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RENAISSANCE PANELLING FOUND NEAR GODALMING : SEE STORY

...battle at Messina, engraved by F. Huys after Brueghel the Elder, at the price of 2,300 marks. In another sale of the Friedrich August Collection Dr. Bierens de Haan acquired, for only 760 marks, the almost complete oeuvre of those artists who made engravings after Rubens's works, whilst a rather plain impression of the Rembrandt etching *St. Jerome in a Landscape* fetched 4,600 marks. Not only was the collector interested in the graphic art of the Netherlands; the Italian masters—Marcantonio Raimondi, Jacopo de Barbari, Annibale Carracci, Canaletto and Piranesi and others—and the French graphic art of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries are represented as well. There are also the rare landscape etchings by Claude Lorrain and portraits by Jean Morin and Robert Nanteuil. This summary would not be complete without mentioning the connoisseur's activity as an authority on two Dutch engravers: On the occasion of his eightieth birthday his friends presented him with the publication of his *Oeuvre gravé de Cornelis Cort, Graveur Hollandais* (1948); besides this he collected the material for an Oeuvre catalogue of the interesting, but as yet little known, Cornelis Bos.

Lot 154: Renaissance Panelling

I AM asked to try to establish any known information in respect of the recent provenance of the Renaissance panelling illustrated. It was found in a furniture store near Godalming, Surrey, and it is hoped that information can be supplied by a reader who may have seen it offered at a sale. There is evidence that it might even have been sold at public auction as far back as 1930. The lot number '154' is deeply stamped on the back. Meantime it has interesting points. The sockets and markings on the surviving pilaster on the right make it almost certain that the panelling formed the back of a ceremonial settle, possibly a magistrate's seat. The approximate date of 1550 is attributed to it on the grounds of style. This is confirmed by the inscription on the left and right panels: IMPERATORI CAROLO V HISPANIARUM

REGI, suggesting 'In honour of the Emperor Charles V, King of the Spains'. Also, the panels may well have been carved in the Low Countries during the Spanish occupation.

The subjects of the carvings are of some interest. The three heads in the medallions at the top are almost certainly portraits. It seems unlikely that the one on the right would be done almost full face, whereas the others are in profile, unless the carver was working from portraits of which these are cop-

ies. The cowl, the absence of head covering and of ornaments in the hands of the supporters, indicate this 'full face' portrait to be that of a clerical dignitary.

Left and right supporters are evidently intended to be galley slaves held by a belt to a ring, with limbs free. But it has been suggested that these figures derive from a misunderstood version of monkeys, a popular mediaeval theme. The figures in the lower panels on the left and right are water gods with aqueducts behind them (a copy of a southern design), and in the centre is the symbolic representation of Fortitude, in the standard mediaeval form of a woman carrying a broken pillar: perhaps to indicate the rebuilding of a town razed by conquerors.

The carver seems to have relied on his own resources for the mermen who support the lower cartouches on left and right. He has had difficulty about the position of the arms holding the torches, represented in two different positions both highly improbable. These mermen are fishing by torchlight with spear and net.

Fashion in American Collecting

THE time has passed when the swarm of European and American dealers and collectors combed Great Britain and the continent of Europe for great art treasures. Gone are the days when money, jewellery and pictures were allowed to flow freely from one continent to another, when currency and other restrictions were unheard of.

Until the great slump of the nineteen-thirties prices were fabulous. Gainsboroughs changed hands for \$300,000; early Italian paintings with plausible histories and names reached 500,000 without difficulty. For a reputation of great wealth it was essential to be in the exciting game of finding the finest paintings and paying the highest prices. But the great benefactors have gone. Their col-

lections adorn the walls of public institutions and Europe guards her art treasures more carefully.

Since 1930 American tastes have slowly changed. The 'New Deal' soaked the rich. There was less money about. Small houses became the vogue. The young in age and spirit no longer saw eye to eye with their parents. They demanded colour and light. The great architects led the way: under Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright walls crumbled, while glass and sunlight triumphed. The demand for tradition waned, and we witnessed a revolution in taste and spirit. The sun was the idol of the nineteen-thirties, and the rich ceased to transfer castles brick by brick from the 'Old Country'. English portraits, Dutch cabinet pictures, and the early Italians became more difficult to sell. Only those of the highest quality were in demand. The scholars who accepted the appointments of museum directors had to decide which pictures were worth adding to the great collections. The heyday of easy buying and selling was over.

The craving for colour, the desire to be up-to-date in taste opened the way for French paintings. First the Impressionists led the way. And here again it was the individual collector who acquired the great treasures of this school: Barnes in Philadelphia, Chester Dale in Washington, to mention only two names. In Philadelphia alone there are more than a hundred of the finest Renoirs, more than fifty of the greatest Cézannes, thirty Modiglianis. With great speed and foresight, the American collector secured the best paintings of this School for his country. He had been trained to pay high prices, and it was comparatively cheap to collect French paintings. Where before he had to spend a fortune to obtain one painting, he could now fill walls. The Impressionists decorated the walls wonderfully, while old French furniture enriched the rooms.

As the furnishing became more austere the fashion of decorating the walls followed. The post-Impressionists, Van Goghs and Gauguins, were now sought after, and prices overreached even those of the Italians in the good old times. Then Matisse, Braque, and



RESTORED FLAGONS : 'PEWTER' : FURTHER PRESERVATION

Modigliani followed, and in recent years came the Abstracts.

The American collector is now in the unique situation where he can demand the best and get it. He loves his friends to recognize his treasures immediately they cross the threshold. His Renoir, his Matisse, his Pissarro must be a typical one.

