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THE VISITATION OF ELIZABETH
REMBRANDT. 1608-1669

Concluding Bulletin of the year announces five important paintings.

AS in former years, the present (May) number of the Bulletin is the last one of the season, the first number of the next volume, which we hope will announce the opening of the new museum, appearing next October. The effort made during the past season to acquire important works of art, which will be shown to their best advantage in the new building, has culminated with the acquisition of five important paintings, described in the following pages. Just as it was possible to announce in the first number of the present volume, a series of great masterpieces representing different epochs and nations in the art of the past, so we are able to conclude with the description of another wonderful series of paintings, which we feel sure will be of everlasting value in the development of the city's culture.

Nothing less than a world-famous masterpiece by Rembrandt is among the five paintings, representing the great epoch of seventeenth century Dutch art, while the fifteenth century art of the north is shown in an exquisite example of early Flemish painting, *The Annunciation*, by Gerard David, and the fifteenth century art of the south by *The Resurrected Christ* by such a famous master as Botticelli. The remarkable epoch of French nineteenth century painting can now be better understood through one of the finest compositions by Courbet, the innovator of the realistic style in Europe in the middle of the century. To the collection of American paintings has at last been added an exceptionally large and important composition by the best of her eighteenth century masters, Gilbert Stuart.

THE VISITATION BY REMBRANDT

Rembrandt (1606-1669), that artist whose inexhaustible life work represents in itself a whole epoch in art history, combining as it does supreme artistic merit with a deeply human philosophy of life, had thus far not been represented in the museum collection. There would have been a most noticeable gap in the Dutch rooms of the new building if the visitor looked in vain for an example of the art of this eminent master. At the same time it has seemed advisable not to attempt any acquisition until a work could be found thoroughly characteristic of the many-sided expression of his ideas. We believe such a work to have been found in *The Visitation of Elizabeth*, the famous masterpiece from the Duke of Westminster's collection, known to the art world through many exhibitions in England and Holland and through numerous illustrations in nearly all the books on Rembrandt. Painted in 1640, two years before *The Night Watch* and eight years after *The Anatomy Lesson*, the first great work of his early period, it has often been mentioned together with the two famous

paintings in the Louvre and the National Gallery, the Holy Family (1640), called *The Carpenter's Household*, and *The Woman Taken in Adultery* (1644), as one of the three most important religious paintings of his middle period.

If it had been possible to ask Rembrandt himself what kind of subject he would have advised us to acquire as most representative of his art (if one could acquire only one of his works), it is most likely that he would have recommended a religious composition, not a portrait, although nowadays his art of portraiture is generally more favored by the private collectors. While his portraits were for the most part executed as orders, which of course does not mean that they are less wonderful, the religious compositions in painting, etchings and drawings were created by the artist at his leisure and contain all those reflections which had accumulated in the thoughtful artist's mind during the quiet hours of his busy life. Based upon the story of the Bible, in whose words Rembrandt firmly believed, they expressed so conclusively his ideas of the highest



THE VISITATION OF ELIZABETH (DETAIL) REMBRANDT

spiritual life that they may be said to be the most complete emanation of religion in northern art since the Renaissance.

As proved in a typical instance like the Thirty Years' War, the seventeenth century was preeminently a century of combat for religious ideas. While the Latin races with their fight against the Reformation had produced the art of the Counter-Reformation, as expressed in the Jesuit

baroque architecture and sculpture and the paintings of masters like Murillo in Spain, Guido Reni and the Bolognese school in Italy, Le Sueur and Philippe de Champaigne in France, and Rubens in Flanders, in the Germanic countries, where the actual battlefields of the war were located, none of the art had sprung up characteristic of the religious ideas which had given force to their fight for Protes-

tantism. The Netherlands, being in the front row of the fighters and having succeeded in freeing themselves from the Spanish yoke, were most productive in giving expression in art to the ideas of the period, developing new fields in painting in every direction,—landscape, portraiture, genre and still life. But no master expressing the spiritual side of this epoch of religious art had come forth. Then Rembrandt appeared and with his rich creative power, the fertility of his productions, his many sidedness in every medium, quite alone more than balanced the enormous list of minor artists, towering above not only all the artists of his own country, but all the masters of the northern school during his century, becoming the greatest exponent of the religious revolution which took place in the Teutonic race during his epoch. It would be wrong, however, to make of Rembrandt an essentially Protestant painter. Just as Michelangelo is not alone a painter of the Catholic Church of the Counter-Reformation, but can be understood by spectators of all religious faiths, so Rembrandt's art belongs to the same higher realm where all religions meet, the realm where a deeply human understanding of all expression of life reigns.

