



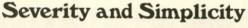
Coulton Waugh

Low Tide - Provincetown, ca. 1925

Water-colored lithograph

12½ x 9"

Richard and Rosanne Barons Collection



The Arts and Crafts Aesthetic in the Northeast 1895-1925

THE INTERNATIONAL ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT originated in England during the mid-19th century, in defiance of the Industrial Revolution. Whether social or moral, the machine had changed England forever. The polluted land-scape and the demoralized workers making monotonous manufactured goods led the leaders of the movement—poet, socialist, craftsman, book printer, and designer William Morris; philosopher John Ruskin; essayist Thomas Carlyle; and architect August Charles Pugin—to look nostalgically to an earlier era in British history, a time when medieval craftsmen took pride in their handmade products. They sought a time when skills were either passed down from one generation to another or learned through the apprentice system.

It was not until 1888 that the movement took its name from the newly formed Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society of London. This group, which married fine arts to handicrafts for the first time, aimed at dignifying decorative arts.

The American Arts and Crafts movement was inspired by the European decorative arts exhibited at the 1876 Centennial Exposition, held in Philadelphia. The quality of the ceramics, glass, and furniture was exciting and inspired envy among Americans. Within a few years, educators were introducing applied arts instruction, and American craftsmen were producing beautifully made household furnishings. Craftsmen began to be viewed as artists, and the American home became furnished with solid and simple designs, finely crafted from native mate-

rials. Socialists of the day even claimed that the personal relationship between satisfied customer and proud craftsmen, as well as the bond between home and handicraft industry, strenghtened the moral fiber of Americans.

Gustav Stickley, the father of the American movement, articulated this theme in 1901: "The United Crafts [his new company] endeavors to promote and to extend the principles established by Morris, in both the artistic and socialistic sense. In the interests of art, they seek to substitute the luxury of taste for the luxury of costliness; to teach that beauty does not imply elaboration or ornament; to employ only those forms and materials which make for simplicity, individuality and dignity of effect." (The Craftsman, October, 1901)

In America, the Arts and Crafts movement was not only Gothic inspired, it took influences from any culture not yet mechanized. Japanese textiles, lacquerware, and paper cuts; Chinese ceramics; Indian hammered brass; and Syrian-blown glass all presented flaws that stressed the individualism of each object. "Individualism is the watchword of the new century," wrote Gustav Stickley (*The Craftsman*, December, 1901). This return of self-pride was one of the tenets of the movement. Nationalism was another. In America, nationalism was reflected by the adaptation of the colonial revival aesthetic with its Pilgrim century-inspired oak furniture and vernacular Gothic architecture. American designers introduced new world images such as the United States flag, the ship "Mayflower," as well as native

plants such as corn. Regional coastal pines and decorations from Indian weaving and pottery played a major role in California design.

This exhibition focuses on Arts and Crafts objects from our Northeast region, extending from Boston, south to Doylestown, Pennsylvania, and west to the Niagara River. From 1895 to 1925, this region was richly adorned by the crafts presented in the exhibit by masters including Will Bradley, Claude Bragdon, William Wallace Denslow, Harvey Ellis, Ruth Erikson, Elbert Hubbard, Dard Hunter, Henry Keck, Karl Kipp, Hugh Cornwall Robertson, Adelaide Alsop Robineau, Charles Rohlfs, Jessie Willcox Smith, Gustav Stickley, and Louis Comfort Tiffany.

Three lesser-known exceptional artists are also introduced. The architect Ernest G. W. Dietrich (1857-1924) was born and educated in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In 1889, he opened an architectural office in New York City, from which he designed both residential and public buildings, and in 1903, he published an article "The Craftsman House" in Gustav Stickley's *The Craftsman*. Rome Kincade Richardson (1877-ca.1946) was born in Candor, N.Y., studied at Pratt Institute and the New York School of Art, and remained in New York City to work as an artist and designer. Ten of the 50 book bindings he designed before 1917 are exhibited. Adele Rouyon (1870-1955), a Brooklyn-born artist-designer, studied at the Art Students League and the Brooklyn Art School before receiving her degree at Pratt Institute in 1906. She is noted for the Japanese influence in her work, probably inspired by her teacher, Arthur Wesley Dow.

Please join us as we feast on the rich legacy of the severe and simple products of the American Arts and Crafts movement, which was founded more than a hundred years ago on the idea that every home should be a beautiful, finely made place.

