

Bulletin of the Rhode Island School of Design

Issued Quarterly

Vol. VI

JANUARY, 1918

No. 1



PASTEL PORTRAIT OF RICHARD WARD

JESSE METCALF FUND, 1917

J. S. Copley (1737-1815)

PASTEL PORTRAIT

BY COPLEY

THE latest addition to the group of representative American works of art which have been secured with the Jesse Metcalf Fund is a pastel portrait of Richard Ward, by John Singleton Copley. It is signed, and dated 1754, and was a product of his early development since it was made when he was but seventeen.

Copley at this time was living at Lindel Row, near the upper end of King Street, Boston, and had already produced work of decided promise. Two years before he had painted a portrait of his step-brother Charles, and when sixteen had made a portrait of Reverend William Welstead. There is much obscurity about his early training. The only evidence we have is in a letter from Lord Lyndhurst, Copley's son, dated 1827, and quoted by Martha Babcock Amory, Copley's biographer (p. 9), to the effect that: "considering that he (Copley) was entirely self-taught, and never saw a decent picture, with the exception of his own, until he was nearly thirty years of age, the circumstance is, I think, worthy of admiration, and affords a striking instance of what natural genius, aided by determined perseverance, can accomplish." In this connection it must be remembered that art in America in the middle of the 18th century could hardly be judged by the same standard of accomplishment as that of Europe, but both John Smibert and Blackburn had painted in Boston and Copley must have seen some of their work. He possibly had some instruction from his step-father, Peter Pelham. Smibert died when Copley was fourteen, so he had little if any personal influence on the young artist.

It is, therefore, of decided value to find a portrait such as that illustrated, which is evidence of growing interest in character analysis, and, is in some ways decidedly in advance of the work of his day.

Richard Ward, the subject of the portrait, was a noted figure, being colonial governor of Rhode Island from 1740-1743.

He was born in Newport, R. I. on April 15, 1689 and died August 21, 1763. His father (Thomas) and his grandfather (John) had both served under Cromwell. We are told that his mother, "Amy Smith," was a grand-daughter of Roger Williams.

Interesting details of his public services are at hand. He was Attorney General in 1712-13, Representative and Clerk in the General Assembly in 1714, Secretary of the Colony 1714-33, Register of the Admiralty Court in 1723, and Deputy Governor for several months in 1740. We are further told that he was present at the Siege of Louisburg in 1745.

His family life is of interest in view of the number of his descendants still in Rhode Island. On November 2, 1709 he married Mary, daughter of John Tillinghast. They had fourteen children. Among these we find that Samuel was twice governor, while Henry served as Secretary of the Province and a member of the Colonial Congress. The daughters married into important families. Isabel married Huxford Marchant, Amy married Samuel Vernon, Margaret married Colonel Samuel Freebody of Newport, and Elizabeth married Dr. Pardon Bowen of Providence. The portrait, therefore, has a decided historical interest as well as an artistic one, and is of especial appeal to citizens of Rhode Island.

The medium chosen is decidedly worthy of note, for pastel is not a material much in use at present. It consists of a mixture of chalk and pigments held together by a binding substance, and generally is used by the artist in the form of small sticks or pencils of color. Just when pastels began to be used is not altogether clear, for drawings in colored chalks were made in Italy as early as the 15th century; but generally the credit of originating this medium of expression has been given to J. A. Thiele of Dresden (1685-1752). It became an independent art in the second half of the 17th century. The artist who first achieved preëminence through its use was Rosalba Carriera, a Venetian (1675-1751), and it was the fashionable medium

for small portraits in the 18th century in France. It was quite to be expected that English artists would use such a popular medium, and in turn that its use would be brought to the colonies at an early date.

To what extent Copley used pastel is not easy to establish. Those who have listed his works have told us of eleven pastels and forty-two crayon drawings; seventeen of the latter are colored. Whether any of the last are in pastel is not stated. But Copley doubtless used pastel with full appreciation of its merits and defects. In its favor might be mentioned the facility which dry color of this nature offers to the artist, its permanence and the soft velvety surface which gives a charm not to be obtained with another medium. It has proved to be especially adapted for portraits, still life and genre subjects. On the other hand there is danger of the color becoming rubbed unless very carefully preserved, or held by a fixative, which darkens the pastel.

