

**CATALOGUE OF A
PRIVATE COLLECTION
OF PAINTINGS AND
ORIGINAL DRAWINGS**

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Catalogue of a Private Collection of Paintings and Original Drawings by Various

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VARIOUS

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C A T A L O G U E

OF

A PRIVATE COLLECTION

OF

PAINTINGS AND ORIGINAL DRAWINGS

BY ARTISTS OF THE

DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS.

NEW YORK:

WM. C. BRYANT & CO, PRINTERS, 19 NASSAU STREET.

1851.

EXTRACTS FROM THE PUBLIC PRESS OF NEW YORK.

These remarks of the Press were made at the time the Gallery was first opened, since when, many pictures have been added.

THE DUSSELDORF GALLERY.—The arrival of one fine picture, of a new style, or that can give a new sensation of art, is by no means an inconsiderable event in a city.

The Dusseldorf Collection, however, is one of unusual magnitude in the way of Art, for it is a sudden and unheralded revelation of a *whole school* of painters, of whose existence, hitherto, we have known little or nothing. In a remote town of Germany, an Academy of Art, founded by one liberal sovereign and encouraged by others, has gradually grown to be a home of artists, and, by isolation and mutual emulation, they have formed a separate school of style, the peculiarities of which have been heightened to striking excellencies, till they now send out a Gallery for Exhibition which rivals successfully the best exhibitions of modern Art in France and England.

We confess that these Dusseldorf pictures took us quite by surprise, and we are sure that few novel spectacles will ever have become so fertile a theme of discussion and interest. It gives great point and individuality to the exhibition, also, that there are two most admirable pictures, with a grouped portrait of the principal Dusseldorf artists—very fine-looking fellows, and a brotherhood one would like exceedingly to visit. The life in such an atmosphere of Art and genius must be very delightful, and the old town of Dusseldorf is illuminated by their residence there, like a decayed bush by the golden breast and clear carol of the bird that chooses it to sit in and sing.

We have not yet had the leisure to make the second and more critical visit which would enable us to speak safely of the comparative merits of these beautiful pictures, but we will do so hereafter, and meantime we advise no one to lose this opportunity of adding another whole volume to their viewless library of thought-learning in Art.—*Home Journal*.

THE FINE ARTS.—A RARE COLLECTION OF PAINTINGS.—One of the most important items of the week, in matters of Art, is the arrival of a large private collection of modern German paintings, principally by the most prominent artists of the Dusseldorf school. Among them was a beautiful work by Hubner, "Das Jagdrecht," a terrible story of the game laws of Germany. This is the same artist whose picture of the "Lovers' Quarrel," in the Art Union, has excited so much attention lately, but which is, however, a far inferior work

to this we speak of. Another, a picture of "Falstaff enlisting his Troop," from the Dusseldorf school, is painted in the true spirit of Shakespeare. Falstaff, however, has a little too much of the German in his composition, and we may well imagine what a German Falstaff might be; a "Heidelberg Tun" of beer and heaviness, not a luxurious butt of good "Sherris Sack" and wit. 'Tis a capital picture though, and so is a most fairy like scene of elves and mannikins—"Peas Blossoms and Cobwebs." The original of a fine lithograph, well-known to our artists, contains portraits of all the painters of the Dusseldorf school at a shooting match. Think what a commotion a hundred and thirty such let loose among us would create in our little world of Art. We fancy that our artists would appreciate the necessity of severe study, and that our annual exhibitions would be the better for it. We can do as well, and perhaps, better, in time, but not until we cease this mere "playing at Art." Whether the pictures we have spoken of will be exhibited, we know not; we sincerely hope they may be; we apprehend that the most serious obstacle in the way is the difficulty in obtaining a proper gallery. A few only have been opened, to ascertain if they had suffered any damage on the voyage, and having seen these, and been extremely gratified, we are the more ardently desirous that all should be exhibited, and that the public and ourselves may enjoy the full of so rich a treat.—*Literary World.*

PICTURES.—Art is civilizing and refining, and the Art of painting, especially, appeals so directly to the sense of beauty, color and proportion, with which all human beings are more or less endowed, and which sense in all may be educated, and rendered a source of pure and permanent delight, that it becomes a duty, in some degree, and an obligation to encourage the growth of this Art.

