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LA SAVOISIENNE

By H. G. E. Degas (1834-1917)

Museum Appropriation, 1923

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EXAMPLES OF DEGAS' ART

IT has been well said that no one artist creates a national art. This has been abundantly proved in the history of art. Such a gift to posterity is usually the work of a group of distinguished artists, working together but with distinct personalities and not always the same technique. Certainly the national art of France for the last half-century is expressed in the work of such a group: namely, Manet, Monet, Renoir and Degas. Renoir's work in the Museum was discussed in the Bulletin for April, 1923. It so happens that Degas may also be well studied in the Museum, for there is a fine painting, several drawings and an important bronze by him.

The painting, "La Savoisienne," was bought last spring from the Museum Appropriation. It is a canvas 24 by 18 inches and is a magnificent example of Degas' work at a most interesting period, for it was painted in 1873. The pastel is a spirited and careful drawing of a ballet dancer, one of his later works and very fine in quality. This is a recent gift from Mrs. Gustav Radeke.

Degas was born in Paris in 1834, and spent most of his life in and around the metropolis. As a pupil of Ingres he received a training in drawing which was unusually sound, and his work shows everywhere his power of line. He exhibited at the Salon up to about 1870, when his contact with Manet and other exponents of Impressionism influenced his art, especially his handling of color. Blessed with sufficient means so that he did not have to court popular support, he retired to his studio and gave himself up to a life of seclusion but of intensive activity, as is shown by the wonderful series of sketches, drawings, pastels, sculpture and painting which he has left. He was always studying, like his teacher Ingres who at eighty-seven copied a painting by Giotto so that he might learn. Degas was an Impressionist only in his interest in color and light. His point of view on life, as expressed in his art, was gently satirical; there was nothing of caricature, nothing of bitterness, but only



BALLET GIRL

Degas (1834-1917)

Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke, 1922

an appreciation of the human interest of the life about him. His portraits were character studies of note, each one showing the artist's reaction to the personality before him. Also, they do not make one feel that they were painted on commission, but have a spontaneity which adds to their distinction. His race horses and their riders are painted with greater understanding and appreciation than by any other artist. His pastels of ballet dancers are an important part of his work, and he was the pioneer in the portrayal of this side of stage-life. It was always the light, color and life which interest the painter. At the Degas sale in Paris in 1918, there were hundreds of drawings, some more finished than others, but all showing his genius and mastery of line.

"La Savoisienne" belongs to the period when Degas began to introduce radical changes in his method. In it however there is nothing of that free treatment of

color, that painting of the light on an object—rather than the object itself—which is found later on. It is superbly drawn, and simple and restrained in handling. Through it there is the appeal of the maiden from Savoy with her peasant costume and simple dignity. The contrast is marked between this and the blasé ballet type of later days. It is also far more restrained than much of his later work.

In his later work there is no part more important than his studies of ballet girls and bathers. The drawing recently given shows one of the dancers adjusting her dress and is rather more complete than most of his sketches. There is a freedom of line and power to express a great deal in a simple way, which is worthy of the pupil of Ingres, and which in part goes to make Degas one of the master draughtsmen of the last generation.

A BURGUNDIAN PAINTING

SEVERAL years ago the Rhode Island School of Design purchased with the Museum Appropriation a part of a wing of an altarpiece, which possesses much of interest. It is a companion piece to one in the Worcester Art Museum, and both were formerly in the Oscar Hainauer collection in Berlin. They are described by Doctor V. Thieme in the catalogue issued in 1907, under the editorship of Doctor Wilhelm Bode. There they are called Burgundian School work and the subjects given as the "Grand Bâtard of Burgundy and his wife." They were shown at the special exhibition of French primitives in the Pavillon de Marsan at the Louvre in Paris in 1904, numbers 350 and 351, where they were called "French School of the North-East" and dated about 1460. In the catalogue of the exhibition Lorraine is suggested as a possible provenance, and the naming of the donor in the painting as Antoine of Burgundy is rightly questioned. Sometime after 1904 Frau Hainauer sold these panels, and they ultimately passed through a dealer's hand to Worcester and Providence, as noted.

