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moral obligation might be deemed by the Trustees no less binding than a legal obligation as to all matters within their control, it would in this form better insure to the Museum and to the public the benefit of Mr. Hearn's gift in the event of unforeseen contingencies which could not be so controlled. Moreover, this moral obligation instead of being perpetual, is limited to twenty-five years. Were this gift, an entirely new one, unrelated to what Mr. Hearn has done for the Museum in the past, and unrelated to expectations which have justly been entertained by him because of representations made to him by former officers of the Museum, your Committee, for the reasons of general Museum policy embodied in the above-mentioned resolution, would have felt constrained to decline the gift unless made without such conditions either of a legal or moral character. This, however, is not the case. Mr. Hearn has already given to the Museum twenty-four of the pictures now hung in this gallery, and has undoubtedly been encouraged to do so in the expectation that his present gift would be accepted substantially in the form in which it was originally made.

"Moreover, it should be noted that Mr. Hearn's gift provides a very generous endowment for the acquisition of American pictures, quite aside from his collection now in Gallery 15, as well as a gift of very valuable and desirable American pictures, and that it carefully provides for the exclusion from his gallery of any picture which may be decided to be unauthentic by experts to be selected by the Museum.

"Under all these circumstances your Committee recommend the acceptance of Mr. Hearn's gift according to the terms of his letter of January 11th, and they deeply regret that the variance between the present policy of the Museum with regard to conditional offers and the terms of his gift as originally proposed, as well as, to a certain extent, the terms as finally proposed by his letter of January 11th, should have involved delayed action respecting so important a gift from one of their fellow Trustees, whose interest in the Museum and in the cause of art has been thus so generously manifested.

" J. PIERPONT MORGAN
ROBERT W. DE FOREST
CHARLES STUART SMITH
Committee."

An article on the paintings in Mr. Hearn's gift, with reproductions of some of the American paintings will be printed in the next issue of the Bulletin.

WILLIAM TILDEN BLODGETT AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

THE gift of four English pictures of the first rank, in memory of William Tilden Blodgett by his children, William T. Blodgett and Eleanor Blodgett, is recorded elsewhere in this Bulletin.

Thus another memorial collection to perpetuate the name of one of the founders of the Museum is added to the list, which already includes those of John Taylor Johnston and Henry G. Marquand. The charming personality and forceful initiative of Mr. Blodgett are a living memory to the older generation of New Yorkers who know the prominent part he played in the public life of our city during the sixties and early seventies. His share in the establishment of our Art Museum, however, is known only to a small and rapidly narrowing circle. Sometime the history of the Museum will have to be written, and it seems opportune at this time to recall Mr. Blodgett's services in its behalf; more particularly as with this gift in his memory, there has come into the possession of the Museum a file of personal papers and letters relating to its earliest beginnings.

Mr. Blodgett's activities embraced a far larger sphere than the interests of our own Museum. Reaching the prime of manhood during the period of our Civil War, the patriotic activities of that time absorbed his attention until its close. He was one of the organizers of the Union League Club. He was one of the central figures of the great Sanitary Fair, which contributed more than a million dollars to the sick and wounded in the field. With the coming of peace he turned his energy in other directions. He was one of the founders of *The Nation*, a literary force potent for sane thinking in public matters during the sixties and seventies, and which is still published as the weekly edition of the New York *Evening Post*. He was one of the foremost in establishing our American Museum of Natural History.

It is, however, his relation to our own Art Museum which concerns us at the moment. He was one of the committee which

