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Masters in Art

A Series of Illustrated Monographs

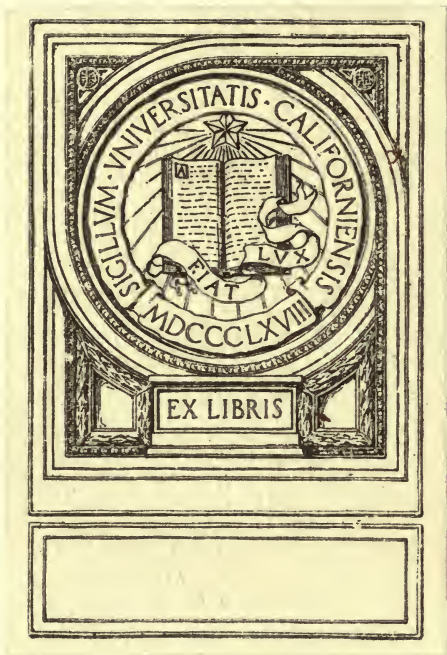
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REMBRANDT



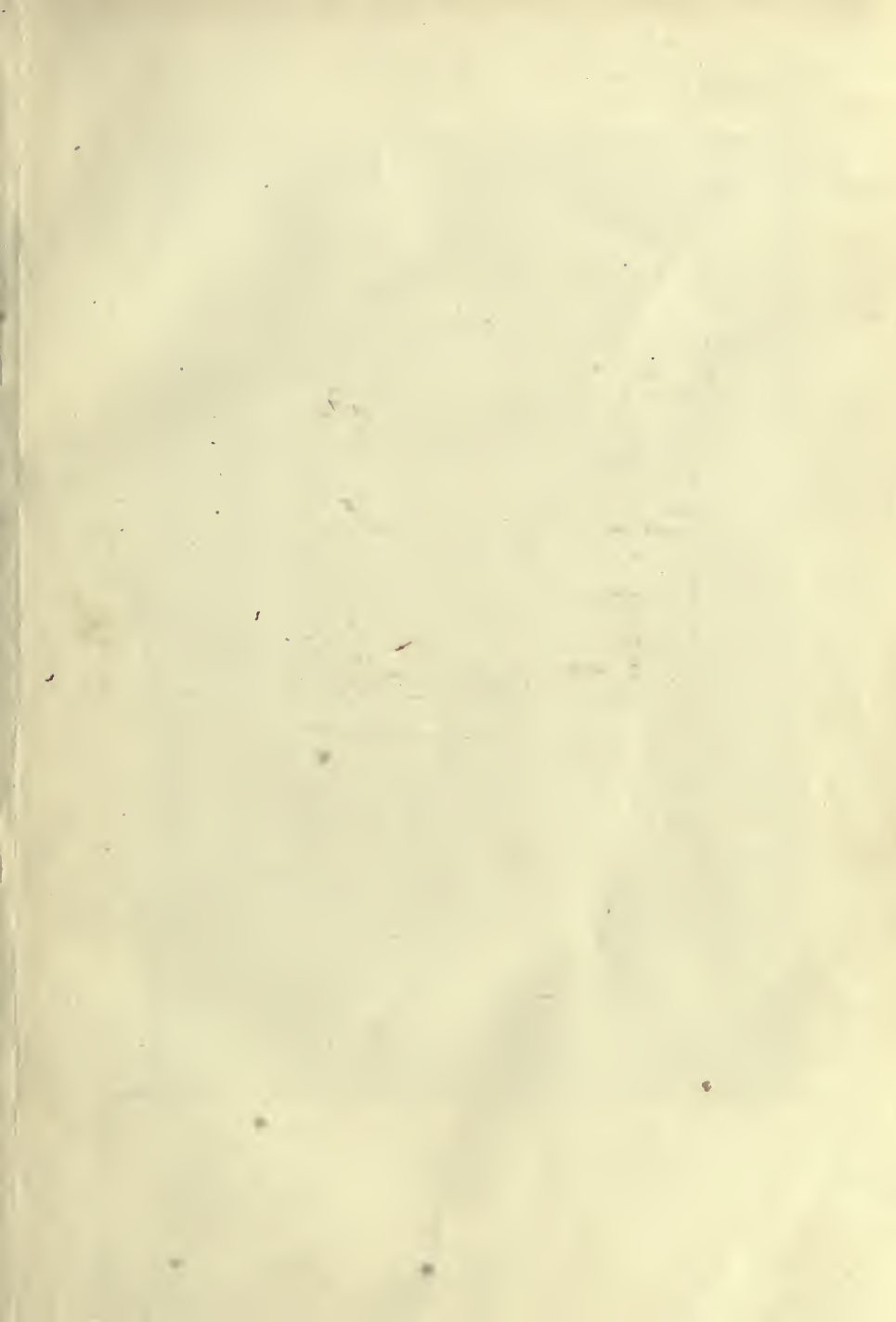
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MASTERS IN ART. PLATE V.
PHOTOGRAPH BY HANSTAEDEL.

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MASTERS IN ART. PLATE IX.
PHOTOGRAPH BY HANSTAEHEL

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MASTERS IN ART. PLATE X.
PHOTOGRAPH BY HANST/INUL

REMBRANDT
THE SYNDICS OF THE CLOTH GUILD
RIJKS MUSEUM, AMSTERDAM



PORTRAIT OF REMBRANDT BY HIMSELF

LOUVRE, PARIS

Rembrandt painted more than forty portraits of himself, in many aspects and various fantastical costumes. Although probably few of them can be described as accurate likenesses, it is clear that he was a strong man, of ordinary figure, with a thick nose, coarse but firm mouth framed with a stiff moustache and imperial, and dark, piercing eyes. The portrait here reproduced was painted in 1633, and shows him clad in a violet velvet mantle with a jewelled gold chain about his shoulders.

Rembrandt van Rijn

BORN 1606: DIED 1669
DUTCH SCHOOL

UNTIL within the last half-century the generally accepted story of Rembrandt's life was made up of a collection of fictitious statements, the falsity of which has been proved by the careful researches of M. Charles Vosmaer and his fellow-workers, of MM. Bredius, de Vries, Immerzeel, and others, and lastly of Dr. Wilhelm Bode, and M. Émile Michel, whose work upon Rembrandt, published in 1893, is now the standard authority on the subject.

But, although much concerning Rembrandt has been revealed, although "the cobwebs of myth with which, partly through malice, partly through ignorance, the master's image had been overwhelmed have been torn away," nevertheless, painstaking and seemingly exhaustive as the researches have been, much concerning the life of the greatest of Dutch painters still remains shrouded in darkness and mystery.

