THE WALLACE COLLECTION

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THE WALLACE COLLECTION

BY

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"ROSSETTI: PAINTER AND MAN OF LETTERS,"

"WHISTLER: A BIOGRAPHY AND AN ESTIMATE"

ETC.

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FOREWORD

Of many books consulted in the preparation of this little guide, by far the most useful have been the official catalogues published by order of the Board of Trustees. The Wallace Collection has been singularly fortunate in the matter of its administration. Both the first Keeper, Sir Claude Phillips, and his successor, Mr D. S. MacColl, are gentlemen who enjoy a world-wide respect and esteem for their scholarly writings on art subjects. To them, and to the Hon. Inspector of the Armouries, Sir Guy Laking, M.V.O., we owe catalogues which are models of what such works should be.

Throughout the following pages reference is made to the sixth edition (1910) of the "Catalogue of Furniture and Art Objects," for which Sir Claude Phillips was responsible, and to the thirteenth edition (1913) of the "Catalogue of Pictures and Drawings," which has been substantially revised, with the addition of a quantity of valuable new matter, by

Mr D. S. MacColl. In the course of 1912 a series of sixty letters from the fourth Lord Hertford to his agent, Mr Mawson, was acquired by the Trustees, and these letters, ranging from 1848 to 1856, have enabled Mr MacColl to identify many purchases, to correct certain attributions and to trace the history of very many of the paintings.

In view of new information drawn from these and other sources, books on this collection which have already been published are rendered out of date, for they contain so many errors, misstatements and wrong attributions that they can no longer be consulted with any confidence. The present, therefore, seems to be an opportune moment for the issue of a handbook which, without pretending to be exhaustive or erudite, aims at presenting in a popular form the results of the most recent researches into the history of some of the principal art treasures in the Wallace Collection.

In conclusion, the writer desires to acknowledge the very valuable assistance he has received from Mr A. J. Sanders of Leeds in the chapters dealing with furniture and porcelain.

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NOTE

ROMAN numerals in brackets refer to the number of a gallery. Arabic numerals refer to the number of a work. Thus (XV., 281) denotes work No. 281 in Gallery XV.

The terms "right" and "left" used in describing pictures refer to the right and left of the spectator.

Dates given in brackets after an artist's name refer respectively to the years of his birth and death. In this connection the letter c = *circa* (about).

Except where otherwise stated, "Lord Hertford" = Richard, fourth Marquess of Hertford.

I

INTRODUCTORY

NEVER yet has a nation come into an artistic heritage so rich, so varied and so comprehensive as the bequest of Lady Wallace to the British nation. When she died in 1897 good judges roughly estimated the value of her art treasures at £2,000,000. To-day they must be worth at least double that sum, and with art works geometrically progressing in value as they do nowadays, there is no telling how many millions sterling they may represent in fifty or a hundred years time.

Of the scope of the Wallace Collection only the faintest idea can be given within the limits of this handbook. The paintings and drawings alone number close on eight hundred and, important as these are, they form only one section of the whole. The assemblage of Sèvres porcelain is one of the finest in the world, only equalled but not surpassed by the Royal collections. French decorative furniture of all kinds, with clocks, candelabra,

candlesticks, etc., is represented here with a completeness and brilliancy hardly to be found in any one museum, public or private, in Europe or America. The series of eighteenth-century snuff-boxes is unique; the sculpture includes masterpieces by Clodion, Coysevox, Falconet, Houdon and Pilon, as well as precious small bronzes and medals of the earlier Renaissance and other periods. The miniatures show superb examples of the greatest and rarest masters, the European armoury is unique of its kind in the United Kingdom, and among the Limoges and other enamels, the ivories and the goldsmith's work may be found the rarest examples of the most exquisite craftsmanship.

Yet with all this wealth and magnificence we never feel overwhelmed and lost as we sometimes do in other museums: at the Louvre, for example, or in the Victoria and Albert at South Kensington. The Wallace Collection is large enough and comprehensive enough to be practically inexhaustible, but it is not so large that it fills us with despair of ever being able to know it all. Hertford House never frightens the student; it never loses its charm, its power to soothe as well as interest. Elsewhere we are often painfully made conscious that art galleries are the prisons of art, as M. Robert de la Siseranne has candidly declared, but as we ascend the great

staircase of Hertford House we recognise that we are entering no prison but a Home of Beauty.

This stately homeliness, which is so seductive a feature of the Wallace Collection, is due in no small measure to the wisdom of the Board of Trustees, who from the very first have made it their business to see that the appearance of a private house should be preserved as far as possible in the arrangement of the various objects. Each gallery is not merely a reference library of pictures and art objects, but a handsome furnished apartment. That is why we feel at our ease in them, and when we arrange to meet our friends, say in Gallery XVI., we are not abashed but merely moved to receive them as if we were monarchs and they ambassadors.

The variety of objects to be seen in every room effectually dissipates that feeling of weariness which is apt to be engendered by the inspection of endless rows of pictures or endless cases of porcelain. The beauty of any picture or art object is always enhanced when it is shown amid suitable and congenial surroundings. The system of exhibiting art treasures as an ensemble of various objects similar only in period or nationality is undoubtedly an ideal arrangement, and wherever it has been adopted it has increased the interest of the objects assembled.

Another contributing factor to the peculiar charm of the Wallace Collection is the abundance therein of small pictures and small art objects. The eye is rested and refreshed when it is turned from a large oil painting or a massive piece of furniture to the contemplation of a miniature or a small bronze. Further we are taught here, as we are taught nowhere else in Great Britain, that in art what matters is not quantity but quality. And this is a lesson which we Britons find it exceedingly hard to learn. Inability to grasp its truth has led to the wasting of many thousands of pounds, both in London and in the provinces, on the acquisition for public and private galleries of what were thought to be "important" pictures by reason of their size. Now the dimensions of a painting have nothing whatsoever to do with its importance. Many of the most important pictures in the Wallace Collection are tiny in point of actual size. Clouet's *Dame de Cloux,* Brouwer's *Boor Asleep,* Fragonard's *Lady Carving her Name,* Watteau's *Harlequin and Columbine* and *Lady at her Toilet* may be cited as a few examples.

Moreover, who has not revelled in the series of little gems in Gallery XV. by Diaz, Décamps, Couture, Prudhon and other French painters? And who has failed to realise that all of these, including

Meissonier, of course, were at their best in their smaller works? They may not have been great masters, and their large paintings, some of which may be seen in the same gallery, are frequently wearisome and ineffective; but on a smaller scale they proved themselves to be truly great as Little Masters, and we should be deeply thankful to those who formed this collection that they more often bought the little pictures that are great than the big pictures which are little.

II

THE FORMATION OF THE COLLECTION

In Gallery XVI. you will see two portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Frances Seymour-Conway, Countess of Lincoln* (33) and *Lady Elizabeth Seymour-Conway* (31), the fourth and fifth daughters respectively of the first Marquess of Hertford. Finer and more impressive examples of Reynolds may be found in these galleries, but these two paintings deserve our special notice because, so far as we know at present, they are the foundation-stones on which the Wallace Collection has been built. They were not acquired with that object, however. The first Marquess had no idea of founding an art collection; all he wanted was portraits of his daughters by the foremost painter of the day, and he little knew that in giving Sir Joshua the commissions he was taking the first step towards erecting a mighty monument to the fame of the Seymours.

On the part played by this family in English history it is unnecessary to dwell. They rose to

eminence when Jane Seymour married Henry VIII. and her eldest brother, Edward, was created Earl of Hertford. On his nephew's accession to the throne as Edward VI., Hertford became Duke of Somerset and Lord Protector of England. Later he fell from power and was executed, as also was his brother Thomas, who had married Catherine Parr. His son and grandson were claimants to the throne—as descendants by marriage from Henry VIII.—and though the family led a chequered existence through the reigns of the Stuarts, Edward Seymour avenged family grievances when he headed the opposition against James II. and joined his fortunes to those of William of Orange.

In 1750 the earldom of Hertford became extinct with the death of the seventh Duke of Somerset, but the title was revived in the person of Francis Seymour-Conway, who a year before his death in 1794 was created Earl of Yarmouth and first Marquess of Hertford. Allan Ramsay's portrait of George IV. may possibly have belonged to him, as well as the two Reynolds portraits already mentioned, but what is perhaps more interesting to note, in view of subsequent events, is that the first Marquess was Ambassador to France from 1763 to 1765, and so inaugurated that connection with Paris which was continued and developed by his heirs.

To his son, the second Marquess, can be definitely traced the purchase, in 1810, of two important pictures—the world-famous *Nelly O'Brien* (38) of Reynolds—which he picked up for £64, 1s.—and Romney's "*Perdita*" *Robinson* (37), which cost him twenty guineas. Whether he purchased these for artistic or iconographical reasons can never be known now, but if this Lord Hertford was not a great collector, at least he paved the way for collecting by marrying two heiresses in succession. The Seymours had a knack of making profitable marriages —they had already absorbed the Conway title and estates—and the example of the second Marquess was followed by his only surviving child.

Of this child, Francis Charles Seymour-Conway, Lord Yarmouth, and afterwards third Marquess of Hertford, K.C., it may be said that he had good taste in art—but in little else. He was born in 1777, his mother being his father's second wife and an intimate friend of the Prince Regent. The latter fact procured him the position of Vice-Chamberlain in the Regent's Household, and throughout his life he had great influence with the Prince. In 1798 he married a young lady whose mother was the Marchesa Fagniani but whose father was never definitely identified. The honour was claimed by two men, both of them enormously

wealthy, a Mr George Selwyn and William, fourth Duke of Queensberry, familiarly known as "Old Q." : and to support his contentions each made a point of leaving the young lady a fortune, whereby the Marquess gained to the tune of something like a million sterling. A moralist with a turn for statistics might find it interesting to calculate what proportion of the treasures of the Wallace Collection we enjoy to-day as an indirect result of the frailty of the Marchesa Fagniani.

Wealthy, witty and deplorably dissolute, the third Marquess of Hertford was an outstanding figure in the London society of his day. What manner of man he was, Thackeray has shown us in "Vanity Fair." For "Gaunt House" read "Hertford House," for "Steyne" read "Hertford," and in the persecutor of Becky Sharp we may recognise a true portrait of our collector.

He began his apprenticeship to art at an early age, for as Lord Yarmouth he assisted the Prince Regent in forming a collection of pictures, mostly by Dutch masters. Later in life he had built for him in Regent's Park a villa, which he proceeded to fill with decorative furniture, bronzes, marbles and a few pictures. Some of the last were presents from His Royal Highness. Sir Lionel Cust has discovered, from an entry in one of the daybooks of Old Carlton

House, that Gainsborough's portrait of Mrs Robinson —*Perdita* (42)—was sent to the Earl of Yarmouth by order of the Prince Regent on 13th April 1818. Another gift from the same source was Hoppner's *George, Prince of Wales,* which the Regent had purchased with others from the artist's widow in 1810.

But what was probably the greatest masterpiece of painting in this villa is no longer to be found in the Wallace Collection. Fortunately we need not bewail its absence, since the work, *The Vision of St Helena,* by Veronese, is now one of the chief glories of the National Gallery. It is curious, however, that it should have slipped out of the collection. When the contents of this villa were sold in 1855, after the owner's death, his son, the fourth Marquess, bought in most of the pictures, and a letter exists instructing an agent to bid for this picture but to give "not more than £40 or £50." This limitation reads strangely to-day, and had the sale taken place half-a-century later, and the Veronese departed to Germany or the United States, we should mourn more deeply the unaccountable shortsightedness of Lord Hertford in this particular instance.

To return to his father, the "old Marquess," as I shall style him henceforward, he bought Dutch

paintings for himself as well as for the Prince Regent. To him the Wallace Collection owes, among other things, the splendid *River Scene with View of Dordrecht* (138) and two other Cuyps, Jan Steen's *Village Alchemist* (XIII., 209), Adriaen Van Ostade's *Interior with Peasants* (XIV., 169), Isack van Ostade's *Winter Scene* (XVI., 73) and Wouwermann's *Camp Scene* (XIV., 193), all of which are admirable examples of their respective authors. Two other notable purchases by the old Marquess were Van Dyck's *Portrait of the Artist as the Shepherd Paris* (XVI., 35) and Titian's *Perseus and Andromeda* (XVI., 11), discovered "skied" in a bathroom at Hertford House by the late Keeper, Sir Claude Phillips, in 1900, and now recognised as one of the chief treasures of the collection.

The third Marquess got together the nucleus of a great art collection, but he was first and foremost a man of the world. He had been in Parliament, a captive of Napoleon at Verdun for three years after the Emperor's breach of the Treaty of Amiens, a plenipotentiary for Fox on his release, and in 1827, as Envoy Extraordinary, he had headed a Garter Mission to the Tsar of Russia. At his death, in 1842, he was supposed to be worth two millions sterling.

His eldest son and heir, Richard Seymour-

Conway, Viscount Beauchamp, born 22nd February 1800, was first and foremost a collector. Military, political and diplomatic life—each he tried, and each he found distasteful. After holding a commission in the 22nd Dragoons, in 1817 he was attached to the British Embassy in Paris; two years later he was elected to Parliament, from which he retired in 1826. He had another try at diplomacy in Constantinople, but as soon as he came into the title, in 1842, he established himself in Paris and devoted himself to the collection of art objects. From his flat at No. 2 rue Laffitte, where he led a quiet and retired life, he directed operations which filled with art treasures the houses in Berkeley Square and Manchester Square—which he owned but rarely visited—as well as his own apartment and the Pavilion of Bagatelle in the Bois de Boulogne.

In many respects the fourth Marquess was the very reverse of the third. The old Marquess loved display and ostentation; the new Lord Hertford hated a crowd. He seldom entered a saleroom, and conducted his bidding through agents. Happily his London agent, S. M. Mawson, was a remarkable man, gifted probably with a far finer taste than Lord Hertford himself. In fact, there is no doubt that it is to Mr Mawson that the Wallace Collection

owes many of its finest pictures. He won the confidence of his patron, who had the good sense to be guided by the advice of this expert even when it ran contrary to his own inclinations. It was through Mr Mawson's good offices that fine examples of the early Italians, of Rembrandt, of Rubens and of Velasquez were added to the collection. Some of these Lord Hertford never saw, and he gracefully acknowledges what is due to his agent in a letter which speaks of "our Collection, which owes a great deal of its splendour to the interest you have always taken in it."

"I only like pleasing pictures," Lord Hertford naïvely confessed, and it is to his credit that he found so much that was pleasing among the works of the great French artists of the eighteenth century and of his own time. His greatest discovery was Bonington, by whom he secured no less than thirty-six pictures and drawings. "I like this master very much, though he is not much admired in our country," he writes. He bought nine pictures by Watteau, and nine by Guardi, and here again he showed a fine taste ahead of that of his day.

But his judgment was not always impeccable. It is difficult to understand how it was that the man who apparently appreciated "quality" in paint so keenly as to buy twenty-eight works by Décamps

could have so strong an admiration for Horace Vernet as to acquire twenty-nine of his works. Again, though he bought twenty-one Greuzes, fourteen Paters, eleven Lancrets, and eight Fragonards, he missed Chardin altogether, and thereby his collection was the poorer. And he also bought eleven pictures and drawings by Bellange and ten by Roqueplan—and thereby it was none the richer.

We get a clue to Lord Hertford's private tastes in his thirteen Murillos, his sixteen Meissoniers, his twelve Delaroches. It was a cultivated, scholarly taste, but not a brilliant, unerring judgment. Of this he was himself probably well aware, and since it was his desire to make his collection representative and not limit it to what he liked personally, he allowed his agents a large discretion, and this they used greatly to his advantage. Among these agents the principal two were S. M. Mawson, in London, and Richard Wallace, who lived with him in Paris.

Who was Sir Richard Wallace? He was born in London on the 26th of July 1818, but who his parents were nobody knows. Two theories are current about him. According to the first, which is most widespread in vulgar opinion, he was a natural son of the fourth Marquess by some young

woman in the service of the household. It should be noted that the difference in age between the fourth Lord Hertford and Richard Wallace was only eighteen years, but this, of course, is not an insuperable objection to the theory.

Another theory is that he was an illegitimate son of the last Marchioness of Hertford, *née* Maria Fagniani. This theory is far more plausible. Maria, Marchioness of Hertford, seems to have taken after her mother. She was supposed to have had three children by her husband: one daughter, who died nine months after her marriage to a M. de Chevigné; and two sons: Richard, the fourth Marquess, and Lord Henry Seymour, who was born in 1805 and died in 1859. Common rumour, however, said the second son was no Seymour but in truth the son of Count Casimir de Montrond. Lord Henry's chief claim to fame was as founder of the French Jockey Club, and it may be questioned whether the uncertainty of his parentage makes that of Sir Richard Wallace any the more certain. Still, in favour of the second theory as against the first, it must be noted that Richard Wallace, or Richard Jackson as he was first called, was a protégé of the Marchioness Maria before he became the protégé of Lord Hertford. Sir Walter Armstrong accepts the second theory in his article for the *Dictionary*

of National Biography, and of the two it is certainly the more credible.

"Monsieur Richard," as he was called, lived in Paris among the artists and writers of the Second Empire and made an art collection of his own, which he weeded out to a great extent by a sale in 1857. In the August of 1870, during the Franco-Prussian war, Lord Hertford died. He had never married, and while the title and entailed estates passed to a cousin, his art collection, with all his unentailed property, was bequeathed to Richard Wallace. Throughout the siege "Monsieur Richard" remained in Paris; he organised three ambulance corps, founded and endowed the British hospital to which he gave the name of his benefactor, Lord Hertford, and subscribed £4000 towards a fund for the relief of victims of the bombardment. He is said to have spent £100,000 in charities during the siege of Paris, and he also gave a hundred drinking-fountains to the city, but after the Commune he probably thought it advisable to transfer the greater part of his collection to London, and soon made preparations for so doing.

In February 1871 he married Mademoiselle Julie Amelie Charlotte Castelnau, daughter of a French officer, by whom he had one son, who died before his father. On Christmas Eve of the same year he

was created a baronet, and the following year, while a home was being prepared for them in London, he lent most of his paintings and other art objects to the Bethnal Green Museum, where they remained till April 1875.

Meanwhile Sir Richard was making structural alterations in the big house on one side of Manchester Square. This had been built about 1776 by the Duke of Manchester, and was still known as Manchester House, though after the Duke's death it passed out of the family and served first as the Spanish, then as the French Embassy. Later it passed into the possession of the Hertford family, but the name was not changed to Hertford House till it came into the hands of Sir Richard Wallace. Under his directions a new wing was built on the garden which had been behind the house, these additions consisting of the long gallery (XVI.) on the first floor, the side galleries (IV., VII., XV. and XVII.) on the ground and first floors, with stables and coach-houses under the long gallery.

It is difficult to form any adequate idea of the extent of the collection formed by the last Lord Hertford, because a great part of it was destroyed by a fire which broke out at the Pantechnicon in 1874. All we know is that, great as it was, extensive and valuable additions were made to it by Sir Richard

Wallace. The rich collection of European arms and armour was entirely his creation. He also acquired a great number of the Renaissance bronzes, jewellery, goldsmith's work and other art objects of this and later periods.

With regard to paintings, his most notable additions were Corot's *Macbeth and the Witches* (XV., 281), Rousseau's *Glade in the Forest of Fontainebleau* (XV., 283) and probably the three little gems by Diaz (XV., 266, 268, 312), as well as the majority of the early Italian, Flemish and French works in Gallery III. Of these last, Beccafumi's *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* (525) and Vincenzo Foppa's *Boy Reading* (538) are of special importance. Another important painting once in his collection was Terborch's *Peace of Munster,* which he presented to the National Gallery, of which he was a trustee.

Though he made Hertford House his English home, and arranged his art collection there after its removal from Bethnal Green Museum in 1875, Sir Richard Wallace spent the last four years of his life in Paris; and when he died there, on 20th July 1890, some people feared that he might leave his great collection to the French nation. There is no evidence, however, that he had any such intention. The whole of his collection he left unconditionally to Lady Wallace, and after this lady's death, on 16th

February 1897, it became known that by a will dated 23rd May 1894 the widow of Sir Richard Wallace had made the magnificent bequest of these art treasures to the British nation.

The generosity of this action is the greater when we remember that Lady Wallace was of French nationality and would have been quite justified in leaving the collection to France. It is perhaps not too much to say that the course of action she took was to a great extent inspired by the disinterested counsel of her chief confidential adviser, Mr John Murray Scott, who had been her husband's secretary and intimate friend and was the residuary legatee of Lady Wallace's estate.

Shortly before his last illness Lord Hertford had been attended by an English doctor practising in Boulogne, a Dr Scott, whose son attracted the notice of Sir Richard Wallace. This son, John Murray Scott, was afterwards engaged by Richard Wallace as his secretary, and aided the latter in his charitable, artistic and other undertakings. His qualities, abilities and kindly disposition gained him the affection of both Sir Richard and Lady Wallace, who in time came to look upon him more as an adopted son than as an official of the household. Had he been of an intriguing nature he might have been the owner of Hertford House and its contents, and

his public-spirited action in persuading Lady Wallace to make her great bequest was acknowledged when for his services to the nation John Murray Scott was created baronet and K.C.B. and appointed a trustee of the National Gallery as well as of the Wallace Collection.

