

OF THE

## DETROIT MUSEUM OF ART

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### **Charles Storm Van's Gravesande Collection of Drawings, Water-Colors, Etchings and Dry Points.**

This article, relating to the welcome gift of Mr. Charles L. Freer to the museum, of the Charles Storm Van's Gravesande collection of drawings, water colors, etchings and dry points, has been reserved until this opportune moment of the opening of the new Library and Print Room, tho' Mr. Freer's gift was made last summer. The water colors of the collection have been hung in the small new gallery devoted to water colors. The framed drawings and etchings grace the walls of the Library and Print Room, and the unframed etchings in portfolios, are in the keeping of the attendant in this room, and can be seen upon request.

Van's Gravesande is a Dutchman, born in Boeda in 1841. He resided at Brussels several years, but now has a fine studio at The Hague, where he receives many visitors from distant art centers. He never worked for money because he inherited a fortune in early years, but few men have been more wedded to art, and few have excelled him in quantity and quality produced.

There are three collections in America rich in the etched work of Van's Gravesande, namely: That owned by the Lenox Library of New York, a gift from the late Samuel P. Avery; the famous private collection of Howard Mans-

field, Esquire, of New York, and the Freer Collection owned by this Museum. The latter collection is the most complete in Etchings and Dry Points, and also includes a representative group of Water Colors and Drawings in crayon and pencil.

Many European Museums also contain specimens of Van's Gravesande's work; the Dordrecht Museum being particularly rich in all of the various mediums used by this artist. Van's Gravesande has exhibited for many years in the leading European Exhibitions, particularly in Paris, where his etched work is very highly esteemed. In this country, in addition to the collections above named, scattered impressions are found in the hands of connoisseurs, and by degrees the power of his art is forcing itself to the front in America as well as in Europe.

It may be of interest to know that the Art of Etching received very little public attention in this country until the winter of 1884-5, when the New York Etching Club began a series of Annual Exhibitions, and Sir Seymour Haden visited America and delivered a course of lectures on Etching in various American cities. Through this and other means interest spread throughout America and ere long the art became "popular" and was largely overdone. Many huge etchings were done by inferior artists, and eventually *Fashion*

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*demanded* that almost every home should include an etching, and Fashion quickly flooded the country with countless so-called etchings without the slightest aesthetic value. Fortunately, an early finish to this inferior work followed. But, of course, Fashion did not affect the great etchers.

Whistler continued his work as an etcher to the end of his life and to-day fine proofs from his plates, like those by Rembrandt, are priceless. Van's Gravesande and a few others, including Pennell, Cameron, Strang and Baer, all of whom were inspired by the example of the two greatest Masters, are still producing excellent work.

From time to time exhibitions of Van's Gravesande's work have been given in Eastern Cities, particularly at the Grolier Club in New York and at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. So in those cities art-lovers have been privileged to enjoy his work, and much has already been written concerning it. Perhaps his most intelligent critic is Professor Richard A. Rice, of William's College, who as early as 1887 prepared the first descriptive catalogue of his etchings and dry points; and it is interesting to quote herein from the writings of Professor Rice during that early period:

