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MATER AMABILIS CORREGGIO PARMA. 1494-1534

CORREGGIO'S MATER AMABILIS

The Mater Amabilis, as the recently acquired painting by Correggio has been called in an Italian engraving of the early eighteenth century, is a fascinating work of the North Italian High Renaissance. combining as it does an unusual intellectuality in the complicated twisted composition of Mother and Child, with the naïve charm and graciousness of an artist filled with optimistic sentiment. The corkscrew like position of Mother and Child, who are placed in such a manner that the limbs of the Madonna are turned to one side, while her head and the upper part of her body are turned to the other, and the counterposition of the Child's limbs and body are evident, yet we become hardly conscious of the intricate construction of the two figures. which reminds us of the composition by Leonardo in the Louvre, his St. Anne with the Madonna and Child, and feel only the pleasing rhythm of line of the two small figures who embrace each other with such tenderness in a most exquisitely executed landscape surrounding. Likewise admirable is the combination of plasticity and beautiful colouristic effects in this paint-While most compositions of this period lead the eye of the spectator from one corner with a strong repoussoir in the left or right foreground to the distance, the artist here dared to place the group in the middle in front of a cluster of trees. and develops the depth from the center to the left and right distance. The colorsthe deep red and blue of the gowns, the blue distance behind brown-green hillsare of unusual brilliancy, yet they are combined with the finest chiaroscuro in the modelling of the figures, especially in the heads and hands.

The painting has an exceptionally long history, since the time when it belonged to the painter Brescianino, who was a late follower of Correggio, from whom it came into the collection of Count Bertioli of Parma. It was engraved by M. de Magis-

tris of Piacenza in the year 1738. It is reported that the artists of Parma regarded the painting at the time the engraving was made as an original work by Correggio of his early period. In 1830 we encounter the painting in the Borromeo Monti Gallery and later in the Fabrizi collection in Rome. It was one of the last acquisitions of Count Crespi, in the catalogue of whose collection it is described by M. Nicollein 1914. Afterwards it passed into the Chiesa collection in Milan from where it was sold at auction at the American Art Galleries in New York in 1926.

The painting is mentioned as being lost in the book on Correggio by J. Meyer, the first scientific publication on the master in recent times (Leipsig, 1870; English edition, 1890). It was rediscovered by Gustavo Frizzoni, whom Dr. Gronau calls the best connoisseur of Correggio of his time. It is published by Gronau in Klassiker der Kunst where it is also reproduced.

In writing about the painting in the introduction of the Crespi catalogue, M. Nicolle says:

"We have here another precious example of the master of Parma, that small Madonna which has been engraved in former days under the rather sentimental and somewhat naïve title, Mater Amabilis, and which was long lost and has been rediscovered only recently. It is one of those exquisite little paintings like the Zingarella or the Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine in the Museum at Naples, in which Correggio knows how to combine in a beautiful framing tenderness of expression with a soft and at the same time brilliant color scheme."

Gronau, and following him Nicolle, places the picture about 1518, while Frizzoni dates it about 1520 on account of the relationship to the Madonna Albinea. In the Thieme-Becker Lexicon of Artists, however, Gronau changed his opinion and believed it to be the work of Correggio's son, Pomponio Allegri, an attribution which becomes a surety with Adolfo Venturi who reproduces it under this name in his Storia dell'arte Italiana, Vol. X.

He ascribes to Antonio Allegri also the Madonna Casalmaggiore in the Museum at Frankfort, a painting which, after long fighting for and against it, had at last been generally accepted by the best scholars. including Berenson, as an original by Correggio. I believe that anyone who has seen the originals in recent times will agree that our painting is by the same hand and not by the inferior one of Correggio's son. whose only two known works show a far less complicated and much more unbalanced composition than those of his father. I do not think it impossible that our painting also, with its old history, will be restored to Correggio after it has been seen again by the two excellent scholars in its cleaned condition. It has happened over and over again that art critics have been influenced-and quite naturally-by the condition of a painting, and certainly those who saw our painting at the Chiesa sale before it was cleaned by the late Hammond Smith-one of the last pieces of work this excellent restorer did-will not be surprised that doubts could arise regarding its authenticity. The colors came out so luminous, the clair obscure so fine, the modelling of the faces so exquisite that it seems scarcely possible that it is not by the same master's hand as the painting which hangs next to it, the Marriage of St. Catherine from the Castiglione collection, which was acquired by the Museum a short time ago as a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb.

