

## ❧ THE FRANCO-BRITISH EXHIBITION ❧

### THE FRENCH SECTION



POPULAR venture intermittently backed by the official world of two nations, important owing to the chance of politics, at once reactionary in aim, yet in part admirable: such is the character of the Franco-British Exhibition at Shepherd's Bush —I had almost said Earl's Court. At first one feels that the management which is answerable for the Turco-Austrian architecture can claim part authorship in some of the sculpture represented, that decorations intended for the buildings have found a place in the galleries, where the energetic impresarios of the exhibition may be detected in works disguised under very French and English names; but this impression passes, and we find among the litter of exhibition art some masterpieces by the giants who have illustrated the nineteenth century.

My business is with the French section. Unlike the English one, this is confined to a period of production which excludes even the survivors from the eighteenth century who lived into the nineteenth, such as Prudhon, Fragonard, Houdon and Clodion. France, however, has strengthened her exhibit by a group of monuments by her great sculptors, Barye, Rude, Carpeaux and Dalou; whilst England, forgetful of the monumental work of her one great sculptor, Alfred Stevens, benefits only by one work (*Watts's Clyde*), which is not of recent production. In the English section the younger masters have been practically extinguished by bad placing; if in the French section there is also a predominance of work which has lost its hold even upon the market, there are several examples by the more prominent masters of the New Salon, even the reluctant Monsieur Rodin being present with two marvellous busts. With the works of the French members of the International Society, such as A. Besnard, J. E. Blanche, Cottet, E. Carrière, Bartolomé, I have no space to deal adequately; it would also be difficult for a contemporary to write with that generosity which the importance of their art commands, and their work is not unfamiliar to London. The bulk of this article must of necessity concern itself with the masterpieces done some years ago, though no system has been observed in the arrangement of the French section, and works done yesterday are placed next to those of the past.

Some acknowledged masterpieces stand in the centre of the Sculpture Hall; foremost among them is the *Ugolino* by Carpeaux. We have to revert to *The Deposition* by Michelangelo to find a design at once so central and significant as this. We have but to think of the wriggling *Laocoon and his Sons*, with their academic anatomies, meaningless hands, and the lack of relation of the figures to each other, to realize the beauty of this tragic work, which stands beyond the habit and range of Car-

peaux as the *Colconi* stands beyond the range of Verrocchio.<sup>1</sup>

I have to confess to a great disappointment in the sketch for Carpeaux's *Flora*; it shows signs of physical fatigue which are absent from the final version. The *Dead Cavaignac* by Rude is one of the great triumphs of French sculpture, which was so fertile in masterpieces during the nineteenth century. The current estimate of modern art tends to exaggerate the significance of modern landscape painting; it is in sculpture, in the masterpieces of Barye, Carpeaux and Rodin, that the highest level of success has been achieved. They can challenge comparison with the masters of the Renaissance. But the study of art is ever fertile in surprises, and leads constantly to unexpected 'transvaluations' of the work of a period. We overrate the painting of the eighteenth century, hardly as yet appreciate its sculpture to the full, whilst its beautiful architecture remains for another generation to understand. How shall I convey the austere tenderness, the dignity and realism which characterize the effigy of G. Cavaignac? The rendering of the head, the humble anatomy, the clinging draperies, each and all are beyond praise; I prize this noble work beyond Holbein's tragic *Dead Christ*, or that haunting effigy of a dead man with a wreath of roses by that great modern Italian sculptor Bastianini, to whom we owe three masterpieces and one of the great scandals or bankruptcies of criticism in the history of art.<sup>2</sup>

The famous statue by L. Brian is half lost against a wall; close to it is a tired and dirty cast of Falguère's *Martyr*. Falguère, at one time overpraised and now underrated, is represented again by an enchanting little bronze bas-relief hung in the picture gallery, which holds also Barye's fascinating *Theseus and Minotaur* and a case of small bronzes by Dalou, three out of these last having been seen recently in London. One feels before these masterly works that one is face to face with some priceless addition presented to the museum of some impoverished or stingy nation by some prince of finance, and not before the modern work of a man who once counted like Rodin only as a skilful workman. Paul Dubois's famous *Eve* and bust of *Paul Baudry* have not stood too well the test of time; after Rodin's busts the portrait of Baudry, which seemed at the time of its production an epoch-making work, has lost force and power. If the sculpture department holds several admirable works by Carpeaux and Rude, there are disappointments, notably with Frémiet, who seems too tight and too anecdotic in aim; there are also countless pretentious and meaningless female nudes flaunting the curves of professional hips before the more modest male academics of the British sculptors, who face them

<sup>1</sup>The sum of £2,000 would secure this priceless work for the nation.

<sup>2</sup>Rude was assisted in the work by Christophe.

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in bashful poses suited for instant purchase by the Chantrey Bequest.

Ingres is represented by a masterpiece, this alone is an artistic event!—Ingres who still remains unintelligible to most Englishmen. Unlike David, who really focused the reactionary temper of an epoch in the commonplace terms of that period, Ingres is no mere contemporary of Canova and Vigée-Lebrun. Like his contemporary, the Englishman Blake, Ingres held tenaciously to an ideal which ignored the limitations of his time. Something of the pontiff or prophet characterized both. Blake thundered to a chapel audience about original innocence and about the might in the Holy Ghost of Michelangelo; there was a chapel fervour in the art of this man who might have been also the founder of a pre-Mormon sect. To Ingres belonged the culture and obstinacy of a great tradition: he thundered also to his disciples and enemies, doubtless explaining to Madame Ingres that he, she and art lived in an 'époque apostat'! But he loved art only, and with his pencil and brush he tracked down that which he wished to see with something of that instinctive grip upon delicate form which characterizes Holbein and Raphael. If Blake despised the beauties of the noblest painting to evolve at times a curious and not unlovely workmanship of his own, leaving form, which he worshipped, to the chances of a 'provincial' practice, Ingres knew his qualities and persisted in them till drawing acquired with him a new quality of its own, unlike the balanced design of Raphael, unlike the delicate precision of Holbein, yet allied to each—at times more realistic, at times more abstract, but rarely failing in some strange quality of emphasis which constitutes the essence of art. Baudelaire, in one of the most searching pieces of criticism ever penned, analyzes the extraordinary quality of exaggeration in Ingres's drawing, the profound sensuousness which underlies it, and its freedom from academic vacancy. Was this draughtsman's quality always present in his subject pieces as it is in his direct transcripts from nature? It is often there, but not always; it is present in the *Stratonice* at Chantilly and in the *Virgil* at Brussels. In the work of this arch-priest of perfection we shall find anticipations of the voluptuous and melancholy figures of his pupil Chassériau, represented in the exhibition by a small pensive *Venus* rising from a silent sea under the grey of the dawn.

The colour and pigment of Ingres's portrait of Bartolini are sober and fine; the painting of the left hand has the quality of some masterpiece of the Renaissance. The drawing of the coat is worthy of Holbein, the painting being on a par with that of Velazquez when a young man or Courbet at his best.

