



THE Gallery of Art at Washington, founded by the generosity of William W. Corcoran, Esq., affords the most complete individual manifestation to be found in this country of public-spirited interest in the progress of art. Without any restriction, except such as may be imposed by the trustees for the preservation of the institution, this noble gift has been granted unreservedly to the people. It has been placed under permanent charge of an administrative board, and has been wisely established in the national capital. The purpose of the donor was not only that there should be provided a pure and refined pleasure for residents and visitors at the national capital, but that something useful should be accomplished in the development of American genius. The gallery is open daily, Sundays and certain holidays excepted, between the hours of ten A. M. and four P. M., from October 1st to May 1st, and from nine A. M. to four P. M. the remainder of the year. Three days in the week admittance is free; on other days the fee is twenty-five cents. Persons are permitted to draw and copy on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

Whatever be the size of such a collection, its aim should be to furnish as far as possible a comparative view of the different schools and periods of art. This has evidently been the guiding principle in the selection and arrangement of the works in the Corcoran Gallery. Incomplete as such a collection must seem by the side of the vast art-galleries of Europe, the Corcoran Gallery ranks with the four best public art collections in the United States.

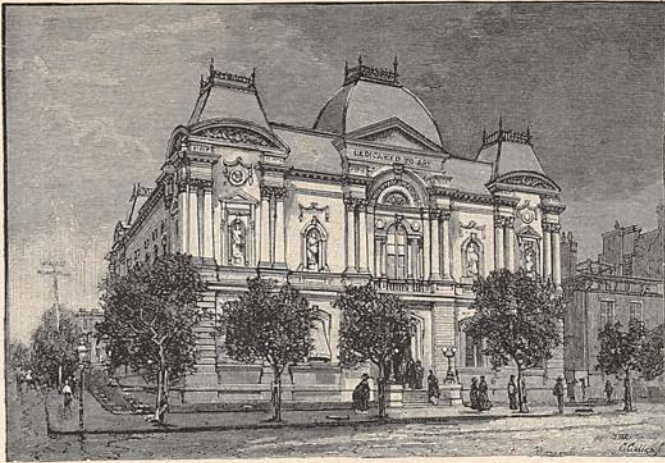
Mr. Corcoran, not satisfied with collecting and giving these works of art, has erected a building for their accommodation at a cost of \$250,000, and has endowed the institution with a fund of \$900,000, yielding an income of over \$60,000. This fund is applied to defraying the current expenses of the gallery,

and to making additions to the exhibits. It is also expected that an art-school will soon be established.

The building stands on the north-east corner of Pennsylvania avenue and Seventeenth street, nearly opposite the new War Department and in plain sight of the White House. It is two stories in height, and unpretentious in general form and finish. Four niches in the front of the gallery hold white marble statues, seven feet high, of Phidias, Michael Angelo, Raphael, and Albert Dürer. These are by Ezekiel of Rome, who is to fill five vacant niches on the west front, where may be seen his statues of Titian and Da Vinci. Entering from Pennsylvania avenue, we find ourselves in a broad hall with a massive staircase in the middle. The ground floor is devoted to sculpture, bronzes, and porcelain, and the second floor to painting. The large central hall on either side of the stair-way is open to the roof, affording light, ventilation, and easy exit in case of fire. From the vestibule, one passes by two corridors, on either side of the central stair-way, which are adorned with statuary, into the Sculpture Hall, which is ninety-five feet long and twenty-four wide, reaching completely across the rear of the building. This is entered from what is called the vestibule of Sculpture Hall, a small octagonal apartment.

The Sculpture Hall leads on the right into two smaller divisions called Sculpture rooms, and on the left into the Hall of Bronzes, which is sixty-one feet in length. All the galleries, both upstairs and down, communicate by arched door-ways, and the floors are sustained by brick arches. These halls were not furnished and opened to the public until 1874, although the erection of the building was begun as far back as 1859, after the plan of Mr. James Renwick, of New York. The civil war arrested the work, and in 1861 the building was occupied by the United States Government for the Quarter-





EXTERIOR OF THE CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART.

master-General's Department, and was so retained until 1869.

