Metropolitan Museum's Treasures That Few Ever See

Art Objects in Storerooms and Obscure Corners Hold Wealth of Interest Notwithstanding Many of Them Give Way to More Famous Works

VISITORS to the Metropolitan Museum of Art whose knowledge of its collections amounts to that of a professional cicerone have been wondering what had become of the Bonnat portrait of the museum's first president, John Taylor Johnston, which early in the year disappeared from the walls. But as their knowledge includes even the bypaths they accounted for it in various ways or, if they wished to know the particular way, they would simply inquire of the curator of paintings.

The ordinary visitor, however, is not so acquainted with precedent. To him the closed doors in certain alcoves of different galleries mean nothing. That one of them, in particular, leads to a large room where drawings, water color paintings and oil paintings in reserve are kept in racks is a fact he had not suspected.

Planning for Museum's Jubilee.

As a matter of fact the Johnston portrait was taken out of public view to await the rearrangement or readjustment of the collections making for the Museum's jubilee on May 8 in order that it might be hung again in a sort of historic limelight. With the same idea in view, that of giving prominence to treasures which have acquired hallowed associations in the fifty years of the Museum's life, changes are making in all departments of the institution. Some important ones have already been effected, but beginning to-morrow the Museum will be closed for two weeks, when the serious work of preparing for this important event will be accomplished.

With the private view to which fellows and incorporators, fellowship members and sustaining and annual members are invited, together with their friends, there will be shown a good many valuable things which have been relegated to the storerooms for one reason and another. Some will be restored temporarily to the galleries for purely sentimental reasons, while others are accessions which have not yet been seen publicly.

A museum in this respect is not unlike a private house or, at least, like a private collection. A householder with artistic instincts frequently weeds out of his furniture articles that no longer appeal to his changing taste or fail to harmonize with his recent purchases and the art collector, as his knowledge and experience waxes, is apt to make a cleaner sweep of things which once he prized too highly. It is natural enough to attribute to a museum the same human traits of growth of knowledge and taste. Pictures which when first acquired seemed to stand for an epoch in art are sometimes superseded by others which show it better; the former are likely to be taken down from a gallery and hung in a corridor or even in the basement of the building or not hung at all. To a degree the same rule works in all collections.

But the infrequent visitor, whose main interest is perhaps the paintings, is often puzzled when he goes to a certain point in a certain gallery to look for a painting which once hung there, and he does not always receive from the attendant an adequate explanation of its absence. The attendant is able to say that it has been hung somewhere else, if such is the case, or that it has been removed from the wall, but his knowledge sometimes stops there. If the visitor found Bryson Burroughs, curator of paintings, he would learn precisely what had become of it. He could even see the picture if it is still in the Museum, and if not he would learn that it was out on loan to a library or to an exhibition of the American Federation of Art.

When the thing sought is a drawing or a water color the explanation is simpler, for exhibitions of these are specially made and are interchangeable. The water color portraits by Rosetti, in which the Museum is rich, are to be seen in Mr. Burroughs's room except at such times when they form part of a temporary water color exhibition. They may be regarded justly as a part of the wealth of the institution held in reserve.

In the Vast Storerooms.

Also in reserve are many paintings representative of the eighteenth century English and French schools. Such pictures of this school as are possible to be hung in the space available are crowded into gallery No. 24, but of both schools the Museum now owns enough paintings to fill individual rooms. In this gallery were hung, perforce, certain acquisitions too important to be kept reserved. These are the head of a lady by Boucher, the portrait of Mme. Favart and the portraits of Monsieur and Mme. Leblanc by Ingres. For reasons already stated the two drawings by Ingres and nineteen drawings from the Pembroke Collection have been in retirement for almost a year. The second group of Degas drawings, acquired in 1919 at the second Degas sale in Paris, together with a selection of French and English drawings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was shown last October. Earlier in the year an exhibition of water colors and drawings by American artists of recent times was held. These have gone back to temporary obscurity in rack and portfolio.

Museum visitors are not aware of the existence of gigantic storerooms in the basement of the place, and even if they did know about them they would not be permitted to increase their knowledge by a personal investigation. It is in the storerooms that the great cases of Egyptian art are first received, and there are made the repairs, so to speak, if any are required after the long sea voyage. There, too, the recent acquisitions of modern sculpture are uncased and the storerooms, in addition to other uses, serve as general receiving rooms. Directly beneath what are known as the Morgan galleries is the storeroom of decorative arts, where the greatest activity reigns. Work in other departments may be spasmodic, proceeding by fits and starts, according to what comes in, but there is always work in the decorative arts.

