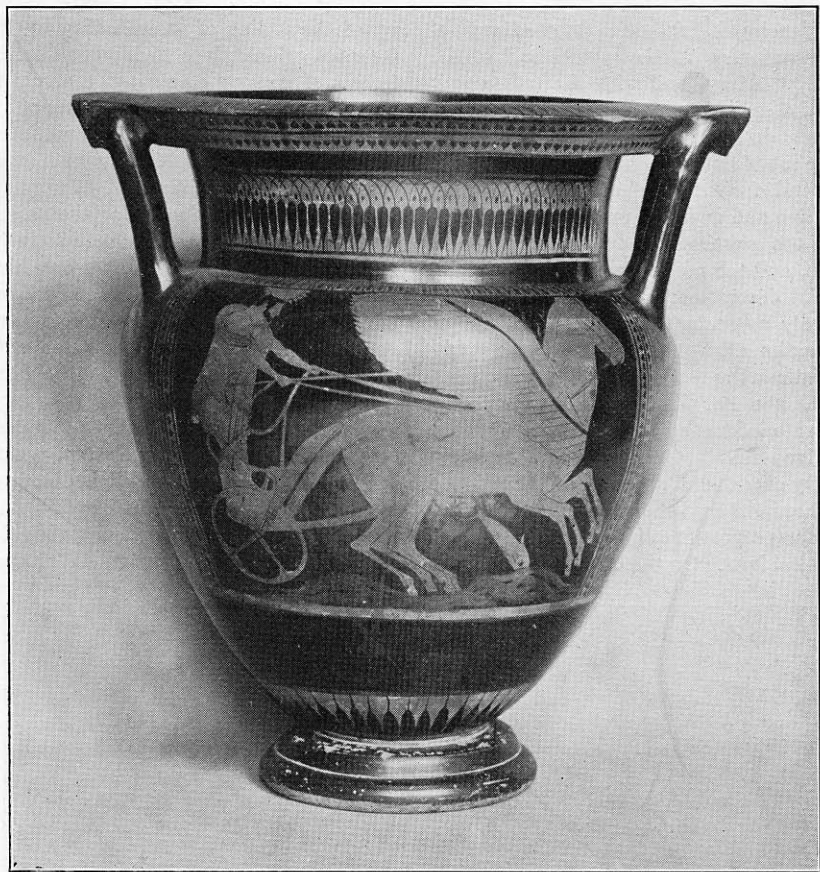


Bulletin of
The Detroit Institute of Arts
Of the City of Detroit

Vol. VI

NOVEMBER, 1924

No. 2



RED-FIGURED KRATER
Attic, Middle of V Century B. C.

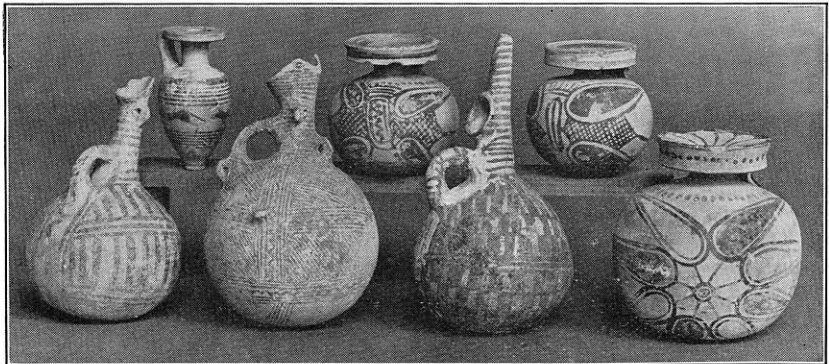
GREEK VASES

Until about fifty years ago, the art of Greek vases was regarded without dispute as the most perfect creation of European ceramics. Even the laws which were formed by the estheticists governing all kinds of ceramics, especially since the time of the newly developed enthusiasm for the classical period in the reign of Napoleon, were taken almost exclusively from the style of Greek vases. This changed completely with the increasing of the pictorial tendencies in art and the advent of Impressionism in the second half of the XIX Century, and with the rediscovery of the early Far Eastern ceramics which was a deciding factor in this movement. The art of Greek vases seemed now to be the general taste too colorless, too hard in outline and in inside decoration, too cold and too consciously thought out in proportion, and too much given to realistic pictorial decoration. Indeed, there can be hardly a greater contrast in the field of ceramics than that between the early Asiatic art and the art of Greek pottery. Both the Far Eastern ceramic and the more modern ceramic which has been derived from it, gives up almost completely every ornamental decoration; neither does it care for sharp linear outline in the forms, or for proportions built up from mathematical laws. On the other hand, it looks

for the greatest richness of color nuances and makes the soft yielding form of the clay conform to the voluptuous glimmering glaze.

