

Art In Utah

THE LATE STATE EXHIBIT And Some Interesting Reflections Concerning It.

As Observed by a Painter From Abroad.



GEORGE HENRY TAGGART.

IT HAS long been maintained that America had no national art and that Americans could not produce great paintings or sculptures in their own country. Yet no people have ever in so short a time made such great progress in this direction—and of all the states in the Union Utah, which already stands third in educational advantages, has, considering the few years of its existence as a civilized center, shown the most rapid development in artistic matters.

There was a time when one had (supposedly) to go to Rome in order to become a great artist, then to Düsseldorf and Munich and now to Paris, but there is every reason to believe that in the future the world will look to America for instruction in art as it at present does for all things mechanical.

Right here in the schools of Salt Lake City can be obtained the rudiments of a technical art education not inferior to the best that our country has to offer, and that the young people are taking advantage of this opportunity in the most earnest application and the most rapid progress.

The character of the student must, of course, shape his career. If he be weak and unworthy he has it within his power to cater to the lowest tastes and pollute the intellectual atmosphere of the homes in which his works may be placed, but if he be strong and of high ideals he may come into the presence of the great nature and open his own way to the highest moral altitudes, creating in works of art a heritage for the world in which he lives.

A picture that awakens a good thought is a success; if it carries with it the best mood of nature and suggests the eternal fitness of things it is a greater success—it is ennobling—it is vital.

As a mental habit we think of great things as coming from afar—yet, while we are looking beyond the horizon here within the very borders of Salt Lake City are being conceived and executed impressions of nature many of which will hold a high place with the best productions of the United States—and, in fact, some have already received acknowledgment in other lands.

If the public prefers the lowest instead of the highest form of art in its home decorations it is only because it has become accustomed to the lowest form, and this taste is originally the fault of the artists.

But most of the workers here do with their abilities only that which

they believe they should do—only that which is the best they can accomplish with nature's gifts—and in spite of all obstacles are true to themselves.

And if the people here have now the opportunity of seeing and possessing desirable works of art, which may beautify and refine their places of abode and make life more worth the living, it is due to the sincerity and untiring efforts of Utah artists who in spite of all discouragements have kept the highest standard. Art, which is such an important factor in our every day lives, influencing as it does our very character, had in Utah for its origin the meager points brought out in the early days when Salt Lake Valley was a desert.

In the beginning there was but little encouragement for the silent workers in the home, the field or the studio and the progress was slow, yet as Salt Lake City has grown from a few log cabins into a place of beautiful abodes, so has the local architecture, sculpture and painting kept pace with all this development. And in the homes of many here may be felt the refining influence of the work of Utah artists.

Credit is due not only to the workers who have grown with the artistic movement through the years but also to others who do not make of art a profession.

An active unselfish woman has been the means of creating an art collection, which is the property of the state, and which it is hoped will in due time be appropriately housed. Each year, from a state fund, several pictures painted by resident artists are added to this collection, so it is obvious that in the future Utah will possess a fine chronological gallery—and it is also obvious that the merit of most of the works will owe its being not only to the character of those who are working and teaching in the present but also to the perseverance of those who paved the way in the past.

