



FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT
WRITERS IN MUSEUMS 1798-1898

EDITED BY
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II. Italian Genius in American Light: The James Jackson Jarves Collection at Yale

Kathleen Lawrence

Perhaps the strangest tale in the annals of nineteenth-century Americans abroad is the history of expatriate collector James Jackson Jarves (1818–1888). His failure to convince fellow Bostonians to accept his priceless collection of Italian art was chronicled by Gilded Age writer Edith Wharton in her novella *False Dawn* (1924), where she fictionalized the consequences of Jarves’s misguided passion for late Gothic and early Renaissance painting; an obsession that provoked ridicule from contemporaries, animosity from his wife and daughter and led eventually to financial ruin. In addition to his love for works by duecento, trecento, and quattrocento Italian masters, this Galileo of the art world was driven by the desire to enlighten his American compatriots, whose narrow mercantile existence he aimed to enrich with the visionary spirituality of Renaissance devotional objects. In order to impart intellectual and aesthetic light to culturally bereft citizens, however, Jarves needed literal illumination in a repository that would permit better viewing. Aided by a perspicacious architect and prescient college administrators, Jarves placed his orphaned masterpieces in the first dedicated college art museum, on walls illuminated with sunlight by day and gaslight by night, rescuing these artefacts from what Jarves perceived as the darkness of Italian neglect.

Jarves's pursuit of art was subsidized by newly acquired industrial wealth from his father's Boston and Sandwich Glass Company, a factory system that married industry to aesthetics and usefulness to beauty. Deming Jarves produced the most sought-after whale oil lamps in America, enabling him to fund his son's search for intellectual and aesthetic illumination with light-emitting objects.¹ Jarves's conflicted psyche mirrored this paradox, as he had what fellow Florentine and expatriate Englishman Thomas Adolphus Trollope (1810–1892) called 'Yankee energy and industry'² combined with a love of the transcendent he found in Renaissance Italian painting, which Jarves called 'a spiritual apprehension of life'.³ Jarves believed that art in America would 'turn the heaviness of Puritan life into a thankfulness and delight'.⁴ Ironically, his indefatigable urge to collect masterpieces of the Catholic faith derived from characteristics inherited from dissenting Puritan forbears: unflagging diligence, a love of freedom, and a desire for individual expression.

Jarves's drive to possess, re-hang, and re-light Italian devotional art was tied to teachings imbibed from the American Protestant minister-turned-writer Ralph Waldo Emerson, who preached to the masses not from the pulpit but from the lectern, not in a church but in a great public auditorium. Emerson's radical individualism fused secular American republicanism with liberalized religion, best expressed in his credo 'Trust thyself', granting his listeners and readers the freedom to 'write upon the lintels of the door-post, *Whim*'.⁵ Like a true Emersonian, Jarves found meaning where he wanted to, preaching in his books a religion of art for the masses which constituted a reaction to bourgeois American business culture in its means, and an embrace of that same culture in its ends. The critic Sacvan Bercovitch called this American paradox the 'rites of assent', denoting the inherent intellectual collaboration between America's most profound thinkers and the capitalist project at the heart

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- 1 Deming Jarves, *Reminiscences of Glass-Making* (Boston: Eastburn's Press, 1854), p. 46, <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/44284>
 - 2 Thomas Adolphus Trollope to Charles Eliot Norton, 12 February 1859 in J. J. Jarves, *Letters Relating to a Collection of Pictures Made by Mr. J. J. Jarves* (Cambridge, MA: H. O. Houghton & Co., 1859), p. 25, <https://archive.org/details/lettersrelating00jarvgoog>
 - 3 James Jackson Jarves, *The Art-Idea: Sculpture, Painting, and Architecture in America* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1865), p. 363, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/011535205>
 - 4 Jarves, *The Art-Idea*, p. 261.
 - 5 Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Essays. First Series* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1876), p. 48, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009775811>

