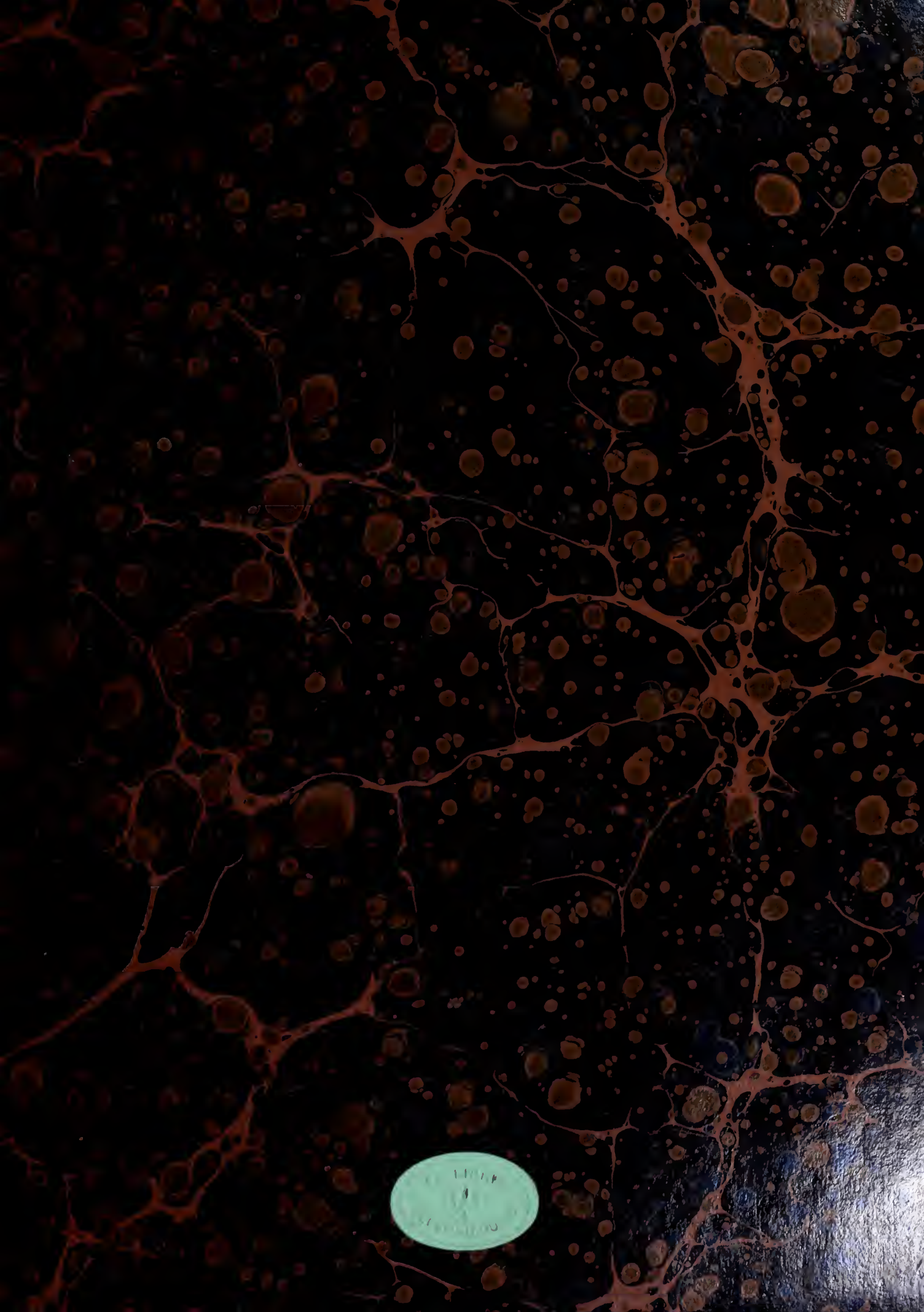




Sir. John
Martin Harvey Kt



— 17.0

RUBENS



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RUBENS

BY

MAX ROOSES

KEEPER OF THE PLANTIN-MORETUS MUSEUM, ANTWERP, AUTHOR OF ŒUVRE DE RUBENS, ETC. ETC
AND JOINT EDITOR OF THE CORRESPONDANCE DE RUBENS AND BULLETIN RUBENS

TRANSLATED BY HAROLD CHILD

ILLUSTRATED BY OVER 350 REPRODUCTIONS OF RUBENS'S WORKS,
INCLUDING 70 FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS IN HELIOGRAVURE AND FACSIMILE

VOLUME II



LONDON: DUCKWORTH & CO
3, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W. C.

1904

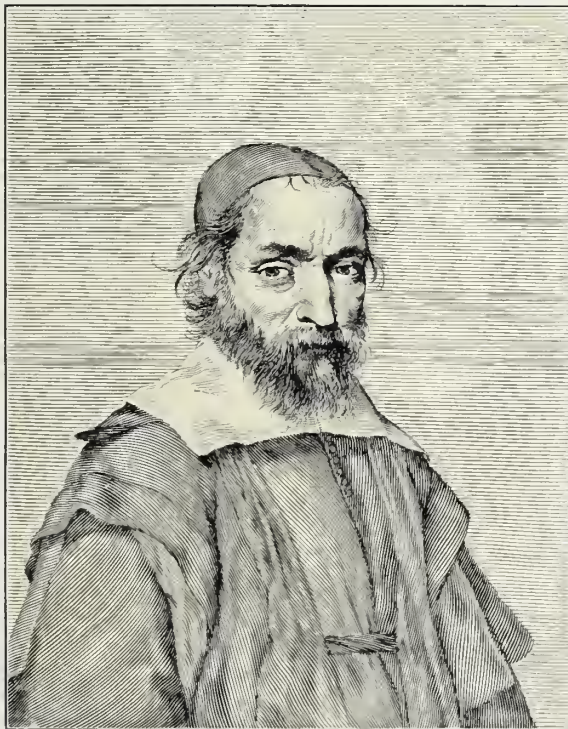


DIANA HUNTING THE STAG (Museum, Berlin)

CHAPTER VI

THE PERIOD OF THE MEDICI GALLERY
1622-1625

RUBENS AND PEIRESC. — THE MEDICI GALLERY. — RUBENS'S WORKS IN PARIS. — THE HISTORY OF THE EMPEROR CONSTANTINE. — ALTAR-PIECES. — MYTHOLOGICAL PICTURES. — HISTORICAL PICTURES. — PORTRAITS. — FRONTISPIECES TO BOOKS. — RUBENS'S ENTRY INTO POLITICS. — RUBENS AND SPINOLA. — RUBENS ENNOBLED.



NICOLAS CLAUDE FABRI DE PEIRESC.
After the engraving by Claude Mellan.

RUBENS AND PEIRESC. — In 1619, when Rubens thought of obtaining copyright in France for his engravings, he approached Gaspar Gevartius, with whom he had formed friendly relations that same year, or possibly earlier. After finishing his literary studies at Louvain, Gevartius had gone to Holland, where he entered the service of the French Ambassador, Benjamin Aubery. In 1617, at the age of twenty-four years, he went to Paris where he became the guest and friend of the president of parliament, Henri de Mesmes, in whose staff he made the acquaintance of Peiresc and other men of influence. In 1619 he returned to Antwerp, where, however, he did not stay long, for in 1620 he went to live at Louvain, to study law, and in the following year he obtained at Douai the title of doctor of law, *honoris causa*; on the 7th September, 1621, he was

appointed town-clerk of Antwerp, an office which he held till 1662; he died in 1666. We have already said that he was one of Rubens's most intimate friends. When Rubens asked him to obtain a licence for his engravings in France, Gevartius wrote to Peiresc to request his intervention, and on the 25th October, 1619, the French juriconsult informed him that he had obtained the licence, and was sending it him. At the same time he asked Gevartius to put him into communication with Rubens, for whom, he assured him, he had the highest esteem.



THE SHEPHERDESS OFFERING AN EGG
Drawing (Albertina, Vienna).

Gevartius complied with his wish, and thus there came into being between two of the most eminent men of their century, a friendship which soon became very close and was only to be ended by the death of one of them. Gevartius had the abilities and accomplishments that were most valued at that time; he was a great latinist; he was acquainted with antiquity, its annals and its customs. Further, he had studied the history of more recent epochs and obtained the title of historiographer to the King of Spain and the Emperor of Germany. He belonged to the school of Justus Lipsius, though he had not attended his lectures. At Paris, therefore, he felt drawn towards Peiresc, who in turn had formed an affection for him.

Nicolas Claude Fabri de Peiresc was three years younger than Rubens; he was born at Beaugensier in Provence, on the 1st December, 1580. His family was of great consideration in that country, and his father was councillor of the Court of Aids at Aix. After concluding his Latin

studies in his native country, he went in 1599 to Italy to study law at the University of Padua, but also with the secret wish to become acquainted with the remnants of antiquity. In 1602 he returned to Provence, where two years later he obtained the title of doctor. In 1605 he set out for Paris and visited England in 1606. He returned to Aix through Holland and Flanders. One of his uncles having resigned his post of legal adviser to the parliament, he succeeded to the office, which he held till the close of his life. In 1616 he returned to Paris, where on this occasion he spent seven years. There it was that he entered into correspondence with Rubens; and there also that he met the great artist in 1622. On the 18th August, 1623, he returned to Provence, where he died on the 24th June, 1637.

Peiresc devoted himself ardently to all the sciences. He was not only interested, as the

fashion of those days was, in antiquity, its art, institutions, and history, but also in all positive knowledge. He profited by his travels in Italy, England, and the Netherlands to form acquaintance with the principal men of letters of those countries. He employed his means in collecting everything that could be of any use to him in his studies, or to those who cultivated the sciences; he devoted his time to maintaining with the learned of all lands a correspondence, the extent of which is almost fabulous, not only for the number of letters written but for the matters they treated of. He remained indifferent or unacquainted with nothing that he thought worth knowing. He was one of the greatest collectors as well as the most distinguished



SACRED CONVERSAZIONE - Sketch.

authorities on antique coins and engraved stones, and he never let slip an opportunity of increasing his collections and extending his knowledge of these subjects. He was no less interested in antique statues and Latin, Greek, and Oriental inscriptions. He had agents in Asia and Egypt who procured him anything that might be useful to him: works of art, ancient writings, books, coins, and exotic animals and plants. His house at Aix was a library, a museum, and an observatory. He maintained in it an engraver, a sculptor, a binder, and a copyist to help him in keeping his treasures as well as transcribing his letters and manuscripts.

No learned publications of any importance were undertaken without his lending the authors the help of his information; and he brought to notice a number of plants and animals till then unknown in Europe. He displayed equal activity as an astronomer and a naturalist, and was

responsible for experiments and discoveries of all sorts. He wrote but little himself, but he was the man of scholarship and erudition, whom everyone knew and consulted, the factotum of letters and sciences, as Bayle calls him.

When Gevartius asked him for his help in obtaining the licence, Rubens was not altogether unknown to him; he had heard tell of his antiquities and no doubt knew that Dudley Carleton's marbles had recently gone to enrich his collection. He had heard tell also of the painter's extraordinary abilities. In fact, in one of his first letters, he says to Rubens: « You have reached the summit of the noble art you cultivate; you surpass all the » painters of this century; I will not say, of all centuries, for fear of hurting your modesty, » but I am convinced that you are the equal of the most excellent masters » (1). Desirous as he was of extending his acquaintance and forming relations with men of merit, he was not slow in getting Gevartius to introduce him to Rubens. On the 18th January, 1620, he had received the catalogue of the Antwerp painter's collection, and in the letter which he wrote on the same day to Gevartius he expressed a wish to see it, and be allowed to make a sketch of the marble busts of Cicero, Seneca and Chrysippus, which formed part of it. Rubens replied through Gevartius that he would draw the busts himself for Peiresc. Gevartius had praised to the French scholar the cabinet of antiquities of the Duke of Aerschot, which was about to be sold; Peiresc replied that he had seen it in 1606 and spent ten days there. He had heard that Rubens had bought the whole of it, or at least had obtained the most important items. This was not absolutely true: Nicolas Rockox had undertaken the sale, but Rubens helped him. In May, 1623, when he arrived in Paris, he brought with him some of the duke's coins, which he sold to Peiresc and other French collectors.

In 1620 Peiresc had discovered in the Sainte Chapelle at Paris one of the finest engraved stones of antiquity, almost the most beautiful of all, the « Apotheosis of Augustus », which represented in reality the « Campaign of Germanicus in the East ». He had an imprint, lacking in clearness, of a second cameo, the « Triumph of Tiberius and Germanicus », which was then at Vienna, where it still remains. Rubens had a drawing of it, of which Peiresc wanted a copy. At the same time, the French scholar manifested the intention of having the two master-pieces engraved and published, with the addition of an explanation written by himself. The first letters exchanged between Rubens and Peiresc treat of these two cameos, their explanation, and the publication of a reproduction of them. Peiresc's first letter was in French; Rubens must have answered him in Italian, for the scholar's next letter is written in that language, in which the correspondence was continued. Rubens says somewhere that he writes French with difficulty, but the letters of his in that language, which we have, show that he knew it perfectly; however, he wrote Italian with greater facility and preferred to use it.

When Rubens heard of Peiresc's intention to have the two cameos engraved, he immediately replied that he also had formed a plan to engrave and publish the stones in his own collection.

(1) *Correspondance de Rubens*. Letter from Peiresc to Rubens of the 23rd December, 1621.



HEAD OF A YOUNG WOMAN
(Albertina, Vienna)

... He wrote that while visiting that he was ...

... Rubens was not ... He had heard tell that ...

... I will not say of all ... He was ...

... At the same time, the ...

... He had ...

HEAD OF A YOUNG WOMAN (Albertina, Vienna)



Thereupon, Peiresc declared himself disposed to give up the project of having the two celebrated cameos reproduced, and to help Rubens to make a publication of greater scope, which should include, besides his own stones, the most remarkable of those to be found elsewhere. Rubens began to carry out the work, in which he was helped not only by Peiresc but also by the Cavaliere del Pozzo. He had two plates engraved by Lucas Vorsterman, one comprising the heads of Germanicus and Caius Cæsar, two grandsons of Augustus, and of Solon and Socrates; the other, the heads of Plato, Nicias, Pallas, and Alexander the Great. Another engraver, probably Nicolas Ryckemans, engraved the two large cameos of Germanicus and Tiberius, as well as the triumph of Claudius and Messalina, the triumph of Licinius, Agrippina and her two children, and a series of six heads on a single plate, among which were Germanicus, Caius Cæsar, and Solon, already engraved by Vorsterman (*Œuvre*. Nos 1220-1228). No more were engraved, and the projected work was not carried out. The plates appeared later under the title of *Varie figurei de Agati Antique*, with a frontispiece engraved by Peter De Jode after a picture by Rubens, now lost, the « Good Government » (*Œuvre*. No 823).

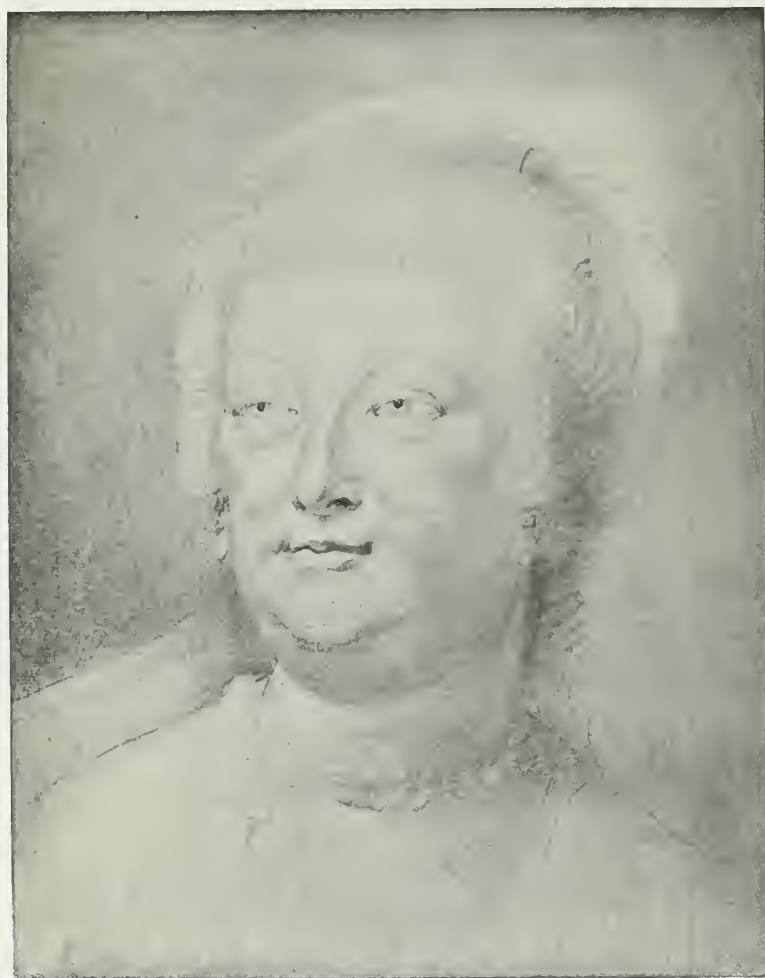
This plan probably led on to the publication of another series of engravings after antique sculptures, representing the heads of twelve celebrated philosophers, generals, and emperors of Greece and Rome (*Œuvre*. Nos 1208-1219). Rubens made grisailles after the marbles he had seen at Rockox's and elsewhere; he had four of them engraved by Lucas Vorsterman, who worked for him from 1617 to 1620; five by Pontius, two by Witdoeck, and one by Boëtius a Bolswert. Nine of these twelve plates are dated 1638, the five by Pontius, the two by Witdoeck and two of Vorsterman's. The four, or at any rate the three undated Vorstermans and the Boëtius a Bolswert, had probably been engraved eighteen years before. Peiresc, indeed, wrote to Aleandro on the 10th May, 1624: « Rubens has already had fifteen of the finest » cameos engraved on copper, and he sees no obstacle to adding a few marble busts, among » others that of Demosthenes with the hair cut short on one side of the head and very long » on the other, and with an inscription in Greek ». We have lately seen two of these grisailles, one representing « Scipio Africanus » in the collection of M. C. Hoogendijk at The Hague, lightly and rapidly executed, and the other, « Seneca », which is far more worked upon; it was bought in 1900 by the Plantin-Moretus Museum. The latter of the two seems to have been made much earlier after the marble in Rubens's possession; the former on the other hand must date from the master's last years, probably from 1638, when he had the busts engraved.

In his letter to Rubens of the 26th November, 1621, Peiresc says: « If you carry out your » projected travels, and with all my heart I conjure you to do so, I will show you the cameo » from the Sainte Chapelle, which you can then examine at leisure ». Rubens, therefore, had told him that he might be going to Paris, without mentioning his object. Peiresc learned it from a third person, and in his letter of the 23rd December, 1621, he says that he had heard that Rubens was going to France at the request of Marie de Medici, who had urged him to come and enrich her new palace with some pictures by his hand.

THE MEDICI GALLERY. — This, then, is the first mention of one of Rubens's most important works.

The ex-Queen of France, the Queen-mother as she was called, had a stirring past behind

her. She was the daughter of Francesco II, Grand-Duke of Tuscany, and Johanna, archduchess of Austria; in December, 1600, she married the greatest of the kings of France, Henri IV, who had divorced Marguerite de Valois because she bore him no children. Not a year had elapsed before Marie bore him a son who later became king under the name of Louis XIII. She was a woman of imposing beauty, but hateful character. During her husband's life-time, discord and quarrels reigned in the royal household; Henri IV, the *vert galant*, had always been



MARIE DE MEDICI — Drawing (Louvre, Paris)

passionately fond of women, and after his second marriage, as after his first, he did not fail to keep mistresses publicly. Marie de Medici was not the woman to bring him back into exemplary courses; her character on one hand and her husband's libertine conduct on the other, made their marriage a hell. She was extravagant and squandered enormous sums on the unworthy favourite she had brought from Florence, Eleonora Galigai, the daughter of her nurse and later her woman of the bed-chamber, who exercised an unbounded influence over her, and whose husband, Concini, she raised to the rank of a Marshal of France, under the name of the *Maréchal d'Ancre*. Ambitious to the highest degree, the queen had yet no talent for directing

the affairs of state; she sought the support of those who seconded her evil inclinations, and made enemies of the men who might have assured her peace in private life and esteem in the country. The assassination of the king in 1610 left her unmoved, so much so that she was suspected, though unjustly, it is true, of having had a hand in the crime. She thought of nothing but of securing her own rule; had herself proclaimed Regent of the kingdom and held the reins of power during the minority of her son. When Louis XIII came of age in 1614, the same life of discord that she had passed with her husband began anew between mother and son; but since Louis's character was feebler and Marie had succeeded in forming a party in the kingdom, their quarrels became more fatal to the State and to themselves. In 1617 the favourite, Concini,

was assassinated by order of Louis XIII. Soon afterwards Eleonora Galigai was condemned to death and burned alive, and Charles d'Albert, afterwards Duc de Luynes, to whom the king had given all the Concinis' appointments, and to whom he extended his entire favour, succeeded in persuading him to keep Marie de Medici a prisoner in her apartments. She demanded audience of the king; he refused it, declaring that he meant to reign alone. She found herself compelled to ask permission to leave the court and retire to Blois. She left on the 5th May, 1617. On the 21st February, 1619, she escaped from Blois, and with the assistance of the Duc d'Épernon, went to Angoulême. The deplorable state to which she was reduced, and the loss of her power and influence, roused pity in the country; Louis XIII himself was moved, and in 1619 a reconciliation took place between mother and son. It was not long before another quarrel broke out between them. Marie de Medici went to Anjou, and there raised a small army which took up a hostile position in front of that of the king. They met in battle at Pont-de-Cé. The struggle was at its acutest point when the Abbé de Luçon, later Cardinal Richelieu, intervened and negotiated an arrangement between mother and son, which was signed on the 16th August, 1620, at Brissac. Marie de Medici, reinstated in her honours and dignities, returned to Paris, and when the Duc de Luynes died on the 14th December, 1621, she again occupied the post of president of the council. She then had Richelieu under her protection, hoping to rule through him, and never suspecting that instead of a subservient instrument she would find him a stubborn adversary and a pitiless master. That she was only to learn later, in 1626.

It was in the course of the six years that lay between the reconciliation of the queen and her son and her rupture with the all-powerful minister, that Rubens came into connection with Marie de Medici. Those years were possibly the happiest of her life, and the favourable change that her destiny had undergone permitted her to take an active interest in works of art, for which, like a true Medici, she lacked neither taste nor ability. This is proved by the fact that in her youth she made a wood-cut of the bust of a Roman lady, on which she put the inscription: *Maria Medici a 1587*. A proof of this cut she presented to Philippe de Champagne, who wrote upon it with much enthusiasm: "On Friday the 22nd February, 1629, the Queen-Mother judged me worthy of this rare present made by her own hand ».

Two years after the death of Henri IV, his widow had conceived the plan of building herself a more commodious palace than the Louvre, in which she was then living. She bought the *hôtel* that had been built in the Rue de Vaurigard, on the left bank of the Seine, about the middle of the sixteenth century by Robert Harlay de Sancy. In 1564 it had become the property of his widow, and had since belonged to the Duc de Piney-Luxembourg, whence it took the name it kept after the queen had pulled down the existing building, and still keeps to-day. The purchase of the house and its appurtenances, and of some adjoining portions of property, took place on the 2nd April, 1612. In the following year the Queen bought more land, and could begin to think of building her palace. The site was far from being as extensive as the grounds now occupied by the Jardin du Luxembourg; it was increased by half in 1796 by the Republican government.

After pulling down all the existing buildings, the queen ordered the architect Salomon de Brosse to build her new residence. The work was pushed forward actively, and was finished

in 1620. The street front of the palace was composed of a central block with two projecting storeys and surmounted by a cupola; at either end stood a three-storeyed pavilion connected with the central building by a low gallery. Behind this main building lay an inner court, rectangular in shape, on the further side of which rose the principal building, consisting of



THE DESTINY OF MARIE DE MEDICI
(Louvre, Paris).

three storeys with a central fore-part and two lateral pavilions. The two main blocks were joined by two-storeyed wings. The upper storey was occupied by the galleries which Marie de Medici wished to have decorated with paintings by the hand of Rubens. The whole palace formed a rectangle measuring 130 yards deep and 108 yards along the front. The outside remains to this day almost what it formerly was; but most of the statues which Marie de Medici put there have disappeared in the course of time. The queen occupied the main block on the far side of the courtyard. Her private apartments lay on the right and adjoined the gallery on the same side, which was that for which Rubens was to paint his first series of pictures, representing the « History of Marie de Medici ». The artist had a great admiration for the building. In the introduction he wrote for his *Palaces of Genoa* he calls it, « the very famous palace built by the queen-mother of France in the suburb of Saint-Germain ».

How the queen came to conceive the idea of entrusting the important task to Rubens is not stated. We can understand why she gave the commission to none of the French painters. Simon Vouet, the most remarkable of them, was an imitator of Caravaggio and belonged to the school of the naturalists who aimed rather at rendering truth, as they saw it, with rude energy than at painting pictures to charm the eye by the richness of their colour and the brilliance of their light. Nicolas Poussin was still young and almost unknown, and he only came to Paris in 1623. Among the rest there was no historical painter of any merit. There

was no dearth of them, indeed, in Italy. The second generation of the school of Bologna was still living: Guido Reni, Francesco Albani, Domenico Zampieri, Giovanni Lanfranco and Guercino, to name only the chief of them, were at the height of their vogue and enjoyed great reputation beyond the Alps. It cannot be doubted that Marie de Medici thought of these artists, her compatriots, compared them with Rubens and gave the preference to the Flemish

painter. It has been claimed that the queen chose Rubens on the advice of Baron Henri de Vicq, then the Archdukes' ambassador to the French government. But this statement rests on no proof, and it is more probable that the diplomat acted simply as intermediary. Marie de Medici maintained the most friendly relations with the Archduchess Isabella, who set great store by Rubens's genius and had become his patron. It is natural and probable that the queen had informed the Infanta of her wish to find an able painter and asked her opinion of Rubens; that the Infanta's opinion was as favourable as possible, and that the queen took her decision in consequence of it. One *Sieur Nardi*, who bore the title of arch-priest and was a member of Marie de Medici's suite, went at her orders to visit Rubens and treat with him about the work to be done; but there his powers ended and people of more distinguished station conducted the later negotiations.

In November, 1621, it had already been decided that Rubens was to go to Paris, and there come to an agreement with Marie de Medici on the great work to be done. He started early in January, 1622, and stopped at Brussels, where he visited the Archduchess. She handed him a little dog and a necklace ornamented with twenty-four enamelled plaques, to be presented to the queen (1), which clearly proves that Isabella had a hand in the affair of the paintings. On the 11th January Rubens was in Paris, as Peiresc wrote to his friend Aleandro. As the journey from Brussels to Paris usually took from three to four days and Rubens was still in Brussels at the beginning of January, on the 11th of that month he can only lately have arrived. He remained in Paris till the 26th February, as we learn from the letters written on that date by Peiresc to the Nuncio Guidi da Bagni at Brussels, and by Gevartius to Rockox, who sent his letter to Rubens. On the day of his departure Rubens and the queen subsigned the contract concerning the paintings for the two galleries. It had been agreed between the queen and the artist that he should execute them for a sum of 20,000 crowns or 60,000 francs, equivalent to about



THE TRIUMPH OF TRUTH
(Louvre, Paris).

(1) To the Queen-Mother, by Rubens, a small bitch and a necklace with twenty-four enamelled plaques (*Compte des dépenses de l'Infante. Janvier 1622*). A. CASTAN : *Les Origines et la date du St.-Ildefonse de Rubens*. p. 75.

180,000 francs (£7,200) in modern money. In one of the galleries he was to represent « The History of Marie de Medici » and in the other that of Henri IV. He was to begin with the former, do what he could of it at home, and return when he had painted eight or ten pictures. We are convinced that Rubens received the order for the Medici gallery with enthusiasm and that he set to work full of courage and confidence in himself. On the 13th September, 1621, a few months, even a few weeks, before he was bidden to Paris, he wrote to William Trumbull : « Everyone has his special grace : my talent is such that no enterprise, however vast in quantity and diversity of subjects, ever conquered my courage ». In this case, indeed, the task was immense, and calculated to spur on the genius of this inexhaustible creator. He had to paint the lives of two royal persons passed in the midst of the most brilliant court of the time ; to decorate the most splendid palace with an innumerable series of compositions, and to recall to being episodes of dazzling magnificence, scenes of war and peace, and events in family and in public life : for him it was the realisation of a mighty dream.

During his six weeks' stay in Paris at the beginning of 1622, Rubens had the opportunity of making the personal acquaintance of Peiresc ; it is needless to say that they very soon formed a friendship and profited by the occasion to see each other often and converse on all sorts of subjects. Peiresc was an obliging and most agreeable man ; in every respect he was a distinguished representative of the courtesy that reigned in the centres of cultured refinement, as it was then to be found in France and Italy, though it may appear now-a-days a little exaggerated in its flattering style. But making every allowance for his habitual urbanity, the store he set by his new friend is none the less striking. He tells all his correspondents that it was an inexpressible pleasure to him to be able to converse with a man so richly endowed ; to the Nuncio, Guidi da Bagni, he celebrates his rare erudition ; to Gevartius he praises « his integrity, his eminent virtues, his profound erudition and wonderful knowledge of antiquity, his rare management of worldly affairs and the great sweetness of his conversation » ; he assures Rockox that he had learned more about antiquity from talking to Rubens than in ten years by any other means ; to Aleandro he declares that Rubens's manner was so agreeable that it would be impossible to find a more charming man in the world ; on the 17th March, 1625, he wrote to his brother Valavez in connection with the attempt he was thinking of making to induce Rubens to settle in Paris : « I much regret not being at court myself to set that circle to work a little on the attempt to profit by the opportunity and keep this pearl of honour in France, for I hold that there is no more lovable soul in the world than that of M. Rubens ».

Rubens felt no less attracted towards a man who had travelled much and seen much, who was interested in everything, was ignorant of nothing, and knew everyone. With him he could discuss the subjects that interested them both, Roman antiquities, statues, engraved stones, the literature of the past and the present, his own art and the art of the Italians. We know that they did not fail to do so, and that Rubens's esteem for Peiresc was as great as Peiresc's for Rubens. At their first meeting, the two friends talked much about antiquities and especially coins ; the sale of the Duke of Aerschot's collection, which Rockox had undertaken, was introduced. Rubens had brought some prints of his own engraved stones, and Peiresc gave

him impressions of the great cameos of Paris and Vienna; the two collectors made expeditions in search of anything that might interest them for their collections, and Rubens bought thirty cameos from a dealer in antiquities. In these first meetings, they talked of the political situation of the two countries; Peiresc was less interested, perhaps, in the artifices of politics and the frivolity of worldly affairs than in science; but he was too greedy for knowledge and too intimately connected with statesmen and the leaders of high society not to be well informed on all that was going on. Rubens, for his part, was too fond of concerning himself with public affairs at home and abroad to lose the opportunity of an exchange of ideas on the subject with Peiresc.

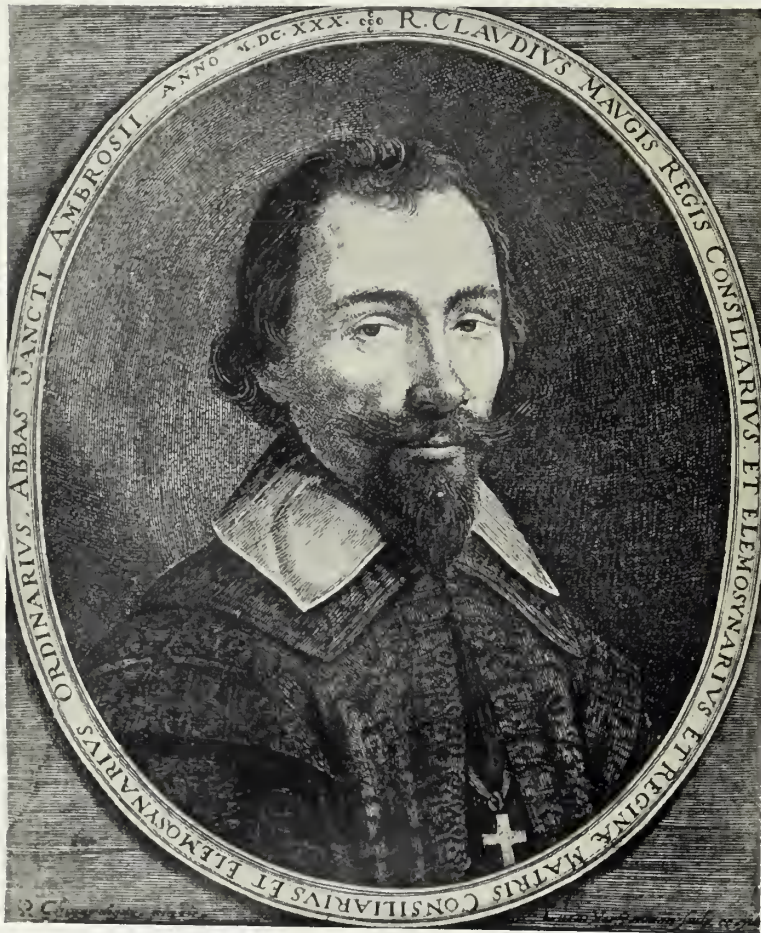
They naturally discussed also the paintings ordered for the decoration of the new palace, so that these two cultivated men had no lack of topics for their conversations. Those conversations continued even after Rubens's departure. In March, 1622, a correspondence began between them which was to last for many years. So long as Peiresc remained in Paris, that is until the 18th August, 1624, they wrote every week. When he returned to Provence, the letters became less frequent, but in December, 1624, Peiresc's brother Valavez took his place as Rubens's regular Paris correspondent. In April, 1626, he gave up the post in turn to Pierre Dupuy, advocate and librarian to the king, one of the most learned men of his time, with whom Rubens kept up a regular correspondence until the moment when he undertook his diplomatic mission into Spain. This correspondence was something of the nature of a weekly review, regularly exchanged between Paris and Antwerp, and probably communicated by each contributor to his friends.

From 1622 to 1625 the letters of Peiresc and Rubens treat of the productions of ancient art, in which both were passionately interested, the pictures of the Italian masters, the cameos bought for Rubens in Paris by Peiresc, the chief events of the day, their family life, and the subject which was then of especial interest to Rubens, the paintings for the Medici Gallery. While Peiresc remained in Paris he gave Rubens all the help in his power, championing his interests and his ideas with the queen and her agents, looking with him into the subjects which were suitable and the places they were to occupy, obtaining him the necessary measurements and the portraits of princes and nobles who were to appear in the compositions, and all the necessary information on the dress of the characters, the appearance of certain places, and the changes to be introduced into the lighting of the gallery, which had been still unfinished when Rubens began his paintings. For his part Rubens undertook all sorts of commissions for Peiresc; sent him books, instruments and other things that could not be had in France, and exchanged impressions of the engraved stones belonging to their collections.

The correspondence Rubens continued to carry on after Peiresc's departure, first with Valavez and then for a longer period with Dupuy, was less intimate in character; politics, with which our artist became more and more occupied, took the first place, and art and collecting are less prominent; but the painter and the librarian continued to attach great importance to letters and scholarship. As soon as a book worth reading appeared, Dupuy sent it to Rubens; Rubens often wrote what he thought of it, and in his turn sent from Antwerp the books people were interested in in Paris. The correspondence of these two enlightened men sending each other information on all that could be of interest to a scholar, an artist, and a statesman,

comprises the years 1626, 1627 and 1628. No better proof could be given of Rubens's wide and penetrating intellect, of the extent of his knowledge and the universality of his interest, than the letters written weekly throughout those three years. And while many of them have been lost, the greater number have fortunately been preserved.

Among the acquaintances Rubens made in Paris, we must mention one whose patronage



CLAUDE MAUGIS

Engraved after the picture by Philippe de Champagne.

never failed him, Claude Maugis, abbé of Saint-Ambroise, a friend of Peiresc's and treasurer to the queen, to whom he also acted as adviser in artistic matters. He himself was a collector of engravings and pictures, and set great store by Rubens. He took some trouble to have the Antwerp master commissioned for the work, openly declaring that he was the only man in Europe capable of carrying it through successfully, and adding that the Italian painters could not accomplish in ten years what Rubens promised to do in four. These bold statements won him the enmity of all the French painters, which did not trouble him in the least.

The future Cardinal Richelieu was also well disposed towards Rubens, and

arranged the whole matter with Claude Maugis. The artistic world of Paris was disturbed by the preference given to a foreigner, but their rage was powerless. Their discontent and their intrigues did not fail to come to the ears of the queen, but she held to her choice, and threatened the chief instigator of the malcontents, the arch-priest Nardi, who could not forgive his own exclusion from the negotiations, with a hundred strokes if he did not quickly hold his tongue and be gone. But the French painters persisted in their hostility. When Rubens had delivered his first pictures they made underhand attempts to disparage them and have them refused. But in this they succeeded no better. Claude Maugis vigorously defended Rubens, and the queen declared that she was not going to be influenced by any of these machinations,

that she was pleased with the work and intended all the world to look upon the matter as settled; she threatened to disgrace anyone, who should dare to say anything against it.

As soon as Rubens had returned home and had the time, he set to work. He had not been able to take the exact measurements of the pictures he had to deliver, and Peiresc and

Maugis accordingly set about obtaining them from the architect de Brosse. On the 8th April, 1622, Peiresc was able to send the dimensions of the general run of the pictures. All the panels were of equal height and measured 11 ft. 11 1/2 in.; the eight panels that were to go between the windows on the left, were all equal in width and measured about 9 ft.; on the opposite side, between the windows that looked out over the inner court, they were one inch wider, because the wall was not so thick on that side and the bay of the windows was narrower. As the foot differed at that time in one country and even one town and another, Peiresc took the precaution of sending Rubens the exact length of the Paris foot in a piece of cloth that had been deprived



HENRI IV STARTS FOR THE WAR AND ENTRUSTS THE GOVERNMENT OF THE KINGDOM TO THE QUEEN (Louvre, Paris).

of its elasticity. He was to inform him later of the width of the other panels.

At the same time, the position of the different pictures was indicated. The series was to begin at the entrance of the hall on the side of the door by which the queen passed from her apartments into the gallery, that is, on the left going from the hinder block to the front block of the palace. Between the entrance to the gallery and the first outer window there was a narrow wall-space; further on, between the windows, the eight spaces were each 9 ft. wide; between the last window and the wall at the end of the room was to stand one of the three large canvases, each at least 23 ft. long; the second was to go along the wall, and the third between the wall and the first window on the courtyard side. Between the nine windows opening over the courtyard were the sites reserved for the eight following pictures; and finally a narrower

picture was to occupy the wall-space between the last window and the wall on the same side as the entrance. The fire-place, flanked by two doors, occupied the centre of this wall. Above the chimney-piece was to go the portrait of Marie de Medici, and over the doors those of her parents Francesco de Medici and Johanna of Austria. Altogether, therefore, there were 21 historical pictures and 3 portraits to be painted (*Œuvre*. Nos 730-754).

The subjects taken from the history of Marie de Medici were to follow each other in chronological order; and the choice of them gave rise to long negotiations between Rubens and Peiresc, who more than once acted as the interpreter of the wishes of the queen and Claude Maugis. We can well understand that the selection gave rise to difficulties of a peculiar kind. The life of Marie of Medici, stormy though it was, might be summed up in a few words; she was born, married, had children, and quarrelled with her husband and son. Quarrels and reconciliations followed one another until her exile came to put an end to the domestic discords and civil wars she had provoked. A historical painter would find it difficult to be commissioned for a more insignificant and thankless subject. There was nothing noble in the queen's heart, nothing brilliant in her reign. All the notable and interesting events of it were actions inspired by egotism, hatred and discord, and equally devoid of grandeur in their causes and their effects; actions over which it would have been better to cast the veil of oblivion, than to bring them into full light and glorify them by works of art. And the artist had to make his choice from this royal life devoid of human worth, this career loaded with honours but destitute of honour or merit. Fortunately for him, it was a life surrounded by material luxury and splendour, and these manifestations of a purely external brilliance he confined himself to reproducing.

The arrangement the queen first wished to settle upon was as follows: the first picture was to represent the Birth of Marie de Medici; the second, her Education; the third, Henri IV receiving her portrait; the fourth, the Provisional Marriage; the fifth, her Arrival at Marseilles; the sixth, her Arrival at Lyons; the seventh, the Birth of the Dauphin; the eighth, the Coronation; the ninth, the Death of Henri IV and the Regency of the Queen; the tenth, the Taking of Juliers; the eleventh, the Peace of the Regency; the twelfth, the Council of the Gods, or « the queen receiving the decision of the gods relative to the marriage of her two children »; the thirteenth the Marriage of the King, or Louis XIII receiving his wife in the presence of the Queen-Mother; the fourteenth, the Marriage of the Queen of Spain, Marie de Medici's daughter. At least four panels were to be left empty for the present, and the series was to be closed by the Resignation of the Government into the hands of Louis XIII. At the beginning of July Rubens had sent detailed propositions for the filling of the four empty panels and a substitute for a fifth subject that had been struck out; on the 26th August, 1622, Peiresc asked him in the queen's name to choose the following subjects: the Departure from Paris after the death of the maréchal d'Ancre; the Departure from Blois; the Treaty of Angoulême; the Taking up arms before Pont-de-Cé; and the Reconciliation of the queen with her son after the death of the maréchal d'Ancre. Peiresc also proposed as possible subjects: the Entry into Paris, and the King setting out for the war and placing the power in the hands of the Queen. The last of these subjects only was approved. Rubens, for his part, had recommended one with considerable warmth; it is called the *Flamen* (the Roman priest of Jupiter, Mars, and Romulus) and was probably the same as the Queen on the point of learning the resolution

of the gods touching the marriage of her Children ». The subject was not accepted, but as Rubens was anxious to paint a mythological subject, he proposed a Council of the gods before the campaign of Juliers; the military episode was not commemorated, but the Council of the gods did for the picture devoted to the « Government of the Queen ». The Queen's Departure from Paris was chosen for one of the panels still vacant; Rubens made a sketch for this subject which is now in the Pinakothek at Munich. It was finally rejected, however, because of the painful recollections it aroused.

Of the subjects mentioned above they ruled out also the « Taking of Juliers » which was nevertheless the only warlike event that happened during the Regency of Marie de Medici, the « Entry into Paris », and the « Departure from Paris ». The last was replaced by the « Prosperity of the Regency ». Two subjects, the « Marriage of Louis XIII » and the « Marriage of the Queen of Spain » were thrown into one under the title of « The Exchange of Princesses ». Besides the subjects mentioned two others were later selected and painted, the first and last of the series : the « Destiny of Marie de Medici spun by the Fates », and the « Triumph of Truth ». The « Treaty of Angoulême » and the « Reconciliation of the Queen with her son » were painted in three panels : the « Reconciliation of Marie de Medici with her son », the « Conclusion of Peace », and the « Meeting of Marie de Medici and her son ».

Finally the following selection and order were fixed upon. Along the outer wall of the gallery came the first ten pictures : the « Destiny of Marie de Medici », her « Birth », her « Education », « Henri IV receiving her portrait », the « Provisional Marriage », the « Landing at Marseilles », her « Marriage concluded at Lyons », the « Birth of Louis XIII », the « Departure of Henri IV for the War » and the « Coronation of Marie de Medici ». At the end of the hall came the large picture, the « Apotheosis of Henri IV and the Regency of Marie de Medici ». On the side of the inner court also were ten pictures : the « Regency of the Queen », in which Rubens made use of his Council of the gods, the « Journey of the Queen to Pont-de-Cé », the « Exchange of Princesses », the « Prosperity of the Regency », the « Majority of Louis XIII », the « Escape of the Queen from the Castle of Blois », the « Reconciliation of Marie de Medici with her son », the « Conclusion of Peace », the « Meeting of the Queen and the King », and the « Triumph of Truth ». All traces of the disagreements that had existed between the queen and her son were not, therefore, banished from the history of the queen-mother; the Journey to Pont-de-Cé, which ended in the fight between the king's troops and his mother's, and her Escape from the Castle of Blois, were anything but pleasant memories, and it is very difficult to consider the escapade of a queen who is being let down out of a window as an exploit worthy of immortalization. The Reconciliation, the Conclusion of Peace, the Meeting between mother and son, and the Triumph of Truth, recall events rather painful than pleasant.

Rubens had sent his complete plan on the 19th May, 1622. On the following 1st August the queen had approved it with certain modifications. He began by making sketches of the compositions. Claude Maugis was continually pressing Rubens to authorize him to submit these sketches to the queen; the artist resolutely opposed this. Then Maugis insisted that when Rubens came to Paris to put the finished pictures in position, he should bring the studies with him; Peiresc suspected the treasurer of wanting to appropriate these sketches, and the event proved that he had guessed rightly, for they actually became the property of Claude

Maugis, either being presented him by Rubens, or in some other manner. These sketches had been drawn by Rubens on small panels, the colour so thin that it scarcely covered the surface; in general they were treated in pale tones with few effects of light; they differ much both in size and importance. Eight of them are 2 ft. high by 1 ft. 7 in. wide, four of them are 1 ft. 6 in. high and less, another is 2 ft. 4 in. by 1 ft. 6 in., and another 1 ft. 8 in. by 2 ft. 11 in. The two sketches in the Hermitage at St Petersburg, those of the « Marriage of Marie de Medici » and the « Birth of Louis XIII » differ markedly from the rest in size and only measure a fraction under 13 in. by a fraction over 9 in. and a fraction over 12 in. by a fraction under 9 in. For



THE CORONATION OF MARIE DE MEDICI (Louvre, Paris).

two pictures, the « Coronation of Marie de Medici » and the « Apotheosis of Henri IV », Rubens made two sketches, a small one now in the Hermitage at St Petersburg, and a larger one in the Pinakothek at Munich. The sketches for two others, the « Destiny of Marie de Medici » and the « Triumph of Truth », are both on one panel. This double sketch was probably painted after all the others; in its execution to the full scale the composition underwent more important modifications than any of the other subjects. Most of the sketches are now in the Pinakothek at Munich, which has sixteen; the Hermitage at St Petersburg has four; and the Museum at Copenhagen two, those of the parents of Marie de Medici. The sketches for two pictures are not known: the « Birth of Marie de Medici » and the « Reconciliation of the Queen with her son ».

Rubens had received the measurements for the three largest pictures on the 3rd November, 1622. At that date he had already begun the work, and pushed it forward so quickly that by the beginning of February, 1623, he was able to promise to go to Paris at the end of March with the nine first pictures. On the 3rd March he asked Peiresc to have two rooms in the old Luxembourg made ready for him; but as the queen was occupying the whole of that palace,

she offered him rooms in the new building. These, however, were not yet furnished, and Rubens charged Peiresc with the hiring for him of a room in the neighbourhood. Just as he was about to start, his friend informed him that the queen was to set out on the 28th March for Fontainebleau, where she intended to spend some time ; he himself had to go there to take steps in the matter of a forthcoming lawsuit. The artist, therefore, had to postpone his departure. On the 6th May, Cardinal Richelieu informed Claude Maugis that it was the queen's pleasure that Rubens should come to Paris to put the finished pictures in their frames. They were to be temporarily housed in a room in the palace of which Maugis had



THE APOTHEOSIS OF HENRI IV AND THE REGENCY OF MARIE DE MEDICI (Louvre, Paris).

the key, for the queen did not wish them to be seen before the whole series was finished. When informed of this decision by Peiresc, the painter started immediately, and on the 25th May Peiresc wrote to Rockox that Rubens had arrived the day before. On the 29th he wrote in his note-book in large letters, which proves that he regarded it as an important event : ARRIVAL OF M. RUBENS.

The painter spent a good month in Paris ; on the 15th June, 1623, the queen came to see the nine pictures he had brought, and expressed her great satisfaction ; on the following day Richelieu came to examine them and could not weary of admiring them. On the 29th Rubens strapped up his valise, the only luggage he had brought, mounted his horse, and returned to Antwerp, after having taken leave of his friend Peiresc. Peiresc did not remain long in Paris. On the 18th August, 1623, he left for Provence, and passed through Bordeaux, where he took ship to reach his destination by sailing up the Garonne. He wrote twice to Rubens on his journey ; the letters are veritable dissertations on the cameos they had already talked about and the statues Peiresc had discovered in the course of his journey. When he reached home in November, he had two pieces of bad news to send ; his father was seriously ill, and

during his absence of several years part of his collections and notably his most precious coins, all his cameos, to the number of twelve hundred, and a box full of gold rings set with precious stones, had been stolen.

In the correspondence of this period between Peiresc and his Antwerp friend, we find a number of allusions to the report, current in Paris and Rome, of Rubens's death. In July, 1622, the news had spread through the French court; it was probably an exaggerated account of Vorsterman's attempt that started it; but in August, 1624, and January, 1625, the same false report was circulating in Rome, without anyone knowing whence it came nor what had started it. Rubens's health left nothing to be desired; during the second half of 1623 and throughout the following year he had worked valiantly on the gallery of Marie de Medici; the labour reached an end in the last days of 1624, and he prepared to start for Paris. The marriage of Charles I of England with Henrietta of France, the daughter of Marie de Medici, was to be celebrated in the month of May, 1625, and the pictures had to be in position and the palace of the Luxembourg finished for that event. Rubens wished to retouch all the pictures himself when they were in position, and his last stay in Paris was consequently to be a long one. On the 12th December, 1624, he wrote to Valavez that he hoped to be ready in six weeks, but he asked for a few days longer to let the colours dry, and as the waggon which was to take the pictures over would want quite a fortnight to make the journey from Antwerp to Paris, he could not count on reaching that city before the end of February. But on the 10th January, 1625, he was informed by Claude Maugis that the queen desired him to be in Paris on the 2nd, 3rd, or at latest the 4th February. He complied with the queen's wish and arrived on the day named. No doubt he proposed to spend the three months that remained to him in retouching and considerably altering certain pictures.

It has been claimed that a letter, which he sent to Paris three weeks before he started, refers to this work. In that letter he charges a friend to engage the ladies Capaïo in the rue Verbois and their niece, little Louise, to sit as models for the Sirens during his stay in Paris. « These persons », he adds, « will be of great and infinite assistance to me, partly on account of the superb expressions of their faces, but further by their superb black hair which I find it difficult to obtain elsewhere and also by their stature ». It has been supposed that these models were to sit for the Naiads swimming alongside the ship that bears Marie de Medici to Marseilles. But this is scarcely probable. The Naiads in the History of Marie de Medici are fair, and the pictures in which they appear certainly formed part of the first nine, which Rubens had brought to Paris in 1622. Unfortunately we do not know the date of the letter nor the rest of its contents, and it is impossible to settle precisely the period at which it was written and its real meaning.

The pictures were ready on the day appointed; the betrothal of the royal pair took place on the 8th May, 1625, and the marriage was celebrated three days later. The queen was greatly pleased with Rubens's works; she avowed it to the artist and repeated it to everybody. The king also came to visit the gallery; it was the first time he had set foot in the new palace although it had been building for ten years. His Majesty much admired the pictures, as Rubens was informed by those who had accompanied him on his visit. Claude Maugis explained the

subjects to the king, and found the need of no small skill to present the scenes in a manner that should disguise whatever was unpleasant for the prince.

The painter found himself unable to accompany the king, for he had hurt his foot. A bootmaker had tried on a new boot so roughly that he had all but crippled him, and the artist was obliged to keep his bed for ten days. On the day of the wedding he was present at the ceremony, during which he escaped a great danger. A large scaffolding had been erected before the door of Notre-Dame, on which the ceremony was to be celebrated. When it was over, the brilliant company who had been present went into the church where mass was said by Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld, who had blessed the marriage. Facing the scaffolding in front of the church, platforms had been erected on which the invited guests took their stand. Rubens was on one of them with Valavez and the gentlemen of the suite of the English envoys ; during the ceremony, the posts which supported the platform broke, and the people on it were thrown to the pavement. Valavez, who was standing by the side of Rubens, fell with thirty of those present and injured his head ; none of the others were hurt ; the painter had time to leave the falling stage and stride on to an adjoining platform.

He left Paris at the beginning of June ; this time he travelled post and reached Brussels on the 11th, where he wished to visit the Archduchess ; she, however, was at Breda, which had just been taken by her troops, and which she wished to see before the fortifications were demolished, and on the following day he continued his journey to Antwerp.

Rubens had stayed in Paris three weeks after the marriage of the king of England, and it is very probable that his departure was delayed by the difficulty he had in getting paid. We do not know what agreement was come to touching the date of payment, but he probably had not failed to stipulate that part of the money due to him should be paid on delivery of the first half of the pictures. In a letter of the 21st April, 1623, immediately before Rubens's second journey to Paris, Peiresc advised him that Claude Maugis thought it desirable that the queen should be in Paris at the moment when the painter brought his nine first pictures, as unless that were so it would be difficult for him to get what was due to him. Immediately after the celebration of the royal marriage, he wrote himself to Peiresc, that the embarrassed condition of the public finances gave him some anxiety for his own interests, but that he did not want to importune the queen with his demands for money. He found it equally impossible to obtain Cardinal Richelieu's decision on the subjects he was to treat in the gallery of Henri IV. « In fact », he says, « I am weary of this court, and if they do not show the same punctuality in satisfying me which I myself have shown in the service of the queen-mother, it may very well happen (I tell you this in confidence) that I shall not return here so readily, » though, to tell the truth, I have no complaint to make of Her Majesty's treatment of me ; « the difficulties I complained of were legitimate and excusable ». However, it appears that he obtained satisfaction and was paid before his departure.

According to the custom of the time, he was generous to his patrons and all who had done him any service. We have already said that Maugis coveted the sketches of the History of Marie de Medici and that Rubens presented them to him ; in December, 1624, Cardinal Richelieu sent Rubens the measurements of a picture he wanted, and the artist promised to bring it when he came to Paris in February. On the 10th January, 1625, he proposed to finish

the picture in Paris, since he had no time to spare in Antwerp. He also presented a large and beautiful picture, entirely by his own hand, to Monseigneur d'Argouges, who no doubt was the queen's steward. It is not known what these two pictures were.

In three years, therefore, Rubens had executed one of his most important works, which is also one of the most considerable ever painted. The three portraits and the twenty-one large pictures which form the « History of Marie de Medici » excited general admiration, beginning with the princess who was the heroine of them, and going on with contemporaries and the generations that followed. Then and later more than one detailed description of them was written ; one Morisot published an explanation of the subjects, which Rubens found accurate on the whole, but in which, according to him, the real meaning of certain details was not given. Mathieu de Morgues devoted twenty-four distiches to the same subject, and in 1814 M. Charbonnet published another explanation. All these commentaries were turned into Latin verse. Till recently, the biographers of Rubens were in the habit of describing each of the subjects of this series at length, while they confined themselves to mentioning the titles of the master's other pictures, which led to the Medici gallery's being generally considered the most important of the works of Rubens.

And, in a certain sense, it was, in its extent, the lofty rank of the sovereign whose history it commemorated, and the splendour of the palace it adorned. Rubens painted it in the prime of life and the full maturity of his talent ; he devoted more time and more care to it than to any other of his productions ; it was the first he painted for a royal palace ; it was the first and most important of those he devoted to the reproduction of contemporary events. If it was not the work of which Rubens, the heroic painter, had dreamed, it was at least that best suited to Rubens, the inexhaustible creator of symbols and decoration. And he made the decorative creation of it the most brilliant that could be seen, somewhat resembling the great Council Hall in the palace of the Doges, but more skilfully arranged and less overcharged with the subject treated.

In his opinion, the scenes drawn from the life of the queen, in spite of their pomp and splendour, were not fruitful enough to give his creations the brilliance he wished to present. He had recourse therefore to the realm of fable and allegory, from which he borrowed figures that he could clothe in all the nobility of form and all the elegance of movement that he could imagine. He mixed a profusion of allegorical figures and the dwellers on Olympus with his historical persons. It is certainly something of a shock to see Marie de Medici incessantly escorted by supernatural beings and personifications of abstract ideas in all the acts of her public and private life ; but a seventeenth century artist and a pupil of Otho Vænius was accustomed to translate his own ideas and the deeds and movements of his heroes into this figurative form, and, in the eyes of his contemporaries, to embellish truth in so unnatural a manner, was a permissible and praiseworthy thing. Nothing in those days was more common than this turning of reality into fable and this mixture of human beings with supernatural figures : Paolo Veronese had very largely seen his glorification of the republic of Venice, in the Doges' palace, in this light. The Court of Marie de Medici and high French society, which was the most perfect expression of Franco-Italian culture, delighted in these inventions. The painter



THE BIRTH OF LOUIS XIII
(Louvre, Paris)



displayed his own classical erudition, and did homage to that of the spectators by showing that he held them capable of understanding his inventions and allusions.

An excellent means of adorning the truth was not the only thing Rubens saw in these auxiliaries borrowed from mythology ; he found another advantage in them. However rich the gala-dresses of a seventeenth century court, the beauty of the nude forms of gods and demi-gods still surpasses them in magnificence ; the splendour of their flesh must efface the brilliance of the most sumptuous stuffs. Thus he made his work an assembly in which terrestrial and Olympian figures might vie with each other who should play the most brilliant *rôle* in the historic romance, and it would be difficult to say which win, the motives supplied by history, or those inspired by fiction.

Among the scenes borrowed from real life we may note the provisional marriage of the queen at Santa-Maria-del-Fiore, with the majestic central group formed by the betrothed lady, her uncle and Cardinal Aldobrandini, who is joining their hands. Rubens had been present at this ceremony during the first year of his residence in Italy, and here he represents a scene which had vividly impressed him. We may mention also the « Departure of Henri IV for the War and the placing of the Regency in the hands of Marie de Medici », in which, between the king and queen, the Dauphin is noticeable in his brilliant red and blue costume ; and the « Coronation of the Queen », the only picture in which Rubens found it impossible to heighten the splendour of the reality by any allegory. These scenes are historically true ; they have an element of solemnity which the artist insistently brings out. Only in the picture of the « Departure of Henri IV » has the intimate interest of the event been somewhat sacrificed to the desire of increasing the solemnity. As a set-off, he has brought out the human character in more than one of his figures : thus, Henri IV is looking with an expression and gesture of admiration and love at the portrait of Marie de Medici ; thus, again, the queen, visibly weak, and dressed like a woman who has lately been confined, is contemplating with sweet emotion her new-born son ; thus, once more, we see on her face the expression of maternal love in the « Minority of Louis XIII » and of resignation in the scene of the « Escape from the Castle of Blois ».

Numerous and splendid are the figures taken from fable, the three Fates and the three Graces in the « Education of Marie de Medici », the three Sirens in the « Landing at Marseilles » the Health and Plenty in the « Birth of Louis XIII », the Discord in the « Apotheosis of Henri IV », the Apollo, War, and Envy in the « Regency of the Queen », the Plenty in the « Prosperity of the Regency », the Mercury in the « Reconciliation », the Peace and War in the « Conclusion of Peace », and the nude woman in the « Time bringing the Triumph of Truth ». All these figures are of incomparable beauty, some in the splendour of their opulent forms and their brilliant nudity, others in their dramatic gestures or elegant movements. We will not go so far as to say that Rubens always escaped the danger to which he so audaciously exposed himself in mixing fable with history ; he has introduced too much boldness into his allegories always to come out of them with equal good fortune. Lucina bringing Marie de Medici to the town of Florence immediately after her birth ; the town of Lyons going to meet the queen in a chariot drawn by lions ; the marriage of Jupiter and Juno, symbolizing that of Henri and Marie de Medici ; the « Meeting of mother and son », represented in the sky by Valour striking

Discord with a thunder-bolt and hurling her into the abyss ; such allegories as these are too far-fetched.

But Rubens was chiefly concerned with the painting, and troubled little about probability ; he wanted colour, and clothed his princes and courtiers in garments of satin and velvet, and covered them with gold and silver ; he wanted light, a great deal of light, and he poured it in abundant and varied streams over the scenes he placed on earth and in the sky ; he subdued it in the « Birth of the Queen », he scattered its rays across the waters of the Castalian fountain in the « Education of Marie de Medici » ; he extinguished it in the church in Florence, and replaced it by the flare of torches in the « Escape from the Castle of Blois ». He wanted figures full of movement, and called to his aid his Naiads, his rowing Nymphs, his radiant Apollo, the victorious archer, War and Discord, the Queen on horseback, the King ascending to heaven, Courage hurling the thunderbolt, and Truth appearing in bodily form ; and out of all these elements he composed a work, the beauty, colour, and brilliance of which made it worthy to adorn the palace of a queen. He sought and found the tone which suited the apotheosis : heavenly light in the distance, natural light in the foreground ; beautiful figures, rich draperies, sumptuous buildings, graceful attitudes, universal nobility ; no touch of drama, but history turned into an apotheosis. His choice of colours brings out still further this glory and brilliance. Wherever he could, Rubens has put broad passages of red ; Jupiter's robes, the clothes of the courtiers, the draperies decorating the halls and other parts as well, are all of this bright and vibrating colour. Then we have a golden yellow : in the sky, on the robes of the prelates, the queen, the goddesses and nymphs, and a little everywhere. And then gay tints : tender blue, water-green and white. Once or twice he was compelled to use black, but he is dark nowhere, with the exception of his favourite grey grounds, which throw up the richness of the colours in all their splendour.

In the history of the artistic development of Rubens the Medici Gallery must be classed with the works of 1619 to 1621, the « Four parts of the World » in the Imperial Museum at Vienna, « Castor and Pollux carrying off the daughters of Leucippus », and the « Rape of Orithyia by Boreas », two pictures in which we find again the long and sinuous bodies of the Naiads in the « Arrival at Marseilles », the « Miracles of St François and St Ignatius », and others. It is the period of his full bloom ; he has cast aside the timidity and the chilliness that characterize his work of 1615. The composition is broader, freer, and more exuberant, the execution careful, the drawing accurate, and the outlines clearly marked. We find no more flat tints, but everywhere luminous reflexions on the prominent parts, and effects of shadows in the hollows ; no more fugitive lights on the outlines of the limbs, nor blue modelling on the flesh, but shadows of transparent grey, sometimes warm in tone, sometimes colder. We may still note a certain restraint, which is no longer timidity, but yet contrasts with the ease and *abandon* that were soon to be characteristic of his manner. He had not put the finishing touches to his work before he had already renounced this reserve and begun his « Adoration of the Kings » in the Antwerp Museum, which is painted more broadly and boldly, and marks the beginning of his last period. The Medici Gallery may be regarded as the last work of his second manner, which was first manifested in his « Descent from the Cross ». The greater part of it is by Rubens's own hand, helped in the painting of the accessories, the landscapes,

buildings, arms and hangings, by one or more of his pupils or collaborators, among others probably by Wildens. The fruit and dogs may perhaps be attributed to Snijders. The little dog to be noticed in three of the pictures is no doubt that presented by Rubens to Marie de Medici from the Archduchess Isabella. There is a tradition that Justus van Egmont accompanied Rubens to Paris and helped him in his work; and the supposition is confirmed by a letter written on the 3rd July, 1625, by Rubens to Valavez in which he expresses his astonishment that « Justus » should be so long in returning. It is very probable that he is referring to his pupil, who bore this Christian name; and in support of this opinion may be urged further the fact that Justus settled later in Paris. During Rubens's second visit to Paris, in June, 1623, he had been accompanied by one of his pupils, only known to us under his Christian name of Maximilian: he stayed in the capital of France several days after his master's departure, and, as Peiresc wrote to Rubens on the 10th July, 1623, he only left Paris that day, after spending several days in drawing ancient tombs for the French scholar.

The pictures remained in the Luxembourg palace and in the hall where Rubens had placed them until 1802. The palace was then chosen for the meeting-place of the Senate, the gallery was demolished and Rubens's pictures were taken to the Louvre where they may still be seen. In 1900 they were taken from the long gallery where they had been for nearly a century and transferred to the new rooms that were then opened. Eighteen of the large pictures were placed in a splendid gallery which contains nothing else, and an attempt has been made to restore the decoration which originally surrounded them; the other six pictures are in an adjoining room. Rubens's work has thus received a homage which has been paid to no other artist in the celebrated Museum; and his splendid creations have been placed in surroundings which bring out all their brilliance.

The work was not engraved in the life-time of the artist, but at the beginning of the eighteenth century it was reproduced after drawings by Nattier and his two sons, in a series of plates which is one of the master-pieces of French engraving; another engraved reproduction appeared early in the nineteenth century. The Gobelins manufactory made a copy in tapestry, which was begun under Louis XVIII and finished under Louis-Philippe.

Independently of Rubens's sketches for these pictures he made other studies for them also, but unfortunately hardly any of them are known. In the Schneider sale in Paris in 1876 there appeared a study drawing for the « Marriage at Lyons »; in Sir Thomas Lawrence's sale (London, 1880) there was another for the « Coronation of Marie de Medici »; the portfolios of the Louvre contain a rough sketch for the « Majority of Louis XIII »; and the Crozat sale (Paris, 1741) included several studies for heads which were used for the characters in the Medici Gallery (*Œuvre*. Nos 1469, 1470, 1471).

The pictures were several times cleaned and restored. Mols said in 1775: « These pictures » have been cleaned, notably on the occasion of the arrival of the king of Denmark in Paris. » At the present moment they look as if they had been flayed, they have been so much rubbed » and re-rubbed, and the bloom of Rubens's finishing touches has been so much removed ». In 1858 they underwent another restoration, and on this occasion again it was complained that they had suffered much. From this we might suppose that nothing remained of the pictures but the skeleton. This was not the opinion of the French painter, Eugène Delacroix, a great

admirer and competent judge of Rubens: « You are kind enough to ask my opinion on the » restoration of the Rubenses », he writes to his friend Dutilleux after the restoration of 1858. « Altogether, I think the work good ; it is even excellent in regard to the varnish that was » always put over pictures. The effect produced is this : when the varnish is cleaned off the » background, particularly over the flesh, it reveals that freshness in the tones which one » would have expected » (1). According to him the old varnish deadened the colours, and by its removal the shadows became darker and the luminous passages regained the intense brilliance given them by the painter. We are absolutely in agreement with the great artist, and



ANNE OF AUSTRIA, QUEEN OF FRANCE (Louvre, Paris).

cannot admit any good ground for the complaints that were heard at the time, any more than for those that were poured forth before. The Medici Gallery has suffered no more than the other works of Rubens which have been cautiously cleaned, and it has certainly lost much less than a quantity of other paintings which have been restored and mutilated in a barbarous way.

WORKS EXECUTED BY RUBENS IN PARIS.

— Rubens also painted the portrait of Marie de Medici, as a study for her History ; it was never finished and was probably still in the master's possession at his death. It now belongs to the Museum at Madrid, and unfinished though it is, it is one of Rubens's master-pieces.

Marie de Medici is represented seated, with one hand at her waist, the other on

her knees ; she is no longer young, her hair is going grey, her figure has stoutened and her face become fat ; her black dress is only indicated by a spot, against which her collar and cuffs stand out white and luminous. The queen's head and hands are soberly painted with extreme softness and delicacy. Nowhere in the History does she show the same dignity of mien, the calm, proud look, which would prove her a queen even to those who did not know her rank. The picture is swiftly painted, with a sureness of hand which gives the impression of life in all its freshness, and sums up, in a minimum of detail, the impression of the queen which the artist received and wished to preserve.

Rubens made three other drawings from the queen (*Œuvre*. Nos 1514, 1515, 1516) ; one in red, white, and black chalks belongs to the Louvre and represents Marie de Medici seen nearly full face ; another is in the Albertina at Vienna ; both are master-pieces, portraits full of truth and nobility, of the kind that Rubens used to make to serve as documents in painting his

(1) *Lettres de Eugène Delacroix*, 8 August 1858. (Paris, Quantin, 1878).

portraits. A small pen-drawing in the British Museum represents the queen side-face, looking



APOLLO IN HIS CHARIOT SURROUNDED BY HOURS AND GENII — After Primaticcio (Baron von Oppenheim, Cologne).

straight in front of her and wearing her hair taken up so as to form a high head-dress. The

catalogue of the Duke of Buckingham's collection mentions « the portrait of the queen of France sitting under a canopy, 1 ft. 9 in. high, by 2 ft. wide ». This probably refers to a portrait of Marie de Medici painted in 1625 for Charles I's celebrated favourite, George Villiers, duke of Buckingham. Giustiniani Priandi wrote an account of the marriage of Charles I and Henrietta of France for his master, in which we read as follows : « the envoys extraordinary of England have been presented by Her Majesty with jewels to the value of 30,000 crowns, and Buckingham has received a hat ribbon worth 50,000 crowns, which means but little to them, considering that they have made a present of the value of 25,000 pistoles to various persons of the court, and given the painter Rubens a silver credence of the value of 2,000 crowns for no reason except that he had painted two portraits » (1). We cannot say for certain which the two portraits here referred to were ; possibly the portrait of the queen sitting under a canopy, which we have just mentioned, was one of them, while the other might be that of the duke of Buckingham now in the Pitti Gallery ; perhaps two different portraits of Buckingham are meant. It is certain that at Paris in 1625 Rubens painted not only the portrait of the duke now in Florence, but also an equestrian portrait in the possession of the Earl of Jersey (*Œuvre*. N^o 907). For the latter Rubens received £500 sterling (about £1600 in modern money), an exorbitant sum compared with what he usually received for work of this kind. The Earl of Jersey's gallery also contains an apotheosis of the Duke of Buckingham, a ceiling probably painted for the duke but never delivered, as it still appeared in the list of Rubens's goods at his death. The National Gallery in London has a sketch for it (*Œuvre*. N^{os} 819, 820).

For the portrait of the Duke of Buckingham Rubens made a magnificent black and red drawing, which is now in the Albertina. There also is preserved a portrait-drawing of the Duchess of Buckingham, forming a pendant to that of the Duke (*Œuvre*. N^{os} 1501, 1502). The existence of this drawing implies that Rubens intended to paint the duchess's portrait, but it probably went no further than the intention ; in any case we know no painted portrait of this lady, and find no mention of it anywhere.

During his stay at the French court, Rubens painted a number of portraits of people he had met there. The most important is that of Anne of Austria, then queen of France, now in the Louvre, where it continues to be called Elizabeth of France, queen of Spain, though it bears no resemblance to that princess (*Œuvre*. N^o 886). The queen is sitting in a red velvet arm-chair, and wears a blue dress embroidered in gold and over it another robe of black satin, open at the chest. Her hair is dressed high, and on it rests a gold crown ornamented with beautiful large pearls ; round her neck she wears a rich necklace of pearls and emeralds and a high lace collar ; in her hand she has a bunch of roses, lilies and jasmine. On the left is a view of a splendid palace. The princess is no beauty ; her eyes are large with heavy lids ; the lower part of her face shows the feature of the Hapsburg family, the projecting chin ; but her complexion is white and fresh and her hands are incomparably delicate. « Her hands and

(1) A. BASCHET : (*Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1868, May, p. 493). The author confines himself to giving the French translation of the Italian text. The latter describes the present under the name of *credence* (in Italian *credenza*) which means a small buffet or service-table. It is improbable that a piece of furniture of that kind is signified here under that name. We believe that the present consisted of a jug and salver, and was the same as the basin and ewer which appeared in Rubens's succession and now belong to M. le baron Constantine de Borrekens.

arms », says Mme. de Motteville, « were of astonishing beauty, and all Europe has heard their » praises : the colour of them was, without exaggeration, snow-white ». The portrait is executed with much care and painted in pale tones ; but there is little life in it, and the sumptuous clothes and accessories make it seem still paler and deader. Rubens, no doubt, painted it during his stay in Paris in 1625. The Royal Museum at Amsterdam has a replica of it painted in Rubens's studio ; there was another in the master's succession, and still others are mentioned, probably copies.

That period, also, must have seen the painting of the second portrait of the queen, now in the Madrid Museum (*Œuvre*. N^o 884), in which Anne of Austria is represented in black with her hands on her knees. It is a highly finished state-portrait, but the queen looks none too seductive in it. There was a copy in the collection of the Dukes of Marlborough at Blenheim.

Rubens probably also painted the portrait of Louis XIII, for there is a contemporary engraving representing the king which has an inscription stating that it was engraved after a portrait by the master. An example of it is mentioned in a collection which also contained the portrait of Anne of Austria (*Œuvre*. N^o 980).

It is known for certain that he painted the portrait of the baron de Vicq, then ambassador from the Infanta Isabella to the French court, and that of the baroness de Vicq (*Œuvre*. Nos 1076-1077). Both were in the collection of William II, King of the Netherlands. When that was sold at The Hague in 1850, the portrait of the baron was bought for the Louvre, that of the baroness by a private person.

During the few months Rubens spent in Paris to finish the Medici Gallery, he can have spared very little time for other work. We know, however, that when he had the opportunity he made studies after the works of art he saw there. Thus he copied two ceilings by Primaticcio at Fontainebleau, one representing « Apollo chasing Diana », and the other « Apollo surrounded by the Hours » (*Œuvre*. Nos 565, 566). The original paintings exist no longer, but the drawings are preserved in the Louvre. Rubens made two superb grisailles of them, heightened with a few colours. The former is in the Liechtenstein Gallery at Vienna, the latter in the collection of the baron von Oppenheim at Cologne.

It was in Paris and at this time, no doubt, that he painted « Lot leaving Sodom » (*Œuvre*. N^o 101), which is now in the Louvre, and formerly belonged to the kings of France. The panel is dated 1625 and has Rubens's signature. It is a work of the first order, small in size but as broadly drawn as if it were a large picture. The group advances in the foreground. The movement of it is full of simplicity but of grandeur as well. The anxiety of Lot and his wife offer a striking contrast to the careless air of their opulently built daughters, the colour is rich and varied, the light superabundant ; the painting is thin, and the tones shaded and broken in a way that announces a change of manner with the master. A further proof that this carefully finished picture, which is entirely by the master's hand, was painted in Paris, is the appearance in it of the little dog he had brought to France for queen Marie de Medici from the Infanta Isabella.

THE HISTORY OF THE EMPEROR CONSTANTINE. — At the same time that Marie de Medici ordered the Luxembourg paintings of Rubens, the king commissioned him to carry out a

series of twelve cartoons, to be used as models for tapestries and to represent the « History of the Emperor Constantine the Great » (*Œuvre*. Nos 718-729). The order was given him during his first visit to Paris, that is to say in January-February, 1622. By November the first four cartoons: the « Baptism of Constantine », the « Battle with Maxentius », the « Defeat of Maxentius » and the « Raising of the Labarum » reached Paris. Rubens had made the sketches and had them carried out by his pupils on canvases the size of the tapestries. It is not known when the eight other cartoons were sent, but the whole series must certainly have been



LOT LEAVING SODOM (LOUVRE, PARIS).

finished by 1625. On the 26th February, 1626, Rubens complains in a letter to Valavez of the difficulty he finds in getting paid what was still due to him for the work.

The subjects treated were: the « Marriage of Constantine » the « Apparition of the Monogram of Christ to Constantine », the « Labarum », the « Battle of Constantine and Maxentius », the « Defeat and death of the tyrant Maxentius », the « Triumph of Constantine », the « City of Rome crowned by Victory and recovering her authority after the victory of Constantine », the « Trophy erected to Constantine », « Constantine sharing the power with his son », the « Foundation of Constantinople », « Constantine honouring the True Cross », and the « Baptism of Constantine ».

The « Defeat of Maxentius » is represented on a bridge, one arch of which is broken. The conquered general is crossing the bridge in flight with his army; all are being hurled into the stream. The dramatic power of the picture recalls the « Battle of the Amazons »; while closer in composition, it is worthy of being coupled with that master-piece. The « Battle of Constantine and Maxentius » is simply arranged; the artist has represented the spot and the moment in

which the two armies are rushing upon each other. We do not find in it the power which Rubens could display in such subjects, and later he never found the opportunity of showing how, in favourable conditions, he might have treated action so full of movement. Luck was against him indeed, whenever he came to paint a battle-piece. The combat in which Decius fell shows but a single group clearly detached from the general engagement; the « Battle of Tunis » remains a rapid sketch; the « Battle of Ivry » was begun on the full canvas, but never finished. The other cartoons in the « History of Constantine » are much less interesting, and show much less value as compositions. The « Town of Rome crowned by Victory » and the « Trophy of Arms » are two subjects we have already met with in the « Story of Decius », where they are more simply treated.

In this matter also Peiresc was the intermediary who watched Rubens's interests and helped him with his advice and his services during the execution of the work. When the four first cartoons had reached Paris, he went to see them with six others, who held current commissions from the king for the inspection of public works. The cases were opened in their presence, and when they had withdrawn, the canvases were put back again, as the king was anxious to see them before the world in general. Rubens had sent a lengthy description of the subjects to Peiresc, who was thus enabled to give his colleagues accurate information on the scenes represented. The work gave great satisfaction, and as might be expected from the men of that age, they vied in admiring the artist's profound knowledge of antique dress and the precision with which he had represented it, even to the nails in the shoes. They agreed also in recognising that they were in the presence of the work of a great man and a lofty intellect, and that even as they saw it, executed, as it had been, by pupils, no French painter would have been capable of doing anything like it. Some unfavourable judgments also were passed, which Peiresc transmitted to his friend undiluted.

We borrow them from his letter of the 1st December, 1622 : they show how a learned archaeologist judged the work of a painter; and they constitute the only criticism written in the master's life on one of his productions. « Of the four cartoons », says Peiresc, « the » « Baptism » has been assigned the first place; no one has discovered the least detail to find » « fault with in it, and it has been admired in all its parts. The Allocution, which pleased me much » « by the accuracy of its military costumes, found many critics; but only so far as regards your » « manner of drawing the legs, which you make bowed instead of straight as the usual practice is. » « I remember well that you once told me, *à propos* of the fine curving of the legs of Fréminet's » « Moses and St Paul, that in nature this effect is certainly real, and the objectors were unable » « to deny the truth of this observation. But they replied that that is the result of some defect » « or a national peculiarity, for there are countries where everyone is bow-legged, or very » « nearly. The statues of antiquity proscribed this form; Michael Angelo, Raphael, Correggio, » « and Titian have done the same; it seems, therefore, that it ought still to be proscribed » « now-a-days, and eyes which are accustomed to seeing in this manner cannot accept without » « difficulty an entirely different manner.

» Your cartoons would have astonished everyone, had it not been for this peculiarity, which » « our race cannot approve of, and if you will take the advice of your humble servant you will in » « future adapt yourself to this defective vision of ours. The Ethiopian painters represent the

» Madonna as a Moorish woman with a black face, but if Michael Angelo or Raphael were to
 » come now-a-days and paint figures with bowed legs, they would hear critics without end
 » finding fault with them for it. Unless you decide, in the pictures for the Gallery, to find
 » natural positions in quite another attitude than that in which this bow appears, it is very
 » certain that you will get little satisfaction out of them, for here you have to deal with
 » blockheads, who like nothing that runs counter to their sentiment. The ancient Egyptians,
 » who were nearly all crook-kneed, gave this defect to their figures, and, I suspect, would
 » have considered anyone who had not this defect as deformed. Our French *petits-mâtres*
 » do the same.

» In the cartoon of the battle everyone has been struck with astonishment at the figure of
 » Licinius or the man fighting with Constantine, and the figure of the dead man lying under
 » his horse; and the whole composition has excited admiration. It appears, however, that the
 » Constantine brandishing his javelin might have put a little more animation into the
 » movement; and further, it is thought that the painter has not reproduced very skilfully the
 » drawing of the arm throwing the javelin (the arm must be the right arm although the
 » cartoon for the tapestry must represent a left arm); it looks as if it were slightly dislocated
 » and not moving naturally: that is all the censure that has been given to this figure, with the
 » exception, however, of a leg, which is rather more bowed than these critics like.

» In the great scene of the broken bridge, an infinity of things has been admired, especially
 » the two men hanging by their hands; the wounded man hanging by one hand I thought
 » altogether excellent and inimitable; some, however, criticized the proportions of the hanging
 » thigh, and the other clinging with both hands was considered superb; but once more a
 » minute fault has been discovered; one thigh coming lower down than the other. I could
 » have wished that you had given a final touch with your own hand to each of these two
 » thighs ».

After the cartoons sent by Rubens to the king of France the Gobelins manufactory made twelve tapestries for the royal store-room, of wool and silk slightly enriched with gold. The same models were used afterwards to make other examples of these tapestries. In 1730 the crown had several series of them; there is still one in the national store-rooms in Paris. The imperial house of Austria has six pieces of one series and three of another. The tapestries made after Rubens's models were enclosed in borders not of his designing; the example at Paris has a border of arms, altars and busts on pedestals, which had been used already for the tapestries made after Raphael.

In the last century Rubens's sketches were in the gallery of the duke of Orleans, on the sale of which they passed into various private collections. While they belonged to the duke of Orleans they were engraved by Nicolas Tardieu. On comparing the engravings with the tapestries we may notice remarkable differences, which proves that the same differences must have existed between the sketches and the cartoons made in Rubens's studios, which have disappeared without leaving a trace. Thus, for example, in the composition in which Constantine shows the monogram of Christ to his soldiers, there are four tents; in the sky there are three angels carrying a cross and in one of the rays of light emanating from them may be read these words in Greek: « In this sign shalt thou conquer »; on the right is a

dwarf putting on the emperor's helmet; on the rock whence the emperor is addressing his troops may be read in Latin : « The speech which brought victory to the soldiers of Constantine led by the Lord »; none of which details appear in the sketch.

The two great series of historical paintings carried out by Rubens in 1622-1625, the three journeys he was compelled to take to Paris and the part he then began to play in public affairs, absorbed a great deal of his time. It is not surprising, therefore, that in those years he produced fewer works of other kinds than in the preceding periods.

ALTAR-PIECES.

THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. CATHERINE. — Commissions for altar-pieces, however, were not lacking, and some of the most important date from this time. One of the first in chronological order was probably the « Martyrdom of St Catherine », in the church of that name at Lille (*Œuvre*. No 399). It was presented by Heer Jan de Seur, councillor to the Archdukes and clerk in ordinary of their finances, and his wife Maria de Patyn. Jan de Seur died on the 2nd June, 1621, and Maria de Patyn on the 25th January, 1668. Their epitaph states that they presented the choir of the church with the altar-piece of St Catherine. It may be admitted, we believe, that the order was given towards the end of Jan de Seur's life, and executed soon after his death in 1622. Unfortunately the picture is so badly hung that it is impossible to form any idea of its artistic value or the character of the execution. Only the composition can be made out. The martyr is kneeling in the centre of the picture on a platform with three steps; her hands are bound; on the right the executioner, sword in hand, is preparing to cut off her head; on the left a pagan priest is pointing to the statue of Apollo which stands by the side of a dome-shaped temple, and exhorting the Christian to worship the idol. Round her stand four women, one of whom is moving the martyr's hair from her neck and another her robe, while a third is about to bind her eyes. From the summit of the heavens, angels are bringing her a crown and a palm. To right and left are soldiers and spectators. It is a very beautiful, but very material representation of the bloody drama about to take place; it gives a clear idea of the event without presenting any emotion. How times have changed! The Apollo from whom the saint turns away her eyes in horror has become the god of Rubens's art; the idol which was imagined at the time of the persecutions as a demon of monstrous form is now looked upon as the personification of the highest beauty, and even in the Vatican his statue was regarded with respectful admiration, while in the Corte di Belvedere it was venerated as in a temple.



ST. CATHERINE
Drawing (Albertina, Vienna).

ST. ROCK. — The pictures Rubens executed for the cathedral at Alost are far more important. Tradition has it that they were ordered of Rubens by the Confraternity of St. Rock, the patron-saint of the hop-merchants, who, we are informed, paid him 800 florins for it (*Œuvre*. Nos 488-491). The inventory of the estate of Isabella Brant shows that between the 20th June, 1626, and the 28th August, 1628, Rubens had received from the cathedral of Alost 500 florins, probably in payment for the altar-piece. We have no documentary evidence of the date of the commencement of the work nor the circumstances attending it; but in restoring the altar the date 1623 was discovered on one of the statues of saints that decorated it. In that year or the next, no doubt, Rubens executed the altar-piece. In 1626 Paul Pontius engraved the principal panel.

This panel represents St Rock imploring Christ's pity for the plague-stricken. Rubens has conceived the composition in the simplest manner. He has divided the picture horizontally into two parts by a vault carrying a level pavement; in the upper part he has represented St Rock recognized by Christ as the patron saint who preserves from plague; in the lower part he has shown the sick imploring their protector. Above, all is glory, power and beauty; below all is suffering, misery, lamentation. We see three sick people, an old man, a man in the prime of life, and a woman, lying on the straw of a wretched pallet-bed, and half-raising themselves to implore the intercession of the saint against the plague, while two compassionate attendants stand by them and inspire them with hope in the intervention of the mediator. On the extreme left is another head of a sick man, lying on a pillow. On the right is a thin and enigmatic personage, like a dead man brought to life again, enveloped in his shroud and raising his head above the vault to see what is happening. St. Rock is kneeling with his left hand on his breast, his hat and staff in his right, and his dog by his side. He is looking in reverential amazement at Christ, who has descended from heaven and is showing him a scroll borne by an angel behind St Rock, on which is written: « Thou shalt be the patron-saint against the plague ».

If the two parts of the picture are separated materially, they are united in thought. The sick, full of confidence, are imploring their protector; all eyes and all hands are raised to him; the line which separates sky and earth so sharply is broken by the human figure, draped in a shroud, which raises its head above the vault. The picture is pale and harmonious in colour and light. The red drapery of the Christ, the yellow drapery of the angel, and St Rock's, which is brown and violet, give variety to the upper part; the nude flesh in the other group gives it a warmer and more luminous tonality. The movement of the whole composition is remarkable. Christ descending from heaven with floating hair and robes, St Rock manifesting by his gesture of amazement and the effort he is making to rise, the emotion he feels at the unhopèd-for favour he has just obtained, the sick and their attendants agitated by the same hope and the same peril, are all figures full of lively and true reality. The principal characters, St Rock and the two sick men, are among the most successful figures Rubens ever painted.

He has obviously used in this picture a motive, which he also used elsewhere: the contrast between physical suffering and the supernatural power that can put an end to it. He had used it already in his « Miracles of St Ignatius and St François Xavier » in the Jesuits' church at Antwerp, and the « Miracles of St Ignatius » in the Jesuits' church at Genoa; he

was to use it again in the « Conversion of St Bavon » and the unfinished picture of the « Miracles of St Benedict ». All these works, except the last, were executed in the space of four or five years. The painter found in this antithesis the means of emphasizing on the one hand the drama of human life, on the other the splendours of the supernatural life.

As in most of his altar-pieces, Rubens painted here also some small pictures by the side of the large one ; the altar of St Rock is the only one in which these accessories have remained in their place. They comprise a Madonna with the infant Jesus placed above the altar-piece, and two panels of smaller dimensions below the large one, the predellas which stood behind the candlesticks. That on the right represents the death of St Rock, who is dying in the cave in which he has been confined with other prisoners, and whither an angel comes to console him. That on the left represents St Rock miraculously nourished by his dog, who is bringing him bread. These three small pictures were painted by Rubens's pupils and retouched by the master;

he painted the lower part of the large panel and had the upper part prepared by his collaborators, but he repainted a great part of it himself.



ST. ROCK INTERCEDING FOR THE PLAGUE-STRICKEN
After the engraving by Paul Pontius (Cathedral, Alost).

THE CONVERSION OF ST. BAVON. — Another altar-piece we have lately mentioned belongs to the same epoch and the same manner; the St Bavon, painted for the cathedral at Ghent (*Œuvre*. No 396).

Rubens had made a sketch for this work in 1612; it had been ordered of him by the bishop of Ghent, Karel Maes, and was to form a triptych, composed of a central panel and

two shutters that could be closed. He painted on his single panel the whole subject of the future triptych, as he did for the altar-pieces of the « Elevation of the Cross », and that of « St Ildefonso receiving the chasuble from the hands of the Virgin ». In the sketch we see a palace in the background with a balcony at the height of the first storey on which is a group of spectators. At the top of a flight of steps are two bishops or abbots receiving St Bavon at the entrance to the abbey; one of the holy knight's servants is distributing his goods among the poor, who are standing below in the foreground. On the left is a platform on which is St Bavon's wife with two ladies of her suite; on the right a numerous body of men-at-arms on foot and on horseback. The two lateral groups were evidently intended to appear on the shutters.

The sketch was finished at the beginning of 1612, and the Archduke Albert had seen it in Rubens's studio. Bishop Maes died on the 21st May, 1612, before the painter could set to work on the large picture. His successor Frans Hendrik van den Burch would have preferred to see the statue of the patron saint of the church over the high altar of St Bavon, and would not hear of the picture's being carried out. Seeing this, Rubens approached the Archduke Albert, on the 19th March, 1614, begging him to intervene and write to the prelate of Ghent that he knew the picture and considered it good, and wished the bishop to have it painted. Rubens declared in his letter that in his opinion the picture of St Bavon was the finest work he had ever conceived, even the finest that had ever been executed in the country. He added that he had not only designed the altar-piece, but had made a drawing also for the altar, including the marble framework, the tabernacle, and the shrine in which the relics were to be enclosed. The Archduke Albert gave orders to write to the bishop of Ghent, inviting him to allow Rubens to carry out his work and accept it, if he thought it desirable for himself and his church.

The letter had no more effect than the steps which Rubens no doubt took with the bishop. The bishop, in 1615-1616, ordered the Antwerp sculptor Robrecht de Nole, to make a marble altar with the statue of St Bavon placed in a niche between pillars. Only the statue had been delivered when, in 1616, the bishop was called to another see. His successor, Jacob Boonen, persisted in the project of having the altar decorated with statues, and ordered from the sculptors Jan and Robrecht de Nole a Christ risen from the dead, a St Bavon and a St Amand to take the place of the altar-piece, and a Virgin with two angels to be placed above. In 1622, before the work was carried out, Bishop Boonen was made Archbishop of Mechlin, and Antonius Triest succeeded him. Triest was an admirer of Rubens and hastened to modify the plans of his predecessors. On the 10th February, 1623, a new agreement was concluded. The statue of St Bavon was placed above the altar, and the necessary space was left for a picture 16 1/2 ft. high by 10 ft. wide, which were the dimensions of Rubens's picture. The painter resumed the long interrupted work. A few months later it was finished, and on the 27th September, 1624, he had a sum of 600 florins paid for him to his friend Jan Breughel at Ghent. This was probably in payment for the altar-piece of St Bavon, perhaps merely in quittance of part of the total, for in the accounts of the succession of Isabella Brant, which were drawn up on the 28th August, 1628, Bishop Triest appears as having paid the estate 1000 florins for what he still owed Rubens. When at last it had reached its destination, the picture did not remain in the place assigned to it. From 1702 to 1719 the sculptor Peter Verbrugghen erected a new

altar which is still standing, and over it they placed once more the statue of St Bavon ; the old altar was sold to the church of St Gommarius at Lier and Rubens's St Bavon was relegated to a chapel at the entrance to the choir. In 1794, it was taken to Paris ; in 1811 Napoleon presented it to the Museum at Brussels ; in 1817 King William I gave it to the Museum at Ghent, whence it was moved in 1825 to the church of St Bavon, at the request of the churchwardens. It was placed in a side chapel of the apse. The repeated restorations and cleanings it has undergone have entirely spoiled it ; little remains of the work which has had so troubled an existence, and it is no longer possible to gauge its original value. While it was still a sketch, Rubens thought very highly of it ; we do not doubt that the finished work was equally one of his master-pieces, but we can only suppose it ; it is no longer permissible to state it.

The original composition was naturally modified when the three pictures were combined into one. The three women who were to appear on the left shutter are now standing on one side on a platform, which is ascended by three steps; the company of men-at-arms on the right has disappeared, and so have the spectators on the balcony; but the reception of St Bavon at the door of the church by two prelates, and the distribution of his goods among the poor have been kept. The two events

are represented one above the other ; the entry into the cloister above, the distribution below, and the three women are placed between the two scenes. The composition has gained by this arrangement, the groups are nearer each other and hold together better. This again is one of the pictures in which Rubens opposes the magnificence of a sumptuous group to the dramatic



THE CONVERSION OF ST. BAVON

After the engraving by F. Pilsen (Church of St Bavon, Ghent).

action of another group, and in which the nude flesh of the latter exceeds the rich costumes of the former in brilliance.

If we ask for an explanation of the small regard shown for Rubens's certainly very remarkable picture by certain dignitaries of the church, it may be found, we think, in the opulent beauty of the noble ladies and in the nudity of the poor people, which, though we cannot call it shocking, is certainly very slightly draped.

ST. FRANCIS OF PAULA. — Two other pictures of the same date show a conception analogous to that of the miracle-working Saints. The first is that of « St Francis of Paula » which we only know from three different sketches (*Œuvre*. Nos 431, 431(2), 431(3)). One of them is in the Museum at Dresden. The holy monk is hovering at the top of the canvas ; on the left is a building approached by a flight of steps ; before the door stand a king and queen of France ; on the steps are a multitude of people of their suite invoking the saint ; below at the foot of the steps are sick and possessed, waiting to be cured by him. We know a second sketch for the same subject by a copy in the Museum of the Academy of Fine Arts at Vienna (N^o 776), the original of which Waagen saw in the collection of Mr Morrison in London. It differs in a number of points from the former ; it is clear that the steps do not lead to the building but to a vault that lies in front of the cloister. A third sketch, which differs from the two others, is in the Pinakothek at Munich ; the Museum of the Academy at Vienna has a copy of it (N^o 647). It is difficult to determine precisely the date at which the picture was painted. The composition in the Dresden Museum is the one which most resembles that of the « Miracles of St Benedict », of which we are about to speak ; that in the Pinakothek has some points of resemblance to the « Conversion of St Bavon ».

ST. BENEDICT. — Another picture belonging to the series of miracle-workers is the « St Benedict » (*Œuvre*. N^o 397). It formed part, in an unfinished state, of Rubens's succession, and was given by the heirs to Gaspar De Craeyer, the well-known painter, who had acted as agent in the sale to the king of Spain of some pictures coming from Rubens's estate. De Craeyer probably sold it to the abbey of Afflighem. When the Emperor Joseph II closed that convent, it became the property of Heer Schamp van Aveschoot, the collector of Ghent ; after his death it was acquired by M. Tencé of Lille ; at the sale of his collection it was bought for the King of the Belgians, Leopold II. The subject treated is as follows : Totila, king of the Goths, having heard of the wonderful works of St Benedict, wished to prove him, and sent him one of his servants clothed in royal garments and attended by a numerous escort. About half-way up the picture we see the abbey of Monte Cassino, approached by two flights of steps. On the steps on the right stands the pretended Totila with a brilliant troop of courtiers ; he is being dismissed by St Benedict, who is standing with two monks of his order on the landing above. On the other flight of steps, some visitors are being received by five monks. Below crowds a great multitude, among which we may note a group of sick and a man possessed being held by two men. In the sky we see Christ surrounded by the Virgin, St Peter, St Paul and a number of angels. The most striking thing is the display of pomp ; the king and his suite in their brilliant draperies, the sky and its glories, and the movement of the variegated crowd give the composition a most decorative appearance, which



THE EDUCATION OF THE VIRGIN
(Museum, Antwerp)



Hochgr. Knechtgen, Hubner & v. Santen

overwhelms the group of the necessitous. The resemblance of this picture to the « Miracles of St Ignatius and St François Xavier », the « St Rock », and the « St Francis of Paula » is instantly noticeable. It is quite possible that the « St Benedict » is later in date than the rest of these works ; but it cannot be positively proved, and in any case it is certain that in its general character it belongs to the same series. It has remained unfinished. It was not an altar-piece like the other pictures of the same kind ; it measured 5 ft. 3 in. high by 7 ft. 7 in. wide. It has been said that it was ordered by the abbey of Afflighem, but the tradition is no doubt due to the fact that it was once in that monastery.

THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS. — « The Resurrection of Lazarus », now in the Museum at Berlin, was probably meant for an altar-piece (*Œuvre*. N^o 263). Mariette saw it in 1747 in Paris in the shop of a picture-dealer who had discovered it in France in the chapel of a château, the name of which he does not mention. From Paris the picture passed into the collection of the king of Prussia ; and that is all we know of this remarkable work. Did Rubens paint it for one of the gentlemen whose acquaintance he made at the court of Marie de Medici ? Is it possibly the present he offered to M. d'Argouges (1) and with which the recipient was very pleased ? We put the question, which seems to us a very natural one, but we cannot answer it.

The composition is extremely simple. Lazarus has just woken from the sleep of death and stepped from his tomb, which is hollowed out of a rock. His two sisters are stooping before him ; one is undoing the bands round his hands and arms, the other is looking in joy and surprise at Christ, who is standing behind her, with one hand raised on a level with his head, the other with his chest. His attitude proclaims the mighty magician, who commands life and death, and the benefactor exhorting Lazarus, who is still hesitating to come forth. The expression of the newly-risen is touching ; he is drawn forward by the powerful glance of his Saviour, while his whole body betrays stiffness and impotence. Two apostles, one of whom is taking off the shroud, are present at the scene. The colour is strong. Christ's red cloak and white robe, Lazarus's white shroud and the luminous flesh of the women stand out vigorously against the dark shadows. The painting is broad and powerful. The picture is certainly later than 1618-1620, the date



THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS (Museum, Berlin).

(1) Io feci al signr d'Argouse un bel presente di un quadro grande de mia mano propria, il quale mostro d'agradir molto. (Rubens to Valavez, 3 July 1625).

assigned to it by the Berlin catalogue. It contains more variety, softness, light and colour than Rubens used to display at the time when he painted the pictures for the Jesuits' church. His brush has already in certain parts a freedom of movement which heralds the period of transition from his second to his third manner, that is to say, the years 1623-1624. The sketch is in the Louvre; it contains one more apostle than the picture.

Rubens also made a grisaille after this picture, which was intended as a model for the engraver. The alteration he introduced into the original composition is worth noting. He raised the number of figures from six to seventeen. Behind the two apostles he put six spectators crying out with astonishment at the sight of the miracle; behind Christ stand five scribes watching his deeds and movements with suspicious and malevolent eyes. Instead of a dark cave we see a tomb cut in a regular manner in the rock. The principal group has not gained by it, and the action has become no more dramatic; but the composition is better filled and the impression produced by the miracle is rendered in greater variety. In that form the picture was engraved by Boëtius a Bolswert.

THE CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN. — The « Coronation of the Virgin » in the Museum at Brussels dates from the same time, that is about 1625. It was painted for the altar of the Lady Chapel in the south transept of the church of the Récollets at Antwerp (*Œuvre*. N^o 362). It is a work of minor importance: the Virgin is kneeling on the clouds under the crescent moon between God the Father and God the Son who are holding a crown over her head while the Holy Ghost hovers above her, and little angels flutter under her feet. The painting is the work of a pupil, retouched by the master, who has added with his own hand a couple of admirable little heads of angels. The Berlin Museum has a slightly modified replica of this picture, also painted by pupils and retouched by the master (*Œuvre*. N^o 363).

THE EDUCATION OF THE VIRGIN. — A work in all respects more remarkable, widely known and fully deserving its great fame, is the « Education of the Virgin » (*Œuvre*. N^o 140). Rubens painted it for the Chapel of St Anne in the church of the Reformed Carmelites at Antwerp, where it remained till 1794, when it was sent to Paris by the commissioners of the French Republic. In 1815 it returned, with a large number of the artistic treasures taken from Antwerp, and was placed in the Museum of that town, where it may still be seen.

St Anne is sitting on a bench in her garden; Mary stands before her, laying her hand, in which she holds a book, on the knees of her mother. Behind the bench, and leaning his arm on the back of it, is St Joachim, who is looking at mother and daughter. It is a scene of peace and happiness. St Anne, with maternal solicitude, has laid her hand on her daughter's shoulder, and is fixing her eyes, radiant with love, on two little angels who are holding a crown over Mary's head. The household knows nothing of care or privation; the mother is dressed like a woman in easy circumstances. Over her red robe she wears a black cloak lined with fur, and a thin white veil covers her head and chest. Mary wears a robe of grey-blue silk and a pale blue scarf over her shoulders and breast. The bench on which St Anne is sitting is of marble, richly worked; behind her rises an arbour supported by marble pilasters. The right side of the picture is flooded with light, which throws brilliant reflections on the folds and broken surfaces

of Mary's silk robe, plays in pearly gleams on the little angels and casts golden rays across the pale grey atmosphere. The scene is radiant with joy ; on the right a rose-tree in flower climbs up the frame, the angels have roses in their hands, and verdant branches escape from the arbour. All, no doubt, is a reminiscence of happy days passed by Rubens in his father's house, of his mother with her serene face, so loving and so dearly loved, of his sister Blandina in her youthful beauty, the leafy arbour, and the flower garden that lay behind the house. He has been satisfied to ennoble this picture of middle-class domestic life by the expression of the characters. To him, Mary is already the chosen one, awaiting a high destiny and thinking of loftier things than her school-book. She is no more the little middle-class girl learning her lessons ; she is the young Virgin, the future Mother of God. Her head is encircled by a narrow aureole ; on one side silvery reflections play over her dress, on the other it reflects the red of St Anne's robe. Here we see the apotheosis of virginal purity, shining all around and spreading over all : the angels in the sky, the flowers along the trellis, and the passing clouds seem to raise in chorus a hymn of youth and joy.

