PAINTERS AND SCULPTORS

KENYON COX

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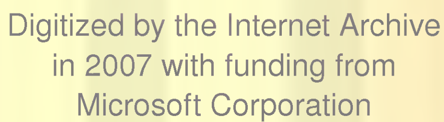
Helen Huntsman-Trout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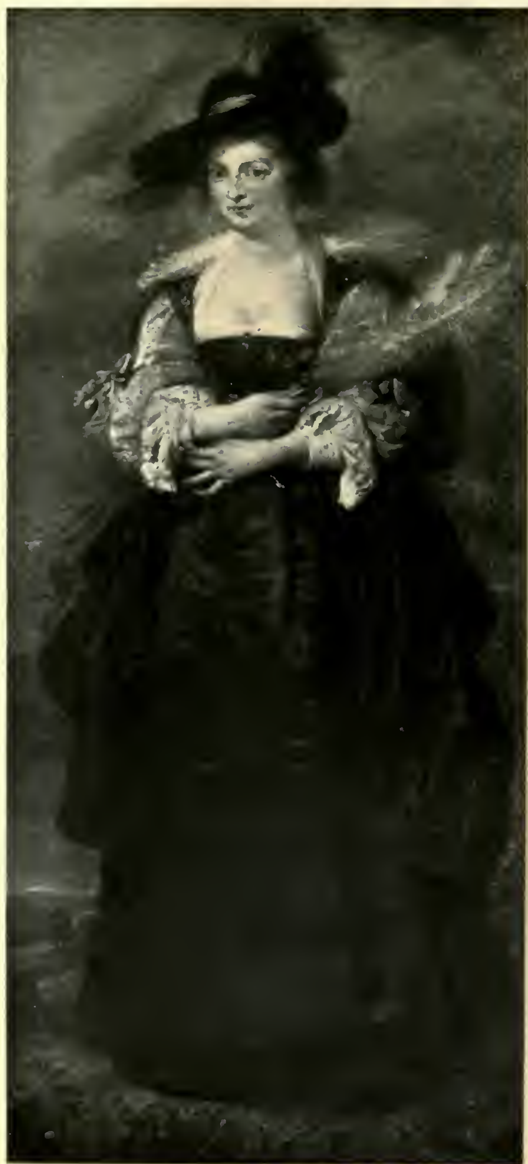
OLD MASTERS AND NEW

SECOND SERIES



RUBENS: "PORTRAIT OF HELENA FOURMENT"

PAINTERS AND SCULPTORS

A SECOND SERIES OF

Old Masters and New

BY

KENYON COX

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1907

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To EDWIN H. BLASHFIELD

My Dear Blashfield:

From no one else have I so often received encouragement, either in my proper work as an artist or in my attempts at criticism, as from yourself. As a painter and a writer you know the difficulties of both arts, and your unfailing sympathy with my aims and appreciation of my efforts has been a frequent help when I most needed it. May I not, then, as a slight testimony of gratitude, of affection, and of esteem, dedicate this second series of my essays to you?

Kenyon Cox.

March 30th, 1907.

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PREFACE

The Preface to the unillustrated edition of "Old Masters and New," published in 1905, concluded with a half promise of future editions, "augmented and enlarged," in which other masters, old and new, should be treated of. Circumstances and the publishers have decided that this independent collection of essays, produced during the past two years, should be offered, rather than an enlarged edition of the first series.

The promise was made conditional upon the encouragement of the public, and the encouragement extended has, indeed, been sufficient to incline me to believe that, in spite of the ancient opinion that artists are the worst of critics, a part of the public is willing to listen to a practical artist talking of art. The accusations most commonly made against the artist as critic are two in number. The first is that the artist is necessarily so biassed by his own practice as to be unable to see the merits of other methods than his own; that being himself in the midst of the immemorial battle of the schools, other artists, living or dead, will seem to him either allies or opponents, and that he will over-praise or over-blame accordingly.

The second is that he is apt to be so engrossed in the study of means as to forget the aim of art; that his point of view is too exclusively technical; and that he fails to estimate the final value of a work of art to the world, because he is so busy in finding out how its effect is produced.

Now, it is perfectly true that many artists are violent partisans, and even that a certain narrowness of vision may add to their efficiency as artists; but partisanship is by no means confined to the actual combatants, and ignorance is no guarantee of impartiality. The artist who has attained to any degree of eminence in his art knows its difficulties well enough to respect achievement in it even where he disapproves the direction of effort. When Ingres complained of the smell of sulphur left behind by Delacroix, the implied comparison with the Devil was at least not a contemptuous one; and if he passed by on the other side of the gallery, when he met Rubens, yet he took off his hat. In my own experience I have never found any artist so intolerant of others as his literary backers are apt to be. For downright illiberality there is nothing like a writer who has picked up a few catchwords from a coterie of artists he specially admires, and who uses these as a yardstick for the measurement of all men, ignorant that there can be any other standards than those he has learned to apply.

That an artist may be quite as broad-minded in his

views of art as any layman, the admirable writings of Fromentin sufficiently attest; but an artist of less catholicity of judgment than he may yet render a real service to criticism. He may be unjust to what he dislikes, but, like the merest layman, he "knows what he likes"; and, unlike the layman, he knows why he likes it. If he is honest—and artists are as likely to be honest men as are others—you may always trust an artist's praise, whatever you think of his blame. The qualities he praises may not be, in a larger view, very important ones; and he may be quite insensible of other and higher qualities; but the qualities he praises are there. That he sees, for instance, nothing to admire in Raphael, merely proves his own partial blindness; but if he admires Tiepolo it is because Tiepolo is, after his degree, truly admirable. If he can help you to see the admirableness of Tiepolo the gain is yours; some one else may help you to understand the greatness of Raphael.

And it is by reason of his knowledge of technical matters—because of his too exclusive devotion to them, even,—that the artist can give you this help. The technical methods and the technical achievement of a master are not the only things of importance about him—perhaps not the things of most importance—but they are important things; and these important things no one can explain to you who does not practically understand them. Any one may know whether a dinner is good or bad—though there are

degrees of competence even here; it is only a cook who can tell you what goes into the sauce. And, in the long run, the technical mastery of an artist is the best attainable measure of his greatness. There is much more to Rembrandt than his handling of paint and acid—much more to him, even, than his knowledge of light and shade or his mastery of expressive drawing; but if it were not for the light and shade and the drawing, the paint and the acid, that "much more" would be unknown to us—without his technical mastery his genius would have been mute. The greatest artists have ever been the greatest technicians, and the successive judgments of their fellows on their technical achievement is what has, in the end, fixed their rank in the hierarchy of art.

More than this, however, the technique of any art is not merely the means of expressing the artist's thought—it is a condition precedent to the thought itself. The thought is moulded by, and grows out of, the mode of expression; and what one shall endeavour to say is predetermined by one's knowledge of, and feeling about, the means of saying it. The union of matter and manner is so intimate, the reaction of manner on matter and of matter on manner so constant, that it is hopeless to attempt to understand the mind of an artist unless you measurably understand his processes. The mind of the colourist is not that of the draughtsman, and the very habit of hand—the mere use of a particular tool—tinges, as it expresses,

the soul. No one but another Titian could know, with certainty, the meaning of Titian.

What really prevents many artists from being the most effective of critics is not their bias, which is no greater than that of others, nor their interest in the technique of their art, which is an element of strength, but their lack of the technique of literature. The art of expression in words, like other arts, has its limitations; and the writer, like the painter, must often say what he can rather than what he would. But its limitations are different for different persons, and are proportioned to natural gifts and to the degree of their training. That a man with a natural gift for expression in lines and colours should have an equal gift for expression in words, must be a rare occurrence. That a man who has spent a lifetime in mastering the trade of a painter should have mastered the trade of writing, also, as thoroughly as one who has done nothing else, must be still rarer. There are many artists whose judgment of a picture is invaluable, but who could not write a page of readable prose if their lives depended on it. No more difficult task can be laid upon any art than the translation into its own terms of a work in another and an alien art, and the literary criticism of painting demands a special mastery of words and a special flexibility of style which are not commonly to be found among professional writers—still less among those to whom writing is but a secondary occupation. Fortunately, however,

all our schooling is, to some extent, an education in literary expression, so that any man who is educated at all may, without hoping for consummate mastery of language, expect to attain some degree of intelligibility. When to clear intellect, catholicity of judgment, and special technical knowledge, is added unusual literary power, you have the ideal critic—the man born to interpret the artist to the public. Such an one was Fromentin. With something less than his literary faculty you may yet get much valuable criticism, as in the letters of Millet and Delacroix. From almost any artist, if he can but write plainly, you shall hear something worth listening to. From the literary genius without technical knowledge you get words—words brilliantly coloured, perhaps, and deftly arranged in wonderful patterns—words which form themselves into a work of art and thereby give you pleasure—but nothing serviceable as an interpretation of that other work of art with which they deal.

Believing, on these grounds, that the special training of a painter is one important qualification for the criticism of art, and may, by its presence, partially offset any deficiency in other most desirable qualifications, I have ventured to publish these studies of a few of the myriad aspects of the art of painting and the kindred art of sculpture—these attempted appreciations of a few out of the many ancient and modern masters whose achievements form the history

of art. All of them have appeared in print, though all of them have been subjected to some revision in preparation for the present volume. The essay on Rembrandt was originally delivered as an address before the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, and subsequently before other bodies, and was first printed in the *Architectural Record*. As it was desirable to make it as complete as possible, within its necessary limit of length, it will be found to contain a good deal that parallels, more or less closely, parts of the paper on that master in my former volume, but mingled with much fresh matter; the whole constituting, it is hoped, a more adequate presentation of the genius of one of the greatest of artists. In the *Architectural Record* appeared, also, the essay on Rodin. The opening paper, on the "Education of an Artist," is made up of two articles from the "Encyclopedia Americana." The essay on the "Painters of the Mode" first appeared, under another title, in *Harper's Bazar* for August and September, 1905; that on Holbein in *Scribner's Magazine;* and those on the Pollaiuoli and on Lord Leighton in *The Nation*. My thanks are due the publishers of all these periodicals for their kind permission to use the articles here.

K. C.

I

THE EDUCATION OF AN ARTIST

Old Masters and New

THE EDUCATION OF AN ARTIST

THE education of a painter is to-day altogether different from what it was in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and this difference is largely dependent upon a different conception of the social status of the artist. In the mediæval world the painter was a craftsman, like the carpenter or the smith. The individual artist might rise to some eminence and consideration, but as an artist he was a member of a mechanical trade which no one would have thought of putting on a level with the learned professions. To-day the painter, the sculptor, the architect, is a professional man, like the lawyer or the physician, and his education is planned, as nearly as possible, on the lines of theirs. As long as the artist was considered a tradesman he was educated like a tradesman, that is, by apprenticeship to a master of the craft. In a modified form this apprenticeship system was in force as late as the eighteenth century, but its character can best be understood by considering it as it was practised in the fifteenth.

In the fifteenth century, then, the master painter kept a shop, a *bottega*, which differed in no essential particular from the shop of any other tradesman, and his business was to supply anything that was wanted in the way of painting, from the ornamentation of a chest or the painting of a sign to the production of an altarpiece or the frescoing of a palace wall. He maintained a force of journeymen and apprentices, and it was no more expected that he should produce with his own hands everything which left his shop than it was expected that the master joiner should saw every beam, or the master mason lay every stone. To such a master a boy who showed any disposition toward art was bound out, at the age of twelve or thirteen, for a term of years. He was to give his services in any capacity in which they were available and a sum of money was paid the master, who, in return for this premium and service, engaged himself to teach the boy his trade. The apprentices swept out the shop, ran errands, waited on customers, ground colours, prepared canvases and panels, pricked cartoons and pounced them upon the wall, set the palette and cleaned the brushes of the master. At odd times they copied the master's studies, and always they watched his methods and learned how he did things and by what succession of processes a picture was produced. At the end of his term of apprenticeship the boy had learned enough to be useful and was

worth a wage. He became a journeyman, and was free to stay with his master or to engage himself to another. At this stage of his evolution he was intrusted with more important work, painted backgrounds or draperies from the master's studies, made studies himself for the less important parts of pictures, finally painted entire pictures himself under the master's supervision and on the master's account—pictures which were almost indistinguishable from the master's own and were frequently signed by him before delivery to the customer who had ordered them.

If the young painter were unambitious he might remain at this stage all his life. If he were determined to be a master in his turn he probably travelled a little and engaged himself to this or that more celebrated master that he might study other methods than those he had learned, pick up other traditions, and familiarise himself with the best work that was being done in his art. When he could do what his masters did as well as they did it, and hardly until then, he was ready to observe nature for himself, to allow his own temperament to influence his work, to become, perhaps, a creator and an innovator, and to teach others all that he had been taught and all that he had learned for himself, so that they might begin, as nearly as possible, where he left off.

The typical education of a modern painter is as different from this as possible. He begins his special

education later than did the mediæval painter, having spent some years in ordinary schooling; perhaps, even, in securing a college training. He may have done a little desultory drawing during this time, but, about the age of twenty or later, he decides to become a painter and begins his serious education in art. He begins it not as an apprentice, but as a student; not in a shop, but in a school. If the school is a great state institution or one connected with a university it will afford lectures on the theory and history of art, to which, likely enough, he will pay little attention. It will be in a great city where he will be able to visit museums which have gathered together the art of many ages and many countries and to see exhibitions where almost as many methods of work are exemplified as there are individual exhibitors. Even in default of museums and exhibitions he will infallibly have access to many cheap publications which, by some of the applications of photography, will give him a fair idea of the results attained by the art of the past and the present; of its methods he will know nothing. Meanwhile, he will be set down before a plaster cast or a living model and bidden to draw. He will be more or less thoroughly grounded in anatomy and perspective and other sciences, above all in the science of aspects, but he will have practically no instruction whatever in his craft. His canvases and colours, like his brushes, he will buy ready-made. His master he

will see twice a week, for a few minutes, and that master's criticisms will be directed exclusively to the justness of his observation and the truth of his rendering of nature. The master's own work will be carried on in another place, in quiet and in solitude, and the student will know nothing of it except, now and then, to see the completed picture. The more intelligent and conscientious the master, the less likely he will be to attempt real technical instruction, for he will feel that his own methods are tentative, suited to himself alone, and of doubtful validity or permanence, while he will be hampered by our modern respect for individuality and the fear of destroying something more precious than anything he can supply.

After three to five years' work on this system, our student will be able to draw with fair accuracy anything set before him, to distinguish its values, even to copy its colour with some approximation to success. On the other hand he will have exercised little either his invention or his memory, will be entirely in the dark as to what he wishes to do with his acquired science, and will have practically no knowledge of the thousand and one processes that go to the production of a picture. Likely enough he will never have made a tracing or squared up a sketch; almost certainly he will never have arranged a drapery; quite certainly he will, no more than his master, know anything of the proper management of

oil colours, of the use of vehicles, or of the composition and permanence of pigments. For a time he will try to do outside the school what he has always done in it, and will be surprised that no one cares for the result. Then it will perhaps dawn upon him that he has learned a science, but not an art; he will flounder and experiment, and, if he is a man of force and originality, he will invent an art of his own, and methods that will somehow serve his needs. If he is of a cool and logical mind he will recognise that his training was vastly better than none, and will, in default of a better, recommend it to others or help to give it to them. If he is of a warm and emotional temper he will condemn it as useless or worse, and tell those who consult him to get along without it.

It is obvious that the results of these two educations must differ as greatly as the conditions which produced them. The modern painter may readily be a man of broader culture and wider outlook than the painter of the Renaissance; with anything like the same original force he will probably be a more personal and individual artist; he will certainly know a great deal about the aspects of nature that the Renaissance painter never dreamed of. Just as surely he will be the inferior of the Renaissance painter as an efficient workman, will rarely attain complete mastery of his tools, and will try to substitute the charm of his personal sentiment and his individual view of nature for that assured rightness which

comes of an accepted body of traditions and the possession of tried methods. What modern art has gained in variety and in the perception of new truths it has lost in weight and coherence. Each artist works in his own way, for the attainment of self-expression, and does little toward the building up of a great school.

It is easier to see the weakness of modern education in painting than to devise a remedy, and those who are most opposed to the modern academic system seldom suggest anything to take its place. There are many reasons why the old apprenticeship system could hardly be revived. There are such multitudes of students to-day that it would be impossible to find masters for them, and our masters have, in general, nothing for apprentices to do. They are no longer at the head of great workshops, turning out a multiplicity of diverse products. Each is engaged in a more or less narrow specialty, producing work which is valuable only as it possesses his personal quality and exhibits his personal touch, and his patrons would resent the intrusion of any hand but his own as little less than commercial dishonesty. The modern student, also, knows too much of the art of all times and countries to choose a single master and docilely follow his teaching. It is doubtful if modern conditions have not rendered forever impossible anything like a local school of painting.

The conditions of mural painting do, indeed, en-

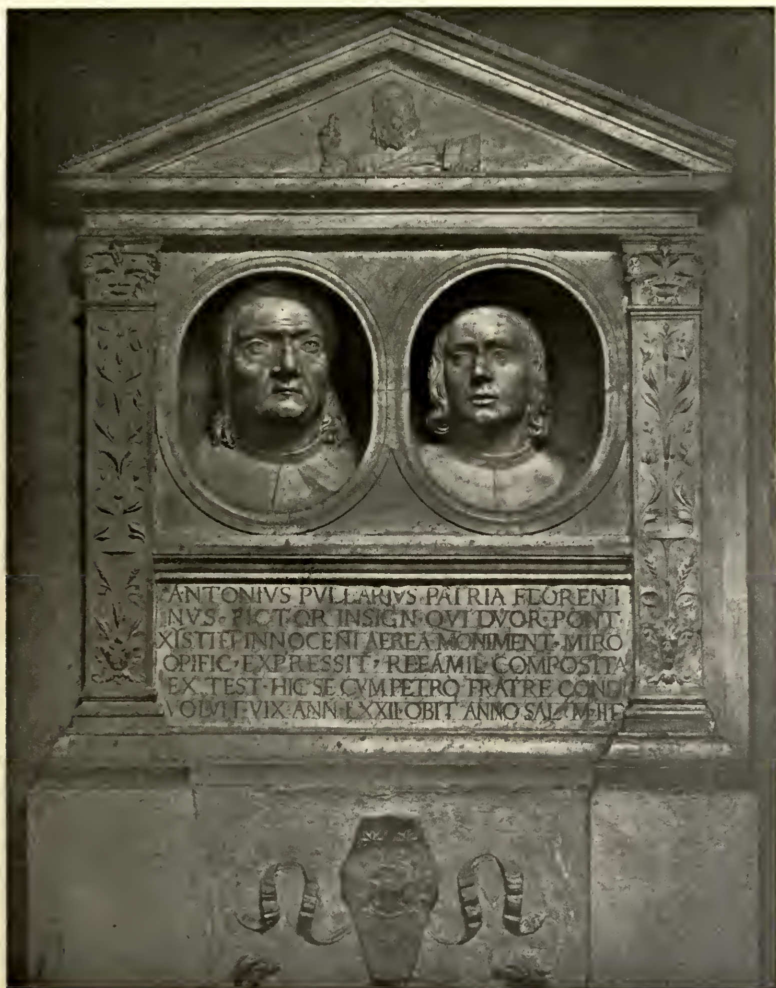
tail something like the old apprenticeship system, and in the growing demand for the decoration of public and private buildings there is a hope for the revival of older methods of education. It is recognised that a decorative painter may properly have a corps of assistants, and while these assistants are not likely to be mere beginners, but will already have had an academic training, they are enabled to supplement it with the practical instruction of a master in the methods of creating a work of art. How far a similar instruction can be engrafted on our academic system is the problem that should most seriously occupy the directors of our schools of art. The rigid discipline in drawing and painting from nature need not be relaxed,—in its way it is admirable and should be strengthened rather than weakened,—but it should be pointed out that the ability to imitate form and colour is a tool, not an end, and that the creation of a work of art is something different from the production of a life-study. The student should be encouraged to train his imagination and his memory as well as his eye, and it would be well if some knowledge of technical processes could be conveyed and the pupil encouraged, as soon as he is at all fit, to attempt the actual creation of a work of art, under the guidance of the master. Meanwhile it should be insisted upon that the education of eye and hand can hardly begin too early, if technical mastery is to be attained, and that we must be willing

to sacrifice something of the education of a gentleman to the education of a painter.

We know little of the education of the sculptor in ancient Greece, and can only guess at the training which produced the greatest sculptors the world has seen. In the Middle Ages and the Renaissance education in sculpture proceeded on much the same lines as education in painting, the young sculptor entering the workshop of a master and learning thoroughly all the mechanical parts of the trade before he attempted anything in the way of independent study of nature. To-day the education of the sculptor is organised in the same way as that of the painter, and the student has much the same training in the observation of nature, and much the same lack of training in the essentials of art. There are, however, certain differences between the conditions under which sculpture and painting are carried on in modern times which seem to favour the education of competent craftsmen in sculpture. The mere bulk and weight of material involved in the creation of heroic statues or groups makes it inevitable that the sculptor should have some assistance, and most prominent sculptors are more like the heads of mediæval shops than are almost any modern painters. Apart from the more or less illegitimate employment of what are known as "ghosts" (that is, artists, often of more ability than the employer, who actually produce the work for which the employer secures the commission

and appropriates the rewards), a sculptor may have a corps of perfectly legitimate helpers who vary from the mere studio boy or the caster to the accomplished modeller. Many young sculptors thus pass through the studios of their seniors and gain invaluable experience in the actual production of works of art which is supplemented, either before or afterward, by a regular school education. Such a double training is the best our time has to offer, and is certainly far better than either an apprenticeship or a term of study in an art school taken singly; but it is not yet an ideal training.

The technique of sculpture, as far at least as regards the handling of the clay or wax model, is an infinitely simpler thing than that of painting. There are no complicated processes to master, no questions of the chemistry of pigments, of the optical effects of colours on each other or of the different qualities of reflected and transmitted light, such as are involved in the manipulation of paint. Modelling is a matter of knowledge of form and facility of hand, and both the knowledge and the facility might be attained as readily in the school as in the studio, for there is so much rough manual labour to be done in a sculptor's studio that a helper might work there for years without doing much real modelling. And the technique of modelling is, after all, of relatively little importance; for the sculptor, unlike the painter, puts his personal handiwork upon a thing destined



TOMB OF ANTONIO AND PIERO POLLAIUOLO

to be destroyed and never to be seen by the public. He works in clay or wax, while it is the interpretation of his work in marble or bronze that is set before the world, so that he is almost in the position of the draughtsman upon the wood block, whose work ceases to exist and is replaced by that of another. The sculptor of the Renaissance was either a stone carver or a bronze founder or both, and the craft he practised was the craft of carving or of metal working, the modelling being only a preliminary and being sometimes dispensed with altogether. The modern sculptor tends to become a modeller and to put all his strength into the clay, the final carrying out of his ideas being largely intrusted to others; and his knowledge and invention count for much more than his skill of hand, while the worker in stone or bronze rarely becomes an original artist. Of course the best of our sculptors do not only control and oversee the final carrying out of their work, but actually put hand to it themselves, at times; and even when they do not they must vary the manner of modelling they employ according to the material of the definitive work, and these variations of manner they will teach their assistants. Also there is a great deal to be learned in a sculptor's workshop hardly likely to be picked up elsewhere, were it only the mechanics of setting up great armatures, the processes of pointing and enlarging small models, and the rest. Still there is some tendency to a di-

vorce between the original artist and the workman, and it is difficult for the modern sculptor to become a thorough master of his craft, thinking naturally in stone or bronze rather than in clay.

There is another respect in which the education afforded by the apprenticeship of the Renaissance was greatly superior to that obtainable in a modern studio. The Renaissance master was often a painter as well as a sculptor and, not infrequently, an architect as well, and the essential unity of the three great arts of design was inevitably impressed upon his pupils. The modern sculptor rarely knows anything of painting or architecture, and his studio assistant has little opportunity even to learn drawing, the foundation of all the arts. If he would learn to draw he must study in an art school, and he is generally encouraged to do so in such time as his necessary work leaves at his own disposal. In the modern art school the students are allowed, or even required, to change from class to class, and their chance of acquiring some notion of the interdependence of the arts, and some breadth of artistic culture, is greater than that of the mere studio assistant. Such interchange of work between drawing or painting and modelling would be of great benefit to the painter also, if he more often took advantage of it, but is hardly as essential to him as to the sculptor.

In some measure, then, the schools offer a valuable supplement to the training of the studio, but they do not give nearly all that they might or should give.

Of the true meaning of composition, and of the difference between artistic expression and imitation, the school, at its best, can give no such idea as can the studio, where the actual production of a work of art, through all its stages, may be watched. Yet the students might be encouraged and aided in the actual carrying out of original work, taught something of the difference between the use of the model for the attainment of a predetermined result and the mere copying of a set pose, and, possibly, instructed in casting, pointing, marble cutting, and even bronze founding and chasing, and the production of various patinæ. A thorough mastery of drawing cannot be too much insisted upon. Of course the constant study of modelling from the living figure would continue to be the principal element of training, but it would be well if some study of drapery and costume could be added to it. The graduate of our art schools, either painter or sculptor, generally knows little or nothing of the arrangement of draperies, and this is one of his most serious deficiencies.

Such a course of instruction as is here sketched has been attempted, but has never been thoroughly worked out in our schools. It could hardly fail to prepare the student for more efficient service in the studio of a master than he is now generally able to give, and to enable him to acquire more surely and rapidly that practical knowledge of real work which no school, however managed, can supply.

II

THE POLLAIUOLI

THE POLLAIUOLI

EVER since Vasari made certain demonstrable blunders in his account of the brothers Antonio and Piero Pollaiuolo, the works of Antonio have been so confused with those of Piero, and both with the works of others, that it was apparently reserved for Mr. Berenson, in one of the chapters of his monumental work on "The Drawings of the Florentine Painters," to make a beginning in disentangling the two individualities, and in demonstrating that Antonio was a great artist and his younger brother little more than a not very competent assistant. More recently Miss Maud Crutwell has published the only book in any language devoted to Antonio Pollaiuolo, a careful and intelligent study, in which she has taken up the task and carried it into greater detail, differing with Mr. Berenson now and then on this or that minor matter, as was to be expected, but carrying out her work on the large lines laid down by him.

A not unnatural enthusiasm for her subject has, however, led Miss Crutwell into an exaggerated estimate of his greatness such as is common enough in monographs on particular artists. However care-

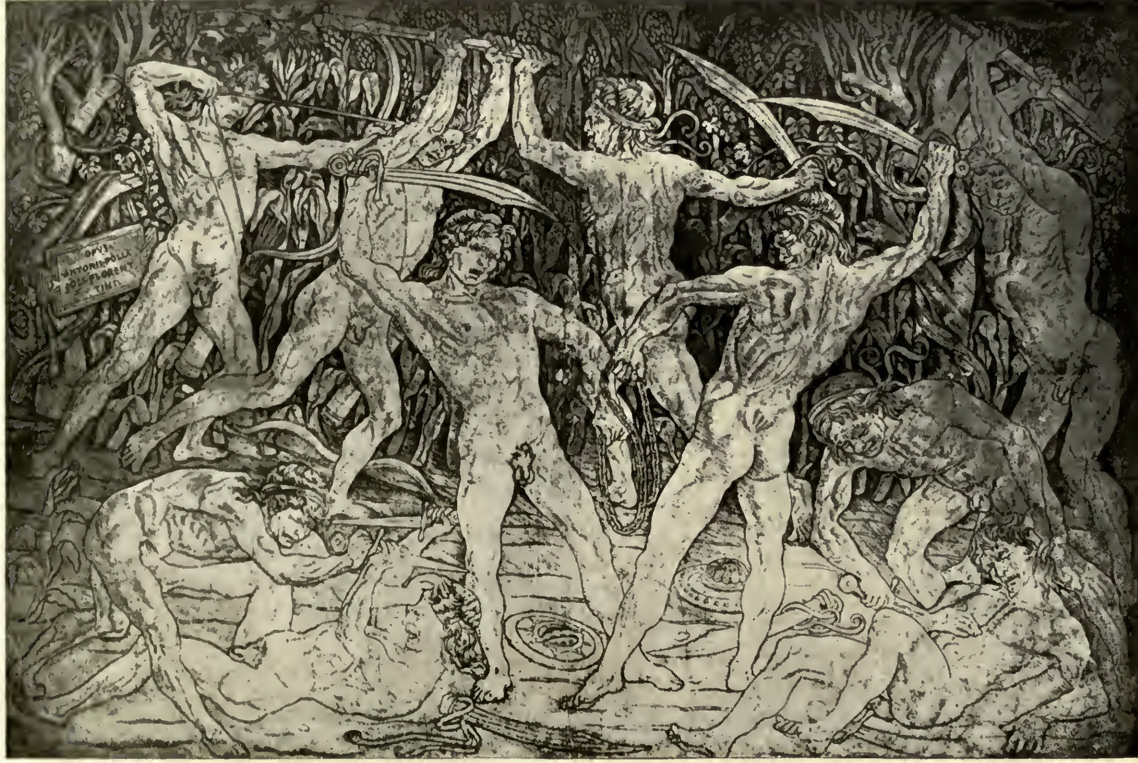
less or untrustworthy as to matters of fact Vasari may have been, he was an excellent critic, and his praise is usually both intelligent and just. His estimate of Antonio is nearly perfect: "He understood the nude in a more modern way than any of the masters before him. . . . He was the first to study the play of the muscles and their form and order in the body." That is a very precise definition of the quality of the master. He was a man of scientific and realistic temper, little concerned with beauty or sentiment, interested in mastering the human figure and in expressing its substance and its movement, the pathfinder for the glorious masters who came after him. As such he is a man of very real importance in the history of art. But Miss Crutwell is not content with rating him as one who "understood the nude in a more modern way than any before him"; she will have it that he understood it better than any one before or since. "Not even Signorelli nor Michelangelo have equalled him," she says; certain works she calls "worthy of the sculptor of the Parthenon reliefs"; and of the reliefs on the tomb of Sixtus IV. she remarks: "Never has the female nude been at once so exquisitely and so scientifically modelled," and "certainly no other sculptor has combined so exquisitely its possibilities of grace and strength." Her text is full of allusions to his "faultless drawing," his "faultless anatomy," his "perfect proportions." Now all this is,

asking pardon for the rudeness of the phrase, arrant nonsense. Antonio Pollaiuolo never did a faultless figure in his life, nor anything like one. In drawing, engraving, painting, sculpture, he produced many figures. Energetic they are, vital, full of force and movement and life, but faultless is what they are not. They are rather ungainly, ill proportioned, ugly. Now and then they approach beauty, but now and then only, and perfection they never touch.

Such incontinence of admiration would be harmless enough were it not that it has led Miss Crutwell to a conception of the relations between the two brothers, and of the share of each in the work undertaken jointly by them, which is quite incredible. Ardently admiring Antonio, and having little but contempt for Piero, she must needs give to the elder everything of good in their joint works, and to the younger everything faulty. So, when she finds the mirror and serpent in the hands of the "Prudence" of the Mercantanza better executed than the figure, instead of reasoning, as Berenson does of the background of the "Annunciation," that this is just the kind of thing an inferior man could execute well, she concludes that Antonio painted these details himself. She likes the landscape backgrounds, with the Arno winding through its valley and under the walls of Florence, which occur in many of the pictures of the Pollaiuoli, and concludes that Antonio painted

these, even when they are incidental glimpses through a window in the background of a composition showing, otherwise, no touch of his hand. She has reduced all this to a theory and propounds it categorically. "He seems in all their joint work to have reserved to himself only such parts as interested him," and that he was specially interested in landscape "is proved by the fact that, while leaving to Piero the principal figures in his pictures, he himself painted with the care of a miniaturist the background scenery." We are asked, in a word, to believe that the greatest figure draughtsman of his age (or, as we are told, of any age), a man of fiery energy, a student of anatomy, who dissected many cadavers and who valued subjects only as they afforded opportunity for displaying the nude in violent action, a goldsmith by training, a sculptor by preference, amused himself by painting "with the care of a miniaturist" bits of landscape between the legs of figures drawn by an incompetent younger brother! One can as easily imagine Michelangelo doing the same thing.

Surely, a more rational theory of the collaboration of the two Pollaiuoli than this must be attainable. Without pretending to the perilous honours of modern connoisseurship, with no facilities for the proper study of the works involved, relying only upon the data afforded by Miss Crutwell herself and by Mr. Berenson, and the reproductions published by them, I am tempted to suggest an alternative hy-



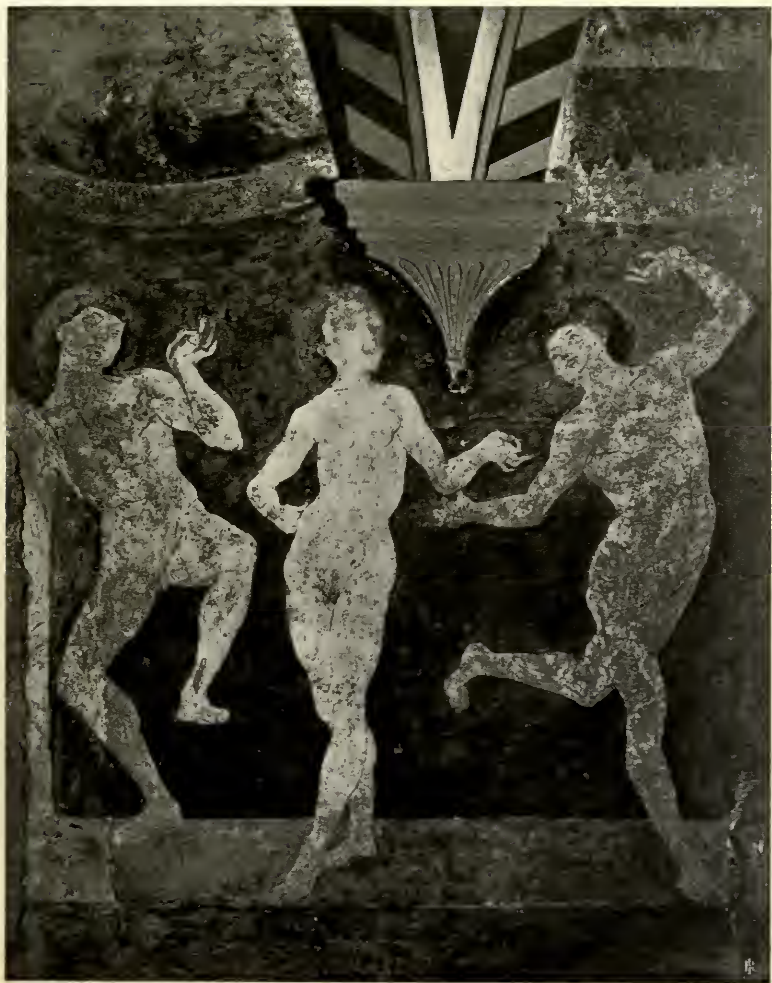
ANTONIO POLLAIUOLO: "BATTLE OF TEN NUDES"

pothesis which may be worthy of investigation by some one competent for the task. That hypothesis is, in brief, that Piero was the landscape painter of the family, that the characteristic view of the Val d'Arno appears only in works in which he had a share, and that it is uniformly executed by him.

