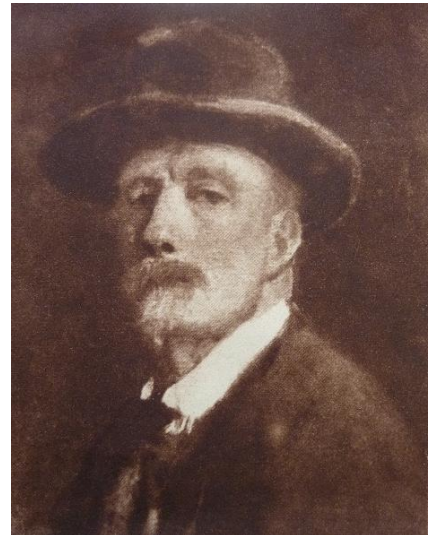


Hein Kever, an unlikely Dutch visitor to Marlotte

The recent announcement of a sale in Amsterdam caught our attention because it mentioned Marlotte and featured an artist, Hein Kever, of whom we were previously unaware; these two factors prompted us to investigate the context behind this information.

Jacob Simon Hendrik Kever, known by the diminutive "Hein," was born into a wealthy Amsterdam family on June 19, 1854. It was his mother who encouraged him to pursue painting under the tutelage of Jozef Israëls (1824–1911), a close family friend who was, at the time, widely regarded as the most respected Dutch artist of the second half of the 19th century and the founder of the Laren art colony, located east of Amsterdam. After studying under Israëls, an artist deeply influenced by the principles of the Barbizon School, as well as the painter and lithographer Johan Conrad Greive (1837–1891), and following further training at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp, Kever embarked on a career defined by a profound connection to the human condition and the natural landscape. He participated in the 1910 Brussels Universal Exposition and was awarded medals in Munich (in 1901 and 1905) and in Paris (in 1898 and at the 1900 Universal Exposition).



Self-portrait by H. Kever, ca 1910

His biography notes that Kever traveled very little beyond the borders of the Netherlands. Around 1887, he and his wife settled near the artists' colony of Laren, sometimes referred to as the "Dutch Barbizon", where he would eventually pass away on April 29, 1922. This artistic community championed a humanistic aesthetic that moved away from the grandiosity of historical painting, favoring instead the sincere, the humble, and the everyday. The true essence of Kever's art lies in his ability to transform mundane into something monumental. A master of genre painting, he possessed a rare sensitivity for capturing the quiet dignity of peasant interiors and farm life. His early works often reflected the influence of Impressionism, employing loose brushstrokes to seize the fleeting atmospheric conditions of the Dutch landscape. Yet, as his confidence grew, so too did the luminosity of his palette; the muted, earthy tones that characterized his initial period gradually gave way to a more vibrant and assured



The apple orchard by H. Kever, ca 1900

use of light, imbuing his later canvases with a newfound warmth and vitality.¹

Kever in Marlotte

As previously mentioned, Hein Kever very rarely ventured outside his home country. Given his training and stylistic interests, it would have been reasonable to assume that Barbizon might have been a preferred destination for one of his trips abroad; however, we have found no evidence of such a visit. In fact, only one trip abroad is documented: Kever was in Paris in 1895, accompanied by another Dutch painter. The purpose of this stay appears to have been quite specific, visiting the Louvre Museum and meeting with art dealers.

It is therefore surprising to discover that Kever had already visited Marlotte in 1882, as evidenced by two paintings of streets in the hamlet, a place that, by that time, had already gained a certain renown within the artistic community. Although the *Auberge Antony* had been destroyed a year earlier, the village had managed to retain its bucolic character. The reason for his trip to our village remains unknown. Did he come to meet another painter? Regardless, Hein Kever, best known for his landscapes and rustic genre scenes, must have been sufficiently touched by the still-authentic character of Marlotte to paint at least the two works reproduced below.



Marlotte by H. Kever, July 1882



View from 44, rue Murger



Marlotte by H. Kever, August 1882



View from 69, rue Murger

¹ WahooArt.com

We believe we have identified the two locations in Marlotte chosen by Hein Kever. For the painting on the left, it is likely that the artist set up his easel between numbers 44 and 46 on Rue Murger; the dark, pointed roof in the background is the Hôtel de la Renaissance—known at the time as Château Niedermeyer. The scene on the right is almost certainly located on the same street, near number 69. Naturally, a fair amount of masonry work has been carried out over the last 144 years!

This identification serves to highlight—if any proof were needed—how well the local heritage has been preserved over the years!