



Rembrandt Peale,

MASTERS OF ART AND
LITERATURE.

Fifth Article.

REMBRANDT PEALE, born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, on the 22d day of February, A. D. 1778, came of good stock. His father, CHARLES WILSON PEALE, was not only one of the best patriots of the Revolution, but also a portrait painter of great excellence, and one of the *Fathers* of arts in America. A sketch of the life and labors of the son would be incomplete without a proper reference to the father—to whose love of Art and eminence in his profession his son, REMBRANDT, owes much of his success.

The "times that tried men's souls" were not congenial to the culture of Art. War absorbed all energies that, in times

of peace, might have been turned with success into the great channels of Commerce, Education, Mechanics, and Fine Arts. The claims of country were paramount to all others. Hence, we find the artist, the lawyer, the clergyman, the statesman, the farmer, and the mechanic, all in the ranks, doing battle for that freedom which is now our blessed inheritance. CHARLES WILSON PEALE, though giving extraordinary promise as an Artist, did not shrink from his country's call, but girded on his armor, and followed the fortunes of WASHINGTON, until Victory gave the weary patriots rest. Mr. PEALE was born at Chester, on the eastern shore of Maryland, April 16th, 1741, thus being three years the junior of WEST and COPLEY. His genius was of a very versatile character, "being," as his biographer says, "harness-maker, and clock and watchmaker, silversmith, painter in

oil, crayon, and miniature; moulded the glasses, and made the shagreen cases for the latter; was a soldier, legislator, lecturer, and preserver of animals, whose deficiencies he supplied by making glass eyes and artificial limbs; constructed for himself a violin and a guitar; modelled in clay, wax, and plaster; and was the first dentist in this country who made sets of enamel teeth." Not until twenty-six years of age did he turn his attention to oil painting. Encouraged by the material aid of several gentlemen of Annapolis, he was enabled to proceed to London, and pursued his studies in the Royal Academy during the years 1770 and 1771, under the direct tuition of BENJAMIN WEST, who ever took so much interest in his countrymen. Returning home, he pursued his profession (and the art of war) with great success, painting portraits of many of the great men of that great era, which are now regarded as almost priceless legacies by his countrymen. After the close of the war, Mr. PEALE painted assiduously in Philadelphia, and in 1785 commenced the great Museum which still bears his honored name. In 1791, he made the first effort ever made in America to found an Academy of Design, where native artists might study, and their productions be placed on exhibition for the public good. Though his first attempt did not prove a success, the tireless worker again tried, and in 1809 succeeded so far in his plans as to see the establishment of the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts, and lived to see it become a noble monument to his memory. He contributed to seventeen exhibitions of the Academy, closing his extraordinary and useful life in 1827.

From association with such a father, the son could but attain to eminence. Born when the parent was with WASHINGTON, enduring the sufferings of Valley Forge, REMBRANDT'S first years were passed under the care of his admirable mother. He early showed his taste for Art, and was with his father constantly, after the close of the War. When the elder PEALE painted "the best portrait of the Father of his country," young REMBRANDT—then eight years of age—was at his father's side, studying those noble features which he, himself, in a few years, was to have the privilege of limning from life.

It was in September, 1795, that WASHINGTON gave the "boy-painter" three sit-

tings, of three hours each. The punctual visitor came at seven, always holding his watch in his hand; and it is needless to say he ever found the young artist ready for him. Moved by innate modesty and awe, REMBRANDT induced his father to be present at the sittings, to paint the subject at the same time. The success of REMBRANDT was, of course, but partial, though admirable as the work of one so young. But the study of the face of WASHINGTON made him familiar with its every line and expression, and enabled him in after life to produce the portraits of the great man which are now so highly prized.

At 18 years of age, REMBRANDT opened his studio in Charleston, S. C. He remained there, painting with success, until 1801, when he visited England, to study under WEST, at the Royal Academy. His studies were pursued with great ardor, and induced great changes in his style and coloring. At this time he published his "Memoirs of the Mammoth,"—a little work which attracted the attention of CUVIER. Returning to America, he practised his profession in Philadelphia. In 1807, he visited Paris, for study, and to paint eminent Frenchmen. He found sitters in many *savans* and military men, whose portraits afterwards were a great centre of attraction in the museum of the elder PEALE, in Philadelphia. Returning home, he remained in Philadelphia until 1809, when he again went to Paris, accompanied by his family. Here he remained for fifteen months, an ardent student of the great masterpieces in the public galleries, and zealously painting at his "Gallery of Eminent Frenchmen" of the time.

