

1985

## **Picturesque America: Packaging America for Popular Consumption**

Allen Lewis Ramsier  
*College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wm.edu/etd>



Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), and the [Marketing Commons](#)

---

### **Recommended Citation**

Ramsier, Allen Lewis, "Picturesque America: Packaging America for Popular Consumption" (1985).  
*Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects*. Paper 1539625288.  
<https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-jwxj-xw43>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, & Master Projects at W&M ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects by an authorized administrator of W&M ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@wm.edu](mailto:scholarworks@wm.edu).

**PICTURESQUE AMERICA:**  
**PACKAGING AMERICA FOR POPULAR CONSUMPTION**

---

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Program in American Studies

The College of William and Mary

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

---

by

Allen L. Ramsier

1985

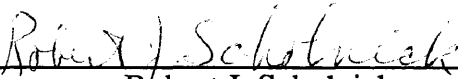
APPROVAL SHEET

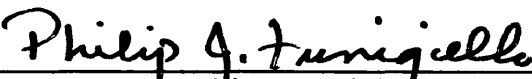
This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of


Master of Arts

  
Allen L. Ramsier

Approved, September 1985

  
Robert J. Scholnick  
Program in American Studies

  
Philip J. Funigiello  
Department of History

  
James D. Kornwolf  
Department of Fine Arts

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iv
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .....	v
ABSTRACT .....	vi
CHAPTER I. LANDSCAPE FOR A MILLION PARLORS: <u>PICTURESQUE AMERICA</u> CAPTURES NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICA .....	2
CHAPTER II. UP-TO-DATE PRODUCTION MEETS THE POET OF THE WOODS: THE PUBLICATION OF <u>PICTURESQUE AMERICA</u> .....	6
CHAPTER III. IN PURSUIT OF A VENEER OF CULTURE: AN AUDIENCE DISCOVERS <u>PICTURESQUE AMERICA</u> .....	15
CHAPTER IV. ARISTOCRATIC STANDARDS ARRIVE IN AMERICA: THE PICTURESQUE ESTHETIC .....	19
CHAPTER VI. NATURE UNADORNED IS ADORNED THE MOST: THE IMPORTANCE OF NATURE TO NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICANS .....	29
CHAPTER VII. ART SIGHS TO CARRY HER CONQUESTS TO NEW REALMS: USING NATURE TO ESTABLISH AN AMERICAN IMAGE.....	34
CHAPTER VIII. IN QUEST OF THE PERFECT COMPOSITION: THE PICTURESQUE TRAVELER .....	40
CHAPTER IX. A CONSUMING PASSION: MODERNIZATION IN <u>PICTURESQUE AMERICA</u> .....	47
CHAPTER X. WINDOW TO A WORLD: THE NINETEENTH CENTURY MIND IN <u>PICTURESQUE AMERICA</u> .....	62
NOTES .....	67
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	86

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my wife Yvette and daughter Kavanah for their ceaseless support and encouragement during the course of this study. Also, I would like to express my appreciation to Professor Robert J. Scholnick who provided the direction necessary to focus my work. Finally, I would like to thank Professors Philip J. Funigiello and James D. Kornwolf for their guidance and suggestions as readers of the manuscript.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE	AFTER PAGE
1. "Our Great National Park: The Yellowstone".....	21
2. "Petersburg Gap".....	28
3. "Newport: The Walk on the Cliff".....	44
4. "A Glimpse of Charleston and Bay, from St. Michael's Church".....	50
5. "Albany, from Kenwood".....	60

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the image of American life expressed both explicitly and implicitly in the popular nineteenth century illustrated work Picturesque America (1872-1874), a two-volume publication which sold nearly a million copies and which demonstrated how a popular publication appealed to diverse American needs in the post-Civil War years. To accomplish this, it promoted the picturesque esthetic, a British-Italian perspective for viewing nature and composing landscapes, which provided a simple and uniform way for its many readers to view their diverse and expanding country. It also enabled them to feel cultural equality with or superiority to Europeans. In addition, it served many as an esthetic education, even through the picturesque esthetic which it embodied had been outmoded on the continent for many years. Finally, it furnished information about where and how to escape modern industrial life.

Underlying the presentation of these qualities was a message which encouraged its readers to ignore the negative aspects and consequences of modernization while enjoying the benefits of an industrial society. It also promoted American business growth and, as a result, omitted any mention of the human and natural problems caused by unfettered economic growth. These messages result largely from the blindness which is a product of perceiving the United States through the limitations of the picturesque esthetic. For these and other reasons, Picturesque America serves as an apt expression of the cultural contradictions of American life in the late nineteenth century.

PICTURESQUE AMERICA:

PACKAGING AMERICA FOR POPULAR CONSUMPTION



LANDSCAPES FOR A MILLION PARLORS:  
PICTURESQUE AMERICA CAPTURES NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICA

It is the purpose of the work to illustrate with greater fullness and with superior excellence, so far as art is concerned, the places which attract curiosity by their interesting associations, and, at the same time, to challenge the admiration of the public for many of the glorious scenes which lie in the by-ways of travel.<sup>1</sup>

Thus writes William Cullen Bryant in his preface to Picturesque America (1872-1874), a quarto-size, two volume set of illustrated books which pictures and describes, as its title page notes, "the mountains, rivers, lakes, forests, water-falls, shores, canyons, valleys, cities, and other picturesque features" of the United States of the 1870s. To accomplish this, Picturesque America is filled with 49 steel-engraved and some 820 wood-engraved illustrations made from sketches commissioned by the D. Appleton Co. especially for this publication. Accompanying the sketches are sixty-five essays describing and promoting the local history, economy, geography, folklore and residents of each site. The art of Picturesque America not only helped nineteenth century Americans see their expanding country, but it enabled them to maintain a carefully contrived composure as they attempted to adjust to their rapidly changing society. For these reasons, Picturesque America was a phenomenal success.

The thousands of miles traveled by the artists, the painstaking efforts of the engravers, the diligent work of the essayists, and the careful scrutiny of the editors combined to produce a best-selling publication. One writer of an obituary in Publisher's Weekly for the work's general editor Oliver Bell Bunce claims that "probably no publication ever planned in this country has attained such financial results, the reported figures of which seem almost fabulous."<sup>2</sup> Bunce's obituary in the New York Times echoes this claim when it calls Picturesque America "one of the greatest successes of this age of successful publications."<sup>3</sup> John Cephas Derby comments in his Fifty Years Among Authors, Books, and Publishers (1884) that Picturesque America and its companion

volumes Picturesque Europe (1875-1879) and Picturesque Palestine (1881-1884) "continue to sell largely and by subscription only."<sup>4</sup> In his history of the publishers D. Appleton and Company, Grant Overton reports that nearly a million sets of Picturesque America were sold by subscription in its initial offering.<sup>5</sup> This figure is supported in Allan Nevins' history, The Emergence of Modern America 1865-1878.<sup>6</sup> In an essay on the Appleton publishers, Frank Comparato confirms the near-million initial sales figure of the subscription edition and reports that a later, pre-bound, commercially available set of Picturesque America, Picturesque Europe, and Picturesque Palestine sold 600,000 copies.<sup>7</sup> These figures mark a phenomenal success, especially when measured against the assessment by Frank Luther Mott in Golden Multitudes: The Story of Best Sellers in the United States that a best-selling book in the decade of 1870-1879 sold at least 375,000 copies.<sup>8</sup> These sales figures are "almost fabulous"; they are also a tribute to the army of door-to-door salesmen the publisher employed to sell Picturesque America by subscription in 48 parts at fifty cents each.<sup>9</sup> This makes the initial price twenty-four dollars, which excluded binding, another potential profit for the publisher if the customer chose to return the 48 paper-bound parts to the company for a cloth binding. This nearly twenty-four million dollar gross was a gold mine on the one hundred and thirty-eight thousand dollars the Appletons invested in the production of this best-selling parlor book.<sup>10</sup>

By all accounts and in a manner which must have satisfied the nineteenth century businessman and layman alike, Picturesque America was hugely successful. While references to Picturesque America appear in a variety of sources, there is no extended treatment of the publication to date. The sales figures suggest that Picturesque America is worthy of study because it was so widely available and, therefore, potentially influential among its sizable readership. One reason that the work sold so well is that it enjoyed all of the benefits of publication technology and distribution of the time. It also represented the

best of a flood of popular books and articles which attempted to satisfy readers' demands for more knowledge of unfamiliar American landscapes. In addition, the appeal and influence of Picturesque America can be traced to Bunce's decision to unify the visual and written images of American landscape with the picturesque esthetic, a way of seeing nature and, in Bunce's Americanized version, cities and industries, which matched nineteenth century interests and impulses. Using the style of the picturesque, Bunce and his staff were attempting to establish an esthetic perspective from which their readers could understand and assimilate to radical economic and social changes of late-nineteenth century America.

Americans sought to establish some common ground when they faced the tasks of reuniting the North and the South after the Civil war and of coping with an emerging urban, industrial life. Picturesque America enabled Americans to ignore or sentimentalize the recent war, escape into nature, and focus on the West, the region which seemed to promise unlimited opportunity to achieve the American dream of the independent yeoman farmer. In many respects, the picturesque esthetic appealed to these sentiments and was, therefore, an appropriate unifying theme. For one, it provided simple esthetic guidelines for an unsophisticated citizenry. Second, it presented a set of rational guidelines for appreciating both wild and tamed nature as found in the United States of the time. Third, it encouraged national pride by providing American nature as a source for establishing a superior attitude toward Europe, whose historical importance and eminence was firmly established. Finally, it presented an escape from the memories and emotions of the Civil War and modern urban industrial life by offering an optimism which greatly appealed to nineteenth century Americans.

In these respects, Picturesque America diverted the nation's attention from its sectional differences to areas of natural and man-made beauty around the country. In so

doing, it provided some guidance for a class of citizens which had spent most of its time accumulating wealth and relatively little time acquiring cultural refinement. Picturesque America appealed to a large number of readers who had developed more leisure time and a desire to travel. It also provided a single method of seeing the expanding and richly varied country which now extended across a geographically diverse continent. Picturesque America taught its readers not only where to travel in the United States, but also what and how to see the best views in a given locale. The essayists in Picturesque America set out in particular to dispel the notion that travel in Europe was preferable to travel in the United States. This effort simultaneously appealed to nationalistic impulses to reunite the divided country and introduced Americans to many parts of their country with which they were previously unacquainted.

Before exploring the picturesque esthetic in further detail, a telling of the story behind the publication of Picturesque America will reveal how the work itself is an appropriate representative of its age of success and optimism.

UP-TO-DATE PRODUCTION MEETS THE POET OF THE WOODS:  
THE PUBLICATION OF PICTURESQUE AMERICA

The history of the publication of Picturesque America is itself an expression of the scope and spirit of nineteenth century American enterprise. From its origin to its production and sales, the themes of patriotism, materialism, technology, nature, and large scale are present. The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography credits Harry Fenn, the illustrator of 25 of the 65 articles and the first artist commissioned by the Appletons to travel the United States to gather sketches for the work, with the original idea of the publication. Fenn's biographer relates the incident which purportedly gave him the idea:

[ Picturesque America ] had its origin in Mr. Fenn's overhearing an Englishman sneeringly say that the scenery in America had nothing picturesque about it. [Fenn proposed,] 'If [Appletons'] will make it worth my while, we will show the young man if there is anything picturesque in America.'<sup>1</sup>

Then, motivated by both patriotism and profit, Fenn proposed the idea to the Appleton Co. and was enthusiastically received.

Sound business practice forbade launching a project of the scope of Picturesque America without a test of the public's receptiveness. This began with the publication of Harry Fenn's sketches and editor Oliver Bell Bunce's description of Florida and Maine in Appletons' Journal.<sup>2</sup>

The magazine announced its intention to publish the "Picturesque America" series in its pages in the November 5, 1870 issue and published the first images of Florida the following week.<sup>3</sup> These and subsequent articles<sup>4</sup> were so enthusiastically received that Bunce proposed the project to George S. Appleton, the third son of the publishing company's founder, Daniel Appleton. George Appleton approved, and Picturesque America became the first of the Appletons' large library of art books which George Appleton oversaw from 1872 to 1878.<sup>5</sup>

Given the quality of Picturesque America and the inclination of nineteenth century

American popular taste, the Appletons were virtually guaranteed success as Samuel C. Chew observed in his introduction to an anthology of works published by Appleton-Century-Crofts.

At this time, when Americans were looking back to the tragic struggle through which a divided country had recently passed, they were also looking out upon the expanding greatness of a reunited country. Impressions of different parts of the United States were staple articles in the magazines, and books on the subject were popular.<sup>6</sup>

In his preface to Picturesque America, William Cullen Bryant appeals to this national pride and genuine interest when he writes that "it is quite safe to assert that a book of American scenery, like Picturesque America, will lay before its readers more scenes entirely new to them than a similar book on Europe."<sup>7</sup>

With the intention of bringing new and old American vistas to the American public, the work on Picturesque America began. Three figures dominated in the design and the content of the publication. The first, Oliver Bell Bunce, wrote twelve of the 65 essays and directed the work, assigning artists and essayists and assembling their material in his New York office. Bunce was literary editor at D. Appleton and Co. from 1867 until his death in 1890 and associate editor of Appleton's Journal from 1869-1872, when he assumed joint editorship with Charles Henry Jones until the magazine's demise in 1881. It was in this role of magazine editor that Bunce sent Fenn on his initial journey to gather sketches for the "Picturesque America" series. In its obituary, the New York Times characterizes Bunce as a company man who "was more jealous and exacting in furthering the interests of his employers than he ever was in pushing his own."<sup>8</sup> This is most clearly shown in the final years of his life. The Dictionary of American Biography notes that after suffering with tuberculosis during his last twenty years, Bunce "died, as he claimed that he wished to, in harness," working at the Appletons' offices until one week before his death, then taking manuscripts home to edit on his deathbed.<sup>9</sup>

The second dominant figure in creating Picturesque America was principle illustrator Harry Fenn. Beyond proposing the initial idea and providing many of the sketches, Fenn was most likely the source for the unifying theme of the picturesque esthetic. After immigrating to the United States from England at the age of nineteen, Fenn stayed six years before traveling to Italy in 1862 to study art. It is there that Fenn most likely received his training in the picturesque esthetic. According to art historian Barbara Novak, the continued influence among Italian artists and teachers of Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), one of the earliest practitioners of the picturesque esthetic, kept the esthetic alive in Italy well into the 1860s; because Italy was the most popular destination in Europe at the time for artistic instruction, the picturesque esthetic became influential among aspiring American artists.<sup>10</sup> Fenn returned to the United States with this picturesque training and began to establish a reputation as an illustrator of nature and, in the words of a writer in Appleton's Journal, as "one of our most attractive draughtsmen."<sup>11</sup> Editor Bunce acknowledges Fenn's influence on the esthetic principles behind Picturesque America when Bunce writes in his essay on Charleston:

[E]veryone ought to travel in the company of an artist. It is only when associated with one of this instructed class that a man discovers the use of his eyes, and begins to understand fully the beauties, and harmonies, and rich effects that pertain to many things neglected by ordinary observers. . . . In the writer's own case he found it a good training to hear enthusiastic Mr. Fenn dilate upon this bit of color, that glimpse of rich toning, this new and surprising effect.<sup>12</sup>

The third important figure associated with the creation of Picturesque America is William Cullen Bryant, who contributed more image than substance. Bryant received credit as editor on the title page, and, as the Dictionary of American Biography explains, Picturesque America was "nominally under Bryant's editorship."<sup>13</sup> It was Bunce, however, who conceived and executed the work of the publication. In his biography of Bryant, Charles H. Brown writes that Bryant was persuaded by George S. Appleton to

work as editor on Picturesque America, a task which Bryant "took up with interest, but soon tired of it," writing in a letter to Rev. Dr. Orville Dewey that he "could not recall having engaged in a literary task so wearisome, since 'the mere description of places is the most tedious of all reading.'"<sup>14</sup> Bryant was happy to leave the bulk of the editorial work to Bunce, contenting himself (and obviously the publisher) by reading the proofs and writing a preface. In his Bibliography of American Literature, Jacob Blanck cites another Bryant letter to Rev. Dewey in which Bryant defends his work on Picturesque America:

I edited this work, it is true. Somebody must edit such a publication, and I do not see why I should not do it as well as another. Every part of it, except a few of the first sheets, passed through my hands; and I do not remember that I was ever more weary of any literary task. . . . It was my business to correct the language, omit superfluous passages, and see that no nonsense crept into the text; and this I did as faithfully as I knew how.<sup>15</sup>

This token editorship was typical of Bryant at this point in his life. Between 1872-1876, Bryant, nearly eighty years old, lent his name and sufficient time to write prefaces and read proofs to three large works in addition to Picturesque America. These included a collection of American and British poetry, a four-volume history of the United States, and an edition of Shakespeare's plays.<sup>16</sup> This pragmatic and profitable practice prompted Harriet Monroe, founder and editor of Poetry: A Magazine of Verse from 1912-1936, to call Bryant "the great national tone imparter" because of both the sales potential and the ideals which his signature represented.<sup>17</sup>

Undoubtedly Bryant had sales potential; as Judith Turner Phair points out in her introduction to A Bibliography of William Cullen Bryant and His Critics, 1808-1972, while Bryant is at best a minor poet by today's standards, in his day he was viewed as an eminent American poet.<sup>18</sup> In fact, Bryant's contemporary critics ranked him with the English nature poets, claiming, "No English poet surpasses him in knowledge of Nature, and few are his equals,"<sup>19</sup> and that Bryant is "[as] abstract as Shelley and reflective like



Wordsworth."<sup>20</sup> In addition to his marketability as an easily recognized and well-loved figure, Bryant also represented many ideals with which the readership of Picturesque America could identify. In an age which deified nature as a source of rejuvenation from city life, Bryant was a country boy who grew up with the influences of rural life and a first-hand knowledge and appreciation of nature.<sup>21</sup> This was significant to his readers, who romanticized nature, yet were increasingly products of an urban environment. Urban dwellers were rapidly becoming the majority as the United States struggled through the transformation from a rural to a predominantly urban population, a consequence of the increasing importance of industrialization in the American economy, especially since the Civil War.

Bryant also appealed to the American public with his strong religious sentiment, a pre-requisite for popular acceptance in his day. In fact, as a contemporary assessment of Bryant by Eugene Benson points out, of all American poets, Bryant brought the most solemn tone to nature poetry and instilled a sense of the religiousness of nature.<sup>22</sup> Also typical of his age, Bryant was a "passionate botanist" knowing trees and flowers extensively and including a variety of flora in his poems.<sup>23</sup> Richard Henry Stoddard captures all of these appeals when he claims in a biographical article in Appletons' Journal that Bryant blends "the knowledge of the naturalist with the insight of the poet," and that "no English poet surpasses him in knowledge of Nature, and few are his equals."<sup>24</sup> In this sense, Bryant's readers could identify closely with his sentiment because many Americans were struggling to blend their increasing interest in science with their religion, art, and politics.

