and clarity triumph, and the Park of Versailles, the model of its kind, unfolds on a scale of which the Latins and the Italians could not dream."

A painful and prolonged silence lingers now in these abandoned gardens.

That is the inevitable destiny of the works of humans that survive their reason for being. They seem to maintain a cruel regret giving them the illusion of life and nothing can dispel this heavy sadness: not the sunny days, nor joyful crowds running to celebrate some pompous commemoration.

Nevertheless, these magnificent gardens are still more beautiful for us than for the magnificent autocrat who willed their creation: the hard and precise bower replaced the free vegetation; high and shady *allées* extend on all sides. Little by little, a funereal

[12] André Peraté, *Les villes d'art célèbres*. *Versailles*.

impression of a fallen and defunct majesty is transformed into a feeling of deep gratitude for the benevolent Nature which, with an infinite smile, seems to forgive for having been constrained for a day; because this effort of human authority had the goal of beauty.

This thought, inspired by Versailles before the Mystery of Death, is noble and pure.

How different from the hideous sneer of the dances of death which blight most German cemeteries which show nothing but sinister ossuaries and filthy mass graves!

It has been said in other times:

> Who will deliver us from the Greeks and Romans?

Let us say today:

> Who will deliver us, at last, from the Huns and the Germans!

Khnopff, Fernand, « Motion, » (relative à la construction d'un Palais des Expositions des Beaux-Arts), *Bulletin de la Classe des Beaux-Arts,* 1920, 9-10, (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, séance du 7 octobre, 1920), 90.

(Séance du 7 octobre 1920)

Motion de M. Khnopff

Considérant que le Sénat a rejeté les crédits demandés pour la construction d'un Palais des Expositions des Beaux-Arts, et qu'à la suite de ce vote « aucune exposition générale des Beaux-Arts n'aura lieu à Bruxelles aussi longtemps qu'un local pouvant les abriter ne se trouvera à la disposition du Gouvernement » (arrêté royal du 31 août 1920), M. Khnopff propose d'adresser une protestation à la Chambre des Représentants, au Sénat et à M. le Ministère des Sciences et des Arts.

Cette proposition, appuyée par MM. Solvay et Max, est adoptée à l'unanimité des membres présents.

Khnopff, Fernand, « Motion, » (relative à la construction d'un Palais des Expositions des Beaux-Arts), *Bulletin de la Classe des Beaux-Arts,* 1920, 9-10, (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, séance du 7 octobre, 1920), 90.

(Séance du 7 octobre 1920)

Translation:

Motion of Mr. Khnopff

Considering that the Senate has rejected the appropriations requested for the construction of a Palace of Exhibitions of Fine Arts, and that as a result of this vote "no general exhibition of fine arts will take place in Brussels so long as a location that could house it cannot be found at the disposition of the Government" (royal decree of 31 August 1920), Mr. Khnopff proposes to send a protest to the House of Representatives, the Senate and the Minister of Sciences and Arts.

This proposal, supported by Mr. Solvay and Mr. Max, was adopted unanimously by those present.

1921

Khnopff, Fernand, « Note Bibliographique, » in *Bulletin de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*, 1921, 4-5, (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, séance du 7 avril, 1921), 37-38.

Note Bibliographique.

J'ai l'honneur de présenter à la Classe, au nom de Mme Isabella Errera, le premier volume de son *Répertoire des peintures datées*.

L'auteur s'est imposé la tâche de classer les peintures datées de toutes les écoles, depuis 1085 jusqu'en 1875, c'est-à-dire 40,700 numéros environ.

« La date résulte soit de l'œuvre elle-même, si elle y est inscrite, soit de documents probants, soit de références contrôlées à l'aide de travaux des auteurs les plus réputés, des catalogues de ventes, des musées, etc.

» Le plan adopté est le suivant : les matières sont réparties en colonnes donnant la date de l'œuvre dans l'ordre chronologique, le pays d'origine du peintre, le nom de celui-ci, le sujet de la peinture, l'endroit où elle se trouve actuellement, les sources de toutes les indications précédentes.

» L'ouvrage formera deux forts volumes in-4° raisin d'environ 450 pages chacun. »

Mme Isabella Errera a fait paraitre déjà, en 1901, chez Falk, à Bruxelles, un *Catalogue d'étoffes anciennes.*

En 1905, chez Goossens et Lamertin, à Bruxelles, *Collection de broderies anciennes.*

En 1907, chez Goossens et Lamertin, à Bruxelles, *Catalogue d'étoffes anciennes et modernes.*

En 1913, chez Hachette et Cie, à Paris, *Dictionnaire-Répertoire de peintres, depuis l'antiquité jusqu'à nos jours.*

En 1916, chez Goossens, à Bruxelles, *Collection d'anciennes étoffes égyptiennes*.