Rubens painted this picture *con amore*, and put the same care into it that he put into the altar-pieces painted for the churches of Antwerp and the neighbouring towns, Mechlin, Brussels, and Ghent. It is not entirely by his own hand ; the background is the work of one of his pupils, perhaps Theodoor van Thulden, who at that time was fond of these pale grey tones and silvery light. But the master finished the picture, and painted the heads of St Anne, Mary and Joachim ; it was he who poured the light over Mary's robe, the plump little angels and the soft and fluid air ; and he retouched the whole work. It is later than 1620 ; and this becomes instantly plain on comparing the picture with the Calvary that hangs opposite ; the painting is freer ; a clearer and more abundant light plays in reflections on the flesh and the garments ; we find a number of indications revealing more maturity as well as more suppleness in the brush. The large part taken in it by collaborators and the absence of any document on its origin would make it very difficult to fix the date of the picture, were it not that the work itself furnishes us with information on the subject. The model who sat for Mary was no other than young Helena Fourment, who became Rubens's second wife. The girl, already well developed, who was to marry at 16, might then have been about 10 or 11 ; she was born in 1614, and the picture therefore must have been painted about 1624 or 1625. I am convinced that the St Anne, whom Rubens painted so lovingly, the excellent mother with the intelligent and sympathetic face whom we meet in more than one picture, is no other than Rubens's own mother, Maria Pypelinckx.

I remember how on going into a printseller's shop in Antwerp a day or two after this idea had struck me for the first time, I saw the magnificent engraving made after this picture by Schelte a Bolswert ; I asked the printseller if he knew who the people were. He answered unhesitatingly : « Certainly : the Mary is Helena Fourment, the St Anne is Maria Pypelinckx, and « the Joachim is Jan Rubens » — « What makes you think that ? » I asked him with much interest. — « Oh, it is an old tradition handed on to me by my uncle, who kept this shop » more than seventy years and knew all the Antwerp artists ». Though a little disappointed at finding that my supposed discovery was no discovery at all, I was none the less pleased at seeing my hypothesis confirmed by tradition. Is this tradition equally well founded in the case

of Rubens's father? I should not like to say that it is; but I might confine myself to saying that the model, who here sat for Joachim, appears in more than one of Rubens's pictures; in the *Virgin with the Parrot* in the Antwerp Museum, for instance, which was painted eleven years before, and in which the model referred to seems some ten years younger.

THE ADORATION OF THE KINGS. — It was for an Antwerp church, the church of the abbey of St Michael, that Rubens painted the most important of the altar-pieces of the years 1622-1625, the *Adoration of the Kings* now in the Antwerp Museum (*Œuvre*. N^o 174). The picture was ordered by the abbot, Mathias Irsseus, for the high-altar of the monastery church, and paid for by two instalments of 750 florins each, the first on the 23rd December, 1624, and the second on the 29th August, 1626. It may be taken that the picture was finished between these two dates, that is, in 1625. It is remarkable not only in itself, but also because it marks a notable change in Rubens's manner, and inaugurates the series of works of his third and last period.

In the centre of the foreground kneels one of the kings, with a censer in his hand. He is no longer a dignified elder as in the preceding Adorations, but a robust man in the prime of life with long black hair and a grey beard. He wears a white robe and a cape of cloth of gold, richly adorned with precious stones and edged with ermine; beside him stands his page, of whom we only see the head and the end of a dark blue garment. On the left of this first group stands an old king with a long white beard, and an eagle nose and eye. He is draped in an immense red cloak which falls in long folds to the ground. Behind his two companions stands the negro king, whose powerful frame is dressed in a pale silk turban and green mantle. On the right is Our Lady, wearing a red robe over a blue petticoat, and holding the child, who is raising himself up in his manger, which is filled with straw, a white cushion and a sheepskin. On the ground lies the ox, whose great head seems to come out of the frame. Among these figures we see St Joseph and some half-dozen of the kings' suite; higher up are five or six more, one of them on horseback and two on camels. The whole group is framed by a transparent blue sky and the brown wood-work of the stable, which stands on the ruins of a superb ancient building.

The figures are full of movement: the kneeling king, who, with bowed head, is looking reverentially at the child; the king in the red cloak, holding his gold cup with a stern air; the negro who is looking at Mary and the child as if he would like to carry off one and tear the other in pieces; the men of the suite crowding round and leaning forward to lose none of the spectacle. The grouping is well thought out. The group nearest the spectator is kneeling down, the next is ranked round and above it, and higher still comes a second row, thus filling the frame in a most decorative manner. All of them show more curiosity about an unusual spectacle than reverence for the Child-God. The picture is very theatrical and more gorgeous, perhaps, than any other Rubens ever painted. The richness of the colouring is specially admirable; as we have said, this was the first picture in which he adopted a new manner, which he was to carry to greater lengths but never to renounce. In the pictures of 1612-1624 he disposes his colours in large masses, clearly separated, independent of each other and terminated by sharply drawn outlines; his effects of light consist in the oppositions of black and brown, balancing



THE ADORATION OF THE KINGS
(Museum, Antwerp)



Heinrich Schaeffer, Hühner des Saiten

and emphasizing each other. A certain evolution is clearly proved by a comparison between the earliest and latest works of this period, the « Unbelief of St Thomas » and the « History of Marie of Medici » : gradually the colour becomes better blended, the light paler, the forms more marrowy, and the lines less sharply defined, while the brushwork acquires more freedom and animation ; but in general the characteristic features of all these pictures remain the same. In the « Adoration of the Kings », on the other hand, we find a sharp change. Harmony in strength gives place to the concert of delicately analysed tints. The colours are no longer arranged in large masses, nor reduced to a few principal tones ; they are full of *nuances*, of play, of reflections, and of combinations of tone and tone. In the figures in the foreground these graceful refinements are pushed to their furthest limit. Luminous and transparent tones dominate in the kneeling king : his ample white surplice is newly unfolded ; on the shoulder it is an unbroken dead white ; lower down it becomes transparent and suggests the dark colour of the under-garment. The bands of gold that hang over the top of the arm fall along the back and throw over the modelling of the body and the train that falls in broad folds to the ground, golden lights that flame under the reddish reflection of the old king's mantle. The chest of the kneeling Mage is covered with the gold cape ornamented with many coloured jewels and a border of ermine. The gold gleams on the broken surfaces of the stuff, while the flame of the censer throws a border of glowing red over the rich tissue.

The negro king is standing. Over his powerful loins the green silk is stretched tight, and the modelling is emphasized under the effect of light by very pale tones, which disappear towards the bottom and grow darker towards the top by becoming veiled in shadow. His waist is encircled by a scarf of pale-coloured silk shot with gold ; on his neck glows a red carbuncle ; his shoulders are covered with a dark green cloak, trimmed with light brown fur. The hand that lies on his hip appears out of a blue sleeve ; at the point where it touches the furred cloak, tints of pale green, with golden lights playing in them, soften the transition from the brilliant blue to the deep green. Between the negro prince and the kneeling king comes the little page, whose fair head and blue sleeve serve as a transition between the green robe of the one and the white surplice of the other.

The white head of the old king rests on his ample red cloak, which falls, not in regular folds, but in a sinuous line from his shoulders to his feet. Outside it is adorned with gold embroideries ; the inside, which is thrown over his shoulder, is a flat red. The cloak is turned back at the edge and exposes a robe of an indecisive bluish shade, sown with golden patterns and edged with broad dark fur, on which play fugitive reflections ; the sleeve near the hand appearing out of the cloak is the same bluish colour as the robe. The hands, which are holding a cup and cover, seem to flame under the reflections of gold and purple emitted by the metal and the scarlet cloak. In the sleeves of the cloak lurk shadows of a rich black, which throw up the weight and suppleness of the precious stuff.

Mary is in shadow. Her red robe shows in places tints of pale rose and dark brown, there are reflections of pale green and dark green on her blue mantle, about her shoulders floats a veil which is pale brown on one side, forming the transition from the white flesh to the red robe, and on the other side is pale green to blend the red robe with the blue cloak thrown over her shoulder. In front of Mary lies the Child Jesus, whose tender white flesh unites with the

linen, the very pale sheepskin, the straw, the ox's head, and the ground, to form a luminous passage by the mixture of white, grey and brown.

Neutral tints prevail in the upper part, dark brown on the right, light brown on the left, relieved by a few more vivid notes. The warmly-coloured head of St Joseph, the white robe of the servant leaning forward behind the negro king, the brilliant red of the jacket of a negro, the red cap of a camel-driver, the greenish blue of the sky with greyish white clouds floating in it, the marble columns, the helmets of two soldiers, the heads and light-coloured clothes of two other servants, and the red caps and bluish clothes of two horsemen, stand out in a subdued manner.

Here Rubens reveals himself as above all things a painter; the unity of the action has become a secondary matter, and each figure taken separately diminishes in importance. The total effect of the colours is the great thing. Notwithstanding the scattering of the colour and the light, their harmony has become greater, and for the first time we find in this « Adoration of the Kings » a new grouping of tones. Not only do the colours react upon each other better, but they radiate from a central point towards the extremities, and all the parts agree with one another in contributing to the general effect. In the centre, as the focus of colour and light, we have the white surplice of the kneeling king and his gold cape, on which the flame of the censer throws glowing reflections; all around him the tones grow weaker, in the red robe of the old king, the green-bronze robe of the negro king, the quicksilver-blue and brick-red garments of the Virgin, the soft little body of Jesus, and the powerful head of the ox. Higher up come half-tones in the circle of the heads of the masters and their suite; higher still the bronzed bodies of the servants and the flat blue of the sky. The result is a connected and blended whole, in which every shade and every reflection contribute to the general effect and form a mighty symphony of colour. This is not the first time we have noticed Rubens's tendency to group the secondary figures round the principals: we have already remarked it in the « Descent from the Cross ». But there the protagonist was also the focus of light and colour, and his signification justified his predominance. Here the central point is a character of secondary interest. It is not to the part he plays, but to the light and colour which the painter has lavished on him, that he owes his position as the master-figure in the composition.

The difference between the « Calvary » of 1620 and the picture now before us is immense. In the former we might still note the full, intense light, the large masses of colour, the nude flesh and the skilful and dramatic movement of each figure; action, external life, was still of great importance; in the latter the artist is thinking of nothing but the harmony and fusion of tones; the characters are of no importance except for the spots of colour they make, and the light they give and receive; they do not act so much as decorate, and their own existence is effaced in the general effect of their tones. The colour is triumphant, and the light has become more abundant without having as yet the blonde sweetness and the incomparable power it was to achieve later. Rubens was to pursue his course along the new road he had entered on, and tread step by step the distance that lay between the « Adoration of the Kings » and the altar-piece of his mortuary chapel. He remained ever the dramatic artist *par excellence*, but he became more and more the unrivalled colourist; side by side with the mighty pourtrayer of

human passion and creator of the human body we find the magician of colour and light who was to become more and more master of both.

In 1794 the picture was taken to Paris by the commissioners of the French Republic, and it returned in 1815. The sketch for this remarkable work is now in the Wallace Collection in London. It differs markedly from the picture. The two kings in the foreground are different in form and attitude; the two pages are standing on the extreme left, and in the background, in place of the columns, are members of the kings' suite.

The Cassel Museum has the portrait of a European in Eastern dress which was evidently used as the model for the negro king (*Œuvre*. N^o 1091). The attitude is the same, and the costume, through differing in colour, is composed of garments of the same shape as the Moorish prince's. Until lately it was not known who this European in Eastern garments was. A fortunate discovery among the archives of the church of Schooten, a village not far from Antwerp, has given the answer to the riddle. Nicolas Respani or Respaigne, a merchant of Antwerp, who lived in Venice with his first wife at the beginning of the seventeenth century, made his will on the 22nd November, 1647, in which he leaves to his wife « his portrait in Turkish costume painted by Rubens ». Respani returned to Antwerp in 1619, and married again there on the 24th October of the same year. While living in Italy he had visited Jerusalem, where he obtained the title of Knight of the Holy Sepulchre. On his return he had his portrait painted in 1623 or 1624 in the dress of a knight of the order, and sat as a model for the negro king in the « Adoration of the Kings » in the Antwerp Museum. He was a member of the circle to which Rubens belonged; from 1623-1624 to 1630 he was a member of the chamber of rhetoric, the « Gilliflower »; on the 23rd October, 1627, he was one of the witnesses of the marriage of Elisabeth Fourment with Nicolas Piquery (1).



PORTRAIT OF NICOLAS RESPANI (Museum, Cassel).

In the Oldenbourg Museum there is a portrait of a man with a long beard, wearing a

(1) P. GÉNARD : *P. P. Rubens*, p. 412. — MAX ROOSFS : *De Man in het oostersch gewaad uit het Museum van Cassel*, Bulletin-Rubens, V. 103.

furred cloak and a gold chain round his neck, who recalls another figure in the « Adoration of the Kings », and was painted about the same time (*Œuvre*. N° 1110).

MYTHOLOGICAL PICTURES. — To the same period and the same manner as the « History of Marie de Medici » belong several pictures representing mythological subjects. First comes



OLD WOMAN AND TWO BOYS WARMING THEMSELVES (Museum, Dresden).

the « Venus warming herself » in the Brussels Museum (*Œuvre*. N° 700). The picture is not now in its original state, and is called « Venus in the cave of Vulcan ». On the left we see the god of fire working at his forge ; Venus comes to look for him : she is holding Cupid by the hand but turning her head to look at Pan who is crouching behind her offering her figs, pomegranates, apples, and apricots. Behind the god are Pomona, with a basket of fruit on her shoulder, and Ceres, with a crown of wheat-ears on her head. Originally, in place of Vulcan there was an old woman warming her hands at a fire-basket and beside her a boy blowing the fire and a youth bringing wood. This group was removed and replaced by Vulcan. From the detached fragment another picture was made which is now in the

Museum at Dresden (*Œuvre*. N° 861). The fact of this separation is proved by an old copy made after the original picture and now in the Royal Museum at The Hague, and also by a second copy which was sold in 1882 with the collection of Herr Ruppertshoven von Boll of Vienna. A third copy by Matthijs van Bergen formed part of the collection of the king of Prussia at Berlin. The picture in the Brussels Museum provides another certain proof : in it may still be clearly seen the line separating the added part from the original picture and corresponding exactly with one of the edges of the panel in the Dresden Museum. Probably one of the owners of the original picture was shocked at the nudity of certain figures and wished to be rid of these pagan deities



PETER PAUL RUBENS
after the engraving by Paul Pontius (National Gallery, London)

front view and a gold necklace for neck, who recalls another figure in the 'Adoration of the Kings', and was painted about the same time (*Etren.* No. 110).

Mythenquaden, etc. (1610). In the foreground and the same subject as the 'History of Minerva Minos', showing several pictures illustrating mythological subjects. First comes

the figure of Minerva herself (No. 1610). Minerva is shown seated on a throne, with her right hand on the bow of Ulysses, and the left on her lap. She is in the fire-working of her fingers. Venus notices to look at him; she is holding Cupid by the hand but turning her head to look at Pan who is granching behind her offer for her figs, pomegranates, pears, and apples. Behind the group is a group of figures, including a figure of Vulcan, an old woman, a boy blowing the fire, and a youth bringing wood. This group was removed and replaced by Vulcan. From the detached fragment another picture was made which is now in the

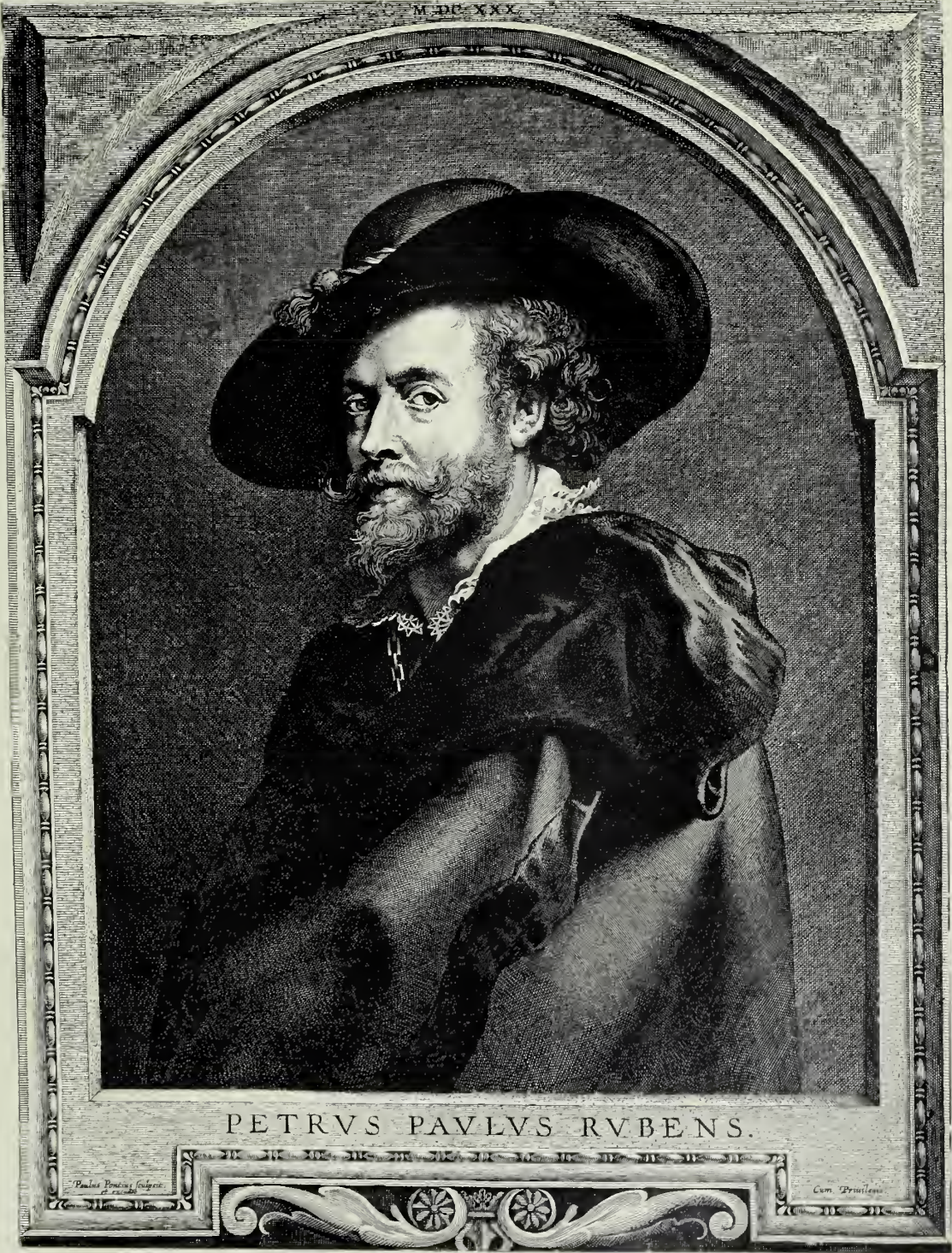


The 'Mythenquaden' (No. 1610) of the 'History of Minerva Minos'.

Academy at Dresden (No. 1610). The fact of this separation is proved by an old copy made after the original picture was sent to the Royal Museum at The Hague and also by a second copy which was sold at 1800 and was collected by Herr Ruppertmann, now kept at Vienna. A drawing by Muller's was found in the collection of the Duke of Prussia at Berlin. The picture at the Brussels Museum is another picture which was found in the same place. It has been separated and added care with the original picture and is now in the collection of the Duke of Prussia. The picture was checked at the nudity of certain figures and was removed and placed in a separate picture.

PETER PAUL RUBENS
after the engraving by Paul Pontius (National Gallery, London)

M. DC. XXX.



PETRVS PAVLVS RVBENS.

Paulus Pontius Gougen
sculpsit

Com. Prutenus

while keeping the old woman and the two boys. This group, moreover, was much the best part of the picture ; the warm yellowish white light, rising from the fire and then turning to dark red and in places to transparent brown, the softened reflection of the flames on the faces of the woman and the children, and the brightness that becomes lost and absorbed in the obscurity of the cave, are all splendidly rendered. The effect is the same, on a large scale, as that which Rubens, imitating Elsheimer, put into his « Flight into Egypt » in the Cassel Museum. The subject is the same as that of his « Shivering Venus » in the Antwerp Museum. The group in the original picture at Brussels is entirely by Rubens's hand, like the fragment at Dresden.

Among mythological subjects, we may also mention the « Tiger and Plenty », or rather « Neptune and Cybele », symbolizing the alliance of Earth and Water, of which two examples are known. One, painted in the manner of Jordaens, but certainly a Rubens, dates from the time when he painted the Medici Gallery and belongs to the Hermitage Museum at St Petersburg ; the other is in a private collection (*Œuvre*. Nos 683, 684).

HISTORICAL PICTURES. — A remarkable work of this date must be mentioned as a historical picture, the « Thomyris and Cyrus » in the Earl of Darnley's collection at Cobham Hall (*Œuvre*. No 791). In the middle of the canvas is a slave holding the severed head of King Cyrus over a copper vase into which he is letting the blood drip ; on the left stands Queen Thomyris with the women of her train ; on the right a dense group of courtiers and warriors ; in the background are richly sculptured columns supporting the vaulted roofs of the palace. The *ensemble* is very decorative, and its splendour and brilliance are not diminished by the horror of the action performed by the executioner before the sumptuously attired barbarian princess. All the spectators appear equally indifferent to the scene of blood ; Thomyris alone testifies her horror by the spasmodic gesture with which she raises her hand with the fingers spread. This is a peculiarity we notice in many of Rubens's works, the exhibition of an atrocious spectacle in a peaceful and sunny setting, among people breathing happiness and dressed in their richest clothes. The picture dates from the time of the Medici Gallery ; one of the women in the suite of Queen Thomyris is carrying a little dog, like the one Rubens presented to the queen-mother from the Infanta Isabella. For this woman and the one by her side Rubens made a study which is in the Albertina (*Œuvre*. No 1566). The pages who bear the train of Queen



VENUS AND CUPID (Sedelmeyer, Paris).

Thomyris's robe are Rubens's children : Albert, who was born in 1614, might be nine, and Nicolas, born in 1618, might be five : the picture, therefore must have been painted in 1623. Rubens took up the same subject again in a picture in the Louvre, painted by his own hand, while the other example had been prepared by one of his pupils and only retouched by himself.

Another important picture, unfortunately lost, was the « Cambyses and the Judge » (*Œuvre*. N^o 793), which Rubens painted for the Magistrate's hall in the Brussels Town-hall, that it might serve as a salutary warning to the judges. He was paid 3000 florins for it on the 6th April, 1622 ; but it was not finished till towards the end of the following year (1) ; it was destroyed in the fire caused by the bombardment of the town in 1695.

PORTRAITS. — A number of portraits date from this period. Besides that of Nicolas Respani we know the portrait of a woman belonging to M^r Charles Butler and bearing the inscription *Virgo Brabantina* (*Œuvre*. N^o 1103). It represents a young woman with her hands crossed on her waist, a necklace of white pearls round her neck, and a chain and a brooch enriched with precious stones on her breast. It is a superb portrait of a woman unknown, painted by Rubens's own hand.

From 1624 dates a portrait of Emmanuel Sueyro, the historian, chevalier of the Order of Christ, which was engraved by Peter De Jode for the *Anales de Flandres*, and is only known to us from that engraving (*Œuvre*. N^o 1065).

THE PORTRAIT OF RUBENS. — In 1623-1624 Rubens painted his own portrait (*Œuvre*. N^o 1043) ; its fame is universal, and it represents him as he wished to be known to posterity. He painted it at the request of Charles I, King of England, then Prince of Wales. The Earl of Danby (Lord Danvers), wishing to make a present to the prince, asked William Trumbull, the English envoy at Brussels, to treat with Rubens for a portrait of the painter for the heir to the throne. On the 1st March, 1623, William Trumbull communicated this news to Sir Dudley Carleton, and on the 10th January, 1625, Rubens wrote to his friend Valavez : « The Prince of Wales is the greatest amateur of art of all the princes in the world. He has had something » of mine before, and asked me, through the English agent in Brussels, for my portrait so » urgently that there was no possible means of refusing him, though it did not seem to me » proper to send my portrait to a prince of his degree but he forced my modesty ». In the catalogue of the pictures of king Charles I this work is mentioned as « given to the king by Lord Danby ». It is still in the royal collection at Windsor.

It is almost useless to describe this portrait, which has become, so to speak, the official likeness of the master, has been reproduced times without number and is well known to everyone. Rubens is looking to the right, with his eyes turned aside, and wearing his usual expression of distinction not exempt from pride. He wears a large felt hat with a low, round crown encircled by a gold cord, the wide brim throwing a faint shadow over his high and well rounded forehead. His eyebrows form lightly and regularly curved arches, between which his forehead is creased by a double ridge, which reveals a serious and reflective nature. His

(1) Letter from Rubens to de Marselaer, 23 February 1623, printed by H. Hymans in the *Bulletin de l'Académie royale de Belgique* (Classe des Beaux-Arts, August, 1900).

dark brown eyes are clear ; above and below them the flesh is manifestly sinking down. His nose is almost straight, with a slight fold on the bridge, and becomes slightly broader towards the tip ; the nostrils are wide, and a clearly marked hollow runs down to the mouth ; the moustache is thick and proudly turned up ; it spreads in a light fringe over the right cheek, while on the left a few hairs

are turned up in a point towards the brim of the hat. His complexion is pale, white on the temples and slightly pink on the cheeks. He wears a turned down collar edged with lace. A heavy gold chain, five of the links of which we see to be square, hangs over his chest, and the end of his cloak is thrown back in broad folds over his shoulder. In thus immortalizing his features, Rubens stamped them with a seal of elegance, which shows him in the most advantageous light. The broad-brimmed hat which throws up the whiteness of the face like a dark frame, the abundant curly hair thrown back in regular and supple ringlets, the proud, frank eyes with their firm, clear oblique look, the moustache turned up in that jaunty, challenging manner, the lower lip which comes forward with an air of decision,



VIRGO BRABANTINA (Sir Charles Butler, London).

the beard twisted to a point with an elegance full of vigour, the half open collar, and the large sleeves of the cloak ; everything combines to give this portrait an air of manly beauty, nobility of intellect and artistic ease, and makes it one of the handsomest heads of a man that the world has ever known. It is the portrait of the artist in his triumph. He has conquered all the difficulties of life, and raised himself to ever grander heights ; he reigns undisputed in his sphere, and the consciousness of his superiority radiates from every feature of his face.

In saying that Rubens showed himself to the best advantage in the portrait of 1624, we do not mean that he embellished or altered his features of deliberate purpose ; but there can

be no doubt that he touched up his exact likeness a little to make it his official and definitive portrait; and he was particularly anxious that the engravings destined to spread it abroad should be made according to his own idea. M. Henri Hymans has shown in a profound and very interesting study the changes the painter introduced into the work of the engraver, who was to reproduce the portrait of 1624 (1). Pontius, who engraved the plate in 1630, at first put neither the inscription nor the frame, representing in the upper part a sort of sculptured moulding, which appear in the later states. In the very rare first state, Rubens is represented with a broad, high forehead which very plainly suggests the baldness of the scalp; his brows are very puckered at the root of the nose and run down in a very marked way towards his ears; under his eyebrows the skin falls in heavy folds; a few hairs of his moustache are turned up very high on one side of his cheek, while on the other they rise in four quite distinct strands to the brim of the hat; the beard is heavy; the tip of the nose goes to a sharp point and a deep hollow runs along the nostril; the total effect has something hard and crabbed about it, revealing no very amiable character in the sitter. In the second state the engraving shows the moustache markedly shortened and the point of the nose rounded; the lateral ridge is smaller; the nostril has become more regular; the rebellious hairs of the moustache rising towards the brim of the hat are shorter and less bushy, and the expression of the face is calmer and sweeter. In the third state, the plate has a moulding, but no inscription; the whole face has been retouched, the shadow of the hat falls more broadly over the forehead and hides the baldness, the eyes are not so sunk and the brows are raised, the skin no longer falls in folds, the point of the nose has lost all its sharpness, and the upper lip is thrown forward by the strong and shapely moustache, while the lower lip has receded. The point of the moustache is broader and turns up more on the cheek; the mouth is wider open, and the whole face is lightened, softened and improved. In the fourth state the engraving shows still more marked changes: the moustache is no longer turned up like a dragoon's, but forms a delicate curl shown against the cheek, a lock of hair has slipped from the hat and falls over the forehead, which till then had been too little covered; the shadow that lies on it is still thicker, and the expression of the eyes has gained sweetness. In this form the engraving bears the date M.DC.XXX, and the name *Petrus Paulus Rubens*. These changes introduced into Pontius's engraving bring it into closer resemblance to the picture than it was in the first state; but while sweetening the expression of Rubens's face, they have made him look no younger. He was only forty-seven and was therefore in the prime of his life when he painted his own portrait. The engraving thus finished under the master's direction has elements of perfection in form and seriousness in expression; it has taken on an air of grandeur and nobility which no doubt rather idealizes Rubens, but by robbing his features of adventitious details gives play to what is essential in them, and brings them out in all their clearness and purity.

Rubens painted a second example of his portrait of 1624, which is now in the Uffizi at Florence (*Œuvre*. N^o 1044). The shape of the head is the same, but the tonality is warmer, the cheek turned towards the spectator is lit by a ray of golden light, which tints it with a shade of brown impregnated with sunlight and envelops it in reflections in the manner of Rembrandt.

(1) H. HYMANS: *Rubens d'après ses portraits* (*Bulletin-Rubens*, Vol. II, p. 1).

The background is a grey-green, on which the paint is spread very thin. The brushwork is so free and creamy, and the whole picture so splendid that I do not consider it to be a replica but the earlier in date of the two portraits.

In 1628 Rubens had a copy made of it by one of his pupils, and sent it in 1630 to his friend Peiresc, who bequeathed it to Bonifazio Borilli (*Œuvre*. N^o 1045). It remained in that family for nearly two centuries; at present it is at Aix in Provence and belongs to the heirs of M. Roux Alphéran de Lauzière.

The Uffizi at Florence has a second portrait of Rubens very different from the first (*Œuvre*. N^o 1046). The painter is represented bareheaded. The hair is already thin on the top of his head, as in the other portrait; the ear is large and has a very heavy lobe. His moustache is not turned up, his nose is straight, and his eyebrows less arched. Here again the painter is looking over his shoulder, but a little more downwards. The painting is flat and thin, without great effects of light and colour, and appears to date from 1628, the year of Rubens's second journey into Spain. On a comparison of the portrait in the hat with this, it becomes all the more clear that the former is a show-piece, retouched, corrected, idealized, and made more distinguished than nature. The beard, if not altogether removed, is at least thinned, and reduced to silky down; the moustache is turned up, and the expression sweetened. In the portrait without the hat the complexion shows vigour and health, the hair is a ruddy brown, the beard thicker, and the handsome eyebrows are heavier. The portrait which till quite lately belonged to the Chevalier van Eersel at Brussels (*Œuvre*. N^o 1047) must date from the same period. Its resemblance to that last mentioned is striking, but here the head is leaning forward and the hair falls over the forehead. This portrait agrees perfectly with that which Rubens added to the « Adoration of the Kings », when he retouched and partly repainted it at Madrid in 1628. It must date from the same period, but is of inferior artistic value.

The portrait in the Arenberg gallery at Brussels was painted in 1630 (*Œuvre*. N^o 1048). Rubens is here represented with his head a little on one side and covered with a broad-brimmed hat; his face is more regular in outline, his curled moustache spreads out on each side without turning up, his cheek-bones are more prominent, and the whole face has grown thinner and older. As a study for this portrait Rubens made a superb drawing, now in the Albertina (*Œuvre*. N^o 1529). He represented himself in the same manner in the picture in the Pinakothek at Munich in which we see him walking with his wife Helena Fourment and his



P. P. RUBENS (Arenberg Gallery, Brussels).
After the engraving by Panneels.

son Nicolas (*Œuvre*. N^o 1051). The portrait was engraved by Panneels, one of Rubens's pupils, in the same year as it was painted.

Once again we find the same portrait in a picture belonging to M. Stroganoff at St Petersburg, in which Rubens appears in an arm-chair by the side of a table on which stands a jug of richly chased silver (*Œuvre*. N^o 1053). One hand is resting on the arm of the chair, the other, which holds a letter, is lying on his knee. By Rubens's side stands his son Nicolas. The picture is roughly painted, and is evidently a copy of a fine portrait painted by Rubens and now lost. The portrait that Vandyck drew and had engraved for his Iconography resembles the one in the Arenberg gallery, except that Rubens is represented hatless. Here again the head is a little to one side, and the moustache curled on both sides of the mouth but not turned up. Vandyck removed all the traces of age and weariness that may be noted in Panneel's engraving: the brows are lightly and correctly arched, the nose regular and full between the eyes, there are no lines on the face and the skin forms no folds. To complete this rejuvenation Vandyck covered the head with thick curls hanging down in front, which had really disappeared many years before.

However easy it may be to show that the portraits agree with each other and are faithful likenesses, it soon becomes clear that the portrait in a hat, engraved by Pontius, is the only official and guaranteed one. The portrait in which Rubens is painted with Isabella Brant shows him as the calm and tender newly-married man, happy and in love, but a little lacking in manly vigour and too studied in his attire. The portrait engraved by Panneels betrays physical decadence; the expression is dreamy, and the inner flame seems quenched. In the portrait without the hat at Florence, the baldness of the scalp detracts from the beauty of the whole, and the lowered eyes lack candour. The portrait *par excellence* shows us the man in the prime of his life and all the power of his genius; there is nothing effeminate in his beauty, nothing ostentatious in his pride; the neck, which is here bared instead of being covered as in the other portraits, and the head, which is erect instead of leaning, give him an air of firmness and assurance. This portrait, the most finished that ever he painted, gives us Rubens complete.

FRONTISPIECES FOR BOOKS. — Between 1622 and 1625 Rubens designed a number of frontispieces for books; that for the *Augustini Mascardi Silvarum libri IV*, published by the Plantin press in 1622 (*Œuvre*. N^o 1288) which was used later for *Las Obras de Don Francisco de Borja, principe de Esquilache*; and those for Dionysius Mudzaert's *Kerckelycke Historie*, printed in the same year by Hieronymus Verdussen (*Œuvre*. N^o 1291); the first and second parts of *Francisci Harwi Annales Ducum seu Principum Brabantiae* (*Œuvre*. N^{os} 1276, 1277); *Franciscus Longus a Coriolano, Summa Conciliorum*, both published by the Plantin press in 1623 (*Œuvre*. N^o 1283); the *Generate Kerckelijcke Historie* by Heribertus Rosweyde, printed the same year by Jan Cnobbaert (*Œuvre*. N^o 1295); *Caroli Scribani Politico-Christianus*, which appeared in 1624 published by Martin Nutius (*Œuvre*. N^o 1304), and *Hermannus Hugo, Obsidio Bredana* (*Œuvre*. N^o 1278), which the Plantin press published in 1626, but for which Rubens had designed the frontispiece in 1625.

For Jan van Meurs, Balthasar Moretus's partner from 1618 to 1629, he painted a small grisaille, of the most ingenious invention and very spiritedly executed, after which the painter

had his own personal mark engraved: it is now the property of the Plantin-Moretius Museum (*Œuvre*. N° 1314).

RUBENS'S ENTRY INTO POLITICS.

The period at which Rubens painted the « History of Marie de Medici » saw him also enter on his diplomatic career. The Twelve Years' Truce had expired on the 9th April, 1621, and the great question for Spain, as for the United Provinces, was whether it should be renewed or whether hostilities should be resumed. The southern provinces longed to see a continuation of the peace they had enjoyed since 1609. The resumption of hostilities meant to them a return of the calamities they had suffered from for half a century; the country, which would be enabled by peace to repair the disasters of all kinds it had experienced, would have to make new sacrifices, commerce would remain paralyzed, general insecurity would return, and the growing power of the northern provinces would render the chances of the struggle more doubtful and demand greater efforts. And the only end of it all would be to re-establish the dominion of Spain, which under the reign of Albert and Isabella had become in the eyes of our race a foreign power, and to win victories, for which our rulers themselves cared little, over our ancient fellow-countrymen, who were then a free people. The policy of the Archduke Albert, indeed, had always aimed at making this country independent of Spain, and diminishing as much as possible the tutelary power exercised by the king of Spain over Isabella and himself. War with the United Provinces, therefore, which could not be waged without the assistance of his powerful brother-in-law, was a prospect that pleased him little. Philip III had other plans: the southern Low Countries were to continue to form part of the Spanish monarchy, and the United Provinces were to return under its dominion.

Long before the expiration of the truce, the Archdukes had insisted on the King's sanctioning its renewal or its prolongation. Philip III showed himself little inclined to comply. In his eyes the Hollanders were still rebels who must be reduced to submission. Not only



FRONTISPIECE TO *Francisci Haraei Annales*
Drawing (British Museum, London).

had they wrested their own territory from his dominion, but they had closed the mouth of the Schelde against the commerce of the southern provinces ; their empire in the East and West Indies was increasing every day ; they were becoming a great maritime power which might at any moment give Spain good cause for anxiety about her possessions beyond the seas. And, moreover, were they not the most solid defenders of the Reformation, the worst enemies of His Catholic Majesty's religion? All accommodation with them was bound to be repugnant to him. For some time, therefore, he left the Archduke's letters unanswered, and when at last, on the 4th February, 1621, he stated his conditions, they proved impossible to accept. Not only did he demand the reopening of the Schelde, which was perfectly reasonable, but he stipulated also that the Dutch should renounce all trade with the East Indies and withdraw from the West Indies the forces they were maintaining there.

Besides the countries directly interested, there were others to whom the question of war or peace between Spain and the United Provinces could not be a matter of indifference. France was the hereditary enemy of the house of Austria, and disputed with it the leadership of Europe. Once engaged in war against the United Provinces, the military forces of the Catholic king ceased to be a danger elsewhere, and could lend no help to the German Emperor, the relative and co-religionist of the king of Spain. France supported the Protestants in their struggle with the Emperor of Germany, and Louis XIII and his minister, Cardinal Richelieu, lent Holland the aid of their diplomacy and their subsidies against Spain, and strove to prevent the conclusion of peace.

At the moment when the truce was on the point of expiring, an unexpected circumstance arose. At the beginning of February, 1621, the Archdukes were informed from several quarters that Maurice of Orange was willing to lend his aid to restore the United Provinces to the dominion of Spain. The great general, the son of William the Silent, had declared himself ready to betray his country and sell his companions in arms ! However improbable the rumour must have seemed, the Archdukes appeared to believe it. They had the greatest interest in ending the war at any price and removing this eternal obstacle to the return of calm and prosperity. They considered it more profitable to treat with a single individual, whom they regarded as an ambitious man whose desires might be satisfied, than to negotiate with the States General, whom they could not hope to induce to make concessions by any considerations of personal interest. They believed, and the king of Spain was of the same opinion, that Maurice might be given, or at least promised, whatever he desired or dreamed of, on condition that he consented to have the king of Spain recognised as legitimate sovereign of the United Provinces. We find no precise statement of the reward reserved for the supposed traitor, but it is certain that the partizans of peace in the southern Netherlands intended that it should be very great.

In his letter to the king of Spain of the 7th April, 1619, therefore, Don Balthasar Zuniga expressed the desire that Prince Maurice should be granted the sovereignty of Holland and Zealand, and possibly other provinces besides, on condition that he restored part of the revolted provinces to Spain and recognized the sovereignty of the king over the rest (1).

(1) GACHET : *Lettres inédites de Pierre-Paul Rubens*. Introduction, p. XX.

THE INFANTA ISABELLA CLARA EUGENIA IN THE HABIT OF A NUN



THE INFANTA ISABELLA CLARA EUGENIA IN THE HABIT OF A NUN
(National Gallery, London)

had they wanted to remove territory from his dominion, but they had closed the mouth of the Scheldt against the commerce of the southern provinces; their empire in the East and West Indies was increasing every day; they were becoming a great maritime power which might in an instant give Spain good cause to suspect those who conversed with them. Were they not the most cruel persecutors of the Protestant, the worst enemies of the Catholic Majesty's religion? His commissioners were then to be engaged in five or six years time, therefore he and his Associates must be provided with arms at least on the 4th February 1621. He stated his proposition, then pressed impossible to accept. Not only did he demand the reopening of the Scheldt, which was perfectly reasonable, but he requested also that the Dutch should renounce all trade with the East Indies and withdraw from the West Indies the forces they were maintaining there.

Beside the countries directly interested, there were others to whom the question of war or peace between Spain and the United Provinces could not be a matter of indifference. France was the hereditary enemy of the house of Austria, and disputed with it the leadership of Europe. Only engaged in war against the United Provinces, the military forces of the Catholic King could be a danger elsewhere, and could lend no help to the German Emperor, the native and co-religionist of the king of Spain. France supported the Protestants in their struggle with the Emperor of Germany, and Louis XIII and his minister, Cardinal Richelieu, lent Holland the aid of their diplomacy and their subsidies against Spain, and strove to prevent the conclusion of peace.

At the moment when the truce was on the point of expiring, an unexpected opportunity arose. At the beginning of February, 1621, the Archdukes were attacked from an unexpected quarter. Maurice of Orange was willing to lend his aid to Spain, his cousin, Governor of the provinces of Spain. The great general, the ally of a king, the ally of a power which could command the obedience of a country had felt the necessity of some extraordinary measure for the removal and punishment of the Archdukes, and he was of opinion that they had no ground to stand on which they could not be treated as a single individual, whom they regarded as an enemy, and whose person might be seized, then to negotiate with the States General, and that they were bound to make themselves by any considerations of personal interest. They consulted with the king of Spain and of the same opinion, that Maximilian and Isabella should be more prominent whatever he desired or dreamed of, on condition that Maximilian should be acknowledged by legitimate sovereign of the United Provinces. We had no precise statement of the reward reserved for the supposed traitor, but it is certain that the intentions of peace at the southern Netherlands intended that it should be very great.

In his letter to the king of Spain of the 7th April, 1619, therefore, Don Baltasar Zúñiga expressed the desire that France should be granted the sovereignty of Holland and Flanders, and possibly other provinces besides, on condition that he should give up the southern provinces of Spain and recognize the sovereignty of the king over the rest of

¹ *De Bataafsch-Zeegeest*, *Verhaal de Staat der Vereenigde Nederlanden*, p. 100.

D. ISABELLA CLARA EVGENIA, HISPANIARVM INFANS, &c.



Maurice certainly seems to have done what was necessary to maintain the hope that the war might end in this way in the minds of the king and the Archdukes. The letters exchanged between Albert and Philip III in February, 1621, prove this. On the 4th of that month the king at last yielded to the reiterated demands of his brother-in-law and his advisers, and allowed them to treat with the prince on the subject of his reconciliation. On the 8th a Dutch lady arrived in Brussels, Bertholda de Swieten, widow of Floris van T' Serclaes ; her husband had been an intimate friend of Maurice's, and she herself was on friendly terms with him. She belonged to the Roman faith, and occasionally visited our provinces, where two of her daughters had married.

She went to see the Archduke's confessor, Fray Iñigo de Brizuela, and told him that, a few weeks before, in a conversation with the prince of Orange, she had pointed out to him the great advantages which the submission of the southern provinces to their ancient sovereign might procure for him. The prince had at first been indignant at such suggestions, but three or four days later he had invited Lady T'Serclaes to come and see him, and had told her in confidence that if the recognition of the king's authority were proposed to the States General, he would support it on condition that he was granted an extraordinary reward. Later, he had summoned her again, renewed his declaration, and authorized her to go to Brussels and make his intentions known to the Archdukes. The negotiations continued between the Archdukes and the emissary. In March, 1621, she informed them that Maurice thought it desirable that an authorized person should be sent to The Hague to persuade the States General to submit to the authority of the king of Spain.

The choice for this mission fell on Peckius, the chancellor of Brabant. On the 21st March he reached Rotterdam, where he was hooted by the populace ; at Delft they threw stones and lumps of turf at the boat which was taking him to The Hague. Having decided to give the envoy a fitting reception, the States General wished to name a hotel in which he should be lodged ; but Prince Maurice assigned him one of the chief houses in the town as his residence and rode in person to meet him some distance from The Hague. But matters went no further than these acts of politeness. When Peckius had developed his proposition before the States General, the gist of which was to pledge the northern provinces to conclude a good arrangement, which should make them a single state under a single ruler by the recognition of their legitimate sovereigns, Maurice withheld his support. There was no discussion of the limits of the envoy's mission nor of the conditions made by the Archdukes ; and the reply was confined to the statement that the sovereignty belonged to the States General, which would allow no one to call it in question, and that whoever should attempt so to do would be declared incapable of negotiating any treaty whatsoever. The prince of Orange expressed to the envoy his astonishment that he should have undertaken such a mission, which must of necessity be received with indignation in a country which had long regarded its national independence as beyond all discussion. It is probable, almost certain indeed, that in urging the dispatch of an agent with a mission to lay a proposition directly before the States General, the prince's object had been to provoke the answer they actually gave, and consequently a rupture. He was anxious for war, expecting greater advantages from it for his country and himself than any the king of Spain might be able to promise him.

That, however, did not prevent Lady T'Serclaes, on her return a little later to Brussels, from telling the Archduke that, since the negotiations relative to the submission of the United Provinces had no chance of succeeding, they must content themselves with a prolongation of the truce, and that Prince Maurice held out hopes that the new conditions would be in some respects more favourable for the Spanish Netherlands than the conditions of 1609. But here again it was a case of empty or inaccurately transmitted promises.

In the meantime the Twelve Years' Truce had expired on the 9th April, 1621. Philip III had died on the 31st March, and had been succeeded by Philip IV without any notable change in the situation as the result. The Archduke Albert died on the 15th July following; his decease brought the southern Netherlands again under the direct dominion of Spain, and from being sovereign the Infanta became merely governor.

There was no immediate outbreak of hostilities on the expiration of the truce, but in the month of August, 1621, Spinola passed the frontier at the head of his army and marched on Juliers, while Zealandish Flanders was threatened on the side of the southern provinces. Juliers fell into the hands of the Spaniards on the 2nd February, 1622; Spinola laid siege to Berg-op-Zoom in June, and was forced to retreat in October. Maurice, for his part, attempted an attack on Antwerp in 1623, and the war continued with varying fortunes till the peace of Munster in 1648.

After the two armies had already taken the field, and the frontier was the theatre of a series of bloody encounters, sieges and captures of towns, Lady T'Serclaes continued for some time, but without result, her attempts to arrive at the conclusion of peace or of an armistice. We find her intervening so late as 1629. She was not alone in making these efforts. Among those who were working for the same end, though not in concert with her, we must mention Jan Brant, called the Catholic, a cousin of Isabella Brant, who lived at The Hague and with whom Rubens was on friendly terms. In 1623, or possibly earlier, Jan Brant had directed his efforts to the renewal of the truce. He seems to have taken the first steps towards opening up negotiations to that end at the command of Maurice of Nassau, and he continued the work for a long time. It was only natural that he should have recourse to the good offices of his cousin Rubens, of whose credit with the Archduchess he was aware. The earliest evidence we have of Rubens's being involved in affairs of state is in 1623, and after that date they are very numerous.

On the 30th September of that year the Infanta granted him a monthly salary of ten crowns, charged on the funds of the citadel of Antwerp, in recognition of services rendered to the king, and in order to permit him to continue them with greater ease. These services can only have been political; and, indeed, on the very day when Isabella signed the order, Rubens wrote a letter to Peckius which clearly shows that he was in treaty with his cousin Jan Brant and was acting as intermediary between the Chancellor of Brabant and the court of Brussels on the one hand, and the people occupied in winning over Prince Maurice on the other. The part played by Rubens did not long remain secret. On the 30th August, 1624, the French ambassador at Brussels, de Baugy, wrote to d'Ocquerre, the secretary of state: « The proposal of a truce is by no means displeasing to the Infanta, from whatever quarter it may come, and she listens nearly every day to those which are made her in this matter by Rubens, a famous

painter of Antwerp, who is known in Paris by his works in the palace of the queen-mother. He has gone to and fro several times between this and the marquis Spinola's camp, giving it out that he has some private intelligence in this matter with Prince Henry of Nassau, whom he declares of his own knowledge to be inclined towards the truce (1). A fortnight later, on the 13th September, de Baugy wrote again from Brussels to d'Ocquerre: "The painter Rubens is in this town. The Infanta has commanded him to paint the portrait of the prince of Poland, a matter in which I fancy he will succeed better than in the negotiations for a truce, to which he can only give superficial colour and shade, without body or solid foundation". It was known also that Rubens was negotiating through the medium of his cousin Brant, and people tried to find his motives for intervention in considerations of his personal interest. "I have learned", writes de Baugy again, "that Rubens is acting solely from his own interest, and a desire to assure himself the enjoyment of an advantageous inheritance he expects from an uncle of his wife's living in Holland, with whom Rubens has opened a correspondence on this subject". On the following 13th October, William Trumbull, the English political agent at Brussels, wrote to Secretary Conway that Rubens had concluded a treaty of peace between the two parts of the Netherlands.



A WAITING-WOMAN OF THE INFANTA — Drawing (Albertina).

We find our artist, therefore, suddenly recognised as a very active politician, esteemed and consulted by his sovereigns, suspected by foreign powers, and treating directly with the chiefs of the national and foreign armies. In the letter he wrote to the Infanta on the 15th March, 1625, he himself reminds her that she formerly did him the honour to consult him on affairs of state. The negotiations of 1624 must have been of a serious nature, for on the 11th October of that year Philip IV wrote to his aunt Isabella that he has read her letter and that of the Catholic employed in the matter of the truce, and that he approves of the meeting of those responsible for the government and of the six months armistice during their negotiations.

When Rubens made his entry into political life, he was admired as an artist all over Europe; and admired no less for the far-reaching nature of his intellect and the variety of his knowledge. He had travelled over a large part of the civilized world and associated with

(1) On Rubens's diplomatic career see especially GACHARD: *Histoire politique et diplomatique de Rubens*, Brussels, 1877, and CRUZADA VILLAAMIL: *Rubens diplomático español*, Madrid, 1874; also *Correspondance de Rubens*, edited by CHARLES RUELENS and MAX ROÖSES.

princes, scholars, statesmen and soldiers of many nations. The most influential men in Antwerp were his intimates; he had the *entrée* at the court of Brussels, and he took a practical interest in politics: it is not surprising, therefore, that the Infanta, who had learned to know him, had chosen him for her counsellor and the intermediary between the court of Brussels and Jan Brant; we find proof of this in four letters of the painter's which have come down to us. The first is dated the 30th September, 1623, and contains a report to the Chancellor of an interview he had had with Jan Brant at Antwerp. Rubens was a partisan of peace, and he proves himself that he enjoyed his work by advising Peckius not to send Jan Brant to Brussels for the future but to keep him at Antwerp, whence Rubens would take or send his answer to Brussels. « But do not tell him » he adds, « that it was I who suggested this, or he may grow suspicious and think that I want to push him aside, to become the sole person responsible » for the whole matter ».

The second of the letters we alluded to is very long, and was written from Paris to the Infanta by Rubens on the 15th March, 1625. He had heard that the Duke of Neuburg, the same for whom he had painted four altar-pieces in 1619, had left Madrid to go to Brussels by way of Paris, and that the king of Spain had given him plenary powers to conclude the truce with the Dutch. He looked upon the choice as an unfortunate one, owing to the credulity of the duke, who would also be liable to suspicion as having a personal interest in seeing the termination of a war that was disastrous to his own states. Moreover it was not a wise move to send the duke to the court of France to try and persuade the influential statesmen there to favour the peace, for one of the principles of French policy was to leave no stone unturned to prolong hostilities between Spain and the Dutch. The negotiations with the Prince of Orange, which were still being carried on in March 1625, must remain secret according to the express desire of Maurice, who had declared that he would break them off immediately if any whisper of them came to the ears of the king of France or of England. He advised the Infanta, therefore, to dispatch the Duke of Neuburg to Brussels direct, and to order him meanwhile not to say a word to anyone of the affair. Supposing there should be negotiations for a general peace, it would be better to entrust the matter to some one with no personal interest in it; Cardinal Barberini, for instance, who was then expected at Paris to be present at the marriage of the king of England.

In this letter Rubens stated that the negotiations with the Prince of Orange were fairly well advanced, but also that he had learned from several quarters that there was little hope of their coming to a favourable conclusion. And, in fact, all these comings and goings, and all these secret interviews remained without result. Maurice of Nassau died on the 23rd April, 1625, and in him disappeared the man on whom, rightly or wrongly, the friends of peace had founded their hopes of an agreement between the United Provinces and the southern Netherlands. In spite of his death, the negotiations relative to the prolongation of the truce or the conclusion of peace went on. They were no longer addressed to a prince of the house of Orange, but to the legal representatives of the country. Two recently published letters from Rubens to his cousin Jan Brant, one dated the 20th July, the other the 25th August, 1625, prove that both continued to be interested in the matter and that Rubens was still the Infanta's confidential adviser.

In September, 1625, he was summoned by the governor to Dunkirk where she had gone to superintend the armament of the fleet; and there he received orders to go immediately to the territory of a prince on the German frontier. He started on the 19th September; on his return he came back to Dunkirk to report to the Infanta the result of his mission. It is not known what the mission was nor what its issue. In August, 1625, he settled at Brussels, where he spent the winter. Evidently he was most anxious to be charged with the conduct of the negotiations for peace between the northern and southern Netherlands. He was convinced that he had clearer views than most people on the politics of his age and country. In his letter to the Infanta of the 15th March, 1625, he was already communicating to her his opinion on the manner in which the negotiations would best be conducted if they wished to arrive at a general agreement between the crowns of France and Spain, at the same time as a truce in the Netherlands. On that occasion he offered his services to write on the matter to the Count-Duke Olivarez, the first minister of Philip IV, and to his cousin, the son-in-law of marquis Spinola, Don Diego Messia, later Count de Léganès. He would have been willing also to write to the marquis Spinola, if he had known the Infanta's intentions. Everything shows that he was getting ready to play the important part with which he was soon to be entrusted, and gaining ever more and more of the Infanta's confidence.

She gave him a new and signal proof of her sympathies at the time of the capture of Breda. In our provinces a great deal of importance was attached to the capture of that place, which was the hereditary patrimony of the Princes of Orange in the Netherlands. Maurice had declared that it was strong enough to have nothing to fear from a siege; once taken, it not only constituted an acquisition of territory for Spain, but was also the key to the north and a pledge of future victories. In August, 1624, the town was invested by Spinola's troops. Maurice did not oppose him, being anxious to profit by the distance of the enemy's forces to try and capture the citadel of Antwerp. Frederick Henry, who had succeeded his brother as Stadtholder of most of the Dutch provinces, tried later in vain to relieve the place. On the 5th June, 1625, the town was compelled to surrender to Spinola. The siege and capture of Breda had produced a great sensation at home and abroad. The town had scarcely been taken when Wladislas Sigismund, the Polish prince who had come to pay a visit to the Infanta, went to Breda to see the siege-works (1). While he was at Brussels, the governor commissioned Rubens to paint the illustrious foreigner's portrait. The picture has been preserved and is now in the Durazzo palace at Genoa (*Œuvre*. N^o 1078). It represents Wladislas half-length, wearing a broad-brimmed hat ornamented with a plume, and draped in a full cloak over a rich buff doublet, with one hand on his hip and the other resting on a walking-stick. Another portrait of the same prince, which represents him on horseback, is also attributed to Rubens. It was sold in London in 1850 and in 1860, and now belongs to Sir Frederick Cook. It is not a genuine Rubens, but certainly seems to have been painted after a picture by him. Between the 20th July, 1626, and the 28th August, 1628, Rubens received 1000 florins on account of the 1800 that were due to him from the king of Poland for works executed before the first of those dates.

(1) H. HUGO : *Siege de Breda* — Plantin, 1631. p. 41,

The duke of Neuburg, whose approaching arrival in Paris Rubens had announced to the Infanta on the 15th March, 1625, left, after waiting on the king of France, for Brussels, where he stayed some time. He too wished to see the siege of Breda. When the town had been taken, the governor made her formal entry and returned through Antwerp, accompanied by the general and several foreign princes. Great rejoicings were held in the city on the Schelde. During her stay in Antwerp, on Thursday the 10th July, 1625, after dinner, she went to visit Rubens (1) and let him paint her portrait in the nun's dress which she had worn since the



AMBROOS SPINOLA (Museum, Brunswick).

death of her husband, her head covered with the heavy veil of the Poor Clares, a cord round her waist, and holding the ends of the veil to her waist with her hands (*Œuvre*. N^o 970). Pontius engraved this portrait and it remained the official likeness of the governor. In the engraving the portrait is surrounded by a frame formed of allegorical figures. The picture is now in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire.

Probably on the same occasion, Rubens painted the portrait of the Duke of Neuburg which formed part of his estate and is known to us from the engraving by Peter De Jode (*Œuvre*. N^o 1009). The duke is seen three-quarter-face, smiling; he wears a full beard, a turned-up moustache, a raised collar, and a rich dress, on which gleam the insignia of the Golden Fleece.

RUBENS AND SPINOLA. — Bellori states in the most positive manner that Rubens also painted on this occasion the portrait of

Spinola, and we have no reason for doubting the accuracy of the statement; it may be added that Rubens painted the famous general more than once. On the 2nd September, 1627, he wrote to Pierre Dupuy in Paris that he had made a portrait of the Marquis, but that it was not yet engraved. He refers, perhaps, to the example of 1625. On the 9th December, 1627, he wrote again to Dupuy that he was engaged in painting him, that the picture was not finished yet, but had got some distance. He probably painted a first portrait in June, 1625, of which he afterwards made two or more copies; one of them must have been begun, no doubt, in 1627, at the moment when the Marquis set out for Spain.

One example is in the Brunswick Museum; another in the Nostitz collection at Prague; a third in the Duke of Leuchtenberg's gallery at St Petersburg; and there was a fourth in Prince

(1) A. CASTAN : *Les Origines et la date du Saint Ildefonse de Rubens*, p. 77.

Demidoff's gallery (*Œuvre*. Nos 1059-1062). They all agree perfectly, except that in the portrait in the Nostitz collection the armour, which in the others covers only the general's chest and hips, covers also his arms. He is represented three-quarter-length, with one hand on the hilt of his sword, the other on his marshal's staff. He is bare-headed and has short hair, a thin beard, a curled moustache, a rich lace collar, a scarf over his right arm and the Golden Fleece on his breast; his plumed helmet stands on a table by his side. None of the examples known are of extraordinary artistic merit. The Brunswick portrait is sweeter and weaker in tone; the Nostitz is stronger; the gold-encrusted armour throws off a bright gleam, and the red and white plume of the helmet and the red scarf round the right arm give the painting a brilliant appearance and make it a state-portrait. Spinola's head is long and thin; his half-closed eyes, his large forehead, tightly closed lips and pointed chin reveal the profound dreamer and the resolute man of action.

Between 1620 and 1630 Rubens became a personal friend of the great general, who had no secrets from the artist, while both were the counsellors and confidential advisers of the Archduchess. With her they formed the triumvirate, which at that time discussed and decided on the most important affairs of the country. Rubens saw his friend's departure with regret, and asked himself anxiously who would replace the able and experienced general. He had formed an attachment to Spinola, whom he esteemed highly, though his weak sides had not escaped his notice. On the 27th January, 1628, shortly after the Marquis had left this country, on hearing with what honour he had been received in Paris, Rubens wrote to his friend Pierre Dupuy : « I am happy to learn that the Marquis is leaving your court with a good » opinion of it. He genuinely deserves in all points to be treated as a most worthy man, as » I can testify from my familiar intercourse with him. He is the wisest and most prudent » person I have ever met, and never lets his intentions be guessed. He is not eloquent, but » rather through fear of saying too much than through any lack of fertility or intelligence. I » say nothing of his courage, which is known to all the world; I myself distrusted him at first » as an Italian and a Genoese, but I have learned, on the contrary, to know him for a sure » and safe man, who deserves the most entire confidence. As for my Gallery (the Medici » Gallery) His Excellency did not trouble to go and see it, having no taste for painting, which » he understands no more than a porter ».

RUBENS ENNOBLED. — The honours and marks of confidence which the Infanta granted Rubens in 1625 were neither the first nor the only ones he received from his rulers. In the preceding year he had obtained a very high distinction. Philip IV had sent him a patent of nobility, a favour which the artist had asked for some months before with a request that he might be exempted from the cost of the grant. On the 29th January, 1624, the bishop of Segovia, Don Iñigo de Brizuela, president of the Council of Flanders at Madrid, presented a report on this petition, which he supported on the grounds that Rubens excelled in his art and was held in great esteem throughout all Europe. « Many sovereigns », added the bishop, « have tried » to induce him to leave Antwerp by promises of great honours and large sums of money. He » comes of honourable parents, faithful subjects of His Majesty, and unites to his rare talent

» as a painter, literary gifts and a knowledge of history and languages ; he has always lived in
 » great style and has the means of supporting his rank ».

The report was approved, and on the 5th June, 1624, the king granted a patent of nobility to Rubens, his children and their descendants. The patent emblazoned his arms as follows :
 — Party per fesse, or a bugle-horn sable cantonnée of two cinquefoils, azure a fleur de lys of the first, the helmet open and barred, the mantlings and torse or and argent, and for crest the same fleur de lys or, as they are painted and figured in the centre of these the aforesaid presents (1).

In 1627 Rubens also obtained the title of gentleman of the household of Her Most Serene Highness, by which we find him styled in documents of a later date (2). Later, Charles I granted him the degree of knight and added to his arms a canton gules with the lion or of the royal escutcheon of England.

Rubens was the first of his race to be ennobled ; but the arms granted him by the king were not altogether new in his family ; his father used to use a seal which bore them, the only difference being that in Jan Rubens's coat the helmet had no fleurs de lys, but a bugle-horn. At an earlier date the same shield had been borne by two abbots of St Michael at Antwerp, without the bugle-horn in the upper part (3).



FRONTISPIECE TO *Bauhusii et Cabillavi Epigrammata*
 Drawing (Plantin-Moretus Museum, Antwerp).

(1) GACHARD : *Particularités et documents inédits sur Rubens*. Brussels, 1842, p. 13.

(2) Letters from Peirese to Dupuy of the 18th July and 29th September, 1627.

(3) P. GÉNARD : *Les Armes de la famille Rubens* (Bulletin-Rubens, III, 65). — Id. : *De Kwartieren van Rubens*, (Ibid. IV, 142).



THE DUC OF BUCKINGHAM
(Albertina, Vienna)

in a patient, busy man and a knowledge of history and languages; he had always lived in great style and in the rooms of an important nobleman.

The request was approved and on the 5th June, 1624, the king granted a patent of nobility to Rubens, his children and their descendants. The patent embraced the arms as follows:—'Three quarters, or a lozenge-form sable containing of four quarters, namely a lion de lys of the first, the helmet crest and surmount, the quarters and lozenge or and argent, and for chief the same lion de lys. In chief are painted and inserted in the centre of these the blessed presents (1).

In 1627 Rubens also obtained the title of gentleman of the chamber of His Most Serene Highness by which we find him styled in documents of a later date. Later, Charles I granted him the degree of knight and added to his arms a second lion and the motto of the royal coat of arms of England.

Rubens was the first of his race to be ennobled; but the same process has by the time were not altogether new in his family, his father used to carry a lion on his shield, the only difference being that in Jan Rubens's coat the helmet surmount bears de lys, not a lion's head. At an earlier date the same shield had been borne by the abbots of St Michael at Antwerp, without the eagle crest in the upper part (3).

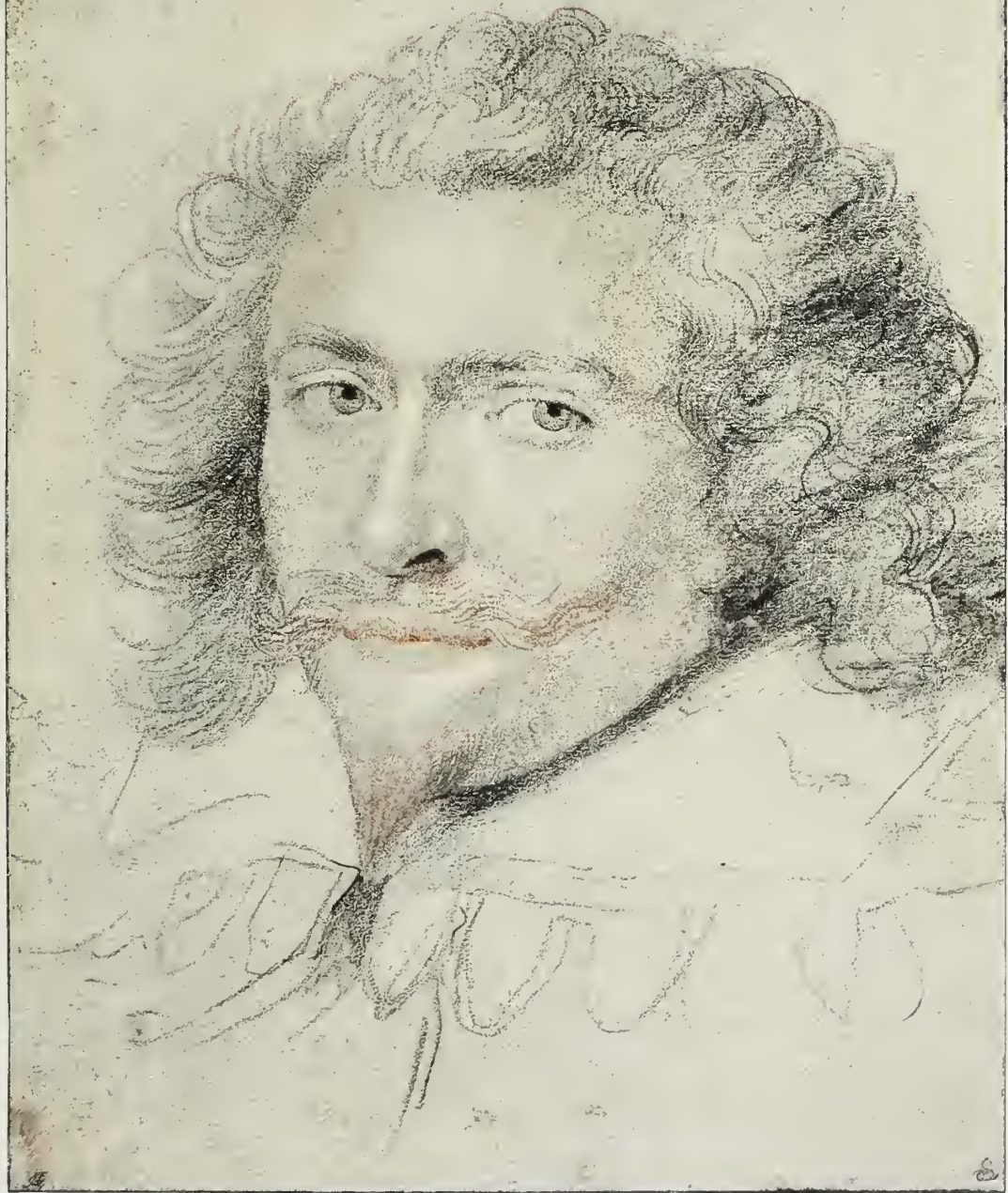


Coat of arms of the Duke of Buckingham (Albertina, Vienna)

(1) *Archives de l'Etat de Brabant*, t. 10, p. 100. (2) *Archives de l'Etat de Brabant*, t. 10, p. 100. (3) *Archives de l'Etat de Brabant*, t. 10, p. 100.

THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM
(Albertina, Vienna)

Georg von Beyer P. P. Ruben





A FARM-YARD (Museum, Dresden).

CHAPTER VII

1625-1627

RUBENS AND BUCKINGHAM. — RUBENS AND GERBIER. — RUBENS BECOMES A DIPLOMATIST IN FOREIGN POLITICS. — DEATH OF ISABELLA BRANT. — NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN RUBENS AND GERBIER. — PICTURES OF THIS PERIOD. — HIS PUPILS.



BALTHASAR GERBIER — Engraving after A. Vandyck, published by Jan Meysens.

RUBENS AND BUCKINGHAM. — Among the people whom Rubens met in Paris, when he went to hang his paintings in the Medici Gallery, there were two with whom he entered into relations which were to last for some years ; the Duke of Buckingham and Balthasar Gerbier. The marriage of Charles I and Henrietta Maria took place on the 11th May, 1625, and the king of England was represented at the ceremony by the Duc de Chevreuse ; on the 24th the Duke of Buckingham arrived with a mission to receive the young princess and conduct her to her royal husband ; their departure took place on the 2nd June. Charles I's favourite, therefore, had only spent nine days altogether in Paris, during which he must have met Rubens and made friends with him.

George, Duke of Buckingham, the all-powerful favourite of two kings of England, was then thirty-three years old. He was descended from the noble family of Villiers, and was

the most charming and the most corrupt of the courtiers of his day. King James I, the royal pedant, concerned himself less with guarding the interests of his country than with holding theological controversies and pronouncing discourses crammed with the most grotesque erudition. He had a weakness for young men of agreeable exterior, however ignorant or corrupt they might be otherwise. His weak will and his lack of character made him prone to be led by others, and he granted his unworthy favourites the highest dignities and most exalted posts, resigning to them the power he was incapable of wielding properly himself. Thus it was that after the fall of his first favourite, Somerset, he had chosen George Villiers to be his pet. Ever a pedagogue at heart, he tried to form the mind of his new confidant, and gave him lessons in all subjects, which he believed him to have thoroughly mastered. Nor did he forget more material honours : in less than two years this youth of twenty-three became successively gentleman of the bed-chamber, Baron, Viscount, Marquis of Buckingham, Lord Admiral of England and absolute master of the king's mind ; he was the fountain of all offices and all privileges ; he was all-powerful, thanks not to his own merit, for he had none, but to the king's caprice. The story of the marriage of the heir to the throne, afterwards Charles I, shows how scandalously Buckingham abused his unlimited power. The part he played in that matter had such important consequences, and the event itself is so intimately bound up with the history of Europe at this time, that it will be necessary to explain its origin and its principal details, all the more so because it led indirectly to Rubens's intervention in foreign politics.

In 1613 James I had given his daughter Elizabeth in marriage to the Count Palatine, Frederick V, whose zeal for the Reformation had caused him to be regarded as one of the leaders of the Protestant party in Germany. In that country the struggle between the supporters of the old and the new churches had lasted for a century, now allayed by treaties wrested by the Protestants from the Catholics, now breaking out anew in consequence of the inevitable clashing of the adherents of the opposing forms of worship, who had words of peace in their mouths but hatred and enmity in their hearts. In the first fire of enthusiasm and faith among the proselytes, the party of reform had made great progress in Germany ; little by little it grew to be more powerful than the Catholic party, and for some time it continued to gain ground in regions where it had not yet won the upper hand. Alarmed by their danger and urged on by the Papacy and the young and bellicose order of the Jesuits, the Catholics had given serious thought, in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, to the organization of resistance. In the first years of the following century the struggle began again with new vigour under the direction of the Emperors of Germany and the house of Hapsburg ; and the issue was doubtful. Both sides made a supreme effort, and the Thirty Years' War, which was to decide the future of the churches, broke out five years after the Count Palatine had become the son-in-law of the king of England.

Trouble had arisen in Bohemia. The Protestants, fearing with good reason that the liberty of conscience which had been conceded them would be compromised by the policy of the Emperor Matthias, then on the throne, and the Catholic nobility, revolted and threw the aulic counsellors Martinitz and Slavata out of the windows of the Hradschin at Prague. On the 28th August, 1619, when the Emperor Ferdinand II ascended the throne, the struggle became desperate and pitiless. The Bohemians, desiring to give unity to their resistance, looked about

for a leader and fixed their eyes on the Count Palatine, to whom they offered the crown of Bohemia. Two days before the election of the new Emperor, Frederick had accepted their offer and had been proclaimed king. His reign was short; on the 8th November, 1620, his army was completely defeated on the White Hill, and he was compelled to take flight. In the following year the Emperor deprived him of his title of Elector and of his hereditary estates, which he gave to Maximilian of Bavaria, the general of the Catholic forces. For eleven years the banished and dispossessed prince continued the struggle for the crown of Bohemia and his own territory; he counted on the support of his father-in-law, James I of England, and later on that of his brother-in-law, Charles I, to recover what he had lost.

In this religious war, Spain naturally took the side of the Catholics and their leader, the Emperor of Germany. The troops of Spinola, general of the Spanish forces of Albert and Isabella, and the imperial troops commanded by Tilly, had conquered the Palatinate, and the son-in-law of James I had no more bitter enemy than Philip III, who was then on the throne of Spain. And this very James, the Protestant king of England, chose the daughter of the most Catholic king in Europe as a wife for his son. He believed that this alliance between the two royal houses would induce the king of Spain to restore his estates to the Count Palatine. The Earl of Bristol, who was sent to Madrid to treat for the match, was charged at the same time to demand that the Spanish troops should hand over the Count Palatine's estates to the English.

The negotiations opened with Philip III for the hand of his daughter, the Infanta Maria Theresa, for the Prince of Wales, were continued with Philip IV who had succeeded his father on the 31st March, 1621. They scarcely advanced at all. The idea of yielding to the demands of the mortal enemy of the German Protestants was repugnant to the people of England. The grant of his sister's hand to the son of the heretic king of England fitted no better with the policy of the Spanish monarch, and difficulties were thus bound to arise on both sides.

In the hope of coming more quickly to a favourable conclusion, Buckingham conceived the singular notion of going to Madrid with the Prince of Wales to carry on the negotiations in person. The king of England was at first opposed to the plan, but his son and his favourite obliged him to yield, and he ended by showing so much enthusiasm for their romantic project that he allowed no one to combat it, and delivered a long discourse to his council in which he stated his desire.

The prince and Buckingham made the journey incognito. They embarked at Dover and disembarked at Calais, and then crossed France and Spain without being recognized. At Madrid which they reached on the 17th March, 1623, they found a disposition towards a favourable reception of the demands of the English court; great entertainments were organised, royal gifts were exchanged, the Pope's consent was asked and obtained, and the arrangements relating to the nuptial ceremony and the religious observances of the bride were concluded. There appeared to be perfect agreement on all points, except one. It was Charles's wish that the celebration of the marriage should be followed immediately by its consummation, and that his young wife should return with him at once to England. The Spanish court would not yield to the prince's desire, and insisted that he should return alone and that his wife should only follow him to England eight months later, when every measure should have been taken in

that Protestant country to guarantee her the free exercise of her religion. The prince consented. When he had given the Spanish court the promise asked on the score of the religious question, and received a letter from king James calling him home, he talked of setting out for England. He left on the 9th September, 1623. Philip IV accompanied him and loaded him with marks of friendship.

The king of England had solemnly sworn faithfully to execute the agreement concluded at Madrid, and the people had submitted, though regretfully, to the sovereign's will. The marriage was regarded as a settled thing. But when the prince and Buckingham returned to London in October without the marriage having been celebrated, it was hoped that the project had fallen to the ground. The news of the concessions made at Madrid to the English Catholics had been received with disfavour, and the clause providing that the governance of the national church should be left untouched filled the hearts of all Protestants with a joy which they manifested in an uproarious manner. Buckingham, who, rightly or wrongly, was regarded as the author of the rupture, and had been granted the title of Duke by the king during his absence in Spain, became for some time the most popular man in the three kingdoms.

But matters were not exactly on the footing they were supposed to be. On his departure the prince had given the Earl of Bristol, the English ambassador, full power to conclude the marriage in his name. On his return to London he informed him that these powers were only to be used after the receipt of fresh instructions. King James gave orders to the diplomatist to demand the Palatinate for his son-in-law. Philip IV appeared agreeable, but on certain conditions which he joined with the Emperor in laying down. But the Count Palatine refused to accept them, and pledged his father-in-law to declare war on the king of Spain and the Emperor, to restore him to possession of his hereditary estates. On the 29th February, 1624, king James made a speech in Parliament, in which he complained bitterly of the proceedings of Spain, which had beguiled his son by false promises, and invited the House of Commons to give an opinion on the occasion for war.

Some days afterwards Buckingham appeared in Parliament and gave the fullest explanations. According to him the Spaniards had never intended good faith in the matter; they had meant to consent neither to the marriage nor to the restoration of the Palatinate; they had shown the prince a dispensation from the Pope subject to conditions which it was impossible to fulfil. Thereupon, on the 30th March, Parliament decided to ask the king to make preparations for the conquest of the Palatinate by force of arms. The house declared itself prepared to vote the necessary supplies for the war. In May, 1624, the English ambassador told Philip IV that there could no longer be any question of the projected marriage. The king of Spain had been expecting this decision; he had stopped the preparations for the ceremony and bidden his sister drop the title of Princess of Wales, which she had already taken.

In the same month of May the king of England had sent the Earl of Carlisle and Lord Holland into France, to demand the hand of the king's sister, Princess Henrietta Maria, for the heir apparent; the request was eagerly granted. The free exercise of the Catholic religion was guaranteed to the future queen and the members of her suite. Besides the undertakings contained in the published articles of the convention, the king of England promised to lend

Louis XIII the aid of his fleet in the case of his wishing to fight the Huguenots by sea. And in February, 1625, when the king of France prepared to subdue Soubise, who was at the head of the Protestants, the king of England actually sent him eight ships to be used as he should think fit, while a fleet of fifty English vessels was equipped with the object of attacking the shores of Spain.

In the meantime, James I died on the 6th April (o. s. 27th March); his son Charles I succeeded him and the final preparations for the young king's marriage with Henrietta of France were hurried on, so that the ceremony was able to take place in Paris on the following 11th May.

The preparations for the war were then pushed forward more vigorously. Buckingham and Lord Holland were sent to The Hague where they concluded an alliance with the United Provinces, France and Denmark against the Emperor and the king of Spain. Charles I raised a body of 12,000 men, who were to conquer the Palatinate under the orders of Mansfield, and on the 3rd October a fleet of 88 ships sailed from Portsmouth harbour for Cadiz, where it landed 1833 sailors and 2988 soldiers. But on learning that serious resistance might be expected, the troops took ship again in haste, and the fleet sailed to meet the Spanish squadron which was expected from the West Indies. It failed to fall in with it, and after capturing a few merchant-vessels, returned to England with very little to show. The German campaign had no better results. The disgraceful issue of the enterprise showed what Buckingham was worth as a military leader, just as his journey to Madrid, as extravagant as it was romantic, had given the measure of his statesmanship.

This was the man whose acquaintance Rubens made in Paris, and whom he visited several times during the few days Buckingham spent in that town. He drew his portrait, and that of his wife the duchess; he painted him, as we have seen, once head and shoulders, and once on horseback. Buckingham was a great amateur of works of art of all kinds, and being an extravagant man, with his royal patron's purse-strings in his keeping as well, he denied himself nothing that he fancied, however great the price. Naturally he talked art with Rubens, and then learned, if he did not know it before, that the Antwerp painter owned a rich collection of antique statues, pictures and engraved stones. These conversations, no doubt,



THE CHRIST A LA PAILLE (Museum, Antwerp).

made him anxious to buy Rubens's collections. « Shortly after this meeting in Paris », says the author of the *Vita*, « he sent one of his agents with a mission to buy Rubens's » artistic treasures for 100,000 florins. » The interval that elapsed between the meeting and the conclusion of the bargain was not really so short. When Buckingham was sent to the Low Countries in November, 1625, to conclude an alliance with the United Provinces, he passed through Antwerp, where he paid a visit to Rubens's house and collections; but it was not till December, 1626, that the painter went to Calais to ship his works of art. He stayed there three weeks. In September, 1627, the pictures, some of them his own work, were ready to be dispatched, and it was not till then that the sale was concluded (1).

The agent appointed by Buckingham to deal with Rubens was Michel Le Blond. This distinguished artist, who was born of Walloon parents at Frankfort, was a jeweller and copper-plate engraver; his manifold abilities had induced the king of Sweden to employ him as agent at the English court. He lived for long in London, and then went to settle in Amsterdam, where he died in 1656. Vandyck painted his portrait, and Sandrart, who had a high opinion of him, drew his likeness and had it engraved for his *Teutsche Academie*.

The price agreed upon, as Philip Rubens informs us, was 100,000 florins, but Rubens only received 84,000. The inventory drawn up on the death of Isabella Brant mentions the sale as follows: « Item it is to be noted that Rubens, the father of the said children, sold directly » and for the best price after the death of the mother to the Duke of Buckingham in England, « several pictures, antique marbles, agates and other jewels for the sum of one hundred thousand florins, from which must be deducted sixteen thousand florins, that is to say six » thousand florins for a picture of the « Assumption of the Elect », which the father aforesaid « was engaged to deliver with the other objects to the Duke above-mentioned, and which had » not been begun at the death of Isabella Brant, and ten thousand florins allowed under the « head of commission to the person who negotiated with the Duke the sale of the objects » aforesaid ».

The collections sold included the antique marbles which Rubens had bought of Sir Dudley Carleton and those he had brought from Italy, the pictures by Italian and other masters, and the engraved stones and medals he had bought at various times and places. To the things in his possession Rubens had to add others, made by himself or bought with this intention; he paid Cornelis De Vos 48 florins for two copies of pictures and M. Gault, of Paris, 300 florins for a number of agates; he also gave M. Gault certain pictures in exchange for a certain quantity of engraved stones (2); and he paid Hans Hans 222 florins for medals. All these were included in the sale to the Duke of Buckingham.

After his death his collections remained for some time intact in his palace, where Rubens saw them again in 1629; later, some of the pictures were bought by the king and the Duke of Northumberland. A large part of his artistic treasures were exported on the seizure of the

(1) NOEL SAINSBURY: *Op. cit.* 103. — Letter from Dupuy to Peiresc of the 28th December, 1626, and Letters from Dupuy to Valavez of the 1st and 4th January, 1627. TAMIZEY DE LARROQUE: *Lettres de Peiresc*, I, 794, 801, 805.

(2) I have seen in this town (Brussels) one named Gand of Paris, who has a number of beautiful stones. But the rarest he had he bartered with Rubens for pictures (Philippe Chifflet to the Nuncio Guidi da Bagni, 25 June, 1627). Quoted by AUGUSTE CASTAN: *Opinion des érudits de l'Autriche sur les origines et la date du Saint-Idelfonse de Rubens*. p. 41.

property of his son; the only catalogue in existence is that referring to the part sent to Antwerp to be sold there during the young duke's exile. In it we find 19 pictures by Titian, 2 by Correggio, 21 by Bassan, 13 by Paolo Veronese, 8 by Palma, 17 by Tintoretto, 3 by Raphael, 3 by Lionardo da Vinci, 13 by Rubens, 8 by Holbein, 1 by Quentin Matsys, 2 by Snijders, 6 by Antonio Moro, 6 by Willem Key, and many others. To these must be added 9 statues in metal, 2 in ivory, 2 in marble and finally 12 cases of engraved stones. The 13 pictures by Rubens no doubt formed part of those he had sold; of this we shall speak later, when we come to discuss the works produced by the master at that time. Probably the 12 cases of cameos also came from Rubens's collection. The other pictures and the statues mentioned in the catalogue of the second Duke of Buckingham had partly, no doubt, the same origin; and probably some of them had never belonged to him at all.

Rubens appears to have intended the formation of another collection of antique statues, for Philippe Chifflet wrote to Guidi da Bagni that the painter meant to start for Rome in September, 1627, to buy ten or twelve thousand florins' worth of them (1). In 1634 Rubens wrote to Peiresc that he had kept some of the rarest cameos and most remarkable medals, when he sold his collection to the Duke of Buckingham, so that by adding to this nucleus he had formed another cabinet of works of art as beautiful as they were rare (2). Sandrart states that in the purchase of these things he was aided by the sculptor George Petel of Augsburg, then staying in Antwerp.

The sale of his collections to the Duke of Buckingham was not the only one Rubens concluded about this time. Between 1626 and 1628 he received from Daniel Fourment, his future father-in-law, the sum of 900 florins « in payment for certain agates sent by Rubens to » the Indies in the lifetime of Isabella Brant », and on the 18th December, 1634, he wrote to Peiresc that he had had in his possession an agate vase containing a « pot », which he had bought himself for 2000 crowns, and which had been sent to the East Indies on a ship captured by the Dutch. It seems clear that this vase formed part of the precious things which Rubens sent to the Indies, and for which he had been paid by Daniel Fourment.

RUBENS AND BALTHASAR GERBIER. -- Rubens had also become acquainted in Paris with Balthasar Gerbier, a member of the Duke of Buckingham's suite. This strange and enigmatic man was among those with whom Rubens was chiefly connected, and it is well to dwell on him for a moment. His father, as he himself stated on the family tree which he sent to the Secretary of State, Sir Francis Windebank, was born at Antwerp and was the son of a Norman knight. His father married Catarina de Laloe, daughter of Alonzo, Philip II's secretary. Balthasar Gerbier himself was born, according to his own account, at Middelburg in Zeeland, his mother having taken refuge there, shortly before his birth, to escape the massacre of St Bartholomew. He states also that all his relatives were living in Portugal, England and France, and belonged to the old aristocratic families of Melun, Espinay and Lannoy. Any number of family trees might be examined without revealing a corresponding series of impudent inventions. Sincerity

(1) AUG. CASTAN : *Opinion des érudits de l'Autriche sur les origines et la date du St.-Ildefonse de Rubens*. p. 41.

(2) Letter of 18 December, 1634.

was not Gerbier's leading virtue, and this example shows to what lengths he could push his effrontery in lying. Noel Sainsbury, who takes these statements seriously, concludes from them that Gerbier was born soon after the massacre of St Bartholomew, that is in 1572, but it is difficult to be vaguer in indicating the date of a birth than by saying that it happened after the Paris massacre: every year of the last quarter of the sixteenth century might equally answer to that description.

Contemporaries of Gerbier affirm that he was born in Antwerp. Under his portrait published by Cornelis De Bie in his *Gulden Cabinet* we read: « Born at Antwerp in the year



PORTRAIT OF A MAN — Drawing (Museum, Rotterdam).

1592 », and under that engraved by Pontius after Vandyck: « Aged 42. 1634 ». But it is quite certain that he was born at Middelburg. He was baptised there in the Walloon church on the 12th March 1592. Joachim Sandrart calls him a painter and puts his birth at Antwerp; adding that he lived for many years in Italy, a circumstance we also find mentioned under his portrait engraved by Jan Meyssens. It is not probable that he went to the Peninsula. In 1616 he was in London. Walpole relates that in 1613 the Duke of Buckingham took the young artist under his protection; but that is hardly possible, since it was not till 1615 that Buckingham became the king's favourite. Gerbier himself states that he went to England in 1617, and we should have no reason for doubting his assertion, if it were not that the South Kensington Museum has a portrait in grisaille of Charles I, painted by Gerbier and dated 1616, which tends to the belief

that that was the year in which he crossed the channel.

The earliest works of his we find mentioned are pen-drawings. By a resolution of the 21st February, 1615, the States General of the United Provinces allotted him a sum of 100 florins for « having drawn with the pen a portrait which was a very good likeness of his Excellency » (Prince Maurice) which he had presented in homage to their High Powers ». He appears to have tried to gain a livelihood in London, not only by painting but by making pen-and-ink drawings. According to Sanderson he drew the ten commandments for the Dutch church in that city. In 1618 he made a portrait of the Duke of Buckingham, a large miniature of the kind Gerbier most commonly and most successfully affected during his short artistic career: it bears the inscription: « B. Gerbier, 1618 ». Thenceforward, therefore, he was under the protection of the Duke of Buckingham. In 1623 he accompanied him to Madrid. Gerbier there painted a miniature of the Infanta, which was sent to King James. There also he probably took

his first steps along the slippery pathway of secret politics, which he was to tread during part of his life. In 1625 he was with the Duke of Buckingham in Paris, where he met Rubens for the first time.

We shall have to speak in more detail hereafter of the relations that were formed between the two artist-diplomatists of Antwerp; for the moment we will confine ourselves to tracing the broad features of Gerbier's succeeding career, so far as we may find our way through such a labyrinth. During part of the year 1627 Gerbier remained in the Netherlands as secret agent to the Duke of Buckingham, and engaged, at his master's orders, in negotiations with Rubens on the subject of the peace between England and Spain. These negotiations gave rise to Rubens's great diplomatic expedition of 1628-1630. After Buckingham's assassination on the 23rd August, 1628, Gerbier remained for some time without employment. He was then in London, and Rubens lodged with him during his visit there in 1629. He was then in the enjoyment of high favour with Charles I and was living on



PORTRAIT OF A MAN UNKNOWN — Drawing (Max Rooses, Antwerp).

a large scale. A letter of 1628 states that the king and queen had supped with Gerbier, who spent £1000 sterling on the entertainment. In 1629 and 1630 he was employed by the king in the purchase of works of art. In May, 1631, he was sent to Brussels as diplomatic agent with the title of Squire of the king's body. The king had extraordinary confidence in him and sent instructions direct to him, which sometimes contradicted those of the Secretary of State. For several years Gerbier was in direct correspondence with the king, whom he kept informed on the diplomatic negotiations and intrigues carried on between England, France, Spain, Savoy, the United Provinces and the Netherlands, in which he was constantly involved.

While he was living in Brussels as secret agent, great discontent arose in the Spanish Netherlands owing to the long duration of hostilities with the northern provinces. A number of members of the nobility set on foot negotiations with the States General with the aim of delivering these provinces by means of an insurrection, and with the help of the United Provinces, with which they were to be united into a single state. The leaders of the movement believed they could trust in the representative of the king of England; some of their meetings took place in Gerbier's house. Gerbier, who wanted money to go on living at the rate he liked, sold the secret of the conspiracy to the Spanish government for 20,000 florins. As a result, the Duke of Arenberg, the representative of the States of these provinces, was arrested in 1634 at Madrid, where he ended his days in prison. He afterwards accused Lord Cottington of having betrayed them.

This was probably not the only infamous deed done by Gerbier. The Duke of Buckingham, who employed him on the execution of all sorts of secret and unacknowledgeable plans, and who certainly was not over-scrupulous in matters of honour and conscience, speaks of him as an arrant knave, whose word no one could trust. He remained at Brussels till 1638. Then he went to England, where he was knighted on the following 22nd October and took the name of Gerbier d'Ouvilly; later, he called himself Baron Douvily. A few days afterwards he returned to Brussels where he remained till August, 1641. On the 10th May of that year he was appointed Master of the Ceremonies to the king. On the 13th July, 1641, he was granted letters of naturalization in England. Then he disappeared from the political arena; he is suspected, however, of being the author of a most vile and odious pamphlet against his benefactor, Charles I, which appeared in 1651, two years after the king's execution.

The rest of his existence was even more troubled than his political career. We can only mention a small part of his adventures and his innumerable fleeting publications. In 1641 he had proposed to Charles I the establishment in England of *Monts de piété*. In 1643 we find him at Paris, trying to introduce the system into France. In the same year he obtained from the Queen Regent letters patent authorizing him to carry out his scheme; but he completely failed to bring it to a successful issue.

In 1648 he formed the plan of founding an Academy or University in London for foreign languages and science. In that and the following year he published not only the prospectus of his scheme, but the first public lectures he had delivered in this Academy on Works of fortification, Military architecture, Cosmography, Navigation, Geography, Language and Science, and Law and Eloquence. But he was soon obliged to close his University. Then he went to Holland, where he presented a scheme for exploiting the gold and silver mines in America. In 1660 he published a statement in which he declares that he had gone to Cayenne on a mission for the Netherlands, and settled at Surinam. There the Dutch governor, who had orders to send him back to Holland, had forced his way into his house, killed one of his daughters, and endangered the lives of the members of his family. Finally he had been sent to Holland, where the government had held an examination of the matter and disapproved the action of the governor.

On the restoration of Charles II, he returned to England. In his last years he published several works on Architecture and Politics. In 1665 he had a guide for travellers in foreign

countries printed at Oxford. He died in 1667 and was buried in the church of Hempsted Marshall, a village in which he had built a seat for Lord Craven.

Balthasar Gerbier was a child of his age and of the politics of that age, politics composed of underhand manœuvres carried on by shady agents, of mutual deception, which duped both friend and foe, politics which were entirely made up of perfidy and duplicity. His skill and experience in all these practices were incontestable. He was moreover a very clever man, ready for all occasions, gifted with a lively wit, and a facile tongue, speaking and writing several languages with elegance, interested in everything, skilled in getting on good terms with everyone, always on the watch for a victim to deceive, and always ready to clear himself of every accusation and defend himself against every suspicion. Such was the man with whom Rubens was in frequent, not to say constant relations from 1625 to 1640. Gerbier always showed much esteem for and sympathy with the great artist, and served his interests faithfully, thus putting off in his favour his usual methods of action, which were those of an adventurer without honour or conscience. Whether Rubens knew him for what he was, and whether he was ever aware that Gerbier had sold the secret of the conspiring nobles are questions it is impossible to answer. Gerbier informed against them in 1633, when the great painter had already given up politics and maintained no relations with Gerbier beyond those referring to his works of art; but though Rubens's reputation as a politician remains free from every stain and exempt from all suspicion, it is none the less a matter for regret to see him connected so long and so intimately with a rogue like Gerbier. The royal robe of the artist ought never to have brushed against the soiled rags of this vile hack of low political intrigues.

RUBEN'S ENTRY INTO FOREIGN POLITICS. — Gerbier himself made a note of the negotiations he was concerned in at the same time as Rubens, as, indeed, it was his habit to do of everything he did or wrote and of the letters he received. The diaries in which he summed up his political doings are to be found at the Public Record Office in London, and thence we draw our information on Rubens's entry into foreign politics.

When the Duke of Buckingham was in Paris, says Gerbier, in April (May) 1625, Rubens painted his portrait, and on that occasion had an interview with Balthasar Gerbier. Rubens told him that the Infanta and the Marquis Spinola much regretted that the Prince of Wales had not been better received at Madrid. He added that the differences that might arise between England and Spain caused him serious anxiety, and that every right-minded man ought to contribute with all his power to the maintenance of amicable relations between the two countries. He gave expression to the hope that the Duke of Buckingham would try to soften the heart of the king, who must, no doubt, be deeply offended. Gerbier replied that the happy marriage just concluded at Paris would put the ill success of the journey to Madrid out of mind, and that the king of England had no cause of complaint except the injustice committed to his sister, the Queen of Bohemia. The exchange of views between them during their stay in Paris went no further. Rubens had observed that Buckingham's disposition was pacific, and he continued to write to Gerbier after hostilities between Spain and England had broken out. He acted as the interpreter of his sovereign, who saw with regret her native land and the country of her adoption suffering more and more from the evils of war. He too suffered at

seeing his fatherland and his city declining and becoming impoverished day by day in a manner as purposeless as it was profitless; he saw the civilized world the victim of devastation, and the arts and the crafts of peace fettered and destroyed by brute force, and in the soul of the artist and the patriot was born a burning desire to do what he could to remedy this pitiable state of things. He undertook the task in common accord with his sovereign; it was arduous, all but desperate; his efforts were more than once to fail; but he continually returned to the charge; he was determined to succeed, and succeed he did up to a certain point. After his return to Antwerp he wrote to Gerbier that the Infanta deplored the hostilities which had broken out between Spain and England. The great aim of Charles I, he added, was



STUDY DRAWING
(Duke of Devonshire, London).

to see his sister and her husband restored to their hereditary dominions; but to succeed in that, the king must needs address himself to the Emperor or the king of Spain. If Gerbier would win the Duke of Buckingham over to the restoration of peace, Rubens would do his best to persuade Spain to generosity. Buckingham replied through Gerbier that he asked nothing better than to see peace concluded on condition of the restoration of the Palatinate to the king of Bohemia. This reply was sent to Spain, and some days later Rubens wrote to Gerbier that he had orders to continue the correspondence; and the Infanta was soon to give him more precise instructions.

From August, 1625, to February, 1626, Rubens lived at Laeken, near Brussels, where he had settled on his return from a mission to the German frontier on which the Infanta had sent him in the preceding month. According to what he told Valavez, in his letter of the 28th November, 1625, he made this long stay in the capital because the plague was rife in Antwerp. In Brussels he lodged at the Golden Lion hotel. In 1626, the estate of Isabella Brant paid Andreas van Broechem, the landlord of the hotel, the sum of 900 florins for « the amount of the expenses » (1). We may suppose that during that time he was occupied with politics and chiefly with the negotiations he had set on foot at Paris with Gerbier. The Infanta was at Dunkirk during the first four months of Rubens's stay in the capital. There she was superintending the construction of a fleet and the establishment of a naval base at Mardijk. After her return to Brussels in December, 1625, Rubens stayed there two months longer, and no doubt during that time he held several interviews with the princess on affairs of state. This supposition is rendered extremely probable by the fact that on the 26th December, 1625, he wrote to his friend Valavez that the first minister of Spain, the Count-Duke Olivarez, had himself informed him that the Spanish galleons had just returned to Cadiz without meeting a single English vessel. At this time, therefore, not only was Rubens in enjoyment of the confidence of the Infanta and

(1) *Bulletin-Rubens*, IV. p. 181.

Spinola, but the all-powerful minister was in correspondence with him concerning events of the greatest importance.

Gerbier relates that, after the return of the English fleet in October, 1625, from its fruitless expedition to Cadiz, Rubens wrote to him that matters had taken a new turn; Spain was naturally offended at the high-handed proceedings of England; she had proved the impotence of the English fleet, and was not disposed to humour so violent and rash an enemy. Charles I, moreover, had concluded an alliance with the United Provinces of the Netherlands and Christian IV, king of Denmark, with the object of taking the Palatinate from Austria and Spain by force; and so there was no more need to humour England.

In November, 1625, therefore, Philip IV had commenced hostilities against her; had seized the goods of all the English living in his dominions, and commanded preparations to be made for attacking the enemy on their own territory. On the 5th March, 1626, he settled the difficulties between himself and France on the subject of some of the territories of northern Italy, so as to be free of anxiety from that quarter. On the other hand, Charles I had aroused the dissatisfaction of his brother-in-law, the king of France, by breaking the engagements he had made with regard to the Catholics in his Kingdom, and supporting the French Huguenots against their sovereign. In his own country a fierce quarrel had sprung up between Parliament and Crown, so that Buckingham and he found themselves in a very difficult position.

Then the Duke once more approached the Antwerp artist who had promised to do all he could to bring about the restoration of peace. Gerbier declares that the first attempt at re-opening the negotiations was made by Rubens. It seems, indeed that it was he who first expressed a wish to see an armistice concluded between the two countries; but it cannot be doubted that England welcomed with joy the overtures for peace and reconciliation that were made her. Buckingham looked round for an opportunity for arranging an interview between Gerbier and the Infanta's confidential agent without exciting suspicion. He found one in the negotiations which were always pending on the purchase of Rubens's artistic treasures. But some time elapsed between the conception of the plan and its execution.

DEATH OF ISABELLA BRANT. — In the meantime Rubens's attention was distracted from all other matters by a family bereavement. Isabella Brant died on the 20th June, 1626. The loss of his companion was a heavy blow to the great artist. On the 15th July he wrote to Pierre Dupuy: « You may well remind me of the rigour of fate, which bends not to the caprices of » our passions, and being the expression of sovereign will, owes us no account of its resolu- » tions. It commands as an absolute master, and we must obey like slaves; in my opinion, » there is nothing we can do but make our submission as easy and as honourable as possible



KNIGHTS FIGHTING
Study after Titian's *Battle of Cadore*
(Albertina, Vienna).

by submitting with a good grace. But for the moment it seems to me most difficult, indeed almost impossible. You give me sage advice in urging me to put my trust in time ; it will do for me, I hope, what reason cannot. I do not pride myself on Stoic impassivity, and I cannot believe that a sentiment sprung from natural causes ought to meet with disapproval, nor that we ought to look with equal indifference at all the events of this world. I am convinced that sensibility is a quality that has nothing in common with vice, though it does not merit the name of virtue, and that the grief we suffer at certain events ought not to be blamed ». He goes on to draw the moral portrait of his dead wife which we quoted in a previous chapter; a touching and eloquent funeral oration, a wreath of everlastings laid on the tomb of Isabella Brant.

