The Jarves family of Boston supplies us with an instance of an American family in which an unusual aptitude for fine and applied art ran through three generations.

John Jarves arrived from London sometime before 1788 and set up as a chair and cabinet maker in Boston. He must have been very successful, for when he died in 1823 he left six buildings and the impressive sum (for those days) of $25,000. No doubt examples of his work survive in the Boston area today, although none have yet been recognized. John Jarves’s son, Deming, struck out for himself and at the surprisingly early age of thirty found himself not only the technical director but also the proprietor of the progressive Boston-and-Sandwich Glass Company and the Cape Cod Glass Company. That his factories produced some of the most pleasing and imaginative early American glass as well as a wide range of useful articles may be seen from the special display of Sandwich glass in the galleries of the American Wing.

James Jackson Jarves, Deming’s eldest son, was to realize his artistic bent in collecting, and in becoming a passionate and articulate spokesman for the cause of art in public life. He deliberately set out to add to the young nation’s “aesthetic capital” to which his father and grandfather had silently and with their own hands contributed.

As a child James had collected haphazardly and voraciously; as an adolescent, convalescing after a long illness which prevented him from reading history at Harvard, he walked about his native Boston and dreamed of endowing it with all the architectural beauty which should clothe a great city. In the man these two preoccupations came together: persevering with self-discipline and an astonishingly advanced taste, he formed five separate art collections in Europe and guided them into public institutions here. The most famous of these is, of course, the large group of Italian primitives which has made the Yale Art Gallery noteworthy for almost a century. At Cleveland there is the Holden Collection, also of Italian primitives, and at Wellesley College a collection of textiles. We in this Museum also have reason to be grateful to him. For in addition to the Vanderbilt drawings, noted in the Bulletin for April 1947, we owe to Jarves the initiation of the now richly representative collections of European glass.

In 1881 Jarves presented close to three hundred examples of Venetian glass to the Museum, then just ten years old. The collection was given in memory of his father, Deming Jarves, who had died in 1869. He intended it to form a nucleus “about which, if circumstance permit, there may grow up a more adequate representation of the art and the ground it tries to cover.” In spite of his modesty Jarves’s collection contained a remarkably complete range of examples of glass-making techniques. It was a “systematic” collection, one based in part on the categories formulated in 1858 by Arthur Wollaston Franks, Director of the British Museum. Included in it (see Figure 1) were examples of transparent or single color glass, crackled glass, aventurine, millefiori, the various kinds of latticino and milk glass, and—the only type he had to represent by a nineteenth century reproduction—the heavier

In buying there is a pleasure, because it is in a inferior sense, a species of creation.

James Jackson Jarves
glass of the fifteenth century decorated in enamels. The collection also included examples of glass beads, engraved glass, “constructional” glass for mirrors and cabinets, toys, and revivals of earlier glass styles, made in the nineteenth century.

_Harpers New Monthly Magazine_ published in 1882 an article by Jarves introducing the collection to the public. “Chance,” he says, “at first threw in my way a few specimens of the earlier Venetian glass. . . . These suggested the idea of attempting to obtain a sufficient number to fairly illustrate the various types which have given celebrity to Venice in this line from the fourteenth century to the nineteenth inclusive…” The article gives some idea of the expert sources from which he formed his knowledge. He undoubtedly knew Alexander Nesbitt’s two descriptive catalogues of glass in the Victoria and Albert Museum, published in 1878, and the Slade Collection at the British Museum, published in 1871. On at least one occasion he had met Nesbitt, then a keeper at the South Kensington Museum, and he seems also to have corresponded with him. Another connoisseur to whom he could turn was the Cavalier Professor Zanetti, who had founded and then directed the Civic Museum at Murano. He was even able to obtain from Zanetti some glass duplicated by material already in that museum. For the most part, however, dealers and experts aside, it was the “born collector” that, as he records, “got the glass mostly direct from first hands needing money,” and it seems that more than once he traveled a considerable distance to buy old glass from private families.

The collection represents Venetian glass from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Although it contains many objects of daily use, it also includes such treasures as a bottle with a silver stopper made to imitate chalcedony (Figure 2) and attributed to the inventive Miotti family, two sixteenth century bottles with tall necks and spreading bases (Figure 4), probably from the Ballarin factory (a third is in the Murano collection), and three pieces of eighteenth century opaque white glass painted in enamel colors (see Figure 1). A curious feature of two of these, a cup of characteristic handle-less shape and a saucer, is that, for shading the painting, fingers have been deliberately moved over the wet enamel to blot the paint so that the wavy lines of the fingerprint catch up the color and leave a pattern rather like mezzotinting. A similar cup is in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The third opaque piece is a plate painted blue and yellow with an _amorino_ riding a Pegasus.

The very fragility of the Venetian _cristallo_ that commended it so highly to the buyers of Europe certainly has not tended to its preservation, and one can be sure that the discovery of pieces of uncommon size would be all the more exceptional. Jarves probably realized his extraordinary good fortune in finding two large glass buckets.
ten inches high with a base diameter of nine inches increasing to twelve inches at the top. One of these pieces (Figure 5) is in perfect condition, and so also is a large tublike wine cooler 11 3/8 inches high with a uniform diameter of 13 3/8 inches. At the other end of the scale Jarves added some tiny glass versions of useful domestic vessels. These are probably contemporary with the silver miniatures of a similar kind made in England and Holland at the end of the seventeenth and during the first half of the eighteenth century. (See Figure 7.)

