“Connecticut is not Athens.” But a few years later, after the French and Indian War and the crossing of the mountains, the endless western trek and the opening of new frontiers began. Matters other than art now seemed more compelling and important. Even after the mid-nineteenth century we had a steady expatriation of artists, such as Abbey, Sargent, and Whistler. Expatriation of American artists and authors has ceased. We have come of age aesthetically, and Europeans now come to America to see our collections of both foreign and native art.

If I speak of the historical limitations of a collection wholly made up of oil paintings it is only because, as a complete pictorial presentation of the American scene, I miss the long series of prints by Currier & Ives, the early woodcuts in books on America, and the illustrations by various methods of our great period of the 1890’s, among others.

It is, nevertheless, extraordinary to find, in spite of all the handicaps of early generations, how much has here been gathered to depict in oils the continuous story of the growth of America. The long line of portraits, from the beginning, of all types—statesmen, clergymen, frontiersmen, Indians, inventors, artists, authors, businessmen, and others—would in itself constitute a history of the nation from the biographical approach, and many of these the public may never see again. If school children, to say nothing of their elders, were taken through the exhibition and told who these people were and what they did, it would be as good and vivid an introduction to the range and variety of American life and accomplishment as could be imagined. In a short article it is impossible to note individual pictures, which may be studied in advance in the catalogue, but in addition to the portraits there are an amazing lot of pictures which light up other aspects of our past, for example those showing costume, early school life, ways of life—such as a country fair, a country store, whaling, scouting and frontier life, the methods of going West by boat and prairie schooner, mining, negro life, the Civil War, the Texas Rangers, architecture of various periods, the first transcontinental railway, the age of the bison, and many others.

Although I have never taught, I have thought of the collection to some extent from the standpoint of the school teacher, and it seems to me that taking children to see the pictures, after a careful study of the catalogue, would give them a peculiarly living relation to our past.

Some day I should like to see in the Museum a collection of pictures of all sorts, including photographs and all other media, which would make an Epic of America for the eye and would be permanent, like The American Wing for rooms and furniture. But meanwhile, for a short time, until October 29, we have this, which should not be missed.

JAMES TRUSLOW ADAMS.

A FRENCH CRUSADER’S SWORD POMMEL

Louis Joseph Cartier, of Paris, in token of the friendship between the French and American peoples has presented to the Museum a French thirteenth-century sword pommel bearing in enamel the heraldic arms of Peter of Dreux (about 1190–1250), Duke of Brittany and Earl of Richmond and a crusader with Louis IX (Saint Louis) of France.

Any object associated with a crusader creates immediate interest. Peter of Dreux, great-grandson of Louis VI of France, held the county of Brittany as guardian for his minor son and also the great English barony of Richmond, of which the Breton dukes were lords by inheritance. The geographical position of Brittany gave Peter an important part to play in the struggle between the Plantagenet and Capetian monarchies. In practice he alternated his allegiance from one side to the other as occasion suited his interests. Though he was nicknamed Mauclerc because of the brutality with which he treated the Breton clergy and though he spent a large part of his life under excommunication, he and his family are immortalized in the stained-glass windows of the south transept of the cathedral of Chartres. He is also depicted in a neighboring bay, mounted in full armor with sword, shield, and lance. In his tomb effigy in the

1 Acc. no. 38.60. Shown this month in the Room of Recent Accessions.
abbey of Saint Yved at Braine, near Soissons, Peter wears a sword with pommel bearing his heraldic arms—perhaps the very one described in this article.

Our pommel is enriched with champlevé enamel, the grooves for the vitreous colors being channeled in the copper base. On the obverse appears the shield of arms of Peter of Dreux, Duke of Brittany, alternate squares of blue and gold (designating the house of Dreux) quartered with ermines (Brittany). On the reverse, in a shield with a green field, is a cross set with red enamel, and in the background are carved scrolls or vines, probably typifying Christ. Colored enamels were, of course, ideal for showing heraldic arms. In the present instance, however, the enamels no longer retain their brilliant hues or their original high luster. Here and there are small flecks of gold which show that originally the surface was gilded. The enameling was first accomplished and then the mercury gilding, which required less heat than the fusion of the flux. A soft enamel was used, and the atmosphere has caused the surface to decompose. A hard enamel would have been more susceptible to chipping during the cooling process which followed the gilding.

