

VERMEER



JAN VERMEER
COMPLETE EDITION OF
THE PHAIDON PRESS



DETAIL OF PLATE 6

THE PAINTINGS OF JAN VERMEER

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JOHANNES VERMEER OF DELFT

THE curious case of Jan Vermeer of Delft is one of the inexplicable mysteries of the history of art. He has passed by acclamation into the company of the great masters of pictorial art, on the strength of a meagre total of some forty pictures, most of which are tiny in dimensions. We know little about him beyond what those pictures disclose; though scholars have searched incessantly during the past fifty years for any scrap of further information concerning so notable a figure.

On October 31st, 1632, he was baptised in Delft, where he was born. When he was twenty-one he married Catherina Bolenes who survived him with eight children, all under age, when he died on December 13th, 1675. Admitted to the local guild of painters in 1653, he became their steward in 1662 and again in 1663 and 1670, and was elected Doyen in 1671. He seems never to have quitted Holland for a day during all his forty-three years of life, and never resided outside his native city.

Two relevant archives were discovered and published by Abraham Bredius in 1885. The earlier is a power of appointment by his mother-in-law, Maria Tens, executed in 1673, nominating him "with full trust" to look after certain monetary interests of her son, Willem Bolenes. The other is an inventory of the scanty property left in his dwelling and that of his mother-in-law on his death. We do not possess a single letter addressed to or written by him.

There has been much conjecture as to who could have been the teacher of so accomplished a painter. The work of Pieter de Hooch and of Samuel van Hoogstraten may well have influenced him. Two portraits by Hoogstraten hung in his house. But Carel Fabritius, his townsfellow, who joined the guild the year before his own entry, is in all probability entitled to that credit. Vermeer owned three of his pictures. Bleijswijck, in his description of Delft, includes a poem on the death of Fabritius, in the last quatrain of which he declares that Vermeer rose from the fire that consumed the former phoenix, to move like a master on the same course. Those who have admired the tiny panel by Fabritius, depicting a gold-finch on its perch, which hangs close to Vermeer's "Head of a Young Girl" in the Mauritshuis at the Hague will surely have traced a technical as well as a spiritual affinity between them. Theodore van Baburen of Utrecht probably also exercised a potent, if indirect, influence upon Vermeer. His picture "The Procuress", now in the Rijksmuseum at Amsterdam, is unmistakably reproduced in Vermeer's "Lady at the Virginals" of the National Gallery and in "The Concert" of the Gardner Museum at Boston. Vermeer's own "Procuress", of the



Carel Fabritius: *The Goldfinch*. 1654. *The Hague, Mauritshuis*

Dresden Gallery, is more than a little reminiscent of this prototype. It may be that he owed to Baburen, who was much influenced by Caravaggio and the other Italian mannerists of the age, the Italian savour so apparent in three of his other pictures: the "Diana and her Nymphs", of the Mauritshuis, the "Christ in the House of Mary and Martha", of the National Gallery of Scotland, which recalls Cavallino's "Death of Saint Joseph" in the National Museum at Naples, and "The Supper at Emmaus", of the Boymans Museum at Rotterdam, which closely resembles Caravaggio's picture of the same title, recently acquired from the collection of the Marchese Patrizi for the Brera Gallery at Milan.

It is amazing that we have no contemporary document to tell us what his countrymen thought of Vermeer the man, or of his achievement as an artist. The French traveller, de Monconys, in his *Journal des Voyages*, published at Lyons in 1666, provides the sole evidence remaining of a personal contact. He visited the painter in 1663, with the hope of buying a picture. But Vermeer had nothing to offer. All that the would-be purchaser could find in Delft was one picture, in the possession of the Vermeer family baker, for which he was asked three hundred florins and which, with reprehensible ill-taste, he considered to be worth not more than fifty.

Yet an understanding love of art was so prevalent throughout Holland in the eighteenth century that we cannot suppose Vermeer's merits to have been neglected by his contemporaries. It is more than likely that his pictures were in considerable demand and realised good prices. He could hardly have existed, however modestly, and brought up his large family were this not so, for, undoubtedly, he was far from being prolific as a painter. Were it not that his wife was an heiress of sorts and received several bequests from her relations, they had, in all probability, starved. It is said that he owed no less than three thousand one hundred and seventy-six florins to his baker when he died, and that the debt was liquidated by the assignment of two of his pictures.

The eclipse which overshadowed his reputation during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries can only be explained by the fact that critics and collectors had few opportunities of studying his work, because of its extreme rarity. He

meant little more than a name to scholars, until Etienne Joseph Théophile Thoré, who wrote under the pseudonym of W. Bürger, contributed, in 1866, a memorable article to the *Gazette des Beaux Arts* in which he described forty-seven works as being by Vermeer. Seventeen years later, Henri Havard, in the same magazine, revised that list and added another to its total. Hofstede de Groot, in the first volume of his *Catalogue Raisonné of the Dutch Painters*, published in 1911, showed that Bürger and Havard were both somewhat less than scientific in their judgments, and had attributed to Vermeer pictures painted by Renesse, de Hooch, Steen, Terborch, Vrel, Boursse, Metsu, de Man, van der Laan, de Witte, Hondekoeter and Vermeer of Haarlem. He reduced the total of authentic works to thirty-three. A number of those which he admitted are now generally discredited, including the "Lady playing a Guitar" of the Johnson collection at Philadelphia and "The Astronomer" in the collection of the Vicomte du Bus de Gisignies at Brussels. Since de Groot's catalogue appeared, books on the master have poured in a steady stream from the printing presses of Europe. They already number twenty, of which three were published almost simultaneously in 1939. The number of articles on the subject is legion. But, though a few pictures undoubtedly by Vermeer have been discovered since de Groot conducted his researches, no authority places the extant total as higher than forty-three. This is the limit fixed by Dr. A. B. de Vries who is recognised as a sound and most learned authority: and five which he admits and reproduces in his recent book have yet to win undisputed acceptance. These are the "Portrait of a Young Man in a High Hat", in anonymous Dutch possession, the "Girl with the Blue Bow" in the collection of Mrs. Louis F. Hyde, the "Young Woman in a Hat", in the collection of Baron Thyssen-Bornemisza and "The Laceworker" and the "Smiling Girl", both in the National Gallery at Washington.

It is not justifiable to suppose that many others can have perished during the two hundred and sixty-five years that have elapsed since the artist's death.



