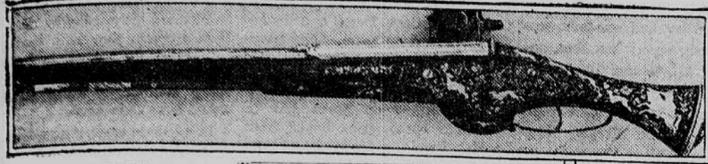


# Treasures of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Could Relate Stories of Romantic Adventures



By Fred B. Pitney

**ORNATE** pistol, once the property of King Charles I of England

arrangement was between Bucchi and the farmer is not known, but Bucchi was later discharged from the government service and officially disgraced. Meanwhile, however, a local merchant had paid the farmer \$180, and an Italian-French syndicate smuggled the packing cases across the border and placed them in the vaults of the Credit-Lyonnais in Paris.

The British Museum heard of the discovery and sent an agent to Italy, but the syndicate, looking for the highest price, opened negotiations with the Metropolitan Museum. General di Cesnola, who was then director of the museum, had the packing cases sent to New York. They came over under a special guard and after two months of sorting over and playing with the fragments the general got a glimmering of what they were. Without going any further he offered the syndicate \$50,000 for the lot. Its asking price had been 1,000,000 francs, but it accepted the museum's offer.

In making the biga it had been ornamented with a model of itself in high relief. It was this decoration General di Cesnola had found. A full size drawing was made from the model and from it the biga was reconstructed. When the biga was put on exhibition the Italian government went into a great state of fury and the Italian Parliament held a special indignation meeting. General di Cesnola, who was an Italian by birth, was accused of being a traitor, and Bucchi was disgraced.

General di Cesnola replied that if the biga had remained in Italy he would not have touched it, but once it was across the Italian border all the great museums were sure to bid for it and there was no chance of its going back to Italy under the competition of the British Museum, the Louvre, the Berlin Museum and the Metropolitan. He felt justified in obtaining it for New York.

### An Ancient Sword

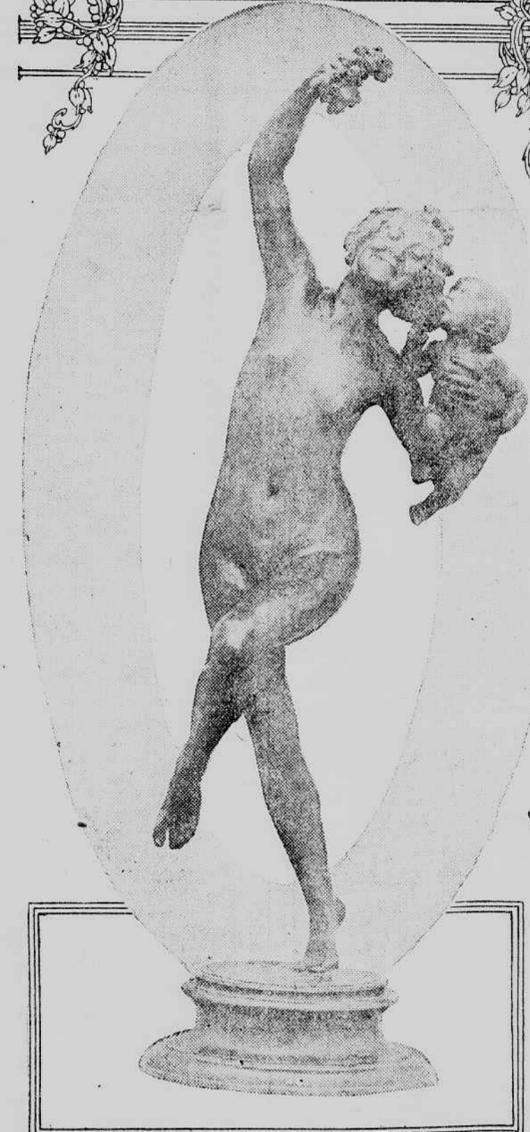
Another exhibit of such antiquity that it is the only one known to be in existence is an Assyrian bronze sword dating from the fourteenth century B. C. The curved blade is about twenty inches long and suggests the Malayan bolo of the present. On each side of the blade and the back it bears three similar inscriptions, reading, "The Palace of Vulnori, King of Nations, Son of Budil, King of Assyria, Son of Belnirai, King of Assyria," and thus, besides being an example of ancient arms, it is a valuable historic document, as it gives the names of three kings of Assyria who reigned in Assur in the fourteenth century B. C.

The sword is a primitive bronze Sa-pa-ra of a type well known from carvings on Assyrian monuments, where the god Maruduk is often shown, armed with a similar weapon, fighting a dragon. It was found about 1875 by the British explorer Colonel John Hanbury, at Nardin, and was for several years in the Assyrian Gallery of the British Museum. The late J. P. Morgan obtained it for the Metropolitan.

