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# BULLETIN

## of THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS

ROBERT FULTON
*By* JEAN-ANTOINE HOUDON,
FRENCH (1741-1828)

*Gift of*
*Dexter M. Ferry, Jr.,*
*1949*

## THE MUSEUM AND THE PROFESSIONAL ARTIST

The museum in a city such as ours must serve not one public but many, each of which has its own field of interest. The professional artists of the community form only one of its publics, a few hundred people perhaps out of the 2,500,000 in our metropolitan area. But small in numbers though this group may be, it is very important and deserves most careful thought.

Professional artists tend, I notice, to assume that their interests are the same as those of the general public. This is not so. Their interests are quite different and in some cases actually opposed. This opposition between the interests of the layman and of the professional can be found in every field of education and museum work. It is inherent in the situation. The best that an institution can do is to try to serve both publics as well as its means allow.

The artist's economic problems are so great that his chief interest in a museum is apt to be governed by the degree to which the museum shows or, better still, buys his work. The museum is looked upon primarily as a patron. In this respect we work under very grave limitations. Our funds are very small, so small that if we should devote all the unrestricted income of the museum received in 1948 from City and membership funds, to patronizing the exhibitors in the Michigan Artists Exhibit and the Michigan Artist-Craftsmen Exhibit, each exhibitor would receive less than fifty dollars. This would certainly not solve the artist's economic problems and I think everyone would agree, artists and laymen alike, that it is not a policy that, pursued year after year, would result in giving us a very good museum. We badly need funds, however, to buy contemporary art and in the meantime we try to do what we can as a patron of artists.

A much more important function is to try to create a public for the artists. There are thousands of people in Detroit who can spend fifty, or a hundred dollars, or five hundred dollars, in a year on a work of art if they wish to do so. If the museum can arouse the interest of these people in the work of their own artists, can bring about a generous recognition of achievement, can create an art-loving community, a far greater source of patronage will be formed than the museum can ever hope to be. This is a difficult but rewarding task. Detroit has a more interesting artistic life than the city at large realizes or appreciates. Each year we hold a series of exhibits to bring the artists of this community to the attention of the public, one for painters and sculptors in the Fall, one for silversmiths, ceramists and other artist-craftsmen in the Spring. We have begun to organize Little Shows of Work in Progress in Michigan to circulate through the state. We have also a permanent gallery of the work of Michigan artists in the museum. What we are aiming at is not only to recognize achievement but to create an interested and discerning public for art.

So much for the economic side of art. That is important but it is not all-important. A still more essential responsibility to the artist is seldom discussed.

Our greatest duty to the artist is to help him to develop his talent and to

realize his full powers. How can we do this? An artist needs to know the language of his art. He can only do this by seeing first-rate examples of all phases of his art. He also needs to educate his perceptions. He must train his eye, develop his taste, enlarge his judgment. The artist in Detroit lives in a physical environment which is largely chaotic, anti-artistic, purely utilitarian and commercial. An artist must train his eye to observe, and use, the most delicate nuances of color, of shape, of surface. He can only do this by looking at things. Our collection alone offers a training ground for his eye, his taste, his sense of style. I do not mean that he should imitate what he sees here but that he should use it as a massive storehouse of experience to sharpen his powers of observation and to enlarge his judgment.

Outside our collection nature is vast, ever bountiful. But the tradition of art can be known only from misleading little reproductions in magazines. Within this building, therefore, we are trying to enable the artist in Detroit to experience the arts for himself, to feel at home in the world of art, to move at ease through its infinite richness and variety, not merely gaze at it from a far distance or hear of it at second hand.

Art students often think that if they could only see the work of the modern painter they happen to be interested in at that moment – Picasso, Renoir, Cézanne, Chagall – all would be well with them. But what did Picasso, Renoir, Cézanne, the other artists who have made the greatness of the School of Paris, what did they look at? Where did they learn that sense of style the Detroit painter admires? They looked at the Louvre. No one who reads the lives of the painters of Paris can escape the fact that the great school of all these men was the continuous pageant of art spread out before them in the Louvre. That is what we are trying to do in our own way and degree for the artists in our own community. Perhaps this is the best thing we can do for them. For after all, their hardest problem is to learn to work, produce, create, on the highest level of their art.

E. P. RICHARDSON

## HOUDON'S MARBLE BUST OF ROBERT FULTON

To represent the genius of Jean-Antoine Houdon, the eighteenth century French sculptor, the Institute owned until recently only a statuette from his workshop. Therefore Mr. Dexter M. Ferry, Jr.'s gift of a marble bust of Robert Fulton by the artist whom Jefferson rightly called "without rivalship the first statuary of his age" marks in the history of our museum a milestone comparable only to the acquisition of its first Rembrandt or its first Titian. Such an important addition to our collection (see front cover) deserves a thorough study, the results of which will be published at greater length than is possible within the limits of the *Bulletin*. It may be said here, however, that this bust of Fulton was executed in 1803 in Paris (at a critical moment in the inventor's life, when he was still hoping to sell to Napoleon Bonaparte his device for his submarine), and

that it was exhibited at the Salon of 1804. Until a few years ago, the bust was owned by the descendants of Admiral Decrès who, as Minister of the Navy, was responsible for the final failure of Fulton's attempt to interest the First Consul in his invention. Several plaster busts of Fulton by Houdon exist; ours is apparently the only bust executed in Houdon's studio in marble, a medium in which the sculptor was most successful. A masterpiece of subtle characterization, this portrait of "the Archimedes of his country" as DeWitt Clinton called Fulton, will take its place near another famous likeness of the inventor, Rembrandt Peale's portrait presented last year to the Institute by the Ford Foundation.

PAUL L. GRIGAUT

Acc. no. 49.23. Height, 28½ inches, including base. Gift of Dexter M. Ferry, Jr., 1949.

