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*Remarks on Illustration and
Pennsylvania's Contributors to Its
Golden Age*

ILLUSTRATION means "a making clear." In its broadest sense it is a making clear of anything by any method. These remarks, however, are on illustration by pictorial means, on surfaces of two dimensions, by brush or pen, by paint or ink, by pencil, chalk, or needle. Pictorial illustration has become one in the public's mind with reproduction for publication, with magazines and books. This reproduction purpose is by no means an essential consideration, if one at all, in the production of an illustration, but clearness is always an essential. It is this quality which, probably above all others, makes a picture associated with publication. No editor would dare, as a continuous policy, to buy for reproduction works ununderstandable. His books, his magazine would quickly lose their purchasers. Thus it is that the pictures that are clear are those that go forth from the printing presses, go forth in countless copies to the stores and newsstands, to the waiting multitudes of periodical subscribers.

Clearness alone, however—and by clearness I do not mean photographic fidelity to fact, but clearness of intent, clearness of message—does not create a work of art, and it is as art that I am here consider-

ing illustration. Art is but the expression of ideals, and illustration as art, in its finest and most lofty sense, is the revealer of man's noblest vision, of his yearning for perfection, of his conception of the Divine. These two qualities are inevitably inherent in every illustration that is truly art—the quality of idealism and that of understandability—with which two there will also be, if the work be great, the quality of force—force, the power of utterance attained by him who concentrates upon a single purpose, lets not attention, imagination wander from his one or dominant theme. So it is that I think of illustration as pictorial art, as fine art, clear, strong, spiritual, beautifying the pages of publications, carrying through the power of the printing press, these days in avalanches of untold copies, its inspiring message to the far corners of the globe.

It is difficult—in these immediate postwar days, in this aftermath of the most devastating cataclysm in human history, in this era of turmoil when passion is still rife, selfishness runs high, materialism and money values seem to control mankind, when all this welter of earthly struggle has dimmed the star of man's aspiration and art, which is an echo of his thoughts and dreams, has inevitably become debased—it is difficult, I say, in regarding what is being launched upon the world in the name of art, in the name of illustration, to feel aught of uplift, to behold aught of that light that must ever be man's torch to guide him through the shadows of the unknown.

As we wait and work and ponder, as we plan and take our bearings, as we try this, now that, to free ourselves from the afterwar morass in which we flounder, my mind runs back to that amazing epoch of my youth when the sunlight of existence seemed untouched by cloud, when art reflected the joyousness of living, when illustration, in the magazines of that vanished day, embodied the very essence of the wonder of the world. That was a golden age. How we who loved the decorated page, decorated as it had never been before with imaginative beauty, waited breathlessly for the new issues of our favorite magazines, grasped them the instant they appeared. What prizes they were, those old *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, *Century*, the early *Collier's*! Filled were they with Reinhart's drawings, Abbey's, Pyle's, Pennell's, Frost's. Their pages I have bound and filed. No works today give me thrill as these. I regard them still with all the veneration, all the awe that they inspired, lo, these fifty years ago.

Whatever love of pictures I possess I have inherited from my father. He had no patience for the unilluminated page, pored over the new illustrated publications, displayed to me with excitement—I was about fourteen then and could not yet quite fathom the reason of his emotion—the last drawings of the artists of the day. The original *Life* Magazine had just found its stride; full already was it of work by masters of the pen, but it was the new *Harper's Monthly* that held his rapt attention. Charles S. Reinhart was at the height of his career. He was a son of Pittsburgh—as am I, as was my father; we were living in that amazing city—and had become the idol of the Pittsburgh art world. He and his work were on everybody's lips, and I began to realize, even in my boyhood, the power of art when speaking from the pages of a distinguished publication. I saw Reinhart only once, at a thronged reception. Carefully clad, immaculate, gracious, he showed no eccentricity such as the layman expects to see in beings gifted by the gods. He was, I should say, the first dominant personality in the new era of illustration, when the processes of reproduction had been revolutionized, the wood-block had given way to metal plate, and perfect reproductions of line drawings went forth in hundreds of thousands of impressions. Reinhart was in full glory before Abbey had attained the heights. His facile, skillful delineations of character, his subtle, social types, the life within his figures are a monument to his genius. I have on file voluminous envelopes of his pages from the early *Harper's*. Why is it that his work is but little known today save to the true amateur of illustration? Is it because his work appeared only in magazines, which, despite unbelievable circulations, vanish in, as it were, the twinkling of an eye, the very finest of but a generation ago being now practically unfindable? Is it because his drawings were made primarily to accompany authors' texts, had chief cause for being to enrich, to clarify, someone's thoughts other than the artist's? The enduring work of art, I feel, must have for its existence reason all its own, must stand alone whether it also be designed to add meaning to the written word.