In the Bulletin of the Worcester Art Museum for July 1913, where their panel is published, the date of 1460-1480 is given as a probability, and the name of the Maître de Moulins is mentioned in connection with it as standing for a group of painters working in the same manner. But certainly the painter of these panels is not the Maître de Moulins.

It may seem that there has been considerable uncertainty about these panels, but this has been largely cleared up by an authoritative article by A. Van de Put in the Burlington Magazine for June 15, 1923, in which he establishes the names of the bishop, donor and donatrix, and fixes the date and school. He makes the curious error however of saying that the companion panel now in our possession is at present in "an American private collection." If we quote* at large from his article, which is entitled "Some Golden Fleece Portraits," it will be to further the interest in our panel. Mr. Van de Put refutes the identification of the donor in the Worcester painting as Antoine de Bourgogne, Count of La Roche-en-Ardenne, and establishes the portrait as that of Claude de Toulangeon, Lord of La Bastie, who was received into the Order of the Golden Fleece in 1481. We are told that "through the extinction of an elder branch of cousins in 1462, and by his marriage, Claude de Toulangeon became the leading baron of Franche-Comté. Son of Antoine de Toulangeon, Lord of Traves, Mont-Richard and La Bastie, Marshal of Burgundy, and himself, as has been seen, a knight of the Fleece, Claude is styled in 1483 Lord of Toulangeon, La Bastie, Aultrey and Champlie, Baron of Bourbon-Laney and of Senecy. He had been knighted in 1453; was a chamberlain to Philip the Good; and was renowned for his unshakable loyalty to the line founded by Duke Philip le Hardi. It is interesting to think of him as the ambassador sent to England to invest Henry VII with the Fleece, after his election at the Mechlin chapter in 1491." He died between 1500 and 1505.

*By kind permission of the editor of the Burlington Magazine and Mr. Van de Put.



CLAUDE DE TOULANGEON AND CLAUDE, BISHOP OF BESANÇON
Burgundian, 15th Cen. Original in the Worcester Art Museum

His wife, who is represented in the panel in Providence, was "Guillemette de Vergy, heiress of Charles de Vergy, senechal of Burgundy, widow by a first marriage of Guillaume de Poutailler, and a member of another great house of Bourgogne Franche-Comté." They were married in 1470.

The bishop in the Worcester panel is "Saint Claude, Bishop of Besançon, abbot and afterwards name-patron of the great monastery at St. Oyant in Franche-Comté." The female saint behind Guillemette de Vergy, who holds a triple crown, is either Elizabeth of Hungary or Bridget of Sweden. Mr. Van de Put dates both panels on the above evidence as being works of the

period of 1470-1481, and there is general agreement on this.

Whether the work is by a native French artist or a Flemish artist working in Burgundy, is another matter. None of the writers thus far have commented on the fact that as wings of an altarpiece there should be figures painted on the back or outside of the wings. These exist, for the Worcester panel has on the back a bearded saint much damaged, and the Providence panel has quite a well-preserved painting of St. Martin of Tours. Both of these figures are painted in grisaille, a practice very common among Flemish artists. Furthermore, both are cut just below the knees, showing that originally the panels were longer. Just what difference this



GUILLEMETTE DE VERGY AND PATRON SAINT

Burgundian, 15th Cen.

Museum Appropriation, 1917

would make with the front of the panels, so far as general effect is concerned, is a matter of conjecture.

It is further to be noted that pieces of wood were fitted into the curved upper corners, completing the rectangle of the panel, and also that narrow strips of wood were added to the sides, increasing the original width. A new background has then been painted in, covering not only the old panel but the new pieces. The original size of the panel was $40\frac{1}{2}$ inches high by $29\frac{3}{8}$ inches wide.

This information may seem rather archaeological and therefore not of general interest, but it shows the extent to which so-called repairs are sometimes made to old panels. It does not affect the charm and

beauty of the portraits in themselves, which after all form the chief interest; but helps us to better locate the school of painters in which they were produced.

It is a pleasure indeed to be brought in contact with members of the brilliant court of Burgundy and with persons who themselves played no small part in those stirring times; and all the more so because their portraits, painted by an unknown but exceptionally gifted hand, have come down to us, and now may be seen in the museums in Worcester and Providence, which are but forty-four miles apart. —L.E.R.

