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The Exhibition Of M. Rodin's Works In Paris.

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The Rodin Exhibition

always been directed on unconventional lines, and this year's exhibits surpassed their average in the variety and quality of the work. They have again been well supported by the weaving industry conducted by Mrs. Joseph King. The Windermere class again showed their excellent silks and mixtures of silk and linen, as beautiful in colour as in texture and surface. Under the enterprising leadership of Miss Mabel Hill, the Llandaff spinners, weavers, and dyers have been making some delightful experiments with vegetable pigments, and the colours set in their new home-spuns are highly satisfactory both in appearance and wear. These, like most of the textile workers, are under the "developed industries" section, that is, of persons actually living by the handicraft.

In a final survey of the exhibition, it is often difficult to divide our sympathies between those who are thus striving to keep the work on professional lines, and those, on the other hand, who approach it mainly as a recreation from widely different pursuits, and find in it a profitable hobby.

ESTHER WOOD.

THE EXHIBITION OF M. RODIN'S WORKS IN PARIS.

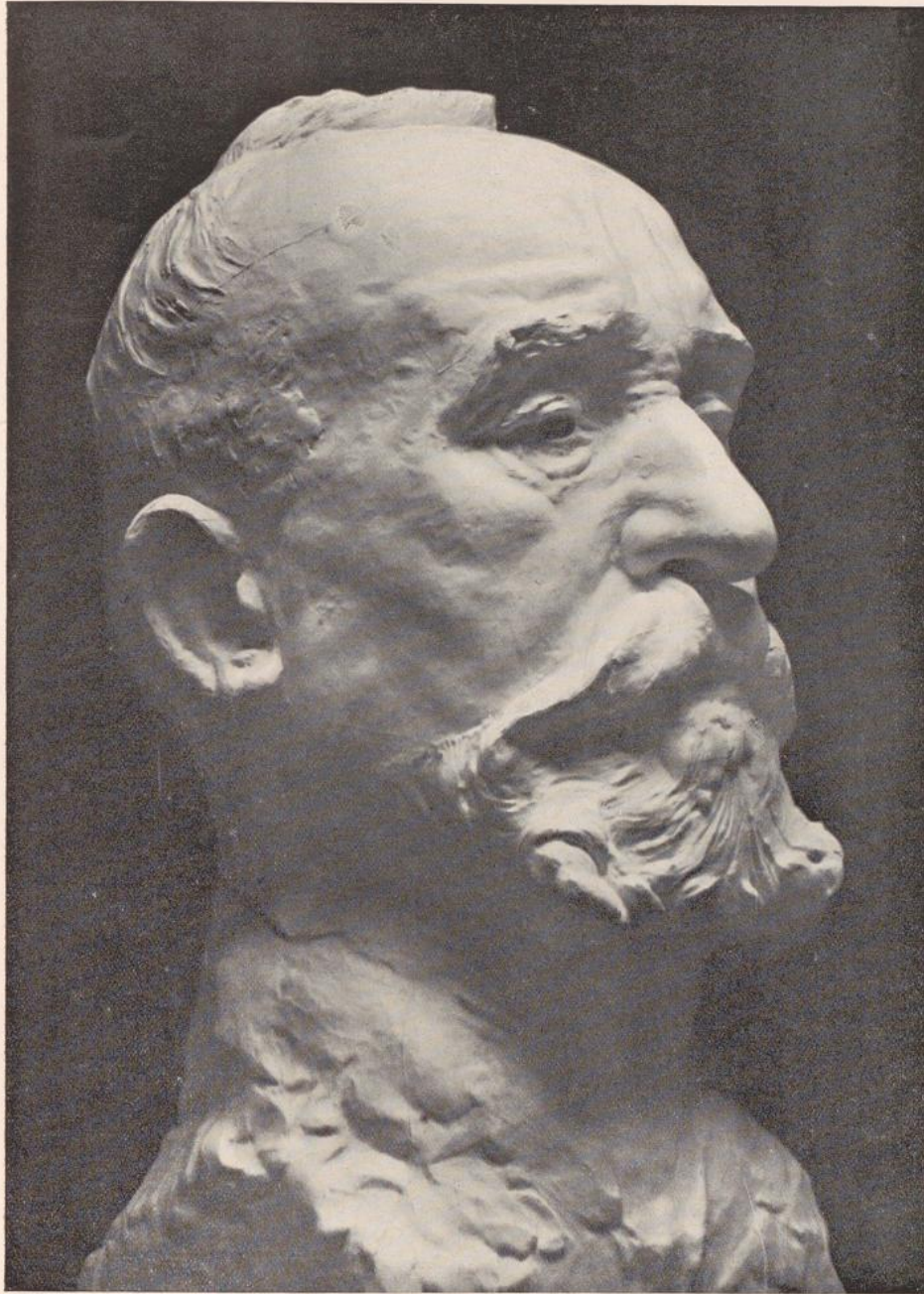
THE Rodin Exhibition was opened on the 1st of June; and those who know and admire the work of the great sculptor as it deserves to be known and admired will rejoice to see it thus displayed in a suitable setting, by direction of the



