

Bulletin of

THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS

of the City of Detroit

*

VOLUME XXV • NUMBER I • 1946



THE MYSTIC MARRIAGE OF ST. CATHERINE
BY PAOLO VERONESE, VENETIAN, 1528-1588.
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Walter O. Briggs, 1944.

THE MYSTIC MARRIAGE OF ST. CATHERINE, by Paolo Veronese (Venice, 1528-1588), the generous gift of Mr. and Mrs. Walter O. Briggs, is one of the most important gifts of Italian painting that the museum has received. Monumental in scale and stately in design, it is a noble addition to the beauty of our Venetian gallery. Rich, grand and pleasing in effect; glowing in color; serene, elevating and touching in its treatment of the subject, it is an example of the great church art of the Italian High Renaissance at its best.

Venetian painting of the sixteenth century reached its culminating point in three great painters, Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese. Of Titian and Tintoretto we have great examples, but of Veronese, the third and youngest, we had previously only the charming but tiny panel of the *Muse of Painting* exhibited at Alger House. This was probably painted to be set into a panel of a piece of furniture and is of great interest for the light it throws on the sumptuousness of Venetian decorative style, but it is too small to reveal the scope of an artist of Veronese's enormous gifts and importance.

The picture has an interesting history. Carlo Ridolfi in his *Meraviglie dell'Arte* (1648) describes the paintings which remained after the artist's death in his house, which was then owned by a great nephew, Guiseppe Caliarì, the only heir of the family. One of these represented "Santa Caterina Martire Sposata da Christo, nel cui bel volto si scuoprono le candide sue affetioni" (The martyr St. Catherine, betrothed of Christ, in whose beautiful features are expressed his tender feelings). According to tradition this picture was acquired by the Mora family of Ferrara from Guiseppe Caliarì. In the nineteenth century it passed by inheritance to the Councillor Z. Sernagiotto, whose wife was descended from the Mora family. In 1871 it was sold by the Councillor for forty thousand gold francs to the Cav. L. Rossi of Venice who resold it the following year to Mr. Quincy Adams Shaw of Boston. It is thus one of the earliest of the great pictures of the Italian Renaissance to come to America and it remained in this private collection until it was acquired for Detroit.

Veronese, born at Verona, came to Venice in 1553. This picture may be dated by its style in the first years after his arrival at Venice. Another painting of the *Marriage of St. Catherine* in the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Charles V. Hickox, New York City, (formerly in the Liechtenstein Gallery, Vienna), is still earlier in style, perhaps about 1550-55. In the Gardner Museum, Boston, is a wonderful though puzzling drawing connected with the world-famous altarpiece of the same subject which he painted for the Church of S. Catherine in Venice about 1575, at the height of his mature style. Ridolfi mentions seven paintings of St. Catherine by Veronese, so that it may be considered one of his favorite as well as his most famous themes. Other paintings of the theme are today in the Church of S. Francesco della Vigna, Venice; in the museums of Montpellier and Brussels; the Hermitage; and at Hampton Court.

The mystic marriage of St. Catherine was one of the great subjects of Renaissance art. For the Middle Ages and Renaissance St. Catherine of Alexandria was one of the four great virgin saints (the others being Saints Barbara, Ursula and Margaret), who embodied the feminine virtues of intellect, heroism, purity, fortitude and faith. Her legend cannot be traced back to great antiquity; it appears no earlier than the eighth century in the east. Brought to the west of Europe by returning crusaders in the eleventh century, it at once attained great popularity. St. Catherine was the patron saint of education, philosophy, science, and thus of schools and colleges, of students, philosophers and theologians. By women she was regarded as the type of feminine intellect and eloquence and her royal birth made her a favorite patron saint of ladies of nobility.



Catherine was, according to legend, the only daughter of the king of Egypt and lived at the time of Constantine the Great. The child was the wonder of all who beheld her for grace of mind and person. Her parents, though pagans, were virtuous, and their daughter was educated in the best wisdom of antiquity. The works of Plato were her favorite study and a tower of the palace was turned into a study, fitted with all kinds of mathematical instruments, for her use. When she was about fourteen, her father died and Catherine became the queen of Egypt. But she still preferred the study of philosophy to royal splendor and the duties of her office. The nobles of the kingdom met in parliament to urge her to marry and give the kingdom an heir. To this Catherine replied that she would marry only someone so noble that all men should worship him and she should never think she had made him king; so rich that he should pass all others; and beautiful and benign in the same degree—an answer which produced somewhat natural consternation among the nobles. Then in a dream Catherine found herself led to a most glorious sanctuary on top of a high mountain, where a royal queen of indescribable beauty and majesty met her and presented her to her Son, who was the Lord. But He turned away his head and refused her, saying "She is not fair enough for me." On hearing these words, Catherine woke in a passion

of grief. But then a holy hermit, sent by the Virgin, instructed her in Christianity and baptized her. That night Catherine was again conducted in her dream to the courts of Heaven, where among a noble company of saints and angels, the Lord received her with a smile of welcome and placed a ring upon the finger of the princess. In the morning, when she awoke, the ring was still on her finger and from that time she regarded herself as the betrothed of Christ. The rest of the story, leading to her martyrdom, does not concern us here, although it too was a popular theme of Renaissance art.

