

CURRENT ART NEWS AND GOSSIP

INTEREST in the exhibition of the Washington Water Color Club has been stimulated by the purchase of two of the pictures by the trustees of the Corcoran Gallery of Art.

As an example of the lavish expenditure of money for art decorations we may note the fact that the tapestries which are to be used in the dining room of the mansion now building for Charles M. Schwab, on Riverside Drive, New York, will cost approximately \$50,000.

Paul Helleu, the Parisian portrait painter, is contemplating a visit to this country early in January. He will accompany John S. Sargent, who is returning to the United States to accept some important commissions for portraits, among which are portraits of President Roosevelt and J. Pierpont Morgan.

Patronizing Auction Rooms.

The days of the court painter seem to have passed away, and in their place we find royalty through its agents frequenting auction rooms in search of pictures painted by subjects of the kingdom.

A Rubens' Picture. Mr. Frank P. Stearns recently invited several of his intimate friends and art connoisseurs to meet at his residence in Boston to inspect Rubens' famous painting, "The Feast of Herod," which was loaned him for the occasion by Herman Linde, the well-known art collector, and who has become famous not only as a collector of art works, but as a collector of masterpieces.

Capital Camera Club Exhibit. An exhibition of photographs, the work of the members of the Capital Camera Club, will be opened to the public on Monday, December 8, and will continue during the week.

The expression which is often made that artists are not appreciated until after their death is a convenient expression, but not by any means remarkable for its truth.

A New Method. Painting with oil sticks is the new thing in Paris, and the introduction of this method in this country may be looked upon as something in the near future.

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CAREER OF EDWIN A. ABBEY, WHO IS PAINTING KING EDWARD'S CORONATION

AN American artist who recently visited in England found Edwin A. Abbey engaged in painting the coronation picture which King Edward had ordered.

"Abbey, it is a great work and a great chance; but tell me, how did you get it?"

"The painter's reply was laconic: 'Through my grandfather.'"

The friend gasped his astonishment; then laughingly added:

"And I see by the newspapers that you are also to decorate the new capitol of Pennsylvania, a work that will be monumental and take years of your life. Did your grandfather get you this commission, too?"

"If I do the work, he will be the cause," was Mr. Abbey's answer.

Grandfather a Merchant. Roswell Abbey, grandfather of the artist who hopes to have the coronation painting completed by next spring, was a merchant, an inventor of type foundry appliances, an adept in almost every line of commerce and, for his own pleasure and recreation, a worker in water colors.

Roswell Abbey's son, William M. Abbey, was a merchant in Philadelphia, when that city scarcely extended above Broad Street.

One of William M. Abbey's two sons is Edwin A. Abbey, and Edwin A. Abbey began manifesting the artistic trait of his grandfather almost from the cradle.

He was barely four years old when he began making pencil drawings that attracted more than passing attention on the fly leaves and margins of magazines and books, and a few years later he divided his time between baseball and littering up the house with sketches of the family, his home and his playmates.

About the same time a decided characteristic, that is remarked upon whenever Mr. Abbey's art is discussed, began to develop.

Mr. Abbey is famed among artists as the profession's most pronounced stickler for correct costumes and settings for his work. He has a horror of anachronisms. So, in order to be absolutely accurate, he has gathered from time to time a collection of ancient dress and implements of warfare that experts in such things hold to be unequalled.

Wherever he has seen habiliments that had the spirit and technique of the times dealt with in the various products of his brush and pencil, Mr. Abbey has secured them, and many of these he has discovered in out-of-the-way corners of Europe. Others that he has not been able to obtain in this way he has had built according to painfully detailed descriptions found in chronicles and other ancient sources of information.

His Peculiarities. Mr. Abbey considers no amount of time and work wasted in avoiding an anachronism or undoing one. After he had finished the painting of "Gloucester and the Lady Anne" he discovered that he had got in the wrong quarters in the coat of arms on the lady's dress, which is of heraldic design. Despite the fact that it meant much labor he promptly did the skirt over again.