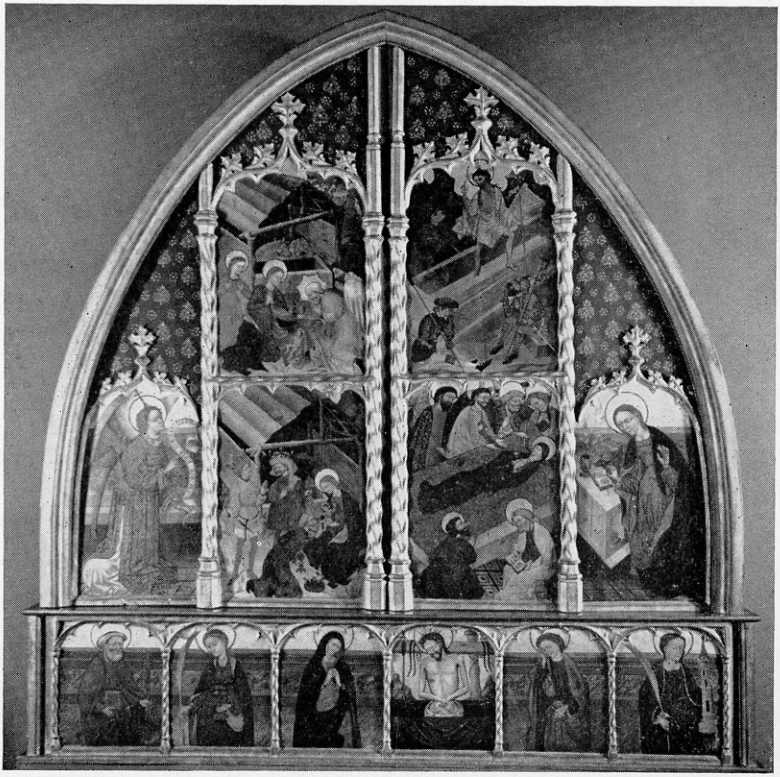
## A FIFTEENTH CENTURY SPANISH ALTARPIECE

A large Spanish altarpiece added to the Gothic gallery as the gift of Mrs. Lillian Henkel Haass, is an important addition to our collection of medieval art. Among all our medieval paintings, we had nothing of this size, nor anything to illustrate so well the character and the massive decorative splendor of a large Gothic polyptych.

There was a type of medieval altarpiece in Spain which had in the center a single sculptured figure, standing in a niche, with painted wings on either side. Our altar evidently belonged originally to this type. The width of the central statue and nich corresponded to the predella panel beneath representing *Christ in the Tomb*. When this statue was lost, or decayed, the two side wings were brought together and supported by a plain modern outer frame in the form of a single arch. One panel at the right end of the predella has also disappeared.

It rarely happens that a large Gothic polyptych survives to modern times with so few changes. In contrast with the dismembered fragments of polyptychs commonly seen in museums, this altar gives an excellent conception of what a medieval altarpiece really was—a majestic and glowing ensemble of painting and carving, bright with gold leaf and crowded with stories to illustrate the story of Christianity and the Church.

On the outside of the polyptych, to right and left, appear the Angel of the Annunciation and the Virgin Annunciate. In the center, above left, is the Nativity or rather the Adoration of the Christ Child, with a shepherd feeding his flocks in the background. Below this is the Adoration of the Magi, who are represented as crowned kings bearing gifts of gold, while a great star pours its rays down upon the Child. At the upper right, Christ emerges from the tomb. Below this is represented the death of the Virgin. In the predella, the central panel represents Christ in the tomb, with the instruments of the Passion. To the left are St. Peter, St. Lucy and the Virgin; to the right, St. John Evangelist and St. Barbara.



**ALTARPIECE**
**SPANISH** (third quarter 15th century)
*Gift of Mrs. Lillian Henkel Haass, 1947*

The altarpiece was purchased in Madrid in 1925 by Mrs. Haass and hung in her collection until it was given to the museum. The only student of Spanish painting who saw it and ventured an opinion on its authorship is Chandler Post, who attributed it to the school of Luis Borrassa (1380-1424), the founder of the International Style in Barcelona. He gives the altarpiece to a master who painted a small retable over an altar at the right of the nave in the parish church of All, just southwest of Puigcerdá, which is the Spanish border station on the modern railroad line from Barcelona to Andorra and Toulouse. The All Master, as Post calls him, was active in the first half of the fifteenth century. The attribution does not seem satisfactory for two reasons. The All Master's work is much more rustic in quality than this altarpiece; while the costumes, and especially the textiles, depicted in the Detroit altarpiece are distinctly of the second half of the fifteenth century. The altarpiece seems to belong rather to the late Gothic style derived from Bernardo Martorell (the Master of St. George), which prevailed through Catalonia in the second half of the fifteenth century.

No problems of identification in art history are more difficult than those presented by Spanish painting in the second half of this century. An enormous number of paintings were produced. Each city and region had apparently its own group of painters. Influences from Italy and Flanders mingled with native tendencies of style. Martorell and his school in Catalonia present, however, a strongly indigenous character which is clearly apparent in this altar. For the present it seems better to call this simply Catalonian, third quarter of the fifteenth century.

E. P. RICHARDSON

Cat. no. 929. Acc. no. 47.184. Panel. The main altar, height 6 feet 5 inches, width 7 feet 5½ inches; the predella, height 19⅝ inches, width 7 feet 11 inches. Ref.: Chandler R. Post, *A History of Spanish Painting,* IV, ii, 534 and VIII, ii, 608. Gift of Mrs. Lillian Henkel Haass, 1947.

## THE MAGDALEN IN THE WILDERNESS *by* JACOPO TINTORETTO

Venetian painting in the latter half of the sixteenth century was a marvelous outburst of genius and skill, unsurpassed in Italian art. In addition to Titian and his numerous followers, and Paolo Veronese, one of the most superb of decorative painters, there was the solitary and individual figure of Tintoretto. Titian and Veronese are represented in our collection by capital works. Tintoretto, one of the most many-sided of painters, was represented in our collection by a ceiling painting, *The Dreams of Men,* from the Palazzo Barbo a San Pantaleone, on the Grand Canal, an early work, done before 1550. We have also an example of his official portraiture, the *Doge Girolamo Priuli.* But these two pictures give only a slight notion of his richness of invention and the splendor and poetry of his style.

*The Magdalen in the Wilderness,* which has now been added to our collection as the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb, is an example of his mature work, imposing in scale, brilliant in execution, and filled with the strange dramatic poetry of his art. It comes from the collections of the Earls of Lonsdale and hung in Lowther Castle, situated on the borders of Westmoreland and Cumberland in the northwest corner of England. In this vast but remote estate it has been seen by few students of painting. Waagen, over a century ago, visited Lowther Castle and noted it briefly as "Tintoretto. 1. The Magdalen. Whole-length figure, life-size; of great energy . . ."; and his notice was mentioned in Osmaston's list.[1] Otherwise, so far as I can find, the picture has not been noticed in Tintoretto studies.