The mystic marriage of St. Catherine is thus an allegorical vision, implying the spiritual union between Christ and the redeemed soul. Veronese treated it each time in a different way. The most intimate is perhaps the picture in the Montpellier Museum, where the Christ Child leans forward on his mother's knees to give his betrothed a baby embrace, and the only attendant is St. Joseph; the most sumptuous is the great high altar in S. Catherine's Church, Venice. In our picture Veronese, with his unsurpassed genius for rich, fanciful and pageant-like effects, gave this mystical allegory an atmosphere of joy and splendor without sacrifice of its solemnity. St. Catherine is represented in her robes as a princess, wearing royal crown and jewels, and a costume of superb Venetian velvet brocades. A choir of angels chant hymns of joy; an attendant angel carries the palm of martyrdom, and flying cherubs swing back the wine-colored curtain overhead.

The representation of early examples of string instruments is an interesting detail. One angel plays a lute. Another angel in the foreground plays an instrument which is identified by Mr. Georges Miquelle, the first cellist of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, as a *viola de gamba* in the cello size. This instrument was the immediate predecessor of the cello, which was invented about 1520 and gradually replaced the *viola de gamba* in the late sixteenth century. This instrument already has the scroll head of the modern cello but it shows the thick neck and sloping shoulders of the *viola de gamba*. Venice and the nearby cities of the mainland were the center of the development of the modern stringed instruments. Thomas Coryat, the English traveler who visited Venice in 1608 and attended a concert in the Scuola di San Rocco, gives us a glimpse of what this musical activity meant:

"This feast consisted principally of Musicke, which was both vocal and instrumentall, so good, so delectable, so rare, so admirable, so superexcellant, that it did even ravish and stupifie all those strangers that never heard the like. But how others were affected with it I know not; for mine owne part I can say this, that I was for the time even rapt up with Saint Paul into the third heaven. Sometimes there sung sixteene or twenty men together, having their master or moderator to keepe them in order; and when they sung, the instrumentall musitiens played also. Sometimes sixteene played together upon their instruments, ten Sagbuts, foure Cornets, and two Violdegambaes of an extraordinary greatness; sometimes tenne, sixe Sagbuts and four Cornets; sometimes two, a Cornet and a treble violl. Of those treble viols I heard three severall there, whereof each was so good, especially one that I observed above the rest, that I never heard the like before. Those that played upon the treble viols, sung and played together, and sometimes two singlar fellowes played together upon Theorboes, to which they sung also, who yeilded admirable sweet musicke, but so still that they could scarce be heard but by those that were very neare them. These two Theorbists concluded that nights musicke, which continued three whole howers at the least."

In writing of Veronese's art one is led inevitably to the Venetian sense of splendor of which he is one of the supreme exponents. Yet it is useless to write of this quality. In, for example, the rooms of the Ducal Palace decorated by Veronese and Tintoretto, the painters worked in collaboration with the architects,

woodcarvers, stone carvers, painters and gilders to produce a visual experience of richness, grandeur and noble calm that is indescribable. It is a quality that only the visual arts can express. But the visual arts there expressed an instinct of the Venetians to surround the life of their Republic with an atmosphere of splendor, which became an influence spreading outward from the Ducal Palace and ultimately transforming the taste and style of decoration over the whole of Europe. Venice did not lose her primacy in the arts of decoration until the nineteenth century and it lingers on today in a craft like Venetian glass. This sense of splendor is so completely absent from our world that it is hard for those who have not seen Venice to comprehend its meaning. One may get some suggestion of it from the Venetian 18th century velvets and brocades in our textile gallery, if one remembers that these magnificent stuffs were made not to be specimens in a museum case but to be made into clothing and really worn, as we wear clothes of wool or cotton or printed rayon. After having reflected on these for a while, one should go and sit before the Veronese which adds to our Venetian gallery the note of ease and brightness which its otherwise sober grandeur of tone required.

The style of this new altarpiece is that of Veronese's early Venetian years. The three principal figures are arranged in the pyramidal grouping of the High Renaissance, although the easy movements of the figures disguise the architectonic quality of the group and there is already a suggestion of the flowing diagonal movement of his later compositions. The color, too, is still in strong, clearly defined areas in the High Renaissance style, not yet fused into the glowing tonal harmony of his later manner. It is, stylistically, a splendid example of Venetian painting of about 1555-60. It thus represents the opening phase of the coloristic tradition of painting—solid, plastic forms moving easily in deep space, all seen in terms of light and color—which Venice created in the sixteenth century and continued to the time of Tiepolo, and which passed through Rubens and Goya to the great French colorists of the nineteenth century.

Paolo Veronese is thus represented in our collection, thanks to this generous gift, by a major work and one most characteristic of the tone of mingled tranquility and grandeur, joy and grace, characteristic of his art.

E. P. RICHARDSON

Canvas: H. 66½; W. 46 inches. Acc. No. 44.265.

NEWLY REOPENED 18TH CENTURY FRENCH ROOM—Restored and refurnished through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Kanzler, the 18th Century French room, recently reopened at the Museum, constitutes what may be described as virtually a new gallery. The word "restored" is applicable for four reasons: in the first place, because of the improvement to the *boiserie*, of the period 1760-70 from a château near Amiens, and from which a dark stain, applied when the room was first installed at the Museum in 1927, has been cleaned to reveal the pristine beauty of the paneling and carved ornament in its fine honey color; secondly, because of the architectural enlargement effected by inserting two book-cases on one side of the room and two cases for porcelain on the other, at the tops of which have been repeated an ornamental motif borrowed from the original doors; in the third place, the elimination of one fireplace to permit a more satisfactory arrangement of the furniture; and finally, the installation of a new ceiling, employing an authentic 18th Century profile, with concealed lighting on which engineers of the Chrysler Corporation have collaborated to produce an ideal diffusion throughout the room.