"LE PRINTEMPS"

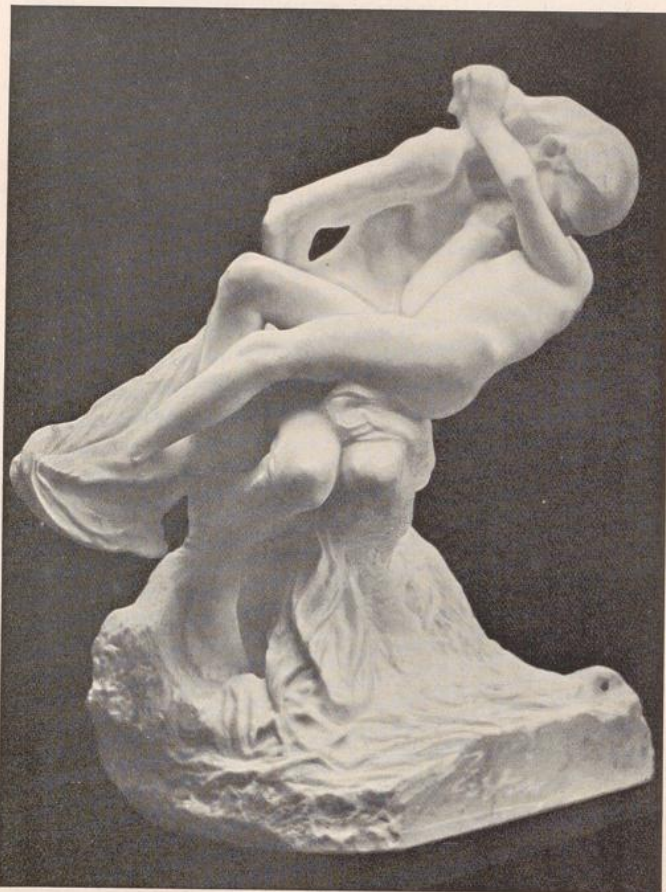
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BY A. RODIN



"PUVIS DE CHAVANNES"
BY A. RODIN

The Rodin Exhibition



“LA PARQUE ET LA CONVALESCENTE”

BY A. RODIN

artist himself; while as for those who know his work but ill, or without knowing it venture to criticise or condemn, here is a splendid opportunity for them to justify the faith that is in them. So far as the great majority is concerned—those who know nothing of Rodin, for the excellent reason that they have never had the chance of seeing a really adequate display of his productions—the occasion now offers for so doing, and all who desire may satisfy their curiosity, and see for themselves whether the enthusiasm or the depreciation, which for years past the great sculptor has evoked, is the juster reward for all his effort.

