

THE EARLY LIFE OF F. M. DREXEL, 1792-1837*

The Peregrinations of a Philadelphia Painter-Banker

DORNBIRN in Vorarlberg, variously known from its bucolic character as "*Die Gartenstadt in Österreichischen Rheintal*," and from its cotton industry "the Vorarlberg Manchester" lies in a fertile valley to the east of the Rhine about seven miles above the entry of that river into Lake Constance. Behind the town rise the wooded heights of the Bregenzer Wald, while the horizon from west to south is everywhere bounded by lofty peaks, the Apenzell Mountains, the Kamor and Hohe Kasten, snow-clad Sentis immortalized by von Scheffel in Ekkehard, the indented Churfürsten, and the mountains of Liechtenstein. Around the town the verdant fields and innumerable orchards invest the whole scene with a feeling of Arcady; and while Dornbirn itself cannot pretend to have the architectural and antiquarian distinction of nearby Feldkirch and Bludenz, yet its old wooden houses and farm buildings, scattered throughout the town and always adjoined by large gardens, have much about them to remind one of a lovely New England village. Dornbirn, always the most populous place in Vorarlberg, had in the 1790's about four or five thousand inhabitants. It was in this town that Francis Martin Drexel first saw the light of day on Easter Sunday, April 7, 1792.

The name Drexel—with its variants Dräxl and Drachsl—is a common but very characteristic one in Western Austria, being frequently found in the Bregenzer Wald, the Ober Inntal, and the

* The main sources for this account are the "Life and Travels of F. M. Drexel, 1792-1826," and the "Journal of Trip to South America." The original MS. of the "Life and Travels," sometimes in the possession of the late John D. Lankenau, is lost, but there are several typescript copies in the hands of various descendants. The pagination of these copies differs considerably. The manuscript of the "Journal" was owned by the late Sarah Drexel Van Rensselaer who had a small edition privately printed about 1916 for distribution among the family. There is no date, place, or printer mentioned, nor is the number of copies given. The MS. is untraced at present and it is greatly to be feared that it, too, has been lost. Probably the largest corpus of Drexel material is in the possession of the author. This includes the MS. accounts, fully itemized, of the South American trip and a number of South American water-colors, along with a considerable number of miscellaneous papers, most of which have been used in this article. Examples of Drexel's painting may be seen in the Drexel Institute, the Mary Drexel Home, besides in private collections such as those of Harrison Morris, Esqr., Mrs. Andrew Van Pelt, Mrs. Drexel Dahlgren, and Mrs. Seton Henry.

Ötztal, while Dornbirn is still full of people of the name.¹ Francis Drexel's parents seem to have come of good yeoman stock, presumably devout Catholics, solid, simple folk who had lived in the district since time immemorial.² His father Francis Joseph Drexel forsook the soil to engage in trade, becoming one of the most prosperous merchants of the town, a position which unfortunately he was to lose in the Napoleonic wars.

Francis Drexel's childhood seems to have passed peacefully enough, for until the Austerlitz campaign Vorarlberg was a quiet backwater, almost entirely free from the belligerent cares of the rest of Europe. Aside from six months tutoring with the parish priest of Gaissau, some miles northwest of Dornbirn, and the occasional visits to some relatives who had a farm at Langenegg in the northern Bregenzer Wald, he grew up in his native place until 1803, when his father wishing to give the boy the best education he could afford, sent him to a convent school in Italy. It was old Francis's idea to have the son thoroughly grounded in languages, that he might be fully qualified to follow up the Drexel business, so accordingly the boy was taken to the town of Saronno, midway between Milan and Como, and there entered at the celebrated school of the Convent della Madonna. Here young Francis remained over a year, learning Italian so that he spoke it like a native, also learning French, but forgetting most of his native tongue in the process.³ Yet the first crisis of the boy's life was at hand, for Napoleon's Austrian campaign of

¹ The names of four Drexels appear on the town war memorial, all killed on the Italian front.

² The following genealogy of the Drexel family was prepared by Herr H. Hammerle of Dornbirn from the church records there, Herr Hammerle was a descendant of the Willhelm family:

Jacob Drexel, —, m. Eva Womer.

George Drexel, —, m. Anna M. Hamerle.

Jacob Drexel, 1664, m. Katherine Diew.

Francis Xavier Drexel, 1715, m. Mariana Jüssengen.

Francis Joseph Drexel, 1762, m. Magdalena Willhelm.

Francis Martin Drexel.

Lodevick Willhelm, 1684, m. Katharine Huter.

Thomas Willhelm, 1722, m. Susanna Henburger.

Magdalena Willhelm, —, m. Francis Joseph Drexel.

Francis Martin Drexel.

³ He later lamented that while on his return, he soon re-learned German, yet he quickly forgot all his French and Italian.

1805 brought home to the burghers of the Tyrol that they were not living in a Utopia. The heavy failure of the father Drexel's partner, caused wholly by the war and the consequent economic condition of the country, brought great losses and distress on the Drexel family, nearly impoverishing them. Young Francis was brought home at once from Italy; on December 2, 1805, the Austrians were crushed at Austerlitz; and on December 26 the Treaty of Pressburg was signed, ceding all Tyrol to the Napoleonic state of Bavaria.

At the age of thirteen young Drexel found himself again in Dornbirn, his education abruptly ended (for it had been intended to send him to France after Italy), his family's fortunes gone, and his country under a foreign yoke. In his *Life* he tells us that he had absolutely no inclination for business, but a strong bent towards painting, which he had had since infancy. His father, now a discouraged and disappointed man, was doubtless under the circumstances glad enough to be relieved of further worry about the boy's education, and was probably glad enough to let the boy follow his own desires. In consequence we learn that on New Year's Day, 1806, Francis Drexel was apprenticed to a painter in the village of Wolfurt, just outside Bregenz and about five miles north of Dornbirn. Who this village Titian was, we know not, nor what pictures he painted, but during the three years in the Wolfurt atelier young Francis did undoubtedly acquire a certain proficiency in his chosen profession. Artistic tradition was not wholly lacking in the Vorarlberg of those days; the lyrical Angelica Kauffmann came from Schwarzenberg in the Bregenzer Wald,⁴ while three of Austria's greatest Baroque architects Thumb, Beer, and Moosbrugger all were born and lived in the district. To be taught by a local worthy, who may have been merely a housepainter, was by no means as poor an artistic education as it sounds today.

After three years of study at Wolfurt, a second and far graver crisis took place in young Drexel's life—the Tyrolese revolt of 1809. Goaded by the oppression and tyranny of the French and Bavarians, who bled them with taxes and drafted their young men for Napoleon's armies, this proud people rose under their great patriot Andreas Hofer

⁴ There is some doubt as to whether she was born at Schwarzenberg or Chur in Graubunden. The parish church at Schwarzenberg contains a fine altarpiece by her, as well as a marble portrait bust.

and in April overwhelmed the Bavarians at Sterzing. A second hostile army was summarily dealt with by these hardy peasants in the two smashing victories of Berg Isel, outside Innsbruck, May 25 and 29; and a third French army, this time under Marshal Lefebvre, was routed on the same field on August 13. For several months the gallant Hofer ruled Tyrol in the Emperor's name efficiently and well, until (after the further betrayal of Tyrol by Austria in the Treaty of Schönbrunn) an overwhelming French force brought the end of Hofer's government, as well as the brutal execution, on February 20, 1810, of that noble character by the ruthless Napoleon.

Vorarlberg at this period of history was an integral part of Tyrol, and its natives, Francis Drexel among them, considered themselves as good Tyrolese as the men of Rattenberg and Brixen.⁵ They found their leader in Dr. Anton Schneider of Bregenz, "the Hofer of Vorarlberg," who however was not to have even the temporary success of the Sandwirt of St. Leonard. Young Drexel, now a youth of 17, joined the rising, but little is known of his activities in it.⁶ The Vorarlberg rising was more sporadic than the main one, and not so well managed, while the Franco-Bavarian forces used better strategy. A heavy skirmish at Hohenems on May 29 resulted in the withdrawal of the Bonapartist troops, but the Austrian success was short-lived. Coming swiftly up the Lechtal from Reutte, the enemy took Schneider's forces in the rear, cut them off from the rest of the Tyrol, and dispersed them without a battle, forcing them to capitulate on August 4. France's vengeance was swift and stern. Every able-bodied man and boy from 16 to 45 became liable for service in various units of the Bonapartist forces. Having no desire to serve against his own country or to risk his life in the enemy's army, he determined to leave the country and escape to neutral Switzerland. Accordingly on August 9, but four days after the capitulation, he secretly left Dornbirn at night with a companion called Casper Thurner, and made his way undetected across the Rhine into Swiss territory.

⁵ The present administrative arrangements date from 1815, when under Metternich Vorarlberg was created an independent county with Bregenz as the capital. Francis Drexel's lifelong devotion to the Tyrolese cause is shown by the fact that he always carried with him a water color of Hofer and, as a lucky-piece, a Tyrolese twenty kreuzer pewter coin—one of the "Zwanzigers" minted in 1809 under Hofer's direction at Hall in the Unter Inntal.