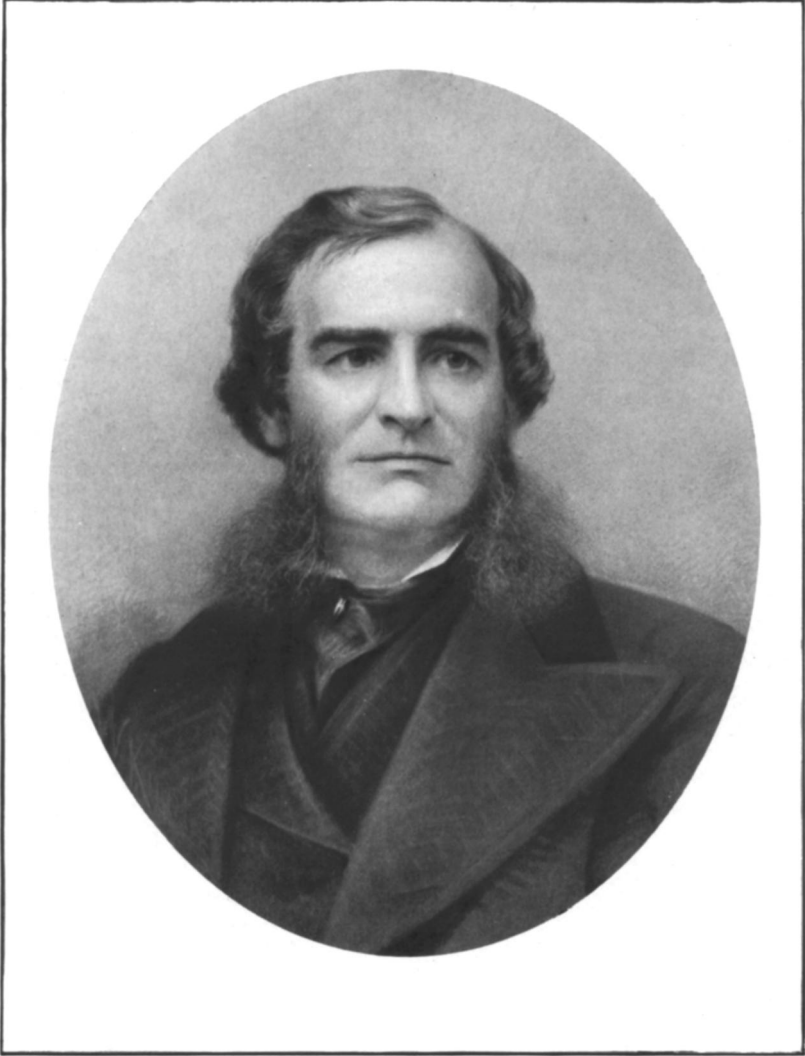
initiated its organization. This committee was appointed on November 23, 1869. It was originally a committee of fifty and was afterwards increased to one hundred and sixteen. Mr. Blodgett was one of the original incorporators, and took an active part in securing its charter, which became a law on April 13, 1870. He was the first Chairman of its Executive Committee, and when a temporary residence abroad compelled him to give up the duties of this position he became its First Vice-President. He died on November 4, 1875, only three years after the opening of the Museum. The resolution adopted at the time of his death by his fellow Trustees in the Museum, unlike many formal resolutions on such occasions, evidently came from full hearts and with full knowledge of the loss to the institution. It reads as follows:

“Mr. William Tilden Blodgett, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, died at his residence in this City on the 4th day of November instant. He has been so closely connected with this institution from the beginning, that the Trustees feel it to be a duty and a privilege at this, their first meeting since his death, to record in their journal an expression of gratitude for his services, and sorrow for his loss. Having been conspicuous for many years in this community for his intelligent and liberal encouragement of Art, Mr. Blodgett was naturally regarded as an important auxiliary in the establishment of an Art Museum. He was one of the most efficient of the fifty gentlemen who founded our institution, and at the first election of officers in January, 1870, was made Chairman of the Executive Committee. After he resigned this post on account of absence from the country, he was chosen a Vice-President, and continued to occupy this place until his death. During all this period he was one of the most industrious, sanguine, and judicious friends that the Museum possessed. He was largely instrumental in procuring the act of incorporation, and it was in a great degree owing to his energy, tact, and perseverance that the grant for the erection of a building was obtained from the Legislature. He was also one of the most active agents in soliciting funds from the public. In addition to his own generous gifts, he secured from others the largest contributions that were collected by any single individual.

