

California Art Research

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MONOGRAPHS

TOBY ROSENTHAL

DOMINICO TOJETTI

THADDEUS WELCH

CHARLES DORMAN ROBINSON

Gene Hailey, Editor
Abstract from California Art Research
W.P.A. Project 2874, O.P. 65-3-3632

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T O B Y R O S E N T H A L

1848.....1916

Biography and Works



"THE CARDINAL"

TOBY ROSENTHAL

From the windows of a humble tailor shop to the walls of the great galleries of America and Europe, is the story of the artist, Toby Rosenthal. A story written by intense ambition, hard work, and a never swerving devotion to his ideals of art.

Whether Rosenthal was born in Strassburg, West Prussia, or in New Haven, Connecticut, is a question upon which biographical authorities are closely divided. In the earlier, more nearly contemporary accounts his birthplace is given as Strassburg; while the more modern works give it as New Haven. The more acceptable fact is that he was born in Germany and was brought to America at about the age of four. One fact generally agreed upon is that his birthdate was March 15, 1848. Toby was of German Jewish parentage, being the son of Jacob and Esther Rosenthal. His father was a tailor and already the father of two boys when Toby was born. Neither the worthy Jacob nor Toby's brothers ever evinced any artistic ability, and if we look for inherited talent, we must go back to his maternal grandfather, a rabbi and teacher of the Scriptures. One detailed account describes the patriarch blessing the baby and officiating at the traditional ceremony at which he was given the names, Tobias Edward.

HIS EARLY EDUCATION AND ART TRAINING

The family joined the eager eyed throng looking to better themselves in the New World and emigrated to America, probably in 1853. There they settled at New Haven, Connecticut, where they remained for four years. Business was not flourishing and the country was full of rumours about the boom times in California; so after a brief stop in New York, in 1857 they went to San Francisco, then in its infancy, where the good Jacob doubtless thought to make a fortune--if not in the gold fields, by making suits for the miners and dresses for their ladies.

The children at first attended public school, but Jacob Rosenthal was neither satisfied with the education that they were receiving nor the associations which they were forming with the young hoodlums of the neighborhood; so at an expense which forced rigid economy on himself and his family, he secured the services of a private tutor, from whom Toby learned all he ever absorbed of common education.

From almost babyhood Toby had shown a love of drawing and of pictures. In his readers, it was not the letters and words which held his childish fancy, but the illustrations. We are told that he covered, not only the margins of his books, but even the wall paper with his copies and sketches, and it was at the ripe age of five that he announced to his father that when he grew up he wanted to be a painter of pictures. From this early determination he never wavered, and, after the

family settled in San Francisco, he persuaded Jacob to send him to Monsieur Louis Bacon for art lessons. Bacon was a French sculptor who had a small class in drawing and there was not much that he was able to teach the ambitious boy. Part of this training seemed to consist of giving Toby pictures to copy. One of these was from a French illustrated magazine and represented the taking of the Malakoff. It was a picture involving over seventy faces and the boy copied it with such exactitude and verve that the copy fairly excelled the original. His proud father hung this drawing in his tailor shop window.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS AT HIS DOOR

The subject of further art lessons was seriously considered and Mr. Thomas Hill, the famous California landscape artist, was approached. He, however, required two dollars an hour for lessons, which, though they may have been worth it, was far beyond the means of the tailor and his family at this time. Toby was in despair at the idea that he would have to take up tailoring, or be apprenticed to some trade, for lack of further art instruction. Then came the fortunate chance, the opportunity without which the name of Rosenthal would never have become known. One day the door of the little tailor shop opened and in walked a well-to-do German baker named Hess. He had looked at the Malakoff picture in the window and he asked Jacob who had drawn it. He

was told that it was the boy, Toby, then about fourteen. When he learned, as he did by further questioning, that there was no money for art lessons, he said that such talent must not be wasted and that he would come back the next day and would be responsible for securing the instructions needed. He said that he knew an artist who thought more of art than money, who would be interested in the boy. And come back he did and took Toby to the studio of Fortunato Arriola. Arriola looked at the work done by Toby and looked at Toby himself. It was the first studio the boy had ever seen and it is easy to imagine the hope and awe with which he regarded the easels, the paints, the canvases. To Toby it must have seemed a doorway to the Heaven of his ambitious young dreams. The artist, Arriola, consented to take Toby in immediately, and the only payment he stipulated was that the boy try hard and continue to do his best work, at which he had already shown himself capable. Arriola realized the boy's possibilities, for he said:

"I'll teach you all I know for nothing. I do not believe I can teach you much; your way lies above mine."

For eighteen months the good hearted Spanish painter kept his word and shared his knowledge with young Toby. They worked together on several pictures and it is to the man's credit that he felt no jealousy at the boy's swift progress, but rather was glad that he was an instrument towards his success. At the end of this time he took Toby to his father and

admitted that he was able to teach him no more, and said that he should be sent to Europe to further develop a talent that was recognized as genius. Jacob Rosenthal had anticipated this, and determined to sacrifice rather than hamper Toby's studies; he had saved the money necessary to send the lad to Munich; which at that time enjoyed the reputation of being the center of European art.

TOBY GOES TO EUROPE

Toby was only sixteen when he made the trip to Munich--alone, with the savings of the Rosenthal family--not knowing a single person in the strange city. It speaks well for his singleness of purpose and his character, that there was no hesitancy in sending the boy by himself. When he arrived at Munich he applied for admittance to the Royal Academy, but he found that though he had been considered a wonder at home, he did not come up in some respects to their entrance requirements. Toby immediately applied himself to brushing up in what he lacked, and by the time the next term opened he was able to take his place in the class. He had not been with his class six months when he became dissatisfied with his progress and with eleven other students formed a class which was conducted by Professor Raupp. This increased his progress greatly as he also kept on with his Royal Academy studies. It was while he was with Raupp that Toby painted "Affection's Last Offering". This was his first important work and was very

favorably received, being reproduced in illustrated art magazines in Europe and America. The picture was sent to San Francisco, and it is told that when his old teacher, Fortunato Arriola, saw the picture he was so overcome with emotion that he sobbed. Before this picture was completed Professor Raupp was offered, and accepted, the post of Director of the Academy at Nuremburg. Toby, who decided it was best to remain in Munich, had to find a new master and was taken by Raupp to the great Carl von Piloty, who accepted him as a pupil. Higher he could not go than Piloty in Munich. Piloty was considered by far the best instructor in Germany and very particular about the pupils he received.

Under Piloty he painted his "Morning Services in the Home of Sebastian Bach". This brought the artist instant acclaim and was exhibited in Vienna, after being shown in Munich and Nuremburg. It was purchased by the City of Leipsic for their public museum. This picture was lithographed by the City of Leipsic and widely copied in wood-cut by all the illustrated papers.

At this time as Rosenthal's health became impaired, from too much study and concentration upon his work, he returned in 1871 for a visit to San Francisco.

It is easy to imagine the pride and joy with which he was welcomed by his old parents. Their faith had been so amply justified and greater triumphs were yet to come.

HIS "ELAINE"

It was during this visit that Toby met Mr. Tibercio Parrott, who was a well-known millionaire Art Connoisseur of San Francisco. This wealthy merchant was a patron of Art, and there ripened a friendship with Rosenthal, due to similar tastes and the fact that both were widely travelled. One evening at his home, reaching down a well-worn copy of Tennyson, he turned to the "Idyls of the King", selected and read the passage:

"Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead,
Steered by the dumb, went upward with the flood.

In her right hand the lily, in her left the
letter;
All her bright hair streaming down;

And all the coverlid was cloth of gold,
Down to the waist, and she herself in white.

All but her face, and that clean featured face
Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead
But fast asleep, and lay as she smiled."

"Can you paint me a picture of that?" he asked
the artist.

"I can," said Rosenthal, "If you will let me
take my own time."

"Do so, and name your own price."

Rosenthal took the Tennyson home, and spent the night eagerly reading the Idyl. In the morning he visited Mr. Parrott and they agreed that he would paint the picture on his return to Munich and that the price would be one thousand dollars.

Immediately on his arrival he started his commission, which he had decided to title "Elaine"--but found it impossible to be satisfied with his efforts. Sketch after sketch was made and thrown away; finally in desperation he sneaked the corpse of a young woman into his studio; to get the appearance and atmosphere of death on his canvas. He kept this strange model, working feverishly, until the protests of his neighbors forced him to give up his strange companion. As a result he fell severely ill.

About this time Miss Hattie Green of San Francisco, visited Munich, accompanied by friends, to study Art. Quite naturally she visited the studio of the already well known Rosenthal. She was beautiful, with long golden hair and Toby immediately saw in her his image of Elaine. She consented to pose and the features of the painting were hers.

Meantime the picture had taken up much more of the artist's time than he had expected it would and he wrote to Mr. Parrott that in view of this and the fact that it was a larger and better painting than they had planned, that the price be raised to \$2,200. To this letter he received no reply, and after several months of silence, Toby considered himself released from the contract. "Elaine" was finished at last and sent to Berlin for exhibition, where it drew large crowds and much favorable criticism. While it was there on exhibition, Mrs. Robert C. Johnson of San Francisco called on Rosenthal at his studio, and seeing a photograph of "Elaine"

fell in love with it, and offered Toby two, three and finally three and a half thousand dollars for it. This price the artist accepted and the painting was sent to America. After the sale it developed that Crown Prince Frederich William admired and wished to purchase "Elaine" at a high figure, but Mrs. Johnson would not sell and it was exhibited in Boston for two weeks before being sent to San Francisco.

There was much controversy over the artist's breach of contract with his patron in which connection the News Letter of August 5, 1876, later made the following frank criticism:

"The apologist of Rosenthal cunningly attempts to create sympathy by referring to him as the 'poor boy artist, a mere youth', as if he were not competent to enter into a contract to paint a picture. Now, as Toby Rosenthal was twenty-six years of age, when he received the commission from Mr. Parrott, the childhood plea must be considered weak indeed; and as to his poverty, he is well off for one in his station of life, and was at the time referred to. No, if that breach of contract has any significance--and we think it has, it can readily be found in the covetousness which is inherent in some men, and which stops at nothing--even the violation of a contract,--for gain!"

Mr. Parrott, who had ordered "Elaine" from Rosenthal was both angry and disappointed at his failure to deliver the picture. There was a deal of discussion as to whether an ordered painting was, or was not, an artist's own property, before he received payment. The result was that Parrott, the art patron, ordered another painting of the same theme to be executed by Dominico Tojetti; Tojetti was the well-known Ital-

ian figure-painter who had made his home in San Francisco.

It took the latter over a year to paint his "Elaine". and when it was finished there was great controversial criticism as to the relative merits of the two canvases.

Regardless of the ethics of the transaction Mrs. Robert Johnson made arrangements with Snow & May to exhibit "Elaine" in their Gallery, the proceeds to be given to Charity.

It was hung for three days and attracted immense crowds; ten thousand and ninety-four persons jammed Snow & May's Galleries the first day. Prominent, in the front of the throng, were an excited be-spectacled man and an old woman, with a shawl around her shoulders--drinking in the praises of the visitors--Jacob and Esther Rosenthal, the artist's parents. Doubtless that day was reward enough for all their sacrifice.

It seems characteristic of Rosenthal's work that it appealed to the taste of the public; partly, at least this was due to the human story which he built into them. Whether they were humorous in subject or bordering on pathos, they all appealed to the emotions of the observer and hence took and kept a firm hold on popular fancy. When Mr. Snow came down to his Gallery, on the morning of the third day, "Elaine" had been stolen. He smiled indulgently--conceiving this to be a joke, but to his shocked astonishment the canvas had actually been cut from the frame. Virtually the entire police depart-

ment were put on the case immediately, and detectives haunted the rooms of the Gallery. Mr. Snow wrote Mrs. Johnson the following letter which indicates his deep concern:

"April 3, 1875

Mrs. Robert C. Johnson
San Francisco, California

Respected Madam:

We cannot be unmindful of your kindness in yielding to the popular wish to look upon 'Elaine' and your placing it in our possession to gratify that desire, and we beg to express again our deep sorrow that we have been the unwitting cause of so sad a loss to you.

We have taken a day to recover our equilibrium from yesterday's shock--have given the matter mature thought, and reach the conclusion that if we are not legally, we are morally responsible for the safety of property placed in our hands by the patrons of our house. To offer a reward for the return of 'Elaine', would be a precedent imperiling the most valued property of a large class of our citizens, rendering the ownership of works of art a source of anxiety, rather than that of pleasure. We, therefore, decline to make a bid for its return. We have, however, this day forwarded to Mr. Toby E. Rosenthal, a commission to reproduce 'Elaine', at our charge, to take the place of the one lost. This will, of course, render valueless the stolen picture.

With admiration for your philosophy under great trial, and with deep respect, we are

Very sincerely your obedient servants,

SNOW & MAY."

Mrs. Johnson accepted the generous offer and a cable was forthwith dispatched to Toby to re-create his 'Elaine'. But the San Francisco detectives, with a speed which surprised

every one, probably including themselves, got on the trail of the art thieves and two days later the picture was back in the hands of the delighted Mr. Snow. It had been stolen with a view toward claiming the expected reward, and was scarcely damaged by the adventure. Mr. Snow was quoted by the Press as saying the picture to be worth about five thousand dollars, but for exhibition purposes he would value it at twenty-five thousand.