De plus, Mme. Isabella Errera a ouvert, en 1918, rue Royale, 62, à Bruxelles, une bibliothèque d'art et d'art appliqué.

« Tout ce qui se rattache à l'art plastique, décoratif ou appliqué y trouve sa place, et l'artiste comme l'artisan peuvent y puiser des données aussi intéressantes que précieuses sur le sujet qui les attire spécialement. »

J'ai l'honneur de proposer à la Classe d'adresser à Mme Isabella Errera ses remerciements et ses félicitations.

Fernand Khnopff.

Khnopff, Fernand, « Note Bibliographique, » in *Bulletin de la Classe des Beaux-Arts*, 1921, 4-5, (Bruxelles, Académie royale de Belgique, séance du 7 avril, 1921), 37-38.

Translation:

Bibliographic Note.

I have the honour to present to the class, on behalf of Mrs. Isabella Errera, the first volume of her *Repertoire of Dated Paintings*.

The author has taken on the task of classifying paintings dated from all schools, from 1085 until 1875, i.e., approximately 40,700 numbers.

“The date may result from the work itself, if it is inscribed, from documentary evidence, or references verified by using the work of authors of the most reputable catalogues of sales, museums, etc.”

“The plan adopted is the following: materials are divided into columns giving the date of the work in chronological order, the country of origin of the painter, the name of the artist, the subject of the painting, its current location, the sources of all the previous indications.

“The book will be comprised of two large volumes in quarto format of about 450 pages each.”

Mrs. Isabella Errera has already published with Falk in Brussels in 1901 a *Catalogue of Old Fabrics*.

In 1905, with Goossens and Lamertin, Brussels, *Collection of Ancient Embroidery*.

In 1907, with Goossens and Lamertin, Brussels, *Catalogue of Ancient and Modern fabrics*.

In 1913, with Hachette et Cie, Paris, *Dictionary-Directory of Painters, From Antiquity To The Present Day.*

In 1916, with Goossens in Brussels, a *Collection of Ancient Egyptian Fabrics*.

In addition, in 1918 Mrs. Isabella Errera opened a library of art and applied art at rue Royale 62, in Brussels.

“Everything that relates to the plastic, decorative or applied arts has its place here, and the artist or craftsman can find much that is interesting and valuable on the subject of their particular interest.”

I have the honour to propose the class to convey to Mrs. Isabella Errera its thanks and congratulations.

FERNAND KHNOPFF.

Khnopff, Fernand, « Les œuvres d'art inspirées par Dante, » *Le Flambeau*, IV, 7 (31 juillet 1921), 349-358.

(also reprinted in the 1980 exhibition catalog Fernand Khnopff)

Les Œuvres d'art inspirées par Dante

Un proverbe latin, aux riches assonances, disait autrefois: *Nomen, omen*, un nom est un présage.

Il n'a jamais été mieux réalisé que par Raphaël, l'Archange de la peinture et celui de la vue, le deuxième des trois grands Italiens dont le monde civilisé a, successivement, célébré les centenaires, en ces trois récentes années.

Léonard, Raphaël, Dante.

Au 4e chant du Paradis, le poète écrivait: Afin que l'intelligence humaine saisisse les choses divines, force est de leur prêter des formes sensibles. Ainsi l'Ecriture condescend à nos facultés en attribuant à Dieu des pieds et des mains, tout en signifiant par là bien autre chose, et représente, sous un aspect humain: la Sainte Eglise, Gabriel, Michel et l'autre qui rendit la santé à Tobie, *E l'altro che Tobbia rifece sano*.

Le troisième archange n'est pas nommé, il n'est fait allusion qu'à son geste de charité vers le vieillard aveugle de la Bible.

L'étude anxieuse des mystères d'au-delà s'arrête souvent à des précisions téméraires ou à d'inutiles hésitations. Qui peut à présent, devant certaines constatations troublantes, dire s'il y a là de simples coïncidences ou des prédestinations lointaines? Dieu seul le sait.

Le mot poète signifie: celui qui accomplit. Avec leur admirable sens de la proportion, les Grecs n'avaient pas séparé le labeur de l'exécution, de l'inconscience de la rêverie. Mais il advient parfois que l'enthousiasme créateur dépasse l'œuvre, comme un vin écumant déborde la coupe qui devait le contenir. Le poète devient alors l'inspirateur et, par d'autres moyens d'expression, des œuvres nouvelles se produisent, parallèles à la sienne.