Edwin Austin Abbey—born in Philadelphia, receiving his art education at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts—shared with Howard Pyle a long era when their works were simultaneously

appearing on the pages of *Harper's Weekly* and *Harper's Monthly*. Abbey's drawings were being published only a year or so before those of Pyle. Both men were firmly established with Harper and Brothers in the late 1870's, shared eminence down the years together until their deaths in 1911. What a duo were these! Of Pyle presently. Of Abbey who can think save but with veneration? What master of ink was he! What elegance was his, what fluency of line! What beauty was in his figures, what lofty interpretation gave he of historic times! My words run to superlatives, but no superlative can equal my admiration of this master's art. Let those of my readers who would be acquainted with an exalted period in the history of the illuminated page delve into the files of libraries, look up the early *Harper's Monthly* or *Weekly*, lose themselves in the revelations of this genius of the pen.

As with Reinhart, I saw Abbey but once. It was at the Philadelphia Academy of Music, at a commencement of the University of Pennsylvania, when I, at length a neophyte in art, gazed at him with deep emotion as he appeared upon the stage. It was, I think, about the time that he had turned to color, had completed his murals in the Boston Public Library. In dignity he seemed to tower, as do all majestic souls, and when from the Provost of the University he received his doctor's hood he assumed a magnificence of color, a central note of pageantry that well exemplified the splendor of his years of labor.

Indeed magnificent was Abbey's color, the achievement of his murals, but it is, I judge, upon his drawings that his fame will chiefly rest. As with Reinhart his depictions were for texts—Herrick, Goldsmith, Shakespeare—but Abbey's drawings depend not on their lines for being. They complement the words, make visible the time, the place, the characters, yet do vastly more. They present, shall I say, through miracles transferred to metal plates, the pulsing, suffering, yearning souls of men. No artist has there been more steeped in historic study. Dwelling finally in England he was enabled to discover facts of Shakespeare's time without which the convincing portrayals of the playwright's characters would have been impossible. I am told that Abbey was wont to spend on research more than the honorarium he was to receive, to expend all he might have saved

on the purchase of authentic still life, on the manufacture of costumes for his models.

How bountifully did Pennsylvania contribute to illustration's Golden Age! Arthur Burdett Frost, another son of Philadelphia, lent luster to the period. He, too, was of that group of luminaries whose magnificence of output will, I doubt not, never be surpassed. Almost of the same year were the dates of birth of the dominating quartette—Frost, 1851; Abbey, 1852; Pyle, 1853; Pennell, 1857. In my files, I find reproductions of Frost's work from *Harper's Monthly* of 1882. He probably appeared in earlier issues. In my boyhood I remember studying his drawings, as I did Reinhart's, although Frost attained full flower later than did Reinhart. Of all but incredible virtuosity was Frost's talent. His humor was irresistible, his draftsmanship superb, his knowledge of nature and animal life profound. Deep was his love and sympathy for humanity. His back-country folk are full of quaint and captivating charm. How his pigs and rabbits scamper! Into what inglorious escapades his unfortunate bumpkins fall! It was after he had drifted from *Harper's* to *Scribner's* that I find his work most alluring. He, like Pyle and Abbey, connected the line-cut period with the development of the half-tone plate, and thus it is that, in the later years of his career, Frost produced wash drawings which, in subtlety of suggestion, have probably never been excelled. What eeriness he could evoke! With candle and with firelight, with leaping shadows, he gave to his negro figures a spell of witchery, of voodoo-like enchantment.

