

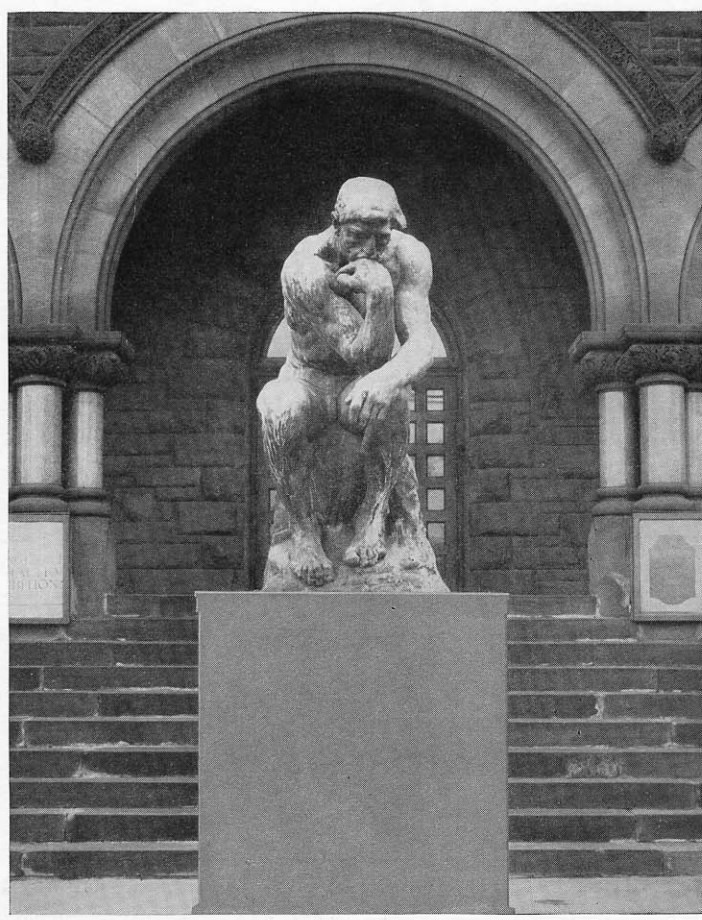


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"LE PENSEUR," BY AUGUSTE RODIN  
ANONYMOUSLY GIVEN

## RODIN'S "LE PENSEUR" GIVEN

One of the early originals of Auguste Rodin's "Le Penseur," "The Thinker," has been presented as an anonymous gift, and this heroic bronze figure now commands the approach to the Museum. It is one of the earliest examples of this fine subject, executed under the personal direction of Rodin and during its sojourn for a number of years in an important collection of Switzerland it has taken on a patina of unusual loveliness, which only time and the elements can give to a bronze. Like all great art, it enhances its present site, and will probably be similarly located in front of the facade of the new building on Woodward Avenue.

Rodin is now considered as the logical follower after the French Carpeaux, Rude and Houdon, and the third greatest sculptor, following after Phidias and Michelangelo. He has influenced more sculptors than all others since his time.

Like all truly great artists he had an open mind, learning from the Far East, Egypt, Mexico, Italy and France of the Eighteenth Century. He had been the "ghost" for many of the master sculptors in his youth, helping them with their commissions. In this way he was slave to no one master or school, but picked up that which had been found worth while by many.

He travelled in Italy, studying the works of Michelangelo, and the

more realistic Italian, Donatello. Searching about in France he had soon filled his note book with sketches and appreciations of the Cathedrals, upon which subject he published the book "Cathedrals of France."

The bronze, "Man with the Broken Nose," was refused by the Salon in 1864. In 1877 "The Age of Bronze" was accepted for exhibition, after it had been unjustly challenged as a cast taken from a living model. This charge, however, indicates his first manner, that of naturalism.

In the second period of his work he went on toward the impressionistic, laying emphasis on light and shade, rythmic movement and finally on concentrated well balanced forms, which could be viewed advantageously from any position. It is this second period which is the greater.