WALTER ARMSTRONG

"FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW," 1894

THE doubts in connection with Rembrandt begin with the date of his birth. Three different years, 1606, 1607, and 1608, have been given. M. Michel, following Dr. Bredius, says he was born at Leyden on July 15, 1606, which makes him sixty-three at his death, in 1669. He was the fifth of six children born to the miller, Harmen van Rijn (Harmen of the Rhine) by his wife, Neeltjen Willemsdochter van Zuitbroeck. Humble as they were in station, his parents sent him to the Latin school in order that, as Orlers, the best authority for his early years, puts it, "he might in the fulness of time be able to serve his native city and the Republic with his knowledge." Such studies were not to the boy's mind, however, and Harmen soon perceived that his son's inclination towards art would have to be indulged. He was placed with Jakob van Swanenburch, whom he quitted three years later to study under Lastman at Amsterdam. It was during the first short stay in the city whose chief ornament he was afterwards to become, that he underwent the influence of Elsheimer, who had been Lastman's master in Rome, and of Lievens, who was his fellow-pupil in Lastman's studio. But Rembrandt only stayed six months in Amsterdam. He returned to Leyden in 1624, "determined," says Orlers, "to study and practise painting alone, in his own fashion." He remained six years in his native town, working much from the members of his own family and from himself, carrying out those elaborately staged compositions which mark his first period as a painter, and taking the first steps as an etcher. . . .

M. Michel in his "Life of Rembrandt" paints a graphic picture of Amsterdam in 1631, of her growing trade and prosperity, and of the transformation, not only in the city itself, but in the spirit of the inhabitants, which followed the long struggle with

Spain. The revival of civil life had been followed by a great increase in the attention given to the arts. The institutions fostered by the war had encouraged painters, and now, with returning prosperity, other institutions, and especially those connected with charity, came forward to commission pictures. For a long time Amsterdam was the chief place to profit by the return of peace. Her position, at once well sheltered and easily accessible both from the interior and the sea, has often been likened to that of Venice, but perhaps a comparison would be better with Constantinople. Her position at the head of the then navigable Zuyder Zee, and at a point where all the canals of Holland converged from the south, was very similar to that of the Eastern capital on the Sea of Marmora. Within a century of William the Silent's assassination in the palace at Delft, Amsterdam had practically grown into the town we all knew until the other day. Like several other Dutch cities, she has now begun to put on suburbs at an alarming rate, but in 1630 she was already at the knees of that rampart over which she only began to swarm some twenty years ago.

It was in this Amsterdam that Rembrandt established himself in 1630; here, in 1632, that he painted his first corporation picture, the "Lesson in Anatomy;" and here, in 1634, that he married his wife, Saskia van Uylenborch, much of whose short married life must have been spent in sitting to her husband. M. Michel enumerates some eighteen portraits of her, of one kind or another, not counting compositions in which she may have sat for single figures. Some have recognized her features in an even greater number of cases. Saskia died in 1642, the year of "The Night Watch." Vosmaer, through a misapprehension by his friend, Dr. Schekema, of an entry in a parish book, gave a second wife to Rembrandt, one Catharina van Wyck, whom he was supposed to have married in 1665. It is now believed that Saskia's only successor was Hendrickje Stoffels, whose connection with the master began about 1650 and lasted till her death, which is supposed to have occurred about 1662. The most intricate and obscure points in Rembrandt's life are those connected with Saskia's disposition of her property. She made a will in favor of her son Titus, with a contingent remainder for the benefit of her sister Hiskia, but as the will also contained a stipulation that Rembrandt should not be legally bound to carry out its provisions, "because she had confidence that he would behave in the matter in strict obedience to his conscience," it is difficult to understand exactly how it came to precipitate his ruin. However this may be, the fact remains that between 1654 and 1658 the painter was stripped of all the property he had accumulated in the historic house in the Breestraat, and that for the rest of his life he was a sort of nomad, shifting his lodgings with uncomfortable frequency, carrying with him nothing but the materials of his art and some little wreckage from his collections, which seem to have been saved we know not how. During all this period, except the last few years, he had for legal *tuteurs* Hendrickje, and his son Titus, who made shift to manage his affairs while he confined his thoughts to art. How he passed the melancholy years which intervened between their deaths and his own we can only conjecture. . . .

Rembrandt's son Titus died in 1668, and the old painter was left with two children (a daughter and a granddaughter) to form his only links with the past. His own death took place about thirteen months later. So far no allusion to it has been found in any contemporary document, except the death-register of the Werter-Kerk of Amsterdam, in which this entry occurs: "Tuesday, October 8th, 1669; Rembrandt van Rijn, painter, on the Roozegrift, opposite the Doolhof. Leaves two children."

The Art of Rembrandt

EUGÈNE FROMENTIN has given us, in his "Maîtres d'Autrefois," the most illuminating, the most penetrating, criticism upon Rembrandt that has yet appeared — a key criticism, which renders many confusing and diverse opinions reconcilable. Unfortunately the length of his masterly essay makes it impossible to reproduce it here in its entirety, but in the following synopsis (though for the sake of condensation we have been obliged to depart from the logical order of the original) we shall use Fromentin's own expressions wherever possible.

The starting-point or text of the theory is, that Rembrandt's was a dual nature, that he was two men in one, — the first a trained, facile, and workmanlike Dutch painter of his own time, above all a realist; the second a visionary, a dreamer, an idealist whose ideal was *light*.

The first of these Rembrandts, — Rembrandt the realist, the accomplished technician, — whom Fromentin has called the "exterior man," was possessed of a clear mind, a vigorous hand, and infallible logic; indeed in every quality the very opposite of the romantic genius to whom the admiration of the world has been almost entirely given. And assuredly, in his way, this "exterior" Rembrandt is no inferior master. His manner of seeing is thoroughly healthy, his way of painting edifying from the simplicity of the means employed, attesting that he wished above all things to make his work comprehensible and veracious. His palette is limpid, without cloudiness, tinged with the true colors of the daylight. His drawing makes you forget it, but it forgets nothing. He expresses and characterizes, with their true individualities, features, glances, attitudes and gestures, the normal habits and the accidents of life, — he is, in a word, admirably lifelike. His execution has the propriety, the breadth, the high bearing, the firm tissue, the force and conciseness which characterize painters who are masters of their craft. As the work of this clear-seeing, workmanlike realist, the "exterior" Rembrandt, we may instance the portrait of "Burgomaster Six" in the Six Gallery at Amsterdam, "The Gilder" in our own country, and the "Portrait of Elizabeth Bas" reproduced in this issue (though this example is not so apt an instance as the other pictures named). In these portraits there is no poetry, no idealism, and yet they are so thorough in workmanship, so truly seen and rightly rendered, that they deservedly rank among the world's masterpieces.

So much for the "exterior" Rembrandt. Let us now turn to the other, — Rembrandt the idealist, the dreamer. Here is a painter far more subtle, more difficult to characterize. Perhaps we shall more clearly see what he was if we approach him through an example of his work, such as, for instance, the "Christ at Emmaus" (Plate VIII).

This little picture, insignificant in appearance, of no great composition, subdued in color, almost awkward in execution, would alone be sufficient to establish the greatness of a painter. Not to speak of the disciple who clasps his hands in worship, nor of the other, who, astounded, his gaze fixed upon the face of Christ, is plainly uttering an exclamation of amazement, one might only remember in this marvellous work the figure of the Christ, and it would be enough. What painter has not given us his conception of Christ? From Leonardo, Raphael, and Titian, to Van Dyck, Holbein, Rubens, and Van Eyck, how have they not deified, humanized, and transfigured him, told the story of his passion and of his death, related the events of his earthly life, and conceived the glories of his apotheosis? But has he ever been imagined like this? In pilgrim's garb; pale, emaciated; breaking bread as on the evening of the Last Supper; the traces of torture still on the blackened lips; the great, dark, gentle eyes widely opened and raised

towards heaven; the halo, a sort of phosphorescent light, enveloping him in an indefinable glory; and on his face the inexplicable look of a living, breathing human being, who has passed through death! The bearing so impossible to describe, and assuredly impossible to copy, the intense feeling of the face, where the features are undefined and where the expression is given by the movement of the lips and by the look, — these things, — inspired one knows not whence and produced one knows not how, are all priceless. No art recalls them, no one before Rembrandt, no one after him, has expressed them.