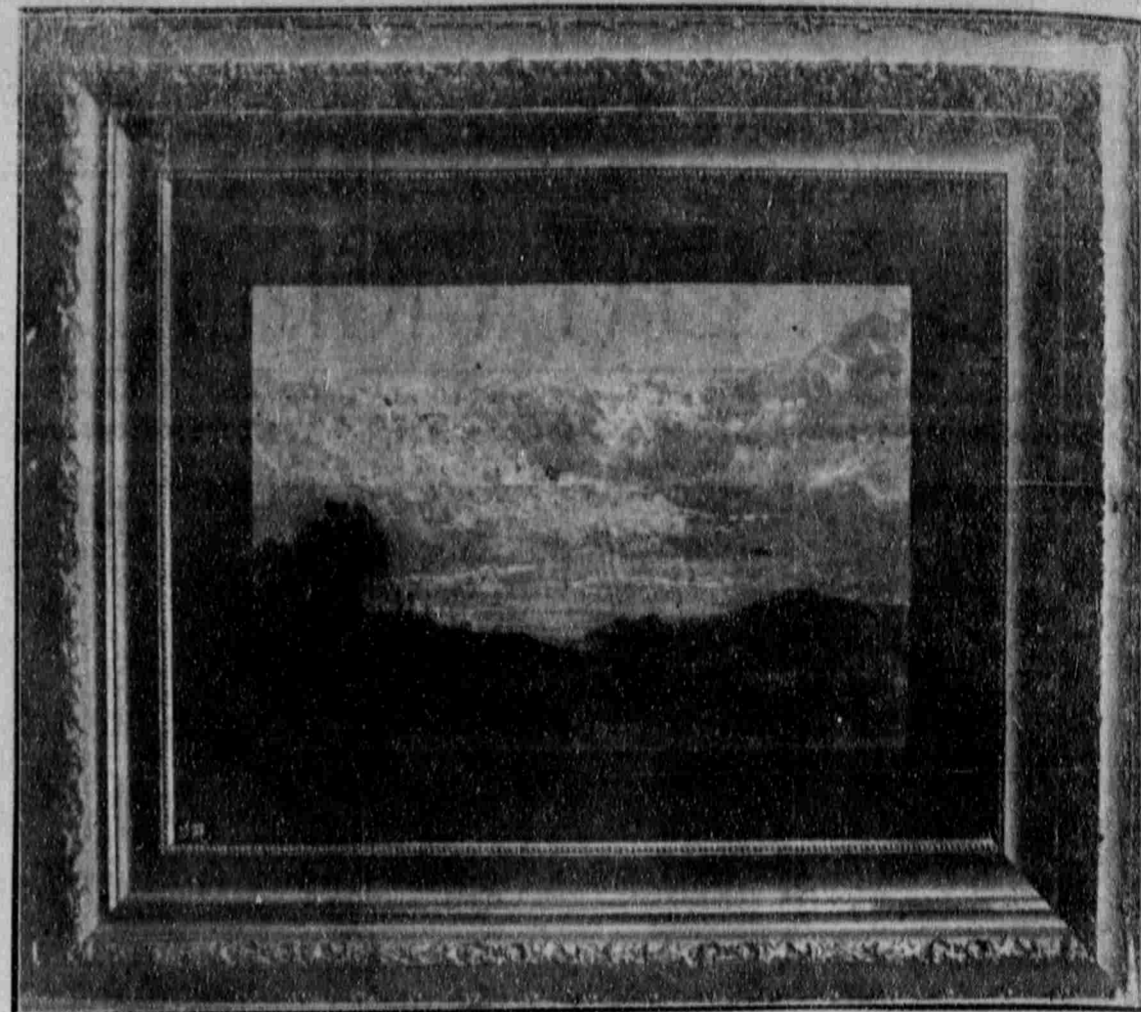
Each one of the artists here has to a remarkable degree preserved in his creations his own individuality and has fearlessly given expression to the aspect of nature as he sees it. This individual freedom has borne fruit in landscape of the greatest variety of sentiment; one has depicted the tender moods of the valley, the delicate tones of spring, the soft coloring of the autumn haze; another the strength and grandeur of the mountains with all their vivid intensity of light and shade; yet another has transferred to canvas the sense of magnificent distance and the mystery of the incomparable canyons; and again others there are who have portrayed the human side of nature in its various phases.

There is not the slightest reason why great works of art should not be produced here in Utah as well as in foreign lands, and it is no exaggeration to say that this is already being done.

The scenery of Utah has its own distinctive character as well as has the scenery of France and Holland, and who will say that Utah is less interesting and attractive? Who will say that the dwellers here, their thoughts and their every day lives are less worthy the greatest artistic effort than are the peasants of France? Are not the womanhood and the manhood, their home life, their very souls and characters as high and noble and as inspiring as the most exalted people of Europe?