Bryant's partisanship for America and things American made him attractive to an American audience which was struggling to establish its cultural independence along with its political independence from Great Britain and Continental Europe. As early as 1818

Bryant's literary criticism consistently called for the development of an American style of writing free from imitation of European models.<sup>25</sup> In his preface to Picturesque America, Bryant raises this cause in the world of art when he proclaims that "Art sighs to carry her conquests into new realms"; the United States, according to Bryant, is that new realm because artists had visited all of Europe while the United States abounded in landscapes which had never been sketched or painted.<sup>26</sup> Beyond the championing of American culture, Bryant used his influence as editor of the New York Evening Post -- an occupation based on a pragmatic decision which would appeal to the Puritan work-ethic of the American public: ". . . politics and a bellyful is better than poetry and starvation:"<sup>27</sup> --to promote and protect such American causes as national preserves to protect American forests and Central Park in New York to bring nature into the city.<sup>28</sup>

Thus the "great national tone imparter" was a definite asset for the Appletons in their effort to promote sales of Picturesque America. The Appletons also had a vested interest in Bryant because they had published many of his works since 1854, when they issued two new complete editions of his poems. Therefore, when Grant Overton proudly proclaimed in The First Hundred Years of the House of Appleton, 1825-1925 that "though he was nearly eighty years, [Bryant] undertook the editorship of the gigantic Picturesque America and despite the arduousness of the task read and corrected every word of the proofs,"<sup>29</sup> Overton was praising not only the mentally and physically fit Bryant, but also the poet who was a fixture and a steady source of income in the literary stable of D. Appleton and Co. Bryant, then, was the perfect choice as editor-in-name both for the reading audience and the publisher of Picturesque America.

Not only did the men involved in the production of Picturesque America exhibit many characteristics of the age, but the actual production and distribution of the two-volume work also show an America rapidly changing as a response to modernization

and technology. An epic publication could only result from an enormous investment; as John Cephas Derby reports in Fifty Years Among Authors, Books, and Publishers, the engravings alone cost some \$80,000.<sup>30</sup> The Appletons spent their money wisely in hiring some of the best engravers of the day. Consequently, the illustrations in Picturesque America established new standards of quality for landscape printing. Frank Weitenkampf supports this assessment in American Graphic Art when he describes the technical standards of the wood engravings in Picturesque America as "a noteworthy stimulus to good engraving"<sup>31</sup> and "an interesting collection of well-engraved landscapes" worthy of study.<sup>32</sup>

To substantiate his claim, Weitenkampf cites the opinion of Sylvester Rosa Koehler, art critic and editor of the American Art Review (1880-1882), who called Picturesque America "an epoch-making work."<sup>33</sup> (Incidentally, Weitenkampf's approval does not extend to the steel engravings in Picturesque America, which he describes as "thin....work."<sup>34</sup> In his 1880 history of American wood engraving, William James Linton, "one of the most able wood engravers of the second half of the [nineteenth] century"<sup>35</sup> and one of the engravers of Picturesque America, called the publication the "most important book of landscape that has appeared in this country" and further claimed that "nothing of later years in England will equal [it]."<sup>36</sup> Writing fourteen years after Weitenkampf, Frank Luther Mott agreed with the assessment that the importance of Picturesque America is in its wood engravings.<sup>37</sup> The quality of the engravings also benefited from the large format of the work. William James Linton felt that Picturesque America was a triumph of the art of engraving because its size "gave scope to the engraver."<sup>38</sup> Thus, two more characteristics of prosperous nineteenth century American life, large investments and grand scale, contributed to the success of Picturesque America.

As Linton noted, the steel-engravings are not equal in quality to the wood-

engravings. However, they do bring another important element of the nineteenth century to the production of Picturesque America. Typical of the technology which made American publishing larger and faster than its British counterpart,<sup>39</sup> the D. Appleton Co. made a commitment to mechanization of the printing and binding processes.<sup>40</sup> Picturesque America boasts the first prints from a steam-powered gravure press which was invented by Robert Neale with research and development funds provided by the Appletons.<sup>41</sup> Thus, Picturesque America, brought not only new American scenery to its readers, it employed the newest, most advanced technology to do so.

The great economic prosperity of the United States could not have occurred without a well-executed sales drive to promote American products; Picturesque America shows this aspect of the American experience as well. As Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt observes in A History of the Making and Selling of Books in the United States, American publishers in the mid-nineteenth century faced a dilemma--while the American public was increasingly literate and had more leisure for reading, book stores and retail outlets were uncommon and, consequently, the publishers were not easily able to place their books in interested readers' hands.<sup>42</sup> In his history of their firm, Grant Overton reports that the D. Appleton Co. overcame this problem by originating "the method of selling books by means of personal house-to-house canvas" to sell the first American Cyclopaedia (1857), and that this practice evolved into subscription sales,<sup>43</sup> which the Appletons used successfully between 1870 and 1900.<sup>44</sup> Lehmann-Haupt reports that under this method publishers hired an army of salesmen and sent them out to small towns and homesteads with order forms.<sup>45</sup> The salesmen completed the orders and collected the money, then delivered the books on a separate trip. Frank Elbert Compton points out that the subscription method was successful because the general prosperity following the Civil War allowed people to afford books and that subscription books were popular because they were effortlessly

acquired and satisfied the contemporary "insatiable desire for at least a veneer of 'culture.'"<sup>46</sup>

Overton claims that Picturesque America was the first in this "vogue of books" that were "published in small sections, monthly, to be afterwards combined and kept in portfolios or bound as the owner might wish."<sup>47</sup> Each of the 48 issues of Picturesque America arrived in a printed wrapper,<sup>48</sup> cost fifty cents, and contained one steel engraving and multiple wood engravings.<sup>49</sup> Though it was issued in parts, the subscriber had to agree to purchase the entire work.<sup>50</sup> This method facilitated Appletons' financing of such a large work. One can only imagine the skill of the salesmen in persuading nearly one million readers to subscribe to Picturesque America. One tactic which must have been used appears in the Appletons' 1874 New York Times Christmas announcement; after gaining the attention of those who "have already subscribed for the [Appletons'] Cyclopaedia," they attempt to induce readers to subscribe to Picturesque America, "the most magnificently illustrated volumes ever yet produced," by claiming that every European monarch and the Pope had already done so.<sup>51</sup> Such a sales pitch is aimed at an insecure middle class which is looking for guidance in its search for a "veneer of 'culture.'"

Thus, even before examining the image of the United States which Picturesque America presents, the individuals who participated in the production of the work and the process of publication and distribution themselves illuminate many elements of nineteenth century American character. The audience which Picturesque America attracted most likely exhibited many of these same beliefs and practices.

IN PURSUIT OF A VENEER OF CULTURE:  
AN AUDIENCE DISCOVERS PICTURESQUE AMERICA

The sales figures establish Picturesque America as worthy of study because it was so widely available and, therefore, potentially influential among its sizable readership. The essayists in Picturesque America were apparently aware of their large readership. Because the work was produced over a four-year period, the first parts of the series were sold and in the public's hand while the latter parts were in production. In Volume Two, William Carey Richards alludes to the large readership in telling the story of Charter Oak in Connecticut when he notes, "Although the story is a familiar one to the people of Connecticut, we do not lose sight of the circumstance that we are writing these sketches for hundreds and thousands in our own country, and in other lands."<sup>1</sup> Beyond his awareness of his domestic audience, Richards also shows that the success of Picturesque America was not limited to the United States.

That large and international audience of whom the essayists were so aware represent an indentifiable culture. The purchasers of Picturesque America represented an affluent economic background, as illustrated by Grant Overton who name-drops prominent nineteenth century subscribers to the publication series.<sup>2</sup> These included public figures in all walks of life, among them writers Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Ralph Waldo Emerson, James Russell Lowell, John Greenleaf Whittier, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and George W. Curtis; political figures Ulysses S. Grant, Hamilton Fish, Schuyler Colfax, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Charles Francis Adams; businessmen Jay Cooke, Cyril A. Field, Cornelius Vanderbilt, and August Belmont; generals L.W.B. McClellan and William T. Sherman; and Reverend Henry Ward Beecher. On thousands of other subscription lists are hundreds of thousands more names of readers who were desirous of owning Picturesque America. The twenty-four dollar subscription price also suggests that the

readership of Picturesque America would have been largely middle and upper class.

Further support for this comes from Robert J. Scholnick's assessment of the readership of Appleton's Journal, the magazine offered by D. Appleton and Co. to capture the growing urban, new-monied audience. Scholnick concludes that "clearly [ Appletons' ] painted its 'picture' of the contemporary world from the point of view of the conservative middle class urbanites who were its primary audience."<sup>3</sup> These same readers would be the type of reader which Picturesque America hoped to capture because they would already be familiar with the "Picturesque America" series in the pages of the Journal and Appletons would therefore hope to capitalize on that familiarity. In addition, they would have the money and sustained interest to subscribe to all 48 parts.

There must have been some subscribers who were unable to afford to pursue the quest for natural beauty which Picturesque America advocates. Beyond their interest in newly discovered American landscapes, these subscribers were possibly seeking the benefits that simply owning an epic work like Picturesque America would provide. As Jenni Calder points out in her study The Victorian Home, books on display in a Victorian parlor were often "decorative rather than readable."<sup>4</sup> Hans Huth says as much about Picturesque America:

This monumental publication is representative of its period and is quite in keeping with the oversize canvases of Bierstadt. His pictures could not be observed in all their details at one time, and these were not even intended to be read from cover to cover but rather to be perused now and again as they lay in state on the drawing-room table beside the stereoscope.<sup>5</sup>

Books were a traditional symbol of refinement, and, as Frank Elbert Compton points out, subscription books were effortlessly acquired, and gratified the contemporary desire for at least a facade of refinement.<sup>6</sup> So Picturesque America satisfied those who had or aspired to have the wealth necessary to display an esthetic sense.

Final evidence of its appeal to an affluent audience is the work's unifying theme of

the picturesque esthetic, an esthetic which could best be appreciated by an individual with enough money and leisure to travel. In his introduction to a reprint of The Home Book of the Picturesque (1852), Motley F. Deakin notes that the eighteenth century British aristocratic class developed the picturesque esthetic at its leisure; consequently, the aristocrats could develop a rational, formulaic method of seeing which required time to learn and then to find in natural landscapes.<sup>7</sup> Richard D. Brown concludes in his study of late nineteenth century America that Victorian Americans romanticized, among other things, "the beauties of European aristocratic art and culture."<sup>8</sup> Apparently at this point in American history, many members of the middle class, whose ancestors had struggled to escape from the influence of European monarchs and aristocracies, were sufficiently interested in material goods and refinement to overlook their traditional dislike of the whole notion of monarchs and aristocrats. Given these Americans' strong desire to acquire taste, members of the European ruling class would have provided the best models of style and taste simply because they had a longer tradition of wealth, leisure, and refinement. Deakin discusses this trans-Atlantic contrast and argues that the American "senses his cultural inadequacies so keenly, he approached the picturesque more as a willing and humble student than as a dilettante toying with the latest popular interest."<sup>9</sup> The newly prosperous American public needed some education about the picturesque esthetic and books like Picturesque America provided esthetic training for the insecure. As Motley F. Deakin observes:

When America had reached the moment at which she could interest herself in the picturesque, her desire to enjoy it bespoke a level of material well-being, of intellectual tolerance and leisure until then not realized in this country.<sup>10</sup>

Americans were ready for a book like Picturesque America so they could acquire the esthetic training their busy schedules of exploring, conquering, developing, and producing had previously precluded. By choosing the picturesque esthetic as a unifying theme, editor



Bunce and his staff tapped nineteenth century American character on many levels.

## ARISTOCRATIC STANDARDS ARRIVE IN AMERICA: THE PICTURESQUE ESTHETIC

The picturesque esthetic owes its origin to the esthetic theory developed by Edmund Burke (1729-1797), British statesman and orator, who created two esthetic categories, the sublime and the beautiful, in an attempt to objectify emotional responses to nature in an age of reason.<sup>1</sup> Burke claimed that esthetic experience stimulated one of the two emotional reactions to nature: an overwhelming feeling of awe and fear (the sublime) or a gentle response of tenderness and pleasure (the beautiful).<sup>2</sup> Feeling that there was a great range of esthetic experience between fear and tenderness, two other eighteenth century aristocratic British esthetes, William Gilpin (1724-1804) and Uvedale Price (1747-1829) transformed the picturesque esthetic to capture the realm of landscape between Burke's dark and fearful sublime and his tranquil and pleasant beautiful.<sup>3</sup> As developed by Gilpin, Price, and two other major figures, Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792) and Richard Payne Knight (1750-1824), the picturesque esthetic evolved into a set of strictly delimiting guidelines for appreciating nature. Reynolds pioneered the picturesque esthetic based on the principles that nature should be appreciated as it commonly appeared and that a proper appreciation can only be achieved by one who is in "the habit of contemplating and brooding over the ideas of great genius" and who has subsequently developed "an artistic mind."<sup>4</sup> Knight felt that there was no inherent objective quality in a subject for painting and stressed the importance of artistic education to develop "the eye of a painter, the feelings of a poet, and the discernment of a critic" to be able to view a landscape with the subjective quality which was the picturesque esthetic.<sup>5</sup> Gilpin, a third eighteenth century proponent of the picturesque esthetic, felt that the educated seeker of the picturesque would ultimately find a natural scene "which would look well on a picture . . . if it composed well and was harmoniously colored."<sup>6</sup> Such a scene would include rough and broken objects

like rocks, ruins, or scraggly castles.<sup>7</sup> Finding the truly picturesque scene was no easy undertaking. The seeker of the picturesque must first have a clear understanding of the picturesque esthetic and, in addition, must not confuse it with the sublime or beautiful. Also, a hearty disposition aided greatly in the pursuit; Gilpin advised the seeker of the picturesque to look along the brinks of precipices, to climb mountains and to search gorges.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the picturesque esthetic had a British aristocratic origin and required careful study, then the wealth, leisure, and constitution to pursue its cultivation and discovery.

Like the concepts of the sublime and the beautiful, the picturesque esthetic was a formulaic, rational approach to esthetics, though the picturesque esthetic is the most rational because it lacks both the emotional fire of the sublime and the calm feeling of the beautiful. Christopher Hussey captures this distinction in The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View:

Classic art makes you think, imaginative art makes you feel. But picturesque art merely makes you see. It records without contemplating.<sup>9</sup>

This rational esthetic did have a following on both sides of the Atlantic.

The picturesque esthetic enjoyed its European vogue and decline a half a century before it peaked in popularity in the United States between 1840 and 1860.<sup>10</sup> The longer popularity of the picturesque in the United States was due to the continued influence of Claude Lorraine on Italian art instructors, who taught aspiring American artists studying in Italy well into the 1860s.<sup>11</sup> The training which Picturesque America illustrator Harry Fenn and his fellow artistic pilgrims received amounted to a formula which dictated both how the artist viewed a landscape and what he sketched. From Claude's works, the formula included dividing the composition into four planes: a dark frame of trees, a foreground dominated by a large central feature like a group of trees or animals, a middleground which

often included a body of water, and an illuminated, distant mountain as a background to give the picture a feeling of closure.<sup>12</sup> All of the planes were connected by, in Kenneth Clark's words, "much art . . . [which leads] the eye from one plane to the next . . . [by employing] bridges, rivers, cattle fording a stream, and similar devices."<sup>13</sup> Claude's works generally depicted tranquil scenes. A darker side of nature entered the picturesque esthetic in the works of Salvator Rosa (1615-1673), who utilized stormy and night-time settings. Salvator also introduced into his foreground such stock figures as banditti, shaggy pines, rustics, travelers, and brickmakers.<sup>14</sup> These painters and their proponents forged a formula which is repeated over and over in late eighteenth and nineteenth century art.