We have no letter of Rubens's that can throw any light on what became of him from the 24th April to the 15th July, 1626. The only document that supplies any information is the letter written on the 19th June by Peiresc to Aleandro, in which the French scholar says to the Italian :

If you wish to write to M. Rubens, you may send your letters to me and I will forward them to Antwerp, but he tells me that the plague is prevalent there and with increasing intensity, which may persuade him to leave the town, as he did last year. » Before the 19th June, therefore, while Isabella Brant was still alive, Rubens had informed his friend Peiresc that the plague was raging in Antwerp. A few days later his wife was suddenly taken from him : the coincidence makes it a probable supposition that she was a victim of the epidemic, which had laid waste the town for three successive years.

According to the custom of the time, the funeral was celebrated with great banquets. The estate spent 204 florins 11 stuyvers on food and drink, the services of a cook and the hire of plate. The deans of the « Gillyflower » and the Guild of St Luke received 110 florins and the members of the Town Council 135 florins for the repast that was served to them on this occasion.

The earliest biographers of Rubens state that he travelled in Holland soon after the death of Isabella Brant, to seek diversion from his grief. They evidently allude to the tour Rubens undertook in the following year through the northern provinces. In July, 1626, he was still at Antwerp; but probably in the month of August he went away for a more or less extended time, and already therefore the journey was attributed to the grief he suffered at the death of Isabella Brant. In fact, a certain J. B. Berthold, the Archduke Leopold of Austria's *chargé d'affaires*, wrote to the prince on the 28th August, 1626 : « Rubens is away for the moment, on account of the death of his wife, which happened a few days ago. It is said that he will shortly return to Antwerp, where I shall go to see him ». We know that he returned home on the 11th September; two months later he left Antwerp a second time, as we shall see.

RUBENS'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH GERBIER. — In November, 1626, the negotiations touching the conclusion of peace were resumed with increased vigour. On the 19th of that month Rubens wrote to Pierre Dupuy that he was on the point of undertaking a little journey, which might very likely last a month, and directs him not to write to him during that time. He went to Calais, taking with him the collection of works of art he had sold to Buckingham, and

which he intended to dispatch thence to England (1). He was to meet Gerbier at the port, and discuss other things than works of art with him. He waited in vain for the English agent for three weeks. Then he left for Paris, where he arrived on the 25th December, and there he met Gerbier. Gerbier was the first to leave, on the 4th January, 1627; Rubens stayed in Paris for another ten days. He had had an attack of gout, probably his first, and did not return to Brussels till the 20th or 21st January. There he reported to the Infanta what had occurred in Paris. On the 28th he was at Antwerp. He had asked for a passport for Gerbier to the Spanish Netherlands, which was given him on the 4th February. Gerbier arrived at Brussels in the second half of that month, bringing letters to Rubens from Buckingham. Rubens went to meet the English agent at Brussels, and received from him a letter dated the 23rd February, in which it was stated that, if the Infanta was authorized by the king of Spain to negotiate a general armistice between Spain, England, the States-General and the king of Denmark, Buckingham would undertake to induce the other parties to accept this suspension of hostilities for one, two, three, four, five or six years. In a second letter given to Rubens by Gerbier, Gerbier declared that it was impossible for the Duke to contrive the conclusion of peace on the conditions of 1604, because the situation was very different, and that consequently it would be better to conclude an armistice to begin with, in order to gain time for deliberation.

Thereupon there began the serious negotiations in which the Infanta was represented by Rubens. When he had sent Buckingham's letters to the princess and Spinola, they charged him to reply to Gerbier on the 24th February, that both were desirous to see the conclusion of the negotiations. But, he added in their name, it was not in the power of the king of Spain to impose his will upon the Emperor, nor on the Duke of Bavaria, the leader of the Imperial forces, who was on bad terms with Philip IV; for this reason, it would be better to give up the idea for the moment of coming to an understanding with the German and Danish rulers, and confine themselves to concluding a convention between the English and Dutch on one side and the king of Spain on the other. The last named would thus have more authority to treat with Germany. The king of England, therefore, would do wisely to begin by leaving the king of Denmark and the Elector Palatine out of the negotiations; after the conclusion of the general peace nothing would be easier than to come to an arrangement with them. Only one serious difficulty would arise with the United Provinces: they would undoubtedly claim the title of independent states, to which the king of Spain could not consent; but there would be nothing to prevent the conclusion with them of a provisional treaty, in which there should be no question of their independence. If they raised no difficulties on the score of the title to be assigned them, the king might perhaps be disposed to conclude a perpetual peace with them on conditions favourable to both sides. The king of England might intervene to bring about this result, which would incline the king of Spain to act as mediator in the affairs of Germany. So far as Spain and England were concerned, the simplest thing would be to conclude a truce between them on the conditions of the treaty of 1604, and specially on that dealing with commerce and the rights of private persons. The Infanta was prepared to intervene to bring

(1) On the 26th November, 1626, Jan Breughel the younger wrote to Federigo Borromeo: Il re de Angliaterra (read Buckingham) ha comperate in una volta qua del Van (read ? Cav.) Pietro Paulo Rubens per cento et trenta millia escudi de quadri: et questa modo e trasportato tutte le cosse bella di Anversa in Londres. CRIVELLI: *Giovanni Brueghel*, p. 344.

about an arrangement between the Duke of Savoy and his brother-in-law the king of Spain, but the Duke of Savoy's envoy would not be authorized to take any part in external affairs until those of his master were settled. This restriction on the envoy of Savoy was aimed at the inevitable abbé de Scaglia, who had a mania for meddling with the affairs of everyone and playing the part of international mediator in Europe. At that very moment he was in London,



ST. PEPIN AND ST. BEGGA, HIS DAUGHTER (Imperial Museum, Vienna).

where he was engaged in forging all sorts of schemes of agreement, one between France and England against Spain, and another between Germany and Spain against France.

When Charles I and Buckingham had been acquainted with the verbal communications made by Rubens to Gerbier, on the 24th February, 1627, or shortly after, they declared in a letter dated the 9th March that they shared this point of view in every respect; but they still insisted on the Infanta's intervening to have his hereditary estates restored to the Count Palatine. Buckingham promised Rubens to send as plenipotentiary to Holland a man well known to him, Sir Dudley Carleton, to sound the intentions of the States General and

induce them to show themselves accomodating. On the 21st April, 1627, Rubens expressed his thanks to Buckingham for the confidence he had placed in him; he gave Gerbier an official acknowledgment, in French, of the dispatch, and sent him at the same time a confidential letter, in Flemish, to tell him that what he had written had been dictated by the Infanta to de Boisschot, the Chancellor of Brabant, and that the governor, and Spinola also, were keenly anxious to see the negotiations concluded.

That was the state of affairs when Scaglia arrived on the 10th May at Brussels, whither he came to implore the intervention of the Infanta to restore his master, the Duke of Savoy, to favour with the king of Spain. He had heard in London of the task entrusted to Rubens; he went to Antwerp to find him, and accompanied him to the marquis Spinola's at Brussels,



THE DUCHESS OF BUCKINGHAM
(Albertina, Vienna)

and by the Emperor's emissary, the Duke of Savoy and his brother-in-law the king of Spain, were authorized to take any part in external affairs and even to act as mediators. This restriction on the envoy of Savoy was aimed at the ambassador of Venice who had a hand for meddling with the affairs of everyone and was the most influential mediator in Europe. At that very moment he was in London,



The Duchess of Buckingham, painted by Hans Holbein the Younger.

where he was engaged in causing all sorts of quarrels of dissension in reference to the Emperor's ambassador, and was not without success. He kept himself close with the English court.

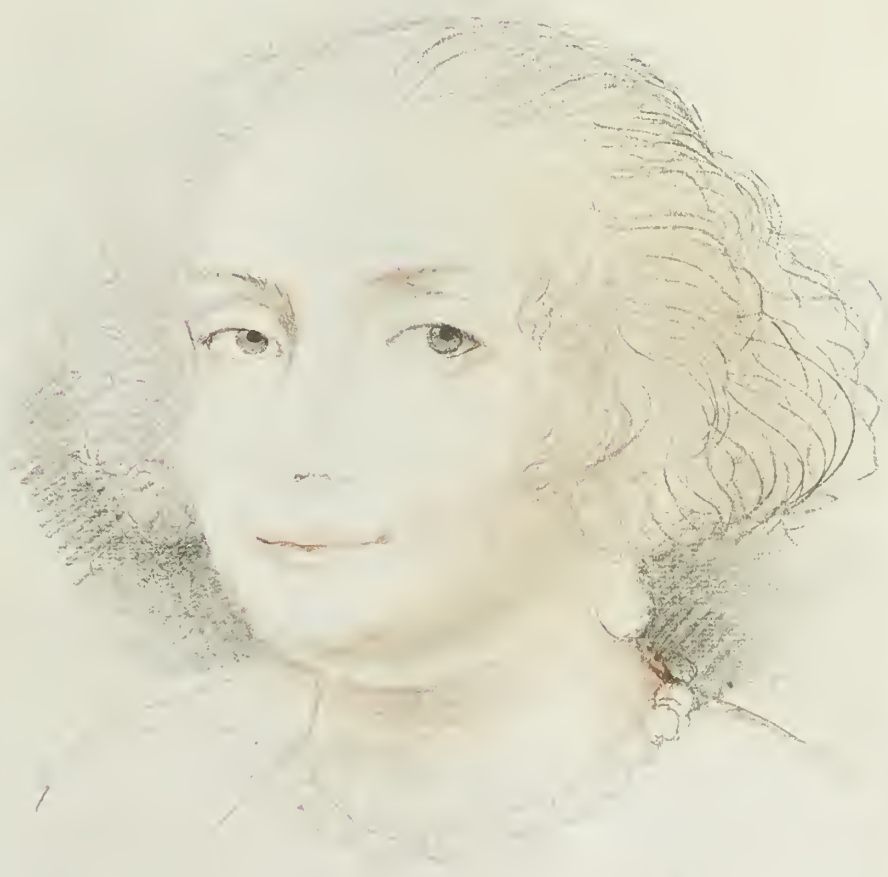
When the Duke of Buckingham had been acquainted with the verbal communications made by Rubens to Gerbier on the 24th February, 1627, or shortly after, they desisted in a letter dated the 9th March that they shared the point of view in every respect; but they still insisted on the Infanta's intervening to have his hereditary county restored to the Count Palatine. Buckingham promised Rubens to assist in procuring the Emperor a man well known to him, 50 Dutch soldiers, to sound the intimations of the States General and

to give them the Duke's permission to intervene. On the 21st April, 1627, Rubens expressed his desire to be admitted to the company he had placed in him; he gave Gerbier an official written declaration of his wish, and sent him at the same time a confidential letter, in French, in which he said that the letter he had written had been dictated by the Infanta to de Brucelles, the Countess of Nassau, and that the governor and Spanish also, were keenly anxious to see the Emperor's ambassador.

Thus was the state of affairs when Rubens arrived on the 19th May at Brussels, whither he went to receive the ambassador of the Duke of Savoy, the Duke of Savoy, by treaty with the king of Spain. He had heard in London of the news conveyed to Rubens; he went to Cologne in June 1627, and proceeded July to the Emperor's embassy at Brussels,

**THE DUCHESS OF BUCKINGHAM
(Albertina, Vienna)**

Sandra Colonna 11/21/2018



Scaglia boasted that it was in his power to conclude a treaty between England and France, but that he could also have the preference given to a convention between England and Spain.

The Infanta sent the news of the whole story to the king. Philip and his first minister, the Count-duke Olivarez, found themselves in a considerable difficulty. Olivarez and the French envoy, the comte de Rochepot, had signed a treaty at Madrid on the 20th March, by which their respective countries undertook to conquer England, divide it between them and restore the Catholic faith. This treaty had already been signed by both sovereigns. What part were they to take now with regard to the propositions of the Infanta and Buckingham? The rejection of them was repugnant to the hesitating and dissimulating character of the king of Spain, and it was impossible to accept them; they took, therefore, a middle course. For fear of exciting the suspicions of England before the commencement of hostilities against her, Philip IV sent Isabella, on the 1st June, 1627, an authorization to treat with all the sovereigns, whether for peace, a truce or an armistice; but he dated this authorization the 24th February, 1626, that is to say, fifteen months before the real date. By this means he avoided the appearance of having broken his word to France. He sent also a like authorization to treat with the United Provinces, on condition that they would renounce the title of independent states, a condition which he must have known they would not accept at any price, and further that they would permit the practice of the Catholic religion in their territories. For the moment, however, he preferred to grant them a truce for one year.

A fortnight later he wrote to the Infanta to express his extreme displeasure with Scaglia's visit to Brussels. If the affairs of Italy were to be settled, he said, he would extend his favour to the Duke of Savoy, and of this the Infanta might inform him; but she was to pay no attention to anything the envoy said. The crown of Spain could only lose consideration if this wretched person, who had made everyone his enemy, were to pose as arbitrator and mediator between her and the other European powers. But in thus disowning one of the negotiators, he added a less justifiable observation. « I am displeased », he writes to the Infanta, « at your » mixing up a painter in affairs of such importance. You can easily understand how gravely it » compromises the dignity of my kingdom, for our prestige must necessarily be lessened if we » make so mean a person the representative with whom foreign envoys are to discuss affairs » of such great importance. If the party making propositions cannot be denied the right of » choosing his representative, and if England finds no objection to fixing her choice on » Rubens, that choice cannot be agreeable to us ».

Without positively refusing Rubens, the court of Spain only admits his intervention with reluctance. Imagine it! Rubens charged with royal powers and treating with ambassadors; what a twist for the protocol, what dishonour to the country and the monarchy! The Infanta did not allow her *protégé* to be disparaged without protest; she took his side. « Gerbier », she wrote to her nephew, « is a painter just as much as Rubens, and Buckingham has sent » him here with an autograph letter for Rubens, and with instructions to lay these propo- » sitions before him. We could not, therefore, refuse to hear them. It scarcely matters who » sets these affairs on foot; if they are followed up, the conduct of them will naturally be » entrusted to persons of the highest rank ». Rubens, therefore, remained provisionally charged with the important functions of negotiator.

He asked nothing better. On the 19th May, 1627, he had told Gerbier that he would willingly go to Holland to discuss the question with him, Scaglia and Carleton. No one, he believed, and the others shared his opinion, was better informed than himself on all that concerned these negotiations ; and they had recourse continually to his advice and knowledge. In this confidential letter he recommends Gerbier to ask Buckingham to have him (Rubens) sent by the Infanta into Holland, and requests him further to demand a passport from the States General.

TOUR IN HOLLAND. — On the 23rd June, Rubens received the safe-conduct he had asked for ; on the 10th July he arrived at Breda. From there he sent a messenger to Gerbier to suggest that he should join him at Zevenbergen, a village near the frontier. Gerbier refused, and proposed to meet him in one of the great towns of Holland, Rotterdam, Delft, Amsterdam or Utrecht. There, he said, their interview would attract less attention than in a little forgotten village, to which they had nothing to take them. Rubens had formal instructions not to meet the English agent anywhere but at Zevenbergen. He wrote to Gerbier again, asking him to come there ; Gerbier again refused. Then Rubens found himself compelled to return to Brussels to demand fresh instructions. This time he was allowed to advance nearer the centre of Holland. He started once more, stopped on the 19th July at Antwerp, whence he wrote to Pierre Dupuy on the same day, and on the 21st July met Gerbier at Delft. The object of their meeting was only known to a few initiated ; in the eyes of the public in general their only business was to conclude the sale of works of art to Buckingham or to go and visit the painters and see the pictures in Holland ; according to some, the journey was attributed to Rubens's desire to find distraction after the loss of his wife in foreign travel.

Rubens spent a week with Gerbier, from the 21st to the 28th July. They went from town to town, on pretext of seeing the pictures ; they passed through Amsterdam and Utrecht. In the latter town they visited Honthorst, in whose studio Sandrart, the painter and historian of painting, was then an apprentice. Sandrart was bidden by his master to accompany Rubens during the rest of his journey.

For a long time the artist had been no stranger in Holland. Soon after his return from Italy he had been in correspondence with Professors Daniel Heinsius and Dominicus Baudius, both friends of his brother Philip. Before 1616 he had visited Holland and been entertained there by the artists (1). Several of his pictures had been sold in the northern provinces to painters and people of distinction, poets had sung of them and engravers had reproduced them. Anna Roemers Visscher had copied one of his Madonnas, and had written verses in his honour ; Mierevelt owned a copy his « Venus and Adonis » ; Constantijn Huygens placed him above all contemporary painters, and he was in friendly relations with Peter van Veen, his master's brother. According to a letter written by Rubens in August, 1627, he had enjoyed the favour of Prince Frederick Henry, who had ordered an equestrian portrait (2). On the 19th May, 1627, when expressing to Gerbier his desire to be sent as envoy to Holland to negotiate with

(1) *Correspondance de Rubens*, II, p. 133.

(2) Letter published in the catalogue of Thomas Thorpe, sold in London in 1833.

him, he says himself : « I have friends there who enjoy the highest consideration, and old » correspondents who will not fail in their duty ».

It is not surprising that in 1627 the Dutch painters gave him a triumphal reception, that Sandrart afterwards recalled with pride the days he had passed in the company of the great painter. In his *Teutsche Academie* he speaks thus :

« In the meantime, Rubens's wife having fallen ill and soon succumbed, in spite of the » efforts of the doctors, he took a journey into Holland for distraction, where he proposed to » visit the numerous distinguished painters of whom he had often heard, and whose works » he knew. Thus he came to see Honthorst at Utrecht, who received him well and showed » him all the pictures he was at work upon, among others a Diogenes, with his lantern in his » hand, looking in broad daylight for a man in a public square in Athens. Rubens considered » the composition very good, but perceived at once that the picture had been painted by one » of the young artists who frequented the studio in great numbers. He wished to know, » therefore, who had painted this Diogenes. « It is a young German », answered Honthorst, » pointing to me. Thereupon Rubens praised this piece of work by a beginner, and urged me » to reflect maturely and work zealously. He also examined the other pictures and declared » himself very pleased with them. After that, he meant to go and see Abraham Bloemaert, » Cornelis Poelenburg and other artists, and Honthorst, who was slightly indisposed, bade me » accompany him, and I showed him everything to his entire satisfaction. After a banquet » organized in his honour by Honthorst, he left for Amsterdam, then for other towns in » Holland, where he spent a fortnight in visiting everything that was remarkable. I accomp- » anied him all the time with much pleasure, for he was an artist who could teach me much by » his conversation, his advice and his example. I only left him at the frontier of Brabant ».

A letter from Dudley Carleton informs us that on the 25th July Rubens was at Amsterdam, whence he proposed to return home by way of Utrecht ; on the 6th August he was back in Antwerp. These two dates determine the time he spent in travelling about Holland in the company of Sandrart.

Rubens's arrival in Holland had caused a sensation. The French and Venetian envoys tried hard to guess the object of the journey, which roused their suspicions. Carleton avoided meeting him, and sent his own nephew to the Prince of Orange and the States General, in order to remove all mistrust and keep them informed of all that was passing. Scaglia went to meet him at Delft, but after that he had no relations with anyone but Gerbier.

FAILURE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. — Their exchanges of opinion had scarcely any result. Gerbier complained that Rubens had nothing to show him in black and white, to use his own expression, and confined himself to a verbal declaration that the Infanta and Spinola were pacifically inclined. On his side, Gerbier confined himself to making equally pacific and equally empty declarations on the part of his masters. But he insisted that positive engagements should be taken, and declared that he could only state the intentions of England more precisely if Spain made a formal proposition. Rubens could not satisfy him on this point before the arrival in Brussels of the marquis de Leganes, don Diego Messia, who had been charged by Philip to explain his intentions to the Infanta. Gerbier insisted on Rubens's going to meet

him. Rubens promised to do so, and asked Gerbier to stay another month in Holland, to await the answer of the Spanish envoy. He then started, and in the course of the month of August he wrote several times to Gerbier to inform him that the Spanish envoy was detained in Paris by illness, and that he had no means of obtaining any information from him.

At length don Diego de Messia, so impatiently awaited that he had come to be called the



THE MARQUIS DE LEGANES — Drawing (Albertina, Vienna).

Messiah, arrived in Brussels on the 9th September, 1627; but he brought the astonishing news that the king his master had ordered him to join his new ally Louis XIII and his minister Richelieu in preparing in Paris an expedition against England. The combined fleets of France, Spain and the Spanish Netherlands were to set sail for her coast and there land an army which was to march on London and capture it. The marquis Spinola was to be in command of the allied forces. Such was the reassuring and pacific news brought to Rubens, the Infanta and Spinola by the envoy on whom they had based so many hopes! At the very moment when Philip IV was authorizing the negotiation of a truce with England he was signing a treaty with France for the capture of London. No more cruel deception for the

friends of peace at the court of Brussels and no more discouraging proof of the irresolution and duplicity of the Spanish government could possibly be imagined.

The Infanta and Spinola, ashamed of the mission entrusted to Messia, showed their disapproval of it; Rubens was in consternation. For several days Gerbier had been writing to him more than once to complain of all these tergiversations, and had announced his approaching departure for England. The day before Messia's arrival in Brussels, Gerbier had

once more written to Rubens that they would both lose all credit in England if he returned without a written reply from the Infanta to Buckingham's letter of the 9th March.

Rubens could not gainsay him. He had known of Gerbier's impatience for some time, and in writing to him on the 27th August had not dared to insist further on his continuing to wait for Messia's answer. A fortnight or so later, he learned the news brought to Brussels by the Spanish envoy. The letter he wrote to Gerbier on the 18th September bears visible traces of his discouragement. He realised that for the moment nothing more could be done. But the opinion of the Infanta and Spinola was unchanged. He hoped that Buckingham's also would be unchanged, and promised to keep Gerbier posted with what occurred, and with anything that could be done in the interests of peace. He spoke in the name of the Infanta and Spinola and with the approval of Messia himself. The letter was an obliging communication, dictated by the desire to palliate the conduct of Spain by arousing the hope of a better future. On the same day he wrote Gerbier a confidential letter in French giving his opinion and that of his masters on the treaty made between France and Spain. He regarded it as a clap of thunder without a thunderbolt, destined to make a great deal of noise but produce little result. But on the same day he reveals in a letter in Flemish to Gerbier the indignation, with which the conduct of Olivarez had filled him :

« I beg you to believe that I am doing all I can, and that I find my masters roused to much anger in this matter, for they are injured and indignant at the conduct of Olivarez, in which passion has prevailed over all reason and consideration, as I remarked from the words of don Diego himself, however he tried to conceal the fact. The majority of the council of Spain was of our opinion ; but this man settled everything in his own way. So many remonstrances are made to don Diego that he is beginning to be disturbed *et se hailla emberassado* (find himself in an embarrassment). He has had the perfidy of the French brought home to him and the aid which the king of France is giving the States (of Holland) and would give if he could to Denmark, until the French themselves are laughing at our simplicity and only use the Spanish alliance as a bogey for bringing England to terms, in which they are certain to succeed. By order of the Infanta and the Marquis, Rubens has more than once laid these considerations and reasons under Don Diego's very eyes, very frankly and urgently, and not without effect ; but the thing is done and he cannot modify the commands of Spain ».

He wrote also to Buckingham, on the 18th September, 1627, to inform him that, if it had depended on him, the matter would have taken a very different turn, and to assure him, in the name of the Infanta and Spinola, that they would always be glad to do anything in favour of peace, and did not despair of soon finding their opportunity.

Gerbier had quickly learned from a trustworthy friend of his in Paris everything that had been plotted by Messia and Richelieu. He had immediately communicated the news to King Charles in a letter of the 15th September, 1627, in which he added that the French minister had also signed an alliance with the United Provinces of the Netherlands.

Richelieu's intentions are not hard to understand. Threatened by a coalition between Spain, the Spanish Netherlands and England, France would have found herself surrounded by enemies on all sides. England would have had her hands free to support the Huguenots.

If moreover a treaty were to have been concluded between Spain and Holland, the danger which the French Huguenots threatened to the kingdom of Louis XIII would have been still further aggravated. That was to be prevented at all costs. The best thing to be done was to make a treaty with Spain. It is not surprising that the clever statesman, who directed the destinies of France, realised this and succeeded in bending the none too able advisers of Philip IV to his ends. The latter were to see nothing for the moment in an alliance with France but a coalition of Catholic states against the Protestant states, a means of reducing England, the ally of Holland, to powerlessness, and consequently of compelling the United Provinces to submission. In reality they were playing the game of France, who was then Spain's principal enemy and was destined to lose no time in making her preponderance felt in Europe. Fancying themselves clever when they were nothing but perfidious, Olivarez and the council of state tried to save appearances and pretended to be attempting to renew friendly relations with England. They gave Messia orders not to break off the negotiations for peace. In this way they wound the political situation into a still worse tangle.

For the moment, therefore, Rubens's mission to Holland, his interviews, his *pourparlers* and correspondence with Gerbier remained without result. We say for the moment, because a few months later the negotiations were to be resumed, and this time with complete success. For the time being, in spite of the hypocritical declarations of Madrid, all appeared lost. Gerbier could do nothing but return to London. On the 4th October he was recalled by the Secretary of State : his mission was ended.

It seems that Rubens made another brief journey into Holland at the beginning of October. On the 12th of that month Jacques Dupuy wrote to Peiresc : « M. Rubens has gone for a short » journey in Holland, but he tells us nothing about it ». And on the 14th of the same month Rubens himself tells Peiresc that he had not written by the last courier, who left on the 7th October, because he was away from home. We do not know what he went to do beyond the frontier ; probably to take leave of Gerbier before his departure for London.

Heart-broken at the result of an undertaking he had begun with such flattering hopes, he showed his grief in his letters to Gerbier no less than in his interviews with the leaders of the court of Brussels ; he wrote to Philippe Chifflet that Spain had acted inconsiderately in allying herself with France, who would only keep her word so far as it suited her own interests (1).

But outside the circle of the initiated he breathed not a word of his doings nor of the way he had been misled. During his travels in July, August and September, 1627, he wrote several times to Pierre Dupuy in Paris, and each time discussed questions of politics ; but not a single word ever escaped him on the subject of the important and most honourable part he himself was playing at that very moment. He let his correspondent into secrets which were common property, but carefully kept silence on much more important events, in which he himself was concerned and which very few knew of. Peiresc, who well knew that his friend was the princess's adviser and man of confidence, rallies him on his reserve and declares that, when Rubens gave any news of the negotiations he himself was directing, he professed to

(1) Letter from Philippe Chifflet to Guidi da Bagni, Papal Nuncio, 10 September 1627 (AUG. CASTAN : *Opinions des érudits*, etc., p. 42).

have heard it from a third person. He was as far as the rest from penetrating the secret his friend was hiding from everyone. Our artist had become an expert in diplomatic dissimulation, and took good care not to show the friends of France that he disapproved of the treaty concluded against England by France and Spain, and kept his prophecies of evil for Buckingham, who, he said, had placed himself by his own rashness in the necessity of conquering or perishing gloriously, and who, if he survived the defeat of England by France, would be no more than the plaything of fortune, and the object of his enemies' mockery. This, we must admit, was pushing his respect for state-secrets a trifle far.

WORKS SOLD TO BUCKINGHAM. — It would have been natural, however, if Rubens had expressed himself more guardedly on the subject of the English statesman. He had just concluded a sale with him, which brought him a fortune, and included a large number of his own works, proving how highly Buckingham appreciated his genius. We do not know precisely what works these were; but we find certain indications on the subject in the catalogue of the pictures sent to Antwerp in 1649 to be sold for Buckingham's son, who was then living in exile. This catalogue, published by Brian Fairfax in 1758, mentions thirteen pictures by Rubens, which, without question, were all among those sold by the painter to Buckingham in 1625, and sent to England in September, 1627.

They are as follows :

1. A large piece, being a Landscape full of figures, horses, and carts. Length 5 ft. Breadth 7 ft. 7. in.
2. The Picture of the queen regent of France, sitting under a canopy. Length 1 ft. 9 in. Breadth 2 ft.
3. A piece representing winter, wherein there are nine figures. Length 4 ft. Breadth 7 ft.
4. Another large piece wherein are several gods and goddesses of the woods, and little Bacchus's. Length 5 ft. 4 in. Breadth 7 ft. 6 in.
5. Another ditto of Cimon and Iphigenia. There being in this picture three naked women and a man in a Landscape. Length 7 ft. 6 in. Breadth 10 ft. 9 in.
6. A fish market, wherein our Saviour and several other large figures are painted. Length 9 ft. Breadth 13 ft. 9 in.
7. A wild boar hunting, wherein several huntsmen on foot and on horseback are represented. Length 5 ft. 6 in. Breadth 6 ft.
8. Medusa's Head. Length 2 ft. 6 in. Breadth 4 ft.
9. A naked woman with an hermit. Length 1 ft. Breadth 2 ft. 6. in.
10. The dutchess of Brabant with her lover. Length 3 ft. Breadth 2 ft. 9 in.
11. The three graces with fruit. Length 3 ft. Breadth 2 ft. 6 in.
12. The evening in a small Landskip. Length 2 ft. Breadth 2 ft.
13. The head of an old woman. Length 1 ft. 8 in. Breadth 1 ft. 4 in.

The catalogue in question only mentions the purchaser's name in the case of one of the pictures, the « Three Graces » : « Sir James Thornhill bought this picture at Paris, which was sold here after his death. » The picture referred to is the « Nature adorned by the Graces »

which is now in the Glasgow Museum. It is of small dimensions and carefully painted; Jan Breughel did the rich garland of flowers to be noticed in it (*Œuvre*. N^o 821).

Of the twelve others four are in the Imperial Museum at Vienna. It is doubtless no mere chance that all these pictures have passed into the same gallery, and there is reason to suppose that the Archduke Leopold-William, a great amateur of art and then Governor of the Netherlands, bought a large part of the Duke of Buckingham's collection at Antwerp in 1649; but a fact that might tend to invalidate this explanation is that none of these four Rubenses appear in the catalogue of the Archduke's pictures drawn up in 1659 (1). In 1718 all these pictures were already part of the Imperial collection at Prague, whence they were moved to Vienna in 1721 and 1723.

First comes the « Duchess of Brabant with her lover », or « St Pepin and St Begga his daughter », as the catalogue of the Imperial Museum at Vienna calls it (*Œuvre*. N^o 479). In our opinion there is no more reason for accepting one of these names than the other. The engraver gave his plate the title: « St Pepin, first duke of Brabant, and St Begga, founder of the convent of noble ladies at Andenne, near Namur, drawn by Rubens after ancient pictures ». It is clear, in fact, that Rubens here represented people of old times in their original costume, but he rejuvenated them by the execution and turned them into true Rubenian figures, overflowing with freshness and life.

The second picture is the « Medusa's head » (*Œuvre*. N^o 636), with serpents by Jan Breughel, striking in expression and very highly finished in execution.

Then we have « Cimon and Iphigenia » (*Œuvre*. N^o 871), a scene borrowed from a story by Boccaccio. The young woman, entirely nude, is lying on the ground with her head resting on the side of one of her companions, and a third woman leans against the trunk of a tree. Behind the latter is a page asleep, in whom we recognise Rubens's second son. On the other side is the shepherd Cimon, looking eagerly at the beautiful women. The landscape is by Wildens, the fruit and animals by Snijders; the two principal women's figures are by Rubens, the others by a collaborator retouched by the master. The attitude of the women is graceful, but the whiteness of their flesh has grown pale through cleaning.

Then comes « Angelica and a Hermit » (*Œuvre*. N^o 872), a subject taken from Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*. This is a small picture entirely by the master's hand, painted with a broad and marrowy touch.

A fifth picture from Buckingham's collection, the « Boar-hunt » (*Œuvre*. N^o 1160), was in the gallery at Prague till 1649, and was bought by the Elector Frederick-Augustus II for the Dresden Gallery, where it still remains.

One of the pictures from the Buckingham collection, the « Winter landscape with nine figures » (*Œuvre*. N^o 1173) is now in the royal gallery at Windsor; this is the picture of which we spoke above (p. 193).

Another picture, the « Landscape with horses and carts » (*Œuvre*. N^o 1199) is evidently the one in the same gallery entitled « Landscape with peasants going to market ».

The other pictures, the « Queen-Regent of France under a canopy », « Fauns and Dryads

(1) Printed in the *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorische Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*. Part I Vienna, 1883.

with little Bacchuses », a « Fishmarket », « Evening », a small landscape, and the « Head of an old woman », are lost, or at any rate impossible to identify with certainty. It is possible that the landscape was the moonlight picture formerly at Dudley House and sold in 1892 (*Œuvre*. N^o 1189). The « Sacrifice to Venus » in the Museum at Vienna has been taken for the « Fauns and Dryads with little Bacchuses »; but, besides the marked difference between the sizes of the two pictures, the latter was painted after 1630 and consequently cannot have been sold to the Duke of Buckingham in 1627.

Besides the pictures delivered, the sale included a large canvas representing the « Ascension of the Elect », which Rubens promised to deliver but never finished. All we know of it is the sketch, of which we have spoken (p. 195). It was included in Rubens's estate; the painter Jan Wildens bought it and had it retouched by Jan Bockhorst; it is now in the Pinakothek at Munich.

Not all these works were painted for Buckingham. Rubens must have had several of them ready for some years. This applies to the two pictures now belonging to the gallery at Windsor, the « Winter Landscape » and the « Peasants going to market », and the Dresden « Boar-hunt », which were painted ten or twelve years before they were sold. The « Head of Medusa », and the « Nature adorned by the Graces » were painted in the life-time of Jan Breughel, and consequently before the 13th January, 1625. The « Duchess of Brabant and her lover », « Cimon and Iphigenia » and « Angelica and the Hermit » are the only ones which seem to date from about 1625 to 1627; this is probably also the case with the « Marie de Medici under a canopy ».



THREE NYMPHS WITH A HORN OF PLENTY
(Museum, Madrid).

CIMON AND PERO. — We may note that among the few pictures of which Rubens borrowed the subjects from poets or prose-writers two occur among the canvases he sold to Buckingham. We are justified in believing that the duke informed him of his preference for subjects of this kind, or else that Rubens liked to treat them at this period, as at others he had given the preference to hunting-pieces, landscapes or bacchanalian scenes. In support of this hypothesis we mention the fact that, not to speak of the « Duchess of Brabant and her lover », which has an episodic character, Rubens treated about the same time another literary subject, the « Story of Cimon and Pero », or « Filial love among the Romans », taken from an instance

quoted by Valerius Maximus in his *De Pietate erga parentes*. Several pictures representing this subject are known. One of them was formerly in the collection of the Dukes of Marlborough, and was bought in 1886 by consul Weber of Hamburg (*Œuvre*. No 868); there is another in the Museum at Amsterdam (*Œuvre*. No 869). They are treated in a very different manner, but are both only second-rate works. A third picture forms part of the collection of Lord Hardwicke. Waagen says of it that it is careful in execution and powerful in colour, but the composition and expression are little attractive. A fourth example, known from the engraving by Cornelis van Caukercken is in the Hermitage Museum at St Petersburg (*Œuvre*. No 870). Till 1863 it was exhibited as a genuine Rubens; then it was put aside on the advice of Waagen, who took it for a copy. Lately it has returned to its place in the Museum. It is a painting with the brilliance of enamel. The head of the old man is powerful and has strongly marked features; golden reflexions play on the fair hair of his young daughter. The picture must have been painted in 1611 or 1612. There is also an engraving after another composition, in which the father is represented sitting down and the daughter standing. The print is signed N. R. (Nicolas Rocholle) and bears the date 1623.

THE TRIUMPH AND FIGURES OF THE HOLY SACRAMENT. — The most important work executed by Rubens during the period now before us, which extends from the middle of 1625 to the end of 1627, is the « Triumph and Figures of the Holy Sacrament » (*Œuvre*. Nos 41-55). It was ordered of him by the Archduchess Isabella. Before her marriage, the princess had passed eight months in the convent of the Poor Clares at Madrid, founded by the Infanta, Doña Juana, daughter of the Emperor Charles V and queen-dowager of Portugal. In memory of its royal origin, it bore the title of the *Monasterio de las Señoras religiosas descalzas reales*, the convent of the royal discalced nuns. After the death of the Archduke Albert his widow had resumed the dress of the Poor Clares, and some years later she wished to give her favourite order and the convent she had lived in a mark of her sympathy. She decided that it should be a royal gift, consisting of a series of tapestries woven at Brussels after designs by Rubens, and destined to clothe the walls of the convent church. The subject chosen was the Triumph of the Holy Sacrament, for which St Clare had a special devotion. Rubens painted the sketches, and his pupils carried out the cartoons to the requisite size under his direction; Jan Raes, a well-known Brussels tapestry-weaver, made the tapestries. « In January, 1628, were given to » Peter Paul Rubens several pearls, on account of the patterns for the tapestries for the » Cordeliers at Madrid »; this entry we find in a document entitled » Presents given by the Infanta », which appears in the Chifflet collection in the library at Besançon. Another entry, unfortunately undated, runs as follows : « The Infanta sent to the Discalced Nuns at Madrid a » tapestry containing the figures and mysteries of the Holy Eucharist, the patterns of which, » [which] were made by Rubens, cost thirty thousand florins. The tapestry was worth nearly a » hundred thousand. » We find another indication relating to the date at which Rubens was at work on the models in a letter addressed by Philippe Chifflet to the Apostolic Nuncio, Guidi da Bagni, on the 21st May, 1627, in which he says : « Rubens intends to leave for Rome » about that time (September, 1627) after he has finished several pictures which he has

» undertaken for Her Royal Highness » (1). It is quite possible that he was at work on them during the six months from August, 1625, to February, 1626, which he spent at Brussels in the neighbourhood of the tapestry-weavers.

In July, 1628, the tapestries were completely finished and were sent to Spain. On the 14th of that month Philippe Chifflet wrote to the Nuncio, Guidi da Bagni: « Her Royal Highness dispatched two days ago two carts which she is sending into Spain loaded with tapestries, canvases, geographical charts and some paintings ».

The royal convent of the Reformed Carmelites at Madrid still owns the tapestries, and exhibits them every year on Good Friday and in the octave of the Holy Sacrament. Another example may also be seen in the royal palace at Madrid. Copies after Rubens's models were several times ordered of the Brussels weavers. F. Jos. van den Branden mentions two Antwerp merchants, Frans de Smidt and Ascanio Martini, who both had a series of fifteen compositions after the models of the « Triumph of Holy Church » by Peter Paul Rubens carried out at Brussels by Frans van den Hecke, weaver to the court. In our own day detached pieces of the series may be found in the possession of Baron Erlanger, MM. Ferrié, Bracquenié and Vayson, and in the Kunstgewerbe Museum at Vienna.

The work is best known by the large engravings of ten of the subjects by Schelte a Bolswert, Nicolas Lauwers, Adriaan Lommelin, Jacobus Neefs and Conrad Lauwers. The plates by Schelte a Bolswert and Nicolas Lauwers are among the master-pieces of the Rubenian school of engraving.

The principal plates are known under the inaccurate designation of « Triumphs of Faith »; each engraving has a special title, such as the « Destruction of Paganism », the « Triumph of the New Law », the « Triumph of the Church in the Holy Sacrament », the « Truth revealed by time », and the « Triumph of Divine Love », only to mention the earliest prints made after these compositions.

The real subjects treated by Rubens number thirteen. First come five triumphs: the « Triumph of the Holy Sacrament over Paganism », the « Triumph over worldly Wisdom, Science and Nature », the « Triumph over Ignorance and Blindness », the « Triumph over Heresy », and the « Triumph of Divine Love in the Holy Sacrament ». Then follow four symbolical events: « Abraham offering bread and wine to Melchizedek », the « Israelites receiving Manna in the desert », the « Sacrifice of the Old Law », and the « Prophet Elijah fed by the angel ». Finally there are four compositions representing the Confessors and defenders of the dogma of the Holy Sacrament: the « Four Evangelists », the « Fathers of the Church and other Saints », the « Popes who confirmed the dogma », and the « Ecclesiastical authorities and the House of Austria adoring the Holy Sacrament ».

The series of tapestries possessed by the convent of the Descalzas Reales comprises eighteen compositions (2); the last, representing the « Ecclesiastical authorities and the

(1) AUG. CASTAN: *Opinion des érudits*, etc., p. 41. — ID.: *Le Saint-Ildefonse*, p. 79.

(2) The description of the tapestries (*Descripcion de los Tapices de Rubens que se colocan en el claustro del Monasterio de las Señoras Religiosas Descalzas Reales*. Madrid, Fortonet, 1881) only mentions seventeen, and passes over in silence the two little angels bearing the Holy Sacrament.

princes of the house of Austria adoring the Holy Sacrament », is divided into five parts, and there is a second and modified example of the « Triumph of Divine Love ».

For most or perhaps all of these subjects, Rubens made sketches in grisaille, the composition of which differs very little from that of the pictures woven. The Museum at Cambridge has seven of them : the « Triumph over Wisdom, Science and Nature », the « Triumph over Ignorance and Blindness », the « Triumph over Heresy », the « Triumph of Divine Love », the « Meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek », the « Four Evangelists », and the « Fathers of the



THE TRIUMPH OF THE HOLY SACRAMENT OVER IGNORANCE AND BLINDNESS — Sketch (Museum, Madrid).

Church and other defenders of the Holy Sacrament ». We have recently discovered two others of these sketches in the market, the « Prophet Elijah » and the « Manna ».

Rubens then painted in colour the sketches which were to be used as models by his collaborators to be executed on canvas to the requisite scale. The Museum at Madrid has eight of these sketches treating the same subjects as the grisailles at Cambridge, and one more, the « Triumph over Paganism ».

Finally the large models were painted by Rubens's pupils and retouched by him.

These pictures and the eight coloured sketches remained in the palace at Brussels till 1648, when Philip IV ordered his nephew Leopold William, then governor of the Netherlands, to send them to Madrid. The order was carried out in whole or in part. The king kept the sketches in his collection, and they were afterwards moved to the Madrid Museum. It is not exactly known what became of the large canvases. According to tradition they were given by



THE HOLY SACRAMENT ADORED BY PRINCES AND PRELATES
after a copy (Rev. Le Monnier, Paris)

panels of the *Triumph of the Holy Sacrament* is divided into five parts, and the *Triumph of Divine Love* is a copy of the *Triumph of Divine Love*.

In addition to all of these subjects, Ribens made sketches in grisaille the composition of the *Triumph of Divine Love* from that of the pictures woven. The Museum at Cambridge possesses the *Triumph over Wisdom, Science and Nature*, the *Triumph over Ignorance and Error*, the *Triumph over Heresy*, the *Triumph of Divine Love*, the *Triumph of the Holy Sacrament and Adoration*, the *Four Evangelists*, and the *Feast of the*



The Triumph of the Holy Sacrament, from a sketch by Peter Paul Rubens. (Museum, Madrid)

Christ and other defenders of the Holy Sacrament. We have recently discovered two others of these sketches in the market, the *Victory of Christ* and the *Mantia*.

Ribens had planned to make the sketches which were to be used as models by his collaborators to be executed by himself in the opposite style. The Museum at Madrid has eight of these sketches, among the most famous of the grisailles at Cambridge, and one more, the *Triumph over Ignorance*.

Finally the large models were painted by Ribens's pupils and executed by him.

Three pictures and the eight colored sketches remained in the palace at Brussels till after Philip IV ordered his cousin August William, then governor of the Netherlands, to send them to Madrid. The order was carried out in whole or in part. The king kept the sketches in his collection, and they were afterwards moved to the Museum. It is not possible to know with certainty of the large pictures. According to tradition they were given by

THE HOLY SACRAMENT ADORED BY PRINCES AND PRELATES
after a copy (Rev. Le Monnier, Paris)



the Count-Duke Olivarez to the church of Loeches, near Madrid, where Philip IV's minister had his country house. Olivarez fell into disgrace in 1643, and as the pictures were not sent from Brussels till 1648 the story cannot be accepted. It is certain that in the eighteenth century the church in question possessed six of the canvases. Possibly Philip IV gave them to Olivarez's nephew, Don Luis de Haro, and he may have presented them to the church of Loeches. But it is more probable that the king gave them to the church direct.

Ponz, in his travels in Spain, and Father Pedro Antonio de la Puente state that they saw six of the pictures in the church about 1770: the « Triumph of the Holy Sacrament over Wisdom, Science and Nature », the « Meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek », the « Fathers of the Church », the « Evangelists », « Elijah fed by the angel », and the « Israelites receiving the Manna ». They were taken away in 1808 by the French. Two of them were given to general Sebastiani, who sold them to the Louvre. These two were the « Triumph of the Holy Sacrament over Wisdom, Science and Nature », and « Elijah fed by the angel »; the four others were bought by M. Bourke, the Danish envoy at Madrid, who sold them 1818 to the Duke of Westminster. They are still in the possession of that family in London. The Duke of Westminster has a seventh composition, the « Fathers of the Church confirming the doctrine of the Holy Sacrament ». An eighth picture, the « Divine Love triumphing in the Holy Sacrament », belonged in 1830 to Mr. Joshua Taylor; in 1836 it became the property of Mr. Pennel, who sold it to Mr. Cave; and it formed part of his sale in 1841.

We do not know what became of the others. We are tempted to believe that there never were more than six in Spain; in any case, no more were ever seen at Loeches; it is not improbable that some remained in Brussels. In fact, we read in the *Gazet van Amsterdam* for May, 1727, that on the 21st of that month there were discovered in an obscure corner of the chapel of the palace at Brussels six pictures by Rubens representing the Triumphs of the Church and the Entry of the Cardinal-Infant. They were destroyed on the 4th February, 1731, by the fire which broke out in the palace. The writers of the time are not agreed upon the number of pictures in the series of the Triumphs and Figures of the Holy Sacrament, which



TITLEPAGE FOR *Jacobi Bidermanni Heroum Epistole*
Drawing (Plantin-Moretus Museum, Antwerp).

were destroyed on that occasion ; some speak of six, others of seven, others again of ten ; the most trustworthy, the painter Aegidius-Joseph Smeyers, only mentions four.

A number of copies of the compositions belonging to the series, some of the same size, others smaller, but all of secondary artistic value, were extant in the eighteenth century, or are so still. We have also found some reduced copies of brilliant colouring ; they are not by the master's hand, but by his cleverest pupils.

The reproduction of these compositions in tapestry, engraving and painting clearly proves the great success they attained and the length of time during which efforts were made to procure examples in Belgium and elsewhere.

The five Triumphs, which gave their name to the whole series, are the most remarkable in subject. Like the rest, Rubens painted them on an imaginary canvas unfolded by small angels hovering in the air, before a sort of theatre, the vaulted roof of which is supported to right and left by a colossal pillar, while the lower part represents a symbolical subject, treated decoratively.

The « Triumph of the Holy Sacrament over Paganism » (*Œuvre*. N^o 41) is the best known, from the masterly engraving by Schelte a Bolswert. In the upper left hand corner we see an angel holding in one hand a sheaf of flames, in the other a chalice with the host. The sight of him is sufficient to terrify the pagans sacrificing and put them to flight. They were on the point of slaying a bull before the altar of Jupiter ; the ceremony is interrupted, and the priests fall as they flee. The sacrificial slaughterer, an almost nude giant with his axe in his hand, is raising his arm above his head as if to protect it ; his assistant, kneeling on one knee, holds the bull by the horns with both hands, and looks up in terror at the angel armed with flames. The group is one of the most powerful that was ever drawn by Rubens or composed by anyone : though its movement is impetuous, it is none the less perfectly balanced, and the picture of terror it presents is all the more striking for the mighty strength of the men who are affected.

The « Triumph of the Holy Sacrament over Wordly Wisdom, Science and Nature » (*Œuvre*. N^o 42) shows a young girl symbolical of Faith holding up a chalice with the host in her hand, and standing on a chariot, drawn by two large angels and pushed by two smaller angels. By her side is a celestial spirit holding a cross. Behind the chariot come three captives : one, personifying Science, holds an astrolabe in one hand and a book in the other ; then comes the Stoic philosopher, an old man of morose aspect leaning on a staff, and the Epicurean, crowned with flowers, walks behind him. In front goes Nature with innumerable breasts ; she too is conquered by the new Faith. This again is a superb group, calm but powerful, and forming a triumphal procession of angels pushing, pulling and flying, of Faith at the head of the procession, and the conquered coming after her. All is movement, harmony, overflowing life, and passionate impulse.

The « Triumph of the Holy Sacrament over Ignorance and Blindness » (*Œuvre*. N^o 43) is represented by a young woman sitting in a four-wheeled chariot in the form of a shell drawn by four horses. She has a chalice with the host in her hand, and an angel is holding the papal tiara over her head. Numerous allegorical figures surround the horses, on one of which sits the Spirit of the Church. A young woman holding a martyr's palm is flying above the

procession, and the horses are led by the Spirits of Justice and Authority. Behind the procession walks an old man in chains with ass's ears, personifying Ignorance; another old man with blindfolded eyes, personifying Blindness, is being led by the Spirit of Light. Hatred and Discord are crushed under the wheels of the chariot. There is something even more triumphal in this group than in the one last mentioned. The horses chafing at the bit and pawing the ground with pride, the flight of angels round the young woman symbolizing Faith, the Spirit riding one of the horses and carrying the pontifical keys, Faith with her inspired gesture and the life-like attitudes of the vanquished, all combine to form a group incomparably rich and animated, a veritable triumphal procession marching onward, overpowering, irresistible.

In the « Triumph of the Holy Sacrament over Heresy » (*Œuvre*. N° 44) we see an old man with wings, symbolical of Time, rising in the air and bearing with him in his flight the figure of Truth, a young woman with flying hair and draped in a white robe. Before him flee two hideous figures, Lying and Revolt; winged dragons hover in the air, vomiting flames against the beneficent Spirit. Luther lies stretched on the ground, groaning in the midst of his writings, while Calvin continues to defend his doctrine; Tanchelin, holding a monstrance in his clenched fist, is half thrown down. The Truth is a figure of remarkable beauty, very graceful in her flight, and recalling the figure Rubens placed in the last picture of the History of Marie de Medici.

The « Divine Love triumphing in the dogma of the Holy Sacrament » (*Œuvre*. N° 45), is represented by a mother holding one of her children in her arms while two others press close against her. She is sitting in a chariot drawn by two lions, one of whom is ridden by a small winged angel armed with an arrow. On the front of the chariot stands a pelican opening her breast with her beak to feed her young. Behind the chariot come two angels, one of whom is armed with a torch and is burning two serpents that crawl along the ground; the other has a bow in one hand and a flaming heart in the other. Twelve angels hover in a circle round the head of the mother.

In the « Meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek » (*Œuvre*. N° 46), we see the high priest, followed by two other priests and three attendants, one of whom is carrying on his shoulders a basket of bread, while the two others have jugs of wine. Two children are distributing the bread among Abraham's servants; Abraham, dressed as a Roman soldier, holds in his hand the two loaves he has received from Melchizedek; behind him stand six soldiers and a young servant holding his horse. The arrangement of the scene recalls that of the ceilings of the Jesuits' church at Antwerp and the Museum at Caen. In the sketch in the Madrid Museum the two servants with jugs of wine do not appear, and Abraham is only accompanied by two soldiers.

In the « Israelites receiving manna in the desert » (*Œuvre*. N° 47), we see Moses with one hand raised to heaven, making the miraculous food rain down in the form of seeds by the force of his prayer. One man is stooping and preparing to lift a sack full of manna, another is putting a basket on the head of a woman. A young girl holds out her apron to take manna in, and a mother is going away with her little girl in one hand and a basket on her head. It is a superb and artfully arranged group.

The « Sacrifice of the Ancient Law » (*Œuvre*. N^o 48) is represented by two priests slaying a lamb. In the middle of the picture are two old men advancing towards the altar, one of them carrying a lamb; they are followed by three Levites. In the foreground are two children carrying a pair of pigeons. Beside the altar are two piles of loaves, and on the left the faithful bringing their offerings. In the middle distance appear four priests carrying the ark of the covenant, round which the people gather with cries of joy. The loaves and the lamb here symbolize the sacrifice of the New Law.

The « Prophet Elijah in the desert » (*Œuvre*. N^o 49) is a man of wild appearance, wearing a sheepskin with a white drapery thrown over it; an angel stands by his side offering him bread and wine.



TITLEPAGE FOR *Casimiri Sarbievii Lyricorum Libri IV*
Drawing (Plantin-Moretus Museum, Antwerp).

The « Four Evangelists » (*Œuvre*. N^o 50) are standing on the platform whence the imaginary tapestry falls. St Luke with his ox, and St Mark with his lion are raising their eyes to the angel who is pointing out to St Matthew a passage in his open book. St John with a chalice in his hand is looking up to the eagle descending upon him.

The « Fathers of the Church and other Saints » (*Œuvre*. N^o 51) are also standing on a platform. On the right are St Ambrose and St Augustine in episcopal robes, and St Gregory with the tiara on his brow and the papal cross in his hand; in the middle stand St Thomas Aquinas and St Clare; to the latter, who is holding the Holy Sacrament, Rubens has given the features of the Infanta Isabella. On the left are St Norbert in the Praemonstratensian habit and St Jerome wearing the violet robe of a cardinal and

plunged in the study of a book. This picture, which belongs to the Duke of Westminster, was lately exhibited in the South Kensington Museum in London.

The « Doctrine of the Holy Sacrament confirmed by the popes and prelates » (*Œuvre*. N^o 52) is represented by a young woman clothed in a red robe and a blue cloak, sitting in the middle of the picture. She is passing between her fingers a chain made up of medals on which appear the popes, the two ends of it being held by angels. In the heights is an angel carrying the symbol of eternity, represented by a serpent biting its tail.

We only know the last composition, the « Holy Sacrament adored by the leaders of the church, the princes of the house of Austria and the angels » (*Œuvre*. N^{os} 52-53) by a copy in the possession of M. Meunier, vicar of the parish of les Ternes in Paris. In the sky a monstrance is borne by two small angels; lower down, to right and left, are groups of angels playing on

various instruments or singing in honour of the Holy Sacrament. On the ground, to the right, are several kneeling princes, among whom we may recognise the King and Queen of Spain, the Emperor of Austria, and the Infanta Isabella; on the left kneel the four fathers of the Latin church, St Dominic and other priests. In the tapestries of the Descalzas Reales this subject is divided into five parts; the angels carrying the monstrance, the two groups of angels singing and playing on various instruments, and the two groups of spiritual and temporal authorities.

The seven compositions of which we know the painted cartoons are treated with unusual breadth; in the two in the Louvre, especially, the brushwork is free almost to roughness. In those belonging to the Duke of Westminster the touch is firmer and more careful. But all are treated in a more summary fashion than the majority of Rubens's works, and markedly more than the « Story of Decius Mus »; they are broader and flatter, and thus fulfil up to a certain point the conditions of monumental painting, which demands lower relief and more fulness than cabinet pictures. But in another respect Rubens has forgotten these conditions and even grossly disregarded them. Nothing is more contradictory to probability than the idea of representing his subjects on fictitious tapestries supported above by angels and raised from below in several parts; or the idea of representing the tapestries as a lowered curtain, closing up the space between two pillars; or the risky and illogical inspiration of making the action begin on the imaginary tapestry and end on *terra firma*. Fancy has here turned to unjustifiable arbitrariness and unbridled caprice. Rubens has transgressed not only the laws of his art but those of reason as well, and allowed himself to be drawn into bad taste and the *rococo* style.

But if we can forget these liberties, we must needs admire the magnificence of the compositions: the mighty breath with which he has inspired men and animals; the sureness and boldness with which he has given them life; the powerful movement which approaches violence but never reaches it; the vivacious air which never degenerates into wildness. In the leading compositions of the series there is a superabundance of life which leaps from the movement of every limb, the fold of every drapery, the smallest fibre and the meanest detail.

Even in the subjects with less action, like the « Abraham and Melchizedek », the « Elijah », the « Gathering of the manna », the « Fathers of the church » and the « Evangelists », this fulness of life and powerful need of action are manifest everywhere, in the movement of a head, the gesture of an arm or leg, or the expression of a face. In the « Four Evangelists », for example, the lion of St Mark is advancing at one end of the composition with his tail raised, while at the other end the eagle of St John comes down in swift flight, with open beak and threatening claws, an angel is descending with open wings and flying drapery, and the Evangelists, surprised by the apparition, stop short in their walk, and raise their heads in anxious attention, each one in a different attitude and with a half-completed gesture.

This series of the Triumphs and Figures of the Holy Sacrament is the most important work ever produced by Rubens in a style he cultivated all his life, the allegorical. We have already seen symbolical figures playing a considerable part in the History of Marie de Medici. Some of his earliest pictures, the « Choice of Hercules », « Virtue triumphant », « Religion triumphing over Paganism », the « Shivering Venus » and others, are pure allegories; his drawings for frontispieces are the same, and so are his paintings for the Entry of the Cardinal Infant and for the ceilings at Whitehall; but nowhere does symbolism reign so undisputed

as in the five Triumphs, and nowhere has the artist treated it in more masterly fashion. Rubens easily becomes enigmatic when he wishes to wrap up too much meaning in his symbolical figures, as he often did in his frontispieces. But here the subjects and their signification are, at any rate in essential points, clear and striking. There is no need to be deeply versed in history nor in theology, to understand that in the first picture the pagan priests and their faithful followers are hopelessly vanquished and put to flight by the marvellous power that appears in the heavens; it is equally easy to discover the signification of the victory expressed by the irresistible movement of the maiden bearing the Holy Sacrament in the compositions that follow. The meaning of some of the secondary figures may appear obscure, but as a whole the lucidity is dazzling. This eloquent precision in the sensible interpretation of a supernatural fact which produced a complete change in the history of the world was certainly one of the causes of the extraordinary success of this one of Rubens's creations.

If we look round for other works of the same kind, which he might have used as models, we find a number of Triumphs by Titian. First there is the Triumph of Christ. Jesus is standing on a chariot drawn by four fathers of the Latin Church; before him go Adam and Eve, followed by their descendants, patriarchs and sibyls; behind the chariot marches the army of martyrs and confessors. It is said that Titian painted the fresco of this triumph in his house at Padua. According to Vasari, he published it in 1508 in a series of eight woodcuts. It is a curious fact that the triumph was published in 1543 in the form of woodcuts, with the inscription: « Printed at Ghent by Joost Lambrecht, engraver of letters, opposite the town hall, and are to be sold there, in the year 1543 ». There is a great difference between this long procession of people before and behind the chariot, in which the Saviour only occupies a minor place, and the crowded compositions of Rubens, in which the triumphal chariot forms the principal part. Titian's four Triumphs inspired by Petrarch's poems are also well known; the Triumph of Time, of Glory, of Death and of Religion, and also the Triumph of Religion and Peace crushing Heresy.

A work which stands in much closer relation to that of Rubens is the « Triumph of Holy Church », as presented by Otho Vænius in six compositions, which belong to the Museum at Schleissheim. The root idea is the same; glorified figures like the Church, Christ on the Cross, and so forth, appear throned in a chariot drawn by horses led by allegorical figures such as the Divine Word, or Human Reason, and followed by enemies of those whose triumph is being celebrated, while other figures, which pay them homage, are placed in the chariot or round about it. But if there is a likeness in the conception of the subject, the execution is entirely different. With Rubens all is life, movement, strength, spirit; with Otho Vænius, it is all restrained elegance, coldness and impersonality: the former shows us real men, the latter allegories under human form.

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN IN ANTWERP CATHEDRAL. — One year before the completion of the Triumphs, Rubens painted the most important of the altar-pieces of this period, the picture which to-day still adorns the high altar of the Cathedral at Antwerp (*Œuvre*. No 359). The altar had been wrecked, like the rest, by the iconoclasts in the troubles of 1566. After 1585 a provisional altar had been put up, over which was placed a picture by Frans Floris, the

Birth of Christ, which belonged to the altar of the Gardeners. About 1618 the construction of a new altar was entertained, and the churchwardens asked Rubens for a plan for it. He sent them two different ones on the 16th February, 1618. At that time he knew that he would have to paint the altar-piece for it. Jan del Rio, the dean of the Cathedral, had spoken to him about it, and he had agreed to do it. But it was not till the 17th October, 1619, that the treasurer of the church appeared in the dean's name before the assembled canons, and informed them that del Rio desired to be buried in the choir near the north entrance opposite the sacristy; he proposed to build himself a tomb there and present the church with the altar-piece by Rubens, which was to be mentioned in his epitaph. The canons assented to the proposition, and all was done accordingly. On the 12th November, 1619, Rubens concluded an agreement with del Rio which was reduced to writing and is now in the possession of the Baron de Saint-Genois at Ghent. In it he undertakes to paint to his best ability for the high altar a panel representing the Assumption or the Coronation of the Virgin, the panel to be 16 feet high and proportionately wide; and for this del Rio was to pay him 1500 florins. Rubens waited to set to work till the altar should be built. The sculptors Robrecht and Jan De Nole undertook the construction of it for 16,500 florins, but as a fact they received 19,900 or 20,000 florins. The first stone was laid on the 2nd May, 1624. During this time Rubens had had his panel made; but when the plans for the altar had been drawn it was found that the space to be filled by the picture was larger than the panel. It was then decided to add a width of 3 ¹/₄ in. to the left side of the panel. The building of the altar took another year. Finally, after Rubens's return from Paris, in the second half 1625, he began to think seriously of setting to work. The picture by Frans Floris was put back over the altar of the Gardeners, the choir was shut off to enable Rubens to work undisturbed, and from the 27th February, 1626, the services were held in the lateral choir, called the choir of the Circumcision. On the 11th May the panel was taken from Rubens's house to the church. He had by that time made a sketch, which has not survived; the altar-piece he painted over the altar itself. On the 30th September, 1626, the picture was accepted by the canons.

The dean del Rio died on the 6th January, 1624, before Rubens had begun the work, and it was his heir, one Guiliam Carn who placed the first two-thirds of the price agreed upon in the painter's hands on the 30th September, 1626, and the remaining third on the 10th March, 1627. He received also 45 florins for an ounce of ultramarine which he had used.

The altar built by the brothers De Nole after Rubens's designs is known to us by an engraving. Six Corinthian columns in white marble supported a cornice of polychromatic marble. Above, in a niche, stood a Christ, holding in his hand a crown destined for the Virgin who was ascending to heaven. The niche was surmounted by a triangular pediment, on which appeared God the Father on a throne; and between these two persons of the Holy Trinity hovered the Holy Ghost. Two angels bearing a palm and a crown were seated on the cornice, at the extremities of which were two candelabra. The altar was sold, on the 8th November, 1798, by the agents of the National Convention for 250 francs payable in *assignats*. It was pulled down, and in 1824 a new one was built to the designs of the architect John Blom. The picture of the Assumption of the Virgin was taken to Paris in 1794, and restored to its original

place in December, 1815. It was then cleaned by van Regemorter, and again restored in 1877 by MM. Sacré and van den Heuvel.

In its main lines the composition is the same as that of the Assumptions of Our Lady we have already noticed. The painting is entirely by Rubens himself. The Virgin is hovering in the clouds, carried by small angels and supported by larger angels. Mary's left hand is laid on her bosom, and her right is held out and slightly raised. Her eyes are fixed with an expression of



THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN (Cathedral, Antwerp).

intense desire on the Christ, who awaits her in heaven, whence glory shines upon her; the position of her hands also reveals her anticipation of celestial bliss. The small angels carrying her or holding her robes are nude; the loins of the four large angels round about her are enveloped in floating drapery. Below are the twelve apostles, grouped round the tomb, which Mary has just left; the eyes of some are following her miraculous ascension, others are looking at the empty tomb; on the left St John is raising his hands and eyes towards the Virgin. On the two steps of the tomb kneel two women holding the white shroud; behind the tomb is another woman pointing with her hand to the empty hollow. On the right, half-way up, may be distinguished in the shadow the wall of a grotto, whence falls a little verdure. On the left the scene is bathed in a sweet light; on the right a thick cloud throws a transparent shadow.

Such is the picture; there is nothing extraordinary in the composition, expression or action; but there is more movement

than in the earlier interpretations. The characteristic merit of the picture is the colour. The rich varied colours of the Virgin's robes, with their gleaming blue discreetly relieved by white and gold, the soft flesh of the celestial spirits, the scarlet and pale green draperies of the angels on the right, the tints of which stand out richly against the black of the clouds, and finally the variegated multitude occupying the bottom of the composition, give the picture an extraordinary intensity and variety of tones. The brilliant blue of Mary's robe, and the still intenser blue worn by the stooping apostle, the two spots for the colour of which Rubens paid 45 florins extra, stand out luminously from the middle of sweeter and warmer tints. With the exception of a few strong tones, all the colours are shaded, tempered by shadows and modified by reflections. The contrast between the lighter, more aerial group ascending to heaven and the

solider mass remaining on the earth is less marked here than in the earlier « Assumptions »; it has not disappeared, but is blended more harmoniously. The lines, too, are broken, rounded off and effaced. It is all clear, rich and full; the shadows are softened, and it is not long before they will disappear. Mirth and happiness reign throughout; it is a true assumption, full of angels sporting with cries of gladness, inspired with swift and lively motion, and resplendent with the joy of its colours.

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN AT AUGSBURG. — In 1627 Rubens painted another « Assumption of the Virgin » for Otto Hendrik Fugger, of the wealthy family of bankers of that name at Augsburg. On the 16th August of that year a sum of 300 florins was paid for a walnut-wood frame intended for a picture which Fugger had had painted in the Netherlands by Rubens. The picture was intended for one of the altars in the church of the Holy Cross at Augsburg, where it still remains (*Œuvre*. Part V, p. 329). It is a second-rate work, of the kind Rubens used to supply for foreign churches: it was painted by his pupils after his sketch and retouched by him in the principal figures.

THE ADORATION OF THE KINGS IN THE LOUVRE. — Among the most important works of this period we must mention the « Adoration of the Kings », painted for the high altar of the church of the Annonciades in Brussels, and now in the Louvre (*Œuvre*. N^o 159). The picture was a gift from the widow of Peter Peckius, the chancellor of Brabant, who died on the 18th July, 1625, and was buried in that church. The building of the church was begun in 1620; it was consecrated on the 24th January, 1627; the three altars were erected in 1626, and so there is no doubt that the picture was finished in 1626 or at the beginning of 1627. In 1777 the nuns sold it to Louis XVI, king of France.

Of the Adorations of the Kings, this is the most distinguished for sobriety in the composition: the numerous train and the brilliant pomp of the eastern monarchs have disappeared; besides the three kings and the Holy Family there are only five figures, and we see no more than the heads of four of them and the head and shoulders of the fifth. There is more calm and restraint, too, in the grouping and the attitudes. Two of the kings are kneeling, one close to the child and the other by his side, while the third, the negro king, is standing behind the other two. They form with the Virgin a close and charming group about the new-born Saviour. The picture is chiefly remarkable for its colour. The old king on his knees near the child wears a rich cloak of cloth of gold over a pale violet robe; the king in the foreground is enveloped in a red mantle edged with ermine, and the negro king is draped in white silk. The Virgin wears a red robe over a white robe, a blue drapery and a white veil: all these rich and brilliant tones are in juxtaposition and harmony with each other. The painting recalls that of the « Adoration of the Kings » at Antwerp; the brushwork is broad, the colours shaded, the sweet and equal light touches the tints and reflexions to silver or gold and relieves the dark shadows.

THE HOLY FAMILY. — There are not many more pictures of this period to mention. Some of those Rubens painted during the second half of 1625 and in the course of the two following years appear among the works he sold to the Duke of Buckingham; others he took to Spain

in 1628. I believe we may refer to the same period a « Holy Family » (*Œuvre*. N^o 218) which formerly belonged to the Duke of Marlborough, and was bought at his sale by M. Charles Sedelmeyer of Paris, sold before 1890 to M. A. Thiem, exhibited by him at Berlin in 1890, and presented later by Mr Matthison to the Metropolitan Museum at New York. The picture is entirely painted by Rubens and very bright in colour.

THE THREE NYMPHS WITH A HORN OF PLENTY. — To the same period also belongs the Three Nymphs with a Horn of Plenty » (*Œuvre*. N^o 651), which formed part of Rubens's estate at his death. It was bought for 740 florins by the king of Spain, and is now in the



A WOMAN HOLDING A BASKET
Drawing (Albertina, Vienna).

Madrid Museum. One of the nymphs is stooping down in the foreground, and another sitting by her side, while the third is standing. All three are holding up a large horn of plenty which rests on its point. A small monkey plays on the ground, which is strewn with fruit; a parrot is perched on the fruit which fills the horn, while another flutters about it. The figures, broadly and firmly painted and superbly draped, are Rubens's own work; the animals and fruit are by Snijders. The sketch for the picture, without the animals and with certain modifications, is in the gallery of Dulwich College.

PORTRAITS AND FRONTISPIECES OF BOOKS.

— About the same time Rubens painted the portrait of his friend Gevartius (*Œuvre*. N^o 958) now in the Antwerp Museum, to which it was presented in 1874 by M. and Mme. Gillis van s' Gravenwezel. The learned secretary of the town of Antwerp is sitting in an

arm-chair before his writing-table, on which stands the bust of the emperor Marcus Aurelius, Gevartius's favourite author. Above, on a shelf, are some books. His face is thin and his complexion fresh; his hair is scanty above the forehead and falls on either side in long dark brown curls; his moustache and imperial are pale in colour. He wears a ruff and a black suit with luminous reflexions. The fur cloak that hangs over his shoulder is only just seen. The portrait is that of a gentleman and a scholar, grave and dignified, of a man of mark, aware of his worth and liking to have it recognised by others, and as calm in attitude as he was in life and temperament. The painting is highly finished; clear and luminous tones spread over the face, which is emaciated by study and intellectual labour; the hands are treated with a softer touch in fat and creamy tints.

Another portrait, also in the Antwerp Museum, (*Œuvre*. N^o 1082) seems to belong to the

same period. It represents a young man wrapped in a cloak, with his right hand on his hip, and his left hanging close to his body and gathering up the folds of his cloak; his attitude is stiff and he is looking shyly in front of him. The modelling is less rich, the touch rougher and the colour browner than in the portrait of Gevartius.

The pendant, a portrait of a woman, was separated at the Cornelissen sale from the portrait of the man, which was also included in that sale. In 1873 it belonged to Mr. Wilson (*Œuvre*. N^o 1083), and is mentioned in his catalogue published in that year. But it was not sent to Paris in 1881 to be sold with the rest of the collection.

Between 1625 and 1627 Rubens drew a number of portraits and frontispieces for books. He designed the title-page of Herman Hugo's *Obsidio Bredana*, published by the Plantin press in 1626 (*Œuvre*. N^o 1278). For the collection of the *Opuscula* of Leonardus Lessius, printed in the same year by the same firm, he drew the portrait of the author after a picture painted by another artist (*Œuvre*. N^o 1280). In the following year appeared the portrait of Jan van Havre, illustrating his collection of verses, *Ars Virtutis* (*Œuvre*. N^o 1311); it was engraved by Cornelis Galle after a drawing by Rubens. In 1627 he drew another portrait of Don Diego Messia, Marquis de Leganes, the Spanish envoy with whom we have seen him connected. It is a proud, strong figure drawn by a firm and masterly hand, and is now in the Albertina (*Œuvre*. N^o 1510). There can be no doubt that it was a study made with the idea of painting a portrait; but we do not know whether the latter was ever carried out. It is true that in the postscript to a letter written on the 9th December, 1627, to Pierre Dupuy, in which Don Diego Messia, Marquis de Leganes is referred to several times, Rubens states that: « One of these days I am » going to begin on the portrait of the Marquis »; but in the same letter he mentions the Marquis Spinola, and as Rubens was in the habit of calling the latter by his title without the addition of his name, it is probably Spinola and not Leganes who is referred to.

In 1626 Rubens painted in grisaille a frame for the portrait of the Count-Duke Olivarez (*Œuvre*. N^o 1011). The composition is allegorical, rich in invention as he used to make them, and very decoratively arranged; it is, in a word, one of the best works of this kind he ever produced. The edge of the portrait is surrounded by palms to which are attached two trumpets of Fame and two burning torches, symbols of the glory that encircled the minister. Above the portrait is a terrestrial globe with the helm and a staff of authority, recalling the extent of his sway; above these, a winged olive-crown indicates his love of peace, and the whole is surmounted by a star encircled by a serpent with his tail in his mouth, with this explanatory



AN ANGEL HOLDING A SHIELD
Drawing (Albertina, Vienna).

inscription: *Hespera quis caelo lucet felicior ignis* (What light shines happier in the western sky?) The portrait, taken from a picture by Velasquez, is placed on a pedestal ornamented with the arms of Olivarez; on it, to the right, sits a Genius with the lance and buckler of Minerva and the head of Medusa; by his side flies the owl sacred to the goddess. To the left sits another Genius, holding the club and lion's skin of Hercules, symbolical of Strength and Wisdom. The work was engraved by Pontius. This celebration of his glory was highly gratifying to the all-powerful minister, who thanked Rubens in a letter of the 6th August, 1626. The picture was lately the property of M. Ed. Kums. At the sale of his collection at Antwerp in 1898 it was bought by M. Em. Leroy.

RUBENS'S PUPILS.

After 1621 a number of new pupils were admitted to Rubens's studio to replace others who had left or to augment the number of the master's collaborators. We are convinced that we do not know them all, any more than we know all their predecessors, and that only the names of the most remarkable among them have survived. We will pass them rapidly in review.

JUSTUS VAN EGMONT. — One of the best known is Justus van Egmont, who was born at Leyden on the 22nd September, 1601. He came to Antwerp in 1615, and was there apprenticed to Jasper van den Hoeck; in October, 1618, he set out for Italy. Tradition says that he had collaborated with Rubens in the paintings for the Medici Gallery, and this is confirmed by a remark of the master's in his letter to Valavez of the 3rd July, 1625. « I am surprised », he says, « that Justus has not written by this courier, and has not mentioned the date of his » departure ». Rubens had returned from Paris three weeks before, having finished the Medici Gallery, leaving behind him a certain Justus with whom he was in some kind of relation. It is natural to suppose that this Justus was no other than his pupil van Egmont who had accompanied him to Paris to help him put the finishing touches to the Gallery.

Justus van Egmont, moreover, is one of the small number of pupils, whose presence in Rubens's studio is proved by an official document, an entry in the registers of the Confraternity of St Luke, which establish the civil status of our artistic community. There we read under the year 1627-1628: « Justus van Egmont, painter under Rubens ». In 1628, when Rubens drew up the statement of property under the succession of Isabella Brant, he mentioned: « A sum » of 34 florins paid to the painter Justus for what was owing to him »; here again it is van Egmont who is referred to by his Christian name. On the 19th August of the same year, when Rubens gave a certificate to Deodate del Monte, van Egmont is mentioned as a witness in the notarial act (1).

In the same year the Confraternity of St Luke notes his departure. No doubt he went to Paris, where we know for certain that he was in the early days of 1636; he then bore the title of « Painter of the King's Chamber », which proves how swift his rise had been (2). In 1643

(1) DE BIE: *Gulden Cabinet*, p. 136.

(2) JAL: *Dictionnaire Critique*.

he painted the portrait of Louis XIII, which was engraved on copper by Jeremias Falck. When the Academy of Painting and Sculpture was founded in Paris in February, 1648, he was among the first twelve members appointed; in the following year he presented the Academy with the portrait of Gaston d'Orleans.

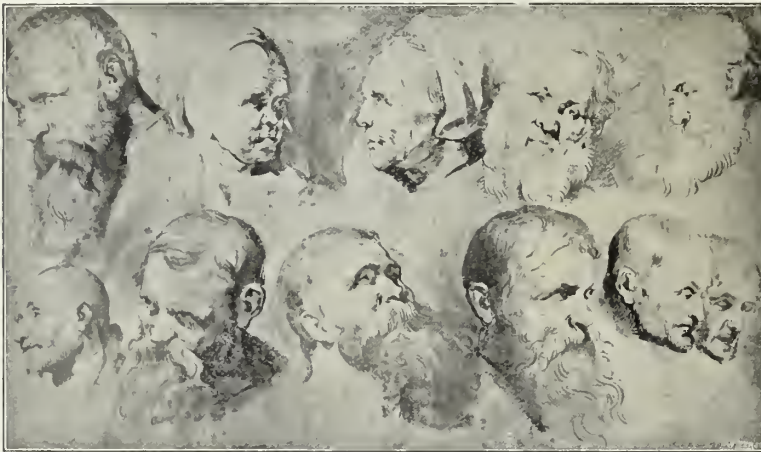
In 1649 he was at Brussels where he painted the portrait of the governor, Leopold William, which is now in the Imperial Museum at Vienna; and later he returned more than once to this country, through he habitually resided in Paris; thus on the 18th March, 1656, he bought several houses in Antwerp. In 1658 he was still in Paris, where he painted the portrait of a Dame de Normanville, in whose honour he composed a sonnet in French and wrote it on the back of the panel. At Paris he was in great request as a portrait-painter; princes and gentlemen of the highest rank had their portraits painted by him. At the castle of Chantilly we find a portrait of the prince de Condé which he painted in 1656, and another of the same famous general in 1662, besides a portrait of the duchesse de Daumont. These works are of very uneven merit. The portrait of Mme. de Normanville is warm in tone and cleverly painted; the Leopold William, treated in the manner of Vandyck, is of no great worth, while those of the great Condé are heavy in colour. The duchesse de Daumont is decorative enough, but looks like a painting on porcelain. A portrait of Honorine de Horne, Comtesse d'Ursel, is insignificant and in a bad style.

The best work of his we know is the three Goubau children, painted in 1663, and the property of Baron de Borrekens of Antwerp. It is a fine, rich painting, with no great effects of light, but pale in tone, delicate and sweet, in the style of Rubens, somewhat ornate in the French manner, and incomparably superior to all the portraits we know by him of great people. Van Egmont amassed a considerable fortune. His vanity grew with his money, and towards the end of his life this son of a carpenter passed himself off and wished to be recognised as a descendant of the great historic house of Egmont.

Besides portraits he painted other subjects; van den Branden mentions two series of tapestries representing the history of Augustus Cæsar, and the history of Mark Anthony and Cleopatra, which were woven in 1659 and 1661 from his cartoons. But all his historical and sacred pictures are lost, which proves their worthlessness. We have, in fine, too few of his works to be able to form a just idea of his real manner and the part he took in Rubens's pictures. It was limited, no doubt, to accessory services. He spent his last years in Antwerp, where he died on the 8th January, 1674. His funeral took place on the 24th at the church of St James.

THEODOOR VAN THULDEN. — Another of Rubens's collaborators is of more importance, Theodoor van Thulden, who also came from the northern Netherlands to Antwerp. He was born at Bois-le-Duc, where he was baptized on the 9th August, 1606. In 1622 he was received as a pupil into the studio of an otherwise quite unknown painter, Abraham Blyenberch; four years later he was admitted master in the Confraternity of St Luke. It is said that he also helped Rubens to paint the Medici Gallery; but this assertion should be received with caution, as he was not nineteen when that undertaking was completed. Like Justus van Egmont, he worked for some time in France, where, in 1632, he painted a series of pictures for the church of the

Trinitarians representing the Life of St John of Matha, which he etched himself in 24 plates. In the following year he made etched reproductions of the « Adventures of Ulysses » after the frescoes by Nicolo dell'Abbate in the castle of Fontainebleau. In 1635 he was back in Antwerp, where he took an active part in the painting of the triumphal arches erected for the entry of the Cardinal Infant Ferdinand. He etched the plates representing these triumphal arches and illustrating the description of the entry. We shall return to them later; confining ourselves for the moment to mentioning that Gevartius states in his preface to that work, that the etchings were made after the creations of Rubens by the celebrated painter Theodoor van Thulden, formerly a pupil of the master. It is clear that our artist was no longer a pupil on his return



SHEET OF STUDIES OF HEADS
Drawing (British Museum, London).

from France; his apprenticeship and his period in Rubens's studio were therefore prior to his journey south and to the year 1632. He remained some years longer at Antwerp; in April, 1646, he was living there in a house in the Lange Nieuwstraat. But in the following year he was in Paris, where he painted three pictures for the church of the Trinitarians for which he had worked before. In 1648 he was called to The

Hague where he worked with other painters on the decoration of the famous Hall of Orange, in the Palace-in-the-Wood. After the completion of the work in 1652, he settled in his native town, which since 1629 had belonged to the United Provinces. There he lived till his death in 1676. In the interval he received several orders from the southern Netherlands. In 1654 and 1655 he painted two important works for the governor, Leopold William, which are now in the Imperial Museum at Vienna. In 1656 he designed the windows for the Lady Chapel in the church of St Gudule at Brussels. They were painted on glass by Jean de la Barre.

Most of the works of van Thulden which are known to us show the influence of Rubens very plainly in his healthy, plump bodies, intense strength and life, abundance of soft flesh and richness of colour and light. A striking peculiarity in him is his tendency to give all his figures pleasant forms and graceful gestures, to sweeten his colour and adorn it with shades and reflexions which give it a flowery and nacreous appearance. Relying on this peculiarity, which we also meet in some of the master's works on which one of his pupils collaborated, we believe we may attribute this collaboration to van Thulden. This applies to the « Education of the Virgin », and « St Teresa praying for the souls in Purgatory », in the Antwerp Museum, the « St Ildefonso » in the Imperial Museum at Vienna, the « Massacre of the Innocents » in the Pinakothek at Munich, and the « Martyrdom of St Livin » in the Museum at Brussels. During Rubens's last years he collaborated in the Ovid's Metamorphoses painted for Philip IV. His

part in the series consisted of the « Orpheus playing the lyre » and the « Discovery of purple », which are now in the Madrid Museum and like others of his pictures were for some time attributed to Rubens.

The most remarkable of van Thulden's works are those he painted for the governor Leopold William, the windows in St Gudule's at Brussels and his share in the decoration of the Huis-ten-Bosch. The paintings he carried out in the great historic hall plainly reveal the influence of Rubens, but also a certain degeneration from the master's manner; there is something in them too tender, too rounded, too effeminate. Later, like other painters of his time, he came under the influence of Vandyck, which may be seen clearly from his pictures in the Museum at Vienna.

WILLEM PANNEELS. — Willem Panneels was born in 1600. In 1628 he was admitted into the Confraternity of St Luke at the same time as Justus van Egmont, with this note: « painter under Rubens ». He had been apprenticed to Rubens in 1624 or 1625; in 1630 he left him to go to Germany. On the 1st June of that year Rubens gave him a most flattering certificate, which is of sufficient interest to persuade us to transcribe here its essential parts. The two notaries instructed to draw it up attest that Rubens has appeared before them and declared that Willem Panneels had studied painting under him for five years and a half and had made remarkable progress; that when he, Rubens, had set out for Spain and afterwards gone to take charge of His Catholic Majesty's interests in England, he had entrusted to Panneels the care of his house in Antwerp and all its contents; that Panneels had acquitted himself of this charge with the greatest fidelity and had rendered a most satisfactory account of everything. Thereupon Panneels started for Germany, where he was living in Cologne in 1630, Frankfort-on-Main in 1630 and 1631, and Baden and Strasburg in 1632, as he himself states on the etchings he made, in which he constantly styles himself a pupil of Rubens. Later, all trace of him is lost. It is impossible to say which of the master's pictures he collaborated in, or to what extent. From his etchings we learn that he was a historical painter, and that he had so completely adopted the manner of his master that by merely altering the inscriptions it was easily possible to make the plates engraved by Panneels after his own paintings pass for the work of Rubens. Until lately his etchings were the only productions of his that were known; but quite recently I have discovered in the course of a single journey the drawing of his « Assumption of the Virgin », which he etched, and which is now in the Museum at Buda-Pesth, and a picture representing the same subject in the Museum at Innsbruck. The latter is attributed to an Italian painter, Domenico Pozzo, but is evidently by a pupil of Rubens. It agrees with the main lines of the etching by Panneels, but differs in details. As a painting, it is a poor work; it might be a feeble example of Erasmus Quellin; the colour lacks harmony and the composition is not happy.

JACOB MOERMANS. — The only painter we find entered as a pupil of Rubens is Jacob Moermans, who was born on the 1st May, 1602. In 1621-1622 he was matriculated in the register as a pupil of Rubens; he proceeded master in 1629-1630. On the 22nd December, 1653, his funeral took place in the church of St James, and he was buried by the side of his

wife. He lived in the house called the Suikerhuis (the sugar-house) on the Kathelijne Vest, and was drowned in the Vuilrui. He enjoyed the fullest confidence of his master and his master's heirs; Rubens stood god-father to one of his children. Moermans, who also traded in works of art, sold the engravings after the master's works, and from 1631 onwards had plates engraved for Antonius Goetkint (Bonenfant), a print-seller of Paris. In Rubens's will, made on the 27th May, 1640, it is laid down that his artistic property « shall be sold at a convenient time either by public auction or by private contract, according as it shall seem best, and that according to the opinion of S^{rs} Franchois Snyders, Jan Wildens and Jacques Moermans ». The heirs afterwards paid Moermans several sums of money to go to Mechlin to look for pictures, and to value others at Mechlin or in the castle of Steen. He was also paid 1000 florins « for his services, trouble and time, both during the life of the said deceased and afterwards, » at the sale and on other occasions ».

There is no doubt that Jacob Moermans was a painter; how he painted and what he produced we do not know, for none of his work has survived. We cannot, therefore, determine, nor even guess, what part he took in the master's work. We know him best as a dealer in works of art, and it was in this quality that he seems to have had most connection with Rubens. We have elsewhere expressed the opinion, which we believe to have sufficient probability to be repeated here, that the indications of the names of the sitters for certain portraits drawn by Rubens are the work of Moermans.





THE LAST SUPPER.— Drawing after Lionardo da Vinci (Museum, Dijon).

CHAPTER VIII

THE DIPLOMATIC JOURNEYS

1628-1630

RESUMPTION OF THE DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS. — JOURNEYS INTO SPAIN AND ENGLAND. —
WORKS PRODUCED DURING THESE YEARS.



PHILIP IV, KING OF SPAIN (Pinakothek, Munich).

RESUMPTION OF THE DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS. — The artful intervention of France had resulted in September, 1627, in the miscarriage of the negotiations between Spain and England. Rubens had withdrawn, deceived and discouraged, while Gerbier had returned to England in disgust and anger. It was now necessary to wait till water had flowed under the bridge before the situation changed and the interrupted negotiations could be resumed. They were opened again, however, sooner than was expected. When Gerbier landed in England, his master Buckingham had set sail about two months before for the west coast of France at the head of an army intended to assist the French Huguenots besieged by Louis XIII in La Rochelle. He succeeded in disembarking his troops in the Isle of Rhé, which lay off the besieged town, but he was repulsed in his attack on

Fort St Martin and compelled to retreat on the 29th October, 1627. He returned home with half his army.

In ordinary times this check would perhaps have stirred the English people to new efforts against the enemy of their country and religion, but the internal condition of the kingdom distracted attention from events abroad. Discontent was general. The House of Commons, which was soon joined by the Lords, recognised in Buckingham the man who was leading the country to perdition. In 1626, they refused to vote the supplies necessary for the continuation of the war until the king should discharge his favourite from his post as absolute minister. Charles I preferred to dissolve the parliament and throw the leaders of the opposition into prison. Having no legal method of procuring money, he had recourse to the levying of arbitrary taxes, which naturally increased the general discontent.

In the meantime, news was received of the treaty concluded at Paris by Don Diego Messia between France and Spain against England. In place of an enemy who had already shown herself too strong for him, Charles would now have to deal with a new and formidable adversary. Buckingham and he consulted on the best means of deliverance from this state of things, and ordered Gerbier to resume negotiations with Rubens, with a view to ridding themselves of at least one of their foes.

According to Gerbier, Rubens had continued to write to him after the failure of their efforts for peace. He even adds that when Rubens insisted on carrying on the correspondence, he refused, saying that the curtain was down on the comedy and he had no wish to raise it again. Thereupon, Rubens gave up any further attempts, but at the command of the Marquis Spinola, who was just about to start for Spain, he wrote again to Gerbier and sent him a copy of Spinola's letter. We do not believe a word of this, and are of opinion that this time the overtures came from London. However it may have been, towards the middle of December, 1627, Rubens received at the same moment by special courier, a letter from Gerbier and one from Scaglia, who was also in London, whence he had written on the 3rd December. Both asked his intervention for the resumption of the interrupted negotiations.

On the 17th December, 1627, Rubens sent Scaglia's letter to Spinola; he kept Gerbier's, which was written in Flemish; the substance of both, he declared, was the same. He translated a passage of Gerbier's letter for the marquis. The English agent attempted to gloss over the defeat of the English before La Rochelle, and to make it out a mere ruse employed by them in order to return soon to the charge with superior forces and more chance of success. Rubens was not taken in by this piece of invention, and wrote to Spinola that the English were so enraged against France on account of their defeat, that they would make terms with Spain at all costs, in order to be able to turn all their forces against their conquerors and prevent the two newly allied nations taking the field against them. He declared roundly to Pierre Dupuy that Gerbier's letter was full of lies, and that his attempt to disguise the defeat of the English was ridiculous.

On the 21st December, Spinola wrote to Rubens by order of the Infanta, that she and he were disposed to favour the negotiations for peace, that he was starting for Spain in two days, that he would tell the King what had happened, and that his Majesty would then let him know what he wished Rubens to do. He contented himself with insisting that Gerbier and Scaglia

should state clearly on what basis England intended to treat, and should put forward propositions that could be accepted.

The Infanta had not waited to resume the negotiations until the overtures came from London. In her ardent desire to restore peace in her provinces and the neighbouring countries, she had written to Olivarez soon after the negotiations between Rubens and Gerbier had been broken off, to enlighten the king on the situation. By a letter of the 11th November, 1627, Philip IV had granted the marquis leave of absence for three months from the 1st December, to go to Madrid. Spinola could not start till the 3rd January following. The Marquis de Leganes, his son-in-law, accompanied him. They passed through France, and went to see the siege of La Rochelle, where they stayed for some time, so that they did not reach Madrid till the 24th February. Spinola was in entire agreement with the Infanta and Rubens, and his stay at the court was to give a decisive turn to the question. Much was expected in these provinces from the marquis's intervention; there was a general conviction that the Dutch would never be persuaded by force of arms, and that peace alone could restore their ancient prosperity to regions that had been so sorely tried (1).

But Spinola was never to see the Netherlands again. The king kept him at Madrid till July, 1629, and instead of allowing him to return to Brussels, sent him to Milan with the title of governor and commandant-general of the forces there. Philip had promised the Infanta to send the great captain back to her, but believing or pretending that he could make better use of him in Italy, where war had broken out between Spain and the Duke of Savoy over the possession of the estates of the late Duke of Mantua, he kept him in that country. The marquis died in the Castello Nuovo di Scrivia on the 25th September, 1630. He was a partisan of peace, but he sued for the command of the royal troops in case war should break out with England. It is believed that his sovereign was offended with him for his efforts towards peace, and that his detaining him at Madrid to send him later beyond the Alps was merely a means of masking the disgrace into which Spinola had fallen. On hearing of his death, Rubens wrote to Dupuy : « As to the death of Spinola, the only thing I can tell you is that it was caused by labours and » anxieties too heavy for his strength and his age. He seemed tired of life. Someone has seen » a letter of his, written while he was still in good health, in which he says : « I hope the Lord » » of his grace will relieve me of life in September, or before ». In him I have lost one of my » greatest friends and patrons, as may be seen from scores of letters he wrote me » (2).

Everything we know of the relations between the great general and the great artist prove how highly he esteemed Rubens. Roger de Piles says that Spinola used to say that he saw so many brilliant qualities in the eminent man that he believed his genius for painting was the least of his gifts (3).

Rubens sent Gerbier a copy of Spinola's letter of the 21st December, and received an

(1) A letter from Baithasar Moretus to his friend Jan van Vucht at Madrid shows the state of men's minds in the Spanish Netherlands : God grant, says the letter, that the Marquis Spinola may be able to do something there (at Madrid) in favour of the peace we so ardently long for, for I fear that we shall never see the Dutch conquered by force of arms. We have seen proof of this for many years. — Antwerp, 3rd August, 1628 (Archives of the Plantin-Moretus Museum).

(2) Letter to Dupuy. — Letter dated 1630, and probably the month of October.

(3) Œuvres diverses -- 1767 — IV. 368.

answer from him dated the 18th February, 1628. Scaglia, to whom the copy had been shown, answered on the 21st February. These letters show how anxious England was to conclude peace with Spain. On the 30th March Rubens sent them to Spinola, after showing them to the Infanta. He was sealing the packet when he received three more letters from Gerbier, one written in French, and the other two, which were very long, in Flemish; he sent the first to Spinola, adding a *résumé* of the other two. Gerbier again insisted that Spain should state her wishes clearly and not confine herself, as in the preceding year, when he was negotiating with Rubens, to furnishing the latter with vain words and empty promises, while England was making serious propositions and being represented by authorized persons.

Rubens shared this point of view. He also was anxious that the negotiations should be opened on a solid basis and with a desire to bring them to a conclusion. It is scarcely necessary to say that he was animated by the desire of being personally entrusted with the negotiations, and that the course he recommended was directly contrary to the continual hesitation of the court of Spain and its repugnance to state frankly what result it wished for. The king and his advisers were of opinion that it was always necessary to act in such a manner that they could do the exact opposite on the following day, and so deliver themselves that their words might be interpreted in two senses.

In sending these documents to Spinola, Rubens asked him for a prompt reply, as a tour which he proposed to make the following year in Italy depended on the decision he came to. Rubens, indeed, appears to have been thinking seriously of going to Italy. He had promised Peiresc to go and visit him in the autumn of 1628, and Peiresc had sent the good news to his friends. He had had the idea of making the journey before, for, as we saw above, Philippe Chifflet notes as follows, under the 21st May, 1627: "Rubens thinks of starting for Rome about September, after finishing some pictures he is painting for the Infanta." Gevartius had also been convinced that his friend was going to undertake a journey across the Alps, for he had told Aleandro that Rubens was going to see him in Rome, and on the 23rd September, 1628, the Italian scholar wrote to thank him for the good news. But Rubens kept the part he was playing in politics as secret that year as he had the year before, and even at the very moment when he was expecting to be summoned to Madrid he left his friends under the impression that he was about to start for Italy. On the 31st August, when Rubens was already on the way, Peiresc still believed that he was starting for Italy, and came to see him at Aix.

At the same time as he wrote to Spinola, on the 30th March, 1628, Rubens informed Gerbier that by order of the Infanta he was enabled to give the king of England and Buckingham the assurance that the Archduchess Isabella was working actively in the cause of peace, that she was trying to make her nephew share her ideas, and that she had charged Spinola to use all his efforts at the court of Spain to attain that end.

The result was favourable, but as usual in Spain, the decision was long in coming. The king, to whom Spinola had shown the letters sent him by Rubens, charged the Infanta to invite her painter to send over the originals of these documents, which he had only communicated in copies or extracts; it was possible, in fact, wrote Philip on the 1st May, that he had omitted or misunderstood or misquoted some passage. Rubens replied that he was ready to obey, but that he was the only person able to understand the letters, which treated moreover



THE EVILS OF WAR
(Pitti Palace, Florence)

answers from him dated the 18th February 1628. Scaglia, to whom the copy had been shown, answered on the 20th February. These letters show how anxious England was to conclude peace with Spain. On the 20th March Rubens sent them to Spinola, after showing them to the minister. He was absent the point when he received three more letters from Gediér, one coming by Fronton and the other two, which were very long, in Flemish, he sent the first by Spinola, leaving a copy of the other two. Gediér again insisted that Spain should make her terms openly and not confine herself, as in the preceding year, when he was negotiating with De Witt, to flattering the latter with vain words and empty promises while England was making serious propositions and being represented by authorized persons.

Rubens shared this point of view. He also was anxious that the negotiators should be opened on a good hour, and with a desire to bring down to a conclusion all business matters to say that he was animated by the desire of being personally concerned with the negotiation, and that the course he recommended was directly contrary to the commercial interests of the court of Spain and its repugnance to state frankly what result it wished for. The king and his advisers were of opinion that it was always necessary to act in such a manner that they could do the exact opposite on the following day, and to beware themselves that their words might be interpreted in two senses.

In sending these documents to Spinola, Rubens asked him for a prompt reply, as a tour which he proposed to make the following year in Italy depended on the decision he came to. Rubens, indeed, appears to have been thinking seriously of going to Italy. He had promised Perese to go and visit him in the autumn of 1628, and Perese had asked the grand duke to his friends. He had had the idea of making the journey before his departure, and Philippe-Chifflet notes as follows, under the 21st May, 1627:—Rubens, desirous of starting for Rome about September, after finishing some pictures he is painting for the king—Gevartius had also been convinced that his friend was going to undertake a journey across the Alps, for he had told Alexandre that Rubens was going to the court of Rome, and on the 27th September, 1625, the Italian scholar wrote to thank him for the good news. But Rubens had the idea he was trying to stall, as would the minister be that the good news was false. In the very moment when he was expecting to be surprised by Martinon and his friends under the impression that he was about to start for Rome, on the 27th August, when Rubens was already on his way, Perese had believed that he was starting for Italy, and came to see him at Aix.

At the same time as he wrote to Spinola, on the 30th March 1628, Rubens informed Gediér that by means of his friend he was enabled to give the king of England and Buckingham the assurance that the duchess, Isabella, was working actively in the cause of peace, that she was trying to come to some agreement along her ideas, and that she had charged Spinola to put all his efforts in the cause of peace in order that she might.

The result was, however, not so good. In Spain, the decision was long in coming. The king, to whom Spinola had already his answer sent him by Rubens, charged the Infanta to give her answer by sending over the originals of those documents, which he had only communicated in extracts; it was possible, in fact, says Philig on the 1st May, that he had accepted the terms proposed by negotiating some business. Rubens replied that he was ready to take any measures which he could possibly take, and he enclosed the letters which he had to cover



of other matters than those which he had communicated to Spinola; that, if the king would give him the name of someone at Brussels to whom he might show them in absolute confidence, he would hasten to do so, or even bring them himself to Madrid, if such were His Majesty's good pleasure. This reply was evidently concocted for the purpose of eliciting an invitation to go to Spain. Rubens realized that the moment was at hand when, according to his desire, he might be entrusted with an important mission and do useful work. He did everything in his power to hasten it on, and succeeded. On the 31st May the Infanta sent his



THE CHILD JESUS, ST. JOHN, TWO ANGELS AND A LAMB (Museum, Berlin).

answer to the king of Spain; she assured her nephew that England was anxious to conclude a treaty and that Rubens had faithfully interpreted Gerbier's communications. Thereupon the king summoned the Council of State and submitted to it the Antwerp artist's proposition. The Council was of opinion that it would be well to summon Rubens to Madrid and ask him to bring the papers in his possession. « The negotiations », the Council concluded, « may be » pushed forward or held back according as it be judged opportune. If they are to be » continued, the advent of Rubens will be more useful than injurious ». The king approved this point of view, but, faithful to his character, he added: « We must not insist on Rubens's » making the journey; it is for him to decide if it is to his interest to undertake it ».

That was on the 4th July, 1628. On the 6th July the king wrote to the Infanta: « I have » read your Highness's letter in reply to mine of the 31st May on the subject of Peter Paul » Rubens. Since he has given us to understand that he will come to Madrid if bidden to do so,

» and will bring the letters in his possession on the subject of the negotiations with England,
 » it will be well for your Highness to request him to do so, but after agreeing with him that
 » he shall be careful to bring all the documents of the kind which he has in his hands. If the
 » English wish to send someone charged with the necessary powers secretly to one of the
 » ports of Biscay, your Highness might give him a passport, and Rubens's journey will offer
 » greater utility. Nevertheless, we must abstain from insisting on it with him, but leave him to
 » decide it according to his own convenience ».

On the 13th August the Infanta informed the king that Rubens was going to start in a few days ; to Olivarez she wrote that he would bring not only the documents in his possession, but also those in the office of the Secretary of State. Three days before, Rubens himself had written to Pierre Dupuy that he was afraid their correspondence might be interrupted for a few months on account of a great journey he was about to undertake ; « but », he added, « as » nothing in this world is certain until it is done, I will give you notice of my departure, and to » prevent your writing to no purpose, I will inform you of any delay or obstacle that may » arise ».