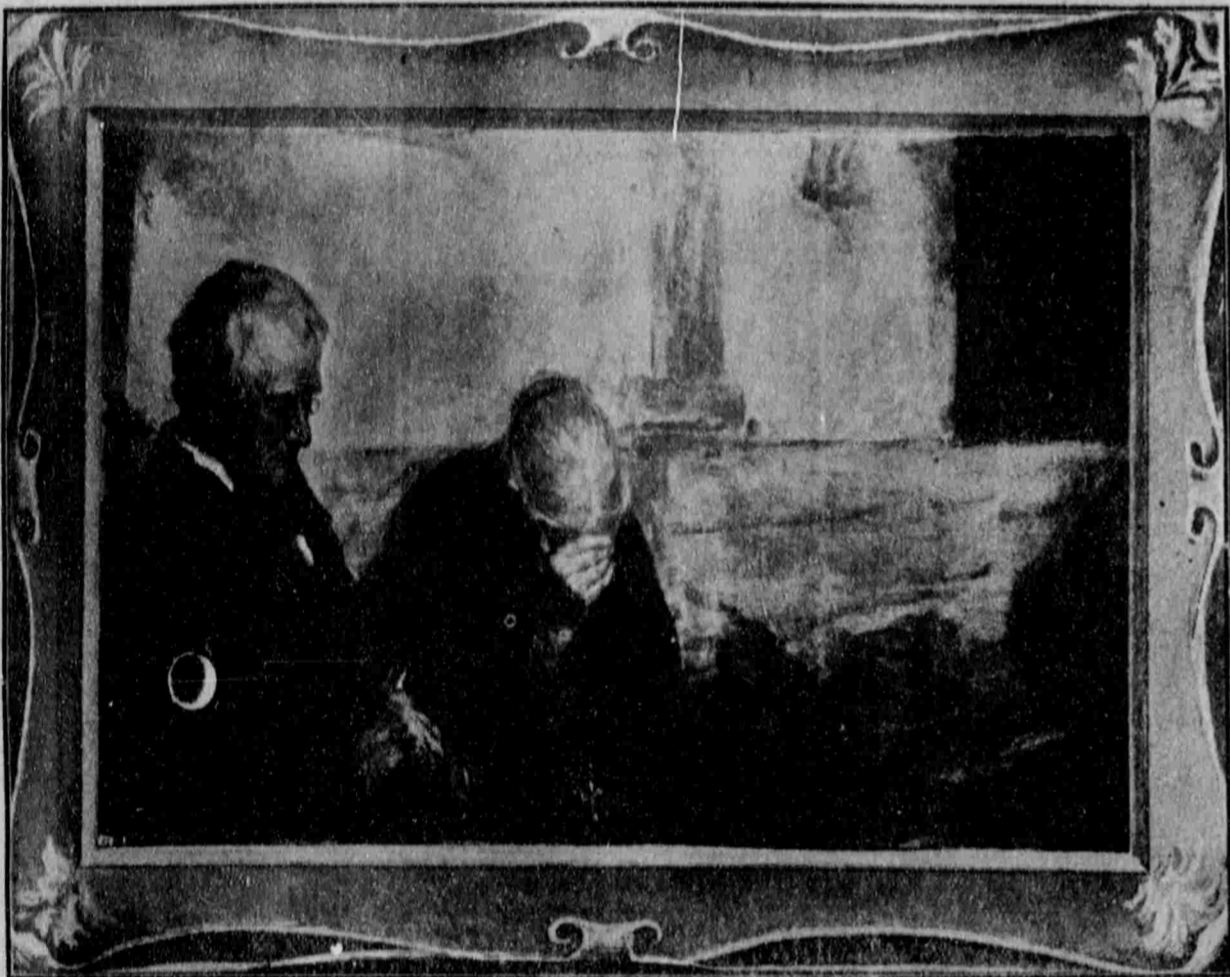
Here are our themes, the way is open for the expression of the most profound thought and feeling, and if the future art of Utah is of as high an order as is that of the present the state may well be proud of its daughters and sons whose earnest efforts have achieved so much that is worthy and beautiful.

GEO. HENRY TAGGART.



CULMER'S BEAUTIFUL "CLOUDLAND."

"Cloudland" is the title of one of the most beautiful water color productions that ever came out of the studio of H. L. A. Culmer; and friends of that gentleman know that such a statement means much, for he won his laurels in this class of work years ago. The reader can form only the most inadequate idea of the picture as reproduced here. Its conception is so idealistic, its execution so delicate, its colors such mere tint suggestions as to defy photography and typography alike. It was much admired at the late state art exhibit, and took the first prize—fifty dollars—as the best water color creation there displayed, a fact that made it the property of the state. It also took the first prize for water color pictures at the Utah Fair in October last.