The Far Eastern potter is fond of accidental effects of form and glaze, and works instinctively, in harmony with his Asiatic temperament, in contrast to the more logical and clear-thinking Greek. In the background, of course, are two absolutely different philosophies of life—the giving up of the feeling of individuality by the Oriental, which gives to his ceramic the feeling of melting away into a world of abstraction, and the accentuation of individualism by the Greek, whose whole art seems to express his philosophy of man as the center of the universe. Not only are the Greeks fond of decorating their vases with all sorts of scenes of human activity, not caring for landscapes or for any kind of surroundings which would detract from man's importance, but the potter even goes so far as to place his own personality in the foreground, so that in the most developed periods we find the potter's signature on vases—an idea which would seem impossible to the Far Eastern potter.

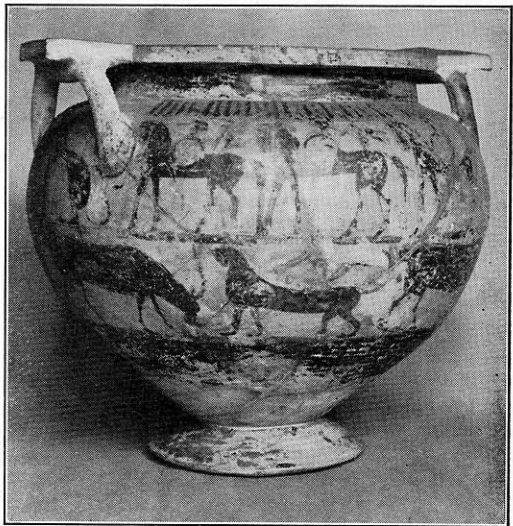
While about 1800 we still had several branches of European ceramics which, like the Wedgwood, were deriving their inspiration from Greek vases, in modern



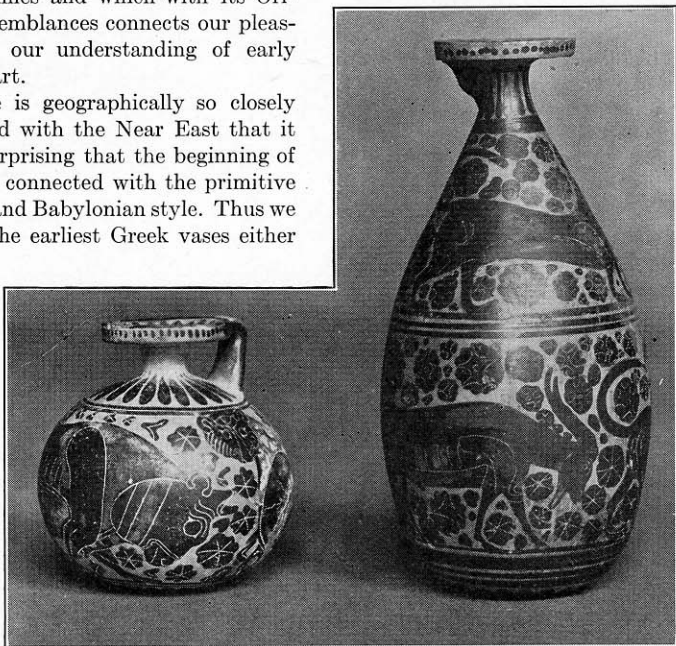
ARCHAIC VASES, WITH GEOMETRIC DESIGN
Mostly Corinthian, VII Century B. C.

times the Asiatic tendencies have been so strong that the study of Greek vases has been turned over almost exclusively to the archaeologist. The tiresome exhibition which has been given to the most important collections of Greek vases in European museums, where endless rows of similar cases have been placed next to each other, was not conducive to increasing public interest in these productions. In the most modern times, however, with the overcoming of impressionism by the going back to the more severe and primitive forms, we begin again to appreciate the lawfulness of Greek forms and the exquisite harmony of their vase painting. Now we are especially inclined to go back to archaic art, which was less appreciated in earlier times and which with its Oriental resemblances connects our pleasure with our understanding of early Asiatic art.

