

THE American Scene

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THE DIVERGENCE OF AMERICAN ART

This is the second of a series of articles concerned with the history of American art, as illustrated in the collections of the Gilcrease Institute. See Volume 2, Number 1 for the Emergence of American Art.

The union had been re-established, the railroads had connected the continent, and the Eastern half of the U.S. had reached a level of social ma-

turity. But business was now the prime challenge for aggressive Americans and many, due to their genius in the financial world, were becoming tremendously wealthy. They found great pleasure in demonstrating their new wealth with the acquisition of the grandiose and the flamboyant. The purchases included an array of magnificent homes decorated in an extravagant manner, costly and exotic social functions that would bring to

mind the Arabian Nights, and other such expenditures that were designed for self-gratification and to impress. Principally for these reasons, works of art were being acquired.

Europe was the art shop for the impressionable, wealthy Americans. An American artist who desired recognition and success could do so more readily by working and living in Europe, as in the case of James McNeil Whistler. However, thanks to pro-



WATCHING THE BREAKERS

Gilcrease Collections

WINSLOW HOMER

moters of American art such as Thomas B. Clark, Winslow Homer and George Inness—two American artists who remained in America most of their lives—were accepted by the public and critics, and were financially successful. An even greater incongruity was that their work stood as far apart as possible from any direct influence from Europe at that period in American art.

The background from which Winslow Homer (1836-1910) was drawn into the field of fine art was a very influential factor in the evolution of his work. At the age of nineteen, determined to take a profession which would encompass his ability to draw, he became an apprentice in a lithography studio. Here Homer learned and developed his skill of drawing, but more important, he learned to produce drawings and woodcuts which told an objective story of places, people, and activities. After he had served two years' apprenticeship he pursued illustration until he reached the top of this profession at which time he began devoting all his efforts to print making and painting in oil and watercolor.

Homer visited France during his first trip abroad and made contact with a second important influence—the impact of a new school of art. It is not certain how Homer spent this time abroad aside from his painting, however, it is known that he

placed little emphasis on visiting museums and that he disdained and avoided conversations concerning art. Nevertheless, he was introduced to French impressionism and was excited by it; his paintings from this period show a more pronounced emphasis on capturing and portraying the momentary aspects of light. Homer's second trip abroad was spent in isolation on the coast of England and while this trip had little influence on his art as far as outside contact, it enabled a concentrated study and work which stabilized ideas and techniques and gave his work maturity.

After two years in England, Homer returned to America and established a studio at Prout Neck, Connecticut. Here Homer found isolation and solitude which he sought more and more as his years progressed. In winters there were no visitors in the area and in summers only a select group gained admission to his studio. Winslow Homer did not dislike people, but he found it necessary to his work to eliminate impelling close social contacts. He chose to speak to all through his paintings. Perhaps for this reason when there were lengthy periods during which his dealer could not sell his work Homer would suffer depression and swear never to paint again.

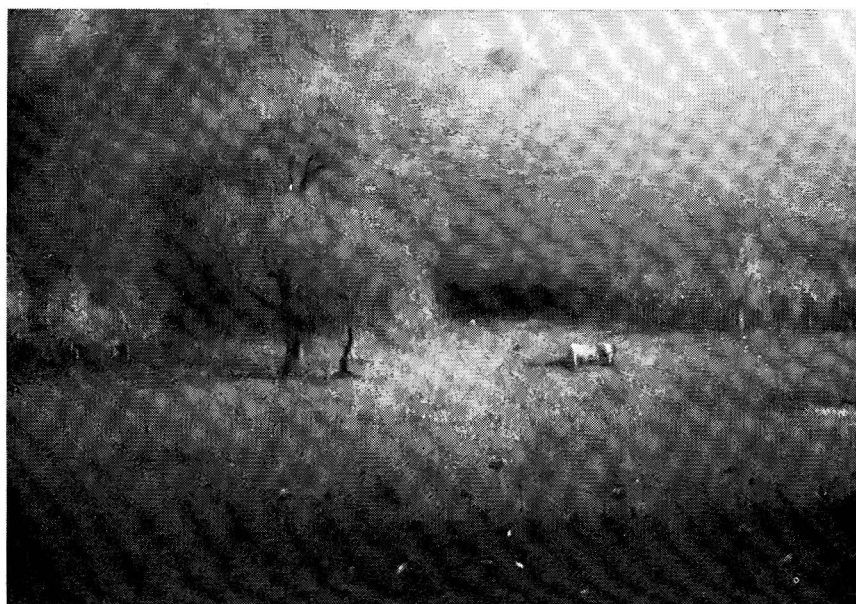
GEORGE INNESS (1825-1894) on the other hand was not so dependent on public acceptance, stating on many occasions that nothing could cause

him to cease painting. He painted with an emotional exuberance that was the prevailing influence in his life and work. Unlike Homer, Inness thrived on human relationship. He was intensely emotional and lavished as much love and warm affection on his family as he did on his work. With equal fervor he would engage in conversations concerning art and philosophy. Many visitors would remain pinned to their chairs by the strength of Inness' gaze while the artist discoursed for hours.

Shortly after Inness was married, a patron defrayed his expenses enabling him and his bride to travel to Europe where he might further his artistic career. Inness came into contact with the paintings of artists of the French Barbizon school and those of the Englishmen, Turner and Constable. In them Inness found his greatest influence—outside his own thoughts and emotions—taking what he needed from those he admired but imitating none of them.

In their mature work, Winslow Homer and George Inness emphasized the same subject matter—nature. The approach to nature, which was in accordance with each man's personal philosophy, was ultimately the greatest influence on their work. Homer's philosophy had perhaps evolved from his early training as an illustrator. He believed that nature spoke in visual words and one only need record what was before him in order to produce the most significant paintings. Thus, Homer would wait and watch for the visual voice of nature and then paint directly from nature. Inness on the other hand had begun painting landscapes in a realistic manner but more and more his personal philosophy influenced his work. In this philosophy, God, nature, and man were integrated and God spoke through nature to man. Inness sought to emphasize the emotional and the mystic of nature, in doing so he painted from his memory of nature and invited his personal emotions toward God and nature to reconstruct what was visually accurate.

"New Jersey Landscape" shown here is an excellent example of the manner in which Inness reconstructed nature. The artist has eliminated the small details and fused the larger forms, creating a sense of mysticism which was, to Inness, God speaking or the essence of nature. In contrast, Homer has given the viewer of "Watching the Breakers" (see cover) a sense of that reality which accompanies a vivid, visual experience with nature. L. W.



NEW JERSEY LANDSCAPE

GEORGE INNESS

AMERICAN REALIST

Thomas Eakins

Thomas Eakins was born in 1844 and died in 1916. He founded no school of art and his work met with little acclaim in his own lifetime; yet today he ranks with America's greatest painters. His rise to such an enviable position in such a short period of time following his death is remarkable and shows how truly great art often has a way of lifting itself to its proper place of recognition.

