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A HISTORY OF AMERICAN ART





A HISTORY OF AMERICAN ART

By
SADAKICHI HARTMANN

In Two Volumes

VOL. I.

Illustrated



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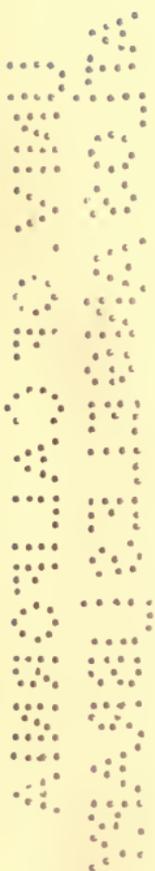
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TO MY UNCLE

Ernst Hartmann

AMONG WHOSE BOOKS AND ART TREASURES
I SPENT MY CHILDHOOD, AND WHOM
I HAVE TO THANK FOR MY FIRST
APPRECIATION OF ART.

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A HISTORY OF AMERICAN ART.

CHAPTER I.

AMERICAN ART BEFORE 1828.

URING the reign of King George III., when the town of Boston had scarcely more than eighteen thousand inhabitants, there hung in the library of Harvard University a copy of the Cardinal Bentivoglio by Van Dyck, painted by John Smybert, the first English artist of any note who settled for a length of time in New England.

This picture, although nothing but a pale reflection of a master-work, served a number of young American painters as chief object of inspiration, — Copley, Trumbull,

Wilson Peale, and Allston copying it in turn,—and may, in this respect, be regarded as the first impetus to the foundation of a native American art.

This fact in itself is significant enough to show the conditions of art resources at the time when young Copley in Boston and the Quaker boy West in Philadelphia made their first venture in the world and their profession. In our day of constant interchange it seems hard to realise the position of a painter in the eighteenth century. There was absolutely no art friction in the atmosphere; the few artists who had achieved anything like excellence, as Malbone, the miniaturist, E. Savage, F. V. Doornick, O. A. Bullard, Pine, the Englishmen Blackburn and Williams, Cosmo Alexander, the teacher of Stuart, and Samuel King, of Newport, the teacher of Allston, could diffuse their sentiments, opinions, and experiences only in most

limited circles. Exhibitions were unknown, and the patronage of the few families who were no longer brought face to face with the elementary problems of existence was confined to portraiture. The majority of painters of this period, as well as that of the early part of the nineteenth century, were "travelling artists," who went forth over the country, painting portraits or sign-boards, decorations for stage-coaches and fire-engines, or whatever else they could find to do for practice and living. The talented artist, who felt a soul struggling within him, was forced to let it expand with no help from his surroundings — indeed in most instances with the very meagrest of mechanical resources.

The New England States, although opposed to art on principle, were after all that part of the country in which signs of literary and artistic activity became

first apparent in sporadic and individual cases.

John Singleton Copley (1737-1815) was the only American artist of this period who did meritorious work before he came under foreign influences. Already as a young man he wielded his brush with more than ordinary dexterity, and revealed himself as a full-fledged personality. His large compositions, "Death of the Earl of Chatham" (at the National Gallery, London) and "The Death of Major Pier-son," which established his fame in England, are painted with a breadth and virility that remotely recall Rembrandt and Franz Hals. The grouping of the numerous portrait figures in the Chatham picture is most skilfully arranged, and the distribution of the high lights on the principal scene of action, on the heads of the numerous figures, and the brown-panelled walls, is handled with astonishing mas-



COPLEY. — FAMILY PICTURE.

tery. His style, simple and matter-of-fact, influenced David to that extent that he suddenly changed his style and painted the death of Marat and Lepelletier in a similar realistic fashion. Of course, Copley's creations were still studio pictures; he stood in no close relation with nature, and could never overcome the hardness of his outlines, but his efforts give us at least half-way artistic reflections of the costume and character of his time. To our art only the portraits which he painted in Boston are of importance. They lead us into interiors of the "royalist era," with carved chairs and showy curtains, peopled with well-to-do men and women, proud of their birth, and lavishly robed in ruffles, silver buckles, gold-embroidered waistcoats, and rich brocade dressing-gowns.

{ Copley's contemporary, Benjamin West (1738-1820), had nothing at all in com-

mon with the development of American art. He left at an early age for England, where he climbed the very pinnacle of social if not artistic success, becoming a personal friend of the king, who almost exclusively employed him as his historical painter from 1767 until 1802, and succeeding Sir Joshua Reynolds in the Presidency of the Royal Academy in 1792. He became responsible for many portraits, and endless historical and Biblical works, which can be studied to the best advantage at the London National Gallery and the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts. His dignified but stilted compositions, like "Christ Rejected" and "Death on the Pale Horse," have become absolutely unpalatable to our modern generation. We appreciate his love for heroic size,—the canvas of his "Christ Rejected" is 200 by 264,—his daring innovation of dressing historical characters in the costume of the



WEST.—BATTLE OF THE HAGUE.

time and country in which they lived ("The Death of Wolfe"), but remain absolutely unmoved by his cold, relief-like drawing and dead, gray colouring. It is rather his picturesque personality than his art which attracts us to-day.

Nevertheless the influence of his career was favourably felt. His success had been so extraordinary that it fired the ambition of many a young American painter. What was possible to a poor Quaker seemed to be also within easy reach of other talents. It served as an encouragement to take up painting as a regular profession. And his native town, Philadelphia, where it was said that the Cherokee Indians taught him the secret of preparing colour, profited the most by it. It was the first city of the Union where opportunities for art growth and a moderate patronage presented themselves. Matthew Pratt and Robert Feke, a Quaker, who enjoyed the

reputation of painting almost as well as West, painted numerous colonial family portraits. Charles Wilson Peale (1741-1829), a man of rare versatility and also a portraitist of some merit, established the first art gallery, a "Museum" of historical portraits, in his residence at the corner of Third and Lombard Streets, Philadelphia, and helped to found the Philadelphia Academy in 1805, whose director he was until 1810.

In the meantime the first two of what we may call "native talents" had exerted themselves in behalf of American painting: Gilbert Stuart (1755-1828) and John Trumbull (1756-1843).

Gilbert Stuart, born at Narragansett, R. I., is one of the most remarkable colourists and portrait painters of modern times, and had for almost a century no superior on this side of the Atlantic. His stay with West in London harmed the origi-

nality of his work in no way; from the very start his art was as delicate and refined as that of his contemporaries Romney and Gainsborough, with whom he successfully competed. Many of the best years of his art life, however, were spent in America, where he painted many notables of the day, among them George Washington, who sat for him three times. (The Vaughan picture belongs to Mrs. Joseph Harrison, Philadelphia, the Lansdowne, a full-length portrait, is at the Philadelphia Academy, and the Atheneum head at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.)

Brilliant colouring, firm yet remarkably free handling, natural, lifelike posing, and an individual conception which dominates all the details of his workmanship, are the striking characteristics of all his pictures. The richness of his flesh-tints, and his unerring precision in modelling the face with-

out the help of lines,— he always remained true to his much quoted maxim, “There are no lines in nature”—all apparently so simple and yet so massive and effective, are astonishing. An inexhaustible virility and ever-buoyant enthusiasm furnished the key-note of his character, and the result was portraits of men and women, who seem alive and imbued with an individual character of their own, even if the colour of their complexion is subject rather to an idealising method than to nature. His brush work as well as his colour — with the exception of those portraits that have of late acquired a curious purplish hue — are as interesting to-day as they were one hundred years ago. He was a past master of his art, and it took almost a century of ceaseless work and endeavour before American painters learned to *paint* again with the same ease and grace as did Gilbert Stuart, when our



TRUMBULL. — BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL.

American art was still in its swaddling-clothes.

Trumbull was quite a different type. He was less richly endowed with natural gifts; with him every accomplishment meant strenuous study, and the less said of his merit as a painter the better. Yet he will always remain dear to us for his glorification of our revolutionary history, for his "Battle of Bunker Hill," "Death of Montgomery," and "Declaration of Independence," reproductions of which are familiar to every child, as no primer of history is published without them. Most of his pictures are in the art gallery of Yale College.

America had now become an independent nation, and everywhere a restless activity set in. The problems of existence had to be solved, new forms of government founded, and manifold incongruous elements welded into one nation.

The growth of our art, however, was rather handicapped than benefited by these conditions. The "royalists," the only ones who could afford the luxury of art, had left the country, and the rest of the population, forced to wrest from fate the right of existence, were too busy with their material welfare to feel anything but indifference for those few assertions of poetic sentiment that now and then appeared on the surface of public life. In the first twenty years of the nineteenth century our art life was still utterly insignificant. But again three men stepped forth who bore upon their brush-tips the honour and progress of American art: Thomas Sully (1783-1872), John Vanderlyn (1776-1852), and Washington Allston (1779-1843).

While the second war with Great Britain was raging in the North, Sully, having chosen Philadelphia for his per-

manent home, rapidly became the most fashionable portrait painter of the day. In forming his style, he had been chiefly influenced by Thomas Lawrence, and like him he portrayed all the fashionable women of his time. Nearly every Philadelphian family with ancestors has to show some of these sweet, musing faces, with their robes draped picturesquely about them, and with nothing to do but to look graceful. At the historical portrait exhibition at the Philadelphia Academy, 1887-88, Sully was represented by one hundred and six pictures, showing great versatility and extraordinary powers of conception and execution. He himself would, no doubt, have been the first to admit that he had done too much, but in that he is not exceptional. Few artists have the heart to refuse commissions, when such are almost thrust upon them, — as was the case with Sully since he had

painted a full-length portrait of Queen Victoria in 1838,—and try for less work, more thoroughly executed.

About the same time that Sully depicted Pennsylvania ladies of fashion, Vanderlyn, living in Rome in the house that Salvator Rosa once occupied, painted his "Ariadne," and Allston was at work in Cambridgeport at his enormous canvas, "Belshazzar's Feast."

In the work of both these men, the influence of Italy is palpable. Many pictures of the old masters, either originals or copies of more or less merit, had been imported from the Italian peninsula during the disturbances which then convulsed Europe, and strongly influenced public taste in their favour. The artists, waiting patiently, but in vain, for the public to come up to their ideals, decided to meet it half-way by studying the Italian methods of painting. And so it became

the fashion for young art students to go to Italy—Henry Bainbridge, a pupil of Mengs and Battoni, was the first—to complete their art studies, as later on they went to Düsseldorf and Barbizon.

But there was little for a painter to learn in Europe at that time, no matter where he went. The art of painting had fallen asleep with the decadence of the Dutch school, and was once more in a lethargic state. It was the time of Davids and Overbecks and Wests, a time devoid of great *painters*. All the teachings of academies and universities tended to monumental art; drawing and composition were mastered solely as the language of ideas, and the human figure was studied chiefly for the expression of narrative or dramatic action. Conceptions so lofty could hardly find an adequate sphere in easel painting, but needed canvas of a larger scale.

Washington Allston represents this school in America. Thanks to Jared B. Flagg, his biographer, we know more about this painter's life and public career than that of most artists. This biography is a very reliable and elaborate work, going into the minutest details. But there is hardly a demand for such a memorial of the painter of "Belshazzar's Feast." Only a certain set of old-fashioned amateurs, who cannot keep pace with the rapid strides of modern art, and who still cling to Allston's memory as to a sort of American Titian, may have looked out for such a book, and now greet it with all the mild enthusiasm left to old age. The younger generation, however, aspiring to understand modern art, which sacrifices ideas and feelings to technical accomplishment, has but little in common with the austere dilettantism of Washington Allston.

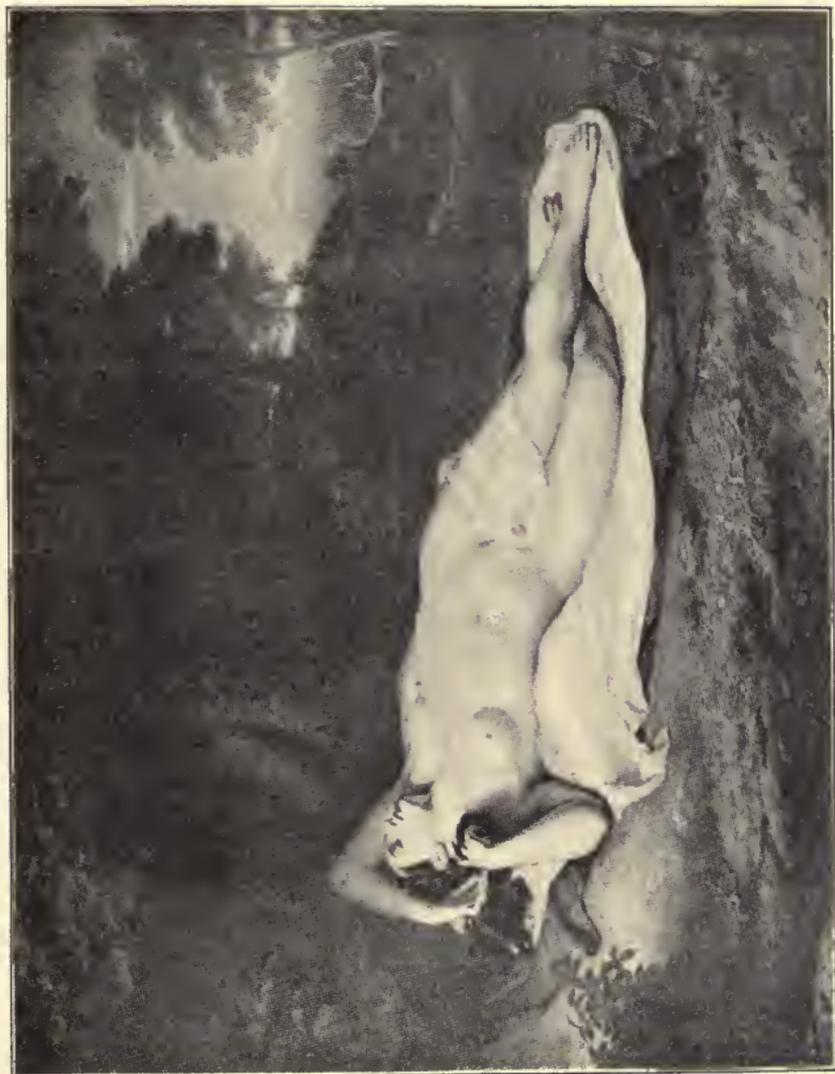
Washington Allston could be treated in a friendly manner without receiving the cult of a demigod and absurd comparison with the cinque-cento masters. As a man of artistic temperament and ambition, he stood high above even the more advanced of his period, and Longfellow's, Lowell's, and Emerson's admiration for him can probably be explained by the sympathy they felt for that quiet enthusiast, whose dreary fate it was to paint "under debt" in Cambridgeport. What a Hades Cambridgeport must have been seventy-five years ago to a man of Allston's character!

And we, standing in the full glare of sunlight, when we look back to the past, and perceive his dignified figure against the dark, sombre background of his unfinished "Belshazzar's Feast," at the Boston Museum, with its heavy architectonic background and life-size figures,—even

the most radical impressionist among us, —should feel something like reverence for that man, who ever shunned popularity and held nothing dearer than his art. Many of our mercenary painters might go to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and learn something of that sublime botcher, who was sincere even when he made such daubs as "Lorenzo and Jessica."

His nobility of character can best be traced in his outline drawings; they are firm, graceful, and competent, but he invariably failed to convey the idea they expressed into his finished pictures, which have but little merit in regard to colouring, values, or modelling. He was an imitator all his life and very often a copyist, as in "The Sisters," where a whole figure is borrowed from Titian's "Lavinia."

He liked the architectonic background of Titian, the Michael Angelo attitudes of Tintoretto, the purity of design of



VANDERLYN. — ARIADNE OF NAXOS.



The Italian influence on all stars

Raphael, and now and then demonstrated in his paintings the result of these studies. Of all his paintings, that are at present in America, his "Angel Liberating St. Peter from Prison," in the insane asylum at Worcester, is the only one that has decided merit. The slender figure of the angel, robed in white, his sweet Raphaelic face, framed in by waves of brown hair, is beautiful, and almost worth a trip to Worcester. His portraits, like those of his mother, and of Coleridge, represent, perhaps, his best work, though they can in no way stand comparison with the portraits of Gilbert Stuart.

A direct outcome of the Italian school was Vanderlyn, who has painted only two pictures of decided merit, "Marius Sitting on the Ruins of Carthage" (in the possession of Bishop Kip, California), medalled personally by Napoleon I. in 1808, and his "Ariadne of Naxos" at the Philadel-

phia Academy. Few painters have ever succeeded in rendering the nude with such purity of expression as in this figure "pillowed upon her arm and raven hair." It is in my opinion the best nude this country has ever produced, and I say this after due consideration of a "Nude" by Fuller and "The Reflection" by Fitz. Many of our modern painters may be technically Vanderlyn's superiors, but the "innocent repose" and "unconscious loveliness" of this Ariadne seem impossible for them to attain. At that time realism was still unknown, and the figure is in consequence an ideal one, but so beautifully modelled and so delicious in its flesh-tints that one willingly misses the modern note. Vanderlyn's technique was in every way sufficient to realise the conception. Only the landscape is of inferior workmanship, but its dark green monotonies form a delightful back-

ground and contrast with the red and the white of the drapery, and the rose tints of the body.

The excellence of the work of some of the men mentioned in this chapter was largely due to foreign influences, and did not combine toward a practical and common end. Each one had to work out his own salvation. Besides they attempted too much. Great epics cannot be accomplished by amateurs. Their gigantic canvases might not have been filled successfully even by a Veronese or Tintoretto. Consequently their talents were not always shown to their best advantage in these ambitious tasks. The less important their work happened to be, the more artistic it seemed to become. Some of the academical studies after the nude by Trumbull are charming, and some of Allston's sketches contain delightful passages.

The joint endeavour to pass to styles more naturalistic and poetical, to endow American art with traits distinctly native, was made during the following fifty years. It was a hard struggle, many mistakes were made, and although the artists wished to rely entirely upon their own technical resources, they never succeeded in freeing themselves from the imitation of foreign conventionalities. Only after years of diltantism were they wise enough to study more advanced foreign styles and develop those complete methods which sustain our present art.

The more astonishing do the few but brilliant efforts of those men who nourished the growth of American art at its beginning appear to us now. The art of few nations can boast of having possessed at the very start one of the most remarkable portraitists of all times and countries, and to have produced, in regard to propor-

tion and symmetry of form and composition, gravity and dignity in motive and conception, one of the best nudes ever painted.

CHAPTER II.

OUR LANDSCAPE PAINTERS.

N the winter of 1828-29, — two years after the National Academy of Design was founded in New York, — Thomas Cole (1801-48), then an absolutely unknown artist, fighting bravely against every form of adversity, held an exhibition of his sketches in New York, and gained immediate recognition among the profession, so much so that John Trumbull, Asher B. Durand, and William Dunlap purchased some of his work and sought his acquaintanceship. These were sketches that he had painted in the Catskills, the banks, rocks, woods, dells and cascades around the neighbourhood of Clove, destined to become the stamping-

ground of so many of his followers. They contained as good work as anything he did later, his observation of the form and outline of nature was even keener at this time, than when his imagination was given a fuller sway.

It was a memorable exhibition, as it gave America its first painter who painted landscapes professionally. Until then Cole had either struggled along, half starving, in Philadelphia or New York garrets, thankful when a customer appeared to buy a picture for ten or twenty dollars, or gone forth over the country, after the fashion of travelling artists, with a green bag over his shoulder containing his painting material and a flute, stopping at taverns and painting a portrait or sign-board in return for board and lodging. Now the hard part of his fight was over; he came into contact with men who had drawn their inspiration from Benjamin West, and who

owned at least lofty ideals, if but little technique. He soon found his way to England, into the studios of Turner, Constable, Lawrence, and other men of note. On his return to this country he, however, showed that he was less influenced by these modern men, who were just establishing their fame, than by the study of Claude Lorraine and Salvator Rosa. He was an ardent scholar of English literature, and the influence of Bunyan and Walter Scott can be traced in all his works. He was the upholder of the imaginative landscape, he transcribed nature with the glance of a poetic imagination, and Bryant and Cooper found much to praise in his works. He was in truth more of a poet than a painter. His drawing was feeble, his sense for colour undeveloped, and his touch hard and dry, like that of most of his contemporaries. He mastered chiaroscuro, however, and

his big canvases show how far nature can be represented by mere light and shade composition. The serious turn of his mind gave at times a religious fervour to his pictures, which commands our respect, even when we fail altogether to appreciate the result. It is difficult for a modern man to appreciate panorama-like sceneries like "The Cross of the World" and his famous serial, "The Voyage of Life" (exhibited in the thirties), the more so as time has darkened their colour beyond retrieve. Yet in all his compositions, particularly in his "Prometheus," "The Architect's Dream," and his serial "The Course of Empire," consisting of five large canvases (now at the Historical Society, New York) and representing a nation's rise, progress, decline, and fall, a rapturous love of nature is evident, and a powerful mind seeking to find expression for some lofty literary ideal. The five pictures represent

the same locality; the first shows the scene at sunrise in spring; the second, the empire in its youth with the sun in the sky; the third, the powerful city with temples, colonnades, and domes at harvest-time; the fourth, the destruction of the city by invaders. The last picture of the serial, entitled "Desolation," has rarely been surpassed in solemn majesty and depth of thought. It represents a gray silent waste, broken by an expanse of water, once the harbour of a mighty city. A solitary moss-grown Corinthian column looms up in the fore-ground; behind it in the distance a temple is seen in ruins. The moon, freeing herself from a stratum of clouds, pours her pale light on the desolate coast land, of which the wildness and solitude of primitive nature has again taken possession.

Thomas Doughty, one of Cole's contemporaries, was also one of the "young

Americans" who attracted favourable notice in England, as well as in his own country. Few men have done so well with so little experience. He was in the leather business until his twenty-eighth year. His pictures, although at times attempting large compositions, were known for their simplicity, their poetic traits, and soft, silvery tones. They are unpretentious as works of art, but the art historian cannot overlook them, exerting as they did an influence on the style of the landscapes that followed them.

The third who has to be mentioned among the founders of American landscape painting is Asher B. Durand (1796-1886), a man of larger technical experience, but of less talent than the two former. He was by profession (until 1835) a steel engraver, one of the most skilful our art ever possessed, but at the same time very successful in entirely different

branches. He painted a head of Bryant, which placed him in rank with the best portrait painters of the time, and his landscapes were so fresh and vigorous in treatment, and so massive in the handling of the backgrounds, that he can with right be regarded as one of the pioneers in this department. The care he had been obliged to give to engraving was, at times, a drawback to perfect mastery, but on the other hand also proved of assistance to him in the composition of lines. He had a keen insight into the individuality of trees, and his oak, sycamore, and butternut studies are very valuable reminiscences of the woodlands he loved so much. His "Edge of the Forest" at the Corcoran Gallery, poetical and dignified in conception, is probably his best known picture. I once saw a little sketch of his, entitled "Garden of Love," a meadow lined with trees and dotted

with figures, which was as free in its handling and as fluid in its colour as if a modern Paris or Munich man had painted it.

Also John F. Kensett (1816-72), like so many artists, was originally an engraver. In the forties he budded forth as a landscapist and soon held a commanding position, but despite several years spent in Europe, notably in Italy, he was technically a mere amateur. His pictures were so thinly painted that they almost appear "flat" to us. Notwithstanding, his pictures, small compositions as a rule, possessed a certain winning tenderness and suggestiveness, rare at that period of our art. He and Sandford R. Gifford were the first to strive for more pleasing colour harmonies and a more careful observation of atmospheric changes, the play of sunlight in the clouds and misty distances. They lacked firmness of drawing, and

their love for niggling details and the brown tonality of their pictures disturbs us, although these lyrical attempts were really forerunners of the modern school, as it was not so much things as feelings that they tried to suggest. In quiet, dreamy coast and Hudson River scenes Kensett's talents were shown at their best. Sandford R. Gifford was specially fond of dusky woodland scenes, the wild scenery of the West, and the Hudson River, with sunset skies, glowing atmosphere, rolling mists, and trailing vapours. Melville Dewey represents the same phase in our present landscape art. One might travel far without having ever an opportunity again to see such a confusion of mists, winds, sunshine, moonlight and showers, and irisate colour effects as in Melville Dewey's confuse and effeminate pictures.