There is certainly no inherent improbability in the notion that the inferior figure-painter should be the superior in landscape, and there is nothing in what we know of the character of the two brothers to negative the supposition that the placid distances, which contrast so strongly with the savage energy of the figures in front of them, were the work of the weaker and milder man. Miss Crutwell dwells upon the striking difference in type of the portraits upon their tomb in San Pietro in Vincoli, comparing Antonio's head to those of Mantegna and Signorelli. It reminds one of that of Ingres also, with its great nose, its high cheek bones, its forcefulness, and its austerity; and it reminds one, more than all, as Mantegna and Ingres often do, of some aged Indian chief. But for the broken nose and the beard, which disguise the resemblance, Michelangelo had a head of the same family—the typical head of the severe masters of form. Piero's is as different as possible —"timid and fretful," Miss Crutwell calls it, "with its weak mouth and vacillating expression"; mild, certainly, and somewhat sentimental, gentle, and with a vague brooding about the eyes, gazing off into the

distance with a dreamy look altogether in contrast with Antonio's concentrated glance. It might well be the head of some modern lover of nature in her sweeter moods; it could never be the head of a great draughtsman.

All this may be purely fanciful, however, and proves nothing. Let us consider some concrete facts. And first, note the almost entire absence of distance, or even of what may be called a background, in the works that are accepted as entirely by Antonio's own hand and as most characteristic of his genius. The frescoes of the Villa della Gallina, in the grounds of the Torre del Gallo, Arcetri, near Florence, are much dilapidated and repainted, but they seem never to have had anything but a flat tone behind the figures, which detach themselves against it in a pattern of nude forms much as an antique sculptor would have designed a frieze. Such is the treatment, also, of the drawing in the British Museum of a "Prisoner Brought before a Judge," the figures in almost pure outline, relieved against a flat wash which represents nothing—the plane surface of the sculptor in relief. In the "Battle of Ten Nudes" we see the goldsmith, the ornamentalist, the worker in niello, rather than the sculptor. The background is a closely interwoven thicket of trees and vines treated in a wholly conventional manner, a piece of intricate decoration rather than a representation of nature; and the whole plate is, with evident intention, kept en-



ANTONIO POLLAIUOLO: "FRESCOES FROM VILLA GALLETTI"

ANTONIO POLLAIUOLO: "FIGURE FROM FRESCO OF VILLA GALLETTI"

tirely flat and without suggestion of distance. This is Antonio's method when he is entirely free to do as he chooses—to leave the background out entirely or to make of it a mere pattern. When he has to tell a story he must give it a setting, and his designs for embroidery, where Piero probably assisted him, have glimpses of landscape, rigidly subordinated, however, to the figures. Whenever it is at all possible, he substitutes architecture for landscape, and treats it in a very formal way. So, in the relief for the silver altar, there is the necessary architectural setting in the tradition of Ghiberti, though he seems never to have attemped landscape in bronze as Ghiberti did; but in his most mature and most magnificent work, the tombs of Sixtus IV. and Innocent VIII., he returns to the purely sculpturesque tradition, and his reliefs have no perspective and no distance. Only something rudely symbolical of rocks suggests that some of the figures are supposed to be out of doors.

Of the paintings attributed to Antonio alone, two are supposed by Miss Crutwell to be so early as to exclude Piero's collaboration, the "David" of the Berlin Museum and the "Apollo and Daphne" of the National Gallery. If the latter is really as early as she thinks it, our suggestion is disproved. But the "David," striding over the head of Goliath, is painted "against a slate-grey wall." The earliest picture in which she recognises, as does every one,

the hand of Piero, is the "Sts. James, Vincent, and Eustace," painted in 1466, when he was about twenty-three years old. Two of the figures certainly, all of them possibly, are partly or entirely by Piero. Between them are narrow strips of landscape, a few inches wide, the characteristic Pollaiuolo landscape with its winding stream. We meet it constantly after this, nowhere more characterised than in the glimpse of distance seen through the window behind the "Annunciation," a picture in which not even Miss Crutwell finds any other trace of Antonio's hand. The "St. Mary of Egypt," however, at Staggio, which she believes to be entirely by Antonio, has a different style—a rocky cave as purely symbolical and anti-natural as a background of Giotto's. It is true that there seems to be a bit of distance, in the left hand lower corner, which resembles the Val d'Arno landscape we are familiar with, but less well done than usual—if Antonio was indeed dispensing with his brother's assistance on this occasion, he may have done it carelessly himself.

But the crux of the argument is to be found in the two little pictures of "Hercules and the Hydra" and "Hercules and Antæus," now in the Uffizi, and their relation to the large pictures of the same subjects known to have been painted for Lorenzo de' Medici in 1460 by Antonio, with the assistance of Piero, then a youth of seventeen. The small panels are considered by Berenson to be preliminary studies

ANTONIO AND PIERO POLLAIUOLO: "SS. JAMES, VINCENT, AND EUSTACE"

PIERO POLLAIUOLO: "THE ANNUNCIATION"

Engraved through the courtesy of the Print Department of the New York Public Library

for the large pictures, but Miss Crutwell argues, very successfully, that they are independent versions, thinking it likely, however, that they were painted "about the same time"; and she goes on: "They belonged to the Medici collection, probably to Lorenzo himself, and it may be that he valued them so highly as to order them to be copied on a larger scale." In either view the little panels would be earlier than the lost pictures with which they are connected. Why should they not be later, free replicas made for some other member of the Medici family from the large canvases belonging to Lorenzo? Miss Crutwell's arguments for the independent nature of the smaller pictures seem to point to this conclusion, although she does not draw it. Her reasons are these.

Among the engravings of Robetta are two, of the Labours of Hercules, which have been generally accepted as copies of the small panels, but which differ from them in many points, and which seem likely to be copies of the lost pictures, as Robetta would be unlikely to make such grave changes himself, or variations so much in the manner of Antonio's own work. In the "Antæus" there is a strange figure of a child which has no apparent reason for being there, and which we can hardly conceive of as added by a copyist. The figure of Antæus himself is awkwardly arranged, without any foreshortening of the limbs, and is altogether more primitive in manner than in the little panel. In the "Combat with the Hydra" there

are also several variations, notably in the pose of Hercules's left hand (which does not grasp the Hydra's neck, but is only stretched out toward it), in the less happy composition of the lion-skin, and in the drawing of the Hydra itself; and most of these differences are supported by an old drawing in the Louvre and by Antonio's own sketch in the British Museum. What Miss Crutwell does not note is that the pose of the left hand in the engraving, bent back upon the wrist in a peculiar manner, is unlike either the sketch or the painting, yet is strikingly characteristic of Antonio, occurring in his drawing of "Adam" in the Uffizi, in two of the figures in the "Prisoner Brought before a Judge," and in the Torre del Greco frescoes. But all these differences are slight compared to those in the backgrounds. In the little pictures the figures are posed, in the characteristic Pollaiuolesque way, upon a foreground eminence, with no middle distance, and loom large against a distant landscape with a winding stream, upon which we look down as from a height. In the engravings everything is different—there is nothing but shapeless, dumpling-like masses of rock, piled so high, in the "Combat with the Hydra," as utterly to dwarf the figure, and pierced with a cave somewhat resembling that of "St. Mary of Egypt."

All of these differences are in favour of the smaller pictures as the more mature and well-considered works, but this is especially true of the difference of

ANTONIO POLLAIUOLO: "HERCULES SLAYING THE HYDRA"

background. It is inconceivable that the painter who had once made his figures tower against the distance as these do should afterward substitute the clumsy lumpiness which stands for the earth in the engravings. My supposition is that the small panels were painted some few years after the large pictures, and that the figures were revised and improved by Antonio himself. In the backgrounds he let Piero, who had already, as we know, some slight share in the larger works, try his hand, and, being pleased with the result, called him in thereafter when landscape was to be treated, though he did without landscape when he could. The background of the "Hercules and Antæus" would thus be probably the earliest of Piero's attempts at the painting of distant landscape, that of the "Hercules and the Hydra" being already somewhat more mature, though neither of them is equal to what he afterwards did in pictures otherwise very inferior.

One difference between the two versions of the latter subject remains to be noted. In the engraving, as in Antonio's sketch, the club of Hercules "breaks out in flame," as Miss Crutwell, following Mr. Berenson, expresses it—in other words, he wields the burning brand with which it was necessary to sear the Hydra's severed necks to prevent the heads from growing out again. Was it from negligence, or as a concession to the common notion of Hercules, that, in the smaller version, this detail was omitted and a

plain club substituted for the flaming one? Probably enough, the same instinct for greater intensity of action which led Antonio to substitute the grasping hand for the merely gesturing one suggested a direct attack upon a living head as more poignant than the earlier motive, and he abandoned the illustrator's faithfulness to the story for the sake of a heightened display of energy. A similar intensification of emotion is shown in the way the Hydra's tail and paw clasp the leg of Hercules. It is such things that make the tiny picture the marvel of concentrated fury that it is.

III

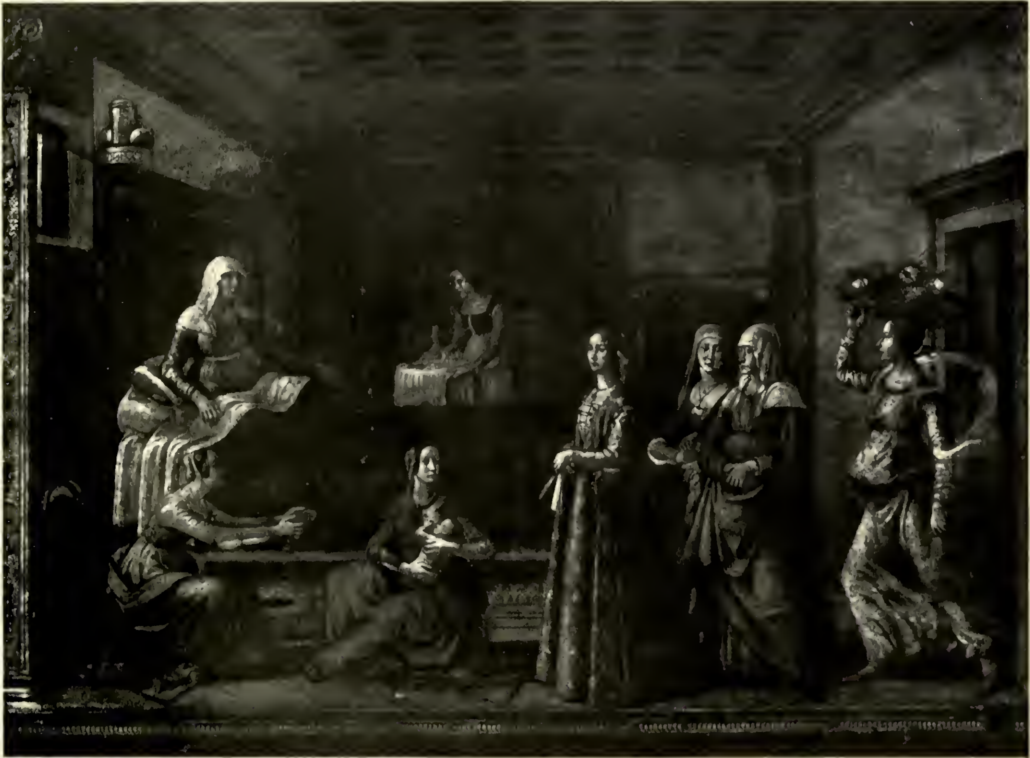
PAINTERS OF THE MODE

PAINTERS OF THE MODE

IT is now many years ago that my indignation was stirred by the sneer of a well-known critic at the late Alfred Stevens, as a mere painter of feminine frivolity and fashionable clothes; and one constantly hears the same kind of criticism from those who judge of the value of a work of art by its subject rather than by its excellence. The truth is, that since there has been any art in the world many of the greatest artists have devoted their talents to the painting of beautiful women in the fashionable toilettes of the time, and that a history of the mode might be written which should be illustrated entirely by acknowledged masterpieces of art. When art has been really living it has occupied itself with the life of its own time; and as painters are no more than human they have generally found that the women of their time were a very considerable part of that life. They have liked them beautiful according to the taste of the moment, and they have liked them none the less for being well dressed. We know the ideal of feminine elegance in all ages of the world, and in all countries under the sun, from the records left us by the artists, and are informed

as to the necklace of Pharaoh's daughter and the hairpins of the ladies of Japan. Even the monkish illuminators of the Middle Ages show the universal interest in head-dresses and stomachers, and can conceive of the Queen of Sheba no otherwise than as resembling the prettiest duchess of the neighbourhood.

As the "classical" ideal is founded on the art of the Greeks and Romans, we are apt to forget that their art was not classic to them, but entirely local and contemporary, and that what we think of as "drapery," as distinguished from costume, was simply the costume worn by the ladies of Greece and Rome. That that costume was simple and noble was the artists' good fortune and ours, but that even it could be coquettish and fascinating, as well as grand and austere, the figurines of Tanagra may remind us. Women were women even then, and devoted time and thought to the toilet, and artists were men, and found the result delightful. But the interest of artists in contemporary fashion has not been confined to those epochs when the fashions were intrinsically beautiful, or to the times when they themselves were naïvely ignorant of any other dress than that worn by their fair contemporaries. No matter how extreme the monstrosity of the mode might be at a given moment, there have been painters to find a beauty in it; and when art has been most pompous and academical there have been, fortunately for us,



GHIRLANDAJO: "BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST"

portraits to be painted and pretty ladies who have wished their clothes immortalised with their faces. The gravest artists have seldom been able to resist them, and the most learned have occasionally painted the laces and ribbons of a living beauty with all the particularly of a Gothic miniaturist.

In the present essay I shall not go further back than the fifteenth century. I shall neglect the art that could not help being classic, and the art of the ages of innocence that could not be classic from lack of knowledge, and I shall take up the art of the Renaissance at the moment preceding its culmination, and trace it down the centuries to our own day, endeavouring to show how the greatest masters have devoted their strength, habitually or occasionally, to the illustration of feminine fashions.

We cannot do better than begin with the teacher of Michelangelo, an artist considered the first in Florence in his day, yet who has not escaped the kind of criticism which has been visited upon Alfred Stevens. When Domenico Ghirlandaio was commissioned, toward the end of the fifteenth century, to decorate the choir of Santa Maria Novella with frescoes illustrating the lives of the Virgin and John the Baptist, he seems to have found that the simple incidents to be represented left a good deal of space unoccupied; and this space he filled, much as Veronese would have done a hundred years later, with such accessory figures as pleased him and would

make a fine effect. He was a simple sort of painter-man, who found nothing more interesting than the people he knew, and he thought it likely that the people of Bible times had friends and neighbours who might drop in on important occasions, much as they did in Florence. So his great pictures are filled with portraits of the men and women of his day, and many of these have been identified and are very interesting to us, as they were to him. Among them he painted some of the most famous beauties of the time, so that we can see just what was the type of beauty most admired, then, in Florence, and just how these Florentine ladies dressed. There is a whole bevy of them in "The Visitation," and another in "The Birth of the Virgin," the foremost of whom, in gold brocade, is supposed to be Lodovica, daughter of Giovanni Tornabuoni, who ordered the paintings and never entirely paid for them. In "The Birth of John the Baptist" one lady holds out her arms to take the baby from the nurse, while others are entering to bring gifts and congratulations to the mother. Most conspicuous among them is Giovanna degli Albizzi, married on June 16, 1486, to Giovanni's son, Lorenzo. She stands there, rather prim and a little conscious of her best gown, frankly posing for her portrait and looking out of the picture at the spectator. This same Giovanna is one of the attendants of St. Elizabeth in "The Visitation," and she was painted by Botticelli also, who makes her even more

charming than she is here, in his delightful frescoes of the Villa Lemmi now in the Louvre.

The Florentines of the fifteenth century loved an intellectual and ethereal type of beauty. All these ladies are tall and slender, and they wear close sleeves, puffed at the elbow, which show the thinness of their arms, and short cuffs which make the hands look long; short waists with flat corsage; and stiff, straight skirts which exaggerate the apparent height of the figure. If Giovanna's forehead is not shaved almost to the crown, as it would have been a few years earlier, it is yet "high, serene, and shining," as the taste of the day demanded it; her nose is long, fine, straight, slightly tip-tilted; her mouth small; her chin rather pointed and kittenish. The extreme of the type may be seen in certain portraits, variously attributed to Piero della Francesca, Antonio Pollaiuolo, or Verrocchio, notably one of the Poldo-Pezzoli museum at Milan, and in the strange portrait at Chantilly of Simonetta the beautiful, who "was so sweet and charming that all men praised her and no woman envied her." Piero di Cosimo has painted her for us (who knows from what drawing or medal, for he was but fourteen when she died), her golden, jewel-wreathed hair covering little more than half her head, a serpent twined with the necklace around her slender throat, her fragile bust and meagre shoulders bare. It may not be an authentic portrait, but it is all the more certainly a representation of the

contemporary ideal of beauty—a beauty that went early into a decline, and died young.

Of the great trio who glorified the next generation of Italian artists one was a delineator of men rather than of women, of the nude rather than of the draped figure, a sculptor rather than a painter. Michelangelo stands alone, almost the only great artist who never painted a portrait, and from whom one can learn nothing of the aspect of his time, whatever one may learn of its soul; it is different with the other two. Leonardo, scientist, engineer, architect, sculptor, as well as painter—the most profound mind of the Renaissance, and one of the most wonderful minds the world has ever known—was enamoured of the smile of woman and thought four years not ill-spent in the effort to fix the fleeting expression of La Gioconda as she listened to the music he had provided for her. The master of composition who designed the solemn "Last Supper" at Milan, the lover of furious action who drew "The Battle of the Standard," the sculptor of the Sforza statue, lives for us, after all, in a few ineffably smiling female heads, and several of these are portraits. One of them—for surely, whatever the experts may say, she is his—is that unknown Italian lady whom tradition has wrongly identified with the wife of the French advocate Féron, and who is therefore known to us as "La Belle Féronnière." Who but the painter of Mona Lisa made these unfathomable eyes to smile above

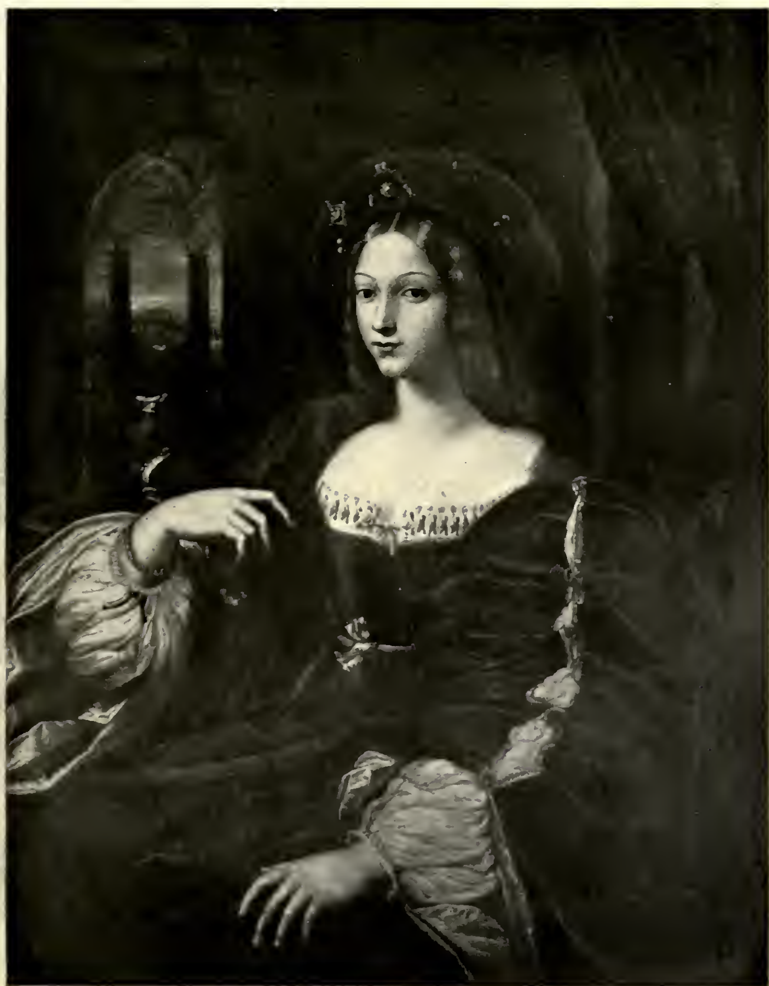
LEONARDO: "LA BELLE FÉRONNIÈRE"

the smileless mouth? What hand but that which played in the intricate braidings of Leda's hair traced with such exquisite care each loop and bow of this costume? Only a few years have passed, but the Renaissance has grown riper, and though Leonardo's women have intellect enough, they have healthy bodies too. The forehead is broad rather than high, and its height is diminished to the eye by the placing of the jewel upon it; the cheek is rounded, the chin and jaw are firm, the throat is full and columnar and not too long, the bust grandly arched, though small. It is "a perfect woman, nobly planned," and the physical completeness is accentuated by the close and modest coiffure which makes the head seem small and dainty in spite of its well-rounded development. For just balance of all bodily and mental perfections, combined with mysterious and illusive charm, Leonardo's feminine ideal is perhaps the finest of any.

Raphael, the greatest of decorative designers, was also one of the greatest of portrait-painters, and he was so pre-eminently the painter of the beauty of women that his Madonnas have become the ideal of female loveliness for the whole Western world, and we can scarcely imagine abstract beauty otherwise than as he pictured it. One does not think of his women as having much intellect, but they have infinite sweetness and tenderness of sentiment. They are healthy, happy, virtuous wives and mothers, loving

and pure, and they grow constantly in physical ripeness until the noblest of them, with all their gracious softness, have almost the splendour of the goddesses of Greece—almost the majesty of the sibyls of Michelangelo. These are the women that he painted from "a certain ideal that was in his mind," but he also painted certain ladies as they were in the flesh, the "Donna Velata," for instance—that "veiled lady" whose name and rank are also veiled from us, but who was far above him, and whom he loved to his dying day—and Joanna of Aragon, who is interesting to us because we know who she was and what her contemporaries thought of her. The portrait of Joanna, in her red dress, is not so fine as that of the beloved—perhaps Raphael let his pupils paint it as he let one of them make the drawing for it,—but in both pictures there is the carefulness of each detail of costume which the master's conscious and almost academic art had banished from his more important works.

The wife of the Viceroy of Naples was the most renowned beauty of her day, "celestial and almost divine," and treatises on beauty were written expressly to prove her the most beautiful of all women. As late as 1551, more than thirty years after the latest date at which this portrait can have been painted, a solemn council was held in Venice to consecrate officially her beauty, and to erect a temple in her honour. A handsome woman she certainly is as she



RAPHAEL: "JOANNA OF ARAGON"

sits forever before us in the portrait in the Louvre, though perhaps a trifle insipid in expression. The eyebrows, which were almost wanting with Verrocchio and Ghirlandaio, which were nearly horizontal with Leonardo, are elevated into two sharply marked and questioning arches which give a singular air of innocence to the physiognomy. Of the robe not an item is neglected that can help us to know what was the supreme type of elegance of the early sixteenth century.

Michelangelo might disdain everything but the nude human figure; Raphael might invent a drapery in "the grand style" vaguely reminiscent of antique sculpture; but whatever might be their nominal subject, the Venetians never painted anything but Venice. If to occupy oneself with the living beauties of one's own time and country, and to represent them in the clothes they actually wear, is to be frivolous, then all Venetian art was deeply tinged with frivolity. This is as true of Carpaccio at the end of the fifteenth century as of Veronese at the end of the sixteenth. His altar-pieces are somewhat conventional, and the Virgin is with him, as she remained even in Veronese's day, a trifle Byzantine. It is in his series of pictures of the Life of St. Ursula that Carpaccio shows us the art he really delighted in, and it is nothing else than the painting in all its splendour and brilliancy of the life around him—the life of the richest and most magnificent city of

Europe. He is quite naïf and simple about it, has little science of composition, or knowledge of drawing—has no astonishing talent as a painter, even—only a love for life and a joy in setting down some image of the things he sees. He likes a romantic story, and above all he likes men and women and the clothes they wear. Each picture is a whole book of fashion-plates with so many figures that I have had to select a part of one only, for reproduction. As for his women, they have none of the intellectuality or lack of physical stamina of their Florentine sisters. They are wholesome, well-set-up persons, tranquil and rather stupid, one imagines, living the indolent life of the lagoons and ready, in the next generation, to assume the full-blown richness of what we know as the Venetian type of beauty.

They took no exercise, these Venetian ladies—they could not ride, and they did no more in the way of walking than a turn or two in the Piazza—they took infinite care of their complexions and grew sleek and white and massive; they treated their hair with washes and spread it out over a crownless hat to bleach it in the sun, and crimped it artificially till it rippled about their heads in little amber waves. They were sumptuous creatures, sleepy, and disinclined to exertion, content to sit in splendid garments and be adored. The type scarcely changes through the whole sixteenth century, except to grow more accented, bigger and blonder, as the years pass

CARPACCIO: "ST. URSULA LEAVING HER PARENTS"

by. The great Titian lived so long and painted so many of these rich beauties, and so consummately, that we are apt to think of the type as his creation, but it is the same in all the works of his contemporaries. One could choose a hundred examples of it for illustration almost as easily as one; we must content ourselves with two—one painted by Titian near the beginning of the century, one by Veronese near the end.

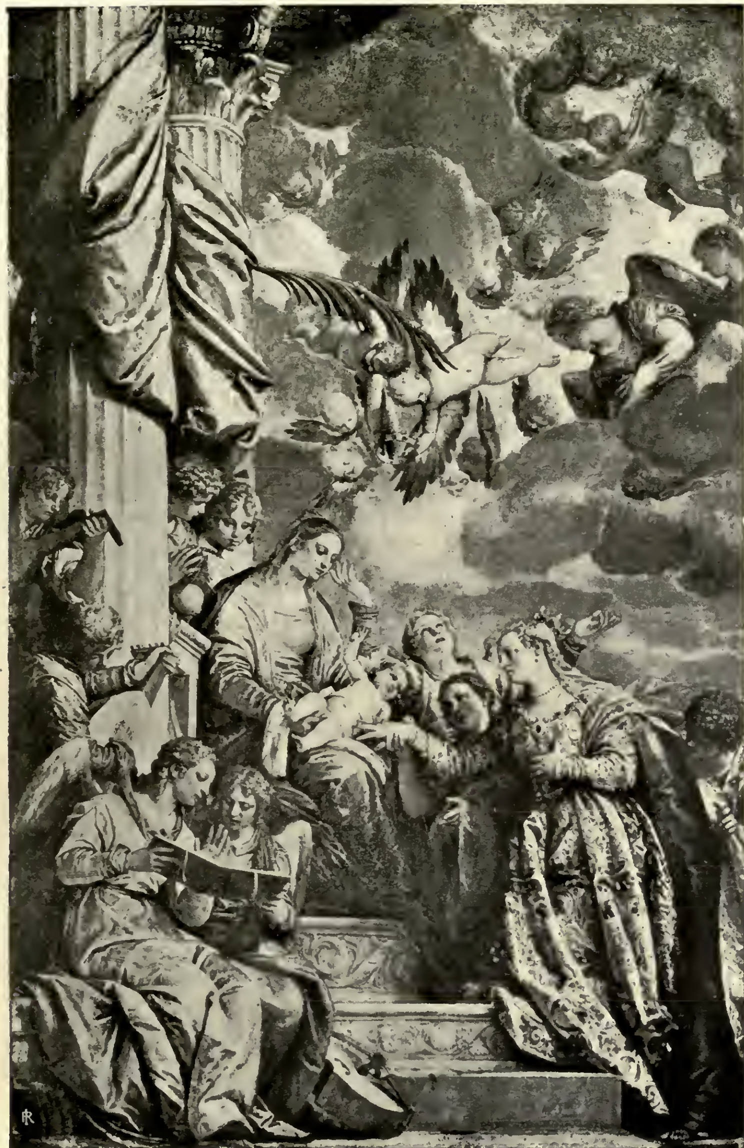
There have been many conjectures as to what Titian meant in the picture that is known to us as "Sacred and Profane Love." Almost the only thing we can be sure of is that he did not give it that title. Whatever may have been his intellectual intention, however, his pictorial conception is abundantly clear. He wanted to paint two beautiful women, one clothed, the other nude, and he made them as beautiful as he could and, inevitably, in the style of beauty most in vogue at the moment. It is a picture of his early time when he was still influenced by the romantic poetry of that wonderful youth, Giorgione; and it is one of the most purely lovely things he ever did. The draped figure is completely dressed, even to the ill-fitting gloves upon her hands, and is a complete record of the fashions of the day. The wide-flowing sleeves; the plain, short bodice with the gathered chemisette beneath; the ample skirt, pleated in at the waist and confined by a belt —these garments are much like those worn by Jo-

anna of Aragon, of whom this lady must be nearly a contemporary, but one fancies that the under-sleeves mark a transition to later modes. The hair with its heavy masses of soft and wavy gold is entirely Venetian, and so is the full oval of the face with its quiet, oxlike eye and ripe mouth—so, too, are the white throat and ample, creamy shoulders.

Veronese's "Marriage of St. Catherine" must have been painted some fifty or sixty years later, and the costume has entirely changed, but the type has only become increasingly opulent. This fair saint is far from the largest of Veronese's women—he was fond of matronly types, in which massiveness approaches stoutness, and many of these are unmistakable and intentional portraits. Neither is she the most beautiful, for his heads sometimes have an adorable distinction. But she is very characteristic of Veronese and of Venice—all the more so that she is intended to be ideal and that even her costume, one fancies, is a little "arranged" and not quite literally copied from the clothes actually worn by any living woman.

This great, good-natured, marvellously gifted Paolo could not help painting the women of his own city and his own time, and even the mystical St. Catherine becomes a plump Venetian under his hand. Taste in dress has become more artificial now, and women wear stiff stays and long waists, and their skirts have become more and more voluminous, while

TITIAN: "SACRED AND PROFANE LOVE"



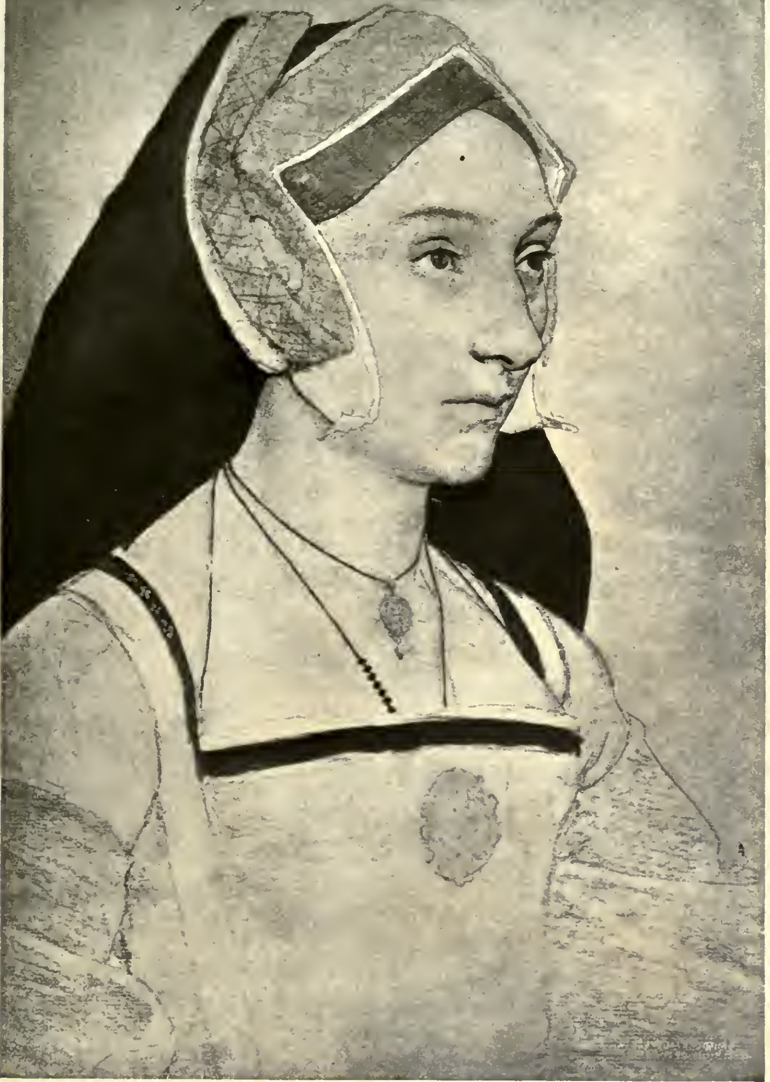
VERONESE: "MARRIAGE OF ST. CATHERINE"

the sleeves are long and rather close, with a little ruffle well down over the wrist. You may see the costume, exactly as it was worn, in many of the figures in Veronese's pictures—here it is slightly modified and made more rich and flowing. Nothing of the natural figure is visible, or even to be divined, but the head and neck and the hands. The fashionable type has become more blond than ever, and the golden hair is flaxen now; the hands are fat and dimpled, with pointed fingers, the pearl-encircled throat is whiter and rounder than ever, and there is a distinct hint of a double chin.

This picture is the gayest and the most rococo in feeling of all that Veronese painted, that having the least of the old Italian gravity and seriousness. No one was ever more able than Veronese; no one ever knew his trade more thoroughly; no one ever painted better. But he is the last of the great Italians, and this picture marks the end of the dominance of Italy in the fine arts. The unequal Tintoretto survived him a few years, but with the beginning of the seventeenth century the sceptre passes definitely to the Northern schools.

The painters of the north, from Jan Van Eyck downward, were essentially realists and portrait-painters, and all through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance the pictures they produced are little else than a series of elaborate illustrations of contemporary life and costume. But of all the realists and

all the portrait-painters that the world has seen, Hans Holbein was perhaps the most typically realist and portrait-painter. In the mid-sixteenth century, when Italian art is at its highest, he shows, in his most characteristic works, no Italian influence, no desire of idealism, no care for anything else than the accurate representation of men and women; and sheer honesty and good drawing have raised him on a pedestal of his own as high as any. This solid, stolid, German burgher, with no other gifts than a true eye and a sure hand, is one of the great ones of the earth—one of the unapproached and unapproachable artists. His truth-telling is so unflinching that one wonders, sometimes, how his patrons stood it, but he could see beauty as well as ugliness, and when he does do a beautiful head his entire veracity makes its beauty the more impressive. One is sure, as one is with no other painter, that the beauty was actually in the sitter, not invented by the artist. His drawings are often more impressive than his paintings (though he painted beautifully, too, after his fashion), because in the drawings the impression of nature is more immediately and more instantaneously rendered; and the wonderful series of drawings at Windsor make us feel that we see the men and women of the court of Henry VIII. more clearly than photography could have shown them to us. They are the most wonderful drawings in all the world, and one of the most wonderful of them is



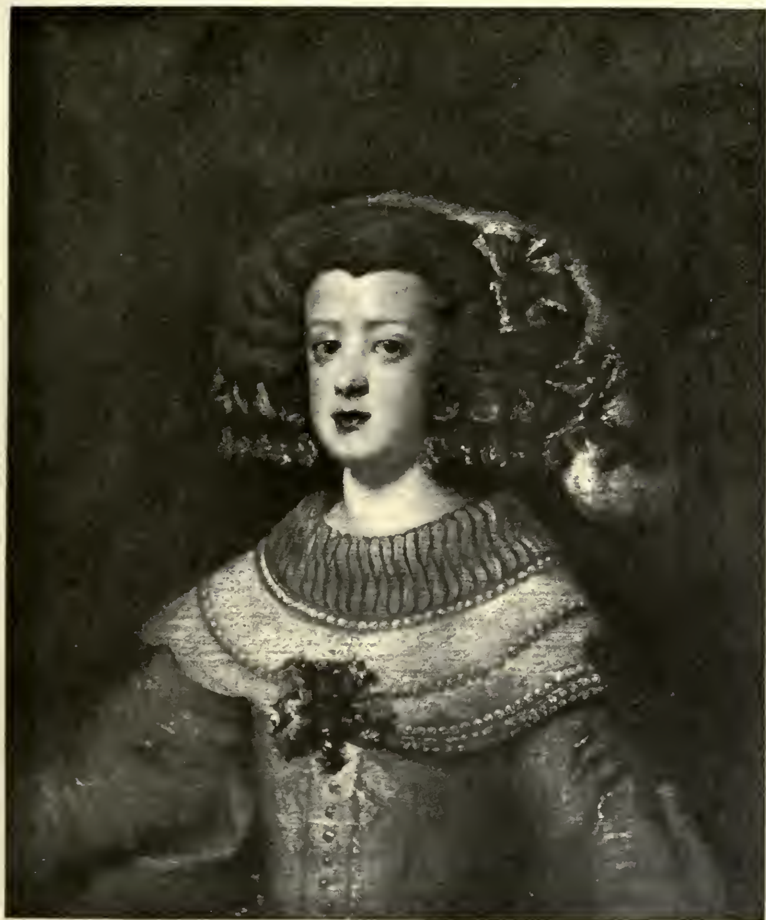
HOLBEIN: "THE LADY HEVENINGHAM"

that of the Lady Heveningham or, as it is written on the drawing, by some later hand, Henegham.