Purchases in this active department have not been numerous enough of late to keep porter and artisan busy, but gifts and loans have made up for the lack in the purchase department. Even there the acquisitions include several pieces of first rate importance, notable among them being Pierre Puget's marble statue of Marsyas, the terra cotta bust, Pere Duchesne, by Joseph Chinard and the Romanesque base of an altar cross of the school of Godefroid de Claire.

Early American furniture, examples of English cabinet making of the end of the eighteenth century, other American material, including furniture, prints and woodwork, are being assembled and held in this storeroom. These will be used in the installation of the proposed American wing, plans for which are now in preparation.

Filling Up the Gaps.

The committee on sculpture has been for several years engrossed in the task of filling up the gaps in the Museum list of American sculptors in its collections, in an endeavor to fill them with worthy representations of our sculptors. There are ninety-one American sculptors represented by 186 examples, and of thirteen pieces marked as recent accessions, seven being gifts and six being purchases, about half are still in the reception room and merit being called part of the riches of the Museum which are not yet on view.

In the extreme northwest corner of the new building is to be found what may be termed the workroom of the department of is curator and Arthur C. Mace and Herbert E. Winlock assistants. Jewelry and tiny religious figures receive an extra cleansing or a mere look over as the case may require before they are put on exhibition, while the statues, sarcophagi and other massive accessions are held in subterranean storerooms.

Rich as this department already is, these storerooms hold in temporary reserve a very wonderful accession to their richness.

"LADY LILITH," PAINTED IN WATER COLOR by DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTE IN 1867 OCCASIONALLY EXHIBITED

BUST of YOUNG GREEK ATHLETE, 4TH CENTURY, B.C. IN RESERVE ON ACCOUNT of METAL WORKERS' STRIKE.

Coming Jubilee Provides Places in Limelight for Valued Paintings and Other Things That Long Have Been Relegated to the Institution's Overplus

There has just arrived the treasures derived from the Museum's excavations on its concession in the Assasif, at Thebes, which were conducted during the winter of 1918-1919. More than forty coffins were uncovered containing their customary but none the less interesting funerary objects. Of the acquisitions which had been held abroad during the war some have but recently reached the Museum and others were in the port of New York subject to the usual delays. While the latter cannot be classed among things which are witnessable with permission the others are, and it is doubtful if much of the new wealth can be arranged in the galleries before the date of the jubilee.

Egyptian Jewelry Coming to Light.

There is to be a new room in the Egyptian section to be known as the room of Egyptian jewelry, and it is hoped that this will be installed no later than the coming summer. Then the jewelry now being restored or burnished in the workroom of the department will no longer be a part of the Museum's hidden trove. The jewelry and other objects found by Prof. Petrie in 1914 have been on temporary exhibition throughout the winter and attracted an immense number of admirers. These wonderful things will go into the Room of Egyptian Jewelry when it is completed.

Repeating the famous words of Sir Henry Cole, the working founder of the Department of Science and Art of the British Government, it may be justly said that the textile room under the direction of Miss Frances Morris, assistant curator of the department of decorative arts, carries out his advice to the letter. Sir Henry said: "If you wish your schools of science and art to be effective, your health, the air and your food to be wholesome, your life to be long, your manufactures to improve, your trade to increase and your people to be civilized, you must have museums of science and art to illustrate the principles of life, health, nature, science, art and beauty." The textiles room not only furnishes a museum but also a place for study which is largely taken advantage of.

In the study room are the cases of the Mrs. Seligman donated collection of bobbin and needle point laces, beautiful and comprehensive, numbering 125 faultless examples of this exquisite work. Because of lack of space this donation has to be withheld from the great public, but it is fulfilling a worthy purpose in the study room. Other laces that are not exhibited are kept in the same room in blue lined cabinets.

Writing a Book on Laces.

Miss Morris has written the descriptive text in collaboration with Miss Marian Hague of the Scuola d'Industrie Italiane, and Miss Sarah Gore Flint Townsend, adviser to the textile department of Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, has written an introductory chapter of a book called "Antique Laces of American Collectors," which is being produced under the auspices of the Needle and Bobbin Club of New York. A loan exhibit of laces held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art during last summer was made up principally of items loaned by members of this club.