As could not be otherwise expected from the advance of realism and individualism in the art of the seventeenth century, Rembrandt's religious representations differ from those of earlier times, being staged in the more natural surroundings of his own epoch but expressing the most subjective mystic ideas of a believer who formed his contact with God less through the medium of a world-wide organized church than through his own individual conception of religion. It is these elements in our recently acquired picture which were already felt more or less by the two earliest authorities on the Dutch school in the nineteenth century: Smith, the critic of the *Catalogue Raisonné of Dutch Paintings*, written in 1836, and Dr. Waagen, the writer of *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*, published in 1854, in which our picture is described at length. Smith writes: "Without stopping to inquire into the pro-

priety of the costume, or wasting words deploring the absence of that elevation of character which distinguished the Italian school, the artist has here achieved that which is more difficult and therefore more rare than either, for he has given a truth and intensity of expression most appropriate to the sacred persons and has added charms of color and a magical effect that we look for in vain in any other painter." And Waagen says: "The simple representation is entirely a scene of the artist's own time and everyday life. At the same time the expression in the heads is refined, noble, and thoroughly Biblical, so that the attention is not distracted by all the little accessories. This picture, painted when the artist was thirty-four years of age, is masterly in composition, in handling, lighting, and glow of chiaroscuro."

It is just this daring of the artist in giving the Biblical figures the costumes of his own time, and yet the ability to produce a mystical, transcendental effect of the scene by means of color, lighting and spacing, which first of all astonishes the observer. What a wonderful spacing in the composition, creating at once the impression of unusual happening of which we are allowed to be a spectator! With the Visitor, we have arrived in front of a large palace with huge columns, standing at the top of a hill which permits a distant view of a large town at its feet, the city of Jerusalem as Rembrandt imagines it, seen in the dim light of a dark afternoon. The many houses with high chimneys and gables are dominated by the Gothic cathedral of heavy proportions, while somewhat nearer to the foreground we observe the strong city walls and the viaduct built over the deep valley. On the road leading along this valley a man driving a horse can be seen, and other groups of figures are standing at the approach to a bridge and near the steps which go farther down to invisible parts of the town. Cleverly has the artist produced the effect of space between the platform on which we are standing and the valley, by placing the driver and the donkey on which the Virgin came up, in such a position that they are partly hidden by the platform.

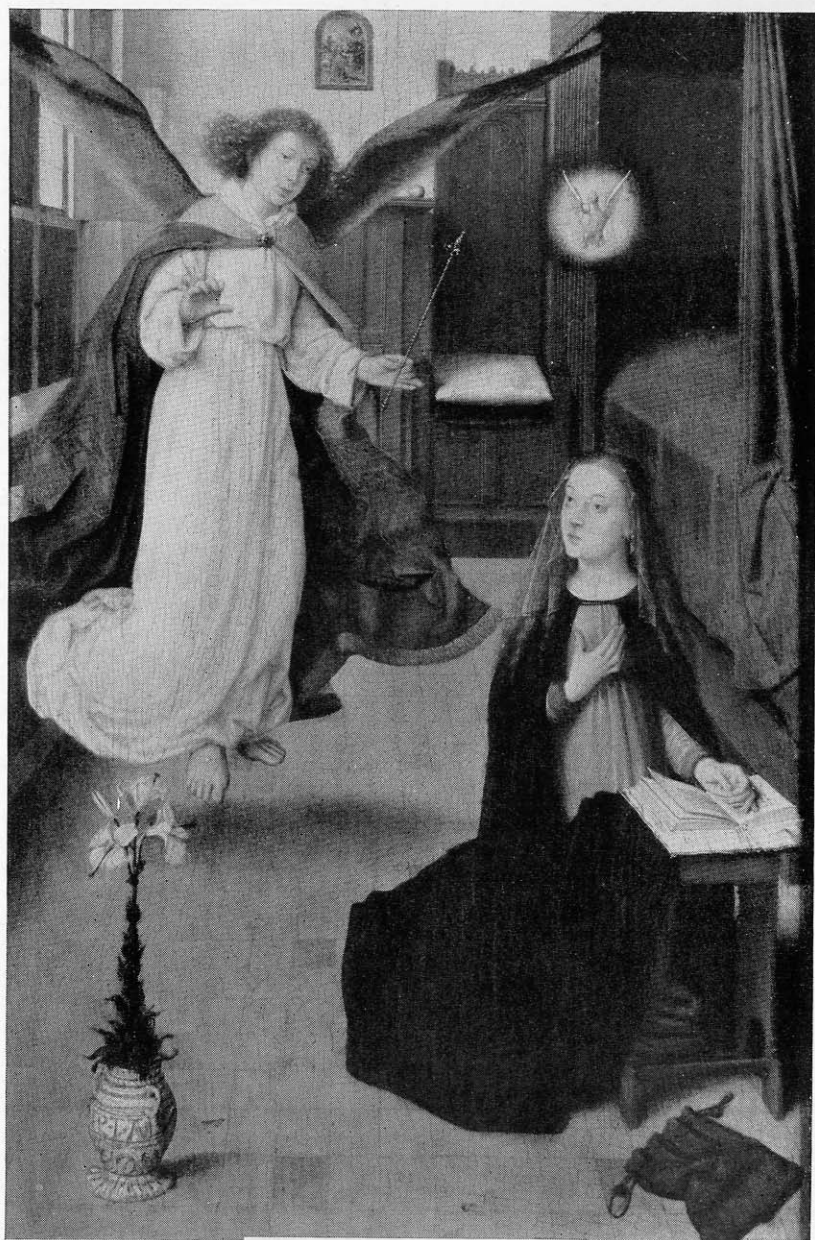
We get a similar feeling of endless depth on the left side, where smoke is coming out from the palace, giving to its silhouette an uncertain appearance of width, while the height of the porch seems exaggerated through the small proportion of the figure of Zacharias coming out to greet the Holy Visitor.