Delacroix fares less well; he is represented by a superb sketch for the Louvre ceiling, but the ugly

little picture of *Mirabeau*, if intelligent in conception, lacks the pictorial substance or the emotional range that would allow full scope to the master's hand, which became chilled, outside tasks not calling for the utmost effort and emotion. To Delacroix belonged an astonishing gift of expressive draughtsmanship; to a great plastic sense he has added a sense of emotional movement which is unparalleled in art and different in kind from that of any other master. His strange and emotional sense of colour was often marred by the uncertainties of his practice as a painter. If the very size of his designs excludes the beauties of fine pigment, in his sketches we recognize the born painter. In his large and noblest work Delacroix is one of the great draughtsmen of the century; in some small pictures, like the *Mirabeau*, for instance, his drawing becomes cramped and the colour uncertain—even his powers as a designer have forsaken him here, and we long in its place for some masterpiece like the *Combat de Chevaux dans une Ecurie* or the *Hamlet*. Fortunately, he is present in the Wallace Collection by a masterpiece, the *Marino Faliero*, with its marvellously painted banners and columns, and its nobly designed Doge in white on the black velvet carpet. I would hasten past Courbet's superb *La Sieste*, the adequate but not supremely representative pictures by Corot, since these painters are well known in England. The small, sombre and laboured little Millet is a masterpiece; it is dull and dingy only at first sight, in conception and design it is worthy of the Louvre.<sup>3</sup>

I have hastened past Courbet, yet the most fertile and sequent efforts in French painting since 1860 owe their impulse to him. Manet, Whistler, each and all the Impressionists, have at some time painted in his dark massive manner, whilst the early work of Legros and Carolus Duran reflects his influence, three notable pictures by the latter being one of the pleasant surprises of the exhibition. To Courbet's example, modified by Impressionism and the influence of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, we may ascribe the now underrated painting of Bastien Lepage, represented by his best work, *Les Foins*, and a small portrait of his brother. Many painters of uncertain artistic achievement, such as Butin, Roll and Duez, owe the salt in their better work to the example of Courbet, modified by the developments of Impressionism. To Courbet belongs the largest share in influencing French painting in the channel of direct painting from nature. I am aware of a side influence from Corot, and even Millet, but this has been less certain and less constant, and has to be sought for more in Holland. Another current in French painting may be said to start with Chassériau, and to have been modified by the

<sup>3</sup> When this article was written the famous drawings by Ingres and Millet were not on view.

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example of Ricard. Each artist influenced by it developed in isolation, and none have achieved as yet their full meed of praise. If we might describe Courbet's naturalistic movement as a sort of assertion of middle-class feeling for substance and fact, the stylists about whom I am about to write tended towards a decorative or a more expressive or intimate type of art.

In a former number of this magazine<sup>4</sup> I have warned the reader not to overestimate the influence of Chassériau upon Puvis de Chavannes, represented here by one of his earliest and noblest works, the *Decapitation of St. John*. In this synthetic design, in the rendering of the draperies, rudimentary tree and the formal rendering of accessories, we recognize the unique aspect and temper common to the work of this great master; the charming and singular colour unusual in Puvis can be ascribed to no known influence; in the exotic perfume which envelops the *Salome*, however, there remains an indefinable trace of Chassériau.<sup>5</sup>

Not far from this noble picture hangs an admirable work, *The Plague in Rome*, by Delaunay, an unequal artist, admirable in this one work, which shows the influence of Chassériau, whilst his conscientious portraits reflect a remote influence of Ricard. Ricard, the magician, the supreme painter of women in the nineteenth century, whom I should have mentioned earlier in this article, is represented in the next room by a thoughtful portrait of a man, skied to make room for some nondescript modern work, and by a study of a woman who waits and watches in the golden twilight of the picture with haunting eyes and lips like some pensive flower.

Perhaps another generation may recognize quite readily that in expression, variety and delicacy Turner, Ricard and Watts are the original and subtle technicians of the century, and not Courbet or Corot and Manet. Perhaps it is unwise to prophesy, since all great emotional or thoughtful work requires emotion and thought in the spectator. Our civilization has witnessed the indifference of three centuries to the noble primitives; Tiepolo, Watteau and Houdon have each at one time been forgotten; Alfred Stevens is still unfamiliar to English sculptors; while France has forgotten the marvellous art of Paul Baudry, who died little more than twenty years ago.

A profound study of the great Italians resulted in one of the most astonishing and daring creations in the history of painting—namely, Baudry's cycle of decorations in the foyer of the Paris Opera. The sudden fame of these works can be estimated

<sup>4</sup> See THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE, vol. xiii, pp 9, ff. (April, 1908).

<sup>5</sup> Would that this rare picture could be secured for the nation for £1,000 before it is too late, for the pictures by this master are as rare in number as the now unobtainable work of some Italian masters of the past.

in contemporary writing; then followed a period of eclipse as sudden and absolute as that which overlook Tiepolo a few years after his death.

Baudry's famous portrait of *Madeleine Brohan* here exhibited counts among the portraits of the century. The painting of the hands and mouth is wonderful; nothing could surpass the luminous tones of the flesh; as yet time has not made interesting to us the ugly but beautifully rendered dress and Castellani jewels or some of the accessories. I had imagined that Baudry's elegant and 'militant' portraits might interest me but little; that the reverence and affection with which I viewed his decorations might fail me in his rather restless rendering of the women of his time; but this picture enchants me, and I am appalled to think that this great artist is often dismissed among faded academicians.

It is well known that Chassériau influenced the strange, complex art of Gustave Moreau, but this can be overstated. This curious and unequal artist is represented by a *St. George and the Dragon* which expresses only one side of the painter's bent, where he appears as a sort of enameller or weaver of strange patterns in paint. Capable of amazing intensity of expression in such works as the *Hercules and the Hydra*; of a haunting and musical vein of invention in his *David*, exhibited many years ago in London, or in that early and fascinating picture where a nymph passes holding the head of Orpheus, which is one of the gems of the Luxembourg, in the *St. George* he aims at the effect of some fairy tale in a picture which is sudden and visionary in aspect, but not sufficiently fused or melodious. Compared with great painting and great drawing, Moreau's work is thin and feverish. Compared with what is often accepted as good painting and drawing—in the output of Courbet and Manet, for instance—it becomes profoundly sensitive and expressive. I owe to a malicious friend the statement that Moreau's later years were embittered by some photographs he saw of the work of Burne-Jones, in which he probably divined a coherence and element of fusion in which his work is lacking; that he raged against Whistler and the Impressionists, feeling the vacancy of much of their work and the mental vulgarity and bigotry which characterize the followers of their cult. Moreau, Puvis and Degas once were friends; with time their friendship wore badly, and each lived to deplore the blatancy of much contemporary painting without realizing that art can be good only with a few masters, and that the average tendencies are valueless now, as they have been in the past.