Greece is geographically so closely connected with the Near East that it is not surprising that the beginning of its art is connected with the primitive Persian and Babylonian style. Thus we have in the earliest Greek vases either



BLACK-FIGURED KRATER
Corinthian, VI Century
(Fig. 1)



ARYBALLOS AND ALABASTRON UNGUENT JARS
Corinthian, VII Century
(Fig. 2)

purely geometric patterns or friezes of animals arranged according to the same rhythmical ideas that we find in the early reliefs of the Near East. In the large Corinthian krater (Fig. 1) we encounter beneath the handles one of the oldest Oriental motives, the two rampant lions with which we are familiar from the lion portal at Mycenae. In the animal friezes the bodies of the animals are consciously drawn out so as to increase the impression of their movement around the vase. The smaller and more profusely decorated Corinthian vases of the VI Century (Fig. 2) are especially

vase in the style of Andokides, (Fig. 3, c) the artist makes his flat ornament conform to the roundness of the vase.

The V Century is the blossoming time of the red-figured style, which is, at the beginning of its development, still abstract enough to keep away from naturalistic and impressionistic tendencies. The wonderful krater (*) which represents on one side Poseidon moving over the sea in his chariot and on the other three youths exercising in the palaestra, belongs to the period of Phidias. What a fine sense of beauty is expressed in the rhythm of the two youths dancing on either side of the



(a)
BLACK-FIGURED VASE
Attic, VI Century

(b)
RED-FIGURED VASE
Attic, Middle of V Century
(Fig. 3)

(c)
BLACK-FIGURED VASE
Attic, VI Century

clever in the conventionalization of the animals—lions, bulls and goats—and are fascinating in color, with their varying shades of brown and purple against a creamy background.

In the black-figured, most typically national Attic vases of the VI Century, the anthropocentric interest of the Greek comes to the foreground in the figured scenes—for the most part scenes of training or of actual battles recording the spirit of the Persian wars. Though the scenes are taken from nature, conventionalization is still so strong that their ornamental function is of paramount importance. Even in the most foreshortened representations, as in the horses on the beautiful

third, who beats time with his hands, and what a fine contrast to the ornamental outlines of the vase itself!

The art was developed to its greatest refinement in the white figured lekythoi made in Athens in the latter part of the V Century. How spirited are the outlines of the two youths standing to the right and left of the stele bringing their offerings! How delicate is the coloring of the gray tones of the figures with their red hair and the red ribbons of the stele against the white background! However, here already the decoration begins to be more a brilliant sketch of a drawing than a decoration which is part of the vase itself.

(*) See Cover.

The stepping stone to the pictorial and impressionistic style comes in the IV Century, which is represented in our collection by typical examples from the southern part of Italy (Fig. 5). In place of the earlier technique which left the figures free against a painted background, comes now the technique where the figure itself is painted and instead of the clear-cut silhouette we now have free brush painting. With the touches of white acting as high lights, the whole figure is made to stand out more, and light and shade are reproduced in a most realistic way. Perspective and the roundness of objects are emphasized, and the consciously sketchy manner of painting accords with the naturalistic tendencies. This style was especially developed by Greek emigrants and those who came under their influence in the southern part of Italy and in other colonies of Greece. It is typical that with the spreading out of Greek culture over the whole world during the Hellenistic period, the characteristic anthropocentric idea begins to wane, and we now find in these later vases that the human theme is becoming less prominent and that accessories such as wreaths, flowers and masks are assuming greater

importance, until at the end of the development painting disappears altogether, as in the black molded bucchero ware.

The small collection of vases which the Museum has acquired—about one hun-



FISH PLATE
Italo-Greek, IV Century
(Fig. 4)

dred and fifty pieces of varying importance—comprises the period from the vases found by Schlieman at Troy, to the days of the Roman Empire. A number of terra cotta pieces beginning with the VI Century figures and fragments to the II and I Century B. C., complete the collection.

W. R. V.



ITALO-GREEK VASES
IV Century B. C.
Fig. 5)

ITALIAN MAJOLICA OF THE XIV AND XV CENTURIES

Dr. W. von Bode, who first recognized the importance of primitive Italian majolica and who has published a large work on the subject, writes in the October *Art in America*:

"Many excellent pieces of Italian majolica of the classic period of the XVI century have strayed into American collections, but there has been comparatively little interest in the primitive art of the XIV and XV centuries. So much the more gratifying is it that a museum like the Detroit Institute of Arts now makes a

both sides of the Appenines, two complete pitchers (Figs. 4 and 5) with a braided design and Gothic leaves on a narrow hatched background of manganese color, are characteristic examples of the ware of that period produced in Siena. Simple as they are, they are nevertheless superior to the Orvieto vases in form and decoration. It is now recognized that the potters of Siena several centuries later manufactured majolicas which belong to the best that this art has produced in Italy.

