

**THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS OF
THE CITY OF DETROIT;
CATALOGUE OF PAINTINGS,
SCULPTURE AND CONTEMPORARY
ARTS AND CRAFTS**

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DETROIT
1920

THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS
OF THE CITY OF DETROIT

ARTS COMMISSION

RALPH H. BOOTH, *President*

WILLIAM J. GRAY

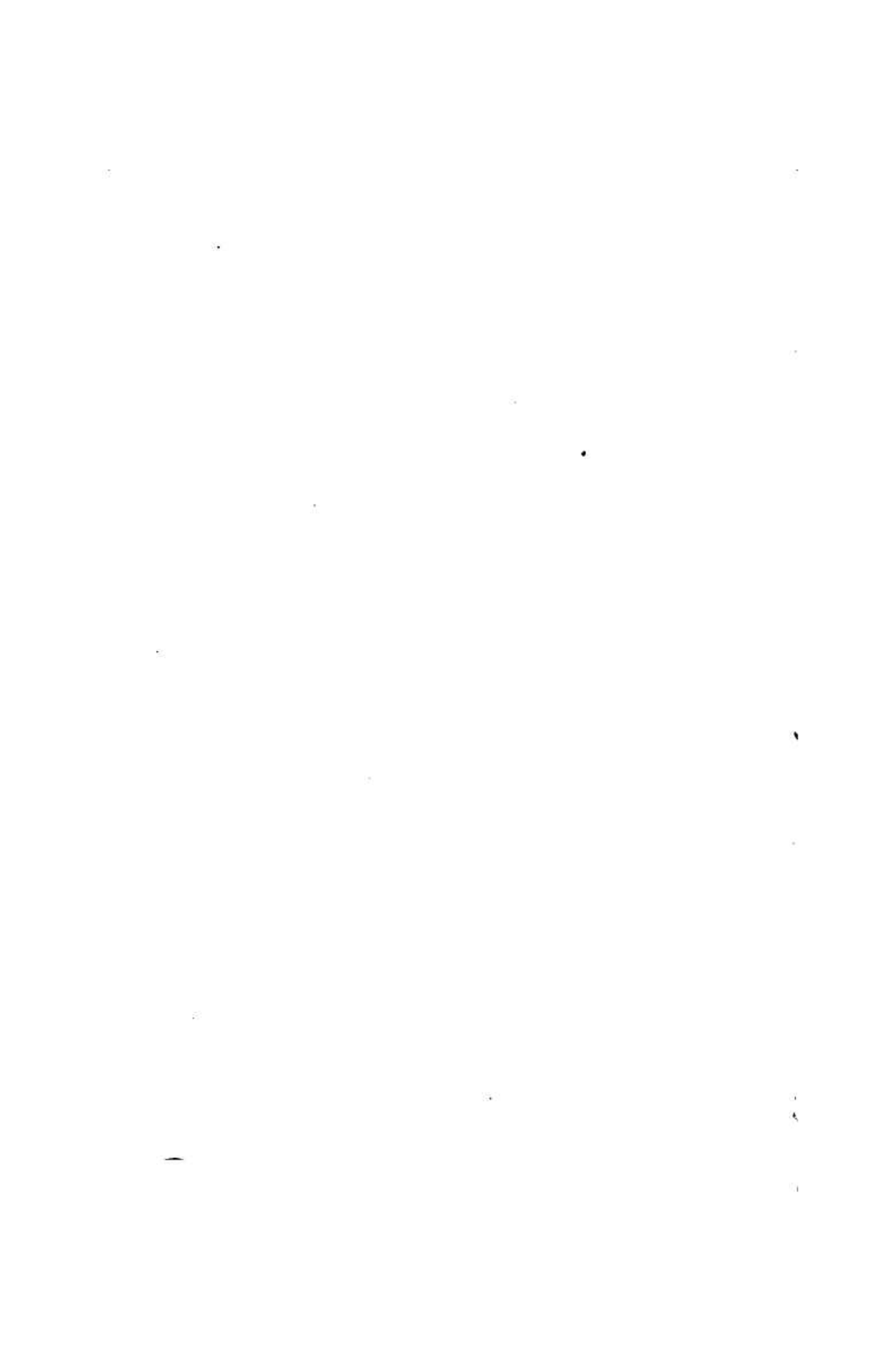
ALBERT KAHN

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Commissioners

CLYDE H. BURROUGHS

Secretary and Curator



Contents

Introduction.....	7
Italian Painting.....	15
Dutch Painting.....	44
German Painting.....	67
Flemish Painting.....	68
English Painting.....	79
French Painting.....	83
Spanish Painting.....	87
Miscellaneous XIX Century Painting.....	92
American Painting.....	107
Sculpture.....	156
Arts and Crafts (Contemporary).....	175
Index.....	188

INTRODUCTION

The collections of the Detroit Museum of Art were recently conveyed to the Arts Commission of the City of Detroit, and form the nucleus around which the Detroit Institute of Arts will be built.

These collections had their first great impetus in 1889, when James E. Scripps, one of the founders of the Museum, presented over seventy pictures by Italian, Spanish, Flemish, Dutch, and French artists of the XV to the XVIII Centuries. This gift places the collections of the Detroit Institute of Arts in an enviable position among American museums for the breadth and character of its collections, in which may be traced almost every influence of Renaissance art.

Speaking of his own benefaction at the time it was made, some forty years ago, Mr. Scripps said:

"As a journalist, it had been my lot, on frequent occasions, to urge upon those who should have accumulated more than the average share of wealth, the duty and wisdom of employing a part at least of their surplus in public benefactions. As my own circumstances bettered, it was impossible with consistency to do otherwise than follow my precept by practical example.

"The most promising field for a public benefaction seemed to be in the establishment of an art institute, which should at once afford elevated amusement to the people, and the means for an education in art for those who would enter upon it as a profession. This field I long since marked out for myself, believing it would prove a useful one, and one that might contribute materially to the aggrandizement of our beautiful city.

