

BULLETIN



OF THE

DETROIT MUSEUM OF ART

July, 1904

DETROIT, MICHIGAN

Number 3

The James E. Scripps Collection of Old Masters.

A RECENT redecoration of the gallery containing the collection of old masters, and the cleaning and rehangings of the pictures, makes the ensemble of this gallery more attractive than ever before.

But it is not to the harmonious whole that attention is directed;—that might be obtained in a collection of modern pictures of varying merits;—but to the worth and merit of the pictures individually and as a collection of old masters, attention is called. Individually they are of inestimable value as examples of the artist who painted them; as a collection they are equally valuable in their varied and scholarly selection.

They are not "hobby" selections and so are not as is usually the case with "hobbies", representative of only one school; nor do they show individual preference for some few favorite masters. A well studied and deliberate elimination and careful selection is very apparent in the eighty pictures comprising the collection. Representative men of the Italian, Spanish, Flemish, Dutch and French schools alike contribute to the ensemble to make it valuable as a basis of systematic study.

THEIR AUTHENTICITY.

Another commendable quality in the pictures is their genuineness. In a collection of this kind, especially in the Italian and Spanish masters whose work so seldom received their signatures,—the distinguishing marks being their style, their general impress and handling,—and coming from an age when the works of the pupils were often copies of the works of their masters, there is much incredulity, naturally, as to a painting being identified with this or that master.

TWO WAYS OF DETERMINING GENUINENESS.

There are only two ways of determining with any accuracy, the genuineness of the old masters; one is the opinions of experts,—men who have made so close a study of painting that there is no doubt as to their judgment in passing upon these works of art; the other and surer means of determining the authenticity of one of these works is to trace its past history. Books contemporary with the artist, and often records left by the artists themselves, make it possible to trace some of these works from the very day they left the artist's easel.

JAMES E. SCRIPPS' COLLECTION BEARS THE TEST.

Almost without exception the James E. Scripps collection

BULLETIN OF THE
Detroit Museum of Art

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE

DETROIT MUSEUM OF ART

Jefferson Avenue and Hastings Street

Incorporated February 16th, 1885

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Hours of Admission

The Museum is open to the public FREE every day in the week from 9 a. m. to 4 p. m., except Sunday and Monday, when the hours are from 2 to 4 p. m.



MADONNA

By Fra. Filippo Lippi

In the James E. Scripps Collection

The James E. Scripps Collection of Old Masters—Continued

of old masters bears this latter test of authenticity. A painting more than any other household article is an heirloom, remaining in one family for centuries. By this fortunate circumstance of few changes in possession it is easy to trace the past history of a genuine work of art. The pictures in the Scripps collection not only have this testimony as to their authenticity, but many of them have undergone the close and professional scrutiny of the expert as well.

It has been gratifying on the occasional visits of some of these experts to note their apparent surprise and expressions of satisfaction in some of these pictures. They fail to comprehend at first that so creditable a showing could be made by so young and so distant an institution. Prof. Andre Michel, Curator of Painting and Sculpture of the Louvre on a recent visit here, passed upon the collection as a whole very favorably.

THE COLLECTOR'S WORK.

The James E. Scripps collection of old masters was personally selected by Mr. Scripps. Their acquisition involved a great amount of time and labor, covering a period of four years. A generous philanthropic disposition coupled with a firm purpose, directing his efforts in channels where they will leave many good results, is a characteristic peculiar to Mr. Scripps. In the early efforts to establish a museum, he became one of the prime movers. He turned his mind to perhaps the largest field of any at that time, the collection of old master paintings, and with



THE VIRGIN

By Quentin Massys

In the James E. Scripps Collection

The James E. Scripps Collection of Old Masters—Continued

logical intensity tried to get representative works from all schools. His selection shows examples of great men and their schools, and fairly portray the methods, coloring and general qualities possessed by those men. Mr. Scripps' forethought is now becoming more and more apparent. The older institutions, particularly of Europe, years ago secured many of the great examples of art, and by reason of large endowments are ever ready to advance large sums for any authentic work in the market.