I met Frost, if I remember rightly, about 1915. It was at the Franklin Inn Club where I was that day the guest of Joseph Pennell—I had not yet been elevated to membership in that august body. Frost was not gregarious, at least not in Philadelphia, and was a member of the Inn but a scant two years. I found myself tongue-tied as I stood beside him, as I find myself always in the presence of greatness, marveling at the simplicity, the lack of formality, of the leaders of the human race. Affable was Frost, that day, with somewhat unkempt mustache and beard, lines of whimsey on his forehead, while in his eyes twinkled that gleam of combined sympathy and humor that told of his oneness with, his compassion for mankind. Never in his words was there aught of vulgarity, never in his work;

never in noble art can there be. In Frost's delectable enjoyment of life there was never a trace, never a forewarning of the comics that overwhelm the pages of our modern press, of the "Funnies" that with ugliness and crudity now are exerting so powerful an influence in debasement of the public taste.

I come now to Joseph Pennell,¹ one of the most dynamic figures in the history of American illustration. A Philadelphian, a Quaker, he led a life of restlessness, of vociferous argument, of protests against the imperfections of circumstance that seemed curiously unrelated to the general poise of Friends. Indeed his personality almost refuted my belief that eccentricity occurs not with the great—for great he was, yet at the same time a bundle of contradictions. Perhaps if less querulous he might have gained even loftier heights. Or was it that his erraticisms had come to him only in those last years of his life, those years that I knew him, loved him despite his peculiarities, when the first World War was devastating nations and he had left, had been forced to leave his beloved studio on Adelphi Terrace, London. He was too well along in years to adjust his life's philosophy of beauty with a riven world, and in the culminating chapter of his final book, *Adventures of an Illustrator*, bequeathed to coming generations a cry of despair that I would he had not written.

Yet, what a life was his! What outpourings of pictorial records of the beauty of civilization! They were a perfect team, he and his wife, Elizabeth Robins, producing years on years their books together, she the texts, he the illustrations. I have seen no drawings of architecture that give me more delight than do his pen-and-inks of the old-time cities of Europe, many of his subjects now, alas, by man's fury for destruction swept away forever. Brilliancy of sunlight, drifting shadow, potent suggestion of lacework of rosewindow, the sense of height, of scale, of poetry, the feeling of human life that

¹ Joseph Pennell's first major work was done for The Historical Society of Pennsylvania. He and Blanche Dillaye etched sixteen views to illustrate "The Germantown Road and its Associations," by Townsend Ward, *PENNSYLVANIA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY*, V-VI (1881-1882). Thirteen of the etchings were the work of Pennell. The Society also published a limited edition of twenty portfolios of proof impressions of these plates, which are now very scarce.

Pennell had previously executed an etching of Fort Wilson. See *PENNSYLVANIA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY*, III (Oct., 1879).

moves at the foot of soaring cathedrals—all are his. What magic has the pen! A point of metal dipped into a font of ink, touched by knowing hand upon white cardboard and, behold! fairylands appear—visions, aspirations, revelations of the realms of spirit far beyond the tangible material of this earth. So touched Pennell pen to paper; so did his drawings, down those precious years, illuminate the pages of now vanished periodicals. I mention not at length his etchings, nor his lithographs, although both are illustrations in every sense; I am confining these remarks chiefly to the publication field. But in his final lithographs Joe Pennell attained probably more fame than in any of his creations. In them he gave the world a vivid interpretation of the vastness of the “Wonder of Work” (this was his phrase), of the control by man of matter, of the unlimited possibilities of inventive genius driven by necessities of war. Man’s accomplishments seemed spectacular then. Puny were they compared with the achievements of today. What could Pennell not depict were he with us in this superhuman, this atomic age of 1946!

Laid Pennell hand upon an undertaking he lifted it not until the task was done. I speak not only of his pictorial work, but of his myriad activities in serving on boards, advisory bodies, committees, juries. Once, at our annual water color exhibition at the Academy, the arrangement of the hanging in the large gallery F was left to his solution. Deep into the night he toiled, evolving an effect than which I have never seen more brilliant. It was not discovered until the exhibition closed that the arresting flare of one especial wall was due to Joseph’s deliberate hanging of an ultra-modern water color upon its side! I trust it is not needful for me to point out that the picture—doubtless a forerunner of the non-objective paintings, now so much the vogue—was not an illustration!

As I think of Joseph Pennell, during those years I knew him, I see, passing before my memory’s vision, his lank, his sinuous, his curious figure; his unkempt yet monumental head; his eyes, now piercing, now, as he pondered, veiled by fiercely contracting lids; his lean and restless fingers, searching in stained pockets for stumps of lithographic crayon, jotting notes and sketches, rich in color and suggestion. I hear his voice, high-pitched, oftentimes in contradiction, full of joy in argument, quick with new ideas, provocative to thought. A human dynamo he was, ceaseless in his labor.