"Faenza was earlier considered as one

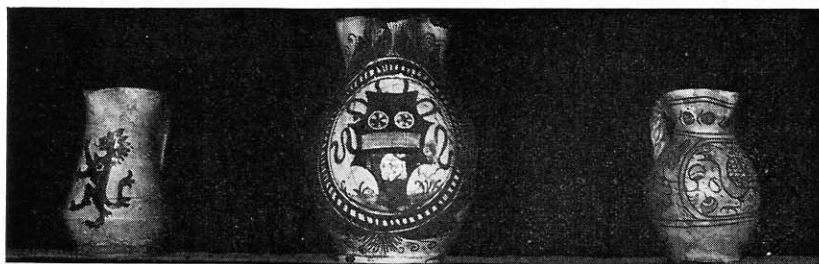


Fig. 3

Fig. 6

Fig. 1

beginning with the acquisition of quite a large collection of seventeen primitive Italian majolicas.

"Among them is a tankard with a bird in the middle between vine branches and leaves (Fig. 1), a characteristic piece of Orvieto manufacture, dating back to the middle of the XIV century. Similar to it is the bowl with two handles of about the same period which is also decorated with a bird, and the similar dish with a skilfully executed lily in the middle. Doubtless the big plate (Fig. 2) with three heart-shaped leaves in the center, is of the same origin. I should also be inclined to identify as Orvieto ware of the late XIV century, the pitcher (Fig. 3) which displays on a white background without any framing, an upright lion of excellent heraldic design.

"Among the rest of the primitive majolicas which come from other places on

of the oldest and among the most highly esteemed places for majolica production. In fact pottery has been found there which may be traced to the XIV century by its decoration of the coat of arms of the Manfredi, rulers of Faenza. Various important pieces among the majolicas acquired by the Detroit Museum are typical faience creations of the XV century. Characteristic for this faience period is the deep blue-black in which the design is carried out, and the snake-like flourish with which the edges of the plates and the neck or central portion of the pitchers and jars are almost uniformly decorated. The pieces in the Detroit Museum show these characteristic qualities unmistakably, especially the splendid big pitcher with the coat of arms with three wheels (Fig. 6) encircled with reed-like broad leaves, the entire design in dark blue; also a rather



Fig. 7

Fig. 10

Fig. 2

small tankard, the large plate with the coat of arms in the middle and the typical snake-like flourish on the broad rim (Fig. 7), and finally the large apothecary jar (albarello) with the same twisted ornament and a great pomegranate among the graceful flower stems (Fig. 8). This apothecary jar shows already in its form the influence of Islamic faience, which at that time was brought into Italy from the East and from Spain in the West and was used as models, of which there is as yet no trace in the Orvieto ware. This influence is first apparent, in its strong and favorable effect upon style, in Florence, where since the beginning of the XV century, the leading merchant families had introduced from their factories in Spain splendid large pieces of the so-called Hispano-Moresque ware.

The pitcher (Fig. 9) shows an example of the early small flower design faithfully copied in Florence from Hispano-Moresque models, in the middle of which the escutcheon of an upright lion is left free. Unfortunately it will never be possible to determine these escutcheons, since Florence alone possessed not less than three hundred families who carried this rampant lion in their coats of arms. There occurs in the Florentine pottery another design in Gothic leaf forms, mostly of strong green color. Perhaps the skilful large plate (Fig. 10) is such a work. The storm-tossed leaves, which as if whipped by a wind circle around the middle of the plate, and the similar design of leaves on the edge are of unusual originality."



Fig. 5

Fig. 8

Fig. 4

Fig. 9



VIGÉE LEBRUN: PORTRAIT OF MARIE ANTOINETTE

Loaned to the Detroit Institute of Arts by
Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb

MARIE ANTOINETTE

B. MADAME VIGÉE LEBRUN

A beautiful and remarkably interesting portrait of Marie Antoinette by Madame Vigée Lebrun (1755-1843) has been loaned to the Art Institute by Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb. Painted in 1779, when both painter and sitter were twenty-four years of age, and five years after Marie Antoinette had become Queen of France, it is one of the first portraits which the famous court painter did of her, and also one of the most successful, painted with the love which Vigée Lebrun had for the Austrian princess who became almost a friend of the painter during the frequent sittings. Indeed, so intimate did they become that the two ladies, who were both musical, often spent the rest periods between sittings in singing duets together. Most of her other portraits represent Marie Antoinette full length, either alone or, as in the famous painting at Versailles, with her three children, and the canvases are of such large compass as to almost overtax the strength of the woman painter.

