

# **ART IN THE NETHERLANDS**

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Art in the Netherlands by H. Taine

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**H. TAINE**

**ART IN THE  
NETHERLANDS**



*THE PHILOSOPHY OF ART.*

ART

IN THE

NETHERLANDS

BY

H. TAINÉ

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TRANSLATED BY

J. DURAND



NEW YORK

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

1874.

TO

GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

7651



PART I.  
PERMANENT CAUSES.







## THE PHILOSOPHY OF ART IN THE NETHERLANDS.

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DURING the last three years I have explained to you the history of painting in Italy; this year I propose to set before you the history of painting in the Netherlands.

Two groups of mankind have been, and still are, the principal factors of modern civilization; on the one hand, the Latin or Latinized people—the Italians, French, Spanish and Portuguese, and on the other, the Germanic people—the Belgians, Dutch, Germans, Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, English, Scotch and Americans. In the Latin group the Italians are undeniably the best artists; in the Germanic group they are indisputably the Flemings and the Dutch. In studying, accordingly, the history of art along with these two races, we are studying the history of modern art with its greatest and most opposite representatives.

A product so vast and varied, an art enduring nearly four hundred years, an art enumerating so many masterpieces and imprinting on all its works an original and common character, is a national product; it is consequently intimately associated with the national life, and is rooted in the national character itself. It is a flowering long and deeply matured through a development of vitality conformably to the acquired structure and primitive organization of the plant. According to our method we shall first study the innate and preliminary history which explains the outward and final history. I shall first show you the seed, that is to say the race, with its fundamental and indelible qualities, those that persist through all circumstances and in all climates; and next the plant, that is to say the people itself, with its original qualities expanded or contracted, in any case grafted on and transformed by its surroundings and its history; and finally the flower, that is to say the art, and especially painting, in which this development culminates.