The theft and restoration of the famous picture was quite naturally a nine days' wonder in San Francisco and occupied whole pages of the contemporary newspapers. The following amusing account of the recovery is taken from the Chronicle of April 5, 1875:

"Taking with them the youngest of the persons arrested as guide, the officers drove with all possible speed to a house nearly midway of the block. It was quite dark, and objects in the neighborhood seemed dim and indistinct. Passing one or two detached buildings that occupied the front of the lot, they were piloted to a shanty in the extreme rear. Raising a window, and taking a key from its place of concealment, they opened the front door and passed through into a small bed-room behind it. Here they found the lost treasure concealed in a bed on the side next the wall, under the bed-clothing. It was carefully wrapped in unbleached cotton, sealed with red sealing-wax in several places and had on the package, printed with a lead pencil, in large, legible letters, the words, 'Custom House Official Maps', in style and orthography as here indicated. A large piece of the material from which the wrapper was cut had been previously found in the lodging-house on Third Street, where the first arrests had been made. The exultation of the officers at the complete success of their skilful strategy, was unbounded.-----"

'Elaine' is at present at the office of the Chief of Police, closely guarded by a squad of policemen.

An order for its delivery to Snow & May will be granted by Judge Louderback, today.

The dead having been steered by the dumb back to the picture store, the painting will be placed again on the same stretcher, the same frame, and exhibited in the same place, the ragged edge having been concealed by a narrow strip of moulding. The work of restoration will be finished tomorrow and the public will be admitted on Wednesday. The order sent to Toby Rosenthal for the duplication of the picture will be countermanded by cable today.

The 'Lily Maid of Astolat' will hereafter be secure in the guardianship of one or two vigilant and esthetic watchmen, who will know and appreciate her at her true value."

The art critic of the Koenigliche Vossische Zeitung, one of the leading German journals had the following to say of "Elaine":

"-----The picture is a pure, romantic, conception of the scene of the poem in its tone and in all its relations of light and shade, and is developed with so much love, art, and care in each detail, that every point is in keeping with the general character and nothing disturbs its harmony. In design and painting it gives evidence of great artistic ability, so complete that I am surprised at never before having either seen a work by its author or heard anything about him."

A Boston critic was quoted by the San Francisco Chronicle as remarking enthusiastically:

"No one can gaze upon Rosenthal's 'Elaine' without emotion. It is a poem in itself. But it is not only the delightful sentiment that permeates the work that is praiseworthy. The drawing is masterly, the color is indescribably beautiful and the atmosphere

pervading the whole is as charming and as poetical as anything in the painting, which, in its technical excellences, is also commendable in the highest degree. The conscientiousness with which every detail is finished, the sharp clear and certain touches, showing unmistakably a hand that labors with perfect knowledge and leaves nothing to chance, bespeak the great artist."

One of the few adverse criticisms of "Elaine" is to be found in Isham's "History of American Painting", in which he characterizes the picture as.....

"'a good loud translation of our household Tennyson into the dialect of Munich.' It is interesting because later Isham points out that 'Rosenthal's style had become thoroughly imbued with the mental and emotional outlook of the Munich School, so that one could not find in his works a trace of anything distinctly American.'"

"Elaine" was sent to the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876, where it took the gold medal for Toby. It was later sold by Mrs. Johnson for \$6,000 and eventually became the property of the Chicago Art Institute.

We have dwelt a little long upon "Elaine" because of all of Rosenthal's work, it seems to have been the best known and most popular--indeed Fingal Buchanan, San Francisco art critic, in 1885, went so far as to call "Elaine" a heaven sent flash of inspiration, which he (Rosenthal) has never excelled.

"Elaine" was the last work done by Rosenthal while under the instruction of Von Piloty. The first picture, after leaving school, was "Nature and Humanity"--a young monk

watching the movements of a pair of butterflies, as they alight on the refectory table. After this he seems to have deserted sentiment for a time and applied himself to the humorous class of subject which was more and more becoming his specialty. Two small pictures which he called "He who laughs last, laughs best," were taken up with the misfortunate antics of two school boys.

They attracted sufficient attention in Germany for the Gartenlaube of Leipsic, to have a double sheet engraving made of them.

The next well-known picture by Rosenthal was his "Seminary Alarmed". This, as the title indicates, portrays a scene in a girls' boarding school. Commenced in the early part of 1875 and completed in the Fall of 1877; it was exhibited in Germany and attracted unusually high praise there; in this connection the News Letter of February 2, 1878, says:

"Toby Rosenthal's latest work, 'A Seminary Alarmed', has arrived at last and is before the public; it is a masterly work in every particular and one upon which he may safely rest his case. All who are familiar with European art criticisms, and those of the German Press in particular, well know that no ordinary picture could have called forth the many elaborate and generally favorable criticisms, which were written upon this work during the two months it was on exhibition in Munich, Berlin, and Hamburg. As to the quality of the picture, it is superb--faultless in drawing, rich and sensuous, yet harmonious in color--a charming work, which furnishes indisputable evidence that Mr. Rosenthal, at the early age of thirty, has become a master in his chosen profession."

In a letter to his parents, Toby betrayed anxiety as to the reception which his "Alarmed Seminary" would find in San Francisco, as follow:

"I am anxiously awaiting news of the safe arrival and exhibition of my picture. Will my countrymen treat me with their former consideration? Will they find merit in my new work? They will certainly see that I am not wedded to one class of subjects! If my 'Seminary' is not received in San Francisco, I hope you will not withhold the fact from me. I am aware of its having both good and weak qualities, and can find consolation in knowing that an art-cultured people, familiar with the works of the best masters of all ages, have gone into ecstasies over my work."

He need not have worried, for once more the Art loving people of San Francisco thronged to Snow & May's Gallery, to see the work of one of their favorite sons. It was later moved to the rooms of the Art Association and was purchased by Colonel Fair for the full price Toby asked for it--\$5,000. The critic of the News Letter congratulated Colonel Fair in an article, May 25, 1878, saying:

"In this work Colonel Fair has a picture far superior in quality to anything ever painted by a Californian. Rosenthal went away from here a boy student, he returned a master, a credit to California and an honor to his profession."

High praise indeed for Toby, for California was finding her place in the art world and many of her artists were already famous.

THE TRIAL OF CONSTANCE DE BEVERLY

Once more, as in the case of "Elaine", words of a famous poem suggested the theme for what was to be a famous painting. Rosenthal visited San Francisco again in 1879; older, more assured,--he was still glad of the love and respect of his fellow townsmen; for him at least it was a case where the prophet was honored in his own land. During this visit he became acquainted with Mr. Irving Scott. Scott told Toby that ever since 1876, he had realized the dramatic possibilities for a picture in the lives of Walter Scott's "Marmion". He said he realized he could not order an inspiration, but giving the poem to the artist added that if it inspired Rosenthal, he would take the picture. Rosenthal read the trial scene until he was as enthusiastic as Scott himself and agreed to carry out the commission when he returned to Munich.

The following extracts from letters written by the artist to his patron, are interesting, as they give a sidelight on Rosenthal's personality as well as on his great capacity for taking pains with details:

"January 18, 1881

I find your 'Marmion' a very difficult subject to treat, because Sir Walter Scott goes rather too far in his description of the 'Trial Scene' and puts Pegasus in chains. To transpose a master's work of painting in language, into a work of the same merit in color on canvas is not always easy, in many cases impossible but I must take some poetic

artistic license as all translators from one language to another do. I must invent new terms and use other grammatical rules to be able to express the same thought-feeling, power of rhythm, limelight and shade! The Director of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Professor Charles von Piloty, declares the subject 'a hard nut to crack'. Several artists here say it is a difficult task, and are pleased not to have the problem to solve."

"January 21, 1882

I have set aside your picture; the trying light hurts my eyes. Sir Walter discovers the scenes lit by the rays of a crescent and torches. 'By each in Benedictine dress two haggard monks stood motionless.' I have spared no labor, time, nor money, in my endeavor to make 'Marmion' my greatest work. I want to send a picture home that will be a picture and a monument to my memory. I have studied up the special history of the Benedictine Order, and consulted the great Church Historian, Dollinger, in regard to a question of ecclesiastical law. He gave me a great deal of information and showed great interest in my work."

The painting of "Constance" was delayed by the artist's poor health. At one time the doctors forbade him to touch a brush for six months. Toby took his idleness with mortification and impatience as he was intensely interested in his subject.

This is an extract from another of Rosenthal's letters to Mr. Scott, on the completion of the picture:

"Berchtesgaden
September 6, '84

"My picture has gone through the fire-proof in Europe. It has hung side by side with the greatest art productions of this century; it competed with the best works loaned from

all the National Galleries and Royal collections in Europe. All the greatest Art critics of Europe have approved our picture. The great Art Jury, formed by about thirty artists from all parts of Europe, sent as delegates from all nations and representing the most celebrated names--have awarded a Golden Medal for the work."

These letters that have been quoted were attached to the catalog of Rosenthal's Exhibition, held in San Francisco, in November of 1884, when "The Trial of Constance de Beverly" was first shown to the public. It was perhaps a mistake to print all the letters, which, on the face of them, had not been intended for public consumption, and the local Press were a bit inclined to twit Rosenthal, on his so evident satisfaction with his own work.

The following criticism from the "Evening Bulletin" of January 17, 1884, gives a graphic description of "Constance de Beverly".

"California claims today the greatest American artist--Toby Rosenthal. In the collection his work is unique. His picture of the immuring of 'Constance de Beverly' is a true work of art, full of the finest feeling, great depth and beauty. The work shows thought even in the smallest details. The subject is taken from Scott's 'Marmion' and shows the moment when Constance de Beverly, the nun who escaped to serve as Marmion's page, is doomed to be immured alive in the prepared niche in the stone wall. The blind old abbot, destitute of human feeling, heartlessly condemns the beautiful young Constance to death. On the stony face of the abbess there is almost an expression of delight in being able to agree to this terrible punishment. The principal figure, Constance de Beverly, is a personification of beauty and loveliness.

As the well fed monk in a fiendish way tears away her mantel, her page's dress serves but to reveal her charms. Her horror at the terrible death awaiting her, and yet her courage, are touching to behold. Shuddering, one gazes upon the dark forms in the background who, in the flickering light of the torches, prepare the living grave."

TOBY MARRIED--1880

In July of 1880, Toby married Miss Sophia Ansbacher of Furth, Germany; who, we are told, "added to her charming character and innate refinement, rare musical attainments." They had two children, a boy and a girl; the boy later becoming an architect of high standing in Munich. Rosenthal's married life was a happy one, and he often remarked that it was for his wife's sake that he valued his success.

THE CARDINAL AND FURTHER HONORS

One of the best loved pictures ever painted by Rosenthal was the "Cardinal's Portrait"; painted in 1896; even today--forty years later, it has been voted the most popular picture exhibited in San Francisco. The story told by the painting, is that of the Cardinal sitting to a young monk for his portrait. The old man has gone to sleep, and the monk is scratching his head in perplexity. On the easel is the partly finished portrait and the contrast between the dignified pose on the canvas and the blissfully sleeping Prince of the Church is what gives the picture its value. A simple story, but it appeals, it is humorous, but with a

tender quality that brings a sympathetic smile. This picture has been reproduced more than any other of the artist's work, and is familiar to thousands who probably do not even know Toby's name. Between pictures Rosenthal had taken on several selected pupils and was very successful as a teacher. As he grew older he devoted more and more of his time to this work and was elected a trustee of the Kunstgenossenschaft and was honored by being invested with the Bavarian Order of St. Michael; if it were necessary to prove the high esteem in which Rosenthal was held by the German people, these honors would do so.

HIS DEATH IN MUNICH

Toby Rosenthal died in Munich in the month of December, 1916, at the age of sixty-eight.

It is impossible to read the life of Rosenthal without the greatest admiration for his steadfastness of purpose. He early decided that he wanted to become an artist--and he did, regardless of the difficulties and hard work which would have discouraged an ideal less firm. San Francisco has reason to be proud of the name of Toby Rosenthal, and, though fame and reputation are fleeting--his will endure while people may yet go for themselves to the galleries and see his beautiful stories on canvas.

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- "Affection's Last Offering" (1868)
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"Forbidden Longing" (1877)
"Who Laughs Last, Laughs Best" (1877)
"Seminary Alarmed" (1877)
"Mother's Prayer" (1881)
"The Empty Place" (1882)
"The Trial of Constance de Beverly" (1883)
"Departure from the Family" (1885)
"Dancing Lessons During the Empire" (1886)
"The Portrait of the Cardinal" (1898)
"The Image Maker" (1908)
"Exile's Return"
"Nature and Humanity"
"The New Governess"
"Bruederschaft"
"Marie the Cook"

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- "William Seligsberg" (1878)
"Dr. J.O. Hirschfelder" (1899)
"Mrs. Leonard Jacobi" (1902)
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"THE BATTLE OF THE CENTAURS"

SIGNOR DOMINICO TOJETTI

Painting and the appreciation of art generally in San Francisco of the 70's is said to owe a great debt to the arrival in that city, in 1871, of Signor Dominico Tojetti, an Italian artist, and his family.

Dominico Tojetti, or as he became better known to early San Franciscans, Professor Tojetti, was born in Rome, Italy, in 1817. He came from a distinguished Roman family and his distinct talent for drawing was shown early. This talent and early artistic ambition appear to have been fostered by his parents, for Dominico studied with such famous teachers of the Italian school as Camucini and Nurandi. He said of himself that his early training was severe and arduous, and he attributed much of his later success to the thorough grounding which he acquired in Rome in both drawing and color. We may presume, also, that the boy Tojetti took an especial interest in the wealth of both mythological and classical art which were available at Rome. The influence of these showed in his painting throughout his life.