A few of these laces, collected by connoisseurs whose only interest is in masterpieces intended for personal adornment or in rare specimens of the early type that are of fascinating interest to students, were donated to the museum. These are to be found in the cabinets aforesaid and make a substantial part of the museum's unused assets.

In order that the public may be able to follow the growth of the Museum collections the practice is to show on arrival the new things destined for any department in the recent accessions room. In the department of classical art a number of important pieces have been shown there and then wrapped up in cotton wool to await their final destination or *vitrine*. Some of these new accessions, gifts and loans are to go to the sixth century room. It is now ready, and so is most of the material; doubtless it will figure admiringly in the jubilee.

With the winding up of periods of loans, when objects are to be withdrawn, the accession of new art objects and the redecoration and arrangements of galleries, there is always some change going on at the Museum even among the collections that seem most static. In consequence of these changes the various private rooms of the place, from the storerooms in the basement to the *meulier* or cast room on the roof, generally contains treasures that have been seen only fitfully in the various galleries. These retired objects, of whatever kind they may be and for whatever reason they are in retirement, constitute the overplus of the museum.

Lady Shimum Wins London's Admiration as a Crusader Pleading for Assyrians

By EDGAR C. MIDDLETON.

LONDON, March 20.

One Whose Grace and Culture Amazes British Dignitaries Tells How Her Countrywomen Are Becoming Westernized—Picturesque Envoys from Pontus and India Also in England Seeking Settlement of Their Problems.

THE lady Surma d'Mar Shimum has arrived in London as the official ambassador from the Assyrians in the Kurdistan Mountains. When Rudyard Kipling wrote his famous lines, "East is east, and west is west," he was reckoning without the great war—or the Turks. East is still east, but the merest shadow of its former mighty substance. It is no longer the father of wisdom but the child of innocence.

Civilization has swept Oriental regimes like the gale through a wheat field in full ear. Naked, dazed, blinded amid the fierce glare of publicity which the great war has turned upon those lost and forgotten tribes east of Suez, the Oriental pathetically turns his face toward the setting sun, toward western civilization—to the great councils of the Allies to settle his numerous problems for him.

Crusaders in London.

From Pontus on the shores of the Black Sea Mgr. Chrysanthos, Archbishop of Trebizond, has come all the way to Europe to the Peace Conference as delegate of the unredeemed Greeks. Bound on a crusade of almost similar nature, Sadhu Sundar Singh is in London to-day from India, while Lady Shimum is in this country to plead the cause of about 80,000 Assyrians domiciled in the Kurdistan Hills, who desire to remain under British protection and apart from the Kurds or the Turks.

"The people I have come to speak for are Christians," she told THE SUN AND NEW YORK HERALD. "They have been cut off from Assyria for about 500 years, and for all that time members of my family have been their patriarchs.

"In the early days of the war, helped by the Russians, we fought against the Turks. We lost a great many men, including my brother, who was the head of the tribe.

"Our women excited the greatest admiration of the Russians. They took up food supplies and ammunition to our men, old and young, in the firing lines."

Speaking of the position of these women, Lady Shimum said they have recently shown signs of becoming westernized: "Actually we are midway between the women of the east and the west. Lately four or five women have so risen to be allowed voices in the councils of the tribe, and many of the women are tending toward western ideas in the matter of dress.

"They have found out how to make European clothes, and they are putting their knowledge to practical effect."

Very handsome, not unlike the Queen of Montenegro in profile, very bright, lively and animated, Lady Surma d'Mar Shimum is only a little over 30 years of age. Of fine physique, as one would expect from a mountaineer, she is also a highly cultured woman, so cultured that the Archbishop of Canterbury closed a recent interview with the "ambassador" by the remark: "It is extraordinary to find so much civilization where one could naturally have expected barbarism."

She Figures in Politics.

Here in London she is rapidly becoming a considerable figure in politics. Besides the Archbishop, Foreign Minister Lord Curzon and Mr. Montagu, India Secretary, already have seen her, and one morning last week Lord Hugh—brother of Lord Robert—Cecil drove out to the London suburb where she is staying, for an interview; anxious to see the head of these Prestorian Christians, whom legend asserts to be the descendants of the ten lost tribes.