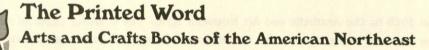
Richard Barons Guest Curator



Adele Rouyon Wallpaper design, 1905 Watercolor 18 x 17½" Private collection



Manhattan by Joseph Clarke and
Henry Hudson by Elbert Hubbard
The Roycroft Press, East Aurora, New York, 1910
Designed by Dard Hunter
10 x 8"
Binghamton University Library Collection



A BOOK WITH AN AGED LEATHER BINDING, stamped in burnished gold leaf with leaves and flowers, invites you to pick it up. Open its lovely cover and you will enter the enchanted world of the Arts and Crafts book.

In the late nineteenth century, the Arts and Crafts movement evolved in response to the Industrial Revolution, which had created an educated middle class with the leisure time to read and a taste for luxury. Their improved cultural and financial situation had, however, been gained at a high cost. The Industrial Revolution entailed the materialization of culture, resulting in a spiritual void and the devaluation of the art of the craftsman. Inspired by medieval illuminated manuscripts, the founder of the Arts and Crafts movement, Englishman William Morris (1834-96), sought to infuse the process of bookmaking with traditional handcraftsmanship, and the final product with a secular spirituality.

Morris's Kelmscott Press in Hammersmith, England, printed books that became the models for Arts and Crafts books in England and America. Morris produced his first book in 1891, and soon periodicals, based on Morris's style, began to appear in America. The time was right for a revival of fine bookmaking in the United States. Printers now had the technology, with their power presses and automatic typesetters, to provide the large middle classes with inexpensive books. The quality of the product had deteriorated, however, and many grieved the loss of fine printing. Some were willing to pay more for finely printed, hand-bound books,

but usually the cost of producing such books, made with much labor and expensive materials, put them beyond the reach of all but the rich.

One of the most flamboyant American promoters of the Arts and Crafts movement was Elbert Hubbard (1856-1915). At the age of 36, he retired from being a soap salesman, attended Harvard University, and then traveled in England, where he was inspired by meeting Morris. Hubbard returned to East Aurora, New York, where he set up a community of as many as 400 local craftsmen, employed in a book printing and binding business, as well as in producing household furnishings in metal, wood, and other materials. However, bookmaking was his first love. In proud acknowledgment of tradition, he called his press the Roycrofters after two brothers who bound books in seventeenth-century England. By 1894, he began the first of his periodicals, The Little Journeys to Homes of the Great.

Many thought that Hubbard was a mere imitator of Morris and criticized his self-promotion, complaining that he denigrated the purity of Morris's style. However, Hubbard used the Italian hand-made papers with his own watermark and worked only with excellent designers, such as Dard Hunter. His books appear quite elegant today. In its 30 years of printing, the Roycrofters Press was largely responsible for the spread of Arts and Crafts books to the American public.

However, other American presses competed with Hubbard; the Library of Binghamton University has excellent examples of not only Arts and Crafts books, but also related books of the period between

1890 and 1915 in the Aesthetic and Art Nouveau styles. The opening pages of the Arts and Crafts examples are often very elaborate, with illuminated or woodcut borders and initials. The paper is very white, thick, and handmade with irregular, untrimmed "deckle" edges. The typeface has a Gothic style and is printed in black ink; red ink was sometimes also used, especially for headings. The bindings, often handmade, are vellum, paperboard, or leather, sometimes stamped in designs with gold leaf; the appearance is of a medieval manuscript with lines closely spaced in blocks. The editions are often limited, as in printed fine arts pictures of the era.

Arts and Crafts and Aesthetic designers looked to historical antecedents for their motifs, whereas Art Nouveau designers looked to nature. The Art Nouveau books have a loose, open appearance with tendrils of plant life spreading across the pages. Aesthetic books were of Renaissance, rather than medieval inspiration, with light open pages and less ornamentation.

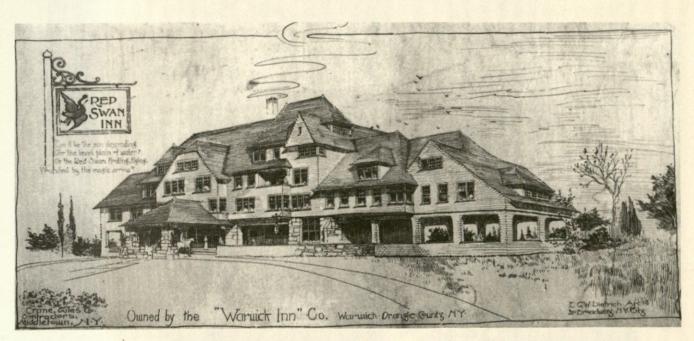
All three styles can be found in the Binghamton University Library. In the Art Nouveau book, Sonnets from the Portuguese by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, illustrated by Margaret Armstrong (N.Y.: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1912), each page is filled with a different flower that sweeps in a whiplash curve across facing pages; the typeface is small, printed in brown and unadorned; the smooth paper does not appear to be hand made; its gold-leafed edges are not deckled; and dragonflies and other Art Nouveau motifs are skillfully woven into the date and dedication pages. Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Henry the Leper, published by the Bibliophile Society of Boston in 1905, is an example of an Arts and Crafts book. The introductory page looks exactly like a medieval manuscript with Gothic script in heavy black ink set in a block on the page, a large ornamented initial, heavy handmade white Italian paper with a watermark, and a woodcut of a woman in a medieval gown decorating the top of the page.

