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"MADONNA AND CHILD." STYLE OF LORENZO GHIRBERTI.
FLORENTINE XV CENTURY.
RECENTLY PURCHASED.

RECENT ACCESSIONS



BAPTISMAL FONT FROM VENICE. ABOUT XIII CENTURY.
RECENTLY PURCHASED.

The new acquisitions of the Detroit Institute of Art belong mostly to the fields of sculpture and the decorative arts of the Gothic and Renaissance periods, forming thus a most valuable addition to the excellent James E. Scripps collection of early paintings in the Museum.

Great periods of art cannot be understood by a knowledge of their paintings alone, even if that art expresses sometimes the highest ideas

of such a period. The foundation of all artistic culture lies in the development of the minor arts, whose importance in the earlier periods should be made clear in every museum. It is not only more enjoyable to see rooms in which decorative arts of a period are shown together with paintings, so that after looking at flat surfaces the eye may rest by looking at plastic forms; it is also of great educational value to have the

style of paintings explained by the similar style found in sculpture or objets d'art of the same epoch. Besides it should encourage the workmen of our day to see how essential the development of the minor arts has been in the past for the building up of artistic culture.

A very remarkable example of the beginning of Gothic art in Italy is the large *Baptismal Font* carved in stone, from Venice. It is almost like a companion-piece to the one which was bought years ago by the Berlin Museum, and which dates from the same period, the end of the XIII Century. The support, consisting of a male figure sitting on a lion, is still Romanesque in style, while the reliefs on the basin and the arches framing them show the beginnings of Gothic influence. For instance, the folds of the garment of the angel who chases Adam and Eve from Paradise have already the Gothic curved lines, and the form of the arches on the upper part of the fountain is characteristic of the transition period from the Romanesque to the Gothic style. Typical of Venetian art, with its various influences, from the Orient as well as from northern countries, is a Byzantine motive, the double dentils on the upper part of the support. The figure part of the fountain has the symbolic meaning characteristic of ecclesiastical art of the early Middle Ages, a meaning which cannot always be understood clearly nowadays. The lion is usually regard-

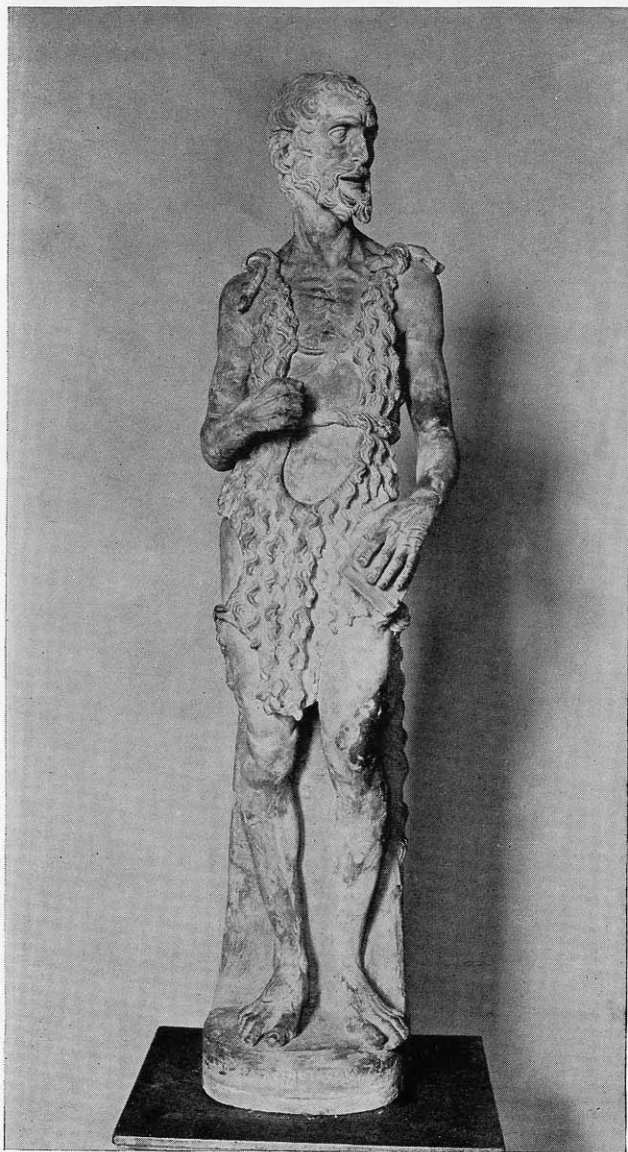
ed as the symbol of evil, while the figure which crushes him very likely represents the power of the Church. There is certainly some kind of connection between these figures and the scenes on the basin of the fountain, which explain how Sin came into the world and what were its consequences, by representing first the Fall of Adam and Eve, then their being driven from the Garden of Eden, and lastly the killing of Abel.