And if, seeking to discover the means by which such marvels are produced, we look into the picture for an explanation, do we find it by saying, as so many critics have contented themselves with saying, that Rembrandt was a consummate master of *chiaroscuro*? Not if we mean by *chiaroscuro* the play and opposition of light and shadow, in which dark waves, shaded, deepened, thickened, revolve around bright centres which are thereby made to appear more distinct and radiant, and yet in which the darkness is transparent, the half-darkness easy to pierce, and even the strongest colors have a sort of penetrability which prevents their being black. This form of expression was by no means either the invention or the exclusive quality of Rembrandt. All the great Italians, notably Leonardo and Titian, have used it; nay, Rembrandt in his other self — the realist, the exterior man — used it consummately. Indeed it was the native and necessary form in which Rembrandt, in either of his personalities, always expressed his ideas. Surely this does not explain the mystery.

But let us take a step further: let us admit (and it is undeniably true) that this idealist, this dreaming Rembrandt, was *more* than a mere master of *chiaroscuro*, — that he was the greatest master of it that has ever lived, and that because it was so intimately adapted to his genius, he developed it into a means of expression of which it had never before nor has it since been capable. Admit that under his hand, misty, veiled, discreet, it lends a charm to half-hidden things, invites curiosity, adds an attraction to moral beauty, and finally, partakes of sentiment, of emotion, of the uncertain, the indefinite, of the dream and of the ideal, — in a word, gives a double life, the life it has by nature and that which comes to it through communicated emotion. And yet, admitting all this (and though it is clear that in thus broadening the meaning of the word “*chiaroscuro*” we are nearer and nearer to the secret), we have not solved the mystery, nor quite lifted the veil which hides the supreme greatness of Rembrandt the dreamer, the idealist, the painter of the “Christ at Emmaus.”

Suppose, then, that in despair of classifying him as merely a master of *chiaroscuro*, in despair of stretching the word to make it contain the whole truth about him, in despair of finding a ready-made term in the vocabulary, we should invent one, and call him a “*luminarist*,” coining this barbarous word to signify a man who would *conceive light outside of recognized laws*, who would attach to it an extraordinary meaning, who would make great sacrifices to it. If such is its signification, Rembrandt is at once defined and judged; for it expresses an idea, a rare eulogium, and a criticism. The whole career of Rembrandt the dreamer turns round this troublesome objective point, — to paint only by the help of light, to draw only with light. He has proved that light exists in itself, independent of exterior form and of coloring; and that it can, by the force and variety of its usage, the power of its effects, the number, the depth and the subtlety of the ideas which it may be made to express, become the principle of a new art. Life he perceives in a dream, as an accent of another world, which renders real life almost cold and makes it seem pale; and his ideal, as in a dream, pursued with closed eyes, is light, — the nimbus around objects, phosphorescence on a black ground. It is fugitive, uncertain, formed of imperceptible lineaments, all ready to disappear before they are fixed, ephemeral, and dazzling. To arrest the vision, place it upon canvas, give it form and

relief, preserve its fragile texture, give it brilliancy, and let the result be a strong, masculine, and substantial painting, as real as any other, which would resist contact with Rubens, Titian, Veronese, Giorgione, Van Dyck,—this is what Rembrandt the “luminarist” attempted. Did he accomplish it? The judgment of the world is there to say. When this dreamer of light used it *appropriately*, when he used it to express what no other painter in the world has expressed, when, in a word, he accosts with his dark lantern the world of the marvellous, of conscience, the ideal, *then* he has no peer, because he has no equal in the art of showing the invisible. All the differing judgments that have been pronounced upon his works—beautiful, defective, doubtful, incontestable—can be brought back to this one simple question: Was the occasion one for making light an exclusive condition? Did the subject require it, did it allow it, or exclude it? In the first case the work results from the *spirit* of the work: infallibly it must be admirable. In the second the result is uncertain; and almost invariably the work is disputable or a poor success. But why was it that Rembrandt the pure idealist, the dreamer of the invisible, the enamored of light, so seldom attained to this supreme achievement? Perhaps we may discover.

To recur to the little picture which has served us as a point of departure for inquiry into his nature, we cannot blind ourselves to the fact that, in spite of its wonderful effects, it is technically in every way inferior to the portrait of Elizabeth Bas. It is not well drawn, it is colorless, in its physical appearance the canvas is mean and insignificant, the workmanship is timid and almost fumbling; indeed in its very essential inspiration, the handling of its light, it is not unimpeachable, for even light in the hand of this dispenser of it was no marvellously submissive and docile instrument of which he was sure. It possessed him, governed him, conducted him to the impossible, inspired him sometimes to the point of sublimity, and sometimes betrayed him.

How, then, are we to reconcile the work of these two men—the exterior man, the master of technique, who can be so clear, with this idealist, this dreamer of dreams, whose visions are so often haltingly expressed?

The key to the mystery lies in the diversity of the two natures—nay, in their adversity! Of almost equal force, but in objects opposite, they clog, hamper, and embarrass each other. Rembrandt was not a man whom tension fortifies, to whom it gives balance. The visionary bends himself uneasily to the expression of natural truth, but is inimitable when the obligation of veracity does not hamper his hand; the technician is a workman who can be magnificent when the visionary does not trouble and distract him. One perfection he rarely shows because of the difficulty of maintaining himself in this ideal state, of painting an entire picture in it; because he could rarely escape the rising in him of the realist to trouble the dreamer. To the other he as rarely attains, because the idealist so constantly intervened to disturb the calm workman.

The whole history of Rembrandt's life, then, may be expressed as a struggle for the reconciliation of his two natures, a struggle of which the painter himself was, perhaps, unconscious. All his works bear testimony to the difficulty he had in finding a subject of such mixed character that both sides of his talent might be manifested together without injury to each other. To Fromentin the principal interest of “The Night Watch” lies in the fact that it is to him a clear evidence of struggle,—a battle-ground which marks the progress of the reconciliation, a splendid failure which shows us the painter in a day of great ambiguity, when neither his thought was free nor his hand healthy.

Did he ever succeed in effecting the reconciliation, in finding the subject? If never completely, surely most nearly in “The Syndics.” A group of burghers and merchants, but notable men, assembled in their own house, before a table with an open register upon it, surprised in full council. No one of them is posing, they are all living.

Occupied without acting, they speak without moving their lips. A warm atmosphere, increased tenfold in value, envelops the whole with rich, grave half-tints. The painting and relief of the linens, the faces, and the hands is extraordinary, and the extreme vivacity of the light is as delicately observed as if Nature herself had given its measure and quality. The picture is at once very real and very imaginative, both copied and conceived, prudently managed and magnificently painted. In this canvas all Rembrandt's efforts have borne fruit; not one of his researches has been in vain. Here he meant to treat living nature as he treated fictions, by mingling the ideal and the true, and here he succeeded. The two men who had long divided the forces of his mind joined hands in this hour of success.