In the painting of the "Castle of King Amphoras" there is a vaulted roof supported by columns with unusual capitals. That he might not be guilty of an anachronism, Mr. Abbey traveled to Brittany and not only copied but modeled the capitals as well.

This characteristic Mr. Abbey displayed when, a boy just in his teens, he posed brother and sister and companions, always insisting that their costumes should be faultless as to time and

circumstance. One of his first sketches to be printed in a magazine was "Tracking Rabbits."

It showed two boys out hunting. Mr. Abbey's brother and a friend, and before the artist would consent to begin the sketch he warned the youthful models almost to the point of rebellion by his fussiness over details of their dress.

It was the same with the drawings that he made for the late Oliver Optic's paper, "Our Boys and Girls." The first of these, and the first of any of Mr. Abbey's handiwork to be published, was an illustrated rebus, appearing in 1896.

At that time Mr. Abbey was fourteen. But the style of this and other illustrations that appeared frequently in the paper so attracted Mr. Adams to the youthful artist that he cultivated his acquaintance and later dedicated a book to him.

"The First Thanksgiving." Two years after the rebus was published young Abbey went into a wood engraver's shop and drew on wood; and it was about this time, too, that he first broke into "Harper's" with a sketch portraying a band of Puritans celebrating "The First Thanksgiving." Concerning this achievement Mr. Abbey, while in this country last year, said to a friend

who congratulated him on securing the commission for the coronation picture: "Yes, naturally I'm pleased to have been selected; but, do you know, I wasn't tickled half so much as when I got my first sketch in 'Harper's.'"

Three years after "The First Thanksgiving" had been published, Mr. Abbey came to New York. In the meantime he had studied a year or so in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia, and today there is a tradition in that school that "Ned Abbey was a good artist, but unwilling."

But once in New York, he began developing another trait that is the subject of much good-natured banter among his fellows-in-art. He joined the Tile Club, of which many artists now famous were members, F. Hopkinson Smith being among them.

It was a duty of the members at the club meetings to paint tiles and plaques and what not for one another's studios, and the result, in Abbey's case, was that he cultivated a fondness for spending nearly every cent he had, not necessary for living expenses, in adorning his studio and home.

Leased Morgan Hall. When he leased Morgan Hall, his English home, an old rambling structure, parts of which are more than 300 years old, which is surrounded by an estate of thirty acres, he began altering it right and left and decorating and embellishing it with as much fervor as he used to display in adorning the studios of his young days in America.

To Morgan Hall Mr. Abbey has also carried his enthusiasm for baseball. He doesn't play baseball, exactly, but nearly every day he indulges in what he considers the next best thing—cricket.

Up to the time that he was commissioned to paint the coronation picture Mr. Abbey had not been presented to King Edward. When he was summoned before the King, so that he could be officially informed that he had secured a much coveted honor, about all that his majesty said, beyond the mere announcement of his selection, was:

"My lord chamberlain will attend to the details."

Then Mr. Abbey, clad in the gown of the Royal Academy, and carrying his sword, bowed himself out of the royal presence.

Met Sweden's King. But Mr. Abbey has held an extended conversation with at least one monarch. This is King Oscar of Sweden.

A short time after he had become a member of the Royal Academy, Mr. Abbey, according to a custom regarding new members, found himself a member of the academy council. One of the duties of the council is to arrange for royalty's private view of the annual exhibitions.

At the first private view that Mr. Abbey helped to plan, he had one of his paintings hung, "The Trial of Queen Catherine," and it fell to his lot to escort King Oscar, then on a visit to England.

Every thing went smoothly enough until Sweden's ruler caught sight of Mr. Abbey's exhibit. Then he planted his royal person solidly before the painting and rapidly began firing questions at its author.

So persistent was the King in his inquisition that he attracted the other members of the party about him and unintentionally furnished them with a half hour's amusement by the questions propounded. But Mr. Abbey's answers evidently pleased King Oscar, for it is said that when he heard that his fellow ruler, Edward of England, was casting about for a coronation painter, he diplomatically suggested the name of the American who, at an academy exhibition several years before, had answered a long string of question in so satisfactory a manner.

