

# Bulletin of The Detroit Institute of Arts Of the City of Detroit

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PORTRAIT OF MRS. CHALMERS  
BY SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

## TWO ENGLISH PORTRAITS

The English Exhibition in February was inaugurated with a subscription list for the purchase of a work of the English School as a memento of this fine exhibit, and so generous and encouraging were the subscriptions on the opening date and subsequently during the exhibition that with the total subscribed, the Arts Commission has been enabled to secure two fine examples of the leaders of eighteenth century painting in England, namely, Sir Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough. There were more than ninety subscribers to the list, as follows, together with a number of anonymous subscriptions:

- Dr. and Mrs. Charles D. Aaron  
 Mr. Colin Agnew  
 Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Ainsworth,  
 Mr. and Mrs. Russell A. Alger  
 Mr. John W. Anderson  
 Mr. and Mrs. Standish Backus  
 Mr. and Mrs. Ford Ballantyne  
 Mrs. John W. Beaumont  
 Mr. and Mrs. George O. Begg  
 Mrs. Edward S. Bennett  
 Admiral and Mrs. Robert M. Berry  
 Mr. and Mrs. Frank W. Blair  
 Mr. and Mrs. Howard Bonbright  
 Mr. and Mrs. Frank P. Book  
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 Mr. and Mrs. Edgar W. Bowen  
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 Miss Isabelle C. Bradbeer  
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 Mr. and Mrs. Philip Breitmeyer  
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 Mr. & Mrs. Edmond Devening Bronner  
 Mrs. Max Broock  
 Mrs. Edith Knight Butler  
 Mr. and Mrs. Leo M. Butzel  
 Mr. Charles W. Casgrain  
 Mrs. William Clay  
 Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Colby  
 Mr. and Mrs. Frank Hobbs Croul  
 Mr. & Mrs. Armin A. Darmstaetter  
 Mrs. Sherman L. Depew  
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert O. Derrick  
 Sir Joseph Duveen  
 Mrs. Frank Woodman Eddy  
 Mrs. James E. Edgar  
 Mrs. Henry M. Fechimer  
 Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Fisher  
 Mr. and Mrs. Edward F. Fisher  
 Miss Elsie M. Flintermann  
 Mr. and Mrs. Edsel B. Ford  
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 Mr. and Mrs. Ossip Gabrilowitsch  
 Mr. J. George Gnaou  
 Mr. William J. Gray  
 Mrs. Ernest W. Haass  
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 Mr. Walter F. Haass  
 Mr. and Mrs. Christian H. Hecker  
 Mr. William Hendrie  
 Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Hodges  
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 Mrs. Lewis H. Jones  
 Mr. Albert Kahn  
 Mr. and Mrs. William R. Kales  
 Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Kanzler  
 Mr. F. Kleinberger  
 Mrs. Edwin Lodge  
 Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Mack  
 Mrs. Arthur McGraw  
 Dr. and Mrs. Angus McLean  
 Mr. and Mrs. James Thayer McMillan  
 The Misses McMillan  
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 Dr. R. Adlington Newman  
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 Mr. and Mrs. Harold Pa'mer  
 Mrs. Arthur Maxwell Parker  
 Mr. George B. Russell  
 Mr. John R. Russell  
 Mr. and Mrs. Murray W. Sales  
 Mr. and Mrs. Allan Shelden  
 Mrs. Frederick T. Sibley  
 Mr. Hal H. Smith  
 Mr. and Mrs. John W. Staley

Mr. F. Steinmeyer  
 Mrs. George Gordon Tanner  
 Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin S. Warren  
 Mr. and Mrs. Charles B. Warren  
 Mr. and Mrs. Harry J. Warner  
 Mr. and Mrs. Pearson Wells  
 Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb  
 Mr. and Mrs. Alfred G. Wilson  
 Mr. and Mrs. Fremont Woodruff  
 Mr. Howard Young

the middle of the eighteenth century, to that of a respected profession, and he produced an admirable gallery of portraits of the most distinguished men and women of his day. He was born in the year 1723 and studied art under an excellent if not very exciting painter, Hudson. At the age of twenty-five, when he had mastered scarcely more than the elements of his craft, he had the opportunity of visiting



