

55.

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

Vol. XIV.

MARCH, 1935

No. 6



ST. JOHN IN THE WILDERNESS
ANTONIO ALLEGRI, CALLED CORREGGIO
PARMA. C. 1494-1534
GIFT OF A. W. M. MENSING, AMSTERDAM

ST. JOHN IN THE WILDERNESS BY CORREGGIO

The fame of Correggio, until the beginning of the nineteenth century equal to that of Michelangelo and Titian, suffered a relapse after the spread of realism and impressionism about the middle of that century. Correggio's incomparable chiaroscuro, still taken as a model by Prudhon, his delicate lyrical qualities, still a source of inspiration for the Romantic School, were opposed to the ideals of the generations whose banner was unfurled by Manet and the painters of *plein air*. The ceiling paintings in Parma, where a profusion of artfully fore-shortened figures are dissolved in light and ether, seemed to them the beginning of a movement which led to empty virtuosity in illusionary wall painting, and the rapture expressed in our master's figures the starting point for the sentimentality of Guido Reni.

A change of opinion began to make itself felt about the time of the fourth centenary of the birth of Correggio (1894), when Berenson¹ published two articles on the artist in which he stressed the derivation of his art. Instead of lavishing upon him the extravagant encomiums of earlier times, he assigns to the master his true place in the complete picture of the High Renaissance. He characterizes him as a "sensitive and lyrical nature," related in spirit to Shelley and Keats, whose religious compositions do not, like those of earlier masters, inspire us with contrition and awe, but put us in sympathy with the marvelous poetry and the deep humanity of the story of Christ.

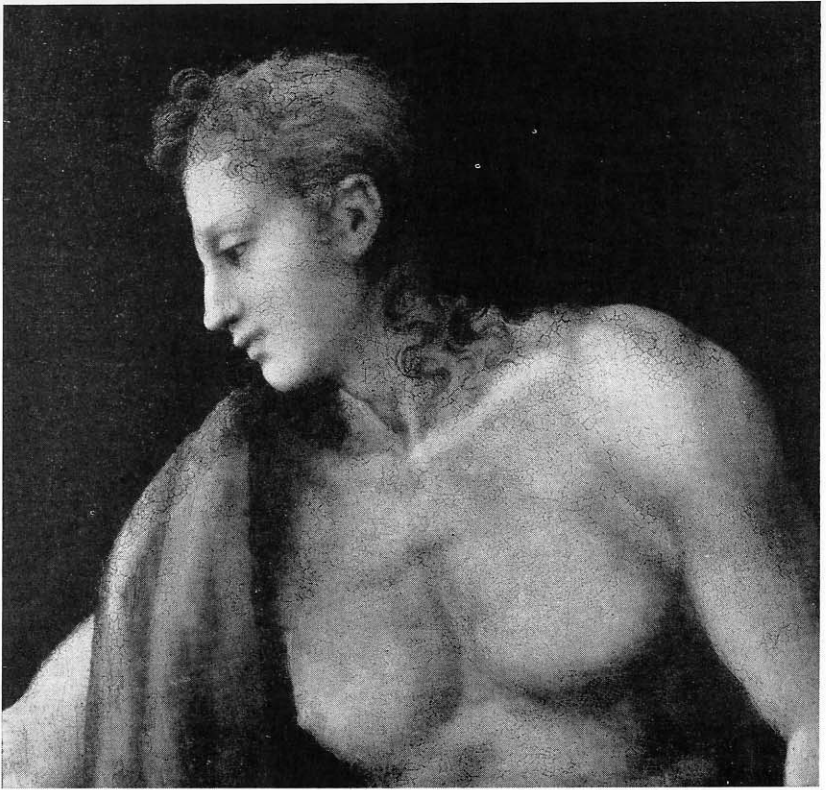
In the forty years which have passed since then, during which modern art has renounced the one-sided focussing of attention upon the outer form and has again interested itself in the psychic content, the understanding of Correggio has also grown, and the fourth centenary

of his death (1934) was celebrated with a comprehension of his art quite different from that of his birth. The Louvre had a commemorative exhibition, principally of his drawings, and his native city of Parma is arranging for an extensive exhibition of his paintings. The newly-awakened interest in his art is also shown by the rich art-historical literature of the past few years. After Gronau had first assembled his works in *Klassiker der Kunst* (1907), there have recently appeared two comprehensive biographies, the monumental work by A. Venturi (1926) and the Corrado Ricci book (1933), the latter mainly of value from the culture-historical standpoint.

Today, to be sure, we appreciate Correggio in another way than did the eighteenth century, which celebrated in him the dissolving of the severe style of the Early Renaissance into a decorative character, and was enthusiastic over his sweetness and grace. We have become more severe toward the sentimental effusiveness in Correggio's representations of the Passion or the stories of the martyrs, toward that complete abandonment to pain and devotion which is more difficult for the Northerner to comprehend than for the Southerner; but we admire greatly the enchanting youthful ardour which gave the serene ecstatic content to his Madonna pictures or to his religious and mythological scenes. We marvel at the magic of his delicate sensuousness, the charm of the play of light, the colors, dissolved and glowing in the semi-darkness, and feel ourselves drawn by the allure of his graceful childlike figures and the serenity of his landscape views.