Lady Wallace stipulated in her will that Mr Murray Scott should be one of the trustees of the collection, and she also made two other conditions:

1. That the Government for the time being should agree to give a site in the central part of London, and build thereon a special museum to contain it, and that the collection should always be kept together unmixed with other objects of art, and be styled "The Wallace Collection."

2. That the Louis Quatorze balustrade to the Great Staircase at Hertford House should be used in the new museum.[1]

The first condition gave rise to some discussion, and the Treasury in May 1897 appointed a committee to consider how the collection might best be housed. The Marquess of Lansdowne was the chairman of this committee, and the other members

[1] This forged iron and gilt bronze balustrade was formerly at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, but was removed in the time of Napoleon III. The interlaced L's throughout the design indicate that it was made originally for Louis XIV.

PERSEUS AND ANDROMEDA
Titian

THE RIALTO

Guardi

were Lord Redesdale (now Chairman of the Board of Trustees), Sir William Harcourt, Sir Walter Armstrong, Sir Francis Mowatt, Mr Alfred de Rothschild, Sir E. J. Poynter and Mr Alfred Waterhouse. This committee, with the exception of Sir E. J. Poynter, unanimously recommended that the collection should remain at Hertford House, the apartments being suitably altered for the purpose. Sir E. J. Poynter favoured the housing of the collection in a new building near the National Gallery. The purchase and adaptation of Hertford House did not strictly comply with the terms of the bequest, but the law officers of the Crown held that the Government might be justified in so doing if Mr Murray Scott, the only person who could claim under the will, would bind himself and his heirs to treat this action as a satisfactory fulfilment of Lady Wallace's conditions. This Mr Murray Scott agreed to do, and on the 22nd of June 1900 the Wallace Collection was opened to the public at Hertford House.

Sir John Murray Scott was the first Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and retained the chairmanship till 17th January 1912, when he suddenly died of heart failure while on a visit to Hertford House.

III

THE ITALIAN SCHOOLS OF PAINTING

Few people go to the Wallace Collection to study the earlier schools of art. It contains comparatively few Italian paintings, and our memory of its pictures is fully occupied with thoughts of the great masters of the seventeenth century and the wonderful series of works which form so glorious a monument to the artistic genius of France. "Primitive masters," confessed Lord Hertford, "I have not yet adopted, and," he added, "I don't think I ever will." Nevertheless, thanks probably to Sir Richard Wallace and Mr Mawson, a few primitives crept into the collection, and are to be found mostly in the third gallery to the extreme right of the entrance hall as you enter the museum.

The earliest school of painting represented is that of Siena, the little hill town which rivalled Florence in the dawn of Italian art. Its founder, Duccio, was probably born five or six years before Giotto, and scholars have yet to settle whether it originated

from Byzantium, France, or a revival of native Etruscan genius. The little panel of *The Virgin and Child with St Peter and St John the Baptist* (III., 550) has recently been ascribed to Paolo di Giovanni Mei. It shows the influence of Lippo Memmi, to whom it was formerly attributed, who in turn was influenced by his brother-in-law, Simone Martini (c. 1283-1344), the friend of Petrarch. The author of our panel, who flourished in the second half of the fourteenth century, had no knowledge of perspective or of the subtleties of modelling, but to many art lovers the naïve sincerity and deep religious feeling expressed in these early works give them a force and charm often absent from more learned but more worldly paintings.

A later example of the Sienese school, painted about a century later, is the little panel of *St Jerome chastising himself* (III., 543). This is much more realistic, and was formerly attributed to Andrea del Castagno, a Florentine influenced by the realism of Donatello, but it has now been definitely assigned to Benvenuto da Siena (c. 1436-1520), author of the fine triptych at the National Gallery. Almost the last of the Sienese artists, Domenico Beccafumi (1486-1551), a contemporary of Michael Angelo, is also represented here by his early but interesting panel, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* (III., 525).

For centuries past the Venetian school has been celebrated for its colour, and we get more than a hint of what is to follow from the glowing richness of *St Roch* (III., 527), by that early master, Carlo Crivelli (c. 1430-1595). "The latter half of the fifteenth century shows no art more intense in conviction than that of Crivelli," says our catalogue, "or more brilliantly decorative after its peculiar fashion." And Mr Bernhard Berenson waxes still more enthusiastic: "He takes rank with the most genuine artists of all times and countries, and does not weary even when great masters grow tedious." This panel, which probably formed part of a much larger altar-piece, is a fine example of Crivelli's best style.

Another early Venetian master splendidly represented here is Cima da Conegliano, who died about 1517. The panel of *St Catherine of Alexandria* (XVI., 1) was bought by Lord Hertford in 1859, and is the most important example of this master in England. Originally it formed the central portion of the altar-piece at the church of S. Rocco at Mestre, near Venice. The two wings, *St Sebastian* and *St Roch*, are now in the Strasburg Museum, while the lunette, *The Virgin and Child with SS. Dominic and Francis*, was sold at Christie's (No. 17, 3rd July 1912) to Mr Langton Douglas.

A whole romance might be written round the fresco painting known as *A Boy Reading* (III., 538), formerly catalogued as by Bramantino but now ascertained to be the work of Vincenzo Foppa, who founded the Milanese school in the latter end of the fifteenth century. Foppa was commissioned by that great art patron, Cosimo de' Medici, to decorate the walls of his bank in the Via de' Bossi, Milan, and this charming work is a fragment of what he painted there. It was still in its place and mentioned by contemporary writers as late as 1862, and some time after this it was saved from inevitable destruction by being cut clean out of the wall. As a panel of plaster it found its way to Paris, where it was probably sold by Vicomte de Tauzia, Keeper of Pictures at the Louvre, to Sir Richard Wallace. The identity of the boy is uncertain. He has been called Gian Galeazzo Sforza, but since this youth was only born in 1469, and since the fifteenth-century writer, Filarete, tells us definitely that Foppa was working on some of the frescoes for the Banco Mediceo in 1463, it is doubtful whether this fresco was painted so much later as the age of the boy, if Galeazzo, would imply. On the other hand, Filarete informs us that according to the contract Foppa was to adorn another part of the building with "portraits of the Duke Francesco Sforza, of his illustrious consort

and their sons," so this may be one of the Sforzas, if not Gian Galeazzo. But Mr MacColl suggests "it is more likely that it is emblematic of education or eloquence; it recalls illustrations of lecture-rooms in early printed Venetian books."

Bernardino Luini (c. 1475-1535), another Milanese painter, is represented by four works, of which the most notable is unquestionably *The Virgin of the Columbine* (XVI., 10). This was bought by Lord Hertford as a Leonardo da Vinci, and exhibited under his name at Bethnal Green.

The ups and downs of collecting are well illustrated when we compare this Luini, bought as a Leonardo, with the most famous Italian picture in the collection, Titian's *Perseus and Andromeda* (XVI., 11), presumably bought as a school-piece. It was purchased by Lord Yarmouth, the third Marquess, in 1815, for £362. Some time in the fifties or earlier it was seen by Dr Waagen, and by that time it had got attributed to Veronese. In his monumental work [1] Dr Waagen accepts this attribution, but comments: "The conception is very animated . . . the colouring of a power seldom seen in his pictures and approaching Titian. The landscape also, which occupies a large portion of the picture, is admirable."

[1] "The Treasures of Art in Great Britain." 1854-1857.

After this someone appeared to think that it approached closer to Titian than to Veronese, and so it was written down in the inventory of the collection as "School of Titian." It was not thought worth showing at Bethnal Green, and was so lightly esteemed that it was hung in a bath-room—and high up even there. Hence it was happily rescued from oblivion in 1900 by Sir Claude Phillips, who recognised it to be an authentic work from Titian's own hand.

It is extraordinary that it should have been lost sight of for so many years, since it was sold from the Orleans Collection to a London dealer in 1798; it is not as if it were an unknown work. It is highly praised by Vasari, and mentioned by Titian himself in an existing letter written to Philip II. of Spain, in 1554, to congratulate him on his marriage with our Queen Mary. In the light of history it is tempting to construe the subject as symbolising Spain's attempt to rescue England from the dragon of nonconformity—but veracity forbids! The exact date of the painting is not easy to fix. The master had evidently thought it out in 1554, and it was possibly finished and sent to Spain with the *Europa* in 1562. It is worth noting that when Titian sent in his bill (22nd December 1574) for a number of pictures the *Andromeda* appears just before the *Europa*

in his list, and immediately before the *Andromeda* appears the *Diana and Actaeon,* which we know was sent in 1559. The engraving made under Titian's eye in 1565 was probably executed from a second version of the subject now at the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg. At all events, the following interesting passage from Vasari proves that when the biographer went to Venice in 1566, to collect material for the second edition of his "Lives," this picture was already in Spain :—

"Titian painted Andromeda bound to the Rock with Perseus delivering her from the Sea-monster; a more beautiful painting than this could not be imagined; and the same may he said of another, Diana Bathing with her Nymphs and turning Actaeon into a Stag. . . . These pictures are in the possession of the Catholic King, and are held in high esteem for the animation imparted to them by the master, whose colours have made them almost alive."

So many people have remarked how "modern" this masterpiece of Titian's old age appears, that it is worth quoting Vasari's continuing remarks. "It is nevertheless true," he observes, "that his [Titian's] mode of proceeding in these last-mentioned works is very different from that pursued by him in those of his youth, the first being executed with

a certain care and delicacy, which renders the work equally effective whether seen at a distance or examined closely; while those of a later period, executed in bold strokes and with dashes, can scarcely be distinguished when the observer is near them, but if viewed from the proper distance they appear perfect. . . . And this method of proceeding is a judicious, beautiful, and admirable one, since it causes the paintings so treated to appear living, they being executed with profound art, while that art is nevertheless concealed."

To many of Titian's contemporaries the paintings of his last manner must have seemed as "unfinished" as did those of Gainsborough to the captious of his generation, those of Whistler to Ruskin, those of the French Impressionists to the critics of the last century. It was a happy coincidence that Sir Claude Phillips' rediscovery of Titian's impressionist masterpiece should have occurred just about the time when Claude Monet, Pissarro, and the other great masters of modern France were at length accepted and appreciated by the educated London public. Some idea of Titian's earlier style may be gained from the *Venus Disarming Cupid* (XVI., 19), which is remarkably close to Titian in his Giorgionesque period. This painting also was once

in the Orleans Collection, where it was classed as a Giorgione, a name it bore till quite recently; but the weakness of the construction generally, and of the landscape in particular, has caused it, notwithstanding its richness of colour and dignity of design, to be considered by modern connoisseurship as the work neither of Titian nor of his first master, Giorgione, but by some hitherto unidentified Venetian painter in the first half of the sixteenth century.

In passing, we must note that the catalogue queries 1477 as the year of Titian's birth. Few modern students can accept this date, which is only given by the artist in a begging letter to Philip of Spain, when it was to Titian's advantage to make himself out to be older than he was. The indications given by Vasari and Dolce that Titian was born in 1489 are more credible, but probably the nearest approach to the truth is given in a letter, dated 8th December 1567, from the Spanish Consul in Venice (Thomas de Cornoça), which fixes the year of Titian's birth as 1482. For a full review of the evidence concerning the date of Titian's birth the interested reader is referred to "Giorgione" (1907), by Mr Herbert Cook, who inclines to agree with Vasari.

To another and very much later age belong the

numerous paintings of Venice which hang on the walls of Gallery XII. Antonio da Canale (1697-1768), commonly known as Canaletto, was a pioneer in painting what may be described as "urban landscapes," and his views of Venice, with their accurate perspective and formal dignity of design, were enormously popular in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Every country gentleman who made the "grand tour" in those days wanted to purchase a Canaletto as a souvenir of his visit to Venice. As a result of this widespread demand the work of Canale was extensively imitated both in Italy and in England. The Wallace Collection is crowded with these imitations, and contains no painting which can certainly be ascribed to the hand of the master. Two views of *The Grand Canal* (Nos. 506 and 507) have been identified as the work of his nephew and pupil, Bernardo Bellotto, to whom was originally applied the diminutive of Canaletto—*i.e.* "the little Canale"—though this nickname is now generally used to denote his more famous uncle. The remaining pictures still wearing the name of Canaletto are not from the hand of either uncle or nephew, but the production of Italian or English imitators, and mostly of inferior quality.

Francesco Guardi (1712-1793), another pupil of Antonio Canale, stands head and shoulders above

these "pot-boiling" imitators. In some respects he surpasses his master, not in formal dignity of design but in his vivacious charm and the brilliant luminosity of his colour. Where Canale gave precise linear perspective, Guardi gives us atmospheric perspective. His views are never cold, but bathed in light and air; they are full of movement, and the little figures peopling them are exquisitely drawn and grouped. Comparing him with his master, Mr Berenson shrewdly observes that Guardi had "more of an eye for the picturesque and for what may be called instantaneous effects, thus anticipating both the Romantic and the Impressionist painters of our own century." He was a great colourist, and his technique, with its small deft touches of colour, conveys the sparkle of Venice with a brilliance which, in its own way, has never been surpassed by any painter. His pictures have excited the intense admiration of Whistler and many other modern artists. The Wallace Collection contains nine of his views of Venice (Nos. 491, 494, 502-504, 508, 517-518, and XI., 647), all, except the last, in Gallery XII.; and these are of his best. They represent the maturity of Guardi's power, and in no other museum in the world is his delightful art seen to better advantage.

IV

THE MASTER-PAINTERS OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Writing from Paris in 1863, Lord Hertford invites his London agent, Mr Mawson, to come over and see "a goodish portrait by Rubens" which he had bought that year in Brussels. This is the *Isabelle Brant, first wife of Rubens* (XVI., 30), a slightly varied version of the portrait at The Hague, and Lord Hertford might pardonably congratulate himself on the purchase. But he ought to have been still more delighted when Mr Mawson secured for him in 1856, at a cost of 4550 guineas, *The Rainbow Landscape* (XVI., 63), undoubtedly the noblest of the many Rubenses in the collection. In all likelihood, however, Mr Mawson had need of his considerable persuasive powers, for Lord Hertford once confessed: "I do not much like Rubens' landscapes."

Whether or no we agree with his lordship depends, to some extent, on what we demand of a landscape. There are landscapes which soothe and calm our

spirits, and there are landscapes which exhilarate. Those by Rubens come under the latter category. The Fleming was no mystic in his attitude towards Nature; he approached her without awe, without humility, and with the friendly arrogance of a strong man who respects strength in others. He was a pioneer of landscape painting, but most of his landscapes were painted in the neighbourhood of the Château de Stein, his country-seat near Mechlin, and in them we may trace not only the painter's glory in the pomp and prowess of Nature but the landowner's pride in a handsome and well-ordered estate.

An admirable commentary on *The Rainbow Landscape* has been written by the German critic, Dr Richard Muther: "The struggle of the elements is past, everything glitters with moisture, and the trees rejoice like fat children who have just had their breakfast."[1] The last touch is masterly; it expresses exactly that healthy and contented animalism which radiates from every work by this master.

Rubens lived and painted on the physical plane, and that is why, though we pay homage to his masterpieces at Antwerp, we always feel that he was

[1] "The History of Painting." Translated by Geo. Kriehn, Ph.D., 1907.

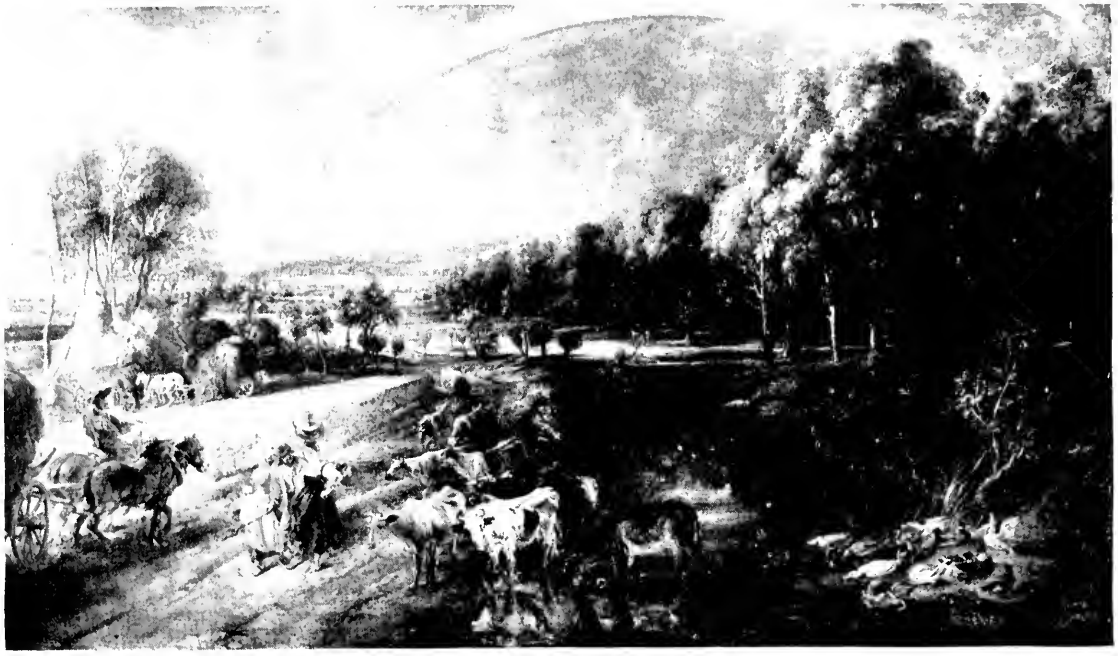
unfitted by his temperament to the treatment of religious subjects. There are five of these at Hertford House, including the sketch, *Adoration of the Magi* (XXII., 519), for the altar-piece in the Antwerp Gallery. The most satisfying is *The Holy Family with Elizabeth and St John the Baptist* (XVI., 81), which is unusually pleasing in conception as well as in execution. The expression of the St John is charming, full of human affection, and the whole composition is rhythmically balanced and sumptuous in colour. *Christ's Charge to St Peter* (XVI., 93) is greatly inferior, and though its authenticity is beyond dispute the work deserves the censure it received from Sir Joshua Reynolds: "The characters heavy, without grace or dignity; the handling on a close examination appears tame even to the suspicion of its being a copy; the colouring is remarkably fresh. The name of Rubens would not stand high in the world if he had never produced other pictures than such as this."

How greatly quality is to be preferred to quantity, even in a Rubens, may be recognised when we compare this painting with the Rubens sketches in Gallery XXII., the masterly and spirited little battle-scene, *Defeat and Death of Maxentius* (520), and the three tiny panels (522-524) of the master's first sketches for his decorative pictures, *The Birth*

of Henri IV., Triumphal Entry of Henri IV. into Paris, and *Marriage of Henri IV. and Marie de Médecis.* It is interesting to recall that the battle-scene is one of twelve sketches illustrating the history of the Emperor Constantine the Great, originally designed by Rubens for the tapestry manufacture at Mortlake.

Another exuberant Fleming was Jacob Jordaens (1593-1678), the contemporary of Rubens, and greatly influenced by that master though never actually his pupil. *The Riches of Autumn* (XVII., 120) is a splendid example of his bacchanalian opulence, finely decorative both in design and colour. The fruit, vegetables and most of the foliage in this picture are painted by Frans Snyders, who frequently collaborated with Rubens and other Antwerp painters. He was a noted painter of still-life subjects, as *Dead Game* (XVI., 72).

But the most famous pupil of Rubens was temperamentally poles apart from his master. Where Rubens made all his sitters strong and lusty, Van Dyck made his refined and spiritual. From Rubens he learnt how to handle his tools, but so soon as he had mastered them he obtained widely different results. His master did well by him when he urged Van Dyck to go to Italy. The dreamy, poetic-looking youth was spiritually nearer akin to



THE RAINBOW LANDSCAPE

Rubens

PHILIPPE LE ROY

Van Dyck

the Italian than to the Flemish painters, and what he learnt from them, and especially from Titian, may be seen in his portrait of himself, *The Artist as the Shepherd Paris* (XVI., 85), painted in Italy about 1625-1626. Somewhere about this time, or a little earlier, he would have painted the *Young Italian Nobleman* (XVI., 53), whom Mr Lionel Cust thinks may be a member of the Lomellini family whose group-portrait is in the Scottish National Gallery.

Fortified and polished by his knowledge of Italian art, Van Dyck returned to Antwerp, there to paint, among other people, *Isabella Waerbeke, Wife of Paul de Vos* (XVI., 16), and those two outstanding masterpieces of this period, the portraits of *Philippe le Roy* (94) and his wife (79). The husband, Governor of the Netherlands, and the artist's very good friend, was painted in 1630, the wife in the following year; and the year after that, in 1632, the young master was invited by Charles I. to England, there to become Sir Antony Van Dyck and Principal Painter in Ordinary to his Majesty.

After he had established himself in England Van Dyck slightly altered his manner, but though he painted many noble works in this country it may be questioned whether he ever did anything surpassing his portrait of *Philippe le Roy*. Fine as the portrait of the wife is, that of the husband seems to me more

profound, probably because the artist knew the man more intimately. He was only thirty-two when he painted Philippe, and ten years later he died, in London, but he lived long enough to set a style in portraiture which generations of painters have aimed to emulate, never surpassing, rarely approaching.

The elegance of Van Dyck's portraits is commonly remarked, but what the casual observer is apt to overlook is that this elegance penetrates below externals to the mind and spirit within. How many portrait painters who have aimed at Van Dyck's elegance have given us nothing but *chic*! Van Dyck was not only a most accomplished and fluent master of the brush; he must also have been a keen psychologist. In the history of art Van Dyck takes rank with Botticelli as a poet-painter who strove exquisitely to mirror not merely the bodies but the very souls of humanity.