MRS. MEAD BY THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH

The position of Sir Joshua Reynolds in English painting is a very important one. He raised the status of portrait painting in England from that of a merely mechanical craft into which it had degenerated by

the Mediterranean with Admiral Keppel. He was absent from England almost three and a half years, two years and eight months of which time he had spent in Rome. This visit left an indelible im-

pression on his art. On his return in 1752 he lost little time in setting up as a portrait painter in London, where he had not to wait for success. In 1768 he became first president of the newly-formed Royal Academy, at which institution he delivered, as a series of lectures spread over many years, the famous Discourses. He was knighted at the levee of the twenty-first of April, 1769. When Sir Joshua was sixty-six years old he lost the sight of one eye and he ceased to paint. He lived a few years longer, dying in 1792.

The portrait of Mrs. Chalmers which the Museum has acquired is a work of the artist's early maturity. It was probably painted in the late fifties or early sixties of the eighteenth century. With its blond colouring, its pale blue and pink, it has a slightly French air, but the character represented with such admirable insight is clearly and typically English.

Thomas Gainsborough's life was less eventful than that of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Born in 1727 in the east of England, he early showed his talent and was sent to study under a French engraver in London. He returned to his native district in 1745, where he married and settled down to teaching, portrait painting and landscape

painting in Ipswich until 1760. In that year he moved to the fashionable watering place, Bath. After fourteen years of uninterrupted success with distinguished sitters, he felt justified in trying his fortune in London. He established himself in Pall Mall in 1774 and became at once a serious rival of Sir Joshua Reynolds. He died in 1788.

Gainsborough was the most perfect painter that England ever produced. His finest portraits and his landscapes have a lyrical charm that puts him high, not merely among the painters of England, but among the painters of the whole world. His art, founded on that of Van Dyck and the Flemings, has a peculiarly eighteenth century quality of lightness and elegance. The present portrait of Mrs. Mead is one of his early works, painted no doubt during his Ipswich period. He does not yet manifest all the skill of handling, all the graceful dexterity that were to be his distinguishing characteristics later, but already in this charming early work we can see the elements out of which his later style was to be formed, and there is no other artist of the time who could have painted a portrait at once so lightly treated, so elegant, and so solidly constructed.

H. J.

## MODERN FRENCH PICTURES

The most significant of the modern movements in painting have come from France. For more than a hundred years Paris has been the art capital of the world. The 1830 romantic movement, Barbizon, impressionism, the movement vaguely known as post-impressionism, of which cubism, fauvism, and so forth are eddies, have all emanated from France. In six pictures recently acquired by the Museum we have examples of three of these movements.

The little water-colour drawing of Renoir is a mere sketch,—a happy *notation* of a woman and child standing among the trees of a garden in front of a

country house; and on the side are drawn in coloured and black chalks a few nudes. But even on this scarcely stained sheet of paper, one familiar with Renoir's work, or one sensitive to such a thing, will detect the master's feeling for volume and for rhythm. The recession of the garden path and the establishment of the figure in its space are suggested perfectly with the slightest of indications. And the nudes are charming. Renoir belonged to the older generation of impressionists; he was the companion of Monet and Manet and the rest when they fought their long fight through the seventies and eighties of the last century. He started life as a



WINTER LANDSCAPE BY MAURICE VLAMINCK

painter of flowers on china, and something of the enamel-like and saturated quality of colour which he had learned to use in practising that trade clung to his work through life. In order to show that it is not merely the Philistine public that finds it difficult sometimes to understand the work of a great artist,—and Renoir is unquestionably a great artist—one may quote the story of how Manet, himself the most accomplished painter of his generation and entirely without envy towards his fellow-craftsmen, went to Monet, who was a particular friend of Renoir, in order to get him to persuade Renoir to give up painting because he had no talent for it and was only wasting his time. And Manet was the ardent champion of the younger generation! Renoir's history was somewhat different from that of most of the impressionists. He never adopted quite whole-heartedly the scientific and rather abstract theories of Monet and his circle, and later in life he developed into what was in a sense the very opposite

of an impressionist: he became the master of three-dimensional composition, and through this mastery he has influenced the latest movements of painting. He is a kind of modern analogue of Titian, with his interest in the nude, his glowing colour, and the atmospheric envelopment of his grandly designed forms.

