



WALTER HOMER and EVELYN MILLER
Children of Mr. and Mrs. Homer A. Miller

Photo by Webster

THE ART COLLECTION OF THE DES MOINES WOMEN'S CLUB

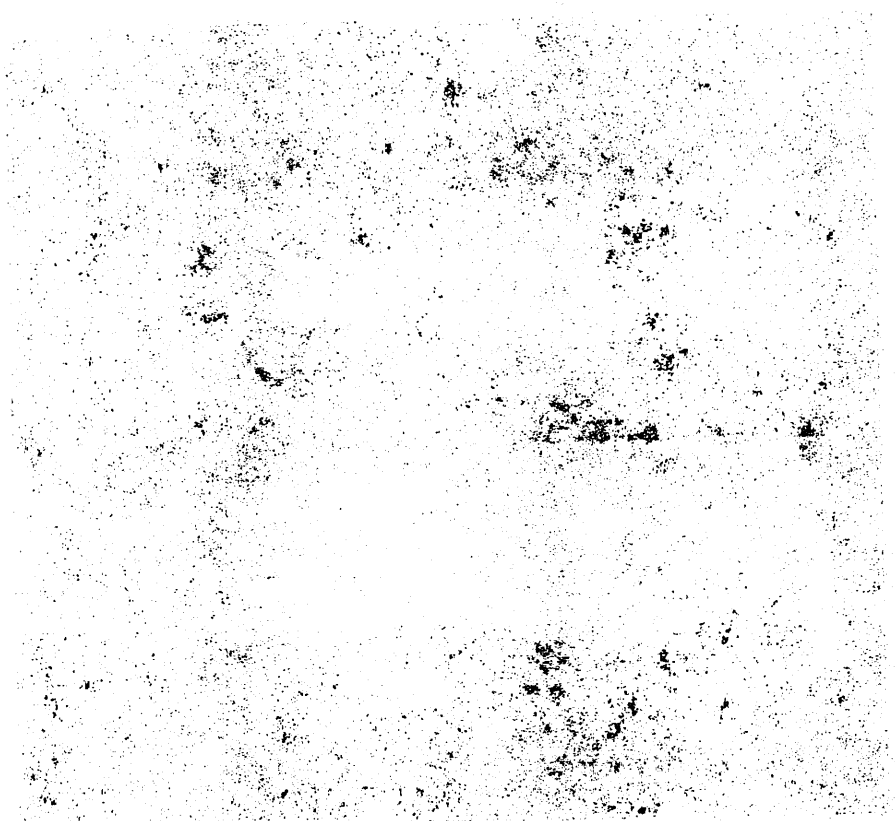
Calista Halsey Patchin

NO DOUBT it was the conviction that, in a growing western city, which has no leisure class among its busy men, "art" must be part of the white woman's burden, which led the Des Moines Women's Club, in its initiation, to pledge itself to the upbuilding of an art gallery in Des Moines. It is a thing that no other woman's club in this country has attempted, and in spite of its many interests, manifold by a rapidly increasing membership,

the club has held steadfastly to this one thing. The collection now consists of some twenty-five oil paintings, mainly by American artists, the beginning of a sculpture room in a few works in marble, plaster and bronze, some water color, and engravings, and a small, but well-selected group of Braun photographs.

The pictures, which have followed the varying location of the club, are now better housed than ever before in the auditorium of the club house at

Midwestern
Volume 3
April (?) 1909



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY

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JEANETTE REYNOLDS

Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Reynolds

Hoyt Sherman Place, the gallery being open to the public free, Fridays and Saturdays, from 10 a. m. to 6 p. m. and on Sundays from 2 to 5 p. m.

The club has brought to the city valuable loans, both collections and single notable paintings, as the Winslow Homer's some years since; the recent Johansen exhibition; and the promise in the near future, of the annual exhibition of the Society of Western Artists.

On the two "art days" of the club year, the art department, which is practically an art club, brings to its plat-

form speakers of local and national reputation; and this last year, for the first time, the club offered prizes for the best painting by Des Moines artists, the competition bringing out much good work.

