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

Vol. VII MARCH, 1926 No. 6

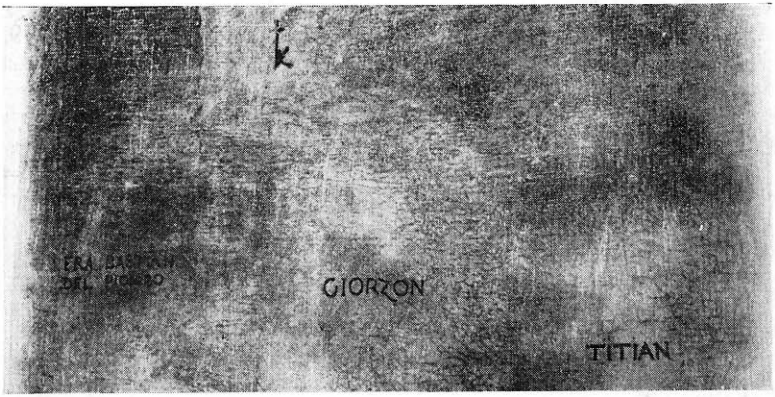
THE APPEAL, BY TITIAN, GIORGIONE AND SEBASTIANO DEL PIOMBO

A COMBINED WORK BY TITIAN, GIORGIONE AND SEBASTIANO DEL PIOMBO

The three-figure painting acquired by the Detroit Institute of Arts from the collection of the former Grand Duke of Oldenburg (formerly in the possession of Count Schönborn at Pommersfelden, sold in Paris in 1867) is, whatever it may represent and whoever painted it (both these questions are open to discussion), a remarkable creation of the Venetian Renaissance at the moment of its development at the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the bud of this wonderful art as expressed in the works of Bellini and Giorgione, opened to the full flower of the Cinquecento style in Titian. In this period of the late works of Giorgione who died in 1510, the early paintings of Titian (1505 to 1515), and of Sebastiano del Piombo, were created some of the most superb works known to art lovers, such as *The Concert* by Giorgione (Louvre), the *Venus* by Giorgione (Dresden), *The Concert* (Pitti) attributed to Titian, *The Three Ages* (Bridgewater Gallery), the *Sacred and Profane Love* (Villa Borghese) by Titian and the *Santa Conversazione* by Sebastiano in San Crisostomo in Venice. It was the period when Dürer studied in Venice (1506-7) and when even one of the great Florentine painters, Fra Bartolommeo, got his inspiration during his stay in this city in 1508. A part of the charm of these works of the transitional phase, perhaps the most glorious phase of Venetian art, lies in the unexpected growth of Giorgione's art from the earlier delicately lyrical style which connects him with his master, Giovanni Bellini, into the more monumental and fuller expression of form and spirit characteristic of the beginning of the High Renaissance; while Titian, whom we know generally through the opulent and voluptuous art of his riper years, is still bound through a certain youthful shyness and reserve to a more exquisite and imaginative expression of worldly beauty. Sebastiano, also, the third and perhaps not quite so highly gifted pupil of Bellini, enchants us throughout this period by his fascinating rendering of beautiful Venetian women who, while gorgeously developed types, never lose their dignity. While the figures in his later Roman compositions under Michelangelo's influence revel in grandly sculptured poses, his early works combine with the Venetian softness of modelling and color, such clearly designed and handsome plastic forms that several of these paintings have for a long time been attributed not only to Giorgione but even to Raphael.

If we can trust the early inscription which has recently come to light on the back of our picture (and we can see no reason for doubting it), the Art Institute has come into the possession of nothing less than an extraordinarily combined work by these three great masters who represent the highest expression of Venetian art at the threshold of the High Renaissance. According to these inscriptions, the figure of the man is by Giorgione, the brunette woman on the right by Sebastiano, and the blond woman on the left by Titian. And indeed, when once these names have been uttered, the style in which the three different parts of the picture are executed points most plausibly to the correctness of this attribution, even to those who have only a superficial knowledge of these masters. In the delicate and refined execution of the figure of the man we recognize the art of a master who is not only earlier and more Quattrocento-like but also of an entirely different temperament—more pensive and lyrically inclined than the master, for instance, who executed the gorgeous woman in white with such broad strokes and such forceful, realistic forms. The beautiful *clair obscure* in which the face is modelled, with at the same time the almost geometric pattern of classical