Portrait of a Man (Attributed to Vermeer). Holland, Private Collection



*The Girl with the Blue Bow (Attributed to Vermeer). Glenn Falls (New York),
Mrs. Louis F. Hyde*



*Laughing Girl (Attributed to Vermeer). Washington, National Gallery of Art,
Andrew W. Mellon Collection*

His name rarely appears in old sale-catalogues. On three occasions only have considerable numbers been mentioned as existing together in any one collection in the seventeenth century. Twenty-six were sold, in 1677, as part of the

estate of the painter and picture-dealer Johannes Collenbier of Haarlem. Nineteen were in the collection of the painter Jacob Abrahamsz Dissius of Delft, who died in 1682. Twenty-one were sold in an anonymous auction on May 16th, 1696, at Amsterdam. Most of these, identifiable by the catalogue description, are known to us to-day. Occasionally a sensational discovery, such as that of the superb "Supper at Emmaus", which was found a few years ago in the linen-cupboard of a house in Paris, occurs to remind us that



Supper at Emmaus. Rotterdam, Museum Boymans

similar possibilities are not exhausted. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to conclude that we already possess the major portion of his output.

Vermeer's reputation tends to suffer through this scarcity of his work, which tempts dealers and the more sanguine type of expert to attach his name to paintings which have little value when considered simply as works of art. A striking example of such fallacious judgments was afforded by the "Portrait of a Girl" in the collection of E. W. Edwards, shown at the Dutch Exhibition in Burlington House in 1929. Though considered to be genuine by three such good judges as de Groot, von Bode and Dr. M. J. Friedländer it has since



*Young Woman in a Hat (Attributed to Vermeer). Lugano (Switzerland),
Baron Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza*

fallen from the eminence on which they placed it. In the Vermeer Exhibition, held at the Boymans Gallery in 1935, six of the fourteen paintings attributed to him failed completely to win a general concensus of opinion in their favour.

A sad proof of the snobbism of collectors is given by contrasting the prices paid for pictures by Vermeer before their authorship is recognised with those fetched by examples of acknowledged authenticity. Thus, the "Christ in the House of Mary and Martha", now in the National Gallery of Scotland, was bought for eight pounds in Bristol in 1901, and the "Head of a Girl", in the Mauritshuis, only cost a couple of shillings when sold by auction at the Hague about the same time. Judging from the price of eighty thousand pounds paid by Sir Henri Detering for the "Street in Delft" which he presented to the Rijksmuseum, and the seventy-five thousand which the "Supper at Emmaus" cost the Vereeniging Rembrandt for the Boymans Museum, Vermeer's admitted masterpiece, "The Artist in his Studio", of the Czernin collection at Vienna, might well attain a quarter of a million if put up for public auction at a propitious time.

Theoretically, it should not be a difficult task for a competent art-historian to arrange in chronological order a group of thirty-eight paintings comprising all the universally acknowledged work of a particular artist, and to trace through them the tendencies and influences by which his style developed. In practice, it has proved impossible to do so in the case of Vermeer. His pictures range in scale from the "Christ in the House of Mary and Martha" in which the figures are life-size, to the "Young Girl with a Flute" which measures only eight inches high by seven inches wide. The former is painted with broad, sweeping brushwork: the latter is touched in with the utmost delicacy of glaze and stipple. In

diversity of subject, also, the group is most remarkable. It contains one conventional portrait, that of the young woman of the Budapest Gallery, one classical composition, one contemporary comment on morality, one religious allegory, two scenes from the New Testament and two landscapes. The rest are, almost all, domestic interiors. Five is the largest number of persons appearing in any of his compositions and that only in the "Diana and her Nymphs". In no less than twenty-one of them he is content to depict a single figure. Most of his pictures still bear his carefully drawn signature. "The Procuress" is the only one to bear an indisputable date, 1656, and proves him, therefore, to have been a highly accomplished painter by the time he was twenty-four.

Basing their conjectures upon the date of "The Procuress", a great many critics have assigned tentative dates to the other works. They fail lamentably to agree. For example, Bredius concludes that the "Supper at Emmaus" was painted about 1653: but de Vries, with more plausibility, places it some ten years later. It may, however, be reasonably supposed that the "Diana and her Nymphs" represents Vermeer's art at its beginnings and that "The Painter in his Studio" was executed towards the close of his life; for the latter is the most lovely and accomplished thing he ever produced and it remained in his widow's possession at his death until she pledged it, as security for a loan, to her mother. "The Painter in his Studio", obviously portraying Vermeer himself, gives us some valuable clues about his methods of work. He sat close to his model and drew directly on his