“Painting, as well as poetry and music, exists and exults in immortal thought.”

—LAURENCE BINYON.

A CHINESE BODHISATTVA OF THE SUI DYNASTY

ART has always achieved its most perfect expression when inspired by deep-seated and national religious beliefs or by ideals born of those beliefs. This is largely true of Greek art and the art of the early Renaissance, but it is completely true of Chinese art and the art of India whence China derived whatever is best in its sculpture. For, in the greatest periods of both these countries, the major arts were directly and solely inspired by Buddhism. It is the high aim of Buddhist art to express the mental vision of its deities obtained through fixed contemplation rather than to fashion an image based upon the likeness of reality or the actual world.

Our figure is the generous gift of Mr. Manton B. Metcalf, and dates from the Sui Dynasty (581-610). It is a Bodhisattva, literally "wisdom being" or "Buddha elect," that state or "kalpa" obtained through acquiring "Bodhi wisdom" immediately preceding the attainment of Buddhahood. At this stage, the Bodhisattva makes a vow "to remain in the world as a savior of others." After many incarnations in which he practices the Ten Transcendent Virtues and is always preoccupied with the will to save all creatures from suffering, he resides in the Tusita Heavens and may then pass through the thirteen Bodhisattva heavens, finally attaining Nirvana, or be reborn once more on earth, becoming a mortal Buddha and from this station directly entering Nirvana." [Catalogue of the Indian collections in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts," by Ananda Coomaraswamy, pt. 2, p. 24.]

The Bodhisattva is arrayed in all the splendor of ornaments rightfully his as prince in the clan of Gautama, or "prince among men" as he was comprehended in popular belief. The breast is bare. The garment is draped over both shoulders. Long folds, supported on each arm, fall detached from the body to the feet. Over an undergarment, there are festooned ropes of pearls and gold beads; a garland reaches

to the thighs, and another to the girdle about the waist. There is a jeweled necklace, a wristlet, and upon the head, a richly studded, jeweled crown, differing in elaborateness from the more usual five-leafed crown. A bow ties the undergarment just above the waist and the feet are bare, showing below; the skirt with four pleated folds, which strongly suggest those of a Greek tunic.

There is no other evidence of Greek influence which reached China in the seventh and eighth centuries through the sculptures of Gandhara, and so doubtless these folds have a very remote connection with Gandhara, if any at all. In all other respects our figure shows the inspirational influence of Indian tradition — the source of the greatest achievements in Buddhist sculpture, and an influence dominant in China from the third to the seventh century. The eyes are downcast and partly closed. The ears are long-lobed, in keeping with Buddhist tradition as symbolical of asceticism and self-mortification. But there are no pendent ear-rings as is customary in Indian Bodhisattva figures. Variations from the Indian formula, however, are not uncommon among the Chinese. There is the full cheek and faint suggestion of a smile — the smile of divine peace and bliss.

Unfortunately, both hands are missing; and we thus lose the proper attributes and finger gesture, so we can only hazard a guess as to the identification of our figure. We assume that it represents either the Bodhisattva Maitreya (Mi-li-fo), symbolizing The Compassionate or the Loving One, or the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, in which case the Chinese probably worshipped the figure as Kwan Yin (the symbol of mercy) a Bodhisattva extremely popular among the Orientals. Kwan Yin was interpreted as the masculine manifestation of Avalokitesvara, who in India symbolized the "Lord of Compassionate Glances." The figure, carved in light brown stone, is standing, with arms bent at the elbows, the left forearm pointing downward, and the stone appearing to indicate that an object was



BODHISATTVA Chinese (581-610 A. D.)
Gift of Mr. Manton B. Metcalf, 1920

carried in the hand. Merely speculating, we might say this was the Kalasa vase, which held the amrita, the "Nectar of life" or "sweet dew," as it was poetically called by the Chinese. Presuming the right hand was in vitarka mudra, or more properly vyakhyana mudra, the finger pose of teaching or argumentation, and the left carried the kalasa vase, we might interpret the Bodhisattva as Avalokitesvara in his nontantra form, generally referred to as Padmapani the lotus bearer. But Padmapani is the female manifestation of Kwan-Yin, and our figure is apparently the masculine form. We can only speculate, rather rashly perhaps, that the sculptor diverged from tradition, as was often the case, and reversed the order, placing the vase in the left hand when it should be in the right,

and the right hand in vitarka mudra when, for the masculine form of Kwan-Yin, it should be the left. There is the further difficulty that no image of Amitabha Buddha the "spiritual father" appears in the crown, an omission not uncommon in China. Without this cognizance, we may equally as well identify the figure as Maitreya Bodhisattva, who also carried the vase as an attribute. At best, such speculation is of little profit except from an archaeological point of view whereby we may attach to the identified figure some narrative of legendary or historical importance.