forms in which it is designed, reminding us of the type of the *Venus* at Dresden and *The Shepherd* at Hampton Court, are quite Giorgionesque, as are such details as the soft brown-violet tones of the cap—a color which Giorgione used for instance in the Berlin portrait—and the spirited painting of the fine plaitings of the shirt and the hairs of the fur. On the other hand, the figure of the woman on the right seems to come from a master of sterner character, who strives for monumental forms and simplification of lines and is less interested in color problems, for as fine as the dark blue of the costume with the gold pattern is, the composition in this respect is built up more upon contrasts of dark and light than upon shades of colors as is the figure on the left, which



might almost be called a symphony of white, pink and blond tones. Who would not like to recognize at once Titian's indescribable charm and free technic in this superb fair type so beautiful and so real, so persuasive and yet so dignified, with her luminous and fresh complexion, her brilliantly painted blond hair, the delicious pink flesh tones which shine through the flowing white sleeve, and the extraordinary pose of the well-shaped and sensitive hand so beautifully rendered in color and design?

If we accept the theory that the picture was executed by three hands, it seems astonishing indeed that the result is a work of such unity. The three figures are clearly related to each other, not only in the sense of the story (whatever it may be) but also in its perfect arrangement into three different planes, giving an amazing effect of space between the figures when seen from a certain distance. How is it possible that these artists worked out the problem together in so common a spirit and sense of form? However, we should remember that these three masters formed an extraordinary trio of pupils of one great master; that they had not yet been entirely detached from a common tradition whose strength in these times we are nowadays hardly able to understand; and that they were of the age, between twenty and thirty (Giorgione born in 1478, Titian in 1477, Sebastiano in 1485), when artists are susceptible to different influences and are able to adapt themselves to collaborators. In addition to this we will find that the idea of the collaboration of these three artists is not so unusual as may at first appear when we remember that we know of more than one instance where two of the three have collaborated in the same work. We know that Titian completed the *Bacchanale* by Bellini in the Widener collection and that it is generally conceded

that the landscape in the Dresden *Venus* by Giorgione was executed by Titian. The Pitti *Concert*, formerly generally believed to be by Giorgione and now given by most critics to Titian and even to Sebastiano, is said by others to be the combined work of Titian and Giorgione. The *Three Philosophers* in Vienna by Giorgione is believed to have been finished by Sebastiano after Giorgione's death; the three figures of saints in S. Bartolommeo di Rialto by Sebastiano are now believed to have been designed and begun by Giorgione. How difficult it is in some instances to differentiate between the style of Giorgione and Sebastiano, we need only to be reminded of the *Woman Taken in Adultery* in Glasgow attributed alike to both, and for the differentiation between Giorgione and the early Titian, of the *Portrait of a Merchant* in the collection of Mr. Henry Goldman, which Dr. Bode gives to Giorgione and Mr. Berenson to Titian. The reason for the completion of the works of Giorgione by either Titian or Sebastiano is generally given to have been the early death of the former. If, however, we accept our picture as the work of the three masters, we come to another and more natural conclusion: that Sebastiano and Titian were at a certain time (about 1508-10) collaborators in Giorgione's studio. This agrees with the fact related by Vasari that Titian was chosen by Giorgione to help in the execution of the fresci of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi in 1508. It is about this year that we may date our picture.

It is interesting to study the various attributions which have been given to the picture since it was sold in Paris in 1867. While it was given to Giorgione before this time, Otto Mündler in 1867 changed the name to the one of Cariani, a good means of escape if one did not want to give it to a greater name. Cariani's art reflects both Giorgione's and Titian's style of the period when our picture was executed. Most critics kept this name traditionally, and one may say quite naturally, as no one could suspect a collaboration of the three great masters. Besides, the picture was in a neglected state of preservation, not showing its beauty of technic which has come out since it has been cleaned. But if we read the remarks of these critics we feel that this Cariani attribution was kept *faute de mieux*. Several times we meet with the name of Sebastiano (Venturi, Schmidt-Degener) and, if I am informed rightly, Berenson has recently pronounced with great decision the name of Titian for the woman on the left. In reading through the different criticisms we may say that after all scholars have come very near to what we believe to be the truth. One of the longest criticisms dealing with the picture was written by Tancred Borenius in the Burlington Magazine in 1913 (p.15), and while he believes that Cariani is the right attribution, he remarks: "No doubt there is something in the face of the lady at the right that recalls the female type occurring in Sebastiano's early work." And curiously enough, the nearness to the work of Giorgione that he naturally felt in the figure of the man causes him quite naturally to attribute *The Shepherd* at Hampton Court, a work which has been rightly attributed to Giorgione by Berenson, to Cariani. Schmidt-Degener, in his publication on the Oldenburg Gallery, 1906, describes it at length under the name of Sebastiano and says: "According to the style, the picture was painted about 1510. The wonderful woman's portrait to the right could be a twin sister of the beautiful women on the altar of San Crisostomo, the most gorgeous creation of Piombo's early period." While he feels on the one hand the influence of Giorgione, he also finds relations to Titian, and it is interesting that he remarks: "The gesture of the woman to the left is later used by Titian in his allegory of Avalos."