In refurnishing the *salon*, the principal aim has been to avoid the usual dead, unliveable atmosphere which forbiddingly pervades the majority of period rooms in museums and to substitute an air of elegance, cheerfulness, and warmth through the device of carefully arranged furniture of the most distinguished quality, in the selection of which particular attention has been devoted to richness of color in order to emphasize the desired values.

The inclination in redecorating the room has been toward the period of Louis XV in the belief that the 18th Century style of that epoch is superior in interest and beauty to that of Louis XVI, which has become so familiar in this country. The floor is covered with a Savonnerie carpet of superb color and design (from the Clarence Mackay Collection). Against the left wall are a gilt carved settee and two armchairs (from the Widener Collection), upholstered in extraordinarily brilliant and well-preserved Beauvais tapestry. In front of the settee is placed a Régence carved and gilt wooden center table from the Palace at Tsarskoje-Selo and upon it a magnificent Chien Lung bowl, mounted with ormolu of the Louis XV period.

In the center of the room, the handsome writing desk, also with ormolu mounts, is surmounted with a bust of Benjamin Franklin by Jean Jacques Caffiéri, carrying over in date to the Louis XVI period. Before the desk is a leather chair with gilt carved legs (from the Max Reinhardt Collection), of great historical interest since it comes from the Palace of Sans Souci at Potsdam and was supposedly used by Frederick the Great, who, it will be remembered, patronized French culture to such a wide extent, among other favors inviting Voltaire to live at his court between 1750 and 1753.

Between the windows, which are hung with a rich 18th Century yellow silk brocade repeated in the covering of a Régence beechwood bench and a *fauteuil*, signed by Jean Baptiste Tiliard, stand on consoles a pair of porphyry cups supported by gilt-bronze naiads (from the Stroganoff Collection in Rome). Beside a *bergère* at the right is a marquetry table signed by Mathieu Criaerd. The Louis XV chandelier is from the Russian Palace of Pavlovsk.

On the marble mantelpiece in the center of the wall opposite the settee, an ormolu clock, of about 1750 by Cronier, representing "L'Amour Guerrier," is flanked by a pair of superb Chien Lung porcelain birds, while in the fireplace are gilt-bronze Louis XV andirons decorated with Chinese figures.

Aside from the complete restoration of the room, Mr. and Mrs. Kanzler have presented the Museum with two marble cupids in the style of Duquesnoy (set on consoles facing those holding the porphyry cups), the Régence table and Chien Lung bowl, the writing-desk, and desk-chair from Potsdam, and they have very generously indicated that from time to time they will make other gifts from among the objects which at present they are lending. The only pieces that formed the furnishings of the room as it formerly stood in the Museum are the marquetry table, the *fauteuil* by Tiliard, the beechwood bench (presented to the Museum by Arnold Seligmann), and the clock by Cronier.

It is felt that the complicated question of the period room in museums has been most successfully solved by this achievement, from the technical as well as the aesthetic standpoint, and that the example of the newly reopened room will pave the way in suggesting methods of overcoming the frequent difficulties which beset museums faced with problems surrounding such installations.

JOHN S. NEWBERRY, JR.

A RIVER GOD, by Jacopo Sansovino, Venetian, 1486-1570 (Terra cotta, H. 13 inches; W. 13¼ inches; Acc. No. 45.25)—This is a piece of sculpture of small size, a sculptor's sketch in fact, but it contains the greatness of style, the grandeur and ease and decorative richness, which made Sansovino the greatest Venetian sculptor of the Renaissance. The sculptors of the sixteenth century were fascinated by the sculptural possibilities of the human figure in movement. The discovery of the Laocoon group in 1506 gave a new impetus to Italian sculpture which was translated into contemporary terms by Michelangelo. Sansovino, a Florentine by birth, worked in Florence and Rome from 1502 and absorbed the double inspiration of classical art and Michelangelo's sculpture at their source, but his best period began when he was driven from Rome by the Sack of 1527 and took refuge at Venice. Two years later the death of the old late Gothic sculptor, Bartolommeo Buon, left vacant the post of "Protomaestro," the chief architect of the Venetian Republic. Sansovino was given the place. The faith of the Venetian officials was fully justified both in Sansovino's professional competence and in his power to absorb the rich and sumptuous spirit of Venetian art. As architect he added two famous buildings, the Library of St. Mark and the Loggetta, to the wonderful architectural ensemble of the Piazza of St. Mark. His best period as a sculptor came in the 1550's when he was extremely productive, completing his bronze doors for the sacristy of San Marco and doing bronze statuettes of apostles for the choir rail, as well as two giant marble statues for the outdoor stairway in the court of the Doge's Palace, and other bronze and marble sculptures and tombs for various Venetian churches. The present bozzetto,



or sketch, in brown terra cotta, is (together with a *River God* in the Berl Collection, Vienna) closely related to the Apostles of 1550-52 on the altar rail of San Marco. Brinckmann, in his well known work on Baroque sculptor's sketches, says that there is a pair of bronzes in the Thiers Collection, the Louvre, related to our sculpture, and that one of these indicates the missing right arm of our figure held a cup, which with the bunch of grapes suggested to him the title of "Allegory of Autumn." When Brinckmann described our figure in 1924, it belonged to the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin. In the early 1930's it was sold by the museum, perhaps on purchasing the Guelph Treasure, which was partly paid for in works of art. It came to our museum as the gift of Mr. and Mrs. E. Raymond Field, whose gift of an important *Crucifix* of the same period, close to Michelangelo in style, was described in the last volume of the "Bulletin." Exhibited in the Venetian gallery where, surrounded by the canvases of Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese which were being produced in Venice at the same time, it gives an example of the chief sculptor of this magnificent group of artists and adds greatly to the beauty of the room.