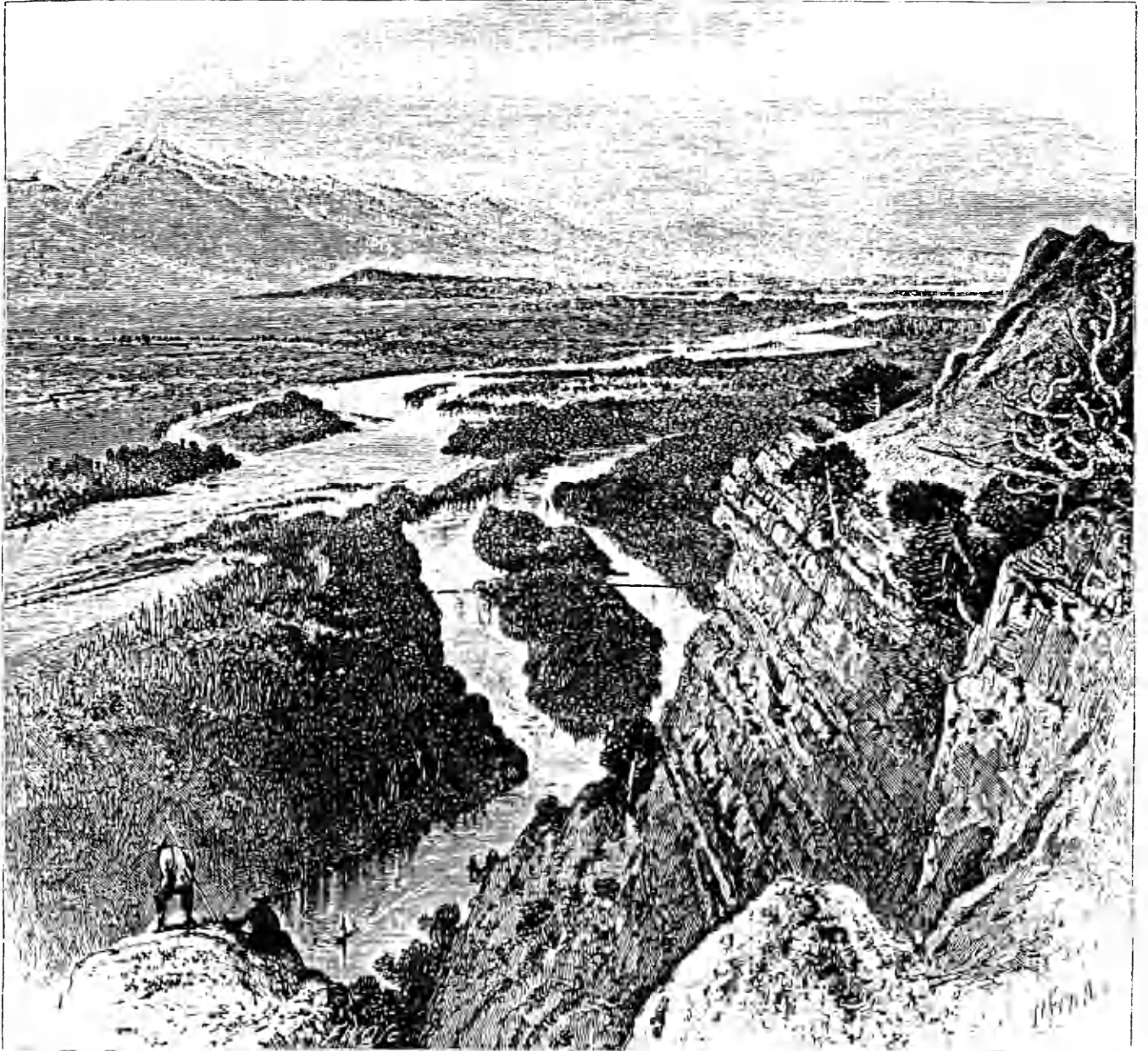
Picturesque America abounds with illustrations which conform to this formula. Typical is "The Yellowstone." (Figure 1). In an essay depicting one setting in Virginia, George William Bagby describes a scene which "composes itself into a picture which has an almost studio-like attention to the ordinary [i.e. picturesque] rules of composition":

High hills enclose the place; back of these mountains, and back of all, the great Salt-Pond Mountain-- a slumbering Titan. In the foreground, a hill top, with gnarled and picturesque trees; beneath, the tranquil, gleaming river, shortly lost to sight in the sombre mountains; and immediately opposite the spectator, the rugged, riven, and weird Anvil Cliff lifts its awful but not repulsive front.<sup>15</sup>

As Motley F. Deakin notes in his introduction to The Home Book of the Picturesque: or, American Scenery, Art, and Literature, the picturesque was based on an effort to exclude "man and his artifacts: in order to see the world in a natural state."<sup>16</sup> This convention of the picturesque esthetic, that nature is the source of the picturesque, appears frequently throughout the two volumes as the artists sketch and the essayists describe American landscapes. Most Americans viewed cities with distrust and regarded nature as the place to escape modern life. In describing Chicago, Bunce alludes to this belief:

# OUR GREAT NATIONAL PARK

THE VALLEY OF THE YELLOWSTONE.



The Yellowstone.

**Figure 1**

Our American cities are not usually picturesque. Their sites were selected for commercial convenience; hence they are generally flat. Time has not yet mellowed their tints, nor age given quaintness to their structures. Long rows of handsome facades, and avenues of embowered cottages, however gratifying to their citizens, do not supply the stuff which the soul of the artist hungers for.<sup>17</sup>

In this statement Bunce mentions another important element of the picturesque: age. Deakin observes that age increased an object or view's picturesqueness, so history was important to the appreciation of the picturesque. Thus, when a man-made work appears in a picturesque landscape, it is inevitably in ruin or somehow manages to convey an ancient appearance. All of these romantic ideals appear in Picturesque America. More references are made to the Revolutionary War than to the Civil War, which had ended just seven years before the publication of Picturesque America. Consequently, the Potomac below Washington is "worthy of inspection" because of its historical associations with the Revolution,<sup>18</sup> and, in spite of its second-rate natural beauty, Harper's Ferry, Maryland deserves a visit because it, too, has historical significance.<sup>19</sup> Nineteenth century Americans drew upon natural history to compensate for a relative lack of human history in their effort to include historical objects in their landscapes. As developed below, this practice was a crucial aid in generating a self-image of an established America. Consequently, the essayists in Picturesque America reserve some of their greatest praise for those rock formations which resemble European castles and ruins. David Hunter Strother observes in his essay on West Virginia that a seemingly artificially composed scene of multi-colored arched strata elicits "no other emotion than that of pleasing curiosity" while a rock pile that resembles the ruin of a feudal castle or the chimneys of a burnt factory cause the artist and writer to divert from their path.<sup>20</sup> George Makepeace Towle proclaims that on the East Coast, "a savage fortress, Castle Rock, with battlements, embrasures, buttresses, and turrets, [is] the only kind of counterpart to the castle-ruins which so richly deck European scenes that our new America affords."<sup>21</sup> Finally,

Rodolphe E. Garczynski intones the same praise in an effort to convince American travelers to see the United States first when he assures the reader that anyone who "shall pine for the castled crags of the Rhine" need only visit Chimney Rock on the Upper Mississippi to find natural rock formations "in the precise image of Chepstow Keep, in 'merrie England,' and [which] is to all intents and purposes, as much a castle as any ruin of the German river."<sup>22</sup>

The picturesque esthetic, then, was a British aristocratic invention which dictated how to view landscape by acquiring preconceived notions of what images to seek and placing great value on untouched nature and antiquity. These characteristics were incorporated into the illustrations and essays of Picturesque America, and, in a form which was further Americanized by Bunce and his staff, contribute to an understanding of nineteenth century American culture.

## PANACEA FOR CULTURAL INSECURITY: THE APPEAL OF THE PICTURESQUE ESTHETIC

When the picturesque esthetic reached the United States, especially in a popular publication like Picturesque America, it still contained its classic principles, but in an altered, Americanized style which fit the lifestyle of capitalistic empire builders who studied money-making in the first generation and acquired culture only in the financially comfortable second or third generations. Historian Allan Nevins describes the post-Civil War American society, especially in the North, where Picturesque America was published, as greatly affluent but with little refinement and taste in spending its excess money.<sup>1</sup> The need for taste, as Jenni Calder explains in The Victorian Home, resulted from the development of mass production, which greatly increased the variety of products available and consequently required consumers to discriminate a "good buy" and to refine taste.<sup>2</sup> Both Nevins and Calder observe that nineteenth century efforts to spend money tastefully often ended in vulgarity in architecture and furnishings.<sup>3</sup> Amid the cluttered Victorian parlor,<sup>4</sup> Picturesque America lay in state among the bric-a-brac, awaiting to offer its didactic instruction in the picturesque esthetic. Any esthetic which would appeal to such readers had to be easily understood and contain acceptable principles.

Late nineteenth century Americans were not only insecure about style and consumption; both beneficiaries and victims of their age, they were increasingly confounded by the pace of modernization around them. And the culture they produced was a manifestation of their response to modernization.<sup>5</sup> Factories were growing, immigrants from American farms and abroad were pouring into cities, science was challenging established religious beliefs, and the new urban lifestyle challenged the traditional family structure. In an effort to enjoy the material comforts of the new age, Americans adapted to



modernization by becoming time-conscious,<sup>6</sup> rational, specialized, efficient, cosmopolitan, and future-oriented and by accepting the chaotic conditions necessary to advance the capitalistic-industrial process.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, hoping to maintain traditional values, they idealized the stability of the well-kept and orderly home, family life, and religion.<sup>8</sup> Because they desired anything which they perceived as unchanging or unchangeable, Victorians sought universal truths to explain and justify all phenomena,<sup>9</sup> so they made every effort to transmit their culture and values through carefully constructed rhetoric which relied on rational appeals.<sup>10</sup>

For these reasons, Bunce and the staff of Picturesque America chose well when they elected to unify their work with the rational picturesque esthetic. Recovering from a highly emotional civil war and facing an emerging modern life whose cold efficiency was rapidly overturning antebellum conventions, nineteenth century Americans found comfort in the didactic principles of the picturesque esthetic. Examining the effect of modernization on Victorian behavior in an essay entitled "Modernization: A Victorian Climax," Richard D. Brown concludes:

Repression of emotions and spontaneous impulses in favor of punctuality, order, cleanliness, and devotion to duty was a social necessity. Victorians eager to achieve the prosperity and physical security that modernization promised, were generally willing to put the spontaneous, sexually-related, traditional world behind them so as to become, like the characters in Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward (1888) entirely rational, well-organized, secure beings.<sup>11</sup>

Nineteenth century Americans, then, wanted clear, rational guidelines to develop an esthetic sense, even at the expense of clearly realistic images. The picturesque esthetic provided an acceptable way of seeing for those who learned its tenets of composition and content. The search in nature for scenes which conformed to this esthetic provided Victorians a considerable challenge. As editor Oliver B. Bunce points out in his essay describing Mauch Chunk, Pennsylvania, "There is a great deal in knowing how to find the

picturesque, and Mr. Fenn, in his large drawings, has selected points of view that present the hills and town in their best aspect."<sup>12</sup> Bunce's point underlines the rational nature of the picturesque esthetic; unless one has studied the formula of the esthetic and knows what to look for in a scene, he will not truly appreciate what he sees.

Once the artist or traveler has mastered the picturesque formula, he or she is then prepared to mount the frequently arduous search for the few picturesque perspectives of a given landscape. In another essay in Picturesque America, Bunce stresses the difficulty of the search:

People in search of the picturesque should understand the importance of selecting suitable points of view. The beauty or impressiveness of a picture sometimes depends on this. It is often a matter of search to discover the point from which an object has its best expression; and probably only those of intuitive artistic tastes are enabled to see all the beauties of a landscape, which others lose in ignorance of how to select the most advantageous standing-place. To the cold and indifferent, Nature has no charms; she reveals herself only to those who surrender their hearts to her influence, and who patiently study her aspects. The beauty of any object lies partly in the capacity of the spectator to see it, and partly in his ability to put himself where the form and color impress the senses most effectively. Not one man in ten discerns half the beauty of a tree or a pile of rocks, and hence those who fail to discover in a landscape the charm others describe in it should question their own power of appreciation rather than the accuracy of the delineation.<sup>13</sup>

Here Bunce expresses the time necessary for both studying the picturesque esthetic in advance of a trip into nature and then looking at a landscape from every perspective to discover the view which fits the formula. His conclusion also suggests an attitude that individual reactions are somehow inferior to an established idea of beauty.

Again, because the picturesque was much less dramatic than the sublime or beautiful, the picturesque required more discrimination to perceive. As David Hunter Strother notes in "West Virginia," "The casual observer may be easily tricked by his careless eye or exuberant fancy."<sup>14</sup> In his essay on the Upper Delaware, William Henry Rideing further describes the skill of the trained eye of the picturesque artist in finding details in nature which are truly picturesque:

The artist drew our attention this way and that--one moment toward yonder

darkling hollow in the rocks, as the spray dashed itself into the brown seams; next toward the water, as the light played ever-new tricks with it; and then to a little pool formed in the cup of a boulder. That keen eye of his discovered effects in the smallest nooks, underneath the fronds of the tiniest fern, among the grains of sand that lodged in the crevices, and in the swaying shadows of the forms around.<sup>15</sup>

In addition, much perseverance was required. As Bunce notes of Charleston, "The search for the picturesque that would meet the necessities of our purpose was not expeditious."<sup>16</sup> After all, Bunce comments elsewhere, "A mountain no more carries its beauty within the ready ken of everybody than a wise man 'wears his heart on his sleeve for daws to pick at.'"<sup>17</sup> Precise knowledge of what to look for and patience are not all that is required of the seeker of the picturesque; the aspiring esthete must be prepared for a rigorous physical workout as well.<sup>18</sup> As Bunce notes, "It is only after walking around a place, and surveying it from different situations, that an artist can settle upon his views."<sup>19</sup> In another essay describing the shores of Mount Desert, Maine, Bunce advises the devotee:

No indifferent glance will suffice. Go to the edge of the cliffs and look down; go below, where they lift in tall escarpments above you; sit in the shadows of their massive presence; study the infinite variety of form, texture, and color, and learn to read all the different phases of sentiment their scarred fronts have to express. When all this is done, be assured you will discover that 'sermons in stones' was not mere fancy of the poet.<sup>20</sup>

It is the "sermon in stone" which Bunce holds out as the reward to the persevering seeker of the picturesque. Essayist Strother narrates an incident from his picturesque tour of West Virginia which illustrates the extent to which the aspiring artist or traveler must go to discover the picturesque:

The gorge is about a mile in extent, affording grand and pleasant views from many different aspects, but no convenient stand-point for the artist. . . . Here our perplexed Salvator [illustrator William Ludwell Sheppard] dismounted, and, scaling a rude cliff, nestled amid the gnarled branches of a dead cedar, hanging a hundred feet above the road. As he showed no disposition to descend, and returned no answer to our summons, we presumed he had attained the object of his search.<sup>21</sup>

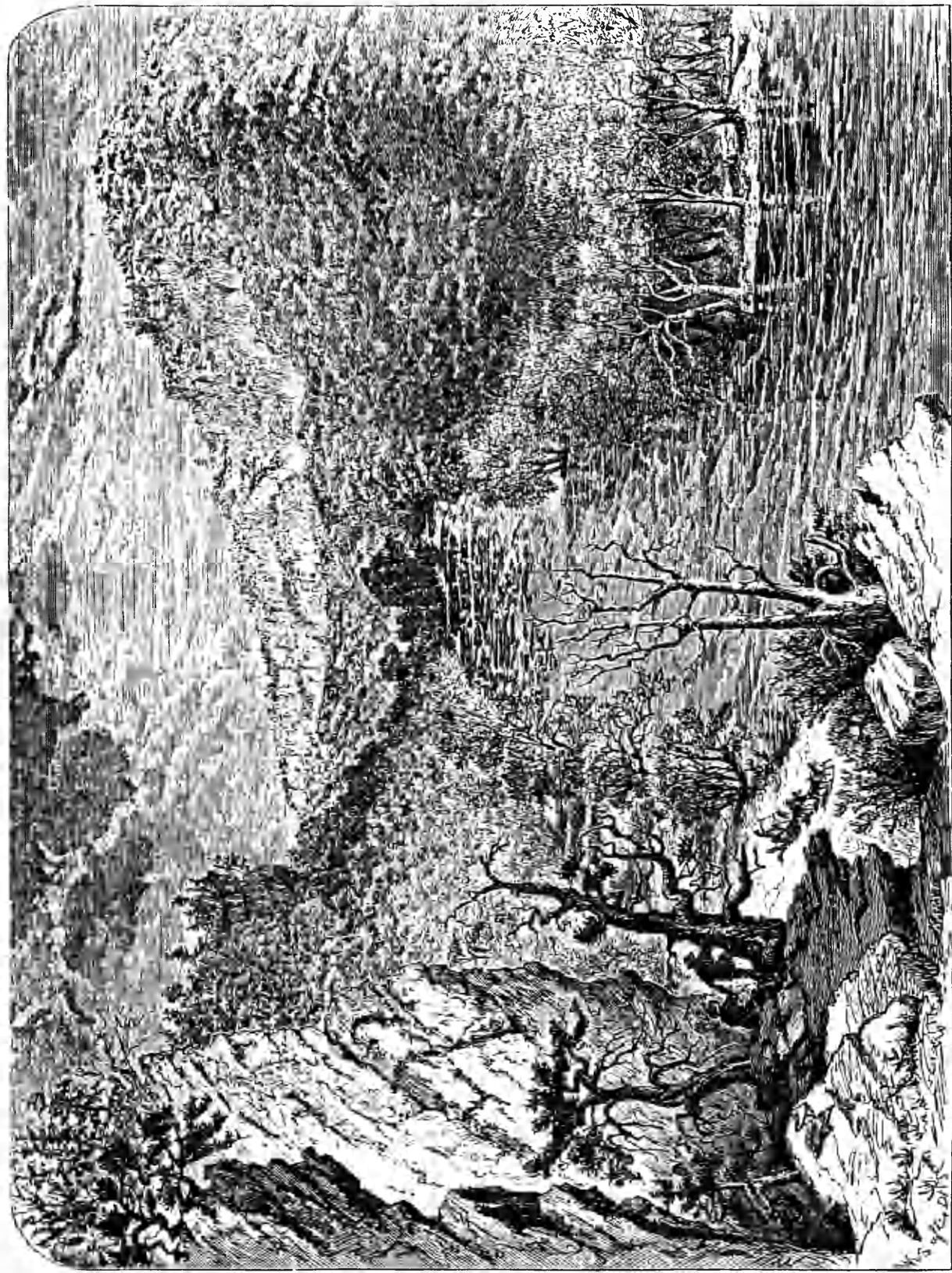
Similar notions of the difficulty in finding the picturesque and the special knowledge of the student of the picturesque are echoed in John C. Carpenter's description of Harper's

Ferry<sup>22</sup> and in Rideing's essay on the St. Lawrence.<sup>23</sup> The precarious perch of the artist and his companion in "Petersburg Gap" (Figure 2) portrays the risks the picturesque traveler took to obtain the perfect view.

Even the approach to a given site is important when seeking the most picturesque view; as Edward Livermore Burlingame points out in his essay on the Hudson, "here especially, among the scenes we know well, we have our fixed ideas of the traveler's most satisfying courses."<sup>24</sup> Again the concept of a formulaic standard exists; the traveler escaped the city and searched for natural beauty, but only the natural beauty which conformed to the man-made picturesque esthetic.

Light was another element to consider when seeking a view which fit the principles of composition dictated by the picturesque esthetic. Consequently, the essayists in Picturesque America provided directions for visiting a site in its best light. For Natural Bridge, Virginia, sunrise provided optimum illumination;<sup>25</sup> the mountains on the Columbia River were viewed best in morning light;<sup>26</sup> afternoon light revealed the White Mountains to their best effect;<sup>27</sup> Mount Desert, Maine, was most magnificent at sunset;<sup>28</sup> while the best time to view the Niagra rapids was at night under moonlight.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, Edward Livermore Burlingame recommends that Weber Canyon in the Sierras "should be viewed on a cloudy, gloomy day, to realize its whole look of wild grandeur."<sup>30</sup>

Much to the late nineteenth century American readers' delight, then, Picturesque America prescribed guidelines to teach those readers the formula of the picturesque esthetic. Reassuring and fortifying its readers with the knowledge that this esthetic was the best way to view nature, it supplied Americans with a socially correct framework from which they could approach nature.



PETERSBURG GAP.