A PRIZE PAINTING.

The above picture represents two old people, in a silent church, alone with half in reverence, half in bodily weariness, with her forehead covered with her hand. The man is not so humble, and, manlike, does not bend so low. The object of the painting is to tell the lives of the poor. Their faces show the lives and in those who have lived and in those people in the State of New York, whom the artist has known all his life. This was one of the prize pictures at chased by the state for \$500. The painter is George Henry Taggart.

THE RECENT ART EXHIBIT.

Expressions of regret are often heard now, by those who failed either through neglect or necessity, to visit the late Utah art exhibit in this city. Their regret would likely be more keen if they realized the value of the opportunity they missed. It was, indeed, a rare treat for every lover of art and a proud occasion for the artists who had the privilege of hanging their paintings on the wall. Some have the idea that the exhibit was a failure in one sense, viz.: in the point of attendance. It is a deplorable fact that the exhibit was not visited by so many as had been expected or even as many as former exhibits have attracted.

"The reason for this," says President H. L. A. Culmer of the Art Institute, "was no doubt largely due to the lighted advertising methods we employed. We failed to fill all the downtown windows with placards or to have the streets paraded by a band. Artists are of a modest temperament, especially Utah artists, and anything that appears like advertising is distasteful to them. We had reason to believe that because the exhibit was free the hall would be thronged and we therefore failed to advertise the exhibit as we should have done." Another thing that curtailed the attendance was the out-of-the-way location of the exhibit. While it was convenient enough for those who took a lively interest in it, the casual passerby who drops into a thing of that kind, would not go out of his way. But mind you, we do not admit that the exhibit was anything but a gratifying success. Those who visited it are unanimous in their expressions of admiration, and they will wait a long time before they will see a better collection of paintings. There was not a poor picture on the wall; we would not let one be hung up. Last February I visited the annual art exhibit of California at San Francisco, and it did not compare with ours for excellence. There were scores of pictures there that were no better than many that we rejected."

using as any that can be found anywhere and there is nothing we dare not hope for the future. Some of the boys we have sent abroad have already made their mark. I have in mind, Saïor Borglun, a young man born in Ogdens, whose work in sculpture has found its way into the richest homes in France. He has been in Paris for several years and is now a shining light in the most exclusive art circles in the world. He still claims Ogdens as his home, and may return to Utah to live. In conclusion, I am very pleased to state as a prophecy, and you may put it down as such, that Salt Lake will soon be one of the great art centers of the United States.

The Art Institute, of which Mr. Culmer is president, is an institution created by the legislature of the state in a bill introduced in 1898 by Mrs. Alice Merrill Home. She was the author and mover of the measure and it was largely due to her assiduous efforts that the institute was created. The bill provided for the creation of a governing board consisting of seven members, to be appointed by the Governor. The board was to have four artists, one architect, one educator and one member identified with the manufacture of art fabrics. The board was to give public lectures, and exhibitions, the latter to be held once a year. The bill provided for an appropriation of \$1,000 for two years and the same sum each year thereafter. It also required the state to spend \$300 at each exhibit in the purchase of prize pictures, which were to form the nucleus for a state art gallery. This gallery was to be called the "Alice Art Collection," in honor of Mrs. Home, the author of the bill. It will not be many years until the state will be the possessor of a pre-eminent art collection which every citizen will take pride in. The paintings that have already been acquired are among the very best productions of local artists. There is another way by which the state collection is added, viz.: that any artist desiring to become a life member of the institute can donate a painting of his own, worth \$100 in lieu of that sum of money that is required to purchase a life membership.

THE STATE GALLERY.