E. P. RICHARDSON



HYGEIA, THE GODDESS OF HEALTH, by Peter Paul Rubens, Flemish, 1577-1640 (Panel, H. $41\frac{3}{4}$ inches; W. $29\frac{1}{4}$ inches; Acc. No. 44.266)—Rubens is one of the most famous painters in the history of art, yet if his name is familiar in this country, his art is not; for he has not been very well represented, on the whole, in American museums. He is one of those artists whose genius is quite impossible to translate into words, no matter how much is written about him. The facts of his life are well known and form the agreeable story of a man of genius who was also endowed with all the qualities which make for a wise, generous, useful, and successful life. The documentation of his pictures is also abundant, for in most cases they have been famous since they left his easel. Something of his dramatic power can be grasped from photographs, for he was a man who delighted in narrative subjects and excelled in visualizing the episodes of the Bible or of classical poetry, with which his mind was richly stored. But the essence of his greatness is in his powers as a painter, powers to create effects

of light and tone and pictorial harmonies and over all the tone of a great pictorial imagination untranslatable into words. One must see these qualities for one's self in his works in order to enjoy them. The lack of major examples of his work in American public collections explains why one still meets intelligent people, whose notion of him is formed by the Marie de Medicis series in the Louvre and who throw up their hands at mention of his name, exclaiming, "Oh, those fat women!" It is of no use to argue about tastes. One only wishes that such people could see the Rubenses in Munich or Antwerp or Vienna and discover for themselves the pleasures of his art.

It is therefore a great pleasure that the museum has acquired as the generous gift of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Reichhold a completely characteristic picture by Rubens, splendid in quality, perfect in preservation, painted entirely by his own hand. It represents the ancient Goddess of Health, *Hygeia*, and is a picture which gives the writer the same keen pleasure as the *Head of a Little Girl* in the Liechtenstein Gallery or the *Helena Fourment as a Bride* in Munich, for example.

Rubens was a master of the Grand Style. He was in fact one of the artists whose work made it necessary to invent the term "the Grand Style." The aim of the arts in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was to create for life a setting of the utmost grandeur and richness. Architects built all over Europe the great palaces and châteaux for the aristocracy which are still the tourist sights of today. Painters and sculptors enriched these grandiose buildings with magnificent decorations. Rubens' painting was a culminating point of this decorative style. Large in scale, flowing and energetic in movement, magnificent in its luminosity and deep, resonant tone, his art is the Grand Style at its best—solid, rich, grand and exhilarating in its powerful sweep. All these qualities are splendidly exhibited in the present picture. The scale is heroic; the effect dramatic. The deep red cloak and pearly flesh tones and the glittering gold snake and gold dish glow with wonderful luminosity and grandeur against a deep and stormy twilight sky. The peculiar tone of Rubens' temperament is also strikingly evident. He had an imagination capable of giving form to any subject, however unusual or complicated, with an ease and mastery which gives the pleasure that watching the sure, confident action of a great gift always affords. But over this is something else. Above the door of his house in Antwerp Rubens had carved a verse from Juvenal's "Tenth Satire" which is most characteristic of him: "Let your prayer be for a healthy mind and a healthy body; pray for a brave heart that knows not the fear of death . . . and is innocent of guile and cupidity." His work radiates a glow of health and vitality, of frank and generous strength which is unforgettable, once it has been seen in a work of the present sort.

The subject is *Hygeia*, daughter of *Aesculapius* and goddess of health. The picture has also been called *Cleopatra*. The author of the "Klassiker der Kunst" volume on Rubens, R. Oldenbourg, who did not know the present picture, published an old copy at Schloss Raudnitz in Bohemia as *Cleopatra* (p. 71). Dr. Erwin Panofsky, whose achievements in iconography are well known, recalls that Plutarch in his "Life of Antony" said that the snake did not wish to bite at first and that *Cleopatra* had to make it angry. "As a means of stimulation, *Cleopatra* used a gold instrument which Plutarch designates by a very rare Greek word which means something in the way of a spindle or needle. But it is quite possible that some translator misunderstood this word, so that Rubens was justified in showing a little gold dish instead." But Rubens was not only a great painter, he was one of the leading classical scholars and antiquarians of his time. It is not necessary to suppose him misled by a supposititious bad translation into illustrating Plutarch incorrectly. One may assume, on the contrary, that Rubens, who was one of the greatest masters of dramatic emotion in painting, would have