⁶ Francis Drexel the father appears to have been an officer among the insurgents.

From then on for five years the youth was practically a fugitive, wandering over Switzerland, as well as France and Italy, always poor, and sometimes penniless, leading a vagabond existence by picking up whatever work he could wherever he could; but never losing his spirit and always keeping his self-respect.⁷ After staying a week with the priest at Diepoldsau, on the Swiss bank of the Rhine, young Drexel set out to look for work, and proceeding through Apenzell, got his first job in the village of Trogen. Here he was employed as housepainter by one Meyer, and for his pains he was boarded and paid forty cents a week;⁸ this lasted but six weeks, and by October he was on his way across the Splügen into Italy. Stopping first at Chiavenna he painted two coaches, a job which took him six weeks, and then hoping that he might be admitted as a student in the Milan Academy, he proceeded thither only to find no vacancy there nor work of any kind

⁷ This table epitomizes the Odyssey of Francis Drexel until his arrival in Philadelphia: Born Dornbirn, Vorarlberg (then part of Tyrol), April 7, 1792.

In Dornbirn, 1792-1803.

In Milan, 1803-1805.

In Dornbirn and Wolfurt, 1805-9.

In Switzerland, Aug. 9, 1809-October, 1809.

In Chiavenna, October-November, 1809.

In Milan, November-December, 1809.

Back to Switzerland, late December, 1809.

In Luzerne, Winter 1810-end of July, 1810.

In Basel, August-October, 1810.

In Biel, November, 1810-March, 1811.

To Paris, March, 1811.

In Paris, April, 1811.

Return to Basel, May, 1811.

In Basel, May, 1811-January, 1812.

In Dornbirn, 1812.

In Zürich, February, 1812.

In Basel, March-June, 1812.

In Luzerne, July-December, 1812.

In St. Gall, January, 1813.

In Luzerne, February, 1813-July, 1814.

In Geneva, August, 1814-October, 1814.

In Dornbirn, November, 1814-end of February, 1815.

In Bern, spring 1815-April, 1817.

In Wurtemberg and Basel, April, 1817.

Started down the Rhine, April 2, 1817.

Arrived Amsterdam, May 10, 1817.

Sailed from Texel, May 17, 1817.

Arrived Philadelphia, July 28, 1817.

⁸ In each case he gives the equivalent in U. S. currency.

in the city. He was, however, kindly received by the Morandi family at Saronno, whom he had come to know when a schoolboy at the Convent, and who now pressed him to stay the winter. But wanderlust seems to have gripped the young man, for he refused this kind invitation, and with pack on back he tramped again across the Splügen amid the snows of December.

Near Chur he fell in with another pedestrian, a man recently discharged from the army, who had spent eight years in one of the Swiss regiments in French service. Together they proceeded to Walenstadt, where the inns were so full that they had to share the same bed. Drexel was footsore and weary; he slept like a log, hearing nothing. On arising the next morning he was thunderstruck to find his pockets picked and all his money gone; and although he openly accused the soldier and complained to the authorities, he never saw a penny more. He now found himself absolutely without money, in a strange land in midwinter, friendless and with no prospect of work, "which brought tears in my Eys." In this extremity he was comforted by a kind woman who, seeing his distress, gave him some wine and enabled him to take the boat which went the length of the lake of Walensee to Weesen—ten miles. On the boat his luck took a turn for the better, as he chanced to meet a merchant of Feldkirch named Herburger, a friend of his father's who had been mixed up in the revolt and who had deemed it wise to stay clear of Tyrol for a while. Herburger treated the hungry youth to a square meal and continued to bear all expenses as far as the Monastery of Einsiedeln. Here they parted company, Drexel proceeding to Luzern with the advice of Herburger to go from house to house on the road, begging for food and shelter as German journey-men were wont to do.

In Luzern the youth fortunately found work and was also boarded by his employer, but his recompense for his labors was only thirty-two cents a week. His companions were greatly addicted to cards and gaming, and succeeded in leading him into such evil ways that he usually lost his wages for weeks ahead; and was so poor that his clothes were in rags and he was practically barefoot—this in an Alpine winter. About Easter, 1810, he renounced the vice of gambling for a time, at least, moved to another lodging, and asked his employer for a substantial increase in wages, which—wonderful to relate—he received. From that time forward he was intensely economical.

Hoping to better his fortunes elsewhere he left Luzern that summer for Basel, proceeding—as usual—on foot, and spending a sleepless night in the village of Durnen near Alten where he found clots of blood on the bedclothes and all over the floor. Leaving this sanguinary caravanserai as early as he could, he walked on to Basel, sleeping for several hours in a field on the way. At Basel he secured employment with one Peter Biermann at two French crowns a week—the highest wages that he had yet received. While there is no specific reference to the nature of Drexel's work in Basel—or elsewhere during this stage of his career—it is most probable that he was employed chiefly as a housepainter. Judged by modern American standards this sounds the complete opposite of anything artistic, yet when we remember that even now the walls of many buildings in Tyrol, Bavaria, and Switzerland are gaily decorated with religious and mythological scenes and figures we must conclude that when there is no demand for portraiture the job of housepainter in these parts is a very good artistic second-best.

Here he worked till the end of October when he was laid off (being the last employed); and although promised work by Biermann in the spring, he decided to try his luck elsewhere, and so betook himself to Biel. At this town he was employed as coach painter at eighty cents a week by one Lederer, who was the local postmaster, soon becoming the ablest man at that work in the establishment. But his spirit was strangely restless and with the advent of spring, 1811, he joined forces with a fellow-workman, one Ludwig Krone of Hamburg, and set out for Paris. They traveled in one of Lederer's post coaches as far as Pruntrut, and then on foot to Besançon, where Drexel had some trouble about his passport. This cleared up, they walked on to Dole, where they decided to send ahead their packs, then from Dole to Dijon, where they felt sufficiently on a spree to have a bottle of champagne. Beyond Dijon they fell in with an odd pair, one, a very distinguished looking French gentleman and the other a Spanish officer who had been imprisoned in Dijon. Stopping at an inn these two worthies persuaded Krone and Drexel to play cards with them; Drexel lost enough money to have his suspicions aroused and to stop playing at once, but his companion was too gullible, and ere they finished the poor Hamburger had lost every penny he had—eighteen guineas—then his watch, and lastly his seals. Drexel was all for

thrashing the sharpers, and calling aside his companion proposed that one pitch into the Frenchman and the other attack the Spaniard, but Krone was a man of weak spirit, and refused.

Proceeding by coach via Auxerre to Fontainebleau and then by boat down the Seine they reached Paris early in April with every intention—on Francis Drexel's part, at least—of making a considerable sojourn in the capital. But unlike many of his descendants he simply hated the place, and after five weeks (during three of which he was employed in the Faubourg St. Antoine) he was in full flight for Switzerland. He did, however, see Napoleon at a distance—not that that did him much good.

In May he was back in Basel, having come by Troyes, Chaumont, and Belfort. Lack of work there drove him to Mülhausen in Alsace where he stayed several weeks painting coaches. Not liking the place he returned to Basel and found employment with his old boss Biermann, being paid the very high wage of four French crowns a week and having thirteen journeymen under him. For the first time he now had enough money to live comfortably, and he even indulged in the luxury of fine clothes; but the situation was too good to last, and the jealous fellow-workmen all conspired against him, and made things so disagreeable for him that after about six months he determined to leave Basel and to visit Dornbirn.

Near the end of January, 1812, he set out in his best clothes with money in his pocket, and proceeding via Waldshut, Schaffhausen, and Constance, reached Dornbirn one night after an absence of two and a half years. Thinking it best not to expose himself he went to the house of an uncle named Luger where he met his sister and her fiancé, and unobserved they proceeded to his father's house. The meeting with his mother was very warm and affectionate. It happened that there was a masked ball being held in Dornbirn that night, and thither brother and sister proceeded, their faces hidden behind black handkerchiefs. No one recognized Francis Drexel, although from his size and fashionable dress many thought him to be the governor, "for which my sister got rather wrongfully suspected by bad tongues and equal base minds, and furnished such persons talk for sometime afterwards."

His stay in Dornbirn was destined to be short, for even then Napoleon was recruiting his great army for the Russian campaign, and the very day after Drexel's arrival an order went out for all

young men to appear at the government house for physical examination for military service. It was hence imperative that he be got out of the country secretly and without delay. As soon as the conscription order had gone through, the frontiers were automatically closed, and even the ferryman at Buren, on the Rhine west of Dornbirn, had the strictest of orders not to let any young man across. Francis Drexel, the father, sought to bribe the ferryman as well as the corporal of the guard, but to no purpose, and it looked very much as if the youth would have to perish on the steppes of Russia after all. At last, however, the ferryman was prevailed upon to leave the boat unlocked, and when he and the guard were at supper at a nearby public house, the Drexels, *père et fils*, got into the boat, and rowed across to Switzerland. Here they parted, the young man for St. Gallen and Zürich, and his father back to Dornbirn by another ferry to avoid suspicion.

