

# V A N I T Y F A I R

July, 1916



**A pencil study, by John Sargent,  
for the profile head of his  
"Portrait of Madame X"**

*(With the kind permission of Mr. John Lane)*

**I**N the "Portrait of Madame X," the Metropolitan Museum of Art has just acquired, for its permanent collection of American art, one of the most interesting paintings, if not the most interesting painting created by John Singer Sargent. The subject is Madame Gautereau, a redoubtable Parisian beauty of the early eighties. Madame Gautereau, after the portrait had been completed, refused to accept it, giving as the reason for her refusal, that Sargent had pitched it in somewhat too frank a vein. The painter did not insist on her carrying out her side of the contract and promptly and obligingly created another portrait of her, this time in a milder and more subdued manner. Sargent decided, however, to send the rejected canvas to the Paris Salon of 1884 (the year of its painting), where, under the designation of "Portrait de Madame G—," it made an immediate success. It probably did more than anything else to start Sargent on his career as a world figure in art. During the past thirty years many efforts have been made, by dealers, by museums, and by private collectors, to persuade Mr. Sargent to sell the painting (which he has kept in his studio in London), but he has always refused to part with it. The news that it has just passed into the ownership of the Metropolitan Museum of Art should come as great and gratifying news to admirers of Sargent's genius and to all friends of the Metropolitan Museum.

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