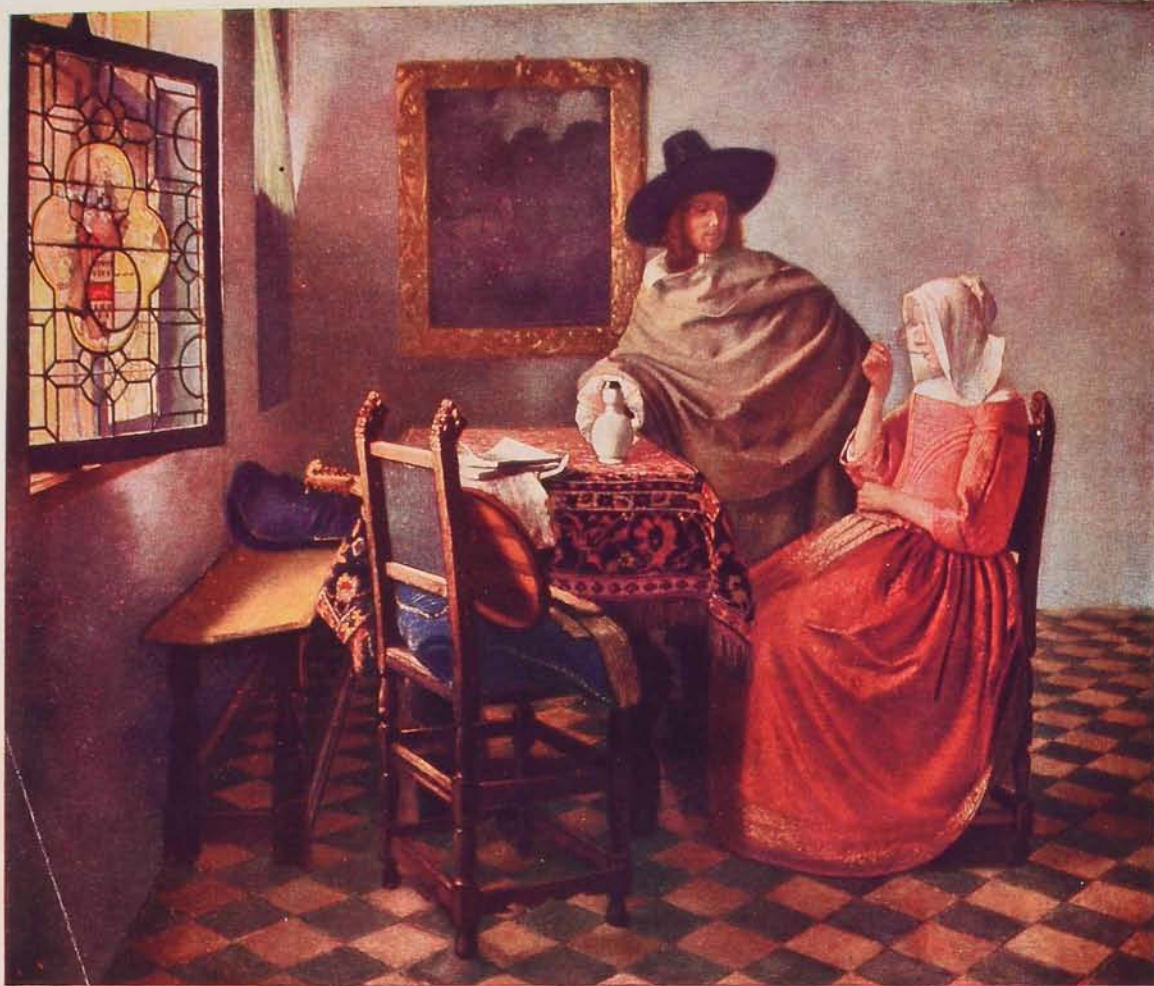


Head of a Boy (Attributed to Vermeer). Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett

canvas or panel without the aid of preliminary studies. Only one sketch exists which is ascribed to him, and that, the "Head of a Boy", in the Kupferstichkabinett at Berlin, done in oil-paint on paper, is of very dubious authenticity. His designs must have been worked out, in chalk or crayon, with complete deliberation before he came to apply his pigments upon them: for there are very few traces of after-thoughts to be found in the finished work. In the "View of Delft" he obliterated the

figure of a man standing upon the near bank of the Rotterdam Canal, who, with the passage of time, has made a ghostly reappearance through the overlying paint. In the "Christ in the House of Mary and Martha" we can detect some readjustments in the left hand of Our Lord. Everything else of his which survives seems to have been executed with magisterial certainty.

His special predilections never degenerate into mannerisms. He has a liking for flat pattern: and the background of his pictures is always, with one exception,



A Girl drinking with a Gentleman. Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum

exactly parallel to the spectator's field of vision. In the "View of Delft" the diagonal deviation is barely noticeable. Yet, despite his fancy for effects of silhouette and his avoidance of complicated schemes of linear perspective, he invariably creates an illusion of depth

or distance, through his consummate understanding of aerial tonality and his most skilful, if unobtrusive, disposition of lights and shadows. He was not an adventurous artist. The great majority of his figures are posed to face the light, which generally falls from left to right. He employed the same studio properties over and over again. The Gobelins tapestry and the square-backed chair with the little seated lions as terminals, which appear in so many of his pictures, must have formed, for a long period, part of his domestic furniture. The coat of arms in stained glass which is shown in "The Glass of Wine" of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, in the "Lady and two Cavaliers" of the Brunswick Gallery and in "The Letter-writer" of the Beit collection, probably embellished the window of his own studio. A picture of a Cupid, with a bow in one hand and a letter in the other, was evidently one of his treasured possessions, for it can be recognised in "The Maid-servant asleep", in "The Lady at the Virginals" of the National Gallery and in "The Lady and the Cavalier" of the Frick collection. Another picture, representing the finding of Moses, painted in the style of Jan van Loo, appears in "The Letter-writer" and "The Astronomer" of the Beit and Rothschild collections respectively. The picture of the Crucifixion, in the background of the "Allegory of the New Testament", which seems to have been painted by Jordaens,



A Young Lady in Blue reading a Letter. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

is probably that mentioned in the posthumous inventory of his property.

Unfortunately, we cannot identify a single one of his sitters, not even the "Young Woman" of the Budapest Gallery. The painter in Count Czernin's picture turns his back to the spectator. The figure on the extreme left of "The Procuress" is traditionally supposed to be a portrait of the artist, but there is only the circumstantial evidence of its pose to warrant this assumption. The "Lady reading a Letter" of the Rijksmuseum may well be Vrou Vermeer: for it is psychologically unlikely that any other comely young woman would have

been willing to act as his model while in an obvious condition of advanced pregnancy.

It is impossible to explain in words the magical charm that sets Vermeer so high above the many accomplished painters who flourished contemporaneously in Holland. He stands aloof from them all, a strangely unique personality. His colour sense has an exquisite delicacy of taste that is quite unprecedented, and finds expression most frequently in cool schemes compounded with deep blues, lemon-yellows, olive-greens and clear dove-greys, linked and harmonised by vivid touches of bright red and golden brown. In his management of white pigment, no painter has ever surpassed him. He uses it to produce effects of crystalline purity and precision. The luminosity that characterises all his pictures is devoid of the least taint of heat. Reynolds must have forgotten, or never known, his work when he came to pen the famous passages in the Eighth Discourse that treat of the essential dominance of warm hues.

Vermeer had also a genius for composition. Our eyes are never tempted to roam beyond the limits which he imposes with his frames. Every constituent element of his design flows easily and gracefully into one indivisible whole. His temperament was essentially aristocratic; violent gesture or anecdotal innuendo had no appeal for him. That excessive finish for which so many Dutch painters apparently claimed a sort of moral value, that is spurious, meant nothing to him. There is no surplussage in his work. What he wishes to state is set down without



A Maid-servant pouring out Milk. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

affectation or indulged facility. His pictures are full of closely observed detail; but that detail is strictly relevant to his aesthetic purpose, and, so, essential.

Above all, we praise Vermeer for his power to bring us into intimate contact with his own placid and lovely disposition. He calls us gently outside the stress and vexations of commonplace existence to share a quiet joy in visual beauty. He brings us, under his mantle, into a world withdrawn from trouble where peace and light, those two great gifts of God which wise men always long for, may be found without limit.

EIGHT SIGNATURES OF JAN VERMEER

- (1) Meer
1656
- (2) I. Meer.
- (3) M
- (4) Meer
- (5) Meer
- (6) Meer
- (7) Meer
- (8) I Ver. Meer

(1) The Procuress, Dresden, plate 6.—(2) A Street in Delft, Amsterdam, plate 13.—(3) View of Delft, The Hague, plate 16.—(4) Head of a Girl, The Hague, plate 27.—(5) Head of a Young Woman, Arenberg Coll., plate 29.—(6) Young Lady with a Pearl Necklace, Berlin, plate 37.—(7) The Love Letter, Amsterdam, plate 43.—(8) The Artist's Studio, Czernin Coll., plate 42.

CHRIST IN THE HOUSE OF MARY AND MARTHA. Edinburgh, National Gallery. 149 × 141 cm. (62½ by 55½ in.). Signed: I. V. MEER. Plates 1 (colour*); 2-4.