As his passport was not in order young Francis could not run the risk of entering Zürich unless unobserved, but he sent his luggage ahead, and putting on his best clothes walked leisurely through the city gates, hat under arm, and looking contemplatively at the ground before him—and the sentinel, doubtless thinking him a young gentleman of the place just out for a stroll, never stopped him. Here he found employment with a man named Huber, but the pay was small and after a month he decided to go on to Basel.

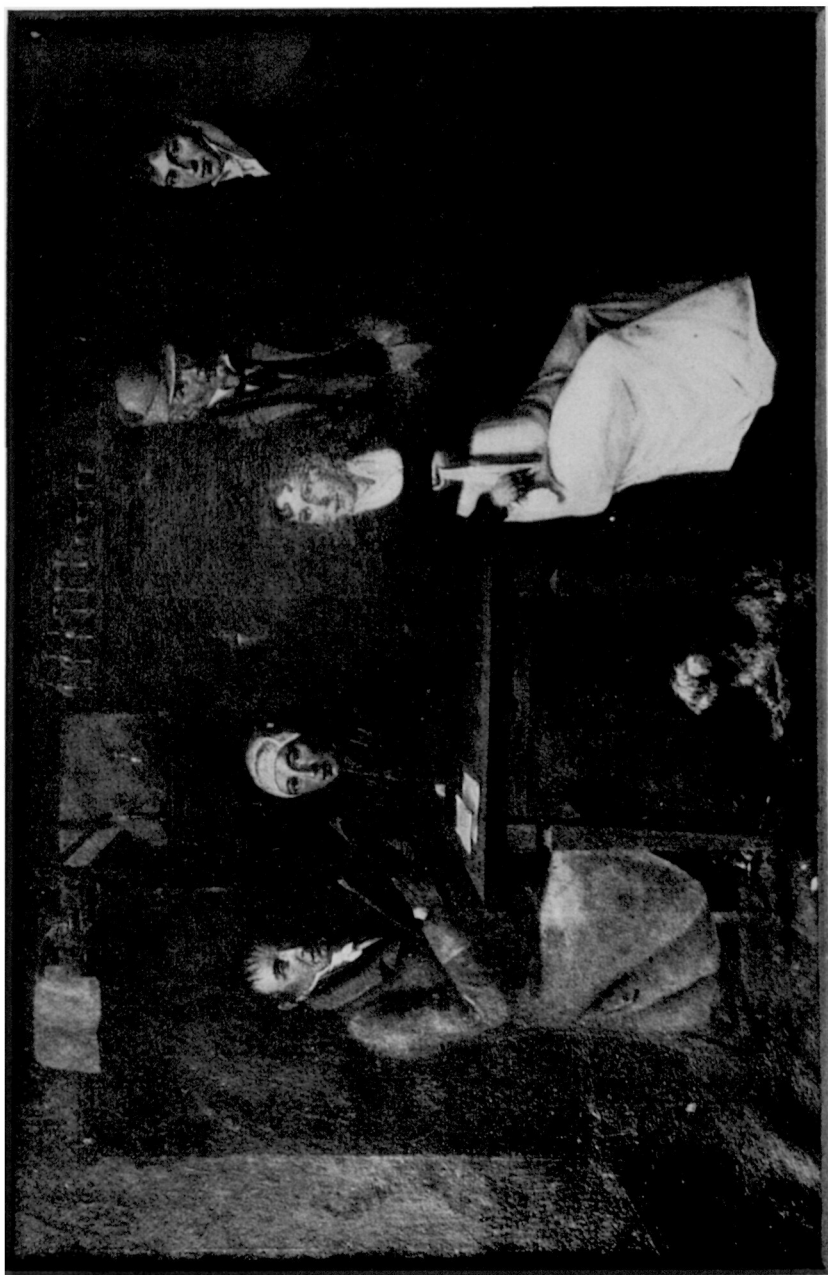
After some trouble about his passport he left Zürich and on reaching Basel went at once to his old employer Biermann, only to find that his place had been filled by his able apprentices. For four months he contrived to get work of some sort in Basel, in the meantime negotiating with one Gilly of Luzern for work there. Gilly promised him his board, one French crown a week and full winter's employ. In July Drexel went to Luzern and worked several months for Gilly, but about Christmas his employer broke the contract, reducing the pay to half a crown. Drexel accordingly took his leave and proceeded to St. Gallen, being determined to set up business on his own account. But St. Gallen proved a bit too close to Tyrol, and after eight or ten days there, with every prospect of success before him, he was recognized by an old acquaintance from Dornbirn who brought him evil tidings from home. This man told him how his father had been compelled to draw a lot for him in the conscription, how he had drawn 41 and all men to 43 had been called up, how the father had in consequence been

arrested and fined heavily, and how young Drexel had therefore forfeited his citizenship as well as any patrimony which he might inherit. This distressing intelligence quite naturally filled the youth's heart with bitter sorrow; but not knowing what to do about it, he wrote his sister, who visited him, and they tearfully poured out their woes to each other.

St. Gallen being untenable, the unhappy young man set out for Luzern, where his extremity forced him to accept work for low wages. There he remained a year and a half, well and unmolested, until July, 1814. Then he went to Geneva, where he helped an aquatinter for a fortnight, and so on to Lausanne where, after working six weeks for one Hubacher, he was fortunate enough to have considerable instruction in painting from Professor von Sonnenschein of the local art school. So he continued until late October of that year when the downfall of Napoleon brought Vorarlberg back to Austria, and the granting of a general amnesty made it safe for young Drexel to return home, which he did straightway.

His homecoming was joyful but quiet, and for a month he lived peacefully at his father's house. One Sunday in church, however, he met Herr Lander, the richest man of the town, who told him that the Emperor Francis was expected to pass through Dornbirn on the morrow, and that the authorities were most anxious to have an appropriate painting for the occasion. Drexel agreed to do the job, and by six o'clock Monday morning—having worked continuously from Sunday noon—he had done a huge water color of Francis, Alexander of Russia, and the King of Prussia, all kneeling in thanksgiving after the Battle of Leipzig; all the figures being life-size. This great work was speedily incorporated in an imposing triumphal arch; at eight the militia turned out, and at ten the Emperor drove through the arch and was presumably awe-struck by the beauty of the painting. In any case Drexel was presented to His Majesty, who condescended to ask the young man where he had learned painting and how long he had been at it, and directed his secretary to note down Francis's name in the records.

The royal visit was nothing if not brief, the Emperor making a hasty inspection of the local industries and departing for Feldkirch at noon. Yet the more sanguine of Drexel's friends encouraged him with the hope that his royal highness would send the budding artist to a good



THE DREXEL FAMILY IN DORNBIERN, 1815

From left to right: Franz Josef Drexel, father of Francis M. Drexel (b. 1762); Magdalena Wilhelm Drexel, mother of Francis M. Drexel; Susanna Drexel (b. 1789), his sister; Anton Drexel (b. 1796), his brother; Francis M. Drexel.

The original picture was once in the possession of Mrs. John G. Waumough; its present whereabouts is unknown.

academy; but of course no such luck followed, and by the end of February, 1815, the disillusioned artist, ever suffering from wanderlust, took his leave of Dornbirn and of his family forever.

His ambition, with the wide world before him, was to be a portrait painter, a good and successful one. Even in the brief winter at Dornbirn he had made a beginning of this career, painting several portraits (very cheaply, as he tells us) as well as the quite creditable conversation piece of the Drexel family. At his father's suggestion he first went across Bodensee to the Württemberg side, where the old man had some friends. He first tried Meersburg and then Friedrichshafen, but neither with much success, albeit he fared better at Rorschach on the Swiss side. He charged four French crowns a portrait, although in the case of his Rorschach landlady, he did it for half price. Returning to the German side, he worked for some time in Langenargen, with some success, and then took his way for Switzerland, doing some pictures at Berne, and finally landing at Basel. It was here that, after painting some portraits successfully, the idea of going to America first came to him. "The prospect being a novel one to go to such a distant place, several whose acquaintance I made went also, and above all one fool makes many, I resolved to go too and see that other half of the World or at least a Portion of it, I reasoned to myself since my native place having but five thousand inhabitants would never employ me professionally, and being obliged to be from home it would be of no wether [*sic*] I was One Hundred, or Ten Thousand miles off. . . . If I did not do well would return after six months, but if on the contrary six years, but by no means stay."⁹

Accordingly he made a bargain with a man named Halter for his passage down the Rhine to Amsterdam whither five hundred other emigrants, many bound for America, were about to sail in six boats. Of the river journey Drexel wrote: "We embarked the 2nd of April, 1817, a very favorable day, the whole town in motion to see so many go so far from their native home; it was about half past four in the afternoon that all were shipped and ready, and we parted with many a sigh and good wish from the multitude assembled, which amounted to thousands, of Relations and others, proceeded, but a few leagues, disembarked for the night and remained the following day; the 7th we arrived at Strasburg, remained one day, 9th Spier, 10th Mann-

⁹ "Life and Travels," 19.

heim, went to the theatre here found it very good, 12th Mayence, 13th Coblenz and Bonn, 15th Coelln, 18th Dusseldorf and Urdinggen, here we encountered very strong head winds, could not proceed for one day, a passenger had died in one of the boats, he was buried on the bank of the Rhein in his cloths, without any Coffin or ceremony, nor the least sympathy of the other fellow Passengers, the most of them who were present I am sorry to say made a sport of it, 19th Wessel, a strong fortification in Possession of the Prussians, here we were all ordered to leave the boats, commanded to stand in a file of each boat separate."¹⁰

A rigid passport examination took place at Wessel near the Dutch frontier, and as Drexel's passport was not in order (not having been endorsed at Basel) he was compelled to stay there nearly three weeks while his passport was sent back to Switzerland to go through the necessary red tape. He consoled himself during the weary hours at Wessel by painting several portraits.