A covered cup bearing the Doge’s arms and encasing a coin dated 1697 recalls one of the privileges granted to the glassmakers of Murano. These silver medals were, by special permission, coined by the Murano Commune at the mint in Venice, and were embedded in vessels specially made as gifts for distinguished visitors.

There are, too, a number of wineglasses (see Figure 6) from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, with much looped and pincered metal springing about the stems, perpetuating waywardly the brackets and balusters in the work of renaissance goldsmiths. These appear to have most delighted Jarves, who found in them wit, splendor, ambition, dexterity, and a reminder of the social custom (to which the industry ministered) of breaking glass vessels at the end of a banquet “to show an aristocratic contempt of expense.” Not all the drinking vessels are so elaborate, however. Some of the most beautiful seventeenth century examples (see Figure 9) are quite unadorned. In the purity of
their outline they might almost be taken for modern pieces, except that they do not offend the eye with the overstatement of severity so much seen today.

The later Venetian eighteenth century is represented by some amusing toys and animals of glass (see Figures 7, 10); and there is an interesting small group of pieces from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which have been reattributed to France on account of their compact forms and sturdy metal (see cover).

Fortunately the systematic nature of Jarves's collecting did not exclude the work of his own day nor that of the fairly recent past. The collection therefore offers a good opportunity to study the glass made in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by the revived Salviati and Venezia Murano companies. At these factories, all the old techniques were revived and applied to shapes derived from the ancient world as well as to modified revivals of early European shapes. In spite of a historical incompatibility between technique and form, the examples demonstrate a certain successful flair.

Earlier, in 1860, when Jarves brought in his unique collection of Italian primitives in the hope of settling them quickly in a public collection, New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Cambridge would have none of them, and they were acquired in 1871, for a fraction of their value, by Yale University where they have remained. There was then not only little interest in art among Americans, but also, in some, the definite feeling that if art came from Europe, America was better without it. Given these two prevalent attitudes it is scarcely surprising that the collection of "wiry madonnas" should receive a lukewarm welcome, when the taste for them even in Europe was shared only by connoisseurs of the most adventurous sort.

None of this was true, however, of the acquisition of Jarves's glass collection by this Museum in 1881. The change in the public attitude was no doubt brought about by a number of not entirely idealistic causes, among which one may count the growth of private fortunes, the security of peace, industrial expansion with the resulting inadequacy of the already disintegrating apprentice system, and travel abroad. Travel abroad indeed was indirectly responsible for the
founding of the Metropolitan Museum, which was first proposed among a group of Americans in 1866 in Paris. Also we may surely take into account the cumulative effect of Jarves's own

in 1851—the year of the Great Exhibition in London, the avowed task of which was to improve taste in manufactured goods in England, and a direct result of which was the founding of

books written to promote the understanding of art by his countrymen and, as a necessary corollary, the founding of museums.

Jarves had arrived in Europe for the first time the South Kensington Museum. Almost immediately, Jarves started a new life of gallery-going, study, and collecting. His innate aesthetic sensibility and keen eye had to make up for all the

Fig. 5. Colorless glass bucket. Probably Venetian, xvii century. Height 10 inches
paraphernalia of art detection and attribution upon which the modern scholar can rely. Bernard Berenson said of him: "He had one of the highest senses of art appreciation that any American of the period possessed."

In 1855 he published the first of his books on art. Three more followed. In them he attempted to give a complete survey of European art from its Greek beginnings to the Italian Renaissance, dealing in great detail with the latest phase in this cycle. He also dealt with American artists of his own and earlier times, and devoted some chapters to primitive art and Oriental art. The books, he hoped, would first lead to an acceptance of European art in all its historic styles, and then promote the desire to found museums to make up for the lack of a "floating aesthetic capital," which he saw so richly dispersed in

*Fig. 6. Venetian glass vessels, xvi–xix century. Heights 7–14½ inches*
Europe. This lack he itemized as “No ruins, cathedrals, aristocratic mansions, no state collections to guide the growing taste, no art patrons, no ancestral homes, or legendary lore, no history remote enough for inspiration and, the greatest loss of all, no lofty and sublime poetry.” With the last book, which appeared in 1871, he formally laid aside the self-imposed task of trying to invoke initiative in bringing art to America, since Americans, having subdued the inhospitable new continent—at least the eastern half—were now ready for this development. In Jarves’s view, America had only to establish public collections of art, which would inform the public and develop artists and technicians as well as patrons, to vindicate the American belief in the superiority of their nation over all others in all time. The basis of this belief was the confluence of political and religious freedom in America at that time, which provided an unprecedented opportunity for self-development in both the artist and the public—unhampered, according to Jarves, by obedience to the dogma of Catholicism or the sycophantic need to please a patron. This unique moment in history, he felt, should be improved while it lasted, since, if the opportunity were not taken and the social and political conditions changed, it might take another human age before the same ideal conditions for art could return, and then not to America.