CHURCH COMMISSIONS

His talent was rewarded early by many important commissions in Rome, the most outstanding of which may be divided into two categories; work done for the Church, and that of a secular nature. Popes Gregory XVI and Pius IX both honored

Tojetti with orders for the Vatican as well as for the Churches of Rome. As the result of winning a nation-wide contest, his picture of the blessed Germain was chosen to be exhibited in the Basilica of St. Peter's on the occasion of the beatification of that Saint. The picture represents St. Germain miraculously fording a torrent and is now preserved in the Great Hall of the Vatican. Another very important commission given by Pius IX, was a large painting to commemorate the escape of that Pontiff and his court; for that work, which is in the Church of St. Agnes, the painter was accorded the title of Marquis of the Church.

The lateral altar in the vast Basilica of St. Paul's, representing the interview between St. Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila when they became converted to Christianity, is one of the better known masterpieces of Tojetti.

EUROPEAN PORTRAITS

When two figures were to be replaced in the famous Loggia of Raphael at the Vatican, Gregory XVI ordered Tojetti to take the commission. This, perhaps as much as anything else, showed the high esteem in which he was held in Roman art circles. When this work was completed he was decorated by the King of Naples and by the crazy King Ludwig of Bavaria. Tojetti probably painted three fourths of all the portraits of the Popes which then hung in the gallery at the Vatican.

In secular work Tojetti was no less successful. Prince Torlonia was one of his distinguished patrons and among the artist's best known frescoes are those which adorn the ball room of the Prince's palace at Naples. They are of a mythological and historical character.

Now we come to the circumstances which eventually brought Tojetti and his family to San Francisco. Through his work and his family influences, the Signor was well acquainted at the Italian court and in diplomatic circles. It was due to these connections and to his outstanding merit as both a painter and a teacher, that he was selected by the Minister from Guatemala to fill an important post in Central America. The Guatemalan Government, wishing to establish an Academy of Fine Arts, had instructed their minister to secure for them the services of the best Italian artist available. After a good deal of persuasion, Tojetti decided to accept the honor offered and with his wife, two sons and a daughter, left for the Central American Country.

TO GUATEMALA

In those days it was a long and dangerous trip around the Horn, and the danger was fully realized by the unfortunate family. Their ship was wrecked and although their lives were spared, Tojetti lost most of his treasured possessions, including a large assortment of costumes which he had intended to use in historical paintings. After such a

discouraging start it is pleasant to be able to relate that he was both honored and successful in his new post. There for four years, he carried on the duties of President of the Guatemala Academy of Fine Arts, during which time he succeeded in putting the new institution on a firm and lasting basis. However, the climate did not agree with his health; so he was finally obliged to resign and travel northward. At that time he made a short stay in Mexico. From there, in 1871, he went to San Francisco.

The Tojettis were well received by the art world of San Francisco, the more so as his daughter, Signora Tojetti Maringhi, was acclaimed as the greatest pianist ever to appear in that city, while his sons Virgilio and Eduardo attracted attention as painters. The Professor found a large home on Grant Avenue and, moving his talented family into it, prepared to make a long stay.

AMUSING CRITICISM

One of the earliest major works of Tojetti, in his adopted home, was a large canvas, "California". The painting aroused considerable criticism, both good and bad. Since at that time he could neither read nor write English, it was felt that, perhaps through no fault of his own, he had made many mistakes on this ambitious work. It was an allegorical composition representing California as a female figure flanked by two minor figures, Commerce and Agriculture; in the back-

ground were mountains, harvest fields and the ocean. The art critic of the news Letter said of the picture:

"Its great charm, it is needless to say, is the artistic manner in which the subject is treated. The drawing is vigorous, the coloring warm and rich, whilst the way in which the light and shade are managed is exceedingly effective. The grouping also is very artistic, the central figures being brought prominently forward, the subsidiary figures, not interfering with, but on the contrary serving to bring into relief and to illustrate the principal part of the allegory, the central figure, 'California'. To a landscape breathing peace and tranquility this picture adds the interest of an historical allegory, and as the spectator stands before it entranced, gathering into his mind the details of the painting, he is forced to own that for this alone the artist deserves the laurels which he has long since earned and so modestly wears."

CLASSICAL V.S. CALIFORNIA

On the other hand the art critic of the Overland Magazine of January, 1875, voicing the conviction that a painting designed to symbolize the Lady of the Golden Gate should display at least a rudimentary knowledge of the history, figures and symbols appropriate to the State of California, dips his pen in a solution of wormwood and writes:

"In one of the flamboyant paintings now on exhibition at the Academy we have 'California' allegorized by Professor Tojetti. In the use of allegory to illustrate a subject on canvas, great latitude is allowed the painter; but an essential desideratum is, of course, a thorough technical knowledge of the subject to be treated. This the artist evidently does not possess, and the result is a remarkable picture in that it has some

fine drawing and painting, but all is lost and ruined by his ignorance of the subject and by several errors which will creep into all compositions of this magnitude. Now, a bear is a very proper thing indeed in an allegory of California, but not as a seat for one of those three figures. Poor Bruin must be anything but comfortable, as he forces his nose out for a little fresh air. What similitude has that old spear to anything Californian? Why not lay the bow and arrow prostrate, in lieu of it? There are no mining implements of any sort represented, and a badly drawn and unnaturally colored sickle, with a sheaf of wheat such as could be plucked from any bale of wheat hay, is made to represent agriculture.

"And what a weakly simpering maiden, to represent California, is that central figure; while those each side are not much better, and labor under the disadvantage of sitting in holes in the ground. Signor Tojetti could doubtless treat such a subject of his own country in a different manner, but from a gentleman who has lived but a short time in California, and neither speaks nor reads the English language at all, it is expecting too much to think that he can handle such a subject intelligently, and the owner of the picture has himself to blame for giving the commission and getting as a result a poor picture."

"The Battle of the Centaurs", another of Tojetti's large canvases, followed his work "California", and now hangs in the de Young Museum at San Francisco. The picture, which is mythological in subject, was painted in accordance with the description given by Plutarch. The principal figures are those of Theseus and the Centaur which he has vanquished. There are other accessory figures, notably one of a Centaur carrying off a struggling maiden. Of this picture the critic of the News Letter commented:

"-----The genius of the artist has enabled him, in portraying the Centaurs, to combine the human form, expressing an almost super-human intelligence, with the distinctive characteristics of a lower species, so perfectly that it makes our human pride recoil, as if some enemy of our race tainted us with the assurance that the monstrous might, at least in the moral world, find its counterpart. To those carping critics who find Professor Tojetti's style too severe and classical, we can only say that if classical art is to be banished from the rooms of the Art Association, then that body surely made a serious mistake in importing, at so great an expense, those plaster models designed for training students in true artistic principles.

"Few of our citizens are able to gratify by foreign travel their desire to behold the best specimens of the school in which Professor Tojetti excels, and we cannot but think their thanks are due to him for bringing the classical school of art as it were, to their very doors.

"For our part we may add, without wishing in any way to take from the well-earned reputation of local artists who have labored long and faithfully to advance the cause of art in our midst, that the presence of Professor Tojetti among us may be hailed by them, as well as by the public, as an inestimable advantage, enabling our city in its art infancy to begin where older cities are proud to leave off."

On the other hand we have the critic of the Overland Monthly, February, 1875, who in speaking of "California", "The Battle of the Centaurs" and "The Madonna" saying:

"The three large pictures by Tojetti are remarkable--chiefly for their size. They are faulty in drawing, bad in color, and very conventional in composition. It is a pity that a man who is a tolerable portrait painter should so mistake his abilities; for an

ambitious attempt like this, when it falls so far below mediocrity, becomes mournful."

Mr. Tiburcio Parrot, pioneer San Franciscan and liberal patron of the arts, had early taken an interest in the work and progress of Tojetti. It was he who had commissioned "California", and in spite of previous criticism, he now gave the Italian painter another important order. At his suggestion Tojetti did a painting illustrating Dante's story of Francesca da Rimini and her tragic love for Paul Malatesta. As was true of this artist's earlier efforts a great deal of controversy was stirred by this painting. One of the principal arguments was as to whether the composition was copied from Dore's famous illustrations for Dante. In this connection the San Francisco News Letter of July, 1875, stated:

A CONTROVERSY BY CRITICS

"'Francesca da Rimini' as painted by Tojetti, has some resemblance to same subject treated by Dore. There can be no doubt of it. And what does it prove, except that each artist, with the same instruction to guide him; instruction contained in the marginal notes of the written tragedy, placed there to secure the proper representation of the scene upon the stage--has arrived at very nearly the same result--the palm of superior excellence evidently falling to our own artist, Tojetti. The room in the castle, the chair, that is so grievous an offence to the 'Call' critic, the famous window that Tojetti has dared to put in the wall of his room after Dore had put one in his, the drapery, and last of all the relative positions of Francesca, of Lanciette, and of Paul, are not only fixed by the text of the tragedy, but the costumes as well are fully set forth."

This same picture was later, in 1879, exhibited at the Paris Salon, where the opposite side was taken by the Paris Art Correspondent of the Gazzetta del Popolo of Turin, published in that paper, June 26, 1879; he said in part:

"I have noticed two large pictures by Tojetti of Rome. One of them 'Elaine' might pass; as to the other--'Francesca da Rimini'--it is an unworthy thing. He has had the effrontery to literally copy the wood-engraving from Dante, illustrated by Dore and to paint it as large as nature. Even this might have been pardoned, however, if only it were well executed; and he had the impudence to send this daub to Paris, where it was placed close to a big painting by the same Dore--which, after all, is equally ugly. It seems as if it was accepted and hung at the Salon only in mockery, to show that Italian artists copy the French. In a word, it is provoking for an Italian to see such work."

During this time Tojetti engaged in a good deal of portrait work in which he was successful. Among these was a full length portrait of Mark Hopkins, the famous art patron, of Nob Hill. The Hopkins family refused to accept the portrait, which as a result stood in the artist's studio gathering dust. In the main, however, his portrait work was better received than the larger more ambitious canvases and even his most severe critics could find only his use of bright coloring at which to level their shafts--"Gaudy as a new chromo", protested the Chronicle critic for example. Among these portraits perhaps one of the best known was that of Mrs. Ashley, which attracted favorable comment as well as new sitters for Tojetti's brush.

HIS "ELAINE" AND ROSENTHALS'S

Probably every artist has to his credit one painting which stands out from the rest of his canvases, one with which his name becomes associated, by the laity as well as by critic and connoisseur. If such is the case, "Elaine", was certainly Tojetti's one painting. The circumstances which brought him the commission were peculiar and aroused public interest in "Elaine", almost before she took form on canvas. Mr. Parrott had ordered from Toby Rosenthal, San Francisco's Boy Artist, a picture illustrating a scene from Tennyson's "Idyl of Elaine". The story is that Mr. Parrott had agreed to pay young Rosenthal \$1000 for the painting but that on its completion it was sold to Mrs. Johnson of San Francisco for a much higher price. It was then exhibited in San Francisco where it was stolen from the gallery and later recovered by the police. Feeling over the ethics of the transaction ran high, and as the outcome of the whole thing, Mr. Parrott commissioned Tojetti to do another version of it for him. Selecting the same scene to paint, the Professor spent a year on what was to become his best known picture. Accounts differ as to the price he received; the News Letter said five and the Examiner said ten thousand dollars.

It was inevitable that the second canvas should be compared to the earlier one by Rosenthal, which by that time was in Munich; it was also inevitable that the critics should

be divided in their opinions as to the relative merits of the "Two Elaines" as they came to be called. Tojetti's picture showed the Lily White Maid of Astolat lying in a rowboat, her hands crossed on her breast. In the boat with her was the dumb servant who accompanied her to Camelot, while her brothers stood on the shore. In the background rose the towers of Astolat. It was in the detail of the painting that Tojetti showed again his special attention to costume and coloring. Those factors made the work an authentic illustration of the period of Elaine, while that of Rosenthal was called by the critic of the News Letter "a picture suggested by Tennyson's 'Elaine', that could not by any manner of means be called an illustration of it."

POETIC APPRECIATION IN THE '80'S

Continuing later, this critic thus evaluates Tojetti's painting:

"Before looking at this picture 'Elaine', in order to thoroughly appreciate its beauties, a careful perusal is necessary of that part of the poem beginning with Elaine's dying requests and ending with the couplet which is the text of the picture. By doing so the visitor will realize he is viewing a work which is a faithful illustration of the Idyl, as well as a magnificent work of art. A view of Tojetti's picture will produce a feeling of pleasurable satisfaction, not unmixed with pain, as we are reminded of the fate of the Fair Maid of Astolat. One does not feel, in looking at it, as if the artist had been sparing of his time in elaborating his work, or had tried in any manner to improve upon the

sentiment as given by the poet. It is, in truth, the poem en cueros, and will take its place as being by far the most important and interesting work of art yet produced in San Francisco. Our art patrons can but think that artists such as Tojetti, who execute commissions with that strict regard for the high sense of honor which is due from the artist to his patron, are well worthy of patronage."

Among other of Tojetti's better known works were the "Madonna"; "Progress of America"; an allegory, "Night"; and his large canvas "Venus". The last named canvas attracted a great deal of attention and interest from the public as well as the critics of the day. It was nude, almost life size. The artist said that he experienced difficulty securing suitable models and as a result had to use different models for various parts of the figure. Perhaps this was responsible for one criticism which suggested that while the body was that of a mature voluptuous woman, the head was that of an innocent young girl. "Venus" was painted to the order of Mr. Parrott, and after a brief exhibition in the Art Association rooms in San Francisco, was sent to Boston and later to London and Paris for exhibition purposes.