Little is known of the lady except that she was a cousin of Anne Boleyn, and the mother of a large family, but her face, of a chaste and purely English loveliness, is our possession forever. It is difficult, to-day, to conceive what great differences of type and costume were to be found in the Europe of that time by travelling a few hundred miles. Geography will never play such a rôle again. Compare the costume of these English ladies, with their elaborate caps completely covering the hair, their stiff stomachers and narrowed bust and shoulders, and the wing-like sleeves standing out stiff below, with the unbound locks and free-flowing robes of Joanna of Aragon or Titian's lady of the "Sacred and Profane Love," and it will seem as if one had gone back two hundred years, at least, and found oneself again in the Middle Ages. If you look at the paintings rather than the drawings this effect will be increased by the hard and minute style of handling which was partly Holbein's natural language, but was partly, perhaps, forced upon him by the primitive taste of the England of that day. Yet these English portraits are ten or twenty years later than the Italian pictures. The Renaissance crept very slowly northward, and it was for that very reason that it reached its highest splendour in Flanders when it was already dead in Italy.

Logically, we should deal next with glorious Peter Paul Rubens, but it will be more convenient to take him up a little later, when he can be placed in relation to his artistic posterity. Now we shall jump from England to Spain, where, almost precisely a hundred years after Holbein, flourished a painter who seems to have had no ancestry, and no immediate posterity, but whose influence to-day is greater than that of any other master whatsoever—the master from whom are ultimately derived the varying styles of Manet and Whistler and Sargent—Diego Velasquez.

Velasquez is as unapproachably the painter as Holbein is the draughtsman, and his inimitable freedom of handling is antipodal to Holbein's severity and jewellike incisiveness, but temperamentally the men had much in common. Both were realists and portrait-painters by nature, and neither found anything so interesting as life. The portrait of the Infanta Maria Theresa, in the Prado, is technically one of the world's masterpieces of painting, a miracle of lightness of hand and justness of eye, but its interest for us, just now, is in the complacency of a great artist before the most monstrous costume that was ever worn in the world. The stiffness of Italian costume in the later part of the sixteenth century is thought to have been due to Spanish influence; by the middle of the seventeenth the Spanish Court costume had become an extravagant carica-



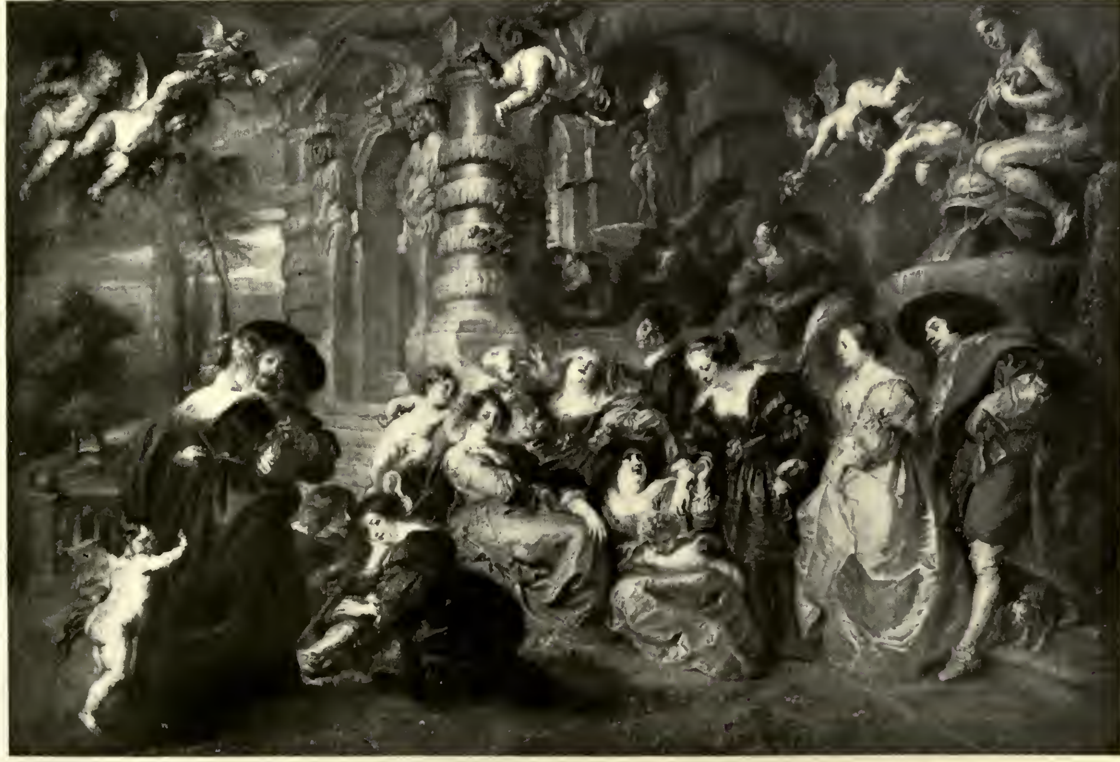
VELASQUEZ: "THE INFANTA MARIA THERESA"

ture of this stiffness such as no other nation has ever tolerated. The skirt is supported on a hoop which is built out sideways until it holds the arms nearly horizontal, and the figure is actually wider than high; the body is incased in a rigid sheath which shows no vestige of natural curves; the hair is puffed out on either side of the head and often tricked out with a multitude of little bows and feathers; the very face is daubed with red and white, and everything natural is suppressed that it is possible to suppress. Yet these extraordinary garments the great painter can copy with utmost precision, and in this little painted idol he can see, and make us see, the charm of living, human youth. Art has done many marvellous things, but nothing more marvellous than this.

In his own day Velasquez had little more than a local reputation and, in spite of his two voyages to Italy, remained merely the court painter of the King of Spain; but the first half of the seventeenth century is full of the glory of Peter Paul Rubens, Knight, Secretary to his Majesty's Privy Council, and Gentleman of the Household of her Serene Highness the Princess Isabella, the finest of gentlemen and the most exuberant of painters. He was admired and employed in Italy and France, in Spain and England, as well as in his native Flanders, and may be said to have been painter to all the courts of Europe. Directly, or through his pupil Van Dyck, he was the father of all the art of the eight-

eenth century and of much of that of the nineteenth. In every way he was one of the most splendid figures in the history of art. The taste of his time was for the pompous and the emphatic, and a great deal in his art is really academic, unchastened as it seems to our more refined sensibilities; but his abundant vitality is his own. He covered acres of canvas with gorgeous allegories, painted a whole figure from top to toe in a morning, tranquilly and easily, and went out to ride in the afternoon. His several great series of historical paintings devoted to the glorification of Marie de' Medici or another, his altarpieces and colossal decorations and mythologies, have ceased to please the world very greatly, magnificent though they are as revelations of power. To us, with our changed tastes, they ring a little hollow, and their vigour is marred by what seems to us coarseness, though queens and princesses saw nothing wrong in them. Critics and students of art will always admire them, but the world has turned to another part of the great man's work for its pleasure—a part of it which he produced to please himself, the surest way to please others.

At fifty-three Rubens took for his second wife a girl of sixteen, Helena Fourment, radiant with youth and beauty, whom he adored. He was rich and had a fine position, was growing elderly and gouty, and was tired of playing ambassador and of painting enormous pictures to order. He knew every-

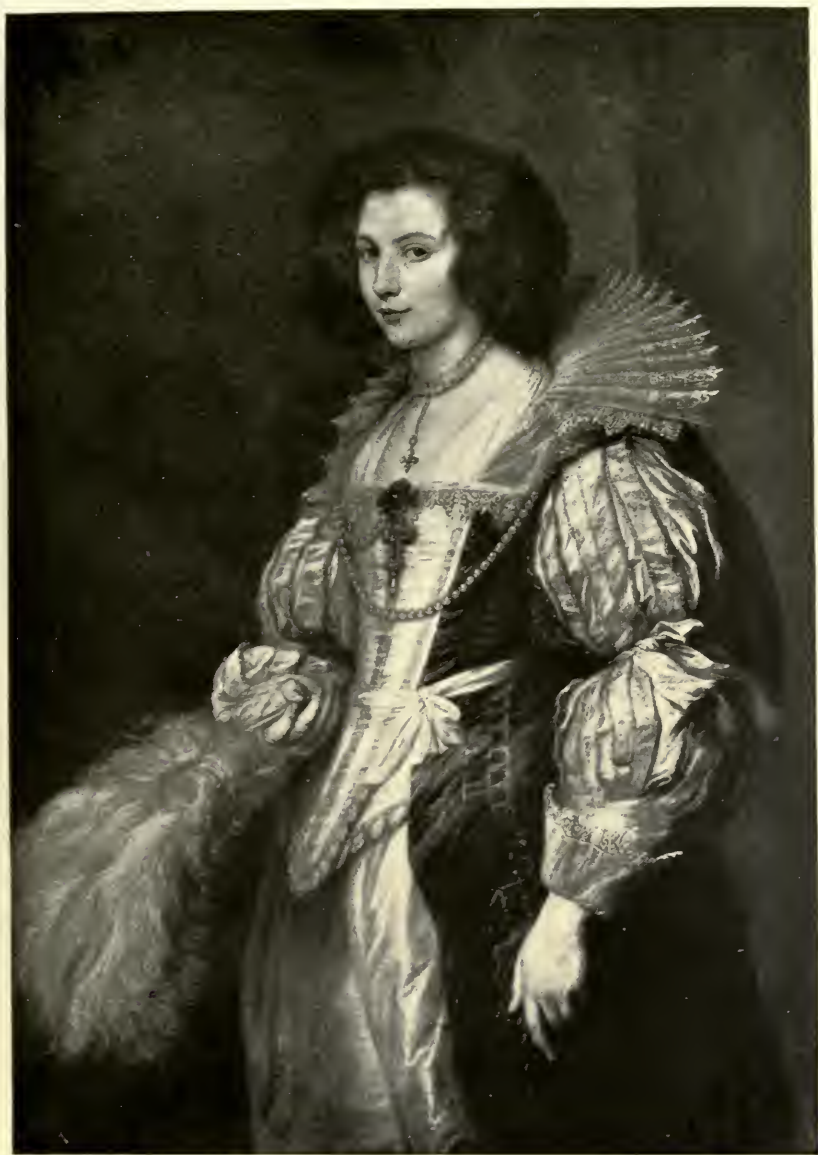


RUBENS: "THE GARDEN OF LOVE"

thing that was to be known of the art of painting, and he laid all his skill and experience at the feet of his young wife, painting, for his own amusement, a series of portraits of her, and of smallish pictures in which she is ever the principal figure, which are scattered through the museums of Europe and which are marvels of delightful art. In them the love of one woman takes the place of an interest in all women, but the result is the same. He painted her again and again in all the splendid costumes which his wealth could afford her, and all the fashions in dress, from 1630, when he married her, to 1640, when he died, might be reconstructed from her portraits alone. Perhaps the most delicious of his pictures is that "Garden of Love," now in the Prado Gallery, in which there seem to be half a dozen Helenas, each more fascinating and more richly dressed than the others. It was painted in 1638, only two years before the end, and it was to such adorable "frivolity" that the greatest master of the time devoted the ripened talent of his old age.

As to Rubens's best pupil, Van Dyck, he is so essentially the painter of elegance that it is hardly necessary to do more than name him. He was more than twenty years younger than Rubens, but he survived him only a year, and his portraits cover the same years as those of Rubens. The differences are those of temperament rather than of time. He had less than Rubens's strength, more than his refinement; his

work is aristocratic and distinguished, but not so full-blooded or so manly as that of his master. His English portraits, painted after 1632, grow languid and almost affected in their prettiness, and his greatest things, such as the Marie Louise von Tassis, here given, were painted before that time and therefore antedate the portraits of Helena Fourment; yet they seem to belong already to a later and more sophisticated age. This lady is very noble and very beautiful, above all very elegant and very perfectly gowned, and her head is living and human and expressive; but she has not the warm and abounding vitality of Helena, and though she is more the great lady she is not so bewitching. There is something of the robustness of the sixteenth century about Rubens even when he is gayest—there are a gentleness and melancholy about Van Dyck that mark him in advance for the favourite painter of Charles I. Above all, one feels that so Helena Fourment did look, though the genius of her husband heightened the effectiveness of nature; one suspects that this is the way Marie Louise wished to look rather than the way she really appeared. As to costume, the priority of the "Marie Louise" is shown in the more erect collar and the greater length of the stomacher and the sleeves, for during the seventeenth century the waist grew ever shorter, the collar more falling, and the cuffs crept gradually toward the elbow, while the bust was pushed higher and higher and was more



VAN DYCK: "MARIE LOUISE VON TASSIS"

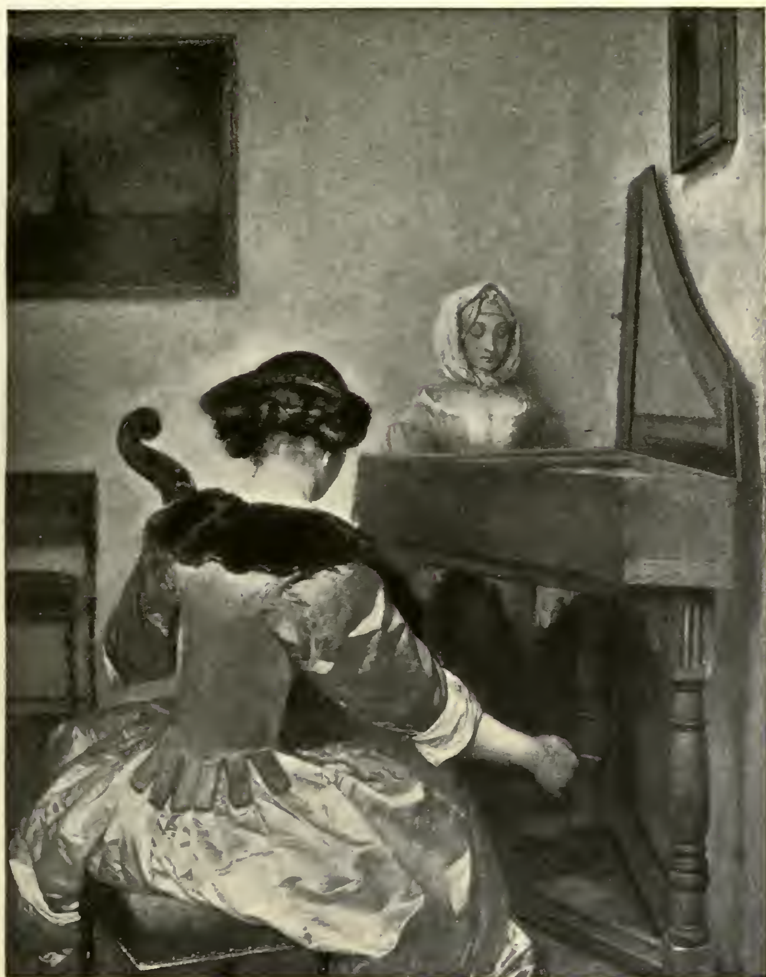
and more constricted by the straight and narrow stays.

In the latter part of the century the Dutch were as incontestably the first painters of Europe as the Flemish had been in the earlier, but we shall find little to our purpose in the work of the greatest of them all. Now and then Rembrandt painted a lady, but he soon lost his earlier popularity and few ladies came to sit to him, while for the purposes of his strangely poetic art an old Jew was a better subject than the finest ladies would have been. The other Dutchmen were realistic enough and had no scruples about elevation of subject and no fear of contemporary costume or triviality of incident. No school has more frankly painted the portrait of the everyday life about it than the Dutch—but the painters were mostly men of the lower class, and more at home in the pothouse than the parlour. Painting what they knew and loved, as did Carpaccio and Veronese, they have given us the impression that Dutch life was low and coarse, and we have all sympathised at times with Louis XIV.'s "*Eloignez moi ces magots!*"

Yet there was a life of refinement in the Holland of the seventeenth century, and there were painters to preserve it for us. The Dutch had among them some of the profoundest scholars of the age, they were delicate connoisseurs of painting and lovers of music, and the grave, orderly, dignified domesticity

of their life has been admirably painted by some of the most perfect craftsmen that ever handled brush. There is no swagger or brilliancy about these painters—their art is reticent and discreet, exquisitely neat and clean and finished, fond of half tones and the quiet light of interiors shut away from the street, mysterious in its processes and inimitably refined in its observation, above all, absolutely truthful and honest. Vermeer of Delft is the most delicate and sensitive of them—an artist of infinite distinction who saw subtle shades of sentiment and subtle effects of light and air never rendered by any other; Ter Borch is most the man of the world. He has painted his own portrait for us, a dignified little man with a large strong face under his big periwig, and shrewd eyes either side the big hooked nose, very properly dressed in black and grey with a rich lace fall, his toes well turned out—a most capable and respectable person who will paint you a thoroughly sound and workmanlike picture, altogether perfect in its way, which will last forever.

In "The Concert," of the Berlin Gallery, you have a bit of the life of his time just as he saw it. The room is plain, almost austere, and perfectly kept; nothing could be more distressing to these ladies, one feels, than untidiness. There is a tile floor, without rug or carpet, and the furniture not actually in use is ranged primly against the walls, upon which, in narrow frames, hang a painting or two—master-



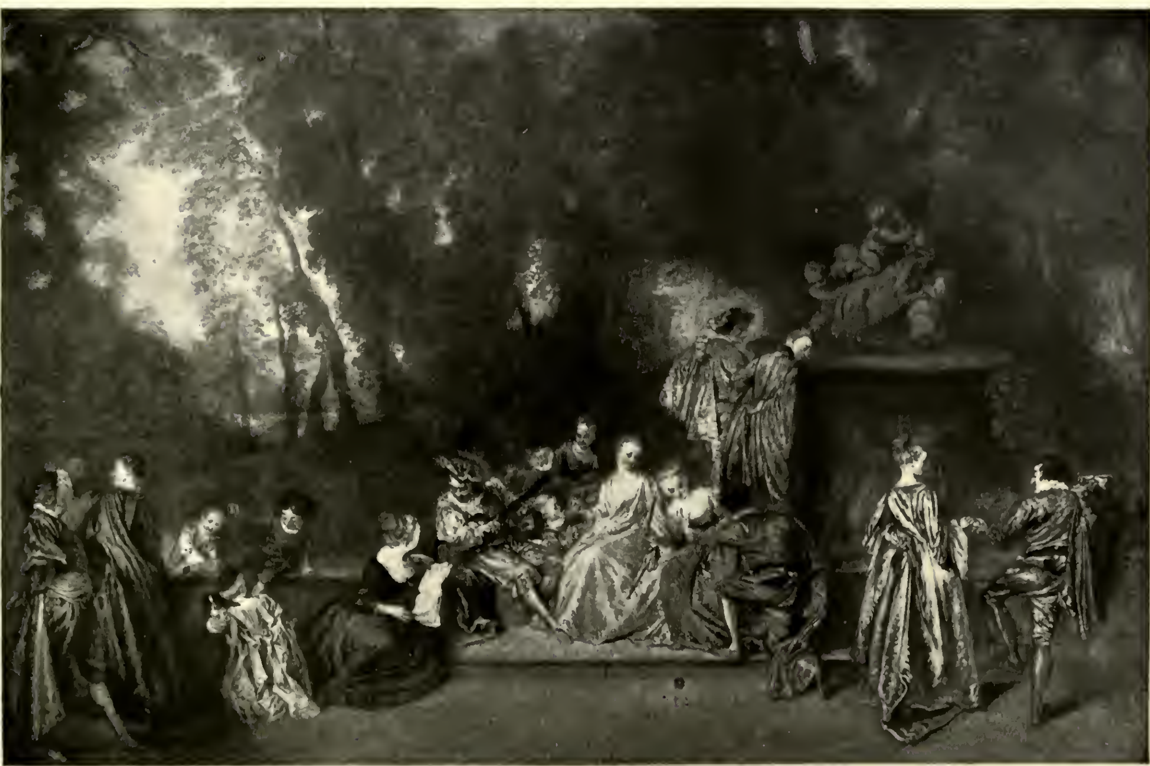
TER BORCH: "THE CONCERT"

pieces, likely enough. There is nothing anywhere that could catch dust or that might not be scrubbed as often as desirable. In this room sit two ladies—they are unmistakably such—making music. Their dress is rich and of expensive material, but quite plain and sober, and the conscientiousness of the artist has made you see almost the stitches with which it is put together. The 'cellist has her back to you, and you notice only the neatness with which her hair is dressed and the single pearl in her ear; the other is seen nearly in full front and has a charming face—much more beautiful than was ever common in Holland. It is a picture of peaceful, unexciting, but indubitably elegant leisure, which the great little man has painted, entirely real, yet with an element of idealism in it also—an ideal of decency and propriety not without its charm.

With the eighteenth century we must leave the Low Countries for France and England, and here something of a surprise awaits us. The eighteenth century was undisguisedly, intensely, and intentionally frivolous. Its art was created for the amusement of court gallants and powdered marquises avid of pleasure and reckless of the "deluge" to follow. Here, then, if anywhere, we should expect to find the painters occupying themselves with *chiffons*, giving us the most accurate details of fashionable toilettes, painting the boudoir and its frail occupants with all exactness—and they do nothing of the sort.

We have idylls and ballets and masquerades—shepherds and shepherdesses or scenes from the Italian comedy—anything but plain statements of how people actually looked and dressed. Even the portrait-painters become untrustworthy, and we have great ladies posing as Diana or Venus or the Graces in something intended for classical drapery—often in very little of that. It is only Chardin, the painter of the bourgeoisie, who consents to give us, with almost Dutch perfection, some such record of actual life as the Dutch have given us. For the true dresses of the gentlemen and ladies of the day we must go to the caricaturists, who alone take life seriously.

The art of Watteau, with which the century opens, is founded, in ideal as in technique, upon that of Rubens, and Watteau did nothing all his life but play his variations upon the theme of "The Garden of Love"; yet how different the temperament of the two men, how different in sentiment the art they produced. Watteau was sickly, restless, morbid, unhappy, and while he learned his trade from the good-humoured giant of Antwerp, and even found in his works the type of his own compositions, he had none of that master's jovial realism and abounding vigour. Life as it was, was hateful to him, and the real jangled his sick nerves. He took refuge in an operatic paradise of his own invention where nothing was too gross or solid and no one was ever in earnest, where life was a kind of perpetual picnic



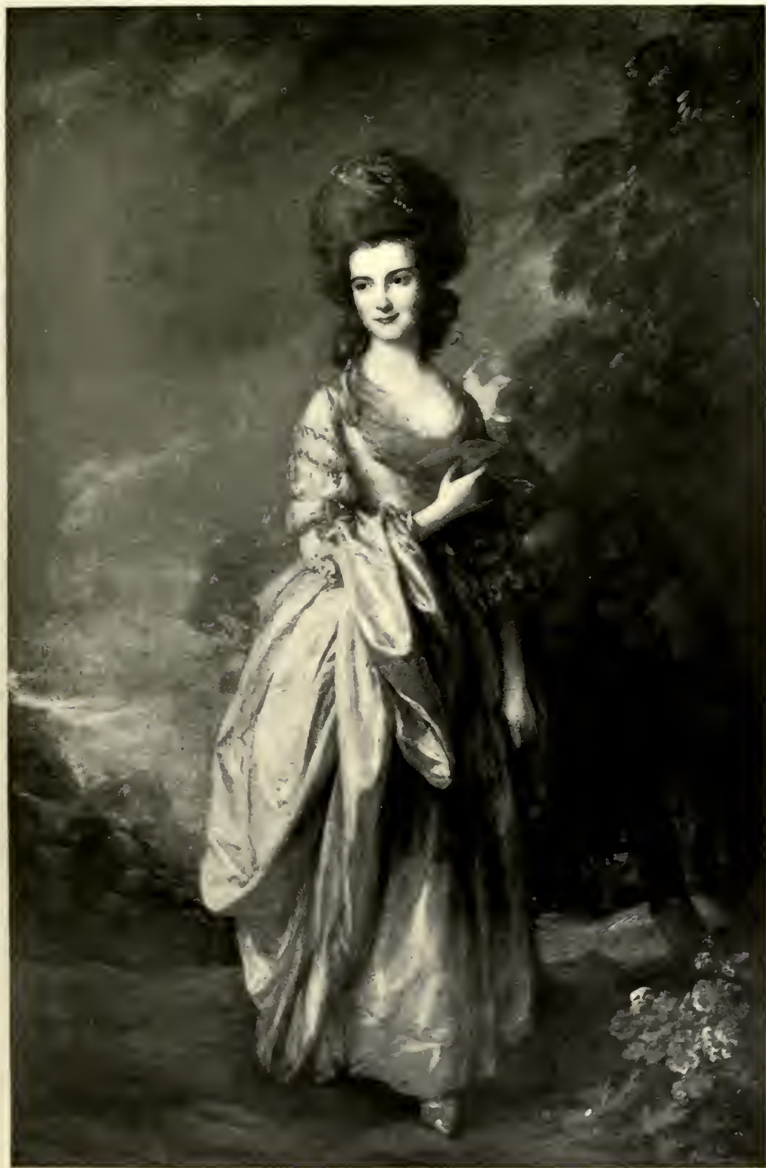
WATTEAU: "FÈTE GALANTE"

without the eating, where love was only a pretty imitation, and there was nothing more important to do than to sit under graceful trees or dance a languid minuet—far from him the mad whirl and robust gaiety of Rubens's "Rondo." His men are habited in a dress reminiscent of the past century—a dress that passed, in the theatre, for the costume of a peasant—or in the still more frankly conventional costumes of "Gilles" or "Mezzetin"; the dress of his women is probably more like that of reality, and he has given his name to the "Watteau plait" which so many of them wear. Among the most charming things he did are numerous chalk drawings, rapidly jotted down from nature,—some as studies for pictures, more, perhaps, for the pleasure of doing them—which are unique in the world for the expression of feminine grace and elegance. They are as masterly in their way as the grandest things of the Italians, and as ideal—only it is the idealism of another age when the feminine type has become fragile and subject to the vapours. Only once, in the signboard painted for his friend Gersaint, the picture dealer, has he given us a bit of actual life.

The love for masquerade is almost as marked in the great English portrait school of the latter part of the eighteenth century as in the school of Watteau. The English were neither so light-minded as the French, however, nor so clever, and the masquerading took on a different tinge. Reynolds tried to imitate

the great Italians, talked of the "grand style," and was always attempting classical draperies and painting young English ladies as "Nymphs adorning the Statue of Hymen," or the like. Gainsborough, with less learning and more temperament, put his "blue boys" into Van Dyck costumes and his women into standing collars. Both were true painters, at a time when there was no longer any real painting elsewhere in Europe, and they had a race of healthy and beautiful women for models. Even their theatricalities are charming, and when they painted their fair sitters in their habits as they lived, they are irresistible. In such a portrait as that delightful one of Mrs. Beaufoy, the headdress alone shows the artificiality of the century that was passing; the rest of the costume is simple and pretty enough, and the lady looks wholesome and happy, though her shoulders are narrower and more sloping than we should like them in this day of athletic women.

The French Revolution swept away all the frivolities of court life and the pretty play-acting of the Trianon—and it swept away the art of painting, too. That stern republican, David, became dictator of the art of France and of the whole continent of Europe. According to him colour was meretricious and technical brilliancy vulgar, if not immoral. Art should deal only with elevated subjects and in a chaste and lofty style. Nothing that had happened since the fall of the Roman Republic was worthy of



GAINSBOROUGH: "PORTRAIT OF MRS. BEAUFOY"

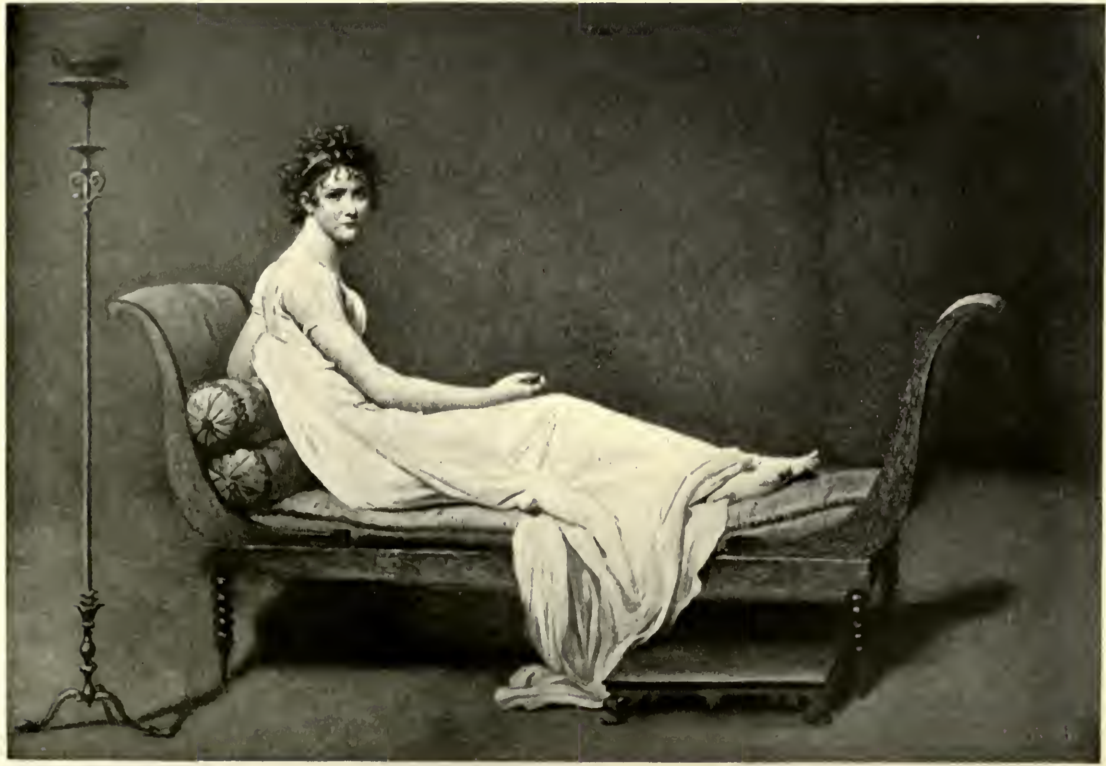
representation, and the artist should devote himself to drawing helmets and kneepans after the antique. His style was even more rigid and academic than that of the most pompous of the academicians of Louis XIV.'s time, and though one must respect him, it is difficult to conceive that any mortal can ever have enjoyed his cold, grey pictures of straddling heroes—his "Oath of the Horatii" or his "Leonidas at Thermopylæ." Yet there was a painter in David, if not a great one, and he shows himself when the theoretician, now and then, relaxes the severity of his rule. At the Emperor's command he painted a contemporary subject in the "Coronation of Napoleon" which is still interesting, if not inspiring, and he painted a few portraits which will always please.

First of these is that of Madame Récamier, forever charming on his canvas as she was in life. Never was David's art so supple, so humanised, as in this picture, where he was directly under the spell of a warm and living personality—never was his hand so light, his method so nearly that of a painter. His science is subordinated to the rendering of life, his draughtsmanship employed to convey an adequate impression of the slenderly graceful figure before him. There is little colour in the picture, but there is none of the hard finish and rather brutal solidity of his ordinary handling—everything is indicated in thin and almost transparent rubbings, apparently at

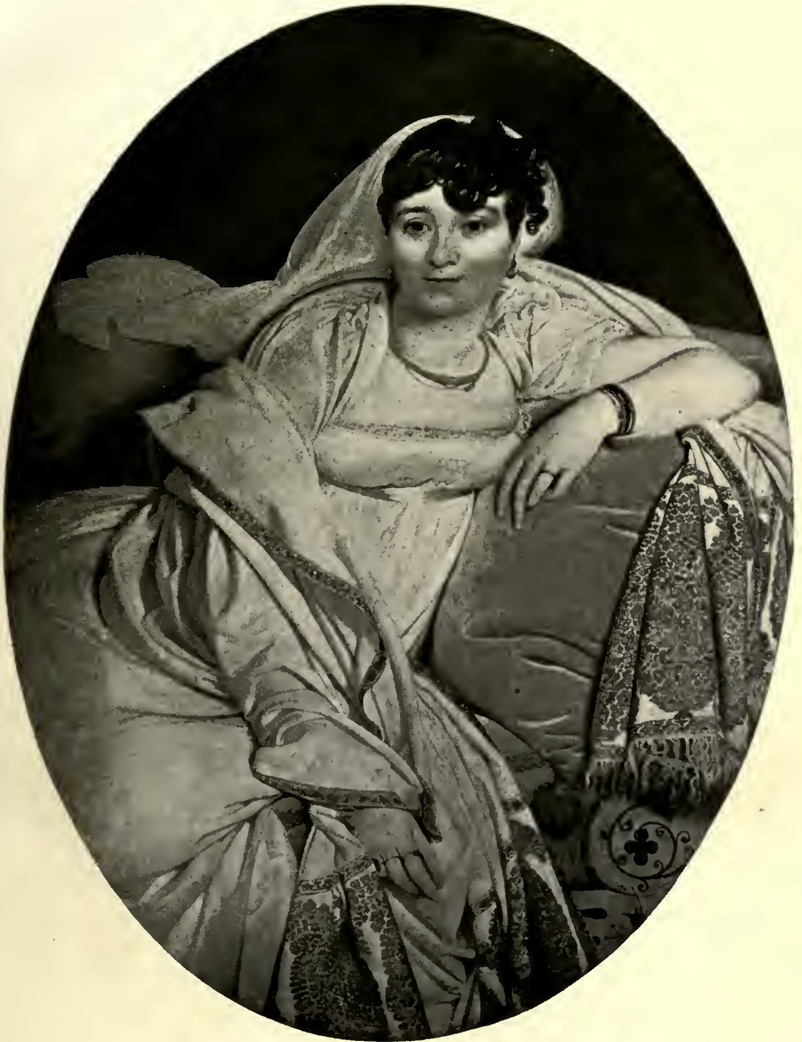
a single sitting. Perhaps the portrait was never finished; if so we must be thankful that accident, or perhaps his own realisation that he had already done better than his best, prevented his ruining it, as he must infallibly have done had he attempted to carry it further.