The veteran academician Hébert (a pupil of Ricard) exhibits three pictures. These are at once interesting and unpleasant, though more significant than many pictures painted almost yesterday by other members of the old Salon. Together with

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such veterans as J. P. Laurens and L. Bonnat (that noble collector of old and modern art) he stands far above the exhibits by the conservative section of the Salon. E. Detaille, with *The Victims of Duty*, achieves a triumph in all that art should not be. In vulgarity of conception, ugly colour and paint and nerveless drawing, this is easily the worst picture in the entire exhibition. I believe that no royalty in Europe has missed visiting this painter's studio. One feels that the German Emperor would give back the French provinces to claim the art of Detaille for the Fatherland. Nothing in the English section shows so profound an indifference to all that makes for art. It is with a sigh of relief that one turns from such a work to the wall given over to the Impressionists. The great quality of fresh instinctive painting in the work of Manet was revealed to the English public some three years ago at the Grafton Galleries; two important paintings of his (one of them a masterpiece) now represent him at Dublin. In the Franco-British Exhibition he is represented by *Le Liseur*, an early and somewhat lifeless work, and by a large still-life, *La Brioche*, which is inky in tone—better, but not greatly so, than a good Vollon. The *Jeanne* represents a later phase of his practice which has influenced countless painters in the Salon. At his best Manet has painted enchanting pictures; at his worst his work merges into the output of a period which he helped to influence. Renoir fares better; all his three works are typical, one of them, *La Loge*, counting among his best pictures. If Renoir is the most unequal painter of the nineteenth century he is at his best less impersonal in his outlook than his fellow Impressionists. If Manet saw actual local colour in broad sudden patches with something of the transposition in their relation which characterizes the vision of a man of defective eyesight, Renoir broods by preference over bright summer colours and sees them like a tangle of coloured silks. At the start his work was influenced by Fantin Latour. The singularly unequal quality of his output may be ascribed not merely to the tyranny of an acquired formula which has burdened most Impressionists but to failing health, some of his canvases having been painted of necessity with the left hand. The absence of Degas (probably at his express wish) renders the discussion of one of the most complex and fascinating personalities of the nineteenth century beyond the scope of this article. The effect of the Impressionist group is unforeseen; each of them, Monet even, seems tranquil in aspect when compared with the conventional works of the old Salon hanging by. Whatever may be the future estimate of the value of this school, both in conscious aim and in result, their practice shows always a genuine love of their profession and a genuine love of nature. The space at my disposal does not allow me to analyze and praise other

quite modern works by friends and contemporaries. I can only express a genuine pleasure in seeing again pictures that I liked in my youth, such as Cazin's decoration and Besnard's charming portrait group of his children. I am delighted to praise the *St. John* of Puvis de Chavannes which I admired in his studio, and to be able to state in print that it is time to do justice to Baudry. I am pained by the practical absence in both sections of a picture by a master and friend, A. Legros.

Despite gaps in representation, errors in precedence, and the atmosphere of jobbery which characterizes all universal exhibitions, there remains a fairly sequent series of representative works illustrating the art of France in the nineteenth century. These are shown among others that are on the mental level with the switchbacks and other popular attractions of this show at Shepherd's Bush.

CHARLES RICKETTS.

### THE BRITISH SECTION

THE British Art Committee of the Franco-British Exhibition, which includes so many presidents of different societies, might well have invited the directors of our permanent galleries to their august councils. Mr. Claude Phillips would surely have not been *de trop*, and Sir Charles Holroyd and Mr. D. S. MacColl with their wonderful and recently proved capacity for hanging, apart from their knowledge and sympathies in English art, might have prevented certain errors of omission and commission. All committees, especially in connexion with art, are of course a mistake. An ideal committee should consist of two persons with power to reduce their number; Caesarism is the only possible alternative. Directors should be dictators. The great European collections which we admire, whether in a municipal building or at an auction room, were formed by one man's taste or at one man's discretion. Nearer home, in a city seldom held up for a model, the admirable tyranny of Mr. Hugh P. Lane has brought together the finest public collection of modern pictures in existence, with the possible exception of those at Birmingham and Manchester. But the English rivals devoted years where Mr. Lane has given months to his objective. Even at Shepherd's Bush the most happily chosen group of modern pictures is to be found, not in the British Pavilion at all, but in the remote and otherwise foolish Irish Village. It is quite worth the extra sixpence, however, to see what the persuasive talent of Mr. Lane can achieve, and ethnologically to realise the unexpected Celtic talent in our midst.

In this more democratic country nothing can be done without a committee; else the public might suspect unfairness, prejudice and jealousy, characteristically un-English faults confined

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entirely to other nations. The significant names of Mr. Francis Bate, of the New English Art Club, and Sir Charles Lawes-Wittewronge, Bart., seem guarantees that any mistakes are due not to insufficient knowledge of contemporary art, to prejudice, internal dissensions, lack of catholicity or taste. Wisely perhaps, it has been assumed that our French visitors will spend their Sundays, when the Exhibition is closed, at the Burlington Fine Arts Club (in order to correct preconceived ideas of English pre-Reformation Art) or at the National and Tate Galleries, which fill up fairly enough the *lacunae* in a necessarily exiguous display. An invitation to tea with Mr. Herbert Trench at Richmond is the easiest way to become acquainted with the art of Mr. Wilson Steer, one of our leading landscape painters, of whom the French may have heard more than some of the committee seem to have done. Permission to visit the wonderful silk paintings of Mr. Charles Conder belonging to Mr. Edmund Davis will be a privilege such as the Exhibition does not afford: for one of the most original and exquisite English artists is unrepresented.

English painting has always been a Cinderella among the schools of Europe. Denied or neglected abroad, her treatment at home has hardly been creditable to our patriotism. She has been hustled by her older and plainer sisters, Religion and Literature, who have pulled her ball dress to tatters in trying to get it on themselves, and have enlarged the glass slippers out of all recognition in order to fit their splay extremities. When she is allowed to be seen, she has always been arrayed as the handmaid of something. She has been a 'tweeny' in the House of Intellect, the victim of kitchen politics below stairs; she has suffered from a want of unity of purpose or singleness of aim; she has had to please too many masters as well as herself—sometimes the public, sometimes the publican, the dealer, or the *nouveaux riches*. She was snubbed by the church of the eighteenth century and rescued by the moralitarian in the nineteenth; and hers is the head on which all the odds and ends of the world are flung. No wonder the French critics find that our art is odd when it is subjected to such odd treatment by those at home.

Who does not remember the shocking collection of British pictures in the Paris Exhibition of 1900? The impression left on the French critics was only partly modified by the small and rare collection of deceased masters at the English Pavilion in the Rue des Nations. At Shepherd's Bush we have risked a similar eventuality. In the Old Masters section, inadequate only perhaps owing to space, there is at all events evidence of an individual taste unravaged by the dissensions of a committee. Here are great masterpieces by Gainsborough: *The Duchess of Cumberland* and *The Blue Boy*, typical with

others of English painting at its highest. They illustrate that Gothic element which Ruskin subtly detected in the most Romanesque of our portrait painters. Ruskin insists—and the point is not so fantastic as you would suppose—that Gainsborough is more interested in the faces of his sitters than in their bodies, in expression rather than form. This is true even of modern artists furthest removed from any Gothic inspiration; note the portrait of *Lord Roberts* by Charles Furse, that of a beloved servant of his government rather than an ideal general. How true even is it of Watts, the torch-bearer of tradition, the Italian tradition in English painting! This was apparent at the New Gallery recently, where his picture hung beside the Latin triumphs of France. Here, he is in an entirely Gothic environment and seems Latin enough by comparison. It is easy to understand why the French admire Lawrence so much more than we do ourselves; why we underrate, and why they possibly overrate him. Verlaine once observed in the course of a lecture that we were still Gothic in our art, our literature and our life, while France had put the Middle Ages away tenderly in a museum. Even S. Paul's—outwardly a Renaissance building, if ever there was one—is constructed on Gothic principles, and the pediment of the façade is, I am assured, only a gable.