The temperamental contrast between Rubens and Van Dyck finds a parallel in the two great portrait painters of Holland of the same century, Frans Hals and Rembrandt. Hals also lived on the physical plane, but whereas Rubens for all his exuberance of spirits never forgot his courtly manners, the boisterousness of Hals was that of a good burgher on the spree. The swagger of the

brushwork in *The Laughing Cavalier* (XVI., 84) is as provocative as the unconcealed disdain and conceit of the young soldier depicted. Nobody can dispute the vital force of a canvas by Hals or contest the supremacy of his realistic rendering of externals, but sometimes we wish that he had dived deeper into character and had concealed his own extraordinary cleverness a little more effectually. Of one thing we may be certain, that Hals thought painting tremendous fun, and as a happy-go-lucky Bohemian he would doubtless have roared with laughter if he had been told that one day an English nobleman would pay £2040 for this portrait.

That lyrical prose writer, Sir Frederick Wedmore, has summed up the difference between Rubens and Rembrandt in a singularly happy phrase. "A blare of trumpets announces Rubens's presence," he writes; "but Rembrandt simply holds your hand." To continue the analogy, we may say that Hals bursts in through the door which Van Dyck opens noiselessly. Sir Antony gives you the most graceful bow and a most penetrating look; but he does not "hold your hand." That is the difference between him and Rembrandt. Both have sympathy and insight, but Van Dyck's are limited to the upper classes; those of Rembrandt are universal.

Rembrandt's intense interest in the humble and lowly may be seen in his tender little panel of *The Good Samaritan* (XIV., 203). This is probably the earliest picture by the master in the Wallace Collection, and well illustrates the careful precision of his first manner. An etching of the same subject was executed by one of Rembrandt's pupils in 1633, so we shall probably not be far out in conjecturing that this was painted in the previous year or earlier.

Look at the portrait of *Jean Pellicorne with his son Gaspar* (XVI., 82), or *Susanna van Collen, Wife of Jean Pellicorne, with her Daughter* (XVI., 90), and you will get a good idea of Rembrandt's ordinary professional style in portraiture about this time (1632-1633). We do not count these among Rembrandt's great masterpieces, but this was the sort of portrait which his contemporaries liked, which for some twelve years or so kept him a popular and prosperous portrait painter. Had he settled down to this style and not aspired higher he might have escaped bankruptcy—but then he would never have become the great master he is. He began his experiments towards evolving a more profound and artistically richer style of portraiture by painting himself again and again. The portraits of *The Artist in a Cap* (XVI., 52) and *The Artist in a*

Plumed Hat (XVI., 55) are early examples of this ceaseless experimenting, and of the development of the master's second manner.

Had he stopped even here all might have been well with him from a worldly standpoint, but Rembrandt never stood still. How far he had got some twenty years later we know from his *Portrait of the Artist's Son Titus* (XVI., 29), painted about 1657, and one of the great masterpieces of portrait painting in the world. How thin and shallow those earlier portraits look by comparison with this haunting and passionate portrait of the boy he loved—loved and lost, for eight years later Titus died, in 1665: the third great loss Rembrandt had suffered since the death of his parents. His first wife, Saskia, had died in 1642; her successor, Hendrickje, some twenty years afterwards. Surely with all reverence we may say that Rembrandt was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

Suffering sours or ennobles character, and Rembrandt was one of those who are ennobled by the trials they undergo. He lost his popularity almost synchronously with his first wife, in 1642, when he painted *The Night Watch*. Few sitters would go to a madman who painted faces in shadows which concealed warts and pimples and other characteristic traits. And he took such liberties with his subjects

that few would go to him for works other than portraits. *The Centurion Cornelius* (XVI., 86), which Dr Bode places about 1650, is a glorious example of this tendency. For years experts have been worried to decipher the subject of this painting, which used to be known as *The Unmerciful Servant*. By this reading the figure in the turban and red robe was held to be the Christ, and critics enlarged on the displeasure expressed in His face, and the guilt and fear of the Unrighteous Servant whom they took to be the central of the three figures to the right. How easily we may misread pictures if we approach them with preconceived ideas, and how vastly more important are their decorative than their illustrative qualities! A mezzotint by James Ward, published in 1800, gives the correct title, and we may gather that Cornelius, the red-robed figure, is in no way displeased, while the remaining three figures are merely "two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually" (Acts x. 7), receiving instructions to go to Joppa. Of course, all the difficulty has been brought about by Rembrandt's love for Oriental splendour, which led him to habit a Roman centurion in Asiatic costume. It is not "correct" in the way that Alma Tadema's Roman paintings are; but it is great in a way they are not, because greatness

in art does not rest on pettifogging accuracy of antiquarian details but on largeness of conception, noble design and splendid colour.

All Rembrandt's landscapes were painted between 1640 and 1652, and perhaps it is not too fanciful to imagine that he found in Nature consolation for the loss of his first wife and his waning popularity.

The *Landscape with a Coach* (XIII., 229) belongs to the earlier years of his landscape period. It used to be called *An Ideal Landscape,* and the old title is serviceable as indicating that this picture is almost certainly not a realistic view of any particular place but a studio composition made up from various sketches of nature put together without regard to topographical accuracy. It may not be nature in a petty, literal reading of the word, but it is a most poetic rendering of a theme which nature has suggested. Rembrandt excelled in landscape as in every other branch of painting, and in his appreciation of the veil of beauty which atmosphere casts over a scene, as well as in his capacity to find strangeness in the familiar and beauty in the commonplace, he anticipated the romantic landscapes of the painters of Barbizon.

Velasquez was one of the few really great artists in the world who enjoyed a comfortable life and the

general esteem of his contemporaries. He had the gravity and intellectuality of Van Dyck without his spirituality. Van Dyck's personages are sometimes refined to the point of appearing ghostly; the men and women of Velasquez are always substantial. His realism is as intense as that of Hals. Compare his *Lady with a Fan* (XVI., 88) with the latter's *Laughing Cavalier* on the same wall. The Velasquez is literally truer, because it is more diffuse, more seen as a whole. The Spaniard silently opens a window on life; Hals smashes it with a brick—and some have their vision disturbed by the noise of the falling splinters.

Nobody has established the identity of this lady with a fan. Beruete has suggested that she may be Francisca, the daughter of the painter and the wife of his pupil, Mazo, but he brings forward no evidence worth talking about to support this identification. A spirited sketch of the same lady is in the Duke of Devonshire's collection.

Of the remaining pictures at Hertford House ascribed to Velasquez the only one whose authenticity has not been questioned seriously is *Don Baltasar Carlos in Infancy* (XVI., 12). The present Keeper stoutly defends *Don Baltasar Carlos in the Riding School* (XVI., 6), which both Sir Walter Armstrong and Beruete ascribe to Mazo. According

THE LAUGHING CAVALIER

Frans Hals

LADY WITH A FAN

Velasque

THE ARTIST'S SON TITUS

Rembrandt

to Mr MacColl, "Mazo was incapable of so original a design and magical an execution."

Perhaps the most interesting of the acknowledged "school-pieces" is the full-length portrait of *Don Baltasar Carlos* (XVI., 4), which was once in the possession of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Northcote relates that on seeing this picture in his master's studio he "greatly admired it and with much simplicity said, 'Indeed it is very fine; and how exactly it is in your own manner, Sir Joshua.' Yet it never entered into my mind that he had touched upon it, which was really the fact, and particularly on the face." A close investigation reveals Sir Joshua's "restorations," not only in the forehead, hair and shadows round the jaws, but in the whole of the left hand and throughout the background. The original picture at Vienna, of which this is probably a copy by Mazo, has a table with a black hat on it, and beyond that a grey piece of wall. Mr MacColl points out that "Reynolds seems to have taken the dark patch of the hat as defining the shape of the table in a curve; has made the wall a sort of mantelpiece with a little book lying on it, and has broken a second curtain across it."

The adventures of an artist do not cease with his death. Velasquez, Court Painter to Philip IV. of Spain and Mayor of the Palace, met with a decline

after his decease. He was, comparatively speaking, neglected and underrated till the third quarter of the last century, when he was rediscovered and his praises sung loudly and enthusiastically by Manet in France and Whistler in England. At a time when artists were preoccupied with problems of rendering light and air, with colour rather than with line, a multitude of worshippers was ready to pay homage to the master of Madrid, who built up his aerial vistas by the juxtaposition of subtly harmonised planes of colour. The vehemence of his admirers was not to be denied, and the name of Velasquez became a household word. To-day the pendulum has swung so far in his favour that many —forgetting Rembrandt, Titian and a few others— do not hesitate to call him the greatest painter who ever lived.

Murillo, on the other hand, is less highly esteemed now than when Lord Hertford bought a round dozen of his works. When our grandfathers and great-grandfathers spoke of Spanish painting they thought first of Murillo; when it is mentioned to-day we think of Velasquez, Goya, El Greco, and almost forget Murillo. The present generation finds a flavour of confectionery in Murillo's religious subjects. We look for sentiment and discover sentimentality. Murillo was possessed neither of

great originality nor deep religious feeling. Indeed, he was at his best painting the beggar boys of Seville rather than the Holy Family. *Joseph and his Brethren* (XVI., 46) and *The Charity of St Thomas of Villanueva* (XVI., 97) are the nearest approach in the Wallace Collection to those pictures in which Murillo prettily plays the "Lady Bountiful" among the slums of Seville. Of the remaining works, *The Marriage of the Virgin* (XVI., 14) is perhaps the most pleasing, while of the four canvases not from his own but other hands (XXVI., 7; XVII., 104, 133, 136), the oval *Virgin and Child* (133) is the best. But beside Rubens, Van Dyck, Rembrandt and Velasquez, Murillo is outclassed at every point. The official catalogue sums him up kindly but firmly: "He had an unerring instinct for graceful and finely balanced composition of the more academic type, but, even in his famous *sfumato* or vaporous style, he cannot be ranked high among the true colourists."

V

DUTCH GENRE PAINTINGS AND LANDSCAPES

All great art springs from great emotion, and the wonderful artistic activity in Holland during the seventeenth century was inspired by the wave of patriotism which had broken the yoke of the Spaniards and established the independence of the Dutch Republic. It was love of country and contentment in peaceful domesticity, after the stress of war, which made the Dutch artists pre-eminent as painters of the homeland and the hearthside.

The Wallace Collection is particularly rich in examples of this school, whose Little Masters are so numerous that it is a task to mention each by name, whose work is so full of charm and distinction that it becomes invidious to give precedence to one over the other.

Chronologically, and perhaps artistically as well, the first place is claimed by Adriaen Brouwer, whose *Boor Asleep* (XIII., 211) is one of the brightest jewels in the Hertford treasury. He was probably

born in the same year as Rembrandt, in 1606, or a few months earlier, but whether he was born in Holland or Flanders is disputed. The latest authorities favour the latter and give Oudenarde the honour of being his birthplace. More certain is our knowledge that he spent his youth in Haarlem, where he came under the influence of Hals. Later he worked at Amsterdam and Antwerp, and how highly he was esteemed by his greatest contemporaries may be gathered from the fact that Rubens possessed seventeen of his pictures, while Rembrandt had eight and a sketch-book. In a sense, Brouwer is a painter's painter, for only those who have studied painting can fully appreciate the greatness of his achievements: but all can admire the humorous vividness of his vision, the summary perfection of his drawing, and the harmonious beauty of his enamel-like colour.

His works are exceedingly rare, for, like Giorgione, he died at the early age of thirty-two; but Brouwer also left a rich foundation for other artists to build upon and a fame that is increasing yearly.

How fine a colourist was Brouwer may be recognised when we compare his little masterpiece with any of the works by his Flemish successor, David Teniers the Younger. *Boors Carousing* (XIII., 227), in the same room as the Brouwer, is quite a

good example of Teniers in his silvery manner, but it looks commonplace beside the distinction of the other. While Teniers endeavoured to idealise his peasants and make them fit company for respectable citizens, his Dutch contemporary, Adriaen van Ostade, was more ruthless in his realisms. From his version of *Boors Carousing* (765) close by we learn his tendency to caricature and to amuse his patrons by exaggerating the stupidity and ungainliness of his victims. His younger brother, Isack van Ostade, holds the balance more evenly, extenuating no man nor setting down aught in malice. The *Winter Scene* (XVI., 73) is a good example of his serious and unprejudiced vision. The authorship of *A Village Scene* (XVI., 21) is more questionable, and it may conceivably come from the hand of one of the Molenaers, a family of painters who extensively copied the style of the Ostades.

Gerard Dou, one of the many pupils of Rembrandt and financially the most successful painter of his day, made his fortune by never progressing beyond the first manner of his master. *A Hermit* (XIV., 170) is a typical example of his precise, minutely finished style, which retains its popularity among those unable to distinguish between industry and inspiration. Dou foreshadows the decay of the Dutch, when prosperous shopkeeping has dulled the fine spirit of

freedom which made them a great nation. "His is a witless, dreary, petrified art, enlivened by no thought and pulsating with no idea. In the soul of Dou there lives the soul of that Holland which clipped the wings of Rembrandt, the only real 'Flying Dutchman,' and let Hals starve." [1]

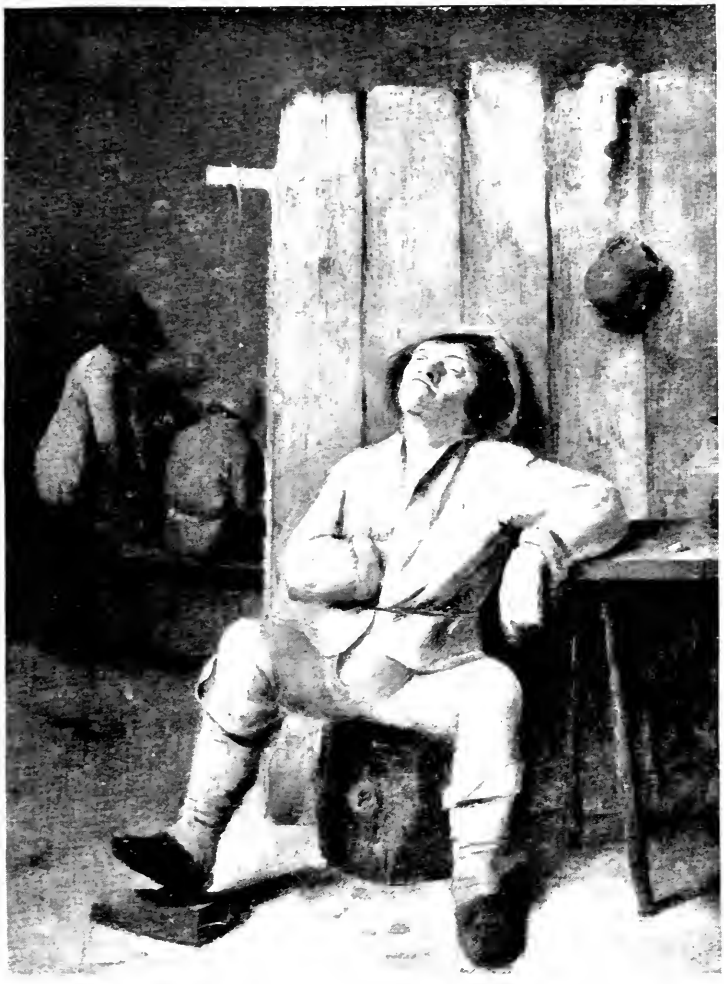
A far greater master than Dou, with an equally keen eye for detail but with more ability to subordinate it to the unity of his whole theme, was Gerard Terborch (1617-1681). *A Lady Reading a Letter* (XIII., 236) is a brilliant example of his elegant intimacy and of that delicate charm of colour which only two or three of his fellow-countrymen could rival. Indeed the influences that went to the making of Terborch were not confined within the frontiers of the Netherlands. He was more a man-of-the-world than most of the Dutch genre painters; he visited England, Germany, France, Italy and Spain, and in the last country he undoubtedly studied the paintings of Velasquez. That he was much affected by that exquisite colourist, Jan Vermeer of Delft, is not likely, seeing that Vermeer was fifteen years his junior. But he may well have been influenced by Vermeer's master, Carel Fabritius, whose *Starling* is one of the glories of the Mauritshuis at The Hague, and whose short, meteoric career had a

[1] Dr Richard Muther. Op. cit.

greater influence on Dutch genre painting than has yet been recognised. There are passages in Terborch's *Lady at her Toilet* (XIII., 235) which recall the colour schemes and enamel-like quality of paint which Vermeer learnt from Fabritius and exquisitely perpetuated.

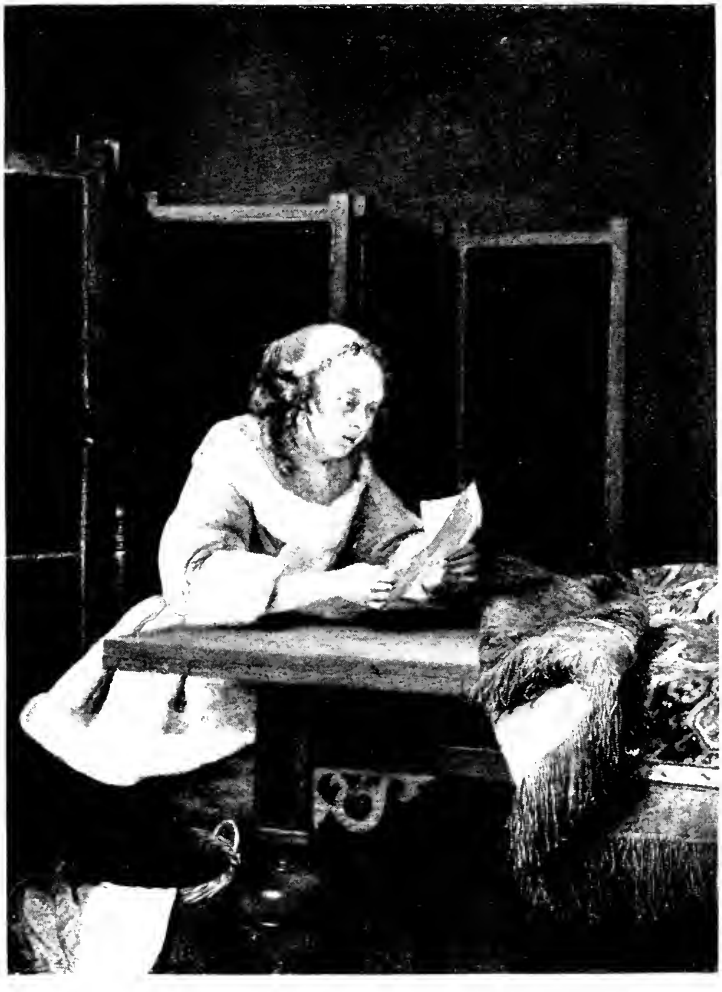
Terborch's greatest rival, Pieter de Hooch (1630-1677), may also be seen at his best in the *Interior with Woman and Boy* (XVI., 27). These two and the other great masters of the Dutch school are each in his way so perfect that, Rembrandt always excepted, it is, as Dr Bode says, "a matter of individual taste" which we place first. For my part, I give Vermeer the hegemony for soft radiance of colour, but when it comes to Terborch and De Hooch I can only bracket them as equals. The latter's figures are not so aristocratic as those of Terborch, but they are seen as finely and have their being in the same clear light which both these masters observed and rendered so lovingly.

Gabriel Metsu (1629-1667) is a formidable rival to both. *The Letter Writer Surprised* (XIII., 240) shows how close he went to Vermeer, and his colour has a tenderness which tends to make even a Terborch look a little hard. On the other hand, Metsu's observation is less subtle, his research into light and shade is not carried so far; but he knows well how



BOOR ASLEEP

Brouwer



LADY READING A LETTER

Fragonard

to set his stage decoratively and his pictures are always sprightly and dramatic.

Known formerly chiefly as a portrait painter, Nicolas Maes (1632-1693), another pupil of Rembrandt, is now valued above all for his genre paintings. Of the two at Hertford House, *The Listening Housewife* (XIII., 224) is by far the better, though it is one of his earlier works in this style. In the best of his works there is a real passion of observation and penetrating intimacy. "There is scarcely any pupil of Rembrandt's," says Dr Bode, "who approaches the great master so nearly as Maes does in this series of pictures." Unfortunately the series is severely limited; some thirty only are known to exist, all painted between 1655 and 1665. After this date circumstances drove him into "pot-boiling" portraits, of which we have no examples here. The two attractive portraits of boys with hawks (XVI., 20, 96) have been taken away from Maes by the most recent scholarship and given to his slightly older contemporary, Joannes van Noord.

Jan Steen (1626-1679), represented by five pictures here, must be rated with Teniers as not more than a secondary genre painter. He is cleverly satirical, occasionally accomplished, but his lighting is rarely true or beautiful and his colour never rises to preciousness and is frequently downright inharmonious.

Between the genre painters and the landscape painters of Holland stands Aart van der Neer (1603-1677), a most convenient and fascinating causeway. Born three years before Rembrandt, he is one of the great Early Fathers of landscape, and he is splendidly represented in the Wallace Collection. He anticipated Whistler in painting nocturnes (XIV., 161, 157), while Dr Bode ranks his *Winter Scene* (XIII., 159) and *Skating Scene* (XIV., 217) here as "among the most perfect landscape delineations of winter."