There are in this collection, good examples of the Byzantine Italian manner,—the rigid unchanging design which prevailed from the fall of the Roman Empire until about the thirteenth century; and later, of the revival under the incentive of the church which, though still under bonds of ecclesiastical symbolism, gained from the study of nature more truth and freedom. Among the few examples of pre-Raphael work the student may find enough to illustrate the progress of art until it reaches the zenith of that rich epoch known as the Lombard, Florentine and Venetian schools. Following upon the heels of this came the Spanish, Flemish and Dutch schools, all of which are represented by more or less important examples.

While it is impossible to go into a description and detailed account of all of these paintings, the attention of the visitor is called to a few of special interest:

One of the very good early Italian paintings is a fragment of a work by Fra Filippo Lippi (1412-1469). Lippi entered a monastery of the Carmelite monks when quite young, just at a time when Massacio was frescoing some of the walls. He was much interested in the work and studied with this master. Being in love with life and tempted by its inducements he ran

away from the monastery, abducted a nun, and gave up cloister work for his art and pleasure. His painting procured him immunity for the offense. He is reckoned as one of the greatest of Italian masters. His work differs from that of Fra Angelico and Massacio, whom he studied, in being more realistic. His temperament expressed itself in his painting with the result that he left the high idealism and gave a better idea of actual life. In this picture the Virgin stands holding the infant Saviour on her left arm. Two



THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

In the James E. Scripps Collection

By Murillo

saints stand one on either side, in attitudes of adoration.

A very fine example of Quentin Massys' style is seen in Number 13. The Virgin seated in the open air, holds the infant Jesus on her knee. The child embraces the mother with animation. The background, which is perfectly finished, is a rocky landscape with castle and city at the right, and minute figures walking in a public square.

Quentin Massys was the one man through which the transition from the earlier to the later Flemish style was accomplished. Perhaps in no other painter's work will such a change be noticed as in this early example of his work and "The Miser's" Number 14, which is in his later style. The one is so conventional in composition, subject and handling; the other such an actual picture of life without regard for tradition. This example of his work was secured by Mr. Scripps from the private collection of Sig. Casa Murata, director of the Pitti Palace Gallery, Florence.

Perhaps the most striking picture in the collection is the "Immaculate Conception," by Murillo, the great Spanish master (1613-1682). His most famous pictures are his representations of the Immaculate Conception, of which there are known to be twenty-five in existence. The doctrine of the immaculate conception, or sinless nature of the Virgin Mary, has been one over which many controversies have taken place,

The James E. Scripps Collection of Old Masters—Continued

causing from the fifth to the thirteenth centuries much serious dissention in the church, and much horrible persecution. Even the artist in painting the subject was compelled to follow rules laid down by the inspector of the inquisition.

This picture was taken from the Royal Palace at Madrid during the Peninsular War by the French General Desolle, whose daughter sold it to a well known London dealer. He in turn sold it to the King of Holland for \$20,000. At the sale of the king's pictures in 1850, it was bid in at \$15,480. In 1857 it was sold to W. H. Aspinwall, of New York, at whose death it was sent to London, where it was purchased for the Detroit Museum. It is number 84 in Charles B. Curtis' catalog of the works of Murillo.

Museum Notes.

During the three months just past the attendance at the museum as shown by the turnstyle was 20,558.

The board of trustees voted to close the museum for cleaning and oiling the floors. From July 11 to August 1 the public will not be admitted.

A copy or copies of the BULLETIN may be had by applying at the Library, and they will be sent regularly as published to any address sent to the Editor.

Application to copy or photograph any object in the Museum must be made and filed in the Director's office. Easels and space to keep materials will be provided for students.

The museum Library is extensive and is accessible to students wishing assistance in any art line. No books are lent from the Museum but reading may be done in the building.

Schools, study clubs and societies of a literary character may secure objects for illustration from any department by applying at the Director's office, providing they can be transported without fear of breakage.

