Cabinet Pictures by
Byam Shaw
Suggested by
Passages
From British Poets

LOANED BY
MR. R. HALL McCORMICK
CHICAGO

Feb. 1 to 22, 1900

THE ART INSTITUTE
OF CHICAGO
THE ART INSTITUTE.
Lake Front, opposite Adams Street, Chicago.
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1899-1900

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The Art Institute of Chicago was incorporated May 24, 1879, for the "founding and maintenance of schools of art and design, the formation and exhibition of collections of objects of art, and the cultivation and extension of the arts of design by any appropriate means." The Museum building upon the Lake Front, first occupied in 1893, is open to the public every week day from 9 to 5, Sundays from 1 to 5. Admission is free to members and their families at all times, and free to all upon Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays.

The Art School, in the same building, includes departments of Drawing, Painting, Sculpture, Decorative Designing and Architecture.

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DESIGNATION OF GALLERIES

MAIN FLOOR

SEE PLAN

Room 1, Elbridge G. Hall Collection of Sculpture: Egyptian and Assyrian.
Room 2, (Corridor) Same: Asia Minor, and Early Greek.
Room 3, Same: Age of Pheidias.
Room 4, Same: Later Greek.
Room 5, Same: Roman.
Room 6, (Corridor) Same: Renaissance.
Room 7, Office of the Director.
Room 8, (Hall) Elbridge G. Hall Collection: Modern.
Room 9, Office of the Secretary.
Room 10, Elbridge G. Hall Collection: Modern.
Room 11, (Corridor) Historical Collection of French Sculpture and Architecture.
Room 12, Same.
Room 13, (Corridor) Same.
Room 14, Higinbotham Collection of Naples Bronzes.
Room 15, Egyptian and Classical Antiquities.
Room 18, Fullerton Memorial Hall, Lecture Room.
Room 24, New Library, now in process of construction.
Rooms 19 and 20 are in the part not yet built.
DESIGNATION OF GALLERIES

SECOND FLOOR

SEE PLAN

ROOM 26. . . . . Oil Paintings; Modern.
ROOM 27. . Special Exhibition of Works of Byam Shaw.
ROOM 28. \} Caxton Club Exhibition of Whistler's Etchings.
ROOM 30. .
ROOM 31. . Special Exhibition of Works of Birge Harrison.
ROOM 29, (Corridor) . Century Drawings and Autotypes.
ROOM 32. . . . Paintings; Old Masters.
ROOM 33, (Corridor) . Arundel Reproductions.
ROOM 34. . . . Committee Room.
ROOM 35, (Hall) . . . Sculpture and Paintings.
ROOM 36. . . . Committee Room.
ROOM 37, (Corridor) . Oil Paintings, A. A. Munger Collection.
ROOM 38. Oil Paintings, Henry Field Memorial Collection.
ROOM 39. . Oil Paintings, The Elizabeth Hammond Stickney Room.
ROOM 40. . . Nickerson Collection (in preparation.)
ROOM 41. \} .
ROOM 42. \} Oil Paintings; Modern.
ROOM 43. \}
ROOM 44. \} Collection of the Antiquarians, Textiles, Embroideries, Musical Instruments, etc.
ROOM 45. \}
ROOMS 26 to 54 are in the part not yet built.
NOTE.

After this catalogue was printed permission to exhibit Mr. Shaw’s famous painting “Love the Conqueror” was cabled from London by Messrs. Dowdeswell & Dowdeswell, and it will form part of this exhibition on its arrival,
1. Winter reigneth o'er the land.  
   —Bishop Walsham How.

2. We think her white brows often ached  
   Beneath her crown.  
   —Christina Rossetti.

3. Will, if looking well can't move her,  
   Looking ill prevail?  
   —Sir J. Suckling.

4. The Spring spreads one green lap of flowers,  
   Which Autumn buries at the fall.  
   —Christina Rossetti.
5. When musing on companions gone,  
   We doubly feel ourselves alone.  
   —Scott.