Dante, inspirateur, ne peut être comparé qu'au prince des poètes, Homère, ὁ ποιητής, et à celui qu'on a nommé l'Homère du romantisme, le multiple Shakespeare.

Tenter de réunir en une liste complète tous les ouvrages de peinture, de gravure, de sculpture et de musique que fit naître, par son exemple, le grand Florentin, serait un effort inutile: leur valeur est trop inégale, leur nombre trop grand. On peut dire même que la liste est loin de pouvoir être close, car les deux épisodes les plus connus de la Divine Comédie n'ont pas encore été traités par le moyen qui convient le mieux.

Le supplice d'Ugolin, dont, avant tout, les violents effets du clair-obscur peuvent exprimer la sombre horreur, a été supérieurement représenté par des sculpteurs.

L'émouvant récit de Françoise de Rimini dont, seule, la musique peut suivre les phases douloureuses dans l'affreuse rafale qui l'enveloppe, a été forcément, mais avec succès, divisé par des peintres.

Qu'il nous soit donc permis de rappeler trop brièvement le souvenir de noms très illustres et de n'étudier à part que quelques œuvres contemporaines que nous avons pu voir de près.

Leur description sera d'autant plus exacte et, si leur nombre est réduit, la diversité de leur interprétation prouvera, assurément, l'ampleur de l'inspiration à qui elles doivent l'existence.

On a retrouvé des miniatures dans des copies manuscrites de la Divine Comédie, dont la date remonte au XIV^{e} et au XV^{e} siècle.

La première édition de Dante, accompagnée de gravures, est celle de Florence 1481; ensuite, celles de Brescia 1487 et de Venise 1491, 93 et 97.

Le nombre des éditions s'accroît considérablement au XVIe siècle, il diminue au XVII^{e}.

Au XVIII^{e} paraissait la suite des dessins du sculpteur anglais Flaxman, dont la ligne simple retenait longuement l'attention d'Ingres, et au XIXe , l'illustration de G. Doré, qui prodiguait, dans cet énorme travail, son brillant talent d'improvisateur.

Les gravures de la première édition de Florence étaient des interprétations, peu fidèles, des compositions que Botticelli avait commencées, à la demande de Lorenzo di Pier Francesco dei Medici. Ce fut son dernier ouvrage, inachevé. Tout l'art du maître de la grâce morbide et des élégances recherchées se voit encore dans l'illustration du 28^{e} chant du Paradis.

C'est cette grande page de poésie mystique, où Dante et Béatrice s'élèvent au ciel, parmi les chœurs des anges, chantant éternellement la gloire du Très Haut et, comme si l'artiste avait espéré marquer sa place dans la Cité céleste, que Savonarole avait fait entrevoir à ses disciples, sur une tablette portée par un des anges, il a écrit, en lettres minuscules, son nom: Sandro di Mariano.

Les plus grands noms de l'Art italien sont inséparables de celui de Dante, le créateur de la littérature nationale, le protagoniste de la réaction de l'individualisme contre la tyrannie du dogmatisme.

Giotto a peint son portrait. Raphaël l'a placé dans son Parnasse. L'œuvre entier de Michel-Ange porte l'empreinte de son esprit. Signorelli, Fra Angelico, les Orcagna, les maîtres du Campo Santo et tant d'autres ont proclamé l'autorité de son génie dans des œuvres fameuses, qu'il serait impertinent de dénombrer ici.

Les diverses écoles d'Italie n'ont pas cessé d'enrichir ce trésor d'hommages, auquel ont largement contribué les écoles étrangères, d'Angleterre, avec Sir Johsua [sic] Reynolds et Lord Leighton Watts et Rossetti; de France avec Ingres et Delacroix, Scheffer et Flandrin, Carpeaux et Rodin, Cabanel et Gérome, pour ne citer que des artistes défunts.

Notre souvenir le plus lointain de la figure de Dante est la reproduction gravée d'un tableau de Gérome.

Sous les murs de la ville, le soir, les citadins se reposent du labeur du jour et devisent, étendus sur l'herbe fraîche; les mères se joignent aux ébats des enfants, dont les cris joyeux résonnent plus clairs, à présent que le travail s'est tu.

C'est l'heure qu'a chantée Virgile, en un vers qu'égalent, seules, les pages les plus sereines de Claude et du Poussin: *Majoresque cadunt altis de montibus umbrae*.

Déjà l'ombre s'allonge au pied de la montagne et voici que s'avance, silencieusement, un personnage sombre.