Dard Hunter (1883-1966), a Roycroft designer, employed a style influenced by designs from Vienna and Scotsman Charles Rennie Mackintosh. The design of Manhattan by Joseph Clarke (East Aurora: Roycrofters, 1910) is rectilinear, with a stylized ship. Soon after, Frank Lloyd Wright would make geometric abstraction of natural plant motifs his trademark, thus combining Art Nouveau plant motifs with emerging geometric abstraction.

Along with the revival of limited edition books, trade books flourished with cloth covers, less expensive paper, and plain print. They too benefited from the Arts and Crafts designers producing their covers. Will H. Bradley (1868-1962) started a literary magazine in Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1895. The striking binding of *In Russet and Silver* by Edmund Gosse (Chicago: Stone & Kimball, 1894) has tan trees against a silver and brown background. The book covers designed by R.K. Richardson have natural motifs set off by gold leaf. The stylized waves and lobster in gold leaf of the *The Sea Lady* by H.G.Wells (New York: Appleton, 1902) is typical of his designs.

The golden age of American book design was a brief two decades (1890-1910), but it rejuvenated the art of printing and inspired the creation of dozens of small presses, whose unique publications we cherish today. But most importantly, it popularized the Arts and Crafts movement through the printed word.

Lucie Nelson Curator



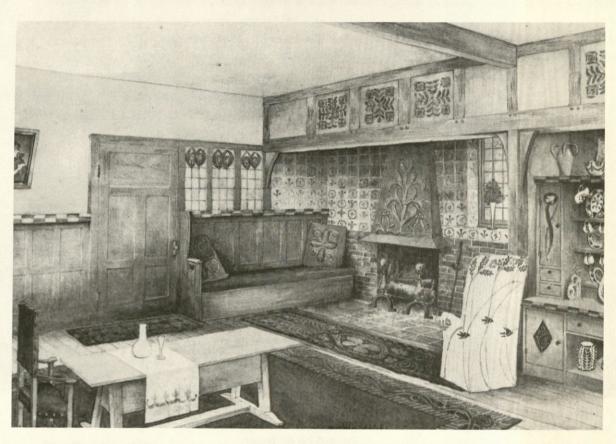
Ernest G. W. Dietrich

Red Swan Inn, Warwick, N.Y., ca.1902

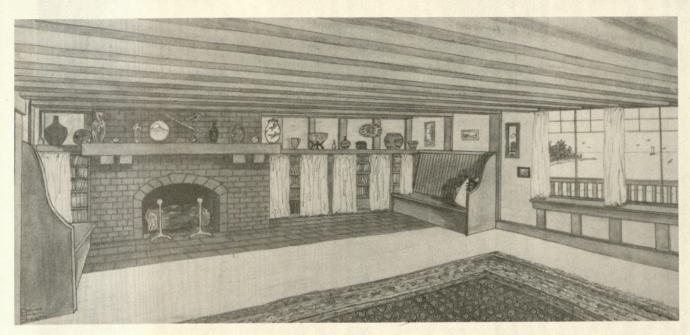
Pen and ink on paper

15½ x 30"

John Spencer Collection



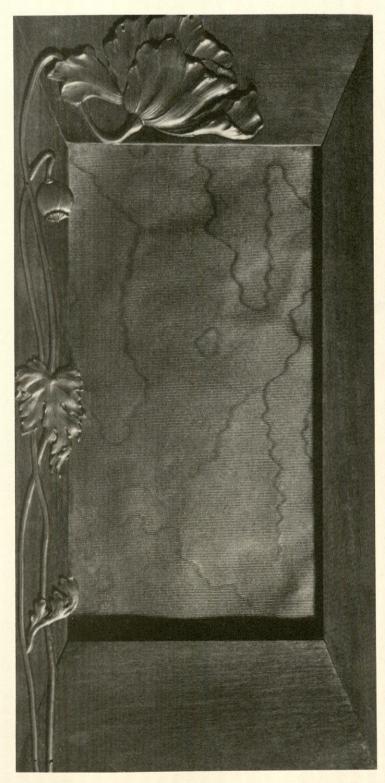
Ernest G. W. Dietrich
Interior perspective of dining room with fireplace, ca. 1903
Pen and ink with watercolor on sketchboard $14\frac{1}{2} \times 18$ John Spencer Collection