At last his passport was returned, and on May 10 he continued by boat down the Rhine. A serious quarrel with his fellow passengers, caused by his proposal that they pool their financial resources, made him leave the boat at Rhenen by Duurstede and proceed to Utrecht, in company with two Frenchmen and a weaver, in a small craft. From Utrecht to Amsterdam he made the journey in a packet boat, and in the Dutch metropolis found the immigrants for America assembled.

Drexel's account of his voyage from Amsterdam to Philadelphia is so vivid that I give it in full:¹¹

Here [in Amsterdam] I found my old Companions who left me behind at Wessel, and who were to sail in three days from the Texel, a Mr. Bayer who was brought up a Merchant, and who had a young brother and Sister with him, as also a few thousand Dollars in Watches, Jewelry, and Cash, has undertaken to contract with the Captain, (Richards) for all Passengers, in the Steerage for eighty Dollars. Printed Contracts were Circulated among the Passengers, by them aproved, and Mr. Bayer entrusted to have duly signed and executed for the whole of the Passengers, the list Promised, Mondays Potatoes with dried Codfish, Tuesday, Pork and Sauercraut, Wednesday Codfish & Potatoes, Thursday, Beef and Rice, Fryday, Pork and Beans Saturday, Pork and Souer Crout, Sunday the same as Thursday: One quart Water, 1 lb Ship Bread and two glasses Gin per day; Beer the first 3 weeks, One pound butter and quantity of Cheese per week. . . . Those were to consist the fare. Mr. Bayer advised me to go with them, especially as he some other friends and myself were to have a

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 22-25.

room made for our own accomodation which he understood with Capt. Mess for ourselves and live like May-bobs. [Nabobs?]

I took under such favorable aspects my Passage from Capt. Richards, in the Ship John of Baltimore, paid Eighty Dollars, the Capt. did not understand German nor French I had therefore to conclude my bargain through an interpreter. Mr. Bayer being with me recd. a favorable answer to every inquiry, recd. a receipt for Payment in advance &c. . . For meanwhile some of the better sort of Farmers to whom I made propositions arrived in Amsterdam, saw all or more difficulties I pointed out to them, entreated me to stay with them help them to get a Passage, and for so doing they engaged to pay my Passage for me, but my Passage was paid and engaged.

The 16th of May in the Evening Mr. Bayer, Brother, Sister, Halter, Christian Smith and myself left Amsterdam in a small schooner for the Texel where the ship lay at Anchor, and in which were allready 350 Passengers who had been there for ten days expecting the Capt. every day to proceed, but the Capt. wanted more Passengers, we arived the next day, 17th at about noon, to Mr. Smith and myself contrary to my expectation was assigned a birth in the steerage. Mr. Bayer & Co. had an apartment but it so happened that they wished the room for them selfs, to my remonstrations I was laughed at, in the evening the Captain came on Board, and the 18th, on a Sunday about noon Anchor was weighed and we went under sail. I took immidiatly sea sick and remained so for about 20 days, my provision accumulated day after day, no appetite, that I gave it to who made aplication, for the first fourteen days we got full rations, but now allready we were put to half allowance, when I had no difficulty to find Customers. We passed the Straits of Dover at one at night, the next day to our Surprise we saw a new fatt, stout, red faced Gentleman Passenger issue from the Cabin. Some Swiss Passenger at once knew him to be one of the Principal Generalls of Napoleon, by name Van Dame. 21st to 25th we were becamed before the Isle of Wight, the 11th of June spoke an English Shipp from Canada. Our rations having been reduced to half the usual allowance there was great discontent among fathers of Familys, who had many Children, they eating generally as much a grown persons, but having to pay or paid but half Passengers, half rations was only as a matter of course allowed them, several of them came to me and begged me to remonstrate, especially since I had been intimately acquainted with Mr. Bayer, a Capt. Melvin from Bremen but Married in New York lossed his Vessel in Europe, and held in the Ship the situation to weigh out and deliver the rations. I proceeded to him with a request to know why we did not get now but one half of the Rations, he without further ceremony seased me by the throat, threatening me at the same time with putting me in Iron, . . . those who instigated me to speak, stood along side of me motionless, and I had to take the insult as well as abuse from Mr. Bayer of all sorts, however it produced this effect that it was agreed to sue the Capt. whenever we should arive in America. . . .

The 18th, steered to a Ship which was allready two days in sight, spoke her, a Russian Ship with emigrants from Antwerp to Baltimore; July 15th, spoke a ship from New Orleans for England the 17th, about two hours after dark a Vessel hailed us, commanded us to heave to, sent a boat with an officer on Board, fear and consternation prevailed, we were comanded to go to our birth, a search was expected, Genl. Van Dame hid, however, after examining the ships papers

and the ship generally, they informed us that they were Mexican Patriots, they had a brig with them that they said was Spanish, and which they had taken a few days before, they left eight days previous Baltimore, and left us papers from that City: . . . the 20th, the Cables were agin bro't from the hold, the Anchors repaired which was to us a agreeable and joyfull sign, 22nd, we spoke a Ship which was left the evening before the Delaware, and at $\frac{1}{2}$ before 11 o'clock A. M. at last we discovered land, a person who makes the first voyage, and that a long one, and who had allmost half of the time been sea sick may be judge of the most unmixed pleasure which I felt at that moment, an hour after we recd. the Pilot at two P. M. we entered the Delaware, at five we had a severe storm, left both Anchors go, got head Winds, and on the 25th at 9 A. M. we reached the Lazarets, we were all ordered on Shore for 24 hours, 26th, we again went on board in the evening, and the 27th, half past 11 at night we anchored oposit Callowhill Street in the stream, the 28th, at 4 P. M. those who had paid for their Passage were permitted to go on Shore: thus it will be seen that from the day leaving Amsterdam until my arival at Philadelphia was 72 days.

His entrance into our city is therefore quite suggestive of Benjamin Franklin's appearance a century earlier; a young man, a complete stranger, with the world before him and but a few dollars in his pocket. He brought but one letter of introduction, to Mr. Rieder, an artist who lived at Seventh and Spruce Streets, and immediately on landing he repaired to this house to obtain lodging. Rieder was sick, and sent Drexel to a family named Grundloch who lived in Broad Street. After staying the first night with one Bush, Drexel went to Grundloch's and stayed six weeks, before he established himself in his first studio at 131 South Front Street.

No time was lost in starting his career as an artist; within a month of landing he had painted Mrs. Grundloch and her daughters, and was well along with a conversation piece of Mr. Gaul, the brewer, and his family. His energy and activity procured him a prominent place in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in their 1818 Exhibition, where he showed no less than nine oil paintings and two drawings. These included two male and three female portraits, a self-portrait, a Magdalene, a Beggar—"Give us this day" etc.—and a picture entitled "Love." Clearly he had managed to make a good start as a portraitist, not in a class with Sully, but an adequate painter for those who could not afford the leader of the art in Philadelphia.

In spite of the *éclat* with which he burst into the Academy in 1818, he sent but two canvases to the exhibition the following year, both male portraits, while in 1820 he showed a male portrait, a female portrait, and a copy of Trumbull's Death of General Montgomery (now



MRS. GRUNDLOCH: DREXEL'S FIRST PORTRAIT IN PHILADELPHIA

The original is in the author's possession.

in the Drexel Institute). In 1822 and 1823 he gave up exhibiting and his name does not appear in the catalogue, but in 1824 he was back again with a portrait of General Alexander Ogle, a large conversation piece with no less than thirteen figures, and two pictures entitled "cat and kittens." The following year the picture of himself with his wife and daughter (now at the Mary Drexel Home) was exhibited, also a canvas of a lady, but after that year there is no record of his exhibiting at the Academy. For more than eight years he worked industriously in Philadelphia at his chosen field, in which he neither starved in a garret like Van Gogh nor made a fortune like Sir Joshua Reynolds, but in his own words "continued to do middle well." From this period date the considerable number of chalk drawings, largely from antique casts, in the author's collection, which may indicate either that he took in pupils or that he constantly practiced to improve his draughtsmanship. He also attained some proficiency as a miniaturist.

