



SCRIBNER'S
MONTHLY,

AN
ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE
FOR THE PEOPLE.

CONDUCTED BY
J. G. HOLLAND.

FROM NOV. 1871, TO APRIL, 1872.

SCRIBNER & C.
NEW YORK.

in this way. Scarcely more than this, for he seldom remains over a few minutes in a studio before he glides back, on slipped sole, to mount his studio stairs again.

And so goes on his life from day to day, during the working week. His Sundays he spends with his family on Staten Island.

Whatever the differences of opinion among his fellow-artists as to the value of Page's

method, or as to the success of his results as a colorist, there are no two opinions as to the worth of his advice. No man's opinion goes further among his fellow-workers than does his. There is comfort in it often, profit always, for it is sincere, and born of the knowledge of fifty years among pictures and among men. If you would know a man, seek the knowledge of him among his fellow-laborers.

ALBERT BIERSTADT, N.A.

THERE are few landscape painters living whose reputations have reached so far as that of Albert Bierstadt. His paintings are as well known and at least as highly appreciated in Europe as they are here. Whilst this is due in a great measure, no doubt, to the artistic merit of his works, it is still more due to the fact that he is a leader among those who first essayed to give expression on canvas to the great and grand in Nature, of which the scenery of the West is so prolific. Whatever may be the differences of opinion upon the merit of his *technique*, there are none as to his genuine love of art, or of his devotion to it, so often proved by "hair-breadth 'scapes by flood and field."

Nor do those qualities, to which this artist's success is due, cease when the toilsome journey is ended, or when the skillfully manipulated painting—for the material of which he may have traveled four thousand miles—has dried upon the canvas. Possessing, in a remarkable degree, those qualities which in a man add daily to his list of friends; gentle in manners; open-hearted; active, without show of it, in all matters tending to the help of a fellow-worker; generous, but not obtrusive in his charities, and being gifted with consummate business tact, it is not surprising that his name should have a double value, or his works receive an amount of recognition and appreciation not always conceded to those of others of possibly equal merit, who are known only by the evidences of their talent.

Albert Bierstadt was born on the 7th of January, 1830, at Solingen, near Düsseldorf, where, it might be assumed by the speculative philosopher, he drew inspiration from the very atmosphere of the place. But since he was permitted to remain only a couple of years in the neighborhood of the great German School, we are unwilling to concede any credit to it for influencing his future, even in this subtle way. Albert's father left Germany for the United States in 1832, and settled in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Here Albert was educated. Unlike other youths, afterwards famous as artists, he was not a

prodigy in the art way; didn't sleep with a color-box under his pillow, or transfigure the fences of the neighborhood with elaborate designs in chalk. But he was noticeable, at a very early age, for his love of adventure, and his first appeal for popularity was a composition which he wrote at school, when twelve years old, entitled "The Rocky Mountains." This might be supposed, judging from his after labors, to contain a description of the scenery since so attractive to him. But such is not the fact, for the paper, still preserved by his family, is devoted to the details of a bear-hunt, the chief end of which was to supply food for the hunters.

It was not until some years after the date of this production that the future landscape painter began to show that his leaning was towards art. But even at this time, his efforts did not give promise of future power; for then as now, we presume, he felt more than he expressed, and had a quiet way of making up his mind, not easily disturbed. His mother, a cousin of the celebrated painter, Hasenclever, knew something of the vicissitudes of an artist's life, and tried to persuade Albert to devote himself to some other calling, but ultimately yielded to the persistent wickedness of the boy, who had determined to run all risk, satisfied that the goal was well worth striving for, and anxious, besides, to begin the world by depending upon his own resources.

This he did when still young by teaching crayon drawing, to the practice of which he had devoted himself for two or three years.

He was twenty-one years old when he made his first attempt at painting in oils, but in two years he had made such satisfactory progress, and had received such recognition of it, that he was in a position to realize a long-cherished dream of visiting Düsseldorf.

So, in 1853, he reached the German school where he had proposed to pursue his studies with the advice of his mother's relative, then in the zenith of his fame. Unhappily, the first news he heard on his arrival was the death of Hasenclever. Here, however, he



ALBERT BIERSTADT.

soon made the friendship of Andreas Achenbach, Lessing, and Leutze, and profited by it—especially by the example and counsel of the former. His progress was rapid. In a short time his pictures began to find their way to this city, where they were exhibited and subjected to much criticism. Doubts as to their originality were freely ventilated by some, for the work already suggested a skillful handling not often attained until after very many years of patient labor.