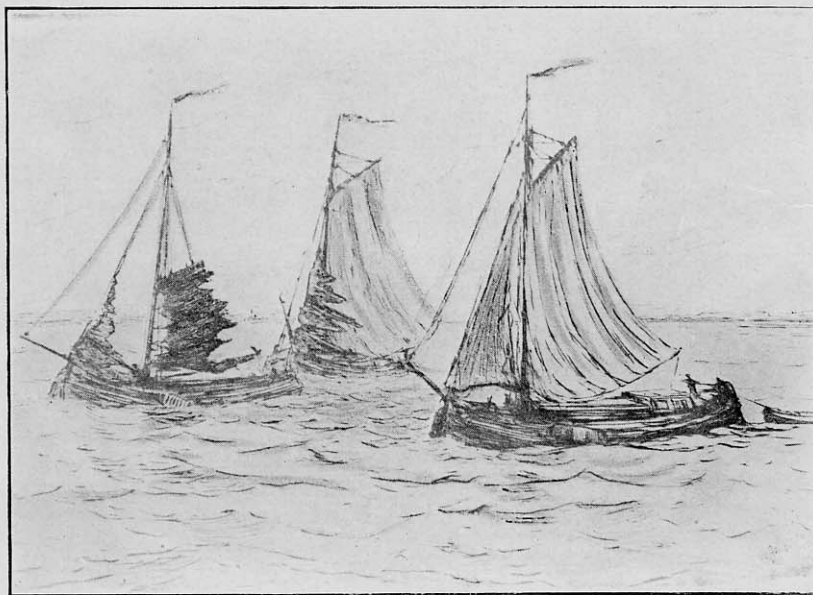
"Rarely, if ever, has his skill in the rendering of any

dividual ones need not be pointed out to prove that he sees accurately and quickly, and that his power of vision is attended by sureness and swiftness of hand. His sketches of those rapidly moving boats of Holland which head no two minutes in any one direction testifies to this. How well he gets the melting distance of Dutch landscape! In the more elaborate drawings the solid qualities are not sacrificed to soul-destroying finish or merchantable prettiness."

### The Lectures of 1905-06.

On Sunday, April 9th, will be given the last of the series of lectures for 1905-6, held in the New Auditorium. They will be discontinued during the summer months as heretofore, and will be taken up again in October of this year.

The value of the auditorium as an addition to the museum, of which there was a shadow of a doubt at the time of its erection, is inestimable. The large crowds of interested listeners at the lectures, and the larger crowds of disappointed ones who could not get in, have proven it to be an attractive educational feature of the museum work. Not a Sunday but the room has been filled to overflowing—every available bit of space in the aisles, and all standing room, being occupied.



A DRY POINT ETCHING. By Charles Storm Van's Gravesande. In the Charles L. Freer Collection.

object, reflections, or water, quiet and in motion, or the delicate foliage of spring, caused him to be so satisfied with the performance, that we feel it has become a mannerism. It is always instinct with life and feeling. And this style is the result of an acute observation of subtle phenomena in nature, combined with a remarkable temperance in the use of means of interpretation, together with an actual love for the objects rendered."

"The tenderness and delicacy of line which make up the charm of his early plates, have given place, in his later series, to boldness and vigor. There is no uncertainty, no hesitation in them. He knows what he wants and puts his hand to it."

"We know well however that the final test of an artist's work does not lie in the most skilled handling of stylus or needle. It stands or falls by its reply to the question: Is he a true seer? Does he lift the veil of nature for us? The frank answer, as well as the key-note to all his art, Van's Gravesande gives us not only in his etched work, but even more directly in his drawings in crayon and water color—a selection of which has been arranged for exhibition. In-

Twenty-six talks have been given, in which have been taken up the art, and much of the history, of Egypt, Greece, Italy, France and England, successively. The stereopticon has been used to illustrate them, and has been invaluable in making them comprehensible.

On Sunday, March 11th, was given Director A. H. Griffith's 300th Sunday talk in this museum. Thirteen years ago he began these talks in a purely accidental manner. It was in the early days of the institution when the Detroit Museum of Art was little known even in its own city, and the visitors were few, that Mr. Griffith, one Sunday, explained the collection in one of the cases of archaeological material to several people who had collected around it. The following Sunday the number of visitors had increased, and it was not possible for them to all get around a case to see its contents, and so material was taken from it and a few chairs were arranged in the statuary court and a talk given to those who were interested. As the crowds increased from Sunday to Sunday it was found necessary to move up into the main picture gallery, and here for eleven years talks of a half hour's duration were given on Sunday from October till May of each year to an