The portrait of Richard Ward shows that Copley was thoroughly familiar with his medium, and while it has not the superior merits of the work of later years, it is clearly indicative of high achievement and dignity. With this example of Copley's work should be compared the oil portraits of Governor Gill and the two Mrs. Gills of a later date, which are also features of the permanent collection.

L. E. R.

THE STUDY AND COLLECTING OF PRINTS.

IN view of an increasing interest on the part of an ever widening and discriminating minority, it might not be out of place to briefly suggest a few reasons why the study and collecting of prints is so engrossing, satisfying and broad in its appeal.

A good print has an intrinsic artistic value which places it at once with the major arts. In this field some of the world's greatest creative minds have ex-

ercised their best artistic efforts, and have produced works which will always be classed with the world's masterpieces. One need only mention the strong, vigorous plates of Mantegna; the precise, brilliant engravings of Dürer; the masterly and profound etchings of Rembrandt; or the refined and exquisite works of Whistler. All these men happened to be painters as well, but their names would be equally immortal if only their prints remained to us. The esthetic pleasure and enjoyment to be derived from such prints is great to any serious student of art, but it is necessarily increased in proportion to the observer's understanding of the process in which it is executed, with its possibilities and limitations, and of the aim of the artist.

To the student of art in other fields a new side of the artist's soul is revealed. Here, as almost nowhere else, you get into an intimate relation with him, for here he is most himself. In this respect prints may be compared to drawings and water-color sketches; but while these are in every case unique and therefore of great rarity and still greater cost, the print, being the product of a reproductive art, may be possessed by a comparatively large number of people at a nominal price, and so in their esthetic, cultural, and intimate appeal are more effective and universal. In his prints the artist confides to you his love of country, of city, or of man, his delight in the life and pleasures of the court, his deep religious convictions; he smiles as he portrays your own weak points to you or with bitter tongue denounces the vices of his age. This sense of intimacy is greatly enhanced by the fact that you can take these prints in your hands and study them at close range and at your leisure.

So, too, for the student of costume, manners, furniture, or biography, a new mine of information is opened. Less formal than painting and sculpture, prints deal more intimately with contemporary life. In them are reflected the world's activities, its history, its heroes, its literature, its art. In the wood-cuts of Dürer we hear the first bugle-call of the Reformation which

culminated with Luther twenty years later; in the engravings of France in the 17th and 18th centuries the life of court and chateau, together with the portraits of the men and women who fill such a prominent place in history and romance, are placed before us with all the pomp and splendor of the period in which they lived; in the 15th century Italian illustrations to Dante we find an interpretation of the Divine Comedy, which has never been surpassed; while in addition they reveal the tendencies of the general art movements in Europe and the development of the various local and national schools from the 15th to the 20th centuries. And so we might go on; a detail starts you on research in other fields—your horizon ever broadens. Their breadth of appeal is instantly obvious. It is hardly too much to say that a study of prints from their beginnings to the present day, following all the leads that are opened up to us, would in itself give one an accurate survey of the life, history, and art, in all its phases, of the last four hundred years in Europe, from the playing-cards and religious prints of the 15th century to the war lithographs of Joseph Pennell in the 20th.

It is said that every man has either a hobby or a vice. The hobby of collecting prints is cultural and educative, a stimulus as well as relaxation. It meets all the requirements of a hobby and a study. One's powers of perception are wonderfully increased by the careful discrimination that must be shown in detecting differences in impressions and states, differences often very slight and subtle. Then there is the joy in the quest of them, the pleasure in the acquisition of a particularly rare state or an especially fine impression, the growth of artistic appreciation that comes from constant contact with your treasures, and the relaxation from care and business as you lose yourself in their beauty and their message. With a very modest outlay one may possess original works by the world's greatest artists, whose paintings are either unobtainable or would cost a King's ransom. And then there is the

added distinction and dignity which well selected prints give to any home.

H. F. S.

A SPANISH CHEST.

