

The Antwerp School of Art

L'ACADEMIE ROYALE DES BEAUX-ARTS D'ANVERS. BY ALICK P. F. RITCHIE.



THE CORRIDOR

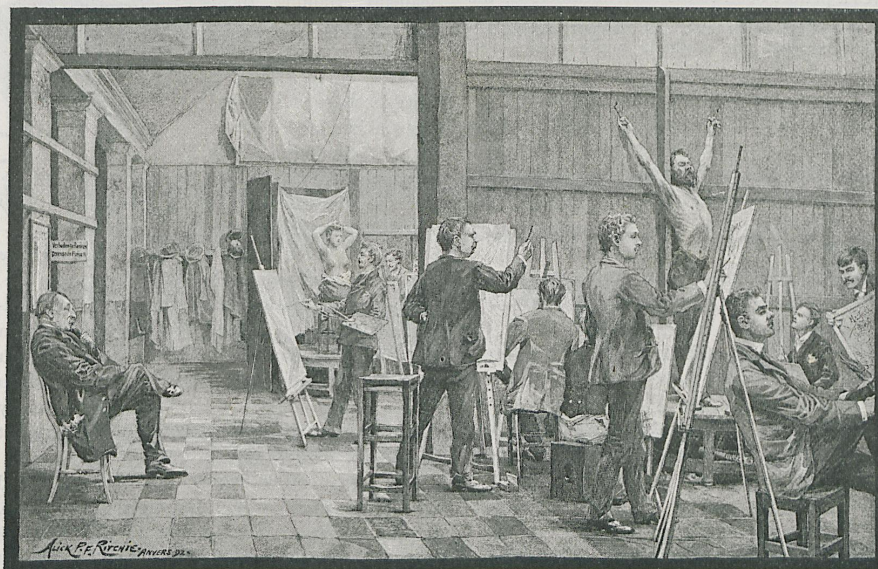
THE original School of Art at Antwerp was instituted in the year 1664, mainly by the efforts of David Teniers (the younger) and a number of his contemporaries, amongst whom were Jordaens, Huybrechts, Halen, Breughel, Coques, and Quellin (the elder). From that date up to the end of the eighteenth century, the school was carried on with increasing success in a building not far from the Bourse.

At the time of the French Revolution, Art was neglected here as elsewhere for the more momen-

tous questions then disturbing the mind of Europe, and the Academy, left entirely to its own resources, suffered considerably; but in the year 1804 a new era dawned, and the present Société des Beaux Arts was set on foot, with Herreyns as first director. An old Franciscan monastery was chosen as headquarters, and in this building, slightly altered to suit its new purpose, the work of the Society has been successfully carried on to the present day.

The main entrance to the building is just opposite the statue of Vandyck in the Rue du Fagot. Although the structure is neither imposing nor beautiful, yet its interior has a picturesque quaintness calculated to carry the mind of a reflective student (a somewhat rare variety) back to the days before its desecration, when within the rambling passages and 'neath the vaulted roofs were seen "long trains of monks, slow marching, and with bended, shaven heads, chanting the while their evensong," or solitary vigilants, flitting at times with torch in hand across some darker space.

Small square slabs can still be seen in the stone floors marking the resting-places of the monks of other days. On these one may read the dates of birth and death, and the letters R.I.P., which almost seems a mockery, for these gloomy passages, once no doubt silent as the graves themselves, now echo with joke and laughter and the various sounds which distinguish the modern art student from other



A LIFE CLASS IN THE ANTWERP SCHOOL OF ART