During a four years' stay in Europe, from 1853 to 1857, Bierstadt continued to work with enthusiasm and industry at his easel, yet managed to find opportunity withal to gratify to a limited extent his love of adventure.

He made a journey, on foot, through Westphalia, visited Hesse-Cassel and Switzerland, sketched among the Apennines, and crowned his wanderings by a visit to the Eternal City. In these tours he enriched his portfolio with sketches, which he afterwards used to unmistakable advantage. It was from Hesse-Cassel he brought the study from which he afterwards painted his picture of "Sunlight and Shadow," one of the most successful of his works, and that, perhaps, which first determined his rank as a painter.

He returned to New Bedford in 1857, where he took a studio and began to work, painting chiefly from the sketches and studies he had made in Europe.

In the spring of the following year he made his first artistic tour across the Plains, with the Pacific Wagon-Road Expedition under General Lander. During this trip the party encountered much danger and exposure, and it might be assumed that the artist's love of adventure had somewhat cooled by the time they had reached the base of the Rocky Mountains. And so it had, in a measure. Yet he decided to make the journey back under even less favorable auspices, and came East with two companions only.

This return trip was fraught with much greater risk to life and limb than the outward one, for it lay through forests and over mountains inhabited only by the Indian. For a great portion of the time, we are told, the party had to depend on game for food, and were often without water for days together. They all reached home safe, however, and Bierstadt, at least, profited materially by the journey. "The Rocky Mountains" and "Laramie Peak," two pictures, the painting of which established his position firmly, were the immediate results of this adventure.

Ordinary appetites would have been quite satisfied, doubtless, with this one experience of the Rocky Mountains. But not so that of Bierstadt, for again, in 1863, he set out on a journey which gave promise of five-fold perils and privations. This time he visited Salt Lake City, crossed the Humboldt mountains to Virginia City, and the Sierra Nevada to San Francisco; thence, after a short stay, he passed on to the Yosemite, where he spent seven weeks, devoted, in the main, to making studies and sketches of its wonders of valley and mountain.

With a full portfolio, he returned to Sacramento, whence he proceeded to Tehama by steamboat. Here he and his companions landed and took horse for Shasta Peak—that wonderful extinct volcano, as picturesque as it is wonderful. Remaining here but a short time, the party set out for Oregon. On their way there, unfortunately, one of them fell ill, and they were compelled to seek shelter and rest for him in the cabin of a backwoodsman, where the party remained long enough to enable the sick man to regain strength. Here Bierstadt's kindness of heart was manifested in his patient waiting by the side of his suffering companion, who afterwards wrote home of the solicitude of the artist in the most grateful terms.

This experience over, Bierstadt went to Portland, thence to Willamette, up the Columbia, and over Fort Vancouver to Dallas, where he sketched Mount Hood, and made

studies in color of details of the country round about. Then back to Portland again, which he soon left for San Francisco, whence he returned home after a brief stay.

The experiences of this sketching tour could not be told, had I every page of this number at my service; but remembering how much more difficult it was eight years ago than it now is—whilst it is still no trifling matter—to make long journeys through the Western wildernesses, and considering how many thousands of miles were conquered in pioneer fashion, a quick imagination will supply its owner with some idea of the dangers and fatigues encountered and overcome by this heroic hungerer after knowledge, this seeker of the sublime in nature in her most secret places—on mountains, the virgin snow of whose cloud o'er-topping summits had never, since creation's dawn, been pressed by foot of man before; in valleys still close-clad in the primeval raint, and echoing, for the first time, the white man's voice and footstep.

The fruits of this journey were manifold, for it not only provided the artist with material for many years of work, but it quickened the general interest in him and in his labors.

After his return from the West this time, Bierstadt painted industriously and profitably in New York for three years, his larger works bringing very high prices. In 1866 he moved to Irvington, on the Hudson, where he had built himself a home with a studio attached to it. Here he continued his work uninterruptedly until June of the following year, when he left for Europe to make studies for two paintings, commissioned by the Government, and to be placed in the Capitol at Washington. The subject suggested for one of these was the discovery of the Hudson River by Hendrick Hudson.

During this absence he spent most of his time in London, but found leisure to make a flying visit to Italy, where he made sketches for and painted his large picture of "Vesuvius in Eruption," exhibited after his return at the gallery of G. P. Putnam.

In 1868, Bierstadt's sight began to fail him somewhat, and it became imperative that he should have rest. This he took for a short time, during which his eyes recovered their strength, and his health generally improved.