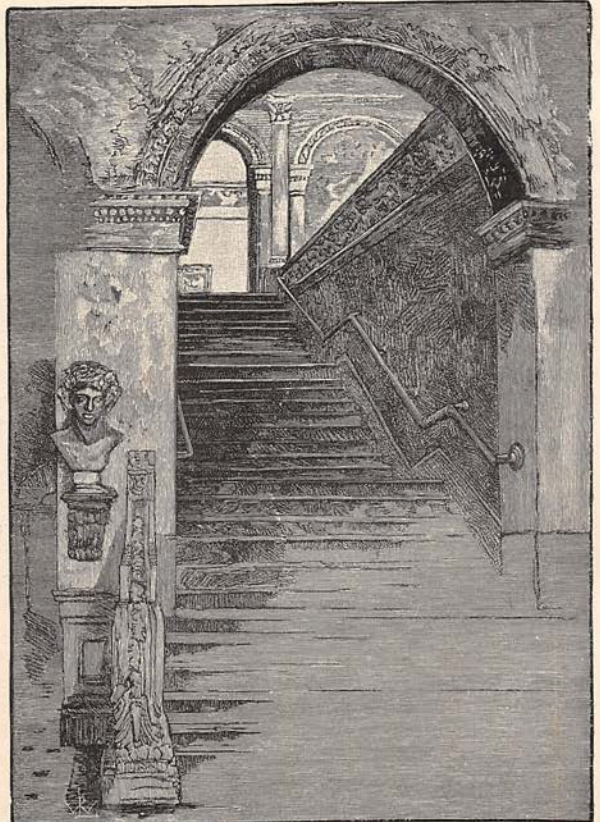
The vestibule is enriched on either hand by a magnificent Japanese lacquered vase of Arita ware eight feet eight inches high. Another interesting object is a cast of a bas-relief of "Phœbus and the Horses of the Sun." This was taken from a triglyph found by Dr. Schliemann in the ruins of the uppermost of the five cities which have succeeded each other on the supposed site of Troy. Along the corridors are arranged casts taken chiefly from examples of Roman sculpture, and on this floor, near at hand, is the well-known statue by Vela, entitled the "Last Days of Napoleon." The original of this statue was purchased by Napoleon III., but this replica is of marble, executed under the eye of the sculptor, who, although a Swiss by birth, belongs to the Modern Italian school. In the Hall of Sculpture the selection of casts is confined chiefly to examples of Greek art. Some of these are already familiar to the public. But a number of the casts, although from originals well known to the antiquary and the artist, are yet but little known to the American public.

Among these casts attention may be called first to those of the Elgin marbles. It is to be regretted that these casts of the Elgin marbles at the Corcoran Gallery have not been accompanied by copies of the so-called Æginetan marbles, the originals of which are at Munich. With the addition of these the art stu-

dent might form a clearer conception of the growth of the leading schools of plastic art in past ages.

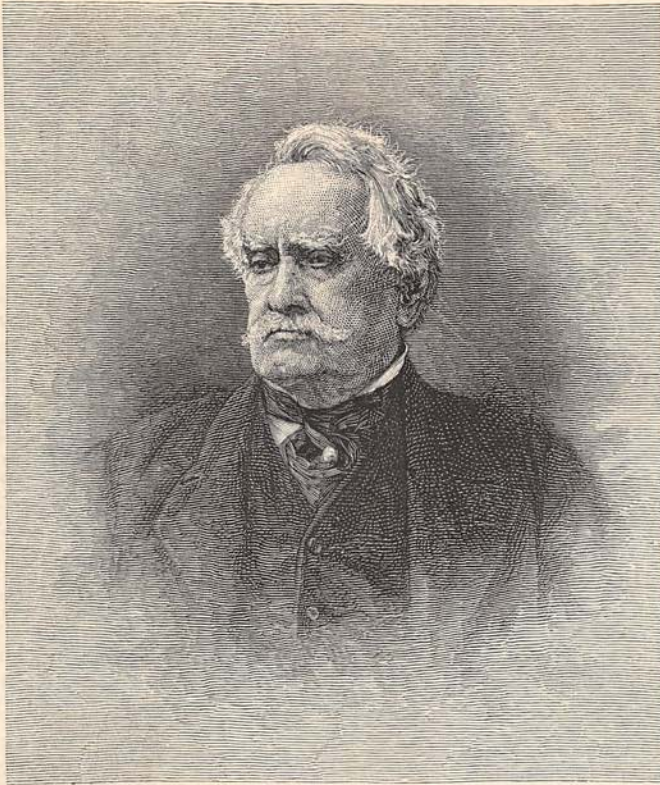
Turning to the right from the Hall of Sculpture we enter a side gallery in which we find four pieces of modern sculpture. The statue of Clytie by the late W. H. Rinehart, of Baltimore, is his best creation, and in gracefulness and beauty compares well with the three other statues with which it is placed in juxtaposition, — the Venuses of Gibson, Canova, and Thorwaldsen.