6. Was this fair face the cause, quoth she,  
   Why the Grecians sacked Troy?  
   —Shakespeare.

7. And all winds go sighing  
   For sweet things dying.  
   —Christina Rossetti.

8. Maud Clare.  
   —Christina Rossetti.

9. God's in his heaven—  
   All's right with the world.  
   —Browning.

10. MAUD.  
    . . . When alone she sits by her music and books.  
    —Tennyson.

11. CUPID AND CAMEASPE.  
    O Love! has she done this to thee?  
    What shall, alas! become of me?  
    —J. Lylye.
12. Or thought, as his own mother kissed his eyes,  
    Of what her kiss was when his father wooed?  
    —D. G. Rossetti.

13. Come in God’s name, come down! do anything, but 
    be something.  
    —Clough.

14. While roses are so red, 
    While lilies are so white 
    Shall a woman exalt her face, 
    Because it gives delight?  
    —Christina Rossetti.

15. Two thousand pounds of education 
    Drops to a ten-rupee ‘jazail.’  
    —Rudyard Kipling.

16. **AMOR MUNDI.**  
    Nay, too steep for hill mounting; nay, too late for 
    cost counting; 
    This down hill path is easy, but there’s no turning 
    back.  
    —Christina Rossetti.

17. Why so large cost, having so short a lease, 
    Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend? 
    —Shakespeare.
18. Maggie has written a letter to give me my choice between
A wee little whimpering Love and the Great God Nick o' Teen.
—Rudyard Kipling.

19. STATTON WATER.
He's drawn her face between his hands,
And her pale mouth to his. —D. G. Rossetti.

THE FRAMES WERE DESIGNED BY, AND MADE UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE ARTIST.
PRESS NOTICES.

(Chicago Times-Herald, January 21, 1900.)

Feb. 1 there will be placed on exhibition at the Art Institute some twenty or more paintings by the young Englishman, Byam Shaw. Mr. Shaw is little known to the American art-loving public, and his work is calculated to create more talk and arouse more controversy than any exhibited here for some time, as Byam Shaw is a painter who distinctly gives his beholders, admirers, something to think about. He is a painter of parables. He seeks loveliness in an ideal type of humanity. He revels in beauty in all its forms; he discards all that is frankly ugly. He chooses faces that are alike beautiful to the initiated and the uninitiated. He ranks among the younger of the pre-raphaelites, and he has been influenced by his master, Rossetti, in whom the spirit of enchanting mysticism in modern art had its birth. So far, however, Byam Shaw has escaped being a servile imitator. In these days, when sheer ugliness has fascinated so many of the younger men, Mr. Shaw's aesthetic compositions furnish a pleasing and safe attraction. A dominant and exceptional trait in a man of his years is his insight into problems of life that demand the closest study of human nature—problems which in most instances he essays with wholesome vigor, which could only be the outcome of
judgment. Every incident of his stories in colors are thought out and expressed with care, and he has the faculty of telling a fanciful story pleasantly, and for embroidering it with a wealth of appropriate detail. His work is imbued with quaint symbolism, great refinement, and, like most of his countrymen, he has inherited a rich color sense.

* * *

Byam Shaw's success has been meteoric. He was not born until 1872, and his first appearance on the walls of the Royal Academy was made in 1893, when he exhibited a picture, "Rose Marie," for which he found the subject in a poem by Rossetti. In the years that succeeded he established himself among the foremost of the younger painters of to-day. He has, in fact, progressed without hesitation, and each year has added to his popularity. One of Mr. Shaw's commentators says that some of the qualities in his work—characteristics that are peculiar to it and that set it apart from the bulk of contemporary effort—must be considered to be accountable for the rapidity of his rise, but that probably he owes most to the "extraordinary fertility of his imagination to the power, of which he has consistently proved himself possessed, of embodying in his pictures a great variety of fanciful suggestions and a succession of ideas fascinating to the people who affect that type of art which has a story to tell." He states, further, that Mr. Shaw is a good-tempered satirist, a humorist who can be amusing without descending into vulgarity. "His allegory is pleasantly free from obscurity and pedantry." He
makes his points frankly and honestly and with a cheerfulness that is in itself fascinating. He has a healthy regard for facts, and has not the slightest hesitation in acknowledging himself to be a lover of wholesomeness. In the subject matter of his pictures Mr. Shaw inclines to the spirit of mediaeval romanticism. His color at times is amazingly brilliant; his draperies are uniformly classical; his fair women, as they glide through Elysian fields or play on quaint musical instruments, are suggestive of the pre-Raphaelites that have gone before. Again, a lithe dame is reminiscent of Botticelli."

