

A Noted Philadelphia Artist

Thomas Eakins was best known to Philadelphians as a portrait painter of remarkable skill and of large achievement. For forty years, in this city, he put on canvas many of our noted men and women, with remarkable fidelity to truth. His work was realistic rather than imaginative, but some of it achieved great fame. His large painting of Dr. Agnew and his clinic (in which the late Dr. J. William White appears), and of Dr. Gross and his clinic, are admirable specimens of composition, as well as of portraiture.

But Mr. Eakins was much more than a portrait painter. Some of his mural compositions are justly admired. His Crucifixion, at the Overbrook Seminary, is a notable piece of work, while he achieved fame as a sculptor. The late artist was a man of unusual gifts, but his modesty was such that he never pushed himself forward.

It is notable that Mr. Eakins, who got his larger training under Gerome, never ran after the strange artistic gods which have developed in modern times. Neither impressionism, futurism nor post-impressionism kept him from that honest effort to paint things as they are and to give the world some counterfeit presentments of life destined to be lasting. Aside from being a painter, he was an ardent anatomist, holding professorships in this department of learning. It was this that gave him unusual power as a sculptor, although that was with him an avocation.

Philadelphia for more than a century has been training the artists who have made this country famous, but most of them have been obliged to seek their fortunes elsewhere. We are not patrons of the art which we develop. Mr. Eakins was one of those who chose to remain faithful to his native city, thereby losing in fortune, but he leaves behind him an eminent record of achievement, and his place will be missed,