The men of this time, representing the

so called Hudson River school, were in most cases self-taught, and serious, conscientious workmen, with a rapturous enthusiasm for nature, and absolute freedom from sensationalism. Commercialism had not yet interfered with art. Dealers were still unknown, and the interchange of ideas still very limited.

Two men, effected more or less by these conditions, were George L. Brown, of Boston, who devoted his art to Italian scenery and strove for luminosity of colour, and Louis Mignot, of South Carolina, who was one of the first to draw attention to the inexhaustible variety of scenery of our continent. Mignot was one of the most skilled of our early painters in the handling of materials, and commanded a wide range of subjects, and, whether it was the glow of tropical scenery of the Rio Bamba in South America, the rush of iris-circled water at Niagara, or the fairy-like grace

of new-fallen snow, he was equally ambitious in rendering the varied aspects of nature. At the opening of the Civil War he became a resident of England, and perhaps his most important picture, "Snow in Hyde Park," found its place in a private gallery there.

Minor artists of note of that period were, J. W. Casilear, known for his delicate finish; J. A. Suydam, with his pensive bits of nature; S. L. Gerry, whose dreamy, pleasant "Valley of Pemigewasset" attracted considerable attention; R. W. Hubbard, with his New England landscapes; C. P. Cranch, a literatus by profession, who showed in his Venetian pictures a correct perception of colour; and J. R. Meeker, who made a specialty of the lagoons of the South, haunted by pelicans and gaily coloured cranes. All these men show no dash or ingenuity, their work is deficient in drawing, colour, as

well as in tone quality; even in composition and chiaroscuro they were not out of the ordinary. They had not yet learned to wield their brushes with modern dexterity, and still saw nature with the eyes of Lorraine. If I mention their names it is largely because they, after all, played a part, however small, in the development of our landscape art. And it can be said in their favour that they approached their subjects with a reverent and poetic spirit and frequently succeeded in making pictures that were at least pleasant to look at.

More than passing notice is deserved by J. F. Cropsey (1823-1900). I am well aware that his pictures have, of late, been the laughing-stock at the Academy exhibitions, and it is not my object to defend them. Yet it should be recognised that in his *earlier* career — already in the seventies his work did not sustain the early reputation he had justly acquired — his

style had a certain crispness, his colour strength, and his composition an architectural sense (he started life as an architect) for the handling of masses. His "High Tom, Rockland Lake," an autumnal landscape, with the placid surface of the lake, wooded slopes, and a weird light effect behind the curiously sloped mountain peaks, is a masterly composition, and for many years it served as model for the treatment of similar subjects. Undoubtedly art has changed since Cropsey was elected Academician, but I am not so certain whether many of the younger men of the "Society" will not also be considered Cropseys twenty years hence. It is ridiculous to be so narrow-minded as to believe only in one school. Why, in a few years, the impressionists will also "be old fogies," and lament over the inconsistency of art instead of their own visual disturbances.

Those men, however, who had some individuality to express, no matter how stunted it may have been, certainly stand out, and Cropsey is undoubtedly one of them. He was one of the last exponents of that early school of landscape painting, which concentrated its faculties chiefly upon the choice of subject.

Only gradually our landscape painters began to strive for a more faithful, photographic representation of nature, by which process they discovered that their technique was absolutely insufficient for such a task, and they began to travel to Düsseldorf, where, under the leadership of Lesing, a new landscape school had sprung up. The exodus of our young painters to Germany, in the forties, was due largely to the popularity the productions of the romantic school had attained in America. Besides, there was no other goal for the art student; Munich had only a school of

pedantic cartoonists, while in Düsseldorf the technique of painting received some consideration, at least.

Lessing was a man of decided abilities. He did not only possess the qualities necessary for a leader, but was a genuine artist. His influence on our art, however, was rather injurious. True enough, he taught our painters to draw, to make most scrupulous studies for each important picture, and to analyse minutely the construction of tree trunks and branches, of foliage and shrubbery, but his pictures were all painted to please the public, and imbued with a disagreeable sentimentalism, which Carlyle would have called "moonshine." A few of his best pictures, for instance his "Eifel-landscape," possess a rare dramatic intensity, yet the light effects always suggest the stage. Lessing painted ideas like Cole, but with a more perfect tech-



COLE. — THE VOYAGE OF LIFE (CHILDHOOD).

nique, and with a romantic instead of classic tendency. He is also the originator of that peculiar green-in-green tonality, which may be true to nature, but which is hardly ever artistic in its results. I have dwelt at some length on the characteristics of this school, as its influence was very stringent; even Inness could not escape it, and, in the sixties, introduced angels and monks, knights and pilgrims, chapels and shrines, into his compositions.

In 1848 Paul Weber, one of the representatives of this school, came to this country and established himself in Philadelphia, and, after refusing to paint for a newly established art gallery for eight dollars per week, he became one of the most fashionable painters of the day. He was a subject painter, exceedingly amiable in disposition, with considerable technical resources, and clever light effects, which the French would call *cherché* and *raf-*

finé. An example of his work hangs on the walls of the Philadelphia Academy. Among his pupils were W. T. Richards, Schüssel, Shearer, the Hart brothers, and various skilful members of the painter's own family.

For twenty years or more the work of our painters showed the effect of the foreign method. A few of them, true enough, possessed sufficient independence of action to enable them to assimilate rather than imitate, but the pictures made under the Düsseldorf influence were hardly as individual as those of the preceding period, although their workmanship had doubtless been improved by the foreign technique.

Worthington Whittredge and R. M. Shurtleff became the faithful delineators of wood interiors, with the sunlight filtering through the foliage, and their pictures have been prominent on the walls of the Academy to this very day. William and

James Hart also identified themselves with this *vert bête* movement, cattle they only added to their landscape in later years. Many others worked in the same vein, but their names do not need to be mentioned. They showed a keen perception for the beauties of the slopes and vales and woods of our rural districts, but the effect was generally marked by hardness and lack of warmth. Edward Gay (1837-) is one of the few of the old school who succeeded in shaking off the trammels of early art and kept themselves in line with the progressive spirit of our landscape art. His "Broad Acres," for which he received the two thousand dollar prize at the competitive exhibition of the American Art Association in 1887, is at the Metropolitan Museum. The most important representative of this school was perhaps W. L. Sonntag (1822-1900). He developed by the means of a peculiar fibrous brush work

a style of his own. His pictures display an attractive vigour and freshness of execution.

Besides Düsseldorf, England, in particular the Norwich school, in which the weather-beaten trees, old woods, deserted huts, and wastes of heath of Old Crome were so prominent, began to exert an influence on our own art. Constable had no followers at that early date. He died in 1837, and his pictures only became known in the forties and fifties when the Barbizon school was already flourishing. David Johnson, with his rich, massive brush work, faintly suggested the strength of the Norwich men. J. B. Bristol imitated the more delicate phases of their art in the dreamy pastoral meadows, craggy uplands, and dimpling lakes of our Green Mountains, veiled by luminous cloud effects. A. F. Bellows, on the other hand, attempted minute transcripts of the idyllic side of our

rural life. His attractive village pictures, in oil and aquarelle, dotted with New England elms and groups of figures, secured him the title of the American Birket Foster. Chas. H. Miller and P. V. Berry still represent this movement to-day. The former has deservedly won a place in public favour.

The greatest evil of the Düsseldorf movement, its false note of sentimentalism, was avoided by most of the landscape painters (which cannot be said of the figure painters, treated in another chapter). The American mind was too matter-of-fact, and too much interested in its country to lose itself in idle dreams. These two qualities gradually invested the artists with the power to stamp individuality of expression upon their canvases, and caused their successors to develop into the foremost landscape painters of the world, next to those of France.

Again another impetus was felt toward the middle of this century. The discovery of the gold mines of California was a signal for enterprise, not only to commerce, but also to the literature and to the landscape art of the United States. Thousands of enterprising men, beside themselves with excitement, at once started for the gold regions, down to the Isthmus of Panama and up along the western coast, or slowly moved in trains of wagons and ox-carts overland across the country. Taylor and Scott conquered the Pacific, the explorer Fremont pointed out the swelling ranges of the mountains, and our painters began to reveal to us the peaks of the Rocky Mountains, the glory of the Columbia River, and the wonders of the Yellowstone Park. Their great compositions threw the people into an ecstasy of delight, which, at this time, is difficult to

understand. Artists like Albert Bierstadt and Hill bounded, at one step, into popularity.

These painters had lofty conceptions, but not ability sufficient to render them into art; perhaps no one can master the scenic glories of the West. At any rate, it would take a sort of Michael Angelo — gigantic conceptions of a gigantic mind — to do justice to such stupendous tasks. The smaller pictures of these explorers of the West were generally by far more valuable for their artistic qualities than the larger ones, by which they became popular.

Pictures like Bierstadt's "Rocky Mountains," Hill's "Yosemite Valley," and Thomas Moran's "Gorge of the Yellowstone" (at the Capitol) look very much like gigantic chromo-lithographs to us.

The only technical benefit we gained by it was the mastery of perspective and

a constructive power, which found its strongest interpreter in Thomas Moran (1837-). Our Western scenery, with its clear atmosphere which preserves every aerial gradation, making it possible to see patches of snow on the forest line of mountains at a distance of ten miles, encouraged perspective views and a closer observation of the architecture of nature, and the whole profession profited by it. And that these men taught us to appreciate the beauties of our own countries is their final everlasting merit. It was the reason why we succumbed neither to the Düsseldorf platitudes, nor lost ourselves in sheer imitation of the Belgian school.

Frederick E. Church (1826-1900), born at Hartford, Conn., was the first to explore the vastnesses of our country. And he did not limit himself to the West, but roamed through South American wilds as well as classic lands on the Mediter-

ranean shores. A pupil of Cole, he has carried to full fruition the aspiration of his master, and occupied the same high place in the second period of our landscape art as the painter of "Desolation" did in the first. He also gained his first inspirations along the shores of the Hudson and amid the beautiful regions of the legendary Catskills. He was infinitely closer to nature than his master, but she only interested him in her little known and more remarkable and startling effects. He had no conception whatever of the *paysage intime*. He drew to himself the spoils, the riches, the splendour of the whole round globe, and yet all his pictures are noteworthy for an absence of sensationalism and staginess, from which even Inness is not always free. The only fault we can find with them is a somewhat too careful reproduction of details, which, however, has not prevented him from

massing his effects to rare beauty and even sublimity.

A picture like his "Niagara" (1857) at the Corcoran Gallery disarms criticism. The green flood pours into an abyss veiled by mist. The sky is of a rosy gray, the distant shore is lined with the glowing tints of October foliage, and the ethereal vision of a rainbow unites heaven and earth,—indeed, a picture before which one can pause in pensive dreams. What majesty there is in the strangely illumined peak of the Cayambe ('58) at the Lenox Library! It radiates the inner light of the restless, ever unsatisfied soul of a genius, born at a time when few painters painted really well, and who himself, self trained as he was, could never overcome the technical weakness of his school.

What an epic of the grander aspects of the external world is nevertheless his

“Ægean Sea!” What noble sympathy with nature is shown in this vast Claude Lorraine like expanse of land and water, in the snow-covered peaks of the distant mountain range, the shore dotted with columns and ruins of palaces, and the two rainbows which spurt geyser-like into the sky.

True, he was not one of the masters of the brush, but he painted well enough to express with charm as well as clearness the impressions he received, and these were the impressions of a very individual artist. Had his growth been assisted by stronger outside influences, he would doubtlessly have reached superior technical skill; but something of the personality of his manner might have perished. So we are content with his shortcomings, as the verdict is still a very high one. W. H. Osborn, Newark, N. J., owns Church’s “Chimborazo,” “Andes of Ecua-

dor," "Tropical Moonlight," and "Ægean Sea." His "Cotopaxi" is at the Lenox Library.

While Church taught the people to love beauty and to find it among the remotest regions, the fever of the California rush had not yet subsided, and it was the desire of every ambitious artist to take life into his hands and explore the West. Walter Shirlaw made a Western trip in 1859, and Thomas Moran stayed for many months among the titanic gorges of the Yellowstone River and the lurid splendour of its sulphurous cliffs and steaming geysers. The latter is a man of fervid imagination, and unrivalled in ambitious compositions that cover a vast territory. His knowledge of form and constructive ability is quite remarkable, and his skill in compositions reveals itself best in the black and white reproductions of his works. His Venetian scenes

are too Turner-esque to be considered more than clever adaptations.

Next to Church, Thomas Hill, of Taunton, Mass., originally a coach painter, became the leading representative of this school. Although his wood interiors of Fontainebleau are perhaps his best, his name in the future will always be identified with California. He became the painter of the Rocky Mountains and the Yosemite Valley, those regions where "the roar of the whirlwind and the noise of thunder reverberated like the tread of the countless millions who evermore moved westwards." Hill has taken no liberties with his subjects, but has endeavoured to convey a correct impression of the scenery. He found a worthy successor in W. Keith, since his twenty-first year a resident of San Francisco. One of his best pictures, "Mount Hood, Oregon," is at the Brooklyn Institute. In

his smaller work he shows at times a good deal of imaginative fancy. Charles Rollo Peters represents the California scenery with a technique that shows the characteristics of current art. In his moonlights he sees nature with the eyes of a poet.

Our landscape painters had, by this time, become masters of drawing, construction, perspective, composition, and chiaroscuro, their sense of colour had also grown more pronounced, but their pictures still lacked tonality. The importance of local values was still overlooked, the brush work still very monotonous, and the picture itself without suggestive qualities.

In 1865 a collection of English water-colours was exhibited in New York. It attracted much attention, and although a few artists like J. M. Falconer had already used the medium here, this seems to have

been the first incentive to our artists to devote themselves seriously to water-colour painting. A society headed by such men as Samuel Coleman and Swain Gifford was formed, and a school of artists, finding expression wholly in water-colours, like Henry Farrar, sprung up.

Samuel Colman was one of our first painters of Oriental phenomena. He spent many years in Spain, Morocco, France, Italy, and Switzerland. His pictures were noteworthy for their sweet and harmonious colouring and picturesque composition. Henry Farrar belonged to a little clan of artists and literati, including Clarence Cook and Charles Eliot Norton, who posed as Preraphaelites, although they had nothing in common with the English school but their loving study of details, and the publication of a magazine, *The New*

Path, in imitation of *The Germ*. They had chosen the same region which had inspired the first landscape school in America, the Catskills, as headquarters, and there the best work of Farrar, Chas. Moore, and the two Hills, father and son, was executed.

About 1860 the fame and the glory of the Barbizon school began to excite American artists, and under its rejuvenating influence the Rocky Mountain school soon paled into insignificance. Thomas Moran and Hill still continued to be ardent partisans of this school, but with the exception of Keith, Horace Robbins, successful in seizing certain aspects of mountain scenery, James and George Smillie, with their delightful facility in handling colour, and a younger painter by the name of Parshall, who approaches these subjects with the spirit and treatment of the modern landscape school,

little of note has been done during the last forty years.

The new school was of an entirely different character. The Hudson River and Rocky Mountain schools had dealt wholly with externals, and the subject had been the first and last end sought; now nature itself, the poetry and mystery of its simpler moods, became the leading motive of our landscape art.

Michel, Millet, Rousseau, Dupré, and Corot, each having a style that can be distinguished at the first glance, had one trait in common. They sought to suggest the symbolical meaning which the human mind associates with the aspects of hills and skies, of autumnal woods and lonely ponds and moorlands fading into space. They saw in nature moods in sympathy with the human soul.

There were two men who painted landscapes in a way which could hardly be

understood at that period, when size was one of the implements to success, Elihu Vedder and A. P. Ryder. The first was in his early landscapes more of a painter than ever afterward, when his canvases gained more and more an illustrative quality. Compositions like "The Refuge" are full of deep suggestions and weird attempts in psychology of colour. Ryder, although largely known as an interpreter of the poetic in paint, has achieved many of his earlier successes in landscapes. One must gaze at his "Lowlands near Highbridge" to know how well he understood how to endow a single subject with rare suggestiveness. Another picture I remember represents an old country house with light glowing in the casements. They are notable for their mellowness of tone and severity of composition. In many of his recent paintings the landscape also plays the most prominent part, but pure



VEDDEK. — LANDSCAPE.

landscapes are becoming rather rare with him. The last to leave his studio was his "Forest of Arden," finished in 1897.

These two men represented the imaginative landscape, which only existed in their own fancies. The true artist, unlike the commonplace painter, who shows us things that we have seen and felt in the same way ourselves, selects more subtle and yet more typical facts, explains them with poetic fervour, shows us things which we have probably not noticed before, and makes them for ever ours. But this can also be accomplished by a more truthful and poetical rendering of local scenery; at this task Jarvis McEntee (1828-91) put himself. His gray melancholy autumnal scenes, wild reaches of russet woodland, with skurrying clouds, are true to nature, and, at the same time, a reflection of his temperament. His art sings in a low minor key,

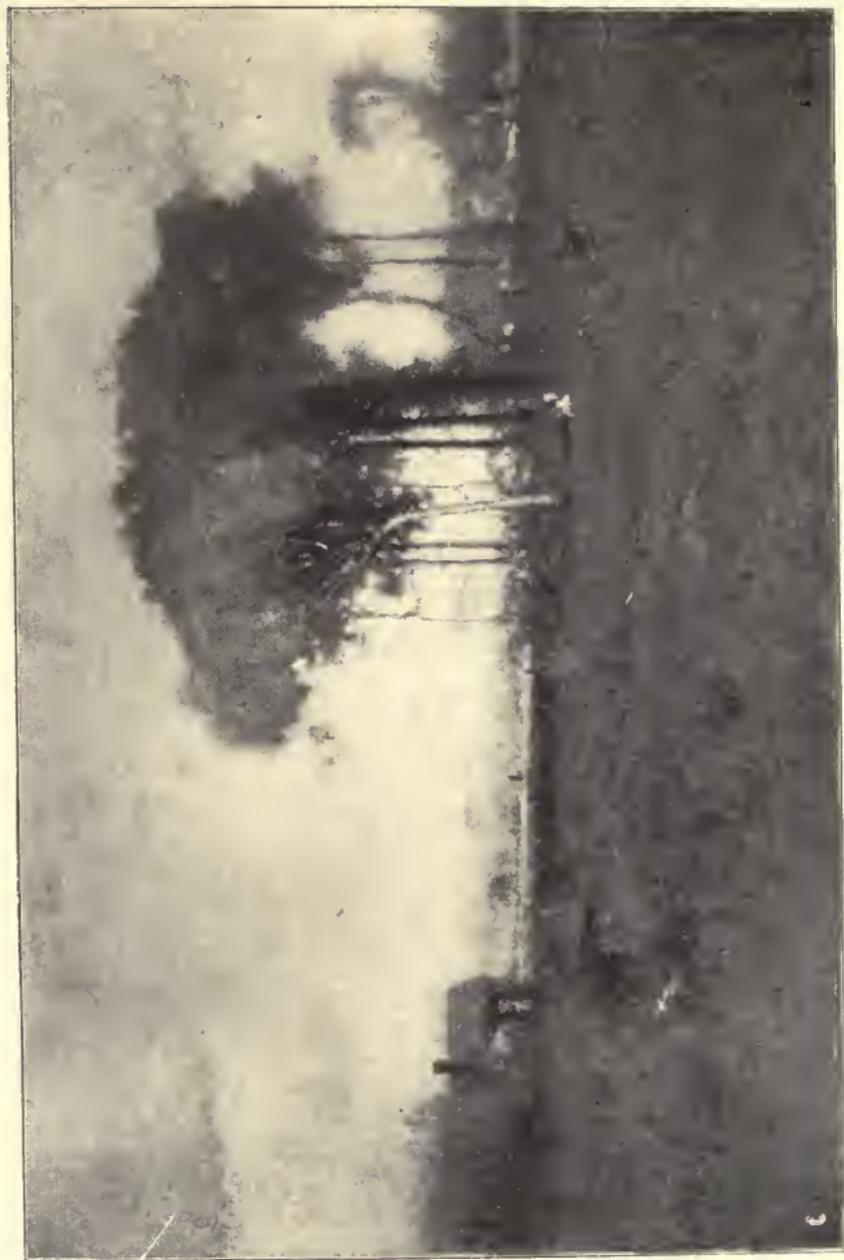
that finds response in our heart. His compositions have already that harmony of line and masses which distinguishes the Barbizon school. To the left, in the middle distance, a pond, bordered by two trees with autumn foliage, two smaller masses of shrubbery of similar shape, as accompaniment, behind it wooded ranges which slope down to the right affording a vista of the sky; to the right, in the foreground, some vegetation sprinkled with flowers, from which a defoliated tree rises in an oblique line against the sky. That is an example of his style of composition. His outlines, modelling, local colours were still far from perfect, but the general effect of his elegies of falling leaves was a decided advance toward perfection. The disagreeable green at last began to disappear from the canvases. Landscape art consisted, as Edmond About wrote, "in choosing well a bit of country, and

painting it as it is, enclosing in its frame all the naive and simple poetry which it contains." ¶ Hamilton Hamilton painted his woodland scenes with cattle browsing in the rich meadows, Swain Gifford his picturesque views of the Massachusetts coast, and Donoghue Rogers depicted autumnal forest scenes at times with such poetic truth that our ears seemed filled with the soft rustling of the leaves.

Paris now became the centre of attraction, and the advantages our landscape art gained thereby were shown in two artists, W. L. Picknell and Charles H. Davis, who were competent technicians. W. L. Picknell (1853-97) strove for brutal truth, he joined the school of open-air workers, and painted his pictures directly from nature. His "On the Borders of the Marsh"—a November day in a Brittany field, with the characteristic gnarled trees, overgrown with ivy and mistletoe, and

the broad earthen fences peculiar to that region — is most vigorous in its treatment, and peculiar for the way in which he encrusted the surface of the picture with thick lumps of paint. Later on he modified this crude appearance of his brush work, and in his "Road to Concarneau," which attracted great attention at the Paris Exhibition of 1880, and "In California," it is entirely subordinated to his sole desire of depicting nature just as it is. To suggest anything beyond topographical and atmospheric truths lay beyond his powers. He excels in the illusion which he can give of reality; and his beach scenes, white sand basking in the glowing sun, impress at the first glance like reality itself.

Charles H. Davis (1856-) is his very antipode. He also cares for reality, but it is not his principal aim; on the contrary, he subordinates it entirely to those



From a Copley Print. — Copyright, 1889, by Curtis & Cameron.
INNESS. — GEORGIA PINES.