* * *

Few men have been blessed with a more valuable equipment for an artistic career. Unlike many artists, Byam Shaw never had to fight against any opposition to his choice of a career. From boyhood the profession that he was to follow was accepted and every effort was made to develop his artistic instincts, and he was directed in the right channels. His father guarded him against early impressions which might prejudicially influence the formation of his taste. The child was allowed to see nothing which was not calculated to accustom him to intuitively prefer real beauty. Even the illustrated books, fairy tales and nursery rhymes which were bestowed upon him were first carefully supervised by his father, and if they were not up to a reasonable standard they were destroyed, fearing that they might mislead the boy's choice of the right. In 1880 he became the pupil of J. A. Vinter, with whom he worked for seven
years. Afterward, at the advice of Sir John Millais, he began to work for admission to the Royal Academy Schools. In 1890 he qualified for the Academy. Two years after his entrance he won the Armitage competition prize for his "The Judgment of Solomon," and in 1893 another prize for a decorative design. In 1892 he began illustrating. He did considerable work for Cassell & Co., enlivening many fairy tales. He also illustrated Browning's poems with rare skill and poetic invention. At that period he became as well a contributor to Comic Cuts. At first his orders for illustrations came in slowly. His style was unusual, but his fine draughtsmanship and decorative sense soon placed him on the list of leading black and white artists.

* * *

In 1894 Mr. Shaw was represented at the Royal Academy by a water color entitled "Abundance" and an oil called "Silent Noon," which is said to contain the peace of noon. It is also notable for its fine landscape, in which are placed two recumbent figures. The subject was taken from the nineteenth sonnet in Rosetti's "House of Life":

"Your hands lie open in the long fresh grass,
The finger-points look through like rosy blooms."

A year later Mr. Shaw painted a third subject from Rosetti's poem, which bore a quotation from "The Blessed Damozel." In 1896 the Academy contained a full-length portrait of his mother, Mrs. John Shaw, a
nude called "Jezebel" and his astonishing phantasy, "Whither." Later he produced "The Comforter," a dignified composition showing a young husband at the bedside of his ill wife. Christ sits by him, holding his hand. One of Mr. Shaw's highly imaginative works, "Love's Baubles," was purchased by the corporation of Liverpool. It was the sensation of the London art season of 1897. It presents a procession of lovely women following the bearer of a charger weighted with baubles. Other works that have won enthusiastic praise from Mr. Shaw's admirers are "Truth," "The Queen of Hearts" and the "The Queen of Spades."

(London Sun, May 1, 1899.)

Mr. Byam Shaw's strong picture "Love the Conqueror" will undoubtedly be the picture of the year at the Royal Academy. From the gate of a mediaeval city by the sea, issues forth the procession of those who have immortalized Love. Dante, Mark Anthony, Beethoven, Cleopatra, Mary of Scotland, Washington, Pocahontas, Shakespeare, all the world's great lovers held in silken bondage by cherubs. In the center on a black horse, is Love, the Conqueror, behind him a serried array of scarlet clad heralds. It is a beautiful and original idea that Mr. Shaw carries out in his somewhat bizarre yet powerful style, whilst the vivid hard color is daringly but effectively handled.
(Liverpool Courier, May 8, 1899.)

One of the pictures of this year's Academy is "Love the Conqueror" by Mr. Byam Shaw, a young artist only twenty-five years of age, and the general recognition of his undoubted talent will no doubt be strengthened by his collection of paintings at the Dowdeswell Galleries. Mr. Shaw possesses in a marked degree the gift of originality. These cabinet pictures at Dowdeswell's are the outcome of thoughts suggested by some passages from British Poets. Christina Rossetti is evidently the favorite, for quotations from her work predominate. A beautiful work, perfect in its way, the smallest detail studied, is one illustrating Tennyson's Maud (No. 10) "When alone she sits by her music and books." In this little gem there is something which seems to partake of the nature of a Rossetti and sometimes a Millais, and yet throughout the style is undoubtedly the painter's own.

