

1885

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

**Letter from Fernand Knopff to *La Réforme***

Lundi soir

Monsieur,

Vous écrivez dans *la Réforme* du 23:

« M. Knopff 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 côté 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 Knopff

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 Knopff to *La Réforme***

Translation :

Monday evening

Sir,

You write in *la Réforme* on the 23rd: “Mr. Knopff, 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 Knopff

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 du dessin et, s'étant reconnue, s'adressa vivement à 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 dûit 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 silent, 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 climatiques. « 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.

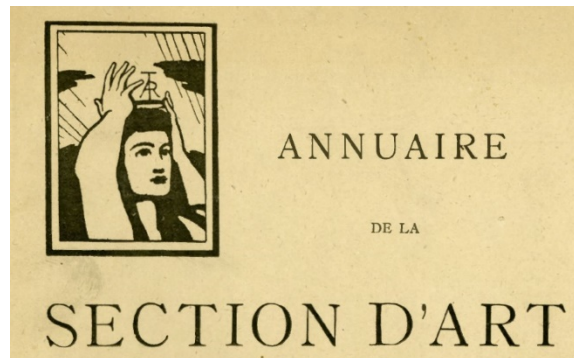
Poems and paintings by Rossetti were then studied in their similarities of inspiration and their differences in technique. The analysis of the work of E. Burne-Jones followed; it was rather general, apart from the description of two paintings: *The Chant d'Amour* and *King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid*.

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 paraît 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.

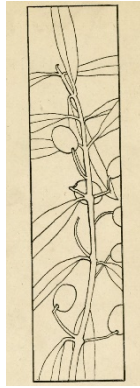
En voyant les choses de très-haut, on peut dire que dans le grand mouvement de civilisation venu du Sud-est, de l'Inde, et se dirigeant vers le Nord-ouest, après avoir passé par l'Asie-Mineure, la Grèce, l'Italie et la France, l'heure est arrivée pour les Anglais d'être les plus forts.

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 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.

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 différent 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 tient 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'écrêteau-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 maîtres du XVe siècle qu'avec celui des maîtres 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 maîtres gothiques de phrases laudatives, mais de les montrer uniquement pour les faire connaître. Celui qui les connaîtra, 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 public.

Bonne soirée inauguratrice de la saison de 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 terracotta 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**

Conférence 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 à ses pieds. D'un long sceptre vert, elle dirige le chœur.

Et des enfants la suivent, à peine éveillés encore, mais s'animant bien vite aux fanfares aiguës 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 coiffés à 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 pâles 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 à 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 Noël, 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 nacrés ; 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 exprimés de l'Anglaise esthétique, de l'Anglaise de la période du Paon, comme on dit à Kensington.

Walter Crane n'a que rarement tenté 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'artificialité qu'après eux avaient cultivé les esthétiques; mettant tout leur effort à 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 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 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 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 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 XIV<sup>th</sup>, 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 Cinquantaire* 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’yeux est la Passion de Notre-Seigneur et l’autre la vie de Monsieur St. Jean-Baptiste.”

The sculptural 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 écrasant 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 disparaît, 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, das 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 renaissance 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 of 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 of works of Art was held recently at Termonde (Eastern Flanders), and proved very interesting, although they were confined to natives or inhabitants of 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 appliqué 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 à l'état de coulées de suie. Ces deux constatations ont coûté très cher.

3. L'avenir? Comme CETTE œuvre n'a pas de raison d'être, elle disparaîtra 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 Knopff, » (concerning l'Art appliqué à la Rue), *La Jeune Belgique*, 2nd series, 1, 14 (April 4, 1896), 95-96.  
[same letter as above]

### **Lettre de M. Fernand Knopff**

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 coûté très cher.

3. L'avenir? Comme CETTE œuvre n'a pas de raison d'être, elle disparaîtra 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 appliqué 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 disparaîtra 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 à 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 à 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« Liges 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 understand 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* (*Forêt 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.



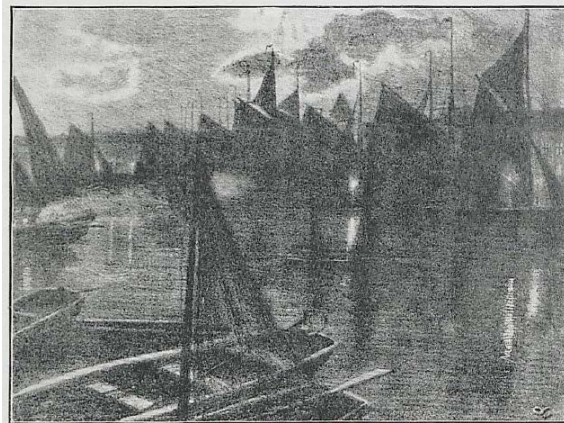
"The Camp Fire"      From a Photograph by M. Alexandre  
("Exhibited at the Brussels Photographic Salon")

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.

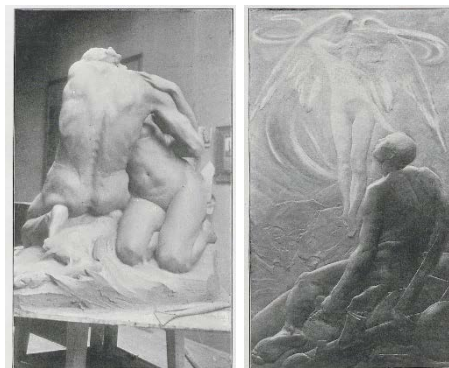


F.K., "Studio-Talk Brussels," *The Studio*, 7, 37 (April 1896), 181-185.



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. Vandeveldt 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. Rassenforsche [sic], of Liège.