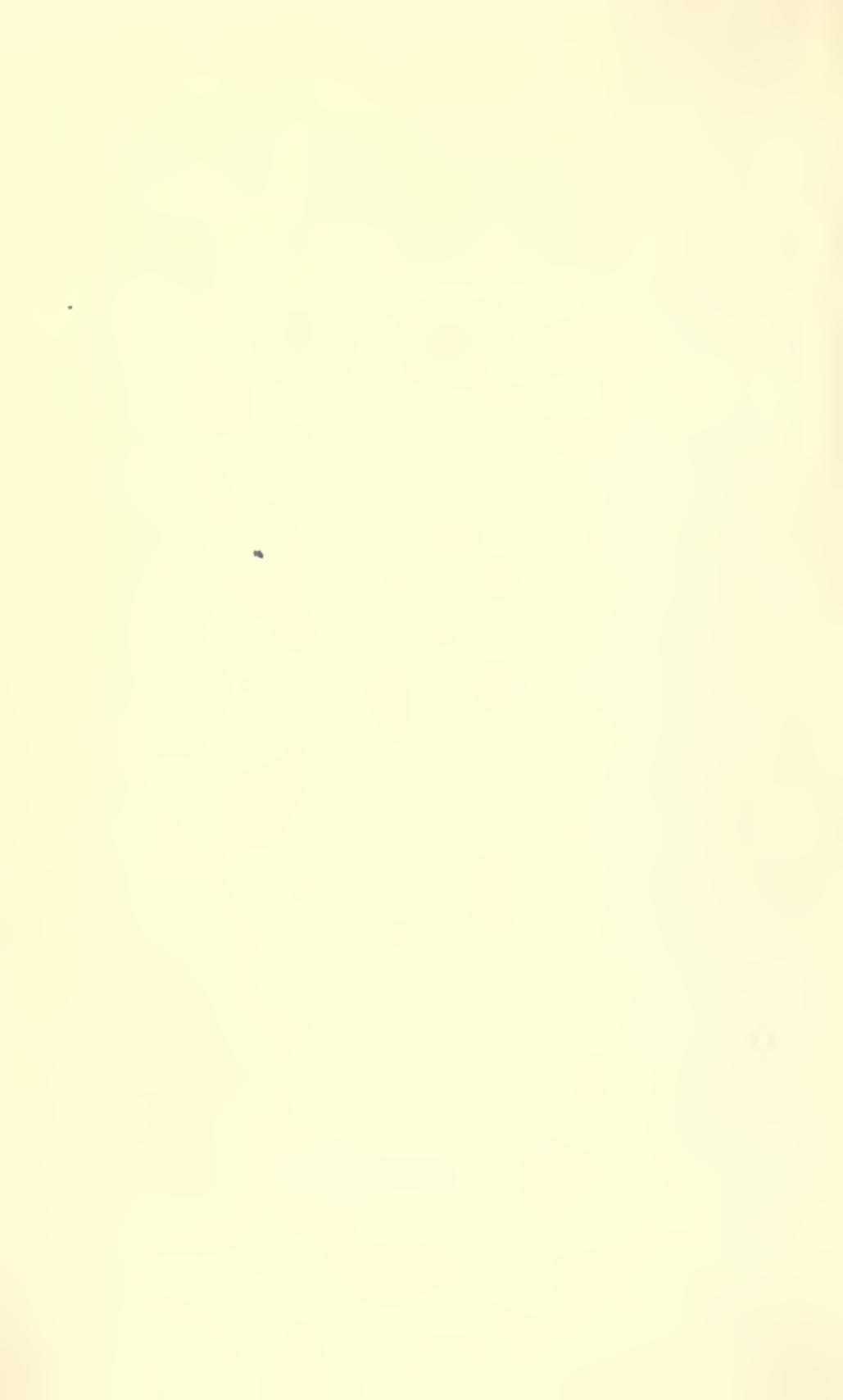
qualities which arouse sentiment in the spectator. He wants his pictures of Night and Twilight to impress like night and twilight itself. At the Paris Annual Exhibition of 1878 he covered himself with glory with his four pictures, "Un Soir d'Hiver," "Le Soir après L'Orage," "Le Versant de la Colline," and "La Vallée en le Soir;" in particular the latter one, which represented a green valley, invaded by the all-encroaching gloom of twilight, with a white cloud stealing softly over the expanse of verdure. The melancholy of stillness and the mystery of night are perfectly rendered. His pictures are at once realistic and lyrical, and infused with the same emotions that they provoke in the soul of the spectators. He proved himself a strong personality, and gave promise to be one of our greatest landscapists. His later work, more realistic and less lyrical,

which he now and then sends forth from his reclusory in Mystic, Conn., hardly comes up to the work by which we know him best: his "Late Afternoon" at the New York Union League Club, "The Brook" at the Philadelphia Academy, and the "Evening" at the Metropolitan Museum.

A decided step in advance was made by A. H. Wyant (1836-92), born at Port Washington, Ohio. Less subjective and morbid than McEntee, but moved by similar motives, Wyant displayed a sympathy with nature and a masterful skill in depicting subtle effects which place him among the first landscape painters of the age. In the suggestive rendering of space and colour, of the multitudinous phases of a bit of waste land, or mountain glen, or sedgy brook-side, simple enough at first sight, but full of infinite unobtrusive beauty, he was unsurpassed. His



WYANT. — ON THE BEAVER.



pictures are equally distinguished by truth, vigour, and delicacy, and by their breadth of feeling and poetic treatment.

There is a spirit in Wyant's pictures akin to that found in Corot's works, noticeably in the vague melancholy and dreamy tenderness, a reflection of the inner life of the artist, which pervades the multitude of details, he managed to introduce without harming the central and prevailing idea. He was the direct outcome of the *paysage intime* and one of its truest exponents. Occasionally his work shows traces of foreign influence, principally Dupré and Corot, but he was an artist of too much original power, a too careful observer of nature, to have been under any necessity to stunt himself by the imitation of another artist, however great. He struck with marvellous precision the point between the real and ideal, where we still accept a picture as a

faithful transcript of nature and yet are charmed by its poetic suggestiveness. His dexterity of handling, however, did not always suffice. Several of his pictures can be seen at the Metropolitan Museum.

In the meanwhile, George Inness (1825-97), who is generally considered our greatest landscape painter, and which honour he undoubtedly shares with Homer Martin and D. W. Tryon, had bravely struggled for recognition. In 1875, at the age of fifty, he was still unknown. At last in about 1878 he began to be appreciated, whereupon he rapidly climbed the ladder of fame. His pictures brought enormous prices, and the rapidity with which their value increased can best be noticed in his "A Gray Lowery Day," which he sold for three hundred dollars in 1879, and which was purchased by Henry Sampson, Esq., for \$10,150 in 1889.

Inness was born at Newburgh, N. Y. He was a pupil of Regis Gignoux, a Frenchman who had a great admiration for the Barbizon school. In 1846 Inness set himself up in a studio in New York, and in 1850 went abroad, where he became acquainted with Corot and Rousseau, and enjoyed for a time the close companionship of Millet.

The paintings of his youth bore the marks of the Hudson River school; they look pedantic and laboured, and are overcrowded with details. Only now and then a burst of light revealed the genius struggling for expression. His second style seems to have caused him great difficulties; there is a period in which his genius was under a cloud, when he chose various of his popular contemporaries as his models. From these recollections and uncertainties he freed himself only gradually, learning step by

step to seek inspiration in himself alone. The latter period is the only one which interests the art critic.

A visit to the gallery of R. H. Halsted, which was sold at auction in 1895, was a revelation to every art lover. In the works of no other artist do we find such feeling for the poetry of our country and perfection of representation united to the same degree. With admirable drawing he combined a knowledge of chiaroscuro in its most multifarious aspects, a colouring powerful and warm, and a mastery of the brush which, while never too smooth on the surface, ranges from the tenderest, most minute touch to the broadest, freest, and most liquid execution. His work was always very uneven, because he was first of all an artist who made use of his landscapes to express his own moods and dreams; he put in them his own feelings, like Homer Martin, only the latter was a

painter of his own bitterness and weariness of life which he managed at times to transfer into a style of beauty and repose, while Inness made his picture reflect more the mental condition, the imaginings derived from the study of other arts. He expressed through landscapes those obscure but powerful emotions which, for want of a better term, we call the dramatic in art.

He delighted especially in representing a wide expanse of land, which was always a trait of the best of American landscapes. He had the widest range of subjects at his command, he was interested in every phase of scenery, he loved every season and every hour of the day, and grew enthusiastic over every aspect of nature, from the simplest to the most startling phenomena. The titles of his pictures, "Georgia Pines," "Sunset on the Passaic," "The Wood Gatherer," "After

a Summer Shower," "The Delaware Valley," "Winter Morning at Montclair," etc., show best the variety of his subjects. His art is rather difficult to study now; formerly it was owned by a few men like Messrs. Clark, Halsted, etc., but lately has been considerably scattered, the public galleries having but little to show of his best work.

Unlike McEntee, who, whenever he introduced figures into his landscapes, represented them as struggling against some unrelenting destiny, Inness used them merely as incidents, as parts of the wholeness of nature. He was most attracted by idyllic scenes and the calmer moods of nature, and, although he needed threatening skies and wild tempests to give full play to his dramatic temperament, he carefully avoided all sinister appalling spectacles, from which, if encountered in reality, one might flee with a shudder of

horror and alarm. The note of sublimity was very seldom sounded in our landscape art, and then only in scenes of silent and peaceful grandeur.

Inness idealised all his creations with his magical light effects. Such deep luminous lights had never been seen before on American canvases.

Ever since the sixties he poured over all his canvases a dazzling radiance, which at times seems almost unearthly. His pictures glow with strange and noble harmonies, of the sun struggling through clouds after a shower of rain, with rainbows of ineffable beauty, with the glow of chariots of fire that race through the evening sky.

He worked like a virtuoso, always trying to realise the original inspiration in one daring effort, which he usually carried to a certain state of perfection, and if it did not please him in that state,

he did not start over again, but at once tackled a new idea. He did not allow himself the time to work on one canvas for years, slowly maturing the idea. His ardent temperament was always in the search for something new, and this feverish haste often made his work appear melodramatic, and induced him to apply mannerisms of glazing and scumbling bright colour over darker ones, which otherwise might have been avoided.

Few have carried the landscape to such a pitch of art as has George Inness. He became in his old age a marvellously dexterous painter, especially proficient in rendering sunlight with a brilliancy never surpassed. Then he became a master of atmosphere, in which he had been merely great before, and added the poetry of colour to the perfection of drawing.

But the last word had not yet been said. Our landscape art was still in the

ascent, and Homer Martin and D. W. Tryon were the men who brought it to its highest pinnacle of perfection. The innovation of impressionism, however, was necessary toward this steady progress. Manet, Monet, Renoir, Sisley, and Pissaro had painted their mosaics of open-air tones. For years they had had no other outlet for their works than the gallery of Durand-Ruel, when at last, about 1885, the public began to find them "less bad." A visit to one of their exhibitions was like stepping out of a room into the sun. Colours of such violence and vibrating joy had never been seen before. One felt as if standing in the midst of a fire, with lambent flames on all sides. Painting had been blind, and now opened its eyes for the first time. It had lived in darkness, and now suddenly saw the sun rising.

And these colour-orgies triumphantly

entered the studios of all countries, and proved a particular stimulant to landscape painting, by heightening the "key" of all succeeding productions. The Americans were quick in recognising the merits of this movement, but it remained more or less an experiment with them. They adopted neither the dots of the *pointillists*, put on in huge wafers, the pear-shaped spots of the *poirists*, the commas of Monet, the streaks of Besnard, nor the cross-hatchings of Raffaëlli, but modified one or the other method, or a combination of several to their special use. Enneking, the late Jacob Wagner, E. Barnard, and Hayden, of Boston, Shearer, of Philadelphia, Taylor, E. Lawson, Meteyard, and W. Robinson are some of the disciples of impressionism, whom I have encountered in this country.

Childe Hassam applies at times the genuine Monet technique to great advantage. He is undoubtedly our foremost

impressionist since the decease of Theodore Robinson.

Theodore Robinson (1852-96) was strictly termed a neo-impressionist. He accepted the innovation of colour, light, and moving life, and the impressionist theory that the first consciousness we receive of an object consists of a confusion of colour dots. But he painted merely in prismatic colour strokes, varying in size according to the subject. A broad mass of colour seemed opaque to him, and only a juxtaposition of pure colour spots capable of vibration and life. He spent the years 1884-88 with Monet, at Giverny, and then returned to this country, devoting himself to the Delaware and Hudson River Canal scenery. What correct, accomplished prose that man wrote with his brush! One has only to look at his "A Bridge" at John Gellatly's gallery, at the exquisite nude in the pos-

session of Doctor Kelsey, N. Y., at his "In the Sunlight" at the Grand Union Hotel, N. Y., and his "Hudson River Canal," refused by the Metropolitan Museum, to which it was offered as a gift. How concise he was in his mannerisms, and what vital studies he painted with his sick and wasted body, for he was an incurable invalid. He executed no commonplace transcripts of nature, but canvases which glow and vibrate with nature itself, or, in other words, pictures which give one the same impression that a real sunlight scene does at the first glance. He was the most robust craftsman of this school we have had in America.

A peculiar phenomenon in our art is presented by Maria à Becket, who, in moods of religious ecstasy, with so intense an energy as to raise blisters at her finger-tips, paints impressionistic sketches which would have gained her a reputation

in Europe long ago. Although she is of frail build, she has the vigorous touch of a man. After having associated with men like Homer Martin, W. M. Hunt, and Daubigny, she invented a pallet-knife style of her own, in which she slaps on pure colours in a wild *improvisatore* fashion. Her range of subjects embraces all zones and atmospheric phenomena. Her strongest pictures, however, depict live-oaks spreading their vast arms like groined arches of Gothic cathedrals, festooned with the mystically trailing folds of the Spanish moss, along the lagoons of the South, with water so truly realistic in its effect that one is tempted to dip one's finger into it. She seldom exhibits, but various art lovers and critics have been attracted by her work.

The Manet impressionism of seeing things flat, as broad masses, has also influenced our landscape art considerably.

Henri, Redfield, Schofield have painted landscapes in that fashion.

To Manet and Monet, and above all else to Millet, who transferred landscapes back into the black, rough soil of reality, we owe the present frugality in the choice of subjects. The simplest rural scenes, such as fields and meadows, the corner of a garden, a vista through woodland, old orchards and humble country homes, an old fence or a clump of trees, a lonesome road, or a row of trees against the luminous sky, etc., are sufficient to serve as mediums for expressing the beauties of nature "as seen through an artist's temperament."

The singular blending of original expression with a conscious or unconscious tendency to copy contemporary foreign style and methods, is still rampant, although the more serious men are succeeding more and more in freeing themselves from such an influence. Land-

scape painting is undoubtedly the most popular branch of our art, and the one most encouraged by the dealers. A foreign artist is said to have once remarked at an Academy exhibition: "Why, it seems to me that American artists paint nothing but landscapes." And it really impresses one so. Every exhibit contains landscapes of all styles, from Gainsboroughs down to Cazins, imitations or adaptations. And any amount of diluted Diaz', Duprés, Corots, and Rousseaus. The canvases of R. C. Minor, Julian Rix, and H. W. Ranger almost in every instance bear reminiscences of the Barbizon school. They know every trick of the trade, and their work impresses one as being decidedly too clever. Ranger's "Morning at Highbridge," however, is a picture of considerable solidity and breadth. The pictures of Appleton Browne, simple bits of nature in greenish gray, always remind

one somewhat of Corot, due to a long servitude to this poet of the brush.

We may regard R. A. Blakelock (1847-) as a direct descendant of Rousseau. He had a strong personality, however, and his peculiar canvases, painted with a skewer such as the butchers use, blackened with madness and illumined with a weird tearful moonlight, — insufficient as they may be in many respects, — are at least the original expression of a soul.

Besides these imitators there are a number of men who excel only in one phase of nature, which never grows uninteresting even if reproduced in a hundred variations. In the case of J. J. Enneking, of Boston, it is the representation of autumnal forest land behind which the sun is setting in a fierce glow of red and orange colours; with Bolton Jones the melancholy poetry that pervades autumnal scenery;

and with J. F. Murphy the passion for desolate wind-tossed plains shrouded in storm-laden clouds.

Water-colour painting enjoys great popularity. Many of our leading men, like Winslow Homer, Shirlaw, La Farge, F. S. Church, and the majority of our landscapists, in particular A. Schilling and Horatio Walker, are as successful in aquarelle as in oil, but make no specialty of it. The large bulk of water-colours, however, serve strictly commercial ends. The work of comparatively few water-colourists is characterised by any individuality or strength. If we mention the names of S. P. R. Triscott, Sears Gallagher, and Ross Turner, all three New England artists, C. C. Curran, Albert Herter, A. E. Sterner, W. L. Lathrop, Clara McChesney, and Rhoda Holmes Nichols, who has often proved herself a master in this medium, we have all but exhausted the

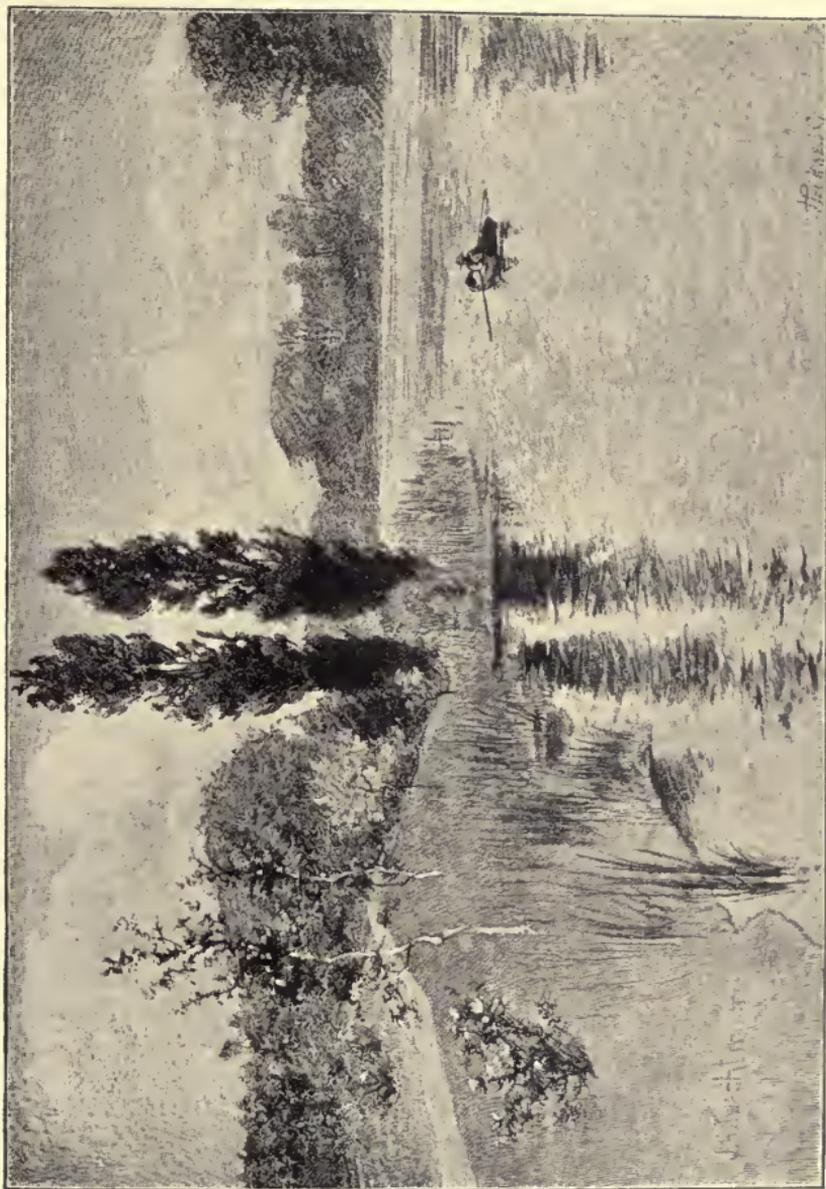
subject. There are two men, however, who have something special to say. H. B. Snell is our foremost water-colourist. Thoroughly original, pure and delicate in tone, he makes us feel in his pictures something of the intensity with which he is himself impressed by nature. What would an exhibition be without his delicate colour harmonies and subtle poetical fancies? He once said to me: "I do not quite understand your clamour for high art; I am not in it." That was very modest of a man who is decidedly "in it," and in this particular branch of art almost alone in it. If life were not so short, and its interests so manifold, I could gaze for hours at pictures like "A Cove," a quiet nook formed of stalwart rocks, crowned with a sunlit plain cradling a sheet of water, on which a dim sail is drifting, or at his "Moonlight" (both exhibited at the New York Water Colour Society, 1898), a

marvellous skyscape over a simple cottage, all bathed in a silvery fairylike colour. C. A. Needham (1844-), also active as a landscape and street-scene painter, is another expert water-colourist. A few trees reflected in a pool of water, a sloping hill, some shrubbery, and a sky faintly flushed with blue or rose, suffice him to suggest both poetry and mystery. The chief characteristic of his style is a love for beautiful colour. Every work of his brush reveals an originality of artistic expression, alike in composition and decorative effect. In his smallest sketches there are always noticeable qualities of colour, and an impression so true and broad as to never fail to recall nature. For melody and grace of conception and execution Needham's art stands almost unique. In his most recent work the colour is almost too sombre and the mystic quality still more pronounced.

The Japanese influence can be traced

in the work of Sargent Kendall, whose sketches have all the characteristics of Japanese landscape art without possessing its primal virtue, the power of suggestiveness, and J. H. Twachtman, whose atmospheric effects have a distinction of tone and a delicacy of colour comparing favourably with the exquisite colouring of Hiroshige. He perpetuates the spirit, the depths of atmosphere, the light, the movement, the exquisite feeling of pulsating nature, particularly in those moods where sharp details are merged into more tender harmonies. A. B. Dow, who draws American landscapes in the manner in which an artist of Old Japan might have drawn them, will be commented upon at length in another chapter.

Among the artists who have a special fondness for line composition and the vastness of nature are Stephen Parrish, L. Ochtman, and C. A. Platt (1861-).



TWACHTMAN. — THE POPLARS.

Stephen Parrish excels in winter scenes and the misty, dreary, drowsy side of nature. Ochtman, whom George Inness admired and predicted a future for, is an artist of brilliant parts, and one who, although sometimes inclined to sensationalism, has undoubtedly created some splendid compositions. My favourite, however, is C. A. Platt. His landscapes are true observations of nature, with a decided touch of poetic feeling, dreamlike and gilded with classicism. These men have a certain preciseness of treatment in common, that gives dignity to their spacious landscapes, which, however, lack warmth of feeling, and, at times, look rather empty.

Among the men whom it is more or less difficult to classify are many who, without attaining the highest rank, give us much that is pleasing, much that is poetic, and occasionally some examples of

the first order. A man who stands out distinctly is Morgan McIlhenny (1858-). We feel at once here is a man behind the canvas. He is inspired by the quiet tones of gray days in fields and meadowlands, and understands how to imbue the simplest scenes with a certain idyllic feeling. He struggles very hard for expression, he lacks freedom and strength, yet what a delicious silvery tone can be found in some of his pictures. Another man of merit was the late Charles Linford, of Philadelphia, who took Diaz for his model and then went out-of-doors and composed his pictures, going from place to place, now setting his easel up for a tree or a road, then for a fence, etc., until the picture was finished. His greens were very vigorous, and his use of bitumen was exceedingly skilful. Boston has two landscapists of decided talent: C. H. Woodbury, fond of choosing his subjects from

the rolling sand-dunes of New England, although he is equally successful in other subjects, with a preference, however, for undulating land; and C. E. L. Greene, an earnest and enthusiastic worker, by far too little known, whose pictures show a vigorous, free handling, a fine conception of colour, and a delicacy of feeling that places him among our leading landscape painters.

Among the landscapists whom we can study at the regular art exhibitions are Charles W. Eaton, who always manages to paint a pleasing picture and to appear poetical; W. M. Chase, whose landscapes of the Shinnecock hills sometimes contain delightful passages; Lungren, who explores the sedge deserts of Arizona; J. A. Prichard, the depicter of wild-flower life, with backgrounds of trees that remind one of temples and sacred woods; G. H. Dearth, favourably known for his wood-scenes and sand-dunes in bluish twilight

tones, shimmering with the light of the afterglow; Arthur Parton, who in former years depicted some of the sober effect of our gray November days, but who, lately, like Homer Lee and Charles A. Needham, in his more realistic moods, has been searching for picturesque bits around New York. His "Palisades in Winter" deserve special praise.

