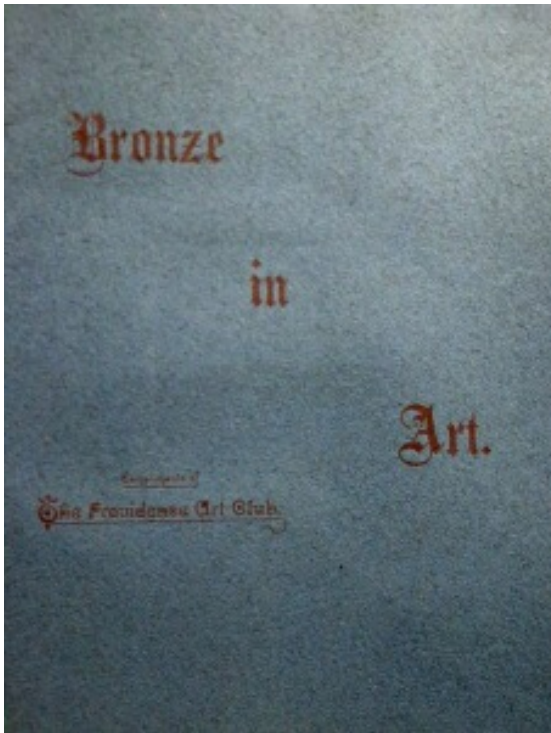


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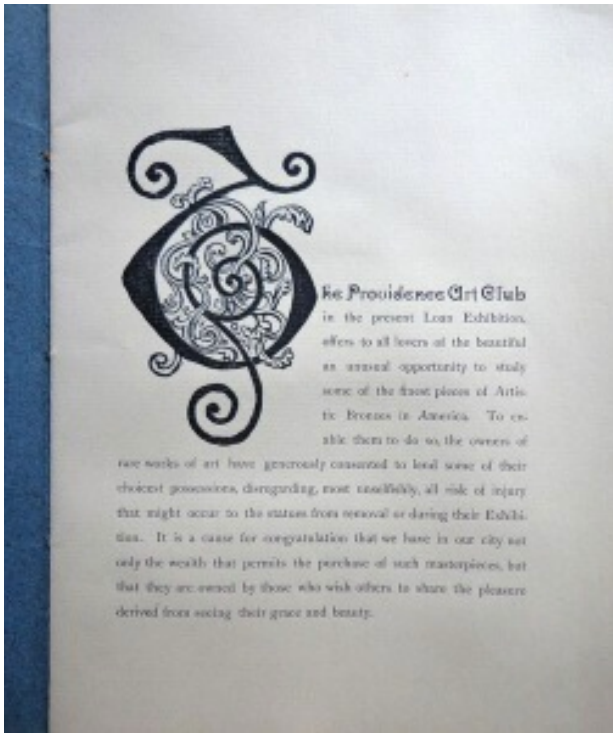
Bronze in Art

Compliments of

The Providence Art Club

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Box 2, 1880-1889



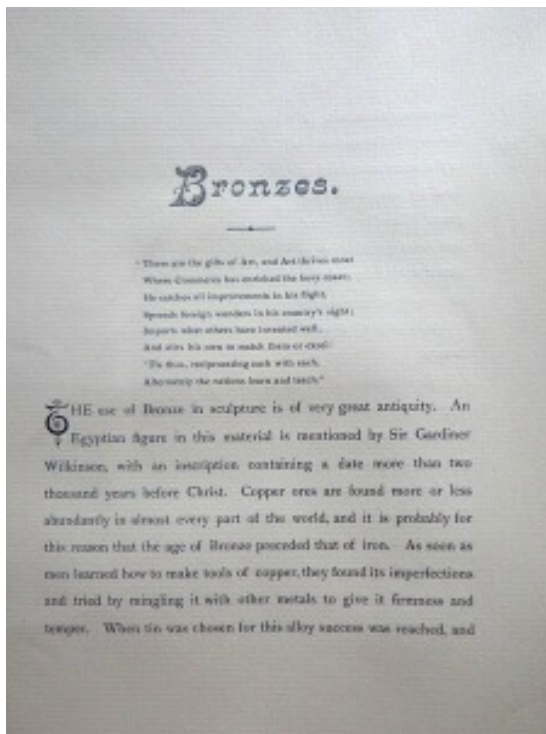
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The Providence Art Club in the present Loan Exhibition, offers to all lovers of the beautiful an unusual opportunity to study some of the finest pieces of Artistic Bronzes in America. To enable them to do so, the owners of rare works of art have generously consented to lend some of their choicest possessions, disregarding, most unselfishly, all risk of injury that might occur to the statues from removal during their Exhibition. It is a cause for congratulation that we have in our city not only the wealth that permits the purchase of such masterpieces, but that they were owned by those who wish others to share the pleasure derived from seeing their grace and beauty.

