

Valentine Writer

Volume 36 Number 4

National Valentine Collectors Association

Winter 2012

Best wishes for a Happy Holiday Season!

Important Message from Nancy Rosin, *President*

Thank you for your many wonderful letters, for helping to share our passion, and for guiding us towards the future. In order to solve the dilemma of increasing postage and printing costs, we will follow the path of many others, as our Directory and Newsletter become electronic publications. Others have met similar challenges, and discovered many benefits. You will have the ability to enlarge your page, print it out at home, and even view it on your electronic devices. This method will enable us continue to provide the articles and auctions you love. A limited number of paper copies will be made for libraries and available at extra cost. While this seems dramatic, we expect a smooth transition, and truly appreciate your understanding. We will enter our 37th year, with a bright future and our love of Valentines!



This issue is devoted to the master purveyor of Valentines, **Eugene Rimmel**. As a perfumer in Victorian London, his workshop created **scented Valentines, fans, perfumed fountains, and all manner of romantic novelties**. Inside, you will find his fragrant story!

More will be found online during the festive month of February! We are honored to jointly celebrate the heritage of **Eugene Rimmel** with our friends at the prestigious John Johnson Collection of Ephemera at the Bodleian Library, Oxford University. This prestigious repository in the United Kingdom, enthusiastically shares our passion for the history of the Valentine.

Please follow this link, and you will be directed to the virtual exhibit:

<http://johnjohnsoncollectionnowandthen.wordpress.com/>

We are sad to announce the passing of our dear friend and member, **Janice Naibert**.

Welcome new members:

Val Hall • 108 Oakbriar Close SW, Alberta, Canada T2V 5H2 • adorh@shaw.ca
Barbara Loe • 11165 Penfield Ave. N., Stillwater, MN 55082 • bjloe@earthlink.net
Pat Villmer • 274 Edwin Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63122 • pvillmer@excite.com

Happy Valentine's Day, 2013

EUGENE RIMMEL: MASTER OF SCENT &

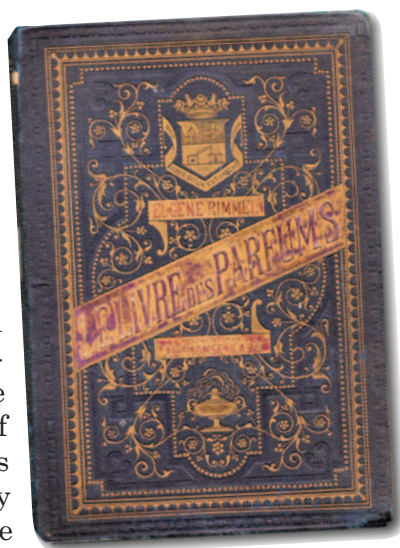
By Nancy Rosin



Eugene Rimmel ~ 1820-1886

which St. Valentines Day was celebrated, was **Eugene Rimmel**, of London, England. The appeal of his genius extends far beyond his association with perfumed papers, for his personal focus on the original marketing of his product, and his concept of beauty, has had a lasting impact.