Figure 2

NATURE UNADORNED IS ADORNED THE MOST:  
THE IMPORTANCE OF NATURE TO NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICANS

In nature, Americans found both stimulation and comfort. As Barbara Novak notes in Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting 1825-1875, the wilderness simultaneously provided the promise of progress and growth in its virginity and the reassurance of establishment and age in its geological past.<sup>1</sup> Earlier in her book, Novak observes that the American view of nature evolved from three sources: an esthetic appreciation of the variety of natural beauty found in the United States, a "New Jerusalem" concept that America would be the site of Christ's return for the millennium as predicted in Revelations, and an optimistic self-image that American economic productivity was second to none.<sup>2</sup> Novak theorizes that this identification with nature made American artists and their American patrons and audience extremely receptive to the picturesque esthetic. In fact, when nineteenth century American artists self-consciously traveled to Europe (specifically Italy) to study with their perceived cultural superiors, the Americans' whole-hearted embrace of the "new Eden" myth made them eager students of the picturesque esthetic.<sup>3</sup> The readers of Picturesque America would have equally and whole-heartedly received the picturesque esthetic. Not only was it rationally explained and clearly delineated, the picturesque esthetic also focused on nature, which, as Novak explains, played such an important part in the American imagination.

The picturesque esthetic also appealed to Americans who were attempting to flee the darker side of modernization by escaping into nature. Advocating this escape in his essay "Nature," Ralph Waldo Emerson observes that "our hunting for the picturesque is inseparable from our protest against false society."<sup>4</sup> Thus, as nineteenth century Americans faced unprecedented growth in population, industrialization and urbanization, they sought to escape by retreating into nature.

From these views of nature as a source of spiritual promise, a resource for productivity, and an area of retreat and rejuvenation, the attitude evolved that nature existed for the gratification of man. These beliefs converted into a determination to transform American nature into a cultivated garden. In his study of literary expressions of American attitudes toward nature and technology, Leo Marx traces the evolution of the American "hopefulness [which has] been incorporated in a style of life, a culture, a national character" based upon the pastoral myth of America as a garden awaiting cultivation.<sup>5</sup> This optimism continued into the twentieth century in spite of the ravages nature suffered at the hands of technology. Henry Nash Smith found similar attitudes as he studied literature dealing with the settlement of the West; Smith cites examples of eighteenth century writers (among them Benjamin Franklin) who helped to reinforce the American garden myth which inspired the emigration to and settlement of the lands beyond the Appalachians.<sup>6</sup> Behind these and later migrations west was the optimistic belief that the United States was a blessed region and would therefore avoid what Americans regarded as the undesirable European conditions of crowded urban areas, unemployment, and unhealthy environments. This optimism often contained religious overtones which cast the United States as the new Eden.

Implied in these exceptional qualities of American nature is a resultingly exceptional American. St. John de Crevecoeur felt that not every person in the American republic was extraordinary by European standards; nevertheless, he did feel that between the uncouth frontier fringe and the Eastern establishment of money, city dwelling, and social stratification was a central region, a middle landscape, which produced an ideal, democratically equal citizenry.<sup>7</sup> Thomas Jefferson also believed in this agricultural ideal, raising the small landholder in the sparsely populated, yet carefully cultivated regions in the United States to the highest position of respect because, as Smith explains, "such men had

the independence, both economic and moral, that was indispensable in those entrusted with the solemn responsibility of the franchise."<sup>8</sup>

This notion that a benevolent nature exists for the gratification and improvement of America appears throughout Picturesque America. In his essay describing Natural Bridge, Virginia, John Esten Cooke calls nature "great, beneficent and doing all things in order."<sup>9</sup> John C. Carpenter presents a similar view of nature when he describes Harper's Ferry, Maryland in the wake of the Civil War:

What man has builded, man has destroyed, and in many cases, utterly; but the fair and smiling fields are as eternal as the mountains that shelter and protect them.<sup>10</sup>

This availability of nature for man's use was a given concept in this era of optimism. Essayist Felix Gregory de Fontaine articulates this when he says that the diversity of nature along the French Broad River in North Carolina reminds the viewer of "the same diversity of outline that is to be seen in the highest type of creation-- man."<sup>11</sup> Here de Fontaine expresses the view that humans are the lords of creation; he implies that humans have the right to use nature as they please.

Believing that nature was limitless and existed for their benefit, nineteenth century Americans, then, sought both physical and spiritual rejuvenation there. William Carey Richards advocates a journey to the seashore, where the "fresh ocean breezes, the bathings, and the past-times offered by the salt-water expanse" contribute to physical health.<sup>12</sup> Oliver Bell Bunce concurs, advising that a "plunge into the breakers" will allow one's "heart and his muscles [to] gather freshness and strength from the brief battle with Old Ocean."<sup>13</sup> More important were the spiritual benefits derived from communing with nature. William Carey Richards expresses two ways in which nature enriches humans:

The other views which we have introduced will prove that an artist will find in all this region abundant opportunities for the exercise of his skill, and that the man of taste may wander wherever his inclinations may direct, and be sure of finding enough to gratify his most ardent love of nature.<sup>14</sup>



When properly appreciated, therefore, nature was an inspiration to the artist and a place where the cultivated individual might enrich his esthetic sense and display his refinement.

Equally important, as Barbara Novak shows, nature was inextricably intertwined in nineteenth century American religion.<sup>15</sup> This belief amounted to "a secular mode of faith based on a unique interfusion of optimism, transcendentalism, nationalism, and science" which made nature "the unfailing repository of the society's ideals."<sup>16</sup> Ruth Miller Elson found the same ideals in her study of nineteenth century American schoolbooks, a ubiquitous disseminator of culture, which portrayed nature as the creation of God for the benefit of man.<sup>17</sup> It was in this mode that William Cullen Bryant's association lent a spiritual tone to Picturesque America. Bryant's poetry and prose sanctified nature, viewing it as a source of spiritual healing.<sup>18</sup> Picturesque America conveys a unified tone of appreciation of nature to its readers.

The first is offered by Felix Gregory de Fontaine in his description of the French Broad River in North Carolina. De Fontaine is moved to exclaim that viewing nature's "manifestations of power and beneficence serve to link the creature with his Maker, and teach him to look with love and reverence from 'Nature up to Nature's God.'"<sup>19</sup>

Rodolphe E. Garozynski is inspired in approaching Trenton Falls, New York, to "creep in alternate ecstasy and awe"; he then stands "gazing steadily upon it, . . . letting its beauties infiltrate slowly into the mind," finally, becoming "lost in love and admiration of the God that made the world so fair."<sup>20</sup> As Garczynski continues, it is apparent that every element of nature provides some spiritual inspiration:

And the diapson of its roaring becomes, to the ear of the man penetrated with the beautiful, a loud hymn of triumph and of praise to the great Maker of all. Nor will the wind be denied its share in the coral lay; for it stirs the huge branches of the evergreen, and makes them give forth tender rustlings of thanks and joy. Earth, air, and water join in one grand harmony; but man, the master-spirit, is silent, for in silence his spirit speaks most eloquently. But, though no word is spoken, the heart--the human heart that weeps and trembles--is touched to its remotest depths,

and from its deeps comes back an answer to the song of the elements.<sup>21</sup>

The importance of nature to both the nineteenth century American and to the picturesque esthetic make them instantly compatible and, therefore, suggests a third appeal of Picturesque America to its readership.

## ART SIGHS TO CARRY HER CONQUESTS TO NEW REALMS: USING NATURE TO ESTABLISH AN AMERICAN IMAGE

While nineteenth century Americans were unsure of their esthetic senses, they did take great pride in American nature. This pride combined with the self-confidence earned by a bustling economy to prevent any excessive self-effacement in international circles. Instead, nineteenth century Americans not only used their natural resources to become the world's major industrial nation; they used nature to bolster their self-concept when they compared themselves to Europeans, the undisputed arbiters of esthetic taste. The nineteenth century Americans accomplished this by drawing on two key elements of the picturesque esthetic: nature and antiquity.

As Motley F. Deakin points out in his introduction to the reprint of The Home Book of the Picturesque (1852), age increased an object's or view's picturesqueness, so history was an important ingredient in the picturesque formula.<sup>1</sup> Deakin feels that one motive for the attraction of the picturesque esthetic was the cultural inferiority mid-nineteenth century Americans felt when they compared themselves to Europeans; lacking a historical past when compared to the Europeans, Americans sought examples of "sublime effects in Nature: to establish the nation's antiquity in natural history."<sup>2</sup> Further support for this notion is provided by Barbara Novak, who observes that by choosing natural history over European history, Americans had at once a closer association with God and a repudiation of the "bloody and despotic" European past.<sup>3</sup> In Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century, Ruth Miller Elton explains this as an urge to bolster the American ego by attempting to bury the newness of the American republic resulting from its immigrant past and geographical mobility.<sup>4</sup> In the world of art, this search for "Americanness" manifested itself in an effort which nineteenth

century American landscapist Worthington Whittredge articulated as "looking and hoping for something distinctive to the art of our country, something which shall receive a new tinge from our peculiar form of government, from our position on the globe, or something peculiar to our people, to distinguish it from the art of the other nations and to enable us to pronounce without shame the oft repeated phrase, 'American art.'"<sup>5</sup>

American artists were particularly disturbed by European historical paintings,<sup>6</sup> which in a single stroke reminded the world of Europe's lengthy history and dominance in art. To enter the international art world, American artists resorted to landscape paintings which, according to Alan Trachtenberg, were "an approximation to the heroic historical canvasses that academic European art crowned as the highest, most spiritual of paintings."<sup>7</sup> At least for the American psyche, this process worked. Evidence for this can be found by contrasting the attitudes expressed by James Fenimore Cooper in an 1852 essay entitled "American and European Scenery Compared" with those of virtually any essayist in Picturesque America. Cooper conceded that "as a whole, it must be admitted that Europe offers to the senses sublimer views and certainly grander, than are to be found within our own borders, unless we resort to the Rocky Mountains and the ranges in California and New Mexico."<sup>8</sup> Writing twenty years later, the essayists in Picturesque America do resort to those mountain ranges because manifest destiny had succeeded in making them a more closely integrated part of the United States. In addition, the essayists have a greater national self-confidence based upon such rising luminous stars as Cooper, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Asher B. Durand, and other literary and visual artists.<sup>9</sup> The essayists in Picturesque America are also confident because of the international political and economic progress the United States enjoyed in this same period.<sup>10</sup> Constance Fenimore Woolson expresses this patriotic spirit as she asserts in her essay on Lake Superior, "in the rapid progress of the New World, twenty-five years should be

considered as an equivalent for a century or two of the [O]ld [World]."<sup>11</sup> Consequently, the American scenes pictured in Picturesque America are either claimed to rival or surpass European vistas.

In his preface, William Cullen Bryant sets the tone for many writers in Picturesque America. Pointing out that virtually all of Europe has been visited and drawn, Bryant attempts to rally American artists with the cry that "Art sighs to carry her conquests into new realms."<sup>12</sup> Here Bryant continues his practice of promoting the American arts, and the Appletons' decision to hire Bryant for the marketability which his reputation and opinions represented are clear. Writing of the Catskills, Henry A. Brown also articulates this effort to awaken the American public to the natural beauties available in the United States:

[F]rom few places, even among the Alps of Switzerland, does the traveler see beneath him a greater range of hill and valley; and yet many an American stands on the summit of the Righi, rapt in admiration of the wonderful prospect, ignorant that a view nearly as extensive, and in many respects as remarkable, may be found in one of the earliest-settled parts of his own country!<sup>13</sup>

William Henry Rideing assumes somewhat of an indignant tone when he observes:

Occasionally, . . . [the Rockies] are called the Alps of America by one of those absurd whims of literary nomenclature that insist upon calling New Orleans the Paris of America, Saratoga the Wiesbadan of America, and Lake George the Windermere of America, just as though we had nothing distinctly our own, and Nature had simply duplicated her handiwork across the seas in creating the present United States.<sup>14</sup>

Rideing's indignation is motivated by his patriotic fervor and a smug satisfaction that American nature is second to none.

In spite of Rideing's criticism of comparisons to European natural sites, time and time again the essayists in Picturesque America strive to convince their readers that American nature stands equal to European nature. Thus the terrace effect at Dubuque is "as quaint as any of the scenes in the old cities of Lombardy upon the slopes of the mountains, among the terraces cultivated with the grape, the olive, and the fig";<sup>15</sup> the forest in the

Neversink Highlands, New Jersey, is "such a forest as that of Arden could scarcely excell";<sup>16</sup> Taghanic Water-fall, New York "is considered as grand as the Staubbach in Switzerland";<sup>17</sup> the suburbs of Boston compare favorably to those of Paris;<sup>18</sup> the area around Williamstown, Massachusetts, resembles Swiss scenery;<sup>19</sup> the Passaic River, New Jersey, compares to the placid Avon River, England;<sup>20</sup> Casco Bay, Portland Maine, equals the Bay of Naples in size and shape as well as in its frame of "ranges of green and undulating hills";<sup>21</sup> Lake George, New York is the "American Como";<sup>22</sup> and the Cozzens's Hotel overlooking the Hudson River may cause the reader "to deceive himself into the belief that he looks upon some legend-haunted ruin near the Rhine or the Necker, so picturesquely are the outlines of the commonplace old structure by the Cozzens's Landing shaped and scarred by time and weather."<sup>23</sup>

Interspersed among these comparisons to European places are unqualified claims of American superiority. One of the boldest of these is made by L. J. G. Runkle in his description of Mount Hood, which he has observed on his journey down the Columbia;

[Mount Hood] is more magnificent than words can tell or brush can paint. And, if any 'vagrom' man, having seen the two, pretends to think Mont Blanc the finer, let us, as Americans, laugh him to scorn.<sup>24</sup>

Mountains are the natural formation which the essayists use most frequently to point out the superiority of the American landscape. Consequently, in another comparison to Mont Blanc, Mount Shasta is declared more favorable than Blanc because, in spite of Shasta's inferior height, it is one magnificent cone, unlike Blanc's "succession of peaks."<sup>25</sup> Similarly, Edward Livermore Burlingame praises the California Sierras by claiming:

Almost every phase in the phenomena of Alpine scenery is repeated here-- often with greater beauty than in that of Switzerland even, with which the very word "Alpine" has become so entirely associated by usage.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, while describing the view from Mount Lincoln, Colorado, William Henry Rideing

asserts that "Professor Whitney has truly said. . . . that no such view is to be obtained in Switzerland, either for reach or the magnificence of the included heights."<sup>27</sup>

Though the essayists primarily tout American Mountains, they do manage to assert American superiority in other areas as well. In a preface to Picturesque America which appeared in a small number of editions before it was superseded by Bryant's, editor Bunce boasts:

There are a few mountains in other portions of the globe that attain a greater altitude, but the number and the distinct character of our mountain-ranges are remarkable; the White Mountains, the Catskills, the Alleghenies, the Rocky Mountains, and the Sierra Nevada, embrace some of the wildest and most beautiful mountain-scenes in the world, while the gigantic canyons of the far West are unapproachable in grandeur. Our rivers are among the largest and our lakes are the noblest of either continent; our water-falls are among the masterpieces of Nature's handiwork; our forests are of the primitive growth; our prairies and savannas possess a novelty and beauty that fill the beholder with surprise and admiration.<sup>28</sup>

In another of his essays, Bunce proudly proclaims the higher quality of the geysers of Yellowstone to those in Iceland.<sup>29</sup> The Yankee weakness for large statistics is called upon to bolster American nationalism when William Henry Rideing boasts that the Georgetown tourist hotel in the Rocky Mountains is "five thousand feet higher than the glacier-walled vale of the Chamouni and even higher than the snow-girt hospice of Saint-Bernard."<sup>30</sup> Therefore, whether the essayists and illustrators were presenting mountain or hotel, they continually strove to establish the United States as a worthy place for travel and a source of national pride. The American-European relationship, then, was an important contributor to the importance and appeal of the element of age to this American version of the picturesque esthetic.

These proud claims of the superior age of American nature were based upon geological study, one field in the burgeoning area of science, which captured the imagination of nineteenth century America.<sup>31</sup> Among other ways, this obsession appears

in Picturesque America as the essayists work to show American superiority over Europe. Thus, Bryant says that the sequoias in California are "trees of such prodigious height and enormous dimensions that, to attain their present bulk, we might imagine them to have sprouted from the seed at the time of the Trojan War."<sup>32</sup> By appealing to natural history, Bryant has armed his American readers against any pretension the Europeans might feel about their long established modern history. Robert Carter assumes a similar stance when he claims of the Adirondack Mountains that "these high summits are thought, by geologists, to be the oldest land on the globe, or the first which showed itself above the waters."<sup>33</sup> Here, too, science is used in an attempt to depict the United States as old and established.

In short, another reason the picturesque esthetic appealed to the readers of Picturesque America is because of the importance it placed on antiquity and nature, which Bunce and his staff used to diminish any feelings of inferiority many Americans held toward European culture.



## IN QUEST OF THE PERFECT COMPOSITION: THE PICTURESQUE TRAVELER

Having acquired the tenets of the picturesque esthetic, realizing that the appreciation of nature was important to the formation of character, and knowing that travel in the United States was as desirable as travel in Europe, the nineteenth century reader of Picturesque America needed direction on where and how to tour the United States in search of the picturesque. Picturesque America was ready for this task; as Bryant declares in his preface:

It is the purpose of the work to illustrate with greater fulness and with superior excellence, so far as art is concerned, the places which attract curiosity by their interesting associations, and, at the same time, to challenge the admiration of the public for many of the glorious scenes which lie in the by-ways of travel.<sup>1</sup>

The urge to travel spread rapidly in the nineteenth century. This urge resulted from increasing wealth to finance travel, more leisure time in which to travel, and greater interest in the esthetic and cultural education which travel offered. Picturesque America presented an allurements for two types of travelers. For the armchair traveler who either through lack of desire, lack of money, or the pressures of meeting production deadlines did not leave home, Picturesque America presented views and descriptions of what was being missed. The essayists were sensitive to this function and David Hunter Strother mentions it at two points in his description of West Virginia. Strother first challenges the reader to try himself in the wilds of West Virginia, then, in acknowledgement of those "who would shrink from a personal encounter with the wilderness" or "whose jealous occupations deny the needful leisure for the exploration":

Let these betake themselves to easy chairs and slippers, snuffing the mountain-air in fancy through a hot-house nosegay, or the more virile fumes of a meer-shaum pipe, and thus follow our leading through one of the most civilized, easily accessible, and curiously picturesque, of these mountain-districts.<sup>2</sup>

Later in the essay, Strother's makes another reference to the advantage of pursuing a landscape in Picturesque America over exploring it in person:

To one in the flesh the journey is tedious, tiresome, full of privations and difficulties; but to you, our friends in the cushioned chairs and worsted slippers, the transit shall be as brief and easy as though you sat upon that magic rug in the Arabian Nights.<sup>3</sup>

Thus those with an interest in travel but without the time, the means, or the inclination could satiate their desire with Picturesque America. Strother's comments also reveal his image of his financially comfortable reader; no mere laborer would have the time or money to sit in his home in worsted slippers with meer-shaum pipe perusing the pages of an expensive coffee-table book.