“His zeal in our behalf was not checked by his frequent absences in Europe. It was entirely through his timely and disinterested effort that the Dutch and Flemish pictures now in possession of the Museum were purchased at Brussels. His letters to his friends at home constantly showed his extraordinary interest in our enterprise; and one of them, written from the remote regions of Upper Egypt, was full of valuable suggestions for the future, and anxious solicitude for the acquisition of the Cesnola Collection.

“It is not only for his work in the Museum that the cause of American Art is under lasting obligations to Mr. Blodgett. With few advantages for early education, and no youthful associations to direct his attention to pictures, his own natural refinement and keen perception of the beautiful induced him to cultivate their study; and when Providence, which does not always see fit to add to a taste for such pursuits the means of its gratification, was pleased to give him wealth, he found its most delightful employment in the encouragement of Art. He bought, among other valuable works, Church’s ‘Heart of the Andes,’ and he exercised that cordial and elegant hospitality toward artists—the most obscure and struggling as well as the most eminent—which is sometimes as strong a stimulus to effort as the purchase of their works. After his repeated visits to Europe, it was interesting to observe how his ability as a connoisseur increased. His own judgment became more precise and accurate, and he also had the sagacity to consult competent advisers. He was courageous, as well as fortunate, in his purchases; and at the time of his death owned a remarkable collection of works of the best period of the Dutch, Flemish, French and English schools, several specimens of which have been reproduced as masterpieces by etchings in foreign Art journals.

“With this knowledge and unaffected love of the fine arts, Mr. Blodgett had a thorough conviction of the importance of cultivating them at home, and seeing that justice should be done to our own school in the eyes of the world. He was a diligent worker in the committee which selected the American collection for the French Exhibition of 1867, and was also a member of the advisory body which is performing a similar service for the ‘Centennial Exhibition’ in Philadelphia. In all these enterprises he



WILLIAM TILDEN BLODGETT

has shown the same generous liberality and the same sanguine temper which he has constantly manifested at our Board, and which has done more to stimulate the efforts of others than can adequately be measured by words

"The Trustees of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in recording these obligations of the public toward Mr. Blodgett, cannot omit to express their own personal sorrow at an event which has deprived them of the companionship of a Christian gentleman, whose noble presence, gracious manner, and inspiring voice have rendered our progress always pleasant, and sometimes, when we most needed encouragement, comparatively easy."

The personal papers and letters, referred to above, which, fortunately for the history of the Museum, have been preserved by Mr. Blodgett and his family, give a much more intimate impression of his work for it and of his close association in this work with its first President, John Taylor Johnston. Among them are two apparently rival tickets printed, evidently for the first election of officers in 1870. One of these is headed by the name of John Taylor Johnston, as President, and that of William T. Blodgett for first member of the Executive Committee. The other is headed by the name of Dr. Henry W. Bellows as President, and that of Dr. C. R. Agnew for the corresponding position on the Executive Committee. There is also a copy of the first subscription list to the fund for establishing the Metropolitan Museum of Art, containing all subscriptions made up to February 1, 1872. Perhaps no more striking evidence of the growth of New York fortunes could be presented than by contrasting the scale of giving then current with the contributions of today. There were only three contributions of \$5,000 and over. They were as follows: John Taylor Johnston, \$10,000; William T. Blodgett, \$5,000; Alexander T. Stewart, \$5,000. The Presidents of the Museum who succeeded Mr. Johnston are all found upon this list, but as subscribers for lesser amounts.

Mr. Blodgett purchased the first important collection owned by the Museum embracing one hundred and seventy-four Flemish and Dutch pictures. Its entire cost, including expenses, was \$116,180.27, an absolutely insignificant sum compared to their present value. This purchase,

which absorbed a large part of the original subscriptions to the Museum, was severely criticized at the time as an act in excess of Mr. Blodgett's authority. The private papers now received show how unjust this criticism was. Among them is Mr. Blodgett's original offer to the Trustees, dated December 21, 1870, which, after reciting the purchase "in his own name, and with his own resources," offers the pictures at cost to the Museum, with an agreement on his part that the Museum might reject any picture the authenticity of which was not fully established, and deduct from the purchase price its value as agreed upon between him and the Trustees. This offer was not accepted until March 20, 1871. Meanwhile it appears from the papers that John Taylor Johnston had assumed one-half of the cost, and provided \$100,000 toward this cost by borrowing that amount from the Bank of America on joint account with Mr. Blodgett. There is also an agreement between Mr. Blodgett and Mr. Johnston fixing their respective rights in these pictures.