IN Mediæval and Gothic Europe the chest was one of the most important pieces of household furniture, and even throughout the Renaissance, although not as immediately indispensable, it continued to hold its own both in popular favor and artistic merit. Its uses were as varied as the needs of the age dictated; and its decoration, especially in the late Gothic and Renaissance periods, was only limited by the wealth of the owner. In early times it served not only as a chest for storage, but as a seat, a table, and very often as a bed or couch. Strength rather than artistry was of first importance in this period, as a large number of chests were used to transport the furnishings of a house from one place to another, or as strong-boxes for treasure. On these the heavy iron bands, the lock, the handles, and the rings for the carrying-poles, were the chief decoration, and are often of great interest and beauty. As this form of chest became less essential, owing to the change in the manner of living, heaviness gave way to beauty, and iron ornament to wood-carving, inlay, and painted decoration.

There has recently been added to the permanent collection, through the generosity of Mrs. Gustav Radeke, a Spanish Gothic Chest dating from the 15th century; falling, therefore, in that period when beauty had superseded strength as the first essential; while the absence of rings for carrying-poles still further shows that it was not constructed for any other than stationary household use. A dignified simplicity marks not only the dimensions of the chest, but also the character of the carving and metal-work—a simplicity in strong contrast to the usual Spanish fondness for unrestrained ornamentation, a native tendency further stimulated by the Moorish influence for surface decoration,

and at this particular time by the powerful influence of the Flamboyant Gothic of France and Flanders on Spanish art.

Although chests were common to both Moor and Christian, this example shows no Moorish influence. It lacks both drawers, which were introduced by them, and inlays, which they used lavishly; while the design of the carving is Gothic in its purest form. And although according to Senor Riaño, "The Moors accommodated their customs and ornamentations with

The motives, the reverse curve, and the peculiar form of the trefoil, are distinctly Flamboyant, but they are used by the Spanish workman with a simplicity of design, and a strength and vigor of carving, that is characteristic of earlier times. Such restraint is not often found in the more ostentatious late Gothic, and one finds but few chests of that date with such sincerity of purpose.*

Only the front panel of the chest is carved, and the design falls naturally into



WOODEN CHEST

Gift of MRS. GUSTAV RADEKE

Spanish Gothic, 15th Century

the Gothic style," Moorish workmanship seems to be, in this case, out of the question.

The Gothic impulse was not native to Spain, and she drew freely from outside sources; so much so, that her Gothic style, is, in general, picturesque rather than original or homogeneous. She borrowed from England and Germany, as well as from Flanders and France, although chiefly from the latter. Here, however, we find none of the mixture of motives that we should expect, nor any of the overloaded complexity or dry technical cleverness of the Florid French Style, or of Gothic art in general at the end of the 15th century.

three main divisions. The pattern is made up of trefoils and intersecting circles, the emphasis being on the perpendicular, quite like the late Gothic of England. The central division, while similar in general character, differs in detail as well as in size, and so relieves the panel from monotony. The lock, handles, and hinges are of wrought

* Chests of a similar character may be noted as follows: A 15th century French chest in the Metropolitan Museum, Hoentschel Collection, illustrated in the Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, vol. 3, no. 8; a 15th century Dutch chest in the Musée National d'Amsterdam, illustrated in the catalogue of *Le Meuble Hollandais* by Willem Vogelsang; and a 15th century Spanish chest exhibited in the *Exposición de Mobiliario Español*, Madrid, 1912.

iron, and in their simplicity harmonize splendidly with the carving on the chest. In general, Spanish metal-work of the 15th century is characterized by surpassing magnificence, and a tendency to combine distinct German and French elements; but here the metal-worker, as we noted in the wood-carver, showed unusual restraint, the two working in unison produced an harmonious whole. The border of the lock-plate is relieved by a simple conventional pattern of cut-work, the same design appearing again on the eight braces, while the bosses holding the simple bar handles are of a rosette design.