In addition to painting, Drexel soon after arrival applied himself with his characteristic energy towards mastering the English language, with such success that he was soon able to write idiomatic English in the characteristic English "copybook" hand of the period—whereas his German hand always remained the most illegible cursive German script. For practice he not only copied good specimens of prose and poetry, but he had more original flights of the imagination, and there exists a mythical conversation between himself and Benjamin Franklin, which Drexel evidently wrote for grammatical practice, as well as to elucidate his ethics. It would appear that Drexel had the greatest admiration for Franklin and took him as a model. The following passage is a fair sample:

Drexel

Men are subject to various inconveniences merely thro' lack of a smal share of courage, which is a quality very necessary in the comen occurences of life, like in battle. Many impertinancies do we daily suffer with great uneasiness, because we have not courage enough to conquer our dislike. And why may not a man use the boldness and freedom of telling his friends, that their long visits sometimes incomed them.

Franklin

Let Honesty & industry be thy constant companions & spend a day one penny less than thy clear gain. The use of money is all the advantage there is in having it, if you know how to use it.

Drexel

Whatever you do do right and diligently, which will save a great deal of trouble & vexation.

A Man that is honest will cherfully give every satisfaction that is reasonably required without excuse or compulsion,—but He that refuses to give prompt satisfaction is most assuredly a rogue.

There is but one way of doing Business, and that is the right way.

Not only did Dréxel apply himself diligently to his painting and his mastering our language, but he also turned in his spare moments to the social side of life. Soon after establishing himself here he made a number of friends, at first presumably largely German-Americans, for we know that he was elected to the Deutschen Gesellschaft of Philadelphia, December 26, 1822. Closest of his early friends was one Martin Fisher, whose daughter Mary he became engaged to; but shortly before the marriage Mary died very suddenly, and this tragic event put an end to the friendship, for to use Francis's words: "The family before her death treated me like a son of their's but after that sad catastroph [*sic*] Mrs. Fisher did me the honor to detract from my conduct and honor, as she had admired and praised before."

This tragedy does not seem to have ruined Drexel's life, for we find that shortly after this he became intimate with Catherine Hooke or Hookey, whose father Anthony ran a grocery store at Third and Green Streets.¹² This intimacy blossomed into an engagement, and on St. George's Day, 1821—being Easter Monday—Francis Drexel and Catherine Hookey were married.

From then on for many years Francis Drexel resided with his family at 40 South Sixth Street, to which house he had removed from his second studio, 171 Chestnut Street. His immediate domestic circle seems to have been blessed with felicity, but it is an old truth that when a man marries a girl he marries her family, and Drexel's relations with certain of his in-laws were not altogether cordial. In

¹² The Hookey family seem to have been largely of English Quaker stock from Pennsylvania and Maryland, but it is also probable that they had some Pennsylvania Dutch blood. Anthony Hookey was one of the founders of Holy Trinity Church. "She [Catherine Hookey] came of good old Pennsylvania stock from Pottstown and Reading. Nicholas Buck the founder of Bucks County was Ma's great uncle, Governor Snyder was a relation, & Judge Smith of Reading a cousin. I think Ma's ancestors during the Revolution were Tories, but I know one of them was a Continental soldier. Ma also had a great many relatives on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, I think the name was Little and Smith, but I am not sure, as the little I knew of them I have forgotten in the haze of my childhood." Caroline Drexel Watmough to Katherine Drexel Penrose, August 2, 1904.



FRANCIS M. DREXEL AND HIS WIFE CATHERINE HOOKEY DREXEL AND
DAUGHTER MARY (MRS. LANKENAU)

Painted by Francis M. Drexel, c. 1825. Reproduced by the courtesy of
The Mary Drexel Home.

particular there was one Bernard Gallagher, a handsome Irish adventurer who had made a runaway marriage with Mary Hookey, Catherine's eldest sister. Gallagher, who gave out that he had been a captain in the army (in what army does not appear), had come to Philadelphia as supercargo on a West Indiaman, and at this period of our history had been married some years, had been forgiven for his elopement, and was engaged in the grocery business near Sixth and Chestnut Streets. It is perhaps natural that men of two such diverse temperaments should not get along, especially as Gallagher was in the habit of spreading the most scandalous libels about any young man who visited the Hookey household. His behavior towards his new brother-in-law is vividly related by the latter:¹³

I did not escape his infamous tongue, and Writings of letters anonymously even long after Marriage, my Wife he did the same favor, employ others to write anonymous letters for him, went to places where I was employ to traduce my Character, and succeeded at Mr. Bazeley's who had employ me as teacher of Drawing in his Seminary at the rate of \$72 per quarter, but Mr. B. would not listen to a traducer when he began to traduce to Parents Mr. B's establishment for having such a immoral teacher employ as me, an action for Damages was the result where when it came before the court and jury on the April 1824 his lawyers—Duane and Ingersol seeing the desperate case and fearing the jury would give the full amount of Damages, asked \$10,000, proposed to my attorneys terms, of paying \$2,100, and that he Gallagher should acknowledge before the Court and Jury that he wronged me knowing nothing disadvantageous against me or Wife, and sign a paper to the same effect before them, which should be Recorded in said Court; not wishing to ruin his Wife & children I directed my attorneys to accept of the proposal, my attorneys kept for their exersions \$600,—my expenses to them were near \$100. previous, so that I have got \$1400. or thereabouts. Mr. Bazeley was satisfied with Mr. Rieder as Drawing Master;—I lossed for allways my place there—many of my neighbors, and Mrs. Mathews who kept a Seminary informed me that they had also recd. anonymous letters against my Character.

This litigation closed an important chapter in Francis Drexel's life. Discouraged by Gallagher's libels as well as by the annoyance and anxiety of the law suit, to say nothing of the loss of business, the young artist decided to seek his fortune in more congenial climes; and after a tender parting with his family he sailed for South America, on May 15, 1826, aboard the brig *Navarre*, James Girdon master.

We next hear of Drexel at Guayaquil in Ecuador¹⁴ in mid-September. As four months is an extremely ample time for the voyage it is

¹³ "Life and Travels," 26-27.

¹⁴ Ecuador was a part of Colombia until 1830.

more than likely that he stopped off en route for a month or two, possibly at Panama, in the event that he crossed the Isthmus (he may, of course, have sailed around the Horn). Amongst his luggage were a large number of uncolored aquatint portraits of General Bolivar, which he hoped to sell to the patriotic South Americans at a large profit. These engravings were presumably done by Drexel and were published by I. B. Longacre in 1826, and cost the artist \$2500. They represent the Liberator quarter length in full dress uniform, and measure $11\frac{1}{2}$ by $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Drexel also hoped to paint portraits of Bolivar from the engraving on order in addition to his ordinary portrait work, but the South American mentality is notoriously ill-suited and averse to static political conditions, and before our artist set foot on that continent Bolivar's star was sadly on the wane. About the time that the *Navarre* was clearing the Delaware Capes Bolivar issued his project for the constitution of Bolivia, in which he embodied his opinions respecting the form of government he conceived to be most expedient for the newly established republics; but this code did not give satisfaction. Its most extraordinary feature was the provision for lodging executive authority in the hands of a president for life, without responsibility and with power to nominate his successor, a proposal which alarmed the friends of liberty, and excited lively apprehensions among the republicans of Chile and the Argentine; while in Peru, Bolivar was accused of a design to unite into one state Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia, and to make himself perpetual dictator of the confederacy.

Colombia was the first state to revolt against the Liberator; and Bolivar, who had been in Peru, left Lima in September, 1826, and hastened by boat to Buenaventura and Bogota, reaching the Colombian capital in mid-November. Hence in October when Bolivar's vessel was coasting Ecuador he and Drexel were but a few miles apart. This is the nearest that they ever came to a personal meeting, and the family tradition that they were close friends and that Bolivar started Drexel in business must be consigned to the realms of the most extravagant fiction.

Drexel's fortunes at Guayaquil were definitely good; he took in over two thousand dollars, and even after paying off his heavy expenses for his passage he was able to send seven hundred dollars home to his wife. During his stay in Ecuador he painted at least sixteen pic-

tures and seven miniatures, charging a hundred dollars for an oil and fifty for a miniature. Among his sitters here were Bernardo Roca,¹⁵ afterwards president of Ecuador, Mrs. Illingsworth, whose husband was an English merchant prominent in the Ecuadorian struggle for independence, Thomas Mosquera the intendant and a leading figure, William Wheelwright of Newburyport, the American Consul, who later as consul at Rosario built the railway from Buenos Aires to Cordoba, and William Swett, an American merchant from Portland, Maine. All the leading men and women in Ecuador who wanted their portraits painted literally flocked to him, though his accounts show that they did not all flock to pay him afterwards. South America then had possibilities for the foreign artist, for there certainly were no native products worthy of the name; and a great continent, having just gained its independence and undergoing consequent prosperity, did of necessity contain many people who would patronize a skilful limner. In this respect Francis Drexel was doubtless justified in leaving his wife and family for four long years and in traveling many thousands of miles in a backward continent, a continent where malaria and yellow fever were endemic and ubiquitous, where sanitation was still primitive, and where revolutions and earthquakes were the order of the day.