The Lonsdale collection contained a few notable Dutch and Italian pictures, a large collection of classical marbles and a great number of sporting pictures. The Dutch seventeenth century and the large Italian pictures were mainly acquired in the 1760's and 1770's by Sir James Lowther,[2] created first Earl of Lonsdale in 1784. The Tintoretto was presumably acquired at that time; but from what source is unknown. The subject is rather exceptional in

Tintoretto's work. He painted a *Magdalen in the Wilderness* in the Scuola San Rocco, Venice, a masterpiece of his latest style in the 1580's. A second *"Maddalena che piaghe i suoi falli a pie del Redentore"* is mentioned by Ridolfi as in the Casa Grimana a Santo Luca in 1648.[3] There are, however, two lost pictures which might be identified with ours. One was the *Magdalen* which was in the collection of the painter Niccolo Renieri in 1663[4]. The sale catalogue of the Renieri collection describes his picture as "Una Madalena in ginocchione, grande al naturale, figura intiera alta quarte 8⅔, large 6½."[5] The measurements given for Renieri's picture were about 78 by 57 inches (1 quarta, or span: 9 inches). The picture now in Detroit is 79½ inches by 53⅜ inches. If one may interpret "una Madalena in ginocchione" as simply a hasty expression for "the Magdalen at prayer" the Lowther-Detroit canvas seems to correspond very well with Renieri's picture. There was also a picture in the now destroyed church of S. Maria Maddelena, on the Canareggio, in Venice, described thus by Borghini in 1584: "In Santa Maria Maddalena due quadri d'essa Santa, nell' uno quando ella predica, e nell' altro quando volenda comunicarsi, tramortisce e muore" (. . . one in which wishing to take communion, she faints and dies.)[6] In Sansovino-Martinioni the latter of these is described as ". . . la penitenza fatta da lei ne i boschi di Marsilia" (. . . her penitence in the wilderness of Marseilles)[7], a description which fits our picture even more exactly. But the similarity of measurements and the fact that our painting has the style more of an easel picture than a church decoration, point perhaps to the picture in the Renieri collection. In either case, this new work is a capital work of Jacopo Tintoretto at his best level and a notable addition to the list of his paintings in America.

St. Mary Magdalen is one of the beautiful legendary figures of western art. According to the tradition followed in Tintoretto's time, Mary Magdalen out of whom Jesus cast seven devils, Mary of Bethany the sister of Martha and Lazarus, and "the woman who was a sinner" who anointed the feet of Christ in Bethany, were one and the same person. The legend which grew up around her was that she and Lazarus and Martha were very rich. Lazarus was a soldier. Martha was a model of virtue and propriety. But Mary lived a life of pleasure and self indulgence. The teaching of Christ brought about her reform and she became one of his devoted followers. After the crucifixion she and her brother and sister, with a number of other Christians, left Palestine and settled in Provence where Lazarus eventually became the first bishop of Marseilles. Mary Magdalen, however, retired into the wilderness of the mountains of Provence where she devoted herself to solitary penitence for the sins of her past life. During this long seclusion she was sustained only by the ministry of the angels. This later life of the Magdalen became one of the most popular themes of Renaissance art. Here, painted by Tintoretto at the height of his mature style, it offers a theme for his most vivid poetic imagination. Taken with his much earlier *Dreams of Men,* it illustrates the growth of his art into one of the wonderful creations of western painting.

THE MAGDALEN IN THE WILDERNESS
*By* JACOPO TINTORETTO, ITALIAN (1518-1594)
*Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb, 1948*

Ridolfi, the seventeenth century painter who studied under one of his principal pupils, and whose biography of Tintoretto is our chief source of knowledge about his life, says that when he installed himself in his own studio he wrote on the wall, as the aim of his art, "the drawing of Michelangelo and the color of Titian." But his first model of colors was actually the painter Andrea Schiavone. He knew Michelangelo's sculpture in the Medici tombs through the casts made by Daniello da Volterra, and actually based two of his own early frescoes for the Palazzo Guzzoni, on the Grand Canal, upon the *Aurora* and *Dusk*. But Michelangelo's Sistine Ceiling and *Last Judgment* made the greatest impression on him. He must have visited Rome to see them, at what date we

do not know; but it must have been between 1541, when the *Last Judgment* was completed, and 1546, when Tintoretto painted the *Miracle of St. Mark* in which Michelangelo's influence is clearly dominant.

Our ceiling painting, *The Dreams of Men,* has only recently been cleaned by Mr. William Suhr so that one can see it for the first time unobscured by a massive coat of dirt and old varnish. It is now clearly a youthful work. It shows the influence of Schiavone still in the round blunt-featured facial types; but Michelangelo's influence is still stronger in the violently twisting, elongated heroic figures. Tintoretto is already remarkable for the flying movement of these figures through the deep, lofty space of the ceiling. The powerful dark silhouettes cutting across the lighted background already announce a strongly personal style. But in color and light it is not distinguished when compared with his later work.

The *Magdalen,* however, belongs to a phase when the development of his luminous color, dramatic poetry of feeling and a classical simplicity of drawing (revealing the influence of Titian) were combined in a series of wonderful works, marked by the great Crucifixion of 1565 in San Rocco (where the group at the foot of the cross is one of his masterpieces of dramatic pathos), the Crucifixion in San Cassiano, and the *Origin of the Milky Way* in London. Prof. R. Palluchini, who is preparing a work on the early years of the artist, likewise dates it after 1560.[8]

In this *Magdalen* the color is no longer mere paint for a palette, but, magically dissolved in a painter's vision of light and air, is a pictorial language akin to the grand resonance of music. His brushstroke in the windswept trees and dashing water is a vehement stroke, now with a dry brush, now heavily loaded with oily impasto, now boldly sweeping, now delicate, which fills one with astonishment and delight. Yet technical virtuosity is only a means to an end. The scene is utterly real and convincing. The praying figure seems to live and breathe, is almost incredibly beautiful in the rapt intensity of its life. The landscape is full of movement of wind and water. And all is transposed to the plane of noble and mysterious grandeur which is the imaginative tone of Italian art at its highest point.

E. P. RICHARDSON

[1] Cat. no. 962. Acc. no. 48.394. Height 79½ inches; width 53⅜ inches. Ref.: Waagen, *Treasures of Art in Great Britain,* III, p. 265; Osmaston, *Art and Genius of Tintoret,* II, p. 189. I understand from Mr. Waterhouse that Mr. Tancred Borenius also had seen the picture and spoken enthusiastically of it.

[2] I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. Waterhouse for this information. Some information about the family is also given in Capt. Lionel Dawson, *Lonsdale,* London, Oldhams Press, 1946.

[3] Carlo Ridolfi (ed. Hadeln), *Maraviglie dell'arte . . .,* II, p. 54. This may be, as Hadeln suggests, the *Feast in the House of Levi* in the Escorial, a workshop version of Tintoretto's signed and dated painting of 1562 in the Museo Civico, Padua.

[4] Sansovino-Martinioni, *Venetia citta nobilissima . . .,* Venice, 1663, p. 378; and Ridolfi-von Hadeln, *loc. cit.,* p. 56, n. 6.

[5] Giuseppe Campori, *Raccolta di cataloghi ed inventarii inediti . . .,* Modena, 1870, p. 445.