Not only in his drawings did he make evident what to the untrained eye remains unseen but in local and in national movements for artistic betterment he revealed goals for which to strive. His torrents of plans and schemes, his impatience at delays, his intense, if not violent personality made it difficult for him to work in concord with his fellow men. Well I remember my predicaments when, through a quirk of fate, I found myself in 1918, head of the group of artists in charge of the decoration of Philadelphia for the Victory Loan Campaign. I could not guide the recalcitrant team of celebrities, all older than I, that composed my impressive committee. My reins became entangled. Pennell reared and snorted, made progress all but impossible. "Joseph! Joseph!" I cried as he plunged into publicity, announcing to the press unauthorized statements as to plans yet undeveloped. Reporters besieged me; my telephone bell never stopped. "Joseph, do not take the bit in your teeth!" and, with inconsistency of simile, "You leave me up in the air!" To which he replied, with one of his swift changes of humor and utterly engaging smile, "Oh well, you come down again!"

He was alert to opportunity for telling effort. He proposed, in what seemed to me to be an irresistible letter to the Philadelphia daily papers, that the Mummers' Parade be placed for artistic guidance in the hands of the artists of the city. He was willing to devote all his abilities to aid in developing a crude, an uncouth procession into a pageant of true splendor. His vision, as are many visions of our seers, was not acceptable. Cried the press in horror: "Let art not mar nor hamper the natural exuberance of our people!"

Of Howard Pyle I could write tomes. He lived in Wilmington, Delaware, and perhaps has no place among these thoughts on Pennsylvania illustrators, but, after all, Wilmington is a suburb of Philadelphia (forgive me, Wilmington!), and moreover Pyle received his early and only art instruction in Philadelphia. This was from one Van der Weilen, of whom I know not else than that H. P. was in his private class three years—years coinciding with the time that Abbey was in Philadelphia studying at the Academy of Fine Arts. Too, it must be remembered that at the height of his career Pyle conducted classes at the Drexel Institute.

No one can I place in equal stature beside Pyle's towering figure.

He was colossal among giants. His work embodied every quality inherent in the greatest art: clearness, force, elegance, magnificence of purpose, spirituality of utterance, noblest idealism, love of humanity, the power of transporting the beholder into realms of farthest fancy. And with these powers he, too, possessed that sense of decoration—a dangerous word, not flatness, not service design—*page quality*, perhaps, its name should be—that made his drawings one with type. This is a gift but rarely granted to the illustrator, this realization of the magic of printed paper, this expression of dream and wonder in terms of the leaf of magazine or book. As in mural painting a decoration that imitates the planes of nature is not mural but gives the illusion of destroying the wall, so in the art of illustration must drawings, half-tones themselves, tell their tales in terms of printed surfaces or else the unity of thought and page will vanish. This ability of Pyle's developed into majestic flower. Combining fantasy of vision, mystic charm with his delight in ink, in forms of letters, head and tail pieces, the relation of proportions of type pages to margins, he left to the world books, written by himself, unique in the history of illustration and of literature.

Many fields of thought, of historic exploration, Howard Pyle made his own. I can think of no one who pictorially can approach him, in beauty or authority, in telling of the time and customs of our Colonial days. His black and whites of the Revolutionary War, of the personality of Washington, take their place among the permanent records of our nation. His interpretations of the pirates of the Main in romantic color are unrivaled. In his tales of Robin Hood, his *Men of Iron*, his four volumes on King Arthur, he reveals the spirit of legendary England as can no literal drawings of knights and castles, however faithful. In the realm of pure imagination H. P. has not been paralleled. His *Modern Aladdin* has lived in my inmost consciousness ever since I first read it, fifty years ago. His drawings for Markham's "Man with the Hoe" and for Howells' *Stops of Various Quills* unlock the portals of the spiritual world, and among his symbolical texts and paintings for *Harper's* and the *Century*, his "Pilgrimage of Truth," his "Travels of the Soul," will remain imperishably in the annals of creative art.