Still not a word of his destination nor of the mission entrusted to him. He told Philippe Chifflet, whom he was to have met at Brussels, that he was going to Spain to paint the king's portrait ; but Chifflet, who had acquaintances at the court of Brussels, had heard that Rubens had been sent by the Infanta for the purpose of pursuing the negotiations he had begun with England relative to commerce. So little was known in Brussels, even in usually well informed circles, of the mission Rubens was charged with, that two days before his departure the French envoy wrote to his government that Rubens was gone to Venice to treat there with the Earl of Carlisle. Our artist had, in fact, been in communication with the Earl, who had been sent by his sovereign towards the end of May on an extraordinary mission to the Duke of Lorraine and the Duke of Savoy. He had asked through Rubens for a passport to cross the Spanish Netherlands and had obtained it on condition that he did not stop at Brussels. Carlisle went to see Rubens at Antwerp and complained of being not so well treated as other envoys. Rubens transmitted the English diplomat's complaint to Brussels, and obtained the Infanta's consent to receive Carlisle. She gave him audience twice and charged the artist to bring him again at his departure. During this short journey, as at their interviews, Rubens had the opportunity of long conversations with Carlisle on the political situation and what he was going to do at Madrid ; and however carefully the secret was kept, the best informed of the foreign diplomatists living in Brussels must certainly have suspected what the matter under discussion was. The French ambassador informed his government several times that they were concerned with the peace between Spain and England, of which Rubens was « the *proxénète* » (go-between) (1). Before starting for Spain Rubens put several matters in order. On the 19th August he made before the notary de Breuseghem the declaration in favour of Deodate del Monte of which we spoke above (p. 207).

(1) GACHARD : *Particularités et documents inédits sur Rubens*, p. 19.

THE ACCOUNT OF THE ESTATE OF ISABELLA BRANT. — On the 28th of the same month he executed a more important document. He submitted to the guardians of his children, his father-in-law Jan Brant and his brother-in-law Hendrik Brant, the statement of his property at the time of his wife's death, and the accounts of his dealings with it since. The statement and accounts were approved. They show that before the death of Isabella Brant Rubens's real property consisted of his house on the Wapper, another house adjoining it in the Lammekensstraat (now the Hopland) and a house in the Jodenstraat; a farm with 32 acres of land at Zwijndrecht, which he had bought of Nicolas Rockox on the 15th June, 1619, and an annuity of 3717 florins charged on the Estates of Brabant, the towns of Antwerp, Ypres and Ninove, and several private properties. After the death of his wife, he had bought with the 84000 florins that had been paid him for the works of art sold to the Duke of Buckingham three houses on the Wapper adjoining his own and four houses in the Lammekensstraat, adjoining his property, a farm at Eeckeren rented at 400 florins a year, and an annuity of 3173 florins charged on the Estates of Brabant, the Brussels Canal and property of Jonker Jan Doyenbrugge de Duras. For the moment the account did not include his possessions in pictures by his own or other hands, works of art and other precious things like engraved stones; these were kept back to be valued later, as also were the jewels of the deceased, which were valued at 2700 florins. All these were the common property of Rubens and his deceased wife, and one half descended to their sons (1). On the day that he settled these accounts, or the following day, he started on his journey.

WORKS OF 1628. — THE ALTAR-PIECE OF THE HIGH ALTAR OF THE CHURCH OF THE AUGUSTINES. — The numerous political occupations which absorbed part of his time during the first eight months of 1628 probably did not prevent his carrying out several pictures. This certainly applies to the altar-piece he painted for the high altar of the church of the Augustines at Antwerp (*Œuvre*. N^o 214).

The fathers of the Observance of St Augustine had settled in Antwerp in 1608. In 1615 they began to build their church, which was finished in 1618 and consecrated by Bishop Malderus. Some years later they resolved to adorn the three altars of their church with retables, and had the happy idea of approaching the three most distinguished painters of Antwerp, Rubens, Vandyck and Jordaens. We may suppose that Rubens, whose eldest son, Albert, was then attending the Latin school of the Augustines, gave them the benefit of his advice. For the high altar Rubens painted one of those *Sante Conversazioni*, like those the Italian painters used to produce, which show the Virgin surrounded by a number of Saints. This subject he united with a mystical marriage of St Catherine, another favourite scene at that date. For the altar in the north aisle Vandyck painted a « St Augustine meditating in ecstasy on the miracle of the Holy Trinity ». Jordaens painted a « Martyrdom of St Apolline » for the south aisle.

A note transcribed by one of the brothers from the accounts of the monastery for Frans

(1) *Bulletin-Rubens*, IV, pp. 154-188.

Mols, the indefatigable student of Rubens, states that in 1628 Vandyck was paid 600 florins for his picture, Jordaens the same sum for his, and Rubens 3000 florins for his altar-piece.

About half way up the picture we see the Virgin sitting on a sort of semi-circular pedestal, with the Child Jesus standing on her knees and leaning forward to place the ring on the finger of St Catherine, who is kneeling before him. On the left are St Peter and St Paul; on the right, next to the Virgin, are two little angels receiving a lamb, and John the Baptist pointing to

heaven, whence an angel is descending and holding a crown of roses over Mary's head. Lower down, on the steps leading up to the pedestal on which the action is taking place, we see St Augustine, St Laurence and St Nicholas of Tolentino on the right; on the left in the foreground are St William of Aquitaine, St Sebastian and St George; beside them the holy women, Mary Magdalen, Clare of Montefalco, Apolline and Agnes; in a word the patron saints of both sexes of the church and of the guilds that had their altars there. Each is recognisable by his attributes. St George, who has Rubens's features, is placing his foot on the wounded dragon which lies in the front of the picture and turns its open and threatening jaws towards its conqueror.



CHRIST ON THE CROSS BETWEEN THE TWO THIEVES
(Museum, Toulouse).

The grouping is superb. The figures of the saints in the lower half of the picture, from St Laurence to St Mary Magdalen, rise towards the right in an undulating line up to the Virgin's throne, and answer to Nicholas of Tolentino and St John the Baptist in the upper part on the left. Rubens had the Italian *Conversazioni* in his mind when he painted this

picture, but his treatment of the subject was original. He gave it the life and movement which are so distinctive a feature of his compositions during this period. The child standing on his mother's knees and leaning forward, St Catherine raising her face and hands towards him, the delightful and busy little angels, St John the Baptist pointing with bold gesture to heaven, and the other saints leaning forward or back with their attention fixed on the miraculous spectacle taking place above them, or else talking among themselves — all is full of life and action. There is no lack of superb figures; powerful tones are supplied by the St Augustine and the St Laurence in rich priestly vestments, the St Sebastian displaying his youthful form in complete nudity and recalling the same saint in the « St Dominic and St Francis protecting the world » in the Museum at Lyons, and the St George with his

gleaming armour; while the holy women and the children in the upper part, the Virgin in her red and blue robe as fresh as a newly opened flower, the St Catherine in her bronze-coloured garment with pale yellow reflexions, and the St Rosalie, in whom we may recognise the young Helena Fourment, supply the pale and gentle notes in the gamut of colour.

There is no brilliance, however, in the colour and light; a sweet and dull tonality prevails in the entire picture, and allows no detail to stand out, and no radiance to shine forth. It cannot be said that the picture is in bad condition. It was cleaned a few years ago, and yet it must have suffered. When we find Sir Joshua Reynolds, a most competent judge and very little given to exaggeration, speaking of it these terms at the end of the following century: « I » confess I was so overpowered with the brilliancy of this picture of Rubens, whilst I was » before it, and under its fascinating influence, that I thought I had never before seen so great » powers exerted in the art », we cannot but agree that this power is no longer to be seen. What remains is a sweet and subtle light scattered over the rich draperies and beautiful nude limbs of women and children, while there is no detail that stands out strongly, and the general effect gives no very forcible impression. It is true that the picture is badly lighted, the windows on either side of it over the altar certainly injure it, but they were there in Reynolds's time, and did nothing then to mar the powerful effect of the painting.

Rubens painted the lower parts, and had the upper parts carried out by his pupils, putting the finishing touches himself. The picture was sent to Paris in 1794 and was returned in 1815. It must have enjoyed great success in the earliest years of its existence, for no picture has been so often copied in small. These miniature versions allow us to form an idea of the brilliant colouring of the original altar-piece better than the picture itself in its present state. There is one in the Museum at Madrid; another formed part of Rubens's estate and was given to Don Francisco de Rochas in return for his good offices in the sale of the pictures bought by the king of Spain. This is perhaps the copy now in the Berlin Museum. In the middle of the eighteenth century Descamps reckoned three more in French collections. In the catalogue of the Sedelmeyer gallery of 1897 there occurs a sketch for the picture which shows that it was not originally designed in a rectangular shape, but was to have been arched at the top. The Museum at Frankfort-on-Maine has a rapid first sketch of the composition.

FRONTISPIECE. — One of the last things Rubens did before starting for Spain was to design the frontispiece for Balthasar Corderius's *Catena sexagiuta quinquagracorum patrum in S. Lucam* (*Œuvre*. N^o 1264). Theodoor Galle was paid for engraving it on the 8th September, 1628; and the book was published in the same year. In the frontispiece Rubens represented Truth hanging round the neck of St Luke a chain of 65 medallions of the holy Fathers of the church. The allegory, as usual, was very thinly veiled, and this Rubenian female figure was not exactly to the author's taste. Balthasar Moretus pointed out to him that in Rubens's conception Truth ought to be naked, and that the painter considered her sufficiently veiled as she appeared in his drawing. Thus the figure remained as the painter had imagined her.

PICTURES TAKEN TO MADRID. — When Rubens set out for Madrid in 1628 he took a

number of pictures, and had some more sent out; the king had asked the Infanta to commission Rubens to paint them for him. On the 22nd December, 1630, he wrote to his aunt : « Rubens has brought several pictures for me. The price of them is owing to him ». On the 22nd December, 1629, a document was submitted to the Infanta stating that Jean Montfort, quartermaster-general of the household and court of Her Highness, had laid before the Infanta, in the name of the Comte de Couppigny, the account thereto annexed, and the list of the pictures painted by Rubens at Her Highness's orders for the service of the king and sent into Spain in the preceding year, with a petition that the account, amounting to 7500 florins, might be passed. The Infanta replied that the price had been agreed upon with Rubens before he painted the pictures, which were already in Spain, and that the king had been much pleased with them and had ordered him to be paid without delay. It appears, therefore, that Rubens had painted the pictures immediately before he set out; and since there was only an interval of a month between the conception of the idea of this journey and its execution, it must be admitted that the king had expressed the desire to have some pictures by the master before he invited him to come to Spain. We shall see before long that Rubens took with him one or two which he had painted some years before.

When we come to ask what the pictures were which Rubens took with him or had sent out in 1628, we find that unfortunately the list laid before the Infanta has not been preserved. We only know it from a reference to it by Pacheco, the historian of Spanish art. According to him Rubens took eight pictures into Spain: « Jacob and Esau », « Mucius Scævola », « Ulysses and Achilles », « Samson opening the lion's jaws », « David fighting with a bear » « A Satyr with a tiger », « Ceres », and « Samson and the Philistines ».

One of these pictures we have mentioned already, the « Ulysses and Achilles », or « Achilles recognised by Ulysses among the daughters of Lycomedes » (*Œuvre*. N^o 567) which was offered by Rubens to Sir Dudley Carleton in 1618, and is now in the Madrid Museum.

« Jacob and Esau » represents the reconciliation of the two sons of Isaac. Like the other seven pictures, it was placed in the new hall in the Palace of Madrid, with several works by other masters. In the inventory of 1636 it is described as follows: « A picture rather smaller » (than the « Story of Scipio » by Vicente Carducho) by Rubens, the Flemish painter, its subject » being the « Reconciliation of Jacob and Esau », wherein are three camels, a horse, a lamb » and other animals with several figures of men ». In the inventory of 1686 the same picture is mentioned as still in the same place. It does not appear in the later inventories, and was probably destroyed at the burning of the palace in 1734.

The brief description quoted above shows that the composition was the same as that of the picture in the Pinakothek at Munich, in which Rubens treated the same subject (*Œuvre*. N^o 109). It is quite possible that the picture somehow found its way into Germany.

The « Ceres » mentioned by Pacheco is the same as the « Ceres and Pan » (*Œuvre*. N^o 584) in the Madrid Museum (N^o 1593). The goddess is seated in a woody landscape, with a cornucopia on her knees and a crown of ears of corn on her head. By her side and leaning towards her sits Pan with a basket of fruits. On the right is a heap of fruits. The figure of Ceres is slightly timid in attitude and warm in colour; Pan is chiefly enveloped in warm brown

shadow. The figures are by Rubens, the landscape and fruits by a collaborator, probably Jan Wildens, but not Snijders, as stated by the inventories of the royal collections drawn up in 1686 and later. The picture is pleasant and not without merit and has been often copied.

The « Mucius Scævola » appears in the inventory of the pictures belonging to the king of Spain drawn up in 1636. « A picture by Rubens, representing « Mucius Scævola burning his hand in a wood-fire » » (*Œuvre*. N^o 808). Close to Scævola is Porsenna sitting on a throne; on the ground lies a man stabbed with a dagger, and there are other figures also. The picture brought by Rubens to Madrid was probably destroyed in the fire of 1734. There is a picture in the Museum at Buda-Pesth representing the same subject, painted by a pupil and retouched by the master.

We know nothing of the other pictures mentioned by Pacheco. There is no « Satyr and Tiger » in the Madrid Museum; but the subject is treated in a picture in the Dresden Museum, the work of a pupil retouched by the master (*Œuvre*. N^o 610). A modified interpretation of the subject was engraved by Erasmus Quellin, but it is impossible to say what relation there is between these works and the picture Rubens sold to the king of Spain.

« David strangling a bear » was etched by Willem Panneels, and a picture representing the same subject was sold in 1827 at the Altimera sale (*Œuvre*. N^o 118). Whether these works represent the same group as that mentioned by Pacheco, we do not know. Rubens treated the subject of « Samson and the Philistines » again in a picture now in the Pinakothek at Munich, to which we shall return (*Œuvre*. N^o 116).

DEPARTURE FOR MADRID. — Rubens went to Madrid by way of France, but secrecy and dispatch had been so urged upon him that he was unable to visit any of his friends in Paris, nor even the Spanish ambassador or the Infanta's representative. Several people offered to accompany him, but he gave permission to one only, the painter Jean Cossiers, and that to oblige Peiresc. But to his great regret and Rubens's also, says Peiresc, the poor lad was unable to get leave from his parents to go (1).

The king had bidden Rubens travel post, and he must have certainly have hurried, for he only took a fortnight to make the long journey. He left on the 28th or 29th August, and on the 15th September the Papal Nuncio at Madrid, Giovanni Battiste Pamphili, wrote to the Secretary of State at Rome that Rubens had had several secret interviews with the Count-Duke Olivarez, which were certainly not concerned solely with art. However, in the course of his journey he had gone a little out of his way to see the siege of La Rochelle, a sight which excited his highest admiration. He stayed there certainly not more than one or two days. Needless to say, his arrival and his interviews with Olivarez did not pass unnoticed. In the dispatch which the Nuncio sent to the Cardinal Secretary of State on the 15th September, he expresses his opinion that Rubens must be charged with some important mission. « It is believed », he says, « that » this great friend of Buckingham's has come to propose a treaty of peace between the two

(1) Peiresc to De Vries, 2 February, 1629 — *Bulletin-Rubens*, 1 p. 175.

» kingdoms, or else that he has been charged, as one enjoying the confidence of all his
 » countrymen, to say what they think of a truce to be concluded in Flanders ».

In September, 1628, the Venetian envoy, Alviso Mocenigo, wrote to the Doge that there was a rumour that the peace with England was on the point of being, or already had been signed; and it was also stated that an armistice had been concluded with the Dutch through the intervention of Rubens.



ACHILLES RECOGNIZED BY ULYSSES AMONG THE DAUGHTERS OF LYCOMEDES.

NEGOTIATIONS AT MADRID. — Some days after Rubens had started, Scaglia arrived in Brussels from England, accompanied by Gerbier. They were both on their way to Savoy. At the same time arrived Endymion Porter and Don Francisco Zapata, who were going to Spain to be present at the negotiations opened by Rubens, and to take part in them if necessary. Scaglia had a long conversation with the Infanta touching the feelings of the English statesmen, and on the 6th September, 1628, Isabella sent her nephew the most important of his communications.

England desired peace with Spain, she said, but solely on condition that the Count Palatine, the king of Denmark and the United Provinces were included in it. She was even proposing the conclusion of an alliance for a term of years with these powers against any who

might attack the independence of the revolted states. Scaglia was of opinion that they ought to begin by concluding an armistice, during which negotiations for peace might be conducted. He counselled prompt action and was opposed to the idea of demanding liberty and security for the English Catholics, which would ruin everything. He believed that the Dutch were anxious to entrust their interests as little as possible to the English, in the fear of being sacrificed by them to the Count Palatine. He reminded her that the settlement of the position



MELEAGER AND ATALANTA (Pinakothek, Munich).

of the latter was the crucial point of the negotiations, and once more brought up the idea of giving the Emperor's daughter in marriage to the Count Palatine's son, which would be a proof of a serious intention to restore to Charles I's brother-in-law his lost estates. To keep the French in check, the king of Spain should support the Huguenots and send aid to La Rochelle, then besieged by Louis XIII. Gerbier, for his part, had assured the Infanta in confidence that the king of England and Buckingham were disposed to make peace with France, and that no time must be lost if this possibility was to be anticipated. Philip IV had a new and important reason for listening to this advice. At the end of 1627, he had been reconciled with his uncle, Charles Emmanuel of Savoy, and had concluded a treaty with him for disputing the possession of Montferrato with the Duc of Nevers, the successor of Vincenzo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, of whose hereditary estates it had formed part. Since the French were supporting Nevers, there was some fear of their concluding peace with England in order to free their hands to attack

Spain and Savoy. In view of this, it was to the interest of both countries to be reconciled with England. Scaglia, therefore, who was trying to bring about this reconciliation, was willingly received and given audience by the Infanta, when he arrived in Brussels on the 31st August, a day or two after Rubens had started. The statements and advice of Scaglia and Gerbier, which the Infanta sent to Philip IV, may give some idea of the quarrels that divided Europe in 1628. It is necessary, though not always easy, to have them clearly in mind, in order to understand the nature of Rubens's intervention.

THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN WESTERN EUROPE. — Looking at things from a little further back in point of time, we see that religious interests were the determining factor in the conduct of the statesmen of Western Europe in the first half of the seventeenth century. Germany was divided into two camps by the struggle for or against the Reformation, and the Thirty Years' War was raging there; in France, the royal armies were occupied in the north, south and west in subduing the Huguenots; in the Netherlands, the struggle was being carried on between the Catholic armies of Spain and the Calvinist forces of Frederick Henry with the support of England. In the latter country all rights were still denied to the Catholics, and the assistance given to foreign Protestants was enthusiastically applauded by the nation. The two parties were face to face, the adherents of the old doctrine and those of the new; and the natural consequence of this state of things should have been the coalition of the Catholic states, Spain, the Spanish Netherlands, the Emperor and the Catholic princes of Germany, France and the independent Italian states on one side; on the other the Protestant countries, England, the United Provinces of the Netherlands, Northern Germany, Denmark and Sweden. Those were the politics of the time of Philip II; and they would have remained the most simple and most natural under his successors, if other interests had not driven princes and peoples into other directions.

Spain herself had set the example. Her colossal power had proved insufficient to subdue a pigmy foe like the northern provinces of the Netherlands; and the reduction of the southern provinces had cost Philip II the best of his resources for many years and had enfeebled his kingdom for ever. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the war had been going on in this country for forty years; if Philip III wished to make an extraordinary effort to bring it to an end, he was compelled to conclude peace with the other powers; he did so with England in 1604, but he was too late. Spain was too much exhausted; she was no longer in a condition to bring back to obedience the little corner that had separated itself from her immense empire. In 1609 she was forced to conclude a truce for twelve years. Since then nearly twenty years had elapsed; her weakness had continued, and had even increased. The government might deceive themselves and believe that a supreme effort and a clever policy could win everything back; but facts were to prove that the men on whom the duty fell were not equal to the task; perhaps, indeed, it was beyond human power. In any case an honourable peace with one of the hostile countries would be welcome, since thus Spain would have her hands free to act energetically elsewhere, and by that time the Catholic king was beyond anxiety as to whether the allied country were Catholic or Protestant.

France was engaged in fighting the Huguenots in the interior; the capture of La Rochelle

was to bring about their defeat, and a Catholic country ruled by a Cardinal would naturally take sides with Spain and Austria in the crusade against the Protestants. But by relieving these two countries of their enemies, she would be enclosing herself in a circle formed by two mighty empires which would almost entirely surround her, and, as inseparable allies, would oppose any extension of her power and influence. Now France in the seventeenth century was the power which aimed at the hegemony of Europe. Around the powerful nucleus she had already succeeded in forming lay scattered fragments of different nations : in the south-east the Italian states and Savoy ; in the east and north the small states belonging to the Empire or to Spain, Burgundy, Lorraine, Alsace, the Archbishoprics of the Rhine and the southern Netherlands ; in these directions expansion was possible, but only on condition of reducing Spain and Austria to impotence. That was the reason why Catholic France allied herself with Protestants, the natural enemies of her rivals, why she supported the Netherlands in their struggle with Spain and gave her king's sister in marriage to the king of England's son. For the moment the revolt of the Huguenots and the discontent of the nobility gave Richelieu ample occupation ; when that part of his task was accomplished, he was to pursue his aims beyond the frontiers ; a Roman Cardinal, he was to ally himself with Gustavus Adolphus, the champion of the Protestants, against the Roman Emperor, the head of the Catholics. France, which, from the point of view of religion, would have been the natural ally of Spain and Austria, became their natural enemy from the point of view of politics, which in Richelieu's eyes was the more important of the two. Spain followed the example set by her northern neighbour. The most Catholic king gave large subsidies in aid of the French Protestants who were in revolt against their sovereign, not because he had any love for heretics, but because he wished to create difficulties for France.

In England, the people continued to follow the influence of their affection for the new doctrine. They sided with the Protestant Count Palatine, the Danes and the Dutch. Quite recently, Buckingham had even thought of attacking Spain and supporting the Huguenots of La Rochelle. But the deplorable political incapacity of the favourite and the two kings he served in succession, rendered the execution of any consecutive plan impossible. One moment they were seeking the friendship of Spain ; the next declaring war on her, and the next asking for peace. One day they were assisting the king in his attack on La Rochelle ; another, they were supporting the rebels against the king. The Netherlands, and not without reason, believed England to be capable of sacrificing their interests to those of the Count Palatine. Moreover internal troubles continued to increase during the reign of Charles I. The king had quarrelled with his Parliament, and every day saw him taking another step towards his inevitable defeat and death upon the scaffold. The only consideration that appeared to be taken at all seriously was the recovery of the estates of his brother-in-law the Count Palatine.

The policy of the northern Netherlands was very simple ; alliance with all the enemies of Spain for the conquest of independence and liberty. This end they pursued with stubborn determination, but they were not to attain it till twenty years later. The southern Netherlands had no policy of their own, at any rate officially. The country belonged to the king of Spain, and to own the territory, it was believed, was to control public opinion. But the spirit of the

inhabitants would not bend to the resolutions of the sovereign. They could not evince any sympathy with a policy which made their country the theatre of endless wars and countless calamities. The princess who governed these provinces, the generals who commanded her armies and the statesmen and courtiers who surrounded her were naturally of the same opinion as the king and the ministers at Madrid ; the Catholic clergy roused the inhabitants against the Protestants of the north, and the people, though fully aware that the king's interests were not theirs, were docile and accustomed to endure, and obeyed the impulsion given them. So long as there was any hope that Spain would subdue the provinces that had thrown off her yoke, our countrymen submitted to the heaviest sacrifices ; but when it became evident that the forces of the kingdom were inadequate, and that the prosperity of the country was doomed to perish in the interminable struggle, they became opposed to the continuation of the war and anxious for peace. In 1628 the Infanta Isabella, Marquis Spinola and the leaders of the government and the army were converted to the same ideas, and became ready to accept peace at the price of heavy sacrifices.

RUBENS'S MISSION AND AIM. — Rubens was the princess's confidential adviser and her chosen instrument for the execution of her designs. He was very devoted to her, and not without reason ; as an artist she had shown him favour in every possible way since his return to his native country, and in politics she had permitted him to take a place corresponding to his dearest ambition. He regarded her with sincere esteem, but without exaggerating her qualities. « The princess », he wrote, « goes to no excess either in hate or love ; she is gentle and benevolent to all ». It must have been easy for him to exercise an influence over her feeble character, and he did so to the advantage of the policy which he believed to be most in harmony with the country's interests. Rubens was as far as any of his fellow-countrymen from having a really national policy, which could have given autonomy to the Belgian provinces ; in his eyes the descendants of the Dukes of Burgundy were the legitimate sovereigns of the land, and as a matter of law the doctrine was indisputable. Nor had he any thought of a union with the northern provinces for the formation of one great independent state. In his idea such a project would have been treason towards his sovereigns, and its execution would have involved this country in wars of which it was impossible to foresee the duration or the issue. The conquest of his country by the armies of Frederick Henry or Louis XIII would by no means have been to his taste, and in either case he would have sided with Spain. His ideal was the maintenance of peace and the return of prosperity by the development of commerce and industry in a country which should honour letters and arts and seek greatness by the means open to small states, intellectual culture. Such a country could live and flourish under the rule of an enlightened prince ; and the desired result would have been achieved under the reign of Isabella, if the war with Holland had not brought general disability, barred all progress and destroyed even the hope of a better future. That state of things could not continue without resulting in the complete ruin of this country ; peace must be concluded between the provinces of the North and South, if the wounds of the latter were to be healed.

Rubens clearly foresaw the decadence of his native town, and expressed his opinion

candidly. On the 28th May, 1627, he wrote to Pierre Dupuy : « Our town is dying like a body » attacked by consumption ! Every day the number of its habitants decreases, for they find no means of providing for their needs by work and industry ». And in 1635, when the new governor of the country, the Cardinal-Infant, made his entry into Antwerp, the painter symbolised the deplorable situation of the city on one of his triumphal arches, on which the Maid of Antwerp appeared begging the prince : « Let not Mercury take flight far off from us nor » abandon his beloved town, and may Commerce, the exile, appear again upon the banks of » the Schelde ! » The closing of the river inspired Rubens, like every one else, with the keenest apprehension. « Our prince will deliver the Schelde from her bonds », wrote his friend Gevartius under another picture, « and will point out anew to the ships the path they have » forgotten ; poverty and pale want will flee away, and the mariner will no more be driven to » turn the hard ground with the hoe ». That was the cause of the desire for peace at any price, and if Rubens considered a reconciliation of Spain and England so desirable, it was because one necessary consequence would be a treaty between the United Provinces and Spain. Agreement with England would rob France of a powerful ally, and by weakening Holland should dispose her to lend a more willing ear to propositions of peace.

Rubens's journey to Madrid gave him the opportunity of working under the most favourable conditions for the realisation of his project. It enabled him to enter into direct relations with the king and Olivarez, the absolute minister. His idea of the court he was to visit was no lofty one. Spinola, who had arrived there six months before him, had tried in vain to defend the opinions they held in common. « I believe », Rubens wrote on the 20th July, 1628, to Jacques Dupuy, in connection with the Marquis's visit to Madrid, « that the Spaniards are » trying to follow their old ways with this clear-sighted man and keep him in suspense as they » always do with anyone who goes to the court on whatever business. They overwhelm you » with fine promises and, while abstaining from any action, feed you on hopes that will never » be realised ». He had few illusions therefore, and held none too favourable an opinion of the statesmen who were then at the head of affairs in Spain and other countries. « The interests of » the whole world are intimately connected at this moment », he wrote again, « but the » kingdoms are governed by men without experience, indisposed to follow any advice but » their own, incapable of carrying out their own schemes and unwilling to accept other » people's ». Such was his opinion of the rulers before whom he was about to appear.

OLIVAREZ AND PHILIP IV. — The most important of them was the Count-Duke Olivarez, then first and absolute minister of Philip IV. He was born on the 6th January, 1587, at Rome, where his father, Count Henriquez, had been ambassador of the king of Spain at the court of Sixtus V and Viceroy of Naples and Sicily. As the second son he was intended for the church, and consequently was educated at the University of Salamanca and obtained a commandry in the order of Calatrava. By the death, just at that time, of his elder brother he became the presumptive head of the family, left the seminary for the world and in 1607 married his aunt ñes de Zuñiga. She was an old and ill-favoured woman, the daughter of the Viceroy of Peru. He went to live in Seville, where he remained till 1615, when the favourite at that time of

Philip III summoned him to Madrid to take the post of gentleman of the chamber to the Prince Royal. When Philip IV succeeded his father in 1621, at the age of sixteen, the young king extended his fullest confidence to his gentleman of the chamber, whom he made Duke of San Lucar. Thus he obtained the double title of Count-Duke (*Conde-duque*) by which he was

usually designated. From that moment he reigned for twenty-two years over the mind of the king and all the dominions of Spain.

Philip IV had nothing but dislike for serious occupations or anything that demanded mental effort. He loved luxury, fêtes, and a life of pleasure, and had innumerable mistresses, whom he chose indifferently among the great ladies of his court or the prostitutes in the street. He loved and encouraged art, and practised it himself. He was not a bad man; on the contrary, he was affable and kindly by nature, with no desire but to govern his empire well and make his people happy, but too careless and idle to realise his good intentions. Physically he was active and agile, and had the reputation of being the best horseman, the cleverest shot and the



THE COUNT-DUKE OLIVAREZ (After the engraving by Pontius).

most daring hunter in his kingdom. In daily life he was gentle, affectionate and good-tempered, equally exempt from the caprices of the man in authority and the fancies of the despot. His fault was not that he did evil, but that he did no good, and remained passive and inert at a time and in a position in which there was need of active use of the greatest talents to bring back its old prosperity to his country or merely to arrest its decay. He might have been one of the do-nothing Merovingians, who contented themselves with the title of king and left the power to their ministers.

Olivarez was not a bad man either. For a statesman, he was even comparatively honest, and had put an end to his predecessors' custom of receiving presents from everybody on every possible occasion. This disinterested conduct, it must be admitted, must have come very easy to him; for he had drawn into his own hands the grandmastership of all the military orders and had secured the offices of Grand-Chamberlain, Grand-Marshal and Grand-Chancellor of the Indies, and these posts brought him in 240,000 crowns a year. Moreover, he made use of his great influence to engage in trade with the Indies, which annually brought him in millions more.

He was as zealous and active in affairs of state as his master was the opposite, and far from opposing the king's repugnance for work he set himself to maintain and increase it. According to the rules of the Spanish monarchy, the sovereign was compelled to have knowledge of all official documents, make all appointments and form all resolutions. It is related that Olivarez used to appear before him with an appalling number of letters, reports and documents of all kinds, enough to frighten a more active man than Philip. He counted on the discouragement which the king was certain to feel at the sight of such a mass of papers, to prevent his finding out what they were all about and induce him to sign them all without reading a word of them.

His character differed from Philip's in other respects besides. He was stern and rough with all who approached him; his temper was very quick and he heaped insults and threats on anyone who displeased him. He hated worldly pleasures as much as the king loved them. He lived like a cenobite, and had a coffin in his chamber in which from time to time he lay down, while the *De Profundis* was chanted over him.

He agreed with the king in wishing to see the country great and prosperous; Philip IV was convinced of this and left him to act as he pleased. Olivarez had no dearer wish than to see Spain regain the place she had lost after Philip II, under the reign of the pacific Philip III. During his ministry, the country was constantly engaged in war; its military expenses were heavier than ever, its armies greater and its fleets more powerful. Spain then made a supreme effort to recover the hegemony of Europe, but failed miserably in the attempt. The minister in power was unequal to his task. He was one of those short-sighted and opinionated men who are incapable of forming wise resolutions or taking good advice. He was destitute of open-mindedness and frankness; a pettifogger, not a man of action. All his life he remained a donnish pedant, and the exercise of power never availed to bring him the mind of a statesman, wide of view and swift in resolution; he veered to and fro, and followed tortuous paths, took the advice of men who were dependent on him and dared not disagree with him, and in his anxiety to reign alone never allowed real statesmen to see what was going on.

In the verdict of history, this gloomy personage bears the heavy responsibility of having contributed more than any other man to the ruin of the country he wished to save. Under his rule Spain lost all the moral authority and material power she still possessed; her armies were defeated, her fleets annihilated; she saw her exterior possessions decreased, her population impoverished, her commerce and her industry ruined; she was merely the shadow of what she had been half a century before. The United Provinces were still unconquered;

France had extended her frontiers on the north east and south at Spain's expense ; Catalonia was in revolt, and Portugal lost. Philip IV, who saw his hereditary estates taken from him piece by piece, was forced at last to come out of his lethargy and dismiss the master he had submitted to. But he was too late ; the rude and laborious Olivarez and the pleasant and voluptuous Philip had brought Spain into straits from which she was never to escape.

On one point, and a very important one for our purpose, the two masters of Spain were



THE ACT OF RELIGION OF RUDOLF I (Museum, Madrid).

in agreement : they both loved the fine arts and were good patrons of artists. It is true that, though their reign was the golden age of letters and art in Spain, the government cannot be said to have taken any liberal course to help them to flourish, or given them any powerful advancement. But it must be admitted to the honour of both that wherever they met with ability they appreciated and encouraged it. It was in their time that Lope de Vega and Calderon de la Barca wrote their comedies, and Mendoza and Quevedo their picaresque romances, while great fame was won by a number of lyric poets. Zurbaran and Alonzo Cano were court painters to Philip IV ; the glory of Murillo dominated the second half of his reign, Velasquez was his painter and his daily companion for 37 years, and the northern possessions were lit by the great Antwerp School, in which Rubens, Vandyck, Jordaens and Teniers held the first places. Philip IV had inherited a taste for the arts, and especially the art of painting, from his Burgundian ancestors ; he himself wielded the brush, and his taste was very sound. It is not surprising



THE MARRIAGE OF ST. JOHN
after the engraving by Comelis van Caercken (Museum, Brussels)

Spain had departed her borders on the north east and south at Spain's expense. Catalonia was the great and Portugal had Philip IV, who saw his hereditary estate taken from him since he could not be forced at last to come out of his lethargy and dismiss the master he had subjected to. But he was too late. The rude and laborious Castiles and the pleasant and cultivated Provinces had brought Spain into straits from which she was never to escape.

Yet one more and a very important one for our purpose: the two masters of Spain were



FIGURE 2. *Isabella and Philip IV. (Engraving)*

In agreement. Very little could be done with the great mass of artists. It is true that, though they were the best painters of Europe and art in Spain, the government cannot be said to have given any mark of honor or help them to flourish or given them any powerful advancement. Yet it must be granted to the honor of both that whatever they met with ability they appreciated with enthusiasm. It was in their time that Lope de Vega and Calderon de la Barca wrote their tragedies and Alarcón and Quiroga their picturesque romances, while great fame was won by a number of both poets, Zúbarra and Murillo Gato (were court painters to Philip IV; the glory of Murillo blossomed the second half of his reign. Velázquez was his painter and his daily companion for 17 years and the northern possessions were lit by the great Antwerp School, in which Rubens, Van der Werf and Teniers held the first place. France had introduced a taste for the arts and especially the art of painting; from his Burgundian conquests he brought victory the books and his taste was very sound. It is not surprising

THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. LIVIN
after the engraving by Cornelis van Caukercken (Museum, Brussels)



that Rubens was welcome at his court; and scarcely had the artist reached Madrid when the king took of possession of him.

PAINTINGS EXECUTED BY RUBENS AT MADRID. — On the 2nd December, 1628, Rubens, who



SAMSON TAKEN BY THE PHILISTINES (Pinakothek, Munich).

had only been ten weeks in Madrid, wrote to his friend Peiresc: « I am busy painting, as I » am everywhere, and have already finished the equestrian portrait of His Majesty completely » to his taste and his entire satisfaction. The king takes great delight in painting and in my » opinion is a very gifted prince; this I know from personal intercourse with him, for I am » living in a suite of apartments in the palace and he comes to see me nearly every day. I have » also painted portraits of all the members of the royal family from life with great care and » much to my satisfaction. These pictures are intended for my most serene mistress, the » Infanta ».

In his *Arte de la Pintura* Pacheco, the father-in-law of Velasquez, gives much fuller

details of the paintings executed by Rubens at Madrid. « He brought », he says, « for His Catholic Majesty, king Philip IV, eight pictures of different subjects and sizes, which have been hung in the new hall with other valuable works. During the nine months he spent in Madrid he painted a great deal, without neglecting on that account the important mission he was charged with, and in spite of several attacks of gout; so great were his talent and ability. First of all he painted the king, the queen and the Infanta, half-length, to take back to Flanders. He painted five portraits of His Majesty, one of them being an equestrian portrait with other figures which is a masterly work. Then he painted the Infanta (Margarita) at the convent of the Discalced Carmelites, nearly three-quarter-length, and made several copies of the picture. He painted five or six portraits of private persons. He copied all the pictures by Titian in the king's possession, such as the « Bath » (of Diana), « Europa », « Venus and Adonis », « Venus and Cupid », « Adam and Eve », and others; and among the portraits by Titian those of the Landgrave (Philip of Hesse), the Duke of Saxony, the Duke of Alva, Cobos, a Doge of Venice, and many other pictures besides those in the possession of the king. He copied the full-length Philip II in full amour. He made several alterations in the « Adoration of the Kings » in the palace, and painted for his great admirer, Don Diego Messia, a picture of the « Immaculate Conception », two ells high, and for Don Jaime de Cardona, a brother of the Duke of Maqueda, a « St John the Evangelist » life-size. It seemed incredible that he could have painted so many pictures in so short a time and in the midst of so much business.

He spent little time with our painters, and the only friendship he formed was with my son-in-law (Velasquez) with whom he had corresponded before. Rubens praised his works very highly because of his modesty. They visited the Escorial together.

In short, all the time he was at court, the king and the ministers showed high esteem for him and his works, and the king bestowed upon him the post of secretary to the Privy Council at the court of Brussels for life and with reversion to his son Albert, an office which yielded 1000 ducats a year. When he took leave of the king on the accomplishment of his mission, Olivarez sent him, in the king's name, a ring worth 2,000 ducats.

We saw above (p. 454) what the eight pictures were which Rubens brought with him from Antwerp. The king must have ordered them, and it was probably in connection with this that Rubens had corresponded with Velasquez before his leaving for Madrid. The pictures he painted for the king were exclusively portraits.

The first was that of the king himself. He painted « Philip IV on horseback with other persons ». This portrait is mentioned in the list of pictures in the king's possession in 1636. The portrait of king Philip IV, our Lord, whom God protect », we read. « It is the work of Rubens, in full armour and mounted on a bay horse; he wears a red scarf and a black hat with white plumes; he has a commander's staff in his hand: in the upper part are two angels bearing the terrestrial globe, and Faith planting a cross on the globe and offering His Majesty a laurel crown. On one side is Divine Justice hurling a thunderbolt on the enemy, and on the other is an Indian on the ground holding up the helmet ». Lope de Vega and Francisco Lope de Zarate each wrote a piece of verse for this portrait. The lengthy title of

the second of these poems explains the symbolical meaning of the accessory figures. It runs as follows : « To His Majesty King Philip, our Lord, whose portrait on horseback and fully » armed Rubens has just painted ; Faith offers him with her right hand a crown, as to her » defender, while with her left she plants the cross on the terrestrial globe, and the Divine » Wrath hurls the thunderbolt at her enemies. An Indian, personifying the New World, bears » his helmet and seems to say that it is the wealth of the king that supports the burden of » war ». In 1636, the picture was in the new hall of the palace of Madrid. In the inventories of 1686 and 1700 it is mentioned as being in the Hall of Glass. It was probably destroyed in the fire of 1734 (*Œuvre*. N° 1024). The Uffizi gallery at Florence (N° 210) has a copy of this portrait which passes for an original by Velasquez, but was painted after Rubens by another Spanish painter.

« Rubens », says Pacheco, « painted the king five times », and one of these pictures is the equestrian portrait we have just described. It is impossible to particularise the four others with absolute certainty ; but there is no lack of portraits of the king of Spain painted by Rubens in 1628 and 1629 which might be those to which Pacheco refers. There is one in the Durazzo palace at Genoa, representing the king full-length and life-size (*Œuvre*. N° 1026). He is standing on a terrace with a balustrade along the edge and ornamented with marble pillars between which hangs heavy red drapery with warm and luminous reflexions. He is bare-headed and wears the order of the Golden Fleece, a black pourpoint and a stiff collar, and his cloak hangs open. His left hand rests on the hilt of his sword and his right holds the edge of his cloak. Beyond the balustrade there is foliage. The head is strongly lighted, but without distinction ; it is a state-portrait, without much vigour or charm, and is remarkable neither for grace nor originality.

A second portrait, now in the Pinakothek at Munich, represents Philip IV half-length, and exactly matches the upper part of the Durazzo palace portrait (*Œuvre*. N° 1025). The king, who is standing three-quarter-face, is wearing the same black pourpoint with gold buttons. His sleeves are of black cloth embroidered in gold ; his left hand rests on the hilt of his sword, and a dagger hangs from his belt. He wears the Golden Fleece round his neck and the chain of another order over his chest.

A third portrait, resembling the last mentioned, formed part of the estate of the Baroness Hirsch de Gereuth of Paris ; there is a copy of it in the Hermitage at St Petersburg. It is no more flattering than the two first, and the king's features show neither charm nor beauty. His head is long and narrow, with thick lips, a small mouth and the prominent jaw characteristic of the Hapsburgs, which makes the profile concave. His skin is pink and white, and his pale yellow hair is brushed flat with the exception of a small forelock, which is rather ruffled than curled, and a long curl hanging over his ear. His eyes are grey-blue and unequal in size, the right being half shut and the left wide open. A fair moustache covers his upper lip, and he has an imperial on his lower lip. His nose is large, and fairly regular in shape, but spoiled by the protruding of his prominent lips. He looks like a man of thirty, of feeble constitution, without will, wit or vivacity, pasty, sluggish and insignificant.

Rubens's estate included a portrait of Philip IV in a hat ; and such a portrait there is in the

collection of Senator Peter de Ssemeno at St Petersburg. The king has one hand on his hip and the other resting on his commander's staff; he wears a cuirass with a red scarf over it. There was another portrait of the king in Rubens's estate, and there are others in several collections, Lord Spencer's at Althorp, the Sterling collection, the Philippe sale (London, 1828), and the Hamilton sale. They all represent the king as he appears in the picture at Munich, which may be considered as his official portrait. Pontius engraved it in 1632, and thus helped



DIANA AND CALISTO (Museum, Madrid).

to disseminate the approved and guaranteed image of the royal physiognomy. The engraving stops at the waist, so that the hilt of the sword and the hand resting on it are not seen.

« Besides the king », says Pacheco, « Rubens painted the queen and the Infantas ». Several examples of a single portrait of the queen, Elizabeth of Bourbon, are known. There is one in the Pinakothek at Munich (*Œuvre*. N^o 925). The queen is represented three-quarter-length in a graceful, easy attitude, but cramped by her clothes. She wears a high collar of white lace which is turned almost grey by the reflexion of her black silk dress; a rich necklace of pearls hangs over her breast; her dress is ornamented with gold buttons, and she has earrings made of three pearls. In her right hand is a fan and in her left a handkerchief. The lines of her head are regular, though her face is too small in the lower part, and her eyes are large and round. The painting is all Rubens's own, but not very carefully done. The dark brown tint to be noticed round the eyes and on the outline of the face, produces a disagreeable effect. Pontius engraved this portrait as well, to make a pair with the Philip IV.

The Imperial Museum at Vienna has another example of this portrait, also by Rubens himself; and in the Hermitage at St Petersburg there is a copy by another hand.

The members of the royal family whom Rubens painted at Madrid in 1628 were the Cardinal-Infant, Don Carlos the king's brother, and their sister Maria Theresa. The Cardinal-Infant, who was to become the governor of the Spanish Netherlands six years later, was nineteen when Rubens painted him. He still wears the red robe with sleeves lined with white,



NYPHS AND FAUNS (Museum, Madrid).

transparent stuff and the Cardinal's biretta; there is a book in his left hand. His fair hair with pale gold lights, which he afterwards wore in long curls, was then cut short; his eyes are very large, his nose long and aquiline and his mouth small. The portrait, which is in the Pinakothek at Munich, is Rubens's own work; the painting is good and free from pretension; what it offers is simply the figure of a fair young man, with nothing very characteristic in the model and no transcendent merits in the execution (*Œuvre*. N^o 928).

Rubens kept the portrait he had painted at Madrid in his own collection; probably he made more than one copy of it, and sent one to the Infanta and kept one for himself. The portrait that appeared in Rubens's estate is mentioned in the inventory as: « A portrait of the Cardinal-Infant in a red robe, on canvas »; and is probably the one which is now at Munich.

The portrait of Don Carlos is lost. We only know it by the engraving by Peter De Jode. The prince, who was born in 1607 and died in 1632, is painted head and shoulders; he wears a cuirass on which gleams the Golden Fleece. He is seen in profile and has a slight moustache and imperial; his hair is cut short behind and falls in long curls over his temples, being taken up in a knot over his forehead. His nose is regular and his chin comes forward in a point.

The portrait of the Infanta Maria Theresa, whose hand the Prince of Wales had demanded in 1623, and who married Ferdinand III, Emperor of Austria, in 1631, is also lost. This picture also formed part of Rubens's estate, and is mentioned in the French catalogue as « the portrait of the Empress », and in the English catalogue as « the portrait of the present Empress ». De Jode's engraving of it represents her almost full-face, and dressed in very rich clothes, with her face framed in a number of rows of curls, and jewels in her hair (*Œuvre*, No 988). The engraving may perhaps have been made after the picture of 1628, though it makes the Infanta look much more than twenty-two. When Rubens painted her, she was a very pretty woman, white-skinned and fair, with a charming face and manners : she has the face of an angel, said an Italian envoy of her.

The Infanta of the Discalced Carmelites, whose portrait Rubens painted rather more than half-length, and copied more than once, was Margarita, daughter of the Emperor Maximilian II and of Maria, daughter of the Emperor Charles V. She was born in 1567 and died in 1633, being 61 or 62 when Rubens painted her. She had entered the convent of the Poor Clares, and enjoyed great consideration in Madrid. Portrait and copies alike are lost.

According to Pacheco again, Rubens painted the portraits of five or six private persons, but of these we have no other information.

For Don Diego Messia, Marquis de Leganes, he painted, as we learn from Pacheco, an « Immaculate Conception », two ells high. What has become of it? In 1636 there was an « Immaculate Conception » of that height above the altar of the royal chapel in the palace at Madrid. On one side of the Virgin was an angel giving a palm to the serpent, who had an apple in his mouth, and on the other side an angel holding up a laurel wreath in his left hand. The picture was painted by Rubens and presented to the king by Leganes. This, no doubt, was the picture referred to by Pacheco. It is not mentioned in later inventories, but it has appeared again in the Museum at Madrid under the name of Erasmus Quellin. The catalogue states that the inventory of 1636 had attributed it falsely to Rubens ; but in that case Pacheco also was mistaken, and Leganes deceived the king concerning the author of the painting.

The other picture painted by Rubens for a private person, according to Pacheco, was a « St John the Evangelist » for Don Jaime de Cardona or Cardenas. We do not know what has become of it.

The Madrid Museum has an equestrian portrait of Philip II (*Œuvre*, No 1020). Cruzada Villaamil states that Rubens painted it in 1628 or 1629 (1). But elsewhere he confuses this picture with the copy made by Rubens after Titian, which shows the king full-length and wearing armour. This picture was possibly painted at Madrid, but it is also possible that it was painted some years later and sent to Madrid from Antwerp with the portrait of the Cardinal-Infant. The king is wearing rich armour with a short cloak hanging over it ; his hat is yellow and ornamented with a white plume ; he is riding a bay horse and has the reins in one hand and his staff in the other. His attitude is grave, dignified and majestic. A winged genius, with a palm in one hand, is holding a crown with the other over the king's head. In the distance is

(1) Op. cit. p. 143.

a battle painted on a very small scale. The picture has ease and breadth, and is an official portrait without much depth or brilliance. Like the portrait of the Cardinal-Infant, it is a pendant to the Philip IV on horseback. There is a replica of this picture belonging to the king of England at Windsor, painted about 1635 by one of Rubens's pupils and retouched by the master.

The copies of the Titians at Madrid were not the least important of the works executed by Rubens during his stay here. We quoted Pacheco's evidence on the subject above. It is impossible that Rubens can have copied all the Titians in the king's possession. No painter was so widely represented in the palaces of Spain as the great Venetian. He was Charles V's favourite portrait-painter. The relations between the Emperor and the artist had begun in November, 1530, and lasted till the sovereign's abdication. Every time that Charles went to Italy he had his own portrait or those of his chief statesmen painted by Titian. This occurred at Mantua in 1530, at Ferrara in 1532, at Asti in 1536 and Milan in 1541. In 1548 and 1550 Titian crossed the Alps to meet the Emperor at Augsburg, and remained for months together in Germany to carry out his commissions. For the Emperor, Titian had painted chiefly portraits; for Philip II he mainly treated sacred or profane subjects. In 1550 he had painted the king's portrait at Augsburg, and between that date and his death in 1576 he was continually executing commissions for him. Philip was never tired of having pictures by his favourite artist, and Titian was never tired of pocketing the large sums he paid for them. In 1628, therefore, there were many more of his works in the palace of Madrid than the dozen mentioned by Pacheco; the inventory of the royal collection drawn up in 1686 mentions still 76, very few of which had been acquired since Rubens's second visit to Madrid, and the catalogue of the Royal Museum gives 41 more as there still, though many have been destroyed in various fires or lost in other ways (1).

We can form a more exact idea of the number and variety of works by Titian which Rubens copied, from the list of the works of art he left. Under numbers 38 and 69, and the heading: « Pieces of Sr Peter Paul Rubens Knt made in Spaine, Italie and other places, as well after Titian as other good M^{rs} » (2), we read as follows: « The picture of Hippolitus de Medici », « A Boyes face with a black cap », « A young man's face », « A picture of a Venetian gentleman », « A great Adam and Eve », « A Calisto », « An Actaeon », « A Venus and Adonis », « An Europa », « A Venus and Cupid lying on a Bed », « Venus and Cupid lookinge in a glasse », besides the portraits « Charles the fift, the Emperesse Leonora his wife, the sayd Emperor and Emperesse uppon ye same cloth, the Emperor Ferdinand with a sword in his hand, the Duke d'Alva, Duke John Frederick of Saxonie, Philip, Landgrave of Hessen, Isabella d'Este, Duchess of Mantua, the same in black clothes, Alfonso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, Francesco Sforza, ye 2^d Duke of Milan, Andrea Gritti, Duke of Venice, Kinge Philip the second,

(1) CARL JUSTI: *Die Spanische Brautfahrt des Prinzen von Wales im Jahre 1623.* — *Deutsche Rundschau*, Vol. XXXVI (1883) p. 217.

(2) *Catalogue of the works of art in the possession of Sir Peter Paul Rubens at the time of his decease* (Edited by Dawson Turner for private circulation). Second Edition, 1839.

as big as y^e life, James (Ydiaquez), his secretary, the king's dwarfe, a certayne great man with a dog, four Venetian courtesans, and a Bride ; in all 32 pictures.

To these we must add numbers 81 and 82 : « A peice of Venus wth many Cupidos taken out of Philostratus » and « A peice of Bacchanalls with Sheppards and shepherdesses dancinge and drunck » (*Œuvre*. Nos 573, 706), both painted after descriptions by Philostratus and included in Rubens's original works, but really copied by him after Titian. We must mention also a picture of « The Saviour with a world in his hand », and a « St Peter Martyr, a great



MERCURY SENDING ARGUS TO SLEEP (Museum, Dresden).

draught after the picture w^{ch} stands in the church of St John and St Paul at Venice », both noted in the inventory as by Titian, but sold to Philip IV as copies after his originals.

It is clear from this that Rubens had a strong predilection for the great Venetian, and was anxious to possess his works, whether originals or copies, for the inventory also mentions nine pictures painted by Titian himself. His admiration for the master was of long standing. During his residence in Italy he had copied, as we have said, the « Bacchanalian Scene » and the « Sacrifice to Venus » after the descriptions of Philostratus, both of which were then at Rome and are now in the Madrid Museum; and among the portraits after Titian which appeared in the inventory of his estate, four at least had been copied while he was in Italy, the Cardinal Ippolito de Medici, the two of Isabella d'Este, Duchess of Mantua, and the Venetian bride.

We have but scanty information on the fate of the copies made by Rubens after Titian. The king of Spain bought nine of those which came from his estate, the « Saviour holding the terrestrial globe », « St Peter Martyr », « Calisto », « Actaeon », « Venus and Adonis », « Europa », « Venus and Cupid », « Cupids » and the « Bacchanalian Scene ». To these must be added the « Adam and Eve », which is not mentioned in the accounts of Rubens's estate,

but was no doubt acquired by the king at that time or later. Only two of these ten pictures remain at Madrid, the « Adam and Eve » and « Europa ». The « Cupids » and « Bacchanalian Scene », which Rubens painted in Italy, were carried off by Bernadotte and are now in the Museum at Stockholm. What became of the rest we do not know.

We are no better informed on the fate of the other twenty-eight pictures copied in 1628 and 1629 after Titian by Rubens, which appear in his estate. Bad fortune seems to have hung over the whole series. The most we are able to discover is a piece of later information on one of these copies, a nude woman wrapped in a cape, painted by Rubens after Titian, which appears in the estate of the celebrated animal-painter Frans Snijders, who left it to his brother-in-law Paul De Vos.

The portrait of the Duke of Saxony appears again in the succession of Albert Rubens, and later in that of Stoop (Ghent, 1868).

The two that remained at Madrid, the « Adam and Eve » and « Europa » show what Rubens understood by making a copy. Like those he made in Italy after Italian masters, and even to a greater degree, the copies of 1628-1629 are rather translations of the original work into the style of Rubens than faithful reproductions.

In the « Adam and Eve » (*Œuvre*. No 96) we see Adam seated on a rock at the foot of a large apple-tree. He is leaning on the rock with one hand and laying the other on Eve's shoulder to prevent her taking the fruit. Eve has hold of the branch of the tree in one hand and is bending it down so as to hide her nakedness. The other hand she is holding out to take the apple offered her by a serpent with the head of a child. The two figures are nude. Titian's work is at Madrid also, which makes comparison easy. It is clear from Rubens's copy that he worked after an Italian model: his figures, especially the Eve, remain southern in type. The woman has full, round limbs, a thick neck and the solid joints which distinguish Titian's models and are not found in original figures by Rubens. But the differences are striking. In the Italian work the ground is much duller and less transparent. The Adam, who in Titian's picture has heavy dark outlines, is more luminous in tint and robuster in structure with Rubens. On the other hand, the Italian Eve is finer than the Flemish. In the original work her outlines are more clearly marked, her flesh warmer and firmer and like gilded marble; and the shadows of her face are transparent and give a filmy look to the head; but her shape is that of a superb creature, made to be the mother of the human race. Rubens treated her less poetically; her flesh



MAXIMILIAN I, EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA
(Imperial Museum, Vienna).

is whiter but softer and she has neither the nobility nor the strength of build of the model. But that does not prevent Rubens's work from being superior to the Venetian's. His attitudes are more gracious, his light more brilliant, his figures more lively and his background more luminous and transparent. The picture is a translation of the languorous and melodious Italian into a firm and vigorous Flemish.

In Spain, then, Rubens painted a number of portraits and copied a number of pictures. But he appears to have brought back no other souvenir of the country for himself than a drawing of the Escorial, which he had visited with Velasquez. The inventory of his estate gives under number 132 : « A Landschap after the naturall wherein is the Escuriall in Little ». It does not state whether it is a picture or a drawing. Rubens's own evidence justifies the latter supposition. Towards the end of his life he had in his studio a painting which was seen by Edward Norgate, illuminator of manuscripts to the king of England and a connoisseur in matters of art. Norgate spoke of it to his sovereign, who bade Gerbier ask Rubens to let him have it. The envoy fulfilled his mission on the 13th March, 1640 ; two days later Rubens replied that the picture which Norgate had seen in his studio was painted by Peter Verhulst after a drawing he had made himself on the spot, and that he informed His Majesty of this fact to prevent any misunderstanding. Gerbier insisted on having the picture, and Rubens sent it him at the end of April with a letter giving some details of the way in which the work had been carried out, and of the excursion he had made to the Escorial during his stay in Madrid. He writes :

« Here is the Picture of St Laurens in Escorial, finished according to the capacity of the
 » Master, under my direction, however. Please God the extravagance of the Subject may give
 » some recreation to his Majesty. The Mountain is called the Sierra de St Juan in Malagon,
 » it is very high and steep, and very difficult to ascend and descend, so that the clouds beneath
 » us were very low, the sky above remaining very clear and serene. There is, at the summit,
 » a great wooden cross, which is easily discerned from Madrid, and there is, on one side, a
 » little church dedicated to St John, which could not be represented in the Picture, for it was
 » behind our backs, where a Hermit lives who is here seen with his *borico* [mule]. I need
 » scarcely say that below is the Superb Building of St Laurens in Escorial, with the Village
 » and its avenues of Trees, with the Frisneda and its two ponds, and the road towards Madrid,
 » which appears above, near the horizon. The Mountain, covered with snow, is called La Sierra
 » Tocada, because it has, almost always as it were, a veil round about its summit. There is a
 » tower and a house on one side, though I do not remember their name particularly, but I
 » know the King went there at times when hunting. The Mountain quite to the left is
 » La Sierra y puerto de butrago. Which is all I can say on this subject. » In a postscript he
 adds : « I quite forgot to say, that at the summit, we met with much *vinayson*, as is represented
 » in the Picture ».

The drawing of the landscape with the Escorial is lost ; there are several copies of the picture painted after it, among other places in the Dresden Museum and the collections of Count d'Egremont and Lord Radnor. They are all probably by Peter Verhulst, who according to Rubens was a very second-rate painter (*Œuvre*. Vol. IV, p. 385).

RUBENS AND VELASQUEZ. — Among the important events from the point of view of art which make Rubens's stay in Spain memorable, was his meeting with another artist of genius, Velasquez. Both were living in the palace and in the enjoyment of the king's highest favour. In 1628 they were the two greatest painters of their time, and to-day they are still reckoned among the greatest masters of all ages. Rubens, then 51 or 52, had reached the summit of his glory; Velasquez was in his thirtieth year and had been court-painter for five years. His position, both in art and at court, was therefore comparatively modest. Rubens was surrounded with the admiration of all; he was the confidential adviser of the governor, a statesman charged with an important political mission. He had hardly reached Madrid before he was entrusted with the honoured task of painting the portraits of the royal family, a task which had devolved for some years on Velasquez. Rubens it is true, was working for the Infanta Isabella, and the honour the king paid him in sitting to him might have been attributed to his desire to please his aunt as well as to his admiration for the artist; but his daily visits to Rubens, and the order for eight pictures he had given him beforehand and those painted on the spot, prove that in falling in with the wishes of another the king was also obeying his own inclinations.

Rubens often met Velasquez, and his work appeared to interest him. « He spoke of it very favourably », says Pacheco, « because of the modesty of the Spanish master ». No doubt, it was not for this reason alone, but rather for his artistic merit that Rubens praised Velasquez, whom he calls the greatest painter there was or ever had been in Europe (1). If Rubens used that expression, his modesty equalled that of his Spanish contemporary.

It is certain that they must have esteemed each other very highly, were it only on account of their very different conceptions of art. Rubens was the painter of life in full bloom and vigorous action; his invention was fertile, his colour brilliant and his grouping powerful. He was the magnificent and gorgeous Antwerper. Velasquez was the exact and penetrating observer of men in themselves, the searcher of thought; the calm servant of truth, a painter of cold colour, conscientious drawing and dark shadows, and perhaps it was the modesty of his painting rather than that of his character that Rubens praised. It is claimed that Rubens's influence on Velasquez is visible in the change his manner underwent in 1630. This is denied by his distinguished biographer, Carl Justi, who to combat the allegation points out that it was between 1629 and 1631, that is during the period that marks the transition from his first to his second manner, that Velasquez made his first journey into Italy, and that the change is only to be discerned in the works he painted in Italy and after his return. He may have come under the influence of the master-pieces he saw in Rome and Venice as well as under that of Rubens, whom he saw at work in Madrid. However it may be, Velasquez remained what he had been before, one of the most original masters who ever wielded the brush. But from 1630 onwards, his painting became more luminous, his figures freer in movement and his brushwork broader.

(1) El mayor pintor que ay ni auido en Europa y que así lo confesó Rubens, vn gran pintor Flamenco quando vino a esta corte. (Gaspar de Fuensalida's words, quoted by Carl Justi. — *Velasquez*, I, p. 246).

He had no need to leave Madrid to study the Italians ; pictures by Titian, the greatest of the Venetians, filled the royal palaces ; and if it is true, as everyone admits, that the court-painter developed at this period under foreign influence as much as of his own initiative, it appears improbable that he learned nothing from daily contact with Rubens for months together.

It is hardly necessary to say that Velasquez never imitated Rubens. The characteristics which the Flemish painter admired in his Spanish fellow-artist continued to be his after 1629,



THE RAPE OF PROSERPINE (Museum, Madrid).

as much as they had been before ; the originality of his painting, his certainty, the breadth and sobriety of his use of colours, the expression of the inner life by the most simple means : clearness without brilliance, the strictest possible rendering of the truth without either platitude or grossness. The two masters were too great not to admire each other and take keen pleasure in meeting. The name of Velasquez does not occur either in the history of Rubens or in his correspondence. There is no direct proof of the sympathy and esteem in which the Spanish master held the Flemish, but it may be concluded from the increasing favour in which Rubens's works continued to be held at the court of Madrid, where Velasquez's influence was supreme in matters of art.

RUBENS'S DIPLOMATIC WORK AT MADRID. — Rubens employed the greatest part of his time in painting. The king liked meeting him better in his studio than at the board of the

council of state. But Rubens had come to Madrid for other things than painting, and he fulfilled his important mission conscientiously.

Olivarez summoned the council of state for the 28th September, 1628; present, Don Agustin Messia, the Marquis of Montesclaros, Don Fernando Giron, the Marquis of Gelves, Don Juan de Villela and the Marquis of Leganes. Olivarez spoke first, to introduce the question and communicate to the council what Rubens had told him and what he had heard from Endymion Porter. He showed how Charles I, urged by pride, had made an expedition against Cadiz in defiance of all laws human or divine, of sworn faith and his royal word; how the attack had been repulsed, and how the king had repented and asked for peace, the result of which had been the communications made by Gerbier and Scaglia to Rubens, and the sending of Father William of the order of the Holy Ghost, who was then in Spain. The minister, Cottington, had written to Olivarez shortly before, that he himself was going to be sent as ambassador to Spain. Finally, Endymion Porter had informed him that the king of England was so favourably disposed to peace that Buckingham was coming in person to Spain whither Cottington and Gerbier were on their way for the same purpose. Rubens was then introduced; he confirmed all that had been said and told what he knew of the negotiations that had largely been conducted by himself. The assembly deliberated on all these points and decided to invite the king to order a friendly welcome to Cottington in the port where he might land and to charge Porter to write to Buckingham that the king was disposed to continue the negotiations. The king approved of this decision (1).

But they waited in vain for the arrival of Cottington, who was to have come to Madrid to treat for peace; and worse, at the moment when they were preparing to inform Buckingham of the resolutions arrived at, he had been dead for more than a month. He had been assassinated at Portsmouth on the 23rd August. It was not till the beginning of October that Olivarez heard the news at Madrid. The fatal occurrence naturally retarded the negotiations, and little, therefore, was done at Madrid. On the 24th October Philip IV charged the Infanta to find out in London what influence the duke's death might have on the conclusion of peace, bidding her do all she could to prevent its being delayed. He pronounced against the armistice concluded by Scaglia and remained convinced that Charles I desired peace, as Endymion Porter had told him.

The Infanta, on her side, had not remained inactive. More than a month before the king sent her these instructions she had charged Don Carlos Coloma, formerly Spanish ambassador in England and then governor of Cambrai, to write and sound Sir Francis Cottington. Cottington's answer, confirmed by Richard Weston, the lord high treasurer, was that the English government was always anxious for peace, and that if it were not concluded it would be the fault of Spain. At the same time, he did not conceal the fact that the Venetians were straining every nerve to reconcile Charles I with France. In his reply Coloma showed himself in favour of peace, and Cottington promised to set out for Spain; but he stayed in London and only went as ambassador to Madrid in the following year. Endymion Porter had left Madrid at the beginning of December, and the negotiations, in fact, were broken off. In spite

(1) Archivo general de Simancas, Secretario de Estado—Leg. 2517, fol. 107.

of their fine promises, the English ministers were in no hurry ; as usual they were playing a double game, and listening to the propositions of France at the same time as the pacific assurances of Spain.

At the beginning of January, 1629, Abbé Scaglia reached Madrid, this time as envoy extraordinary from the Duke of Savoy. His master had charged him to insist on the prompt conclusion of peace between Spain and England. On the 29th October, 1628, the king of France had taken La Rochelle, and, being relieved of his enemies in the interior, was at length about to turn his forces against Savoy in favour of the Duke of Nevers. Scaglia, Olivarez and Rubens had interviews which confirmed the Spanish minister in the design of concluding peace with England. Matters went on thus until April. Then letters from the Infanta reached Madrid, and another from Richard Weston to Carlos Coloma, in which the English minister declared that his master intended to send a representative to Madrid, if the king of Spain sent one to London. At Madrid there was Rubens, who had succeeded in gaining the confidence of Philip IV and the all-powerful Count-Duke, and Olivarez thought of sending him to England as Endymion Porter had been sent to Madrid, and bidding him tell Charles I that the king of Spain was disposed to come to terms with him. After the arrival of the Infanta's dispatches, the Spanish statesmen resolved to entrust Rubens with a more important mission to the English court, and to hasten his departure.

We do not know what instructions were given him, but from what he did in London and from what Philip IV wrote to his aunt, we know that he was to remove the difficulties that obstructed the conclusion of peace, and so to arrange matters that when Philip IV's official ambassador arrived in London he should have nothing to do but sign the treaty ; he was to baffle Richelieu's efforts to win England for his ally, and contermine the Cardinal's plans by every possible means ; he was also to come to an understanding with Soubise, the leader of the Huguenots, who was then in England, for his return to France. Finally he was to smooth away the existing difficulties between the Count Palatine and the Emperor, and meanwhile to get a truce concluded between Spain and the United Provinces. The questions he had to negotiate upon concerned directly or indirectly most of the nations of Europe, and on the solution of them depended in great measure the peace of the West.

Our painter, who had hoped to be able to return home, taking a journey into Italy and Provence on the way, accepted the task entrusted to him, and gave up his visit to the country where his friend Peiresc lived and the land he had left twenty years before with the ardent desire to see it again at some future time. Olivarez prescribed the course he was to follow in London, and gave him letters of recommendation to Weston and Cottington. On the 27th April, 1629, the king wrote to the Infanta to tell her that he was sending Rubens to London. Isabella was to send him the necessary money and fuller information. On the same day that he wrote to his aunt, Philip appointed Rubens secretary to the Privy Council of the Netherlands, with all the rights, privileges and emoluments attached thereto, thus giving him a more official status. The emoluments were three-quarters of a Spanish pistol a day, or 992 florins, 6 stuyvers and 6 deniers a year.

Rubens thus found himself raised to one of the most important posts in his country. But

he never undertook the active duties of his office or attended the sittings of the Privy Council. After his appointment, as before, he remained the intimate adviser and willing servant of the princess. His son Albert, on the other hand, to whom he handed over his office a few weeks before his death, and who went soon afterwards to settle in Brussels, performed the duties incumbent on him in virtue of his high function. We have already recorded that, according to Pacheco's book, Philip IV sent Rubens, on the day of his departure, a ring set with diamonds in testimony of his satisfaction.

Rubens left Madrid on the 29th April, 1629. He had hardly given anyone any news of himself during his stay there. No doubt he informed the Infanta of what was happening in the political world, but unhappily none of his letters have been preserved. He wrote a few letters too to his friends in France, but there is no mention of politics in them. On the 29th December, 1628, he wrote to Gevartius, but does not touch on politics except to say that he has nothing to tell him : « On affairs of state, I can tell you nothing for certain, for I do not see clearly yet », he says in Flemish. He goes on the record the impression produced on him by Spanish policy, an impression that is anything but favourable. He had considerable sympathy with the king, while regretting that he allowed himself to be guided by his advisers. The depositories of power he thought little of. Piet Hein had captured shortly before (9th September, 1628) the galleons of Spain. Rubens writes of it to his Antwerp friend as follows : « The loss of the fleet » has made a great stir here, but they do not mean to believe in it so long as they hear no » news of it from our side ; however, it is only too true according to public opinion » ; and he goes on in Latin to express himself freely and gives a gloomy picture of the situation : « It is a » heavy loss, which they should attribute to their own folly and negligence rather than bad » fortune. They have been told of it often enough and in ample time, but they have taken no » trouble to avert the evil, or else lacked foresight to defend themselves. I wish you could » see how glad they all are here, because they see in this public calamity a means of satisfying » their hatred in the discredit of their rulers. The power of hatred is so great that we forget our » own loss, to feel only the sweetness of revenge. I am only sorry for the king ; nature has » endowed him with all the good qualities of mind and body, as I can affirm from my personal » knowledge of him. If he were less distrustful of himself, and reposed less on others, he » would be equal to the most exalted rank and capable of governing empires. But as it is, he » is paying the price of his own credulity and the incapacity of others, and is the object of a » hatred he has done nothing to deserve ».

RETURN FROM MADRID. — Rubens's mission demanded diligence. He went to Paris through western France, and reached it on the 10th May, 1629, lodging with Baron Henri de Vicq, the envoy of the Infanta, in whose house he received the painter Adriaan de Vries, who was much liked by Peiresc and his friends. He saw the gifted portrait-painter's latest works and praised them highly. He also visited Marie de Medici's palace, which was then completely furnished, and declared that the court of Spain had nothing so splendid to show (1). On the

(1) Letter from Pierre Dupuy to Peiresc. 18th May, 1629.

evening of the 11th May he left Paris in a post-chaise and reached Brussels on the morning of the 13th (1). Although the day was Sunday he was instantly received by the Infanta and handed her the letters he had brought from Spain. She pointed out the line of conduct he was to follow in London, and bade him start at once for Dunkirk, and cross the Channel from there. From Brussels he went to Antwerp, where he was only able to spend three or four days (2).



THE VIRGIN SURROUNDED BY SAINTS, IN THE CHURCH OF ST AUGUSTINE AT ANTWERP
Sketch (Museum, Frankfort-on-Maine).

His intervention in London was becoming more and more urgent. At Madrid, as usual, precious time had been lost ; Rubens had been there seven months and a half, and the work he accomplished there might have been done in as many weeks. Richelieu acted with more decision and rapidity. Keeping in sight his design of enfeebling Spain in every possible way, he had insisted on a termination of hostilities between France and England, and London,

(1) Chifflet's correspondence, 18th May, 1629. (AUG. CASTAN : *Opinion des érudits, etc.*, p. 42).

(2) Rubens to Dupuy, 8th August, 1629.



Portrait of Rubens
(Albertina, Vienna)

morning of the 11th that he left Paris in a private barge and reached Brussels on the morning of the 12th. Although the day was Sunday he was instantly received by the branta and handed her the money he had brought from Spain. She pointed out the line of conduct he was to follow in London, and bade him start at once for Dunkirk, and cross the Channel from there. Thence Brussels he went to Antwerp, where he was only able to spend three or four days (2)



The Vision of Saint Elizabeth at the Combat of St. Michael at Antwerp
(Kunsth. Museum, Frankfurt am Main)

The intervention in London was becoming more and more urgent. At Madrid, as usual, precious time had been lost; Robert had been there seven months and a half, and the work he accomplished there might have been done in as many weeks. Richelieu acted with more decision and rapidity. Keenly conscious of his course of enfeebling Spain in every possible way, he had insisted on a termination of relations between France and England, and London,

² *Journal de Richelieu*, 10th May, 1635; *Journal de Richelieu*, *Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de la Ville de Paris*, etc., p. 14.
³ *Journal de Richelieu*, 10th May, 1635.

PORTRAIT OF RUBENS (Albertina, Vienna)



D. D. Petrus Paulus Rubens Pictor Exarthen.

which was tired of the procrastination and tergiversation of the court of Madrid, had consented. Peace was concluded on the 20th April. This meant one more difficulty for the negotiator, whose task was already very complicated. It was realised more clearly at Brussels than at Madrid that there was no time to be lost. The settlement of the relations between Spain and the Spanish Netherlands on one hand and the United Provinces on the other, was of the utmost importance to our country, and there is no doubt that Rubens's chief object was to put an end to the war between them. The Infanta, however, had ordered him not to touch on this point immediately on reaching London, since Jan Kessler, a member of the council of finance, was at that actual moment at Rozendaal, where he was paving the way for a truce, with some chance of success. Should he fail, Rubens would have to see to the matter of an armistice with Holland at the same time as the other points in question. Kessler's efforts remained without result, and Rubens, no doubt, had to undertake in London the restoration of peace between the two parties in the Netherlands.

RUBENS'S ARRIVAL IN LONDON. — He went to Dunkirk where he spent several days waiting for the man-of-war which was to take him to England without danger of falling into the hands of the Dutch, who were constantly cruising off the port. The king of England had given orders that the man-of-war which had taken back to the continent the French envoy who had come to conclude the peace in London, should take up Rubens on its homeward voyage (1). The ship, the *Adventure*, Captain John Mennes, reached Dunkirk on the 2nd June; Rubens went on board the next day, and reached Dover the same evening. His brother-in-law, Hendrik Brant, went with him (2). Two days later, on the evening of Tuesday in Whitsun week, the 5th June, 1629, he reached London, and went to the house of his friend Gerbier. On being informed of his arrival, the king invited him on the following morning to Greenwich. Rubens went, was very cordially received and had a long interview with Charles I, who recommended him, when he took his leave, to return to London and repeat to the treasurer, Richard Weston, what he had said to the king. On leaving the king he met Carlisle, who invited him to dinner. In the afternoon he visited Weston and handed him a letter from Olivarez. On the following day, Thursday, the king took council with the lord high treasurer and the chamberlain, Lord Pembroke. It was decided to entrust the conduct of the negotiations to Cottington. On the Friday, Secretary Carleton gave an entertainment in honour of Rubens, at which he was present with Richard Weston's eldest son and Sir Henry Vane. On the Saturday he dined with the lord high treasurer, and had a long conversation with him. On Sunday Weston and Cottington went to the court, where it was decided that they should both go with Lord Pembroke to the lord high treasurer's house in London. Rubens went there to meet them, and they conversed for an hour. When he left, Cottington conducted him to his carriage. This detailed report on Rubens's first six days in London is taken from a letter sent to the Infanta on the 15th June by a secret agent she kept in London, who sent her news of all that went on

(1) Record Office : Orders of Charles I, Vol. 142, n^o 110.

(2) GACHARD : Op. cit. p. 121, and letter from Rubens to Gevartius, 15 September, 1629.

at the English court. According to the same correspondent it was believed that Rubens had brought less than was promised by his letter to Cottington. He adds that the artist was not very kindly received, and that with the exception of Cottington there was no one he could count on.

RUBENS'S DIPLOMATIC WORK IN LONDON. — Rubens's situation was splendid in appearance, but not very favourable in reality. He was not empowered to conclude peace himself; his mission was to prepare and smooth the way for the Spanish envoy, who was to come after him to complete what he had begun. Though it was an exaggeration to state that Rubens had only one man on whom he could count, it is certain that many of the English statesmen leaned towards France, and Richelieu's liberality and cleverness gave Rubens plenty to do.

What made his task specially difficult was the equivocal attitude of England and Spain, which were both constantly in pursuit of two ends at once. England had just made peace with France (1), which in Richelieu's eyes was tantamount to an alliance against Spain. The Spanish court was always wondering whether it would not be better in the end to agree with France and conquer England for their joint benefit. Rubens stands honourably distinguished from these hypocrites and chimerical schemers; he knew what he wanted, and wanted it energetically, without hesitation or deviation. He wanted the end of the war that was impoverishing and threatening to ruin his country, and he wanted the establishment of friendly relations between his sovereign and the king of England, in order to compel the proud and obstinate Dutch to accept reasonable conditions.

We have now to follow the course of the negotiations he opened on the 8th June. The king of England had given him a personal and encouraging welcome. Since Buckingham's death a great change had taken place in the conduct of affairs of state. The all-powerful favourite had not been replaced and the king governed for himself. Matters were hardly improved by the change. Charles I was a very attractive person, a man of agreeable manners and handsome presence, a good husband, a lover of the arts and full of good taste; unlike the king of Spain he lacked neither will nor energy; but all these qualities were combined with an inconstancy and changeableness that rendered them rather harmful than useful. He would not allow the parliament to claim the smallest share of authority: he would accept its advice, but never its orders nor its criticism. He had seen with impatience the Lords and Commons censure Buckingham more than once and demand his recall. Rather than defer to this perfectly legitimate desire he had dissolved parliament, imposed arbitrary taxes and thrown the members of the opposition into prison. He had granted parliament and the people the most extensive rights, and reserved to himself the right of respecting them as little as he did their ancient liberties. His idea was that, as king, he was justified in doing anything to carry out his wishes and extend his power, even break his word and violate the laws.

In foreign politics he was as insincere and dishonourable as in home affairs. We have seen him promising his aid to the king of France against the Protestants and then supporting

(1) The treaty had only been signed at Windsor and Fontainebleau on the 16th September, 1629.

the Protestants against the king, demanding the hand of a princess of Spain and then marrying a princess of France, concluding peace with France to begin negotiating afterwards with Spain, France's natural enemy. He ought to have been the champion of the continental Protestants, and he was continually doubting whether to side with the Netherlands against Spain, or with Spain against the Netherlands. The only aim he persevered in following was the restoration of his sister and her husband to the Palatinate, but instead of taking up arms in their favour he confined himself to negotiations and a demand for the intercession of Spain on behalf of the Count Palatine. He left the task of championing the Reformation against the Catholic Empire to Catholic France and to Gustavus Adolphus, the chivalrous king of Sweden.

At the bottom of his heart, Charles was not an enemy of the Catholics; there was too much resemblance between them and the Episcopalian Anglicans, or at any rate, both were too strongly opposed to their worst enemies, the Puritans, for him to be anxious to quarrel with them. Cottington, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had been sent on several missions to Spain, and went surety for Spain and Rome, if he was not actually a Catholic, also leaned towards that party. Another statesman with whom Rubens had friendly relations was Lord Carlisle, who had been ambassador in France and had returned to London in January, 1629, after meeting Rubens at Antwerp the year before. The treasurer, Richard Weston, who since the death of Buckingham had been the most influential statesman and the most favoured at court, agreed with the king in desiring peace with Spain, and therefore was not opposed to the propositions brought by Rubens.

As Rubens soon discovered, there were several parties in the English court; one, led by Carlisle, was for peace with Spain and war with France: the next largest, which included the treasurer and Lord Holland, was for general peace, and the third was for war with Spain and an offensive alliance with France against her. The king was hesitating, and wished to negotiate with both powers and compare their offers before deciding. Rubens shows him as very desirous for peace, and his conduct throughout the negotiations proves him to have been so.

The artist found a friend and ally in Lorenzo Barozzi, the secretary of the Duke of Savoy and his envoy to London. The painter told him what had passed in the course of his first interview with king Charles I on the 5th June. On the following day a letter from Barozzi gave the Duke an account of this interview; it has survived, and shows that Rubens acquainted the envoy at length with the object of his mission, the conclusion of peace or a truce, and a new alliance between England and Spain. To these propositions Charles replied that his last agreement with France was only an armistice that could be broken when he pleased if he were to treat with Spain. The king had formally rejected a truce, in which he saw merely a ruse on the part of Spain to cajole England, and desired a definite peace. Philip's promise to intervene, either alone or in concert with the Emperor, to obtain from the Duke of Bavaria the restoration of the Palatinate appeared to him insufficient. Rubens had pointed out that it was not in the power of Spain to accomplish the restitution, and that to state the contrary would merely be to deceive England; that he himself had drawn up a document which Charles had approved, by which he declared that he would be content with the active intervention of Spain, and that there could be no idea of Spain's declaring war against the Emperor and the Duke of Bavaria

with the object of restoring the Count Palatine to his estates. He added that it rested with Spain to treat with France, which she would do if the negotiations with England came to nothing.

The arrival of Rubens and the welcome he received from the king of England soon provoked the distrust and hostility of the Venetian envoy, Alviso Contarini, who went to Greenwich to congratulate Charles on the peace concluded with France, and represented to him that the interests of Spain were diametrically opposed to those of England, and that



PORTRAIT OF JUSTUS LIPSIVS — Drawing for an edition of Seneca (British Museum, London).

consequently an alliance between the two countries was inopportune. The king replied that he had made peace with France in the general interests of Christianity, and alluding to the war undertaken by Louis XIII against the Protestants of the south, he added that he did not know what to think of the king who had suddenly attacked the natural friends of England, the Huguenots.

The Dutch envoy, Joachimi, for his part lost « no opportunity of representing to » these gentlemen how contrary to their » common interests, and how prejudicial to » the king's reputation it was, to treat with » Spain ».

In spite of all this, Charles continued to pay kindly attention to Rubens. In a second interview he told him that he had charged three commissioners to discuss his propositions with him; the three being Lord Weston, the Earl of Pembroke and Sir Francis Cottington. Rubens lost no time

in having an interview with them. He set out the object of his mission, as he had done to the king; and they made the same reply, that they could not be content with an armistice but wished to conclude a treaty of peace, adding that the promise given by Philip IV to intervene with the Emperor to secure the restitution of the Count Palatine's estates was equally unsatisfactory, the king of Spain having sufficient influence on the Emperor to obtain from him the promise of the restitution of the Palatinate.

On the 25th June Rubens was again received by the king. He has left a record of this interview himself in three letters written five days later to Olivarez, all of which have survived. A number of dispatches addressed by him to the Spanish minister are also in existence, so that we have Rubens's own authority for the story of his proceedings as a diplomatist in London.

In the course of the interview of the 25th June the king asked him to make known to him all the communications he had been charged with, as he wished to have all the cards on the

table in the game with Spain, so as to lose no time. Charles wished to treat with Rubens as plenipotentiary, without waiting for the arrival of the promised envoy. He repeated that Philip's promise to intercede with the Emperor for the restitution of the Count Palatine's estates was not sufficient, and that he laid down as his first condition the restitution of those portions of the Palatinate which his father, James I, had granted to the Archduke Albert. Rubens pointed out to the king that he had no power to treat of this restitution, that the question was reserved for the official envoys who were coming to complete his work, and that he had brought an agreement for an armistice signed by Philip IV, which would permit of the mature consideration of the conditions of the final treaty and a decision with full knowledge of the case. But king Charles would not hear a word of the truce : he insisted that the Emperor and the Duke of Bavaria should send plenipotentiaries to Madrid to meet the representatives of England, Spain and the other interested parties. Before all, Spain must restore the places she was occupying in the Palatinate. Rubens, observing the king's determination, said that he would report it to his masters ; but for his own part he demanded that England should not, for the present, follow up her agreement with France. The king gave the promise.

Later on the 25th June, 1629, Rubens acquainted Weston and Cottington with Charles's statements ; they considered the king to have gone too far in the matter of concessions and expressed their fear that the Council of State, if consulted, would disapprove of his attitude ; they feared that to accept a part of the Palatinate would be to renounce the rest. Rubens went back to the king the same day, and pretending not to remember exactly what had been said in the morning asked him to repeat it, which Charles immediately did. He expressed the same opinions in the presence of his ministers, whom he received shortly afterwards.

Rubens was not over well satisfied with the results obtained, especially since he feared that in that country, where opinions were easily changed, the king might allow himself to be influenced by the French, Venetian and Dutch envoys. He had good reason for objecting that



FRONTISPIECE FOR *Justi Lipsii Opera* — Drawing
(Plantin-Moretus Museum, Antwerp).

more was asked of the king of Spain than he could give, and that Philip could not make war on Germany to ensure peace with England: Charles did not contradict this, but declared that there was no great hurry, and that he would soon come to an agreement with Spain if Philip would promise to do what was necessary when the time came. Rubens wished to return to Brussels after this interview to render account to the Infanta of his mission, but Cottington dissuaded him by saying that his going would compromise everything; he decided to remain, and informed the Infanta by letter of what he had done in London.

In the second of his letters of the 30th June, 1629, to Olivarez, he called the minister's attention to the danger threatening from France. Two days before, the English envoy, Edmondes, had left for Paris; on the day after, the French ambassador, Châteauneuf, started for England. Châteauneuf had sent his secretary on ahead to advise the king not to treat with Spain and to tell him that he was fully empowered to conclude an agreement with England for the seizing of the Palatinate by the combined forces of the two nations. Richelieu had written to the same effect to Weston. Rubens did all he could to oppose this project, fatal as it was to Spain. He complained to Olivarez that he had been given no authority to treat for peace. « If I had been », he wrote, « I could have broken off the French treaty in 24 hours, for all the ambassador and » his gang, for the king himself told me that our dilatory ways were the cause of his treating » with the French, whom he distrusts and hates ».

Rubens had yet another mission to fulfil on behalf of Spain. The government had instructed him to hand some bills of exchange to Soubise, one of the leaders of the French Huguenots, who had come to London to seek aid for his party. Our artist-diplomat was not to part with these moneys until he was certain that Charles I meant seriously to treat with Spain and would allow Soubise to enlist men and man his ships. Some days after Rubens's departure Philip IV's ministers had signed a convention with the Duke de Rohan, Soubise's brother and the first leader of the Huguenots, by which Spain undertook to pay him 300.000 ducats annually to enable him to carry on the war in the South of France. They further assigned Rohan a pension of 40.000 ducats and Soubise one of 8.000. That was the king of Spain's way of respecting the peace he had concluded with his neighbour France; and His Catholic Majesty, who had heretics burned at home, chose this method of defending his religion abroad against the schismatics of the Reformation. On his arrival in Brussels Rubens had with him the bills of exchange that had been given him at Madrid for Soubise; the Infanta, in her innocence of the mysteries of international politics, thought it impossible that her nephew, who had been reconciled with France, could be bringing his ally into trouble by supporting the Protestants, and thought it would be much better to employ the money in making war on Holland. She relieved Rubens, therefore, of his money. When Rubens reached London, Soubise was not a little angry at finding himself deprived of the funds promised; he complained bitterly, petitioned for Charles's intervention and demanded authority to enlist men and man ships. The king of England replied that he could not grant this authority unless the king of Spain kept the promises he had made to the Huguenots. Then Rubens laid the difficulties of his position before Olivarez. But Olivarez had already forestalled him, and informed him in a letter of the 11th June that he was forwarding fresh supplies. When they arrived, Rubens had no

need of them. On the 28th June, 1629, Louis XIII had concluded peace with the French Protestants and extended his pardon to their principal leaders, Rohan and Soubise.

Rubens wrote a third letter to Olivarez on the 30th June, to inform him that the English ministers had disapproved of king Charles's declaration as imprudent. If Spain confined herself to a promise of active intervention with the Emperor for the restitution of the Count Palatine's estates, England, in their opinion, would obtain nothing but an empty promise. For that reason they wished to have the date of the restitution settled. Rubens pointed out to them, as he had before to the king, that it was not in Spain's power to promise what she could not guarantee. Charles I had understood this, and looked for another solution : he proposed a marriage between one of the Count Palatine's daughters and the Duke of Bavaria's brother, without troubling about the age or the consent of the proposed parties.

On the 2nd July, forty-eight hours after the dispatch of these three letters, Rubens wrote to Olivarez again. There was no use in waiting, he declared, for the upshot of propositions so vague. What was wanted was a more solid basis for negotiation ; the king of England was of the same opinion, and had resolved to send Cottington to Madrid on the 1st August, calculating that by that time an answer would have been received to the propositions he had sent through Rubens. Rubens again expressed his desire to go to Brussels to give an account of his mission to the Infanta. But Philip objected to his leaving London before the end of the negotiations : he wrote to the Infanta that as soon as she knew for certain of Cottington's departure for Madrid, she might announce that Don Carlos Coloma, formerly Spanish ambassador at the English court, was coming to London. At the same time he invited the Emperor and the Duke of Bavaria to send plenipotentiaries to Madrid to be present at the negotiations with England.

A few days afterwards, Rubens had another audience of the king. He told him of his wish to return to Brussels ; Charles opposed it, and asked him to remain in London to be a witness of what was transacted with the French envoy. As he stated that he could not send an ambassador to Madrid before being certain of the dispatch of a plenipotentiary to London, Rubens reassured him on that point. Charles renewed his promise not to make an alliance with France against Spain, and from what he said on the subject of the Palatinate, Rubens concluded that the king would be satisfied with the restoration of the towns entrusted by James I to the Archdukes. Rubens was very well satisfied with the progress of affairs, and delighted with the king's frankness.

On the 20th July, Weston wrote to Olivarez that Cottington's departure for Madrid was fixed for one of the early days of August, and praised Rubens very highly, saying that he had taken a great deal of trouble and had won the esteem of all both by his extraordinary artistic gifts and his other good qualities. Cottington confirmed Weston's statements in a letter to Olivarez of the same date ; he too said all that was good of Rubens, whose appointment had met with the approval of everyone in London, not only because he understood affairs of state but because he had succeeded in winning the good graces of all and especially of the king. On the 22nd July, 1629, Rubens sent the English statesmen's letters to Olivarez, together with four dispatches addressed by him to the Count-Duke. It is not impossible that he had

asked Weston and Cottington for these flattering testimonials, as an indirect reply to the complaints to which his proceedings had given rise at Madrid. In fact, we gather very clearly from one of these four dispatches that at one time the court of Spain had declared itself displeased with the view he took of his duties. Olivarez had reminded him that he had not been sent to London to conclude the peace nor discuss its terms, but to see that ambassadors were appointed for that purpose. Rubens had exceeded his powers, had shown too much zeal and had done too much and too good work to please his masters. Rubens replied that he had not gone beyond his powers, but that king Charles had concluded from the tenour of his letters of credit that the bearer was permitted to listen to the propositions that had been made him and transmit them to Madrid. That was what he had done, confining himself to stipulating, in accordance with the Infanta's recommendation, that until the reply was received there should be no more treating with France. Finally he had used his efforts to have Cottington nominated and to hasten his departure. He had assured the king in general terms that Philip would intervene with the Emperor and the Duke of Bavaria, and had sent Charles's reply to Olivarez. He was able, therefore, to claim that he had done a great deal of useful work, and this the facts themselves bear out. In his other dispatches of the 22nd July to Olivarez, he apprises him that an adversary had just appeared who would reopen the whole matter, and against whom Rubens had taken all the precautions he could. He refers to Richelieu. On his arrival in London on the 5th July, 1629, the French ambassador, Châteauneuf, had been received in audience on the 8th by the king and queen. His mission was to further the designs of the great Cardinal-minister, and give battle to the Emperor and the king of Spain on every possible ground. He proposed, therefore, more definitely than before, a treaty of alliance between his country and England for the purpose of conquering the Palatinate and delivering Germany from the yoke of the house of Austria. In order to conciliate himself with the English people, he insisted upon Charles summoning his parliament, which could not fail to oppose an understanding with Spain. In his opinion this measure would result in the fall of Weston, in whom he saw a Catholic, and therefore a partisan of Spain. Châteauneuf had recourse also to a means of great efficacy in England: he bribed the men of influence, who, like the Earl of Carlisle and Lord Holland, spent preposterous sums to maintain their rank, and whose coffers were always empty.

Another of Richelieu's agents, an Englishman named Furston, had come to London some days before to work for the same objects as Châteauneuf, and prove that England's interests lay in an understanding with France rather than with Spain. Philip could not be trusted, while the king of France was ready to attack Spain and the Empire on all sides, in Italy, in Franche-Comté, in Germany and in the Netherlands; he had made peace with his rebellious subjects in order to have all his forces at command. He asked nothing of England but to come to an agreement with Holland for an attack on the coasts of Spain by their united fleets. In return, the Palatinate should be restored to Charles I. Furston was to offer the treasurer, Weston, a considerable sum for the assurance of his support. The offer was tempting, but when Cottington told the king of it, he only laughed, saying that he recognised Richelieu's tricks, and had rather treat with Spain than with France.

Rubens gave an account of all this to Olivarez, and sent him on the same day the text of



HELENA FORMENT
(Pinskothen, Munich)

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HELENA FOURMENT
(Pinakothek, Munich)



Hologr. Koclofzen, Dabnet & V. Janten.

the propositions which had been made him by Charles and countersigned by Weston on the 13th July. The document confirmed his dispatches point by point. The king wished to conclude a firm and lasting treaty with Spain, and, considering it to be beyond the power of Spain to secure unaided the restitution of the Palatinate, he stipulated that Spain should restore the towns in her occupation and insist with vigour that the Emperor and the Duke of Bavaria



THE FAMILY OF BALTHASAR GERBIER (Fragment of a picture at Windsor Castle).

should restore to the Count Palatine the rest of his estates. The king, therefore, showed himself amenable on this point, which had always been essential in his eyes. He had begun by insisting so strongly on the restoration of the dethroned prince because he believed himself to be fulfilling an imperative duty to his sister and her husband; later, when he found his chances of success diminishing, he believed it consistent with his honour to maintain his demand, while expressing it with increasing mildness. Finally he had moderated his claims and asked nothing more of Spain than what she could promise and perform. If Spain accepted, Cottington was to start for Madrid immediately.

Rubens, therefore, had obtained what he had asked for, and considered his mission at an end. He hoped to be able to return home; but he was still to be seven months and a half more

in London. The delay was caused by all sorts of obstacles and set-backs which prevented his departure. Don Carlos Coloma had been appointed ambassador to London. Rubens, who had heard the news on the 17th August from Olivarez, communicated it to the king, who was delighted and promised that Cottington should take ship at the beginning of September ; but three months passed before the Spanish envoy made his preparations for leaving Brussels. There was even a question of replacing him by the Marquis de Mirabel, Philip's ambassador at Paris, which displeased the English minister exceedingly. Weston stated that he regarded the negotiations as broken off, and that the French were right in declaring that Spain was trying to play with England. Rubens, for his part, was very annoyed at the delay, and felt humiliated at the breaking of the promise he had given. « The delay seems to me so regrettable », he wrote to the Infanta on the 24th November, « that I curse the hour when I set foot in this » country ».

He had good reason for annoyance in London ; but it was not his masters' bad faith that detained Coloma at Brussels. The war with the United Provinces had begun to go badly for the Spanish Netherlands. Wezel had been taken on the 19th August, 1629, and Bois-le-Duc had capitulated on the 14th September ; Spinola, the able general, was still in Spain, and Coloma had taken his place at the head of the army ; his services could hardly be spared, and Isabella had serious thoughts of sending Mirabel to London instead of him. But when Philip heard from Rubens that Cottington was on the point of starting for Spain, he ordered Coloma to set out at once. Some time passed, however, before Coloma embarked. On the 20th December he had not even reached Dunkirk ; the impatience in London was growing stronger and stronger, and it was not concealed from Rubens. To give the English a little satisfaction, on the 26th December Rubens sent his brother-in-law, Hendrik Brant, who had been with him all along, to Dover, with orders to go and receive the Spanish envoy and accompany him to London. Coloma landed at last on the 7th January, 1630 ; on the 11th he reached the capital and was received on the 13th in solemn audience by the king in the palace of Whitehall. Rubens was counting on being able to leave England without further delay ; but once more his expectation was falsified. The new ambassador had need of his knowledge and advice ; and therefore, exerting the authority he had been given at Madrid, he kept him for six weeks longer.

Cottington, for his part, was very anxious to start for Madrid ; he told Rubens that it was a wonderful thing to have succeeded in inducing the king to have the letter of the 13th July written, but that, if things were to turn out badly, he, Cottington, would be ruined. Weston and he were impatient at Spain's delay in replying. On this point Rubens could give them no satisfactory explanation ; possibly they were awaiting Cottington's arrival before making up their minds. Cottington said that all he could do would be to repeat what the king had said ; in case of a refusal he would depart immediately. Weston spoke to the same effect : « the » peace », he said, « will be signed in the first hour, or not at all ».

The Dutch, French and Venetian envoys did all they could to delay Cottington's departure. Richelieu no longer asked even that England should send a fleet against the shores of Spain. He only asked that Charles would allow his subjects to found a society with the object of attacking the Spanish possessions in the East and West Indies. He pretended also to know

from a trustworthy source that the king of Spain would not yield any of the towns of the Palatinate, and that Don Carlos Coloma was not coming to London, and gave other news, true or false, to delay the departure of the English plenipotentiary. Nothing came of it. At the instance of Rubens the king signed Cottington's letters of credit on the 30th October, and the envoy left three days later. Rubens had procured him passports from the Infanta for two ships, one of which had a cargo of merchandise which the English diplomatist, who was also a merchant, intended to sell in Spain. Cottington set sail for Lisbon, where he landed, and left on the 24th December for Madrid. He reached it in January, 1630. Since the 13th July, Rubens had been at work day and night in London, keeping the English patient, urging the Spanish on and counteracting the intrigues of the hostile envoys. He acquitted himself conscientiously and with the greatest success in all. It soon came to be understood at Madrid that he had been unjustly blamed. On the 20th August the dispatches he had sent in July were read to the Council of State; and it then became clear how successful his mission had been. The Council approved of everything he had done, and voted him their thanks. In another sitting, on the 28th October, further letters from Rubens were read, and Olivarez was again ordered to thank him for the valuable information he had sent from London, and to inform him of the satisfaction experienced by the government at the ability he had displayed.

His masters were not alone in recognising his merits. In England also the king and his chief ministers held him in high esteem. In August Cottington had given a splendid entertainment at his house in Rubens's honour. Up till the last moment before sailing for Madrid, he had acquainted Rubens with everything that might interest him, and consulted him on everything connected with his mission. At the beginning of October, the painter-diplomatist visited Cambridge; he was received there with great honour, and the senate of the University conferred upon him the degree of Master of Arts, the highest distinction that could be accorded to an artist. The king had always extended to him the kindest and most obliging welcome. On the 3rd March, 1630, the eve of his departure, he went to take leave of the king and queen. On that occasion the king gave him the rank of knight for life and presented him with the sword, set with jewels, which he had used for giving the accolade, as well as the ring on his finger and a hat-cord ornamented with diamonds. The king had bought the ring and cord from Gerbier, and had paid £500 sterling for them. On the 24th March, 1638, Lionel Wake, a merchant of Antwerp, received from Endymion Porter a gold chain, weighing 82 oz : 7 deniers, to be given as soon as possible to Rubens in the king's name. Charles payed Gerbier the cost of Rubens's living in London and that of his brother-in-law and suite; the account from the 17th December, 1629, to the 4th March, 1630, has survived, and amounts to £128. 2s. 11d. The Venetian ambassador in London wrote to his government that it would be impossible to do more honour to an envoy, however distinguished. When the peace was concluded, Charles had the patent of Rubens's knighthood made out in December, 1630. We grant him this title of nobility, says the king, « because of his attachment to our person and the services he has rendered to » us and to our subjects, his rare devotion to his own sovereign and the skill with which he » has worked to restore a good understanding between the crowns of England and Spain ». He empowers him also to add to his coat of arms a charge borrowed from the royal scutcheon of

England, consisting of on a canton gules a lion or, which Rubens placed in the sinister chief of his arms (1).

His praise and honours were well earned. He had distinguished himself by his grasp of affairs, his zeal and his perspicacity. He had kept up a constant correspondence with Olivarez : some of his dispatches are lost, but during the period to which those preserved in the royal



A DAUGHTER OF BALTHASAR GERBIER — Drawing
(Museum, Weimar).

archives of Spain belong, we find the three long letters of the 30th June, 1629, one of the 2nd July, one of the 6th and four of the 22nd, six of 24th August, one of the 2nd September and six of the 21st, and one of the 14th December. These letters, however, are not confined to affairs of state, but besides the negotiations between England and Spain they deal with everything of interest from the point of view of politics that Rubens heard. He describes among other things the Duke of Savoy's attempt to persuade the king of England to join with France in the campaign undertaken by Louis XIII in Italy for the purpose of putting the Duke of Nevers in possession of the duchy of Mantua, a proposition which the king of England refused, and thus put an end to the hitherto intimate relations between Rubens and the representative of Savoy. He was constantly considering the influence which the peace with England would have on the conclusion of a treaty between the Spanish Netherlands and the United Provinces. He believed that such a

treaty was impossible without Charles's intervention but could be easily concluded with his help. In working for the peace, he had always at heart the results it would have on his country. He was of opinion that in exchange for the restitution of the towns of the Palatinate Charles ought to commission Cottington to offer the king of Spain not only a treaty of alliance against France, but also his good offices to induce the Dutch to conclude an agreement with Spain, and, in case of their refusal, to abandon them and even side with Spain against them. That, he thought, should not be difficult to obtain. The king of England had seen with regret the capture of Wezel by the Dutch ; Rubens assures us that tears had come into Charles's eyes at the news, and that the capture of Bois-le-Duc had caused him equally painful emotion.

(1) It is absolutely certain that Rubens was knighted by Charles I. M. Alphonse Wauters has doubted the authenticity of the letter granting him the title, which is in the possession of Count Van der Stegen of Louvain (*L'Art*, III, p. 206).