Like so many of the Little Masters of Holland, Aart van der Neer deteriorated towards the end of his life. He was a tavern-keeper and wine-seller as well as painter, and conceivably reverses in business may have driven him to pot-boil in his last years. But the two winter scenes here belong to his best period, approximately 1655 to 1665, when he was not dependent on painting for a livelihood and as a happy amateur could paint how he pleased.

Farming has always been a very important industry of Holland, in the seventeenth century as it is to-day, and the homely realism which is the feature of Dutch art was directed towards the country as well as the town. Of those who painted cattle Paul Potter (1625-1654) is the most celebrated, though he died in his twenty-ninth year. The

precision of his drawing has been admired for centuries, and the Wallace Collection contains one of his best and latest works, *Cattle in Stormy Weather* (XIII., 252), as well as two others. But his objective, impersonal accuracy of delineation is apt to tire us by its very impartiality and lack of strong personal feeling; though we do not all dare to be as severe as Dr Muther, who regards Potter's cattle as "essentially Dutch, for they know neither passions, nor struggles, nor movement, but chew the cud phlegmatically or lie down in comfortable repose."

Adriaen van de Velde, son of the famous marine painter and member of a great family of artists, was another accomplished and short-lived painter. But whereas with Potter the cattle were the principal theme, with Van de Velde they were only part of the landscape. Even a religious subject, such as *The Migration of Jacob* (XVI., 80) was seized upon as an excuse to paint animals out of doors. But the sunniness and atmospheric charm which distinguished his art is not so well seen in this large work as in the smaller *Noonday Rest* (XIV., 199). As so frequently happens with him and other artists, the little pictures are the greatest.

Cattle figure largely also in the paintings of Aelbert Cuyp (1620-1691), so numerously and finely represented at Hertford House. But his principal

interest lay neither in the beast nor in the earth, but above, in the mighty vault of the heavens; and it is in his painting of skies and sunlight that his mastery is most clearly seen. *Shipping on the Maes at Dordrecht* (XVI., 49) and *The Ferry Boat on the Maes* (XVI., 54) are both brilliant examples of Cuyp's glowing light and golden colour.

Though distinguished for his horses, Philips Wouwermann was a painter not of animals but of genre, and we shall find many pictures here, whether *Horse Fair* (XVI., 65), *Farrier's Shop* (XIV., 144), or *Camp Scene* (193), where in his clever, characteristic way he puts in a white horse just where his composition requires a spot of light colour.

Apart from all other Dutch landscape painters, belonging indeed to another race altogether, stands the austere and majestic figure of Jacob van Ruisdael (1628-1682). We may easily pass by his two paintings in the Wallace Collection, the *Rocky Landscape* (XVI., 50) and the *Landscape with Waterfall* (56), for they have none of the bright colour and lively detail which draws our eyes to the work of lesser men. Yet if we search we shall find therein all the essential details of a scene in nature, and these are so ordered into unity that the whole gives the effect of an instantaneous impression. "The lasting, singular impression made on us by

these paintings proceeds," says Dr Bode, "from the happiest combination of rare taste, wealth of thought, and fervid feeling possessed by the artist, who has put his whole soul into his pictures."

Though he took all Nature for his province, and in his youth painted her more peaceful aspects, we instinctively associate his sublime spirit with holy spots which are both savage and enchanted. We cannot realise that he was eight years younger than Cuyp; we can hardly believe that he was ever young, so serious and austere is his vision. Ruysdael, says that eloquent American painter, Mr John La Farge, "is as different from Cuyp as shadow is from sunshine; and his grave and solemn mind gives to the simplest and most commonplace of landscapes a look of sad importance, which is almost like a reproach of lightmindedness, addressed to any other man's work which happens to hang alongside." [1] If we fail to appreciate Ruysdael the fault lies in our littleness, not in his greatness.

Meindert Hobbema (1638-1709), out of whose smiling and friendly art grew our own Norwich school and other British landscape painters as diverse as Gainsborough and Constable, has always enjoyed a high popularity in this country. He is

[1] "Considerations on Painting."

splendidly represented here by his *Watermill* (XVI., 99) and four other landscapes. He was Ruysdael's pupil and friend, but as different in temperament from his master as a man could well be. Ruysdael goes to Nature with the devoutness of a worshipper approaching a shrine; Hobbema, with the unconscious ease of a man entering his own home.

He painted the same subjects over and over again, and he painted them so naturally, so freshly and convincingly, that they take us straight to nature rather than to pictures by other artists. In the humbleness and sincerity of his naturalism he is so near to our own feelings of delight in sunny weather and fresh country air, that nobody requires his pictures to be explained to them. What does require explanation is how it happened that this most simple, honest, and easily understood painter fared so poorly in the profession of art that at thirty he was thankful to take a small position in the wine-customs to gain his independence.

VI

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY PAINTING IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND

In art the eighteenth century belongs to France and England. It was the age in which each found a national style, and though owing to the exclusion of English furniture but a limited idea of the unity and completeness of our own culture at this period can be formed from the Wallace Collection, it reflects the artistic activity and thought of eighteenth-century France with a rounded fulness that is given nowhere else in this country, that is hardly to be found in France except at Versailles.

France had great masters of painting before the eighteenth century. Recently we have learnt that she too had her primitives, and one of her earlier sixteenth-century painters is brilliantly represented at Hertford House, among the miniatures, by the exquisite *Dame de Clous* (XI., 107). This undoubtedly comes from the hand of Jean Clouet himself, but the panels in Gallery III., including the charming *Mary*

Stuart (530), are not by the master, or his son, François Clouet, but able contemporary copies.

Though the almost feminine grace and *finesse* of Clouet's drawing may be held to be characteristic of France, his can hardly be styled a national art. It is too near to that of his contemporary, Hans Holbein the Younger, whose more tender qualities are not represented here. The *Jane Seymour* (III., 554) is pretty good, but neither this nor the *Edward VI.* (547) are true Holbeins; they are adaptations of the originals to be found respectively in the Imperial Gallery at Vienna and our own National Portrait Gallery. To see the master himself, in a double sense, we must again hunt among the miniatures till we find the tiny but colossal circular portrait of the artist by himself (XI., Case B, 93). The tremendous virility expressed in this little masterpiece is eloquent of the sturdy workman who would brook no interruption when he was busy. Memories of "Father William" rise to our mind, and as we linger we can almost hear a gruff voice exclaiming: "Be off, or I'll kick you down stairs."

England imported her earlier masters from the Continent, though the brilliance of her indigenous miniaturists suggests that some day research may unearth native primitives. France bred them, but

INTERIOR WITH WOMAN AND BOY

De Hoogh

SKATING SCENE

Van der Neer

when they were full grown they went and lived in Italy. That is why neither Poussin's *Dance to the Music of Time* (XVII., 108) nor the *Italian Landscape* (XVII., 114) of Claude Lorrain can be considered altogether Gallic in origin. They were great men, world-masters whose innovations left an indelible impress on landscape painting—the development of which, by the way, can be traced with rare completeness in the Wallace Collection—but their art belongs to the world, to Europe generally rather than to France. Philippe de Champaigne again, though usually numbered among the French school, was born a Fleming and a Fleming he remained, as his portrait and religious paintings here (XVII., 119, 127) sufficiently prove.

No; that painting which we rightly look upon as essentially and characteristically French was born when Largillière began painting *Louis XIV. and his Family* (XVII., 122) and Watteau left Valenciennes for Paris.

The Wallace Collection is so infinite in its variety that it necessarily stands in the minds of visitors for many things, according to their private inclinations. To most people it stands above all for French art of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but some analyse their preferences more minutely, and among these are individuals with whom the Wallace

Collection stands pre-eminently for Watteau. These fanatics have some show of reason on their side, for not even in the Louvre can the object of their adoration be more delightfully worshipped. Personally, I confess that if a grateful nation offered me for private use during my lifetime one picture, and one picture only, from the Wallace Collection, I should not hesitate a moment before unhooking *A Lady at her Toilet* (XIX., 439). It is as unique as the *Venus* of Velasquez, and dare I add that to my thinking it is lovelier and more joyous? It is not at all typical of Watteau, and that partially accounts for its supreme beauty and charm. For it rarely happens that an artist's greatest efforts are superficially typical of his more ordinary professional practice. The *Night Watch* is no more "typical" of Rembrandt than the *Mass of Bolsena* is of Raphael. At the same time none but these great masters could have painted them, and no one but Watteau could have painted *La Toilette*. His alone is the tender, impeccably correct yet expressive draughtsmanship; his alone is the subtle orchestration of ethereal colour.

There have been many painters who were great draughtsmen, there have been many painters who were great colourists; but those who were supreme both in drawing and colour we can almost count on our fingers. Watteau was of their number. Look

at the little figures in a more typical Watteau, *The Music Party* (XVIII., 410) or *The Champs Élysées* (380). They are as perfect in their delineation of form as Raphael at his best, and in their own way they rival even Rembrandt in their expressiveness and sense of movement. In the Print Room of the British Museum you will find chalk drawings to confirm the highest opinions you can form here of the master's powers.

And then his paint, so exquisite in colour and so jewel-like in quality: where among his predecessors will you find its equal? You can get a hint of its sparkle from the later works of Titian, from some things by Correggio or Veronese at their best; but it is not the same, and I believe it is always lower in the scale of colour. The brightness of his palette, and the little touches with which he laid on his colour, make his panels vibrate and sing as those of no other artist had ever done before. Watteau is not only a great master, he is one of the pioneer masters on whose original research and brilliant experiments the greatest of his successors have founded their practice.

We have surely arrived at a stage of education when it is no longer necessary to defend Watteau against the charge of frivolity, of being nothing more than a chronicler of picnics. He lived in an arti-

ficial age, and being a true artist, he could hardly escape reflecting something of its artificiality. But if he showed us the hectic charm of a civilisation already being consumed by mortal malady, his honesty and insight into character forbid his allowing us to imagine that the happiness of his puppets is anything more than a passing moment of forgetfulness and self-deception. He has the sensitive soul of the true Frenchman, the sensitiveness that makes France the gayest and saddest of nations. With his remarkable sympathy for French art and French character, Sir Frederick Wedmore has rightly laid stress on "the reflective pathos, the poignant melancholy, which are among the most appealing gifts of him who was accounted the master of the frivolous, of the monotonously gay."

When I wrote just now of Watteau's successors I was not thinking of his imitators, Pater and Lancret, whose elegant pastorals were so eagerly bought up by Lord Hertford. Pater was a type of the prosperous plagiarist, whose confections are often pretty and dainty but never profound. His colour too is greatly inferior to that of his master, as we may learn by comparing Watteau's exquisite little *Harlequin and Columbine* (XVIII.) with any Pater in the collection. Lancret was cut out for better things. If Pater pleases us best when he comes nearest to

his master, Lancret impresses us most favourably when he is farthest removed. He had a grasp of character which the shallower Pater never possessed, and at his best, as in his superb portrait of an actress known as *La Belle Grecque* (XX., 450), he has a dramatic force which Watteau never possessed. Had he never approached nearer to Watteau than he does in *Mademoiselle Camargo Dancing* (XVIII., 393), another spirited and individual figure subject, his reputation would stand higher than it does to-day; but he could not resist the temptation of being in the fashion. Pictures which are based merely on other pictures and not on personal feeling and observation are moribund before they are dry, and Lancret's clever but unscrupulous plagiarism lost him the higher fame as well as Watteau's friendship.

If Watteau laid the foundations for the romantic and landscape art of modern France, Rigaud, Largillière and Nattier evolved the French portrait in the grand style. It is impossible to do justice to these portraits in an ordinary picture gallery, and it is only when we see them spaciously housed in conjunction with the ornate furniture of the period that we realise how admirably they reflect the temper of the time. Portraits like Nattier's *Mademoiselle de Clermont* (XX., 456) and Boucher's *Marquise*

de Pompadour (XVIII., 418) are not to be judged as easel paintings but as items in an elaborate scheme of interior decoration. In that they take their place with an arrogant confidence that is justified by the result. There is nothing like them in the history of portraiture, just as there never was a Court exactly like that of the "Grand Monarch" and of his immediate successors. In these portraits is reconveyed to us all the splendour of that Court, its ostentation, its luxury and its heartlessness. They are the quintessence of aristocratic feeling, so full of culture that there is little room for humanity, the most pompous paintings the world has ever seen.

Beside their measured stateliness our English portraits, even of the highest personages, never appear more than genteel; for England in the eighteenth century was already in the grip of democracy. Sir Joshua Reynolds may not have had a promising subject in *William, fourth Duke of Queensberry* (I., 561), but Boucher, who was not overparticular about getting likenesses, would at least have made him look like a duke. Reynolds, with the bluff irreverence and common-sense which used to characterise our countrymen, makes him look exactly like "Old Q." Sir Joshua and his contemporaries talked a lot about the "grand style," but whenever they attempted it they only made

themselves look ridiculous. When they forgot what had been done in Italy and what was being done in France, and were content to be their own homely natural selves, then they give us masterpieces like the *Nelly O'Brien* (XVI., 38) and *Mrs Richard Hoare with her Infant Son* (32): masterpieces which we love, not because they are in the "grand style," though we admit their decorative qualities, but because they are intimate and familiar and full of personal feeling—in short, because they are intensely human. Nelly, we are told, was no better than she should have been, and a French painter of that period would have thrust her misfortune in her face. But Sir Joshua, great-hearted gentleman and true Christian, painted her, not because she was my Lord Bolingbroke's mistress but for his own good because she was a woman, God bless her, a pleasure to know and to look upon, and, above all, a human being compact of faults and virtues like himself.

We must admit that Sir Joshua and the rest look heavy-handed beside their contemporaries across the Channel. We will give the Frenchmen their due, they could be magnificent in the lightest and airiest fashion. The Englishmen were too solid for airiness and too stolid for magnificence. They could only be substantial and comfortable and affectionate. But if there were some things they could not do,

there were also other things, impossible to their neighbours, which they could achieve with ease. Among these are Sir Joshua's two child portraits here, *The Strawberry Girl* (XVI., 40) and the little girl with the dog, *Miss Bowles* (36).

We can understand Reynolds a lot better, and perhaps appreciate his qualities more keenly, when we learn of the preliminaries which preceded the painting of this last. Sir George Beaumont advised Mr Bowles to ask Reynolds to dine, so that the great man might become acquainted with his sitter. "The advice was taken; the little girl placed beside Sir Joshua at the dessert, where he amused her so much with stories and tricks that she thought him the most charming man in the world. He made her look at something distant from the table and stole her plate; then he pretended to look for it, then contrived it should come back to her without her knowing how. The next day she was delighted to be taken to his house, where she sat down with a face full of glee, the expression of which he at once caught and never lost."[1]

To have told Sir Joshua that he was just a mass of emotions would, no doubt, have been to invite a sound cudgelling, but it would not have been far

[1] "Life and Times of Sir Joshua Reynolds," Leslie and Taylor.

NELLY O'BRIEN

Sir Joshua Reynolds

MISS HAVERFIELD
Gainsborough

from the truth. Like a good Englishman, he kept his feelings under stern control; and he had them well in hand when he painted Mrs Hoare and her baby. He was conscious that her gorgeously patterned dress would look well against the landscape background, he must have known that her pose, that the position of the two left arms, would provide a surprisingly beautiful and rhythmic design; but with all these elements of the grand style remembered and expressed with consummate mastery, he could not altogether hide his human sympathy with the maternal passion, and after all this—is it not?—is the great thing which we carry away from the picture.

Of all our eighteenth-century portraitists Thomas Gainsborough is the lightest and airiest, and he also did not lack psychological insight, though his two works in the Wallace Collection have not the profundity of Sir Joshua's. His *Miss Haverfield* (XVI., 44) is more of a little lady than any of Sir Joshua's children, but this cannot be counted a great virtue so long as we rank childhood as more important to the world than gentility. To be candid, what we admire in Gainsborough is not the intensity of his personal feeling—more often than not he is a little cold and aloof—we are fascinated by his graceful dexterity as an executant. He is

less emotional than Sir Joshua, but he is a greater colourist, and there can be little doubt that he took a hint in this department from Watteau, whom in one picture at least he directly emulated. His treatment of foliage greatly resembles that of Watteau, and it is the technique of Watteau which bears the closest resemblance to that network of small touches of colour which gives so great a vivacity to the *Mrs Robinson* (42) and other works by Gainsborough, touches which were incomprehensible to so many of his contemporaries. Sir Joshua could not altogether approve of these eccentricities, but his honesty would not allow him to deny their effectiveness when, after Gainsborough's death, he paid his tribute to the painter. "It is certain," he said, "that all those odd scratches and marks which, on a close examination, are so observable in Gainsborough's pictures, and which even to experienced painters appear rather the effect of accident than design—this chaos, this uncouth and shapeless appearance, by a kind of magic at a certain distance assumes form, and all the parts seem to drop into their proper places, so that we can hardly refuse acknowledging the full effect of diligence, under the appearance of chance and hasty negligence."

Inherited tendencies so quickly accustom us to the outlook of a great master, that few people now

are even conscious of this peculiarity in Gainsborough's paintings. But to his contemporaries a Gainsborough must have seemed as strange as a Mancini, a Monet, or a Pissarro did to us only a few years ago. Romney, the third great English painter of the period, is not so well represented here as his rivals, and it must be confessed that his "*Perdita*" (37), charming as she is, looks a little wooden beside those of Reynolds and Gainsborough. It is worth noting that the portraits by Romney and Gainsborough were done while this gifted actress and authoress was under the "protection" of George IV. But that royal rascal soon tired of her, and at the age of twenty-four—when Reynolds painted her—she had already been abandoned by "the first gentleman in Europe." When he sent her away, the scamp gave her a bond for £20,000; but he never paid it, and "Perdita" Robinson died in 1800, poor and paralysed.

Curiously enough, the one eighteenth-century French artist tainted with democracy, Chardin, whose intense humanity links him to his contemporaries across the Channel as his colour exalts him over most of their heads—this great painter was unaccountably missed both by Lord Hertford and Sir Richard Wallace. His pupil, Fragonard, a very different sort of man, appealed to them more

strongly and their group of nine Fragonards is hardly to be equalled in any other collection.

Fragonard was only for a few months with Chardin, by whom he was little influenced. It would be extravagant to see much of the latter even in Fragonard's domestic subjects, the *Young Scholar* (XX., 455) or *The Schoolmistress* (XVIII., 404). Chardin is always serious and earnest, Fragonard is frolicsome and playful. How characteristic of him is his signature in the latter delightful picture, where the subject suggests the alphabet and he impishly traces on the background "A B C D E Fragonard"! He learnt more from Boucher, his second master, for Boucher also in his own way was a master in the harmonising of schemes of delicate colour. But Fragonard's paint has a fat, luscious body unknown to Boucher, and this most likely he got from Tiepolo, whose work he studied attentively in Italy after he had won the Prix de Rome. Boucher, as I have already hinted, was a decorator rather than a painter. That is where his pupil differs from him, for Fragonard was a painter as well as a decorator. We should know this if nothing of his existed but the *Lady Carving her Name* (XVIII., 382). It cost Lord Hertford £1400 in 1865, but it was not a penny too dear, for though it is so tiny (nine by seven inches), it is

the greatest Fragonard he ever possessed. It must surely be later than *The Swing* (XIX., 430) which, though much larger, is painted in so much tighter and cramped a manner. Lady Dilke, who fixes the date of the latter about 1768, held that in this picture "the licence taken is saved from being offensive by an air of fantastic unreality." [1] That is a matter of opinion, but the present generation is apt to find all the so-called "gallantry" of this period exceedingly detestable. We know from records that this subject was painted to order, so we need not blame the painter unduly on any moral grounds, and it is more to the point to lay stress on the great artistic superiority of the *Lady Carving her Name,* so delicious in colour, so fresh and vigorous in handling. Although Fragonard could paint admirable miniatures (see XI., Case B, 183), there is nothing of the miniature painter in this little picture which we may imagine that he painted for himself and not to order. Even in this wistful little picture there is a touch of playfulness. Is the title correct? Is it her own name she is carving, or "a name"? At all events, the first initial carved is that of the artist, who perhaps thought better of his first idea and finally signed himself, not on the tree but on the stone bench.

[1] "French Painters of the Eighteenth Century."

But a bad time was coming for all these aristocratic painters. Happy those who died before the French Revolution set in. Fragonard lived on and nobody then wanted panels like those on the staircase of Hertford House. The Cupids were asleep with a vengeance and only the gods of war were in demand. Even Greuze, distinctly a bourgeois painter, could not accommodate himself to the change in taste, and both died in poverty. It seems extraordinary that Greuze, most popular of painters at all times, should have fared so badly at the end of his life. But there is an explanation. That innocent, "sweet" little person who looks out at you from so many frames on the walls of Hertford House brought her immortaliser to a miserable end. If you are a judge of character you will probably have come to the conclusion long ago that the Greuze girl is not so innocent as she pretends to be. She is eminently "kissable," and if you are wise you will leave it at that. Greuze married her to save her reputation, so 'tis said, and lived to repent of his bargain. She was the daughter of an old bookseller on the Quai des Augustins, and her latest biographer does not conceal the fact that her every feature "announced a hasty, passionate, and rather voluptuous nature." [1]

[1] "Greuze and his Models," John Rivers.

Owing to her husband's exposition of her charms, Anne Gabriel became one of the noted beauties of the day, and she repaid him by robbing him not only of his peace of mind but of large sums of money that he had saved.