The "Portal of Hell" commissioned in 1880 for the Musee des Arts Decoratifs, which occupied the sculptor for 20 years, were never completed. It was to have interpreted the history of the world, with all its struggle and unattained efforts, from the time of Adam. It was in a way to have been a plastic crystallization of the entire Dantesque tragedy. Had the door been carried out according to the proportions of "The Thinker," which was to have been the crowning feature, it would have been one hundred feet high. The artist thought in terms of detail

rather than of the general design. For this reason, although many of the parts were completed, the dream was never realized in its entirety. The forms have the same nervous tension, the same spirit of the dramatic, the same rhythm as Michelangelo's.

"The Thinker" is strongly reminiscent of the Sibyls in the Sistine Chapel or the Lorenzo de Medici of the Medici tombs in Florence. In it as in them there is complete unity. "The Thinker," in its unfinished surface, is the greatest of all of this group. The greatest artists realize that they are unable to completely represent their great thoughts, and would rather suggest than photographically portray.

Auguste Rodin sought the inner significance and not the superficial. The way in which this form is twisted about recalls the asymmetrical balance, that was a great advance over the stiff Byzantine manner. The play of light and shade clearly defines his feeling for design in depth as well as in height and width. The simplicity illustrates a desire for directness and effectiveness of message. Finally the dignity, monumentality and repose interprets the spirit of his art.

Rodin was buried by the ruins of the Chateau D'Issy, where a replica of this same statue towers above his remains as if guarding them.

R. P.

## MUSEUM NOTES

Wilhelm R. Valentiner of the Detroit Institute of Arts staff, in the office of expert and adviser, has been actively engaged in his duties in Detroit. He has been installing new accessions. These comprise a great many pieces of old sculpture and painting; fine old furniture, fabrics and objects connected with Christian worship. The 14th to the 17th centuries are the periods represented.

The Detroit Institute of Arts has been the recipient of a well known piece of sculpture by one of the early Americans. "The Lost Pleiad" by Randolph Rogers, (1825-1892) is the subject of this gift, and the donor is

Mrs. Sherman L. Depew. Born in Waterloo, New York, Randolph Rogers spent his young manhood in business at Ann Arbor, Michigan. The Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument in Campus Martius, Detroit, is one of his works.

The Detroit Museum of Art Founder's Society has presented to the Print Department, a lithograph by Charles Storm van Gravsande, "The Inner Harbor, Hamburg." The newly acquired print, purchased from the Charles L. Freer Fund, has the simplicity and the feeling for carefully wrought detail that we find in all the work of this Dutch artist.



STUART NEEDLEWORK. CHARLES I, QUEEN AND ATTENDANTS  
RECENTLY ACQUIRED

## RECENTLY ACQUIRED FABRICS

Two interesting additions have recently been made to the textile department by the purchase of a piece of stump or "embossed" needlework of the Stuart period, and a XVII Century Persian brocade.

Much has been written regarding the origin of stump work. We know that it was a popular diversion of the women of royalist households during the reign of James I through the Commonwealth to Charles II.

Though perhaps these works of the Stuart and Tudor periods are a little stiff and ungainly, there is a

quaint beauty and charm about them that is all their own, and some of the best specimens carried out by highly skilled workers attain artistic distinction by reason of the perfection of their craftsmanship.

The term "embossed," an old English word, was used on account of the raised portions being stuffed with pieces of silk, cotton, wool or even wood. The coverings were worked in the most exquisite stitches, taken from examples of old lace and Oriental embroideries. In some pieces we find a great deal of gold,

silver, colored lace and passementerie used. These materials were made by the workers and were often more difficult of execution than the embroidery itself.

The example acquired for the Institute is done on linen and was evidently the top of a fitted work casket. The scene shows Charles I and his Queen, Henrietta Maria, grouped with attendants. The scattered floral forms, birds, and beasts, with the inevitable castle (probably Whitehall) in the background, are much repeated motifs in the stumpwork of this period.