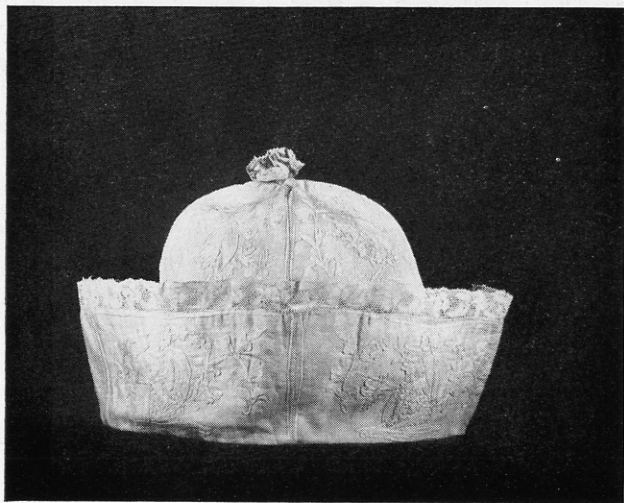
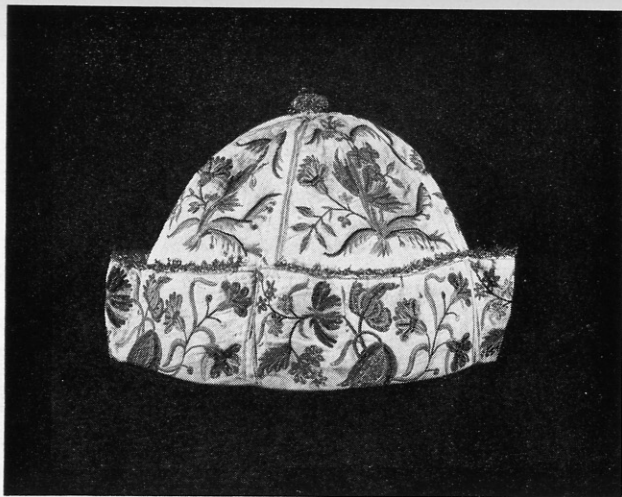
imagined some memorably passionate and dramatic scene had he wished to show Cleopatra killing herself. The identification as Hygeia, which Dr. Ludwig Borchard and Dr. Ludwig Baldass put forward when the painting came on the art market from a private collection in Paris ten years ago, seems to me the correct one. Hygeia, the daughter of Aesculapius, was the goddess whose function was to maintain the health of the community, which great blessing was supposed to be brought by her as a direct gift of the gods. The serpent was the distinguishing symbol of her father, at whose famous temple at Epidaurus in Greece snakes played some definite though little understood part in the cure of the sick. During a great plague in 291 B.C. the people of Rome sent to Epidaurus for one of the sacred snakes of Aesculapius. As the ship conveying the snake came up the Tiber, just opposite the Capitoline hill, the snake slipped overboard and swam to the island in the river, which thus became sacred to Aesculapius. A great temple was built there and the bust of Aesculapius with a serpent in relief is still visible on part of what remains of the travertine bulwark built around the island which transformed it into the likeness of a ship. Hygeia, says the Abbé Montfaucon (who represents the taste of the baroque amateurs) in his "L'Antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures" (Paris, 1719-24), had a temple at Rome on the Quirinal which was then in ruins. "Hygeia," he says, "is more frequently found upon Medals than her Father. She is commonly described holding in one Hand a Serpent, and in the other a Cup, towards which it extends its Head, as if it were going to drink at it." These medals were too common for him to illustrate all the types, though he gives sixteen. They were apparently struck as votive offerings to be left in the temples after one had regained health. Rubens, an ardent collector and a keen student of archaeology, perhaps had such a medal in his collection which suggested that he try his own wonderful power of visualization upon the theme.

Rubens' Hygeia is calm, benign and majestic, the very personification of the deity of health. There is no hint of fear or grief, as there would be in a Cleopatra, only vitality, assurance and strength.

The picture is a masterpiece of Rubens' robust and plastic style of his early middle years, about 1615. It seems to have passed from Rubens' studio to his friend and collaborator, the landscape painter Jan Wildens (whose double portrait with his wife, painted by Van Dyck about 1618, is also in our collection). In the inventory of Wildens' son Jeremias, who died shortly after his father, it is described (December 30, 1653) as: *Een vrouwe met een slange in de handt, van myn heer Rubbens* (a woman with a snake in her hand, by my lord Rubens). Its subsequent history can be traced from the de Proli sale, Brussels, 1785, through various collections in Holland, France and Belgium until it came to America about ten years ago. It was exhibited at the New York World's Fair of 1939 when it was in the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Reichhold. It has now come to the museum by their generous gift to be one of the most remarkable paintings in the baroque gallery. I have perhaps emphasized its subject in this discussion. But to anyone who has a feeling for paint, it will be most memorable for the sheer magnificence of its sure, easy, powerful, luminous painting.

E. P. RICHARDSON

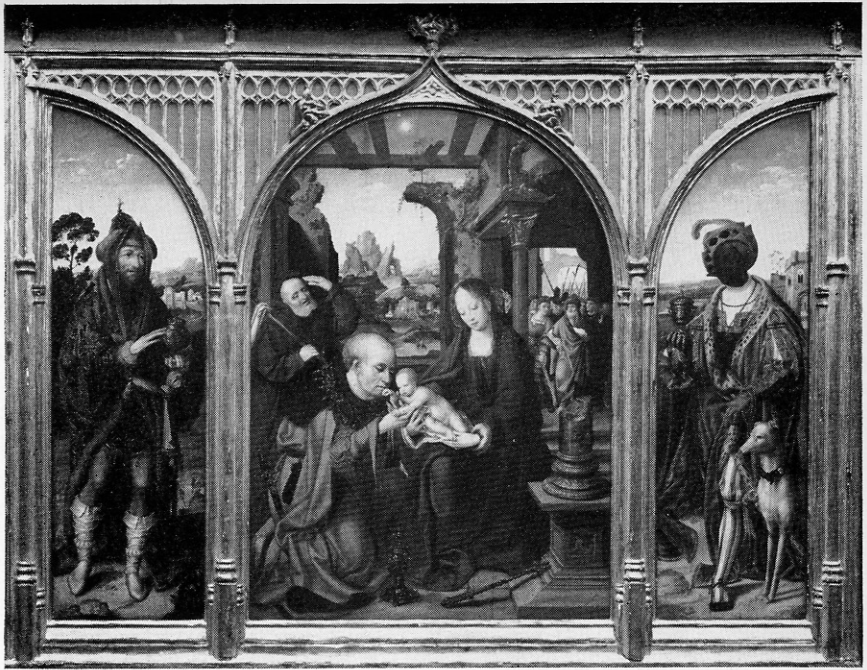
Collections: Jan Wildens; Jeremias Wildens, 1653; Comte Charles de Proli, Antwerp, 1785; P. de Smith van Alphen, Amsterdam, 1810; H. Francken, Lockeren, 1830; Charles J. Nienwenhuys, Brussels, 1840; Prosper Crabbe, Brussels, 1890; Henry Reichhold, Detroit.