Louise Nast Sanger Untitled, 1915 Pen and ink with watercolor 10¼ x 22¼" John Spencer Collection



Franck Taylor Bowers Untitled, ca.1917 Oil 13½ x 21" Private collection



Frame, ca.1905 Wood and copper 11 x 5¹/₄" Saral Waldorf Collection.



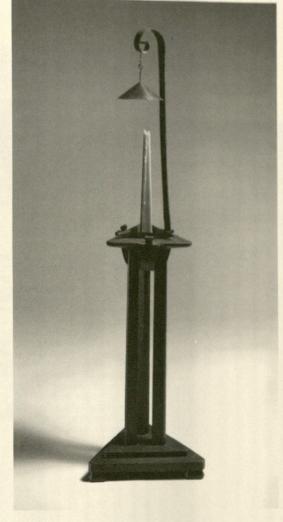
Gustav Stickley "Chalet" desk, ca.1905 Oak New York State Museum Collection



Harvey Ellis
Side Chair, ca.1903-1904
Oak with pewter inlay
Designed for Gustav Stickley
New York State Museum Collection



Adele Rouyon Untitled, 1905 Watercolor 7¹/₄ x 4" Private collection



Charles Rohlfs
Candlestick, ca. 1900-1905
Oak with copper
h: 36½"
Adam Weitsman Collection



Candlestick, ca. 1905
Poplar with copper
h: 9½"
Private collection



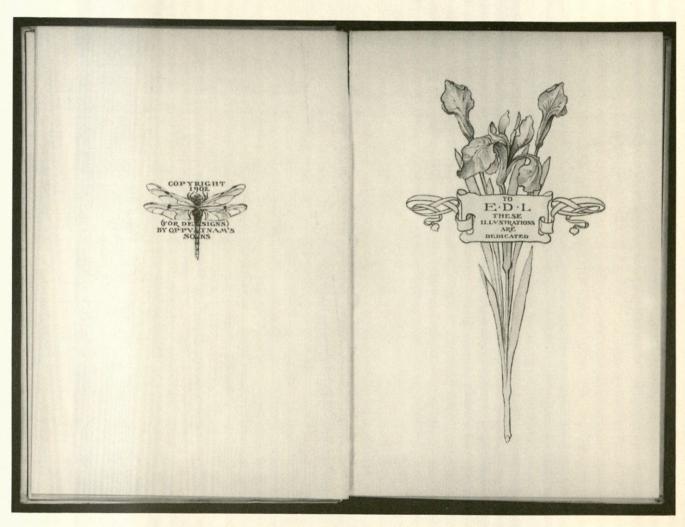
Introduction



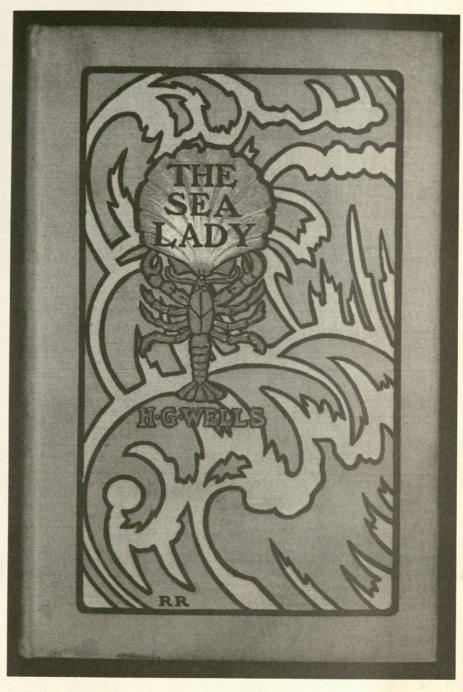
De manuscript of "Henry the Neper," which in the accompanying volume is presented in facsimile, was purchased by Afr. William K. Birthy of

by Wr. William k. Dirby of St. Louis, from Wesses. D. f. Stevens k. Drown, London. It was sold as "a manuscript in Dance Gabriel Kossetti's autograph," and was presumed by the bealers to have remained with the poet from the years 1846–7, when the paraphrase of Dartmann von Aue's poem was probably made, until 1871, when Kossetti put some finishing touches upon it. It was not printed during Kossetti's lifetime, although, according to his brother's testimony, "he thought well of it, and sometimes contemplated publishing it."

