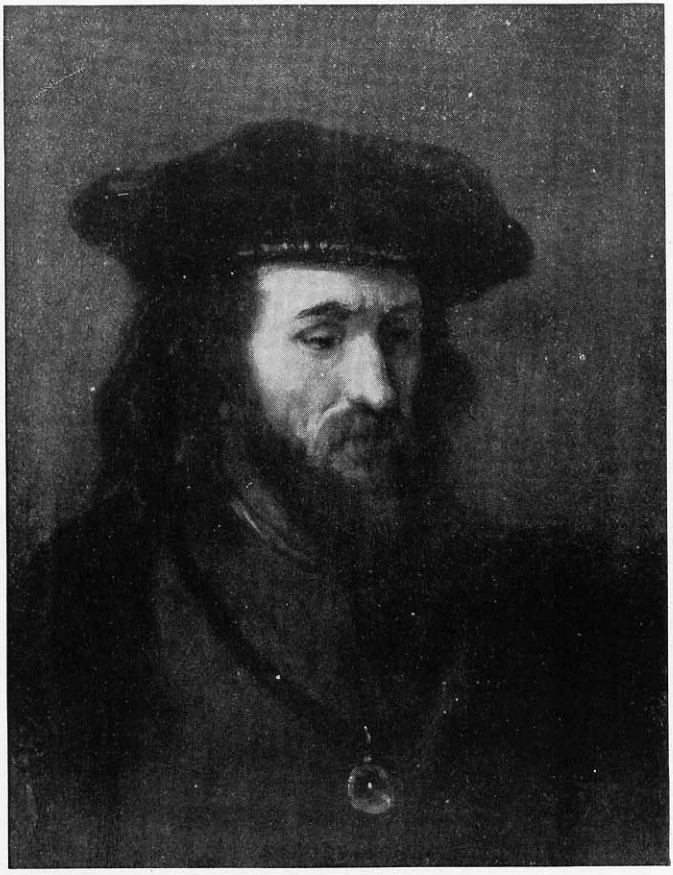
Bulletin of
The Detroit Institute of Arts
Of the City of Detroit

Vol. IX DECEMBER, 1927 No. 3



STUDY HEAD OF AN OLD MAN
WORKSHOP OF REMBRANDT
BEQUEST OF COLONEL FRANK J. HECKER

BEQUEST OF COLONEL FRANK J. HECKER

The Institute has recently received an important bequest: a sketch attributed to Rembrandt, a landscape by Dewing, two Tryons and an allegorical subject by Church, through the will of the late Colonel Frank J. Hecker. Colonel Hecker was one of the early incorporators of the old Museum of Art and a generous donor to the acquisition of the site of the present building. Throughout his life Colonel Hecker showed a great interest in the arts and began collecting while still a young man. He was especially attracted to certain phases of American art—particularly to Whistler and the artists influenced by him.

The study head of an old man, attributed to Rembrandt, is one of those expressive, broadly painted studies in which the work of Rembrandt and his nearest pupils is so rich. It probably represents a type from the lower Jewish classes at Amsterdam, which, on account of his psychological interest in their resigned and deeply human expression, Rembrandt loved to use as studio models. Study heads of this type form a large part of Rembrandt's work, and his fame as a character painter is based partly upon these wonderful representations of human suffering. The fine, soft *clairobscure* which envelops the figure, the mild and golden color scheme, and the easy and smooth technique, place the painting in the forties of the seventeenth century, when Rembrandt was at the height of his fame. Although the portrait has not been accepted by the special students of Rembrandt's works as an absolute autograph painting, the execution is so close to that of the master that it does not greatly matter, so far as our enjoyment of the expression and the technique are concerned, particularly since in these study heads even the specialist finds it more and more difficult to differentiate between the work of Rembrandt and that of his best and nearest pupils. It is a most welcome addition to the small collection of Dutch paintings in the museum. Rembrandt himself is so far represented only by a religious subject, *The Visitation*, and a legendary theme, *The Death of Lucretia*, from his workshop, and for the understanding of these larger figural compositions it is most necessary to have an example of Rembrandt's art from which we can judge how carefully the artist studied the expressions of his models before using them in his religious or historical compositions.