Here, in these bright, well-lighted galleries, decked with straw-coloured hangings, we may see all the thought, all the labour of a life of struggle and toil; may look into the very soul of the man, into his

dreams, his ambitions, his hopes, his fancies, even his sorrows and his despairings; for here it all is interpreted in fullest expression. This art is essentially—one feels it immediately—the art of action; this sculpture is no mere symbolism, no mere materialisation of allegories. One single purpose dominates all—the glorification of Nature, as seen in the palpitating beauty of the human form, under the influence of those emotions which best serve to dignify and to exalt it. Thus the titles figuring in the catalogue are for the most part simply the indispensable concessions to the necessity of distinguishing one work from another. Whatever be the designation, whether *Niobé*, *Le Génie du Repos éternel*, *Eve*, *L'Homme qui s'éveille*, *L'âge d'airain*, *Saint Gêrôme* or *Alceste*, whether *La Sphynge*, or *Le Printemps* or *Frère et Sœur*, the same senti-

ment, the same love of life and humanity, quivers in each and all of these figures. Among all these hundred and fifty pieces of sculpture of diverse importance, there is not one but is animated by the warm breath of vitality. Nothing could be more striking, nothing more beautiful. One is carried away, as it were, in a whirlwind of passionate gestures. The emotion produced is almost too great, for it is painful—delightfully painful—in its intensity. One is obliged to pause awhile to recover oneself; then, when the senses are calmed once more, it is possible for the mind to attempt some sort of estimate of the actual artistic worth of the work around one.

From the mask of the *Homme au nez cassé* (1864) onward, right down to this *Buste de Femme*, produced quite recently, Rodin's work is marked