Trademark Val St. Lambert

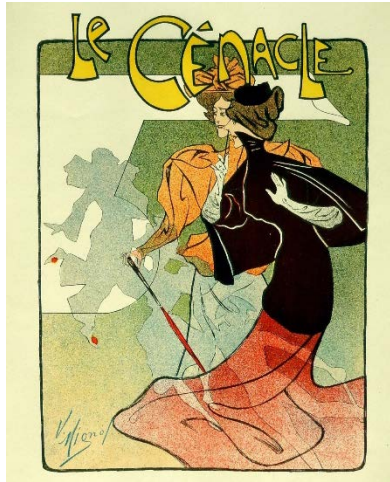
Among the new posters which are appearing in daily increasing numbers on the walls and in the shop-windows, those of M. Mionet [sic—Mignot] deserve a special word of mention. The design he has done for the *Cénacle* is quite a surprise in colouring, while the drawing of a second (for a fencing school)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

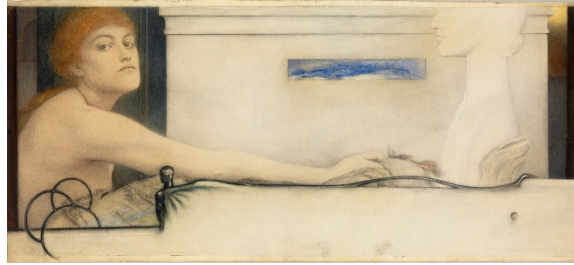
has a large circle of acquaintances, and, moreover, possesses those social qualities which are the more precious inasmuch as they seem lacking in certain of his *confrères*. He has fixed his studio at La Haye.

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.

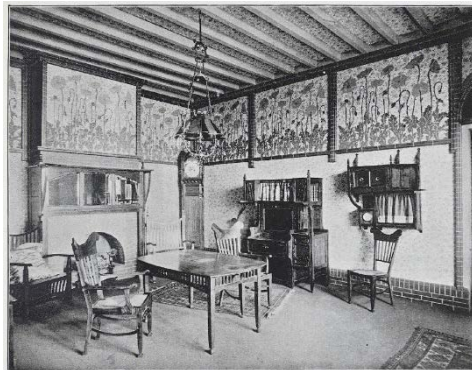
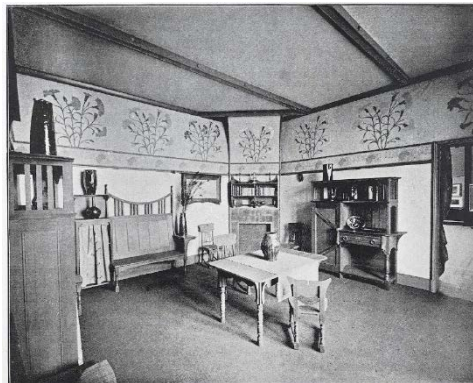


F. K., "Studio-Talk. Brussels," *The Studio*, 8, 40 (July 1896), 116 -122.



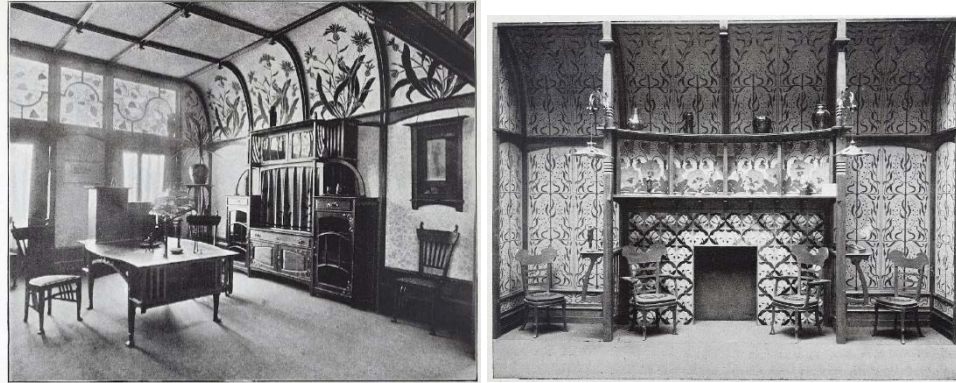
Poster by A. Donnay | Poster by E. Berchmans

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)

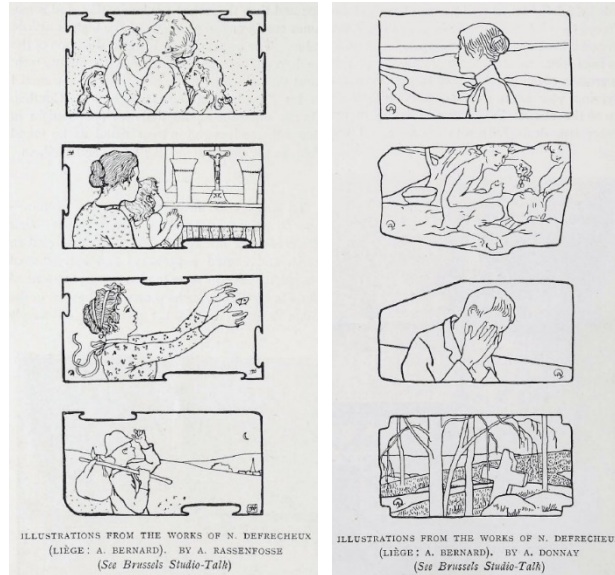




"Un Cabinet de Travail" and "Inglenook," Designed by G. Serrurier  
(From a Photograph by Alexandre)

It was in a publication called *Caprice-Revue*, managed by M. Maurice Sivilie, 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 *verniss-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 16<sup>th</sup> 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'Étain," 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. Wytzman. 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. Wytzman

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 Pêche*, 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 fellow'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 draughtsmanship, 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 draughtsmanship 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, Coppel 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.”