Taken thus, as a dual nature, Rembrandt is wholly explained,—his life, his work, his leanings, his conceptions, his poetry, his methods, his way of working, even to the color of his paintings, which is only a bold and studied spiritualization of the material elements of his art.

JOHN C. VAN DYKE

"THE DIAL," VOL. 16

REMBRANDT was a remarkable man in the annals of art, a superb etcher and a supreme painter, whose like it is not probable we shall see again. Primarily he was a portrait-painter. The single figure was more consonant with his art-methods than the composed group. This was probably due to several causes. He was no lover of the traditional or academic, and never followed school formulæ in composition to any extent. His composition was his own, and it was sometimes good and sometimes bad. He had not a particle of what has been called "style," had no care for line as line, and was uniquely individual in the picturesque. With peculiar methods that became dominant in his art and were opposed to classic composition, he often distorted lights and shadows, and built up certain portions of a composition by dragging down other portions; and this, while a forceful method of procedure with the single figure, as his portraits attest, was not perhaps the best method of handling composed groups, as a number of his large figure-pieces attest. His mastery of light-and-shade rather militated against his composition, just as it bleached and often falsified his color. Fine in many instances as a colorist, he was prone to destroy the purity and value of tones by subordination; and, positive as he was in handling, he at times lapsed into heaviness and ineffectual kneading.

Mentally he was a man keen to observe, assimilate, and synthesize. His conception was localized with his own people and time (he never built up the imaginary or followed Italy), and yet into types taken from the streets and shops of Amsterdam he infused the very largest humanity through his inherent sympathy with man. Dramatic, even tragic, he was at times, and yet showed it less in vehement action than in passionate expression. He had a way of striking universal truths through the human face, a turned head, bent body, or outstretched hand, that was powerful in the extreme. His people have great dignity and character; and we are made to feel that they are types of the Dutch race—people of substantial physique, slow in thought and impulse, yet capable of feeling, comprehending, enjoying, suffering. His landscapes, again, are a synthesis of all Dutch landscape, a grouping of the great truths of light, space, and air. Whatever he turned his mind upon was treated with that breadth of view that overlooks the little and grasps the great.

He painted many subjects, dating from 1627 to the time of his death, and at first was a little sharp in detail and cold in coloring. After 1654 he grew much broader in handling and warmer in coloring, tending, toward the end of his life, to rather hot tones. His domestic troubles served only to heighten and deepen his art, and perhaps his best

canvases were painted under stress of circumstances and in sadness of heart. His life is another proof, if needed, that the greatest truths and beauties are to be seen only through tears. Too bad for the man! But the world—the same ungrateful, selfish world that has always lighted its torch at the funeral pyres of genius—is the gainer.

WALTER ARMSTRONG

"MAGAZINE OF ART," VOL. 23

MORE, perhaps, than in the case of any other first-rate artist do we recognize the work of Rembrandt by the personality behind it. Superb though his technique is, it does not lend itself readily to those tests we are now taught to consider scientific. He varied his manner in the most curious and unusual way. In a single year you will find pictures painted with the luminous thinness of Van Eyck, and others in which the loaded brush is used with extraordinary vigor and bravura. . . . Once Rembrandt was "through" with his tentative period—which in his case lasted a very short time—he played with his manners, fusing this picture into a polished skin, loading the paint onto that as if he wished to design in ridge and furrow; winning his light to-day from within, catching it to-morrow on the surface of his paint; alternately diffusing the interest over his canvas and concentrating it, even with violence, on a single point. The one thing in which he never varies is loyalty to his own gift. From first to last he *paints*; he understands that what he has to say must be said *in* and not *through* paint; that the emotions and ideas for him are those which can be expressed in the material in which he deals. Within these limits his variety is so absolute that instances of mere repetition are scarcely to be found in the whole range of his work. Each conception suggested its own treatment; and it is not until we reach the very end of his career, when at last his brain is stiffening with age, that evolution ceases, and methods and types begin to lose their power of variation. To the superficial observer—may he forgive me!—all this may seem the reverse of the truth, and he may assert, with some plausibility, that Rembrandts are more like each other than the works of any one else. But this impression, which is, perhaps, the one carried away by most visitors to a picture gallery, results naturally from the fact that his productions stand so decisively apart from the common stream of art. It is not that he repeats himself, but that he repeats no one else. His individuality is so imperious, self-sufficing, and all-transforming, that its presence blinds us to the infinite variety of its manifestations, and we have to wait till the dazzle is over before we can recognize how changeful he is.

ÉMILE MICHEL

"REMBRANDT: HIS LIFE, WORK, AND TIME"

POSTERITY has taken upon itself to avenge the oblivion into which Rembrandt fell. And yet we would be wrong to bear too hardly upon his contemporaries for their want of appreciation. Rembrandt's art was too original, too diametrically opposed to received ideas, for things to be otherwise. The average man could not understand it, and the touch of moroseness in the artist's self-contained personality was not calculated to attract his affection. He scandalized his fellow-townsmen by some of his proceedings, and in none did he lay himself out to please them. Always in extremes, his temperament offers many contradictions. From one point of view he was a dreamer, incapable of managing his affairs, or even of arranging his daily life. On the other hand, in all that touched his work he showed a tenacity and a sense of system which are rare even with the best-regulated artists. He created his own methods of study from the very foundation. Simple in his habits and of an extreme frugality, he yet shrank from no expenditure when it was a case of satisfying an artist's caprice. Good-humored, kindly, and ready to do a service as he was, he nevertheless lived apart, in a solitude

which had something forbidding about it. He took an interest in all things, and yet, although his movements were perfectly free, he never left his native country. Gifted with a fine imagination, he yet clung to the skirts of nature; eager for every novelty, it was yet in the humblest and most beaten tracks of life that he sought and found the subjects he dressed in unexpected poetry. His sense of beauty was perfect, and he spares us no extreme of ugliness. On a single canvas he will mix up the highest aspirations with the commonest trivialities, the most absolute want of taste with a refinement of delicacy almost excessive.

From the extreme precision and finish of the work of his youth to the breadth and largeness of that of his maturity was a steady march. In his first productions — his studies, of course, excepted — his touch is fused, delicate, and subtle; in his later works it is broader, freer, more decisive; and it ends with the somewhat forbidding abruptness of his old age. In this connection some of his own remarks are significant — “Hang these pictures in a very strong light,” he says, in his youth, when speaking of his “Passion” series. As age came upon him he kept the critics more at arm’s length. “The smell of paint is not good for the health,” we hear him saying to some one who came too close to his easel. At the same time, as a broader treatment led him to enlarge his figures, it also caused him to diminish their number, for he felt that to multiply the points of interest, as he used to do, was hurtful to the unity of the final result. His aim was to deepen and clarify the effects. Among all possible movements and gestures he sought for those which best agreed with the character of his subject, and established the closest and most definite relations between the various figures. So too, in his portraits, he attached gradually less and less importance to the costume and to various colors. He suppressed strong contrasts, and so led the eye more surely to the true centre of interest, the head. He recognized that all the features are not of equal moment. He insists upon those which give individuality to a countenance, — upon the mouth, and, still more, upon the eyes, which he endows with a singular vivacity. As for color, after having first experimented with a sort of monochrome made up of reddish tones, and afterwards with a richer and more varied palette, he came to see that harmony, as he understood it, was to be obtained by the utmost possible enforcement of certain dominant tones — golden and tawny browns, and especially reds — and by their juxtaposition to broken tints of iron-gray and neutral brown. His chiaroscuro, too, was modified as his powers grew. The sharp transitions of his early work disappeared to make way for the quieter contrasts with which he obtained effects quite as powerful and more subtle and various.