DIANA AND HER COMPANIONS. The Hague, Mauritshuis. An almost obliterated signature: J. V. Meer. 98.5 × 105 cm. (38¾ by 41½ in.). Colours: Diana in golden yellow; attendant, right foreground—violet and brown; seated attendant—red blouse and blue skirt; back-figure—yellow gold; background—dark green and pale blue. Plate 5.

THE PROCURESS. Dresden, Gemäldegalerie. 143 × 130 cm. (56¼ by 51¼ in.). Signed: J. V. Meer, and dated 1656. Plate 6 (colour) and frontispiece (colour).

LADY READING A LETTER AT THE OPEN WINDOW. Dresden, Gemäldegalerie. Remains of a signature. 83 × 64.5 cm. (32¾ by 25¾ in.). Plates 7 and 8 (colour).

A GIRL ASLEEP. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Signed: J. V. Meer. 86.5 × 76.5 cm. (34.16 by 30½ in.). Colours: Dark red bodice, black cap, white kerchief over the shoulders; blue and white dish with fruit. Plates 9; 10, 11.

A STREET IN DELFT. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum. 54 × 44 cm. (21¼ by 17¼ in.). Signed: J. V. MEER. Plates 13 (colour); 12; 14.

VIEW OF DELFT FROM THE ROTTERDAM CANAL. The Hague, Mauritshuis. 98.5 × 117.5 cm. (38½ × 46¼ in.). Signed: I. V. M. Plates 16 (colour); 15 (folding-plate); 17.

THE COUPLE WITH THE WINE-GLASS. Brunswick, Gemäldegalerie. 78 × 67.5 cm. (30¾ × 26½ in.). Signed: J. MEER. Colours: The lady in rose-red and salmon-red; the cavalier in grey; the sleeping young man in officer's uniform, grey and gold; tablecloth—blue. Plate 18.

OFFICER AND LAUGHING GIRL. New York, H. C. Frick. 48 × 43 cm. (19 × 17 in.). Colours: The soldier in grey, red and black; the girl in yellow-green and black. Plate 19.

A MAID-SERVANT POURING OUT MILK. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum. 45.5 × 41 cm. (18 × 16½ in.). Signed: J. V. MEER. For the colours see reproduction on page 11. Plate 20.

YOUNG WOMAN WITH A WATER-JUG. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. 45.5 × 40.6 cm. (18 × 16 in.). Plate 21 (colour).

PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN. Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts. 82 × 65 cm. (32¼ × 25¼ in.). Colours: Dress—deep blue and black; gloves—white with bright yellow trimmings; collar—white with golden yellow; back of chair—yellow brown; tablecloth—dark red. Plate 22.

A GIRL INTERRUPTED AT HER MUSIC. New York, H. C. Frick. 37 × 42 cm. (14½ × 16½ in.). Colours: Girl in red jacket with blue skirt; man in blue-grey; dark-blue cushion on the chair. Plate 23.

A GIRL DRINKING WITH A GENTLEMAN. Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum. 65 × 77 cm. (25½ × 30¼ in.). For colours see reproduction on page 9. Plate 24.

THE CONCERT. Boston, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. 71 × 63 cm. (28 × 25 in.). Colours: The Man—in grey with gold; the spinet player—in yellow; ground—black-white. Plate 25.

THE MUSIC LESSON. London, Buckingham Palace. 72.5 × 62.5 cm. (28½ × 24½ in.). Plate 26 (colour).

HEAD OF A GIRL. The Hague, Mauritshuis. 46.5 × 40 cm. (18¼ × 15¾ in.). Signed: I. V. MEER. Plate 27 (colour); 28.

HEAD OF A YOUNG WOMAN. Formerly Brussels, Duke of Arenberg. 45 × 40 cm. (17¾ × 15¾ in.). Signed: I. MEER. Colours: Black-brown background, yellow veil. Plate 29.

THE LACE-MAKER. Paris, Louvre. 24 × 21 cm. (9½ × 8¼ in.). Signed: I. V. MEER. Colours: Yellow dress with white collar, greenish-blue skirt; deep blue cushion, with white and red feathers protruding from it; yellow-brown book; red string in hair; table-cover in green, blue and yellow. Plate 30.

A LADY WRITING A LETTER. London, Sir Alfred Beit. 71 × 59 cm. (28 × 23¼ in.). Signed: I. V. MEER. Plate 32 (colour); 31.

A WOMAN WEIGHING PEARLS. Philadelphia, Joseph E. Widener. 42 × 35 cm. (16¼ × 13¾ in.). Colours: Dark blue cloak with ermine over a red and yellow dress; blue tablecloth, yellow curtain. Plate 33.

A LADY WITH A LUTE. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. 51.5 × 45.7 cm. (20¼ × 18 in.). Signed: MEER. Colours: Yellow jacket with ermine collar; cloth on table striped in blue and white; blue curtain. Plate 34.

A LADY WRITING A LETTER. New York, J. Pierpont Morgan. 46 × 36 cm. (18½ × 14¼ in.). Colours: Yellow jacket with ermine; blue tablecloth and blue back of chair. Plate 35.

A YOUNG LADY IN BLUE READING A LETTER. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum. 46.5 × 39 cm. (18¼ × 15½ in.). For the colours see reproduction on page 10. Plate 36.

A YOUNG LADY WITH A PEARL NECKLACE. Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum. 55 × 45 cm. (21¾ × 17¾ in.). Signed: J. MEER. Plate 37 (colour).

*A colour description is given only where this edition contains no reproduction in colours. Where nothing else is said, the pictures are painted on canvas.

THE LACE-MAKER. Washington, National Gallery of Art, Andrew W. Mellon Collection. 45 × 39.5 cm. (17 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.). The authenticity of this work is dubious.

Colours: Dress—yellow; cushion—dark blue; silver bowl in front of the cushion; grey-green background.
Plate 38.

THE GIRL WITH THE RED HAT. Washington, National Gallery of Art, Mellon Collection. 23 × 18 cm. (9 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 7 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.). Signed: I.V.M.

Colours: Blue dress; tapestry in the background—blue, grey and brown.
Plate 39.

THE GIRL WITH A FLUTE. Philadelphia, Joseph E. Widener. Panel, 20 × 18 cm. (7 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 7 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.).

Colours: Dress—blue-grey; cuffs, collar and bib—white; hat—yellow, brown, green and white stripes; flute—ochrous yellow; tapestry in background—blue, green and grey.
Plate 40.

THE ARTIST'S STUDIO. Vienna, Count Czernin. 120 × 100 cm. (47 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 39 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.). Signed: I. VER-MEER.
Plate 42 (colour); 41.

THE LOVE LETTER. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum. 44 × 38.5 cm. (17 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 15 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.). Signed: I. V. MEER.

Colours: Women in white-yellow; maid-servant in brown, white and blue.
Plate 43.