But his anticipations relative to peace between the Spanish Netherlands and the United Provinces were not to be realised. After Cottington at Madrid and Coloma in London had taken up the negotiations for the treaty of peace, nearly a year elapsed before it was concluded. Peace was signed on the 15th November, 1630; it restored amicable relations between England and Spain, as stipulated by the treaty of 1604. The two countries were to abstain from giving help to each other's enemies, and the king of England promised to intervene to bring about an understanding between Spain and the United Provinces, while Philip gave his personal engagement to do all he could to obtain from the Emperor and the Electors the restoration of the Count Palatine to his hereditary estates. But the promise was not kept, and the war between Spain and the Catholic Netherlands on one side and Holland on the other was to drag on for fifteen years more by sea and land, in Europe and the Indies, without England's doing anything much to stop it. It was not till 1645 that the negotiations were opened which ended in the treaty of Munster, in which the interests of the Belgian provinces were sacrificed.

Rubens could congratulate himself on his stay in England. The beauty of the country and its inhabitants had charmed him; English life pleased him, and he found all round him a luxury and plenty which proved the wealth and prosperity of the nation.

Not only had the diplomatist been received with the highest honours, but the artist and archaeologist had by no means been left in the cold. He visited several collections of pictures, statues and antique inscriptions, among other the celebrated Arundel marbles, with the owner of which he had been long acquainted, and the pictures in the king's possession and those of the late Duke of Buckingham, at whose widow's house he saw once more the artistic treasures he had sold some years before to the favourite (1). He visited several scholars; Cotton, the great archaeologist, Boswell, the artistic statesman, and Drebbel, the inventor. He wrote to his friends Dupuy, Peiresc and Gevartius, and as usual told them very little about politics; but from what he tells them of his impressions it is easy to see that when he passed



THEODORE MAVERNE
Drawing (British Museum, London).

(1) Le robbe del ducca di Buckingham sono ancora tutte in essere tanto le pitture quanto le statue, gemme e medaillie et il palazzo e mantenuto in ordine come fu nella sua vita (Peiresc MSS. National Library, Paris, Français 9532. Note in Rubens's handwriting).

the Hook he imagined England to be a barbarous country, especially in comparison with Italy, and that his surprise on a closer view had been all the more pleasant.

RUBENS'S ARTISTIC WORK IN LONDON. — Though Rubens painted little during the nine months he spent in London, he was not completely idle. All the paintings of this period known to us are connected with his visit to England, some recalling his mission, others treating a national subject or representing people he had met in London.

The most important of these pictures is his « Minerva protecting Peace against War » (*Œuvre*. N^o 825), an allegorical glorification of the peace whose advocate he was with Charles I. The painter presented it to the king during his visit to England, and after Charles's death it was sold with his collections and bought by the Doria family of Genoa. In 1802 it became the property of Mr. Buchanan, later that of the Marquis of Stafford, first Duke of Sutherland, who presented it in 1828 to the National Gallery in London.

The picture is an allegorical composition, happily conceived and brilliantly executed. Peace is represented as the source of wealth and happiness. The goddess, the upper part of whose body is nude, is seated in the centre of the composition, pouring a stream of milk from her full breast into the mouth of her new-born child, while three other sturdy and happy children are coming with their arms about each other towards their generous nurse. The eldest is holding up his garment, into which a small winged genius is putting fruit; the youngest has a grape in his hand. On the left squats Pan, the god of the fields, holding out to the children a cornucopia pouring forth fruits. Behind him Wealth advances carrying a vase full of plate and Joy dancing and leaping to the sound of the castanets and tambourine. In the upper part hovers a Cupid with a caduceus in his hand, bringing a crown to Peace. In the background Minerva, armed with her lance and helmet on head, is repelling Mars, who, sword in hand, is trying to throw himself upon Peace; Hatred and Destruction follow close behind him. In the distance flames and smoke rise from devastated fields. The group composed of Peace, Pan, Wealth and Joy is of great beauty; the nude flesh of the women and the drapery round the waist of Wealth make superb passages of colour; the group of children is still more beautiful, and full of nature, simplicity and charm. Unfortunately the painting has suffered, the colours have grown darker, the background has turned black and the brilliance of the light parts is proportionately deadened; the panel and the paint are cracked, and have been clumsily restored.

Rubens painted this picture in his friend Gerbier's house, where he was staying; and there, too, he found most of his models. Gerbier's wife sat for the Goddess of Peace, and his children for the little boys and girls that appear in the composition. We find them again in a group in which Rubens painted Mme. Gerbier with a child on her lap and three others, a boy and two girls, standing before her.

We know two copies of this picture. The first belongs to the Royal collection at Windsor Castle. It forms the central part of a large painting which was considerably extended later. On the added part an artist of less merit represented Balthasar Gerbier himself and his four other children. The second copy (*Œuvre*. N^o 956), probably imitated from the first, belongs to

Mrs Culling Hanbury of Badwell Park, Hatfield. It was formerly the property of Lord Radnor and was engraved by MacArdell.

In the Earl Spencer's collection at Althorp there is a portrait of one of the little girls in the preceding picture (*Œuvre*. N° 957), the charming child with large eyes and fair curls who is holding a grape in her hand in the allegorical picture, and in the family group is leaning her elbow on her mother's knee. The Museum at Lille has an early copy of this portrait.

Shortly afterwards Rubens painted another « Minerva defending Peace against War », which is now in the Pinakothek at Munich and closely resembles the one he painted for Charles I (*Œuvre*. N° 826). The figures are almost exactly the same but differently arranged. He had the work prepared by a pupil, retouched it himself and left Snijders to paint the fruit in the foreground.

In a picture probably also painted during his stay in London, and now at Dulwich College, he reproduced the figure of Peace almost exactly, turning her into a Venus. Here also she is pouring the milk of her breast into the mouth of a child on her knees, who represents Cupid. A warrior in a breastplate, no doubt Mars, is looking over his shoulder at the charming picture, in the way that Titian's lovers look at their mistresses (*Œuvre*. N° 704).

While Rubens was in London there was a man living there, who must have been pointed out to him as a prodigy, and whose portrait he painted. This was Thomas Parr, « Old Parr », as he was called (*Œuvre*. N° 1017). The portrait is now in the collection of M. Maurice Kann at Paris. The back of the panel has the following inscription : « This is the portrait of Old Parr, » painted by Rubens when he was ambassador in London. Parr was then in his 142nd year, » and died at the age of 145 ». There is nothing remarkable about the portrait, and the model does not look of the fabulous age given him by history or tradition. He would be taken for a hale old man of between 70 and 80, with white hair and beard, a fresh complexion, a long and narrow head, a bald forehead, and drooping lids over keen eyes. He wears a linen collar, a red gown and a cape. The portrait is carefully painted, but with a light and easy touch.

Rubens also painted « Theodorus Turquetus Mayernius », physician to James I and Charles I, whose acquaintance he had no doubt made at court (*Œuvre*. N° 993). He is represented sitting in an arm-chair with one hand resting on the arm and the other on his knee. Beside him stands a statue of Aesculapius. He is a corpulent man of severe aspect, and wears a full beard and short hair. The portrait was engraved while in the possession of Dr Mead, and was included in the sale of his effects at his death ; it then passed through various hands and was bought in 1848 by the Royal College of Medicine. The British Museum has a drawing in black chalk (*Œuvre*. N° 1513) after the same model, the face being drawn in water-colour ; it shows the same vigorous head with a straight nose, full cheeks, short hair and a long imperial. The figure is standing and holding in his left hand the edge of the cloak thrown over his shoulders. The drawing is certainly by Rubens ; we have not seen the picture, but the difference in the beard and the attitude incline us to doubt whether it is the work of our painter.

He drew two other foreigners as well, who appeared at court during his stay in London, a Siamese ambassador and priest, both in national costume (*Œuvre*. Nos 1531-1532). The

drawings, which are in private collections, are very well known from the facsimile engravings by W. Baillie. One of them has the inscription: « A Siamese Priest. Arrived at the Court of » K. Charles the 1st as an attendant to the Ambassador of his nation, just as Rubens was preparing to leave England, however that Eminent Artist found time to make ye above describ'd Drawing ».

He also painted, again for the king, a « St George », the patron saint of England (*Œuvre*. N^o 435), to whom he gave the features of Charles I; St Agnes, who was delivered by the saint, appeared under those of the queen of England. The landscape in which the scene is enacted represents the valley of the Thames with the castle of Richmond. It is said in a letter of the 6th March, 1630, that Rubens sent the picture to Antwerp, in remembrance of his visit to England. Walpole believes that the painter only kept a copy (1). The original, or one of the numerous replicas made of it, has belonged to the royal family of England since 1814 and is now at Buckingham Palace.

He painted also in grisaille the design for a ewer and basin made for Charles I by the famous Antwerp goldsmith Theodoor Roegiers (*Œuvre*. N^o 688). The painting is now in the National Gallery in London. On the body of the ewer is the « Judgment of Paris », with Jupiter, Neptune and two goddesses looking on. On the ground of the basin is the « Birth of Venus ». The goddess is rising from the waves, accompanied by four Nereids and two Tritons, one of whom is carrying one of the Nereids on his back. Above hover deities holding a wreath of shells, while the blowing of the winds is represented by heads with puffed-out cheeks. On the border are nymphs and small genii riding on dolphins, Neptune and a goddess, and Cupid and Psyche. The ewer was probably made in 1636. On the 8th November of that year, indeed, Gerbier wrote to the Earl of Arundel, Grand-Marshal, that he had sent Rubens the letter in which the Earl had ordered him to send to The Hague the drawings that were to be used as models for the ewers.

According to an old tradition which has never been disproved, Rubens induced the king to buy Raphael's cartoons of the « Acts of the Apostles ». Seven of them were still at that date in the hands of the descendants of Bernard van Orley at Brussels, who had been charged by Pope Leo X to have them executed in a tapestry factory there. These celebrated compositions now belong to the English government and are exhibited at the South Kensington Museum in London.

Rubens did not depart immediately after taking leave of the king on the 3rd March. Two days later he went to see the Dutch envoy, Albert Joachimi, at Chelsea. On the same day, Joachimi sent a report of the interview to the States-general. Rubens had asked for the envoy's good offices for the release of the crew of a Dunkirk ship which had been chased and captured off the coasts of England by a Dutch man-of-war; the sailors, thirty in number, were imprisoned at Rotterdam. The interview then passed on to the political situation. Rubens stated definitely that peace would be concluded between England and Spain; he praised the goodness of Philip IV and the Infanta Isabella, expressed the hope of seeing the negotiations continued

(1) HORACE WALPOLE : *Anecdotes of Painting*. London, 1871. p. 163.

relative to the truce between Spain and Holland, praised Prince Frederick Henry, whom he « had the honour of knowing », and offered his services to bring about the conclusion of an agreement between the two countries.

RUBENS'S RETURN FROM ENGLAND. — He left London on the 6th March to take ship at Dover, where he was detained for some time by an unforeseen circumstance. Some young Catholics of both sexes, who wanted to cross to the continent, the girls to enter convents and the men to finish their studies in a Jesuit college, considered it a good opportunity to undertake the voyage in company with His Catholic Majesty's representative. But the English law permitted none but merchants to leave the country without special authority, and Sir John Coke, the king's secretary, ordered the Lord Wardens of the Cinque Ports to prevent Rubens's departure. The order was carried out and the ship detained in port. There followed an exchange of diplomatic dispatches between the Spanish ambassador and the English ministers. What the issue was we do not know, but we know that Rubens was kept at Dover a long time. Finally he was allowed to embark about the 23rd March. Doubtless he went first of all to Brussels to render an account of his mission to the Infanta. He reached Antwerp again in the first week of April, 1630. On the 6th Balthasar Moretus wrote to Jan van Vucht : « Mr. Rubens has at last returned from England ». Two days later he wrote to another friend : « Mr. Rubens



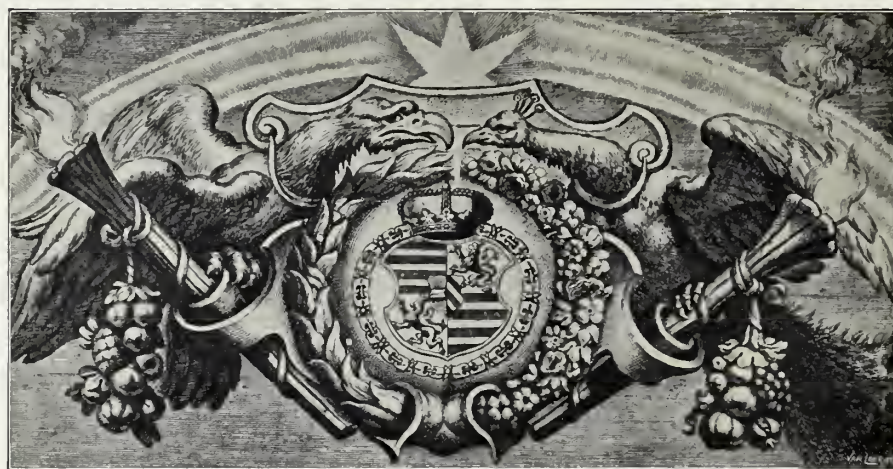
HOLY FAMILY (Museum, Cologne.)

» is back from England, and has good hope of the conclusion of peace with England ». In the course of the year following his return, he was repaid his travelling expenses, amounting to 12,374 pounds Flemish, the balance of which, amounting to 6,374 pounds, was paid him by order of the Infanta on the 24th March, 1631 (1). This sum possibly included an indemnity for the expenses of his journey in 1627, which he had not yet received. Probably also it was then that he was presented, as a token of the Infanta's gratitude for the way in which he had fulfilled his mission, with the silver ewer and basin which formed part of his estate, and which his heirs agreed to leave to his sons, Albert and Nicolas. Nicolas became the owner of it, and it now belongs to one of his descendants, Baron Constantijn de Borrekens of Antwerp. On the ewer appears the Triumph of Venus; and on the basin Susannah and the elders. The

(1) JULES FINOT : *Documents relatifs à Rubens conservés aux Archives du Nord* (Bulletin-Rubens, III, p. 128).

border of the basin, and the neck, foot and belly of the ewer are covered with gambolling children and ornaments of every kind. The basin bears the monogram of Albert and Isabella. It is a master-piece of chasing, in the style of Rubens, but not made after his design (1).

On the 16th July, 1631, Philip IV, like Charles I, granted Rubens the title of knight, at the request of the Council of State of Brussels, with the support of the Infanta, who lauded his artistic ability and the services he had rendered the king in affairs of importance.



Vignette on the title-page of BALTHASAR CORDERIUS *Catena patrum Graecorum in Sanctum Joannem* after the engraving by Cornelis Galle.

1) P. GÉNARD : *L'Aiguère de Rubens* (*Bulletin-Rubens*, I, p. 226).



THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS (Museum, Madrid).

CHAPTER IX

THE FIRST YEARS AFTER RUBENS'S SECOND MARRIAGE 1630-1634

RUBENS'S SECOND MARRIAGE. — PORTRAITS OF HELENA FOURMENT. — FURTHER EXCURSION INTO POLITICS. — RUBENS'S INTERVENTION IN THE QUARREL BETWEEN MARIE DE MEDICI AND LOUIS XIII. — NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE UNITED PROVINCES. — PAINTINGS OF THIS PERIOD.



HELENA FOURMENT AS MARY MAGDALEN (Dulwich College).

RUBENS ON HIS RETURN TO ANTWERP. — We have very little information of interest on what Rubens did during the first months after his return home. On the 1st June, 1630, he appeared before the aldermen with his friend Cornelis van der Geest to make a favourable report on the conduct and ability of his pupil Willem Panneels, who was going abroad and wanted a testimonial. On the 27th April, 1629, the king had appointed Rubens secretary of the Privy Council, and on the 7th June, 1630, he took the oath of office. On the 10th August he wrote Peiresc a long letter on various archaeological points. He also wrote to Pierre Dupuy in

October, but with neither of them did he renew the regular correspondence of former days ; years passed without his sending any news of himself to the former. During these first months he concerned himself as little as possible with politics, his hands being naturally full of other matters after an absence of more than a year and a half.

HIS SECOND MARRIAGE. — But an important event was to take place in his life before the end of the year. On the 6th December, 1630, at the age of fifty-three, he took for his second wife a girl of sixteen. This was Helena Fourment, eleventh child of Daniel Fourment, silk and carpet merchant, and Clara Stappaerts. She had been baptized in the church of Notre-Dame on the 1st April, 1614. Her brother Daniel, who was twenty-two years older, had married in 1619 Clara Brant, the sister of Isabella, Rubens's first wife. Rubens had therefore been for years in relations with them as with other members of the Fourment family. As we have said, about 1620 he painted the portraits of Clara Fourment, Helena's sister, and her husband Peter van Hecke; another sister, Susannah Fourment, the woman with the *chapeau de paille*, was the artist's favourite model.

Rubens had remarked Helena Fourment some years before. He painted her in the « Education of the Virgin », when she was ten or eleven, and, by a sort of presentiment of what she would become to him later, he gave the St Anne, who is laying her hand familiarly on her shoulder, the features of his own mother. At that time Helena was a well developed and full-fleshed child, over-flowing with life and health, with blue eyes, fair curls and handsome regular features. Her youth fulfilled the promise of her childhood with interest, and at the time of her marriage, at the age of sixteen years and eight months, she was a superb young woman.

Gevartius, who wrote his friend's epithalamium in Latin verse, is transported by her beauty. « When Zeuxis », he says, « wished to paint Helen of Troy, with her bright eyes and » sweet face, he chose five young maidens in the town of Crotona to compose her beauty » from the perfections of them all. One lent him the incomparable whiteness of her brow, » another the golden curls that framed her face, another her mantling cheeks, her ivory neck, » her eyes that shone like stars, her red lips, her velvet shoulders, her rounded breasts, her » snowy bosom and her milk-white hands, and thus the artist mingled in a single form all the » gifts which nature had divided amongst them. But Zeuxis is surpassed by Rubens, of whom » it is hard to say whether he shines the brighter by his art or by his eloquence ; and now » he owns the living image of Helen of Flanders, who is far more beautiful than her of Troy. » Whiter than snow, she is no daughter of the swan that betrayed Leda. She has no mark » between her brows, like that which, they say, disfigured the forehead of the daughter of » Tyndarus. In her pure soul she unites all the gifts that adorned the maidens of Hellas and » Latium. 'Twas thus that Venus, with her golden locks, rose from the sea. 'Twas thus that » Thetis became the bride of Peleus, in the days when Thessaly was the home of the great » gods. The beauty of her shape is surpassed by the charm of her nature, her spotless simplicity, » her innocence and her modesty ».



HILENA FOURMENT (A LA PELISSE)
(Imperial Museum, Vienna)

in jobs, but with saving of time did he review the regular correspondence of former days, years cannot be spent in sending any news of himself to the former. During these first months he continued himself as idle as possible with politics, his hands being naturally full of other matters since an absence of more than a year and a half.

HIS SECOND MARRIAGE. — But an important event was to take place in his life before the end of the year. On the 6th December, 1630, at the age of 39 (some say 40) he was married with a girl of sixteen. This was Helena Fourment, eldest child of Denis Fourment, silk and carpet merchant, and Clara Stappert. She had been baptized in the church of Notre-Dame on the 1st April, 1614. Her brother Daniel, who was twenty-two years older, had married in 1619 Clara Brant, the sister of Isabella, Rubens's first wife. Rubens had therefore been for years in relations with them as with other members of the Fourment family. As we have said, about 1620 he painted the portraits of Clara Fourment, Helena's sister, and her husband Peter van Hecke, another sister, Susanna Fourment, the woman with the *chapeau de paille*, was the artist's favourite model.

Rubens had remarked Helena Fourment some years before. He painted her in the *Education of the Virgin*, when she was ten or eleven, and, by a sort of presentiment of what she would become to him later, he gave the St Anne who is laying her hand familiarly on her shoulder, the features of his own mother. At that time Helena was a well developed and full-breasted child, overflowing with life and health, with blue eyes, fair curls and fine, regular features. The youth fulfilled the promise of her childhood with maturity and beauty of her manner, at the age of sixteen years and eight months she was a superb young woman.

Cervantes, who wrote his friend's epitalamium in Latin verse, is transported by her beauty. — When Zetis's beauty, without so great riches of Troy, with her bright eyes and sweet face, he chose five young youths in the town of Crete to compare her beauty from the perceptions of them all. One went from the tremendous softness of her brow, another the golden curls that framed her face, another her snatching cheeks, her ivory neck, her eyes that shone like stars, and her face, her snowy shoulders, her rounded breasts, her snowy bosom and her rill-veined arms, and was the artist mingled in a single form all the gifts which nature had divided amongst them. But Zetis is surpassed by Ruleris, of whom it is hard to say whether he shines the brighter by his art or by his eloquence; and now he owns the living image of Helen of Euboea, who is far more beautiful than her of Troy. — Whether than snow, she is no daughter of the Swan that betrayed Leda. She has no mark between her brows, like the white, they say, disfigured the forehead of the daughter of Tyndarus. In her pure soul she unites all the gifts that adorned the maidens of Hellas and Latona. Thus thus that Venus, with her golden locks, rose from the sea. Thus thus that Diada became the bride of Pelops, in the days when Thessaly was the home of the great gods. The beauty of her shape is surpassed by the charm of her nature, her spotless simplicity, her innocence and her modesty.

HELENA FOURMENT (A LA PELISSE)
(Imperial Museum, Vienna)



If we take away the exaggeration and the flowers of rhetoric with which the learned poet, in homage to the fashion of his day, has scattered his emphatic verses, which many of the guests, no doubt, did not understand at a first hearing, there still remains a sincere admiration for the charms of the young bride. Helena Fourment was beautiful, and remained so throughout the rest of Rubens's life. In February, 1639, the Cardinal-Infant wrote to his brother Philip, in sending him Rubens's « Judgment of Paris » : « The Venus in the centre is a » very good likeness of his wife, who is certainly the handsomest woman to be seen » here » (1).

Rubens himself very seldom speaks of his young bride. He mentions her once only, in his letter of the 18th December, 1634, to his friend Peiresc, four years after his marriage. Speaking of his life since his return from London, he says : « Being unable to make up my » mind to live in celibacy, I took the step of marrying again, for, while placing continence » above everything, it is permitted us to give our senses legitimate satisfaction, thanking God » for the pleasure he grants us. I have, therefore, married a young woman of honourable, » though middle-class birth, although everyone advised me to choose a lady about the court. » But I was chiefly afraid of finding my companion subject to pride, that plague of the nobility. » That was my reason for choosing one who would not blush to see me take up my brush. » And, to tell the whole truth, I loved my liberty too much to exchange it for the embraces of » an old woman ». We do not attach more importance than need be to this explanation, which implies that cool reason was the artist's only inducement to marry Helena Fourment. We prefer to rely on the conclusion of his statement, and believe that, as he says, he married her because he loved her and she was young and pretty.

If he had tried to reason and justify his love, he would probably have concluded that Helena Fourment realised his ideal of female beauty. His motto was *Mens sana in corpore sano*, and in women his idea of health was opulence of form. In his Italian years he had chosen very powerfully built women for his heroines ; in those days they had brown flesh and waving hair ; but they were material beauties, beings of flesh and blood. After his return to Flanders, his women were still giantesses like the saints on the shutters of the « Elevation of the Cross » ; but little by little their skins became clearer and their flesh softer, as in the virgins in the « Assumption » in the Brussels Museum, the allegorical figures in the « History of Marie de Medici », the « Daughters of Lycomedes » and the nymphs of his mythological pictures. Later they became still whiter and plumper, like the Saints in the altar-piece of St Ildefonso, or Bathsheba, or Susannah, or the Sabines. The meditative beauty which the early Italians and Flemings gave their female saints was without charm for him, and the academic beauty of Raphael's Madonnas left him cold. What he sought in woman was the fresh and rosy companion of male vigour, the fruitful mother and ample nurse of healthy children. His Mary and his Venus, his female fauns and saints were colour and light ; and so was Helena Fourment. Without a knowledge of the Flemish people it might be imagined that Rubens's figures represent the Flemish type in its purest form ; it is not so to-day, and it was not so

(1) JUSTI : *Velasquez*, II, p. 407.

in Rubens's time. Young women made like Rubens's models, giantesses composed of milk and blood, are as rare and as hard to find with us as with other nations.

THE PORTRAITS OF HELENA FOURMENT. — If Rubens rarely put his love and admiration for his young wife into words, his brush was all the more eloquent. He was never tired of painting her in all costumes, alone, with himself or with his children, not to mention the numbers of pictures for which she sat.

The most famous of these portraits, which is also perhaps the earliest in point of time, represents her entirely nude, draped in a black velvet cloak embroidered in gold and lined with fur, which she is holding with one hand over her left shoulder, and with the other against her side, so that it covers her back and hips leaving the upper part of her body and her legs visible (*Œuvre*. N^o 944). Her hair is dressed in the usual way; pale gold in colour, it falls over her forehead where it is cut in a straight line, and floats in long curls about her temples. A small gauze cap, fastened over her brow with a ribbon gives a rather fanciful air to her head. She is in the full bloom of her seventeen years, just as Rubens loved and married her, with a white and velvety skin and regular features; her face is rather broad in the middle and grows smaller towards the chin, her mouth is a Cupid's bow, her eyes are almond-shaped and deep blue, the left rather wider open than the right; and she wears the troubled expression which she was to keep for some time afterwards, and which is easily explained by the costume in which she was posing. Her youthful beauty, framed in the black cloak and the red carpet on the floor, shines with its utmost radiance: the round, plump arm stretched beneath her bosom to reach her shoulder, supporting her firm and ample breasts, one of which is slightly raised by the movement, the graceful line of her legs, one planted on the ground while the other is raised and slightly bent — all this is inundated by a flood of light that falls on her forehead, flows along her cheeks and bathes the lower part of her face in velvety radiance. It is a portrait of the most alluring of women, but of a real woman, with an ampler waist than Rubens gave to his Venus and feet misshapen from the wearing of too small shoes.

We need only compare the portrait of this Helen in a cloak with that of Isabella Brant seated beside her husband under the honey-suckle arbour to see the difference between Rubens's second marriage and his first. Isabella, too, was young; in her clear eyes and her tranquil joy we can read her love for the handsome man who had chosen her for his companion. Happy, thoughtful and richly but not ostentatiously dressed, she evidently lives but for him. Helena Fourment may look a little timid in her plump nudity, but there is not the least trace of thought about her. Her husband is proud of his wife and anxious, not without a touch of delicacy, to let others know and appreciate in detail the treasures in his possession. If there were any need to find excuses for his master-piece, it might be said that Rubens was not the first to represent a woman in this costume; Titian painted more than one with their naked shoulders wrapped in a cloak while their arms and bosoms remained bare. There is one in the Hermitage at St Petersburg, and another in the Imperial Museum at Vienna. In the inventory of the estate of Frans Snijders we even read: « a small naked woman with a cloak », painted

by Rubens after Titian and bequeathed by Snijders to his brother-in-law Paul De Vos. But it must be admitted that it was not Titian's own wife whom he painted so, and his models are not as nude as Helena Fourment.

Rubens left his portrait to Helena herself. What became of it we do not know, until the last century when it appears again in the Emperor of Austria's collection, whence it passed to the Imperial Museum at Vienna.

About the time when Rubens painted his young wife in all the brilliance of her nudity, he made another portrait of her in her wedding-dress. The picture is in the Pinakothek at Munich (*Œuvre*. N^o 940) having come there from the Electoral Gallery in the same town. Helena Fourment is sitting in a red velvet arm-chair. Her wavy curls are decked with a bride's wreath of orange-blossoms, and on her breast she wears the heavy gold chain that had belonged to Isabella Brant, adorned with a heavy jewel, the end of which is fastened to the edge of her dress, which is cut very low in a straight line. She has on a high collar of stiff lace, sleeves of white gauze and a little black silk cloak open in front to show her white silk dress sprinkled with gold flowers. Her right hand lies on the arm of the chair; the upper part of her body is leaning slightly to the right in a negligent attitude of great comfort, and in her left hand she holds a feather fan. As seen here she is the well dressed lady, a trifle massive in the heavy costume of the period, but simple in attitude and expression, dreamy and a little surprised. All her finery adds nothing to her opulent beauty, but does nothing to obscure it. The painting is broad, rapidly and lightly brushed and rich in tone, with grey transparent shadows on the white skin, a rather warmer touch on the chin and slightly redder shadows on the long taper fingers.

There is a bust after this portrait in the Royal Museum at Amsterdam (*Œuvre*. N^o 941). The painting is fine, rather dry and lacking brilliance, but the picture is a Rubens. It formed part of the van der Hoop bequest. Several replicas of it are to be found in sale-catalogues and private collections. In the Heseltine collection in London there is a large drawing in black chalk which was made as a study for this portrait and was followed by the master with a few modifications.

Rubens painted his second wife and himself together several times. It was probably in the year after the marriage that he first did so on a small panel (3 ft. 1 ¹/₂ in. high by 4 ft. 2 ¹/₂ in. wide) now in the Pinakothek at Munich (*Œuvre*. N^o 1051). The painter is walking in the garden with Helena Fourment and Nicolas, his youngest son by his first wife. It is spring-time; the roses and tulips are in flower; the boughs are budding and the fruit-trees seem to be powdered with rime. In the background is the pavilion with its pillars and statues, on the right a fountain and in front of it flowers in pots, in the foreground a dog, some chickens, a turkey, a peacock and an old servant-woman feeding them. Rubens is leading his young wife towards the pavilion down the broad walk across the garden. His head is a little bowed, in the attitude in which he appears in Panneels's engraving, and he wears the same dress, all of black, with a large hat and white collar.

He is no longer the young and well-made man, entering joyfully on life, whom he showed us by the side of Isabella Brant. Years and cares have robbed him of some of his vivacity,

thinned his face and prematurely bent his back. He presses close to his young wife, sheltering himself in her shadow, as if seeking by her side rest after labour and calm after turmoil, and



HELENA FOURMENT (Hermitage, St Petersburg).

reaping at last what he had shown during his life. Helena Fourment wears a large straw hat ornamented with tulips and other flowers, a white bodice with puffed sleeves, a black dress turned back with yellow, and a white apron and skirt, and has a fan in her hand: she is overflowing with health in her youthful amplitude. She turns to show her pretty face. The boy who follows, hat in hand, looks like a page waiting on his mistress's orders. He might be twelve or thirteen years old. His long fair hair falls over his shoulders, and he wears a red pourpoint with a white collar and red rosettes on his black shoes. It is a charming picture, entirely painted by the master and speaking eloquently of domestic happiness. It was sold in 1698 by Gisbert of Cologne to Max Emanuel, Elector of Bavaria. In the National Museum at Stockholm there is a portrait drawn by Rubens representing his son Nicolas at about the same age and in the same attitude as on the panel.

It was probably in 1631 that he painted Helena Fourment in a more serious toilet, as we see her in another portrait in the Pinakothek at Munich (*Œuvre*. No 937). She wears a cap and dress of black velvet with a gauze front and a necklace of white pearls. She is still a plump young woman, and her dark clothes throw out her fresh and rosy complexion. A red bow on the front of her cap, a red ribbon at her waist, the pink-lined gloves in her hand, the white feather floating over

her fair hair, the brilliant white of the chemisette and front and the white gauze showing the greyish green of the stuff through it form a gamut of sober tones which harmonise with her soft flesh,* heightened with pink shadows on the curves of her face, her fingers and her breast.



REINS AND HELMA FOURMENT WALKING IN THEIR GARDEN
(Pinakothek, Munich)

thinned his face and prematurely bent his neck. He presses close to his young wife, she leans
 herself to his shoulder, and walking by her side rest after labour and vain after turmoil, and



HELENA FOURMENT (Pinninge & Pinninge)

her hair, the brilliant white of the clochette and front and the white gauze showing the
 greyish green of the stuff through it form a garnet of sober tones which harmonise with her soft
 flesh, tinged with pink shadows on the curves of her face, her fingers and her breast.

reaping at and what he had sown during
 his life. Helena Fourment wears a large
 straw hat ornamented with tulips and
 other flowers, a white corset with puffed
 sleeves, a black gown, trimmed with
 yellow, and a white mantle over it, and
 has a fair complexion and a countenance
 with health in its young freshness.
 She turns to smile at the young boy,
 the boy who follows, but at the same time
 a page waiting on his mistress's dress.
 He might be twelve or thirteen years old.
 His long fair hair falls over his shoulders,
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**RUBENS AND HELENA FOURMENT WALKING IN THEIR GARDEN
 (Pinakothek, Munich)**



In Consul Weber's collection at Hamburg there is a portrait of the same date, almost in the same clothes, a black velvet dress with a white front and a black cap with red and white plumes. Helena Fourment is seen three-quarter-face and not full-face as in the other portrait. The painting is so light that the colour scarcely covers all the ground of the panel (*Œuvre*. N^o 942).

The Hermitage Museum at St Petersburg has another portrait (*Œuvre*. N^o 943), dating from the first or second year after the marriage. Helena is represented full length, standing; the sun plays on her fair hair and a transparent shadow veils her brow and neck. Her hands are laid across her waist; in one she has the feather fan which she is holding in the portrait of her in her wedding-dress; there is the same gold chain on her breast and the same jacket over her black dress, open in front to show her white muslin sleeves. Round her neck she has the same lace collar, but half turned down instead of standing up. On her head she has a black hat, with the brim turned up on one side and fastened by a cluster of jewels. The large ostrich plumes with which it is crowned fall waving over the brim. She looks very distinguished in her fine clothes and graceful attitude. Like the rest, this portrait is a master-piece of painting, broadly but carefully handled and full of grace and elegance. The flesh is soft and the hands superb, and the white linen stands out against the black dress.

When Rubens had the happiness of being a father once more and the child began to walk, he wished to give further evidence of his love for the mother and the joy he derived from the birth of the offspring she had just given him. He painted himself with his young family full length and life-size (*Œuvre*. N^o 1052). Once more he is walking in the garden with his wife; the roses are in flower, the water springs from the fountain and flows into the basin. He is looking at the young mother with eyes full of tenderness and love. She is bare-headed, with her hair taken up behind in a chignon surrounded by a circle of jewels; in one hand she has her feather fan, and the other is resting on Rubens's arm and holding the leading-strings which guide the steps of the child. She is wearing the broad open collar and black jacket which we know; a jewel set with a large white pearl gleams on her breast. The child wears a yellow-grey robe, a white bib, a blue ribbon on its chest and a padded cap on its head. Rubens is standing in the darkest part of the picture, and the shadow of his hat falls over his face. He is in the middle distance, not at all a prominent figure; it seems to have suffered from clumsy restoration. The young mother, on the other hand, is inundated with warm and glowing light, and to throw out the whiteness of her skin Rubens has surrounded her face with black; and a golden reflexion lights her head. Her snow-white face and breast, her delicate white hands with long taper fingers, the reflexions playing on her satin dress, the many-coloured flowers blooming at the edge of the fountain and the red and blue parrot clambering about the stems are all broad and rich in colour. When Rubens is seen next his wife, it is clear that she was short. Her husband, who was not over middle height, is almost a head taller than she.

In the last years of his life, he painted himself and his young wife together once again, as spectators at a merry-making in a country-spot. The picture is in the Imperial Museum at Vienna (*Œuvre*. N^o 1190). He was then already weakened by illness, and leans on a stick; his wife is still in all the splendour of her blooming health.

NEW EXCURSION INTO POLITICS. — After his long absence and his recent marriage, it might be supposed that Rubens would find the need of enjoying a well-merited rest in the bosom of his family, and of occupying himself undisturbed with his artistic labours. That, no doubt, was his wish, but some time was to pass before it could be realised. He had scarcely been married when the question arose of sending him to England again on a new mission. Peace had been concluded between the courts of London and Madrid; Don Carlos Coloma



LANDSCAPE WITH COUPLES SPORTING (Imperial Gallery. Vienna).

was wanted in Flanders to take command of the army, and probably they were unable to replace him in London immediately by an ambassador with the same rank and the same powers. In a Council of State held at Madrid on the 21st December, 1630, the choice of an envoy was debated. The candidates proposed were Juan de Nocolalde, the king's secretary, who had been in the Netherlands for two years, Jan Baptist Van Male, a member of the council of finance and formerly *chargé d'affaires* in London, and finally Rubens himself.

The king appointed Nocolalde temporary *chargé d'affaires*, and the Marquis of Castaneda ambassador. The Infanta, who had need of Nocolalde, did not give effect to this decision, but sent to take his place in London an Englishman settled in Brussels, named Henry Taylor, who had more than once been entrusted with political missions in his native country. But the king had reserved a part for Rubens. Foreseeing the difficulties that might arise in consequence of the new differences that had broken out between Louis XIII and his mother, Philip IV believed that no one was so capable as Rubens of going to negotiate with the English court. On the 6th April, 1631, he wrote to the Infanta to this effect: she spoke of it to Rubens, who showed little anxiety to leave his young wife.

But the respite was to be but short. Since his return from England, it is true, he had never ceased to take an interest in the political situation of his country, as is proved by the report of the sitting of the Council of State at Madrid on the 23rd May, 1631. On the 10th and the 18th of March of that year he had written to Olivarez on various matters concerning the king's service in Flanders. The Council proposed to pass him a vote of thanks, which the king approved.

RUBENS'S INTERVENTION IN THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MARIE DE MEDICI AND LOUIS XIII.
— The occurrences in France alluded to by Philip IV in his letter to the Infanta of the 6th April, 1631, which led to Rubens's return to political life were as follows :

In 1620 Marie de Medici had become reconciled with Louis XIII. She took her place at the Council of State and accompanied the king and queen on their provincial journeys. But she could not resign her *rôle* of ex-queen and ex-regent; she was devoured by pride and ambition and wanted her large share of power and honours. To increase her influence, she did her utmost to have her friends appointed to the high offices of state. The man she most counted on to support her was the Bishop of Luçon, Armand Jean du Plessis, afterwards Cardinal Richelieu. He had been her chaplain since 1614; two years later he was appointed secretary of state for war and foreign affairs by Marshal d'Ancre, the favourite of Louis XIII and the queen-mother. He had followed the latter into exile at Blois, but without incurring the king's displeasure. Later, however, Louis XIII began to distrust him, and, to keep him away from Blois, ordered him to go and settle at Avignon. After the reconciliation of Marie de Medici and her son, the Bishop of Luçon returned to court, and his royal patroness had him appointed a member of the Council of State. In 1622, she procured him the cardinal's hat. His power had increased daily, and had ended by becoming almost unlimited in questions of war and peace, at home and abroad. He became the real sovereign of France, and it must be said to his honour that under none of the kings was the state ever governed by a more powerful mind and a stronger hand.

The queen-mother, who had hoped to find him her servant, soon found that she had provided herself with a master who left her no power and not even the hope of ever recovering the least vestige of it. Thereupon she declared war on her former *protégé*, and had recourse to every possible means to induce her son to dismiss the supreme minister. At one moment, in September, 1630, it looked as if she had succeeded in influencing the king; but the Cardinal soon finally regained his ascendancy over the monarch, and Marie de Medici was exiled to the castle of Compiègne. She contrived to escape and was intending to go to La Capelle, a fortified place in the north of France, which was to be handed over to her by the governor. The plan failed at the last moment and the fugitive queen was compelled to make up her mind to cross the Belgian frontier. On the 20th July, 1631, she reached the little town of Avesnes, then in Hainault.

On hearing of her arrival, the Infanta sent the Marquis of Aytona to assure her that she would do all in her power to make her stay in the Low Countries pleasant and to persuade

her not to stay in the small frontier town, where she would be exposed to a surprise from the French. The fugitive followed her advice and left on the 29th July for Mons in Hainault, where she was received by the authorities and inhabitants with all the pomp displayed at the entry of the sovereigns of the country. She stayed there a fortnight. On the 11th August, Isabella came to see her. Next day the two princesses went to Mariemont, and left it on the 13th August for



WOMEN BATHING (H. I. M. the German Emperor).

Brussels. When Aytona had been received by the queen-mother at Avesnes, he had asked her to name a member of her suite with whom he might discuss current events; she chose the Marquis de la Vieuville. Isabella, for her part, had charged Rubens, who went with Aytona, to represent her with the queen-mother, although a man of the highest nobility, Albert de Ligne, Prince of Barbançon, had offered to do so. This delicate mission, then, was entrusted to our artist, who followed Marie de Medici from Avesnes to Mons.

Even before going to see the queen-mother, he had found himself involved in the events

brought on by the dissensions that had broken out in the royal house of France. In her struggle with Richelieu Marie de Medici had been supported by her second son, Gaston, duke of Orleans. He too had sworn deadly hate against the Cardinal. On hearing that his mother was confined in the castle of Compiègne he formed the plan of taking arms against the minister. A few gentlemen joined him ; he raised money and troops in France and tried to shut himself up in Orleans to resist the royal forces. But on their approach he fled into Burgundy,



DIANA SURPRISED (H. I. M. the German Emperor).

and then into Franche-Comté, which still belonged to Spain. From there he sent one of his followers to demand the Infanta's support against Louis XIII and Richelieu.

Isabella, who saw a danger to Spain in the preparations for war against France carried on in Franche-Comté, advised the Duke of Orleans to seek refuge in Lorraine. He took her advice and the Duke of Lorraine, Charles IV, declared himself ready to give armed support to the French prince. In June 1631, Gaston sent one of his partisans, Achille d'Etampes, commander of Valençay, to the Infanta to solicit pecuniary assistance and leave to levy troops in the Spanish Netherlands. The Duke of Orleans also asked that the Dunkirk squadron might be put at his disposal for an attack on the French coasts. When his envoy arrived at Brussels, the Archduchess had received a letter from Philip IV, which approved the granting

of subsidies to Gaston of Orleans, but refused to go further. The commander of Valençay was coldly received, therefore, and sent back to discuss his propositions with Aytona. Being obliged to leave the capital to take over the chief command of the army, Aytona begged the Infanta to choose Rubens to take his place. She did so, and the artist-diplomatist was charged with the conduct of the affair. He had good grounds, therefore, for writing to his friend Peiresc three years later that he alone had been entrusted with all the secret negotiations relating to Marie de Medici and the Duke of Orleans at the time when they had fled from their country to seek refuge in our provinces (1). The long consultations that took place between Rubens and the commander of Valençay resulted merely in d'Etampes's resolution to return to Lorraine to ask for further instructions. On the 10th July, 1631, Rubens left for Dunkirk to inform Aytona of what he and the duke of Orleans's envoy had agreed upon.

Some days later he went with Aytona to visit the queen-mother at Avesnes, and followed her from there to Mons. When he had acquired a knowledge of the intentions and desires of Richelieu's two enemies, he wrote Olivarez a long letter from Mons on the 1st August, 1631, in which he communicated his impressions and his opinion. He supported their demand for aid. According to him the Cardinal was solely responsible for the misunderstanding that existed in the royal family. Rubens had learned in England the proofs of his perfidy; so long as he remained in power, no agreement would be possible between Louis on one side and his mother and brother on the other. If the interests at stake were those of a single person, of whatever rank, he would hesitate to recommend intervention; but the occasion was now offered of reducing Spain's most formidable enemy to impotence, and putting France for a long time out of a condition to take any steps against other countries. Richelieu had always used his intelligence and power to oppose, to humiliate and to weaken Spain, and Spain ought to hesitate at no sacrifice to rid herself of so dangerous an enemy. « The French we shall » help », he added, « will not be grateful for it, perhaps, but in waging a civil war they will be doing us a service by weakening themselves with their own hands ». Rubens added a very exaggerated enumeration of the partisans numbered by Gaston of Orleans in France, of the governors of provinces and towns who would rally to his side, and the troops he would be able to levy. Wallenstein, he had been assured, had offered his services, a number of German princes would follow him and the king of England would come to his aid. Spain's part must be to grant Richelieu's enemies a subsidy of 300.000 gold crowns and shut her eyes to the enlisting of soldiers that might take place in the Spanish Netherlands. The troops should be given free passage through these provinces. It may be said that this attitude was an infraction of the law of nations and a sworn oath; but it must be remembered that Richelieu had acted far worse towards the king of Spain.

The letter of Rubens's of which we have given a *résumé* is extremely remarkable. It is in obvious contradiction to his love of peace and his incessant efforts to bring it about, and also to the sworn friendship between the two kings. He wished to see Spain making an alliance which might bring on a dangerous war. Till then, the efforts of the two kingdoms to obtain

(1) Letter of the 18th December, 1634.

the supremacy had been rather of the nature of a secret competition than declared hostility. If Gaston of Orleans attempted to invade his brother's kingdom with Spanish help it would mean a rupture between the two kings, and it was to be feared that if Louis triumphed over the rebels he would try and take vengeance on the nation that had aided them. Rubens, therefore, wanted to stake his dearest object, the tranquillity of western Europe and his own country. His conception of the part to be played by Spain belonged to an unscrupulous policy which recked nothing of treaties and did not hesitate to violate peace when the opportunity was presented of striking an appreciable blow at the enemy. That, unfortunately, was the policy of the time, and it may be doubted whether it differed much from that of the present day. Admitting that this interested action was no great strain on the ideas of the time concerning international rights, it must be admitted that there was something great and bold about Rubens's plan and that his advice was that of an experienced politician. He saw clearly that Richelieu's object was the ruin of Spain and the annexation of the adjacent provinces. He knew that after subduing the Protestants in France the Cardinal would have a free hand to bend foreign nations in the same way, and above all Spain. It was from that quarter that peace and justice were threatened with terrible and imminent peril; the choice lay between warding it off or perishing; and it was necessary to keep Richelieu busy at home, and when the Huguenots were done with to give him an enemy to contend against who might keep him in check for years and even ruin his party. The stake was considerable, but the gain might be important. But nothing venture, nothing have; there must be no hesitation or half-hearted action, but energetic support of the rebels. As for scruples about loyalty, Rubens held that they might be sacrificed to the necessity of self-defence in a deadly struggle; all means were good against an enemy who stopped at nothing. It cannot be denied that Rubens let his imagination run away with him, and that the poet and dreamer had cajoled the statesman. New and vast horizons were opening before his mind; he saw his sovereign taking a bold resolution and inaugurating a decisive action, he saw a hereditary enemy crushed or reduced to impotence and his country made great and free; and to reach results like these he did not hesitate to risk what was dearest to him. His advice was rejected at first, and then followed partially and hesitatingly. It was too virile and too bold for the weakness and irresolution of Spain, which was doomed to irremediable decay. Richelieu did not deal it its death-stroke, but he incapacitated it for the fight, and if he could not win the Rhine frontier and the Belgian provinces for his country, it was certainly not his fault.

Rubens was not alone in believing that Gaston of Orleans ought to be vigorously supported, for it appears that the two representatives of the Infanta at the court of the queen-mother were acting in concert. Aytona's opinion very nearly coincided with Rubens's. In his letter to the king of the 30th July, written two days before Rubens's to Olivarez, he writes as follows: « Never has Your Majesty, nor any of your predecessors, had so favourable an » opportunity of humiliating your stubbornest foes, and the most unrelenting opponents of » your designs, for Your Majesty may now count on the assistance of a queen who has long » governed France, where she has a number of partisans, and of a king's brother, the heir » presumptive to the throne ». On the same day he wrote to Olivarez to the same effect:

« In my opinion, it is one of the most important events of Your Excellency's time, and a good opportunity for our revenge for the wrongs France has done us ». The Marquis de Mirabel, Spanish ambassador at Paris, was of the same opinion.

But it was not in the king's character to attempt so bold a stroke; he was unwilling to risk a rupture with France, and so he informed the Infanta that if he consented to negotiate in favour of the queen-mother he did not mean to lend her armed assistance. He wrote to the Pope, the Emperor, the king of England, the grand-duke of Tuscany and the duke of Savoy to ask them to assist in reconciling the king and his mother. On receiving Rubens's, Aytona's and Mirabel's letters, he summoned the Council of State to consider the question. The Council met on the 16th August, 1631, and gave a unanimous decision against intervention in the affairs of France in the way that Rubens had recommended. Olivarez, while recognising our artist-politician's good intentions, declared that his letter contained much extravagance and Italian babble. On the 23rd August the king wrote to the Infanta that he had no intention of supporting the queen-mother and the duke of Orleans in the manner that had been recommended him. He considered the resources and troops at the disposal of the fugitives too weak and doubtful to be reckoned upon in a war with France; if Richelieu's enemies succeeded in gaining possession of a fortified place like Calais, where there would be a certainty of being able to assist them, he would be willing to try the adventure.

But before the end of the year opinions at the Spanish court had changed. At the meeting of the Council of State on the 19th December, 1631, the chief members under the leadership of Olivarez resolved to obtain the king's promise to intervene in earnest in favour of the duke of Orleans, in order to oppose the designs of the king of France, the German Protestants and Gustavus Adolphus, king of Sweden, the progress of which was giving cause for anxiety. But, as usual, Madrid acted without vigour, and when later, under pressure of circumstances, they decided to follow Rubens's advice, they took nothing but half-measures and achieved nothing.

After writing to Olivarez, Rubens left Mons; on the 7th August he was back in Antwerp, for Ophovius notes in his diary that he visited the painter on that day.

Although hardly any attention had been paid to his advice, he continued to act as intermediary between the queen-mother of France and the king of Spain. During Marie de Medici's visit to Brussels in August, 1631, she sent to Olivarez through Rubens's agency a project for a treaty between herself and her son. The Count-duke found the terms of it very apt, but the Marquis de Mirabel thought it had no chance of success, because Richelieu would oppose it. Rubens also kept Olivarez acquainted with the queen-mother's movements at Brussels; among other things he informed him that in August, 1631, she had sent one of her gentlemen to the Prince of Orange to induce him to favour the conclusion of a truce between Spain and the United Provinces. To indemnify him for his intervention in all these matters, he received a sum of 500 livres on the 17th November, 1631 (1).

(1) 17 novembre 1631 : A Rubens 500 livres pour estre employé en affaires secretz dont n'est besoing faire plus ample déclaration. *Bulletin-Rubens*, III, p. 128.

On the 4th September, 1631, Marie de Medici left for Antwerp ; she took ship at Willebroek and landed at the Crane's head, taking up her abode in the princely chambers of the abbey of St Michael. The Infanta, who accompanied her, had appointed her this residence, and took up her own in the house of the late Simon Rodriguez. The princesses were accorded a brilliant reception, and throughout the queen's visit, which lasted till the 16th October, the highest honours were paid her. On the 10th October she visited the Plantin press. La Serre, the courtier who related Marie de Medici's travels in the Spanish Netherlands in an emphatic and bombastic style, reports that she manifested a desire to see the superb pictures which adorned Rubens's house. « He », says our author, « is a man whose industry, though rare and marvellous, is the least of his good qualities : his judgment » in affairs of state and his wit and government exalt him » so high above the condition he professes that the works » of his wisdom are as remarkable as those of his brush. » Her Majesty enjoyed extreme contentment in contemplating the animated marvels of his pictures : the colours » of which, no doubt, must have been mixed by admiration » herself, since none is ever weary of admiring their beauty » and perfection ». She also went to see Vandyck, and had her portrait painted by him (1). But her object in spending six weeks in Antwerp was not only to see the curiosities of the town ; she wished also to pledge her jewels there, to procure the necessary funds for the execution of the plans of her son Gaston. Rubens lent her money on two jewels, which he showed to Gerbier, as Gerbier told king Charles in a letter of the 2nd October, 1631 (2).



ST. BONAVENTURA (Museum, Lille)

On her return to Brussels she resumed her struggle with Richelieu. She addressed herself in succession to king Louis and the parliament in the hope of bringing about the fall of the all-powerful minister, but without result. Arms were as powerless as the pen to achieve the fall of the Cardinal. The duke of Lorraine, who had assembled an army on the pretext of supporting the German Catholics in their war with Gustavus Adolphus, was compelled by Richelieu to cross the Rhine and put his fictitious plan into effective execution. The troops collected by Gaston were too weak to do anything serious ; after his check in Lorraine the prince rejoined his mother at Brussels on the 28th January, 1632. The refugees were still counting on the duke of Bouillon, who had promised to seize Sedan and hand it over to them ; but anticipating failure, the duke wished to be sure of the support of Spain. In May, 1632, he sent a gentleman to Rubens, to ask him to intervene in his favour with the Infanta ; Rubens consented and wrote to the Archduchess on the 11th of the same

(1) DE LA SERRE : *Histoire curieuse de tout ce qui c'est passé à l'entrée de la Reyne Mere du roy treschrestien dans les villes des Pays-Bas*. Plantin, 1632, pp. 49, 68, 69.

(2) NOËL SAINSBURY : *Op. cit.* p. 162.

month to induce her to grant the support requested. The demand was probably not granted, for we hear nothing more of the duke of Bouillon intervening in favour of the French refugees, and it was not long before he took service in the Dutch army that was investing Maastricht.

When Gaston of Orleans had returned to Brussels, he and his mother insisted more strongly than ever on obtaining the support of the Spanish government. Philip and the Infanta could not remain in the background much longer, for Richelieu's attitude in the affairs of Germany became more and more threatening. They gave the duke of Orleans the means of collecting a small army at Trèves, where he went on the 18th May, 1632. He entered France with a handful of soldiers, but was received as an enemy everywhere. He pushed on as far as Languedoc, where the duke de Montmorency joined him with a few troops. On the 1st September he was attached at Castelnaudary by the royal army under the command of Marshal Schomberg. His little band was put to flight ; Montmorency was wounded, taken prisoner, condemned to death and executed at Toulouse. Gaston of Orleans, who had counted on more serious support from Spain, ended by submitting, and on the 29th September, 1632, the act of reconciliation was signed at Béziers. Gaston, none the less, left France two months later and on the 21st November rejoined his mother at Brussels.

Mother and son stayed many years more in the Spanish Netherlands, where their presence was a disturbance of peace and the occasion of heavy expenses. Their behaviour at last led to the breaking out of war between France and Spain in 1635. They ended by quarrelling between themselves. Gaston of Orleans was the most inconstant friend or enemy, sometimes plotting against the Cardinal and sometimes coming to an understanding with him for the betrayal of his mother. In 1642 he was reconciled with his brother, who died on the 14th May, 1643. Marie de Medici and Richelieu had gone before him, the former on the 3rd July 1642, the latter on the 4th December of the same year. The queen-mother lived in the Netherlands till 1638, continually trying to come to terms with her son, but always thwarted and overcome by the Cardinal. Then she went to Holland, whence she crossed to England ; finally she went to settle at Cologne, where she died in poverty and neglect, after being a burden for many years to herself and everyone else.

We have only touched in passing on her adventures and her son's, because in April, 1632, Rubens asked for and obtained permission to give up all dealings with their paltry intrigues, and with the private rancour and personal interest which swarmed about the queen-mother and her son, who was even less sympathetic than herself.

But our artist was not yet at the end of his political career. New troubles and disillusionment awaited him. His object was always the same, to put an end to the strife between the Spanish Netherlands and the United Provinces, in order to restore to his country the tranquillity and prosperity it had lost. In that he was in perfect accord with the Infanta, who preserved unlimited confidence in him.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE UNITED PROVINCES. — In December, 1631, Rubens was sent by the Infanta into Holland on a secret mission, which no doubt concerned the conclusion of a treaty of peace. He left about the 15th December and stayed two days at The Hague. Frederick

Henry at first refused to receive him. He insisted, basing his demand on a passport which the prince had given him the year before, and ended by obtaining audience of him. He then made propositions which the prince rejected, declaring that only the States General had the power to decide these questions. The disappointed artist left Holland, travelling by short stages and taking four days to make the journey between The Hague and Brussels. There he accounted to the Infanta for his mission and started at noon for Antwerp.

The last time the Infanta had recourse to his intervention in affairs of state was in 1632, on the occasion of one the disturbances that were frequent in our provinces after they came again under the rule of Spain. On the death of the Archduke Albert this country returned to the condition of a direct possession of Spain. Isabella was too much respected at Madrid to be treated as an ordinary governor, but the extinction of all trace of independence was aimed at no less than before. The high offices were filled more and more exclusively with Spaniards. In 1628 Spinola had been recalled, his only offence being the fact that he was an Italian; and his place at the head of the army was filled by Don Alvarez de Bazan, Marquis of Santa-Cruz, a pure-blooded Spaniard, but deplorably incapable. The result was a series of defeats. The Council of State, which was composed of members of the Belgian nobility, was robbed of its privileges for the benefit of a Junta and an auxiliary Council composed of Spaniards. The nobility, touched in its interests and ambitions, conceived a keen resentment.

Just as under the reign of Philip II and the government of Margaret of Parma, Orange and Egmont had protested against the appointment of foreigners to the highest offices of state, a number of nobles now opposed a return to the same errors. Duke Henri de Bergh, the most distinguished of Spinola's lieutenants, who had held the supreme command since the general's departure, on finding himself compelled to resign it to Santa-Cruz, betrayed more anger than any at the exclusion of natives from all important employment. In February, 1632, he lent an ear to the advice of the count de Warfusée, who had been dismissed for malversation from the post of superintendent of finance and had sold himself to the Dutch government. De Bergh agreed with an envoy of that government to turn traitor to Spain and put himself and all the troops he commanded or could raise at the service of the United Provinces. On the 4th June, 1632, he delivered up Venloo; and the Statholder, Frederick Henry, immediately seized Ruremonde and besieged Maastricht, which he took on the 24th August. At the instance of an emissary of Richelieu, Carondelet, dean of Cambrai, several members of the Belgian aristocracy had an interview with de Bergh, and though not imitating his treason, concocted a plot to raise the country against Spain, throw off the foreign yoke with the aid of the French forces, and found an independent state under the government of natives. The principal conspirators were the princes of Epinoy and Barbançon, the duke of Bournonville and the count of Egmont. Looking round them for a man of influence to put at their head, they cast their eyes on Philip, duke of Aerschot and prince of Arenberg. He was disposed to join them; but Isabella, who had been informed of the plot, summoned him to Brussels and made an earnest appeal to his fidelity. He yielded to her entreaties, and broke with the conspirators, whose plans were thus foiled.

But in the hope of giving the malcontents some satisfaction and of realising his own

designs, the duke of Aerschot advised the Infanta to summon the States of the country. Isabella consented, and at Brussels on the 9th September, 1632, she opened the assembly of the deputies of all the provinces. One of the first desires she expressed was for the opening of negotiations with United Provinces in view of the conclusion of a treaty of peace. The States wished to conduct the negotiations themselves, as the legitimate depositories of the sovereignty, like the States General of the northern provinces. Isabella again consented, although the claim was in opposition to all the traditions of the Spanish monarchy, and although the end proposed by



JAN VAN HAVRE (after the engraving by Cornelis Galle).

she had strongly suspected what the malcontents were planning and had tried to renew negotiations with the government of the United Provinces. In the early part of August, 1632, she sent Rubens, her confidential adviser, to Liège, where several members of the States of Holland then were, on a mission to watch closely the progress of the siege of Maastricht. He took letters of credit from the Infanta, who had agreed with the king to authorize him to treat in her name. After a preliminary interview with the deputies of the States General, he returned to Brussels to inform the Infanta of what had passed between them. On the 26th of the same month he went to Maastricht, which Frederick Henry had entered four days before; on the 29th he returned to Brussels without having succeeded. Emboldened by their success, the Dutch were no longer willing to treat with Spain or her allies.

At the Hague, Rubens's goings and comings had excited the suspicion of the envoys of the powers who were interested in the continuation of hostilities, and also of the States of

the States of Brussels was nothing but an agreement with those of The Hague for the deliverance of the country from the yoke of Spain. They invoked the aid of France, and put themselves in communication with Richelieu, who from the beginning had held out a hand to the malcontents and fostered the trouble. They would not have hesitated to hand over their country to their neighbours on north or south, or even to consent to its being divided between them, on the sole condition that power was promised to themselves. The people was not with them; their party remained a small aristocratic minority, a handful of disaffected men who complained loudly but did very little.

While yielding to the demands of the lords, the Infanta did not remain inactive. As we have said, towards the end of 1631 and before the summoning of the States,

Brussels, who looked askance at the idea of any one else being entrusted with the negotiations. With the Infanta's permission they sent, in their turn, three of their members to the prince of Orange and the representatives of the States General at Maastricht, to come to an agreement upon the time and place of a conference for the discussion of peace.

It was arranged that the conference should take place at The Hague, and the negotiations opened on the 13th December, 1632. The Belgian envoys, to the number of ten, wished for the conclusion of an armistice to begin with. The prince of Orange and the States General of Holland invited their southern neighbours to declare themselves independent of Spain and promised to assist them in the struggle, but refused to treat with them on the basis of the treaty of 1609. It was not unknown to the Dutch that the proposals brought by Rubens in August were more to their advantage than those now before them, and they were counting on concessions from men less devoted to Spain. Seeing that matters were at a standstill, the Belgian envoys sent four of their number to Brussels near the end of December, to inform those who had sent them of the difficulties they were encountering, and to complain of the mission entrusted to Rubens. The States of Brussels knew already from the prince of Orange that Rubens had come to him at Maastricht with propositions; and attributing the failure of their own envoys to Isabella and her emissary, they resolved, at their sitting of the 4th January, 1633, to ask the Infanta what instructions she had given Rubens in August. No answer was given to their demand. But we know what the Infanta wanted. She wished to treat without the intervention of the States of Brussels and had reckoned on Rubens to do the work.

The States of Brussels having resolved to treat with the Dutch themselves, the Infanta wished at any rate to have some supervision exercised over their proceedings, and entrusted the task to Rubens. On the 13th December, 1632, the very day on which the negotiations were to open at The Hague, Rubens wrote to prince Frederick Henry, asking for a passport for himself and two or three servants to enable him to go to The Hague and assist the deputies in the elucidation of several points with which he was more particularly acquainted. The prince sent the letter to the States General at The Hague, who issued the passport on the 19th January, 1633. Early in the same month Rubens had been called to Brussels to give the States an explanation of his connection with the matter, and on the 24th the assembly deputed three of its members to visit the Infanta and complain of Rubens's intervention. Isabella replied that, if Rubens had asked the prince of Orange for a passport, it was in order to go to The Hague, where the deputies wished to see the documents relating to his former negotiations on the subject of the truce, and not for the purpose of taking part in the actual discussions.

The duke of Aerschot was extremely indignant that the Infanta should have placed her confidence in a mere artist rather than in a great noble like himself. On the 28th January, 1633,



THE INFANT JESUS, SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD
(Steengracht van Duivenvoorde,
The Hague).

he returned to The Hague with his three colleagues. They spent a day in Antwerp, and invited Rubens to hand them over the papers in his possession. The artist, aware of what had happened at Brussels and the duke of Aerschot's anger against him, refused to go and see him. The duke was still more enraged by his refusal; and with the object of making his ulterior intervention impossible, informed him that he was displeased with his attitude and his demand for a passport.

Thereupon, on the 29th January, Rubens wrote him the following letter :

« My lord,

« I am very grieved to learn the resentment Your Excellency has shown at my demand for a passport, for I stand upon firm ground and entreat you to believe that I shall always be able to give a good account of my actions. I protest therefore before God that I have never had any orders from my superiors but to serve Your Excellency, in all ways, in the conduct of this affair, so necessary to the service of the king and for the preservation of the country that I should esteem him unworthy of life who for his private interests should retard it in the smallest degree. I do not see, however, what inconvenience could have resulted if I had taken my papers to The Hague and put them into Your Excellency's hands, without other office or quality than to render you my very humble service, desiring nothing else in this world so much as occasions to show by my deeds that I am, with my whole heart, etc. »

The duke, as vindictive as he was proud, answered this courteous note with the following contemptuous letter :

« Mr. Rubens,

« I see by your letter how grieved you are that I have shown resentment at your demand for a passport, and that you stand upon firm ground, and entreat me to believe that you will always be able to give a good account of your actions. I might well have omitted to do you the honour of answering you, considering how grossly you have failed in your duty of coming to see me in person without making a secret of the matter by sending me your letter, which is proper between persons of equal station, for I was at the inn from eleven o'clock till half-past twelve and returned there in the evening at half-past five, and you had ample time to come and speak with me. Nevertheless, I will tell you that the whole assembly at Brussels found it very strange that, after having entreated Her Highness and required the Marquis of Ayetone to order you to communicate the papers to us which you wrote to me were in your hands, which they promised us they would, instead of that you should have asked for a passport; for it matters little to me upon what ground you stand on and what account you can render of your actions. All I can tell you is that I shall be greatly obliged if you will learn from henceforth how persons of your station should write to men of mine. And then you may be assured that I shall be, etc. »

The duke of Aerschot attained his end. Rubens took no more part in the matter, and this monumental piece of intentional rudeness really marks the end of the great artist's diplomatic career (1). The two letters caused some stir. The duke of Aerschot sent copies of them to the

(1) Gachard quotes the Venetian envoy, Alviso Contarini (Op. cit. p. 251) to prove that after Rubens had received the duke of Aerschot's letter, he wrote to him again and received an answer. This is an error on the part of the distinguished historian; the letters quoted above are the two to which Contarini refers, and no others were exchanged.

States, who communicated them to the Infanta and the marquis of Aytona, and the French ambassador sent copies of them to the Secretary of State. They were universally regarded as scandalous and as an insult offered publicly and with premeditation to the Infanta's confidential adviser, and consequently to the Infanta herself. The fact was that an old hatred had burst into flame : the duke of Aerschot and the States of Brussels could not forgive the princess for having preferred one who was not a member of the assembly to themselves. « If he hath » acquired so much more envie among them », wrote the English envoy, William Boswell, to his government, « it is because, hee is none of their bodie, if not rather because he is an » immediat Minister of their King and having more sperit than any member of them they » know very well that he understands it better than any of them » (1).

The duke of Aerschot's behaviour no doubt seems far worse to us than it did to his contemporaries, for they knew that the tone taken by the nobleman with the artist of genius was that usually adopted by people of his rank in speaking to men of the middle class, no matter what their merit, or to members of the lesser nobility. At the outset of the rising against Spain, when the president of the Court of Accounts of Brabant dared to defend the interests of the country against the count of Hoogstraten, the latter said to him in the presence of the prince of Orange : « All these lawyers are villains, and you are a villain sir, and villains do » villainous things » (2). That is just how the duke of Aerschot addressed Rubens.

Rubens refused to go to The Hague, and begged the Infanta to relieve him for the future of any political employment. « I threw myself at Her Highness's feet, » he wrote afterwards to Peiresc, « and begged her, as the sole recompense of my labours, to excuse me from any » further missions, and to allow me to do my duty without leaving home. I had more difficulty » in obtaining this favour than any that had been granted me before, and a few matters were » even reserved for me, which I could manage without putting myself out very much » (3). The Infanta yielded to his request and sent in place of him his friend Jan van den Wouwer, with orders ostensibly to give information to the envoys, but in reality to watch their proceedings and safeguard the interests of the Spanish crown and the Spanish Netherlands.

RUBENS'S LAST INTERVENTION IN POLITICS. — There was one more occasion, however, in which Rubens attempted to take part in political matters ; and again it was his ardent desire to see the return of peace between his country and the United Provinces that made him think of leaving his studio and his native town. This happened in July, 1635. Antonius Triest, bishop of Ghent, a friend of Rubens and a partisan of peace, was in touch with van Berckel, a former burgomaster of Rotterdam. With the governor's consent, he was sounding him, to know if he would help in bringing about a reconciliation between the two countries. Van Berckel consented and went to Antwerp, where he met Bishop Triest, who at once went

(1) NOEL SAINSBURY. *Op. cit.* p. 177.

(2) ROB. FRUIN : *Verspreide Geschriften*, I, p. 339.

(3) Letter of 18 December, 1634.

to see Rubens, told him of their interview and secured his promise to join his efforts to theirs. The victories won in the course of the year by the governor, Ferdinand, against the combined forces of France and Holland, ought in their opinion to incline Holland to lend a more favourable ear to propositions of peace. Rubens was of the same opinion, and made the bishop an offer to go, if the Cardinal-Infant so wished, to the prince of Orange, and ask him and several friends he had at The Hague whether they believed in the possibility of peace. This he could do without exciting suspicion, as he had been invited to Amsterdam to see the pictures by old masters that had been sent from Italy. To conceal the real object of his journey, he would take five or six amateurs of art with him, and he felt convinced that at The Hague they would begin talking to him of a treaty of peace before he himself said a word on the subject.

Bishop Triest communicated this conversation to Martin van Axpe, the Secretary of State, and he replied, at the order of the governor, that there was no objection to Rubens's making the journey. The government of Brussels therefore gave him and his companions passports in August, 1635. Rubens asked the States of the province of Holland for a safe-conduct allowing him and his two sons to go to England, passing through Holland, in order to take Charles I the pictures he had ordered for the banqueting-hall at Whitehall. The States debated the request. The secretary of the French ambassador at The Hague pointed out that in entering their country Rubens had a very different object from that he alleged and that his arrival would excite discontent and discord. The Provincial States did not dare to come to a resolution and referred Rubens's request to the States General, who in their turn referred it to Frederick Henry, who was in no hurry to give his consent. It follows from a letter of Constantijn Huygens, of November, 1635, that the passport had not been granted at that date. Rubens had not waited for it; on the 8th October he had sent the pictures by Dunkirk and given up his journey into Holland.

No doubt it was to this last futile attempt at intervention in affairs of state that he referred in his letter of the 16th March, 1636, to Peiresc, in which he says : « Against my will I spent a few days in Brussels on private business. Do not persuade yourself that the business was what you suspect. I am telling you the truth and you will believe me. I grant that they first of all asked me to undertake the matter. But since in my opinion it presented no great interest and some difficulty was made about giving me my passports, I raised voluntary delays on my side; and there being no lack of people anxious to take on the task, I was able, thank God, to stay quietly at home ».

And so Rubens took final leave of political life in August, 1635. All whom he had served or with whom he had been brought in contact kept a very high opinion of his abilities ; princes, ministers, statesmen, friends or foes, had learned to esteem him, and his name remained completely unspotted in a world of intrigue, which was swarming with suspected persons, and where the best did not recoil from disloyal manœuvres. More than once in his political career he had shown his aversion and dislike for the lack of sincerity, decision and sagacity against which he had had to struggle. Creator as he was of a world of giants and heroes, he found himself too great to twist along the tortuous paths on which he had ventured in the hope of rendering



Марија де Вирџинија
(Марија де Вирџинија)



some service, and come out with honour. He returned to his art, the domain in which he reigned absolute and unrivalled.

END OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. — The negotiations between the Catholic Netherlands and the United Provinces remained without result. The king of Spain had looked with disfavour on the meeting of the States General at Brussels, and had charged Peter Roose, president of the privy council, who was then at Madrid, to oppose these gentlemen on his return to Brussels and to dissolve the assembly. From that moment Isabella's government set to work to thwart and undo all the attempts made by the States ; their demands remained unanswered and their resolutions without effect, and they had no force at their disposal to command obedience. They had asked the king's authorization to conclude peace with Holland in their own names ; they received no answer, and their envoys remained at The Hague for two months without being able to do anything. On the 12th November, 1633, they resolved to send two of their members, the bishop of Ypres and the duke of Aerschot, to Madrid, to ask Philip to authorize them to conclude a truce with Holland in their own names. The bishop refused to go and the duke set out alone in the middle of November. Before he reached Madrid, the Infanta died, on the 2nd December, 1633. He heard the news at Irun on the Spanish frontier, and doubted whether to pursue his journey or to return to Brussels to sit on the Council of Regency, of which the Infanta had appointed him a member. He came to the conclusion that his presence would be more useful at Madrid than at Brussels, and unhappily for himself continued his journey towards the capital, which he reached on the 26th December.

There began for him then the saddest adventure that ever marked these bloodless troubles and this unimportant imbroglio ; the king was by no means anxious for the visit of the duke of Aerschot, whom the Infanta had promised to send to Madrid to rid herself of the head of the present and future opposition. « You must receive the duke with as much courtesy as possible », she wrote to her nephew, « and keep him as long as you can, for if he has really taken part in the plot, as Gerbier says he is ready to prove, it will as well to have him to your hand ».

What was it that Gerbier had promised to prove ? At the outset of the conspiracy of the nobles, the secret agent who then represented the king of England at Brussels had dazzled them with hopes of support from his master, who authorised him to do so. He had negotiated with the malcontents in the name of his sovereign, who wished to see an English party arise in our country ; it was in his house that Henri de Bergh had discussed matters with his partisans. He knew their plans, therefore. Flattered at his connection with the nobility of the country, and a born intriguer, he may perhaps have hoped to attain an important part and fish with profit in the waters he was helping to trouble, for he had no fortune, was badly paid and liked to live well. When it became clear that nothing serious was to come of the plot, his thoughts turned to drawing some advantage from what he knew. Moreover he was on bad terms with the duke of Aerschot, and flattered himself that he had found an excellent occasion to satisfy his hatred and fill his pockets at the same time. When the duke started for Madrid,

Gerbier informed the Infanta that, in consideration of a good reward, he would tell her the names and plans of the conspirators of 1632. The princess promised him 20,000 crowns for the information and the king promised him his particular protection for the future. The shameful bargain was concluded, and the traitor received his money and told his secret to the Secretary of State, Francisco Galeratta, who handed it on to Father Philip, a Capuchin. Father Philip left on the 22nd or 23rd November, 1633, to take the news to Madrid and arrived some days before the duke of Aerschot.

When the Council of State had taken cognizance of Gerbier's revelations, at first they attached very little importance to them, especially as the enterprise had completely failed and all danger had disappeared. But the arrival shortly afterwards of complaints from the marquis of Aytona and the revelations of other people brought the duke more and more under suspicion. The king was little disposed to condemn him. He received him on the 15th April, 1634, and advised him to tell the truth, promising to pardon him if he repented and swore fidelity for the future. The duke of Aerschot, who in reality had not joined the conspirators, and had rather contributed to the miscarriage than the furtherance of their projects, but had been connected with them and knew their plans, had the unfortunate inspiration to say that he knew nothing except from hearsay. The king and his ministers insisted on his making fuller confession, and he then related scrap by scrap a part of what he knew. Enraged by his lack of sincerity, the king ordered an enquiry and threw the duke into prison. The case of the unhappy and presumptuous man does not appear to have been brought on, but he never recovered his liberty. He died on the 24th September, 1640, in the fortress of Pinto.

Fortunately, we are able to state that Rubens took no part direct or indirect, in his friend Gerbier's treachery. On the 16th June, 1634, he went to Brussels, to discuss with the marquis of Aytona the project of fortifying the dikes round Antwerp, a question on which he also wrote to Olivarez. On that occasion he showed Gerbier the proceedings in the interrogatory of the duke of Aerschot, in which the duke accused the English envoy of having fostered the plot against the king of Spain. Gerbier denied everything, and Rubens seems to have believed him, so that he never knew what a scoundrel his friend had been. Gerbier hid his treason so cleverly that for years afterwards he remained the king of England's *chargé d'affaires* in these provinces. At the court of Brussels they had been anxious to be rid of the rogue, and asked the king to recall him. But he pleaded his cause so well that he kept his post till 1641. He then returned to London, where in the month of June of that year he instituted proceedings against Lord Cottington, whom he accused of revealing the secrets of the conspiracy at Brussels. He lost his case and his post at the same time. We have related elsewhere the remainder of his adventures.

In these provinces, events followed their course through anything but cheering vicissitudes. There was no more question of insurrection. The Brussels deputies spent a year in waiting or discussing at The Hague, and then returned with nothing accomplished. The States were dissolved on the 5th July, 1634, and were no more summoned, either by the Spanish government or later by the Austrian government. In 1635 the war between the Northern and Southern Netherlands took a new turn. On the 8th February the king of France concluded a treaty with

the United Provinces, to make a joint attack on the Spanish Netherlands, a project which Richelieu had long cherished. On the 19th May following, war was declared and the country invaded. But at that time the government and the army were in the hands of a man of military talent, the Cardinal-Infant Ferdinand, brother of Philip IV. He inflicted heavy defeats on the allies, who saw their brilliant hopes fade away, but without renouncing their plans. The war lasted many years longer, exhausting the country, destroying the remnant of its ancient prosperity and drying up the springs of its future regeneration. Not till 1648 did the peace of Munster put an end to hostilities by the sacrifice of our unhappy land.

THE HISTORY OF HENRI IV. — The quarrel between Louis XIII and Marie de Medici and the flight of the latter had disastrous consequences for Rubens and for art. As we have said, the artist had undertaken to paint not only the life of the queen-mother, but also that of her husband, Henri IV. The second series of pictures was to decorate a gallery, like the one which contained the first series, lying to the left of the inner court of the new Luxembourg. Rubens had stipulated for a total sum of 20,000 crowns for these two great undertakings, and it had been granted him in February, 1622. He proposed to begin the paintings for the second gallery immediately after those for the first had been put in position, and during his last visit to Paris, in May, 1625, he had written out a scheme for the work and sent it to Cardinal Richelieu. But the minister's hands were so full of affairs of state that he could pay no attention to the project, and when Rubens left nothing was decided. He counted on the Cardinal and the abbot of St Ambroise letting him know their intentions later. On the 12th February, 1626, the question had not yet been considered in Paris, and Rubens was afraid that in spite of the agreement made with him, some foreign artist would be entrusted with the work. Two years later, in January, 1628, he had begun to make the drawings. He rightly had a high idea of the task. « The subject is of such extent and grandeur », he wrote on the 13th May, 1625, to Peiresc, « that there is enough of it to decorate ten galleries », and on the 27th January, 1628, he wrote to Pierre Dupuy that the second series would be more successful than the first, the subject being a better one.

Another year passed without any further news on the subject of the gallery of Henri IV ; in 1629, there was some talk of giving the work to an Italian painter. On the 22nd April, Richelieu wrote to Marie de Medici : « Madame, I trust your Majesty will not take it amiss » if I say that I think it appropriate to have the gallery of your palace painted by Josepin » (d'Arpino) whose only desire is to have the honour of serving you and of undertaking and » completing the work for the price which Rubens received for painting the other gallery ». Rubens was then in Spain, and the Cardinal knew very well that he was not working there in the interests of France. He found it natural not to entrust the decoration of one of the royal palaces to an enemy of the country. The queen-mother must have subscribed to that opinion, for she wrote to Cardinal Spada to ask if Guido Reni could come to Paris to paint the second gallery ; at the same time she informed him that a like request was being made to Josepino. The Cardinal replied that Guido Reni could not leave Bologna and that Josepino was too old, and in conclusion he advised her to give the work to Guercino.

Of these three painters, the one recommended by Richelieu was undoubtedly the poorest. Josepino (Guiseppe Cesari) or il Cavaliere d'Arpino, as he was usually called, was one of those clever and facile artists who have filled the palaces and churches of Rome with such quantities of historical paintings, revealing some dexterity but no superior merit. Guido Reni and Guercino had far more ability and fame; they were the most distinguished artists of the last period of the Italian Renaissance. The former had grace without vigour, the latter vigour



HENRI IV SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY OF CONCLUDING PEACE
Sketch (Lichtenstein Gallery, Vienna).

without grace. Neither could be compared with Rubens. The suggestions of both Cardinals remained without result. Marie de Medici looked no longer beyond the Alps for her painter, and the work remained in Rubens's hands. On his return from England in 1630, he began it in earnest. In October and November he complained to Dupuy that two feet had been cut off the height of his pictures, and the doors enlarged, after he had begun to paint on a different scale. He had already carried some of the compositions some way, among others the « Triumphal entry of the King », and he asked for at least six inches more height, to avoid being forced to cut off the head of the king in his chariot. On the 27th March, 1631, his difficulties had not been arranged; but so far from complaining we find Rubens congratulating himself, all of the « History of Henri IV » that he had painted being lost labour. For the

queen-mother was then in exile under a strong guard at Compiègne, and was to cross the frontier a few months later, bidding farewell to France for ever.

The Gallery of Henri IV would, no doubt, have consisted of twenty-four pictures, three of them much larger than the rest. Rubens began on these first. He half-finished two of the three, and both appeared among the six that formed part of his estate at his death. The « Victory of Ivry » and the « Triumphal Entry into Paris », two immense pictures, are now in the Uffizi at Florence. Besides these, Rubens had sketched other pictures with life-sized figures. According to the catalogue of the works of art left by him at his death, his studio contained « Six great » Clothes ; y^e beseiging of Townes, batailles, and Triumph of Henry the 4th, y^e French Kinge ; » not full made which he had begunn some yeares past for the pallace of the Queen-mother » of France ».

It was a great misfortune that Rubens never finished this series. He had reached his full maturity without losing any of his creative power, and his colour had gained greatly in delicacy and strength. He was much attracted by the work, which had an infinitely more interesting subject than the « History of Marie de Medici ». She was a woman who had never done anything great. The episodes of her life could supply nothing but show-pictures, pleasing to the eye but incapable of touching the emotions. Henri IV, on the other hand, is one of the greatest figures in modern history; a valiant warrior and wise legislator, he had an eventful career that led to a tragic end. His name, his brilliant deeds and his violent death had filled all Europe thirty years before. During his youth and early manhood Rubens had constantly heard tell of his battles, his victories, his magnanimity and the affection his people held him in, and he wished to give immortality to the great figure and his glorious actions. The task was one he enjoyed, and he took it up, not in chronological order, but choosing the most striking events from the midst of the series : the « Battle of Ivry », the most important of the king's victories; the « Taking of Paris », the most arduous of his enterprises, and his « Triumphal Entry into the Capital », the greatest day of his life.

The half-finished pictures in the Uffizi at Florence enable us to form some idea of what the « Battle of Ivry » and the « Entry into Paris » would have been. The former (*Œuvre*. N^o 757) shows the battle at its hottest moment. Henri IV has hurled himself into the fight; sword in hand, he is attacking the count of Egmont, the leader of the Spanish auxiliaries. A French officer, in the centre of the composition, is dealing a mortal blow to the Spanish general. The group of these three men grappling in a fight to the death, is superb. Their maddened horses take part in the struggle; more enraged than their masters, they hurl themselves upon each other and try to tear each other in pieces. A fallen horse and rider are trodden under foot by the combatants. On the right, behind the king, come two foot-soldiers and a mounted standard-bearer; further on is a group of soldiers fighting; on the ground lies a corpse. On the right is a confused group of soldiers fighting for a flag. On the same side a horse and rider are stretched dead on the ground. In the sky hover Bellona and a Fury.

The light falls full on the central group, throwing out Egmont's white horse and making Henri's armour flash; the right side of the picture is plunged in strong shade, and the horizon is shut off by clouds and the smoke that rises in waves about the combatants. The battle is

waged not only between men and men, but between shadow and light as well, and the victory lies with the latter. The struggle is only indicated. No doubt, if this powerful composition had been finished, it would have ranked as one of Rubens's finest works. Unity of plan, powerful dramatic action, boldness of movement, opposition of light, simplicity of subject and grand and powerful execution — this rapid sketch contains all these admirable qualities; the finished work would have been more than masterly.

The « Triumphal Entry » is finer still (*Œuvre*. N^o 759). Here again Henri IV is the central point of the action, but the action is of a very different kind. It is not the ardour of battle, but the joy of triumph. In the former work we had the smoke of powder and the ghastly spectacle of the dead and dying; in this we have the smoke of incense, the fanfares of trumpets and the joyful shouts of victorious warriors and the enthusiastic crowd. The hero is standing in a Roman chariot, raising a palm to heaven in his right hand; he is looking fixedly in front of him, pale with emotion and immobile, as if excess of happiness had robbed him of all animation; his majesty is that of a superior being, alone motionless in the midst of so much movement. Beside the chariot walk trumpeters and flute-players, standard-bearers and trophy-bearers; beyond it we have a hint of the surging crowd; men, women and children are sitting on the ground and looking at the stirring spectacle; the group on the left, composed of an old woman, a mother and a child recalls the group on the left shutter of the « Elevation of the Cross ». Behind go the prisoners, mournful pledges of victory. In the sky hover symbolical figures bearing crowns and laurels. The two white horses that draw the chariot are just about to pass under the triumphal arch raised at the corner of the street. All is joy and animation; not a figure but is walking or flying; the whole scene vibrates with intense life.

The scene is treated in the classical manner. The chariot, the armour, the trophies, the music and the prisoners all recall the triumphs of ancient Rome and the painting by Mantegna of Caesar's entry into the eternal city. But here the movement is freer, the joy more enthusiastic, the figures stronger and the light more vivid. The picture also recalls one of the Triumphs of the Holy Sacrament, the « Victory over Ignorance », which shows the same animation and the same violent movement round the symbolical figure throned in solemn calm. But there is something loftier about the victorious Henri IV, and the crowd about him is more eager and advances more impetuously. In all Rubens's work there is no picture in which his mighty genius has conceived and treated a multitude of sentiments and actions with more simplicity, without detracting from the general impression produced by a tumultuous and noisy crowd.

The « Triumph of Henri IV » is carried much further than the « Battle of Ivry ». In the latter the greater part of the scene is lost in neutral tones as if in a fog, out of which only one of the central groups rises distinctly. In the Triumph all the colours are clearly marked and all the effects obtained; only a final touch was needed to bring the whole into harmony. The two pictures are extremely interesting as evidence of the way in which Rubens worked. First he traced the main lines of his composition in low colours, but these indications are correct from the first. In the « Battle of Ivry » the Henri IV is a portrait, the movements of the horses are irreproachable; the bright reds are marked here and there by relatively weak tones, and the main effect of light and shade in the centre is accurately noted; so, too, are the degradations

of the light which grows weaker on the left than on the right. On both sides the groups of combatants are carefully indicated with their colour and light. The less finished parts, the spirits holding a palm and a crown and hovering over the king's head, are drawn with a brush in grisaille. Through all the picture the painter's chief aim has been to produce a striking effect of light, and that end he followed from the moment when he put the first touch of colour on the canvas.

The sketches for these two great compositions are known. That for the « Battle of Ivry » belongs to M. Bonnat, the painter, of Paris. There are several sketches for the « Triumphal Entry », two in grisaille and another in colour ; the last is in the Wallace Collection, London, and is widely different in composition from the great picture at Florence.

The third large picture in the History of Henri IV is the « Taking of Paris », which we only know from a sketch in the Berlin Museum (*Œuvre*. N^o 758). The strife is over. From the top of a bridge they are throwing the corpses of the vanquished into the Seine. On the left is king Henri, with the crown on his head and the sceptre in his hand, receiving the keys which are offered him by the maid of Paris. Behind him are musicians and soldiers, in the midst of them a standard-bearer trampling Discord under his feet. Beneath the bridge appears another bridge in perspective, and beyond rise the houses of the town. All the parts of the subject are lightly indicated ; the bridge and the corpses thrown into the water are treated in grisaille ; in the group of the king and his suite we can distinguish the colour of the armour and the reflexions that play on the steel ; the pale red note of a cloak and the dark red of a pair of breeches, two spots of light on the corpses, tints of rose on the living and the reflexions of light in the sky make up all the colour that can be seen in this first sketch for the picture.

There are sketches in existence of some of the small compositions, among others the « Birth of Henri » (*Œuvre*. N^o 755) and his « Marriage with Marie de Medici » (*Œuvre*. N^o 762) one of which opened the series while the other closed it. The first shows the town of Pau holding the new-born child, one day to be king of France, on her knees. Mars, with a trophy of arms in his hand, is handing him a flaming sword. Above is Sagittarius, the sign of the Zodiac answering to December, the month in which the king was born. In the sky hover three little genii bearing a shield and a lance. In the background is the castle, in the foreground the God of the river lying among the reeds. In the « Marriage of Henri IV with Marie de Medici », the king, crowned with laurels, has one arm round the waist of his bride ; and holds a palm in the other. He is leading the queen to the altar, caressing her with an amorous look. Between them hovers the God Hymen with a lighted torch in his hand ; in the sky flutter three small loves. About 1774 these two sketches were in the Schorel collection at Antwerp and were then engraved by Martenasie ; they are now in the Wallace Collection in London.

Two other sketches known are in Prince Liechtenstein's gallery, and represent subjects taken from the « History of Henri IV ». They stand alone in having a strangely divided composition ; the upper part represents a historical subject, the lower part an allegory. They were probably made for the pictures for the gallery of Henri IV, but it is strange that Rubens should have so far departed from the manner in which he treated the other subjects. The first sketch (*Œuvre*. N^o 756) represents in its upper part a fight on a bridge. In the lower part,

which is completely separated from the rest, there are two allegorical figures : Military Valour, with nude torso, a helmet on her head, a sword in her belt and her foot on the neck of a sleeping lion, and, on the left, a figure which probably symbolizes Victory, with her head crowned with laurels and holding a commander's staff in one hand and a cornucopia in the other. The catalogue of the Liechtenstein Gallery calls this painting « Horatius Cocles defending the bridge »; but a cartouche in the upper part bears an inscription, the first two words of which *battle of* are legible, and the third and last seems to read *Coustra*. It is probably the battle of Coutras, one of Henri's victories.



THE BATTLE OF IVRY (Uffizi, Florence).

The other sketch in the Liechtenstein Gallery (*Œuvre*. N° 761), a more rapid note of which is in the possession of the duke of Arenberg, is, like the first, in grisaille touched with a little blue. The upper part represents Henri IV led by Minerva and advancing to seize a nude woman by one of her curls, which hangs over her forehead. The woman is accompanied by two allegorical figures, Time and Peace. The artist no doubt wished to represent Henri IV seizing by the forelock the opportunity to conclude peace. In the lower part there is an allegorical figure, nude, with piercing eyes, a club in one hand and a serpent in the other. It is probably Prudence ready to act at the auspicious moment. The upper part is represented as a hanging tapestry; and this fact, joined to the general arrangement, suggests that Rubens proposed to paint some cartoons for reproduction in tapestry. Possibly he had received an order or had conceived the idea of representing the History of Henri IV in this manner, and the two sketches would belong to this unfinished series.

The Liechtenstein Gallery has another sketch representing a woman sitting in the middle of a field of battle between two corpses and plunged in mournful reflections. The figure is so much in harmony with the allegories of the lower parts of the two preceding sketches that we believe it to belong to the « History of Henri IV ».

In the Burtin sale (Brussels, 1819) there was a small sketch (8 5/8 in. by 6 1/8 in.) belonging to the same series (*Œuvre*. N^o 760) and described in the catalogue as « The Genius of France » bringing the crown to Henri IV : the Genius of Peace and Union driving from him Hypocrisy



THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY OF HENRI IV INTO PARIS (Uffizi, Florence).

» and Discord. A page holds his helmet, and a dog accompanies him, as a symbol of Fidelity.
 » The scenes passes under a canopy in a palace of fine architecture ».

The subject of one of the sketches in the Liechtenstein Gallery was treated by Rubens in a separate picture which has wrongly been supposed to form part of the series intended for the Luxembourg. In 1897 it was in the possession of Herr Miethke, a picture-dealer at Vienna. It represents a warrior in a cuirass, with a shield on his arm bearing the head of Medusa, and leaning forward to seize Opportunity, represented as a nude woman, by a lock of hair which is offered to him by Minerva. The old catalogue of the Gallery of Sans-Souci describes a similar composition, and there is a drawing of it in the Museum at Weimar. The principal figures are the same as those in the sketch in the Liechtenstein Gallery, but the composition and attitudes are very different. We believe the picture to be earlier than the date at which Rubens began to work at the « History of Henri IV » and that he intended to make use in the latter of the composition of a picture previously painted.

THE HISTORY OF ACHILLES. — One of Rubens's great works, the « History of Achilles », probably dates from 1630-1635 (*Œuvre*. Nos 557-564). It consists of eight compositions intended to be worked in tapestry. The subjects are as follows :

1. « Achilles plunged by his mother in the Styx ». Thetis is holding her son by the heel and plunging him head first in the water which is to render him invulnerable ; a Fate, with a torch in her hand, lights the scene. On the right are the shades of the dead crowding on the brink of Acheron and imploring Charon to ferry them across. Beyond the stream is a landscape in the realm of shades.

2. « The Education of Achilles by Cheiron ». The young hero is seated on the back of the centaur, who is galloping across the landscape and turning his head to instruct his pupil. A lyre hung in the branches of a tree and two greyhounds at the foot of it allude to the lessons in music and the chase given to Achilles by Cheiron.

3. « Achilles recognized among the daughters of Lycomedes ». On a terrace of the palace of Lycomedes, king of Scyros, Achilles is seen among the king's six daughters. Ulysses and Diomed, disguised as merchants, are bringing a basket full of clothes, from which the girls are hurrying to take their choice. Achilles has found a helmet, which he is putting on his head with both hands. Thus he betrays himself to the Greek generals ; but Ulysses is laying a finger on his lips to sign his companion to be silent.

4. « Thetis receiving the arms of Achilles from Vulcan ». Accompanied by Cupid and Charis, one of the Graces, Thetis is standing on the sea-shore, and taking a shield from Vulcan ; one of the god's assistants is bringing armour ; on the left is Chiron taking his pupil's helmet from the hands of a small love ; in the background, the forge of the god.

5. « The wrath of Achilles against Agamemnon ». The king of the kings of Greece is seated in the centre of the composition. He has just pronounced the judgment condemning Achilles to yield Briseis, his beloved slave. The young hero is drawing his sword to take vengeance ; but Minerva stops him by seizing his hair. Agamemnon tries to rise to punish Achilles, but is restrained by Nestor. Three other warriors are present.

6. « Briseis restored to Achilles ». Achilles has retired in wrath to his tent, and from that moment the Greeks have had nothing but misfortune and defeat. The angry warrior must be appeased. The wise Nestor brings Briseis back to Achilles, who runs joyfully to meet her ; a band of women and warriors surrounds the fair captive ; in Achilles's tent is the corpse of Patroclus, his companion in arms.

7. « Achilles killing Hector ». The Trojan hero has fallen on his knee. Achilles is piercing his neck with his lance. Pallas hovers in the sky encouraging the Greek warrior ; the terrified Trojans flee towards the town, one of the gates of which is seen in the background.

8. « The Death of Achilles ». Pierced by the perfidious arrow of Paris, Achilles has fallen while sacrificing to the gods ; he turns and tries to tear the arrow from his heel, but his strength fails him and he faints ; the terrified priests surround him in lamentation. On one side is the murderer, to whom Apollo is showing the spot at which the hero is vulnerable.

Each of these compositions is framed by two caryatids standing on pedestals and sup-

porting an architrave. The fronts of the pedestals are decorated with allegories and the caryatids represent allegorical or mythological characters. Rubens has scattered the riches of his imagination with his usual profusion. In the scene of the Styx, Pluto and Proserpine support the architrave and Cerberus lies at the foot of the pedestal; in the « Education of Achilles », Aesculapius and Terpsichore, representing Health and Music, serve as caryatids, and the lower part is decorated with hunting-motifs; in the « Achilles recognized by Ulysses », Wisdom and Beauty form the supports; in the « Thetis and Vulcan », Jupiter and Juno urge the mother of Achilles to go and find the enemy; in the « Wrath of Achilles », we see Fury and Discord; in the « Restitution of Briseis », Mercury and Peace; in the « Death of Hector », Hercules and Mars; and in the « Death of Achilles », Apollo and Venus, the instigators of the crime. The mythological figures are accompanied by their attributes; from the architrave hang wreaths of flowers and fruits, with little loves playing in them; the decorative part of the tapestries is conceived in the same spirit as the « Triumphs and Figures of the Holy Sacrament », but the ornamentation is here more rich and varied.

In the « History of Achilles », which furnished the matter of the father of epics, Rubens found subjects for a number of successful compositions like those he had admired on his favourite jewels, agates. All the first half is conceived in a style rather familiar than dramatic. The meeting of Achilles and Briseis has more of middle-class drama than heroic tragedy about it. But there is something striking in the « Wrath » of the hero; the movement is very natural and it is overflowing with passion; the « Death of Achilles » is moving by its intensity of tragic grief, terror and pity. Masterly figures and groups occur in each composition: Thetis instructed by the Fate in the first picture, the daughters of Lycomedes astonished at seeing Hector put on the helmet, Thetis receiving the shield from Vulcan, and Achilles slaying Hector or running to meet his beloved are all master-pieces of observation and rendering.

Rubens did not paint the cartoons alone. He first made a series of sketches which in 1643 belonged to his father-in-law, Daniel Fourment. In 1879 Mr. Smith-Barry had six of them, and the two others were bought in Rome by George John Vernon in 1829. With the assistance of one of his pupils, probably Van Thulden, Rubens transferred the sketches to larger canvases (3 ft. 5 1/8 in. by 3 ft. 5 3/8 in.) which served for cartoons for the weavers. Some years ago the whole series of these cartoons still belonged to the duke de l'Infantado at Madrid, and later, six of them belonged to the duchess de Pastrana, also of Madrid. The other two appeared in the Salamanca sale (Paris, 1867). The duchess de Pastrana gave two of hers to the Museum at Pau; the others were dispersed. One of them, « Thetis plunging her son in the Styx » was seen at the Pacully sale (Paris, 1903).

The « History of Achilles » was reproduced several times in tapestry; in 1875 an example of five compositions of the series was bought by the Museum of Archaeology at Brussels at the van Susteren du Bois sale at Antwerp. Michel says that in his time, that is in the second half of the eighteenth century, the king of England had a complete set. Two or three more or less complete sets are to be found in France.

It is difficult to decide when and for whom the cartoons were made. Some say that it was for Charles I of England, others for Philip IV of Spain. There is no printed or manuscript

document, no letter nor inventory to prove that either of these kings ordered or owned the cartoons or the tapestries. Some years ago we had no better information about the « History of Constantine » painted for Louis XIII. In support of the belief that Charles I ordered the work, it may be advanced that in the eighteenth century there was still a complete collection of the tapestries in one of the royal palaces of England. On the other hand it may be contended that till recently the cartoons still belonged to the duke de l'Infantado and the duchess de Pastrana, like those of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* which were painted for Philip IV, and that therefore they appear, like the others, to have been painted for the court of Spain. We must draw attention further, to a document that may refer to these pictures, an entry in Philippe Chifflet's diary, which says :

« 21 April, 1636, His Highness (the Cardinal-Infant) sent a handsome present to the king » which left to-day for Dunkirk, where it was » put on board ship ». The present included, among other things, a tent in silk and gold tapestry, the models of which had been designed by Rubens (1). It is possible that these models were the « Story of Achilles », and that makes it more than probable that it was carried out for the king of Spain. If we add that the style of the compositions we know reveals a work of about 1635, we reach the conclusion that the order for them was probably given by Philip IV or the Cardinal-Infant.



THE WISE GOVERNMENT OF KING JAMES I
SUPPRESSING REBELLION. — Sketch for the ceilings at
Whitehall (Baron Oppenheim, Cologne).

Elizabeth had built a royal residence on the site of the former palace of the archbishops of York. This was burned down on the 12th January, 1619, and James I immediately had it rebuilt after the designs of the architect Inigo Jones. It was to form part of a splendid palace. The great project was never completely carried out; the only part built was that containing the banqueting-house, as it was called, which is still to be seen in the street of Whitehall; it has a mournful notoriety in history, for it was from thence that on the 29th January, 1649, Charles I mounted the scaffold, which had been erected against the front of the building. Before the completion of this hall the king must have asked Rubens through Sir Dudley Carleton to paint the ceilings, for on the 13th September, 1621, he wrote to William Trumbull, James I's agent,

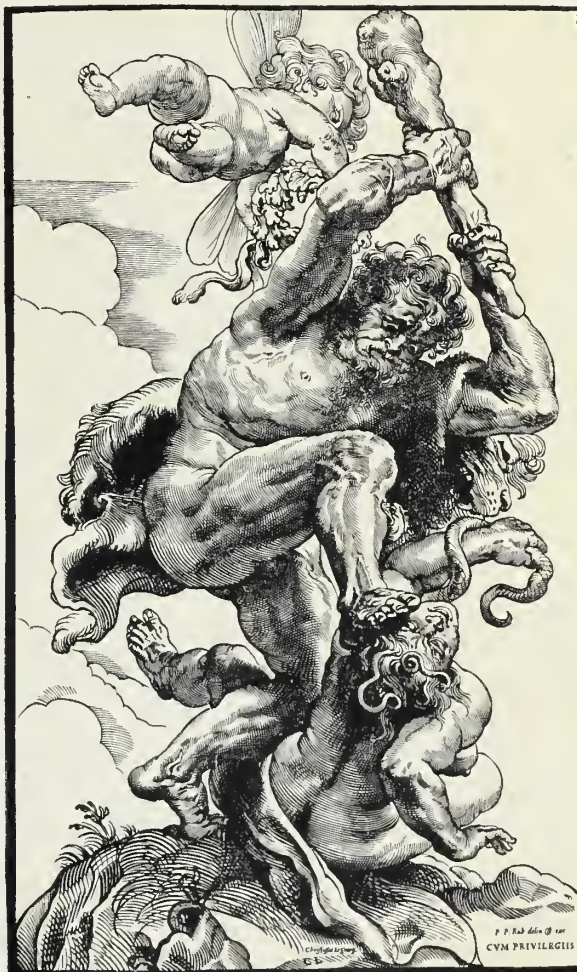
THE CEILINGS AT WHITEHALL. — Fortunately we are much better informed on another important work of this date, the ceiling of the banqueting hall at Whitehall in London. Queen

(1) AUG. CASTAN : *Les origines et la date du Saint Ildefonse de Rubens*, p. 80.

then living in Brussels : « As for His Majesty and His Highness Monsieur the Prince of Wales, » I shall always be very happy to receive the honour of their commandments and touching the » hall in the new palace I confess I am of natural instinct fitter to do very great works than » small curiosities ». Rubens had just finished the ceilings of the church of the Jesuits, and the reputation they had gained him must have contributed to the desire of the English court to entrust him with another piece of work of the same kind. For some years nothing came of the project. It must have been after Rubens's visit to London in 1629 that Charles I mentioned the matter to him again, for he lost no time in setting to work on his return to Antwerp.

