# CATALOGUE OF A COLLECTION OF WOODCUTS OF THE GERMAN SCHOOL

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Catalogue of a collection of woodcuts of the German school by Various

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## VARIOUS

# CATALOGUE OF A COLLECTION OF WOODCUTS OF THE GERMAN SCHOOL

Trieste

## Surlington Fine Arts Club.

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## CATALOGUE

#### OF A

## COLLECTION OF WOODCUTS

#### OF THE GERMAN SCHOOL,

EXECUTED IN THE XVTH AND XVITH CENTURIES.



#### LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE BURLINGTON FINE ARTS CLUB.

1882.

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#### EXHIBITION

#### OF A

### COLLECTION OF WOODCUTS.

#### INTRODUCTION.



HE art of engraving designs on wooden blocks, so as to obtain from them impressions or reproductions of those designs upon paper, by means of printers' ink, though unknown to the Romans, who yet knew how to stamp cyphers and marks upon their bricks,

and though partially developed among the Chinese and Japanese as early as the Xth century, does not appear to have been practised in Europe before the close of the XIIth century. It began in Germany, and is supposed to have owed its introduction to the use of playing-cards, brought into Europe from the East, and said to have been invented by the Arabs. These seem to have been first known in Italy, as is indicated by their name, derived from the Italian *carte*, about 1350. From that country their popularity spread very quickly in all

#### INTRODUCTION.

directions, and especially towards Germany, where there soon grew up a large trade in them, but not much before the close of the XIVth century.

That the first European practice of this art was in Germany, is hardly to be doubted. All the earliest examples hitherto discovered point to a German origin; and nowhere was the art more rapidly developed, or brought to a higher pitch of excellence, than in the land of its adoption.

The object, therefore, of giving, within a reasonable compass, an illustration of the history of wood-engraving from the middle of the XVth to the end of the XVIth century could not be, perhaps, better attained than by assembling a select collection of the works, executed in wood, of some representative artists of the German schools which flourished during that period. This it has been attempted to accomplish in the present Exhibition.

It is not considered likely that many, if any, of these painters and designers executed their cuts with their own hands upon the blocks; this, rather the work of artisans than of artists, was probably in most cases relegated to persons who were specially fitted for the mechanical performance, and who worked under the direction and supervision of the originators of the designs. In some cases these executants signed the blocks as well with their own as with the master's name; as, for example, Jost de Negker (Cat. 91), who seems to have cut many of Burgmair's blocks; in others, as on the little cut, "Die Herzogin" (Cat. 127), with their own name only.

The chronological, the only rational, order of arrangement has been followed, in placing the artists, as far as the sequence of their dates could be ascertained. To place the works of each in chronological sequence would be a task of almost insuperable difficulty, owing to the fact of those works having been executed by different hands, which fact alone would

#### INTRODUCTION.

be quite enough to mask the development of style, to illustrate which is the only and the grand aim of the chronological system. This, therefore, had to be foregone; and the prints are placed nearly according to the arbitrary arrangement adopted by Bartsch, Passavant, and other writers.

J. M.

The indications (B.) and (Pass.) in the Catalogue refer to the lists of Bartsch and Passavant.

The prints and books of which this Collection consists have been contributed by three members of the Club,

> MR. R. FISHER, MR. H. H. GIBBS, MR. W. MITCHELL.



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