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NOTES ON
THE ART OF REMBRANDT

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TO THE MEMORY

OF

SUNDRY UNDERGRADUATES

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PREFACE

THESE notes deal almost entirely with the problem of art education, and may thus be regarded as a supplement (though their nucleus is of earlier date) to "Notes on the Science of Picture-making." Portions of chapters iv, vi, vii, and viii have appeared in *The Burlington Magazine*. I am deeply indebted to the authorities of the Print Room at the British Museum for much help, and in particular to Mr. A. M. Hind, who generously placed at my disposal the proofs of his forthcoming critical work on Rembrandt's etchings. I have also to thank the Duke of Devonshire, Mr. Charles Ricketts, and Mr. Charles Shannon, Messrs. Colnaghi & Obach, Messrs. Duveen Brothers, and the Carlton Galleries for permission to reproduce pictures and drawings. The subject-matter seems to fall so definitely within the scope indicated by the chapter headings as to render an Index in this case unnecessary.

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INTRODUCTION

THE main purpose of these notes can best be explained by a brief account of the circumstances in which they were originally made. Some years ago I was compelled to find a subject for a series of lectures at Oxford. It was desirable that the subject should be one of interest to those who professed only a vague general drift towards the arts, that it should also be helpful to those who were making experiments either as artists or (what seemed hardly less important) as collectors, and also that it should be capable of ready illustration by the collections in the present Ashmolean Museum.

The unique sequences of drawings by Michelangelo and Raphael had to be set aside; the one for ever, the other for the time being. Their study involved problems for the solution of which neither the lecturer nor the greater part of his audience was ready; while cost and rarity placed any similar things beyond the reach of the undergraduate collector. The collection of prints by Dürer and Rembrandt seemed to offer more suitable material. I decided to begin with Rembrandt,

because I knew nothing of Dürer's technical processes, whereas accident had given me an elementary acquaintance with etching and dry-point.

A very brief study of the superb series of Rembrandt prints at the British Museum rapidly widened the scope of my inquiries. The steady growth of the master's powers from youth to old age, the appearance of a grave defect in one plate, its avoidance in the succeeding plates, the alternation of successes with failures in Rembrandt's early years—all these phenomena compelled speculation as to the method by which genius works, and revealed thereby a remarkable parallel to the idea of the artist's mind which is enunciated in the "Discourses" of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Stripped of its accidental trappings, its overstatements to encourage young students, and Reynolds's own apparent misconception as to the limitations and the value of the Grand Style, that theory presents genius not as an incomprehensible inspiration, independent alike of settled principles and deliberate reasoning, but rather as the result of patient self-critical cultivation of a man's own powers. Rembrandt's etchings seemed to illustrate Reynolds's theory so remarkably that inquiry in other directions followed. The result was confirmation in my own mind, and afterwards the series of lectures published as "Notes on the Science of Picture-making."

Since those days, short in point of time as the interval has been, much has happened. The exhibition of the so-called Post-Impressionists, whatever view we may hold as to the permanent value of any or all of the exhibits, indicated that experiment, if not complete achievement, was being carried outside the boundaries of painting and sculpture as hitherto recognised. New theories as a matter of course have followed the new practice, and any criticism dealing with a subject so remote from these current controversial interests as the art of Rembrandt must seem antiquated.

Yet I believe this remoteness to be more apparent than real. There is much in the character of Rembrandt's work, and a good deal in his personal temper, which makes him more akin to the great moderns in France and England than to his own prosaic and for the most part conventional countrymen. I have called him a rebel. The word is a little unjust if rebellion connotes disorder, as reactionary is unjust if reaction connotes only the inevitable counterpart of action. His position is rather that of an independent, a logical independent, going on his own way in a world which is moving in a different direction, and therefore appearing in it as an element of opposition.

This logical independence is the attitude of all considerable artists, but many escape the charge

of being revolutionaries simply because their independence coincides in direction with the general current of men's thoughts, because it is their good fortune to move with the stream. To struggle against it is the lot of those born in less happy times, either when the world of taste is dominated by some single narrow theory, as in the periods when Italianising Academies held supreme power, or when, as in our own day, men's eyes are surfeited with the spectacle of the innumerable arts of three continents and six thousand years jostling for prominence. Out of this welter all that the average mind can grasp is a certain vague impression which it endows with the name of beauty, and applies as a test to all contemporary efforts.

This popular ideal is really eclectic. It is a generalised blend of various elements which, in their original form, may have been fresh and full of life, but which, in the process of combination with other elements, inevitably lose the distinctive character which was the real source of their excellence. So Greek art of the best period was gradually reduced to an average and standardised by the Romans, who achieved success only when, as in their portrait sculpture, they endowed it with fresh character. Later, when the great minds of the Renaissance set themselves to emulate the remains of ancient sculpture, they produced a

living art because they could not help infusing something of their own powerful personalities into their efforts. Donatello and Michelangelo are great, not because they resemble the ancients whom they studied, but because they have great character and personality of their own. To-day all civilised nations pin their faith to some ideal of generalised "beauty," and all true artists, in consequence, have to swim against the current.

In the following pages I may have often seemed to refer to Academies as if they were still Academic, as if they still taught that the only road to salvation led through Greece and Italy. That is strictly true only in isolated cases. For the most part, like the Royal Academy in England, they are mixed bodies, containing several prophets of classical rigour, possibly a few good artists, and a great many painters who honestly believe in some form of the popular ideal and honestly paint down to it. In Reynolds's time things were different, and it is to the Academic system as he conceived it, rather than to its developments under his successors, that the majority of my remarks about Academies apply. Reynolds inherited the eclectic ideal of the Grand Style, and it is on this point of theory, and not in his practice, that he is in opposition to Rembrandt.

But if Reynolds paid so much attention to the current theories of his day as to lay undue stress

upon one great phase of the art of the past, he atoned for the error by recognising, and enunciating more definitely and strongly than any painter has done before or since, the value of personal character in the artist. And Rembrandt might have been his ideal student, deliberately choosing, for want of larger ambitions his master would have said, a walk in life below that of the professors in the Grand Style, and pursuing it with that laborious, diligent self-criticism which Reynolds maintained to be the secret of genius.

What Reynolds does not say, but what the example of Rembrandt, and of other artists in whom we may trace a similar steady development, seems to prove, is that this process of self-training may be exceedingly slow. I remember noticing long ago, and deriving therefrom some encouragement, that Constable did not reach his full strength till he was more than forty years old. But when I found that almost all the etchings of Rembrandt which I particularly liked were executed after his forty-fifth year, that the precocious Raphael only lifted himself above the Umbrians and Florentines round him towards the end of his brief and crowded life, while even the colossal mind of Michelangelo was mature in years before it bore its noblest fruits, I felt that Reynolds's theory could be safely maintained, not of course as an explanation of all genius, but as a reasonable deduction from the career of some very great artists. As such I attempted

to explain it to my audience, first in connexion with the etchings of Rembrandt, afterwards with the drawings of Raphael, and nothing that has happened since has shaken my firm belief in its utility for certain types of mind. No theory can make great masters of us all, but no other theory that I know of makes even our failures become things of absorbing interest, or will keep us busy and cheerful and hopeful till our hands or eyesight fail, and we must give up playing with paints and brushes.

NOTES ON THE ART OF REMBRANDT

CHAPTER I

REMBRANDT AND MODERN ART

FROM time to time we hear expressions of regret that the artistic conditions of our own time should have degenerated so far from those which prevailed when the great artists of the early Renaissance did their work. More rarely practical attempts are made to revive handicrafts upon the ancient lines, usually with but moderate success to the promoters, though occasionally with some profit to men of business, quick to imitate the movement at second-hand and, with the help of machinery, to undersell its products. The craft of painting, however, has been left to take care of itself. Divorced for the most part from its old decorative uses it can clearly no longer support the *bottega* of a Renaissance craftsman. Such demand as does exist exists almost entirely for easel pictures of one kind or another, and the virtuoso in this specialised profession handles the allied crafts, if at all,

only for his amusement. Should a man by chance have been educated in one of the crafts, he deserts it for the potentially more lucrative profession of picture-painting at the earliest opportunity, and in the rare instances where great artists, like John Crome or Alfred Stevens, have really combined the painter and the craftsman, the combination has sprung from necessity not from choice. In Italy the decorative needs of Italian palaces prolonged this *bottega* tradition, in a greatly modified form it is true, almost to the nineteenth century, while the supreme beauty and importance of the finest products of the tradition in that country has made Italy ever since the model for all the rest of Europe where organised training in the Fine Arts is attempted.

Yet the introduction of Italian methods and Italian standards into the academies of Northern Europe has been by no means an unqualified success. So voluminous is the literature of the Fine Arts, so cheap and in many ways accurate has photographic reproduction become, that we can now review the European painting of the last two centuries with far less distortion of perspective than was inevitable when books were few and engravings both costly and imperfect. And the spectacle is curious. All the academies of the Fine Arts have inculcated the study of Italian painting; generation after generation of learned and capable men have laboured after Italian principles; these

academic professors have received every encouragement; princes, states, and municipalities have given them ample opportunities for great achievements, with ample rewards and honours for whatever they did achieve. What has been the result?

Even by their fellow-countrymen the majority are forgotten; a few, perhaps, survive as the subject for derisive comment. Hardly any retain a tithe of their former prestige, and even then do not retain it in virtue of the work by which it was originally gained. In France, where Latin blood might seem to make for kindred feeling with Italy, David, Ingres, Chassériau, Baudry are almost the only names which can be quoted with any confidence, and of these the two last are the only ones whose present fame is independent of portraiture. In England the academic system has been even less fortunate; not one of its countless professors is remembered with honour for his achievements in the Grand Style, unless with them we group for the occasion the unemployed and neglected genius of Alfred Stevens.

Had art meanwhile been moribund in France and England this sterility of Italianised teaching would have been no more than the natural consequence of a general æsthetic decline. But the truth is just the contrary. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries painting flourished in France and England as it never did before, and the roll of considerable artists

in each country is long and glorious. Great as the artistic record of the eighteenth century undoubtedly is, both in France and England, the record of the nineteenth century is perhaps greater still. Nor can this greatness be generally attributed to an indirect influence from the current Italianised training. On the contrary the academies, without exception, have been at first indifferent and then bitterly hostile to the painters who have succeeded in their despite. The struggles of the men of 1830 in France, and of the Pre-Raphaelites in England, against official enmity are become classic instances of this conflict between two opposing forces, in which the ultimate victory has always fallen to the rebellious juniors. The larger measure of official respect which is now accorded to "Independents" shows clearly that the tide is turning. But the ultimate fate of the unsuccessful academic system does not concern us here. Our task is rather to realise clearly the causes of its failure, and with them the causes of the success of the groups or the individuals who have in turn rebelled against it.

Rebellion is a strong word to use, but it is the word which fits the case best. The academic system implies a certain conformity, if not wholly to the canons of classical sculpture and of Renaissance painting at least to so much of them as may be comfortably blended with the ideals and the fashions current at

the moment in society. The great modern artists have almost uniformly spurned this compromise, and have gained at first neglect, then notoriety and abuse, and last of all fame, with perhaps tardy recognition, by the discovery and emphatic exposition of new qualities. These qualities in time become absorbed in the common stock of artistic perception, and so become food for the next generation of academicians, leaving to the next great artist the task of making a fresh departure.

Of this alternate process of rebellion, academic assimilation and renewed rebellion the progress of landscape in England affords a simple illustration. At the opening of the nineteenth century the orthodox academic landscape-painting was attacked and vanquished by Constable and the water-colourists contemporary with him. So much of Constable's discoveries as the public could readily accept was appropriated by academicians of the type of Creswick, and the compromise survives even now in the work of certain popular veterans. Pre-Raphaelism was the next revolt. Once more academicians made a popular compromise, of which the landscapes of Hook, Henry Moore, and Millais will count as good examples. Then came Whistler's *Nocturnes,* and the reflection of French Impression and Realism seen in the work of the early members of the New English Art Club. Again the academicians absorbed so much

of the novelties they had derided as would blend comfortably with their previous borrowings, and a time will doubtless come when the Independents of our own day will be diluted and assimilated in like fashion.

"But," the reader may ask, "you would surely not have us think that this process of assimilation and absorption is wrong? Is it not right to keep an open mind, to recognise our mistakes, and to accept good work; even if from natural caution we have to do so somewhat late in the day? Must not a system which in politics and commerce produces at least a reasonably good result, be of equal service when applied to the Fine Arts?"

It would be pleasant if a survey of the history of the arts in modern times permitted an answer in the affirmative; but it does not. On the contrary, the record of history, as we have seen, indicates that the one possible answer to these questions is "No."

The truth is, that whereas compromise and cautious following of a new departure, as soon as it promises success, make for reasonably good results in politics and commerce, in the Fine Arts they spell failure. Art knows nothing of reasonably good results. It must either be wholly good in its kind and degree, and therefore immortal; or nothing at all. Mediocrity is no better than incapacity when the final account is taken. Nay, its fate can be even worse, since transient

fame may make sport for future critics, while incapacity lies untroubled in its nameless grave.

The artist then must harden his heart to the opinion of the society around him, and must make no compromise to win its approval. Even in studying and taking hints from his ablest contemporaries he must consider well what he admires in them before he permits it to affect his own work. If he finds in them some new principle which sensibly augments his powers of personal expression, he is on safe ground. If, on the other hand, what he borrows is some mere outward grace, some trick in handling, some preference in the choice of his subjects which seems to bring his work into closer accord with the contemporary work about him, he at once falls into deadly peril. He is becoming a follower instead of a leader, and followers in painting, as in poetry, are always men of the second rank.

In fact, selfish and arbitrary as the statement may appear, an artist in the end stands or falls by his personality. Even when, as in Renaissance Italy, he lives in the midst of a great decorative tradition, it is the personality he infuses into that tradition which counts in the long run. Critics, and artists too, often speak as if the revival of some great decorative tradition would enable all well-meaning persons to paint well—would cover them with a common cloak of æsthetic respectability. But in Italy, the one country

where we can reasonably presume the existence of such a tradition, we see no such phenomenon. The dullards are perhaps less tiresome than dullards working in France or Holland on easel pictures; but the great men were as conspicuous in Florence or Rome four centuries ago as they are to-day in London or Paris. Each man can bring to his art only such talents as Providence has given him. Providence too determines largely the form that his art must take when it determines the time and place of his birth; all that the man himself can do is to bring his faculties to the utmost perfection possible within those limits.

And here we come to the great dividing line between the art of the Old Masters and the art of the Moderns. To represent things completely with paint upon a flat surface proved at first no easy matter to the human intelligence. Step by step successive artists gradually felt their way towards painting the human body. Giotto, Masaccio, Piero della Francesca, Andrea dal Castagno, Pollaiuolo, Luca Signorelli, all mark definite stages in the advance of this knowledge, and each, in virtue of his contribution towards it, enlarged his own powers of expression. Progress in art, in fact, became almost identical in appearance, if not in reality, with progress in the power of representation.

But when Michelangelo and Titian, Raphael and Correggio had once assimilated all the knowledge of

their predecessors, and by their example made it possible for ordinary students to paint the human body with a completeness unknown to the great masters of an earlier age, no considerable advance in the power of representation pure and simple was possible, except in provinces of the art, such as landscape, where it had not already been obtained.

This fact was more or less dimly recognised during the latter part of the sixteenth century, and in the work of the Mannerists and the Naturalists we see definite if ill-directed efforts to escape from the chains which were strangling art in Italy. But the idea that the central principle of art was the representation of form, and that form in its perfection was materialised in the then extant remains of classical sculpture, survived all these momentary protests. It was gradually introduced into academies of painting all over Europe, and met with such universal acceptance that the workers in any other field of art, however perfect their craft, however obviously delightful and excellent their results, were regarded both by the public and themselves as the humble inferiors of the professors in the academic style.

Yet these professors were doomed to sterility, and that in exact proportion to their faithfulness to their principles. A Reynolds or a Gainsborough, a Chardin or a Goya could find endless suggestions for new combinations of line and tone and colour in the real

people and real things which they painted. The academic style permitted no such pleasant licence. Its canon of perfect representation condemned all free and suggestive brush-work, as its canons of ideal beauty condemned the warm colours, the irregular graces, the forcible character of real, living nature. Tied hand and foot by these self-imposed restrictions the academies could produce nothing which was not a dull or insipid variant of something which had been done infinitely better before, when men's minds were still fresh, when to be able to draw the human figure was a real distinction, when classical sculpture had still the interest of a new discovery.

Even to-day, when this sterility is patent to every open-minded observer, we seem hardly able to shake ourselves free from the venerable superstitions that lie behind it. We do not perhaps accord our modern professors in the grand style quite the same undivided respect which they would have enjoyed a century ago; but we do still base our general attitude towards art criticism, and in particular towards art education, on the fallacious principles of the academies, though they may be disguised in such pleasant terms as Tradition, Sincerity, and Beauty. So our modern systems of art education are conducted on lines as inimical to real talent as the academic systems they are superseding. We dare not ask ourselves whether there is anything in the results produced which justifies the

vast sums extracted from the taxpayer to pay for professors, and teachers, and buildings, and models, and materials, not to mention a whole army of administrative functionaries connected with that branch of national education in both hemispheres. Where success is achieved, it is achieved by teachers of marked personal individuality; not by those who never dare to venture beyond the official curriculum.

The record of art history since the close of the fifteenth century proves that almost every artist of the highest eminence has been, in some sense, a rebel against all systems accepted in his time. It proves also that he has taught himself far more than others have taught him.

Academies and schools can teach the elements of drawing and painting. In the past they have sometimes performed the function, which public galleries perform much more splendidly to-day, of providing students with a variety of examples of the good work done by earlier painters. Incidentally, too, their students may derive some beneficial stimulus from the friendly rivalry and conversation of their fellows. But here the usefulness of schools and academies comes to an end. When they have taught a boy the first elements of his craft and have perhaps given some stimulus to his unformed mind, every further step they take drags him nearer to the abyss of mediocrity. It is the finishing process, in which the

student is crammed with the canons and ideals of his predecessors, that is really fatal. A bad system of elementary teaching may hamper talent, but cannot destroy it. So that to escape from an art school early is the less of two evils.

If he is to succeed the student thenceforth must travel by himself. He must go forward as best he can, painting just the things that interest him, learning some new fragment of experience from each successive failure, analysing so far as he can the causes of that failure, studying how he may correct them in his subsequent work, and continuing this process of self-questioning and self-correction, till his experiments lead him at last to a point where he finds he has no predecessor to guide him, where in fact he becomes an artist even though he must remain to the end a student also.

Possibly that is the secret of perpetual artistic youth. At any rate such a secession from formal art-teaching cannot be regarded, as many might feel inclined to regard it at first sight, as a refuge for idleness. On the contrary, in an art school the student is saved much of the hardest of all forms of labour, the labour of thinking for himself. His masters consciously or unconsciously direct his line of thought, help him with suggestions as to subject, treatment, and models, and settle all his perplexities; while the solitary worker has to gain his experience in the

sweat of his brow, and so comes to his full stature slowly, but all the stronger for his incessant independent toil.

Self-training is an unlovely word, but I can think of no better to describe this side of the modern artist's development, as rebellion describes the other side. The two words stand as we have seen for a real distinction between old and modern painting. When the craft of painting was in its infancy, when its processes were practically trade secrets, when its future lay all in one direction—that is to say, increased power of representation—the rebel against the current knowledge and artistic ambition of his time had as little chance as the self-trainer. When the practice of painting and the science of representation were more or less completely understood, the conditions were wholly changed. New horizons opened on all sides to the imaginative mind: new methods were needed to express them in paint. So the modern artist, rebel and self-trainer in one, came into being, and of modern artists the greatest, if not quite the first, is Rembrandt.

CHAPTER II

REMBRANDT AS REBEL

FROM the early days of the Renaissance the independence of the Low Countries had been as marked in art as in politics. The wave of humanistic culture which spread over Europe from Italy, for a time seemed indeed to have overwhelmed the national character in the Netherlands, as it did elsewhere; but the revolt against the Spanish dominion quickly turned the main current of thought back into its old channels. Where definite schools of teaching existed the Italianising influence might still survive, but it did so more as a part of what was then conceived to be a liberal education than as a force that had its roots in any pronounced national sympathy. The real strength of Holland, apart from the genius of the various members of the House of Orange who in succession controlled its tangled politics and led its armies to ultimate victory, was democratic, and it was to the many rather than to the few that the national style of painting appealed.

At the time of Rembrandt's birth in the year 1606 the long struggle with Spain, though still a constant

menace, had passed its most critical point, and the outburst of patriotic enthusiasm which that struggle aroused had had ample time to make its effect felt in Dutch art. It is true we cannot claim in Holland any such single great forerunner for Rembrandt as the elder Bruegel was for Rubens, constituting a definite link between the old formal art of the Low Countries and the free lively painting of the seventeenth century. We have rather to deal with a group of minor artists, various in their education and their taste, but united by the common bond of independence.

This independence is specially notable in portraiture and landscape. In landscape Van Goyen showed that the level horizons and grey skies of Holland were material enough for a picture, and in so doing pointed out the road which nearly all the best northern landscape of later times has followed. The more unequal and experimental art of Hercules Seghers aimed at a loftier ideal. Sometimes, as in his noble oil landscape in the Uffizi he rivals Rembrandt; sometimes in his curious etched plates of desolate mountain scenery his vision is that of an Independent of to-day.[1] Indeed

[1] Seghers is such an interesting figure in art that I may be forgiven for relating the following incident. In the Spring of this year 1911, a small portrait on a thin badly cracked panel hardly more than a foot square was brought to me at the National Portrait Gallery. It represented a young man wearing a broad lace collar of the English type of 1610, standing with palette and brushes in front of an easel. The work was of poor quality, like that of the hack-painters of the beginning of

so original are these two precursors of Rembrandt in the field of landscape, the one in his simple versions of Dutch skies and walls and waters, the other in his sympathy with nature in her most solemn moods, that the great master when he arrived at his full power could only bring to the art a new intensity of observation, especially in the case of effects of light, a new summary perfection of craftsmanship, and a supreme sense of design. Rembrandt is thus no rebel so far as landscape is concerned, though we must remember that all the time he was working the body of Italianising landscape painters at Rome, grouped first around Paul Bril and afterwards around Elsheimer and Claude, was a steadily increasing force in Holland. It is to his credit that Rembrandt should have preferred to these specious hybrids the humble canvases of Van Goyen and the hopelessly unpopular

the seventeenth century, but of its genuineness there could be no question. What made the picture notable was that on the easel before this young man dressed in the English fashion of 1610 was a landscape—a gloomy plain with dark clouds above it, and in the centre a ruin illumined by a broad flash of wandering light. The technique of the landscape was similar to that of the early landscapes of Rembrandt, and much bolder in handling and in taste than the rest of the picture. But Rembrandt was not more than four or five years old when the style of dress seen in the picture was in vogue, nor did the long oval of the sitter's face bear any resemblance to him. Seghers, on the other hand, was born in 1590, and would therefore be just the apparent age of the sitter—and from no other forerunner of Rembrandt could such a landscape have come. Why he should be painted in a style which suggests, though it does not quite prove, a connexion with England, I must leave it to others to determine.

art of Seghers; but the preference was still in the nature of a choice between two rival styles, and not a revolt against some single all-powerful tyranny. At the same time the innovations already mentioned were so important as to make Rembrandt's landscape become in the end identical in aim and treatment with the landscape of to-day—a claim which cannot be put forward either for Van Goyen or Seghers. Thus Rembrandt, in this province, without being a rebel was a pioneer of revolution.

In portraiture his position was somewhat different. Sound painters like Ravestijn and Miereveldt had prepared the way, while Frans Hals, Rembrandt's senior by more than twenty years, was at the summit of his career when the younger master was still working under his father's roof. He had thus no lack of good examples to guide him. Dutch portraiture both before and after Rembrandt's time was always sincere and straightforward, often tinged with a pleasant note of gravity, and almost always conveyed in terms of sound craftsmanship. It was an art well suited to a practical matter-of-fact nation, and rarely coloured with the suggestion either of romance or of some inward spiritual intensity which are perhaps the most valuable qualities in many Italian portraits. It was an art of externals, pleasantly and intimately presented, like the scenes from contemporary domestic life to which Dutch art of the seventeenth

century owes so large a part of its popularity and fame.

And for many years, if we judged Rembrandt by his portrait commissions, he would seem hardly more than the most important member of this excellent school. In him its characteristic merits are seen to perfection, that is all. His touch is more workmanlike and crisp, and sometimes more free, his composition more surely planned, especially in the matter of shadow and atmosphere, his eye for character, and for those refinements of modelling which express it, is more searching, his taste in colour more sober and more sound. But the general planning, aspect, handling, and sentiment of his portraits are not radically different from those of his contemporaries; and up to the time when he painted the *Night Watch* (1642), he received a full share of patronage, being among the most popular representatives of his profession in all Holland.

An examination of the contents of Rembrandt's studio about this time would have left a different impression. Quite a series of works of small or moderate dimensions would have revealed the painter as a daring experimentalist. Portraits of himself, of the members of his family and of certain favourite models constantly recur, treated with every possible variety of design and feeling and handling. In one piece opposition of light and shade suggest a dramatic mood, in another swift

strokes of the brush and loaded pigment are used to seize a momentary smile. Most often the sentiment is of profound and melancholy contemplation. The sitters, in fact, for these pictures are no less remote from the comfortable businesslike folk of Holland than the technical devices employed are remote from that precise and calculated manipulation which is characteristic of the Dutch school. Instead of smooth polished surfaces and scrupulous *finesse* of execution, rugged masses of paint and broad sweeps of the brush, careless and accidental to all appearance, meet the eye.

Moreover, Rembrandt, unlike most of the regular portrait painters of his time, was distinguished as a painter of historical and religious subjects, and the influence of these imaginative efforts is reflected in his portraiture. His sitters often seem to breathe an air which is not that of Holland, to be taking part in a drama which is hardly even of this world. The impression is strengthened by the long robes, the turbans, the helmets, and the armour, which replace the everyday dress of Holland with its effective contrasts of black and white, just as a setting of uncertain shadows and momentary lights, beyond the bounds of climate and geography, is substituted for the cool trim interiors which we know so well from the pictures of De Hooch and Vermeer, of Metsu and Steen.

At the time of the painting of *The Anatomy Lesson*

in 1632, these efforts towards an extension of the art of portraiture were still in the experimental stage, and did no more than stimulate Rembrandt to the composition of a singularly effective portrait group, original enough to make a strong impression upon his contemporaries, yet in its polished execution and vivid presentment of realities sufficiently akin to the art of the time to avoid the suspicion which originality is wont to excite.

When *The Night Watch* (to give it its popular title) appeared ten years later, contemporary taste in art was practically unchanged, but Rembrandt himself had moved forward. Determined that this, his first and only commission for a *Doelen* picture, should surpass all other *Doelen* pictures, he regards his "Archer" company as the actors in some great historic drama; and to present this drama with due effectiveness he forces the shadows to blackness, and envelops all the figures but those of the captain and his lieutenant in mysterious shadow, from which here and there a face or a weapon emerges, while a random flash of light strikes on the unexpected figure of a girl with dead birds hanging from the girdle of her rich dress. We all know how the painting displeased both sitters and critics; the sitters complaining that their faces had not due prominence, the critics deriding the black shadows; and how those complaints and that derision proved fatal to Rembrandt's popularity, and contributed to

the ruin and bankruptcy which came upon him a few years later.

But the unpopularity of *The Night Watch* does not wholly explain the conditions under which Rembrandt worked during the final period of his life, when the fulfilment of his very rare commissions by masterpieces like the *Jan Six* of 1654, *The Syndics*, the Rijksmuseum *Anatomy Lesson*, brought no return of popular favour; when apparently no one would buy his pictures at any price, and when he was reduced to the straits revealed in the pitiful documents published by Dr. de Groot, before his troubles ended in a pauper's forgotten grave. Rembrandt, in fact, had passed so far beyond the somewhat narrow limits of contemporary Dutch taste, that it has taken something like two and a half centuries for Europe to find out how high his position really is.

We cannot blame his contemporaries for their neglect of him while the record of the nineteenth century stands to our discredit, nor need we invent imaginary parallels when the actual case of Whistler is fresh in our memories. If we recall the outburst of foolish execration in the press which attended the production of the *Portrait of the Painter's Mother* and the *Miss Alexander*, we shall realise at once what Rembrandt's critics felt about *The Night Watch*. But Whistler had two great advantages over Rembrandt. He could wield the pen as readily (one

wishes sometimes it were not so) as the brush, and before his death turned the tables on his critics by immortalising their fatuities. Rembrandt was tongue-tied and suffered in silence. Whistler had social gifts which defied bankruptcy and unpopularity; Rembrandt was by nature a solitary and endured these troubles alone. The state of the picture market also was in Whistler's favour; so that in spite of caprice and a limited output he fared on the whole far better than did Rembrandt with unremitting industry and inexhaustible creative power.

A similarity may also be traced in the character of their respective innovations, widely different as were the results which they obtained. Each endowed his art with a new sense of rhythm and a new vitality, the former element being specially prominent in the case of Whistler. Even his early work shows how strong was his natural feeling for rhythm of line and mass. But when he came in contact with the then newly imported art of Japan, in which rhythm was developed with a whole-hearted daring unknown to Europe, his innate predilections found a powerful and sympathetic stimulus. Thenceforth both painting and etching became for him a series of problems in rhythmical invention, problems always involving the entire subordination of his subject-matter, and in his later years seeming almost to demand its complete suppression. With Whistler, indeed, the passion for rhythm appears

always to some degree in conflict with his sense of vitality, and not infrequently at the last as overpowering it. Yet how strong that sense of vitality was we can judge from his Biarritz sea-pieces, the prototypes, and the most perfect examples too, of modern coast-painting, from such *genre* pieces as *At the Piano*, where in the vibrant atmosphere the very waves of sound seem to be arrested by magic, or from such a portrait as that of his mother, the more intensely real for its utter quiet.

Rembrandt's search for purity and balance of rhythm was no less earnest than Whistler's, but it was less subject to caprice and far less jealous of other pictorial elements. The earlier portrait painters of Holland had already evolved sound and convenient formulæ for the spacing of their portraits, and Rembrandt, master of spacing though he was, had, in the case of single figures, only occasional opportunities for using the unique experience of design which he derived from his practice of making imaginative compositions. Such inventions as the noble self-portrait in Lord Iveagh's collection can hardly be paralleled even among the great Italians. In his rare portrait groups of which *The Syndics* is the finest extant specimen, the same daring and novelty of rhythm is equally conspicuous. Of the new vitality with which he inspires portraiture I have spoken at some length in the chapter where his portraits are

compared with those of Hals; it is needless, therefore, to insist on it here, especially since the intensity of his characterisation is the quality which renders him fascinating even to the most casual observer.

We may note that this power of expressing rhythm and vitality develops steadily step by step with the growth of his technical skill. His early highly finished portraits have neither the superb freedom of contour nor the spiritual intensity which are the hall-marks of the work done after 1650. Rembrandt was already a saddened middle-aged man before he discovered that there was a quality of rhythm in the rapid sweep of his practised brush which no laborious finish could attain or imitate; and that the intensity of his emotion demanded a corresponding intensity in the massing or spreading of his pigment. He followed up his discovery and found himself a rebel against the whole tradition of his time and country, a tradition of clear careful contours, of neatly planned deliberate brushwork, the separate strokes nearly or quite invisible, and of smooth polished pigment surfaces. So far as his countrymen were concerned his protest went unregarded. So long as he conformed outwardly to the pictorial fashion of Holland he had been esteemed as one of the greatest of Dutch artists; no sooner did he rebel against it than he fell instantly from favour, and was relegated to an obscurity from which only the reputation he gained elsewhere in the

course of some two hundred and fifty years has slowly redeemed him. The art of Holland went on its way as though he had never lived, died in due course its natural death, and revived again only when the example of Rembrandt was forced upon its notice through his French admirers late in the nineteenth century.

It is however in his subject pieces, and above all in his Biblical compositions, that Rembrandt displays his full power. The development of this side of his genius deserves to be considered in some detail. In another section of this book I have attempted to trace his progress by means of his etchings, from his earliest plates to the time (now far less definite than it seemed to be some years ago) when he laid the needle aside. Here our concern is less with the relative place of Rembrandt's works as compared with each other, than with their relation to the work of his contemporaries in the same field.

We need hardly trouble ourselves with the three years' apprenticeship of Rembrandt to Jacob van Swanenburch. Rembrandt was a boy of fourteen who had everything to learn, and the greater part of the instruction he received must have been rudimentary. Nor was Swanenburch a painter of so much character or originality as to impress any deep mark upon his pupils. All opinion ancient and modern agrees as to the poverty of his talent, though Rem-

brandt is said to have made rapid progress under his tuition. His next teacher, Pieter Lastman of Amsterdam, was in his day a much more conspicuous person. A man of forty, who had spent his *Wanderjahre* with Elsheimer at Rome, he was, by the time the boy Rembrandt came to him, a very important and powerful member of the group of Italianising Dutchmen who possessed and retained for many years a large share of the local art patronage. Lastman was a thorough eclectic, well versed in the formal compositional science of the time, and borrowing his material from Flemish as well as Italian sources. He was a harsh and heavy colourist, but according to the standard of his time a very fair draughtsman, and his somewhat "tight" modelling, as well as his use of Oriental accessories, are echoed for years by his famous pupil.

But, as more than one critic has noticed, we do not find in Lastman that use of chiaroscuro as a means of dramatic emphasis which marks almost all the early painting of Rembrandt. Rembrandt, indeed, seems to have found the eclectic Italianising atmosphere of Lastman's studio wholly uncongenial, for he left Amsterdam in six months, to return to Leyden and carry on his studies at home, in company with another precocious fellow-townsman, Jan Livens, who had also been through the same training. That the change was due to no quarrel seems clear from the

fact that Rembrandt remained on friendly terms with his former master; and we must therefore ascribe this decisive resolution to some inborn conviction that he could not work out his ideas except in some way that was quite different from Lastman's.

The defects of an eclectic Italianising art such as Lastman's are many, but the chief of them is a mistaken sincerity—a sincerity to abstract rules and principles rather than to the artist's personal vision. The grand style of composition demands this, good drawing demands that, and so on until the artist's original idea is deprived of all the freshness and accent which might give it interest. Lastman himself was far from incapable, but his work is laboured and cold—laboured from the desire to pose his figures with due propriety, cold because they are types, not real persons, and take but the most perfunctory interest in their business. Some echo of Caravaggio may give a certain general force of effect to a picture like *The Death of S. John Baptist* at Aschaffenburg; but Salome receives the saint's head as indifferently as a parlour-maid receiving a joint which she is to carry up to the dining-room; the old woman holds the dish with no more attention than is necessary to see that there is not a spill, while the executioner looks at the princess much as an honest enamoured gardener might look at a pretty fellow-servant from whom he gets nothing but sharp words. It is easy to

imagine Rembrandt's dissatisfaction with such futile scholarship, and his impatience to get to work on more satisfactory lines.

Yet the task was no easy one. He might return home and practise working from such living models as his family and his own person afforded, and might exercise his hand on still-life subjects, but the Italianate influence still clings to him, and leaves its mark in artificial planning and "tight" modelling. His development during the first few years after his return to Leyden is unknown to us. Not till 1627 do we begin to have definite evidence of his growth, though from the first we notice that his aim is always the expression of character in preference to the formal grace which was the Italianiser's ideal. His work is still almost wholly experimental, displaying very various influences, but among these influences there is one which seems to me to deserve more attention than is usually given to it, and that is the influence of Jan Symonsz Pynas.

Houbraken, after mentioning Rembrandt's training under Swanenburch at Leyden, and under Lastman at Amsterdam, mentions that he also worked for some months under Jacob Pynas, whom some considered to have been his first master. In his account of Jan Pynas, after stating that Pynas travelled in Italy with Lastman, he goes on to say: "His brushwork inclines towards a brown tone:

therefore many believed that Rembrandt aped him in this matter."

Three pictures by Pynas were in Rembrandt's possession at the time of his bankruptcy, but the influence may well have been of far older standing, since Rembrandt would almost certainly have come into contact with Pynas's work at Amsterdam, even if he did not know the painter. Dates put the possibility of a reflex action of Rembrandt upon Pynas out of the question. Pynas was painting in the style from which Rembrandt borrowed before Rembrandt was born.

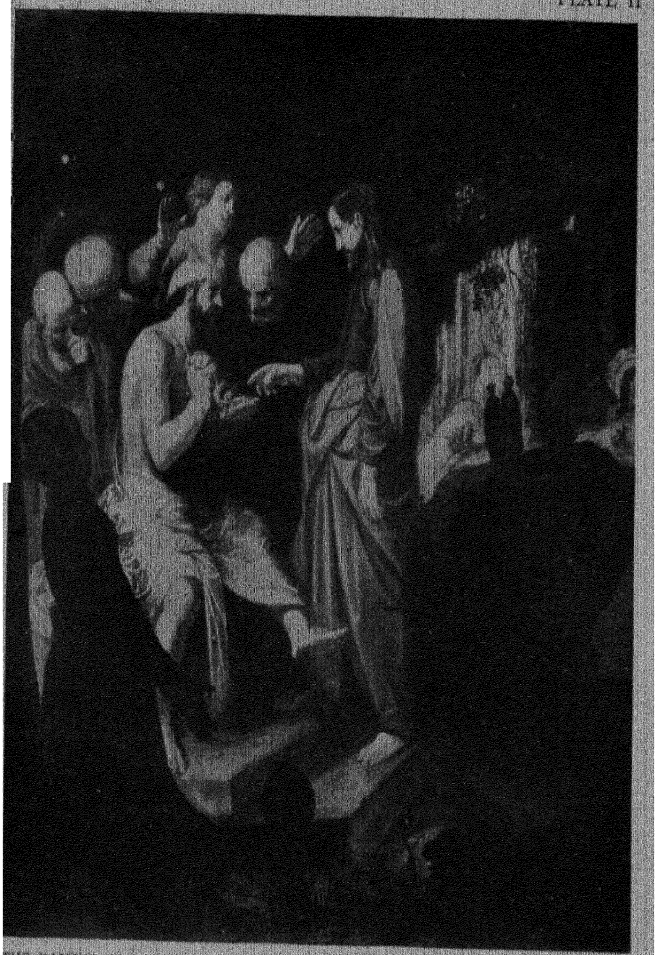
The little picture by Pynas which is reproduced here passed a few years ago into the hands of one of the wisest of American collectors, and will serve to illustrate my point. The panel is signed and dated 1615, and the subject, "The Raising of Lazarus," was apparently a favourite one with the artist, for an oblong version of it, more elaborate and with equally strong resemblances to Rembrandt, exists at Aschaffenburg and is dated 1605, a year before Rembrandt was born.

In Mr. Johnson's picture we may notice how the main group in brilliant light is sharply contrasted with the dark figure of the woman kneeling in the foreground, a figure conceived entirely in Rembrandt's manner. The pattern traced by the passage of light through the picture and the general disposition of the masses are also similar to the style of Rembrandt's

early work, and when we pass to the landscape on the right, a characteristic example of Pynas's manner, the resemblance is even more striking. Here we find flat masses of shadow silhouetted by masses of strong light, dark outlines used in the drawing of the figures, and a general system of painting into a ground of rich warm brown which is exactly the same as Rembrandt's. The very touch in the details of the foreground leafage might also be Rembrandt's own.

In fact, whatever other influences may have been at work in the making of Rembrandt, the influence of Pynas is the most powerful and persistent of all upon his method of figure-composition. The red chalk drawing of 1630 in the British Museum, begun as a *Raising of Lazarus* and completed as an *Entombment*, is an illustration ready to hand. The masses are arranged with a crescent-shaped sweep in the manner of Pynas; on the left we have a suggestion of the ruined arches fringed with tangled creepers, his favourite landscape motive, and on the platform above the tomb stand two erect figures which might almost be enlargements of the two similar figures in Mr. Johnson's picture.

Resemblances to Elsheimer and others have also been pointed out. But it is not so much with resemblances that we are now concerned as with differences. The chief point of departure is the



THE RAISING OF LAZARUS. BY JAN PYNAS. *(Mr. John G. Johnson.)*

PLATE III

STUDY FOR AN ENTOMBMENT. (*British Mu*

substitution of individuals for types, of forcible character for graceful idealisation. Pynas with all his really romantic feeling, and as an artist I think he is underestimated, is an Italianiser, peopling his composition with generalised types. Here, for example, Lazarus, the centre of the design, is a mere interesting invalid and, but for the context, we should never recognise him as one for whom the impassable gates of death had that very moment been unbarred. Christ stands as one engaged in friendly argument; not as God who has just worked a stupendous miracle. The figures behind Lazarus are purely conventional, the most active of them, the sister with uplifted hands, being no more than a feeble echo of Caravaggio.

In Rembrandt's youthful design, Lazarus hampered by his grave-clothes is rising stiffly, his head gazing forward as if fascinated by his divine liberator, whose intent figure and uplifted hand we may perhaps trace in the centre of the group to the left. Possibly the need of connecting this group with the opposite corner of the design led to the subject being changed to an Entombment, and in the suggestion of the despairing figures which bend over the lifeless body, as of the varied feelings of the spectators behind, we can already see evidence of the new insight brought to bear upon this ancient theme. Equally alien to the precise formulæ of the Italianisers is the introduction of the

two men to the extreme right, of whom we can see the heads alone.