Thomas Eakins was a realist, a superb technician, whose philosophy of art was naturalism. He believed that the artist should master the techniques which give him control of light, color and form and then paint his picture with as true a rendition of his subject matter as possible. Truth was his goal, not beauty, idealization, or romance. However, he was not a mere copyist; he recognized that true art must contain an element of creativeness and for him that element was truth. His being did not require that he infuse his paintings with his own emotional experience; on the contrary he insisted upon a strict objectivity. It was this objectivity, this truth for truth's sake, this respect for nature, with its sometimes harsh and impersonal aspect, that injured his popularity during his lifetime.

One feature of Eakins' painting shocked the art world; this was his choice of subject matter. Eakins painted the ordinary, common events and scenes which were a part of everyday life in his hometown of Philadelphia. The evolution of art in America has been such that today this is a common practice, but when Eakins began painting, it was a radical innovation and varied greatly from the romantic subject matter of the artists of the Hudson River and Dusseldorf schools so popular in this country up to Civil War times. The Victorian Gilded Age of his own day could not

appreciate a man whose outlook had the directness of the twentieth century's concern for reality, unadorned by romanticism or fanciful idealism.

Thomas Eakins was gifted with an alert and capable mind and as a school boy he excelled in mathematics, science and drawing. He was graduated from high school in 1861 and during the next five years attended the Philadelphia Academy of Art and the Jefferson Medical College where he studied anatomy. In 1866 he went to Paris to study at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts where he chose for his master teacher, Jean Leon Gerome. Gerome was a literalist, believing that the artist should adhere to the truth and that the most important element of art was drawing. It was natural for a scientific-minded person like Eakins to prefer Gerome's approach; the influence of his teacher was to show itself throughout Eakins' art career. It was during the Paris years that Eakins was imbued with the principal of being a thorough technician and it was this ability to master technique that was to eventually assure him a high place in American art. In 1870 after a trip to Spain, Eakins returned home where he remained the rest of his life.

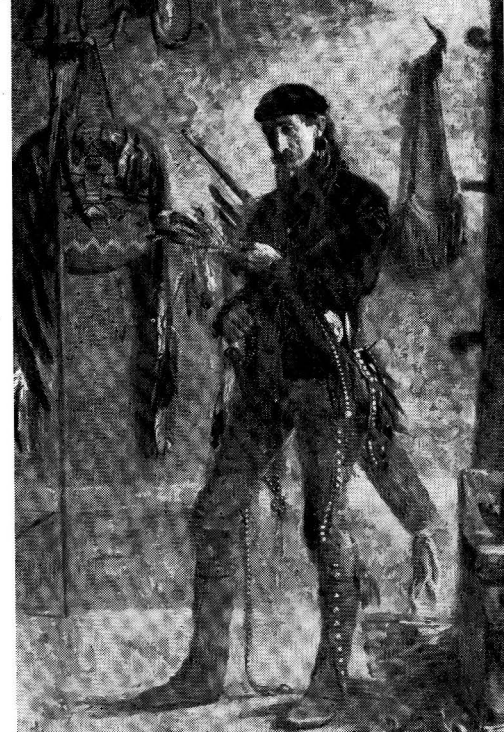
Eakins set up a studio in his father's house and began to paint portraits of members of his family and of outdoor scenes taken from his own experiences as hunter and sportsman in the vicinity of Philadelphia. He also resumed his studies of anatomy at Jefferson Medical College and pursued the study of mathematics. In 1876 he became an instructor at the Philadelphia Art Academy and three years later succeeded Christian Schus-

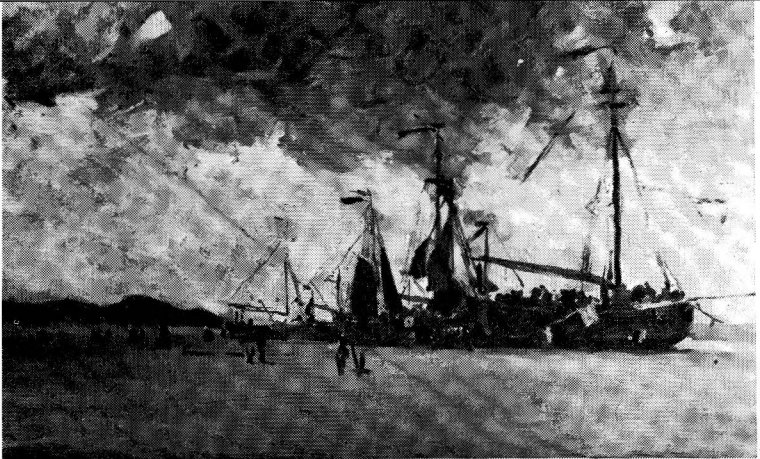
sele as professor of drawing and painting.

Eakins instilled a new spirit into the Academy and made radical innovations in teaching methods and policy. In sharp contrast to his own teacher, Gerome, Eakins started his students off by having them paint in color without preliminary practice in drawing. He also introduced the use of models in life drawing classes. While at the Academy he built a device to study the running motion of the horse which became one of the earliest attempts at motion pictures. In 1836 Eakins resigned from the Academy and devoted the rest of his life exclusively to painting.

As he grew older Eakins turned more and more to portrait painting but even here his work did not arouse much enthusiasm. In comparison with an earlier master, Thomas Sully, whose portraits had a pretty and flattering aspect, those of Eakins were profound studies of character; moreover, he often caught the sitter in a rather uncomplimentary manner. Such paintings were not apt to please the art public of that period.

The painting of Frank Hamilton Cushing, a noted ethnologist, was done in his studio about 1895. Cushing helped Eakins convert the studio into a replica of a Zuni Indian pueblo room and then posed for the artist as a Priest of the Bow, a sacred Zuni fraternity to which Cushing belonged. It is an excellent example of Eakins at his best. M.W.





ON THE COAST OF BRITTANY
JOHN SINGER SARGENT
Gilcrease Collections

SOME WENT A

American Artist

During much of the first half of the 19th century American Artists, still under the influence of the romantic philosophy and the Age of Reason, were extolling the virtues of their own culture and painting the glories of the American landscape. Many artists traveled abroad but most of them returned with little more than a veneer of European culture; they remained in America reveling in the beauty and strength and virility which they felt innately American. By the 1860's however, artists, disillusioned at home partly as a result of the Civil War and lured by the exotic and the venerableness of the old world, not only studied in Europe but some remained as expatriates. In essence, these men were doing almost the same as the artist who escaped to the western frontier to follow the trail of the Indian and the trapper and the early settler—to paint the people and the land as it was being attacked and altered by the steady onslaught of civilization. The artists who went abroad either to Europe or the American frontier were, of course, seeking new experiences and a new challenge for their art.