Returning to Philadelphia, he pursued his portrait painting with great success; and found time to work up his "Roman Daughter," which was first exhibited at the Academy in 1812. This really great picture did not escape all kinds of criticism, but passed the ordeal successfully. It was purchased by Mr. Savage, of Boston.

The long-cherished design of establishing a museum and fine-art gallery in Baltimore, was carried out at this time. He remained in that city nine years, busy with sitters, and also finding time to paint the "Ascent of Elijah," "Court of Death," &c., &c. The last-named was exhibited throughout the Union, and with great success to the artist's fame and re-

sources. It is on a canvas twenty-four by thirteen feet, and contains twenty-three full-sized figures.

From 1822 to 1829, Mr. PEALE painted portraits in Boston, New-York, and Philadelphia. In 1829, together with his son, he again visited France, extending his studies into Italy, remaining abroad sixteen months. His "Washington," which he exhibited at the Academy in Florence, and in other cities, attracted much attention. On his return home, he published a volume on Italy and Art, which proved a great success, and showed the artist to be an acute critic, as well as shrewd observer. The portrait of WASHINGTON, after his return, was purchased by Government, and now adorns the United States Senate Chamber. This portrait was his first study, improved by diligent and most careful scrutiny of all the busts and portraits of WASHINGTON which fell under his observation. It is regarded as one of the best and most life-like of all the busts and portraits of the "Father of his Country" ever painted, and received the encomiums of Chief-Justice MARSHALL, Judge WASHINGTON, LAWRENCE LEWIS, and other personal friends and relatives of the great patriot.

In 1832, the subject of this notice again visited England. Previous to this time, as early as 1825, he had experimented successfully in the just-discovered art of lithography, and took a medal from the Franklin Institute, Boston, for his lithographic impressions. His trip to England was to introduce his improvements in the art to the British public.

In 1834, Mr. PEALE opened a studio in New-York, painting eminent subjects with much success. He also produced his work on the "Principles of Drawing," which contained much useful information.

Since that time, Mr. PEALE has practised his profession chiefly in his old home in Philadelphia. He has produced several portraits of WASHINGTON of inestimable value, as being painted by the only living artist to whom the great subject sat. *One of these portraits it has been the good fortune of this Association to secure;* and it will form not the least attractive feature of the forthcoming distribution.

A visitor thus describes the present appearance of the artist, in a recent number of "Harper's Weekly:" "There appeared little of the octogenarian in his

voice, step, or manner. His whole being seemed to glow with the enthusiasm of hopeful youth, as he talked of Art, its charms to the practitioner, the divinity of its origin and character, and its humanizing influence upon society.

"In figure Mr. PEALE is of medium height, well-proportioned, and not at all bent by the weight of years. His hair—his 'plumes,' as he playfully called his locks—is white and abundant; the expression of his face is exceedingly pleasant, for it beams with benignity and earnestness; and his mild blue eyes were brilliant with the glow of feeling, as he spoke with much emotion of the portrait of WASHINGTON, which he had been permitted to paint from the living face."

CHARLOTTE BRONTE.



HE career of Lord Byron has always been likened to that of a meteor through the heavens—appearing with sudden and dazzling splendor; and here, it seems to us, the likeness ends, for the life and decay and final end of the dissolute man, were not at all in harmony, nor in fulfillment of his first promise. He "went out," as some beacon set upon a high hill, in the tempest which his own passions had raised. How different the sad story of the authoress of "Jane Eyre!" No brilliant meteor ever more startled the wondering world than did the appearance of "Jane Eyre" startle the literary and social fabric of England and America. It came unheralded, with no publisher's flourish of prepared notices, no critic's kind commendation, but dropped into the great channels of life to force its way into households everywhere, and to stir human sympathies to a depth almost unknown.—"Who is the author of this strange, powerful, weird work?" was the general cry of the public and the press. "What living author can so dissect the very soul itself, and can so mercilessly paint all its lights and shadows? Not Dickens, not Thackeray, not Kingsley—they have no such power. And it is not a woman, for surely no female could so read the great scroll of human passion, or, reading, could find it in her heart to write up the record. Who could have done it?" Thus the comment