In the dissolution of his forms in chiaroscuro, in his feeling for landscape, which is not frequent in Italian art of his time, he comes in touch with Leonar-

¹The Study and Criticism of Italian Art, first series, 1920.



do. As painter, he can even in some respects be regarded as the completer of the Leonardesque ideals: with his naive nature, less given to weighty thoughts than Leonardo, he more easily overcame, in the carrying out of his ideas, the difficulties which at times baffled the deep-thinking and eternally experimenting Leonardo. He is also connected with Leonardo in the high art of the light pen- or red-chalk sketch with which he occupied himself with special predilection and with like facility and grace of execution.

It would of course be wrong to compare the short existence of this master, who lived aside from the great stream of Italian art, with the life of such great exponents of the High Renaissance as

Leonardo, Michelangelo and Titian. Correggio, with his more limited powers, was wise enough to keep away from the great art centers of Florence, Rome and Venice, where the delicate flowering of his art would scarcely have been able to hold its own. It is this wisdom and modesty which he has to thank for the great perfection of an entirely self-contained life work, unfolded in the quiet of a provincial city, and whose influence, after his death, on account of this very concentration, was to be scarcely less than that of those great ones.

Correggio was already represented in our museum by two important works: *The Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine* and the small *Crespi Madonna*.¹ The first is a colorful work done about 1512,

¹Both listed in Berenson's *Italian Pictures of the Renaissance*, 1932, p. 153.

still exhibiting the deep shadows of the first Mantegnesque period of the artist and painted in warm colors, notably a cinnabar red and a deep green and orange. In the modest Madonna who kneels upon the ground, and in the St. Catherine, the artist's perception of charm and grace is already manifest. In the *Mater Amabilis*, also, done a few years later (about 1515), there still rule, as strong local colors, the intense cinnabar of the dress of the Madonna and a blue in the mantle which is continued in the delicate blue of the mountains in the landscape, while the shadows are less dark and the outlines softer and more flowing.

A third work, which the museum has now acquired, carries us to a still more advanced stage of the master—about 1518-20—when the local colors have almost disappeared, the shadows have become transparent, and the artist is most of all interested in depicting the light which dissolves form and colors and plays over the nude body. It is the composition of *St. John in the Wilderness*, formerly in the collection of the Duke of Oldenburg, which has come into the possession of the museum as the generous gift of A. W. M. Mensing of Amsterdam.

The picture was acquired in Naples in 1787 by the German painter Tischbein as a work of Raphael, and is described in the catalogue of the Oldenburg Gallery in 1881 as belonging to the school of Raphael. A. Venturi first recognized the close relation to Correggio and attributed it to him in the catalogue of the Crespi collection. He returned in greater detail to this attribution in his large Correggio work (1926, p. 562) and in the *Storia dell' arte italiana* (p. 524) in both of which it is reproduced. The attribution has not remained uncontested. Gronau (*Klassiker der Kunst*) doubted it without at that time having seen the original, as does likewise C. Ricci, who probably also did not know the original and who can besides scarcely be regard-

ed as an authority on painting. Both authors, however, regard the picture as important enough to be reproduced in their works. Recently L. Venturi has also pronounced himself in favor of the attribution, and after the picture has been freed of the old over-painting, I believe that, thanks to the possibility of the comparison with the *Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine*, it will soon receive the permanent place in the literature which A. Venturi has assigned to it.

The motif is characteristic of Correggio: a nude figure is placed directly against a half-dark wall formed by nature, and the light, which falls from the left above, plays over the body. The youthful saint sits upon a rock in the cool shadows of a deep ravine. He has covered the hard rock upon which he sits with the goat skin, the other end of which, turned over so that the under side is visible, falls over his left shoulder. The pose is such that—certainly with symbolical intention—the legs are placed in the form of a cross, the left leg being prolonged into the staff of the cross by the reed which he holds in his right hand, and the right leg forming part of the arm of the cross. The inscription band which he holds at the same time with the right hand, lies over the left thigh in such a way that the connection of the drawn-back leg with the line of the staff of the cross is especially striking. The pose of the body, which seems in no way unnatural, is one of contraposition in the sense of the High Renaissance: the right arm is held out in front, balancing the drawn-back left leg; the right leg is placed forward, the left hand lies sidewise at the back upon the rock. In this way the body is given at the same time a turning, by means of which the plastic effect of the upper body is brought into prominence, while the profile position of the head resumes that of the lower part of the body. This profile, with the delicate reddish tones about the mouth and nose, and the thin blond curls, is typically Cor-

reggiesque and affords a good comparison with the profile of St. Catherine in the painting of our museum. It shows at the same time that in the course of the artist's development the forms have become softer and more transparent. The same delicacy of modelling is shown in the body, in keeping with the spirited execution of the finely-observed landscape background with its layers of rocks, the foliage between, and the stunted oak tree which grows out of the rocks above.

Although the picture has suffered from over-painting in some places, especially about the body of the saint, there still remains enough of the original beauty of composition and pictorial execution to transmit to us the spirit of the great master in a subject especially suited to his nature.