For the growing number of Americans who were traveling, Picturesque America provided an overview of those areas in the United States which were worthy of visit in the estimation of Oliver Bell Bunce and his artists and essayists. By the 1870s, the "by-ways of travel" Bryant mentions in his preface were those areas adjacent to railroads. In fact, as early as the 1830s, railroad travel had become the cheapest, fastest and most comfortable mode of transportation.<sup>4</sup>

After the railroad whisked nineteenth century travelers to a site, the picturesque esthetic provided guidance for what to look for and how to appreciate what they saw. Like the picturesque esthetic itself, the model of the picturesque traveler was a British import. Christopher Hussey describes the picturesque traveler as an individual who had "a conception of an ideal form of nature, derived from landscape painting, and whose purpose it is to discover ideal scenes in existence."<sup>5</sup> Motley F. Deskin adds that the seekers of the picturesque "taught themselves to judge the value of perspective, of color and chiaroscuro, of line, of subject, of composition."<sup>6</sup> The picturesque traveler, Hussey continues, was a devoted student, welcoming any advice "upon the best manner of

pursuing the required effects."<sup>7</sup> This advice included not only the details of the esthetic, but also the best approach to a view and which viewpoints provided the proper perspective. As Edward Livermore Burlingame states in Picturesque America, "To us, the way of approach seems of no little moment; and here especially, among the scenes we know so well, we have our fixed ideas of the traveler's most satisfying courses."<sup>8</sup> Finally, the picturesque traveler approached a natural setting as if it were a potential landscape painting, "criticizing nature as if it were an infinite series of more or less well composed subjects for painting."<sup>9</sup> Thus, the emphasis is on seeing, and, as Hussey notes, unlike the Romantic traveler who grew introspective and explored personal reactions to new scenes, the picturesque traveler, "when the mind has a little recovered its tone," focuses on the scene itself to determine what makes it picturesque.<sup>10</sup> The picturesque esthetic, then, provided the nineteenth century American traveler with the unemotional, rational guidance which he or she preferred. Thus, comfortably prepared, the nineteenth century American traveler joined the anonymous ranks of picturesque travelers. In his essay on the St. Lawrence, William Henry Rideing joins such a party of New Yorkers, who "all came up the Hudson in the Vibbard; all occupied the same Pullman car between Albany and Niagra, and [who] will all rush to the same hotels in Montreal and Quebec, as fashion bids us."<sup>11</sup>

To the picturesque traveler "with guide book in hand and glasses slung from his shoulder,"<sup>12</sup> Picturesque America presented its travel guidance with the same didactic tone of its instruction in the picturesque esthetic. To prepare the reader for the subtle appreciation of the picturesque esthetic, Rodolphe E. Garczynski admonishes:

Americans are too apt to rank their rivers by their size, and almost refuse to believe that a stream can be exceedingly lovely that does not flow, at the least, a thousand miles or so. Such a work as the present will go far to remove this way of thinking, since the scenes depicted of many rivers will enable the world to compare and contrast them more accurately; and the comparison will assuredly

award the palm of loveliness to the smaller streams.<sup>13</sup>

Beyond a focus on smaller sized natural wonders, which is consistent with the contrast between the picturesque and the sublime or beautiful, John C. Carpenter describes the additional skill necessary to appreciate the subtleties of the picturesque:

The first sight of mountains is inevitably one of disappointment. . . . Very seldom, indeed, are the combinations [in nature] such as to present these scenes in all their impressive grandeur; and rarer still is the mind that is capable of comprehending at once all that is taught by them. Yet those who have been merely summer sojourners among the 'eternal hills' can understand, if they have used their time wisely, why the mountaineer comes gradually to love them. The imagination at first may refuse to be satisfied, but there will be in the end no sense of failure, no lack of fulfillment of all, and more than all, that was anticipated to those who become friends with the mountains. . . . [After the first exhilaration, this flush and glow of pleasure succeeds the softer, calmer mood that sees, in the still and marvelously beautiful vision, but one of the least of the wonderful works of the creator.]<sup>14</sup>

Such promise held great appeal to the nineteenth century American reader who was rational and believed that perseverance would bring an eventual reward.

This same American, urban and efficient, wanted to have access to nature and the picturesque to fit his or her busy schedule. In his essay on the Catskills, Henry A. Brown calls this potential traveler "the dweller in a city of the plain, weary of work and worn with the tumult of its life."<sup>15</sup> Writing about Newport, Rhode Island, T.M. Clarke further describes these urban refugees as "those who need relief from the high-strung excitement of American life, the merchant who wants rest from his cares, statesmen and writers who would give their brains repose. . ."<sup>16</sup> In his essay describing the French Broad River, North Carolina, Felix Gregory de Fontaine calls the potential escapist a "denizen of the city, who has been walled around with brick and marble" and who "goes forth to worship at these [natural] shrines."<sup>17</sup> Brown, Clarke, and de Fontaine are all referring to tourists who were flocking to popular resort areas, locations where Americans could escape into a more natural setting without leaving behind many of the amenities of urban living. Thus, more evidence of the appeal of Picturesque America to its predominately middle- and

upper-class audience is in its featuring of the most popular resorts available to those wishing (and financially able) to escape the confines of the cities to visit American resorts and natural wonders. This describes the new urban dweller, a white collar worker who would have an interest in the work and culture provided by the city, but who also desired to retreat occasionally into nature.

As railroad travel became more comfortable and as cities grew and people wanted relief from urban congestion, summer vacationing grew steadily in the mid-nineteenth century. The result of this desired escape was the rise of the summer resort.<sup>18</sup> The rise in popularity of summer resorts is reflected in Picturesque America, which mentions no fewer than twenty resorts, most of which are located in the Northeast and within proximity of New York City.<sup>19</sup> The most fashionable seaside resort of the day, Newport, Rhode Island, was featured in its own essay. (Figure 3) The importance of this function of the work is underscored in the addendum to Bryant's preface in the one-volume, 1894 edition of Picturesque America, which was revised by Marcus Benjamin, editor of three annuals of American summer and winter resorts:

During the past two decades great advances have been made in railroad building, and in consequence many of the localities described in Picturesque America are now easily accessible. Summer and winter resorts are far more numerous in these days than formerly, and attractive scenery forms an important consideration in the selection of such places. Fine hotels have succeeded the modest and frequently incommensurable inns of the past. These changes have rendered necessary certain slight modifications in the text, but, with these exceptions, no alterations of importance have been made in the present revised edition of Picturesque America.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, Picturesque America served to inform its readers of the existence of various resorts which would provide relief from the discomforts of city summers and winters.

The consequences of this public service were not all favorable to the trend-setting upper-class travelers who spearheaded the resort movement. As Hans Huth notes in Nature and the American, publications which informed the public about natural and resort

NEWPORT.



The Walk on the Cliff.

Figure 3

areas contributed to an increase of tourism to that area and a subsequent demand for more resort accommodations.<sup>21</sup> This, in turn, contributed to the creation of an accelerating cycle of discovery, development, and further discovery, where an educated, wealthy, and/or artistic elite discovered a new site, publication brought the site's existence to popular awareness, crowds increased, becoming "unwieldy and sometimes annoying," and the more sensitive or more exclusive protected themselves by establishing restrictions or moving on to discover a more remote site.<sup>22</sup> According to Huth, by the mid-nineteenth century, increasing affluence, more leisure, and the desire for resorts became so great that anyone seeking a seaside resort could find one "commensurate with his means"; the final resort for the wealthy, then, was to escape to inland hotels and spas which were more expensive and, therefore, more exclusive.<sup>23</sup>

The process of the transition of a discovered hideaway to an overpopulated watering place is shown by Oliver Bell Bunce in his essay on Eastern Long Island, where he wistfully describes the transformation of East Hampton, a primitive farming village which "is rapidly becoming a favorite place of summer resort, visitors at present finding no accommodation save that offered by private families; but its growing popularity renders the erection of hotels almost certain, and then good-bye to its old-fashioned simplicity."<sup>24</sup> Here Bunce is bemoaning the advance of progress and displaying an air of nostalgia for an idealized lost past. Ironically, Bunce is unwittingly adding to the situation he dislikes. As shown above, one of the purposes of Picturesque America was to promote an awareness of resorts. Therefore, Bunce seems to suffer the conflict between believing that nature is the source of rejuvenation of the human spirit in an urban industrial society and confronting the reality of democratically allowing the population access to that rejuvenation.

With editor Bunce's opinion in mind, perhaps there is a bit of snobbishness in

T.M. Clarke's conclusion to his essay on Newport, Rhode Island, the most exclusive seaside resort of the day:

The men of our land, above all others, require some such place of resort, to allay the feverish activity of their lives-- a place where they may come together periodically, not for debate, and controversy, and labor, and traffic, but for pleasant talk, and rational recreation, and chastened conviviality. They need to dwell where, for a part of the year, they can see the sun rise and set, and scent the flowers, and look out upon the waters. This green island seems to have been made by a kind Providence for such uses as these, where men may forget their cares and cease from their toils, and behold the wonderous works of God, and give him thanks.<sup>25</sup>

Advocating an escape from modern urban life into nature, Picturesque America prepared its readers to be picturesque travelers and pointed them toward the popular resorts of the day. Such fervent love of nature and seeming dislike of modernization would cause the reader of Picturesque America to expect an unrelenting attack on urban-industrial life. Such is not the case, however, as the essayists in Picturesque America seem to be able to embrace both nature and technology with equal favor.



A CONSUMING PASSION:  
MODERNIZATION IN PICTURESQUE AMERICA

Cities presented the greatest challenge to the writer who sought the picturesque everywhere. As Elias Lyman Magoon writes in an 1852 essay entitled "Scenery and Mind," nineteenth century Americans regarded cities with distrust, feeling that cities ruined men while nature provided a source of inspiration.<sup>1</sup> In spite of the efforts of Bunce and other writers to present American cities in their most favorable light, the ugliness of nineteenth century American manufacturing cities appears in Picturesque America. Rodolphe E. Garczynski expresses his distaste for Troy, New York, a manufacturing city "abounding in tall chimneys vomiting forth black smoke."<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere, John C. Carpenter lists some of the details which constitute urban ugliness when he bemoans the encroaching urbanization of Baltimore:

Before these words are many years old, the streets, the dwellings, all the unpicturesqueness of lamps and telegraph pole, of curb-stone and gutter, will be up to the limits of the embankment upon which we are standing.<sup>3</sup>

William Carey Richards expresses similar frustration when his search for the picturesque on the falls of the Housatonic is frustrated by a sprawl of factories:

They [the falls] are worthy of attention, but it is difficult to avoid some feeling of vexation on finding that near views of them are blemished by the unsightly encroachments of that barbarism which, under the misnomers of "civilization" and "progress," clutter our water-falls and rapids with the ugly shanties and shops where dwell and toil the gnomes of factories, forges, and furnaces, useful indeed, but which we would fain banish into caverns, or at least into unlovely corners.<sup>4</sup>

Beyond the middle-class white-collar condescension toward the working class, Richards makes a loud cry against the ruination of nature at the hands of industry. Richards is making the strongest condemnation in picturesque terms of any writer in the work. In doing so, he expresses what Leo Marx calls a sentimental desire to escape to some

idealized pastoral state where modernization would not intrude.<sup>5</sup>

The milder criticisms of modernization contain less condemnation than annoyance. Typical are Charles D. Gardette's comments that Philadelphia's grid-shaped street plan "is very unfortunate, and a wholesale sacrifice of beauty to utility"<sup>6</sup> and that Independence Hall is a difficult structure on which to gain a picturesque perspective because it is "hemmed in . . . by the obtrusiveness and inharmonious aggregations of brick and mortar devoted to the prosaic purposes of trade."<sup>7</sup> Elsewhere, as Edward Livermore Burlingame describes the termination of his railway ride across the plains and Sierras, he sadly observes:

Civilization appears again; houses and towns begin to line the track; the stations are like similar places in the East; the prosaic railway-peddlers come back again with their hated wares; for us, the picturesque is over; and already the hum of the still distant city seems almost to reach our ears, as we dash in under the great green oaks of Oakland.<sup>8</sup>

William Carey Richards makes a further complaint when his search for the picturesque along the Housatonic River brings him to the junction of the Naugatuck where "the busy manufacturing interests of such villages as Derby and Birmingham subsidize and utilize the water-power of the streams, with little regard to picturesqueness of appliance or effect."<sup>9</sup>

One solution to these irritations from industry's encroaching upon picturesque nature is provided by Rodolphe E. Garczynski in his essay on the Upper Mississippi; when his appreciation of the falls at Minneapolis is hindered by dams and factories which "destroy all the romance and much of the beauty of the water-fall," Garczynski moves above the falls and attempts to appreciate the rapids.<sup>10</sup> Once again the nineteenth century optimism that science and technology would solve all problems most likely enters into the picture here. Instead of rallying the readers of Picturesque America behind an effort to halt or even control unsightly industrialization, Garczynski prefers to move blindly on to find the picturesque view he envisions in his mind and is seeking in reality. Apparently,

Garczynski optimistically assumes here that America can be prodigal with its natural scenery and that productivity is an acceptable substitute for natural beauty in esthetic appreciation.

Dark comments about industrialization are the exception rather than the rule because, like Garczynski, the essayists struggle to present all of the places pictured in their best light. Samuel C. Chew observes that "the text [of Picturesque America] is historico-descriptive with an abundance of sentiment and regional pride."<sup>11</sup> This sentiment results in frequent deviations from the classic tenets of the picturesque esthetic. The simultaneous disdain of urban areas and admirations of bustling metropolises shows the conflict between the traditional values of pre-industrial America and the country's newly found economic power. In assembling Picturesque America, Bunce seems to have attempted to resolve this conflict by presenting both natural and urban settings with virtually unqualified praise. Bunce provided his readers with voluminous illustrations and written descriptions of the most popular natural landscapes in the United States; he then interspersed sketches of city scenes, which the artists have struggled to shape to the picturesque esthetic, and essays with a tone of boosterism, which tap into the spirit of nationalistic pride in the country's growth. The consequence is a very Americanized version of the picturesque esthetic. In his preface to Picturesque America, Bunce confirms this intent:

The design of the work includes, not only the natural beauties of our country, but the various aspects that civilization has impressed upon it. It will give views of our cities and towns, exhibit the animated life that marks our rivers and lakes, and portray those features of our life and habits that have a picturesque element.<sup>12</sup>

This is a radical departure from the picturesque esthetic, which its British founders stressed was found only in untouched nature.

The illustrators of Picturesque America gained urban picturesque views by ascending the tallest structure available and then searching for the view which provided the

framed foreground, middle ground and background composition described above. Consequently, it was worth "the fatigue of ascent" to get the view from the belfry of Independence Hall, Philadelphia,<sup>13</sup> or to climb to the cupola of the capitol in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.<sup>14</sup> A prime example of an urban picturesque scene shows the view of Charleston, South Carolina from the belfry of St. Michael's Church.<sup>15</sup> (Figure 4) The sketch is framed by the columns of the belfry which substitute for Claude's trees. A negro janitor stands by the guardrail gazing at the city and drawing the reader into the scene; the Negro represents the convention of Salvator's rustic figure. The foreground contains houses, buildings, and ships along the waterfront, which replace Claude's clump of trees. The middle ground features the standard body of water, here in the form of Charleston Bay. Finally, the illustrator replaces the conventional illuminated mountain background with banks of clouds. The picturesque esthetic, then, serves to bring together nature and cities, as well as all of the regions of the United States.

What the picturesque esthetic did in the world of art, the railroad accomplished in reality. In his preface to Picturesque America, William Cullen Bryant praises the railroad, which provided the nineteenth century traveler unprecedented ease at arriving at natural sites or in traveling between cities:

By means of the overland communications lately opened between the Atlantic coast and that of the Pacific, we have now easy access to scenery of a most remarkable character.<sup>16</sup>

Herein lie the elements of one of the major contradictions in nineteenth century life: the love of nature and the consequent desire to escape into it as opposed to the love of material comforts and the resultant consumption of natural resources necessary to sustain an industrial society. The essays and illustrations in Picturesque America contain this same contradiction. In her study of nineteenth century American landscape art, Novak remarks upon the ubiquity of images of the locomotive, the ax, and human figures; all three



A GLIMPSE OF CHARLESTON AND BAY. FROM ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Figure 4

represent man's exploitation of nature, yet Novak feels that nineteenth century American optimism prevented Americans from fully perceiving themselves as destroyers of the natural environment they idealized.<sup>17</sup> Alan Trachtenburg also explores the incompatible combination of the appreciation of nature and railroad building in The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age, finding a "buried contradiction here between the appeal of wild grandeur and the comfort of mechanized access to the site where such an appeal can be satisfied. . . ."<sup>18</sup> Trachtenburg concludes that this simultaneous love of nature and the technology which will consume it was a process which changed "American nature into natural resources for commodity production."<sup>19</sup>

Constance Fenimore Woolson demonstrates this unawareness when she writes the essay describing Lake Superior in Volume I of Picturesque America, where her detailed descriptions of scenic beauty are punctuated by depictions of the mineral riches which the areas along the lake promise. Although she claims that she is seeking "some romance left on Lake Superior in spite of the prosaic influence of the Cornish miners and Yankee capitalists,"<sup>20</sup> Woolson seems excited by a portion of Minnesota "wilderness with vague rumors of precious metals hidden in its recesses."<sup>21</sup> She also stands in awe of Iron Mountain, "a ridge of ore eight hundred feet high, which sends its thousands of tons year after year down to the iron mills of Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Cincinnati, and scarcely misses them from its sides."<sup>22</sup> In addition, she is impressed by the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, which she describes as "a vast mineral storehouse, whose treasures, although not yet half developed, supply the whole nation, and are crossing the ocean to the world."<sup>23</sup> A final expression of support for the industrial status quo comes in her idolization of New York businessman John Jacob Astor, who "made his brave fight, single-handed, with the vast corporation [Hudson's Bay Company], and failed, solely on account of the incapacity or infidelity of his agents."<sup>24</sup> We may assume that such

expressions of pride in the exploitation of natural resources and in American business interest were pleasing to the readers of Picturesque America.

While the exploitation of nature inevitably resulted from the rise of technology, so too the appreciation of nature was made possible by that rise. As Christopher Hussey points out, the appreciation of "scenery, Romantic emotions, and the perception of the sublime" in England at the end of the eighteenth century "increased in direct ratio to the improvement of roads."<sup>25</sup> Half a century later, railroads performed a similar function in opening up much greater expanses of countryside to travel. Obviously a culture can better evaluate and appreciate something which it has seen and experienced directly.