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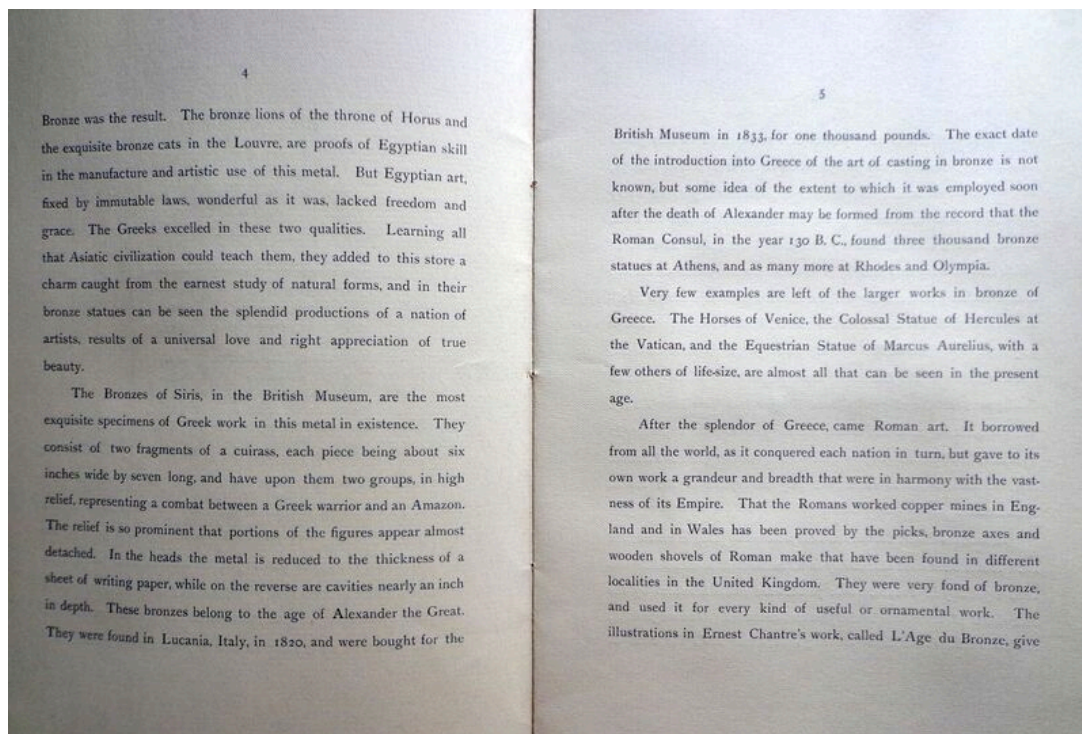
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Bronzes.

"These are the gifts of Art, and Art thrives most Where Commerce has enriched the busy coast; He catches all improvements in his flight, Spreads foreign wonders in his country's sight; Imports what others have invented well, And stirs his own to match them or excel: 'Tis thus, reciprocating each with each, Alternatively the nations learn and teach."

The use of Bronze in sculpture is of very great antiquity. An Egyptian figure in this material is mentioned by Sir Gardiner Wilkinson, with an inscription containing a date more than two thousand years before Christ. Copper ores are found more or less abundantly in most every part of the world, and it is probably for this reason that the age of Bronze preceded that of iron. As soon as men learned how to make tools of copper, they found its imperfections and tried by mingling it with other metals to give it firmness and temper. When tin was chosen for this alloy success was reached, and



Bronze was the result. The bronze lions of the throne of Horus and the exquisite bronze cats in the Louvre, are proofs of Egyptian skill in the manufacture and artistic use of this metal. But Egyptian art, fixed by immutable laws, wonderful as it was, lacked freedom and grace. The Greeks excelled in their two qualities. Learning all that Asiatic civilization could teach them, they added to this store a charm caught from the earnest study of natural forms, and in their bronze statues can be seen the splendid productions as a nation of artists, results of a universal love and right appreciation of true beauty.