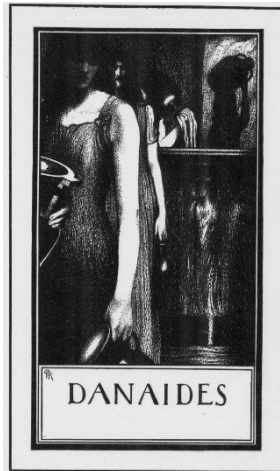
But then the question occurs, “What is bad taste?”

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 to 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.

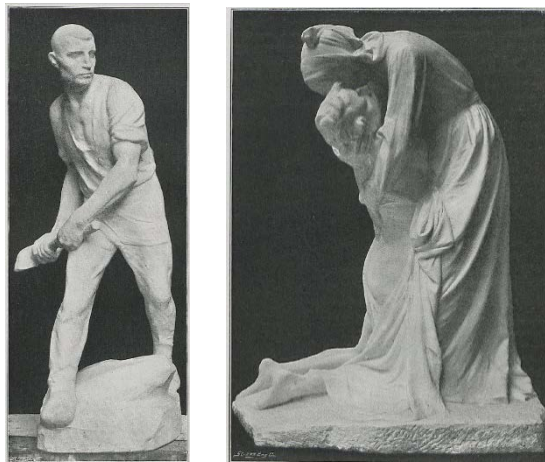
F.K.

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'Immortalité*—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.

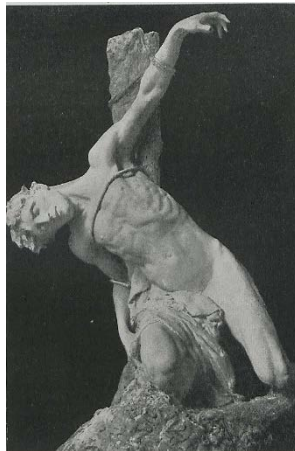
From Paris we also have some delightful *pâte de verre* by M. H. Cros; exquisite gypsographic prints by M. P. Roche; quaint knick-knacks by MM. Carabin and Charpentier; ingeniously designed bronze work and jewellery by M. H. Nocq; graceful furniture by M. Plumet, and a varied assortment of plates by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

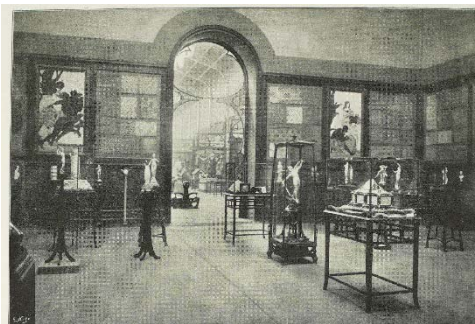
F.K., "Studio-Talk Brussels," *The Studio*, 11, 53 (August 1897), 200-202.

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.

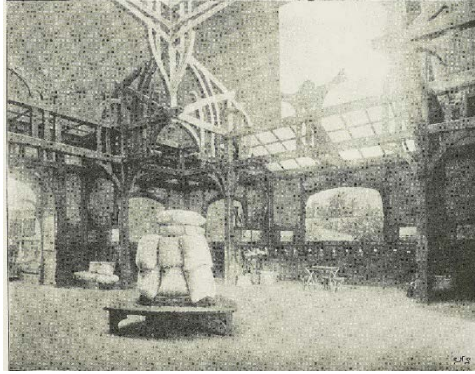
This year the Tervueren Colonial section of the Brussels Exhibition has been arranged with every regard for art, and the Secrétaire d'Etat, M. Van Eetvelde, together with Commander Liebrechts and Lieutenant Masui, cannot be too highly complimented on the success of their plans.

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 Enfants, 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 incrustated 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 mass 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.

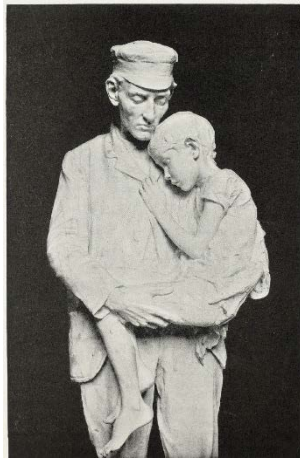
Verstraete has treated landscape not from the colourist's point of view alone. He has grasped and recorded the spirit of the soil in its subtlest aspects and in his most characteristic manner, and with all possible delicacy and intensity of feeling revealed the close connection between Man and the Earth 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, *Pêcheurs halant leur barque* and *Pêcheurs 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'église" (Fragment) by G. Charlier | "Pêcheurs 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, of 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 of 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 Sillon," 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, it 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 life, 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 George 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 is 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.

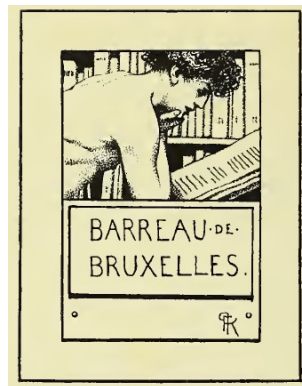
### Belgian Book-Plates

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. Vandeveld, 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 Beauafort, 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

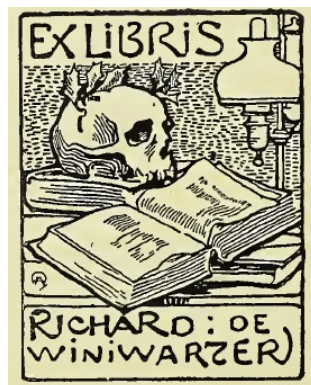
Among the Brussels artists who have designed book-plates may be mentioned A. Lynen, most thoroughgoing of Bruxellois, who executed a work of this kind for M. G. Schoenfeld the advocate; G. M. Stevens, author of his own “mark”; H. Meunier, of poster fame, who has executed *ex libris* for Madame H. Meunier, 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.