The two paintings by Dwight W. Tryon, *Spring* and *Autumn*, are companion pictures, painted in 1893, when the artist was under the influence of the impressionistic theories of painting which were making their way to America in the wake of the many American artists who were returning from Europe, where the new ideas had held sway for some time. This new ideal in painting, in which there was a renunciation of the form produced by lines, and the substitution of its effect by chromatic values of color, harmonized in the medium of natural light, found a ready response among such men as Whistler, Tryon, Dewing and Twachtman. Tryon's reaction was in a brightening and heightening of his palette (compare his earlier painting, *Before Sunrise, June*, in the Museum's collection) and although they express much the same subtle sentiment, the delicate tans and browns of the earlier picture here give way to soft greens, pinks, yellows and blues. As in most of his works, he here represents nature in a reticent mood. In *Autumn* we do not see the vivid colors which we usually associate with this period of the year, but everything is softened and subdued, as though the artist were endeavoring to express something of the sadness of the last glow that comes to nature before its final succumbing and death, and as in all his work he seemed more anxious to express the intangible spirit of nature than her palpable outward form.

The painting by Thomas W. Dewing

was painted in the same year as the Tryons, 1893, and has much the same general color scheme. It shows two young women dressed in the costume of the "mauve decade" out in a meadow before a green wood over which the moon is just rising. "flapper" type. In the comparison they seem hardly made of flesh and blood but, as someone has said of them, more "the essence distilled from the fading of what is womanly, the mere fragrance of dead rose-leaves." As Dewing grew older he be-

MOONRISE
THOMAS W. DEWING
BEQUEST OF COLONEL FRANK J. HECKER

Dewing is one of the few American artists who have given us definite types of American womanhood. Though far removed from Colonial days, his women are still daughters of Puritanism and it is most interesting to contrast them with the present day came more and more enamoured of the subtleties of color and lighting which were occupying the attention of artists as a result of the growing influence of Impressionism. He came to be less concerned with form as form, and increasingly occu-

pied with its abstract expression. The other painting by Dewing in the Institute's collection, *The Recitation*, is perhaps even a better illustration of this tendency.

The last of the paintings in the Hecker bequest is *The Fog*, by Frederick S. Church. It should be of particular interest locally, as Mr. Church was born in Michigan (Grand Rapids) and is numbered among the Michigan artists who have gained national reputation. *The Fog* is an allegorical representation of this phenomenon of nature and represents a very lovely nude girl with long flowing golden hair, riding up out of the sea on a white horse, surrounded by cloud-like formations of white fog, warmed in color by numerous soft notes of pink, green, blue and rose.

Like Dewing, he has created an original type of American girlhood, but Church's maidens are in the Greek rather than the Puritan tradition. He is interesting as a type of American artist who owed nothing to foreign study, his work showing little of the new influences which had come into French art during his time. But in spite of a manifest amateurishness in his work, there was a certain charm and freshness about it that not only captured the public but had an appeal also to the men returning from the Continental studios, perhaps because his light, bright tints had much of the quality of washes of water color, and perhaps, too, because of their undeniable decorative feeling.

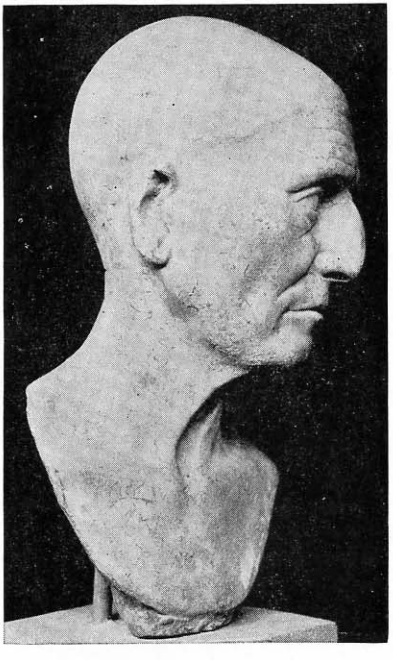
J. W.

FOUR ROMAN PORTRAIT HEADS

The gallery of Roman art, heretofore rather scantily equipped, has recently been enriched by the acquisition of four portrait heads, three of which (the three emperors) were generously presented to the Museum by Mr. and Mrs. James S. Holden.