Correggio is not well represented in

American collections. This is understandable. His span of life was short, and his work as panel painter, compared with his extensive frescoes in the Cathedral and the Camera di San Paolo in Parma, was not prolific. Owing to his early fame, his large panel pictures were soon absorbed by the large European galleries, the Louvre, the National Gallery, the Vienna Gallery, the Berlin Museum, and, notably, the Dresden Gallery, which possesses four of his finest altarpieces. America owns only two Madonnas—one in the museum of Philadelphia (John G. Johnson collection), the other in the Timken collection—and the important altarpiece with four saints from the Ashburton collection, now in the Metropolitan Museum. Our museum is therefore especially fortunate in possessing three paintings by his hand.

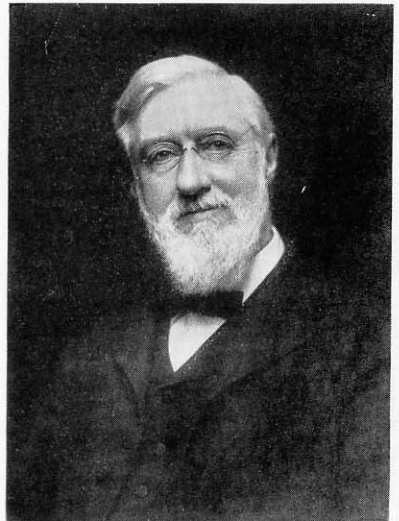
W. R. VALENTINER.

THE ONE-HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF JAMES EDMUND SCRIPPS

Every museum has at its inception a patron, who lays the foundation for its subsequent growth. In the case of the Detroit Institute of Arts, it was James Edmund Scripps, the one-hundredth anniversary of whose birth will be celebrated on March 17. His name, more than any other, has significance in the early history of our museum.

It can be left to others to relate his accomplishments in the business world of Detroit. It is my purpose here to point out only his achievement as founder of a collection which formed the nucleus for the present development of our European wing and of our print department.

If the collection which he assembled were exhibited as a group (as was the case in the old museum), it would be



seen at a glance how large its contribution is to these important parts of the museum. The personality of the collector would stand out more clearly than now, perhaps, when the name of the donor upon the labels recedes behind that of the artist.

Modern museums have long since abandoned the practice of keeping intact the collection of a single donor. The arrangement of a museum should follow educational principles, which require a systematic grouping of the entire material, either according to period or technique, but in any case from a chronological standpoint. It is quite different from the arrangement of a private collection, which is built up according to the taste of a single individual and should be arranged to suit that taste. Museums have first of all a public function to perform. It is well known how some of the older museums, rich in the endowments of unbroken private collections, have had trouble in emancipating themselves from the natural but mistaken wishes of the donor. The Metropolitan Museum, for instance, has only now, after years of negotiations, been able to break up these collections into their proper departments.

In our case there was only this one important collection of paintings which had been presented to the museum. Thanks to the good judgment of the donor, it has been possible to arrange the works into the different schools to which they belonged. This modesty, which was in keeping with Mr. Scripps's unassuming character, has been rewarded. If we wander through the different rooms of the European department, we will see that in almost every one a work of the Scripps collection hangs in a prominent place and in some instances dominates the main wall. One has the opportunity to compare the paintings chosen by a single individual fifty years ago, according to his own taste, with those which since then have been assembled by the work of many in the museum.

He will see that these works of the Scripps collection not only hold their own excellently, but in many cases take first place.

If we begin with the early Flemish gallery, the center of the main wall is occupied by the colorful and lyrically conceived *Last Judgment* by Jan Provost, who has only in the last few decades been recognized as one of the most talented masters of the Bruges school. Equally important is the *Madonna and Child* by Quentin Matsys, the great Antwerp artist, a work whose authenticity had for some time been doubted, but which has again been restored to its rightful place. In the room of Flemish art of the seventeenth century is the large painting of Rubens, *Abigail Meeting David with Presents*, which requires an entire wall. Although large paintings of this kind from the later period of the artist are seldom executed by Rubens alone, his share in this work is in many parts so evident that its laying-out and a final going over can be attributed to him with certainty. In the large early work of Van Dyck the motif is also particularly attractive, for it represents a young married couple who were friends of Van Dyck, the artist Jan Wildens and his wife. It adorns the museum's large reception hall, together with *The Death of Lucretia*, the large workshop picture by Rembrandt, the execution of which can be traced largely to Jan Victors.

It was the Dutch painters of the seventeenth century in whom Mr. Scripps was most interested. In the large corner room devoted to the Dutchmen and the two small rooms over the early Flemish gallery, pictures from the Scripps collection take up a large part of the wall space. To be sure, the masters represented here are not Rembrandt, Frans Hals, and Vermeer, who were sought by the generation of great American collectors who followed Mr. Scripps; and of masters like Hobbema and Pieter de Hooch the selection does

not include works of their greatest periods (the Hobbema is an early, the Pieter de Hooch a late work.) But Mr. Scripps had full understanding for those masters who represent an excellent cross-section of the Dutch paintings of interiors and landscapes, and which are to be found in so many large European galleries, though scarcely at all in American museums. And still one may hope that the appreciation of these "little masters," who suit so well the spirit of America's colonial architecture, will gradually gain prevalence. At any rate we are fortunate to be among the few public galleries in this country to possess such landscapes as those by Aelbert Cuyp, Salomon Ruisdael, Aert van der Neer, Simon de Vlieger, Jan Both, E. Murant, G. Berckheyde, Ph. Wouwermans, A. Verboom, and Jan Wynants, or interiors by Jan Steen, Brekelenkamp, Gerrit Lundens, E. de Witte, and H. van Vliet.