But if the picture is a capital instance of the influence of life upon art it is no less an instance of the influence of art upon life. The theories of David had profoundly influenced the world about him, and the austerity of these bare walls, the slender forms of the furniture, the classical tripod with its lamp; the simple white robe, bare feet and arms, and coiffure imitated from the antique—these things are the tribute of the age to a powerful artistic personality.

The foremost of David's pupils was a far greater artist than his master. David's drawing is coldly correct, that of Ingres is exquisite. He is one of the great masters of line, and the beauty of his lines and of the patterns they trace is so great and so satisfying that one forgives him the hardness of his textures and the unpleasantness of his colour. It is not painting that he gives us, but it is art of a very refined kind like the cutting of Greek gems, and the "Œdipus," the "Source," the "Ruggiero and Angelica" are in their own way inimitable and among the most accomplished masterpieces of the nineteenth century. Yet it is doubtful if Ingres is not surer of immortality for his portraits than for anything



DAVID: "PORTRAIT OF MME. RÉCAMIER"



INGRES: "PORTRAIT OF MME. RIVIÈRE"

else. The little portraits in lead pencil which he did as "pot-boilers" are almost as wonderful as Holbein's portraits in chalk, and the painted portrait of Bertin is one of the most astonishing renderings of a personality and a physique that the world has seen. For though he was a classicist by training, Ingres was a realist by nature, an observer of extraordinary incisiveness, strong, veracious, eagle-eyed, and while he had far more than Dürer's sense of beauty he has all his relentless accuracy. If, as he said, "drawing is the probity of art," never was a man of more rigid probity. The dogmas of classicism kept the observation of contemporary life out of his pictures—they could not keep it out of his portraits, and therefore there is more of Ingres in the portrait of Madame Rivière than in "The Source." It has all the beauty of arrangement, all the severity of line, all the look of something carved in imperishable material, fixed forever and as irrevocable as inevitable, which is the charm of his art for those who care for it; and it has, besides, the interest of the real, of the woman of flesh and blood immortalised in her actual charm, dressed as women did dress at the end of the Napoleonic period.

Between 1820 and 1830 men began to wish to paint again. They were no longer willing to do without colour or the delight of free and beautiful handling, and they tired of restricting their art to the delineation of Greek and Roman heroes with straight

noses and curly hair. The love of light and colour took them to the Orient, or they looked at the pictures of Rubens and Veronese and began to paint the Middle Ages and the Renaissance because they loved silks and brocades better than abstract draperies. Gradually it dawned upon them that the old masters had painted their own times and that they might do the same. They went into the fields and painted the landscape they saw there—Troyon began to paint cattle, Millet to paint peasants, Courbet to paint the bourgeoisie. Finally, about 1860, they dared again to paint the fashionable lady, not merely in portraiture, but as the subject of a picture. The last of the academic restrictions on the subject-matter of art was swept away.

And so we come back to the name with which we set out, that of Alfred Stevens, for no man has painted the modern woman of fashion so well as he. A Belgian by birth and early training, a Parisian by choice, he combined the wit and elegance of his adopted city with something of the vigour and the feeling for beautiful painting of the old Dutch and Flemish schools, the result being an art of his own with a flavour unlike any other. Manet and Whistler were just beginning their careers when Stevens was doing some of his best work, for there is a charm in the sound and quiet painting of the sixties that I do not find to the same extent in that later work which shows him as the cleverest of virtuosi. Ter Borch

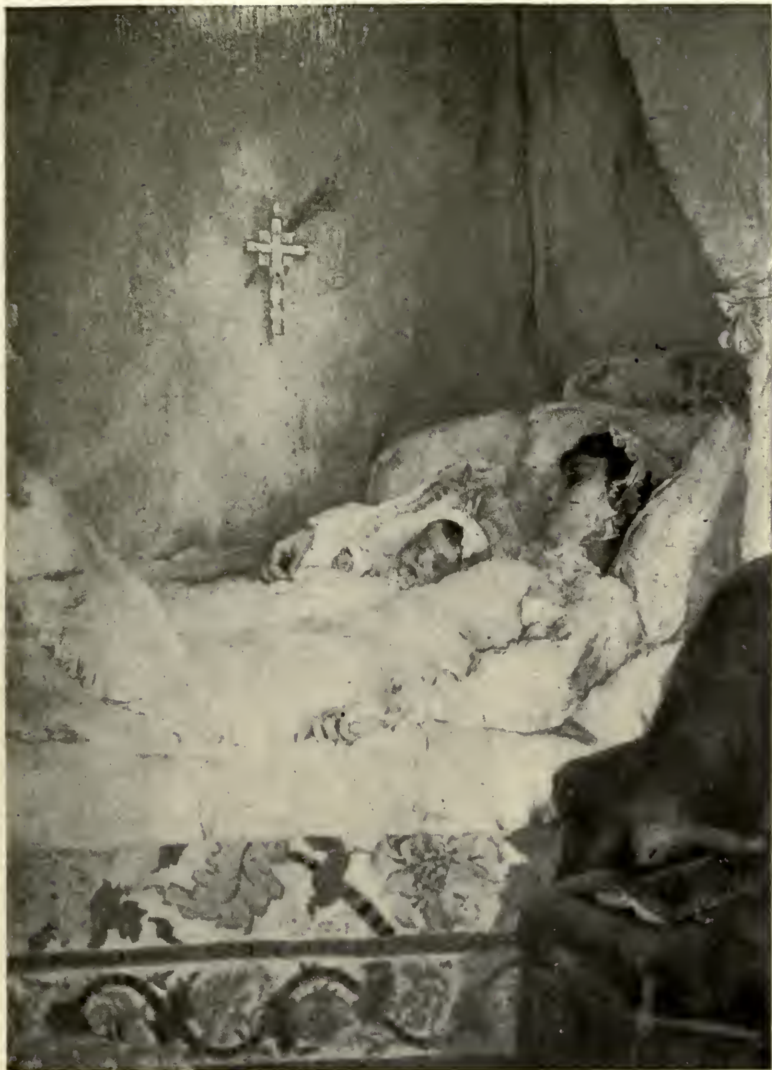
STEVENS: "UNE VEUVE"

Through the courtesy of Martin A. Ryerson, Esq., of Chicago, the owner of the original

or Vermeer, who told no stories, might not have understood the delicate mixture of irony and sentiment in such pictures as " Une Mère " or " Une Veuve "— they would hardly have cared for the fine literary skill and the exquisite restraint with which the incidents are presented—but assuredly they would have appreciated the just notation of light and colour, the perfect drawing, the absolute rendering of substance and texture. They would have seen in him a craftsman of their own lineage, a pupil of whom they might be proud. In " La Dame Rose " of the Brussels museum, they would have found a picture after their own hearts, and while they might miss something of its serious beauty in his later canvases, neither they nor any true painter that ever lived could fail to admire the combination of subtle tone and colour with extreme ease and brilliancy of manipulation which makes them almost unique in art. For us there is the added interest in the earlier paintings that the dresses of forty years ago have already become historic costumes, and have taken on, as such, a picturesqueness which we cannot yet find in those of twenty years later, which are merely out of fashion.

In this cursory review of the art of four hundred years I have given no new facts, and said nothing that is not perfectly well known. Neither is there anything new in the moral I would draw from it. For that moral is not, as might be supposed, that art

should deal with the fashionable life and the fashionable costume of its own time—it is only that it may do so. These men were not great painters because of their subjects. There have been equally great painters who dealt with other subjects, and painters who dealt with the same subjects who were not great at all. It is not what one does, but how one does it that is of importance, and if one paints well it does not matter what one paints. The only rule as to choice of subject is that one should choose what honestly interests one, not what one has persuaded oneself ought to be interesting. If a man likes the nude let him paint the nude; if he likes peasants let him paint peasants. If he finds that fashionable life interests him more than anything else, and affords him opportunity for the exercise of his peculiar abilities, let him paint that. Our business is to enjoy what he has produced, and to estimate its value by the amount and kind of the artistic qualities it contains, not by the subject which has given occasion for their display.



STEVENS: "UNE MÈRE"

Through the courtesy of William Chase, Esq., of New York, the owner of the original

IV

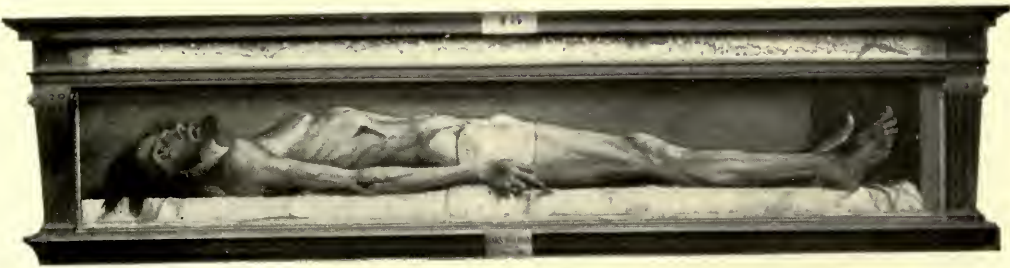
HOLBEIN

HOLBEIN

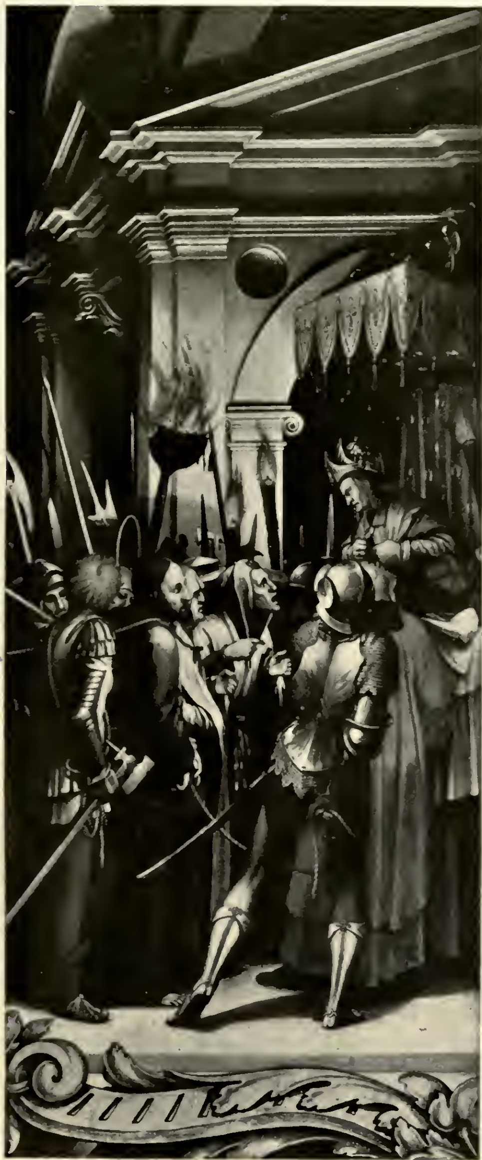
THE name of Holbein calls up immediately in the mind a series of portraits somewhat stiff in attitude, rather primitive in their lack of light and shade, but incomparable in their masterly draughtsmanship and their expression of character. To the true connoisseur it calls up first of all, perhaps, that wonderful series of drawings preserved at Windsor Castle, studies for portraits of persons connected with the English court, which are even more remarkable than the paintings executed from some of them for the masterful use of what seem inadequate means—drawings which express the full power of the sixteenth century in the technique of a hundred years earlier. Considered in itself there is something enigmatic in this contrast of matter and manner, but the puzzle becomes more baffling when one considers these drawings and paintings in connection with the early work of the man who produced them. We are too apt to forget this early work. When we begin to study it we find that Holbein's development was in the reverse direction of that of almost all other artists, that his methods grow more primitive as he grows older, and that his

earlier productions, if we except the mere prentice work of his extreme youth, are much freer in movement, richer in composition, fuller in light and shade, every way more *modern* than the works of his full maturity.

Born at Augsburg, almost at the very end of the fifteenth century, twenty-six years later than Dürer and twenty years after the date usually given as that of the birth of Titian, Holbein was a child of the high Renaissance and, slowly as the Renaissance crept northward, fell early under Italian influence. At Basel, where he began his independent career at about the age of seventeen or eighteen, this influence must have been greatly strengthened in some way, and reaches its visible height about 1526, just before his first journey to England. The multifariousness of his work during these early years is somewhat surprising to us who have learned to think of him as almost exclusively a portrait-painter. Here is an all-around artist who can turn his hand to anything and, in the absence of steady employment, is very willing to do so. Book illustrations, portraits, designs for stained glass, anything from initial letters to altar-pieces, he is glad to do, and he does them with a wonderful fertility of invention and a precocious mastery. The earliest are decidedly German in accent, reminding one not a little of Dürer, but almost from the first there is a finer taste in ornament and in architecture, a greater freedom of movement,



HOLBEIN: "THE DEAD CHRIST"



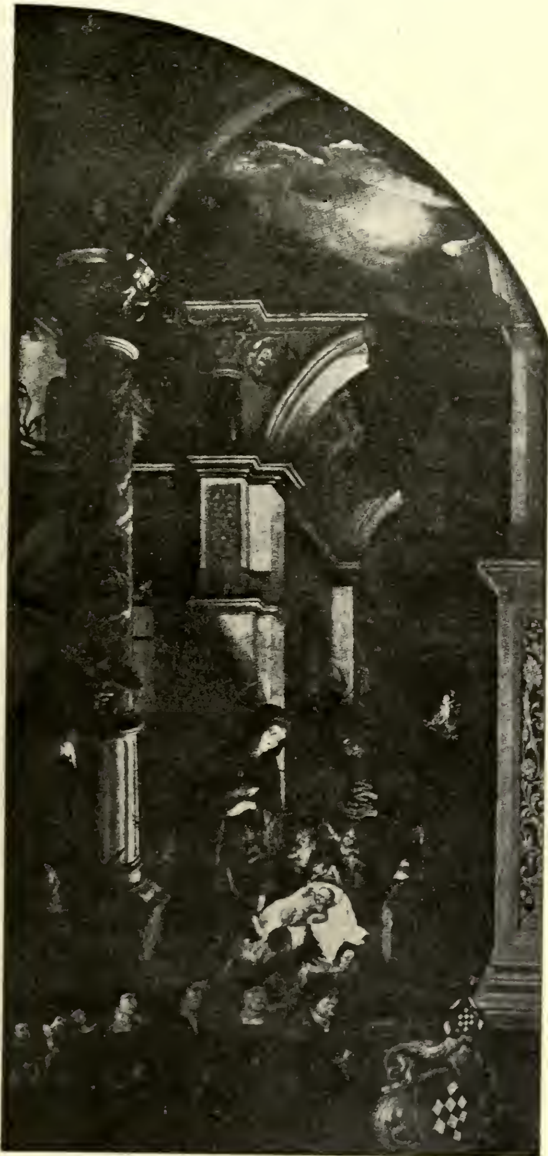
HOLBEIN: "CHRIST BEFORE PILATE"

a more Italianate costume, and a more concentrated composition; while the study of light and shade becomes early a visible preoccupation. There is a whole series of his cartoons for glass in the museum at Basel which are worth attentive study, and the designs for the shutters of the Basel church organ, there preserved, seem to me admirable in character, in decorative propriety and in beauty of line—far finer than anything of the same sort by Dürer or by any other Northerner. As for his little woodcuts of the "Dance of Death," every one knows them and every one admires them. No one else has packed so much action, so much energy, so much fancy into such small compass. These tiny blocks are among the world's masterpieces of design.

But let us concentrate our attention on a few things which show in a particularly clear manner Holbein's study of light and shade and the influence upon him of Italian art. In 1521, when he was twenty-four years old, he painted, probably for his own instruction, that extraordinary piece of realism, the "Dead Christ" of the Basel Museum. In conception this is sufficiently German or, one may say, sufficiently primitive—the lank body stretched out at full length and painfully studied in every detail, the ghastly face with glazed eyes and open mouth, are Gothic enough. Its originality is in the lighting, which is such as no primitive, German or Italian, would have thought of. Instead of the front light,

which casts scarcely any visible shadow, Holbein has used, to bring out the modelling, a sharp side-light from the right which rakes the meagre forms and, relatively to the position of the head, becomes a lighting from beneath, throwing the whole face into shadow except the underside of brows and nose and upper lip. Turn the picture so as to bring the figure upright and you have precisely that effect, as of an actor before the footlights, which still seems piquant to us in the work of Degas and rather startlingly modern in the portrait of General Borro, usually attributed to Velasquez. The next year Holbein painted the "Madonna of Solothurn," a grand composition, noble and simple in its *ordonnance*, with nothing particularly novel in its lighting, but with no remnant of primitiveness and nothing peculiarly German about it, unless it be the overcomplication of fold in the lower part of the Virgin's mantle or something in the type of her head. It is a picture which reminds you of no special Italian master, but might almost pass for the work of some unknown Italian, and has not nearly the local and national accent of the "Meyer Madonna" of four years later.

In the next few years must have been painted the eight scenes from the Passion on the wings of an altar-piece, in Basel, the "Touch Me Not" of Hampton Court, and the "Nativity" and the "Adoration of the Magi" in the church of Freiburg in Breis-

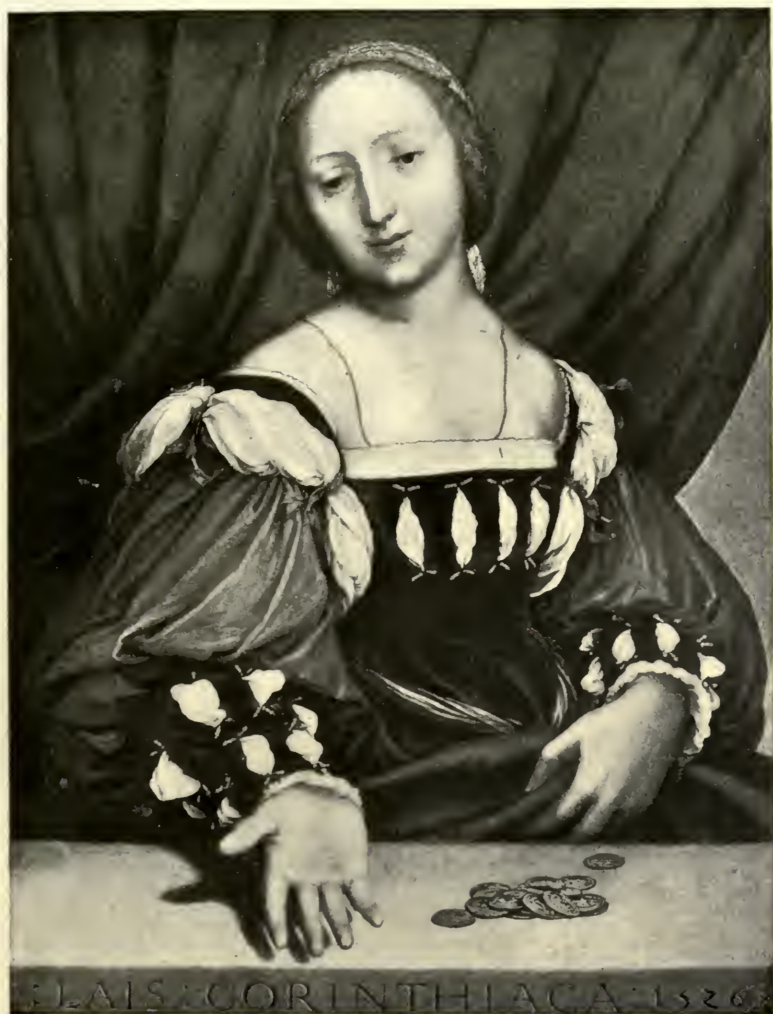


HOLBEIN: "THE NATIVITY"

gau. The "Touch Me Not" has almost a Venetian air, both in types and costume and in the simplicity of its composition and the gravity of its masses, while the brilliant interior lighting of the tomb, in the setting of dark rocks, is altogether surprising. The scenes from the Passion, crowded into their narrow upright spaces, are full of small figures in turbulent action, of audacious foreshortenings, of torchlight, moonlight, all kinds of light that are violent and unwonted, of things that suggest Tintoretto more than they resemble anything done up to that time. But it is the "Nativity" of Freiburg that shows us Holbein the innovator more clearly than any other work. It is a night scene and the light comes from the holy child, as in Correggio's famous painting in Dresden; but in picturesqueness of effect, with its vast shadows wavering up the ruined columns, its weird lights flickering into the faces of the spectators and bringing out the broken arches against the deep sky, where, clear at the top, the moon breaks through fleecy clouds and shines serenely down upon the group beneath, it far outdoes Correggio. Truly a remarkable picture to have been painted in the first quarter of the sixteenth century by a young German painter in a Swiss town far from the art centres of the South.

In these days one is never sure that an accepted attribution shall not be upset or an accepted date altered, and it is possible that I have taken too much

for granted, but I imagine there can be no doubt about the "Meyer Madonna" and the "Lais Corinthiaca" of 1526, or the "Venus and Cupid" which so closely resembles the "Lais"; and these pictures alone are sufficient to show Holbein's submission to Italian influence and his interest in chiaroscuro. In the "Venus," and in the still finer "Lais," there is no longer question of a vague and indeterminate influence from beyond the Alps; it is unmistakably the influence of Leonardo that has somehow reached Holbein. In expression, in modelling, in arrangement, the effect of some study, direct or indirect, of the work of the great Florentine is at once apparent. The pose of the "Lais" is admirably free and graceful, the subtly indicated smile and the exquisite modelling are altogether Leonardesque. The elaborate costume has little in common with that worn by the wives and daughters of the painter's burgher friends. The only fault one can find with the picture is that it is too reflective and not sufficiently local and original. One can see nothing German in it but a slight homeliness in the delicate features—nothing specifically Holbein's own unless it be the impeccability of the spacing and the composition, in which he never fails. And yet there is one piece of observation in this picture quite astonishingly novel—the cast shadow of the hand, upon the window-ledge which, as with the Italians, was a favourite device of Holbein's for closing the bottom



HOLBEIN: "LAIS CORINTHIACA"

of his composition, seems like a prophecy of Rembrandt.

Such was Holbein when, at the age of twenty-nine, he determined to go to England in search of more golden opportunity. An eclectic, a student of Italian art, a bold experimenter and innovator, what was England to make of him? An artist whose personality was not yet decisively shaped, but who might do anything, what was England to allow him to do? The English, who lived upon foreign artists for many generations and produced scarcely any of their own for two centuries after Holbein's time, have always made over the artists whom they have adopted, and they have generally made of them painters of portraits exclusively. For three hundred years they had no use for altar-pieces or decorations or subject pictures or even landscapes; the only works of art they would pay for were their own likenesses, and an artist must be a "face-painter" or starve. From the time he set foot in England, one may say, Holbein painted nothing but portraits. He was back in Basel from 1628 to 1631, with English money in his pocket, and at his old work of decorating the town-hall, doing miscellaneous designing and illustrating, even making some beautiful drawings for goldsmith work, but he seems to have found it impossible to make a living there, and in 1531 he goes back to England and his portrait painting, and does nothing else until he dies.

Fortunately for him, and for us, he was already an admirable portrait-painter and had produced, as early as 1523, such a masterpiece as the "Erasmus" of the Louvre. During all the time of his experimenting and painting altar-pieces and easel pictures he had had occasional portraits to do, and had done them with constantly growing power. At first they are German and Dürer-like, but gradually the influence of the old Netherlandish school becomes more pronounced in them, until the portrait of Erasmus of Rotterdam becomes entirely Dutch. It is beyond praise in its quiet perfection of drawing, its wonderful truth and character, its enamelled surface and beauty of sober colour. The eclectic had studied Van Eyck as well as Leonardo, and had almost surpassed him upon his own ground. The many-sided artist had one side that fitted the idiosyncrasy of the new public to which he was to appeal; it was that side only of his genius that was to be permitted further development.

It is only slowly, however, that the extreme of what we know as the Holbeinesque manner was formed. On his first visit to England he bore a letter of introduction to Sir Thomas More from their common friend, Erasmus, and the portraits he painted were of More's family and circle of friends. On the second visit he was for a time engaged on portraits of the German merchants, members of the Hanseatic League, who were settled in London, and

some of these portraits are among his most perfect achievements. We have no evidence of his official connection with the court of Henry VIII. before 1536, and it is as court painter that those portraits were produced which are most rigid in pose, most shadeless, most naïvely insistent upon every detail of ornament and costume. It is in the work of the last seven years of his life that the great painter becomes definitely the primitive he has generally been reckoned.

Let us, for the sake of contrast, go directly from the work of Holbein's first Basel period to some of the work he did as court painter to Henry VIII., picking up the dropped threads later. Placing the portrait of Jane Seymour or that of Anne of Cleves beside the "Lais Corinthiaca," one seems to have gone back in manner a hundred years. In place of the easy movement of the "Lais" we have the point-blank symmetry of the "Anne of Cleves," everything on one side of the canvas answering exactly to something on the other with almost the absoluteness of a tracing, or, if the face is turned in three-quarters, as in the "Jane Seymour," bust and shoulders and hips are all turned together, even the eyes following the general movement—a wooden doll could not turn otherwise. Nay, she is incapable of turning; it is the artist who has moved around her to get another view. In place of the beautifully drawn and painted costume we have clothes of an extraordinary rigidity,

with no detail slighted, each jewel or bit of pattern as near as every other, the whole thing perfectly flat, not only without modelling but without perspective. The gold is real gold-leaf, only slightly modified by glazings; the face is entirely without shadows and the hands cast no shadow on the gown; the background is a perfectly even, flat tone, representing nothing. Jane Seymour, Queen, is a queen of playing cards.

How far the artist could go at this period in the abolition of cast shadows is shown most clearly, perhaps, in the remarkable drawing of Sir John Gage, where the sharply projecting hat-brim casts absolutely no shadow, however narrow or diffused, on the brow below it. It is not a matter of the direction of the lighting—you cannot arrange light so if you try. It cannot be ignorance; the beauty of the drawing itself would convince you of that, if we had not his earlier work to prove to us that he knew more, rather than less, about chiaroscuro than the other painters of his day. It is unmistakably a matter of choice. The ablest painter out of Italy has deliberately set back the clock, and has reduced the art of painting, which he has been at so much pains to master, almost to the condition of mediæval illumination.

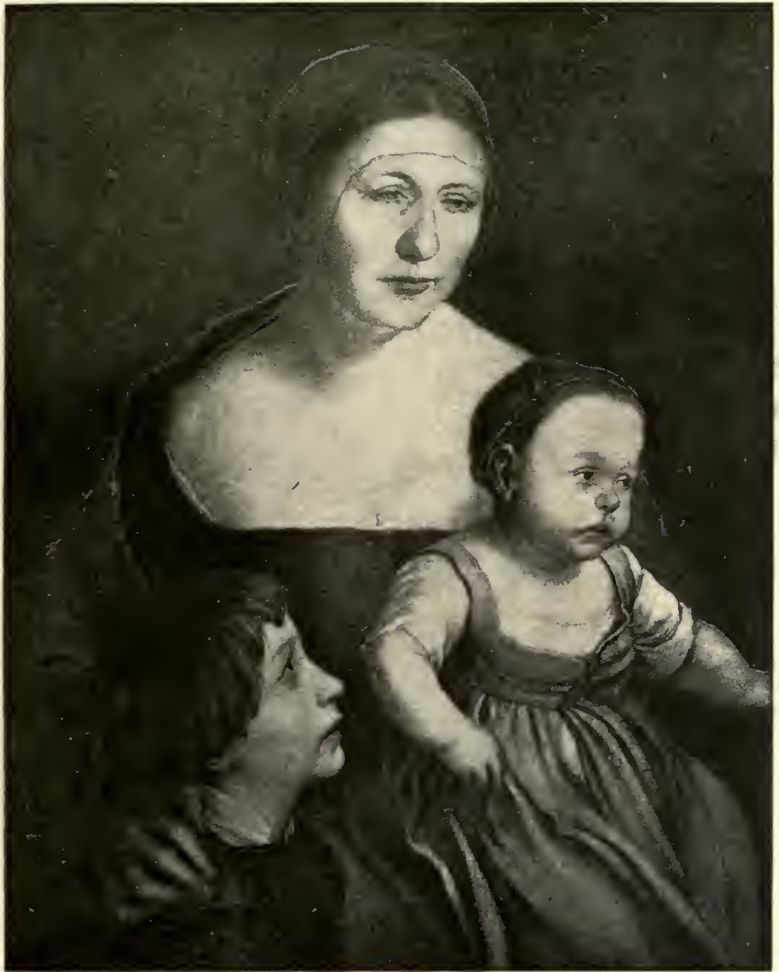
Was the choice his own or that of others? I think there can be little doubt that it was forced upon him by the taste of his royal master. When Holbein

HOLBEIN: "PORTRAIT OF JANE SEYMOUR"

HOLBEIN: "SIR JOHN GAGE"

came to England there were already certain Flemish miniaturists there, employed by the court—men whose art was directly descended from that of the old missal-painters—and one of these, Lucas Hornebolt, was a "king's servant" during the same years as Holbein and at a higher salary than Holbein received. These men painted in water-colour, in flat and brilliant tones, without light and shade, used gold freely, and employed the even blue background which gradually became the miniaturist's sky. They had so formed the taste of the court that, in the next generation, Nicholas Hilliard was expressly commanded to paint Elizabeth "without shadows." From one of these men, probably this same Lucas Hornebolt, Holbein, who had never painted in water-colour, condescended to take lessons, and in 1535 he painted the wonderful miniature of Henry Brandon, son of the Earl of Suffolk, which is in the Royal Collection at Windsor. It is much freer in attitude than that of his brother Charles, painted six years later, as if Holbein were reluctant to submit himself entirely to the reigning taste, but he had to learn to do so. It is in some of the miniatures which he must have painted—they are too fine to be by any one else—that the extremely primitive style of the portrait of Jane Seymour first makes its appearance. Apparently he found that he must apply it to his portraits in oil if he was to succeed at court, and the kind of humility and simplicity that had always

led him to accept any sort of task that any one was willing to pay for, led him to accept these limitations. That there was some constraint, however, would seem to be indicated by the fact that the primitiveness of his style is in direct ratio to the exalted station of his sitter. Even during his first visit to London he had painted Archbishop Warham in a much stiffer manner than he used for others, and had employed real gold on the mitre and crosier; and chains of office are always apt to be drawn with a rigidity very different from the ease with which he could do the scales and seals of a merchant. Whenever he is at home with a sitter of something like his own rank he paints his best, represents him in his own surroundings as he lived, gives him a certain freedom of movement and truth of light and shade, limiting himself only to the front light which even such a sitter demanded; and when he is back in Basel he paints his wife and children with such richness of shadow that, in our own day, Henner, as a travelling student, found himself attracted to the picture, and made a copy of it which might almost pass for an original work of his own. Even to the end he can paint a picture like the "Hubert Morett" at Dresden—a picture seen from directly in front but without the rigid symmetry of the "Anne of Cleves" —a picture with a green damask curtain for a background and with a sidelight on the face, giving it a degree of chiaroscuro which made its long attribu-



HOLBEIN: "HOLBEIN'S WIFE AND CHILDREN"

tion to Leonardo possible. It is only when he is called to paint royalty that he entirely effaces his knowledge of effect, his freedom of movement, his interest in the background, and produces a sort of mediæval miniature on the scale of life.

It is as if he said: "Very well. You want stiffness; you want absence of shadow; you want every detail of costume made out, each jewel, each link of a chain as prominent as every other. You shall have it so. I can do other things, but I can do this too, and you have a right to say what you want as long as you pay for it." Does this seem too much like commercialism? Holbein was a tradesman, but he was an artist also, and if he accepted the limitations set for him he produced such things under those limitations as had never been produced before —such things as we still admire even more than they were admired by his contemporaries. If he was to work at all it was necessary to do such work as was in demand, but he could show how such work ought to be done; and though he painted, as it were, with his hands tied, he could still paint better than any one else. He abandoned the beauties incompatible with the kind of art that was asked for, but he carried the beauties proper to it to their highest perfection. He even made an added means of expression of the very limitations of the art he practised, as great artists will, and the shadelessness of the portrait of "Jane Seymour" is so expressive

of the dazzling fairness of complexion which was her chief claim to beauty that it might well be thought, as it has been, to have been invented merely for that purpose; while the "miniature-like perfection" of detail in the costume has made of the whole picture an exquisite and splendid piece of decoration.

What would such an artist have produced if he had been allowed to do as he liked, and had continued to develop on the lines of his earlier work? He *did* develop, and, because he was a more mature and powerful artist at forty than he had been at thirty, the relatively primitive works of his last decade—he died at forty-six—are the finest and noblest things he did and are among the finest things ever done by any one. Compared with them such a picture as the "Lais" is the interesting work of an artist of promise—they are the ultimate expression of one of the greatest of artists, masterpieces destined to everlasting fame. Whatever he might have been, Holbein *is*, for us, the master of the Windsor drawings, of the portraits of Christina, Duchess of Milan and Hubert Morett and Georg Gyze—a painter of portraits in the Flemish manner and one of the greatest—in some ways *the* greatest—of portrait-painters.

What, then, are the qualities of these works that give them a special and unique greatness, differing in kind from that achieved by any one else? The most obvious of their qualities are their impeccable

HOLBEIN: "PORTRAIT OF ERASMUS"

HOLBEIN: "CHRISTINA, DUCHESS OF MILAN"

draughtsmanship and their absolute truthfulness—the most evident of Holbein's claims to immortality is simply the possession of a wonderful eye. His drawing is altogether without visible formulæ or reliance on acquired knowledge, without habits, entirely innocent, and accurate with an accuracy unknown before or since. The mere ability "to take a measure or to follow a line," as Fromentin phrased it, has in him reached the level of genius. There is a sheet of studies for the hands of the "Erasmus" that is an everlasting marvel. A single slow, even, trembling pen-line, tracing the contour with entire impartiality, dwelling on no one thing with more insistence than on another, and there are the hands before you—those wonderful hands, soft, firm, trained by years of beautiful penmanship, a little aged now and not so free or so steady as they have been—hands that no one who has studied the Louvre portrait can ever forget—as completely rendered in this slight sketch as in the painting itself. His drawings at Windsor are full of such miracles of vision, and they are evidently as truthful in the rendering of physiognomies—so truthful that one wonders, sometimes, that he found patrons. Evidently the Englishman of that generation wanted the truth, and Holbein gave it to him unrelentingly. He is the one painter whom one can never suspect of flattery—in spite of Henry's disappointment with the real Anne of Cleves after seeing her por-

trait—the one painter whose entire veracity is unquestionable. And this veracity gives a singular preciousness to his testimony when he gives us beauty; and he had an eye for beauty, too. One doubts if Titian's "Bella" was as fair as she is painted, if this or that beauty of Van Dyck's was as fascinating in the flesh as in his presentation of her; but one knows that the "Lady Lister" or the "Lady Heveningham" looked thus and not otherwise, that her penetrating charm was in reality hers—not lent her by the artist. No one, not even Velasquez, not even Ingres, has ever given us quite this vivid sense of likeness which, after all, is one of the chief aims of portraiture.

But though Holbein's drawings are thus accurate, far beyond the accuracy of the photograph, they are never photographic, never anything but works of the finest art. The great, humble, painstaking, clear-seeing artist seems to be bending every faculty to the realisation of fact; but all the while, by slightest, perhaps unconscious, modifications and imperceptible insistences, he is enhancing the flow of a line or subtilising the gradation of a half-tone, making out here and suppressing there, laying in a broad mass of tone where it will tell, or reducing another mass to mere outline. Above all, there is a sovereign instinct for the value of his material, for the intrinsic beauty to be revealed in chalk or pen-line or spaces of blank paper, that is equal to that of Whistler—it could

HOLBEIN: "PORTRAIT OF HUBERT MORETT"

hardly be superior. In the combination of rigorous truth-telling with sympathy and with a sense for beauty Holbein's paintings and drawings are alike —it is their abstentions, their apparent slightness, their economy of labour, their achievement of the utmost result with the least adequate means, that give the drawings a certain superiority over the paintings, and that make this set of sketches from the life one of the world's most priceless possessions.