But all Frenchwomen were not like that, even before the Revolution, and happily the Wallace Collection reminds us of the existence of another, an honour to her sex, her country and her time. We cannot do full justice to the art of Madame Vigee le Brun from what we see of it in Hertford House. Of the charm of her personality we get some idea from Dumont's miniature (XI., Case C, 244); and her *Portrait of a Boy in Red* (XX., 449) and *Madame Perregaux* (457) tell something of her executive ability, of her understanding of children, of her human sympathy. But to take her measure we must see her portrait of herself and her little daughter at the Louvre, and then we know she was not only the most human portrait painter practising in France during her time but also one of the truest and most accomplished artists of her century.

VII

MODERN FRENCH PAINTINGS

To examine critically a gift-horse is not supposed to be good form. It is impolite, not tactful; but if you wish to form a just estimate of its value the proceeding is highly sensible. The modern paintings acquired by Lord Hertford and Sir Richard Wallace include many works of fine quality, but they also include a great number of pictures which are poor in quality, were popular in their time, and are of little or no interest to-day. That both these discriminating art patrons should have made so few mistakes when purchasing "old masters" and so many mistakes when buying the works of living artists, merely proves what the well-informed have long known—namely, that it is infinitely more difficult to recognise great talent among our contemporaries than among the dead whose praises have already been sung.

Where so many collectors err in their patronage of living art is that they are tempted to be guided

La Dame des Clous

François Clouet

Portrait of the Artist

Hans Holbein the Younger

LADY CARVING HER NAME

Fragonard

in their choice not only by the merit of the work but by the position of the artist. Those who forget this tendency will be tempted to wonder whatever in the world induced Lord Hertford to acquire twenty-nine pictures by Horace Vernet, a painter whose existence we should have forgotten long ago but for his tiresome intrusion at Hertford House. The explanation is very simple. At the time these paintings were bought Horace Vernet was President of the French Academy, a great man to his contemporaries because he was head of a great school, and a charming and courtly man to boot. Many people would think they were quite safe in buying the pictures of a president of an academy; but Lord Hertford, had he lived long enough, would have discovered that it all depends on who is the president. If he is a Joshua Reynolds, well and good; but more often he is not, and then you get an Eastlake or a Vernet. It not infrequently happens that an artist's reputation after his death is in inverse ratio to what it was in his lifetime. So with Horace Vernet, his little pictures of soldiers are tolerably pleasing as unimportant illustrations, but the large canvases admired by kings and emperors in his day are as dead as those monarchs, and on the whole are rather less respected.

The case of Horace Vernet proves how fallible

the most experienced collector may be when he exercises his judgment among the living. There are always people to be found who will maintain that preferences in painting are merely "a matter of taste." When dealing with what is excellent of its kind, this is true. It is a matter of taste whether you prefer Watteau to Chardin, Rousseau to Corot, Courbet to Delacroix, but if it was possible for you to prefer Vernet to any of these it would not be a matter of taste, it could only be a lack of knowledge. For if taste dictates our choice between equals, it is knowledge which enables us to discriminate between what is excellent and what is inferior.

I have no desire to dwell unduly on Lord Hertford's mistakes; it is pleasanter to dwell on what is true and beautiful and lasting in its charm: but I am thankful that not a single Vernet in the collection can be traced to the instigation of Mr Mawson. I like to think that Mawson would have known better.

The pomp and circumstance of what I may call Ludovician art was utterly destroyed by the French Revolution. Theocritus gave place to Cæsar, and David and his school arose to paint Roman history and military subjects to meet the popular demand of the time. David's pupil, Baron Gros, another

great man in his time, is represented here by the small *General Bonaparte Reviewing his Troops* (XV., 303); he was a great favourite with Napoleon, but in 1835 he recognised his deficiencies and escaped the censure of the rising generation by throwing himself into the Seine.

David and his school are of some importance in the history of French painting, but we can well dispense with them at Hertford House. The three Frenchmen who most deeply influenced the painting of the nineteenth century were Ingres, Delacroix and Courbet: Ingres, the great Classic among many pseudo-Classics; Delacroix, the great Romantic; Courbet, the great Realist. All three were great, and all three hated and misunderstood each other.

We can understand Sir Richard Wallace never buying a Courbet—no gentleman of his day would patronise an artist who was a red-hot revolutionary and a communist; we can understand his missing Daumier, whose gaunt masterpieces would appear to him unfinished; but why neither he nor Lord Hertford bought a painting by Ingres is inexplicable. In the Board Room at Hertford House there hangs, however, a pencil drawing by Ingres after Raphael's *Hope and Charity* (767), which gives us an idea of the daintiness and precision of the master's line.

Ingres was the one great artist who came out of the studio of David and had Raphael for his model. The idol of Delacroix was Rubens, and he was as enamoured of colour as was Ingres of line. In 1824, when the paintings of Constable were exhibited for the first time in the Paris Salon, Delacroix, then twenty-six years of age, was greatly impressed by the Englishman's work, and on Varnishing Day he made his own picture brighter with more luminous colouring. He was probably the first of modern painters to study colour scientifically: to ask of a red, for example, not merely whether it was light or dark but whether it approached orange or purple. He studied the *magnum opus* of the great scientist Chevreuil on colour, but he based his practice far more on his own observations than on scientific theories. When he was in Morocco he wrote in his journal about shadows on the faces of two peasant boys he had seen, and remarked that whereas the sallow, yellow-faced boy had violet shadows, the ruddy-faced one had green shadows. He began that research into the colour of shadows the expression of which has been the supreme achievement of modern painting.

All colour, we now know, is relative, not absolute, and depends on many things: the colour of the light, the distance of the object from the eye, and

its surroundings. The colour of an object close to the eye is what we call local colour; for example, the white of the newly fallen snow on the ground just beneath us. But snow-topped hills lighted by the setting sun are reddish in hue, and this is an example of illumination colour. Hills covered with green grass seen from a great distance appear blue, and thus we learn of the existence of atmospheric colour. But this is not all, for further complications are brought about by the fact that when two colours are juxtaposed each tends to throw its complementary into the other.

Delacroix learnt something about this while he was painting *The Execution of the Doge Marino Faliero* (XV., 282). He had been trying hard to get brilliancy in his yellows, without succeeding to his liking; and then one day, while walking through the streets of Paris, he saw a black and yellow cab, and he noticed that beside the greenish-yellow the black took on a tinge of violet, its complementary. He had discovered another secret law of colour: that to obtain the full brilliance of any given hue it should be flanked and supported by its complementary colour. He did not attain to full knowledge; it was left for later generations to make finer distinctions and recognise that if violet is the right complementary for a greenish-yellow, an orange

yellow requires turquoise blue. Delacroix did not get further than opposing yellow by violet, as we may see in his work at Hertford House, a picture painted, we should remember, in 1826, before he went to Morocco. This was one of the painter's favourite works, and a very splendid and glowing creation it is, as we may realise by comparing it with the works hung round it. Many of these are very beautiful in colour, but none is more alive and vibrating in its colour. It is finely dramatic as well, spirited in its design and the general presentation of the subject. Some day, perhaps, it will be hung in a better place, where its qualities as a landmark in the rise of romantic painting may more easily be perceived. It is the finest Delacroix in any English gallery, but all the same we cannot take the full measure of the painter till we have seen his *Triumph of Trajan* at Rouen or his works in the Louvre.

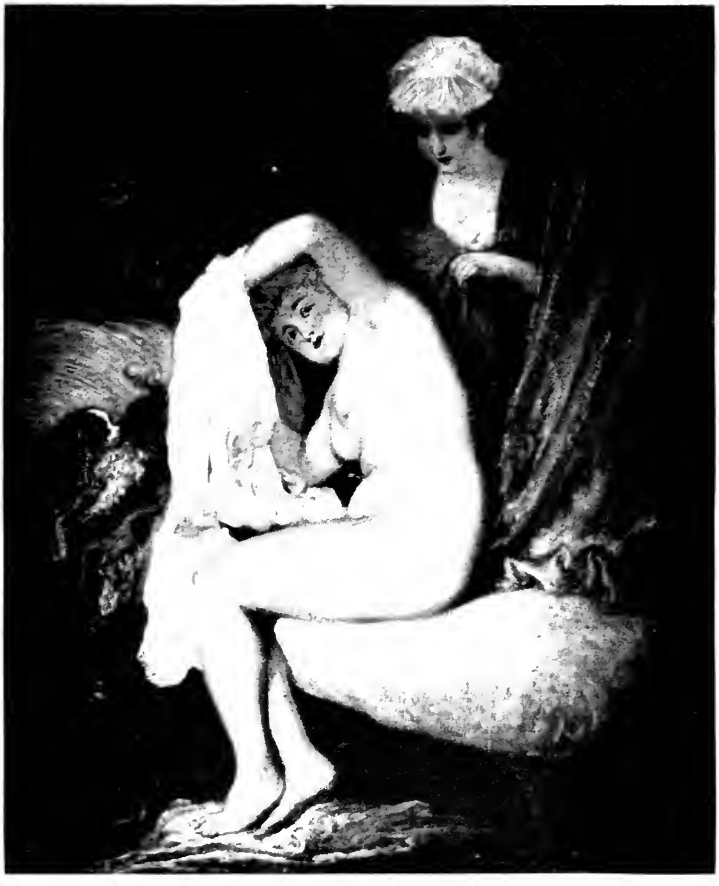
The smaller *Faust and Mephistopheles* (342) is interesting as showing how Delacroix was momentarily influenced by the style of his friend Bonington, but it can hardly be regarded as a representative example of the "leader of the Romantic painters, whose aim was the substitution of colour, life and poetry for the frigid Græco-Roman classicality of David's school."

Richard Parkes Bonington was born near Notting-

ham in 1801, so we may claim him as an Englishman; but he went to Paris as a boy of fifteen, received his training at the Beaux-Arts, and is therefore a French artist in all but birth. He died when he was only twenty-six, but already his rich colour and romantic feeling had influenced his contemporaries, and there is little doubt that had he lived he would have been one of the greatest and most distinctive artists of his time. The Wallace Collection contains the finest series of his works to be found anywhere, and these show his precocious versatility and variety. He was not allowed time to find himself completely, but first in water-colour, and then for a few years in oils, he treated architectural subjects, landscapes, figures and historical genre with a remarkable charm and distinction. He anticipated the Orientalists so completely in his water-colour, *The Arabian Nights* (XXII., 657), that for years this was catalogued as a Décamps. Mr MacColl has recently discovered the signature, "R. P. Bonington 1825," concealed under the old mount. It is worth noting in this water-colour, painted a year before the *Doge Marino Faliero* of Delacroix, how the luminous red-brown shadows are darkened by touches of indigo, not black, and how effectively two notes of blue give value to the prevailing colour scheme of old gold. When we look at this little picture of *Scheherazade* or the

Landscape with Timber Waggon, France (XV., 362), we begin to understand the enthusiasm of Delacroix, who hailed his friend's works as "diamonds by which the eye is fascinated."

Géricault (1791-1824), another short-lived painter who also influenced Delacroix, was built on a more heroic scale, as we may gather even from his little sketch of *A Cavalry Skirmish* (274). How spirited and full of animation this appears beside many similar subjects in its neighbourhood! It was from Géricault perhaps that Delacroix caught the fire of passionate drawing, that tempestuous rendering of form which characterises the work of both these painters of revolt. But Géricault, though his paint is always of good quality, was not really a fine colourist. In this he was surpassed by many lesser men. Not by Delaroche, whose compromise between the classicism of Ingres and the romanticism of Delacroix was highly popular and successful in his day, but appears to us as tame and unspirited as compromises in art usually are, but by men like Prud'hon, Décamps and Couture, who usually become tiresome and depressing when they attempt a large canvas, but are almost invariably delightful in small pictures. When they felt themselves obliged to paint a *grande machine* they forced their genuine talent beyond its capacity, and the perpetuation of their



LADY AT HER TOILET

Watteau

La Belle Grecque

Lancret

mistakes only serves to remind us of the truth that in art it is quality and not quantity that counts. Do you know Prud'hon's little painting of *The Zephyr* (295)? It is only some eight by six inches, but who in his senses would exchange this tiny canvas, full of enamel-like colour and tender feeling, for his nearly life-sized *Venus and Adonis* (347)?

And the weeny little *Harlequin and Pierrot* (288) of Couture? Would you exchange this "four by five" scrap of loveliness for his enormous *Décadence des Romains* which you have hurried past at the Louvre? Of course not. In Paris you have probably thought of the man only as a tiresome academician who made a lucky reputation as a teacher owing to the brilliance of his pupils. From the Wallace Collection, whence in all wisdom his "big machines" are excluded, you learn better, for there a precious group of tiny canvases testify to his sensibility to charming colour.

And Décamps? Have we not all delighted in the colour of his *Villa Doria-Panfili* at Rome (267), and in that extensive series of small Oriental subjects which makes Hertford House the finest Décamps gallery in existence? There is nothing finicky about the painting of any of these. They are not miniature paintings like those of Meissonier, which

interest us by their industry and exactitude of detail; they have the greater qualities of freedom of handling, intense virility and glow of colour. Have you noticed the family resemblance between the fat, luscious paint of Décamps, Couture and a few more? They got it, like Millet and some other great men not represented here, from Correggio's *Jupiter and Antiope* at the Louvre. They could be, and were, Correggios in little; but when they tried to rival him on his own scale disaster awaited them.

Diaz drew inspiration from the same source: Diaz, whose works fit the phrase of Delacroix, "diamonds by which the eye is fascinated," far more closely than those of Bonington. His little Cupids (266, 268) and *Fountain at Constantinople* (312) are among the most precious things in colour in the whole collection, and they also possess pre-eminently that charm of surface which we hopelessly define as "quality of paint"—hopelessly, because, in truth, it baffles definition. We know the difference between velvet and velveteen, between satin and satinette; and we should be able to feel the difference between the surface quality of a Delacroix and a Delaroche, a Diaz and a Bonheur. We feel that the one is but "bread and scrape" compared with the other; but we cannot get over the difficulty by thinking we have only to spread on paint thickly enough in order to

get "quality." For it has been obtained with the thinnest and most liquid of vehicles by Gainsborough and a few others, and unobtained by many who have loaded their canvases with pigment.

Once our eye is trained to look for it, we mark the difference in surface between a Dupré and a Rousseau, and it is his want of this quality, among others, that forces us to rank Dupré low among the painters of Barbizon. Rousseau, so finely represented here by his *Glade in the Forest of Fontainebleau* (283), we must rate high, very high, for other qualities besides those of the surface of his paint. He is the great realist among the landscape men, not limited in his choice of themes like Corot, but omnivorous, painting everything to be found in the forest, at all seasons, at all hours. He does not look at Nature with the dreamy gaze of a poet, but with the fiery glance of a philosopher who would rend her secrets from her. In this passionate search for plastic form, for the very anatomy of Nature, his paintings may appear prose beside the poetry of Corot; but it is the sonorous prose of exact language grandiloquently phrased in carefully rounded periods.

"Rousseau is an eagle," said Corot, with charming modesty; "as for me I am only a lark who utters little cries among the grey clouds." But how exquisite are his trills! We cannot judge him by his

Macbeth and the Witches (281) here, for, felicitous as this may be in its rhythmic design and silvery tonality, it is not an altogether frank expression of the painter's soul. Corot, the supreme master of reveries in paint, had to force himself not a little to become dramatic, and somehow, despite the charm and mystery of the evening landscape, we feel that he is a little too strained to be altogether himself. It is interesting because it is of so exceptional a character, and, relative to what many others have done, it is a thing of beauty. But for Corot, no; here he does not give us of his best, and to see that we must go at least as far as the Salting Bequest in the National Gallery.

Troyon, who like Diaz had worked for the porcelain factory at Sèvres before he went to Barbizon, began his career as a landscape painter; but at thirty-eight he discovered that he could paint cattle—and what was more important, could sell his paintings of them. Combining the cattle demanded by the public with the landscape which really interested him most, he contrived to remain an artist and yet make a good thing out of painting. Corot sold his first picture when he was fifty, and, though fourteen years his senior, was still an unknown man when Troyon was a well-known and prosperous painter. But neither his art nor his nature was spoilt

by Troyon's worldly success, which enabled him to do many a good deed by stealth towards his brilliant but less fortunate comrades. His tactful generosity to Millet and others was rewarded when he made young Boudin his protégé, and the boy whom Corot was later to style "the king of sky painters" gave Troyon a hand in painting the brilliant heavens that illumine his landscapes. It is possible that Boudin had a hand in the sky of the larger cattle landscape (344) at Hertford House. If so, these passages are all that represent him, for Sir Richard Wallace missed Boudin, together with Millet, Daubigny, Monticelli—how was that?—Jongkind, Manet and a host of other good painters working in the sixties and early seventies. But he did not miss Isabey. Though chiefly known for his brightly coloured procession-pieces like his *Court Reception* (271) here, Isabey was also a landscape painter of distinction, and he was something of a pioneer in sea-painting. His *Promenade by the Sea* (XV., 360), painted in 1846, and his *Ships on the Seashore* (579), painted five years later, show his steady progress towards a lighter scheme of colour, more in accordance with the true hues of Nature. The yellowish grey clouds of the last, with the peeps of blue sky in between, show how this veteran—who lived to be eighty-two — anticipated the "grey

painting" of Boudin and prepared the way for the luminist landscapes of Claude Monet and Pissarro.

The modern paintings of schools other than the French hardly bear talking about. To have bought Verboeckhoven, Gallait and Baron Leys, and to have missed Alfred Stevens and Willem Roelofs, throws little credit on our collectors' excursions to Belgium. Nor are the modern British painters much to brag about. The Turner sketches are nothing out of the way, and the rest—Bonington excepted—is little above the low level of the Chantrey Bequest. Our collectors do not appear to have profited by history when they started to collect works by living painters. Else had they known that it is on the pictures which academies reject that the art of the future is built, and that posthumous fame has a way of unseating the mighty from their safe official seats and of exalting the meek and lowly to the throne of grace. Let us think of Corot and Horace Vernet—and say no more.

VIII

BRONZES AND SCULPTURE

I REMEMBER visiting the Wallace Collection on one occasion with a foreign lady who was not interested in the least either in pictures or furniture. She was an authority on what are known as "Swedish movements," and her absorbing interest was in the human form and its full plastic expression in art. Accordingly, we spent a very pleasant afternoon looking exclusively at the bronzes and sculpture in Hertford House, and in her company I examined carefully, for the first time, many pieces that hitherto I had only cursorily regarded.

It was this lady, if I remember rightly, who first called my attention to the boxwood statuette of *Hercules swinging his Club* (X., Case A, 35), an object, as I afterwards discovered, of the highest celebrity. But my friend knew nothing of its history; she did not know that it had been attributed to the early sixteenth-century Paduan artist, Francesco da Sant' Agata, or that it had probably been inspired by a

Greek antique of the fourth century B.C. She only knew it was a consummate rendering of lissome, athletic form, of muscles taut but elastic; an extraordinarily actual impression of vital, physical movement. Everyone can see how superbly the form is modelled, how true it is to life; but the trained eye will also perceive how exquisite is the flow of line throughout the figure, and how admirably and inevitably the thick end of the club balances the advanced right foot. This little masterpiece is only about nine and a half inches high, and it serves to remind us once again that in art the real greatness of a work has nothing to do with its dimensions.

Among several bronzes which date from about the same period—namely, the first part of the sixteenth century—first place perhaps should be given to the throned goddess (XI., 71), a signed work by Giovanni da Cremona, though its patina is so suspiciously brilliant and light that this surface colouring may conceivably be of later date. The modelling of this statuette cannot approach that of the boxwood Hercules, as we recognise the moment we look at the left fore-arm and right leg of the goddess. Its charm is rather in the pose and general conception of the whole figure, which is possibly intended not so much to represent Venus herself as to symbolise the mystery of love. The sphinx and the Cupid,

EXECUTION OF THE DOGE MARINO FALIERO

Delacroix

A Glade in the Forest of Fontainebleau

Théodore Rousseau

modelled in low relief on either side of the throne, lend some colour to the latter interpretation.

Of the numerous small bronzes by Giovanni da Bologna (1524-1608), which were acquired either by Lord Hertford or Sir Richard Wallace, one of the most conspicuous is the spirited group of *Nessus carrying off Dejanira* (33). This fine bronze, to be found on the landing at the head of the grand staircase, is another example of sculpture that is decorative rather than realistic. There is great strength and virility in the human part of the centaur, no doubt; still it is not for subtlety of modelling that this group commands our admiration. Its pre-eminent distinction lies in the skill of its pyramidal composition, the main lines of which are suggested by the outstretched arm of Dejanira, the curved fore-legs of the centaur and the rhythmical re-echo of this curve in the waving tail.

Another bronze group by this Italian master, *Hercules overcoming a Centaur* (IX., 26), should be mentioned, not only for its intrinsic interest but also for its bronze base, chased and gilt, which is also Italian work dating from the end of the seventeenth or early beginning of the eighteenth century.

A still earlier marble relief is of too curious a character to be passed over in silence. This is the circular *Head of Christ* (III., 26), executed by Pietro

Torrigiano, a Florentine artist who came over to England somewhere about 1515. It will be noticed that the face of Christ is not at all Italian in type but Gothic, and the explanation is that on his way to England Torrigiano probably visited Amiens Cathedral, where the famous *Beau Christ* so impressed him that he made it his model for this head.