of American culture.⁶ As the Boston Courier admonished its own city, Boston was a community 'where wealth and political distinction are so eagerly pursued, neither object of pursuit being very elevating or refining in its effects', therefore 'a public gallery of works of Art would shed a benignant and beneficent influence...'⁷ With the idea of displaying Italian religious art in a Protestant college amidst gleaming modern surroundings, Jarves was joining the profoundly spiritual to the secular, mitigating the crassness of his country's burgeoning industrial culture. Yale itself stood at a crossroads, transitioning from a clerical training ground with emphasis on ancient languages and biblical exegesis to a research university. Its new art school with a museum attached could assess religious art from an interpretive distance.⁸

Jarves first began to appreciate early Italian works after reading Alexis François Rio's *The Poetry of Christian Art* (1836) and Alexander William Crawford, 25th Baron Lindsay's *Sketches of the History of Christian Art* (1847) during his first European sojourn. These books, as well as English critic John Ruskin's *The Stones of Venice* (1851–1853) and Lady Callcott and Augustus Wall Callcott's *Frescoes of Giotto* (1835) were a revelation to Jarves, who suddenly found himself admitted to a rarefied unknown world of spiritual and aesthetic dimensions.⁹ Like his ancestors who broke ties with the 'Old World' to create the new, Jarves considered faith in the future to have supplanted superstition and ritual. Yet he also feared rootless contempt for history and faith. He believed Italian art could build an aesthetic bulwark against the rampant materialism that was encroaching upon post-bellum American society. For Jarves, the American future of enlightened commercialism could appropriate ancient holiness to underpin a creed of individual advancement, a prospect he associated with light. He warned his fellow Americans, 'With us, the public voice is dumb. There is no universal demand for Beauty. Yet the divine spark exists in us, and needs but encouragement

6 Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Rites of Assent* (London and New York: Routledge Press, 1993), p. 36.

7 Anonymous, 'Article from the Boston Courier of 9th of February, 1859', in Jarves, *Letters Relating to a Collection*, p. 29, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044108139858;view=1up;seq=35>

8 Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, John De Witt, John Howard Van Amringe *et al.*, *Universities and Their Sons; History, Influence and Characteristics of American Universities, With Biographical Sketches and Portraits of Alumni and Recipients of Honorary Degrees*, 4 vols. (Boston: R. Herndon Company, 1898), I, p. 351.

9 Jarves, *The Art-Idea*, p. 126.

to grow into a bright and steady light'.¹⁰ Relatedly, T. A. Trollope advised Charles Eliot Norton after having seen Jarves's collection in his Florence palazzo (before it crossed the ocean to Boston and eventually New Haven), that his paintings 'are called upon to perform a civilizing office for the rising world on the other side of the Atlantic'.¹¹

In spite of his reverence for Italian artefacts, Jarves displayed the imperious sense of superiority held by many Grand Tourists towards Italy and her museums. Nineteenth-century English and American visitors to Italian cultural sites often registered derisive complaints about the state of Italian institutions, revealing their own lack of comfort with foreignness, extrapolating moral inferiority from material conditions. For example, critic and art historian Anna Jameson (1794–1860) rebuked an aristocratic Roman family in her memoir *Diary of an Ennuyée* (1826): 'The Doria Palace contains the largest collection of pictures in Rome; but they are in a dirty and neglected condition and many of the best are hung in the worst possible light...'¹² American writer Henry James (1843–1916) spoke of this dim light in 'The Madonna of the Future' where his protagonists 'wandered into dark chapels, damp courts, and dusty palace-rooms, in quest of lingering hints of fresco and lurking treasures of carving'.¹³ In 'Traveling Companions', James's protagonists strolled through St. Mark's Basilica and wandered 'into the dark Baptistry and sat down on a bench against the wall, trying to discriminate in the vaulted dimness the harsh medieval reliefs behind the altar and the mosaic Crucifixion above it'.¹⁴