This pommel is an early example of the use of heraldry, for mediaeval coats of arms had their origin in the practical necessities of war. They date from the introduction, about 1180, of the closed helm (like that worn by Peter of Dreux in the equestrian figure at Chartres), which rendered distinguishing devices indispensable for the recognition of leaders on the battlefield. Pommels were also engraved with war cries or with the knight’s seal, and sometimes contained a relic. Since our pommel is of Breton origin, it is perhaps appropriate to mention three swords with armorial pommels in the Musée Dobrée at Nantes. One bears the arms of the Sire du Mourant; another, the three leopards of England; and the third, the arms of the Dauphin of France, later Charles V.

A small piece of the iron tang of the blade, which runs through our pommel, projects through its lower edge. It is from the tang that the pommel itself originally developed, for the end of this stem of metal was beaten out to prevent the material which formed the grip from falling off. The pommel had three main purposes—to prevent the hand from slipping, to balance the blade, and to “pummel,” or strike, an opponent. Great ingenuity was shown in the design and execution of sword pommels, as may be seen on the arms in the Museum’s collection. Not only iron, but silver, bronze, ivory, rock crystal, porphyry, and sardonyx are included in the materials utilized, and sculpture, engraving, gilding, and

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2 Chequy or and azure within a bordure gules, a quarter ermine.
3 The crusaders wore different-colored crosses to identify their nationality, red being the color for France.
inlay are variously employed in the decoration.

The present pommel was bought in Damascus about ten years ago. One can readily surmise how it got there. Peter, a highly capable captain, was wounded at the battle of Mansourah as he fought side by side with Robert of Artois, the Master of the Templars, and was taken prisoner by the Turks with King Louis and most of the crusading barons. The Sire de Joinville gives a vivid account of Peter's activities in his famous chronicle. Stephen V. Grancsay.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS OF FRENCH SCULPTURE

Two outstanding examples of French sculpture, both of them of types difficult to come by today, have been purchased by the Museum and are shown this month in the Room of Recent Accessions. The earlier of these two sculptures, a standing symbolic figure of a semidraped woman holding a palm frond, is of bronze with a light brown, transparent patina. The figure has no early history, nor has the identity of the sculptor been definitely established. It dates presumably between 1560 and 1570. The other sculpture, a high relief in white marble of a heavily draped seated woman, is known to be by François Girardon (1628–1715) and has a long and interesting history. It was made between 1672 and 1675. Aside from their individual importance, the two figures in juxtaposition present an illuminating illustration of the difference in treatment of allegorical figures in two important periods of French sculpture approximately a century apart.

Let us look first at the earlier of these two sculptures (fig. 1). The figure is gracefully posed in the Italianate manner fostered in France by the so-called school of Fontainebleau. It is unfinished at the back and open, thereby suggesting that it was designed to stand against some sort of architectural background, probably a funerary monument. A search for analogies immediately brings to mind the famous tomb of Henri II and Catherine de Médicis in the basilica at Saint-Denis. The four bronze figures of Virtues which occupy diagonal positions at the corners of this tomb were modeled shortly before 1565 almost certainly by Germain Pilon (1536 or 1537–1590). They

FIG. 1. ALLEGORICAL FIGURE
FRENCH, ABOUT 1560–1570

1 Acc. no. 39.77. Samuel D. Lee Fund. H. 58\(\frac{3}{4}\) in. Ex coll. the Dowager Viscountess Harcourt.
2 Whether this is the attribute of victory, of martyrdom, or of peace, it is impossible to say.
3 Acc. no. 39.62. Fletcher Fund. H. 56\(\frac{3}{4}\) in.