Louis de Bourbon, duc de Penthievre, was extremely rich, so rich that even the king of France had cause for envy and alarm. The rents from the Duc's estates came to about five million livres a year, which the Revolution succeeded in reducing to three million. These estates were vast, for inheritance had brought him among others the lands and châteaux of Dreux, Brie, Aumale, Amboise, Sceaux, Rambouillet, Anet, Bizy, Gisors, Dombes, and Chanteloup. Property on such a scale had its drawbacks, and a memoir of 1783 describes the Duc in the midst of his custodial duties. "As for M. the duc de Penthievre, they claim that he is almost deranged by the arrangements he has to make; he has a considerable number of châteaux, all well furnished, well maintained and well guarded, always ready to receive him, and that he visits in succession; which subjects him to enormous expense, compounded by his excessive charities, which do not diminish at all, and come to four hundred thousand livres a year."

His money provoked other worries for the Duc at court. The same memoirs recount in 1775: "Everyone knows that the extreme wealth of the Duc de Penthievre, considerably augmented by his inheritance from the Comte d' Eu, has started to beget envy at court, not with regard to this prince, but in the event that all his possessions should pass to the house of Orleans, as must happen through the marriage of the only daughter of the Duc de Penthievre with the Due de Chartres, himself the only heir of his branch. For the purposes of opposing such an enormous fortune His Majesty has been advised to urge the Duc de Penthievre to remarry, and they say that he is being strongly urged to this decision." The Duc did not succumb to these importunities, and his worldly goods did pass to the House of Orleans, as will be seen.

The Due's father was Louis-Alexandre de Bourbon, comte de Toulouse, third son of Louis XIV and Mme de Montespan. Legitimized three years after his birth, and later raised to the rank of prince of the blood royal, the Comte neverthe-

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Fig. 29. Armchair covered in white satin embroidered with colored silks, signed by Georges Jacob. It is part of a set made for the Hôtel de Toulouse, 1775-1780. Height 40 3/4 inches
Gift of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, 1958
less bore the stigma of the bend sinister on his shield. His arms were inherited by his only child, with the lands and titles he had received from Louis XIV and a house in Paris called the Hôtel de Toulouse.

This hôtel, which stood near the Place des Victoires, was celebrated in eighteenth century guidebooks for its architecture and decoration, and for its many distinguished paintings of the French and Italian schools. The exterior architecture dated from the seventeenth century and was the work of François Mansard, but many of the interiors were redesigned by Robert de Cotte for the Comte de Toulouse between 1713 and 1719. The Duc de Penthievre in turn made changes in the ground floor arrangements and in the right wing, and the hôtel stood in its welter of decorations until the Revolution, when the property was confiscated, the contents sold, and a national printing press installed there. In the early nineteenth century the Banque de France took over the hôtel and engulfed it with annexes. On special days the so-called Galerie Dorée is shown, a sadly restored relic of Mansard’s and De Cotte’s magnificent Hôtel de Toulouse.

While he was living in his house, the Duc de Penthievre lost his wife and then his son, the Prince de Lamballe, who had just married. His only daughter and heiress, Mlle de Bourbon-Penthievre, married the Duc de Chartres, the future Philippe-Egalité d’Orléans, and went to live in the Palais-Royal. To mitigate his loneliness, the Duc asked his young daughter-in-law, the Princesse de Lamballe, Marie-Antoinette’s familiar, to occupy an apartment in his house which he prepared for her on the second floor.

Fig. 30. Marquise bearing the inventory mark of the Orléans family, by Georges Jacob, about 1780. Height 37 ¼ inches
of the right wing. In spite of his riches, the Duc seems to have been addicted to plain living, and his own private quarters were decorated with restraint. He drew on his full resources for the Princesse, however, and her apartment, described by Thiéry in the *Guide des Amateurs* in 1787, was an enchantment of late eighteenth century decoration. "The salon of the Princesse, the woodwork of which is painted white and gold in the modern manner, is hung with sky blue velvet fringed with gold. The curtains and furniture coverings are made of the same materials. On the chimneypiece are patinated bronze female figures on marble pedestals holding ormolu girandoles aloft. . . . The Princesse's bedroom is richly decorated and embellished with two oval paintings by François Boucher, and two marble medallions of the King and Queen over the doors leading to the salon. On the chimneypiece are two magnificent vases imitating lapis from which spring ormolu girandoles. . . . The canopied bed [lit à la turque] is placed between two carved and gilded columns." These two rooms are now the office and waiting room of the governor of the Banque de France.