The new year's work begun July 1st. The annual report of the past two years' work, together with a history of the municipal and legislative acts relating to the museum since its establishment, are now in the hands of the printer and will be ready for distribution very shortly. A report will be sent to any one desiring same upon receipt of a postal card addressed to the editor.

The transient exhibitions closed with the Remington collection of original illustrations. The walls of the main gallery are now hung with the permanent pictures of the museum which are taken down and stored during the winter months to give room for the transients. During the past year 617 pictures were exhibited in the museum besides those which are permanently a part of the collections.

Mr. B. J. Blommers, the painter of Holland child life, together with Mrs. and Miss Blommers, visited the museum in June. Mr. Chas. P. Gruppe, also from The Hague, Holland, and a painter of charming Dutch landscapes, inspected the collections here. Mr. Gruppe has a very fine example of his work hanging in the main gallery, an autumn pastoral scene in the woods of The Hague. Mr. William Howe, the American animal painter, was a guest at the museum long enough to see its galleries and to concede one of his finest works, "A Norman bull," to the museum collections. This picture is now hanging in the Michigan State Building at the St. Louis Exposition, but will be packed and sent here after the close of the fair.

Two city representatives were appointed by the mayor of Detroit to fill the vacancies of the retiring appointees—Joseph L. Hudson to succeed Geo. H. Barbour for a term of four years, John McKibben to succeed himself for a term of three years.

At the annual meeting of the incorporators the assistant directorship of the museum was officially conferred upon Clyde H. Burroughs, who has been in its employ since November, 1901. He has for some time nominally fulfilled that position without the title having been officially given.

At the annual meeting of the incorporators of the museum, held July 7, Mr. George H. Barbour was unanimously elected an incorporator to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Mr. George F. Moore. The following new trustees were also elected: George H. Barbour, Bryant Walker, Frederick Stearns and Percy Ives.

A regular meeting of the trustees was held immediately following the incorporators' meeting, at which the annual election of officers took place. The following were elected: President, Thomas Pitts; Vice-President, Frederick Stearns; Secretary and Treasurer, Fred. E. Farnsworth; Executive Committee, Thomas Pitts, John McKibben, and John M. Donaldson.

Among the contributions to the museum collections during the quarter just finished the following important ones are worthy of note: Mr. William Stevenson, of Flint, Mich., lent his large collection of coins. A new case has been provided for them and they are temporarily on view at the back end of the court. His collection is extensive, covering antique Greek and Roman as well as modern issues. Mr. E. C. Walker lent three important oil paintings recently purchased in New York—a Dutch scene by Hans Hermann, a good example of Ad. Schuyler's Arab horses, and a portrait by the German artist Lenbach, of his daughter. These are hung in the McMillan room. Grinell Bros. gave the use of an upright piano on the occasion of the 250th Sunday talk.

The Year's Work.

Never before in its history have the museum collections been so freely used by all classes of our citizens as during the past year. Hardly a week has gone by that there has not been visits by large classes from the schools for the special study of some department. Many clubs have also made the paintings a special study. On a number of these occasions short talks have been given either by the director or assistant director.

Hundreds of objects have been loaned to the different public schools and clubs for purposes of illustration. The large collection of photographs have been in almost constant demand.

The collection of plaster casts have been a source of considerable interest and reference.

There has been an increased interest and attendance at all the lectures given in the evenings, while the Sunday talks have been never so popular, the attendance often being beyond the capacity of the room.

There has been a large number of exhibitions held during the year, averaging in merit above those of former years. That this opportunity for the people to see the work of the artists of today is appreciated is shown by the large number of visitors.

The placing of the museum by legislative acts on a basis of other city institutions is already being felt and its influence will steadily increase, for while it has been a semi-public institution for some time, the fact that it belongs to the people has now been emphasized and donors to its collections realize that their gifts will always be available to the public.

All in all the year has been one of unusual progress and activity, which speaks well for its future.