In the present painting the artist has concentrated upon the charming face with the somewhat long-drawn features of the Hapsburg, and the color composition—almost a symphony in red—is most successful. The costume of red velvet trim-

med with fur, the toque of the same color with its white feathers, the scarf, laces and jewelry, all painted in the most exquisite manner, and above all the finely drawn features, bring back to us the charm and fascination of the society of the days just before its downfall in the Revolution. Who would believe that the splendor surrounding this pleasing figure would come to such a sudden and tragic end in the sombre days of the Civil War and that this kind personality should be fated to fall under the axe of the executioner?

The painting comes from the collection of Baron Christiani of Paris and has been traced back to Vigée Lebrun, who outlived her greatest period before the French Revolution almost two generations. When she died in 1843, the picture was left to her nephew, Charles Tripier le Franc and his wife, Madame Eugenie Lebrun, whose son, Charles Auguste Tripier le Franc, bequeathed it in a testament still extant to Monsieur Boige, a notary of Dixmont (Yonne). From the collection of this gentleman it was acquired by Baron Christiani, from whom it passed into the possession of the present owner.

W. R. V.

PRINT CLUB

The Print Club of Detroit held its first monthly meeting on Monday evening, October 20th, at the Institute of Arts.

A constitution and by-laws were adopted by the club, and to meet the wishes of its members, a plan of study will be arranged. It was felt that a definite program which would include the study of the various processes of the graphic arts was the best approach to the study of prints.

The meetings will be informal, and will include the discussion of the technique of prints, with the study of the work of a

particular master. The collection of the Institute will be made available to these print students, and the club will also view prints in the possession of individual members.

It is the hope of the Print Club that a new interest and enthusiasm may be created by this group who are seriously undertaking the study of prints. The members are to meet at the Institute on the second Monday of each month, and the next regular meeting will be held on Monday evening, November 10th. I. W.

PROGRAM FOR THE SEASON

"Hospitals do much; they make ill people well. Art Museums do more; they make well people better."—George W. Stevens, Director, Toledo Museum of Art.

As a writer said, "Knowledge is nothing but wisdom is everything." If the teaching or learning of many facts is of debatable value, at least an appreciation of the truth is surely essential to progress and to the happiness of man. By more thorough acquaintance one sees more clearly the truth. While the Detroit Institute of Arts does not believe in forcing itself or insisting that the public learn endless facts concerning the collection, it does try to give the visitor every opportunity to become more and more familiar with the exhibits.

FRIDAY EVENING

As Mr. Benjamin Ives Gilman, Secretary of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, says in his book, "Museum Ideals," "Education in the Fine Arts may aim to form artists or public." The educational program this year includes several types of events. The Recreation Commission of the City of Detroit has a free class in the practice of the Fine Arts, Friday evenings from 7:30 to 9:30 under the direction of Miss Jessie Talmadge and Miss Hoyt Hill. Criticism is given in drawing, pastel and the like, working from the costumed figure or from sculpture in the permanent collection. This class is for all persons sixteen years or over. There is a special class in perspective working under the guidance of Mr. Harold Young.

SATURDAY MORNING

Beginning December 6th, there will be special Saturday morning programs in the auditorium of the Detroit Institute of Arts for the school children of the city. Moving pictures showing processes of art work in artistic lands, with their monuments of architecture and the like, will be shown. Music furnished by the Chamber Music Society and brief talks on some special

topic, illustrated by the originals in the collection, will comprise programs which will be varied according to the season and the holidays.

SUNDAYS

Beginning with the 16th of November there will be events at the Detroit Institute of Arts, Sunday afternoon at 3:30, sometimes in the auditorium where such eminent speakers as Dr. Lynn Harold Hough will address the visitors; at other times in the galleries with an informal discussion on some topic which is particularly well represented by permanent exhibits, such as "Egyptian Life," "Greek Vase Painting," or "Colonial Times."

These programs will continue through Easter.