From this side gallery, devoted to modern statues of Venus, which I am inclined to call the Gallery of Comparison, we pass into the Gallery of Renaissance Sculpture, which is one of the most interesting divisions of this collection. As the name indicates, it contains copies of some of the masterpieces of sculpture pro-



THE MAIN STAIRCASE.





WILLIAM W. CORCORAN.

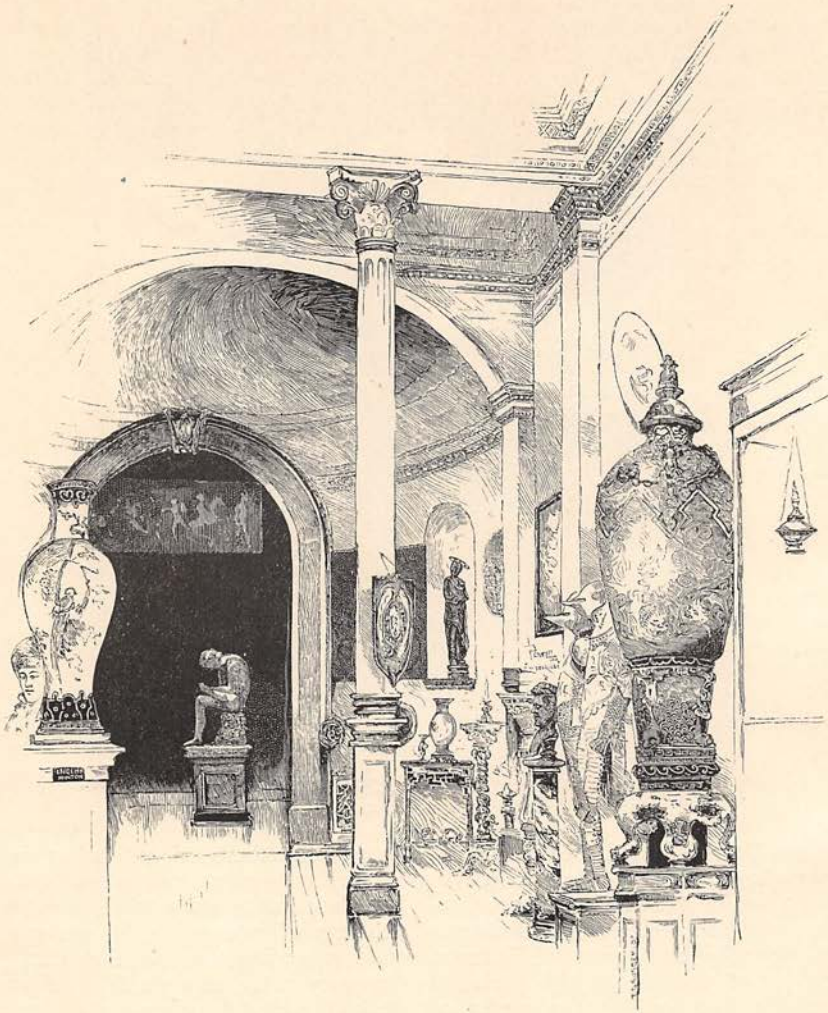
duced when Donatello and Verocchio and Michael Angelo, Ghiberti and Cellini, brought about a revival of the art in Europe, including casts of Michael Angelo's "Prisoners or Slaves" and Ghiberti's gates of Florence. Another type of the art at this period is represented in this hall by the works of Jean Goujon and Germain Pilon, the founders of the modern French school of sculpture. It is by a natural transition that we pass from the contemplation of the school of Jean Goujon to the metallic art, of which a most admirable collection—the finest on this side of the Atlantic—is gathered and beautifully arranged in that part of the Corcoran Gallery called the Hall of Bronzes, which is a lofty apartment elliptical in form, sixty-one feet long and nineteen wide. The center is divided into two sections, containing examples of the masterpieces of classical and contemporary metal-work. In the first are electrotype casts made by Christoffe and Co., of Paris, from the famous Hildesheim antiques unearthed in 1868. These treasures, which consisted of bowls, drinking-cups, saucepans, vases, ladles, tripods and the like, are of silver, and represent different periods of classic art. That they should have

been hidden there ten feet below the surface has naturally given rise to much conjecture. But the facts relating to their concealment, although of interest to the antiquarian, are quite subordinate to the importance of this discovery in the help which it affords in the work of tracing the growth of the arts.