The great Constantin Huygens, in a most interesting fragment from an uncompleted autobiography,[1] anticipated the unfavourable verdict of Rembrandt's countrymen when he described him as inferior to Livens in sublimity of invention—"the youthful soul of Livens breathes nothing that is not great and noble, and rather exaggerates the grandeur of the forms he has before his eyes than merely equals it." Yet Rembrandt is superior in judgment and in liveliness of feeling. When speaking of the *Judas returning the Pieces of Silver*, a work of about 1629, now in Baron A. von Schickler's collection, Huygens in his enthusiasm throws aside his conventional prejudice and challenges, on behalf of his young Dutchman, the whole art of the world, past and present, to equal the passionate figure of the fallen apostle. He soon returns however to the fashionable view of his time, and gently blames Rembrandt and Livens for being so serenely satisfied as to think little of Italy, though they could see it in a few months. It is almost madness that they should omit to obtain in youth the one thing needful to perfect their art. If only they knew the work of Raphael and Michelangelo they would excel all that they found in Italy, and

[1] Reprinted in Dr. de Groot's *Die Urkunden über Rembrandt* (1906), pp. 13–19.

would bring the Italians to Holland. Their excuse is that they must make the most of their youth, and have not the time to travel: also that the finest Italian pictures have been brought to Northern Europe and gathered into collections, while in Italy they are widely separated. He concludes with an account of their devotion to their art, their precocious renunciation of youthful pleasures, and their labours carried on so unremittingly as to imperil their bodily health. "I am compelled to state that never in any human beings have I seen such unremitting diligence."

This testimony from one of the most powerful minds of the time is of singular interest. We can easily understand how the facile talent of Livens would impress his contemporaries, who could hardly foresee that he was essentially imitative, and that his very strivings after the Grand Style, which made him so interesting as a boy, were to be his bane in after-life. Yet the rare woodcut portraits of Livens have a place of their own in the history of wood-engraving hardly less important than that occupied by Rembrandt's portraits in the history of etching, so that it would be unjust to consider all his early labour as labour in vain.

Rembrandt's mind was of a different stamp. We shall probably never know precisely why, when still a boy, he turned his back on Lastman's studio and returned to work by himself at Leyden. His action

at any rate implies a definite dissatisfaction with the art which he found round him at Amsterdam; his own early products at Leyden may give us some hint as to the causes of that dissatisfaction.

It would be a mistake to call him a realist: his pictures from first to last are not conceived in the colouring of nature, and many of the Italianisers were much more scrupulous than he in their observance of local colour. On the other hand, the Italianisers of his day, like all their true successors, were betrayed by their search for perfection of form into coldness and insipidity, faults which even the violence of the *Tenebrosi* could not remove.

Rembrandt from the first is interested very little by perfection of form, but is interested very much indeed by character, the quality which all the Italianisers conspicuously lacked. He saw their works in much the same light as we see them to-day, and recognised their essential vacuity even though he may not at first have been able to diagnose the cause. Possibly, too, he may have been led to underestimate for a time the art of Italy itself, since the phases of it with which he would be brought most into contact would be those with which he was least in sympathy, and he would be further prejudiced by the deplorable results of their influence upon his seniors. In later life he could adapt Raphael, copy Mantegna, and buy paintings attributed to the great Venetians; his youthful answer

to Huygens reads like a polite excuse for giving a wide berth both to Italy and to Italian painting.

His revolt against the fashion of his age was the more noticeable in that he chose for its exercise the very same province in which Italy was held to be supreme. His fellow-countrymen, when they went to Nature, traversed the humbler fields of landscape portraiture or genre-painting. Rembrandt applied his new principles to subjects which had already served for the accepted masterpieces of the world, and which were held by universal opinion as capable of being treated only on lines closely similar to those which were hallowed by past genius.

Sometimes, especially in his earlier years, Rembrandt's principles led him astray. Certain themes demand grace of form before all else, and if that be lacking the result is incongruous if nothing worse. So, when Rembrandt represents a Diana bathing, no accuracy of observation of an ugly Dutch model atones for her want of grace. The result may be a very powerful and capable study, but is a very bad representation of a goddess. In this field the Italians retain their advantage.

But the Italians, at least the lesser and later Italians, and their northern followers constantly made the mistake of applying the canon of perfection of form, which in the case of classical subjects might have a certain appropriateness, to subjects where it was certainly

not essential, and often where it was positively detrimental.

Humanism had developed side by side with art in Italy. The incessant study of classical models had not only resulted in the growth of a great neo-pagan art, but had also cast the art of the church into a distinctly pagan mould. Michelangelo and Raphael did no more than remodel, perfect, and immortalise a series of types, quite alien to the simple Bible narrative, which in more primitive shape had long been familiar and had embodied to the general satisfaction the great personages of the Christian faith. And the fascination exercised by the great artists of the Renaissance was so powerful that even in Northern Europe, where the Bible had come to be generally read, studied, and discussed, their semi-pagan imagery still held its own; and the nations which had shed their blood for freedom from the Roman doctrine continued to honour and to accept without question the art which corresponded with it.

The trading ventures of Holland in the East Indies, and the consequent familiarity with Eastern habits and costume, gradually modified the treatment of sacred subjects by Dutch artists in certain minor details. Oriental robes, plumes and turbans take the place of togas and curling philosophic heads of hair from the very beginning of the seventeenth century, and Rembrandt himself in his early years does not go much

farther than that. He recognised that Oriental dress was better suited to the Gospel narrative than the garb of ancient Greece and Rome, but was unable for a long time to shake off the trammels of the classical tradition. The venerable bearded men who play such a large part in his early designs are still types rather than individuals, and it is only when he leaves Leyden and finds in Amsterdam a new wealth of human models that types begin to give place to real persons.

With reading, too, the Bible narratives appear to him in a fresh light. They cease to be allied in his mind with the Olympian dignity they had assumed in Italy by a fortuitous association with classical sculpture, and derive new value from their intense humanity. The personages who take part in these great events are no longer heroes or philosophers but men, with men's passions, men's character and men's frailty, wearing for the most part no ample robes but the simple useful dress of every day. It is easy, when we think of the outcry round the first Pre-Raphaelite pictures, to imagine how such a change would be regarded as a degradation of religion ; and how, when the same attitude was adopted towards classical subjects, it resulted in obvious incongruities. Rembrandt was the first to prove to us definitely that, with a certain class of subjects, delineation of character may be more than a substitute for grace or dignity of type. That he should sometimes have carried the theory into fields

where it was less applicable, is merely a proof of the impossibility of establishing any new principle in art without testing it by experiment. We may judge how difficult it was even to follow him, from the example of Huygens. Huygens felt that the *Judas* figure was a new discovery in art, but still could not free himself from the idea that Rembrandt was almost insane in refusing to visit Italy.

But Rembrandt does not stand apart from all his fellows only in the truth and variety of his human types and the inventive insight with which he groups them. His art is more human than that of his contemporaries, but it is also more artistic, more complete in itself, more independent in its relation to nature.

This independence shows from the first. Accurate observer though he is of effects of light, and practised though he is in the use of colour, his attention is given always to expression by means of form. He does not really occupy himself with colour, either by attempting to imitate the infinite variety of nature's colour in the fashion of a realist, or by working in the mood of the creative colourist and building up expressive harmonies from a limited number of carefully selected hues. On the contrary, his painting always seems an enriched variant of his drawing; local colours at first being used somewhat freely, but as an ornament, not as an added means of expres-

sion. Indeed they so frequently conflict with expression that, after a time, he suppresses local colour almost entirely, except for such reds and yellows as will enliven his general scheme of rich brown, and for a cool grey which by contrast serves for blue. Ripe experience enables him to use this simple palette with such superb force and emphasis, that he proves himself a great colourist as well as a great designer; but his success is limited both in time and in range, and the main mass of his painting, considered as colour pure and simple, aims less at achieving beauty than at avoiding garishness, coldness, and dullness.

Elsewhere I have attempted to indicate some of the advantages which Rembrandt derived from his renunciation, such as liveliness of touch, power of characterisation in portraiture, and control over certain phases of landscape which present endless difficulty to the realist. I have insisted too on the superiority, for compositional purposes, of symbols of natural objects which do not come near to complete statements, but have the quality of somewhat remote echoes. Here I need therefore dwell only on the assistance which Rembrandt derived from the absence of local colour in securing rhythmic effects by means of line and tone. We can analyse this rhythm most satisfactorily in his etchings and drawings, for there we have, so to say, the bare bones of his art. In his paintings the fusion of one tone with its fellow,

and the greater degree of mystery suggested by his deep transparent shadows, make analysis more difficult, but the rhythmic play of light and shade and contour is none the less there, if more subtle and intangible. This rhythmic quality is enhanced in his later years by the daring and freedom of the brush-work — the juxtaposition of the powerful strokes giving at once the most lively vibration to the tones, and also that unifying and synthetic quality which belongs to all work that is done with a sure and speedy hand.

This sense of the rhythm that comes of large handling and this lively vibrancy of touch were unknown to the other painters of Holland, with the single exception of Hals and one or two of his pupils, and were unappreciated by their patrons. But even in the work of Hals they are blended with none of that infinite invention of line, that play of contrasted tone, which make the works of Rembrandt stand as pre-eminent above all the other products of the Dutch School in perfection of design as they do in their imaginative quality. Indeed had less been written, and written well, on the imaginative side of Rembrandt's art, I should feel a traitor to him in insisting here so continually upon his technical characteristics to the exclusion of the inventive brain which governed them and gave them birth. For this new rhythm of line and tone and this new vitality which

Rembrandt infused into painting, and which constitute him if not a positive rebel against the technical methods and tradition of his time, at least an unsuccessful reformer (which politically comes to much the same thing), are of course no more than the outward signs and symbols of an intellect which in point of imaginative insight and creative science stands alone. Had Rembrandt never lived, stray flashes of the genius of a Titian, of a Dürer, or of a Holbein might still have illuminated for us some of the deeper shadows of the human soul; but the association of God with toil-stained inglorious man would have lost the single interpreter whom our age of reason does not in its heart disavow.

CHAPTER III

THE LIMITS OF REVOLT

IT is essential for the working artist to recognise the absolute necessity of some such revolt as Rembrandt's, if he is to give full expression to that part of himself which alone is likely to have any interest for posterity. It is hardly less essential for him to recognise that revolt has its limits. Revolt may become revolution, and revolution for those who have gone forward more from enthusiastic instinct than from conscious principle will speedily turn to anarchy. The artist, like the statesman in a time of change, must have clearly in mind the limits within which his powers of resistance remain effective. To overthrow a feeble government only to obtain anarchy in its place is sheer madness. If we set about destroying we must do so with the deliberate purpose of building again, and that on an impregnable foundation.

Were our concern with a substantial edifice of stone or iron, the text-books would teach us what strains we might safely impose on our materials, and a footrule would prove whether our structure was top-heavy. But stability in the palace of art can be

judged by no such plain arithmetic. Often it depends upon a dexterous balancing of refinement with boldness, and so must ever remain to some extent a matter of personal opinion. No two critics, however skilled, can draw quite the same frontier line between the realms of coherence and incoherence. The late work of a Turner, a Rodin or a Renoir will reveal differences of opinion even in those whose general taste and training is identical. Yet an approximate agreement may be attained, and therewith comes the possibility of making a rough chart for the craftsman's guidance.

Constant change, constant progress, is the condition of effectiveness with all creative minds. So soon as the artist completes one stage of his journey, he cannot halt but must press forward to the next stage. And this progress for all the great post-Renaissance artists tends to take the same general direction.

Completeness and coherence of design, harmony of colour, fullness of content and a nice precision in the use of material are the common characteristics of this art in its early stages. Gradually the painter's desire for more emphatic and personal expression leads to the sacrificing of some or all of these qualities. Surface finish, the least important of them, is the first to go; emphatic handling takes its place. Then minute completeness of design is exchanged for a more sketchy treatment which allows essentials to be strongly accented while unessentials are suppressed.

Changes, too, will be taking place in the artist's feeling for colour. Having learned how to produce harmonious colour he will be constantly trying to strengthen the effect of his work by the accent of unexpected colour schemes, made pleasant and fresh like a fruit by just a hint of sharpness.

As time goes on these tendencies grow in strength. Freedom of handling will become looseness or roughness. The eye will come to find mere harmony of colour a commonplace thing, and will either wish to be rid of colour altogether, or will seek a pleasant stimulus from colour oppositions which would have seemed acid or discordant a few years before.

The rhythmic element in the design meanwhile will become more fragmentary and elusive from the same desire to avoid the obvious, so that the work will appear sketchy, if not positively incoherent, to those not in sympathy with the artist's attitude.

Carried to an extreme this process reduces art to the making of entirely personal symbols—hieroglyphics possessing an interest and a significance for their maker, but for him alone. This extreme is clearly almost as far removed from the central achievements of art as its opposite, the painting which adopts for a standard the taste of the general public. If to lower oneself to the level of the crowd is to be trivial; to be understood only by oneself is to be obscure; hence to know the limits within which per-

sonality may be exercised is the artist's paramount concern.

One limit, and that perhaps of more general application than the rest, may be found in decorative quality. So long as we can conceive a noble building or a pleasant room in which the painting under consideration can take its proper place, so long we may be fairly sure that the painting has not outstripped the boundaries of fine art. The varieties of good interior decoration to-day are so many, that any reasonable scheme of tone or treatment which a painter may choose can be fitted with an appropriate setting. If a picture clearly demands an exceptional or extravagant setting, we may safely conclude that all is not well with it whatever excellent qualities it may possess.

This principle extends beyond mere outward pleasantness or adaptability of aspect. The quality of the material of which a picture is composed, especially in small works of art which have to be seen close to the eye, ought not to be positively disagreeable. Hence the coarse, rough, and spotty masses of paint, of which so many modern pictures are composed, are a real disadvantage and can be excused only by very considerable merit in other respects. Sometimes, of course, as in a fine study by Constable or a fine painting by Monticelli, the loaded pigment acquires a gem-like quality which could be obtained

in no other way; but these instances are rare, and too often the loading remains mere clumsy paint.

Yet when ripe experience demands the utmost conceivable freedom in design and handling there is one simple means by which the disadvantages of which we have spoken may be minimised, if not wholly overcome, and that is by employing some medium other than oil-painting. A drawing or an engraving, however slight or arbitrary the treatment may be, can almost always be made into a pleasant decorative unit by tactful mounting and framing. A large number of the drawings of Rembrandt and some of his finest etchings—the luminous plate of *Christ appearing to His Disciples* (B. 89) might be instanced—would almost certainly lose more in decorative quality than they would gain in expressiveness could they be turned into oil-paintings, even by the master's own hand.

The cardinal error of many modern extremists is a misconception on this point. Their most audacious efforts are made in oil-paint, a substance disagreeable to the eye when coarsely or violently applied to canvas. The same efforts made by a Degas in pastel, or by a Conder in *gouache* upon silk, would have no less expressiveness, and would have a decorative quality, perhaps too a positive delightfulness of substance, which would augment immensely their value as works of art. It requires no little courage perhaps for a painter to say of some fine conception, "It is a

subject for a drawing, not for a picture." Yet until painters learn the necessity of this self-denial, they will often be disappointed to find a good sketch obstinately turning into something unpleasant when worked out upon canvas, and providing the enemies of any original effort (and there will always be plenty of them) with a convenient victim.

There is a literal element in oil-paint which makes it more apt for positive statement than for suggestion. It is perhaps too commonly regarded as the appropriate vehicle for all serious work, and artists too often try to carry out ideas in the oil medium which need some less substantial embodiment. A superb drawing in line or colour may refuse to be translated into anything except a very unsatisfactory painting in oil. To have more than one medium at command is thus only common sense.

The test of decorative fitness may be so readily applied to any novel work of art by the artist himself and by the more intelligent section of the public, and gives on the whole such sound results, that it needs no help from any more recondite ordeal. But the extreme forms of individual art are often liable to a serious defect which this test does not probe, a defect not necessarily fatal to pictorial excellence or expressiveness, but still harmful in that it diminishes notably the charm a picture might otherwise have for us.

We all take a certain pleasure in good craftsmanship, and rightly. Good craftsmanship not only is a direct cause and evidence of effective expression, but the power and skill employed reflect something of these qualities upon the spectator, and heighten his enjoyment thereby. The mighty line of a drawing by Michelangelo or Holbein, the superb brushwork of a Rubens or a Gainsborough, are no rhetorical displays of the painter's cleverness, but are absolutely necessary for the full expression of his meaning.

Now the rebel from commonplace forms of art may come to lose or to throw away this most valuable weapon, and that from more than one cause. Sometimes in sheer reaction from the commonplace craftsmanship all about him (often perhaps the only quality in art which seems to interest the average man) he will spurn all craftsmanship, and defy the public with work from which all evidence of technical science has been carefully removed. I think real instances of this are more rare than critics are apt to suppose. Usually an apparent desire to shock the middle classes is the unconscious result of an effort at increased expressiveness.

Thus, in design, simplicity is often a valuable thing, especially in a period when the fashion is all for complicated trifles. So to attain simplicity the artist reduces the objects in his picture to their most elemental terms, emphatically stating the main contours and the

chief masses, but carefully avoiding the possible distraction of details. Up to a certain point the process works admirably. Yet a time may arrive when simplicity comes near to emptiness, when contours lose the subtlety which makes them suggestive of the things they symbolise. The firm contour of a face as drawn by Holbein is simple, but also suggests a very real personality. The contour of a face drawn by a child is a mere symbol expressing a face indeed, but not the personality through which alone the drawing of a face acquires any serious interest.

For instance a child, or a pavement artist, can by rude symbols suggest such a thing as a house on a hillside; but the very rudeness of the symbols prevents the drawing from connoting more than generalised house and generalised hillside. To give such things any further value than mere generalisations possess we must particularise, and particularising implies added refinement. Our drawing must represent some particular sort of house and some particular sort of hillside before it can inspire any but the most vague and fleeting interest.

In an age when art is in danger of perishing from laborious triviality a vigorous protest will have a certain indirect value as an educative stimulus, yet its absolute value may be hardly greater than that of the elaborate concoctions which it helps to discredit. Excess of subtlety doubtless leads to weakness and

confusion. But excess of simplicity leads to emptiness, and all the best art of the world avoids, and will continue to avoid, either of these extremes.

That there should be any talk of rebellion at all, that the assertion of individuality in art should often be regarded as a revolt against tradition, is due to the fact that we often misuse the word tradition. First we interpret it as summarising the principles and qualities common to certain groups and classes of works of art already in existence. Then we make of it a kind of universal law directing that all future works of art shall conform more or less closely to the accredited existing models.

The word should be given more freedom. Tradition, as I have pointed out elsewhere,[1] is in its essence no more than the body of principles which secure conformity between art and its contemporary environment. As that environment changes so tradition too must change. The business of the artist is thus the doing of work in harmony with the finest and noblest conditions of life and architecture which he discovers around him, and, so long as he conforms to that simple rule, his work will remain traditional, however revolutionary in other respects it may appear.

[1] *Notes on the Science of Picture-making*, p. xxi.

CHAPTER IV

REMBRANDT AS SELF-TRAINER

IT is a matter of unceasing regret that the calls of other work have prevented me from making any thorough or consistent study of Rembrandt's drawings. When we think of their immense number and variety, of the consummate art and profundity of imaginative insight which they express with the help of a reed pen and a few touches of black or brown, they appear as a monument to their maker's genius even more wonderful than his pictures, an achievement to which the art of the world can hardly show any parallel. So complete indeed do these drawings on occasion become, that it is only a survival of the vulgar prejudice against slightness of means which causes them to be rated below the master's paintings. A good drawing by Rembrandt is in every way a more perfect and delightful work of art than any of his less successful pictures. It gives us the quintessence of his genius, both technical and spiritual, in the most summary and concentrated form, so that, when looking over Rembrandt drawings, our thoughts often wander from the subject with which he is dealing to marvel how he could possibly see so

much in it, and tell us all that he has seen with such absurdly limited means.

And our marvelling may lead us to think a little more clearly about the true nature of drawing, and to see why a few strokes of a pen may often satisfy us infinitely better than the most elaborate realistic painting would do. There are countless sides from which the problem may be viewed. In the case of Rembrandt I need illustrate only one of them.

We do not always remember that art is a music in which the notes can never be more than echoes—and of echoes often the most delightful are those heard far away.

And here we come at once to the stumbling-block over which unsympathetic critics of Rembrandt have fallen. His models are beggars, common ugly men, still commoner uglier women; and his art, say these judges, is as debased as his models. Now if Rembrandt had painted these models with the ordinary modern approach to realism, the charge might hold. But only in the cases where his models have some great inherent dignity does Rembrandt make his echo anything but remote, at least in his mature time. Where the models have many unpleasant features on which there is no need to insist, where the scene is too painful for realistic presentation, or where the introduction of a superhuman element would make elaborate realism self-destructive, he expresses himself in

terms of the remoter echo—distilling the essence of his message purged of all grosser substance.

The point is of such cardinal importance in the theory of artistic expression that, at the risk of repetition, I will try to explain it more clearly. An echo in a confined space may approach in loudness and distinctness the sound which gave it birth. With increasing distance the iteration becomes much less powerful and, if the echo is repeated from very far off, it will be only a delightful phantom, purged of all grossness by the large tracts of air through which the sound-waves have travelled. Between these extremes, of exquisite faintness and of a force hardly inferior to the original sound, there exist an infinity of gradations, and these gradations may not unfairly be compared with those that exist between the painting of a woman's head by some powerful realist, and a silverpoint study of a Madonna by the young Raphael. In the former we have something which is not nature but is the nearest possible thing to nature, an echo which is almost deceptive in its literalness of imitation. In the latter we have an echo infinitely delicate and etherealised.

The field of the artist is bounded by these two limits: his powers, his taste and his subject-matter will decide the limit towards which he inclines. The closest echo attainable will be his choice where substance and solidity are essential, as in the paint-

ing of still-life and genre subjects, and often in portraiture. But these close echoes often prove intractable material for the creative artist. When he comes to combine a number of them each, from its very nearness to nature, contains much that is incongruous with the harmony of the composition as a whole, or is at least unnecessary to it. This is especially the case where the original material contains much that in itself is displeasing to the eye. For instance, a series of careful literal paintings of four-wheel cabs and cabmen, even by the most skilful of realists, would be intolerable. Yet we never tire of Keene's drawings of such things, for in them the unpleasing and unessential elements are purged away, and the echo becomes artistic material which can be combined readily with any other material of a similar kind.

With distance, echoes are not only refined, but the process of refinement reveals in them a certain harmonious quality which is common to all other echoes of the same degree of remoteness. So remote echoes in virtue of this quality will blend without incongruity when the combination of nearer echoes would be forced or ridiculous. An elaborate figure composition, for example, will frequently look well in a sketch, but is very rarely successful when carried out with any approach to precise realism. In the sketch the figures are symbols, composed of

the same material and executed in the same manner, so that the result has unity. In a realistic picture the symbols have no necessary relation to each other except in that they are lighted by the same light and are enveloped in the same atmosphere. The bond of connexion between them is thus infinitely less strong than in the case of the sketch; and the extreme difficulty of establishing a connexion in the face of so many natural obstacles doubtless accounts for the rarity of complete success in this field. Rembrandt by his consistent reliance upon somewhat remote symbols, in painting as well as in drawing and etching, has bequeathed to us the most marvellous treasure of elaborate yet successful compositions which was ever amassed by a single human brain.

The more we consider the question quite frankly, the more strictly limited does the usefulness of the nearer echoes seem to become. They do not even necessarily give us the sensation of power, although their individual notes may be loud; for artistic power depends less on the pitch of every part of a composition than upon the relative force of certain parts compared with the remaining parts. Few painters with all the resources of their medium have produced portraits as strong as a drawing by Holbein or Dürer can be. And if even power is not the exclusive property of the nearer echo, what are we to

say of those lighter and more tender graces to which art owes its lyrical quality? They have clearly their natural home among the remoter echoes, and their charms fade fast if brought too near to reality. Modern "art-photography" will serve as an illustration. Those of its products which are the best in design and feeling are precisely those in which the superabundant detail of nature has been most deftly suppressed—which, in other words, are the least like ordinary photographs.

We can thus understand why much art which presents us only with remote symbols of natural objects delights or moves us more than forms of art in which literal imitation of nature is carried to a high degree of perfection—why the black and white drawings of a great Chinese or Japanese master, in which abstraction is carried to its farthest limit, may suggest the scale and majesty of nature more amply than an elaborate European oil-painting, and why a slight drawing or etching by Rembrandt may be ranked with the world's greatest masterpieces in any manner or medium.

Though some of his first drawings and etchings are as abstract in their symbolism as any of his later ones, we cannot well believe that he mastered the value and potentialities of abstraction all at once. These early works must in a sense be regarded as accidents, valuable indeed as gradually pointing the

way to a more large and certain method of design, but still accidents, since their true nature was not apprehended, the power of producing similar effects consistently was not yet within the artist's grasp, and they came into being rather as experiments, sketches, or beginnings, than as complete works of art deliberately planned and executed. The evidence of Rembrandt's oil-paintings is conclusive as to the attitude of his mind. For years the realistic bend of his Dutch temper clogs his hand as much, if not more than, the compositional devices he had learned from Lastman and Pynas, and he is a middle-aged man before he knows quite certainly when to use local colour and when to dispense with it. Thus, during the first twenty years of Rembrandt's artistic career, we are constantly coming across paintings and etchings which have the hall-marks of Rembrandt's hand and Rembrandt's inventive power, but which are not really successful and which leave us cold, even if they do not perhaps actually repel us a little by something which seems coarse or vulgar.

And it is just these discrepancies, these occasional variations from a master's highest standard, which are apt to become a cause of strife between the critics who can paint and the critics who cannot. These last find it natural to make a man's best work a sort of touchstone for everything else which is attributed

to him, and to ascribe to the collaboration of pupils, the imitation of admirers, or the loving energy of the picture restorer, all that does not come up to this high water-mark of excellence. The working painter, on the other hand, is more cautious in his judgment. He knows how much his own work varies from day to day and from year to year, with the state of his health and the conditions in which he labours; and he notices that even the greatest and ablest of his contemporaries are not exempt from the same human frailty. He knows, moreover, how essentially experimental all advances in his art must be in their beginnings. Hence, when he sees a poor picture bearing a great name he does not at once cry "forgery," but asks himself whether at any period of his career, either for some experimental purpose, or in some infelicitous moment either of mental apathy or of physical failing, the great man could have fallen so far. And this in particular applies to great innovators like Rembrandt, who are constantly calling upon their brain to conceive and their hand to execute things to which all previous achievement in the arts has shown no certain road. Their work must be unequal, and their art must be a gradual growth, and can be studied with profit only in that light.

One of the most striking consequences of studying Rembrandt in this manner is the apparent coincidence of his attitude towards the problem of artistic educa-

tion with that of Reynolds—an attitude which hitherto has been almost uniformly regarded as absurd.

Critics, from the days of William Blake, have either derided Sir Joshua or accused him of hypocrisy because in the famous Sixth Discourse he maintained that genius was largely the result of intelligent labour. To avoid misapprehension I will quote Sir Joshua's own words:—

"It is very natural for those who are unacquainted with the *cause* of anything extraordinary to be astonished at the *effect*, and to consider it as a kind of magic. They who have never observed the gradation by which art is acquired; who see only what is the full result of long labour, and application of an infinite number and infinite variety of acts, are apt to conclude, from their entire inability to do the same at once, that it is not only inaccessible to themselves, but can be done by those only who have some gift of the nature of inspiration bestowed upon them.

"Genius is supposed to be a power of producing excellencies which are out of the reach of the rules of art; a power which no precepts can teach, and which no industry can acquire.

"But the truth is that the *degree* of excellence which proclaims *Genius* is different in different times and different places; and what shows it to be so is that mankind have often changed their opinion upon this matter.

"When the arts were in their infancy the power

of merely drawing the likeness of any object was considered as one of its greatest efforts. The common people, ignorant of the principles of art, talk the same language even to this day. But when it was found that every man could be taught to do this, and a great deal more, merely by the observance of certain precepts, the name of Genius then shifted its application, and was given only to him who added the peculiar character of the object he represented; to him who had invention, expression, grace or dignity; in short, those qualities or excellencies, the power of producing which could not *then* be taught by any known and promulgated rules.

"What we now call Genius begins, not where rules, abstractedly taken, end, but where known vulgar and trite rules have no longer any place. It must of necessity be, that even works of Genius, like every other effect, as they must have their cause, must likewise have their rules; it cannot be by chance that excellencies are produced with any constancy or any certainty, for this is not the nature of chance; but the rules by which men of extraordinary parts—and such as are called men of Genius—work, are either such as they discover by their own peculiar observations, or of such a nice texture as not easily to admit being expressed in words; especially as artists are not very frequently skilful in that mode of communicating ideas."

Reynolds had already said, in his Second Discourse:—

"Few have been taught to any purpose who have not been their own teachers. . . . If you have great talents industry will improve them, if you have but moderate talents industry will supply their deficiency."

[This he afterwards modifies by admitting the need of general strength of intellect, though not of specific gifts.]

"Nothing is denied to well-directed labour; nothing is to be obtained without it."

Now when we study Rembrandt's etchings in consecutive order they seem to anticipate almost all that Reynolds was here attempting to impress upon his audience. Rembrandt is undoubtedly a very clever student from the first, but his early work is uncertain and exceedingly unequal. In his course of self-education he makes experiment after experiment, now trying for this quality, now for that. Sometimes he fails entirely, and it is long before he is completely successful; but every failure, partial or total, teaches him a lesson of something to be avoided or done otherwise in future. By this constant introspection fault after fault is conquered, and increasing power leads to increasing boldness, until at last no effect, however complicated or daring, is beyond his reach.

This view of Rembrandt must seem to be con-

tradicted by the experience of many working artists. Few, however, can claim the general strength of intellect with which Rembrandt set out, fewer still an equal concentration of all their powers upon art from boyhood to old age. The difference, indeed, is largely a question of terms. Reynolds hardly did more than state a conviction that the persistent effort of a strong intellect devoted to the arts must produce the exceptional results that a similar effort would produce in other fields of activity; in other words, that in the madness of Genius there is more method than is commonly suspected.

The root of the common erroneous opinion as to the nature of Genius is the confusion of art with virtuosity. In music, where the brilliant executant is rarely or never a great composer, we can separate readily enough the talent which combines manual dexterity and fine musical feeling from the intellectual gifts which lead to musical creation. But in the case of painting we do not draw the same distinction. If a boy has clever fingers, and some taste and facility in drawing, people are apt to regard him as an artist in embryo, without even considering whether he has either the brains or the enthusiasm necessary for the arduous and complicated craft of painting. On the other hand, if a boy seems to draw badly, neither general strength of mind nor a decided bent for the arts are com-

monly sufficient to reconcile his parents to the choice of painting as a profession.

Yet the history of the arts proves time after time that young men with no special readiness with the pencil have become great artists, while brilliant executants who proved utter failures are commoner still. Of the former class Constable is an excellent example. No one who knows Constable's early work can wonder at his parents' opposing his wish to adopt painting as a profession. For years he was clumsiness personified. Yet by sheer patience and determination, and by an unconquerable enthusiasm for nature, he overcame all these deficiencies and became one of the significant figures in the history of art. On the other hand, youthful virtuosi of the pencil whose talent, for want of character or of enthusiasm, has proved utterly sterile, will be remembered by most of my readers.

There can be no doubt that this rare manual dexterity is a gift from Providence which no human effort can imitate. But it is not the first essential in the making of a painter. Many of the great artists, perhaps all the very greatest, are virtuosi. The skill of a Dürer or a Holbein, of Leonardo or Raphael, of Rubens or Van Dyck, of Watteau, of Tiepolo, or of Gainsborough, is an inborn quality which makes the manipulative part of their craft come to them more easily than to those

with less certainty of hand and eye. But side by side with this list it would not be difficult to compose another containing the names of other distinguished artists who, like Constable, have built up a great name upon modest and laborious beginnings. Reynolds, when he wrote his Discourses, remembered with how much effort he had attained to his own breadth and certainty of practice: he remembered also how many clever students came to nothing for want of intelligent enthusiastic labour. He did not forget that the inborn talent of the virtuoso was a good thing, but he did not dilate upon it because he knew that, by itself, it could not carry a student far, and that keen intelligence and enthusiasm, if rightly exercised, was a more serviceable if a less brilliant heritage. That the addition of virtuosity did not make the heritage more precious still, Sir Joshua would have been the last to deny.

As every one knows, the process of etching is that of drawing with a needle upon a varnished plate of copper, and of biting with acid the lines traced by the needle, leaving them engraved upon the copper-plate, from which impressions are printed as from any other engraved plate. The essence of the process of etching lies in the fact that the needle can move freely over the polished surface of the copper,

and has not to be ploughed into it as the line-engraver's burin has to be. Even the great Dürer is constrained to some extent by having actually to cut in metal each line of his work. In etching on the other hand the needle responds to the slightest touch of the artist's fingers, and adapts itself equally well to an elaborate composition and to a hurried sketch.

It is thus our singular good fortune to be able to study the genius of Rembrandt in a medium which is at once comprehensive and intimate. The greatest advantage of all however which etching possesses for the student, lies in its clear and precise character. In criticising it, there is comparatively little room for the difference of opinion which personal taste, in colour, in handling and in pigment, introduces into the criticism of painting. In etching we have to deal only with definite black and white lines, about the direction and arrangement of which there can be no conflict.

Let us then examine the etchings in chronological order, and consider them in their relation to the development of Rembrandt's artistic power. The first point to which I wish to direct attention is the identity of Rembrandt's progress in its main lines with that of the great sculptors. Donatello, Verrocchio, Michelangelo, and Rodin all began in the same way: they studied nature until they had

absolutely mastered the art of imitating her. But they were not content to stop at perfect imitation. They found that mere precise imitation, like a cast from the life or a photograph, was a thing devoid of character and significance, and they obtained character and significance by emphasis of structure or modelling, by scientifically calculated departures from realistic truth, by suppressing unessential things and by concentrating upon essentials.

Now this is exactly the process which we shall see was adopted by Rembrandt in his course of self-education. From the first he tries to find scope for his inventive power in imaginative compositions, but lack of experience makes his earlier efforts either entire failures, or only half successful. He therefore goes back to the study of nature, of real people, until by constant practice and observation he trains his memory to draw without a model as accurately as with one. This power once attained, Rembrandt is free to design as he pleases. At first even his imaginative compositions are treated as if lighted with the direct and positive light of day. Gradually this comes to seem prosaic—great events demand an environment of hallucination and mystery —and so by constant experiment and observation he learns at last to surround his figures with an atmosphere of luminous uncertain twilight, which reveals what must be revealed, and hides what must be

hidden. When people speak of Rembrandt it is to the profound and emphatic work of his mature life that they generally refer. They seem to forget that this supreme power was not a sudden inspiration, but was the result of many years of concentrated study, of a long series of experiments carried out on a logical principle.

The mass of criticism devoted to Rembrandt's etchings is considerable, but until the last fifty years very little of it was written either by artists or by men who had much technical acquaintance with the process. The credit of first arranging this long series of some three hundred plates in chronological order must be given to the late Sir Francis Haden; and with the experiment he made in arranging a loan exhibition at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1877 the whole of the modern criticism of Rembrandt may be said to begin; though the references to Bartsch's great catalogue are generally retained for purposes of identification.

Of the various chronological schemes put forward, that of Dr. von Seidlitz is perhaps the most generally accepted. It was made the foundation of the admirable catalogue of the Exhibition at the British Museum in 1899 (in its way a masterpiece), and of the system now employed in arranging that collection. This catalogue as recently revised I have used as the framework of the following study. The

Museum authorities differ in some details from Dr. von Seidlitz, and instances will occur in which even the verdict of the Museum may seem to deserve reconsideration, but these variations are few. As we shall see, there is a good reason for the conservative attitude which these cataloguers adopt.[1]

The first group of Rembrandt's etchings with which we have to deal belongs to the years 1628–1630.

The first of these etchings with a date, *Rembrandt's Mother's Head and Bust* (B.M. 1, B. 354) is so accomplished as to suggest that it was by no means Rembrandt's first experiment in the medium. He had learned etching four years earlier, during his stay with Lastman, and we may well ask whether he had not during those four years executed other plates which are either lost or still pass unrecognised among the undated prints.

No. 3 in the Museum Series, *Rembrandt bareheaded with high curly hair, Head and Bust* (B. 27), is far more scratchy and inexperienced in style, while the artist represents himself as little more than a boy. A similar look of boyishness may be noted in another plate, the heavily bitten *Rembrandt with Fur Cap in an oval border* (B.M. 59, B. 12). Is it not possible that these two prints may really

[1] For the reader's convenience references, both to the British Museum Catalogue (B.M.) and to Bartsch (B.), are given throughout.

be earlier in date than 1628? Inexperience would explain the weakness of the one and the over-biting of the other, an over-biting which clouds firm and scientific drawing to such an extent that some authorities entirely reject the plate.

Yet when full justice has been done to the skill and sensitiveness of Rembrandt's first portrait of his mother, it is wrong to class it with the work of his maturity. The dexterity of the touch, the grip of character, and the sense of reality which it displays foreshadow greatness, but Rembrandt has still to learn to space his masses grandly, to suggest bulk and solidity, and to model with scientific economy of line.

A little later, perhaps in 1630, Rembrandt begins to attempt etching a complete composition. The first of these efforts, *Peter and John at the Gate of the Temple, roughly etched* (B.M. 5, B. 95), is of extreme interest. There is an attempt at making a grand design, at suggesting height and depth and recession, and at getting an effect with the smallest possible number of lines, but the attempt is not successful. The figures, though large in conception, are not convincing or solid, and the contrasts of scale are exaggerated. In the *Small Lion Hunt* (*with one Lion*) (B.M. 6, B. 116) the handling is more rapid, probably with the idea of suggesting force and movement, but the result is again unsuc-

cessful, on account of the obvious arrangement and the slip-shod drawing.

Rembrandt, at the age of twenty-four, evidently did not possess sufficient knowledge to draw animals or figures from memory with the correctness necessary to make them convincing, and the numerous studies of beggars and models, including himself and his family, which occupy so large a space in the work of the next few years, were doubtless made with the view of remedying this deficiency. In spite of this constant practice, years elapsed before Rembrandt had mastered his materials so completely that it becomes impossible to tell whether a figure in his work is drawn from a model or from memory, and the constant alternation of invention and work from nature is the characteristic feature of his etchings for some ten years.

The development of his mighty genius is the more notable when we remember that Rembrandt was twenty-four years old when he etched these two plates, whereas Millais painted his *Lorenzo and Isabella* at nineteen, and was only twenty-three when the *Ophelia* and *The Huguenot* appeared. Thus, as artists go, Rembrandt cannot be called exceptionally precocious. A steady determination to correct his faults and an intelligent and unsparing criticism of his experiments are the real characteristics of his temper, and it is upon them,

and not upon some spontaneous unconscious instinct, that the profound and masterly work of his later years is built up.

Finding that he required a far more intimate knowledge of real things to give strength and solidity to his conceptions, Rembrandt set himself to gain this knowledge from nature. In the year 1630 he executed some two dozen studies from beggars, from models, including the one usually identified with his father, and from himself—varying on each occasion the lighting, the arrangement, and the method. Of the beggar studies the best is perhaps the *Beggar Man and Beggar Woman behind a Bank* (B.M. 13, B. 165), where the light and shade are simply and broadly massed, the savage hungry look of the woman is excellently caught, and the workmanship is as fluent as in the portrait of his mother and more structural. A similar improvement may be noted in the portrait, *Rembrandt's Father in profile, R.* (B.M. 23, B. 292).

The four compositions belonging to this year, 1630, are more interesting still. The first, *The Flight into Egypt*, exists in a complete state only in Paris and Amsterdam, and is a ragged, roughly-bitten design, resembling the earlier *Lion Hunt*, but even less successful. The next, *The Presentation in the Temple* (B.M. 18, B. 51), is a remarkable attempt at obtaining in etching the richness

of design and the delicacy of treatment which at this period were Rembrandt's ideals in painting, and are realised in the picture of the same subject now in the Hague Museum. For the period the attempt is remarkably successful, and this little plate would make an admirable beginning for a collection of the master's etched compositions. The light and shade are broadly massed, and an effect of great space is obtained in a tiny compass by the dexterous recession of the building to the right and left. Compared, however, with Rembrandt's later work, the transitions are too abrupt, and the lights are broken by sharp dark shadows, while the pointing angel in the centre, and the beggar's leg and crutch on the extreme left, indicate an obvious straining after effect.

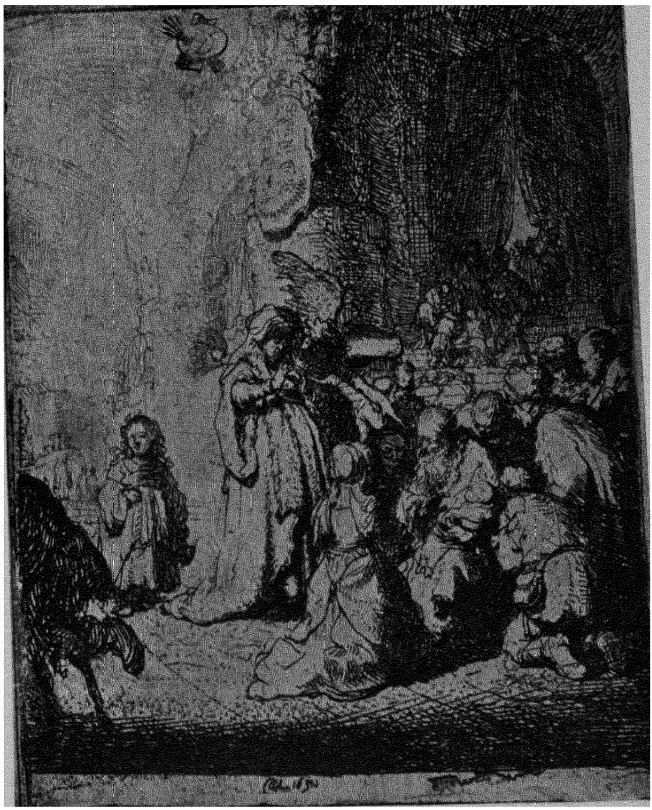
The following plate, *The Circumcision* (B.M. 19, B. 48), attempts still more, namely the complete tonality and chiaroscuro of painting on a miniature scale, but the result is not so successful. Minute gradations of tone can be suggested by lines only when the lines themselves are minute, and this minuteness involves a loss of strength and character, as we see in the work of modern reproductive etchers. Etching is essentially a process of drawing with lines, and the moment the lines cease to tell as lines but are merely component parts of a tone, the work must look weak. Rembrandt

REMBRANDT BAREHEADED, WITH HIGH CURLY HAIR.
(B. 27; B.M. 3.)