Some time passed before it was finished; but all was ready in August, 1634. On the 11th of that month Gerbier wrote to Charles I and Tobie Matthew that there was a report that Rubens could not send off his pictures because the money to pay for them was not forthcoming. The sum agreed upon was £3000 sterling, equal to about £10,000 to-day. It was not till July, 1635, that Gerbier received orders to accept delivery of the paintings intended for Whitehall; they had been rolled up for a whole year, and Rubens considered it necessary to repaint a great part of them. Gout prevented his crossing the sea, and he directed one of his pupils to go and put them in position and retouch them wherever necessary. On the 8th October, 1635, they were delivered to Lionel Wake, an English merchant living in Antwerp, who sent them to London by Dunkirk. On the 6th June, 1636, Charles I issued an order to pay Rubens the £3000 due to him. But payment was not made

immediately. A first instalment of £800 was paid on the 28th November, 1637, and the last of £330 on the 14th June, 1638. On the 3rd April, 1639, Charles I gave the artist a further present of a gold chain weighing 82 1/2 oz. which Lionel Wake was ordered to deliver to him. This was probably a token of the king's satisfaction at the way in which the work had been done. The Whitehall paintings are still in their original place; they cover the ceiling of the old banqueting-hall, which is now occupied by the Museum of the United Service Institution. They consist of nine compositions, and the subject of them is the glorification of the reign of



HERCULES CRUSHING ENVY. — Ceiling at Whitehall, London
(After the engraving by Christoffel Jegher).

James I. The hall is divided into three compartments in length and width, the three principal compositions occupying the central compartments lengthwise. The one nearest the entrance to the hall represents James I declaring his son Charles king of Scotland; that in the middle, James I ascending to heaven, and that at the far end the Blessings of the reign of James I. To right and left of the first of these three there are oval panels representing Minerva trampling Ignorance under foot, and Hercules crushing Envy; on the right of the central picture are winged children, some playing among garlands of fruits, others following a car drawn by lions; on the left are children bearing a cornucopia or following a car drawn by a stag and a wolf, while one of them is riding on a sheep. On either side of the furthest picture are allegories representing the Good Government of the king triumphing over Rebellion, and the Liberality of the king triumphing over Avarice.

Allegory, it will be observed, is paramount. The principal compositions represent the deeds of the king, but they take place in the midst of symbolical beings; the six other panels show nothing but allegorical figures. Rubens is further here than usual from the epic interpretation of his subjects. In the « History of Marie de Medici » and the « History of Henri IV », allegorical figures are mingled with real persons. In the « History of James I », reality gives place to symbolism. It would seem that the less interested he was in the deeds of his hero, the more he called imagination to his aid; and that the deeds of James I seemed to him so insignificant that instead of representing them he poetised them.

It is difficult to say now-a-days, what artistic value the Whitehall ceilings had. Hardly anything can be seen of them; a brown tone has flooded both light and colour with a kind of warm muddy vapour, so that nothing appears distinctly and the whole work is blurred in a dull glow. The painting has had to be restored several times. In 1687 it had already been severely injured by the water that filtered through the roof, which made restoration necessary. In 1780 it had to be retouched. At one of these restorations, or rather ruinations, they took it into their heads to fix the canvases to the ceiling in places, and the result is that they now look like darned mattresses, the broken surfaces being lit here and there with streaks of light catching them from outside. Of the decoration which was once the pride of the banqueting-hall only a mournful ruin is left. We do not believe that it can ever have been one of Rubens's master-pieces; the total effect must always have been too declamatory, the forms too emphatic, the allegories too far-fetched and the background too full of decoration, which must have revealed more clearly the emptiness of the scenes. Possibly the brilliance of the colour may have partially counteracted the weakness of the composition, but the supposition rests on no proof.

It is corroborated, however, by the beauty of the studies Rubens made for the works. For none of his paintings did he make so many sketches and separate fragments. Besides a sketch of the whole scheme, which was in the collection of Charles I and seems to be lost, we know a score of studies made for the nine pictures or parts of them. Six sketches are mentioned of « James I declaring his son king of Scotland »; three of the « Blessings of the Reign »; and four of the « Apotheosis ». Some of these studies, among others one in the Brussels Museum representing a fragment of the « Blessings of the Reign », are real master-

pieces. « Minerva striking Ignorance », bought in June 1899 by the Museum at Antwerp, though less remarkable, is still a fine thing which shows the care with which Rubens made the preliminary studies for his great work. Judging from the wood-cut made by Christoffel Jegher after the drawing of « Hercules crushing Envy », this may be considered one of the most powerful and superb figures Rubens ever painted. It is reminiscent of Titian's « Cain killing Abel » in the church of Santa Maria della Salute at Venice. The children playing about the panels surrounding the central composition were, no doubt, worthy of the painter of the « Children carrying a garland of fruits » in the Pinakothek at Munich.

THE MIRACLE OF ST. ILDEFONSO. — Soon after his return from London, Rubens was commissioned by the Infanta Isabella to paint an altar-piece for the Confraternity of St Ildefonso in the church of St Jacques sur Caudenberg at Brussels (*Œuvre*. No 456-459). The Confraternity had been founded at Lisbon in 1588 by the Archduke Albert, then governor of Portugal. On becoming joint ruler with the Infanta of the Netherlands, he transferred the seat of the association in 1603 to the parish church of Brussels. The members were recruited from among the officers and servants of the court of the Archdukes. The register of the Confraternity, from 1621 onwards, mentions the most important events in its history, but says nothing about the altar-piece. Till lately it was believed that Rubens had painted it soon after his return from Italy, when he was appointed court-painter. But recently discovered documents prove that it was not executed till 1630-1632 (1).

On the 14th August, 1630, Erycius Puteanus, a professor at Louvain, wrote to Philippe Chifflet, the Infanta's chaplain, to say that he had received the inscription composed by Woverius for the altar of St Ildefonso, and was going to revise it at the request of d'Andelot, the prefect of the Confraternity. Two days later he sent him a slightly altered text. On the 22nd, 23rd and 27th August, he wrote to him again on the subject of the alteration he had introduced into Woverius's text. The final form was as follows : « To God all good and all great. In » honour and for the worship of St Ildefonso, bishop of Toledo, the Chrysostom of Spain, the » Confraternity of the officers of the palace, instituted by the piety and animated by the example » of Albert and Isabella, Archdukes of Austria, Sovereigns of Belgium, adorned with marble » and above all with love for their patron and their rulers this altar, widowed of ornament, and » this altar-piece presented by a royal widow : the head of the corporation being Sir Ferdinand » d'Andelot, of Franche-Comté, knight, head steward of the Court, 1630 ».

The marble altar, therefore, was put up in 1630, to frame the picture presented by Isabella. Ferdinand d'Andelot was prefect of the Confraternity from the 23rd January, 1629, to the 23rd January, 1630 ; at that time Rubens was out of the country, and the altar-piece must have been painted before August, 1628, for Isabella to have been able to present it then. But according

(1) AUG. CASTAN : *Les origines et la date du St. Ildefonse de Rubens*. Besançon, 1884. — ID. : *Une visite au St. Ildefonse de Rubens*. Besançon, 1885. — ID. : *Opinions des érudits de l'Autriche sur les origines et la date du St. Ildefonse de Rubens*. Besançon, 1887.

to Philippe Chifflet the altar was not finished till 1631. In 1629 ad 1630 the Infanta had provided it with the utensils necessary for divine service ; and according to the inscription on an engraving quoted by Francis Mols, it was blessed in 1632. It is out of the question that Rubens should have painted his altar-piece in 1628, before the building of the altar, and the statement of Puteanus, to the effect that the Infanta presented the triptych in 1630, must be taken in the sense of a mere promise. Moreover, the artist's manner and the models who sat for the picture show that it dates from 1630 to 1632. The St Rosalie in it is almost the same as the figure in the « Coronation of St Rosalie », which dates from 1633 ; the Virgin shows a



MINERVA REPULSING MARS — Study for the ceilings at Whitehall
(Museum, Brussels).

striking resemblance to the Virgin in the « Holy Family » in the Cologne Museum, and that of Rubens's mortuary chapel, which are both of later date ; and the St Ildefonso is painted from a model employed by the master after 1630.

There is no doubt, then, that Rubens began the work after his return from London, and he intended to make it the most complete and perfect picture he had ever painted for his august patroness. She and her husband were to appear on the shutters as donors, and the picture was to adorn a church

which was used as the court chapel and was intended for a Confraternity composed of the courtiers and servants of the princes. He meant to put all his genius into it, and did, in fact, produce one of his most lofty and masterly works.

He began by making a sketch, which is now in the Museum at St Petersburg (*Œuvre*. No 456⁽²⁾). The Virgin is giving St Ildefonso a chasuble sent down from heaven ; on her right is one of the holy women, and three others are standing on her left. The saintly bishop, kneeling before Mary, places his lips reverentially to the miraculous vestment ; beside him two priests with lighted torches are taking flight, in accordance with the legend, at the sight of the miraculous apparition. The background is occupied by a semi-circular building with empty niches below and niches filled with statues above. On either side are the donors, with their patron saints. For the heads of the Virgin and the holy women Rubens drew studies which are now in the Albertina at Vienna (*Œuvre*. Nos 1433, 1570, 1571, 1572, 1574).

In painting the altar piece he made marked changes in his original idea. In the lower part



ST ILDEFONSO RECLINING THE CHAIR FROM THE HANDS
OF THE VIRGIN
(Imperial Museum, Vienna)

... 1629 and 1630 the Infanta had provided ... and according to the inscription on an ... in 1632. It is part of the question that ... before the wedding of the Infanta and the ... the Infanta presented the chasuble to 1630, must be ... Moreover, the artist's master and the models who sat ... from 1630 to 1632. The ... the same ... of St. Ruffino, which ... shows a ... to the ... Family ... and ... a ... coat, which are both of later date; and the St. Ildefonso is painted from a model employed by the master after 1630.



St. Ildefonso receiving the chasuble from the hands of the Virgin (Imperial Museum, Vienna)

There is no doubt, then, that Rubens began the work ... from London, ... to make it ... and perfect ... the ... and the ... was ...

There is no doubt, then, that Rubens began the work ... from London, ... to make it ... and perfect ... the ... and the ... was ...

... the court chapel and was attended by a ... of the ... of the painter. He ... into it, and did, in fact, ...

The ... sketch, ... at St. Petersburg (*Euvre*, N° ...). The ... St. Ildefonso ... on her right is ... and three others are ... The ... kneeling ... to the ... and two priests ... in ... at the ... The background ... building with empty ... with ... the ... with their ... and the ... which are ...

... made ... in the lower part

ST. ILDEFONSO RECEIVING THE CHASUBLE FROM THE HANDS OF THE VIRGIN (Imperial Museum, Vienna)

of the picture he left out the priests taking flight, and put in above three angels hovering in the sky and holding hands. Instead of putting one holy woman on the Virgin's right and three on her left, he put two on each side; he introduced radical alterations in the patron saints of the donors and replaced the niched building in the background with the episcopal chair in which legend represents the Virgin as sitting. St Ildefonso's violet cloak becomes black; the golden robe of St Rosalie becomes white with gold embroidery; the red cloak and hat of St Albert become violet, and the whole composition is simpler and more harmonious.

In the sketch the principal figure and the shutters form a single panel; in the final work they form a triptych. On the centre panel, the Virgin is seated on a throne placed in a niche raised on two steps above the ground and having a shell-shaped canopy flanked on either side by a twisted pillar and a fluted pilaster. She wears a blue drapery over a red robe; a small aureole lights her face and a gauze veil falls from her auburn hair over her shoulders. The miraculous chasuble is white embroidered in gold and various colours. St Ildefonso wears a white surplice, a full black robe and a small hood; his cardinal's hat is on a step beside him. On Mary's right are two martyrs, probably St Barbara and St Catherine; they carry palms but have no attributes. On the left are St Rosalie crowned with white and red roses, and wearing a white satin robe embroidered in gold over a blue skirt edged with ermine, and St Agnes, who is lifting her veil with one hand, while in the other she holds the yellow drapery she wears over a red robe. From the summit of the sky a powerful sheaf of rays of light falls obliquely. In this celestial radiance hover three small angels, one holding a crown of roses and another the branch of a rose-tree, while the third holds a hand of each. The Virgin is looking graciously at the saint, who is plunged in meditation. The four holy women watch with quiet attention the gift of the chasuble; the angels alone show their joy by their movements.



HEAD OF A WOMAN — Drawing — Study for one of the figures in the Miracle of St Ildefonso (Albertina, Vienna).

Rubens evidently intended to represent a celestial vision, and the great dramatic painter conceived it as a picture of quiet happiness and peaceful meditation. He struck out the torch-bearers in the sketch as too boisterous; and having first divided the holy women unevenly on either side, he then placed two on the right and two on the left, to obtain more balance and

symmetry. Whether this was intentional or a happy accident, we cannot say; but it seems to us that by this means he came nearer to the arrangement of the old mystical painters, who placed their characters peacefully to right and left of the Madonna. Action and movement are provided by the oblique placing of the groups and the variety of the attitudes, and the convergence of all the faces and eyes towards the centre of the composition gives it cohesion and unity.

The Miracle of St Ildefonso was meant to open up a view of heaven in all its beauty, radiance and happiness. All the beings the artist shows us are beautiful, happy, celestial. The Virgin, the most beautiful of his creations, in all the strength and brilliance of life, with her fresh face and sweet expression, the holy women, young and healthy, and not over opulent of form, the bishop, exalted in a divine ecstasy and the perfectly lovely little angels overflowing with happiness are all celestial figures seen in a vision. But it was in the light and colour that he chiefly sought to express the supernatural vision as he conceived it. Red and gold are the prevailing colours he uses. The head of the Virgin is encircled with a narrow but very bright aureole; in the sky there is a flaming glory in which the little angels play as in their element, and which falls on the throne, making it gleam and glow. Reflexions, some bright and some soft, are scattered round, playing from all quarters, and lighting up everything they meet. From this background of light stands out the most brilliant of colours, red. The Virgin's robe is scarlet, St Agnes's garnet; St Ildefonso has a red stripe round his neck, one of the women has a red ribbon on her arm, another has red roses in her hair, and the little angels' flowers are red too. The same colour sparkles or glows on the rosy bodies of the celestial children, and on the cheeks of Our Lady, the holy women and St Ildefonso. Red and gold are harmonized throughout the picture, and form a sort of luminous vapour in which the whole composition is bathed.

These warm tones are thrown out by colder colours, the blue drapery of the Virgin and St Rosalie, the black robe of the saintly archbishop, the black sleeve of one of the holy women and the yellow-green robe of another. There are no full tones. The priest's black robe is covered with a white surplice through which the dark tint is visible; the white of the woman's robe in the foreground is interrupted by red and gold reflexions. The light is nowhere crude; the scene is penetrated with a soft, warm radiance that refines, gilds and embellishes everything. The painter must have observed these tones and the luminous vapour in some sunset when the western horizon was ablaze with flaming gold and the clouds were lit by pink reflexions. It was thus that Rubens pictured heaven, or at least it was thus that he imagined the celestial vision must have appeared to St Ildefonso when he went to Matins the night before the Annunciation and found the church resplendent with so divine a light that the feeble eyes of his companions could not endure it (1).

The same tone prevails in the two shutters. On the right is the Archduke Albert, clothed in gleaming armour and a brocade cloak edged with ermine, and kneeling before a prie-dieu covered with red velvet. Behind him stands St Albert of Liège, clad in violet, with a large

(1) *Generaele Legende der Heylighen*, 23rd January.

Cardinal's hat on his head and a book in one hand, while with the other he is touching the archduke on the back with a protective gesture. By the prince's side is the crown on a red velvet cushion ; and in the upper part a heavy red drapery hangs between two pillars.

On the right is the Infanta kneeling before a prie-dieu covered with red velvet. She wears a robe of white silk embroidered in gold and trimmed with ermine ; her head and breast are adorned with precious jewels. She has a heavy collar of lace round her neck. Beside her is St Elizabeth of Hungary in a monastic habit, holding a book in both hands ; on the book lies a crown of roses and a crown of laurel above a chased diadem. The archduchess has left off the habit of the Poor Clares which she was wearing in 1630, and returned to her festal robes, and it is now her patron saint who wears the nun's habit. Beside her on the right is her crown on a red velvet cushion ; and above her a red drapery hangs between two pillars. Here again all is rich and brilliant colour, luxury and splendour, as in the principal panel.

On the backs of the shutters Rubens painted the Holy Family. The Virgin, with the infant Jesus in her lap, is sitting under an apple-tree which has a red curtain hanging among the branches. Behind her stands St Joseph, and the little St John is running towards the infant Jesus, with St Elizabeth holding him by both hands. St Joachim is holding out to the Saviour a branch with apples on it which he has just plucked. The colours are clear, gay and strong, very warm in tone and showing a brilliance which contrasts with the harmonious sobriety of the St Ildefonso.

Rubens was assisted by a pupil, probably van Thulden, both in the principal panel and the shutters. He himself painted the principal figures, like the Virgin, St Ildefonso, St Rosalie and the Archdukes. The other figures were prepared by a collaborator and then finished by Rubens ; and, as usual, he gave life and unity to his work by putting in the delicate finishing-touches with his own brush. On the backs of the shutters, which represent the « Virgin with the apple-tree » he painted all the figures except St Joseph and St Joachim, which he merely retouched. The sky is his painting also, and all he left to pupils was the accessories, like the apple-tree, the orchard and the angels. The triptych was placed over the altar of the Confraternity of St Ildefonso, on the left of the high altar in the church of the abbey of Caudenberg at Brussels. It did not stay there long. After the capture of Bois-le-Duc by the Dutch in 1629, a miraculous image of the Virgin was transported thence to Brussels and placed in the church of St Gery. On the 16th May, 1641, this statue was put up over the altar of St Ildefonso, and Rubens's master-piece was hung on one of the walls of the chapel. At the beginning of the eighteenth century it was subjected to a singular transformation. Two joiners of Liège sawed the shutters in two through the thickness ; the two outer halves when joined together formed a single picture. The Confraternity of St Ildefonso had ceased to exist in 1657, and the picture remained the property of the church. The church was destroyed by fire in 1743, but Rubens's master-piece was happily spared. In 1776, the abbot thought of selling it and devoting the money to the rebuilding of the church, and asked the governor, Charles of Lorraine, for the necessary faculty. In the catalogue of the pictures in the monasteries of the newly suppressed order of the Jesuits, the triptych of St Ildefonso appears as destined to be put up to auction. On the 3rd December, 1776, the Empress Maria Theresa gave orders to her minister, Count Starhem-

berg, to buy the picture for the Imperial Gallery at Vienna, which he did at the price of 40.000 florins. The Belgian provinces had to pay that sum for the privilege of sending out of the country one of the finest works of our greatest master. In May, 1777, the St Ildefonso and the altar-pieces taken from the Jesuits' church at Antwerp were on their way to Vienna, where they have ever since formed part of the Imperial Gallery of Painting, which is now in the new Imperial Museum of the Fine Arts.

ALTAR-PIECES. — Rubens painted a number of other altar-pieces during the first five years after his return from London (1630-1634). Among them was the « Last Supper » (*Œuvre*, Nos 265-267) for the altar of the Confraternity of the Holy Sacrament, whose chapel lay at the end of the north aisle of the cathedral at Mechlin. The altar had been built in 1631, but the money to build it with had been provided five or six years before. From the accounts presented by the dean of St Rombout on the 29th November, 1632, to prove the money received and the payments made for the altar-piece, we learn that Catharina Lescuyer had paid Rubens 1000 florins for the large picture and two predellas representing the « Washing of the Feet » and the « Entry into Jerusalem ». The altar-piece was to serve also as a mortuary picture for the tomb of her father. The other legatees and a few donors provided the funds for the building of the altar and the placing of the picture ; the panels alone cost 850 florins. In 1794 the altar-piece and the two predellas were sent to Paris as spoils of war. In 1813 the imperial government presented the « Last Supper » to the Museum at Milan ; the two predellas fell to the Museum at Dijon, and the three pictures are still in these collections.

The central panel represents Christ and the twelve Apostles sitting at a round table in a room like a chapel of Roman architecture. With eyes raised to heaven, he is blessing the bread ; the apostles watch him attentively ; Judas alone sits in the foreground turning away his head with his chin resting on his hand and looks fixedly out of the picture with the oblique glance of a criminal meditating evil designs. Rubens did not take much trouble over the composition of his picture and the arrangement of his figures. He has communicated an intense internal life to the Christ absorbed in prayer and the Judas plunged in meditation on his crime, and it is on these figures that he has concentrated the attention of the spectator. He has principally relied for his effect on the light. On the table stands a lighted candle, and there are two others on a piece of furniture to the right. There is no other light in the room. The taper on the table throws a ruddy glow over the apostles' heads and chests, and casts warm and harmoniously blended tints on the draperies, which shine among the transparent shadows and lend sweetness and softness to the flesh. The torches burning on the piece of furniture on the right light up the backs of Judas and the apostle on either side of him, and throw a dark tone on the traitor's head, which contrasts with the silvery gray that bathes the face of Christ. The light falling from both sides produces great variety of effect ; on the left it wanes and grows less towards the top, and mingles with and loses itself in the shadow on the ground. There is nothing so original and so complicated as this mixture of lights of various degrees of intensity, rivalling each other and striving in concert against the darkness. The light is here brilliant and



ST. TERESA INTERCEDING FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY
(Museum, Antwerp)

copy of the drawing by the Emperor's Gallery at Vienna, which he did at the price of 40,000 florins. The Emperor promised not to pay that sum for the privilege of sending out of the country any one work except of the greatest master. In May, 1777, the St. Ildefonso and the accompanying convent church at Antwerp were on their way to Vienna, where they have remained almost ever since the Imperial Gallery of Painting, which is now in the new building belonging to the Emperor, Art.

Altarpiece.— Rubens painted a number of other altar-pieces during the first five years after his return from London (1630-1634). Among them was the *Last Supper* (No. 204207) for the altar of the Confraternity of the Holy Sacrament, whose chapel lay at the end of the north aisle of the cathedral at Mechlin. The altar had been built in 1631, but the money to build it with had been provided five or six years before. From the accounts presented by the dean of St. Rembaot on the 29th November, 1632, to prove the money received and the payments made for the altarpiece, we learn that Catharina Lesquier had paid Rubens 1000 florins for the large picture and two predellas representing the *Washing of the Feet* and the *Entry into Jerusalem*. The altarpiece was to serve also as a mortuary picture for the tomb of the dean. The other legatees and a few donors provided the funds for the building of the altar and the painting of the picture; the panels alone cost 350 florins. In 1794 the altarpiece and the two predellas were sent to Paris as spoils of war. In 1813 the imperial government presented the *Last Supper* to the Museum at Milan; the two predellas fell to the Museum at Dijon, and the three pictures are still in these collections.

The central panel represent Christ and the twelve apostles, sitting at a round table in a room like a chapel of Roman architecture. With eyes fixed on Christ, he is drinking the blood; the apostles watch him attentively. Judas, alone, out of the group, has turned away his head with his chin resting on his hand and looks broadly out of the picture, with the change of glance of a criminal meditating evil designs. Rubens did not take much interest in the composition of his picture and the arrangement of his figures. He has concentrated his attention on the Christ absorbed in prayer and the Judas charged with remorse on his crime, and it is on these figures that he has concentrated the attention of the picture. He has principally cared for his effect on the light. On the table stands a silver chalice, and there are two others on a piece of furniture to the right. There is no other light in the room. The taper on the table throws a ruddy glow over the apostles' heads and faces, and casts warm and harmoniously blended ones on the napkins, which shine among more transparent shadows and lend sweetness and softness to the flesh. The torches burning on the piece of furniture on the right light up the beard of Judas and the apostle on either side of him, and throw a dark tone on the man's head, which contrasts with the silvery gray that tints the face of Christ. The light falling from both sides produces great variety of effect, but the air it wanes and grows less towards the top, and mingles with and loses itself in the shadow on the ground. There is nothing so original and so complicated as this mixture of lights of various degrees of intensity, swelling soft and clear and agreeing in concert against the darkness. The light is very brilliant and

ST. TERESA INTERCEDING FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY
(Museum, Antwerp)



there soft, turning into a vague glow and passing from twilight to dense shade. The painting is broad and fat ; though heavy and verging on black, it has power. Rubens used the assistance of his pupils ; but all the lighted parts, the heads, the draperies on the right and all that gives life to the work, and the powerful and original effects of artificial light, are certainly by the master's own hand. Jordaens has obviously imitated it in one of his master-pieces, the « Last Supper » in the Museum at Antwerp, just as Rubens borrowed from Titian's pictures of the same subject.

The sketch is in the Hermitage Museum at St Petersburg.

In the following year Rubens painted, again for Mechlin, the « Coronation of St Catherine » (*Œuvre*. N^o 400) which was ordered of him by the Augustine fathers for the altar of St Barbara in their church. In 1633 they paid him 600 florins for it, 100 of them being contributed by the tanners. Later, the picture was put over the altar of St Apolline in the same church, and in 1765 the monks sold the picture to the chevalier Verhulst for 950 florins and two butts of wine estimated at 120 florins. At the sale of the Verhulst collection it was bought by the Duke of Rutland, and is now in his seat of Belvoir Castle. The picture represents the Virgin sitting on a throne under a bower of verdure, with her Son on her lap. The little Jesus is leaning forward to place a crown on the head of St Catherine, who is kneeling before him in the foreground. On one side of the throne stands St Apolline, on the other St Margaret. Beside the latter is an angel with a thunderbolt in his hand. In the sky hover three angels, one of whom is dropping roses, while the others bear a palm and a crown. Waagen praises this picture very highly, and considers it one of Rubens's most attractive master-pieces, characterized in his opinion by warm and transparent colour and intelligent and careful execution (1).

From the same year, about 1633, date two altar-pieces painted by Rubens for the church of the Recollets at Ghent, « St Francis of Assisi receiving the stigmata » (*Œuvre*. N^o 416) which is now in the Museum at Ghent, and « St Francis protecting the world », now in the Museum



FRONTISPIECE FOR *Maphai* (*Urbani VIII*) poemata
Drawing (Plantin-Moretus Museum, Antwerp).

(1) *Art Treasures in Great Britain*, III, p. 399. — SMITH (*Catalogue raisonné*, II, p. 47) gives an inaccurate description of this picture, which he calls a Marriage of St Catherine.

at Brussels (*Œuvre*. N° 425); both of which are works of secondary importance, painted by a pupil, with the flesh and the luminous parts retouched by the master. The first of the two, however, is remarkable for the golden tone in which it is bathed and the beautiful harmony of its sober brown tints; the second for the bold attitude of the Christ, who is in the act of hurling a thunderbolt at the universe, and the dramatic expression of the Virgin, who is staying her Son's arm.

In the same year or the year before, he painted an « Adoration of the Kings » (*Œuvre*. N° 176) for the Benedictine convent at Louvain. Anna van Zeverdonck, prioress of the convent, had a new church built in 1627, which was finished in 1632. She ordered the high altar of an Antwerp sculptor who delivered it in the following year; Rubens painted the retable, the panel and painting of which cost 920 florins, according to the account presented by the sister stewardess to the archbishop's delegate on the 9th March, 1634. The convent having been closed by Joseph II in 1783, the picture was sold at Brussels in September, 1785. It passed through several hands and was bought in 1806 by the Marquis of Westminster, whose family still owns it. The composition is simpler than in other interpretations of the same subject. St Joseph is sitting at one end of the picture; the Virgin has the Child on her lap; before her kneels the eldest of the three kings; behind him comes the second bowing low, and next comes the negro king, standing very upright. Their suite is made up of four servants and a page, and two angels hover in the clouds.

This picture may very probably be the « Adoration of the Kings » on which Rubens was at work in 1631, and which he offered to sell on the 20th June of that year to an Italian named Valguarnera, telling him that it was not quite finished (1).

A sketch, which was formerly in the Saceghem collection at Ghent, is now in the Wallace collection in London.

One of the most remarkable altar-pieces painted by Rubens about this time is a « St Teresa praying for the souls in Purgatory » (*Œuvre*. N° 493) which he carried out for the altar of St Teresa in the church of the Discalced Carmelites at Antwerp. It was taken to Paris in 1794 by the French Republic and returned to Antwerp in 1815. It is now in the Antwerp Museum. It represents Jesus standing in a landscape, his body and legs bare and a drapery round his loins. St Teresa is kneeling before him. Two angels hover in the sky, and a third is rescuing Bernardino de Mendoza, the founder of a Carmelite convent at Valladolid, from the flames of purgatory which blaze at the bottom of the picture with another man and two women burning in them. In the engraving by Schelte a Bolswert there are five figures in purgatory; the head vaguely indicated on the left was added by Rubens after the model supplied to the engraver.

Christ, in a graceful attitude, is hearing St Teresa with a gesture of benevolence; she invokes the Almighty with confident familiarity. Two souls delivered from purgatory are manifesting their joy, and two small angels, hovering in the sky, hold out their hands to help them. None of the figures express suffering or complaint; and the only two who convey the idea of sorrow and desolation are the man lifting his hollow eyes, half blinded by tears,

(1) *Bulletin-Rubens*, III. p. 206.

towards Christ in supplication, and the woman crossing her arms on her breast and turning away her glance. The silvery tone of the picture contributes still further to give a joyful aspect to the scene; the nacreous flesh, the rosy little angels and the pearl-grey shadows make it a pair with the charming « Education of the Virgin », which is the same size and hung close by, though the two pictures were painted at different periods and for different buildings.

Rubens was helped in this picture by one of his pupils, probably van Thulden. The collaboration is more obvious here than in any other work. When he employed an assistant, he used to paint the figures low down in his altar-pieces himself, and leave his pupils to prepare those high up, which he retouched afterwards, and he followed that practice in the present case. The purgatory, which is entirely his own work, is thin and transparent in colour, with the tones well blended: it a splendid piece of work, a master-piece of breadth, sureness and harmony in the effects of light and shade. The upper part, which was prepared by a pupil, is a dull gray, which has been covered by Rubens with clear and nacreous tones that blend very imperfectly with the painting of the ground. It is easy to follow from point to point the places where the master's brush has retouched the figures to give them life and warmth.

The sketch is in the Wuyts Museum at Liege. Here there are only two angels engaged in delivering the souls; and the angel holding out a hand to them has butterfly's wings, not bird's wings as in the picture.

An altar-piece painted between 1630 and 1632 for the church of the Cell belonging to the Dominicans at Liege has little of interest to offer. It is now in the Hermitage Museum at St Petersburg (*Œuvre*. N^o 211). It represents the Virgin holding out a crown of roses to St Dominic. Beside the latter are St Thomas Aquinas, St Isidore, a bishop and a king; in the foreground kneel St Catherine of Siena, a saint and a pope, probably Pius V, who instituted the rosary in commemoration of the battle of Lepanto. The picture is the work of a pupil, rapidly retouched by the master. It was sold in 1767 to count Cobenzl, whose collection passed to the crown of Russia. In 1897, the sketch was in the hands of M. Sedelmeyer of Paris.

SACRED PICTURES. -- Besides altar-pieces Rubens painted other sacred pictures at this period. The subjects of two remarkable compositions were taken from the Old Testament. The first is « Judith giving the head of Holofernes to an old woman » (*Œuvre*. N^o 126), which is now in the Museum at Brunswick. It is a bold painting with the paint strongly laid on by the master himself. Curious effects of light are produced by the candle held by Judith's servant. The flame throws vivid yellowish reflexions on the severed head of Holofernes, the face and hands of Judith, who is a young giantess, and the wrinkled face of the old servant; there are reflexions also playing on the cuirass of Holofernes, which is hanging near the top of the picture. The effects of artificial light are more powerful here and more concentrated than in the « Last Supper ».

Then comes the « Samson taken by the Philistines » in the Pinakothek at Munich (*Œuvre*. N^o 116). Here again we have an effect of artificial light. Delilah is fair and ample; wrapped in

a light and almost transparent robe of gauze, with her legs covered by a grey-blue drapery which is slipping from the couch on to the ground, she is half raising herself on the bed she has shared with Samson. With the shears in her hand she is looking mockingly at the giant who is being strangled. He still has one knee on the frame of the bed; his brown skin and his rage contrast with the whiteness and gaiety of Delilah. The scene is lighted in the background by a torch held up by one of the soldiers come to seize Samson, and in the foreground by the rising of dawn. The double light that results gives the painter an opportunity of combining the effect of daylight with that of artificial light. The picture is a superb piece of painting entirely by the master, and dates from about 1634. The model who sat for Samson is the same as the Judas of the « Last Supper »; the old woman standing by Delilah's pillow is the same as Judith's servant and the woman feeding the peacocks in the picture of Rubens walking with Helena Fourment.

MYTHOLOGICAL PICTURES. — Rubens treated few subjects at this period taken from mythology. The most important is the « Sacrifice to Venus » in the Imperial Museum at Vienna (*Œuvre*. N^o 705). The picture is a large one, containing three groups glorifying the power of the goddess of love. Rubens has laid the scene in enchanting surroundings. On the right is a group of large trees interposing the slight screen of their leaves against the light; on the left is a grotto with a spring flowing from the rock at its entrance; the water falls into a pool from which it overflows. Above the grotto rises an arch surmounting a temple of the nymphs in the form of a cupola supported by pillars. Between the grotto and the trees the country lies open. From both sides and through the foliage rays of light inundate the scene with soft warm brightness which gives a festal air to everything. All, indeed, is joy and gladness; a band of little loves are hanging heavy garlands of fruit on the trees, and a red hanging passed between the branches forms a brilliant canopy above the marble statue of the goddess which stands against the trunk of a tree in the middle of the picture. The statue represents a Venus of opulent mould and rich flesh, such as Greek nor Roman ever imagined in dreams nor realised in marble, but standing for Rubens's conception of the goddess of beauty. At the foot of the statue is a tripod with a vessel on it from which rises the smoke of perfumes thrown on by a priestess, while another is presenting a mirror to the goddess, and a third drapes the leg of the statue with a white fabric. In the foreground a dance of children winds in long rings round the pedestal. On the right two little loves are kissing on the grass; from the same side two women advance carrying statuettes which they have come to offer to the goddess, and in the middle distance two bacchantes led by a satyr run forward singing and playing on the castanets and a tambourine. The most important group is on the left; three satyrs dancing with three nearly nude women. And such a dance! Venus has heard the prayer of these couples, and has kindled all the fires of love in their breasts; not the peaceful flame of the first timid and dreamy fancy of youth, but the fleshly and brutal passion of the vigorous male desiring the robust female. One of the satyrs is lifting up his young and powerful companion as if he would carry her off; another is embracing his, while she bends in his



THE OFFERING TO VENUS
Imperial Museum, Vienna

of the bed, which is draped with a blue and white striped fabric, is lit by a grey-blue drapery, which is draped over the headboard and is lit by a small lamp. The bed is lit by a small lamp. The woman is lying on the bed, looking at the camera. She is wearing a blue and white striped dress. The man is sitting on the bed, looking at the camera. He is wearing a blue and white striped shirt and a blue and white striped tie. The scene is lit by a small lamp. The woman is lying on the bed, looking at the camera. She is wearing a blue and white striped dress. The man is sitting on the bed, looking at the camera. He is wearing a blue and white striped shirt and a blue and white striped tie. The scene is lit by a small lamp.

Roberts' treatment of the subject is a fine example of his style. The scene is lit by a small lamp. The woman is lying on the bed, looking at the camera. She is wearing a blue and white striped dress. The man is sitting on the bed, looking at the camera. He is wearing a blue and white striped shirt and a blue and white striped tie. The scene is lit by a small lamp. The woman is lying on the bed, looking at the camera. She is wearing a blue and white striped dress. The man is sitting on the bed, looking at the camera. He is wearing a blue and white striped shirt and a blue and white striped tie. The scene is lit by a small lamp.

THE OFFERING TO VENUS
(Imperial Museum, Vienna)



Persepolis, die Götter, die Götter, die Götter.

grasp and brings her lips to his in a lascivious kiss, and the third has seized his prey by the hands and throws himself back as he hauls her to him. Each of the three has fastened on to the woman he desires, and is clasping and overpowering her, to possess her wholly in a frenzied and insatiable transport. And for their part the fair, plump and seductive beauties, driven by the irresistible power of Venus, give themselves up without resistance to the bestial passion of their lovers.

The scene is a hymn to the goddess of love, sung at the pitch of the voice with transports of intoxication; nothing could be less like commonplace and mechanical praise than this fiery and enthusiastic hymn. Rubens never restrained his adoration of the carnal Venus. In this picture he pays her graceful homage, surrounding her with all that he found most beautiful, glowing golden light, trees with thick foliage to filter the rays of the sun, children with plump limbs, women with white and opulent flesh, sumptuous buildings and delicious landscape. He has painted it all in broad rich strokes, every one of which sets it overflowing with light and life.

We believe him to have created this master-piece in the early days of his second marriage, in 1630-1631, in a frenzy of love for his young companion and as an act of grateful homage for the gift he had received from the goddess of pleasure. And therefore he has given his wife a place of honour in the picture; she it is whom the satyr on the extreme left is holding at arm's length, as if to glorify himself and hold her up for our admiration. Calm and playful, she allows him to do it, while still rather keeping him off than encouraging him. In spite of his roughness, the passion of the male reveals itself more respectfully than that of his two companions.

Rubens borrowed several of the ideas for his *◀ Sacrifice to Venus ▶* from Titian's picture of the same subject, which he had copied in Rome (*Œuvre*, N^o 706). The bacchante, for instance, who is presenting the mirror to Venus occurs in the work of the Venetian painter, and so do the loves sitting on the ground and kissing each other, and the others playing among the leaves.

Rubens glorified his young wife in quite another style in the *◀ Diana and her train surprised by a satyr ▶* (*Œuvre*, N^o 586). Here Helena Fourment is the goddess of the chase and of chastity. One of her nymphs, upon whom a satyr has thrown himself in a fury of bestial desire, is resisting her brutal aggressor with violence; two other nymphs, who are not so shy, look on at the scene and smile. Diana is a fair goddess with sunny golden hair and wide dreamy eyes. With breast exposed and naked legs, and a red drapery and a tiger-skin about her loins, she remains unmoved and indifferent to what is happening, absent-mindedly caressing the greyhound standing close to her. She is as beautiful as a Greek cameo, and the whole group recalls the graceful and cleverly arranged little scenes of ancient art, in which all the parts are balanced without effort and in the happiest manner. Before 1749 the picture had passed from the collection of Count Cobenzl, into that of William III, landgrave of Hesse, and is now in the Museum at Cassel.

There is another copy of it in existence (*Œuvre*, N^o 587) with very slight modifications, painted by pupils and retouched by the master. It was lately the property of Sir Thomas Baring in London.

A subject which Rubens had treated twenty-five years before « Ericthonius in his basket discovered by the daughters of Cecrops » gave him the idea at this time, with certain modifications, for a picture which belonged to the duke de Richelieu in the second half of the seventeenth century, and is now the property of the duke of Rutland (*Œuvre*. N^o 607). In 1676, Philip Rubens wrote to Roger de Piles that this picture had been painted between 1630 and 1640. Waagen states it to be clear, brilliant and delicate in tone. There is a sketch for it in the Museum at Stockholm.

« Plenty » (*Œuvre*. N^o 824), an allegorical picture of the same period, is now in the possession of Baron Edmond de Rothschild of Paris, who bought it in 1884 from the duke of Marlborough for the enormous price of £20,000. It represents three women picking fruit from an apple-tree in which is perched a little love. The apples, which lie on the ground and fill two baskets besides the apron of one of the women, are by Snijders; the women were painted or at any rate repainted by the master. The tone is warm and the painting rich. The picture is not altogether of the highest order, and it is surprising that, while it was still the property of the duke of Marlborough, the director of the National Gallery in London should have valued it at £40,000.

THOMYRIS AND CYRUS. — Far more important is the only work of this period that takes its subject from history, the « Thomyris and Cyrus » (*Œuvre*. N^o 792) now in the Louvre. Rubens had treated the same subject ten years before in the decorative style of the Medici Gallery; he now interpreted it after his new manner in which the painter and colourist are stronger than the draughtsman. The action is reduced and concentrated. Instead of seventeen figures there are only nine, and of two of them the heads are all that is visible. In spite of its vivid horror, the drama is only of secondary importance.

The queen is seated on a throne raised on four steps covered by a variegated oriental carpet; above her hangs a red velvet canopy. She wears a robe of white silk embroidered with gold flowers and a cloak of the same stuff embroidered with figures in gold thread and trimmed with ermine. On her right arm appears the red sleeve of an under dress, and a black lace veil hangs from her head over her shoulders. Her feet rest on a blue cushion. On the queen's left are two young maids of honour, whom we have already seen in the « Miracle of St Ildefonso » under the names of St Barbara and St Catherine. One is a brunette and wears an amber-coloured robe with a blue drapery over it. Of the other we only see the fair head. Behind them is an old woman who is to be seen in a number of Rubens's pictures, and who becomes older and older as the pictures become later in date. Here she is an ugly old crone with toothless jaws, hollow cheeks and a nut-cracker chin. On the queen's right are two soldiers wearing Roman helmets with white plumes, and two courtiers, one in a turban and the other in a Hungarian cap and a red robe. Between the courtiers is the executioner bowing with the severed head in his hand. Against the vessel over which he holds it is a little dog standing ready to lick the blood as it drips. Above hangs a red drapery, and a glimpse of blue sky can be seen between it and the twisted pillar that closes the composition on the left.

The drama, as we said, is a secondary matter. Instead of looking attentively or in horror, as in the first picture, at the dreadful object presented to her, the queen merely casts a cold and indifferent glance at it; her handsome and richly dressed women remain as impassive as herself, while the fair-haired maid of honour looks with interest at the executioner. On the opposite side the men are stiff with importance under their rich-coloured garments; the older of them is looking on with an air of dignity at a scene which appears to him too unimportant to be worth much notice; the younger alone pays any attention, looking calmly to see if the deed has been well done. But the executioner's face is drawn in a cruel smile, and his strong and knotty arm is eloquent of violence and murder.

The real subject of the picture is the infinite play of light and colour, and what Rubens here shows us in that order has never been surpassed. In the centre, we have the queen's white silk robe with gold embroidery, partly bathed in light, partly veiled in transparent shadow; on the right, the ample amber-coloured robe of the maid of honour, the folds of which are spangled by the light, while it throws up her blue veil and purple sleeve; on the side where the men are, we have the broad red garment, the fur bonnet and tan boots; in the foreground the blue cushion, the oriental carpet, the black and white dog and the precious vessel; in the upper part, the red drapery, the clear sky and the richly worked pillar. And dominating the whole is the luminous flesh, the softest and most brilliant of all, the living part of the picture, for which the rest of it only serves as a setting.

The effects of light are still more splendid. It falls from the upper right-hand corner, bathes the women's heads in clear brightness, and passes on to fall full on the face of the man in red and the naked arm of the executioner. It glides from the blue drapery of one of the women on to her amber-coloured robe, making the folds of it sparkle, and goes on, growing softer, but still powerful, to caress the gold-flowered, white silk robe of the queen and the courtier's red cloak. At top and bottom it is veiled, but remains transparent and rich, casting no black spots nor thick shadows, but full of life and vibration, blending the colours and softening the outlines, like a magic ring in the artist's hand.

PORTRAITS. — Some of the portraits of this period represent Rubens's relatives or friends. First comes Susanna Fourment, his sister-in-law, with her daughter Catharina (*Œuvre*. N^o 952). The mother is sitting in an arm-chair, with one hand resting on the arm, and the other holding her daughter's. She is richly dressed, in a red and white striped skirt, a black jacket, a lace collar and a golden yellow bodice. The child has a red hat, and is looking at the spectator and laughing. The picture is unquestionably a Rubens, though it was formerly attributed to Vandyck. Susanna is wearing the same dress, the same jacket and the same triple row of pearls round her neck as Isabella Brant wears in the portrait in the Hermitage, and Susanna herself in the portrait in the Louvre. The picture dates from about 1630. It is some ten years later, therefore, than the *Chapeau de paille* in the National Gallery. Susanna Fourment had married a second husband, Arnold Lunden, and bore him two children, Arnold, born the 25th March, 1623, and Catharina, born the 2nd April, 1625; the latter, aged then about five, is the child with which

Rubens painted her about 1630. The picture passed from the Gaillard de Gagny collection into the Choiseul, and thence to the Hermitage. The figures are by Rubens, the accessories by a pupil, while the light that falls on the drapery is by the master.

Among the men with whom Rubens kept up a constant acquaintance we must mention Michael Ophovius. He was born at Bois-le-Duc in 1571, and appointed bishop of his native town in 1627. Two years later, the capture of Bois-le-Duc by the prince of Orange compelled



THOMYRIS AND CYRUS (Louvre, Paris).

him to settle in Antwerp, whence he moved in 1636 to Lier, and died there on the 4th November, 1637. He was buried at Antwerp in the choir of the church of the Dominicans, the order to which he belonged. Ophovius had played an important part in those troubled times. He was at the head of the missions which left this country to visit the separated provinces and even as far as Scandinavia, to combat heresy and attempt to bring back the Protestants within the fold of the church. When driven from his episcopal see, he continued to fulfil his pastoral functions, and travelled incessantly in northern Brabant, preaching and performing the duties of his office. Before becoming a bishop he had shown great activity as a missionary in the northern provinces and also as a political agent of the Infanta Isabella. In 1623, when he tried to persuade the commandant of Heusden to

surrender the place, he was arrested and held prisoner for eight months. It has been said that he was Rubens's confessor, though it is not proved; there is more foundation for the statement that the artist designed his tomb. The bishop kept a diary from the 4th August, 1629 to the 1st January, 1632. On the 7th August, 1631, he notes: 'I went to see Rubens at his house', and on the following day: 'I supped at the margrave's with Mr van Oncle, Rubens, the superior of Dordrecht, Madame Ridderspoore and her daughter and Mr Bocquet', and on Saturday the 23rd August, 1631; 'After the assembly of the bishops, I supped with Mr Montfort; present, Rubens and his wife and the king of England's agent and his wife'.

Gerbier and his wife, no doubt, are meant. On the 4th February, 1631, he mentions his tomb :
 • I went to see Rubens to make the arrangements about my tomb .

Rubens painted two portraits of Ophovius. One was in the Dominican monastery at Antwerp, and is now in the Royal Museum of Fine Art at The Hague (*Œuvre*. N^o 1013). Ophovius wears his Dominican habit, a white frock and black hood : with his left hand he is holding the right side of his cloak against his waist, while the right is extended with the gesture of a preacher. He is a hale man of sixty, with small bright eyes, thick hair still auburn, a wide jaw and a large mouth. He is the type of a sectary of complete conviction, a man of battle rather than of peace. The painting is straightforward and full of life and reality. The dark and powerful head stands out strongly against the background ; the light falls in waves over the white robe, the gesture is restrained and the attitude full of firmness and very natural. The painting is as robust as the sitter.

There is another portrait of him at the Seminary of Haaren near Bois-le-Duc.

Rubens painted two other priests, both abbots of St Michael. The first is Mathias Yrselius (*Œuvre*. N^o 1081), who died in 1629. His portrait is in the Royal Museum at Copenhagen. He is dressed in his white habit, and wears a beard ; his hair is gray and his hands are clasped. His crozier and mitre lie beside him on a table ; at the top in one corner are his arms with the motto *Omnibus omnia*. The picture is wonderfully effective ; the abbot's white robe stands out strongly against the red background, and his pale face comes between these two extreme notes. The painting is very fat and prodigiously strong and brilliant.



MICHAEL OPHOVIUS (Museum, The Hague).

The other portrait of an abbot is that of Joannes Chrysostomus van der Sterre, Yrselius's successor, which was in the abbot's lodging till 1770, and then disappeared (*Œuvre*. N^o 1070). Van der Sterre probably had his predecessor's portrait painted at the same time as his own. The supposition is corroborated by a statement in his biography that he had all his predecessors painted in one large picture, in which he appears himself in the guise of the first abbot Waltman, receiving the crozier from the hands of St Norbert, the founder of the Premonstratensians.

Among the well known people whose portraits were painted by Rubens between 1630 and 1634 we may mention Sir Thomas More, copied after Holbein, in the Museum at Madrid (*Œuvre*. No 1007); Francesco de Moncada, marquis of Aytona, who commanded the Spanish forces in this country from the death of the Infanta Isabella till the arrival of her successor, the Cardinal Infant. The latter is very coarsely painted, only the head being by Rubens. It is in the possession of the Reverend Denis Jeandel (*Œuvre*. No 1004).

There are also a number of portraits of persons unknown to be mentioned. In the Museum at Brunswick there is a man almost bald (*Œuvre*. No 1086) with a full beard, seen three-quarter-length with his right hand laid on the arm of a chair and his gloves in his left.

In the Pinakothek at Munich there is a thickly painted bust of a young woman with fair hair taken up in little curls round her forehead; her eyes are large and her features regular. She wears a black bodice and a light gauze scarf (*Œuvre*. No 1108).

In the Imperial Museum at Vienna there is a young woman, half-length, with a necklace of two rows of pearls, a wide open collar, a small bodice of white muslin and a black dress. Her right hand holds her muff. The painting is thin and without modelling (*Œuvre*. No 1126).

The same collection has a grey-haired old man wearing a pleated ruff, a black suit and a brown cloak; the painting is broad, and a fine grey in tone (*Œuvre*. No 1130).

In the Museum at Dresden there is an old priest (*Œuvre*. No 1096) painted head and shoulders: he has a bald forehead and silky hair and wears a red chasuble edged with gold. It is a very noticeable picture, signed *P. P. R. 1634 f.* Possibly it is only a study, for Rubens used it in his « Herod's Banquet », where he appears as the guest in the middle who is raising his eyes to look over his neighbour's shoulder.

To the same period belongs a whole series of portraits painted by Rubens for his friend Balthasar Moretus, which are now in the Plantin-Moretus Museum (*Œuvre*. Nos 961, 1003, 1005, 1014, 1015, 1031, 1034). The ledger of the Plantin press for the years 1624 to 1655 contains the account of what was due to the artist from 1620 to the 12th April, 1636. It mentions the following pictures by Rubens: « The Virgin and Child, St Joseph, St Gaspar, St Melchior and St Balthasar », of which we have spoken before, two pictures on panel of « Christ » and the « Virgin Mary », and seven portraits also on panel, of Petrus Plantinus, Arias Montanus, Abraham Ortelius, Jacob Moretus, Joanna Rivière, Martina Plantin and Adriana Gras. The first three were celebrated scholars whose works had been published by the Plantin press; Jacob Moretus and Adriana Gras were the grandfather and grandmother of Balthasar Moretus. Martina Plantin was his mother and Joanna Rivière, Plantin's wife, was his grandmother. All these pictures were painted to adorn the great hall in Plantin's house, now the Plantin-Moretus Museum, where they were placed above the cornice. Rubens had hardly known any of the people represented, and must have painted them after earlier portraits. The pictures are works of second-rate merit, which were paid for at 24 florins apiece. Moretus valued them at not more than 14 florins 8 stuivers, but Rubens held firm and the printer was obliged to pay him the price he asked. We know that one of these portraits, that of Petrus Plantinus, was painted in July, 1633 (1); the others had been painted shortly before.

(1) Balthasar Moretus wrote to Louis-Joseph d'Huvertère on the 29th July, 1633: « Repperit tandem Rubenius effigiem D. Pantini p. m. eamque mihi ad exemplar tuum depinxit ». (Archives of the Plantin-Moretus Museum).

FRONTISPIECES OF BOOKS. — During this period Rubens produced for his friend Balthasar Moretus and the Plantin press a whole series of frontispieces and portraits intended for the engravers. In 1630, soon after his return, he drew a vignette for the title-page of *Balthasaris Corderii Catena Patrum Græcorum in Sanctum Joannem*, a work published the same year by Balthasar Moretus. The vignette represents an allegory of the marriage celebrated in 1631 between the Archduke of Austria, afterwards Ferdinand III, to whom the book was dedicated, and the Infanta Anna Maria of Spain. Rubens made the drawing while he himself was betrothed, and produced a very happy composition, at once rich and sober (*Œuvre*. N^o 1265).

In 1631 he designed a frontispiece for the works of Ludovicus Blosius which were published the next year by Balthasar Moretus, edited by Antonius de Winghe, abbot of Lessines. The original drawing is in the British Museum, in London (*Œuvre*. N^o 1246).

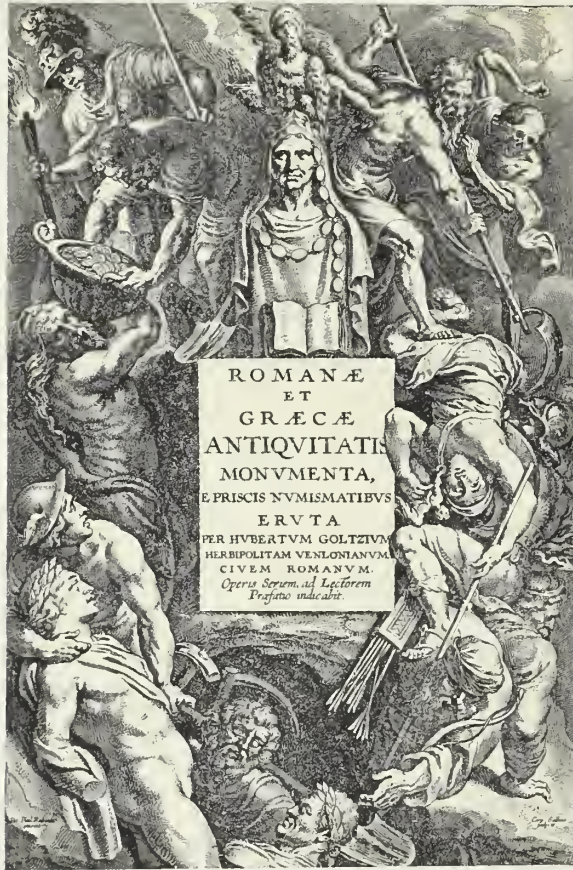
In 1631 or 1632 he designed the general frontispiece for the works of Hubert Goltzius, which Balthasar Moretus was proposing to republish (*Œuvre*. N^o 1272). The work did not appear till 1645, but the cost of the engraving was paid on the 18th June, 1632, to Theodoor Galle, who had had Rubens's drawing engraved on copper by his brother Cornelis. The painter was greatly interested in the works of the famous archaeologist and authority on Graeco-Roman numismatics. To him and his friends, who were all amateurs of coins and engraved stones, the book was a *vade-mecum* which they consulted daily. Jacob De Bie had bought the plates engraved by Goltzius for the first edition of his works, and had prepared a new edition of them between 1617 and 1620; Rubens had then designed the frontispiece of one of the four volumes. The edition was a bad speculation for De Bie who was obliged to dispose of the unsold copies and the copper plates engraved by Goltzius. Rubens bought them and sold them again to Balthasar Moretus. On the 27th November, 1630, Moretus acknowledges that he owes the painter 4920 florins for 328 copies of the works of Goltzius, at the rate of 15 florins apiece; payment was to be made by three instalments, and on the second payment 300 florins more were added for a certain number of copies not comprised in the first sale. The copper plates were valued at 1000 florins more, which Moretus was allowed to settle in books. The buyer used the copies thus acquired to make a new edition of the works of Goltzius by reprinting the title-pages and adding an introduction. The wood-cuts in two colours, for the volume which contained the Roman emperors, were lost. Moretus had new ones made of the same kind for his fifth volume (*Œuvre*. N^o 1274). Rubens was commissioned to draw some portraits of the last emperors of Germany, and Christoffel Jegher engraved all the plates under Rubens's supervision. The frontispiece of this fifth volume, which is commonly attributed to Rubens, was executed by Erasmus Quellin, probably under the master's direction (*Œuvre*. N^o 1273).

In 1632 Rubens designed the frontispiece for the works of Dionysius the Areopagite, which were published by Moretus in 1634; he also designed the vignette in the second volume (*Œuvre*. N^{os} 1266, 1267).

In 1632, again, he made the frontispiece for *Matthiae Casimiri Sarbievii e Soc. Jesu Lyricorum libri IV*, which was published the same year (*Œuvre*. N^o 1303).

In 1632 or at the beginning of 1633 he designed the frontispiece for *Silvestri Petrasanctæ de Symbolis Heroicis libri IX*. The engraving was paid for on the 12th April, 1633, and the book was published in 1634 (*Œuvre*. N^o 1292).

From 1634 date a number of frontispieces; those of *Bernardi Bauhnsii et Balduini Cabillavi Epigrammata*, *Caroli Malapertii Poemata* (*Œuvre*. N^o 1241), *Jacobi Bidermani Heroum Epistolæ, Epigrammata et Herodias* (*Œuvre*. N^o 1245), and *Benedicti Hæfteni Regia*



FRONTISPIECE FOR THE WORKS OF HUBERT GOLTZIUS
(After the engraving by Cornelis Galle).

ity, often has a monumental appearance.

He is wonderfully skilful in finding figures appropriate to the subject of the book. The composition is generally well arranged, sometimes a little daring and enigmatic to those who are not familiar with the art of deciphering rebuses. But once the meaning is grasped, one can only wonder at the astonishing cleverness of the invention and the power of the interpretation. Take two of these frontispieces as examples. We select them, not because they are superior to the rest, but because the subjects have been more amply described by those who helped Rubens to choose them, or to whom he himself explained them. The first is the graceful and comparatively simple plate for the *Peinture de la Sérénissime princesse Isabelle-Claire-Eugénie*,

via Crucis (*Œuvre*. N^o 1275); that of the *Latin poems of Pope Urban VIII* and the portrait of the poet which adorns the volume (*Œuvre*. Nos 1285, 1286); and that of the *Peinture de la Sérénissime princesse Isabelle-Claire-Engénie* by Tristan Lhermite (*Œuvre*. N^o 1310); all of which were done for the Plantin press; and last that of *Oliveri Bonarti in Ecclesiasticum Commentarius*, published by Jan Meursius (*Œuvre*. N^o 1247).

All these plates were engraved by Cornelis Galle the elder, except that for Jacob Biderman's poems, which was executed by Charles Mallery. Rubens received 20 florins for each folio frontispiece, 12 florins for each 4to, 8 florins for each 8vo and 5 florins for each 24mo. The frontispieces belonging to his latest period are the finest he produced; his pencil, like his brush, had gained in breadth, in freedom and in boldness, and consequently in individuality. He is unrivalled in the combination of various elements in a frontispiece, historical or allegorical figures, architectural or decorative motifs, and in uniting them into a harmonious whole, which, in spite of its complex-



THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS
National Gallery, London



which shows the portrait of the Infanta on a pedestal shaped like an ancient altar, on which the title of the book is engraved. In a letter of the 29th January, 1634, to Philippe Chifflet, Balthasar Moretus describes the composition thus : Hesperus, the Evening Star, hanging above the head of the pious princess signifies Spain, her country ; the chain of coins, the line of her ancestors. On the right are the imperial crown, the laurel and the sceptre, indicating that she is the daughter of Philip II, the grand-daughter of the Emperor Charles V, and the descendant of the many illustrious Emperors of the house of Austria. On the left is a bunch of lilies, showing that she has the blood of the Valois in her veins. The caduceus and the thunderbolt borne by the genii on either side of her portrait symbolise the wars she waged and the peace she procured. In the middle stands an ancient altar of Salus, with serpents rising against it, as it appears on Roman coins. The turtle-dove in the lower part is the symbol of widowhood ; the rudder and the globe on which the bird is standing signify that Belgium owed her safety to the Infanta's government .

The frontispiece to the archaeological works of Hubert Goltzius is more complicated and even overloaded ; it is, in fact, one of Rubens's least happy productions of this kind. There is no doubt that Rubens's friend Gevartius helped him to find appropriate allegories, and hampered the taste of the artist by his scholastic erudition. Gevartius himself has explained the frontispiece in his preface to the first volume, a task by no means useless to those who wish to decipher this enigma. « The plate », he writes, « which is composed and signed



FRONTISPIECE FOR *François Tristan, La Peinture de la Sérénissime princesse Isabelle-Claire-Eugénie* (After the engraving by Cornelis Galle).

by the chevalier Peter Paul Rubens, the Apelles of our age, represents the renaissance of antiquity. At the top, on the left, is Time, in the form of a winged old man, with a reaping hook in his hand, and beside him Death, who is hurling into the gulf of the past figures representing Rome, Macedon, Persia and Media . Then follows a detailed description of the four allegorical figures falling on the right of the composition. The learned author goes on : On the right of the frontispiece we see Mercury, with his winged cap on his head ; in one hand he has a pickaxe with which he has just unearthed the busts of Greek and Roman generals that lie beside him. With the other hand he is exhuming the statue, almost uninjured, of a Roman emperor crowned with laurel and wrapped in his military cloak. A little higher

» up is Hercules, draped in his lion's skin, holding up a vessel full of coins to a lightly-clad
 » slave. Minerva, the goddess of the arts, with helmet on head and a torch in her hand, is
 » reading and explaining the coins of kings and emperors which have just been dug up. At
 » the top of the frontispiece is the bust of Antiquity, crowned with laurel and adorned with a
 » chain composed of coins of all sorts. An open book resting against the breast of the bust
 » stands for the history and explanation of the coins. The Phœnix, symbol of New Birth and
 » of Eternity, is perched on the head of Antiquity. In the centre of the design is a square
 tablet bearing the title of the book, and all these allegories are grouped about it.

About 1634 Rubens designed the frame-work of the title of a thesis in honour of the order of St Francis and the imperial house of Austria. The principal figure is St Francis on his knees, holding three terrestrial globes (*Œuvre*. N^o 1231). The plate was engraved by Paul Pontius, and the grisaille, which was seen at the Secretan sale (Paris, 1859) now belongs to Mr. John G. Johnson of Philadelphia. The design includes the Cardinal-Infant in ecclesiastical costume, and Balthasar Carlos, the heir apparent of Spain, who was born in 1629, and was then five years old.



THE PORTICO OF THE EMPERORS (Erected on the Meir at the Entry of the Cardinal-Infant.
 After the engraving by Th. van Thulden).



THE CARDINAL-INFANT SALUTED BY THE MAID OF ANTWERP NEAR THE GATE OF ST. GEORGE
(After the engraving by Th. van Thulden).

CHAPTER X

THE LAST YEARS 1635-1640

THE ENTRY OF THE CARDINAL-INFANT — PURCHASE OF THE LORDSHIP OF STEEN —
LANDSCAPES — OTHER PICTURES OF THE LAST YEARS -- PUPILS AND COLLABORATORS —
ILLNESS — DEATH — PROPERTY — MORTUARY CHAPEL — CONCLUSION.



THE THEATRE OF WELCOME — Sketch
(Hermitage, St Petersburg).

THE ENTRY OF THE CARDINAL-INFANT. —
Immediately after the death of the Archduke Albert in 1621 the court of Madrid had thought of sending one of the brothers of Philip IV to Brussels, to be brought up there and familiarised with the manners and status of the country, and thus prepared to succeed the Infanta Isabella. The governor was then fifty-five, the times were threatening to become difficult, and it was natural to send an Infant to her assistance. It was good policy also to put a prince of the blood at the head of so important a possession, in order to preserve the shadow of independence which our provinces had lost by the death of the archduke. They thought first of the king's eldest

brother, Don Carlos, but Ferdinand was soon chosen in his place. A royal decree, dated the 7th September, 1623, but kept secret, appointed him the Infanta Isabella's successor. He was born on the 16th May, 1609, and was only nine years old when he was raised to the archbishopric of Toledo, the first and most important diocese in the country. Two years later he received the hat. But neither his abilities nor his tastes were those of a priest. Ferdinand was the ablest of the sons of Philip III, and from infancy he had shown a vocation for the profession of arms. At twenty, when for the first time he took his place by the king's side at the Council of State, he said to him : " Rid me of these cardinal's robes, that I may be able to go to the war ". He was an active young man of keen intelligence, and a fearless hunter ; later, he proved himself a clever statesman and general. Physically also he was the best endowed of the royal princes, being fair and slim with large eyes and an intelligent countenance. But his health was weak.

Rubens painted him first at Madrid, in cardinal's robes. In this portrait, which is in the Pinakothek at Munich (*Œuvre*. N^o 928), the fair young man with his awkward air, his humid blue eyes and short hair, looks like anything rather than a priest, and seems ill at ease in his red robe. When Ferdinand arrived in these provinces Rubens painted him in armour half-length, in a cuirass, with a commander's staff in his hand, his long curly hair falling over his shoulders, a red scarf across his breast, and standing in a dashing attitude. This picture recently passed from the collection of Mr. Vernon Smith into that of Mr. Pierpont Morgan, and there is a replica of it in the Museum at Buda-Pesth. The face is pale, and the light falls on the cuirass in silvery rays, which are very bright on the chest and duller on the hip and arm ; brilliant light falls also on the golden brown curtain which is reflected on the shoulder-piece of the armour, as the red scarf is on the breast-plate and the gleaming hilt of the sword on the thigh. Rubens never painted anything stronger in light and colour ; it is unquestionably the most brilliant portrait he ever produced. He painted the prince again on horseback. In this portrait, which is in the Museum at Madrid (*Œuvre*. N^o 930), he appears as a handsome man sitting with easy confidence on his rearing steed. He has long curly hair and a fine moustache. He is still fragile of figure, and his glance is feverish, but it is clear that he enjoys life and is worthy to rule.

Like his brother, Ferdinand loved the arts, women and the chase, but he was not an everrated idler like Philip IV. He took as much interest as his brother in Rubens's work, on the progress of which he regularly sent news to the king during his residence in our provinces. His campaigns absorbed nearly all the time he spent in this country, and with all the pride of a true-born Spaniard he seems to have had little sympathy with the Flemings, who nevertheless for their part were very fond of him. In 1639 he had been present at the great kermesse at Antwerp : " Yesterday, " he wrote to his brother, " they held their great festival — here called the kermesse ; a great procession went out with many triumphal cars ; in my opinion it was finer than at Brussels. After the procession they all went to eat and drink, and to end with they were all drunk, for without that they do not think it a festival here. The people here really live like beasts " (1).

(1) *Cierto que viven como bestias en esta parte.* (Lettre of the 29th August, 1639, in JUSTI, *Velasquez*, II, 408).

The plan formed in 1623 was not carried out at once, but it was never given up. On the 1st July, 1627, Rubens wrote again to Pierre Dupuy that the dispatch of Prince Ferdinand as successor to the Infanta was announced from Spain. In 1631, when Isabella was on the point of turning sixty, the king thought it time to carry out the design formed eight years before, which had always been opposed by Olivarez, who considered that Ferdinand's influence would endanger his power. But first of all the future governor of the Netherlands must be appointed to govern one of the provinces of Spain for a year, and be initiated into affairs of state. In this country it was hoped that the Cardinal-Infant would be placed beside his aunt, to be acquainted by her with the course of the country's affairs. (2)

On the 12th April, 1632, he left Madrid with the king and Don Carlos for Barcelona, where he was to spend a year as governor of Catalonia. On the 10th April of the following year he embarked for Genoa, and thence continued his voyage to Milan, where he was to spend some time learning politics and war. He was there when Isabella died on the 1st December, 1633. As Ferdinand was not yet ready to start for the Netherlands, the government was entrusted for a time to the marquis of Aytona. At last, on the 30th June, 1634, the Infant set out for these provinces. He crossed the Alps with a considerable body of troops. On reaching Germany he found himself in the neighbourhood of the Austrian army under the command of Ferdinand, king of Hungary, who was marching against the Protestants and Swedes led by Bernard of Saxe-Weimar. The leader of the Catholic army invited Ferdinand to join forces with him to fight the enemies of the house of Austria and the Catholic religion. He consented, and on the 5th and 6th September, 1634, a meeting took place under the walls of Nordlingen in Bavaria. The battle was desperate and the defeat of the Swedes complete, and all southern Germany fell again into the emperor's power.



THE CARDINAL-INFANT FERDINAND (Picpoint Morgan Collection).

(1) Letter of Balthasar Moretus to Jan van Vucht, 21 May 1632 (Archives of the Plantin-Moretus Museum).

After this victory, in which the Cardinal-Infant made a brilliant *début* as a commander-in-chief, he resumed his journey to the Netherlands, reached Brussels on the 4th November and made his entry. Nine days later, the Magistrate of Antwerp invited him to make his entry into that city also. He was to arrive by the Schelde, so as to escape the crowd. The municipal authorities decided to ask the merchants of various nationalities settled in Antwerp to erect triumphal arches and decorate the streets on the occasion of the prince's entry (1). It seems strange to read of foreign merchants established in Antwerp in 1634, half a century after the closing of the Schelde; but it is less surprising that the Portuguese were the only ones to respond to the suggestion. In November the designs were made for the triumphal arches to be erected by the town at its own expense. First, two were proposed, the arch of Ferdinand, in the lange Nieuwstraat near the Bourse, and the arch of Philip in the Huidevetterstraat. The first was to be 60 feet high and 40 wide, with a depth of 26 feet, and was contracted for at a sum of 2999 florins; the other was to be 55 feet high, 38 feet wide and 28 feet deep and was to cost 3525 florins. At the beginning of December they contracted for a stage to be built on the Mechelsche plein near the church of St George, a portico on the Meir near the Clarenstraat, and a stage on the bank of the river near the Watermill; the portico was to be 212 feet long, the stage near the church of St George was to be 80 feet high and 78 feet wide and the stage to be built on the river-bank 40 feet high and 50 wide. A third stage was to be erected in the Milkmarket, a fourth in the lange Nieuwstraat, near the Clarenstraat. The town also resolved to erect 300 posts with tar-barrels on them to illuminate the town. The administrators of the Mint promised to put up a triumphal arch at the entrance into the Kloosterstraat, and the Fugger, the wealthy bankers, contributed 1000 florins towards the erection of a triumphal arch in front of St Michael's abbey. The Confraternity of St Luke obtained a subsidy of 700 florins for the erection in the Great Market-place of a stage on which living persons should be represented, and the chamber of rhetoric *de Goudbloem* an equal amount for a stage in the Cornmarket. The Portuguese undertook to put up a triumphal arch at their own cost in the Gasthuisstraat.

They had reckoned on the prince making his entry in the first fortnight of January, 1635, and it had been stipulated in the conditions of the contracts that the triumphal arches and stages must be finished by the 6th or 8th of that month. But that winter was extremely hard; the Schelde was frozen in February (2) and the Magistrate was obliged to ask for an extension of time, the workmen being unable to do in three days what they could usually do in one. The ceremony was postponed therefore till the 3rd February. Then another misfortune occurred. The French troops were threatening the frontier, and Ferdinand was compelled to go and meet them in order to stop their advance. The entry had to be postponed till the 17th April, 1635.

Carpenters, painters, sculptors and other craftsmen set to work on the decorations. The refectory of the Great Carmelites, or brothers of Our Lady, in the Huidevetterstraat, and the covered galleries of the Bourse were put at their disposal. Rubens was charged with the

(1) See on the Entry of the Cardinal-Infant the *Bulletin des Archives d'Anvers*, VI, p. 400; VII, p. 1; XIII, p. 215.

(2) Letter from Balthasar Moretus to Jan van Vucht of 17 February, 1635 (Archives of the Plantin-Moretus Museum).

general direction of the work. He had to deliver the plans and designs for the triumphal arches, the stages, and the portico that was to be built on the Meir; the paintings intended to adorn these erections were to be carried out after his sketches. He discussed his ideas with his friends Nicolas Rockox and Gaspar Gevartius, but executed them entirely by himself. « The Magistrate », he wrote to Peiresc on the 18th December, 1634, « at the very height of » the preparations, has thrown the whole burden of the festival on my shoulders. I am so » overwhelmed with work that I have no time to write, or even to live ».

The decorations of 1635 are one of his leading works, unique in kind, and one of the greatest in size. Rubens was a born decorator; the proof may be found not only in the paintings he made for huge buildings like the ceilings of the church of the Jesuits and of Whitehall, the Medici Gallery, and the *Metamorphoses of Ovid* in the Torre de la Parada, or again in his plans for altars and for his own house, or in his designs for frontispieces, but in the whole range of his work. The opportunity was now offered of displaying this consummate faculty in all its brilliance; he had an entire town to decorate, an army of artists and artisans to direct and *carte blanche* for the creation of grandeur and beauty. He profited by it freely. Once more he proved that whatever he undertook became a master-piece, stamped with the lion's claw. Of all the decorations of cities carried out in all times and all countries, the decoration planned by Rubens for the entry of the Cardinal-Infant remains the most artistic and the most sumptuous; never have triumphal arches been seen so grand in their total effect, nor so elegant in every part. We may still admire them in van Thulden's engravings, and the more we contemplate the abundance, we might almost say the debauch of invention poured in floods from an inexhaustible spring, the more astounded we remain at the achievements of the giant, as it were, in play. But when we put ourselves in the spring of 1635, and see rising along the streets this mass of multicoloured ornament, trophies, flags, floating streamers, columns, obelisks, torches, gates, statues and paintings, when our imagination brings back to life all that these dumb prints have to show us, we are present at the festival and acclaim the creator of this vast decoration.

On the 7th December, 1634, the Magistrate summoned the members of the Grand Council, in order to lay before them a report on Rubens's schemes for the celebration of the entry and to ask their authorization for the raising of the necessary funds. The assembled councillors declared that in consideration of the decay and impoverishment of the city it would be well to make some small reduction in the profusion that had been previously displayed on such occasions, and that it would be advisable to replace quantity by appropriateness and beauty of invention and the arrangement of the decoration in a general scheme. They proposed therefore to confine themselves to the construction of two triumphal arches, one in honour of His Majesty, the other of His Highness, and four stages intended to show the present poverty of the town and country, in order to induce His Highness to provide a remedy. We know that this scheme was extended; but they remained faithful to the two leading ideas, to do honour to the reigning house and at the same time bring home to it the sad condition of the country. The festival was to be glad and brilliant; but among all the shouts of joy must be heard lamentation for the present woe and the sombre vistas of the future.

On the eve of his entry the Cardinal-Infant left Brussels early, accompanied by prince Thomas de Carignan, brother of the duke of Savoy, his suite and the flower of the nobility of Belgium. He reached Willebroek about midday and there took ship. Some hundred vessels that had come to meet him, escorted him up the Rupel and the Schelde to Antwerp. He landed at Kiel, near the citadel, and spent the night there. On Tuesday, the 17th April, about four in the afternoon, he marched out of the fortress at the head of a brilliant troop of horsemen, and came to St George's gate, by which he was to enter the town, as its sovereigns and governors had



THE CARDINAL-INFANT (Museum, Madrid)
After the engraving by Paul Pontius.

done since Charles V. For the occasion the Magistrate had had the outer face of the gate painted and gilded. Here the six Guilds were waiting, armed and led by the burgomaster Robert Tucher, who welcomed the prince. The guard of citizens and the crowd of sight-seers covered the ramparts. The prince entered the town in the midst of salvos of artillery, volleys of musketry and fanfares from the town trumpets placed over the gate.

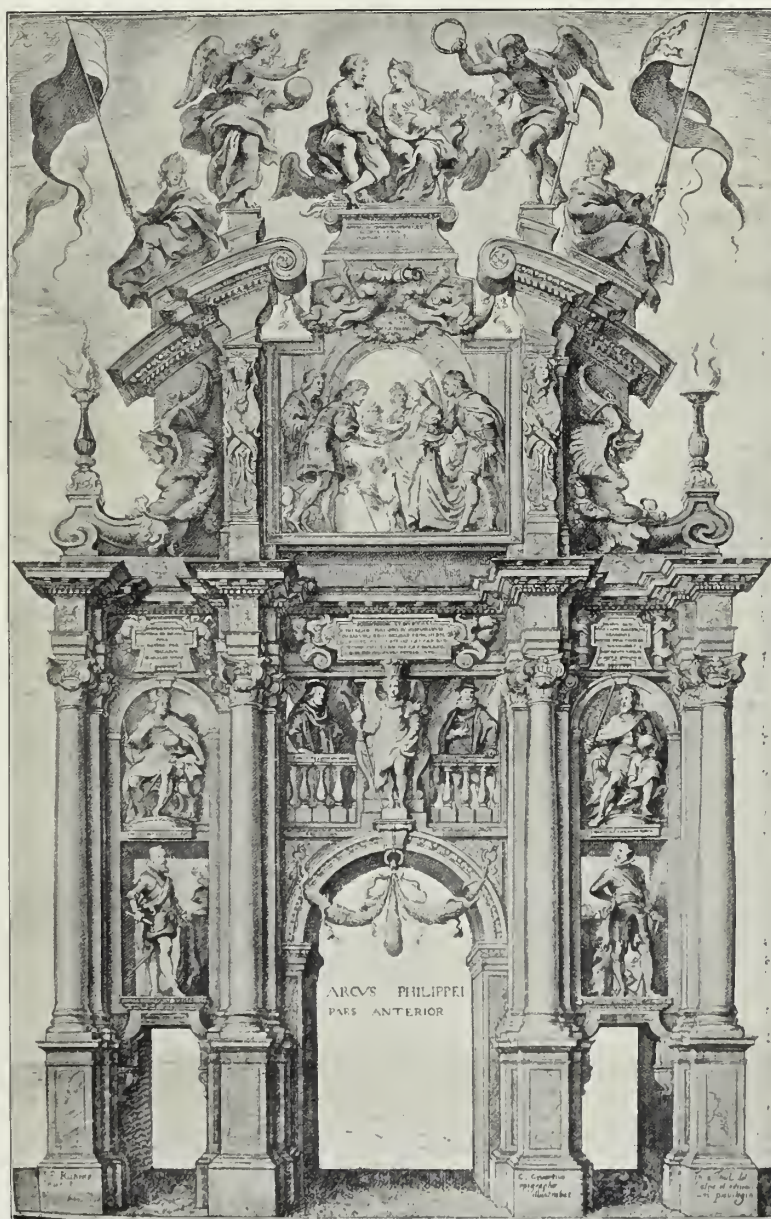
Hardly had he passed the gate when he met a triumphal car bearing a troop of young girls. One of them, personifying the town of Antwerp, presented the victor of Nordlingen with a laurel crown on a golden salver. The prince then followed the street of St George's gate. At the end of it, in front of the church, stood the first stage, representing Welcome. It was composed of a back-cloth joined obliquely by two side panels. The central picture bore a semi-circular crowning, on which, as on the side panels, were painted winged children carrying

escutcheons and flags, and figures of victory blowing trumpets. The subject represented was the Maid of Belgium kneeling before the Prince to implore his protection. « To thee do we look for our salvation; the days which the plagues of war have made evil will through thee become better days; the road lies open before thee, and Victory flies on snowy wing to greet thee »; so spoke Antwerp to the prince in Latin verse. The left side panel represented Neptune calming the waves, symbolising the passage of the Infant from Barcelona to Genoa. The ships of the prince's convoy were here of secondary importance, and what chiefly attracted the attention was the nereids pushing the shell-shaped chariot which held the god, the sea horses drawing it, their driver, and most of all the god himself, bidding the winds and waves to favour the voyage. On the other side was the meeting of the two Ferdinands, the king of Hungary and the Infant of Spain, at Nordlingen, and in the foreground the god of the Danube announcing to oppressed Germany the end of her woes. The centre panel had been

painted by Cornelius Schut after a sketch which Rubens supplied for this, as for all the other parts of the decoration; the two others were painted by the master himself, who had had them prepared by a pupil and then finished them with his own hand. The prince pursued his course by the Mechelsche plein and the lange Gasthuisstraat. In the latter, a little beyond the Arenbergstraat, stood the triumphal arch erected by the Portuguese, the only one not designed by Rubens. It had been made after the designs of Ludovicus Nonnius, doctor of the town and a Spaniard by origin.

In the Huidevettersstraat, not far from the Meir, stood the triumphal arch of Philip. This arch was painted on both sides and celebrated the glory of the house of Austria and its alliance with that of Burgundy. On the front was a representation of the marriage of Maximilian of Austria with Marie of Burgundy, the last descendant of the national line; on the other side was the marriage of their son, Philip the Fair, with Juana, Infanta of Spain. Above the arcades were portraits of some twelve princes of the two houses, and on the pediment allegorical figures and others bearing flags.

Cornelis De Vos and Jacob Jordaens had painted the portico, Erasmus Quellin and Antonius Dembri had carved twenty capitals, eight of which were four-sided, and twelve in low relief. In the Meir, between the Grammeystraat and the Clarenstraat rose the portico of the emperors, forming an immense curve, the front of which was turned towards the Huidevettersstraat. Under twelve arches supported by columns were twelve emperors of the



THE FRONT OF THE TRIUMPHAL ARCH OF PHILIP
(After the engraving by Th. van Thulden).

house of Austria, from Rudolf I to Ferdinand II, and in the midst rose a hollow gilded column, ornamented with coloured glass. At night a light was placed on it which lit up the square. To right and left of the obelisk stood the pillars of Hercules, and then came torches, laurels, garlands, escutcheons and flags. Theodoor van Thulden, Jan de la Barre, Erasmus Quellin and Hendrik van Balen's two sons, Jan and Gaspard, had carried out the paintings. The statues of the emperors were in white Avesnes stone gilded, three of them being the work of Hubert van den Eynde, three others by Jenin Veldenaer, two by Paul van den Mortel, two by Forcy Cardon, and two by Sebastian De Neve.

On passing through the central arch of the portico, the procession took the Clarenstraat and proceeded to the end of it. In front of the spot where it joins the Nieuwstraat, stood the stage of Isabella, across the St Jacobstraat. This stage was consecrated to the memory of the Archduchess and was called the « mortuary chapel », being partly hung with black cloth in sign of mourning. Lighted candles were placed on the cornice in honour of the departed princess. The picture above the principal arch represented prince Ferdinand taking leave of his brother. Isabella was seen descending from the heavens and presenting her nephew to Belgium, saying : « This is he who has been often promised you ». Below came verses in honour of the young prince, which ended with these words addressed to the people of Antwerp : « Philip of » yore brought you arms, glory and riches ; Ferdinand brings you his heart ». The main picture had been carried out by Gerard Zegers, and the accessory paintings by Jan Boekhorst and Borchgraef.

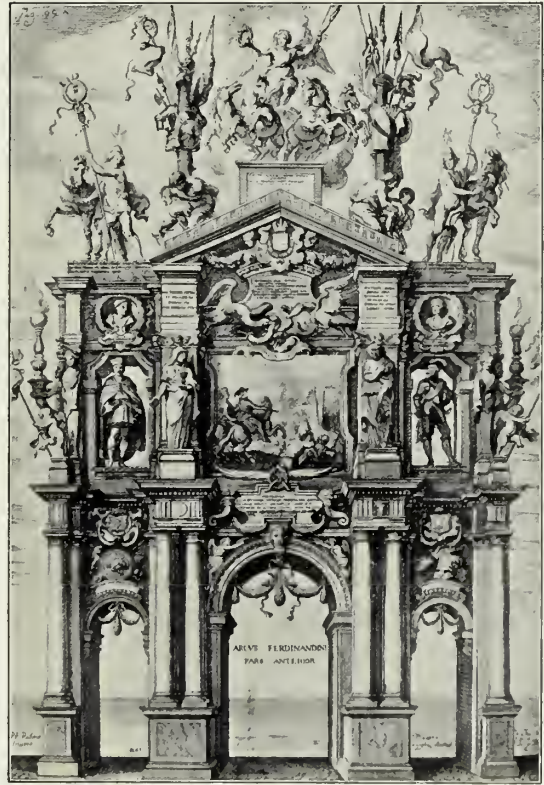
Further on, in the lange Nieuwstraat, between the Pruynenstraat and the Markgravenstraat, stood the triumphal arch of Ferdinand, which was as remarkable as that of Philip. The great picture above the principal arch represented the victory of Nordlingen ; above the lateral arches were portraits of the two Ferdinands, and on the pediment was a Victory, coming with a palm and a crown in her hands, in a chariot drawn by four horses. Beside her were trophies of arms and captives in chains, and at the two extremities the Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux, holding a horse by the bridle and bearing a shield with the initials of the victorious generals. On the other side the main picture represented the triumphal march after the victory of Nordlingen. On the summit was the Morning Star, represented by an exultant and radiant woman mounted on a winged steed. At the side were trophies of arms, allegorical figures and decorative subjects. The painting was the work of Gaspar van den Hoecke and his son Jan.

The third stage, representing the temple of Janus, stood in the Milk-market, in front of the korte Nieuwstraat. In the middle of the base was Rage escaping from the temple with blindfolded eyes, a sword in one hand and a torch in the other ; Discord and Tisiphone, one of the Furies, were opening one wing of the double doors, while Peace, Religion and the Infanta Isabella closed the other. Below was a prayer addressed to the Infant : « O prince, may thy victories by land and sea close at length the gates of the temple of Janus ;.... may the peace, so long desired, be restored to our country and our people ». The panel and the caryatids on the left represented the Ills of War ; those on the right the Blessings of Peace. The upper part was in the form of a cupola. The paintings were by Theodoor Rombouts, Jan Cossiers, Arthur Wolfaert and Gerard Weri.

From the Milk-market the procession followed the Kaasrui to the Great Marketplace; in which, near the Maalderijstraat, stood the stage erected by the Guild of St Luke. Numerous allegorical figures, represented by living persons, stood beneath a painted tree symbolising the genealogical tree of the house of Austria.

The Great Market-place, which was then crossed, was adorned with a number of posts erected by the town and the corporations, and supporting the patron saints of the latter and floating banners; and in the Corn-market the chamber of rhetoric, de Goudbloem, had erected a stage, on which were living figures representing Belgium attacked on all sides by her enemies and invoking prince Ferdinand as the defender and saviour of the country. Rubens had not collaborated in these two last stages.

The prince entered the church of Our Lady by the main entrance. The dean, Albertus Miræus, bade him welcome and a *Te Deum* was sung. The procession passed through the Corn-market to the Hoogstraat. At the far end, near St John's Bridge, stood the sixth stage, facing the Rampart of the Stonecutters. It represented Commerce deserting Antwerp, and was composed of five panels. On the central panel was Mercury flying from the city, Navigation asleep and in chains, and Belgium weeping and imploring the prince to reopen the Schelde and let Commerce flourish once more. On the left was Prosperity, on the right Want; the two end panels represented Comus, the god of feasts, and Industry, the daughter of Poverty. The paintings had been carried out by Theodoor van Thulden, Jan de la Barre, Erasmus Quellin and Hendrik van Balen's two sons, Jan and Gaspard, after sketches by Rubens.



THE FRONT OF THE ARCH OF FERDINAND
(After the engraving by Th. van Thulden).

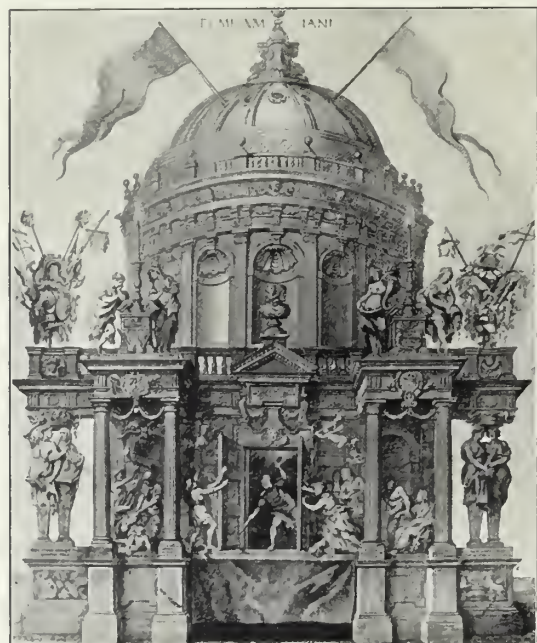
Thence the procession passed along the Oever to the Kloosterstraat. At the entrance the masters and servants of the Mint had raised a triumphal arch, representing on one side Potosi, and on the other Work on precious metals. On the summit there was a group in front representing Jason seizing the Golden Fleece, and at the back Hercules slaying the Hydra and Spain gathering the golden apples from the tree guarded by the dragon. Rubens supplied the sketches for the triumphal arch, but we do not know who painted it.

Further on in the Kloosterstraat, near the entrance to St Michael's Abbey, stood the triumphal arch of Hercules Prodicus. The picture above the arch represented Hercules with the features of Prince Ferdinand; Minerva urging him to follow the path of virtue, and Venus

and Bacchus to choose material pleasures. The opposite side represented Bellerophon piercing the Chimæra with his spear. Above were the arms of the Cardinal-Infant between flying flags and two Victories bearing banners. The paintings were carried out by Jan van Eyck and David Ryckaert after sketches by Rubens.

At the entrance to the abbey, where he was to lodge, the prince was greeted by the Pensionary of the town, Jacob Edelheer.

Along the route he had followed had been placed the cars and other elements of the procession of the Ommegang, which had been restored for this occasion. The Giant stood in



THE TEMPLE OF JANUS
(After the engraving by Th. van Thulden).

the Great Marketplace, the Elephant at the entrance into the Wijngaardstraat, the Ship at the entrance into the Linen-market, and the Mount Parnassus in the lange Nieuwstraat. The staff of the Parisian post had erected a column in the lange Gasthuisstraat; and the Spanish post another in the Meir. On the triumphal arches and stages were placed the musicians of the town, who played as the procession passed by; and in the evening the Townhall, the professed house of the Jesuits and the tower of St Michael's Abbey were brilliantly illuminated. There were fireworks two days in succession on the tower of the cathedral, in front of the Jesuits' College and on the column of the Spanish post.

Ferdinand spent eight days at Antwerp and visited in turn the curiosities of the town, the fortifications, the churches, Rubens's house, the Plantin press and the hall of the tapestry-weavers.

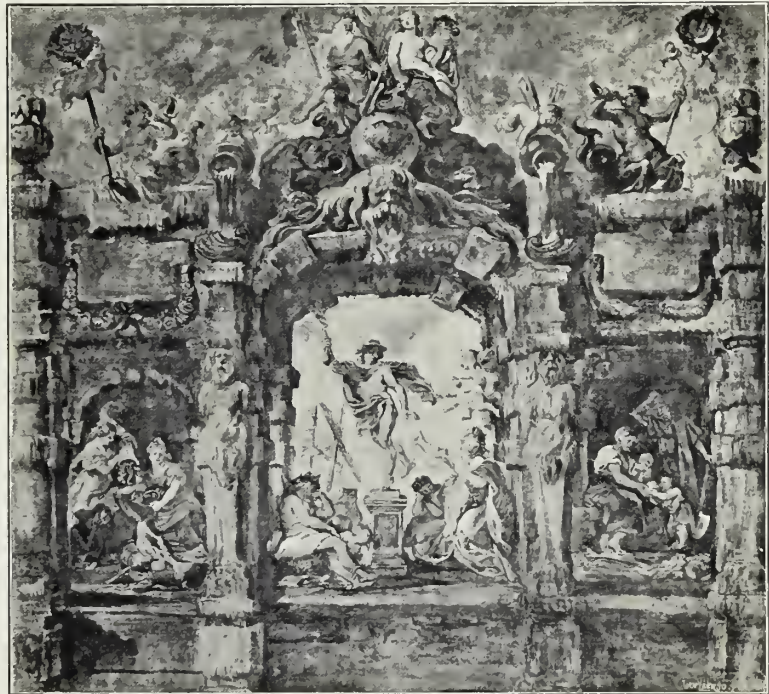
After his departure they resolved to present him, instead of the 9000 florins that had at first been intended, with the best pictures that had appeared at his entry and the twelve statues of emperors from the portico in the Meir. Rubens, Jordaens, Gerard Zegers and others who had contributed to the decorations, were employed to retouch the three pictures on the stage that stood near the church of St George, two from the triumphal arch of Philip, two from the arch of Ferdinand, that of the glorification of Isabella, three from the temple of Janus, the Mercury leaving Antwerp, the two pictures from the arch near St Michael's Abbey, and the portraits of Albert and Isabella, Charles V, Maximilian I, the two Ferdinands and others. The statues of emperors, cleaned and regilt, were to adorn one of the galleries in the palace at Brussels. Pedestals were made for the statues and frames for the pictures.

The rest they attempted to sell. On the 18th June, 1635, they began with the pictures from the arch of Ferdinand, which fetched 429 florins 12 stuivers. Discouraged by this poor result,

the Magistrate resolved not to continue the sales, but to keep everything in the town warehouses, to be used again as occasion arose. We do not know what became of the things. But in the castle of Broechem, called de Halmale, near Lier, we have discovered a number of paintings from the triumphal arches, which had been used as hangings in the chambers. They must have suffered grievously since the Cardinal-Infant admired them; in their present state they do not enable us to form any idea of what they were at the time of the Joyful Entry; but they prove that Rubens made a great many alterations in the models used by the engravers.

Some of the pictures presented to Prince Ferdinand have been preserved. We have also some of the sketches made

by Rubens. But all that has survived is but an insignificant part of the whole. Neptune protecting the prince on his crossing is in the Museum at Dresden; the meeting of the two Ferdinands in the Imperial Museum at Vienna; the battle of Nordlingen in the royal collection at Windsor. In April, 1899, the two pictures from the arch of Philip were offered us for sale; they then belonged to M. Simon of Paris. The portraits of Albert and Isabella, repainted by Rubens, and that of the Archduke Ernest from the same triumphal arch are now



THE THEATRE OF COMMERCE DESERTING ANTWERP
Sketch (Hermitage, St Petersburg).

in the Brussels Museum; the Stockholm Museum has the chief panel of the stage representing Commerce deserting Antwerp. The portraits of the emperors Maximilian I and Charles V, retouched by Rubens, are in the Museum of the Academy at Vienna; the two Ferdinands are in the Imperial Museum there, and two allegories from the arch of Ferdinand, the « Clemency » and the « Foresight of the King » are in the Museum at Lille. The Hermitage at St Petersburg has the sketches for the stage of the « Welcome », for five of the statues in the portico of the emperors, for the « Glorification of Isabella », the back of the arch of Ferdinand, the temple of Janus, « Commerce deserting Antwerp » and the front of the arch of Hercules Prodicus. The sketch of Neptune protecting the voyage belongs to the duke of Grafton. The sketch of the « Meeting of the two Ferdinands » was in Sir Abraham Hume's collection in 1830. M. Bonnat, of Paris, has the sketch of the Bellerophon on the arch of Hercules Prodicus; the marquis of Bute the sketch of several parts of the temple of Janus, and the Antwerp Museum the two

sketches for the arch of the Mint, the sketch of the back of the arch of Philip and that of the front of the arch of Ferdinand. The two last are attributed without proof to van Thulden ; at any rate they are not by Rubens. The sketch of one of the emperors on the portico in the Meir, Frederick IV, appeared in the Dubus de Ghisignies sale, and the Museum at Aix-la-Chapelle has those of the emperors Albert II and Ferdinand I.

The best idea we are able to form of the work done for the entry of the Cardinal-Infant is provided by the engravings made by van Thulden under Rubens's direction (*Œuvre*, Nos 772-790). The great painter here reveals himself as an original and first-rate architect. His decorations were not buildings, it is true ; but there is no reason for thinking that they could not have been carried out in marble as well as in woodwork and painting. They were designed to give an impression of festival and splendour, and they succeeded perfectly. The style of them is the massive style created by the Romans, modified by the Genoese architects and by Rubens himself. The general figure is a façade of two or three arches separated by columns, which form the essential part of the lower portion of the structure ; above the arches, which sometimes support a kind of storey, rises a rich and varied crowning. The columns and round arches, the side passages, the caryatids, the consoles and the balustrades gave the woodwork an air of unusual solidity but without the slightest heaviness. The construction was so pierced, so much in relief and so richly adorned with statues that it remained light in spite of its massive supports and its exuberant ornamentation. That was always the mark of Rubens's originality. With prodigal and unwearying hand he piled up rich and new inventions, yet his work was never overcharged and never fell into bad taste. As a painter he was tempted to sacrifice the leading qualities of architecture, symmetry and solidity, and substitute picturesque effect, broken lines, profusion of flowery ornament and all the characteristics of the baroque style.

His sketches were made in pale, light tones ; they are master-pieces, unrivalled in lightness of execution, the work of an artist who created without effort and executed without hesitation or uncertainty. It is possible that the decorations actually carried out differed from the sketches in certain details ; in the total effect they remained the same. The most remarkable of the paintings he retouched is the « Neptune commanding the waves », now in the Museum at Dresden (*Œuvre*, No 774). This is a large and decorative piece, freely and strongly painted, full of ease and grandeur in its spirited execution. The principal picture of the temple of Janus is the most dramatic in effect. The figure of Rage reveals nothing less than a paroxysm of fury, while the other characters are struggling to shut the gates of the temple of Janus (*Œuvre*, No 784). Many of the groups on the wings of the porticos are full of elegance and grace, with no loss of vigour ; the Victory, for instance, and the Morning Star which take their flight, with joyful beating of the wings, on the arch of Ferdinand. The numerous portraits which appeared in the decoration are naturally treated with breadth and rather sketched than finished ; but they are full of life, and might be the characters in an epic poem. The Archduke and Archduchess, for exemple, on the arch of Philip (*Œuvre*, Nos 778-779), which are now in the Museum at Brussels, are strikingly effective, and one might say without exaggeration that they see the spectator's hat off.

Rubens's work was that of a great artist and a good patriot. By means of his art he

proclaimed aloud what his heart was full of and what he had tried so long to realise by means of his diplomacy. The fate of his town and his country touched him ; he saw Antwerp sinking in irremediable decadence, and he profited by a solemn occasion to mingle with the shouts of joy a cry of anguish and grief, a supreme appeal for the help that could assure salvation.

Under his direction Antwerp had organized a magnificent celebration ; no expense had been spared to win the heart of the governor, and the cost was considerable. Before setting to work the question of ways and means had been discussed. The expense had been calculated at 36,000 florins, about £ 8000 in modern money, and on the 7th December, 1634, the Magistrate proposed to the Grand Council to borrow this sum, the interest on which was to be paid by an extraordinary tax of eight stuivers on beer which had been formerly voted to cover the cost of an epidemic. The first chamber of the Grand Council, which was composed of ex-aldermen, gave its consent ; the second, which comprised the deans of the burgesses and the officers of the quarters, was less accomodating and asked for fuller explanations ; and the third chamber, composed of the master-craftsmen, was quite as unfavourable. The Magistrate took great pains to persuade the two recalcitrant chambers, and succeeded ; but the raising of the 36,000 florins was only authorized on condition that the burgesses should have no further contributions to pay, and that one of the taxes on beer should not be levied till the 31st January, 1636. It was also agreed that the estimate of 36,000 florins should not be exceeded. The loan was then floated. Nicolas Rockox came at the head of the list with a contribution of 8000 florins ; and eight other ex-magistrates and wealthy burgesses subscribed the rest.

When the accounts were made up on the 30th April, 1636, it was realised that the expenses amounted to 78,370 florins, 6 stuivers and 9 deniers. Deducting from this sum the loan of 36,000 florins and 9,371 florins, 5 stuivers and 9 deniers derived from other sources, there remained a deficit of 32,999 florins ; from which it is clear that in matters of public works, exceeding the credit voted is not an invention of our modern aediles. After that date several thousand florins more were spent. The Magistrate insisted on a vote from the three chambers of the Grand Council for the taxes necessary to meet the deficit. The deans of the burgesses, the officers of the quarters and the master-craftsmen persisted in refusing their consent to the imposition of new taxes to meet expenses incurred without their approval, and invited the Magistrate to pay off the debt out of reductions made on future expenditure. And with that he had to be content.

There had been no stinginess as regards the painters, and the distribution of gratuities had been liberally practised. Rubens had received 5000 florins for two large pictures placed » over the stage near the church of St George, for having retouched divers paintings and the » portraits placed over the other triumphal arches, in addition to all the sketches made by » him and the direction and care given to all that was employed at the entry of His Royal » Highness ». He was given another 600 florins for having retouched the same two pictures placed over the stage near the church of St George.