There are at present in this old town sixteen of these accomplished animals. They all belong to the sheepdog breed, but besides Belgian there are also Russian and de la Brie dogs. During the day they take their well-earned rest in comfortable loose boxes attached to the head stations of the police. But at 10 o'clock their duties begin, and scarcely has the hour chimed from the old belfry above their heads when they set up a deafening chorus of barks as if to show their eagerness to get to work. They are on duty till 5 the next morning, and do not seem at all fatigued by their long hours.

Most people know how prominent a part is played by the dog in Belgium, where he acts as the poor man's horse. But the Belgium dog has not stopped here. He is an ambitious creature. He is not content to do naught but slave. He has, in fact, aspired to the law with such good effect that he has become one of his limbs, and now plays the part of policeman, and with such good results, too, that crime in that particular district patrolled by him is said to have diminished by two-thirds since his entry into the force. It is at Ghent that the dog has become a recognized member of the regular town constabulary. The dogs are taught by means of dummy figures made up as much as possible to represent the thieves and dangerous characters they may be likely to meet. How much patience is needed by him who undertakes this particular form of education only those who have tried to train animals will properly appreciate. The dog must be taught to seek, to attack, to seize, and to hold, but without hurting seriously.

The first step is to place the dummy in such a position that it shall represent a man endeavoring to conceal himself. The dog soon understands that it is an enemy whom he must hunt, and enters into this part of his lesson "con amore," but it is not so easy to teach him not to injure it.

The teacher lowers the figure to the ground and the dog learns that, though he may not worry his prey, he must not allow his fallen foe to stir so much as a finger until the order is given. After the dummy a living model is used, and as this process is obviously not without danger, the person chosen for this purpose is usually he who ministers to the pupil's creature comforts, and for whom the canine detective is sure to entertain a grateful affection. Nevertheless, he is prevented at first by means of a muzzle from an exhibition of too much zeal. Afterward the experiment is tried on other members of the force, and in four months the dog's education as a policeman is considered complete, and he takes his place with the rest. The animals are also taught to swim, and to seize their prey in the water; to save life from drowning; to scale walls, and to overcome all obstacles, so that any enterprising burglar who goes "burgling" in Ghent has a lively time of it if he meets with one of these four-footed "bobbies."

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WHERE WASHINGTON TOOK TEA

AT a place called "Washington Crossing," nine miles above Trenton on the Jersey shore of the Delaware, is an old weather-beaten house, soon to be sold "under the hammer." To travelers it is pointed out as the headquarters of General Washington just before executing his famous crossing of the river, 125 years ago last Christmas.

There seems little doubt of its age. The shingles on its side walls are worn through by the patter of more than a century's raindrops, its shutters creak on hinges of hand wrought iron, and within there is a great central fireplace in which ten men could stand upright.

His Grandfather's Son. The present occupants know little or nothing of the history of the building, and the same is true of the townspeople of Trenton. On a recent day a visitor went over the place in a somewhat excited frame of mind. He signed himself in the register kept at the house in this way:

"Henry D. McConkey, son of Henry V. McConkey, who was a son of John McConkey, who was a son of William McConkey, the former owner of this house when Washington crossed the ferry, December 25, 1776."

He was a little man in black—a leather manufacturer of Johnstown, N. Y.—and he had a small satchel filled with historical documents in support of his claim, including letters from his great-grandfather. Indeed, he seemed so genuinely excited over his visit—the first, he said, of any of the family to their Revolutionary homestead—that there was no doubt that he believed every word of the story he told. It included incidents of that famous Christmas night not to be found in the histories and overlooked even by Paul Leicester Ford in "Janice Meredith."