I browse for hours at a time among my H. P. treasures, lost to the immediate world as I reread the inimitable *Wonder Clock*, *Pepper* and

Salt, and *The Garden behind the Moon*. Pyle originals crowd my walls. Only today have I received from New York eight pen-and-inks that illustrated *Twilight Land*. Why am I so fortunate as to have them come my way? Where have they lain hidden these six-and-fifty years?

My memories of Howard Pyle burn as brightly as though I had seen him yesterday. I think of him most often in the studio in Wilmington, Monday evenings. The room is in almost darkness; the students are in semi-circle facing the one shaded light that throws its rays upon the easel, upon the compositions awaiting criticism, upon Pyle, seated on his stool, arms folded, deep in contemplation. A yellow glow falls upon his dome of forehead; his countenance, broad, benign; his remarkably small mouth, speaking now with touch of drollery, now with firmness, now with lofty message that quickens the heartbeats of his fortunate class. His eyes, shadowed by the overhang of brows, by their mystery lend enchantment to his words.

A myriad other recollections crowd upon me. One there is of the first criticism I received after having been admitted to his instruction. It was at Chadds Ford, in the old mill which had been transformed into a makeshift but romantic studio. I had been endeavoring with oils and brush and palette to suggest on canvas the spirit of the model that had been posed before us. It was my first handling of the medium—as it was, I believe, of the other raw recruits who formed the class—and my efforts, I full well knew, were terrifying to behold. When H. P. stood before my easel he was silent for many a minute. At length he spoke. "Oakley," he said, choosing his words with care, "either you are color-blind, or else you are a genius."

A poignant memory is of a winter's day in Wilmington when, at noon, I knocked upon Pyle's studio door. It was our privilege to be welcomed at that hour if we wished advice. I thought I heard his voice reply, so lifted latch and stepped within. I had been mistaken. He had not told me to enter. He had thrown the picture upon which he had been working upon the floor and in a fury of frustration was stamping on it.

Here for me was a happening unforgettable, a revelation of how the limitations of material means, the impotencies of mediums, hamper the great as well as small. A master in truth is he who can, as could Howard Pyle, with the pitiful tools that man has been able

to devise—greasy pigments, black liquids—tell of the aspirations of the soul, the realms to which its yearnings fly.

Ah me, those days of mine with Howard Pyle are now long gone. Have any of us, dear master, fulfilled your hopes for what we might attain? Did you have inkling of a strife-torn world to come? Did you arm us with your philosophy of truth knowing it would serve indeed, as mail and buckler, against the blasts of war and hate, intolerance and cynicism that, since you have passed beyond your life on earth, have seared so many human hearts?

Henry McCarter was born in Norristown, Pennsylvania, some say in 1864; some, 1865; others, 1866. Studying in Paris as well as Philadelphia—in which latter city he passed the greater portion of his years—he became an artist of international sympathies, and in his drawings and his oils made clear the universality of beauty. The height of the heavens, the splendor of the sun, storm and cloud, the wonder of humankind, be it of this corner of the world or that, of these he told. He is remembered, perhaps, more by his mural panels, his easel paintings, vibrating with light, than by his contributions to periodicals. But in the old-time monthlies will be found his rich and decorative (in the true sense) studies of mountains, forests, waters, people, not only of America but of lands across far seas. I look with special pleasure on his series of color pages in *Scribner's Magazine*. In his "Scenes from the early History of Ireland," McCarter, himself of Celtic blood, has caught the epic atmosphere of that country's wild, heroic past.

I found McCarter baffling, found myself, when I talked with him, struggling to follow his elusive words, his sentences pregnant with meanings difficult to grasp. Magnetic was he with a something I cannot define. It was not his figure, rotund, unwieldy, that attracted. Was it his eyes, so curtained, so unfathomable? At my request he spoke one night to the Contemporary Club. The subject was "Art, Sane or Insane?" He held his audience riveted, not by what he said—for his low voice reached scarcely beyond the first row of chairs—but by what he seemed to emanate, the intangibility of spirit, the mystery of existence, the power of art to triumph over the manacles of matter. I recall but two words of his address, barely audible were

they as he gazed into a vision that had enthralled his thoughts: "blue, blue . . ."