Cornelis Schut received 1113 florins 10 stuivers for the principal picture of the same stage ; and Cornelis De Vos and Jacob Jordaens, 4200 florins for the paintings on the arch of Philip. They were also paid 754 florins for supplementary work, and Jordaens received another

600 florins for retouching the two principal pictures on the arches of Philip and of Ferdinand before they were presented to the Cardinal-Infant. The other painters and all those who collaborated were treated in the same spirit. Gevartius received 480 florins for the verses and inscriptions on the triumphal arches, and he was afterwards to be paid 3600 florins for the narrative account of the entry. The clerks who copied the balance-sheet received 400 florins. The inhabitants of the houses which had stages and triumphal arches in front of them were indemnified. Numerous gratuities were distributed to all who had taken part in the work;



THE TRIUMPHAL ARCH OF THE MINT — Back.
Sketch (Museum, Antwerp.)

from the highest to the lowest, each had his share. Simon Nobiliers received 24 florins for having lent the town a portrait of the Cardinal-Infant, of which a copy was needed; the two burgomasters each had 240 florins; the treasurers of the town, the officers of the quarters, the prince's officers and servants, the town messengers, who had had many journeys to make on account of the joyful entry, and the porter of the monastery of the Brothers of Our Lady all received their shares; the Cardinal-Infant's jester was not forgotten, and was put on a level with the burgomasters at the price of 240 florins.

Theodoor van Thulden was commissioned to engrave the stages, the triumphal arches and the portico, and Gevartius to draw up the report, that the splendid celebration might have a fitting memorial. On the 25th May, 1635, the contract was signed between van Thulden and the Magistrate: the artist was to deliver 25 large plates and at least 15 small ones, and that by the following Christmas at the latest. At least 600 proofs were to be pulled of his

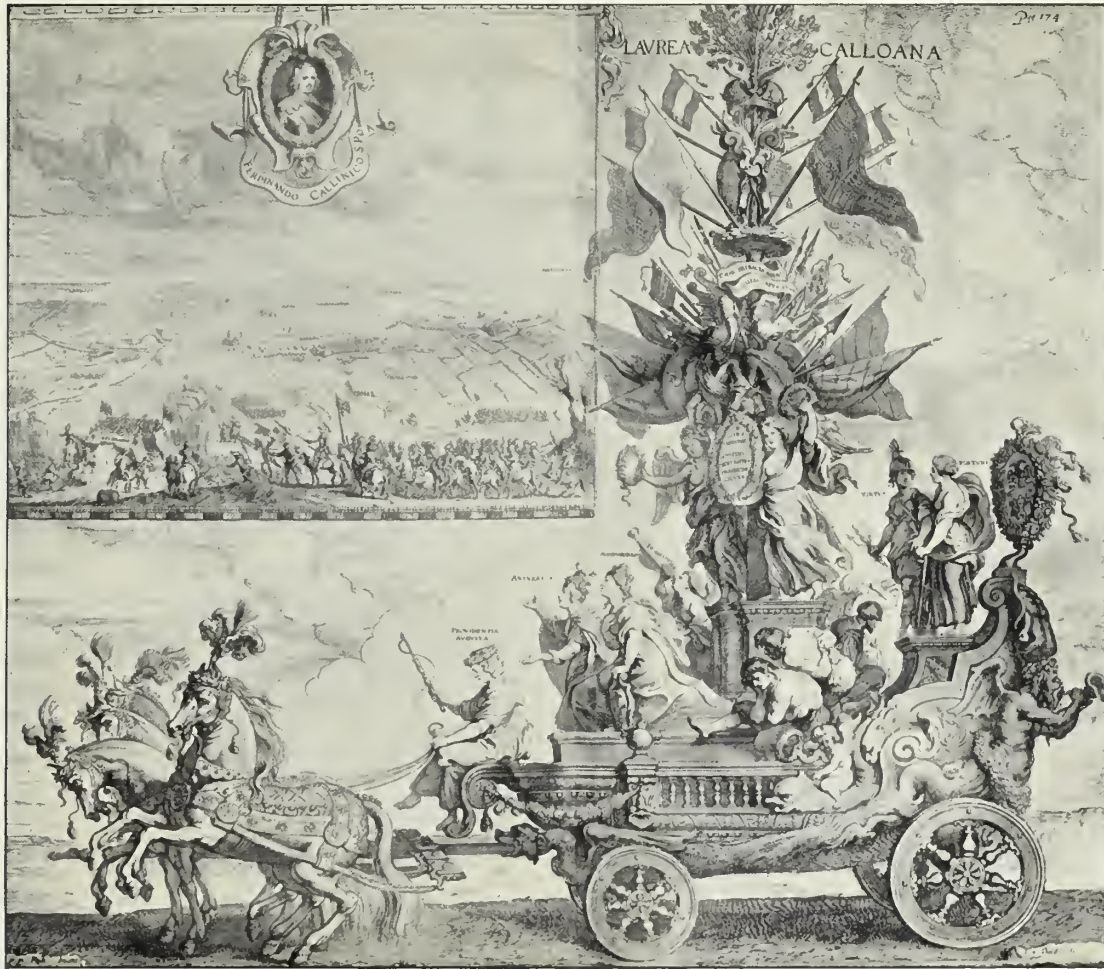
work; of which the town would take 200, paying the artist 2000 florins for them. First Balthasar Moretus and afterwards Jan van Meurs was appointed to do the printing. The work progressed slowly; on the 7th September, 1638, van Thulden complained that Gevartius's text was not ready; on the 26th January, 1639, the Magistrate presented the ex-burgomaster Tucher, Christian van Broecheven, pensioner of the council, and Doctor Ludovicus Nonnius with a butt of French wine for revising Gevartius's work. A like gift was made to Gaspar Estricx, canon and dean of the cathedral, who had granted the ecclesiastical *imprimatur*. In 1639 van Thulden was constantly complaining of Gevartius's delay in delivering his text. On the 9th November, 1640, the work was nearly finished; but instead of the 30 sheets of print that the contract provided for it ran to 80, and that was not all. The Magistrate therefore granted



LANDSCAPE WITH ELEVEN COWS
(Pinakothek, Munich)



van Thulden an indemnity of 800 florins in consideration of the extent of the work, which amounted to no less than 105 sheets. In June, 1641, the dedication of the work was approved by the burgomaster; but on the 9th December, 1641, it was decided to add the description of the car commemorating the victory of Calloo. In the interval van Thulden had brought an



THE CAR OF THE VICTORY OF CALLOO (After the engraving by Th. van Thulden).

action against the town for indemnity; experts were appointed, on whose report it was decided on the 18th April, 1643, to allow van Thulden in all 4500 florins, and that ended the matter. Though the book was only published in December, 1642, it was dated 1641; the Cardinal-Infant, to whom it was dedicated, had died in 1641, and they did not wish to appear to be paying the homage of the work to a dead man. It bears the well known title of *Pompa Introitus honoris Serenissimi Principis Ferdinandi Austriaci Hispaniarum Infantis S. R. E. Card. Belgarum et Burgundionum Gubernatoris*. It is written in Latin throughout, like all the inscriptions at the festival and like everything else in those days that was meant to appear

distinguished or learned. But it was a splendid work. Rubens had designed the frontispiece, a monumental page which was probably engraved by Jacob Neefs. The length of Gevartius's text was due to his admixture of dissertations on a score of historical and archæological questions. Van Thulden's plates are admirable of their kind, and the printing is equal to the best ever produced by the Antwerp presses in their golden days.

We have said that in December, 1641, the Magistrate had decided upon the addition to the description of the festival of a plate commemorating the victory of Calloo. On the 21st June, 1638, prince Ferdinand had won a signal victory over the Dutch troops occupying the dike of Calloo on the left bank of the Schelde about two leagues from Antwerp. Under the command of William of Nassau they were ordered to support prince Frederick Henry in an attack he wished to attempt on Antwerp from the west. On being informed of the danger threatening the town, the Cardinal-Infant hastened to Antwerp and charged his lieutenants to attack the army of the States. Count William of Nassau, believing himself to be threatened by superior forces, ordered his troops to evacuate the entrenchments of Calloo and Verrebroek and retire on Liefkenshoek. During their retreat they were attacked by the Spanish and lost heavily in men and munitions. The peril that threatened Antwerp was thus dissipated by an important success that cost the prince very little trouble and exposed him to no danger. Some days later, his lieutenants, count Piccolomini and prince Thomas de Carignan, encountered the French troops near St Omer and compelled them to raise the siege of that place. The Magistrate of Antwerp resolved to celebrate the great event at the same time as the victory of Calloo by having a triumphal car made, which appeared in the procession of the « Ommegang » at the kermesse in August, 1638. Rubens was commissioned to design the car, which we know from the sketch preserved in the Museum at Antwerp and from the plate engraved by van Thulden for the *Pompa Introitus*.

It is shaped like a ship, the symbol of Prosperity. The four horses that draw it are driven by « August Providence » in the guise of two-faced Janus. Behind it, Antwerp and St Omer, kneeling on a step, are rejoicing in their deliverance ; instead of a mast there rises in the middle of the vessel a colossal trophy, at the foot of which are two Victories. The conquered flags float round the arms and panoplies ; higher up come the escutcheons and banners of the victors, and the whole is crowned by a laurel branch. At the foot of the trophy there are also two figures of Fame, blowing trumpets, the banner hanging from one of their trumpets bears the words *Io triumphe*, and the other *Io Callinice*, which mean « Hail, noble conqueror ! » and « Hail, victor of Calloo ! » The car also contained prisoners in chains, and on the poop the emblems of Valour and Success. Behind it was a marine god blowing a trumpet. In its main idea the car preserves the forms adopted by the Renaissance, but it is heavier, more richly ornamented and freer in line. Both in the general effect and the smallest details it is a masterpiece of decorative art, and the festal air of the trophy that rises superb and triumphant to the sky is matchless. In reward for this magnificent creation the Magistrate of Antwerp presented Rubens with a butt of French wine, worth 84 florins.

THE LORDSHIP OF STEEN AND THE LANDSCAPES.



RUBENS'S CASTLE AT ELEWIJT — Front.

PURCHASE OF THE LORDSHIP OF STEEN. — Hardly was the celebration of the entry brought to a close when Rubens concluded a piece of business which in itself had no relation with art, but which exercised a great influence on his life and works. On the 12th May, 1635, a decree of the council of Brabant acknowledged him as purchaser of the lordship of Steen, with the lands wood and meadows depending on it. The lordship lies in the parish of Elewijt, between Mechlin and Vilvorde, east of the village of Eppeghem, about six leagues from

Antwerp. Since the 29th May, 1627, Rubens had owned a country-house called the « Castle of Ursele » with several pieces of land, at Eeckeren in the polder to the north of Antwerp; this was valued at his death at 11.300 florins. The house probably seemed to him too modest for a man of his rank, or perhaps he found its situation in a marshy country unhealthy, and began to look out for a larger and more salubrious residence, such as his new property was.

It was an old manor-house, very picturesque if not very spacious. It is still standing, but recent restorations have disfigured one of the façades. In the advertisement of the sale, which took place in the *salle d'Uccle* in the Townhall at Brussels on the 13th October, 1682, the property is described as : » A manorial residence, with a large stone house and other fine » buildings in the form of a castle, with garden, orchard, fruit-trees and draw-bridge, and a » large hillock on the middle of which stands a high square tower, having also a lake and a farm » with farm-house, granges, divers stables and outbuildings, measuring in all 4 bundaren 50 » roeden, the whole surrounded by moats ».

The front remains as it was in Rubens's time, and probably even a century before. The front door opens into a fore-part opposite a stone bridge thrown across the moat; above the door are two storeys and a high gable window that opens into the feudal dove-cote. The manorial dwelling lies on the right, and has six windows on the ground floor, and the same number in the only storey; on the left are the stables and coach-house. The back was in the same style, but beside the central fore-part stood a octagonal tower with a steeple crown, which held the staircase. A few yards from the dwelling-house stood the square crenelated tower. The building, which was in the style of the Flemish Renaissance of the middle of the sixteenth century, was of jointed red brick, with window and door frames of white stone. The back looked over the lakes, now filled in; the soil was and still is extremely fertile, and oaks and other large trees stood round the castle. There was no lack of water; the Barenbeek flowed through the park, met the Snoekengracht behind the house to the left and ran into the Dyle

further on (1). On all sides the level plains of the valleys of the Dyle and the Senne stretched to the horizon.

The property bought by Rubens consisted of farm lands and woods lying in the territory of the parishes of Eppeghem, Elewijt and Weerde. Later he bought other pieces of land, and the advertisement of the sale of 1682 gives the total extent of the property at 22 bonniers, 3 acres, rented at 1400 florins a year. Rubens also made some alterations to the house. The entire property was valued at his death at 100.000 florins, 93.000 representing his first purchase and 7.000 standing for improvements and additions. This valuation included the copyholds of Attenvoorde and Steen with the rights dependent on them and the nomination of a steward, officers and vassals of the manorial lands. Rubens thus became the possessor of a feudal estate and took the title of Lord of Steen, mentioned by Gevartius in his epitaph, in precedence of all his others.



RUBENS'S CASTLE AT ELEWIJT -- Back.

RUBENS AS A LANDSCAPE-PAINTER. — Rubens spent the five last summers of his life at Steen, and being unable to set up his studio there, he was forced to confine himself to painting small pictures. He found himself face to face with nature, and with his sensibility to all impressions and his gift for translating them into line and colour, it is not surprising that he painted the spots he had continually under his eyes. He had treated landscape before, not only as accessory to his historical pictures, but taking

the reproduction of a scene in nature as a principal subject.

During his residence in Rome he painted a view of the Palatine (*Œuvre*. N^o 1175). Among the pictures he sold to the duke of Buckingham in 1625-1627 there were three landscapes, two of which are now in the royal collection at Windsor Castle (*Œuvre*. Nos 1173 and 1199), a cattle-shed with a « Snow-scene » and a landscape with peasants going to market. The third represented an evening scene. Like the « Prodigal Son » in the Museum at Antwerp (*Œuvre*. N^o 260) the « Farm at Laeken » at Buckingham Palace (*Œuvre*. N^o 1198), the « Watering place » in the collection of the Duke of Buccleuch in London (*Œuvre*. N^o 1196) and the « Rainbow » in the Hermitage and the Louvre (*Œuvre*. Nos 1184-1185), the Windsor pictures were painted long before 1625 and probably between 1612 and 1616. Some twenty years passed before Rubens painted any more landscapes, but then he painted a large number of them.

Forty of them are known, some only from engravings, and we are convinced that several are lost and that he painted some fifty in all. With the exception of those just mentioned, all

(1) Statement of Count John of Nassau's clerk for the deed by which he consented to the deflection of the Baenbeke (read Baerbeke) (*Bulletin des Archives d'Anvers*, II, p. 143).

that we know date from the master's residence at Elewijt. At his death, no less than seventeen landscapes were found in his studio. The inventory describes them so summarily that we have only been able to identify eight.

Before Rubens, landscape had already been one of the favourite subjects of the Flemish school, which made it, so to speak, a speciality. From Hendrik De Bles and Joachim De Patinir until Rubens, there was a great deal of convention in the manner of seeing and representing natural scenes. The earliest painters gave them a fantastic interpretation. Not content with the ordinary forms of nature and the rich simplicity she presents in all places and seasons, they sought the extraordinary and the surprising. They were attracted by lofty rocks, mountains whose blue summits rose one above the other to the horizon, a boundless sea, anything strange and wonderful, anything that

could rouse astonishment and admiration. Everything else appeared to them not worth painting. De Bles and De Patinir had made such scenes the background of their pictures, drawing on imagination rather than observation. The brothers Bril were the first to approach reality, but even they considered it beneath their dignity to represent nature in all her rudeness and grandeur; they thought it right to soften and polish and adorn her, and to turn their rocks, woods



LANDSCAPE BY MOONLIGHT

After the engraving by Schelte a Bolswert (Dudley House, London).

and waters into drawing-room ornaments; they treated mountains and lakes seen in the distance like knick-knacks arranged on their tables. They were imitated by their successors, Lucas van Valckenburg, Gillis van Coninxloo, Josse De Momper and Tobie Verhaecht. But these latter painted wilder nature, and found frowning mountains, precipitous rocks and thick forests alone worthy of their brush. The practice of Rubens's contemporaries was almost the same, though Velvet Breughel and Lucas van Uden showed better tendencies, the former in the richness of his painting and the latter under the influence of Rubens. With a profound respect for reality, Peter Breughel the elder had now and then painted a glimpse of genuine nature, but for him landscape was only an accessory.

Rubens was the first to see nature as she is, beautiful in herself, everywhere and always. In his first attempts he appears to have been under the influence of the Italians, and especially of the two Caracci. Like theirs, his earliest landscapes betray the desire to choose agreeable scenes and give the leading part to figures or accessories. His « View of the Palatine Hill » is the work of an archaeologist rather than a painter; his « Prodigal Son », which is classed among

his landscapes, is a farm-interior ; his cattle-shed with a snow-scene, too, is rather an interior than a piece of nature. The four other pictures of his first years are genuine landscapes, though slightly theatrical in effect and full of figures and animals.

The landscapes he painted later reveal his full originality. He now renders nature in her perpetual variety. Sometimes as in the *Philemon and Baucis* (*Œuvre*. N^o 1168) in the Imperial Museum at Vienna, during a storm that devastates the country to punish the inhospitable inhabitants. Darkness wraps nature in her cloak of leaden grey ; the waters flow down the mountains and rocks as if down a gigantic staircase, uprooting and crushing the trees and sweeping away men and beasts, in a scene of anguish and terror. Sometimes, as in the *Shipwreck of Aeneas*, now in the Museum at Berlin (*Œuvre*. N^o 1169), he shows a storm at sea with all its terrible effects : the rushing waves shattered against the precipitous reefs, the disabled vessel and the sailors in peril of death. These dramatic spectacles agreed with his nature, and so he gave them the preference.

But he found attraction also in the fields, when the weather was fine. He liked to paint the true Flemish landscape with a windmill on an eminence, a wooded hill, a stream flowing under a bridge, a village steeple in the distance, and in the foreground early bird-catchers with their snares, or wood-sawyers at work, such a scene, in fact, as he saw out of his window every day (*Œuvre*. N^o 1176). Or else he would paint a wood, with a huntsman out at dawn with his dogs, while the golden beams of the rising sun fall through the leaves like luminous rain (*Œuvre*. N^o 1192). He painted the country in full daylight, too, with shepherds pasturing their flocks, milk-maids milking their cows, waggoners watering their horses and gentlefolk dancing on the lawn in front of their castle, or horsemen joining in a tourney, while the sun shines full on one part of the landscape and the rest is plunged in thick shade (*Œuvre*. N^o 845). Sometimes, too, he showed nature refreshed and restored after a storm, with a rainbow throwing its iridescent curve across the clouds and people returning gaily and briskly to work.

What he loved best was the country at sunset, when the peasant with a sheaf on his shoulder leads home his heavily laden waggon. From his own life he borrowed the lord of the castle walking with his wife and son to taste the freshness of the evening in the glades of his park. From Greek mythology he took the story of Meleager and Atalanta, chasing a final boar in the evening. He understood the poetry of twilight and expresses it admirably ; he paints the waggoner lost in the marsh after sunset, disturbed by the increasing darkness and exerting all his efforts to get his cart out of the bog. He makes us feel the mysterious calm of night, at the hour when the moon rises from the clouds and silvers o'er the tops of the trees with her pale radiance while on the earth all sleeps, save a single horse that crops the grass on the edge of a pool not far from a little wood. Pastoral scenes, pictures of the laborious life in farm and field, fresh impressions spontaneously rendered as he received them, these were the landscapes that Rubens painted in his latest years.

They may be divided, like those of an earlier period, into two categories : those he sketched for van Uden to paint, retouching them himself afterwards, and those he painted entirely with his own hand. The first are the most numerous and the most decorative. They

include the « Landscape with Philemon and Baucis » in the Imperial Museum at Vienna, the « Return from work » and « Ulysses landing on the isle of the Phæaciens », both in the Pitti Gallery at Florence, and the « Cart in the mud » in the Hermitage at St Petersburg. As in his other pictures there is a marked difference between the amount of his collaboration in one and in another. Sometimes, as in the « Philemon and Baucis », he repainted nearly the whole picture, spreading colour and life all over it; sometimes, as in the paintings at Windsor and the Pitti palace, his finishing touches are of less importance, though even so they give the pictures all their value.

The landscapes of the other series are master-pieces of broad, free painting, with gradations and effects of light, amazing invention and ravishing execution. Of this kind is the « Meleager and Atalanta hunting » in the Royal Museum at Brussels and the Museum at Madrid, which show a dense forest at sundown. Glowing rays of light fall between the trunks and through the leaves like a torrent of mingled gold and rubies produced by some firework let off behind the wood. Of this kind, again, is the « Sunset » (N^o 157 in the National Gallery in London), a real gem of beauty and charm, of light and colour (*Œuvre*. N^o 1193); and, again, in the same gallery, the « Castle of Steen », rising in the dazzling light of sunset. The landscape is rendered in all the truth of its rustic disorder, if we may call it so; it stretches out of sight under the rays of the sun that stream down and inundate it. Wherever the warm light meets a tree, a man, or a field it flames over them in glittering rays; it envelops the castle in a golden mist and transforms the little country scene into what we might deem a faery region, if we did not often see the reality on fine summer evenings (*Œuvre*. N^o 1204).

It was not only in the interpretation of these superb natural spectacles that Rubens was a past master. The simple country, the earth on which men labour, provided him with pictures quite as admirable, as may be seen from the two landscapes in the Pinakothek at Munich. They represent views seen in the daytime and in full light. The first of the two is sketched with a sure hand and a rapid brush, trees in the background and at the sides, a meadow in the foreground and light spread abundantly over all (*Œuvre*. N^o 1201). The most important thing in it is the eleven cows, which Rubens has painted in all attitudes, lying down, standing, seen from in front, from one side and from behind; some light brown and some dark brown, one white with red patches, one black and one grey. The other landscape is chiefly taken up with effects of light (*Œuvre*. N^o 1202). The storm has passed, and the rainbow gleams in the clouds; on one side the sky is clear and the light shines in all its brilliance, on the other the violet-tinted storm-clouds are passing away. Men and beasts revive, the waggoner leading his waggon full of hay, the milk-maids carrying their pails, the peasant with fork in hand, all resume their occupations, and the cowherd leads his beasts to the pasture. A golden light floods the fields, gives a blueish tint to the dwarf trees in the background, throws deep shadows on the great trees and the hay-mows, and sheds brilliant colour on the men and animals moving in the foreground. Here, as elsewhere, the figures are drawn in two strokes of the brush; Rubens took very little trouble over the trees -- a little brown for the trunk and a few green, blue and yellow spots for the leaves, and that is all. The sky is painted with still greater breadth. With apparent caprice, the painter has mixed blue, red, green and white,

impasting here and there, and then thrown a few brownish lines over all; and the result is that what seems pure fantasy on a close view becomes, when looked at from the right distance, an exact and superb interpretation of the effect of colours in nature.

There is another example of the same landscape in the Wallace Museum in London, which even surpasses the first and is perhaps the finest Rubens ever painted. In this picture the sun has still more brilliance and warmth. It seems as if a wave of molten gold were flowing over the landscape, gilding everything, penetrating and heating all the tones. Ripples of light play over the water, rays and beams of gold pierce the shady wood, here and there lighting up a trunk or a tree-top. Bronze tones spread over the brambles, on which the red berries flame like glowing coals; the mists are impregnated with light like the vapour that rises from a



LANDSCAPE WITH WAGGON STUCK IN THE MUD
After the engraving by Schelte a Bolswert (Hermitage, St Petersburg).

furnace, a mixture of flames and smoke. The parts that lie in shadow form a violent contrast. No one ever equalled Rubens in his power of opposing intense light and profound darkness without being hard or improbable, and never did he himself do it so powerfully as in this effect of sunlight which warms but does not burn.

He had placed an indelible imprint on the art of his time and country, and on no branch of it did he work a more complete reform than on landscape. He trans-

formed it, not only for the school of Antwerp, but for the Netherlands and the whole of Europe. Till then the art had delighted in the mechanical reproduction of details, or in the arbitrary arrangement of accessories with a view to theatrical effect; Rubens was the first to respect nature and abstain from all fantasy in the interpretation of her, the first to see her with a poet's eye and find her fair in herself. He made her dramatic by translating her joys and griefs, her woe and gladness, her calm and her fury. He was the first to realise how decorative an effect animals, and especially cattle, produce in a landscape, in which they become clear and luminous points, and how rightly placed they are in our meadows. He opened up the way, therefore, for the Flemish and Dutch painters, who followed him either unconsciously or of deliberate purpose, but equalled him neither in breadth of conception nor in the power of their colour and light. Jan van Goyen, Aart van der Neer, Rembrandt, Hercules Seghers, Jacob Ruysdael, Hobbema, the earliest and greatest masters of landscape in Holland, come only second to Rubens. In our own day we have seen the rebirth of his conception of nature and his love of light and truth, but not his sovereign might.



THE RETURN FROM THE FIELDS
(Pitti Palace, Florence)



He did not confine himself to the painting of fields and meadows, hills and woods ; he observed and represented also those who till the soil and live in the lap of nature. In his time, as both before and after him, it was the custom to insert in landscape scenes borrowed from history or mythology ; if contemporaries were introduced, they were gentlemen dressed for a *fête* ; if peasants, they were celebrating the kermesse or engaging in a carouse, but never in their habitual occupations. Rubens placed the countryman in the countryside ; he showed him doing his daily work, reaping his corn, driving his flocks, milking his cows, going to market,



LANDSCAPE WITH THE CASTLE OF STEEN AT ELEWIJT (National Gallery, London).

sawing timber, or warming himself in the chimney-corner while the snow was falling outside ; showed him, in fact, being and acting as nature's children must.

Rubens's contemporaries preferred historical paintings to landscapes ; nevertheless his landscapes were highly successful. Several of them we have in two versions, like the « Meleager and Atalanta hunting » at Brussels and Madrid ; the « Rainbow with Shepherd playing the flute » at St Petersburg and Paris, and another « Landscape with Rainbow », with peasants reaping the hay, in the Pinakothek at Munich and the Wallace Gallery in London.

Another proof of the success of these pictures is the engravings made after them, of which complete series were published, which was not the case with any other class of his compositions. There is a set of six of the pictures called the great landscapes of Rubens, five of which were engraved by Schelte a Bolswert and one by Peter Clouwet ; Schelte a Bolswert engraved a series of twenty small landscapes, and van Uden, Rubens's regular collaborator, published four etchings after landscapes by the master.

OTHER PRODUCTIONS OF THE LAST YEARS

ALTAR-PIECES. — Large altar-pieces are rare during the artist's last years, owing probably to his summers in the country, the attacks of gout to which he was becoming more and more subject and the important commissions he received from the king of Spain after the Cardinal-Infant's arrival in these provinces. However, between 1635 and 1640, he painted some ten, which included several master-pieces. His dramatic power, far from having diminished, appears to have increased: he delighted in representing without the slightest diminution the most horrible tortures and the most poignant emotions. His manner continued to change; his tones become lighter, his light more abundant and paler, his colour more delicate, more finely shaded and more harmoniously blended.

THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. LIVIN. — The first in chronological order of the last series of altar-pieces is certainly the Martyrdom of St Livin (*Œuvre*. No 469), which was painted for the high altar of the Jesuits' church at Ghent. On the 5th May, 1777, it was bought for king Louis XVI of France at the sale of the works of art from the churches of the suppressed order of the Jesuits. It was placed in the Napoleon Museum in Paris. When the Imperial government decided to distribute among the departmental museums some of the large number of pictures collected at Paris, no distinction was made between regular acquisitions and spoils of war, and this picture, to which our country could set up no further claim, was sent back in 1802 to Belgium, and has since been in the Royal Museum at Brussels.

It is one of the master's most dramatic compositions. The martyr, in episcopal robes, is kneeling in the foreground and looking up to heaven with an expression of unspeakable anguish. Three executioners are carrying out their barbarous task; one of them is pulling him by the beard, between the teeth of another is the knife which he has just used to cut out the saint's tongue, while the third is holding out the tongue at the end of his pincers to a dog which is leaping up to seize it. There is blood on the hands of the executioners, blood on the face and beard of the martyr and blood on the neck of his surplice. Beside this scene of torture is a scene of anguish. In the clouds appear two angels brandishing a thunderbolt over the heads of the executioners and the warriors standing by. The white horse of one of the latter is rearing and throwing his rider violently to the ground; a brown horse, mad with fear, is neighing, while his rider raises his hands in supplication. On the left is a soldier fleeing with his eyes raised to heaven imploring mercy. Rubens never painted more violent movements, more cruel actions or more heartrending emotions. To show the full sequence of the episode, he was obliged to sacrifice unity, and the picture falls into two sharp divisions, the martyrdom of the saint and the punishment of the executioners. The lack of unity is apparent not only in the representation of the action, but also in the lines of the composition. The two groups act independently and are turned in different directions. It is true, however, that the confusion of the movements gives fine expression to the atrocity of the torture and the terror of the guilty.

The broken action gains a certain unity from the painting. Rubens used the gayest colours in painting the most horrible deeds. In the foreground the tones are exceedingly rich and lit by the brightest light; in the background the tones grow softer and thinner; the whole scene is bathed in radiant light. It might be a festival. The sumptuous ornaments of the bishop, the glittering armour of the warriors, here a red cap, there a graceful helmet, the sunny background, all speak rather of joy than of terror; the little boy urging on the dogs on the right is a gay and laughing image of childhood and the angels that appear in the sky are charming little chubby beings. The moral hideousness of the deed disappears under the material beauty of the execution. There are scarcely any shadows, the outlines are blended in pale light, and the charm of the colour softens the brutality of the faces.

Rubens painted the figures in the foreground himself, and the angels in the sky; he retouched the figures in the middle distance, the horses and the large angels. The animals are probably by Paul De Vos. The sketch for this picture, which is warm and powerful in tone, belongs to M. Rodolphe Kann of Paris, who bought it at the Crabbe sale.

THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. JUST. — About the same time, that is at the end of 1635 or the beginning of 1636, Rubens painted an altar-piece representing St Just bearing his severed head in his hands (*Œuvre*. No 467). The order was given him by his friend Balthasar Moretus for the high altar of the church of the Annonciades at Antwerp. On the 12th April, 1636, Moretus entered in his ledger a sum of 300 florins paid for this picture. It was sold on the 12th September, 1785, with other works of art from the suppressed monasteries, and is now in the Museum at Bordeaux. The subject is hideous and the execution poor. Rubens painted the principal figure and retouched the two others. The landscape is probably by Wildens. The picture must have deteriorated a great deal since Sir Joshua Reynolds saw it in the church of the Annonciades, for he had nothing but praise for it, and declared that every part of it is touched in such a style that it may be considered as a pattern for imitation ».

THE BEARING OF THE CROSS. — One of the best known and most admired of the master's works belongs to this period, the « Bearing of the Cross » in the Royal Museum at Brussels (*Œuvre*. No 274). It was painted for the abbey of Afflighem in Brabant. The monks had entered into negotiations with Rubens some years before he painted it. In 1634 they had begun extensive restorations in their church, and had been planning for some time to have the high altar rebuilt. They asked Rubens for a idea for an altar-piece, and Rubens made a sketch before 1632, in which year the engraving of it by Pontius was published. The monks were not at all satisfied with the sketch, and in 1634, when they assigned the building of the altar to Jan Du Can, they agreed with Rubens for the delivery of a picture with certain alterations. The altar was finished in 1636, and Rubens's altar-piece was placed on it on the 8th April, 1637. He received 1600 florins for it, with 500 for the workman and the apprentice who had made the frame and stretched the canvas. The French carried off the altar-piece in 1794; it was restored in 1815 and placed in the Museum at Brussels the following year.

The scene takes place on a path that climbs the steep ascent of Golgotha. At the foot are two Roman soldiers in helmets and breastplates leading the two thieves. In the middle of the way Christ has sunk under the cross; the two men helping him to carry it are lifting it up; Veronica is wiping the sweat from the Saviour's face, and John leaning forward to help him to his feet again. On either side is a woman with a child in her arms, looking with compassion at the sad spectacle; a soldier is striking Christ with his staff to force him to stand up. Higher

up an officer raises his staff to point the way, and in front of him are two horsemen carrying standards at the head of the procession.

The three groups are not consecutive, but are rather placed side by side. The drama, properly so called, is taking place in the centre. Christ has fallen to the ground on hands and knees; his mother, full of pity, stretches out her arms to succour her beloved, and two friends are uniting their efforts to lift up the heavy cross. Veronica and the two mothers complete the suffering and piteous group. The rest is but padding. The accessories, which play the chief part, are somewhat theatrical and decorative. The two horsemen riding at the head of the procession and the officers and two soldiers escorting the thieves are elegant and well made. At the bottom the bare backs of the thieves form a fine spot of light and colour beside the soldiers in armour. In the same way, it is the secondary figures that attract attention



THE BEHEADING OF ST. PAUL
(After the drawing in the National Gallery, London).

in the central group; the man with the nude torso is the dominant figure, and the painter has shown no less predilection for Veronica and the fair young mother, while he has neglected Christ, Mary and John. Rubens does not try to touch the emotions; what strikes him is the picturesque effect of the procession climbing the hill, the beauty of the movements and the vigour of the limbs. But the tone of the picture is robust, and especially powerful in the lower parts, where the shadows lie heavy. From this solid base the upper groups taper with increasing brightness and delicacy up to the jaunty bearing of the horsemen, who give a festal air to the funereal procession. At the top of the hill the banners are lost in the clouds, and to one side the view stretches far over the landscape to the point where the sun lights the sky with his glowing beams.

The lower group is entirely painted by Rubens, and so is the central group, in which the



THE BEARING OF THE CROSS
(Museum, Brussels)

The scene takes place on a path that climbs the steep (east) of Golgotha. At the front are two Roman soldiers in helmets and breast-plates, leading the *tree of life*. In the middle of the way Christ has sunk under the cross; the two men bearing him to carry it are lifting it up; Veronica is wiping the sweat from the Saviour's face; and John is bent forward to help him to his feet again. On either side is a woman with a child in her arms, looking with compassion at the sad spectacle; a soldier is striking Christ with his sword to prevent his being lifted up. Higher



THE BEARING OF THE CROSS
(After the drawing by the *Wanderer*, 1803)

in the central group; the two men with the cross come to the foreground first, and the painter has thrown his less proflection on Veronica and the two young men, while he has neglected Christ, Mary and John. Rubens does not try to touch the emotions; what strikes him is the picturesque effect of the picturesque elements, the form, the beauty of the movements and the vigor of the lines. But the *ton* of the picture is robust and especially powerful in the lower part, where the shadows are heavy. From this could have the upper groups taper with increasing lightness and delicacy up to the sturdy bearing of the horsemen, who give a final touch to the hurried procession. At the top of the hill the benches are lost in the clouds, and the view stretches far over the landscape to the point where the sun glimmers on the yellowing beams.

The lower group is entirely painted by Rubens, and so is the central group, in which the

rest of the picture is painted, and the whole is a masterpiece of the art of the painter.

The three groups are not connected, but are rather placed side by side. The drama, properly so called, is taking place in the centre. Christ has fallen to the ground on hands and knees; his mother, full of pity, stretches out her arms to succour her beloved, and two friends are uniting their efforts to lift up the heavy cross, Veronica and the two mothers complete the suffering and piteous group. The rest is but padding. The accessories, which play the chief part, are somewhat theatrical and decorative. The two horsemen riding at the head of the procession with their officers and the soldiers carrying the cross, are the most important figures in the picture. The two men with the cross are the most interesting figures that attract attention.

The two men with the cross are the most interesting figures that attract attention.

THE BEARING OF THE CROSS (Museum, Brussels)



Virgin's blue robe and St John's red robe form two dark patches ; the upper group alone was painted by pupils, but retouched and lighted by the master.

There are two sketches for this picture in existence, one in the Royal Museum at Amsterdam, which is reproduced here, and another in the Museum of the Academy at Vienna, both very different from the picture and the engraving ; this proves that Rubens took up his work again and altered it more than once.

CHRIST BEFORE PILATE. — A picture of « Christ before Pilate », which is only known to us from an engraving by Nicolas Lauwers, a sketch in the possession of the van Parijs family at Brussels and a copy in the cathedral at Nivelles, appears to us to date from the same period (*Œuvre*. N^o 273). Certain figures, indeed, like the Barabbas being brought before the proconsul at the same time as Christ, and the Jews demanding the condemnation of the latter who are seen half-length at the bottom of the picture, strikingly recall the composition and execution of the « Bearing of the Cross ».



THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN (Lichtenstein Gallery, Vienna).

THE BEHEADING OF ST. PAUL. — Another picture, now lost, was probably painted about the same time. This was the « Beheading of St Paul » (*Œuvre*. N^o 478). It was painted for the convent of Rouge-Cloître near Brussels. When the French troops invaded Brabant in 1695, the picture was taken into the church of St Catherine at Brussels and thence to the chapel of St Eligius ; the chapel was burned in the bombardment of that year, and the picture perished in the flames. The sketch may be seen in the Holford collection in London and there is a drawing in the National Gallery. An engraving by Peter Verbruggen the younger, representing the altar of the Dominican church at Antwerp, shows this picture. A copy of it was taken to Paris by the French in 1794 ; thence it was sent to Aix in Provence, where it still is, in the church of the Madeleine. The martyr is kneeling on a flight of steps ; the executioner stands ready to cut his head off, and a woman is covering his eyes with a bandage, as in the « Martyrdom of St Catherine ». He is surrounded with soldiers and spectators ; three angels, hovering in the sky, are bringing palms and crowns. The arrangement of the figures and the attitude of one or two of them also recall the « Bearing of the Cross ».

THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. ANDREW. — From the same period also dates the « Martyrdom of St Andrew », which is still over the altar of the church of the Hospital of St Andrew of the Flemings at Madrid (*Œuvre*. N° 389). It represents the apostle at the moment when the executioners are preparing to fasten him to the cross, which is already erected ; a soldier in a helmet, a mounted officer and a large number of spectators, of which the greater part are women, are present at the martyrdom. The composition of the picture is fine and close, the colour rich and the painting very finished. The chief figures are by Rubens's hand, the rest by a pupil and retouched by the master.

The picture was presented to the establishment in which necessitous Flemish found refuge at Madrid by Jan van Vucht, a rich merchant, born at Helmont, in Brabant and settled in Madrid. From April, 1622, to June, 1637, he was in business relations with Balthasar Moretus, who wrote to him at least once a month and sent him books, and sometimes pictures intended for Spain. From these commercial relations had sprung a personal friendship, and Moretus discussed not only their mutual interests with his correspondent at Madrid, but also the political situation of their native country, on which he sent him succinct information.

Rubens had made van Vucht's acquaintance during his visit to Madrid in 1629. In Moretus's letters to the merchant we find mention more than once of a picture which van Vucht wished to order of Rubens: on the 31st August, 1630, for instance, Moretus wrote : » If you want a Diana with two nymphs or some other subject of three or four figures, » Rubens is prepared to paint you one for the aforementioned sum of 100 patacons » (1). From this, and from what was said later on the subject of the picture, it is clear that the picture referred to was not an altar-piece. Van Vucht must have ordered the « Martyrdom of St Andrew » later, for in making his will on the 24th April, 1639, by which he left the chapel of St Andrew's Hospital a sum of 552,719 maravedis, he added : « I bequeathe to the said hospital the picture of the Martyrdom of the glorious St Andrew, which I had painted for me in Flanders, and which is the work of the famous master Peter Paul Rubens ». He further willed that a frame should be made for the picture well carved with columns and the necessary pediment for the adornment of the altar.

When the hospital was suppressed at the end of the eighteenth century, the altar-piece was taken to the Escurial. In 1844 the chapel in the Calle San Marcos was reopened, and the picture restored to its original place. In 1862 the old chapel was pulled down, and a new one was built in the Calle Claudio Coello. Rubens's picture was placed over the altar in 1877. The Imperial Museum at Vienna has a study made at the same period for a St Andrew (*Œuvre*. N° 388).

THE CRUCIFIXION OF ST PETER. — It was for a foreign church also that Rubens painted one of his last great altar-pieces, the « Crucifixion of St Peter » (*Œuvre*. N° 487). It was ordered of him in 1637 by the painter George Geldorp, a native of Cologne living in London. As Rubens was surprised that he should be asked for an altar-piece from London, a second letter

(1) Archives of the Plantin-Moretus Museum, and *Bulletin-Rubens*, V, p. 121.

came to inform him that the picture was intended for the church of St Peter at Cologne, to which it was presented by the wealthy banker, Evrard Jabach, lately deceased. Rubens chose the Crucifixion of St Peter, a subject which appealed to him by its strangeness. Tradition relates that, out of pure humility, the apostle demanded to be crucified head downwards, holding himself unworthy to die in the same manner as his Master. Guido Reni, Caravaggio and Vandyck had treated the subject before Rubens, who wished to attempt it in his turn. He appears to have found great satisfaction in the idea of painting an important work for Cologne, and on this occasion he wrote the often quoted words: « I have much affection for the town » of Cologne, because I was brought up there till my tenth year, and I have often desired to » visit it again after so long an absence; but I fear my engagements and the dangers of the » journey will deprive me of this pleasure as of many others ».

Geldorp declared his approval of the choice, and Rubens set to work without undue haste. On the 2nd April, 1638, he wrote that the picture was far advanced already, and that he hoped to make it one of his best works; but he asked for time to finish it at his leisure, for, he says, « though I am overwhelmed with other work, the subject of this altar-piece gives me more » pleasure than any I have on the easel ». He never delivered the picture, which was found in his studio at his death, and was afterwards sold to Georges Deschamps for a client in Cologne for 1200 florins. The Cologne client represented the Jabach family, which had the picture placed on the altar of the church of St Peter in memory of the deceased banker. In 1794 it was taken to Paris and returned in 1815. In the interval Jan Jacob Schmitz had made a copy of it, which was put on the altar in place of the original and was relegated to one of the aisles on the return of Rubens's altar-piece.

Rubens may have imagined that he was going to make the « Crucifixion of St Peter » one of his best works, but his anticipations were not realised. The subject attracted him by the boldness of the attitude of the saint, crucified head downwards, and by the effect he wished to produce by making the light fall on his chest, which was inclined forward; but the execution did not answer to his expectations. The expression of cruelty in the executioners is exaggerated; their features and movements are monstrous, and the principal figure arouses repugnance rather than admiration. Moreover, the painting is not by the master's hand, which merely retouched and added light to the flesh of the saint and the executioners. Just as he had done some thirty years before in the « Elevation of the Cross », Rubens gave his own features to the officer clad in armour who is present at the martyrdom; but great is the contrast between the vigorous warrior in the prime of life of 1610 and the decrepit, dull-eyed old man of this work of his latest years.

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN. — At the same time that he undertook to paint this picture for Cologne, a Flemish gentleman, Charles de Schotte, ordered an altar-piece of him, for the church of the Carthusians at Brussels, intended to perpetuate the memory of his father, Theodoor Schotte, supreme judge of the council of war, who died in 1629, and his mother Elisabeth van den Brandt. Rubens once more chose his favourite subject, the Assumption of the Virgin, which he was now to paint for the last time (*Œuvre*. N^o 360). He treated it without

modifying or rejuvenating it; he simply put a little more realism into it than into the previous Assumptions, and there is admirable unity in the effect of the colours. He painted the lower figures himself, was helped in the rest by his pupils, and retouched the whole. The picture has suffered severely from recklessly rough cleaning. It was bought, before 1763, by prince Liechtenstein of Vienna.

THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. THOMAS. — There is yet another martyrdom among the last pictures that came from Rubens's studio, that of St Thomas (*Œuvre*. N^o 498), which was



THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. THOMAS (Museum, Prague).

ordered of him in 1637, at the same time as a St Augustine (*Œuvre*. N^o 392), by the Superior of the monastery of the Augustines at Prague, where the church was dedicated to the bishop of Hippo. The two pictures were paid for by the Countess Martinitz, *née* Helena Werschowitz, who gave 945 florins for them. They were placed over the high altar of the church, where lately they were still to be seen: the « Martyrdom of St Thomas » in the usual place for altar-pieces, and the « St Augustine » immediately above. They were recently moved to the Museum at Prague. In the first of the two, the action presents the same savage cruelty as the « Martyrdom of St Livin », but without the horrible details of the latter. Seven executioners are falling furiously on the martyr; one of them is driving his spear into his body, and, to give greater force to the blow, has placed his foot on the apostle's leg; another is plunging a dagger into his neck; two are stoning him, and the others are coming to help and throwing themselves on the wretched victim. St Thomas is painted from the same model as the St Livin

in the picture at Brussels. The tonality is brown; the executioner with the spear wears a robe of the same colour as his skin; the one with a stone in his hand is wrapped in a red drapery, and the saint's robe is black. The effect of the light is striking; the figures stand out powerfully luminous against a dark background, which is yet transparent: we have harmony in dazzling brilliance. Here again the background is occupied by graceful buildings which help to give a festal air to the scene of murder. As in the « Martyrdom of St Livin », Rubens painted the figures in the foreground himself, and had the secondary figures and accessories painted by his pupils.

The « Saint Augustine » is less interesting (*Œuvre*. N^o 392). The saint is standing on the



THE RAPE OF THE SABINES
(National Gallery, London)

manifestly an expression of the fact simply but & with more feeling than it shall bear the present discomposure, and does not adapt itself only to the effect of the picture. He painted the lower figures almost, and indeed to the left by his pupils, and this must be so. The picture has suffered severely from a badly judged cleaning, & was bought by the Prince of Saxe-Weimar in 1703, by prince Christian of Saxe.

The Martyrdom of St. Thomas.—There is yet another picture among the 184 pictures that came from Rubens's studio. That of St. Thomas is dated 1628. It was



200. Martyrdom of St. Thomas (Globe Theatre).

in the picture at Brussels. The quality is superb; the execution with the spear wears a robe of the same colour as his skin; the man with a stone in his hand is wrapped in a red drapery, and the same robe is black. The effect of the light is striking; the figures stand out powerfully here and there against a dark background which is yet transparent; we have harmony in dazzling brilliancy: there again the background is occupied by graceful windings which seem to give a feeling of the same of wonder. As in the 'Martyrdom of St. Lavin', Rubens placed the figures in the foreground nearest, and had the secondary figures and accessories drawn by his pupils.

The 'Saint Augustine' is now in constant (Zweve, No. 392). The picture hanging on the

east end of the church at Brussels, which was ordered of him in 1628, with the assistance of St. Augustine of Avere, No. 393, is a reproduction of the martyrdom of the Augustine at Brussels. When the church was dedicated to the bishop of Hippo. The two pictures were made for by the Countess Maribona, nee Heister Werschoewitz, who gave 915 tolas for them. They were placed over the high altar of the church, where lately they were still to be seen: the 'Martyrdom of St. Thomas' in the usual place for altar-pieces, and the 'St. Augustine' immediately above. They were recently moved to the Museum at Prague. Of the first of the two, the wall now presents the same 'Martyrdom of St. Thomas' as the 'Martyrdom of St. Lavin' and the 'Martyrdom of St. Augustine' at Brussels.

The 'Martyrdom of St. Thomas' is a reproduction of the original painting by Peter Paul Rubens, which was ordered of him in 1628, with the assistance of St. Augustine of Avere, No. 393, is a reproduction of the martyrdom of the Augustine at Brussels. When the church was dedicated to the bishop of Hippo. The two pictures were made for by the Countess Maribona, nee Heister Werschoewitz, who gave 915 tolas for them. They were placed over the high altar of the church, where lately they were still to be seen: the 'Martyrdom of St. Thomas' in the usual place for altar-pieces, and the 'St. Augustine' immediately above. They were recently moved to the Museum at Prague. Of the first of the two, the wall now presents the same 'Martyrdom of St. Thomas' as the 'Martyrdom of St. Lavin' and the 'Martyrdom of St. Augustine' at Brussels.



shore and looking with astonishment at the little child occupied in lading out the sea into a little hole which he has just dug in the sand. The figure is imposing and stands out strongly in rich episcopal robes against a pale blue sky with grey floating clouds. The painting is more vigorous and the colour richer than in the « Martyrdom of St Thomas », though the picture was prepared by pupils, and Rubens only retouched the head and drapery of the bishop.

THE EVILS OF WAR. — Besides the altar-pieces, Rubens painted some allegorical, historical and sacred pictures at this period. The first we will mention is the « Evils of War », ordered by Justus Suttermans for the grand-duke of Tuscany (*Œuvre*. N^o 827). Suttermans was an Antwerp painter settled in Florence, where he had won a great reputation and succeeded in gaining the confidence of the sovereign. He paid for the picture through his agent at Antwerp, Andreas De Schutter. After receiving the last payment of 142 florins 14 stuivers, the Antwerp master wrote, on the 12th March, 1638, to his Florentin fellow-artist to say that he had sent the picture off three weeks before by way of France. For his subject Rubens had chosen the « Evils of War », thus giving expression to an idea he had long had in mind ; he wished to show how deeply he had taken to heart the ills wrought on his country and its inhabitants, on art and science, by all the unhappy wars that had ravaged his native land. He explained the subject to Suttermans, and



ST. CECILIA PLAYING THE HARPSICHORD
(Museum, Berlin.)

although he rather spoke of the composition than of the sentiments animating it, we give his description here, as the only one he wrote of one of his own pictures. « The principal figure is Mars coming out of the temple of Janus, which is closed in time of peace » according to the Roman custom, and rushing forward, his shield on his arm, his bloody sword in his hand, threatening the nations with the direst calamities. He takes no heed of Venus, his beloved, who is embracing him and striving to detain him with her caresses, with Cupids and loves in her train. Mars, on the other hand, is hurried on by the fury Alecto, who has a torch in her hand. Beside her are two monsters, Pestilence and Famine, the inseparable companions of war. On the ground lies a woman, who has been thrown down ; she holds a lute, the symbol of harmony, incompatible with Discord and War ; another woman with her child on her arm signifies Fecundity, Maternity and Charity, troubled by War, which ravages and destroys everything. We see also an architect thrown to the ground, with his instruments in his hand, which implies that everything built in time

of peace for the use and ornament of cities is overthrown and ruined by the violence of arms. If I recollect right, I believe you will also see on the ground under the feet of Mars a book and some drawings, which signifies that he tramples letters and all things of beauty under foot. He ought also to have an unbound sheaf of arrows and javelins, which, tied together, would symbolise Concord; and finally the caduceus of Mercury and the olive-branch, the symbols of Peace, lie on the ground where they have been thrown. The woman in mourning dressed in black without jewels or ornaments and covered with a torn veil is unhappy Europe, so long laid waste by pillage, devastation and want, which cause incalculable damage to all. Her attribute is the terrestrial globe, borne by an angel or a genius and ornamented by a cross which shows that the Christian world is referred to.

The explanation is thus as clear as possible, but what Rubens has not mentioned is the intense dramatic life he has given to all his figures. His Mars impetuously leaping forward, his frenzied Alecto bounding on and dragging the god of war in her footsteps, the supplicating and tender Venus and the miserable Europe raising her arms to heaven to implore succour, are so many masterly personifications of passion and emotion. Another thing he does not speak of is the beauty of the light, blonde and caressing on the white body of Venus, sweet and pale in the blue sky in which float transparent clouds, but powerful and sinister on the gloomy or terrifying figures.

Two other large historical pictures are in the National Gallery in London: The « Rape of the Sabines », which first belonged to the duc de Richelieu and came to the National Gallery from the Angerstein collection; and the « Brazen Serpent » which passed to England from the Marano palace at Genoa in 1806, and was bought for the National Gallery in 1837.

THE RAPE OF THE SABINES. — This picture (*Œuvre*. N^o 803) represents a splendid outdoor scene. In the background we see the temples and palaces of ancient Rome, not those of the time of Romulus but of the imperial epoch; in the foreground the struggle between the Romans and the Sabine women. The blazing sun spreads its rays over everything, sending floods of light over the flesh, the drapery and the white marbles. All is strife and movement, but the action was difficult to dramatize and Rubens did not attempt it. There is nothing sufficiently sad in the violent abduction of some young women by men desirous of marriage, to rouse pity for the fate of the victims. We must add that Rubens has unfortunately made the women carried off by the Romans very little like timid lambs; some of them are of an ample figure which gives them the look of venerable matrons and worthy mothers of families rather than tender maidens: the stout woman with powerful breasts, wearing a gold robe, who is clasping her hands in entreaty and throwing herself back, while her Roman suitor struggles to push her before him; another no less massive woman whom two men are struggling to lift on to a horse, and a third who has thrown herself on the ground and is keeping two Romans busy, one of whom is lifting her skirts above her knees — all this is little short of grotesque. But the movement is full of vigour; and we cannot but admire the magnificence of the colours and the play of them on the dark background: the red, blue, green and pink, the steel of the armour and the marble of the palaces are blended with the tints of the sky and clouds. The

brilliance of the colours, again, is surpassed by that of the rays of the sun and the incomparable richness of their gradations : we seem to be present at a transmutation of colour into light.

Rubens had treated the same subject before. In the Pinakothek at Munich there is a picture dating from about 1615, painted by a pupil (*Œuvre*. N^o 805⁽²⁾) after a sketch by the master representing the « Reconciliation of the Romans and Sabines » (*Œuvre*. N^o 805). Lord Ashburton has a sketch of the same subject (*Œuvre*. N^o 806), with another which forms a pair with it and represents the « Rape of the Sabines » (*Œuvre*. N^o 807). Rubens also painted both these subjects towards the end of his life for the king of Spain.

THE BRAZEN SERPENT. — The other picture in the National Gallery, the « Brazen Serpent » (*Œuvre*. N^o 112) represents on one side Moses and Eleazar, the son of Aaron, showing the Israelites the brazen serpent which is to heal them ; on the other those who have been bitten and are imploring help or trying to free themselves from the coils of the serpents. The picture is entirely by the hand of the master and was painted about 1637 ; its relationship with the « Martyrdom of St Thomas » is evident.

The groups of the unhappy sufferers are arranged with a view to dramatic effect. But the artist wished to show not only the struggle between men and reptiles, but between light and shade as well. On the left Moses and Eleazar stand out in luminous brown against a dark cloud in the heavy atmosphere of the background ; on the right the warm flesh tones and rich outlines of the Israelites bitten by the serpents are relieved against an obscure background which seems to be a wall of rock. Entangled one with another like the links of a chain, they turn in supplication towards their saviour, the serpent. Below lie the dead and dying ; a woman is weeping in dumb despair over the corpse of her father ; higher up, others are struggling in defence of their lives ; mothers in mortal anguish are imploring help for their children. Physical suffering and moral torture are not expressed here with savage violence, but in a restrained and piercing manner by tears, groans and supplications. Every single body, some full of life and health, others wrapped in the pallor of the death-agony, is thrown into the fullest light. Nothing could be more wonderful than these conflicts of light and shade, or this display of rich and powerful light rising from the breast of darkness.

Rubens was becoming more and more a colourist, to the neglect of drawing. In this terrible drama, Moses and Eleazar are devoid of priestly dignity : the women and children are without beauty, mere shapes reflecting light or casting more or less heavy shadows.

SAINT CECILIA. — A fourth large picture, the « Saint Cecilia » (*Œuvre*. N^o 403) was, like the others, entirely painted by Rubens. It belongs to the Royal Museum at Berlin, and shows the manner of the master in the very latest period of his life. He cares for nothing but the play of light and shade, colours and reflexions ; his love of brilliance has grown, and he has reached the last degree of refinement in the use of delicate shades. The saint, to whom he has given the features and figure of Helena Fourment, is sitting before her harpsichord, and raising her large dewy eyes to heaven ; there are red spots, very sharply outlined, on her cheeks, her pale auburn curls mingle in disorder and her complexion is pale, almost sallow. She wears a dark

green robe with pale lights, a white gauze scarf and a black velvet drapery lined with yellow silk ; under her lifted robe shows a petticoat of salmon colour shot with red and yellow with green lights. Rich reflexions also play on the soft flesh of the little angels round about her. The whole picture is nothing but effects of light and shade ; an intense glow falls on the head, breast and hands of the saint, on the two little angels and the salmon-coloured petticoat ; light and transparent shadows fall across the red tapestry hanging above and the yellow



BATHSHEBA AT THE FOUNTAIN (Museum, Dresden).

imagined more atrocious, more inhuman than the order issued by Herod? What more desperate than the resistance of the mothers whose children were about to be massacred? What scenes of rage and despair could possibly equal these? In the « Fall of the Damned » and the small « Last Judgment » the great dramatic artist had shown the most terrifying spectacle that the imagination can conceive, an immense crowd of human beings hurled into the abyss ; in the « Battle of the Amazons » he had represented the most dreadful episode that the human eye could contemplate, a troop of horsemen precipitated from the top of a bridge into a river. But those pictures were only concerned with physical suffering ; in this he shows the mental tortures of the mothers whose children are being massacred, and who thus are being robbed of more than life. Rubens wished to represent the drama in all its truth ; on one side he showed the extreme of human barbarity, on the other the extreme of suffering,

drapery over the seat ; her robe and the little angel standing on the ground are bathed in sweet sunlight. The expression of the saint's face lacks charm, as does her whole figure, but the delicacy of tones and shades is really admirable. The picture formed part of the master's estate, like many others we have yet to speak of. It was presented to van Ophem in recognition of the services rendered by him on the occasion of the king of Spain's purchase of 29 pictures belonging to the estate.

The pictures of smaller size of this period were treated in the same way as the altar-pieces.

THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS. — The most remarkable of all is the « Massacre of the Innocents » (*Œuvre*. N^o 181), one of Rubens's master-pieces, and possibly the picture in which his dramatic power and the wealth of his colouring are united in the most perfect harmony.

The drama is horrible. What can be



THE BRAZEN SERPENT
(National Gallery, London)

green robe with gold lights, a white gauze scarf and a black velvet drapery lined with yellow silk; under her blue robe shows a petticoat of satin, patterned with red and yellow with green lights. Real reflections also play on the soft flesh of the mother's face, round about her. The whole picture is smiling, but effects of light and shadow, as coming from above, falls on the head, breast and hands of the saint, on the two little boys and the mother's yellow petticoat; soft and transparent shadows fall across the red lace-trimmed hood and the yellow

drapery over the mother's shoulders, and the little girl's saffron or yellow dress is bathed in sweet sunlight. The expression of the saint's face lacks charm, as does the whole figure, but the delicacy of tones and studies is really admirable. The picture formed part of the master's estate, like many others we have yet to speak of. It was presented to van Ophem in recognition of the services rendered by him on the occasion of the king of Spain's purchase of 20 pictures belonging to the estate.

The pictures of smaller size of this period were treated in the same way as the altar-pieces.



THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS (Rubens, 1612)

THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS. — The most remarkable of all is the *Massacre of the Innocents* (*F. and N. 181*) one of Rubens' masterpieces, and surely the most powerful dramatic composition he made in his country, as shown by the scene's perfect harmony.

The drama is horrible. What can be imagined more atrocious, more barbarous than the order issued by Herod? What more desperate than the resistance of the mothers whose children were about to be massacred? What scenes of rage and despair could possibly equal these? In the *Fall of the Damned* and the small *Last Judgment* — the great dramatic artist had shown the most terrifying spectacle that the imagination can conceive, an immense crowd of human beings hurled into the abyss; in the *Battle of the Amazon* — he had represented the most dreadful episode that the human eye could contemplate, a troop of horsemen precipitated from the top of a bridge into a river. But those pictures were only concerned with physical suffering; in this he shows the mental tortures of the mothers whose children are being massacred, and who thus are being robbed of more than life. Rubens wished to represent the drama in all its truth; on one side he showed the extreme of human barbarity, on the other the extreme of suffering,

THE BRAZEN SERPENT
(National Gallery, London)



without academic art, without conventional gestures and grouping, leaving the action its full brutality.

He represented despair in its three degrees. Dumb grief he personified in the mother bowed over the body of her child, in another pressing the little lifeless being in her arms and in a third pushing away in vain the executioner who has seized her child by the leg. The despair that breaks forth in cries and lamentations he showed in the mother in the centre of the



CONVERSATIE A LA MODE (ELEGANT SOCIETY) — Drawing for the engraving by Christoffel Jegher.
Left side of the picture (Lately in the collection of Sir Charles Robinson, London).

composition who is lifting blood-stained infants' clothes to heaven ; in another imploring mercy for her nursling which is about to be dashed to pieces, and in a third flying to the rescue of her child which is in the arms of the executioner and holding out supplicating hands to her. Finally the artist has shown us furious resistance. One woman is plunging her nails into the executioner's cheek and biting his arm ; two others are frantically fighting the murderers, and an old woman, a grandmother no doubt, is stopping a soldier by seizing his legs. A group of three children peacefully sleeping the eternal sleep forms a touching contrast to these scenes of violence.

We pass on to the painting. These horrors and sufferings are rendered in smiling colours bathed in bright light. It seems as if indifferent and pitiless Nature were laughing at humanity's profoundest emotions. Rubens seems to have illustrated in advance the words of a French

philosopher : « Nature is immoral ; the sun has seen the most crying iniquities without veiling his face, and has smiled at the greatest crimes » (1). Two of the mothers wear pale blue robes ; others wear amber-colour, red or violet with purple reflexions ; one is in full dress, with a petticoat of red silk and a black silk dress lined with yellow silk, such as Helena Fourment usually wore. The sky is holding festival, in an orgy of light and colour. The blue is flecked with little gilded clouds ; angels holding flowers and crowns hover in the air ; in the background and at the sides temples and palaces rise in a warm mist, which softens the brilliant radiance of the sun. The colours are rich and tinted with green-bronze lights over brown, violet over purple and yellow over red. The tone is more sober and more restrained on the right, and darker on the left ; there are no shadows ; all is light, and the intensity, the whiteness and the sweetness of the light are incomparable.

This master-piece is entirely by the hand of Rubens, except the background, which he merely retouched. It was painted for Antonius Triest, bishop of Ghent, to whom it still belonged in 1643, as Pontius, who engraved it, states in his dedication : later it passed into the collection of the duc de Richelieu, who sold it to the Elector of Bavaria. It is now in the Pinakothek at Munich.

MYTHOLOGICAL AND OTHER PICTURES. — To the same period belong the « Bathsheba at the fountain » (*Œuvre*. N^o 121) in the Museum at Dresden, which is entirely by the master's hand and painted in vaporous tones on a pale background, and the « Mercury and Argus » (*Œuvre*. N^o 644) in the same Museum, a master-piece of a warmer tonality and bathed in golden light ; the « Holy Family » in the Museum at Madrid (*Œuvre*. N^o 222) and another in the Museum at Cologne (*Œuvre*. N^o 229) ; « Meleager and Atalanta » (*Œuvre*. N^o 640) in the Pinakothek at Munich ; the « Hero crowned by Victory » (*Œuvre*. N^o 831) in the Imperial Museum at Vienna ; the « Judgment of Paris » in the National Gallery in London (*Œuvre*. N^o 663) ; « Diana and Actæon » now in the Schubart collection at Munich (*Œuvre*. N^o 601) ; « Bacchus on his barrel » (*Œuvre*. N^o 574) in the Hermitage at St Petersburg, and the « Nymphs and Fauns » in the Museum at Madrid (*Œuvre*. N^o 649).

All these pictures are little master-pieces. The « Bacchus on his barrel », the « Nymphs and Fauns » and the « Bathsheba » are somewhat pale and almost pearly in tone ; the « Mercury and Argus », the « Judgment of Paris » and the « Meleager and Atalanta » are lit with warmer and more vaporous light, but every one of them is bathed in sunshine and incomparably rich in delicate shades. Golden tints predominate in the Bathsheba, in which pale tones play on the pretty woman's wavy hair, on her transparent and ruffled shift, her red drapery and the broken folds of the negro's blue robe ; the light is reflected by the stone vase standing at the bather's foot and by the marble palace in the background, and floats diffused throughout the atmosphere. The tints are nowhere brilliant ; they harmonise, blend and combine in a whole that is full of sweetness and sober in tone but radiant with light. The scene of the « Judgment of Paris » takes place on a summer evening in a landscape with gnarled trees standing in thick

(1) RENAN : *Dialogues et fragments philosophiques*. Paris, 1876, p. 250.

clumps. Paris and Mercury are half effaced in luminous vapour, while the goddesses stand out white and firm against a background of verdure and clouds. Juno, with the light full on her back, is outlined with shadows of rich brown ; her broad carmine drapery has slipped from her shoulders and stopped between her hip and knee: Venus is fair, plump and almost childish ; Minerva takes her stand proudly ; all three pleasantly vie with each other in the delicacy and opulence of their luminous tones and stand out brilliantly against the softness of the background with its brown tints. The Dresden « Meleager and Atalanta », which is a copy of the picture at Munich (*Œuvre*. N^o 641), the « Mary Magdalen in a landscape » at Dulwich College (*Œuvre*. N^o 471) and the « St Jerome » in the Imperial Museum at Vienna (*Œuvre*. N^o 464) offer less interest.

The « Herod's Feast » which dates from the same period (*Œuvre*. N^o 242) differs markedly from the other pictures, and reveals the brilliant and brightly lighted colours which characterize certain works of Rubens's last period. Some of the figures strikingly recall those in the « Christ in the house of Simon the Pharisee » (*Œuvre*. N^o 254). Like that picture it recalls the banquets of Paolo Veronese, but instead of confining himself to the exhibition of a brilliant and sumptuous spectacle, the artist has painted a dramatic action at the same time as a princely feast. Salome bears on a charger the head of St John, to which her mother Herodias is pointing with the end of her fork ; all the guests are standing up or turning away their heads so as not to see the hideous trophy of the murder that has just been committed. Herod alone, plunged in his own thoughts, looks at it fixedly, and remains motionless, stupefied by the unexpected appearance of the head, which recalls his crime. He is one of the most tragic figures in Rubens's work. The master has given Herod his own features and Herodias those of Helena Fourment. Although the picture represents an important action and a number of characters, Rubens made the figures small, as in the « Massacre of the Innocents » and his last « Susannahs », because gout prevented him from undertaking paintings of large size. But the picture is none the less equal to his most important works. In the seventeenth century it probably belonged to Sandrart and is now the property of M. Herman Linde. Several large copies have been made of it.

GENRE-PICTURES. — After creating so many masterly works, Rubens first entered at the close of his life on what to him was an entirely new field, *genre*-painting, and achieved a brilliant success in it as in all others. Among his previous works we find only one *genre*-picture, « Love and Wine » (*Œuvre*. N^o 833) in the municipal Museum at Genoa. Possibly the « Soldier, the Signora and the old woman » (*Œuvre*. N^o 842), which belonged to Sandrart, also dated from Rubens's Italian years. In 1635-1640 he treated a whole series of subjects drawn from the life of people of quality and the life of peasants. This style of subject was not new in the Flemish school. Vinckeboons had more than once placed groups of lords and ladies in his landscapes and parks. Peter Breughel the elder had painted scenes of peasant life, and Adriaan Brouwer had painted nothing else. Rubens had a high opinion of the two last-named artists ; his collection included twelve pictures by the former and seventeen by the latter. But he abstained from taking them as models ; and when he became the painter of the

daily life of his time, he aimed at nothing but the truth, taking nature as his only guide. He painted what he saw, as he saw it. His residence at Elewijt no doubt influenced this tendency, for his *genre*-pictures are contemporaneous with his landscapes. In some of the latter we see lords and peasants *en fête*; as in the « Landscape with couples playing » in the Museum at Vienna (*Œuvre*. N° 1190), the « Landscape with a tournament » in the Louvre (*Œuvre*. N° 845) and the « Rustic dance » at Madrid (*Œuvre*. N° 838).

CONVERSATION A LA MODE. The most famous of these *genre*-pictures represents some fashionable people talking, flirting and dancing in a beautiful garden (*Œuvre*. N° 835). A



A COUPLE EMBRACING — Drawing. Study for the *Conversation à la mode* (Fodor Museum, Amsterdam).

couple pushed forward by Cupid are making ready to dance. Another couple sitting on the ground are engrossed in an intimate conversation; the lady has laid her arm on the knee of her cavalier and with her pretty head leaning on her hand listens dreamily to the sweet suggestions of her companion. In the middle are three ladies sitting down and inviting a fourth to take a place near them; beside each of the three first is a little love, and a cavalier with a guitar is standing near the group. On the right a couple is descending a flight of steps arm-in-arm to join the central group. All these people are young, handsome and happy to be alive; the women are of opulent mould, the men of distinguished bearing, and their clothes are rich and brilliant. The scene is marvellously beautiful; a fountain from which jets of water fall from stage to

stage, an arbour where roses mingle with verdure, a pavilion, the entrance of which is adorned with rich sculptures, and in the background a view of a princely garden. Evening is falling; the light grows soft, the shadows are transparent and the still air is full of reverie. It is the hour when the heart grows tender and opens to sweet emotions, and these people are rejoicing in the bliss of being handsome, of having cultivated wits, of loving and being loved. It would be impossible to imagine a more magnificent spectacle, more elegant men and women or more splendid painting. The charm of the evening light which clothes everything in soft tones, the richness of the dresses, the plump flesh of the women and the play of shades, of waving lights and reflexions, all show that Rubens felt the grace and poetry of the worldly scene and wished to let others share his pleasure.

In Rubens's time the picture was known as « *Conversation à la mode* »; to day we should call it the « Garden-party ». The artist evidently had in his mind some *Conversazione* which he might have witnessed in an Italian palace; it is a recollection of foreign parts which he has



CONVERSION A LA MODE
(Wesling, Wadding)

many lots of low loss, he aimed at nothing but the truth, taking nature as his only guide. He painted what he saw, as he took it. His residence at El Escorial no doubt influenced this tendency, for his pictures are contemporaries with his landscapes. In some of the latter we see more soft beauties of life, as in life. (Landscapes with figures among) in the Museum at Vienna (*Zeitsch.* No. 1190), the "Landscape with a fountain" in the Louvre (*Zeitsch.* No. 845) and the "Rural dance" at Madrid (*Zeitsch.* No. 812).

CONVERSATION A LA MODE

The most famous of these *conversations* is certainly, among fashionable people talking, flirting and dancing in a beautiful garden outside of Madrid. A



CONVERSATION A LA MODE. (Museum, Madrid.)

couple pushed toward by their admirer, ready to dance. Another couple sitting on the ground are engaged in an intimate conversation; the lady has laid her arm on the arm of her cavalier and with her pretty head leaning on her hand listens dreamily to the sweet suggestions of her companion. In the middle are three ladies sitting down and inviting a fourth to take a place near them; beside each of the three first is a little love, and a cavalier with a guitar is standing near the group. On the right a couple is descending a flight of steps arranged to join the whole group. All these people are young, handsome and happy to be alive; the women are in Spanish dress, the men in contemporary fashion and their clothes are rich and varied.

The scene is wonderfully arranged, and the artist's treatment of the figures is

stately, an admirable result of the artist's skill. The figures are arranged in a circle, with high sculpture, and in the background the fountain, with its water falling in a living, the light grove with the fountain, the garden, the sky, all are a part of the scene. It is the hour when the heart grows warm, the senses are quickened, and the people are rejoicing in the bliss of being together, of being without care, of loving and being loved. It would be impossible to describe a more beautiful, more elegant men and women in more splendid parkland. The color of the evening light washes clothes, everything in soft tones, the richness of the dresses, the glances, the play of the women and the play of shades of waving robes and reflexions all show the artist's rich grace and poetry of the worldly scene and wished to let others share his pleasure.

In Duran's description the picture was known as "Conversation a la mode" (to day we should call it the "Country party"). The artist evidently had in his mind some *Conversations* which he must have witnessed or seen before; it is a collection of foreign parts which he has

CONVERSATION A LA MODE (Museum, Madrid)



adapted to his national life. Doubtless the pleasure-gatherings in his day were not altogether like the ideal type he has conceived. However, the world he lived in, and which he shows us in this picture, was very refined, elegantly dressed and courtly in manner; but its morals were anything but severe, if we may believe Father Poirters, who has left a satirical picture of the way they passed their time :

« They used to sit under a green arbour or to go on the water to get an appetite, or
 « again in the afternoon they would mount their carriages to make the pilgrimage of Venus,
 » the fashionable walk; when evening came
 » they sang, or danced the whole night and
 » made love in a way that cannot be told » (1).

We are convinced that Helena Fourment's brothers and sisters with their wives and husbands served as models for the people in this picture. We meet with them again in other works, and can easily recognize the artist's second wife in the young woman sitting on the ground with her elbow on her cavalier's knee.

Rubens painted several versions of this picture; the most remarkable is the one we have just described, which is in the Royal Museum at Madrid. It was bought by Philip IV; when, is not certain. At the king's death it was hanging in his bedroom. There was a picture called « *Conversatie à la mode* » which formed part of Rubens's estate (*Œuvre*. No 836), no doubt representing the same subject as the Madrid picture, but painted on panel and thus differing from the work described above, which was on canvas. Helena Fourment bought it



SHEPHERD AND SHEPHERDESS (Hermitage, St Petersburg).

in for 120 florins. It occurs again in the inventory of the estate of Albert Rubens, which was drawn up on the 6th December, 1657. This is probably the copy which in our own day passed from the Pastrana collection into that of Baron Edmond de Rothschild of Paris. The colouring has a velvety brilliance, and we believe we are justified in attributing it to Rubens, though its authenticity has been contested. In its principal features it agrees with the other version, but has three more figures in the foreground, a cavalier and two ladies, while those in the background are absent. Differences may equally be noticed in the accessories.

Another picture called « *Sketch for a Conversatie à la Mode* » also occurred in Rubens's estate; it was sold for three pounds Flemish (18 florins) to M. le commis Maes of Brussels.

Rubens drew the same subject again, with marked variations, for his wood-engraver

(1) PATER POIRTERS : *Het masker van de wereld afgetrokken*, p. 272.

Jegher. There are a number of studies from life, made for the figures in this picture, in the Louvre, the Museum at Frankfort, the Fodor Museum at Amsterdam and the Heseltine collection in London (*Œuvre*. Nos 1477-1487).

Few of Rubens's works obtained such a success as the « Conversation à la mode »; the Dresden Museum has a copy resembling a miniature, long attributed to Rubens, and old copies may be found in the galleries of Potsdam and Vienna, in the royal palace at Naples and several private collections.

This is the only *genre*-picture which Rubens took from the life of people of quality; the figures in his other *genre*-paintings are all peasants or soldiers.

THE SHEPHERD EMBRACING A SHEPHERDESS AND OTHER PICTURES. — The « Shepherd embracing a shepherdess » (*Œuvre*. No 840) in the Pinakothek at Munich is an instance of this. The brutal passion of the natural man is here rendered in the most realistic fashion. The picture is painted by Rubens and dates from his last years, probably from 1639. He did not hesitate, however, to appear himself in the guise of the amorous shepherd, and give his wife's features to the wanton shepherdess, who shows no sign of alarm at the advances of the gallant. This is probably the « Sylvia » which appeared in Rubens's estate and was bought by Balthasar van Engelen for the prince of Orange. There is a replica of it in the Hermitage at St Petersburg (*Œuvre*. No 841). The picture at Munich is full of virtuosity, a glorification of light. The earth is golden brown, the sky is wadded, dark green and grey, but the tints are indecisive or play in half tones, to throw out the lighted parts. The latter are of tender or brilliant colours, creamy white and scarlet for the shepherdess, whose hair has gold lights in it and is tied with a white ribbon. The shepherd is brown with brilliant lights on his torso and knee, in contrast with the whiteness of the woman. Nothing could be richer or more harmonious than these gold and silver reflections, these pale and dark tones, which each modify the other, or the light which springs from darkness and mounts and grows, illuminating everything and triumphing over all the shadows.

In Rubens's estate there appeared also a « Swiss and his mistress » accompanied by a satyr, a painting on panel which has disappeared, and a « Troop of Swiss demanding money and food from peasants » (*Œuvre*. No 844). Waagen claimed to have found the latter picture in the collection of the Earl of Dunmore. A composition of the same kind is known from an engraving by Frans van den Wijngaerde. M. Somzée, of Brussels, has a picture corresponding with this engraving, which appears to be painted by Rubens and to date from his last years, in spite of the strangeness of the composition and colouring.

Rubens's estate also included a « Dance of Italian peasants », which was sold to the king of Spain for 800 florins and is now in the Museum at Madrid (*Œuvre*. No 838). The picture is a little marvel; the movement is bold and the colour brilliant, with remarkable effects of light and shade. Another dance of Italian peasants fell to Helena Fourment on the division of Rubens's estate; this possibly was the sketch for the picture just mentioned, now belonging to the Academy of Fine Arts at Vienna (*Œuvre*. No 838²), or a replica by another hand, the property of Consul Weber at Hamburg (*Œuvre*. No 839).

An allegorical picture, treated in the manner of a *genre*-picture, represents an « Old woman holding a lighted candle », which gives expression in a familiar form to a conception of life found in Lucretius's lines : « In a brief space the races of living things are changed, and like runners hand over the lamp of life ». And, in fact, a young boy is lighting his candle at the old woman's. In 1855 this picture belonged to Lord Feversham. Where it is at present we do not know. There is an engraving of it, which is said to have been roughly sketched by Rubens and finished by Pontius. Rubens's estate, again, included a « Fight between peasants », painted after a drawing by the elder Breughel (*Œuvre*. N^o 843). This is probably the picture engraved by Vorsterman after Peter Breughel, representing five peasants fighting : one of them is bringing his flail down on the head of another who is armed with a fork and is throwing a woman to the ground ; a third is trying to ward off the flail, while the fourth is holding up a pot at arm's length and the fifth is standing aside. We do not know the picture, but there are old copies of it in the Museums at Dresden and Vienna.

THE VILLAGE KERMESE. — The most remarkable of Rubens's peasant-pictures is the « Kermesse » in the Louvre (*Œuvre*. N^o 837). The public holiday is represented in all its wild brutality, not, probably, as Rubens saw it, but as he imagined it. He must have been present at some kermesse at Elewijt or in the neighbourhood, and there observed scenes that impressed him by their violence, their boldness of movement and the whole display of gross naturalism. When he found himself at his easel and wished to render what he had seen, the popular merry-making became transformed in his mind into a superb explosion of virile strength, an unrestrained abandonment to brutal passion, which turned these primitive beings into so many heroes. He had sung the ancient Venus and the loves of fauns and satyrs ; he celebrates now the rustic Venus of the Flemings. Compared with the painters who treated subjects of the same kind before and after him, he surpasses them by his whole colossal height. He makes Teniers look like a gentleman in gloves and a lace collar, amused at the spectacle of the young blades keeping the kermesse, and turning them into opera-peasants. Brouwer's figures are clumsy and ugly ; Jan Steen indulges in farce and Ostade in sentiment. Rubens's peasants are strapping rogues, afire for pleasure, giving the rein to their instincts, fearless and shameless, unrivalled in the orgies of their merry-making. There are a hundred of them there out in the country, outside a tavern in front of which are two minstrels scraping at their fiddles under the shade of a clump of trees. A group is dancing, flying round in a mad whirl, others are paired off in couples. The men enfold their companions, envelop them in their embrace, lift them from their feet and throw them on the ground. And the ample peasant-women give hug for hug and kiss for kiss, with as much joy and licence as the men themselves. On the left are people drinking in front of the tavern ; the old men fraternize, mug in hand ; a woman is emptying a glass down the throat of a yokel lying on his back ; one of the drinkers is full, another too full, and the babies drink at their mothers' swollen breasts. All this movement, this overflowing surge of joy is flooded with dull and vaporous sunshine, lighter to the left and firmer to the right, without brilliance, but warm and almost devoid of shadows. Bright

colours, more or less intense reds, predominate, mingled with pale green and delicately shaded blue, to soften what else might be too crude in the colour for the eyes to endure.

This picture was painted about 1636 and is entirely by the hand of the master; in 1685 it was bought by the king of France and has since remained the property of the French government.

PICTURES PAINTED FOR THE KING OF SPAIN. — Towards the end of Rubens's career the largest patron of his works was the king of Spain. When the artist left for Madrid in 1628, he took with him eight pictures which Philip had ordered of him. He painted about thirty others during his stay in Spain. The inventory of the king of Spain's collection, drawn up in



THE APOTHEOSIS OF HERCULES — Sketch
(Madame Errera, Brussels).

1636, mentions twenty-five others, sent from Flanders for the queen, which the king had had hung in the room next his bed-room, where he usually supped. Among the number some were by the hand of Rubens, others retouched by him, others again exclusively painted by his collaborators. The subjects of twenty of them are given: « Diana the Huntress » by Rubens, two still-lives by Snijders, « Ceres and Pan » by Rubens and Snijders, two pictures representing the « Five Senses » by Rubens and Jan Breughel, two « Flemish Weddings », a « Flemish house with the Infanta's court », the « Marquis of Brussels », a « Flemish house with the Infanta », a « House with the Archduke », a « Flemish farm », a « Naval battle

near shore », two « Landscapes with soldiers », a « Human Life », a « Testament and Burial », a « Siege of a fortified place in Flanders » and a « Woman with a sickle » by Rubens and Snijders (1).

It is not known exactly when these twenty-five pictures reached Madrid. Only five of them are now to be found in the Museum at Madrid, namely: « Ceres and Pan » (N^o 1593), brought by Rubens in 1628 (*Cœuvre*. N^o 584), the « Five Senses » (N^{os} 1237 and 1238 in the Museum at Madrid), a « Flemish house with the Infanta » and a « House with the Archduke » (N^{os} 1604, 1605); these two represent a portrait of the Infanta Isabella with a view of the castle of Mariemont, and a portrait of the Archduke Albert with a view of the castle of Tervueren, (*Cœuvre*. N^{os} 874, 968); all trace of the others has been lost.

Rubens does not appear to have painted any pictures for the king of Spain during the first years that followed his return from London; but matters changed on the arrival of the Cardinal-Infant. We have already remarked that on the 21st April, 1636, the Cardinal-Infant sent the king,

(1) CRUZADA Y VILLAAMIL : Op. cit., p. 380.



THE VILLAGE KERMESSE
(Louvre, Paris)



his brother, among other presents, a tent of silk and gold tapestry, the designs for which were by Rubens and possibly represented the « History of Achilles ».

OVID'S METAMORPHOSES. — From that moment commissions came in rapid succession. In 1636 Prince Ferdinand received an order from his brother for a number of pictures to be carried out by Rubens for a hunting-box, the Torre de la Parada, three leagues from Madrid. The building of the house had been begun the same year, after the plans of Juan-Battista Crescenzo, Marquis of Las Torres, and the directions of the king himself. Philip IV wished to entrust Flemish painters with the decoration, which was chiefly to consist of pictures, and to have the walls of a dozen rooms, four on the ground-floor and eight on the first storey, covered with mythological paintings; the spaces between and above the windows and doors were to be adorned with hunting-pieces and animals by Paul De Vos. The king had a list drawn up of the mythological subjects to be represented, which were to be taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (*Œuvre*. Nos 501-556). The execution was entrusted to Rubens. As at the entry of the Cardinal-Infant in 1635, he procured the assistance of his pupils and other Antwerp painters in the colossal undertaking.

On the 20th November, 1636, Ferdinand wrote to his brother: « As touching the » paintings your Majesty ordered me to have » executed for the tower, Rubens has received » the commission, and he tells me that he » has already begun upon some of them. On reaching Brussels, I will send your Majesty a » more detailed report on the progress of the work, and if it is your Majesty's good pleasure, » will go to Antwerp to hasten it ». But the king was in a great hurry and on the 31st January, 1637, his brother had written to Madrid: « They are working diligently at the Antwerp » paintings though the frost had caused some delay during the last few days. I am much afraid » the work may drag on a long time, for Rubens will give no precise answer, and confines » himself to promising that neither himself nor the other painters will lose a minute. I spur him » on as much as possible, and will go and see to it myself as soon as the work is a little more » advanced. » He kept his word, for on the 28th April, 1637, Balthasar Moretus wrote to Jan van Vucht, his correspondent at Madrid: « His Royal Highness the Prince-Cardinal came to » Antwerp last week and again honoured my printing-house with his presence ». The work had already been put in hand at the beginning of 1637, for on the 14th January of that year Rubens bought of Moretus a copy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, ornamented with copper-plates. The work was pushed on incredibly fast, and on the 21st January, 1638, the Cardinal-Infant



THE BIRTH OF VENUS
Sketch (Madame Errera, Brussels).

was able to write that the king of France's passport had arrived, but that the expedition must be postponed until the paintings were dry, for fear of injuring them in rolling them up. Rubens had demanded a delay of twenty days, and the prince was compelled to grant it. On the following 11th March the pictures were dispatched by way of Paris, and they reached Madrid at the end of April. On the 9th December, 1637, Rubens had received 2500 florins on account of the total price of 10,000 florins; the remaining 7500 florins were paid a little later. According to a report sent by the Tuscan ambassador to his sovereign, the consignment included 112 pictures, intended not only for the Torre de la Parada, but also for the palace of Buen-Retiro. During the war of the Spanish succession the Torre de la Parada was sacked and pillaged in 1710; some of the pictures were destroyed or lost, the rest were taken first to Buen-Retiro and then to the Royal Museum at Madrid. There were pictures by other painters in the hunting-box. An old edition of the catalogue of the Museum at Madrid mentions under this head four pictures by Velasquez, the « Idiot of Corla », « Aesop », « Menippus » and the « God Mars », and possibly also the portraits of Philip IV's two dwarfs; five pictures by Carducci, the « Birth of Christ », the « Annunciation », the « Visit to Elizabeth », the « Presentation in the Temple » and the « Assumption of the Virgin ». The pictures painted by Rubens during his first visit to Spain were also placed there, the « Heraclitus », « Democritus », a « Saturn », a « Ganymede » and a « Mercury ».

So far as can be ascertained, the « Ovid's Metamorphoses » comprised 56 compositions. Thirty-one of them are in the Museum at Madrid. Eight of these are almost equal in size, chiefly painted by Rubens or retouched by him. The « Battle of Lapithæ and Centaurs » (N^o 1579 in the Madrid Museum), the « Rape of Proserpine » (N^o 1580), the « Feast of Tereus » (N^o 1581), « Orpheus and Eurydice » (N^o 1588), the « Milky Way » (N^o 1589), « Mercury and Argus » (N^o 1594), « Saturn devouring one of his sons » (N^o 1599), and the « Rape of Ganymede by Jupiter » (N^o 1600). Three other smaller pictures were retouched by him: the « Goddess Flora » (N^o 1596), « Fortune » (N^o 1595) and « Mercury » (N^o 1598).

Jan van Eyck painted the « Fall of Phaeton » (N^o 1150 in the Madrid Museum), and probably also « Diana pursued by Apollo » (N^o 1642); Jan Peter Gouwi painted « Hippomenes and Atalanta » (N^o 1387), the « Defeat of the Titans » (N^o 1388) and the « Fall of Icarus » (N^o 1388^a); Erasmus Quellin, the « Death of Eurydice » (N^o 1540), « Jason » (N^o 1541), the « Rape of Europa » (N^o 1538), « Bacchus and Ariadne » (N^o 1539) and « Cupid riding on a dolphin » (N^o 1542); van Thulden, « Orpheus playing the lyre » (N^o 1776) and the « Discovery of purple » (N^o 1777); Cornelis De Vos, the « Triumph of Bacchus » (N^o 1792), « Apollo and Python » (N^o 1793) and « Venus rising from the sea » (N^o 1794); Mathias Borrekens, the « Apotheosis of Hercules » (N^o 1173); and Jan Cossiers, « Jupiter and Lycaon » (N^o 1295), « Narcissus » (N^o 1297) and « Prometheus » (N^o 1296).

For all these pictures Rubens made sketches, some of which have been preserved. Those for « Apollo and Marsyas », the « Triumph of Hercules », the « Fall of Icarus », the « Milky Way », « Jupiter and Semele », the « Golden Fleece », the « Birth of Venus », « Apollo and Python », « Arachne and Minerva », « Atlas bearing the world on his shoulders », « Canens daughter of Janus », « Cephalus and Procris », « Cupid riding on a dolphin », « Daedalus

making the labyrinth », the « Rape of Deianira », « Deucalion and Pyrrha », the « Death of Dido », the « Rape of Europa », « Hercules chaining Cerberus », the « Death of Hyacinth », the « Battle of the Lapithae and Centaurs », « Mercury and Argus », the « Fall of Phaeton », « Polyphemus », « Prometheus bringing fire from heaven », the « Feast of Tereus », the « Fall of the Titans » and « Vertumnus and Pomona » were still, some years ago, in the Pastrana collection at Madrid, but have since been sold and dispersed. « Atalanta's Race », « Diana and Endymion », « Orpheus and Eurydice », « Perseus and Andromeda » and the « Rape of Proserpine » are in the collection of the duke of Osuna at Madrid. « Cadmus and Minerva » was till recently in the collection of Sir Thomas Baring in London. The « Fortune » is in the Royal Museum at Berlin. The « Fall of the Titans », the « Battle of the Lapithae and Centaurs » and « Mercury and Argus » passed from the Pastrana collection to the Museum at Brussels ; the « Triumph of Hercules », the « Milky Way », the « Birth of Venus » and the « Golden Fleece » are now in the collection of Mme. Errera at Brussels ; « Apollo and Marsyas », « Cupid riding on a dolphin », « Jupiter and Semele », the « Fall of Icarus » and the « Fall of Phaeton » are in the duke of Valencia's collection at Madrid.

The pictures which Rubens sent as his own were not entirely painted by his hand ; he had them roughly sketched in by his pupils and retouched them afterwards. Those in which he was helped were the « Mercury and Argus », the « Milky Way », the « Feast of Tereus » and « Saturn devouring one of his sons ». Some, like the « Battle of the Lapithae and Centaurs » and the « Rape of Proserpine », are of great dramatic power ; others, like the « Milky Way » and « Mercury and Argus », are composed with elegance and executed with a light touch. But taken as a whole, this great work belongs, even in its better part, to decorative art. It only furnishes another proof of the pleasure Rubens took in the very human conceptions of pagan mythology and the ease with which he moved in the midst of the creations of the most artistic of peoples.

LAST WORKS EXECUTED FOR PHILIP IV. — This considerable consignment of pictures reached Madrid in April, 1638, and before the 30th June the Cardinal-Infant found himself charged to commission Rubens for another series of pictures. On the 11th December of that year they were not finished, but they were sent by the post on the 27th February, 1639. Rubens, wrote the Infant, had painted them with his own hand to save time.

On the 22nd June, 1639, prince Ferdinand was once more charged by the king, his brother, to commission Rubens and Snijders for a series of pictures to decorate the vaulted hall of the palace of Madrid, and probably representing hunting-pieces and animals. They were eighteen in number, and the two painters received 10.000 florins for them. Rubens painted the figures, and Snijders the landscapes and animals. Eight of these pictures were sent off in 1640 ; eight more on the 4th January, 1641, and the two others reached Madrid on the 2nd June of the same year.

Further, four large pictures were ordered of Rubens alone. The subjects were « Hercules » (*Œuvre*. N^o 625), « Perseus and Andromeda » (*Œuvre*. N^o 668), the « Rape of the Sabines » (*Œuvre*. N^o 806) and the « Reconciliation of the Romans and Sabines » (*Œuvre*. N^o 807).

Rubens's heirs received 4200 florins for them in 1640. The last mentioned was finished at the master's death; the other three had been begun, or the sketches made. The heirs commissioned Jordaens to finish the « Hercules » and the « Perseus and Andromeda », and paid him 240 florins on this head. The « Rape of the Sabines » was finished by a pupil unknown.

Unfortunately most of the pictures sent to the king are now lost. The « Metamorphoses » are the only ones of which any considerable number have been preserved, and all we know for certain is that one of the pictures ordered in 1638 and delivered in 1639 was the « Judgment



MERCURY SLAYING ARGUS (Museum, Madrid).

of Paris » (*Œuvre*. N^o 662) in the Museum at Madrid. It was finished on the 27th February, 1639, and the Cardinal-Infant wrote the same day to his brother that it could not be sent through the post like the rest because of its size, but that he would send it by the ordinary messenger. He adds : « It is, without any doubt, the best picture Rubens ever painted. It has » only one fault, the goddesses are too nude ; but it was impossible to induce the painter » to change it ; he maintains that it is indispensable to bring out the beauty of the painting. » Venus is in the middle ; a most successful portrait of the artist's wife, who is beyond » question the handsomest woman in the country ». This praise is not exaggerated ; the picture is a master-piece in Rubens's latest manner, with its golden light and superb naked women, a triumph of soft and opulent flesh.

Not one of the eighteen pictures painted in collaboration with Snijders has survived. Snijders was charged with the completion of the decorations of the Torre de la Parada. In the seventeenth century de Piles wrote : « In Spain, at the Torre de la Parada, three leagues from » Madrid, may be seen a large number of pictures taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and as

» they were arranged so as to leave very large empty spaces between them, Snijders filled the » spaces with animals ». The paintings were destroyed, no doubt, at the sack of the castle in 1710.

Of the four pictures ordered of Rubens at the same time as the eighteen others, only the « Perseus and Andromeda » (*Œuvre*. N^o 668) now remains ; it is in the Museum at Madrid. This is one of Rubens's most perfect works. Jordaens finished it, as we have said, and his part



THE MARRIAGE OF PELEUS AND THETIS — Sketch (Heseltine Collection, London).

in the painting is very hard to distinguish ; he succeeded so well in blending his work with Rubens's that it is hard to tell which belongs to which. The Andromeda is certainly by Rubens, and is perhaps the most beautiful woman he ever painted. She is fastened to the rock, with her arms above her head, the tresses of her golden hair flying in the wind, and a light drapery slipping from her side and surrounding her hips. Her shape is ample but elegant, her flesh shows the brilliant white and the light and transparent shadows which characterize the master's most luminous manner : the painting is velvety and really admirable in its delicacy of touch. The attitude and expression of the figure are as fine as the painting ; the bust is slightly turned back, with a movement full of originality, and the lifted arms make a sinuous and most graceful frame for the head. Andromeda has caught sight of her rescuer, and there is a smile on her lips which will end as a kiss. Rubens had entered his last year and was hard on the close of his life when he painted the Andromeda, and never had he created anything younger and fresher.

Though the picture at Madrid does not enable us to judge with any certainty what the « Perseus and Andromeda » was when Rubens died, we have more definite evidence of what he still could do towards the close of his life in another of the paintings of his last years, which may be a study for, or may be a reproduction of the Andromeda in the Madrid picture, and of a like figure, the Minerva in the « Judgment of Paris » at London and Dresden. This is the « Andromeda » in the Museum at Berlin (*Œuvre*. N^o 667), which formed part of Rubens's estate at his death and for which Helena Fourment had sat. Andromeda is in the same graceful attitude, with her arms raised above her head; her flesh is fair and soft, with light and transparent shadows. The superb figure stands out radiantly against the tempered light of the background and the red and white draperies in the foreground. After Rubens's death the painting belonged in succession to his son Albert and the duke de Richelieu.

Not content with the pictures he had ordered of the master during his life-time, the king charged Don Francisco de Contreras y Rojas, keeper of the jewels of the Cardinal-Infant, to make a selection from the catalogue of works left by the master which were to be sold. He thus acquired 32 pictures, for which he paid 27.100 florins. Seventeen of them were by Rubens's own hand: a « Saviour holding the terrestrial globe », a drawing after the « St Peter Martyr », « Callisto », « Actaeon », « Venus and Adonis », « Europa », « Venus and Cupid », a « Bacchanalian scene », and the « Sacrifice to Venus », all after Titian; besides « Nude nymphs and satyrs », the « Virgin and St George », a « Troop of Swiss », a « Dance of Italian peasants », « Christ and the disciples at Emmaus », « St George », a « Stag-hunt », and « Three nymphs holding a cornucopia ».

Most of these pictures are lost. As we have said, one of the copies after Titian, the « Europa », is still in the Museum at Madrid, and two others, the « Bacchanalian scene » and the « Sacrifice to Venus » are in the Museum at Stockholm. Of the original pictures by Rubens, the « Virgin and St George, or the Repose in Egypt », the « Dance of Italian peasants », the « Christ at Emmaus » and the « St George slaying the dragon », are in the Museum at Madrid. Some of the pictures, like the « St George and the dragon » and the « Nymphs with the cornucopia », date from an earlier period, but most belong to his last years. We have spoken of them before, but have three yet to deal with. « St George, or the Repose in Egypt » (*Œuvre*. N^o 179) is a charming little work, which shows the Virgin with the child Jesus asleep on her lap. Two holy women are looking at the child, while three little angels play with a lamb. On the extreme left is St George, with a banner in his hand, trampling the dragon underfoot. The picture is later than 1635; there is a great likeness between the St George and the green arbour which appear in it, and those in the picture in Rubens's mortuary chapel. The « Christ at Emmaus » (*Œuvre*. N^o 345) is remarkable for the warm tints spread by the setting sun over the landscape and figures. The « Nude nymphs and satyrs » (*Œuvre*. N^o 649) is probably the picture numbered 1587 in the Museum at Madrid, which is merely a slightly altered reproduction of a work painted by Rubens in Italy. It offers the most remarkable evidence in our possession of the radical change undergone by the master's manner. The early picture (see page 96) is absolutely in the style of the ancient bas-reliefs and shows the firmness of design and colouring which we meet with in some of the master's earliest productions; in the later picture, all is life,

brilliance and light ; all reminiscences of antiquity have disappeared to give place to youth and joy in the figures as in the painting.

A courtier who understood the king's tastes presented him another with picture by his favourite painter ; the equestrian portrait of the Cardinal-Infant (*Œuvre*. N^o 930), which Miguel Olivarez bought at the sale of Rubens's goods after his death and sent to the king by the Marquis of Leganes.

Several of the pictures now in the Museum at Madrid do not appear among those mentioned by name as having been bought by the king. They are seven in number, « Nymphs of Diana surprised by satyrs » (Madrid Museum, N^o 1586), « Diana and Callisto » (N^o 1592), the « Three Graces » (N^o 1591), a « Dead Christ on the knees of his mother » (N^o 1563), the « Religious act of Rudolf I, count of Hapsburg » (N^o 1566), the « Meleager and Atalanta hunting » (N^o 1583) and the « Conversation à la mode » (N^o 1611). All were evidently bought by Philip IV, for they appear in his inventory. The « Religious act of the Emperor Rudolf » was in the king's possession before 1636 ; the rest must have been sent him between that year and 1640. The greater part of them, no doubt, were included in the order transmitted to the Cardinal-Infant in 1638. The « Diana and Callisto » (*Œuvre*. N^o 602) may possibly be the picture mentioned under the name of « Callisto » in the catalogue of Rubens's goods (N^o 43) as being a copy after Titian ; but this is not certain, for it does not agree with Titian's « Diana and Callisto » in the Museum at Madrid. We have already described the two last of these seven pictures, and will proceed to add a word about the others.

The « Nymphs of Diana surprised by satyrs » (*Œuvre*. N^o 650) is one of the fullest of movement of all Rubens's pictures. The attendants of the goddess have laid aside their robes and veils to rest in their splendid nudity ; some are still sitting or lying on the ground, others have sprung up and are fleeing from the satyrs who give chase and seize on all they can catch. Everything in the picture is admirable ; the graceful figures of the women, the life, vivacity and emotion of those attacked, the surprise of those woken up and the calm of those who are still asleep. As in the pictures of the same period and the same kind, Rubens had the landscape and accessories painted by collaborators, and merely retouched them ; the figures he painted himself.

In the « Three Graces » (*Œuvre*. N^o 613) Rubens realised his ideal of feminine beauty ; they have youth, opulent shapes, golden hair, white skins and sweetness of character, infantile simplicity of heart ; they are virginal souls in seductive bodies. He has entwined them in the most graceful fashion and in varied attitudes ; one is seen almost full face, the second from one side, the third from behind. Their arms are joined in a light and supple embrace, and all have one foot raised, as if they were just about to put themselves in motion. They are represented life-size, and have none of the brilliant colours of the nymphs in the preceding picture or the goddesses in the « Judgment of Paris » in London and Madrid, though they show the rich radiance which characterizes the master's last manner. The picture is mentioned in the inventory of the works of art left by Rubens (N^o 92), but it does not occur in the list of the purchases made by the king of Spain. There is no doubt, however, that Philip IV bought it of the heirs.

The « Dead Christ on the knees of his mother » (*Œuvre*. N^o 320) came from the monastery

of the Escorial, to which the king had presented it, and where it hung in the prior's lodging. Philip IV evidently preferred mythological to sacred subjects. The picture dates from the artist's last years. Everything is arranged so as to bring the Saviour into full light, while the other three figures are in shadow.



ANDROMEDA (Museum, Berlin).

in it. The picture appears in the inventory of the palaces of Philip IV drawn up in 1636, and was painted between that year and 1630.

PORTRAITS. — During his last years Rubens also painted a number of portraits.