[6] *Il Riposo di Raffaello Borghini, in cui della Pittura, e della Scultura* . . ., Florence, 1584, p. 553.

[7] Sansovino-Martinioni, *op. cit,* p. 146. Boschini, *Le Minere,* 1664, p. 477, however adds that Domenico Tintoretto had added "l'anima stessa, che ascende al cielo" (her soul, ascending to heaven).

[8] Letter to the present writer, April, 1949.

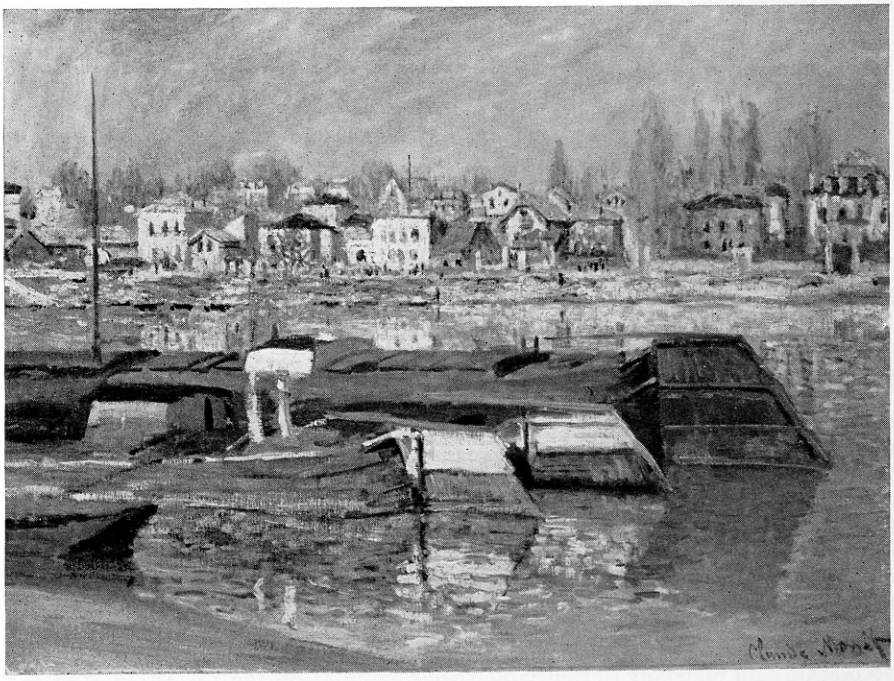
## MONET'S *SEINE AT ASNIÈRES*

I doubt if there has ever been in the history of painting a more congenial group of friends than that formed by the Impressionist painters, each one helping and encouraging the others, Renoir praising his opposite Cézanne and introducing him to his collector friends, Cézanne copying for his own pleasure the portrait that Renoir had made of him, Manet the elder of the group, following the lessons of a younger Monet, Degas even, so often bitter, collecting and cherishing all through his long life works by Monet, Cézanne or Renoir. Such mutual admiration and support were necessary, for the Impressionists have known all that adversity held in store for the bohemians of nineteenth century France – absolute poverty, sarcasms, humiliations, incomprehension on the part not only of the public, but even of such innovators as Daumier. If there is no bitterness in their works, but on the contrary a *joie de vivre* such as painting had not known since Boucher and Fragonard, it is in part, I believe, due to this Brotherhood of gifted and understanding artists.

In the crucial years of the fight for recognition, the most pathetic figure of the group was probably Claude Monet. Married, the father of two children, he was often in a desperate situation, literally accepting bread from Renoir "so that we won't starve," as he wrote to another of his friends, or begging Manet to find a collector willing to purchase "ten or twenty of his pictures at 100 francs each."[1] And yet it was during that period, roughly the decade 1870-1880, that he painted one of the most cheerful landscapes of the nineteenth century, *The Seine at Asnières,* a recent gift of the Ralph Harman Booth Fund to the Institute.[2] Almost Japanese in its composition and chords of color, and brightening the wall of the Detroit museum gallery in which it hangs, that luminous painting seems to embody the aims of Hokusai's *Mangwa*: "to hand down to future ages and to bring within the knowledge of our remote fellowmen beyond a thousand leagues, the spirit and form of all the joy and happiness we see filling the Universe."

For another reason, *The Seine at Asnières* is an important addition to our collection. Few other paintings even by Monet, the recognized leader of the movement, exemplify more completely all that is best and most constructive in Impressionism. In certain works of his later years, when he painted his "series" – cathedrals, haystacks, *Nymphéas* seen at different times of the day and therefore differently colored by the sun, "that charlatan," as Corot called it – it happens that Monet, like Rimbaud, is carried away by a desire to express the inexpressible and that his landscapes have the shapelessness, the haziness of

sonnets slowly pondered by a Symbolist poet. But *The Seine at Asnières* was executed when Monet was at the height of his powers, in the more solid and precise style which, it seems, will be recognized that of his "best time." The subject, as so often happens with Impressionist painting, is trite: Asnières was then a small town in the suburbs of Paris inhabited mostly by *petits bourgeois* and retired shopkeepers such as Maupassant or Daudet described, or such as Seurat (the *Grande Jatte* is close by) was to depict a few years later. But Monet disliked as much as Cézanne *la peinture propre et horriblement ressemblante* – lush and frightfully life-like painting. For him these white and red houses, these grey barges, even the Ile-de-France sky with its pearly sheen, were nothing but a starting point for a "variation in opale," a depiction of the play of shifting light over the Seine's slow waters. Here, as in Monet's other water scenes, there is a feeling of mirage; of "métaphores," as Marcel Proust called the deceptive effects of Elstir-Monet's paintings. But the *Asnières* is not the work of a "tricky" painter. With its subtle sense of color, its extraordinary variety of texture – forceful, broad strokes in the Vermeer-like foreground and, in the background, minute touches which are like the epitome of the Impressionist technique – it has the lyrical intensity of effect and the feeling for the poetry of space and light which great painters achieve without great effort. It



THE SEINE AT ASNIERES
*By* CLAUDE MONET, FRENCH (1840-1926)
*Gift of the Ralph Harman Booth Fund, 1948*

was Marcel Proust who pointed out that each creative artist obliges us to look at the external world through his own eyes. Sometimes we revolt, sometimes we discover a new range of emotions in the companionship of great men. To rediscover the world with Monet is a pleasant task.

PAUL L. GRIGAUT

[1] The most thorough studies of the lives of Impressionist painters, during the "heroic" years and the later, less arduous period, are: John Rewald, *The History of Impressionism* (New York, 1946) and Lionello Venturi, *Les Archives de l'Impressionisme* (New York, 1939). M. E. Chernowitz, *Marcel Proust and Painting* (New York, 1945), forms also a valuable study of Impressionism.