A GIRL WITH A GUITAR. London, Kenwood House, Lord Iveagh Bequest. 49.5 × 42 cm. (19 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 16 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.). An old copy in the Johnson Collection, Philadelphia.

Colours: The woman in yellow; grey-green background; blue tablecloth.
Plate 44.

MISTRESS AND MAID-SERVANT. New York, H. C. Frick. 88 × 76 cm. (34 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 29 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.). Remains of a signature.

Colours: Woman in yellow; hair-net with red inlet; maid-servant in grey brown; dark green tapestry to the right; blue tablecloth.
Plate 45.

A LADY SEATED AT THE VIRGINALS. London, National Gallery. 51.4 × 45.7 cm. (20 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 18 in.). Signed: I. V. MEER.

Colours: Woman in blue; spinet marbled in brown, grey and black shades; 'cello—yellow brown.
Plate 46.

A LADY STANDING AT THE VIRGINALS. London, National Gallery. 50.8 × 45.7 cm. (20 × 18 in.). Signed: I. V. MEER.
Plate 47 (colour).

A LADY SEATED AT THE SPINET. London, Lady Otto Beit. 24.5 × 19.5 cm. (9 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.).

Colours: The lady in white-grey dress, with a yellow plaid round her shoulders; red hair-net; light grey wall.
Plate 48.

THE ASTRONOMER. Formerly Paris, Baron Edouard de Rothschild. 50.5 × 45.5 cm. (20 × 18 in.). Signed: I. MEER, and dated 1668.

Colours: Dress—blue; tablecloth in green, yellow and blue; dark grey wall.
Plate 49.

THE GEOGRAPHER. Frankfort-on-Main, Städelsches Kunstinstitut. 53 × 46.5 cm. (21 × 18 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.). Signed: I. MEER. Colours: Dress—violet blue, with cuffs in yellow-red; brown wood, grey wall.

The signature and date on the wall is by a different hand and was added later; the authentic signature is on the cupboard door, top right.
Plate 50.

ALLEGORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. 113 × 88 cm. (44 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 34 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.). From the Friedsam Collection.

Colours: White dress with blue bodice; blue cushions; curtains in green, blue and yellow.
Plate 51.

COLOUR PLATES IN THE TEXT

SUPPER AT EMMAUS. Rotterdam, Museum Boymans. 128.9 × 117.5 cm. (50 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 46 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.). Signed: I. MEER.
Reprod. page 6 (colour).

PORTRAIT OF A MAN. Private collection in Holland. 87.5 × 66 cm. (34 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 26 in.). Signed: I. Meer. "The authenticity of this work is, I think, dubious." (Thomas Bodkin.)
Reprod. page 5 (colour).

The other three colour plates in the text correspond to the monochrome reproductions Nos. 20, 24 and 36.

MONOCHROME REPRODUCTIONS IN THE TEXT

(ATTRIBUTED TO VERMEER)

LAUGHING GIRL. Washington, National Gallery of Art, Andrew W. Mellon Collection. 40 × 31 cm. (15 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.).
Reprod. page 6.

THE GIRL WITH THE BLUE BOW. Glenn Falls, New York, Mrs. Louis F. Hyde. 40 × 35 cm. (15 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 14 in.).
Reprod. page 6.

YOUNG WOMAN IN A HAT. Lugano, Switzerland, Baron Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza. 23.5 × 21.3 cm. (9 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.).
Reprod. page 7.

HEAD OF A BOY. Sketch in oil colours on brown paper. Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett. 16.2 × 19.7 cm. (6 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.).
Reprod. page 8.

CAREL FABRITIUS (1614-54): THE GOLDFINCH. 1654. The Hague, Mauritshuis. Panel. 33.5 × 22.8 cm. (13 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 9 in.).
Reprod. page 4.

THE REPRODUCTIONS

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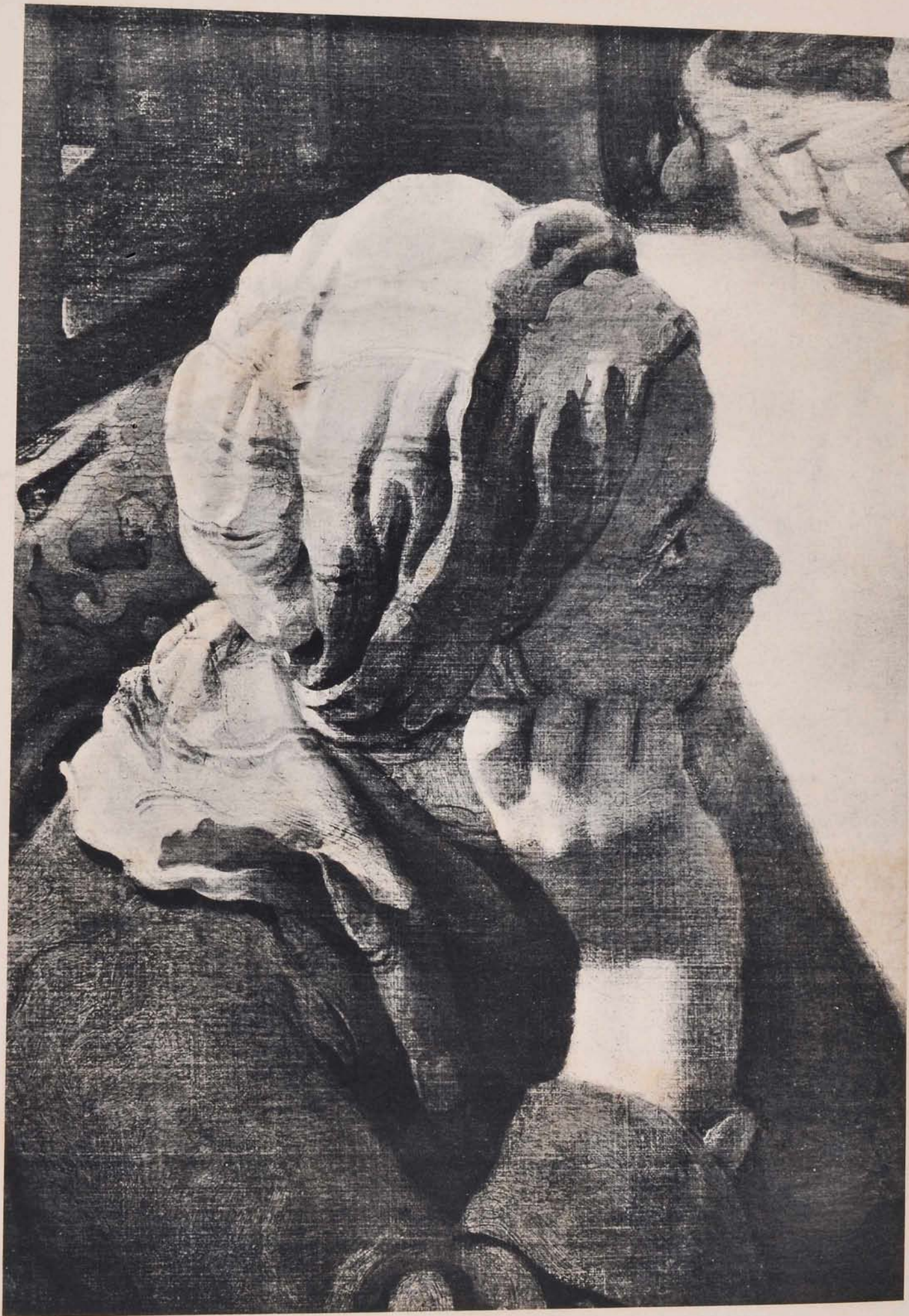
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1. CHRIST IN THE HOUSE OF MARY AND MARTHA. EDINBURGH, NATIONAL GALLERY