It is remarkable how the artist, in spite of the opening of space in all directions managed to give the intimate feeling to the scene which is characteristic of the religious representations of Rembrandt, especially in this epoch of his happy home life. Through the chiaroscuro the artist has created a kind of frame of darkness around the strongly lighted features, placing them as it were almost in a half-shadowed room or interior. Besides the grouping itself, the homelike appearance is enhanced by the richness of detail. It is like a scene of welcome of neighbors received as guests in the most friendly manner. The young woman has come accompanied by her negro servant, who takes off her mantle at once when the elderly woman comes out of the house to embrace her young friend. Rapidly, too, the old Zacharias is coming down the steps, carefully guided by the young boy servant, upon whose shoulder he rests his hand. Of no less friendly interest in the newcomers seem to be Elizabeth's little half-shorn poodle and the peacock with her young grouped at one corner of the house and looking around at the visitors.

But with all this art of giving space to the composition and rendering it at the same time intimate, the representation would not have half its deep meaning without the wonderful expression of sentiment which Rembrandt has given to each of its figures. What a stately and dignified Madonna, with her modest, confident and calm expression, holding herself like a queen, as if she felt her great destiny! How convincingly is the care and devotion pictured in the face of Elizabeth, who speaks with such sincere intensity and encouragement to her young woman friend, and how vividly is rendered the excitement in the attitude of old Zacharias, whose body and

hands seem to tremble—one of those types of old men for whose characterization Rembrandt has always been famous! What a contrast in the faces of the servants, who are looking on as uninterested, obedient spectators! In the miniature-like execution of the small figures (the panel measures only 22½ inches by 18½ inches) we feel still the young master who industriously and yet with the mark of the genius in each stroke worked out all parts of the picture with the greatest care. We are reminded of some of the early works of the artist, who started his career in the miniature style of the Leyden school, connecting thus his art with the great primitive school of the fifteenth century. Yet in the precision of design, in the refinement of the color combination which has its center in the blue shades of the Virgin's dress and mantle and the warm red tones of Elizabeth's costume, we recognize the mature artist who had already developed the strongest medium of his art, the chiaroscuro, to the highest degree. All shadows have a marvelous transparency of gray and brown tones enveloping the forms, yet making clear all their main functions.

For those who are interested in Rembrandt's personal history, our painting has a special charm, as its subject can be connected with certain events of his family life. This connection with personal experiences may be found in nearly all religious works of Rembrandt, proving how close their creation was to the development of his inner life, revealing its most important phases. We recognize easily in the portrayal of the Virgin the type of Saskia, with her high forehead and strongly-formed chin, and we remember how her three children who had been born during the six years of her marriage to Rembrandt had died one after another. In the year following the execution of our picture, in 1641, Titus was born—the only surviving child, who became for the next twenty years the beloved companion of the artist, when Saskia had died soon after the birth of her son. After all the misfortune of their married life the artist and his wife must have awaited the birth of the child with



THE ANNUNCIATION ·
GERARD DAVID
BRUGES. 1450 to 60-1523

greatest anxiety, of which no less than two great religious compositions speak,—ours and the one of *Manoah and his Wife Praying for a Son*, in the Dresden Gallery, a composition created in 1641, shortly before the birth of Titus. No wonder that Rembrandt put his whole soul into the delineation of the sacred subjects which seemed like a prayer to Heaven for his wife's happy future.

The painting has a remarkable record. It was first in the possession of the King of Sardinia, then in the collection of Prince Eugène de Savoy in Vienna. Imported to England in 1807 by Nieuwenhuys, the greatest English dealer of his time, it was purchased by Earl Grosvenor, afterward Marquis of Westminster, in 1812. For a hundred years it remained in the possession of the Marquis, afterward the Duke of Westminster, of Grosvenor House, London. A few years before the war it was sold to Baron Alfred de Rothschild, of Halton Manor and Seamore Place, London, after whose death it was sold with his whole collection to a concern of English and American art dealers. While the painting was in the possession of the Duke of Westminster it was exhibited frequently,—in 1834 in the British Institution (Cat. No. 114); in the Old Masters Exhibition of the Royal Academy, London, in 1870 (Cat. No. 36); in 1895 (Cat. No. 88) and in 1899 (Cat. No. 52). In 1898 in the great Rembrandt Exhibition (Cat. No. 45) which was arranged at Amsterdam at the occasion of the inauguration of Queen Wilhelmina of Holland, it

was one of the most popular of the Rembrandt paintings shown.