Il marche si lentement qu'il semble parfois immobile, sous son long manteau aux plis droits. Un chaperon, aux lignes dures, encadre un visage plus dur encore; l'horreur a scellé ses lèvres et son regard intérieur épouvante.

Il passe, et un enfant, qui jouait, s'inquiète à sa vue. Il interroge sa mère: Qui est cet homme? Elle répond: Cet homme' c'est celui qui revient de l'Enfer.

Puis, ce fut au Louvre, la *Barque du Dante,* l'œuvre de début d'E. Delacroix, peinte il y a un siècle. Elle montrait déjà la qualité essentielle de son génie: l'expression dramatique par la couleur, et créait d'emblée cette atmosphère sulfureuse, si caractéristique du romantisme. Dès l'abord, l'impression est sinistre. Contre la barque, qui porte les deux poètes, les damnés haineux se tordent avec rage, dans le clapotis lugubre de l'eau morte. Au fond, rougeoient des masses informes: vapeurs ou murailles et le quatrain de Baudelaire revient à la mémoire:

> Delacroix, lac de sang, hanté des mauvais anges,
> Ombragé par un bois de sapins toujours vert
> Où, sous un ciel chagrin, des fanfares étranges
> Passent, comme un soupir étouffé de Weber.

A la Bibliothèque de la Chambre des Pairs, le maître peignait, vingt ans plus tard, le passage du 4^{e} chant de l'Enfer, où Dante et Virgile rencontrent, dans un lieu majestueux, les grands poètes et les plus grands hommes de l'antiquité.

Dans le Jardin des Tuileries, s'érige le groupe en bronze de Carpeaux*: Ugolin et ses enfants*. Le sculpteur a choisi l'instant où le prisonnier, entendant murer la tour et forcené de douleur, se mord les mains. Ses fils, croyant que la faim le pousse, se pressent contre lui et le supplient de reprendre ces chairs qu'il leur a données.

Dans un groupe de Rodin, on voit Ugolin se traînant sur les genoux parmi les cadavres de ses enfants; avançant ses mâchoires démentes, mais saisi d'effroi à l'idée de cet horrible repas.

Plusieurs peintres, sir Joshua Reynolds, notre compatriote de Biefve, Banfi et Diotti ont aussi représenté cet épisode, qui a souvent inspiré les musiciens.

Vincent Galilée, le père du philosophe, avait écrit*: il Lamento del conte Ugolino.* La composition de Donizetti avait été dédiée à Lablache et celle de Zingarelli eut de nombreuses interprétations.

Divers chants de la Divine Comédie avaient été mis en musique, au cours du XVIe siècle, par Josquin, Willaert et d'autres compositeurs belges et l'on a pu entendre, encore, des ouvrages inspirés par le poète à Listz et à Ambroise Thomas.

Quatre grands peintres ont traité l'épisode—divisé—de Françoise de Rimini.

Ingres et Rossetti, le crime; Scheffer et Watts, le châtiment.

Le petit panneau d'Ingres montre avec quel intérêt il avait consulté les miniatures des anciens manuscrits. L'ingénuité charmante des attitudes, l'élégance précieuse du dessin, l'extrême fini de l'exécution font de cet ouvrage une délicieuse calligraphie d'une puérilité savante.

L'œuvre de Rossetti est toute de passion. Les amants sont assis, l'un contre l'autre; le livre fatal est ouvert sur leurs genoux; les mains se sont prises et, par un mouvement instinctif, se sont rapprochées des gorges qui s'étranglent; les doigts s'étreignent à se briser; les regards se pénètrent, les lèvres se joignent. Le péché a fait d'eux sa proie. La mort est proche. L'expiation va suivre. C'est l'Enfer.

Au fond d'un gouffre de ténèbres, mugit l'ouragan, entraînant dans le noir tourbillon qui jamais ne s'arrête, les âmes charnelles dont l'amour enivra la raison. Dans la violence de la tourmente, elles passent, rapides, en prolongeant de lamentables cris et le poète est saisi de compassion. Il a vu deux ombres qui paraissent inséparables, il les appelle à lui et il entend les paroles poignantes:

« Il n'est plus grande douleur que se rappeler le souvenir du temps heureux, dans la misère. »

Et c'est alors ce beau poème d'amour navré, dont Carlyle a écrit

Woven in rainbows on a ground of eternal black.

Dans le tableau d'A. Scheffer, popularisé par la gravure de Calamatta, le groupe des amants tristement enlacés est emporté dans l'espace, sous les yeux des deux poètes. Le peintre semble avoir cherché surtout, après l'effet dramatique du geste, la correction des lignes et la rondeur des modelés.

Dans l'œuvre de Watts domine le sentiment du souvenir éternel et du désir infini.