A brief word in regard to the development of Buddhist art in China is perhaps not out of place. Stone sculpture in China had its origin in tablets and stelae and does not date, so far as we know, earlier than the first century A. D. Nor was Buddhism officially introduced from India until the end of this same century under the emperor Ming Ti, whose envoys, it is recorded, returned from India to the imperial court with a bronze image of the Buddha and two Buddhist monks. In the following century, despite the breaking down of the central government following the termination of the Han dynasty, Buddhism seems to have made considerable progress across China; so that by the end of the fourth and fifth centuries, images of the Buddha began to adorn the temples. This progress gave the first great impulse to sculpture in full relief; and the caves in the sides of the mountains, such as those at Lung Men and Yun Kang, began to be richly decorated with Buddhist images technically known as "Tsao hsing," "erected according to design," a definition used to distinguish Buddhist sculpture from other stone reliefs representing lay figures.

The "tsao hsing" were cut in bold relief from the solid rock while the "shih hsaing" were Buddhist images cut in the full round, which would be the proper definition of the Bodhisattva under discussion. It remained for the Sui dynasty (581-610), an age "passionately devoted to Buddhism" and which saw the northern and southern sections once more harmoniously merged, to pro-

duce the finest sculpture which has as yet appeared in China. It was a creative force which lasted well on into the years of the T'ang dynasty before a marked decline was evident. We are extremely fortunate to possess a figure from the period of this high achievement, and one which may have stood in one of the rock caves surrounded by other Bodhisattvas. It must be remembered that the Chinese never regarded carving in stone with the same importance that they attached to calligraphy and painting.

Finally, one may ask, how are we to judge or appreciate these sculptures. There is no anatomical exactness, no portrayal of action, no display or modeling of muscular anatomy, and no attempt at similitude of human expression. In fact, we are not made to feel the living sentient being in the stone. All such standards belong to the arts of representation that deal with the reality rather than the ideal—and further more, of a religious ideal. We must, therefore, judge it, not by our standards of scientific accuracy—but with the aims and ideals of the Oriental in mind. It is the embodiment in stone of a spiritual idea pertaining to, but in no way identified with, the physical world. This is why the portrayal of muscular structure is obviously aside from the point. The most we can say is that in outline, shape, and form, the figure is human-like. In attire, it is royal-like, and there are certain cognizances by which we make the distinction between a Bodhisattva and a Buddha. But in every other way—in conception of the idea and in carving—stress is placed entirely upon the abstract qualities; the quiet attitude, the lines of rest, the slightly curving pose, abstract and serene expression, and lastly, the clear suggestion, conveyed both in the figure and the expression of contemplation and peace,—in these we find the conception of the Buddhist ideal. This in brief is of gods who, “having shaken off this mortal coil” and obtained perfect wisdom, dwell in rapt and blissful contemplation amid the peaceful regions of the celestial heavens.

—A.C.E.

AN ENGLISH ALABASTER

RELIEF

THE average student of sculpture finds the greatest interest in the main currents of the Classical, Romanesque, Gothic or Italian Renaissance periods. This is as it should be, for here is the expression of the richest genius and more complete national feeling. However the lesser currents, which are influenced by the larger ones, have their decided appeal to the student who cares to go further. The difference of degree of art merit being admitted, there is found a wealth of interest which well repays investigation. A good example of this is seen in an alabaster relief representing the “Coronation of the Virgin” which has recently been acquired by the Museum, and which was the work of a Nottingham sculptor in England in the fifteenth century. This acquisition was made possible by a generous gift from Mrs. Thomas Ewing of New York, supplemented with a small amount from the Museum Appropriation.