They have always been Christians, but some years ago they seemed to be in danger of losing their old literature, so the Archbishop of Canterbury sent out a mission. Then the Assyrians said: "Our boys are being taught, we want our women taught now," and as a consequence the Sisters of Bethany went out to Kurdistan in 1890.

Though the Lady Shimum wears the Turkish fez with a veil round it, her tribe fought against the Turks with great bravery in the war and lost heavily. But they lost more in a terrible march. In Kurdistan the snow in winter is often so deep as to render the roads impassable.

Why the Kurds Avoid Them.

The march in question was undertaken to make connection with a large force of friendly Arabs under the command of the famous Col. Lawrence. They failed to find them and were almost at their last extremity, all clustered together, when an aeroplane suddenly appeared overhead. "A Turkish aeroplane!" they cried in dismay, and expected bombs. But it was an English machine, and the pilot, descending, told them where to find the British troops.

Why, being Christians, it may be asked, are they not persecuted as the Armenians are by the Kurds?

"Because," Lady Shimum proudly explained, "our people are a race of martial mountaineers, as they showed only too well in the late war. In the kind of guerrilla warfare that alone is possible amid the bleak mountain slopes of our country they are unconquerable. The Kurds are forever harassing the Persian plains beneath our rocky fastnesses, but wisely leave us alone.

"While we call ourseves Assyrians, it is hardly true to fact. To call a man an Assyrian is as much an anachronism as to refer to an Italian as a Roman. Both of these ancient races have ceased to exist. You westerners, however, chose to label us with the nationality and we feel ourselves highly flattered by the mistake.

"We are a mongrel—a nomadic—race, always on the move; part Kurd, part Armenian, part Georgian and part Syrian. Some of us even are descended from the nomadic Turks. But one and all are Christians by religion and always have been. Our history goes back to the time of the lost tribes of Israel; our country surrounds ancient Nineveh of Biblical fame."

Judged by the standards of distance in the Orient, Mgr. Chrysanthos, the Archbishop of Trebizond, might be said to be a neighbor of the Lady Shimum—at least the object of his mission to London would suggest that the two peoples were divided by but a few geographical miles.

"It is the aim of the Pontic Greeks," he told THE SUN AND NEW YORK HERALD, "to make Trebizond the capital of a Greek republic, which would give the predominantly Greek population of the hinterland of the Black Sea the opportunity of managing their affairs democratically, and of making their land a centre of culture and progress.

"Our country was Hellenic before the coming of Christ, and, in spite of centuries of Turkish misrule and oppression, still remains such."

A tall, bearded figure, picturesque in his Byzantine robes and priestly head covering, the Archbishop is visiting London to enlist the sympathy of the British Government and the English Church in the determination of the Pontic Greeks to become autonomous, and rid themselves forever from the yoke of the Turks, against whom he is particularly bitter.

"Driven from our country by Turkish misrule," he exclaimed vehemently, "270,000 Greeks are now refugees scattered in the Caucasus and southern Russia.

"When the future of Pontus as an autonomous Greek State, in accordance with the unshakable will of its population, is assured, these 270,000 will return."

The Holy Man From India.

Sadhu Sundar Singh, the Indian missionary to England, is six feet in height, extremely fair, with handsome face, dark eyes and hair; barefooted and dressed in a long flowing saffron robe, with a scarf of the same color thrown loosely over his shoulders and turban to match.

He is only 30 years of age, grave in demeanor, but with a captivating smile and the unembarassed manner of the real mystic. The saffron robe is the time honored dress which proclaims the wearer to be a *sunyasi* or a *sadhu*, a holy man, and gives him the freedom of all India.

He is a Sikh by birth. His father is a wealthy landowner in Rampur, and as a child Sundar was brought up in the lap of luxury. His mother, a refined and gifted woman, always urged him not to be careless and worldly but to become a holy sadhu. He observed the wishes of his dead mother, and unflinchingly facing the anger of his Hindu relatives he became a Christian at the age of sixteen.

Many attempts were made to win Sandur back to his family. His father told him of the wealth and honor that awaited him, an uncle offered him jewels and money and even placed the *pugaree* from his own head at his nephew's feet, but Sundar would not be tempted. After this he was no longer a son but an outcast.

Poison in His Food.