There are many more, who devote their lives with enthusiasm to the pursuit of landscape painting, but it would be an impossible task to mention all. Among the younger men, however, there are four who seem to challenge attention, for the fact that, although they have not yet developed a distinct style of their own, they seem to possess sufficient individuality and skill to accomplish the task, and may, perhaps, be destined to play an important part in the future development of our landscape art. They are F. de Haven,

W. L. Lathrop, F. Kost, and Alexander Schilling.

F. de Haven (1856-), in his earlier career, possessed exquisite tone quality, lately he strives more for colour and dramatic intensity. His subjects are simple and poetical: the last glow of the sun, a windy day, a threatening sky, or struggling clouds throwing a stream of light on the plain, etc., furnish the principal themes of his pictures.

F. Kost (1861-), whose canvases were formerly aglow with radiant colours, has sobered down to gray harmonies, and in this process also simplified his compositions. His latest pictures of Buzzard's Bay, with seaweed gatherers at work, large canvases, with the immensity of the sea, and the beach lying under a gray sky, with only a man and a cart at the water's edge, have a strength and directness which show clearly, that Kost is one of the few

men who endeavour to depict nature as they see her through their own eyes, fresh and ever variable.

Another master of simplicity is W. L. Lathrop, (1859-), the poet of exquisite green and gray gradations, who only needs a strip of wind-blown marshes, a solitary house on a hill, and a row of defoliated trees against the sky to reflect a colour mood of nature. His pictures lately show more colour and a more poetical choice of subjects, but he is less successful in these attempts, and will undoubtedly return to simpler phases of nature.

Alexander Schilling (1859-), though originally an artist of decided individuality and originality of conception, had the misfortune to become too closely connected with the style of two other men he admired. Being a skilful etcher, circumstances forced him to devote four

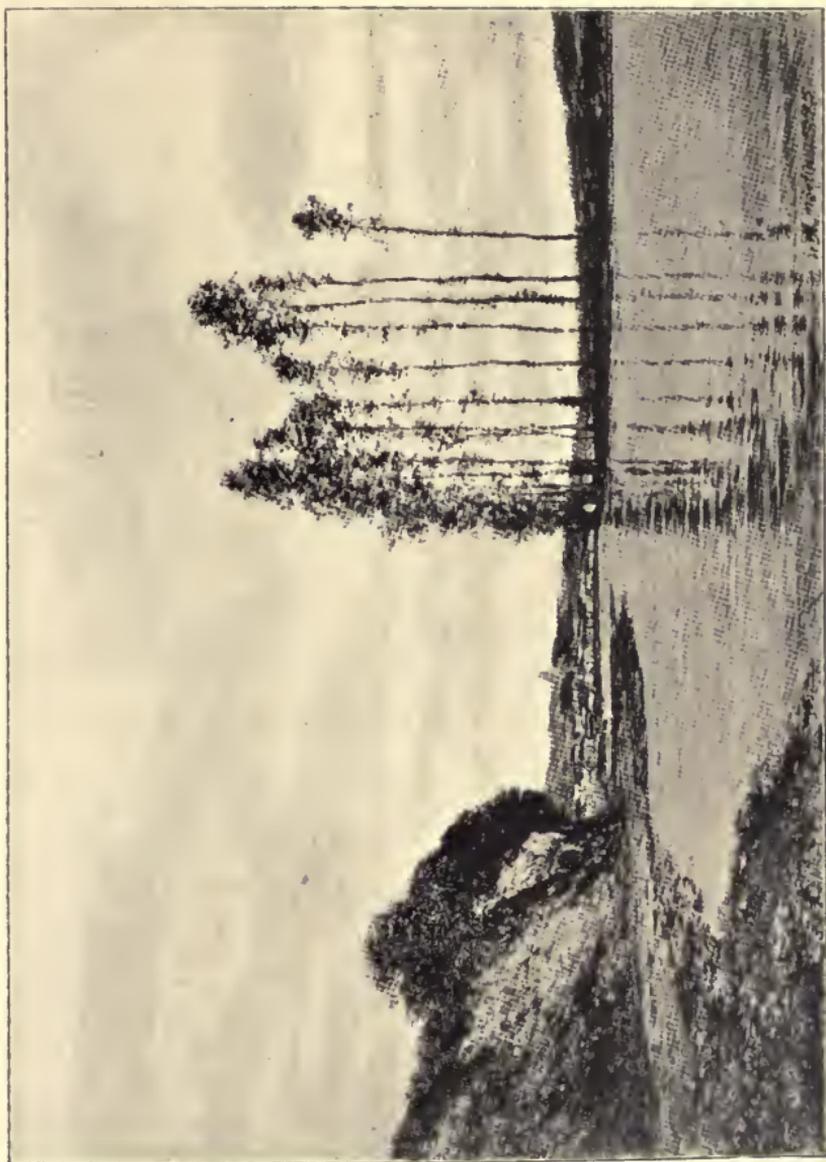
years of his life to the making of two reproductive etchings after Tryon and Horatio Walker, and ever since he has been unable to free his art from their influence. Notwithstanding which, he has something to say—something that comes from the heart of the man,—and as soon as he has found his own self again he will produce work of lasting value. Though as a rule not partial to prophecies, in this case I venture one, because I know of no talent better equipped or more symmetrical among the younger landscape painters of America.

If these men really aspire to the foremost rank, the task they have before them seems gigantic, for they would be obliged to surpass the two greatest landscape painters America has hitherto produced, Homer Martin and Tryon.

Homer Martin (1836-97), born at Albany, N. Y., was a direct descendant of

the melancholy muse which urged Jervis McEntee to pursue inaccessible ideals. Like him, he makes use of landscapes to express his own bitterness and weariness; he contemplated nature with a dreaming sadness, and created groves and mountain recesses in which he could hide his melancholy broodings. But he was too genuine a poet of the brush to remain solely subjective.

Among the monotonous dunes of Newport, in the solitudes of the Mississippi valley, as well as at the foot of the Adirondack Mountains, he tried, prey to a secret but gnawing inquietude, to grasp the soul with which the pantheists endow nature. The faint and fugitive lights which flit across his canvases are the image not so much of his own soul but that of humanity. No one ever reflected like him with a ray of struggling light the solemn agitation of a human mind



MARTIN. — HARP OF THE WINDS.

in quest of the unknown, aspiring from things visible toward the infinite.

Technically his work was still more uneven than Inness', he was entirely subject to inspirations. He seldom reached the desired end, and many of his canvases were consequently failures. But in pictures like the "Harp of the Winds," the "Sand Dunes" at the Metropolitan Museum, the "Newport Neck" at the Lotus Club, New York, there is absolute freedom, freshness, and originality. They startle us by their intimacy with nature, the strength and immensity which they perfectly suggest, and their wealth of subdued colour.

He seemed to have less feeling for form, but his mastery of atmosphere and indefinite distances and his peculiar rich schemes of colour—which is the more astonishing as his eyesight had been always very bad, in particular since

1892 — will make his name one to be remembered for ever in the world of art, as one of the classics of American landscape painting.

The memorial exhibition of his work at the Century Club ('97) was complete enough to enforce that conclusion. How that man has toiled, how faithfully he has struggled to perfect himself, and what strides he has actually made from the "Naturanschauung" of the Hudson River School and the Kensett style with its melting and subtle gradation of pure thin colour in the early sixties, to the lurid sentimentalism of the early eighties; and from these the steady ascent to the masterpieces of eight or ten years ago, with their rich and ruddy colouring, their lineal and constructive beauty, their solid technical resources, their intimate knowledge of nature in her calm and dreamy moods; and finally his latest

work where merely a road along a hillside and a defoliated tree or a waste of land with a rock formation were necessary to him to express with profound simplicity the heroic harmonies of nature. He felt like his own flesh and blood the animating forces of the humid soil, the spirituality of trees, and the revelations of light in the ever changing atmosphere. His sympathy with these aspects of nature almost amounted to idolatry.

Much further landscape painting cannot go. It was, however, left to Dwight W. Tryon (1849-) to embellish it with two other qualities, the subtleties of Japanese art and the musical suggestiveness which was introduced into mural painting by Chavannes.

Looking at a picture of Inness, we still argue in our mind, "He meant to represent such and such a scene under

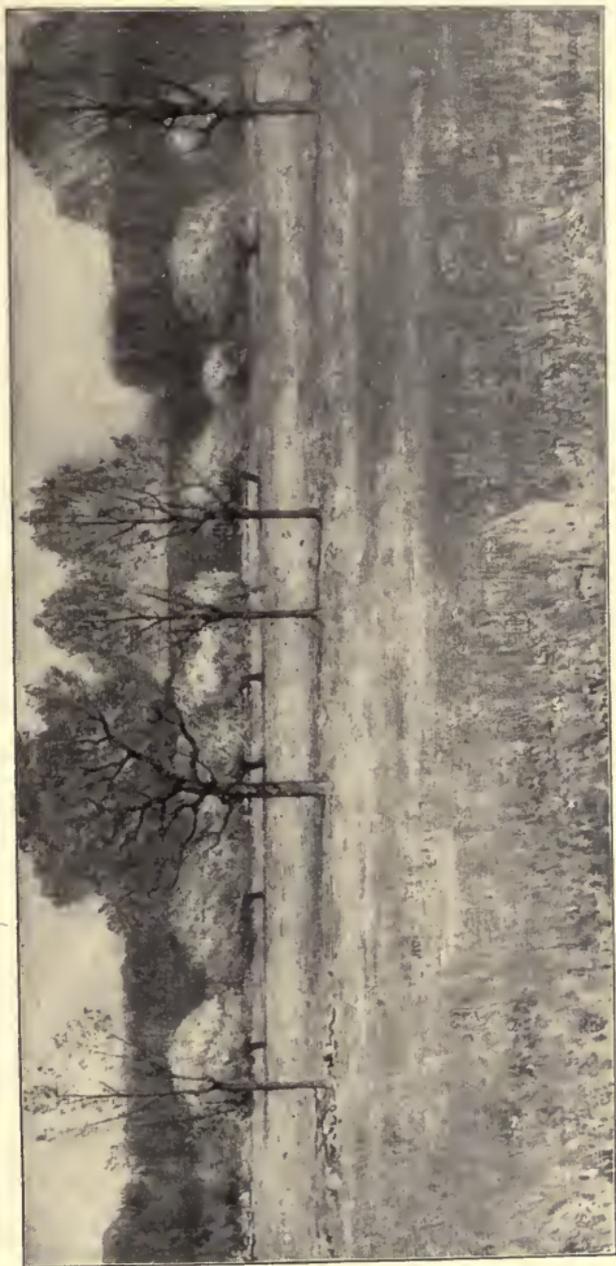
such and such circumstances;" before a Homer Martin, one realises at once its meaning and says to oneself, "It represents fall and the weird melancholy of a human soul;" but before a Tryon, one simply feels as if looking at nature herself. Its vague harmonies drift quickly and irresistibly into one's soul.

Tryon was born at Hartford, Conn. He studied with Daubigny and Harpignies, and was awarded the Webb Prize for his "First Leaves," at the Society of American Artists in 1889. At first he painted very much like his French masters, but having the gift of delicate observation and absolute surety of the eye, he made rapid strides toward perfection, and his style appeared already mature when he received the first class medal for his "Rising Moon," at the Munich International Exhibition of 1892. In reality he had arrived only at a period of transi-

tion. His pictures still revealed a distinct poetic thought, not unlike Cazin's earlier work, for instance, "La Village Morte," and "A Cottage Lost in the Solitudes of Picardy." Dissatisfied with these early triumphs, he set himself the task of fathoming the psychological qualities of colour, the sentiment and poetry they are capable of suggesting, in short, their musical charm. He persistently strove for the subtlest nuances and most fugitive moments of nature. His magic brush leads us to silent meadow-lands and straw-coloured fields, where human life seems extinct and only long rows of trees lift their barren branches into dawn; to the hushed mystery of a sleeping pond or a wandering river reflecting the eternal riddle of existence; to lonesome, snow-bound marshes, with a few faint lights shining through tree trunks and wind-worn shrubbery; or into classic orchards

where apple-trees in blossom seem to drop "large and melodious thoughts."

These simple subjects Tryon moulds into simple repetitions of horizontal lines, embroidered with the fretwork of details, into nameless nuances of colours, fragrant in their vitality and yet so fragile that the ordinary eye can hardly distinguish and appreciate them. He masters, like no one else, the uncertain tonalities of dawn and twilight. With works of art it should be very much as with human beings, they should possess a soul, an individuality, a certain something which can not be materially grasped, but which produces in the sympathetic spectator feelings, similar to those the artist felt in his creative moments. Tryon's pictures have this to a rare degree. They are almost, literally speaking, musical in their effect, not unlike the pizzicato notes on the A string of a violin.



TRYON. — SPRING.

Tryon's method of work is particularly interesting. Seven months of the year, at least, he spends on his farm at South Dartmouth, Mass. During this time he never paints, he simply absorbs the beauties of New England scenery and takes mental notes. Also during the winter months, in his New York studio, he lives a very retired life, caring for no companionship save his painting, which occupies him as long as daylight lingers, and there and then he tries to realise in paint the accumulated mental notes. At the start he is an impressionist. What he considers a sketch many landscapists would consider a finished picture. They contain all the vitality, the robustness, *bravura* strokes of the first impression. Then he begins to work, to touch up and break the surface, perfect the construction of leading lines, to drag and stipple with nervous touches until his

ideal is realised. And — what is most marvellous — the finished picture still possesses the original strength of the sketch, only muffled, as it were, by the mist of dreams.

He composes his pictures as a composer does his score. His parallelism of horizontal and vertical lines is like melodic phrasing. And it seems as if his objects were shaped and massed to complete each other, to harmonise like accords. He has done for landscape painting the same thing which Chavannes did for mural painting. His contribution to the use of parallelism in pictorial art is enormous. Here the Japanese might pause and learn new lessons. He is, however, less a composer of space than Chavannes; he prefers the rhythms of sharp curves and broken undulations. Chavannes composes at *largo*; Tryon restricts himself to *andantes* and *adagios*.

Tryon has often been criticised for his limited range of subjects. "They are like song composers" (referring to Dewing and Tryon) "who excel in a simple little melody and never tire of repeating it," a painter once remarked to me. This is hardly just; few seem to realise how much strength is really necessary for such moderation. Tryon attempts only what he can master.

To appreciate fully how perfect Tryon's art really is, one has to visit the House of Freer, Detroit, where his pictures are shown to the best advantage. The whole interior decoration is in harmony with the Tryons, Dewings, Abbott Thayers, Whistlers, F. S. Church's, and numerous Japanese *kakemonos* of which the collection exclusively consists. Tryon has reached the calm perfection of Japanese art. The great power of the artist, who stands alone among his brother painters for delicacy of

work and a singular superiority of education, lies in the very moderation which guides all his efforts, and which has always been one of the leading characteristics of art, when it approached perfection.

CHAPTER III.

THE OLD SCHOOL.

N the year 1828 the National Academy of Design held its first exhibition. In the same year Gilbert Stuart died. These two events, occurring at the same time, mark the close of one period and the beginning of another.

The new institution tried to furnish thorough opportunities for art instruction, to give annual exhibitions, and to establish a permanent art gallery; the latter project was soon abandoned, the other two were strictly carried out. Samuel F. B. Morse, an artist of ability, but better

known as the inventor of the electric telegraph, was its first president.

Besides the three landscape painters, Cole, Doughty, and Durand, mentioned in the preceding chapter, three other artists were particularly active in the development of our native art, namely, Henry Inman, Chester Harding, and Robert W. Weir.

It was a fair beginning, despite the meagreness of the artistic life of that time, an idea of which may be gathered from the fact that there was only one dealer in New York City who supplied materials to the few studios in the neighbourhood of Greenwich Street and lower Broadway. This individual seems to have been somewhat of an autocrat, and reports relate that it was not uncommon for him to dictate to the artists who had to patronise him the colours he would permit them to use, refusing to sell certain materials if

he considered them inappropriate. The neighbourhood of his shop was a sort of rendezvous, just as his little parlour in the rear was a gathering-place for a few choice spirits among the still small band of workers.

Notable among them was Henry Inman (1801-46), a well-trained painter, equally successful in portraits, miniatures, landscapes, and genre subjects. His "Mumbling the Peg" (at the Philadelphia Academy), two boys sitting in a meadow, playing jack-knife, is a picture of decided merit. Expressed with frankness and sincerity by a man of thought and poetic feeling, the little oval-shaped picture deserves to be considered the first picture of note of the American school of genre painting. Success crowned his short career to a large degree, most notably in portraiture. During a visit to England, in 1844, he painted the portraits

of Wordsworth, Dr. John Chalmers, Lord Chancellor Cottenham, Macaulay, and other noted men. He was very popular among the profession, and with each returning summer a band of artists, including Kensett, F. E. Church, Mount, and McConkey, all men representative of this period, gathered in the Catskills to answer to his and Cole's summons, and explored the country in expeditions on foot, in buckboards, or other mountain conveyances, so that scarcely a nook in gorge or valley remained unvisited. At the time of his death Inman was engaged in a series of historical pictures for the Capitol at Washington.

Chester Harding (1792-1866), who had been farmer, chair-maker, peddler, and tavern-keeper before he took up portraiture as a profession at the age of twenty-eight, occupied in Boston about the same position as Inman in New York. He

was a conscientious workman, like most of the portrait painters of this period.

The lesson which Copley and Stuart had taught with their portraits and the picturesque dresses of their time, recording on canvas what suggests the customs as well as the people of the Revolutionary period, was not as yet forgotten. Sully was still painting, and a shining example to all, and their efforts were appreciated in England as much as at home. Harding was a man of more than ordinary ability, and he was patronised by the oldest and most aristocratic families here as well as abroad. Contemporaries report that there was something magnetic and grand in his character, frank and good-natured in his daily life, and earnest and indomitable in all matters relating to his art.

Robert W. Weir (1803-89), of Huguenot descent, was the leading representa-

tive of our historical painters, who acquired their training in Italy, and attempted to paint classical pictures of heroic sizes like Carlo Brumidi, whose then much-admired compositions are now entirely forgotten.

Weir's "Sailing of the Pilgrims" (well known by numerous productions) and "Taking the Veil" cause us to wonder that Americans could have so early produced works of art as clever and conscientious as his. They show dignity and scrupulous care, but are, on the whole, more pleasing than vigorous and original.

The most prominent effort in historical painting, however, we owe to an artist of German extraction: Emmanuel Leutze (1816-68), whose "Washington at Princeton," "Emigration to the West" (one of the panels of the staircase at the Capitol), and "Washington Crossing the Dela-



WEIR. — SAILING OF THE PILGRIMS.

ware" (at the Metropolitan Museum) are still known to everybody. He came early to America, but always remained in touch with his native country, and painted many of the American subjects, among them the "Washington Crossing the Delaware," at Düsseldorf. The ice was painted from a mass of broken ice floating down the Rhine. He was very prolific, a man capable of enthusiasm, and aspiring to high ideals, but his art bore the unmistakable stamp of his teachers, Lessing and Shadow, and any connoisseur knows what that means, in particular when applied to figures over life-size. His colour was always crude and hard, and his drawing academical. His "Godiva," "Iconoclast," "Landing of the Norsemen," and similar compositions, in which he could display his knowledge of costume, are even less artistic than his more realistic Washington pictures. He had vast

intellectual resources, but was in no sense a painter.

New York had gradually become the centre of a number of excellent portrait painters, such as Elliott, Page, Baker, Hicks, one of the first Couture pupils, Le Clear, Huntington, Naegle, and Gray, — the contemporaries of Staigg, Healy, and Ames in Boston, — an astonishingly large number, considering how few good portraitists we possess nowadays; but photography at that time was still in its infancy and portraits in demand, even by the less wealthy class. And the men were grown to the task, their brush-work was not as clever as that in vogue to-day, but they all had the gift of catching a likeness, which is, after all, the most important thing in portraiture.

At a time when appreciation of purely technical qualities was still very scarce, Charles Loring Elliott (1812-68) achieved

an extraordinary degree of excellence. His wondrous faculty of grasping character, and his brush work, which looked vigorous in comparison with the minute, painstaking style of his brother artists, make him incontestably the leading representative of the old portrait school of 1840. His pictures are full of fine colour and unity of effect, his style is direct, sincere, and strong, and one is amply compensated for the slight faultiness of drawing, the result of insufficient academic training, by the comprehensive grasp of his subject.

As a forerunner of George Fuller one may regard William Page (1811-85). He produced quaint types of American feminine beauty, and, as far as characterisation is concerned, revealed rare delicacy and a deep insight into human nature. His success with colour, though often very marked and satisfactory, suffered

sometimes, I suppose, by reason of the very multiplicity of his experiments. At all events, there are pictures from his brush in which, in the common studio phrase of our period, the colour does not "ring true." Also Hicks, of Boston, was notable for his colour. A still more pronounced sense for colour than either Page or Hicks was possessed by one of their contemporaries, a queer sort of genius, who died about 1870 in abject poverty, at the age of sixty. His name was John Quidor. Four of his paintings, illustrating Washington Irving's "Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and his "Knickerbocker's History of New York," can be seen at the Brooklyn Institute. In the catalogue he is mentioned as a master of "low tone," but in my opinion that is merely a matter of varnish and time. His pictures were painted very thinly and with pure colours, and their charm and merit,

at the time they were painted, lay undoubtedly in the subtle skill, with which the colours were blended into a harmonious whole. He has a dainty touch and a naïve humour that are delicious, and his fine mellow colour will save him from oblivion, despite the varnish that has been put on more recently.

G. Baker was the sentimental depicter of ideal heads and children, and H. P. Gray exerted himself in figure compositions of the Italian Renaissance. Good miniatures, by far better than the majority produced to-day, were painted by Staigg and Miss Goodrich.

The most successful artist of this period was Daniel Huntington (1816-), the third president of the National Academy. He was very popular, and dispensed with a lavish hand that which he earned to those in need and distress. He is still painting to-day, but being a

pupil of Morse and Inman, he needs must be associated with the men of that period as a pleasing portrait painter, who knows best himself that he was no genius like Elliott, but who did as much as anybody to advance art at that early stage. In his youth he devoted himself to historical, allegorical, and religious paintings, and his "Mercy's Dream" and "The Sybil" created almost as much sensation as Cole's "The Voyage of Life." His portrait of Bryant, at the Brooklyn Institute, is a remarkable delineation of character, despite the otherwise conventional treatment.

The first American who made a specialty of genre was William Sidney Mount (1807-68), the son of a farmer of Long Island. He exhibited his first picture in 1828. Mount had a keen eye for the humorous traits of our rustic life, and although he was very deficient in tech-

nique, he always succeeded in portraying some of his shrewd observations of human nature on his canvases. "The Long Story" and "Bargaining for a Horse" are two of his best pictures. A long cherished wish to work out-of-doors, and to make his studies in the Long Island villages at leisure, suggested the building of a wheeled studio with a glass front, drawn by a pair of horses, which enabled him to move from place to place and select any point of view he wished. F. W. Edmonds, a friend of Mount's and a bank-cashier by profession, found time to produce many clever "story-telling" pictures, showing a keener eye for colour, but less skill in the drawing and composition.

Richard Carton Woodville, a "Düsseldorf man," promised very much, but unhappily died very young.

J. B. Irving executed some clever interiors, with figures in old-time costume

delicately drawn and painted, reminding one of Toulmouche. At this time also our frontier life was coming more prominently into notice, becoming a subject for the pen of our leading writers. Irving, Cooper, Whittier, Kennedy, Street, and Longfellow celebrated Indian life and border warfare in prose and verse, while the majestic lines of Bryant's "Prairies" seemed a prophetic prelude to the march of mankind toward the West. It is greatly to be regretted that the work of these courageous, enterprising pioneers of Western genre: G. Catlin, C. F. Wiman, Deas, and W. H. Ranney, was of so little artistic value, and that Victor Nehlig, a Frenchman who also devoted himself to these subjects some ten years later, and whose brush had a very sympathetic touch, was less thoroughly imbued with the actualities of Indian warfare and border life.