TEACHERS' COURSE

Monday afternoons at four o'clock, a course offered by the Teachers College is held in the Detroit Institute of Arts. Lectures on the History, Theory, Significance and Appreciation of the Fine Arts are given by the Educational Secretary with illustrations of masterpieces and followed by examination of the objects in the permanent collection. These and tests contribute to make this a serious course, which it is hoped will be valuable to the students not only for the moment but for life's enjoyment. The course is attended by a larger number than last year and from the interest of the students promises to be worth while.

ART SCHOOL COURSES

Two lecture courses will be given by the Educational Secretary for students of the art schools of Detroit, one on Thursday afternoons at one o'clock for the day students, the other on Friday evenings at seven o'clock, for the night school students. Any registered art student may enroll for these lectures, which will deal with the history of art, good composition and effectiveness of message. For this

course, as in the case of the teachers' course, credit will be given for attendance and success in tests.

MODERN ART

Beginning Friday the 14th of November the Educational Secretary will conduct a series of informal lectures and discussions on Modern Art, primarily for the members of the Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society and their friends. This, like the courses mentioned above, is the result of requests which have been sent to the Detroit Institute of Arts. A group desiring to learn more concerning the intent and actual work of the modern artist has come with an open mind to discover the truth before either praising or condemning. How much better this is than criticising although ignorant!

This course will consist of five lectures taking up,

1. Impressionism.
2. Neo-impressionism. The Transition.
3. The birth of post impressionism. Cézanne. The "Fauves."
4. Cubism, futurism, and other "isms." Synchronism.
5. The outcome. Present conditions and hopes for the future.

SCHOOL WORK

As usual classes from the schools are coming to the Institute to study the collec-

tions related to their school work. This activity has expanded until it is necessary to have assistance. Members of the staff go out to speak to schools as well as to clubs, etc., but prefer to have organizations and individuals come to the Museum itself to see the collections at first hand. The groups can better enjoy the masterpieces themselves in their own Art Institute.

SCULPTURE CLASS

The last three years there has been a sculpture club or sculpture class. The number of persons interested in modelling has greatly increased. As a result a sculpture class has started in the Detroit School of Applied Arts carrying on the work which the sculpture club initiated, meeting Tuesday evenings at 7:30.

In connections with this work in sculpture it may prove interesting to announce that the City Art and Design Committee of the Twentieth Century Club have offered a prize of \$100.00 for the best work by an amateur sculptress, the money to be used for further study.

This is a suggestion of the work which the Educational Department of the Institute will attempt to carry on this season. It is hoped that this may prove attractive and valuable. However, it is really a means in our pursuit of happiness to a much greater end: the enjoyment of life.

R. P.

NOVEMBER EVENTS AT ART INSTITUTE

704 E. JEFFERSON AVE.

CALENDAR OF EXHIBITS

From November 17th to December 1st. Architectural Exhibition under the auspices of the Thumb-Tack Club.

In the Children's Museum there will be an American Indian Exhibition. This includes bead work, weaving, basketry and pottery.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- November 10th, Monday, 8:00 p. m.* Print Club Topic, "The Rise of Engraving."
- November 11th, Tuesday, 8:15 p. m.* First lecture of special series, "Stained glass as an Artist's Medium," by Mr. Charles J. Connick. (Illustrated by Lumière Autochromes.)
- November 16th, Sunday, 3:30 p. m.* Concert by the Detroit Chamber Music Society.
- November 17th, Monday, 8:00 p. m.* Opening of Thumb-Tack Club's Architectural Exhibition.
- November 23rd, Sunday, 3:30 p. m.* Concert by the Detroit Chamber Music Society.
4:00 p. m. Mr. Hal H. Smith, President of the Print Club, will speak on the topic, "The Joy of Collecting Prints." This talk will be followed by an informal discussion and examination of fine prints in the print rooms. Miss Isabel Weadock, Curator of Prints, will lead the discussion.
- November 30th, Sunday, 3:30 p. m.* Mr. Ben Blessum will lecture on "Glimpses of Norway's Fjords." (Illustrated by Moving Pictures.)

Lectures are given each week by Mr. Reginald Poland, Educational Secretary, to the following groups:

- Monday, 4:00 p. m.* To the students of the Detroit Teachers College, Extension Department.
- Thursday, 1:00 p. m.* To the day students of Art Schools of Detroit.
- Friday, 7:30 p. m.* To the night students of Art Schools of Detroit.

Those interested may register for these courses.

The Recreation Commission holds free sketch classes on Friday evenings from 7:30 to 9:30 p. m. The Exhibition Galleries are open at this time.