W. R. VALENTINER.

A PAINTING BY MATHIEU LENAIN

The revival of interest in artists of the past is usually related in some way to the trend of modern art. Frans Hals was rediscovered with the arrival of the impressionist style; Greco became famous when this style was replaced by what has been termed expressionistic art, and the interest in French classicistic art from Poussin to David was revived when modern artists developed a new style of simplified design and architectonic compositions similar in its tendency to this classic style of the seventeenth century and the period of about 1800. In the long neglected study of seventeenth century artists, Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain were not the only ones to come again to the foreground; other masters of the classicistic trend aroused new interest, like Eustache Le Sueur, the sensitive master of delicate and decorative compositions, Philippe de Champaigne, the excellent portrait painter, and Gaspar Dughet called Poussin, with his Italianized landscapes, of which the museum acquired one last year. Together with these artists who worked for the most part in Paris, others of a more realistic style and living in the provinces were rediscovered, among them an artist who worked at Lunéville by the name of Georges du Mesnil de la Tour, one of whose works was sold at a New York sale. being attributed at one time to Vermeer (compare Dr. Voss's article on the artist in Art in America, December, 1928), and three painters who came from Laon, the brothers LeNain. In the work of these interesting painters, also, the connection with the art of more recent times had become obvious as early as 1910 when a special exhibition of their works was arranged by the Burlington Fine Arts Club of London. Indeed, we need only to study some of their most characteristic compositions representing peasants indoors or in the open to recognize in subject as well as manner, works anticipating the style of Millet and Courbet. While in the beginning of our century the connection with the realistic art of the nineteenth century -then very much in vogue-seemed to be of special interest, we now find even more fascinating the seemingly unemotional and curiously statuesque attitude of the figures



A PEASANT FAMILY MATHIEU LE NAIN FRENCH. 1607-1677

in the compositions of the works of the LeNains, characteristics which connect these artists with the classicistic works of their own country in early and in more recent times and which differentiates them clearly from contemporary Dutch paintings. The first impression which we receive in front of the paintings by the LeNains is the curious manner in which a number of figures are placed stiffly, either standing or sitting next to each other, in a room or in the open, with their heads usually at the same level. That a conscious scheme of composition lies behind such grouping cannot be doubted when we note how the arms and legs of the figures are placed in such a way that they help to strengthen the compositions through horizontal and vertical lines. Somewhat different, but not less consciously constructed, is the composition of our newly acquired painting, A Peasant Family.

Here the figures are placed in such a way that their outlines almost form a circle, of which the gray jug constitutes the center. The arms of the figures point to this center like the spokes of a wheel.

The three brothers LeNain worked in such harmony with each other that they were not interested in having the public know their individual characteristics. They signed their paintings only with the family name, leaving out their first names, which we know from documents were Antoine (born about 1588), Louis (born about 1593), and Mathieu (born in 1607). In the thirties of the seventeenth century they went from Laon to Paris where they were among the first to join the newly founded Academy in 1648. Two of the brothers, Antoine and Louis, died soon afterward in this same year, two days apart; since Mathieu lived twenty years

longer (he died in 1677), it has been possible to separate his works clearly from that of the other two brothers, since several works signed LeNain have dates later than 1648. Our painting is obviously by this artist and is closely related to the Trictrac Players in the Louvre and the Jardinier, formerly in the possession of Louis Sambon (reproduced in Gazette des Beaux Arts, 1923, p. 37). Like most of the compositions of the LeNains, which represent beggars, peasants, soldiers and family portrait groups, the subject of our painting also is taken from the life of the peasants and represents an elderly man with his two children, a girl and a boy, partaking of a meal from the top of a barrel. It shows the strong contrast of light and shade characteristic of the compositions of these artists as of most of the Baroque Age, and has the fine cool color scheme with gray, pale blue and pinkishbrown tones typical not only of our artist but of several of the best French masters of the seventeenth and eighteenth century until the time of Chardin, with whose art not only the color harmony but also the still life painting in the center of the composition are related.