Mount was destined to become the precursor of a whole school of genre artists, and portraiture was gradually replaced in public favour by the painted anecdote. While shiploads of the academic artificial productions of the Düsseldorf school were imported, they depicted domestic scenes and homely episodes of every-day life, like children playing with a cat, the bride before the mirror, boys attempting their first smoke, etc. Meyer von Bremen, like Chartran to-day, by far more popular in America than at home, was considered the typical representative of German art, and although more serious artists had nicknamed his little cabinet pieces, whose exquisite finish was their sole merit, "German chocolate boxes," they were the favourites of the picture-buying public. And for the next twenty years the popularity of "story-telling" in paint, and with it the attention bestowed on the

human figures, steadily increased, and reached its height in the sixties, when the immigration of the peasantry of Europe set in, affording new opportunities in types and costumes, and when the Secession war, with its many sad and comic situations, gave to this branch of art a new impetus.

Among American genre pictures which attracted special attention and which became popular by reproduction in steel engraving, "Forging the Shaft," by John F. Weir of New Haven, "Yankee Doodle," and "Jim Bludsoe," by A. W. Willard of Cincinnati, "Arguing the Question," by T. W. Wood, and the "End of the Game," by F. B. Meyer, should be particularly mentioned.

At the close of the war several of the leading representatives of the school reaped an unexpected golden harvest. For the first time in its history there

was money in the country, and well-to-do people were willing to part with thousands of dollars for luxuries, for which they would not formerly have spent a hundred. The walls of the old Studio Building, in Tenth Street, New York, could tell many a story of financial success and ensuing prosperity. There were a dozen men who had an order for every picture that left their easel. One of them was J. G. Brown, the "shoeblack Raphael," as he has been termed. We all know his work. An academy exhibition seems to be impossible without him. His pictures are surely not in harmony with modern ideas of art, but we should recognise the fact that, however tiresome and crude we may find them, he had a knowledge superior to that of most of his contemporaries, that he knew something of physiognomy, of which most modern painters are absolutely ignorant, and that

he was one of the first who sketched out-of-doors and painted his pictures entirely from the costumed model. That he disregarded Ruskin's dictum in regard to the artistic value of dirt, is largely due to his training and the taste of his time. The masquerading automatons of the peasant-painter Robert had not yet been replaced by the realistic figures of Bastien Lepage.

Another successful painter of this period was E. L. Henry, whose works will outlive many of greater merits, not because of any artistic merits they possess, — they have none, — but because of their interest to future generations as replica of the customs and costumes of our ante-railroad times.

Men like Brown and Henry in a way represent American art better than any one else; not its aspirations, but its stern cruel facts, those the large multitude can

appreciate and understand. Even the best of the picture-loving public still prefer story-telling to any other style in painting. A picture of Eastman Johnson speaks to them. They can understand it. The profession, on the other hand, excepting those who practise it, make this branch of art a subject of much adverse criticism and argument. As long as the public wants such pictures and the artists paint for the public (which they invariably do, expecting money in exchange for their work), they have their place, particularly if executed with the ease and elegance of an Eastman Johnson. He is the one great artist this school produced, our typical storyteller. Each one of his earlier pictures is like a page from a popular novel.

Eastman Johnson (1824-), like most of his contemporaries, only enjoyed the pedantic training of the Düsseldorf school,

where he studied from 1848-51. Yet what a mind of large reserve power greets us at the outset of his career. What strong and earnest convictions, expressing his thoughts in methods entirely individual, can be traced in all his works. In his earlier career he painted genre subjects, like his "Old Kentucky Home" (1867), at the Lennox Library, and his "Old Stage Coach" (1871), with delicious frankness; later on he devoted himself to semi-literary subjects, like "Milton Dictating to His Daughter" (1875), and to compositions in which he subordinated the subject to execution, and in the last twenty years almost entirely to portraiture.

He was progressive, and entered into the heart of his time. By the force of his imagination and antiquarian knowledge he conjures up before us the very spirit of the Cromwellian age. But the



JOHNSON. — OLD STAGE COACH.

subject which suited him best he found in contemporary life. His "Husking Corn" (1876) is a masterpiece. He did not find it necessary to idealise nature, — mud or magnificence, it was all the same to him. The only embellishment he furnished he gave unconsciously, his energetic individuality. Eastman Johnson was in the very vanguard of those painters who fought for realism in modern art, and there are few who have succeeded as well as he in rendering our American life more picturesque.

We feel before his works, through all the imperfections of his art, through all the faltering methods with which his genius sought to express itself, that a vast mind here sought feebly to utter great thoughts. We see that unmistakable sign of all minds of a high order, that the man was greater than his works. It is not dexterity, technique, knowledge, that

impresses us in studying the work of Eastman Johnson, so much as character, and this quality, if no other one, ensures him the position of one of our most distinguished painters.

Other men of talent of this period were Ward, Magrath, Wordsworth Thompson, and White. E. M. Ward has shown, in his interiors of workshops and old-fashioned houses, a more poetic feeling, more careful chiaroscuro, and more correct and forcible drawing than most of his colleagues, but he did not participate in the reign of prosperity of 1866-70. William Magrath (1835-) excelled in single figures associated with rural life, generally a milkmaid or farmer, which were actual distinct character types. "On the Old Sod," at the Philadelphia Academy, is one of his best pictures. Wordsworth Thompson, after devoting himself to coast scenes, for which he made studies during

a stay at the Mediterranean, became a depicter of the Revolutionary times and the Secession war. He was a skilful draughtsman, in particular of horses, and his highly finished pictures had something [cool and crisp about them. He painted gay cavalcades, travellers on horseback, and camping scenes, but his favourite subject was the figure of a horseman, — a scout or huntsman halting before a wayside inn. Among his more elaborate compositions is one representing the Continental Army defiling before General Washington and his staff at Philadelphia.

Prominent on the Academy walls were also the pictures of S. J. Guy, who made many friends by the simple pathos and humour with which he treated child life, of Fred Johnson, and Oliver J. Lay, who has executed some thoughtful and refined indoor scenes.

J. C. Thom was an erratic sort of character, shunned by the profession all his life, but who painted delicious bits of out-of-door figure pieces.

The emancipation of the slaves disclosed to the profession of what importance our coloured citizens might prove in art,—their squalor, picturesqueness, broad and kindly humour, and the pathos which has invested their life with unusual interest. T. W. Wood absolutely failed therein. Edwin White (1817-77) used them for his simple studies from nature. His old negro dreaming of liberty before a fire-place (at the Lenox Library) reveals fine perception and a certain charm of execution. It was left to Winslow Homer, however, to represent the negro, with a simple broad execution, as he really is. Alfred Kappes, who died in 1894, the last, most modern exponent of the old genre school, made a specialty of negro

life, and combined cleverness of handling with genial humour, and the popular quality of telling a story effectively.

Most of these artists mentioned, if they had any training at all, were Düsseldorf men; they were people's painters, trying to paint pleasing pictures, and with few exceptions had but little skill in handling the brush. The men who studied in Paris fared much better. There Couture had founded a new school. His "Romans of the Decadence" had taken the world by storm, and his bold and personal style, a perpetual challenge and defiance to the classic school, was the magnet which attracted all young art students to his studio. Among his American pupils, Edward Harrison May (1824-87) scored great triumphs with his "King Lear and Cordelia" and "Franklin Playing Chess with Lady Howe." Here was colour, light and a vigorous grasp of form, which had

the certainty of a well-schooled hand. But the most talented American artist was W. M. Hunt (1824-79), born at Brattleboro, Vt. The son of a well-to-do lawyer, he enjoyed greater advantages of training than most painters of the early time. He began his studies at the Royal Academy, London, and later on went to Düsseldorf. With the same earnest idea to further his technique, still entertaining the idea of becoming a sculptor, he first entered Pradier's studio, but finally abandoning the idea, he joined the Couture class. A few years later we find him in Barbizon studying with Millet. In 1855 he returned to America and established himself in Boston.

Although a man of imagination and lofty ideal he was first of all a painter, the first great technician we had, and his influence was far felt. He had a large number of lady pupils, of whom several,



HUNT. — THE FLIGHT OF NIGHT.

notably Elizabeth H. Bartol and Mrs. S. W. Whitman, gained some distinction. He used to take great interest in their progress, and to them were directed the "Talks," which were so successfully jotted down by Helen M. Knowlton that Hunt had them copyrighted, and which give a fair idea of his method of teaching and criticism. The constant progress of his pictures, the elaborate study he bestowed upon them, and their simple, broad execution were, after all, the best demonstration of the art of painting he could give.

It is very difficult to summarise his characteristics as a painter. The Hunt Memorial Exhibition of 1879 showed an astonishing diversity of technique,—the more so if one considers that many of his best pictures and sketches were lost in the fire of 1872,—covering the wide range from Couture's direct surface methods to Millet's soulful and mystic touch. Yet

in all his pictures the artist's wonderful power of concentration and vitality in recording impressions are markedly evident. His pictures are entirely free from the trivial and useless, showing no uncertainties, and lacking nothing of that spontaneity which is the great charm of masterpieces. He was always painting to satisfy himself, not to gain position, or the applause of critics and society, but to be true to the highest and best aspirations, regardless of praise and comment.

Among the pictures that I have seen, and which impressed me most favourably, I may mention his "Charles River with Bathers;" "Horses and Cart on a Beach;" the "Hurdy-gurdy Boy," the bright laughing face of a Savoyard looking up to an imaginary window; "The Prodigal Son," who, returning in a state of semi-nudity, throws himself into his father's arms, while his jealous brother turns away; the



HUNT. — CHARLES RIVER WITH BATHERS.

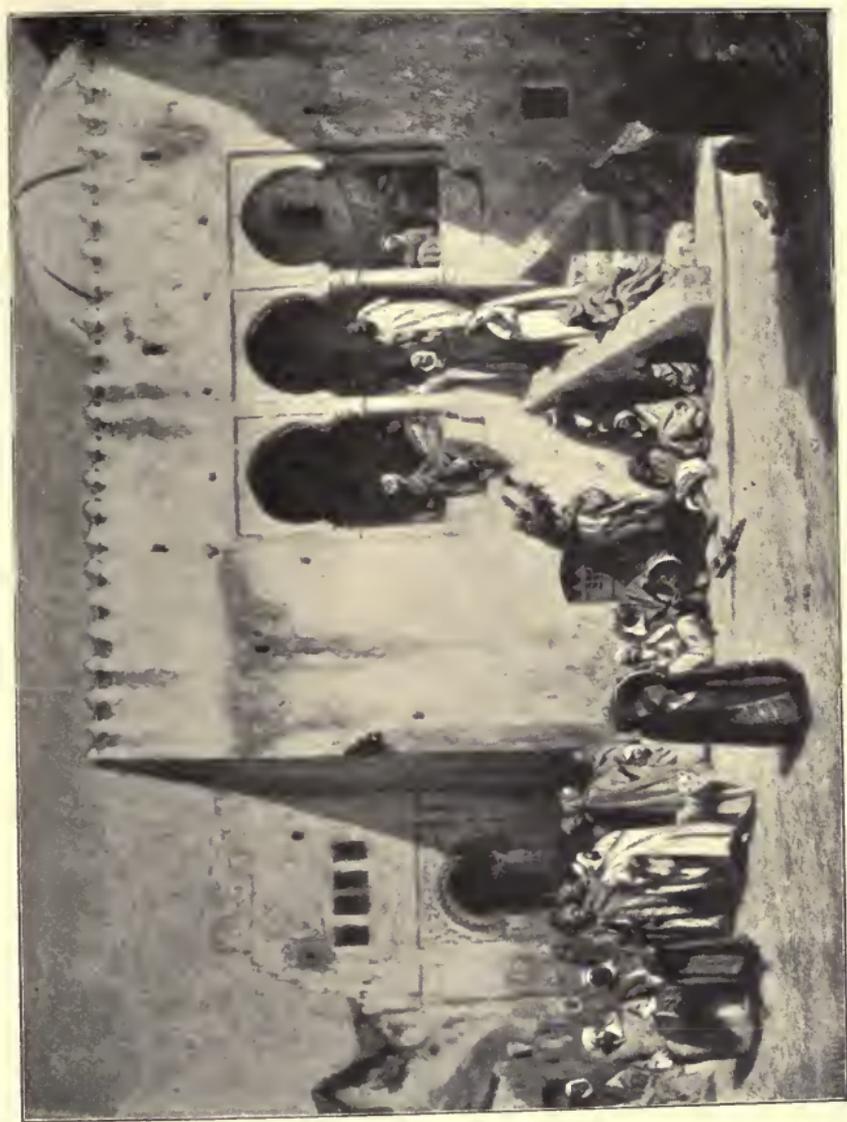
portrait of Allan Wardner (owned by Mrs. W. M. Evarts, New York), and his "Gloucester Harbour," very rich in colour and light, an old pier and an expanse of water in the foreground, and a sky full of sun and air over the distant town with its shipping. There is indeed much to appreciate in the poetical conception of these pictures, the charm and originality of their composition, and the firm grasp of form and character they convey; but it is, after all, his spirited technique which fascinates most. It was Hunt who first shook off the trammels of the early time and ushered in the progressive element of modern art.

Among the artists of Boston belonging to the set who often met Hunt at Marliave's French restaurant were Robinson, Waterman, and Harvey Young.

Marcus Waterman, one of the veteran artists of Boston, is to be ranked among

the Orientalists. Although he has not gained such a wide reputation as Weeks and Bridgman, yet he holds his own, and as a painter of sunlight he has few equals. The courts of the Alhambra, for instance,—a stunning scheme of peacocks against bluish green tiles,—and scenes from the “Arabian Nights” are his familiar subjects. His drawing of elephants and wild animals is very spirited; the colossal grayish white figure of the genius (in the “Merchant and the Genius”), looming up erect in the desert against the dark blue sky, shading his face with one hand, shows what he can do in imaginative figure drawing. Waterman’s “Roc’s Egg” has been considered by many a superior production to Vedder’s interpretation of the same subject.

At this occasion the names also of William Sartain and Prosper L. Senat, two other artists who devote themselves



WATERMAN. — MAUROUF AMONG THE MERCHANTS.

principally to the depiction of Oriental scenery and life, may be mentioned.

Harvey A. Young, a representative of our later portraiture, has a good eye for colour, and seizes a likeness in a manner that is artistically satisfactory, while he does not so often grasp the character of the sitter as his external traits.

Two other portraitists of this period were George A. Story, characterised by vigour of style and pleasing colour, and Henry Furness, of Philadelphia, who died in 1867, just as he reached his prime. His first efforts showed but little talent, but he had the quality of growth, and his latest works were remarkable for the rendering of character. When he had a sitter he would give days to a preliminary and exhaustive study of the mental and moral traits of the individual.

Shortly after Hunt returned to America, and instilled life and energy into

Boston art circles, another genius, John La Farge (1835-), came to the front. He was a self-taught man, and had no technique at his command, but he had one quality which American art until then had rarely known, namely, colour.

This rare gift became first noticeable in his flower pieces, which occupied him during the years 1860-65. His water-lilies are a revelation of colour. The water seems to take a green reflection from the flower-sepals, broken lights from the white blow vibrate all through it, and the sensitive gold of the stamens at the heart of the lily shines through the white petals quivering in the sun.

Soon after he began his decorative work for both private and public buildings, by which he gained an international reputation, and which was only now and then interrupted by the occasional painting of a landscape. In 1867 the architect H. H.

Richardson saw some panels La Farge had made for a gentleman's dining-room, and promised the artist the first decorative work at his disposal. The opportunity came in 1876, when the building committee of the Trinity Church, Boston, engaged La Farge to undertake the whole mural decoration of the new edifice, the most ambitious attempt at church decoration ever undertaken in this country. The time allowed was very short, but he proceeded to carry it out, selecting as chief assistant Francis L. Lathrop.

The character of the designs and ornamentation is, on the whole, well in keeping with the Romanesque style of the church, and the groups of small nude figures in the spandrels at the top of the tower interior have been excellently painted. The large figures lower down are of inferior quality. They too plainly show the haste with which the work was

executed. The two prophets on the north wall, however, just over the chancel, stand robed in an agreeable delicacy of tint, and in them the want of good drawing is less pronounced. A few years later La Farge painted with more deliberation two simple compositions depicting "Christ and the Woman of Samaria" and "Christ and Nicodemus," the latter one of his masterpieces.

Other important work quickly followed. Two frescoes and the decoration of the St. Thomas Church, New York, the King's Memorial at Newport, the staircase panels and ceiling at the Vanderbilt mansion, and the "Adoration of the Magi," at the Church of Incarnation, New York, gave wide scope for splendour and brilliancy of colour. The best that this artist has yet accomplished in the way of work upon a church interior is his painting of the "Ascension" at the little



From a Copley Print. — Copyright, 1886, by Curtis & Co.

LA FARGE. — CHRIST AND NICODEMUS.

church on the corner of Tenth Street and Fifth Avenue, New York. There is an absence of religious feeling noticeable in all his pictures. There is a large degree of technical incompleteness in nearly all his work. At some points his hands seem to refuse to do their work and begin to grope. He has no scruples whatever in applying figures of new and old masters, and leaving it to his assistants to enlarge his designs. He knew well enough that his colour would atone for all his sins and shortcomings. His colours, although they have something of the barbaric sumptuousness of the Orient, glow in the proper environment with a dim luminous beauty, with a spirit and life of their own. They stamp everything he touches with the seal of genius.

Of late he has devoted much of his time to water-colours, for which he has undertaken journeys to Japan, Ceylon,

Samoa, the Fiji Islands, and other remote corners of the globe. Their drawing is often very feeble, but their rhythmic notes of colour invariably redeem their other shortcomings. They are as strong as in the days when he painted his "Newport, Paradise" (Academy exhibition about 1870), a vast landscape in morning light, scintillant with sunbeams, in which separate colours are almost indiscernible. Pink, green, violet, dark and pale blue tints, and other subtle melodies of colour flit and flame across the canvas like a gorgeous pageantry, like a palpitating blaze of jewels, and yet unite to a perfect harmony.

La Farge was also the first to manufacture stained glass to suit his own purposes. He originated the style of painting merely the face, hands, and flesh-tones of the figure and of constructing the drapery and accessories of opales-

cent glass, the fibrous texture of which replaces the drawing. Such a piece of glass, with all its surface corrugations and stratifications, is a work of art in itself. Before the work on Trinity was begun, he had made his first experiments, but not before 1881, when he constructed the Harvard Memorial Window, did he succeed, to his own complete satisfaction, in producing pieces of glass of a certain colour which were inlaid or sprinkled with one another. In his windows at the Church of Ascension, we see effects altogether novel in this art. The depth and purity of colour have almost the quality of painting and, although utterly unlike the ancient examples in arrangement and spirit, they surpass mediæval work in regard to richness and splendour. His "Christ and Nicodemus" is his masterpiece in this department, as is his "Ascension" in religious mural painting.

Followers La Farge had many, but no successor to him has arisen among them. Francis Lathrop, who studied with Madox Brown, reproduced the spirit of the Pre-Raphaelite painters with a great deal of sympathy, but without special accentuation. Crowninshield introduced barbaric sumptuousness into interior decoration, and Louis C. Tiffany, once a painter of European street scenes, carried into the sphere of professional decoration all the inventive taste, and freedom from conventionality which he displayed in the execution of his first important work, the windows and wall paintings of the Union League Club. Other notable workers in this field are Lamb, Armstrong, and Heinigke, and H. J. Thouron in Philadelphia. The construction of stained glass windows, although La Farge's work has never been surpassed, has steadily progressed, but church decoration seems to

rest solely in the hands of La Farge. Nothing has been done that compares with his work.

At present Violet Oakley (1874-) is engaged on a big triptych for the Church of Angels, New York, the centre in mosaic, which promises to be well drawn, and interesting in its line, space, and colour composition, with a delightful parallelism and repetition of figures. The religious feeling, which is generally missing in such works, is quite pronounced in Violet Oakley's art. It is superior, at any rate, to M. L. Macomber's religious sentimentalism and E. Daingerfield's attitude of devotion, but whether it is strong enough to lend her work a striking individuality—to do what colour did for La Farge—is another question.

Colour was also the principal charm of two other men. W. A. Babcock, who spent nearly all his life at Barbizon, was a

sympathetic and poetic painter of nudes and costumed figures. His colour is soft and luminous. R. L. Newman (1827-), of whose works John Gellatly's private gallery contains thirty examples, is a colourist in the sense of the old masters. He excels in richness and satiety of separate tones, and is clever in bringing them into proper relationship. His Madonnas, Red Riding-Hoods, reading girls, classical figures with animals, "Christ Walking on the Sea," etc., are colour dreams pure and simple. As subjects they have but little interest. His colour, as well as Babcock's, is purely sensuous in its effect, it does not arouse the finer qualities of emotional imagination. Their art is not vibrant enough, it never loses itself beyond the material, where one forgets oil paints altogether, where they melt into the lyricisms of soul as in Ryder, for instance. Newman's and Babcock's perceptibilities

come to a standstill in the act of transforming vague inspirations into colour, and only here and there they soar a little beyond it. He held a representative exhibition of his work at Goupil gallery in 1894.

We now come to that phase of art which was the realisation of what all the men since 1828 had struggled for, the beginning of a native art, and which is best represented by Winslow Homer (1836-) and Thomas Eakins (1844-). Both are still working to-day, and their work has rather increased than lost in interest. I mention them in this chapter, because they asserted themselves long before the appearance of the so-called new school of 1878, and because the tendency to depict reality, which they persistently clung to during all their career, has been superseded by other aims and ideals of art.

It is extremely seldom that we find an American artist who is also American by nature. The majority of our artists have, through their European schooling, acquired a foreign way of looking at things that can be readily traced to Paris, London, or Munich. A few, and among them the best, pose, like Whistler, as cosmopolitans. They profess to believe that art is universal, that nationality has nothing or but little to do with its development; and yet they contradict this attitude in admiring Japanese art, which in recent decades has taken the place occupied at the beginning of this century by Grecian and Roman art.

For Japanese art is above all else a condensed and clarified expression of racial and national traits. Gradually, through the centuries, Japanese art has developed out of the mythological and religious beliefs, out of the peculiar customs and

manners of that artistic people and the environment and climate in which it lives. If our artists believe in Japanese art, they should endeavour to understand its spirit, and not overlook the causes of its most rigid laws. True enough, our American nation, through the influences of incessant immigration, has not yet attained its final equilibrium. Our conditions of life are still too confused for sharply defined expressions, such as we find in Paris, for instance, where everything has been classified by long familiarity. Nearly all the masterpieces of American painting — I mean those painted in America by Americans — show refinement rather than strength, which is peculiar, as strength is undoubtedly more characteristic of a young country like the United States than the suave, sensuous style of a Dewing or Tryon.

American men and women of advanced

taste, such as can afford to patronise art, turn rather to epicureanism than to simplicity and strength. After accumulating their wealth, the rich have everything at their command, except the super-refinement of taste and manners which the European nobility have acquired through centuries of indolence. The Anglomania and love of titles of our plutocracy is only a natural outcome of existing conditions.

Therefore, the lack of rough, manly force, and the prevailing tendency to excel in delicacy and subtlety of expression. The Michael Angelo strain is lacking almost entirely in our art. Walt Whitman's "Others may praise what they like, but I, from the banks of the running Missouri, praise nothing in art or else, till it has well inhaled the atmosphere of this river, also the Western prairie scent, and exudes it all again," was a voice in the

wilderness. The artists have taken no heed of it. Only men like Winslow Homer or Thomas Eakins have endorsed it to a certain extent with their work, the only two men who are masters in the art of painting, and at the same time have strong, frank, and decided ways of expressing something American.