Our artist left Guayaquil for Lima on November 29 on board the Peruvian brig *Confianza*, Captain Paras, an uncomfortable boat, full of cockroaches and Colombian officers. With one of the latter, Lieutenant Marischal by name, Drexel had a serious altercation nearly ending in a duel, the quarrel being occasioned by the soldier's overbearing and selfish gluttony. It seems that while the other passengers ate salt horse, the lieutenant regaled himself with chicken, and if he did not like the way a fowl was cooked he would throw it into the sea. This so enraged Drexel that "we had a few words, when he brought his sword on deck to fight with me. I told him if he wished to settle in that way, I had a good pair of pistols below and would give him satisfaction." This caused the bully to change his tune, and seems to have so cowed the officers that the plans for a mutiny which they contemplated were speedily dropped.

Callao was reached on December 21 and the captain recommended

¹⁵ I am greatly indebted to Charles L. Chandler, Esqr., for his kind help in identifying the sitters as well as for his aid in other South American questions.

Drexel to Don Jose Bivero, the Commandante of Callao. This worthy greeted the artist very cordially, insisting that he stay at Callao as his guest. Drexel was delighted at this prospect, especially as Captain Para had said that the General was a splendid man who would treat his guest excellently. Our hero was rudely undeceived when his host made him go through the customs house; and apparently the Peruvian customs a century ago were far worse than New York or Calais nowadays. Not only were all of Drexel's belongings turned inside out, but he had to strip naked, the soles of his shoes were taken off to see if he had concealed papers, and he was put through the third degree generally—all this under the personal supervision of Bivero and before fifty or a hundred onlookers. This brutally drastic behaviour on the part of the authorities was occasioned by some obsolete orders to arrest a spy who was either French or German and who posed as an artist; and when it became evident that Drexel was not the man, the General became the charming host that he was supposed to be.

On Christmas Eve our artist proceeded to Lima, eight miles inland, where he was destined to make his home for seven months. At first he stayed with a nephew of General Bivero's in the suburbs, but as this was inconvenient he soon moved to more central lodgings in the large mansion of Don Losi Polacio Quadrode y Nunez. This arrangement was brought about by Mr. Edward McCall of Philadelphia, a partner in the firm of Nixon, McCall & Company. On January 4, 1827, Drexel had his first commission in Peru—a portrait of one Mrs. Thwaites "a lady from Buenos Ayres, with which I had very bad success, altho' a very good likeness. She was very vain, and thought herself much handsomer." In the course of his first month in Lima he grew quite into the South American way of living; he went to a bull fight, he felt several earthquakes, and he found himself in the middle of a revolution. This last event was the overthrow of the Bolivar government on January 26–27 by the Colombian troops under Colonel Bustamante; the Peruvians, availing themselves of the opportunity, abjured the Bolivian code, deposed the council appointed by the Liberator, and proceeded to organize a provisional government under the leadership of President St. Cruz. Like many South American revolts this one was wholly bloodless.

Among his other diversions Drexel visited the Cabildo where he saw a poor portrait of Bolivar by a native named Gil, and several im-

portant documents of Pizarro. On Carnival Sunday, February 25, he was down in Callao again with his friends the Bivero family. They took him for a very elaborate picnic by the sea, and Drexel went bathing and spent most of the day in a state of semi-nudity. The next day he was suffering the tortures of the damned from sunburn, in fact he was so badly burned that he was quite sick and spent several days in bed, being tenderly nursed by Señora Bivero. A month later he paid a second visit to the Biveros to attend a big dinner in memory of St. Joseph's Day, and at the same time he went aboard the U. S. frigate *Brandywine*, then riding in Callao harbor. He mentions the capture of Montillo, the notorious brigand who earlier in the year had nearly captured Mr. McCall; and he described at some length the Good Friday procession in Lima, which was evidently a religious Saturnalia. In addition to an effigy of Judas Iscariot, which was hanged, drowned, and then burned "there were figures about sixteen feet high, some representing women, others Indian chiefs dressed in their style leading the procession and others more in the middle. There were also three or four men with wooden masks on, with sticks 3 or 4 feet long in their hands to keep order. . . . The Clergy under a cover called the Canopy with the Host closed the rear with a few soldiers behind them to keep the crowd off and a band of music. Very few decent people attend it."¹⁶

While painting a portrait one day he was interrupted by an earthquake of unusual severity, and "at the moment she [the sitter] felt it she ran off in the street, and I followed her just as quick with my palette and brushes in my hand. It is certainly very awful to see all the people in the streets on their knees making crosses and praying fervently for forgiveness and mercy, hear the dogs bark, and the horses refuse to proceed."¹⁷ But Drexel soon of necessity grew to regard earthquakes as a matter of course, and to forget about them as soon as they passed.

Bolivar was now at the height of his unpopularity in Peru; not only were all portraits of the Liberator removed from the public buildings, but even private owners hid their pictures of the erstwhile hero. One or two followers for whom Drexel had painted Bolivar made him do so with the greatest secrecy, lest they be incarcerated. Yet notwith-

¹⁶ "Journal," 22.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

standing the almost complete loss of Bolivar commissions our artist did extremely well at Lima, even better than he did at Guayaquil, and better far than he was destined to do elsewhere. We know of his painting thirty-five portraits and three miniatures, clearing a total of \$4300; and with his Guayaquil surplus he was able to send \$4467 home to his patient wife. Among his sitters here were several Bostonians, a Mr. Whitmore and a Mr. Boardman, also William Tudor, Harvard 1796, the U. S. consul at Lima who was later U. S. Minister to Brazil.¹⁸ Of the native worthies, he painted two of the leading patriots, both presidents of their respective countries, namely Bernardo O'Higgins (1780-c. 1850) who had been president of Chile in 1822 and 1823 when he was overthrown by a revolution; and Ramon Castilla (1797-1867) president of Peru, 1845-51, and again after a revolution, 1854-1862. Drexel also painted Admiral Guise, the commander of the Peruvian navy, and Mr. Nixon of Nixon, McCall & Company.

At length on July 5, 1827, Francis Drexel left Lima, and two days later sailed from Callao for Valpariso on board the ship *Gulnare* of Newburyport, Captain Nicholas Brown. A month later the *Gulnare* reached the Chilean port after an uneventful passage during which she raced the British frigate *Doris*, and passed Juan Fernandez Islands. Drexel spent two and a half months in Valpariso, having quite a fair number of commissions, especially in making portrait drawings at \$17.50 apiece. Any temptation to stay longer, however, was banished by the grasping and mendacious behaviour of his landlord, one Captain Ross of the ship *Minerva*. Ross (and in his absence Mrs. Ross) constantly demanded higher rent, and when that was not forthcoming they locked the studio door and took the key away. This constant squabbling along with a row with the customs officials cut short Drexel's stay and on October 28 he set out in a gig for Santiago, in company with a Swedish merchant. His total income of \$2300 at Valpariso was not too bad, certainly, and he did fifteen pictures and six miniatures. Among his sitters here was Charles Whiting Wooster (1785-1848) of New Haven, admiral and commander in chief of the Chilian navy. Drexel was able to send \$1867 home to Philadelphia.

On the morning of the second day from Valpariso our traveler beheld a sight which must have reminded him of the Rhätikon and

¹⁸ He also painted a picture of Pizarro for Tudor.

Silvretta Mountains of his old home, although even surpassing them in magnificence. "Arriving," he wrote, "at the top of the Questro de Prado, beheld at once the whole range of the Andes, half way down covered with snow, and, as it were a barrier or wall across, to shut off all communication with the country beyond it. The valley in which Santiago stands is about eight leagues long, with mountains standing clear in it, and other valleys taking different directions. There could certainly not have been a more splendid and imposing view than that which opens all at once upon the beholder, after twenty-five leagues travelling, without anything striking to the eye."¹⁹

Drexel reached Santiago that evening and took lodging with one Ramon Formas at 32, Calle de San Carlos, rent free on condition that he paint portraits of the members of Señor Formas's family, but the Chilian did not keep the condition. Within a fortnight of his arrival Drexel came down with a severe attack of fever; his only illness during his four years in South America, and although the spell was sharp he soon threw it off. He thought to hasten his recovery by riding, but his horse ran away with him and in his weakened condition nearly killed him, so that he was constrained to complete his convalescence by a regimen of baths. By mid-December he was well on the road to recovery; and was able on Christmas Eve to take part in the celebrations of which he gives a vivid description: "The common class of people go about, blow through cow horns and whistles, and shake rattles, to announce the birth of our Savior, which did not cease until day, and it is remarkable that on every Sunday and feast days the common class enjoy themselves at different amusements, such as dancing to the music of the guitar, and never fail to help themselves plentifully of chicha, the wine of the country, with which they get intoxicated, when many a time they fight with knives to settle their disputes of honor on the spot, and only cease when one of the party loses his life which on this Christmas cost 8. It is computed that in their capital, Santiago de Chili only, about 200 yield their lives to the knife a year."²⁰

On December 30 he dined with Francisco Antonio Pinto (1785-1858) who had just become president of Chile and whose brief administration was destined to be marked by many useful reforms. This honor of dining with so great a personage was the high point of

¹⁹ "Journal," 27-28.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 29-30.