Before he left home a deadly poison had been mixed with his food. He arrived at Ropur violently ill and made his way to the house of an Indian pastor and his wife. A physician who was called pronounced the case hopeless and promised to come in the morning to the funeral. Sundar was in mortal pain, but much to the physician's surprise he was alive and on the road to recovery.

Sundar then continued his way through India, studying at various missions and preaching as he went. He entered the St. John's Divinity College at Lahore and spent the years 1909 and 1910 in study. After that for many years the Sadhu went to Tibet each year for the six months of hot weather.

Many are the wonderful stories he tells of his travels. At Narkanda he found men reaping. He joined them and spoke of religious matters. One of the men, who became annoyed, hit the Sadhu on the head with a stone. Soon this man was seized with a severe headache, had to stop work, and the Sadhu took up the scythe and reaped with the others. At the end of the day the men, whose hearts had become softened, invited him to their home. Later, when the Sadhu had left and they took stock of the harvest gathered that day, they found to their astonishment a record yield.

At one village the people treated him so badly that he spent his nights in the jungle. One particularly black night he found a cave, where he spread his blanket. When daylight came it revealed a man eating leopard still asleep close to him. On another occasion a panther that had killed several people of the village allowed him to pass unmolested.

In Nepal he was put in prison and subjected to tortures which normally should have ended his career, but much to the astonishment of his persecutors he survived. It filled them with superstitious dread. At the age of nineteen, while in Tibet, he was arraigned before one Lama and found guilty. The two favorite forms of capital punishment are being sewn up in a wet yak skin and put out in the sun until death ends the torment, or being cast into the depths of a dry well, the top being firmly fastened over the culprit's head. The second form was chosen for the Sadhu. He was stripped of his clothes and cast into the depths.

Melted Wood May Prove Useful

IT is possible to melt wood by heating it in a vacuum, producing a hard, homogeneous substance. Melted wood was for a long time only a laboratory curiosity, but it may be that industry shall presently discover practical applications of the greatest interest.

Now although wood is eminently inflammable it melts at a relatively low temperature, but in very precise conditions, and only when it is absolutely removed from contact with oxygen so that its combustion is impossible. This may be understood when we remember what its composition is. When its immediately soluble constituents have been removed, by means of alcohol, for instance, it gives on analysis organic acids, water, oily essences, silicates, sulphates, phosphates, chlorides, and hydrocarbonates of lime, potash, soda and magnesia, carbonic acid, carbonated hydrogen, &c.—that is to say, solely bodies susceptible of being evaporated or dissolved after having cooperated by chemical affinity in the formation of determinate substances.

Starting from these data Messrs. Bizouard and Lenoir, in 1891, studied the problem of the fusion of wood. They operated in a closed vessel at a relatively low temperature—that is about all one can gather from the records of the period.

Their work was taken up by others, and now there is a full operative technic that enables us easily to obtain excellent results. A metal receiver, a sort of boiler having a double bottom through which superheated steam passes, is filled with bits of wood. It is closed by a lid similar to that used in autoclaves and provided with a tube and stopcock communicating with an apparatus for exhausting the air. When the wood thus kept in a vacuum is heated above 284 degrees Fahrenheit the water and other volatile substances are given off first and are drawn off by means of the exhausting apparatus, after which the heating is continued for about three hours. There then take place a complex series of reactions and phenomena analogous to those that accompany the distillation of wood in a closed vessel, and in this way all the so-called pyrogenous products are separated; these in turn are drawn off, condensed and separated so that they may be utilized commercially. There then remain in the receptacle only the fibrous skeleton of the wood and the mineral salts, which taken together constitute a fusible mass. This is allowed to cool slowly, out of contact with the air, and then placed in a second boiler, which, after the air has been exhausted, is filled with nitrogen under a pressure of 1.5 to 2 atmospheres. The whole is heated to 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit, for two hours, and at the end of this time the wood is melted into a homogeneous, hard mass.

A Golden City

THE Mexican city of Guanajuato, built near the oldest gold mines in the country, was originally constructed of adobes made of the refuse of these mines. As the early processes of extraction were very imperfect, the walls and floors of these buildings were thus full of gold.

Things would have continued thus for an indefinite time, and the inhabitants would have been living yet in these valuable buildings, if the passage of a railway line near by had not necessitated the demolition of about 100 houses.