Les amants criminels sont enveloppés des longs plis du suaire, déchiré par la tempête. Leurs mains cherchent encore à s'étreindre; le frêle et livide visage de Francesca tend son regard noyé d'extase vers celui de Paolo, plus douloureux sous la conscience plus lourde de sa faute. Si amère est cette douleur, que le poète a senti son cœur défaillir de pitié. Il est tombé comme tombe un corps mort et le couple damné s'engloutit à jamais dans l'horrible ouragan de l'éternelle nuit.

Des coureurs se passant le flambeau figuraient le symbole antique de la pensée en marche.

Dans le grand courant d'histoire, qui se dirige du S.-E. vers le N-E., le peintre-poète anglais D.-G. Rossetti paraît avoir été prédestiné à transporter dans la Grande-Bretagne la lumière de l'art italien.

Né à Londres, d'un proscrit napolitain, il ne vit jamais l'Italie; pas plus, d'ailleurs que Delacroix, l'introducteur du coloris vénitien dans la peinture française. Le père de Rossetti—que son fils, en un très beau sonnet, remercia de lui avoir donné le prénom de Dante—est considéré comme un des plus savants commentateurs de la Divine Comédie. Il avait élevé ses enfants dans l'admiration du grand visionnaire et les plus belles œuvres du peintre-poète ont été conçues et exécutées sous l'influence de l'Alighieri.

La première est une composition d'après un passage de la *Vita Nuova* décrivant l'auteur en train de dessiner un ange le jour anniversaire de la mort de son amie.

Puis c'est un diptyque: *La salutation de Béatrice, sur la terre* (d'après la *Vita Nuova*) et la salutation en Eden (d'après un passage célèbre du *Purgatoire*).

C'est aussi, dans ce poème, au 5^{e} chant, qu'est citée l'agonie de la Pia de Tolommei, la femme de Nello délia Pietra de Sienne.

Elle avait été enfermée par son mari dans une forteresse des Maremmes pour qu'elle y meure, lentement empoisonnée par les miasmes. L'angoisse de son beau visage est pénible à regarder et le geste des mains, effrayant: l'une torturant l'autre de son anneau conjugal.

Le dessin: la *Barque d'amour*, illustre un charmant sonnet adressé à Guido Cavalcanti, et c'est la lecture, encore, de la *Vita Nuova* qui inspira les trois ouvrages les plus remarquables du peintre: *Beata Beatrix*, le *Rêve de Dante* et la *Dame de pitié*.

La *Beata Beatrix* fut peinte en souvenir de Lizzie Siddal, sa femme bien-aimée, morte si jeune et qui avait si souvent posé pour lui la figure de Béatrice.

La pensée de la mort n'a jamais été exprimée avec plus de beauté. Il n'y a rien là de la déchéance physique, c'est le calme moral avec l'idée chrétienne de la béatitude finale pour l'élue, et l'exécution de cette peinture est d'une émotion si intense qu'il semble y vivre un charme analogue à celui du «Portrait ovale» décrit dans le conte d'E. Poe.

Le *Rêve de Dante* est la composition la plus importante de Rossetti. Elle est d'une noble ordonnance, son dessein est de grande allure et sa couleur somptueuse.

Dante raconte, vers la fin de son livre, qu'un jour, accablé de tristesse au souvenir de la mort de Béatrice, il vit qu'une dame le regardait de sa fenêtre, avec un sentiment de douce compassion. Cet incident est le sujet d'une œuvre supérieure dont le peintre chercha la réalisation à plusieurs reprises, sous les titres de: la *Donna de la finestra* ou *The lady of pity*.

Il paraît y avoir concentré tout l'esprit du grand visionnaire, dont la prodigieuse complexité, par les émotions directes de la vie, s'étend des plus brutales cruautés du

châtiment infernal, aux suavités les plus immatérielles de la clémence céleste. Cette dame de pitié est une créature étrange, où se mêlent les élégances morbides de Botticelli et la rudesse puissante de Michel-Ange.

Une chevelure violente couvre en partie un front volontaire. La barre courbée des sourcils domine des yeux où peuvent passer des lueurs de crime et resplendir l'illumination du don total. Les lèvres pourpres et charnues, annoncent des amours périlleuses et mortelles. Les mains, aux doigts allongés, semblent passionnées jusqu'au meurtre.

Elle était à la fenêtre, elle a vu la détresse profonde du poète; elle l'a comprise, et ces mains se sont croisées, simplement, sur la barre d'appui; de ces yeux émane une caresse apaisante pour une âme tourmentée, et de ces lèvres descend le baiser d'une sœur sur un front qui souffre.