Signor Tojetti was responsible for much of the painting which decorated the Catholic Churches of San Francisco. Unfortunately these, with his other frescoes were lost in the great fire of 1906 which destroyed so many of early San Francisco's art treasures. Chief among these Church decorations were the frescoes and altar piece at the old St. Ignatius. These represented the ascension of St. Ignatius, and consist-

ed of a main center piece with side scrolls and panels. Perhaps of all the various types of painting in which Tojetti engaged in San Francisco, this, his Church work, was the most successful. He was fitted for painting of this nature by his previous experience in Rome, the center of religious painting, and by his personal intimate knowledge of Church history and decoration.

MANSIONS AND FRESCO PAINTING

In the fresco decoration of the homes of San Francisco's "upper ten", the Tojettis also found a fertile field for their art. Their best known examples of this class of work were the Mark Hopkins mansion and the palatial home of Mr. Fair. In this regard it is interesting to note that the News Letter, erstwhile champion of Tojetti's art, ran a lengthy article, entitled "Tojetti's Spleen", published in 1880; it indicated an about face as far as their critical opinion was concerned. Generally speaking this publication had praised his work, but the article mentioned was published with the dual purpose of warning wealthy San Franciscans against his decorative work and at the same time to "tone down Tojetti's intense vanity". There was an intense rivalry between the Tojettis and Signor Garibaldi, who was a well known Italian fresco painter engaged to fill some important commissions in San Francisco. Quoting from this article:

".....It would not be out of place to mention here that much of Tojetti's spleen may be traced to the fact that Garibaldi once refused for a consideration of \$200 to approve an indifferent painting for which he, Tojetti, was to receive \$1000 if such approval was given. In a thousand ways Garibaldi has assisted his maligner. He has given Tojetti work when he was penniless, has advanced him money for work not yet performed, and more than all--has instructed him in what he knows. Yet now this viper bites the breast that warms it into life. In our opinion he deserves the contempt of all honest men, and especially of his fellow artists. Certain it is, however, that his vindictive whinings can do no harm to a man as well known throughout Europe and America and so much admired as G.G.Garibaldi."

ONE WITH HIS ERA AND IDEALS

It seems only fair to discount such criticism when motivated by personal animosity, and as for teaching Tojetti what he knew, it should not be forgotten that Tojetti was not only well known but distinguished in European and Roman art circles long before he came within the ken of either the News Letter or Garibaldi in San Francisco. In reviewing the artist's work, it is interesting to note just how controversial were the opinions of his ability. Even of the same picture there were usually two distinct and directly opposite camps of criticism and thought. It does not add to the value of his works to find that often the same critic seemed to blow hot and cold on Tojetti's art. The mere fact that his work did arouse such interest with the art loving public and his so-called critics, seems to prove that it had its merits as an effective expression of the art ideals and popular taste of

San Francisco's decades before the twentieth century.

Signor Dominico Tojetti, at the age of seventy-five, died at his home, 223 Leavenworth Street, San Francisco, March 28, 1892. He was survived by his wife, daughter, and two sons. To the Tojetti family for faithful work and teaching, their adopted home gives gratitude, but also because they spread a large measure of popular enthusiasm for the art and culture of the Old World to the young city of San Francisco.

HIS SONS FOLLOW ART

Tojetti's two sons, Virgil and Eduardo, were both born in Rome. Later in San Francisco they studied art with their gifted father, and doubtless much of their later success was due to this training. Virgil, or Virgilio, had so far profited by his father's training that when the famed Garibaldi painted his frescoes in the Baldwin Academy, he elected Virgilio to help him. The elder Tojetti collaborated with indifferent success on several pictures with his son. These were signed "The Tojettis", or "Tojetti & Son". Virgilio later went to Paris where he studied with Gerome and Bougerau. He settled down in New York about 1883, where his pretty genre pictures and frescoes became quite popular. Some of his compositions were "Birth of Venus", "Sorrow", "The Feast of Flora", and "The Senses". He also executed many murals in New York, among them panels for the Savoy Hotel and the Hoffman House. Virgilio Tojetti died in New York in 1901, at the age of fifty-one.

The other son of Tojetti, Eduardo, was also an ambitious artist, although not as successful or as well known as his father and younger brother. He studied with his father and later with other Italian artists in Rome. He designed the murals in the diamond palace of Colonel Andrew and had also several mural panels in old St. Ignatius Church and College. One of his oils, titled "Nude", is in the permanent collection of the Bohemian Club of San Francisco. Eduardo made his home in San Francisco, where he died in 1930, at the age of seventy-nine.

SIGNOR DOMINICO TOJETTI
REPRESENTATIVE
WORKS

Portrait of the Late Mark Hopkins

Nude

Battle with the Centaurs

Romeo and Juliet

Francesca da Rimini

California

Elaine

Portrait of Mrs. Ashley

Progress of America

Madonna

Venus

Night

Ophelia

Portrait of Mrs. Will Irwin

Study of Horses Heads

The Holy Family

Portrait of General Grant

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[San Francisco BULLETIN]
Gregory

DOMENICO TOJETTI

- b. [1806] Rome, Italy
 d. March 28, 1892 San Francisco, California
 1806: CSL
 1807: M. Arkelian, THE KAHN COLLECTION
 1817: CAR

OBITUARY

CALL-BULLETIN (San Francisco)
 March 29, 1892, p. 8, age 85

MONOGRAPHIC SOURCES

Arkelian, M. THE KAHN COLLECTION.
 Ill.: THE PROGRESS OF AMERICA, 1875 (color)
 Van Nostrand, J. THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS.

NEWSPAPER AND PERIODICAL SOURCES

ART JOURNAL (New York)
 Vol. 1 (1875), p. 384, completes THE PROGRESS OF AMERICA
 SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE
 March 6, 1905, p. 4, THE ORIENTAL'S DREAM deemed obscene by
 a Virginia judge
 February 17, 1918, p. E3, FRANCESCA DA RIMINI AND PAOLO restored
 SAN FRANCISCO OPERA MAGAZINE
 I PURITANI, 1977 season, cover ill.: OPHELIA (color)

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

San Francisco, California. University of San Francisco, Gleeson
 Library. DOMENICO TOJETTI, 1817-1892. April 26-May 23, 1959.
 4 pp.; b&w ill. 19 exhs.
 Biographical information, checklist, ill.: FATHER MICHAEL ACCOLTI, S.J.
 Exhibition reviewed in the SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, May 10, 1959, TW,
 pp. 14-15.

(continued)

DOMENICO TOJETTI

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Biographical information about DT included in the entry for his grandson, Albert T. Roche (Vol. 3, p. 189).

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Dawdy 1

Thieme-Becker

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Schwartz

Smith and Moure

ARCHIVAL SOURCE

CSL (1908)

VIRGIL (VIRGILIO) TOJETTI

- b. [February 10], [1850] Rome, Italy
 d. March 26, 1901 New York, New York

February 10: CSL
 March 15: Bénézit, DIZIONARIO ENCICLOPEDICO BOLAFFI,
 NEW YORK TIMES obituary, and Thieme-Becker

- 1849: Mallett
 1850: CAR, age 51; CSL
 1851: Bénézit, DIZIONARIO ENCICLOPEDICO BOLAFFI, NEW YORK TIMES
 obituary, Smith, and Thieme-Becker

OBITUARY

NEW YORK TIMES
 March 28, 1901, p. 9

BIOGRAPHICAL DIRECTORIES

AAA 1903-1904, obituary
 Bénézit

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 4 vols. Milan: Leonilde M. Patuzzi, 1962.

DIZIONARIO ENCICLOPEDICO BOLAFFI DEI PITTORI E DEGLI INCISORI ITALIANI
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Mallett

Smith

Thieme-Becker

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Monro and Monro

ARCHIVAL SOURCE

CSL (1908)

EDWARD (EDUARDO) TOJETTI

- b. March 15, [1851] Rome, Italy
- d. November 27, 1930 San Francisco, California

1851: CAR, Obituary, VS, all age 79
1852: Mallett
1854: BAY OF SAN FRANCISCO
1855: CSL

OBITUARY

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE
November 28, 1930, p. 12

BIOGRAPHICAL DIRECTORIES

AAA 1931, obituary
BAY OF SAN FRANCISCO, Vol. 2, p. 680
Dawdy 1
Mallett

ARCHIVAL SOURCE

CSL (1908: Oakland)

T H A D D E U S W E L C H

1844.....1919

Biography and Works



"MT. TAMALPAIS"

THADDEUS WELCH

There were many colorful characters who found their way into the glamorous days of the 'sixties and on toward the end of the century, in San Francisco, and many were destined to be known nationally and internationally by their genius and achievements in letters and the arts. The latent talents of many of these wanderers, without doubt, were brought to the surface and developed through an enthusiastic interest on the part of a public which, though rough and sometimes uninformed, paid close attention to the cultural side of the roaring life of the Golden Port.

Out of the Oregon frontier woods, in 1866, drifted our Thaddeus Welch, a young tramp printer who was determined to make his way and name, as an artist in oils, an interpreter of Nature's beauties and colors. And for more than half a century he studied and worked until he had gained recognition as one of the truly great naturalistic artists.

Thad Welch became known as the "painter of Marin" and his canvases of that northern county, with its softly-rounded hills and wooded slopes, now hang in galleries, clubs and homes the world over. His rare gifts, however, were not confined to nature studies; but also found an outlet in portraits and in studies of domestic animals. As early as 1880, during his student days abroad, years be-

fore recognition came to him in San Francisco, he was awarded three bronze medals for works exhibited in Munich and Paris. A prophetic comment of the period appeared in the "Californian" of July, 1880:

"Three pictures are exhibited by Messrs. Morris and Kennedy which are well worthy of attention, both for their intrinsic merit and from the fact that the painter of them is a Californian. They are the work of Mr. Thaddeus Welch, who we understand left San Francisco to study in Europe some years ago, and is at present in Paris. We have seen the works of many young Americans who have studied abroad but we do not remember to have seen many which so completely justify the painters of them in having gone abroad as do these of Mr. Welch.

"It is too often the misfortune of young Americans in Europe to find that they have learned the language of color without having anything to say in it. Mr. Welch, however, shows in his pictures that he has studied the technical side of his art, not for its own sake, but chiefly and rightly as a means of expression. His three pictures all indicate that the workman has passed his apprenticeship, and feels an easy confidence in handling his tools. But, above and beyond this technical skill, they indicate gifts in the painter which will make us watch his development with the greatest interest. His subjects and his treatment of them show a wide sympathy with man and nature."

THE PIONEER CRAFTSMAN AND ARTIST

There was something about the versatility of the man which makes one wonder how Nature sometimes doles out individual gifts of genius in abundance. Welch was not only a

master artist with a wide range of subjects, but he was also an inventor, a natural craftsman in the woods and an able builder when resourcefulness and building sense were required. During his long tramps with his second wife, Ludwilla Pilat, through the forests--now called Muir woods--and over the Marin Hills they came to a steep ravine beyond the Redwood Canyon, a veritable wooded wilderness and they immediately selected it for their work shop and named it "Steep Ravine". Its precipitous sides were covered with tall redwoods; laurel grew higher up in the glen and a small stream flowed at its base, on its way to the sea.

Welch secured lumber in San Francisco, had it shipped to Bolinas Bay, hauled fifteen miles to the ridge and lowered down into the ravine. He then built a cabin and he built well. He solved the water problem by rigging a two-bucket pulley, operated from the porch. When one bucket came up filled with sparkling spring water the other bucket would descend and fill itself. He solved the bath problem before he had finished the cabin. Some distance from the cabin the stream was bordered by a small sandy beach. Here he found a hot mineral spring. When the tide was out a natural bathtub could be had by scooping out a hole in the sand and they were always assured of plenty of hot water.

That Welch and Ludwilla were practical planners along with their artistic temperaments and dream moments, is

evidenced by the fact that their nearest trading place for supplies was nine miles away, in Mill Valley, by the "Lone Tree Trail." And these were lean days as there were little and often no returns for extended periods for Welch's landscapes. Keeping the cabin stocked seems not to have bothered them in the least. It was told by Mrs. Welch that one day their nearest neighbor down the slope, a dairy rancher, asked Welch what they subsisted on without occasional trips to Mill Valley and he replied, "mussels and mushrooms." Then Mrs. Welch discovered patches of mustard greens and dock and on the other slope the receding tides sometimes left onions, oranges and melons. Then there would be a day of feasting. Welch built an oven of clay and rock under the trees and there Mrs. Welch did her baking. She later said that the oven worked perfectly, in rainy season and out.

Before the end of the five years they lived at "Steep Ravine" the cabin had been improved into a comfortable woodland dwelling with a mechanical work shop on a neighboring hillside for diversion.

THE INVENTOR AND PRINTER

Years later after success had been won and they had moved to Santa Barbara he built a neat work shop beneath his studio and in the waning years of his life he spent as much time over the work bench as he did before his easel. He essayed the most delicate and original attempts at machine con-

traptions. At this time he perfected a rapid shutter for a camera and his last successful invention was an electric dynamo with an entirely new method for generating current. To work with his hands, he said, was surcease from constantly tantalizing pastoral visions and dreams.

Another illustration of his resourcefulness may be found in his own private journals. It had to do with the early period of his life when he occasionally would be forced to give up his sketching and painting and return to typesetting and tramp printing or whatever he could find to do to get funds with which to continue his studies. He had gradually been working his way south to San Francisco. He wrote:

WESTERN RANCHING

"The completion of the Central and Union Pacific Railroad had knocked the bottom out of the printing business for many, and after haunting the printing offices in the vain hope of earning enough to keep from starving, I made a break for the country, to try my luck on a ranch again.