It must be remembered that the programme for English painting promulgated by Reynolds in his 'Discourses' was never carried out seriously; all his recommendations were either ignored or actually reversed in practice; he hardly took the trouble to carry all of them out himself. He implored the students to go to Italy and copy Old Masters; they stayed at home and copied him; or they took Gainsborough as their model and studied their own scenery as the Norwich painters did. The valuable Latin element in our art, such as it is, comes down, however, through Reynolds; but it is a Latinism that has suffered a considerable sea change. It must be accepted that the English School has no Ingres, no Andrea del Sarto. Those conscientious painters who tried to carry out the recommendations of the great President failed dismally: they were splendidly null without being icily regular; of them there are happily few or no examples at Shepherd's Bush, so far as the eighteenth century is concerned. But if portraiture is superbly represented by Hogarth, Reynolds, Hoppner and Romney, and other painters, the by no means lesser glory of English landscape is hardly allowed to shine. An entirely English landscape by Turner would have been more apposite than the beautiful *Mercury and Herse* or even than the noble *Quillebauf*. The large picture ascribed to Cotman, the authenticity of which was canvassed when it was shown at Burlington House some years ago, is hung too high for examination. The *Moonlight Scene* given to old Crome is by his

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son, John Berney Crome.<sup>1</sup> There is, however, a fine Wilson belonging to Mr. Harland Peck and a particularly excellent Ibbetson, who, in the absence of striking rivals, assumes greater importance than we should accord him. The Barker of Bath is unusually poor; an opportunity has been lost for rehabilitating an undeservedly neglected Old Master. Though the large *Dedham Vale* will have a particular interest for French artists (who owe, traditionally, so much to a painter of whose technique they must have hazy notions, if they examine the average Paris Constable), it was a pity to include two smaller works one of which is by a well-known imitator, and the other, apparently, by a member of the Norwich School.

If the *Canterbury Pilgrims*, by William Blake, was going to be hung at all, it should not have been skied. There are reasons, indeed, for placing it among the Preraphaelites as a kind of link or key to the school which owed something to the artist's inspiration. But it is, after all, an eighteenth-century criticism of mediaevalism, though painted in 1810, and Blake belongs to that century as much as the poet Gray. He was simply a Goth who woke up before the others; and his was not a runaway knock at Strawberry Hill in the sense that Chatterton's undoubtedly was. *The Pilgrims* should have been hung beside the Gainsboroughs and Reynoldses by way of contrast, in order to emphasize the important circumstance that the English School is *always* one of surprises concerned with side issues; anarchic, individual, and attracting genius into by-paths without unity of aim.

The most conspicuous things in the Pre-raphaelite room are, symbolically enough, an emergency exit (occupying the place of honour) and the *Golden Stairs* of Burne-Jones, which seems a gracious and gentle ladder by which we can descend into the arena of contemporary art. But before we clutch the bannister let us pay homage to certain works—*Le Chant d'Amour* of Burne-Jones, the gorgeous *Autumn Leaves* of Millais, the radiant *Work* of Madox Brown, and (pretending not to see *The Blessed Damosel*) the *Mariana* and *Bower Meadow* of Rossetti—though neither of them can be reckoned among the artist's masterpieces. The rare and delightful *Queen Guinevere*

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Ross's conclusion is natural enough, for the open texture of the painting, as well as the subject, may seem at first sight to be more in the manner of John Berney Crome than of his father. Yet many of those who have followed the career of the father and son with attention will feel that the superb painting of the orb of the moon and the mills in front of it has just that quality which the older man obtains in his happiest moments, but of which the son was never able to produce more than a rough imitation. The loose handling of the unfinished trees and foreground illustrates Crome's study of Gainsborough, whose influence is seen in Crome's sketches more frequently than in his pictures, which were usually worked up to the current ideals of finish. It may be permissible, therefore, to see in this *Moonlight* a noble unfinished study by John Crome, in spite of its external resemblance to the facile night pieces of his far less gifted son.—ED.

of William Morris is shamefully hung too high. It is one of the few pictures Morris ever painted, and technically it has a particular interest because the handling has not any apparent relation to Rossetti or Madox Brown. In its very dryness it is more mediaeval than any of their pictures, or that of the other Preraphaelites, save the early *Magi* by Burne-Jones. Though (to use a hateful word pregnant with possible error) it is entirely decorative, it has none of the falsehoods with which decoration, in its proper sense, must alone concern itself. Still, it is perfectly pictorial with all the wealth of accessory you find in a picture by Carpaccio or some Fleming.

The Greeks very nearly solved in marble, assisted with colour, the problem of unifying truth and pattern which Morris has here attempted in oil: we are often deceived by the verisimilitude of their bas-relief; but their sense of style provoked the necessary and invaluable lie of isocephaly, by which even the youths and the horses of the Parthenon have no actuality. Pergamene realism, an unconscious longing for photography, brought antique art to an end long before its destruction by Roman connoisseurs. Hence the errors of Renaissance sculptors, who were deceived, partly by the antiques of a rather late date, and partly, along with the painters, by the still dimly understood aesthetics of Aristotle. A truth in decoration must be a pictorial fib; or you relapse into admiration of views of towns on the more atrocious Worcester ware, Tintern Abbey on the coal-scuttle, and other examples of 'nature in art.' Morris came to believe that all pictures as separate entities were a mistake. In *Queen Guinevere* he seems to have been trying to effect a compromise by painting an isolated piece of decoration, which in another sense every picture becomes, if it be a good one. Yet it is a dangerous experiment, and its repetition became later on a stumbling block to the English School, though few will deny that Morris has succeeded delightfully. So-called decorative pictures painted without any relation to some definite place they are destined to occupy are usually dismal performances, even when the archaism and the conventionalism are not excuses for incompetence. Unusually well represented is another freak of the English School, Simeon Solomon, whom Burne-Jones is said to have appraised as the 'greatest artist of us all.' One of his best pictures, *The Mother of Moses* (badly hung), belonging to Mr. W. G. Rawlinson, when exhibited in the Academy called forth in the 'Cornhill' the admiration of Thackeray, a surprising champion. *The Love in Winter*, though weakly drawn, is also a beautiful example. Too many people only know of Solomon's hideous chalk drawings, which, executed when he was sunk in the lowest depths of drink and misery, have no

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artistic significance or interest. His early pictures go far to justify Burne-Jones's opinion of him. Though conveniently grouped with the Pre-raphaelites he is remote from the principles as practised by the brothers or as laid down for them by Ruskin; nor did he follow the advice of the poet in the 'Bab Ballads' who took 'nature for his only guide.'

An everyday tragedy in England is that other people manage your business better than you can yourself. That is why we are a God-fearing and interfering nation. Even the Pre-raphaelite manner was carried to greater perfection by those who were never members of the brotherhood. You could not find a better or more typical portrait of the school than the *Mrs. Stephen Lewis* of Frederick Sandys, an artist who must be seen in small quantities. A number of his works recently brought together showed that he never fulfilled his early promise; and his recent work, like Solomon's, was detestable: he is seemingly ill at ease with his pigment, though his pen drawings are unsurpassable. That he was a Norwich painter gives him an historical importance of peculiar interest.