The most important is in the Pinakothek at Munich, and represents a scholar who is no other than Jan Brant, Rubens's father-in-law (*Œuvre*. N^o 1109). It bears the inscription : « A^o Sal.

The « Religious act of Rudolf of Hapsburg » (*Œuvre*. N^o 815) offers more interest and originality. The story or legend relates that the Count of Hapsburg, when hunting with his squire, met in a wood with a priest and his sacristan who were carrying the viaticum to a sick man. Rudolf dismounted and put the priest on his horse, which he himself led by the bridle ; the squire did the same for the sacristan. The picture is interesting because it is the only one in which Rubens has treated a humorous subject. The priest riding on the count's horse is a majestic and contemplative figure ; the sacristan, on the other hand, has a world of trouble to keep his seat. The horse feels that he has an inexperienced rider, and bends his hind legs to try and be rid of him. The churchman is by no means comfortable ; he is leaning forward over the horse's neck, drawing up his legs and dropping his lantern, which flies open ; but just as it is going to fall, he succeeds in catching it. The sacristan's terror and anxiety are comic to the highest degree without reaching caricature. The picture is more moderate in tone and light than those of Rubens's latest years usually are ; he worked simply to paint an anecdote that might give pleasure in the land of Sancho Panza, and he did so with no great display of colour. The landscape is by Wildens, who surpassed himself



THE THREE GRACES
(Museum, Madrid)

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XVI^eXXXV AETAT. LXXV ». The old man is full of strength and life, and is sitting in a red velvet arm-chair; in one hand he has a book, the other is on the arm of the chair; several books stand along the wall on a shelf, and the titles are legible: *M. T. Ciceronis opera omnia* and *Commentarii C. Julii Caesaris*. The flesh of his face is full and the skin rosy, his hair is cut very short, his hands are plump and his countenance denotes delicacy and kindness. The last time I saw this portrait, it seemed to me that the sitter who was so delighted to display his books could only be a scholar, nearly related to Rubens, and probably his father-in-law, Jan Brant; his small deep-set eyes slanting up at the corners give him a striking resemblance to Rubens's first wife. On verifying my supposition, I found it fully confirmed by the inscription and the dates. Jan Brant was born on the 30th September, 1559; he was 75 in 1635. His principal works were: *Elogia Ciceroniana Romanorum domi militiaeque illustrium* and *Notæ politicæ et criticæ ad C. Julii Cæsaris Commentarios*, published in an edition of Cæsar by Gothofredus Jungermanus (1).



HELENA FOURMENT WITH HER SON FRANS ON HER LAP
(Pinakothek, Munich).

Five portraits of this period are in the Imperial Museum at Vienna: « Charles the Bald » (*Œuvre*. N^o 913), the « Emperor Maximilian I » (*Œuvre*. N^o 990), a « Man with a turned-down collar » (*Œuvre*. N^o 1131), an « Old man with a long beard » (*Œuvre*. N^o 1132) and an « Old Priest » (*Œuvre*. N^o 1133); the two first are master-pieces, brilliant in colour and radiant with light. Next come a « Dominican » (*Œuvre*. N^o 1092) in the possession of M. Moltke at Copenhagen, and the portrait of Nicolas Rockox which we know from an engraving by Pontius (*Œuvre*. N^o 1035) and which is dated 1639.

(1) *Bulletin-Rubens*, V, p. 115.

Rubens continued too to show the same delight and the same skill in painting his young wife, sometimes alone, sometimes with himself and sometimes with her children ; he painted his own portrait once only, and probably once also that of his children by his second marriage. They were four in number. Clara Joanna, the eldest, was born on the 18th January, 1632 ; she married Philip van Parijs, lord of Merxem and Dambrugge, councillor and receiver-general of the States of Brabant for the quarter of Antwerp, and died on the 24th March, 1689. Frans was born on the 12th July, 1633, and had for sponsor His Excellency Francisco de Moncada, duke of Aytona ; he became a member of the Council of Brabant in 1664, married Susanna Gratiana Charles on the 27th February, 1661, and died at Brussels on the 26th September, 1678 : his second son, Alexander Joseph, who died at Mechlin on the 17th February, 1752, was Rubens's last direct male descendant. Isabella Helena was born on the 3rd May, 1635, and died unmarried on the 21st September, 1652. Peter Paul, born on the 1st March, 1637, became a priest and died at Turnhout on the 9th August, 1684. A fifth child, Constantia Albertina, was born eight months after her father's death, on the 3rd February, 1641 ; she became a nun at the abbey of ter Kameren in 1657.

The portraits of Helena Fourment painted by Rubens in the course of his last years are not only witnesses to his love for his young wife ; they are positive gems, and it is hard to decide which of them is the most perfect. In the portrait in the Museum at The Hague (*Œuvre*. N^o 936) she wears a blue silk dress, a black silk cloak, a fur collar and a small hat surmounted with a white ostrich feather ; her sleeves are slashed with white silk, she has white pearls in her hair and ears and round her neck, and a spray of roses in her hand. She is twenty years old, and an imposing young woman ; her bare neck and breast are snow-white, her features have fined down, her expression is dreamy, and her pretty face, radiant with life and youth, is bathed in light. The colouring is rich and sweet. The master enjoyed making his beloved beautiful, and with a light touch scattered gay tints prodigally over her sumptuous attire ; her golden hair is flooded with waves of the gleaming light that gilds the Cardinal-Infant's curls in the portrait bought by Mr Pierpont Morgan, and the « Andromeda » in the Museum at Berlin. There is a study made for this portrait (*Œuvre*. N^o 1505) in the collection of drawings in the Hermitage at St Petersburg.

The portrait in the possession of Baron Gaston de Rothschild of Paris shows a very different Helena Fourment (*Œuvre*. N^o 938). She might be a year older ; her face is slightly thinner ; she is dressed in black, and wears a mantilla with a gold border, Spanish-fashion. She is holding her hair off her face with one hand and looking sideways with a merry eye. The painting is rich and full of life. The Museum at Dresden has a replica (*Œuvre*. N^o 939).

The later portraits show Rubens's wife with one or more of her children. In the portrait in the Pinakothek at Munich (*Œuvre*. N^o 947) she has her eldest son on her lap. She is sitting on a stool near a balustrade, from which rises a pillar with drapery hanging on it ; in the background is a landscape. The painting is splendid. The sitter is bathed in the pearly light shaded with golden and ruddy reflections which also shines over the « Massacre of the Innocents ». Helena's dress is violet with gold ornaments and her bodice green ; there is a rose-coloured ostrich feather in her white felt hat, and the seat is red-brown ; a fine and transparent light seems to emanate from her face. In the rest of the picture the shadows are

very sharp, and as in other works of the master's last years the outlines are clearly marked with a line of red-brown. The child is completely nude, but wears a small black hat with a white plume. The varied colours of the clothes play upon each other and mingle their reflections. The green bodice strikes on the white linen on Helena's knees, and the red of the seat sends waves over the violet skirt, which in its turn is reflected back. Golden-brown tints warm the mother's dress, the cushion on the seat, the drapery and the clouds, and alternate with the silvery tones of the gauze, the feather and the hair; and the milk-white flesh of the mother and the luminous and firmer flesh of the child stand out like precious stones against this suave mixture of colour and light as if against a soft, rich mist. The picture is a triumphal hymn in honour of the young mother and the fine boy. The child, about two years old, is Frans, born in 1633; this would date the picture at 1635.

There is a portrait of Helena Fourment with her older children in the Louvre (*Œuvre*. N^o 948). Frans is on her knee, and her eldest daughter, Clara Joanna, is standing in front of her on the left; on the right are the hands of a younger child held out towards the mother. The picture is unfinished, and only the heads have been brought to a certain degree of completion. The background is prepared, according to Rubens's practice, by means of a thin layer of golden yellow, on which he afterwards laid the colours. The flesh and clothes are still in the same tonality, but lit by a stronger light; the shadows are done in bistre, and the mother's dress and the cushion on her knees are marked in spots of red. The figures, being lightly and boldly sketched, enable us to admire the magic power with which Rubens poured life and light over the canvas. Here we see Helena Fourment's children at a little greater age; Clara Joanna is about five, Frans about three and a half, and Isabella Helena one and a half; the picture therefore must have been painted at the beginning of 1637. The cause that prevented the artist from completing his work was not death, as one would be tempted to believe, and as I myself lately believed, but some unexplained reason.

A large portrait in the possession of Baron Alphonse de Rothschild of Paris represents Rubens's wife full-length (*Œuvre*. N^o 945). She is wearing a rich black satin dress and a small hat of original shape, like an inverted saucer with a pompon standing up in the middle; her white gauze bodice with wide sleeves is ornamented with violet knots. Behinds her walks a page. She is coming out of a splendid building, and before her stretches the street, up which a carriage is approaching. Helena Fourment stands out in tones of brilliant white and intense black against the warm tints of the background; her attitude is simple and graceful. The boy coming behind her wears red with a white collar and has a black hat with a wide brim in his hand; he is her eldest son Frans, aged about six, so that the portrait must date from about 1639. The outlines of the face are clearly marked by means of a line of dark colour. The Pinakothek at Munich has the bust of this portrait (*Œuvre*. N^o 946).

There is a remarkable miniature which makes us better acquainted than any of the pictures with Helena Fourment's children, at any rate with the four eldest. It is painted in water-colour, and forms part of the king of England's collection at Windsor. The children are seen in front of an arch that opens on the country. The eldest daughter goes in front; she looks about six years old, so that the painting must date from the early months of 1638; she wears a large white collar and apron over a rose-coloured dress; her hair is parted in the middle of her

forehead and falls down her cheeks to her neck. She has the large eyes and small mouth of her mother, but her face is fuller and rounder. She is giving her hand to her little brother Frans, a charming child with large eyes of marvellous beauty; he has his mother's Cupid's bow mouth and her pointed and delicate chin; his hair comes down over his forehead to his eyebrows and falls in thick curls over his ears and neck. He wears a loose grey jacket, a belt, a large white collar, a small red cloak over his shoulders, laced hose and rosettes on his shoes; one hand hangs down by his side holding a broad-brimmed hat with a plume. The second daughter, Isabella Helena, is holding the little Peter Paul's hand; she is dressed like her sister.



HELENA FOURMENT AND HER CHILDREN (Louvre, Paris).

Peter Paul, who has a cap on his head, is riding his hobby-horse. The two little ones are led by a nurse, and a majestic cook brings up the rear with a basket of fruit on her arm. The group is commonly taken to have been painted by Fruytiers, and the attribution is justified by an entry in the accounts of Rubens's succession: « Paid to Fruytiers, painter, the sum owing to him for the frame and glass for the children, 6 florins 12 stuyvers ». It seems to me that Fruytiers must have painted his water colour after an unknown picture by Rubens, for his manner is entirely in conformity with that of the master. The group was engraved by P.J. Tassaert.

It is probably Helena Fourment's three eldest children which appear in another engraving by P.J. Tassaert, representing a boy riding on a dog which his sister is holding by the collar, while a baby is pulling his tail. Constantijn Huygens the younger has a note in his journal under the 28th August, 1696, that he gave two carriage-horses for a picture by one Martin, » said to be a pupil of Rubens; the picture represented three of Rubens's children and a large dog on which one of the children is clinging, while another, a little girl, holds the dog » (1). This picture, which in the last century belonged to M. J. Bertels of Antwerp, is only known by the engraving, which does not give the young people's features very exactly, but enables us to be quite certain that they are Rubens's children.

Knowing them as well as we do, we are able easily to trace them in the picture. As we have said, the two eldest appear in a picture in the Louvre; Frans is especially interesting and plays the leading part among the children of Helena Fourment. He is sitting on his mother's lap in a portrait in the Pinakothek at Munich, and acting as her page in Baron Alphonse de Rothschild's picture at Paris; and no doubt it is her eldest son whom the mother is driving in

(1) *Journal van Constantijn Huygens den zoon* (published by the Historical Society of Utrecht, 1877), II, pp. 628-9.



RUBENS AT THE AGE OF SIXTY
(Imperial Museum, Vienna)



leading-strings in a picture in the same collection which shows Rubens taking a walk with his wife (*Œuvre*. N^o 1052). Frans is easily recognisable, accompanied by the cook, in a picture belonging to the Marquis of Bute which was engraved by R. Earlom (*Œuvre*. N^o 1054). We find him again on the lap of the Virgin in the Holy Family in the Cologne Museum (*Œuvre*. N^o 229). And finally in the charming portrait in the Earl of Radnor's collection at Longford Castle (*Œuvre*. N^o 1039) we may recognise the boy with long curls and large bright eyes, wearing the smart jacket of a young gentleman, and a broad-brimmed hat with a red and



FOUR CHILDREN OF RUBENS AND HELENA FOURMENT — After a water-colour by Fruytiers (Windsor Castle).

yellow plume, which, as usual, he is holding in his hand; a sweet and intelligent child, full of health and life, the image of his mother and evidently his father's favourite.

Independently of the pictures in which he painted himself with Helena Fourment, Rubens made a portrait of himself at the moment when he felt his end approaching. The picture is in the Imperial Museum at Vienna, and represents the painter at over sixty years of age (*Œuvre*. N^o 1049). He is seen three-quarter length; his broad-brimmed hat is elegantly tilted over his ear and his cloak is thrown back over his shoulder and held up by his sword, on the hilt of which rests his hand. His attitude is still proud and noble, but his face is thin, his moustache and beard are scanty and out of curl; his features are bony, his chin sharp, and his eye, once so clear and bold, is now sad and dull; his eyelids fall heavily, the crow's feet lie deep at the corners and below the eyes, and the lifeless skin hangs in bags. Physically the great man is no more than the shadow of himself, and he has painted himself with striking faithfulness.

Conscious of what he has lost, he finds a bitter pleasure in putting it on record ; he makes no complaint and asks for no pity, but finds himself interesting as he is, and shows that he is right. The heroic and fiery artist has become feeble, a dreamer ; basking just once more in the light of the sun, he wraps himself chillily in his cloak and looks sideways with a suspicious glance as if he were afraid of being interrupted by some noise or some troublesome disturbance. Full daylight has become too bright for him ; he prefers a softer light in harmony with the depression of his vital principle and the slow beat of his pulse. In this picture, which is certainly among his very latest, he continues to say what he means with perfect calmness and precision. He had made careful preparation for it : the Louvre has a masterly drawing in black chalk of his emaciated and suffering head (*Œuvre*. N^o 1530).

FRONTISPIECES OF BOOKS. — Besides this prodigious number of pictures Rubens made several designs for the engravers during this period. We have already said that in 1638 he had had twelve heads of Greek and Roman emperors, generals and philosophers engraved after grisailles painted by himself (*Œuvre*. Nos 1208-1219). In 1635 was published the narrative of the journey of the Cardinal-Infant from Spain to the Netherlands, written by Diego Aedo y Gallart. The book was printed by Jan Cnobbaert ; Rubens designed the frontispiece, which is preserved in the South Kensington Museum and was engraved by Marinus (*Œuvre*. N^o 1233). In 1638 he drew a frontispiece for Ferdinand van Marselaer's work entitled *Legatus* ; the engraving is by Cornelis Galle the younger (*Œuvre*. N^o 1287). Rubens himself wrote a detailed Latin explanation of the allegories in his design. His autograph manuscript is preserved in the Royal Library at Brussels, and the text, slightly altered by van Marselaer (1), was printed at the beginning of the book, which Moretus did not publish till 1666. In 1639 Jerome Verdussen published *De Generale Legende der Heylighen* by Petrus Ribadineira and Heribertus Rosweyduis ; the frontispiece was probably engraved by Jan Collaert, after a drawing by Rubens (*Œuvre*. N^o 1293).

Rubens did but little for the Plantin press. In 1634-1636 he drew another frontispiece and a printer's mark for the works of Justus Lipsius. The two original designs belong to the Plantin-Moretus Museum ; the first was engraved in 1634 and the second in 1636. The work was not published till 1637 (*Œuvre*. Nos 1281-1282).

From that year onwards Rubens made no more drawings himself for his friend Balthasar Moretus, but entrusted the work to his favourite pupil, Erasmus Quellin, giving him a slight sketch or some other direction and revising his work. This method was employed for the frontispieces of Jan Boyvin, *Le Siège de la Ville de Dole*, Plantin, 1638 (*Œuvre*. N^o 1249) ; Hubertus Goltzius, *Icones Imperatorum Romanorum*, Plantin, 1645 (*Œuvre*. N^o 1273) ; *Luitprandi Opera*, Plantin, 1640 (*Œuvre*. N^o 1284) ; Mathieu de Morgues, *Diverses pièces pour la Défense de la Royne-Mère du roy très-chrestien Louis XIII*, Plantin, 1637 (*Œuvre*. N^o 1290) ; Bartholomeus de los Rios, *De Hierarchia Mariana*, Plantin, 1641 (*Œuvre*. N^o 1294), and *Caroli Neapolis Anaptyxis ad Fastos Ovidii*, Plantin, 1638 (*Œuvre*. V. p. 107). Quellin also designed other frontispieces : Philippus Chiffletius, *Sacrosancti et Oecumenici Concilii Tridentini Canones*

(1) H. HYMANS : *Deux nouveaux autographes de Rubens* (Royal Academy of Belgium. Bulletin de la Classe des Lettres, etc. 1900, p. 674)

et Decreta, Plantin, 1640 (*Œuvre*. N^o 1263); Balthasar Corderius, *Expositio patrum Græcorum in Psalmos*, Plantin, 1643 (*Œuvre*. V, p. 70); Max Goubau, *Apostolicarum Pii quintii Pont. Max. Epistolarum libri quinque*, Plantin, 1640 (*Œuvre*. V, p. 81); Joannes Caramuel Lobkowitz, *Philippus Prudens*, Plantin, 1639 (*Œuvre*. V, p. 94), and Fr. Quaresmius, *Terræ Sanctæ Elucidatio*, Plantin, 1639 (*Œuvre*. V, p. 109). They have been attributed to Rubens, but the archives of the Plantin-Moretus Museum clearly prove them to be Quellin's, and it was he who was paid for them.

PUPILS AND COLLABORATORS.

At no period of his life did Rubens produce so many works of the highest value, and at no time was he helped by so large a body of collaborators. He employed most of the artists of talent living in Antwerp on the carrying out of the Ovid's *Metamorphoses* for the Torre de la Parada, and the paintings for the solemn entry of the Cardinal-Infant. Not all of them were his pupils nor his regular collaborators; but they were very willing to work under his direction when he wished it. We have now to say something of his ordinary collaborators between 1630 and 1640.

ERASMUS QUELLIN. — During Rubens's latest years, Erasmus Quellin was his favourite pupil. The son of a sculptor of Liège, he was born at Antwerp on the 19th September, 1607, and was a brother of Arthur, the famous sculptor, and Hubert, a distinguished engraver. In 1633-1634 he was received as a master's son into the Guild of St Luke, and at the entry of the Cardinal-Infant he helped Rubens to carry out the Portico of the Emperors and the Theatre of Commerce deserting Antwerp. As we have said, he worked from that time until the master's death on Rubens's drawings. There is no doubt that he painted several pictures in the series of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and helped his master in other works. Without being a great artist himself he assimilated Rubens's manner perfectly and proved a useful and excellent collaborator. After the master's death he succeeded him as official painter to the town, just as he had succeeded him as designer to the Plantin press. He painted the triumphal arches erected for the entry of the Archduke Leopold William in 1648; in the same year he painted the theatre on which the peace of Munster was announced in Antwerp; in 1657, a triumphal arch for the entry of Don John of Austria; in 1660, the theatre announcing the reconciliation of France and Spain, and other works of the kind. He was also in request as a painter of altar-pieces and portraits. Very few of his numerous works under the two last heads have survived. He died on the 7th November, 1678. His regular collaboration with Rubens is well founded, though it is impossible to determine upon which pictures it was exercised.

ABRAHAM VAN DIEPENBEECK. — The painter who was most successful in assimilating Rubens's last manner was Abraham van Diepenbeeck. He was born at Bois-le-Duc in 1596, and was the son of a glass-painter, whose art he himself practised for a long time. In 1623 he settled as a glass-painter in Antwerp, obtained citizenship in 1636 and was admitted master in the Guild of St Luke two years later. He also practised historical painting till his death, which took place in 1675. On his portrait, which was engraved by Paul Pontius and published by Jan Meyssens during his life-time, he is designated as a pupil of Rubens. This is probably not

an exact statement in the literal meaning of the word ; but it is quite certain that he adopted the master's manner. Certain pictures, like the « Clelia » in the Louvre, the Berlin Museum and the Dresden Museum, have been attributed turn and turn about to Rubens and van Diepenbeeck ; others, like the « Four fathers of the Church » in the Museum at Stockholm (*Œuvre*. N^o 368) have given rise to the same perplexity. The collaboration of the two artists is proved, at any rate, by the inscription on the engraving of the « Contest between Neptune and Minerva » (*Œuvre*. N^o 1232) which was engraved by Pontius after Rubens's suggestion and Abraham van Diepenbeeck's design.

JAN VAN DEN HOECKE. — Cornelis De Bie states that Jan van den Hoecke came under Rubens's tuition ; and it is possible that it was so, though this artist's manner also shows the influence of Vandyck. He was born at Antwerp in 1611 and no doubt received his first lessons in painting from his father Gaspar van den Hoecke. We know that between them they painted the triumphal arch of Ferdinand in 1635. « In consequence of the absence of Jan Hoeck, now in Italy », Jordaens in 1637 retouched two large pictures that had formed part of the triumphal arch and were intended to be presented to the Cardinal-Infant. Van den Hoecke, therefore, did not stay with Rubens long : he entered his studio in 1630 and left the town shortly after 1635. A fact which tends to prove his artistic connection with the master is that a number of engravings made after his pictures pass for being reproductions of pictures by Rubens. On his return home he set off again, to go to Vienna, where he became court-painter to the Archduke Leopold William. When the Archduke became governor of the Spanish Netherlands in 1647, he brought Jan van den Hoecke with him ; the painter settled in Antwerp and died there in 1651.

FRANS WOUTERS. — More than one painter worked under Rubens without leaving any positive proof of the fact. Frans Wouters is one of those about whom we owe satisfactory information to chance. He was born at Lier and baptized on the 2nd October, 1612. In 1629 his father apprenticed him to Peter van Avont, the distinguished painter of children. But at the beginning of June, 1634, the young artist left his master's studio, and van Avont made a complaint to the magistrate that « Frans Wouters had left his studio without rhyme or reason » for the shop of Sir Rubens, although he had had a fine suit of clothes made for him worth quite 13 pounds » (1). He did not stay long with his new master, but went to Vienna, where he became court-painter to the Emperor Ferdinand II. In 1641, he returned to Antwerp, where he was employed to value the works of art left by Rubens. He died in 1659. In spite of his high-sounding title, very few of his works have survived, and those of no extraordinary merit.

VICTOR WOLFVOET AND OTHERS. — Another artist mentioned as a pupil of Rubens is Victor Wolfvoet, who painted entirely in his manner. He was born in 1612 and died in 1652. Very few of his pictures are in existence. One of them, the « Head of Medusa » in the Museum at Dresden, exactly recalls the manner in which Rubens has treated the same subject in a picture in the Imperial Museum at Vienna. He was also a picture-dealer, and the inventory of his estate contains, besides several pictures by his own hand, numerous copies of Rubens and sketches by the master. His pictures all represent subjects also treated by Rubens : « St Catherine »,

(1) F. JOS. VAN DEN BRANDEN : *Geschiedenis der Antwerpsche Schilderschool*, p. 806.



THE BANQUET OF HERODIAS
(Hermann Lindé)

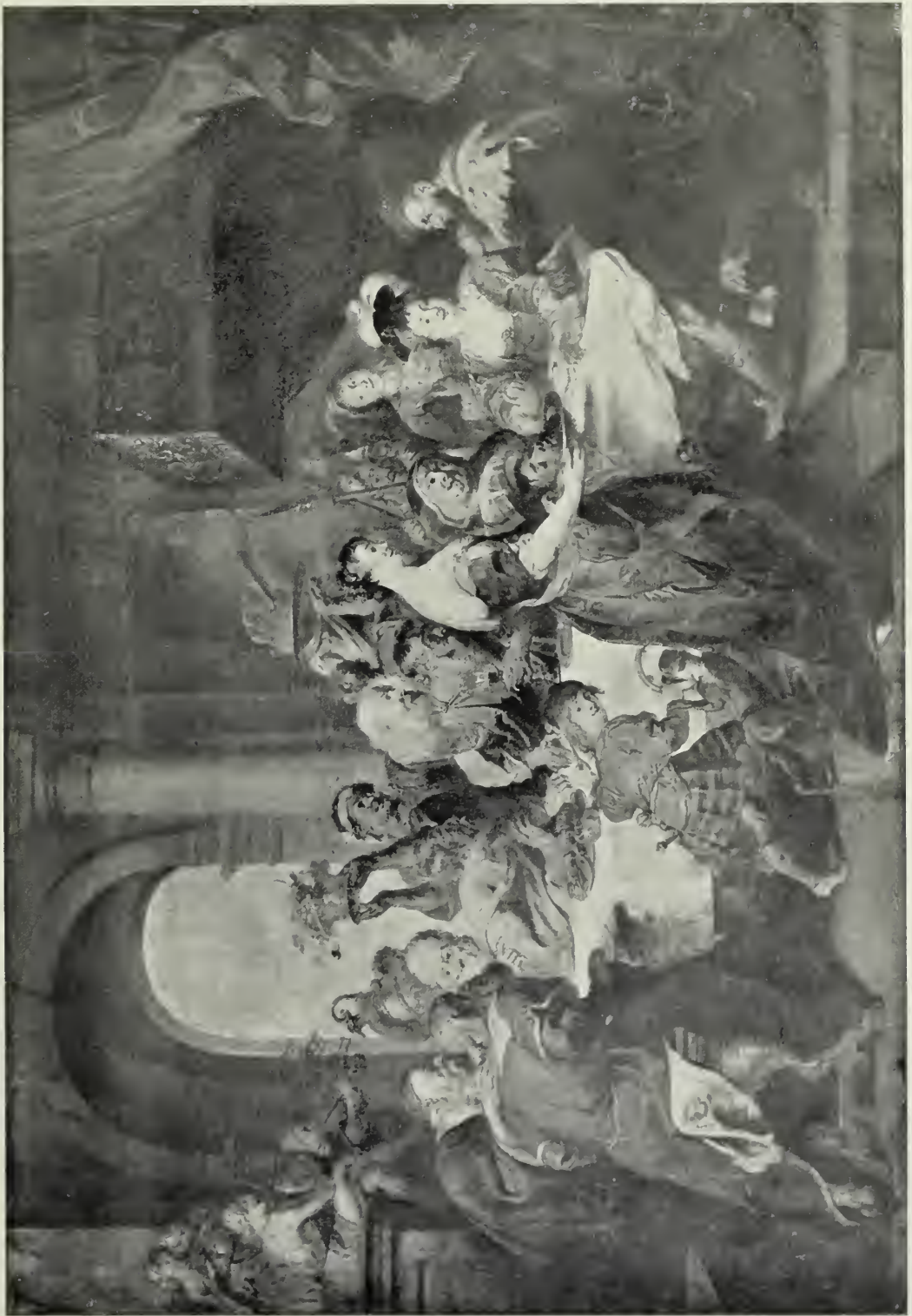
no doubt associated to the usual meaning of the word — but it is quite certain that he adopted the master's manner. Certain pictures, like the 'Clelia' in the Louvre, the Berlin Museum and the Cassino Gallery, have been attributed turn and turn about to Rubens and van Diepenbeek; some (and one — 'The Father of the Church' in the Museum at Stockholm (*Zeits.* N° 368)) have given rise to the same perplexity. The collaboration of the two artists is proved, at any rate, by the inscription on the engraving of the 'Contest between Neptune and Minerva' (plate, p. 172) which was engraved by Pontius after Rubens's suggestion and Abraham van Diepenbeek's design.

JAN VAN DEN HOECKE. — Cornelis de Brouwer has given the name of Hoecke to the Rubens's father, and it is possible that it came so, though not without a certain modification, the influence of Van Dyck. He was born at Antwerp in 1604 and first became known by two pictures of descent from the father, Gaspar van den Hoecke. We know that he died in 1635. In consequence of the absence of Jan Hoecke, now in 1637, Jordaens in 1637 retouched two large pictures that had formed part of the triumphal procession and were intended to be presented to the Cardinal-Infant. Van den Hoecke, therefore, did not stay with Rubens long: he entered his studio in 1630 and left the town shortly after 1635. A fact which tends to prove his artistic connection with the master is that a number of engravings made after his pictures pass for being reproductions of pictures by Rubens. On his return home he set off again, to go to Vienna, where he became court painter to the Archduke Leopold William. When the Archduke became governor of the Spanish Netherlands in 1647, he brought Jan van den Hoecke with him; the painter settled in Antwerp and died there in 1681.

FRANS WOUTERS. — More than one painter worked under Rubens with no less, and possibly more, profit of the fact. Frans Wouters is one of those about whom we have satisfactory information to hand. He was born at Liege and baptised on the 1st October, 1612. In 1622 his father apprenticed him to Peter van Avont, the distinguished painter of the day. But at the beginning of June, 1634, the young artist left his master's studio, and gave Antwerp a complaint to the magistrate that — Frans Wouters had left his work, without giving an excuse — for the shop of Sir Rubens, although he had had a few suit of clothes made for him worth — quite 13 pounds — (1). He did not stay long with his new master, but went to Vienna, where he became court-painter to the Emperor Ferdinand II. In 1641 he returned to Antwerp, where he was employed to value the works of art left by Rubens. He died in 1659. In spite of his distinguished title, very few of his works have survived, and those of no extraordinary merit.

VICTOR WOLFFVOET AND OTHERS. — Another artist mentioned as a pupil of Rubens is Victor Wolffvoet, who painted exactly in his manner. He was born in 1612 and died in 1652. Very few of his pictures are still existing. One of them — the 'Head of Medusa' in the Museum at Dresden, exactly recalls the manner in which Rubens has treated the same subject in a picture in the Imperial Museum at Vienna. He was also a picture-dealer, and the inventory of his estate contains besides several pictures by his own hand, numerous copies of Rubens and also, but by the master. His pictures all represent subjects also treated by Rubens — St. Catherine, ,

(1) *De. van. den. Hooft.* 'Geschiedenis der Antwerpse Schiedk. vol. 1. p. 201.



« Plenty », the « Rape of the Sabines » and the « Reconciliation of the Romans and Sabines », a « Meleager and Atalanta hunting », a « Pastoral », « Mars and Venus » and the « Beheading of St Paul ».

Cornelis De Bie also mentions Nicolas van der Horst, as having been apprenticed to Rubens. He was born at Antwerp, and worked for some time in Brussels, where he died in 1646. The same author also mentions Lucas Franchoy the younger, born at Mechlin in 1616. He went to France, returned in 1655, and died in 1681. He speaks also of Jan Thomas, born at Ypres in 1617, who came early to Antwerp, there adopted the manner of Rubens and left the town, after 1654, to become first of all painter to the Archbishop of Metz and then to the Emperor of Germany. He died at Vienna in 1673. At the date of Rubens's death he was working under him, and the heirs paid him 90 florins « for what he had painted for the house of the deceased ».

The heirs also paid 300 florins to Nicolas de la Morlette, painter, « for having retouched the pictures in the house of the deceased ». Peter Verhulst received 10 florins « for what he had painted in the house of the deceased ». These artists must, therefore, be considered as collaborators with Rubens. Of the last, Rubens said that he was a most common painter, and had painted a landscape with the Escorial after one of his drawings (1).

Other names are mentioned, but without substantial proof. Philip Rubens mentions, as a pupil of his uncle's, Jan Bronckhorst, who appears never to have visited Antwerp. A few names have come down by chance. Thus, in a series of twelve Roman emperors (*Œuvre*, N^o 891), we find one picture signed by Rubens (1619), another by Gaspar van den Hoecke (1622), and a third by A. Jansen (1618). Gaspar van den Hoecke is well-known, but we do not know who the other can have been, unless it was Abraham Janssens. Again, in Balthasar Moretus's accounts we read, under the 18th February, 1632: « To Sir Pietro Paulo Rubens, by » Peter Boum his disciple » (2). Nothing is known of Pieter Boum, or rather Bom, except that he was admitted master in the Guild of St Luke in 1636-1637 and that his mortuary fee was paid in 1668-1669. On the 10th July, 1623, Peiresc wrote to Rubens that he was sending him a



FRANS RUBENS
Drawing (National Gallery, London).

(1) Letter from Rubens to Gerbier, 15 March, 1640.

(2) MAX ROOSES : *P. P. Rubens en Balthasar Moretus*, p. 126.

letter by Maximilian, who had brought him some engravings and made drawings for him after ancient marbles. Who Maximilian was we do not know, but it is plain that he was in Rubens's service.

THE LAST DAYS

During his last years Rubens enjoyed to the full the fruits of his long and indefatigable labours. His creative power kept its force and freshness to the end, and his death was an apotheosis. On the 15th April, 1636, the Cardinal Infant had appointed him his court-painter, with an emolument of 500 florins a year; and if his relations with the court of Brussels were not so frequent as in the life-time of the Infanta Isabella, he continued to enjoy the same degree of favour and esteem from the new governor. We have seen that the king of Spain asked him for more pictures than he could paint; he was, like Velasquez, and perhaps even more so, the favourite painter of the art-loving monarch. He was in high favour with Charles I of England; on the 24th March, 1638 (3rd April, 1639) Charles gave a further order to send him a gold chain and medal of the value of £300 sterling. He had broken off all relations with the court of France since the exile of Marie de Medici, but with her he remained on the best of terms. All, even to Frederick Henry, the Stadtholder of the Netherlands, recognized his lofty gifts; on the 2nd July, 1639, the Stadtholder invited the painter, through Constantijn Huygens, to paint a picture for him. The duke of Tuscany gave him a commission in the last years of his life, and they poured in from Madrid, Prague, Cologne and all the towns in the country. He had stamped his imprint on all the art of his time, and was taken as a guide and model not only by the artists of his town and country, but by architects and sculptors; and the engravers knew no other master. They had made his works familiar and admired all over Europe, and he had given their art new life and strength. The history of art has no instance to show of so universal an influence, so absolute an authority and so complete a triumph.

He had withdrawn from politics, which had brought him more disappointment than satisfaction, though his opinion continued to be asked on affairs of state. There was consolation of a kind in reserve at the close of his life for the man who had acquitted himself with so much zeal and conscientiousness of his patriotic task, and whose only failure in the course of his whole career had been the arrest of his efforts in favour of his fellow-countrymen; a ray of reasonable hope gleamed among the dark clouds which presaged a mournful future. The energy of the young governor had changed the face of affairs; the victor of Nordlingen was well able to hold his own against the prince of Orange; and, in fact, he checked the advance of the enemy's forces and even compelled them to retire. If the engravings made by van Thulden after Rubens show the god Scaldis in chains and crying aloud in despair, they also celebrate the victorious day of Calloo. « Affairs have taken a turn here », wrote Rubens to his friend Peiresc on the 16th August, 1635; « from defensive tactics we have passed to offensive, « so that instead of seeing, as we did a few weeks ago, 60,000 enemies in the heart of Brabant, » we are at this moment masters of the country with an equal number of soldiers. The capture of Schencken has given us the key of the Betuwe and the Veluwe, and we strike terror into » the enemy, without denuding Artois and Hainault, where our troops are ready to repel all » aggression ». But the Cardinal-Infant, while still a young man, followed close behind Rubens

to the grave, leaving his work unfinished. After his loss the situation grew increasingly desperate. But the glorious master was spared the grief of seeing the consummation of the humiliation and the sacrifice of the town and the country he loved so well.

His life had been full of agitation, and in his last days he found the need of calm and tranquillity in the midst of a small circle of friends in his studio and in the bosom of his family. « I am a man of peace », he wrote to Peiresc in his letter of the 16th August, 1635, « and I flee quarrels and lawsuits like the plague; I hold that an honest man's desire ought to » be above all to enjoy perfect tranquillity of mind in public as in private life, performing all the » services he can, without injuring anyone ». He had kept up intimate relations with Gevartius, Rockox and Balthasar Moretus. From time to time he continued to exchange letters with Peiresc, which touched no more on politics, but on art and science, and dealt with the works of the early Christians as well as those of classical antiquity; he also discussed with him the anatomy of the eye, the microscope and perpetual motion, which was then one of the questions of the day. His letter of the 1st August, 1637, to Junius, who had made him a complimentary gift of a copy of his *Pictura Veterum*, shows that up till his latest days he was interested in transalpine art. He shows the high esteem he had formed of the book by expressing the wish that Italian art also might find its historian. Painting was not the only thing that interested him; his curiosity was universal, and Chifflet was right in saying that he was the most cultivated painter in the world (1). In the epitaph he composed for the artist, Gevartius bears witness that he deserved the name of the Apelles of his century and excelled, not only by his gifts as painter, but also by his knowledge of ancient history, literature and all the sciences. His correspondence and the contents of his library confirm the testimony of his friends.

RUBENS'S LIBRARY. — From the registers of the Plantin press, we learn what books Rubens bought of Balthasar Moretus between 1613 and 1640; he must have bought books elsewhere besides, but, such as it is, the list gives us some information on his reading and his studies. It includes large works with engravings on zoology, botany, natural science, numismatics, history, fine art, editions of Latin classics, Latin translations of Greek authors, and books and pamphlets on contemporary politics. He read no Greek, but Latin, Italian and French; only one Netherlandish work appears among his purchases, the *Emblemata* of Jacob Cats, which he bought in 1620. He regularly procured copies of the Plantin editions for which he had designed the frontispieces. In 1637 we find him buying a considerable number of historical works; the *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum*, 6 vols. folio, the *Annales Imperatorum Romanorum et Byzantinorum*, *Cæsarum Vitæ*, *Historia rerum Persicarum*, and *Historiæ Francorum scriptores*. In the two following years he bought nothing; in February, 1640, he bought the *Galeria Giustiniana*, and (mournful omen) on the 24th March of that year, his son Albert went to the Moretus library to purchase a book of hours of the *Officium B. Mariæ* and another book of prayers, the *Litanæ Sacræ*. That his library was of some considerable size is proved by the fact that the heirs paid 6 florins to have the inventory of it drawn up.

(1) Letter of 6 June, 1640, to Balthasar Moretus (*Bulletin-Rubens*, 1, p. 218).

HIS COLLECTIONS. — He preserved to the end his taste for works of art of all kinds. His house was a veritable museum, in which he and his friends always found a pleasant means of passing the time. He had made no new collection of antique marbles after selling all he owned to the Duke of Buckingham in 1625; but he continued to collect engraved stones and was constantly adding to his collection of agates and rings.



P. P. RUBENS — Drawing. Study for his portrait at the age of 60 (Louvre, Paris).

But his most precious possession was his gallery of pictures. The inventory drawn up after his death mentions no less than 319, 94 of which were originals of his own painting. The rest were by Italian, Flemish or Dutch masters. Titian was always his favourite; he had nine pictures by him (1) and 32 copies after the great Venetian of his own making, among them 23 portraits. He had 5 pictures by Tintoretto and a copy made by himself; a portrait by Raphael, and eight copies by himself; and 4 pictures and 2 drawings by Paolo Veronese. The German masters were represented by an Albert Durer, three Holbeins and four Elsheimers, and his collection also comprised one or two pictures by each of our early national masters; two portraits by Jan van Eyck, a picture by Hugo Van der Goes, one by Quentin Matsys, two by Willem Key, one by Antonio Moro and three by Frans Floris. He was an especial admirer of Peter Breughel the elder and had twelve of his pictures. Among his contemporaries, Adriaan Brouwer was his favourite; he had seventeen pictures by him; he had 10 Vandycks, all it may be believed, in his early

manner; 3 Jordaens', and some pictures by his collaborators Frans Snijders, Paul De Vos, Jan Breughel and Wildens, and 6 by Frans Ykens. Among the young Dutch masters he gave the preference to Cornelis Saffleven, of whose pictures he had at least 8; he himself had painted the figures in four of them.

Beauty of colouring was evidently what determined his purchases. He loved Titian above all among the Italians, Elsheimer among the Germans and the elder Breughel and Brouwer among the Flemings. What rejoiced his eyes was the rich and brilliant colour of Breughel and the warm tones and delicate shades of Brouwer. It has been stated that Brouwer had exercised

(1) The inventory of his estate mentions eleven of them, but two of these, the 'Saviour holding the terrestrial globe' and the drawing of the 'Martyrdom of St Peter', were sold to Philip IV as copies made by Rubens after Titian.

some influence on Rubens, who towards the end of his life adopted his free manner, his shaded tones and his reflexions. We believe that Rubens was accessible to all influences and all teaching, and that he may have learned from the school of Brouwer as from the school of Titian. He evidently had as great an admiration for the Flemish painter of peasants and taverns as for the Italian painter of the great ones of the earth and the inhabitants of the heavens. Brouwer was admitted a master in the Guild of St Luke during the winter of 1631. Even before he arrived in Antwerp, Rubens had bought one of his pictures, a « Village Dance », and on the 4th March, 1632, he declared before a notary that he had had the picture for a year. But to conclude from that, that after 1630 Rubens had changed his manner and set to work to imitate Brouwer is pure invention. The master evolved and altered regularly and step by step from his return from Italy till his death, from the « Descent from the Cross » in the cathedral down to the « Virgin surrounded by Saints » in the church of St James at Antwerp. His last manner, the manner which he is supposed to have borrowed from Brouwer, was already plainly apparent in his « Adoration of the kings » in the Museum at Antwerp, which dates from 1625. The painting of that picture is already thin and transparent, the colours are shaded and reflect one upon the other. Rubens therefore painted in the manner of Brouwer several years before knowing it. After 1630 his manner continued to change ; his colour became paler and his light fairer ; his tones remained brilliant though they were no longer handled in large masses. He showed no sign of the characteristic features of the painter of taverns, who loved golden tones and thin and scanty colour. It is possible that Rubens learned from him, as from Breughel, to love village feasts, but there is a great gulf between his kermesse and their peasant-scenes.

RUBENS'S DOMESTIC LIFE. — Rubens was now the possessor of a considerable fortune : he had a town-house and a castle in the country ; his household was maintained on a great scale ; he had three maid-servants, one of them a cook, a valet, a colour-grinder, two grooms and three horses. His life was simple and regular. His nephew relates that he went to early mass every day, and then began work, while someone read to him. He saw little company, never drank or played, and conversed only with a few friends and then on serious topics. His only recreations were rides on horseback or an hour spent among his engraved stones. He was universally esteemed, and was then in the enjoyment of the popularity which two centuries and a half have done nothing to diminish. His sons by his first wife were grown up, and his second marriage had resulted in numerous and lively offspring. But his health declined from year to year, and soon from day to day.

HIS ILLNESS. — For years, as we learn from his nephew, he had suffered from gout. We have other authority also. It is mentioned for the first time in his letter to Pierre Dupuy of the 22nd January, 1627. He had passed some days in Paris, where he had fallen ill ; on his return home he wrote : « The pain in my foot lasted as far as Péronne, then little by little it grew less. » On reaching Brussels I was completely cured. Thank God, I am now free from it ; heaven » preserve me in future from the visits and torments of this domestic foe, and grant that I may » have left it on the French frontier ! » From time to time, however, he suffered new attacks. On the 29th December, 1628, he wrote to Gevartius from Madrid : « I have suffered much the » last few days from gout and fever ». In Spain he was cured by one Fabrizio Valguarnera, a

dubious person who styled himself gentleman and doctor of laws, practised medicine and took an interest in art. In gratitude for his services Rubens had promised him a picture ; on the 20th June, 1631, he offered him an « Adoration of the Kings » 7 or 8 feet square (1), probably the same as the one he afterwards sold to Anna van Severdonck for the church of the Benedictines at Louvain (*Œuvre*. N^o 176). In September, 1635, the gout had compelled him to keep his bed for a month. In the following October he should have crossed the channel to direct the placing in position of the ceilings at Whitehall ; he was too seriously ill to undertake the voyage, as Gerbier wrote to Secretary Windebank. In 1637 an attack of the same complaint in the hand rendered him unable to make drawings for the engravers and retouch their work, as we learn from a letter of the 8th April of that year from Balthasar Moretus to his cousin Frans Raphelengien. His artistic production had not yet begun to be seriously affected by his indisposition, for in 1638 he was overburdened with commissions and worked harder than ever. He must have had a fresh attack about that time, for on the 24th October of that year Mathieu de Morgues wrote from Brussels to Philippe Chifflet : « M. Rubens is better, and is expected in this town » (2). Next year his condition began to be serious. In a letter written to him by Constantijn Huygens on the 2nd July, 1639, we read : « His Highness (Prince Frederick- » Henry) is delighted to hear that you have recovered from a severe illness ». Indeed, in February, 1639, he had sent his eldest son to Brussels to represent him while the gout prevented his « appearing in person ». In the following April the gout in his right hand prevented his signing his name (3). In the course of the summer, however, he paid another visit to his country seat. There again he had an attack of his complaint and was treated by two doctors from Mechlin. Rubens then understood that the time had come to make his dispositions for the future of his wife and children. In the marriage-contract concluded with Helena Fourment on the 4th December, 1630, two days before the wedding, he had settled a sum of 42,000 florins on her in case of his predeceasing her and leaving her childless. In 1631 the couple made a first will ; on the 16th September, 1639, they both signed a codicil stipulating that the children of the two marriages should take *per capita* an equal share in the estate of the parents. On the same date he appointed new trustees for his son Nicolas in place of those who had died.

It is clear that he felt his end to be at hand. Later, the state of his health improved, for at the beginning of 1640, and up till the month of May, which was the last of his life, he was in correspondence with Gerbier and Scaglia on the subject of some ceilings to be painted for one of Charles I's apartments, a matter in which Jordaens also was approached. It was but a last flicker ; the attacks of gout became more and more serious. On the 5th April the Cardinal-Infant informed Philip IV that Rubens was paralysed in the hands, and that there was no hope of his ever being able to paint again ; a week later he was better, and Gerbier wrote that he had been glad to get a long letter from him, a clear proof that he was not so ill as was reported, since the letters were as well formed as if he had had nothing the matter with his hand. The complaint, however, did not leave him entirely. Four days later, Rubens himself wrote to the celebrated sculptor, Frans Duquesnoy, that he would very much like to go and admire the statue of

(1) *Bulletin-Rubens*, III, p. 206.

(2) AUG CASTAN : *Opinion des Érudits de l'Autriche*, p. 43.

(3) F. JOS. VAN DEN BRANDEN : *Op. cit.* p. 578.

St Andrew which his fellow-countryman had made for St Peter's at Rome, but that his age and the gout that crippled him made it impossible. Improvement and relapse continued alternately for some time yet. On the 21st April, 1640, Gerbier wrote to the king of England that Rubens was paralysed; but on the 2nd May the Cardinal-Infant told Philip IV that Rubens was better and had promised to finish the large pictures and the ten small ones for Easter. In the course of the month he realised that his days were numbered.

RUBENS'S WILL. — On the 27th May he summoned the notary Guyot and made a new will in conjunction with Helena Fourment. He left his wife all that the custom of Antwerp allowed him to leave her: half his property in addition to the share of one child, and her share of particular acquisitions and legacies. All his children by both marriages were placed on an equal footing. He left his books to Albert, and his agates and medals to Albert and Nicolas as a pre-legacy. He bequeathed pictures to certain people and made gifts to churches and the poor. He expressly stipulated that his drawings should not be sold till the youngest of his children was eighteen, and then only if none of his sons had become a painter and none of his daughters had married a painter of renown. In either of the latter events the drawings were to be divided between his artist sons or sons-in-law.

HIS DEATH. — The danger of his state increased from day to day, and all the resources of medicine were called in to banish it. He was treated by two Antwerp physicians, Doctor Lazarus Marquis and Doctor Spinosa; two barber-surgeons, Master Hendrick and Master Hans Daepe, took special charge of his bad foot, and doctors, probably the Cardinal-Infant's, were sent from Brussels in the hope that their science might succeed in bringing him relief. Two apothecaries, Peter van den Broeck and J. B. Despontain, supplied him with medicines, and the first gave him in addition a certain water for the gout. Nothing did any good. « Sr Peter Rubens is deadly sick », wrote Gerbier to William Murray on the 31st May; and in a letter written on the same day to the king of England, he adds: « Since I finisht this letter, neewes is come of Sr Peter Rubens death ». On the 2nd June he wrote to Inigo Jones: « Rubens deceased three dayes past off a deflaction wich fell on his heart, after some dayes indisposition of ague and goutte » (1), in other words of rising gout. The great artist died on Wednesday the 30th May, 1640, about noon. « He has left us, to go and see the original of many fine paintings he has left behind », wrote the abbot of St Germain to Balthasar Moretus a fortnight later. « Of a truth », replied Moretus, « our town has lost much by the death of Mons^r Rubens, and myself in particular one of my best friends ».

No funeral orations or obituary notices were accorded him. Newspapers and reviews were few in those days. The only mortuary eulogy of the deceased that we know of is a piece of terribly pompous verse to be found in Alexander van Fornenbergh's *Antwerpschen Proteus*. The conclusion of the poem seems to imply that there had been others besides. « The rhyming geniuses who have celebrated Rubens in bold verses and composed learned poems in his honour, all imagine that they have carried off the palm, but they have taken charcoal to paint the sun with ».

The last verse is striking and nothing better was ever said of Rubens.

(1) SAINSBURY : Op. cit. p. 230.

HIS BURIAL. — On the evening of the day of his death Rubens's body was laid in a ribbed coffin of hard wood and placed in the family vault of the Fourments in the church of St James. Monks from six convents accompanied it in procession, and each received 3 florins 12 stuyvers. The funeral service took place on the 2nd June, « with 60 tapers, crosses of red satin and the music of the church of Notre-Dame ». Before the mass, the *Miserere*, the *Dies Iræ* and the Psalms were sung, and masses were said for six weeks. The choir of the church and the house of the deceased were hung with black. On the day of the funeral there were several banquets, according to the custom of the times. Besides that held in the house of the deceased, one was given at the town-hall to the members of the Magistracy and the Treasury, which cost 250 florins ; another at the « Golden Flower » to the members of the Confraternity of the Romanists, which cost 126 florins, and yet another at the « Stag » to 34 members of the Confraternities of St Luke and the Gilliflower, which cost 182 florins. The Brothers of Our Lady celebrated 150 masses, the Dominicans 100, the Augustines, the Capuchins, the Reformed Carmelites and the Franciscans each 100, the Beghards and the Minimi 50 ; 15 were said at the chapel in the Keizerstraat, 25 in the church at Elewijt and ten at the Black Sisters' of Mechlin. 500 florins were given to the respectable poor and 100 florins to the church of St James. The monastery of the Brothers of Our Lady received 24 to defray the cost of a « recreation », and 14 florins' worth of food was bought for the Capuchin fathers, also for a « recreation ».

THE ESTATE.

THE WORKS OF ART. — On the 8th June, 1640, the notary Guyot began to draw up the inventory of the goods found in the house of the deceased, and set to work at the same time to catalogue the pictures. By the 14th July it was completed in Flemish, French and English. It was not printed till later, by Jan van Meurs, and then only in French. It is a curious fact that out of the whole edition only one copy has survived (1).

The title of the work is : *Spécification des peintures trouvées à la maison mortuaire de feu Messire Pierre-Paul Rubens, chevalier etc.* ; it comprises 314 numbered articles and 15 unnumbered, of which 319 are pictures and 10 statues or objects of vertu. There were 46 pictures painted by Rubens after Italian masters, 94 original pictures, 7 pictures in which the figures were by Rubens, a large number of portraits from life by Rubens or Vandyck, a quantity of drawings and sketches for his principal works, and numerous copies of his pictures which are mentioned in the lump.

Among his own paintings few are sacred subjects. Besides the two bought by Philip IV

(1) This copy is in the National Library in Paris and forms part of a file of MSS. (Fonds St-Germain, français N^o 1041). It was reproduced by Paul Lacroix in the *Revue Universelle des Arts*, I, p. 268 (Brussels-Paris, 1855) and is entitled : *Spécification des peintures trouvées à la maison mortuaire de feu Messire Pierre-Paul Rubens, chevalier etc.* The text had already been given, but with less accuracy, in the *Histoire de la Vie de P. P. Rubens*, by J. F. M. MICHEL (Brussels, 1771) ; in LÉPICIÉ : *Catalogue des tableaux, dessins et sculptures en marbre, ivoire et pierres précieuses qu'on a trouvé à la maison de feu Messire Pierre-Paul Rubens, chevalier*, and in the *Catalogue de la plus précieuse collection d'Estampes de P. P. Rubens et d'A. van Dyck qui ait jamais existé, par Del-Marmol* (1794). An English text has been published three times ; first by Dawson Turner, under the title of *Catalogue of the works of art in the possession of Sir Peter Paul Rubens at the time of his decease* (2nd edition, 1839) ; next in the *Catalogue raisonné* (I, 355) by John Smith and finally by Noël Sainsbury (Op. cit. p. 236). Dawson Turner's English text was printed after the MS. list sent to William Murray by Gerbier on the 14th July, 1640 ; Noël Sainsbury's is a reprint of it. The English text printed by John Smith is a translation of the one published by J. F. M. Michel. There is a Netherlandish text in the translation of J. F. M. Michel's book (Amsterdam, Johannes Smit, 1774), in the reprint published at Antwerp in 1840 by Victor Ch. van Grimbergen.



SUZANNA AND THE ELDERS
(Max Rooses, Antwerp)

THE BURIAL. — On the evening of the 1st of his death Rubens's body was laid in a ribbed coffin of wood and placed in the family vault of the Fourmen's in the church of St James. Much from the countryside accompanied his procession, and each received 3 florins 12 stuyvers. The funeral service took place on the 2nd June, with 60 taper-candles of red satin and the presence of the church of Notre-Dame. Before the mass, the *Miserere*, the *Diri Ira* and the *Psalms* were sung, and masses were said for six weeks. The choir of the church and the house of the deceased were hung with black. On the day of the funeral there were several banquets, according to the custom of the times. Besides that held in the house of the deceased, one was given in the town-hall to the members of the Magistracy and the Company, which cost 250 florins; another at the 'Golden Flower' to the members of the Community of the Weavers, which cost 120 florins, and yet another at the 'Star' to 24 members of the Carpenters of St Luke and the Gillflower, which cost 182 florins. The Brothers of Our Lady borrowed 100 courses, the Dominicans 100, the Augustines, the Capuchins, the Reformed Carmelites and the Franciscans each 100, the Beghards and the Mianen 50; 15 were said at the chapel in the Kerkstraat, 25 in the church at Elwep and ten in the 'Black Sisters' of Mechlin. 500 florins were given to the respectable poor and 100 florins to the church of St James. The monastery of the Brothers of Our Lady received 24 florins for the cost of a 'recreation', and 14 florins' worth of food was bought for the Capuchin monks, also for a 'recreation'.

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THE WORKS OF ART. — On the 20th June 1640, the notary Cuyot began to draw up the inventory of the goods found in the house of the deceased, and set to work at the same time to catalogue the pictures. By the 14th July it was completed in French, French and English. It was not printed till later, by Jan van Meurs, and then only in French. It is a curious fact that out of the whole edition only one copy has survived (1).

The title of the work is: *Spécification des peintures, sculptures et autres ouvrages d'art de feu Messire Pierre-Paul Rubens, chevalier etc.* it comprises 314 numbered catalogues and 15 unnumbered, of which 310 are pictures and 10 statues or objects of art. There were 40 pictures painted by Rubens after Italian masters, 04 original pictures, 7 mosaics, to which the figures were by Rubens, a large number of portraits from life by Rubens or a copyist, a quantity of drawings and sketches for his principal works, and numerous copies of the pictures which are mentioned in the book.

Among his own paintings were also several copies, besides the two bought by Philip IV

(1) This copy is in the National Library of the University of Paris, and is part of a file of MSS (Fonds St-Germain, Français N^o 1011). It was acquired by Paul Durand, at the Bibliothèque de Jean-Louis de Bérault-Dorville, Paris, and is entitled: *Spécification des peintures, sculptures et autres ouvrages d'art de feu Messire Pierre-Paul Rubens, chevalier etc.* The text is already being given, for general information, in the *Spécification des peintures, sculptures et autres ouvrages d'art de feu Messire Pierre-Paul Rubens*, 1771, at London. Catalogue des peintures, sculptures et autres ouvrages d'art de feu Messire Pierre-Paul Rubens, chevalier etc. par un artiste de sa cour, de feu Messire Pierre-Paul Rubens, chevalier etc. par le Catalogue de Rubens, chevalier etc. par l'Escole de Peinture et PA. van Dyck par un artiste de sa cour, par J. de Meurs, (1742). An English edition was published three times: first by Dawson Turner under the name of *Spécification of the paintings and of the possession of the Works of Art belonging to the house of the deceased* (2nd edition, 1820), next by the *Commissaires de MM. de Bérault-Dorville and Berault de Saint-Sauveur* (1771, ed. p. 200). Dawson Turner's English edition was printed with the MS. and has, as Sir Isaac Milner, in Turner's *Life* (1825, 1840, 1846), said: 'Sir Isaac's is a reprint of the French edition printed by J. de Meurs, and is a translation of the one published by J. P. M. Meurs. There is a Neapolitan translation of J. P. M. Meurs's book (Naples, 1771) which is not printed published at Antwerp or Paris by Goussier, the Genevois.'



we must mention as among the most remarkable the « Bathsheba » in the Museum at Dresden, the « St Cecilia » in the Museum at Berlin, a life-sized « Magdalen », a « Christ on the Cross », « St Peter and St Paul », an « Adoration of the Kings » and a « Prodigal Son ». The catalogue also mentions three Susannahs, and two others formed part of the estate, but the subject is anything but sacred. As usual they show a naked woman under the eyes of two old men, and trying to escape their glances and their hands. It is not known for certain what these five pictures were, nor what has become of them. We have some grounds for recognizing two of them in two works of the master's last years, one of which belongs to the present writer, and the other is in the Pinakothek at Munich. They differ only in the accessories. In the former (*Œuvre*. N^o 135) the background is a drapery, in the latter (*Œuvre*. N^o 134) it is a landscape; in the former Susannah is holding a lock of her hair, in the latter her cloak. The picture in my possession is a gem of the first water; the tone is pale but warm and vigorous, the colours are transparent and much shaded with reflections; the painting is entirely by the hand of Rubens. The Munich picture is weaker and seems to have been largely repainted by a restorer. It is not, however, the unfinished Susannah which was bought at the sale by Nicolas Rubens, for that was painted on canvas while the Munich picture is on panel. The master's hand is distinctly recognisable in certain parts of the latter picture, like the heads of the old men and the warm tints of the clouds; but the flesh of the Susannah is not luminous, and the accessories, which are vigorous in my picture, are dull in this.

Some thirty of the original pictures represent historical or literary subjects, or scenes of the life of the people. The king of Spain bought seven of them. Of the rest, the most remarkable are the « Andromeda » in the Museum at Berlin, the « Bacchus » in the Hermitage at St Petersburg and the « Shepherd and Shepherdess » in the Pinakothek at Munich. We must mention also the « Pythagoras », with fruits by Snijders, at Buckingham Palace. There were also 17 landscapes and 32 portraits. Among the latter we may note those of Charles the Bold and the Archduke (? Emperor) Maximilian, which are probably the pictures now in the Imperial Museum at Vienna, those of Philip the Good, the Earl of Arundel, Spinola, Mayerne, Lionardo da Vinci, the Cardinal-Infant, the Empress, the King and Queen of Spain, the Duke of Buckingham, Albert and Isabella, and Marie de Medici.

From the presence of these works, sometimes in numerous duplicates, in Rubens's studio, we may conclude that he used to keep at the disposal of collectors an assortment of portraits of contemporary princes, of landscapes and pleasant and attractive subjects, such as « Susannah », « Angelica and the Hermit », « Bacchus on a barrel », « Hercules drunk », the « Satyr with a basket of fruit », « Conversation à la Mode » and others of the same kind.

Independently of the pictures mentioned in the catalogue of the estate we know from the accounts of the goods in the house of the deceased that there were a number of works there which the heirs divided up, sold or gave away. Rubens had left Helena Fourment her portrait known as the « Woman in the pelisse », and had left his portraits of himself, those of his two wives and of his children to his second wife and her children. Helena bought nine other pictures, among them a « Conversation à la mode », a portrait of her niece Madame Picquery, the portrait of Susanna Fourment known as the « Chapeau de paille » and that of Jan Rubens, her husband's father. Ten pictures were allotted to Albert Rubens, among others four portraits

of Susanna Fourment, his mother-in-law, a portrait of his wife and the portraits of his grandparents, Jan Rubens and Maria Pypelinckx, which unfortunately are lost. Nicolas Rubens had eleven less important pictures, including a « Susannah, unfinished, on canvas », three landscapes, two of them by van Uden, and a « Judgment of Paris ».

Don Francisco de Rojas, the king's intendant at Brussels, was presented with a replica of the picture in the church of the Augustines at Antwerp, and Gaspard de Crayer with the « Miracles of St Benedict », for their good offices in the matter of the purchases made by Philip IV. Under the same head the intendant-general van Oncle received an « Argus », and Salomon Nobiliers a « Nymph and a Satyr carrying a basket of fruit ». Another copy of the latter picture was given to Peter, the outrider of the Clarenstraat, for having negotiated the purchase of a horse. A « Christ at Emmaus » was presented to the « Golden Lion » hotel at Brussels; Frans Thibout of Ypres had a « Sea-piece »; Gillis Sprincen a « Woman taken in adultery », and Grysperre a portrait of his wife.

Other pictures were sold privately; to Balthasar van Engelen, for the prince of Orange, a « Sylvia » (? « Shepherd and Shepherdess »); to Jan Cossiers, the portrait of a man unknown; to Miguel d'Olivarez, a portrait of the Cardinal-Infant; to Andreas De Schutter, for Joost Suttermans, a « Virgin with St Francis »; to Peter van Horen a « Virgin surrounded by a garland »; to Jan Janssens, receiver of the town, two portraits of his wife; to Peter van Hecke a « Venus at the mirror »; to Jan Baptist Maes, commissioner of finance at Brussels, four unfinished pictures, an « Adonis hunting », a « Nymphs and Satyrs hunting », an « Atalanta hunting » and a « Conversation à la mode »; to Arnold Lunden, two portraits of his wife, Susanna Fourment. Others were given copies of works by Rubens, which were found in great numbers in the master's house; during his life-time and during the first few years after his death they appear in large quantities at public sales.

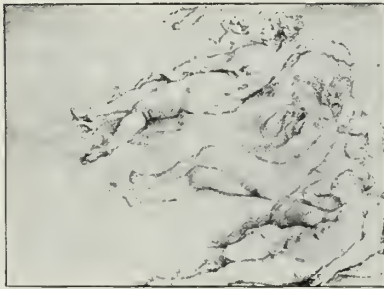
A number of unfinished pictures formed part of Rubens's estate: some of them we have noticed, but there is one of which the estate account makes no mention, the « Entombment of Christ » (*Œuvre*. N^o 322), which has lately passed from the Habich collection to that of M. Crombez. It was engraved by Witdoeck and looks like a sketch, while in reality it is a small unfinished picture. On a background of warm brown, rather rubbed on than painted, the figures are merely spots of red, green, yellow and white. The effects of light are simply indicated, and the master evidently left the picture unfinished; the originality of Witdoeck's engraving lies in its faithful reproduction of this unfinished state.

The printer of the catalogue also issued posters which were put up in Holland and elsewhere to announce the sale of the pictures. Rubens had appointed that the sale should take place by public auction or private contract, as should be considered most favourable in the opinion of the painters Frans Snijders, Jan Wildens and Jacob Moermans. The heirs proposed first of all to sell the works of art in the estate by private treaty (1). Finally they decided to hold a public sale, which lasted no less than three months. It began under the direction of a broker named Jan Lindemans on the 17th March, 1642, and went on through April, May and June (2). In all it produced 69,454 florins 7 1/2 stuyvers.

(1) Letter from Gerbier to Arundel, 2 June, 1640.

(2) *Bulletin des Archives*, II, p. 80.

The accounts were not closed till the 17th November, 1645. They showed Rubens's estate at 283,987 florins 1 1/2 stuyvers. This sum did not include the agates, which were sold by the descendants of Albert and Nicolas for 5606 florins 8 stuyvers, and, according to Philip Rubens, belonged in his time to the king of Spain (1). The silver, which the heirs divided between them, the jewels, which were valued at 16,674 florins 2 stuyvers, the library and portraits which descended to the widow and the sons of his first marriage, and the drawings which were not sold till later, were also omitted from the account. Albert and Nicolas received besides, as their share of their mother's estate, 51,766 florins, 13 stuyvers and 9 deniers. The house in the Wapper and the three adjacent dwellings were not sold till the 16th September, 1660, when they fetched 20,000 florins. The expenses of winding up the estate up till the closing of the accounts amounted to 20,075 florins 12 stuyvers. In round figures, Rubens's estate may have amounted to 400,000 florins or £100,000 in modern money. In the course of the winding-up more than one difficulty arose between Helena Fourment and the children of the first marriage, but they were easily smoothed away, and the division took place to the satisfaction of all parties on the 9th April, 1646 (2).



STUDY OF NUDE WOMEN
Drawing (Lately in the collection of
Sir Charles Robinson).

THE DRAWINGS. — Under the will of the deceased his drawings were to be kept till the youngest of his children was eighteen. His posthumous daughter, Constantia Albertina, was born on the 3rd February, 1641, and the drawings therefore could not properly be sold until the 3rd February, 1659. But the youngest child but one became a priest, the youngest entered a convent before August, 1657, none of the sons became a painter and none of the daughters married an artist. There was no reason, therefore, to defer the sale till 1659. It took place on the 23rd August, 1657, and produced 6557 florins 16 stuyvers (3).

The drawings belonging to Rubens's estate were of several different kinds. The catalogue of the sale mentions : A very large quantity of drawings of the most notable pieces, made by the late Mons. Rubens . By that we must understand drawings made after his own pictures, by himself, his pupils or the engravers. Those he had not made himself he had retouched. The most remarkable of these are in the Louvre; they were drawn by Vandyck and finished by Rubens.

A second species of drawing, those which were reserved by Rubens, had been collected or executed by the testator . These therefore comprised drawings by himself and by other masters. Who the latter were we cannot tell, but Rubens's drawings we know.

He had made several different kinds. We have had occasion more than once to mention those he made for frontispieces. Most of these were pen-drawings more or less washed in ink; some are done in grisaille on small panels. The invention is always admirable for richness and originality of motif; they are usually allegorical and sometimes so subtle that it is impossible

(1) *Bulletin-Rubens*, II, p. 165.

(2) *Bulletin-Rubens*, IV, p. 238.

(3) *Bulletin-Rubens*, V, p. 56.

to understand them without explanation. In his earlier days Rubens drew them very carefully and delicately, as in his *Aguilonii Optica* of 1613; later, the movement becomes bolder, the lines stronger and the handling fatter and more highly coloured. Most of them were made for the Plantin press. The accounts of the firm give the prices paid to Rubens. We have already said that for folio frontispieces and portraits he received 20 florins; 12 for quarto; 8 for octavo, and for smaller sizes 5. The drawings remained the property of the printers, and the Plantin-Moretus Museum still owns a number of them.

Rubens sometimes made drawings for the engravers in ink or black chalk after his own pictures. Many of these have been preserved, for instance the series of « Christ and the Apostles » in the Albertina (*Œuvre*. Nos 1325-1337), the « Baptism of Christ » in the Louvre (*Œuvre*. No 1343), the « Miraculous draught of fishes » in the Museum at Weimar (*Œuvre*. No 1344) and the « Christ on the Cross » in the Boymans Museum at Rotterdam (*Œuvre*. No 1345). Sometimes he painted the engravers' models in grisaille on panel. But whether they were painted or drawn by himself or his pupils, he made a practice of altering his compositions with a view to the effect to be produced by the engraving, which he considered should be different from that produced by his pictures. A special place must be assigned to the drawings made to be engraved on wood by Christoffel Jegher; they are nine in number and most of them represent slightly altered versions of subjects painted by Rubens. The master's pencil never produced anything more perfect. One of them, an absolute master-piece, is the « Conversation à la mode », lately in the collection of Sir Charles Robinson in London. Rubens also made drawings for sculptors; of these we know the vault of the Lady chapel in the church of the Jesuits at Antwerp, and a plan for an altar, both of which are in the Albertina.

The second division consists of studies, which are of two kinds: those which Rubens made after the works of other masters, and those he made for his own pictures. He drew a great deal in Italy, and we have his studies after Michael Angelo, among others the admirable series of the prophets; after Raphael, Lionardo da Vinci, Paolo Veronese, Pordenone, Primaticcio, Giulio Romano and Titian. All these drawings are carefully made, and several are master-pieces. Of his studies from the antique, all that remains is a few series of heads of emperors and other famous persons, drawn on a small scale with the pen after cameos. But we know that he made more important works of this kind, such as the heads of Greek and Roman emperors, generals and philosophers, two of which we know in grisaille, the statues and antiques that appear in Philip Rubens's *Electorum libri II* and the drawings of cameos which we know from the engravings.

Drawings of yet another kind are attributed to Rubens; collections of figures which he executed as models for his pupils and which were engraved on copper at his expense or the expense of his publishers. We know four of these. The first and the best known is that engraved by Paul Pontius and published first by Peter van Avont and afterwards by Alexander Voet (*Œuvre*. No 1229). The title-page is a niche in front of which hangs an ox-hide bearing the words: *Petrus Paulus Rubbens delineavit*, and the series comprises 19 plates. Three of them are studies of eyes, ears, parts of the head, entire heads, hands and feet; eight of figures without skin; three of different heads; two of heads of animals, and three after the antique. Several of the heads appearing in this album may be recognised in Rubens's works, such as the head

of the daughter of Herodias in « Herod's feast » (*Œuvre*. N° 242), the old woman in one of the « Processions of Silenus » (*Œuvre*. N° 676), one of the heads in the study of the four negros (*Œuvre*. N° 858), an old man with a long beard in the « Woman taken in adultery » (*Œuvre*. N° 256) and several others. One of the studies is a reproduction of part of the « Cattle-shed in snow » (*Œuvre*. N° 1173); another gives three of the cows that appear in two of his landscapes, and two of the studies after the antique he used for pictures. It is possible that Rubens made drawings of the kind that appear in this album, for his pupils, like that representing the three cows, which is the property of the Duke of Devonshire. Probably the engravings in Pontius's collection were made after drawings by Rubens, but it is not a necessary conclusion that he had them engraved and collected into an album of models.

Another collection of drawings attributed to Rubens was published by Pierre Aveline (Paris, Charles Antoine Jombert, 1773, 4°). It consists of 44 plates and a French text, translated, it is affirmed, from a Latin text composed by Rubens. The drawings, like the text, are attributed to Rubens without the slightest foundation.

The same may be said of a volume of plates entitled : *Diversche Figuren wt de Academie int licht gebracht door Peeter de Jode, plaetsnyder van Antwerpen* (1629, fol.). The work consists of 24 plates without text; the name of Rubens is not mentioned, but it is engraved on a later proof of one of the plates representing three angels hovering in the heights and carrying a cornucopia. This sheet appeared separately, and to enhance its value the proprietor had the master's name engraved on it.

A fourth album is mentioned, containing 19 plates all representing the human figure and engraved by Nicolas Lauwers, Cornelis Galle and Peter De Jode. The name of Rubens appears on the first plate, but none of the drawings are his work.

His most interesting studies are those he made for his own pictures. It is true that Rubens was not in the habit of making drawings in preparing his compositions, but usually painted his sketches; sometimes, however, he drew more or less extensive fragments before putting them in colour. For some of his creations he made a considerable number of these drawings; for the « Fall of the Damned », for instance, in the Pinakothek at Munich, and for the « Conversation à la mode »; he made pen-drawings of some ten lions, which he used in his « Daniel » and his « Marriage of Marie de Medici at Lyons »; of a number of shepherdesses for the « Adoration of the Kings » in the Museum at Rouen, and for all the women's heads in the « Miracle of St Ildefonso ».

It often happened that he made pen or chalk drawings of the sitters for his portraits, and these are generally master-pieces of matchless breadth and sureness of touch, of profound and powerful life. No one but Rubens could have made anything quite so perfect as the portraits of the Duke of Buckingham, Susanna Fourment, the Marquis de Leganes, the Infanta's chamber-maid and Nicolas Rubens, which are all in the Albertina, and of Marie de Medici and the artist himself, which are in the Louvre.

How or to whom all these drawings were sold in 1657 we do not know. Some were probably bought by the banker Jabach of Cologne, and passed in 1671 with the rest of his collection to the king of France and afterwards to the Louvre. The choicest became the property of Duke Albert of Saxe-Teschen, the founder of the Albertina. He had married the

daughter of the Empress Maria Teresa, the Archduchess Christina, who was governor of these provinces from 1780 to 1790. During these ten years he lived at Brussels with his wife and began to get together his magnificent collection. He must have had the good fortune to lay his hand on a store of drawings by Rubens which had till then remained intact. Indeed, it is worth noticing that the Albertina alone can show a large number of portraits on which the name of the sitter has been written in an untrained hand. The writing can only be that of a collaborator

or servant of the artist, possibly Jacob Moermans, who directed the sale of the effects. Many of the drawings are now scattered, and were so before the day of the sale. Of those that appear under the master's name in public or private collections as many are spurious as genuine.



RUBENS'S MORTUARY CHAPEL.

THE MORTUARY CHAPEL

Some days before his death Rubens had expressed to his wife and children a desire that a mortuary chapel should be built in his parish church of St James, to provide a burying-place for himself and his descendants, « if they held him worthy of such a monument ». Above the altar was to be placed his picture of the Virgin with the Child Jesus and a number of saints, as well as a marble statue of the Virgin, carved by Lucas Faydherbe.

On the 29th November, 1641, the guardians of Rubens's infant children, his widow and his children who had reached their majority, approached the Magistrate of Antwerp for the purpose of obtaining his authorization to build

a mortuary chapel behind the choir of the church of St James. The authorization was granted them, and they paid 5000 florins to the vicar and churchwardens, who undertook for that sum to pay for the building, with the exception of the altar and the interior decoration, which were to remain at the charges of the widow and children. The widow and children also defrayed the cost of the masonry for the vault and the four windows, painted at their order with the arms of the deceased. On the 3rd November, 1643, the chapel was finished and the Maypole was set up there. In the course of the same month the body of Rubens, which till then had been lying in the family vault of the Fourments, was brought to the chapel.

When the altar was finished, the picture Rubens intended for it was put in position. It is still there. The figures form a close group. The Virgin is seated on the right on a seat with a high back which resembles the entrance to a green arbour. She is leaning forward, holding in her

arms the infant Jesus, who is giving his hand to be kissed by a cardinal kneeling before him. Behind the cardinal are three female saints and St George in full armour holding up a red banner; the dragon lies at his feet, with a fragment of the lance that has killed him in his neck. To the right is St Jerome with one knee on a lion; on the other knee is a book which an angel is helping to hold. In the cloudy sky hover four small angels bearing a palm and a crown of roses which they hold over Mary's head (*Œuvre*, No 207).

We must begin by dissipating the supposition that in this picture Rubens treated a subject that had any connection with the purpose of the chapel. The figures in it do not represent either his two wives or any other members of his family, in spite of persistent attempts to identify them. The infant Jesus alone has some resemblance to little Frans Rubens. The choice of saints was guided by no definite intention; it is not even possible to recognize some of them with any certainty. It is not known who the cardinal is who is kissing the hand of the Child. The first of the female saints, who has the expression of a penitent, wears a black skirt and some white linen that has slipped off her shoulders and leaves her bust almost completely unveiled; the vial of balm in her hand, her costume and the expression of her face hint that she is the repentant Magdalen. The second, whose head and neck are all that is visible, wears a crown of roses and may pass for St Rosalia; of the third we see only the head. There is no knowing what made the master choose these saints and no others, nor even what connection they have with each other and with the subject. It is



THE MADONNA WITH SAINTS
(Church of St James, Antwerp).

clear that the artist had no thought of giving unity to his work. The little Jesus is looking at his mother and taking no heed of the cardinal kneeling before him; the three women are equally without interest in the act of adoration that is taking place before them; the St George has the bellicose attitude of a warrior and raises his banner with a resolute and challenging air, and the behaviour of the St Jerome, who is lifting his arm with a violent movement and turning his head away from the central group, is still more passionate and wild. Rubens merely wished to paint a *Santa Conversazione*, a Madonna and saints. He chose the subject because it left him complete liberty in the choice of the persons in it, and he made free use of this liberty in grouping figures as different as possible from each other in character, his only thought being the effect he might draw from them from the pictorial point of view. His object was to perpetuate his memory, to give an example of his art as he understood it towards the end of his career; he aimed at creating a work unhampered by any accessory signification and nothing more than a piece of painting; and with one foot in the grave he produced a work of

genius, the highest expression of his mastery in the handling of the brush and his magic power over light and colour.

Not that the picture is exceptionally full of light or shows any great richness of colouring. On the contrary, it is all of one warm, dull tone, against which the most highly lighted parts are softly radiant, and a single brilliant point stands strongly out. The central point of the picture is the Cardinal kneeling before the infant Jesus ; his head is bathed in a glowing and transparent half-light, like a mysterious vapour, veiling the light and colour. Outwards from this point the light increases on all sides ; the heads of the three women grow brighter and brighter, glanced over, as they are, by a rose-coloured light like that of dawn. The nude flesh of the Magdalen becomes a firmer white ; the sun casts silvery spots on St George's armour and scatters over the steel in soft reflexions. But on the right the light is more intense on the plump and solid body of the child and the Virgin's face, which is a velvety red like the bloom on a peach. It shines still more strongly on the brown, almost roasted, flesh of St Jerome. At top and bottom it is reflected on the white and rich complexions of the angels. Behind St Jerome the light goes out in indefinite shadow.

The colour is treated in the same way as the light. The cardinal's hood is a tender scarlet, and the splendid tint shines softly in the half-light ; the colour becomes paler in the rich, fresh blue of the Virgin's drapery, which, like the red of the cardinal's cloak, shines in the half-light like an immense jewel ; it becomes more intense in the Magdalen's black skirt, and less brilliant in the duller red of St George's banner. It is as if the sweetness of the colours of heaven came from all sides to turn to solidity and strength on terrestrial objects.

It is the same with the figures. The central group is all grace, charm and sweetness ; the meditative face of the cardinal, the ideally beautiful countenance of Mary, the pleasant and virginal features of the two young women in the background and the small angels fluttering joyously in the air, all show the calm of happiness in thought and action ; the penitent Magdalen serves as a transition to the St George and the St Jerome, whose expression is emphatic and whose action is almost coarse.

Throughout we find gradation, progression, explosion ; throughout, the light vibrates, melts away, moves, flames and goes out ; throughout, the colour is born, shines softly, and grows dark, to gleam forth anew. In the half-light we find nothing but chromatic tones and shaded tints, movement and vibration. It is an image of the struggle between light and darkness ; between dull tones and brilliant tones, in which the manifold harmonies of living colour are revealed. Rubens cared nothing for the meaning of his subject nor the parts played by his characters ; he thought only of the light and the colour. They it is which carry on the action, give meaning to the work and form its unity. In this picture he continues and carries to its furthest extreme what he had begun fifteen years before in his « Adoration of the Kings » in the Museum at Antwerp : the common action, the reciprocal influence and the unity of tones and tints. But in the earlier work the light and colour sprang from a point in the centre and the effect diminished as it drew further away, while here the sweet radiance in the centre grows in intensity as it nears the edges. This is painting for painting's sake ; it lives of itself and sets itself no end but its own beauty, its own perfection. Nowhere better than in this work has

Rubens proved that he was not only the most dramatic of all painters, but also an incomparable colourist and a magician with the brush.

The picture was taken to Paris in 1794 and restored in 1801 to Antwerp, to be placed in the central school of the department of the two Nethes. On the 21st October, 1815, it was put back over the altar for which it had been painted.

The altar is a modest structure, consisting of two marble Corinthian columns bearing an entablature, above which is a niche containing the Mater Dolorosa carved by Faydherbe and designed by Rubens to crown the altar. Below the retable is a marble slab with the inscription : *Domina Helena Formentia vidua ac liberi Sacellum hoc Aramque ac Tabulam, Deiparæ cultui consecratum Memoriam Rubenianæ L. M. Poni Dedicari Curarunt.* (The lady widow Helena Fourment and the children have had this chapel, this altar and this picture erected and consecrated to the service of the Mother of God in memory of Rubens).

In the floor of the chapel is a large sepulchral stone, with this inscription :

D. O. M.

Petrus Paulus Rubenius Eques
 Joannis, hujus urbis senatoris,
 Filius steini Toparcha :
 Qui inter cæteras quibus ad miraculum
 Excelluit doctrinæ Historiæ priscæ,
 Omniumque bonarum Artium et Elegantiarum dotes
 Non sui tantum sæculi,
 Sed et omnis ævi
 Appelles dici meruit :
 Atque ad Regum Principumque virorum amicitias
 Gradum sibi fecit :
 A Philippo IV. Hispaniarum indiarumque Rege
 Inter sanctioris Concillii scribas adscitus,
 Et ad Carolum Magnæ Britanniæ Regem
 Anno M.DC.XXIX. delegatus,
 Pacis inter eosdem Principes mox initæ
 Fundamenta feliciter posuit.
 Obiit anno sal. M.DC.XL. XXX. May ætatis LXIV.

Hoc monumentum a Clarissimo Gevartio
 Olim Petro Paulo Rubenio consecratum
 A Posteris huc usque neglectum,
 Rubeniana stirpe Masculina jam inde extincta
 Hoc Anno M.DCC.LV. poni curavit
 R. D. Joannes Bapt. Jacobus De Parys,
 Hujus Insignis Ecclesiæ Canonicus
 Ex Matre et Avia Rubenia Nepos

R. I. P.

To God all good and all great. Peter Paul Rubens, knight, son of Jan, alderman of the city of Antwerp; lord of Steen, who, among the other gifts by which he marvellously excelled in the knowledge of ancient history and all other useful and elegant Arts, deserved also to be called the Apelles, not only of his own age but of all time, and made himself a pathway to the friendship of kings and princes: by Philip IV, king of Spain and the Indies, he was appointed one of the secretaries of the most venerable Council, and sent as ambassador to Charles, king of Great Britain in the year 1629, and laid with skill the foundations of the peace that was thereafter soon concluded between those Princes. He died in the year of our salvation 1640, on the 30th May, aged 64.

This epitaph formerly consecrated by the most renowned Gevartius to Peter Paul Rubens and up till now neglected by his descendants, has now, in the year 1755, when the male line of Rubens is extinct, been placed here by the Reverend Doctor Joannes Baptistus Jacobus de Parys, Canon of this illustrious church, a descendant of Rubens through his mother and grandmother.

May he rest in peace.

It follows from this epitaph that the text composed by Gevartius for the grave of his illustrious friend was not carved upon the stone. The tomb remained without an epitaph till 1755. Canon van Parijs, who placed the flagstone and had it engraved with the eulogy composed by Gevartius, also restored the altar; and, indeed, the tomb beneath the altar is adorned with eighteenth century sculptures. Several of Rubens's descendants were laid after him in the same tomb, more than twenty according to van Lerijs. When the grave was opened on the 23rd October, 1855, careful note was taken of the condition in which the vault then was, and an etching was made of it. Among the rare fragments of skeletons which were found scattered about the vault, there were none that could be recognized with certainty as belonging to the great artist. M. Frédéric Verachter, the keeper of the archives of the town, who gained access to Rubens's tomb on the 25th October and made most careful search there, stated that the only thing that could be recognized was the bottom of the ribbed coffin of hard wood, on which some fragments of skeletons were still lying (1).

In recent years the question has been debated whether the epitaph drawn up by Gevartius was or was not carved on the stone which was placed above Rubens's tomb in 1643. Hermann Riegel (2) decides it in the affirmative, because, as he says, de Piles and probably also Basan had read and copied the inscription before Canon van Parijs had it replaced. In that case van Parijs, out of pure presumption, appropriated the credit of having been the first to have carved on the tomb of his famous ancestor the epitaph that had been composed a century before, and unjustly accused the immediate descendants of neglecting their duty. Riegel supports this assertion with much warmth and a great display of documents, but it will not hold. Can it be admitted that a priest occupying a high dignity in St James's church can have removed a stone that was universally familiar and substituted another bearing the same epitaph, with the

(1) Manuscript note in the collection of M. Edm. Lombaerts.

(2) *Beiträge zur niederländischen Kunstgeschichte*, I, p. 213.

addition of a statement that there had never been a stone there with an inscription? It is inconceivable that the idea of so bare-faced a lie can ever have occurred to a reasonable being. There would have been a storm of protest.

A piece of evidence which proves that Rubens's tomb bore no epitaph before 1755 is that the *Grand théâtre sacré du duché de Brabant*, published in 1729, which gives the principal inscriptions on the tombs in St James's church, makes no mention of Rubens. It only quotes the epitaph still to be seen in the same chapel on the monument erected to Albert Rubens and his wife Clara del Monte.

The truth is that the epitaph composed by Gevartius was well known in Antwerp, though it was not carved on the tomb. Philip Rubens had quoted it in the *Vita* and had communicated it to de Piles. The latter, reproducing it in his turn, had stated that it might be read in the church of St James's in which he had never once set foot. He had seen it only in a manuscript that had been sent him from Antwerp. Later writers who took the epitaph from de Piles did not trouble to test the truth of his statement as to where it was to be seen. It is true that Riegel does not acknowledge the *Vita* as the work of Rubens's nephew and maintains the astounding opinion that de Piles's biography is earlier than the *Vita* and that the latter is an abridgment of it. There is no need to pause to refute the dicta of Riegel, after the publication of the letters exchanged between Philip Rubens, M. Picard and the French biographer, in which Rubens's nephew declares in so many words that he had sent his biographical notice to a French gentleman, and de Piles, on his side, acknowledges the receipt of it.

While the feebleness of Riegel's arguments is clear at first sight, a document relating to the epitaph produced by Génard offers more serious difficulty (1). In a copy of the *Grand théâtre sacré du duché de Brabant* by Le Roy, which was bought by the Antwerp scholar for the archives of the town, he found a drawing representing a monument intended for Rubens's chapel and inscribed with Gevartius's epitaph on a marble slab. Above the slab was a painted portrait of Rubens, supported by two children blowing the trump of Fame; beside the monumental stone were two satyrs kneeling on the tomb, in front of which hung a curtain



PLAN FOR A MONUMENT IN RUBENS'S MORTUARY CHAPEL.
After a drawing by an artist unknown.

(1) P. GÉNARD: *La première épitaphe de Rubens* (*Bulletin-Rubens*, IV, 260).

bearing the arms of Rubens and Helena Fourment. The whole monument is in the style of the Rubens period and is not without artistic value. It is intercalated in Le Roy's book without any note relating to its erection or to its disappearance. M. Génard did not doubt that it had been in existence in the Rubens chapel, opposite the monument put up in 1657 to Albert Rubens. But no one ever saw it there, or at any rate mentioned it; nobody knew of its disappearance, and nobody knows when nor why it was removed. Mols, who knew the mortuary chapel well before 1755, and quotes at full length every fact and every document relating to Rubens that came to his knowledge, could not have failed to remark on the disappearance of the monument; but he says not a word of it.

We are convinced that the monument never existed. It is quite possible — and the drawing found in the copy of Le Roy's book belonging to the archives of the city of Antwerp makes it probable — that there was a project for a richly decorated monument on which Gevartius's epitaph was to have been engraved, and that the drawing published by M. Génard was executed after his plan, which was subsequently abandoned. I may add that it is quite possible that Gevartius's epitaph had not been intended to be engraved on a stone laid among the flagstones in the floor of the chapel, but on a monument to be erected there. In that case, the fact that the monument was not constructed would explain the omission of the epitaph.

A remarkable point is that Gevartius's text makes Rubens 64, when in reality he had not completed his sixty-third year on the day of his death. The error in the date evidently comes from a slip of the pen or a mistake in arithmetic. The *Vita*, which is the earliest and most trustworthy authority on all that concerns the biography of the master, expressly states that he was born in 1577 and died in 1640; but it makes the same mistake in declaring that he was 64 years old.

CONCLUSION.

Rubens was buried at the foot of his last master-piece. It is not his loftiest nor his most characteristic work, but it was that in which he was bound of necessity to end, considering the direction taken by his genius since his artistic emancipation. He had begun by regarding the world in its reality and its full vigour. In love with life and humanity and believing in both, he had expressed in brilliant fashion this faith and this love: he was the poet of health, of warm red blood, which he set flowing through every vein and glowing at every pore. To dream, with him, was to sleep. He sang the song of action, because action alone is healthy and real.

He was happy. The present and the picture were all smiles for him. His body was healthy and his mind powerful; the world had heaped its favours upon him, and genius had refused him none of its gifts. He was one of the spoiled children of fortune, such as are born only once in a century, or once in the whole life of a nation. It was told him, sung to him in every tone; he knew it, he felt it; his heart overflowed with exuberance of joy and his creations are the offspring of this conscious joy and confidence in himself, the hymn he chanted in his gratitude in honour of nature, as he conceived her, as she revealed herself to him. The human drama, strife and suffering, appeared to him as the expression of the sovereign might; the tension of muscles and nerves, shouts of laughter and cries of despair, the brutality of the



THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS
(Pinakothek, Munich)

having the name of Albert and Ernest Fourment. The whole monument is in the style of the French period but is not without artistic value. It is intercalated in Le Roy's book without any acknowledgment of its authorship or of its disappearance. M. Génard did not doubt that it had been an addition to the *Statues* placed opposite the monument put up in 1657 to Albert Rubens. But no one from Le Roy's library or at any date mentioned it; nobody knew of its disappearance, and nobody knows today nor why it was removed. Moïse, who knew the history of the *Statues* had seen the monument, would not have failed to remark on the disappearance of the monument; but he says not a word of it.

It is not impossible that the monument never existed. It is quite possible that the drawing found in the copy of Le Roy's book belonging to the archives of the City of Rouen makes a mistake. It may have been a project for a relief decorated monument on which Gevartius's name was to have been engraved, and that the drawing published by M. Génard was executed and set on stone which was subsequently abandoned. I may add that it is quite possible that Gevartius's epitaph had not been intended to be engraved on a stone laid among the flagstones at the base of the Chapel, but on a monument to be erected there. In that case, the fact that the monument was not constructed would explain the omission of the epitaph.

A dangerous point is that Gevartius's text makes Kullens 64, when in reality he had not completed his sixty-third year on the day of his death. The error in the date evidently comes either from a slip of the pen or a mistake in arithmetic. The *Vita*, which is the earliest and most trustworthy authority on all that concerns the biography of the master, expounds upon his various lives of 1577 and died in 1640; but it makes the same mistake by describing him as being 64 years old.

CONCLUSION

Erasmus was looked at the foot of his bed as a philosopher in an old age, but he was a contemporary poet, not a philosopher, and it was that in which he was famous or successful in mind, considering the manner taken by his poems. Since his artistic sensibilities, he had begun by regarding the world as his enemy and his full enemy. He loved both life and humanity and believing in both, he was possessed of brilliant features. His faith was that love - he was the poet of health, of warm and honest which he set flowing through every vein and glowing at every pore. To dream, with the eyes to sleep. He sang, the song of action, because action alone is healthy and real.

He was happy. The present and the future were all smiles for him. His body was healthy and his mind powerful, the world had treated his favours upon him, and genius had refused him none of its gifts. He was one of the spoiled children of fortune, such as are born only once in a century, or once in the whole life of a nation. It was told him, sung to him in every voice he knew it felt it, his heart overflowed with exultance of joy and his creations are the utterance of this conscious joy and confidence in himself, the hymn he chanted in his gratitude to nature of nature, as she manifested her, as she revealed herself to him. The human voice, grief and suffering, appeared to him as the expression of the sovereign might, the source of pleasure and pain, shouts of laughter and cries of despair, the brutality of the

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executioner and the victim's tears of blood, the blow of the lion's paw, the neighing of horses, the roaring of tempests and the amorous sigh of the earth caressed by the rays of the sun translated, for him, the universal life, as he conceived it and as he saw it.

There came a time when he found the need of something more than the mere expression of his sensations in all their strength, and more than the mere representation of light and colour in their own brilliance. In the fire of his youthful passion, he had boldly cried out what was in his heart ; later, he felt the desire and the need to translate his impressions in a more personal manner, to put more of himself into their manifestation, and to pass from grand simplicity in art to the richest of complex expression. More and more he aimed at the adornment of his creations ; more and more he came to consider the world from the point of view of the painter, the colourist.

Till the last moment he remained the great dramatic artist, the epic poet, who creates men and sets them in motion ; but side by side with the psychic and emotional life of his characters, side by side with the substances of things, he was ever more and more attracted by their external aspect, their value as passages of colour, the light and rapid image of them as it gleams and is reflected in space. Sharply defined outlines disappear, leaving nothing in the painter's eye but the play of colours, the reflections of light and the vibration of the air. Reality is melted, volatilized, evaporated, and the artist throws his visions on the canvas in splendid harmonies, which he has seen come to birth, detach themselves from matter and float in space, harmonies which have wafted him with them into other spheres, into the world of his own creation which has now become his real world, his kingdom, the world of light and colour.



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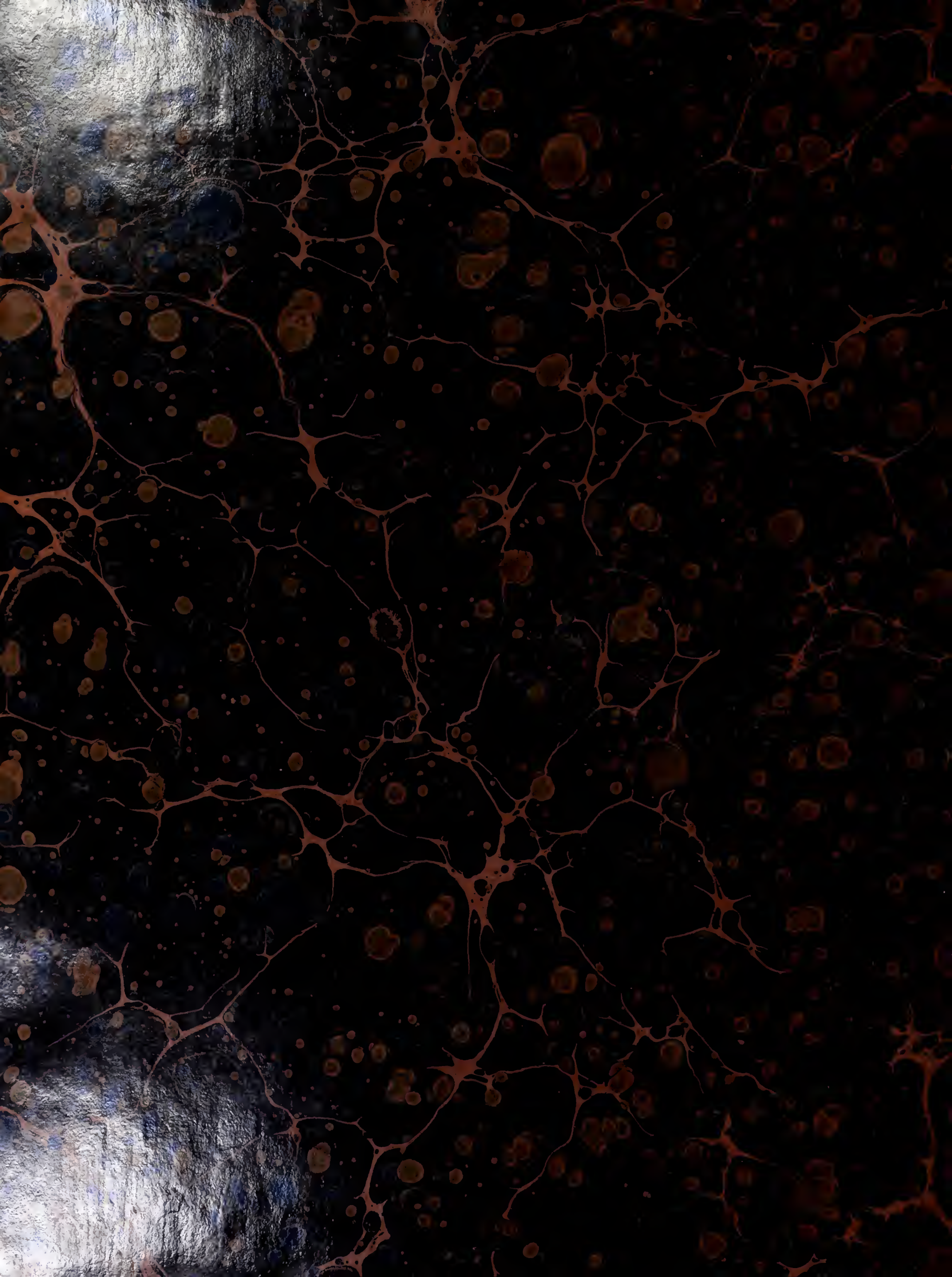
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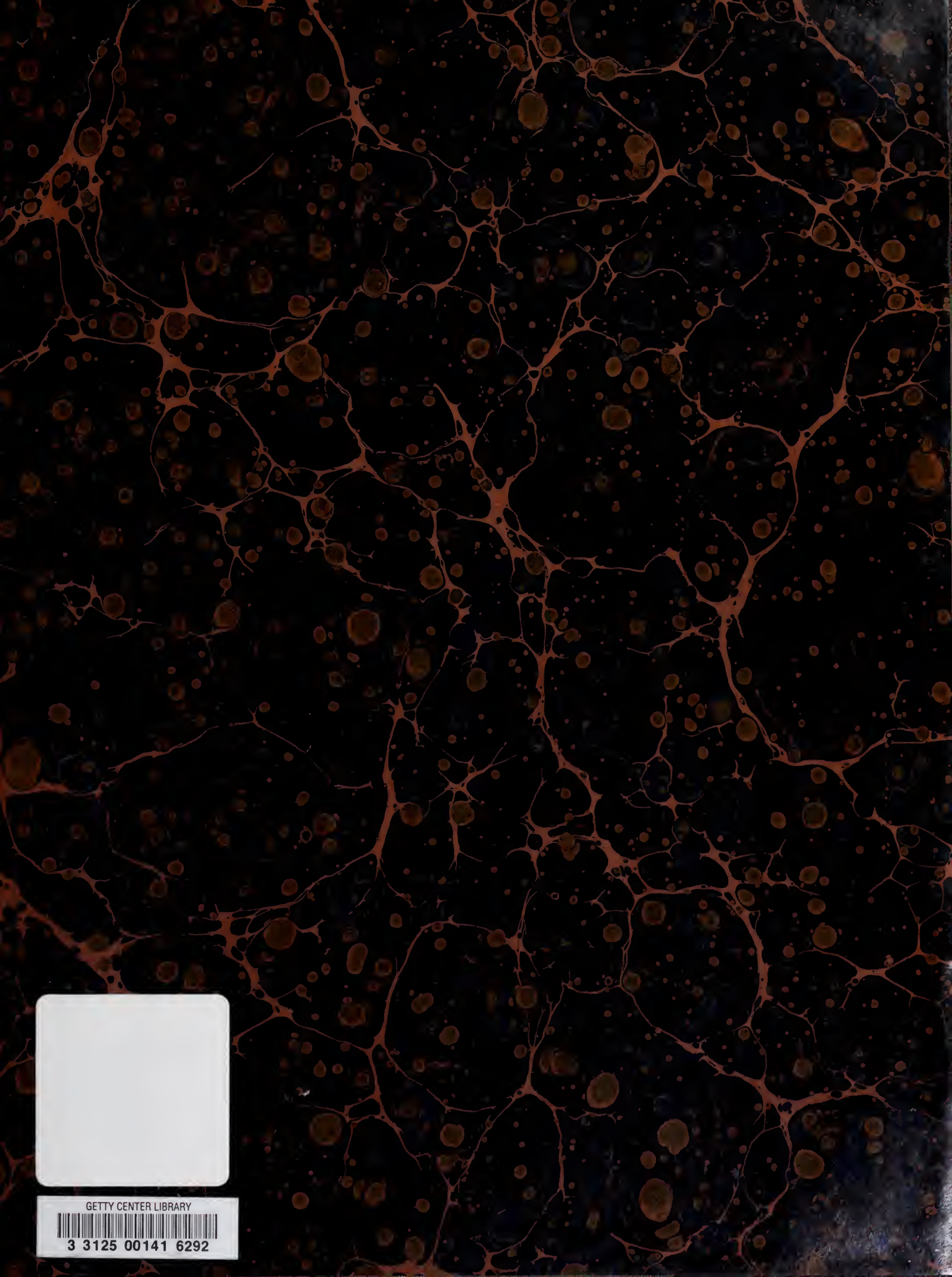
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