Picturesque America never attempts to resolve the conflict between technology and nature, apparently because its writers and artists did not totally realize the contradiction. Few writers in Picturesque America notice the discomforts and dangers of living in the modern industrial age, the majority preferring to ignore or gloss over the negative aspects of their day. Beyond the homage in Bryant's preface, both volumes abound with praises of the iron horse. L. J. G. Runkle longs for the day when the railroad connects the headwaters of the Missouri to those of the Columbia when "the six hundred miles of track will open an incalculable wealth to trade, and the most magnificent wilderness of the world to travel."<sup>26</sup> W. F. Williams echoes this optimistic belief that nineteenth century America enjoyed the best of both the natural and technical worlds:

[The railroad] harmonizes well with the rural scenery. . . .[It gives] to the wildest and most unfrequented valleys a touch of human life and interest which greatly adds to the effect of mountain solitudes. Heard in the far distance, the whistle of the locomotive sounds really musical. The rumbling of the approaching train-- now enhanced by a sudden echo, now deadened by a plunge into a tunnel-- grows nearer and stronger, till, as the long line of cars passes by, it becomes less and less distinct, and, dying away in the distance, renders the solitude of hills, by contrast, still more lonely. There is in all this a certain picturesque effect of sound. . . .<sup>27</sup>

Those writers who saw the negative aspects of the railroad take one of three

attitudes. The first is an optimism that scientific invention will triumph over any temporary inconveniences. This view is shown in editor Bunce's description of Lookout Mountain and the Tennessee River:

The lovers of the picturesque sustain a great loss by means of the numerous lines of railroads that have recently come into existence. . . . Whether human ingenuity will yet succeed in inventing substitutes for the smoke and other unpleasant appliances of a railroad train remain to be seen. . . .<sup>28</sup>

A second attitude is similar to that shown by Bryant in the preface. This opinion of the railroad is expressed by William Carey Richards when he praises the railroad as a convenient method for arriving near a natural site, but discourages the building of direct access of railroads to natural wonders:

[O]ur advance, helped at one point by the swift progress of the railway train, brought us ere long into a region where such speed, amid the surrounding loveliness, would have been an impertinence, if not, indeed, a penalty.<sup>29</sup>

Richards detects that the railroad might spoil the natural beauty of a scene. John C. Carpenter also expresses his concern about the railroad and unequivocally criticizes the negative effect it has wrought on Americans. He develops this third attitude about the railroad in his description of the broken tranquility of Harper's Ferry, West Virginia:

[T]he red signals that denote the coming of a train suddenly appear and presently, with a rumble and jar across the bridge, the loaded cars slacken speed, stop a moment, and take up their usual hurrying, anxious, noisy crowd of passengers. . . . Mothers, who have been sitting, the very images of patience, hastily clutch babies and bundles; those exasperating, cool persons, the experienced travelers, quietly push ahead, and, obtaining the best seats, turn over the ones next them, fill them with carpet-bags and overcoats, and coolly ignore all inquiring glances . . .<sup>30</sup>

Thus, while many writers of Picturesque America may not have perceived the consequence of technology, as represented by the railroad, on nature, some writers were sensitive to these effects, especially when they intruded upon an idealized, nostalgic view of man and nature.

Judging from the responses of the essayists in Picturesque America, the railroad had various degrees of success in effectively exposing the traveler to scenic terrain along its



routes. Edward Livermore Burlingame affirms that the route of the Pacific Railway "shows the traveler the [Western] prairie itself in perhaps as true and characteristic an aspect as could be found on any less-tried course."<sup>31</sup> While the flat and monotonous prairie could be seen in its most picturesque aspect from a train, most other forms of landscape eluded the picturesque traveler unless he dismounted from the train and continued on some more primitive method of transportation. Robert Carter concedes this point when he attempts to refute the European charge that the United States is not scenic or picturesque; Carter asserts that this view is based on the impressions of the average traveler who rides the fixed routes of the railroad which follow level plains and which therefore miss the more spectacular American vistas of the mountains.<sup>32</sup> Within the United States, William Henry Rideing points out, the same limitations of the railroad cause the American public to think that the Sierras are more spectacular than the Rockies because the rail route exposes the traveler to more picturesque views of the Sierras.<sup>33</sup>

Even in those terrains where the railroad follows a picturesque route, the essayists allow that the velocity of the train spoils the view. This speed, which permits easier access to remote areas than previously enjoyed, is viewed in two ways. William Carey Richards takes a more optimistic position when he feels the speed of the train presents a challenge to the picturesque traveler:

[T]he railway tourist must use his eyes diligently to catch a tithe of the picturesque shapes which will pass before him as he is whirled-- all too swiftly-- along the west bank of the lovely [Housatonic] river.<sup>34</sup>

Shortly later, Richards takes a much darker view of the many passengers with whom he shares his train ride and who seem to have become hardened to this modern mode of travel:

The slave to the railway and its 'rapid car' will not, probably, discover the truth that [Berkshire County is unequalled in picturesqueness in the Western world]. He may, indeed, unless he sleeps in transit, or does the next most heathenish thing--reads some narrow-printed page instead of that open volume where God has imprinted his own grand symbols of beauty and power-- he must see a

surpassingly-varied landscape, with perhaps astonishing effects, though he needs to bide through changing skies, and hours, and moods of Nature.<sup>35</sup>

Richards seems to lay the blame on the Americans riding the train and not on the train itself as a negative environmental influence. Thus, even as Richards senses the impact of railroads on his fellow Americans, he refrains from attacking the railroad and instead cites the human error.

Admiration for America's first monopolistic industry, the railroad, transfers to other industries in Picturesque America. In a day of sprawling industrial growth with little or no attention to environmental effect, praising urban industrial sites was a difficult task at times. As Bunce acknowledges in his description of brookside mills in Pennsylvania, "Too often labor mars the landscape it enters."<sup>36</sup> The optimism which pervades Picturesque America triumphs, however, as Bunce claims that brookside mills combine "the beautiful and the useful," so deserve the attention of the seeker of the picturesque.<sup>37</sup> Other writers perform more complicated maneuvers in an attempt to find the picturesque in the cities they describe.

Edward Livermore Burlingame presents one of these in his essay on Poughkeepsie, New York:

By day, one may quarrel a little with the smoke of its busy foundries, but by night these become the most strangely beautiful and striking feature in many miles of the Hudson's scenery. They light the river like weird beacons, and the sound of their great furnaces comes across the water in stillness, as the panting of giants that toil when the weaker forces of the world are all asleep.<sup>38</sup>

Rodolphe E. Garczynski takes a similar tack when he asserts that the iron furnaces and rolling mills along the Susquehanna River "seem at first like blots upon the landscape, but they serve to diversify the monotonous beauty of the scenery."<sup>39</sup>

Two other attempts to rationalize the appreciation of man's works in a natural setting stretch the standards of the picturesque esthetic to its breaking point. In the first, W.S. Ward concedes that the bridge at Portage Village, Pennsylvania, does not appeal to the

artist's picturesque eye and therefore is not illustrated for the reader; Ward presses the point, however, that the bridge is worth considering because "it is regarded as a triumph of the bridge-builder's skill."<sup>40</sup> William Carey Richards stretches this practice even further when he claims that the completion of the Hoosac Tunnel in the Valley of the Housatonic will add to the "physical and moral, if not to the natural, beauty and grandeur of the Berkshire Hills."<sup>41</sup>

The essayists in Picturesque America, then, attempt to strike some balance between undisturbed nature and nature which has both major and minor man-made modifications. As discussed above, Americans have tended toward a middle landscape concept of their country, where the ideal environment is one in which nature has been partially modified to accommodate man. With this ideological foundation, literature both popular and high-brow, fictional and non-fictional, perpetrated these beliefs and established the farmer in a special position of respect and influence in the American psyche. Leo Marx points out that cultural historians Richard Hofstadter, Henry Nash Smith, and Marvin Meyers all agree that the American obsession with the agrarian ideal has blinded the culture to the "real problems of an industrial civilization."<sup>42</sup> Smith concludes that while the introduction of steam power in the forms of riverboats and locomotives necessitated a shift in perception, the agrarian ideal was simply expanded optimistically to view industry and finance as two other routes to the realization of the independent yeoman ideal that was so firmly fixed in the American mind.<sup>43</sup> Hofstadter observes that the Reform movement which began at the end of the nineteenth century and extended through the New Deal attempted to establish this expanded ideal, striving "to restore a type of economic individualism and political democracy that was widely believed to have existed earlier in America."<sup>44</sup> The result of this process is the Naturmensch, a construct conceived by Jose Ortega y Gasset as an individual who is simultaneously in love with nature and the material objects and

conveniences of industrial society (e.g. automobiles), but who is unaware or repulsed by the subsequent destruction of nature, production of unpleasant side effects, and exploitation of human resources which make the material comforts possible.<sup>45</sup> These attitudes and actions lead to an American landscape which is tamed, cultivated, mined, and productive, but sterile.

Ortega y Gasset's concept of Naturmensch is useful in understanding those occasional dissenters in Picturesque America like Bunce, Richards, and Carpenter, who criticize the effects of technology on nature. This concept is not needed frequently, however, as the essayists are generally quite comfortable with their simultaneous love of technology and nature. Edward Livermore Burlingame expresses this sentiment in his essay on the Western plains:

[W]e cannot change the Plains themselves in a decade. We encroach a little upon their borders, it may be, and learn of a narrow strip of their surface, but they themselves remain practically untouched by the civilization that brushes over them; they close behind the scudding train like the scarce broader ocean behind the stoutest steamer of the moderns-- a vast expanse as silent and unbroken and undisturbed as it lay centuries before ever rail or keel was dreamed of.<sup>46</sup>

History proved Burlingame wrong-- at the time of his writing, plainsmen were hunting the buffalo into near extinction, American cavalry were subduing the Plains Indians, farmers were homesteading increasing areas, and within twenty years, Frederick Jackson Turner declared the end of the American frontier. Such optimism as Burlingame's prevented misgivings about the potential long-term effects of modernization and further fueled the justification nineteenth century Americans felt in their unrestrained conquest and development of the continent.

The view that American nature is complete only after American settlement appears frequently in Picturesque America. As William Henry Rideing contemplates Thomas Moran's sketches of the Rockies, he writes that with the settlement of men in the mountain valleys,

A void is filled. A man on the heights looking into the valley would be conscious of a change in the sentiment of the scene. The presence of humanity infuses itself into the inanimate.<sup>47</sup>

Rideing feels that natural beauty is not enough; human history is necessary to make sufficient changes for men to live comfortably here. Rideing goes on to suggest some possible improvements for these mountain valleys:

We are not sure that 'beauty unadorned is adorned the most' in this instance. A few hedge-rows here and there, a white farm-house on yonder knoll, a level patch of moist, brown earth freshly ploughed, and a leafy, loaded orchard, might change the sentiment of the thing, but would not make it less beautiful.<sup>48</sup>

This same belief appears elsewhere as James D. Smillie asks:

Why not cultivate carefully these natural beauties [near Yosemite Falls]-- make lawns of the meadows, trim out the woods that the different trees may develop their fullest form, and control the river's course with grass-grown banks?<sup>49</sup>

These suggestions, which today would send an environmentalist lawyer flying into court for an injunction, fit firmly into the Americanized picturesque esthetic. These writers are going beyond the requirements of the picturesque traveler to seek the one perspective in a natural scene which provides the view which most conforms to the picturesque esthetic; they are advocating transforming an entire landscape so that it becomes picturesque.

Nineteenth century optimism blinded these writers and their readers to the limits of nature's bounties and the negative environmental consequences such a transformation would bring.

Edward Livermore Burlingame's comments about the Western Plains capture the optimism and natural pride nineteenth century Americans felt about the advance of their civilization:

For us, the boundary of the region of the comparatively unknown has been driven back beyond the Mississippi, beyond the Missouri, even; and the Eastern citizen, be he ever so thoroughly the town-bred man, is at home until he crosses the muddy, sluggish water that flows under Council Bluffs, and hardly passes out of the land of most familiar objects until the whistle of the "Pacific Express," that carries him, is no longer heard in Omaha, and he is fairly under way on the great level of Nebraska.<sup>50</sup>

Fellow essayists writing about the East coast in Picturesque America did not have to prescribe such overwhelming changes. Instead, these writers could extoll the man-made

picturesque vistas which had already been established by longer settlement. Rodolphe E. Garczynski captures this spirit as he describes Troy, New York, from the Troy Bridge, "The view here of the bustling place is inspiring, and makes one as eager to be up and doing as the pastoral scenes of the Mohawk Valley made us wish to live and die shepherds."<sup>51</sup> Thus the business spirit becomes an essential ingredient to the nineteenth century American's standards of appreciation. Editor Bunce presents similar tastes amid his occasional descriptions of the picturesque esthetic. As Bunce describes the Neversink Highlands, New Jersey, the first land a traveler sees before entering New York harbor, he asserts that the Highlands present "to the traveler prompt assurance that the country he visits is not only blessed with rare natural beauty, but that art and culture have adorned it."<sup>52</sup> Bunce uses similar standards to judge the Brandywine River:

Other streams are perhaps as beautiful as the Brandywine, but no other unites the beauty of wooded heights and tumbling water-falls with structures of art that give rare charm and even-quaintness to the picture.<sup>53</sup>

Bunce praises Red Bank, New Jersey, for its increase in only forty years from a settlement of two houses to "a pretty village, and, what perhaps is better, a thriving one."<sup>54</sup> Finally, Bunce proclaims of Milwaukee, "[as] it is one of the most charming, it is also one of the most active and prosperous of the cities in the Western country."<sup>55</sup>

Bunce's model is supplemented by other essayists in Picturesque America. William Carey Richards advises that Chicopee and Holyoke, Massachusetts are of interest to the tourist "if, with his love of Nature, he combines an interest in works which give scope to human industry, and minister to the comfort and add to the luxuries of life."<sup>56</sup> By identifying comforts and luxuries as ingredients for esthetic appreciation, Richards captures the hearts of the middle-class readership of Picturesque America which was struggling to establish and improve its material position in American society.

In a "superb view" from Mount William along the Upper Delaware River, William

Henry Rideing discovers the ideal landscape which would appeal to the above standards:

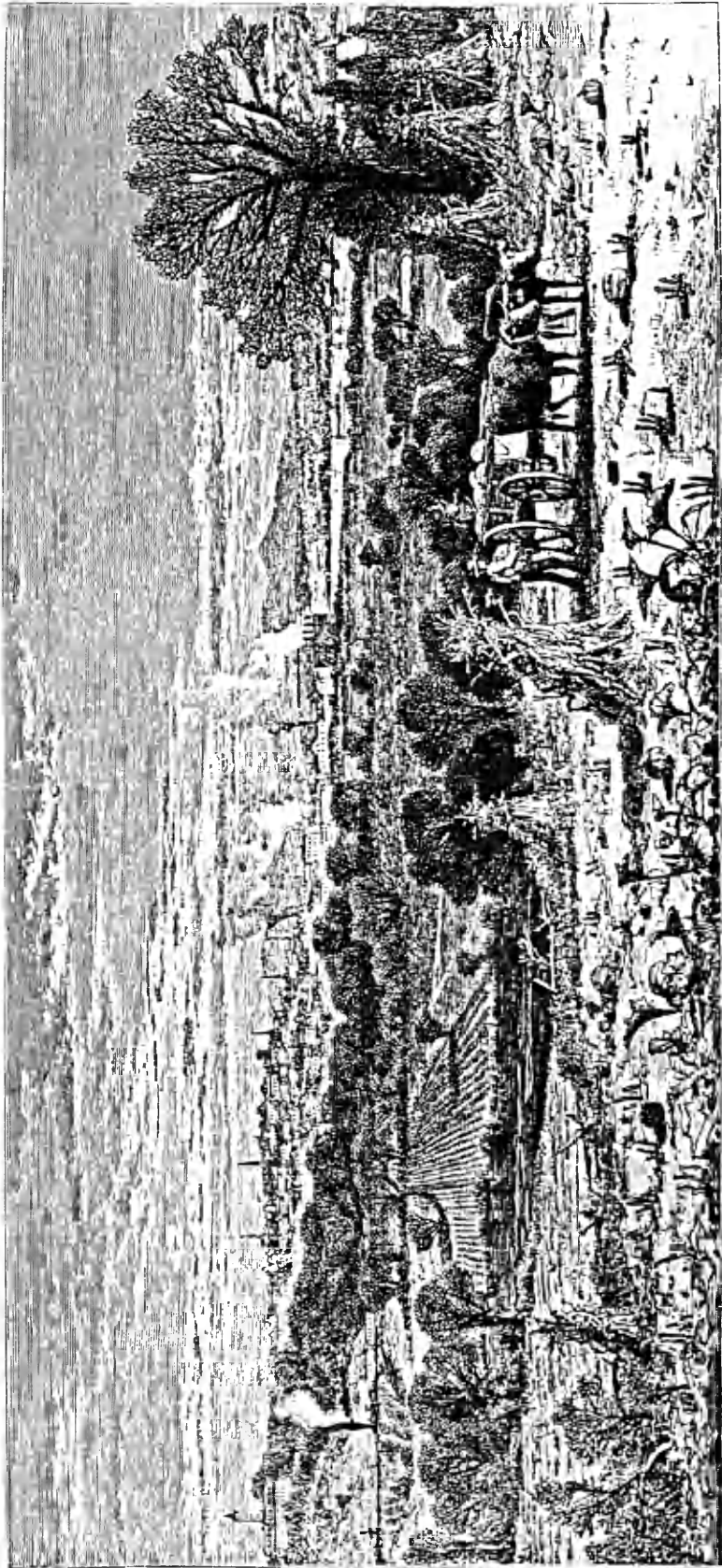
As far as the eye can reach, the land is under cultivation. In yonder wide plain there is not one wild acre; and, out beyond the limits of the little town, the farm-houses are numerous, and close together.<sup>57</sup>

Also representative is Harry Fenn's sketch of Albany, New York (Figure 5), where a farmer harvests an autumn pumpkin crop while behind him a locomotive and Albany's factories spew steam in their frantic productivity. These examples show that Bunce and his staff of writers and illustrators Americanized the picturesque esthetic by grafting on the American urges to establish a new Eden and to become prosperous in business. While they praised nature as a source of refreshment and inspiration, the nature which they sought was remarkably like the public parks which were rapidly gaining vogue in American cities.

