

### A GREAT BENEFACTOR

A great deal has been written about Alfred Felton and his magnificent bequest to the people of Victoria, but the intimate story of the shy, retiring man, who lived in two rooms at the Esplanade Hotel, St. Kilda, and had whiting for breakfast and chicken for dinner three hundred and sixty-five days of the year, has never been better told than in that charming little book "Flinders Lane" by Russell Grimwade. Sir Russell gives us the inside story of those little sidelights on the character of this great benefactor which bring him to life and which will keep his memory alive for future generations.

The reputation of the National Gallery of Victoria today as one of the great Collections in the British Empire, rests almost entirely on the works that have been presented through the Bequest. Since Felton's death in 1904 works of art to the value of £833,400 have been presented to the Gallery and a similar sum has gone to charitable institutions throughout the State — a lasting memorial to the imaginative and far-seeing Englishman who made Victoria his home. And the Bequest still goes on.

Space does not allow for a detailed list of the great works that have come our way through the Bequest, but the van Eyck "Madonna and Child", the series of Blake Drawings, van Dyck's "Countess of Southampton", the Tiepolo, the Poussin, the Florentine Portrait of a Lady and the group of French Impressionists, to name a few, have done much to put us on the map of the art world.

We are fast approaching the time when the Bequest will have been in operation for half a century, and as 1950-51 will always be considered a memorial year in its history this issue of the Bulletin is devoted entirely to works of art that have found their way to these shores to "elevate and improve" the public taste of this country. During this period, thanks to the accumulated interest stored up during the war years we have been able to acquire a number of great works. Foremost of these is the Beit Rembrandt "Portrait of a Man" painted when the Dutch master was at the zenith of his powers (reproduction with notes in this issue). Next in importance is Constable's large "Study for a Boat Passing a Lock", a notable work and one of the great Constable "finds" in recent years, which has not yet arrived and which will be reviewed at a later date.

Other fine works include the "Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes" by the 18th century Italian painter Pittoni, a fine landscape by Salvator Rosa, the exquisite little drawing by Liotard and the recently acquired collection of drawings by one of the greatest English draughtsmen, Charles Keene.

This is a formidable list and one which any Gallery in the world would be proud to possess.

DARYL LINDSAY.

*The photograph reproduced at the head of this page shows Edward William Grimwade (right) telling a story to Alfred Felton. It is one of the few existing photographs of Mr. Felton and was taken by Norton Grimwade at "Harleston", Caulfield, in 1902, and is reproduced by courtesy of Felton, Grimwade and Duerdins Pty. Ltd., where it hangs in the Board Room.*



REMBRANDT VAN RIJN    PORTRAIT OF A MAN, 1667

*Oil on canvas, 40½ in. x 32¾ in.    Felton Bequest, 1951*

## REMBRANDT VAN RIJN (1606-1669)

## PORTRAIT OF A MAN

The "Portrait of a Man" is known to have been in English collections for well over one hundred years. The picture was in the possession of Lord Aylesford before 1836, from where it passed to Sir Otto Beit. It was sold to Melbourne by Sir Alfred Beit. Recorded in the standard literature on Rembrandt and exhibited at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1905 the portrait had nevertheless remained unknown to a wider public until its recent exhibition at the National Gallery in London where it was shown for several years. "Since then", writes Mr. McDonnell, "its fame has grown steadily".

Rembrandt holds a unique place among the great European portrait painters. Almost two-thirds of his work may be described as portraits, yet the greater part of these were not made in response to commissions and a considerable number of them are not even "likenesses" in the ordinary sense of the word, but imaginary portraits of biblical, mythological and historical characters, for which members of his family often sat as models. The use of the single bust, three-quarter or full-length figure was to Rembrandt an essential form of self-expression.

The "Portrait of a Man", no doubt executed on commission, belongs to the artist's late phase, famous for the group portrait of the Syndics of 1662, the later but undated Widener portraits, the Brunswick family group and others. The "Portrait of a Man" is one of the few very late works on which Rembrandt placed a date, 1667, and thus invaluable to the Rembrandt scholar as sure evidence of his latest manner.

In the late portraits Rembrandt's style became very quiet. He often used the full-on, frontal view, the greatest simplicity of pose. Yet the "Portrait of a Man" gains startling vitality from subtle adjustments of form and colour. The pyramidal composition which supports the head has been deprived of lifeless symmetry by the unequal slant given to the arms and the incomplete form of the right hand. The simple black mass of the garment contrasts tellingly with the white collar and the red curtain. Composition and "handling" combine to give prominence to the head. Framed by the open brushwork of the hair, and contrasted by the pure white of the flatly painted collar, the highly elaborated face shows the most intricate paint texture of any part of the picture. The broken strokes of impasto paint around the eyes enhance the aqueous clarity and stillness of the pupils. Around mouth and chin and in the magnificent reflected light on the right cheek the brushwork is open and flowing and allows the dark ground to shine through the glazes. The work reflects the painting experience of a long life and the vigour of an artist at the top of his powers.

