

GIFT OF AMERICAN PORTRAITS

The Trustees of the National Gallery of Art have announced the acceptance of the gift of sixty-three American portraits from The A. V. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, together with a group of eight paintings from the Collection of Mr. Chester Dale and two portraits presented by Mr. Clarence Van Dyke Tiers. The first group includes important paintings from the famous Thomas B. Clarke Collection, which was acquired by the Mellon Trust in January, 1936, during the lifetime of the late Andrew W. Mellon; and also a number of outstanding portraits purchased by the Trust from other private collections. Some of these paintings have already been exhibited at the National Gallery; others will be shown shortly. Twenty-two of the pictures are intended for a National Portrait Gallery, provided such an institution should be established within the next twenty years.

This gift includes nineteen works by Gilbert Stuart. With the five portraits already given to the Gallery by the Mellon Trust, the National Gallery will be able to show in a unique way the development of Stuart's style. His English period is illustrated by a well-known portrait of Sir Joshua Reynolds; his Irish period by the colorful Luke White; his New York period by portraits of the Pollock and Yates families. From Stuart's sojourn in Philadelphia comes his famous portrait of Washington, known by the name of its first owner as the "Vaughan Washington," and generally considered one of the

three portraits of the first President painted by Stuart from life. The canvases painted during the period of Stuart's residence in Washington are equally interesting, including, among others, the portrait of Dr. William Thornton, architect of the original Capitol building and of many distinguished Washington houses. Stuart's last period in Boston is illustrated by a brilliant study of the naval hero of the war of 1812, Commodore Thomas MacDonough.

While these portraits by Stuart form the most important group of paintings by a single artist, the gift also affords a general survey of the last hundred and fifty years of American painting. One of the earliest of the portraits given by The Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust is Williamina Moore by Robert Feke, a painter whose rare works are distinguished among American paintings of the first half of the eighteenth century by their subtle color and beauty of brushwork. Another early colonial portrait is that of Jane Browne by Copley, painted when the artist was only eighteen years of age and strongly influenced by the Smiberts. The easy, flowing style of Copley's mentor in England, Benjamin West, the friend of nearly every American painter of the eighteenth century who crossed the Atlantic, is illustrated by a self-portrait.

During the first half of the nineteenth century Sully achieved a preeminent position among American painters. Six of his portraits have been given to the Gallery. Of these the most important historically are his portraits of two presidents, John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson. Another interesting Sully canvas is the portrait of Major Thomas Biddle painted in collaboration with the

artist's son, Thomas Wilcocks Sully.

The more realistic style which succeeded the romantic painting of Sully is illustrated in works by Samuel Waldo and John Neagle. An early suggestion of the influence of Continental painting appears in a rare group portrait by John Krimmel, who was born in Württemberg and died in Germantown, Pennsylvania. John Quidor, on the other hand, was one of the first American painters to develop a style relatively free of European influence; and in his Rip van Winkle he exemplifies that search for an American mythology which has occupied so many contemporary painters. Modern painting is exemplified in the gift of two portraits by Frank Duveneck, which foretell in their rapid brushwork the style of painting dominant in this country in the early years of the twentieth century.

Among the portraits which may eventually become part of a National Portrait Gallery, the earliest, dated 1616, represents Pocahontas and is by an unknown artist. There are also portraits of a number of presidents: Andrew Jackson painted by Ralph Earl, Monroe by Vanderlyn, Tyler by Eichholtz, and Abraham Lincoln by Healy, to name a few. Portraits of other distinguished Americans included in the gift are: John C. Calhoun portrayed by Rembrandt Peale, De Witt Clinton by Jarvis, John Marshall by Lambdin, and Nathaniel Hawthorne by Emanuel Leutze.

This gift by the Mellon Trust is most admirably supplemented by the portraits from the Dale Collection, including, as they do, works of several painters not hitherto represented in the National Gallery. Among these are two portraits by Samuel King and

two others by the painter-inventor, S. F. B. Morse. The portrait of Mrs. Wm. Griffin, one of the most attractive of all the works of Thomas Sully, is also included in the Chester Dale gift. A painting of the artist's studio by William Chase, entitled A Friendly Call, and Moonlight, a landscape by Ralph Albert Blakelock, still further augment the American Collection.

The two portraits presented by Mr. Tiers add the name of another artist, Matthew Pratt, to the growing list of American artists represented in the National Gallery. His painting is a portrait of the Third Duke of Portland. The other painting is a portrait of Pratt's eldest son, Henry, done by Thomas Sully.