

In 1636 he painted "The Entombment," "The Resurrection," and "The Ascension," companion pictures to the "Crucifixion" painted for Prince Frederick Henry four years previously; "The Repose in Egypt," now at Aix-la-Chapelle; "The Ascension," in the Munich Pinakothek; "Samson blinded by the Philistines, with Delilah in Flight;" and "St. Paul," in the Vienna Belvidere, besides three portraits and ten etchings.

The finest etching of this period was "Ecce Homo," a marvellous composition, consisting of an immense number of figures admirably disposed. Our Lord is seen in front standing, surrounded by guards. His eyes are raised to heaven, his hands are manacled and clasped together, and on his head is the crown of thorns. "It is," says Mollert, "one of the painter's grandest works."

"The 'Ecce Homo,'" says Wilmot Buxton, "to say nothing of the splendor, the light and shade and richness of execution, has never been surpassed for dramatic expression; and we forgive the commonness of form and type, in the expression of touching pathos in the figure of the Saviour; nor would it be possible to express with greater intensity the terrible raging of the crowd, the ignobly servile and cruel supplications of the priests, or the anxious desire to please on the part of Pilate."

The following year, "The Lord of the Vineyard," now in the Hermitage, was painted, representing the master in a chamber flooded with light, listening to the complaints of the laborers; "Abraham

sending away Hagar and Ishmael;" and several portraits of himself and Saskia. Now she is seated at a table face to face with her husband, her blue eyes looking pleased and happy into his; now they walk hand in hand in a beautiful landscape.

In July, 1638, a second child gladdened the Rembrandt household, this time a daughter, named Cornelia after the artist's mother. In less than four weeks she passed out of Saskia's arms, leaving them again childless. Rembrandt's father had died six years before, and of his brothers and sisters, Gerrit, Machteld, and Cornelis were dead also. Still the painter worked on bravely, for did he not have the one inspiration that gave almost superhuman power to overcome obstacles, and made work a pleasure, — the love of his blue-eyed Saskia?

During this year some lawsuits occurred in the family over her property, and Rembrandt sued some of her relatives for slander, because they had insinuated that Saskia "has squandered her heritage in ornaments and ostentation." How little the Friesland people knew of the poetry of the painter's heart, which, for the love he bore Saskia, decked, with his rich imagination, every picture of her with more than royal necklaces, and covered her robes with priceless gems, because she was his idol!

This year, 1638, he painted the great picture "The Feast of Ahasuerus," or "The Wedding of Samson," now at Dresden, where at the middle of

the table sits the joyous queen, Esther or Delilah, robed in white silk, and richly jewelled, of course with Saskia's face; "Christ as a Gardener," long owned by the Prince of Hesse-Cassel, presented to Josephine at Malmaison, and bought by George IV. for Buckingham Palace, where it still remains; "Joseph telling his Dream;" "The Little Jewish Bride," representing St. Catherine and her wheel of martyrdom (the hair, the pearls, the face are all Saskia's), and other works.

The next year among his many superb portraits are three of his mother: one in Vienna, painted a year before her death, in a furred cloak, resting her folded hands on a staff; another with a red shawl on her head; and still another seated, with her hands joined; — both the latter in the Hermitage. He also finished "The Entombment" and "The Resurrection," begun three years before. He said, "These two pieces are now finished with much of study and of zeal, . . . because it is in these that I have taken care to express the utmost of naturalness and action; and this is the principal reason why I have been occupied so long on them." He urged that they be hung in a strong light, for he said, "A picture is not made to be smelt of. The odor of the colors is unhealthy."

He etched "The Death of the Virgin," "The Presentation," "Youth surprised by Death," and others.

The next year, 1640, a baby's voice was again heard in the handsome Rembrandt home, a little

daughter named, for the second time, Cornelia, but in a few short months the household was again stricken by death.

