

CATALOGUE OF A JOINT EXHIBITION
OF THE WORK OF
CARO-DELVAILLE AND SPICER-SIMSON
DETROIT MUSEUM OF ART
OCTOBER 6th TO NOVEMBER 15th, 1918

SPICER-SIMSON

BY EDWARD T. NEWELL

President of the American Numismatic Society

Reprinted from the Catalogue prepared for the Spicer-Simson Exhibition at the Gimpel & Wildenstein Gallery

MR. SPICER-SIMSON is well known to collectors and connoisseurs in Europe. There his work is to be found as part of the permanent collections of all the principal Museums. The opportunity of seeing a large number of his medals brought together in one exhibition will not fail to create a very great interest in America, where only a few examples have been acquired by the public collections.

The variety shown is remarkable, and the means employed to express the individuality of his subjects as varied as they are imaginative.

Contrasting the delicacy of relief of his children's portraits with the more vigorous modeling of his mature sitters, we are struck with Mr. Spicer-Simson's versatility; the strong, bold handling of so many of his male portraits, (Gen. Horace Porter, George Frederick Watts, R. A. O. M., etc.) and his sympathetic, evanescent treatment of the daintiest types of womanhood as found, for instance, in his portraits of Mrs. Archer M. Huntington and Mrs. Frederick T. Blakeman.

Particularly noticeable is the successful handling of surfaces, their variety of relief and texture. These qualities are especially conspicuous on the reverse of the Alexander Agassiz medal. George Meredith's portrait, to be seen in the National Portrait Gallery as well as in the present Exhibition, shows how far matter can be made to express poetry and imagination, whereas General Horace Porter and Prof. J. P. Wood are men of action both in treatment and effect.

To his own inborn ability Mr. Spicer-Simson adds that inestimable quality so often lacking in present day artists—an understanding and appreciation, as thorough as it is sympathetic, of the great masters of the past. It is rare to see reflected in the work of one man so many of the characteristic qualities of the Greek, of Roman and of Italian masterpieces, the graceful lines, the subtle modeling, the sure instinct for balance and spacing of the Greek, the truthfulness and ability in portraiture of the Roman and of his pupil and descendant the Quattrocento Italian. To all, Mr. Spicer-Simson adds his own originality of thought, a sensitiveness of touch, a something that is perhaps as much the poet's as the artist's.

Medallic art is at once one of the highest achievements of human genius, as it is one of the most difficult and exacting mediums of artistic expression. To the obvious points of contact between medallic art and the so-called major art of sculpture, are to be reckoned in favor of the former, the added charm that resides in the compactness of the form, the spacing, the lettering, and above all in the intimate and human interest which is the very nature of the medal. Here we have a form of sculpture on a scale that allows of it being taken in the hand, giving it that intimate character not wholly attainable by the more popular forms of art. Thus may be obtained the varying play of light which gives distinct changes of expression to the features and a consequent semblance of life to the portrait. Like its older sisters of sculpture and painting the portrait medal should possess, perhaps to an even greater degree, beauty of line, of form, of composition, and even of color suggestion.

As usual it was Greek genius that first conceived the great artistic and commemorative possibilities presented by a piece of metal of coin-like aspect. Thus their coins often assumed the form and appearance of a commemorative medal, though still serving as a

medium of exchange. We are justified in assigning the origin of the medal to the Greeks, for they were not only the pioneers in perpetuating records of great events or personages in this manner, but they were the people who laid and established the canons and ideals of that art whose most beautiful examples to-day are the incomparably glorious coins of the Greek cities of Sicily and Magna Graecia. Although the famous silver medallions of Syracuse are undoubtedly coins, still, in other respects, they possess all the characteristics of the medal.

The Romans carried the commemorative issues of the Greeks a step nearer to our conception of the true medal. From Augustus to Theodoric and Justinian, the Roman rulers made a practice of striking gold and silver pieces of medallion form and commemorative of notable events in their reigns. As these pieces were all multiples of current coins it is conceivable that at times they might have been put in circulation. Our literary sources however speak of them as having been struck with the basic idea of gifts from the throne to important personages of the empire. In addition to these quasi medals many of the emperors actually did strike large and exceedingly beautiful medals in bronze which had no relation to the current coin. They are fine examples of the best in Roman art and, though not signed, are undoubtedly from the hands of the foremost artists of their kind.