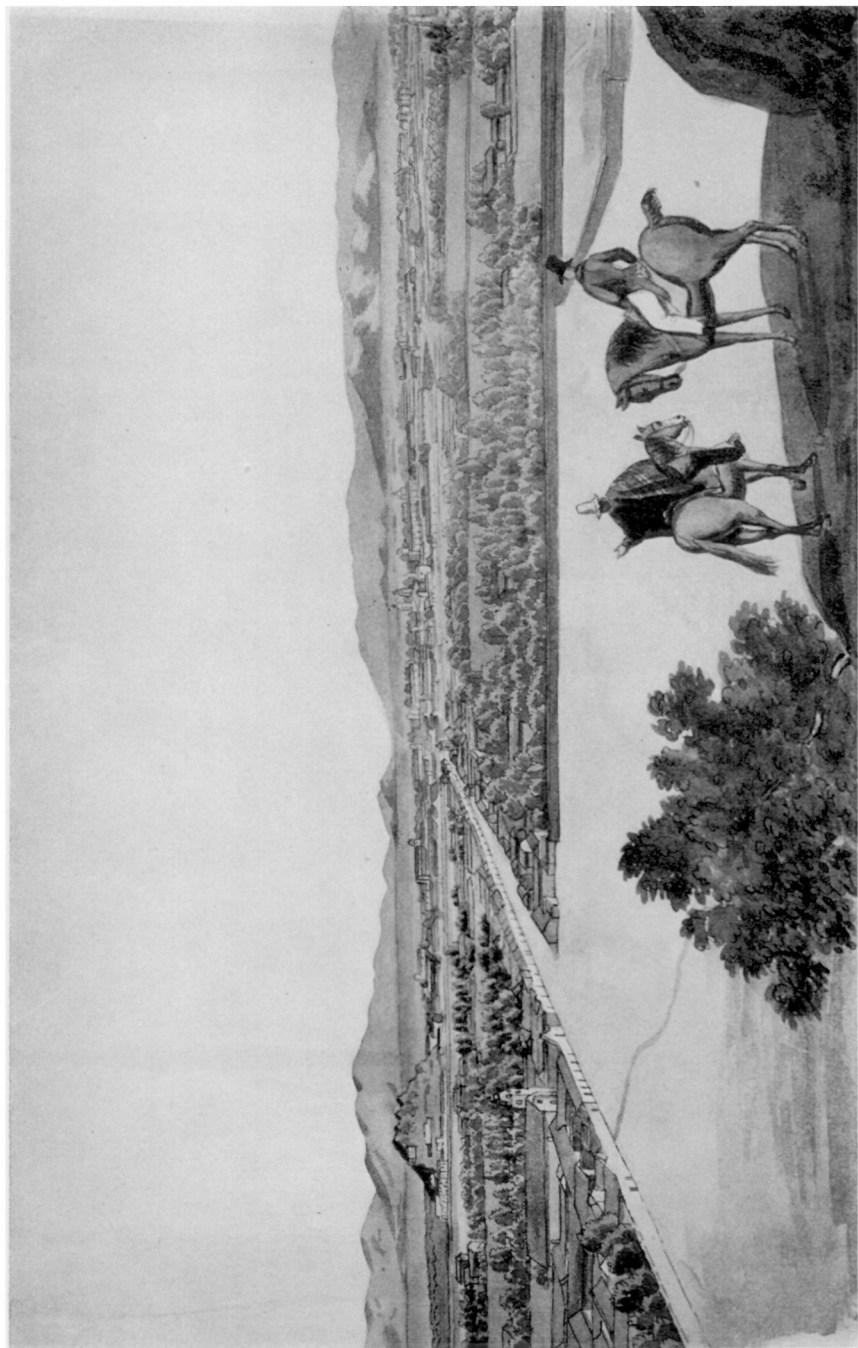
Drexel's stay in Santiago; from then on his luck became quickly worse. For one thing he had collected a very shifty servant who committed various petty thefts, and late in January he suffered the very disastrous loss of his paint box, colors, and brushes. His servant was imprisoned but refused to reveal any information, and Drexel had the greatest difficulty in obtaining any redress or in getting the authorities to take any interest or action in the matter. Our painter did eventually recover the useless stubs of his pencils and crayons, but even after two months of search he was unable to find his brushes or colors, and so was forced to grind his own pigments and to borrow some brushes from a Swiss artist named Jeny. Besides, he was forced to pay his servant damages for false imprisonment.

How he managed to paint at all during this trying winter is a question; yet he did accomplish twenty-three portraits and ten miniatures, including President Pinto, William Delano of New England, General Cienfuentes, a prominent soldier in the Chilean War of Independence, and Señor Zea, who later came to the United States on a mission. Our artist took in a total of \$2500 of which he sent \$1671 home to Philadelphia.

On March 19, "heartily tired of Santiago where the administration of justice is altogether a lost art, . . . at half past ten with little regret, I left Santiago for Valpariso with my sword on my side, on horseback."²¹ En route to the coast Drexel passed three very suspicious looking characters who turned out to be the party who had robbed and beaten one Mr. Kemble, a Boston printer, but two days before. Drexel was luckier, and proceeded unscathed to Valpariso. Here he remained a fortnight, awaiting a sailing and doing a few miniatures to pass the time, until on April 4 he embarked on the British brig *Scotland*, Captain Lamb, paying, he tells us, \$20 for his passage. One of his fellow passengers was a Mr. Caldcleugh of Coquimbo, principal agent of the Anglo-Chilian Mining Company, a man whose kind hospitality to Darwin a decade later is attested in grateful terms in the *Voyage of the Beagle*.

After a rough passage in which Drexel—always a poor sailor—was lamentably sea sick, the *Scotland* anchored at Coquimbo on April 10. Drexel remained here almost three months, staying first with Caldcleugh and later living in most uncomfortable lodgings over a coffee house for \$22 a month. During his residence here he was

²¹ *Ibid.*, 36-37.



SANTIAGO, CHILE

From a watercolor by Francis M. Drexel in the author's possession.

constantly bothered by earthquakes and was once—contrary to his principle—fleeced at cards to the tune of \$96; but he did paint nine portraits and six miniatures for a total of just over a thousand dollars, and so was able, with his Valpariso surplus, to send \$1725 home.

Leaving Coquimbo July 9 on the ship *Candaci* of Boston, Captain Hobart, Drexel proceeded northward to Arica. The *Candaci* put in at Copiapo, to take a cargo of copper, of which place our artist wrote: "Went on shore and found in this desert only one hut in which three families were crowded, and as far as the eye reached there was nothing but dreary sand to be seen, at the farthest end of which the equally dreary and fruitless Andes closed the scene."²²

Arica was reached on the 26 and Drexel lost no time in starting on his bold excursion into the interior of the continent. His objective was no less than La Paz, the primitive capital of the Indian state of Bolivia. Why Drexel ever imagined he would make any money in that half-savage region is a mystery. To us today it looks exceedingly like a fool's errand, and we can only marvel at our hero's luck in getting out alive. It must have been his irrepressible wanderlust that inspired him to cross the Andes and to go to the very edge of the frontier in the hope of painting portraits. His impressions, none the less, were keen, and his description of the trip up country from the coast is illuminating:²³

I sent my package to Tacna 15 leagues distant on mules and hired a horse to go thither for \$12. with the assurance that it was a very good one, I was completely undeceived when it was brought to me. No doubt twenty years before it might have been good, but now it seemed to be scarcely able to support its own weight, and my friends assured me if it should die on the road they would make me pay for it well. At eleven o'clock I mounted, and to say the least, had I a mask and a three-corner hat on, every one would have sworn that the very identical Dr. Syntax [*sic*] was making a new tour. Mr. McCarthy and I left our friends at 11 o'clock armed with bread and brandy and water. The way or road if it may be so called led along near the sea. After two leagues we saw a few huts near a small river, . . . the sea remained always in view and the Andes to our right. For thirteen leagues no shrub nor scarcely any stone is to be seen. Skeletons and carcasses of mules and horses aplenty are to be met with near and along the road. If a horse or mule gets exhausted it is abandoned. We met one mule straggling worn out alone. . . . About 6 P. M. we met a thick Scotch mist and got wet on one side completely until we reached the town, which was not before 8 o'clock. Mr. James Genius a gentleman from St. Petersburg, in-

²² *Ibid.*, 42

²³ Drexel was therefore six weeks in Tacna, and painted six portraits and six miniatures there.