We advance more than a century when we pass from this fountain to the sandstone statue of the *Madonna and Child*, a rare and beautiful example of the art of Siena at the end of the Gothic period, about 1430. The posture of the Madonna, forming the famous Gothic S curve, the richness of the flowing garments which still hide the form of the body, the sweetness and lyrical sentiment of mother and child, are partly the expressions of the last phase of Gothic style, partly the character of the art of Siena, to whose artists the spirit of Gothic art was more congenial than to the more severe and realistic Florentine masters. The statue is near in style the work of the greatest Sieneese sculptor, Jacopo della Quercia, the predecessor of Donatello and Michelangelo. Some critics even think it may be a late work by him.

The right name seems to me the one which has been suggested by Dr. Schubring in his book on the art of sculpture at Siena, that is, Gio-



"MADONNA AND CHILD." SIENESE ABOUT 1430, BY A FOLLOWER
OF JACOPO DELLA QUERCIA.
RECENTLY PURCHASED.



"ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST." BY BELLANO OF PADUA, 1470.
RECENTLY PURCHASED.



"ST. MICHAEL." GERMAN GOTHIC WOOD CARVING.
RECENTLY PURCHASED.

vanni Turini, the follower of Jacopo della Quercia, who worked together with him and Donatello on the famous baptismal fountain in the cathedral of Siena. That this statue was a well-known work at the period when it was executed is indicated by the fact that there exists a terracotta replica of it in the Amsterdam Museum. While the rhythmic sense of the Gothic style is pre-eminent in the garments, we notice the beginning of the Renaissance influence in the realistic modelling of the faces of the Madonna and Child. When the figure was executed Donatello had already begun to work on the great realistic statues for the cathedral of Florence.

But even in Florence there worked several artists who were in favor of the Gothic tradition and did not dare to break with it as courageously as Donatello. Among them was Lorenzo Ghiberti, the sculptor of the bronze doors of the Baptistery. The style of Ghiberti's art is very well represented by a terracotta relief of the *Madonna and Child*, acquired by the Detroit Museum. It belongs to a group of terracotta reliefs which treat the relationship between mother and child in an especially charming and human way and prepare the road for Luca della Robbia's sweet compositions. As Ghiberti was the teacher of Luca, these reliefs have been rightly associated with his delicate art.

What a contrast if we compare with these two Madonnas the *St.*

John the Baptist of Bellano, the Paduan follower of Donatello, a work full of the severe and intense realism which Donatello introduced into Italian Renaissance art. Bellano, as the artist who completed the last works of Donatello, the pulpits at Santa Croce in Florence, is well known, and his small bronze statuettes are among those most sought after by the collectors of Renaissance sculpture. The terracotta statue bought by the Detroit Museum is one of the very few signed works of the artist, bearing the inscription "Vellano Patavinus Orvs, A. D. 1470." Before the inscription was deciphered this work was ascribed to Minelli, another North Italian artist among the followers of Donatello, but as the inscription is perfectly genuine and the style of the work agrees with some of his bronzes there can be no doubt that it is one of the finest works of this great Paduan artist, who, as a sculptor, can be compared with the painter Mantegna. The statue shows the same clear and sharp outlines, a similar intense feeling for the bare forms of nature and a passionate, almost ascetic religious sentiment to which the subject of St. John the Baptist especially lends itself.