During the 1870's and 80's art traditions in Europe were once again being shattered. The concept of impressionism was as much a way of thinking as a way of painting. Nature itself was ugly and ordinary and shapeless, so the artist of the school reasoned; art alone could bring order to nature and make it beautiful. This concept was not accepted readily in America but doubt was raised as to the validity of the pastoral scenes of the Hudson River school. The romantic enthusiasm for the natural and a belief in the identity of reason and nature were put to a severe test. Such paintings as "Kindred Spirits", painted by Asher B. Durand in 1849 showing Thomas Cole, the artist, and William Cullen Bryant, the poet, in one of nature's grandest settings, was, in a sense, smashed to the ground and con-

sidered trite and naive. The expatriate American artists returning from Europe advised their colleagues that grace and beauty was, after all, not the result of nature but the product of man's design and effort.

During this period in the history of American art, several artists represent the group which turned to Europe for inspiration and sometime home. Three of these will be treated in some detail in this article; these are: James Abbott McNeil Whistler, John Singer Sargent and John LaFarge. This is a convenient selection because they are not alike and represent different aspects of the European experience.

James Whistler was born in Lowell, Massachusetts in 1834, although he chose in later years to be born at a different time and a different place. He, like the other two artists to be dealt with, had an aptitude for and an interest in art at an early age. However, since he came from a military family, he was sent to West Point; fortunately for the sake of art, he was discharged after three years because of his inadequacy in chemistry. In 1854 shortly after his discharge he made his first etching on copper as an employee of the Coast and Geodetic Survey in Washington.

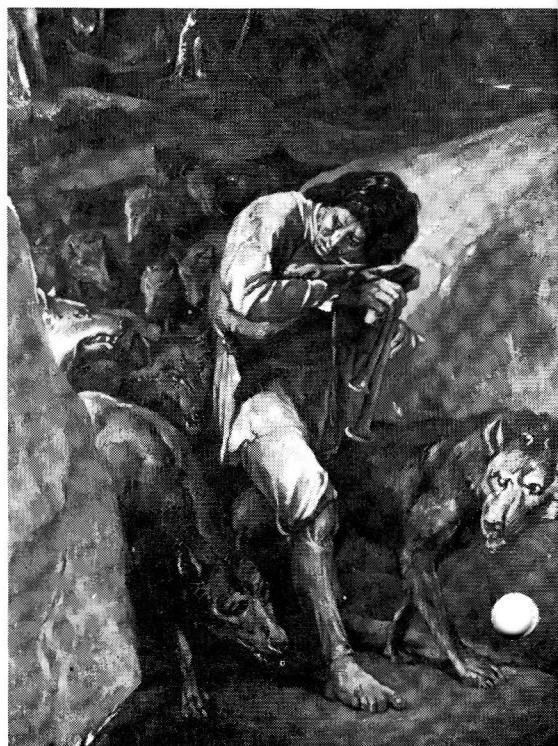
In 1855 young Whistler left the United States never again to make it his permanent home. In Paris he entered the studio of Gleyre, a romantic painter with whom he had absolutely no sympathy. Whistler became acquainted with several artists in Paris—Degas, Bracquemond, Alphonse Legros and Gustave Courbet who admonished him to paint "just what he saw". It appears that Whistler took this advice seriously but what he saw was not what most of his contemporaries saw. In 1859 he returned to London and shared a studio with George Du Maurier on Newman Street, finally settling in Lindsey Row, Chelsea. The following year Whistler painted his first important picture, "At the Piano", which was accepted

for the 1860 exhibition at the Royal Academy.

Whistler, from the beginning, chose to paint in a manner which denied his objects of shadows, in a sense producing flat, dimensionless scenes. He could remember the details of everything he saw, but rather than paint the actual person or view he preferred to rearrange it to suit his own sense of composition. He preferred the dim outlines to the sharp and the clear. He said, "When the evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry as with a veil and the poor buildings lose themselves in a dim sky, and the tall chimneys become campanili, and the warehouses are palaces in the night, and the whole city hangs in the heavens, a fairy land is before us. . ."

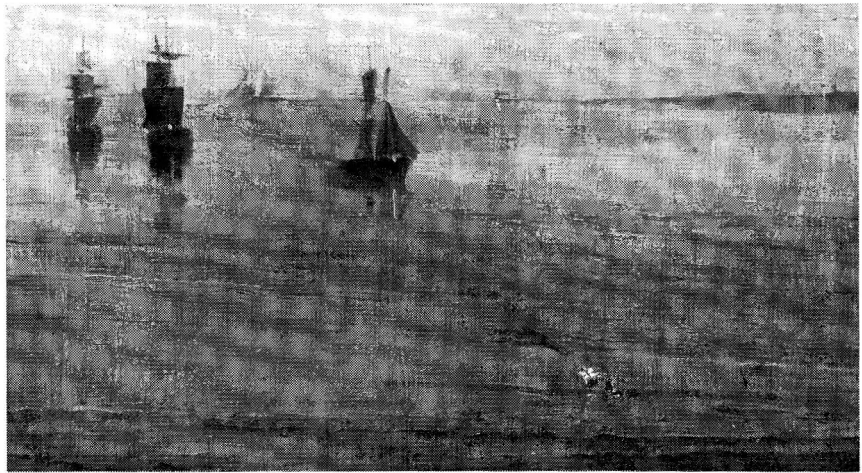
THE WOLF CHARMER
Gilcrease Collections

JOHN LA FARGE



BROAD . . .

Europe



Many of the critics failed to understand his manner of expression, including John Ruskin who called his work a pot of paint flung in the public's face. Whistler sued Ruskin for libel and the judge, as though offering an opinion regarding both parties, awarded the artist one farthing.

The Whistler family was often without funds since the artist loved the good things of life but seldom earned enough to purchase them. He was scorned by many and worshipped by few; his sharp wit cut deeply his friends as well as his enemies. Whistler, unlike Sargent, was proud and conceited; he painted, talked and acted with a flourish. When someone asked, "What are we to do if we disagree with Mr. Whistler's principles?" "Do, my dear sir? Why, die!" replied the caustic artist.

Whistler in 1863 entered "The White Girl" at the Royal Academy but the painting was rejected. He sent it to Paris and the Salon des Refuses, where it aroused considerable enthusiasm from the critics. This was the beginning of a productive period; during his residence at Chelsea he painted the Thames River and the adjacent area as though it were always in a bank of fog. During this same period he was influenced by Japanese art, producing such paintings as "La Princesse de la Porcelaine", "The Golden Screen", "The Little White Girl", "Sympathy in White Number 3" and "The Balcony". During the 1870's Whistler remained in England, making only short trips to parts of Europe. In 1884 he was elected a member of the Royal Society of British Artists and two years later became its president. During the 1880's some of his finest portrait work was done, including the portrait of his mother and that of Thomas Carlyle. In 1892 an important exhibition of his work was held at Goupil's Gallery which included nocturnes, marines and chevalet pieces from all periods. From that date on his reputation as

an artist was assured. In 1898 he was elected first president of the International Society of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers, an office he held until the time of his death in 1903.