This portrait is an interesting addition to the two Rembrandts already in the possession of the Gallery. The "Two Philosophers" with its grey shadows and pale colouring is a youthful work of the artist's formative stage. In the "Self-Portrait" of 1660 Rembrandt still adheres to the almost monochrome deep-brown tonality which is typical of his work of the fifties. The "Portrait of a Man" shows the return to greater brightness of colour, to contrasts of red, white and black which is characteristic for the whole of Dutch art of the sixteen-sixties. In a cooler tonality this same colour scheme may be observed in the "Portrait of a Lady" by Terborch in our collection. The contrast between the small miniature-like Terborch with its cool calm and the new Rembrandt with its warmth and vitality symbolizes the gulf which separated Rembrandt from the "Small Masters" of his period.

URSULA HOFF.

## LIOTARD'S LADY IN A TURKISH DRESS

The drawing by Jean Etienne Liotard (1702-1789), a Swiss-born artist who for the greater part of his life worked in Paris, is of particular interest since it is an example of the gradual change which led French 18th century art away from the Rococo to the classicism and naturalism of the 19th century.

The lady in the drawing is seated in a room, indicated as a Turkish interior by the grated window to the left. She reclines on a Turkish ottoman and is clad in Turkish dress: a patterned jacket and delicately striped trousers are worn over a dress of transparent white fabric. She is resting against an ermine-lined coat which partly covers her left arm. The head-dress, decorated with a feather, completes the exotic apparel.

The face, however, shows that the sitter is a European, probably a Parisian lady. The dress and surroundings are a piece of masquerade, of "turquerie", which, like "chinoiserie", was one of the favourite fashions of the playful Rococo period.

"Turqueries" were a favourite genre of Liotard's. Known as "Le Peintre Truc", Liotard had spent many years in Constantinople. He had grown a long beard which together with his Turkish dress and fur hat gave him an exotic and ferocious appearance, well designed to attract sitters from a fashionable society, yearning for ever new sensations.

The highly accomplished drawing with its gentle harmony of brownish-red, grey and white, its simple, restful line, its balance of quiet forms and delicate variety of tone, however, recalls none of the customary flourish and bravura of the Rococo style.

Liotard combined a love of exotics with a devotion to the meticulous realistic art of the Dutch "Small Masters" of the 17th century. He moreover was a devoted admirer of Rousseau's and had a romantic belief in "nature" and "the natural life". To Liotard, the exotic East conjured up dreams of a life, more colourful, less artificial, less conventional, in short, more "natural" than that of 18th century French society. The fashions of the East seemed to him to find most fitting expression in the truthful, naturalistic and meticulous style of a Dutch "Small Master".

Liotard's love of ordered arrangement, of restful horizontal lines, foreshadows the rise of the "classicist" style of the turn of the century. An example of Ingres' classicist treatment of a subject which has a certain similarity to Liotard's drawing may be found in our collection. Ingres' "Lady Jane Montagu" represents a "masquerade" too, only it is Graeco-Roman instead of Turkish. Ingres' more severely linear work yet reflects the love of exquisite craftsmanship and elaborate pattern which continues to remain part of the more naturalistic style of later 19th century French painters. The colourful exotic costume, now Turkish, now Spanish, also re-appears throughout the century in the work of Delacroix, Manet, Renoir and Matisse.

URSULA HOFF.