The painting which occupies the place of honor in the gallery, is a large canvas, "Loading the Caravan," by Edwin Lord Weeks, and is a fine example of the work of an American artist, who is one of a small group to which Bridgeman belongs, who have won their reputation in the Orient. Trained in Paris, under Bonnat and Gerome, he



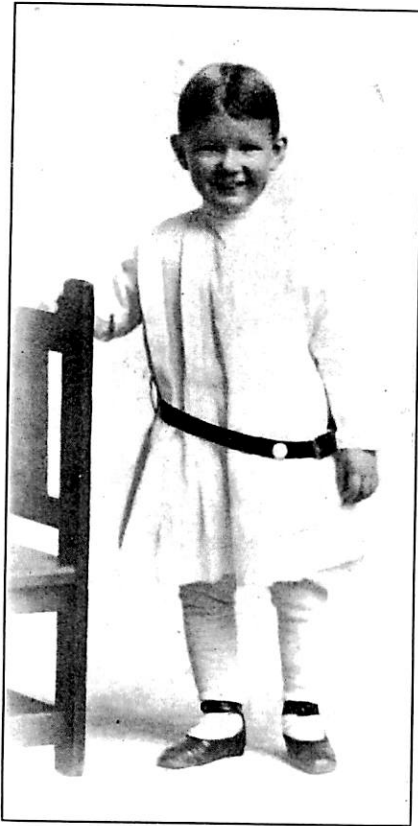
GERTRUDE ELIZABETH

Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Mahoney

won honorable mention in the Paris salon, the diploma of honor at the Berlin International Exposition, and a special prize in 1896 at the "Empire of India" exhibition in London the same year. He died in 1904. Specimens of his work are in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and in the Corcoran Gallery at Washington.

"Loading the Caravan" is a desert landscape in Persia under the light of early morning, so early that the figures of men and horses on the outskirts of the caravan are a little blurred with color. There is a stir of life in the foreground, a note of preparation. Four men, with strong upheave of hands and head, are loading the camel

with the red lacquer chests, used in Persia for tea. That touch of red is the highest color note in the picture; for the rest a color scheme that clothes the men in shades of olive, white, and soft blue that made it necessary to paint portions of the camel pale blue, but you do not notice that at first, and when you do, it is all right—there is a color reason. A secondary group of men and animals at the left a little further back, and to the right more figures, those that blur a little. The rich, dull color tones of a bale of oriental rugs, ready for loading, give a touch of luxury. A charcoal brazier and down in the sand, a glow worm of live coal. In the foreground are the



FREDERICK CHARLES CROWELL
Two and one-half year old Son of Mr. and
Mrs. F. C. Crowell

tawny, arid desert sands, in the background hills, violet and dewy blue under the early morning light, and over all the ineffable silence and mystery of the desert. It is one of the genre scenes of oriental life on which the artists' reputation rests.

The club is the fortunate possessor of a landscape by Inness, America's greatest landscape artist. There were two distinct periods in Innes' art. In his earlier work he belonged to the Hudson river school, painting pictures, earnest, sincere, always with the touch of genius, but somewhat labored and crowded. Later on he more idealized his art; it was more poetic; he became a master of moods—the moods of nature, and learned the secret of magical, luminous light effects. To quote an eloquent art critic: "Ever since the 60's, there has poured over all his canvases a dazzling radiance



SARA DOLPH FIRESTONE
Six months old Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert
Firestone, Akron, Ohio

which at times seemed unearthly. His pictures glow with strange and noble harmonies; the sun struggling through clouds after a shower of rain; rainbows of ineffable beauty; chariots of fire racing through quiet evening skies." The not very large canvas which hangs here is a spring scene, poetic, quiet, tender, with all the thrill and charm of an April day. The sun is shining through clouds, bringing into high light on the left a tree and cows standing underneath, and laying in sunlight a stretch of the meadow, after the fashion of the fitful sunshine of a cloudy day. But in mid air hovers a cloud, dark and heavy with rain—the thumb-mark of the storm. In the foreground is a pool of quiet water—reflected blue melting into the yellow green of young spring grass.