If Renoir represents a reaction against the strict theories of impressionism, Signac is one of those who pushed these theories to their logical conclusion. He was one of the early supporters of *pointillisme*, a practice founded on the mathematical theories of Charles Henry. According to the *pointillistes* the paint should be put on the canvas in spots of pure primary colour, which by their fusion when looked at from a distance, produce the intermediate hues and tones. Theoretically it should have been possible to calculate just how many spots of each colour would be necessary to establish objects at different distances behind the picture plane. In the work of the extreme

practitioners of this method, like Cross, the result is hard and mechanical—indeed the effect produced is rather that of coloured confetti stuck on the canvas. Signac had more natural sensibility than Cross, and his oil paintings, though produced by the same method, have often a certain lyrical charm. This charm is developed more naturally in his delicate water-colours, in which the technique of the *pointillistes* survives only in an exquisitely attenuated form, and serves to interpret in a slightly aloof and abstract manner the artist's perception of a world inundated with light and gay with the movement and reflections of water.

The two water-colours and the oil painting of Vlaminck represent a later generation—a generation which has seen and profited by the works of that greatest of modern masters, Cezanne; which has absorbed the lessons of the cubists, and whose main preoccupation is with design rather than with literal representation. There was a time at which Vlaminck seemed to be in danger of becoming the

victim of his own virtuosity: his pictures were like variations on one theme and his technique was visibly inspired by early nineteenth century painting on glass. His use of ink in his water-colours, too, was becoming a mannerism. But recently, as in the expressive oil painting of a snow scene which the Museum has acquired, he shows a new development and a more determined attack on reality. The technique is no longer that of the impressionists with its meticulous imitation of tones and the breaking up of colour. Here the paint is spread flatly with a palette knife, and reliance is placed on the formal elements of design. An effect of the desolation of winter is produced in an uncommonly convincing manner, and the picture may be regarded as a typical example of the kind of thing that the more modern artists are trying to produce. The two little water-colours are admirable in their strength of colour and their economy of means. Altogether this set of six pictures supplements in an instructive manner the modern French pictures already in the galleries. H. J.

## A ROSSETTI WATER-COLOUR

The Museum has acquired from the Leverhulme sale a water-colour painting in Rossetti's most romantic manner. Rossetti was a curiously uneven artist. As a young man he showed something like genius, but almost before he had reached middle life it was as though a door had shut, and the interior and romantic world of an imagined Middle Ages, of which he had for so long enjoyed an unhindered view, was suddenly hidden from him, and then began that long and rather dreary time when his imagination was filled only with yearning female faces with smouldering eyes, curled lips and impossibly long necks and heavy hair. These things became an obsession, and at the same time his technical power, never robust, went entirely to pieces, so that some of his later canvases are lamen-

table indeed, with their curdled and shapeless masses of paint. All these *Venus Verticordias* and *Sycamore Trees*, with the sonnets on the frame, eking out what the brush was unable to say, produce in the end only oppression and gloom. But in his youth he had seen the light, he had a real sense of design and an original creative imagination, and he was able to communicate his visions in an appropriate and delightful form.

Rossetti was born in the year 1828 of Italian parents who lived in London. As a young man he became the leader of a set of ardent spirits who founded a society known as the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. The object of this association was to save painting from the state of decay into which it had drifted through an academic imitation of the old masters.

The purpose was to be achieved by a humble copying of nature, by the representation of the most intimate details of objects and by returning to the methods and supposed outlook of the primitive painters. Ruskin was the prophet of this movement, whose doctrine was by

the dogma, and his *Annunciation* in the Tate Gallery can hardly be considered a success. By 1857, however, he had become more the master of his tools, and in the study of such books as Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* and Froissart's *Chronicles*, he found a material that moved his



A FIGHT FOR A WOMAN BY ROSSETTI

no means a novelty. In Germany the Nazarenes, half a century earlier, whose Ruskin was Friedrich von Schlegel, had held an extremely similar theory and had practised a kindred method. Both Rossetti and Millais produced interesting works inspired by this theory. In the early fifties Rossetti was perhaps rather hampered by too literal an adherence to

imagination profoundly. In that wonderful year he produced a series of water-colours which must be considered the high water-mark of his genius: glowing little paintings with names evocative of the romance of Arthur and his knights, indeed of all that is remote and unfamiliar—*The Chapel before the Lists*, *The Tune of the Seven Towers*, *The Blue Closet* and so

forth—names that inspired William Morris afterwards to write those strange and dream-like poems in his first volume of verse, *The Defence of Guenevere*.