While this decoration was in hand, the Duc must have decided to refurnish his own state bedroom on the ground floor, variously known as the Chambre de Parade or Chambre des Balustres. This was a room in the state apartments, used on ceremonial occasions, and the balustres were the balustraded railing in front of the bed of state or lit de parade. This bed and railing, called estrade, are sketchily indicated in a plate from *Architecture Française, Recueil des Plans, Elevations, Coupes et Profils, etc.*, by Jacques-François Blondel, Paris, 1754.

The set of carved and gilded furniture consisting of two armchairs (Figure 29) and two side chairs, part of the recent gift to the Museum from the Kress Foundation, came from this room. Although the Museum's set numbers only four pieces, the original set may have included more chairs and even sofas and a fire screen. The
underside of the seat rail of one of the armchairs bears the inventory mark of the Duc de Penthievre with the designation “Chambre à Balustr.” There are other marks on the chairs, including the inventory mark of Louis-Philippe-Joseph d’Orléans, the Duc’s son-in-law, and two different sets of inventory numbers. One of these numbers may refer to the chateau of Bizy in Normandy, where this set of furniture might have been transferred, and where the Duc de Penthievre died in 1793.

The legs of the chairs are carved with beautiful spiral bay leaf garlands in low relief, which are brought out into full relief on the stiles and rails. The covers are of silk needlework on a white satin ground. The patterns of the flower sprays and flower baskets are in the manner of the famous Lyonnais textile designer, Philippe de Lasalle. It is unlikely that these covers, which date from the late eighteenth century, are original to this set of chairs.

Beside the inventory marks and numbers, each chair in this set bears the incised mark of the maker Georges Jacob, the best known and most versatile chairmaker of his age. He did much work for the royal family, including Louis XVI’s brothers and sister, for the Condé and Orléans families, for Catherine the Great, Princess Kin-sky, and the Elector Palatine. Jacob, who came to Paris from a village in Burgundy, became a practicing master of his craft in 1765 and founded a dynasty of chairmakers which lasted until 1847.

Jacob signed another set of carved and gilded chairs consisting of a pair of armchairs and a large bergère (Figure 30), known in the eighteenth century as a tête-à-tête, and later renamed marquise. These chairs bear the Orléans inventory mark without further designation, and research in Orléans archives is necessary before their history can be traced. The carving of flower clusters, ribbon bands, leaf and pearl moldings is

Fig. 32. Cylinder desk by David Roentgen, about 1780. Height 45 inches
even more lapidary than on the chairs from the Hôtel de Toulouse. The covers of this set are also of white satin embroidered in delicate colors, and were probably pieced from large wall coverings like the three panels shown near them.

The two sets of chairs, which were united in the Orléans Collection, are shown with other decorative objects given by the Kress Foundation in the two galleries adjoining the shop front from the Quai Bourbon, where the decorative porcelains and porcelain furniture are displayed.

Among the ébénisterie or case furniture given to the Museum by the Kress Foundation are a small oval table and cylinder desk (Figures 31, 32) by David Roentgen. The marquetry designs carried out in light-colored woods are similar on the two pieces. Ribbon swags and clusters of roses are represented, hanging from loops, twisted around pruning knives, and, on the cylinder of the desk, garlanded over a carrousel lance. Such a fantastic combination of marquetry themes is not unusual in Roentgen’s work. Born in Germany, he had a cabinetmaking shop in Neuwied, and depots in Paris, Berlin, and Vienna. The Museum’s oval table, which is shown in the room from the Hôtel de Tessé, exists in several versions in other museums and private collections. The cylinder desk, which dates from the 1780s, derives from the prototypal bureau du roi, made by Oeben and Riesener for Louis XV at Versailles, and delivered in 1769.

Another type of desk is represented in the Kress gift by the fall-front or upright desk, the secrétaire à abattant or en armoire, a type that originated about 1755. Two of these desks are signed by Guillaume Kemp and Pierre Roussel.