Mr. J. G. Moulton, of Chicago, from whom the club purchased the Inness, presented them with "A Cup of Tea" by B. De Hooze, one of the younger modern Dutch artists, and a follower of Josef Israels. Everybody likes the De Hooze. There is nothing more

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Photo by Webster

GRETCHEN and CATHERINE HARBACH

Daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Wilmot Harbach

companionable in art than the Dutch pictures of domestic life, painted by a people with whom the love of home is a passion. "A Cup of Tea" is simple in composition, and painted with a flowing brush, a young woman—just a tired little German haus-frau, sitting at a kitchen table under a window, pouring a cup of tea. It is about four in the afternoon. The sunlight falls through the upper sash on her hands, holding up the teapot and cup, her face, her white Dutch cap, warms into rich brown the kerchief drawn about her shoulders, glances over her shoulders to the back of the old-fashioned kitchen chair and goes out in a final glint on the farther wall. For the rest, the

room just goes off into the background, and glooms.

Another "Dutch Interior," painted by Sidney Potter, was presented to the club by Mr. D. S. Chamberlain, and purchased by him on a recent trip to London. This also, is a charming bit of domesticity, a Gretchen in Dutch cap and kerchief, sitting by an open casement, through which is a vivid glimpse of yard. She holds in her lap a basket in which are two kittens, with an apprehensive mother cat on a chair close by, all so well painted that really it is the kittens one looks at first and remembers. The flash tones in the figure of the girl are good, and very smoothly painted.



Photo by Webster

KATHARINE SWIFT

Daughter of Rep. and Mrs. C. F. Swift of Harlan, Iowa

"Entering the Harbor," by Henri Guinier, was exhibited in the French section of the Art Galleries at the St. Louis Exposition, at which time it was purchased by the club. Henri Guinier is a Frenchman who has achieved a reputation painting Holland scenes. A peasant woman, sitting on the ground in the foreground, watches, through the trees, the ship in the distance, entering the harbor. It is the sort of picture that tells a story, and though all the artists should protest at once the heresy of looking at a picture in this way, what the public will always feel in the picture is the strong human feeling and pathos in the face and figure; the sort of dumb patience that the artist has expressed in the way her heavy hands rest on her knees, the whole attitude of the rather heavy figure. Near by are cliffs and cottages, well painted, and on the inlet of water are sailboats which remind one somehow of the toy boats in Central Park, but for the wom-

an in the picture there is only one sail.

A gem of the collection is a tiny canvas, "Boy and Boat," by Pinta Souza, a young and promising Portuguese artist whose work has aroused much enthusiasm in Paris. The picture is simple in composition and subtle in color. A bare-legged boy, with his back to the front, is wading sturdily into a quiet stream, which runs straight as a canal might, through the picture. The water is in shadow, pricked by the sharp white sail of the little boat in the background. The figure of the boy is well modeled and well painted and the whole thing is charming.

Among the early purchases of the club, were the three pictures, "Portrait of a Lady," "Ready for Shopping," and "A Fantasy," painted by Mr. Clarence E. Baldwin, an artist who spent four years in Des Moines, and organized Des Moines' first art school. Mr. Baldwin took high rank as a student in the Art League of New York, afterward



Photo by Webster

FAITH WINIFRED STILLMAN

Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sen. Paul E. Stillman, of Jefferson

studied in Munich, and is now engaged in commercial illustrating in New York City.

"The Portrait of a Lady," a well-known Des Moines woman artist, is a three-quarter length figure in heavy winter wraps—hands in muff, and textile fabrics handled so en masse, so opaque in color and so nearly the tone of the background that except in a strong light it is difficult to tell where figure leaves off and background begins. The hat is in warm tones of brown, and the clear pallor of the face, of which the feature is the eyes of an unusual shade of blue, and remarkably well painted—has a cameo effect.

"Ready for Shopping" is one of the pictures one sees in every exhibition, and which always attract by their cleverness—a lady in hat and black net face veil—in this instance done with great delicacy of execution. "A Fantasy" is a little picture—a symphony in yellow. Just a girl in a dancing pose, masses of warm chestnut hair tumbling about her face, and with her

yellow satin dress daintily caught up in her outstretched hands. Mr. Baldwin always had the courage of his color.

Two marines, "An Afternoon at Block Island" and a larger canvas, "Nantucket Beach," are by Mr. David Gue, formerly of Iowa, who has made a specialty of marine painting in New York, and has met with much success in recent years.