SS. PETER AND JOHN AT THE GATE OF THE TEMPLE. (B. 95; B.M. 5.)

SMALL LION HUNT (WITH ONE LION). (E. 110; B.M. 6.)

BEGGAR MAN AND WOMAN BEHIND A BANK. (B. 165; B.M. 13.)



THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE. (B. 51; B.M. 18.)

THE CIRCUMCISION. (B. 48; B.M. 19.)

for another six or seven years errs now and then from the attempt to be over delicate, but never so entirely as in this little plate of *The Circumcision.*

The fourth of these compositions of 1630, the *Christ disputing among the Doctors* (B.M. 20, B. 66), is almost as remarkable as *The Presentation*; indeed, it might be regarded as an attempt to correct the defects of that plate. The light and shade are massed still more broadly and simply, while air and space are suggested by slightness of handling rather than by any pronounced arrangement of lines or gradation of tones. The design is still further improved and concentrated in the third state by cutting away a portion of the top and left side. The interest is thus definitely focussed upon the figure of Christ and the doctors round Him, though the improvement involves the sacrifice of one of the finest figures of all, the man on the left of the plate, who sits in shadow glaring fiercely at the divine Child. As it stands this print is an exceedingly good straightforward illustration of the subject, but in his maturity, Rembrandt gives us much more than that, as we shall see when we come to consider his later treatments of the same incident (B.M. 277, B. 64; B.M. 257, B. 65).

The breadth of lighting in this plate is obtained by a simple and obvious arrangement of the

masses; in his later work the planning is so subtle as to defy analysis. Brilliancy of illumination is secured by sharp contrast with masses of shadow; in his later work Rembrandt gets even more brilliancy by dispensing with any such commonplace devices, and fills even his shadows with reflected lights which pulse and shimmer and give his work that mysterious glow and vitality in which its peculiar charm so largely consists. Character here is expressed by means of general types; in the later plates every figure is a living person with an individuality and a temper of his own, and Rembrandt appears to us as the equal of Shakespeare in the wealth of human imagery that he holds at his command.

The beginning of the period with which we have next to deal is more difficult to discuss coherently and completely than any other portion of Rembrandt's career as an etcher. Between sixty and seventy small plates, mostly portraits and studies of beggars, are signed with his initials and attributed to the year 1630–1632, and it is round these plates, in themselves for the most part of no great importance, that the battle of criticism has raged most fiercely. In method, taste, and accomplishment these plates show the greatest possible variations. Sometimes they are coarsely bitten, sometimes they are delicate to timidity; many are vulgar,

not a few are dull; some are free and florid, others are stiff and dry; one group will be finished to excess, another will be empty and bald.

The most severe critics of Rembrandt's work reject almost every one of these little plates, arguing that, in insight and accomplishment, they fall so far below the level both of the prints of his later period and the earlier portrait of his mother that they cannot possibly come from his hand, but must be the work of pupils or imitators. The authorities of the British Museum, and I believe of the principal museums on the Continent, adhere to the traditional view that these plates are in the main the work of Rembrandt, but allow that a few may be fairly doubted. At first sight the former theory seems the more attractive, for it is easy to assume that Rembrandt was so great a genius that his work could never fall below a very high level. Yet on closer examination several difficulties present themselves. In the first place, the prints in question differ in many cases so slightly, both from undoubted work by Rembrandt and from each other, that it is not difficult to arrange them in a series where the difference between each print and its neighbour will be imperceptible, and the acceptance of the genuine work at one end of the scale seems logically to imply the acceptance of the doubtful things at the other.

Then a comparison with Rembrandt's early paint-

ings, of which our knowledge, thanks to the labours of Dr. Bode and others, has so greatly increased during the past few years, reminds us that there we meet with just the same inequalities of method, and taste, and skill. That the etchings should vary in the same way then seems not only possible but probable, especially when we take into account the hit-or-miss nature of the medium, and the extreme difficulty of correcting any unsuccessful passages.

Again, if Rembrandt did not execute these plates, who did? Bol, Livens, and Van Vliet, among whom these prints are sometimes divided, have all left work of their own by which we can judge their claims. Bol, though fairly able, has a personal style which is easily recognisable and may at once be dismissed from the inquiry. Van Vliet with equal uniformity proves himself to have been a coarse and clumsy etcher, quite incapable of doing any but the roughest work. Livens alone remains, by far the most accomplished of the three, and from first to last a careful student of better men. His personal relations with Rembrandt render it most unlikely that he should have etched plates and then signed them with his friend's initials, but among the plates till recently given to Rembrandt by the Museum authorities there are two or three which so clearly betray the mannerisms of Livens that they may safely be ascribed to him. We may thus, without much hesitation, hold to the traditional belief that the

great majority of these plates, unequal as they are, were etched by Rembrandt himself.[1]

It should be remembered that in Rembrandt's youth the capabilities of the process of etching had never been explored, and that he had therefore to teach himself, by constant experiment, the best way of utilising the medium. Experience was the object of his search, and he could only buy experience at the price of failure, as every one else has to buy it. The experience gained upon the fifty or sixty small plates

[1] The plates which may almost certainly be given to Livens are B.M. 83, B. 358 and B.M. 89, B. 296, while the *Portrait of Rembrandt's Mother*, B.M. 91, B. 344, strongly resembles Livens, and may perhaps be a copy by him in reverse of the plate by Rembrandt, B.M. 52, B. 343. Of the other works on which doubt has been cast we may name first a number of plates, which, though unsuccessful from haste, fatigue, experiment, inexperience, carelessness, or absence of a model, still seem to show quite definite traces of Rembrandt's hand as well as of Rembrandt's spirit. These are B.M. 24, B. 294; B.M. 30, B. 10; B.M. 31, B. 13; B.M. 35, B. 9; B.M. 38, B. 138; B.M. 61, B. 332; B.M. 69, B. 135; and B.M. 74, B. 153. Other plates exhibit under-bitten subjects which have been reworked. These are B.M. 66, B. 6; B.M. 67, B. 336; B.M. 84, B. 307; B.M. 85, B. 324; and perhaps B.M. 62, B. 14; B.M. 63, B. 15; B.M. 76, B. 134; B.M. 86, B. 298; B.M. 87, B. 314. In the first of these cases both workings seem to be by Rembrandt's hand, in the remainder an under-bitten plate by Rembrandt seems to have been worked up by a pupil.

Among plates which a very generous attitude towards Rembrandt's work may perhaps retain, but which cannot be retained without hesitation, are B.M. 55, B. 8 and B.M. 81, B. 169. Plates for which Rembrandt's authorship appears almost indefensible on any ground are B.M. 33, B. 1; B.M. 39, B. 302; B.M. 60, B. 25; B.M. 64, B. 377; B.M. 65, B. 322; B.M. 68, B. 326; B.M. 70, B. 317; B.M. 71, B. 323; B.M. 72, B. 167; B.M. 75, B. 175; B.M. 82, B. 355; and B.M. 88, B. 337.

executed between the years 1630 and 1632, in every possible variety of method, formed Rembrandt's professional style. After 1632 he continues to vary his method to suit particular subjects or particular effects; but the variation is small compared with that of the preceding years, and is the deliberate change made by a master for a definite purpose, and not the tentative experiment of a novice. To discuss these variations with the least pretence of completeness is impossible within the compass of a short study. We may therefore pass at once to the development of Rembrandt's sense of design, which went forward side by side with his increase of power as a technician, merely reproducing five heads sketched in 1631 on a single plate (B.M. 41, B. 366) as an example of his experiments.

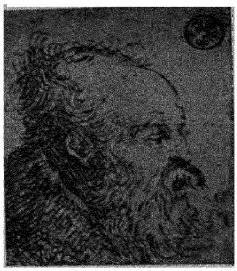
In 1631 Rembrandt left Leyden to settle in Amsterdam, and perhaps the increased facilities for getting models in the larger city led to the etching of the two studies from the life, *Diana at the Bath* (B.M. 42, B. 201) and the *Naked Woman Seated on a Mound* (B.M. 43, B. 198). In these plates every deformity of the ugly models used is reproduced with the most scrupulous fidelity. Both, in fact, are student's exercises of an exceedingly careful and laborious kind, so laborious indeed that it is only in some accessories of the *Diana*, such as the tree in the background and the frilled linen on which the goddess is seated, that the handling shows any sign of freedom.

These studies from life seem to have inspired Rembrandt with the idea of etching a classical subject with nude figures, and the result was the *Jupiter and Danaë* (B.M. 44, B. 204). The defects in the drawing of the figures show that Rembrandt had not yet mastered the art of working without a model, and the difficulty of his task is reflected in the uncertain technique; but the plate is none the less of considerable interest. Here for the first time we see Rembrandt trying to envelop his subject in the atmosphere of mystery which was afterwards to become the dominant characteristic of his work, and the dimly seen figure of Jupiter creeping forward in the twilight is thus a forerunner of the sinister *Clement de Jonghe*, and of the crowd that huddles in the darkness under the *Three Crosses*.

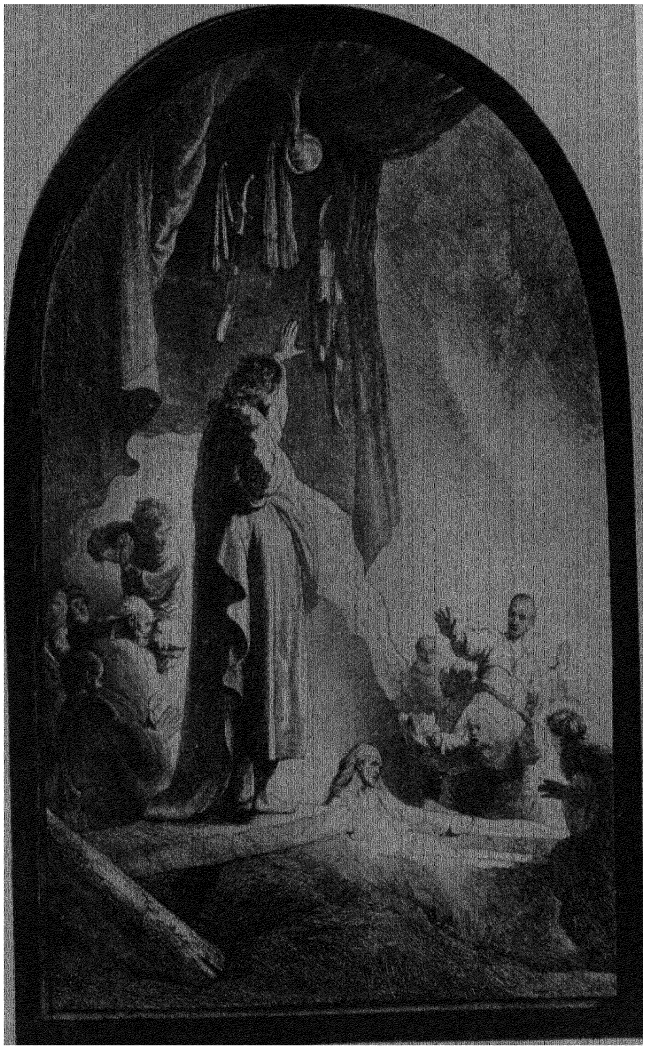
The prints of 1632 show similar variations, though there is a general advance in power. The plate of *St. Jerome Praying* (B.M. 94, B. 101) indicates that Rembrandt was still far from certain when working without a model, but *The Holy Family* (B.M. 95, B. 62), while showing traces of the same weakness, is etched in a light, open style, which anticipates Rembrandt's manner eight years afterwards. Before adopting it, however, he had other problems to face, as the large plates of *The Raising of Lazarus* (B.M. 96, B. 73) and *The Good Samaritan* (B.M. 101, B. 90) sufficiently indicate.

The plate of *The Raising of Lazarus* is a notable effort on Rembrandt's part to utilise the whole of the technical knowledge he had acquired during four years of unremitting toil. The figure of Christ is posed in the centre of the design in an attitude suggesting the study of Rubens; the light and shade are strongly contrasted and broadly massed; while the gestures of the spectators express terror and wonder with great dramatic force. Yet, compared with Rembrandt's later rendering of the subject, the result is only melodrama. The hanging curtain, effective enough as a mass, is felt to be a studio accessory; the arrangement is too obviously picturesque, and we are conscious that the miracle is presented as if it were the master-trick of a successful conjurer, not a natural manifestation of divine omnipotence. It is, of course, a powerful piece of work, and a proof that by the age of twenty-six Rembrandt had mastered all the studio precepts of composition (perhaps a necessary prelude to greater things), but the intense insight, and the subtle art conveying it, which give Rembrandt his place with the supreme masters, are as yet unborn.

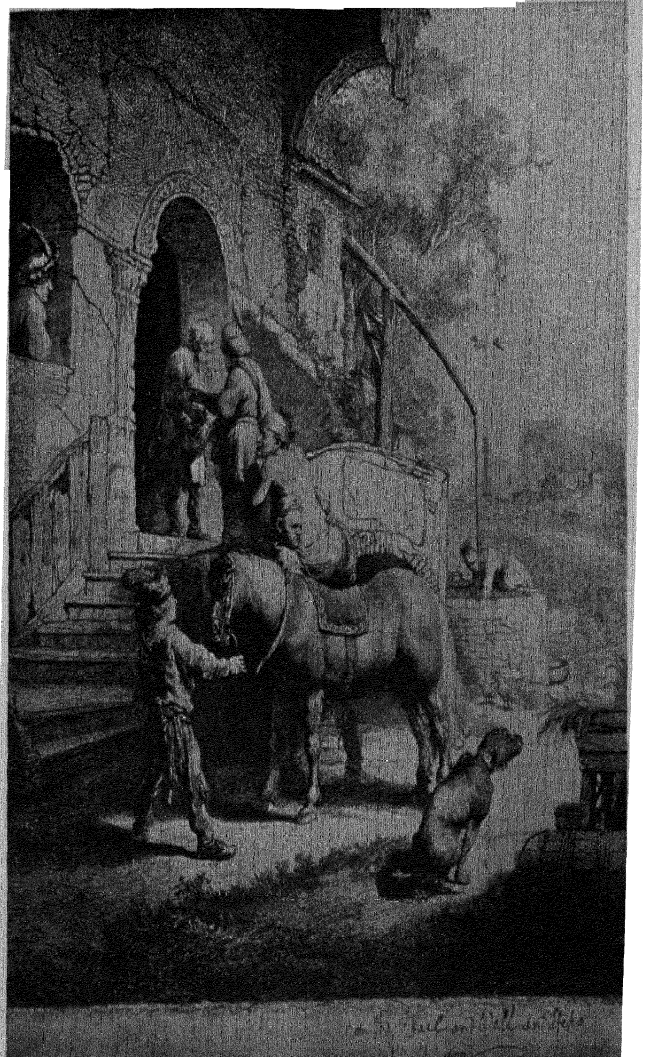
Nor is *The Good Samaritan* a success: indeed many critics doubt whether it is Rembrandt's work at all. The plate is etched, with a few changes, from the picture in the Wallace Collection, and that may explain why the handling is cautious and



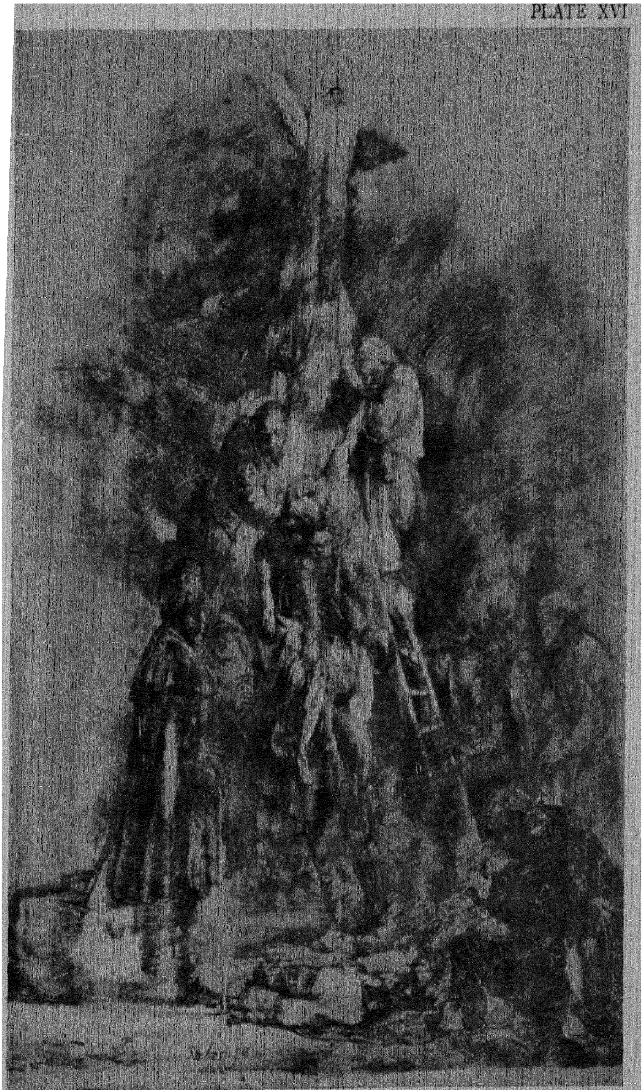
FIVE STUDIES ETCHED ON A SINGLE PLATE. (B. 306; B.M. 41.)



THE RAISING OF LAZARUS. (B. 73; B.M. 96.)



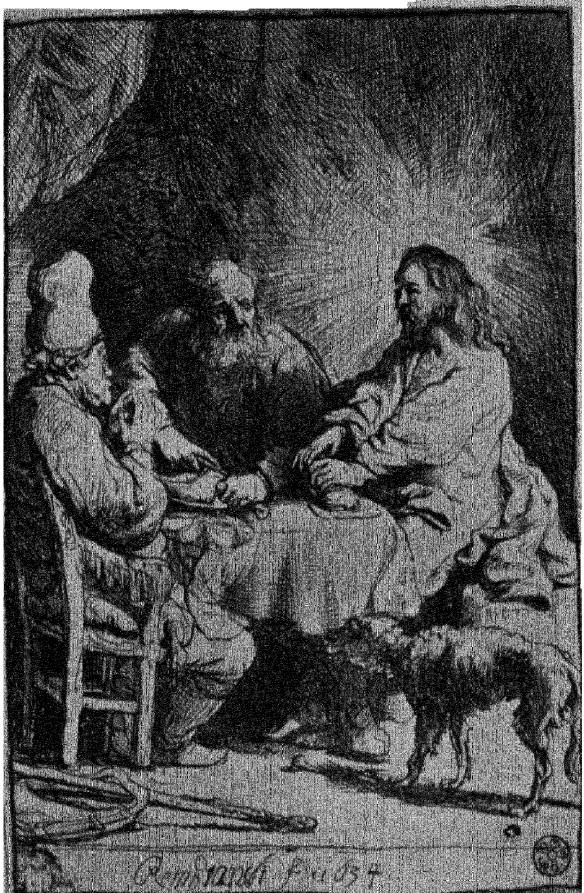
THE GOOD SAMARITAN. (B. 90; B.M. 101.)



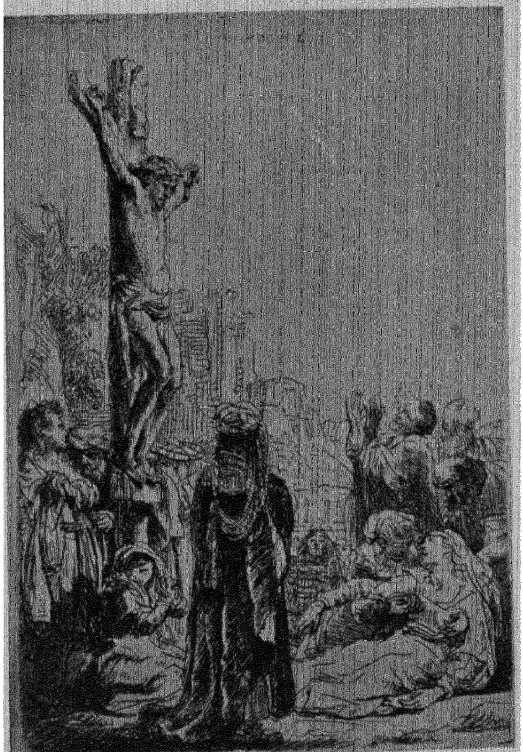
THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS. FIRST PLATE. [B. 81; B.M. 102.]

THE ANGEL APPEARING TO THE SHEPHERDS. (B. 44; B.M. 120.)

PLATE XVIII



CHRIST AT EMMAUS. (B. 88; B.M. 121.)



THE CRUCIFIXION. SMALL PLATE. (B. 80; B.M. 123.)

prosaic. Etching, when used for reproduction, almost always has to effect its purpose by tones and not by lines and, in sacrificing quality of line, it sacrifices (as we see even in the cleverest modern work) its peculiar strength and vivacity. In forcing etching, however, to do work unsuited to its nature, Rembrandt had the excuse, which modern etchers have not, that he was a pioneer making experiments. To the end of his life he continued to make occasional experiments in complete tonality and obtained some wonderful results. But, fine as are plates like the *Jan Six*, the artist will leave them to the wealthy collector, and will choose for himself the subjects where the needle is used with more freedom. In 1632, however, Rembrandt was still a learner, and unable to evade or conquer the difficulties of working in tone. *The Good Samaritan* has thus many weak points, though the thorough drawing of such things as the boy holding the horse, and the dog in the foreground, are enough to prove that the work is his, for they are beyond the capacity of any of his pupils. Even Livens, the ablest of all his contemporaries, sees facts far more loosely, being attracted by their picturesque quality, not by their construction.

I have often wondered whether the failure in the biting of the first plate of *The Descent from the Cross*

of 1633[1] was not a turning-point, or at least a landmark, in Rembrandt's career. The few prints pulled from the ruined plate have the ghostly suggestiveness, the sense of space, atmosphere, and uncertain light, which Rembrandt learned to produce deliberately in later years, but which hitherto he had failed to compass. This accident may well have turned his thoughts towards the cultivation of new qualities, by which the rigidity and violence of plates like *The Raising of Lazarus* might be transformed into something less substantial, but charged with a significance infinitely more profound.

In the following year, 1634, Rembrandt seems to make a deliberate attempt at obtaining this mystery and intricacy in *The Angel Appearing to the Shepherds* (B.M. 120, B. 44). But the blaze of light in the sky is still obtained by violent contrast with masses of deep shadow, so that the effect is theatrical, while the crowding of the plate with small sharply defined forms makes it worried and patchy as well. He had still to discover that realistic symbols were neither so well suited to these supernatural subjects, nor usually so ready to harmonise with each other, as symbols which echoed nature more remotely.

[1] It is interesting to note that the head of Joseph of Arimathea in this plate is drawn from Sylvius, the uncle and guardian of Rembrandt's future wife.

The difficulty of simplifying a complicated subject is one which every artist has to face, and the subjects which Rembrandt attempted combined the utmost brilliancy of light, the utmost darkness of shadow, and the most profuse and minute detail, so that the difficulty in his case was infinitely greater than that which less ambitious artists have to face. In order to find a solution he seems to have turned to the study of the masters who had best solved the problem before him—Rubens and the Venetians. In their pictures he could see numerous figures and quantities of detail combined into a harmonious whole, without losing their vitality, their vigour, or their solidity. I feel bound to notice in this connexion the part which Rubens played nearly two hundred years later in the development of Turner and Constable. It is to the influence of Rubens, and possibly to a single picture, the *Château de Stein*, now in the National Gallery, that we may ascribe the remarkable change which both these artists underwent about the year 1815.

That Rembrandt had already been attracted by Rubens was evident in *The Raising of Lazarus*. Now he set himself to study not only the poses and gestures and forms which he saw in Rubens's work, but also etched one or two compositions in his manner, to see if thereby he could learn the secret by which Rubens was able to knit together

the various parts of his design. *The Ship of Fortune* (B.M. 106, B. 111) of the year 1633, the *Christ at Emmaus* of 1634 (B.M. 121, B. 88), the *Christ and the Woman of Samaria* (B.M. 122, B. 71), and *The Stoning of St. Stephen* (B.M. 125, B. 97), are all exercises in the manner of Rubens; while the weak and lifeless plate of *The Tribute Money* (B.M. 124, B. 68), with the *Christ Driving the Money Changers from the Temple* (B.M. 126, B. 69), are exercises of a similar kind in the manner of the Venetians. Dürer, too, was constantly studied, and in the last-named plate we may trace his influence, not only in the gesture of Christ, which is directly borrowed from him, but even in the sharp shadows which divide the figures.

The transition from even the best of these plates to the small *Crucifixion* (B.M. 123, B. 80) is so abrupt that it is hard to believe that the date 1634 usually given to this little plate is quite accurate: 1636, or perhaps even 1638, would seem a much more probable theory. In this *Crucifixion*, indeed, Rembrandt's style, while it still lacks the supreme and emphatic mastery of his old age, has the perfection of technical accomplishment which characterises the best work of his manhood. The tiny figures are drawn with a grace, dexterity, and soundness which no earlier plate displays: the sense of atmosphere, mystery, and rich colour shows an equally

marked advance. But it is in the design that the greatest change of all is evident. The large spacing of the piece, the bold introduction of the upright figure in the foreground, the group under the cross, and that bending over the swooning Virgin, are perhaps in themselves things which the etcher of *The Raising of Lazarus* might have invented in a fortunate hour; but the fusion of them into a design at once so rich, so grave, so simple, and so intensely sincere, is a triumph which belongs to a much higher order of art. Were it not indeed for the loose treatment of the raised hands of the Apostle on the right, it would not be fanciful to assume that the plate actually represented an advance upon *The Death of the Virgin* of 1639, and that its date was 1640. How Rembrandt himself was interested in the design may be guessed from a proof in the British Museum, where the background and sky are tinted with printer's ink, so that the effect becomes a night effect. The magnificence of the result, coupled with the dexterity displayed in the wiping, certainly suggest that the experiment was made by Rembrandt's own hand while printing the plate.

This question of fusion, of knitting together the various parts of a complicated design into a connected whole, is more important than it may seem at first sight. Almost all artists before Rembrandt's time had

been content with a precise and definite statement of things seen: the unseen was for them only another version, and usually not a very distant version, of the visible world. Leonardo and one or two of the great Venetians had attempted to cross the border, but with imperfect success. Rembrandt, from the first, had been fascinated by the superhuman as well as by the human, and even in youth began to attempt to find a proper setting and atmosphere for the miraculous world he found in his Bible.

In painting, his purpose was fairly well served by a dark background from which the emphatic could emerge, and in which the unemphatic might be concealed. Gradually, as experience increased, he learned to charge this background with mysterious significance, to delight in the suggestions of palpitating shadow which its transparency so readily produced.

Etching, however, seemed to afford no such facilities. Its definite bitten line remained hard and matter of fact; its deep shadows, however skilfully managed, had not the intrinsic quality of air and space that a thin coat of dark paint possesses naturally if spread upon a light ground. The blending of part with part, that in painting could be done with a few softening touches of the brush, could be obtained in etching, when once a plate was bitten, only by laborious reworking. If in painting he had a few forerunners from whom he could learn some of the secret of

mystery: in etching he had none. Hence his countless experiments; the studied interchange of high light and deep darkness, and the forced contrasts of *The Raising of Lazarus* and *The Angel Appearing to the Shepherds*; the rush to an opposite extreme of minuteness and exact tonality based on that of painting in *The Good Samaritan*; then the broader lights and sweeping lines of the plates done under the influence of Rubens, where fusion is sought more in flowing rhythm of line than in subtle juxtaposition of tones; and then, last of all, a combination of all these methods, in which rhythm of line and delicate tonality are accented and enriched by a moderate use of contrast.

In this combination each element plays its proper part. The rhythmic line makes the foundation of the structure; the play of delicate tone gives it quality, texture, and mystery; while the daring and dexterous introduction of passages of deep shadow give force, colour, and emphasis. In later life the rhythm is more nobly varied, the tone more boldly and more subtly played with, and contrast is employed in a less conventional way; nevertheless, in this little plate of *The Crucifixion* all these elements are rightly and perfectly blended for the first time, and so it may fairly be termed a landmark in Rembrandt's development.

As we are now arriving at a turning-point in Rembrandt's career it may be well, lest there should

be any misunderstanding, to point out that the theory of development we have been following must be followed with caution, and must not be applied too rigorously to every work which comes from Rembrandt's hand. We must never forget that even the very greatest among artists are after all human beings, and subject therefore to human infirmities. Sometimes Homer nods, and sometimes his digestion gets out of order. A master's work, when viewed as a whole, may exhibit a continuous progress, but the progress is never in the nature of a strict mathematical sequence. It resembles rather an incoming tide, now advancing, now for a while appearing to retreat, and then advancing again beyond all former limits.

Critics who are not painters frequently make the mistake of rejecting these inequalities, just as critics who are not poets batten upon the occasional infelicities of a Shakespeare or a Shelley. Such alternations of success with comparative failure are naturally most frequent where the artist has advanced beyond all his predecessors, and has no secure tradition to guide him, where his work is necessarily experimental—and that was Rembrandt's position with regard to etching. He was testing the capacities of the medium as they had never been tested before. The sequence can best be traced in his subject pieces, and for that reason these notes are principally con-

THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON. (B. 91; B.M. 147.)

THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE. (B. 49; B.M. 102.)

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS. (B. 72; B.M. 198.)

THE TRIUMPH OF MORDECAI. (B. 40; B.M. 172.)

CHRIST CARRIED TO THE TOMB. (B. 84; H.M. 215.)

JEWS IN SYNAGOGUE. (B. 126; B.M. 234.)

CHRIST APPEARING TO HIS DISCIPLES. (B. 89; B.M. 237.)

fined to them, or rather to such a brief selection from them as clearness admits.

We have seen how the influence of Rubens enabled Rembrandt, between the years 1632 and 1635, to pass from his first manner, in which strong masses of deep shadow were contrasted sharply with equally strong masses of brilliant light, to a more harmonious method of work in which unity was secured by flowing lines and a generous use of half-tones. This method might perhaps be liable to the reproach of tameness, and in the plate of *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (B. 91, B.M. 147), belonging to the year 1636, we see an effort to escape this defect by a new freedom in the handling, by the introduction of straight lines to contrast with the bending figures, and by an insistence on the human element in the two chief personages which, in the case of the worn and grimy prodigal, verges upon caricature. This plate might be contrasted with the *Abraham casting out Hagar and Ishmael* (B. 30, B.M. 149), of 1637, where the workmanship is extremely minute, and all the artist's cleverness in suggesting colour, all his humorous insight into the feelings of the actors in the scene, does not save the print from the reproach of prettiness. The superb portrait of *A Young Man in a Velvet Cap* (B. 268, B.M. 151), which suggests a memory of some portrait by Holbein, and one or two excellent studies of women's heads belonging to the

same year indicate that this return to minuteness was only momentary, though in the *Joseph telling his Dreams* (B. 37, B.M. 160), of 1638, we see it once more, associated with a somewhat unsatisfactory composition, yet with such a wealth of character study in the heads of the envious brothers that the plate has wonderful merit as an illustration.

The influence of Rubens still predominates in the large plate of *The Death of the Virgin* (B. 99, B.M. 161), of the year 1639, in its way a marvellous design. Here a general lightness of tone, which the Rubens method of work involved, adds to the general effect of space and blazing light, while the sacrifice of obvious contrasts of black and white is more than atoned for by the richness and variety of the forms and figures, and by the extreme fluency of the handling. This last still obtains its effects by an emphasis which verges on caricature, a fault from which Rembrandt was shortly to free himself, but which here is one of the signs to show that this wonderful plate is a trifle immature. The influence of Mantegna, whose prints Rembrandt possessed and copied, may be noticed in the figure of St. John, though Rembrandt with all his skill and sympathy cannot as yet rival Mantegna's power of expressing passionate sorrow.

Even in Rembrandt's later work, however, we shall seldom find a more elaborately majestic composition. Some slight trace of the theatrical and

conventional still hangs about the placing of the chair in the right foreground and the magnificent seated figure which serves as a foil to the group round the bed; but the suggestion of space and depth and height by sheer dexterous drawing of the bedposts and canopy is beyond all praise, and allows the eye to pass without any sense of incongruity to the upper part of the room into which the celestial vision has descended. The slight yet convincing treatment of the roof beams, which harmonises so perfectly with the handling of the clouds on which the angels stand, proves how much Rembrandt had learned about reducing the various parts of his designs to simple terms, so that each fitted naturally into the next, and the eye might pass without wonder or protest from the substantial to the unsubstantial, from the real to the visionary, from man to God.

A similar fusion is the predominant characteristic of the oblong *Presentation in the Temple* (B. 49, B.M. 162), generally ascribed to the year 1639. The plate may well be a year or two later, since the drawing of the figures, though no less swift and fluent than in *The Death of the Virgin*, is devoid of any trace of caricature. Here, indeed, we see Rembrandt's powers as a draughtsman in a state of complete development. By constant practice he has learned to draw from memory or from imagination as completely and incisively as when he has a model before him, and the

drawing itself is no mere mechanical representation of facts, but a rendering that varies with each figure, the very method adapting itself to the place and purpose of the figure in the whole scheme. The figures in high light are hardly more than outlines; those in half light are more fully realised; those in shadow are so strongly worked as to tell at once as patches of deep colour. The paleness of tone which indicates the survival of the Rubens influence adds space to the composition, but the modulations in it are so gentle that the print looks weak. Such delicate modulations of grey tones are admirable in a large fresco or mural painting—indeed the superiority of Puvis de Chavannes over even the ablest contemporary decorators rests largely upon his recognition of this fact—but on a small scale the resulting flatness is less satisfying to the eye. In the reproduction the deeper shadows tell more strongly that in the original, so that the lack of force is no longer evident.

Rembrandt would seem to have become conscious of the defect, for in the elaborate composition, *The Triumph of Mordecai* (B. 40, B.M. 172), assigned by the British Museum and other authorities to the year 1640, but quite possibly several years later, he sets himself to remedy it by a free use of the rich blacks produced by dry point. In this brilliant print the general tone is one of rather pale grey, passing continuously into white. On this delicate beginning

the emphatic passages are marked with dry point, the deepest tones being reserved for the head of Haman, which is strongly relieved by the white horse behind him. A more masterly example of insight into character than this same head would be difficult to conceive; never has the contrast of triumphant wisdom and discomfited rascality been more wittily shown.

It is worth while to pause for a moment to consider how *The Raising of Lazarus* (B. 72, B.M. 198), of 1642, marks an advance upon *The Triumph of Mordecai*, whatever the precise date of the latter may be. That it represents an advance upon the earlier treatment of the same subject is clear enough, for the old melodramatic poses, the old contrast of high light and deep shadow, are gone, as well as the old artificial feeling about the event represented. In the earlier plate Rembrandt could represent Christ only as a mighty magician; in this later version he has come to understand St. John's story better, and recognises in the miracle the result of divine love and sympathy acting through Him who had no form nor comeliness among the sons of men. The thought is appropriate enough in a plate etched in the year of Saskia's death, but it is with the technical rather than the spiritual significance of the plate that we must deal, and this may best be explained by a comparison with *The Triumph of Mordecai*.

The Triumph of Mordecai is a masterpiece of art, yet it undeniably lacks certain qualities which separate Rembrandt's finest etchings from everything else of their kind. Upon analysis this inferiority seems to reside only in a certain completeness of statement, a certain uniform definition, which leaves the imagination but little room for play. In *The Raising of Lazarus* the omission of unessential things is carried further than in any previous work by Rembrandt. Large spaces are left either entirely empty or are covered with just so much work as will indicate their general character and no more. The attention is thus concentrated on the principal figures, while the design gains in freedom and breadth. This comparative lack of finish necessitates a swift and summary handling, and the subject thereby has the motion and freshness of a good sketch instead of the immobility which dogs even the greatest artists when they fill their work with detail. Most of the previous plates, too, were united by a very definite realistic scheme of light and shade. Here the arrangement of these elements, though straightforward enough to prevent any feeling of incongruity on the part of the spectator, has an accidental and momentary character, a subtle uncertainty, like a landscape seen on a stormy day when lights and shadows are constantly on the move, that adds not a little to the effect of mystery which the piece inspires.

As if to make sure that this arbitrary treatment would not lead him too far away from natural truth, Rembrandt in the very same year 1642 etches *St. Jerome in a Dark Chamber* (B. 105, B.M. 201), and *A Student at a Table by Candlelight* (B. 148, B.M. 202), in which realism of tone is carried to such an extreme pitch that in the latter plate the actual pulsation of flickering candlelight is suggested with almost deceptive accuracy. Then, after two or three years, comes the little plate *Christ carried to the Tomb* (B. 84, B.M. 215), a masterpiece even among Rembrandt's masterpieces. The design is so simple as almost to defy analysis, since its effect is dependent upon the exact proportion of the figures to the landscape, and upon the placing of them exactly where they best give the sense of an advancing procession. It is however in the intensity of its feeling that the plate is most wonderful. The tragic scene of the Entombment has been a favourite one with the great masters, and each has drawn from it the elements which best suited his temper. To Donatello and Titian it has suggested a passionate arabesque of weeping heads and waving hands; to Raphael and others an arrangement of elegant athletes; to Michelangelo the hopeless reality of death, the lifeless body weighing heavy in the bearers' hands. Rembrandt alone appears to have gone to the heart of the Bible story, to have dismissed all idea of parade, and seen

only the poor faithful *cortège* left alone in a mocking and indifferent world. The awful rigidity of the corpse seems to dispel all idea of resurrection: the mourners walk like men who have abandoned hope, but not affection or reverence.

The splendid series of portraits etched between the years 1646 and 1648, the *Sylvius*, the *Ephraim Bonus*, the *Asselyn*, the *Jan Six*, and the *Rembrandt drawing at a Window*, prove that the experience gained in etching these Biblical compositions had immensely widened Rembrandt's attitude towards portraiture. We note at once a wonderful increase in richness of design and in dignity of spacing, as well as in sympathy and insight. Rembrandt's earlier portraits, with all their skill and power, seem superficial or picturesque by the side of these grave and profound studies of human character. To this period also belongs the superb plate of *Beggars receiving Alms at the Door of a House* (B. 176, B.M. 233), a group so brilliantly definite and complete, so masterful in its economy of line, that we regret even the few touches of dry point added in the second state to give additional subtlety.

In another plate belonging to the same year, 1648, the *Jews in a Synagogue* (B. 126, B.M. 234), this element of subtlety is more appropriate. Here we have a composition boldly cut in half, and dominated by upright lines, which in the hands of any other

master could hardly have escaped being stiff and formal. Rembrandt's accumulated experience enables him to avoid this formality by the method of his handling. The drawing in this plate is in the strongest possible contrast to that in *The Beggars*. There it was constructive, every line being directed towards indicating the real shape and solidity of the things represented, so that a sculptor might easily use the print as a model for a highly-finished relief. In the *Synagogue* forms are suggested chiefly by the play of light upon them, and the lines employed do not follow the direction of the surfaces, as in the *Beggars*, but are almost wholly independent of them, and are used merely for producing different tones of grey. The result is a certain elusive quality which, while it charges the little plate with an atmosphere of mystery, is in itself a perfect counterpoise to the vertical and horizontal lines which make up the design.

We now come to what is perhaps the most famous and popular of all Rembrandt's etchings, the so-called "Hundred Guilder print," *Christ healing the Sick* (B. 74, B.M. 236). Certainly in a sense it is one of the most important of Rembrandt's prints, both from its scale and from the ambitious effort involved. It aims at combining in a single plate force, pathos, mystery, and complexity, and does so with a brilliancy and power that are beyond praise.

In boldness of mass, richness of invention, and certainty of line, no other print of Rembrandt surpasses it. Nevertheless, the impression left by even the most perfect proof is not wholly satisfactory, though it is difficult to analyse the reasons for the comparative coldness with which we view this technical masterpiece. The defect, in the end, seems to resolve itself into a defect of proportion; the figures are too numerous for the scale of the work. The subject, in fact, is one suited to a large mural painting; on its present scale it looks forced and crowded, and I forbear to make the defect more evident still by reproducing it on the tiny scale which this page admits. In the collection at the British Museum there is a pale counterproof of the first state, which shows how much the plate gains in spaciousness and dignity by being made less forcible. The strong contrasts of light and darkness make us long for the open air and, while they perhaps heighten the force of the plate, they destroy its unity. We see in the counterproof, where these shadows are reduced to paleness, how the resulting empty space provides an effective balance for the crowded groups, which themselves unite in far more perfect fusion when the background ceases to be a mass of impenetrable darkness. To put the case in another way, we have only to think of the mural paintings in the Pantheon at Paris to recognise that the design

is one which is perfectly adapted to the decorative tonality of a Puvis de Chavannes, but not to the dramatic and violent realism of a J. P. Laurens.

The less "important" and far less elaborate plate of *Christ appearing to his Disciples* (B. 89, B.M. 237) is really far more successful. Here, as by some sudden flash of supernatural illumination, the miraculous presence of Christ is at last realised with a fulness that even Rembrandt himself attains but twice or thrice, and of which the most famous example in oil painting is *The Supper at Emmaus* in the Louvre. The technical advance is no less wonderful. The figures are enveloped in a blaze of light, no longer obtained as in earlier plates by violent contrast with masses of deep darkness, but rather suggested by the very tone of the piece, by the absorption of all shadow in the encompassing brilliancy, by a superb economy of audacious black lines. The plate, indeed, in this respect, is an anticipation of the glowing fancies of Turner's maturity, and of the modern scientific painting of light and air which has been founded on Turner. It is one of the earliest "Impressionist" works of art, and may perhaps serve some day as a point of departure for those who are tired of the narrow range of landscape and genre subjects to which modern "Impressionism" has for the most part been restricted. From the semi-scientific and usually

prosaic representation of a limited number of visible effects, the great "Impressionists" of the future may turn to things invisible, to prove that their method is not really a sign of defective imagination, but is perhaps the most perfect of all methods for representing what is seen only with the eye of the spirit. At any rate, that is the lesson which this little plate of Rembrandt seems to suggest.