Au 8e cercle de l'Enfer, Virgile, voyant Dante près de succomber à la fatigue, lui dit: « Relevez-vous, ce n'est pas dans la mollesse que la gloire vous attend—la gloire,—ce sillon lumineux que tout homme doit laisser après lui, s'il n'a pas glissé dans la vie, comme la fumée dans l'air et l'écume sur l'onde. »

En cet instant nous avons l'honneur de commémorer le sixième centenaire de la mort de Dante.

Sa pensée, nous la comprenons, ses émotions, nous les éprouvons, ses visions, nous les voyons toujours et celui, que la marche divine de Béatrice conduisait vers la splendeur des astres et l'infini des étoiles, fait songer à ces soleils éteints, dont la lumière n'était parvenue à la terre qu'après des milliers de siècles et dont l'éclat rayonne encore à nos yeux éblouis.

Fernand Khnopff

Khnopff, Fernand, « Les œuvres d'art inspirées par Dante, » *Le Flambeau*, IV, 7 (31 juillet 1921), 349-358.

Translation:

The Works of Art Inspired by Dante

A Latin proverb, richly assonant, in olden times said: *Nomen, omen*, a name is an omen.

It has never been better exemplified than by Raphael, the Archangel of painting and as we have seen, the second of the three major Italians for whom the civilized world has successively celebrated centennials in the past three years.

Leonardo, Raphael, Dante.

In the fourth song of the *Paradiso*, the poet wrote: If human intelligence is to know divine things, they must take perceptible forms. Thus Writing condescends to our faculties in attributing feet and hands to God, all the while meaning something else by that, and by representing under a human aspect the Holy Church, Gabriel, Michael and the other who brought health to Tobias, *E l'altro che Tobbia rifece sano*.

The third Archangel is not named, and there is no mention to him other than his act of charity towards the blind old man of the Bible.

The anxious study of mysteries from beyond often ends with either bold precision or pointless hesitation. Who can say at this time, faced with certain troubling evidence, if these are merely coincidences or distant predestinations? God only knows.

The poet word means: he who accomplishes. With their admirable sense of proportion, the Greeks did not separate the work of execution from the unconsciousness of reverie. But it happens sometimes that creative enthusiasm exceeds the artwork like a foaming wine overflows the cup which was meant to contain it. The poet then becomes the inspiration, and by other means of expression, new works are produced parallel to his.

Dante, the inspirer, can be compared to the prince of poets, Homer, ὁ ποιητής [the poet], and to him who was named the Homer of romanticism, the many-sided Shakespeare.

To try to gather in a complete list of all the works of painting, engraving, sculpture and music that have been brought forth by the example of the great Florentine would be a futile effort: their value is too uneven, their number too large. We can even say that the list is far from being able to be completed because the two most famous episodes of the Divine Comedy have not yet been treated in the way that best suits them.

The torture of Ugolino, in which the violent effects of chiaroscuro can best express the dark horror, was best represented by sculptors.

The moving story of Francesca de Rimini, for which music alone can follow the painful phases in the awful whirlwind which envelopes her, was forcefully and successfully portrayed by painters.

If we may be therefore be allowed to too briefly recall the memory of some very illustrious names and to study only a few contemporary works that we were able to view closely.

Their descriptions will be more accurate for that, and if their number is reduced, the diversity of their interpretation will surely prove the magnitude of inspiration to which they owe their existence.

Miniatures have been discovered in manuscript copies of the Divine Comedy dating to the 14th and 15th century.

The first edition of Dante, accompanied by engravings, was published in Florence in 1481; then Brescia in 1487, and Venice in 1491 and 93 and 97.

The number of editions increased significantly in the 16th century, and decreased in the 17th century.

The 18th century brought the suite of drawings by the English sculptor Flaxman, whose simple lines long held the attention of Ingres, and in the 19th century G. Doré lavished his brilliant talent for improvisation in illustrations to this enormous work.

The engravings of the first edition of Florence were scarcely faithful interpretations, compositions begun by Botticelli at the request of Lorenzo di Pier Francesco dei Medici. This was his last work, left unfinished. All the art of the master of morbid grace and refined elegance can be seen in his illustration of the 28th song of Paradise.

It is that great page of mystical poetry, where Dante and Beatrice rise to heaven among the choirs of angels eternally singing the glory of the Most High and, as if the artist had hoped to mark his place in the celestial city as Savonarola had suggested to his disciples, he wrote his name in small letters: Sandro di Mariano, on a tablet carried by one of the angels.