Whistler was honored with awards from most of the countries of Europe and several of his most famous paintings were sold to collectors and museums in his native country. The artist did not make his home in America during the later years of his life but in his heart and in spite of his remarks concerning the climate of art in America he held it in warm esteem. He lived elsewhere because he felt he would not be accepted at home.

John Sargent was born in 1856 of American parents in Florence, Italy. He was educated in Florence, Rome, and Nice. At an early age he seemed destined for a career in the U.S. Navy but because of his interest in art and the understanding of his artistic mother, he was allowed to enter the studio of Carolus Duran (Charles Durand) in Paris at the age of 18. Sargent worked with Duran, then one of the most popular portrait artists in Paris, off and on for five years but the young artist and his family were travelers and never stayed in one place for any length of time. During the 1870's John visited both Italy and Spain, following the suggestion of his teacher, to study the works of Velasquez. On leaving Duran, Sargent painted the master's portrait—long considered one of his finest works.

Sargent visited America first in 1876 at the age of 20. He spent four months traveling and painting in the eastern states. Later in life he remarked that from this visit forward he felt bound to America. In 1890 he returned to America to paint some of his finest portraits and to begin the series of decorations for the Public

Library of Boston, a project not concluded until 1916. Sargent was accepted by the American public from his first visit and just as in Europe he was greatly sought after for portrait work. Some critics in recent years have said that Sargent painted people as "clothes horses", without character and with little warmth and charm. They have criticized him for his unwillingness to get acquainted with his subjects but rather it seems that Sargent had the ability to get an impression during the first sitting and to put it down irrevocably and without malice or affectation. Perhaps his method was as incisive as that of the portrait painter bent on making a character analysis of his subject. It would seem that the product of his work was no less thoughtful than Gainsborough or Romney of an earlier date or the portrait work of the present day American artist, Aaron Shikler, the latter being much admired for the effects also found in the work of Sargent. Sargent's incisiveness often evoked scorn from both sitter and critic, but perhaps this was because the results were too revealing. Today, artists—to their everlasting regret—have accepted the challenge to delve into the minds of their sitters and bring forth a kind of pictorial psychological case history. Sargent did not attempt this but rather saw himself as a recorder of an impression. He said that he would like to set down with skill the things he saw without troubling to ask of its ethical significance or of any significance other than the visual value. Painting was more than an art to Sargent, it held the same exhilaration as a sport but his quarry was a suitable subject and his trophy the creation of a thing of beauty.

Sargent studied closely the work of

Cont. on Page 9

Interpreters of the Western Scene

FROM THE HUDSON RIVER TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

"What do we want with this vast, worthless area? This region of savages and wild beasts—of deserts of shifting sands and whirlwinds of dust—of cactus and prairie dogs? To what use could we ever hope to put these great deserts, or those endless mountain ranges, impenetrable and covered to their very base with eternal snow?" These words are Daniel Webster's. The occasion was a speech before Congress in 1845; his subject was the American West. The slightly florid style of oratory is a Webster trademark, but the attitude he expresses is one that was common with the American public of the age. From the time of its acquisition until the eve of the Civil War, the average citizen thought of most of the western region as a harsh and alien environment. The reports of travelers stressed the hardships the country inflicted; only the visionaries could see any ultimate usefulness in the land, and even the visionaries seldom spoke of beauty.

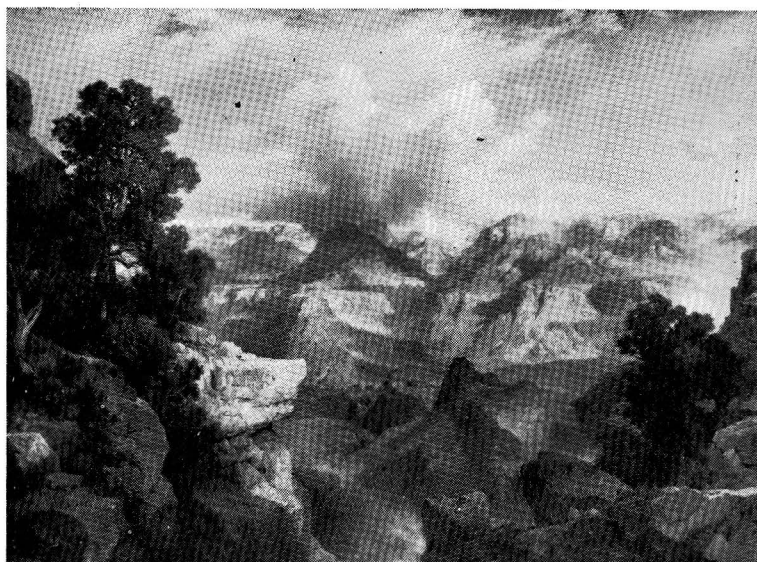
Yet, at precisely the same time the public was accepting the term "The Great American Desert" as an apt description of the West, the artists of the East were beginning to discover their own surroundings as appropriate subjects for their art. In the middle 1820's members of the Hudson River school began to paint landscapes that expressed an almost religious awe of the beauties of nature, and a nationalistic pride in a uniquely American landscape. It is a significant indication of the different heritages of the eastern and western United States that these two seemingly incompatible concepts could develop side by side.

Actually inheritors of the Hudson River school tradition were destined eventually to make the obvious step of bringing their philosophy to the recording of the spectacular beauties of the West. But there was a 30-year time gap between the beginnings of the American Landscape school and the arrival of the first practitioner in the Rocky Mountains.

In terms of his background, Albert Bierstadt seems a little incongruous as

the man to reveal the image of the West to the American public. Although he spent all but two of his first 23 years in the United States, there was a strong German influence in Bierstadt's heritage, particularly in his artistic training. He spent the years between 1853 and 1857 in Europe. His

United States he went to the White Mountains to work, and here presumably formed a resolve to use his talents in recording the grandest scenery he could find in America. Whatever the reason, April of 1858 found Bierstadt on his way to join a military expedition that was going to lay out an



GRAND CANYON

Gilcrease Collections

THOMAS MORAN

first stop was at the famous Dusseldorf Academy where he acquired a taste for the heroic scale and a grandiloquent romanticism that would be his hallmark for the rest of his artistic career. After formal studies at the Academy Bierstadt traveled to Rome and then took a walking trip through the Apennines. Here, ironically enough, he met Worthington Whittredge and Sanford Gifford, two important exponents of the American Hudson River school, and undoubtedly absorbed some of their philosophy of art.*

When Bierstadt returned to the

overland wagon route from Ft. Laramie to the Pacific Coast. He spent the entire summer observing and sketching as the party traveled from the Laramie Mountains to the Wind River and Shoshone country. It is not difficult to imagine the impact this country had on the young artist. Here was landscape that was ideally suited to his temperament and talent; he thought on a big scale, and here was a big country, as dramatic as anything his Dusseldorfian imagination could desire. Bierstadt hurriedly returned to the East and set to work with immediate and spectacular results.