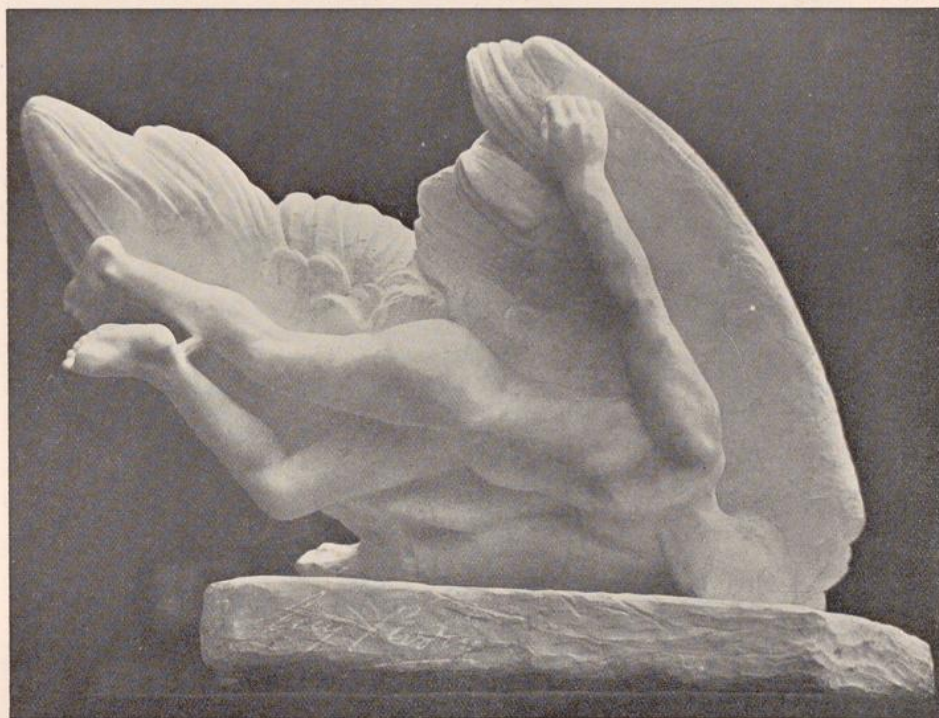
The Rodin Exhibition

by an extraordinary unity. Here we see primeval man, the man of *L'âge d'airain* (1877), which by its intense reality, its abundant life, brought down volumes of unjust abuse on the sculptor's head, some furious critics going so far as to accuse him of taking a cast from the living form! Here again are *Eve* (1881), *La Guerre* (1883), the busts of *Dalou*, *Victor Hugo*, *Antonin Proust* (1885), the first study for the *Monument de Victor Hugo* (1886), *Persée et Méduse*, *La Tête de Saint-Jean-Baptiste après la décollation* (1887), *Le Songe de la Vie*, the bust of *Octave Mirbeau*, *Les Femmes damnées*, *La Pensée* (1889), *Le Frère et la Sœur* (1890), *La Cariatide*, *La jeune Mère* (1891), the busts of *Puis de Chavannes* and *Henri Rochefort*, the *Bourgeois de Calais* (1892); and then from 1893 to the present year come—to name the most important—*Le Printemps*, *Le Baiser*, *La Sphynge*, *Adonis*, the *Monument du Travail*, the *Bénédictions*, *Icare*, the *Statue de Balzac*, the *Trois voix* (from the Victor Hugo monument), *La Parque et la jeune Fille*, *L'éternelle Idole*, and finally *La Porte de l'Enfer*, which, in the words of M. Arsène Alexandre, "has

no date, but is the product of all the twelve or fourteen years during which Rodin was employed in conceiving, modifying, embellishing, curtailing, re-making his design; while he left it covered up, only to start afresh with renewed energy when he seemed to have abandoned it definitely for something else."

But what were we saying just now, when we described the sculptures we have just named as being Rodin's "most important works"? Does the "importance" of a work of art depend on its size, or on the number of figures it contains? To disprove any such theory we have here displayed an innumerable series of studies, and small groups and statuettes of splendid merit, proclaiming the genius of their creator just as completely and as definitely as his biggest works.

After all, there is nothing surprising in the fact that throughout his career Rodin has been, as he is even now, more or less misunderstood and unappreciated—or, shall we say, ill-appreciated—as anyone may discover who takes the trouble to examine his work minutely. The cause of the artist's



"LA CHUTE D'ICARE"