"Only one who has tried it knows what it is to work on a farm in California during harvest time. Four o'clock in the morning until sunset, continually on the jump except when the machine broke down, with the thermometer at one hundred and eighteen in the shade and the rapacious mow of the thresher crying for more straw, more straw. It was enough to take the starch out of even the most seasoned. And when the wind blew, that made one's hair and whiskers stand on end with electricity, the machine became a veritable dynamo, and after the noon hour gave the feeder a shock up to his elbows. The horses were dry as a bone, the perspiration drying before it had time to wet the hair.

perchance pushed against a rattle weed. The next day I looked under the rock where I had been seated and there he was as comfortable as you please. He had been only six inches from my heel all the time I was painting the day before.

"No other incident occurred to disturb my happy dreams, until my *bête noir*, penury, was again on my track and I saw I must give Shasta a rest while I took a walk to Yreka to see how the printing business was flourishing. But there was no show for a stranger and the prospect commenced to look pretty blue.

A WESTERN CAMP FIRE

"One evening while wandering in the outskirts of the town I came across a family of campers around a fire. The man of the outfit was fiddling 'Soldier's Joy,' the lady smoking. I could not see her face, only the clay pipe protruding from a wilted sunbonnet. The children, two girls and two boys, were sprawled around the fire, in the dust and ashes.

"The fiddler informed me that he was traveling for his wife's health. We soon found that we had mutual friends and acquaintances and they invited me to share their bacon and other luxuries of which I stood in great need. Wandering around without a nickel among strangers, I had about come to the conclusion that an artist's life is not what it is cracked up to be.

"The solitude in that great pine forest in winter, when there is four or five feet of snow, was something terrible. Every living thing, almost, seemed to have deserted it. One solitary bear had crossed the road. Not a chipmunk nor bird of any kind was to be seen nor heard. Even the wind had ceased to rustle the pine needles. The stumps, where men had felled the trees, were some company, as they showed that some human being had been there. By dark, I was about six miles from a deserted shingle-maker's cabin where I had left a piece of pork and a loaf of bread.

HUNGER IN THE SNOW

"Travelling in the dark was impossible. The snow on the pine trees had thawed and fallen off in masses, making great holes into which I stumbled every minute.

"I looked out for a place to build a fire and found a big sugar pine that had been blown down, making many splinters. But they were wet from the melted snow and my matches were almost gone before I coaxed the wood to burn. After the fire had melted the snow from the log, I pulled off a piece of bark about my size and after making it hot before the fire, stretched myself upon it until it became cold, then warmed it again--all this time I was thinking of the pork and bread, and how if I should ever get to a place where there was enough to eat, I would never leave it, and what a fool I had been to do it this time.

"I had never known what hunger was until that night. I tried to go on in the night, but had to give it up. I ate snow, chewed sticks, and finally tried the pan of lard. It was eleven o'clock the next morning before I reached the deserted shingle-maker's cabin. I was so played out that I could not enter it with any sort of dignity, but just rolled in, as the snow about the door was almost as high as the cabin.

"The pork was raw, the bread was full of frost, but I ate them both and then felt as though nothing had happened. By dark on the following day I was in camp.

"Of course my reception was very warm, as they had had their doubts about seeing me again, and to tell the truth, I had some doubts myself, of ever reaching their cabin. They were enthusiastic about their plan for going out with sleds, and they had been anxious about my welfare because they needed me to pull one of the sleds.

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SNOWSHOES AND TRAMP PRINTING

"My experience had taught me something about snow, and I commenced to use my knowledge by making a pair of fine snow shoes, eight feet long, three inches wide, with nicely turned up toes. I cut and split a pine sapling and fashioned the pieces into something like my snow shoes and nailed them onto my sled runners. When the others saw what I had done they pirated my invention. It was my private intention to run away from them the next day, which I did, making straight for Red Bluff to look for a printing office.

"It was a fine day's tramp through slush and mud, only to find all the positions filled by young ladies who pulled their skirts aside as I passed, for I was about the worst looking tramp printer ever seen without the courage of the average tramp. This was about 1870."

WELCH EXHIBITS AND STUDIES ABROAD

Welch was 30 years old before he was able to realize his dream of European study, but by 1874 he was ready to travel. By dint of his savings, working as a printer, an occasional commission to paint a portrait, and financial aid on the part of a believing sponsor, he was ready. After the arduous steamboat travels of that day he reached Munich where he established himself. For more than six years he studied. Working there and in Paris, he lived the life of the American art student abroad. He gained a certain recognition there, even in those days, his canvases being hung in Paris and Munich showings.

One happening at this time had a direct bearing on the remaining years of Welch's life and the Helen Vernon Reid narrative best tells this:

"By the time he left the Royal Academy, which was some time in the summer of 1878, Welch was doing excellent work and able to sell quite a few of his landscapes. Of course they did not bring large sums, but it proved to him that people were interested in his work and his time had not been spent in vain.

"After leaving the Academy only nature and his own genius had anything to teach him. He formed quite a friendship for John H. Twachtmann, who was afterwards called the impressionist of America. The advice of Twachtmann was appreciated and Welch was therefore delighted to have been singled out from the rest as his companion, for his comradeship was always beneficial. They conceived quite a novel and inexpensive way of traveling about the country to paint, building a wagon, or cart, which served as a sleeping compartment, studio and kitchen combined.

THE TRAILER-STUDIO OF 1880'S

"When this box-cart was folded up it was only about two feet high. Thus, when wishing to move to another town they folded up and were able to ship it by rail, many times dragging the wheels themselves when unable to obtain an old horse.

"They were camping on the outskirts of a small Bavarian Village, where the farms were scattered but flourishing. On learning that the proprietor of the village inn was a relative of an acquaintance of his in America, Twachtmann persuaded Welch that they put up at his hostelry for a time and enjoy the certainty of well cooked meals and a comfortable bed. There were many bits to paint in the immediate vicinity and Welch gladly acceded to the plan. This gave them more time for painting than when they prepared their own meals and consequently these were busy and profitable days for the two artists.

WELCH AND TWACHTMANN
AND THE
INN KEEPER'S DAUGHTER

"The proprietor of the Inn was a big, surly man, domineering over the gentle wife who did all the cooking for the establishment; while their daughter, a pretty young girl of sixteen, waited on the table and assisted her mother in various ways in caring for the guests. Welch was soon attracted to the refined, overworked wife and the pretty daughter with an understanding bred from contact with similar conditions in his own family. He therefore felt a bond of sympathy with them and an aversion for the dominating innkeeper. Welch was all sympathy and told the girl if there was any thing he could do for her or her mother they had but ask him.

"She smiled a wan little smile through her tears but shook her head, comforted, however, by the sympathy of the young artist. Welch and Twachtmann had already stirred her girlish imagination by their pictures, which were different from those made by the daubers who occasionally stopped at her father's inn. Their pictures portrayed faithfully the places, which were familiar to her from childhood, and the fact that they were thought worthy subjects for their canvases, filled her with delight. Therefore she always hovered about the inn door to catch a glimpse of the new sketches as the artists returned each evening from the day's work. The artists were young and that they were pleased with her honest admiration for their pictures she well knew, for youth has a way of sensing those things.

"Welch took keen pleasure in showing her his work and looking for approbation in her beautiful eyes. How much he cared for her interest in him he was not aware until one afternoon returning earlier than usual from their sketching they found the young girl seated by the roadside. She was evidently waiting for their coming for she arose as soon as they appeared and approached them. It could plainly be seen that she had been crying and

was somewhat excited, though there was a new determination in her bearing. She quickly told them of added cruelties of her father and of her determination to leave home. That they were leaving the inn on the following morning she knew, as they had hired a horse to draw their cart,

THE FLIGHT, "A TROIS" FROM CRUELTY

"This seemed an opportunity not to be overlooked; could she go with them? They could leave her at any town remote from her home, she said, and she was certain to find employment as she was domestic. She could keep house better than any girl of her age, in the village, she ended with natural pride. Sympathy is certainly akin to love but it was anything but sympathy that made Welch's heart flutter strangely in his breast and his voice was unsteady as he assured her that she could go with them.

"Twachtmann was not lacking in sympathy but hesitated about taking her as he feared he would be held in a bad light by his friend in America, for abetting his relative in leaving home. However, his opposition was overruled, and they determined to leave on the following morning before daybreak, notifying their host that they would make an early start and not require any breakfast.

"They arose accordingly three hours before they were supposed to start to avoid complications. Their fair passenger met them by appointment on the outskirts of the village; a small bag containing a few clothes and her mother's picture being all she took with her. Although the horse traveled slowly they made considerable progress, having such an early start, and as the day advanced were far distant from the inn.

"During these passing hours Welch had been wrapt in thought, and the occasional questions he asked their fair companion were all bearing on the subject of his meditations. It was thought advisable for Twachtmann to

procure something for their noon meal from a farm-house, and during the interval of his absence Welch chatted with the young girl and finally disclosed his plan.

"He had little or nothing, he told her, but a good name, and the ability to paint, which should eventually provide a good living; she had a keen sympathy for art and if she could reciprocate his affection for her, he thought they could help each other and he had better become her protector for life. She blushingly admitted that she cared.

THE MARRIAGE IN TRANSIT

"To Twachtmann's surprise they were married by a civil magistrate that very evening, he being the groom's only attendant. Shortly after this Twachtmann parted from them, returning to Munich, Welch and his bride journeying on through the country.

"Unfortunately, the dispositions of the young couple were at variance and later proved something to be conjured with. The young wife was a practical, frugal housewife, and the young husband with a highly developed artistic temperament, was anything but practical and lacked the primal elements of a business man. Therefore, though he did excellent work, he received little for it and there was seldom enough in the larder to keep them well nourished.

"The young wife, discouraged by the lack of judgment, developed in consequence an irritable, nagging disposition, which in turn brought violent outbreaks over the slightest trifle.

"Therefore the following four years were full of suffering for this unfortunate couple. Twice he left his wife for a few weeks, thinking that when apart they could better see their problem and re-establish harmony on his return, but to no avail.

"There were two children born of this union-- a boy and a girl; the latter one reaching maturity, evincing decided artistic ability. In this the daughter, now Mrs. Fanny Welch Pillsworth, supports herself by her art and competent critics prophesy that in time she will make a name for herself, independent of any association with her renowned father.

"On learning that his father-in-law was dead, Welch made arrangements for his wife to return to her mother at the inn and there to raise the children, he contributing as best he could to their support. During these unhappy years Welch departed from his temperate ways and formed the habit of indulgence which later caused him and one very dear to him, great suffering.

"On leaving Germany for Paris he obtained a legal separation."

AWAY FROM DOMESTIC LIFE AND TO U.S.A.

The famed views of Munich and Welch's temperamental unrest built a convivial urge and sometimes a craving for spirits in later years which threatened the spark of his artistic genius.

But he was off to America for the realization of his hopes. One incident is recorded in connection with his sailing that illustrates the resourcefulness of the man--also his impetuous nature.

Duvenick, a celebrated portrait painter of the time, and Welch had become good friends and the artist induced Welch to sit for a picture. This was done in the studio of William M. Chase. The picture was life size and all were enthusiastic

about it. When preparing to sail Welch faced the problem of what to do with the large canvas as he had no thought of leaving it behind. He finally cut out the head and shoulders. Fortunate it is, that this has been preserved as it has been declared to be a remarkable portrait.

AMERICAN PAINTERS ACCEPT PARIS AND MUNICH MANNERS

Concerning Welch's return the Reid narrative read:

"Conditions in the art world were greatly changed when Welch returned to America in the Spring of 1881. Although he had not been identified with it before his sojourn in Europe, the fact was overwhelmingly apparent that the revolution in art had not been confined to the continent.

"During 1875-1876, a group of young American painters returned from France trained in the newest methods of the French school, becoming in many instances teachers in our art schools and then spreading the knowledge of the new technique until the French method of teaching has become the basis of instruction in this country.

"They met at first with considerable opposition from the older men of the National Academy of Design who regarded them somewhat as revolutionists, disturbers of almost sacred traditions, troublesome and dangerous and not to be encouraged.

"However, John La Farge, the famous landscape painter, without hesitation gave them encouragement and support, and by his assistance the "Society of American Artists" was founded in 1877. Therefore when the second group of painters returned with all the novel and revolutionary methods of the Munich and Paris schools, they found students at home had already assimilated the inspiration of the best of the French masters

of landscape, but they had assimilated it on a basis of native training and practice.

"Consequently, Welch found the American students and art-loving public fully acquainted with the new school and its achievements and heartily responsive to the work of a student from abroad."

Welch, following his arrival in New York, went at once to the home of one of the sponsors for his studies abroad on the Hudson near Ossining. He went in for the portraiture and landscapes around the district. It was one day while he was sketching in a wooded creek he'd called "Devil's Steps" that he encountered Ludwilla Pilat, a school girl of Austrian parentage, and here opened the important chapter of his life.

WELCH'S SECOND MARRIAGE AND TRAVELS

The girl was the daughter of Carl Pilat, an exiled Austrian, and early displayed artistic abilities which Welch developed. Needless to say, the friendship with Ludwilla ripened into a real love and after one year they were married. Until their deaths in California they were constant in their devotion to one another and to their art.

Then Welch accepted commissions--mostly for portraits--in Boston and New York until a letter from Twachtmann, his old Bavarian companion, took him to Philadelphia to paint a cyclorama of "The Battle of Gettysburg." Other similar com-

missions followed and years of wanderings included Chicago, Denver, Salt Lake and Australia until 1892 found the couple in San Francisco, their goal for nine years.

A difficult period for a time in California, finally found the two in a small cabin in Marin County and there a great artist found himself.

From all accounts, Welch was a droll sort with a keen sense of humor, but aggressively determined once he had made up his mind, where his art or finished canvases were concerned. When he had made a decision, he held to it, even though a she wolf and litter were howling at his cabin door.