Rembrandt's activity was now marvellous. In the next two years he painted "Le Doreur," a portrait of his artist friend Domer, which was sold in 1865 for over thirty thousand dollars; it is also called "The Gilder," and is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; the portrait of an aged woman, purchased in 1868 for the Narishkine Collection, for eleven thousand dollars; "Woman with the Fan," of Buckingham Palace; the mysterious "Witch of Endor," Schönborn Gallery in 1867, for five thousand dollars; "The Carpenter's Household," now in the Louvre, representing Joseph at work, with the tender mother nursing her child; "The Salutation," in the Grosvenor Gallery; "Susannah at the Bath;" "The Offering of Manoah," at the Dresden Museum, showing Manoah and his wife prostrate before the altar, from which an angel crowned with flowers is ascending; a magnificent portrait of himself at thirty, in the National Gallery, in a black cap and fur robe, his arms crossed on a window-sill; sixteen fine etchings, among them three lion-hunts, the preacher Anslo and his wife seated at a book-laden table; several exquisite portraits of ladies, and two of the beloved Saskia: one is full of life and health, with the sweetest expression, and carefully finished; the other, in 1642, is richly dressed, but the face is delicate and dreamy, like that of

one who may have received a message from the unseen world.

Professor Mollett says of these, "The first represents Saskia in all the freshness of her beauty, seen through the prism of love and art; in her rich dress, fresh color, and bright smile, bearing a strong resemblance to the Saskia on her husband's knee. It is difficult to imagine a more charming and amiable face, or a portrait more happy in color and expression. The work is very carefully finished without being minute, the tone profound, the touch broad and melting. No greater contrast can be conceived to this picture bathed in light, radiant with happiness and health, than the 'Saskia' of Antwerp. This portrait has an indefinable charm. The very soul of the painter seems to have entered into the picture, to which a melancholy interest is attached. It bears the same date as the year of Saskia's death, 1642. The face no longer shows the serene beauty of youth and strength, but its etherealized and delicate features have a thoughtful and dreamy expression. It was probably painted from memory, after Saskia's death."

In September, 1641, a son was born to Saskia, Titus, named for her sister Titia van Ulenburgh. The latter died the same year. On the 19th of the next June, Saskia was buried from the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam, leaving her son, not a year old, and her husband, to whom her loss was irreparable.

This year he had completed his greatest work, "The Night Watch," now in the Amsterdam Museum, and stood at the very zenith of his fame. From this time, while he did much remarkable work, he seems like a man on a mountain top, looking on one side to sweet meadows filled with flowers and sunlight, and on the other to a desolate landscape over which a clouded sun is setting. With Saskia died the best of Rembrandt. Before her death he had painted various pictures of himself, all joyous, even fantastic, sometimes as a warrior, sometimes with jewelled robes and courtly attire. Now for five years he made no portrait of himself, and then one simple and stern, like a man who lives and does his work because he must.

"The Night Watch," or the "Sortie of the Banning Cock Company," represents Captain Frans Banning Cock's company of arquebusiers emerging from their guild-house on the Singel. Amicis says of it, "It is more than a picture; it is a spectacle, and an amazing one. All the French critics, to express the effect which it produces, make use of the phrase, '*C'est écrasant!*' ('It is overpowering!') A great crowd of human figures, a great light, a great darkness — at the first glance this is what strikes you, and for a moment you know not where to fix your eyes in order to comprehend that grand and splendid confusion.

"There are officers, halberdiers, boys running, arquebusiers loading and firing, youths beating drums, people bowing, talking, calling out, gestic-

ulating — all dressed in different costumes, with round hats, pointed hats, plumes, casques, morions, iron gorgets, linen collars, doublets embroidered with gold, great boots, stockings of all colors, arms of every form; and all this tumultuous and glittering throng start out from the dark background of the picture and advance towards the spectator.

“The two first personages are Frans Banning Cock, Lord of Furmerland and Ilpendam, captain of the company, and his lieutenant, Willem van Ruijtenberg, Lord of Vlaardingen, the two marching side by side. The only figures that are in full light are this lieutenant, dressed in a doublet of buffalo-hide, with gold ornaments, scarf, gorget, and white plume, with high boots; and a girl who comes behind, with blond hair ornamented with pearls, and a yellow satin dress; all the other figures are in deep shadow, excepting the heads, which are illuminated. By what light? Here is the enigma. Is it the light of the sun? or of the moon? or of the torches?