It has in the meantime been possible to fill some gaps in the collection of Dutch masters by the purchase of works by Rembrandt, Frans Hals, Jacob Ruysdael, Terborch, W. Kalf, and others, but in the midst of these paintings those given by James E. Scripps hold an honoured place.

If we turn to the Spanish school, the center of the end wall is occupied by Murillo's *Immaculate Conception*, which shows the master in a popular phase of his art, but whose delicate execution can also give pleasure to the connoisseur.

Only in the gallery of the Italian High Renaissance is the Scripps collection not well represented, for the two works formerly attributed to Titian are not by his hand. In this room, however, an important donation of the collector's daughter reminds us of his name, the beautiful *Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine* by Correggio, which was given by Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb in memory of

her father. On the other hand, we meet in the Early Renaissance room and in the Italian Gothic room two important paintings of the Scripps collection: the fascinating Madonna by Cima de Conegliano, one of the most important contemporaries of Giovanni Bellini, and the altarpiece by Allegretto Nuzi, which belongs among the finest works of this lyrical and decoratively-gifted Umbrian master.

It is not surprising that we come upon a series of interesting Italian works of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the collection of Mr. Scripps, for the taste of his time was inclined toward masters like Guido Reni and Sassoferrato. All the more is it to be wondered at that this collector had an eye for the earlier masters as well.

The collection of European prints given after Mr. Scripps's death by his wife corresponds in range to the collection of paintings, and illustrates the different periods and countries from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Among the nearly 1,200 prints, many of them are of excellent quality, like those by Dürer and the French seventeenth century masters.

Since the gift of the Scripps collection of paintings (1889), our possession of the older masters has considerably multiplied and the collection is now housed in a building such as could not have been anticipated when the first public collection in Detroit was created. It is certain, however, that this development would not have been possible if so valuable a beginning had not been made, which demanded from those responsible for the donated property an immediate continuation. Thus it is not by chance that our collection of the older European paintings, to which Mr. Scripps was especially devoted, has come to be the most important part of our museum.

EROS TRIUMPHANT



EROS TRIUMPHANT

FRENCH (TOURAINNE OR NORTHERN FRANCE)

LAST QUARTER OF XV CENTURY

PURCHASED FROM THE RALPH H. BOOTH FUND

As an expression of the spirit of Gothic art, tapestries will ever be assigned a foremost rank, and so it is with a feeling of grateful remembrance of our former president that we announce the purchase of a French tapestry of the fifteenth century, from the Ralph H. Booth fund.

The tapestry, measuring $9\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ feet, is a fragment, the central part of a once much larger composition, of high quality of design, great beauty of color scheme and excellent preservation.

Eros, blindfolded, armed with bow and arrow, stands firmly on the back of a prostrate, crowned figure; other men, strong warriors, are struggling desperately, but cannot rise from the ground. Their weakness is set off by the magnificence of their attire and by the supine unconcern of the surroundings; the sky is bluest azure; columbines and daisies, carnations and strawberries grow on the greensward; the cold grey steel of Cupid's mailed loincloth contrasts with the dazzling splendor of his wings. While the whole setting and the crouching figures are clearly French, Eros is adapted from an Italian, possibly a Mantegnesque, drawing. But the designer had the good taste to soften the realism of his model, and the protruding ribs frame the soft flesh in conventional undulations. The slightly bulging closed eyes, visible beneath the veil, bring to mind those glories of the great thirteenth century, the blindfolded figures of the Synagogue.

Fortunately, this fragment does not stand alone. It is part of a set of tapestries that have hung for centuries in the Château de Chaumont. Three complete tapestries have found their way to the collection of Mr. Clarence H. Mackay, to whom we are indebted for the courtesy of allowing us the use of his photographs for comparison.

Mr. Mackay's *Triumph of Divinity* is



TRIUMPH OF DIVINITY
 FRENCH (TOURAINÉ OR NORTHERN FRANCE)
 LAST QUARTER OF XV CENTURY
 COLLECTION OF CLARENCE H. MACKAY, NEW YORK

the direct companion piece to our Eros. A garden is sheltered from wind and curious eyes by shrubs, trees and steep cliffs. Here, in the "*hortus conclusus*," amid flowers symbolizing her name¹, Mary, Queen of Heaven, holds court. She is seated comfortably, the heavy crown does not weigh down Her forehead, for two angels are supporting it over Her head. She has been reading in an illuminated book that rests on a velvet cushion on Her lap; but Her attention wanders, attracted by the sweet music of her *chapelle*: six angels playing harp and lute, flutes and organ, as an accompaniment to the chapel-master's singing. In the foreground three much smaller figures form a pyramid marking

the axis of the composition. The central figurine holds red and white carnations, for burning but pure love; below, a little girl, seated among the flowers, waits for her playmate who is wading through the shallow stream, causing consternation among the waterfowl.

The madrigal on the scroll reads (translated):

"God triumphant by just authority
 Only is permanent and durable.

Nothing will last beneath the firmament,

But above triumphs eternity."

