COLLECTORS AT HOME

The current show of Collectors’ Choice gives a separate gallery to each collection. We would have succeeded better in dramatizing the various donors’ personalities if each room had been decorated so as to suggest the way each collector lived with his treasures. This was not done because it seemed inadvisable to disguise our newly rebuilt galleries on their very first presentation to the public. As a substitute for such domestic color we are reproducing what photographs we could find of the houses of some of the great collectors whose munificence has made this Museum. It is fascinating to peer into the seclusion of a recent yet already remote past at some work of art that we all know in the searching light of the Museum galleries.

These rooms become romantic and haunting when one realizes that only one of them—Mr. Morgan’s study—still remains intact. Our American mansions of marble and granite and bronze cost a world of planning and labor to create, but they have vanished before the eyes of a single generation. In no city in the world have extraordinary buildings come and gone so swiftly as in New York. Many, flashing by too rapidly for even the camera to catch their image, left no reminder of their dreamlike passage except the gifts their owners made to the public. A. H. M.
The picture gallery in A. T. Stewart's house on Fifth Avenue at 34 Street, built in 1869. When this collection was sold in 1887 Cornelius Vanderbilt gave the Museum Rosa Bonheur's Horse Fair, and Judge Henry Hilton gave Meissonier's Friedland, the two most famous pictures in the house.
The gray and gold Grecian drawing room in Henry G. Marquand's house on Madison Avenue at 68 Street, built by Richard Morris Hunt about 1893. The quotation from Aeschylus's "Agamemnon" over the mantel says "A mighty beard of flame." The large painting is by Alma Tadema, who designed the furniture of ebony incrusted with carved ivory and moonstones. Some of this furniture, the richest of its age in England, has been generously lent by Mrs. Martin Beck.
The third-floor gallery in the H. O. Havemeyer house at 1 East 66 Street, photographed in 1892 just after the completion of the interior decoration designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany and Samuel Coleman. As the collection grew, another picture gallery was installed on the main floor of the house.
J. Pierpont Morgan's study in the Morgan Library, 33 East 36 Street, built by McKim, Mead and White in 1908. Photographed about 1915.
The picture gallery in William H. Vanderbilt's house on Fifth Avenue at 51 Street, built in 1880-1881. The interior was designed by Christian Herter and was executed by over 600 artisans working a year and a half.
The house of William K. Vanderbilt on Fifth Avenue at 52 Street, built by William Morris Hunt in 1881-1882. In 1920 Mr. Vanderbilt bequeathed the Museum the portraits shown here, Gainsborough's Mrs. Grace Dalrymple Elliott and Reynolds' Colonel George K. H. Coussmaker.
The armor hall in Bashford Dean's house at Riverdale, built about 1928 by Dwight James Baum
George Blumenthal's house on Park Avenue at 70 Street, designed by Goodhue Livingston and Florence Blumenthal in 1916. The white marble patio came from Velez Blanco near Murcia, and Joos van Gent's painting of the Adoration of the Magi from the chapel of the Dukes of Frias near Burgos. The fountain, from the workshop of Donatello, once stood in the garden of the Pazzi Palace in Florence. It is now in the gallery beyond the Medieval Sculpture Hall in the Museum. In 1941 Mr. Blumenthal bequeathed to the Museum the house and the collection before 1720. To this bequest Mary Ann Blumenthal added many xviii century works of art.