(London Daily Mail, April 29, 1899.)

Mr. Byam Shaw has a wonderful picture, which will no doubt be the center of attraction when the Academy opens. It is called "Love the Conqueror" and shows Love, represented as a young boy in golden armor, seated on a black horse gaily trapped. Behind stands a long line of men at arms in brilliant scarlet, whilst before the hillock on which the Conqueror stands, passes an unending procession of the victims to the passion. It would seem that all the famous figures of life and fiction
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are passing in review before the gazer, headed by the figure of a young girl in pink raiment, spangled with daisies, typifying Youth. Dante, Cleopatra, Shakespeare, Mary Stuart, Lohengrin, Julius Caesar, Ivanhoe, Henry VIII., Falstaff, Charles II., Elizabeth, Fair Rosamond, all figures in this wonderful and never-ending parade, which stretches across the background to the gates of a quaint mediæval city. Truly a wonderful painting.

(London Morning Post, May 11, 1899.)

The congenial alliance between poetry and painting is exemplified in a fashion not less impressive than fanciful through a series of cabinet pictures now on view at Messrs. Dowdeswell’s gallery, New Bond street. In these dainty little works, figure-subjects all, painted on panel with remarkable beauty of color and accuracy of execution, the heroes and heroines have been chosen sometimes from the writings of Shakspeare, but more frequently from those of Clough, Browning, Tennyson, Christina, Rossetti, and a few other poets of less eminent rank. The numerous personages of the changeful scenes are depicted with such strength and variety of dramatic spirit and amid such picturesque diversity of incidents and accessories as win attention and interest at a glance. The artist is Mr. Byam Shaw, for whom, he being still very young, a brilliant career may be confidently predicted.
The Dowdeswell Galleries contain a singularly interesting collection of cabinet pictures by Mr. Byam Shaw, entitled "Thoughts Suggested by Some Passages from British Poets." Certainly, in none of the larger and more ambitious works of this promising young artist, has he yet so vindicated his right to be classed among the true poet-painters of English growth as here in these fantasies, avowedly based on the fantasies of poets, yet, as they should be, seen with the painter's eye, rather than thought out in the brain of the deliberately poetic literateur. A determined mediaevalist, and in love with northern much more than with southern ideals, Mr. Byam Shaw yet renounces many things which the greatest of the fifteenth century painters north of the Alps—the Van Eycks, Bouts, Van der Weyden, Memlinck, and Hugo van der Goes—had achieved. His rich and splendid color is oftener that of the missal, and the stained-glass window, than that of the painted panel of the higher order. The unifying, softening influence of atmospheric environment is too often and too resolutely renounced. There are, all the same, among these so-called cabinet pictures, which we should prefer to style poetic studies, not a few things which may rank as veritable inventions, true visions of the poet-painter inspired, not so much to embody the creations of verse as inspired by them to see and perpetuate visions of his own. Now and again the pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and Ford Madox Brown assert their influence; the more modern
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artist adopts in many cases their point of view, but cannot boast that persistence, that infinite patience, which they displayed when they held Nature in the closest possible embrace, and sought to express her innermost secrets."

"We think her white brows often ached beneath her crown," (No. 2), (Christina Rossetti), shows a mediaeval queen in sorrowful meditation. "When musing on companions gone" (No. 5), (Scott), depicts with deep pathos a sad browed old lady entering church alone, and as she goes seeing, gathered together above her, the faces of the beloved dead, not weird and ghost-like, but in their counterfeit presentment as they lived. There is a curious coincidence, which may be accidental, between the design of "All winds go sighing," (No. 7), and that beautiful decorative canvas by Henri Martin, at the Luxembourg, showing red-robed, laurel-wreathed Provencal poets wandering amid the stems of the fir-trees.