EMBROIDERED MEN'S CAPS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY—When men wore wigs and removed them, they had to protect their shaved heads against catching cold. In the eighteenth century a type of cap was evolved, of four segments coming to a point and bordered by a turned-up band. These caps were generally made of plain or twilled linen, lavishly embroidered and finished with a tassel. The cap above (Accession number 44.56. Octavia W. Bates fund) has floral designs, embroidered in finest chain stitch in polychrome silks and metal thread. The band is edged with metal lace, the tassel is made of twisted gilt wire and metal lace. The cap below (Accession number 43.444. Gift of K. T. Keller) is embroidered in all white chainstitch, with a *chinoiserie* design of flowers, butterflies and figurines, and finished with Valenciennes lace. This cap was worn by the French philosopher Voltaire, who was born in Paris in 1694 and died there in 1778.

These caps have been acquired from the famous collection of Mrs. De Witt Clinton Cohen, New York.

ADELE COULIN WEIBEL



THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI, by Joos van Cleve (Flemish, c.1485-1540 or 41), the most recent gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb, brings into our collection a masterpiece of Flemish painting and adds another to the long series of notable benefactions to the museum by these generous donors. This great triptych is famous not only as an imposing and in the true sense gorgeous work of art but as Joos van Cleve's only fully-signed work and the key picture in the identification of an artist whose name was lost for centuries by a curious historical accident.

Joos van Cleve was one of the creators of the Antwerp school of painting, which rose at the beginning of the sixteenth century and included Quentin Metsys, Patinir, the founder of Flemish landscape painting, Pieter Bruegel, and finally Rubens and Van Dyck. His activity falls within the first forty years of the century which opens with the discovery of America. This century was one of immense creative effort. In every field of our civilization—science, art, religious and social organization—it had a lasting influence in the direction our life has followed. It was a century so prodigally rich in talents that it eludes the historian who tries to label it. The great explorations, the High Renaissance in Italy, the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation, the rise of Spain enriched by the gold of Mexico and Peru to dominate the life of Europe, each of these is only one facet of its life. One of the most important changes it produced was a gradual shift in the center of gravity of Europe brought about by the discovery of America. The maritime countries which looked out over the Atlantic began to replace the older lands looking on the Mediterranean as the great powers of Europe. The wealth of the New World made Spain the first Atlantic naval power but neither Spain nor France nor England became the center of the new economic life. The commerce of the Atlantic centered then as now in the narrow seas of the English channel but not in English hands. The new sea-borne commerce centered in the Low Countries, on the mainland side of the channel, and

for nearly a hundred years "the magnificent city of Antwerp, famous throughout every land" as Guicciardini, the Florentine historian, called it, was the greatest market and trading center of the new Atlantic world. After a century the Dutch stopped the commerce of the Scheldt and Amsterdam took Antwerp's place; a hundred years later still London took the place of Amsterdam. But for the better part of a century Antwerp was the point of focus where one could see the rich, ancient life of mediaeval Europe changing and flowing into the new life of the north Atlantic powers.

During that period, lasting roughly from the youth of Joos van Cleve to the death of Pieter Bruegel, a distinctive school of painting flourished at Antwerp. A new type of artistic activity was created by the commercial supremacy of the great port. There had been great schools of art in the older cities of the Low Countries, notably at Bruges and Brussels; but the pictures of the Antwerp painters are more numerous in our museums because their production of art was greater. Joos van Cleve was both typical and outstanding in this new artistic life. The fame of the great school of art in the Netherlands had spread over all Europe and the crowds of merchants thronging to Antwerp brought orders to the workshops of the Antwerp artists from every port where its ocean and river-borne commerce touched, from Riga on the Baltic to Lisbon in Portugal and Genoa and Naples on the Mediterranean. The painter was still a mediaeval craftsman. He was the master of a workshop in which, if he was a successful master, he had journeymen and apprentices working under his direction. The typical Antwerp painter at this time had a large workshop in which pictures were created not only for local demand (the nobles and merchants of Brabant) but for export. Joos van Cleve seems to have been for thirty years the outstanding painter of Antwerp in the eyes of Italy, Cologne, France and perhaps England. Commissions came to him from as far afield as Danzig and Genoa and when he produced an outstanding picture—a splendid altar or particularly tender and touching *Virgin and Child*—one often finds workshop replicas of a part or even of the whole picture, testifying to the popularity of his compositions as they stood in the workshop before delivery or stood in position in church or palace. About 1530 when King Francis I of France married Eleanor of Austria and sent to Antwerp to bring some famous painter to his court, Joos van Cleve was chosen and went to Paris to paint the King and Queen and the princes of their court. Many versions of these portraits exist, of which Friedlander believes the *Francis I* in the Johnson Collection, Philadelphia, and the *Queen Eleanor* at Hampton Court are probably the first. On leaving Paris, Joos van Cleve visited England in 1536 and painted a portrait of *Henry VIII* which is still at Hampton Court.