The greatest names in Italian art are inseparable from that of Dante, the creator of the national literature, the protagonist of the reaction of individualism against the tyranny of dogmatism.

His portrait was painted by Giotto. Raphael placed him in his Parnassus. The entire body of work by Michelangelo bears the imprint of his spirit. Signorelli, Fra Angelico, the Orcagnas, the masters of the Campo Santo and many others have proclaimed the authority of his genius in famous works that it would be impertinent to count here.

The various schools of Italy have continued to enrich this treasure of tributes, to which foreign schools have contributed greatly, England, with Sir Johsua [sic] Reynolds and Lord Leighton, Watts and Rossetti; France with Ingres and Delacroix, Scheffer and Flandrin, Carpeaux and Rodin, Cabanel and Gérôme, to cite only deceased artists.

Our oldest memory of the figure of Dante is the engraved reproduction of a painting by Gérôme.

Under the walls of the city, in the evening, the citizens resting from the toil of the day and converse, lying on the fresh grass; mothers join the antics of children, whose joyful cries resound more clear now that work is done.

It is hour of which Virgil sung, in a verse that alone equals the most serene pages of Claude and Poussin: *Majoresque cadunt altis montibus umbrae*.

Already the shadows stretch at the foot of the mountain and now a dark character comes silently forward.

He walks so slowly that he seems almost immobile, under his long coat with vertical folds. A hood whose hard lines frame a still harder face; horror has sealed his lips and his inward gaze is terrifying.

He passes, and a playing child is disturbed by the sight. He asks his mother: who is this man? She responds: This man is the one who returned from hell.

Then at the Louvre, the *Barque of Dante,* the first work of E. Delacroix, painted a century ago. It already revealed the essential quality of his genius: dramatic expression by color, creating from the beginning this sulfurous atmosphere, so characteristic of romanticism. From the outset, the impression is sinister. Against the boat carrying the two poets, the hateful damned writhe with rage in the gloomy lapping of the dead water. In the background, indistinct shapes glow: vapors or walls, and the quatrain of Baudelaire comes to mind:

> Delacroix, lake of blood, haunted by evil angels,
> Shaded by a forest of evergreen fir trees
> Where, under a sorrowing sky, strange fanfares
> Pass, like a muffled sigh of Weber.

Twenty years later, in the Bibliothèque of the Chamber of Peers, the master painted the passage in the 4th song of hell, where Dante and Virgil encounter the great poets and the greatest men of antiquity in a majestic setting.

In the garden of the Tuileries, the group in bronze by Carpeaux was erected*: Ugolino and his Children*. The sculptor chose the moment where the prisoner heard the tower walled up and in frenzied pain, bites his hands. His son, believing that it was hunger that drives him, presses against him and begs him to take back this flesh that he has given them.

In a group of Rodin, we see Ugolino shuffling on his knees among the corpses of his children; advancing with demented jaws, but knowing the terror of the idea of this horrible meal.

Many painters, including Sir Joshua Reynolds, and our compatriots Biefve, Banfi and Diotti have also represented this episode, which has also often inspired musicians.

Vincent Galileo Galilei, the father of the philosopher, wrote*: il Lamento del conte Ugolino.* Donizetti's composition was dedicated to Lablache and that of Zingarelli has had many interpretations.

Various songs of the Divine Comedy were set to music during the 16th century by Josquin, Willaert and other Belgian composers, and one can still hear works inspired by the poet by Listz and Ambroise Thomas.

Four great painters have treated the episode—divided in parts—of Francesca da Rimini.

Ingres and Rossetti depicted the crime; Scheffer and Watts, the punishment.

The small panel of Ingres reveals with how carefully he had studied the miniatures of ancient manuscripts. The charming ingenuity of the attitudes of his figures, the precious elegance of his drawing, and the extreme finish of the execution make this work a delicious calligraphy of a learned childishness.

The work of Rossetti is pure passion. The lovers are sitting, one against the other, the fatal book open on their knees; they are holding hands, which by an instinctive movement, have moved closer to the throats which will be strangled; fingers embrace as if to break; eyes penetrate, lips join. Sin has made them its prey. Death is near. Atonement will follow. It is the Inferno.

At the bottom of a chasm of darkness, the hurricane howls, sweeping along in the black whirlwind that never stops, the carnal souls whose love intoxicates the reason. In the violence of the storm, they pass by rapidly, their dismal cries echoing and the poet is seized with compassion. He saw two shadows that appear inseparable, and he calls them to him and hears the harrowing lyrics:

"There is no greater pain than to recall memories of happy times in misery."

And it was this beautiful heartbroken love poem, of which Carlyle wrote

Woven in rainbows on a ground of black eternal.