During this intermediate period the Museum was first opened at No. 681 Fifth Avenue, originally a private house which had been previously altered and occupied by Mr. Dodworth as a dancing academy. The opening occurred February 20, 1872, just thirty-four years ago. Among the letters preserved by Mr. Blodgett, who at this time was in Europe, are two from Mr. Johnston, one dated February 10, 1872, just before the opening, and the other dated February 22, 1872, just after its occurrence. These portray so well the intimate relations between these two founders, and the hopes and fears of that early period of small beginnings, that they are given substantially in full.

"February 10, 1872.

"MY DEAR MR. BLODGETT:—

"Many thanks for your letter of Jan. 20 recd. this morning and for your prompt attention to my request about the 'Slave Ship.' I hope to hear soon that this picture has been secured. Another English painter of whom I have long desired to have a specimen is Sir Joshua Reynolds, but I

(1) Turner's "Slave Ship," bought by Mr. Johnston. First exhibited in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Sold with his collection in 1876; now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

would be hard to suit in what I would take. If I had Mrs. Boddington as St. Cecilia (Lenox's) and a good Murillo I could die happy!

"We are just in the stir and bustle of preparing to open the Museum. The pictures are hung and look remarkably well. Some cracking and blistering has taken place after all the care with which they were cradled, etc., but not much. The great question has been about the loan Exhibition. Sturgis and the Loan Committee have held back about it but the rest of us have been of the opinion that small collections in the different departments would indicate the breadth of our designs while the smallness of our space would sufficiently explain the lack of quantity. It is now understood that the center of the exhibition room is to have a row of low cases or bronzes or whatever they can secure that will not obstruct the view of the pictures. High cases will succeed when the novelty of the collection is worn off. My Napoleon goes into the room north of hall. Capt. Alden's wood carvings are secured and are to be in the N. E. basement room.² The sarcophagus on inspection turns out to be a fine work of art, late Roman, probably a royal tomb. The Westchester Apollo is still to be investigated. After writing and writing to Ward I found he had gone off south without examination and without notice to me. Rather provoking, especially as poor Mrs. Wilkins is in a fever at having no notice taken of her offer. I have now got Fisher to send out, have written to Mrs. Wilkins apologizing. I hope soon to straighten everything out. The pictures overflow the great hall and are to have the best place in the rooms also. The hanging committee have worked like beavers.

"I observe what you say about additional purchase of Dutch and Flemish pictures. Personally I should like and prefer to follow up that school and make the Gallery *strong* in one thing, and it may be found judicious to do so. Much will depend, however, on how our pictures take with the public. Unless they are a decided success it may be well to branch out in some other line before going deeper into pictures, the more so as our space is limited.

(2) Now in the Fine Art gallery of Yale University at New Haven.

(3) Mr. Robert Gordon, then living in New York, later of J. S. Morgan & Co., London.

"Gordon³ is slowly collecting in the subscriptions. The debt in bank is reduced to \$15,000, perhaps some less. It is a shame to our citizens that the amount was not forthcoming at once.

"The general opening is to be on the 20th, and we hope to make it a success. On the 17th we have the Press and some of the artists, on the 19th the Trustees.

"We will soon, therefore, know what is thought of our labors so far.

"Yours very truly,

[Signed] JOHN TAYLOR JOHNSTON."

"P. S. I intended to let the Museum have the Turner for some months."

The second letter reads:

"February 22, 1872.

"MY DEAR MR. BLODGETT:—

"Hoppin⁴ tells me that he has written you at some length about our great success in getting together the Artists and Pressmen on the evening of the 19th inst. Personally I felt very apprehensive of the effect of inviting the disaffected artist element and the gentlemen of the Press, but it all worked *very* well. One party who came there with an artist told me afterwards that they halted for a moment before going in in front of the building, and the artist told him it was a 'd——d humbug, and,' added he, 'I thought so too, but when we came out we thought very differently.'