The present picture was painted some years later than this set but it is inspired by the same spirit. Two men, clothed in brightly-coloured vaguely *Quattrocento* Florentine costumes, are fighting to the death in a dim light among trees, while in the background there crouches a woman

who is recognisably a likeness of Elizabeth Siddal, Rossetti's beautiful wife. In technique Rossetti did not aim at the liquid and characteristic qualities of his medium. Indeed he had little interest in the qualities of paint as such. But by patient stippling he was able to obtain a rich and jewel-like effect of colour and to express his romantic vision, more adequately perhaps than in any other medium.

H. J.

## A BRONZE BELL BY ANDREA PISANO



The large bronze bell which has been presented to the Institute by The Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society is of special interest as it is an important example of early medieval bell casting as well as a signed work by Andrea Pisano, the great sculptor of the bronze doors on the Baptistry in Florence. It is signed *Opus And. Pisano 1338*, which would place

it soon after that masterpiece was finished, in 1336.

The beautiful outline of the bell shows the Gothic character of the work, as do also the leaf motif at the top of the bell, the inscription band below the series of apostles, and the Madonna with two saints under one of the arches on the lower part. That we are still in the beginning



of Gothic art in Italy may be seen from the character of the other parts of the ornaments: the rounded arches in the lower part filled with scrolls containing busts of saints, and the figures of apostles in the upper band—all these ornaments still showing characteristics of the Romanesque or even Byzantine style. To explain this curious incongruity of style, Dr. Bode, in speaking of our bell, says that most likely the artist used earlier moulds of the casting foundry, while the Madonna was added as a characteristic

work by Andrea. We find in the Bargello several large bronze bells of the same period, but none of them signed and only a few with figure designs. The light appearance of the patina may be due to the fact that silver has been added to the bronze, while the tone, as in most of the Italian bells, is rather high in key. It is hoped that the beautiful tone of the bell can be heard in the new building, where it is planned to have it ring the closing hour.

W. R. V.

## A SYRIAN NECKLACE AND GLASS VASE

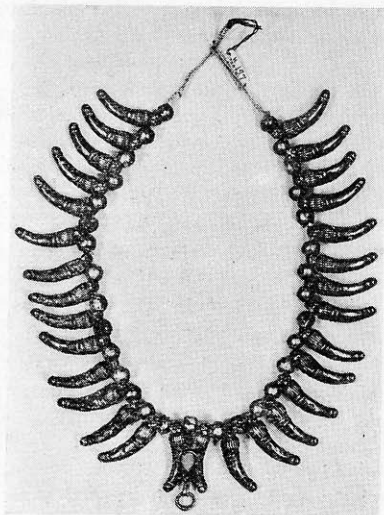
Two objects of the Syrian craftsman's art—a necklace of the XII or XIII century and a glass vase of the II century have just been presented to the Oriental Department by Mr. K. W. Bachstitz.

The necklace, which dates from either the XII or XIII century, preserves the tradition of a much earlier epoch. Unlike wood carving, miniature painting, or pottery, the motifs of jewelry underwent slow alteration.

It is not until we arrive at the Kyble type of jewelry and that of Algiers and Morocco in the XVII and XVIII centuries that the difference between epochs is strongly marked. Even here there is a reminiscence of earlier work, although the form is lighter and there is a tendency toward excessive ornamentation.

It will be observed that the difference in treatment between Oriental and Occidental jewelry, particularly the jewelry of today, is very distinct. Modern jewelry, as has been aptly remarked, aims only to exhibit the stone. This is certainly obvious in most of our contemporary rings and necklaces. But apart from its color, a jewel has no merit per se artistically, and yet we give it undue prominence out of pride in material possession. Not so the goldsmith or craftsman of Islam. His primary object was beauty of design and color. Because the color of precious stones contributed

to this end, they were employed with gold and arranged with a view to the ensemble. For the same reason, semi-precious stones and colored glass were altogether suitable in gold settings. When gold was employed without jewels and the surface permitted it, we find the ornamentations in filigree and granules—



occupation with design being exactly as strong in the jeweler's mind as the preciousness of his material.