"Such were my aspirations for our good city when, in 1885, through the energy and liberality of others, the Detroit Museum of Art came into existence. The grounds

and building being provided for by popular subscription, the opportunity appeared for carrying out my long-cherished plans, and I at once set about forming for it the nucleus of a collection of pictures. My attention was directed to the field of the old masters for the following reasons: (1) From having for some years been a collector of the etched and engraved works of the old masters, I possessed some slight acquaintance with the field. (2) It was a field which, in the prevailing rage for modern pictures, would not be likely to be taken up by any other beneficiaries of the Museum. (3) It was not difficult to see that it was the cities which possessed the choicest collections of the works of the great masters of the past that were the favored resorts of artists and art students. It was largely by the study of these old masters that great modern painters were developed; a collection of their works, therefore, seemed almost indispensable, if Detroit would become a center of art education. (4) No public gallery in this country had as yet made any considerable start in acquiring a collection of old masters. A field for pre-eminence was, therefore, open to the Detroit Museum in that direction, which in the line of modern pictures could only have been attained at the cost of a large fortune. (5) There appeared to me to be an element of permanent value in old masters, which modern pictures might not possess, an opinion which was strengthened by a private letter received in 1885 from Mr. Charles B. Curtis, of New York, in which the following passage occurred: 'I am glad to be assured that there are some men in this new country, who are capable of appreciating the works of the old masters, and who buy them in preference to the productions of the modern school. At present the fashion sets towards the style of Diaz and Bouguereau. How long this may last we cannot tell. He would be a bold man who should undertake to prophesy what will be the status of these men a hundred years hence. But Murillo and Claude have lasted two centuries with increasing fame. We may safely trust, therefore, that they will continue to shine far into the future.' (6) Every year old pictures are becoming scarcer in the market, and every year that the beginning of our collection was postponed, made it the more difficult of accomplishment.