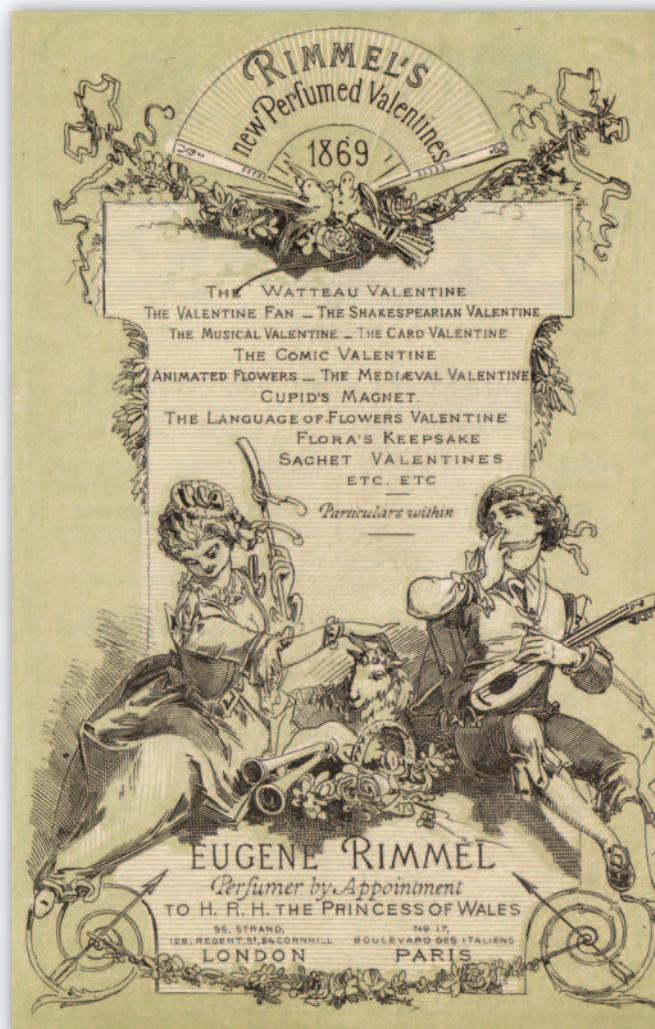
The magical allure of his Valentine incorporated a combination of beautiful materials, creative design, romantic intention ~ and usually, an intoxicating scent. **Eugene Rimmel** utilized his many years in the perfume industry to perfect it as an asset to romance, through its' chemical effect on the brain. Concern for hygiene had arisen in the seventeenth century, and by the nineteenth century, cleanliness had become synonymous with virtue. Since the subtle benefits of bathing had not reached all classes, perfume became an essential part of feminine attire. As camouflage for body odors, its usage became essential, to shield the senses in the odoriferous environment of nineteenth century London. In fact, **Mr. Rimmel** believed that the refinement of a woman could be ascertained by her choice of perfume.



While it was beauty and inherent promise that ultimately sold every Valentine, each manufacturer brought a certain flair or style to their product, adding to its' popularity then, and adding fascination for the modern collector. One person who had a dramatic effect on the manner in

Modern studies have corroborated his observations, for it has been scientifically shown, that the neurological effects of fragrance can alter blood pressure, pulse and mood, as well as having sedative effects. Of the five senses, only our sense of smell is linked directly to the brain's control center, where emotions such as fear, anxiety, depression, anger, and joy emanate.

The Book of Perfume, **Eugene Rimmel's** legendary contribution to the world of scent and the magic of perfumery, used scholarship and beautiful art-work, to reveal the history of the subject, while enhancing his product; it enjoyed multiple printings between 1864 and 1870, in both English and French.



Eugene Rimmel continued on page 3

SENTIMENT ~ GENIUS OF PERFUME & LACE



Folding fans were created for Christmas and Valentine's Day ~ sentimental, useful, and coyly romantic.

His shop, however, is where his expertise as a manufacturer reached the pinnacle. Soaps and perfumes, scented gifts of all sorts, and artfully inspired Valentines, made the shop at 96 Strand, seem like Cupid's Headquarters. The divine scent permeated the street beyond the doors, and invited all passers-by into his shrine. From the cellar to the attic, in preparation for the holy event, workers assembled missives that ranged from the most simple to the most elaborate. Sweet-smelling flowers, feather doves collected in Brazil, music boxes and glove boxes, sachets, fans with marabou and mother of pearl, and jeweled gifts of substantial value ~ there was no limit to the fantasies created by this establishment ~ and sent throughout the world. His vision of beautiful merchandise set a standard for the period. A staff of one hundred fifty young women was happily employed at the place from which all Valentines

in the world appeared to emanate. In 1864 the company produced £250 weekly, nearly \$500 at the time -- impressive statistics when today's comparative numbers would be twenty-fold.

Matching the extensive volume of these magnificent creations, **Eugene Rimmel** was exceptional in his unique marketing. Having met a talented young French artist, Jules Cheret, he capitalized on the young man's skill, and soon, he was producing eye-catching labels for his perfume products, as well as annual Perfumed Almanacs, which conveniently advertised their products. Theater programs for at least three theaters in the Strand pro-

moted perfumed gifts to the captive audience; often the paper programs provided to the more expensive seats were pleasantly scented ~ a salutary touch in a crowded public venue, where it could be a precious deodorant. His involvement with the theater is said to even have included a perfumed waterfall in at least one show ~ possibly the 1875 Covent Garden production of *Cinderella and the Glass Slipper*, which he produced. Seasonal advertising fliers ~ avidly collected now -- included a broad range of seductive, amorous, and playful mementos for all his devotees.



