

**THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM  
OF ART: GUIDE TO THE LOAN  
EXHIBITION OF THE J. PIERPONT  
MORGAN COLLECTION**

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*Morgan, John Pierpont,*

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## INTRODUCTION





THE J. PIERPONT MORGAN  
COLLECTION  
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INTRODUCTION  
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THE exhibition which, through the courtesy of Mr. J. P. Morgan, the Metropolitan Museum now offers to its visitors, and which is described in the following pages, is spoken of as the "Morgan Collection." It is, however, only that part of his collection—or more properly collections—which the late Mr. Morgan allowed to accumulate in Europe, and sent to this country during the year before he died. To form an idea of the extent of his collections in their entirety, it should be remembered that in addition to what is now placed on view, there is in the Museum a vast amount of material belonging to them, distributed through its various departments, such, for example, as the large gallery of Chinese porcelains, the rich and important Hoentschel collection of mediaeval works of art, the Merovingian and Germanic antiquities, many paintings exhibited in our picture galleries, and individual objects in our Egyptian and Classical collections; and besides all these there are the treasures in his Library—books, manuscripts, prints, drawings, medals, as well as

## THE MORGAN COLLECTION

the works of art, chiefly Italian, which adorn its walls and cabinets.

Had such an assemblage represented the results of several generations of a family of collectors, it would have been a most remarkable achievement, but formed as it was by one man, and during a comparatively short period of his life, it is probably without parallel in the history of collecting, as there is to-day no collection which in range, variety, and the high average of quality outranks it. Mr. Morgan always had a passionate love for beautiful things, but although he began to acquire these in his student-days, it was not until the latter years of his life, when he relaxed somewhat his close attention to business, that he gave full play to his ambition as a collector. During that time he purchased with almost feverish zeal, willingly pursued by dealers wherever he went, they knowing it was well worth while to save their best things for him, prince of collectors as he was in more ways than one. In many cases, of course, he bought individual objects as they were offered to him, but it was also part of his policy to secure entire collections when he could, and when he knew them to be of recognized high quality, and thus he often reaped the benefit of a lifetime of patient and expert collecting in some special branch. A characteristic instance of his methods he used to describe with great enjoyment, his story being as follows: "I heard that Mr. So-and-so had a certain object in his collection that

## INTRODUCTION

I was very anxious to secure, and in the hope of being able to buy it, I obtained an invitation to visit the collection, which I had never seen. But when I saw what treasures the man had, I said to myself, 'What is the use of bothering about one little piece when I might get them all?' So I asked him at once if he would take so much for his entire collection; he said he would, and I bought it then and there." Another important collection, this time one which he knew well, he bought as he was getting into his automobile to take the steamer for Europe. Just at that moment a dealer came along and told him the collection was for sale. "Very well," said Mr. Morgan, "if you are authorized to negotiate for it, you may buy it for me," and with that, off he went.

The present exhibition consists entirely of material which has never been seen in this country before, with the exception of the paintings, which have been shown in our Gallery of Special Exhibitions during the past year, and five Gobelin tapestries. It comes from his London residence, No. 13, Prince's Gate; his country seat, Dover House, near Putney; the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington; the National Gallery, where the Raphael hung for a number of years, and Paris, where many things were stored from the time when he purchased them. All this part of his collections is therefore now brought together for the first time, and it is doubly to be regretted that he could not have lived to see them thus