In *The Marble Faun* (1860), his novel about American expatriates in Rome and Florence, Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–1864) suggested that the young American copyist Hilda must correct the deficiencies of Italian galleries: 'If a picture had darkened into an indistinct shadow through time and neglect, or had been injured by cleaning, or retouched

10 J. J. Jarves, *Art Studies: The 'Old Masters' of Italy* (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1861), p. 9, <https://archive.org/details/artstudiesoldma03jarvgooq>

11 Jarves, *Letters Relating to a Collection*, p. 24.

12 Anna Brownell Jameson, *Diary of an Ennuyée* (Boston: Lilly, Wait, Colman, and Holden, 1833), p. 124 (1826 ed. available at <https://archive.org/details/diaryanennuyeyby00jamegoog>).

13 Henry James, *A Passionate Pilgrim and Other Tales* (Boston: James E. Osgood & Co., 1875), p. 283, <https://archive.org/details/passionatepilgri00jameiala>

14 Henry James, 'Traveling Companions', *The Atlantic Monthly*, 26 (November 1870), 600–14 (also available at [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Travelling_Companions_\(New_York:_Boni_and_Liveright,_1919\)](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Travelling_Companions_(New_York:_Boni_and_Liveright,_1919)))

by some profane hand, she seemed to possess the faculty of seeing it in its pristine glory'.¹⁵ Hawthorne continued, 'From the dark, chill corner of a gallery, — from some curtained chapel in a church, where the light came seldom and aslant, — from the prince's carefully guarded cabinet, where not one eye in thousands was permitted to behold it, she brought the wondrous picture into daylight, and gave all its magic splendor for the enjoyment of the world'.¹⁶ Although this American woman was a mere copyist, through her pure Protestant spirituality — free from intermediaries to distance her from God — she could extract the essence of the painting in question, washing its Italian dirt with her unspoiled American newness. She could thereby achieve a kind of ownership as though the work itself was originally produced at her hands.

Hawthorne might as well have been describing Jarves. In his letters from Italy to Harvard art history professor Charles Eliot Norton (1827–1908), Jarves related that his adventures 'involved an inquisition into the intricacies of numberless villas, palaces, convents, churches, and household dens, all over this portion of Italy; the employment of many agents to scent out my prey; many fatiguing journeyings; miles upon miles of wearisome staircases; dusty explorations of dark retreats; dirt, disappointment, fraud, lies and money often fruitlessly spent...'¹⁷ He directed his efforts towards a well-remunerated, if not completely noble end: 'all compensated, however, by the gradual accumulation of a valuable gallery'. Casting aspersions on Italian religious orders and repositories, Jarves nevertheless looked for bargains. Treating priceless paintings like liquidation items, he boasted 'In the lumber room of a famous convent I chanced upon a beautiful Perugino, so smoked and dirty as to be cast aside by the monks, who, for a consideration, gladly let me bear it away...' Italy seemed to relinquish her riches for a pittance, and hardly tried to protect them; 'A beautiful full length portrait of a Spanish grandee, by Velázquez, was found among the earth and rubbish of a noble villa, cut out from its frame, crusted with dirt, but beneath in fine preservation...'¹⁸ Darkness, smoke, rubbish, and dirt as described by Jarves seemed to be metonymic symbols for sins that

15 Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun, or the Romance of Monte Beni* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1860), p. 78, <https://trail.ge/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Marble-Faun-c.pdf>

16 Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun*, p. 80.