The marvellous *Val d'Aosta* of Brett is in some ways the most remarkable picture in the room. Hardly with exaggeration it may be called the most astonishing landscape in the English School. It violates with breezy vigour every canon of landscape, and was obviously painted on the eloquent prescription of Ruskin. Everything is there: nothing is suggested, nothing but the sleeping child in the foreground is composed. It treats the spectacle of mountain and meadow like a section of the human frame in a book on anatomy; it might be a surgeon's note for a tract on the prevention of cruelty to landscape. Human ingenuity in paint could hardly go any further; though art has often done so. At the same time, if we cannot accept it as a model of what landscape ought to be, let us recognize its beauty and pay a tribute to the painter for his perfect success in what he attempted. He has tried what primitives tried charmingly enough in the backgrounds of their pictures—more especially the Flemings. But Brett's success seems to show the futility of the emprise; he does not give us the same aesthetic pleasure that we derive from the stammering failures of the Old Masters; this is art in its *second* childhood. Moreover, Brett, it must be noted, never followed up this daring *tour de force*; or that of the more beautiful *Stonebreaker*, or the only less clever seascape, *Britannia's Realm*, neither of which are shown here. He became the commonplace delineator of sham realistic sea views. Truth, however, he undoubtedly achieved, coming nearer to that combination of a truth in art and a truth in nature than almost any other English landscape

painter. The great landscape painters willingly or unwillingly adjust the balance, faking one or the other scale. Wilson, Turner, Cotman and Crome and Constable selected, suppressed or emphasized. The artist's unalterable prerogative, of which Brett refused to avail himself, must not be confused with the doctrine of the Impressionists: the error of their critics, who complain of their lack of finish, or the error of their defenders who, maintain that there is nothing more to see or to be recorded. When a youthful enthusiast confessed to Ruskin that he thought the *Val d'Aosta* was better than Titian he was corrected by the sage, who replied, 'Different from Titian.' We should compare it with such pictures as *Crossing the Brook*, by Turner, and others, where great distances are superbly rendered, or with such miserable productions as *Over the Hills and Far Away* (hung where Walker's *Plough* ought to have been). It is undoubtedly as different from them as from Titian.

William Dyce's *George Herbert at Bemerton* is another interesting work by an unassociated Pre-raphaelite, wrought with greater skill than the originators sometimes commanded, always excepting Millais, that great amphibian, who was half artist, half academician from his birth.

No example of Edward Calvert—like his master Blake, a side issue in the English school—is to be found at Shepherd's Bush. One of his largest and most important pictures is at the Luxembourg, but he is unknown at the Tate or the National Gallery. French critics see in him, with all his defects of draughtsmanship, an interesting manifestation of English art synchronizing with their own—Fantin Latour and Puvis, whose work he could never have seen. He is more Graeco-Latin than any Englishman. Again you lament the absence of George Richmond, the first Englishman who could handle religious and historical subjects in oil (Blake never succeeded in that medium) without the insipidity characteristic of post-Reformation art. Alfred Stevens, our great, perhaps our only great, draughtsman, is also unrepresented. Since Whistler is included in the Black and White section of an exhibition where Mr. Pennell and Mr. Sargent are both exhibitors, why are there none of his pictures, which have so profoundly influenced the younger generation? This particular omission is inexcusable.

In the water-colour rooms, where you would have thought the committee might have roused itself to justify almost the only artistic reputation we have in France, the display is quite deplorable. Some brilliant Rossettis (notably *Ophelia's Madness* and the superb *Paolo and Francesca*), *The Green Summer* and *Backgammon* by Burne-Jones illuminate one wall; and others by J. F. Lewis and Ruskin are all worth careful study. But the famous early English water-colour school to which Britons are patriotically attached

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(and generally spoil with gold mounts) like Uncle Adam in Stevenson's story make 'an awful poor appearance.' There is nothing absolutely dazzling by Turner; the John Robert Cozens is a wretched specimen; Cotman is absent; and there is only one Girtin. We can only goodhumouredly echo the hearty laughter of the French visitors over this particular section on a day when there was nothing much to laugh at. How much better if all the pictures had been chosen by Mr. Marion Spielmann, whose taste is obvious in such excellent choice as there is; or to any ONE member of the committee, however much you might have deprecated his selection.

The charming *Renaissance of Venus* by Mr. Walter Crane is a fair haven from which to embark on a rapid survey of the modern section of British painting. This was first exhibited in 1877 and became the property of Watts, who particularly admired it. The year was an eventful one, because it saw the opening of the Grosvenor Gallery, which was destined to be the focus of much ridicule, and for many years the home of pictures condemned by the authorities at Burlington House, although the Guelphs often hung side by side with Ghibellines, and the wise and foolish virgins lit their lamps at the same hospitable shrine. The Preraphaelites were settling down to a languid aestheticism; Rossetti was never an exhibitor; and the Impressionists were making their first public manifesto in London. The more particularly esteemed pictures from these schools belong perhaps to an earlier date; but, apart from this, it is informing to glance at the catalogue and to realize the artists whom Sir Coutts Lindsay on his own initiative was able to muster. The gallery contained no less than seven Whistlers (including the *Henry Irving*), two masterpieces by Watts (*The Hon. Mrs. Percy Wyndham* and *Love and Death*), three Albert Moores, eight Burne-Joneses (including *Merlin*, *The Days of Creation*, and *Venus's Mirror*), four Holman Hunts, and other works by artists now seen in Shepherd's Bush. And this was no retrospective exhibition; Venus, indeed, had risen from the sea! It will, of course, be urged that we cannot replace the immortal dead. But I believe that it would have been perfectly possible to have filled the galleries at Shepherd's Bush with an exhibition of *living* artists quite as remarkable as the Grosvenor of 1877.

With all respect to a much-advertised tea, I refuse to believe that the leaves of thirty years ago are more delicious than those of to-day. Only the selection must not be made by a committee, or art politics will interfere. Why has Mr. MacColl's only water colour been placed on a level with the visitor's boots? Why is Professor Tonks represented by only one small picture, which is skied? As an official, quite apart from his unique position as an artist whose vigorous influence has produced

such noble results, he was entitled to more honour. Where are the *Strolling Players* and *Rosamund and the Purple Jar*? Where is Mr. Wilson Steer's *Hydrangeas* and *Nidderdale*? and where, indeed, is Mr. Steer's picture at all? In the catalogue it is well named *That's for Thoughts*. The *Doll's House* of Mr. Rothenstein has lost none of its sombre power, and is one of the fine things possible to see. Two characteristic and beautiful pictures, the *Delia* of Mr. Charles Shannon and *Supper Time* of Mr. Strang, are so ingeniously placed as to be quite invisible.

Even the Academicians are not too well represented, with the exception of Mr. Sargent, Sir Laurence Alma Tadema, Mr. Alfred East and Sir Edward Poynter. From the President's point of view, which may not be precisely that of the advanced critic or artist, his portrait of *Mrs. Murray Guthrie* is a singularly beautiful picture, to which the model has contributed no small share. The accomplishment of the painting is, as they say, a lesson for all of us. And if *Atalanta's Race* be a trifle empty for its length, we may learn from it why the Academy has sometimes lost time by stopping to pick up the apples discarded by those who are making for the goal. From Sir William Richmond should have been extracted the splendid *Bismarck*, or, if that was inappropriate for an exhibition intended to dazzle the French, his portrait of *William Morris* and *A Memory of Sparta*, the most poetical of all his paintings. Neither the *Borgia* nor any others shown by Mr. Orchardson betray his power for conjuring incident into the dimensions of paint; they would hardly explain to a practical French visitor his deserved and recent triumphs in the auction room. The wonderful precision of Sir Alma Tadema is, however, admirably presented, and Mr. Alfred East, who never seems quite satisfied with his academic flag, by a fascinating landscape, *The Shepherd's Walk at Windermere*. It is pleasant to see the *Derby Day* of Mr. Frith in its present surroundings. This is essentially a picture for a popular exhibition, a national treasure like the Crystal Palace or Osborne. Among artists a morbid reaction in its favour has very properly begun. Though it can never occupy the same position in the heads of the English critics that it does in the hearts of English landladies, it is impossible not to admire the invention and skill of a painting that is most certainly a document in the social, if not the artistic history of England. The articulation of gesture, the variety of attitude in the figures, the absence of monotony, make it a real triumph, not exactly of art but of English painting. Intrinsicly how far more artistic it is than many so-called classic and idealistic pictures of the nineteenth century—those of Leighton for example, or rather not for example but for instance! Mr. Frith's directness and materialism are ever so much more valuable