BY A. RODIN

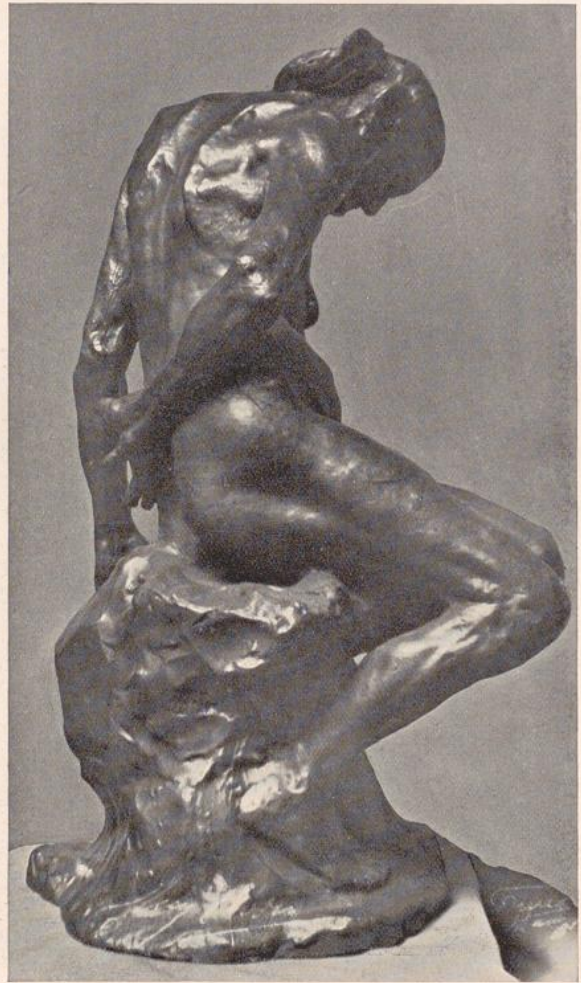
The Rodin Exhibition

unpopularity in certain circles lies in this—that he has roughly broken away from all preconceived ideas, discarded all traditional processes, all false conventions. He is too direct, too free; his conception of art is too sincere, too original, too spontaneous for “the general,” accustomed to something altogether different. Yet we refuse to believe that, as some persist in asserting, Rodin’s art is beyond the intelligence of the masses. The responsibility for the fact that the crowd knows him not at all, or little at best, and cares still less for his work, lies elsewhere, that is to say, with the biased, jaundiced critics, who, relying on the ignorance of those whom they pretend to instruct and advise, have, from some incomprehensible motive, persistently striven to depreciate the great artist whose pre-eminence seems to have disturbed their peace of mind. Moreover, thanks to Rodin’s admirers on the one hand and to his detractors on the other, the idea has got abroad that the author of the *Bourgeois de Calais* and the *Monument de Claude Lorrain* is a revolutionary; and the public fear him as they would a monster! A “revolutionary,” because he has revived the tradition of heroic sculpture, because he is the direct descendant of Verrocchio and Donatello and of our great French masters—Houdon, and Barye and Carpeaux! A “revolutionary,” because instead of blindly accepting the old academic canons and learning his art in the worst possible school, he has preferred to see for himself and has made his own style! Revolutionary, no! Say rather a revolter, one who has revolted against the imbecile tyranny of prettiness and mannerism, against the distortion of nature and life, against the servitude of the schools, as opposed to liberty and individualism!

In any case it will always be Rodin’s glory to have enlarged, enriched the domain of statuary, to have seized and fixed from the quivering life itself an infinity of those gestures, movements and expressive attitudes, whose plastic beauty, it would seem, had not been so much as suspected before

his day; his predecessors, aye, his contemporaries, being satisfied with stereotyped reproductions of the same old, traditional, expressionless poses. Who will dare to limit the artist’s boundaries? Who shall venture to declare definitely: this is beautiful, that is ugly; such a gesture is noble, such is the reverse? Nature herself knows no restrictions of this sort; everything within her is lovely and worthy of stimulating art. What movement, what attitude, what pose of the human body has the artist the right to despise, as vile or inferior?