We know not that this can be more effectually done than, in the first instance, by placing within the reach and examination of minds "finely touched to fine issues," master-pieces of painting.

The school of Dusseldorf, in one of the Rhenish provinces of Prussia, is world-renowned, and from that school, one of our fellow-citizens, of German birth—Mr. J. G. Boker, long a resident here, has recently brought over some of the finest paintings, which, while yet at home, adorned his own residence.

He will, it may be hoped, permit them to be exhibited. Indeed, we call upon him, in the name of his adopted country, to do so; for thereby he will confer upon it real benefit. These paintings are as yet unpacked for the most part. Some three or four, however, we have had an opportunity, through the kindness of Mr. Boker, of examining—they are of rare excellence.—*Cour. & Eng.*

PAINTINGS BY THE DUSSELDORF ARTISTS.—We have an opportunity on the present occasion of saying little else in relation to this exhibition, besides announcing its opening at the Church of the Divine Unity, in Broadway, and desiring all our readers to visit it, as one of the most gratifying and instructive collections which have ever been seen in the United States. It is full of evi-

dences of that indefatigable and minute study of Form which characterizes the German Schools, and in regard to which the Directors are so exacting, that newly arrived students are almost reduced to despair by the magnitude of the task before them. But results such as these show the advantage of this severe discipline, nay, its indispensable importance, if the true objects and aims of Art are to be fulfilled. The decision in handling, the freedom of outline, the firmness and accuracy of touch, which knowledge in the department above-mentioned confers, give a completeness and unity to the expression of thought on canvass, which a half-educated artist, however great his genius, can never obtain by his uncertain and tentative experiments.—*Am. Art Union Bulletin*.

THE DUSSELDORF GALLERY.—One of the agreeable effects of the state of revolution on the European continent, is to throw many precious things into our own country for safe-keeping. One of the very best galleries of pictures ever seen in America, was sent over here at the time Napoleon was turning all Europe into a battle-field; and now, again we are honored with the protection of another precious collection of paintings, deemed at home too valuable to be exposed to the vicissitudes of the Germanic struggles for confederacy. Really, no compliment can exceed that which the jealous anxieties of foreign virtuosi thus pay to the stability of our institutions, the good order and good taste of our people. What! these Western barbarians become the custodians of European art! This nation with the clearing axe yet on its shoulder, and the log-house over its head, whose laws are administered by Judge Lynch; the crow-bar its only barine; Russia-duck for its canvass; its chisel a very cold one; this rude, coarse, unformed nation—yet an experiment—become the refuge of the delicacy and refinement, the precious commodities, the priceless ornaments of foreign cities. Would it be very preposterous to send an American deputation over to Rome, offering to take charge of the contents of the Vatican until things were settled in Italy! True, we might find it necessary to build a considerable town to keep it in, but that we are doing for much less important purposes every few weeks. Perhaps poor Charles Albert's final defeat may render it unnecessary, as order in Italy seems likely to be restored by the utter ruin of its hopes of immediate freedom.

But though we are not likely to move the Vatican here, we have got this charming collection of pictures, the Dusseldorf Gallery, so called because painted by artists of that famous modern school. One of the peculiarities of this collection is the interest and variety of its subjects, and the staring, popular character of its merits. It takes no special cultivation of taste to enjoy it—a great thing to say, when it is added that nobody can enjoy the collection without *improvement* of taste. Its excellencies are not hidden and profound—not of the highest—but they are pure, without trick, real, substantial—their chief merit being that they are thoroughly pleasing. It seems to us that the drawing is very unusually good. To our taste, the gem is neither the Othello, nor the Adoration of the Magi—both, perhaps, more valued—but the piece

illustrating Tieck, the Naiads and Cupids waiting upon the lucky little mortal in the Sea-shell.—*Christian Enquirer*.