By means of this picture, which is a welcome addition to our series of French seventeenth century paintings, including works by Poussin, Gaspard Dughet and Claude Lorrain, I believe that another charming painting in the collection of the late Sir William van Horne of Montreal,



YOUNG GIRL
MATHIEU LE NAIN
IN THE COLLECTION OF
SIR WILLIAM VAN HORNE

which has always been a puzzle to art students, may be attributed with certainty to Mathieu LeNain.² The painting, formerly attributed to Vermeer, as has been more than one French painting of the seventeenth century, has the characteristic cool gray tone of Matthieu LeNain's work and the same curious distorted perspective of the objects near the spectator and shows a girl of very much the same type and with the same costume and hair dress as the girl in the lower left corner of our picture.

-W. B. VALENTINER.

¹ Compare the excellent article on the brothers Le Nain by Paul Jarnot in Gazetle Des Beaux Arts, 1922 and 1923.

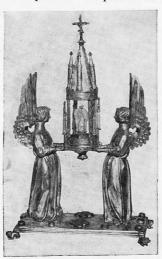
² There are several more unpublished paintings by Mathieu LeNain in American private collections: a portrait of a nun, dated 1671, somewhat similar in type to the one in the Museum in Avignon, in the possession of Mr. F. Tofte of New York, and at least two of the fine series of four paintings belonging to Mr. S. P. Halle of Cleveland.

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A FRENCH GOTHIC RELIQUARY

There is no other period in the history of art in which architecture, and more precisely ecclesiastical architecture, dominates the other arts as completely as it does in the Gothic. Among the different branches of art it is perhaps industrial art which reflects this dependence upon architecture in the most obvious way. In fact, nearly all of the formal elements applied in Gothic decorative art are borrowed from the mighty sister art. Some of these forms, it is true, intended originally to be built or carved in stone, such as pointed

which our recently acquired reliquary belongs, underwent considerable changes with the rise of the Gothic style. The elaborate plastic motives taken over from the contemporary architecture as well as the increasing employment of figure sculpture for decorative purposes naturally made the use of enamel work and precious stones, with which the plane forms of Romanesque objects had been adorned, less necessary. Thus the technique of "champlevé" enamel which had reached its peak in the twelfth and thirteenth cen-



GOTHIC RELIQUARY FRENCH. ABOUT 1440

arches, flying buttresses and pinnacles, often lost somewhat of their purposeful significance and inner necessity when used purely as means of decoration in gold-smiths' work or furniture. The architectural sense of the Gothic, however, was so strong and clear that by selection of these forms and by their organization into a whole it nearly always, even in the minutest creations, succeeded in finding an adequate and artistically convincing expression.

The goldsmiths' art, in particular, to

turies, disappeared gradually in the following centuries. The entire surface of plastic forms now began to be covered with coats of enamel in different colors, attaining thus the effect of polychromy. The goldsmiths also changed the technique of enamel in so far as they employed silver or gold almost entirely as ground instead of copper, and applied the enamel proper in such thin and transparent layers that, with the help of the bright metal underneath, they produced colors of the most brilliant luminosity.

Our reliquary, with two angels holding the little turret which contains the relic, is a good example of the Gothic type of such receptacles, which had superseded the simple casket form of the Romanesque period. We find a similar composition as early as the middle of the thirteenth century in the center part of the bronze triptych from the Abbave de Floreffe (in the Louvre) where two angels are holding a cross which once probably also contained a relic. Other well-known examples from the fourteenth century are the reliquary of S. Carlo in Bologna and the reliquary of St. Eligius in Mons, both of a composition very much like ours.

The main parts of our piece, which is 16 inches high, is done in copper in very delicate repoussé work, with its original gilding well preserved. The base, sup-

ported by small lions, cast in bronze, is adorned with semi-precious stone cabochons and two quatrefoils with a coat of arms in champlevé enamel. The turret, containing the relic in a glass cylinder, is done partly in repoussé, partly in cast work. As to the date, the reliquary, although stylistically closely connected with, is considerably later than the above mentioned pieces in Bologna and Mons. The figures of the angels, -in the folds of their garments especially, -as well as some of the architectural and ornamental details of the turret, such as the cornerwise-set-up buttresses and the rosette at its base, and finally the small crucifix at the turret's tip, with the fluttering loin cloth of Christ, reveal clearly that the reliquary belongs to the last phase of the Gothic style. It might -WALTER HEIL be dated around 1440.