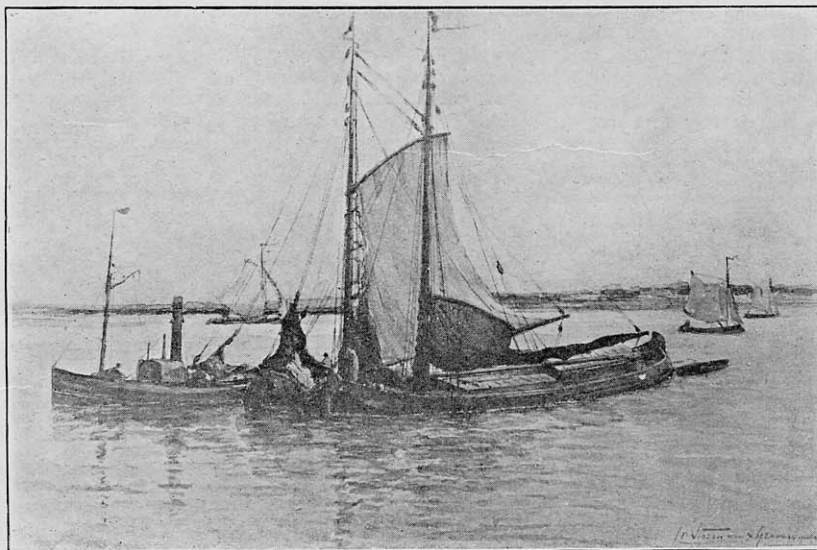
audience which taxed the capacity of the room. They were illustrated by such material as could be seen. These talks were not confined strictly to the fine arts, but embraced history and travel as well.

In June, 1905, was dedicated the auditorium which has been used this winter. This was thought to be large enough at the time, but with the increase in the interest manifested by the people, it has proven inadequate.

In addition to the Sunday lectures the auditorium has been used for lectures of a scientific character and for musical entertainments of a high order.

scribed, that met with the approval of the committee, so no purchase was made.

Another meeting was held, and the committee, consisting of Mr. Charles L. Freer, chairman, Miss Dyar, Mr. F. K. Stearns, Mr. Claud H. Candler, and Mr. A. H. Griffith were authorized to secure a good example of American art at once. "Before sunrise, June," by D. W. Tryon, was selected by this committee, but the price asked for it presented a seemingly unsurmountable barrier. At this critical moment, however, one of the subscribers to the fund—a gentleman much interested in art, and the work of the Detroit Museum of Art,



A WATER COLOR. By Charles Storm Van's Gravesande. In the Charles L. Freer Collection.

#### **Painting By D. W. Tryon purchased by Annual Subscribers.**

Like every other art gallery without an endowment, the Detroit Museum of Art has had to depend, for the growth of its collections, in years past, entirely upon the generosity of individuals. Pictures were presented from time to time with the best of motives, and an honest desire to add to the value of its permanent collection, and a number of good pictures have found their way to the institution through this channel. But there was a desire on the part of all, that the museum should have a fund of its own which would enable it to secure some good example of American Art each year.

A little over a year ago, a citizen suggested that a popular subscription fund could be organized, the members of which would subscribe annually. The sum was set at ten dollars, and one hundred and five names were secured. In January, an exhibition of American art was held, out of which it was expected that some picture would be purchased, but at a meeting held during this exhibition, there was expressed a decided feeling by the subscribers, that the first purchase was a most important one, and that it should set the standard for all future acquisitions. While there were many good pictures in the exhibition which would grace a home, there were none, it was thought, the price of which came within the sum sub-

scribed, and he came forward and generously proposed furnishing the balance of the required sum. His offer was gratefully accepted by the committee, and the picture now occupies a place in the permanent collection.

The influence of the first purchase has already been shown in the rapidly increasing list of subscribers. It is hoped that the number may reach three hundred this year.

It was the desire of the editor to reproduce the painting in this number of the Bulletin, but it was found to be too intangible for the camera and half-tone process.