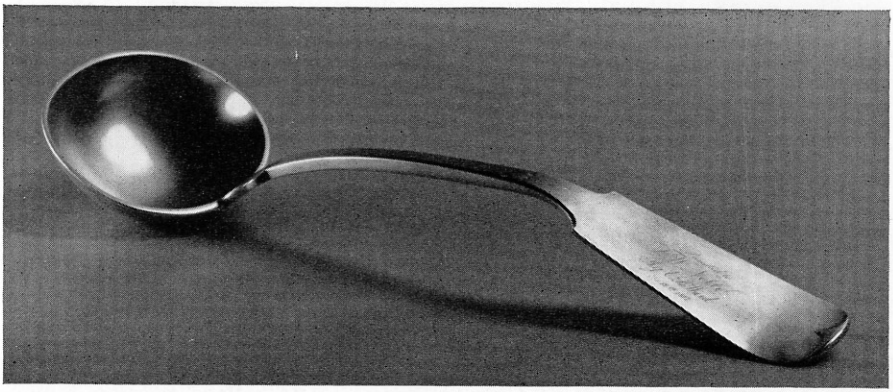
[2] Cat. no. 957. Acc. no. 48.416. Gift of the Ralph Harman Booth Fund, 1948. Canvas. Height, 21¼ inches; width, 28½ inches. Signed lower right. The painting is not dated but it is close to the *Carrières Saint-Denis* (Louvre), which bears the date 1872. Mr. Rewald kindly informed me that the date may well be confined further to 1874-75. Collections: Victor Desfossés, Paris (No. 45 in catalogue of the sale, April 26, 1899; illustrated); Ambroise Vollard, Paris. Exhibited Durand-Ruel Gallery, Paris, 1936; it was then in Mme. Fernand Alphen's collection (see *Apollo,* vol. 23, 1936, p. 106, in which the painting is illustrated as *Les Péniches*). Reproduced in C. Mauclair, *Monet et l'impressionisme,* 1943, pl. 13.

## AN EARLY DETROIT SILVER LADLE

Although it has been increasingly difficult to obtain distinguished examples of American silver, the Museum has recently had the good fortune to receive as a gift from Mrs. Lillian Henkel Haass a handsome ladle bearing the mark *T. B. Leavenworth, Detroit* and fashioned from native silver from Lake Superior. The ladle is remarkable for its vigorous, restrained design and its intrinsic value is enhanced for us by the personalities associated with its history as well as the fascinating story of Silver Island where the silver was mined.

According to the genealogy of the Leavenworth family, Thomas Burr Leavenworth was born in 1821 at Bethany, Connecticut, the son of a shoemaker and farmer. He was trained as a spoonmaker in Woodbury, Connecticut, perhaps in the workshop of Gideon B. Botsford (1776-1866) or Daniel Curtiss (1801-1878), the only Woodbury silversmiths listed by George Munson Curtis in his book on Connecticut silver. Leavenworth left Woodbury for New Bern, North Carolina, and subsequently worked in Buffalo, New York, before coming to Detroit in 1851 or 1852. The name Thomas B. Leavenworth appears in the Detroit city directories from 1852 to 1894, listed variously as "Silver spoonmaker," "Silversmith," and "Silver spoon and fork maker."

The ladle acquired by the Museum is of unusual weight. The heavy, wide bowl is carefully balanced by the thickness of the shank, greater at the junction with the bowl and diminishing with a graceful curve towards the fiddle-back handle. Unlike many of the designers of this period, Leavenworth seems to have preferred the simplicity of earlier styles and his work avoids the ornate decoration and elaborate design which were popular during the last half of the century. Similar design may be seen in the Leavenworth silver previously acquired by the Museum, two tablespoons, the bequest of Jane E. Armstrong



SILVER LADLE
*By* T. B. LEAVENWORTH, DETROIT (1821-1894)
*Gift of Mrs. Lillian Henkel Haass, 1949*

in 1926, and six teaspoons given in 1947 by Miss Sarah Sheridan. These pieces have been arranged along with the ladle in the recently installed gallery of The Arts of French Canada and Old Detroit.

The history of the Leavenworth ladle is suggested by the following inscription which appears on the front of the handle, "Presented to F. W. Noble by E. B. Ward, Feb. 12, 1872," and on the back "Native silver from Silver Islet, Lake Superior." The name Eber Brock Ward is well known in Detroit and closely associated with the city's industrial development, particularly with mining and metal refining activities. Born in Ontario, Ward came to Belle River in 1822 with his father and remained there until 1830 when they moved to Bois Blanc Lighthouse in the Straits of Mackinac. Young Ward here started his own fishing business, the first of numerous ventures connected with the natural resources of the northern lake area. Among his many interests were the famous Ward Line of lake boats, developed in partnership with his Uncle Samuel Ward, foundries, railroads, glass factories, timber and mining. He is credited with producing the first Bessemer steel manufactured in America at his Wyandotte mills in September, 1864. His mining interests were under the direction of Francis William Noble, and among the most profitable of his investments was the Silver Islet Consolidated Mining and Lands Company of which he was a director. It was silver from this mine which was used by Leavenworth in fashioning our ladle, made as a birthday gift from Ward to Noble, who was born February 12, 1826 in Unadilla, New York.

The story of Silver Islet is among the most interesting tales of the lake region. Although it had been known that small deposits existed in the Lake Superior area, no discoveries of any value were made until 1868 when a party of prospectors from the Montreal Mining Company explored a small island about a mile off Thunder Cape, Ontario, and uncovered the mine which became for fifteen years the greatest silver-producing mine in the world. This

tiny bit of land, about ninety feet in diameter, and at its highest point only eight feet above the icy waters of Lake Superior, held great wealth but also presented great problems for the mining engineers. The initial excavation uncovered rich deposits which were immediately sold with great profit. The difficulties of operation, however, proved so great that the Montreal Mining Company sold their island to a New York syndicate directed by a group of Detroiters headed by Major Alexander Hamilton Sibley, son of the first Mayor of Detroit under the charter of 1806, and C. A. Trowbridge. The new owners worked day and night constructing a new shaft surrounded by a superstructure much greater in size than the original rock. In her recent book on Lake Superior, Grace Lee Nute gives an interesting account of the development of Silver Islet including an entertaining description of the village developed on the mainland for the officers of the company. The village became famous for its lavish entertaining and provided a steam yacht for excursions in the lake. The great period of Silver Islet was from 1872 to 1875 after which activities were carried on irregularly. The last great vein was uncovered in 1878 but after this the mine began to fail and by 1884 it was shut down. Although later attempts have been made to revive it, operations are so costly that it has been found unprofitable. During its activities the Silver Islet mine produced silver whose total value was $3,250,000.