The picture was engraved as early as 1813 by John Burnett for Foster's "British Gallery," this engraving having been used by Burnett again for his book on "Practical Hints on Composition in Painting" (1822 and 1828). It has been etched by one of the best Dutch engravers of recent times,—P. J. Arendzen in C. Hofstede de Groot's "Masterpieces of Dutch Art in English Collections." Another etching will be found in the "Catalogue of Grosvenor House" by J. Young (1921, Plate 9). There is a good heliogravure in Dr. W. Bode's important publication on Rembrandt ("The Complete Work of Rembrandt" by W. Bode assisted by C. Hofstede de Groot, Vol. IV, No. 241, 1900.) Other reproductions are in nearly all the more recent books on Rembrandt: in the ones by the writer of this article (Klassiker der Kunst 1909, p. 224); by C. Neumann (1922, p. 221); by D.W. Meldrum (1923, plate 220); also in the book by Dr. M. J. Friedländer (Propyläen Kunstgeschichte, Berlin, 1923); and in "Les Arts" ("Collection de Duc de Westminster," by Langton Douglas, 1905). It is fully described in the "Catalogue Raisonné" of Rembrandt's paintings, by C. Hofstede de Groot (1916, Vol. VI, p. 63) and careful characterizations are given in the books on Rembrandt by C. Vosmaer (1877), E. Michel (1900), W. Bode (1900), C. Neumann (1922), W. Weisbach (1926), not to speak of the earlier works on the artist, like Smith, Waagen, Kugler, and Dutuit.

W. R. V.

THE ANNUNCIATION BY GERARD DAVID

The Annunciation, by Gerard David (Bruges, 1450 to 60-1523), is one of the masterpieces of early Flemish art, that art which only recently has won fresh laurels through the great exhibition at the Royal Academy in London. The purchase of this painting may be said to be of equal importance with that of the picture by Petrus Christus of last year, which has just returned from a successful visit to the London exhibition. Just as the *St. Jerome* of Petrus Christus represents the first phrase of early Flemish art,—the epoch of the Van Eycks—so does *The Annunciation* by Gerard David illustrate the last phase of this great period which lasted from 1420 to 1520, until the introduction of the Renaissance ideas, with which at the very end of his life Gerard David must have come in contact.

Our painting, rediscovered only recently in Russia, proves once more what an extraordinary colorist Gerard David was. In his color schemes he occupies a unique place among the Bruges artists and it is for this reason that his paintings can be properly appreciated only in the originals, a trait which is more true of his works than of any others of the period. It is interesting to know that the critic who twenty years ago wrote the first and most excellent volume on the artist, Baron Bodenhausen,¹ came to this master only through his love for modern French art, especially that of Renoir, and it is just this remarkable colorist of whom we are reminded in our composition with its rainbow tonalities.

For those to be regretted persons who are not able to see the original, we may say that the picture is painted in an unusually light color key, in which the white and light shades around the angel are balanced by the darker blue tones surrounding the Madonna. The gray wall and stone floor form a delicate background for the white robed angel, the most extraordinary part of the color combination on this side being the variety of shades surrounding the head of the Virgin. The angel's hair,

as well as that of the Virgin, is of an orange-reddish tone, a color which is repeated and somewhat modified in the light reddish-brown wood panels and Gothic furnishings of the room. The wings of the angel are blue, green and purple, and his white robe is tinted with shades of light blue and his cloak with changeable light green and rose-violet. The fine nuances of blue, for which Gerard David is famous, prevail throughout the picture, especially on the right side. We find them in the steel-gray-blue of the bed cover and the Virgin's bag which lies on the floor in front of her prayer desk; in the deeper blue of the mantle of the Madonna, and in small spots such as the cushion of the Gothic chair and the miniature-like painting on the wall. Other exquisite little touches of color should not be forgotten to be mentioned: the dove with red beak and legs, the yellow-blue nimbus, the light green stem of the lily, and the brilliant red in the picture on the wall which represents Moses near the burning bush.

Everyone who knows something of early Flemish art will see at once that this variety of broken tones points to the last period of Gerard David's art, the beginning of the new century, when the art of Antwerp, with its over-refined taste in color and design, came into prominence, replacing the more severe and sincere style of Bruges which dominated the art of Flanders in the fifteenth century.

There can be no doubt that Gerard David was influenced in the color scheme of our picture by the greatest Antwerpian master of the new era, Quentin Massys, and that the picture must have been executed between 1515 and 1520, shortly after the time when Gerard David was mentioned as living for a short period in Antwerp in 1515. Strange to say, although the revival of his name and the knowledge of his art does not go farther back than into the sixties of the last century (it was not until the Bruges Exhibition of 1902 that a general recognition of his wonderful

¹E. Von Bodenhausen, *Gerard David*, Munich, 1905. Since this time the artist has been fully appreciated by F. Winkler, *Thieme-Becker Dictionary*, vol. VIII, 1913; M. J. Friedländer, *Von Eyck bis Bruegel*, Berlin, 1916; Sir Martin Conway, *The Van Eycks and their Followers*, New York, 1921.

art took place), we now know his development, thanks to the thorough study of the last generation, through more than fifty known works so well that we are able to date his paintings from year to year throughout his life. Although he accepted to some degree the new ideas, he did not give in to the taste of the new generation, with all its eccentricities of draftsmanship and mannered expression of sentiment, but kept to the very end, so far as design is concerned, the dignity and purity of his strong classical fifteenth century style.