“There are gleams of gold and silver, moon-light, colored reflections, fiery lights; personages which, like the girl with blond tresses, seem to shine by a light of their own; faces that seem lighted by the fire of a conflagration; dazzling scintillations, shadows, twilight, and deep darkness, all are there, harmonized and contrasted with marvellous boldness and insuperable art. . . . In spite of censure, defects, conflicting judgments, it

has been there for two centuries triumphant and glorious; and the more you look at it, the more it is alive and glowing; and, even seen only at a glance, it remains forever in the memory, with all its mystery and splendor, like a stupendous vision.”

Charles Blanc says of the picture: “To tell the truth, this is only a dream of night, and no one can decide what the light is that falls on the groups of figures. It is neither the light of the sun nor of the moon, nor does it come from torches; it is rather the light from the genius of Rembrandt.”

The home of the artist at that time, of brick and cut stone, four stories high, on one of the quays of the river Amstel, must have been most attractive and happy until the death of Saskia.

Says Mr. Sweetser: “The house still stands, and, by the aid of an existing legal inventory (dated 1656), we can even refurnish it as it was in the days of Rembrandt. Entering the vestibule, we find the flagstone paving covered with fir-wood, with black-cushioned Spanish chairs for those who wait, and to amuse their leisure several busts and twenty-four paintings — four each by Brouwer and Lievens, the rest mostly by Rembrandt.

“The ante-chamber, or saloon, was a large room furnished with seven Spanish chairs upholstered in green velvet, a great walnut table covered with Tournay cloth, an ebony-framed mirror, and a marble wine-cooler. The walls were covered with thirty-nine pictures, many of which were in massive and elegant frames. There were religious

scenes, landscapes, architectural sketches, works of Pinas, Brouwer, Lucas van Leyden, and other Dutch masters; sixteen pictures by Rembrandt; and costly paintings by Palma Vecchio, Bassano, and Raphael.

"The next room was a perfect little museum of art, containing a profusion of the master's pictures, with rare works of Van Leyden, Van Dyck, Aartgen, Parsellis, Seghers, and copies from Annibale Caracci. The oaken press and other furnishings indicated that the marvellous etchings of our artist were engraved and printed here.

"The next saloon was the gem of the establishment, and was equipped with a great mirror, an oaken table with an embroidered cloth, six chairs with blue coverings, a bed with blue hangings, a cedar-wood wardrobe, and a chest of the same wood. The walls even here showed the profound artistic taste of the occupant, for they were overlaid with twenty-three pictures by Aartgen, Lievens, Seghers, and other northern painters; The 'Concordi,' 'Resurrection,' and 'Ecce Homo' of Rembrandt; a Madonna by Raphael; and Giorgione's great picture of 'The Samaritan.'

"On the next floor the master had his studio and museum. The great art-chamber contained materials for weeks of study; the walls were covered with rich and costly *bric-à-brac* — statuettes in marble, porcelain, and plaster; the Roman emperors; busts of Homer, Aristotle, and Socrates; Chinese and Japanese porcelains and drawings; Venetian glass; casts from nature; curious weapons and

armor, with a shield attributed to Quentin Matsys; minerals, plants, stuffed birds, and shells; rare fans, globes, and books. Another feature was a noble collection of designs, studies, and engravings, filling sixty leather portfolios, and including specimens of the best works of the chief Italian, German, and Dutch artists and engravers.

To gain this beautiful collection of works of art, Rembrandt spared no money, paying eighty-six dollars for a single engraving of Lucas van Leyden's, and fourteen hundred florins for fourteen proofs from the same painter.

After Saskia died, the tide of fortune seemed to turn. Several artists who had studied in Italy returned to Holland, and popularized the Italian style, so that the works of Rembrandt seemed to fade somewhat from the public gaze. With pride and sorrow he went on painting, but he must have been deeply wounded.

In 1643 and '44, he painted "Bathsheba at the Bath." "The nude figure of Bathsheba," says Professor Mollett, "stands out in a dazzling effect of light from a background of warm, confused shadows. The figure is not beautiful to a sculptor's eye, nor in the Italian style; but in animation, in the flesh color, and in the modelling it is superb. The harmony of the tints and of the general tone is very beautiful; tints of bronze and gold combine with shades of violet, brown, green, and yellow ochre into a warm, poetic, and mysterious gamut. 'This picture should be hung in a strong light, that the

eye may penetrate into the shadows,' said Rembrandt."