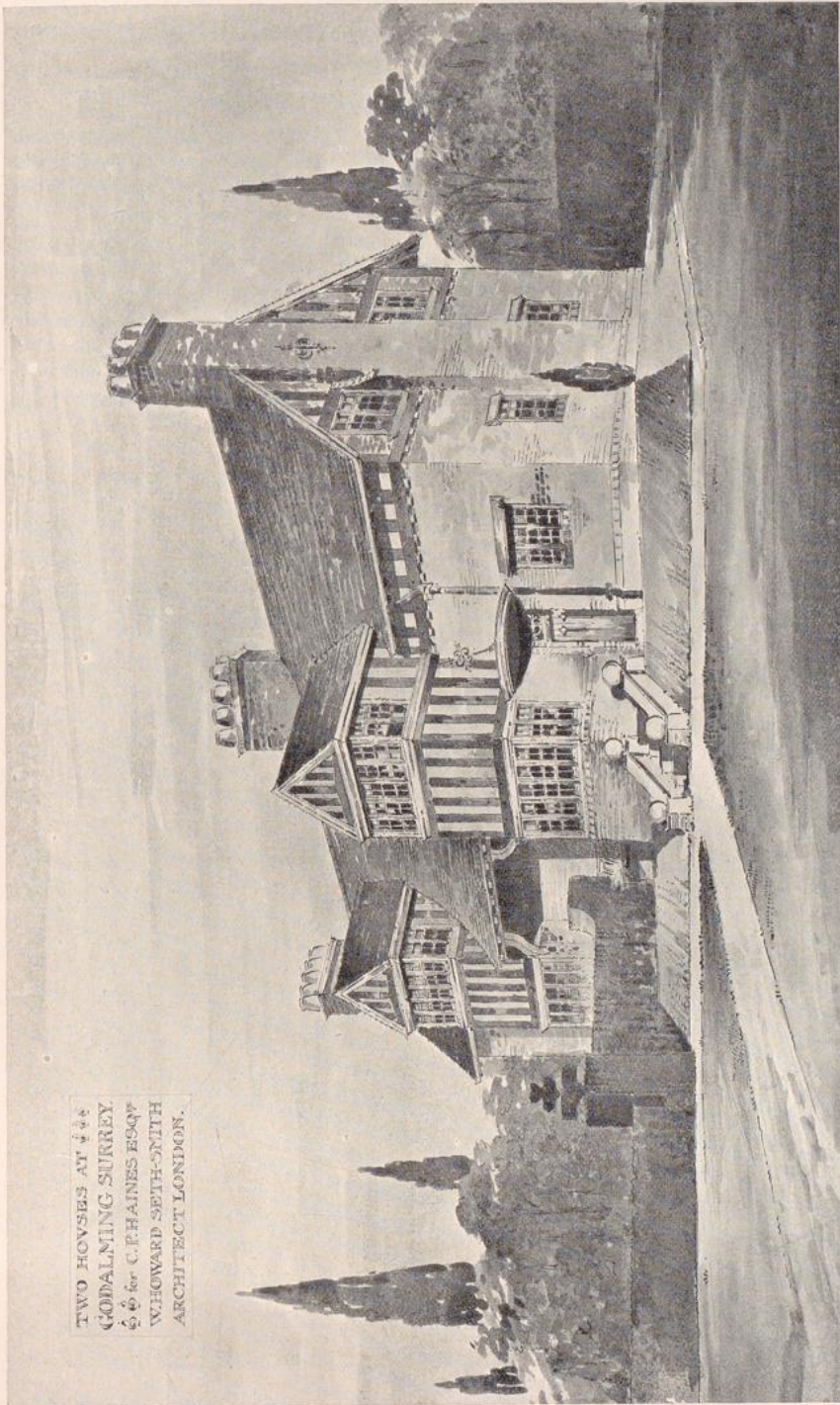
It is his profound conviction of the absolute beauty of life that has made Rodin if not a revo-



“LA VIEILLE FEMME”

BY A. RODIN

TWO HOUSES AT
GODALMING, SURREY.
DESIGNED BY
W. HOWARD SETH-SMITH,
ARCHITECT, LONDON.



TWO HOUSES AT GODALMING
BY W. HOWARD SETH-SMITH,
ARCHITECT

The Royal Academy and Architecture

lutionary, at least a *révolte*; and those who are capable of looking boldly towards the future will not be disposed to deny him the fame he deserves for the redeeming influence already produced by his work on the statuary of his country. That influence will certainly increase as time goes on, and the present exhibition in the Square de l'Alma will go far to strengthen it. M. Albert Besnard observes: "The passionate contemplation of Nature has certainly led him to feel that no power outside Nature herself is capable of suggesting her own true symbolism"; and he proceeds: "Form, as understood by Rodin, becomes vitality itself." And further homage was paid him by the late A. Falguière, who, shortly before his death, said to a friend: "Rodin! Rodin! There's the master of us all!"

THE ROYAL ACADEMY AND ARCHITECTURE; WITH NOTES ON SOME DESIGNS AT THE PRESENT EXHIBITION.

ARE they right, or wrong, the people who tell us, occasionally, that the Royal Academy is seriously solicitous about the welfare of architecture? That the Royal Academy professes to be so is true; but if this profession of its goodwill to architects is believed in some quarters, it is certainly disputed in many others. There is a large and thoughtful public to whom it appeals merely as a stereotyped example of official humour. We are thus brought in contact with two bodies of opinion, the one favourable, the other distinctly



A HALL
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M. H. BAILLIE SCOTT, ARCHITECT