A LANDSCAPE BY OLD CROME

No English artist's fame has so grown with the passing of the years as has that of John Crome, or Old Crome as he is more usually called to distinguish him from his painter son John Bernay. At first passed by as merely a realistic painter of trees, his reputation has increased steadily and consistently, until to-day he is bracketed with Constable and Turner as one of the originators of modern English and consequently of modern European landscape painting, for the debt landscape art owes to these English artists' return to nature at the beginning of the nineteenth century is a generally acknowledged one.

Only to recall to memory the landscapes of Old Crome which one has seen, such as his Mousehold Heath, The Poringland Oak, or On the Skirts of the Forest, is to experience a feeling of quiet peacefulness and serenity, for in keeping with the sunny optimism and cheerfulness of his own temperament, his canvases portray only the stillness and quiet beauty or nature's varied phases. One of the first of European artists to paint directly from nature,

he gives us accurate transcriptions of the countryside of Norfolk, the English Holland where he was born and whose forests, heaths and coast lines he so loved to paint. A master of aerial recession and fusion, ease and economy of handling characterize all his work. In the simple coast scene depicted in our painting-a coast line found only in England-with the two peasants in the right foreground plowing their land to the very edge of the sea, we are impressed with the extreme simplicity of treatment of the earth formations and the breadth of handling which gives to the small canvas (11½ inches by 21 inches) the effect of a much more monumental composition. An effective color harmony is achieved by subtle gradations of soft tones of greens, browns, grays and pale blues, with tiny accents of red in the horses' harness and the hands and faces of the peasants. The painting was formerly in the Maitland Fuller collection and has a well-authenticated history.

Frank to acknowledge his debt to Hobbema, whose name was the last on his



COAST SCENE JOHN CROME ENGLISH. 1769-1821

lips when he died, he painted in a much heavier impasto than that artist and his landscapes are of course much more modern, their simplified composition and handling bringing us much nearer to Cézanne and our own day.

With his friend Robert Ladbrooke, Crome founded in 1803 the Norwich Society of Artists which, with the single exception of the Liverpool Society, was the first provincial exhibition society in England. He had many pupils and followers and it has at times been rather difficult to differentiate between his work and that of the best of his followers, particularly his son John Bernay, Stark, Vincent, and Cotman, but whereas all of these men used positive notes of blue in

their work, as representing distant atmosphere. Crome's color is more subtle and silvery. Other lesser men, notably Hodgson, J. S. Ladbrooke, S. D. Colkett, Stannard, R. Paul, Short, and Wigger, are mentioned by Collins Baker in his excellent work on Crome¹ as among the artists who worked in the period immediately following his death and who either intentionally or unintentionally produced pictures which have been passed off as his. It has been largely for this reason that his reputation suffered for so many years and it is to a great measure due to Mr. Baker's efforts to rid him of this incubus of lesser works that his name now shines with something of its deserved lustre.

-Josephine Walther.

A FRAGMENT OF A TURKISH RUG OF COURT MANUFACTURE

Turkish carpets, to use a general classification to distinguish them from Persian rugs, were, for the most part, not made in European Turkey but throughout Asia Minor, with one of the principal seats of the industry in Anatolia, from whose districts come such carpets as the Ushak, Ghiordes and Koula, to list only some of the more important examples. "Turkey" carpets, as they were called by the Elizabethans and Jacobeans, were first imported into Europe as early as the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and were very quickly recorded both by Flemish and Italian, particularly Venetian, painters. Carpaccio and several other Venetian painters of the fifteenth century, show us carpets which they introduce in their paintings because of their decorative beauty in pattern and color, representing them as hanging over windows and balconies. The Van Evcks and their followers use them in their paintings, where they appear chiefly on the floor. In the portraits of the sixteenth century, Italian and Northern painters show them used as table coverings; Holbein, for instance, used several times an arabesque type in his canvases, and in modern time the type became known by the name of the painter. Thus these Mohammedan carpets had an early and wide appreciation.