His originality of interpretation was always controlled by study of nature. Nature made him what he was, and to her he turned unceasingly. One of his principles was that “Nature alone should be followed.” Tradition had little power over him, and yet he never deliberately threw off its yoke. On the contrary he was always keen to know what men had done before his time, and to profit by their teaching. But when a subject had to be treated he did not trouble himself too much about what others had said. He thought about it for himself; he entered into it; he, as it were, lived it over again, and then set himself to reproduce it in his own way, giving special force to those aspects which had stirred his own emotions.

Rembrandt belongs to the breed of artists which can have no posterity. His place is with the Michelangelos, the Shakespeares, the Beethovens. An artistic Prometheus, he stole the celestial fire, and with it put life into what was inert, and expressed the immaterial and evasive sides of nature in his breathing forms. — FROM THE FRENCH BY FLORENCE SIMMONDS.

The Dutch School of Painting

1600 TO 1700

IN its beginning Dutch painting was, in both method and technique, closely allied to that of Flanders as practised under the Van Eycks, and it was not until the early part of the seventeenth century that art in Holland showed decided originality and force, and that, simultaneously with the birth of political freedom in the country, a school of painting came into being which rapidly rose to eminence and became justly famous.

Setting aside the Italian methods followed by the Flemish, the characteristics of the Dutch school were distinctly individual and national. Domestic scenes, *genre* pictures, and portraiture predominated; and the Dutch, always a plain, matter-of-fact race, no idealists, but fond of home and of peaceful living, told in their art the story of the lives of their countrymen with a fidelity and truth to nature that is always characteristic, and often realistic to a fault. In portraiture they were especially strong. Among their earliest painters in this branch we find the name of Michael Janse Mierevelt (1567-1641), and among the greatest and most celebrated is that of Franz Hals (1584-1666), whose drawing, modelling, color, and technique entitle him to a place in the front rank of portraitists. A little later came Rembrandt Harmens van Rijn (1606-1669), the greatest painter of the Dutch school, and also famous as an etcher. His influence upon the art of his country was immense. Among his pupils were Ferdinand Bol (1611-1680), Govaert Flinck (1615-1660), Nicolaas Maes (1632-1693) and many others. A painter who stands somewhat apart from the followers of either Hals or Rembrandt is Bartholomew van der Helst (1612-1670), whose numerous works are principally portraits and large groups.

At this same period a great number of painters in Holland were engaged in producing *genre* pictures — works finished with the utmost precision and delicacy of touch, and on so small a scale that these artists are known as the "Dutch Little Masters." The best painter among them was perhaps Gerard Terburg, or Terborch, (1617-1681), whose works are interiors, "conversation pieces," etc., marked by their delicate but firm technique, skilful management of light and shade, and by refinement and dignity. Gerard Dou (1613-1675), a pupil of Rembrandt, is one of the best known of the Dutch *genre* painters. His work is full of elaborately painted detail, and represents, for the most part, scenes in the middle and lower classes of Dutch life. Gabriel Metsu (1630-1667), Caspar Netscher (1639-1684), Franz van Mieris (1635-1681), Godefried Schalken (1643-1706), were all painters of interiors, market, street, or kitchen scenes. Adrian van Ostade (1610-1685) represented peasant life, and Jan Steen (1625?-1679) depicted Dutch merrymakings, drunken scenes, etc., with power and skill, but with small refinement. Pieter de Hooghe, or Hooch, (1632?-1681) is celebrated as a painter of sunlight and of out-of-door effects as seen through an open window or door.

The Dutch artists were among the first to give a distinctive character to landscape painting, and many of them devoted themselves to this branch. Although as a rule somewhat subdued and monotonous in color, their pictures often excelled in light and in aerial perspective and atmospheric effects. Jan van Goyen (1596-1656), whose works are mostly depictions of Dutch bays, canals, and rivers, was one of the earliest landscapists of the seventeenth century; while one of the most celebrated was Jakob van Ruisdael (1625?-1682). His pictures are of wild mountainous country, abounding in rushing streams, waterfalls and woods, with gray skies and dark shadows. Meindert Hobbema (1638-1709), whose work met with more appreciation in England than in

his own country, was a painter of wood-scenes, village streets, meadows, mills, etc. His pictures are full of sunshine, and show a close study of nature. Philip Wouwerman (1619-1668), who painted horses, cavalry skirmishes, and riding-parties, Aelbert Cuyp (1620-1691), a painter of landscape with cattle, Paul Potter (1625-1654), who achieved his reputation by his famous picture of "The Young Bull," now in the Museum of The Hague, and Adrian van der Velde (1635-1672), who also introduced cattle into his pictures, were all eminent as Dutch landscapists.

Willem van der Velde the Younger (1633-1707) and Ludolf Backhuysen (1631-1708) were the most noted among the seventeenth-century marine painters of Holland; and of the still-life, flower, and fruit painters who became celebrated in their own day, were Jan David van Heem (1603-1684), Jan van Huysam (1682-1749), Willem van Aelst (1620-1679), Willem Kalf (1620-1693) and others.

With the seventeenth century the glory of the Dutch school of painting passed, and was followed in the eighteenth by a period of decadence, unbroken until our own time, when a revival has taken place, and modern Dutch art, represented by such painters as Israëls, the brothers Maris, Mesdag, and Mauve, ably holds its own among contemporary schools of painting.

The Works of Rembrandt

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PLATES

"MAN WITH A FUR CAP"

THE HERMITAGE: ST. PETERSBURG

THIS portrait of a man, with his fantastic high cap, fur tippet, red robe, and gold-headed stick was painted in 1637, and was formerly believed to represent John III. Sobieski, King of Poland. It is probably, however, a fancy study; possibly, as has been suggested by M. Mantz and others, Rembrandt himself was the original.

"THE ANATOMY LESSON"

GALLERY OF THE HAGUE

"THE Anatomy Lesson," the first of Rembrandt's great portrait subjects, was painted in 1632 at the request of the celebrated anatomist, Nicolaas Pieterszoon Tulp, for the Guild of Surgeons. In the picture Professor Tulp is seen standing behind an operating-table upon which is placed the corpse. Forceps in hand, he lifts the tendons of the partly dissected arm, while around him press his colleagues, eager to watch and to listen. It is a marvellous picture for a young man of twenty-six, and is generally accepted as a milestone in the career of the painter, and as marking a new departure.

"It is Rembrandt's triumph," says Frederick Wedmore, "that over all this terrible reality of the dead, the reality of the living is victorious; and our final impression of his picture is not of the stunted corpse, but of the activity of vigor and intellect in the lecturing surgeon and pressing crowd."