To be admitted to the material advantages of the cabinetmaking guild, the ordinary workman was required to spend six years in apprenticeship, another three or more in an intermediary situation called compagnonnage, submit an example of his work, and pay a stiff fee. After surmounting these obstacles, he was permitted to call himself a master cabinetmaker, was obliged to sign his work, and could open a shop and hire others to work for him. When this happened, many masters became overseers and adminis-
Guillaume Kemp was an exception who kept his hand in by practicing marquetry, though he was declared a master in 1764. Many brilliantly colored exotic woods were used in marquetry, among them pink tulipwood or bois de rose, dark casuarina or beefwood, and purple wood or amaranth, but green wood was usually the result of staining, and Kemp must have stained the green squares in the latticework marquetry of his desk (Figure 35). When the pieces had been cut for a large panel of marquetry such as those on the front of this desk, they were assembled and pasted on a sheet of paper, then glued to the oak carcass with the help of a veneering hammer or a hot iron. If engraving was desired, the required lines were then engraved with a burin, and the surface finished with wax and varnish.

An example of pictorial marquetry occurs on the fall-front of the desk by Pierre Roussel I (Figure 33). The marqueteur has here followed an engraving by Jacques-François Blondel of a trellised chinoiserie summerhouse and pergola, introducing tufted trees and potted plants into the architectural setting of the engraving. The marquetried arrangements of books on the drawer fronts of the fitted interior of this desk reveal the dazzling brightness of woods that have been protected from light.

Two other pieces in geometrical marquetry are a commode by Louis Moreau and a large table à gradins, or desk with superstructure, by Mathieu-Guillaume Cramer (Figure 36). Moreau’s elegant straight-sided commode with curving legs dates between 1765 and 1770, the period of transition between two styles, and is shown in the Museum’s room from the Hôtel de Tessé. The marble top conceals the cabinetmaker’s signature, impressed on the front stiles, and his trade card pasted on the boards. The trade card reads: “A LA PETITE BOULLE BLANCHE, Rue de L’Echelle, du côté des Écuries du Roy. MOREAU Successeur de GENTY, EBENISTE, Tient Magazin de Commodes, Armoires, Secrétaires, Bureaux, Bibliothèques, Encoignures . . . Garderobes à l’Anglaise, Fauteuils et Chaises . . . (géné) rallement tout ce qui concerne la Menuiserie et l’Ébénisterie à Paris 1766.” Moreau seems to have managed sales and production, and his own hand is difficult to detect in the many disparate pieces of furniture bearing his signature.

Cramer was one of a tribe of German-born woodworkers who overran the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, set up workshops, and successfully competed with French cabinetmakers. Riesener, Oeben, Carlin, Weisweiler, Cramer, Kemp, Joseph Baumhauer captured the Paris market by their ability to assimilate the highest French ideals. Cramer’s desk is not signed, and the attribution rests on an identical piece bearing his signature in the collection of Lady Rosebery at Mentmore, Buckinghamshire. The gilt bronze wave molding accords with the satinwood, wal-
Fig. 36. Desk with superstructure, by Mathieu-Guillaume Cramer, about 1780. Height 39 3/4 inches

Fig. 37. Black lacquer commode, signed by B.V.R.B., about 1770. Height 36 1/8 inches
nut, and green-stained harewood inlay of this well-proportioned desk.

It was the custom in the eighteenth century, as it is now, for prominent art dealers to attend large sales. At such a sale they might buy an old Chinese or Japanese lacquer cabinet, which would be sent to a cabinetmaker and the lacquer panels dismounted and reset according to the latest taste. Such may have been the history of the Japanese lacquer panels of the splendid commode signed by B.V.R.B. (Figure 37). An X-ray examination of these panels made at the Museum revealed that the French cabinetmaker or vernisseur, not content with warping the originally flat shapes of the panels, painted sprigs and tendrils over the lacquer compositions to make them more satisfactory in his eyes. The Museum’s commode dates around 1770, and must have been delivered by Bernard van Risen Burgh III, whose inked signature appears on the wood surface under the breccia marble top. The original Van Risen Burgh came to Paris from Friesland in the late seventeenth century, set up as a cabinetmaker, and was succeeded in the trade by his son and grandson. The extreme mystery surrounding the identity of the initials B.V.R.B. was probably the work of the dealers, hoping to prevent their clients from buying direct from the maker. Bernard III, unlike his father, was never admitted as a master to the guild of cabinetmakers, but was entitled, during his mother’s lifetime, to use his father’s mark with the initials B.V.R.B. The mounts on the Museum’s commode are similar to those on a set of furniture sold in the Lepic sale of 1897, and to the mounts of a pair of black lacquer cabinets by B.V.R.B. in the Frick Collection.

