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COLLOQUIA ENTOMOLOGICA II: A REMARKABLE SALE OF VICTORIAN ENTOMOLOGICAL JEWELRY

The insect brooch was a popular *genre* of Victorian jewelry, and the late Dr. Moser Lyon Stadiem of New Orleans owned one of the finest private collections of Victorian jewelry in the United States. Dr. Stadiem's rarities, valued at over a million dollars, were obtained by the Famous-Barr Company of St. Louis five years after his death in 1964. 294 lots of the collection were sold at auction by Parke-Bernet Galleries, New York City, on 6 October 1969, and among these were some of the finest known examples of the great age of entomological jewelry.

The collector was no less remarkable than his collection. Dr. Stadiem was an eccentric character of the Vieux Carre (Latin Quarter) of New Orleans. A highly regarded physician and surgeon, he taught in Louisiana medical schools and served as doctor to the Monteleone Hotel, which granted him a rent-free room in which his hoard of jewelry was housed. He was well known in the Vieux Carre as a *bon vivant*, as an inveterate bachelor, a contributor to charitable and philanthropic causes, a beau brummel, and a collector who enjoyed wearing as many as half a dozen of his antique watches at a time.

Dr. Stadiem's insect brooches were easily among the highlights of the auction. Even the distinguished publicity agents for Parke-Bernet were moved to describe them as "bizarre rarities;" wings seemed to "fly on their hidden coil springs at the slightest movement." The nineteenth-century entomological jewelry *genre* is interesting to the historian as a reflection of the widespread popular interest the Victorian era showed in insects and all other products of nature. We are fortunate in being able to print abbreviated descriptions of all entomological items (for full descriptions see Parke-Bernet's catalogue, 6 October 1969) as well as photographs of most, and actual sale prices of all auction lots. The *en tremblant* jewelry, designed to simulate wing movement, naturally brought the highest prices.

We are grateful to Parke-Bernet, Inc. and Clark, Nelson Ltd. for technical descriptions, prices and permission to reproduce the illustrations.

- Lot 127. English emerald and diamond beetle brooch, first half 19th century (Fig. 10). \$375.00.
- Lot 130. English diamond and emerald *en tremblant* butterfly brooch, mid-19th century (Fig. 6). \$1,400.00.
- Lot 148. Victorian diamond and colored stone (rubies, sapphires, turquoises) butterfly brooch, circa 1880. No illustration available. \$325.00.
- Lot 156. Victorian diamond and sapphire butterfly brooch, circa 1880. Sold as a lot with a non-entomological diamond, sapphire and pearl brooch. No illustration available. \$500.00.
- Lot 185. Victorian diamond and colored stone (turquoises, garnets) butterfly brooch, circa 1880 (Fig. 12). \$225.00.
- Lot 186. Victorian diamond and colored stone (rubies, emerald, sapphires) butterfly brooch, circa 1875 (Fig. 8). \$650.00.
- Lot 187. [Victorian] diamond and ruby dragonfly clip, circa 1890 (Fig. 9). \$1,000.00.
- Lot 188. [Victorian] diamond beetle brooch (Fig. 11). \$800.00.
- Lot 203. Victorian *en tremblant* diamond dragonfly brooch, circa 1890 (Fig. 7). \$27,500.00.
- Lot 208. Diamond and ruby spider brooch (Fig. 4). \$250.00.
- Lot 209. Two Victorian diamond and colored stone brooches (sapphires, rubies) circa 1880, one in the form of a butterfly (Fig. 3), another in the form of a bee (no illustration available). \$475.00.
- Lot 213. Diamond and garnet butterfly brooch (Fig. 2). \$425.00.
- Lot 220. Victorian ruby and diamond butterfly brooch, last quarter 19th century (no illustration available). \$650.00.
- Lot 246. English diamond and colored stone *en tremblant* butterfly brooch, mid-19th century (Fig. 5). \$1,100.000.

- Lot 247. 19th century Indian diamond and colored stone (rubies, emeralds, opals) butterfly brooch (Fig. 1). \$500.00.
- Lot 270. English mid-19th century diamond and peridot *en tremblant* brooch (Fig.13). \$1,400.00.
- Lot 356. Victorian diamond and colored stone (sapphire, emeralds, rubies) butterfly brooch (Fig.14). \$1,500.00.

R.S.W.

Figs. 1-14. Victorian entomological jewelry.