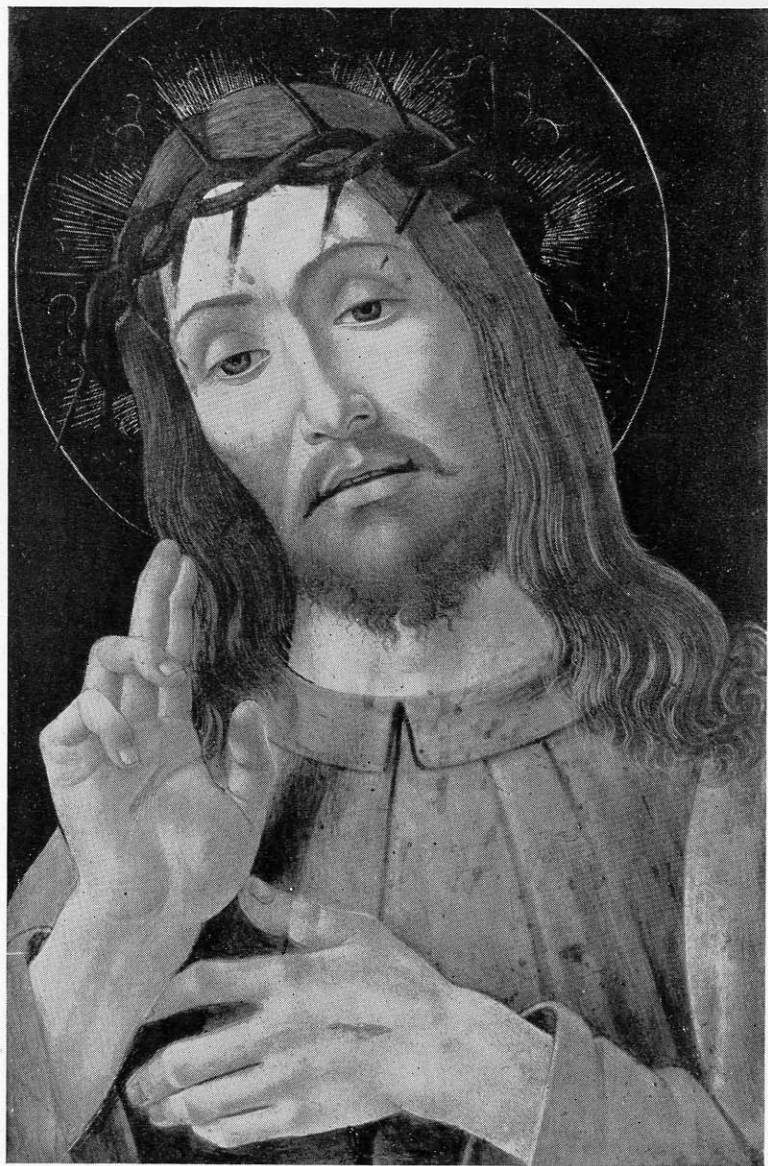
His compositions from the beginning have an extraordinary dignity and monumentality, qualities which are clearly visible in our picture. It is no mere chance that he was the creator of some of the largest altarpieces in early Flemish art, the most monumental of which is in this country in the Widener collection in Philadelphia. The bigness of his conception, however, as with all Flemish masters who developed their art from miniature painting, shows to better advantage in works of small compass like our picture. We feel in our painting how consciously the artist gives strength and quietness to his composition through the clearly-marked vertical lines which prevail in the figure of the angel and continue through the stem of the lily and, on the other side, through the curtains of the bed which parallel the vertical lines of the Madonna.

Combined with this conventionalized style of composition is the expression of the wonderfully naive and pious sentiment characteristic of this artist with his mystic tendencies, who himself belonged to a laymen's religious society. Differing from the Italian compositions of this subject, where the annunciation usually takes place out of doors or in open halls, the portrayal here has all the intimacy and home-like feeling of the early northern artists. The angel has entered the sleeping room of the Virgin and hovers in a remarkably portrayed suspended position immediately behind the kneeling Virgin who has just been reading her prayer book. Still half in thought of what she has been reading, a sense of astonishment and fright seems to rise slowly to her face, while the expression of devotion is shown in the hand

which she places upon her breast. In accordance with the northern idea, the Madonna is not the beautiful and queenly young girl of the Italian paintings, but a home woman of more mature years, while to the angel the artist gives all the expression of youth and sweetness he is able to delineate.