Holbein's sense of propriety in the use of material did not desert him when he came to the manipulating of oil-colours; it simply expressed itself differently. The time of free handling, of the broad and loose touch, had not yet come in art, and if Holbein had the capacity to anticipate it he was not allowed to do so. Minute finish, carefulness, and the evidence of great labour were imperatively demanded of him; as a technician he is always of the school of Van Eyck. His handling is close—"tight" as the painters say—his surfaces are clean and smooth, but this united enamel seems to me almost more wonderful and inimitable than the slashing of Hals, the fat *impasto* of Titian, or the flowing slipperiness of Rubens. He conceived of a painted surface as something precious, jewel-like, indestructible, delicate as porcelain, fused as with fire—and he realised the conception with a consummate mastery. You cannot guess how it is done—the art that conceals art, the skill that hides

itself in its result, can no further go. There are portraits which have all Holbein's draughtsmanship and sense of character, but if they have not his marvellous handicraft, his mysterious perfection of surface, they are copies. It is by his unapproachable skill of hand that you shall most surely distinguish his own work from the replicas that were, no doubt, often made in his own shop; and he who does not feel a sensuous delight and a tingling of the finger-tips before one of Holbein's surfaces will never understand the man.

Some of the qualities of a great colourist Holbein possessed also. His choice of values is always perfect, his balance of light and dark tones admirable, while he is capable of grave or even splendid harmonies and of great purity and beauty of individual hue. It is a decorator's colour, employed in extended masses sharply distinguished from each other; not the broken colouring of the masters of light, but of its kind it has seldom been surpassed. But it is as a designer that Holbein is most absolutely the master. Every one of his portraits, each of his drawings even, is marked by the same mastery of composition that characterised his early illustrations —a mastery, within his narrower limits, as sovereign as that of Raphael or Veronese. Look at any scrap that he has left, look at any of the Windsor drawings, for example, and note how inevitably the head is in exactly the right place within the rectangle

of the paper, how exquisitely the filled and empty spaces are proportioned, how felicitously the lines of the body meet those of the enclosing border, how entirely whole, satisfying, and incapable of change it all is. Then look at his painted portraits. He has always the same problem to solve—the agreeable placing of a bust or half-length within a certain space—but with how many subtle and felicitous variations, with what exhaustless ingenuity, with what invariable adequacy and perfection, he solves it. Each composition has the inevitableness of a Greek gem. The man who could so arrange a simple portrait was a great decorative designer, and it scarcely needs the sketches, which are all that is left of his great paintings for the town-hall of Basel, to show us what was lost to the world by their destruction.

Such was "Master Haunce," who was valued for his knack at catching a likeness and his neat and careful workmanship—a profound artist, a draughtsman and a composer of the very first rank, and a colourist of no mean order. His more ambitious works have nearly all perished, and at the height of his power he was allowed to produce none. We must judge him, finally, by his portraits, and they are enough. If that other great portrait-painter, Raphael, had suffered a similar loss, and we knew him only by his portraits, a few sketches, and a few early pictures, would he stand as high as Holbein?

If any one of these portraits which are the great German's definite expression as we know him, were to be selected as the best available measure of his greatness it should probably be the wonderful "Georg Gyze" at Berlin. It was painted in 1532, at the beginning of his second stay in England, before the demands of fashion led him into his ultra-primitive style, and for one of those German merchants whose station was not sufficiently superior to his own to intimidate him; and while he made no such experiments in the lighting as he was given to in work done for his own amusement, notably in the family group of a year or two before, he was free to use his full power. He has chosen a plain front light, such as Van Eyck might have used, but he has realised the chosen effect to the utmost, with no arbitrary suppression of such shadows as he saw. The attitude is simple and natural, without affectation either of freedom or of stiffness; the execution minutely detailed throughout, but with none of the exaggerated flatness and sharpness of his illuminator's manner. All the multifarious objects on the canvas take their proper places, in spite of their crispness of delineation, and the picture gives a real illusion of depth and of the circulation of air. The merchant sits in his counting-house before a table covered with an Oriental rug and littered with writing materials. He is opening a letter he has just received, and pauses to look tranquilly at the spec-

HOLBEIN: "PORTRAIT OF GEORG GYZE"

tator without turning his head. Behind him are letters and documents in racks, books and boxes on shelves, seals, scales for weighing money, a hundred odds and ends; at his elbow three pinks in a graceful glass vase. He is a youngish man, strong, intelligent, a man of some refinement and love of beauty, richly dressed as becomes his wealth, but a simple burgher, with no airs of nobility about him. You have no doubt that it is the man himself—as a piece of characterisation, a portrait, it is inimitable; and what a work of art! The pattern is flawless; the line exquisitely restrained; the colour, from the apple-green of the wall to the deep rose of the sleeve, sumptuous and splendid; the flesh-painting actually luscious; the surface precious almost beyond belief. There is nothing finer in the world—there can be nothing finer. Within the limits he has set for himself, or which have been set for him by others, this simple, honest workman has attained perfection, and the attainer of perfection is forever among the immortals.

V

THE REMBRANDT TERCENTENARY

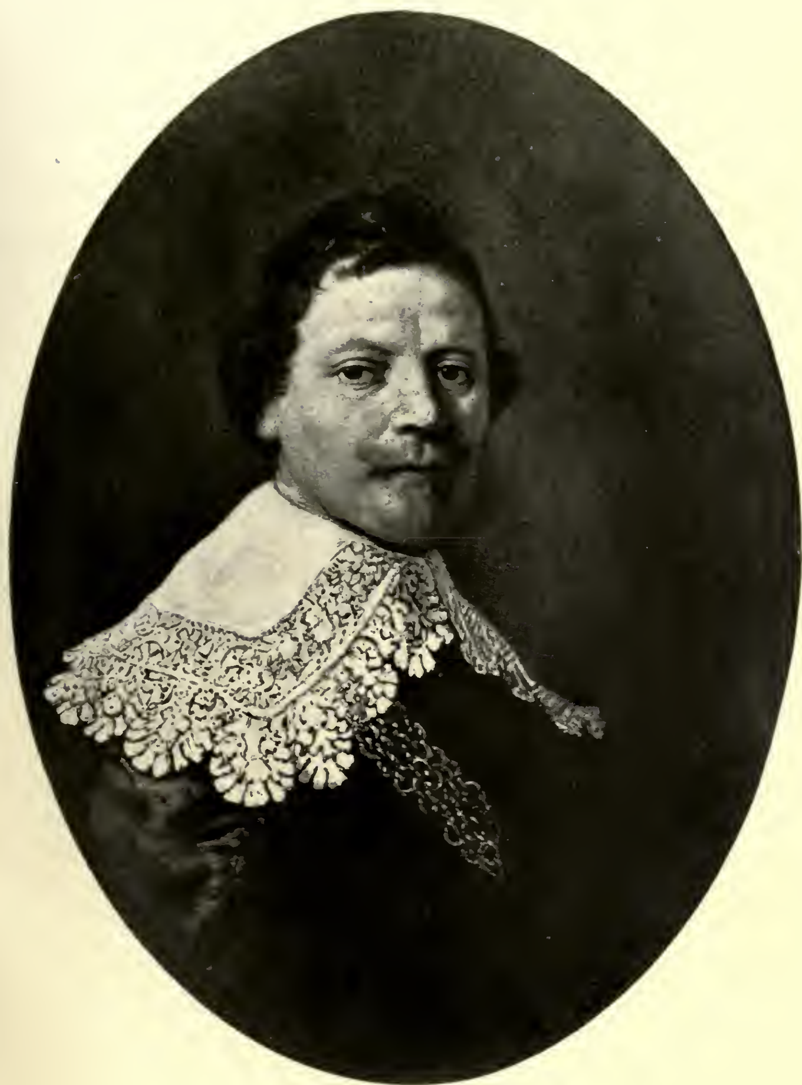
THE REMBRANDT TERCENTENARY

IT is perhaps natural and inevitable that we who are artists or who are especially interested in art should seem to overrate the importance of art to the world at large. We can hardly expect others to share our conviction that art is the only thing that really matters, the only expression of the human spirit which endures. And yet it is true that art, in some of its many forms, has preserved to us all that we care for of the nations and the civilisations of the past. The Greeks had an art more consummate, in many directions, than any other the world has seen; and in virtue of that art they are to-day a living influence, and their thoughts and their ideals are at the foundation of the thoughts and ideals of the civilised world. The Carthagenians were the founders of a mighty empire, but they had no art; and when Rome wiped out that empire their influence disappeared at once and forever with their power. Consider Rome herself, the mighty organiser, the mistress of the world, the nation of soldiers and statesmen rather than of artists, and ask yourself whether even Roman law and Roman institutions impressed themselves as deeply upon the consciousness of men as have Roman letters and Roman archi-

tecture—whether Virgil and Horace are not more certainly our rulers and our lawgivers than Augustus and Justinian.

The little country of Holland played, in her day, a great part in the world. She produced, also, a band of painters whose art, within its limits, was very perfect. Does the world, to-day, care more for William the Silent, or for Ter Borch? In Amsterdam, in the year 1669, died in poverty and obscurity a worn-out and prematurely aged bankrupt who left nothing "but some linen and woollen garments and his painting materials," and was buried at a cost of thirteen florins. In 1906 we, of another race, speaking another tongue, living in a country which has grown great in what was then an almost unknown wilderness beyond the sea, were met together in more than one populous city to celebrate the three hundredth anniversary of the birth of Rembrandt.

The world is often slow to recognise the greatness of the mightiest genius, and the countrymen and contemporaries of this unsuccessful painter cared no more to preserve any record of his life than did the countrymen and contemporaries of the prosperous playwright, William Shakespeare. Like that of Shakespeare, the biography of Rembrandt is a mass of guesses and conjectures, or of trivial and improbable anecdotes and legends. We cannot even be sure of his name, for we do not know why



REMBRANDT: "PORTRAIT OF A MAN"

(Himself?)

or by what right he called himself Van Ryn; nor of the year of his birth, for there seems to be about as much evidence that it was 1607 or 1608 as that it was 1606. What is really known may be told briefly.

Rembrandt Harmensz—Rembrandt the son of Harmen—was born on the 15th of July, in one of the years just named, in the town of Leyden, of a respectable lower-middle-class family. He was enrolled in the university of his native city, but how much he studied there we can only guess. His bent toward art must have declared itself early, for he began the study of painting about the age of fifteen with a bad painter, one Jacob van Swanenburch, and is supposed to have stayed with that master some three years. What he learned from him we can never know, but in 1624 he went to Amsterdam to study with a painter of greater reputation, one of the Italianisers as they were called, Peter Lastman, and from him he can have learned very little, for he stayed in his studio less than six months. Yet certain tricks of costuming and that love of Oriental frippery which gives a strange accent to much of Rembrandt's work he is supposed to have acquired from Lastman. At any rate he returned to Leyden, determined "to study and practise painting alone, in his own fashion." His earliest known pictures are of the year 1627, and the earliest etchings of 1628, so that we have three years unaccounted for.

Somewhere and somehow he acquired the admirable technical training of the Dutch school, for his early work is neither especially original nor experimental, but is soundly executed in the manner of the day. By 1628 he had already become sufficiently well known to attract pupils to his studio, Gerard Dou, then fifteen years of age, enrolling himself in that year as a pupil of the master of twenty-two, and remaining with him three years. In 1631, when Rembrandt went to settle definitely in Amsterdam, he was already a well-known painter, and he shortly became the fashionable portrait painter of the day. The next year, when he was not more than twenty-six years old, and may have been only twenty-four, he painted the "Anatomy Lesson," which set the cap-sheaf on his brief glory and made him, for a time, the most famous of Dutch artists.

At its height his contemporary reputation seems to have been rather local and never to have reached as far as Antwerp, where the splendid Rubens probably never heard of him, but it was real enough. At this time he met Saskia van Uylenborch, a young woman of a much wealthier and better family than his own, was welcomed as an aspirant by her relatives, and married her in 1634. In 1639 he bought the house in the Breestraat that was never paid for, and filled it with the collections that figured in his inventory eighteen years later. He was fond of his wife and of his work, always busy, the master

of many pupils, earning much money and spending it lavishly on his wife and on his collections. He bought paintings, engravings and bric-à-brac at extravagant prices, and seems regularly to have been fleeced by dealers and money-lenders. Titus, the only child of his marriage that lived to maturity, was born in 1641, and Saskia died in June of the next year. In that year, also, he painted "The Night Watch," that puzzling picture which generations of critics have fought over, and which Captain Frans Banning Cocq and his company, for whom it was painted, understood as little as the rest of the world. It increased, in a manner, his reputation, but hardly his popularity. Rembrandt was becoming too original to be popular; and as time went on and his work grew better and better, the public neglected him more and more. He shut himself up in his work; made his servant, Hendrickje Stopfels, his mistress, and let his finances take care of themselves. The crash came, and in 1657 he was declared a bankrupt and sold up. From this time his life became steadily more miserable. He had no money of his own, and could have none, and the faithful Hendrickje, whom it is hoped rather than known he had at last married, formed a partnership with Titus to take over his affairs and make him an allowance. In 1661 he painted "The Syndics," perhaps the greatest of his masterpieces, but it does not seem to have been much admired. It is likely that

his eyes were beginning to fail, for his etchings cease altogether from this year, and from 1662 to 1664 we have no work at all from his hand. Hendrickje must have died about this time, though there is no record of it. Titus married and died, both in 1668, and the next year the father sank into his neglected grave. He left a daughter by Hendrickje who did not long survive him, and in the next generation his posterity seems to have become extinct.

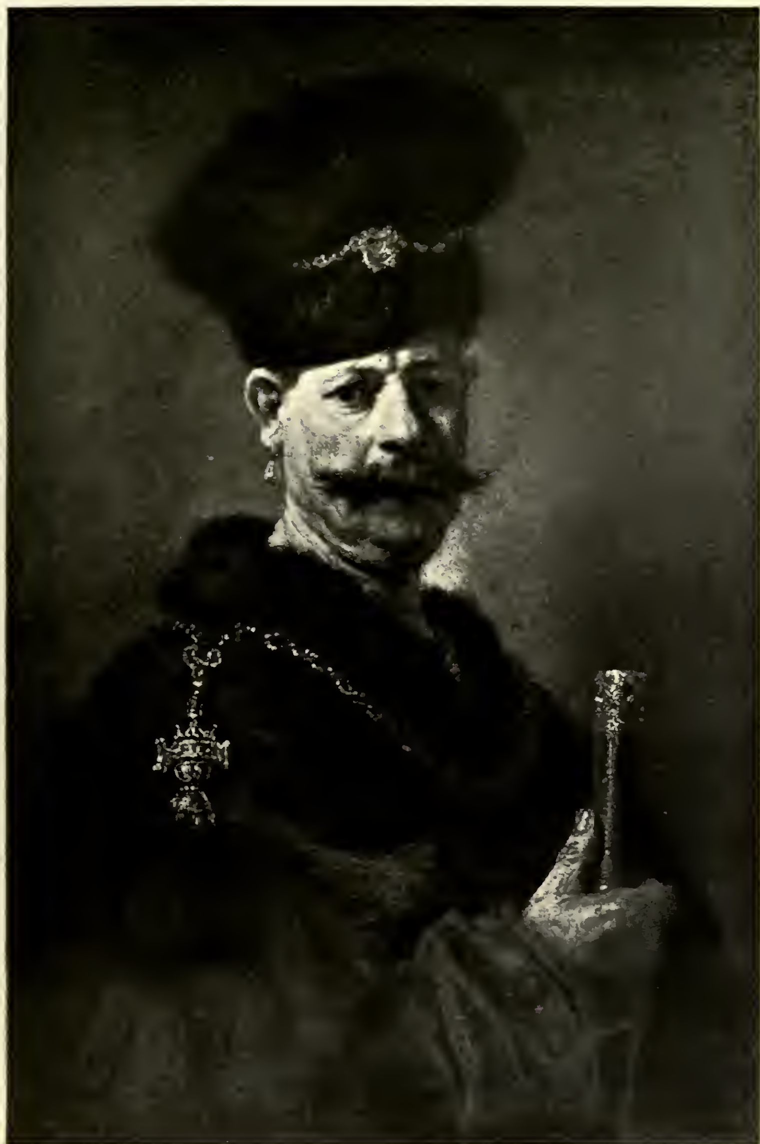
This is practically all that is known of the external life of the man Rembrandt. The record is meagre enough, and we might wish it were fuller, but in reality it is of little consequence that we do not know what he did or how he lived. What is of import to us is what he thought, and, above all, what he felt, and the record of this is preserved for us in his work—a record extraordinarily full and minute. For he was always at work. In his young days he set himself exercises, posed for himself and made all his friends and relatives pose for him in turn, tried myriads of experiments in lighting and handling, working for the sheer joy of it, or with the set purpose of mastering his tools and acquiring the means of expression. Later, in the successful years, busy as he was with commissions, with work that was well paid for and must be executed conscientiously, the stream of work undertaken for his own pleasure, for his own improvement, for his own self-expression, goes on almost unchecked. Sor-

row comes to him and it is in his work that he finds consolation. Patrons fall away—he has more time for his own imaginings. Ruin overtakes him, but he never ceases for a moment to draw, to etch, to paint. Did he even cease for that interval between 1662 and 1664 when the world was darkest to him, or did he merely neglect to date what he produced? Certainly he began again, if not with unabated power, and continued to the end to paint pictures for which the world seemed to have no use.

The volume of his work is extraordinary and its importance not to be overestimated. No scrap of it is entirely negligible or insignificant, and often the rudest scrawls and hastiest notes of intention—jottings of ideas for pictures never to be undertaken—are full of power beyond many a finished painting; a power so great that one can conceive that this first registry of his vision was sufficient for him. The picture was there and it mattered nothing whether or not it ever took on a form more legible to others. In such an essay as this it is impossible to give more than a glance at this vast production. Any detailed criticism of individual works would be out of place, and I can only try to convey some notion of the character of this great genius and of his message to us of another time and country. In doing so I must necessarily draw, somewhat, on the great bulk of existing criticism on the subject. No master has been more discussed than Rembrandt,

none more heartily praised or extravagantly blamed. Our thoughts of him are necessarily coloured by what we have read as well as by what we have seen, and no one could hope to interpret him entirely anew and without reference to the efforts of others. I shall therefore make no apology for agreeing with, or for virtually quoting, Fromentin or La Farge, any more than for disagreeing with Gerard de Lairesse and John Ruskin.

One thing we may eliminate at once from our estimate of the meaning Rembrandt has for us, and that is any notion that he is specially important as a recorder or an interpreter of his age and country. He seems to have had no sitters of such rank or genius that we are interested in his portraits on their account, and even in portraiture—capable as he was, on occasion, of the most admirably lucid vision—his record is so capricious and fantastic that it is never implicitly to be relied upon. Himself he etched or painted some fifty times, at all periods from his boyhood to the very end of his life, and there is, perhaps, no other face so well known to us as his, and yet it is almost impossible to guess what he really looked like. It is not merely that he used his own features for the study of varied expressions, that he lighted the face in all sorts of ways, that he dressed himself in impossible costumes and indulged his fancy for velvet caps and steel gorgets and gold chains; the forms and proportions of the features

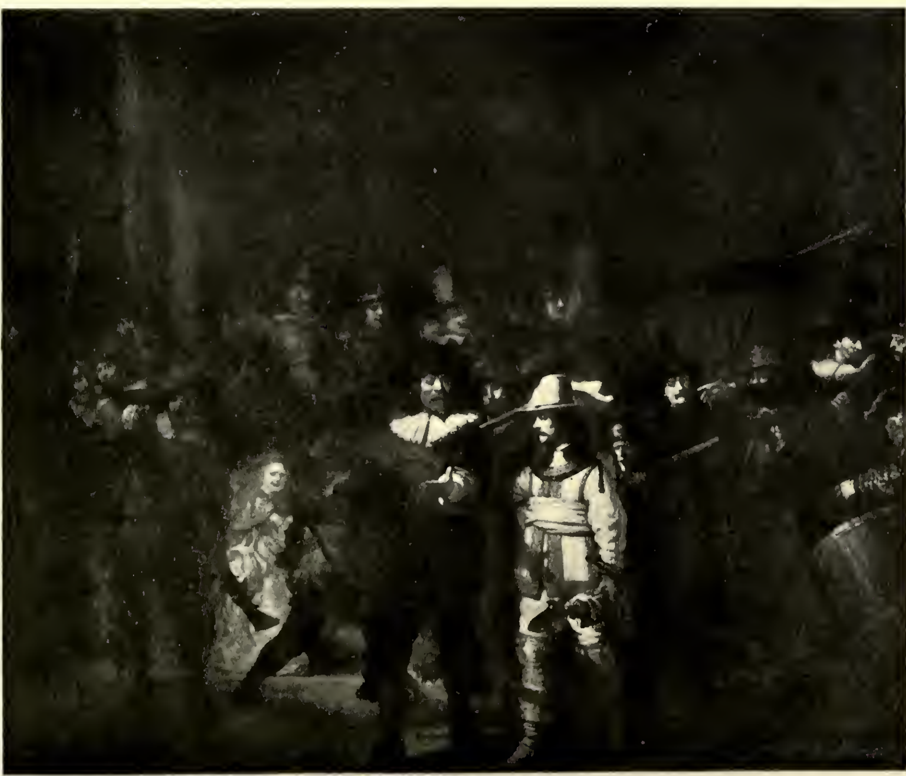


REMBRANDT: "SOBIESKI"

themselves are varied in so bewildering a way that it is only by certain marks—the deep fold between the keen eyes, the heavy chin, the somewhat sensual mouth beneath the bristling moustache—that the head is identifiable. And then one begins to find these same features in other pictures that have passed under other names, until at last one believes that even the so-called " Sobieski " of the Hermitage Museum, though he looks fifteen or twenty years older than Rembrandt was in 1637, when the picture was painted, is only another, and the most incredible, of his avatars. What was the colour of his hair, and how long did he wear it? Did he ever have a beard as well as a moustache? There is a canvas in the National Gallery, painted in 1635, which is so different from the ideal Rembrandt of the better-known pictures that it has always passed for the " portrait of a man " unknown. Here is no bush of fiery curls, but a round and rather close-cropped head; no accoutrement of capes and chains, but a falling collar of somewhat rich lace, such as might have been worn by a young nobleman or a wealthy burgher of refined tastes. Yet as you look at the picture the features assume an air of familiarity and you begin to suspect that here, again, is Rembrandt himself, painted, for once—perhaps at Saskia's desire—as he may really have looked, in his prosperous days, to the rich patrons who came to his studio or met him abroad in the town. Once or twice, late in life,

he appears again in a possible guise—in the costume of his time—but only once or twice; the rest is phantasmagoria. If the identifications so busily made now-a-days are correct, he treated his father and mother in the same way; and certainly he so treated Saskia and Hendrickje, who, poor girl, might reasonably complain of the effigies of her, clothed and unclothed, that have been handed down to posterity by her lord and master.

He could not often treat paying sitters thus cavalierly, but even with them he is not always above suspicion, and in the "Night Watch" he seems to have given rein to his fancy with disastrous results. A few of the principal figures are plausible enough; Captain Cocq himself is treated with respect, and his lieutenant, though badly drawn and made preposterously small, is naturally enough clothed. But in the minor personages we have trunk-hose and steel-caps and broad bonnets and all the outworn fripperies and cast-off clothing of Rembrandt's studio—costumes a hundred years out of date if they were ever worn by any one in the way they are here put together. Compare these strange figures with Hals's perfectly authentic arquebusiers, painted ten or twenty years earlier, or with Van der Helst's equally accurate and sober representations, and you will fancy that Rembrandt has given us a scene from some mediæval *Cour des Miracles* rather than a picture of the citizen soldiery of Amsterdam. No



REMBRANDT: "THE NIGHT WATCH"

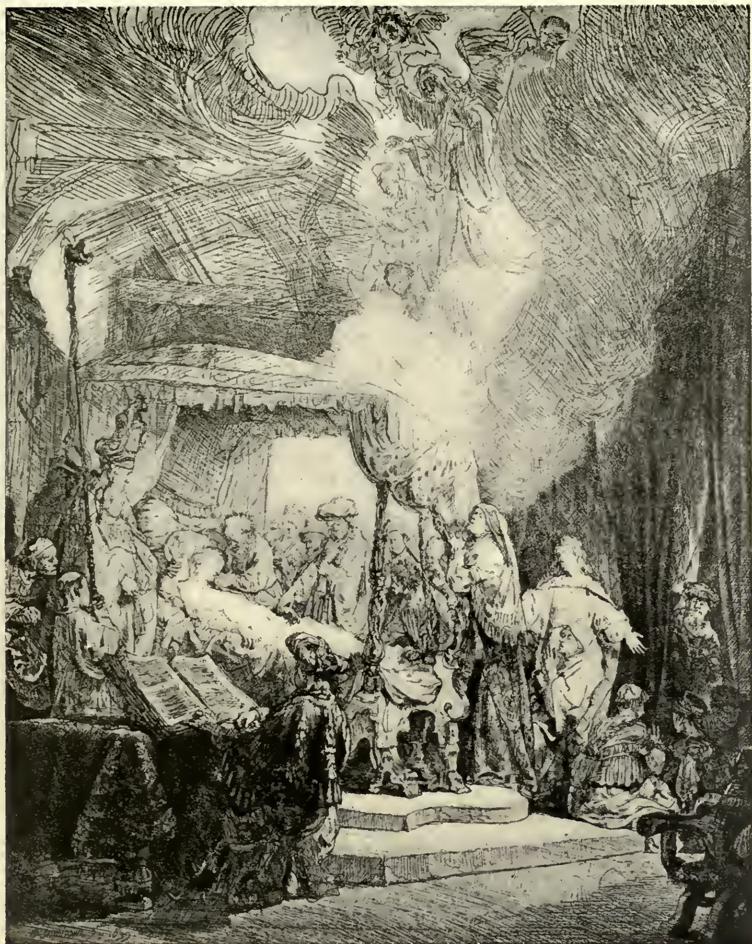
wonder that Captain Cocq was dissatisfied and went to Van der Helst for something that he and his friends could understand.

It is the same with the landscape of Holland as with the costume of the epoch—Rembrandt gives us just as much truth as suits him. He is capable, now and again, of the most careful delineation of canals and polders and windmills, but he is equally capable of mountains and romantic ruins and impossible visions of classic architecture strangely transformed. You can trust him for nothing. If you wish to know what Holland was really like, how her citizens lived and how they looked and what they wore, go to any of her masters but Rembrandt and you shall find abundant and unimpeachable testimony. You may date the fashion of a collar within a year and determine beyond contradiction the number of points that fastened breeches to doublet. From him you will get nothing but picturesque imagination or romantic feeling, and you must be content with that.

Nor has Rembrandt represented the soul of his time and country any more truthfully than its body. However possible it may be to account for the art of this or that master by showing that it was the inevitable product of "the race, the *milieu* and the moment," it is not possible so to account for his. His position is unique in the Netherlands of the seventeenth century as it is in the world at large and in all time. His art is almost the exact antithesis

of that which was practised around him, and coincides with it only in those points where his personal influence dominated other painters. Dutch art is prosaic and exact; Rembrandt is imaginative and fantastic. Dutch art is impeccable in draughtsmanship; Rembrandt is slovenly or grotesque in form. Dutch art is precious or brilliant in workmanship; Rembrandt is rugged and fumbling. Dutch art tells no stories, and avoids, particularly, the Bible; Rembrandt is always telling stories, and it is the Bible stories that interest him most of all. It is only in what he taught them of light and shade that the typical masters of Holland resemble him, and even here the differences are greater than the resemblance. If ever there was one in the world, Rembrandt is the individual great man, the hero in art, influencing others far more than he was influenced, moulding his time rather than moulded by it.

In the case of so great a man there is no reason why we should blink any of his defects or credit him with any virtues that he had not; and so, when Lairesse, a contemporary and rival of that master of the sweetly pretty, Van der Werff, says that "The vulgar and prosaic aspects of a subject were the only ones he was capable of noting"; or when Ruskin remarks that "Vulgarity, dulness or impiety will . . . . always express themselves, through art, in brown and grey, as in Rembrandt," we may admit that these critics, however blind to much else,



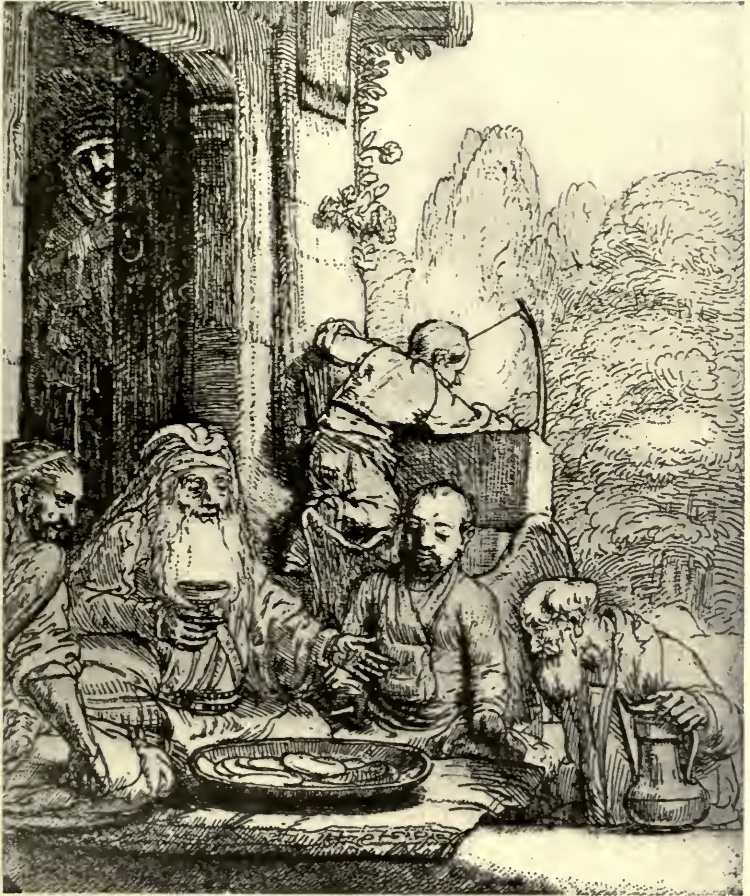
REMBRANDT: "THE DEATH OF THE VIRGIN"

Engraved through the courtesy of the Print Department of the New York Public Library

have indeed seen something in Rembrandt's art that explains, if it does not justify, their strictures. Rembrandt is seldom prosaic, never impious or dull, but vulgar he often is with a quite astounding vulgarity, and ugly with an incomparable hideousness. Such nude figures as he drew are to be found nowhere else in art. The bandy legs, the sprawling hands, the shapeless, stumpy bodies of his Dianas and Danaes, Bathshebas and Susannahs, are a libel on humanity; and it is no explanation of them to tell us how difficult it was to obtain models in Amsterdam, or to intimate that Saskia and Hendrickje were so made. Let us rather admit that he was indifferent to physical beauty, that his figures, clothed or nude, are often ill-drawn, that elegance was not in his province. A different man would have seen differently such models as he had, and have found beauties of line and structure in the poorest of them if beauties of line and structure were what he looked for. It is not necessary to dwell upon the deliberate indecencies of which he was sometimes guilty—witness those plates of undoubted authenticity catalogued as "broad subjects"—or upon the coarseness of incident into which he was betrayed in one or another more serious work. Take him at his grandest and most solemn moments and he is capable of a meanness and triviality of type altogether surprising. One of the most wonderful of his plates, superb in composition, poignant in emotion, is "The

Death of the Virgin," yet the angels who break through the ceiling in a burst of light, and amid clouds of glory, are so incredibly grotesque in form and feature that, were it not for the rest of the picture, one might be tempted to suspect deliberate caricature. Then there is a smaller and slighter plate—one of those amazing pieces of shorthand in which an unforgettable scene is revealed, as it were, in a flash of lightning—which represents "Abraham Entertaining the Angels." There is no doubt about the seriousness of the master's mood—it is even full of religious awe—but one of the angels is a strange little man, fat, and with a round, sleepy looking face, a bald head and a sparse beard. The presence of a pair of wings behind his back is altogether necessary to explain his angelic nature.

If Rembrandt was not, in the ordinarily accepted sense of the term, a great draughtsman, neither was he, if the words are to be used with any strictness, a great colourist or a great technician. It is not merely that he expressed himself, as Ruskin said, "in brown and grey," or, to quote again the exaggerated strictures of Lairesse, that, "with his red and yellow tones, he set the fatal example of shadows so hot they seem aglow, and colours which seem to lie like liquid mud upon the canvas"; it is that he habitually sacrificed colour to chiaroscuro, and was content to lose the unity of a given colour in light and shadow for the sake of heightening the glow



REMBRANDT: "ABRAHAM ENTERTAINING THE ANGELS"

Engraved through the courtesy of the Print Department of the New York Public Library

of the light or deepening the gloom of shade. It is not merely that his rendering of objects and textures is rarely so sure, so adroit, so precise and explanatory as that of Hals or Velasquez, but that, with him, the object often disappears altogether and we have, not a lighted object, but sheer luminosity —light for its own sake, and with little regard to what it falls on.

Here, as so often, it is necessary to distinguish between Rembrandt and Rembrandt. The exterior Rembrandt—Rembrandt the observer, the trained painter, the Rembrandt who was popular in his own day and is still the favourite of the collectors, the painter of " The Gilder " and of the " Burgomaster Six "—was a good draughtsman, a sound colourist and a sober and admirable technician. The other Rembrandt, the visionary, the seer, the dreamer of strange dreams, the worshipper of light, was never so sure of himself. He fumbled and experimented, resorted to violences of method, thumbed and kneaded his material, handled it across and athwart. Even in so early a work as " The Anatomy Lesson " he had forgotten the cadaver in his interest in the light that fell upon it, and had produced something blown and swollen, without form and void, but phosphorescent like a glow-worm in the dark. When he undertook " The Night Watch," that splendid failure, where the dreamer insisted on taking a hand in a work which demanded the observer only, his ob-

session tormented and dominated him. The rendering of the objects and accoutrements, the sword hilts and bandoliers, buffcoats and halberds, is not only far below Hals's level, it is actually clumsy and blundering. It is only when one realises that the objects were nothing to him in themselves, that it is light he is after, and that his method does wonderfully render the light, that one begins to understand. Once or twice, late in life, he manages successfully to reunite his two personalities, to bring to bear upon one work all he has learned and all he has felt, to pour the whole Rembrandt upon a canvas, and the result is such a masterpiece as "The Syndics." Elsewhere you must take the master craftsman and the dreamer separately—these are his successes—or partially united and mutually obstructive—these are his failures.