Now we may reasonably suppose that a Florentine of this period, coming straight from the *David* of Michael Angelo to the sculpture of Amiens, would get a shock approaching to that experienced by a modern Frenchman coming from Ingres to Cézanne. Consequently it says much for Messer Torrigiano's broadminded discrimination that he could so enthuse over this masterpiece of the early thirteenth century. His deliberately assumed archaism is marked in his treatment of the hair, which is most natural on the crown of the head, but a mere rope-like convention in the locks falling over the shoulders. The circular frame decorated with foliage and Tudor roses, which surrounds this high relief, is itself a fine piece of decorative sculpture, for it is all stone, though now painted and gilt.

In the corridor between galleries VI. and VII. is a bronze relief (1) which has puzzled the most eminent experts. The subject presents no difficulty; it is a *Ceremonial Dance of Maidens,* and is an adaptation

rather than an exact copy of the famous late Greek or Greco-Roman marble relief formerly in the Villa Borghese and now at the Louvre. But when and by whom was the adaptation at Hertford House made? Formerly it was thought to be Italian work of the early sixteenth century; but against this it has been pointed out that "the technique is more uniformly complete and accomplished and the working out more formal than is usual in the magnificently expressive works of that time." Then Dr Bode[1] suggested it was by a French sculptor of the eighteenth century, possibly Gouthière or Thomire. A few months later another German critic, Herr Robert Eisler,[2] found a passage in Belloni's "Life of Nicholas Poussin," showing that Louis XIII. in 1641 had ordered casts to be taken of various antiques in Italy, among them that of the *Dancers* in the Villa Borghese. Yet even this does not altogether settle the difficulty, for the bronze at Hertford House is no mere cast of the original marble now at the Louvre. The heads of the dancers are different, the modelling of the figures in the bronze is more elaborate and highly finished. Whoever was responsible for the bronze version must have been a sculptor of no mean accomplishment, and it seems

[1] *Burlington Magazine*, March 1904.

[2] *Ibid.*, September 1904.

reasonable to suppose the author was a French sculptor of the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, who worked from the cast made for Louis XIII.

Here it may be permissible to remark that towards the close of the seventeenth century and after, it is in France that the great sculptors must be sought. Indeed France possessed masters of this art in the preceding century. There was Jean Goujon, traces of whose influence may be found in the carved panels of two sixteenth-century walnut-wood armoires (VI., 15; V., 13) here. There was Germain Pilon, whose noble and arresting bronze bust of *Charles IX.* (VI., 16) has been pronounced "of its class and school unique, both as regards concentrated power of conception and technical perfection."

And then came Charles Antoine Coysevox (1640-1720). It is instructive to compare his sumptuous *Bronze Bust of Louis XIV.* (V., 2) with Pilon's *Charles IX.* The Coysevox has neither the intellectuality nor the spirituality of Pilon's thoughtful masterpiece; but it is no whit less expressive of character. Could mind conceive or hand execute a more magnificent presentation of the arrogant self-sufficiency of the Grand Monarque? "There is no portrait of the King, either at Versailles or

in the Louvre, of precisely the same type, or so admirable in the quality of the bronze as well as the breadth and finish of the execution." In the museum of Dijon there is a similar bust by Coysevox in marble, but it is certainly no finer than the bronze and many find the Hertford House version the more impressive.

Another admirable example of the power and accomplishment of Coysevox is his *Terra-cotta Bust of Charles Le Brun* (IV., 5), who was first painter to Louis XIV. and the director of that monarch's artistic enterprises. This terra-cotta is the original model for the slightly larger marble bust—now in the Salle Coysevox at the Louvre—which was executed in 1679 for the French Academy.

François Girardon (1628-1715), the contemporary of Coysevox and in the opinion of many his equal, is not so splendidly represented at Hertford House. Here we only get echoes, as it were, of his genius. The *Equestrian Statuette of Louis XIV.* (XXI., 39) is only one of several small variants of his great statue in the Place Vendôme which was destroyed during the Revolution. The two bronze garden vases (IV., 106, 107), showing in low relief the Triumphs respectively of Galatea and Venus, are contemporary reductions of the great marble vases at Versailles. Perhaps we get nearest the master

in the bronze groups of *Boreas carrying off Orithyia* (XVI., 4, 6), which are from Girardon's marble original.

Diminished echoes again are the gilt bronze groups of *Les Chevaux de Marly* (XVI., 26, 28). Every visitor to Paris will remember the fine originals by Guillaume Coustou the elder which are placed at the entrance to the Champs Élysées. Coustou was the nephew and most famous pupil of Coysevox, and even the small reproductions here reveal the power of the master. It was Coustou who first broke away from the grandiloquent rhetoric of the Louis XIV. style, and led the way towards that ruder but still decorative realism that was to reinvigorate French sculpture.

The next great step in this direction was taken by Pigalle, who was not only influenced by Coustou but for some time the pupil and assistant of his son, Guillaume Coustou *fils*, himself an accomplished sculptor.

From Pigalle, who most unfortunately is not represented in this collection, descends a long line of great sculptors. Claude Michel, known as Clodion, was among his pupils, and so was Jean Antoine Houdon (1741-1828), who is one of the great sculptors not only of France but of the modern world.

Two signed masterpieces by Houdon are to be seen at Hertford House. One, a marble bust, formerly thought to represent Madame Elizabeth, the sister of Louis XVI., is now identified as a portrait of *Madame Victoire de France* (XI., 1), the fifth daughter of Louis XV. and the aunt of Louis XVI. But it is so great a work of art, so radiant a rendering of the smiling charms of womanhood, regal and mature, that the identity of the portrait is comparatively unimportant. It was executed by Houdon in 1777, when that great man was thirty-six years of age and already a past master of his art. If detail interests you, see how exquisitely the master has treated the lace of this great lady's chemise; and how, notwithstanding the loving care which enables him almost miraculously to suggest its filmy delicacy, he is careful not to obtrude it on the spectator but subordinates this and all other detail to his large conception of the whole bust. Note again how the curls on the shoulder and the cunningly arranged drapery assist and promote that flow of line which gives movement and vitality to the whole bust. And, above all, consider how superbly the head is poised, and with what extraordinarily subtle and delicate modelling the rounded charms of the lady are presented.

Houdon's second masterpiece here, the *Marble*

Bust of Madame de Sérilly (XI., 4), reveals quite another type of womanhood. Madame Victoire is the personification of graciousness and amiability, but she is neither a thinker nor a scholar. Madame de Sérilly is both; she is distinctly *spirituelle* in type and, as opposed to Madame Victoire, we imagine she is governed by her head rather than her heart. All this Houdon has divined, and expressed in his reading of the characters of these two women. The second bust was executed in 1782, and twelve years later Madame de Sérilly was condemned to death by the Revolutionary Tribunal. She escaped, however, because her devoted friend, Madame Elizabeth, falsely declared her to be *enceinte*. But Houdon persuades us that if this miracle had not happened, she would have met her fate with calm self-possession and philosophic fortitude.

Compared with Houdon, it is idle to pretend that his contemporaries, Falconet and Clodion, were master sculptors. They were great decorators, good modellers, clever designers, if you like, and they, with many other sculptors of their time, were employed, as we shall see later, to enrich and adorn the furniture of the period. Clodion, to my thinking, is so immeasurably the superior of Falconet that it seems unfair to couple their names together. Clodion's figures show distinction and observation

BRONZE BUST OF LOUIS XIV

Coysevox

MARBLE BUST OF MADAME VICTOIRE DE FRANCE

Houdon

of life, as we may gather from the *Bronze Bacchante* (XIII., 1) after his original, and still better from his signed work, the *White Marble Vase* (XVII., 55), so delightfully encircled by a chain of sporting Cupids. Falconet was little more than the clever and accomplished Academy student of his day, and his *Venus chastising Cupid* (XXI., 20) takes us neither to Olympus nor Versailles, but merely to the antique class of any academy. Cayot could do this sort of thing much better in the preceding century, as we learn from his playfully tender *Marble Groupe: Cupid and Psyche* (XXI., 1). To see Falconet at his best we must see him applying his art to the decoration of his time, as in the *Clock in Candelabrum Form* (II., 14), where the bronze figure is less sugary and more virile.

We cannot take leave of the sculpture at Hertford House without expressing regret that a greater than Charles Lebourg was not found to perpetuate the heads of Lord Hertford and Lady Wallace. We could hardly have expected a collector in the early seventies to have sought out the youthful Rodin. But there were others: Dalou, for example; and undoubtedly in 1899 a greater than Hannaux might have been found to execute the posthumous bust of Sir Richard Wallace.

France has so great a line of sculptors, second

to no other nation than Italy in the modern world, that we should have liked to see a collection, beginning with Goujon, Pilon, Coysevox, Coustou and Houdon, end with the no less illustrious names of Pigalle, Rude, Carpeaux, Dalou, Barye and Rodin.

IX

FRENCH FURNITURE

"FRENCH furniture? Yes, it is very handsome, no doubt, but I do not care for it." Something of this kind is what one often hears when the subject is mentioned, and this attitude is not altogether confined to the untrained. The writer remembers having heard a very distinguished critic declare that French furniture made him "positively uncomfortable"—as he phrased it—and that he could not easily compose himself for thought in a room so furnished.

Many appear to have experienced a similar sensation, and the explanation probably lies in the temperament of the beholder. Facing surroundings and objects pitched in a higher key than that in which he ordinarily moves, the "plain man" is discomfited by the wrench of trying to adjust himself to the indoor living conditions of an old regime that had surrounded itself with a rare brilliance and beauty of equipment.

The abundant use of gilt, of delicate embroideries and tapestries, the manifold use of ornamental bronze decoration—all this richness that plays so great a part in the composition of fine French pieces, is out of sympathy with our homelier moods, and even with the very thoughts and manners of to-day.

But whatever the cause of this distaste that sometimes makes itself audible, its existence shows the risk there is of underestimating or ignoring this important section of the Wallace Collection. Before discussing the rare objects it contains, therefore, it may be permissible briefly to review the position of French furniture and its claims to our regard. Otherwise the visitor may look on its presence as no more than a pleasant accessory to the pictures.

Now we may safely say that few visitors entertain a suspicion that the Wallace Collection is probably more memorable for its collection of furniture than for its pictures. This view may appear startling to some, yet it is held by many competent judges.

Here is their argument. While the collection of pictures here takes a respectable place among the first two dozen art galleries of Europe, the collection of furniture is equalled by few and perhaps excelled by none in the world. The furniture at the Louvre equals, or some may think even slightly

excels, that of Hertford House, and such collections as those at the Musée des Arts Decoratifs in Paris or at Versailles and Fontainebleau, or our own Jones Collection at South Kensington come in as near rivals. But there are few other serious competitors, and a student of the great masterpieces of furniture must perforce come to the Wallace Collection to see many of its best examples if he would make his survey at all adequate.

But this only indicates the importance of this section in a relative sense. Its real and paramount charm rests on more positive grounds: on the fascination of its art and on its widespread influence on European design and decoration in the last two hundred years.

It is true that during this period Italy, with its own art traditions, still held its own, and even helped France with suggestive ideas; that Holland maintained for the most part its own characteristic work, even markedly impressing these features on England through the reigns of William and Mary and Queen Anne. But outside these exceptions, France, from about 1670 to 1780 or 1790, led the taste of "polite" Europe in matters of furniture and to a considerable degree dictated the prevalent design. Throughout this period Austria, Germany, Belgium, Sweden, Russia and Great Britain either imported French

furniture or were guided by it considerably to modify their native tradition.

For two reigns, as already mentioned, England slighted French influence, but France triumphed in the end, as it had in the beginning. As early as Stuart times we see France dictating the forms of the high-backed chairs, console tables and heavy armoires of the wealthy, these heavy pieces being either imported or adopted from France.

Later again, through the reigns of the third and fourth Georges, we see its influence on our designers. Hepplewhite, Sheraton and Chippendale illustrated in their catalogues so-called French designs, frank imitations, and in their more personal work were obviously indebted in some directions to prevailing French types.

Intrinsically, French furniture has the most vital claims on our admiration by reason of its beauty and sense for style. By this sense for style we mean the fitness, unity and relation of pieces of furniture to the interior decoration and aspect of a room as a whole, which was always tenaciously held by French architects and designers.

Unfortunately, this sense for the completeness of the whole impression of an interior, as it is affected by its contents, cannot be seen at Hertford House—save perhaps in the great gallery upstairs.

For the very wealth of the collection in the space at disposal implies a crowding of the contents that is fatal.

The existing crowded aspect of the rooms takes on somewhat the air of a well-arranged warehouse or dealer's shop. In this proximity to each other the very richness of the pieces of furniture cloys the sense, making, as it were, the quality of these pieces their reproach.

This decorative furniture was for the most part designed for spacious and lofty rooms, where it was grouped parsimoniously in centres and sub-centres with intervening breadth of empty spaces and a prearranged background. In its original surroundings the richness of colour and decoration gave the necessary fulness and concentration here and there, which was required to save the general aspect from a note of baldness and over-simplicity. Thus disposed, the furniture glowed with proper interest amid surrounding spaciousness and against formally decorated and usually pictureless walls.

How existing conditions at Hertford House tell against the sense of style in the furniture becomes further evident when we consider the circumstances of its origin. Fine French pieces were largely designed or controlled by the distinguished architects of the time, and were executed by members

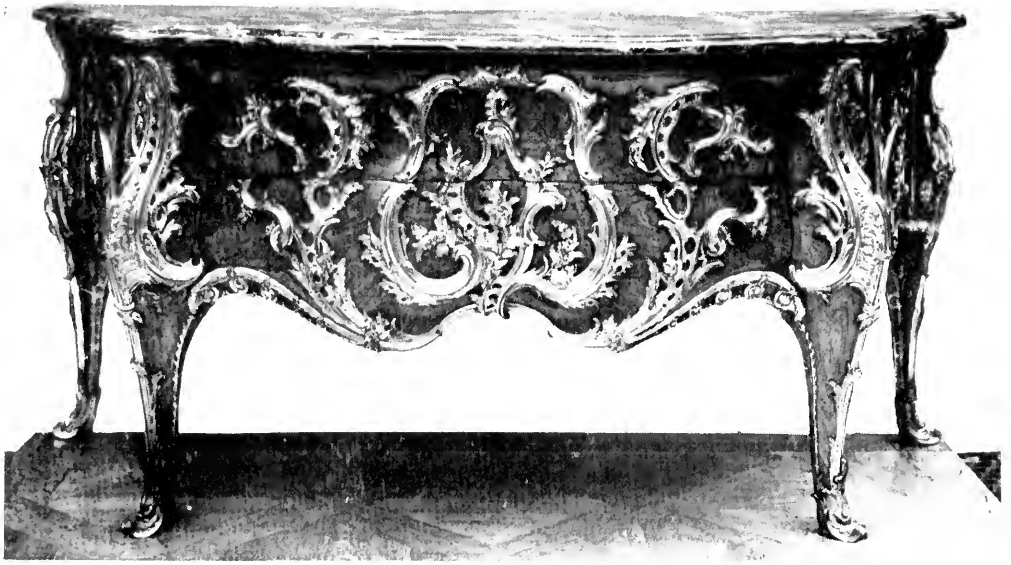
of the most accomplished schools of cabinet-makers (*ebénistes*) Europe has seen. Each piece carried out and expressed the designer's unity of intention for a complete scheme, and, viewed separately, detached from their original surroundings, the beauty and sense of style aimed at in the parts can only be imperfectly suggested.

Some day, perhaps, when the top-lit galleries on the second floor are completed and opened, the present distinguished Director—greatly daring—will take his life in his hands, as it were, and empty one of his rooms, decorate it fitly, and only bring out of the storeroom such pieces as allow of a comfortable spacious setting. This, at least, is a pleasant fancy wherewith to tease our hopes.

The other qualities which contribute towards the premier position occupied by French furniture can be felt here more readily. Prominent among these is the beauty of compact, chastened form. Adding a little emphasis here, refining and paring down a little there, the great cabinet-makers worked in a continuous tradition till, as time went on, the finished product became the polished result of many minds. This gradually matured suavity and compactness of form, with its delicately measured emphasis, is common to most of the pieces at Hertford House that date from the late years of

WRITING TABLE No. 35

Regency Style



Commode XVI 58

Caffieri

Louis XIV., the period of the Regency, and onwards to the last year or two of Louis XV. These last years, by the way, include the complete development of the so-called Louis XVI. style in all its essential features. These limits have to be named, since we must be careful not to push the claim for fine form too far. No doubt a good deal of work done during the actual reign of Louis XVI. designed and executed by such master *ebénistes* as Riesener, Gouthière and Saunier, still maintained form as a fine feature: but the general tendency through this reign was on the whole either towards heaviness, as in the case of the commodes, or towards triviality and smallness of parts.

This fineness of finished form must in part account for the fact that each of the French styles—familiarly known as Louis Quatorze, Regency, Louis Quinze and Louis Seize—when once evolved was never subsequently dropped. Pieces in each style continued to be made, notwithstanding the attraction of the succeeding fashion, so that each style persisted through its successors right up to the present day. For example, we may have a piece typical of the Louis XIV. style made during the Regency or the reign of Louis XV., and abundantly turned out in the time of Louis XVI. and the Restoration.

It is this constancy of types, when once evolved,

that makes it so difficult nowadays to settle the date of most old pieces and causes assignations frequently to be a matter of dispute even among experts. In passing it may be noticed that the French *ebénistes* often signed work they regarded as a masterpiece, and their fortunate habit in so doing occasionally comes in as a determining factor of origin and date.

Hence it happens that what is called a "period piece"—that is to say, one which by internal evidence or pedigree is proved to have been made when its style was originally evolved—becomes of surpassing value and interest. One great merit of the Wallace furniture is that so much of it consists of "period pieces" made by great *ebénistes* who developed the style and were leaders in the movement. When we have appreciated the style and form, we must note the use of colour, which is one of the distinguishing features of French furniture.

First we may call attention to its use for a scheme of sober richness, obtained largely by means of the fine marquetry of woods, or boulle inlay, that forms the body of so many pieces. Secondly, we should realise what is a still more conspicuous characteristic during the reign of Louis XV.—namely, the introduction then and successful use of delicate gay schemes of colour in a higher key than had been previously used in Europe. This is shown at Hertford House

in the way the new tapestry colour schemes were applied to cover chairs, screens and settees; whose frames of gilt carved wood supported the scheme. What we miss here is the correspondingly lighter wall decoration of the period, for without this accompaniment the very merits of the pieces are apt to distort them into a slightly highly strung key.

This new colour scheme, employing tones of rose, dove-grey, delicate blues and greens, became known as *la decoration claire*. It seems to have originated from François Boucher and his practice as a painter. Certainly it was brought into general use by his appointment, first as Inspector of the Tapestry Manufactory of Beauvais, and afterwards—from 1755 to 1765—at the Gobelins. It was Boucher who insisted on the weavers and artists abandoning the old low-toned schemes of rich colour which they had been accustomed to work in, and made them adopt the high-keyed, gayer schemes of his own palette.

Boucher had no little trouble with his workmen before he could bring about the change. They declared his new dyes would fade, and some ran away altogether rather than participate in his "new-fangled" ideas. But Court and society at once welcomed his new schemes with open arms,

for they exactly fitted the gaiety and temper of the time. Examples of these delicate tapestries, produced under Boucher's direction, are included in the Wallace Collection.

In some directions, as already hinted, motives of decoration came from Italy to France, though in the latter country they were always modified in use and were worked out with the French instinct for unity and harmony, as opposed to the Italian love of glitter and emphasis.

The so-called "Boulle"[1] inlay that we see so much of here—which is an arabesque pattern made of tortoise-shell, and engraved brass and white metals —is a modified use of an older Italian practice. It is not, as often supposed, the invention of the great *ebéniste,* André Boulle, for it was used in France still earlier; but his great reputation and frequent use of it throughout a long life has made his name associated with it ever since.

France also took from Italy the initial precedent of applying bronze mounts to furniture and of gilding that metal, but largely developed its principle and practice. In French hands the metal mountings of pieces are invariably richly gilt as well as very finely chased by the highly trained engravers (*ciseleurs*) of the time, whilst their forms

[1] Sometimes spelt "Buhl."

were in many cases designed by the leading sculptors of the time.

This application of gilt bronze (ormolu) mounts to the feet, legs and other outlines of the form, is the most persistent feature of its ornament, running through all the styles in succession. It can be seen on almost all pieces at Hertford House, and will be noticed in the accompanying illustrations. It was always the most costly item in its production—the great artists in it requiring and obtaining enormous prices for the work. Of the estimation in which it is held to-day we occasionally get a glimpse in the saleroom, when some piece of Oriental porcelain, intrinsically worth, say, £100, but with ormolu mounts of a fine French period, brings seven or eight hundred pounds. Mention has already been made of the use of rich exotic and stained woods for the body of French furniture. As produced by such great *ebénistes* as Cressent and Riesener, particularly the latter, it was applied to the body of the piece in patterns of the utmost delicacy and of consummate workmanship; and the presence of this marquetry of woods is one of the striking things in the total effect of French furniture all through its history, giving its main form a sober richness that enabled it to carry without bizarre effect the piquant pointing of its metal mounts.