Tea Played Part. If that he said is true, tea played as important a part in deciding the pivotal battle of the Revolution as it did in Boston in bringing it on. The story he told agrees with the facts, so far as history and neighborhood tradition have set them down. William McConkey owned the inn in 1776. The place is still popularly known as McConkey's Ferry, the name used by Washington Irving, who spelled

it with a "K." McConkey was a friend of Washington, according to his descendant, and one of the men in the barge in which the latter led off his flotilla of hayboats and barges amid ice floes.

Washington and his little army had been forced back across New Jersey, and the Hessians, under Rahl, were at Trenton waiting for the river to freeze that they might cross and capture not only the rebel army, but the Continental Congress at Philadelphia. A bit of ice and they would end the war at one smart turn. The American militia were deserting, and there were mad jealousies among the leaders. The time for the "lucky blow," for which Washington had been playing to run backbone into his forces and his cause, had come.

Craft from up and down stream had been gathered on the Pennsylvania shore and concealed in the bushes. It was a fierce night's work against a madcap wind and blinding snow. On a summer's day the Delaware spreads out flat as a duck pond; then it was all water skirts and swimming ice. Natives of the neighborhood say that crossing in an open boat on such a night was fooling with death. But it was done, though detachments up and down stream failed to cross the current, and it was hours before the last man of Washington's own command was on the other side and in line for march.

Story of the Evening. The only shelter on the Jersey shore was the McConkey Inn. The story of the night's work was told to Henry D. McConkey, as a lad, by his grandfather's sister, then a woman of ninety, but it was as young Polly McConkey that she took part in a scene that was certainly in sharp contrast with the Christmas carousals of the Hessians in the nearby town. To the women of the household—her mother and sisters—had been intrusted the task of feeding the great fire, and all night long huge logs snapped and roared up the flue.

If this tale is true, much of the lusty vigor with which the Continental troops waged battle that nipping winter's morning was inspired by the big kettle of steaming tea in the fireplace of the McConkey Inn. An effort has been made to have Washington's Crossing made a national park. Of the descendants of the original McConkey, perhaps the best known is Maj. Gen. Marcus D. L. Simpson, of Riverside, Chicago. He is past ninety years old.

When in Doubt, Buy at House & Herrmann's.

Advertisement for House & Herrmann's furniture. Includes a Golden Oak Chiffonier for \$10.50 and a Handsome Solid Oak Sideboard for \$22.00.

Advertisement for a Handsome Velour Couch, solid oak frame, deep tufted and well upholstered, for \$8.35.

Advertisement for a Handsome Parlor Table, 24x24 inch top, highly polished mahogany finish, for \$2.65.

Advertisement for a Handsome Solid Oak Medicine Cabinet, stands 23 inches high, 11x17 inch glass door, for \$1.55.

Advertisement for a Solid Oak Dining Chair, high embossed back, brace arms, turned spindles and posts, for \$1.15.

Advertisement for a Solid Oak China Closet, stands 5 feet 6 inches high; bent glass ends, and has French bevel plate mirror in top, for \$13.25.

Advertisement for a Solid Oak Lady's Desk, shaped legs; well-finished interior large pigeon-holes; a very neat pattern, for \$4.50.

Advertisement for Cascarets Candy Cathartic. Includes an illustration of a hand holding a box of Cascarets and a box of Cascarets. Text: 'GET WHAT YOU ASK FOR! CASCARETS Candy Cathartic are always put up in blue metal box, our trade-marked, long-tailed C on the cover - tablet octagonal, stamped CCC. Never sold in bulk! Imitations and substitutes are sometimes offered by unscrupulous dealers who try to palm off fakes when CASCARETS are called for, because the fake pays a little more profit. Get the genuine CASCARETS and with it satisfaction or your money refunded under iron-clad guarantee. 10,000,000 boxes a year, that's the sale of CASCARETS today, and merit did it. They are a perfect cure for Constipation, Appendicitis, Biliousness, Sour Stomach, Sick Headache, Bad Breath, Bad Blood, Pimples, Piles, Worms and all Bowel Diseases. All druggists, 10c, 25c, 50c. Sample and booklet free. Address Sterling Remedy Co., Chicago or New York.'