Beyond the recommendations that urban discomforts can be relieved by a trip into nature, the other solution presented by writers in Picturesque America for the preservation of American nature is the establishment of parks. In an effort to promote the picturesque in cities, the descriptions and illustrations of every city which is found in Picturesque America feature one or more of that city's parks. Thus Savannah is praised first for its garden-parks, then its bustling commerce, tree-lined streets, and fine schools,<sup>58</sup> and one of the featured areas of Philadelphia is the Fairmount Waterworks and its surrounding park.<sup>59</sup> In addition, George Makepeace Towle holds up the model of Wissahickon River Park in Philadelphia as he speaks out for the preservation of natural areas in advance of their depletion by progress:

There is danger that the beauties of the Brandywine, near Wilmington, may in time be sacrificed to the greed of 'enterprising' citizens, unless measures are taken to permanently secure them, by the conversion of the shores into a public park.<sup>60</sup>

Recognizing this same element of greed, editor Bunce approves of the movement to make Yellowstone a national park while it is a United States territory because a delay until it was



Albany, from Kenwood.

Figure 5



owned privately would create "great difficulty" in getting it back for public use.<sup>61</sup> Bunce does not change the pro-business stand which he trumpets throughout the work, though. Perhaps in an effort to mollify business interests, but most likely because of his typically nineteenth century American faith in business,<sup>62</sup> Bunce hastily adds to his argument for Yellowstone National Park that "no injury has been done to other interests"; that is, the land is too high for cattle raising, has a poor climate for farming, and contains no minerals because of its volcanic sources.<sup>63</sup> These would be gratifying reassurances to a readership whose money to purchase a copy of Picturesque America originated in these very activities.

Picturesque America, then, presents an image of nature which fits the picturesque esthetic as it, in turn, has been altered to fit nineteenth century American middle class culture.

WINDOW TO A WORLD:  
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY MIND IN PICTURESQUE AMERICA

Uncertain about the direction of their lives in a modern industrial age and facing the task of re-uniting the North and South after the Civil War, Americans sought to establish a unified identity as Americans. The most comfortable method was to ignore the recent war and, instead, to focus their attention on the landscape itself, which seemed to offer quick forgetfulness in its promise of unlimited opportunity. In the post-Civil War years, the myth of the independent yeoman farmer had expanded to include the industrialists and financiers, who had firmly established an influential social position since mid-century.<sup>1</sup> In producing the popular and profitable Picturesque America, the publishers D. Appleton and Co. sought to capitalize on a number of diverse needs: to achieve sectional unification, to acquire knowledge about the varied regions in the United States, to view America as a land of unlimited wealth, and to show cultural refinement. Ironically, in the pursuit of these goals, Picturesque America contributed to the destruction of the American wilderness, which ostensibly it was created to celebrate, and it supported the status quo of unregulated business growth. Consequently, through its application of the picturesque esthetic, Picturesque America also supports the domestication of American wilderness into the orderly patterns one would expect of grid-shaped urban street layouts and presented the land as ripe for exploitation. This uniformity of outline is reflected in the choice of the picturesque esthetic as a universal perspective for seeing the country. In this way, Picturesque America contributed to what cultural critic Alan Trachtenberg has called "the incorporation of America," which he describes as a process resulting in a "more tightly structured society with new hierarchies of control, and also changed conceptions of that society, of America itself."<sup>2</sup> These economic, cultural, and political changes "proceeded by contradiction and conflict" and occurred as corporations emerged to replace partnerships

and family businesses.<sup>3</sup> The essays and illustrations in Picturesque America exhibit these conflicting values as the writers and artists attempt to mold the American landscape they encountered into the picturesque esthetic.

In some ways, the editors, authors and artists skillfully applied the picturesque esthetic for these purposes. For one, they provided rigid esthetic guidelines for an esthetically insecure citizenry. Second, they presented instruction for appreciating nature, an abundant resource and highly valued for soothing the American psyche in its struggle to adjust to urban conditions. In addition, they encouraged national pride by providing American nature as a source for establishing a superior attitude toward Europe, whose historical eminence was firmly established. Furthermore, by idealizing the past, they presented an escape from the recent memories and emotions of the Civil War. Finally, they offered an optimism about man's position in the natural order in place of an apocalyptic despair about the direction of society.

In spite of its attractiveness to nineteenth century Americans, the picturesque esthetic had many limitations. Ironically, the first is in its effort to present American landscape to its readers. Nineteenth century Americans took great pride in their country and Picturesque America set out to provide its readers with American scenery in all of its magnitude. However, the picturesque esthetic was too restrictive to allow such a view. Given the prescribed parameters which defined the picturesque ideal, the grandeur of American landscape was severely limited by the esthetic's demand for a suitable frame and regularly proportioned composition. Where the United States had thousands of square miles of Virgin forests, wide and varied mountain ranges, and a multitude of canyons and rivers, the picturesque esthetic preached a preference for cultivated farms, mountain views closed in by gnarled tree frames, and canyon and river scenery delimited by preconceived notions of natural beauty which were borrowed from British aristocrats. The proponents of the

picturesque esthetic were cutting their devotees off from any deep emotional response to the natural beauty of their country and were, instead, contriving a highly formulaic, rational, and depersonalized method of approaching nature which was most typical of the Eastern seaboard, the longest settled and most industrial area of the country. Thus, on one hand the essayists praise nature and advocate escaping the urban environment for the rejuvenation which nature provides; on the other hand, the essayists and artists strictly limit the possibility of enjoying, maybe even completely seeing, wilderness settings. The result is a view of nature which could be experienced in a man-made city park, an effect which Bunce and his staff might not have consciously intended, but which nevertheless reinforced the view in Picturesque America that American business and development was ultimately a higher priority than preserving nature.

Another limitation of the picturesque esthetic was its preference for establishment and age. This may have given insecure Americans a little comfort when they compared their country's natural history to the culturally and historically superior Europeans, but it blinded Americans to their dynamically evolving lives in the second half of the nineteenth century. The attraction of the picturesque esthetic to the American public is representative of its attempt at a cultural identity simply by incorporating European esthetics. Consequently, the effort to develop a truly American culture based on the experience, air, and soil of the United States was hampered. In this respect, instead of a record of contemporary events of the 1870s, a reading of Picturesque America provides an insight into how nineteenth century Americans developed an idealized past in their attempt to cope with their dynamically changing contemporary society.

A third limitation, and a blindness under which American nature still suffers in the twentieth century, is the consequence of seeking a natural escape from urban living-- the destruction of the nature which many members of society claim to value so highly. The

result is a simultaneous love of nature and a love of manufactured goods and material comforts. With this belief, Americans detest technology for its dehumanization and pollution of urban areas, yet they refuse to give up their material comforts, a practice which results in the increasing consumption of natural resources. What nineteenth century Americans failed to appreciate as they luxuriated in their Pullman cars were the number of trees which fell to the ax in the construction of railroad cars and cross ties and the quantities of iron ore and raw materials consumed in the manufacture of locomotives and rails.

The final product of a reading of Picturesque America is an image of the United States which, instead of showing readers the country as it was, presents a contrived image which matched what the urban developers, industrialists, and prosperous businessmen would have wanted Americans in their day to imagine as true American landscape. The blissful picture of the fusion of nature and human industry which William Carey Richards envisions for the Valley of the Connecticut River could easily be expanded to capture the message of Picturesque America to its large audience of readers:

Casting our thoughts forward, we see this valley dotted everywhere with villages and hamlets, in which are gathered a population far outnumbering that which now dwells here, whose homes will be abodes of virtue and intelligence. And if natural scenery has aught to do in developing the love of the beautiful, in refining the taste, and in cultivating the imagination, we may justly expect to find here a cultured people, with large brains and warm hearts, who will be among the best citizens of that vast domain which we delight to call our own, our dear country.<sup>4</sup>

There is a notable lack of urban areas and manufacturing districts in Richards' ideal landscape, which most definitely typifies the general avoidance in Picturesque America of openly promoting industrialism.

Reading Picturesque America from the perspective of the twentieth century, then, provides one source of insight into how nineteenth century Americans attempted to define an outlook on life in a completely new, fast-paced, urban, industrial society

which was overwhelming them as thunderously as they themselves swarmed over the continent. Proud of their expanding country and its abundance of natural beauty, optimistic that booming technology and business would lead to the fulfillment of their dream of America as the new Eden, full of a mission to educate the American public's esthetic sense, yet blind to the limitations and negative consequences of their effort, Oliver Bell Bunce and his staff of writers and illustrators produced Picturesque America, a work which symbolizes its age by capturing all of these contradictory impulses in its recording of late nineteenth century America's view of itself.

## NOTES

### LANDSCAPES FOR A MILLION PARLORS: PICTURESQUE AMERICA CAPTURES NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICA

<sup>1</sup>William Cullen Bryant, ed., Picturesque America: or The Land We Live In, Vol. 1 (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1872), p. iii. (Hereinafter referred to as Picturesque America, I.)

<sup>2</sup>"Obituary: Oliver Bell Bunce," Publisher's Weekly, 37 (1890), p. 649.

<sup>3</sup>"Obituary: Oliver Bell Bunce," New York Times, 16 (May 1890), p. 5, col. 4.

<sup>4</sup>New York: G.W. Carleton and Co., 1884, p. 184.

<sup>5</sup>Portrait of a Publisher and The First Hundred Years of the House of Appleton 1825 - 1925 (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1925), p. 58.

<sup>6</sup>Arthur M. Schlesinger and Dixon Ryan Fox, gen. ed., A History of American Life, 12 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1927), vol. 8: p. 237.

<sup>7</sup>"D. Appleton and Co.," in Publishers for Mass Entertainment in Nineteenth Century America, ed. Madeline Stern (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1980), pp. 19 and 20.

<sup>8</sup>Hellmut Lehmana-Haupt, The Book in America: A History of the Making and Selling of Books in the United States, 2d ed. (New York: R.R. Bowker, 1951), p. 199.

<sup>9</sup>Comparato, p. 19.

<sup>10</sup>Charles A. Madison, Book Publishing in America (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), p. 74.

UP-TO-DATE PRODUCTION MEETS THE POET OF THE WOODS:  
THE PUBLICATION OF PICTURESQUE AMERICA

<sup>1</sup>The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, Vol. 6 (1892), s.v. "Fenn, Harry."

<sup>2</sup>"Obituary: Oliver Bell Bunce," Publisher's Weekly, 37 (1890), pp. 649-650.

<sup>3</sup>"Picturesque America," Appleton's Journal, 4 (1870), p. 563; "Picturesque America: St. John's and Ocklawaha Rivers, Florida," Appleton's Journal, 4 (1870), p. 577-584.

<sup>4</sup>The Journal articles were all excerpts of the essays and illustrations in Picturesque America, so they served as an effective advertising ploy to increase the public's interest in buying Picturesque America. The remaining articles in volume four (July-December 1870) were "On the French Broad River, North Carolina," p. 644; "A Farm on the French Broad River and Hickory-Nut Gap, North Carolina," pp. 737-738; and "A Visit to Mauch Chunk," pp. 93-96; "Reems's Creek," pp. 135-137; "Natural Bridge," pp. 168-and 195; "New Hampshire Scenery," pp. 286-290; "East Hampton and Its Old Church," pp. 346-350; "Savannah," pp. 407-412; "Scenes in Florida," pp. 467-470; "Yosemite," pp. 555-558; "Western North Carolina," pp. 587-588; and "Scenery in Nevada," pp. 616-618. In volume six (July-December 1871), perhaps because of the approaching publication of Picturesque America, the "Picturesque America" title was omitted from the Journal articles; however, illustrations and essays which were eventually included in Picturesque America did appear: "Charleston and Its Suburbs," pp. 57-61; "The Columbia River," pp.183-186; "On Lookout Mountain," pp. 238-242; "Augusta, Georgia," pp. 352-354; "On the Tennessee," pp. 421-425; "The Savannah at Augusta," pp. 575-577; and "The Hudson at Glen's Falls," pp. 715-716. Volume seven featured



[Notes for pages 6-8]

illustrated essays on "Scenic and Historic Richmond," pp. 113-117; "From Denver to Gray's Peak," pp. 253-258; "The Cumberland Gap," pp. 281-282; and "Scenes in Yosemite Valley," pp. 519-522. Five more articles appeared in volume eight (July-December 1872): "The Neversink Highlands," pp. 43-46; "New Hampshire Waters," pp. 71-73; "Long Branch," pp. 253-257; "The Wissahickon," pp. 407-408; and "Scenes on the Wissahickon," pp. 631-632. Only one article appeared in each of the next two volumes; this could possibly be attributed to the success of Picturesque America and Bunce's desire to provide Picturesque America's readers with previously unpublished material. Volume nine (January-June 1873) featured "The Yosemite," pp. 111-112; "Scene at Albany," pp. 193-194; "The Green Mountains," pp. 271-274; and "Mackinac," pp. 321-325. Volume ten produced "Eastern Long Island," pp. 481-483. And volume eleven (January-June 1874) contained "Mount Mansfield," pp. 225-226.

<sup>5</sup>The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, Vol. 2 (1921), s.v. "Appleton, George Swett."

<sup>6</sup>Fruit Among the Leaves: An Anniversary Anthology (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1950), pp. 39-40.

<sup>7</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. iii.

<sup>8</sup>"Obituary: Oliver Bell Bunce," New York Times (16 May 1890), p. 5, col. 4.

<sup>9</sup>Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. 3 (1929), s.v. "Bunce, Oliver Bell," by George Harvey Genzmer.

<sup>10</sup>Barbara Novak, Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting 1825-1875 (New York: Oxford, 1980), pp. 228-230.

<sup>11</sup>"Announcement," Appletons' Journal, IV (1870), 563.

<sup>12</sup>Picturesque American, I, pp. 199-200.

[Notes from pages 8-12]

<sup>13</sup>Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. 3 (1929), s.v. "Bunce, Oliver Bell."

<sup>14</sup>Charles H. Brown, William Cullen Bryant (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), p. 501.

<sup>15</sup>Vol. I (New Haven: Yale, 1955), p. 355.

<sup>16</sup>Brown, p. 501.

<sup>17</sup>"Comments and Reviews: Aere Perennius," Poetry, 6 (July 1915), 198.

<sup>18</sup>Troy, N.Y.: Whitston, 1975, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup>Richard Henry Stoddard, "William Cullen Bryant," Appleton's Journal, 6 (1871), 478.

<sup>20</sup>Eugene Benson, "W. C. Bryant, 'The Poet of Our Woods'," Appleton's Journal, 2 (1869), 568.

<sup>21</sup>Stoddard, p. 480.

<sup>22</sup>Benson, p. 569.

<sup>23</sup>Norman Foerster, Nature in American Literature: Studies in the Modern View of Nature (New York: Russell and Russell, 1958), p. 10.

<sup>24</sup>Stoddard, p. 480.

<sup>25</sup>Phair, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. iii.

<sup>27</sup>Phair, p. 5.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>29</sup>New York: D. Appleton Co., 1925, p. 39.

<sup>30</sup>G. W. Carleton, 1884, p. 602.

<sup>31</sup>New York: Macmillan, 1924, p. 122.

[Notes for pages 12-14]

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., pp. 69-70

<sup>35</sup>Geoffrey Wakeman, Victorian Book Illustrations: The Technical Revolution (Detroit: Gale, 1973), p. 17.

<sup>36</sup>William James Linton, "The History of Wood-Engraving in America: Chapter V," Amerian Art Review, 1 (1880), p. 377.

<sup>37</sup>Frank Luther Mott, "Appleton's Journal," in A History of Amerian Magazines, Vol. III: 1865-1885 (Cambridge: Harvard, 1938), p. 187.

<sup>38</sup>Linton, p. 377.

<sup>39</sup>John A. Sutherland, Victorian Novelists and Publishers (London: Athlone, 1976), p. 70.

<sup>40</sup>Frank E. Comparato, "D. Appleton and Co.," in Publishers for Mass Entertainment in Nineteenth Century America, ed. Madeleine B. Stern (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980), p. 18.

<sup>41</sup>Comparato, p. 19.

<sup>42</sup>DS 2nd ed. (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1951), p. 250.

<sup>43</sup>Portrait of a Publisher and The First Hundred Years of the House of Appleton 1825-1925 (New York: D. Appleton Co., 1925), p. 250.

<sup>44</sup>Overton, p. 60.

<sup>45</sup>Lehmann-Haupt, pp. 251-252.

<sup>46</sup>Subscription Books (New York: New York Public Library, 1939), p. 36.

<sup>47</sup>Overton, p. 10.

[Notes for pages 14-17]

<sup>48</sup>Jacob Blanck, Bibliography of American Literature, Vol.1 (New Haven: Yale Univ., 1955), p. 355.

<sup>49</sup>"The Weekly Trade Circular," Publisher's Weekly, 1 (1872), 602.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>"D. Appleton & Co.," p. 8, col.3.

IN PURSUIT OF A VENEER OF CULTURE  
AN AUDIENCE DISCOVERS PICTURESQUE AMERICA

<sup>1</sup>William Cullen Bryant, ed., Picturesque America: or, The Land We Live In, Vol. 2 (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1874), p. 72. (Hereinafter referred to as Picturesque America, II.)

<sup>2</sup>Fruit Among the Leaves: An Anniversary Anthology (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1950), pp. 59-60.

<sup>3</sup>Robert J. Scholnick, " Appletons' Weekly," in American Literary Periodicals: The 18th and 19th Centuries, ed. Edward Chielins (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Forthcoming).

<sup>4</sup>London: B. T. Batsford, 1977, p. 217.

<sup>5</sup>Huth, p. 152.

<sup>6</sup>Frank Elbert Compton, Subscription Books (New York: New York Public Library, 1939), p. 36.

<sup>7</sup>Motley F. Deakin, intro., The Home Book of the Picturesque: or, American Scenery, Art, and Literature (Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1967), n. pag.

[Notes for pages 17 -20]

<sup>8</sup>"Modernization: A Victorian Climax," in Victorian America, ed. Daniel Walker Howe (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1976), pp. 43-44.

<sup>9</sup>Deakin, n. pag.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

#### ARISTOCRATIC STANDARDS ARRIVE IN AMERICA: THE PICTURESQUE ESTHETIC

<sup>1</sup>Hans Huth, Nature and the American: Three Centuries of Changing Attitudes (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska, 1957), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup>Christopher Hussey, The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View (London: Archon, 1967), p. 57.

<sup>3</sup>Hussey, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 60-62.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 79-80.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 245.

<sup>10</sup>Motley F. Deakin, introd., The Home Book of the Picturesque: or, American Scenery, Art, and Literature (Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1967), n. pag.

[Notes for pages 20-24]

<sup>11</sup>Barbara Novak, Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting 1825-1875 (New York: Oxford, 1980), pp. 228-230.

<sup>12</sup>Novak, p. 228 and Kenneth Clark, Landscape Into Art (London: John Murray, 1949), p. 64.