Sachet envelopes were festive mementos for holidays, birthdays, farewell, and love -- and Mr. Rimmel found myriad ways to share his potions. Special colored papers, like this gilded blue treasure, would be embellished with lace and scraps, and scented with "twelve different flowers" for the cost of one British Pound. These were not trivial!

Eugene Rimmel continued on page 4



Beautiful almanacs became popular desk accessories, and their designs changed with the times. From the romantic Language of Flowers themes of 1859 and 1863, to the elegance of the 1903 Art Nouveau, and the Comic Almanac of 1879, buyers were assured they would always be in style!

A skilled artist, Jules Cheret, became the muse for Rimmel's fantasies, as the images of cherubs, women, flowers and children began to decorate theater programs, as well as Valentines. Popular Valentine themes included a Shakespearean series featuring heroines such as Juliet and Desdemona, Love's Visions, depicting fantasies of romantic dreams, and the Language of Flowers series, which illustrated a popular trend in which flowers symbolized specific messages.

Often signed, the works of Cheret are widely recognized, as great fame ensued as a result of his association with **Eugene Rimmel**. The designs Cheret developed, and his expertise in the technical aspects of lithographic printing, led him to Paris, where his studio, established by his patron, **Eugene Rimmel**, created a new art form. Jules Cheret attained international fame as his brightly illustrated posters popular-

ized a new advertising medium and his lovely images danced across the billboards of Paris. Now recognized as "The Father of the Modern Poster", his early connection to Valentines is virtually unknown.

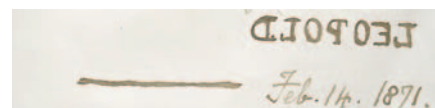
Housed in a building called Beaufort House, the Rimmel establishment scented the neighborhood and charmed the public, with ornamental Valentines, Christmas cards, and Easter cards. Its' famed upstairs workshop was filled with fabulous manufacturing materials, including papers, fabric and tinsel, feathers, gums, and chemical spirits, which proved to be highly flammable, and may have fueled the fire which caused its' total destruction in March, 1875. Despite the great loss, estimated at sixteen thousand pounds, and today's comparable value in the millions, the business continued in other locations, and produced magnificent Valentines until the 1890s.



Rimmel's Perfumed Valentines



*Emblems of love that know no end.
And though so simple is the gift,
The choice was made by Love, not Thrift,
And here I swear that Time shall see
How Ever-green's my love for Thee.
And as the Ivy, tight doth twine
Firmly my love shall compass thine
If Thou wilt be my Valentine.*



*Valentines from the Collections of
Nancy Rosin and Michael Russo*

Hand painted flowers on regal purple silk moiré, cloaked in silvered lace, spoke a secret message. Beribboned doves on unique blue lace carry several messages of devotion, including: Lily of the Valley – Modest Beauty. The Shakespearean Valentines, like the Medieval Series, were very popular – evoking fairies, knights, and romantic fantasy. Who could resist Leopold's jewelry, carved like clinging ivy leaves?

It was the first company to employ women in the manufacture of perfume, and has continued to this day ~

a reflection of the triumph of the establishment he started in 1834. Acquired by Coty Cosmetics in the twenty-first century, the name was retained, and its' popularity endures as a respected and trend-setting name in products which enhance beauty, as the legacy of **Eugene Rimmel**.



MAKING VALENTINES

Extracts from *The Illustrated London News*, 14 February 1874

prepared by Malcolm Warrington ~ Malcolm@scrapalbum.com

The love of the beautiful and graceful, as well as the practice of courtesy – and even of due gallantry between the smallest boys and girls – may be encouraged by their interchange of valentines – those pretty missive gifts and letters commonly sent upon this occasion to and from the young people who love each other in a pleasant and innocent way. It prompts the children to remember absent friends and proves to them how friends and kindred may use the post-office to remind one another of their mutual claims to affection.

Mr. Eugene Rimmel of the Strand, that eminent perfumer fabricates and sells an immense variety of such dainty wares, catering not only for the pleasure of scent, but also for those of the eye. He is constantly inventing new combinations of decorative materials and fresh devices for their most agreeable and significant presentation.