But the most important Turkish carpets, or to be nearer the mark, the more handsome type, is that of court manufacture done at Constantinople in the sixteenth century. Such a type has been recently acquired by the Asiatic Department; it has the appearance of having been made at the Constantinople court factory, and is a fragment of a large carpet to which an edging has been sewn, making it into a runner. In pattern, motifs, color and technique, it is very similar to a Turkish carpet of court manufacture now



FRAGMENT OF A TURKISH RUG CONSTANTINOPLE, XVI CENTURY

in the Austrian Museum for Art and Industry.¹ Such carpets were first made by Egyptians in Constantinople at the order of the Turkish Court; they thus show traces of their origin and Persian influences which the Turks quickly borrowed and

adapted to their own uses in the arrangement of pattern. These court rugs are marked on the whole by a sophistication of design not found in those from Anatolia.

The distinguishing characteristics of a Turkish carpet of court manufacture (besides its colors, usually a dark red ground, with green, dark blue, a brownish tone and white for its floral motifs), is the symmetrical arrangement of its pattern in an "all over" design, disposing in rows, leading away from a center circular medallion of lobed outline. The division of the carpet into medallion and corner ornaments is borrowed from the Persian. The filling of the field with an even, continuous and symmetrically arranged pattern, is borrowed from Egyptian sources. flowers are typical mainly of Turkish motifs: roses, tulips, hyacinths and lancet leaves.

The above characteristics are true of our fragment, except that the field is incomplete and does not show corner ornaments. It is of interest to note that the number of knots to the square inch is slightly less and the technique similar to the carpet in the Austrian Museum. That carpet has 200 knots to the square inch while ours has 192 with 16 knots to the inch in width and 12 in length, the knots woven on two warp threads. The warp of our fragment is silk dyed yellow-a characteristic of Turkish Court carpets, which used silk in place of the more usual woollen warp. A further characteristic of these carpets noticeable in our example, is the use of a cotton pile wherever white is called for, in the outlining of areas. The pile is short, rather flat and inclining decidedly to the left.

In the center of the medallion there is a Chinese motif which is taken from the Persian rugs of the sixteenth century. These motifs are "cloud-bands" which the Persians borrowed from the Chinese whose culture greatly influenced the art of the Safavid dynasty. The flowers grouped around the "cloud-bands" are roses, carnations and gentians, flowers which were native to Turkish art.

The pattern of the inner field is composed of groups of floral and foliate motifs symmetrically arranged in rows with a separate diversion at the corners. chief motif consists of an inter-connected floral composition, the flowers grouped radially about a central rosette, to which a straight shoot leads, rising from the edges out of palmettes. This floral composition is framed by long serrated lancet leaves, symmetrically disposed on either side of the floral units. The two smaller leaves issuing from rosettes on one side, from the lobes of the medallion on the other, are similarly grouped about large rosettes arranged in a vertical shoot passing through the center of the carpet. The smaller leaves are tangent to the larger ones at the highest point of the curve.

A particularly Turkish treatment of a naturalistic motif is adapting the stems inclosing the rosettes to the form of an eight-pointed star. Eight small palmettes branching away from one another are attached to the star. Another Turkish device is the radial arrangement of flowers where a rosette as in this instance, is encircled by eight blossoms; four of them dominant with shades of blue outlined by white, four not dominant with shades of green, spotted by white.

The pattern is arranged in rows across the fragment, there being two complete units, one on either side of the medallions, a scheme typical of the genius of Islamic ornament, which aims to lead the eye to infinity. Emphasis is given to both horizontal and vertical directions in this plan, set off by circular medallions in the center.

ALVAN C. EASTMAN

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Sarre, Old Oriental Carpets.