It is in the field of portrait art that Roman sculpture achieved its happiest results. The sober realism which characterized the Roman temperament was in itself favorable to the creating of likenesses true to life. Already in the clay, stone, and bronze works of the old Etruscans we find this great skill in the rendering of details, though in their representation of the figure as a whole they were less successful. (It is by no chance that later on in the Quattrocento we can notice in the portrait sculpture of the Tuscans, who are related to the Etruscans racially, similar characteristics of meticulously-observed naturalism.)

Roman sculpture, at first more or less a branch of the Etruscan, becomes during the course of the Republican centuries more and more dependent upon contemporary Greek plastic art. As early as the fifth century B. C. we have documentary evidence of Greek sculptors working in Rome. Furthermore, the conquest of the Greek world in the second century B. C. (especially the triumph of Aemilius Paulus



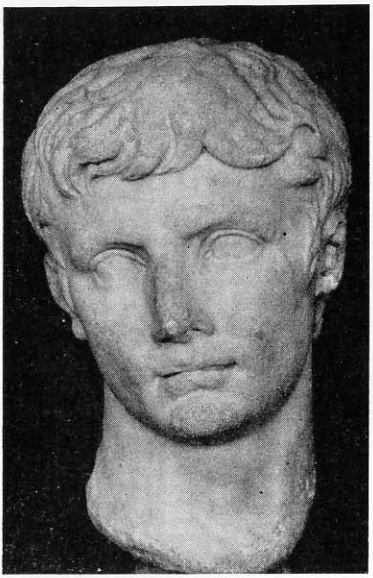
PORTRAIT HEAD
ROMAN. I CENTURY B. C.

over Macedon in 167 and of Lucius Mummius over Greece in 146) brought to Rome as booty such great masses of Greek statues of the finest quality, that there was literally no need for a native production; and during the following centuries, in the field of ornamental and decorative sculpture, the Roman artists restricted themselves, for the most part, to copying the existing treasures. In their portrait art alone, for which they were unable to find ready-made substitutes, an independent life was preserved.

Among the best portraits are those of the late Republican era, the second and first centuries B. C. The forte of Hellenistic art, still alive at this time, here meets with the old Italic talent, resulting in such works as the marble bust of Pompeius in Copenhagen with its expressive, scrutinizing glance, and the bronze bust in the Vatican (since the days of the Renaissance called without reason Brutus) with its menacing sombreness, both distinguished by a grandiose perception of the inner life. It is with this group that the earliest of our busts belongs, the head of a bald, elderly man, with keen, spiritual features, closely related to the well-known marble Cicero in the Vatican. The work might have been done in the latter half of the first century B. C.

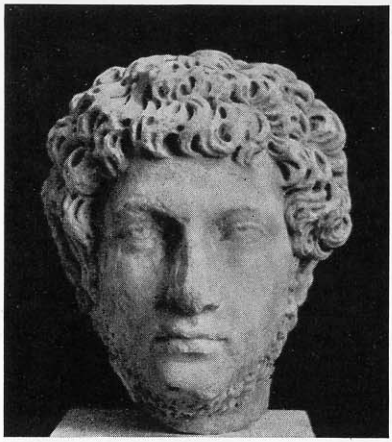
In the following period of the Emperor Augustus, the golden age of Rome's power and culture, all of the arts, sculpture as well as poetry, seek contact with the classic Greek art of the fourth century. This means that in portrait art a general idealism will supersede the minute realism of the preceding period. The marble head of the Emperor Augustus, despite its convincing likeness (proved by many other extant representations), is in its decided protuberance of the brow, its "Greek" nose with the broad root, and its slightly opened mouth, strongly reminiscent of types of youths by Skopas and Praxiteles, and a good example of that classicistic tendency.