It is interesting to compare with these Italian sculptures a few works of Northern sculptors of the XV and XVI centuries, which have been acquired by the Detroit Museum. The *St. Paul*, a French work of about 1500 coming from a church in the

Isle de France shows in a high degree the French sense for monumental forms and decorative beauty, while perhaps the individual expression is somewhat lacking in comparison with Italian sculpture. It is a typical example of the French Gothic style in sculpture, the strength of which lies in its connection with architecture and its charm in the way it preserves the great sweeping lines of the church facades. This connection has always been stronger in France than in Italy, where since Giovanni Pisano the art of sculpture freed itself from the architectural background and adopted a more individual and personal style. The material in which the present statue is executed, like many of the Gothic sculptures in the Isle de France, soft limestone, was especially adapted to great flowing lines and did not allow a too minute execution in detail.

While the French Gothic sculptures were inclined to place the

idea of decorative beauty and general charm above a detailed and individual representation of nature, the Germans, on the other hand, were apt to go too far in their intense

striving for a personal expression of feeling, and to overdo the details. It is curious how each nation selected the material which was most in accordance with its ideas; the Italian sense of harmony found its best expression in marble, the French transcribed their feeling for decoration and charm in soft stone, while the Germans carved their pleasure in intimate observation of nature in the hard but resistible wood. In no other country has the carving in wood been developed as much as in Germany,

especially in the southern part. Among the most important centres of such work belong the two cities Nuremberg and Ulm, from which the two recently acquired statues of the Detroit Museum come. The style of the charming, youthful *St. Michael*, is very near to that of



"FEMALE SAINT." ATTRIBUTED TO JORG SYRLIN, GERMAN XVI CENTURY.
RECENTLY PURCHASED.

Veit Sloss one of the three great Nuremberg sculptors, of the time of Dürer.

It has the naive, childlike expression of some of Sloss's youthful saints, their coquettish postures, their rich flowing hair and undulating, almost baroque folds in the garments, which in the present figure overflow in wild lines the carefully executed armor. On the other hand

the *Female Saint*, which is especially beautiful through the perfect preservation of the paint and gilding, shows the more quiet temperament, the more lyric feeling of the Suvian school and may be attributed to one of the best masters of Ulm, Jorg Syrlin the younger, who worked at the end of the XV and the first quarter of the XVI century.

W. R. VALENTINER

STAFF APPOINTMENT

Dr. W. R. Valentiner has been appointed as a non-resident member of the staff of the Museum as Expert and Adviser.

Trained in the Museum at the Hague as assistant to Dr. Hofstede de Groot, with whom he published several books on Dutch art, and associated with Dr. Bode of the Kaiser Frederick Museum at Berlin, with whom he also published many important volumes on art, Dr. Valentiner was Curator of Decorative Arts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City from 1908 to 1914. His writings on artistic themes include books on Rembrandt

Franz Hals, Italian Sculpture, Oriental Art, and Art of the Middle Ages. He founded the magazine "Art in America," and was its first editor. He has cataloged many important collections, notably the John G. Johnson collection, the P. A. B. Widener collection, the Borden collection and the Lydig collection. He also wrote the catalogue for the Hudson Fulton Exhibition in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1909.

Dr. Valentiner is regarded as one of the best experts in museum work today, having a thorough knowledge of almost all the public and private collections in the capitals of Europe.



"ST. PAUL." FRENCH GOTHIC, ABOUT 1500.
FROM THE ISLE DE FRANCE.
RECENTLY ACQUIRED.

EXHIBITION OF CONTEMPORARY BRITISH ETCHING

An exhibition of contemporary British etching, assembled by Lawrence Binyon, Keeper of Prints at the British Museum, will hang in the Print Galleries of the Institute during the month of December.