Among the special uses for such a chest, might be mentioned the storage of church vestments, weapons, grain, hangings or linen. What this chest was originally used for we do not know, but whatever its first use, there is no doubt that it had long been used as a grain chest. The lower part showed continued contact with the moist earth of a continental stable, while the metal hinges and lock have nearly rusted away. Still, even in this condition it has perhaps the added charm of the wear and tear of a long and faithful, if humble, service, which gives dignity to the vigorous grace of the Gothic carving, and softens the unrelieved outlines of its stolid dimensions.

H. F. S.

NOTES.

— ALEXANDER MEMORIAL EXHIBITION.
— The Museum was privileged to exhibit in its galleries from November 8 to 29 inclusive, the Memorial Exhibition of paintings by John White Alexander. In his death American Art suffered a great loss. "As a painter John W. Alexander is particularly noted for his unerring sense of composition and the perfect placing of his single figures; for the long, sweeping, curving lines that give such a fine decorative character to all his work; for his satisfying and subdued color schemes;

and for the sincerity, refinement, and soundness, both in his aim and in his technic. But he was more than a painter — he was widely influential as a teacher, stimulating and tireless as an organizer and leader, kind and helpful as a friend, ardent and uplifting as a citizen. He was particularly interested in bringing art and beauty to the people and in organizing societies devoted to art and its development. His loss, then, is not only felt in the world of art, but by all who are striving to make life in America better and more beautiful." The exhibition included twenty-six examples and featured such well known works as "Isabella, or the Pot of Basil" from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the portrait of Walt Whitman from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the "Blue Bowl" from the permanent collection of the School of Design, and other superior and representative paintings from the estate and members of his family. The exhibition emphasized his true genius as a dreamer as well as his superior merits as a master of painting.

FALL EXHIBITION.—The Autumn Exhibition of contemporary American Painting opened the season of 1917-18 and was on view from October 3 to 24, inclusive. The Museum was fortunate in being able to secure a notable group by such well-known painters as John W. Alexander, George W. Bellows, Frank W. Benson, Hugh Henry Breckenridge, Howard R. Butler, John F. Carlson, Mary Cassatt, Bruce Crane, Arthur B. Davies, Charles H. Davis, Thomas W. Dewing, John Elliott, John J. Enneking, John F. Folinsbee, Frederick C. Frieske, Daniel Garber, Childe Hassam, Charles W. Hawthorne, Robert Henri, Eugene Higgins, Charles S. Hopkinson, Louis Kronberg, Ernest Lawson, Jonas Lie, William C. Loring, Gari Melchers, Richard E. Miller, Marie Danforth Page, Henry W. Ranger, E. W. Redfield, Albert F. Schmidt, Howard E. Smith, and Charles H. Woodbury. The exhibition numbered thirty-two can-

vases and one red-chalk drawing. In every respect the quality was up to the high standard set by previous exhibitions, and was very indicative of the sound progress being made by American artists in graphic expression.

PENNELL—WARWORK LITHOGRAPHS.

—During the month of December the Museum showed in its special galleries, the remarkable series of lithographs by Joseph Pennell showing War Work in Great Britain and the United States. It is natural to expect that the artist would interpret with consummate skill the spirit actuating this subject, and to express it with the technique of a master.

He was intensely sympathetic with all that he saw, as evidenced by the exhibition, and by his own words, "War work in America is the most wonderful work in the world and that is the reason why I have drawn some of the work I have seen—seen in these endless looms of time, where history is being woven, and I have also seen the aeroplanes and the camps and the shipyards, and all are amazing."

JAMES CARROLL BECKWITH.—The recent death of James Carroll Beckwith has removed another of that group of American artists who studied in Paris under Carolus Duran, and who have shown in their work the sound craftsmanship and breadth of vision which Paris training could give. He was a friend of J. S. Sargent, Wm. M. Chase, and many others. Mr. Beckwith was a wide traveller and student in Spain, Egypt, Greece and elsewhere. In the field of portraiture he achieved much success. In his landscape and other paintings he was an earnest seeker after truth, expressing himself with that restraint and academic feeling which characterized the work of Couture, his ideal. Mr. Beckwith is represented in many of the American museums. The example of his work which is owned by the Rhode Island School of Design is entitled "Grandmother's Love-letter."