Winslow Homer began his career as a lithographer in Buffalo. During a stay in Boston he designed for the wood-engravers. In 1859 he moved to New York, and after a visit to England he retired to Scarborough, Maine, where he lives, as far as polite society is concerned, in absolute isolation, coming in contact only with nature and the seafaring folks that live around him.

Aggressive in disposition, he engaged in a bitter warfare against all conventionality, scorning alike all accepted schools, claiming that nature, studied from the

standpoint of observation and discernment rather than that of intellectuality or sentiment, should be the only foundation of art. From this standpoint his great naturalism sprang into life. Take for instance his "Lookout," exhibited at the Society, spring 1897. It is a masterpiece. Words cannot increase or depreciate its value; it speaks for itself. A glimpse of the swaying upper deck of a vessel; the sea, white in the starlight over the rail; and just under the ship's bell a lifted hand and a rugged face — stern and weather-beaten like the brazen bell — with parted lips, shouting "All's well."

A crude and angular art, but classic in its dignity and strength. The figure, a little awkward perhaps, is a living, moving, breathing being, an expression of absolute reality.

The emotion which such a picture arouses is enough to make one abjure



HOMER.—INSIDE THE BAR.

academic art for ever. It seems as if there is nothing really lasting, nothing that will endure, but the sincere expression of the actual conditions of life.

His technique has steadily improved, —his colour, formerly rather neutral and cold, has of late grown more vivid and impressive; but his work in the sixties and early seventies, including "Inside the Bar" and "Listening to the Voice from the Cliffs," already showed all his directness of expression, and his love for truth and strength, so apparent in his "Visit from the Old Mistress" (1879) and "Life Line" (1884).

Profoundly moved by a certain kind of roughness and wildness in nature and in man, he became the painter of the long-shoremen; of the adventurous existence of our life-saving crew; of the pioneers of civilisation, prospecting the Western wilds; of farmhands in shirt-sleeves and coarse hide

boots, on the fields and hillsides of New England; of negroes and their humble shanties and the queer habits of Southern plantation life; of soldiers around camp-fires; and of country children, real Yankee boys and girls, playing by the quaint little schoolhouse, under boughs of apple-trees in bloom, through which the sun is sifting, or romping over the fields dotted with rural homes. He has also painted types of other countries, always with an American accent, however,—for instance, his famous Gloucester studies, the fisherwomen of Tynemouth,—but the bulk of his work is American. And it is this national quality which makes Winslow Homer great. Nobody could mistake the nationality of the rustic humanity he represents. Nobody could doubt that Winslow Homer is an American by birth and nature.

Whenever Winslow Homer's name is

mentioned, there rises in my mind a picture, a picture of rare and uncouth beauty: a sandy shore, lined by a wall of chalky rocks, a wide wind-worn sweep of a grayish black sea, heaving slowly with the rise and fall of billows under a cloudy sky. The dark silhouette of a sail is seen against a streak of white light at the horizon. And in this scene of desolation a sturdy young woman strides vigorously against the gale, her garments twisted in quaint flowing lines around her.

Winslow Homer paints prose, but a prose of epic¹ breadth. The breath of out-of-doors is in his pictures. We excuse the false notes in his flesh tints, his awkward linear beauty, his neglect of values, his crude key of colours, for there is poetry in the pulsation of his air, in his turbulent waves, in his fishing-boats riding out a gale, as well as in the statuesque beauty of his men and women, whose plastic

immobility has something of the angular outlines of the old New Englanders. In all his work there is something that reminds one of the ancient sea winds, which sung around the cliffs ages ago, something as monumental as the rugged cliffs themselves, which have defied the sun and storms of centuries.

To-day his vision is as fresh and unconventional and his power and individuality as indisputable as ever. His "In the Gulf Stream," exhibited at Knoedler's in 1901, is one of the greatest pictures ever painted in America.

His brother artist, Thomas Eakins, of Philadelphia, is quite a different character. Nearly every one who looks at his "Operation," the portrait of Doctor Gross, a Philadelphia medical celebrity, lecturing to a class of students in a college amphitheatre, exclaims, "How brutal!" And yet it has only the bru-



EAKINS. — OPERATION.

tality the subject demands. Our American art is so effeminate at present that it would do no harm to have it inoculated with just some of that brutality. Among our mentally barren, from photograph working, and yet so blasé, sweet-caramel artists, it is as refreshing as a whiff of the sea, to meet with such a rugged, powerful personality. Eakins, like Whitman, sees beauty in everything. He does not always succeed in expressing it, but all his pictures impress one by their dignity and unbridled masculine power. How crude his art is at times we see in the startling effect of blood on the surgeon's right hand, in the portrait of Dr. W. D. Marks.

As a manipulator of the brush, however, he ranks with the best; he does not stipple, cross-hatch, or glaze, but slaps his colours on the canvas with a sure hand, and realises solidity and depth. His

work may here and there be too severe to be called beautiful, but it is manly throughout—it has muscles—and is nearer to great art than almost anything we can see in America.

His "Christ on the Cross," a lean, lone figure set against a glaring sky,—austere, uncouth, and diabolically realistic as it is,—is a masterpiece of artistic anatomy, in the knowledge of which nobody approaches him in this country.

Thomas Eakins's art and personality remind one of the dissecting room (where he has spent so many hours of his life), of the pallor of corpses, the gleam of knives spotted with red, the calm, cool, deadly atmosphere of these modern anatomy lessons with the light concentrated upon the dissecting table, while the rest of the room is drowned in dismal shadows. And yet, with all his sturdy, robust appearance, he is as naïve and awkward



FULLER. — A TURKEY PASTURE.

as a big child that has grown up too fast, and his eyes have the far-away look of the dreamer. Indeed a quaint, powerful personality!

Of the younger men H. M. Hartshorne shows a good deal of brutal vigour.

During these years that brought Hunt, La Farge, Homer, and Eakins to the front, there lived in Deerfield, Mass., in utter seclusion, a painter — already about fifty years old — who was destined to become the greatest genius which the art of our country has produced.

In 1878 there hung a picture on the walls of the New York Academy called "A Turkey Pasture" (owned by W. H. Abercrombie, Brookline, Mass.), simple in theme, sober in tone, telling no story, which at once won the painter fame and patronage and secured him a position by the side of the most daring painters of the new school. This picture bore the signa-

ture of George Fuller (1822-84). After seventeen years of seclusion the fifty-six years old painter had returned, not a beginner but a veteran, and yet a *débutant* once more. His first triumph was rapidly followed by others. His "Quadroon," "Winifred Dysart" (owned by J. M. Sears, Boston), "Psyche," "Nydia," "The Romany Girl" (owned by Mrs. J. T. Williams, New York), "Priscilla" (owned by F. L. Ames, Boston), and "The Berry Pickers" placed him among the first painters of the world.

George Fuller came of Puritan stock and was born at Deerfield, Mass. An instinct of art which ran in the family asserted itself already during his childhood. At the age of twenty he established himself in a studio at Albany, painting portraits and enjoying the tuition of the sculptor, Henry Kirke Brown. Hence he shifted to Boston and a few years later

to New York, where he worked in the life classes of the Academy. On the strength of a portrait of his friend and teacher Brown, he was elected associate of the National Academy. After spending a winter in the South, he went to Europe, not to study, but to learn from nature, and from mediæval art treasures. He visited London, Paris, Amsterdam, Florence, Rome, and Sicily, and returned in 1860 to America, but not to portraiture. Dissatisfied with his previous efforts, and filled with strange visions, he seems to have felt that if he were ever to work his way, it would be on the strength of his own efforts. He shut himself up in his Deerfield home, took to farming, and the world of exhibitions, of dealers and buyers, of artists and critics, knew him no more, and there, close to nature, he mastered the heights and depths and mysteries of his craft.

Fuller's pictures are so simple that one is not impressed by a surprising technique or some startling effect ; he is a poet who interprets quiet scenes of the simple life of the fields, or more often some study of character, evolved from within his own nature. All his work has a subdued yet glowing colour, a somewhat wilful chiaroscuro, a groping, hesitating touch (often caused by drawing in the half-dry paint with the handle of his brush), and a misty vagueness of effect in common. His pictures were never pictures of definite localities and personalities, but idealised visions of shadowy outlines and soft rich colour, rising from vague backgrounds. It is seldom that he chose a subject of literary interest, like his "Priscilla," and even there it is a matter of conjecture whether the shy, startled girl, with one hand raised in a gentle, half-bewildered gesture, is really Longfellow's heroine.

In his "Winifred Dysart" we see the figure of a frail young girl dressed in a pale lilac gown, — holding a small empty jug in one hand, — against a landscape background of delicate gray with a very high horizon line, which affords merely a glimpse of a cloud-streaked sunset sky.

In the "Quadron" (owned by Mrs. S. D. Warren, Boston), a rather more forceful chord is struck. Sitting in the corn-fields with her arms resting on her knees, her large sad eyes turned to us, she expresses the mystery and suffering of her race.

"And She Was a Witch" (at the Metropolitan Museum) represents a wood interior; in the distance, through tall tree-trunks a woman is led away to the dread tribunal, while in the foreground a young girl seeks refuge at the door of her humble dwelling. I know of no other modern painter who could master such

a subject, unless it were Matthew Maris. Fuller always realises that true pictorial charm, which is neither descriptive nor meditative merely, but is inseparable from the special form in which it is conveyed as the musical charm of a song. His "Nude," sitting listlessly on the ground, her rosy flesh tints shimmering faintly through the soft golden hue which pervades the picture, clings to our memory like a strain of music that we have heard in the twilight and that has haunted us ever since.

It is, however, to his "Romany Girl" that Fuller owes his greatest renown. What singular elusive charm, what wealth of *expression* radiates from the wild-eyed, passionate, yet tender face and lies hidden in the subtle animation of the reposeful figure! In her eyes is something of that expression of life and beauty which quivers on the lips of Mona Lisa, some-



FULLER. — ROMANY GIRL.

thing of that subdued and graceful mystery, which can be found in the best of Leonardo's work.

Fuller was doubtless one of the most powerful exponents of poetic or emotional paint the world has ever seen. To recognise how curiously complete he is, we must note how difficult, nay impossible, it is for us to follow him into his workshop. He withdraws completely from the reach of our examination. And this has, certainly in his case, led to some odd misunderstandings of his position as man and as artist. Fuller has been said to be more of a poet than a painter. He has even been pitied like Millet for not being able to paint at all, and blamed for not drawing directly from the model. What an extraordinary misapprehension of both the man and his art. If we take him as a colourist alone, Fuller has given us enough to make a name for half a dozen

painters. He has presented us with great problems in colour, tone, and light, and his sense of the largeness of things, and his rich and luminous touch, reminds us of the school of Giorgione. Because, besides all this, his work was dominated by another element, the powerful melancholy sentiment of his poetic temperament, because in fact he has solved with his paint the more difficult rather than the easier problem, should he not be classed first of all as a painter— as our foremost painter?

CHAPTER IV.

THE NEW SCHOOL.



OWARD the middle of the seventies a great change came over our American art. The large exodus of students to Parisian and Munich schools, to foreign studios and galleries, had begun a few years before, and its results were just returning to us in the shape of a throng of vigorous, eager, cosmopolitan young painters, all alike disregarding of older American traditions and filled with new ideas on every subject. The realm of technical possibilities had been explored. Gérome and Lefebvre, Carolus Duran and Bouguereau, and the Julien, Coralossi and Academie des Beaux Arts schools in Paris, and the Piloty and

Dietz schools in Munich, had given ample proof of the superiority of European teaching. Fine draughtsmanship, bold and fluent execution of the brush, and careful observation had become common property of all art students. The innovations of the *plein air* school had found ready appreciation, and the realism of Bastien-Lepage occupied the minds of the younger men.

The years 1876-78 were red-letter days in the annals of American art history. One event of importance was crowding upon the other.

The Centennial Exhibition had just taken place. Religious mural painting had a renaissance under the leadership of La Farge. St. Gaudens had found in 1877 the first opportunity to reveal his talents in the "Adoration of the Cross," a group of angels at the St. Thomas Church. In 1878 W. M. Hunt's mural

paintings were put up in the Senate Chamber of the Albany State-house. A new interest in etching was aroused, and wood-engraving suddenly soared to its pinnacle of perfection.

The most important of these events, however, was the foundation of the Society of American Artists in 1878. Already, in the spring exhibition of 1874, a number of pictures attracted attention, which, beside the carefully finished and dull-toned canvases of the old academicians, looked like vista through wide open windows. They were the subject of a most violent controversy, in which the theories of the old and new schools clashed, and resulted finally in their separation. The two Munich men, Walter Shirlaw and W. M. Chase (1849-), were the leaders of the movement. Of the older men, Inness, Fuller, Hunt, Chas. H. Miller, and Thomas Moran sympathised with

the movement. The first exhibition of the Society, held at the Kurtz Gallery, March-April, 1878, contained works by Bridgman, De Forrest Brush, Chase, Colman, Currier, Dannat, Dewing, Duveneck, Eakins, Wyatt Eaton, Fuller, Hunt, Inness, La Farge, Homer Martin, M. R. Oakey, C. S. Pearce, Th. Robinson, Ryder, Sargent, Shirlaw, Thayer, Tiffany, Tryon, Twachtman, D. Volk, Olin Warner, Weir, Whistler, and Wyant, — a marvellous list of names, embracing nearly all those who, by their lofty standard, have helped to raise the standard of modern American art.

It was not this marvellous productivity alone which brought about this reform. An art school, in which the pupils themselves took care of the management and elected their own teachers, was opened. The Academy instruction was free, the League self-supporting.

This was the severe test of its merits. The young art students, however, flocked to the new institution, which not only showed them the use of tools, but gave them a facility of expression, and soon gained a considerable surplus in its treasury. The rich experience of Shirlaw, and the enthusiasm of Chase, coupled with the severe but rational methods of European academies, hitherto unknown in this country, exercised a decided influence on the technical development of our art. Among the teachers were Shirlaw, Chase, Fitz, Wyatt Eaton, Cox, Beckwith, Metcalf, Twachtman, Weir, etc.

Among these men, who strove first of all for technical perfection, B. R. Fitz (1855-91) and Wyatt Eaton (1849-90) were undoubtedly the most talented. Both died rather young, before reaching full maturity. Wyatt Eaton painted with a superb breadth, and his broadening of

details has rarely been surpassed. His "Ariadne," "Daphne," "La Cigale," and "Girl with Viol" are productions remarkable for their vigour and solidity. His mechanic reproduction in pen and ink was well-nigh marvellous. He died comparatively unknown, but the world has crowned his work with posthumous laurels. Fitz had less strength, and was of a more dreamy disposition. His work is low in tone, reserved in colour, and beautiful in line. His "Reflection," painted in 1884, is the best nude of that period. His portraits, delicate and refined, were painted with commensurate skill, and his landscapes were noticeable for their warm and mellow tones. He was cut down in the flush of promise, and few were more lamented than this master of form.

The art of several of the other men, who won their spurs a decade or so ago, retrograded before they had created a

style of their own. Kenyon Cox, Carroll Beckwith, W. H. Low, and Walter Shirlaw have to suffer the fate that their later work did not come up to the standard the public and profession had expected after seeing their youthful efforts. They no longer have the power of attracting people who, once disillusioned, have turned away to others. The younger men do not believe any more in them. And yet what promising work did they not perform at the start, only to mention Cox's "Evening," Beckwith's portraits of Mr. Isaacson and Mr. Walton, Low's "The Day of the Dead," and Shirlaw's "Sheep-shearing in the Bavarian Mountains," "Goose Girl," "Man with a Dog," and his foundry studies, "Rolling Steel Plates" and "Emptying the Crucible."

Also Frank Duveneck, now a resident of Cincinnati, passed early into oblivion despite the marvellous fecundity and

power he displayed during the first few years after his return from Europe. I have watched these rapid evolutions from good to bad more than once; they are just as frequent among the present generation. Two startling examples are Frank Eugene and E. A. Bell. On examining their European work, one is willing to concede a unique place to them; but in their later achievements all strength seems to have departed from their brushes. Perhaps these men will rouse themselves to new efforts; if not, the only explanation I can find for the deterioration of their work is that they were not made of the stuff which produces great artists.

Most of our own young art students think it a great achievement to exhibit a picture or a statue in the Salon, not comprehending how easy it really is to produce one good work of art, as long as

they are under the instruction of some modern master, in continual contact with ambitious colleagues, and exalted by the glory of French art treasures that have suddenly burst upon them. Such hot-house inspirations have but little permanent value. It often would be far better if these young talents had never seen a French studio.

The majority of those who return prove equally unsuccessful in advancing our native art. Obligated to stand on their own feet, no longer sustained by competition, technical advice, and by the suggestions derived from artistic surroundings, absolutely alone, without even sympathy, generally forced to earn their living as artisans or in some branch of art unsuitable for them, they only too often find themselves impotent to rise above unfortunate circumstances. Dissatisfied with themselves, they long for the artistic

atmosphere of Europe, and only produce weak reflections of foreign art.

William M. Chase is almost the only man of the technical innovators of 1878 who has steadily improved. All his work, no matter whether portraiture, still life, or landscape, is still distinguished by the same vitality, by the same flexibility of execution, which enchanted us in his earlier work, for instance "The Children of Piloty." He widened his vision and strengthened his technique by manifold trips to London, Paris, Holland, and Spain, and the study of Whistler and Velasquez. And his latest work is still his best; some of his interiors reveal subtleties that are on a par with Degas.

What a pity that Chase should aspire to the honours of a Julien instead of simply remaining our best technical painter! For there is no denying that Chase is one of the foremost landscapists



CHASE. — PORTRAIT OF A CHILD.

and portrayists, and the best still-life painter we possess. Few can handle the painter's brush as skilfully as he on this side of the water. With him everything is first impulse, his work is thrown off with *brio*, the enchantment of the brush work carries it along. Why, there are passages in some of his pictures which even brush magicians like Whistler and Zorn cannot surpass. Chase is always clever. Clever is a word often misused. It is well applied to him.

There is nobody who can cover a big canvas with such ease, rapidity, and skill, and his pictures belong to the best in every exhibition, no matter what their association may be. But above all else, he is the painter of metal surfaces, of copper, brass, and pewter vessels. What a shiver of delight must run through his frame when he dashes in the high lights in his still-life pictures! A woman's face

is scarcely as interesting to him as a copper casserole. There is nobody in America, and scarcely any one in Europe, who can excel him in painting brass. There is a shimmer of brass throughout his personality, studio splendour, and work. How it sparkles! but the sparkle is so genuine, because he has never catered to the taste of the public, but invariably painted for his pleasure. His great popularity, however, depends on the admiration of his pupils, upon whom he has asserted an influence which is strongly felt in American art.

Among his most talented pupils are Emma Sherwood, Elizabeth Forbes, Mrs. Leslie Cotton, Seymour Thomas, Irving Wiles, Ch. C. Curran, Chas. E. Langley, E. P. Ullman, and Robert Reid.

Irving Wiles is a man of poetic temperament, but of little strength. In his work we discover the imprint of his mas-

ter, but with a smoother and more painstaking execution.

Ch. C. Curran succeeds excellently well in making his pictures look limpid, ultra-refined, and in replacing the little dash and brilliancy he originally had by a sort of sweet sentimentality, — best compared to some effeminate, soft-flowing cordial, served in dainty porcelain cups, and meant, I suppose, for ladies and children. To be just to tractable Curran, however, one must never forget his fantastic Church rivalling efforts. His "Dream" (mimic worlds, represented by soap bubbles, with reclining nude females, floating in space) is one of the few works of pure imagination which our practical nineteenth century America has produced.

At this point it may be appropriate to investigate how modern technique has influenced the various branches of art, as marine, cattle, flower, and still-life paint-

ing, etc., which in the art of the nineteenth century are largely represented by specialists. In order to be just to all, this necessitates the mention of many artists of the older school, and I have made it my object to treat them as nearly as possible in a chronological order.

Our marine art shows a number of able artists, although they have by no means been so numerous or capable as the maritime character of our people might lead us to expect.

William Bradford, by origin a Quaker, has made himself a name for his enterprise in going repeatedly to Labrador to study icebergs and lonely coast scenery. He has painted some spirited compositions. Charles Temple Dix, who unfortunately died young, executed some dashing imaginative and promising compositions, and Harry Brown, of Portland, has successfully rendered certain coast effects.

The ablest painter of that period was James Hamilton, of Philadelphia. His work is very unequal, sometimes almost childish, but in his "Ancient Mariner," and similar serious compositions, he showed beyond question that he was an artist of genius, at times as poetical as Thomas Cole. His colour was sometimes crude, but he handled pigments with skill, and composed with the virile imagination of an improvisatore. His "Last Days of Pompeii," at the Memorial Building, Philadelphia, although no marine, is a very able picture.

The most popular marine painter to this day, at least in certain parts of the country, is W. T. Richards (1833-). He is fond of representing a strip of shore at the time when the tide comes rushing in. His late work looks rather mannered, and has grown monotonous in its everlasting similarity of the composi-

tion and its pale green colour; but few have understood the construction of a wave like him. He is well represented by "The Beach" in the Corcoran Gallery and "The Bell Buoy" at the Philadelphia Academy. His pictures of the bleak, snow-like, cedar-tufted dunes along the Atlantic coast have met with less public favour, while his woodland scenes are open to the charge of being too green and monotonous in colour. A Dutch painter by the name of F. H. de Haas, who came here with the reputation of having been court painter to the 'queen, had a decided influence on our art.

By far more talented was John E. C. Peters, a Dane by birth, who died in 1878. When he first began to paint in Boston, his pictures were weak in colour and rude in drawing. But he improved with marvellous rapidity. Every inch a sailor, a ship to him was no clumsy mass laid awk-

wardly on the top of the water, but a thing of life, with an individuality of its own. "Making Sail after a Storm," representing a clipper shaking out her top-sails in the gray gloom succeeding a storm, is a strong picture. So also are his "After the Collision" and "A Ship Running before a Squall."

Also, W. E. Norton (1843-) made several voyages before the mast, and was therefore well equipped as far as observation goes, even at a time when his technique was still hard and mechanical. His best picture of this early period is probably his "Fog Horn" representing two men in a dory blowing a horn to warn away a steamer stealthily approaching them. His later pictures, largely depicting coast scenes with crowds of fisherfolk, painted with a sensuous, agreeable touch, have become quite popular. Inferior in the knowledge of seamanship, but

more poetical in conception, was Arthur Quartley. He won a rapid and deserved reputation for coast scenes and effects of shimmering light on water. His skies are often very strong.

A peculiar place is occupied by Gedney Bunce, whose large marines of the Adriatic, shrouded in scumbled mist, are noteworthy for their rich tonality of liquid yellows. Some of his pictures seem to have been painted with ground-up jewels, so soft and full is the lustre of their colouring.

Among the younger men, Walter Dean, of Boston, should be mentioned. His "Peace" — one of our colossal white men-of-war in full sunlight — attracted considerable attention at the World's Fair. He is the painter of the New England fishing population at work in their old picturesque boats. F. F. English did some delightful work before he



SNELL. — TWILIGHT ON THE RIVER.

retrograded into pot-boiling. F. K. M. Rehn and W. F. Halsall have painted many pleasing marines and coast views.

But it is not the specialists who have done the best work in this department. They are easily eclipsed by Ryder, who expresses the solid mass and bulk of the ocean, torn by the storm into troughs and crests of weltering foam, with a strong appeal to the imagination. Maria à Becket, inspired by genuine enthusiasm, has rendered some of the wildest and grandest scenes of the ocean, and there are few about whose works there is more of the raciness and flavour of water. Also Henry B. Snell is an enthusiastic student of the sea. How well do I remember his "Wreck of the Jason," in a bluish-green surf with quaint, yellow, wind-flapped sails against a reddish-green sky; the "Haunt of the Sea Gulls," where white birds wing around bleak rocks over

an ultramarine sea. And does not all the work of the specialists pale into insignificance beside the breadth, power, and vitality of Winslow Homer's waves, that dash against the solitary rocks of the Northampton coast?