To some the idea of any great activity in England along the lines of sculpture may come as a surprise, but it may well be recalled that the sculptor and the architect worked together in Gothic times to a pronounced degree. The numbers of churches and cathedrals throughout England bear witness to the demand for sculpture. This was used on the exterior of the churches, for funerary monuments, and especially for reredoses at the altar. It was from one of the last that our relief came. This work stopped abruptly in the second quarter of the 16th century when through iconoclastic zeal, the sculpture was damaged, destroyed or sold. The wealth still remaining in the original position, in museums or private collections, is emphasized in the book by Messrs. Edward S. Prior and Arthur Gardner, “Medieval Figure Sculpture in England,” and by W. H. St. John Hope in several articles in the *Archaeological Journal*. Full indebtedness is expressed to these sources for the information relative to our new relief.



CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN

English, 15th Cen.

Gift of Mrs. Thomas Ewing and Museum Appropriation, 1922

It so happens that the English for years have had available excellent alabaster quarries at Chellaston and Tutbury in Litchfield. The city of Nottingham was not far away and the alabaster could be carried there either by land or water. This Derbyshire alabaster found its way not only all over England but over the Channel to France as well. The men who carved it were chiefly of the School of Nottingham, where types at an early date were developed.

The various kinds of sculpture in alabaster need not concern us at the moment,

but it is of interest to note the reredos panels. These were perhaps a foot wide, fourteen to sixteen inches high, and at the greatest thickness about two inches. Our relief is true to type in this respect, being eleven inches wide, and sixteen and one-quarter inches high. The carving was in fairly high relief, emphasized by gilded and painted backgrounds, and many of the figures themselves were also painted in bright colors.

The work of this school seems to divide into several distinct types, one of which has a so-called "embattled" top, and plain

unfinished sides. The sculptures in this group, which is the one to which our relief belongs, have similarities of modelling and workmanship which show clearly that they had the same origin whether they are found in England or on the continent. This type dates from 1350 to 1430. Like the others of this group, the panel in the museum has a heavily gilded background.

The subjects of these reredos panels, especially those of the embattled type, fall into two groups, one of which would be carried throughout the whole reredos. One set concerned itself with the scenes of the Passion, including the Betrayal, Flagellation, Crucifixion, Entombment and Resurrection. The second treated of subjects about the Virgin. This group included either five or seven panels, of which that of the Coronation of the Virgin is usually the fourth from the left on the altar. The panels were always mounted in wooden frames and against wooden backs to which the separate panels were fastened by a metal clamp, known as a latten, let into the back. A part of such a latten is to be found on the back of the panel in the museum.

The nearest parallel in design and workmanship to our sculptured relief is one at Ripon in Yorkshire, which is thirty miles from Leeds. Here is the same subject, grouping, treatment of drapery, and technique. In the Ripon example (which is illustrated in the work by Prior and Gardner on page 476) the hand of the Christ which is raised in benediction is intact and shows the extension of the index and second finger in the usual sign of blessing. Undoubtedly this is precisely the way that the new relief in Providence might be restored.

The history of the panel since it left the Nottingham workshop is unknown, except that it was found in France. How it came there, whether by sale when first made, or taken there in the middle of the 16th century, or bought by the French since then, cannot be determined. Prior and Gardner cite records to show how eager the French were to acquire this kind of work.

The number created must have been quite large, for it was not unusual for some of the churches to have two or more alabaster reredos screens. Authority for this lies in the parish records. As late as 1567 there were six of the alabaster tables at Ripon.

It is hardly fair to compare the treatment of the subjects in English and French Gothic work. The French artist was far more artistic, but the Nottingham sculptor, like his descendant of the brush, preferred treatment of anecdote rather than an idealized subject dealing with the abstract, which is better adapted for sculpture. This tendency towards story-telling has suggested to the critics a comparison with and a decided influence of the carving of ivory panels. But even granting this, the carving of the "alabaster men," as we are told they were called in the 15th century records, in its simple yet decorative expression of English religious feeling of the 14th century, has much to recommend it to our interest.

—L.E.R.

