A MESSAGE FROM FRANCE

By GEORGES SALLES
Director of the Museums of France

If the Lady with the Unicorn has crossed the seas amid all the heraldic panoply of a warship, it is to bring with her accouterments of wool, gold, and silk a message to the people of the United States from the people of France. The long file of tapestries in her train spreads before your eyes a poem, now rustic and pastoral, now sumptuous and regal; it may be religious or warlike. Our own era adds a paean of liberty. Through its whole length, across five centuries, rings the lyric spirit of our land.

You will see here the products of a craft essentially French, whose renascence in modern times constitutes one of the most striking developments of our contemporary art. You will read here, also, a story in which the humble labors of the field take on an air of legend, while the celestial figures of martyrs and angels hover on the blue horizon of our familiar countryside. Against the faithfully rendered décor of his enchanted dwellings Louis XIV moves with stately presence. Lurçat's chanticleer and the peasants of Gromaire take up, in their own manner, old Gallic refrains. You will hear a song arising from the soil of France. And since we cannot send you our cathedrals, our palaces, or our white villages, our parks or our furrowed fields, we offer you in this long poem the happiest picture a people has ever given of its own life.

I thank our friends of the Metropolitan Museum of New York, and especially its director, Francis Henry Taylor, for the care with which they have received and placed before the American public this exhibition, which was prepared and planned by Pierre Verlet, Curator in Chief of the Department of Decorative Arts of the Louvre.
Detail of one of the tapestries illustrating the history of King Clovis. Above, Clovis sets out on his campaign against Alaric, after making an offering at the church of Saint Martin at Tours. Below, he finds the Loire in flood but is led to a ford by a miraculous white stag. Possibly made in Arras, about 1450. Rheims Cathedral Treasury
The deliverance of Saint Peter, from a series illustrating the life of Saint Peter. The word “paix,” repeated over the tapestry, refers to an agreement between Charles VII of France and Henry VI of England at the end of the Hundred Years' War. Possibly made in Arras, about 1460.

The Cluny Museum, Paris
A man harvesting grapes, detail of a vintage scene on a nobleman's estate. Probably made in the region of the Loire, about 1500. The Cluny Museum, Paris
The body of Saint Stephen guarded by beasts. Above, two angels carrying his soul to heaven. From a series illustrating the life of Saint Stephen. French, about 1500. The Cluny Museum, Paris