Animal painting was never a strong point of American painters. Our school had no Snyder, Moreland, or Landseer. The cattle pictures of the Hart brothers, of Robinson (Boston), Peter Moran, and Ogden Brown are as unsympathetic as those of Howe and Carleton Wiggins nowadays.

William Hayes showed decided ability in his representations of bisons, prairie-dogs, and other dogs. Weak in colour, he nevertheless succeeded in giving spirit and character to the groups he painted, and among our animal painters holds a position not unlike Mount's in genre.

T. B. Thorpe, in such semi-humorous

satires as "A Border Inquest," representing wolves sitting on the carcass of a buffalo, at one time promised successfully to work up a vein peculiarly American in its humour, and which was carried to a higher degree of excellence by W. H. Beard and F. S. Church. Beard has been called our American *Æsop*, and with some right, as he made a specialty of exposing the failings and foibles of our sinful humanity by the medium of animal genre. Monkeys, bears, goats, owls, and rabbits are in turn impressed into the benevolent service of taking us off. Church is a much more refined draughtsman, he excels in tigers and bears in all their varied motions and habits, often suggestive of the action and expression of human beings.

George Inness has painted some excellent cows, and Ryder has shown in his horses more draughtsmanship than he ordinarily seems capable of. Shurtleff

entertained in his earlier career a pleasant fancy for catamounts and deer, and Marcus Waterman has portrayed the elephant with true artistic temperament. H. R. Poore, of Philadelphia, devotes himself to animal painting with a hearty love, a vigorous style, and fine feeling for colour, space, and composition.

J. A. S. Monks, of Winthrop, Mass., has devoted a lifetime to the study of sheep, and depicts them with sympathy and truthfulness. He does not merely give us picturesque views of a group of sheep, but tries to solve the real character, the soul of these animals.

The man to whom the first place among American animal painters should be un-animously conceded is Horatio Walker (1858-), born in Canada. Horatio Walker is an artist who struggles for something, who nourishes an ardent desire to realise *great* art. He has the rare

gift of sifting his subjects from unnecessary details, of painting only the essentials, and thus combining realism and classicism to a decorative as well as suggestive art which satisfies the most modern taste. Pictures like "The Harrower," "Tree Fellers," "Hauling the Log," "A Spring Morning," can challenge competition with any modern European cattle and landscape paintings. Their *raffiné* simplicity and classic calmness compare favourably with the best of Dewing's and Tryon's art, and the colour, the appreciation of light, and the ripeness and harmony and tone which characterise them show Walker to be a master of the first rank. Amusing and interesting is the conception Walker entertains of cattle and household animals. He is on very intimate terms with them. He knows their ways of life, and feels with them their joys and

troubles of existence. He gives to the brutes he paints life and soul. His animals seem to know something of Goethe's "Weltschmerz." His oxen, with a few exceptions, when they simply have the grand movements of nature, are represented as "beasts of toil;" his cows seem to be resigned to a fate of drudgery; his sheep, huddled together in the pale morning light, some of which show traits of Schenck's and Mauve's breeds, look as forlorn and ascetic as the almshouse inmates who were lost in the forest in Maeterlinck's play "Les Aveugles." Also over his landscapes, those forest clearings with a few yellow leaves shivering on barren branches, hovers an atmosphere of loneliness and melancholia, — relieved here and there in the background by the vague indication of spring, — that only a country whose soil is desolate and barren and snowbound one-half of the

year can exhale. I have spent one winter in Canada, and some of its sad, silent winter scenes have made a deep, most vivid impression upon my mind. Up there the farmers have something of Millet's "sublime murkiness and original pent fury," and looking at Walker's pictures I involuntarily asked myself, "How many human lives had to be sacrificed to conquer that Canadian desolation for the usances of civilisation?" A picture that sets one thinking is generally a good one.

The pigs are the only ones of Walker's animals that know how to take life; they lie complacently in their sties, in the midst of their rich *milieu* of manure, rotting straw, and mire, and in colour, conception, and technical handling are almost without exception masterpieces. Four of his most representative pictures are owned by G. A. Hearn, New York.

Flowers are one of the favourite sub-

jects of women painters. It is natural that their charm should appeal more readily to the emotional female nature than to the more austere and scientific intellectuality of man. Two or three dozens of women painters who paint flowers tolerably well could be easily enumerated. The first flower painter of superior ability was Miss Rollins, whose work about 1879 recalled the rich massive colouring of Van Huysum. She composed with great taste and laid on her colours with superb effect. Other effective fruit and flower painters of her time were George R. Hale and M. J. Heade, who was fond of depicting the sumptuousness of tropical vegetation. During the last two decades Way, of Baltimore, the late G. C. Lambdin, of Philadelphia, who took a deep interest in the cultivation of roses, and Miss Green, of Boston, who enjoys the reputation of painting "the

soul of flowers," were successful in gaining public favour. In our time Mrs. E. M. Scott, who renders white roses with a kind of unaffected wholeness of nature, yet with a delicate beauty and poetical significance of their own, and Abbott Graves, who paints elaborate compositions in the French Salon style, endeavouring to lend his flower masses a *raison d'être* by introducing a wheelbarrow or the bow of a boat, on which they rest, are noteworthy exponents of this delicate art. Yet the pictures that linger most pleasantly in my memory are Alden Weir's and La Farge's flower pieces and "The Rose Garden" by Mrs. Dewing (Mariah Oakey).

Still life has rarely been made a specialty, and rarely been handled by artists of superior skill. Hill in the sixties painted the plumage of birds with a loving spirit and astonishing accuracy. Emil

Carlsen is now about the only one I could mention. His arrangements of fowl, vegetables, and ceramic and brass ware are exceedingly clever but strangely cold and unsympathetic in colour. One wonders involuntarily if that man has any fire in his soul to warm his mentality. W. M. Chase still can boast of painting the finest examples of still life in this country.

Battle painting had but very few exponents. It was in the sixties that the historic art of Weir and Leutze gave way to battle painting in the modern sense. The Secession War had given rise to some important work like Winslow Homer's "Prisoners to the Front," and Hunt's "Bugle Call" (1864), and Julian Scott had a moderate success with his "In the Cornfields of Antietam." Soon after Rothermel, a German artist, painted gigantic canvases like the "Battle of Get-

tysburg," which was one of the attractions of the Centennial Fair.

Gilbert Gaul (1855-), a restless, roving spirit, who began his career with painting pretty women and genre scenes, and now illustrates his various experiences in foreign lands, owes his reputation largely to his spirited interpretation of military scenes. His "Charging the Battery" and "Wounded to the Rear" give him a leading rank among battle painters. He represented action at times, principally in his sketches, with a dash and energy that was even superior to De Neuville.

More polished and just as truthful was W. Trego (1859-), who at the beginning of the eighties painted a number of pictures like "The Battery en Route," "The March to Valley Forge," "Battery Halt," which at once secured him a prominent position in our art. He was an

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earnest student, accurate in characterisation, life-like in representation, and pleasing in his gray colouring. Still conscious of technical weaknesses, he went to Paris, and soon after sent pictures like "The Colour-Guard," and "Running the Gauntlet," to the Philadelphia exhibitions, which looked like imitations of Detaille and Morot. He had become a more skilful painter, but less of an American and less of an artist, for he had apparently sacrificed his own originality of idea to the "glorification of war" as delineated by French battle painters, and with which our nation can have but little sympathy. America has lost him, as it had lost so many others before.

The painting of street scenes is, strange to say, one of the oldest branches of our art. The appreciation of common sense and the love for reality, which were always characteristics of the American, may have

something to do with it. At any rate, pictures bearing the title "Central Square, Philadelphia," and "Election at the State House," were already painted by J. L. Krimmel, a German artist, who came to this country in 1810 and was accidentally drowned near Germantown, Pa., in 1821. Even the town of Brooklyn had its painter at that early period. Francis Guy devoted himself with great financial success to street scenes. His "Brooklyn Snow Scene" (1817) is regarded as his chief work. After these efforts, however, little seems to have been done before Eliza Greatorex made her etchings and pen-and-ink drawings, and Louis C. Tiffany, who in Europe had clung pretty closely to cathedrals, tried to discover picturesque bits about New York City. One of his most successful pictures represented an up-town green-grocer's shanty and garden. Also the picturesqueness of

the New York Harbour attracted him, as it did Samuel Colman.

Blum and Lungren soon followed, and did much creditable work particularly in illustration. More recently the etcher, Mielatz, undertook a labour of love in his "Picturesque Bits of New York," and Pennell made some explorations in old Philadelphia. Chase painted his Central Park scenes, that made him more popular with the public than anything else he has done. But it was left to Childe Hassam to become our street scene painter *par excellence*, the depicter of the ever-changing effects of restless city life. He has a wonderful eye for atmospheric effects, for the tumult in thoroughfares and city parks, and for the endless colour suggestions that are revealed by a crowd of pedestrians, vehicles, or by any combination of the manifold paraphernalia of a metropolis.



TREGO. — THE COLOUR - GUARD.

The simplest scene suggests a picture full of interest and sentiment to him, and he is usually successful in reporting these suggestions. His strength lies in painting a man, for instance, with a few dots of colour, and yet expressing perfectly the man's movement, whether he be running or walking slowly.

With his atmospheric effects he sometimes plays like a wizard, the expression of his own personality often being entirely lost in it.

A most serious rival Childe Hassam has in Ch. Austin Needham, the painter of the "Mott Haven Canal." I almost prefer Needham's street scenes. They are so honest, serious, and simple, and imbued with *our* atmosphere, while the principal merit of Hassam's work is that "the light of France is still upon them."

Another street scene painter is R. Henri, whose aim is rather to seize the

mystery, the passion, the despair, as well as the gaiety of a modern metropolis, than to describe its mere topographical features.

Among the young men W. H. Lawrence should be mentioned, who is a careful observer of life *en masse*, and apparently possesses enough technical faculties to give us realistic and conscientious work in that direction.

Everett Shinn, the latest addition in this field,—which calls for more poetic and imaginative treatment by far both in literature and art than it has hitherto received,—will for various reasons be mentioned at length in another chapter.

If one desires to know Japan as it looks to Western eyes, one will find that C. D. Weldon has done the most realistic, Blum the most poetical, and Parsons the most picturesque work. La Farge, too strong an individuality to be a faith-

ful reproducer of scenery, has manipulated the Japanese landscape to suit his own tastes, and given us a few delicious reminiscences of the Land of the Rising Sun.

“The red Indians are undoubtedly pictorial and perhaps semi-picturesque,” was Walter Shirlaw’s verdict about the artistic possibilities of the American Indians. This was after a Western trip which he and Gilbert Gaul, the battle painter, had made in the interest of the Interior Department. The verdict, overexacting as it may seem, comes nearer to the truth than one may imagine at the first glance. These Western tribes, with their characteristic make-up, their wild way of living, and their peculiar ceremonious rites, contain for the artist all the elements of the pictorial, but even to the layman they can hardly claim to be as picturesque as, for instance, the Arabian horseman whom Schreyer paints.

The majority of our American artists seem to share Walter Shirlaw's opinion — if they have given the subject any thought at all — as the number of those who have made the Indians their special genre is very limited. There are W. Cary, H. F. Farny of Cincinnati, E. W. Deming, Rudolf Cronau, Gaspard Latoix and De Cost Smith, a most thorough student of Indian customs and manners. He has lived for a long time among the Sioux, the Crows, the Bannocks, the Chippeways, Omahas, Winnebagoes, and studied their folk-lore and the various dialects of their languages. Among those who have tackled the subject occasionally are Dodge and Mosler. E. W. D. Hamilton, of Boston, is the only one who has tried to introduce the subject into pictures of ambitious size and into fresco painting.

He once set himself the ambitious task of depicting on a huge canvas the rela-

tion of the red Indians to modern civilisation. The picture told its own story. A number of Indian warriors on horseback, accompanied by a squaw carrying a child on her back, and an old chief borne on a litter, represent the doomed race, wandering through a barren, mountainous region, in search of a new hunting-ground. They are stopped by the apparition of an old Indian and a boy; the latter makes a gesture as if forbidding them to advance farther, while the old man points to an Indian burial-place that is pitched up in the cool shade of a rock, the only dark spot in the picture. The background is a powerful impressionistic landscape — one of the mountain ridges near Gay Head — in the strongest sunlight, most dazzling in the direction in which the Indians are forbidden to proceed.

The most poetical and the most successful renderings artistically of the red

Indians were furnished by George de Forrest Brush (1855-), born at Shelbyville, Tenn.

In the beginning of his career Brush gave us poetical renderings of the American Indian. His Indian hunter (owned by C. D. Miller, Jersey City), with his spoils on his back, squatting at the edge of a lake and reaching forth to pluck a water lily, and the Indian canoeist resting on his paddle for a moment to gaze after the flight of a wild swan over the lonesome lake, belong to the best figure paintings and story-telling pictures of American art, and constitute undoubtedly the most artistic representations the red Indian has hitherto found. Other noteworthy pictures of his are "The King and the Sculptor" and "Killing the Moose."

A few years ago, feeling probably that the red Indians were too remote from the every-day interest of our people, and possi-



BRUSH. — THE INDIAN AND THE LILY.

bly also from the higher aims of art, he took up subjects comprehensible to everyone, namely, maternity and childhood, and, with an exquisite quaintness of line and colour, began, like Abbott Thayer, to idealise his wife and children for a serial of modern Madonnas.

The first time I met De Forrest Brush was in a Forty-ninth Street flat several years ago. He was painting at one of the Mother and Child pictures, which was sold in Boston at — for an American picture — quite a fabulous sum. The humble parlour which served as studio, a glimpse through a half-open door into the intimacies of his private life, two little children approaching shyly in the corridor, and the unfinished portrait of his wife on an easel, told me at once that these representations of motherhood were created directly out of an individual home atmosphere.

They lack, however, the freedom and originality, the bold and personal style of Thayer's work. They are constructed too closely after the pattern of mediæval religious work to give absolute pure enjoyment. His pictures look somewhat laboured, not as far as their technique is concerned, but in that which they try to express, the feeling of "domestic piety."

Brush represents the Tolstoian element in our art. He wants his art to be didactic, popular, of elevating influence upon the masses. The painter is ever ready to expound his theories with a sort of boyish vivacity. Many men, who made their name in history and art, had such a boyish countenance and youthfulness of spirit.

One day I argued in his studio: "But I do not see how you do justice to yourself by selling your pictures to some rich

man, who shuts them up, so that few have the opportunity of seeing them!"

"That's why I am tired of picture painting and want to give it up!" he ejaculated. "This may be my last picture (pointing to an easel). I would not go around the corner for all the honour of the Salon. I shall never be satisfied until I am admired by the people of Cherry Hill."

"I do not see how they will understand your work except you lower your standard."

"The worse for me! You know I lived among the Indians; they were not interested in how I painted them, yet they were highly interested in decorating their own shields with simple ornaments. It is the same way with the people of Cherry Hill. They want something which they can appreciate and afford to buy."

"Do you think you can reach them by some reproductive art?" I inquired.

“I thought of taking up lithography.”

“Yes, any amount of good could be done, not by the silly stereotype pictures that Prang publishes, but by real artistic work distributed in the same extensive manner. Everywhere you can run across a Prang lithograph.”

“Prang did for money what I may do out of enthusiasm and love,” said Brush, heroically.

“Then you would become a sort of ideal Prang?”

We smiled at the idea, and yet were both convinced that an ideal Prang could become one of the leading factors in the art education of our American people.

However, he is still painting Madonnas, surrounded with a larger number of children every year, and each garbed in a different shade of colour.

Brush standing now at the head of “modern scholarly art” in America, al-



BRUSH. — MOTHER AND CHILD.

ways remained a true Gérôme pupil. His drawing is strong and *distingué*, and his figures are interpreted with truth of expression. In his Indian pictures his colour was at times very beautiful and powerful. Of late he has striven more for strong and effective contrasts, his colour has grown richer, but his pictures no longer possess the harmony and simplicity of his former method. He has not yet solved the mysterious affinity between certain colours and certain emotions.

An artist to whom America owes a debt of gratitude it can never pay is Abbott H. Thayer (1849-), born at Boston. One might concede, at the very start, that his drawing is at times very faulty, his colour uncertain, and his flesh tones impure, although they generally harmonise with the drapery. Yet the general effect, the final result, is always dignified. Despite his technical shortcomings, he

possesses *style*, which is given to but few men.

His "Corps Ailé," the white-winged body of a girl against a blue background, has already that naïveté and at the same time that intensity of expression which recalls the early Florentine art. Everything is so fresh, so unaffected, so peculiarly his own, that we can well afford to lose a little technical brilliancy as long as his pictures rather gain than lose by his slow and frugal methods. His healthy manly vigour and his naïve religious feeling, a sort of modern pantheism and childlike faith in humanity, impresses us deeply in these days when men are so self-conscious. He feels things with primitive simplicity, joy, and frankness, and this feeling is not affected but natural with him. The idyllic classic note was in the man, and would have found its way into his work, no matter if he had been a painter, poet,



THAYER. — THE VIRGIN.

sculptor, or musician. His three masterpieces are "The Virgin" (at the House of Freer), "The Virgin Enthroned" (owned by J. M. Sears, Boston), and the "Caritas" (at the Boston Art Museum). The first picture represents a young woman in flowing drapery, stepping briskly forward, leading a little boy and a still smaller girl by the hand. The clouds are shaped like wings, and in the atmosphere is the suggestion of spring. "The brooding spirit of life itself is there, bringing to one's thoughts a swarm of birds and flowers and insects." The second picture shows the same girl with a maturer look, Madonna-like enthroned, with the two children kneeling in adoration at her side. The last picture shows the same model (his daughter) standing in the centre with uplifted hands, and one child on each side leaning against her. It is more decorative than the other two without losing

the spiritual motive, with which all his sensuous forms are saturated.

Abbott Thayer's work occupied indeed a strange position in the world's art. It is a modern combination of the inwardness of the Middle Ages and the vagueness of the Orient. His pictures take the place of the old religious symbols, in which he himself very likely no longer believes, and yet they are imbued with so devout a spirit that they could be used as shrines for worship in modern homesteads, reminding us of all that is good and noble in the human race.

H. O. Walker has lately strayed into the same direction, after enjoying the reputation of being one of the few successful painters of the nude figures in Boston. He copied his models with every physical shortcoming; only the truthfulness of his flesh tints redeemed them from vulgarity. His draped figures, al-

though marked by better drawing, more solid construction, and a delightful note of tenderness and affection, lack the quality which would make them look distinguished, which the hermit of Scarborough, (N. Y.) possesses in such a rare degree.

F. H. Tompkins, one of our best figure painters and a pupil of Löfftz, shows all the characteristics of that technical school, which led German art to independent mastership. Correct judgment, simplicity of composition, sureness of lines, forcible modelling, firm, unobtrusive brush work, natural though rather sombre and at times muddy colouring, and a clever handling of conflicting lights are also Tompkins's technical accomplishments, but his principal endeavour is, after all, to express some feeling, a vibration of the soul individual to himself.

His first important picture, "The Worshipers," showed this tendency. It rep-

resented a German girl in plain black, standing tall and erect in a serious and devout attitude in a church pew, beside an old woman attired in a veil and checkered shawl.

Löfftz, who is rather chary of praise, remarked about this picture: "Gabriel Max could not paint such a hand, but he could paint a better picture."

More powerful by far he appears in expressing the sentiment of motherly love. There are more than half a dozen canvases treating this subject, two of which are particularly characteristic. The first, at the Art Club, Boston, depicts a rustic mother betraying in her whole figure and the joyful expression of her face that all her thoughts are with her child. The second type of motherhood is represented by a delicate and refined looking lady, with reminiscences of old New England in her dress, sitting listlessly at the

cradle from which her thoughts have wandered far away.

Two other pictures of more than ordinary significance are his "Good Friday" and "Afterglow." The latter represents a twilight scene. A road, lined on the right with cottages, loses itself in slight undulations in the distance, where a mass of houses, with numerous lights, suggests the never-ceasing tumult of city life. The sun has set in vehement red and orange colours, under a greenish sky, with dark bluish-gray clouds. In the foreground a priest with choir-boys, carrying lighted lanterns and crucifix, is returning from a funeral. The patch of scant vegetation, with a pool of water to the left, the barren road, the dark cottages with an occasional flickering light in the dim windows or streaming through a half-opened door, appear like the vague desire of sad, struggling humanity for something brighter

beyond the grave. And the same feeling is unconsciously worked out in the colouring, the monotony of the bluish-gray tone of the picture finding relief in the fierce colours of the sunset. It is a picture of endless suggestions that appeal to the poetic mind, before which we can dream and experience a desire to fold our hands, however unbelieving we may be.

F. W. Freer (1849-), a resident of Chicago, is another excellent figure painter, a man of an energetic nature and a fresh spirited style. He has devoted himself chiefly to simple and sincere transcriptions of the fair sex, whose grace and beauty he depicts in modern dress, selecting a happy medium between portraiture and genre for his expression.

Other notable painters of the human figure are Wilton Lockwood, J. H. Calliga, Benjamin Eggleston, Louis Loeb, and Sargent Kendall. The latter's "The End

of the Day," a mother and child subject, is a very strong picture. If he succeeded in making a few more as meritorious as this one, he would deserve to be classed among our foremost painters.

The greatest genre painter of the new school was Th. F. Hovenden (1840-95), born in Ireland. His "John Brown Being Led to Execution," at the Metropolitan Museum, is one of the most popular pictures America has hitherto produced. Prince Kropotkin pronounced it the only picture of lasting value he had seen in that gallery. His judgment, however, was biassed by his theory that art should exercise a distinct moral and educational influence. It certainly should, but not merely by the choice of subject, but rather unconsciously, by force of its beauty. Hovenden's picture has undoubtedly the quality of attracting and interesting the large multitude. The pa-

thetic figure of John Brown, followed by the executors of the law and surrounded by soldiers, who hold back the coloured people pressing forward to show the martyr a last sign of gratitude, is told with a touching familiarity and simple and accurate drawing. He is deficient in painter qualities, but one finds in his pictures knowledge of form, power of characterisation, and correct relation of the figures to the background. The following are a few examples that have found enthusiastic appreciation: "Elaine," "In the Hands of the Enemy" (almost as popular as the John Brown), "Brittany Image Seller," "Chloe and Sam," and "Jerusalem the Golden," a lamplight interior painted in the colours of the impressionist school, with a young woman and a man seated in a listless attitude, listening to a girl playing the piano in the background.

Louis Moeller has gained a reputation

for his genre scenes, in which he portrays unique types of old men with a decided ability for characterisation, and dashy but rather obtrusive brush work.

The only representative of the school, the art of which is summed up in a panel of the size of a hand, is J. M. Gaugengigl, of Boston, the Meissonnier of America. It is quite a number of years ago that he painted the fresco of little fauns over the stage of the Boston Museum for one hundred dollars. His pictures, like "The First Hearing" and "The Duel," sell for thousands of dollars now. Nobody can compare with him in painting details; as a painter of buttons, shoe buckles, every thread stealing out of a buttonhole, every wrinkle in a satin breeches, he reigns supreme. A remark which one of the artists made before Gaugengigl's picture deserves to be repeated: "Take a man, dress him up in a revolutionary costume, place him

among old-fashioned furniture, and look at him through a diminishing glass, and you have Gaugengigl's pictures."

Gaugengigl is equal to Meissonnier in skill of detail and colour, although he never became his peer in representing action, as he painted mostly interiors with one or two figures and rarely attempted more ambitious compositions. Two exceptions are his suicide, a man lying dead near the seashore, or his cavalryman, suddenly shot from an ambush in the hills (at the Boston Art Museum).

