



Fig 4:
Parisian Art
Nouveau
pendant.
With Epoque
Fine Jewels

most part, Christian descendants of the Iberian and Visigothic inhabitants of southern Spain before the Moorish conquest. They were relatively well treated, some of them wielded considerable influence in Al-Andalus and, in some areas, they were the majority population.

They evolved their own distinct Church and, despite occasional persecutions and martyrdoms of troublemakers by the Muslims, and the efforts of the Roman Church to suppress them before, during and after the Reconquest, apparently a Mozarabic rite congregation still survives in Toledo. Their architecture was distinctive and so too were their illuminations. However, I look forward

to learning how their influence manifests itself in this triptych.

Two things without which a Belgian fair would not really be complete are a Magritte and a tapestry, and both will duly be on parade. Harold t'Kint de Roodenbeke of Brussels, who specialises in Belgian and international art from 1880 to 1960, offers the 13½in by 20½in *Le miroir invisible*, a 'quintessential Magritte composition in which two rather banal images are combined in a way which is physically impossible while at the same time conveying a sense of perfect normality' (Fig 6).

Tapestries will be found with the Royal Manufacturers De Wit, which is a renowned restorer as well as a dealer. A fine example is its 66½in by 153½in wool-and-silk *millefleurs* tapestry from the Abbey of Herkenrode, with the coat of arms of Christine de Lechy (who had married a Herkenrode in



Fig 5: 16th-century *millefleurs* tapestry from the Abbey of Herkenrode. With Royal Manufacturers De Wit



Fig 6: Magritte's *Le miroir invisible*. With Harold t'Kint de Roodenbeke

1299). It was woven in Bruges, during the second quarter of the 16th century, and it is in splendidly unfaded condition (Fig 5).

Later weavings can be found with N. Vrouyr of Antwerp, the oldest shop in Belgium to specialise exclusively in Oriental and tribal carpets and textiles. The business was founded by the present proprietor's

grandfather, an Armenian who, luckily, emigrated from the Ottoman Empire before the First World War massacres.

Another strength is silver, with Bernard De Leye specialising in French and Belgian pieces, and d'Arschot & Cie offering a wide variety from the 17th to the 19th centuries. Every major European country had—and no doubt has—its own character in silver as in so much else and this is a good opportunity to exercise one's eye.

In writing of Brussels, city of the great architect Victor Horta, one cannot also fail to mention Art Nouveau. Epoque Fine Jewels of Kortrijk obliges with a pretty pendant by the obscure but highly talented Lucien Gautrait, who worked for Parisian jewellers in the early years of the 20th century (Fig 4).

Pick of the week

From January 21 to 26, The Winter Decorative Antiques & Textile Fair, with about 140 exhibitors, will be in the Battersea Park Marquee, nowadays known as Battersea Evolution. According to its publicity, this is the 'ultimate' Christmas party venue: 'Throughout December and

well into January, Battersea Evolution glitters and sparkles with decadent theming and pulsates and grooves to awe-inspiring entertainment. Battersea Evolution knows how to party!' Something of that spirit carries over to the fairs, which are always deservedly popular. They attract serious antique dealers and collectors as well as interior decorators.

As ever, to encourage nervous North Bankers, there will be a free shuttle car service every 15 minutes from outside the Sloane Square Hotel.



Next week
An extraordinary price