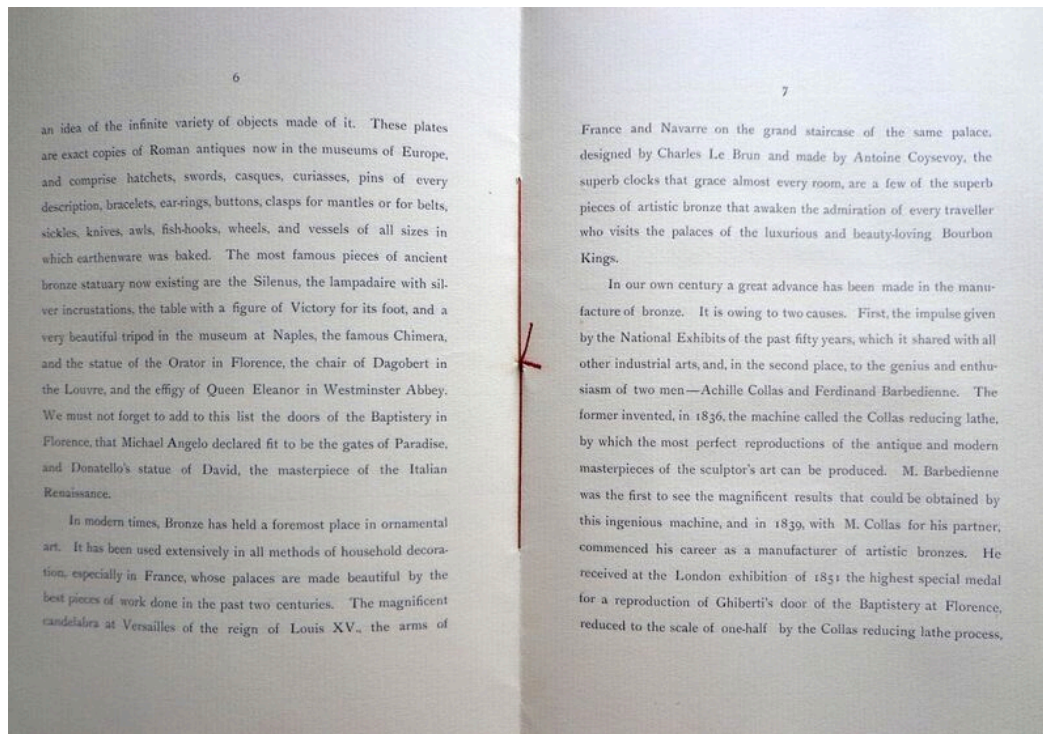
The Bronze of Siris, in the British Museum, are the most exquisite specimens of Greek work in the metal existence. They consist of two fragments of a cuirass, each piece being about six inches wide by seven long, and have upon them two groups, in high relief, representing a combat between a Greek warrior and an Amazon. The relief is so prominent that portions of the figures appear almost detached. In the heads the metal is reduced to the thickness of a sheet of writing paper, while on the reverse are cavities nearly an inch in depth. These bronzes belong to the age of Alexander the Great. They were found in Lucania, Italy, in 1820, and were bought for the British Museum in 1833, for one thousand pounds. The exact date of introduction into Greece of the art of casting in bronze is not known, but some idea of the extent to which it was employed soon after the death of Alexander may be formed from the record that the Roman Consul, in the year 130 B. C., found three thousand bronze statues at Athens, and as many more at Rhodes and Olympia.

Very few examples are left of the larger works in bronze of Greece. The Horses of Venice, the Colossal Statue of Hercules at the Vatican, and the Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius, with a few others of life-size, are almost all that can be seen in the present age.