In 1860 the Rocky Mountain paintings were exhibited at the National Academy, and won instant popularity. The same year, only three years after ending his formal studies, he was made a full academician of the National Academy. The honors were not all on an abstract level; one of his huge, early canvases sold for \$25,000, which was an enormous price for the time. Bierstadt worked hard to maintain his new found success. He made another trip west in 1863 for new material, and painted energetically during the time between his travels.

By 1866, when he was 36 years old, Bierstadt was an enormously successful artist, critically and financially—but this was not destined to last. By the early 1880's styles had begun to change; the galleries no longer wanted his huge canvases, and purchasers were finding new excitement in less familiar names and styles. And, although he continued to paint until his death in 1902, Bierstadt never regained the popularity he had seen in his early years.

The point here is not Bierstadt's critical success, but his impact on the public mind. To a people whose scant knowledge of the West was generally very biased, the paintings must have come as a great revelation. Those who thought of the West as a harsh and dreary place could not have resisted entirely Bierstadt's visions of beauty, and his paintings must have been viewed by a great number of people. Certainly Bierstadt was in a position to affect public opinion, and his part in doing away with the concept of the Great American Desert as a commonly accepted public attitude was probably very great. His paintings were grandiose and sometimes overly romantic, but perhaps this is why they were so readily accepted. This was, at the time, an ideal vehicle for conveying a new interpretation of Western America.

Bierstadt of course had his successors—men who carried on the tradition of American landscape painting in the West, and probably the greatest of these was Thomas Moran. Like Bierstadt, Moran had a combined European-American background. He was born in England, but came to this country at the age of seven. Coming from a family of artists, he received a thorough training in art without going outside the family circle. But again, like Bierstadt, he turned to Europe to finish his studies. These studies, however, were not formal, he simply traveled and observed the paintings of men he admired. His examination of the works of Turner were

particularly influential in the shaping of his technique and philosophy. On his return to this country he was a finished artist, but he also was destined to travel to the Rocky Mountains in order to find a subject matter truly compatible with his skills. This came about when he traveled as part of the Hayden survey party in 1871 to what is now Yellowstone Park. (See *American Scene* Vol. 1, No. 1.) The experience of seeing and recording this wildly beautiful area called forth the best in Moran as an artist, and set the course for the rest of his career. From the time of this first trip in 1871 to just before his death in 1926 Moran worked with a marvelous energy, constantly traveling in search of new subjects, and frequently trying new mediums. His travels and the subjects of his paintings were world wide, but his first love was always the American West. Again like Bierstadt, his first western paintings were an immediate success and they continued to be well accepted by purchasers through the course of

the same time he very effectively helped Americans see a section of their own land with a new vision.

The two artists, Moran and Bierstadt, handled similar subjects in very different ways. As Harold McCracken says: "To Albert Bierstadt, the snow-capped peaks and rocky ridges were like a vision of Wagnerian castles in the clouds—with an accompaniment of musical thunder symbolic of storm and avalanche. To Thomas Moran, the Rockies were a symphony of color and beauty." The works of both are in easily identifiable individual styles, but neither of these men had a great impact on the course of American art from a purely aesthetic point of view. Neither started an important trend or profoundly altered the philosophy of American artists. They were physical rather than intellectual explorers.

In spite of the fact that modern art historians relegate both of these men to the fringes of the mainstream of American art, both made great contributions. Regardless of what the critics might say about technique or



SIERRA NEVADA MORNING

ALBERT BIERSTADT

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his career. But Moran sold more than paintings, he was always, in effect, selling an idea. His first paintings of Yellowstone had been used to persuade Congress to adopt the first national park, and through the rest of his career Moran acted as an individual public relations man for this idea. Many of Moran's favorite sketching areas were made into national parks during his lifetime. In his work

Moran expressed his personal love of the rugged western landscapes and at

taste, both of these artists communicate very directly to the modern viewer the excitement and wonder they felt about their subject matter. We see the West as the new and dazzling thing it was to them, and as we look we can understand why they could have played an important role in changing the attitudes of their contemporaries about what had been the Great American Desert. C.C.P.

*Whittredge, Gifford and John R. Ken-sett went into the Rocky Mountains to paint shortly after the Civil War.



LISTENING TO THE SHELL
Gilcrease Collections

EASTMAN JOHNSON

PAINTING AMERICAN LIFE

At the turn of the nineteenth century the new American nation discovered itself as a nation. The people of the eastern section of the country were no longer occupied with fighting for a foothold in a new and savage land, but rather were busy exploiting that land. In either case they could devote little thought to a luxury such as art. However, as wealth and leisure increased with the years so did the public's appetite for pictures and in gratifying this appetite genre painting found its place in American art.

Genre art is fundamentally a comment on daily life. It finds its inspiration and subject matter in the everyday life of people. This type of art had enormous appeal for the new middle class, which arose from the Industrial Revolution; a class whose tastes ran to sentimental, charming and domestic pictures. The public was no longer satisfied with art that was limited to the painting of portraits;

it desired a more decorative form of art, an art more easily understood. Coveting the culture, the luxury and the traditions of the older world as they did, it was only natural that students and artists turned toward Europe for guidance. Despite the fact that a great many American artists developed in the German schools, it was Holland which produced the greatest school of genre painters. The genius with which the Dutch painters recorded the life of their time had a pronounced effect on all subsequent developments of genre art. And it was from this school that Eastman Johnson, one of America's foremost genre painters, received his training.

Born in 1824, Johnson spent his early life in rural Maine where at an early age he began to make crayon portraits. When sixteen he went to Boston and found employment in Bufford's lithograph establishment, the same shop where, a few years

later, Winslow Homer served his apprenticeship. At eighteen Johnson was back doing crayon portraits in Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Washington, D. C., achieving rapid success due to his extraordinary talent for capturing a flattering likeness of his sitters. In 1849 Johnson went abroad to take up the serious study of painting, going first to Dusseldorf, where he worked for two years in the studio of Emanuel Leutze, the historical painter. He then traveled in Italy and France, familiarizing himself with the works of the masters in the various museums, and eventually settled at The Hague. Johnson intended to stay on a few weeks; however, he fell under the spell of Rembrandt and the Dutch genre painters and remained four years. He first busied himself with copying paintings in the Mauritshuis, later he took a studio and soon painted his first genre pictures. His success was so notable that in the mid-1850's he was offered the position of court painter to William III if he would stay. Declining the offer, Johnson in 1857 or '58 chose instead to return to his native land. The sound technical training that he derived from his association with the Dutch school and his close relationship with Dutch genre painters proved to be an invaluable asset.