During these years, since his return from the West in 1863 until the present date, the records show that he has painted the following important and well-known pictures: "Sunset in California," now in the possession of Miss E. Bierstadt; "Storm in the Rocky Moun-

tains," twelve feet by seven, owned by J. W. Kennard, Esq.; "Mount Hood, Oregon," also a large canvas; "Laramie Peak," in possession of the Academy of Fine Arts, Buffalo, and which the writer esteems as one of the artist's best pictures; "Crossing the Plains," owned by A. Stone, Esq., Cleveland, Ohio; "The Overland Mail;" "The Cathedral Rocks, Yosemite," in the possession of Wm. Moller, Esq., of this city; "The Golden Gate," painted for General J. C. Fremont; "North Fork of the Platte," owned by Judge Hilton; "The Domes of the Yosemite," possessed by Le Grand B. Lockwood, Norwalk, Conn.; "View Down the Yosemite," owned by Mr. Crosby, of Chicago; "Burning Whalers by Moonlight," in the possession of A. Belmont, Esq.; "A View on the Sierra Nevadas," exhibited at Berlin in 1869 (where it received a gold medal), owned by Alvin Adams, Esq., of Boston; "Vesuvius," purchased by James McHenry, Esq., of London; "Puget Sound," owned by A. A. Low, Esq., of Brooklyn; and the "Emerald Pool," now at the Exhibition Room of the Tenth Street Studio Building, with several other works of still later date.

Bierstadt was made a member of the National Academy in 1860, even before he had painted any of the pictures by which he is best known. This early recognition of his talent is to the credit of his fellow-artists with whom the conferring of the honor lay. When at home he has been fairly active in Academy affairs, and deeply interested in the progress of its schools and the success of its exhibitions, to which he contributes his best pictures always; for, unlike others we might name, he considers this his duty to the Academy, even if he thus denies himself the glorification which attends the parlor exhibition of large paintings, where the effect of the picture, and possibly the sale of it, is largely contributed to by a judicious arrangement of drapery and gas-jets.

Last summer Bierstadt made another trip West, but this time he was carried to and fro at forty miles an hour. For since his previous visit the irresistible engine had eaten its way into the wilderness and laid the forest low before it. This time he made studies for another large painting for which he had received a commission from C. P. Huntington, Esq., President of the Central Pacific Railroad.

The scene is on the route of the road, and the point of view is near the place where, some fifteen years ago, a party of emigrants perished within a short distance of the civilization they were seeking, but of the prox-

imity of which they did not know. The rocky summit from which the view is taken is high, and thus a vast extent of mountain, lake, and valley is embraced. The line of the railroad is beheld, a mere thread, where it enters the scene some thirty miles off, and the eye follows it, coming nearer still, along the perilous path cut for it in the trap and granite sides of the great hills which tower above it. In the middle distance is Donner Lake, the central point of interest, and beyond it range after range of hills until the horizon meets them. The foreground is to suggest the unbroken wildness of the place, with its great stretches of jagged pine, the outcropping rocks, their bald foreheads to the sky, and the marvelous detail of vegetable life characteristic of the region. To this end the artist has made many studies of the lesser forms which will admit of realization.

The painting will be entitled "Sunrise on the Sierras," the sun being seen just above the distant horizon, his glories of gold and crimson repeated in the waters of Lake Donner. To make his studies in color for this picture, Bierstadt rose morning after morning at four o'clock, until he had secured the desired effect of light and shade and color.

With all this work accomplished, reputation secured, and his portfolio laden with sketches and studies enough to supply material for a hundred pictures; with a beautiful home to play the prince in now and then, as he does—a home on one of the loveliest spots of earth, commanding a view than which the Rhine has none more picturesque; with a wife young and fair, a lady of rare culture and much beloved; with hosts of friends at Irvington, in the city, wherever his name is known; with all these, indeed, he might be pardoned if he rested from his labors for a decade or so,

"To sleep, with soft content about his head,
And never wake but to a joyful morning."

But not so; he is even now off upon another adventurous journey, during which he is to explore the Pacific Coast, and invade, once more, the dread defiles of Puget's Sound.

The thirst for adventure is yet unsated, and we sometimes fancy that were it not that his imagination has its play, even as he sits before his easel, in the suggestions of the titanic forms and the wild grandeurs in light and shade and color—his memories of the West; were it not that his pleasure is renewed in these, and that through his art he can bring us nearer to the wonders he portrays, we verily believe the man would gather to himself his household gods, take to the mountains and the mist, and live and die there!