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[The Headwaters of the Merced.]

John Muir

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natural outcrop of his education. He could not resist the impulse, under the circumstances.'"  

J. W. GALLY.

Art Notes.

The most notable event in San Francisco art circles during the past month has been the opening of the "Schaus Gallery," at Houseworth's—which contains a larger proportion of good pictures than any exhibition ever made here. The largest picture in the collection, and that which first strikes the eye on entering, is the carnival scene by Coninck. It is a showy picture and not altogether agreeable, being somewhat coarse in character, and the three figures composing it presenting the appearance of having been painted from the same model. A very pleasing picture is that painted by P. C. Comte, representing two ladies feeding fish. The drapery is beautifully executed, though the drawing of the faces is open to criticism. Another by Florent Willems, of a lady and grayhound, has also a bit of exquisitely painted drapery, the texture of the lilac satin robe being admirably rendered; the dog, however, is badly drawn, and the remainder of the picture uninteresting. Several pictures by Verböckhoven are very smoothly painted, but are not worthy of much praise. A small picture of horses by Thoren is very fine, the drawing, foreshortening, and action being excellently rendered. Some flowers, in water colors, by De Longpré's, are very neatly executed. A most exquisite flower-piece—one of the gems of the collection—is by the Belgian painter Robie. It is exceedingly rich in color and masterly in style and effect. Two little genre bits by Siegert are excellent. The landscapes in the collection are not equal to the figure-pieces; that by Lindlar being exceedingly chromo-y in character, and that by Joseph Jansen no better. Another, by Carl Milner, is of a little higher character, but has no striking merit. There are several "marines," by Hertzog, not remarkable for originality. An exquisite fruit-piece by Emilie Freyer is worthy of study, being inimitable in delicacy of finish and color, and shows a beautiful technique; indeed, it is almost equal to the work of her celebrated father. A deer picture, and some ducks, by Tait, of New York, are very poor specimens of that artist. There are also a number of pictures hanging above the line that are as yet out of the reach of criticism.

—Two sales have taken place of late of pictures imported from the East, being probably selections from an accumulation of unsalable works there, and it is certainly a wonder that people of average intelligence here could be induced to become purchasers at any price.

—A marine picture by Bierstadt has been lately exhibited at Snow & May's, and another at Roos' gallery. The first is exceedingly bad; while the other, though it has some good points, is not as a whole very pleasing.

—Toby Rosenthal's picture of "Elaine" has attracted many admirers, both before and since its abduction and restoration. It is certainly a beautiful and poetic rendering of the scene in Tennyson's well-known poem, and adds much to Rosenthal's reputation. Most of us were already familiar with the picture before its arrival, from the numerous well-executed photographs displayed in the shops, which give a good idea of the picture so far as regards the conception and effect, and curiosity only remains to be satisfied in regard to the color. With this, a sight of the picture fully satisfied everyone that it was entirely equal to the composition and effect, being extremely rich and sensuous, and at the same time so judiciously toned as not to interfere with the religious solemnity of the subject.

§ Our friend John Muir, the "Hugh Miller of the West," has kindly furnished the following:

"Keith is painting with characteristic enthusiasm and success on the subject of the 'Head-waters of the Merced,' Lofty alps laden with ice and snow; massive rocks rounded and burnished by ancient glaciers; deep shadowy canions, groves, meadows, streams, have been steadily growing and blending, and are now making rapid progress toward perfect development in one glorious picture. The foreground lies at an elevation of 7,500 feet above the level of the sea, and is composed chiefly of one of those immense dams of glacier-polished granite so often found stretching across the high Sierra ca-
sions. Its surface is planted with picturesque brown-barked junipers, mats and fringes of chaparral, and minute garden-like patches of the various flowers characteristic of the region. The middle and back grounds are the main upper Merced Cañon, and a cluster of snowy alps, flushed and inspired with pure mountain light. From its lofty fountains the young Merced is seen foaming down between its grandly sculptured cañon rocks, curving gracefully through meadow and grove, and finally entering a dark narrow gorge leading on down to Yosemite Valley. The painted rocks are so truly rocky, we would expect to hear them clank and ring to the blows of a hammer; and notwithstanding they are so full of plain truth in form, sculpture, and combination, as to be fit for scientific illustrations, the whole picture glowing with the very genius and poetry of the Sierra. I believe the canvas is said to be ten feet long; but paint, pictures, art, and artist are alike forgotten when we gaze into this glorious landscape. There are living alps, blue shadows on the snow; rocks, meadows, groves, and the crystal river, radiating beauty that absorbs and carries us away. Keith is patiently following the leadings of his own genius, painting better than he knows, observing a devout truthfulness to nature, yet removing veils of detail, and laying bare the very hearts and souls of the landscapes; and the truth of this is attested more and more fully by every picture that he paints.”

CURRENT LITERATURE.


This is the second volume in Mr. Hubert H. Bancroft’s series of five volumes devoted to The Native Races of the Pacific States, the first of which we have already noticed.* The systematic arrangement, the acute analysis, the solid and symmetrical synthetic reconstructions, the concentrated and epigrammatic style, and the sound judgment which characterized the first volume are equally conspicuous in this, and probably even more so, as having the additional quality of that ease which comes from use only. The tone of the volume is livelier and sprightlier than that of the first, but this is the result of many causes. The theme is higher—that of civilized races; the materials are more abundant and more exact; the interest of controversy is sometimes added to that of narration; and speculative discussions often throw a rosy halo around the subject.

Mr. Bancroft restricts Anahua to the celebrated plateaus of the valley of Mexico—the “country by the waters,” as the name signifies, taken from the lakes abounding there, and formerly occupying more of its surface than at present. (Page 87.) The region occupied by the civilized races extends along the continent, bounded by the sea on both sides, between latitudes 11° and 22° north. (Page 86.)

The term Aztec as a general designation Mr. Bancroft rejects, for the reason that it is not sufficiently descriptive nor comprehensive to include either of the two great civilized families of Central America. (Pages 81, 91-93, 95, 104, 114-125.) The Mayas, or Maya-Quiches, include all the ancient races lying south of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec (pages 630-631), and to those lying north of this isthmus he gives the generic names of Nahua. (Pages 91, 103, 124.) He thinks, however, that some authors will not accept this term. (Page 772.) We do not share this fear. He shows clearly that “Nahua” is a Maya-Quiché word used by the Mayas themselves to indicate these very native civilized races which were not of the Maya stock. (Page 129.) The word is thus not only completely descriptive, and of an ancient and honorable lineage, but is restored to its original and specific application. The people of the

* Overland Monthly, December, 1874.