Without the aid of the designer or draughtsman, the lithographer, the wood-engraver, the painter or the colour printer, the cardboard maker, the artificial flower maker, the workers in silk, feathers, glass filigree and lacquer, besides many other of diverse skill we could not have these charming toys of the lovers' vernal festival. They are all arranged, composed and put together and made delicious with fragrance by **Mr. Rimmel**.

The engraving depicts a scene in one of **Mr. Rimmel's** busy and pleasant work-rooms which are very extensive, from eighty to a hundred and fifty industrious females may be found here engaged in most congenial work. It is an agreeable sight to watch their skilful fingers and to notice how they enjoy the exercise of that natural taste for the pretty, the neat, and the convenient which belongs to their clever sex.





An elegant almanac from 1859 features an image of the London shop, later destroyed by fire. The Rimmel label, proudly placed on a fan, indicated that the item came from London's Temple of Love.



surprises and practical jests or useful adaptations of things really serviceable in the concoction of his different valentines.

What **Mr. Rimmel** undertakes is to provide the



Gloves were a symbolic folk tradition – popularized by the romantic entrepreneur, Eugene Rimmel, as a paper expression of love. Presented on St. Valentine's Day, and worn on Easter Sunday, gloves represented acceptance of a marriage proposal. A pair of gloves, without the "g" meant "a pair of loves".



article for a lover or friend to give. That it may be the more worthy of gracious acceptance, he racks his brain for devices and ransacks the stores of every manufacture, the vegetable, mineral and animal kingdom of nature, the farthest countries from Peru to Japan, the workshops of Bohemia, Genoa and Pesth for a diversity of materials. One of the really beautiful things he has lately imported is the work of nuns in a Brazilian convent who are accustomed to make artificial flowers entirely of the feathers of the gorgeous birds that haunt the South American forests. "It is Nature imitating Nature", says **Mr. Rimmel** and it is true that no artificial colours would so vividly represent the hues of living growth.

Auction 2012-4

Ending January 15, 2013

Images and details of all items for auction are also available to view online at www.valentinecollectors.com for closer inspection. All items are described to the best of our ability and may be returned if not as described. Sizes are approximate. Minimum bids are stated; increments are \$1.00. Postage is extra.



1. RIMMEL advertisement, two sides, 6"x10", circa 1870. \$75.

2. Embossed 6" heart with lace that opens, and three others. \$50.



3. Delicate lace, doors open to bucolic scene, fine detail, 5"x6". \$60.

4. Two embossed octavos, blue is sealed closed. 4"x6". \$30.



5. Moving cockerel, 6". \$20.

6. Three early charmers: blue gilt lace front only, and two small backless. \$45.



7. BEISTLE Halloween cut-out 7"; unsigned Valentine boy. \$25.



8. All hearts, nine pieces. \$40.

9. CLAPSADDLE postcard, "Doing Time", original card mounting, \$20.



11. German die-cut open-outs, 7 pcs., incl. Nativity. \$75.



12. MEEK embossed octavo, WHITNEY 5, octavo with mirror; and 2 more. \$50.



13. Collection of fine German stationery and New Year card. \$40.

14. KATE GREENAWAY, printed by Marcus Ward, slight damage to reverse. \$35.



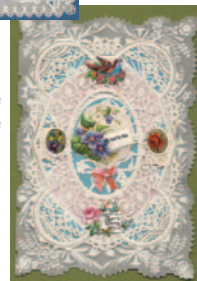
15. WOOD lace octavo, cameo cartouche, silver Dresden border. \$75.



16. Two octavos: early embossed with handwritten proposal, and lace morning glory pattern. \$50.



17. MEEK octavo, pink edge, with scraps and satin, and another. \$100.



18. WHITNEY with stamped envelope and a silvered collage marked W-I. \$40.



19. MANSELL lace octavo, single sheet, central satin with poem, "Blame not too Soon". \$75.



20. WOOD cameo lace octavo, damaged but fine early example. \$50.

Prices Realized 2012-3

2 - \$101. 8 - \$40 15 - \$76.
4 - \$50. 14 - \$25.

Please contact Nancy Rosin if you have items to sell or if you wish to purchase items from our auctions. Your participation is important to us, as 20% from the proceeds are used to maintain our finances.