It is curious that such a figure should afterward have lost his identity for centuries. But his name was obscured by a mistake on the part of Carel van Mander, the Dutch painter and historian whose "Schilderboek," published in 1604, is the chief source of our knowledge of the early painters of the Netherlands. Van Mander confused Joos with his son Cornelis, called "Sotte" or "Foolish" Cleve because his vaulting ambition to become the portrait painter of the English court ended in disappointment so disastrous that he lost his reason. (See the article on our painting by Cornelis van Cleve in the *Bulletin*, Vol. XVIII (1938-39), Nov., p. 2). Van Mander jumbled the facts of both lives together under Cornelis' name, and Joos' individuality was forgotten. When art historians began the study of this period about two generations ago, his works were recognized as those of a great and distinct personality, and were grouped under the title of the "Master of the Death of the Virgin" because of the subject of two remarkable pictures in Munich and Cologne. After several attempts to identify him had proved mistaken, the Master of the Death of the Virgin was recognized



as Joos van der Beke van Cleve, an artist fully documented in the Antwerp records from his entry into the painters' guild in 1511 until he made his will on November 10, 1540, followed by a reference to his wife as a widow on April 13, 1541. He owned two houses in Antwerp, was twice married, and was three times head of the painters' guild. His full monogram appears in the Detroit painting alone, so that this is the key picture in the reconstruction of his work. On the scabbard of the oldest Wise Man are the initials *J* and *B*; while on the collar of the greyhound beside the Moorish Wise Man are two heraldic shields, one with an anchor, the other with the conjoined arms of the Duchy of Cleve and the County of van der Marck (which were united by a marriage about 1520): *Joos van der Beke van Cleve*.

This *Adoration of the Magi* has not only this historical interest as a document but is the first large, complete triptych of the Flemish school in our collection. It shows the massive gorgeousness of Flemish painting in an altarpiece of generous scale and elaborate subject matter. (The three panels are 35 inches high, the width of the center portion 25½ inches, and of each wing 11 inches.) Across the foreground is spread the scene of the Magi. The oldest king has laid down his golden sceptre and his gift to kiss the hand of the tiny Child, whose Mother sits before the ruins of a palace with broken porphyry columns, which was a symbol of antiquity. The two younger kings, represented in costumes of fantastic splendor, fill the two wings. Behind the Virgin, in the middle distance, a sinister crowd of men with pikes and spears can be seen bursting through the door of the ruined palace. These are Herod's men who announce the next scene of the story, the Massacre of the Innocents. St. Joseph, behind the oldest king, has already shouldered his pack and staff and raises his hand in a gesture of hurry and alarm, showing that it is high time for the Holy Family to be off to Egypt to seek safety from Herod's cruelty. Behind this drama of humanity, the

landscape spreads out peaceful and untroubled, filled with lovely meadows and woods, lakes and hills. Joos van Cleve's color is cool, bright and glowing. He paints in a color scheme characterized by the rich chromatic scale of blues—cool cerulean blue, green blues, cobalts, and blues flushed with red glowing to violet and purple—into which are set striking notes of red and gold and green.

Joos van Cleve first appears on the guild lists at Antwerp in 1511. Dr. Ludwig Baldass ("Joos van Cleve," 1925) has established that he must before this have worked at Bruges from 1507 on and studied Memling's pictures there. Dr. Max J. Friedlander ("Alteniederlandische Malerei," IX, p. 58 ff.) has offered ingenious proof that he worked still earlier with Jan Joest in the creation of his great altar at Calcar, only a few miles from his native town of Cleve. But the influence of Bruges and especially of Memling underlies his work at Antwerp. He was after all very similar to Memling in temperament. His natural feeling was gentle and serene. He had an instinctive delicacy of mood and refined richness of style. He had a marked narrative gift with a rich power of invention and his naturally tender sentiment made him the most attractive Madonna painter of the Antwerp School. Like Memling, he was at his best in serene or happy subjects. The hint of tragedy in the background of this *Adoration* is perhaps as successfully expressed as tragic feeling ever is in his works. His style, after he settled at Antwerp in 1511, can be divided into three phases. In the first, lasting about ten years, he was strongly influenced by the restless, nervous style of the Antwerp Mannerists, although remaining much superior to them in artistic knowledge and subtlety. In the second period, in the 1520's, he shows the influence of the Italian Renaissance in an increasing monumentality. This phase is represented by a group of large altarpieces which may be taken as the culmination of his narrative style—the Detroit *Adoration* (about 1525), another large *Adoration* in Dresden (809a) and the *Virgin and Child with Saints* in Vienna. About 1530 a strong influence of Leonardo da Vinci begins to make itself felt. He executed an important commission for a church in Genoa at this time and may have visited northern Italy. He certainly came into touch with the work of Leonardo and his followers when King Francis I of France invited him to his court, sometime after 1530. The three paintings by Leonardo which a Spanish traveler saw in the royal collection in 1517—the *Madonna and Child with St. Anne*, the *St. John the Baptist*, and a third picture which some scholars believe was the *Mona Lisa*—were among the proudest possessions of the French king and Joos van Cleve may be supposed to have seen them. Certainly the use of Italian poses and an increasing chiaroscuro inspired by Leonardo mark the works of his last period. The *Adoration of the Magi* by Joos van Cleve just added to our collection is thus a major work of his mature period and of his most characteristic and independent style.