Our necklace exhibits the first type—interest in both design and color. It is

composed of gold and blue pearl-like glass beads. Thirty tooth-shaped pendants made out of silver and gold plate are set with thirty-one blue "pearls," fifteen of the pendants slanting toward the right, and fifteen toward the left, preserving both balance and a correspondence in direction. The two center pendants are attached and surmounted by a small gold capsule inclosing a light blue turquoise. Another pendant probably containing a larger turquoise was at one time attached to it. Between these pendants and alternate with tiny rosette loops carved on their bulbous parts, are set the indigo-color beads, lending a delicacy and grace to the bolder and more rigid character of the golden pendants. An iridescence caused by long burial, gives an added charm of color. The total length of the necklace is  $11\frac{3}{4}$  inches; the length of the pendants 1 inch.

There is also a very strong, although restrained interest in ornamentation. The chamfer of the pendants, while extremely simple is nevertheless exactly suited to thin elongated shapes. Two golden circlets bind the chamfers, while one circlet at the tip breaks up the plane surfaces. A modern goldsmith probably would have left these surfaces unadorned, depending upon the preciousness of the metal alone to create his interest.

Like the Islamic bracelet now in the museum collection, the necklace comes from the Caucasus and was found in the Tartar graves in the Novorissijk region.

The glass is a blue-green translucent cask-shaped bowl with short foot, a slight curvature through the body, sloping shoulder, and a short straight neck with thin and rimmed lip.

The form has unusual dignity and is reminiscent of the excellent shapes found in the clay vessels used to a large extent in pre-Christian eras before the invention of the blow pipe for glass, which occurred about the first century B. C. The very delicate blue-green color reminds

one of clear sea water where it is shallow.

The ornamentation of the bowl indicates contact with Roman culture, which was dominant in the Near East during the first two Christian centuries. Between a circular band and just below the shoulder of the bowl, is a graceful double-S motif, arranged in a continuous pattern, typical of early Mohammedan designs. From the foot to the band and from the shoulder to the neck are regular flutings, a distinctly Greek motif. The ornamentation is applied, the motifs being impressed upon the bowl by a mould, while the glass is in a molten state.

This vase is made in two sections and then joined together, the method usually employed from the introduction of the blow pipe up to the fifth century. Its height is  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches and the diameter from rim to rim  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The technique in brief is as follows: The glass was blown into a mould which had been made from a model, cut into halves, and then joined. These moulds, which were not destroyed, could be used indefinitely.

A word may be added concerning the invention of glass. Researches, particularly those of Kisa, who published the first thorough and scientific account of ancient glass (*Das Glas in Allertume*, Leipsig, 1908) point to the fact that the credit for the invention of glass belongs to Egypt, a nation which seems to have been the center of the glass industry throughout antiquity. Egypt made glazed beads as early as 3500 B. C. Glass proper made its appearance in the eighteenth dynasty about 1500 B. C. in vases of variegated types. Traces of glass factories have been found at Tel el Amarna and at Thebes. Vases of similar types were later discovered in the Etruscan tombs, and through parts of Greece from the sixth to the fourth century B. C., clearly showing that they reached the Western countries from Egypt and not, as has been previously supposed, Egypt from Phoenicia, where Pliny records the origin of the first manufacture of glass.

The uses of ancient glass were both for the toilet, such as perfume and scent vases, and for the table, and in Greek and Roman times glass often had a funerary use, and contained the ashes of the dead. This does not seem to have obtained in the the Orient.

All primitive types can be seen in the Metropolitan Museum of Art\*, which has one of the richest and most important collections of ancient glass in the world.

A. C. E.

## MUSEUM NOTES

It may be of interest to readers of the Bulletin that Dr. W. von Bode, the greatest living authority on Dutch painting, who is now in his eighty-first year, has written the following letter congratulating the Museum upon its acquisition of the painting, *The Cemetery*†, by Jacob van Ruisdael, which was recently presented by Mr. Julius H. Haass in memory of his brother Ernest.