The final period of Rembrandt's career as an etcher differs in one important respect from its predecessors. Almost up to the year 1650, when Rembrandt was forty-four years of age, it was possible to trace a certain advance, if not in actual technical power and resourcefulness, at least in that fusion of matter and treatment which all perfect art requires. After 1650 advance is out of the question. All that remained to be done was to extend the capacity of the medium employed to the utmost, and then, when failing sight made minute work burdensome, to employ the most direct and emphatic means of expression, till even these became difficult and the etching needle was laid aside for ever.

A study of the early proofs of Rembrandt's plates of this mature period is the best means of discovering with what deliberate science he worked. Take for example the *Landscape with Trees, Farm*

Buildings and a Tower (B. 223, B.M. 244). Here the first state shows a somewhat equal division of importance, and in consequence the effect is ambiguous. On the right we have a barn, a row of trees, and rising above them a ruined tower with a cupola; on the left we have a road passing along the edge of a shadowed clump of larger trees, with a suggestion of stormy sky beyond. In the second state no doubt is left as to the chief motive of the composition. The sky above the dark landscape to the left is strengthened, the cupola on the right is erased. The erasure involves the loss of an interesting feature, and of an obviously rhythmical line, but the reward is a concentration of emphasis upon the grand masses to the left. The subtle portrait of *Clement de Jonghe* (B. 272, B.M. 251) shows similar developments. In each state up to the fourth we see the sitter gradually growing in reality and solidity, without losing in the least his ghostly mysterious smile.

In the work of 1651 and 1652 the tendency to the simplest and most straightforward methods of expression still appears, as in the plates of the blind Tobit groping his way to the door, of *Christ disputing with the Doctors*, and of *David in Prayer*. In this last print the cast shadow on the head of the kneeling king deserves notice as a bold device for

avoiding a commonplace silhouette. The more complicated design of *Dr. Faustus* (B. 270, B.M. 260) belongs to about the same time. It is as superb an example of force and contrast as any of Rembrandt's plates, but differs from his earlier works in that the force is concealed by the most delicate and subtle transitions from light to dark. We may note how Faust's white cap makes the figure tell as the centre of the piece in spite of the large masses of light elsewhere, and yet is connected with the background by the deep shadow in its fold; how the window space is broken up by the framework of the casement, and redeemed from stiffness by the papers which break the outline; and how the plate is enriched and enlivened by the slashes of dry point upon the magician's dress and sleeves. That this consummate art was in some degree communicable is proved by the fact that Rembrandt's best pupils occasionally mastered the trick of it tolerably well, and fell short of greatness simply because they had little of their own to say.

In passing to the two large plates which perhaps are Rembrandt's supreme contributions to the craft of etching, we must note by the way the *St. Jerome Reading, in an Italian Landscape* (B. 104, B.M. 267). Here the total effect is unsatisfactory, chiefly because emphatic chiaroscuro becomes disturbing

when associated with a complex pattern. Complex patterns are best unified by some method which tends towards flatness, such as that of the great Venetians. When an attempt is made to strengthen them by strong relief the result is violent or worried, as with the Bolognese and eclectic schools in general.

The magnificent plate of *The Three Crosses* (B. 78, B.M. 270) has been the subject of some discussion. Opinions differ greatly as to the character and value of the radical alterations made in the fourth state, but those who have followed Rembrandt's development closely should have little difficulty in coming to a decision. In the first three states we have an ideal of richness, complexity and dramatic force most nobly realised. Then, as the plate loses its freshness, Rembrandt is seized with a new ideal of more intense and earth-shaking catastrophe, in which all the obvious artifices of composition have to be dispensed with so that nothing may break the spell of horror and darkness in which the tragedy ends. The result owes its peculiar force to the fierce slashes of drypoint by which it is attained. In no other work by Rembrandt is the handling quite so audacious. Whether we prefer the early states or the later is largely a matter of temperament.

We may see a somewhat similar change in the

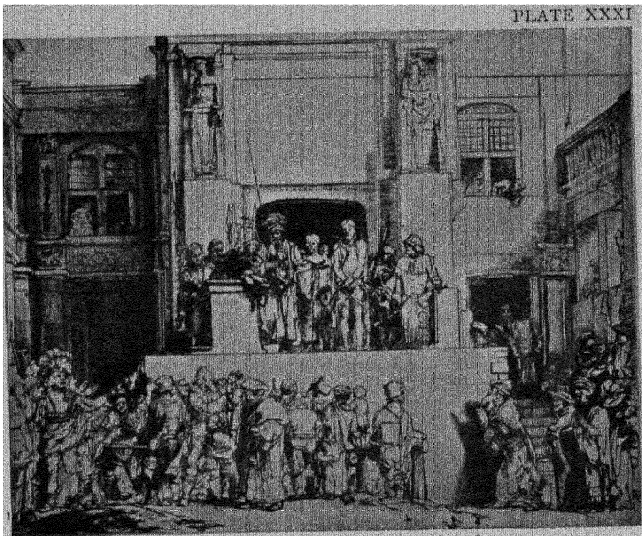
later states of the companion piece, *Christ presented to the People* (B. 76, B.M. 271). The subject opens like one of those problems in abstract proportion which we admire in the art of Piero della Francesca, where the significance of the figures is enhanced by architectural lines planned with consummate science. In the third state the effect is concentrated, solidified and enriched, the lively grouping of the crowd imparting an air of brilliant animation to the piece. Then, as the freshness of the dry point wears away, a more grave and serious mood comes upon the artist. Feeling that the sentiment of the piece is out of keeping with the subject, he sweeps away the agitated figures, and replaces them by two arches, which seem to reflect their hollowness, their mysterious darkness, upon everything else in the scene. Once more the last state, in spiritual intensity, is perhaps superior to the first. The little reproductions may serve to illustrate these changes, but can give no idea of the majesty of the plates themselves, which can only be understood fully by examining a fine series of proofs, such as that which the British Museum is so fortunate as to possess.

These two great plates are accompanied in Rembrandt's achievement by several smaller ones of great beauty and interest. *The Golf Player* (B. 125, B.M. 272) is merely a fine sketch in

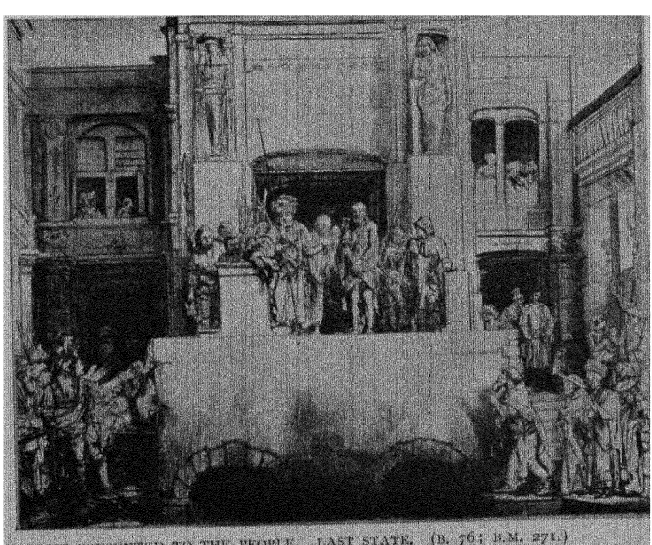
LANDSCAPE WITH TREES, FARM BUILDINGS, AND A TOWER. (B. 223; B.M. 244.) FIRST STATE.

LANDSCAPE WITH TREES, FARM BUILDINGS, AND A TOWER. (B. 223; B.M. 244.) THIRD STATE.

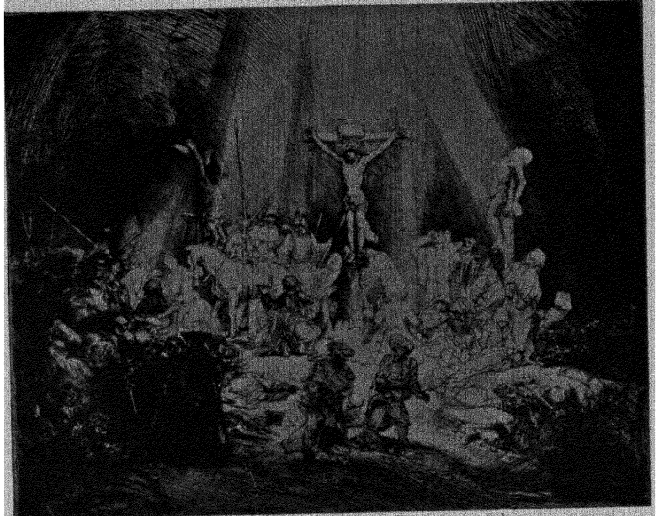
DR. FAUSTUS. (B. 270; B.M. 260.)



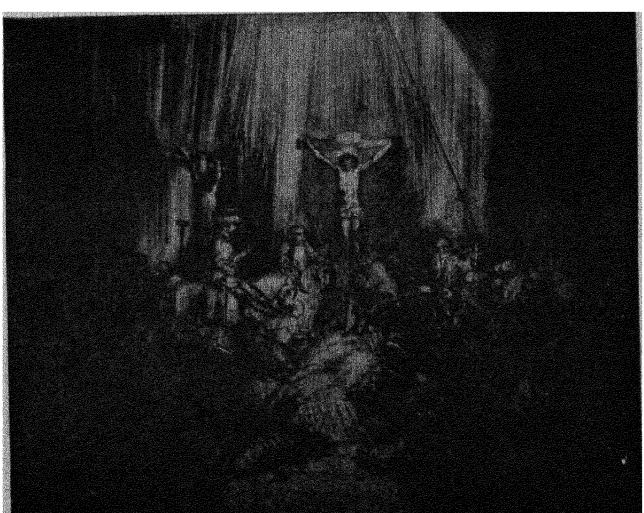
CHRIST PRESENTED TO THE PEOPLE. THIRD STATE. (B. 76; B.M. 271.)



CHRIST PRESENTED TO THE PEOPLE. LAST STATE. (B. 76; B.M. 271.)

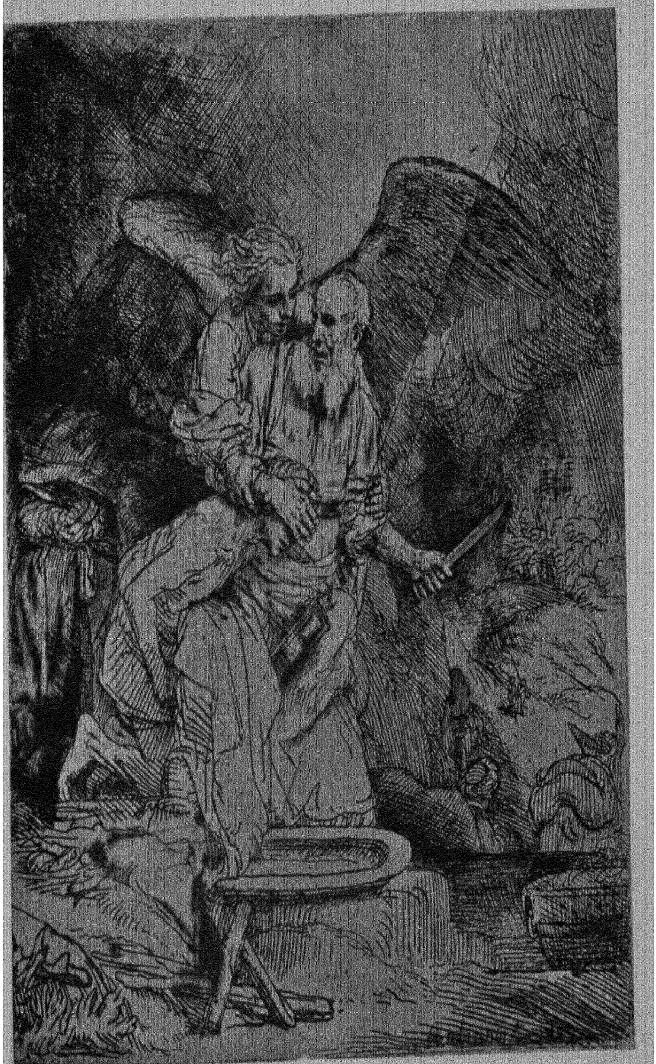


THE THREE CROSSES. THIRD STATE. (B. 78; B.M. 270.)

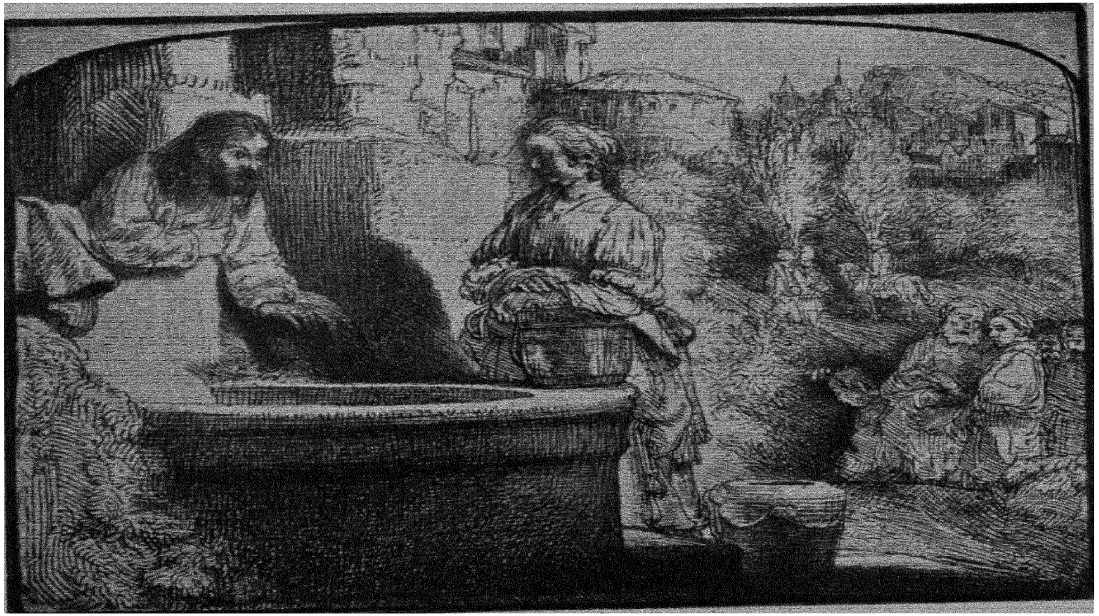


THE THREE CROSSES. FOURTH STATE. (B. 787 B.M. 270.)

CHRIST ENTOMBED. FIRST STATE. (B. 86; B.M. 281.)



ABRAHAM'S SACRIFICE. (B. 35; B.M. 283)



CHRIST AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA. (B. 70; B.M. 294.)

which everything is subordinated to the play of reflected light, but in the *Adoration of the Shepherds* (B. 45, B.M. 273) and *The Virgin and the Child with the Cat* (B. 63, B.M. 275) we see the same technical aim employed upon subjects of a much higher order. These airy little plates, together with the *Christ seated disputing with the Doctors* (B. 64, B.M. 277) and the *Christ between his Parents returning from the Temple* (B. 60, B.M. 278), are almost perfect summaries of Rembrandt's mastery of drawing, lighting, fusion and noble simplicity of design; any one of them might serve as a picture "in little" of his whole immense genius. With them the *Presentation, in the dark manner* (B. 50, B.M. 279), may be considered and contrasted. Like the Glasgow *Achilles*, which Reynolds owned and criticised, the plate is a perfect illustration of a custom, frequent in Rembrandt's oil-paintings, of reducing tone, both to get mystery in the shadows and to obtain the utmost possible value for his high lights. A more dramatic and passionate example of the same treatment is found in the *Christ taken down from the Cross by Torchlight* (B. 83, B.M. 280), where the sharp silhouette of the main group and the ghostly hand uplifted from the darkness give a note of force and reality to a great conception.

As pure design, however, the *Christ entombed*

(B. 86, B.M. 281) is, perhaps, still more superb, at least in the first state. In its later stages the added tones detract from its freshness, its daring, and from the sinister play of flickering light that the sweeping lines of the needle suggest. Even the famous plate of *Christ at Emmaus* (B. 87, B.M. 282) of about the same period (1654) is not more masterly in its bold economy of line. Indeed, Rembrandt has rarely surpassed the sense of height and recession which the bold curvature of the vault compels us to feel, while it repeats and balances the lines of the group that bends over the dead body below. Once more, too, we note the value both as high light and tranquil space of the unworked expanse of white paper round which the emphatic passages are arranged, and the almost Japanese feeling for balance whereby the main action is contrasted with formal architectural lines, with only the two skulls on the ledge, fit emblems of the place and scene, to act as counterpoise.

In the plate of *Abraham's Sacrifice* (B. 35, B.M. 283) suddenly arrested action takes the place of slow melancholy movement. The figures no longer occupy only a small part of the etched surface, and are no longer contrasted and supported by simple lines of massive vaulting. They are planted full in the middle of the plate, they cover a large part of it, and are backed

by clouds and rolling hill scenery. The construction of the main group is so compact and monumental that it might serve as a model to a sculptor or, *mutatis mutandis*, might take its place worthily among the greatest figure-paintings of the world on the Sistine ceiling. Yet with all this firmness and solidity the group is not hard or rigid in effect. Its outlines and masses are everywhere so subtly fused and contrasted with the background that the various elements are inseparably knit together into a great pattern, in which the things accented are just those which give point to the story, while all minor details are merged in what Constable once called "the evanescence of the chiaroscuro."

Even at the risk of breaking continuity it is impossible to refrain from noticing the wonderful series of portraits executed in the years 1655 and 1656. In them we note that the technical preferences and psychological insight, which have combined to make the Biblical compositions the most perfect things of their kind in existence, continue to exert a strong influence upon Rembrandt's method of approaching the living model.

In the small *Coppenol* (B. 282, B.M. 269), probably etched a year or two earlier, the technique resembles that of Rembrandt's later paintings—that is to say, the drawing is not definitely structural, but seeks to render form by play of light and broken textures. The

plate was not wholly successful; but when Rembrandt repeated the effort in the *Old Haaring* (B. 274, B.M. 287) we get not only light and atmosphere, but the most wonderful rendering of colour, texture and intricate character. There is undeniably some sacrifice of form, as there is in much of the late work of Titian, but in Rembrandt's case, at least, the substituted qualities make the print rank among his very finest portraits. In the *Young Haaring* (B. 275, B.M. 288) and the *Jan Lutma* (B. 276, B.M. 290) the most vivid and intense insight into character is combined with a solidity of drawing that Rembrandt himself has hardly excelled (indeed in combined strength of workmanship and overwhelming sympathy with human sadness the *Young Haaring* may challenge comparison with any engraved portrait whatever), while in the *Arnold Tholinx* (B. 284, B.M. 289), the rarest of all his portraits from the collector's standpoint, he hits the mean between the two ideals—the structural and the atmospheric—with a certainty that gives this perfect print the quality of an elaborate painting, without any sacrifice of the quality proper to engraving. As in the subject-pieces, the almost unbroken shadows, so noticeable in the earlier works, are now flooded with reflected light, a practice we note in the work of other great masters, notably in Titian, Turner, and Gainsborough. In the *Abraham Francen* (B. 273, B.M. 291) this "Impressionism" is carried

still further; indeed, everything else, including design and sound workmanship, is sacrificed to it. Thus in the first states of the plate we have a rendering, perfect and quite modern in feeling, of sunlight bursting into a room. But the moment the freshness of the dry-point disappears the marvellous luminosity vanishes also, and leaves a mere ungainly skeleton. The fact should be a warning to modern open-air painters; possibly it was a warning to Rembrandt, for he never made such an experiment with the needle again.

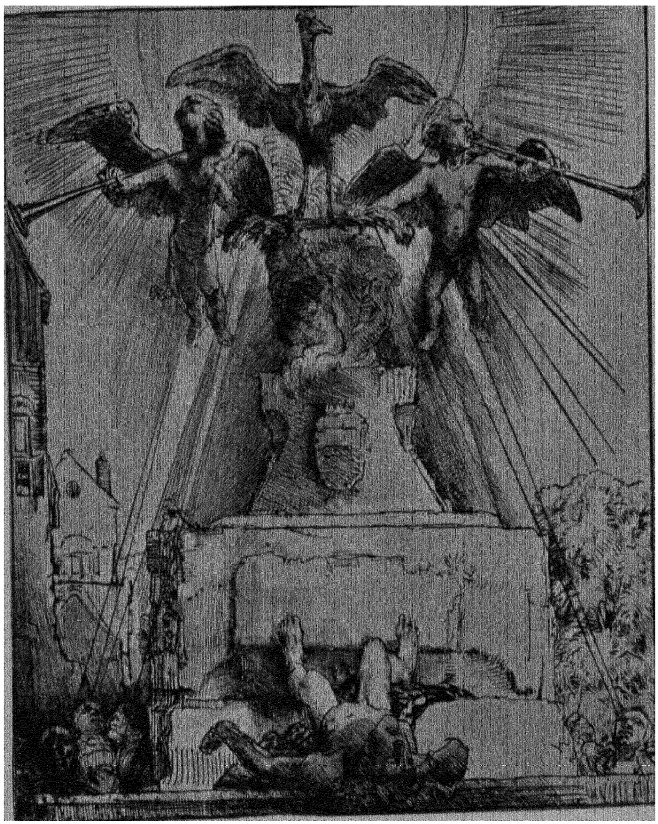
The time was fast approaching when old age and failing sight were to put a stop to Rembrandt's etching altogether.[1] The tragic little plate of *Christ on the Mount of Olives* (B. 75, B.M. 293) repeats the triumph of the *Abraham's Sacrifice*. In the *Christ and the Woman of Samaria*, the arched print (B. 70, B.M. 294), he returns to a favourite subject, and invests it with a rare charm of afternoon sunshine and that unfailing insight into human nature which had become habitual with him (note, for instance, the

[1] Since these notes were written two documents have been discovered and published by Dr. Bredius, which seem to indicate that Rembrandt did not give up etching in 1661. From the first document we learn that he received copper plates for the etching of a *Passion* only a few months before his death: from the second that the portrait of *Jan Antonides Van den Linden* (B. 264) was done as a book illustration in 1665, from the painting in the Hague by A. Van den Tempel, and was apparently rejected by the publishers. A convenient summary of the documents by Mr. A. M. Hind will be found in the *Burlington Magazine*, vol. xv. pp. 244–5: July 1909.

mordant humour with which the apostles are characterised), although the left side of the plate, especially the well-head, shows a monotony of touch which foreshadows decline. Before the end came, however, Rembrandt was to etch a masterly set of nude studies, upon which he concentrated the knowledge of a lifetime and the technical power of a mature genius. *The Negress* (B. 205, B.M. 299), *The Woman at the Bath* (B. 199, B.M. 297), and *The Phœnix* (B. 110, B.M. 295) are notable examples, though *The Phœnix* is far more than a nude study.

This allegory of death and of immortality, the collapse and downfall of the physical man and the translation of the spirit to the realms of eternal day, not only comes, as is fitting, near the close of Rembrandt's etched work, but in its sentiment as well as in its design once more recalls an analogy with Michelangelo. One difference, perhaps, we may note. For Rembrandt's fallen image the trumpets are sounding on the other side, as they did for Mr. Valiant at the end of his pilgrimage. Michelangelo will not avail himself of the imagery the Christian doctrine of the Resurrection suggests, but takes refuge in abstractions as far away from hope or comfort as they are from definite belief.

These vague speculations, these lofty doubts and difficulties, were unknown to Rembrandt. Concentrating itself upon his art, and accepting the faith of his



THE PHOENIX. (B. 110; B.M. 295.)

age and country as he found it in his Bible, his thought was devoted to liberating his design from material and conventional trammels, until his work attained that final and supreme simplicity in which perfect expression is joined to perfect economy of means. Some forms of art arrive at this ideal more easily—the painting of the Chinese might be instanced—but where that is the case we usually feel there is a sacrifice of substance, and that for our prosaic age at least the demand made upon the spectator's imagination is too heavy. Rembrandt's art even in its latest phases is free from this disadvantage. The labour of the greater part of his life was concerned with real things and real people, and much of his work errs, if at all, from being too gross and solid. Yet when he shakes himself free, as most great artists have done, from the shackles of earthly things, and approaches the unseen world of the imagination, the training of his early life continues to assert itself, the invisible is made substantial; and where others deal with the imagery of the Christian faith like children, like anatomists, or like costumiers, Rembrandt as an interpreter of its founder's spirit has a place with Fra Angelico. If from time to time the homeliness of his Dutch models makes Rembrandt's celestial personages almost comically inferior to the more graceful types which the Florentine had at his command, the position is reversed when, as in the great majority of Rembrandt's designs, we are concerned with the men of this

world. These he knew as no artist has ever done before or since, and it is the combination of this insight with his hard won technical power which makes his work on its own ground unsurpassable.

On looking over his compositions, even those where the spiritual element is strongest, we cannot fail to be struck with the immensely preponderant part which humanity plays in them. To Rembrandt the supernatural seems inconceivable except in relation to the natural. If man cannot exist without God, God cannot be made manifest except through man. So of all the Bible stories that of Tobit is perhaps his favourite, for there the sympathy of heavenly beings with earthly troubles is most consistently shown, albeit that we find there, too, an infinite wealth of picturesque material, the blind father, the adventures of boy and angel in Mesopotamia and their triumphant home-coming. And among the countless designs from his hand which deal with the Life and Passion of Our Lord, there is not one in which the personality of Christ is revealed except indirectly by its influence on the men around him. We might have expected that in treating one of the incidents in the New Testament round which his imagination plays most tenderly—the Supper at Emmaus—that the walk in the twilit landscape and the final "Abide with us, for the day is far spent" would have caught Rembrandt's fancy. But he confines himself to the supreme moment where

suddenly God is seen to be God, the gentle face lighting up with a smouldering radiance in the Louvre picture; flashing with majestic splendour in the etching of 1554; and finally, in the superb drawing which serves as frontispiece, melting into a formless glow—in another moment the disciples will be alone.

CHAPTER V

THE LIMITS OF SELF-TRAINING

IF Rembrandt stood alone as an example of a painter who was largely if not entirely self-trained, we might regard his conspicuous success as due to some unique combination of temper and circumstance, rather than to the following of some definite system of thought and practice which might be utilised for the training of other painters. But Rembrandt does not stand alone. Even his great predecessors Raphael and Michelangelo owed more to their own exertions than to any teaching they received directly from others. The case of Michelangelo needs no comment. Raphael, it is true, learned more than the elements of his art from Pintoricchio and Perugino, but it is from the studies carried on in his days of independence, first at Florence and afterwards at Rome, that his masterpieces in the Vatican are derived.

Of the boyhood of Giorgione and Titian we really know nothing. Rubens seems a fully developed artist almost from the first. Van Dyck, like Raphael, while still a mere boy, attains complete control of his master's practice, and then goes away to perfect

himself under the influence of Titian. No teacher but himself really dominated Velazquez in his slow steady progress from local mannerism to the broad serenity of his mature time. Hogarth, Gainsborough, Reynolds and Crome had no real teachers except their love of nature and the work of other painters. Turner studied at the Royal Academy, but learned all the essential parts of his art by incessant professional ambition. Constable also did some work at the Royal Academy, but his transition from incompetence to competence was effected by his practice, in one critical decade, of alternately copying old masters and painting in the open air.

"The men of 1830" in France have a similar record, and their achievement, when we consider it in connection with that of their English predecessors, points to a very definite conclusion so far as landscape painting is concerned. Landscape presents a threefold problem. First of all the painter must be able to suggest the infinitely various gradations of colour and tone in nature, as modified by light and air. Next he must be able to suggest the complexity of nature by a broad and simple treatment. Thirdly he must be able to make a large design out of these infinite details.

The first of these problems can only be solved by incessant observation of nature. The second calls for that practical experience of manipulative economics

which can only be obtained either by copying or by very close and assiduous study of the treatment of details by great masters. The third problem can never be completely solved except by individual effort and experiment, but it can be made much less difficult in its earlier stages by thoughtful analysis of the designs of great masters.

All these problems, it will be seen, are problems which any intelligent student can attack for himself without the aid of a teacher—so long as he has access both to the kind of scenery which moves him most deeply, and to a collection of fine landscapes which he can study closely, and perhaps copy if he finds that desirable. So far as drawings and engravings by the great masters are concerned, modern processes of reproduction place facsimiles within his reach which are for all practical purposes of study but little inferior to the originals. Pictures, however, cannot be reproduced with quite the same verisimilitude. Much about their general planning, and a little even about their execution, may be learned from a good photograph; but the difficulties attending the use of oil-paint can only be mastered by minute observation of good oil-paintings.

The current methods of acquiring a knowledge of landscape painting appear to fail in two particulars. It is the general custom to keep the student at work far too long on mechanical school-practice, till the art that

should be an enthusiasm becomes a labour. When once he has acquired the elements of drawing, the practice of copying such works by great masters as interest him will automatically give the refinements of touch which separate the professional from the amateur. Architectural subjects seem to call for a more rigorous groundwork, and are therefore rarely mastered except by those who have been trained in an architect's office.

It is also the custom to send pupils to work from nature under the care of a teacher, with the inevitable result that not one pupil in a hundred sees nature except through the teacher's eyes. To make a sketch that might by a casual observer be mistaken for a work from the master's hand is the height of the pupil's ambition. Every spring and summer our students troop into the country under the wing of this or that professional, and imagine that they are working from nature while they are merely acquiring his mannerisms. If, instead, they were compelled to go in solitude to the country of their own choosing, and never to submit their work for criticism except as a batch of so many dozen sketches executed independently, the real personalities would have a chance of showing what was in them, and the clever imitator, who is so often deluded into thinking himself an artist, would be quickly disillusioned.

Rembrandt had worked for many years at the other

branches of his profession before he turned his thoughts to landscape. So far as technical experience was concerned he was already an accomplished painter and a masterly draughtsman. Nevertheless his earlier experiments in landscape, as I have indicated elsewhere, were far from complete successes. The complexity of nature set a problem which was at first too difficult even for his master mind, and he had no forerunner who could help him out of his difficulties. He admired the sombre brooding genius of Hercules Seghers. Yet where he is most clearly under that influence his landscapes are mere accumulations of poetic material—accumulations, it is true, of a quality such as only Rembrandt could show, but still accumulations rather than ordered designs. On the other hand, the homely art of Van Goyen seemed even farther from the ideal in Rembrandt's mind, yet in a series of small panels where Van Goyen's simple subject matter is handled with a new breadth and dramatic force we have perhaps the true link with *The Mill*, in which at a later period Rembrandt was to reveal his full powers. The landscape drawings and etchings mark another stage in the transition from complexity to simplicity, and from emptiness to completeness, under the direct influence of nature. Their swiftness, crispness and certainty of touch, and their mastery of design could be the outcome only of highly trained professional experience; their amazing insight,

on the other hand, cannot be explained except by constant reference to nature.

The technical problems of portrait painting are different from those of landscape. The portrait painter need not concern himself very greatly with the subtlety of nature's atmospheric effects, or with the complexities of her detail. Instead he must be able to draw both accurately and swiftly: accurately that he may be able to put his sitter's features in their proper places, swiftly that he may be able to catch those transient subtleties of expression which make the difference between a man and a wax model. Also, if he is to paint as well as to draw, he must be able to use the brush as easily as he uses the pencil, and since large parts of his pictures will necessarily consist of background and clothes he must be able to make these parts of intrinsically attractive quality. I am inclined to think that the problems of design which he has to face are really far less difficult than those of the landscape painter, for dresses and background can be altered and adjusted to each other with a freedom which is quite impossible in landscape, where the broad relations of tone in earth and sky are unalterably fixed by nature.

Presuming, then, that our student has a real inclination for portraiture, and a real interest in human character, we may reduce the essentials of his training to the acquirement first of swiftness and accuracy

in drawing the head and hands, and secondly to command of fine quality of pigment. Our modern training certainly aims at providing the accuracy, but overlooks the concurrent necessity of swiftness. With the help of various devices for measurement, and after hours of labour, the average student can undoubtedly learn to get something which is not unlike the model, but it is a dead and cold likeness. When the stage of oil-painting is reached, the difficulties of the medium make the process even slower, and the likeness, if it exists at all, is more inanimate still. As for technical quality, the student is practically left to find it for himself as best he can, and the chances are that he goes out with no more than this elementary training to swell the crowded ranks of hack portrait painters, to employ in the social arts which help so largely in obtaining immediate commissions, the talents which under better guidance would have made him a good portrait painter.

The accurate drawing and painting taught in an art school are, indeed, only the beginning of a portrait painter's education. He must learn to combine some degree of swiftness with them, and that can only be done by the constant making of rapid studies, studies with the brush as Reynolds wisely indicates. To supplement these by copies or tracings (tracing is supported by the great authority of Ingres) of portrait drawings by the great masters is only

wisdom in a craft where so much depends on refinements. As for technical beauties, some will perhaps be acquired naturally in the process of making rapid studies; the rest must be learned from the close observation or the copying of portraits by great masters. The good portrait painter, like the good violinist, must in short be a virtuoso, and virtuosity can only come with constant practice of hand and mind.

Rembrandt's record in this light will appear to us as that of the model student. When he settles at Leyden his whole spare time seems to be occupied in making drawings, etchings and paintings of himself and the people about him; now and then highly elaborate, but for the most part small in scale and swiftly handled. His mother, his sister, and two bearded men, one of whom may possibly have been his father, appear again and again, as does Saskia when she comes into his life a few years later. But he is his own most frequent model, with every variety of dress and lighting and expression; at one time painted with a breadth and vigour which verge on coarseness, at another etched with almost incredible refinement of detail. It is no marvel that after a few years of such incessant practice he should have become one of the most famous painters of his age and country. To the rarity of accessible examples of the portrait painters of other countries we may in some degree ascribe the tardy growth of his style, and per-

haps too something of its individuality. Van Dyck, to whom the art treasures of Europe were thrown open, had finished his life's work at an age when Rembrandt was still feeling his way to maturity; but the very swiftness with which Van Dyck's genius sprouted up to its full stature seems accompanied by a certain want of solid substance, whereas the slow, steady growth of Rembrandt resulted in a tree against which the wind of criticism beats in vain.

The demands made by figure painting upon its practitioners are still more exacting. If the portrait painter has thoroughly mastered the painting of heads and hands, he need only have a broad general knowledge of the anatomy of the rest of the human form. The figure painter must be familiar with the human form in every part, on every side, and in every variety of action or position. The portrait painter's knowledge of technical quality need not extend beyond the processes employed in the making of easel pictures. The figure painter may have to master in addition the innumerable difficulties of decorative painting. The portrait painter's studies in design rarely extend beyond the problem of placing a single figure effectively in a limited space, and of controlling the limited group of tones and colours which this comparatively simple task demands. The figure painter has the far more complicated task of grouping numerous figures, and numerous tones and colours. The portrait

painter, too, has his model before him. Much of the figure painter's work, unless he restricts himself to a limited range of contemporary subjects, or is able to secure apparent realism by an elaborate reconstruction of the scene he tries to depict, must be done largely, if not entirely, from memory.

This gigantic programme was actually carried out by Michelangelo, Raphael, and a few other very great artists of the Renaissance. Their intellects were great enough to stand the strain placed upon them in so many different directions, and their achievements fired their successors with the ambition to follow in the same path. Art academies sprang up equipped, so far as human effort could equip them, to carry their students through an impossible curriculum, and generation after generation of painters attempted to absorb the vast mass of learning for which the Grand Style of painting called.

Now that we look back on the sorry result we can hardly be surprised at it. Not one student in a thousand was made of strong enough stuff to endure so terrific an ordeal. A few, like Sir Joshua Reynolds, recognising their limitations, slipped aside early into the simpler walks of portraiture, or landscape, or *genre*. The rest lost all such talent as they originally possessed, and became dull eclectic pedants, driving the next unlucky generation into the same interminable educational morass in which their own originality had sunk.

We can now understand why Rembrandt left Lastman's studio, as so many other great artists have deserted their masters, and went home to Leyden to work out his salvation for himself. From Lastman, from his earlier teacher Swanenborch, and perhaps from Pynas, he had learned how to make simple compositions of a few figures on a small scale, and in the conventional manner of his age and country. All that lay beyond, Rembrandt had to teach himself, as every great artist has done before or since. In the section devoted to Rembrandt's etchings I have attempted to deal in some detail with the continued efforts, the slow cautious progress, by which he ultimately built up his knowledge of the human figure and his mastery of design. It will be enough to insist here upon his method of alternating work from nature with work done from memory, by which he strengthened alike his knowledge of the human form, and his power of employing it freely in design where the use of models was impossible. The mere mass of the work he executed enabled him, in time, to perfect himself in those methods of drawing, etching, and using oil paint, which experiment proved most suitable for his chosen subject-matter. The custom of his epoch and country, and the relative unsuccess of his few experiments upon a heroic scale, made it unnecessary for him to extend his labours beyond the province of the easel picture, and to this economy we

may perhaps attribute the almost uniform intensity and concentration which his mature work exhibits. Had the calls upon his genius been more varied in kind, its products could hardly have shown the same consistent excellence.

It is now time to attempt to summarise the results of our inquiry: to consider precisely what portions of an artist's education an art school can supply; what portion can be contributed from other external sources such as good public galleries, and what portion the painter must find for himself.

First as to Art Schools.

The landscape painter, it would seem, can safely leave an art school the moment that he has a good knowledge of drawing and simple colour. Instruction in the general principles of colour ought to be an essential part of this and every course. Training in an architect's office may be taken as an equivalent to an art-school course by those who intend to make architectural subjects their specialty.

The portrait painter needs a longer period of drill in drawing the human figure, and specially in drawing heads and hands. Time studies of the head, both with pencil and brush, as well as the copying or tracing of portrait drawings by great masters, might be made essential features of the curriculum. Eighteen months, or at the outside two years, should be the limit of such a course. Any pupil who did not attain reasonable

proficiency at the end of two years should be dismissed as unsuited to the profession.

I am inclined to think that the regular school career of the figure painter need hardly be longer, though its character would be different, and convenience of access to models might lead many painters to remain connected with the school long after their formal pupilage was ended. In this course, drawing the figure from memory alternately with drawing the figure from the living model would be an essential feature, together with frequent exercise in making sketches in oil from a set subject. These exercises would give the student familiarity with the use of the brush, and would serve as a stimulus to, and a test of, his imaginative faculty. If at the end of a two years' course either his memory or his imagination proved defective, he might still become a good portrait painter with the aid of a little special practice.

I have gone into details, because I do not intend to convey the suggestion that art schools are useless institutions because their functions are strictly limited. Without them, even genius may take years in acquiring the competence which good school-training might have given in as many months. But when the initial stages of training are over, schools become not a help but a hindrance to those who possess talent, and a snare to those who do not. Few seem to realise that what an artist must teach himself, from the study of nature

and of his predecessors, is infinitely more important than all that he can learn from the best equipped art school.

For the study of nature he must consult his own inclinations. For the study of his predecessors he must turn to art galleries, and to the best art galleries. It is most unlucky that, except in a few great centres, the standard of our public galleries should be deplorably low, even in those branches of modern art upon which municipalities spend their grudging money. So far as drawing is concerned, the provincial student can do fairly well with the help of modern facsimile reproductions, but for the study of fine painting he must go to such galleries as those of London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, or Dublin, unless he is fortunate enough to obtain access to some famous private collection.

In some such great gallery the landscape painter will learn how to use and simplify the superabundant material contained in his studies from nature. The portrait painter will learn how a portrait may be made a good picture as well as a likeness, and the figure painter will learn exactly how his predecessors have mastered or avoided the thousand and one difficulties of design and execution which his profession involves. The exact nature of the studies carried on in a gallery of good paintings will naturally vary with the needs of each individual student. Often close observation and rapid noting of the disposition of the light and

shade or of the principal colour masses will be sufficient. Often the copying of details will be all that is required. The copying of whole pictures, though occasionally necessary, and often useful when the pictures are small, is attended with certain dangers. As Reynolds pointed out long ago, copying if too long continued may become an unintelligent and mechanical practice from which the student derives no real benefit. Possibly the exercise of copying pictures from memory might be more generally practised, since it appears to have the double advantage both of strengthening the memory and of fixing in the student's mind the very things which he expects to learn from copying. The increasing prominence now given to drawing from memory in elementary teaching is a good augury for its further development.

What is more pertinent to our present purpose is to recognise clearly and fully that these later phases of the student's work are really even more important than his early training. Many artists have become great artists who have had little or no elementary schooling, but have made amends for the deficiency by the earnestness of their study of nature and of the works of other men. Few if any men, however, have become great artists by resting on the laurels gained in their student days. On the contrary, the non-fulfilment of early promise, owing to indolence in middle life, is one of the most prominent and most distressing

features of contemporary painting. For one artist whose work can be seen to improve as he grows older, we see a hundred whose skill is no less steadily declining.

In short, the few years when the painter is under a master in an art school are only the very beginning of his education. If he is really to be an artist he must continue that education to the end of his days, and become his own teacher. A public school and university education is regarded as a useful preliminary for many walks of life, but no one regards a young man who has just left his university as fitted to take his place, all at once, at the head of any trade or profession, except possibly the young man himself. Long years of labour and discipline in the practical work of the world are needed before even the cleverest youngster can hope for substantial success. But the young painter who emerges with credit from an art school, and finds that his work is up to the not very exacting standard of modern exhibitions, is easily led to believe, from a few flattering press notices and a little patronage, that he has nothing more to learn. If he were to study the history of art he would find that the somewhat tardy development of Rembrandt was no isolated phenomenon, but that a very large proportion of the accepted great masters developed gradually by incessant self-training, and that their masterpieces came far later in

their lives than we are apt to imagine. This becomes even more conspicuous if we make allowance for the shorter average duration of life two or three centuries ago, and for the old custom of apprenticing boys to painting at an age when their modern coevals are inking their fingers in a preparatory school.

