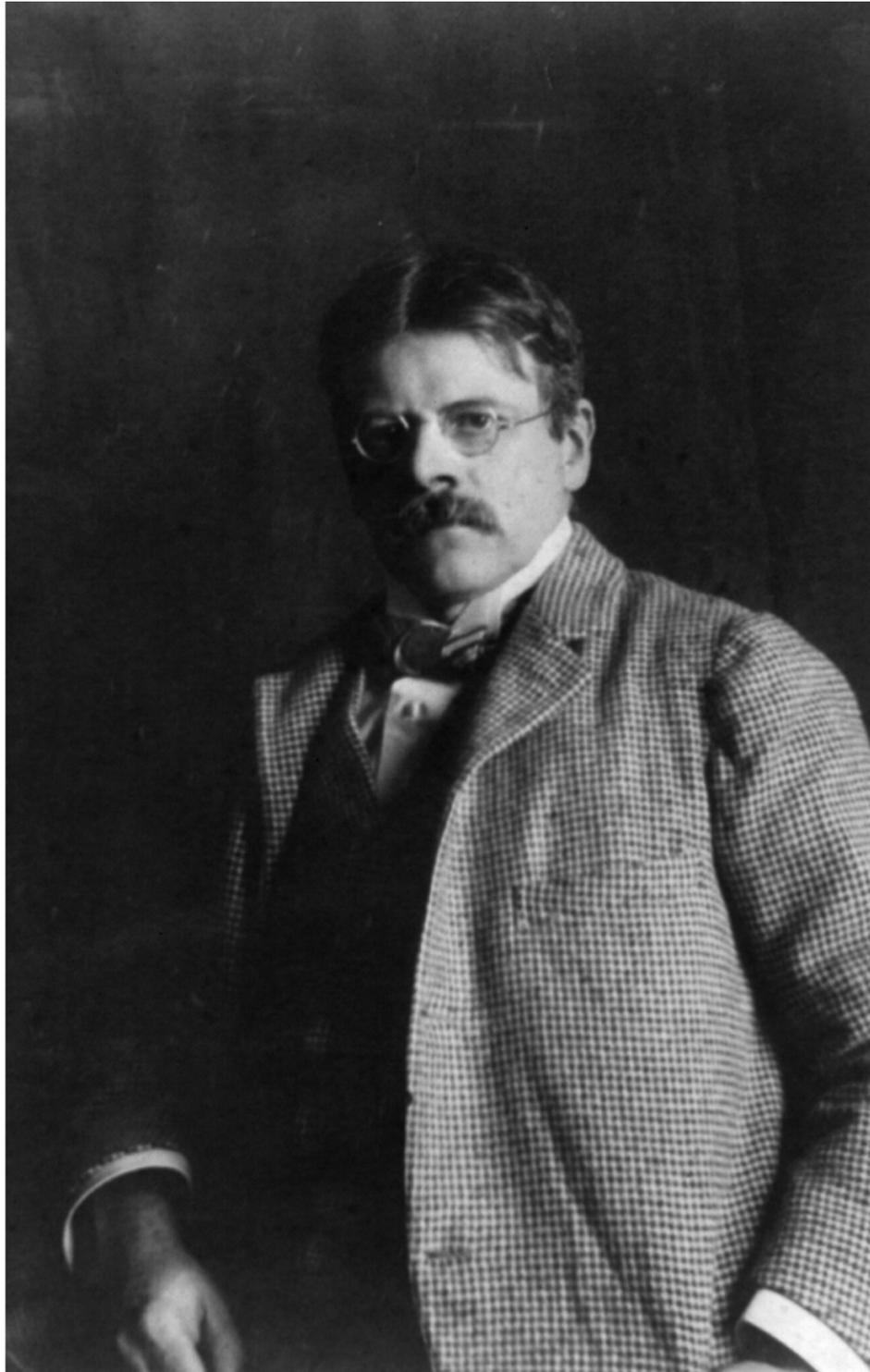


# Edwin Austin Abbey

Artist (1852 – 1911)



The work shown on the stamp is *Galahad's Departure*, from *Harper's Monthly*, September 1902; illustration for *The Quest for the Holy Grail*, mural for the Boston Public Library.



ABBEY and MILLET  
*en plein air*, sketched by  
FREDERICK DELMAN

Abbey was born in Philadelphia in 1852, studied art at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art, and then began as a magazine illustrator before he was 20. He moved to England in 1878 where he was made a full member of the Royal Academy in 1898. In 1902 he was chosen to paint the coronation of King Edward VII, and in 1907 he declined an offer of knighthood in order to retain his U.S. citizenship. Abbey was close friends with other expatriate American artists, and in the summers he painted with JOHN SINGER SARGENT at the home of FRANCIS DAVIS MILLET, who died on the sinking of the *Titanic*. Millet wrote a last letter, which he posted in Queenstown, in which he complained about his fellow passengers:

“Queer lot of people on the ship. There are a number of obnoxious, ostentatious American women, the scourge of any place they infest and worse on shipboard than anywhere. Many of them carry tiny dogs, and lead husbands around like pet lambs.”

Abbey worked on a series of murals for the Boston Public Library in the 1890s, a project that took him 11 years to complete in his England studio. In 1908, Abbey began painting murals and other artwork for the rotunda of the new Pennsylvania State Capitol in Harrisburg. Unfortunately, Abbey became so ill with cancer in 1911 that his studio assistant, Ernest Board, along with Sargent, his friend and neighbor, completed the work with little supervision from Abbey. He died August 1, 1911.

He was elected to the National Academy of Design and The American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 1937, Yale University became the home for a sizable collection of Abbey's works, the result of a bequest from his widow.