"Our public reception on the 20th was an equal success. We had a fine turnout of ladies and gentlemen and all were highly pleased. The pictures looked splendid, and compliments were so plenty and strong that I was afraid the mouths of the Trustees would become chronically and permanently fixed in a broad grin. The Loan Committee worked hard at the last and got together a few things of interest and perhaps it was as well that at the first there should be little to take off the attention from the pictures, and also that we should be able to announce from time to time additions to the Loan Exhibition. Vela's Napoleon⁵ was in place and looked splendid, and excited universal admiration. It is better, if any-

(4) Mr. William J. Hoppin, then Secretary of the Museum.

(5) Then owned by Mr. Johnston; sold with his collection in 1876; now in the Corcoran Gallery at Washington.

thing, than the original, and the marble is perfect. I saw it myself, for the first time, on the reception evening and was perfectly satisfied. We have secured but not yet put up Mr. Alden's fine woodwork. It is much finer than we had supposed, having only before seen it in the cellar. At the last all sorts of difficulties were made. Mrs. Alden's agents, from excess of care, but they are now happily overcome.

"The Westchester Apollo turns out to be three feet high, a statuette! We decided, however, to take it.

"Mr. Rowe presents us with a colossal dancing girl by Schwanthaler, the celebrated German Sculptor, at Munich. It may be very fine, but eight feet of dance is a trial to the feelings. Hereafter we must curb the exuberance of donors except in the article of money, of which latter they may give as much as they please. The sarcophagus has not yet been moved up but will be soon. I think I wrote you that Sturgis on examination liked it very much. J. Augustus Johnson (the donor) has since seen it and pronounces it a fine specimen of the later Roman, and probably a royal tomb. It will be more carefully examined when "in situ."

"We may now consider the Museum fairly launched and under favorable auspices. People were generally surprised, and agreeably so, to find what we had. No one had imagined that we could make such a show, and the disposition to praise is now as general as the former disposition to blame. We have now something to point to at the Museum, something tangible and something good. The cry of humbug can hardly be raised now by anyone. ———, I believe, says very little now about the swindle of the two New York merchants, and the Loan Committee intend to come down on him for the loan of some of his pretty things. ——— has forgotten his insulting note declining a post in the Museum board, and now says he supposes 'they' think they can get along without him. And with others there is the same indication of a change in the current.

"It would have gratified you to have heard the regret expressed that you could not have been with us to have enjoyed the triumph of success after having given so much time, trouble and personal effort to the Institution. It was the only thing wanting to the perfection of the evening.

"Gordon is slowly getting in the money and we are slowly increasing the list of subscribers. We are also busy with the question of site, and have met the commissioners several times. It looks very much as if they would consent to our having Reservoir Square, and give the Natural History the vacant ground on the east side of Central Park. This delighteth much all, or nearly all, but Church and myself, who are 'Central Parkers.' Anyhow we are almost certain to have a decision made soon and permanently.

"Thank you again about the Turner. I have received the bill of lading, so there is little likelihood of a slip between, etc. People who hear of it as coming are delighted.

"Goodbye, my dear Sir. Success to you and Mrs. Blodgett and all your belongings. May you all return well and happy, is the sincere wish of

"Yours very truly,

[Signed] JOHN TAYLOR JOHNSTON."

Unfortunately Mr. Blodgett's letters have not been preserved. If they had been they would have only illustrated more clearly the close sympathy of these two men in working together to establish the institution which owes so much to their initiative and breadth of view.

Fortunately for the Museum, the "Central Parkers," who were apparently in the minority in 1872, carried their point, and the Museum is not at the present time contracted in what was then "Reservoir Square" and is now Bryant Park, behind the public Library.

It is gratifying, also, to know that the present broad departmental development of our collections is only following the judgment of those who started the Museum in that private house on Fifth Avenue, and who were "of the opinion that small collections in the different departments would indicate the breadth of our designs, while the smallness of our space would sufficiently explain the lack of quantity."