The private and personal medal had not yet appeared. This was destined to be one of the glories of the Italian Renaissance. The Italian artist, newly awakened and sensitive to all forms of beauty, strove to emulate and surpass the handsome products of the Roman mint which directly inspired him. The numerous princes, the powerful nobles, the rich merchants, the literati of the rising Italian cities of those days, continually striving among themselves and intensely individualistic, were consumed with the desire of per-

petuating their achievements, their fame, and their features for all time. This spirit soon produced the true medal or medallion such as we know it. The tendencies of our times, resembling in their individualistic development those of the Renaissance, have again brought about a great revival of this monumental yet delicate art of which Mr. Spicer-Simson is such an eminent exponent.

C A T A L O G U E

- 1 Miss Mildred Aldrich
- 2 Woman's National Preparedness Medal
- 3 Mr. Charles Francis Adams
- 4 Mr. Alexander Graham Bell
- 5 Mrs. Frederick T. Blakeman
- 6 Miss Alys Bentley
- 7 Prof. George Pierce Baker
- 8 Abdul Baha
- 9 Mr. Bryson Burroughs
- 10 Mr. Andrew Carnegie
- 11 Mr. John Crisp Coleman
- 12 Mr. Henry Caro-Delville
- 13 Mrs. Henry Caro-Delville
- 14 Mrs. T. Criley
- 15 Dr. Moncure D. Conway
- 16 Child Medal
- 17 Master Waldron Faulkner
- 18 Admiral Sir Wilmot H. Fawkes, K.C.B.-K.C.V.O.

- 19 Mrs. David Fairchild
- 20 Mr. B. T. Galloway
- 21 Miss Katherine Gabaudin
- 22 Charles I. Young Memorial Medal
- 23 Miss Louise S. Hammond
- 24 Miss Elizabeth S. Hammond
- 25 Mrs. Charles Dewey Hilles
- 26 Mrs. Archer M. Huntington
- 27 "Hilda"
- 28 Mrs. F. S. James
- 29 Miss Penelope King
- 30 Sir Walter Lawrence, C.C.I.E.
- 31 Mrs. L. Meilziner
- 32 Mr. George Meredith, O.M.
- 33 Miss Caroline L. Morgan
- 34 Mrs. B. Morrison-Fuller
- 35 Miss E. Mudocci and Miss B. Edwards
- 36 Mrs. Edward T. Newell
- 37 General Horace Porter
- 38 Mr. Percy Raven
- 39 Mr. Ralph Rounds

- 40 Mrs. Ralph Rounds
- 41 Betty and Stowell Rounds
- 42 Mrs. Edward Robinson
- 43 Mr. M. Rosenheim
- 44 Mr. and Mrs. Albert S. Roe
- 45 Miss Mildred Anton Schmidt
- 46 Miss Hilda Anton Schmidt
- 47 Miss Gretchen Anton Schmidt
- 48 Mrs. Anton Schmidt
- 49 Mrs. Stephan Sinding
- 50 Miss Noemie Spicer-Simson
- 51 Mrs. Herman Simson
- 52 Mr. Herman Simson
- 53 Mr. James Stevens
- 54 Mrs. T. Spicer-Simson
- 55 Mr. J. Waldo Smith
- 56 Honorable William Howard Taft
- 57 George Frederick Watts, R.A.—O.M.
- 58 Mrs. Granville Whittlesey
- 59 Prof. John P. Wood, L.L.D.
- 60 Alexander Agassiz Memorial Medal
Given for Oceanography by the National Academy of Science

- 61 The Public Welfare Medal
Award of the National Academy of Science
- 62 Dexter Brackett Memorial Medal
- 63 The 'Entente Cordiale' Medal
Great Britain and France 1905
- 64 Panama-Pacific Commemorative Medal and
Reverse
French Government Presentation Medal
- 65 The Catskill Aqueduct Memorial Medal and
Reverse
- 66 Medal Commemorative of America's Entry into
the Great War and Reverse
- 67 Seal of the New York Women's League for Animals
- 68 "Where Duty and Manly Courage Led"
Memorial Medal to the Fallen Heroes of the Great War

HENRY CARO-DELVAILLE

BY DENYS AMIEL

Editor of "The New France"

*Reprinted from the Catalogue prepared for the Caro-Delville Exhibition at the
Gimpel & Wildenstein Gallery*

AS a Frenchman of the younger generation, I deem it a privilege to present Henry Caro-Delville to the American public, by defining the exact position this distinguished artist occupies among his compatriots. Artistic circles in America have undoubtedly been quick to sense the rank this painter deserves, but the general public which has many interests, naturally enough, does not always adequately realize the true position that an artist occupies, especially when he is a foreigner. At all periods, save for certain rare exceptions, it is time alone that has served to internationalize the world's famous men.