In the following period—that of the



EMPEROR AUGUSTUS
(63 B. C.—A. D. 14)

Claudic emperors—this cool and somewhat over-dignified style again becomes more enlivened by well-observed details, while the age of the Flavians, with the full and sumptuous baroque of its art as a whole, brings to portrait sculpture an increasing superficiality of technique, a neglect of details, and a certain heaviness of form. Under Trajan the plastic style becomes harder and sharper, to be superseded under Hadrian (117-138) by a new period of smooth and eclectic classisicm, which in portrait art is represented at its best by the numerous existing statues and busts of Antinous, the emperor's beautiful friend. Hand in hand with an external elegance, there is a decline of the inner life of sculpture; and yet here as well as in the following period of the Antonines, it is again the portrait in which the Roman sculptors are most successful. Under Marcus Aurelius they begin to loosen the mass of the hair by the new device of boring, thus enlivening it by stronger contrasts of light and shadow; and also to



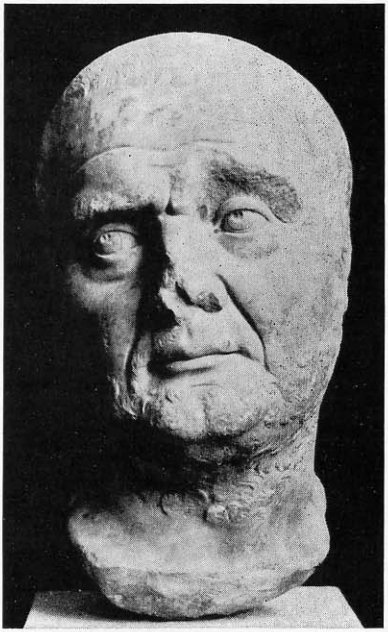
SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS
(A. D. 146-211)

make the glance more vivid by such plastic means as the hollowing out of the eyeball, or even the slight boring of the cornea to produce the effect of reflected light.

The beautiful portrait head in our collection of Septimius Severus, who ascended the throne thirteen years after Marcus Aurelius's death (193), shows clearly all these characteristics. The subsequent period of the soldier emperors, with its uninterrupted sequence of gravest disturbances for the empire, naturally was not favorable to the development of the arts. Nevertheless, the portraits still preserve a great force of characterization, combined with an animated bearing and a vividness of expression. The head of the Emperor Philippus Arabs, a man of Semitic extraction, who as commander of the imperial guards had assassinated his predecessor, Gordianus, in 244, only to suffer the same fate a couple of years later at the hands of Decius, shows in its hard features with widely opened, distrustful eyes, that type of the successful sergeant, brutal and hesitating at nothing, who in those days used to rule over the empire, and illustrates at the same time the astonishing faithfulness with which the artist was able to depict it.

This impressive portrait art flagged little by little after the middle of the third century, and in the rigid features of the portraits from Constantine's time, with their huge, conventionalized eyes, we are at the end of the great free and vital art of the antique and at the gateway of the Middle Ages, with their new and heterogeneous ideas.

W. H.



PHILIPPUS ARABS
EMPEROR A. D. 244-249

PUBLISHED MONTHLY, OCTOBER TO MAY, INCLUSIVE, AT THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS OF THE CITY OF DETROIT. ENTERED AS SECOND CLASS MATTER AT THE POST OFFICE AT DETROIT, MICHIGAN, UNDER THE ACT OF OCTOBER 3, 1917.

FLEMISH MISSAL PRESENTED TO THE INSTITUTE

Mr. Alvin C. Hamer has recently presented, as a dedication gift to the Institute, a Flemish Missal, ascribed to the sixteenth century. It is the first example of this art in the collection of the Institute, and a long and splendid tradition lies behind this beautiful little book of fifty pages, containing eleven miniatures by an unknown Flemish master.

It is a far cry from our day when books are turned from presses in ever increasing numbers, to the ages when manuscripts were produced with loving care and skill. The earliest manuscripts were made by the free workman or the slave, but of these nothing remains but the Egyptian papyri.

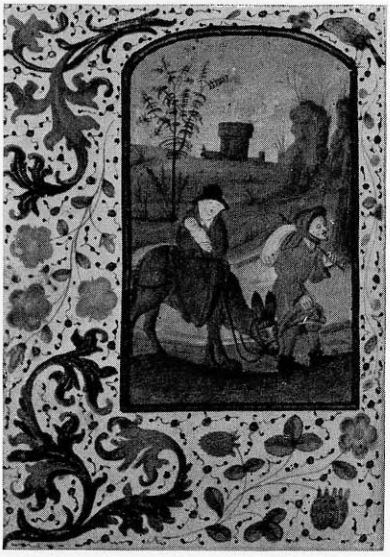
In the West the work of the copyist begins with St. Jerome, and all through the Middle Ages monastic rule included among its most important tasks, the transcribing of manuscripts in order to preserve for us the learning of the ancient world.