Jarves advanced appeals for support at various levels. The benefits of art which he promised were somewhat mixed: among them were the diminution of crime (curiously enough echoed saying in a touching foreword that he would stand aside to allow others better qualified to continue “lest the public should grow weary of the theme and the advocate.”

His “theme” was an argument derived from Ruskin, whom he knew and by whose books—notably The Stones of Venice (1851-1853) and The Seven Lamps of Architecture (1849)—he was clearly influenced at the beginning of his studies in art. In simplest terms this argument maintained that the art of a nation is indicative of its spiritual state, and that a decline in art is to be traced to a decline in spiritual and moral timber.

Thus, art was to be brought to America to fulfill the same function in the development of individual and national life that it did in Europe, of political and religious freedom in America at that time, which provided an unprecedented opportunity for self-development in both the artist and the public—unhampered, according to Jarves, by obedience to the dogma of Catholicism or the sycophantic need to please a patron. This unique moment in history, he felt, should be improved while it lasted, since, if the opportunity were not taken and the social and political conditions changed, it might take another human age before the same ideal conditions for art could return, and then not to America.

Jarves advanced appeals for support at various levels. The benefits of art which he promised were somewhat mixed: among them were the diminution of crime (curiously enough echoed saying in a touching foreword that he would stand aside to allow others better qualified to continue “lest the public should grow weary of the theme and the advocate.”

His “theme” was an argument derived from Ruskin, whom he knew and by whose books—notably The Stones of Venice (1851-1853) and The Seven Lamps of Architecture (1849)—he was clearly influenced at the beginning of his studies in art. In simplest terms this argument maintained that the art of a nation is indicative of its spiritual state, and that a decline in art is to be traced to a decline in spiritual and moral timber.

Thus, art was to be brought to America to fulfill the same function in the development of individual and national life that it did in Europe,
Fig. 8. \textit{xix century Venetian glass vessels, most reproducing earlier types. Heights 4\textfrac{3}{4} - 14\textfrac{3}{4} inches}
by Clarence Darrow in his study on *Crime Its Cause and Treatment*, published in 1922), since appreciation of the beautiful predisposes to the beautiful in action; the improvement in the physical appearance of the race; the mercantile expansion and growth of the material, not to say the spiritual, wealth of the city first founding a fine museum. Collecting should begin at once, he warned, lest the supply of art available in Europe become exhausted.

England he offered as an example of improvement gained by just such methods. "England preserves her preëminence by schooling her artisans in matters of refined taste and perfect workmanship. Under similar advantages, there is no reason why our people with more cosmopolitan brains, acuter sensibilities, readier impressibility and quicker inventive faculties should not exceed her in these respects, as we do already in some of the industrial arts."

The formation of collections and the taste they would foster would encourage native artists. Thus a distinct national art would evolve, and tangible evidence of the existence of America could be bequeathed to posterity. The mere fact of possession and the pride of challenging the great European collections were not to be regarded as ends but only as the means toward this ultimate purpose.

His plans for the ideal museum sound extraordinarily modern, and prefigure our own Museum. Supporting the collections it was to have a staff of lecturers, reading rooms, a library and a connected reference system of photographs and casts, with affiliated schools of design. The complete museum would exclude no period and no civilization, and thus art educators in schools and universities would find in it ample illustrative material for their lectures.

Eventually, Jarves trusted, the cost and responsibility of maintaining this museum would be met by the government, since this followed naturally from his belief that "government should base its qualifications to govern upon its capacity in developing complete citizens—men provided equally for all their powers."

It is not surprising that Jarves's century-old art books are all but unknown today. To the expert, who has all the critical apparatus of the modern art historian, Jarves has little to offer. For the general reader, his theories are either now so much part of our thinking as to arouse no discussion, or else they have been superseded. But it is a pity that Jarves's other writings should not have received the attention they deserve.
also have fallen into oblivion, for they counteract the impression one gets of him from the art books as being a frenziedly single-minded man. In addition to his writings on art, he left two books on Hawaii, where he spent some twelve years in early adult life. One of these, *The History of Hawaii* (1843), is still considered authoritative. He also wrote a romance set in Hawaii, a novel-like autobiography, four still rewarding books of French and Italian travel experiences and reflections, an excursion into Japanese art, a memoir for his gifted dead son, and a host of writings in periodicals, and catalogues to his collections. From all these works, he emerges as a patriotic but not a partisan exile, endowed with a keen eye for the beautiful, the solemn, or the hilarious, a strong sense of the drama of history, and above all, a weirdly accurate fore-vision of present events.

But it is as a collector of glass that we particularly remember him at the Metropolitan. And it is to be noted that through the generous gifts and bequests of some sixty collectors of whom three of the earliest to follow Jarves’s lead were Samuel L. M. Barlow, Henry G. Marquand, and Edward C. Moore, the original “nucleus” has so expanded that we now have a magnificent representation of all phases of European glassmaking.

*Fig. 10. Dolphin and sea horse of Venetian glass. xvii–xviii century. Heights 10 and 5⅜ inches*