THE DUSSELDORF GALLERY.—The re-opening of this interesting collection and the addition to it of several new pictures, afford us a welcome opportunity to offer our readers the few remarks upon it, which we were, soon after its opening, obliged to postpone to other matters.

We have in it about eighty paintings of all descriptions of subjects and all grades of merit;—for, with all our admiration of the collection as a whole, and of some noble works in particular, we feel bound to say that some specimens are but little higher in merit than mere furniture pictures. More than this—they look like a certain description of furniture; those useful articles called tea-trays, which, to suit the taste of some people, are made ornamental by the painting upon them of shiny landscapes and gaudy figure-pieces.

This remark, however, must not be considered at all as a qualification of our high respect for the abilities of the Dusseldorf men; for it applies in any great measure to a few of the pictures only, and those the most insignificant in subject, size and treatment. We should hardly have noticed it, save that it seems indicative of the besetting sin of the school, and that slight vestiges of it are discernible in some of even the most beautiful works on the walls. This effect is not a little increased in some of the pictures by the glass which has been put over them, which also seems objectionable to us on account of its reflective power, causing as it does the frames of the opposite paintings and the persons of the spectators to mingle distractingly with the figures or foliage upon the canvass. We have yet to be convinced that a good oil painting does not lose rather than gain by being seen through a glass medium; a lithograph, colored and gummied, is improved by it, but with everything else the contrary is the case; even with an engraving the glass is a necessary evil.

But while we cannot shut our eyes to this general fault, we cannot acquiesce in the opinion, so generally expressed by artists and critics, that the paintings are too highly finished in details and accessories. We deny that a picture can be too highly finished in any part. The idea, upon a moment's reflection, will be seen to carry absurdity upon the very face of it. It is like finding fault with the poetry of Pope for the polish of its language, the melody of its rhythm and the exactness of its expression, or with the music of Mozart for the melodious grace of its inner parts. Accessories can be made too prominent by being brought forward at the expense of the principal figures, and details may seem obtrusively finished when they usurp that attention which is due to the thought to be embodied. But in such cases the fault is not of commission but of omission. It consists in the neglect of the greater, not in the attention to the less. In such a case we should say—we use the words with reverence—"this ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone." And if an artist who can paint nothing well but stuffs or architecture, chooses an ambitious subject and executes it in a trivial manner, we should find fault with

him for attempting a subject which is beyond his power, not for accomplishing that which is within it.

We regret to hear so much stress laid upon this so called fault of high finish, because it is upon this point that our own painters, the best of them too, are most deficient. They are too apt to give us sketches in oils instead of finished pictures; thus indicating to us what they intend to do, rather than doing it;—as if a man were to end his journey at the last finger-post which pointed to his place of destination. We should hope much more for our artists if they would study and imitate the finish of their brothers of Dusseldorf, instead of carping at it.

But there is another finish and of a higher kind, palpable in these works, which none can find fault with, and which our artists would do as well to emulate, and that is, finish of design, of conception. There is a singleness and clearness of thought in these pictures indicative of a "knowing what they are about," in the artists, which is evidently the fruit, not of individual genius, but of discipline; and this discipline is what our artists need most. We miss in their works the power to strip a thought of all parasite growth and present it simply, clearly, and therefore forcibly, to the eye and the mind. This power the Dusseldorf painters have thoroughly acquired, as is evident to the careful student of this collection,—save perhaps in CAMPHAUSER's "*Battle of Ascalon*," and "*Castle invaded by Puritans*," which are almost of necessity a collection of groups of greater or less interest.—The chief reason why this power should be apparent in so large a number of artists, is the influence which must flow from the gathering together of so many for the purposes of mutual study and improvement. Hints and kindly criticism from superiors and fellows must be of great benefit to artists in this respect; and even the carplings of envy cannot be without their use. Are not our own painters here too apt to keep aloof from each other, and to seek injudicious, though honest praise from unlearned friends, rather than encounter the keen eyes and educated taste of their fellow artists, at the risk of hearing a little wholesome truth? And if they hear such truth, are they not apt to disregard it as the prompting of envy! What matter who is the prompter if it be the truth?—*Cour. & Eng.*