A WATER-COLOR BY EDWARD DAYES

IN the Victoria and Albert Museum in London there is a group of six water-colors which came from the hand of Edward Dayes. They are largely topographical in character, but treated with that fine sense of the picturesque, and showing the complete mastery of technique, which is true of so many English water-colors. Other examples of Dayes' work exist in public and private collections in England, but up to the present his work is rarely found in America. An excellent example however was given to the Museum in 1922 by Mr. William T. Aldrich. It probably represents the Pump-Room at Bath, and is treated in Dayes' characteristic method which was to draw the chief features in India ink and then tint the whole with water-color.

Dayes' position as an artist and member of the English water-color school is peculiar. He was born in 1763, studied under

William Pether, and developed into quite a versatile artist. He was an architectural draftsman, landscape and miniature painter, engraver in mezzotint, instructor in drawing, and an author. Dayes exhibited in the Royal Academy from 1786 to 1804. Evidently his disposition was not a happy one, for Thornbury (*Life of J. M. W. Turner*, R. A., p. 62,) calls him conceited and jealous. He died by his own hand in May, 1804. Dayes' chief claims to our attention lie not only in the unusual interest of his work, but in the fact that he was the teacher of Thomas Girtin, who became the leader of the water-color school of his day. Girtin was fourteen years old when first apprenticed to Dayes, but several years later they quarreled and the relationship ceased. He also influenced Turner as a student. Dayes' work was then being created for reproduction as colored engravings, which at the time was a very popular kind of art. This accounted for the emphasis on line and the small number of colors used. His chief color scheme was in light blue, grey and green. This is explained at length in his "Instructions for Drawing and Coloring Landscapes," published in 1805.

NEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The forty-seventh year of the School opened on September twenty-fourth for the Day Classes and October first for the Evening Classes. There has been a record registration, and the School year begins in an auspicious manner.

Mr. John R. Frazier, who has had charge of the drawing and painting classes at the University of Kansas for a number of years, and has assisted Mr. Charles W. Hawthorne in his important summer class at Provincetown, is now Head of the Department of Freehand Drawing and Painting in the School.

Mr. William E. Brigham has been granted a leave of absence for a year, to enable him to study and travel in Europe. During his absence the Department of Decorative Design will be in charge of Mr. Edmund A. Gurry. Miss Mary L. Crosby has charge of the evening classes in that department.

Two new evening courses are being offered this year. One covers Textile Engraving and is planned to assist the important branch of Textile Printing. It is in charge of Mr. Samuel Harrison. The other class is in advertising methods and has Mr. Frank Dodge as its teacher.



PUMP-ROOM AT BATH

Drawing by Edward Dayes (1763-1804)

Gift of Mr. William T. Aldrich, 1922

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ADMISSIONS

HOURS OF OPENING.—The galleries are open to the public on every day of the year, with the exception of Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and the Fourth of July. From July 1st to September 15th the hours are from 1 to 5 P. M. on week days and from 2 to 5 P. M. Sundays; from September 15th to July 1st the hours are from 10 A. M. to 5 P. M. week days and from 2 to 5 P. M. Sundays. The Pendle-

ton Collection is open from 2 to 5 P. M. daily.

Twenty-five cents admission to the museum is charged on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and the museum is free on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Free transferable tickets admitting four persons on pay-days are sent to all members of the corporation. Art students and artists, on application to the authorities, may obtain free tickets of admission for any pay-day. Teachers with pupils of both public and private schools will be admitted without payment upon application.

PHOTOGRAPHS ON SALE

Photographic copies of many of the objects belonging to the museum, including photographs of the Pendleton Collection of furniture, are on sale at the entrance to the museum.

PUBLICATIONS

Four quarterly bulletins are issued and are sent free of charge to the members, and, on written request, to alumni of the institution.

The year book of the school containing detailed information regarding its many activities, and presenting conditions of admission and a list of the courses given in its several departments, will be forwarded free of charge to prospective students and others who are interested in the institution and its work.

COPYING

Permission to copy or photograph in the galleries of the museum may be obtained in the office. Such permits will not be issued for Sundays or legal holidays.

LIBRARY

The Library contains 5,272 volumes, 16,797 mounted photographs and reproductions, 3,734 lantern slides, and about 4,500 postcards. During the months of June, July and August the library is closed.