J. E. LIOTARD

A LADY IN TURKISH DRESS, READING

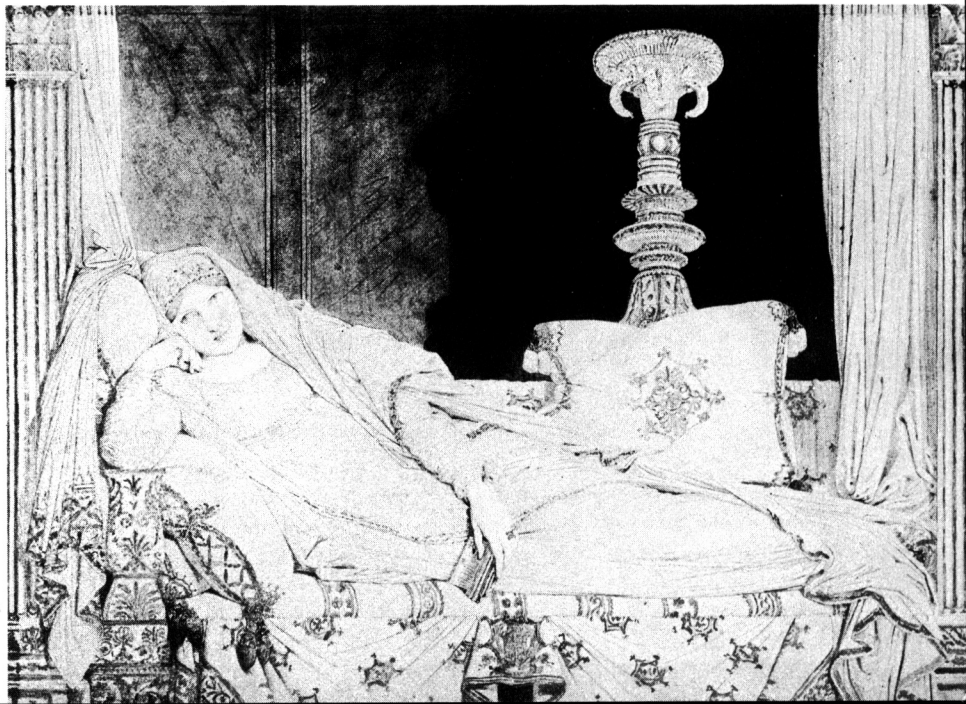
Chalk drawing in three colours, 6½ in. x 8¼ in.

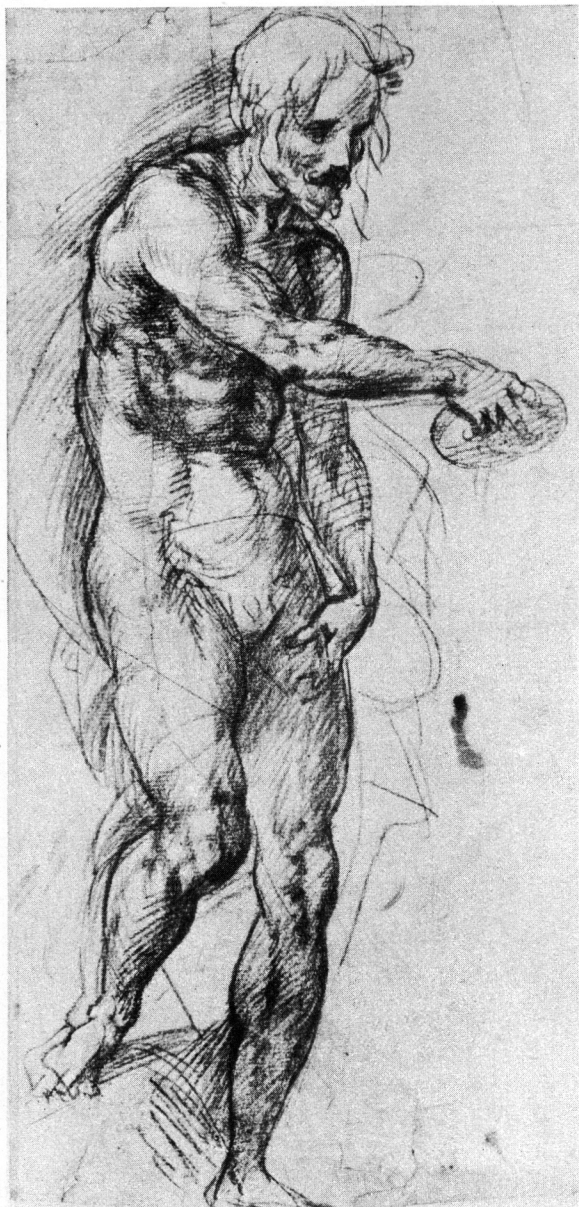
Felton Bequest 1951

J. A. D. INGRES LADY JANE MONTAGU, 1816

Pen and wash drawing, 16¼ in. x 21¼ in.

Felton Bequest, 1920





ANDREA DEL SARTO ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST  
Chalk drawing, 12 $\frac{3}{8}$  in. x 7 $\frac{7}{16}$  in.  
*Felton Bequest, 1936*

The two drawings, reproduced on this page, belong to a number of old master drawings, acquired in 1936 by the Felton Bequest from the famous collection of Henry Oppenheimer. The St. John is a study for a fresco of the "Baptism of Christ" painted in 1517 in the Chostro dello Scalzo in Florence. "The Elder" is a study for Rembrandt's painting of "Susannah and the Elders", 1647, in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin.