Malcolm Bell has written: "The enthusiasm aroused by 'The Anatomy Lesson,' when it was finished and hung in its predestined place in the little dissecting-room of the Guild of Surgeons, was immediate and immense. Commissions flowed in upon the artist faster than he could execute them, so that those who wished to be immortalized by him had often to wait their turn for months together, while all the wealth and fashion of the city flocked to the far-off studio in the outskirts, the more fortunate to give their sittings, the later comers to put down their names in anticipation of the future

leisure. From the beginning, too, pupils came clamoring to his doors, eager to pay down their hundred florins a year, as Sandrart says they did, and work with and for the lion of the day."

"PORTRAIT OF A LADY"

LIECHTENSTEIN GALLERY: VIENNA

OF the portraits painted by Rembrandt in 1636, two are in the Liechtenstein Gallery, Vienna. One of these depicts a young man in officer's costume, the other represents his wife. It is this latter picture which is here reproduced. The lady is richly dressed in brown, with a gold-embroidered stomacher. On her chestnut hair rests a little circle of pearls to which a long blue feather is attached. Pearls are in her ears and around her neck and wrist.

"Few of Rembrandt's works," writes Dr. Bode, "even those painted during his best period, represent the charm of woman so alluringly as this portrait of a lady, whose radiantly fair complexion shines out from its framework of luxuriant hair, and is offset by a rich and superbly painted costume. Few of his portraits are so striking in their personality, and are at the same time so essentially feminine. In this picture Rembrandt shows himself the peer of Rubens as a painter of voluptuous beauty."

"PORTRAIT OF SASKIA"

CASSEL GALLERY

THIS portrait of Saskia van Uylenborch was probably painted in 1634, shortly before her marriage to Rembrandt, which took place in that year. Seen in profile and standing, she is richly dressed, and is adorned with a profusion of pearls and precious stones. Her broad hat of red velvet is trimmed with a long white feather; and in one hand she holds a sprig of rosemary, an emblem of betrothal at that time in Holland.

In describing the picture Vosmaer says: "The figure is well defined against a dark-brown background. The face is entirely in light, almost without shadows, but lifelike and fresh in color, while the rest of the figure is in half-shadow. The whole portrait is finished with extreme care, but lacks freedom in the treatment; the handling being precise and without that quality of suggestiveness which distinguishes so much of Rembrandt's work."

"SORTIE OF THE CIVIC GUARD"

RYKS MUSEUM: AMSTERDAM

AMONG the Guilds or Corporations prominent in the history of Holland, the military companies played an important part. Their members were drawn from the principal families of each city, and it was upon them that the civic authorities depended for the maintenance of public order. It was customary to perpetuate the honors of these Guilds in portraits paid for by subscription on the part of each member desirous of being depicted, and presented by them to the Corporation to hang in the halls of the Doelens or places of assembly. Such a picture Rembrandt was asked to paint for Captain Frans Banning Cocq and his company of musketeers.

Erroneously called "The Night Watch," — a name given it by French writers at the end of the eighteenth century, — it is not a night scene, as its darkened condition, caused by time, thick coatings of varnish, and fumes from peat-fires and tobacco smoke seemed to indicate, but on the contrary, as a recent cleaning and restoration has proved, was painted in full sunlight. It has even been asserted that the exact position of the sun can be ascertained from the shadow cast by Banning Cocq's hand on the tunic of his lieutenant.

The incident represented is a call to arms of the Civic Guard. The company is issuing from its guild house; the captain, dressed in black and wearing a red scarf, gives his orders to the lieutenant, who, clad in yellow, with a white scarf about his waist, and

wearing a yellow hat adorned with a white feather, walks at his side—the two men preceding the rest of the group.

The canvas measures eleven by fourteen feet, but as originally painted in 1642 was considerably larger. The mutilation which it has undergone took place in 1715, when the picture was removed from the Hall of the Musketeers' Doelen to the Town Hall of Amsterdam; and in order to suit it to the dimensions of the place assigned to it, part of the drum to the left, and two figures to the right, of the canvas were cut off. A contemporary copy of the work by Gerrit Lundens, now in the National Gallery, London, shows this to have been the case.

By its originality of treatment "The Night Watch" stands alone in the history of corporation pictures. "It was destined to deal a fatal blow to Rembrandt's reputation," writes M. Michel, "and to sensibly diminish his *clientèle*. . . . To begin with, his treatment of light was disconcerting in the extreme to the average Dutch mind—a mind pre-eminently sober and practical, which insisted on clarity and precision in all things. Secondly, those more immediately concerned in the matter naturally resented so audacious a divergence from traditional ideas. Relying on the orthodox precedents, each had paid for a good likeness of himself, and a good place on the canvas. But the painter boldly ignored the terms of the tacit contract. The two officers prominent in the centre of the composition had, of course, nothing to complain of, but the rank and file, with the exception of some four or five members, had come off very badly. Faces in deep shadow relieved by stray gleams of light, others scarcely visible, and others again so faintly rendered as to be barely recognizable, were not at all to their taste. Disregarding established conditions of these portrait groups, the painter had sacrificed their personalities to æsthetic considerations. His first care had been to compose a picture. . . . After such a blow to their vanity the civic guards bestowed their patronage elsewhere, and Rembrandt's commissions fell off from this time forward."

"PORTRAIT OF ÉLÉAZAR SWALMIUS"

ANTWERP MUSEUM

"**E**SPECIALLY strong and effective," writes Dr. Bode, "is the portrait of Éléazar Swalmius, a clergyman of Amsterdam. This venerable personage, of about sixty years of age and of imposing presence, is seated in a low arm-chair, and regards the spectator with a benevolent expression, accompanying the words which he seems to have just uttered with a characteristic gesture of the hand." The portrait is dated 1637, and in the catalogue of the gallery is called "Portrait of a Burgomaster."

"PORTRAIT OF ELIZABETH BAS"

RYKS MUSEUM: AMSTERDAM

"**E**XQUISITE as is the technique in the portrait of Elizabeth Bas," writes M. Michel, "it is altogether lost sight of in the profound impression produced by the creation as a whole. By far the most remarkable portrait painted by Rembrandt at this period (1643-1646), it fairly claims to rank among his great masterpieces. Elizabeth Bas, widow of the Admiral J. Hendrick Swartenhout, belonged herself to a family of no great importance; but by her marriage with one of those heroic sailors who contributed so largely to the glory and prosperity of Holland, she had been admitted to the most distinguished society of Amsterdam. Born in 1571, she appears to have been from seventy-two to seventy-five years old when the portrait was painted. It is a three-quarters length of an old lady, seated, and facing the spectator. Her black dress is marked by the subdued elegance proper to her rank and age. A closely fitting white cap with semicircular ear-pieces surrounds the face, showing the roots of the hair in front, and the whiteness of the large goffered ruff is mitigated by the pronounced shadow cast by the head. In spite of her yellow complexion and parchment skin, the

old lady's bearing is still erect and stately. The vigorous contours, sharply defined against the neutral background, the close, incisive drawing, the truth of the modelling, the decision of the accents, the extreme frankness of the intonations, even the choice of attitude, all combine to suggest the individuality of the sitter. Greatly as Rembrandt excelled in the rendering of those essential traits that character and habit stamp on a human face, he never gave more eloquent expression of his powers than in this masterpiece of sincerity and divination."

"CHRIST AT EMMAUS"

LOUVRE: PARIS

A DESCRIPTION of this remarkable picture, included in a criticism by Fromentin, will be found on pages 23, 24, and 25 of this number. It was painted in 1648. It is unusually small in size, measuring only twenty-six by twenty-seven inches.

