

WASHINGTON, D.C.

SUNDAY, JULY 19, 1942

The National Gallery of Art announced today the gift of an important group of paintings, drawings, and sculpture from Mrs. John W. Simpson, of New York. Outstanding in the gift are two paintings by Chardin and Raeburn, the latter presented in memory of the late John Woodruff Simpson. The drawings and sculpture, by Auguste Rodin, constitute a unique collection acquired some forty years ago directly from the artist.

The earlier of the two paintings included in the gift is entitled "Soap Bubbles" by Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, unrivaled eighteenth century French master of still-life and domestic scenes. The painting, known also as "Les Bouteilles de Savon", is one of several depicting a theme which Chardin painted and exhibited with great success in the Paris Salon of 1739 and which afterwards achieved further fame through an engraving by Filloeul. The picture given by Mrs. Simpson is the closest of the known versions to the Salon entry. Already familiar in this country through its appearances in such exhibitions as the "Century of Progress" in Chicago and, more recently, "The Masterpieces of Art" exhibition at the New York World's Fair, the painting is an excellent example of Chardin's adroit and sensitive interpretations of childhood pastimes.

A well-known painting by Sir Henry Raeburn, the "Portrait of the Two Sons of David Munro Binning, Esq.", is the second picture in the Simpson gift. Praised as demonstrating most brilliantly the artist's success with portraits of children, the picture represents the young Binning boys seated together in a rustic landscape setting. This picture, executed in 1811, is a mature work in Raeburn's later and more English manner. It is a valuable addition to the Gallery's group of paintings by this distinguished Scottish painter.

Owing to their friendship with the sculptor, Rodin, Mr. and Mrs. Simpson were able to bring together a number of choice examples of the French artist's work. These include fine bronze casts of such celebrated figures as "The Thinker" and the "Age of Bronze", original marbles both in portraiture and figure composition, as well as early terra cotta busts and studies. With six signed drawings and three rare proofs of etchings, this collection will provide for the public a vivid insight into the scope and methods of Rodin's work. Some of the larger pieces will soon be put on exhibition, the remainder as soon as suitable installation may be arranged. With this collection of works by Rodin, Mrs. Simpson also presented to the National Gallery a terra-cotta plaque by Clodion which served as a model for the decoration of one of the monumental urns, signed by Clodion, now on exhibition in the East Hall of the National Gallery.