The Queen of Heaven is robed in a gown of blue silk and a mantle of pomegranate-patterned cloth of gold, lined with the liturgical red. The angels'

¹M—marguerite, daisy; A—ancolie, columbine; R—rose; I—jenette, gorse; E—églantier, wild rose.

wings glow in all the colors of the rainbow; they wear brilliantly colored ample gowns with hoods, or the dalmatic, the deacons' vestment. Moiré silk is used throughout, thus, incidentally, furnishing an important contribution to the still moot question of the age of watered silks. These, although most fashionable in the eighteenth century, must have been known long before then¹.

The calculated magnificence of the widespread draperies adds to the feeling of supreme peace which pervades the entire composition. The choice of the Mother of God, as representing eternity, may have been intended as a compliment to the lady for whom the tapestries were designed, or to womanhood in general.

The *Eros* panel must have been the central part of a composition arranged similarly to Mr. Mackay's *Triumph of Divinity*. We can easily reconstruct the figures on the ground, and supplement them in imagination by groups of two or more people at either side. The flowery ground may have been interspersed with allegorical animals and monsters; doves, goats and sirens are obvious.

The incompletely preserved verses are equivalent to an English madrigal by Richard, Carlton:

"The witless boy that blind is to behold,
Yet blinded sees what in our fancy lies,
With smiling looks and hairs of curled gold
Hath oft entrapped and oft deceived the wise:
No wit can serve his fancy to remove,
For finest wits are soonest thrall'd to Love,"

although Carlton misses the fatalistic turn of the French verses which tell us that, however great Love's power seems to be, Death is yet stronger, is inevitable.

The *Eros* panel was accompanied by two large tapestries, depicting amorous scenes in Gardens of Plenty (*Vergiers de Souffisance*), both belonging to Mr. Mackay.

The inscription of one of these tapestries reads (translated):

"One sees the weather adorned with verdure,

Sometimes as pleasant as an angel;
Then quite suddenly changed and very strange.

Never the weather remains the same."

Weather changes as easily as the moods of human temperament. This theme is elaborated in a garden; a plaited hedge in the center sharply divides two scenes which might be termed *Plaisir d'amour* and *Chagrin d'amour*.

At the left, a lady, seated with skirt pulled up in order to display an elegant petticoat, caresses with one hand a kneeling youth who offers her an apple, symbol of love, while her glance and the red carnation in her outstretched left hand clearly beckon to another swain, who approaches with a nosegay. The artist thus tells the story of fickle love, of beauty attracted by wealth, with the same cynicism that prompted Thomas Bateson's madrigal:

"Who prostrate lies at women's feet,
And calls them darlings dear and sweet;

Protesting love, and craving grace,
And praising oft a foolish face;
Are oftentimes deceived at last,
Then catch at nought and hold it fast."

The accepted lover will presently be discarded for the princely personage with the heavy golden chain and jeweled aigret, whose exaggerated square shoes mark him clearly as a member of the court of Charles VIII (1470-1498), the King of France who was born with six toes and so, willy-nilly, set this fashion of ungainly footwear. At the lady's feet

¹The Historisches Museum at Berne owns two dalmatics, lined with blue moiré linen, which, however, may possibly be later than the orphreys of Palermitan, thirteenth century weaving.

a boy of dwarfish appearance beats a drum and blows a flute, while behind her shoulder a man plays the lute. A jester brings wine and fruit.

At the right side of the tapestry a yet different aspect of love's power is proclaimed. An old man and young woman, obviously members of one of the many mystic-religious sects which, towards the close of the fifteenth century, were found preaching their gospel of chastity and renunciation, wandering from place to place, have been accosted by an amorous youth. Already he has forced the old man to his knees and belabors him with a club. A tiny unicorn, symbol of chastity, sits nearby complacently, apparently undisturbed by the dangers which threaten the poor young woman.

The landscape also is somewhat allegorical: behind the courtly group a castle rises out of a wide moat, with swans, and men fishing; behind the innocent wayfarers so brutally attacked are seen the useless ruins of a fortress on a steep hill. Quite in front, the park is cut off by a river, with ducks and drakes and many ducklings, and the prettiest island where a little girl waits for two boy swains, one wading through the stream, the other offering her a bird.

The third tapestry in Mr. Mackay's collection might be entitled Youth. The madrigal reads (translated):

"Youth plays while the heart is strong
And thinks it holds all in its hand,
But this triumph does not last.
Here you see it quite plainly,
Such is the gambler with death in his
heart.

Young people should take note of it."
Shakespeare's ditty, "Present mirth has present laughter, What's to come is still unsure," expresses the same idea.

In the center a richly attired young woman, with jeweled headdress and belt-buckle, golden bracelet and necklet tied in a loveknot, tries to attract the attention of a group of young men and women, talking and making music, to a darkly handsome youth, writhing on the

ground in spasms of pain. Death, the fiddler with the skull embroidered on his tunic, has marked the young man with this same token. Nobody pays much attention: a child blows soap bubbles, another chases butterflies, a peasant is driving a donkey, loaded with firewood, toward a castle with crenellated turrets. Rarely has the "Dance of Death" been depicted more impressively, more gruesomely, than in this setting of mirth and laughter.