HIS PHILOSOPHY OF WORK

A story is told of an important American engineer who called at his studio in Santa Barbara to give him a commission for a Marin landscape for one of the large Philadelphia clubs. The artist accepted the order and when the successful citizen asked the cost Welch replied that it would be \$5,000. The price was satisfactory and the Philadelphian then said:

"Now, what we want, Mr. Welch, is a painting six feet high and nine and one-half feet across, not including the frame. We have just the place waiting for it."

"That space will remain bare if it is held for one of my landscapes. What you are looking for is a sign painter," the artist said as he escorted him to the door.

Although Welch paintings did not run to such proportions, he would not have accepted the commission even had he and Mrs. Welch been in want. He resented accepting measurements for a masterpiece of his own creation.

The hills and meadows of San Geronimo Valley, California had long appealed to the artist and in time he and Ludwilla Welch acquired a small cottage there where they frequently went to sketch and to procure change from the fogs and rigorous climate of the Marin hills. One day a friendly neighboring rancher, who marvelled at the early and late hours the two Welches worked, stopped at Welch's easel and asked him what hours he worked. Welch replied:

"Not union ones, anyway. I begin about six o'clock in the morning, and far earlier in the summer and I am at work until twilight drops her curtain over the world. I do not mean that I am working all the time, but I am sketching early and late, because Nature is in her softest moods early in the day and again after the sun is low or beneath the horizon altogether." Then he added with a quizzical twist of his lips, "I work longest when I have an order, or when the larder is empty."

In this reply to his rancher friend he gave him, in addition to his quip concerning hours, his overpowering thoughts concerning Nature's treatment of the early morning lights and the soft evening shadows. He was truly a student of Nature.

CRITICISMS

Critics in any branch of artistic endeavor have not always agreed and this is true of the works of Thad Welch. While the constant praise from some was fulsome, yet others were not completely convinced. One, Professor Eugene Neuhaus of the University of California says of Welch in his "History of American Art":

"A popular and successful painter of his day-- his artificial landscapes of the Mount Tamalpais region, painted under the horizontal light of early morning, quickly captivated an uncritical public which was quite carried away by the sweetly saccharine unnatural color of his paintings. At his best at the beginning of his career he was an able painter, a fairly close student of nature who has some fine things to his credit.

"His work, however, rapidly declined, his light effects becoming distorted and theatrical, his color thin and hasty as he yielded to the increasing demands for paintings which his talent could not supply with new and fresh themes. Eventually he lost all contact with nature and repeated himself so often that one is sometimes moved to question the authenticity of the many canvases attributed to him."

A FRAUDULENT CANVAS

At least, the last thought in Professor Neuhaus review is borne out by the facts. After his popularity grew apace following his "discovery" by the Bohemian Club in San Francisco, the demand for his work became general but the public unsatisfied. Spurious Welch canvases began to make an appearance and many of these were sold for large sums. One flagrant case of this kind happened during the last year

of his life. As told to a close friend by Welch, an amazing fraud was perpetrated:

"A lady in Monterey bought a painting supposedly by Welch, from a local art dealer for eight hundred dollars. It was painted along traditional Welch lines with Tamalpais for the background and a group of homeward bound cows in the foreground.

"It sold as a Welch of great merit, exquisite coloring and soulful interpretation of Nature in her rarest mood. The lady had the painting forwarded to her palatial home in Monterey and shortly after invited a select circle of artists from the colony at Carmel-by-the-Sea.

"Pointing to her treasure, she said, 'There is a beautiful Welch. How do you like it?'

"'Great!' chorused the company.

"But one guest merely remarked, 'Hum', and looked thoughtful. Then he explained, 'That's not a Welch. It's a fake.' After the excitement subsided, the lady sent the painting down to Santa Barbara to Thad Welch. He returned the picture in due time with the following scribbled across the back: 'This is a poor copy.--Thad Welch.'

"The art dealer was notified of the fraud and he refunded the money immediately--the lady then buying a genuine Welch landscape for thirteen hundred fifty dollars.

"Shortly after leaving 'Steep Ravine' an exact copy of one of Welch's paintings was on exhibition in a local art store, signed with the copyist's name.

"Welch was indignant and sought out the artist, who denied that it was a copy and said he had painted it from nature in the ravine below the Welch cabin. At which Welch pointed out that a large tree on the left of the picture was not growing by the roadside, but he, Welch, had added it to his painting to give it a better foreground.

"The artist grew confused. He had copied the tree in detail."

On the other hand, Mr. A. L. Gump of San Francisco, the dean of the art dealers whose taste connects the old creative days of natural realism in western outdoor painting with the more modernistic treatments of today, maintains a different view of Welch's work. Mr. Gump knew Thad Welch well as his "dealer", perhaps better than his critics, for Mr. Gump says:

"Thad Welch had the perfect eye for color-- he was a real student of Nature. Nature was his greatest teacher. He was convinced that along toward the end of his trail he had truly caught Nature's spirit. He would not listen to a well-intentioned and a sincere suggestion. He permitted nothing to come between himself and his interpretation of Nature. To my mind this determination, coupled with his genius made him one of the greatest realistic painters who ever lived."

WELCH IN MARIN COUNTY

"That he had an impressionistic mind with a wonderful retentive scenic memory may be realized by the fact that he painted mostly from rough sketches made in the field. Most of his greater oils were done in his studio, wherever that might happen to be, from his careful studies in the open. He really found himself in the Marin hills and his work done there will live. He took a master artist's advantage of the offering of the early morning play of light in the trees and on the flowered rounded Marin hills and also, the sombre shades of the early evening.

"The Welch canvases will live. They are fairly well scattered over the country, but one-- 'Mt. Tamalpais'--hanging in the Family Club in

San Francisco, I consider one of the finest naturalistic paintings ever made.

"I came to know Welch very well toward the end of his Marin days, and it came about in an unusual way. He and his wife had roamed the Marin hills, sketching, painting and trying to do something worthwhile. But it was a period of stern realities for them as there was little demand for his work and the cabin's larder was frequently empty. Then, one day two hiking members of the Bohemian Club of San Francisco happened along the trail where he was at work. They visited, became interested and in the end bought and walked away with two canvases--that marked the beginning of Welch's success.

"From that time on all was plain sailing. The couple moved to San Francisco where he opened a studio in the late '90's and he gained a lasting recognition. He became a member of the Bohemian Club, took an active interest in the San Francisco world of art and letters, and produced some of his best work here from the sketches he had made in the field. And from that time on I think I handled the most of his canvases, and our dealings and friendship were very pleasant, indeed."

PRICES AND PATRONAGE

But the sudden success of this quiet man from the hills developed jealousies and more imitators. The San Francisco Chronicle said of an incident that occurred at a Bohemian Club exhibition:

"A certain man of San Francisco who does some of the most faithful and interesting scenes placed a tag of two hundred and fifty dollars on one of his pictures. This was like a red flag to the man who knows everything from commerce to art and science, and he sent angry queries over several telephone wires, seeking the person who had so presumed. One defendant

into whose ears rattled one of these messages asked why the man's estimate of this work should be questioned and was told:

"Oh he is hard up and will be glad to take less"

"But the man, who at times when the wolf has clamored too savagely at his door held to his price, declined to let his poverty be the standard by which his work should be judged."

Says Town Talk at this time:

"Singly and together the impressionistic artists of San Francisco have tried to sneer Thad Welch into obscurity. But Thad is pursuing profitably his art and continues to paint hillsides and trees in the colors that God has given them. They rashly permitted Welch to enter the Bohemian Club exhibition. All his paintings sold. Most of the daubers who sneered at his work had to pay return cartage on their own masterpieces."

Welch seems not to have interested himself in anything but his determined efforts and studies toward artistic expression. His frequent return to the printing trade was solely for the purpose of securing funds with which to carry on in his chosen art work. However, he had one great national hero who was far removed from the art world--Abraham Lincoln. He often talked of his belief in the man and his ideals and it is probable that he was led to the study of Lincoln from two incidents in his early life.

IN THE TIME OF LINCOLN

At the cabin home in the Oregon woods it was a great day when the infrequent mails brought letters from a remote

world. His favorite aunt was Laura J. Foster of Springdale, Ohio, and her letters would be read and reread. Later, "Aunt Laura" was married to Colonel Jesse Harper who nominated Lincoln for the Presidency at the famous Chicago convention. Some years later while Thad was working on "The Oregonian" came the Emancipator's assassination and the paper rushed out an extra on the meagre details at hand. He became the pressman for the extra and on an old press that came "round the Horn," and launched it, all the time wondering what his "Aunt Laura" was thinking of the tragedy. He often told of how seventy-five dollars worth of "The Oregonian's" extras were sold at ten cents a copy, and that this unexpected revenue was donated to the United States Sanitary Commission, an organization somewhat similar to today's Red Cross.

PIONEER PARENTAGE

Thad Welch's early education perhaps was the same as most of the pioneer youth of that period with the possible exception that even as a young boy he showed a determination to gain real learning at whatever cost. After the wagon trek across the plains the Welch and Smith families took up and cleared land on Panther Creek, four miles from the little frontier settlement of Mc Minneville, Oregon. Thad was then three years old. His father, Russell Welch, a woodsman and lumberjack, had inherited just enough Indian blood--his mother being a quarter-blood--to make him unsympathetic toward

frailty or the inability to withstand the rigors and toil connected with building a home and farm in the Oregon woods. So his early years were not pleasant ones. Although never sturdy, at the age of eight he was working like a man in the fields. Being of delicate build and dreamy nature he was unsuited for the arduous life, being in no respect like his father.

As one early biographer described this trying time for Thad:

"Russell Welch was known to be the finest axeman in Oregon, chopping a tree six feet in diameter without changing his position, first swinging his axe to the right and then to the left. This stockily built muscular man who did not know his own strength could not estimate the weakness of his delicate little son, attributing the boy's inertia to laziness; he never recognized his efforts, was always severe and occasionally beat him. From carrying logs during the period when most children are playing, one of Thad's shoulders remained through life perceptibly lower than the other.

"It was necessary to clear more ground each year of its Virgin growth in order to extend the grain fields and the apple orchard. After the trees were felled Russell Welch would make his son grub-cut the roots of the scrub oak, a difficult task even for a man.

"There was always a keen sympathy and understanding, however, between Thad and his mother. She would have willingly shielded him from the heavy work which his father forced upon him, but there were other children coming in rapid succession who needed her care and attention and Thad, her eldest, though physically unfit, must assume his place beside his father in the work on the farm.

"Life was drudgery also for the wife and mother of the seven little boys and two

little girls who followed Thad; a life at times made almost unbearable by the surly disposition of her dominating husband."

Thad's mother, gentle born and well educated for that period, gave whatever sympathy and help to her eldest when time could be spared from the care of the cabin and her brood. She early sensed an artistic nature and encouraged its development in any way she could. There were few books and no luxuries as all supplies came around the Horn. His early love for music was pronounced although there was little to be heard in the district. It is said that some one asked Thad when he was about eleven what he most wanted and he replied:

"An accordian and a pair of shoes."

About this time in order to obtain ten dollars for a violin, he cut eight cords of wood for a neighbor. It was necessary for him to do this work in evenings and on Sunday as he could not shirk his regular farm work.

HIS EARLY RESPONSIBILITIES

But with few opportunities he was a student--he thought as a student. All through his life he was an original thinker and although he summed up his schooling as a total of two years and eight months, he was a highly cultured individual and could converse on many profound subjects. From the boy days on the farm reading by the light from a rag in a pan of lard, through his tramp printing days and later he

was an inveterate and careful reader.

When he was fifteen he ran away from home with his mother's consent to become a blacksmith apprentice and to remain away from his father. Sometime later his father heard the call from the California gold fields. When the boy received this word he returned to the farm to help his mother. After many months the father returned from the gold fields with a few hundred dollars, installed some needed improvements and soon afterward went away again, leaving the responsibility for the family of ten on the shoulders of eighteen year old Thaddeus. The father went away again and was never heard from afterward.

After many talks between Thad and his mother it was decided that he should go to Portland to learn the printer's trade and, at the same time, send a few dollars home while the next two oldest boys assumed the farm responsibility. He journeyed to Portland in the spring of 1863, took up his abode in an abandoned boat on the Willamette River and secured work as a printer's apprentice at the old Walling Printing Office and there was launched one of the most interesting artistic careers of the many centering in California, following the Gold Rush.

Thad had mastered the intricacies of typesetting and printing at twenty but he had little thought of following it for his life's work. It was to be only a means to an end, and this trade stood him in good stead many times in the

years to follow. He dreamed of a more artistic medium of expression and his natural drift to art perhaps is best told by his most faithful biographer, Helen Vernon Reid, in the Overland Magazine in 1924:

HIS FIRST "TUBE PAINTS"

"A few months prior to his leaving Walling's Printing office an incident occurred which, slight in itself, nevertheless determined the future of Thad Welch.

"One day Baron Von Taft came to the office. He was then an artist but in later years became a prominent playwright in Denmark. On this particular day he brought a bundle of water color sketches, which he had made along the Columbia, to be bound in book form. In looking these over, Thad felt the impulse to paint; he was confident he could do work like this, and better, if he only had the tools, and for days he thought of these water color sketches and longed for an opportunity to try his hand. But the day's work must be done and so the weeks lengthened into months before this seed thought began to germinate in a most unexpected way.

"His Aunt Eleanor had been attending a boarding school at Salem and came home with some paintings she had done in oil. They were merely crude copies but they fascinated Thad. He asked her what kind of paint she used and she replied, 'Tube Paints'.