These flowers, birds and animals all have symbolical significance. The lion signifies adherence to the crown; the rose is the symbol of the Tudor family, and the strawberry denotes the queen's descent from the Frazer clan of Scotland. Thus we might find a symbolical meaning for almost every one of the many objects represented in the piece.

The figures are richly apparelled in the costumes of the period. The

crowns of the king and queen are set with seed pearls and their robes are trimmed with collars and cuffs of genuine petit-point lace. The piece shows Stuart embroidery at its best period—that of the reign of Charles I.

The XVII Century Persian brocade is  $23\frac{3}{4}$  x 27 inches. The motif is the famous Shah Abbas motif, which originated in this century during the reign of Shah Abbas the Great. It consists of a large and mature but not quite fully opened flower, framed by the outline of a symmetrical pointed leaf. In this piece it is worked in gold thread and green silk with the center of the flower in bright red. This design, held together by a tracery of vines, is enclosed in a diaper pattern of a red and green rope-like effect, which runs through the piece. The background is a rich blue. It illustrates the extraordinary success with which the Persians were able to combine brilliant colors in close contrast, toning and blending them into rich harmonies.

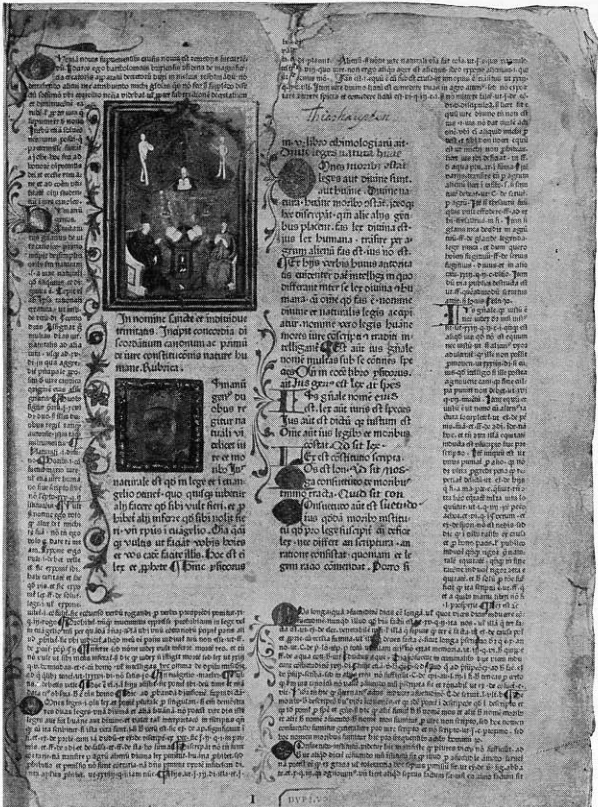
J. W.

## THE HISTORY OF WRITING AND PRINTING ON EXHIBITION IN THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM ROOM

The present exhibit in the Children's Museum Room is an attempt to trace, in a more or less sketchy manner, by means of photographs, facsimiles and specimens, the history of writing and printing from early picture writing down to the best type of printed book of our own

time. The main portion of this exhibit, however, relates primarily to the historical development of the book in Western Europe and the United States.

To assist those who may wish to follow the historical order of the exhibit, numbers have been placed



GRATIANUS COMMENTARY, STRASSBURG, 1471  
 IN INSTITUTE COLLECTION  
 CANONICAL TEXT CENTRE, COMMENTARY RANGE

on the different cases. The first case contains some of the early types of writing, as an American Indian story board, Egyptian hieroglyphs, pictures in color of Aztec characters, Hittite seals, cuneiform characters, and Chinese wood blocks.

Materials which have been used to write upon are grouped in a case at one side. Here one may see in addition to the Babylonian brick, and a bit of Egyptian stone, papyrus,

vellum or old Chinese, Japanese and Italian paper, American handmade paper, and a book from India written on the leaves of the palm.

