

My Herald May 12 1916

# SARGENT MASTERPIECE REJECTED BY SUBJECT NOW ACQUIRED BY MUSEUM

"Portrait of Madame X," Which  
Caused Sensation in Paris, Now  
on Exhibition Here.

When John Singer Sargent, American artist, in 1884 painted a portrait of a reigning Parisian woman the initial of whose last name is G., he put into the work plenty of the characterization that always has distinguished his work. The picture was painted on commission, but it looked so much like the woman that she refused to accept it. Beautiful as the portrait was, it revealed something to which the subject objected.

The artist exhibited it at the Paris salon of 1884 under the title "Portrait of Madame G." It caused a sensation and was reproduced many times. Mr. Sargent did not sell it, and last year he lent it to the Panama-Pacific Exposition, at San Francisco, where it was shown under the title of "Madame X." The Metropolitan Museum of Art has just acquired the work from the artist, who is now in this country, and it was placed on exhibition yesterday in the Room of Recent Accessions. It was bought from the Arthur Hoppock Heard fund.

The painting represents the subject standing, with her face turned in profile. She stands resting one hand on a table. She wears a décolleté black gown. The face and form are unforgettable, and it seems that the woman's very soul is bared to the spectator. The work is of heroic size, being 82½ inches high and 43½ inches wide.

Another most interesting new acquisition of the Museum, also placed on view yesterday, is "Elijah in the Fiery Chariot," by William Blake, painted about 1795. The work is of a peculiar technique, being executed in the manner which Blake called "fresco," which was a color print made by the artist, and finished in water color by hand. His process is not definitely known, and the picture at the Museum seems to defy the wise ones to tell just how it was done. Some of the experts hold that the foundation was an etching, others than a wood engraving served the artist's purpose. Blake's biographer, Gilchrist, asserts that the drawing was made on millboard, the lines traced over in paint mixed with the yolk of egg, and while still wet an impression was stamped on paper, giving an outline of the composition. Another printing gave the shadows and dark masses, and when this was dry the local colors were stamped on. After the printings were finished the picture was worked over in water color by hand.

No matter how the picture was produced its effect is almost indescribable. The real subject of the picture is fire. In the very heart of the blaze the white figure of Elijah sits in the chariot calmly, a great book upon his knee, while with his right hand he controls the steeds, with their manes and tails waving masses of dark flame. Beside the steeds is the figure of Elisha, standing nude, shrouded only in his white beard.

Among four pieces that have just been added by the Museum to the Clearwater collection of American silver is a tankard made by Nicholas Roosevelt (1687-1755), who was a collateral ancestor of Theodore Roosevelt, and who evidently was considered an important silversmith in his own day, for, in 1753, the New York Common Council commissioned him to make a fine gold box to present to Danvers Osborn, Baronet, who was given the freedom of the city at that time. The tankard is



"PORTRAIT OF MME X" by  
JOHN SINGER SARGENT

of the familiar New York type, with a low domed cover and no midrif.

There also is a mug by Hendrik Boelen, who was one of the early New York makers, and who, with his brother, had a large part of the local silver trade at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

The pictures by Cezanne, extremist, have been lent to the Museum by Mrs. Eugene Meyer. They are "Still Life" and "The Bouquet of Flowers."

The Museum yesterday gave notice to the public that after May 23 the galleries occupied by the J. Pierpont Morgan collection will be closed, this action being taken to facilitate the delivery of those parts of the collection that have been sold by Mr. J. P. Morgan. The parts of the collection which are allowed to remain at the Museum will be rearranged according to a plan which will be agreed upon with Mr. Morgan.