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than the false subtleties of fancy painting such as you get in Pinwell and Walker, with their Evangelical aestheticism and wobbly execution. No wonder some of the younger men, such as Mr. Orpen and Mr. McEvoy, seem to derive more from Mr. Frith than from the theatrical properties of the pseudo-romantics, the heavy-weights in the English School of signed artist proofs. Mr. Orpen is seen to advantage in *The Valuers*; though his work in Mr. Lane's Irish Gallery ought not to be missed, where may also be seen Mr. Gerald Kelly's striking portrait of the dramatic sensation, Mr. Somerset Maugham, and the lovely pictures of Mr. Charles Shannon (*Mrs. Patrick Campbell and the Hermes*). Of those who in spite of all temptations remain English, Mr. Augustus John may be congratulated on the finest portrait, *Professor Mackay*, in the whole of the modern section. It is more likely to convert waverers to a belief in the artist's genius than the wilful and wayward *Seraphita*, who, however, should have been here because of the interest she would have had for our French critics with their stagey ideas of the English 'Miss' and the ordinary Alpine climber *en route* for Switzerland. Here at all events is an artist to whom we may point when foreigners remind us that Mr. Sargent is an American trained in Paris and that English painters cannot draw. However glad we may be to see *Isabella and the Pot of Basil* by Mr. Holman Hunt, *The Strayed Sheep* or *The Hireling Shepherd* should have been secured because of their importance in modern English landscape, of which they were, in one sense, pioneers. The treatment of shadow in *The Hireling Shepherd* was without precedent in English painting. Though the Scotch do themselves fairly well, Mr. Hornel has been much too modest; it would have been agreeable to see again *The Druids* and *Among the Wild Hyacinths* shown in that last sensational death-bed confession of the Grosvenor Gallery. The corporation of Liverpool contributes the famous *Idyll* of Mr. Greifenhagen; and another picture which ought never to have been hung in the limited space at the disposal of the committee; it is a monstrous work in both senses of the word.

The section devoted to modern watercolour can only be described as unrepresentative, and that to black-and-white as ingeniously misrepresentative. There are, however, good things by Mr. Pennell, Mr. Muirhead Bone, Miss Airy and two atrociously framed Aubrey Beardsleys.

If English artists are neglected on the continent or at home, they always take it out of sculpture, on the principle of the child who, itself in disgrace, punishes its doll. The images at Shepherd's Bush are all arranged on the lines of Madame Tussaud. French and American visitors will, of course, admire Mr. Harvard Thomas's *Tenerum Lycidan quo calet juvenus nunc omnis*, and about whom the Academy was tepid. The strange, archaistic

beauty of this work cannot be seen to advantage in its present position, but its stylistic qualities irresistibly recall the great pre-Pheidian masters—the body and shoulders the primitive 'Strangford' or 'Omphalos' Apollos. There are several delightful statues by Mr. Gotto, whose *Slinger*, however, seems to have borrowed the feet of a Rodin; *Tigers*, by Mr. Swan; and by Mr. W. B. Fagan there is a pretty little head (No. 1,274), easy to find because it is near a door. With few exceptions, 'degli altri fia laudabile il tacerci' in the words of the most sculpturesque of poets.

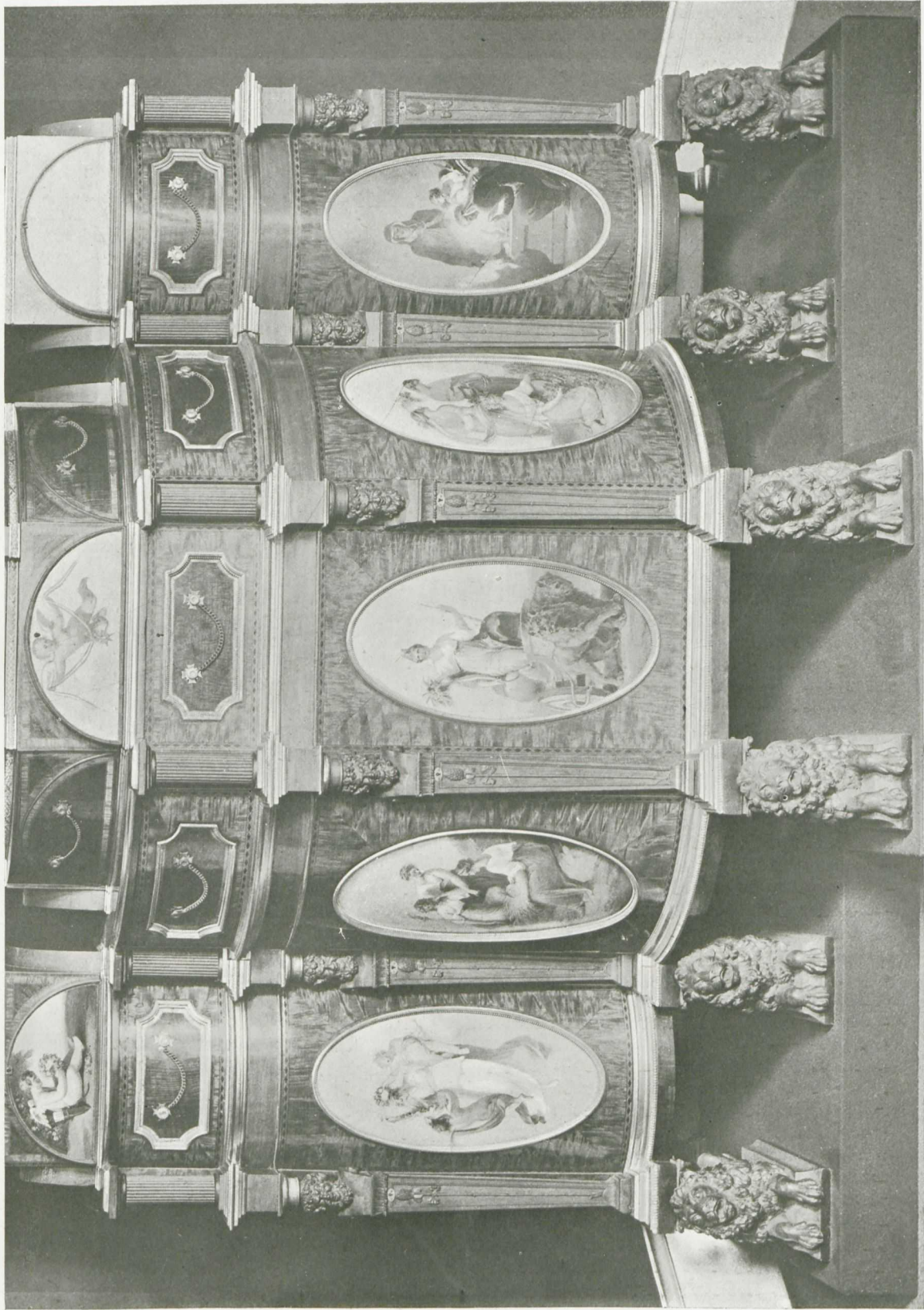
ROBERT ROSS.