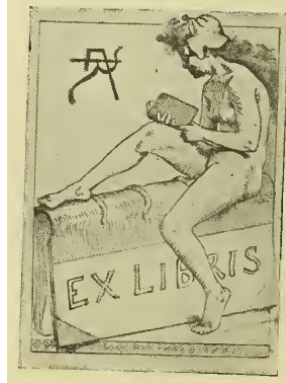
"In Antwerp," writes M. Ch. Dumercy, keenest of art amateurs, advocate, and man of letters, "the book-plate nowadays has fallen from its former high estate. So far as I am aware this is an exact statement of how things stand. I know three Antwerp bibliophiles who possess *ex libris*. When I say 'I know,' 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, Voituren, 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."

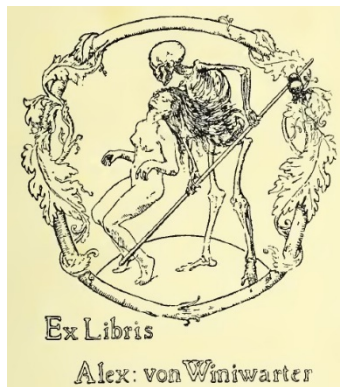


By Donnay



By A. Rassenfosse

This collection has certainly the merit of variety, for 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*."

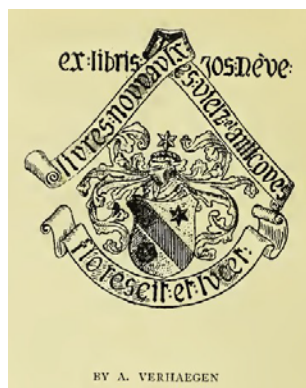
A book-plate is a unique thing, unpretentious in point of size, and of definite character; something that must be specially commissioned, and, moreover, cannot decently exist or be displayed without justification—or, in other words, without a library of books for it to be placed in. For it is only a 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 Liège 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 done, 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.

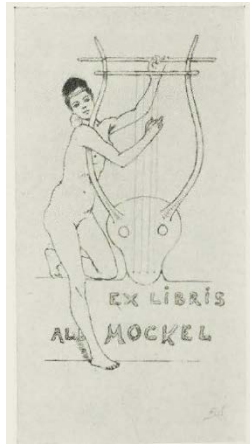
M. Ledru was at first an easel-painter, and it was M. Georges Depret, the alert and cultured manager of the Val St. Lambert Works, who, by his delicate counsel, succeeded in turning him into the recognised designer of the firm's models. These models, as we know, are genuine well-thought-out efforts intended 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 he 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.

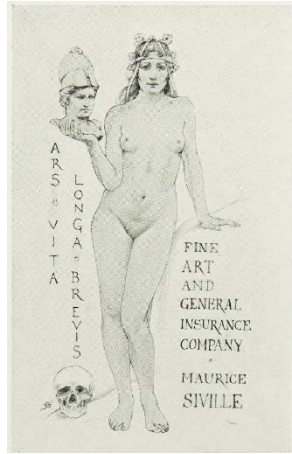
M. O. Berchmans' bas-reliefs ornamenting M. Bénard's sideboard (see page 184) suffice to reveal his technical knowledge, which he displays with equal success in his boxes, his waist-buckles, and his seals.



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, and 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, *vernissages*, 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 December 30, 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 violetter 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 XIV, und die Glockenblume, die dem Pisanello so lieb war. Die Rose, Königin der Liebe, mit den herablassenden 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 Prärafaeliten gewesen. Diese, zu einer exklusiven 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 anreihet, bleibt das letzte der jungen Mädchen stehen; es wendet noch einmal den Kopf und sendet einen lächelnden Abschiedsgruss zurück.

„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 Erinnerung.**

Von Fernand Khnopff (Brüssel)

Sucht man den Ausgangspunkt der gewaltigen Entwicklung 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 aufröthigten.

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 für 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.<sup>1</sup>

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 Rasenflächen 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 gingen 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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 seinen 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 zeigte mir beim letzten Schein des sterbenden 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 to 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.<sup>2</sup>

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 of 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

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<sup>2</sup> The following description is repeated in Fernand, Khnopff, « Des souvenirs à propos de Sir Edward Burne-Jones » (lu à la séance du 5 août 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.

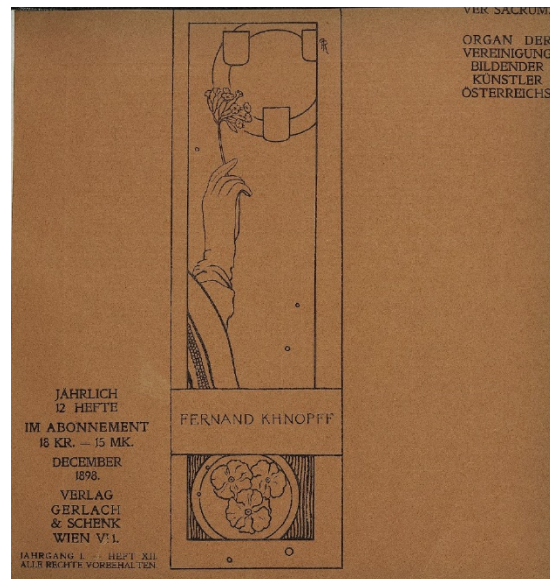
master with his quiet voice and his slow speech conjured up the life of the pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood before me. Now and then he stood up, took a picture off the wall and, showing me in the last glow of the dying day, one or the other of the artful, sharp drawings of J. E. Millais, or a study by Rossetti 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.