Gerard David has a very marked place in early Flemish art, especially that of the Bruges school, whose fame is built upon five great names: Jan van Eyck, Petrus Christus, Hugo van der Goes, Memling, and our artist. The impress of his art upon the development of the school is manifold. Coming from Holland, where he was the pupil of Geertgen of Haarlem, he gives to the Bruges school, which he joined in 1483, a new impetus, adding the severe and at the same time lyrical quality of the Dutch temperament to this school. His influence in his new home and throughout Flanders is enormous. He begins a new school of miniature artists, which produced such famous works as the *Brevier Grimani* in Venice and the illustrated Bruges manuscript of the J. Pierpont Morgan library, and he has numerous pupils among the artists who painted in oil, many of them of great popularity among art collectors: artists like Isenbrandt, Ambrosius Benson, and Jan Provost, the latter well-represented in our Institute by *The Last Judgment*, while a charming Madonna by Benson is in the possession of Mrs. John S. Newberry and two portraits by the same artist, of Holbein-like quality, are in the private collection of Mr. Ralph H. Booth of this city.

Gerard David was early appreciated by the great private collectors in this country,—Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan and Mr. B. Altman of New York, Mr. Joseph E. Widener and Mr. John G. Johnson of Philadelphia, and Mr. Martin A. Ryerson of Chicago. Mr. Philip Lehman, and Mr. Otto H. Kahn are more recent owners of his works. In the museums of this country he is represented only through two compositions in the Metropolitan Museum, one of these being *The Departure of Christ from the Virgin* of the Altman collection.



THE RESURRECTED CHRIST
SANDRO BOTTICELLI
FLORENCE. 1444-1510

THE RESURRECTED CHRIST BY BOTTICELLI

With the beautiful panel of *The Resurrected Christ*, by Botticelli, a gift of Dr. Valentiner, the Institute has acquired its first important work by one of the great Florentine masters of the second half of the Quattrocento. The Florentine school of that period was until now represented by only two works of less important painters, Pierfrancesco Fiorentino and the Master of the San Miniato altar piece, and further by a charming but comparatively modest predella picture by Domenico Ghirlandajo.

Among the leading masters of the early Renaissance in Florence, Botticelli is undoubtedly the greatest. Sandro di Mariano di Vanni Filipepi, commonly known under the name of Botticelli,* was born in 1444 or 1445 in Florence, the son of a tanner. Vasari tells us that he first worked as an apprentice in the workshop of his brother Antonio, who was a goldsmith. Indeed, Botticelli's predilection for fine gold ornaments and tasteful jewelry, as we may recognize from his paintings, make it very probable that he really got a certain training in that craftsmanship. He very soon, however, became a painter, entering the studio of Fra Filippo Lippi where he presumably remained until 1467, when the monk moved to Spoleto. The strong influence of Verrocchio, which we can notice in the early works of the master, lets us suppose that Botticelli in the late sixties, after having left Filippo, worked for a certain time as Verrocchio's assistant. We know very little about Sandro's earliest pictures, attributions proposed by some experts having been refused by others. The first painting for which we have documentary evidence is the *Fortitudo* in the Uffizi gallery in Florence. The order for this picture, which is a companion piece to some other *Virtues* painted by Antonio and Piero Pollaiuolo for the "Mercanzia" (Chamber of Commerce) in Florence, was given to the artist in 1470 by Soderini, the confidential advisor of Lorenzo dei Medici. The figure of this *Fortitudo* as well as the contemporary small paintings of

Judith and *The Finding of the Body of Holofernes*, in the Uffizi, which were probably once used as decorations of furniture, clearly show in the plastic and almost metallic modelling the influence of the bronze sculptor and painter Verrocchio. In the following years Botticelli became the favorite painter of the Medici. Some of his most celebrated paintings were done on commission of members of that family, such as *The Madonna Enthroned with Six Saints* (about 1472), the marvelous *Primavera* and *The Birth of Venus*, all in the Uffizi, the two last paintings being supposed with good reason to glorify Simonetta Vespucci, the innamorata of Giuliano dei Medici, who was murdered in 1478 in the notorious conspiracy of the Pazzi. The pictures in their fanciful symbolism are connected with the poem of the "Giostra" by Poliziano, the court poet of the Medici, and were probably done shortly after Giuliano's death. The well-known *Adoration of the Magi* (about 1475) in the Uffizi, showing the portraits of the most prominent members of the Medici family, was not ordered by that family, however, but as has been learned recently from documents, by a "nouveau riche," a certain Guasparo di Zanobi del Lama, who thus tried to flatter the rulers of the city. In 1481 the artist was sent to Rome with colleagues by Lorenzo il Magnifico, in order to adorn the walls of the Sistine chapel in the Vatican for Pope Sixtus IV. Three large frescoes, two representing stories of the life of Moses and one *Christ Healing the Leper*, were executed by Botticelli by the end of 1482. After the death of Lorenzo dei Medici in 1492, during Savonarola's revolution, the sensitive artist was deeply affected by the monk's fanatic teachings. He is said to have himself burned some of his "worldly" paintings in the great auto-da-fé instigated by Savonarola. From now on he devoted his art entirely to representing holy subjects, preferably scenes of the Passion. The grave and mystic trait characteristic of the artist from the beginning which gave

*The name "Botticelli" which means "little barrel" was first given to Sandro's eldest brother, who was a distinguished banker, as a nickname because of his short and rounded figure and was afterwards adopted by the whole family

his earlier works a special charm, changes now more and more into a gloomy moroseness. His forms grow empty and forced, his creative instinct weakens. What Sandro accomplished during the last decades of his life is indeed very little and almost nothing in comparison with the outstanding importance of his works of the previous twenty years. The two pictures of *The Lamentation for Christ* in the Museums of Milan and Munich, both of about 1497, belong to the most characteristic works of his late period. The artist died in his native city in 1510.