E. P. RICHARDSON

Acc. No. 45.420.

THE MOTION PICTURE PROGRAM

For the third year the Institute of Arts is offering to the people of Detroit a program of outstanding motion pictures. These are given on Tuesday evenings at frequent intervals through the year, and afford the public a chance to see fine and unusual films, most of which can no longer be viewed at the commercial theaters of the city.

Many of these motion pictures are culled from the better films of fairly recent years, and offer revivals of French, Spanish, British, Russian and Czechoslovakian productions. Each has been distinguished because of the high artistic level of

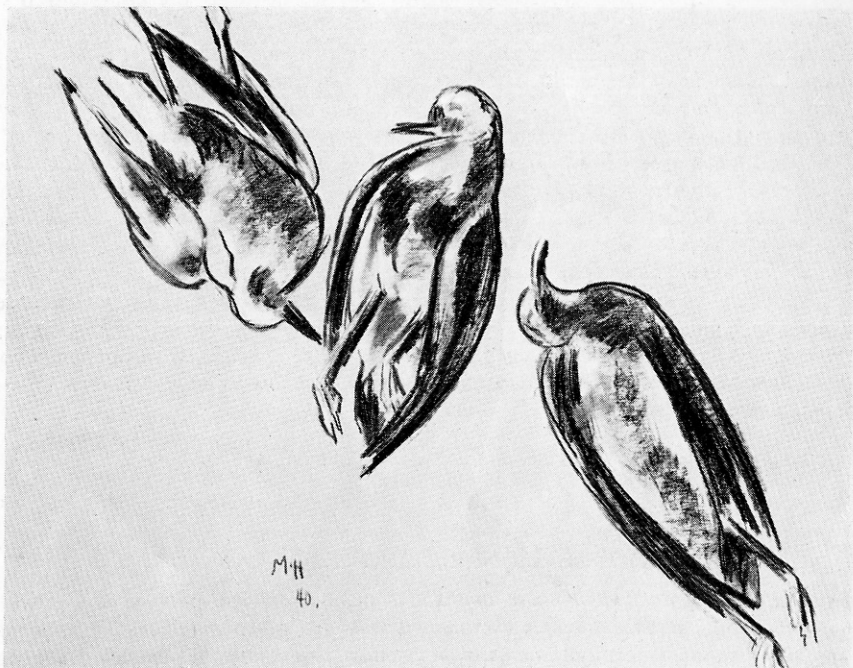
its photography, as in Eisenstein's "Thunder Over Mexico," of its acting, as in "Carnival in Flanders," or for witty and brilliant directing as in Hitchcock's "The Lady Vanishes" and René Clair's "A Nous la Liberté." A number ranked high in all three respects, including a few particularly significant documentary films.

Two films proved of special interest because of their less familiar settings. "Gyandev of India" was produced in Bombay with a native cast. "En Saga," based on a Norwegian novel and a tone poem by Sibelius, was the first sound film to be made in Lapland.

In an effort to make the program as diversified as possible, factual and deeply moving, often tragic films have been interspersed with lighter ones. Among the latter, the muted yet pungent humor of some of the British and Czech comedies proved as delightful as the more scintillating, insouciant wit of the French ones.

This year, Crowley-Milner has joined the Detroit Institute of Arts as co-sponsors of these motion picture programs, which have been expanded to include music, and brief art talks by members of the museum staff. Tuesday evenings are finding the large auditorium crowded to capacity. The audience has discovered that the music, art and drama program affords illuminating glimpses and often a deeper understanding of our own and of foreign cultures. Many seem to feel also that the films, made with consummate skill and artistry, are highly entertaining.

ELIZABETH H. PAYNE



SKETCH FOR SHORE BIRDS, by Marsden Hartley (American, 1877-1943), is a colored chalk drawing, the gift of Robert H. Tannahill (H. 21 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches; W. 27 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches; Acc. No. 45.136).



THE FISHING PARTY, by Cornelius Troost (Dutch, 1697-1750). the gift of Frederic A. Stern, New York (pen and wash drawing, H. 12-5/16 inches; W. 9-3/16 inches. Acc. No. 45.419), is a characteristically sparkling work, signed and dated 1738 at the height of the artist's mature period. This accomplished and humorous drawing well epitomizes the style of "the Dutch Watteau," a sobriquet applied to Troost because of the marked influence played upon him by his slightly older contemporary of the French School. Yet underneath, as here, Troost retains the true flavor of the Dutch "genre" tradition in its gay and familiar aspects.

JOHN S. NEWBERRY, JR.



SUN AND WATER, by Zoltan Sepeshy (American, 1896-), was awarded the Founders Society Prize, the Mrs. Lillian Henkel Haass Prize, and the Mrs. George Kamperman Prize, in the Annual Exhibition for Michigan Artists, 1946 (Canvas: H. 24 inches; W. 32 inches; Acc. No. 45.475).



HEAD OF A VICUNA. Pottery drinking vessel, Peruvian, Late Chimú, 900 to 1400 A.D. (Acc. No. 45.467. H. $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Gift of Edgar P. Richardson). The fine, slightly stylised modelling and the mottled surface of the black body give an excellent likeness of the wild creature whose fur was so highly valued that in Inca times it was protected from unlawful hunting.

ADELE COULIN WEIBEL



CARD TABLE, by Duncan Phyfe (American, 1768-1854), is the gift of Robert H. Tannahill (H. 27 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches; W. 36 inches; Acc. No. 45.417).