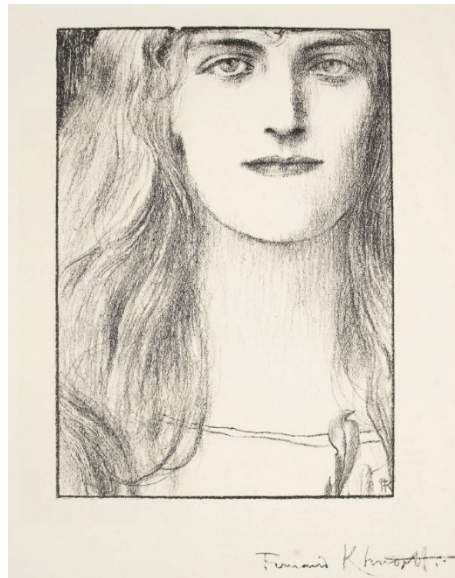
The Salon of the Water-colour Society has been tastefully arranged as usual, and the general effect is distinguished by what we call *tenue*, or style. There were numerous abstentions among the members of the society, but for all that the exhibitors and the regular "guests" once more display their customary 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. Buis, 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 of artists have opened a subscription, on the initiative of the "Cercle pour l'Art," for the purpose of presenting M. Buis 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 of 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 of 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





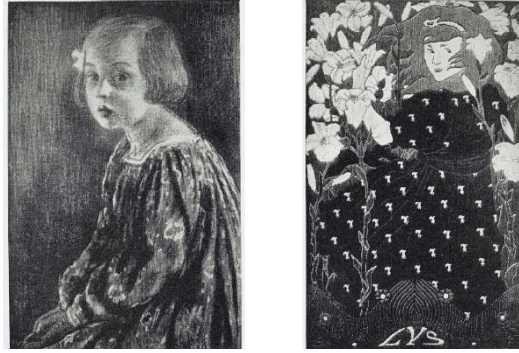
"Soir en Province (Flandre) from a painting by Albert Baertson |  
 "Ferme de Zuid, Beveland" from a painting by Emile Claus

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.

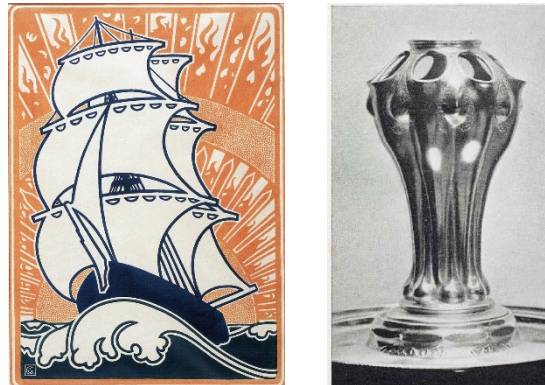
Among the other Belgian productions are the large and brilliantly coloured *Soir en province* by M. A. Baertsoen; the *Ferme de Zuid, Beveland*, by M. E. Claus; a delightful little painting, *Zélandaises*, by M. Mertens; and the plentiful display by M. Van Rysselberghe, which comprises portraits, figures, 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.

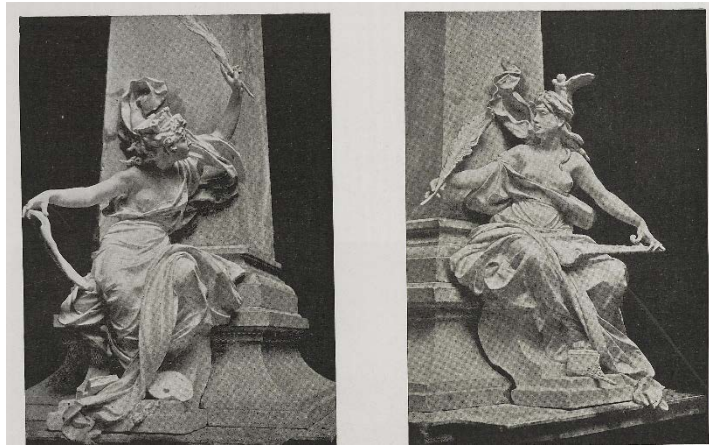
The town of Brussels has commissioned M. P. Dubois, the sculptor, to execute the monument to be raised on the Place des Martyrs in memory of Frédéric de Mérode. Some time ago THE STUDIO reproduced a marble statue by this artist—a seated figure of a woman—now in the Brussels Gallery.

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."

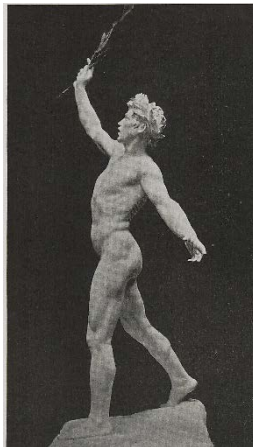
The paintings of M. Rion—most interesting in their sincerity of expression—are also worthy of note; also those of M. G.M. Stevens, equally remarkable for their colouring; together with M. de Rudder's animated group of statuary, and the plaster "sketch" of M. J. Dillens' large figure—*Le Silence de la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



"Le Silence de la Tombe" by J. Dillens



"La Ville de Bruxelles Reconnaisant" 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.

It 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.

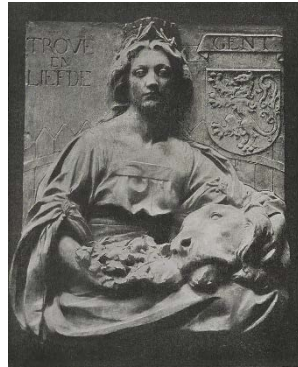
Vanderstappen has undeniable ability; most of the young Belgian sculptors whose work has attracted notice at recent exhibitions have been his pupils; yet none of them has renounced his own individuality in favour of even the remotest imitation of his master. Moreover, with a keen regard for the future 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 disillusiones 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. Vanderborcht, and M. Vanderkindere, the secretary of the association, whose amiability and energy during the exhibition were greatly appreciated.