Returning to the U. S. shortly before the Civil War, Johnson traveled briefly, painting the Indians and the frontier scene around Lake Superior as well as the Negroes in the South. Around 1860 he opened a studio in New York and in a short time was recognized as an artist of real merit; from this time forward his reputation increased steadily.

During the sixties and seventies, when genre art was at its height of popularity in America, Johnson, along with such other prominent genre artists as George Caleb Bingham, Edward L. Henry and William Mount (d. 1868), succeeded in recording a large segment of the social picture of the times. "Listening to the Shell", the Gilcrease painting shown here, represents the simple domestic American taste for art of the time. As in all his genre pictures, there is the same wholesomeness and delight in the simple, universal things and the subjects are far better painted than they ever were before Johnson's time in America. Until the eighties, when he returned once again to portrait painting, Johnson painted the American scene with sympathetic sentiment and a quiet vein of humor, leaving authentic and valuable documents of the period. J.S.

SOME WENT ABROAD Cont.

Franz Hals and copied the work of Velasquez. In 1880 he visited Morocco and Spain and produced three outstanding paintings: "The Alhambra", "Court of the Lions", and "El Jaleo". Sargent seems to have been little concerned with the actual life of people, seeing them through his own personal window. The exception to this was in Spain where he was captivated by the spirit and excitement in the lives of the people around him. Elsewhere he seems to have denied people the right of altering the world as he himself saw it. Sargent was a man of considerable intellect; he was a musician, a linguist, widely read in the literature of England and France and a thorough student of the history and theory of art. He regarded his talent without arrogance, having an innate modesty. He was always willing to help younger artists by giving them the benefit of his time and experience. His life seems to have run parallel with his attitude toward painting; he lived in the midst of people but was somehow not a part of them.

In 1916 he was commissioned by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts to paint mural decorations for their building. At the same time he received many commissions for portraits from well known Americans. He painted William Merrett Chase, John D. Rockefeller and President Lowell of Harvard, as well as many others.

In the early phases of World War I, Sargent, working in a Europe in a frenzy of war, was almost unmindful of the events around him. In the fall of 1916 he was busy sketching the Rocky Mountains and the American West. Gradually the world conflict took on meaning and horror for him. He could not understand how such a catastrophe could have happened in his world. In 1918 he went to the front in France to make sketches under battle conditions. He was impressed but naive; this is borne out by his remark, "I suppose there is no fighting on Sundays." This world was not of Sargent's making. (A small painting, "American Troops at the Front" is owned by the Gilcrease Foundation. This was done in 1918.)

Sargent died in London in 1925. A memorial exhibit of his paintings was held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1926. The exhibit contained 59 oils and 62 watercolors.

John LaFarge was born in 1835 in New York. LaFarge's father had come to the U.S. in 1806 by way of the Carribbean in the services of the French Marine. In New York he married a French girl and due to a care-

ful investment of his money in property, he was, by the time of John's birth, a wealthy man. Young John grew up in a household accustomed to art, literature and intellectual family discussions. His grandfather taught him the rudiments of drawing and sketching at an early age. The boy decided on a career in the practice of law but after his first trip to Europe, meant only as a kind of grand tour, he took a studious interest in art. For a brief period he worked in the studio of Couture in Paris. In England he saw and appreciated the works of the Pre-Raphaelites but though his was a sensitive and sympathetic nature, he was not entirely in accord with the overly sentimental turn which this English school of art had taken. He continued as a student of art and studied every possible aspect of it but for some time reckoned with it as he would with any other social accomplishment.

LaFarge returned to the United States and to a law office in the early 1870's but the spark had been kindled and LaFarge was to forever hunger after a knowledge of artistic expression. When William M. Hunt, a friend of long standing, returned from Europe, LaFarge went with him to Newport to work under his guidance. LaFarge's study was interrupted by what proved to be a series of illnesses, yet in 1876 he had undertaken the difficult task, involving considerable scaffold work, of decorating the Trinity Church in Boston. The following year he was commissioned to do a large mural for the St. Thomas Church in New York City.

LaFarge's greatest fame, perhaps, rests with his work in stained glass. As early as 1873, during another visit to Europe, he saw the lamentable status to which the art of stained glass had fallen. He had considerable knowledge of the beautiful fenestrations in the 12th and 13th century cathedrals in France and knew the perfection possible in this medium. LaFarge determined to perfect a new technique in stained glass, beginning with the manufacture of the glass itself; he eventually developed a technique which revolutionized, or perhaps rediscovered, this art form. "LaFarge", wrote Henry Adams, "alone could use glass like a 13th century artist. In Europe the art had been dead for centuries and modern glass was pitiable." It was LaFarge's interest in the glass work of medieval cathedrals that inspired Adams to write perhaps his most significant book, **Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartes**. The Watson Memorial Window in the Trinity Church in Buffalo was considered by

critics and by LaFarge to be his greatest achievement in stained glass work.

John LaFarge often turned to non-American subject matter for his paintings, but unlike the other two artists discussed, LaFarge was primarily at home in America even though he traveled extensively. In 1886 he visited Japan and Samoa and produced many excellent sketches during his sojourn, yet his fame rests with the work done in his native country. Some of his most famous easel paintings are: "Boy with a Dog", "St. Paul", "Venice Anadyomone", and "The Wolf Charmer", the latter is illustrated here and is a part of the permanent collection of the Gilcrease Institute.

LaFarge painted in various techniques but always with infinite pains for the small but essential details of composition and color harmony. During his life time he was considered one of the great colorists in America. He used color, however, to convey a feeling or emotion but never to excite or attract the viewer by the sheer brilliance of color. At one time the sculptor, Augustus St. Gaudens, was a student working in LaFarge's studio and the two artists, with Henry Adams, remained close friends throughout their lives. Adams, making a comparison between Whistler and LaFarge, tells of their meeting at a supper party where Whistler spoke at length and with fierce conviction about everything from the Boar War to the ineptitude of his fellow artists and the complete lack of appreciation and understanding on the part of the art critics, while LaFarge sat quietly—listening.

LaFarge died in 1910 in Providence, R. I. He had been elected a member of the National Academy in 1869. His works hang in many of the larger museums of the U.S., including the Metropolitan Museum and Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

It is difficult to compare the three men briefly mentioned in this article, but certainly they represent the broadening interest and scope of American art in the mid-1800's. This was a period of considerable self-consciousness on the part of Americans, and the natural source of cultural reference was Europe. Some felt America inferior and without traditions as deep-rooted as those found in Europe and so they turned their back on the new land—but others were just searching for old and new truths; this seems the case with Whistler, the expatriate; with Sargent, the man of the world; and with LaFarge, a man caught in a transitional period he could not entirely comprehend. J.T.F.