"A Summer Afternoon," by Mr. Charles A. Cumming, director of the Cumming School of Art in this city, is a charming landscape, by an artist whose reputation as a strong portrait painter, has somewhat drawn attention away from his landscape work. Mr. Cumming has during the last ten years, executed many private and public commissions for portraits, notably of Iowa men, which would take high rank in any exhibition. He paints character. In "A Summer Afternoon," a lady comes down the broad path of a country garden pausing and bending a little to pick a flower. Sunlight floods the

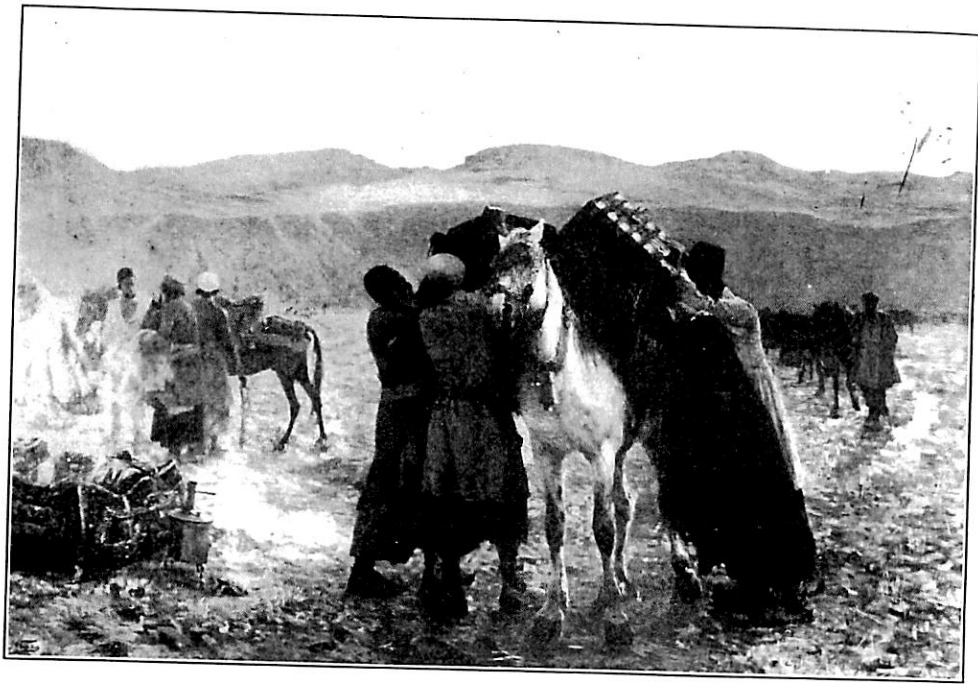


Photo by Webster

"LOADING THE CARAVAN"

Painting Owned by the Des Moines Women's Club

picture. There are strong yellows and greens in the tall, stiff plants that border the path. The shadows are violet under her feet. The figure is so unconscious, so free from pose—just a dainty lady out of doors. The white arch of a parasol over her head gives shadow for her face and hair, and the long downward stroke of the white handle accents the figure. The sleeve billows in the fashion of half a dozen years ago, and the dress is amethyst. The outlying landscape gives a long look across fields and completes a picture in color and atmosphere full of charm.

"October," by Geo. H. McCord, of New York, has much of the full, rich, finished effect of English landscape painting. The bones never show in an English landscape. This is a conventional autumn scene; blue sky with melting white clouds; trees giving a certain park-like landscape effect. Mr. McCord studied in England, Holland and France, and this a characteristic example of his culture and finished style.

There could scarcely be a greater contrast to the quiet beauty of the McCord than the landscape by Jonas Lie, which hangs on the opposite wall, not owned by the club, but here "under observation." A grey sky, with rifts of brilliant blue; cold, black, bitter ground. It is storm-beaten, desolate, unfamiliar Labrador. Jonas Lie was born in Norway, and now lives in this country.

A picture which seems a variation on the Madonna theme is Mr. Wilbur A. Reasor's "Old Man and Sleeping Child." An old fisherman holds in his arm a sleeping babe, and the painting in composition and treatment, is characteristic of the artist who as a portrait and figure painter is well known in Iowa.