In France we have known Caro-Delville for twenty years. His debut was a striking one; attracting attention at once by the clarified vision, the brilliance of style, and the luminosity that he contributed to the color scheme of French art. The critics, who felt called upon to trace the genealogy of the artist, saw fit to relate him to Ingres and Goya. Others saw in him a disciple of Manet. As a matter of fact Caro-Delville exemplifies a temperament Spanish by origin but disciplined by French culture. The simplification of form obtained through the solid fixing of values in the atmosphere which is so characteristic in his work exerted an undeniable influence upon the generation that followed him. Personally, I remember that, arriving in Paris thirteen years ago, I was struck, in the course of my almost daily visits to the Luxembourg Museum, to see young painters disputing a favorable

place for copying a canvas by Caro-Delvaile. This fact is significant of the artistic satisfaction this painter affords our generation. As we in France are rather fond of classifications, Caro-Delvaile had been dubbed "The Painter of Woman," for at the beginning of his career he painted a whole series of intimate portraits in which women held the dominant place. Very soon, however, he underwent a distinct evolution which drew him toward a profound study of the nude.

The most observant artists realized at this time that one would have perhaps to go back to Titian and Veronese to find the radioactivity of the flesh, the secret of which this young painter seemed to have rediscovered. His extremely modern sensibilities were most decisively influenced by the study of the antique, not in academic formulas but by a dignity and logic which he extracted from the living form.

For ten years his evolution continued along the tendencies of his early work. That which followed became constantly more plastic and more stylistic, and the compositions that he gives us today are the admirable fruits of twenty years of work in the full possession of his matured powers. He gives us a transcription of reality, a style however which does not weaken the astonishing gifts of his meridional temperament.

I believe that this exhibition is especially significant at the present moment, when the tawdry and meretricious tend to dominate. There is a great lesson in the work of Henry Caro-Delvaile for it aims to place modern society in its proper setting, that is, to express it in our terms which shall carry on the tradition of the ancients and which may replace the dreary and feeble imitations of the masters of the past. On the day when modern society comprehends this necessary development of decorative art as applied to the modern home, all art and artists will be greatly benefited thereby. Under such conditions art will not only take the form of practical expression of modern life but will

naturally tend toward the domain of divine fantasy which is its true goal.

How grateful we of today should be to Henry Caro-Delvaile for revealing to us with such courage and such nobly disinterested energy the possibilities of restoring its true significance to the art of the painter. Through his work he brings an important message to our whole artistic generation.

Caro-Delvaile exercises his incomparable stylistic art not only in these portraits themselves but in his understanding of the method of depicting a type. He is ever preoccupied with classifying his subject according to some artistic standard; in a word, striving to epitomize its organic and psychic essence. In so doing, he has accomplished what few painters have done before; he has carried on the great tradition of the old masters, who bequeathed portraits to posterity, which, entirely aside from the personalities they portrayed, ever remain eternal types in themselves.

C A T A L O G U E

“PHILOSOPHY”

Three Decorations

- 1 Meditation
- 2 Controversy
- 3 Contemplation

“YOUTH”

Three Decorations

- 4 Festival of Spring
- 5 Fountain of Youth
- 6 Altar of Love

Decorative Panels

- 7 The Grey Scarf
- 8 The Offering
- 9 The Black Grapes
- 10 The Pool
- 11 Gardener's Basket
- 12 Gardener's Basket
- 13 Flower Decoration
- 14 Flower Decoration
- 15 Flower Decoration
- 16 Decorative Sketch
- 17 Decorative Sketch
- 18 Decorative Sketch

PORTRAITS

- 19 Portrait of My Wife and Daughter
- 20 Mrs. Spicer-Simson
- 21 Mme. Felix Wildenstein and Daughters
- 22 Monsieur Denys Amiel
- 23 Mr. Bryson Burroughs
- 24 Mr. Carlos Salzedo
- 25 Mr. Spicer-Simson
- 26 Self-Portrait