Upon the records of the brilliant age of illustration of which I write, connecting the stellar group of artists I have been mentioning with the outstanding figures of the present era, is inscribed the name of F. Walter Taylor. Born in Philadelphia in 1874, he became in his maturity a contributor to the major publications of his day—the very magazines, still alive, of *Abbey*, *Pyle*, and *Pennell*—of drawings of velvet beauty. (He used the soft, the compressed Russian charcoal.) His lights and shadows, his black and white effects were luscious, his presentations of human life of elegance and warmth. To his pages he gave a visual dignity, enriching, with his half-tone studies, texts of Margaret Deland, Mrs. Humphrey Ward, Rudyard Kipling, Edith Wharton. Taylor dominated with combined force and subtlety one of the exacting fields of pictorial art. That his work is not more widely known by the present generation is due, I feel convinced, to his dependence upon authors' manuscripts. Let those interested in the history of American illustration consult the Philadelphia Water Color Club's collection in the Philadelphia Museum of Art. There they will behold a charcoal of Taylor's, illustrating Margaret Deland's *Iron Woman*, that has taken permanent place among the cherished works of Pennsylvania artists.

I saw Taylor often but have few recollections of what he said. He was reserved in speech. I know not what was the fundamental of his philosophy but distinguished he showed himself invariably, distinguished as are all artists who in their work make beauty evident. Let me here remark that art inevitably reveals the character of its creator. No inspiring message can pour forth from an earthy source. A picture can be nothing but a presentation of the inward self of him who has conceived it.

Taylor came to my studio but once. Almost silent, making no observation upon artistic matters—why he came I cannot recall—he left in my memory only one sentence. Gazing up at my old wall-clock—a clock I fondly love, its long brass pendulum moving without sound, keeping me, as it were, in touch with the enigma of time and space, in touch with the pulse of the Eternal that gives solace for the tragedies of temporal failures, of imperfect facts—he inquired, "How

can you work with *that* before you?" So are individualities, diversities of reactions among the mysteries of a world that fundamentally is one.

In this brief sketch of the glowing age of illustration I hope not to cause adverse comment by my omission of names that my readers think should here be mentioned. I trust I may disarm criticism by noting that I write only of vanished figures, also only of artists associated with Philadelphia, whose paths I have been fortunate enough to cross.

Alice Barber Stephens was of this group, a gentle lady, whose quiet devotion to her art brought her to the front rank of her profession. Born in 1858, she studied at the School of Design for Women and at the Pennsylvania Academy, soon finding herself engraving upon wood for *Scribner's Magazine* and with the development of the metal line-cut block launched upon her career of pen drawing. Later with charcoal she continued to present, as she had done with ink, the graceful interpretations of human character that gave her work so wide appeal. I think of her with simple bearing, proceeding on her unruffled way to illuminate our magazines with a poised philosophy that is refreshing to recall in a world that now is rent by argument and strife.

Of George Gibbs, too, I make note here. Illustrator, author, born in 1870, living in Rosemont, Pennsylvania, he wrote volume after volume of swashbuckling tales, with drawings by himself, that carried thrills to his delighted readers. On the pages of periodicals his spirited portrayals of buccaneers and sea fights went forth to millions of subscribers. What adventures were evolved in the workings of his mind! His countenance gave no clue to them. Although dark hair grew upon his chin he resembled Blackbeard not a whit. Unassuming, genial, he was beloved by all that knew him.

Let us return to the teachings of Howard Pyle. It was as Director of the Department of Illustration at the Drexel Institute that he became absorbed in his new activity. Later, realizing the impossibility of devoting adequate attention to the hordes within his class—among whom inevitably the majority proved themselves of little

talent—he withdrew from Drexel, selecting from applicants for his private teaching the scant dozen who to him seemed especially fitted to understand, to practice the essence of his precepts. I cannot help quoting here a sentence from a letter that he wrote in 1897, shortly after he had gone to Drexel, to Dr. MacAlister, Director of the Institute, which makes clear the thrill he was experiencing in equipping young and ardent souls for their journeys in quest of the ideal. He writes, and the italics are Pyle's own, "I think our new departure makes us *the one school of its kind in the world.*"

Indeed it was from Drexel that there came forth the first group of new-born illustrators, aflame with aspiration such as only Pyle could kindle, who have left, are leaving indelible record on the annals of American art. They are still dynamic in their field save one, Jessie Willcox Smith, who left this world in 1935.