After the splendor of Greece, came Roman art. It borrowed from all the world, it is conquered each nation in turn, but gave its own work a grandeur and bredth that were in harmony with the vastness of its Empire. That the Romans worked conner mines in England and in Wales has been proved by the nicks. bronze axes and

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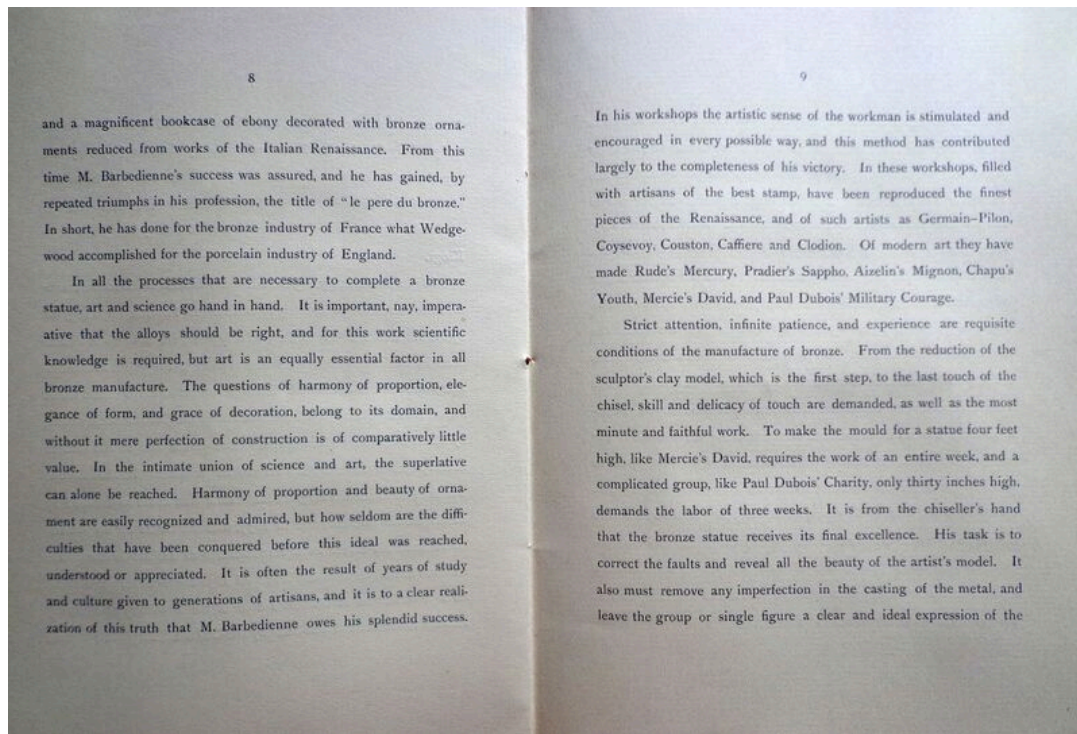
an idea of the infinite variety of objects made of it. These plates are exact copies of Roman antiques now in the museums of Europe, and comprise hatchets, swords, casques, curiasses, pins of every description, bracelets, earrings, buttons, clasps for mantles or for belts, sickles, knives, awls, fish-hooks, wheels, and vessels of all sizes in which earthenware was baked. The most famous pieces of ancient bronze statuary now existing are the Silenus, the lampadaire with silver incrustations, the table with a figure of Victory for its foot, and a very beautiful tripod in the museum of Naples, the famous Chimera, and the statue of the Orator in Florence, the chair of Dagobert in the Louvre, and the effigy of Queen Eleanor in Westminster Abbey. We must not forget to add to this list of doors in the Baptistery in Florence, that Michael Angelo declared fit to be the gates of Paradise, and Donatello's statue of David, the masterpiece of the Italian Renaissance.

In modern times, Bronze has held a foremost place in ornamental art. It has been used extensively in all methods of household decoration, especially in France, whose palaces are made beautiful by the best pieces of work done in the past two centuries. The magnificent candelabra at Versailles of the reign of Louis XV., the arms of France and Navarre on the grand staircase of the same palace, designed by Charles Le Brun made by Antoine Coysevoy, the superb clocks that grace almost every room, are a few of the superb pieces of artistic bronze that awaken the admiration of every traveler who visits the palaces of the luxurious and beauty-loving Bourbon Kings.

In our century a great advance has been made in the manufacture of bronze. It is owing to two causes. First, the impulse given by the National Exhibits of the past fifty years, which it shared with all other industrial arts, and, in the second place, to the genius and enthusiasm of two men - Achille Collas and Ferdinand Barbedienne. The former invented, in 1836, the machine called the Collas reducing lathe, by which the most perfect reproductions of the antique and modern masterpieces of the sculptor's art can be produced. M. Barbedienne was the first to see the magnificent results that could be obtained by this ingenious machine, and

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and a magnificent bookcase of ebony decorated with bronze ornaments reduced from works of the Italian Renaissance. From this time M. Barbedienne's success was assured, and he was gained, by repeated triumphs in his profession, the title of "le pere du bronze." In short, he has done for the bronze industry of France that Wedgwood accomplished for the porcelain industry of England.