Turning from the metal-work of the ancients to that of the middle ages, we find some magnificent specimens, either electrotype copies by Lionnet Brothers of Paris, or by Elkington of Birmingham. Among the most elaborate and interesting are a splendidly decorated suit of armor that was worn by Henry II., several massive and highly wrought shields and helmets of the sixteenth century, adorned with singularly grotesque and ingenious devices, and a cannon covered with sculptured designs, by Germain Pilon.

Two interesting works in this collection are a pair of bronze statuettes representing Christ and John the Baptist, the originals of which are now in the cathedral at Pisa, and were designed by John of Bologna. Coming down to the art of our own time, we find an admirable copy of the masterpiece of Morel Ladeuil, called the Milton Shield.





IN THE BRONZE-ROOM.

The original is wrought in steel and silver *repoussé*, and with great fertility of fancy represents typical scenes from "Paradise Lost." It was purchased by the British Government for the Kensington Museum, at a cost of \$15,000. A copy of another work of this artist is also here, the Pompeian Toilette. It represents a beautiful Roman lady after the bath, surrounded by her handmaids.

Another division of electrotype reproductions of elegant bronzes is found in a collection numbering some ninety pieces, and including specimens of early European work. Among the most interesting examples in this department are pieces by Donatello and Cellini. Here too are some of the most remarkable works which the art of sculpture has produced since the death of Michael Angelo: I refer to the bronzes of Antoine Louis Barye. Through the ages there have been occasional sculptors who have so

idealized animal life, while grasping its essential characteristics, that they astonish us by the grandeur of their works. But it is to the Assyrians that the world has looked until our day for the finest examples of animal sculpture. The beauty, the power, the fury, the drama of the chase were represented by them with remarkable truth: and the pathos of the statue of the "Dying Lioness," at Nineveh, had not been equaled for thirty centuries until Barye appeared in Paris. Upon the principles of his art Barye grafted a profound study of the anatomy of the subjects he modeled; and thus we find in them an intensity of action that never lapses into sensationalism, for the knowledge of the artist was always so completely at his fingers' ends that he did not need to exaggerate. Nor is the force displayed obtained at the expense of beauty of line. Barye began life in 1796 and died in 1875. Long before he died he was



acknowledged to be one of the most consummate sculptors the world has seen.\* It is therefore a matter of no small moment that not less than one hundred and seventeen of his best works should be brought together at the Corcoran Gallery. Of these bronzes, the "Jaguar Devouring a Hare" perhaps most correctly displays the power of the sculptor, conveying the idea of force with tremendous effect, and yet with a reserve that leaves something to the im-

three other works of less importance, are collected there. In the south-east gallery again, is Rinehart's "Endymion," a beautiful creation, and Powers' "Proserpine," one of the more interesting ideal works of that artist, who, if he added nothing to art-growth, is deserving of much credit for what he accomplished as a pioneer in American art. Three examples of the contemporary Italian realistic school of sculpture, by Caroni, Guarnerio, and



THE SCULPTURE-ROOM.

agination; while the undulating grace of the spine of the jaguar, whose very muscle and sinew and furrow of the fur are quivering with the intense rage of conquest, is one of the astonishing achievements of sculpture. Barye was equally successful in representing the horse and other animals, and also the human figure, as we see in the magnificent groups of "Angélique and Roger mounted upon a Hippogriff," and "Theseus slaying the Centaur." In this connection it is interesting to state that two original water-color studies of animals by this artist are in the picture galleries on the second floor.