Two painters of remarkable versatility are Edward Simmons and Robert Blum. Simmons is a good "stock" painter. He is at home in all parts. He can paint a young girl putting on her stocking with touches of French frivolity, a marine with all its delicate gradations of vibrant air and water, and a decoration with touches of the sublime. In two of his more im-

portant pictures, one of which I saw at Philadelphia and the other ("The Carpenter's Son") in the Grand Union Hotel, N. Y., he would have climbed the very heights of pictorial art, if a tin coffee-pot (that could have aroused the envy of Chase) in one, and the wood shavings in the other, had not been painted in such a "devilish clever" manner as to attract the principal attention.

Robert Blum, whose art reminds Vance Thompson of "a portmanteau that has seen many countries and has been labelled accordingly," always aspired to the exquisite exotic touch of Fortuny, but, sad to state, has more often applied the amiable method of Rico. His work is always brilliant, animated, and refined, his Venetian and Japanese pictures fairly sparkle with crisp and delicate effects.

Portraits are painted as numerous as ever, but the large majority are commer

cial, and have no claim to art. Our wealthy classes still prefer to have themselves painted by foreign portrait painters, and, as long as they engage men of rare ability, like Carolus Duran and Zorn, with whom our artists can hardly compete, little fault can be found, but when it comes to mediocre talents like Chartran and Madrazo, it is rather deplorable. Some of our native artists, like Eakins, Chase, Henri, and Dewing, for instance, should be able to satisfy the most exacting demands in that direction.

Among the portraitists who are specialists three stand out distinctly, Vinton, Brandegee, and Cecilia Beaux.

F. P. Vinton, of Boston, is our best portrait painter. He was a great admirer of Hunt, and his works show some of the breadth and virility of his great predecessor. Vinton's portraits are generally good likenesses painted in a masculine

style, with solidity, depth of colour and excellent draughtsmanship, but with a rather prosaic conception. Yet, however far they may be removed from spontaneity and brilliancy of execution, he seldom gives us a picture that could be called insignificant. It seems of late as if Vinton were struggling to get away from his darker colouring, and reach some higher expression of truth. His work at least shows a steady improvement. At all events, he is more competent than most American artists to portray the character of the average well-to-do American, with his manliness, never-abating energy, self-satisfaction, and democratic spirit. His portraits of women are nearly always failures.

Less successful in securing orders is R. L. Brandegee, now living in Farmington, Conn. The portraits he now and then exhibits, strong in characterisa-

tion, impressive in their colouring, and executed in a decisive manner, are a most convincing evidence of his power.

Cecilia Beaux is another artist who devotes her talent entirely to portraiture, which is in itself a decided merit in this art world of ours, in which illustrations, teaching, and portrait painting are generally only considered means to keep artists from starvation. Miss Beaux's individuality is developed in two characteristics: brilliancy and refinement. They are combined in such an exquisite, vital manner as to render her pictures real fragments of beauty, not entirely free, however, from superficiality, and a certain trickiness, which generally accompany brilliancy. Each portrait contains beautiful touches which, carried only a little bit further, would blossom forth into delightful mannerisms, as, for instance, the blue-gray lines which she uses as outlines and em-

phasis in the shadows. Her drawing is often uncertain, and would, undoubtedly, improve by anatomical studies in the life class. Trousers generally have legs inside. Yet her portraits, in whatever surrounding they may be, are always sure to attract attention by their agreeable colour schemes, simplicity of arrangement, naturalness of pose, and their general chic technique. But beneath the flamboyant surface there is a good deal of drab, a rigidity, inherent in her personality; she has not yet learned to animate her art with emotional and intellectual dashes that flash forth from the storm clouds of genius.

Bonnat, for instance, is just the opposite to Miss Beaux, a good deal of drab on the surface, but flamboyant beneath. Miss Beaux lacks the penetrative glance, her observation rests on the external picturesqueness of things.

Perhaps her subjects have not favoured a display of spiritual predominance. But it is doubtful whether she could ever paint the head of an Edison satisfactorily; she might, however, paint Paderewsky.

Women push themselves to the foreground everywhere, but the result is rather dissatisfactory and tiresome. Only Mariah Oakey (in former years), Mary Cassett, Cecilia Beaux, Maria à Becket, and lately Violet Oakley, have shown superior talents.

Why do women always paint such trifling subjects? Why do they always imitate men, instead of trying to solve problems which have never been touched before? The women artists have still to come (Rosa Bonheur was a mere suggestion) who can throw a new radiance over art by the psycho-physiological elements of their sex, and only then the large number of women will be justified in modern



The Viking's Daughter.
From the original in possession of John Bellamy
F. S. Church, N.Y. 88.

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CHURCH. — VIKING'S DAUGHTER.

art. The woman who can paint men as we have painted women, and paint women as we have painted men, will win for herself the laurel wreath of fame.

Clara McChesney is one of the few whose art shows some individuality, despite the fact that she has learnt so much from certain modern Dutch painters that she will never forget their methods. The principal merit of her work is that she paints everything as if seen at a distance of five feet, which is proper. She surprises by a monotony of tone which is only surpassed by her monotony of subjects. Her figures are just as dull, forlorn, and beggarly-looking as those of Israels, Neuhuys, Artz, etc.

Other conscientious women workers of more or less talent are Matilda de Cordoba, Ida Waugh, L. Fitzpatrick, A. E. Klumpke, Clara Weaver Parrish, Amelia B. Sewell, Jane B. Child, Belle Havens,

Elizabeth Nourse, Edith Mitchell Prellwitz, etc.

The so-called poetic picture is fairly in swing, but it is delightful to note that the artists do not find it necessary to ransack the pages of writers for a subject, but rely upon their own imagination.

F. S. Church (1842-), with his elfin tandems, ostrich dances, peacocks in snow-covered parks, etc., was the pioneer in this direction. At times he gave vent to a more serious, half-philosophic, half-grotesque strain of mind, as in his "Northern Sphynx," a monster of ice symbolising the dread perils of polar explorations, "The Sybil," a young girl looking at the head of a mummy, and his etching, "Silence," the head of a mummy whose lips are touched by a rose; but he always returned to his serio-comics,—his bears eating ice-cream and baking griddle-cakes, or flimsily clad dam-

sels with chafing-dishes at the seashore, — those silly and yet so well-told fairy tales for grown up people. Church was also the first of our self-taught men, who unconsciously introduced some of the elements of Japanese art into his pictures.

A Japanese gentleman, who recently took a look at J. Gellatly's picture collection, to the astonishment of his host, only grew enthusiastic when he encountered some canvases of F. S. Church. He did not care for Th. W. Dewing's ideal representations of American womanhood, nor for old Newman's colour dreams, but for the "Viking's Daughter," with a cluster of sea-gulls fluttering around her head, which, with the well-known "Surf Phantom" and "Knowledge is Power," represents the best work this painter has produced. Its suggestiveness, expressed by a poetic idea and delicate colours, with a preference for

fragile grays and whites, interested the man from the land of chrysanthemums.

E. H. Blashfield's (1848-) career is closely identified with antique genre and decorative picture painting. His mature, intellectual, and dignified talent reached its height probably in his "Angel with the Fiery Sword." "Strains of Grey," depicting a laurel-wreathed, youthful figure holding a large, ancient string instrument in its hand, is, for its simple composition, the naïve pose of the figure, the reverie expressed in the face, and its soft, subdued tone of delicious grays, perhaps the most satisfactory work the artist has accomplished.

Siddons Mowbray was born 1854, of English parents, in Alexandria, Egypt. This coincidence apparently has influenced his choice of subjects. He has become the depicter of half-draped femininity in rich costumes lounging about in



BLASHFIELD. — STRAINS OF GREY.

Oriental interiors. Only in a few instances has he attempted more important compositions like "Aladdin," "Rose Harvest," "Arcadia," "Scheherezade," and "Evening Breeze." Although neither an ethnologist striving fatuously to reconstruct the life and characteristics of the Orient, nor a painter of simple prettiness, he was unable to improve upon the one particular idea, which he had formed and elaborated in early life. Other artists who treat imaginative subjects are Kenyon Cox, G. W. Maynard, W. H. Low, E. A. Bell, Louis Loeb, Ch. C. Curran, Bryson Burroughs, H. Prellwitz, and W. F. Kline.

The most exalted position in this branch of art must be given to Thomas W. Dewing (1851-), born in Boston, a pupil of Boulanger and Lefebvre. The charm of his subjects, for instance, his "Musician," a lady sitting in reverie at the piano (at the house of Freer), and his "Lady

in Yellow" ('89, owned by Mrs. J. L. Gardner, Boston), gained him an early reputation, at least in the profession. During my manifold visits to artists' studios, I asked a dozen or more of our prominent painters, belonging to the most antagonistic schools, whom they considered the best artists of America; their lists varied largely, but, strange to say, Dewing was invariably mentioned.

I, for my part, can never look at a picture of Dewing's without being deeply moved. His instinct for beauty, poetic expression, and mystic grace satisfy my desire to forget every-day life completely.

His pictures leave an afterglow, and that is a decided merit. In this world, with its thousands of interests, a man's works must be quite powerful in order to become so important to us as to form a part, however small it may be, of our intellectual life.

Dewing's pictures have a certain something that reminds me of a rare piece of furniture which has been beautified by a coating of *vernis Martin*.

I know of nothing in painting which possesses such an exquisite (intellectual) flavour, except it were the browns of Orchardson or the grayish greens of Théophile Reichardt. It is a most peculiar flavour. I am quite a connoisseur of wines, let me see if I can fix it. It is some rare brand. It is neither Chateau d'Yquem, nor Tokay, nor Lachrimæ Christi, nor Veuve Clicquot. Now I have it. It is perhaps like a cup of Imperial Japanese tea, at about twenty dollars a pound, of mild florescence, delicious in taste, and yet with some strength, by no means effeminate.

The pictures of Dewing are devoted to a certain type of human beings; to represent beautiful ladies, mostly mature women of thirty, is their sole aim.

The ladies all seem to possess large fortunes and no inclination for any professional work. They all seem to live in a Pre-Raphaelite atmosphere, in mysterious gardens, on wide, lonesome lawns, or in spacious empty interiors, where one feels *à son aise*, with something Old Italian about them. They are dressed in the latest fashions, which are, nevertheless, so idealised that they look almost like the liberty costumes of Burne Jones. These ladies use the best perfume in the market. They love beautiful large flowers, and their long, tapering fingers like to glide over all sorts of string instruments, and there they sit and stand, and dream or play the lute or read legends, sometimes two together, sometimes three, and even in larger numbers, all without individuality, but belonging together by a peculiar resemblance of costume, of form and sentiment. As with the majority of women,

one might think that the philosophy of life of Dewing's heroines also consisted of fashion and amusement, but in this company of idol-women it is different; they all have a dream-like tendency, and, though absolutely modern, are something quite different from what we generally understand by modern women. Their ideal is to be found probably between the Antique and the Early Renaissance. They would like to look like the companions of Nausicaa, as Botticelli conceives them, with the education and reading of a *grande dame* of the Italian High Renaissance. They are like amateur actresses in sympathetic, suffering, passive rôles. They entertain a conversation as far removed from our world as was the party in the Decameron of Boccaccio from the pestilence, only that our society lacks the youthful strength and pagan ingenuity of that time.

They lead, indeed, a life of reflection; they seem to be melancholy without reasons, merely because suffering is poetical. When Dewing paints them, he takes good care to avoid expressing even a reflection of the genuinely devout feeling of the Middle Ages, as Rossetti or Henri Martin do, — he depicts the romantic tendency of our refined American ladies, who transform their boudoirs into sanctuaries devoted to the worship of their own individual tastes, who read Swinburne, are fond of orchids, and loll about on divans in their large, solitary parlours, in expectation, perhaps, of a sentimental knight in glittering armour (made of silver dollars) prancing in on a palfrey.

Thomas Dewing is the only American painter who has succeeded in giving us pictures of women that might stand for the "ideal American" type.

He does not merely get their æsthetic



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DEWING. — IN THE GARDEN.

elegance, but succeeds in making them express psychological suggestions (produced by indolence in an artistic atmosphere) with a vague mixture of the Parisian demi-monde, a rare combination of piquancy, refinement, and dream-like qualities. He is also an excellent portrait painter of women, but after all best in those compositions which recall the flavour of Imperial tea and the hue of *vernis Martin*, gems like "A Musician," like several of his long-necked ladies in yellow, in black, or in blue, each distinct in their soul atmosphere; as also in that modern Tanagra figure called "Girl in White," in his delicate pastels and dainty fancies in silver point, and the exquisite poem, "In the Garden," one of the few perfect masterpieces which American figure painting has produced.

The quality in Dewing's work which appeals to me beyond every other is its

personal character; it reflects the man's mind, that of a refined epicureanism, choosing naturally to live among dainty surroundings and beautiful women; it is a fastidious seeking of the unconventionally beautiful and an expression of it that does not smack of any school, although it shows a hard and severe training of the eye and hand, and no sparing of strenuous study.

It is left to us now to mention that artist who is most fit to conclude this chapter, as he represents both schools, the old in his technique, and the new in his ideas. It would be more just still to say, perhaps, that he belongs to no school at all, as he is one of those idealists who might have been born at any time and in any land. I mean A. P. Ryder (1841-), born at New Bedford, Mass., self-taught, enjoying for a short time only the tuition of W. E. Marshall, the engraver.

I do not remember under what circumstance the name of A. P. Ryder was first mentioned to me; there was, however, something about the manner in which it was mentioned that made an impression upon me. Then I recalled having seen an article in the *Century* a few years ago (June, 1890), in which several wood engravings from his pictures—though too much Kingsley and not enough Ryder—interested me so much that I forgot to read the text. A tempting suggestion of some unexplored mystery rose within me, and I decided to visit Ryder.

This was not easy; more than a dozen times I called at the simple, old-fashioned house in East Eleventh Street where he used a third story back room as studio. Then I wrote him about my many fruitless calls, and received as reply a kind invitation, with an excuse for not having

been in, as he had been "absorbing the lovely November skies."

On the appointed evening I met him in a tavern. I have a very bad memory for faces, and therefore do not dare to describe Mr. Ryder's appearance, as interviewers are apt to do. A reddish full beard, a dreaminess in his eyes, a certain softness, with a touch of awkwardness in his general bearing, seemed to me leading characteristics.

After a glass of beer and a cigar we strolled to his workshop near by.

As I entered the little two-windowed den — Mr. Ryder lighting the gas jet which could not even pride itself on having a globe — my eye met a great disorder of canvases of a peculiar dark turbid tone, lying about in every possible position, amidst a heap of rubbish and a few pieces of old, rickety, dusty furniture, covered with clothes, old magazines and

papers, boxes, plaster casts, a collection of odds and ends of cord and twine neatly rolled up, etc.—everything spotted with lumps of hard, dry colour and varnish. I involuntarily had to think of a dump in which street urchins might search for hidden treasures.

Mr. Ryder began to show me some of his half-finished pictures, and I was carried away into a fairyland of imaginative landscapes, ultramarine skies and seas, and mellow, yellowish lights, peopled by beings that seemed to be all poetic fancy and soul:

Scenes from "The Tempest" and "Macbeth;" a skeleton on horseback galloping through an empty racetrack in the moonlight; a Desdemona; a scene of Arabs with camels and tents; a landscape with soft, greenish notes and a good deal of yellow in it; a few moonglade marines, little canvases that might serve as "per-

manent colour inspirations;" a Christ and Magdalen, apparently undertaken more to express individual sensuousness than Biblical glory.

They passed on, one by one; I, having a peculiar mania for searching in every expression of art, and life as well, for its most individual, perhaps innermost essence, tried in vain to form an estimate.

I anxiously lay in wait for an opportunity to enter Ryder's individuality; to find a key to all its treasures. His sense for colours—gorgeous, ponderous as it is in his blues, soft, caressing in his yellows, and weird in his lilac greens—seems to me but an inferior quality. I fail to see that he is a great colourist; surely he is not a colourist in the sense of Titian, Delacroix, Turner, Makart, Böcklin, or Chavannes—even La Farge and Newman are, in my opinion, by far better colourists; he is not even a tone painter

like Michel, Whistler, or Maris; also, to Monticelli and Diaz he is related more in regard to method than colour; Ryder is a chiaroscurist, an *ideal* black-and-white artist, with a special aptitude for moon-light effects. His technique, reminding me somehow of Blake's wood-cuts, is quite his own: the heavy "loading" of his canvases, the muddy, rather monotonous brush work (holding the brush at the middle of the handle and hesitatingly dragging it across the canvas), the constant using of strong contrasts of dark and light colours, and the lavish pouring of varnish over the canvas while he paints, to realise lustre, depth, and mystery.

Ryder showed me a little panel, not larger than 6 x 10, representing a mediæval maiden sitting on the shore and playing the lute, while behind her in the distance vessels are floating by.

"I tried to make it like a little volume

of poetry," he remarked. And then he recited, with a nonchalant but soul-steeped voice, the poem he had written to it:

"By a deep flowing river
 There's a maiden pale,
 And her ruby lips quiver
 A song on the gale.

"A wild note of longing,
 Entrancing to hear —
 A wild song of longing
 Calls sad on the ear.

"Adown the same river
 A youth floats along,
 And the lifting waves shiver
 As he echoes her song.

"Nearer, still nearer
 His frail bark doth glide;
 Will he shape his course to her
 And remain by her side?

"Alas, there's no rudder
 To the ship that he sails;
 The maiden doth shudder —
 Blow seaward, ye gales!

“Sweeter and fainter
The song cometh back,
And her brain it will bother
And her heart it will rack.

“And thus she'll grow paler
With this fond memory,
Paler and paler
And thus she will die.”

Some artists accuse him of being dependent on the old masters. Probably they are right; every artist must get his inspirations somewhere, it really matters little where, as long as he is original himself. True, Ryder's pictures are somewhat like old masters; yet they rather look like old pictures in general, than resemble any particular master, and, therefore, this mediæval appearance indicates no imitative, but, on the contrary, a creative faculty.

Also, in painting poetic subjects, he can hardly be called dependent. What have

Chaucer's lines to do with yonder boat floating mysteriously on moonlit waters? There is some female figure in the boat, but what matters it to us whether it be a heroine of Chaucer's or Ryder's imagination.

Looking about the room, I suddenly saw a life-size portrait gazing at me from a corner. The first glance told me that it was a man in United States uniform; after that I only saw the face: the tightened lips, *the eyes*, it was as if a soul were bursting from them, and then it seemed to me as if Ryder, his soul was steadily gazing at me.

This portrait immediately gave me a keener insight into his artistic character than any other picture. Everything was sacrificed to express the radiance of the innermost, the most subtle and most intense expression of a human soul. Perhaps my impulsive nature, the extraordi-

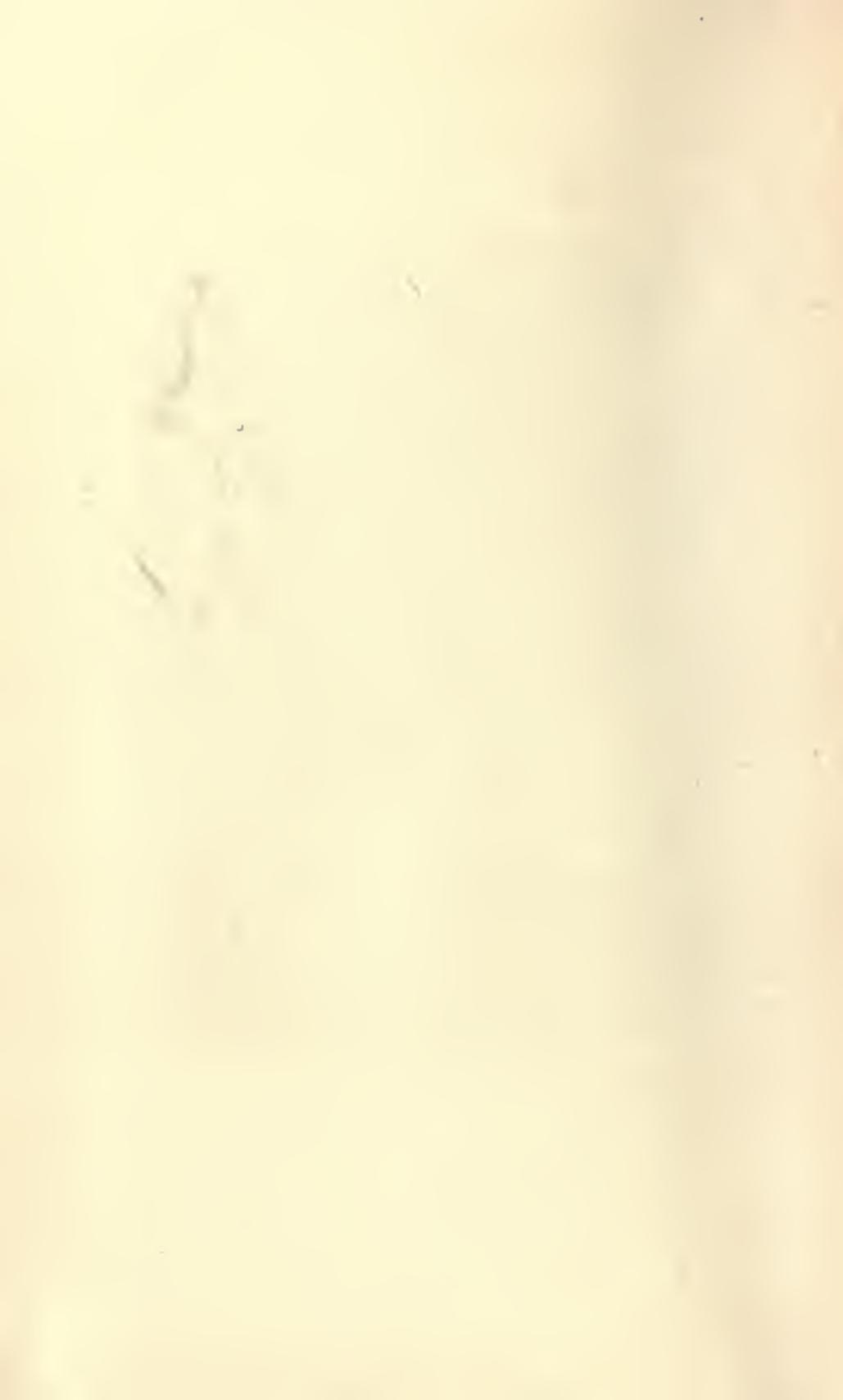
nary hour, the gaslight's hectic glare o'er the lapis-lazuli spots on his canvases may explain a good deal of the enchantment I felt on that evening. One thing is sure, that my first visit to Ryder was one of those hours never to be forgotten.

It is Ryder's overflow of sentiment, curbed (sometimes even suppressed for the moment) by a sturdy awkwardness, which also now and then appears on the apparently so mild surface of his character; this patient waiting (running away from his studio to absorb November skies or moonlit nights, and returning to his canvases at all times of the day and night whenever a new idea suggests itself) until he can condense all the manifold inspirations, of which a picture is created, into the most perfect one at his command, makes his art so great that it can hold its ground, even in the company of illustrious masterpieces.

One must see his "Siegfried" (owned by Van Hornen, Montreal) riding along the Rhine, meeting the Rhinedaughters near a mighty oak, all bathed in a cold, armour-glittering moonshine, to realise how he can flood a picture with sensuous, bewitching poetry; and in order to fathom how far he can climb in grandeur of thought and composition one must study his "Jonah" (owned by C. E. S. Wood, Portland, Ont.), and his "Flying Dutchman," the world-weary phantom ship, adrift on the tempestuous sea of time,—its colossal troughs bedizened with the lurid glamour of a goblin sun,—is seen struggling in the left distance, in an atmosphere laden with Good Friday gloom and glory, on a mighty wave, *upwards!* This upward movement is genius, pure and mighty, that will live for centuries to come (if no varnish slides occur). It is a



RYDER. — FLYING DUTCHMAN.



picture as impressive as religion, one of the few that sound the note of sublimity which is, after all, the highest in art.

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