2. DETAIL OF PLATE 1



3. DETAIL OF PLATE 1



4. DETAIL OF PLATE 1



5. DIANA AND HER COMPANIONS. THE HAGUE, MAURITSHUIS



6. THE PROCURESS. 1656. DRESDEN, PICTURE GALLERY



7. LADY READING A LETTER AT THE OPEN WINDOW. DRESDEN, PICTURE GALLERY



8. DETAIL OF PLATE 7



9. A GIRL ASLEEP. NEW YORK, METROPOLITAN MUSEUM



10. DETAIL OF PLATE 9



11. DETAIL OF PLATE 9



12. DETAIL OF PLATE 13



13. STREET IN DELFT. AMSTERDAM, RYKSMUSEUM

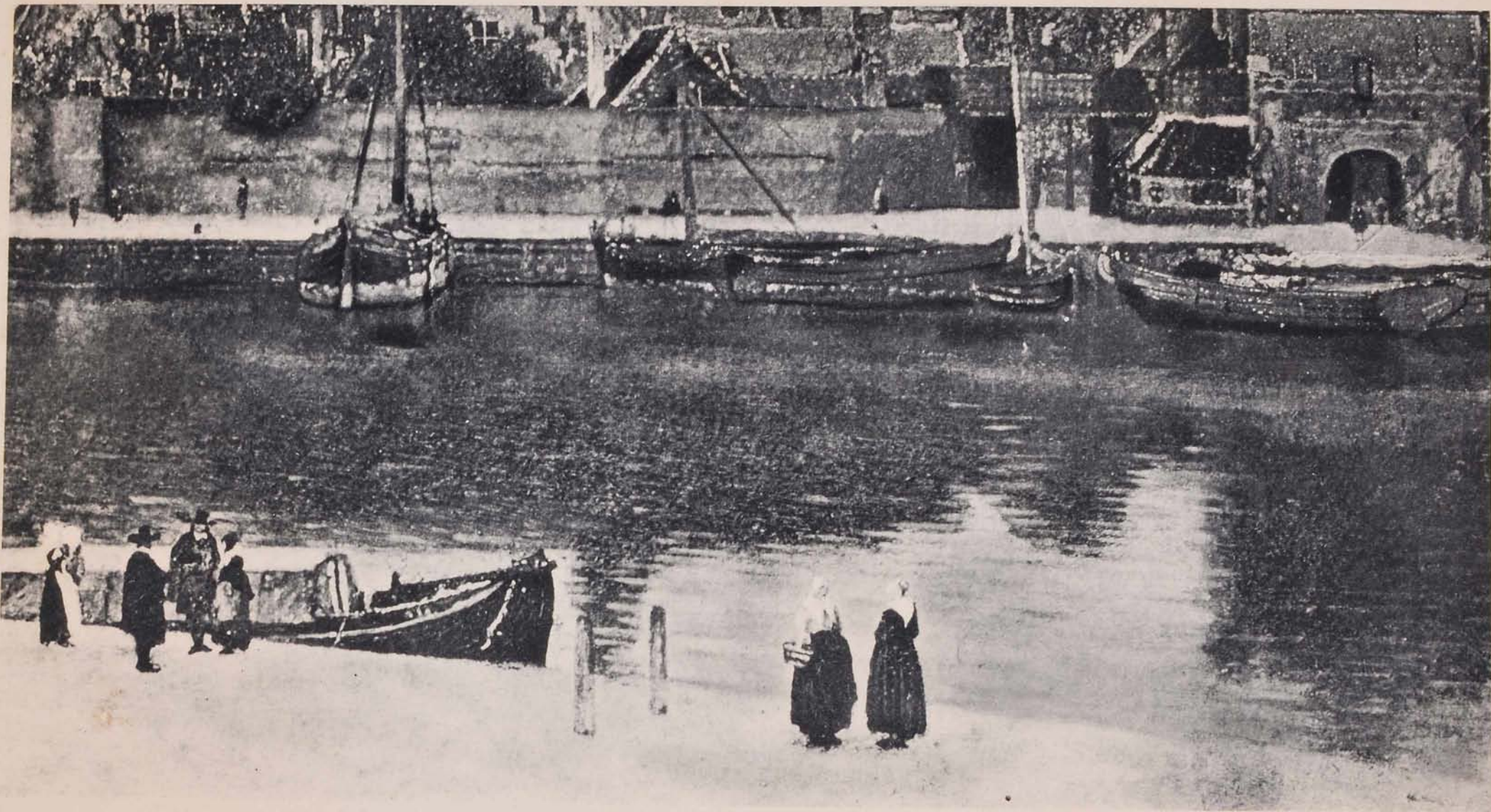


14. DETAIL OF PLATE 13





16. VIEW OF DELFT FROM THE ROTTERDAM CANAL. THE HAGUE, MAURITSHUIS



17. DETAIL OF PLATE 16



18. THE COUPLE WITH THE WINE-GLASS. BRUNSWICK, PICTURE GALLERY



19. OFFICER AND LAUGHING GIRL. NEW YORK, FRICK COLLECTION



20. A MAID-SERVANT POURING OUT MILK. AMSTERDAM, RIJKS MUSEUM



21. YOUNG WOMAN WITH A WATER-JUG. NEW YORK, METROPOLITAN MUSEUM



22. PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN. BUDAPEST, MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS



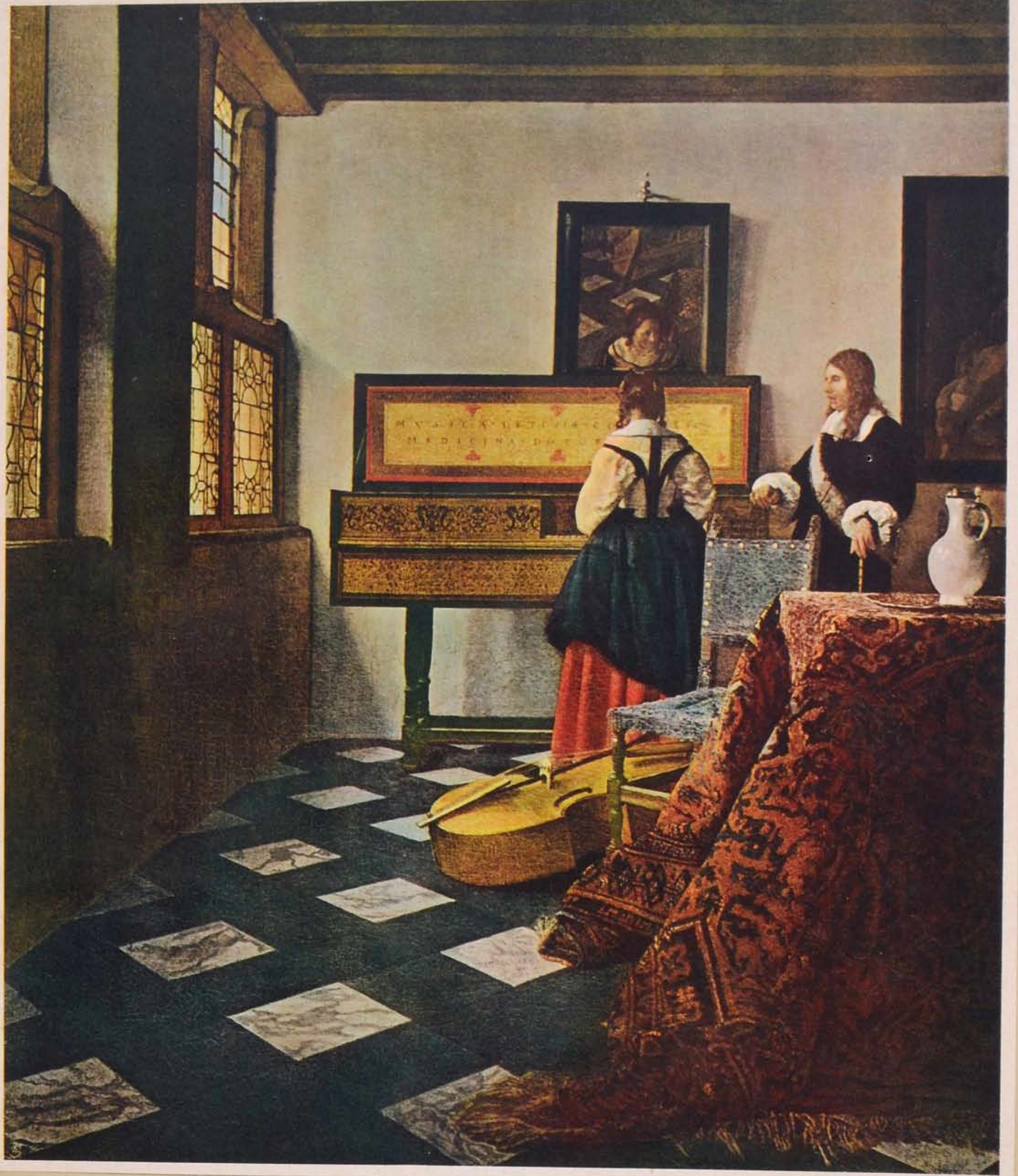
23. A GIRL, INTERRUPTED AT HER MUSIC. NEW YORK, FRICK COLLECTION



24. A GIRL DRINKING WITH A GENTLEMAN. BERLIN, KAISER FRIEDRICH MUSEUM



25. THE CONCERT. BOSTON, ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM



26. THE MUSIC LESSON. LONDON, BUCKINGHAM PALACE.



27. HEAD OF A GIRL. THE HAGUE, MAURITSHUIS



28. DETAIL OF PLATE 27



29. HEAD OF A YOUNG WOMAN. FORMERLY BRUSSELS, DUKE OF ARENBERG



30. THE LACE-MAKER. PARIS, LOUVRE



31. DETAIL OF PLATE 32



32. A LADY WRITING A LETTER. LONDON, SIR ALFRED BEIT



33. A WOMAN WEIGHING PEARLS. PHILADELPHIA, JOSEPH E. WIDENER



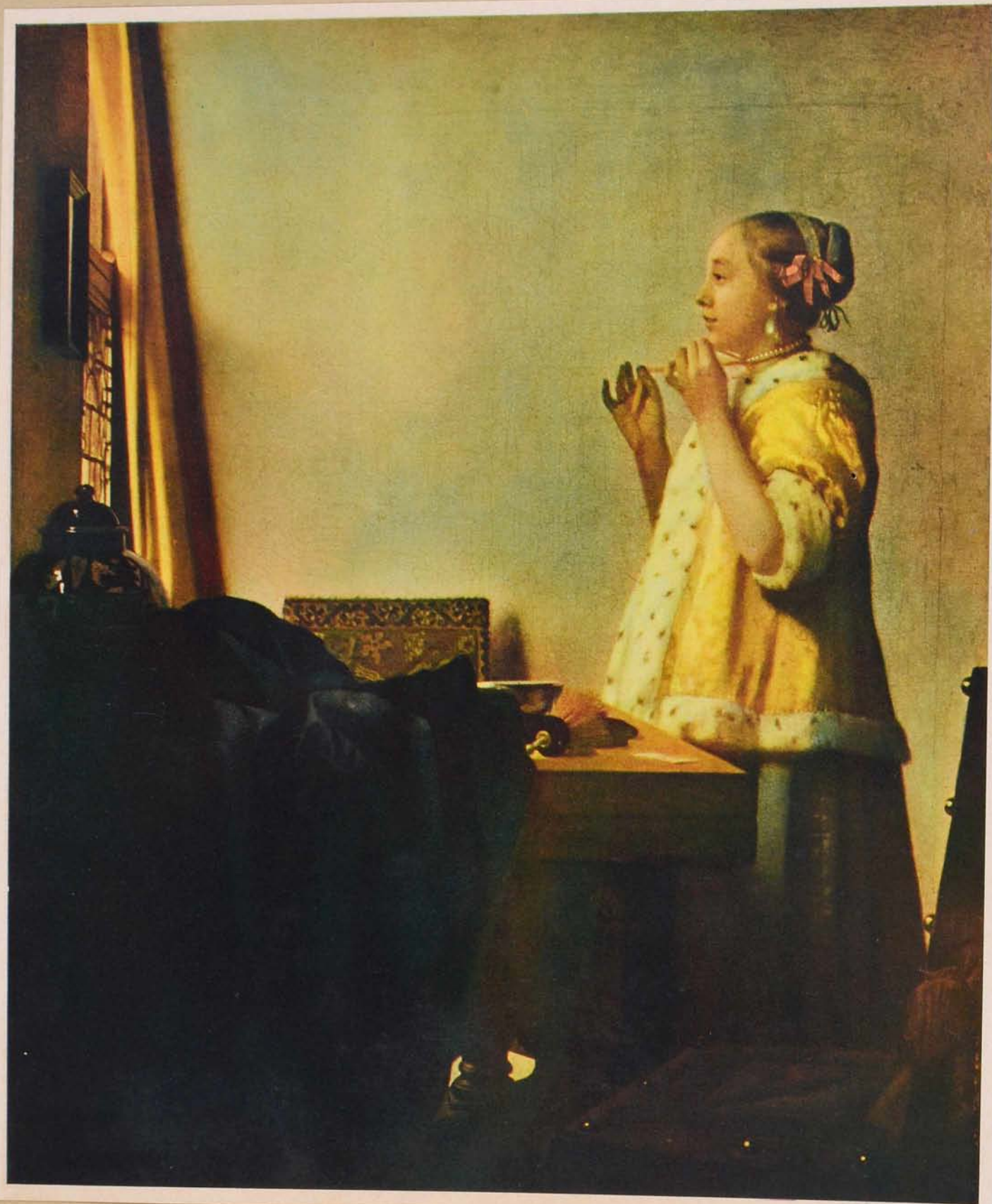
34. A LADY WITH A LUTE. NEW YORK, METROPOLITAN MUSEUM



