



GROUP BY VANDERSTAPPEN.

Architectural Monuments in the War Zone of Belgium



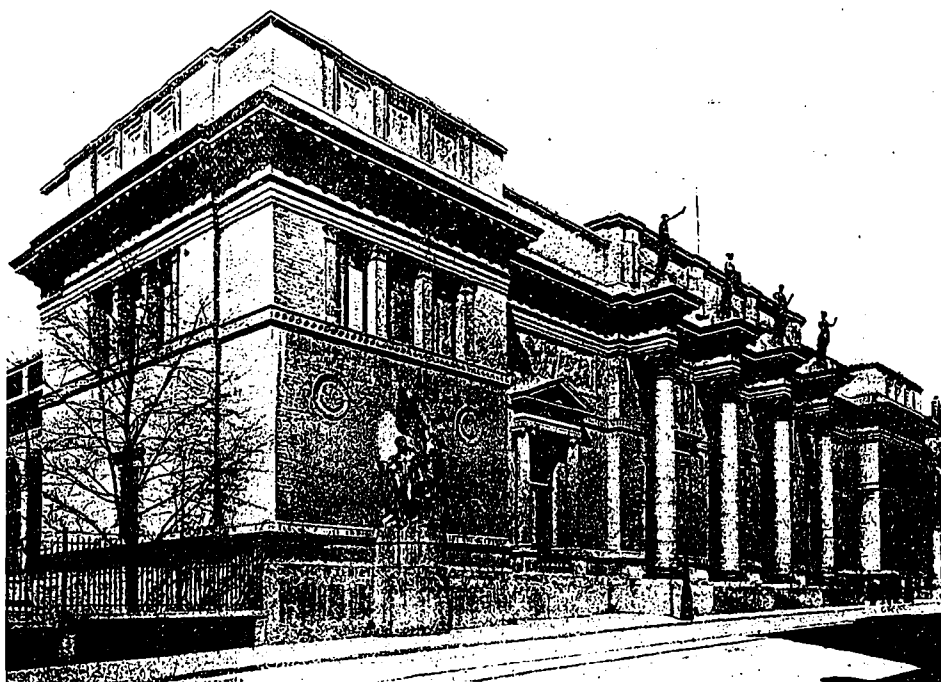
GROUP BY P. DE VIGNE.

IS IT ANY WONDER that the world stands agast at the ruthless destruction of Belgian cities? For over seventy years there has been no internal discord, a fact all the more remarkable when we realize that this country is made up of two distinct races—the Flemings and the Walloons. One of the strong ties between these two peoples is their religion, so identical as to eliminate all contention and strife. And while we think of the Belgians as a whole, still the fact remains that both races retain their original language and the Flemings have changed but little since the days of the Plantagenets, while the Walloons in the east still retain their “Romance” tongue, or speak the French. The Flemings use a Tudesque language and undoubtedly are descendants of German colonists. Their influence stopped west of the Meuse river and as a result lost all connection with their mother country, a condition brought about by their complete separation through the settlement of the Walloons, a Celtic race closely akin to the people of ancient Gaul.

As early as 57 B.C. Cæsar defeated the Belgæ, whom he pronounced as the bravest of all people, on the River Aisne, where the Allies and Germans have been engaged for some time in desperate conflict. From this battle with the Roman legions only five hundred remained out of sixty thousand. Is it any wonder that the Germans have found this quiet and peaceful nation a strong

barrier when once aroused? It is due to their stubborn resistance that Paris is not in German hands to-day, for with little opposition from them the capital of France would have been captured before ample strength could have been mustered for her defence.

In 69 A.D., Belgium and Holland revolted against the Roman Empire, which was the first of a continuous list of short, bloody struggles down to the thirteenth century, at which time she was part of the French kingdom. Gaining her independence in 1302, she retained same until the Spanish Succession, 1702. During this war she was one of the main battle grounds and her loss in art was extremely bitter. Philip of Spain issued an edict forbidding them to build their city halls and other ornamental structures, thereby taking away from them an opportunity



PALAIS DES BEAUX ARTS AT BRUSSELS.