In the painting by A. Scheffer, popularized by the engraving by Calamatta, the sadly entwined group of lovers is carried into space under the eyes of the two poets. The painter seems to have searched above all for the dramatic effect of the gesture, the correctness of the lines and the roundness of the modeling.

In the work of Watts, the feeling of eternal remembrance and infinite desire dominates.

The criminal lovers are wrapped in the long folds of their shroud, torn apart by the storm. Their hands still strive to embrace; the frail and pale face of Francesca turns her gaze of drowned ecstasy to Paolo, most painful bearing the heaviest awareness of her fault. So bitter is the pain, that the poet felt his heart overcome with pity. He fell like a dead man and the damned couple sank, forever engulfed in the horrible hurricane of the eternal night.

Runners passing the torch were the ancient symbol of thought on the march.

In the mainstream of history, which flows from the southeast to the northeast, the English painter-poet D.-G. Rossetti appears to have been predestined to carry the light of Italian art in Britain.

Born in London to a Neapolitan exile, he never saw Italy; no more, for that matter than Delacroix, the introducer of Venetian color in French painting. The father of Rossetti—whom his son, in a very beautiful sonnet, thanked for giving him the name of Dante—is considered to be one of the most learned commentators on the Divine Comedy. He raised his children in the admiration of the great visionary and the most beautiful works of the painter-poet have been designed and executed under the influence of Alighieri.

The first is a composition based on a passage in the *Vita Nuova* describing the author trying to draw an angel on the anniversary of the death of his beloved.

Then a diptych: *The Salutation of Beatrice on Earth* (according to the *Vita Nuova*) and the greeting in Eden (based on a famous passage in *Purgatory*).

It is also in this poem of the 5th song that the agony of the Pia de Tolommei, the wife of Nello della Pietra of Siena is told.

She had been locked by her husband in a fortress of the Maremmes so that she would die there, slowly poisoned by miasmas. The anguish of her beautiful face is painful to see and the gesture of her hands is horrifying: the one tortures the other with its marital ring.

The drawing of *The Boat of Love* demonstrates a charming sonnet addressed to Guido Cavalcanti, and it is the re-reading of the *Vita Nuova* which inspired the three most notable works of the painter: *Beata Beatrix*, the *Dream of Dante* and the *Lady of Mercy*.

Beata Beatrix was painted in memory of Lizzie Siddal, his beloved wife, who died so young and who had so often posed for him for the figure of Beatrice.

The thought of death was never expressed with more beauty. There's nothing here of physical decline, it is a moral peace with the Christian idea of the final beatitude for the chosen, and the execution of this painting springs from an emotion so intense that it seems to embody a spell similar to that of the "Oval Portrait" described in the tale of E. Poe.

Dante's dream is the most important composition of Rossetti. It is of a noble order, his design has great allure and its color is sumptuous.

Dante recounts towards the end of his book how one day, overwhelmed with sadness at the memory of the death of Beatrice, he saw a lady looking at him from her window, with an expression of gentle compassion. This incident is the subject of a masterful work which the painter repeatedly sought to realize under the headings of: *Donna de la finestra* [The Lady at the Window] or *The Lady of Pity*.

It seems to have concentrated all the spirit of the great visionary, whose prodigious complexity, by emotions directly from life, extends from the more brutal cruelties of infernal punishment to the more immaterial suavities of heavenly mercy. This lady of

mercy is a strange creature, mingling the morbid elegance of Botticelli and the powerful roughness of Michelangelo.

Wild hair partially covers a willful forehead. The curved bar of her eyebrows dominates eyes which can emit glimmers of crime and shine with the illumination of total giving. Purple and fleshy lips announce perilous and fatal loves. Her hands, with elongated fingers, seem passionate even to the point of murder.

She was at the window, she saw the deep distress of the poet; she understood him, and her hands are crossed simply on the window ledge; from her eyes emanates a soothing caress for a tormented soul, and from her lips descends the kiss of a sister on a brow that is suffering.

In the 8th circle of Hell, Virgil, seeing Dante nearly succumbing to fatigue, said to him: "Arise, it is not in the softness that glory awaits you—the glory,—this bright furrow that every man must leave after him, if he has is not to glide through life, like smoke in the air and foam on the waves."

At this moment we have the honor to commemorate the sixth centenary of the death of Dante.

His thought, we understand, his emotions, we feel, his visions, we still see, and the divine steps that conducted Beatrice to the splendor of the stars and infinity of stars, makes us dream of faded suns whose light had come to Earth only after thousands of centuries, and whose brightness shines again in our dazzled eyes.

Fernand Khnopff

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