We now turn our attention from the plastic to the pictorial art of the Corcoran Gallery, noting in passing a few modern pieces of sculpture by contemporary and chiefly by American sculptors. The small octagon room is devoted to this department, and the well-known "Greek Slave" by Powers, a "Bacchante" by Galt, "Penseroso" by Rinehart, and two or

Trombetta, are remarkable for their technical beauty, but are otherwise of slight importance. Although the collection of casts and original works in the department of plastic art affords to students a very tolerable comparative view of the subject, the paintings of the Corcoran Gallery seem to have been selected upon a different principle. The collection of pictures, occupying beautiful and spacious halls, ninety-five feet long by forty-four feet broad, flanked by two side galleries, is almost entirely modern, and, while containing some excellent work from well-known artists, has also a number of inferior rank. It is to be hoped that the trustees, in making additions to the gallery of paintings, may be able to procure some examples of the great masters of the Flemish, German, Spanish, and Italian schools of the Renaissance, and of the later English school, thus offering the student a symmetrical scale of comparison in judging of the growth of pictorial art.

The French and Italian schools of this century are quite fully represented by exam-

\* An illustrated paper on Barye and his work will appear in a later issue of THE CENTURY.—ED.





PRINCIPAL FIGURE FROM LEROUX'S "VESTAL TUCCIA."

ples of greater or less merit, as is also the American school. There are only four good paintings by English artists,—Thomas Faed, Boughton, and Morland,—all well known, although not seen at their best here, except perhaps the latter, whose "Farm-house" gives one an excellent idea of the forcible, natural style of a painter who, with Constable and old Chrome, antedated by a generation the vigorous technique of the French school of Troyon, Rousseau, and Dupré. The English painters, so far as technical practice is concerned, especially in the laying on of color, have certainly not improved since the time of Morland, although they may be able to talk a great deal more scientifically about the principles of art.

The contemporary art of France, on the other hand, is here represented to a disproportionate degree, but it is fair to add that the examples are generally of a high character, and are adapted to illustrate some of the most recent phases of pictorial art abroad. Gérôme is represented by a large painting called "Cæsar Dead," the first composition of a work with which the public is familiar. In this copy, the figure of which is life-size, we see only the fallen corpse of the great

Cæsar, while in the other the group of conspirators is also visible flying in the distance. Of the two, the one in the Corcoran Gallery seems the more impressive. Like most of the works of this artist, it is quiet, almost dry, in color. Another painting which merits careful study, is Leroux's "The Vestal Tuccia," which took a second-class gold medal at the Paris Exposition of 1874. The Vestal, accused of unchastity, stands on the bank of the Tiber with an uplifted sieve of water (as in the figure on this page), while observers are seen watching breathlessly on either side of the river to discover whether the sieve, by holding the water, will prove the virtue of the beautiful girl whose life is hanging on the test. A work of more brilliance in color is Kaemmerer's "Beach at Scheveningen." A native of Holland, this artist is, however, identified with the most recent school of French art, which has been strongly influenced by two such opposite artists as Corôt and Fortuny. The leading principles of style advocated by these two painters are harmonized and carried almost to an extreme by the school of which Kaemmerer is a prominent disciple. "Values" and "textures" are apparently the watch-words of the art of this painter. The skill displayed by him in reproducing the fashionable groups on the beach of a noted European watering-place—all the delicate tints of dress and landscape adjusted on a perfectly modulated key of color, the admirable drawing and composition, the facile handling of pigments—all so surprises one by its dexterity that he unconsciously finds himself bestowing unqualified admiration on a school which is really not of the first order: a school which cares less for ideas than for form and color, and is satisfied with a realistic but superficial rendering of the externals of material things. At its best, though still undoubtedly excellent, it is not the highest kind of art; for that necessarily includes all this, and ideas besides. Cabanel is represented in the main picture-hall by a large canvas of a style of subject unusual to this painter of lovely women; it is called "The Death of Moses," and does not show the artist in his best vein, although it is a beautiful composition. Angels, almost colossal in size, are seen bearing the dead hero and prophet in their arms through the skies. "Charlotte Corday in Prison" is the title of a painting which is reputed to be one of the most popular in the gallery. It is by Charles Louis Müller, well known as the painter of the great historical composition entitled "The Last Victims of the Reign of Terror."