17 Jarves, *Letters Pertaining to a Collection*, p. 6.

18 Ibid.

invalidated Italy's stewardship of the world's art treasures. It was as if Jarves had excavated them cthonically from the earth as the Laocoön had been found in 1506 in a Roman vineyard, thereby conferring rights of ownership on the American archaeologist. Jarves wanted not only to clean but also to sterilize Italy; an ironic stance certainly for a lover of art, and Italian art in particular. In a passage in his early book *Italian Sights and Papal Principles* (1856), Jarves blamed any artist who shirked his duties of civic uplift: 'The obscene gallery at Naples is very properly closed to the public; so should every work of art in which immodesty is obviously apparent...' ¹⁹ Jarves applied even more stringent demands to the public. Like the Puritan minister Jonathan Edwards, who demanded his parishioners purge their minds of immodest thoughts, Jarves opined, 'An artist of pure aim should not be held answerable for the imagination of his spectator. It is his business to purify his heart, even as the artist has purified his work, of all gross, earthly elements' ²⁰ Jarves construed the unsullied appreciation of art as a kind of 'business', wedding the language of enterprise to — and thereby justifying — aesthetics.

Jarves offered further negative assessments of Italian light in his art historical books. For example, discussing Domenico Beccafumi, 1484–1549, Jarves wrote in *Art Studies*, 'His best works, being limited to Siena, and not in a favorable light, particularly the fine frescoes of the Oratory of San Bernardino, ...contribute to keep his fame more in shadow than it merits' ²¹ His next book, *The Art-Idea*, offered specific criteria for organizing museums: 'Until recently, no attention has been paid, even in Europe, to historical sequence and special motives in the arrangement of art-objects. As in the Pitti Gallery, pictures were generally hung without regard even to light, so as to conform to the symmetry of the rooms' ²² By this, he was holding the Pitti Gallery to the standards he was in the process of establishing at Yale, placing the element of light as the primary consideration. Writing to his daughter Amey, still at school in New England, Jarves described their summer surroundings at Bagni di Lucca with the same ambivalence he held towards Italy as a repository

19 J. J. Jarves, *Italian Sights and Papal Principles, Seen Through American Spectacles* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1856), p. 189, <https://archive.org/details/italiansightsan03jarvgoog>

20 Ibid.

21 Jarves, *Art Studies*, p. 356.

22 Jarves, *The Art-Idea*, p. 346.

for art. The summer locale was a place where 'the woods are dense, so green and beautiful' and 'the air is perfumed with delicious flowers' that 'we can walk miles under the vines loaded with fruit, forming arbors that make your mouth water to look at them...' ²³ He nevertheless prejudiced Amey, who had been born in Florence in 1855, against Italy: 'The people are very poor, notwithstanding they live in such a beautiful country. But that is owing to bad government and a foolish religion. By and by you will read all about the history of your native country, for although you are Yankee at heart, you are Italian by birth'. ²⁴ By contrast, Jarves was a fastidious Yankee who strove to be an Italian at heart; in spite of having devoted his life to accumulating religious art, he scorned the very faith which had produced it.

In Boston, Jarves encountered Yankees more virulent than he; societal leaders, suspicious of art whose strange iconography repulsed them. These wealthy merchants, dubbed 'Brahmins' to reflect their insularity, failed to understand the significance of the duecento and trecento Sienese, Umbrian, and Florentine schools. The mid-nineteenth century was the era when American collectors and patrons revered late-Renaissance, Baroque, and proto-Romantic masters such as the Carracci, Correggio, Albani, Domenichino, Carlo Dolci, Guercino, Guido Reni, Carlo Maratta, Salvador Rosa, Lo Spagnoletto, Sassoferrato, Giulio Romano, and Guido Rossi among others. These were exactly the painters collected by Boston merchant millionaires and by the Boston Athenaeum, whose core collection included works by the Carracci, Correggio, Guido Reni, Lazzarini, Giovanni Paolo Panini, and Francesco Zuccarelli. ²⁵ While a few works in the collection, which Jarves had so diligently assembled, depicted profane subjects, the majority of the images were sacred scenes that appeared strange to Protestant Bostonians: Madonnas with child, births of the saviour, annunciations, martyrdoms, presentations at the temple, circumcisions, and crucifixions. The few secular motifs

23 The James Jackson Jarves Collection (MS 301), Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, Box 1, Folder 20.

24 Ibid. Florence Amey Jarves (1855–1947) was the daughter of Jarves's first wife Elizabeth Russell Swain. She was born in Florence while Jarves was in Boston overseeing the publication of *Art Hints, Architecture, Sculpture and Painting* (1855). See Francis Steegmuller, *The Two Lives of James Jackson Jarves* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951), p. 153.