The second case, in historical sequence, contains a picture of the Phoenician alphabet from which, in turn, were derived the Greek, the Roman and our own; also a picture of the Rosetta stone, wax tablet, stylus and ink-well of Greek and Roman times.

A 5th century A. D. example shows a proto-Byzantine influence on illustration. Here we see the classical personification of the well in this picture and some indication of a background. Facsimiles of the writing on papyrus of the 6th century, and early illuminated work on vellum from the 8th to the 10th century, is included in this and the following case. Here one may see examples of Byzantine, Anglo-Irish and France-Saxon schools of illumination.

The fifth case contains specimens of the book and the documentary hand from the 12th through the 14th century, a bit of music of the period, and a beautifully illuminated manuscript, 13th century Gothic work. The following case contains not only specimens of writing, music, facsimiles of some illuminated work of the early, middle and late part of the 14th century, but also two beautiful manuscripts, a Bible and a Psalter. The latter contains pictures with beautiful gold grounds, and illuminated text surrounded by a charming border.

With the co-operation of the Art Library at Ann Arbor, the Detroit Public Library, Mr. George Booth,

Mr. Henry Loud and others, it has been possible to gather together this book exhibit which is arranged in historical order, beginning with 1471 and ending with the catalogue published by the Metropolitan Museum at the time of the Hudson Fulton Celebration in New York.

English books from the 15th through the 20th century fill one case. The changes in the English during these centuries, and the growth of illustration deserve more than a casual glance. Among the modern books will be found a copy of Chaucer from the Kelmscott Press, Julius Caesar from the Doves Press, Benvenuto Cellini published by Brentano, New York, and The Philobiblon published for the Grolier Club of New York. Two cases are devoted to children's books. It is interesting to contrast those published seventy-five or one hundred years ago with the best type of children's book of today.

Each Saturday afternoon the Detroit Public Library sends one member from the staff of the bindery department to demonstrate how books are put together.

This exhibit will close the middle of January.

G. A. G.

## SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

### DECEMBER

- 1st, 7:30 P. M.* Free sketch class conducted by the Recreation Commission.
- 2nd, 3:00 P. M.* Story hour for children, in the Children's Room.
- 3rd, 3:30 P. M.* Lecture, "The Story of the Book," by Gertrude A. Gillmore.
- 8th, 7:30 P. M.* Free sketch class conducted by the Recreation Commission.
- 9th, 3:30 P. M.* Story hour for children, in the Children's Room.
- 10th, 3:30 P. M.* Lecture, "Florentine Mornings," by Mrs. Neville Walker.
- 15th, 7:30 P. M.* Free sketch class conducted by the Recreation Commission.
- 16th, 3:00 P. M.* Story hour for children, in Children's Room.
- 17th, 3:30 P. M.* Lecture, "When is a Portrait and How," by Leo J. Mielziner.
- 22nd, 2:30 P. M.* Lecture to Art Committees of Detroit Women's Clubs, "Flanders and the Netherlands," by Clyde H. Burroughs.
- 7:30 P. M.* Free sketch class conducted by the Recreation Commission.
- 23rd, 3:00 P. M.* Story hour for children, in the Children's Room.
- 24th, 3:30 P. M.* Special musical program through the co-operation of the Chamber Music Society.
- 29th, 7:30 P. M.* Free sketch class conducted by the Recreation Commission.
- 30th, 3:00 P. M.* Story hour for children, in the Children's Room.
- 31st, 3:30 P. M.* Special musical program through the co-operation of the Chamber Music Society.

### SCHEDULE OF EXHIBITIONS

- December 3rd* Opening of Ralph H. Booth Loan Collection.
- December 5th to 31st* Annual Exhibition for Michigan Artists under the auspices of the Scarab Club.
- December 11th* Opening of Exhibition of Recent Accessions.