"The Brolles Road," the well-known highway out of Paris which every artist paints; "Le Soir," a Holland Scene filled with the quiet of the sunset hour, and "Le Vieux Filet," a copy from the Louvre, are painted by Harry G. Williams—a western artist who has done some excellent work at home and



Photo by Webster

"A LADY IN GREEN"

Picture Exhibited at the Club House Last Fall

abroad, and were among the earliest purchases of the club.

The "Head of a Greek Boy," by Miss Louise Orwig, a Des Moines artist now working in the East, is good in modeling and color.

Among gifts to the club are a copy of a landscape by Corot, made by a Russian art student and presented by Mrs. Frederick Field; a portrait landscape of Mt. Grey, painted by Mrs. John Scott, and presented by Miss Mary Avis Scott; and two portraits of the German artist Wittkamp and his wife, to which a strong personal interest attaches, because they were painted by Marshall Talbot—an artist who came to Iowa some thirty or more years ago, and who made a vivid im-

pression on the Des Moines of that day. He was a man who by virtue of his talent, his striking personality, the brilliant life he had left behind him, and the pioneer work he did in art here, deserves a monograph in the "Annals of Iowa." Wittkamp was a German artist whom Marshall Talbot knew when he was vice-consul at Antwerp; he sold some valuable paintings in this country, one of which, a King Lear for which Marshall Talbot posed as the model, is now owned in Philadelphia.

The club's beginning of a sculpture room includes a bronze copy of chaplain's Jeanne d'Arch; a marble bust of the Diana of the Louvre; a marble bust of Dante, presented by Mrs. C. E. Rawson; the Venus de Milo in plaster, and

fifty feet of the Parthenon frieze, which some day, properly placed, will be very effective in a gallery.

One of the most valuable assets of an art collection is its loans—long or short. It is the reciprocity of art.

Through the effort of Mrs. R. R. Peters, there hangs this winter in the ante room of the gallery, an interesting group of paintings by Frank Ashford, an artist who grew up on an Iowa farm, now and for several years past, hard at work in Paris. Space forbids detailed mention, but there is exquisite mellowness of color in his little Italian boy; a Brittany washing scene, which shows a new treatment of that hackneyed theme, and good, strong portrait work in the head of a lady and in the artist's portrait of himself.

The Johansen picture, "Falling Leaves," recently purchased by the Proteus Club, hangs in the gallery, and is the strongest example in the room of impressionism. Not a leaf in it—just a color vision of the glory of the autumn woods. Russet brown, bronze brown,

smitten to sudden splendor by strong sunlight, which falls in broad coppery splashes on the ground, as it can fall only when the leaf canopy, like the veil of the temple, has been rent in twain. You can see this by looking for it, any fall day in Iowa. Only these are not Iowa woods.

Some day before long, through the effort of Mrs. W. F. Mitchell, a marine by Mesdag, will be hung on the wall of the gallery, as a loan, and will hang there for a year. The picture comes from Europe. Mesdag is the Dutch master of "the grey school," who pioneered the plein air picture in Holland. Who years ago broke away from the studio, and from a window at the top of a hotel at Scheveningen—beloved of artists—has studied and painted the sea, at the verge. He paints only what he sees and feels. He is the painter of water, not using it as a background, but the water itself—its fascinating, palpitating mystery. It will be an opportunity to study at leisure the work of a master.

ARMENIAN LULLABY

If thou wilt shut thy dreamy eyes,
 My mulberry one, my golden sun!
 The rose shall sing thee lullabys,
 My pretty cosset lambkin!
 And thou shalt swing in an almond
 tree,

With a flood of moonbeams rocking
 thee—
 A silver boat on a golden sea.
 My velvet love, my nesting dove,
 My own pomegranate blossom.

The stork shall guard thee passing well
 All night, my sweet, my dimple feet,
 And bring thee myrrh and asphodel,
 My gentle-rain-of-springtime,
 And for thy slumbrous play shall twine

The diamond stars with an emerald
 vine
 To trail in the waves of ruby wine.
 My myrtle bloom, my heart's perfume,
 My little chirping sparrow

And when the morn wakes up to see
 My apple bright, my soul's delight
 Thy partridge shall come calling thee,
 My jar of milk-and-honey.
 Yes, thou shalt know what mystery
 lies

In the amethyst deep of curtained
 skies,

If thou will fold thy onyx eyes.
 You wakeful one, you naughty son,
 You cooing little turtle.

—Eugene Field.