The gay side of courtly life was illustrated by many sets of tapestries, although too few have survived for our enjoyment. To understand these *plaidoyeries d'amour*, amorous entertainments, we must turn to the literature of the time.

The *Roman de la Rose*, written by Guillaume Lorris about 1230, finished by Jehan de Meung between 1268 and 1285, remained the ideal of the noble lover everywhere, for this lengthy verse novel had taken all Europe by storm, had been translated into Italian and Spanish and German, into English by Chaucer himself, a far greater poet than either Lorris or Meung. *The Romance of the Rose* began as a beautiful presentment of the love philosophy of the troubadours, but ended as a bitter satire on women, exposing with brutality their arts of deception and the means by which men may outwit them. This cynical tendency was followed by other writers, Robert de Blois's *Chastoiement des dames* being possibly the best known.

The fear of the Black death, that great cycle of plague epidemics which spread like wildfire all over Europe in the fourteenth century, causing the death of about thirty millions of persons, loosed to excess the worst as well as the best qualities of mankind. *Carpe diem* became the watchword. Boccaccio gives a terrible description of the state of mind of the citizens of Florence.

Slowly humanity recovered from such excesses. A noble woman, Christine de Pisan, French poet of Italian descent,

published in 1407 *La Cité des Dames* in defense of womanhood who, she felt rightly and strongly, had been attacked most unfairly. How steadily her influence persevered is proved by a set of tapestries, illustrating the "City of the Ladies," which was presented, in 1513, more than a hundred years after its first publication, to Margaret of Austria, by the city of Tournai.

The "Order of the Rose," the "Green Order," to some extent also the "Order of the Golden Fleece" were founded to create anew the service of Love, of Woman. A simpler, more natural mode of living was advocated, pastoral plays became the fashion and influenced directly the designs of tapestries. New ideals were sought, an amalgamation of Christian dogma with classical philosophy. Of the greatest importance, especially for tapestry design, were the writings of Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374), most of all the *Trionfi*, part of the *Canzoniere* which he wrote in honor of Madonna Laura, and published after her death from the plague in 1348.

The *Trionfi* became the *leitmotiv* of many sets of tapestries, although it was left to the Renaissance designers of the early sixteenth century to follow Petrarch's visions as mere illustrators. The fifteenth century merely appropriated the general idea with its underlying moral: the power of Love is great, yet Death puts an end to its pleasures and sorrows; we need not fear Death, nor the loss of earthly Fame, for the Trinity will rule all through Eternity.

The set of tapestries from the Château de Chaumont is extraordinarily brilliant in color scheme, the general effect is luminous and light, owing to the preponderance of tones of golden bronze and creamy white. The reds are bluish, quite different from the yellowish reds of Tournai and Touraine, and the color range is very large.

The texture, especially remarkable in the flesh tones of the huge Eros, proves the tapestries to be the work of a master-craftsman. The whitish surfaces are accentuated by contrast with hatchings of light red and grey. The features of the faces, the hands and feet are modeled into relief by the cunning use of open slits.

While the time of the making of these tapestries is given, clearly, by the costumes, and especially by the exaggerated footwear, as the last quarter of the fifteenth century, it is difficult to decide on the place of manufacture. It is true that the landscape in general, the buildings, more especially, somewhat suggest the valley of the Loire, the Touraine. Jehan and Etienne Le Fevre, tapestry weavers in the service of King Charles VIII and Queen Anne of Bretagne, appear to have been domiciled at 'Tours', but no tapestries can be assigned to them with certainty. A few other names are mentioned in the archives of 'Tours, but the question remains open whether they are those of weavers or merely of dealers in tapestries. Paris, center of tapestry weaving in the fourteenth century, suffered badly during the English occupation, but may have recovered some of its former importance during the reigns of Charles VIII and Louis XII². Several towns, in the north and east of France, had smaller factories, but documentary evidence is sparse and far from clear.

Eight years ago Mr. George G. Booth presented to the Institute a tapestry, woven at the Merton Abbey Looms from the cartoon preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The original tapestry, woven by William Morris, from designs by Burne-Jones, had been destroyed by fire during the Exhibition at Brussels in 1908.³ Morris had taught himself the queenly craft from the perusal of a sixteenth century French treatise and at-

¹Gübel, *Wandteppiche*, II 1928. *Die romanischen Länder*, p. 262.

²Gübel, *ib.*, p. 26.

³*Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts*, Vol. VIII, April, 1927.

tempted, rather successfully, to revive the spirit of Old Touraine. Thus, to our visitors is given the opportunity of comparing the work of the Pre-Raphaelite master-craftsman of the nineteenth cen-

tury, with an original of the fifteenth century, the "White, implacable Aphrodite" with "Cupid, monarch over Kings."

ADELE COULIN WEEBEL.

TWO EARLY AMERICAN LANDSCAPES

The love of landscape has always been one of the main springs of American art, yet landscape painting in the modern sense appeared only with the nineteenth century. The feeling for nature untouched by man appeared with Wordsworth's generation. A much older tradition existed in the taste for "prospects" of towns and cities, which we know from frequent newspaper references to have played an important part in the decoration of eighteenth century homes. The English gentleman who took the grand tour might bring home a view of Venice by Canaletto or Guardi, but the American colonial was content with simple prints of our growing towns and seaports. When the democratic trend of society brought an enormous popularity to prints, the first third of the nineteenth century saw a development of fine copper engravings and colored aquatints which now form one of the pleasantest bypaths of American art.