And in this habit of thoughtful self-training we may see, I think, the one perfect and natural safeguard against the confusion entailed by the countless ideas and ideals over which modern painters and critics so constantly dispute. The painter who has learned from the art of the past how to express his own emotions in the presence of nature, will never fail to understand the flexibility of his craft—to see that it is not an end in itself, but only a means of interpreting something which he wishes to say. The variations and extensions which he makes in his own practice will thus have always a definite and necessary relation to the thoughts he wishes to utter, however novel or audacious they may seem, at first sight, to those who comprehend neither his logic nor his intentions. He will thus inevitably be in some degree an innovator, and without innovation there is no immortal art. Had he lacked this sound foundation of tradition, this experience of the perfect adaptation of means to an end which is characteristic of the supreme masters, he would be certain sooner or later, under the spell perhaps of some specious phrase such

as Tone, or Luminosity, or Sincerity, or Pattern, or Values, to come to regard some single method of work as the best and only method, and so to decline into an unthinking mannerist and imitator, as the majority of would-be painters always seem to decline.

The real reason why self-training is all important for the artist, and must always be far more important than the best teaching the best teacher can give him, is a simple one. Ultimately the painter depends for his fame upon his own personal message, upon the strength and the sweetness of the things he has to say. Training of any kind is only the process of learning how to deliver that message in the most exactly appropriate words—appropriate not only to the subject-matter but to the habits and conditions of the time. No man can see to the bottom of the painter's heart so well as he can himself, if he chooses to try. And it is only the man who knows the message for every month, for every day of his life; who can have a chance of finding the perfect phrase for each occasion. A clever teacher may make a good guess now and then, but can do no more than that, and the guess that is right one day will be wrong the next. So the painter must train himself willy-nilly, or he will never be trained at all.

CHAPTER VI

REMBRANDT AND LANDSCAPE

IT would seem fantastic in these days to say that Rembrandt's achievement in landscape has never yet received full justice. The merits of two or three noble oil paintings have been recognised, the landscape etchings are among the prints which collectors prize most highly, and his drawings are rapidly increasing in market value. Yet, notwithstanding all these signs of growing reputation, Rembrandt does not hitherto appear to be regarded as one who in the field of landscape deserves a place besides Titian and Rubens.

With all his genius, Rembrandt has not had a tithe of the influence upon other landscape painters that was exercised directly by Claude, and posthumously by men like Hobbema and Ruysdael. His pupil Philips De Koninck, indeed, ranks among the most notable of Dutch masters, and his artistic grandchild Vermeer has left us that notable *View of Delft* at the Hague, which is among the flawless relics of the art of the Netherlands. But with these exceptions (and Vermeer is hardly perhaps an exception) all

subsequent landscape of any merit has been painted under other influences, and the only landscapists who have followed Rembrandt are third and fourth-rate men who imitated the forced contrast of black-and-white found in the master's early figure pieces, and imagined that in doing so they were utilising the secret of his genius.

The essential feature of Rembrandt's art in its maturity is the power of abstraction and concentration, by which he was enabled to separate from his subject just those qualities which were required for its pictorial expression and to reject everything else. Upon a similar process of isolation the landscape art of Rembrandt is based. That he did not find the process easy is proved, I think, by the number of landscapes he painted which have the forced composition and exaggerated contrasts of tone that are found in his early figure pieces.

Indeed, as I have already suggested, the majority of Rembrandt's paintings of landscape are evidence that immense force of intellect, immense daring and complete mastery of technical processes, even with some sound tradition behind them, are not sufficient to create great works of art in a moment. Brought face to face with a new and complex subject-matter, Rembrandt attempted to extract from the passive materials of landscape the same complex dramatic force which his biblical subjects were so naturally providing. And

at first the quiet landscape of Holland seemed too tame and commonplace a theme for his stirring thoughts, so mountains, ruins, and lonely waters are huddled impetuously together under thunderous skies, great tree-forms strain in the gale, wide outbursts of wandering light alternate with dark shadows. Something of the passion of the neglected Hercules Seghers breathes from these rather incoherent pieces; much of his actual material reappears in them, although recombined and transfused by the younger master's genius. But these landscapes, though evidently products of a great mind and a great painter, are not good pictures, and in the hands of any lesser man would become preposterous accumulations. They are a relief from the somewhat pedestrian round of everyday Dutch landscapes, in the same way that Turner's failures are a relief from the trivial round of English popular successes, while individual passages of wonderful quality will be found in all of them. But we can safely leave them and turn to the much smaller group of paintings, where Rembrandt completes and glorifies the sincere if limited subject-matter of Van Goyen. The deservedly famous landscape at Cassel, where the heterogeneous elements of the first group are fused for once into something like the simplicity characteristic of the second group, serves as a connecting link. In sheer delight at that broad expanse of luminous liquid air, we forget the homely canal and

barges and windmill in the foreground, which are hardly congruous with the temple of the Sibyl crowning the far away headland. Passing over the little panel in the Northbrook collection—an epitome of the landscape of De Koninck—and the slightly larger one at Oldenburg, where the pollard willows are aflame with a sudden flash of sunset, we find in the charming little landscape—once in England but now in the Rijksmuseum—the homely waterside of Van Goyen seen and painted by a great artist. In the solemnity of its feeling, the perfection of its technique, the glow of its tone, and the compactness of its planning, the work is a worthy forerunner of *The Mill.* The *Winter Landscape* at Cassel, painted in 1646, strikes the same note of simplicity, though nature is viewed here with a wider eye, and presented with a summary perfection of touch that is unsurpassed even in the master's drawings.

In *The Mill* a similar technical perfection is employed upon a more ambitious subject. The pathos of twilight, and the majesty which common things take on under its influence, have so frequently served as motives for the landscape painters of the nineteenth century, that their appeal has perhaps lost its first freshness for us, and we may easily be in danger of calling such effects sentimental just because they are familiar, and are used by common minds to conceal their own deficiencies. Moreover, in an age of realism the emo-

tional significance of any forcing of contrasts of light and shadow runs the risk of being discounted by the desire, if not the imperative demand, for some closer representation of nature's tone and nature's colour. Yet, making full allowance for these objections, it is difficult to name any single landscape in the world which in emotional power, in perfection of design, and in sustained completeness of execution, can hold its own with *The Mill.* Crome's exquisite *Windmill* in the National Gallery, supreme perhaps in certain qualities of luminous atmosphere, is more local and homely. In Turner's version of the subject in the Cook collection which, but for the evidence of his sketch-books, we might take to be a frankly competitive version, the contrast of tones leads to heaviness, and it is rather to such a picture as the *Calais Pier* that we must look for a combination of strength and skill comparable to Rembrandt's. *The Mill* is indeed a modern landscape of the noblest order, painted a century and a half at least before its time.

It may not be inappropriate to mention here one other famous landscape still ascribed to Rembrandt—the *Tobias and the Angel* in the National Gallery. For a long time the ascription of this work by foreign critics to some English painter of the eighteenth century seemed to me fantastic. The extraordinary subtlety and solemnity of the design appeared in

themselves enough to make it unthinkable that the picture should come from any other painter than the supreme master of such themes. But repeated examination, while actually enhancing the charm of the picture, brought the gradual conviction that it contained no single passage for which any parallel could be found in Rembrandt's extant work, while it did contain two passages at least which suggested a very different, and to me totally unexpected, origin. In the first place the menacing beauty of the sky depends even more upon the contrast of the cold grey of the advancing cloud with the warm vaporous blue behind it, than upon the nobility with which the masses are disposed. The effect, in short, is that of one who really thinks in terms of colour, not of chiaroscuro. Secondly, the peculiar pitted impasto used in the figure of the angel and the bank behind him is found only in one English master, and that is the master who alone could have painted the blue and grey of the sky with such superb feeling and science—Sir Joshua Reynolds.

The name of Rembrandt occurs so rarely in Reynolds's Discourses, and then usually with such monitory comments, that we may easily forget or overlook the immense influence which Rembrandt exerted over the formation of Sir Joshua's style. Probably Sir Joshua saw the danger latent in this influence, as then imperfectly understood, and was therefore

chary of mentioning Rembrandt to his juniors, but he none the less succumbed to it, as he succumbed to the temptation of creamy wax vehicles and fugitive crimsons. And there is one moment when this influence is predominant, that is to say in the year 1752. Then he was just back in England from his Italian tour, and was painting the portrait of his servant Giuseppe Marchi, now in the Diploma Gallery, which might well be taken for a work by Rembrandt himself. And this was the one moment in his English career when he would have the time to amuse himself with an experiment in improving another painter's composition. A year or two later he was busy and famous, and had neither the time nor the inclination for such diversions. This date also will explain why, when the picture was acquired by that distinguished collector the Rev. William Holwell Carr, any suspicion as to its origin had vanished. A work by any of the followers of Reynolds could hardly have stood the same ordeal.

The *Giuseppe Marchi* exhibits exactly the same pitted impasto as that which we noticed in portions of the National Gallery picture. The background of the *Lady Cockburn* in the same collection, or, still better, that of the *Mrs. Meyrick* in the Ashmolean Museum (to mention only two examples), will serve as parallels to the painting of the sky. A general resemblance to Reynolds's manner may also be noticed in the treatment of the water and of the

single leaning tree-stem relieved from the dark foliage bordering the river. But here the last trace of Reynolds ceases. The distance with its sandbank, cottage and scattered trees, like the foreground with its awkward figure and clumsy fencing, coupled with the fact that the work is executed on a panel and not on canvas, point more or less clearly to the Low Countries. The name and style of that little known or studied follower of Rembrandt, J. Doomer, occur to the mind: Adrian Brouwer has, perhaps with better reason, been suggested by a well-known Dutch critic. We seem thus to be driven to the conclusion that one of the most impressive landscapes bearing Rembrandt's name has nothing whatever to do with him, but is a Low Country panel, possibly by Brouwer or Doomer, which Reynolds was pleased to rework at the moment when Rembrandt was most in his thoughts, with so much success, that soon after his death the panel was baptized with Rembrandt's name. The interest of the subject will, I trust, excuse this lengthy digression.

Still later in Rembrandt's life than the period of *The Mill*, we find from the setting of such pictures as *The Polish Rider* and the *Tobias and the Angel*, at Glasgow (if my memory serves me), a superb and much underrated picture, that landscape painting came readily to the master's hand, but the absence of more examples seems to indicate that there was

little demand for oil-paintings of landscape, and that he had to turn perforce to more marketable products such as drawings and etchings. Rembrandt was so independent of popular success, in spirit if in no other way, that the theory cannot be pressed too far; indeed he may have thought that his method of landscape painting gave him little which could not be obtained by much simpler means.

His experience had already shown him that the consistent rendering of local colour was not only unessential, but actually prejudicial, to the method of self-expression which he was working out for himself in the oil medium. He had chosen light as his means of emphasis, and he found by experiment that the use of local colour was apt to weaken or deflect that emphasis. If that was the case even in figure painting, where the strong colours of draperies could be disposed at will, how much more was it the case with landscape, where the colours of the sky and the earth, of trees and buildings, were more or less fixed quantities which could not be materially altered or transposed without incongruity?

By dispensing with local colour Rembrandt was able to ensure that the light parts of his landscapes—in his drawings and prints represented by the untouched paper—should be of unsullied luminosity, and also harmonious with each other. If coloured, their tones would of necessity have to be lower, and their

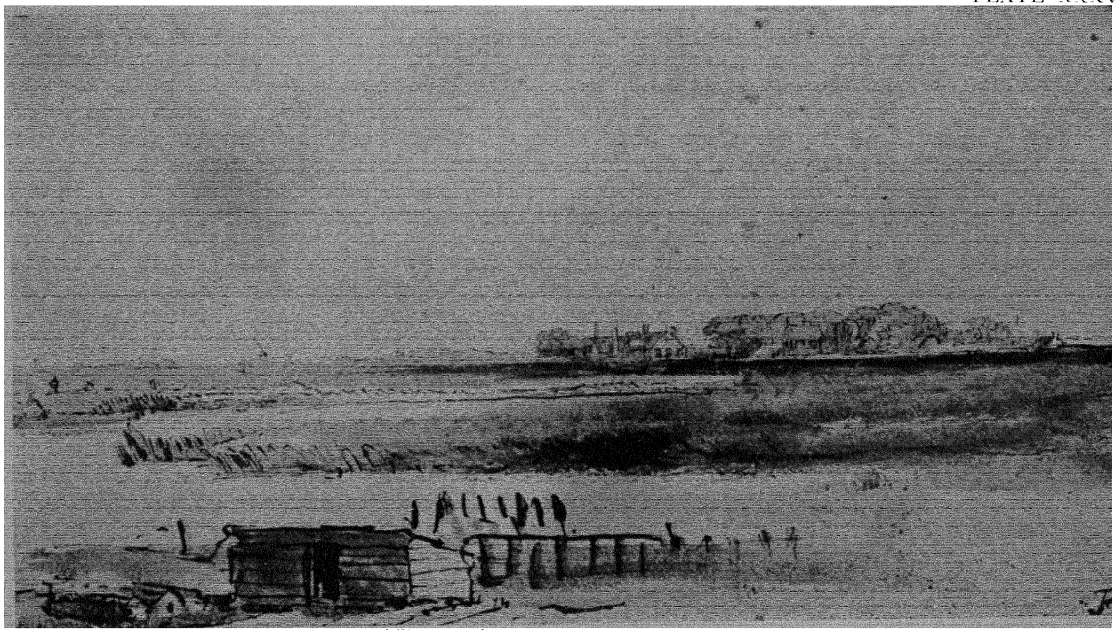
hues would differ, introducing thereby a beginning of discord. By keeping the untouched paper as his symbol for all high lights, Rembrandt thus secured great luminosity, and suggested that unity of natural lighting which is at least as valuable in rendering nature as any insistence upon the local colours of the particular objects selected for treatment.

The advantages of monochrome in the other portions of the work were no less conspicuous, for it enabled Rembrandt to make the fullest use of his masterly draughtsmanship and his power of emphatic statement by means of light and shade. In the drawings of his gifted pupil Philips de Koninck (and in the paintings too) we see the faults which Rembrandt avoided. Not only does the presence of local colour dull the effect of De Koninck's work and make the result look heavy: it also distracts the spectator's eye from what should be the focus of emphasis in the picture. Except in one or two cases, where De Koninck's art is almost indistinguishable from that of Rembrandt (as in Lady Wantage's noble landscape), the cold greens of his foregrounds, and the red roofs dotted among them, constantly disturb our contemplation of the spreading distances and menacing skies which are the real subject of his pictures.

Local colour, of course, has been nobly used as a means of emphasis time after time, but every attempt to combine it with emphatic statement by means of

light and shade has resulted either in disaster or in compromise. By the time Rembrandt came to deal with landscape seriously, he had acquired experience enough to avoid both these perils, and his drawings and etchings in consequence are, so far as they go, perfect.

And they go very far indeed. The rapid pen-strokes and blotted wash of bistre in the first example reproduced are but slight things and may seem to tell us little. But the longer we examine the drawing the more complete do we find it. The far distance passes so evasively into the sky at the horizon that a suggestion of shimmering air and sunlight is conveyed, as no artist with a full palette at his command was able to convey it before the days of Turner. The broad wash of deep colour in the middle distance not only leads the eye away to this sunlit expanse, but serves as a foil to the principal feature of the drawing, the group of houses half hidden by trees, over which the light plays with most exquisite subtlety—the alternations of flushed transient shadow and firm outline having the charm of those rare moods of nature of which Correggio and Gainsborough are the master interpreters. On the right this wash of colour extends to the edge of the watercourse, its broken texture suggesting, with as much verisimilitude as the most complicated process could do, the movement and softness of meadow grass stirred by the



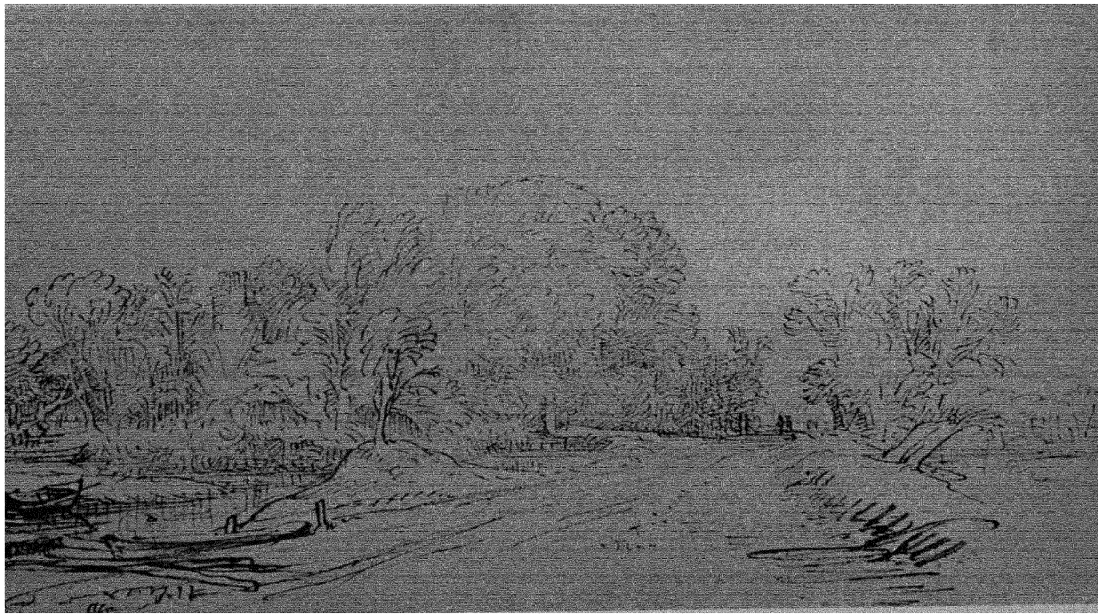
LANDSCAPE WITH A WINDING RIVER. (*Chatsworth.*)

wind; on the left we may notice how a faint wash of colour serves perfectly for a sunlit level, its recession and its brightness being accentuated by the little figure of a woman, with a tiny scratch to the left for the shadow she casts. From the middle distance, with its delightful group of buildings, the eye is led out to the foreground by the sharply defined watercourse, the brightness of the reflection from its surface being emphasised by contrast with the little shed, to which the hen-coops and the odd rails and posts serve at once as ornaments and as documents that the place really was just so. Yet all these masterly details are but trifles compared with the effect of the design as a whole: its ample spacing, its breadth of light and air, and the masterly knowledge which, from these simple materials, has obtained brightness without poverty, and force without heaviness. Setting aside the work of Turner, could so much be claimed for more than a few of the myriad water-colours which have been executed in the nineteenth century, with every advantage that scientific knowledge of nature and an unlimited palette can confer?

In the second subject the mellow surface of the paper is made the unifying element in the design. It stands alike for the colour of the sky, the leaves, the buildings, the grass, the tree trunks, the road and the water, wherever light impinges upon them. The

things combined in the sketch have thus a bond of unity, comparable to the bond which nature provides in the form of atmosphere, but infinitely more powerful. Atmosphere modifies local colours, and tends to bring them into something like harmony; here local colours are in complete harmony, since they are all represented by the same material. The colours of the houses, of the road, the tree stems, the boats and the sky cannot in consequence jar with one another, or introduce emphasis into inappropriate places. If we imagine for a moment what the design would look like were it carried out with a full palette of colour, we shall see that the contour of the great group of trees would inevitably dominate the composition, and give it just the impression of heaviness which the artist has so successfully avoided.

For his emphasis Rembrandt is thus entirely dependent upon light and shade, and the effect chosen is one where that emphasis must be of the gentlest. It is a shimmering summer's day, with no strong contrasts of tone, so the pen is used delicately, that the infinitely varied gradations of the main masses of foliage and buildings in the middle distance may be expressed, and yet kept light and aerial; space and distance being added by the opposition of the fierce scratches by the footpath to the right, and the forcible handling of the logs and boat to the left. Not the least wonderful feature of the drawing is the flexibility



LANDSCAPE WITH A ROAD PASSING AMONG TREES. (*Chatsworth.*)

of Rembrandt's touch. His method owes much of its vigour and vitality to its swiftness. This swiftness in turn demands a calligraphic stroke—and calligraphy, even with very great artists, comes near to mannerism. Rembrandt has his place among the world's greatest draughtsmen, just because his touch never becomes a mere trick of hand, but remains infinitely various, conforming every instant to the texture, or character, or structure of the thing he is representing. Even the swiftest and slightest of his drawings is packed with minute observation, and only reveals the greater part of its secrets to those who have the patience to examine it carefully. As illustrations of such eloquent shorthand these apparently simple drawings from the Chatsworth collection could scarcely be bettered.

Similar examples of concentrated expression can be found in every one of the many landscape drawings which Rembrandt has left, but to attempt to deal with them in detail is impossible. The placing of the subject matter on the paper is as felicitous as in one of Rembrandt's most carefully planned pictures, a few strokes and lines suggest an appropriate setting. Painting could add some pleasantness of colour and substance, and perhaps entice dull perceptions by stating the facts with a more elaborate scale of tones, but against these advantages a considerable loss in liveliness and spontaneity, to which art owes more of

its charm than we often suspect, would have to be set off.

Much then that is delightful, much that is elemental in landscape can be suggested almost perfectly by a monochrome study; and for certain classes of subject, such as landscapes containing much foliage, it may very frequently be preferable to all other methods, both from its avoidance of the difficulties introduced by local colour to which I have previously referred, and from the readiness with which things so complex as trees may be transmuted into simple yet quite intelligible symbols. The landscape drawings of Rembrandt, and of Claude and Gainsborough also, are in their way complete works of art. We may not indeed recognise how complete they are until we compare them with their maker's respective efforts to attain similar results in oil paint and on a large scale. Rembrandt cannot be said to have consistently succeeded, Claude becomes petty and formal, even Gainsborough needs all his rare charm of colour to avoid the appearance of mannerism or flimsiness. A symbol which is quite satisfactory to the eye on a small scale may become inadequate, nay, almost monstrous, if enlarged to several times its original size, or carried out in a different medium. Increase of size and change of medium demand a larger measure of realism than a small drawing need possess, and that, in the case of such creative art as makes any powerful appeal

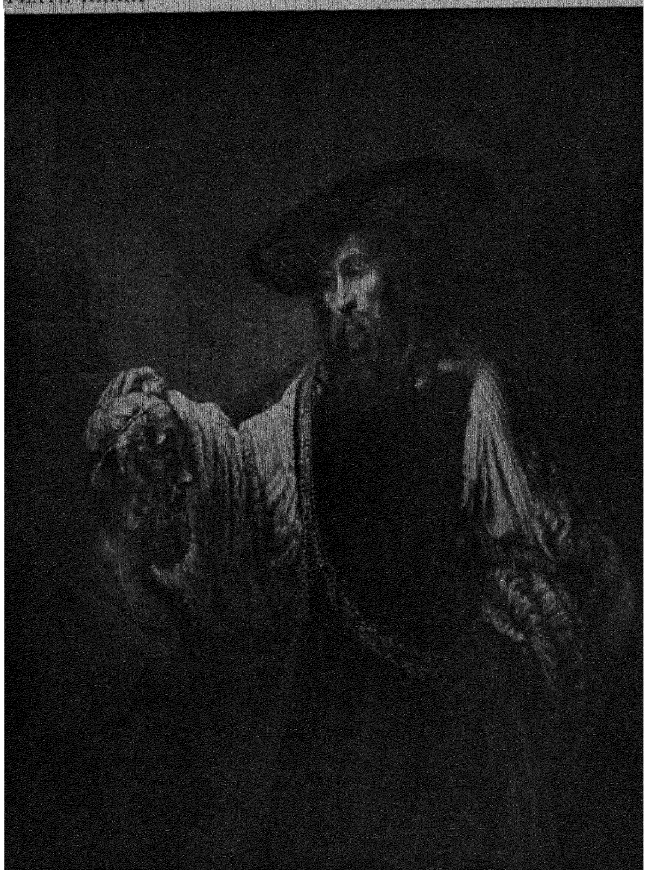
to the emotions, is far from being an advantage. Hence while good landscape drawings are not uncommon, good landscape paintings are even more rare than certain obvious difficulties of the art, due to the complexity of its subject matter and the strict limitations on design imposed by the local colours of ordinary nature, might lead us to expect.

CHAPTER VII

REMBRANDT AND HALS

MUCH has been written, and written eloquently, upon Rembrandt's power of painting the human soul; much, too, has been written, somewhat less eloquently, upon his technical abilities. But the intimate connexion between the form and the matter of his expression is not infrequently overlooked. There is no better way of realising this intimate connexion than by comparing and contrasting him with certain of his brother artists, also masters in their own province, and noticing, as precisely as we can, how each man slowly develops and perfects the form of technical expression which best suits his own outlook upon life; so that what the careless eye notes only as a peculiarity of design or colour or brushwork is seen to correspond more or less exactly with some trait in the painter's character, and to be indeed its necessary and logical outcome. Such comparisons appear specially apt at a time when the style of this or that master is held up as the best of all styles for the amateur to admire and for the learner to follow, in oblivion of the fact that style in painting, as in the other arts, is not a cause of great-

PLATE XXXIX



A SCHOLAR WITH A BUST OF HOMER. (*Mrs. C. P. Huntington.*)

ness but its inevitable consequence, and has always been and must always be as varied in its character as the human intellects of which it is the reflection.

Rembrandt and his countryman Frans Hals, for example, could not be themselves had they adopted either each other's method or that of some quite different artist. Each does, or tries to do, a particular thing in the only way in which that particular thing can possibly be done. A little consideration of a few typical pictures, such as the four portraits from the Kann collection which passed in 1907 to the collection of Mrs. C. P. Huntington, will serve to illustrate my meaning. Of these, two were by Hals and two by Rembrandt.

These last both date from the closing stage of Rembrandt's life; both exhibit his art in that profound and fascinating phase when the artist seems to have cast aside the last ties which bound him to the technical formulæ of his time and the general artistic tendency of his countrymen, and to have lived in absolute isolation with his own visions and with the personal methods of expression he had perfected to their service.

Take for instance this weary man of letters musing over a bust of Homer, and consider how remote it is from the Holland of 1650. Imagine it set as a subject to any of the lusty painters of *doelen* pieces. Would not their ruddy visages cloud at the thought of such a

task, their hands grow stiffer and prosier than their wont? Nor would the petty painters of *genre* feel more easy in the presence of such a problem, except, perhaps, those who traced their artistic descent directly to Rembrandt, as did Dou and Maes, or indirectly, as did Vermeer. These, indeed, might have used the subject as an interesting exercise on the contrasted effect of light illuminating a warmly toned living face and a cold marble bust, as the portrait painters who came after them not infrequently did.

With Rembrandt, however, the time for these professional experiments was past. At the period (1653) at which this picture was painted he had for some ten or twelve years ceased to trouble himself with problems of mere representation of things seen with the eye of the flesh, and was concerned only with the infinitely more complex, difficult and absorbing business of re-creating in paint the things seen with the eye of the spirit.

Here Nature, far from being at one with Art, actually might seem to be at war with her, insisting on the accidental the trivial and the unnecessary, while Art imperiously demanded absolute submission and fidelity to the inward vision, in which the accidental the trivial and the unnecessary had no place; where the essential things actually became significant through their detachment not only from the meticulous,

tangible, practical environment of seventeenth-century Holland, but even from the common air and daylight of our planet. Such detachment had been, and continues to be, the condition of all perfect imaginative art, just as the least breath of it is fatal to perfect realism. It has the advantage of giving the imaginative artist an infinite field for the exercise of his fancy, whereas the realist, however fresh his perception, however novel and ingenious his technique, is inexorably bound, not only to a single circuit of land and sea, but to the infinitely narrower compass of a single definite moment of time, and to all the limitations that phrase implies.

The imaginative artist, on the other hand, knows no bounds but those of human reason. The reverse of a medal by Pisanello may carry us at once to the unknown waste where Innocence muses by moonlight with the unicorn at her side, or where Malatesta Novello, armed from head to foot, tethers his horse to a barren tree and kneels before a crucifix; an Umbrian panel may take us to a place of heavenly verdure, trim castles, and far withdrawn succession of windless lakes. What land or sea is that which Botticelli reveals in his vision of the *Calumny of Apelles*, or Bellini in the *Allegory* which hangs (or used to hang) not many yards away? They have no place in the world contemporary with them, or with the world before or after them. They belong to the universe

of thought, and rest there no less securely than do the images conjured up by Shakespeare or by Dante.

Towards such a world Rembrandt slowly groped his way, severing one by one the ties that bound him to material things (and therewith cutting the thread of his worldly prosperity), till he found at last the door of the house of darkness in which alone his dreams could be made real. In choosing a warm luminous twilight as the setting for the creations of his later years, Rembrandt did no more than the other great masters had done before and have done since. He merely learned to isolate certain qualities inherent in his medium, and set himself to draw from them the last atom of expressiveness of which they were capable. Among the chief characteristics of the oil medium are the force that can be obtained by a thick mass of solid pigment, and the rich, sombre transparency that can be obtained by painting very thinly over a light ground. From boyhood these qualities had attracted Rembrandt, but he was at first unable to make full use of them. His attention was distracted by other considerations, mostly imposed upon him by the then prevalent standards of painting, such as minute finish, formal composition, and the charm of strong local colour. It was only after years of continuous effort and experiment that he finally succeeded in ridding himself of these importunate obstacles to complete self-expression. To a Van

Eyck high finish might be an essential; it was not so for Rembrandt. In a fresco by Raphael formal composition might be desirable; for Rembrandt's panels it was needless. To a Titian the problems of glowing, forcible colour might be worth the study of a long life; in Rembrandt's saddened universe such things were out of place.

For Rembrandt the one means of expression was light: light as it gleams in a place of darkness, flashing here on some significant face or momentary glimpse of white linen, glittering on a jewel or a sword hilt, and reflected ever more dimly from a wall or the folds of a dress, till it becomes indistinguishable from shadow and merges in the all-pervading gloom. The artistic convenience of this sombre atmosphere is obvious. It enables the painter to focus, as no other formula of oil painting has succeeded in doing, the spectator's attention upon the significant features of the design, and to suppress, as thoroughly as a Pisanello or a Korin could suppress them, the forms and details that are unessential to a complete and explicit statement of the matter in hand.

The scholar[1] who leans upon the bust of Homer is a being set apart from the rest of the world as surely as if he had been immured for life in some

[1] Signed and dated "Rembrandt f., 1653." 1.41 m. by 1.35 m. From the collections of Sir Abraham Hume and Earl Brownlow.

impregnable prison. Nothing in the picture suggests the existence of any place but that where the man for the moment is; we can concern ourselves only with his face, his hands, his rich dress, his gesture, the piece of sculpture which may help us to divine his thoughts, and, if we love art, with the genius which has introduced us to their undistracted contemplation.

So it is with the portrait of Hendrickje Stoffels.[1] With the possible exception of Rembrandt's son Titus, Hendrickje is the most persistent and prominent among Rembrandt's sitters in middle and late life. In the Kann portrait of the year 1660 she has lost the bloom of youth which distinguishes the early portrait in the Louvre, and the more subtle but even more haunting charm of that in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum is vanishing. The eyes still retain their lustre, but the face shows unmistakably the advance of age and ill-health, and the contrast between the cheeks, still flushed but no longer firm, and the febrile brilliancy of the eyes, gives the portrait an indescribable pathos—a premonition of the death which was to overtake the sitter some two years later. In the earlier portraits the genial comradeship of Hendrickje had seemed to triumph over the artist's love of isolation, so that

[1] Signed and dated "Rembrandt f., 1660." 0.67 m. by 0.76 m. From the collection of the Marchioness de la Cenia.

among all his sitters she is the one who appears the most approachable, the most lovable. Here, with the waning of her physical health, she begins to be withdrawn from us, and to be already enveloped in the dim air of another world; and this impression is deepened by the superb technical skill with which the artist has fused the furred robe, the hand, and the head-dress with the warm shadows of the background, so that only the pensive face and the brilliant eyes continue to suggest the solid substance of the things of this earth.

No more striking contrast to these two works by Rembrandt could be afforded than by the two paintings by Rembrandt's great contemporary, Frans Hals, which have travelled with them to America. Rembrandt aims at rendering the soul of his sitters by isolating them, not only from their fellows, but from all material things too—by revealing human personality in its loneliness, as it appears when brought face to face with some great issue. For Hals this isolated, subconscious personality does not exist. He sees men with the large general vision of their fellows—the vision of the exterior, comprising all that lies upon the surface; but without a moment's thought that personality may imply more than that—may be more than features, complexion, smile, gesture and clothes.

His art is thus an art of outward and visible

signs and of nothing more; and his place among master painters depends wholly upon his faculty for rendering those outward signs. In this, however, he stands almost alone. Velazquez himself cannot approach the task of representing these signs in paint with the same easy negligence; Tiepolo could not have carried it through with the same freedom from mannerism. Mr. Sargent's brilliant brush is less scientific in its accomplishment, his eye less trained to select at each moment just the facts that are pictorial and to dispense with all the rest.

This process of selection, however, has not with Hals the same significance that it had with Rembrandt. His field being that of the statement of externals, he has no chance of suppressing them wholesale to emphasise some single feature of his subject. He cannot lose his sitter's hands or dress in the convenient twilight of an amber-coloured mist. His eye sees these details as clearly as it sees the sitter's face, and his hand must render them with equal distinctness. So instead of painting an abstraction or essence of his sitter, Hals must paint the sitter himself, his clothes, his mien, his features, and leave to others the business of finding out whether the man is actually or potentially anything more than these externals suggest.

Rembrandt's power of abstraction and isolation

carries him so far that his sitters are not citizens of seventeenth-century Amsterdam, not even Dutchmen of any period or district, not even citizens of this world in a material sense, but rather members of that infinitely larger citizenship of our common humanity, whom we may meet again in his religious and mythological pictures without the thought even occurring to us that their appearance there is an audacious anachronism. The sitters of Hals, on the other hand, never give us a moment's pause. From first to last there can be no doubt about their rank, their nationality and their date. They are burghers of seventeenth-century Holland, and no one but a dunce could mistake them for anything else. The temper of the artist may have made them look more uniformly cheerful than was their wont, just as his splendid skill may have made them look a trifle more spirited (since forcible and lively handling always reacts upon the spectator), but with these slight deductions we feel convinced within ourselves that these people must really have looked thus, moved thus and dressed thus.

Yet inside this conscious fidelity of statement, this almost photographic respect for outward appearances, Hals finds room for the exercise of those faculties of selection and arrangement that mark the artist as opposed to the hack painter. His faculties, it is true, are those of the craftsman rather than of the designer,

for his sense of design is adequate but not exceptional. We do not look to him for those felicitous excursions from the commonplace, those harmonious audacities in which the great masters of design love to indulge. His "archer"-groups are brilliant, varied and inventive compared with the groups of his Dutch predecessors and contemporaries, and effect perhaps as happy a compromise between the claims of art and of his patrons as could well be made; but they are a compromise after all, and though his single portraits are rarely ill spaced, he has left no hint that he desired to advance the decorative side of his art beyond the limits generally accepted in his day.

His one supreme faculty is that of representation in oil paint. As a professional painter pure and simple, within his limits he has, as we have indicated, few rivals. No one has succeeded better in reducing the appearances of nature to terms of oil paint, oil paint swiftly applied and left to stand fresh and untouched for ever. No one has grasped more clearly than Hals that oil painting is, in its essence, a process of brush drawing with semi-liquid pigment of a pleasant oleaginous quality, which may be used thickly or thinly at will, and which, if the touch be left undisturbed, possesses a certain sharpness and force that are ruined by any subsequent reworking.

In the earlier phases of his art, as in the magnificent picture of the *Laughing Cavalier* at Hertford

House, which dates from 1624, this freshness is already attained, so sure are the master's eye and hand; as time goes on it is attained again and again with ever-increasing ease and freedom.

By the year 1644, to which belongs the female portrait recently acquired by Mrs. Huntington,[1] this freedom has become innate, and under its influence the process of painting is reduced to a lively and wonderfully flexible formula. When the main masses of the portrait have once been mapped out, the painting seems to become a process of rapid drawing with a pointed brush, used as a man might use a chalk or crayon. Beginning with the hair we notice how both the comb and the ringlets are drawn with swift touches of light paint, now rippling, now straight, as the forms demand, upon a dark ground. The features are made up of similar touches with a smaller brush in darker pigments, the method being specially noticeable in the painting of the eyebrows and the shadow on the temple. Only in the softer shadow on the cheek have the touches been fused and blended. The starched stiffness of the broad linen collars and cuffs is suggested by sweeping strokes of white at the edges, and by shorter strokes elsewhere which suggest the surface of the material, just as the half tones where it crosses the dark dress suggest its diaphanous fineness.

[1] Cm. 79 by cm. 69. From the collection of Mrs. Wollaston.

With less gifted men such dexterity easily turns to mannerism. The sitter's hands in Mrs. Huntington's picture indicate how Hals kept clear of the danger. The right hand is gloved, the left hand is bare; both are painted with consummate swiftness and ease, but without a single piece of trickery. The naked hand is indicated chiefly by its contour against the shadow below it, a few adroit touches drawing the shadow under the knuckles and the thumb. The creased glove is drawn with even more show of swiftness, the brush strokes rushing this way and that, but all the time they seem to mimic the very folds and dimples of the leather, till the result is a miracle of realistic virtuosity.

The portrait of the young *Koeijmanszoon of Alblasserdam*[1] dates from the next year, 1645, and exhibits the artist in a mood of unwonted gravity. The convivial aspect under which the painter is wont to view his sitters has, perhaps, had as much to do with the idea we commonly form of his habits and character, as the evidence we possess of his relations with his first wife, and the reports of his ill-treatment of Adriaen Brouwer, his unfortunate and gifted pupil. Yet this conviviality of aspect is so generally characteristic of Dutch life in the seventeenth century, with but a few exceptions (for even the grave art of Rembrandt and the staid realism of De Hooch,

[1] Cm. 74 by cm. 62.5.

DOROTHEA KOEYMANS OF ALBLASSERDAM. BY FRANS HALS. (*Mrs. C. P. Huntington.*)

Terborch and Vermeer bear testimony to it), that we can hardly regard it as a mere fashion, and certainly must not press it as an argument against the personal character of Hals. Upon the quality of his art, of course, it has no bearing.

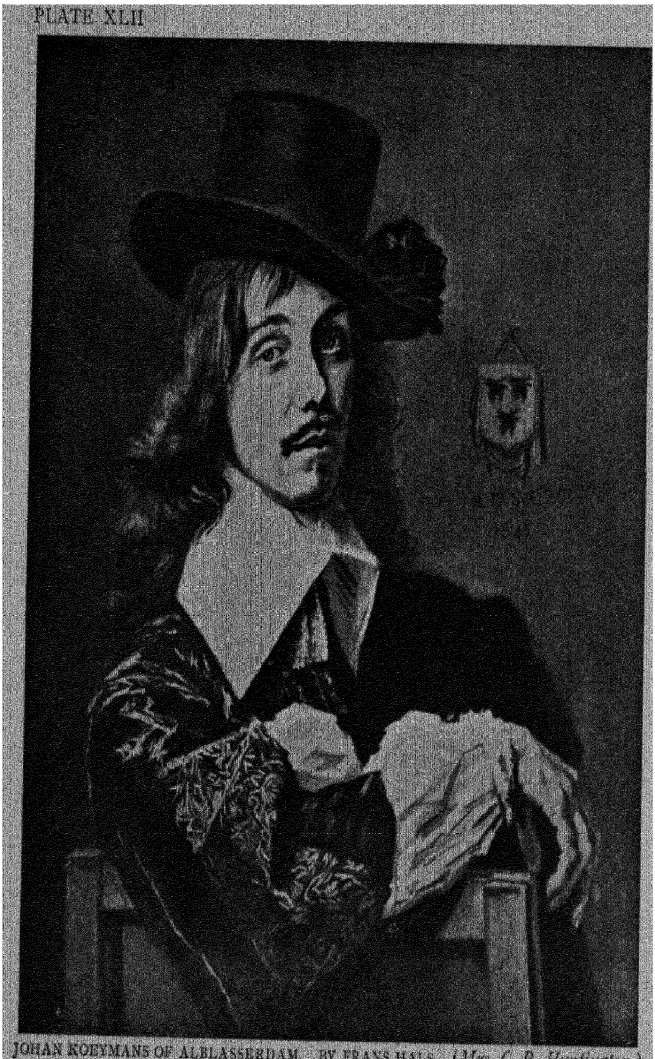
In defaults of other records we are compelled to turn to the arts as evidence of the customs and manner of living of our forefathers, and provided that the evidence is used with due caution it is often of the greatest possible value. Yet the inquirer must never forget that the screen of artistic personality is always interposed, that the better the artist the more likely is he to be rather the interpreter of a few pictorial aspects of his age, perhaps in other respects not the most characteristic ones, than a faithful mirror of the whole period. The considerable artist thus must present a somewhat distorted picture of his time. Some characteristics will be emphasised and accentuated, others will be represented incompletely or not at all. Nor does the distortion end here. The successful artist sets the fashion, the minor painters of the time tend to cling to his skirts, to imitate his choice of subject, and so to amplify his departure from impartial statement. The art of eighteenth-century England might be adduced in illustration. The age of Anne and the first two Georges was surely not so stiff and dull as its painters made it, nor was all England so rough and violent as we see it when the

artistic reaction comes with Hogarth. Reynolds and Gainsborough might make us regard their age as one of even higher human perfection than was actually the case; we shall not get near to the truth till we can balance the impression left by their lofty style with the lively robustiousness of Gillray and Rowlandson.

Yet when all these allowances are made in the case of Dutch art, we cannot help recognising that the general tendency of life in seventeenth-century Holland was towards a very high standard of material comfort, coupled with more hard drinking than would suit our modern constitutions. How far these habits of life contributed to the decline of Holland, and how far they reacted upon political and economic conditions, are questions rather for the student of history than for the student of art. Yet such a portrait as this of young Koeijmanszoon might, in such an inquiry, be not without value as a historical document.