By the middle of the eighteenth century the French were generally conceded to have won from the English supremacy in clockmaking. “Your father and the Maréchal de Saxe beat the English,” Voltaire told the son of the French
clockmaker Julien Le Roy. The large ormolu clock (Figure 40), its movement signed “MARTRE A BORDEAUX,” is an example of the kind of clock which captured the European market from the English. The gilt bronze that bursts around the dial and flows over the musical movement in the base is signed by Dumont, a bronze ciseleur-doreur who is not otherwise known.

The most remarkable of the clocks which the Museum received from the Kress Foundation is the negress clock (Figure 38) from the Léopold Double Collection. The glass paste eyes of the negress recede when her left earring is pulled, and a mechanism rises into place, permitting the time to be read, the hour in Roman numerals in the right eye and the minutes in Arabic in the left. The right earring was originally designed to release the musical movement with miniature pipe organ in the base. This clock was not a unique confection, for several versions of it exist, notably at Buckingham Palace, where the earring mechanism is not present, and in a private collection in Paris. Documents in the Garde Meuble archives in Paris seem to designate the

Fig. 40. Gilt bronze clock, about 1750. Height 30 1/4 inches

Fig. 41. Gilt bronze wall bracket (one of a pair), with crowned medallion of Louis XVI, about 1780. Height 31 1/2 inches
latter version as the clock delivered by Furet the clockmaker to the King at Versailles in July 1784. While still in Furet’s workshop it was seen and described by the author of the Mémoires Secrets: “Paris is going to M. Furet’s shop to see three extraordinary clocks of his creation. The first represents the bust of a negress. . . . Upon pulling one ear-ring the hour is described in the right eye and the minutes in the left. Upon pulling the other a musical movement plays a succession of airs.” The royal clockmaker Jean-Baptiste-André Furet made several more negress clocks while the novelty lasted. A blue enamel tablet on the plinth of the Museum’s negress bears his name: “Furet Hger du Roi.”

The name of the King’s barometer maker, “LANGE DE BOURBON FAISEUR DE BAROMETRE DU ROY,” appears on the dial of a splendid tortoise-shell and gilt bronze barometer-thermometer (Figure 39) made about 1770 in the goût antique.

A pair of gilt bronze wall brackets with cupid supporters and branches in the shape of lilies (Figure 41) are inset with two small oval reliefs of Marie-Antoinette and Louis XVI. Other lily-shaped candle branches spring from cornucopias held by a pair of gilt bronze nymphs on white marble bases. Another pair of candelabra take the form of running bronze figures of a satyr and bacchante on bases of serpentine marble (Figure 42). They hold gilt bronze cornucopias from which spill fruit and candle branches. These graceful incidentals reflect the refinement of French culture before the Revolution, and seem to belong among the candelabra holding ormolu girandoles described by Thiéry in the apartments of the Princesse de Lamballe at the Hôtel de Toulouse.

A Savonnerie screen and carpet are part of the splendid series of French decorative arts given to the Museum by the Kress Foundation. The reserves of the three-panel Savonnerie screen are decorated with orioles, magpies, and parrots, with the hanging emblems of Bacchus, Cupid, and Ceres above them and flowered vases below. The screen was woven at the Savonnerie manu-

Fig. 42. Bronze and gilt bronze candelabrum (one of a pair), with figure after Clodion, about 1785. Height 45 ¼ inches
factory in the early eighteenth century, and probably was originally composed of four or six panels.

The carpet measures thirty feet by fifteen, and is number thirty-eight of the ninety-three woven at Savonnerie between 1673 and 1681 for the Grande Galerie of the Louvre. The panels at either end represent Fame blowing a trumpet and Fortitude with a lion and column. Louis XIV's sunflower, an oblique allusion to Apollo, his arms, cipher, and crown punctuate the carpet, amid a profusion of flower garlands, rinceaux, and cascading fruit. The wool colors have re-emerged after a recent cleaning, proof of the excellence of dyes used at the Savonnerie manufactory.

This short and incomplete catalogue of the examples of French decorative art in the Kress Foundation gift does not do full justice to individual items, and merely serves to indicate the extent of the great gift which has added a new dimension to the Museum's collections in this field.

For information on French furniture in this issue I am indebted to the published works of Pierre Verlet of the Louvre and Francis Watson of the Wallace Collection. I also want to thank for their help J.-P. Baroli and Henry Sorensen of Paris.