Our picture, which Dr. Valentiner discovered under the disguise of an enlarged and overpainted "piece of decoration," shows after having been cleaned and re-

duced to its original shape the hand of the master at his best. It is in a comparatively excellent state of preservation and has been recognized in the meantime by B. Berenson and other authorities as an undoubtedly genuine work of Botticelli. The appearance of suffering in the sad and pitiful eyes, the slightly opened mouth of that noble face of the Saviour, those marvelously expressive and speaking hands, prove absolutely to be the work of such a very great master as Botticelli was. The slenderness of the head and the fine and smooth modelling of the drawing show that the picture belongs to the early middle period of the artist. It might be dated about 1480.

W. H.

THE TODD FAMILY BY GILBERT STUART

Another of the more obvious gaps in the collection of American paintings has been filled through the purchase by The Detroit Museum of Art Founders' Society of the portrait group of the Todd family by Gilbert Stuart. It is an exceptional work of the master in that it combines so happily a large number of figures into a single composition, a thing which the artist was seldom wont to do. Indeed it may be said to be one of the most if not the most important group picture known by the artist.

The group consists of the father, mother, and six children; the younger children with their fresh complexions and fair hair grouped about the mother forming a central group which is balanced on the right with the portrait of the husband and on the left with the older children. It is exceedingly brilliant in color and is characteristic of the style developed by Stuart from about 1780 to 1790, during the first flush of the artist's success, after he had set up a studio for himself in London. It will be remembered that at the outbreak of hostilities between the colonies and the mother country, Stuart, a mere lad of nineteen years, who had already made some progress as a portrait painter in his native city of Providence, Rhode Island, sailed for England, just before the battle of

Bunker Hill. For, while his education had been meagre and his opportunities to study painting quite restricted, he had nevertheless executed a number of portraits before leaving America that do great credit to him and show an unmistakable talent. He was probably actuated in his decision to go to London partly because of Tory leanings and partly because the brewing conflict seriously impaired the possibility of the continued practice of his profession in his native land. He arrived in London in November, 1775, and for a time found it difficult to eke out an existence. His musical attainments enabled him to take a position as organist in a small church and this saved him from dire want. His circumstances were such, however, that in 1776 he made an appeal to his compatriot Benjamin West, and this American historical painter, who was enjoying a most successful practice in London and who was one of the founders of the Royal Academy, took Stuart in as a student and helper and he remained under the tutorship of his benefactor for five years, helping him with his large commissions and carrying on his studies.

During this period, probably with West's influence, he became an exhibitor at the Royal Academy and in 1782 his

entries enjoyed such success that he decided to set up a studio for himself and leased a house on Berners Street. He was married on May 10, 1786, at the age of thirty to Charlotte Coats, the daughter of a physician, and it was probably about this time that our picture was painted. In spite of all the competition that he had with Reynolds, Gainsborough, Romney, West, Hoppner, Beechey, and other notable English portraitists in the field, he had now attained to so eminent a position that patrons flocked to his door and he mingled with the gay social life of London. He seems to have been somewhat improvident and in spite of the large returns from his lucrative practice, his extravagance and lavish entertainments kept him in debt the greater part of the time.

The years between 1787 and 1792 were spent in Ireland where he was called by the Duke of Rutland, one of his London patrons who had been appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Here he also enjoyed a fine patronage and mingled with the finest society of the Irish capitol and continued to live in extravagance and luxury.

In 1793 he determined to return to America. It was his thought to paint the

great Washington, and by a series of engravings for which he anticipated a wide demand, he expected to recoup his low fortune and pay off his indebtedness abroad. His instant success upon his return to New York is well known and for the next thirty-five years, until his death in 1828, he was America's foremost painter. The distinction he had gained in England followed him to his native land and he was besieged with sitters in New York and in Philadelphia and it was not until many of these had been taken care of that he painted his first portrait of Washington, so many editions of which exist today.

Our picture comes originally from Mr. William Burrough Hiel, a member of the Todd family near Southampton, who sold it in June, 1922. Within a year it was sold three times, the first owner paying £220 for it, the next £350 and the third £1000. While it had not heretofore been recorded it was at once recognized by noted authorities, among them R. R. Tatlock, the editor of the Burlington Magazine, as an imposing work by Stuart, and Lawrence Park¹ included it in his splendid book on Gilbert Stuart which gives an illustrated and descriptive list of his works.

C. H. B.

MIDDAY DREAM BY GUSTAVE COURBET

With this painting, one of France's greatest artists of the nineteenth century has made his entrance into the Museum. Gustave Courbet is *the* true and most characteristic revolutionist of painting in his century. His importance from an historical viewpoint is almost greater than the actual one of his work. But in his human life as well as in his art, this man was a sort of brutal conqueror. Hardly ever in the world of art has a personality forced itself so clamorously upon the minds of its contemporaries as did this vain and ambitious son of a peasant, irritating the public and challenging the critics in the boldest and most reckless way.

