

THE WEST COLLECTION  
OF THE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

AN invitation was extended by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania to its members and friends for Monday evening, November 14, 1910, to attend an exhibition of its unique collection of original portraits, sketches, studies, engravings and manuscripts of Benjamin West, one of Pennsylvania's gifted sons and the American President of the Royal Academy, London. Prior to the exhibition, Mr. Charles Frederick Ramsey, Curator of the Academy of Fine Arts, read a paper on "West as an Artist." Some estimate of the extent and value of the collection may be formed from the partial list which follows. The seven handsomely bound, extra large folio volumes, illustrating Galt's Life of West, were collected by the artist himself, and were acquired from one of his descendants; they attracted much attention, as did the portrait of West, by Sir Thomas Lawrence.

PORTRAITS IN OILS.

William Hamilton, of the "Woodlands," and Mrs. Lyle, his niece;

King George III. of England;

Queen Charlotte;

Rev. William Smith, Provost of the University of Pennsylvania;

Mrs. Thomas Hopkinson;

Hon. William Henry, of Lancaster, Penna., and his wife.

PORTRAITS AND PRINTS.

There are no less than 30 engraved portraits of West, at different periods of his life, including the very rare one published in 1768, and a fine impression of Lawrenson's famous mezzotint, which is perhaps even rarer than the

1768 portrait. Among the other engravers represented are G. Dawe, J. Jenkins, H. Meyers, William Pether, William Darton, P. Faloner, C. Jose, H. Cook, Thomas Holloway, C. Heath, J. Fittler and C. Rolls.

The other portraits and prints number 350, and depict West's friends and patrons, the great artists of the world, and the places identified with West's residences and travels.

#### WEST'S ORIGINAL SKETCHES.

Two sketch books contain 110 figure drawings, among them James Dove, the celebrated schoolmaster of Philadelphia, and there are 17 sketches in ink and colors, which bear the artist's autograph, viz: "Lot," "Hope," "David," "Nest of Cupids," "Pharoah's daughter with the child Moses," "The Rape of Proserpine," "The Captive," "A sketch for the Demonias," "Christ Healing the Sick," "The Resurrection," "The Tragic Muse," "Patus and Arria," and "The Angel at the Tomb." Besides these are 46 engravings, after his greatest pictures, including a superb colored impression of "The West Family." Here may be also noted, West's own manuscript list of the subscribers who received copies of prints of his picture "Death of Nelson," engraved by James Heath.

#### WEST'S LETTERS AND MANUSCRIPTS.

This collection numbers over 300 letters and manuscripts, in the handwriting of the artist, including original drafts of several of his letters to King George III, unpublished papers dealing with the Royal Academy and important particulars relative to his numerous pictures painted for the Royal Family, nobility and clergy, and his payments to Bartolozzi. A few selections follow. Draft of letters to Sir Henry Englefield, Lieut. Gen. Turner, Marquis of Hereford, Col. McMahon, Lord Charles Bentinck, Rev. Mr. Sevell, Uvedale Price, Henry Fauntleroy, Baron Denon, Hon. William Wellesley-Pole, Sir John Fleming Leicester, Rev. Dr. Charles Burney, Earl of Powis, Lord Clive, Sir

George Beaumont, Lord Samuel Hood, Col. Sir Herbert Taylor, Lady Jane Seymour, John S. Copley; recommendation of Borekhardt to the King; on celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Royal Academy; on his portrait painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence; and letter on his painting, "Death on the Pale Horse."

Manuscripts: Works of Early Artists; Account of the visit of the Prince Regent to the Academy; Catalogue of Pictures and Drawings, with marginal notes; To the Council of the Royal Academy, 1803; Regarding distinctions bestowed on him in Paris. List of invitations to the dinner of Royal Academy; Notes regarding the expulsion of James Barry from the Academy; Addresses before the Royal Academy 1811, to the students in 1803, and on presentation of the Gold Medal in 1803; Remarks on Historical Painting; Bank and Check books Coutt's Bank, 1790-1804. West's original Catalogue, which contains full particulars of his 173 pictures and original drawings, which were offered to the United States, after the artist's death.

#### LETTERS TO WEST.

The majority of the 532 autograph letters in the bound volumes, are written by distinguished and prominent persons of the reigns of George II and George III to West; all have been catalogued. A few may be mentioned: Duke of Bedford, Sir Thomas Lawrence, Lord Mulgrave, Sir Joseph Banks, Henry Hamilton, Lord Charles Bentinck, Lord Bridgewater, Lord Elgin, Lord Palmerston, Duke of Devonshire, Marquis of Strafford, Baron Bretford, Major Gen. Benjamin Bloomfield, Michael Torcia, Henrietta Walsby, Dr. John Morgan, William Carey, Mrs. Hunt, John MacLeod, Francisco Boldini, Samuel Coates in behalf of the Managers of the Pennsylvania Hospital, Sir Henry Englefield, Rev. William Holwell Carr, Richard Golding, Thomas Heaphey, Thomas Allwood, C. Rich, Capt. John Pasco, Henry Hope, Noel Joseph Desenfans, Thomas Sully, Mrs. de Lutherbourg, Hon Sandys, M. Cos-

way, and Academy of St. Luke, Rome, notifying West of his election to membership, 1816.

#### AUTOGRAPH LETTERS AND DOCUMENTS.

Commencing with Royalty, there are many letters of George III and his consort Queen Charlotte, also of George II, George IV, William IV, and Edward Duke of Kent; James, "the Old Pretender," Catherine "the Great," of Russia; Louis XIV, Louis XV, Louis XVI and Napoleon I; Charles V, "Emperor of the West," Queen Isabella, and Lorenzo de Medicis, "the Magnificent."

Among the artists' autographs, are superb letters of Poussin and his great contemporary Salvador Rosa, and of more recent date, Sir Christopher Wren, Reynolds, Harlow, Lawrence and Flaxman.

The collection of autograph letters and documents signed by famous men, is very large and important. It comprises among others, William Penn, Franklin, Washington, Burke, Lord Chatham, Lord Howe, John Wilkes, Hunter (the great surgeon), Fox, Pitt, Spencer, Perceval, Wellington, Earl of Marshmont, Duke of Newcastle, Lord North, Earl Nugent, Sir Robert Peel, Duke of Portland, Marquis of Rockingham, Earl of Rosslyn, Lord Shelburne, Lord Stowell, Duke of Grafton, Lord Grantham, Prince Hoare, Earl Howe, Earl of Aberdeen, Earl of Fife, Lord Amherst, Viscount Barrington, Duke of Buckingham, Earl of Liverpool, Earl of Carlisle, Sir Charles Manners, Sir John Cavendish, Sir Walter Scott, Sir John Dick, Sir Francis Baring, Sir Charles Manners Sutton, Sir Thomas Tyrwhitt; Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas, Lord Bishop of Oxford, Richard, Bishop of Peterborough, Bishop of Worcester, Bishop of Exeter; Cardinal Callicola, Cardinal Colanne, Cardinal Alersandro, John Vanderlyn to Washington Allston, Philip Van Der Zee, John Glynn, and Gavin Hamilton.

Finally, receipt for the funeral expenses of West, £696 . . ; admission tickets to Royal Academy; account of the daily receipts for exhibition Royal Academy, June and July, 1814.