"THE SHIPBUILDER AND HIS WIFE" BUCKINGHAM PALACE: LONDON

REMBRANDT'S great masterpiece of 1633, a year so rich in important works," writes M. Michel, "is the large canvas known as 'The Shipbuilder and His Wife.' The husband, an elderly man with a white beard and moustache, and strongly marked but placid features, sits at a table, busily drawing the plan of a ship's hull. He holds a compass in his right hand, and turns for a moment from his task to his wife, an old woman in a white cap, who has just entered the room to hand him what is doubtless a letter.

"The frank and generous execution, the soft, warm light, the sober color, the transparent shadows, are all in exquisite harmony with the homely scene, and attune the spectator's mind to fuller sympathy with the old couple. By bringing them thus together he has given us not merely a picture, but an epitome of two lives, which, thanks to his art, are as closely associated in our memories as in reality."

"SYNDICS OF THE CLOTH GUILD"

RYKS MUSEUM: AMSTERDAM

COMMISSIONED by the Guild of Drapers, or Cloth-workers," writes M. Michel, "to paint a portrait group of their Syndics (or directors) for the Hall of the Corporation, Rembrandt delivered to them, in 1661, the great picture which formerly hung in the Chamber of the Controllers and Gaugers of Cloth at the Staalhof, and has now been removed to the Ryks Museum.

"As was the custom among the military guilds, which gradually declined as the civic corporations increased in importance, it became a practice among the latter to decorate their halls with portraits of their dignitaries. Whatever the character of the Company, the manner of representation differed little in these portraits. . . .

"In this instance Rembrandt made no attempt to vary traditional treatment by picturesque episode, or novel method of illumination, as in the case of 'The Night Watch.' The five members of the Corporation are ranged round the inevitable table, prosaically occupied in the verification of their accounts. They are all dressed in black costumes, with flat white collars, and broad-brimmed black hats. Behind them, and somewhat in the shadow, as befits his office, a servant, also in black, awaits their orders with uncovered head. The table-cloth is of a rich scarlet; a wainscot of yellowish-brown wood with simple mouldings, forms the background for the heads. No accessories, no variation in the costumes; an equally diffused light, falling from the left on the faces, which are those of men of mature years, some verging on old age. With such modest materials Rembrandt produced his masterpiece.

"At the first glance we are fascinated by the extraordinary reality of the scene, by the commanding presence and intense vitality of the models. They are simply honest citi-

zens discussing the details of their calling; but there is an air of dignity on the manly faces that compels respect. The eyes look out frankly from the canvas; the lips seem formed for the utterance of wise and sincere words. Such is the work, but, contemplating it, the student finds it difficult to analyze the secret of its greatness, so artfully is its art concealed. Unfettered by the limitations imposed on him, the master's genius finds its opportunity in the arrangement of the figures and their spacing on the canvas, in the slight inflection of the line of faces, in the unstudied variety of gesture and attitude, in the rhythm and balance of the whole. We note the solid structure of the heads and figures, the absolute truth of the values, the individual and expressive quality of each head, and the union between them. Passing from the drawing to the color, our enthusiasm is raised by the harmony of intense velvety blacks and warm whites with brilliant carnations, which seem to have been kneaded, as it were, with sunshine; by the shadows which bring the forms into relief by an unerring perception of their surfaces and textures; and, finally, by the general harmony, the extraordinary vivacity of which can only be appreciated by comparing it with the surrounding canvases. . . .

"Never before had Rembrandt achieved such perfection; never again was he to repeat the triumph of that supreme moment when all his natural gifts joined forces with the vast experiences of a life devoted to his art, in such a crowning manifestation of his genius. Brilliant and poetical, his masterpiece was at the same time absolutely correct and unexceptionable. Criticism, which still wrangles over 'The Night Watch,' is unanimous in admiration of the 'Syndics.' In it the colorist and the draughtsman, the simple and the subtle, the realist and the idealist alike recognize one of the masterpieces of painting."

THE PRINCIPAL PAINTINGS OF REMBRANDT, WITH THEIR
PRESENT LOCATIONS

AMSTERDAM, RYKS MUSEUM: Sortie of the Civic Guard ("The Night Watch") (Plate v); Rembrandt's Father; Young Lady; Syndics of the Cloth Guild (Plate x); Jewish Bride; Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Deyman; Elizabeth Bas (Plate vii)—AMSTERDAM, SIX COLLECTION: Burgomaster Six; Anna Vymer; Ephraim Bonus; Joseph Interpreting his Dreams—ANTWERP MUSEUM: Éléazar Swalmius (Plate vi)—BERLIN GALLERY: Money-Changer; Judith, or Minerva; Rape of Proserpina; Two Portraits of Rembrandt; Samson Threatening his Father-in-Law; Saskia; A Rabbi; Wife of Tobit; Joseph's Dream; Susannah and the Elders; Daniel's Vision; Minister Anso and a Widow; Joseph and Potiphar's Wife; Old Man, study; Jacob Wrestling with the Angel; Moses Breaking Tables of Law; John the Baptist Preaching; Hendrickje Stoffels—BOSTON, ART MUSEUM: Dr. Nicolaas Tulp; Wife of Dr. Tulp—BRUNSWICK GALLERY: Unknown Man; Portrait of Woman; Warrior; Stormy Landscape; Noli me tangere; Family Group—BRUSSELS MUSEUM: Portrait of Man; Old Woman—CASSEL GALLERY: Portrait of Man; Three Portraits of Rembrandt; Three Portraits of Old Men; Head of Old Man; Portrait said to be Copenpol; Jacob blessing the Sons of Joseph; Man in Armor; Saskia (Plate iv); Jan Herman Krul; Holy Family; Winter Landscape; The Ruin; Portrait of Bruyningh; Young Woman—CHICAGO, ART INSTITUTE: Young Girl—DRESDEN, ROYAL GALLERY: Saskia; Portrait of Man; Willem Burchgraeff; Capture of Ganymede; Rembrandt and Saskia; Samson's Wedding Feast; Sportsman with Bittern; Saskia Holding a Pink; Sacrifice of Manoah; Old Woman Weighing Gold; Young Man; Three Portraits of Old Men; Entombment; Portrait of Rembrandt—DUBLIN, NATIONAL GALLERY: Shepherds at Night; Two Portraits of Men—DULWICH GALLERY: Young Man; Girl at Window—EDINBURGH, NATIONAL GALLERY: Young Woman in Bed—THE HAGUE GALLERY: Rembrandt's Mother; Rembrandt's Father; Rembrandt; Young Girl; Presentation in Temple; Anatomy Lesson (Plate ii); Rembrandt as Officer; Woman at her Toilet; Susannah at the Bath; Portrait believed to be Rembrandt's Brother; Man Laughing—HAMPTON COURT: A Rabbi—LONDON, BUCKINGHAM PALACE: Shipbuilder and his Wife (Plate ix); Burgomaster Pancras and his Wife; Lady with Fan; Christ and Mary Mag-