It is this almost exclusive preoccupation with light and shade that explains much in Rembrandt's work which might otherwise seem inexplicable. Chiaroscuro is his one great problem, his one great means of expression. He painted himself again and again, not from vanity, but because he could find no model so patient and so submissive, so willing to subordinate his own personality to the exhaustive study of lighting. He tricked himself out in chains and earrings and gorgets because he was fascinated by anything that glittered and gave him points of brilliant light to contrast with the enveloping gloom

which is his atmosphere. His pursuit of light led him to the denial of colour, so that his latest works are almost as uniformly brown as a photograph, and to that system of rugged surfaces and heavily loaded pigment which is the reverse of the ordinary procedure of the Dutch school and contrary to the practice of all those who have cared especially for the beautiful use of their material. It is light and shade that makes etching as interesting to him as painting. It is for the complete expression of light and shade that, at the height of his power, he will spend hours of patient labour in imitating the roundings and the mottlings of a sea shell. It is the suggestion of light and shade that makes his merest scrawl significant. It is by light and shade he draws, by light and shade he paints, by light and shade he composes. He thinks in light and shade even when he seems to be using pure line. It is seldom that there is not a scratch or two of shadow or a blot for the hollow of an eye socket or the like, but even when these are absent it is not the contour which he is drawing—his line follows the mass, suggests the direction of folds or the bagging of muscles, makes sudden deviations, breaks and continues again, bounds a mass of light or loses itself where the swimming shadow would hide it. The very line is potential light and shade.

It is largely his absorption in light and shade that makes Rembrandt so indifferent to beauty of form—

that makes him, indeed, care for form at all only as it provides surfaces for light to fall on and crannies for shadows to catch in. It was neither by accident, nor altogether from sympathy and love of character, that he painted so many old men and old women. When he was not deeply romantic and poetical he was merely picturesque, and he loved wrinkles as he loved thatched roofs, because they afford so many accidents for the play of light and shade. He haunted the Jews' quarter, delighted in beggars and their rags, screwed his own face into more lines than the map of the Indies, and set even his beloved Saskia to mowing and grimacing that her young face might have folds enough to satisfy his desire of shadows. What had he to do with classic beauty? His nude figures are drawn, as he drew a pig, from the picturesque point of view, and the creased and flabby shapes of his ugly women were better, for his purpose, than would have been the rounded limbs of a Greek nymph.

From a purely technical point of view, then, this is the supreme distinction of Rembrandt: to have devoted himself to the study of chiaroscuro, to have sacrificed everything else to it, to have attained a knowledge of it beyond that of Tintoretto, beyond that of Correggio, beyond that of any one else before or since; to have made himself, in this one branch of art, the unapproached and unapproachable master, and to have taught many other masters the use

REMBRANDT: "DR. FAUSTUS"

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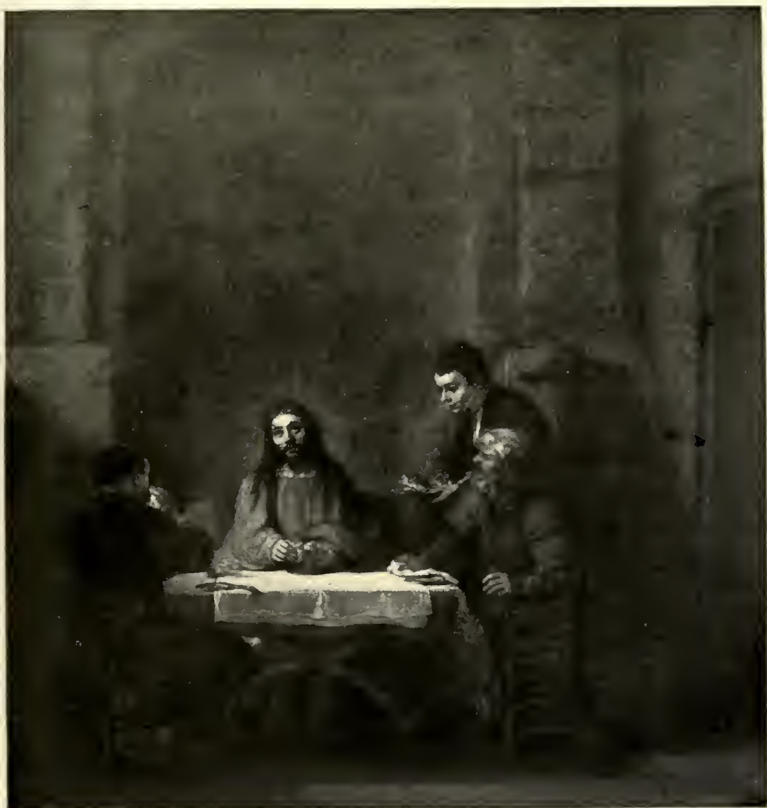
of a tool which, while it would not do in their hands what it did in his, was yet capable of performing tasks he had not set it. This alone would be enough for the glory of almost any artist, but with Rembrandt light and shade is far more than a technical accomplishment. It is mystery and sentiment—a means of expressing the inexpressible and of realising the supernatural—the only means known to art of saying what no one but Rembrandt has said. Look, for instance, at the plate of "Dr. Faustus." One may not quite know what the vision means, but that blazing circle in this room of shadows means something as clearly beyond nature as the quiet light of the window above is wonted and usual. The old man has risen and stands there, leaning upon his desk, gazing intently, with head a little tilted. He is not frightened, but *we* are. It is only a few black lines on a little square of white paper that we see, and behold—a miracle! We are there in the room and the hair rises upon our heads.

Or go into the galleries of the Louvre and look at a little picture there—not a brilliant looking picture, rather snuffy and brown and insignificant of aspect—a picture that seems to have little determinable form, no colour, no visible means of execution, no comprehensible handling. In a lofty room beneath an arch of stone are three men seated at table and a boy who waits upon them. One of the

men looks up in surprise. In the second, who has his back toward us, surprise has dawned into recognition and he clasps his hands as in prayer. The third is breaking bread. There is a dim and wavering aureole about his head, and his face is the face of one who was dead and is alive again. We are with the Pilgrims at Emmaus.

This is the real Rembrandt, the great magician, the incomparable genius; the painter whose vividness and lucidity of imagination, whose depth of insight, whose fulness of sympathy, are unique in the art of the world. With such a man what would be faults in another sink into insignificance or become virtues. His drawing, faulty according to the ordinary standards of correctness, becomes the most wonderful drawing in the world, for it is instinct with life, and so expressive that his countless figures are doing whatever they are about with an intensity unparalleled in art. His colour, different though it be from that of the great colourists, is that most wholly appropriate and necessary to his thought. His figures, however devoid of physical beauty, are yet ennobled by the presence in them of a living soul. His handling, strange and undecipherable as it is, is the most supple and obedient of servants. In his lifelong observation and profound study of things seen, he had mastered the current language of art and could, when he chose, express himself in it with fluency and entire propriety. For the expression



REMBRANDT: "THE SUPPER AT EMMAUS"

of things unseen he created for himself a language of extraordinary flexibility, which no one else has ever learned to speak.

It is his feeling for life, his imaginative insight, his tremulous sensitiveness and intense sympathy which give their supreme value to Rembrandt's great portraits. In all except those that are quite evidently exercises you feel his attentiveness, his humility, his lack of all cleverness or parade of mastery. He is waiting, watching, for the inner life, the real individuality, to peep out in the face, and he is almost always rewarded. You do not care in the least who these people are, or what was their station in life; an old-clothes merchant, an aged housekeeper, a kitchen maid, are as interesting—not more so—as a gentleman or a burgomaster. They are interesting because they are intensely human, intensely alive, because in each of them an individual being with its own nature, its own past, its own thoughts and emotions, looks out of the eyes and speaks with the lips. You may doubt Rembrandt's statements of mere external fact; you may doubt his delineation of features and structure, as you can never doubt those of Frans Hals, for instance; you may wonder that he never saw such elegance and such approach to beauty as Ter Borch and Metzu and Vermeer have shown us; but you can never doubt the essential fact that these people have lived—are living. This conviction of life, of real existence almost independent of ordinary

representation, is such as none of these masters, such as no master—not Velasquez, not Titian, not even Holbein or Raphael, incomparable portrait painters as they are—has given us.

There are many of these wonderful portraits, painted at all periods of Rembrandt's life. Some of them are commissions from well-to-do patrons, some are evidently painted for his own pleasure and from people who are more likely to have been paid for sitting than to have paid the artist for painting them. There is the "Lady with a Fan" of Buckingham Palace, for once a person of refinement and distinction, with a real charm if no great beauty. There are "Elizabeth Bas," in the Rijks Museum of Amsterdam, wealthy, severe, self-complacent, a notable housewife, starched and stiff in her respectability, and that beautiful, kindly, anxious "Old Lady" in the National Gallery. Then there is that homelier couple, "The Shipbuilder and His Wife," in Buckingham Palace, and, going down the ranks of human life, there are the infinitely pathetic "Old Woman" of the Hermitage and the simple, healthy "Girl with a Broom" of the same collection. You may look at any of these portraits forever, come back to them again and again, study and restudy them and never tire of them, never exhaust their perennial interest. There is nothing like them—there never will be anything like them.

Now and then, even with members of his own house-

REMBRANDT: "LADY WITH A FAN"

REMBRANDT: "PORTRAIT OF ELIZABETH BAS"

hold, the artist forgot his experiments and produced portraits of this quality; once or twice, in etching or painting, with himself in his years of sadness and poverty; once, at least, with Hendrickje, in that superb portrait in the Louvre which makes her a real and comprehensible person to us; once in that splendid idealisation of youthful beauty, the portrait of his son Titus in the Kann collection. Several such portraits we have in this country, two of them, fortunately, in public collections where they are accessible to every one—the "Man with a Black Hat" in the Metropolitan Museum, and "The Orphan" in the Art Institute of Chicago. There are no more perfect single figures than these in all Rembrandt's work, and you must go to Amsterdam to see, in the great group of "The Syndics," anything finer. The picture has been described too often and too well for me to describe it again, and the photographs of it are in every one's hand. It is the final demonstration of Rembrandt's full power and, unquestionably, the noblest portrait group ever painted.

It is the very humanity and sympathy in Rembrandt which made these portraits possible that is the excuse for his infrequent indecency, his occasional coarseness. Life and character, and the expression and movement of life, were all in all to him, and these he found everywhere. Nothing human was foreign to him, nothing real outside his range of feeling, and he could sympathise with the

amours of a friar and a peasant wench in a corn-field as he could with the mingled joy and sorrow of the father who, in the wonderful etching, has out-stripped the attendants bearing shoes and garments, and almost stumbles forward in his haste to clasp in his arms the hair-grown, starving prodigal, kneel-ing there half naked before him, the picture of misery and compunction. His very "vulgarity" and "triviality" sometimes serve him marvellously —his entire absence of pose or of any pretence to exquisiteness of taste. Some homely incident, that no one else would have thought of, comes into his mind and is seized upon and noted with a precision that immediately converts his imagined scene into a thing which has actually happened, a thing experi-enced and observed. In this very plate of the "Return of the Prodigal" you see the old man's slipper, half off his foot and dragging on the pave-ment, and that little accuracy serves to convince you of the veracity of all the rest. That was not invented, you say—it is so that it *was*.

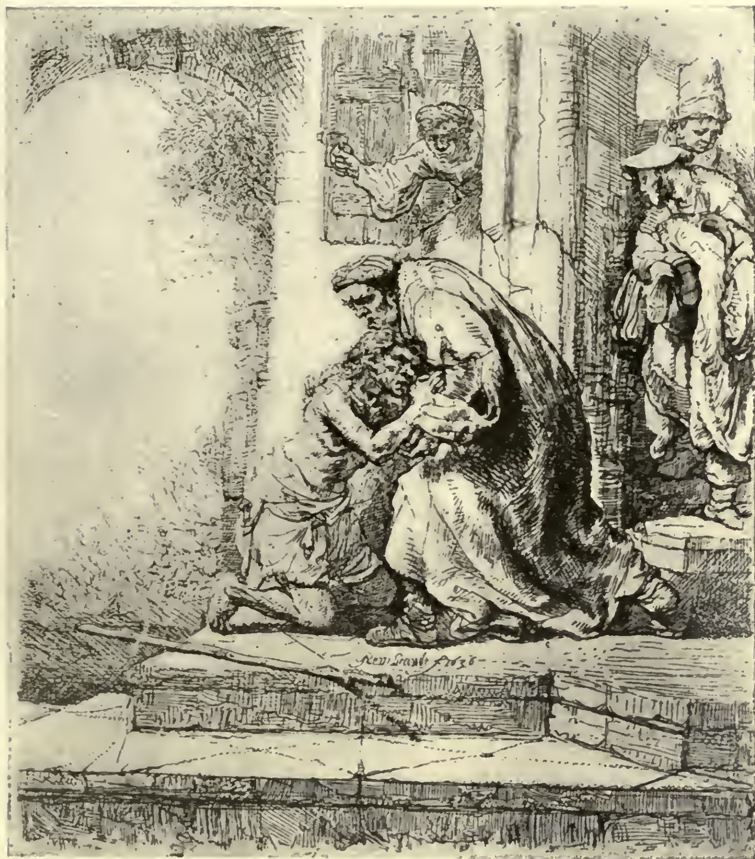
This extraordinary clarity of imagination, this vividness of sight, this compelling truthfulness, is the mark of Rembrandt and is present in nearly all his subject pictures, in nearly all his etchings, above all in his drawings, done for himself alone and to relieve his mind of what must have been almost hal-lucination. At his strangest, at his most grotesque, he forces you to believe in him—to accept his story

REMBRANDT: "GIRL WITH A BROOM"

REMBRANDT: "MAN WITH A BLACK HAT"

as that of an eye-witness. When he is most happily inspired, and his vision most nearly coincides with the antecedently acceptable, no one is so touching or so august. His trick of reality captures you and you experience to the full those emotions which the actual events might have incited. Of the most wonderful of all his pictures, "The Supper at Emmaus," I have already spoken; and in Fromentin and in La Farge you will find elaborate descriptions of the scarcely less wonderful "Good Samaritan," but there are many more examples of his way of translating Bible stories into the language of the everyday life about him and of making them, thereby, a thousandfold more appealing and more effective. How many "Holy Families" have been painted, in Italy, in Germany and in Flanders? And where among them shall you find anything like "The Carpenter's Household" of the Louvre, with its warm interior bathed in sunshine from the open window, the father engaged in his daily labour, the gentle mother baring her breast to the child, the grandmother, homely old soul, leaning over the open Bible in her lap to gaze upon the baby form? Where shall you find a tragic intensity like that of "The Raising of the Cross" at Munich, or a solemn pathos like that of "The Descent from the Cross" in the same gallery, with its pitiful, broken figure, doubled together and sliding sidewise down the sheet, ghostly white in the moonlight, into the reverent hands below? But of

all his pictures none is more surprising than the little "Vision of Daniel" at Berlin. The scene is a wild and rocky landscape through which a brook cuts its way deeply. To the extreme right, only partially in the picture, stands the "vision," a sheep with many horns upon its head; on the other side of the brook, timid, with reverted eye, kneels Daniel, a curly-headed youth; behind him stands an angel, and it is this angel that is the picture—the most real, the most believable angel ever painted. Draped in white and with a scarf about her waist—for surely it is a young girl's, this slender figure—she leans over him, infinite tenderness in the delicate face framed between flaxen ringlets, and lays one hand lightly upon his shoulder in encouragement, while with the other, in a gesture of adorable naturalness, she points to the vision upon which she bids him look. From her shoulders springs a pair of wings, and *such* wings! So light, so strong, so quivering with life, so obviously a part of her and so necessary to her poise and momentary action, that scepticism is disarmed. It is all very well to argue that wings could not grow there and that she could not fly with them if they did. They *do* grow there, and she *can* fly, and there's an end on't. The original sketch for this composition, in which, for once, Rembrandt mingles an ineffable charm with his usual lucidity, is in the collection of M. Bonnat, and it is one of the most striking proofs of the suddenness and com-



REMBRANDT: "THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON"

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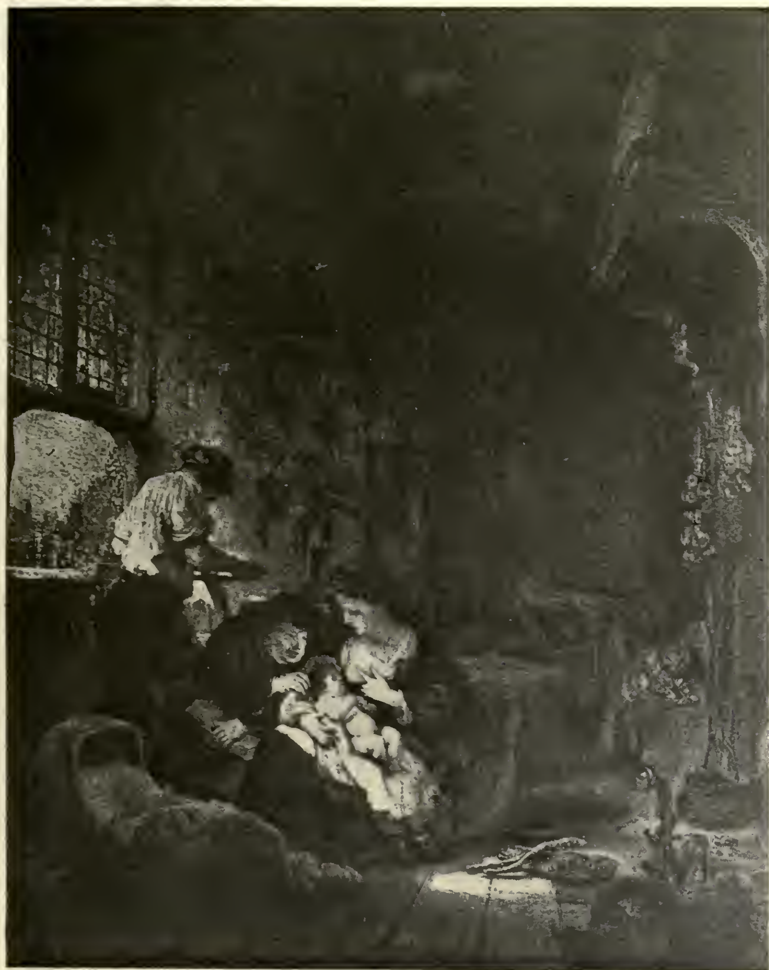

REMBRANDT: "THE CARPENTER'S HOUSEHOLD"

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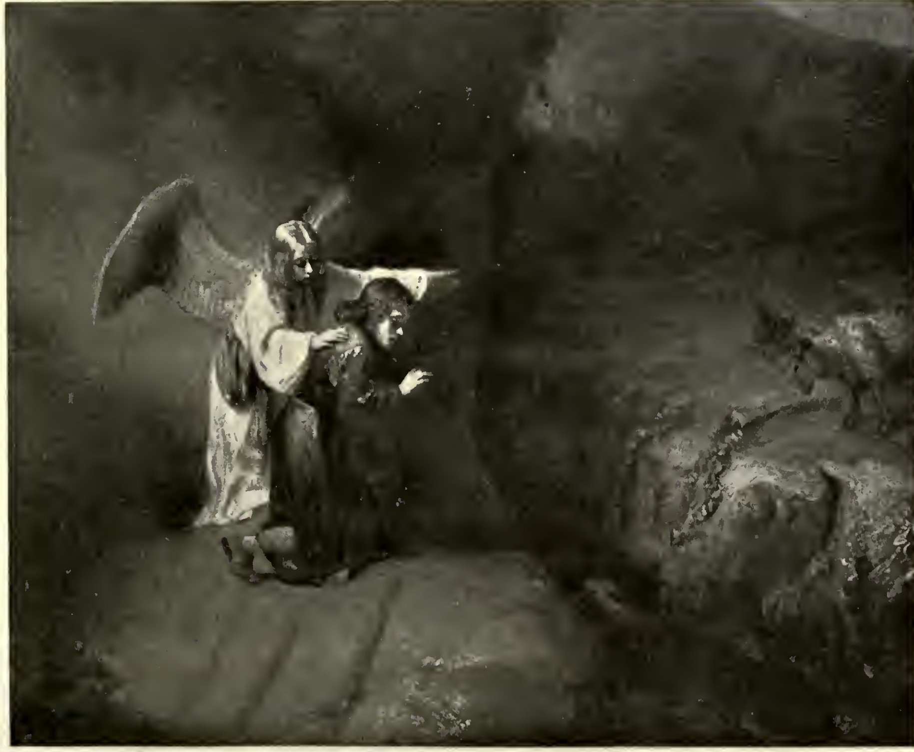
pleteness of the great artist's conception. It is very slight—a few scratches of the pen, a few washes for the deeper shadows of the landscape—but the whole thing is there, the attitudes, the lines, the draperies, even the expression of Daniel's face; yet there are slight discrepancies that prove to the trained eye that this is no copy of the picture, but the first registry of intention, hot from the brain of its creator.

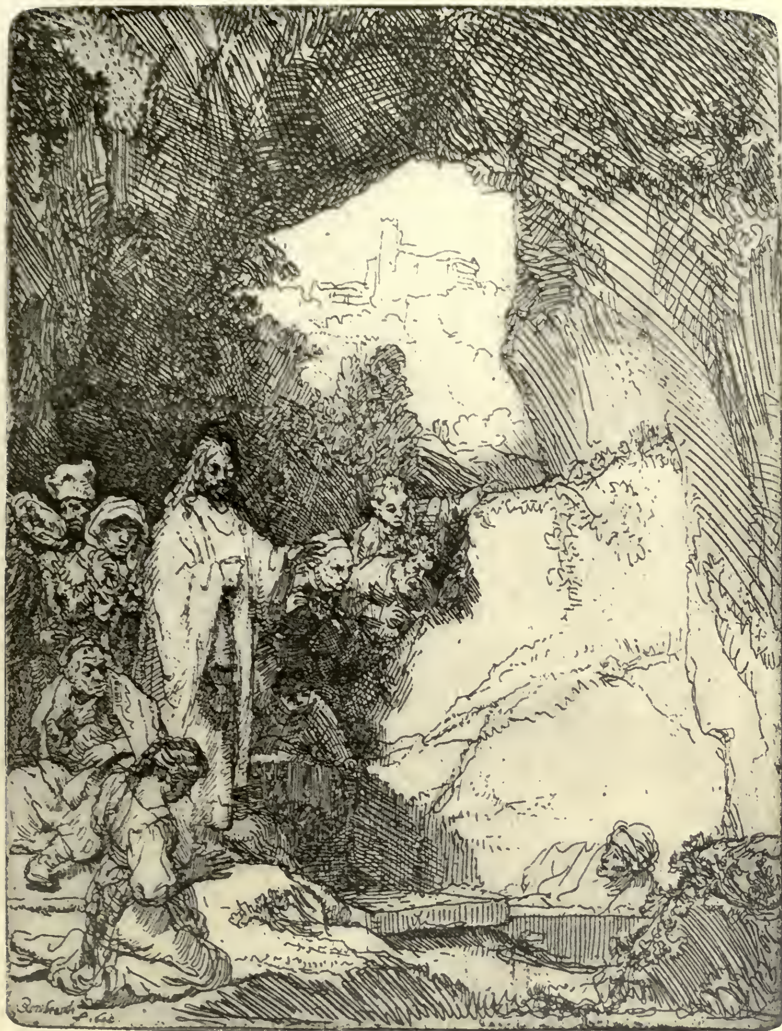
It is perhaps, in his etchings and drawings even more than in his paintings that Rembrandt's marvellous fertility of invention manifests itself most clearly. Industrious and unremitting in labour as he was, only a few of his almost countless imaginings could be realised in painting. Many, and some of the most important in thought, the largest in extent and in number of figures, he chose rather to carry out in the slighter form of etching. Many more seem never to have got beyond the first state of expeditious notation of the idea. And in all these inventions—one dislikes to use a word of such mechanical implication as compositions—we see how his mind turned around and around certain subjects, approached them again and again from one or another side, exhausted their possibilities. There are the Old Testament stories of Abraham and Isaac, of Lot, and of Joseph, there are the Book of Job and the Parables, of which he never wearied. Above all there is the Life of Christ, and there is the

apocryphal Book of Tobit, which seems specially to have haunted him. From these two stories he could not escape until their every phase had been illustrated with his indubitable veracity. And always he approaches these subjects from the Bible in this new way of his own. He is not concerned with ecclesiastical decoration or with æsthetic propriety —still less with pious revery or aids to devotion. What occupied him is the thought of how things might really have happened, of how they would have looked to one who was there, of how he himself or his neighbours would have felt about them. He could not have understood that modern doctrine of criticism which decries the art that tells a story or depicts an incident—he would have gloried in being what he was, the greatest of illustrators.

Something I have already said about one or two of these illustrations of the Bible. The great plates of "Christ Healing the Sick" and "Christ Preaching" are known to every one. But there are other and less universally known chapters in Rembrandt's Life of Christ that are equally ineffaceable from the memory. There is the plate known as the "Little Raising of Lazarus," to distinguish it from the earlier, perhaps doubtful, plate which is more frequently seen. Here, as ever, the Christ is quite undistinguished, rather mean of aspect; and his expression is less deeply studied than usual. The spectators are variously interested or astonished.



REMBRANDT: "THE VISION OF DANIEL"



REMBRANDT: "THE LITTLE RAISING OF LAZARUS"

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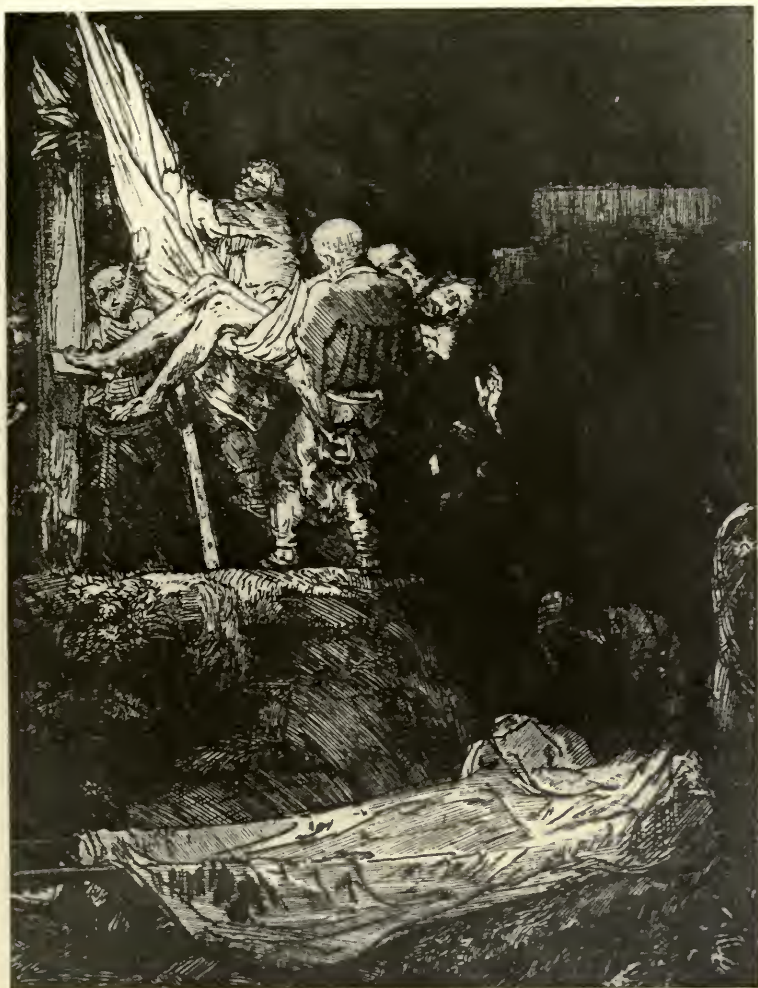
All this is good, but it is not this which one remembers. What is unforgettable is the sidewise lurch of the dead man as he raises himself on one elbow from the tomb, the inquiring gaze of his sunken eyes, fixed upon his master, his hollow cheek and relaxed jaw. And all this is indicated with a few loose scratches, kept intentionally thin and delicate that they may not interfere with the whiteness of the paper which stands for the concentration of light upon this part of the subject. There is the "Christ Presented to the People," with its unwonted pomp of arrangement and monumental dignity, with its vividly seen crowd in the foreground which, altering his idea as he rarely did, Rembrandt was content to efface that the grandeur and pathos of the bound figure of the Redeemer might be heightened. There is the "Descent from the Cross" at night by torchlight, the limp figure still attached to the cross by one bleeding foot, the whole composition built upon and determined by the long stretcher which crosses the foreground and which Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus is covering with a white sheet that it may receive the beloved remains.

As a last instance of the vigour of imagination shown in the etchings, let us take a plate from another cycle, the "Tobit Blind." The scene is a homely Dutch interior, with a great open fireplace where fishes are drying in the smoke, and Tobit's armchair stands in the chimney corner. The old man, in gown

and slippers, has risen hastily, hearing without the step or voice of his long-absent son, and is groping for the door. In his agitation his sense of direction has failed him, and he will not reach it. He has overset his wife's spinning wheel, which lies on the floor behind him. But the little dog, the faithful companion of Tobias in all his adventures, has outstripped his master and fawns at the blind man's feet. It is a little bit of truth so admirably observed, so perfectly rendered, set down with such economy of means—no line or touch that does not carry—that it alone were sufficient to proclaim its designer a master of the highest rank.

This, however, is a conscious work of art, addressed to the public, meant to be seen, and it is, perhaps, in his drawings, made for himself alone and meant for no other eyes, that Rembrandt's marvellous shorthand, and the fecundity of his genius, are most apparent. Here are picture after picture, each fully conceived, present to his mind in every detail, ready to paint. He has set them down in scrawls and blots and dashes, almost illegible, at first sight, to others than himself, yet needing only a little good will on our part, the sending forth of our own imagination to meet his, to reveal themselves as perfect. The rest is but a matter of time and opportunity. Some day, when he has the leisure, he will paint or etch them! But there are so many more ideas than days that the leisure never comes



REMBRANDT: "THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS"—NIGHT PIECE

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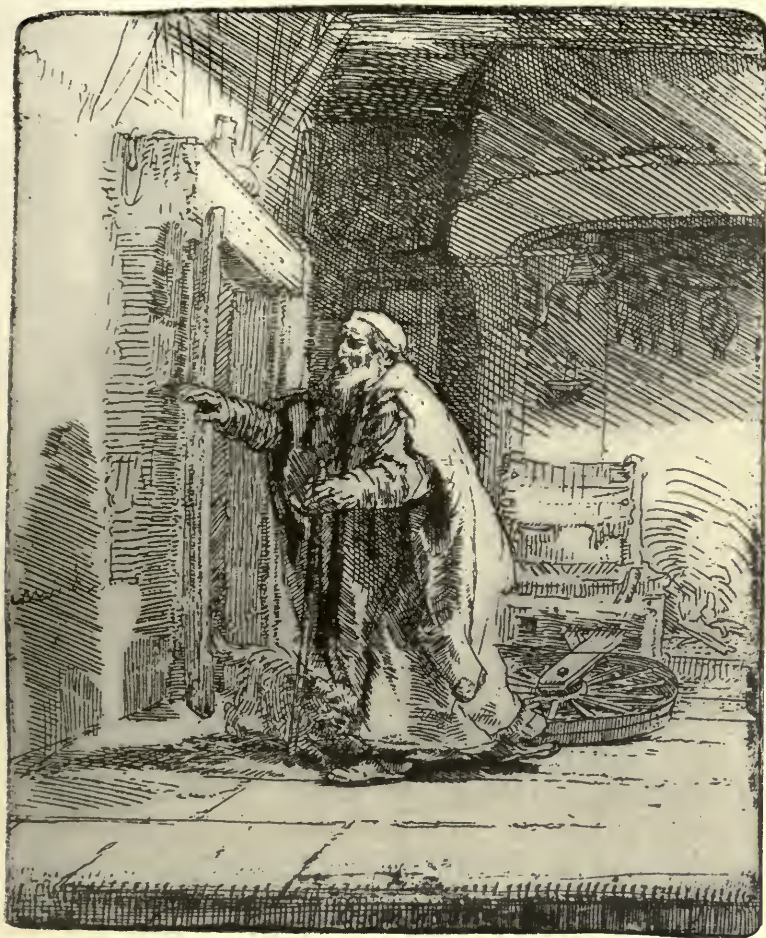

REMBRANDT: "TOBIT BLIND"

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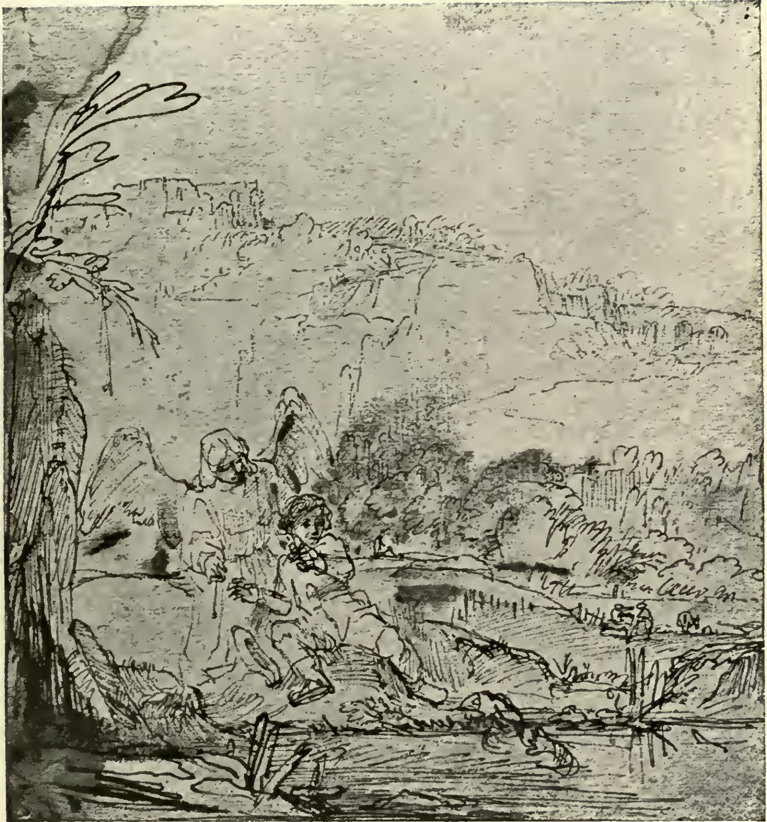
and the most part of them have remained forever in the form of hints and projects.

A whole set of them deals with Tobit and his son Tobias, with the angel, and the never-forgotten dog. There is the departure, with the mother spinning, the father, who seems to be recommending the angel to take good care of his son, the son himself, turning his hat in his hand and looking somewhat sheepish, and the dog jumping upon him in joy of the anticipated outing. But for the wings of the angel —always those wonderful wings such as no one else ever drew—it might be a little scene of domestic genre, such as one of our own painters has entitled "Breaking Home Ties." Then there is the journey, with the companions, angelic and human, walking amicably together and talking as they go, while the dog runs on before them. There is the fish leaping from the water and startling Tobias into the loss of his hat, the angel, meanwhile, bidding him not to be afraid; and there is the cutting up of the fish, the angel looking on with absorbed interest, while the dog profits by the occasion to take a drink from the brook. There is the healing of the father's sight, Tobias and his mother busy and anxious, the angel somewhat unconcerned, as sure of the result. Finally, there is the vanishing of the angel, the whole family prostrating themselves in prayer as they recognise, at last, his heavenly nature. In all the series there is the same homeliness, the same felicitous

notation of gesture and expression, the same sympathy and the same emotion; and each produces the same conviction of entire reality. It is so that the thing must have happened; it could not have happened otherwise.