No visitor to Holland can fail to notice the countless relics of the great struggle with Spain from which, after occupying a position of almost hopeless inferiority, the country at last emerged triumphant. Among those relics none are more interesting than the portraits of the men who in one way or another were involved in that heroic combat with overwhelming odds. The imperfection of the art of the time makes them seem dry, stiff and meagre compared with the ruffling

PLATE XLII



JOHAN KOEYMANS OF ALBLASSERDAM. BY FRANS HALS. (*Mrs. C. P. Huntington.*)

cavaliers of Hals, but with all their stiffness the sitters of Miereveldt and Ravestijn are men of grave and serious purpose, firm, solid folk, well fitted to secure respect both for themselves and their country.

When we turn to this young gentleman of 1645 whom Hals has painted, we recognise at once that we have to do with a race that has passed its prime. The rich, gold-embroidered dress, the profuse linen and the curled hair reveal no more than opulence, but the languid pose of the sitter, the face prematurely thinned by hard living, and the eyes, hard and glittering after a night's debauch, are unmistakable evidences of decline. *Non his juventus!* Yet youth, even in its decay, has its fascinations, and though we do not pass here into the sinister world which Rembrandt opens up in that terrible little etching of *The Card Player* (B.M. 190), the look and gesture of this gallant have an attractiveness, nay, almost a poetry of their own which Hals has not failed to catch.[1]

As a masterpiece of brushwork the portrait is even more wonderful than that of the lady previously described. It is painted with the utmost possible swiftness and freedom, yet everywhere the strokes of the brush take just the course that is needed to

[1] Mr. John C. Van Lennep (*Burlington Magazine*, vol. xiii. p. 293) has since identified the portrait with Johan Koeymans, youngest son of Josep Koeymans van Alblasserdam, who died unmarried at an early age. The lady's portrait most probably represents his mother, Dorothea Berk.

express the infinite variety of surfaces and substances of which the piece is built up. The contrast between the crisp strokes used for the white linen at the wrist and the fluent touch which follows the outline of the fingers and the tendons on the back of the hand is wonderful, but the treatment of the hair—that almost insuperable problem—is more wonderful still. The whole mass of the hair appears to have been first mapped out with precision in middle tint; then upon this foundation the locks and curls are drawn with definite strokes of wet pigment, a few gleams of light, introduced with the utmost delicacy, giving the required lustre. To follow such work stroke by stroke is an education in the technique of direct painting. The mapping of the planes of the head is begun in the same way and completed with sharp touches of light and shadow at the emphatic points.

Yet the growth of this marvellous sleight of hand, this scientific building up of a picture with the least possible number of deftly varied brush strokes, was accompanied by a very definite change in the aspect of the painter's work. It is commonly recognised how the warm, almost Venetian, colour of the earliest of the great *doelen* pieces at Haarlem is soon changed for sharper and fresher contrasts, and how in its turn this love of bright hues gives place in the artist's later years to harmonies in black and white, with the least possible hint of yellow and red in the flesh tones to

preserve the work from becoming absolute monochrome.

Now that we have studied the method of Hals, we see that this change was not a caprice but a necessity. Only by employing a palette of this austere and limited kind could such pictures be painted at all. To imitate exactly the complex range of hues of which the human face is usually composed, needs an elaborate mixing of colours and an equally elaborate application of the mixtures. Hals had the acumen to recognise that what his work might gain in truth to appearances by exact imitation of local colour, would be a poor recompense for the spontaneity and spirit he would have to sacrifice. So we see him steadily restricting his palette more and more, till at last it consists practically of black and white, and his paintings become analogous to black-and-white drawings to which, perhaps from mere habit, a few touches of colour have been added.

The sacrifice of colour was as wise as Rembrandt's, though different in aim. The genius of Hals was in the main a genius of the eye and the hand—the one almost perfectly fitted to observe form and proportion (no one puts a head together more accurately), the other capable of any feat of dexterity—and he did right to give it free scope. His age was less photographically critical of appearances than ours, while its perception for niceties of technical practice was

more keen. It did not demand that Hals should be a Sargent, and struggle for form and colour and technique all together; it allowed him to be himself, an unsurpassed master of the craft of direct painting.

CHAPTER VIII

REMBRANDT AND VAN DYCK

IN the winter of the year 1907 the purchase of the Kann Collection[1] afforded an opportunity for comparing the aims and methods of Rembrandt and Hals, in connection with the portraits by those masters purchased by Mrs. C. P. Huntington. Some very important acquisitions made by Mr. P. A. B. Widener and Mr. H. C. Frick in the following year suggested a similar comparative study of the aims and methods of Rembrandt and Van Dyck.

This study was rendered the more convenient from the fact that each of these great masters was represented by a supreme and typical example of his genius. In the case of Rembrandt, that masterpiece is the noble portrait of himself, which recently passed from a famous English collection to that of Mr. H. C. Frick. It earned universal admiration when it was exhibited a few years ago in the wonderful collection of Rembrandt's work at Burlington House, and never was admiration more thoroughly merited. The history, size and general aspect of this masterpiece are so

[1] See the *Burlington Magazine*, January 1908, vol. xii. p. 197.

well known that I need not recapitulate them here. It will be sufficient to say that at the date, 1658, to which the picture belongs, Rembrandt's art had reached its full maturity, and the ideal after which he had struggled through many years of varied experiment had been completely and securely attained.

That ideal, as we have seen in comparing his portraits with those of Hals, was one of isolation. The whole strength of Rembrandt's genius was concentrated upon an endeavour to set his subjects, whatever they might be, in a world apart from our own, to which the picture-frame was the one window open for human eyes, and in which the air was aglow with a light that was not the light of the sun or the moon, a light that, while suppressing all local and positive colour, seemed itself charged with particles of colour, as a ray of sunshine bursting into a room is charged with vibrant innumerable luminous dust.

In Mr. Frick's portrait Rembrandt has withdrawn himself into this world of his own creation, and sits there in state, clad in rich easy robes like an aged prince on a throne, looking out on humanity with the piercing eyes of profound knowledge and infinite experience. The troubles and disasters of his terrestrial life, the neglect of his contemporaries, bereavement, bankruptcy, poverty, have no place here—he is a king in his own kingdom, and these calamities of his material existence leave him unmoved and

unaltered, except in so far as their impact in the past has left its mark upon the rugged face.

The technical processes by which this effect of isolation was secured have already been discussed. It will be sufficient to point out once more that the elimination of unessential things and the emphasising of essential ones was not an easy matter even for Rembrandt, and that it was only after repeated experiment that he learned the necessity of sacrificing all that the artists of his age valued in order to do the thing which he valued himself. First, he sacrified positive colour, because it confused his purpose, constantly introducing an emphasis differing from that of the main masses of his design. Then (and this was a much harder struggle) he sacrificed the precise and forcible contrasts of light and darkness, which he had learned to use more subtly and more powerfully than any of his contemporaries. This sacrifice involved his immediate prosperity, for his dramatic power, and the technical ability by which it was accompanied, were qualities which his contemporaries, both among painters and the general public, could easily understand; so much so indeed that, up to the last few years, the earlier stages of Rembrandt's art were held to be its most perfect and typical blossoming, and in the popular mind his name had become almost synonymous with theatrical oppositions of blazing light and sombre shadow.

To exchange those vigorous dramatic contrasts for mysterious fusion of tones, those rich deep glazes of green and crimson for dull broken reds and browns and greys, that smooth accomplished brushwork—possessing at once the perfect clearness and cleanness of surface beloved by Northern artists, and those alternations of solidity and transparency, of breadth and precision, that mark the great painter—for a rough, rugged aggregation of seemingly formless touches, was a brave, nay, a quixotic deed. It involved the sacrifice of all the qualities which made his pictures seem good paintings, not only in the eyes of the public but even to his more educated patrons, and therewith involved extreme poverty and the reputation of failure, both for the painter himself and for those dear to him and dependent upon him. Yet it was only by this supreme sacrifice that he was able to develop his genius to the fullest extent, and to become the painter of the naked human soul—a field in which the other supreme masters have approached him rarely, or not at all.

When we compare Rembrandt with the great painters of other countries, there is one important fact which we must not forget, which, indeed, in a comparison with such a painter as Van Dyck is all important. The art of Holland was an art of the cabinet picture, adapted to the private houses

of well-to-do burghers, and usually so moderate in size that the wooden frame played a very considerable part in its value as a decorative unit. Provided that the frame was adapted with nicety to the panel it enclosed, the intrinsic decorative quality of the panel itself might be of the smallest, and yet the eye would find no cause of offence. So long as the colouring was not actually garish, the framed picture would assort well enough with the chairs and tables, the doors and bedsteads, among which it was placed. Hence Rembrandt's sacrifice of definite local colour, and of the vivid arabesques of strongly contoured masses in which the painters of other schools delighted, was of less account in Holland than it would have been in France or Italy, where pictures had to fulfil entirely different functions.

Rembrandt is indeed, on his own ground and in his own country, unsurpassable; but we must never forget that the manner of painting which he perfected is not one adapted to all places and to all occasions. In a great sunny palace, for example, his modest panels of subtly varied darkness would tell as spots or blots upon the spacious walls, and the field occupied by other artists with more splendidly decorative ideals is one in which Rembrandt's solitary and emphatic genius would have found no resting-place. Of these master decorators Titian is, of course, the prince, and Van Dyck only

one among several great followers; but there are numerous occasions on which Van Dyck holds his own so completely in the loftiest company that, when all allowance has been made for the derivative character of much of his art, and for the indefinable suggestion of superficiality which is aroused by his subject pieces, a place among the great masters of painting cannot be denied to him.

Gossip and scandal are often remembered when more important facts are forgotten. Hence the popular judgment of Van Dyck is founded upon the luxury and over-work of his last years in England, while only those who have studied his career with some attention know upon what incessant study his facility was based. That his talent and social success gave him enough practice of hand, in the shape of an endless stream of fashionable sitters, we are ready to recognise; that this practice was supplemented by constant examination and analysis of the great masters of Italy, and of Titian above all, appears only when we see such direct evidence as his Italian sketch-book at Chatsworth, or follow up the more evasive but none the less significant hints afforded by his paintings.

Van Dyck came to Italy a typical Flemish painter: when he left it he was to all intents and purposes an Italian one: so much so that his Genoese work is still sometimes confused with that of certain local masters, and *vice versa*. In Northern Europe some-

thing of the Flemish practice came back to him, for he was ever of an impressionable nature. But the lesson he learned from the Venetians was never forgotten, and it is of Titian and not of Rubens that we think when brought face to face with the masterpieces of his English time, though here and there some ample contour, some touch of red and white in the flesh tints, or some lightly handled fold of drapery reminds us that Van Dyck was by birth a Fleming.

Derivative art is (quite rightly, perhaps) held in less esteem than art in which the individual and personal element predominates. We must remember, however, that there is a limit to individuality and isolation, beyond which an artist cannot go without suffering in one way or another. The case of William Blake is an example ready to hand.

Van Dyck possibly went to the opposite extreme, and derived too much from the example of other masters rather than too little; but this much may be said in his defence—he restricted his admiration to the greatest master of his own age, and to the supreme masters of the preceding age, and he took from each exactly what was best worth taking. On to the original stock of sound, honest Flemish portraiture he first grafted the splendid vitality and rhythmic interlaced design of Rubens; then, with his visit to Italy, he added the senatorial dignity and serene decorative fitness of Titian. We may divide the world's master

painters not unfairly into two distinct classes—the great inventors and the great scholars; and it is among the great scholars that Van Dyck must be placed, where he has Raphael and Reynolds, and some may think Velazquez too, for company.

It is in virtue of this scholarship that Van Dyck, like Velazquez, is a master of style. What he has to do he does perfectly so far as the handling of his material—oil paint upon canvas—is concerned. Titian seldom forgets that he is a Venetian trained in the precise methods of tempera painting, and he almost always carries something of their clearness of statement and definition into his handling of oil paint. Rubens, in the same way, is from first to last a typical Fleming, never forgetting the fluid transparent practice of his countrymen, though enlarging it incredibly in the direction of lightness and freedom, just as Titian had advanced the craft of oil painting from its delicate beginnings as the handmaid of tempera to an independent and manly art, almost infinite in scope, and approaching in its later stages the method of Rembrandt.

The ambitious intellect of Van Dyck fastened upon these two traditions, and extracted from each just those elements that were most valuable. From Rubens he took the swiftness, the glow, the vitality, and the transparency of the Flemish method; from Titian he learned the science of decorative pattern, the

value of large quiet masses interchanged and combined into a grand simple mosaic. In comparison with him Titian exhibits less fluency, and Rubens less largeness of plan, less dignity, less self-control.

Equipped thus, it might seem as if the world had found a perfect oil painter; and that, in a sense, is not very far from the truth. Certainly as regards style, the manner of saying a given thing in the best possible way, Van Dyck is hardly the inferior of any man.[1] It is in the matter of his art, if anywhere, that the weakness lies; in his temper rather than in his representative faculty. It is clear that he lacked the profound spiritual insight of Rembrandt, the stern yet tender sincerity of Velazquez, and the unrelenting justice of Holbein, just as much as he lacked the fire of his masters, Titian and Rubens; and the special virtue of his own which he has to offer in their place is not one to which the world attaches supreme value.

Not without some justice was Van Dyck nicknamed *il pittore cavalleresco* by the ruder spirits in the Flemish colony in Rome. He was a born courtier, one who breathed the atmosphere of a palace as

[1] Not the least striking proof of Van Dyck's perfect control over his medium is the fact that he was able to retain a considerable force of chiaroscuro without sacrificing colour. Indeed he employs colour and chiaroscuro together with so much tact that, in his portraits at least, they rarely or never clash; and in this respect it is evident that Van Dyck possessed a faculty which was denied to Rembrandt, and indeed has perhaps been given in like measure only to Titian, Correggio, Rubens, Reynolds, and Gainsborough.

naturally as his critics breathed that of a tavern, and the courtier to-day is out of favour with us. We live in a democratic age which despises, or at least does not dare to admire openly, the refinement which surrounds a ruling class. We are all for the virtues of honest independent equality, and the appearance of good breeding is held almost as frequently for a sign of weakness, as the appearance of wealth is taken for a proof of degeneracy. An age thus constituted is unlikely to do justice to Van Dyck, who worked at a time when princes could bear themselves like princes, and conduct the affairs of life with a state and ceremony befitting their high place. Of this opulent refinement Van Dyck is the acknowledged master; but, before condemning it as mere surface display, there are certain facts which in common fairness we must recognise.

First and foremost, as I have already suggested, Van Dyck had to fulfil certain primary functions of painting which could hardly have been adequately fulfilled by any other art than that which he practised. His subject pieces and his numerous portraits were required to ornament sumptuous palaces; it was essential therefore that they should be themselves imposing in scale and splendid in design to be in harmony with their suroundings. Their stately decorative character was thus more than a matter of choice, it was a matter of necessity.

That he flattered his sitters, that he gave them all an air of courtliness, that he neglected their real character and was content to paint hardly more than the outward trappings of their state and dignity, is the substance of the main accusation brought against him. So far as the last part of the charge is concerned, the answer is obvious. The luxurious appanages of his princely patrons were just the materials which Van Dyck as an artist naturally enjoyed, and used to fulfil the decorative conditions imposed upon him, nor in doing so did he do more than every great painter has done who has had similar problems to face.

That Van Dyck gave his sitters a universal air of good breeding is true, and is perhaps the gravest item in the indictment against him. Even this charge however may be over-stated. Good-breeding, after all, is not a bad thing in itself. If it tends to conceal a man's real nature by covering the secret passions, the secret doubts and the secret vices of his soul, in doing so it enables its possessor to take a much higher place in the world's citizenship, by removing obstacles to his intercourse with his fellow-men. For a man's own age at least, it represents an effective augmentation of his personality rather than the reverse: for it is only to inquisitive posterity that a rugged, naked character will become more interesting than one whose corners and angles have been so rounded off that his image is that of a citizen of the world, pleasant and easy

of approach, but trained to keep his private affairs to himself. If Van Dyck preferred the social man where Rembrandt preferred the solitary one, the preference, in itself, is no proof of inferiority.

A real fault which he initiated, with disastrous consequences to later portraiture, was developed when he arrived in England and when commissions crowded upon him from men in all ranks of life. In the lordly society of Genoa his sitters were all men of high rank to whom a courtly bearing was natural, or at least seems so now. During Van Dyck's last years in England he bestowed this courtliness on all sitters alike, till it became almost a studio recipe. Every one painted by Van Dyck was turned into a great gentleman; his hands, his face, his bearing, his clothes were marked with a standard of dignified refinement which we know from other contemporary portraits was by no means so uniformly attained. It was perhaps unconscious flattery, but it was none the less disastrous to portrait painting both in England and on the Continent. Before Van Dyck's time the most unprepossessing sitter did not expect his portrait to be anything but truthful: after Van Dyck's time every man expected to be turned into a great gentleman, and every woman into a great lady; and this fashion has prevailed so consistently ever since that it is only here and there, by the malice of a caricaturist,

or by the incompetence of a dullard, that we can really guess what our forefathers looked like.

To say however that in doing this Van Dyck neglected the true character of his sitters, and marked only their outward aspect, is rarely true. His statement of character is perhaps less obviously emphatic than that of several other great masters—his natural taste was for balance rather than for emphasis—but it is made none the less, and often with surprising force. Even Rembrandt could not do his best with an unsympathetic sitter, and when we remember that Van Dyck was continuously employed by the fashionable world, we must also recognise that many, perhaps the majority, of his sitters would be people out of whom Rembrandt or Titian, Velazquez or Holbein, would not have been able to make more than good portraits. A supreme portrait demands a fine subject as well as a great painter, and when Van Dyck had a fine subject he did not fail to do it justice. Portraits such as those of the *Man and Wife* acquired by the Berlin Museum from the Peel collection, are among the noblest things of their kind, nor are they immensely above the average of the Van Dyck work. He died young, and for the last five or six years of his life was so overwhelmed with commissions that haste, fatigue and the help of assistants decreased the general excellence of his productions,

though the falling-off is not nearly so marked as it is in the analogous case of Raphael.

The oval portrait of Canevaro recently purchased by Mr. Henry C. Frick is an excellent illustration of the balance and moderation with which Van Dyck uses his power in works of moderate size, while the great full-length figure of a lady,[1] now in Mr. Widener's collection, will serve to show how unsurpassable he is as a painter of state portraits. The pride of life in a refined and luxurious age was never more grandly set forth. The design of the picture speaks for itself, but the reproduction can convey no adequate idea of the splendid daring of the colour scheme. The lady's dress is a full dark green, with vivid scarlet lace at the neck and wrists, the head being still further accented by the glowing rose-coloured parasol set round it. The dress of the negro attendant is golden brown, contrasting well with the cool stone-work that rises against the sky behind, and the sky itself is no ordinary convention of deep blue or grey, but an expanse of sharp blue and orange such as one hardly finds elsewhere in art before the time of Tiepolo. Of the majestic sweep of the landscape,[2]

[1] Elena Grimaldi, wife of Niccolò Cattaneo; their two children, Clelia and Filippo, are the subjects of smaller portraits in the same collection.

[2] In spite of the unimpeachable evidence of his water-colour drawings, Van Dyck has not yet been accorded his true rank among the pioneers and the masters of landscape.

of the delicacy and distinction of details, such as the hands or the sprig held in one of them, it is needless to speak: they are the work of a master, but here they are trifles compared with the majestic structure of the piece, a structure unique even among Van Dyck's monumental creations.

That such portraits, and countless others in their way hardly less remarkable, should have been executed before Van Dyck was twenty-seven years old is, perhaps, the greatest part of the marvel. At least that will be the feeling of those who have any conception of the long laborious exertions by which the science of painting is mastered, even by the very few who are fortunate alike in the hour, the country, and the physical and mental gifts of their birth.

If we consider for one moment the mass of portraits painted by Van Dyck before his thirty-fifth year, and then compare it with the output of any other portrait painter during a similar period, be he whom we will, the comparison will not be to Van Dyck's disadvantage. Like Reynolds, however, it is only in portraiture that he maintains this high rank. His subject pieces, superb, accomplished, and passionate as the best of them are, have almost always something artificial, derivative, eclectic in them which prevents them from carrying perfect conviction. Unlike Reynolds, Van Dyck has possibly

suffered in reputation from this defect. It is difficult otherwise to account for the comparative disesteem in which he is held, unless it be that painters have united to praise Rembrandt because his style does not compete with our modern fashions, and Velazquez because his method seems open to analysis and imitation, while we can no more imitate the splendid, easy precision of Van Dyck than we can analyse the knowledge and experience that lie behind it. Van Dyck has succeeded in concealing his science so perfectly that our hasty age has failed to recognise its existence. If there be any truth in the old proverb, *Ars est celare artem*—and in painting at least it seems to hold good—some more keen-eyed generation will have to give him a higher rank even than that which his admirers claim for him now.

Since Van Dyck's day, the task of the society portrait painter, never an easy one, has become an almost impossible labour for any great artist. Ingenuity in turning fashionable dress to pictorial ends, tact in making the best of a dull sitter, and skill in catching a likeness have always been demanded of him. But in these days of realism and the camera, we expect also an illusion of hard everyday lighting which spares no obtrusive detail of dress or feature, and a pleasant insipidity of expression which will put the dullest and most frivolous spectators at their ease; forgetting that in exacting scientific verisimilitude

of aspect we deprive the painter of that freedom in suppressing unessentials which all great artists have needed and employed, as our second demand deprives him of the right to express character, without which the most skilful portraits become portraits of dolls or dummies. It is hardly wonderful then that society portrait painting is for the most part left to second-rate men, who, having little artistic enthusiasm, can restrict themselves without discomfort to supplying the sort of realism and the "pleasant" expressions which the public really likes. Now and then some considerable talent started, half consciously perhaps, on this treacherous professional career, will try to keep true to his better self, and may even score a success, in despite of public suspicion, by sheer force of genius. But such successes are rare, and for each one of them it would be possible to count a hundred examples of more modest gifts utterly dulled and degraded by the intolerable fetters which they have not had the strength to throw aside.

The general road of escape for more independent spirits has been that of colour and pattern—a road appropriate enough in its degree, as leading at least to the making of well-designed paintings, and so far an improvement upon the dull, well-beaten track of the common portrait painter. But when we come to consider how overwhelmingly large is the share which character holds in all the world's finest portraiture, we

have to admit that the well-planned pattern is often little more than a pattern, and that the man is made less important than his setting and his clothes.

But portraiture begins with humanity, not with humanity's trappings, and Rembrandt keeps his lofty place among the masters of portraiture because he sacrificed all the customary adornments of his art to make his hold upon the soul of man secure. If now and then he amused himself by painting the trappings as well as the man, he could do so with serene confidence that the knowledge he had acquired would not fail him. And that is in reality the attitude of all the supreme portrait painters. Given leisure or an incentive, they will paint frocks and lace and coats as well as heads and hands. With less leisure or incentive, they will paint the heads and hands and leave draperies and details to assistants, simply indicating on the canvas, or in a separate sketch, the main arrangements of line and colour. Sometimes a mere sketch or drawing of the head is all a great man will vouchsafe us; the rest must be left to the studio staff. When the modern portrait painter studies Titian or Van Dyck, or Velazquez or Holbein, he is apt to forget that there is a Rembrandt latent in all of them, and that from his unseen spirit, as much as from any outward splendour of pattern or colour or brush-work, they derive their supremacy.

CHAPTER IX

REMBRANDT AND TITIAN

SO far for the most part we have studied the genius of Rembrandt on its own northern soil. We have followed in some detail the various modes of emphatic expression which he invented, the various provinces where he rules in solitary greatness; but we have never asked frankly what relation they bear to the art and life of the world. And that, perhaps, is the most important question of all, for until we answer it we can never be sure that we view our accumulated facts in anything like true perspective.

In making such mental adjustments we cannot hope for absolute finality. Our estimate can never be a fixed quantity which the lapse of time will not modify. It can hardly be more than a rough balancing of his qualities with such other doings in the same or similar fields as appear to our time pre-eminent. And in the case of Rembrandt this is less difficult than it might seem at first sight; for there is one great painter of the Renaissance in whom almost all the generous qualities of that epoch seem equably to blend, who might almost be described as

the master and the parent of all other painters in oil, whose fame the lapse of time, the development of critical research, and the temporary elevation of supposed rivals serve only to establish and increase. Titian is thus a touchstone by which other masters of portrait and figure painting in oil can conveniently be tested. The best works of Michelangelo and Raphael are executed in other mediums, which render practical comparison less close and therefore less serviceable.

It is a common habit of critics to represent all such comparisons as unprofitable, partly, I think, from the idea that comparisons of any kind imply either disparagement of the men compared, or a denial of the true sources of æsthetic enjoyment in those who make the comparisons. But the working artist, and the working critic too, may with some security disregard such fine objections. So long as comparison between one masterpiece and another teaches us to see more clearly the respective excellences of each, to appreciate the emphatic deliberate abnormalities from which each derives its peculiar character, comparison must be the painter's most healthy and suggestive mental exercise. It is only when comparison is dominated by the spirit of compromise, when the recognition of diverse qualities in two different masters leads to the desire of building a half-way house between them, that comparison is

perilous. Great artists are great because each travels as far as he possibly can on his own chosen road, developing his personal strength, insight, and refinement even to the verge of exaggeration. Those who have failed (at least in the judgment of posterity) are invariably the men who have halted between extremes, either from native lack of spirit, or from acquired faith in eclectic ideals. Titian and Rembrandt then must not be studied with any idea that a blending of their respective excellences is desirable. But if we recognise from the first that each develops to the utmost certain quite distinct and incompatible personal and racial gifts, we may well hope to understand the capacity and the limits of their respective means of expression far better than we could otherwise do, and that is no small gain.

The broad distinction that the average man would draw between Titian and Rembrandt is that the former is pre-eminently a colourist, as the latter is a chiaroscurist. The distinction is a just one, presuming in each case those faculties of emotion and imaginative vision which give these masters the first place in their respective schools. Titian, alike in passionate youth and popular middle-life, thinks and creates in terms of decorative colour. Each picture is a new colour mosaic, planned at first with curious subtlety and refinement; afterwards with the large ease of the man with complete control of his materials.

Only in Titian's last years does this ideal of the mosaic of contrasted hues give place to an ideal of almost hueless harmony.

With Rembrandt this ideal of harmony is present from the first, though inexperience and the influence of other painting constantly tend to disturb it by the intrusion of local colours seldom or never charged, as Titian's colour is always charged, with emotional or structural significance, but rather surviving as relics of the imperfect eclectic Dutch art by which he was surrounded in youth, or as the accidental souvenirs of some favourite pieces of studio property. As Rembrandt approaches maturity these traces of positive colouring grow fewer and less obtrusive, until his colour at last becomes a quality saturating the very texture, the very atmosphere of his pictures, but nowhere concentrating into a pattern of distinct definable hues.

Further, this effect is attained only by the sacrifice of brightness of tone, a sacrifice appropriate perhaps to the general character and sentiment of Rembrandt's subjects, but perilous, nay, sometimes almost fatal, to the decorative value of his paintings. Where a canvas by Titian will tell like a jewel on the wall, a canvas by Rembrandt will seem but a space of modified blackness. That this darkness vanishes when we look into the picture, that it greatly assists the force of Rembrandt's appeal to the emotions, as it

may afford opportunities for the strongest possible contrast, and for the suppression of things non-essential, are advantages which may counterbalance decorative weakness, but do not remove it.

Titian, in the great majority of the works to which he owes his reputation, remains the heir of a real decorative tradition. The Italian painters of the trecento and quattrocento had always been decorators, often quite literally so. Their art had primarily been an art of embellishing the surface of a wall, a panel, or a shrine, and whatever elements of thought or imagination had from time to time augmented and transfused this primary purpose had been in the nature of bye-products. In Florence and Milan the addition of the newly discovered method of painting in oil to the old decorator's craft of tempera, had prepared the way for an illusive realism of black shadows, but in Venice the new method blended naturally with the old, providing it with fresh and almost unlimited resources of richness and strength, without imperilling its bright decorative character, at least until the sixteenth century had passed its meridian.

And in Venice, pre-eminently the city where splendour was loved for its own sake, this decorative quality took the form of colour invention. Florence, too, produced great colourists, but their achievement in this respect seemed to their contemporaries insignificant by comparison with the advances made by them

and by their fellows in the representation of the human figure. In Venice, control over rich colour was exercised by the humblest craftsmen, while the greater masters, quite apart from their special gifts of emotion and insight, were all distinguished colour inventors.

For them the colour pattern of a picture is no surface embellishment, in the nature of a tinting applied at the last to a design already conceived and executed in monochrome, but an integral part of the work. The work, in short, is invented from the first in terms of colour, and in the broad resplendent mosaic of rich pigment the separate hues each play a definite part, bear a deliberate relation not only to each other, but to the emotional appeal of the subject matter; so that this relation cannot be altered or interrupted without disaster, not only to the appearance of the picture but to its significance also.

This Venetian attitude has not only the advantage of giving a new expressiveness to design (and how great that expressiveness may be the Oriental masters are now beginning to prove to us), but it also tends to a style of painting which is applicable to all or any conditions. A good Venetian picture on a large scale will be a decoration for any palace or any gallery; a small one will preserve its gem-like outward attractiveness, whatever its surroundings, so long as it remains visible at all.

Now the painters who may be termed chiaroscurists,

of whom Rembrandt is the most typical and competent, have usually to sacrifice both these valuable qualities. They do not conceive their subjects in terms of colour. Hence they cannot employ colour with any certainty as a vehicle for heightened emotional expression. Line and tone are their materials, and since line work, in the oil medium at least, has strict limitations, the chiaroscurists are driven to obtain emphasis by the one means left to them—force of tone; and the forcing of tone-contrasts leads in its turn to the production of works in which dark shadows play a considerable or a predominant part.

Now, the dark shadows of oil paint, if treated by a master, have a mysterious richness of quality which is unattainable in any other medium. But they absorb a great deal of light. Hence a large dark picture, whatever its imaginative, emotional, or executive merits, is in its outward effect the reverse of decorative. In an extensive gallery a mass of sombre colour may remain impressive, if viewed at intervals: but in a room where it has to be seen frequently its gloom is apt to become overwhelming. It stands apart from any general scheme of decoration that is less deep in tone than itself, and if we view the matter frankly we can understand why Rembrandt's few efforts on a heroic scale proved either unpopular or abortive.

This objection, however, almost ceases to affect a dark picture when it is very small in scale. A strong

light, of course, is needed if we are to see it clearly, and even in the most skilfully chosen frame its lowness of tone will not suit all interiors, but, like a small dark print, it may, if its design be good, have a distinct decorative value in a suitable place. In this respect Rembrandt follows and perhaps exaggerates the fashion of his countrymen, whose pictures, sober in colour and for the most part rather low in tone, harmonize well on the whole with the grave interiors for which they were designed.

But we might also claim that Rembrandt's paintings, by their very singularity, possess a certain outward fascination which is in some degree a counterpoise to the obvious outward attractiveness of Venetian work. If the gorgeous colour patterns of the Venetians give us instinctive pleasure, the Dutchman rouses and stimulates our curiosity by the flashes of light which emerge from his mysterious darkness.

On a small scale, then, we may regard these two forms of painting as of almost equal outward charm. But as the size of the canvas grows, the advantage begins to lie with the colourists. Increase of scale only adds to the vigour and splendour of a colour effect: in the case of a dark picture it merely serves to make the darkness more importunate. In a room of moderate size a Rembrandt painting six feet square might be oppressive; a good Venetian picture on the same scale would be a superb piece of ornament.

Rembrandt then, and with him all chiaroscurists, are at some initial disadvantage when we compare them with the painters who are colourists. But the disadvantage is only considerable when the comparison is made between pictures on a considerable scale and, if the chiaroscurists proved on examination to have some distinct superiority in the expressiveness of their method, we might fairly set off against it their disadvantage in decorative quality. Were we dealing only with second-rate artists the inquiry would not be difficult. It is evident that a mediocre picture of any school of colourists, even though its conception be trivial and its execution be weak, remains an agreeable piece of decoration. But a picture which exhibits the same defects unredeemed by any charm of colour, pleases neither in its general aspect nor upon detailed examination, and cannot really be considered a work of art in any sense whatever.

Here the advantage lies definitely with the colourists. But when we come to deal with an artist of the calibre of Rembrandt, who is able to utilise the full powers of chiaroscuro, a very considerable gain in point of expressiveness must be allowed.

Having no intricate problems of colour to face at every moment, the chiaroscurist can indulge in the most free, direct and lively handling, and can thereby endow his works with a vitality which the colourist

too often impairs by the elaborate processes required for the production of his finest effects. For example, if we compare the figures in any mature work by Rembrandt with the figures in any subject picture[1] by Titian, those of the Venetian will commonly be found ever so little lacking in character. They will seem too smooth and generalised, sometimes even to the verge of emptiness, while the figures of Rembrandt will retain a vivid impress of life and personality. A sculptor might take any one of Rembrandt's figures (that is to say from any work of his full maturity) for a model, and make a noble statuette from it: he could hardly do so with Titian's.

That the fault does not lie with colouring *per se* is proved by the ceiling of the Sistine. Common criticism appears blind to the fact that this ceiling contains not only the finest series of figure designs in the world, but also what is perhaps the world's noblest piece of colouring on a large scale. That this quality should have been denied, overlooked, or minimized by generation after generation of critics, many of them not otherwise incapable, is a mystery which I cannot attempt to explain. It is sufficient to point out that Michelangelo was able to obtain superb colour without any sacrifice of those accents of form which give figures their

[1] Always excepting certain supreme works such as the *Bacchus and Ariadne*.

plastic value. Perhaps his success may be explained by his medium. Fine colour in oil painting can rarely be obtained except by delicate reworking, and reworking must involve a certain loss of crispness in the forms. The fresco painter gets his effects directly, or nearly so; his forms in consequence preserve any accent he may give them.

To do Titian justice, his portraits are not open to the same criticism. For vigour, accent, and profound insight they will stand comparison with those of Rembrandt, while in point of variety, of colour invention, and in the infinite refinements of workmanship which that invention implies, they must be adjudged superior. Holbein might also be quoted as a proof that in the field of portraiture a great colourist may very well hold his own against a great chiaroscurist. But there are other provinces of art, and those no petty provinces, in which the advantage of the colourist disappears.

The first and most obvious advantage lies in the heightened effect of force and vigour which is conveyed by a strong contrast of light with darkness. These dramatic contrasts are Rembrandt's chief artistic resource in early manhood, but after a while he seems to have tired of them, and to have recognised that their theatrical effectiveness was no fit setting for the more remote and profound phases of human feeling to express which had become his absorbing

interest. In his drawings he obtained this force of contrast immediately by the firm stroke of a reed pen upon paper; in his paintings the oil medium gave him loaded whites for his high lights, and deep transparent tones of brown and black for his shadows.

No colourist, however deftly or scientifically he employs his medium, can hope to get quite the same concentrated intensity of effect as that which Rembrandt obtained, except by working on the same lines, and by keeping local colour in the strictest subordination. Van Dyck and, in a later generation, Reynolds proved that much could be done in the way of splendid compromise between the diverse ideals. But in nothing does the greatness of Titian show more prominently than in the wide range of an achievement which, while keeping for the most part to the decorative aims of the colourist, and fulfilling them more richly perhaps than any other man has ever done, has also included work on chiaroscurist lines which entitles him to mastery, if not to supremacy, in that field also. A considerable group of paintings, it is true, of Titian's middle life can only be termed attempts at compromise, and unsuccessful attempts: but if we remember that the whole science of oil painting was established by these experiments, the relative unimportance of the failures will become apparent.

Again, so far as the impression of force and intensity

may be conveyed by expressive handling, the worker in monochrome has an advantage over the colourist. Released from the necessity of matching or suggesting the ever shifting play of colour upon the things which he paints, he can devote himself wholly to their tones, their contours, their masses and their accents. He can thus proceed swiftly and confidently where the colourist must pause and look, and mix and modify. We have already seen that the most subtle and fascinating effects of colour are rarely produced, at least in oil painting, by any simple single process. They are commonly the result of careful preparation, and of subsequent, perhaps elaborate, reworking. This reworking will almost certainly efface or dim the freshness and crispness of straightforward brush-work, and even the greatest painters cannot always recover the quality thus lost. Rembrandt's rapid and incisive handling of oil paint retains something of the spirit of the vivid shorthand which enlivens his etchings. The painting of a Titian corresponds rather to the more leisurely and elaborate process of line-engraving.

Again, Rembrandt is less concerned with actuality than with the creation of symbols which emphasise character. Titian on the other hand is so absorbed by the actual appearance of things, that painting with him is by comparison imitative. A figure painted or etched by Rembrandt is related almost entirely to the work of

which it forms a part. It may be a mere scrawl of half-a-dozen lines, having the merest trace of a resemblance in tone, and none at all in colour, to the appearance of such a figure if we saw it before our eyes. Titian always seems to paint with the model before him; his figures have the tone, the colour, and the solidity of real men and women; we might almost say that his figures are substantial while Rembrandt's are alive. This power of suggesting solid substance is one of Titian's most notable gifts: it makes the work of almost all his predecessors look thin, like coloured drawings, as it makes the majority of his successors appear flimsy. But it is open to one disadvantage: it renders the representation of the unsubstantial, of the supernatural, exceedingly difficult. A holy personage standing on firm ground, or seated on a stout marble throne, can safely be represented with the solid attributes of a well-built human being. But when he or she is poised upon melting diaphanous clouds, this very suggestion of weight and mass rouses a feeling of discomfort in the spectator; he feels that the figure is too heavy for its airy supports, and that the result is unnatural rather than supernatural.

A slight sketch or study will escape this incongruity, so that the freedom of handling which we see in Rembrandt's best work is a positive addition to the artist's power of expression, while any approach to more complete realisation would prove just the

reverse. And imitation of local colour may be just as fatal a bar to emphatic expression as the imitation of relief. As we have seen in connection with Rembrandt's landscape drawings, it must frequently be a distracting element, and always involves a certain narrowing of the scale of tones which the artist has at his disposal for suggesting the contrast between nature's light and nature's shadows.

It is a mistake, too, to regard black and white as mere negations of colour. On the contrary, black and the various tones of grey which are found in the scale between pure black and pure white, can have a definite effect upon the emotions as powerful as the strongest tones of red or green. Black instantly suggests to the mind ideas of gloom and darkness, and when its quality is not dead but is broken by patches of paler tone, it suggests mystery also. And this suggestiveness is not lost when it is paled into grey, although with each increase in paleness we notice an increase in its power of suggesting atmosphere, perhaps from an unconscious association with the grey tones of mist and twilight, as black derives its power from association with the shadows of night.

This emotional effect of grey when it inclines to coldness may be so powerful as to be almost repellent. Hence *grisaille*, pure and simple, is rarely employed by artists, who find in practice that a

scale of monochromatic transition from black to white, through a scale of very warm greys, if not of positive browns, suits their purpose better. Perhaps the common use of gilt frames has something to do with this need for greater warmth in oil monochrome, for prints and drawings stand on quite a different footing. Brown ink is commonly used for popular etchings at the present day, and sometimes for mezzotints, but the results have neither the force nor the grandeur of prints in black ink. And the drawings of the great Oriental masters point to the same conclusion, although the example of Rembrandt and Claude and many other European masters has given us a prejudice in favour of work in bistre or sepia, of which we are not likely to divest ourselves all at once.

Briefly, then, in restricting himself to what in comparison with Venetian ideals was hardly more than black and white, Rembrandt employed the perfect method for presenting in the liveliest possible fashion the deeper traits of human character, for suggesting those supernatural or mysterious elements which may be associated with men and the history of mankind, and for investing his creations, divine and terrestrial alike, with that atmosphere of intense and often tragic gravity which is his peculiar secret. And out of simple greys and browns, with perhaps a note of rich red for contrast, he was able, in his

later years, to produce colour effects of extraordinary strength and subtlety, effects which make it impossible to discuss him as a mere chiaroscurist. Even when restricted to black ink and white paper, as in his etchings, he can, when the occasion demands, suggest a full palette.

Still these feats do not quite permit us to class him as a colourist with the great Venetians. Rembrandt's colour is so much a part of the substance of his work that his figures seldom appear to have much colour of their own, but rather to derive colour from the exquisitely toned vapours which envelop them. The figures of the Venetians move in a more diaphanous ether, tinged perhaps with gold or silver, but never so much as to dim or sensibly to modify the brightness of the blue and scarlet and green and purple which make them delightful to our eyes.

And it would be rash to condemn offhand the delightfulness of this appeal, merely because it is immediate. It may be argued that an appeal to the intellect (and it is through the intellect that we have to appreciate such an art as Rembrandt's, even when it calls most directly upon our common human sympathies) is intrinsically nobler than an appeal to the eye, such as that made by a piece of fine decorative colour. Such an argument however could, I think, be pressed only by one who was not an artist. All

artists who have advanced so far beyond the first elements of their art as to love fine colour, even though they cannot produce it, know that the finest colouring makes an appeal to the mind, through the senses, which is none the less potent because its logic is not demonstrable. Like those remoter rhythms those indefinable assonances, which are the touchstone of supreme poetry, and in default of which all metrical expression, however lofty or profound its matter, however complete its utterance, remains inexorably condemned as so much skilful verse, the endless complexity of harmonies, contrasts, and combinations by which a master colourist makes his appeal, not only intensify and accentuate his chosen theme, but vibrate in the memory long after the tangible definite shapes which embody them have faded from the mind.

In Rembrandt's early work this appeal is rarely if ever made; in his later work it is seldom predominant, and sometimes so weak as to be negligible. He depends on other arguments, on profound insight into character and on concentration of effect, and so appeals to our sympathies and intellect rather than to our æsthetic sense pure and simple. Though his best pictures are superb both in planning and in execution, though the mystery of his treatment of shadow at once fascinates and impresses the eye, the greater part of his message lies hidden beneath the outward

surface of his canvas, and touches our feelings only after the mind has had time to comprehend the symbols he uses and to deduce his meaning from them. There is something attractive and romantic in the twilight aspect of his painting that draws the imaginative mind naturally towards it: there is ample material for thought in his slightest study. Rembrandt, in short, is one whose genius may often be enjoyed by the man of intellect and sympathy almost as readily as by the artist, though the artist alone can comprehend the strength and skill of his workmanship. Perhaps it is for this reason that he has been a special favourite with critics, while the colourists, because we can no more describe or define the potency of their influence upon us than we can analyse exactly the means by which they produce it, are unprofitable literary material, even for those who are the most wholly enthralled by their magic.