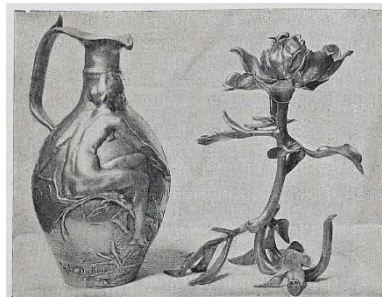
F. K.



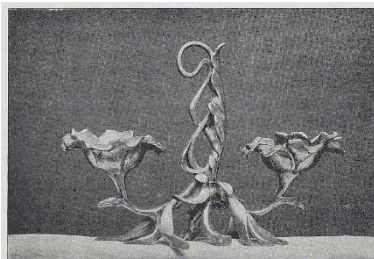
F.K., "Studio-Talk Brussels," *The Studio*, 15, 67 (October 1898), 55-56.

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.



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



Vase in Pewter by Paul Dubois

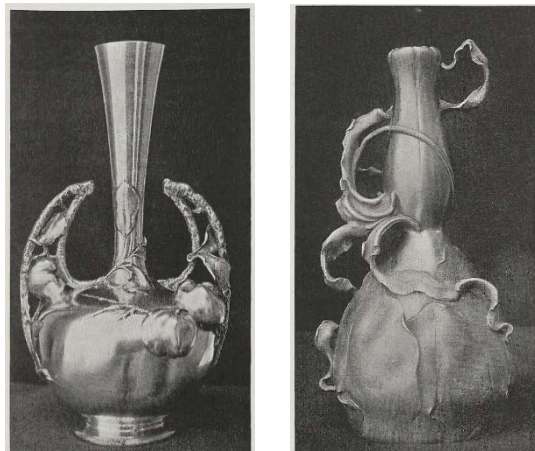
A committee has been formed at Louvain to arrange an exhibition of posters. Artists and collectors have been invited to co-operate in order that such material may be collected as will enable the committee to reconstitute the history of the illustrated poster from its origin.

F. K.

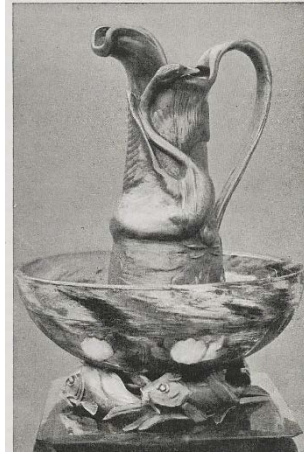
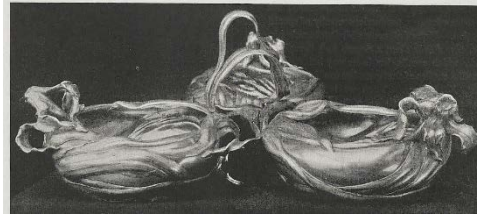
F.K., "Studio-Talk Brussels," *The Studio*, 15, 68 (November 1898), 134-136.

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. It 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 the monument erected to Duyck's memory was inaugurated in the cemetery of St. Gilles, near Brussels. It 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 Akademiepalast 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 Backenknochen; 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 Gesamtheit 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 vereinzelt 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 Continents erinnert, haben die Erläuterer sich dieses ungeheuren Werkes bemächtigt, haben versucht es in Provinzen einzutheilen, und sich Gebiete von verschiedener Art und Ausdehnung 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 specialer 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 Meeresstrand, 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 dreihundertjährigen 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 die 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 erfährt 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 propagandistische „Trachtätchen” verbreitet und die Bacon-Gesellschaft gründen half, ihre zweiunddreissig Argumente auf, deren einige so berühmt sind, dass sie eigene Namen erhielten, ganz wie der berühmten Syllogismen der alten Scholastik.

Immerhin hat dies Paradoxon 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 Beispiel 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 geworden, 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 trägt 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 erschlaft, ist eher vornehm als schön. Er ist kalt im Verkehr, aber manchmal wieder lässt er sich völlig gehen, und derselbe Widerspruch zeigt sich auch in seiner Kleidung, die correct und nachlässig zugleich ist. Was er über alles fürchtet, ist: dupirt 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.<sup>3</sup> 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

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<sup>3</sup> 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 beendet und gedruckt und auf der Bühne des „Globe“ aufgeführt. Dies Theater zeigte von aussen eine achteckige Gestalt. Die Mitte war ungedeckt unter freiem Himmel: die Bühne und die Galerien waren durch ein Strohdach geschützt. Ueber der Thüre das Aushangsschild: Hercules, der den Erdball trägt, 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 dorée* 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 Buchhändlergehilfen 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 archaischer 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 ausdrückt, 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, charakteristische 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 Geringschätzung, 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.<sup>4</sup> 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 dorée* 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

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<sup>4</sup> 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 Anklund 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 dänischer Prinz, der durch seine philosophische Geistesrichtung lebhaft von seiner noch barbarischen Umgebung abstach.

Mounet-Sully verkörperte 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 Eindruck 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 Ausstattung, die Costume!“

„Perrins würdig!“

Von dem Stück spricht während der ersten Zwischenacte niemand. Während 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 Ausstattung und die Costüme einen Erfolg erzielt hätten. Die Kritiker dagegen benützten den Anlass, um sich neuerdings über die Frage der Inszenierung auseinanderzusetzen.