Lost Pages of History

Ben Franklin on the Indian

Lost Pages of History is a new feature in the expanded American Scene; this section will be devoted to material from the Institute's Research Center and Library. This will provide the reader with many first hand accounts concerning America's colorful past and will add even greater significance to this publication. Your file of American Scenes should be preserved, since it will contain rare and interesting "Pages of History"—often available from no other source.

IN THIS ISSUE

During the years 1781 and 1783 Benjamin Franklin was engaged in negotiations for a Treaty of Peace with Great Britain ending the Revolutionary War. Late in 1783 his business as one of the commissioners was over and he had considerable leisure time while awaiting his return to America. Some of this time was spent in writing short tracts answering questions about America which the people of Europe had asked him. One of these tracts concerned itself with the American Indian, about whom Franklin had received many inquiries. It was called "Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America" and in it Franklin relates several experiences between the colonists and Indians which revealed the good qualities of the Indian and pointed out how his customs and thinking differed from those of the white man and yet were sound adaptations of the native to his peculiar environment. It is a valuable historical document, showing the liberal attitude which Franklin displayed toward the Indian at a time when he was generally looked upon as a worthless savage.

The tract is reprinted below as taken from a copy of the London edition of 1784 which is owned by the Gilcrease Institute.

SAVAGES we call them, because their manners differ from ours, which we think the perfection of civility; they think the same of theirs.

Perhaps if we could examine the manners of different nations with impartiality, we should find no people so rude as to be without any rules of politeness; nor any so polite as not to have some remains of rudeness.

The Indian men, when young, are hunters and warriors; when old, counsellors; for all their government is by the counsel or advice of the sages; there is no force, there are no prisons—no officers to compel obedience, or inflict punishment. Hence they generally study oratory; the best speaker having the most influence. The Indian women till the ground, dress the food, nurse and bring up the children, and preserve and hand down to posterity the memory of public transactions. These employments of men and women are accounted natural and honourable. Having few artificial wants, they have abundance of leisure for improvement by conversation. Our laborious manner of life compared with theirs, they esteem slavish and base; and the learning on which we value ourselves, they regard as frivolous and useless. An instance of this occurred at the Treaty of Lancaster in Pennsylvania, anno 1744, between the Government of Virginia and the Six Nations. After the principal business was settled, the Commissioners from Virginia acquainted the Indians by a speech, that there was at Williamsburg a college with a fund, for educating Indian youth; and that if the Chiefs of the Six Nations would send down half a dozen of their sons to that college, the Government would take care that they should be well provided for, and instructed in all the learning of the white people. It is one of the Indian rules of politeness not to answer a public proposition the same day that it is made; they think it would be treating it as a light matter; and that they show it respect by taking time to consider it, as of a matter important. They therefore deferred their answer till the day following;

when their Speaker began, by expressing their deep sense of the kindness of the Virginia Government, in making them that offer; "for we know," says he, "that you highly esteem the kind of learning taught in those colleges, and that the maintenance of our young men, while with you, would be very expensive to you. We are convinced, therefore, that you mean to do us good by your proposal, and we thank you heartily. But you who are wise must know, that different nations have different conceptions of things; and you will therefore not take it amiss, if our ideas of this kind of education happen not to be the same with yours. We have had some experience of it: Several of our young people were formerly brought up at the colleges of the Northern Provinces; they were instructed in all your sciences; but when they came back to us, they were bad runners; ignorant of every means of living in the woods; unable to bear either cold or hunger; knew neither how to build a cabin, take a deer, or kill an enemy; spoke our language imperfectly; were therefore neither fit for hunters, warriors, or counsellors; they were totally good for nothing. We are however not the less obliged by your kind offer, though we decline accepting it: And to show our grateful sense of it, if the Gentlemen of Virginia will send us a dozen of their sons, we will take great care of their education, instruct them in all we know, and make men of them."

Having frequent occasions to hold public Councils, they have acquired great order and decency in conducting them. The Old Men sit in the foremost ranks, the Warriors in the next, and the Women and Children in the hindmost. The business of the Women is to take exact notice of what passes, imprint it in their memories, for they have no writing, and communicate it to their Children. They are the Records of the Council, and they preserve tradition of the stipulations in Treaties a hundred years back; which, when we compare with our writings, we always find exact. He that would speak, rises.

The rest observe a profound silence. When he has finished, and sits down, they leave him five or six minutes to recollect, that if he has omitted any thing he intended to say, or has any thing to add, he may rise again, and deliver it. To interrupt another, even in common conversation, is reckoned highly indecent. How different this is from the conduct of a polite British House of Commons, where scarce a day passes without some confusion, that makes the Speaker hoarse in calling to order; and how different from the mode of conversation in many polite companies of Europe, where, if you do not deliver your sentence with great rapidity, you are cut off in the middle of it by the impatient loquacity of those you converse with, and never suffered to finish it.

The politeness of these Savages in conversation, is, indeed, carried to excess; since it does not permit them to contradict, to deny the truth of what is asserted in their presence. By this means they indeed avoid disputes; but then it becomes difficult to know their minds, or what impression you make upon them. The Missionaries who have attempted to convert them to Christianity, all complain of this as one of the great difficulties of their Mission. The Indians hear with patience the Truths of the Gospel explained to them, and give their usual tokens of assent and approbation: You would think they were convinced. No such matter. It is mere civility.

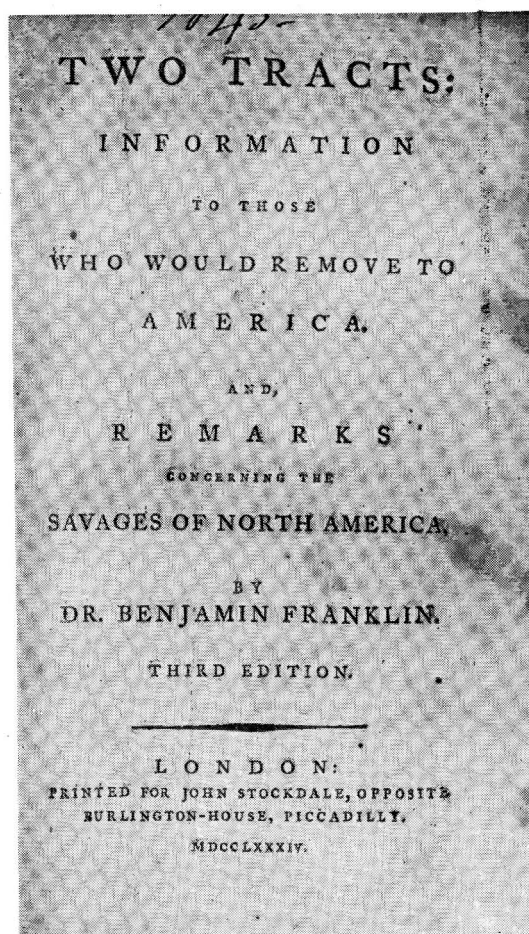
A Swedish Minister having assembled the Chiefs of the Sasquehanah Indians, made a Sermon to them, acquainting them with the principal historical facts on which our Religion is founded; such as the Fall of our First Parents by eating an Apple; the coming of Christ to repair the mischief; his miracles and suffering, &c.—When he had finished, an Indian Orator stood up to thank him. “What you have told us,” says he, “is all very good. It is indeed bad to eat apples. It is better to make them all into cyder. We are much obliged by your kindness in coming so far, to tell us those things which you have heard from your Mothers. In return, I will tell you some of those we have heard from ours.”