Similarity of aim was not the only bond of sympathy between Mr. Blodgett and Mr. Johnston. Both had large and important collections of pictures, which under happier circumstances might have now graced the walls of the Museum. Both sustained business reverses of such a character as to force them to sell their collections. Both recovered, to be sure, a large measure of their earlier prosperity, but by the dispersion

of their collections our Museum has forever lost Turner's "Slave Ship," and has never as yet acquired Church's "Heart of the Andes."

R. W. DE F.

THE WARD COLLECTION OF ANCIENT GREEK COINS

HITHERTO in our Metropolitan Museum the numerous coinages of Hellas and of her widespread flourishing colonies have been represented largely, if not wholly by the Ptolemaic series. These special issues of the long line of the Lagidai kings of Egypt, while possessing undoubtedly a great interest in the eyes of the professed numismatist, as was shown in the preceding Bulletin, can in not the slightest degree be considered typical. For the date of their first mintage (B. C. 305) nearly coincides with the commencement of the period of decline in coin art, thus precluding all artistic excellence; while the purposely slight alteration in their usual type means a complete absence of variety, commonly one of the most pleasing features of Greek coins. Can it then be considered strange if the large preponderance of these inartistic and somewhat monotonous pieces in the Metropolitan cases has made our collection a grievous disappointment to the student possessed of more or less knowledge which he would strengthen and vivify; and has conveyed to the casual observer an entirely inadequate impression of the rich beauty and charm of this genuine and (as we collectors claim) important branch of ancient art.

Now, however, an acquisition of the highest importance, from the standpoint of Greek numismatics, has worked a beneficent change, and the purchase and presentation by Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan of the justly celebrated Ward collection has, at one bound as it were, given to the Museum a distinct value and importance for all American collectors. Indeed this addition is for New York coin lovers what the recent sale of the well-known Greenwell-Virzi-Warren collection to the Museum of Fine Arts has been for Bostonians; although undoubtedly in scope and character the two English cabinets show a wide divergence, and are hardly capable of comparison.

Mr. John Ward belongs to the number of those cultivated, widely traveled Englishmen whose whole-hearted devotion of their

leisure at home and abroad to some favorite pursuit, while affording the enthusiasts themselves an ever fresh interest and enjoyment in life, often incidentally produces a valuable addition to the sum of the world's knowledge in many a new or well-worn direction.

His good fortune, in being the personal friend of those past masters of the science, Dr. Head, Percy Gardner, Arthur J. Evans, and G. F. Hill, whose writings have done so much to stimulate and raise to its proper height the study of Greek coins, has given his collecting spirit unusual freedom of action, while he has conscientiously availed himself of every opportunity thus afforded. The result of his pleasant toil is shown here in about a thousand pieces, all possessing real interest and many displaying the finest characteristics of the Greek issues, which, one need hardly add form the most varied and artistic of all the world's countless coinages. This collection enjoys one great advantage over all other collections which it has ever been possible to purchase, that of having a scientific, and, at the same time, popular catalogue already prepared. This work was done, with his usual accuracy and thoroughness, by Mr. Hill of the British Museum, whose books on this special subject have been of such invaluable assistance to all true collectors, and the importance of such a complete record will be appreciated by all who would really enter upon a careful study of these coins.

One may say that in selecting his coins Mr. Ward has favored no one series to the exclusion of others perhaps equally important, and thus the comprehensiveness of the collection is one of its marked features. Following the regular numismatic order we may begin by examining the usual examples of the Greek colonies in Spain and Gaul; may continue with a study of the beautiful series of Magna Graecia and Sicily—in Sicilian issues, especially those of Syracuse, this cabinet is most pleasingly strong and varied—and may then complete our investigation with specimens of Greece proper, Crete and Asia Minor, thus reaching the North African coast lands, opposite our starting point. In such a wide range there are to be found many coins of the highest rarity (some being unique), which will appeal principally to the scientific student; many of a pure artistic beauty, which will bring longing to the heart of