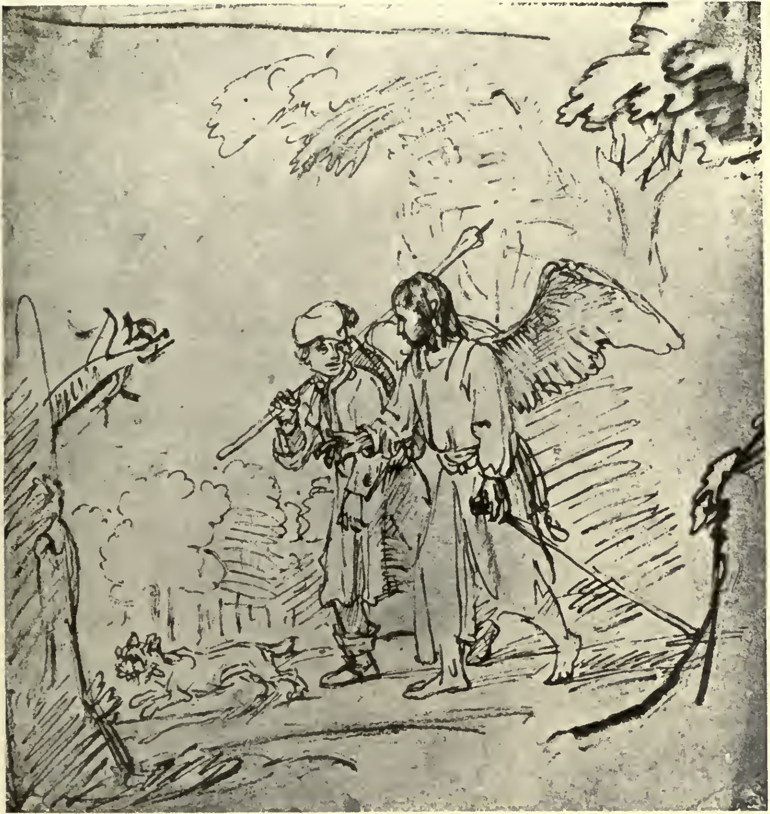
The same qualities are to be found in many other drawings, in "Joseph Comforting the Prisoners," in "Job and His Friends," in "Lot and His Family." The latter drawing is as remarkable as anything even Rembrandt ever did. The whole family is "moving out" carrying its possessions. The father is lamenting, the daughters are sad, the maids unconcerned; but Lot's wife, aged and leaning on a stick, walks on in stony silence and turns a deaf ear to the angel who points out the way. It is not difficult to see who it is that will disobey the divine command not to look back.

There are others and others. In his forty years of unremitting labour Rembrandt produced about four hundred and fifty paintings that we know, two hundred and sixty to two hundred and seventy etchings, and nearly nine hundred drawings and sketches of one sort or another that have been preserved. How much more he may have done that is lost or destroyed one may only imagine. Of this vast output of paintings, etchings, drawings, it is not possible that all should be of equal value. There are plates and pictures, among his earlier works especially, that are deliberately picturesque or partly

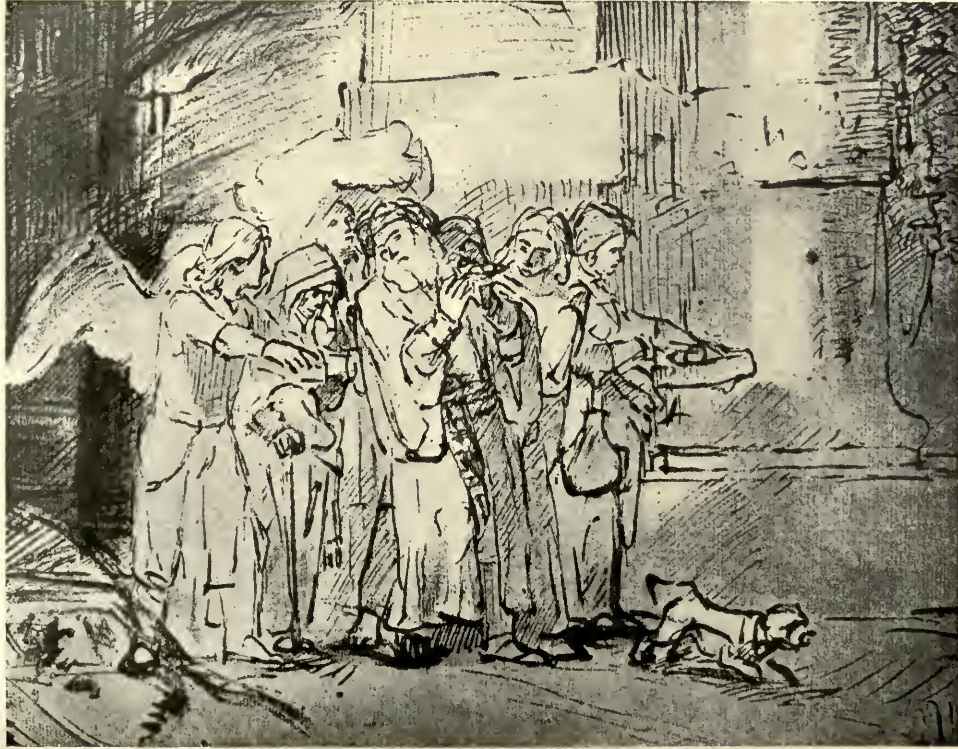


REMBRANDT: "TOBIAS ALARMED AT THE SIGHT OF THE FISH"

theatrical, compositions that are built up rather than truly imagined. On the other hand there are sketches of no particular subject, a woman in bed, an old man praying, a lame man in the street, or rough notes of animals, a lion, an elephant, that are as full of his particular insight, his penetrating imagination, as are his greatest inventions. He could even make inanimate objects, an old coach or a piece of furniture, permanently interesting to us. In the contemplation of his creations all questions of technique or of taste finally fall away and become unimportant, and we are face to face with a great intellect, a profoundly human soul, a visionary who, as he grew older in years, in experience, in sorrow, and in the sympathy which is the fruit of experience and of sorrow, came more and more to "dream true"; a spirit worthy to rank beside that of another great man whose name I have already coupled with his, beside that of Shakespeare. If I have attempted the impossible in this effort to give some idea in words of the character of a genius only to be appreciated after deep study of the works themselves in which it is revealed, I may, at least, be grateful for the opportunity of laying my humble tribute before one who was not only one of the immortal masters of the art I too practise, but was one of the supreme poets of all time.



REMBRANDT: "TOBIAS AND THE ANGEL"



REMBRANDT: "LOT AND HIS FAMILY"

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VI

RODIN

RODIN

NO other living artist is so much written about as Auguste Rodin, no one has been so discussed, so vehemently damned or so extravagantly praised. M. Mauclair, in his recent book on that sculptor, gives a two-page bibliography which pretends to deal only with the most significant writings, and Mr. Brownell, in the newer editions of his "French Art," first published nearly fifteen years ago, has added so much to the already disproportionate space allotted to one artist that all the art of France seems but a preface to that of Rodin. No negligible or mediocre personality ever evoked such a storm of conflicting opinion, and the very existence of such a body of literature attests the importance of the subject. Not so much what is said by admirers or detractors as the fact that it is said at all, may be taken to prove that Rodin is a great sculptor; but we should like more light than is afforded us as to the kind of his greatness. Its degree may be—must be—left to the future to determine. Some day, when the fighting is all over, the world will decide just where it ranks, as a permanent addition to its treasury of enjoyment, the works which will then be definitely classed and enumerated.

What might be possible now is a discussion, divested of partisanship, of the essential character of these works and of the talent which produced them—a discussion that should occupy itself less with estimating how far Rodin has succeeded than with defining what he attempts; that should be more concerned with his direction than with the distance he has travelled.

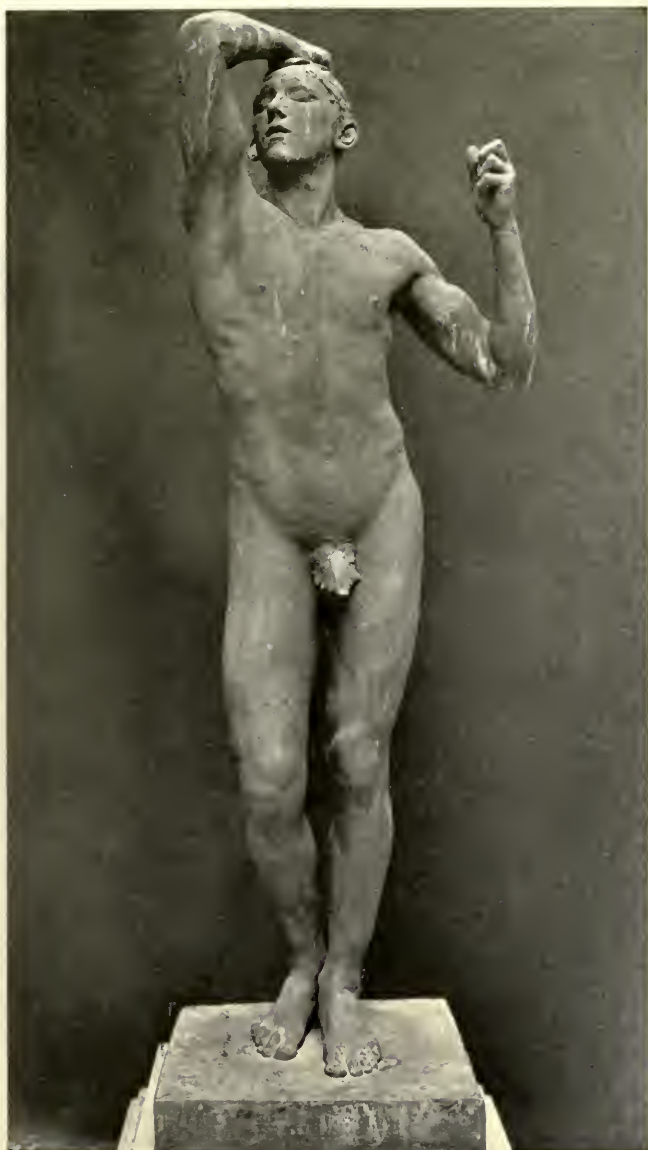
Such a discussion properly demands many more qualifications than belong to the present writer. Besides such general characteristics as are necessary to any profitable criticism of art, its undertaker should possess a real and practical acquaintance with the technique of sculpture, a complete familiarity with the whole of Rodin's work, and some personal knowledge of the man, his temperament, his ideas, his methods. Some of these qualifications have been possessed by critics who have already written on Rodin, but all of them by none. Mr. Brownell is a man of high intelligence and large impartiality, and his chapters on Rodin are, in some ways, the best that have been written, showing a real intellectual grasp of the meaning of Rodin's art and its relation to the art of others; but, to an artist, he seems to dwell too much in a region of abstractions, to be too aloof from the concrete, too detached from the actual. One gets, somehow, the impression that for him a work of art is a thought rather than a thing —to be contemplated, not to be seen or touched or

handled. The vigorous, full-blooded, almost violently sensual art of Rodin is transformed, in his pages, into something making no appeal to the senses, having no substance, conditioned not upon clay or marble, but only on a mental attitude. M. Mauclair is a personal friend of Rodin's, and, to some extent, the mouthpiece of Rodin's own ideas; but he is an extreme partisan, blind to all other merit than that of his hero, admiring him without limit or distinction. No one gives us quite what we want, and we must make our picture as best we can, from such material as we can get hold of, with the aid of such talent and knowledge as we possess. Out of scraps and odds and ends, by reading in and between the lines of what has been written, by study of a few works and of the photographs of others, by supplementing a scanty enough knowledge of the methods of sculpture by a larger knowledge of art in general, one may make out for oneself some tolerably clear conception of the nature of the man Rodin and of the tendency and character of his art.

We want a word which shall express, with regard to the art of sculpture, some such precise notion as is conveyed with regard to the art of painting, by the word painter. When we say of any artist that he is specially and exclusively *a painter*, every one knows at once what we mean. Such an artist readily takes his place on one side of any of the great dividing lines which separate artists into two classes.

He is romantic rather than classic in his temper, realist rather than idealist in his attitude toward nature, occupied with representation rather than with design. He will care more for truth than beauty, or, if you like it better, more for the beauty of the actual than for the abstract beauty of harmonies and proportions; he will care, above all, for his craft, and delight in felicities of rendering and the intrinsic qualities of his material. It does not seem possible to use the word sculptor in a similar sense; it is either too wide or too narrow in its meaning and, if we try to restrict it at all, begins to signify the mere carver of stone. Perhaps the nearest word to express such a master of representation and of his tools, in sculpture, as was Frans Hals in painting, is modeller; and in the sense in which Hals was one of the greatest of painters, Rodin is a prodigious modeller—one of the greatest modellers that ever lived.

All that we know of Rodin's person, his temperament, his training, lead us to expect just this type of artist. His portraits show us a man of great physical force, of abounding vitality, of rather narrow intellect—a bull-necked, full-blooded, strong-bearded person whose heavy, projecting brow, over small, keen eyes, bespeaks unusual powers of observation, whose great, thick nose and heavy jaw show determination and force of will; a man made to see clearly and to see deep, and with infinite patience



RODIN: "THE AGE OF BRONZE"

and dogged perseverance to render what he sees completely; a man who could give three months' work to a leg in order to "possess" it; a man with a passionate love for nature and a firm grip of his materials, born with a delight in the use of hands and eyes, a natural workman. And a workman all his training tended to make him. Born in 1840, in humble circumstances, he began the study of art and the earning of a living at about the age of fourteen, working with a modeller of ornaments, drawing in the classes of the *rue de l'École de Médecine*, studying animals at the *Jardin des Plantes* under Barye. Then he worked six years as an assistant with Carrier-Belleuse, trying meanwhile for admission to the *École des Beaux Arts* and being thrice refused. After that he worked six or seven years in Brussels, how far independently, how far as a sort of assistant to Van Rasbourg it is difficult to judge from the information afforded us. During his apprenticeship with Carrier-Belleuse, at least, and probably afterwards, he had no responsibility for the design, no cause to think much of composition. His whole time and his whole effort were devoted to the study of nature and the mastering of his tools. The only piece of original work of these years that we know of is the head called "The Man with the Broken Nose," which was refused by the Salon Jury of 1864 and accepted by that of 1876. He sent nothing else to the Salon until he was thirty-seven years old, when he was

represented there by the celebrated "Age of Bronze." During this long period he had gained, as the sculptor Boucher testified, a wonderful facility, and was capable of improvising a group of children in a few hours, but he was still earning his living by working for other men. If he had died at forty, few of the characteristic works by which we know him would exist.

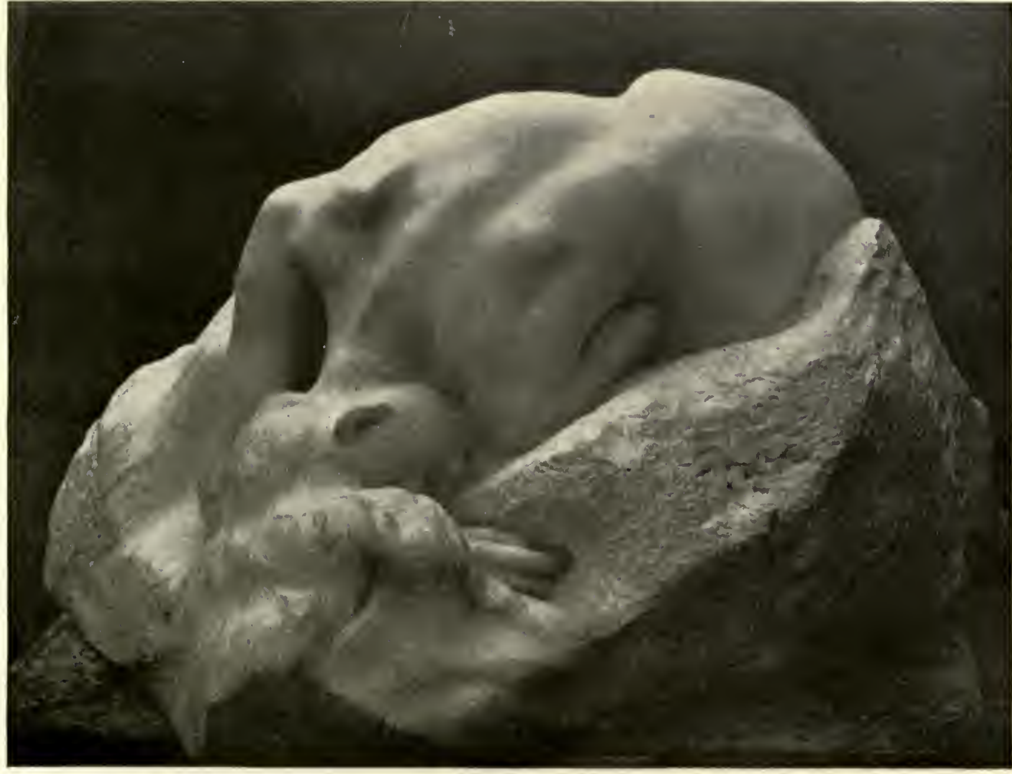
Every one knows how the "Age of Bronze" was attacked by sculptors who had never heard of Rodin and could not believe in his ability, and how he was accused of having made up his figure out of casts from nature. The very accusation was a testimony to its merits, as the partisans of the sculptor announce with sufficient emphasis, but it was also a criticism. It is a statue that looks like a cast from nature, and this not only because it is consummately realistic in its modelling, but because it is nothing else. If there is work that is too inefficient, too lacking in structure and solidity, ever to be taken for a casting from life, so also there is work too evidently designed and composed or too grandly synthetised to be so mistaken. No one has ever imagined that Michelangelo's "Night" or the "Ilissus" of the Parthenon was made up of castings. The "Age of Bronze" is neither more nor less than a study of an individual model. Its attitude, so far as one can see, has neither special significance nor great decorative beauty, but it brings out the structure of the

figure in an interesting way, and on the expression of that structure the sculptor has spent all his energy. The name is probably an afterthought and might as well be anything else. What he wanted was to model the nude figure of the young Belgian soldier who posed for him as well as it could be modelled, and he has done it marvellously well. In its way it is a masterpiece, but it is a masterpeice neither of conception nor of design, but only of workmanship. Many of Donatello's statues are little more, and they alone would cause him to be remembered. Much such another work was the "St. John Baptist" of a few years later, an older and heavier figure, closely studied from the life, in a pose that seems to have no other purpose than that of anatomical display—a portrait of an ordinary model, clumsy and ugly, but superbly done.

In the meantime the artist had been offered a government commission, and, we are told, answered: "I am ready to fulfil it. But to prove that I do not take casts from the life, I will make little bas-reliefs —an immense work with small figures, and I think of taking the subject from Dante." Thus was begun those "Gates of Hell" on which Rodin has been at work for a quarter of a century, which are not yet finished, which, likely enough, never will be finished. They are talked of and written of, but no photograph of the composition as a whole has ever been published and the public knows them only in frag-

ments—this figure and that group separately completed and exhibited. For nearly all the sculptor's smaller works are connected in some way with this great undertaking. He has made of it, as M. Mauclair says, "the central motive of all his dreams, the storehouse of his ideas and researches." He himself calls it "my Noah's Ark."

It is in some of these fragments of the great gates, these single groups or figures, that Rodin's very great talent shows at its best, that his qualities are most conspicuous and his defects least aggressive. Considered in themselves, and without reference to the purpose they were originally destined to fulfil as parts of a greater whole, they are among the most admirable things in modern art. One of them, the so-called "Daniad," I remember well, and it seems to me typical of Rodin's art in its highest development. It represents a single female figure about half the size of life, fallen forward in an odd, crouching attitude sufficiently expressive of utter despair or of extreme physical lassitude. The figure is a slight one, and the attitude, which is not without a strange grace of its own, throws into strong relief the bony structure of the pelvis, the shoulder blades, the vertebræ. One feels that it was chosen mainly for that purpose, and, in face of the result, one does not resent the fact. It is a fragment—a thing made to be seen near at hand, to be walked around, to be looked at from a hundred points of view, to be almost



RODIN: "THE DANAID"

handled. It is not necessary that it should make pretence to monumental composition or decorative fitness—its beauty is intrinsic. It is a piece of pure sculpture, of modelling, as I have said, and such modelling has scarce been seen elsewhere, unless in one or two of the greatest of those figures which we associate with the name of Phidias. Unlike the Greeks, however, Rodin makes no effort to raise his figure into an ideal type of human beauty, or even to choose it for any special perfection of proportion. In this instance it is not an ugly figure, it is even above the average—a good figure as figures go—but the beauty inherent in construction, in the make of the human figure as a figure is what interests the artist. It is the interpretation of such natural beauty as may be seen everywhere and any day, by any one with the eyes to see it, that he has given us.

But it is an interpretation, not a copy. Apart from the scale, there could never be any question here of casts from nature. There is no insistence on detail, no worrying or niggling. Everything is largely done, with profound knowledge, the result of thousands of previous observations, and the significance of every quarter inch of surface is amazing. Such discrimination of hard and soft, of bone and muscle and flesh and skin, such sense of stress and tension where the tissues are tightly drawn over the framework beneath, such sense of weight where they drag away from it—all this is beyond description as

it is beyond praise. And it is all done with admirable reticence, without the slightest insistence or exaggeration, and with such a feeling for the nature of the material employed that the marble seems caressed into breathing beauty, its delicate bosses and hollows so faintly accented that the eye alone is hardly adequate to their perception and the finger tips fairly tingle with the desire of touch. In the presence of such a work one half understands how its author could refer, almost contemptuously, to the great Michelangelo as to one who "used to do a little anatomy evenings, and used his chisel next day without a model."

When, however, one comes to consider this figure, and others like it, as parts of the design of the great gates, one is puzzled. Here is an entirely realised figure in the round, not a bas-relief, and indeed one knows no piece of work by Rodin that is in either high or low relief; they are all practically detached. It melts into or grows out of its base in a manner that is charming, considered in itself, as if the stone were coming to life under our gaze and the process were not yet quite completed; but how could it be a part of any ordered design for a bronze door? And would the bronze have these rough excrescences that seem natural enough as a part of the marble not quite cut away—a part of the shell in which the living figure was enclosed, still remaining as a testimony of its origin? If it were not for unimpeachable

testimony that the "Gates of Hell" do actually exist in the form of a rough model, one would be tempted to think of them as a myth, like Turner's "Fallacies of Hope," a convenient explanation of such fragments as might otherwise seem unaccountable. Even Mr. Brownell, who will not admit that Rodin is not a great composer, does allow that he is not a composer first of all and by nature, and says of the design of these very gates, "if Rodin had been as instinctively drawn to the *ensemble* as he was to its elements, he would not have been so long in executing it." It is the belief that Rodin is not only not a designer by nature, but that he has an innate incapacity for design on a large scale, a lack of the architectonic faculty, an inability to think except in fragments, that leads some of us to imagine that the gates never will be completed—that they are incapable of completion because they have never been really conceived as a whole. It is interesting to note how the method of work upon them is described by so ardent an admirer as M. Mauclair.

"He is continually putting in little figures which replace others," we are told; "there, plastered into the niches left by unfinished figures, he places everything that he improvises, everything that seems to him to correspond in character and subject with that vast confusion of human passions." And again, "he will be forever improvising some little figure, shaping the notation of some feeling, idea or form,

and this he plants in his door, studies it against the other figures, then takes it out again, and, if need be, breaks it up and uses the fragments for other attempts . . . if it were to be carried out it could not contain all the figures destined for it by the artist. There they stand, innumerable, ranged on shelves beside the rough model of the door, representing the entire evolution of Rodin's inspiration, and forming what I call, with his consent, 'the diary of his life as a sculptor.'" Could one conceive a clearer picture of the worker with no general plan, with no definite conception of an *ensemble?* Can one imagine Ghiberti working so on his "Gates of Paradise"? After this we are scarcely surprised to be told that the artist who works in this confused and tentative manner, "never troubling himself about the architecture of the actual scheme," has not even settled on the scale and dimensions of the final rendering, and, having carried out "The Thinker" larger than life, "is credited with an intention of bringing up all the other figures to the same dimensions, which would represent an unheard-of outlay and a gate nearly a hundred feet high." The original commission for a door for the *Musée des Art Décoratifs* seems thus altogether lost sight of, and when we are finally told that "if ever Government should require him to deliver his work he would be able to do so without delay," we receive the assurance with a certain incredulity.

RODIN: "THE THINKER"

Or take the " Burghers of Calais," a work actually completed and now in place. Even Mr. Brownell admits that " its defiance of convention seems *à outrance* " and speaks of the " apparent helter-skelter " of its composition, but he thinks the defiance of convention deliberate, the work of a man impatient of " the simple and elementary symmetry of the Medicean tombs " and composing in a new and daring way. Was it ever composed at all, except in the sense that the assemblage of individually conceived and executed figures is necessarily an act of composition? The work had been in progress for some years; some, at least, of the figures, had been exhibited separately and praised or blamed; but the group as a whole was shown for the first time at a special exhibition in the Petit Gallery in 1889. In the catalogue of that exhibition was an elaborate description of the group, prepared, surely, with Rodin's authorisation, and, at least, published with his consent, in which the order and relative position of the figures was entirely different from that actually to be seen in the group itself. It may have been a blunder, though it is a nearly inconceivable one, but I have always believed that Rodin himself had found that his figures composed better in another order than that which he had vaguely intended, and that he changed the position of them when he came to bring them together. One may like or dislike these figures; one may be troubled by their colossal hands

and feet and gorilla-like type of head, or one may accept these things as part of their expression; one may find their enigmatic gestures either meaningless or full of meaning. One cannot deny that they are works of great power, but it seems to me equally impossible to maintain that they form a coherent and well thought-out design.

It was the work which Rodin had done up to that time—the work we have been discussing—which led Mr. Brownell, in 1892, to write as follows:

"What insipid fragments most of the really eminent Institute statues would make were their heads knocked off by some band of modern barbarian invaders. In the event of such an irruption, would there be any torsos left from which future Poussins could learn all they should know of the human form? Would there be any *disjecta membra* from which skilled anatomists could reconstruct the lost *ensemble*, or at any rate make a shrewd guess at it? Would anything survive mutilation with the serene confidence in its fragmentary but everywhere penetrating interest which seems to pervade the most fractured fraction of a Greek relief on the Athenian acropolis? Yes, there would be the débris of Auguste Rodin's sculpture."

This is largely true, though perhaps it is somewhat exaggerated, but if the foregoing analysis of Rodin's talent is anything like the right one, it will be seen that there is more than one reason why it

RODIN: "ETERNAL SPRING"

is true. Rodin's sculpture would better survive mutilation than that of his contemporaries, not only because of the truth and beauty of the fragments that would be left, not only because his sense of structure makes other sculpture, even very good sculpture, look structureless and flabby, but because his work would suffer as little by mutilation as any work could. It is possible, even, that some of it would be more effective for being resolved into the parts which have not grown naturally and inevitably out of a predetermined design, but have rather been put together afterward into as good an arrangement as their author could contrive. We should be able to do complete justice to the perfection of the fragments without being worried by the artist's defective sense of design. It is not for nothing that Rodin has always been willing to exhibit his work in bits, to carry out as independent statues figures originally conceived as portions of a larger design, to show things without heads or arms and to act himself the rôle of Time or of the barbarian invader. The bits are all that really interest him, and their more or less successful combination is a matter of indifference when it is not a nuisance.

Perhaps the type of artist I have been trying to describe will be brought into sharper relief and made more clearly comprehensible by means of a contrast with a radically different type, and for this purpose let us take another contemporary sculptor

of great eminence—another Augustus, too, by a singular coincidence—our own Saint-Gaudens. Here is a man as fundamentally the designer as the other is the modeller. From the start one feels that the design is his affair, the pattern of the whole, its decorative effect and play of line, its beauty of masses and spaces, its fitness for its place and its surroundings, its composition, in a word. He begins as a cameo cutter and works on gems whose perfection of composition is their almost sole claim to consideration; he produces a multiplicity of small reliefs, dainty, exquisite, infallibly charming in their arrangement—things which are so dependent on their design for their very existence that they seem scarcely modelled at all—things which it is inconceivable that one should separate into their parts, because the parts would have no independent meaning. He does angels, caryatids, in which the realisation of parts is rigidly subordinated to decorative effect and beauty of *ensemble*, and his first independent statue, the "Farragut," is a masterpiece of restrained and elegant, yet original and forceful design—a design, too, that includes the base and the bench below, and of which the figures in bas-relief are almost as important a part as the statue itself.

He is known for the immense amount of time he takes over his work and the number of changes he makes—some of his creations have been as long in attaining completion as the "Burghers of Calais,"

if not as long as the "Gates of Hell"—but his hesitations have arisen from a different cause. The infinite fastidiousness of a master designer, constantly reworking and readjusting his design that every part of it shall be perfect and that no fold of drapery or spray of leafage shall be out of its proper place, never satisfied that his composition is beyond improvement while an experiment remains to be tried, sometimes abandoning his first design for another that he believes to be better, but generally coming back to his original conception, reinforced, broadened, certified by manifold trials and variations—this is what costs him years of labour. When his work is done, you feel that it is inevitably thus and not otherwise; that each small fragment of it is necessary to the effect of the whole and has no existence apart from the whole; and the thought of the barbarian's hammer makes you shudder.

Gradually, by years of work and experience he grows stronger and stronger in the more purely sculptural qualities, in grasp of form and structure, in mastery of modelling; but even in such superb and balanced works as the "Shaw Memorial" or the "Sherman" statue, it is the design that counts first and last, and dominates the special interest of the details—a design free, expressive, complicated, as far as possible from the "elementary symmetry of the Medicean tombs," but nevertheless a design as

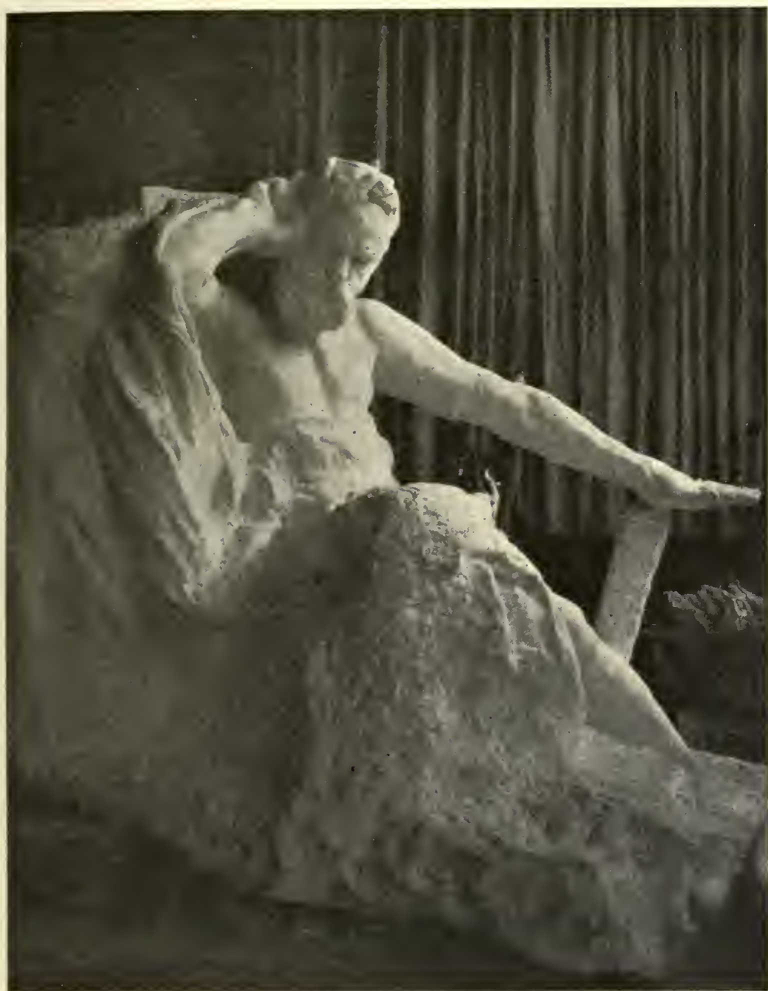
imperiously conceived, as relentless in its dominance of the contributory parts, as intolerant of independent perfections. They are antipodal types of artist, these two Augusti, the natural designer who becomes a modeller through continued effort, and the great modeller who achieves, sometimes, an approach to satisfactory design. Which we shall admire or enjoy the more is a matter, largely, of our own relative susceptibility to the various elements of art. We may be thankful that two such men have existed in our epoch and that we have work so diversely accomplished to enjoy.

So far we have been dealing with what may properly be called the earlier work of Rodin, though the study of it has taken us well past his fiftieth year. This need not surprise us, when we realise that he was nearing forty when he became a recognised, exhibiting artist, so that all this work is that of little more than the first decade and a half of his independent career. In the development of his later style there is much that is more difficult to understand and to explain to oneself or to others, and here M. Mauclair's volume, in spite of a puzzling style which may be partly or altogether the fault of the translator, becomes a real help. Through his explanations, difficult as they are to follow—above all, through his quotations from Rodin's own somewhat rambling talk or occasional writings—one gradually attains to some dim notion of the meaning and purpose of

the sculptor's later experiments. To put it, as nearly as possible, into a word, from a realistic sculptor, Rodin has gradually become an impressionistic sculptor. The evolution which, in the art of painting, began with Courbet and ended with Monet—two men of considerable physical as well as moral resemblance to Rodin—has, in the art of sculpture, taken place in the work of one man.