vited me very politely to come to his house. . . . There being no coffee house or tavern in the place, Mr. Kellman of Hamburg with equal politeness offered me a room, which I occupied until the 12th of September;²⁴ when I left Tacna at midday in company with Captain N. Matzon a Dane for La Paz, 851 leagues in the interior. He had four pack-mules and a servant and I had two pack mules and each of us a driver mounted on a mule. We passed Calan two leagues towards the Andes, and lodged at Patchia two leagues farther. On the whole distance of the road there is no tavern, on which account everything that was wanted on the road to keep body and soul together had to be taken along as well as cooking utensils. The servant generally cooked for the day in the morning, and from that time we continued traveling until night, when he made us chuppy, a kind of hash. We went to Palca, ten leagues, the whole distance uphill. This night we had the heavens for our roof and the stars for our light. I got a little sick. 14th: Ascended six leagues of very steep trail and reached the highest part of our road called Cumba, 14000 feet above the level of the sea. The wind blew cold and sharp. In creeks there was plenty and thick ice, and the snowy Andes were close before our eyes. I bound up my mouth according to custom to beware of a cold from the sudden change, and of a sickness called sorocho, much like sea-sickness, wherewith not only the people but the mules get affected. Passing the highest part I rejoiced having escaped without sickness, but two leagues farther on to my sorrow I found I had been mistaken. My stomach began to revolt and the contents move upwards. I was obliged to hold myself in the saddle and have the mule led. On our right we passed an Indian village, Gacora, and three leagues farther on lodged again on the ground in the cold open air. I had headache, vomited, and bled at the nose. Could eat nothing. 15th: We arose to start very early, but found two mules lost which delayed us to 9 o'clock. It was snowing for four hours. I continued sick. Went this day about eight leagues to a place where two uninhabited huts were, to accommodate officers in case of their passing, called Tambo. 16th: Again two mules lost which went at least three leagues back and delayed our journey again until 11 A. M. I still remained sick with some relief. It was this day snowing hard and we had to pass difficult and steep rocks. Lodged at Chulucana, an Indian town. The Indians refused to give us wood and the hut for the soldiers, to rest that night, but the servant, a fellow of the country, told them that we were officers, and we being as it is the custom armed, verified partly his assertion, and were then respected. We paid for the wood, and were frequently called *comendentes*. 17th: I was much better. Passed St. Iago an Indian town which stands in a very large and beautiful valley at least twelve leagues wide and from twenty to thirty long. . . . We lodged at St. Andreas another Indian town, with the *curé* who gave us a pretty good supper, and breakfast gratis, but made us pay for the food of the mules at \$7.50. 18th: We passed the *Desaquadro* and lodged at a hut called Alluota, but preferred to sleep in the free and open air. The 19th: Passed high and lofty mountains. On the top of one, saw the Mimani Mountains and the valley we had to pass before reaching La Paz, and another snowy chain of Andes beyond it.

Drexel reached La Paz on September 20, and lodged with an American named Matthews. Three weeks of the barbaric Bolivian capital were more than enough for the painter, who by this time was

²⁴ "Journal," 42-46.

fully convinced of the futility of the excursion. He says that he found lamentably little taste among the inhabitants, although some were rich "and they are harrassed with momentary expectations of a revolution to murder and rob." In fact his residence there was being constantly punctuated by street fights and mutinies of the Indian soldiery, and there was even a plot of some troops to invade the town and murder every person they met.

Even the glorious sight of Illimani, raising its snow-clad summit 20,000 feet above sea level, was not enough to detain him, and on October 19 he set out towards the coast with an acquaintance named Pascua who suffered from the universal South American complaint of procrastination. They followed the same road along which they came, as far as Desaguadero, and then turned northwest along Lake Titicaca. Near the lake they fell in with a party of soldiers whom they accompanied, but these specimens of the Peruvian military were not too scrupulous about the rights of property, and Drexel's trunk was rifled and his money (about \$50) stolen. His only redress was to be told by the captain that he was a rogue, and his attempts to get satisfaction from the local prefect were of course in vain. His progress, too, was rendered slow by the diliatory nature of Pascua, who stopped several days at Puno to see his sweetheart, so that it was not till October 31 that Drexel reached Arequipa.

He resided in Arequipa for eight months, being kept fairly busy with commissions, but experiencing the greatest difficulty in getting paid for his work. He was also constantly annoyed by petty thefts, comprising many objects from his shoes to his saddle cloth, and he got into quite serious trouble for painting a picture of Luna Pizarro, an exiled patriot. Nor was he spared the excitement of a revolution, for on November 30 the army mutinied, and for twenty-four hours Arequipa was a battle field. Drexel, although in the center of the trouble, came through unscathed. Wholly disgusted with Arequipa, the painter would have left much sooner, but he stayed on in the vain attempt to collect the money owing him, yet, as he said in his Journal: "The immorality and robbery by those in power is imitated by the lower class, and of course they can not be punished by those who set the example." He did, however, paint twenty portraits and twenty-five miniatures, to a total of \$4000, but his collection of the money was so unsuccessful that he was only able to send \$1855 to the United States (most of it being sent from Chile). His sitters, none the less,

comprized some very prominent men, including three presidents of Peru: General Augustin Gamarra (1785-1841), General Andres Santa Cruz (1792-1865) who had also been president of Bolivia, and Ramon Castilla (1797-1867), whom he painted a second time.

In spite of the unpaid debts and wrangles with a very slippery gentleman named Alvistur, Drexel sailed from Islay, the port of Arequipa, on June 30, 1829, aboard the British sloop *Sir John Keane*, Captain Fraser. He had some difficulty in getting his money, which was in gold, out of Peru, but he did manage to smuggle \$1500 on board the vessel. Arriving at Valpariso on July 14 he sold his gold for a bill of exchange on Philadelphia. Here he remained a month, doing but one portrait, ere he proceeded a second time to Santiago. His bad luck seems to have followed him, and his luggage reached the Chilean capital smashed nearly to bits. Three months in Santiago led to very few commissions, while the town was so upset by earthquakes and revolutions that business was almost at a standstill. Here he did only six oils and ten miniatures, among the former being a likeness of Señora Nicolosa de Toro, daughter of the last Spanish governor.

Drexel was now heartily sick of South America, and saw clearly that the portrait business was about played out; and while the temptation to stay on in the hope of getting the \$6000 still owing him was strong, the temptation to get back to his family was much stronger. On January 10, 1830, therefore, he embarked at Valpariso on the *Lafayette* for Baltimore. The homeward voyage proved speedy and uneventful, albeit the following entries from the Journal take us back to the golden age of New England seafaring: "At noon [January 29] spoke the brig Uscar from Stoningtown, on a sealing voyage. . . . 31st . . . At 2 P. M. spoke ship Reaper, Captain Coffin, from Nantucket on a whaling voyage 70 days out."²⁵ The *Lafayette* passed well south of Cape Horn on January 29, was off the Falklands on February 1, was within sight of Brazil on March 7, and on April 8 dropped anchor at Baltimore. Two days later Drexel reached Philadelphia by steamboat, thus getting home after an absence of one month less than four years.

Details of his homecoming are not known, but it must have been a happy day for his wife and children, inasmuch as Captain Gallagher

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 61.

had been repeatedly telling the Hookey family for four years past that they would never see "that damned Dutchman" again. During his trip Drexel had made (on paper) a grand total of \$22,610, of which he had remitted \$12,545 home, \$3260 went for expenses and \$6768 remained owing him in South America. It will be seen, therefore, that he neither throve nor starved, but he must have felt that the sacrifices which the trip entailed scarcely made the enterprize worth while. In any case he remained at home for five years, painting a few pictures, and also selling trimmings and small wares at his house on Sixth Street. He also had a brief but unsuccessful career as a brewer, his partner being a man named Partenheimer, and his staff consisting of four Irishmen and a blind horse. This business lasted from September, 1830, until July, 1831.

In 1835 he was off on his wanderings again, this time to Central America. Unfortunately very little is known of this venture, but a handbill exists dated Mexico, August 5, 1835, headed "*RETRATOS Y MINIATURAS*," and announcing that "*Francisco Drexel, retratista últimamente llegado de Filadelfia, ofrece respetuosamente sus servicios á las señoritas y señores de esta capital, persuadido que este illustre público tiene un gusto tan culte como el de cualquiera de los países mas civilizados, promete ademas de la mayor fidelidad en los retratos, un muy fino y vivo pincel.*"²⁶ His address was 18, Calle de Tiburcio.

Drexel could not have stayed much above a year in Mexico City at the outside, for we know that he was back home early in 1837. It is possible that his sojourn here enabled him to speculate in foreign exchanges, and so decided him to abandon his artistic career for that of the counting house; and it is also possible that this was the occasion on which he brought home several cases of miscellaneous specimens of fossils and curiosities, which were shown in Peale's Museum in the State House. Of his success as a painter in Mexico we know nothing, but that it could not have been sensational we may infer from his determination to try a new field of endeavor. On the eve of the panic of 1837 he gave up his career as an artist and opened his banking house.

Devon, Pennsylvania

BOIES PENROSE

²⁶ Through the medium of Charles L. Chandler, Esqr., I have been assisted in my researches by Señor Jorge Flores of the Mexican Ministry of Education. Señor Flores kindly but vainly looked through the public archives in Mexico for further material.