This ladle by one of Detroit's best nineteenth century silversmiths adds another link in our reconstruction of the city's early silver craftsmen.

W. E. WOOLFENDEN

Acc. no. 49.21. Maximum length, 14½ inches; length of handle, 11½ inches; maximum diameter of bowl, 4⅛ inches. Gift of Mrs. Lillian Henkel Haass, 1949.

## A VIEW OF THE TOWN OF BRIL *by* DANIEL VOSMAER

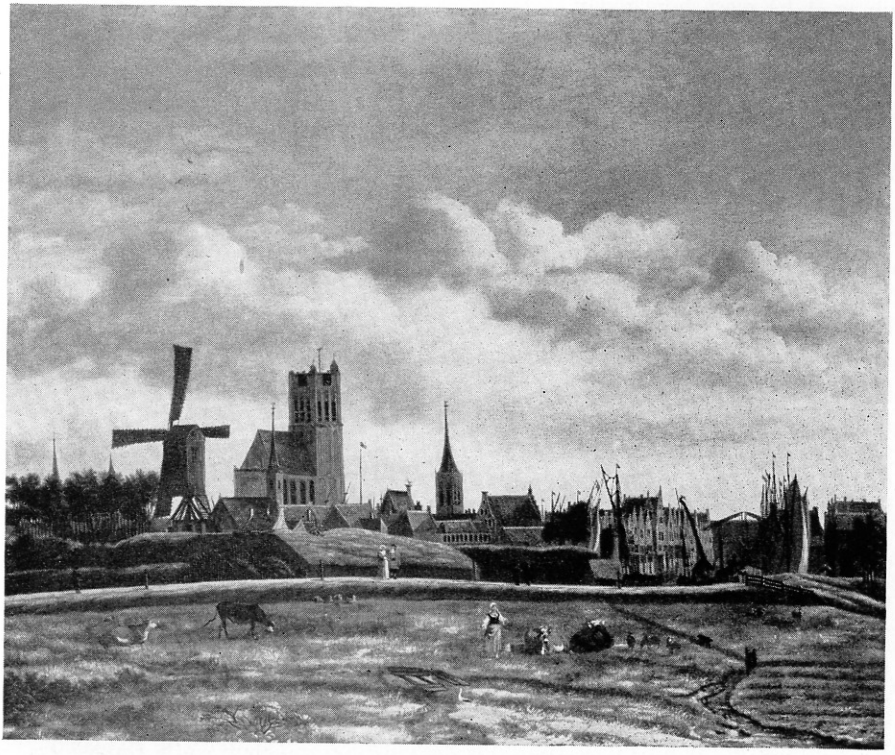
This painting, by one of the rarest of Dutch painters, is of great interest to our collection, not only for its charm of subject and its sensitive style, but as throwing further light on the great closing phase of Dutch seventeenth century painting.

The greatest imaginative impulse which took form in the 1650's in Delft – with the work of Carel Fabritius, Vermeer, de Hooch, de Witte and the painters of their circle, which included Vosmaer – was the discovery of the architectonic beauty of light and space. The vision of Dutch painting in the period of Hals and Rembrandt was primarily concerned with human character and human emotions. In the work of the Delft painters the human drama was hushed, so that the silent beauty of light and space could make itself felt. Vermeer and de Hooch discovered this new imaginative theme of light and space in vistas within the homes and gardens of Delft. Emanuel de Witte found it in the solemn interiors of the churches. But Carel Fabritius, the catalyzer of

the new movement, found it in all sorts of subjects, big and little, a goldfinch on its perch against a plaster wall, or a wide view of a deserted square in a Dutch village.

Daniel Vosmaer (active in Delft 1650-1666) was a member of a numerous family of artisans and artists in Delft. We do not know under whom he received his training as a painter. But his interest in views of towns and outdoor scenes shows the influence of Carel Fabritius.

This view of the little seaport town of Bril is a study of the beauty of light in the late afternoon, just as twilight closes in. The moment when the level rays of the sun touch the green fields for the last time, and linger on the walls and roofs of the little town, is a moment which served as the theme of some of the greatest of Dutch landscapes. Vosmaer has given a sensitive treatment of the beauty of such a moment in his own distinctive style. The high, pale sky, filled with the soft mist clouds which drift in from the sea, is painted with an acute sensitiveness to light. There is a peculiar charm in Vosmaer's way of arranging his composition, so that the broad, almost empty foreground is in contrast to the close-packed, jumbled roofs and towers of the town. The



A VIEW OF BRIL
By DANIEL VOSMAER, DUTCH (active 1650-1666)
*Gift of Mrs. Sidney F. Heavenrich in memory of her husband, 1949*

varied interest of the skyline displays the artist's full talents as a painter of architecture.

The canvas also gives an accurate and delightful impression of what a Dutch town was in the seventeenth century. The town of Bril, at the mouth of the Nieuwe Maas, was then an active little seaport. In modern times a trip to it from the great twentieth century seaport of Rotterdam is a pleasant excursion into the past, for the little town with its tiny harbor and great church remains much as it was three centuries ago. The town of Bril is famous in Dutch history for two things. It was the birthplace of Admiral Tromp, one of the heroes of Holland's naval wars of the seventeenth century. And at Bril in 1572 broke out the first armed rebellion against the Spaniards. A band of Dutch nobles and their followers driven to revolt by the tyranny of Alva captured Bril and held it for William the Silent. From this small beginning developed the generation of struggle which created the independent Netherlands.

This picture was given to us in memory of a great lover of Dutch painting, Mr. Sidney F. Heavenrich, by his wife. All of us who knew Mr. Heavenrich remember with pleasure the warmth and gentleness of his genial, kindly spirit. I like to think that this picture is one in front of which he would have liked to linger if he were here today.

E. P. RICHARDSON

Cat. no. 963; acc. no. 49.7. Canvas. Height, 32¾ inches; width 39½ inches. References: Rotterdam, Boymans Museum, "Vermeer, oorsprong en involaed Fabritius, de Hooch, de Witte," 1935, no. 97.

## FALLEN RIDER *by* PAVEL TCHELITCHEW

Acquired in 1948 as an anonymous gift, this gouache drawing by Tchelitchew has the distinction of being the first work by that artist to come into the permanent Institute collection.

The drawing dates from 1929 and Tchelitchew's circus theme and limited palette period. Blue and pink ochres – reminiscent of Picasso's rose period palette – unite the figures in a moment and atmosphere apart from ordinary experience. While the contorted poses suggest that the figures must rise immediately, each seems completely in the thrall of some mental state or force imposed by the fall and lingering after, inhibiting action.