"Before sunrise, June," is one of those charming American landscapes which Tryon has the happy faculty of finding, and lifting up away from all which distracts. Look across the uplands carpeted in the green of spring we see in the middle distance a clump of bare trees, and in the background the woods and gently rising hills. The grassy field reveals something more than a dull stretch of land; every inch of it is interesting. Tufts here and there vary the color-note and the elevation; and the intimation of a tiny stream, the shimmer of whose water is caught but once in the middle distance, together with an irregular row of leafless shrubs, goes to make the composition very charming, and gives the picture a spaciousness which extends far beyond the bordering frame. Foreground, middleground and background are alike seen through that caressing atmosphere which with its mists refreshes the whole of nature early on a June morning. The sun has not yet arisen to dispel the moisture, but its forerunners are tinting the few clouds of the otherwise clear sky, signalling its approach to the horizon.

### Beautiful Painting Presented By Mr. E. Chandler Walker.

An excellent painting "The Wedding," by Mr. Gari Melchers, has come into possession of the Detroit Museum of Art, through the generous gift of Mr. E. Chandler Walker. The picture is one of Mr. Melcher's recent works and is characteristic of his charm of composition and color.

Before the pulpit the ceremony is being performed by the

are further quickened by their living costumes, which form charming color notes as well as give life to the scene. The introduction of one end of a cabinet with a book lying upon it completes the composition and enlarges the interior.

This is one of the most important acquisitions that has been made in recent years. The museum now has in its possession two important pictures painted by Mr. Melchers, "The Vespers," an earlier work having been presented by the Wittenagemote Club in 1892.



THE WEDDING. By Gari Melchers. Gift of Mr. E. Chandler Walker.

vested clergyman. The bride and groom face him; the former holding a prayer book and with eyes cast down seems contemplative of the far-reaching words uttered by him; the latter with eager face, upturned, earnestly makes his vows. Opposite and facing them stand the parents and relatives of both bride and groom—a charming group because of the varied costumes, attitudes, and expressions. The child—the small sister of the bride—looks on more in wonder than comprehension, but the expressions of the others are mingled ones of joy and sorrow in varying degrees.

The light from two stained glass windows on either side of the pulpit brighten the scene and gives life to the group and substance to the cold, gray stone floor, the undecorated walls, and the sounding board and pulpit. The participants

### Recent Gift of a copy of Fra Angelico's "Coronation of the Virgin."

A faithful copy of Fra Angelico's "Coronation of the Virgin," the original of which is in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence, forms one of a number of important accessions since the beginning of the year. It was the gift of Miss Caroline Godfroy of this city.

Having been abroad several times, and being particularly interested in Fra Angelico's work, Miss Godfroy is undoubtedly a competent judge of the merit of this copy. Even to us who have not the advantage of comparing it with the original, it shows a fidelity in color, and a careful handling of the brush which leads us to believe it to be a faithful fac-

simile of the original. The multitude of delicate figures in their apparel of pure coloring are exquisitely finished.

The following extract from Lord Lindsay's *Christian Art* describes the original: "Quite unearthly is the Coronation of the Virgin; The Madonna crossing her arms meekly on her bosom and bending in humble awe to receive the crown of heaven, is very lovely; the Savior is perhaps a shade less excellent; the angels are admirable, and many of the assistant saints full of grace and dignity; but the characteristic of the picture is the flood of radiance and glory diffused over it; the brightest colors—gold, azure, pink, red, yellow—pure and unmixed, yet harmonizing and blending like a rich burst of wind music, in a manner incommunicable in recital—distinct yet soft—as if the whole scene were mirrored in a sea of glass that burns before the throne."

Owing to the absence of the Director and Assistant Director of the Museum, who will be in Europe for three months, the July number of the Bulletin will not be published. The next number will appear in October, and will take up the work of the Museum from the date of this issue.