Who knows aught of illustration knows of Jessie Smith. She was born in Philadelphia in 1863 and immediately after her student days found herself launched upon her uninterrupted years of prodigality of output. Seldom if ever has a woman attained in art a popularity as was hers, and never, probably, from publications so constant a demand for work. The reason, as we look through the multitudes of magazines and books her brush has graced, is obvious. Devoted to the beauty of the world, gifted with bounty of craftsmanship, she was enabled to communicate, both in drawing and in paint, the subtle something that warms the heart, enables the beholder to forget the moment's strife, to be renewed in power to withstand the buffetings of daily detail. I doubt that any devotee of illustration is not familiar with her pictures for Kingsley's *Water Babies*—the originals of which are now in the Library of Congress at Washington—pictures which in every quality essential for enduring art are rich, pictures which I believe to be Jessie's crowning achievement. Not anchored is the beholder to fact, to representation—although Jessie's knowledge is well revealed of structure, texture, laws of light, the visible qualities that nature offers as means of suggesting that which lies beyond her surface—but transported is he to the land of Kingsley's imagery, to the poetry, the wonder of the world of fancy.

Jessie too, as Mrs. Stephens, of self was undemonstrative, albeit stately in physique. No hint of noise was hers. Firm she was in her convictions, staunch in loyalties. As we talked together often, in her

studio in Chestnut Hill, at the School of Industrial Art, I felt that she personified that which is most noble in human effort, unswerving concentration upon pursuit of the ideal.

Newell Convers Wyeth was born in Needham, Massachusetts, in 1882; was killed in a tragic accident at Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, in 1945. It was in 1903 that he came to Wilmington entering the class of Howard Pyle, admitted because of the strength of his sketches of cowboys and plunging horses. Later he erected his capacious studio at Chadds Ford from whence he sent forth his prodigious pictorial output. No more exuberant personality have I ever known, none more bubbling with ecstasy of living. Of powerful frame he was, of arm length extraordinary. Once, I well remember, he came bounding into the studio in Wilmington, where the members of our class worked together, and in an outburst of bodily prowess caught me up as though I had been a bundle of dry twigs and whirled me about his head. Again I recall seeing him in New York City, heading for the House of Scribner's, carrying high upon his back a widespread canvas as though it were in truth a sail, making down Fifth Avenue as some vast ship before the gale. I caught myself looking for his wake. Indeed does not every courageous soul, as it navigates the deeps of life, leave a glittering record of its course?

We who had known N. C. Wyeth ever since our apprenticeships with Pyle called him "Losh," because of his favorite expletive that he had probably inherited from his New England forebears. His was an eager, searching spirit, a spectacular career, one full of color, color figurative, color actual. Of black and white for reproduction he produced but little. His canvases are replete with vibrant blues and reds and greens, with golden yellows telling of his delight in the abandon of body action, in magnificence of historic or exotic costume, in effulgent sunlight, in fantastic cloudlands. "Arabian Nights! Arabian Nights!" he cried aloud one day as he and I upon his hillside gazed into the heights of ether where cumulus and stupendous vapors touched the very vault of heaven, assumed shapes of jinns, of turbaned figures that brandished scimitars athwart the blue. "But Scheherazade never told of such gigantic genii! Give me skies of Pennsylvania!" With color Wyeth made our prewar monthlies sumptuous. With color he enriched volume after volume of juvenile

classics, chiefly for the House of Scribner's, none more noteworthy than his very first, *Treasure Island*, where his sense of pageantry, his power of suggesting realms of fancy, has not been surpassed in any other of his works. Too, with wealth of color, with imaginative splendor, Wyeth beautified many a wall of bank, of capitol, of public building. Thus in cherished magazine, in book, in mural, will his creations endure down the years, endure as does all art that has been crystallized through clearness of conception, concentration of design, nobility of purpose.

I like to think of Wyeth living his full and happy days there at Chadds Ford, from his studio window overlooking the verdant valley where he and the rest of us, forty and some odd years ago, once wandered, accompanying Howard Pyle, listening as we skirted brook and explored the Revolutionary battlefield, to our master's thoughts, his hopes, his convictions. Although Wyeth's span of life brought him well into the present age of turbulence and passion, never to the last wielding of his brush does his painting show a trace of philosophical insecurity.

What matters it if the ill-advised throw to the winds the heritage that is theirs? The ignorant, the ugly, the low will pass away. In his quest for the ideal man presses ever upward. Art is the record of his climb.

Villa Nova, Pa.

THORNTON OAKLEY