25 Robert F. Perkins and William J. Gavin, *The Boston Athenaeum Art Exhibition Index, 1827–1874* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1980), p. 216.

represented mostly mythological themes and portraits, for example *Stories from the Aeneid* by Paolo Uccello, a cassone depicting the 'Triumph of Love'; *Venial Love* by Agostino Carracci; portraits depicted aristocratic Italians in finery with less volumetric modelling of the faces than seen in the high Renaissance, as in *The Wife of Paolo Vitelli* by Raibolini of Bologna; portraits of the Gritti family by Giorgione; a portrait of Cassandra Fedèle by Giovanni Bellini; a portrait of a Medici princess by Bronzino, and Cosimo de Medici by Pontormo.²⁶

Boston's elite gatekeepers were not only suspicious about the aesthetic value of the works, but they also doubted the accuracy of their attributions. Earlier Baroque and Romantic exhibitions at the Boston Athenaeum, as well as collections of elite New England merchants, had accustomed upper-class Bostonians to seeing paintings in a more pristine state, without the need for restoration. On this matter, Harvard art historian Charles Eliot Norton wrote to Jarves in November 1859 on the eve of a meeting of the Trustees of the Boston Athenaeum: 'The public and many of the proprietors of the Athenaeum consider \$20,000 a very large sum to spend for 'old' pictures. They have no conception of their importance to modern artists, and of their essential value as representing the past thoughts and habits of men.'²⁷ It was because the pictures had dimmed with age or lost layers of paint that Jarves had unfortunately allowed over-zealous cleaning and in-painting by his Florentine dealer and advisor George Mignaty (1824–1895).

A more sinister aspect contributed to Jarves's ultimate failure to secure a home for his collection in Boston. Criticism of the condition of the paintings represented a snobbish estimate of Jarves himself, for although his father was a wealthy industrialist, he was not from the first rank of Boston families; the Appletons, Cabots, Curtises, Forbeses, Lowells, and Perkinses. Indeed, Jarves' dream to endow his native city with the riches of art was scuppered by one of these elite clans — the Perkins family. Edward Perkins, grandson of Boston's wealthiest shipping magnate Thomas Handasyd Perkins, was chair of the Athenaeum Fine Arts committee, thus possessing the power to

26 Osvald Sirén, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Pictures in the Jarves Collection Belonging to Yale University* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1916), x–xv, <https://archive.org/details/descriptivecatal00sir>

27 Charles Eliot Norton to James Jackson Jarves, 17 December 1859, Charles Eliot Norton Collection, Boston Athenaeum Special Collections, Folder 1.

confound Jarves's plans. As Perkins wrote to members of the committee, 'I do not like J., and scarcely know him, but I cannot bear to have Boston victimized & my friends with their generous intentions disappointed. If I could believe J's gallery the thing and his prospectus *bona fide* I should be among the first to rejoice'.²⁸ This letter was followed by a campaign of slander concerning the condition and authenticity of the paintings which ultimately decided the fate of Jarves's intended trove for Boston. Perkins whispered it abroad that Jarves had had to sell a few pictures — probably just to pay for shipping charges — and Norton was warned by an anonymous letter that 'horse dealing and picture dealing are in the same category [and I] cannot bear to have Boston victimized...'.²⁹ Jarves heard rumours of this vilification and fought back in his book *The Art-Idea*: 'Boston is a city of extremes. It grows the intensest snobs, the meanest cowardice, the thickest-skinned hypocrites, by the side of saintly virtues, intellectual vigor, general intelligence, and a devotion to the highest interest of humanity'.³⁰ Ironically, believing Boston to be the 'young Athens of America', T. A. Trollope assumed the collection would go 'unmutilated to Boston' for "the almighty dollar' has already ceased, it seems, to be almighty in Boston'.³¹