dalen; Jewish Rabbi; Rembrandt; Adoration of Magi—LONDON, DORCHESTER HOUSE: Martin Looten; Man with Sword; Portrait of Lady; Titus—LONDON, GROSVENOR HOUSE: Salutation; Gentleman with Hawk; Lady with Fan; Nicholas Bercham and his Wife; Rembrandt; Landscape—LONDON, ILCHESTER HOUSE: Rembrandt in Oriental Dress—LONDON, NATIONAL GALLERY: Old Woman; Portrait of Man; Ecce Homo; Rembrandt (*bis*); Woman taken in Adultery; Adoration of the Shepherds; Woman Bathing; A Rabbi; Old Man; A Monk; Portrait of a Woman; Jewish Merchant; Landscape; Christ taken from the Cross; A Burgomaster; Portrait of Old Lady—LONDON, WALLACE COLLECTION: Burgomaster Pellicorne and his Son; Wife and Daughter of Pellicorne; Good Samaritan; Rembrandt's Mother; A Boy; Landscape; Rembrandt (*bis*); Young Negro; Young Man; Old Man; Unmerciful Servant—MADRID, THE Prado: Queen Artemisia (or Cleopatra)—MUNICH GALLERY: Holy Family; Descent from the Cross; Elevation of the Cross; Ascension; Entombment; Resurrection; Sacrifice of Isaac; Adoration of Shepherds; Rembrandt; A Turk—NEW YORK, HAVEMEYER COLLECTION: Portraits of a Burgomaster and his Wife; Old Woman; Paulus Doomer ("The Gilder")—NEW YORK, METROPOLITAN MUSEUM: Man with a Broad Collar; Old Man; The Mills; Adoration of the Shepherds—PARIS, LOUVRE: Philosopher in Meditation (*bis*); Rembrandt (Page 20); Three Portraits of Rembrandt; Angel Raphael Leaving Tobit; Christ at Emmaus (Plate VIII); Good Samaritan; Carpenter's Home; Saint Matthew; Young Man; Venus and Cupid; Slaughter-House; Bathsbeba; Hendrickje Stoffels; Three Portraits of Men—PARIS, M. RODOLPHE KANN'S COLLECTION: Head of Christ; Titus; A Rabbi; Young Woman; Old Woman (*bis*)—PARIS, BARON GUSTAV DE ROTHSCHILD'S COLLECTION: Martin Daey; Wife of Martin Daey; Standard-Bearer—ST. PETERSBURG, HERMITAGE: Rembrandt's Father; Portrait of a Man; Descent from the Cross; Incredulity of St. Thomas; Jewish Bride; Sacrifice of Isaac; Oriental; Danaë; Man with Fur Cap, called Sobieski (Plate I); Young Man; Parable of Master of the Vineyard; Five Portraits of Old Women; David and Absalom; Holy Family; Portrait of Man; Abraham Receiving Angels; Sons of Jacob; Disgrace of Haman; Pallas; Hannah and Infant Samuel; Girl with Broom; Old Jew; Three Portraits of Old Men; Joseph and Potiphar's Wife; St. Peter's Denial; Young Woman; Young Woman Trying on Earring; Portrait of Man; Young Man; Jeremias de Decker; Prodigal Son; Old Jew—VIENNA, IMPERIAL GALLERY: Portrait of Man; Portrait of Woman; St. Paul; Rembrandt (*bis*); Rembrandt's Mother; Young Man Singing—VIENNA, LIECHTENSTEIN GALLERY: Portrait of Saskia, or Rembrandt's Sister; Young Girl at her Toilet; Portrait of Man; Portrait of Lady (Plate III); Rembrandt.

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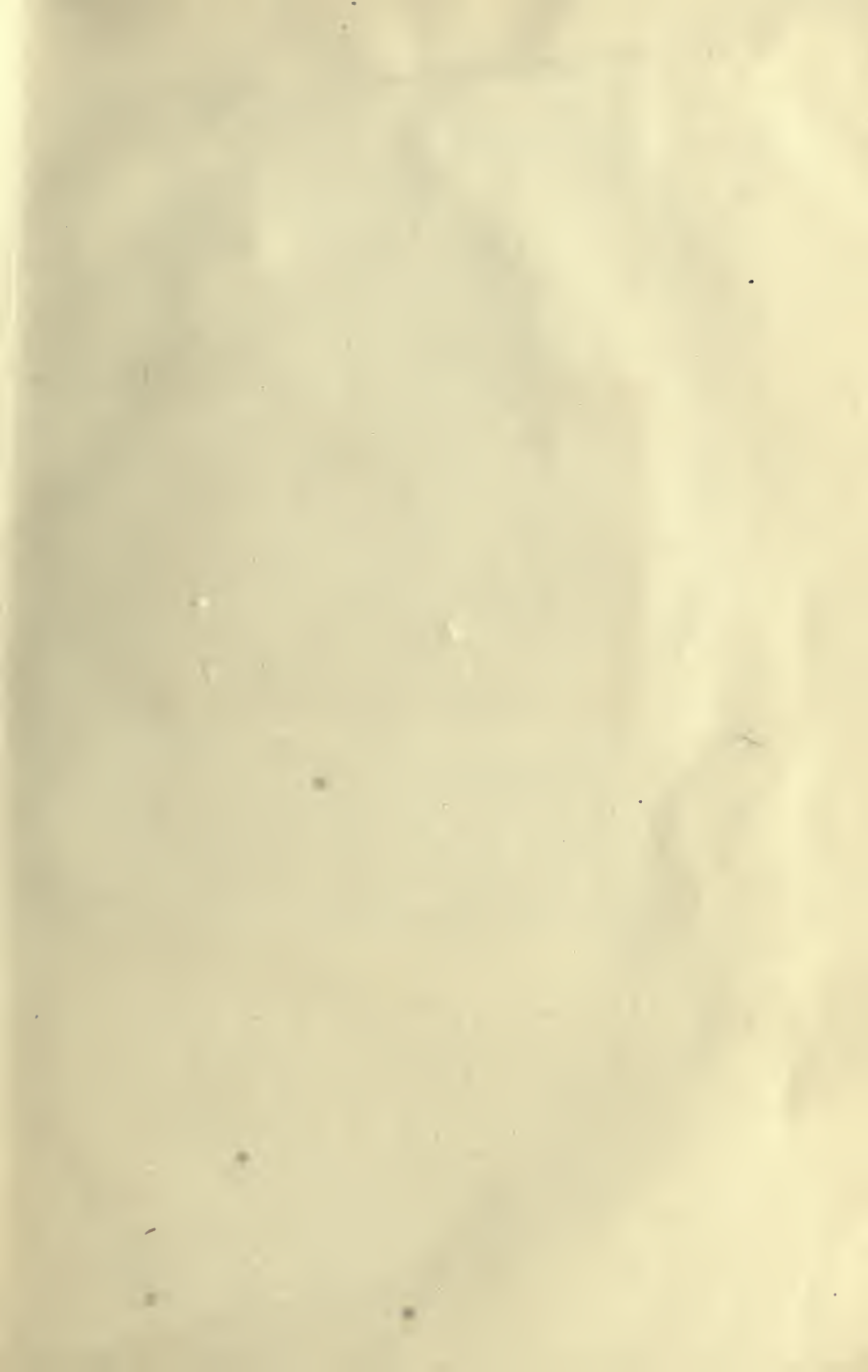
A LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL BOOKS AND MAGAZINE ARTICLES
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