When the picture was sold from the Duke of Oldenburg's collection and brought to America in 1923, Mr. Julius

Böhler had the panel on which the canvas had been glued for generations removed in order to have it relined, and on the upper part of the old canvas was found the mark of an early collector which cannot be deciphered as yet, and the names of the three artists mentioned. The writing points unquestionably to Venice: the leaving out of the vowels at the end in all three names, the spelling of Giorgione with a *z* and of Titian with a *t*. I have been informed that the writing is sixteenth century style. If this is true, and it is not unlikely, it was written possibly during the lifetime of Titian and could almost be taken as documentary proof. But even if it is seventeenth century writing (and that it is earlier than the eighteenth seems obvious), it is of the greatest importance, as the critical faculty at that time was not so highly developed as it is now and it is most improbable that the collector who marked these names could have made these attributions from the style of the picture. The probability is that he noted down a tradition which could not have gone far back and which, compared with its style as we are now able to judge it, was perfectly correct.

The curious origin of our picture as being a work from the hands of three great masters may explain the popularity of the composition, for which a considerable number of early copies speak. I am citing Borenius: "This composition must have been very popular, as there are several old copies of it in existence, the best known being the one in the Venice Academy (No. 550). Dr. Bode mentions two copies, one in the Berlin Gallery (not now shown) and another, comprising only two heads, in a private collection in England. Dr. Schmidt-Degener says that there is one in the possession of Dr. Stüve of Osnabrüch, and I am informed by Mr. Lionel Cust that he has seen another good one." So even the fame of the composition (and that ours is the original of the many represented has never been doubted) seems to point to a greater master than Cariani. — W. R. V.

PAINTING BY MAX BOHM

Max Bohm, who died in 1923, was among the foremost painters of his generation and as a teacher of art has had a deep influence upon many American artists. In the memorial exhibition of his work held in New York in 1924, it was quite apparent to the observer that here was a painter actuated by inner vision and possessed of strong convictions. In an age when painting was known for its virtuosity and smart technic, when brilliancy of performance counted for more than significance or conception, when the deft touch and broad brush work shared equally with the consideration of the content of a painting, Max Bohm stands out an anachronism of his time. He had a larger objective than technical skill. Through the heavy impasto of his color and a technic that is ofttimes halting and inadequate, the sheer force of his vision drove him on to successful achievement.

He approached his theme more as a musician approaches it, often going out without sketch book or canvas and merely drinking in the message which nature in her various moods had for him; then returning to his studio inspired to portray his emotional reactions through the sound and sturdy compositions with which he has enriched American painting.

Through the D. M. Ferry, Jr., Fund of the Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society, we have received a gift of the "Sea Babies," one of his most important paintings. This picture, which is four feet square, is a monumental example of the artist in his happiest mood. It represents the devotion of motherhood and is pregnant with a feeling of deep humanity. Combined with its fine sen-

SEA BABIES BY MAX BOHM
Presented through the D. M. Ferry, Jr., Fund of the Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society

timent and noble composition, the picture possesses that universal quality and that realization of large and simplified forms which, at its best, is the outstanding achievement of Mr. Bohm's work. In the monumentality and simplification of his compositions he was in advance of his time, or perhaps we should say more akin to medieval times, before the naturalness of the Renaissance became so all-pervading.

This delightful decorative group is not weakened by an over-embellishment of detail. The eyes and mouth and other features are sometimes barely indicated. There are no sharp contours in his figures, yet he has achieved a roundness and living quality that proves him to be a master designer and a creative artist. The sound structure of the group is pleasing to the eye because of the delightful way that one form melts into another. Added to this is a fine balance of light and dark and a beautiful use of restrained color. In composition it is even finer than a similar subject which was purchased some years ago for the Luxembourg Museum.