In saying this I do not mean to try to belittle Rembrandt, or to compare him disadvantageously with Titian, but rather to suggest that there is in the domain of colour a much larger *terra incognita* than most of us realise. The tract explored by Rembrandt, and that so thoroughly that few who have followed in his footsteps have gleaned more than a scanty harvest, is wide enough and varied enough for the most ambitious of mankind. The field of colour, unmapped and as yet but casually visited, has not only the fascination

of a continent remote, infinite and hard of access, but has already yielded such random jewels of delight as to make us feel that it may be there at the last that the art of mankind will unearth its crowning treasure.

NOTE

In the jottings from my note-book which are reprinted as an Appendix, no attempt is made to distinguish between the various forms which Rembrandt's monogram takes, though their differences appear to have some bearing on the authenticity of certain points. For these, and other purely critical questions, the reader may be safely referred to Mr. Hind's recently published book.

APPENDIX

ROUGH NOTES ON REMBRANDT'S ETCHINGS IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM[1]

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1. *Rembrandt's Mother: head and bust* (B. 354). Signed R. H. L. and dated 1628

   A brilliant and almost wholly successful work. Rembrandt does not reach the same excellence for a long time afterwards. Yet it lacks the spacing, solidity, and technical economy of his mature etching—the qualities, in fact, which come with knowledge, though its wonderful sympathy and observation give a foretaste of what Rembrandt's talent may afterwards do.

2. *Rembrandt's Mother: head, full face* (B. 352). Signed R. H. L. and dated 1628

   Another good study. It is interesting to note in all these early works how Rembrandt's mind from the first is concentrated upon the portrayal of character, and not upon the formal graces of Italian art which so many of his countrymen aped and misunderstood.

3. *Rembrandt bareheaded, with high curly hair: head and bust* (B. 27) . . . . . 1628 ?

   In the margin appears a faintly scratched monogram with date 1630. These are probably false. Scratchy ill-arranged work: an effort at getting expression in half light. Rembrandt wears no moustache, so the plate may be earlier than 1628, but still an experiment, like some of the self-

[1] The slow growth of Rembrandt's genius can most readily be appreciated if we remind ourselves in connexion with the date of each etching that he was born in 1606 (July 15).

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portraits in oil of this early period, *e.g.* those at Cassel. The effect obtained by using a double needle did not apparently please Rembrandt, for he does not employ it again.

4. *Rembrandt bareheaded: a large plate roughly etched: head and bust* (B. 338). Signed R. H. L. and dated 1629
A calligraphic scribble much more capable than No. 3.

5. *Peter and John at the Gate of the Temple: roughly etched* (B. 95) . . . . . 1630 ?
Exceedingly skilful passages here alternate with mere scribbling. There is an effort at grand design and spacing, but both are exaggerated, and nothing is realised with the force or completeness required by pictorial emphasis. This completeness Rembrandt has to attain by years of alternate working from nature and from memory.

6. *The small Lion Hunt* (*with one Lion*) (B. 116) . . 1630
The scratches and bad drawing prove this to be early. Though the plate represents an attempt at obtaining an effect of force and movement by rapid and vigorous handling, the effort is a failure, because Rembrandt as yet had not sufficient knowledge to draw animals or figures from memory with even a tolerable degree of correctness.

7. *Beggar Man and Beggar Woman conversing* (B. 164). Signed R. H. L. and dated 1630
Skilful but careless. Neither structure nor mystery in the drawing. Most of these beggar studies must have been done from memory or from very slight sketches, and it is only after long practice that Rembrandt learns to make them thorough.

8. *Beggar warming his hands at a chafing dish* (B. 173) 1630 ?
Skilful but careless. Very modern in its want of perception of anything but the external picturesque, though there is some expressiveness about the head.

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9. *Beggar leaning on a stick, facing l.* (B. 163) . . 1630 ?
Skilful but careless. Very similar to No. 8. The head is rather more truculent.

10. *Beggar sitting cloaked, in an arm-chair* (B. 160) . 1630 ?
An attempt at breadth. Like No. 5 in touch.

11. *Beggar seated on a bank* (B. 174). Signed R. H. L. and dated 1630
Exhibits greater delicacy of line and texture, though the expression is forced and theatrical. Possibly done from Rembrandt himself. Again we have an attempt at a broader massing of light and shade.

12. *Beggar with a wooden leg* (B. 179) . . . . 1630 ?
Like No. 11, but weaker.

13. *Beggar Man and Beggar Woman behind a bank* (B. 165). Signed R. L. . . . . 1630 ?
First state most delicately worked. An attempt at increased massing of light and shade. Made theatrical in fourth state by blackening bank, &c. Note the savagery of the woman.

14. *Man in a cloak and fur cap leaning against a bank* (B. 151). Signed R. H. L. . . . . 1630 ?
Poor and sloppy work: an attempt at getting tone and local colour.

15. *Beggar in a high cap leaning on a stick* (B. 162) . 1630 ?
Pale and sloppy, but able. Note, especially, how the face, for all its apparent carelessness, is felt and constructed.

16. *Beggar leaning on a stick, facing front* (B. 172) . 1630 ?
Scratchy, but more subtly modelled and lighted than the preceding subjects, *e.g.* face and body.

17. *Man walking with a stick* (*Joseph from the Flight into Egypt*) (B. 54) . . . . . 1630 ?
A poor thing. The first state containing the complete composition exists only at Paris and Amsterdam — a ragged, roughly bitten plate (Rovinski 180). Like No. 5 it is an unsuccessful effort to anticipate the freedom of handling

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which Rembrandt attained some twenty years later.

18. *The Presentation in the Temple* (B. 51). Signed R. L. and dated 1630

A daring effort at richness of design, completeness, and delicacy. The composition is planned for broad light and shade : but the transitions are too abrupt, the light is broken by sharp deep shadows. Note the effect of recession both on left and right. The pointing angel in the centre and the beggar's leg and crutch on the left, show how far Rembrandt was ready to go in the search for dramatic effect.

19. *The Circumcision* (B. 48) . . . . . 1630 ?

An attempt at complete tonality and chiaroscuro of painting on a miniature scale. Much feebler work than No. 18. Conventional contrasts of light as in Rembrandt's early paintings, but redeemed by none of the spirit in the handling which his work in oil almost always shows.

20. *Christ disputing among the Doctors* (B. 66). Signed R. L. and dated 1630

Like No. 18, but more sketchy and suggestive, more broadly and softly lighted. The design is improved in the third state by a reduction of the top and left hand margins, which concentrates attention upon Christ and the figures round Him, and by the additions to their number.

21. *Rembrandt's Father* (?) *in full face, wearing a close cap : bust* (B. 304). Signed R. H. L. and dated . 1630

In reverse from Dr. Bredius's picture. In the third state the rock at the side is cut away. Solid work, but without luminosity or inventiveness. For the identity of the sitter, *cf.* No. 131.

22. *Rembrandt's Father* (?) *three-quarters, and wearing a high cap : bust* (B. 321). Signed R. L. and dated 1630

Cf. picture dated 1630 in Ferdinandeum, Innsbrück. Good work, but not remarkable, though much lighter and more luminous than No. 21.

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23. *Rembrandt's Father* (?) *in profile r.; head only: bust added afterwards* (B. 292). Signed R. L. and afterwards R. H. L. and dated 1630
Marks a further advance in method, texture, structure, &c.

24. *Rembrandt's Father* (?) *in profile r.; small bust* (B. 294). Signed R. L. and dated 1630
Rather thin and ineffective, yet subtle, *e.g.* in drawing of nose, eyes, and skull.

25. *Three Studies of Old Men's Heads* (B. 374) . . 1630 ?
An excellent free sketch. Upper head to the left specially good.

26. *Bust of an old man with flowing beard and white sleeve* (B. 291) . . . . . 1630 ?
Minute and skilful work, but not up to Rembrandt's best standard, though fur, &c., of dress are clearly by Rembrandt.

27. *Bust of an old man with flowing beard: the head bowed forward* (B. 325). Signed R. H. L. and dated . 1630
Another experiment on the same model, rather less minute, having just the thoroughness and the smallness of Rembrandt's painting at this time.

28. *Bust of an old man with flowing beard: the head inclined three-quarters r.* (B. 309). Signed R. H. L. and dated 1630
See No. 27. The best of the three in workmanship, *e.g.* hair and reflected lights on face. General effect stronger, and use of line more happy.

29. *Rembrandt in a fur cap: the dress light: bust* (B. 24). Signed R. H. L. and dated . . . 1630
Spirited work with much more scientific modelling. Cap, dress, and dark passages of hair due to a second biting over a paler etching.

30. *Rembrandt bareheaded in sharp light, looking over his shoulder: bust* (B. 10). Signed R. H. L. and dated 1630
(The signature and date can only be made out in the first state.)
Coarse and more dramatic. Note the monoto-

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nous forms of the hair and the weak treatment of the shoulders, with their poor silhouette.

31. *Rembrandt bareheaded and open-mouthed, as if shouting: bust* (B. 13). Signed R. H. L. and dated . 1630

Coarse work, very like No. 30, even to poverty of forms of hair, but with more delicacy, *e.g.* in silhouette of collar and cheek. An exercise in expression, like many paintings of this time.

32. *Rembrandt in a cap, open-mouthed and staring: bust* (B. 320). Signed R. H. L. and dated . . . 1630

A clever trifle: note especially the drawing of the mouth and lower part of the face.

33. *Rembrandt bareheaded, with thick curling hair and small white collar: bust* (B. 1) . . . . 1630 ?

Incredibly poor: signed R. L., but very doubtful. Both first and second bitings are thoroughly weak in drawing. If by Rembrandt at all, it must be *c.* 1627, and one of his earliest experiments in etching.

34. *Rembrandt in a cap, laughing: bust* (B. 316). Signed R. H. L. and dated 1631

A clever trifling thing.

35. *Rembrandt bareheaded, leaning forward as if listening: bust* (B. 9) . . . . . 1631 ?

Poor and under-bitten, but no feebler in work than several other experiments in lighting. Perhaps earlier in date than 1630, since Rembrandt has no moustache.

36. *Rembrandt with barehead, leaning forward: bust* (B. 5) . . . . . 1631 ?

A coarse, vigorous sketch on the plate of No. 17.

37. *Head of a man in a fur cap, crying out* (B. 327) . 1631 ?

A coarse, vigorous sketch, unimportant.

38. *The Blind Fiddler* (B. 138). Signed R. H. L. and dated 1631

Minute and rather loose. Shows no grip of reality. Probably done from memory or a hasty sketch, and not from nature.

39. *Head of man in high cap, three-quarters r.* (B. 302) . 1631 ?

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A rubbishy little trifle, probably not by Rembrandt, as there is no real drawing anywhere in it.

40. *A Polander standing with stick, profile to r.* (B. 142). Signed R. L. 1631 1631

A very skilful, lively little sketch.

41. *Sheet of Studies of Men's Heads* (B. 366). Signed in reverse R. H. L. . . . . 1631 ?

A curious specimen of Rembrandt's work in various styles. Important as bearing on different plates which seem below his standard. The two heads on the left, which were cut off first before the plate was divided, are the two worst. Even the best are rather superficial.

42. *Diana at the Bath* (B. 201). Signed R. H. L. *f.* . 1631 ?

Very careful, skilful, and, in places, delicate, *e.g.* tree and lace. The quiver hangs on the tree in a chalk sketch at the Museum, evidently made from a model—but the peculiarities of the model's figure are not toned down in the etching. Like No. 43 a valuable exercise and memorandum for one whose opportunities of study from the nude model were few.

43. *Naked woman seated on a mound* (B. 198). Signed R. H. L. . . . . 1631 ?

More minute in handling and more complicated in modelling. An extraordinary technical exercise, illustrating most vividly how far in his search for character Rembrandt was willing to depart from Italian ideals.

44. *Danae and Jupiter* (B. 204). Signed R. H. L. . 1631 ?

Not well etched. Indicates that Rembrandt's work was still uncertain—but as a first attempt at mystery, *e.g.* in dimly seen figure of Jupiter, and misty light round him, this plate has a certain importance in his career.

45. *A man* (B. 190) Signed R. H. L. and dated . . 1631

46. *A woman beneath a tree* (B. 191). Signed R. H. L. and dated 1631

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47. *Bust of an old bearded man looking down: three-quarters r.* (B. 260). Signed R. H. L. and dated 1631
An effort at great breadth and delicacy.

48. *Bust of an old man with flowing beard: head nearly erect: eyes cast down, looking slightly l.* (B. 315). Signed R. H. L. and dated 1631
The same model treated with less breadth and more contrast.

49. *Bust of an old man with fur cap and flowing beard: nearly full face, eyes direct* (B. 312) . . . 1631?
The same model and treatment, but more delicate.

50. *Rembrandt's Mother, with hand on chest: small bust* (349). Signed R. L. and dated . . . 1631
An elaborate effort at complete tonality, somewhat lacking in freshness.

51. *Rembrandt's Mother seated facing r., in an Oriental head dress: half length showing hand* (B. 348). M. 51. Signed R. H. L. and dated . . . 1631
Fine and minute, but looser than No. 52. Note the grandeur and simplicity of the gesture, and how in this and the following plate the large silhouette of the figure is enhanced by the plain background.

52. *Rembrandt's Mother seated at a table looking r.: three-quarter length* (B. 343.) Signed R. H. L. *f.* . 1631?
A very fine design for the period: stronger work than No. 51, and as complete as Rembrandt's best paintings of the same date. As we might expect, he gains complete mastery over portraiture many years before he has equal success with his imaginative compositions.

53. *Rembrandt's Father* (?) *in furred Oriental cap and robe: half length* (B. 263). Signed R. H. L. *f.* and dated 1631
Good; showing more freedom in treatment of dress than has hitherto been attempted. Could this Hebraic model have been Rembrandt's father, who had died in April 1630? See under No. 131.

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54. *Rembrandt wearing a soft hat, cocked: head only: body added afterwards* (B. 7) . . . 1631 ?
Careful and minute, but not very interesting.

55. *Rembrandt with long bushy hair: head only* (B. 8) . 1631 ?
Very poor, thin and feeble, weak everywhere, yet with some spirit in conception. The forms of the hair and the method of shading the cheek are not like Rembrandt, yet the piece has a sincerity and character which pupils do not usually show.

56. *Rembrandt in a heavy fur cap: full face: bust* (B. 16). Signed R. H. L. and dated 1631
Very fine bold work: cap added later, perhaps to conceal the somewhat insignificant look of the head when left bare.

57. *Rembrandt wearing a soft cap: full face: head only* (*Rembrandt aux trois moustaches*) (B. 2) . . 1631 ?
Good, delicate, and wonderfully thorough in modelling.

58. *Rembrandt with cap pulled forward: bust* (B. 319) . 1631 ?
Sound, but somewhat spiritless.

59. *Rembrandt with fur cap in an oval border: bust* (B. 12) . . . . . 1631 ?
This, though coarse and over-bitten, is powerfully modelled. Rembrandt looks young (*cf.* No. 3), and this might well date from 1629.

60. *Rembrandt with bushy hair and contracted eyebrows: bust* (B. 25). Signed R. H. L. and dated . . 1631
Very poor, thin, and petty: weak pupil's work. Possibly Van Vliet.

61. *Rembrandt bareheaded, the light falling sharply from r.: bust* (B. 332). Signed R. L. . . . . 1631 ?
Over-bitten, but good work and modelling in detached passages. Eye very poor, background possibly retouched. Hind suggests Livens, and compares it with Gotha picture of 1629 (Bode 13). The work appears to me too conscientious for Livens, who is less sound and more facile.

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62. *Rembrandt in a slant fur cap* (B. 14). Signed R. H. L. 1631
Just possibly sketched by Rembrandt. But the dull careful finish must certainly be the work of a pupil.

63. *Rembrandt in a cloak with falling collar: bust* (B. 15). Signed R. H. L. and dated 1631
Perhaps an under-bitten plate by Rembrandt, almost wholly reworked by a pupil. Note especially want of feeling for the structure of the body, which is designed and drawn as if it were a sack.

64. *Rembrandt with a jewel in his cap* (Seidlitz 377) . 1631 ?
Rubbish which should never have been confused with Rembrandt's work.

65. *Young man in a cap* (B. 322). Signed Rt. and dated in first state 1631
Poor and coarse: not by Rembrandt.

66. *Rembrandt in dark cloak and cap: bust* (B. 6) . . 1631 ?
Coarse over-bitten work, perhaps by Rembrandt, over a very faintly etched plate by Rembrandt, which is visible all round the cap and the front of the dress.

67. *Rembrandt* (?) *scowling in an octagon: head only* (B. 336). Signed with monogram R. H. ? . . 1631 ?
Poor and coarse. Fiercely bitten work by pupil on an under-bitten plate by Rembrandt.

68. *Grotesque profile: man in high cap* (B. 326) . . 1631 ?
Apparently a copy with variations of No 69. Unimportant.

69. *Peasant with his hands behind his back* (B. 135). Signed R. H. L. and dated 1631
Apparently a genuine but quite unimportant scribble.

70. *Bust of a snub-nosed man in a cap* (B. 317). Signed R. H. L. and dated 1631
Pupil's work. No real drawing anywhere.

71. *Bust of a man with cap bound round the ears and chin; profile* (B. 323) . . . . . 1631 ?

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The scrawling continuous lines suggest an imitation of Rembrandt's pen drawings by some pupil or follower.

72. *Beggar with a stick walking l.* (B. 167). Signed R. H. and dated 1631

In spite of the signature this appears to be coarse "school" work. The utter poverty of the contours everywhere, and the wretched drawing of the right leg, can hardly be Rembrandt's, although the plate has a certain atmosphere which the imitators usually miss.

73. *Beggar with his left hand extended* (B. 150). Signed R. H. L. and dated 1631

Genuine, but hasty and loose, except the head, which is powerful and characteristic.

74. *Blind man (Tobit?) at a doorway* (B. 153) . . 1631 ?

Coarse but spirited and expressive. Might be an early work of 1629 or thereabouts. *Cf.* No. 5.

75. *Seated beggar and his dog.* (B. 175). Signed R. L. and dated 1631

Pupil's work over a light etching which does not seem to be by Rembrandt.

76. *Old woman in a cottage, with a string of onions on the wall* (B. 134). Signed R. I. ? and dated . 1631

Perhaps etched by a pupil from a beginning or a drawing by Rembrandt. The signature is not like Rembrandt's own.

77. *The Leper* (B. 171). Signed R. H. and dated . . 1631

First state larger; a coarse and scribbled, but genuine plate. Unimportant.

78. *Two beggars tramping towards the r.* (B. 154). Signed Rt. . . . . 1631 ?

A coarse genuine scribble.

79. *Beggar with a crippled hand, leaning on a stick r.* (B. 166) . . . . . 1631 ?

A genuine scribble. Margins continuously reduced in successive states to concentrate effect.

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80. *Old beggar woman with a gourd* (B. 168). . . . 1631 ?
A fine and genuine sketch, full of character and powerful drawing.

81. *Beggar standing leaning on a stick, l.: small plate* (B. 169). Signed with monogram R. H. *in.* . 1631 ?
Delicate. The knot on the trouser strap is like Rembrandt, but the plate is nowhere quite convincing. Possibly a pupil's study from a drawing by Rembrandt.

82. *Bust of an old woman in furred cloak and heavy head-dress* (B. 355). Signed R. H. and dated . 1631
Pupil's work. Coarse, ill-drawn, ill modelled, and ill-lighted.

83. *Bust of an old woman in a high head-dress bound round the chin* (B. 358) . . . . . 1631 ?
Quite certainly by Livens, whose etched work it exactly resembles.

84. *Bust of a beardless man in fur cloak and cap* (B. 307). Signed R. H. and dated twice 1631
Genuine work, perhaps finished by a pupil. The line of the jaw by the ear is good, and the remainder, though mechanical, is above a pupil's ordinary standard.

85. *Bust of a bald man in a fur cloak looking r.* (B. 324). Signed R. H. and dated 1631
This should probably be retained as genuine. The delicate lines are all like Rembrandt: the heavy ones like a pupil. Probably an under-bitten plate finished in the studio. Based on Nantes picture (Bode 26).

86. *Bust of a bald-headed man looking down grinning* (B. 298). Signed R. H. L. and dated . . . 1631
This seems to be an under-bitten plate re-worked. *Cf.* Nos. 84, 85.

87. *Bust of a bearded old man with a high forehead and close felt cap* (B. 314). Signed and dated . . 1631
Heavy biting on the top of a lighter etching, both possibly pupil's work. Unimportant.

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88. *Bust of old man looking down, with wavy hair and beard* (B. 337) . . . . . 1631?
Feeble pupil's work. Quite negligible.

89. *Small bust of a bearded man looking down with eyes nearly closed* (B. 296) . . . . . 1632?
Good, but not Rembrandt—probably Livens. (*Cf.* Livens, B. 53.)

90. *Sheet of Studies: head of Rembrandt, beggar pair, head of an old man and old woman, &c.* (B. 363) 1632?
The head of Rembrandt very good and more mature than most work of the time. Possibly it is one or two years later. The scrawled beggar studies would serve as proof of genuineness of many similar loose plates.

91. *Rembrandt's Mother in widow's dress and black gloves* (B. 344). Signed with the artist's name in full, but not dated 1632
The execution of this excellent plate, a modified copy in reverse from No. 52, strongly suggests Livens. And a comparison will show that this copy, though effective, has none of the delicacy of the original. Rembrandt's father was buried April 27, 1630.

92. *Old man seated with flowing beard, fur cap, and velvet cloak* (B. 262). Signed R. H. L. *f.*, but not dated 1632?
Genuine; the hand very good. The work on the beard seems to prove beyond question that Rembrandt was the author of the other plates of old bearded men.

93. *Man standing in Oriental costume and plumed fur hat* (B. 152). Signed R. H. L. and dated . . 1632
A clever study of textures and colour. The treatment of the hair, beard, and face recalls some of the weaker plates.

94. *St. Jerome Praying* (B. 101). Signed in full and dated 1632
Poor and conventional, perhaps because done without models.

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95. *The Holy Family* (B. 62). Signed R. H. L. . . . 1632

Date settled by the monogram, which does not occur after 1632, and by slight uncertainties in the handling. The light open style is a foretaste of Rembrandt's work in 1640.

96. *The Raising of Lazarus: larger plate* (B. 73). Signed R. H. L. *v. Rijn f.* . . . . . 1632 ?

This must be accepted, and the faults set down to youthful inexperience of the grand style. Some passages resemble Livens, *e.g.* figure of woman on right, but Rembrandt did all of it himself. The influence of Rubens also, which is so strong in the plates of 1634, is here seen definitely for the first time. The miracle is realised only as a drama, not as a manifestation of spiritual omnipotence. Yet this dramatic force has a considerable value in the making of an artist. Where it is deficient, as in the case of Whistler, no taste or virtuosity quite make up for the loss.

97. *The Rat Killer* (B. 121). Signed R. H. L. and dated 1632

The rat killer and the boy are evidently studied from nature. Note, for example, the patch under the boy's chin-strap. The landscape follows the established Dutch convention. The treatment of foliage is much inferior to Rembrandt's work ten years later.

98. *A Polander leaning on a stick: profile* (B. 141) *c.* 1632 ?

A swift, loose, spirited little plate.

99. *A turbaned soldier on horseback* (B. 139). Signed R. H. L. in reverse . . . . . 1633 ?

A small, free study, apparently from memory. It may well be earlier than 1632, and possibly a trial pose for the horseman in the *Baptism of the Eunuch*, engraved by Van Vliet.

100. *A Cavalry Fight* (B. 117) . . . . . 1633 ?

An admirable free study of rapid movement. Much more certain in touch than No. 99, and possibly as late as 1641.

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101. *The Good Samaritan* (B. 90). Signed and dated "Rembrandt . inventor . et . feecit" . . . 1633

Every bit of this is by Rembrandt, after the painting in the Wallace Collection. The drawing of the dog's coat and the sinews of its leg are quite beyond the capacity of any of Rembrandt's pupils. Even Livens, the most skilful of them, sees facts more picturesquely and loosely. When we hear Rembrandt's authorship questioned, we must remember that at this date etching had rarely or never been used for reproducing the full tonality of a picture, and that an experiment in this direction by Rembrandt was therefore natural enough. Nos. 102 and 103 are experiments of a similar kind.

102. *The Descent from the Cross: first plate* (B. 81). Signed and dated 1633

Every stroke of this is by Rembrandt. The head of Joseph of Arimathea is clearly a memory of that of Sylvius. The standing figure on the left recalls Livens, but it is most improbable that Livens could have helped (*cf.* No. 91). The idea no doubt was derived from some sketch or print of Rubens's great picture at Antwerp. The failure in the biting has given the plate a certain ghostly charm, which may have suggested to Rembrandt the idea of avoiding the definiteness he had practised hitherto, and so attaining to that mystery of effect which was afterwards to be characteristic of him.

103. *The Descent from the Cross: second plate* (B. 81). Signed and dated 1633

In this second plate the background and many details are different. The whole is rather more coarsely drawn, and considerable portions of shading with the burin seem to be done by pupils (Qy. Van Vliet). The thing can only be regarded as a studio piece, and is interesting chiefly for the

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ambition of the design. Like No. 101 it is a reproduction of a painting, the original in this case being at Munich.

104. *Joseph's Coat brought to Jacob* (B. 38). Signed and perhaps dated . . . . . 1633 ?

Entirely by Rembrandt but done from memory. Note the delicate suggestion of landscape in the distance. The near foliage is a convention similar to that which is found in Rembrandt's oil paintings of this time.

105. *The Flight into Egypt* (B. 52). Signed and dated . 1633

Genuine but ineffective, from the small scale of drawing coupled with efforts at complete tonality and finish. There is also an attempt at mystery in the elaborately worked background, which fails owing to imperfect fusion with the conventionally lighted figures.

106. *The Ship of Fortune* (B. 111). Signed and dated . 1633

An illustration to "Der Zeevaertlof," Amsterdam, 1634. Done from imagination—therefore loose but undoubtedly genuine; more elaborate than such invented compositions hitherto. Rembrandt never quite mastered the business of making allegorical compositions, and in this case, with the evident influence of Rubens to help him, the crowded imagery fails to deliver any coherent message. Note the difficult attitude chosen for Antony's falling horse, and the play of light over the distant crowd and Janus's temple.

107. *Rembrandt's Mother, in a cloth head-dress, looking down: head only* (B. 351). Signed and dated . 1633

Delicate and crisp if not quite in Rembrandt's strongest vein. The plate is cut down to make a design out of what was at first a mere sketch.

108. *Rembrandt in cap and scarf: the face dark: bust* (B. 17). Signed and dated 1633

Genuine, but contains so much scrawled and careless work as to justify lenient criticism of

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other plates, such as the "Oriental Heads." Note how the outline of the back is softened by the scarf, and the awkward mass of the shoulder is broken by the tassel.

109. *Rembrandt with raised sabre: half length* (B. 18). Signed and dated 1634

Like No. 108 in the draperies, but infinitely more delicate in modelling of features, &c., and less scratchy. The face is a masterly piece of work.

110. *Rembrandt with plumed cap and lowered sabre: three-quarter length* (B. 23). Signed and dated . 1634

Like Nos. 108 and 109. When cutting down the plate to an oval of the second state, Rembrandt omitted the most loose and scratchy parts. Note the irregular shading of background in second state to suggest atmosphere round the head.

111. *Portrait of Jan Cornelis Sylvius, preacher* (B. 266). Signed and dated 1634

Genuine, though the eyes are ill drawn. Possibly done from the picture in A. Van Carstanjen's Collection, Berlin, and not from nature. In the British Museum there is a counterproof retouched by Rembrandt. Faults in the background and dress once more show that the young etcher had still much to learn.

112. *Rembrandt's wife, Saskia, with pearls in her hair: bust* (B. 347). Signed and dated 1634

This timid little plate, where Rembrandt's authorship can hardly be disputed, proves the genuineness of several of the curly haired old men, &c., of earlier date. The dress and background too are not really good in structure, though the effect is airy, and the subject makes the plate popular.

113. *A woman reading* (B. 345). Signed and dated . 1634

An attempted *tour de force*; a combination

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of tone, modelling and colour. The line work in consequence is poor. Note bad drawing of the right hand. The head-dress should be compared with the *Oriental heads after Livens*, Nos. 131, 132, 133, and 134.

114. *A Peasant: one of a pair, calling out* (B. 177). Signed and dated 1634
Free sketch, not very good, probably from memory or very rapid note.

115. *A Peasant: the other of the pair, replying* (B. 178). Signed and dated 1634
Free sketch, not very good.

116. *Two Tramps, a Man and a Woman* (B. 144) . . 1634?
Slight free sketch, not very good: has been doubted, but note drawing of woman's face, hand, and left foot.

117. *Sheet of two slight studies: one of them a Peasant Man and Woman* (B. 373) . . . . . 1634?
Very slight, but right.

118. *Joseph and Potiphar's wife* (B. 39). Signed and dated 1634

119. *St. Jerome reading* (B. 100). Signed and dated . 1634
In this comparatively feeble plate Rembrandt seems to be working from imagination and attempting detail. The skull in the foreground, the Saint's hand, dress, &c., are good and characteristic. The landscape matter is still imperfectly observed, even the thistle is only half understood.

120. *The Angel appearing to the Shepherds* (B. 44). Signed and dated 1634
The outline work is undoubtedly by Rembrandt, as in No. 106, *i.e.* working from memory. The second and third states are also by Rembrandt. The plate is an attempt to get in etching the intricacy and mystery of oil painting. The composition is still patchy and theatrical compared with his later work, but we see, especially in the landscape under the vision, an attempt to recapture

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some of the ghostly charm of the plate No. 102, in which the biting failed.

121. *Christ at Emmaus* (B. 88). Signed and dated . 1634

Done from imagination. Notice the weak hands. The influence of Rubens is marked, both in the types chosen, in the design which is more sharply lighted than usual, and in the roundness and flow of the drapery. Divinity here is a physical rather than spiritual force. *The Incredulity of St. Thomas* in the Hermitage Gallery is a contemporary example of the influence of Rubens upon Rembrandt's painting.

122. *Christ and the Woman of Samaria: among ruins* (B. 71). Signed and dated 1634

All done from imagination, *e.g.* drawing of woman's head. The figure of Christ is still like Rubens. The rest is typical Rembrandt work in drawing, though youthful and rather stiff. Under the influence of Rubens the lighting is broader, the atmospheric effect more natural than in earlier plates.

123. *The Crucifixion: small plate* (B. 80). Signed . 1634?

So good in work that it might well be a year or two later; at once more free, more mysterious, and more airy than the plates before or after it in the Museum series. The tinting of an unique impression in the collection appears to be done as an experiment in the course of printing. The magnificence of the result suggests that Rembrandt wiped the plate with his own hand to try the effect of altering the design, and turning it into a night piece.

124. *The Tribute Money* (B. 68) . . . . . 1634?

Possibly a composition from memory of other pictures. Not typical of Rembrandt in design or massing, and so much weaker than the plates placed near it in the Museum series as to suggest an earlier date.

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125. *The Stoning of St. Stephen* (B. 97). Signed and dated 1635

A poor confused plate, again showing the influence of Rubens.

126. *Christ driving the Money Changers from the Temple* (B. 69). Signed and dated 1635

Another example of foreign influence on Rembrandt's work. Though the figure of Christ is borrowed from Dürer, the chief influence appears to be Venetian, and the sharp divisions between the numerous patches of light and shade in the foreground groups seem to need the support of colour. The background is admirably treated in a style more characteristic of Rembrandt. The paintings of this year also show traces of foreign influence, notably the oval *Finding of Moses* (John G. Johnson Collection), the *Rape of Ganymede* (Dresden), and *Abraham's Sacrifice* (Hermitage).

127. *Girl with hair falling on her shoulders* (*The Great Jewish Bride*) (B. 340). Signed and dated R. 1635 (in reverse) in later states 1635

Apparently done from a study, not direct from life; the work is prosy and lacking in variety of touch and texture. All the first four states are by Rembrandt, but the added work is heavy in effect. In the third and fourth state Rembrandt tries to remedy this by toning down the hands and adding marks on the wall.

128. *Jan Uytenbogaert, preacher of the sect of Arminian Remonstrants* (B. 279). Signed and dated in later states 1635

Delicate but not perfect, *e.g.* right hand and arm. The head and left hand good, but the lower part of the plate even in the first state is not really good. The additions making the finished state (*d*) are masterly in design, and though careless in execution they are so aptly placed that it is hard to believe they are not by Rembrandt,

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though they do not correspond with the retouched proof, and are doubted by the British Museum. Possibly Rembrandt considered that vigorous work was necessary to reinforce a slightly timid beginning.

129. *An old woman sleeping* (B. 350) . . . . . 1635?

Head, hands, and head-dress undoubtedly by Rembrandt. Some wonderful drawing. Note the hairs in the nostril and on the temples, also the left hand, eye, nose, and fur. But the plate suffers from being too uniformly minute. Insistence on texture of furs and clothes destroys the pre-eminence of the head.

130. *Old man in a high fur cap, with closed eyes* (B. 290) . . . . . 1635?

A crisp and picturesque study of no great importance. The fur cap is an afterthought to give weight and accent to the head. The treatment of it should be compared with No. 132.

131. *First Oriental head after Livens* (B. 286). Signed "Rembrandt geretuc" and dated 1635

The ears and the whole drawing and modelling of the face, the shirt, and the fur collar are certainly by Rembrandt himself, also the beard, moustache, and lock on the forehead. It is a correction and improvement on Livens' plate after the picture now in Dr. Melville Wasserman's Collection, Paris (Bode No. 25). The model for this and the next subject is commonly called Rembrandt's father. But Rembrandt's father had died in 1630, and possibly the Oxford drawing inscribed Harman Gerrits, which represents quite a different person from this model, is our single authentic document. *Cf.* A. M. Hind, *Burlington Magazine*, vol. viii. pp. 426–431.

132. *Second Oriental head after Livens* (B. 287). Signed "Rembrandt geretuckert" . . . . . 1635?

Another correction of the similar plate by Livens,

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in complete modelling of the features, colour of the turban, texture of the fur, and solidity of the figure, which in Livens is flat.

133. *Third Oriental head after Livens* (B. 288). Signed "Rembrandt geretuck" and dated . . . 1635

Livens' composition corrected and his manner parodied. The design is made simple and sensible, the whole is coloured and enriched. The work, though free and careless (being invented), is by Rembrandt, *e.g.* beard, and passage from light to shadow on chest.

134. *Fourth Oriental head after Livens* (B. 289). Signed R. . . . . 1635?

The original of this was the best of the Livens plates, and every touch in Rembrandt's version is not only genuine, but masterly. Livens had etched a good plate; Rembrandt parodied it with a masterpiece. The signature on the first three plates, which follow Livens closely, is "Rembrandt geretuckert," as if to certify that the designs were not his. The fourth is transformed into something so good that it is practically a new thing, and is signed with an initial R. without any qualifying phrase. It seems most reasonable to consider this set of four plates as a playful caprice on the part of Rembrandt, to show his friend Livens how his work might be improved without any drastic alteration of design or treatment.

135. *Head of a beardless old man in a high fur cap* (B. 299) . . . . . 1635?

Not by Rembrandt, unless it is quite a boyish effort. A worthless scrap anyhow.

136. *Bald old man with a short beard: in profile* (B. 306) 1635?

Clever but very doubtful; it might be by Livens or by some later imitator. Note ear and hair, picturesque but not real.

137. *Curly-headed man with a wry mouth* (B. 305) . 1635?

Bad, not by Rembrandt.

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138. *A Polander standing with his hands folded: small plate* (B. 140) . . . . . 1635 ?
Good, delicate work, in the manner of the small *Crucifixion*, No. 123, and perhaps of the same date.

139. *The Quacksalver* (B. 129). Signed and dated . 1635
Very clever and spirited in spite of the minute workmanship. Much more thorough and scientific than No. 138.

140. *St. Jerome in prayer, looking down* (B. 102). Signed and dated 1635
Figure poor and more common in workmanship than Rembrandt's wont: not done from a model. The lion is fine, and argues an acquaintance with the real animal gained since the etching of the previous *St. Jeromes*. It is the only part of the plate which supports the dating of 1635.

141. *The Pancake Woman* (B. 124). Signed and dated 1635
Good. The first state is very lightly sketched in, colour and solidity being added later.

142. *The Strolling Musicians* (B. 119) . . . . 1635 ?
Not by Rembrandt. Hands, faces, hats, and everything incredibly bad.

143. *Christ before Pilate: large plate* (B. 77). Signed and dated in the first state 1635, in the finished states 1636 1635–1636
The central group in the second state is by Rembrandt, the rest certainly by a pupil, possibly Van Vliet. A good example of Rembrandt's pupils' capacity at this time when assisted by their master's designs. The original oil study is in the National Gallery, and the plate, like No. 103, was intended to meet a popular demand.

144. *Rembrandt and his wife Saskia: busts* (B. 19). Signed in full and dated 1636
Saskia very good; Rembrandt only tolerable. Note the imperfect drawing of the hand, as in other plates before and after.

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145. *Studies of the head of Saskia and others* (B. 365). Signed and dated 1636

An admirable example of sound modelling and command of line. The handling is much more varied, decisive, and structural than in such earlier plates as the portrait of Rembrandt's mother (No. 1).

146. *Manasseh Ben Israel; Jewish author* (B. 269). Signed and dated 1636

Genuine, but rather cold and prosy, and poor in quality compared with Rembrandt's other work of this period, though the expression of character is sufficient by itself to separate the plate from the work of all other Dutch etchers of the time. Van Dyck was the one artist then living who could have done as well or better.

147. *The return of the Prodigal Son* (B. 91). Signed and dated 1636

Scratchy, loose, and done without models. Unified by a grouping flow of line, and delicate hazy tones, rather than by any strong scheme of light and shade. Freedom of handling gives it emotion and liveliness, while the human element is insisted on almost to caricature. The plate is the antithesis of such efforts as the *Raising of Lazarus* (96) and the *Christ before Pilate* (143), in that it illustrates the superiority of real human character over adroitly posed melodrama. Note the effect of light in the landscape foreshadowing Rembrandt's later style.

148. *Abraham caressing Isaac* (B. 33). Signed . . 1636 ?

The old man's head and bust suggest a study from life, being delicate and perfectly drawn. The rest is apparently done from memory, or from a slight study. Note the awkward arrangement of the feet, and the lively glance of the child which suggests something really seen. The lighting is most skilfully planned.

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149. *Abraham casting out Hagar and Ishmael* (B. 30). Signed and dated 1637

Very spirited and delicate, like a fine example of Rembrandt's early style in painting, but here the refined tonality of painting is suggested without the heaviness of such a plate as *The Good Samaritan* (101), by the suppression of local colour. Too clever and brilliant and pretty to be quite great, though evidently the work of a great artist and *illustrator;* indeed Rembrandt's first motive here seems to be the plain telling of the story, and the graces of the plate to be incidental.

150. *Bearded man wearing a velvet cap with a jewel clasp* (B. 313). Signed and dated . . . 1637

Clever and delicate, but so minute in treatment as to look tame if set beside a plate in Rembrandt's broader manner, such as No. 151.

151. *Young man in a velvet cap, with books beside him* (B. 268). Signed and dated 1637

A magnificent piece, both in design and in strong simple execution. A great advance on the preceding plates, which were too polished or too scratchy. Had Rembrandt seen some portrait by Holbein? Yet its success seems almost an accident, since years pass before Rembrandt is able to achieve such things with certainty. But for the inscription it might well have been placed ten years later in his career.

152. *Three heads of women; one asleep* (B. 368). Signed and dated 1637

A sheet of excellent studies.

153. *Three heads of women, one lightly sketched* (B. 367). 1637 ?

A charming sketch, admirable work throughout.

154. *Study of Saskia as St. Catherine* (*The "Little Jewish Bride"*) (B. 342). Signed and dated . . . 1638

Less thorough, but with a rippling freedom of touch which prepares us for the characteristic manner of the next few years, when Rembrandt

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seems to have been strongly influenced by Rubens.

155. *Part of a head wearing a velvet cap, and a sketch of a tree* (B. 372) . . . . . 1638 ?

The head is finished bit by bit like Dutch painting, the tree much more freely handled. The date of 1643 suggested by Middleton is perhaps more appropriate than 1638, since the head, a self-portrait, is quite masterly compared with No. 156, and the tree wholly in Rembrandt's mature style.

156. *Rembrandt in velvet cap and plume, with an embroidered dress: bust* (B. 20). Signed and dated. 1638

Genuine, finished and accomplished, yet unsatisfactory. Perhaps an attempt at getting the fluent ease and colour of Rubens, whose style the flowing forms of the drapery suggest.

157. *Rembrandt in plain clothes and flat cap: bust* (B. 26) . . . . . 1638 ?

A masterly sketch, in which colour is most brilliantly interpreted.

158. *Man with broad hat and open mouth* (B. 311). Signed R. L. and dated . . . . . 1638 ?

It would seem as if the date should be read 1630. The work has none of the power and decision of Rembrandt's style in 1638. Possibly the plate was etched under the momentary influence of some such artist as De Keyser.

159. *Adam and Eve* (B. 28). Signed and dated . . 1638

Note the masterly modelling of the nudes, and the splendid drawing of the tree trunk. The composition is not perfectly fused, but is broad and powerful. One might imagine it a challenge to the various heroic versions of the subject by the great Italians—an opposition of character and sincerity to the current generalising idealism. No plate illustrates more vividly the essentially modern attitude of Rembrandt towards his art.