The only other staple decoration of the body of a piece was the triumphant French use of the choicest Japanese lacquer and French substitutes for the same. Some of the French commodes of the more restrained Louis XV. design, cased throughout in rare Japanese lacquer, with its colour element in relief upon the dazzling black ground, and surrounded by gilt bronze mounts, may be considered as the most distinguished and complete result the furniture-art has ever evolved in Europe. These rare pieces, however, emanate from two continents, the panels for them having been sent to Japan to be lacquered and thence sent back to France, a proceeding which sometimes meant the lapse of years before an order could be completed.

But, for the most part, the lacquer used in French furniture was of French make. By far the most distinguished of the producers of lacquer in France was the Martin family, who worked during the reign of Louis XV. and adopted European fanciful figures and flowers as decoration in place of Oriental motives. Unfortunately there is no example of the Martin's work in this collection—it is now rare anywhere.[1] But the Martins' influence and fame may still be

[1] An example will be found in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington.

measured by our adoption of the term *verni-martin* for all lacquers of this class and style.

It is now time to notice some of the furniture in detail. In doing this it seems simplest to take it in the order of the styles, beginning with that known as Louis Quatorze. This style got its main direction from Le Brun, who was then at the head of the Academy and virtual controller of taste in France. Its settled aspect was a grave dignity and formalism, caused, in a small degree, by the free use of ebony, but for the most part by the sturdy forms of the pieces. The distinguishing qualities of the style are its severe constructive lines and ample mass, based upon the rather florid classic traditions then current in France. There are no examples of the earlier types at Hertford House. The pieces here are a little later in date, when solidity of aspect was being lightened by the application of metal plaques to surfaces and by an arabesque inlay of tortoise-shell and metals, as we see in the decoration of the ebony cabinet (IX., 4). This rich boulle inlay, together with a spare use, as yet, of metal mounts, the modified use of ebony, and also, markedly, the gradual increase in the use of rich coloured woods, are the prominent features of Louis XIV. furniture.

The great cabinet-maker, André Charles Boulle, is the central figure of the period. Rarely gifted as

an artist, he shared Rembrandt's passion for collecting beautiful things; and after a life of affluence he died, like Rembrandt, in poverty. In his matured and late work he loosened the formality in the outlines of his furniture, and also readily took up the fanciful motives of great contemporary designers like Berain and Gillot—who were introducing a new temper and foreshadowing the liberty and lightness of the succeeding style, Régence. The fanciful waywardness of Berain's ornament can be seen on the top of his ebony console table (XXI., 44). Towards the end of Louis's reign we see the approaching change taking a very definite character. A late and beautiful Louis XIV. table, by Boulle (XVI., 43) has taken on a new suavity of form and looks almost like a completed Regency piece. This fact illustrates what we shall notice repeatedly—namely, that each successive style was almost fully developed before the nominal period of the older one had ended.[1] The splendid workmanship and exquisite finish of Boulle's pieces can be seen at Hertford House in his writing-table (IX., 27) and his cabinet (IX., 4), surmounted by a bronze group.

[1] This notably happened in the development of the style Louis Seize, which was completed in all its best features before Louis Seize came to the throne.

UPRIGHT SECRETAIRE XVIII 12

Riesener

Bureau Toilette XVIII 20

Oeben

Already we have reached what is called the style Régence, quietly arriving there during the last years of Louis XIV. With this new epoch—which takes its name from the Regent Philip of Orleans (1715-1723)—there appears a new note in the furnishing of rooms. This may be called the modern or personal note, as opposed to the older impersonal note of dignity and formal design. This note of individuality in the choice of the applied decoration continues to hold its own through subsequent styles until about 1790, when a severe classicism set in.

Its appearance was the inevitable response to the appeal of the individual to be surrounded with charm and geniality in the personal adornment of his living rooms. It grows in force until it overreaches itself some seventy years later.

The change shows itself at first slowly in the walls and permanent fittings of the salon by a decoration which, though still stately, is lighter and more genial. In the furniture it evolves more rapidly, adding more suavity and fluency to their lighter forms and showing an increase of graciousness and personal fancy in the applied decoration. The frolicsome motives of Berain and Gillott have, in fact, got a firm hold, and the allure of Chinese figures and invention are assisting in the same direction. The architects, Robert de Cotte and Oppenord, helped to

bring about the change, but it was, so to speak, in the air.

In furniture design and decoration the central and great figure of this period and style is Charles Cressent. Like so many of the great *ebénistes* of the time, he was a distinguished sculptor and worker in metals. Also he was the son of a sculptor, and had the considerable advantage of being a pupil of the great Boulle. So excellent an authority as M. Saglio regards him as the best decorative artist of the century. There is only one work in the Wallace Collection which can be said to be by him—and, unfortunately, there are but few examples of the Regency style—a graceful writing-table (35) with the *espagnolettes* (charming heads of women) at the corners, rather suggestive of Watteau's types of beauty. Allusion has already been made to the ebony console table (XXI., 44); and other Regency pieces are a cabinet (I., 12) in various woods, surmounted by a clock, and the fine monumental clock (II., 26) of boulle and gilt bronze, a fully developed Régence piece showing the influence of De Cotte.

As we might expect, there is no sudden transition between the style of the Regency and that of Louis Quinze, but only a gradual development and emphasis of its tendency. The Louis Quinze is, in fact, simply

the opening out of a continuous tradition. In a modified way the change bears some resemblance to the contemporary English change from the earlier Georgian types to Chippendale's full and florid manner. The new curves become more pronounced, general and much more profuse. The principle of the cabriole leg and its curve is universally applied to chairs, tables, sofas and console tables; finished in the case of chairs and sofas with a small vertical toe, and in other pieces, where ormolu mounts are used, with little metal sabots. The use of this cabriole form is a very distinguishing feature for the beginner, and is easily recognisable amongst the objects at Hertford House.

The straight line disappeared everywhere in the new furniture. The outlines of chairs, tables, cabinets, etc., are all bounded by curves, as also are the decorative panels they contain. These curves too develop a new characteristic. On account of the length of the curve, and the frequency and duplication with which it was now employed, the sweep had to be relieved in some way to avoid a sense of weakness. It was checked with a slight arrest here and there; being, in fact, broken up into two inverted sections, as we get roughly by arranging the letters ƨ one under the other with reversed faces. The inside faces of the reversed curve were also

punctuated by allowing the tips of leaves to emerge slightly in the same direction. This is the new feature omnipresent and unmistakable in all Louis Quinze furniture. It was adapted from prevailing Italian usage, but modified and chastened by French designers. In the ablest hands this feature gave a wonderful suavity and movement to the form, just as in less restrained hands—like Meissonnier's—it induced a florid exuberance that is often bewildering and weak.

On all furniture of this period there is also an enlarged use of the richly chased gilt bronze mounts, that now trespass somewhat from the outlines and not seldom sweep energetically over the enclosed panels. There can be no doubt these beautiful metal mounts were regarded by their contemporaries as the distinguished feature of their furniture. The best sculptors and metal-workers of the day were employed to produce them, and the cost of the work was enormous.

Caffieri is, perhaps, still the most celebrated of the artists who wrought on them at this time: and rare as signed and identified pieces of his work are now, the Wallace Collection happily possesses several of these masterpieces. Most important of these is the great commode (XVI., 58). The illustration barely hints at its splendid effect, but it serves to show

the simple strength of the piece as a whole and the virile spring and sense of flow in the metal ornament, as it climbs almost unduly over the curves of the swelling *bombé* front. The more elaborate ormolu mounts, with heavy swags of flowers that were soon to follow, lose this sense of energetic spring and look merely ornate.

The great chandelier (II., 47) of gilt bronze is another of Caffieri's signed masterpieces. Lady Dilke mentions the tradition that it was given by Louis XV. to Don Philip of Spain on his marriage with Louise Elizabeth of France; it is certain that it was recovered in recent times at Modena in Spain.

It would be unpardonable not to note here another great commode (XVI., 57), equally celebrated, which is one of Cressent's masterpieces, though made late in life in the Louis XV. style. It has the same proud front as Caffieri's piece, with even a note of magnificence added by the device of so firmly marking the centre of the piece with the bronze head surrounded with bold casing. This noble emphasis is strengthened again by the way the whorls of palm and ornament gather volume as they move to right and left and finally lend their mass to the sturdy metal-work at the outer angles. Two spirited metal dragons form the handles, and the final mergence of their forms into conventional ornament is skilful and

elusive, like other work of the date, as also is the passage of the bronze forms at the corners into their surrounding frill; this feature recalls some great modern efforts in the same direction.

The vigour and vitality of this commode may well be contrasted with the later large bureau by Riesener in the same room, where the heavy floral swags and newer ornament seem merely to lie in lazy luxuriance on the marquetry.

Nor can we pass over the restrained *chef-d'œuvre* of Oeben, the bureau toilette (XVIII., 20), though it is slightly later in date, and shows signs of the reaction in favour of severer lines that came in towards the close of the reign. Oeben had the distinction of being employed by the Marquise de Pompadour, whose conspicuous taste and intuition in matters of art almost reached the point of genius.

We are now approaching the period when great changes were to come about. Apart from its rich, severe charm this fine piece of Oeben's has a great significance. It is the early sign of a new departure that is finally to lead to the radical change of the style called Louis Seize with its severe straight lines and elaboration of ornament. The change came gradually, as we shall see. For the moment it can be perceived in this bureau toilette by a certain

reticence it possesses and by the straightening of the lines in the body of the piece.

Similar features are marked in the large bureau (XVI., 66) made by Oeben's pupil and successor, Riesener, for the King of Poland. The older marquetry of quiet pattern is here enriched by a beautiful inlay of flowers, birds and fanciful designs; and these are made conspicuous against the quieter marquetry by being executed in lighter and delicately stained woods.

An elaboration of inlay is one of the significant features of the approaching style. Also of the same period is the noble *Bureau de Roi* in the Louvre, made by Oeben and Riesener, whose magnificence of aspect seems to have induced Lord Hertford to commission the splendid copy (XVI., 68) in the Wallace Collection. This fine replica, with its mounts by Dasson, is said to have cost something like three thousand pounds and to have taken three years to make. Its profusion of ornament befits its destination for the King of France, whose initials were once elaborately intertwined in the spaces now filled by the biscuit plaques on the sides. This great piece shows brilliantly the new splendid marquetry we have noticed. And its chased and gilt mounts, here intertwined with ribbon scrolls, take on the heavy swags of foliage and flowers that are dis-

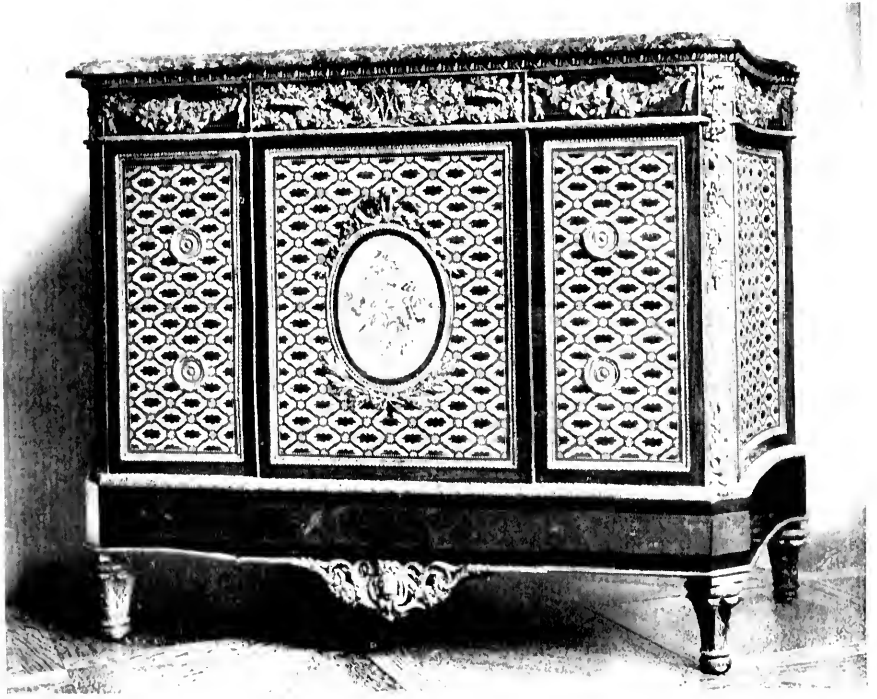
placing older motives adapted from acanthus and palm.

With the completion of this work the Louis Seize style sets in and very rapidly develops. Hertford House is richest in furniture of this period, and we will notice its outstanding characteristics, so that the visitor may recognise pieces in the collection. The straight line is its marked and central feature, and was adhered to with insistent virtuosity, alike in the legs of furniture, in the rectangular forms of the body and the framing in of the panels. Further, the use of the frieze is introduced as a feature in tables large and small, commodes, cabinets and escritoires, placed, of course, just under the cornice at the top, and marked off very sharply with surrounding rectangular lines. Some curves remain in the backs of sofas and chairs, but this is the only exception to the rule, and even here the prevailing aspect of these objects comes within the general principle.

Another noticeable mark of the style is the slighter size and build of the pieces. The only exceptions to this are some ponderous commodes made at the very end of the reign, and those cabinets with boulle ornament that were so much made again in this reign in the style of the Louis XIV. period.

BUREAU XVI 66

Riesener



Commode XVIII 18

Riesener

This general lightness of form was in sympathy with the delicacy of the newer marquetry; and in common agreement with these, the applied ormolu mounts became lighter and more refined. The metal mounts of this period cannot be dismissed without paying them some attention. In shedding the earlier vigorous features that had been in keeping with a larger intention, they took on designs of delicately chiselled flowers and borders of conventional ornament, whose chasing was carried to a pitch of costly and exquisite refinement that resembles goldsmiths' work. The refined charm of this new style, as it developed, may be readily imagined.

Riesener, who is its great figure, was the eminent French master of delicate inlays of coloured woods, and also no mean designer and worker in metals. So famous was his work with the great connoisseurs of the period, and so great the prices he obtained, that in the prime of life he had amassed an enormous fortune. But he too died in comparative poverty, ruined late in life by the Revolution. Throughout his mature life he worked very continuously for Marie Antoinette, and quite a number of the pieces he made for her are at Hertford House.

Amongst these is the lovely commode (XVIII., 18), with the characteristic lozenge-shaped inlay, and

the initials of the Queen in metal intertwined with roses and flowers in the centre of the frieze. In the same room is an upright secretaire (12), in the back of which her cypher appears with the words: *Garde Meuble de la Reine.*

It will be noticed that the official catalogue in its notice of these two pieces attributes their chased metal mounts in part to Gouthière, and it would be impossible to close this chapter without a passing reference to the most celebrated worker in gilt mounts of the period. Though Gouthière was also one of the great cabinet-makers, it is upon his chiselled work in metal that his fame rests. Gouthière is said to have "acquired such extraordinary skill as a chaser as to have been able to make bronze look like gold." He began his career by working for the luxurious Madame du Barry, and consequently from his hand came the work so enthusiastically referred to by M. Saglio as "the dainty delicate fairylike creations that made up the furniture of the châtelaine of Louveciennes."

Gouthière claimed to have invented the new dead surface given at this date to the gilt. His masterpiece, the perfume-burner (XIV., 15), is reproduced here in order to give a slight idea of the lovely design of the metal-work that supports the rich red jasper bowl. Thomire, his contemporary and

assistant, was almost equally famous, and the Wallace Collection contains many examples of his skill.

We have now reached the end of the great period. Henceforward the design of the furniture becomes trivial and effeminate, and its decoration overloaded as well as extravagant in type. The famous *ebénistes,* who had been trained in the great French traditions, whether of foreign extraction like Caffieri, Slodtz, Oeben and Riesener, or of purely French descent, were either long since dead or were being displaced by foreigners like Weisweiller, Schwerdfeger and Beneman, who spoke Marie Antoinette's language and were encouraged by her to settle in France and work to her order.

The outbreak of the Revolution finally swamped these efforts, and brought about the strong reaction for classic design which we know as "Directoire" and "Empire." The members of the distinguished family who gradually built up the great collection at Hertford House seem to have ignored these new styles, and therefore to notice them is outside the scope of this book.

X

PORCELAIN

The porcelain at Hertford House is almost all French. Outside the china of Vincennes and Sèvres there are only some couple of pieces of Capo di Monte, one of Dresden, and under a dozen examples of Chinese. The Capo di Monte, figures in white, are good but not remarkable specimens of the factory, and the Dresden vase (II., 5) is most interesting for its ormolu mounts by Caffieri. The only exceptional pieces not of French origin are the Chinese celadon vases (XIV., Case A), which are also splendidly mounted in metal.

This bias for the rare china of France might almost be assumed from the direction the collection of furniture wisely took, but most probably this common nationality is a coincidence. Without positive knowledge, we may surmise that its French exclusiveness was due to other important considerations. One of these may easily have been the opportunity the Revolution gave of securing valuable

pieces during the break up of royal and noble houses in France. But the paramount reason must have been the rare charm and beauty of the soft paste (*pâte tendre*) porcelain made at Sèvres and Vincennes. The collection at Hertford House is entirely confined to the soft paste ware. There are no examples of the later hard paste that was commenced at Sèvres about 1769—and therefore, so far as period goes, might have been included. The exclusion of this hard paste is another indication of the wisdom and taste of the founders of the collection; for though its first production was looked upon as a great feat and exhibited with much *éclat* to Louis XV. at Versailles, the new china was incapable of giving the charm and beauty of the earlier material. Any claims the hard paste of Sèvres has to distinction lie in its very white body as opposed to the slightly creamy white of the soft paste, and in its exceeding hardness and ability to withstand rapid changes of temperature. To this must be added the fact that from a commercial point of view it was much less difficult and costly to make, owing to the absence of accidents in the firing.

But on the artistic side it could not compare in any degree with the soft paste. On the extremely hard body of the new paste, the richness and softness

of the older enamels were unobtainable. The colour decoration, or painting in coloured enamels, was hard and dry in quality, and thin, on the body of the hard paste, and quite different from the earlier make with its well-fused soft tints and rich fat body. The material of the body of the soft paste had also the charm of its unctuous softer texture, as opposed to the more brilliant hard translucence of the true porcelain. As there is no hard paste Sèvres to see beside the older material in the cases at Hertford House, this cannot be illustrated here: nor can it be fully realised except by handling the two kinds side by side. Enough has been said, however, to indicate the wisdom of the Hertford family in restricting their collection to this delicate ware.

A short consideration of what "soft paste" is will do much to explain why the material adapts itself so pre-eminently to the use of colour; and as it will also show us what an interesting part these soft pastes have played in the discovery and early triumphs of porcelain in Europe, the point may be worth explanation.

Soft paste was first discovered, probably in Italy, before the end of the sixteenth century, and was begun to be made in France about 1700. Prior to this there had been no porcelain in Europe except

that imported from China, the land of its invention. Not only had China alone possessed the secret of its production, but for some three hundred years past it had been manufacturing it for the rest of the world, both East and West—much as England some fifty years ago was supplying both hemispheres with cotton fabrics.

The earliest Chinese porcelain to arrive in Europe seems to have been a present from the Sultan of Egypt to Charles VII. of France. Other pieces came gradually, reaching Europe by overland routes through Egypt to Venice. But it was not procurable even by the well-to-do until the Dutch began to import it in quantities about 1650-1670. The latter of these years is, by the way, the approximate date of production of the three beautiful Chinese celadon vases (XIV., 24, 25, 26) in this collection.

About 1700 the taste for porcelain had almost reached the proportions of a mania. There was, in fact, nothing in the West that could in any way take its place or compare with its delicate white translucent body and liquid glaze. Great efforts were naturally made in Europe throughout the seventeenth century to discover the secret of making it. One of the three[1] early successes in solving the secret was the "soft paste" produced in

[1] The other two were at Dresden and Florence.

1740 or thereabouts at Vincennes and a little later at Sèvres.

It must be admitted, however, that this soft paste is not, strictly speaking, a true porcelain, though it is a very effective counterfeit, with the general outward appearance and much of the charm of the real porcelain body. The Chinese material was derived from china stone and china clay[1]; the constituents of hard felspar and quartz were exceedingly hard and required firing at a very high temperature. The new imitation was an artificial amalgam composed of fine white clay highly refined and a glassy flux; in other words, we may say that this soft paste was a fused combination of white clay and glass.

Though it made a beautiful substitute for the true porcelain, it had two drawbacks. In the first place, it was very brittle when made, but this was not of extreme importance. Its great drawback was the difficulty of firing it successfully, the operation resulting in a considerable number of expensively decorated pieces being spoilt in the kiln. Owing to the glassy mixture in its body it fused quickly at a low temperature, and in exposure to the fire

[1] China clay is the result of the decomposition of felspar, and is found in the form of a whitish clay. China stone is a form of granite, a felspar with some amount of quartz.

PERFUME BURNER XIX 15

Gouthière

POT POURRI VASE XVIII 162

Sèvres Porcelain

it was difficult in practice to strike the exact degree of heat between which the fixture would fuse and so combine, and the very slightly greater degree at which it would melt or lose its shape. So that when the hard paste was secured in France, the production of the beautiful soft paste was gradually discarded on purely economic grounds.

From what has just been said it becomes easier to understand many of the fine qualities for which the French soft paste china is valued. Of these qualities colour is and always must be one of the most prominent. Indeed, colour, *qua* colour, is pre-eminently the true decoration of porcelain. As enamel on china it takes the translucence and radiance of the porcelain ground itself, and thus the whole obtains its wonderful unity of fibre and expression. Colour is the crowning triumph and glory of the old Chinese porcelains, whose surpassing excellence in this respect has never been equalled or nearly approached by European potters.