In the *Fallen Rider* of 1930, a painting related to the present drawing and in a private collection in Philadelphia, the figures are more temporal and specific. The rider, now clothed, is unconscious from the shock of the fall, his arms falling limply to his sides. The violent perspective of his right leg is more pronounced in the painting, although the sharply foreshortened leg in the drawing prepares for this mannerism and relates both painting and drawing to this pictorial rather than literary phase of Tchelitchew's career.

A. S. CAVALLO

Cat. no. 948. Acc. no. 48.374. Gouache on paper. Height, 20½ inches; width, 28 inches. Signed lower left. Anonymous gift, 1948.

FALLEN RIDER
By PAVEL TCHELITCHEW, AMERICAN (Contemporary)
*Anonymous gift, 1943*

## AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY COSTUME

A delightful gift has come to the textile department. It is a costume of the third quarter of the eighteenth century that once belonged to Sarah Ayscough Malcolm, wife of General William Malcolm of New York, and is now presented by the original wearer's great-great-granddaughters, Miss Edith Malcolm White and Miss Ruth Gordon White, of Morristown, New Jersey.

The descent of the gown is clear. From Mrs. William Malcolm it passed to her daughter, Frances, who married Charles Snowden, then to their daughter, Frances Snowden who married James Matthew Waller, and so to their daughter, Frances Malcolm Waller (Mrs. Charles Basil White), who passed on the dress and its rich heritage of family tradition to her daughters, the Misses Edith and Ruth White, who now generously share both with the City of Detroit.

Since every costume reflects something of the person who wore it and the time when it was worn, a few genealogical notes, not easily accessible in the books that recount the history of the eighteenth century in New York, may not be without interest. Sarah Ayscough was the daughter of Dr. Richard Ayscough of Hanover Square, New York City, and his first wife, Mary Carpender (daughter of George and Elizabeth Carpender), whom he married on September 24, 1751. Dr. Ayscough was, according to tradition, at one time surgeon in the British army. As a witness to the will of Paul Richard in 1749 he signed himself "Richard Ayscough, surgeon." When his wife, Mary, died, he married as his second wife, on January 19, 1755, Ann Langdon, daughter of Richard and Ann Langdon. On May 29, 1760, at the age of 37, Dr. Ayscough died and was buried in Trinity Churchyard, leaving a will, in which he called himself "Practitioner in Physick and Chirugeon," and left to his daughter Sarah "£500 current money of N. Y." One of his executors was his uncle, the Rev. Dr. Francis Ayscough, at one time tutor to the grandchildren of George II of Eng-

land, the princes George (later George III) and Edward. In 1772 Sarah Ayscough, then grown to twenty years of age, was married to William Malcolm, a twenty-seven-year old Scotsman, resident in New York, best remember for his part in the Revolutionary War and for his close association with General George Washington. A Colonel in the Revolution, he was appointed a Brigadier General of the New York Militia. He served in the military escort at the ceremonies in connection with the inauguration of President George Washington and Vice-President John Adams in New York City in 1789. He died on September 1, 1791, and an account of his death and funeral appears in *The New York Magazine* for September of that year. He was successful in business and prominent in public life. He was a member of the Chamber of Commerce, State Assembly, Marine Society and St. Andrew's Society, and Deputy Grand Master of the Masonic Order in the State of New York. It is possible that the gown now in the Detroit Institute of Arts was purchased as a wedding dress for that day in 1772 when Sarah Ayscough married William Malcolm and, as was customary in those days, it may well have been worn to church and on other occasions of public gathering for some years.

The costume consists of a dress, petticoat or underskirt, and a pair of slippers, in one of which is attached the printed label "Made by John A. Wolfe, No. 24, corner of Crown and Smith Street, New York." Crown Street is present-day Liberty Street and Smith Street is now William Street, so No. 24 at this intersection was only three blocks north of Wall Street, and not far from Hanover Square where Sarah Ayscough lived. The slippers, made of finest ivory-toned kid-skin with small heels, are decorated with many black dots and an escutcheon-shaped ornament on the toes, and trimmed with black grosgrain ribbon. The dress is open in front, showing the petticoat of white satin. The bodice, pointed front and back, has lace of the period edging the white décolleté and the elbow-length sleeves. The ample skirt could be looped into paniers or worn hanging in straight lines. As there is no dressmaker's label, it is impossible to say where the dress was made; probably it was New York, where there was then a flourishing market for silks imported from England and France.

The material of the dress is a silk woven probably at Spitalfields, England. When in 1685 Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes by which Henry IV had granted freedom of religion, many thousands of Protestant silk weavers left France, and some of these settled at the village of Spitalfields close to the eastern wall of London, where a community of silk weavers had been established in 1629 by Jan van Stryp of Brabant. The weavers from Lyons quickly learned to adapt their designs to the English taste and all through the eighteenth century they were fairly prosperous. Spitalfields silks were in demand in England and exported to the colonies. Technically they are similar to the French silks, but the designs of these English brocades are simpler, the floral patterns are more loosely scattered over the ground, and the brocaded parts are often supplemented by patterns floated in the ground weave. In this costume the ground weave is white faille woven with two vertical bands of satin in the center of each width

GOWN OF MRS. WILLIAM MALCOLM (back view)
American, 3rd quarter 18th century; made of English (Spitalfields) silk.
*Gift of Miss Edith Malcolm White and Miss Ruth Gordon White, Morristown, New Jersey, 1949*

and one near each selvage. On to this alternately lustrous and matt ground sprigs of anemones are brocaded, in various combinations of red, blue, yellow and green. Their disposition is almost haphazard, as if strewn by the Flora of Botticelli. The effect is one of exquisite lightness. The pattern lends itself to the draped effects demanded by fashion as no continuous design ever could.

The designer of this charming fabric remains anonymous. He may have designed his anemones as he saw them growing in field or garden, waving in the wind. Or he may have adapted them from a design in one of the numerous pattern-books which were then published by many well-known painters, masters of decorative art. One of these was Charles Germain de Saint-Aubin (1721-1786), a protégé of Madame de Pompadour, with the title of "Dessinateur du Roi pour le costume." Among the several albums of designs which Saint-Aubin published around the middle of the century there is one entitled "Vingt quatre bouquets champêtres." One of these bouquets consists of two sprigs of anemones tied with a conventional blue ribbon. The shading of Saint-Aubin's anemones is absolutely similar to the color scheme of the silk brocade. These albums were

widely circulated and it is therefore quite possible that the designer of the Spitalfields weaving establishment knew the charming design of the painter from Paris.