I think that we shall soon be faced with the problem which existed in 1927 with the Old Masters; first-class examples of French paintings are almost impossible to find. Prices soar; not only because the frightened European seeks refuge for his money in art treasures, but because there is a steadily growing demand from museums and collectors in America for obvious examples of French paintings. The few great living painters are old; their studios are empty. We shall experience the same glorious hunt for Braque, Matisse and Picasso in the nineteen-sixties as we witnessed the search for English portraits and early Italian works in the nineteen-twenties. So far Europe has created art and formed taste. But America, through her insatiable demand, dictates fashion.

Balmoral Centenary

A CENTURY ago Prince Albert purchased for the Crown the castle and estates of Balmoral on the Deeside in Aberdeenshire. The old castle, a mainly sixteenth-century structure, which had belonged to the Gordons and the Farquharsons, had been rented by the Queen from Sir Robert Gordon, the ambassador to Constantinople, for some years previously. But it was too small for the needs of a growing family, and a new building was erected on the spot, the Queen herself laying the foundation-stone in September, 1853. Designed very largely by the Prince himself, and built from granite quarried on the estate, Balmoral became the very essence of all that was good and bad in Victorian taste. Less pretentious than a

lot of 'Scottish Baronial' architecture, adorned with paintings by the Queen, the Prince and Sir Edwin Landseer, it was the scene of Victoria's happiest days. It has always retained the same felicitous connotation, and to-day, when the dictates of fashion are not as intolerant as they were a quarter of a century ago, we can see that the position of Balmoral in the history of taste has not been finally established.

A Delftware Monteith Bowl

A RISING from the article, 'Two Centuries of China as Decoration', in *The Connoisseur* Antique Dealers' Fair Number, I am reminded that Sir Hugh Blackett, Bart., has an important Delftware Monteith bowl, an illustration of which appears on this page.

Of silver form, the exterior is painted in blue monochrome with what appear to be figures of a Chinese pedlar and an itinerant fruit-seller. Each is seated leaning against his pack and basket of pomegranates respectively, in a conventional mock Chinese rocky landscape. The space between these figures, which appear one on each side of the bowl, is filled with bamboo, mock Chinese characters, foliage rockwork, trellis pattern and a curious design which can be compared only to the prongs of a fork. A wavy line follows the scallops and indentations of the rim, beneath which appear conventional clouds. The circular foot has a broad blue band round the upper part where it joins the body within two concentric rings. The base of the interior is painted with chrysanthemums within three concentric rings and below the scallops with a plain band with pendent leaves.

Professor F. H. Garner in his recently published *English Delftware* mentions (page 19): 'The punch bowls had their accessories, such as punch ladles and the monteith with its indented rim in which the stems of wine-glasses could be placed so that the bowls of the glasses were in cold water'.* The style of painting is analogous to that found on late-seventeenth-century examples of Lambeth delft, and is comparable, as can be seen from the illustration, to a mug (Pl. 45a) in the above-quoted book. The Monteith has always been in the present owners' family. It is 9½ in. in diameter and 4½ in. high.

Pewter: Further Preservation

FOLLOWING the article which appeared in the August issue on a collection of pewter, a reader has drawn my attention to the pair of pewter flagons and the curious patens here illustrated. They belong to Cuckfield Parish Church, Sussex.

The flagons were purchased in 1628: 'Bought two faire new pewter flagons with

* See also Pl. II, p. 63, 1953 *Connoisseur Year Book*, 'Some Aspects of the Du Pont Collection', by Helen Comstock, published this month.



DELFTWARE MONTEITH BOWL, THE EXTERIOR IN BLUE MONOCHROME: COLLECTION SIR HUGH BLACKETT, BT.: SEE STORY

Cockfield [*sic*] engraved thereon.' The patens are not recorded, but appear to be of later origin. They, too, are engraved 'Cockfield'. That these ancient relics are now safe, one hopes, for all time is due to the enthusiasm of three members of the Society of Pewter Collectors: Dr. H. P. Hutchinson, of Haywards Heath, who brought them out of retirement; Capt. A. V. Sutherland-Graeme, who cleaned them; and Mr. Reginald W. Cooper, the well-known Nottinghamshire architect, who designed the fine case, taking as his exemplar a seventeenth-century Hutch at St. Albans Abbey. The case was presented by a parishioner as a private memorial, and is fixed to the south wall of the church.

During the process of removing the black patina which, in the course of some two centuries, had overspread the surface, it was discovered that part of the moulded base of one flagon had been either melted or broken off and had been renewed in lead. As this doubtless occurred whilst the flagons were still in use it was decided to retain the probably local repair rather than to replace the lead by new pewter.

Art in Ancient America

HIS Excellency the Mexican Ambassador opened the recent London exhibition, 'The Art of Ancient America', at the Berkeley Galleries, 20 Davies Street, W.1.

Most American arts affected one another to some slight extent; for wherever civilization began to grow, trade and war also developed. The Iroquois of New York State knew of the Dakota, and the Dakota knew of the Navajo who, in turn, knew the Pacific Coast. The whole of the Americas were linked by ties of local trade, and many artists learned of others without wishing to copy.

Each nation and tribe seemed able to express its own individuality. One can observe the intense formalism of the Inca, seen through Inca eyes as a pattern of recurring beauty. The glittering Quimbaya gold of Colombia expresses the pomp of competitive chieftains; while the refined and sensitive pottery of the Chibcha expresses the cultural



RED POTTERY FIGURE FROM COLOMBIA: 'ART IN ANCIENT AMERICA': BERKELEY GALLERIES