Charlemagne, seeking to revive culture in his day, established under the patronage of the crown, schools of calligraphy, and in the eleventh and twelfth centuries monastic writing reached its highest perfection.

In the thirteenth century came a change. Laymen established themselves near the great universities, and the craft became as lucrative as it was skilled. Kings and courtly patrons began to acquire manuscripts, and Books of Hours, richly decorated, were now made by secular hands. It was the age when Gothic architecture reached its highest development, and its influence, as well as that of the worker in stained glass, is strongly felt. The miniaturists of this period delighted in the rose decoration, and other forms of Gothic ornament, and in a realistic portrayal both of nature and the human form.

In the fourteenth century the great French illuminator Jean Pucelle exercised a wide influence. Borders formed of beautifully designed garlands, and scenes from every-day life appear in the manuscripts of this time, while traces of Italian influence are seen in architectural settings of mixed Gothic. In this century, too, we have the rise of national styles. The distinct types do not appear until a century later, for the illuminators, journeying as they did from country to country, absorbed ideas of technique other than their own, though France still dominates.

To this period belongs the famous *Tres Riches Heures*, made for the famous Jean duc de Berry. The miniatures in this beautiful work have been ascribed to Pol de Limbourg, a member of a family of celebrated Flemish miniaturists, who long before van Eyck, had developed ideas of aerial perspective. The province of Limbourg may be considered as the cradle of Flemish miniature painting, and the Flemish Guilds rapidly developed the art, which was at its highest perfection during the fifteenth century.



ILLUMINATED MISSAL
FLEMISH. XV CENTURY
GIFT OF MR. ALVIN C. HAMER

It was during this century that the art was most profoundly changed. The manuscripts were now painted in grisaille, the gold backgrounds giving way to designs in color, then to pure landscape. This is the time of those magnificent manuscripts, the *Brevarium Grimani*, and the *Hortulus Animae*. Our own missal is also of this period. It is not possible to describe each of the eleven miniatures, but *The Flight into Egypt* is one of the loveliest. It has the foliated border, with blues, green and gold as the predominating colors, the planes are well developed, and the background is of real beauty.

The age which produced this missal saw the decline of a great art. Though great humanists and lovers of art still scorned the printed book, it steadily increased, and as printing had hastened the end of calligraphy, so the new process of wood engraving was to bring about the decline of miniature painting. It ends with Dürer, whose magnificent designs for the Prayer Book of Maximilian stamped with genius the wood engraver's craft, and the last of the great artists whose spirit was mediaeval brought to an end an art whose greatest perfection was reached in the Middle Ages.

I. W.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BLAKE ACQUIRED

Mrs. George E. Edmunds has presented to the Institute a copy of Young's *Night Thoughts*, illustrated by William Blake, and formerly in the collection of that well-known bibliophile, E. Edward Newton.

With the exception of a single print by Blake, this master has been hitherto unrepresented in our collection. Volumes have been written on this baffling personality, and the celebration of his centenary this year has again focused attention upon him.

Born in 1757, and apprenticed to the engraver Basire, Blake produced at the age of sixteen, his *Joseph of Arimathea*. Largely self-taught, and working as a line engraver at a time when English engraving was largely reproductive, Blake developed an original treatment of line.

Unlike the artists of his day, he felt that the oil medium in which they so delighted, could but inadequately express his own peculiar imaginings. Here was a poet and an artist, steeped in the Gothic tradition, living in a world peopled by his passionate imagination, who tells us himself that when he took brush or graver in his hands he "was drunk with intellectual vision."

The work of Michelangelo interested him profoundly, and like the great Florentine, Blake attempted a grandeur of expression which was almost beyond human power.

The illustrations for the *Night Thoughts* were made in 1796, and though they lack the power of his last work, they show the inventiveness and the original imagination which were to characterize all his expressions. These particular illustrations are of the greatest value to the student because in them Blake followed the technique which he was to adopt throughout his life.