The essence of this evolution is the transference of interest from objects to the light that falls upon them, and Rodin has, apparently, attempted something altogether new in sculpture, the carving in marble of an atmosphere, and the rendering not so much of the actual forms of the human body as of its luminosity. Of course nothing is so new as it seems, and the methods which Rodin has adopted have been used before and to some extent for the same purpose. He has only pushed them farther than any one else, has bent his mind more exclusively to the attainment of certain effects, and has more ruthlessly sacrificed everything else in the process. Indeed he himself maintains that so far from being new, the methods of his later work are based on the only right comprehension of the art of the Greeks, which has been misunderstood by everybody else, and that he is proceeding as they did, while others have only unintelligently imitated their works. Whether the use of large masses and united surfaces by the antique sculptors was really intended to pro-

duce an equivalent effect to the luminosity of flesh, or whether it was simply a part of the Greek conception of form—an elimination of the non-essential and a delight in largeness for its own sake—its results have a certain similarity to those attained by the Venetian painters in their effort to attain light and atmosphere. When one passes from Florentine to Venetian painting, the treatment of form is perceived to be almost more radically changed than the treatment of colour. It is not only that the line is disguised and the edges melted away, but all the forms become larger, rounder, smoother, less accented. The Florentine interest in bone and sinew and muscle, in joints and attachments, stresses and pressures, disappears, and we have, instead, broad, glowing masses that seem almost unorganised, so faint are their interior markings. All this was not merely because the Venetians liked fat women, nor was it, as the Florentines thought, because the Venetians couldn't draw. In the same way some critics of Rodin's later work have so far forgotten the "Age of Bronze" as to reproach him with not knowing the figure. It was an amplification of modelling for the sake of obtaining light, and this "amplification of modelling" is what Rodin has introduced into his later sculpture. To get rid of the harshness and wiriness of edges, to spread the lights into their surroundings as lights do spread in nature, he has actually thickened his forms to correspond with the



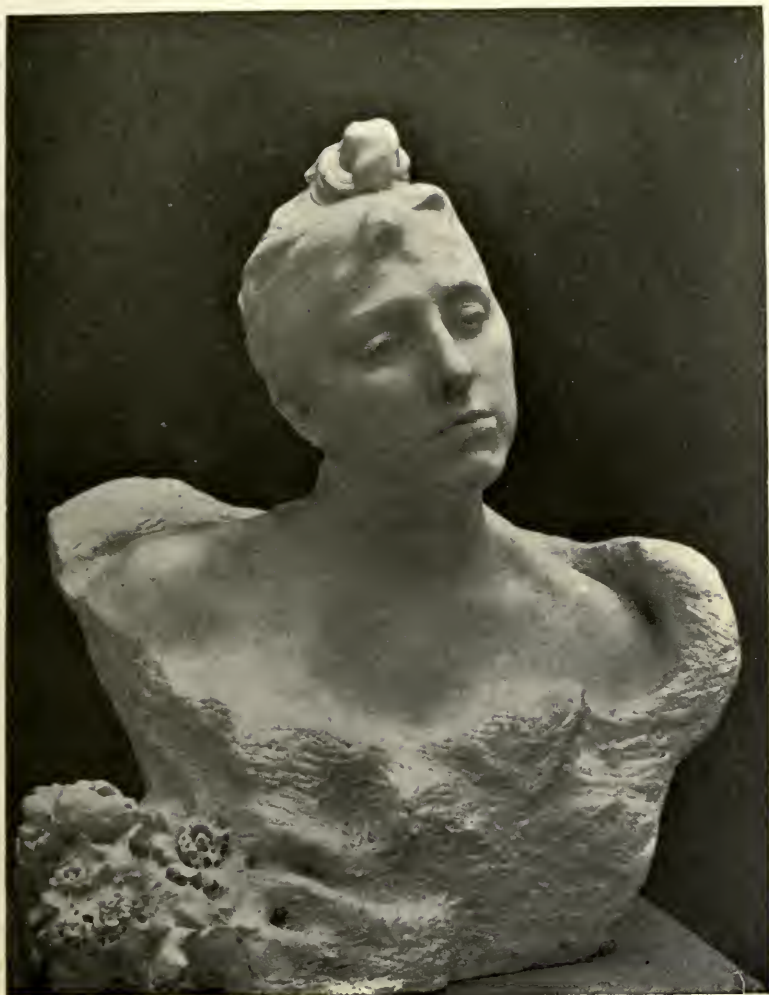
RODIN: "VICTOR HUGO"

apparent thickening of natural forms under illumination, introducing a kind of halation into the art of sculpture; he has gained breadth of effect by filling up hollows, and atmosphere by diminishing shadows, and has enveloped his figures in a mystery like that from which emerge the ghostly presences of modern men and women in the portraits of Eugène Carrière. The figures of the Nereids from the Hugo monument, and the figure of the poet himself, are capital examples of the method. The forms are enlarged and nowhere sharply made out, enveloped in a veil of unremoved marble as in the unfinished works of Michelangelo, and the effect is a curious blurring such as modern photographers seek by throwing their pictures slightly out of focus.

It was a desire for escape, by mystery, from the harshness of the matter of fact that led the Florentine sculptors to the invention of a substitute for colour in their much more delicate system of reticent half-modelling. It must have been as much the relief he found in mystery as his own impatience or the impatience of his patrons which led Michelangelo to leave so many of his works unfinished. In his deliberate search for means of expressing mystery and light Rodin has seized upon the abstraction of the Greeks, the low relief of the Florentines, the unfinish of Michelangelo, and has carried each to extremes never before contemplated. Our opinion of the result must depend on whether we feel it to

be worth while—whether we think the novel achievement altogether compensates for the sacrifices made in its behalf. As Monet has unquestionably painted light as it was never painted before, so has Rodin modelled light as no one ever thought of modelling it. In both cases the question, to which every one will have his own answer, is, how far the end justifies the means. In any case it is surely a gain to have a new kind of achievement, however strongly one may believe that the old kind was, on the whole, more important.

As long ago as when he made the bust of Mme. V., now in the Luxembourg Gallery, Rodin showed the fascination that masses of unsmoothed stone had for him, using them here for the sake of contrast with the exquisitely modelled and finished head—one of the most delightful and subtle pieces of work produced in modern times. In this case he carved a part of the amorphous mass into a spray of flowers—presumably suggested by the accidental shape of the unremoved marble—which I have always wished somebody would take away; the rest of it has an undoubted value, suggesting a fur pelisse, treated sketchily as a painter might indicate it, out of which the smooth white shoulders emerge into palpitating beauty. Since then his use of such rough masses has constantly increased until, in some of his later works, there seems to be more of them than of the figures which grow out of them, and one has seen, in

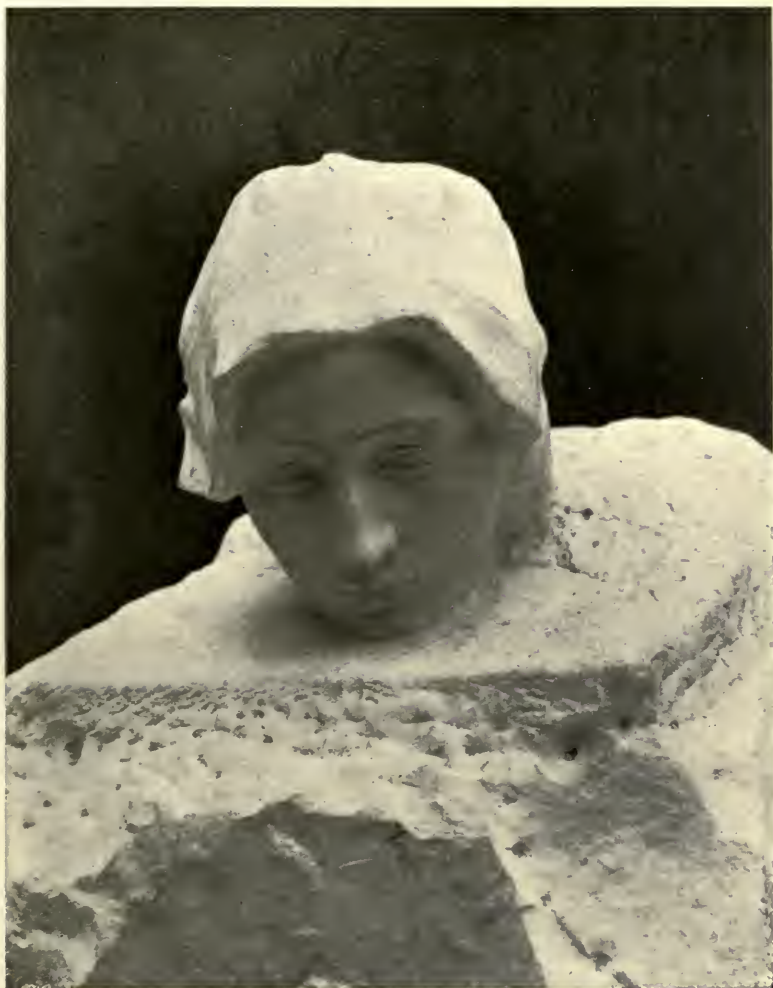


RODIN: "BUST OF MME. V"

his work and in that of some of his imitators, such unfinish deliberately prepared for from the beginning, and shapeless masses of clay added to the model to show where the marble will be left uncut away in the definitive production. Finally he has allegorised this method and produced in "Thought," a female head, visible only from the chin upward, emerging from a rudely squared block, what M. Mauclair calls "the very symbol of his art." Such works are, by their very incompletion, stimulating to the imagination, but one wonders if there is not, occasionally, a hint of affectation in all this, of strangeness for strangeness' sake, of a desire to shock into attention the inattentive or the *blasé*. It is difficult to believe that there is not, at times, an element of challenge in his ostentatious disregard of the common prejudice in favour of the completed and the intelligible, as if he felt obliged to exaggerate his own methods in order to keep up an excitement about his name; and one feels this especially when one finds him transferring this use of intentional roughness from marble to bronze, as in the unexplained excrescence upon the nose of the bronze study for the head of "Balzac," the curious little dabs upon the left breast of the magnificent bust of Jean-Paul Laurens, or the strange medley of bands and straps of clay, reproduced in enduring metal, which stand for the coat in the equally fine bust of Puvis de Chavannes. The suspicion may be entirely unjust. Certainly such

manœuvres are unworthy of so eminent a talent, and certainly such works as the two last mentioned stand in no need of any such adventitious appeal to our interest. But it would not be altogether strange if an artist, fundamentally of a simple and instinctive nature, acclaimed as a poet and a mighty thinker as well as a master of masters, should become somewhat dazzled, lose, a little, his sense of proportion, and end by making a fetich of himself, his ideas, even his mannerisms.

Is the much discussed "Balzac" statue a masterpiece, an error, or a bad joke? It has been called all of these things. M. Mauclair, speaking, apparently, for the artist himself, gives us an account of the reasons why it is what it is. The main point of the explanation is that Rodin wanted to avoid the frock-coat style of statuary. A statue was a proper form of homage to an athlete or a warrior, whose physical perfection was a great part of his effectiveness, but it is absurd to make full-length statues of men whose bodies count for nothing in their fame and whose costumes are ugly and unsculpturesque. Victor Hugo had been transformed by the artist into a kind of nude sea-god, but Balzac's well-known physical peculiarities precluded such treatment, and his frog-like body would have been immitigably grotesque if exposed to view. The logical monument to such a man would have been a bust with an inscription, and, perhaps, with allegorical figures; but since a statue



RODIN: "THOUGHT"

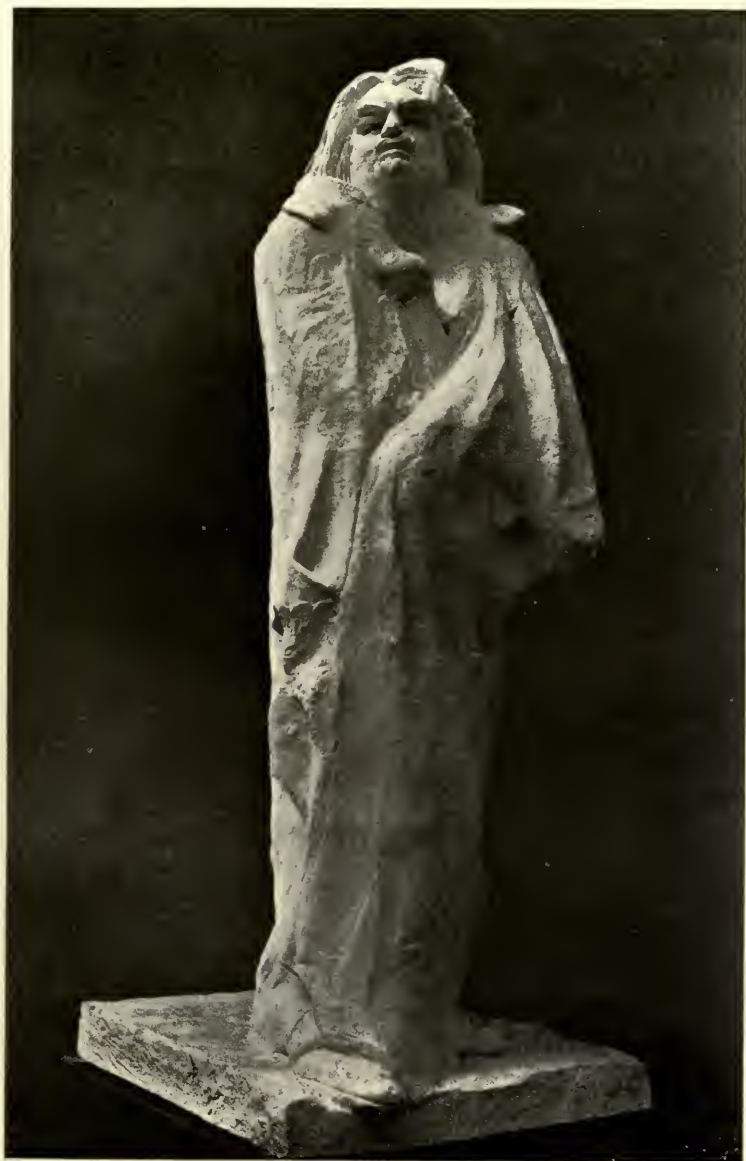
it was to be, the problem was to find some method of concentrating the attention upon the head. Rodin had made a vigorous bronze study for this head, already mentioned, but in the statue he seems to have reworked it, exaggerating his exaggerations in the rage for expression, until it looks more like the head of a Minotaur than of a human being. Then he clothed the figure in the historic bath-gown, and, on his principle of amplifying the modelling, "proceeded to simplify the folds until he had left only the two or three essential ones. The result thus obtained, with the disproportion of body and legs, led Rodin to hide the short, ugly, useless arms under the drapery, and the figure thus assumed," in M. Mauclair's own words, "pretty much the appearance of a mummy, of a sort of monolith . . . the whole work gives the impression of a *menhir*, a pagan dedicatory stone."

The description could not be more exact, but was it not permissible for the *Société des Gens de Lettres* to decide that a *menhir* was not precisely what they had ordered?

Mr. Brownell has said of this statue that "whatever its success or its failure, it emphasises the temperamental side of Rodin's genius, which is here unbalanced by the determination and concreteness usually so marked in his work." Perhaps it is only another way of saying the same thing to call it the aberration of an eminently concrete genius struggling

with the abstract, of a naturalist and a craftsman attempting pure poetic expression.

If, in the discussion of these works, I have spoken much more of methods than of imagination, it is because everybody speaks of imagination and hardly any one of technique, and because the plastic imagination—the imagination of the artist—speaks through forms, and the best way to realise the nature of an artist's imagination is to try to understand the forms he has created. But if I have given the impression that Rodin is not an imaginative artist—that his realism is of the commonplace, *terre à terre* kind which copies rather than creates—I have not given the impression I have intended. I have already said that an artist of the type I am trying to describe is a craftsman, a realist, and a romanticist, and in Rodin the romanticist is nearly as strong as the realist or the technician. It takes imagination of a high order to conceive a figure as thoroughly as the "Danaid" is conceived; it takes invention of a still higher kind to produce such a wonderful and passionate group as the "Eternal Spring"; and many of these smaller groups and figures are wonderfully composed also, if one considers them separately. It is only in his larger compositions, in work that should have a decorative purpose and a formal relation to its surroundings, and in occasional eccentricities and angularities, that one feels seriously the lack of designing power. The lack of imagination, after his



RODIN: "STATUE OF BALZAC"

first two or three figures, one never feels, and however unideal his work may be thought to be, it cannot be called unimaginative; however scientific, it is never cold-blooded. Indeed his imagination is overheated, savagely voluptuous, not without a tinge of perversity—delighting, at its highest, in sensuous beauty and intensity of physical emotion, at its ordinary level in sheer animal force and the splendour of vitality, at its lowest in pain and horror and vice. M. Mauclair devotes some space to certain drawings of Rodin's which must, from his description, be extraordinary enough both in method and subject, and defends them from the charge of licentiousness on the ground that the artist's interest in them is pathological and quasi-scientific, and that they are no more questionable than anatomical plates. Moreover they are done for himself alone, as a part of his study, and are shown only to those who can understand them, while he has never "yielded to the fancy of modelling one of these subjects." Certainly his major works, full of passion as some of them are, are kept well within the limits imposed by decency in both subject and treatment, though he has done certain "sphynxes" and "nymphs" whose expression and type of feature are bestial and revolting, and one has seen other things which one does not need to be a rigid puritan to regret. Fortunately, they do not form a very important part of his production, and the same heat of imagination which

has produced them has endowed his finer works with an intensity of life that is as rare as the magnificent craftsmanship which has interpreted it to us.

The function of the critic is not to praise or blame, not even to weigh or measure or value, but to distinguish, to discriminate, to explain. His work is to show what a thing is, and how and why it is so, to analyse and classify, to determine its genus and species and variety. As he is human, however, his own predilections, his likes and dislikes, will creep in to colour his product, and if he is only honest there will be at least this advantage, that a real enthusiasm will give vivacity to his description of the qualities he most admires and a greater clearness to his perception of their absence. At any rate, the personal equation must be taken into account, and no one critic, however good his intention, can tell all the truth about any artist. This, then, is a sincere attempt to describe how Rodin and his art strike one person. Many other such attempts have been made and many more will be, and I have no illusions as to the definitiveness of this one. Let the reader take it for what it is worth.

RODIN: "THE KISS"

VII

LORD LEIGHTON

LORD LEIGHTON

PROBABLY no other painter, since the art of painting was invented, ever received such splendid material rewards for the exercise of his talents as did Frederic Leighton, Baron Leighton of Stretton, president of the Royal Academy, commander of the Legion of Honour, associate of the Institute of France, member of most of the academies of Europe, doctor of this or that in half-a-dozen universities, knight of many orders, man of wealth, friend of princes—a person of distinction and the highest social standing wherever he might find himself. Perhaps it is partly for this very reason that many critics and painters are inclined to deny him those less material rewards of permanent fame and abiding influence which they would bestow on some less successful men. The very qualities which so greatly aided his career—his good looks, his accomplishments, his personal charm—have tended to obscure his real artistic talent. He did so many things so well that people might be excused for forgetting that he "painted too," as Whistler phrased it—whether as a sneer at the artist or as a rebuke of his superficial admirers, it is difficult to say. He was so eminently and obviously the proper person

for the head of an academy that his art is dubbed "merely academic" and safely disposed of.

How early he was marked out for his great office is surprising. As a youngster at Rome, before his first picture had been exhibited, Thackeray met him, and at once set him down as Millais's only serious rival. Later, in London, before and at the time of his election as associate, his future destiny seems to have been a matter of common talk. It was impossible not to recognise the fitness of the only Englishman who ever really knew how to draw the human figure, when that Englishman was also a cultivated gentleman, a linguist, a musician, an effective writer and speaker, an extremely handsome man, and a person of winning manners. Better than all these things, he was a man of pure and lofty character, not only honourable and conscientious, but broad-minded and tender-hearted, full of charity and the milk of human kindness, an ornament to any profession and to any walk in life.

Born at Scarborough in 1830, of a good family, the son of a physician who had given up practice and lived the life of a scholar, Leighton was educated abroad, being little in England from the time he was ten years old until he settled in London in 1859. All his life he remained a traveller, and was almost as often in Italy as at home. His father wisely insisted on his attaining a good classical and general education before devoting himself to art, and though

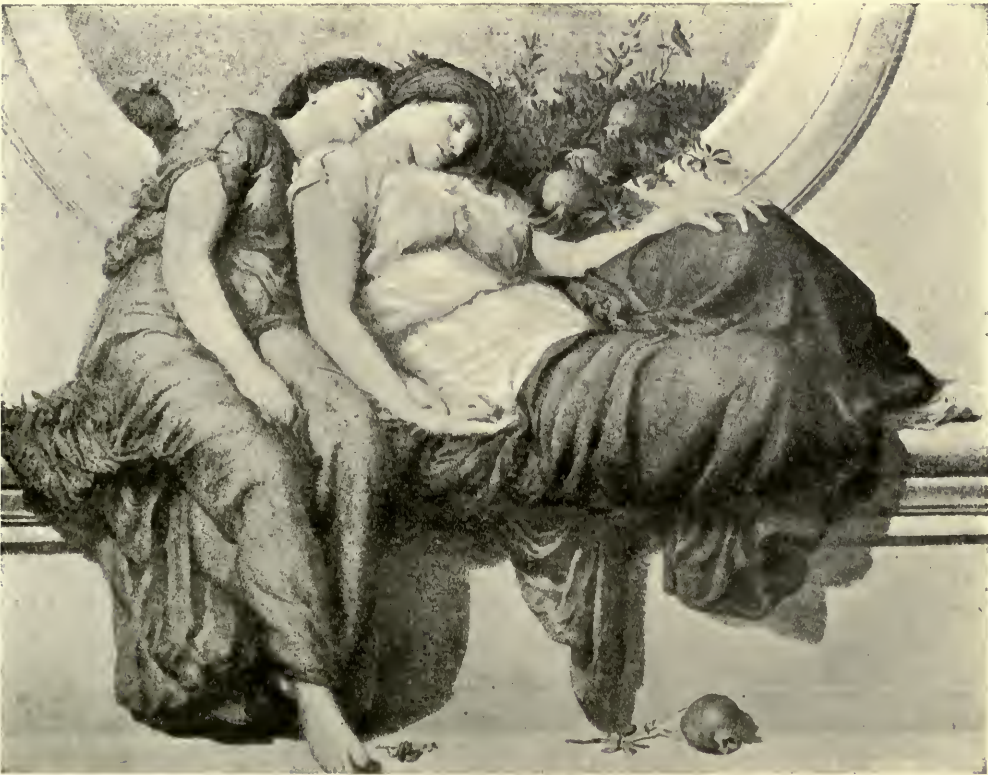
LEIGHTON: "CLYTEMNESTRA"

he seems to have begun his serious artistic training in Florence in 1842 and to have become the pupil of Steinle of Frankfort in 1843, it was not until he was seventeen that he was allowed to give his whole time to his future profession. He remained with Steinle, or under his direct influence, until 1852, and he always referred to that influence as having set upon his own art "the ineffaceable seal." Steinle was an offshoot of the German Nazarenes, an admirer and, in some sense, a follower of Cornelius and Overbeck; but his own idealism seems to have been of a much less pompous and artificial sort than theirs. His was a pure and gentle spirit, and he filled his pupil with lofty ideals of devotion to the highest in art. Technically, his chief insistence must have been upon absolute perfection of drawing. Any specifically German accent that Leighton may have acquired from him rapidly disappeared when his immediate influence was removed; but to him the young man undoubtedly owed that thoroughness of education in form which made him a unique figure in England and the equal of the best-trained artists anywhere.

In 1852 he went to Rome, and the next year or two he devoted to the painting of his first important picture, "Cimabue's Madonna Carried in Procession through the Streets of Florence," which was exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1855, a more ambitious work in size and in the number of figures it contained than any other work of his except "The

Daphnephoria," of 1876, and his two or three mural decorations. It met with instantaneous success, was praised by artists and critics, and bought by the Queen. The opponents of Preraphaelitism were delighted to find a young man not of the Brotherhood who was the equal of Hunt and Millais in ability, while the mediævalism of subject and carefulness of detail evinced in the picture pleased the Preraphaelites and their great advocate, Ruskin. The success was too great to be at once repeated, and for some years we hear of pictures rejected or badly hung, and of adverse comments in the press. Probably the pictures were not so good as the "Cimabue"—some of them have never reappeared—they were transitional works in which the real Frederic Leighton was disengaging himself from the pupil of Steinle. The mediævalism went first—the very year after "Cimabue" he painted a "Pan," a "Venus," and an "Orpheus"; though in a freakish spirit, inconceivable a little later, he gives his Orpheus a violin instead of a lyre. The whole transition can have taken but a short time, and from the early sixties to his death he is always essentially the same. He was elected an associate in 1864 and an Academician in 1869, made president of the Academy and knighted in 1878, promoted to a baronetcy in 1886, and to the peerage on January 1, 1896, less than a month before his death.

Whether the art of Leighton is rightly to be



LEIGHTON: "THE SUMMER MOON"

LEIGHTON: "ANTIQUE JUGGLING GIRL"

called academic depends, of course, on the meaning one attaches to that term. Nowadays it has become a handy missile for the half-educated, the raw emotionalist, or the delighter in paint for paint's sake, to fling at all balanced, restrained, or accomplished art, from Raphael to Vermeer of Delft. Because certain things must be learned, it is assumed that anybody may learn them; because a work of art shows training, it is assumed that there was nothing there to train; the possession of taste is treated as proof of the absence of talent. We shall yet hear Whistler called academic by the more extravagant of the modern advocates of slap-dash. In the sense that his art was studied, polished, restrained, always governed by taste and always avoiding excesses; in the sense that it showed the good breeding of a gentleman and the learning of a scholar, not to be acquired in a week or two, Leighton was certainly academic. Indeed, it may be doubted if any of his contemporaries but Paul Baudry was his equal in academic accomplishment. But it does not follow that he was nothing else, and that there was no real emotion behind his measured utterance.

Even of such truly academic painters as Cabanel or Bouguereau it is absurd to suppose that their work is the result of mere training. Hundreds of men had the same training without the intelligence and the gifts of eye and hand which enabled them to profit by it. Drawing is no more to be learned with-

out an eye for form than is music without an ear for tone, and great natural gifts are as necessary as industry to the attainment of even respectable mastery in it. But Leighton's drawing, at its best, has a quality entirely distinct from the cold perfection of Bouguereau's or the photographic accuracy of Gérôme's. There are many evidences in the English painter's letters that he was keenly sensitive to beauty and was greatly moved by it, but such evidences are not to be found in the letters alone—his paintings and drawings are full of them. His early drawings of foliage and flowers are delightful, and in his later work he attained to an ideal beauty in the representation of the human figure which is more nearly Greek than anything else in later nineteenth century art. His few works in sculpture have been rated very high by professional sculptors, but let us rather consider a few of the figures he painted. Look at the massive, the truly monumental, dignity of his "Clytemnestra," as she watches from the battlements of Argos for the beacon fires which shall announce the return of her husband; a grand figure, titanic in bulk but nobly severe in line, a very embodiment of the spirit of antique tragedy. Look at the full-blown, gracious ripeness, languorous and heavy, of those two lovely sleepers in "The Summer Moon." Look at the youthful suppleness of the "Antique Juggling Girl," her clean, round limbs as smoothly modelled as a Pompeian bronze; or at the exquisite,

LEIGHTON: "THE BATH OF PSYCHE"

delicate slenderness of the "Psyche," her flower-like body gleaming between the marble columns and reflected in the limpid element below. The creator of such figures as these, and of many others only less beautiful, is a great artist—an artist of power, of sensitiveness, and of style.

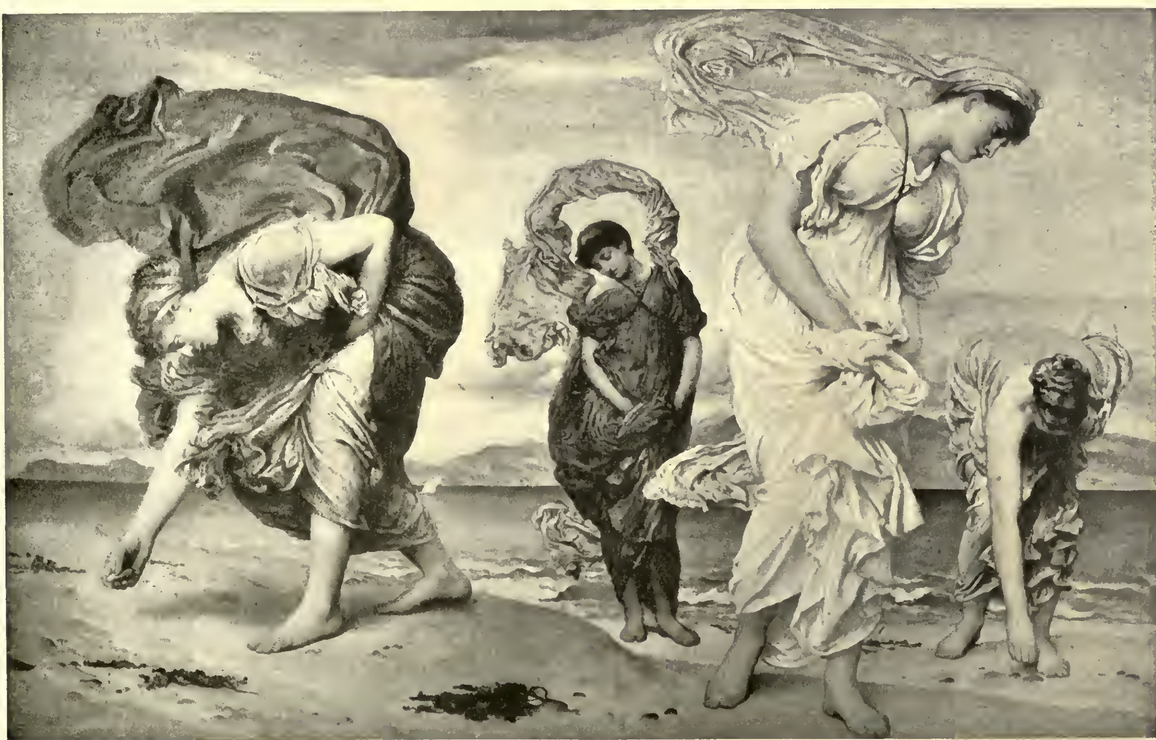
And note that it makes very little difference what these figures are called. Leighton has been accused, among other things, of being a "literary painter," and of serving up to the British public its beloved anecdote slightly disguised with a Greek sauce. The accusation might not seem very terrible even if it were true—since Michelangelo and Rembrandt might tell stories without derogation, why not a lesser man? The question, after all, is not whether one tells stories, but how one tells them. But, at least in the pictures just mentioned, the accusation is not true. Only one of these figures, the "Clytemnestra," has any definite story connected with it, and one imagines that even there the figure may easily have been invented first and the story fitted to it afterward. The stately amplitude of the erect form, the tenseness of the rigid arms and clutched hands, the columnar effect of the whole, accented by and contrasted with the ripple and flow of the finely divided draperies—these are the things that count. Call her after any other tragic heroine and the result would be the same. The others are even more frankly renderings of a type and an attitude of the human figure, two women

sleeping, a girl juggling with balls, a young woman disrobing for the bath. Of this sort are "Summer Slumber," "Flaming June," "Clytie," and most emphatically of this sort are his essays in sculpture, the "Athlete Struggling with a Python," the "Sluggard," and the "Needless Alarms." All these are as purely artistic in inspiration, as little dependent on anything external to themselves for their effect, as any "symphony" or "arrangement" of Whistler's.

It might be more reasonably objected to these works that their inspiration is rather sculptural than pictorial, but there are still people in the world who will not consent that sculpture shall have the monopoly of beautiful form, or that the art of painting shall be robbed of half her immemorial domain, because its borders touch upon the confines of her sister's estate. And if the figures themselves might have been executed in marble or bronze, losing little thereby, there is in almost every case an arrangement of background and accessory, a use of landscape, an addition of light and shade and an enhancement by colour, which are purely pictorial. No, the best of Leighton's works may fairly be called masterpieces of the painter's art, and their creator a master.

If he is not so successful in his larger and more ambitious works it is not because they tell a story or depict an incident, but because he was not a

LEIGHTON: "SKETCH FOR ATHLETE STRUGGLING WITH A PYTHON"



LEIGHTON: "GREEK GIRLS PICKING UP SHELLS BY THE SEA-SHORE"

master of composition, and is seldom quite felicitous in his arrangement of more than one or two figures. Some of the pictures which most clearly show his besetting faults have no more subject than the "Juggling Girl"; the "Greek Girls Picking up Shells by the Seashore," for example. Here each of the figures is the study of a movement, each is beautifully and interestingly arranged, but there is no bond of union between them, no grouping, no large and general sweep of line or apportionment of space. Their juxtaposition is so accidental, and each exists so entirely for itself that one regrets that a slight overlapping here and there prevents the picture being cut into four, any one of which would be more effective than the whole. One could then enjoy the beauty of the individual figures without being irritated by their lack of co-ordination. Not all Leighton's major compositions are as ill put together as this—the "Heracles Struggling with Death for the Body of Alcestis," for instance, is even extremely well put together—but they are *put together*. The whole scheme has not been *seen*, in its entirety, and the details developed from it—rather the separately seen details have been played about until a not unpleasing arrangement is achieved. The difference is radical. One does not expect the visionary lucidity, the astounding clairvoyance, of a Rembrandt—that is something altogether exceptional and to be thankfully received as such—but no man is a composer who has

not something of that grasp of an *ensemble* which mark Raphael and Veronese, which Baudry had, and Millet, and many another and smaller man, and of this Leighton had very little.

It was perhaps his limited sense of composition, his lack of feeling for large guiding lines and simple masses, more than his use of the lay-figure or his elaborate method of work, based on reiterated preliminary studies, which was responsible for another of his faults strongly exemplified in the "Girls Picking up Shells." In that picture, as in the "Greek Girls Playing at Ball," the draperies are supposed to be violently agitated by the wind, but they do not really fly—they are meticulously arranged in a myriad little folds that the wind would blow out of them in a moment, and their unsupported position is only to be accounted for on the supposition that they are of some rigid material like crumpled tin. The fault might be considered as merely the result of a lack of feeling for motion, were it not for two considerations: first, that the illusion of motion in art is almost entirely dependent on composition of line; and second, that Leighton's love for detail carries him into the same fault in the treatment of drapery in repose. In the best of his figures the many beautiful details of much divided drapery are yet duly subordinated to the total effect, but in other instances, as in the "Fatidica," where the immobility of extreme dejection was to be depicted,

this insistence on little things degenerates into an irritating wriggle of folds, which is almost entirely destructive of the effect aimed at.

Of Leighton's treatment of colour it is more difficult to speak justly from an inspection of reproductions and the fading memories of originals seen long ago. Leighton himself, who was pretty well aware of his own strength and weakness, thought he had achieved his position as a draughtsman, "in spite of a fanatic preference for colour." Yet the impression remains that he showed rather a fastidious choice and arrangement of beautiful colours than a true colourist's power, that his flesh painting was a bit waxy, and that he was too apt to harmonise his canvases by a general reddish tone, not altogether pleasant. Such as his colouring was, it was a distinct and necessary element of his work, not an afterthought, and he is far from those painters whose work is better in black and white reproduction than in the original. With Cabanel or Lefebvre the colour is nugatory; with Gérôme it is an offence. With Leighton it is an essential part of the conception, and, often, a great addition to our pleasure.

It is given to few artists, however sincere, altogether to avoid the pot-boiler—the work done from routine, because work is expected from one and one's living is to be made—work conscientiously carried out and thoroughly craftsmanlike, perhaps, but into which the highest qualities of one's art hardly

enter. It is work of this texture that most hurts an artist's reputation with the succeeding generation, and such work Lord Leighton, like others, produced. There are heads and figures of his which are excellently done in their way, but cold and smooth and characterless—things in which, whether by conscious concession to the popular taste or by a touch of national character in himself, his sense of beauty degenerates into a display of prettiness, doll-like and insipid. Is it necessary to dwell upon these? In the long run the best work of an artist gets itself sorted out, and upon that his reputation finally rests. If but a little of it is really excellent, the reputation is secure. To have created half a dozen beautiful and expressive figures is enough for any man, and Leighton has given us more than that number.

In the ceaseless flux of things, which we somewhat presumptuously call progress, one generation treads on the other's heels; and it is as natural that the young should sneer at their out-of-date elders as it is that these elders should be somewhat distrustful of the young until their ability is proved. The revolutionary of to-day is the obstructive of to-morrow, and he has scarcely done railing at his seniors before he is railed at in turn by his juniors. In our day the merry-go-round is moving briskly and a new "art of the future" is born every ten years or so. It may be that all new things are good, but do they cease to be good the moment something newer is in sight?

LEIGHTON: "FATIDICA"

Does a talent cease to exist the moment it is recognised, and does the putting of a letter or two after a name deprive the name itself of all significance? Let us by all means praise him who adds a field, however small, to the domain of art, but it is as well to keep a grip on the original acres. There are, and will be, in spite of fashion, certain permanent elements of art, certain enduring forms of beauty, certain perennial sources of pleasure; and there are artists whose nature and whose duty it is rather to keep us in mind of these than to point out something else with much shouting. After all, are the new things always new and the young always infallible? David was as much a revolutionary in his day as the romanticists who tripped up his heels. Form is out of fashion, drawing is out of fashion, precision and delicacy of workmanship are out of fashion, and Leighton is out of fashion, too. The lover of beauty who has not to paint pictures or write criticisms does not much care and likes him as well as ever. As the whirligig goes round these things will come into fashion again, and then the critics will discover that Leighton, if not one of the world's greatest geniuses, was yet a true, a sincere, an accomplished artist, and one who created certain forms of beauty and distinction worthy to endure.

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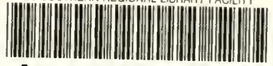
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