"In getting the great 'Cemetery' as a gift for your gallery, you received not only Ruisdael's largest painting, but one of his most important as well. I congratulate the donor as well as the gallery. We had this painting in our exhibition last year, but due to bad lighting conditions, it did not receive full appreciation.

"The extraordinary poetical charm and the melancholic atmosphere of this picture, through which Goethe was inspired to write his interesting essay on Ruisdael, is more pronounced in this *Cemetery* than in any other one of his paintings. Ruisdael himself must have known that, for he painted a smaller repetition of it with slight variations: the well-known picture in the Dresden Gallery.

"This newly rediscovered *Cemetery* is not only larger and more abundant in detail, it is also more subtle in its effect, more beautiful in the treatment of the clouds and the atmospheric

penetration of the whole scenery—one of Ruisdael's unsurpassed qualities.

"It is unusual and at the same time a proof of the extreme care that Ruisdael lavished on this painting, that the Teyler Institute in Haarlem alone is in possession of two sketches for it, the more unusual as genuine drawings of Ruisdael's are very rare, not to mention sketches for his paintings.

"Yours sincerely,  
(SIGNED) "W. BODE."

A more careful study of the *Portrait of a Man*, the French painting of the early part of the sixteenth century which was described in the January Bulletin, has made it possible to give a definite attribution to this charming picture. It is undoubtedly a work by the first and most famous of the Clouet family, who ruled the portrait art of France in the sixteenth century. The style of the painting is very similar to that of the well-known portrait of *Francis I* in the Louvre and that of his son at Antwerp; also to the portrait of *A Man Holding Petrarch's Works* in Hampton Court, all of which are now generally accepted as works by Jean Clouet, to which may be added the portrait of *Vicomte Bastien de Martigues* from the collection of M. Léon Cardon at Brussels.

Common to all these paintings is the

\*The Room of Ancient Glass, G. A. M. Richter, Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Supplement, June, 1911.

†See Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts, Vol. VII, No. 5.

comparatively large size of the heads in proportion to the frames, the similar cut-out treatment of the neck frill, the blue background, and more especially, the Holbein-like quality of the design.

Jean Clouet emigrated from Brussels to Tours, and after his arrival in France held the joint office of Court Painter and *valet de chambre* to Francis I. He combined the influence of Flanders with that of Holbein the Elder, but developed while in France a typical French style, from which the whole art of portraiture in France in the sixteenth century developed.

The most important event in March was the Exhibition of Old Masters from Private Collections in Detroit, which gave a splendid idea of the rapid development of the private collections of the city during the past few years. There were exhibited altogether sixty pictures and twenty-three sculptures. Especially well represented was the Dutch school of the seventeenth century, with four Rembrandts, two large Hobbemas, two Ruis-

daels, and three Cuyps. Next in representation came the French and English eighteenth century schools, with paintings by Pater, Fragonard, Vigee le Brun, Raeburn, Romney and Hoppner. The Italian schools were represented by works by Matteo di Giovanni, Bellini, Fra Angelico, and a series of sculptures of the same period by Niccollo Pisano, Tino da Camaino, Rossellino, Michelangelo and his followers. Of the German school of the sixteenth century an excellent idea was given by portraits by Strigel and Cranach and sculpture by Riemenscheider and Leinberger, while a number of sculptures of the early part of the Middle Ages and some Egyptian art showed the far-reaching interest of Detroit collectors.

The Institute wishes to express its appreciation of the kindness of the Detroit collectors in lending their works for this exhibition and to the New York collector who made it possible to have a representation of the work of the Florentine school through works by Botticelli and Fra Angelico.

## APRIL EVENTS

March 22 to April 5	Exhibition of Old Masters from Detroit Private Collections.
Sunday, April 4, 3:30 P. M.	Easter program of music by the Chamber Music Society of Detroit.
Saturday, April 10, 10:00 A. M.	Program for children. Lecture on Gari Melchers, illustrated, by Eleanor Trizisky.
Sunday, April 11, 3:30 P. M.	Lecture, "Mexico City, the Capital of the Montezumas," by Mr. James A. Blosser.
Tuesday, April 13, 8:30 P. M.	Reception and opening view of the Twelfth Annual Exhibition of American Art.