Max Bohm best expresses himself through the medium of the figure, whether it be in such pictures as "En Mer" which first won him recognition at the Salon and for which he later received medals at the San Francisco and Buffalo expositions, or in his intimate family groups, of which our picture is an outstanding example. Thanks to the generosity of Mr. Ferry and the cooperation of Mrs. Bohm, we have been able to secure a satisfactory representation of this able American artist.

C. H. B.

A STILL LIFE PAINTING BY JAN WEENIX

Still life is a form of painting that achieved independence and development first in Holland in the seventeenth century. The Museum has hitherto possessed no example, except contemporary works, of this kind of painting, and we are fortunate in being able to fill the *lacuna* with a superb example of the art of Jan Weenix, which has come to the Museum through the generosity of Mr. Ralph H. Booth.

Jan Weenix was born in Amsterdam in the year 1640 and died in 1719. He is therefore a late comer among the Dutch painters of the seventeenth century. His earliest teachers were his father, Jan Baptist, and his maternal uncle, Melchior Hondekoeter, the famous painter of birds. He has earned fame especially as the painter of hares and swans. The present picture is an admirable example of his work and though any signature or date that it may have contained has been removed with the bottom of the picture, which has at some time been cut away, it may be placed with confidence, by comparison with other works whose date is known, in the later period of his activity—after the beginning of the eighteenth century.

The subject—some dead birds and fruit—is painted with an astonishing mastery. The contrast between the yellowish white of the hanging bittern and the bluish white of the swan, and the general hue of a transparent brown which pervades the whole work, show a delicate sense of harmony. The handling displays the virtuosity of Dutch painting of the great century—a quality which the Dutch carried to so high a point that it has never since been surpassed. As characteristic mannerisms of the artist, should be noted the dead finch and the fallen white feather in the foreground.

H. J.

A STATUE OF ST. JOHN BY HANS LEINBERGER

ST. JOHN BY HANS LEINBERGER
Presented to the Institute by Mr. Ralph H. Booth

Mr. Ralph H. Booth has presented to the Art Institute a remarkably expressive statue of St. John by Hans Leinberger, carved in linden wood, which forms an excellent addition to the Institute's small series of German wood carvings of the late Gothic and early Renaissance, the period (the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries) when the art of wood carving was more highly developed in Germany than in any other part of Europe.

The statue, which still has traces of the original painting and gilding, forms a companion piece to the "Mourning Virgin" in Mr. Booth's private collection, both statues having unquestionably originally formed part of a crucifixion group of which the center piece, the crucifix, has been lost. Curiously enough, the two statues were found in Florence. If we consider, however, that the statues were executed in upper Bavaria, it is not difficult to understand how they found their way through one of the valleys of the Tyrol into Italy in the period when, as we know from the numerous imitations, German wood carvings were much admired in north Italy.

The style of the artist is so pronounced that it is easy to identify him among the considerable number of wood carvers of Bavaria. We believe the two statues to be the work of Hans Leinberger, whose name was discovered only in recent years from the monogram used on some of his works, "H.L." He worked particularly

THE MOURNING VIRGIN
BY HANS LEINBERGER
In the private collection of Mr. Ralph H. Booth

at Landshut about 1510 to 30, and in the neighboring towns like Moosburg, where he created his most important altar. A number of life-size statues executed in linden wood and smaller reliefs in boxwood are in the Berlin and Nuremberg museums and in the National Museum in Munich, while a tomb stone dated 1524 at Landshut, with early Renaissance forms, shows that he worked in stone as well as in wood. He has recently been identified with the engraver who signed himself "H.L." and whom we now know as the Master of Breisach, one of the most important wood carvers of the Upper Rhine, but this identification seems to be without foundation as Leinberger is an artist of deep sentiment, while the other is a virtuoso of lines and eccentricities. Leinberger may be regarded as the strongest exponent of late Gothic sculpture in upper Bavaria, representing in figures of extraordinary movement, flowing garments and sharp silhouettes, the restlessness of the period before the Renaissance, without losing the expression of dignity and rustic intensity of feeling so typical of the Bavarian wood carver. Our figure shows, like all good sculpture, a feeling for the material in which the artist worked. The character of the tree seems to be preserved in the parallel perpendicular folds of the garment interrupted at intervals by crinkled cross folds, as if a whirlwind had blown upon it, carrying out the impression of knots in the trunk; while in the wonderfully expressive hands and head the soul of the tree seems to have come to life.