### A King's Pistol

Mr. Morgan also gave the Metropolitan the seventeenth century wheel-lock pistol that belonged to King Charles I. It is of the short handled form typical of the period and the slender barrel is incised for nearly half its length in decorated gilt bronze. Inset in the handle are silver plaquettes showing mounted huntsmen armed with pistols urging hounds on deer, and on the butt there is an engraved plaquette showing a huntsman in a buff coat with slashed sleeves and a wide hat with a feather. The maker's name, a Felix Weeder, Zurich, and the date, 1630, are inside the lock plate.

Experts agree that its quality marks it as having belonged to a great personage, while it is not unlikely that it was made especially



**ABOVE**, the "Return of the Holy Family From Egypt," by Rubens, one of the first pictures bought by the Metropolitan  
**BELOW**, the Bacchantes of MacMonnies which Boston barred

for Charles I and that the figures on the plaquettes are intended for portraits of him. The pistol belonged to the late Canon Harford, of Westminster Abbey, whose note, attached to the pistol, said:

"This pistol was brought by Charles Joseph Harford, M. A., F. S. A., J. P., of Stapleton Park, Gloucestershire, about 1790, of a Scotch nobleman in whose family it had been handed down as having been in the celebrated collection of King Charles I."

Prince Rupert was particularly interested in the royal collection of arms as keeper of the armory. The

Scotch were the chief supporters of the Stuarts after the civil wars in England and as the royal collection was dispersed after the death of Charles I it is quite possible that one of his pistols found its way into the possession of the Scottish family.

### The MacMonnies Bacchante

In the modern sculpture gallery is one of the most controversial examples of present-day art. This is the Bacchantes of Frederick MacMonnies. The original was exhibited in the Spring salon in Paris in 1894 and afterward bought by the French government for the Lux-

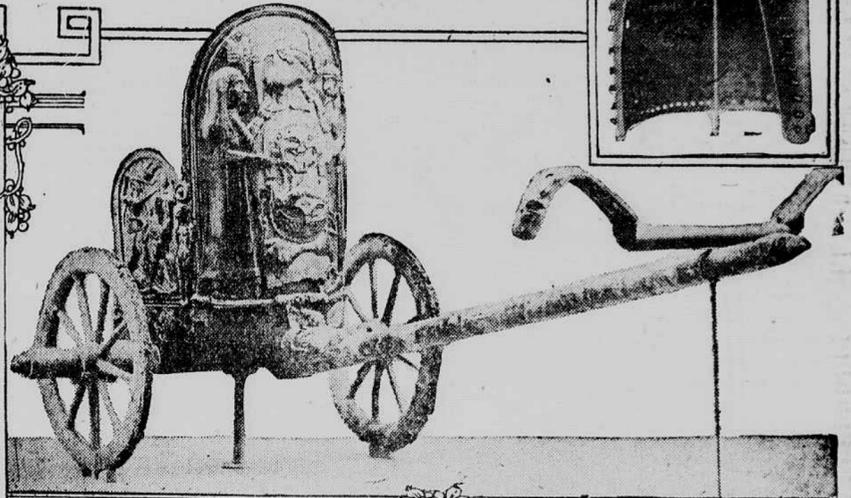
embourg Galleries, where it now stands in the space to the right of the building reserved for sculpture. It was the first example of American sculpture bought by the French government, and there was never any question in France of the propriety of the purchase or of the exhibition of the statue, but when an attempt was made to present this replica to the Boston Public Library New England rose in prudish horror against the suggestion of a statue of a nude woman being shown to the Boston public.

The controversy raged fiercely, but New England was adamant, and ultimately the statue found a hiding place in the cellar of the Metropolitan Museum, whence it emerged by timorous degrees until it stood in the full glare of the main entrance. In subsequent rearrangements it has lost this post, but it remains fully in evidence, and there is nothing to show that the morals of New York, or even of visiting Bostonians, have ever suffered thereby.

Mr. MacMonnies has had other troubles with his nudes. In 1914 he had to put more clothes on the figure of Beauty for the niche to the south of the main entrance to the Public Library before the Municipal Art Commission would give the piece its final approval.

### The Jeanne d'Arc Casque

One of the most interesting ex-



**A ONE-SEATED** buggy, or biga, of an Etruscan dandy of the eighth century B. C.

hibits in the armor collection is the reputed casque of Jeanne d'Arc, and there is an interesting story attached to the suit of armor of Sir James Scudamore. The label attached to the casque of Jeanne d'Arc says, "French, about 1400. This basinet appears to have hung above the main altar of the Church of St. Pierre du Martroi at Orléans and to have passed as the casque of Jeanne d'Arc. It is evidently of French workmanship and of the time of Jeanne d'Arc, but there is

vinced (1) that the casque is French, (2) that it is of the period of Jeanne d'Arc, and (3) that it bears marks of contemporary service."

He might have added that the injuries clearly antedate the ancient rusting.

Experts point out, however, that Andrew Lang speaks of a "chapelaine," and if the term is accurately chosen this casque is discredited, for a chapelaine had a brim, while this casque is plainly a basinet which has lost its face guard. The alternative is that it belonged to one of her officers instead of Jeanne d'Arc and was left by him as an ex voto.