"Not knowing what she meant and not wishing to display his ignorance before her, he went to an art store to inquire about it. The future artist was twenty at that time. From then on he spent all his spare time and money for paints, working all day in the office and at night trying to draw and paint."

CALIFORNIA, HIS WONDERLAND

"When he was a child, California was the wonderland of Thad's fancy. Tales of the Argonauts and descriptions of the Missions never failed to stimulate his longing to visit his Eldorado of the West. Upon receipt of a letter from his Aunt Jane Dixon, who had settled near Sacramento in the town which was named for her family, he decided to go to California at the first opportunity. He went."

Characteristic of Welch was a response to a request from "Gumps" for a sketch of his life. At this time there were ready sales for any work from his brush. He wrote to Mr. A.L. Gump from Santa Barbara in 1916:

HIS BRIEF "AUTOBIOGRAPHY"

"Dear Sir:

"I have always been suspicious, when reading an autobiography, that the man never tells the truth about himself, but what I tell you now is all the truth, and nothing but the truth--cross my heart.

"I was born in Indiana, July 14, 1844. Crossed the plains, to Oregon in 1847. Learned the printer's trade, and came to California in 1866. Went to Munich, to study art, in 1847, and remained there six years, securing three bronze medals. Studied in Paris three and one half years, and exhibited in the Salon in 1880. Lived in Boston, New York, and other places till 1892, when I returned to California, where I expect to be buried. I was married in 1883, and not divorced yet and never stole anything worse than a watermelon. So help me God.

Yours truly,

(signed) Thad Welch."

Thaddeus Welch tells his life's story in this note to Mr. Gump. He died at Santa Barbara in December 1919. He died as he had lived--at work.

Today "Thad" Welch's canvases appear in Historical Exhibitions of early California artists, while certain of his works are preciously tucked away in wealthy art dealer's storage vaults--and every now and then among the contents of a San Francisco home sold at auction--an authentic "Thad" Welch painting is disclosed and perhaps purchased by another California art patron as an appreciation of our landscape by this vigorous artist.

THADDEUS WELCH

REPRESENTATIVE

WORKS

Rocky Point, Bolinas
Marin County Hills
Bolinas Bay, Marin County
The Steep Ravine
Under the Fog
Mount Tamalpais
Among the Hills
Golden Hour
After the First Rain
Brook Scene
Marin Hills
Jerusalem on the Day of Crucifixion
The Ballarat Riots
The Shoemaker

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ARGONAUT
ULS

0409

THADDEUS WELCH

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 d. December 18, 1919 Santa Barbara, California

OBITUARY

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THADDEUS WELCH

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C H A R L E S D O R M A N R O B I N S O N

1847.....1933

Biography and Works



"DONNER LAKE"

CHARLES DORMAN ROBINSON

Among the early day San Francisco artists who received the greater part of their training in the United States was Charles Dorman Robinson, called by contemporary critics, "the dean of Pacific Coast artists."

Robinson was among the first artists who exploited Yosemite Valley. His early canvases were excellent compositions, although in later years his works became hasty products of commercialism. A graduate of the "school of hard knocks" before he was an artist, Robinson was well satisfied with the fundamentals of art, and the art life centered in San Francisco's elusive charms.

His early local patronage of the '80's and '90's, included such names as Irving Scott, James D. Phelan, Frederick W. Zeile, Mrs. Clark Crocker, Mrs. Charles McLaughlin, Mrs. Tobelman, C. W. Watt, E. Hacquette, Dr. Stoddart, and a long list of others.

His important works were hung in the far corners of the British Empire. He included names of the English nobility among his patrons. Representative of his foreign patrons are such names as T. H. Bryant of Junior Hall, near Dorking, England, of the great firm of Bryant and May, match makers; William H. Ferguson, Broughty Ferry, Scotland; Egerton Leigh, Esq., Bournemouth, England; R. Orr Ewing, Esq.,

Ballykinrain Castle, Sterlingshire, Scotland; Sir G.W. Wolfe, the White Star Steamship Builder, Belfast, Ireland; Thomas Carter, Marlborough, New Zealand; Earl of Durham, London; Lord Paulett, London, and John R. Greaves, Bombay, India.

Charles Dorman Robinson was born at Monmouth, Maine, on July 17, 1847. His parents, David G. and Mariete (Dorman) Robinson, were of colonial stock on both sides. There is a family tradition that his great grandfather Robinson, who served in Braddock's ill-fated army, and his great grandfather Dorman fought together under Wolfe at the taking of Quebec, and again on opposite sides at Bunker Hill, although they did not know each other. The Dormans were English army people and the Robinsons were Puritans. Another of his paternal ancestors, Dr. John Robinson, was credited with having sent the Mayflower to the United States. Such ancestry builds a background for Robinson's sturdy independence of character. Robinson's father, Dr. David G. Robinson, built the Adelphi Theatre on Dupont, between Washington and Clay streets, the first to be constructed in San Francisco.

Soon after Robinson's birth, his parents moved to Newport, Vermont, a small town on Lake Memphramagog. This was Robinson's home of his infancy and the reason he called himself a Vermonter. In 1850, when he was three years old his parents brought him to San Francisco. At an early age, the Golden Gate with its passing ships, roused the young

boy's art impulse. When only four or five years old he began to draw pictures of the various crafts. As this artistic ability never left Robinson there is no definite time nor influence that dates his first steps toward art as a career.

EARLY TRAINING

As a boy, Robinson became one of the first pupils of the Union Grammar School, in those days the largest in the City of San Francisco. Here he was awarded a diploma by the Mechanics' Institute for "best specimen of Marine drawing in the Juvenile Department", when he was thirteen years old.

The next year, in 1861, young Robinson went back to his early home in Vermont, and in 1863 to Boston where he began his art education under William Bradford, the great Marine and Arctic painter. During 1862, he studied under George Innes and M. F. H. DeHaas; and in 1863 painted with Gignoux and Cropsey, Newport, Vermont. Later he returned to the shores of Lake Memphramagog, and studied art under S. W. Griggs, a Boston painter, who passed on his interest in picturesque mountain scenes of extreme northern Vermont to Robinson. His work under these teachers did not last very long, but Robinson readily profited by their painting methods. In his endless out door sketching Robinson was mainly self-taught. When he was only seventeen, he sold his first painting, a Lake Memphramagog scene.

Not long after this, young Robinson sought the methods of another painter, Boudin, under whom he studied from 1866 to 1867. His studies here served to strengthen his undeveloped artistic principles of design and composition.

In the year 1874, Robinson went to Clinton, Iowa, where he lived for a year or so. During this brief period, he met Kate Evelyn Wright, an own cousin to Elmer E. Elsworth of Zouave fame. Shortly after they were married, on September 24, 1874.

A year later, Robinson came to San Francisco with his wife and except for a short visit in Paris, France, 1899-1901, they lived in California. In 1880 by invitation of the stage company operating the Big Oak Flat road, Robinson took his first trip to Yosemite, fulfilling a desire of many years. The great Valley at once took possession of him, and for a long period of years, up until the time of his death, he spent almost every summer there, dividing his time between his loved sea shore and the Sierra.

During Robinson's sketching days in Yosemite his studio in the Valley was a thrill to tourists, one of the sights of that "Valley of Sighs." He was so devoted to Yosemite that on many occasions he had arguments with the Board of Commissioners, whenever they tried to modify the original plans of the Valley as a National Park. Every

action of the group was questioned by Robinson, and any evidence of the commercial spirit in its management pained him deeply.

On these controversial occasions, Robinson's views in the matter were generally shared by such prominent men as Frederick Law Olmstead, Robert Underwood Johnson, J.M. Hutchings, John Muir, and the Sierra Club, and to an extent won the Yosemite Commissioners to carry out some of the very reforms for which Robinson contended.

HIS EARLY WORKS

In response to the numerous orders from Eastern connoisseurs for his paintings, Robinson has had a busy life.

In 1884, Robinson went to Yosemite to fill a large order for sketches of the different parts of the Valley. Prominent among his early paintings was his "El Capitan".

Shortly after the completion of his "El Capitan", Robinson painted a marine which surpassed all his previous efforts in that subject. The picture was a scene in the Golden Gate, from beneath the Point Lobos rocks. His treatment of the breakers, which hurl against the rocks with giant force, involved bold painting.

In 1877, Robinson's "Palace of Dido" was exhibited in one of the private galleries of San Francisco. Of this painting, the San Francisco Chronicle, April 15, 1877, said:

"---It is crude in conception, false in drawing, inharmonious in color, and, altogether, an effort that would not lead to the belief that the artist had a grand future before him. It represents the ruins of Carthage with considerable incorrect architectural detail, with opaque water dashing confusedly upon an undefined shore, and clouds of marvelous thickness and solidity obscuring an impossible distance and rendering a horizon impossible.

"A yellow sunset, a long way after Turner, dips down into the picture, midway between the remote distance and the foreground, intensifying the vividness of chaotic expression. The painting will attract attention from the originality of its conception and the novelty in the method of treatment.

Not long after his "Palace of Dido", Robinson was again engaged on two important pieces of work--"Foggy Afternoon on the Bay", with its view of the Magiciene, and "Before Sunrise off North Point", representing a group of vessels in a mist. These were completed early in 1879 and were on exhibition in the same year. These paintings showed delicacy of touch and an insight into nature characteristic of Robinson's work. His "Before Sunrise off North Point", presents singular effects of light on cloud and water.

During this same year, Robinson completed a sketch of Donner Lake, which a local patron bought and sent East as a Christmas gift. The sketch was made from a snowy mountain top, and the contrast afforded by the white and blue of the snow and snow shadows on the foreground and the warmer coloring of the middle distance produced a unique and pleasing arrangement.

In 1880, Robinson painted a scene in the Coast Range, on the Redwood road, during a snow squall. The foreground was a solid mass of white snow, and the prevailing tones were buff and purple of grays. The subject was difficult, but the picture was gratifying. In the same year, Robinson attracted interest with a small view of Yosemite from the Oak Flat road. It was called the "Lost Glimpse" and was veritably such; the Cathedral group and a few drops of the Bridal Veil Fall being all that were visible. This was painted in blue tones artistically graded in a fresh and pleasing manner.

Robinson's "Sentinel" is also worth remembering. This is a view of the South wall of the Valley under a purple effect. Another "Yosemite" view is from Eagle Point, showing Glacier Point and the South Dome. Robinson also painted a delightful scene of "The Sierras in the Vicinity of Mount Dana."

Early in 1885, Robinson sold his "Yosemite from Inspiration Point", and a "Golden Gate". Shortly before the completion of these Robinson exhibited his "Scene on the Bay", a Marine piece, which attracted considerable attention. Of this piece, the San Franciscan, September 20, 1884, said:

"A rather sombre-looking, but otherwise very acceptable, piece of marine work. In this painting he has exceeded many former efforts at wave-color and breakers."

"The strip of beach in the foreground is very natural, as is also the wreckage and logs lying high and dry on the shore."

"Robinson generally gets an excellent water effect when he tries for it, and in this painting he has exceeded his past efforts."

In 1887 Robinson painted a view of Yosemite Valley under a glowing sunset. This was purchased by Mrs. Charles McLaughlin. Another of the Valley at Twilight, was purchased for \$1000, by Lord Paulett. In this same year, Robinson filled an order from Colonel George Lemmon of Washington, D. C. for a view of the Lower Yosemite fall. Other pictures of that year were Central American ruins, displaying stone idols, monuments and sundials, under an intense light; a number of out-of-door sketches of Yosemite, Hetch-Hetchy, Bloody Canyon, and some coast marines, completed the list of his work for that year.

Robinson's European training was only during that brief time in Paris when he studied the methods of Segantini, the French Master, whose technique Robinson brought back to San Francisco, of the early 1900's.

ROBINSON IN CALIFORNIA

Shortly after Robinson's return his marine subjects began to attract popular attention. He painted endless waves on the ocean beach, near the Golden Gate, in every phase of storm and sunshine. He portrayed in vivid

colors the tender blendings of nature. His delicate coloring glows with mysterious effect. His patronage was sure as he made every effort within his artistic ability to produce a pleasing painting of a pleasing subject.

In 1911, he completed a startling theme of an aerial battle of the future. The picture was full of action. Overhead hung dreadnaughts of the air, below lie dreadnaughts of the sea belching powder and flame. Shattered by cannon balls, two of the warships plunged downward half obscured by dense smoke from roaring guns. The sky effect, the black smoke from the battleship funnels, combined with the heavy clouds of a recent storm. Across the angry sky crept a sanguine rainbow in a prismatic band of color, lighting the whole. The painting was realistic to a degree, and in 1912 European abstract art startled New York and San Francisco studios--but not Robinson's studio.

His next masterpiece was a salon theme entitled, "The Grand Canyon", and exhibited at the Gump galleries where San Francisco's famous art patrons browse.

While Robinson was busily painting for local patrons and tourists, he reached out in other directions with almost equal success. In 1884 and 1885, Robinson took much interest in the Palette Club, an organization of San Francisco artists opposed to the San Francisco Art Association. Tavernier was its president, Robinson its secretary during

most of its life. Among its members were such artists as Arthur Nahl, Wandesford, Kunath, Yelland, Holdredge, Joullin, Wores, Harring, Lattimer, Denny, Raschen, Stanton, Pages, Rodriguez, Pissio, Barkhaus, and Yates. The club gave two of the best exhibitions assembled in San Francisco by local artists. Finally the club gave up the ghost, not because of a failure from an artistic point of view, nor because of finances, as there was money in the treasury after all obligations were paid, but because so large a part of the art patrons of the city were Art Association members, and committed to the support of that organization. Robinson, however, stayed with the club until the end, and was its last president. He counted himself fairly independent of local art patronage, as then most of his pictures were sold to foreign buyers. Sixty-seven paintings by Robinson are owned in England alone. He also boasted a list of San Francisco patrons that any painter might be glad to know.