THE FINE ARTS.—THE DUSSELDORF PICTURES.—It is somewhat strange that Dusseldorf, the capital of the inconsiderable Duchy of Berg, in the Rhenish provinces of Prussia—a town of little note, dignified by no historical associations, situated on the monotonous flats of the Rhine, far below the region of its grandeur and enchantment, with nothing to boast in the way of palaces, churches, theatres, or ruins, the great staples of Continental cities—should, nevertheless, be the seat of a School of Painting, perhaps the most conspicuous on the Continent, and which has aided in giving stability and strength to the most important movements in the history of Modern Art. It is true that a famous collection of pictures once adorned the walls of the Electoral palace; but the palace was destroyed in 1794 by the French, and the pictures were removed to Munich. It was long after their removal that the school began to

flourish and become prominent. It seems to have found some congenial influences which are hidden from common observation, and make up for the apparent deficiencies of the place. Perhaps the artists who have congregated in so unromantic a locality, have been urged to greater efforts after ideal beauty, by the very presence of the natural barrenness which surrounds them.

Cornelius, to whom, we believe, belongs the honor of the foundation of the School of Dusseldorf, was a native of the town. Though little known in this country, his name stands at the head of the Modern German Painters, especially of those who, in immediate connexion with him, broke through the conventional mannerisms by which the genius of artists was trammelled, and the spirit of Art degraded; and in opposition to Academies and Professors, sought a freer field for the exercise of "the gift and faculty divine," of which they were the possessors. Of these men, Cornelius, Overbeck, and Schadow, were the most distinguished. They met at Rome, whither they had gone for a common purpose, that of seeking amongst the works of the greatest masters for the truest inspiration. They regarded themselves as the martyrs of the modern absurdities and insipidities which usurped the places and authority of art. Overbeck had, in fact, been expelled from the Academy of Vienna, for exercising that independence of thought which never fails to excite the horror of old "foundations." He had taken refuge from the Academician amongst the grand memorials of the early painters of Italy. He found kindred spirits in his countrymen, banished, like himself, by the puerilities and pompous absurdities of the German Schools, and, like himself in quest of a purer standard of taste, and a more congenial field of labor.

Under such circumstances it was very natural that they should go from one extreme to the other; from the ultra-modern to the ultra-medieval; from the overloaded ornaments and artificial redundancies of painting which were nearest to them in point of time, to the simplicity and sincerity which were furthest off—even beyond the period of highest excellence, quite back in the infancy of the Revival of Art. Equally natural was it that they should have found in their new associations, controlling motives of life, higher than the standards of artistic taste. The old masters led them to the old faith. They exchanged the cold formalities of German Lutheranism for the more vivid ritual of that church, over whose altars, and in whose aisles and sacristies, and cloisters they had studied the works of the masters of their adoption, and found in their pure and simple creations, not less the inspiration of genius than the fervor of unaffected faith. Cornelius was born a Roman Catholic. A large number of his fellow students in Rome, including Overbeck and Schadow, were converted to Romanism, and, as a matter of course, went far beyond him in devotion to their new faith. Their fanaticism, however, for with some it reached that point, gave new ardor to the zeal with which they devoted themselves to their art.

A school of painters formed under such influences, and animated by such inducements, could not have failed of success. Their extravagance was not of a kind to interfere with their progress, for it was the extravagance of simpli-