While Gregor Erhardt and Daniel Mauch (both represented in the Institute by carved wood Madonnas) give us the lyrical, sweet and intimate sentiment of the Suabian School, the sculpture of Leinberger gives an excellent idea of the more temperamental and dramatic style of the Bavarians, in the same way as the *Crucifixion* by Rueland Frueauf does in painting, a similarity which is familiar to many through the Oberammergau Passion Play.

W. R. V.

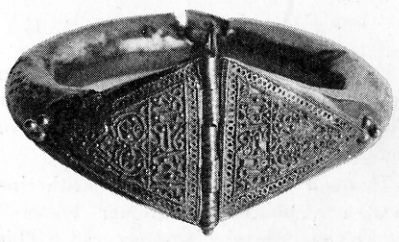
AN ISLAMIC GOLD BRACELET

X—XI CENTURY

Among the older civilizations, as with us today, gold was preferred for jewelry and ornamentation when it could be obtained. Partly because of its preciousness and partly because of its richness of color and soft malleability, it was chosen as the metal most suitable for the choicest ornaments.

In design, the Syrians retained a barbaric character, while the Arabians produced in the tenth and eleventh centuries designs of both extreme refinement and strength, always based, however, upon geometric motifs, in strict adherence to the Koran decree that representation of natural forms was sacrilegious.

A very important piece of jewelry of this type, an Islamic gold bracelet, dating between the tenth and eleventh centuries and representing the height of the goldsmith's art, has just been presented to the Detroit Institute of Arts by Mrs. R. B. Jackson. The bracelet is composed of two tubes made of gold plate hammered and bent in semi-circular form, and hinged



where the halves come together. In the section where the tubes close, the bracelet ends in a quoin, which fits by means of a delicately moulded hinged

lock, into the corresponding lozenge. Aside from the richness and beauty of the metal itself, the great charm of the bracelet lies in the exquisite use and arrangement of the Arabesque design and its technique.

The technique is appliqué and the detail of the design is filagree and granulation; that is, composed of finely twisted gold wire laid double and of minute gold beads. Every gold thread has been treated in such a way that the strand itself seems lost, while the surface appears to be a multiplication of many hundreds of nodules, wrought in a finely organized design. The effect is heightened by insertion of gold pellets slightly larger in size, in parts of the composition, the largest of all, four golden balls in pyramid form set at the apex of the triangles.

We might assume, although we have no proof, that the choice of the triangular lozenges which contain the beautiful filagree work, was intended to signify the prayer niche of a Mosque. If this were so, the calligraphy so finely done at the base of the triangle, would be in all likelihood an inscription from the Koran and intended in a talismanic sense to protect the owner of the bracelet from harm, or to point out to him the way of happiness.

It is in his selection of the motifs and their fitness to the areas in which we see them, that the Mohammedan excels. We observe here his unique feeling for linear design and its use in the decoration of a plain surface and its adaptation to the areas where both the greatest interest in the design and the best balance of the units are preserved.

Excavations within recent years of some of the early battle grounds and of the graves of the Mongols in the Caucasus region, have brought to light a number of examples of Islamic culture. In some of these graves, especially in the Novorissijsk region, beautiful specimens of Arabic work of which our bracelet is an example, have been found. The Mongols, an altogether warrior race, appreciated nevertheless the culture of the people with whom they came in contact. In the present instance of our bracelet, however, we can only speculate that it was prized by a Mongol chieftain, taken as booty with other pieces of great beauty, and buried with his own dead as a mark of honor and affection, after the manner of primitive peoples.

So far as we know, this bracelet, with the exception of one which we recall in the Indian Section of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, is unique in American collections. There exist, however, several bracelets of this type in continental museums, notably in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin and one or two others in Cairo, and an example in the collection Nelidow in Milan. The Archaeological Museum at Madrid is said to have a bracelet of similar description, but we have not yet been able to verify this. A.C.E.

TWO PICTURES BY MICHIGAN ARTISTS

From the recent exhibition by Michigan Artists the Detroit Institute of Arts has added to its permanent collection two works by Detroit painters.

