

Queen Mary's Art Treasures.

On view in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

THIS EXHIBITION OF QUEEN MARY'S Art Treasures occupies an anteroom and a large gallery in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Many thousands of men and women throughout the country will welcome this opportunity of seeing this selection of furniture and *objets d'art* from Marlborough House. The exhibition is arranged in groups corresponding approximately to the rooms which originally housed them.

Queen Mary's life was passed surrounded by beautiful objects of every kind—her interest in which began at a very early age.

Her own skill as an embroideress was developed to a very high degree.

Queen Mary developed her knowledge and experience as a connoisseur much more after the death of King George V.

She was personally responsible for drastic changes in the Royal Palaces and houses, where she rearranged and harmonised much of the furniture and other works of art.

Queen Mary liked flower pieces and other still life subjects but she never displayed any particular interest in old masters except for portraits.

It was towards the smaller *objets d'art* and to furniture that she chiefly turned in making purchases and in this way she became widely known as an art patron.

Her eye for quality was unerring and her interest was only held by first-rate workmanship.

One of her earliest interests was in Regency furniture and many of the finest pieces at Marlborough House were purchased by her long before their beauty and value were recognised by other collectors.

Queen Mary's collection of fans included many fine specimens from nearly every country and of every type; likewise with her collection of tea caddies and work boxes.

Most outstanding of all are her bibelots—snuff boxes, Wedgwood and Battersea enamel plaques, Vernis Martin *etuis* (boxes, etc.) which as was the custom with collectors of the Edwardian era—she liked to set out on small tables and in small cases in her apartments.

Always a lover of Oriental art, particularly jade, Caxton enamels and snuff-boxes, exquisite examples were collected in great variety.

Queen Mary's patronage of the arts was evident also in her unflinching interest in every important loan exhibition during her life and in the National collections. She was a constant visitor to the Victoria and Albert Museum, the last occasion being a private visit to the exhibition of *Brunswick Art Treasures* in 1952. This exhibition consisted of pictures and silver from the collections of her kinsman, the late Duke of Brunswick and Luneburg.

The present exhibition so entrancing in its beauty, will bring back memories of the graciousness and dignity of the great Queen whose life was dedicated to that which was good and noble.

Marlborough House

MARLBOROUGH HOUSE, PALL MALL, was built by Sir Christopher Wren in 1709-10 for the first Duke of Marlborough and the foundation stone was laid by the Duchess.

It was here that the Duke spent his later years. He died at Windsor in 1722, and his body lay in state in Marlborough House before his burial in Westminster Abbey. The Duchess died in Marlborough House in 1744. The family retained possession of the house until 1817, when it was sold to the Crown, and should have become the home of Princess Charlotte (daughter of the Prince Regent, later George IV) and her husband, Prince Leopold. The Princess died before it was ready. The Prince lived there until 1831, when he became King of the Belgians. In 1837 Queen Adelaide, widow of William IV, took up residence in the house and there she remained until her death in 1849. In 1850 it was settled on the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII), who was at that time only nine years old.

Renovation was carried out in 1861 and the Prince went to live there in 1863. In the intervening years Marlborough House played an important part in the artistic life of England. It was in 1852 that the new Museum of Manufacturers was organised there and the name was changed later to the Museum of Ornamental Art. This organisation was the ancestor of the Victoria and Albert Museum and was founded to improve the "public taste in design," largely through the influence of the Prince Consort.

In 1857 the museum was moved to South Kensington and later was named, and is today, the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) moved into Marlborough House after his marriage to Princess Alexandra in 1863, and it remained their London home until the death of Queen Victoria in 1901. The new Prince of Wales (later George V) went to live there in 1902 and was followed by his mother, Queen Alexandra, after the death of King Edward VII in 1910. She died in 1925, and there is a memorial to her inset into the west wall of the gardens, facing St. James's Palace. The future Edward VIII preferred York House, St. James's, and therefore never took up residence in Marlborough House. Queen Mary lived in the House from 1936 until her death in 1953.

Marlborough House had various structural alterations during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The addition of an attic storey to the main block, and later the main block was raised again, and a new block was added covering the south side of the courtyard.

No future arrangements effecting the house have as yet been announced.

ALICE R. BUNCH.

Our Chelsea Pensioners.

HAVING SEEN the contingent of the Chelsea Pensioners at the Thanksgiving Service at St. Paul's Cathedral on May 12th, has prompted Miss A. R. Bunch to contribute a note about these worthy gentlemen.

It is said that when King Charles II wished to provide an institution in which to house his aged and wounded soldiers he chose a site by the river Thames at Chelsea.

After making this choice of site he remembered that he

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