The other works of this time were the "Diana and Endymion" of the Liechtenstein Gallery at Vienna; "Philemon and Baucis;" the "Old Woman Weighing Gold," now in the Dresden Museum; "The Woman taken in Adultery," which brought thirty thousand dollars at public sale, and is now in the English National Gallery; a portrait of Jan Cornelis Sylvius, which was sold in 1872 for nearly eight thousand dollars, and the "Burgomaster Six" for six thousand dollars. The latter was the portrait of Jan Six, a young patrician, an enthusiastic student and poet, married to Margaret the daughter of the famous surgeon Dr. Tulp.

Other pictures in the next few years were "The Tribute Money;" the "Burgomaster Pancras giving a Collar of Pearls to his Wife," now owned by Queen Victoria; "Abraham receiving the Three Angels;" two paintings of the "Adoration of the Shepherds," one now in Munich and one in the National Gallery; "The Good Samaritan," and "The Pilgrims of Emmaus," now in the Louvre; and "The Peace of the Land," celebrating the peace of Westphalia, now in the Boymans Museum at Rotterdam. "It represents the enclosure of a fortress, the walls of which are visible in the right-hand background, where cannons are blazing and a group of soldiers fighting; the right-hand foreground is entirely occupied by a group of horsemen, of remarkable vigor and truth; on the left are two thrones, on

one of which leans a figure of Justice, clasping her hands as if in supplication. The centre, which is in the light, is occupied by a couchant lion growling, his one paw on a bundle of arrows, the symbol of the United Provinces. The lion is bound by two chains, the one attached to the thrones, the other fastened to an elevation, bearing on a shield the arms of Amsterdam, surrounded by the words, 'Soli Deo Gloria.'

"Samuel taught by his Mother," "Christ appearing to Mary," "The Prophetess Anna," "Jesus blessing Little Children," purchased for the National Gallery for thirty-five thousand dollars;—"The Bather," in the National Gallery, of which Landseer says: "It is the most artful thing ever done in painting, and the most unsophisticated;" a likeness of Rembrandt's son Titus, now twelve years old, were his next works. Fifty-seven etchings were made between 1649 and 1655, the most celebrated being the "Hundred-Guilder Print," or "Jesus healing the Sick."

"The subject of this etching is taken from the words, 'And Jesus went about all Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.' The serene and calm figure of Jesus stands out from the shadow of the background, preaching to the people around him. By a superb antithesis, the Pharisees and Sadducees, the priests and the curious and unbelieving, are standing on Christ's right hand, bathed in light,

while from the shadows that envelop the left side of the picture are coming the sick, the possessed, and unfortunates of all kinds. The composition is full of feeling, drawn and executed with a rare genius, the details revealing a world of expression and character: the lights and shadows, disposed in large masses, are of wonderful softness. The etching, commenced with aqua-fortis, is finished with the dry point, the silvery neutral tints of Christ's robe and the soft shadows being produced in this manner."

Frederick Wedmore says in his "Masters of Genre-Painting," "I should be thankful for the 'Hundred-Guilder Print,' were it only because of the half-dozen lines in which Rembrandt has etched one figure, to me the central one, a tall man, old and spare, and a little bent, with drooped arms, and hands clasped together in gesture of mild awe and gently felt surprise, as of one from whose slackened vitality the power of *great* surprise or of *very* keen interest has forever gone. On his face there is the record of much pain, of sufferings not only his own, not only of the body, but of saddening experiences which have left him quelled and forever grave."

The name arose from the fact that a Roman merchant gave Rembrandt for one engraving seven Marc Antonio engravings, which were valued at a hundred guilders, and the artist would never sell any of these pictures below this price. Only eight impressions of the first plate are in existence; two

are in the British Museum, one is in Paris, one in Amsterdam, one in Vienna, one in the collection of the Duke of Buccleuch, one in Mr. Holford's, and one owned by M. Eugene Dutuit of Rouen, sold in 1867 for about six thousand dollars.

When Saskia died, she left her property — she had brought Rembrandt forty thousand florins — to her infant son Titus, with the condition that her husband should have the use of the money until his death or his second marriage. If the boy died, Rembrandt was to receive the whole estate, save in case of a second marriage, when half should go to her sister.

Already Saskia's friends saw the money passing away from the artist, and they brought suits for Titus's sake, to recover it. Finally, in 1656, he transferred his house and land to Titus, with the privilege of remaining there during the pleasure of Saskia's relatives.

