

# MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS BULLETIN

PUBLISHED BI-MONTHLY



VOL. I.

BOSTON, NOVEMBER, 1903

## Notes.

Albert M. Lythgoe, Curator of the Department of Egyptian Art, returned from Egypt on the 16th of October. Mr. Lythgoe will remain at the Museum during the month of November to superintend the receipt of objects newly acquired by the Museum in his Department. These form the subject of a special notice on another page.

The attention of visitors is called to the collection of Chinese and Japanese domestic and sacrificial utensils of pewter inlaid with copper and brass which has just been acquired by the Museum and installed in the Metal Room. In these objects a type of art reveals itself hitherto almost unknown to Occidental collectors, and it is hoped that they may be the nucleus of a new branch of the Museum's collections of Oriental Art.

The School of the Museum reopened on October 7. The number of pupils enrolled is 212, including 68 in the Department of Design, under the direction of C. Howard Walker. The classes in this Department are held in Huntington Chambers, No. 30 Huntington Avenue.

A cast of the equestrian statue of the Condottiere Gattamelata at Padua, by Donatello, has been given the Museum by Francis Bartlett. Want of space will prevent the exhibition of both this cast and that of the similar statue of Bartolommeo Colleoni, received some months since from the same donor. The Museum is fortunate in possessing, through Mr. Bartlett's generosity, casts of the two most famous equestrian statues in Italy and perhaps in the world.

During the present season 1,077 tickets have been issued to instructors and teachers in schools and colleges. Free admission has also been granted to 5,273 students, of whom 531 are from the neighboring universities, and 4,489 from public schools.

## Plaster Casts on Sale at the Museum.

A revised list of objects belonging to the Museum, of which plaster casts are now on sale, is in press and will be sent on application. The list has been increased by a number of moulds for terra cotta figurines from Lower Italy and Asia Minor, with several of the marbles lately acquired by the Department of Classical Art, and a few casts from originals in other museums.

## Isaac Orr Guild.

Since the reopening of the school the pupils have been saddened by the sudden death of Mr. Isaac Orr Guild, which took place at the Museum, on October 7, in the seventy-third year of his age. Mr. Guild was born in Frankestown, N. H., June 19, 1831, removing during boyhood to Lowell. From 1855 to 1887 he was in the marble business at Lynn; and later for a few years with the Tiffany Glass Company. Mr. Guild began his association with the school in 1890, and from that time engaged in the sale of art materials to the students, a portion of the basement corridor having been assigned to his use as an office. His character

and his kindness endeared him to all, and he will always be held in affectionate remembrance by many students.

## The Ceramic Room.

During the past summer the European ceramics in the Ceramic Room have been entirely rearranged under the direction of Mr. Samuel B. Dean. The growth of this collection during recent years, through bequests, gifts, and loans, has been such that all the cases had become overcrowded, and it was no longer possible to make either a systematic or an effective display in them. Consequently the work of rearrangement necessarily began with thinning out the objects. About three hundred and forty specimens belonging to the Museum were retired from exhibition, some permanently, others to await more spacious quarters in the new building, and many loans had to be returned for lack of adequate accommodation. As a result, the collection now exhibited is much smaller than it was, but it has gained proportionately in effectiveness. The products of the various potteries are now properly classified in different cases, and only the choicest specimens of each are shown. A careful inspection of these cases as they now appear will repay even those visitors who are already familiar with the contents of the room. The collection of Wedgwood, in which the Museum is especially strong, occupies seven cases (Nos. 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 19), Italian majolica six (Nos. 2, 3, 4, 10, 11, 12), old Delft two (Nos. 5, 6), Hispano-Moresque one (No. 1), and so on. One of the most attractive features of the new arrangement is the collection of eighteenth century figures and groups, of various European fabrics, many of the specimens in which are very highly prized by collectors and connoisseurs. These are shown in three floor-cases near the door to the Textile Gallery.

## Print Rooms.

### Exhibition of Recent Accessions.

The exhibition in the Print Rooms consists of a selection from the new accessions to the department. The general arrangement of the prints is as follows:

First Print Room: Americana. Old European Prints. Blake's Illustrations of the Book of Job.

Second Print Room: Prints by Charles Jacque, Jean Pierre Norblin and other masters, mostly French: Color prints.

Third Print Room: Modern Dutch Etchings. Modern American and European Work. Illustrations in the German weekly "Jugend."

On the left, as the visitor enters the First Print Room, are the Americana—portraits almost exclusively, and welcome additions all. Special attention should be called to the mezzotint portraits by Peter Pelham. Those of Benjamin Colman (Case 27) and Thomas Prince (Case 28) are the rare original impressions. Below the last-named portrait hangs an interesting early example of lithography in Boston, the portrait of Ward N. Boylston, a benefactor of Harvard. Two good examples of David Edwin's work will be

Mierevelt, perhaps the younger Mierevelt, is an admirable foil to the "Englishwoman," pointing, as it does, to the essential features of Mierevelt, so that one may readily retain a distinct image of his manner and his personality.

The work of Ferdinand Bol has a transparency and depth of color which will not fail to attract; and the curious little Dutch, or perhaps German, portrait of an anatomist, will recall to students the portrait schemes of Cranach.