<sup>13</sup>Clark, p. 64.

<sup>14</sup>Clark, p. 53 and Hussey, pp. 118-119.

<sup>15</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. 346.

<sup>16</sup>Deakin, n. pag.

<sup>17</sup>Picturesque America, II, p. 516.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 576.

<sup>19</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. 336.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 382-383.

<sup>21</sup>Picturesque America, II, p. 401.

<sup>22</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. 387.

#### PANACEA FOR CULTURAL INSECURITY: THE APPEAL OF THE PICTURESQUE ESTHETIC

<sup>1</sup>Arthur M. Schlesinger and Dixon Ryan Fox, gen. ed., A History of American Life, 12 vols., The Emergence of Modern America 1865-1878 (New York: Macmillan, 1927), vol. 8: pp. 203-204.

<sup>2</sup>London: B. T. Batsford, 1977, p. 112.

<sup>3</sup>Nevins, pp. 203-204 and Calder, . 84.

<sup>4</sup>Calder, pp. 32-33.

[Notes for pages 24-28]

<sup>5</sup>Daniel Walker Howe, ed. and introd., Victorian America (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1976), p. 8.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>7</sup>Richard D. Brown, "Modernization: A Victorian Climax," In Victorian America, ed. Daniel Walker Howe (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1976), p. 29.

<sup>8</sup>Calder, p. 115 and D. H. Meyer, "The Victorian Crisis of Faith," In Victorian America, ed. Daniel Walker Howe (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1976), p. 70.

<sup>9</sup>Howe, p. 22.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>11</sup>Brown, p. 43.

<sup>12</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. 110.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>14</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. 390.

<sup>15</sup>Picturesque America, II, p. 473.

<sup>16</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. 200.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>18</sup>Hussey, p. 121.

<sup>19</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. 200

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 6-10.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 382.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 318-320.

<sup>23</sup>Picturesque America, II, p. 374.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 2.

[Notes from pages 28-31]

<sup>25</sup>Picturesque America, I, pp. 86-87.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 446.

<sup>30</sup>Picturesque America, II, p. 182.

NATURE UNADORNED IS ADORNED THE MOST:  
THE IMPORTANCE OF NATURE TO NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICANS

<sup>1</sup>New York: Oxford, 1980, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 228-230.

<sup>4</sup>Hans Huth, Nature and the American: Three Centuries of Changing Attitudes (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska, 1957), p. 89.

<sup>5</sup>Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America (New York: Oxford Univ., 1964), p. 360.

<sup>6</sup>Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth (Cambridge: Harvard, 1978), pp. 124-125.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 126-127.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>9</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. 82.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 334.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 132.



[Notes for pages 31-35]

<sup>12</sup>Picturesque America, II, p. 396.

<sup>13</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. 178.

<sup>14</sup>Picturesque America, II, pp. 80-81.

<sup>15</sup>Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting 1825-1875 (New York: Oxford, 1980), p. 5; and "On Diverse Themes from Nature: A Selection of Texts," in The Nature Paradise: Painting in America 1800-1950, ed. Kynaston McShine (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1976), p. 60.

<sup>16</sup>Novak, "On Diverse Themes," p. 60.

<sup>17</sup>Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska, 1964), pp. 16-19.

<sup>18</sup>Norman Foerster, Nature in American Literature: Studies in the Modern View of Nature (New York: Russell and Russell, 1958), p. 11.

<sup>19</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. 132.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 457.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 458-459.

**ART SIGHS TO CARRY HER CONQUESTS TO NEW REALMS:  
USING NATURE TO ESTABLISH AN AMERICAN IMAGE**

<sup>1</sup>Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1967, n. pag.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting 1825-1875 (New York: Oxford, 1980), p. 145.

<sup>4</sup>Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska, 1964, pp. 341-342.

[Notes for pages 35-37]

<sup>5</sup>Novak, p. 226.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>7</sup>The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), p. 18.

<sup>8</sup>In The Home Book of the Picturesque, introd. Motely F. Deakin (Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1967), p. 52.

<sup>9</sup>Appleton's Journal spotlighted these artists in a series of feature articles: Cooper in 7 (1872), 549-551; Hawthorne in 3 (1870), 405-408; and Durand in 3 (1869), 520-521.

<sup>10</sup>Arthur M. Schlesinger and Dixon Ryan Fox, gen. ed., A History of American Life, 12 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1927), vol. 8: The Emergence of Modern America 1865-1878, by Allan Nevins, p. 31.

<sup>11</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. 411.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. iii.

<sup>13</sup>Picturesque America, II, p. 117.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 484.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 333.

<sup>16</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. 178.

<sup>17</sup>Picturesque America, II, p. 480.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 242.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 314.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 413.

[Notes for pages 37-39]

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 259.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>24</sup>Picturesque America, I, pp. 44-45.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 424.

<sup>26</sup>Picturesque America, II, p. 201.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 484.

<sup>28</sup>[Oliver Bell Bunce, ed.], Picturesque America: or, The Land We Live In, vol. 1 (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1872), p. iii. (Hereinafter referred to as [Bunce].). I credit this preface to Bunce because of his position as editor of Picturesque America and because Bryant joined the project after it was in progress. Bryant acknowledged this in a letter to Rev. Orville Dewey when he wrote, "Every part of it, except a few of the first sheets, passed through my hands . . ." (Blanck, p. 355) A letter dated June 24, 1872, from Bryant to the Appletons further supports this as Bryant agrees in it to edit Picturesque America according to the terms set forth in the Appletons' offer of June 21. (Letter in response to inquiry for material about Picturesque America in Appleton-Century manuscript collection, from Virginia Lowell Mauck, Assistant Curator of Manuscripts, Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington).

<sup>29</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. 293.

<sup>30</sup>Picturesque America, II, p. 492.

<sup>31</sup>Barbara Novak, Nature and Culture: America Landscape and Painting 1825-1875 (New York: Oxford, 1980), pp. 49-50.

<sup>32</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. vii.

<sup>33</sup>Picturesque America, II, p. 419.

[Notes for pages 40-44]

IN QUEST OF THE PERFECT COMPOSITION:  
THE PICTURESQUE TRAVELER

<sup>1</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. iii.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 378.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 390.

<sup>4</sup>Hans Huth, Nature and the American: Three Centuries of Changing Attitudes (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska, 1957), p. 73.

<sup>5</sup>The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View (London: Archon, 1967), p. 83.

<sup>6</sup>Introd., The Home Book of the Picturesque: or, American Scenery, Art, and Literature (Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1967), n. pag.

<sup>7</sup>Hussey, p. 104.

<sup>8</sup>Picturesque America, II, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup>Hussey, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 83-84.

<sup>11</sup>Picturesque America, II, p. 372.

<sup>12</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. 511.

<sup>13</sup>Picturesque America, II, p. 134.

<sup>14</sup>Picturesque America, I, pp. 318-320.

<sup>15</sup>Picturesque America, II,

<sup>16</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. 376.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>18</sup>See Chapter Seven of Huth.

<sup>19</sup>The resorts mentioned in Volume I are Warm Springs, North Carolina, p.

[Notes for pages 44-48]

142; Long Branch, New Jersey, p. 176; Moultrie House, Charleston, South Carolina, pp. 203-204; East Hampton, New York, p. 254; Newport, Rhode Island, p. 362; and Berkekey Springs, West Virginia, p. 378. Volume II mentions Cozzen's, on the Hudson River, New York, p. 16; Greenwood Lake, Cape May, Atlantic City, and Long Branch, New Jersey, p. 56; Lenox, Massachusetts, p. 305; Avon, New York, p. 366; a series of commuting resorts near Boston, pp. 395-404; Isles of Shoals, New Hampshire, pp. 409-412; and Stamford and Shippen Point, Connecticut, p. 438.

<sup>20</sup>[Marcus Benjamin, ed.] Picturesque America, rev. ed. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1984), p. 2.

<sup>21</sup>Huth, p. 120.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>24</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. 254.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 376.

#### A CONSUMING PASSION: MODERNIZATION IN PICTURESQUE AMERICA

<sup>1</sup>In The Home Book of the Picturesque, intro. Motley F. Deakin (Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1967), p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>Picturesque America, II, p. 466.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 110-111.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 295.

[Notes from pages 48-52]

<sup>5</sup>Marx, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup>Picturesque America, II,

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 293.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 352.

<sup>11</sup>Fruit Among the Leaves: An Anniversary Anthology (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1950), p. 40.

<sup>12</sup>[Bunce], p. iv.

<sup>13</sup>Picturesque America, II, p. 27.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 208.

<sup>15</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. 201.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. vii.

<sup>17</sup>Novak, p. 199.

<sup>18</sup>New York: Hill and Wang, 1982, p. 18.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>20</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. 403.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 408.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 400.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 396.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. 405-406.

<sup>25</sup>The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View (London: Archon, 1967), pp.100-101.

[Notes from pages 52-57]

<sup>26</sup>Picturesque America, I, pp. 50-51.

<sup>27</sup>Picturesque America, II, p. 56.

<sup>28</sup>Picturesque America, I, pp. 64-65.

<sup>29</sup>Picturesque America, II, p. 291.

<sup>30</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. 335.

<sup>31</sup>Picturesque America, II, pp. 169-170.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., pp. 414-417.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 484.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 293.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. 299-300.

<sup>36</sup>Picturesque America, I, pp. 220-222.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 220.

<sup>38</sup>Picturesque America, II, p. 3.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 222.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 354.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 317.

<sup>42</sup>Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America (New York: Oxford Univ., 1964), pp. 6-7.

<sup>43</sup>Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth (Cambridge: Harvard, 1978), p. 156.

<sup>44</sup>Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F. D. R. (New York: Vintage, 1955), pp. 5-6.

<sup>45</sup>Marx, pp. 7-8.

[Notes from pages 58-62]

<sup>46</sup>Picturesque America, II, p. 169.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 488.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., p. 492.

<sup>49</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. 478.

<sup>50</sup>Picturesque America, II, p. 169.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 220.

<sup>52</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. 173.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 220.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>55</sup>Picturesque America, II, p. 528.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., pp. 76-77.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 476.

<sup>58</sup>Picturesque America, I, pp. 118-129.

<sup>59</sup>Picturesque America, II, pp. 34-38.

<sup>60</sup>Picturesque America, I, p. 231.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 316.

<sup>62</sup>Bunce's obituary in the New York Times (16 May 1980, p.5, col. 4)

characterizes him as a company man who "was more jealous and exacting in furthering the interests of his employers than he ever was in pushing his own."

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 316.

WINDOW TO A WORLD:  
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY MIND IN PICTURESQUE AMERICA

<sup>1</sup>Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth



[Notes from pages 62-66]

(Cambridge: Harvard, 1978), p. 156.

<sup>2</sup>Alan Trachtenberg, The Incorporation of America: Society in the Gilded age  
(New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), pp. 3-4.

<sup>3</sup>Trachtenberg, p.7.

<sup>4</sup>Picturesque America, II, p. 87

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography. Vol. 1. (1886), s.v. "Bunce, Oliver Bell."

[Benjamin, Marcus, ed.] Picturesque America: or, The Land We Live In. Rev. Ed. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1894.

Benson, Eugene. "W.C. Bryant, 'The Poet of Our Woods'." Appletons' Journal 2 (1869): 568-69.

Blanck, Jacob. Bibliography of American Literature. Vol. 1. New Haven: Yale Univ. , 1955.

Blodgett, Geoffrey. "A New Look at the Gilded Age." In Victorian America, edited by Daniel Walker Howe. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1976.

Bryant, William Cullen, ed. Picturesque America: or, The Land We Live In. 2 Vols. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1872-1874.

Brown, Charles H. William Cullen Bryant. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971.

Brown, Milton W. American Art to 1900: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1977.

Brown, Richard D. "Modernization: A Victorian Climax." In Victorian America, edited by Daniel Walker Howe. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1976.

[Bunce, Oliver Bell, ed.] Picturesque America: or, The Land We Live In. Vol. 1. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1872.

Calder, Jenni. The Victorian Home. London: B. T. Batsford, 1977.

Chew, Samuel C., ed. Fruit Among the Leaves: An Anniversary Anthology. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1950.

Clark, Kenneth. Landscape Into Art. London: John Murray, 1949.

Comparato, Frank E. "D. Appleton & Co." In Publishers for Mass Entertainment in

- Nineteenth Century America, edited by Madeleine B. Stern. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980.
- Compton, Frank Elbert. Subscription Books. New York: New York Public Library, 1939.
- Cooper, James Fenimore. "American and European Scenery Compared." In The Home Book of the Picturesque, introduced by Motley F. Deakin. Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1967.
- "D. Appleton & Co." New York Times, 9 December 1874, p. 8, col. 3.
- Deakin, Motley F., introd. The Home Book of the Picturesque. Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1967.
- Degler, Carl N. Out of Our Past: The Forces That Shaped Modern America. Rev. Ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1959.
- "The Two Cultures and the Civil War." In The Development of an American Culture, edited by Stanley Coben and Lorman Ratner. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1970.
- Derby, James Cephas. Fifty Years Among Authors, Books, and Publishers. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1884.
- Dictionary of American Biography. Vol. 3. (1929), s. v. "Bunce, Oliver Bell." By George Harvey Genzmer.
- Elson, Ruth Miller. Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska, 1964.
- Foerster, Norman. Nature in American Literature: Studies in the Modern View of Nature. New York: Russell & Russell, 1958.
- Godwin, Parke. A Biography of William Cullen Bryant. Vol. 2. New York: Russell & Russell, 1883.
- "Harry Fenn, Artist, Dead in 73d Year." New York Times, 23 April 1911, p. 11, col. 3.
- Hofstadter, Richard. The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F. D. R. New York: Vintage,

1955.

Hoopes, Donelson F. American Watercolor Painting. New York: Galahad, 1977.

Howe, Daniel Walker, ed. Victorian America. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1976.

Hussey, Christopher. The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View. London: Archon, 1967.

Huth, Hans. Nature and the American: Three Centuries of Changing Attitudes. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska, 1957.

Lamb's Biographical Dictionary of the United States. Vol. 1. (1899), s.v. "Bunce, Oliver Bell."

----- Vol. 3. (1900), s.v. "Fenn, Harry."

Lehmann-Haupt, Hellmut. The Book in America: A History of the Making and Selling of Books in the United States. 2d ed. New York: R. R. Bowker, 1951.

Linton, William James. "The History of Wood-Engraving in America: Chapter V." The American Art Review 1 (1880): 374-380.

Lynch, Denis Tilden. The Wild Seventies. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1941.

Madison, Charles A. Book Publishing in America. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966.

Magoon, Elias Lyman. "Scenery and Mind." In The Home Book of the Picturesque, introduction by Motley F. Deakin. Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1967.

Marx, Leo. The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America. New York: Oxford Univ., 1964.

Mauck, Virginia Lowell. Assistant Curator of Manuscripts, The Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington. Letter in response to inquiry about information on Picturesque America in the Appleton-Century manuscript collection. 28 August 1984.

- Meyer, D. H. "The Victorian Crisis of Faith." In Victorian America, edited by Daniel Walker Howe. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1976.
- Monroe, Harriet. "Comments and Reviews: Aere Perennius". Poetry 6 (July 1915): 197-200.
- Mott, Frank Luther. A History of American Magazines, Vol. III: 1865-1885. Cambridge: Harvard Univ., 1938.
- National Cyclopaedia of American Biography: Being the History of the United States. Vol. 2. (1921), s.v. "Appleton, George Swett."  
 -----. Vol. 40. (1955), s.v. "Benjamin, Marcus."  
 -----. Vol. 2. (1921), s.v. "Bunce, Oliver Bell."  
 -----. Vol. 6. (1892), s.v. "Fenn, Harry."
- Novak, Barbara. Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting 1825-1875. New York: Oxford, 1980.  
 -----, ed. "On Diverse Themes from Nature: A Selection of Texts." In The Natural Paradise: Painting in America 1800-1950, edited by Kynaston McShine. Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1976.
- "Obituary: Oliver Bell Bunce." New York Times, 16 May 1890, p. 5, col. 4.
- "Obituary: Oliver Bell Bunce." Publisher's Weekly 37 (1890): 649-650.
- Overton, Grant. Portrait of a Publisher and The First Hundred Years of the House of Appleton 1825-1925. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1925.
- Oxford Companion to Art. (1970), s.v. "Picturesque."
- Phair, Judith Turner. A Biography of William Cullen Bryant and His Critics, 1808-1972. Troy, New York: Whitston, 1975.
- Sabin, Joseph. Bibliotheca Americana: A Dictionary of Books Relating to Americana, from Its Discovery to the Present Time. Vol. 15. New York: Sabin, 1885.
- Schlesinger, Arthur M. and Dixon Ryan Fox, gen. ed. A History of American Life, 12

vols. New York: Macmillan, 1927. Vol. 8: The Emergence of Modern Life,  
by Allan Nevins.

Scholnick, Robert J. "Appletons' Weekly." In American Literary Periodicals: The 18th  
and 19th Centuries, edited by Edward Chielins. Westport, Connecticut:  
Greenwood Press, Forthcoming.

Seitz, Don C. The Dreadful Decade 1869-1879. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1926.

Smith, Henry Nash. Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth. Cambridge:  
Harvard Univ., 1978.

Stoddard, Richard Henry. "William Cullen Bryant." Appletons' Journal 6 (1871):  
477-480.

"The Subscription Book Trade." Publisher's Weekly 2 (1872): 93-94.

Sutherland, John A. Victorian Novelists and Publishers. London: Athlone, 1976.

Thompson, Ralph. American Literary Annuals and Gift Books: 1825-1865. New York:  
H. W. Wilson, 1936.

Trachtenberg, Alan. The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded  
Age. New York: Hill and Wang, 1982.

Wakeman, Geoffrey. Victorian Book Illustration: The Technical Revolution. Detroit:  
Gale, 1973.

"The Weekly Trade Circular." Publisher's Weekly 1 (1872): 602.

Weitenkampf, Frank. American Graphic Art. New York: Macmillan, 1924.

## VITA

Allen Lewis Ramsier

Born in Wadsworth, Ohio, November 3, 1954. Graduated from Rittman High School in Rittman, Ohio, June 1973. Earned B.A. (English), Mount Union College, 1977. Has taught secondary English eight years: Boardman High School, Boardman, Ohio, 1977-78; American School Foundation, Mexico City, Mexico, 1978-83; Gloucester Intermediate School, Gloucester, Virginia, 1984-85; Thomas Dale High School, Chesterfield County, Virginia, 1985-present.

In September 1983, entered the College of William and Mary as a graduate assistant in the American Studies Program.