Now it so happens that colour and its development are greatly assisted and brought out by the nature of the body of soft paste; and it is owing to this that the *pâte tendre* of Sèvres easily comes second to the Chinese porcelains in qualities of translucence and fusion with the glaze. This peculiar adaptability of the soft paste body to bring about a fine colour

result is due to the glassy nature of its body that agrees so well with its own glassy coloured enamels, producing at the same time not only clarity of tint but also a soft fusion of the coloured enamel with the surrounding white glaze. It is interesting to note that the combined results here described could not be obtained upon the celebrated hard paste porcelain that was being contemporaneously produced at Dresden, nor yet in the intensely hard paste of Sèvres, manufactured towards the close of Louis XV.'s reign. The enamel colouring of these looks hard by comparison, thin and opaque in appearance, and will by no means fuse softly into the white glaze but rather has a look of being stuck thereupon.

This defect was really inherent in the harder ground, and can easily be understood with a word of explanation. The light firing that the composition of the highly fusible glassy enamels of the *pâte tendre* rendered necessary was not enough to fasten the colours upon the enamel ground of the hard paste; and so a modified enamel had to be used that was at once much thinner in body and contained a larger proportion of the pure opaque colouring matter. And with this modified enamel body it was impossible any longer to lay the colour in rich impasto or to run it on in the old

liquid way. These rather technical explanations aid us to appreciate the delicate *pâte tendre* porcelain, and having stated them something may now be said of the collection at Hertford House from a more general standpoint.

In its way the collection is almost unique. So great an authority as M. Auscher, the Director of the Sèvres factory from 1879 to 1889, assures us in his luminous book on French porcelain that "the most glorious period of soft paste porcelain at Sèvres—viz. 1756-1769—can only be seen to perfection in the collections of the King of England, Hertford House, and some of the Rothschilds." And it is hardly too much to say that of these the Wallace Collection is generally accepted as being the finest.

This golden epoch of French porcelain is also essentially the period of Madame de Pompadour, when her artistic influence was pre-eminent. Though it appears she took no special interest in china during its earlier development at St Cloud, Chantilly or at Vincennes, directly the transfer of the works from Vincennes to Sèvres was suggested to her, she was an enthusiastic supporter of the scheme and the operating force in the re-establishment and equipment of the works; and it should be added that her wise patronage and direction here was but a con-

tinuation of what she was so conspicuously doing in other directions for the art of France.

This activity of the Marquise and the rare taste that directed it has been but very sparely recognised; so it is interesting to quote this tribute from so high an authority as the late Lady Dilke:—

"The quality in her nature which led her to reject all but the most perfect and distinguished work, coupled with her definite apprehensions of style enabled her, during the twenty years of her reign, to contribute in no unworthy fashion to the progress of the applied arts. She seems to have been one of those who, by born instinct, can more than match the calculations of those who have 'the right to judge,' and her death in 1764 deprived the great group of artists employed by the Crown of a court of appeal whose decisions were ruled by a taste finished to the point of genius." [1]

Her activity in establishing the new works at Sèvres was enormous. Though the old staff of Vincennes, including the chemist Hellow and Duplessis the sculptor, were retained; she obtained large grants from the King and gave a new impetus and new standards to an enlarged staff of experts.

The pot-pourri vase (XVIII., 162) of about this

[1] "French Decoration and Furniture in the Eighteenth Century."

date, with its richly balanced fluent form and panels of Boucher decorations, is a miracle of the potter's skill: his skill to pass successfully through the furnace this elaborate, pierced and fretted form with its thinness of body and liability to collapse or twist out of shape in the firing. Exquisite and simple form reached its height during this time and the satiny sheen of the glazes, with their remarkable, true, even surfaces, became perfected.

In 1757 the most famous of the colour grounds, obtained from a precipitate of gold, was developed, and brought to perfection. This is the "Rose Pompadour" glaze, which throughout the catalogue is called by its other and more misleading title of "Rose Du Barry." M. Auscher tells us it was very difficult to produce, since when fired a little highly it became a dirty yellow; or when fired a little too low, an unpleasant brown. There are three very fine examples of this rose ground here in the jardinières (XII., 118, 146, 154), all alike remarkable for a striking simplicity of general aspect and form, and for the absence of trivial embellishment. This period is especially distinguished as that of the coloured ground-glazes. It has the seldom-used Bleu du Roi—usually softened, after Chinese precedent, with gilt tracery—as we may see in the important vases (XVIII., 159, XVII., 21), and in the

tall companion (XVII., 25) of the latter, with its compact form and graceful handles. Two of these also show in parts the celebrated "apple-green" ground-glaze, as does more fully the bottle-shaped vase (XII., 152). There is also a rare yellow ground colour on it characteristic of this class.

Still more important is the deservedly popular "turquoise blue" glaze, so much in evidence in this collection. This glaze was occasionally and most successfully decorated only by chased gilding of elaborate richness, but more usually delicately executed Boucher panels were added. There are cups and saucers of this kind here, and their air of sumptuous opulence is remarkable.

These panels, or "reserves," or *cartels* as they are described in the catalogue, appear on French porcelain about the time of the establishment of the factory at Sèvres, and are henceforward a persistent feature on that china. At first they are lightly decorated with birds or with flowers painted on the white porcelain background; a little later with the *amorini* subjects made fashionable by Boucher. Then we get the fuller Watteau type of subject inserted with the white picture ground entirely covered, and, last of all, as the classic motive came in, the mythological painting appears treated also entirely in colour.

This change of panel subject and disappearance of its white ground is of general assistance to indicate the period of a piece.

In examining the china at Hertford House nothing is more noticeable than the very partial way the white porcelain ground is at first allowed to appear, and then, in the more costly and typical pieces, disappears altogether about 1770 or soon after. This treatment of china is opposed to the taste and practice of other countries, particularly to that of China ; in these cases the white porcelain played a conspicuous part with the deliberate intent of displaying the characteristic qualities of the beautiful material itself. The French, however, were aiming more and more, as time went on, at an effect of richness and elaboration of the parts, alike in their furniture and interior decoration; and the result in their porcelain is that it begins to have an exceeding richness towards the close of the period that followed the death of the Marquise de Pompadour.

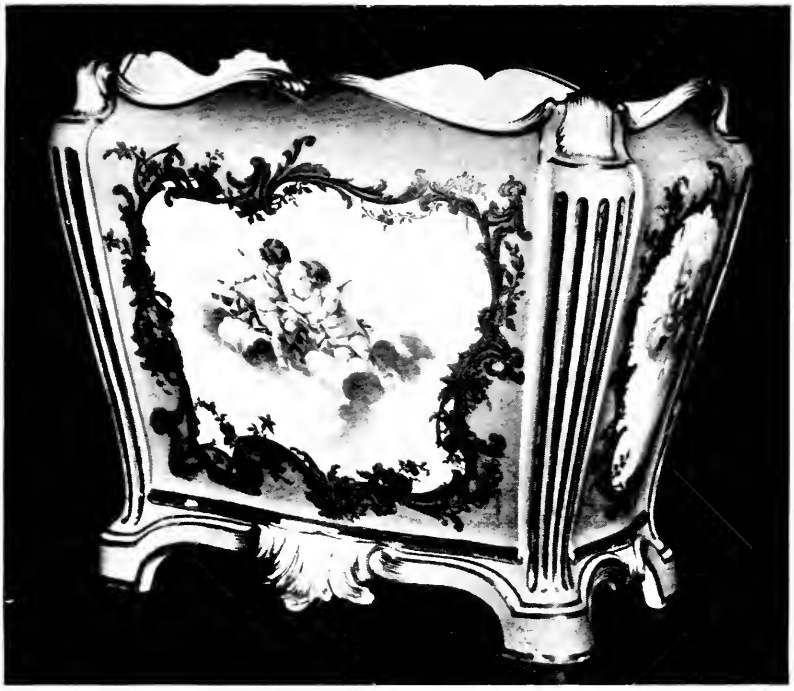
The decorated panels we have been noticing were enclosed by gilded borders, the best of which are etched and chased to add to their significance, and the gilt itself—never fired—has a fat appearance, being fastened, as Sir William Burton explains, on a bed of japanner's varnish. As the encroaching

elaboration of the parts proceeded, the beautiful ground-glazes on the pieces had to go, and the gilt surrounds to the reserves also became replaced by elaborate raised ornament, as we see encircling the panels in the vase of 1775 (XVII., 21).

In the vase just mentioned appears a new feature. This consists of the beads of coloured enamel laid on in separate drops, often applied over a gold foil. This decoration gave to pieces on which it was used the name of "Jewelled Sèvres." The Jewelled Sèvres of a few years later was the most costly of all the soft paste of Sèvres, and suffers from a painful access of elaborate detail. With all its profuse ornament, it has little or no seduction or charm.

One of the best examples of this type—though it is catalogued as slightly earlier—is the vase (XX., 7) with surmounting crown that was part of the service ordered from Sèvres by Catherine II. of Russia. Most of this heavily ornamented type made its appearance after 1780.

As some emphasis has been laid on the defect of these last porcelains, it may be added that the other reproach to the reputation of this beautiful *pâte tendre* of France came through its application to furniture. Both the material, its colour and its very nature were against this employment. Strictly



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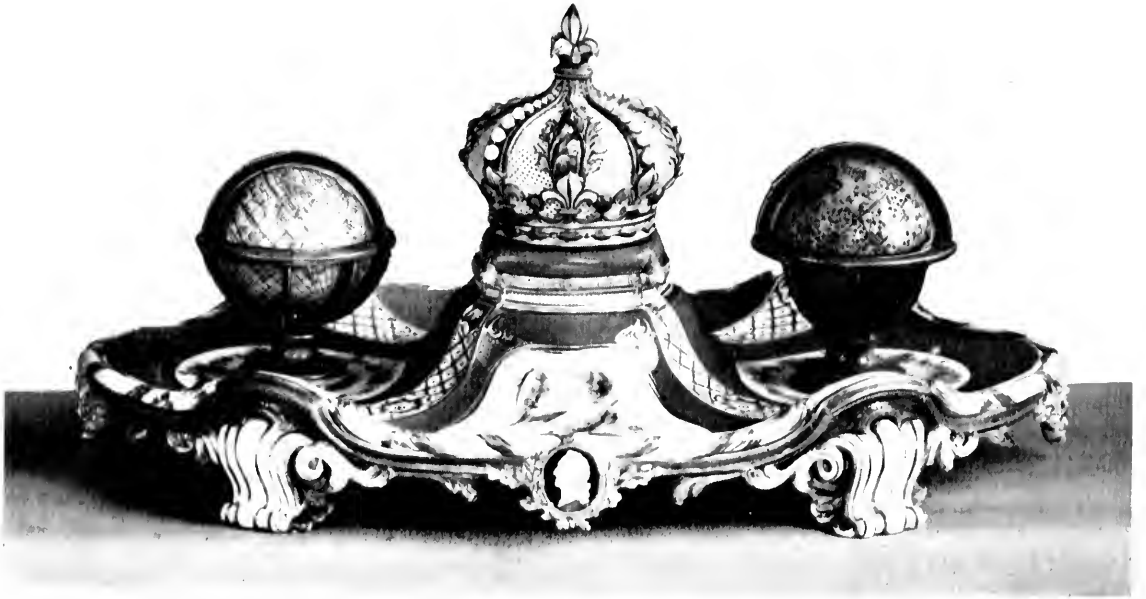

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Sèvres Porcelain

speaking, it is not even qualified to play a conspicuous part in the decoration of a room at all. Its fragile daintiness and caprice, alluring as the private appeal of a mood, render it unsuitable for general employment and liable to leap out unduly from the whole unless the walls be keyed up to the pitch of *la decoration claire*. It was this high pitch which caused its absolute failure when applied in the shape of plaques against low-toned woods—as was attempted too often towards the end of Louis XV.'s reign and later. That it ever was so used by the great decorative artists of that time can only be explained by its popularity and the desire of the wealthy to have it used wherever the novelty could be adapted.

As a counsel of perfection it may be said that these enamelled porcelains, to be fully appreciated, must be enjoyed close at hand for the sake of their separate and isolated charm. They should be taken in the hand, just as a miniature, or a flower or a jewel is taken; and thus at close quarters the sensuous body, beauty and exotic charm of these flowerlike objects yield the delight that is their legitimate offering.

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Before concluding this chapter, a word should be said about the large collection of majolica, of

Italian and Hispano-Mauresque lustred ware, which fills several cases in Gallery III. The majority of these pieces date from the sixteenth century, and may fairly be said to represent the best that European potters could do at this time. And it is generally admitted that this kind of pottery, with its opaque glazing and showy decoration, reached its greatest perfection in Italy in the sixteenth century. The name "Majolica" is said to be derived from the island of Majorca, an early seat of its manufacture, but to be able to do any justice to it we must remember that pottery differs from porcelain not merely in degree but in kind.

We have already examined the composition of porcelain, and we must now show how it differs from Majolica pottery. The body of the last was a somewhat unrefined clay, its coarse dark nature being disguised by a coating of stanniferous enamel. From a distance and from the outside this pottery looks showy and handsome in a barbaric way; but it has fatal deficiencies. The enamel covering on so friable a base could not be so hard an enamel; it easily chipped at the edges of the piece and showed its coarse ground. It would not stand rapid changes of temperature, and its colours are heavy and opaque and broadly applied.

Half-way between these enamelled faiënces and

porcelain comes the celebrated stoneware of Germany and the Rheinland, of which one or two examples may be found in the same gallery. This stoneware was made of a moderately whitish body, hard and close in texture. It was durable and deservedly popular, but it cannot stand comparison for a moment with the true porcelain of China or the soft paste of Sèvres, beside which all pottery must seem clumsy and gross.

XI

THE ARMOURY

To most people, I suppose, the fascination of arms and armour lies in its appeal to the historic sense. Few objects are more potent to aid us in visualising the days of old than a suit of armour which gives us the whole external appearance of a fellow-man. It has a completeness and actuality which cannot fail to stir our imagination, and it makes real to us, as nothing else can, those desperate combats of which we read in our history books.

It was not, however, merely for its historic interest that Sir Richard Wallace got together his great collection of European arms and armour. His aim was not to illustrate the various armaments which succeeding generations had evolved for purposes of offence and defence, but rather to demonstrate the beauty of the armourer's art. A similar consideration must have ruled his predecessor, Lord Hertford, who acquired a great portion of the Oriental armoury. The contents of this section, however, are all of late

date, belonging to the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and consequently do not represent the finest and most resplendent period of Eastern armour. Moreover, as Sir Guy Laking points out, "there is always the prejudice against the weapon of the Orient, that costliness of material is ever uppermost over the fertility of design and fineness of workmanship."

Notwithstanding many fine specimens in this section, it is then the European examples which give high distinction to the armoury at Hertford House. The earliest weapon shown is the Scandinavian sword (VII., 1) dating from the ninth or early tenth century, and in the same case will be found a series of Continental swords ranging from the eleventh to the early sixteenth century. Other cases in the same gallery contain fifteenth and sixteenth century helmets, of which the most famous is the *Tilting Helmet* (78), possibly the only head-piece in the collection that can be identified as being an example of English workmanship. A similar helmet of the same period and form, in St George's Chapel, at Windsor, is said by tradition to have been worn by Henry VI.

But perhaps the most imposing exhibit in Gallery VII. is the *Suit of Tilting Armour* (327) made at Augsburg about 1500 to 1520 for use in the "jousts of

peace." Augsburg, of course, was a famous armorial centre, and this fine suit bears the guildmark of the city stamped at the border of the elbow plates. Radiating fan-shaped fluting constitutes the principal decoration of this suit, as it also does of another *Suit of Armour* (540) near by, which, though much restored, gives an excellent idea of the war harness of a German knight towards the close of the fifteenth century.

These suits, however, are plain and business-like in comparison with the enriched armour in the next gallery. First we may direct attention to the German mid-sixteenth century *Three-quarter Suit of Armour* (VII., 374), decorated with sunk vertical bands and borders of bright steel on a blackened ground; and then pass on to the still more gorgeous, though a little earlier *Three-quarter Suit* (VI., 380), also of German workmanship. What is interesting to note here is how closely this war suit resembles the civil dress of the period. It is decorated with slashed and *bombé* alternate bands, etched and gilt, with a formal design of scrolls, etc., the whole presenting a very rich appearance. Although slashes were a feature of the civil dress, their introduction was a playful allusion to the cuts received in battle. "In this suit they are faithfully represented," says Sir Guy Laking, who also points

out that "this *repoussé* puffed and slashed ornamentation was one of the first attempts to decorate the surface by embossing from the back."

Another superb example of this method of decoration is the *Half Suit of Armour* (VI., 428) which is Spanish in style though probably of mid-sixteenth century German workmanship. All the borders and panels are etched and gilt, while inside the border is an embossed escalloped edging. Note also the trefoil ornament embossed on the plates of the thigh-pieces. The style of this profuse decoration is akin to that of Sigismund Wolf, the famous armourer of Landshut who made suits for Philip II. of Spain.

Richly decorated again is the *Complete Suit of Armour* (VI., 435) made by the English armourer Jacob Topf, or Jacobi, about 1575. From the album of this armourer's original drawings, now at the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, we know that this suit, illustrated therein, was made for Sir Thomas Sackville, afterwards Earl of Dorset. It is a unique example of the art of Jacob Topf, so admirably preserved that the gilding and the black pigment with which it is relieved have almost the same brilliancy as when the suit first left the hand of the master. No pains have been spared in the ornamentation. The scroll design, running in

bands and borders over the granulated groundwork, is deeply etched and partly gilt, while even the plain surfaces have an appropriate enrichment of colour. These surfaces have been oxidised to a rich russet-brown, a characteristic which causes the suit to be an example of what has been called "purple armour."

So far we have only considered examples of Teutonic workmanship, and, fine as these are, it may be doubted whether they represent the highest achievement in European armour. Many competent judges hold that for this we must go to Italy, the home and birthplace of practically all that is most beautiful in the arts and crafts of Christian Europe. Of all the armourers of Italy, not even excepting those of Milan, it is probably the masters of Ferrara who have secured the widest fame. And of all the wonderful contents of the Hertford House armoury few will hesitate to give first place to the magnificent *Half Suit of Armour* (VI., 483), known as that of Alfonso II., Duke of Ferrara, and attributed to the sixteenth-century armourer, Lucio Picinino. A whole volume might be written about this elaborately decorated suit, which contains every possible form of decoration on metal. To begin with, the whole surface of the suit is russeted; the entire design is worked out by the most cunningly graduated em-

bossing. It is chased, enriched with fine gold and silver damascening, plating and overlaying. An arabesque design flows throughout the suit, knitting together the various panels into a coherent whole. On the breastplate fruit, flowers and minor figures lead up to the dominating figure of the God of War; while on the blackplate we see "Hercules strangling the Nemaean lion," supported by figures emblematic of the arts and sciences. The effect of the whole is so dazzling, yet so harmonious, that we do not wonder so competent a judge as Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick should have pronounced this to be "without doubt, one of the most splendid suits in Europe, if, indeed, it be not entitled to pre-eminence." Moreover, it is in an admirable state of preservation, and unfortunately the same cannot be said for another half suit (473), also attributed to Lucio Picinino. In this last the original russet surface and gold damascening have perished, and the present aspect of brightened steel is the result of overcleaning, and probably also of damage by fire.

In the same gallery is the sixteenth-century Milanese *Oval Shield* (632), showing "Scipio receiving the keys of Carthage," another masterpiece of high-relief embossing, chased, richly plated and damascened with precious metals, and with all the exposed surface of the iron russeted. At the top

are introduced the monogram and interlaced crescent moons of Diane De Poitiers. "This justly ranks as one of the finest pageant shields in existence," says Sir Guy Laking. "The famous shield in his Majesty's collection at Windsor and the Giorgio Ghisi shield in the Rothschild bequest at the British Museum may possibly have a prior place as regards quality and technique of workmanship; but in that alone, for they lack that sense of dignity and completeness of design which has been attained in the shield under discussion."

Another fine embossed shield (661) was once thought to have belonged to the Emperor Charles V., but is now attributed to a French armourer of the late sixteenth century.

Passing by several items of historic interest—among which we may note the dagger (669) given to Henri IV. by the City of Paris on his marriage with Marie de Médicis, and the sixteenth-century Bavarian black and gold suit (851) connected by tradition with the Elector Joseph and stolen by Napoleon from the arsenal at Munich—a final word must be said about the *Complete War Harness for Man and Horse* (VI., 620), which is an outstanding feature of this armoury. It is French in style, and probably in origin, dating from about 1460-1480, and has been restored in some minor particulars.

But then "an equestrian harness for man and horse of this early period is of the greatest rarity"; and one entirely free from restoration is unknown even to so eminent an expert as Sir Guy Laking. The mounted warrior shown with uplifted sword-arm is distinctly impressive, but this pose was adopted not so much for dramatic effect as to demonstrate the flexibility of the armour.

In conclusion, while neglecting perforce many objects of interest in this and other sections, attention may be drawn to the Venetian *Bronze Cannon* (V., 1345), decorated with figures cast in high relief, dated 1688 and bearing the signature of John Marzarolli. It is accounted a masterpiece of the bronze-founder's art, and the symbolical figure of "Jupiter hurling thunderbolts at the Titans" is an appropriate allegory of what the maker doubtless hoped his weapon would accomplish.

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