It is a notable group, wide in range, for it gives us a survey of the etcher's art in England from the day of its revival under Whistler and Legros, to the present time, when etchings by Eileen Soper, a child of thirteen, hang on the walls of the Royal Academy.

William Strang, Frank Short, George Clausen, Walter Sickert, and Augustus John, are the etchers representing the older generation.

Strang and Short are Technicians of the highest order—Strang strongly influenced by Legros, and always

an experimenter, and Short, whose mastery has revived mezzotint, and who holds out for the best traditions of the art.

Muirhead Bone and D. Y. Cameron are two of the greatest living etchers, both rendering architectural motives with great skill and delicacy. James McBey, Lumsden, Wheatley, Brockhurst and Blampied are younger men, not yet in the fulness of their powers, but giving promise of fine achievement.

The exhibition represents the highest in present day British etching, and we have here the work of men of assured reputations, with the promise from the younger men of greater things to come.

I. W.

EXTENSION WORK

The Detroit Institute of Arts has been sponsoring a Detroit atelier of the Beaux Arts Institute of Design. The latter is a national organization with headquarters in New York and branches in the art centers throughout the country. It sends out problems in architecture, sculpture, mural painting and interior decoration. Already work has been submitted by the Detroit atelier to the New York office in the field of mural painting.

A class in modelling has been arranged for Tuesday and Friday evenings. A group which is steadily

growing is working from a model with criticisms by Samuel Cashwan, who recently received the Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society second prize awarded by the non-resident jury. Other sculptors who have helped from time to time are such men as Theodore Spicer-Simpson and Alfred Nygard. Their criticisms proved both an inspiration and a help. As a result of this work the rooms originally occupied by the Commercial Art League have proved inadequate, and the quarters have already been expanded twice.

R. P.

SCHEDULE OF SPECIAL EVENTS AT INSTITUTE

December:

- 2nd, 10:00 A. M. to 12:00 M.* Varnishing Day: Private view of Michigan Artists. Exhibition for artists only.
8:00 to 11:00 P. M. Reception and opening view of Michigan Artists' Exhibition.
- 3rd, 10:00 A. M.* Special program for children: Singing conducted by the Chamber Music Society, followed by talk, "Music and Sculpture," by R. Poland.
- 4th, 2:45 P. M.* Musical program by Chamber Music Society, followed by talk, "The Difference Between the Spirit of Eastern and Western Art." by R. Poland.
- 9th, 8:15 P. M.* Lecture under the auspices of the Archæological Society, "The Ancient People of Chaco Canyon," by Edgar L. Hewett.
- 10th, 10:00 A. M.* Special program for children: Singing conducted by the Chamber Music Society, followed by talk, "Sculpture and Paintings to see in Detroit."
- 11th, 2:45 P. M.* Musical program by Chamber Music Society, followed by talk, "Japanese Painted Scrolls and Color Prints."
- 23rd, 7:30 P. M.* Free sketch class conducted by Recreation Commission.
- 24th, 10:00 A. M.* Special program for children: Singing for children conducted by the Chamber Music Society, followed by Moving Pictures on "Nativity."
- 25th, 2:45 P. M.* Musical program under the auspices of the Chamber Music Society, followed by talk, "The Nativity Enacted by Figurines and Persons."
- 30th, 2:00 to 4:45 P. M.* Meeting of the Archæological Society of America.
7:30 P. M. Free sketch class conducted by Recreation Commission.
- 31st, 10:00 A. M.* Special program for children: Singing conducted by the Chamber Music Society, followed by talk, "How to Fill Spaces."

SCHEDULE OF EXHIBITIONS

December 2-31—Michigan Artists Exhibition.

January 1-31—Exhibition of Paintings by Guy Wiggins.

—Exhibition of Miniatures by Royal Society of Miniature Painters and Pennsylvania Society of Miniature Painters.

—Exhibition of Paintings by H. O. Tanner.