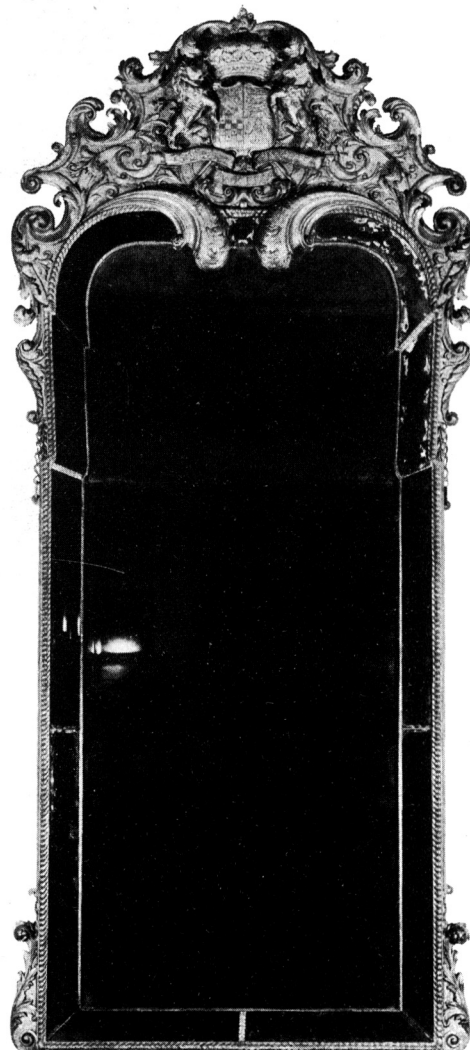


REMBRANDT VAN RIJN STUDY OF AN ELDER  
Pen drawing, 6 $\frac{1}{2}$  in. x 5 in. *Felton Bequest, 1936*

## WILLIAM AND MARY MIRROR

Height 10 ft. Felton Bequest 1950

This magnificent mirror was made for the Seventh Duke of Norfolk, whose arms it bears, and was at Norfolk House, St. James Square, until the building was demolished some years ago. It is a perfect example of the William and Mary period (1688-1702).



WILLIAM AND MARY MIRROR

English (1688-1702). Felton Bequest, 1950

## LIBRARY TABLE—

### MAHOGANY DOUBLE-SIDED

English 18th Century Felton Bequest 1949

A fine 18th century mahogany double-sided pedestal desk, with fluted and beaded frieze, the centre with sliding top enclosing a leather lined well, flanked with small drawers. Original drawer handles.

Dimensions: 4 ft. 9 in. wide; 2 ft. 10½ in. deep;  
2 ft. 9½ in. high when closed;  
2 ft. 6½ in. high when writing flap  
is down.



LIBRARY TABLE — MAHOGANY,  
DOUBLE-SIDED

English 18th century. Felton Bequest, 1949

RECENT ACQUISITIONS TO THE ART GALLERY INCLUDE:

OILS

Portrait of a Man .....	Rembrandt van Rijn .....	Felton Bequest
The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes .....	G. B. Pittoni .....	Felton Bequest
Pegase .....	Odilon Redon .....	Felton Bequest
Portrait of an Aborigine .....	G. B. Nerli .....	Purchased
Street Scene .....	G. B. Nerli .....	Purchased
Summer Holiday .....	Harold Greenhill .....	Purchased

DRAWINGS

Lady in Turkish Dress, Reading .....	J. E. Liotard .....	Felton Bequest
High Life in Venice .....	Thomas Rowlandson .....	Felton Bequest
Landscape .....	Thomas Gainsborough .....	Felton Bequest
The Crucifixion .....	Anthony van Dyck .....	Felton Bequest
Madonna appearing to St. John .....	Guercino .....	Felton Bequest
The Parlor .....	James Pryde .....	Felton Bequest
Nude, Resting .....	John Brack .....	Purchased
Head of a Girl .....	W. Holman Hunt .....	Purchased

GENEROUS DONATIONS TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY AND ART MUSEUM INCLUDE:

Five Etchings .....	D. S. Maclaughlan .....	Presented by P. & D. Colnaghi & Co. Ltd., London
Head of an Old Man .....	Victor Pasmore .....	Presented by the Contemporary Art Society, London
Two Lithographs .....	Thomas Hart Benton .....	Presented by Mr. J. P. Beveridge, Jnr.
Statue of draped female figure, marble, Greek; late archaic period .....		Presented by Mr. Tomas Harris, London
Pair of Cabinets, mahogany, and walnut veneer .....		Bequeathed by Mrs. E. C. Hake
Bureau, Marquetry, Dutch design, 19th century .....		Bequeathed by Mrs. E. C. Hake
Writing or Hall Table, Amboyne wood, 19th century .....		Bequeathed by Mrs. E. C. Hake

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*Front Cover* — REMBRANDT VAN RIJN, PORTRAIT OF A MAN DETAIL, *Felton Bequest*, 1951