The late Romantic school of France, led by such men as Géricault, Delacroix, and Decamps, has an example here by Ary Scheffer,





SKETCHES FROM "ON THE BEACH AT SCHEVENINGEN," BY KAEMMERER.

entitled "Count Eberhard." The count is represented weeping in an agony of grief over his dead son, whom he had alienated and then driven to seek his death in battle; while the more recent realistic school, now at the zenith of its influence, is, on the other hand, represented by one of the most characteristic works of Édouard Detaille, the well-known military painter, and pupil of Meissonier. Resembling his master in style, the younger artist, who is about thirty-four, has perhaps shown greater virility and action in his compositions. As yet inferior to De Neuville in tragic dramatization, Detaille is superior as a draughtsman, and is surpassed by no military painter in a knowledge of the details of war. In such a masterly composition as "Le Régiment qui Passe," showing a regiment defiling by the Porte St. Denis, in which a multitude of moving figures is rendered with precision and fidelity to nature, Detaille has placed himself among the foremost artists of the age. Vely, Comte, Japy, Émile Breton, St. Pierre, and Priou are among other recent French artists who have works in this gallery. That of Priou is a large, highly attractive composition called "A Family of Satyrs," representing an idyl of the primeval age of fable. The flesh tints of the figure in the foreground are exquisitely rendered. Recent Flemish art has three ex-



amples here: two interiors by De Brackeleer, and an important work by Portaels called "The Drought in Egypt." The contemporary Italian school of painting has several examples, of which one by Chierici, called "Fun and Fright"—a mischievous urchin startling his little sister—is a composition of undoubted merit, as it is also thoroughly popular in subject. A Swedish painter of the Munich school, Hugo Salmson, also has here a well-composed and attractive work suggesting festal life in the mining regions of Sweden.

Von Thoren, another representative of modern German art, has an admirable painting in this hall, consisting of two dogs lost on a winter's day. Two foreign paintings of merit, antedating this century, are found in this collection, of which one is a composition by





SOME COPYISTS.

Raphael Mengs, called "The Adoration of the Shepherds," formerly in the famous collection of Joseph Bonaparte. The other old painting referred to (which, however, is not owned by the gallery) is by some unknown artist of the Spanish school, and represents Columbus and his sons. In addition to the foreign paintings we have been able to mention, are a number of others, in some case of nearly equal merit. Besides this collection of foreign art, it is pleasant to state that there is also here a tolerable representation of our American painters. Most prominent among the paintings by native artists is a full-length portrait of the founder of the gallery, directly facing the entrance. It is by the late Charles Loring Elliott, one of the best portrait-painters this country has produced. Elliott appears to excellent advantage

in this masterly portrait. Close at hand we observe a thoughtful woodland scene by Durand, called "The Edge of the Forest," an upright representing a glimpse through a group of oaks, beyond which we catch glimpses of a tranquil lake. This is one of the most successful works of one of the earliest of American landscape-painters.

Three excellent examples of the imaginative genius of Thomas Cole hang on the same wall. The "Tornado" is a composition of much power, replete with imaginative force: a curtain of gloom is driving madly over the sky, and the trees are torn by the blast. But, while acknowledging the energy of the composition, we feel at the same time that it was painted too much under the influence of the stirring, but hardly natural canvases of Salvator Rosa. The rocks are





"TWILIGHT," BY LOUIS JAPY.

not like those we see in nature, and the foliage is conventional. "The Departure" and "The Return," by the same artist, form a pair, representing landscapes and groups of figures of the age of chivalry. The contemporary of Cole and Durand, and, like them, one of the three founders of American land-

scape art, Thomas Doughty, has an "Autumn Scene on the Hudson" in this gallery that is tender and silvery in tone and color. Frederick E. Church also contributes a characteristic South American view, called "Scenery of the Magdalena River," not to speak of his well-known painting of "Niagara Falls"; while



"THE WATERING-PLACE," BY SCHREYER.





"THE DRUM-MAJOR," BY ÉDOUARD DETAILLE.