The fine state of preservation of the costume speaks well not only for the quality of the material and the skill of the dressmaker, but also for the loving care which the Misses White have bestowed upon it in the years of their custodianship. This is the first complete costume of its period to enter the Museum collection, and so it is the more heartily welcomed. It is on display in the Textile Gallery as a pendant to a lavender chiné taffeta gown of the mid-nineteenth century (the gift of Miss Allen Armstrong in 1944); each costume is typical of its period in its style and material and each has a beauty of its own.

ADELE COULIN WEIBEL and FRANCIS WARING ROBINSON

Acc. no. 49.5. Gift of Miss Edith Malcolm White and Miss Ruth Gordon White, Morristown, New Jersey, 1949.

## DECORATIVE ARTS

The objects illustrated in the following pages are examples of the crafts of periods when art meant, among other things, perfect craftsmanship. Ranging from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth century, from a Venetian glass vase to an English porcelain inkstand, they belong to widely different periods and countries. Yet all these objects have qualities in common. They are the work of anonymous artisans, and the result of sincere effort and exceptional skill; more important still they spring from an urge for something more than material needs and they have the intimate quality of things with which human beings have lived.

For the most part acquired within the last few months, these objects fill important gaps in our collections. They represent only a small section of such acquisitions, some of which (Mrs. Haass's important collection of Roman glass, Mr. Tannahill's series of American and European pewter for example) we hope to reproduce in forthcoming issues of the *Bulletin*.

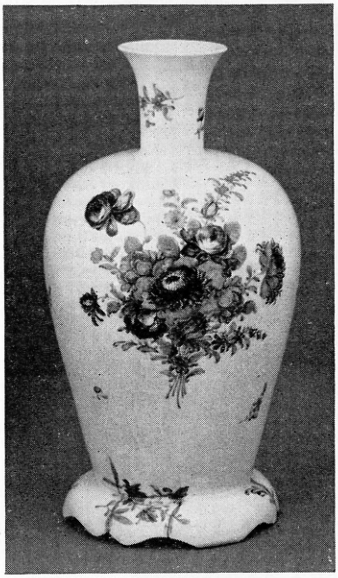
(OPPOSITE PAGE)

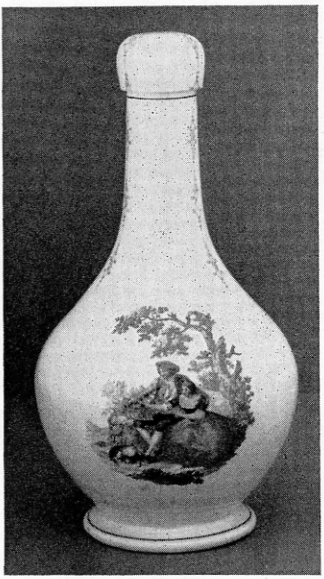
Mahogany Bonnet-top Chest-on-chest, American (Marblehead, Mass.), dated 1774. *Made on the occasion of the wedding of Mary Ann Hidden of Marblehead and purchased from one of her descendants. The initials N.B. painted at the back may indicate that the piece was made by Nathaniel Bowen who was still active in Massachusetts in 1800. Height (to top of central finial), 7 feet 6½ inches; width (lower section), 3 feet 9½ inches. Gift of the Gibbs-Williams Fund, 1948. Acc. no. 48.274.*

Oak and Pine Dower Chest, American (Plymouth, Mass.), third quarter of the seventeenth century. *Painted blue and mottled red. This chest is said to have been made by Kenelm Winslow or John Alden and to have belonged originally to Captain Lapham. Height, 31½ inches; length, 55½ inches. Gift of the Gibbs-Williams Fund, 1948. Acc. no. 48.418.*

(Left) Boy with flowers, English (Longton Hall), middle eighteenth century. *Copied from a Meissen figure modelled about 1750. Height, 5¼ inches. Laura H. Murphy Fund, 1948. Acc. no. 48.141.* (Right) Girl with flowers, English (Derby), about 1755. *Height, 5½ inches. Gift of Robert H. Tannahill, 1948. Acc. no. 48.327.*

Teapot, German (Meissen), about 1750. *A delicate example of rococo Meissen porcelain at its best. The other side shows the hunter and his dog resting. Mark: crossed swords. Height (to top of finial), 4¾ inches. Gift of Robert H. Tannahill, 1948. Acc. no. 48.328.*

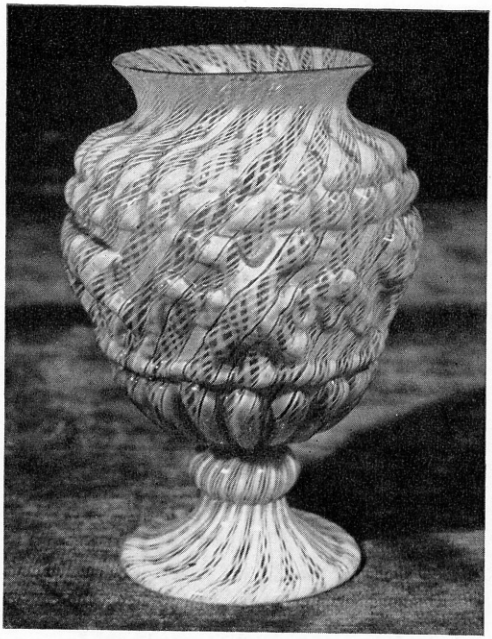




(Left) Vase, English (Bow), about 1760. *Cracks at the base, which occurred at the time of firing, have been cleverly decorated with sprays of flowers. Gift of the Laura H. Murphy Fund, 1948. Acc. no. 48.140.*

(Right) Bottle, English (Worcester), third quarter of the eighteenth century. *The purple transfer design (heightened with red, green and yellow), is inspired by a painting by Nicolas Lancret,* The Bird Cage, *formerly in Potsdam. Height, 12½ inches. Gift of Mrs. Lillian Henkel Haas, 1948. Acc. no. 48.161.*

Inkstand, English (Swansea), about 1815. *The entire surface is covered with naturalistically painted flowers on gold ground. This is probably the most important example of Swansea porcelain in America. From the Arthur James collection. Length of tray, 16⅛ inches; height of tallest well, 4¾ inches. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Roger M. Keyes, 1949. Acc. no. 49.8.*



Glass vase, Venetian, late sixteenth century. *Blown and moulded; the wide central band is decorated with animals and double-headed eagles. From Baron Meyer Rothschild's collection. Height, 4⅞ inches. Gift of Mrs. Richard H. Webber, 1949. Acc. no. 49.6.*

Saucière, French (Chantilly), about 1760. *Artificial porcelain (soft paste); decorated with scattered floral sprays. Mark: hunting horn in red. Length, 6 1/16 inches. Gift of Mrs. Lillian Henkel Haass, 1948. Acc. no. 48.275.*