The museum has recently acquired an original painting from which one of these prints was made. *A View of Detroit in 1836* (Fig. 1), by W. J. Bennett, is the gift of the Fred Sanders Company, in memory of a Detroit pioneer, Fred Sanders.¹ The colored aquatint made from the painting forms part of a famous series of views of American cities by Bennett. The print is inscribed, "Painted by W. J. Bennett from a sketch by Fredk. Grain. Engd. by W. J. Bennett. (Published by) Henry J. Megarey, New York. Entered 1837 by Henry J. Megarey."

William James Bennett was one of the

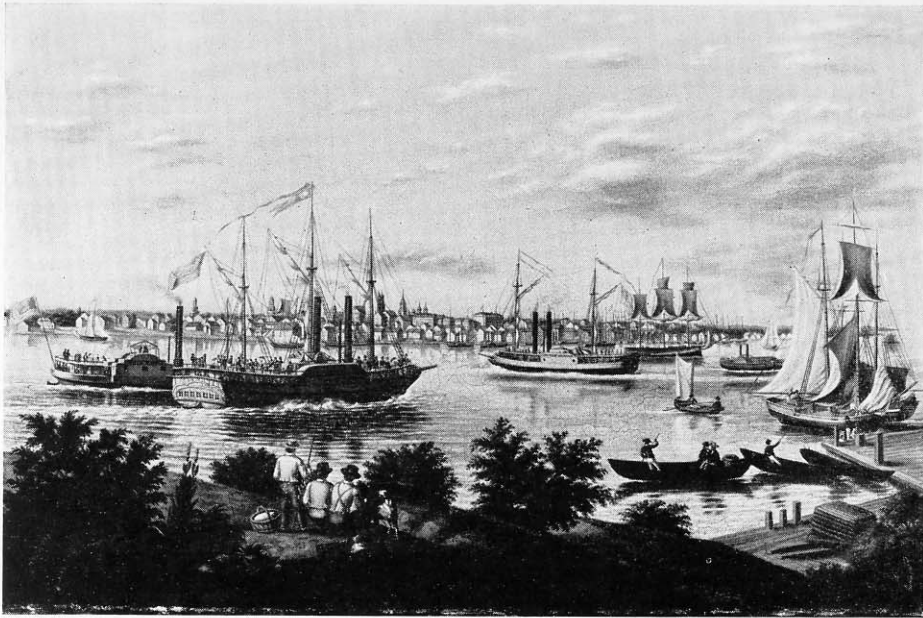
best makers of this type of print. He was born in England in 1777 and came to America in 1816. He was elected Associate of the newly formed National Academy in 1827 and member in 1828; for some years he was curator of the Academy. He died in 1844. Although he exhibited regularly at the National Academy, his chief claim to fame is the series of prints that bear his name.

Detroit one hundred years ago was a little cluster of wooden and brick houses, with a fringe of church spires forming its skyline. The twin pointed cupolas in the center are those of St. Anne's Roman Catholic Cathedral. Then come, in order to the left, the steeple of the First Presbyterian Church, the square pinnacled tower of St. Paul's Protestant Episcopal Church, the steeple of the First Baptist Church, and, on the outskirts of town, the dome of the old State Capitol (built 1823-28; last used by the legislature in 1847). The steamers *Erie*, *Michigan*, and *United States* are conspicuous upon the river.

The historical value of such a picture is great for a city which, like Detroit, has preserved few landmarks of its past. It is difficult for us today to realize that only a century ago Harriet Martineau, on her visit to Detroit, found its greatest interest to be the crowds of Indians which came in along the Chicago road. The painting is part of our knowledge of the changing face of this region, as civilization flowed inward along the lakes and rivers of the huge, forest-covered continent toward the prairie.

Yet interesting as is a glimpse of this

¹Oil on canvas: H. 17 1/2 inches; W. 25 inches.



A VIEW OF DETROIT IN 1836
 WILLIAM JAMES BENNETT 1777-1844
 PRESENTED BY THE FRED SANDERS COMPANY IN MEMORY OF ITS
 FOUNDER, FRED SANDERS

country in the freshness of its rural youth, there is more here than historical value. Bennett was an able watercolorist, though his essays in oil were rare. A pleasant naiveté in his drawing of human figures does not interfere with the quality of his landscape. The smooth waters of the river, covered with shipping, and the wide sky above the little city, are painted with a fine feeling for space and sunlight. The Wordsworthian mood—the love of the serene and spacious quiet of nature—is expressed with genuine felicity.