The paintings that now adorn the state gallery are:
"Children of the Sun," by George M. Ottinger.
"Salt Crested Rocks," by Harwood.
"Prayer," by G. H. Taggart, which is reproduced on this page.
"Willows," by G. Wesley Browning.
"Peasant Woman Knitting," by Miss Mary Teasdel.
"Cloudland," by H. L. A. Culmer, which is also given in one of the accompanying cuts.
"Quaking Forest," by Harwood.
Since the institute was created it has given three exhibitions, two in Salt Lake and one in Logan. The board has not decided where the next exhibit will be held, but it will be either Ogden or Provo. It is quite likely the latter place will be favored as the people of that city have always manifested a lively interest in art. In the work of the institute. Moreover, the latter has received repeated invitations to come to Provo to exhibit.

GREAT TABERNACLE CHOIR

(Continued from page nine.)

time that it was first given to the public there have been numerous additions and changes until today it is recognized as one of the very best, if indeed not the best—the grandest organ in the world.

It is now nearly a year ago since the First Presidency of the Church decided to make the latest improvements in the organ. These were recommended by Prof. McClellan and installed by the Kimball company of Chicago. A great many of the old pipes were taken out and thoroughly overhauled and more than four thousand new ones were added. The instrument's action is marvelous and more responsive than a grand piano as it has no "inertia" to overcome. The repeating power of each key is seven hundred and twenty-six times to the minute. All of the latest mechanical devices have been incorporated in the instrument and any combination of tone desired can be distinctly brought out. Especially fine are the "string" tones, the violins, viola zamba, cello and bass; the clarinet two, oboes, bassoon, eight varieties of flute tones, (each one true to its name) four piccolo stops, four trumpets, tuba, trombone, saxophone, clarion and the "vox humana," which is the pet of the organ and makes "human" tones that deceive even the trained musician.

The doubtful reader should attend one of the organ recitals and hear the organist play the male quartet, "Beauty's Eyes" to be thoroughly convinced. In all, the organ contains one hundred and eight stops and accessories; five complete organs, viz.: solo, swell, great, choir and pedal. The speaking length of the pipes varies from a quarter of an inch to 22 feet. In "full organ" passages the immense bellows displace five thousand cubic feet of air per minute. The installer of the new improvements, F. W. Hedgeland, head expert of the Kimball company, says his firm is prouder of this organ than any dozen others that it has constructed. During the summer season Dr. Walters the famous organist of the Jewish Temple at Washington, D. C., visited Salt Lake and gave a public recital on the organ, and subsequently declared it to represent the end of all organ building knowledge and perfection. During the present year Prof. McClellan has given ninety-two public and fifty-seven private recitals on the great instrument, and the audiences in attendance have ranged from hundreds to thousands.

The Advent

By NEIL MACDONALD
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As shepherds watched their flocks at night
On Bethlehem's dew besprinkled plain.
Around them swept a wave of light
So pure, ethereal, wondrous bright
It ended midnight's reign.
And high in air an angel choir,
With airs seraphic, hailed the birth
Of him who taught us to aspire
To something purer, truer, higher,
Than e'er prevailed on earth.

And angel voices, through the glow
Reflected from the throne of heaven,
To the awed shepherds, bending low,
Proclaimed release from sin and woe
To man redeemed, forgiven,
In manger cot, though lowly laid.
Adoring, star-led sages came
And kneeling low, their gifts displayed;
But one of humbler rank essayed
A wreath with bloom aflame.

The mother took the wreath of flowers
And round the infant's head 'twas bound.
Alas! 'Twas in life's darkest hours,
When hell was leagued with earthly powers,
That he again was crowned,
No gaudy wild flowers then adorn
The pallor of that face divine;
They crowned him, but they crowned in scorn
And, lo, the crown was one of thorn
That marred his brow's outline!

The chief characteristics of the organ are its fullness, roundness and sweetness of tone. In addition to Salt Lake's good fortune it is to hear it almost as frequently as they desire, like that of mighty thunder are instantaneously produced. Mr. McClellan is a native of Utah and a young man whose musical education has been obtained in the best schools of America and Europe. He has already taken a prominent place among the few really great organists of the country. It is to the music of this instrument the great "Mormon" Tabernacle Choir sings its hymns and anthems and from which, together with its capable leader, it secures standing in the musical world. It is a fact generally recognized that a visit to Salt Lake is incomplete without having heard both the choir and the organ, and comparatively few strangers pass through the city's gates without having enjoyed the music of one or both.