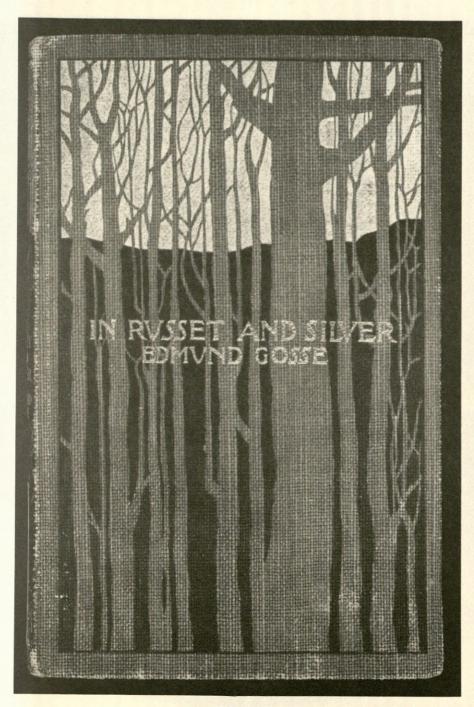
Henry the Leper by Dante Gabriel Rossetti The Bibliophile Society, Boston, 1905 10 x 8" Binghamton University Library Collection



Sonnets from the Portuguese by Elizabeth Barrett Browning G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1902
Illustration by Margaret Armstrong
7½ x 10"
Binghamton University Library Collection



The Sea Lady by H.G. Wells
D. Appleton & Company, New York, 1902
Design by Rome Kincade Richardson
7½ x 5"
John Spencer Collection



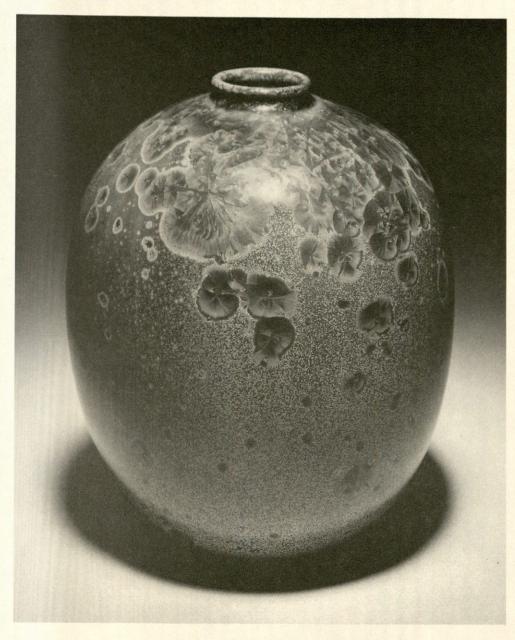
In Russet and Silver by Edmund Gosse
Stone & Kimball, Chicago, 1894
Design by Will Bradley
7 x 4½"
Binghamton University Library Collection



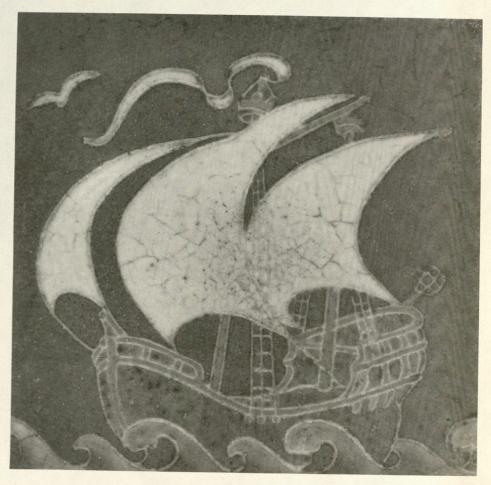
Vase, ca.1915
Fulper Pottery Company
Stoneware
5 x 7"
Saral Waldorf Collection



Bowl, ca.1904-14 Hampshire Pottery Semi-porcelain with mat green glaze Designed by Cadmon Robertson diam: 9½" Everson Museum of Art Collection



Adelaide Alsop Robineau
Vase, ca. 1910
Porcelain with crystalline glaze
h: 45%"
Everson Museum of Art Collection



Tile, ca.1900-1910
Grueby Faience and Tile Company
Earthenware
6 x 6"
Adam Weitsman Collection