Against the works we have been enumerating, the delicate and colored canvas of Romney—Miss Pole-Carew—makes an effectual appeal. Charming, sentimental, but still spirituelle, this portrait, though not an important example of the artist, yet asserts sufficiently the mood and the method of the most Gallic of British painters. The portrait of Mrs. Gilchrist by Sir Henry Raeburn hardly sustains his power, but is by no means uninteresting as an exponent of that manner in England which was shortly to develop into the theatric presentation of character so noticeable in the work of Lawrence. The color as well has something theatric, though still very fine, in its tendency.

Finally, the unctuous virility of the Goya brings to a dramatic close, with its overpoweringly personal method and its assertive singularity of color, a sequence which began (it will be instructive to go back) with the asperity of Memling's "Madonna."

On the screen between the windows of the Fourth Gallery will be found five English pictures, a recent anonymous loan to the Museum. Another—a water color by Peter de Wint—which accompanied these, will be found on the screen of Old English works in the Water Color Room.

The first picture which will strike the visitor is the sumptuous study for the portrait of Master Crewe, in the costume of Henry VIII, from the hand of Sir Joshua Reynolds. It might be possible to point to other examples in the country of greater note and greater magnitude of intention as well as of greater scale, but a more brilliant *morceau*, a more playful, but allusive, learnedness of the brush—no. The boy shares, but not too much, with those other fantasies of Sir Joshua's, where the expression of childish mood is enhanced into a delicate comic mask, as in the "Strawberry Girl" and the "Muscipula." Here, moreover, is the charm of allusion. One feels one sees, the Holbein Henry VIII fused with the Don Baltasar portraits of Velasquez. It is Holbein with unctiousness, yet it is neither trivial, nor deceptive, nor derivative. The child remains a little ruddy English boy of the Georgian period, the handling is as essentially that of Sir Joshua as one would demand, and yet the whole is involved in this peculiar extra luxuriance of fancy. The splendor of the color and depth of tone and the mature, unmolested condition of the pigment need no emphasis.

It is rather the contrary with the "Miss Webster" by Romney. An originally charming tone, to be sure, has withstood the severe treatment of a more than ordinarily brutal restorer, but the character, never, it is evident, of absorbing interest and the never very distinct graphic intention, have both been lamentably marred.

The two sketches by Constable, on the other hand, remain vividly as left by him. The dark sky and lurid meadows of the lower palpitates with a sketcher's roughly but vitally realized impression, while the ripe amber-like passage of a wheat field in the upper has a quality worthy of the ambitious and maturely considered work for which it served as a base.

The Bonington, finally, offsets the cursive quality of the Constables by its elaborate technique,—this from a hand that itself was master of the cursive,—by its balanced composition and its blend of artifice in treatment with simplicity in motive, its sparkling but somewhat devitalized surface. It is an agreeable but rather misleading example of its author.

P. C.

## The Egyptian Department.

Reference was made in the last number of the BULLETIN, for September, to some of the recent acquisitions in this department. The annual donation from the Egypt Exploration Fund has now reached the Museum, and the objects will be placed on exhibition as soon as possible. They include especially a number of examples of ivory figures and objects in glazed porcelain, of the first dynasty, from the work carried on by Professor Flinders Petrie on the site of the Osiris temple at Abydos, which show remarkable skill in modelling and in the processes of glazing even at the beginning of the historical period. From the temple itself there is a sandstone slab with relief of Mentuhotep III; a limestone block from the temple sculptures added under Sankh-ka-ra; and also an important stela of the fifth dynasty, containing a decree concerning the privileges of the temple and the exemption of the temple servants from liability to public duties.

From the Græco-Roman branch of the Fund have come many interesting objects of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, from the work carried on by Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt at Hibeh and Qarara, including a votive inscription, sandals, bracelets, terra cottas, specimens of glass, and miscellaneous bronze implements.

The gift from Mr. Theodore M. Davis, of glazed porcelains and sculptures in wood from the royal tomb of Thothmes IV, in the Valley of the Kings at Thebes, has been placed on exhibition in two cases in the First Egyptian Room (entering from the Parthenon Room). In one case are shown the series of vases, ushabtis, "magic wands," and other objects in glazed porcelain; the second case contains principally the sculptures in wood, the figure of the panther exhibiting wonderful power and action.

In addition to these gifts, the department has added materially to its collection by the purchase in Egypt during the past year of a considerable number of objects, especial stress being laid upon those periods in Egyptian art which had been hitherto insufficiently represented in our collection. So, beginning with the prehistoric period, we shall now have a representative collection of flint implements, knives, arrow heads and spear heads, bracelets of flint, shell, and horn, necklaces, and similar ornaments.

That side of our collection representing the Old Empire will be strengthened by the addition of a series of stone vases and bowls, of alabaster, diorite, slate, and volcanic ash, ranging from the first to the sixth dynasty, which illustrate a greater perfection in the working of stone than was ever arrived at in the succeeding dynasties.

From the Middle Empire there are a number of inscribed coffins, and two fine statuettes in wood which show all the realism of Egyptian sculpture of this period.

The New Empire and the late dynasties are represented by examples of glazed porcelain, glass, bronze, and sculpture in stone, which will supplement the present collection and increase materially its value as a working collection.

Many of these new acquisitions have already reached the Museum, and it is the intention of the department to place them on exhibition with as little delay as possible. With a rearrangement of the Egyptian Rooms in view, and the addition of another room to the department, the present pressing need of space will be temporarily eliminated.

During the coming winter the work of adding to the collection will be carried on in Egypt in the same manner as during the past year, and with the generous help which has been extended to us by the Director General and the Department of Antiquities at Cairo, the outlook for still further and important additions to our collection is very promising.