ROBINSON'S OTHER LINES OF INTEREST

As an illustrator, Robinson has done notable work. One of his best efforts in this line was done in 1891, a series of full page black and white views of Kings River Canyon to illustrate Mr. John Muir's well known article in the Century.

Robinson was not only noted for his paintings and illustrations, but he was a versatile writer as well. Several articles of his have been printed in the Overland magazine. He wrote excellent descriptive articles and fiction, and even essayed verse. Robinson wrote and illustrated the "Wawona Hotel", a sketch of the sights and scenery around the Mariposa Big Tree Station. He also compiled a number of interesting descriptive articles on the "Redwoods" of California.

In 1882, when the Yosemite Falls Hotel went through a thorough painting and renovating it was under Robinson's artistic guidance. However his sketches of Yosemite, the High Sierras and the California coast are the best products of his talents and show his fine art of appreciation of nature in California, with her endless forms, moods and dramatic contrasts.

611 CLAY STREET

The attic of the house at 611 Clay Street, is the oldest artist's studio in San Francisco. Here most interesting art history was made. Charles Dorman Robinson was among those who contributed to the good odor of paint that permeates the place.

There were times when landscape studies did not sell well enough to meet Robinson's expenses. During one of these trying moments, Robinson agreed to paint both floor and skylight of the place as advance payment for lodging.

Robinson set to work, and as the last stroke of his brush completed the skylight he indiscreetly fell through it and used up his month's lodging in recovering. After this incident, which happened in 1895, Robinson left the ramshackle old studio at 611 Clay Street and went to Europe in 1899 and stayed there up until 1901. While in Paris, Robinson studied under Boudin, also the methods of Segantini (1900). The record of this incident was found on the historic door of the place, carefully dated. The door leads from the front studio into a tiny dark passage and on its panes the names and years are recorded. Beginning with "Arriola, 1865" the record tells of such tenants as Denny and Deakin, Charles Rollo Peters and Hall, until its scratches say, "Robinson painted the floor, 1895".

YOSEMITE PANORAMA

Few individuals have done so much to make the great Yosemite Valley known to the world than has Robinson.

Over a hundred pretentious easel paintings of Yosemite subjects were made and sold by him in the Valley itself, while numberless other paintings and sketches, and illustrated articles of Yosemite came from years spent in its splendor. The greatest single work of his life, however, was the painting of the "Yosemite Panorama". The story of

this wonderful piece of work--how it haunted him for years, until opportunity forced his great scheme into execution, how the work was done and the details of it--were all told by Robinson himself in an article which appeared in the Overland for September 1893. Extracts from the article follow:

"---Early one morning in July 1883, armed with a sketch book and a pencil or two, I found myself at the point where the present stage road and the old Mariposa Trail diverge and with the rattle of departing wheels, sounding cheerily in the clear morning air, I betook myself on my exploring trip.----

"Some ten minutes walk toward the north brought me in view of the famous Yosemite features, and shortly after, coming out from under cover of the forest, I stood upon a ragged and sheer precipice, and gazed down, beyond, and far away, upon the most awful and terrific sweep of sublimity that ever eyes had beheld.

"At my left rose in its unapproachable majesty the El Capitan. Following its dome-like summit towards the north and west the wall gradually became less vertical, until it was a shattered mass of granite debris, sprinkled all over with trees and shrubbery too far beyond and below to recognize their individual forms. Directly opposite the El Capitan rose the massive yet elegant forms of the great Cathedral group, over whose walls from a V-shaped ravine fell in a gracefully swaying and pendulous mass of spray and vapor, the Bridal Veil Falls.-----Beyond were all of the well known rock features of the Valley. The Three Brothers, Eagle Point, North Dome, Mt. Watkins, Cloud's Rest, Half Dome, Sentinel Dome, and beyond all the faint outlines of the higher Sierras.

"----From that time it became a cherished desire with me to show to at least a portion of the world, in however, faint a degree, some of the beauty I had that day seen.----

"Unavoidable circumstances made it impossible for me to engage in an enterprise of this magnitude for nearly ten years after having first seen this sublime sight. Efforts on my part were unsuccessful owing to the reluctance of California capital of late years to enter into such an enterprise, however, in Stockton in 1892 a company of gentlemen who were impressed with the idea were willing to put forth the needed money, and in September 1892, I was on my way to my home in Yosemite, to carry out my long cherished idea.----

"---The canvas took us a week to stretch and hang, and its dimensions are fifty feet in width and three hundred and eighty feet in length, weighing two tons without paint on it, we have at this time used nearly three tons of color on it making a total weight of some five tons.

"After the long and tedious job of sizing and ground coloring was laid, came the nice affair of transcribing the design in outline.----

"The labor upon the Yosemite Panorama is also severer than upon most undertakings of this nature, for usually the drawing does not extend farther than half the height of the canvas, the balance being usually directed to sky of the simplest tints, whereas upon the Yosemite the entire canvas being portraiture to within some ten feet from the top, the detail painting is enormous."

THE SAN FRANCISCO FIRE OF 1906

When very few of the artists in San Francisco felt impelled to paint pictures of "the fire", or the ruins, Robinson was again one of the first in the field. His large

picture of "The Fire" was sent to St. Louis in 1907 for exhibition, and subsequently to the Jamestown exhibition of the same year. Previous to these exhibitions it was exhibited in Oakland where it won initial honors.

This painting was highly pleasing in color and Robinson utilized splendid technical ability to produce a very graphic scene. It attracted considerable attention at its initial showing and was subsequently exhibited in the principal cities of the United States.

Because the canvas measured twelve by thirty feet, it was painted in Los Angeles, as there was no large studio left available in devastated San Francisco. All during the progress of the fire Robinson had worked day and night and obtained a large number of sketches in color and pencil, to use in his final enormous pictured record of the burning city. His chosen view was from the side of Twin Peaks about level with the Burnham bungalow and an eighth of a mile south. The "moment" was about midnight on Wednesday when the fire was at its height. Market Street extends almost directly in front of the observer. It was only by using a very large canvas that the detail of the enormous area shown could be adequately conveyed. There are more than four miles of flame stretching almost from side to side of the picture. The upper dome of the smoke cloud passed beyond the observer's view and so was not shown.

The smoke cloud was measured and found to be at least four miles high.

From the elevation selected, the observer on Twin Peaks looks down upon the burning city, and even though it was night, objects all about show dimly in the picture. In the distance, along the sky line, the principal buildings could be dimly seen through the haze of smoke and flame. The field of the fire occupied the center of the picture and could be seen vividly beyond the dark brown hillside of the foreground. There was no suggestion of life close by, but about a half a mile off small houses were visible and there seemed to be relief camps here and there. All this was veiled in an opacity of smoke and recurrent reflections from the fire beyond.

The color scheme of the picture was gray, yellow, and brown. The flames were a very light yellow where they rose from the ground and as they mingled with the smoke took on a red glare that spread over a large part of the smoke field of the canvas. The upper smoke canopy that appeared to hang over the burning city was a cold gray. The foreground color was a wide range of browns and brown-greens. All through the picture the prismatic colors appeared and gave variety and distinction to the different parts.

The burning of San Francisco as a great event of history will never be forgotten; so to Robinson credit is

given for being the first to perpetuate in canvas that unfortunate catastrophe.

ROBINSON'S PHILOSOPHY OF WORK

Whenever an interested student of art came to Robinson for advice, he always told them to forget all they had learned, and to paint only what they see and feel. This, in a nutshell, is the keynote of Robinson's own work. No instructor can claim him as a pupil or imitator, for his pictures show, even on the most casual examination, that he was unmoved by current art fads, and painted what he saw and loved.

The chief value of Robinson's work is his coloring and his subtle blending of the shades that give atmosphere and depth to a picture. Some of his sunset skies palpitate with living light, and some seem to go back from the frame, to unmeasured depths.

Three of his paintings that are worth remembering from the standpoint of color and depth are:

A Yosemite view looking down the Valley toward El Capitan, with the evening light just breaking through the storm clouds that hang heavy about the great cliffs. The warm light suffuses the whole picture with its glow, and the massive bulk of El Capitan above remains cold, grand, and majestic, as it does in the real landscape.

Another is a sunset on the North Beach, a reach of sand on which the ground swell of the Pacific is sending its long rollers, their foamy faces purple against the clear saffron light of the sky and reflected on the beach. In the middle lies the great black bulk of a stranded whale, the one point of dark color in the whole glowing picture. To Robinson this stranded monster typifies the mighty strength of the ocean, and he waxes poetic in speaking of it, recognizing all the time, perhaps, the ease with which that narrow line beyond the sublime might be overstepped in such a subject.

Yet another is a great rock off the coast near Mazatlan. The cliff towers in the middle distance and the foreground shows a tumbling mass of translucent green waves that seem to move before your eyes; "for Robinson's painted water, whether in motion or at rest, is always water, never woolly, never oily." His work is sharp and characteristic.

ROBINSON, MAN AND PAINTER

Faithful to nature, Robinson was a conscientious worker and a good artist. During his life, Robinson made occasional remarks such as the following: "It takes a crank to move the world, and I would rather be a crank than a nonentity."

In the course of his life, Robinson painted the Yosemite Valley as a labor of love, being the most constant of the artists in his residence there. His paintings, which now stand as living records of the Valley and the man who painted them, are to be found in art galleries all over the world.

Robinson's independence of the local and the ephemeral in art made him slow in reaping success, but the best critics agree on the value of his work. As a colorist, he distinguished himself. The close study of years, inspired by an intense love for the grand things of nature, and an absolute independence of all influences, brought him to nature as the greatest teacher of art. This enabled him to paint in his way, the majestic Sierra scenery and the sweep of ocean billows; so that his works follow the "grand style" canvases of the early day landscape painters, such as William Keith, Thomas Hill, Albert Bierstadt, and others.

After a fulsome life, when Robinson was eighty-six, he died on May 8, 1933, in his home in San Rafael. His end was the culmination of a long illness which began from a fall he suffered years before in San Francisco.

Many of his best canvases now rest in important private galleries of American connoisseurs. Several are to be found in the Bohemian Club collection, San Francisco; one

was presented to Queen Victoria; another hangs in the palace of the viceroy of India; and yet another is in the palace of the King of Siam. Such far flung patronage brings a realization of Robinson's share in placing the beauty of California before the world, in an era when "hand painted scenery" and dramatic pictures were well appreciated.

CHARLES DORMAN ROBINSON

REPRESENTATIVE

WORKS

Chrysanthemums
Redwood Grove
Mt. Tamalpais
S. E. Storm Off Seal Rocks
Off the Farallone Islands
Moonlight on the Beach
Marine
A Monterey Wave
Moonlight, Yosemite
Monterey Bay
The Wet Sands
Yosemite
Rocky Coast
U. S. Fleet Enters Golden Gate
Yosemite Panorama
The Palace of Dido
Nevada Falls
The Grand Canyon of Arizona
Lake Louise
Illilouette Falls, Yosemite Valley
Fishing Boats, Twilight
Evening on the Bay
Crest of the Sierras
Sierra Nevada
Sentinel Pines
The Yosemite Falls
Oakland, Looking Toward the Golden Gate
Oakland Harbor
Mt. Diablo
Beach and Seal Rocks at the Cliff House
Old Wharf, Brig at Sacramento
A Bit of Mendocino Coast
Surf Craters, Mendocino Coast
Afternoon on the Mendocino Coast
Venice--Fishing Boats in the Lagoons--Sunset
Santa Maria de la Salute, Venice
Grand Canal, Venice
Afternoon on the Bay--Off Goat Island
Breaking Gale at Seal Rocks
San Francisco--From the Bay
Venice--The Lagoons--Morning
Foggy Sunrise at Farallones

PAINTINGS IN PERMANENT COLLECTIONS:

De Young Museum, San Francisco
 The Grand Canyon of Arizona
 Lake Louise

San Francisco Museum of Art
 Redwood Grove (oil)--Sloss bequest
 Mount Tamalpais (oil)--Sloss bequest
 S. E. Storm Off Seal Rocks (oil)--Sloss bequest
 Off the Farallone Islands (oil)--Sloss bequest
 Moonlight on the Beach (oil)--Sloss bequest

Oakland Art Gallery
 The Wet Sands

Bohemian Club, San Francisco
 Yosemite (oil)
 Rocky Coast (oil)
 U. S. Fleet Enters Golden Gate (oil)
 Nevada Falls

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San Francisco Art Association, Winter, 1895
 San Francisco Art Association, Spring Exhibition,
 March 20-April 16, 1903
 San Francisco Art Association, 1916
 Midwinter International Exposition, San Francisco,
 1894
 Mark Hopkins Institute of Art, 1896
 Second Exhibition, Golden Gate Park Museum, San
 Francisco, 1916
 First Exhibition, Golden Gate Park Museum, San
 Francisco, 1915

CLUBS AND AWARDS:

Clubs--

San Francisco Art Association, 1877-1933
 Bohemian Club
 Palette Club

Awards--

First Diploma, Mechanics' Fair, San Francisco, 1860
 Money Award, Sacramento State Agricultural Society,
 1878
 Gold Medal, Sacramento State Agricultural Society,
 1903

CHARLES DORMAN ROBINSON

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CHARLES DORMON ROBINSON

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ULS

[YOSEMITE ARTISTS]

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Gregory

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Gregory

CHARLES DORMON ROBINSON

- b. July 17, [1847] East Monmouth, Maine
 d. May 8, 1933 San Rafael, California

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