The plates were printed in one color, and then retouched with water color by Blake or his wife, or by a method of transfer he would add from a card the color on a monochrome plate.

An artist of unbalanced power, suffering from a mental malady at the end, Blake stood alone in his own time. Our age has come to a better understanding of this extraordinary man, and his allegory, his mysticism, and his power as a designer, have given him a tardy recognition.

I. W.

GIFTS TO THE AMERICAN COLONIAL DEPARTMENT

To the general public, one of the most popular sections of the new building have been the rooms devoted to American Colonial art, particularly the little house known as Whitby Hall which once stood in Philadelphia and which was built into the museum while the building was in the process of construction.

Since the opening, a number of gifts have been made to this department: several portraits, described in last month's Bulletin and a number of pieces of furniture and other household arts.

In the Whitby Hall rooms have been installed a handsome mahogany and gilt mirror and an unusually fine Hepplewhite chair, gifts from Mrs. William Clay. The chair is one of the most pleasing of the many types made after the Hepplewhite designs, with delicate outline and well-executed carving, particularly in the shield-shaped back, which gives the chair its particular distinction, the flower motifs of the delicate splats and the swags of drapery with which they are caught together being of unusual beauty and exquisite proportions.

The mirror which Mrs. Clay presented is also of exceptional beauty of style, the finest type of the so-called "Constitution" mirror, which became popular shortly after the Revolution. The mahogany veneered and gilded frame is carved in the Chippendale style, with a gilded composition spray of oak leaves attached at either side. The scroll pediment and the gilt eagle surmounting a globe are in the best manner of the "Constitution" type.

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The dark walls of the seventeenth century kitchen have been greatly enlivened by two fine East Indian printed and painted hangings, of the type which the colonists loved to import from Europe, whither they came from India to Portugal, Holland and England following the opening up of the East by the establishment of trading posts by these countries. The smaller, and more attractive print is a gift from Mrs. Ernest Kanzler. The pattern, interlacing bamboo stalks on either side of a branching tree with birds and animals in the branches, is a particularly pleasing one.

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Mr. Albert Kahn has presented to the Institute an interesting early American doorway, which now forms the entrance to the room of the Early Republic, which adjoins Whitby Hall. It once formed part of a house in Newport, Rhode Island, and

DOORWAY FROM HOUSE IN NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND, ERECTED ABOUT 1800
GIFT OF MR. ALBERT KAHN

has the distinguishing "ear-marks" of the houses built in the seaport towns of Rhode Island, which differed in many important respects from those built in the colonies farther south and even from those in New York.

Fluted Doric pilasters flank the door and there is the usual arrangement of an open pediment above a fan light. A meander runs across the abacus of the capitals, continuing across the top of the door. The pediment is enriched with a row of dentils, below which are delicately-formed brackets, and in the rectangular frieze above the pilasters is an applied flower-like rosette, repeated again directly under the peak of the pediment. The fan light has an original feature in the little projections raying from the semicircle, giving the effect of a sun. Altogether, the doorway is a representative example of the excellent work that was being done in American architecture in the early days of the Republic, when the classic revival which had swept over Europe in the latter part of the century found a sympathetic response with the builders and craftsmen of the new republic.

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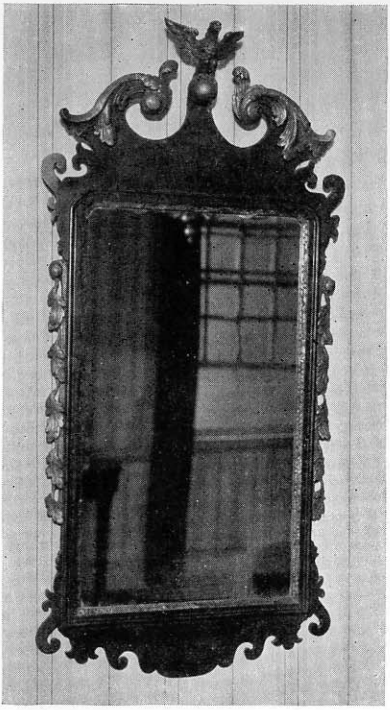