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 Inszenierung 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 verhies. Dort stellten sie den Karren auf, der eine recht geräumige, zweistöckige 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 gewährte 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 für die Costüme und die Inszenierung seiner zahlreichen Aufzüge und Maskeraden an, sondern bringt sogar vielfach den dramatischen Effect seiner Stücke durch die Costüme oder Einzelheiten Inszenierung 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.<sup>5)</sup> Und es ist vielleicht am besten, einfach den schönen Eindruck Edmond Picards zu setzen:

„Die königliche Tragödin erhält den Zuschauer und Zuhörer in beständiger 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 schwimmt und ungewiss zerfliesst, offenbart sich die Schönheit ihrer Darstellung in all ihrer erschütternden Pracht. Dies ist 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 Schauspielerin 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

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<sup>5</sup> Auch wird man in Wien jetzt Sarah Bernhardt 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, unterhält 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 neu entdeckte Weib-Offenbarung. Sie kommen am Friedhof vorüber; Hamlet will Ophelias Graben besuchen und trifft den Laertes, der ihn tötet.

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 unter dem Drucke des Verhängnisses, das auf ihm 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 an und 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 über Wohlbehagen und Comfort, die ihr um die Zeit, wo man die Lampen anzündet, entschlüpfen! 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 für 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 zustuernd.

Die Shakespeare'sche 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 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 légendaires [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.

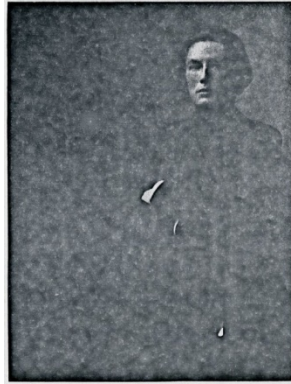
In all these more or less courteous discussions the question is, in point of fact, merely one of the frontier line,” as diplomatists say; and in this, as in many other cases, a buffer State is sometimes desirable. What is most interesting in all this campaign in defence of “art-photographers” is to see 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 (I 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 of 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,

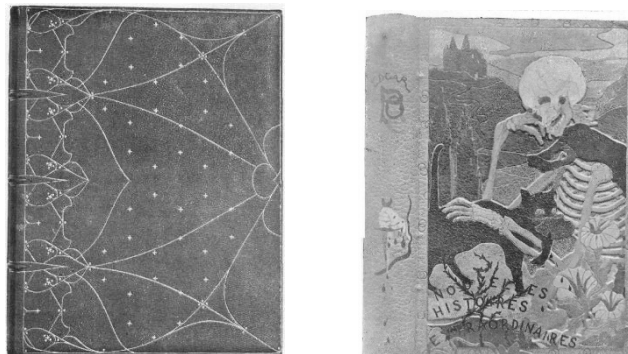
authenticity, perfection of detail, and truth with beauty. Photography has won such wide recognition in the world that it has every right to be itself, without attempting to ape anything else. We should be the first to forgive its mistakes and caprices, but it must not sacrifice what ought to be its 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.

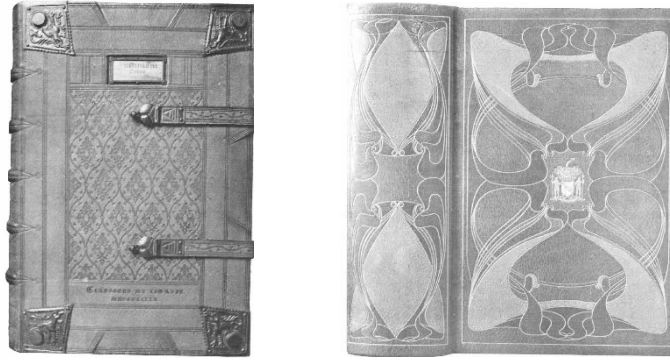
AT the Antwerp Exhibition of 1885, the important exhibits of Josse Schavye were summed up in the catalogue in the following terms: "Specimens of binding illustrative of the various epochs of development of the art from the beginning of the Christian era to the present day, including varnished boards, 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. Vandeveld, 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:—

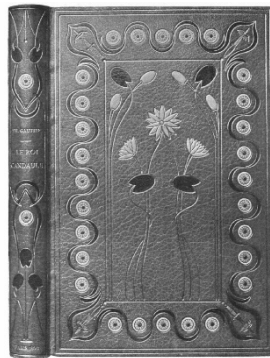
“The progress of the art of binding in Belgium has of late made rapid strides. P. C. Schavye had a pupil who surpassed his master. This pupil was Claessens, of Brussels, side by side with whom I worked myself for no less than ten years. I have got him to bind some of the volumes of my collection of books, 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 for 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

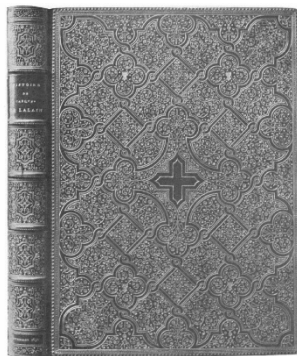
Many well-known and most successful artists were much attracted by the work of the elder Claessens, and he interested them greatly in his methods. Amongst them may be especially mentioned that most modern of modern decorators, H. Van de Velde, who made many clever and beautiful binding designs for the 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 l'Art 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.

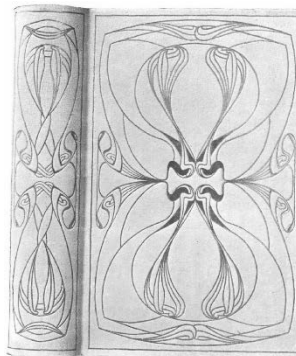


Designed By P. Claessens; Executed By L. Claessens, Père

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 Camélias* 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.

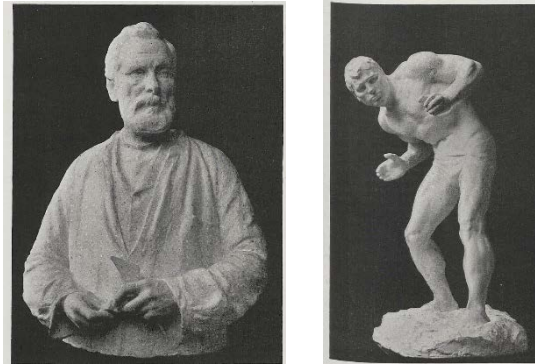


"Thais" Ivory Statuette by G. Devreese

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.