Through the gift of Mrs. Katherine Franke a painting "Summer Waters" by Zoltan Sepeschy was secured. This picture, showing a group of people in holiday mood on the bank of one of Michigan's inland lakes, is a most agreeable interpretation of Michigan landscape. The motif is well chosen, so that the yellow trees form an agreeable screen through which the fresh blue waters of the lake are to be seen, while the yellow sands of the shore and the small figures flecked with sunlight make a very harmonious color scheme.

Zoltan Sepeschy, while a very young man, is a practiced painter of wide experience. He was born in Kassa, Hungary (since the World War a part of Czecho

SUMMER WATERS
By Zoltan Sepeschy
Presented to the Institute by Mrs. K. Franke

Slovakia), in 1896. At the age of twelve, he tells us, he began painting, liking it so well that he often played truant from school in order that he might be out in the fields where he could follow this pursuit, and many a time he received a thrashing for this childish proclivity. After finishing his schooling at one of the well known colleges at Presov, he studied at the Royal Art Academy at Budapest for four and one-half years and there his talent was recognized by the award of a scholarship. He taught the history of painting in Budapest for a time and then pursued his studies at Vienna and Prague. From Max Kurth, the internationally known mural painter with whom he was associated for a time, he acquired that soundness of fundamentals and ease of technique which we see in the painting acquired for the Art Institute. He traveled extensively, visiting such art centers as Leipzig, Dresden, Hanover and Paris, and the influences of this period of travel may be seen in the wide variety and marked versatility of his work. He came to America in 1921 and settled in Detroit.

The painting, "Senorita Do-Do," by Iris Andrews Miller, presented to the Institute by friends of the artist, has added to the permanent collection of the Institute the work of one of Detroit's distinguished painters. In this, as in all of Mrs. Miller's work, there is every evidence of the soundly trained technician. Having completed her studies under Chase, Henri and Breckenridge, Mrs. Miller journeyed to Holland, where she fell with enthusiasm under the influence of those old Dutch masters whose joy in the visible world she so keenly shared.

Since those student days there has been a steady development of power. That local success should have come was inevitable, but recognition has also been received from beyond Detroit. There was the award of the portrait prize in New York and exhibition of work in the Pennsylvania Academy, the National Gallery at Washington, and the museums at Topeka and San Diego.

Against a neutral background, with an admirable feeling for space and a fine sense of characterization, Mrs. Miller has portrayed Do-Do, this vivid daughter of the South. There is the certain stroke, but there is, too, a warmth of color and a sense of joyousness which makes us feel that Mrs. Miller is represented in the Detroit Institute by one of her best efforts.

SENORITA DO-DO
By Iris Andrews Miller
Presented to the Institute by friends of the Artist

THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS ANNOUNCES
A LOAN EXHIBITION OF OLD MASTERS
FROM DETROIT PRIVATE COLLECTIONS
TO BE SHOWN AT THE INSTITUTE
FROM MARCH 22 TO APRIL 4

ON THE OPENING EVENING, MARCH 22
AT 8:15 O'CLOCK
DR. W. R. VALENTINER WILL GIVE A
LECTURE ON FRA ANGELICO

MEMBERS OF THE DETROIT MUSEUM OF ART FOUNDERS SOCIETY
AND THEIR FRIENDS ARE EXTENDED A CORDIAL INVITATION.

MARCH EVENTS

Monday, March 1, 8:00 P. M.	Lecture by Mr. Charles J. Hope-Johnstone for the Detroit Music Club.
Sunday, March 7, 3:30 P. M.	Lecture, "Mexico, the Land of Revolution and Romance," by Mr. James A. Blosser.
Saturday, March 13, 10:00 A. M.	Children's Program.
Sunday, March 14, 3:30 P. M.	Travel Lecture by Dr. Charles A. Payne.
Sunday, March 21, 3:30 P. M.	Lecture, "Mexico City, Capital of the Montezumas" by Mr. James A. Blosser.
Monday, March 22, 8:15 P. M.	Lecture, "Fra Angelico" by Dr. W. R. Valentiner.
Sunday, March 27, 3:30 P. M.	Lecture, "The Building of the Medieval Cathedrals in France and England," by Mr. Fred B. Artz
Sunday, April 4, 3:30 P. M.	Easter program of music, under the auspices of the Chamber Music Society of Detroit.