### NOTES ON THE APPLIED ARTS

AMONG the significant events which remain in the popular mind as landmarks, the Great Exhibition of 1851 has secured a fame comparable to that of the Battle of Waterloo; nor is that fame undeserved. The exhibition was a real landmark, and that in more worlds than one. In the world of politics it was the culminating point of the era of optimism which grew up with the peace of Europe after the fall of the first Napoleon, which was shaken by three great Continental wars, and which only the gloomy close of the nineteenth century could effectually dissipate. In the world of art the exhibition was no less memorable. It marked the climax of a particular phase of ostentatious vulgarity, of a pride in mere elaborate mechanism that brought about the great reaction which in painting we associate with the Preraphaelites, in criticism with Ruskin, and in the field of the applied arts with William Morris.

The development of the applied arts in France and England has, however, been conducted on separate and divergent lines, as an inspection of the 'Palaces' of English and French Applied and Decorative Arts at the Franco-British Exhibition will prove. It may be said at once that the display is neither as fine nor as striking as might have been expected, and that it is almost wholly commercial in character, while the lateness of the date at which the French sections were ready for examination put a serious difficulty in the way of comparison. Several of the exhibitors, especially among the goldsmiths and silversmiths, have made the mistake of trying to show too much, and loading their stalls and windows with a mass of unremarkable objects, where one or two interesting pieces would both have attracted more attention and testified more eloquently to the quality of the work done by the firms in question. Amid much that is uninteresting and some things that are unworthy of a place in anything but an ordinary shop window, it is possible, however, to form some idea of the condition of the applied arts in the two countries, and to trace the different influences which account for the divergence.

International exhibitions of any kind do not,



LOWER PART OF A CABINET DESIGNED BY SIR WILLIAM CHAMBERS AND PAINTED BY WILLIAM HAMILTON (1783). LENT BY MR. R. W. PARTRIDGE

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perhaps, offer a perfectly fair ground of comparison between nation and nation. They have always to be organized on a more or less commercial basis, and it is inevitable, therefore, that even in exhibits of the decorative arts the influence of the man of business should often—perhaps in the majority of cases—somewhat overshadow the results produced by the artist and the craftsman. In this respect neither the French nor the British section can claim a decisive superiority. The older English firms, it is true, make no very reprehensible concessions to the tourist public, and the exhibits of Messrs. Elkington, Messrs. Garrard, Messrs. Mappin and Webb, and the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Company are as free from the appearance of mere window display as are the exhibits of two or three of their important French competitors such as MM. Christoffle or Susse.

A comparison of the two sections reveals one radical difference between the products of the two countries. The best English work is based entirely upon English designs of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and in some instances this reliance upon past designs goes so far that fine pieces of old plate are exhibited side by side with good modern facsimiles. Where our plate is not based upon these old models (as in the case of certain exhibits of sporting trophies and the like) it follows the base examples of the Victorian epoch, and, though frequently elaborate in execution, it is at once put out of court by its meretricious pomposity. A large proportion of the pieces, however, are reproductions of older models, and, since most of those models were in one way or another excellent of their kind, the general effect is good, even if it be somewhat lacking in originality. It was perhaps somewhat unfortunate for England that two or three of the independent craftsmen, whose work we have from time to time admired at the New Gallery and elsewhere, could not have been given a prominent place. Such work as that of Mr. Cooper, for example, would have strengthened the English section considerably, even if it had made its appearance under the wing of one of the great manufacturing firms, who naturally command the most prominent positions.

We miss, in fact, that element of independent craftsmanship which the Arts and Crafts Society introduced and has so creditably maintained, and are driven to recognize that a large majority of our designers are still anonymous workers in the employ of great commercial houses. It is thus as commercial workers that they have to be noticed in any description of the show at Shepherd's Bush. Yet if their work were no more than mechanical manufacture it would not deserve mention, and the mere fact that it is mentioned, even under a trade description, should be taken to imply that in such cases the tradesman has not quite overwhelmed the artist.

When we turn to the French section we find a somewhat different state of affairs. Here two tendencies seem to be at work. First we have to face an old, and possibly moribund, ideal of minute, skilful finish applied to objects of no artistic importance (such as handles for ladies' parasols and small trinkets), yet applied to them with a certain conscientious perfection that is not without merit of a kind. In the combination of pretty enamels with highly wrought goldsmiths' work the French craftsmen show undeniable capacity. The designs may not be of a very high order, and the work may be no more than rather expensive shopwork, but still, in its way, it has a daintiness and appropriateness to feminine uses that ought not to be underestimated. It is distinctly ingenious and pretty, and from the aesthetic point of view is perhaps no less meritorious than that rigid abstention from the ornate which, combined with perfect workmanship, is its Bond Street equivalent.

This, however, appears to be a moribund craft, if we may judge from its present representation. The more elaborate French exhibits, almost without exception, display a very different tendency. 'L'art nouveau' is a phrase vulgarized by advertisement, discussion and abuse. It was wholly English in its origin. William Morris was its grandfather, the Arts and Crafts Society its parent, 'The Studio' its foster-mother. In Great Britain its influence was on the whole healthy and stimulating, but when it once started its career on the continent that career speedily became one of riot. Where it came upon new civilizations the results, as might be expected, were disastrous, and, like Frankenstein's monster, it now threatens to overwhelm central Europe with its monstrous progeny.

In France, however, it met with a stable civilization and an organized system of taste just on the point of revolting from the crude display of the Third Empire in favour of the *barocco* elegance of the eighteenth century. That reaction was so strong that the Arts and Crafts movement could not overwhelm it. It was driven to make terms of peace, and the French section of the Exhibition is everywhere influenced by the resulting compromise. The sweeping curves that in Eastern Europe either run wild riot or are contrasted with solid masses of Egyptian severity, in France take on something of the character of an eighteenth-century festoon, and burst everywhere into artificial blossom. The result is ornate and sometimes extravagant; it is rarely or never wholly satisfying. The easy sweep of the curvature, the skilful workmanship of the elaborate leafage, the carefully 'matted' surfaces have a mechanical effect. They would make admirable decoration for the dinner table of an expensive hotel, but in a private house they would be tiresome.

If we compare them with fine examples of French eighteenth-century work we shall see in a moment

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where the weakness lies. That admirable school of craftsmanship was permeated from first to last by a very real feeling for design and proportion. A mount by Caffieri, for example, is not a mere exuberant flourish, but a deliberate construction carefully calculated to serve the particular end in view. In the modern work we no longer see the same careful foresight to preserve a just relation between plain and decorated surfaces, between large curves and small, between the rigid lines which make for architectural stability and the flowing lines which give energy and life. Everything has been sacrificed either to exuberant ease or to an insensitive simplicity that results both in stiffness and emptiness.

Perhaps the most instructive of all the exhibits in this section is that contributed by the Administration des Monnaies et Médailles. In numismatics the French, for a century or more, have been immeasurably our superiors. As a race they have a certain natural aptitude for sculpture which we do not possess. In France an Alfred Stevens would be no solitary phenomenon, but would appear only as the natural culmination of a widespread national talent. The early French medals are of surpassing interest, whether our inclination lead us to linger over the terrible indictment of Charles X, over Mary Queen of Scots as wife of the Dauphin, over Louis XIV aping Alexander the Great, or over the wise Colbert. Later, after a period of florid decadence, excellent work is done under the influence of classical models, and Euainetos is seen to be the true originator of one of the most successful of modern coin designs, as well as of what is perhaps the most perfect Hellenic example.