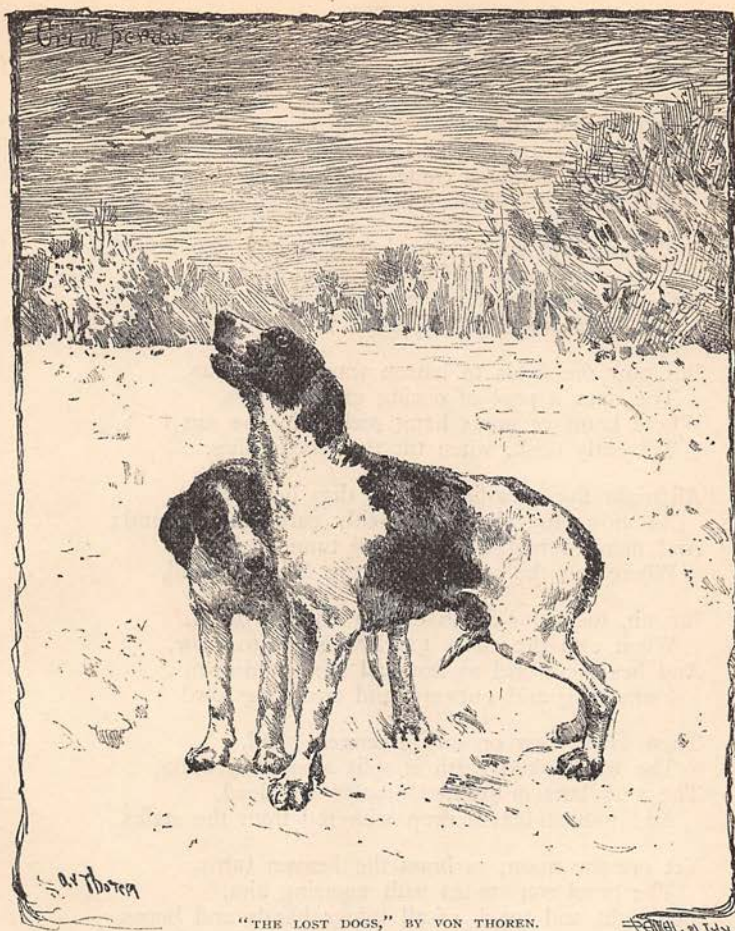
Kensett is well represented by a sunset view on Lake George, which is stronger in technique, and more broad and spirited, than many others of his works. It is interesting in this connection to observe, in the small west-side gallery, an early painting by Inness, which, unlike his later method of broadly treating a subject, is carefully, almost laboriously finished, and effective in color. "The Drove at the Ford" is a good example of James Hart. There is also a clever brook scene by Whittrudge in this gallery. The largest landscape painting in this hall is by Bierstadt,—a view of Mount Corcoran, in the Sierra Nevada.

In addition to the portrait by Elliott, already mentioned, the gallery is enriched by a good number of representative examples of the styles of some of our prominent historical *genre* and portrait painters. We find here

Huntington's "Mercy's Dream," "The Judgment of Paris," by Henry Peters Gray, and Leutze's "Cromwell and Milton"—not, however, one of his best works.

Frank B. Mayer, Ranney, Eastman Johnson, Hayes, the dog-painter, and Tait, are among the artists who represent American *genre* and sporting art in the galleries of painting; but it is to the work of the founder of American *genre* that we turn with most pleasure. Lacking the educational opportunities granted to his successors, William S. Mount produced, notwithstanding, some very satisfactory and entertaining pictures, thoroughly indigenous in character and treatment. We are glad to find such a good example of the American Wilkie in this gallery. Mount never painted a better picture than his "Long Story," in which he





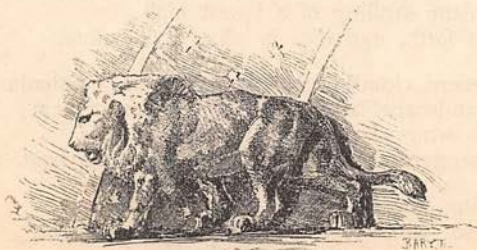
"THE LOST DOGS," BY VON THOREN.

represents a well-known type of the bore and bar-room loafer tiring out the bystanders with one of his unconscionable yarns. Some idea of the importance of the collection of American portraits in the Corcoran Gallery may be gained when we state that it includes works by such artists as Stuart, Rembrandt Peale, Harding, Elliott, Inman, Vanderlyn, Sully, Waldo, and Le Clear,—all prominent, and several preëminent in the department of portraiture.

In this account of the Corcoran Gallery, of course only such works as seemed most im-

portant have been mentioned. We have not intended to criticise, but to make record. Some of the pictures are of a quality so inferior to the best of the collection that one is surprised to find them there, while their room might profitably be occupied by others showing the reigning fashions among our younger American artists. The arrangement of the various departments has been tastefully and judiciously managed by Mr. William MacLeod, the able curator of the Gallery.

S. G. W. Benjamin.



A BRONZE BY BARYE.