35. A LADY WRITING A LETTER. NEW YORK, J. PIERPONT MORGAN



36. A YOUNG LADY IN BLUE, READING A LETTER. AMSTERDAM, RIJKS MUSEUM



37. A YOUNG LADY WITH A PEARL NECKLACE. BERLIN, KAISER FRIEDRICH MUSEUM



38. THE LACE-MAKER. (ATTRIBUTED TO VERMEER) WASHINGTON, NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART



39. THE GIRL WITH THE RED HAT. WASHINGTON, NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART



40. THE GIRL WITH A FLUTE. PHILADELPHIA, JOSEPH E. WIDENER



41. DETAIL OF PLATE 42



42. THE ARTIST'S STUDIO. VIENNA, COUNT CZERNIN



43. THE LOVE-LETTER. AMSTERDAM, RIJKS MUSEUM



44. A GIRL WITH A GUITAR. LONDON, KENWOOD MUSEUM



45. MISTRESS AND MAID-SERVANT. NEW YORK, FRICK COLLECTION



46. A LADY SEATED AT THE VIRGINALS. LONDON, NATIONAL GALLERY



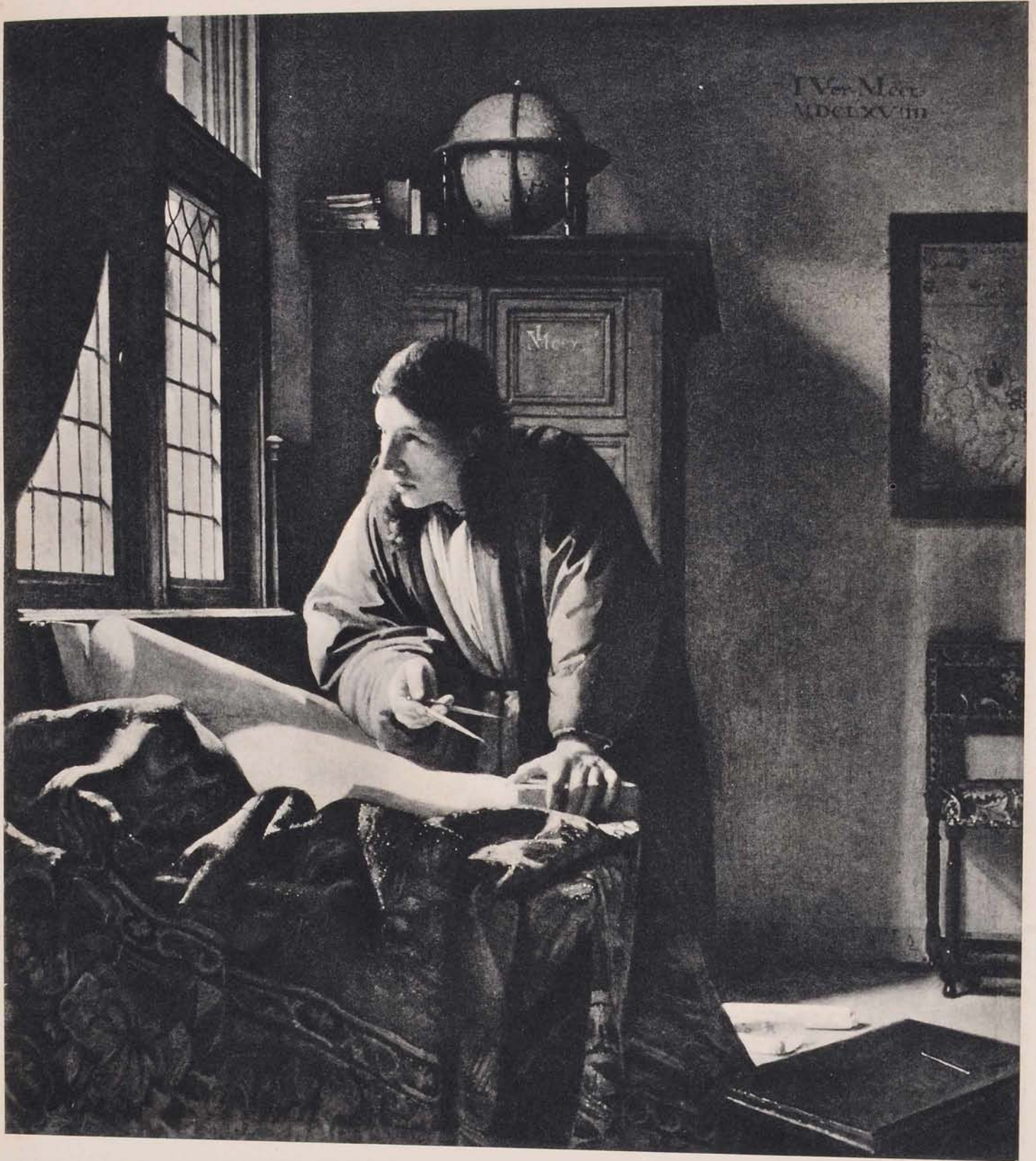
47. A LADY STANDING AT THE VIRGINALS. LONDON, NATIONAL GALLERY



48. A LADY SEATED AT THE SPINET. LONDON, LADY OTTO BEIT



49. THE ASTRONOMER. 1668. FORMERLY PARIS, BARON EDOUARD DE ROTHSCHILD



50. THE GEOGRAPHER. 1669. FRANKFORT ON MAIN, THE STAEDEL ART INSTITUTE



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