Once more, however, as in the case of the decorative metal work, 'L'art nouveau' steps in to modify and improve with the most deplorable results. The old sense of refined proportion at once vanishes under the impulse of the new movement, and in no art is refined proportion so vital and essential as in that of the numismatist. The circular medallion form is discarded for honorary purposes in favour of a rectangular plaque, on which the design loses all the significance it might have secured by subtle spacing, while to make matters worse the actual surface of the metal, to which the medallist looks for his most delicate gradations, his rarest hints and suggestions of modelling or character, is obscured by a uniform artificial dulling or roughening, which makes the noblest material look like cheap alloy or coarse electrotype. The art that could withstand such ubiquitous assaults would indeed be a great art; and nothing proves the essential vitality of French sculpture more conclusively than the fact that a certain remnant of grace and style survives even in these degraded plaquettes. Nor is it for us to throw stones. Our own numismatic

art has sunk into such a slough of hopeless official and commercial conventionality that even these misguided French examples seem by comparison to have both style and spirit.

Had the sections devoted to furniture and the allied industries in France been in a more forward state of preparation, it would have been easier to form a fair estimate of their importance. When these notes were made it was difficult to see any marked indication of originality, either in design or manufacture, the principal firms being apparently content with tolerably skilful reproductions of eighteenth-century patterns. Nor among the minor English exhibits was there much that seemed to call for special notice, while the large English manufacturers of furniture do not seem to have patronized the Palaces of the Applied Arts.

The principal interest of the English furniture section was thus concentrated upon the objects shown by the chief dealers in antique furniture, and upon the work of a few firms of decorators. The foremost place was undoubtedly taken by a series of three rooms, representing the styles of William and Mary, of George I and George III. These rooms were the joint product of three firms, Messrs. Cardinal and Harford supplying the carpets, and Messrs. Mallett the furniture, while the decoration in each case was carried out by Messrs. White Allom. All did their work well, but a word of special praise is due to the excellent taste which governed the decorative schemes. The peculiar serenity of the old panelling was most happily caught, its restful quality being made doubly pleasant from the contrast it provided to the more florid style of eighteenth-century France. The carpet in the Chippendale room was also attractive.

On the opposite side of the gallery Messrs. Hampton showed a panelled room copied to scale from one at Hatfield. It did not, however, show quite to the same advantage as the rooms previously mentioned; possibly because a setting of solid oak is really best suited to the country, to rooms often flooded with sunlight, and to an outlook upon green lawns and bright gardens, or, in the evening, to the cheerful glow of a log fire upon an open hearth. In the glare and bustle of an exhibition its homeliness is out of place. If the panels are on a modest scale they tend to look forlorn, if on a large scale they may seem heavy and pompous. The loan collection of furniture arranged close by contains some notable pieces, among them one of the sumptuous chairs from Knole, and an exceedingly curious example of Chippendale's carving in the Chinese manner; but its usefulness and interest would be greatly increased if the specimens had been properly described and catalogued.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The so-called Official Guide sold in the exhibition is even more comically inadequate in its treatment of the sections of

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The centre of the gallery, like the sides, is largely occupied with loans; the collection of Old English glass and Worcester china being specially good, and contrasting strongly with the modern products of the same kind shown elsewhere. A curious set of parcel gilt plates, engraved after Aldegrever's prints representing *The Labours of Hercules*, also deserves notice. The most prominent object in this section, however, was the large satinwood cabinet made for Charles IV of Spain, lent by Mr. R. W. Partridge. Designed by Sir William Chambers, painted by Hamilton, and made in 1793 by Seddon, Sons, and Shackleton, it represents an effort, unusual if not unique, in English work, though comparatively common among the French *ébénistes*, to raise the art of furniture-making into the regions of architecture. Had it been their national intention to rival the French cabinet-makers in their own field, the English could have chosen no greater designer than Sir William Chambers, and something of the massive grandeur of the façade of Somerset House is evident in his design. William Hamilton, too, was admirably fitted to second Chambers, and his panels of the Four Seasons, of Fire and Water, of Night and Morning, of Juno and of Ceres, are as fortunate specimens of decorative work as eighteenth-century England could show. Like some of its French rivals, the piece combines the functions of a bureau, a jewel-case and a dressing-table. The workmanship without and within is of extraordinary nicety and elaboration. So elaborate indeed is the cabinet that it is only on detailed examination that its merits can be properly judged, and at Shepherd's Bush it suffers for want of an appropriate background. A French piece of the same importance would suffer less, for experience had taught the French designers the advantage of making cabinets compact like a decorated chest. Chambers, making a single excursion into an unaccustomed field, relied upon his architectural experience and, giving free play to his fancy, designed not so much a piece of furniture for a mansion or a palace as a wonderful building of carved and painted wood, unrelated to any scheme of interior decoration.

As we have seen, the decorative arts in England are represented chiefly by wise reliance upon past models, but one or two specimen rooms indicate other tendencies that are at work side by side with this skilful antiquarianism. The famous firm of

Applied and Decorative Art than such publications are wont to be. In this respect, indeed, the whole exhibition compares most unfavourably with its primitive fore-runners in South Kensington: There the official catalogues at least gave a more or less detailed synopsis of the principal objects on view, instead of devoting themselves largely to what may be termed the swing and roundabout departments of the fair.

Morris & Co., for example, contribute some elaborate specimens of their craftsmanship, which serve alike to illustrate the development of the Arts and Crafts movement in England and to form a link with the kindred work that is being done on the continent. The exhibit of Messrs. Godfrey Giles suggests a possibility of development in another direction. Here the scheme of decoration seems to be controlled by very practical considerations, and is carried out with attractive wallpapers that can be washed, and cushions stuffed with springs instead of horsehair; in fact it almost seems as if the increasing strictness of our views upon sanitation and personal cleanliness might react in time upon the decorative arts and supply them with a fresh stimulus, at least so far as dwellings in crowded cities are concerned. The word 'sanitation' does not naturally suggest things of beauty, and customs die hard, but if it were possible to speculate with any certainty on the tendencies of the future, it would not be unreasonable to recognize the probability that the next development of decorative art for town dwellings will take a channel more consonant with the laws of healthy life than several past fashions have followed.

Yet the exhibition as a whole can only be described as disappointing so far as the decorative arts are concerned. It is not that things rare, curious and beautiful are lacking, but rather that the good things appear to have come there by chance, and not as the outcome of any reasonable organized plan. Valuable objects seem to have been plumped down haphazard in the middle of a cheap bazaar; sections to be classified without principle, and arranged without method. So far as it was possible to judge in the midst of this confusion, certain important arts, such as those connected with textiles, were not represented at all in any serious sense of the word; for such exhibits as there were seemed aimed only to catch the attention of the people who crowd to 'sales' in Oxford Street. Possibly the organizers of these shows know their public; but we cannot help thinking that if they had tried to make the arts section into an organized and representative whole, instead of leaving it in the condition of a slipshod emporium, they would have served their public just as well and the exhibiting firms much better. A combined show of the industrial arts of France and England would have been an immensely interesting and attractive thing. As it is, this section is saved from being a fiasco by the enterprise of the few firms, who have taken matters more or less seriously. We do not perhaps realize how high is the average of their taste, till we light upon a certain sideboard of specimen woods in the New Zealand Palace.