“In the beginning, our Fathers had only the flesh of animals to subsist on; and if their hunting was unsuccessful, they were starving. Two of our young hunters having killed a deer, made a fire in the woods to broil some parts of it. When they were about to satisfy their hunger, they beheld a beautiful young woman descend from the clouds, and seat herself on that hill which you see yonder

among the Blue Mountains. They said to each other, it is a Spirit that perhaps has smelt our broiling venison, and wishes to eat of it; Let us offer some to her. They presented her with the tongue: She was pleased with the taste of it, and said, your kindness shall be rewarded. Come to this place after thirteen moons, and you shall find something that will be of great benefit in nourishing you and your children to the latest generations. They did so, and to their surprise, found plants they had never seen before; but which, from that ancient time, have been constantly cultivated among us, to our great advantage. Where her right hand had touched the ground, they found maize; where her left hand had touched it, they found kidney-beans; and where her backside had sat on it, they found tobacco.” The good Missionary, disgusted with this idle tale, said, “What I delivered to you were sacred truths; but what you tell me is mere fable, fiction, and falsehood.” The Indian, offended, replied, “My Brother, it seems your friends have not done justice in your education; they have not well instructed you in the rules of common civility. You saw, that we who understand and practice those rules, believed all your stories, why do you refuse to believe ours?”

When any of them come into our towns, our people are apt to crowd round them, gaze upon them, and incommode them where they desire to be private; this they esteem great rudeness, and the effect of the want of instruction in the rules of civility and good manners. “We have,” they say, “as much curiosity as you, and when you come into our towns, we wish for opportunities of looking at you; but for this purpose we hide ourselves behind bushes where you are to pass, and never intrude ourselves into your company.”

Their manner of entering one another's villages has likewise its rules. It is reckoned uncivil in travelling strangers to enter a village abruptly, without giving notice of their approach. Therefore, as soon as they arrive within hearing, they stop and hollow, remaining there till invited to enter. Two old men usually come out to them, and lead them in. There is in every village a vacant dwelling, called the strangers house. Here they are placed, while the old men go round from hut to hut, acquainting the inhabitants that strangers are arrived, who are probably hungry and weary; and every one sends them what he can spare of victuals and skins to repose on. When the strangers are refreshed, pipes and tobacco are



THE TITLE PAGE OF RARE BOOK BY BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, DATED 1784

brought; and then, but not before, conversation begins, with enquiries who they are, whither bound, what news, &c. and it usually ends with offers of service; if the strangers have occasion of guides, or any necessities for continuing their journey; and nothing is exacted for the entertainment.

The same hospitality, esteemed among them is a principal virtue, is practised by private persons; of which Conrad Weiser, our Interpreter, gave me the following instance. He had been naturalized among the Six Nations, and spoke well the Mohock language. In going through the Indian Country, to carry a message from our Governor to the Council at Onondago, he called at the habitation of Canassetego, an old acquaintance, who embraced him, spread furs for him to sit on, place before him some boiled beans and venison, and mixed some rum and water for his drink. When he was well refreshed, and had lit his pipe, Canassetego began to converse with him: Asked how he had fared the many years since they had seen each other, whence he then came, what occasioned the journey, &c. Conard answered all his ques-

tions; and when the discourse began to flag, the Indian, to continue it, said, "Conrad, you have lived long among the White People, and know something of their customs; I have been sometimes at Albany, and have observed, that once in seven days they shut up their shops, and assemble all in the great house; tell me, what it is for? What do they do there?" "They meet there," says Conrad, "to hear and learn good things." "I do not doubt," says the Indian, "that they tell you so; they have told me the same: But I doubt the truth of what they say, and I will tell you my reasons. I went lately to Albany to sell my skins, and buy blankets, knives, powder, rum, &c. You know I used generally to deal with Hans Hanson; but I was a little inclined this time to try some other Merchants. However, I called first upon Hans, and asked him what he would give for beaver. He said he could not give more than four shillings a pound: But, says he, I cannot talk on business now; this is the day when we meet together to learn good things, and I am going to the meeting. So I thought to myself, since I cannot do any business today, I may as well go to the meeting too, and I want with them. There stood up a man in black, and began to talk to the people very angrily. I did not understand what he said; but perceiving that he looked much at me, and at Hanson, I imagine he was angry at seeing me there; so I went out, sat down near the house, struck fire, and lit my pipe, waiting till the meeting should break up. I thought too, that the man had mentioned

something of Beaver, and I suspected it might be the subject of their meeting. So when they came out, I accosted my Merchant. 'Well, Hans,' says I, 'I hope you have agreed to give more than four shillings a pound.' 'No,' says he, 'I cannot give so much. I cannot give more than three shillings and sixpence.' I then spoke to several other dealers, but they all sung the same song, three and sixpence, three and sixpence. This made it clear to me that my suspicion was right; and that whatever they pretended of meeting to learn good things, the real purpose was to consult how to cheat Indians in the price of Beaver. Consider but a little, Conrad, and you must be of my opinion. If they met so often to learn good things, they would certainly have learned some before this time. But they are still ignorant. You know our practice. If a white man in travelling through our country, enters one of our cabins, we all treat him as I treat you; we dry him if he is wet, we warm him if he is cold, and give him meat and drink, that he may allay his thirst and hunger; and we spread soft furs for him to rest and sleep on: We demand nothing in return.* But if I go into a white man's house at Albany, and ask for victuals and drink, they say, where is your money; and if I have none, they say, get out, you Indian Dog. You see they have not yet learned those little good things, that we need no meetings to be instructed in, because our mothers taught them to us when we were children; and therefore it is impossible their meetings should be, as they say, for any

such purpose, or have any such effect; they are only to contrive the cheating of Indians in the price of Beaver."

* It is remarkable, that in all ages and countries, hospitality has been allowed as the virtue of those, whom the Civilized were pleased to call Barbarians; the Greeks celebrated the Scythians for it. The Saracens possessed it eminently; and it is to this day the reigning virtue of the wild Arabs. St. Paul too, in the relation of his voyage and shipwreck, on the Island of Melita, says, "The barbarous people shewed us no little kindness; for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold."

(The above is an exact copy of Franklin's Article—no attempt has been made to alter spelling, etc.)

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