Gustave Courbet was born in 1819,

¹Lawrence Park, *Gilbert Stuart*, vol. II, p. 343.

the son of a vine grower in Ornans, near Besançon. He started painting quite early, getting some instruction from an unimportant painter of his native place. Coming to Paris in 1839, he worked for a very short time under Baron Steuben and Hesse. He developed his art essentially as an auto-didact, studying some of the old masters, especially Hals, Rembrandt, and the Spaniards, and calling himself "élève de la nature." From the very beginning he was thoroughly convinced of his own importance, scoffing and fighting all intellectualism in art, developing and proclaiming revolutionary and sometimes very silly theories, and shocking the public by tricks of all sorts. In his artistic career he was at first by no means successful. For years



A FAMILY GROUP
GILBERT STUART. 1755-1828



A MIDDAY DREAM

GUSTAVE COURBET

he tried in vain to get admission to the official exhibitions in the "Salon." Finally in 1844 one of his pictures, a self-portrait with a dog, was accepted — without receiving, however, particular admiration from the critics. In the following year also his art failed to get any official recognition. Only in 1849 did he succeed in exhibiting, together with some other paintings, our picture (painted in 1845) under the title, *Baigneuse endormie*.

The success was sensational, and the artist was distinguished with the second medal. In the following year (1850) his large size picture *L'enterrement à Ornans* (*The Funeral*), which is now generally regarded as his master work, started a real riot by the choice and conception of the motive and the bold realism of the execution. Enthusiasm on one side and furious attacks on the other were the consequences. The struggle about and against the artist

continued during all the following years. Courbet found more appreciation in Germany, where he held exhibitions of his works. In 1855 in the International Exhibition in Paris he showed forty of his paintings (among them *L'Atelier*) in a pavilion he had built at his own expense. He succeeded at least that his name was in everyone's mouth. But in his reckless and belligerent way, blaming the government and deriding the juries, he did not even mind offending his best friends, thus losing more and more of them. During the fifties he spent several years in Germany creating there also enthusiasm as well as lively opposition. During these years he did most of his celebrated hunting pieces, he himself being a passionate hunter. In the war of 1870-1871 his political radicalism caused new trouble for him. As President of the Commission for the preservation of national art treasures he made the proposition to pull down the Vendôme column which he said was a valueless and unworthy monument. The column was really removed in 1871. Because of his participation in the communist revolution he was put in jail for six months. Afterwards he left Paris, going abroad. Returned to Paris, he found himself entirely ostracized socially as well as artistically. Even the very few friends who remained faithful to him were not able to help him. Finally in 1875, sentenced to pay the expenditures of several hundred thousand francs for the restoration of the Vendôme column, he fled to Switzerland, where he died in 1877 in La Tour de Peilz near Vevéy. Little by little the wave of indignation over his sacrilege to the national monument calmed down and in the early eighties his art found progressive recognition in France and elsewhere.

As we have said, Courbet deserves more than any other artist in French painting the attribute of revolutionist. The effort of opposing a centuries old tradition of classic art, as that of France, may explain his wild and impetuous behaviour. Some other French artists, even previous to him, had developed similar theories; but while their tendencies were more or less preconceived and deliberate, this "grande

peintre bête" was instinctive and spontaneous. In his scenes of contemporary life Courbet was absolutely true to himself. One feels the great and unintellectual love this peasant had for his subjects. And this artist who called himself a realist trying to imitate literally what he saw with his eyes became very often a poet without being conscious of it. He painted all kinds of average people and nature but he could not help heightening them to representative types. Vulgarity changed under his hands to power and greatness. Courbet had the instinct for grandeur. Furthermore, the craftsmanship of his painting, the splendor of his coloring, and the vigor of his brush strokes, are so extraordinary that we can easily forget not only the silly mistakes of his life but the sometimes brutal triviality of his subjects as well.

Courbet's artistic influence was, as we mentioned, immense. Not only in France, where more or less the entire school of impressionism—even Cézanne in his early "dark" still lifes—stands on his shoulders, but also in America, Germany, Belgium and Holland many of the leading masters of the latter half of the century owe much of their work to him. Among the American artists Whistler especially was greatly influenced by Courbet's art.

Our picture, which has been published many times in books and special articles on Courbet, is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful works by the master. Although being comparatively early it shows already all of the characteristics of his great art. Sufficient to observe the way the relaxed right arm of the woman is painted. And in his light and splendid color scheme, somewhat influenced by the Flemish seventeenth century, it might perhaps appeal more to modern taste than the graver and darker works of the later period. Courbet called the picture, as we saw, *Bathing Woman Fallen Asleep*. He simply wanted to imitate his model in a very realistic and almost trivial position; but he could not help giving to this woman something of the greatness of the very greatest, of Michelangelo, because he too was a genius.