MAHOGANY AND GILT MIRROR
IN THE STYLE OF CHIPPENDALE
GIFT OF MRS. WILLIAM CLAY

A gift of a charming little silver creamer comes from Mrs. Robert M. Berry. It was made by Samuel Richards, a Philadelphia craftsman working in the last decade of the eighteenth century. It is four inches high, of graceful boat-like shape, the upper part of the flat handle not being attached to, but forming part of the creamer itself, the attachment being made only at the bottom. The lower half of the pitcher is grooved vertically, the upper half horizontally. A delicate beading finishes the upper brim and there is a tiny applied ornament in the lower part of the handle.

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Several small objects that help in giving "atmosphere" to the Colonial rooms—a fine brass mortar of pleasing proportions, a "Paul Revere" lantern, a set of candle moulds and a little metal seam holder—came through the Society of Colonial Dames as a gift from Miss Helen Keep.

J. W.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MUSICAL PROGRAM

Friday, December 16, at 8:00 p. m. Organ concert by Mr. G. T. Lowe, Organist of the Church of the Ascension.

Sunday, December 18, at 5:00 p. m. Concert presented by the Chamber Music Society of Detroit.

Friday, December 23, at 8:00 p. m. Concert presented by the Chamber Music Society of Detroit.

Sunday, December 25, at 5:00 p. m. Organ concert by Mr. Francis L. York, Curator of Music.

Friday, December 30, at 5:00 p. m. Organ concert by Mr. William Schenk, Organist of the Lutheran Evangelical Church.

Sunday, January 1, at 5:00 p. m. Christmas Carols by the Choir of St. Paul's Cathedral (150 members).

ILLUSTRATED LECTURES ON THE HISTORY OF ART

For the Members of the Founders Society and their families. (Membership cards must be presented.)

Wednesday mornings at eleven o'clock

December 14. Renaissance Sculpture in Italy—Miss Harvey.

December 28. Italian Painters of the Renaissance—Miss Harvey.

January 4. Painting of the High-Renaissance: Venice and Spain—Miss Harvey.

January 11. Renaissance Painting in the North—Miss Harvey.

CHRONICLES OF AMERICA PHOTOPLAYS

(Open to Public)

January 7, at 10:30 a. m.—Columbus.

January 14, at 10:30 a. m.—Jamestown.

EVENING LECTURES

(Open to Public)

January 10, at 8:15 p. m. Aesthetic Values in Painting—Professor DeWitte Parker, Professor of Philosophy and Psychology, University of Michigan.

January 16, at 8:15 p. m. The Experiences of a Collector—Professor Paul J. Sachs, Professor of Fine Arts, Harvard University; Associate Director, Fogg Museum of Art.

The second lecture in the series of seven evening lectures will be given on Tuesday evening, January 10, at eight o'clock, by Professor DeWitte Parker. Dr. Parker has been Professor of Philosophy and Psychology at the University of Michigan since 1921. His subject will be *Aesthetic Values in Painting.*

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Beginning in January a series of fifteen historical photoplays published by the Yale University Press will be shown in the small lecture room of the Institute. The first of these, *Columbus*, will be given on Saturday morning, January 7, at 10:30. The subjects and dates of the remaining photoplays will be announced in the January issue of the Bulletin. They will have special interest for children but are also open to the general public.

PUBLICATIONS

In addition to the Bulletin, there are now on sale at the desk near the entrance, an illustrated guide to the collections and a handbook of illustrations of the most important paintings and sculpture in the Institute. There are also new post cards and photographs.

ACCESSIONS IN THE JAPANESE COLLECTION

From the exhibition of Japanese works of art loaned by Yamanaka and Company of New York for the opening of the new building, the Arts Commission has recently purchased sixteen pieces. The specimens acquired represent a wide range in both form and time, and will provide an excellent foundation for a suitable Japanese collection. There are two painted screens, three Buddhist paintings and one secular, three Buddhist images of wood, one bronze censer, three pottery jars and three tea caddies. Especially interesting are a screen by the famous Korin and a Buddhist painting in good color from an early period in Japanese history. The most important pieces will be reviewed individually in subsequent issues of the Bulletin.

B. M.