The Scudamore armor is one of

**THIS casque** is reputed to have been worn by Joan of Arc

professionals made a big howl when they discovered that the armor was missing from the offerings. They let something be known of the value of the "junk" and declared that they would have paid at auction a great deal more than Lord Chesterfield could possibly have got at his private sale. The belted earl repented of his bargain, sued the dealer and got the armor back. Then Mr. Morgan bought it for the Metropolitan Museum, paying all either lord or commoner had a right to expect to get for it.

The armor was made at Greenwich, as identified by the ancient pattern book of the royal armorer. The artist was Jacob Topf, and as he was a well known Austrian, who worked at Innsbruck for the Austrian court, it is evident that this is Austrian armor made in England by a visiting armorer.

### Imitation Chinese Pottery

In the Altman collection of Oriental porcelain is a Japanese specimen that was one of the prizes of the museum, but it is not so highly valued now as it was a few years ago. It is one of what were once the famous Yung Lo porcelains, in which the seal of the emperor of that name, who ruled from 1402 to 1424, is cut into the enamel. Until recently these pieces were supposed to belong to the period which they ostensibly represent, and they were one of the goals of collectors, great sums being paid for them.

Now, however, it is known that the Yung Lo pottery has long since disappeared. But early in the last century a Japanese potter produced a similar ware and obtained from his feudal lord permission to sign it with the ancient Chinese seal. The bowls answered in minute detail the descriptions written in Yung Lo's time and collectors competed for them at high price. Recently the records of the Japanese potter were found, and investigations afterward made showed that no specimens of the Yung Lo porcelains previous to his time remained in existence. Consequently, all the precious Yung Lo bowls are deliberate modern reconstructions by a clever Japanese who was almost our contemporary.

Mr. Morgan often said: "No price is too large for a piece of unquestioned beauty and known authenticity."

### An Egyptian Scarab

In the Metropolitan Museum is one of the two earliest known scarabs issued for commemorative purposes. The majority of scarabs were used for seals, and Thotmes III of the eighteenth dynasty is the first Egyptian king known to have issued commemorative scarabs. Two of these remain in existence, the one in the Metropolitan Museum and one in Berlin. The inscription on the one in the Metropolitan reads, "Men-Kheper-Ra, whose two obelisks endure in the temple of Amon."

Thotmes built seven obelisks. One of these is the obelisk in Central Park, commonly called Cleopatra's Needle, and another is in London, on the Victoria Embankment. But it is probable that a special issue of scarabs would only be for a monumental obelisk, such as would be set up in connection with the thirtieth anniversary of the king's nomination as heir to the throne. In the case of Thotmes this was in B. C. 1471, which thus seems to set the date for this commemorative scarab.

Also from Egypt is an object dating from the beginning of the historical period, about B. C. 3400. This is the framework of a couch. It differs from the well known hair-cloth furniture of our recent ancestors in being somewhat less worn.

### AN EARLY gift to the Museum was Vermeer's "Young Woman Opening a Casement," presented by Henry G. Marquand

no documentary evidence showing to whom it belonged."

Writing from St. Andrews, Scotland, in 1910, Andrew Lang said: "At the siege of Jargeau, June, 1429, her life was saved by her chapeline—a light headpiece without visor—when a heavy stone knocked her off a scaling ladder. From Jargeau she went to Orléans for two or three days, and she might naturally have dedicated the chapeline."

This is the only occasion on which the Maid is identified as wearing a vizorless headpiece, while the casque in the Metropolitan has a heavy dent in the left cheek that may have come from the stone that knocked her off the ladder. Two holes in the right cheek look as though they were from lance thrusts. A piece of small chain on the casque indicates that it was suspended in a church as an ex voto, while the Duc de Dino said the links attached to the casque agreed with those above the main altar in the church of St. Pierre du Martroi in Orléans.

Baron de Cosson said of the casque: "As this case stands, we are con-

the Morgan purchases of 1911. It came from Holme Lacy, Hertfordshire, the ancient seat of the family Scudamore-Stanhope, now represented by the Earls of Chesterfield. Sir James Scudamore was a gentleman usher at the court of Queen Elizabeth and was a well known dandy of his day. In 1909, by order of Lord Chesterfield, Henry Lenygon, a London antiquary, was employed to visit the manor house and expertise the contents for sale.

Holme Lacy had been rebuilt in the time of Charles II, but part of the old building, the Henry VIII tower, was untouched, and in an attic, under a litter of odds and ends, Lenygon found a chest of old iron, which he expertised at \$100. The chest stood near a broken window, through which the rain had beat for many years. The floor was rotted and the bottom of the chest was rotted and damp. The armor was badly rusted where it had touched the damp wood and all of it was in a very bad condition.

Only a few words were given to the lot in the catalog prepared for the sale of the contents of Holme Lacy, but this was enough for the dealers in antiques, who, being in vulgar trade, realized the value of the find. One of them visited Lord Chesterfield before the date of the sale and bargained for the armor at private sale. The rest of the pro-