W. R. Valentiner, Early Oriental Carpets, Metropolitan Museum. Kendrick, Guide to the Carpets in the Victoria and Albert Museum

MICHIGAN ARTISTS EXHIBITION

The Michigan Artists Exhibition, numbering two hundred and twenty pictures and twenty sculptures, opened with a reception given by the Founders Society on the evening of January 5th. The jury, consisting of Mrs. Esther McGraw, Mrs. Hanny VanderVelde, Victor V. Slocum, Mathias J. Alten, George W. Styles, Philip Sawyer, Fred H. Aldrich, Jr., and Myron B. Chapin, reviewed more than six hundred entries from all over the state They awarded the prizes as follows: The Scarab Club Gold Medal for the most important contribution to the success of the exhibition to Mrs. Iris Andrews Miller, for her painting Mary; the Mrs. Herbert C. Munro Prize of \$100 for the best figure composition in the exhibition to Lester Mange of Lowell, Michigan, for his painting Promenade, the Frederick Zeigen \$50 Gold Prize to an artist who has never before received an award in the Michigan Artists show to Helen Steketee for her still life Flowers: the Boulevardier Prize of \$50 for the best picture exemplifying modern tendencies in art to Sophie Gurvitch for her painting Morning; the George Murphy Prize of \$50 for a noteworthy contemporary painting in oil to Hunter Gill Griffith for his painting Spanish Woman; the etching prize of \$100

contributed by Frank J. Blair and Hal H. Smith to Charles A. Barker for his etching Bones and I; the Clara Dyar \$50 Prize for the best water color of a Detroit subject to Albert Hemeryck for his painting Owen Park, Detroit; the Mrs. August Helbig Prize of \$25 for the best sculpture to Horace Colby for his Portrait Colby. The Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society Prize of \$200 for the best work by a resident Michigan Artist regardless of subject or medium was awarded by the Board of Trustees to Reginald Bennett for his painting, Bull Fight.

The Mrs. Neville Walker Memorial Prize of \$75 used for the purchase of a water color for the Art Institute collection was also awarded by a special jury, consisting of a representative of the donor, a member of the Scarab Club and a member of the Detroit Society of Women Painters to John L. Pappas for his Elmwood Street in Winter.

The jury also gave three Honorable Mentions, two of them for sculptures to Winifred M. Grindley for her *Portrait of Betty* and Samuel Cashwan for his *Salome;* the third Honorable Mention went to Foster Jewell of Grand Rapids for his painting *The Pessimist.*

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EVENTS FOR JANUARY

TUESDAY EVENING LECTURES

Auditorium-8:00 P. M.

Preceded by Musical Program

January 8. The World View of The Chinese as Reflected in Their Art. Arthur W. Hummel, Chief of the Chinese Section, Library of Congress.

January 15. The Imperial Palace, Focus of Chinese Art. Benjamin March, Curator

of Asiatic Art, Detroit Institute of Arts.

January 22. What's in a Chinese Painting? Benjamin March.

January 29. Borobudur, The Temple of the Thousand Buddhas. Ernst Diez, Professor of Fine Arts at Bryn Mawr College.

WEDNESDAY MORNING LECTURES

Lecture Hall-11:00 A. M.

January 9. The Dutch Little Masters of the Seventeenth Century. Helen W. Harvey, Museum Instructor.

January 16. A French Interior of the Eighteenth Century. Josephine Walther, Associate Curator of American Art.

January 23. French Painters of the Eighteenth Century. Helen W. Harvey.

January 30. The First Great Print Maker: Mantegna. Isabel Weadock, Curator of Prints.

SATURDAY MORNING PHOTOPLAYS AND STORIES Auditorium—10:45 A. M.

January 5. The Eve of the Revolution.

January 12. The Declaration of Independence.

January 19. Vincennes.

January 26. Daniel Boone.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON GALLERY TOURS

With a museum instructor at 3:30—Groups will start from the information desk.

TUESDAY AFTERNOON TOURS OF SPECIAL GALLERIES at 2:30

January 8. Modern Galleries (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Second Floor).

January 15. Far Eastern Art (Galleries 22, 23, 24 and 25).

January 22. Near Eastern Art, Indian and Persian (Galleries 20 and 21).

January 29. Print Gallery—Isabel Weadock, Curator of Prints.

SUNDAY AFTERNOONS

at 2:15

Musical Programs

January 6. Organ recital by Earl V. Moore, Ann Arbor Michigan.

January 13. Program arranged by the Chamber Music Society of Detroit.

January 20. Concert by Border Scottish Choir, Worlow Bull, Director.

January 27. Organ recital by Dr. Frederic Tristam Egener, St. Catherines, Qntario.

EXHIBITIONS

January 4-31—Annual Exhibition for Michigan Artists.