In all the process that are necessary to complete a bronze statue, art and science go hand in hand. It is important, nay imperative that the alloys should be right, and for this work scientific knowledge is required, but art is on equally essential factor in all bronze manufacture. The questions of harmony of proportion, elegance of form, and grace of decoration, belong to its domain, and without it mere perfection of construction is of comparatively little value. In the intimate union of science and art, the superlative can alone be reached.

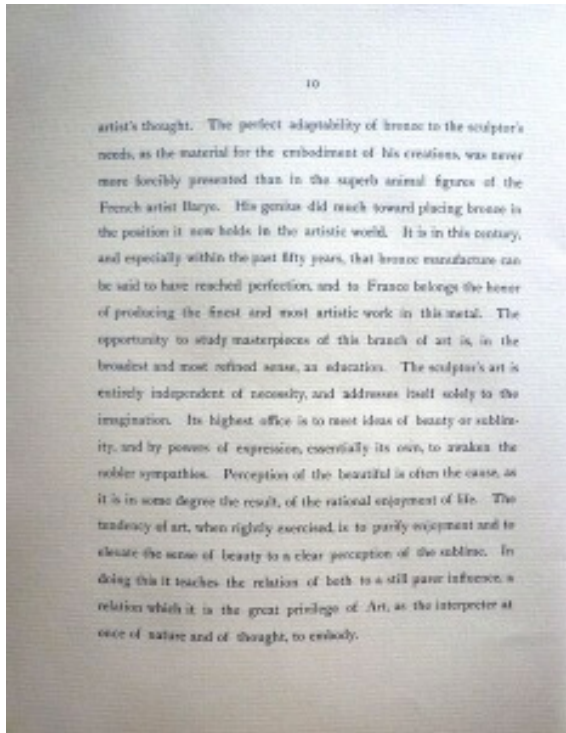
Harmony of proportion and beauty of ornament are easily recognized and admired, but how seldom are the difficulties that have been conquered before this ideal was reached, understood or appreciated. It is often the result of years of study and culture given to generations of artisans, and it is to a clear realization of this truth that M. Barbedienne owes his splendid success.

In his workshops the artistic sense of the workman is stimulated and encouraged in every possible way, and this method has contributed largely to the completeness of his victory. In these workshops, filled with artisans of the best stamp, have been reproduced the finest pieces of the Renaissance, and of each artists such as Germain-Pilon, Coysevoy, Couston, Caffiere and Clodion. Of modern art they have made Rude's Mercury, Pradier's Sappho, Aizelin's Mignon, Chapu's Youth, Mercie's David, and Paul Dubois' Military Courage.

Strict attention infinite patience, and experience are requisite conditions of the manufacture of bronze. From the reduction of the sculptor's clay model, which is the first step, to the last touch of the chisel, skill and delicacy of touch are demanded as well as the most minute and faithful work. To make the mould for a statue four feet high. like Mercie's David. requires the work of an entire week. and a complicated group. like Paul

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artist's thought. The perfect adaptability of bronze to the sculptor's needs, as the material for the embodiment of his creations, was never more forcibly presented than in the superb animal figures of the French artist Barye. His genius did much toward placing bronze in the position it now holds in the artistic world. It is in this century, and especially within the past fifty years, that bronze manufacture can be said to have reached perfection, and to France belongs the honor of producing the finest and most artistic work in this metal. The opportunity to study masterpieces of this branch of art is, and the broadest and most refined sense, an education. The sculptor's art is entirely independent of necessity, and addresses itself solely to the imagination. Its highest office is to meet ideas of beauty or sublimity, and by powers of expression, essentially its own, to awaken the nobler sympathies. Perception of the beautiful is often the cause, as it is in some degree the result, of the rational enjoyment of life. The tendency of art, when rightly exercised, is to purify enjoyment and to elevate the sense of beauty to a clear perception of the sublime. In doing this it teaches the relation of both to a still purer influence, a relation which it is the greatest privilege of Art, as the interpreter at once of nature and of thought, to embody.