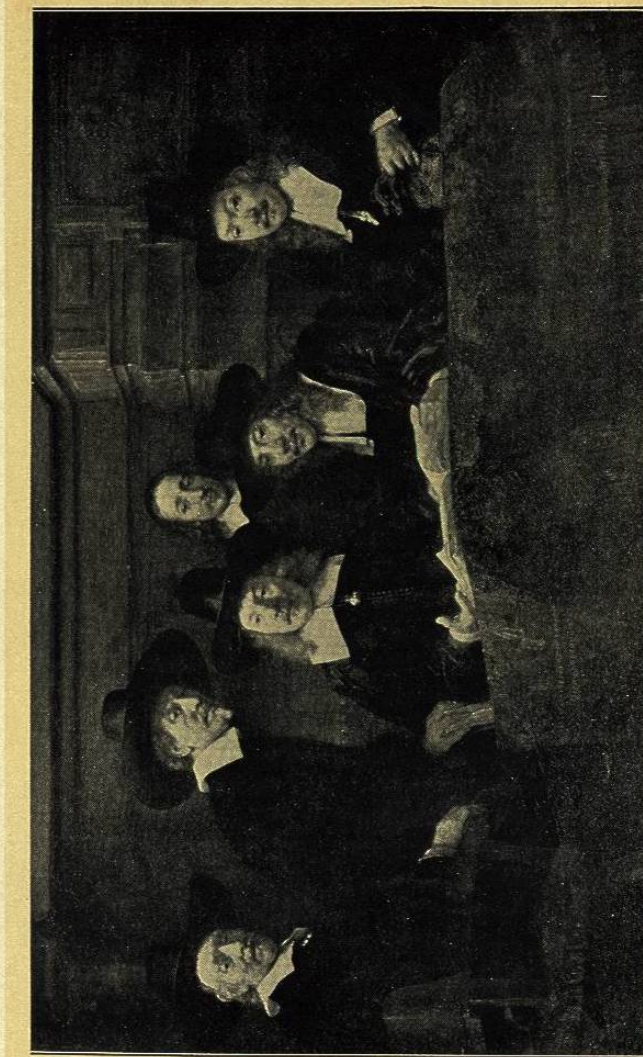
Matters did not improve, and the following year all the rich collection of art works and household goods were sold by auction to meet the demands of creditors. The next year his engravings and designs were sold in the same way, and the year following the house was disposed of, Rembrandt being allowed to remove two stoves only and some screens. These must have been bitter days for the once happy artist. It was fortunate that Saskia did not live to see such a direful change.

During all the struggle and disgrace Rembrandt kept on working. In 1656 and '57 he painted for

the Surgeons' Guild, a large picture, "Lesson on Anatomy of Joan Deyman," containing the portraits of nine celebrated doctors; "St. John the Baptist Preaching," a canvas with over one hundred small figures; "The Adoration of the Magi," now in Buckingham Palace and greatly admired; "Joseph accused by Potiphar's Wife," and "Jacob blessing Ephraim and Manasseh."

Professor Mollett says that the "Jacob" "belongs as much to all times and all nations as the masterpieces of Greek sculpture. This touching scene, which is simply rendered with all the power of Rembrandt's art, represents the aged patriarch extending his hands, which Joseph is guiding, towards the boys, who are kneeling before him. Behind the bed stands their mother, Asenath, with clasped hands. The light falling from behind Jacob, on the left, leaves his face in the shade. His head is covered by a yellowish cap, bordered with clear-colored fur; the sleeve of the right arm is of a beautiful gray; the hand painted with large, broad touches. The bed is covered with a sheet and a counterpane of pale red and fawn color.

"Joseph wears a turban, and his wife a high cap, long veil, and robe of gray and fawn-colored brown. The fair child has a yellow vest; and his head, bright with reflected lights, is very fine in tone, and of extreme delicacy. We see the colors here employed are gray and fawn-colored brown, which, in the highest notes, only reach subdued red or



THE SYNDICS OF THE GUILD OF THE DRAPERS.

(The Staalmeesters)

In the Ryksmuseum, Amsterdam. Painting from the year 1661, by Rembrandt van Ryn.