Proof that Jarves's unique vision for a religion of art was intended to temper his business-loving country, was his urge to display his paintings in a new kind of gallery, a modern surrounding where late Gothic and Renaissance masterpieces would comprise an exemplary, if not encyclopedic, set. In his original letter to Norton proposing the gallery, Jarves specified the need for proper conditions, for 'hanging, lights, and temperature' as well as for 'efficiency'.³² In his article 'On the Formation of Galleries in America', Jarves offered the following specifications: 'An edifice for a gallery or museum of art should be fire-proof, sufficiently isolated for light and effective ornamentation, and constructed so as to admit of indefinite extension. Its chief feature should be the suitable accommodation and exhibition of its contents'.³³

28 Edward Perkins to Charles Eliot Norton Collection, undated letter, Boston Athenaeum Special Collections, Folder 1.

29 Ibid.

30 Jarves, *The Art-Idea*, p. 381.

31 Jarves, *Letters Pertaining to a Collection*, p. 24.

32 Ibid., p. 13.

33 James Jackson Jarves, 'On the Formation of Galleries in America', *Atlantic Monthly*, 6 (July 1860), 106.

According to Jarves's friend and supporter, the architect Russell Sturgis, Jr., his treasures originally resided in 'the private oratory, or where, in a retired place, a room-corner was reserved for the reading-desk and for prayer'.³⁴ This vestigial religious purpose lent gravitas to these orphaned images once put on display in their new modern context. As Sturgis explained, 'Art could not become nor continue trivial when, in addition to the solemnity of its usual subjects, and to the character of their people strongly disposed toward it, the works to which the artist gave their best strength were of general, almost national concern'.³⁵ Sturgis found this added sanctity in particular in an altar piece by an unknown painter dated 1370, that showed the Madonna and child enthroned, attended by angels playing upon musical instruments. Sturgis envisioned that *The Deposition from the Cross* by Gentile da Fabriano, circa 1370–1450, a small altar-piece of tempera with gold background on wood, 'was as permanently fixed above its altar as Duccio's great work at Siena...'³⁶

While Jarves was unable to convince wary Bostonians to take his collection seriously, the works found their home in Yale's modern, well-lighted space, by the strangest of twists. As announced in the *New York Times* Monday, 6 January 1868, from the *Boston Advertiser*, Dec. 31: 'The entire collection, except three paintings, in all one hundred and nineteen, has passed into the custody and possession of Yale College, which will undoubtedly become, sooner or later, the absolute owner. They are hung in the fine arts gallery belonging to the college, a room seventy feet long by twenty-five broad and about thirty in height. The pictures completely fill it, and as the light is very favorable, they are seen to better advantage than they have ever been before in America'.³⁷ Jarves oversaw the hanging of the pictures himself, writing to Amey's governess, Miss Barber: 'I expect to sail about Christmas, as soon as the pictures are hung at Yale... I shall be glad even to get to the ocean to rest as I am about worn out, having done nothing for six months but work,

34 Russell Sturgis, Jr., *Manual of the Jarves Collection of Early Italian Pictures Deposited in the Gallery of the Yale School of Fine Arts* (New Haven: Yale College Press, 1868), p. 10, https://archive.org/details/gri_33125006446203

35 Ibid., p. 10.

36 Ibid., p. 11.

37 Anonymous, 'The Jarves Collection at Yale College', *The New York Times*, Monday 6 January 1868, p. 2.

work, without visiting a single place of amusement or my friends even. But I have got through at last'.³⁸