**A CHINESE STATUE
OF AMITÂBHA.**

THE Museum has purchased a wooden statue of Buddha Amitâbha, which is attributed to the Sung Dynasty in China (960-1259). Wooden sculpture of this date or before is quite rare in European or American



STATUE OF AMITÂBHA Chinese, Sung?
Wood MUSEUM FUND, 1917

collections; and examples when found, have a softness and delicacy of treatment which is not always possible in the harder stone. Buddha Amitâbha, or "Immeasurable Light" as he was called, was especially popular in the Oriental world. When a Bodhisattva, or disciple of the great Buddha, he made forty-eight vows and established the Pure Land of Bliss (Sukhâvatî) in the west, beyond the world known to man.

The statue represents Amitâbha in conventional seated position, and lost in the abstraction of thought so appealing to the Oriental mind. Despite its age it still

has traces of original coloring, especially a pinkish flesh tone. The statue is distinctive for its delicate presentation of Chinese Buddhist thought, and as an excellent example of the high standard created by the Sung sculptors.

THE LIBRARY.

A notable group of French books have been added to the Library. These include:

- Belles demeures de France. n. d.
 Chateau de Bagatelle. n. d.
 Barbet de Jouy — Gemmes et joyaux de la couronne au Musée du Louvre. 1886.
 Gélis-Didot, P., ed.— Oeuvre de J. Fr. Forty. 1896.
 Hucher, M. E.— Vitraux peints de la Cathédrale du Mans. 1865.
 Lefranc, Alex.— Ancienne orfèvrerie Empire. 1903.
 Lumet, Louis and Rambosson, Yvanhoé — Documents sur l'art décoratif français. n. d.
 Meuble à l'époque Louis XVI. n. d.
 Miarko — A B C d'art. n. d.
 Percier and Fontaine—Chateau de la Malmaison. n. d.
 Pouget files—Traité des pierres précieuses, 1762 (reprint).
 Sacchetti, Enrico—Robes et femmes. n. d.
 Salembier — Modèles de dessins d'orfèvrerie. n. d.
 Salembier—Principes d'ornemens. n. d.
- Other recent additions are as follows:
- Andrews, F. H.— One hundred carpet designs from various parts of India. 1906.
 Bowes, J. L.— Notes on Shippo. 1895.
 Davies, G. S.— Renaissance tombs of Rome. 1910.
 Jacob, S. S. and Hendley, T. H.— Jeypore enamels. 1886.
 Jones, E. A.— Old English gold plate. 1907.
 Lawrence-Archer, J. H.— (The) orders of chivalry. 1887.

Ricci, Corrado — Baroque architecture and sculpture in Italy. 1912.

Smith, John — Catalog raisonné of the works of the most eminent Dutch, Flemish, and French painters. 7v. 1829-1842.

The Bulletin of the Rhode Island School of Design Providence

All communications should be addressed to the
General Editor, Mr. L. Earle Rowe.

Entered as second-class matter January 16, 1913, at
the post office at Providence, Rhode Island, under the
Act of August 24, 1912.

Copyright, 1918, by Rhode Island School of Design.
All rights reserved.

OFFICERS

MRS. GUSTAV RADEKE	.	.	President
THEODORE FRANCIS GREEN	.	.	Vice-President
G. ALDER BLUMER, M. D.	.	.	Secretary
STEPHEN O. METCALF	.	.	Treasurer
—			
L. EARLE ROWE	.	.	Director

ADMISSIONS.

HOURS OF OPENING.—The galleries are open to the public on every day of the year, with the exception of Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and the Fourth of July. From July 1st to September 15th the hours are from 1 to 5 P. M. on week days and from 2 to 5 P. M. Sundays; from September 15th to July 1st the hours are from 10 A. M. to 5 P. M. week days and from 2 to 5 P. M. Sundays. The Pendleton Collection is open from 2 to 5 P. M. daily.

COPYING.

Permission to copy or photograph in the galleries of the museum may be obtained in the office. Such permits will not be issued for Sundays or legal holidays.

LIBRARY.

The Library contains 3,517 volumes, 16,111 mounted photographs and reproductions, 2,697 lantern slides, and about 3,250 postcards. During the months of June, July and August the library is closed.