To the picture of a modern cyclist whirling along on a bright, breezy morning, there have been, appropriately enough, appended the words from "Pippa Passes,

"God's in his Heaven-All's right with the world," (No. 9). Here is, nevertheless, an instance among many where the brush cannot indicate more than a tithe of what the poet suggests. In style this little piece recalls strongly Madox Brown and Holman Hunt. Very "Early Victorian" again is "Maud"—Tennyson's "Maud"—

"When alone she sits with her music and books," (No. 10). Delightfully and quite legitimately humorous is the "Cupid and Campaspe," (Lyly) (No. 11).
At the Dowdeswell Galleries are to be seen a number of cabinet pictures by Mr. Byam Shaw, and very well worth a visit is the collection. The pictures are nearly all symbolic—sometimes deeply so. These are fantasies called up to the artist's mind by lines in various poems, but they are rarely illustrative of those lines, or even bear upon the sentiment of the poem as a whole. Here and there is an exception, as in the Simple Simon character of the lute-player—

"Will, if looking well can't move her,
Looking ill prevail." (No. 8).

Or in the very beautiful head in profile, with a wondrously graphic predilla of flaming city below it—

"Was this fair face the cause," quoth she,
Why the Greeks sacked Troy?" (No. 6).

The exhibition proves that Mr. Byam Shaw can weld colors together harmoniously when he likes, and that he is no less rich when he eschews positives altogether, or so subdues them and restricts their number, that perfect unison seems to prevail.

Steady attention to these paintings gives great insight to the psychological side of the artist's personality, and those who admire his style least are of course ready to allow that "personality" is strong. In the "Church Interior," (No. 5)—

"When musing on companions gone,
We doubly feel ourselves alone—"
Everyone will recognize the pathos in the lady’s face, over whose head in the moted beams through the window are visions of those who have ‘gone before.’

(London Echo, May 17th, 1899.)

Who would gain a better notion of Mr. Byam Shaw’s art than is afforded by his big Academy picture would do well to visit the Dowdeswell Galleries. “Thoughts Suggested by Some Passages from British Poets” is the title of the collection of thirty-nine cabinet pictures. The artist’s interpretation of passages is sometimes fanciful and original, but always striking, often eloquent in form and color. Clough and Christina Rossetti seem to be Mr. Byam Shaw’s favorites, but he has drawn inspiration from Browning, Tennyson and Rudyard Kipling. One of the finest things, however, is drawn from Shakespeare, a woman’s head in profile on a black ground, marvelous in its luminous intensity. Very graceful and full of feeling is the rich-robed Queen, illustrating a quotation from Christina Rossetti, (No. 2). “We think her white brows often ached beneath her crown.”

The riderless horse galloping down a rocky gorge is a pathetic and striking commentary on Kipling’s lines, “Two thousand pounds of education drops to a ten-rupee ‘jzail’” (No. 15). Exquisite bits of background, trees and water, are brought into some of the pictures. Others are quaintly mediaeval and gem-like in hue, and others again palpitate with modernity like the young men in the club illustrating Clough’s “Do anything, but be something.” (No. 13).
(Manchester Courier, May 6th, 1899.)

Not content with having directed popular attention to himself at the Academy, Mr. Byam Shaw has an entire exhibition of his own at Dowdeswell’s Galleries. It is here that one can see the train of thought that must have led up to that singular canvas, ‘‘Love the Conqueror.’’ Mr. Shaw has ransacked the poets, old and modern, and under the influence of striking passages has endeavored to give his individual interpretation of these. Christina Rossetti’s verse has apparently been a frequent source of inspiration, and the quotations from her works are illustrated by exercises in bright color that would have gladdened the hearts of the pre-Raphaelites. Clough and Kipling have given the artist more practical themes for illustration. ‘‘Come in God’s name, come down! Do anything, but be something’’ (No. 13) is a capable motive, and well carried out. A youth in riding costume is seen yawning his heart away on the hearth of some club smoking room. In the middle distance another lazy fellow reads a colored sporting paper, and in the foreground a third patrician blows smoke rings and dallies with a whisky and soda. This is a prosaic enough theme, and one to give a so-called impressionist a good time. Mr. Shaw, has, however, contrived to make a decoration out of these mundane trifles, and this work might be taken as an example of his style of treatment.