Yale's original art gallery was the Trumbull Gallery, built in 1832 to house a collection of history paintings by John Trumbull. Yale next secured a loan exhibition of old masters in 1858 under the auspices of Professor Daniel Coit Gilman. However, the collections soon outgrew it and a new building was completed through the generosity of Augustus Russell Street (1792–1866). Street Hall was begun in 1864 but was delayed due to the Civil War. According to the chapter on Yale University in the compendium *Universities and Their Sons*, it was 'the first serious recognition of the aesthetic element at Yale'.³⁹ Street Hall opened at last in 1866 and the 'Jarves collection' was deposited there in 1867. Through the efforts of Professor John F. Weir, Dean of the Yale School of the Fine Arts from 1869–1913, the Reverend Noah Porter, who became President in 1871, and Professor Edward Elbridge Salisbury, an arrangement was made with Jarves whereby he agreed to deposit his collection, then consisting of 119 pictures, at Yale for a period of three years. Luther Maynard Jones wrote to Professor Salisbury, June 26, 1867: 'Mr. Charles Eliot Norton in a recent letter expressed his regret at the chance of losing the collection from Harvard or Boston says, 'If Yale were to secure it, it would do more to make it a true University and the leading University in America than could be done in any other way by an equal expenditure of money.'"⁴⁰ In return for his deposit, the Yale Corporation lent Jarves twenty thousand dollars, the pictures being used as security, with the University reserving the right of buying the collection any time during the three-year interval for fifty thousand dollars. Professor Frank J. Mather, Jr. described this transaction in the *Yale Alumni Weekly* of May 1914, as 'one of the most irregular pieces of University finance on record and certainly one of the most brilliant'.⁴¹

Light was a key consideration in designing the building. According to the Yale President's Reports for 1868, P. B. Wight of New York, the architect of the building for the Yale School of Fine Arts that originally

38 The James Jackson Jarves Collection (MS 301), Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, Box 1, Folder 20.

39 Chamberlain, *Universities and their Sons*, p. 270.

40 The James Jackson Jarves Collection (MS 301), Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, Box 1, Folder 1.

41 'Little Known Masterpieces', *The Literary Digest*, 48.23 (6 June 1914), 1360–62.

displayed the Jarves Collection, explained that 'As the picture galleries were to be on the upper floor, their position was a matter of small importance, inasmuch as the light for them was to be received through skylights'. The architect continued, 'But the arrangements of the studios with reference to obtaining good light, was not so easy a matter'.⁴² As Yale professor Daniel Coit Gilman commented, 'Those who have seen the Jarves pictures in rooms which were poorly lighted, or which were too small to receive the entire number, express themselves delighted that those choice works of art have at last found a home where they can all be seen and satisfactorily examined; and they tell us that the collection has never appeared so well as in its new abode'.⁴³ Central to Yale's interest in the works was education, compelling administrators to seek illumination for student attendance after dark. Contemporary photographs reveal the installation of gaslight as early as the 1870's with upgrades in the 1880's, allowing students and visitors to view the Jarves masterpieces after dusk.

Jarves succeeded in bestowing upon Yale and America aesthetic and spiritual enlightenment from Italian treasures seen with modern illumination. Given that his gallery became the centrepiece of Yale's prestigious art school, and later its art history program, with liberal hours for public viewing, one could argue that Jarves's visionary project profoundly influenced not only Yale's curriculum but also American cultural history writ large. Jarves could not have foreseen the extent to which his idea mitigated his homeland's narrow mercantile pursuits and sterile rejection of sensuality. Although Italy lost over one hundred native treasures, the genius of her artists radically changed a continent. The literal light made possible by the new gallery allowed for the figurative light that entered the minds of American citizens who viewed the works, students and laypersons alike. This achievement was best summarized by the Yale motto 'Lux et Veritas', for 'Light and Truth'.

42 Yale President's Reports, 1868, pp. 33–36, Yale University Manuscripts and Archives.

43 Daniel Coit Gilman, 'The Jarves Collection in the in the Yale School of Fine Arts', *The New Englander and Yale Review*, 27.1 (1868), 176 (New Haven: Thomas J. Stafford, 1868).