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160. *Joseph telling his dreams* (B. 37). Signed and dated 1638

An attempt at an elaborate study of human character which illustrates Rembrandt's insight by the variety and naturalness of the types represented. But to combine the characters into a harmonious artistic whole is still beyond his power —the plate is confused and crowded. To secure greater breadth and unity we find Rembrandt in the next plate turning again to Rubens, and merging all his figures, even at some risk of caricature, in one great blaze of light.

161. *The Death of the Virgin* (B. 99). Signed and dated 1639

A brilliant invention. The man in a cape in front is possibly done from a model, but the others are drawn from memory, and are still rather loosely constructed. The great difference from the earlier plates lies in the treatment of the light: brightness being no longer suggested by violent contrasts, but by diffusion. The lightness of tone adds to the impression of space. To the influence of Rubens we must add that of Mantegna (whose prints Rembrandt copied), notably in the figure of St. John.

162. *The Presentation in the Temple: an oblong print* (B. 49) . . . . . 1639 ?

This may be later in date, the modelling and drawing are more mature and less mannered than in No. 161, indeed they come up to Rembrandt's finest standard. The plate is under-bitten, perhaps deliberately, with the idea of getting greater breadth, and touched with dry point. *Cf.* No. 193.

163. *Sheet of studies, with a woman lying ill in bed, &c.* (B. 369) . . . . . 1639 ?

One invalid is very like Saskia. The work in some of the studies might well be a year or two earlier than 1639, yet No. 164 is no better.

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164. *A Peasant in a high hat, standing leaning on a stick* (B. 133). Signed and dated 1639
Sketch from memory, like earlier work.

165. *Death appearing to a wedded couple from an open grave* (B. 109). Signed and dated . . . 1639
Charming, the touch like No. 161. Perhaps etched with a very sharp needle which cut the copper, and then lightly bitten.

166. *The Skater* (B. 156). . . . . 1639 ?
Very lightly bitten on a ground that cracked: not technically good, but quite genuine.

167. *Uytenbogaert, Receiver-General* (*The Gold-weigher*) (B. 281). Signed and dated 1639
Rembrandt sketched the whole plate, a pupil (Bol ?) did all the details, except the face, which was stopped out and put in by Rembrandt in the second state. A challenge to line engraving in its completeness, but of little interest otherwise.

168. *Rembrandt, richly dressed, leaning on a stone sill: half length* (B. 21). Signed and dated. . . 1639
A brilliant Philistine *tour de force*. The pose borrowed from Raphael's *Castiglione* which Rembrandt sketched when it was sold (?) in 1639. The opulent air of the piece again recalls Rubens.

169. *Old man shading his eyes with his hand* (B. 259) . 1639 ?
Only fair work; might be several years earlier —but anyway trifling. Finished in a fourth state by G. F. Schmidt, 1770.

170. *Old man with a divided fur cap* (B. 265). Signed and dated 1640
Good free scribble touched with dry point. An effort at luminous breadth and fluency comparable with the *Little Jewish Bride* (154), but done with more confidence.

171. *The beheading of John the Baptist* (B. 92). Signed and dated 1640
The little drawing in the British Museum has far more life and vigour. The plate lacks freshness,

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even the first state is rebitten. Note attempt at breadth, by dividing design into two broad and ostensibly simple masses of light and dark. The awkward silhouette of the light figures damages the general effect, as underbiting (perhaps with the idea of getting breadth, *cf.* No. 162) weakens the drawing of details.

172. *The Triumph of Mordecai* (B. 40) 1640

Much looser work : first dry point, then finished with delicate biting ; then strongly accented with dry point. A delightful illustration of the story. Note the subtlety with which light and shadow are interchanged, and yet kept broad, and how all the curves centre in Mordecai's figure. The transition from No. 171 is very abrupt. This plate represents such as immense advance in technique that it might well be dated several years later.

173. *The Crucifixion : a small oval* (B. 79) . . . 1640?

Done like No. 172. This, too, may be later, perhaps *c.* 1648, as the variety and complexity of the rhythms, quite apart from the sure and summary workmanship, seem to indicate.

174. *A Sleeping Puppy* (B. 158) . . . . . 1640?

A wonderful piece of minute work which may be a year or two earlier than 1640. A study of texture and broken and uncertain lights.

175. *Small grey landscape : a house and trees beside a pool* (B. 207) . . . . . 1640?

A charming experiment in complete tonality. The sentiment of the piece is curiously modern : we could imagine it translated into paint by Corot or Daubigny.

176. *View of Amsterdam* (B. 210) . . . . . 1640?

The ideal here is one of character given by large spacing, as opposed to the common Dutch ideal of abundant mechanical detail. The device of a low horizon with a large empty space above

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is well known to-day; this plate has been the model. Note how the haystack and the winding ditch completes the design by connecting the foreground and the middle distance with the distance, and break the long lines of the level fields. From its perfection one might suspect the plate of being rather later than 1640. An unique first state with a rabbit in the foreground, and traces of another spire in the distance has recently been discovered by Mr. G. Mayer.

177. *Landscape with a cottage and a hay-barn: oblong* (B. 225). Signed and dated 1641

Another skilful rendering of space and soft afternoon light, without sharp transitions. On the right the distance is broken by the little figure, to prevent us from noticing that its base line is almost exactly equal to that of the barn.

178. *Landscape with a cottage, a large tree and a mill sail* (B. 226). Signed and dated 1641

Again the same soft light. Note the unexpected mill sail, and the reality of the details of the roof, the ducks, &c., by which the broad masses are made interesting.

179. *Landscape with a Windmill* (B. 233). Signed and dated 1641

A lesson in the variety of linear methods which are needed to get richness and texture in a simple subject. The ideal of large spacing in landscape leads to vacuity and mannerism unless we keep in constant touch with nature. Here great simplicity of design is employed, so Rembrandt calls in all the resources of his art as a draughtsman to secure the texture and details of nature without belittling the broad general scheme of the print.

180. *The small Lion hunt (with two lions).* (B. 115) . 1641?

The work is contemporary with No. 181, and shows the same influence of Rubens, but is done

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on an old plate imperfectly erased, part of which survives on the left and produces the heavy scribbled shading. The brilliant drawing of the riderless rearing horse may be contrasted with the horses in Rembrandt's early plate of the subject, No. 6.

181. *The large Lion hunt* (B. 114). Signed and dated . 1641

Loose, vigorous, and evidently reminiscent of Rubens, as was the *Death of the Virgin* of 1639. Here we find a similar calligraphic fluency and a similar element of caricature, due in this case perhaps to want of first hand knowledge of hunting wild beasts on horseback.

182. *The Baptism of the Eunuch* (B. 98). Signed and dated 1641

Pure fluent invention from beginning to end. Once more we see the influence of Rubens coupled with memories of a former treatment of the subject under Lastman's influence, as in the lost early picture from which that in the Oldenberg Gallery is copied, where all the elements of this design except the landscape are to be found.

183. *Jacob and Laban* (B. 118) (*The Three Orientals*). Signed and dated 1641

A dull subject, which even the broad and powerful handling cannot render interesting.

184. *The Spanish Gipsy* (B. 120) . . . . . 1641?

A similar piece but of still finer workmanship, said to illustrate a Dutch tragedy founded on the *Preciosa* of Cervantes. Note the combination of mystery with richness of colour. It has been suggested that the plate should be dated about 1644, and with some reason, in view of the masterly drawing and the bold concentration of accent upon the figures.

185. *The angel departing from the family of Tobias* (B. 43). Signed and dated 1641

Good, but not remarkable. All done from

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memory, yet without weakness or mere scribbling. The fusion of the materials is incomplete, and the effect of blazing light is got by contrast with too many small shadows. The influence of Rubens is still noticeable in the flowing lines of the draperies, &c., while certain traces of youthful strivings after effect survive in the foreshortened angel, a daring but not very successful effort at improving upon the angel in the Louvre picture of 1637.

186. *Virgin and Child* (B. 61). Signed and dated . . 1641

Italianate, and poor. Perhaps done in a moment of revolt against academical graces, half in joke, like the *Adam and Eve* (No. 159); half to cover up another design, of which a portion may still be traced in the clouds under the Virgin's feet.

187. *Cornelis Claesz Anslo, Preacher* (B. 271). Signed and dated 1641

We find here more complete tonality of a quiet kind than in any early etched portrait: but the work is too minute and mechanical to be of great interest. Perhaps a commission, as it is practically a substitute for a small painting.

188. *Portrait of a boy in profile* (B. 310). Signed and dated 1641

A superbly delicate study. *Cf.* Flinck's picture of William II. of Orange.

189. *Man at a desk, wearing cross and chain* (B. 261). Signed and dated 1641

A wonderful and delicate study of a pale-haired, sinister youth, in uncertain light. The collar is added in the second state to hide the long neck and lean jaw. One of Rembrandt's most haunting and powerful portraits.

190. *The Card-player* (B. 136). Signed and dated . 1641

A scrawled sketch of the same sitter as No. 189.

191. *Man drawing from a cast* (B. 130) . . . . 1641 ?

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A summary, pleasant little scribble, not important.

192. *Woman at a door-hatch talking to a man and children* (*The Schoolmaster*) (B. 128). Signed and dated 1641

An ordinary Dutch effect rather well done, that is all. A return to Rembrandt's early style in painting, very simple, broad oppositions of light and shadow. Quite unimportant except as showing how Rembrandt still could not wholly rid himself of his earlier manner.

193. *The Virgin with the instruments of the Passion* (B. 85) . . . . . 1641 ?

Resembles No. 162. A clear, swift, open sketch. Certainly by Rembrandt. Possibly sketched from a memory of some version of Titian's *Mater Dolorosa* (Carvallo collection), or a similar Italian picture.

194. *Man in an Arbour* (B. 257). Signed and dated . 1642

An excellent little sketch.

195. *Girl with a Basket* (B. 356) . . . . . 1642 ?

Not good, yet possibly not earlier than 1642. The breadth of lighting is characteristic of this time, and the comparative dullness of the handling merely an example of the frailty of even the greatest executive talents.

196. *Sick woman with large white head-dress* (B. 359) . 1642 ?

A tender sketch which Whistler might have done, and which would have counted among his most notable things. In Rembrandt's work it is comparatively unimportant, except as being possibly the last representation of Saskia which we possess.

197. *Reading Woman in Spectacles* (B. 362) . . . 1642 ?

A brilliant rapid sketch.

198. *The Raising of Lazarus: small plate* (B. 72). Signed and dated 1642

A definite landmark in Rembrandt's career:

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entirely perfect and successful. The figures, all done from memory, are at once complete in themselves and fused into the general scheme. The design is more daring in its conventions and omissions than any previous attempt. Everywhere character is rendered without caricature, and set in a delicate natural atmosphere. Christ heals no longer by magic but by sympathy. Rembrandt's freedom of handling in these subjects has a great advantage over the precise Florentine treatment of form, which results in immobility and lifelessness when not actuated by very strong enthusiasm (*cf.* case of Holman Hunt). The realism of light and shade is sufficient to prevent any sense of incongruity, yet if light and shade are *too* simple, the result is like the effect of a cheap tune. Some element of mystery is necessary, hence nature is more interesting in changeable weather or at twilight.

199. *Christ taken down from the Cross* (B. 82). Signed and dated 1642

A slight sketch in dry point, lightly bitten in two places, and not carried further—perhaps owing to dissatisfaction with the awkward design.

200. *The Flute-player* (*L'Espiegle*) (B. 188). Signed and dated 1642

Dull and spiritless work.

201. *St. Jerome in a dark chamber* (B. 105). Signed and dated 1642

A technical *tour de force* like No. 202. Note how the alteration of the line of the curtain in the second state makes the design more definitely rhythmical. Here Rembrandt again returns to a subject of his boyhood, and rehandles it with mature knowledge.

202. *Student at a table by candle light* (B. 148) . . 1642 ?

The work and the modelling throughout are good, though very minute, infinitely better than

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any imitators'. It is a study of artificial light as No. 201 was of daylight. The plate is so marvellously etched and bitten that we seem to see the flickering of the candle flame. These plates, 201 and 202, are conclusive proof, if proof were needed, that Rembrandt, even when his powers of invention were having the freest play, studied and imitated nature even more precisely than before. He probably found that such constant alternation was necessary, lest his invention should outrun his knowledge.

203. *Cottage with a white paling* (B. 232). Signed and dated . . . . . 1642 ?

Very able prose, except in the few impressions where a tint has been left on the sky.

204. *The Hog* (B. 157). Signed and dated . . . 1643

A masterly study of colour, texture, and swinish character.

205. *Landscape with the three trees* (B. 212). Signed and dated 1643

Height and space are here suggested by the bold lines of the cloud shadows to the left. Such boldness is unknown to Rembrandt's early work; such finish afterwards. Note the magnificent structure of the thunderclouds. The plate approaches painting in its completeness, and may be taken as a splendid concession to the Dutch ideal of finish. Very few of Rembrandt's painted landscapes are equally successful.

206. *The Shepherd and his family* (B. 220). Signed and dated 1644

The air and sunlight, the flock of sheep and goats, and the hill crowned with romantic buildings, suggest the memory of some drawing by one of the Hollanders working with Claude in Rome, as does the Tivoli landscape at Cassel, which probably belongs to this period rather than to 1650.

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207. *The Sleeping Shepherd* (B. 189) . . . . . 1644?
A genuine trifle.

208. *The Repose in Egypt: a night piece* (B. 57) . . 1644?
There is a picture by Bol, dated 1644, at Dresden, similar to this feeble thing, but the work here alas! seems to be by Rembrandt. Perhaps another realistic effort which should be placed (but not ranked) with Nos. 201 and 202.

209. *Six's Bridge* (B. 208). Signed and dated . . 1645
A good sketch. The lighting is softer and broader than in modern work of the same kind.

210. *The Omval* (B. 209). Signed and dated . . 1645
A minute study of an old trunk, foliage, and foreground, made to get a grip of reality. The background is a delightful incident, supplying level lines to contrast with the system of curves on the left.

211. *The Boat-house* (B. 231). Signed and dated . . 1645
A masterly study of reflections in water. An example of Rembrandt's curiosity, and perhaps the most perfect sketch of its kind before the nineteenth century. The contrast of blazing sunlight and dark water is very modern.

212. *Cottages beside a Canal: with a Church and Sailing-boat* (B. 228) . . . . . 1645?
This seems of rather earlier date than No. 211, the handling is much smaller in style, the modelling much less firm. It might be a first experiment, earlier even than the *Amsterdam*. Note the weak and conventional design, like the older art of Van Goyen, and the petty treatment throughout.

213. *Cottage and Farm Buildings with a Man sketching* (B. 219) . . . . . 1645?
Delicate, but far stronger than No. 212 both in design and execution. It suggests complete tonality: yet absolute realism is kept subordinate to design, to setting out the subject in exactly

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the right place upon the picture space, and with exactly the right strength of line to make a fine pattern. Were the lines heavier the plate would be hard, were they lighter it would be weak.

214. *Abraham and Isaac* (B. 34). Signed and dated . 1645
Minutely etched, somewhat in Rembrandt's early manner, and retouched with dry point. Perhaps done as an exercise without models, to give every possible variety of modelling, texture, and colour. More remarkable as a piece of virtuosity than as a design.

215. *Christ carried to the Tomb* (B. 84). Signed . . 1645?
A perfect work. The whole tragedy of Christ's burial told at once in the plainest and most convincing terms. The passionate grief and reverence of the poor *cortège*, left alone in a mocking world, are accentuated by the hopeless rigidity of the dead body. The simple square lines of the composition dispel all idea of parade—it is not a majestic scene from a great religious drama, as with the Italian masters, but a convincing statement of the event as it must have happened.

216. *The Repose in Egypt: lightly etched* (B. 58). Signed and dated 1645
Under-bitten. Very pale. Perhaps an experiment towards the blonde and luminous prints of Rembrandt's later time.

217. *St. Peter in penitence: lightly etched* (B. 96). Signed and dated 1645
Under-bitten, perhaps for similar reasons. More probably a study from the model deliberately left as a study. Note the painter-like treatment, in contrast to the more severe drawing of Rembrandt's earlier studies.

218. *Old Man in meditation leaning on a Book* (B. 147) 1646
Under-bitten, very slight indeed. Probably a hasty sketch from life.

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219. *Beggar Woman leaning on a Stick* (B. 170). Signed and dated 1646

A good study: more luminous than early plates of similar subjects, as well as broader and more masterly in handling.

220. *Study from the nude: Man seated before a Curtain* (B. 193). Signed and dated. 1646

A fine study, *e.g.* left thigh and knee.

221. *Study from the nude: Man seated on the ground with one leg extended* (B. 196). Signed and dated 1646

A *tour de force* of tone and realistic drawing. All these three nude studies are made simply with the view of representing the human body with no added convention or idealising—just as a clever modern might make them.

222. *Studies from the nude: one man seated and another standing* (B. 194) . . . . . 1646?

Note the exquisite sketch of a nurse and child (Titus?) in the background.

223. *Le Lit à la Française* (B. 186). Signed and dated. 1646

224. *The Monk in the Cornfield* (B. 187). . . . . 1646?

225. *Jan Cornelis Sylvius, preacher: posthumous portrait in an oval* (B 280). Signed and dated . 1646

Delicate and pathetic, *cf.* No. 111. Vibration of light achieved, yet with some taint of early taste for effectiveness, *e.g.* the architectural oval in which the portrait is set, which receives the shadow both of the face and of the cleverly foreshortened hand. Note the extraordinary use of tint on face (accidental foul biting?), which gives the delicate modelling.

226. *Ephraim Bonus, Jewish Physician* (B. 278). Signed and dated 1647

A complete and well-balanced design, though the hand and arm are ill drawn, and the effect is rather heavy owing to minute working. The hand not infrequently seems to have given Rembrandt trouble. *Cf.* Nos. 113 and 128.

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227. *Jan Asselyn: painter* (B. 277). Signed . . 1647 ?

Very fine and delicate, worked in dry point on the face, which becomes hard in third state as does the outline of the figure. The second state is the finest. The picture on the easel, although very broadly treated, is omitted in the second state to give still greater simplicity to the design.

228. *Jan Six* (B. 285). Signed and dated . . . 1647

A technical masterpiece, for the effect would be difficult enough in painting: in etching it could be obtained only by a supreme command of the needle. Yet one may prefer more vitality. It is worked in dry point on the face, &c., hence the line is poorer in quality than in the bitten plates, and its excellences vanish rapidly in the process of printing.

229. *Rembrandt drawing at a Window* (B. 22). Signed and dated 1648

Another miracle of insight and of technique. Note, for instance, the incredibly delicate modelling of the face, by which the tone of the complexion and the keenness of the eyes is suggested. The landscape is not added till the rest of the plate is badly worn.

230. *Sheet of Studies with the Head of Rembrandt, a Beggar Man, Woman, and Child* (B. 370) . . 1648 ?

The head of Rembrandt is very good, and in a broader manner than previous studies of the same kind.

231. *Artist drawing from a model: unfinished plate* (B. 192). . . . . 1648 ?

All laid in dry point. Note increased carelessness in background as to arrangement of lines, whereby additional vibrancy and mystery are attained. As in No. 234 we have an example of the manner in which irregular lines veil form, while regular lines reveal it. Revelation of form had been the chief business of the artists of the

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Renaissance. Rembrandt was the first to break away from the tradition.

232. *St. Jerome beside a Pollard Willow* (B. 103). Signed and dated 1648

A powerfully drawn caprice. The contrast between the elaborate naturalism of the tree trunk, and the sketchy treatment of the saint and the waterfall behind is too forcible to be convincing.

233. *Beggars receiving alms at the door of a house* (B. 176). Signed and dated 1648

So magnificently drawn that the additional subtlety and softness gained by dry point in the second state is a doubtful improvement. Constructive drawing could go no further.

234. *Jews in Synagogue* (B. 126). Signed and dated . 1648

Here we have exactly the contrary treatment. The lines are not deliberately constructive, to avoid suggesting too much definition. *Cf.* Nos. 231 and 233. Constructive drawing, like that of Dürer or Holbein, would have robbed the plate of its mystery and its atmosphere.

235. *Medea: or the Marriage of Jason and Creusa* (B. 112). Signed and dated. 1648

All clear, open work, almost like a scene from Holbein's *Dance of Death*, *e.g.* in the architecture.

236. *Christ healing the Sick* (*The Hundred Guilder print*) (B. 74) . . . . . 1649?

An attempt at combining everything—force, pathos, mystery, luminosity, and complexity in a single plate. The result is not quite satisfactory, the print is too crowded. The subject, it would seem, is too large for anything except a big picture; on a small scale it looks theatrical. A pale counter proof of the first state (in the British Museum) shows how much the plate gains in spaciousness and dignity by being less forcible. Though in characterisation, in mastery of broad effects of

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light, in summary drawing, and in the use of dry point, it belongs to Rembrandt's mature period, it is really the apotheosis of his early dramatic manner.

237. *Christ appearing to His Disciples* (*The Incredulity of S. Thomas*) (B. 89). Signed and dated . . 1650 ?

The miraculous presence is at last perfectly suggested with the greatest possible economy of means. Force, character, and luminosity are attained without contrast or labour; indeed in its treatment of light it is the most modern of all Rembrandt's works. The date may also read 1654, which year perhaps agrees better with the notable advance in daring and freedom which the plate exhibits.

238. *Canal with a Fisherman and two Swans* (B. 235). Signed and dated 1650

A charming toy. In the mountainous landscape behind we may still trace the influence of Seghers.

239. *Canal with a large Boat and Bridge* (B. 236). Signed and dated 1650

More grave and mysterious than No. 238. The cliff on the extreme left still recalls Seghers.

240. *Landscape with a Cow drinking* (B. 237) . . 1649 ?

A sunny pretty plate, the design of which is completed by distant mountains, once more recalling Seghers.

241. *Landscape with a Hay Barn and a Flock of Sheep* (B. 224). Signed and dated 1650

Fine and strong: the second state is more grave and compact than the first, the touches of dry point giving richness and force to what was at first a masterly interpretation of landscape under subdued light—far more intractable material, as every painter knows, than effects of direct sunshine. *Cf.* Nos. 243, where the same effect is tried less successfully. Rembrandt's insight is apparent not only in such pieces of observation as the horses,

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but even in the details of distant fences, &c., and the modelling of the ground. Note the vast scale given by the gentle slope of the distant horizon.

242. *Landscape with a Milkman* (B. 213) . . . 1650 ?

Originally under-bitten—then made jumpy and spotty by dry point. It must be described as containing fine work, not as a fine etching. The excessive rounding of the trees adds to the awkwardness.

243. *Landscape with an Obelisk* (B. 227) . . . 1650 ?

Not wholly satisfactory as a design, since the obelisk and the group of cottages divide the spectator's interest. The plate is best seen in the first state.

244. *Landscape with Trees, Farm Buildings, and a Tower* (B. 223) . . . . . 1650 ?

In the earlier states the cupola and the barns in front of it make up so strong a group that the eye is drawn away from the real motive of the plate. By suppressing the cupola and strengthening the sky in the later states Rembrandt has concentrated the effect on the dark landscape to the left, and has improved the result enormously, though sacrificing an obvious rhythm of line which the cupola emphasised. A masterly plate.

245. *Landscape with a Square Tower* (B. 218). Signed and dated 1650

Powerful work, but not quite satisfactory in effect, even to Rembrandt, if the numerous changes are any evidence of his feeling. The third state is less "jumpy" than the two earlier ones. The tower in the centre and the cottage on the left balance one another too evenly; the relative importance of the cottage being increased by its strongly marked silhouette and the abrupt line it makes with the edge of the plate. *Cf.* No. 243.

246. *Landscape with three gabled Cottages beside a Road* (B. 217). Signed and dated 1650

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Bitten work under dry point. The plate lacks emphasis, perhaps because the trees compete in interest with the cottages.

247. *The Bull* (B. 253). Signed and dated . . . 1650?
A scribbled sketch : good in appearance, rather poor in detail. A not very successful attempt at combining force with simplicity.

248. *The Shell* (B. 159). Signed and dated . . . 1650
A brilliant technical exercise.

249. *The Gold-weigher's Field, the country place of the receiver Uytenbogaert* (B. 234). Signed and dated 1651
Notable for the superb modelling of the ground and simplicity of drawing and biting. The dry point, which in the richest proofs gives force to the distance, seems to me to deprive it at the same time of air and space ; and these last in compositions of this kind are all-important qualities.

250. *The Bathers* (B. 195). Signed and dated . . 1651
A masterly scribble, such as a very clever modern might do—and be accused of trying to shock the public.

251. *Clement de Jonghe, Printseller and Artist* (B. 272). Signed and dated 1651
In the first four states we can watch the sitter gradually growing in reality and solidity without losing anything of his ghostly and sinister look. The luminosity of the piece is enhanced by the repression of local colour, so that the total effect is almost that of monochrome. Room is thus left for the display of those subtleties of modelling on which its impressiveness depends.

252. *The Blindness of Tobit* (B. 42). Signed and dated. 1651
A masterpiece of straightforward drawing, containing the least possible amount of work compatible with complete expression. Once more luminosity and subtlety are obtained by the repression of local colour. It is noticeable how the finest works of Rembrandt's mature period

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are conceived either as entirely dark or as entirely light, the dark backgrounds of his pictures and the lightly worked portions of his blonde etchings providing convenient channels of escape for accessories which might become obtrusive under any other treatment.

253. *The Flight into Egypt: a night piece* (B. 53). Signed and dated 1651

A strongly etched plate into which in the successive "states" more and more subtlety is gradually introduced, till the result is almost nothing. Reworking, which may add depth and quality to an oil painting, cannot be applied to etching with so much safety.

254. *The Star of the Kings* (B. 113) . . . . 1652 ?

A capable but not particularly interesting study of artificial light. Even in the more congenial medium of oil paint it is doubtful whether such effects have more than an experimental value. Whistler's firework pictures are not his masterpieces.

255. *The Adoration of the Shepherds: a night piece* (B. 46) . . . . . 1652 ?

Another dark plate, fine in feeling, with more richness and variety of design than No. 254.

256. *Christ Preaching* (*La Petite Tombe*) (B. 67) . . 1652 ?

Good in every way, although the formal oval of the composition and the general massing of the light and shadow still recall Rembrandt's early work. The formality is neutralised by the wonderful character, vigour, and variety of the groups, while the theatrical look of the *Hundred Guilder* piece is evaded by the naturalness of the illumination : the touches of dry point helping to make the bitten shadows luminous by contrast with still deeper passages of darkness.

257. *Christ disputing with the Doctors: a sketch* (B. 65). Signed and dated 1652

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Magnificent: its simplicity should be compared with the studied arrangement of the 1630 plate, as its variety of individual characterisation may be contrasted with the generalised types of the earlier piece. Cunning, pedantry, stupidity, senility and fanaticism have never been more concisely presented.

258. *David in prayer* (B. 41). Signed and dated . 1652
Splendid straightforward workmanship. The audacious shadow on David's head prevents the effect being that of a common silhouette.

259. *Peasant family on the tramp* (B. 131) . . . 1652?
A masterly sketch in which freedom and luminosity are gained without any sacrifice of structure.

260. *Dr. Faustus in his study, watching a magic disk* (B. 270). . . . . 1652?
A superb example of force concealed by delicate transitions. Note how Faustus' white cap makes his figure tell in spite of large lights elsewhere, and yet is connected with the background by the shadow in its folds. Also how the papers hanging against the window break its regular outline, and carry diffused light into the room. Note, too, how the breadth of the lighting is increased, and attention concentrated on Faustus by the open handling of the objects in the immediate foreground. Altogether the plate is one of the most perfect of Rembrandt's etched inventions.

261. *Titus, Rembrandt's son* (B. 11) . . . 1652?
A beautiful little sketch, at once forcible and subtle.

262. *Sheet of Studies, with a Wood and Paling, parts of two Men's Heads, and a Horse and Cart* (B. 364). 1652
So modern in treatment, and in the types of the men's heads, that one might pardonably mistake it at first sight for a trial piece by some good French or English artist of the late sixties.

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263. *Clump of Trees with a vista* (B. 222). Signed and dated 1652

A masterly sketch in dry point at once powerful aud luminous, if less felicitous in design than some other landscapes. The dark shadow and sunlit trees to the left are too nearly equal in compositional value to the delicately worked foliage in the centre.

264. *Landscape with a Road beside a Canal* (B. 221) . 1652 ?

A pleasant little composition to which the mast of the ship appearing behind the trees adds an element of the unexpected. The sharp touches of dry point add force to the richest proofs, and make the illumination seem stronger, but, as with No. 249, diminish the effect of atmosphere.

265. *Landscape with Sportsman and Dogs* (B. 211) . 1653 ?

The omission in the second state of the cottage and hay barn to the left admits air into a composition which at first seemed too much shut in. The mountains, the winding road, and the objects dotted all over the plate recall a somewhat earlier type of composition. Perhaps 1651 would be a more appropriate date.

266. *The Flight into Egypt: altered from Hercules Seghers* (B. 56) . . . . . 1653 ?

First Seghers attempts to abstract the romance latent in a hard picture by Elsheimer; then Rembrandt works on Seghers' plate, but never quite succeeds in getting rid of the original stiffness, though he adds some new mystery of his own. The monotony of the unbroken silhouettes of the trees and the ground proves an insuperable obstacle.

267. *St. Jerome reading, in an Italian landscape* (B. 104) . . . . . 1653?

Though beautiful in detail, especially in the landscape to the right with its ravine and rushing water, the effect of the plate is unsatisfactory,

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possibly because the complex massing and grouping, which could be unified by flat Venetian methods of painting, are only disturbed by emphatic chiaroscuro. Flat painting permits—almost demands—a complexity of pattern which is distressing if emphasised by forcible shadows.

268. *Jan Antonides van de Linden, Professor of Medicine* (B. 264) . . . . . 1665?

Perhaps the latest in date of all Rembrandt's etchings, according to recent discoveries. The effect is got by lines which are no longer structural, hence suggesting play of light and atmosphere round the forms. Structural lines tend to define the forms so precisely that this sense of atmosphere is lost.

269. *Lieven Willemsz van Coppenol, Writing-master: the small plate* (B. 282) . . . . . 1653?

Forcible and full of atmosphere like Rembrandt's later paintings, but not structural in modelling, and somewhat accidental in plan. The frequent alterations perhaps indicate the artist's dissatisfaction with the design and effect.

270. *Christ crucified between the two Thieves: large oblong plate* (*The Three Crosses*) (B. 78). Signed and dated 1653

The change, from the third state to the fourth, is from an ideal of richness, complexity, and dramatic force to an ideal of tragic catastrophe. This plate and No. 271 are Rembrandt's most monumental achievements in etching.

271. *Christ presented to the people* (B. 76). Signed and dated (in the sixth state) 1655

Begins almost like a problem in architectural proportion. In the third state the design is concentrated, solidified and enriched. Then, when the dry point wears away, mystery and tragedy are suggested by the gloomy archways added below, in the place of the brilliant group of fore-

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ground figures, so that the fourth state, as in No. 270, is perhaps even grander than the first. The statue of Justice in the niche to the left should be noticed as an example of Rembrandt's invention. It might have been designed by some ultra-modern sculptor of to-day, with memories of Egypt and of archaic Greek work in his mind.

272. *The Golf-player* (B. 125). Signed and dated . . 1654
A luminous little study.

273. *The Adoration of the Shepherds* (*with the Lamp*) (B. 45) . . . . . 1654 ?
A most brilliant little plate illustrating Rembrandt's perfect command of reflected light. No less complete than the earlier plate in the dark manner (No. 255), but much finer in pictorial quality, from the fact that in it mystery is attained without heaviness.

274. *The Circumcision* (*in the Stable*) (B. 47). Signed and dated 1654
Also fine, though the line of dark shadow on the right, cutting the shepherd's head, is perhaps unnecessarily forcible: yet without experiments of this kind we should not have possesed some of Rembrandt's most daring and splendid conceptions.

275. *The Virgin and Child with the Cat: and Joseph looking in at the Window* (B. 63). Signed and dated 1654
Another exquisite and airy print. Like No. 273, an almost perfect example of the power of the simple etched line to suggest a highly complex effect of lighting.

276. *The Flight into Egypt: Holy Family crossing a Brook* (B. 55). Signed and dated . . . 1654
Masterly in workmanship and control of subtle tone, but confused and infelicitous in design.

277. *Christ seated disputing with the Doctors in the Temple* (B. 64). Signed and dated . . . 1654

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A noble summary of Rembrandt's power over drawing, design, illumination, and insight into human character. The personages are differentiated even more subtly, and observed with even more sympathy, than in the plate etched some two years earlier (No. 257).

278. *Christ between His Parents, returning from the Temple* (B. 60). Signed and dated . . . 1654

Another superb example of fusion and noble simplicity of design. The dry point is used less for compositional accent than as an enrichment of the general tone of the piece.

279. *The Presentation in the Temple, in the dark manner* (B. 50) . . . . . 1654 ?

Like the Glasgow *Achilles* this print would serve as an illustration of Rembrandt's experiments in reducing the general tone of a design to accentuate the brightness of the highest light. This often, though not in the present case, results in a certain weakening of the design. The standing attendant with the crozier is one of Rembrandt's noblest creations. The plate also serves to show how certain effects of flashing glittering colour can be rendered almost deceptively by mere black and white.

280. *Christ taken down from the Cross, by torchlight* (B. 83). Signed and dated 1654

Very grand in idea. Note especially the hand reaching out from the darkness, and the rigid lines of the empty bier. Yet the blackness of the shadows does not blend quite happily with the lighter portions of the plate, so that it has not the unity of his most perfect works.

281. *Christ entombed* (B. 86) . . . . . 1654 ?

As at first conceived, a superb example of grand and ghostly design. Tragic impressiveness is obtained here without any of the usual mechanism, by sheer decisive mastery of simple open line work.

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In the later states it is robbed of its singular freshness and daring by added tone.

282. *Christ at Emmaus: the larger plate* (B. 87). Signed and dated 1654

A well-known masterpiece. To the vibrant effect of the intervals of white paper between the bold black lines, corresponding to the broad decisive brush strokes of Rembrandt's later painting, these prints owe their singular luminous charm. It is curious to note that the superb series of plates etched in open line which belong to the year 1654 were produced at the very time when Rembrandt's financial troubles, which resulted in bankruptcy two years later, had become most acute.

283. *Abraham's Sacrifice* (B. 35). Signed and dated . 1655

A monumental design. *Mutatis mutandis*, it might take its place on the Sistine ceiling.

284. *The Image seen by Nebuchadnezzar: the Vision of Daniel: Jacob's Ladder: and David and Goliath:* four subjects etched on one plate (B. 36). Signed and dated 1655

The work of a master in an uninspired and perfunctory mood.

285. *The Goldsmith* (B. 123). Signed and dated illegibly . . . . . 1655 ?

Here Rembrandt first shows signs of decline: his work is just beginning to lose its edge and freshness, though the design is masterly. The space is filled as perfectly and rhythmically as in a Greek coin. Rembrandt's paintings often make for a still greater simplification, merging all details in shadow, whereby the central figure gains force, but there is an undeniable loss in rhythm.

286. *Abraham entertaining the Angels* (B. 29). Signed and dated 1656

Evidently influenced in its details by the oriental miniatures which Rembrandt had seen and copied. The line work is still looser than in

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the preceding plates, in places actually careless, *e.g.* the wing of the angel in the centre of the composition.

287. *Jacob Haaring, Warden of the Debtors' Prison at Amsterdam* (*The Old Haaring*) (B. 274) . . 1655?

Wonderful colour, texture, air and character, are obtained here with some sacrifice of form and quality of line. The richness of the general effect has interested the artist more than the treatment of details.

288. *Thomas Jacobsz Haaring, Auctioneer of Debtors' effects at Amsterdam* (*The Young Haaring*) (B. 275). Signed and dated 1655

The first state is really a trial proof. The force and incisiveness of the treatment are seen in the second state. Here it is fit company for Rembrandt's finest painted portraits. But the close line work does not stand the test of printing long, and the plate loses its crispness in later states from constant retouching.

289. *Arnold Tholinx, Inspector of Medical Colleges in Amsterdam* (B. 284) 1656

This is a marvellous combination of force and luminosity. Note the strong reflected lights, so unlike the unbroken shadows of his early work. This treatment of reflected light is one of the last things an artist learns. *Cf.* Gainsborough and Turner. Here, used in conjunction with the rich black obtained by dry point, it proves no mean momentary substitute for the vibrant bitten line work of the 1654 plates, though the bur of the dry point vanishes almost at once. This is the rarest of all Rembrandt's etched portraits.

290. *Jan Lutma* (*the Elder*), *Goldsmith and Sculptor* (B. 276). Signed and dated in the second state 1656

Another masterpiece more dependent on bitten work. Some freedom and mystery are sacrificed

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by the introduction of the window in the second state.

291. *Abraham Francen, Art Dealer* (B. 273). . . . 1656?

In the first state a marvel of realism in its rendering of natural light and air. But the effect, as in much modern painting, is got at the cost of design and sound workmanship, and the moment the dry point has worn off the plate becomes almost negligible.

292. *St. Francis beneath a Tree, praying* (B. 107). Signed and dated 1657

A typical example of Rembrandt's later work. Force, richness, and mystery are combined with accidental and confused arrangement. The fault is seen in a good many of the later paintings, but there it is often largely redeemed by colour.

293. *Christ on the Mount of Olives* (*The Agony in the Garden*) (B. 75). Signed and dated . . 1657?

A complete masterpiece of a more tragic and passionate order. It has been suggested that this plate may be one of a "Passion" series for which Rembrandt had a commission just before his death, and may therefore be some fourteen years later than the date here tentatively given. On grounds of style this theory is hard to accept.

294. *Christ and the Woman of Samaria: an arched print* (B. 70). Signed and dated 1658

Another marvellous plate, but the workmanship of the heads is less structural than in Rembrandt's best time. The characterisation of the Apostles is almost humorous in its subtlety; and the effect of shimmering evening light is one which Rembrandt himself has not excelled.

295. *The Phœnix: or the statue overthrown* (B. 110). Signed and dated 1658

A noble example of abstract design worthy of Michelangelo. The homeliness of the symbolism should not blind us to the essential grandeur

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of the conception, even if it proves that Rembrandt (like our own Charles Keene), in generally restricting himself to types drawn from the everyday life around him, knew where his real strength lay.

296. *Woman sitting half-dressed beside a Stove* (B. 197). Signed and dated 1658

A fine study from life, with even less concession to grace than in earlier works, *e.g.* the chimney of the stove, which anticipates Millet.

297. *Woman at the Bath, with her Hat beside her* (B. 199). Signed and dated 1658

Note the masterly arrangement and study of lighting for which this wonderful plate is the pretext. All details of structure are lost in the blaze of light which illuminates the piece, and the drawing once more is rightly not structural. This force and splendour, it should be noticed, are obtained without the help of dry point. Half merged in the glowing atmosphere, the rude back of the settle, with the black felt hat beneath, takes on the majesty of one of Turner's castled crags at sunset.

298. *Woman Bathing her Feet at a Brook* (B. 200). Signed and dated 1658

Another fine study without dry point, more modern, and perhaps more prosaic in its realism than No. 297. It anticipates Courbet and, in a sense, Millet also.

299. *Negress lying down* (B. 205). Signed and dated . 1658

Another magnificent study of tone and texture. Richness is obtained once more without dry point, and without the feebleness of line which commonly attends efforts to get full tone in etching.

300. *Lieven Willemsz Coppenol, Writing-master: the large plate* (B. 283) . . . . . 1658 ?

The very minute workmanship is out of keeping with the dated etchings of 1658, and seems much more akin to that of the *Tholinx* and *Francken*

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of about 1656. The painting (in Mr. Alfred Rothschild's collection) from which this appears to be reproduced, is not dated.

301. *Peter and John healing the Cripple at the Gate of the Temple* (B. 94). Signed and dated . . 1659

Here we note a definite failure of Rembrandt's powers; his hand is no longer certain, his eye no longer closely observant. Even the space effect is obtained by obvious effort, since the touch has lost its liveliness, and therewith its power of suggesting atmosphere.

302. *Jupiter and Antiope: the larger plate* (B. 203). Signed and dated 1659

A powerful plate, though rough in handling. Realistic, like his other late studies of the nude, and without the mystery attempted in the earlier plate. Possibly done from a rather more graceful model than usually fell to Rembrandt's lot; but a certain vagueness in the modelling suggests work from memory, perhaps the memory of an Italian picture.

303. *The Woman with the Arrow* (B. 202). Signed and dated 1661

Rembrandt's last dated etching, and at once more graceful and no less powerful than the best of the earlier studies of the same kind. In effect, as in technical treatment, it is quite deceptively modern, perhaps owing to the type of the model, who looks French or English rather than Dutch. Can the plate possibly have been executed during that visit to England in 1661–1662, which recent research seems almost to have established. *Cf. Burlington Magazine*, November 1910, vol. xviii., pp. 118, 119.

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Specimen Page

in which it is painted as by its design. No picture can produce its complete effect unless its colour be in exact harmony with the emotional mood in which it is conceived.

If executed in the sombre tones of Rembrandt, the most sprightly panel of Fragonard would lose all its gaiety: Turner's *Calais Pier* would cease to be menacing if painted with the palette of the *Ulysses and Polyphemus*. Would Titian's superb *Pietà* in the Venice Academy move us so profoundly if it were fired with the radiant glow of the *Bacchus and Ariadne*; or Piero della Francesca's *Baptism*, if its colour had the gentle beauty of Perugino's triptych on the opposite wall? It is fantastic to think so.

Yet painters of to-day seem, with but few exceptions, to be blind to this primary condition of their art. How few landscape painters, for example, in dealing with peaceful country scenery, recognise that the clashing of red-tiled roofs, green grass, or trees and bright blue sky, is so violent as to destroy at once the effect of repose and harmony they are trying to secure? A sepia sketch by Claude or Rembrandt conveys a feeling of quiet and serenity, and this will be retained by a good copy in monochrome. But let us assume the copyist to go a step further and, with the mistaken idea of "finishing" the picture, to paint the grass green, the sky blue, and the houses red. The serenity of the original will vanish at once.