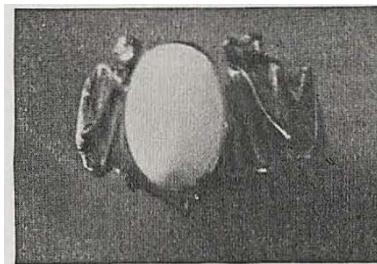
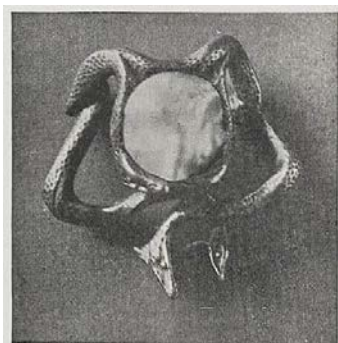
F.K., "Studio-Talk Brussels," *The Studio*, 16, 72 (March 1899), 134-139.

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.

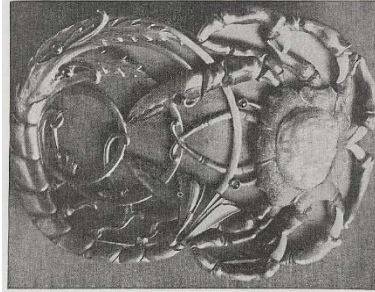
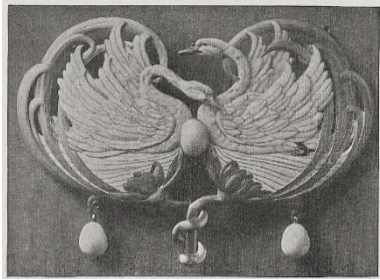
The young Brussels painter, G. M. Stevens, has been exhibiting a large number of drawings and paintings at the Maison d'Art. The majority of these works had already been on view at the "Sillon" displays and at the official salons, where their many merits attracted much attention. His more recent paintings reveal great progress.



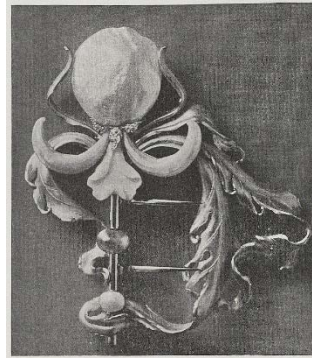
"The Vampire" by P. Wolfers



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 Grubicy, 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 für 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.

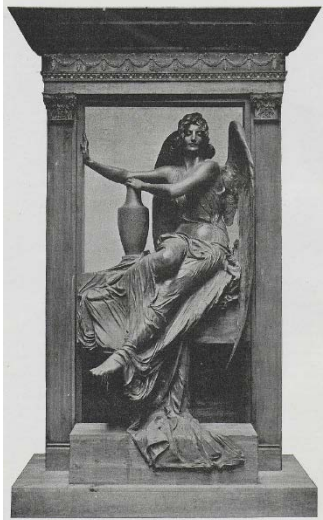
F.K.

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, Blicck, 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.

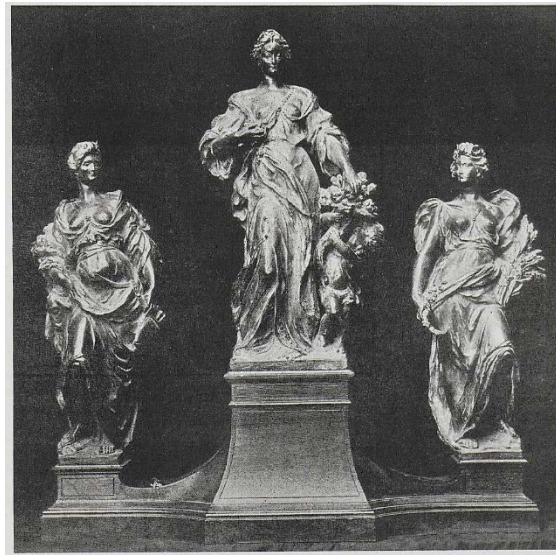
BRUSSELS.—The great Belgian artist, Félicien Rops; recently dead, is at last represented at the Musée de Bruxelles by a characteristic drawing, styled *La Parisine* [sic], a work lately forming part of the de Goncourt collection. It bears this inscription: "À Messieurs Edmond et Jules de Goncourt, après 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.

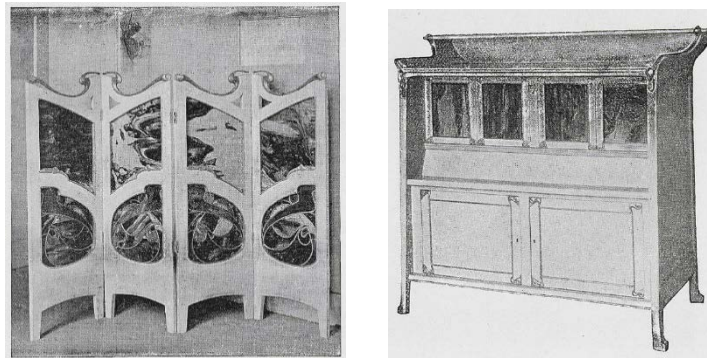
Two paintings stand out prominently from among the rest, namely, Fantin-Latour's portrait group, *La Leçon de Dessin*, and the big picture by Struys—*Désespéré*. The first of these, which was done a score of years ago, is one of those strong and simple creations which impress one by their calm nobility 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 à l'éducation 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 Vandevælde, 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. Vandevælde | Sideboard by H. Vandevælde

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.