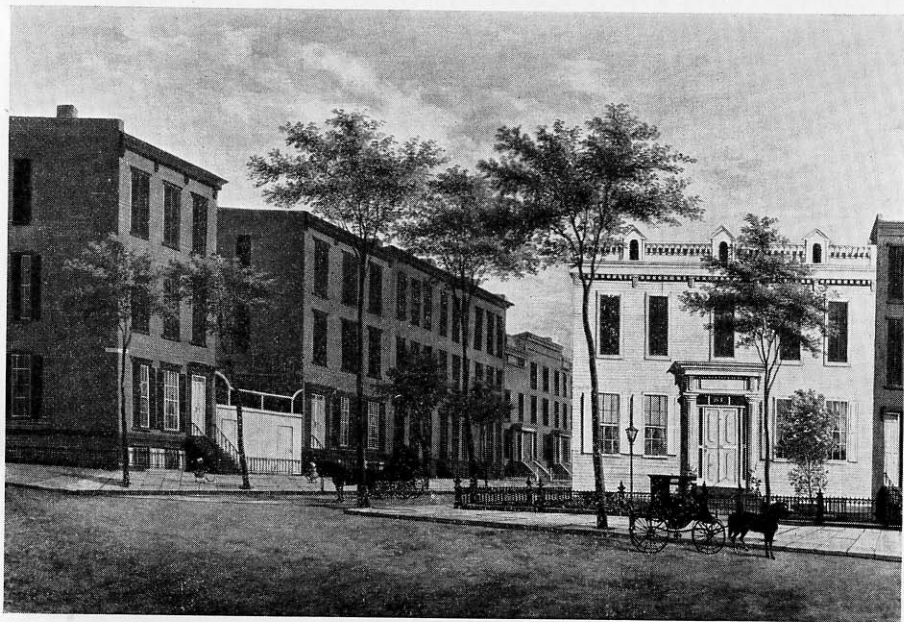
From the readers of the Nancy Brown Experience Column of *The Detroit News* the Museum has received a second addition to its early American collection. *A Street in Brooklyn* (Fig. 2), painted by an unknown artist, probably between

1845 and 1860, represents American folk art in one of its happiest aspects.¹

Much attention has been paid recently to American folk art. The merit of some of the material collected is as undeniable as is the worthlessness of much whose only merit is "quaintness." The simple and unsophisticated heart of the folk artist is never without a certain appeal; but naiveté becomes art only when a degree of craftsmanship is added.

The untaught artist who painted this view had the direct, childlike vision and the simplicity of approach which characterize the folk artist. There is something very delightful about these quiet houses and empty streets, where two old-fashioned carriages are waiting and children are at play. Pictures such as this are always essentially memory-pictures. They

¹Canvas: H. 30 inches; W. 44½ inches.



STREET IN BROOKLYN

UNKNOWN ARTIST. C. 1840-60

GIFT OF THE NANCY BROWN EXPERIENCE COLUMN OF THE DETROIT NEWS

derive less from direct drawing of the subject than from an image retained in the mind, recollected and enjoyed in retrospect. This gives to our canvas the tranquility of a childhood memory, in which one's old happy associations are distilled and all temporary or disagreeable things are omitted.

But the artist also possessed a natural aesthetic sense. The cream colors, browns and greens of the houses have a spring-

time coolness quite unlike the palette of the sophisticated artists of the day. The sky behind the lacy branches of the trees has the clear, airy depth and freshness that is always the best feature of early American landscape. This picture, too, is Wordsworthian in the sense of the spontaneous delicacy and fineness of sentiment which the poet found in the hearts of the humble and simple.

E. P. RICHARDSON.

CALENDAR OF LECTURES AND EXHIBITIONS

EXHIBITIONS

- February 12-March 31. Portraits in the Graphic Arts.
 March 20-April 20. Persian Miniatures.
 March 5-31. Drawings by Modern German Sculptors.

GALLERY TALKS

(Tuesday afternoons at 3:00 and Thursday evenings at 8:00)

- March 5 and 7. Baroque Painting.
 March 12 and 14. Dutch 17th Century Painting.
 March 19 and 21. Early American Art.
 March 26 and 28. French 18th Century Art.

"APPRECIATION OF SCULPTURE" LECTURES

(Friday evenings at 8:30)

- March 1. By Perry T. Rathbone.
 March 8. By Edgar P. Richardson.
 March 15. By Perry T. Rathbone.

WORLD ADVENTURES SERIES

(Illustrated lectures every Sunday)

- March 3, 3:30. "Among the Head Takers of Formosa," by Carl von Hoffman.
 March 10, 3:30. "By Airplane Over Inca Land," by Robert Shippee.
 March 17, 3:30. "A Naturalist in African Jungles," by Edmund Heller.
 March 24, 3:30. "A Night on the Spanish Main," by Edward Tomlinson.
 March 31, 3:30. "The Human Adventure," talking pictures.
 and 8:30.

(Illustrated lectures by Burton Holmes, Tuesday evenings at 8:30)

- March 5. "Yugoslavia and Southern Europe."
 March 12. "Alluring Italy."
 March 19. "Vienna and Austria."
 March 26. "London and Rural England."

GARDEN CENTER

(Illustrated lectures Thursday afternoons at 2:30)

- March 7. "Garden Use of Our Native Plants," by Dr. Prager of Kalamazoo.
 March 21. "Rock Gardens," by Louise Beebe Wilder, read by Mrs. Horace Peabody.

FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

(Pageant of History Talks Saturday afternoons at 2:30)

- March 2. "Court Painter to a Spanish King—Diego Velasquez."
 March 9. "Marie Antoinette Decorates Her New Palace."
 March 16. "An English Lord Sits for His Portrait."
 March 23. "American Colonists Copy Their Continental Cousins."
 March 30. "In Our Own Day."