#### Portrait of Mr. R. Storrs Willis Given.

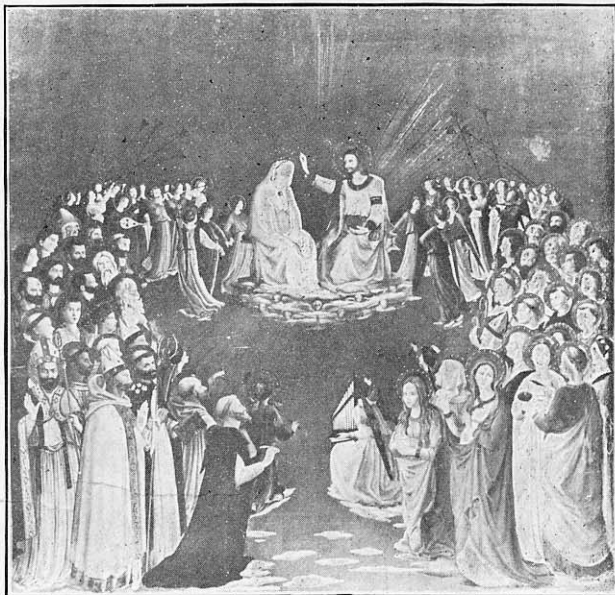
At the quarterly meeting of the Board of Trustees the first Monday in April, Mr. William B. Conley presented to the Museum his portrait of Mr. R. Storrs Willis.

The museum is glad to become possessed of this portrait of Mr. Willis, who from the very beginning of the Art Loan, which ultimately resulted in the founding of the present Detroit Museum of Art, was a sincere and earnest worker, never for one moment losing interest in its plans. His office in the Moffat Block was for more than three years the headquarters for all the detail work in connection with the founding of the institution. It was thro' his influence that His Holiness, Pope Leo XIII gave the "The Marriage of St. Catherine," the first painting in the permanent collection of this city, and it was thro' his personal effort that the Catholics of the city so handsomely framed it.

After the organization of the museum he was for some years active as a trustee, serving on numerous important committees. A gentleman of refinement and culture, the work appealed to him, and his chief desire was that the museum should prove of value to the people of his home city.

William B. Conley, who presents the picture, is one of Detroit's veteran artists. He came to Detroit after studying in the New York Academy in 1868, and devoted himself enthusiastically to his art. He opened one of the first art schools in the city, and established the first life class. His quality as a painter has been uneven. He did many things which were masterful, and others which were commonplace. But whatever average he strikes, he may rightly be said to be an important factor in the development of the art of this city.

This painting is one of Mr. Conley's best portraits, painted from life in 1887, about the time of the building of the first section of the museum. It will be placed in the Board Room.



"CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN," After Fra Angelico.  
Gift of Caroline A. Godfroy.

#### Museum Notes.

On the evenings of January 9th and 23rd, the Museum was kept open for the benefit of the members of the Y. W. C. A. A lecture was given them by the director, on the latter date.

The Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society held their annual meeting in the Auditorium, January 16th. Three sessions were held, at which some very interesting papers were read and discussed.

On the evening of January 12th an informal reception was given Messrs. J. Campbell Phillips and Walter Florian, of New York, two well-known American artists, whose joint exhibition was shown in the Detroit Museum during the month of January.

Three lectures on Archaeology of more than usual interest have been given during the winter under the auspices of the American Institute of Archaeology, Detroit Chapter; Prof. Martin L. D'Ooge, Ph. D., of the University of Michigan; Prof. John P. Peters, Ph. D., of New York City, and Prof. A. M. Tozzer, A. M., Ph. D., of Cambridge, Mass., were the speakers.

The Michigan Ornithological Club met at the Museum on the evening of February 15th. The following papers were read: "Further problems in Bird Protection," by A. W. Blain, Jr.; "The Cerulean Warbler" (notes of 1905) by J. Claire Wood.

A lecture on French Art, illustrated with the stereopticon, was given in the auditorium on the evening of February 15th, before the united Bay View Reading Clubs of Detroit.