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★ THE POCKET HISTORY OF ★ ★

American Painting

WITH 52 ILLUSTRATIONS



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First Flowers of Our Wilderness,
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FOREWORD

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America may be proud of her painters - For three centuries our strongest workmen have expressed American thought and life - Their canvases constitute a pictorial autobiography of America.

I

Headwaters

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The first views of America are created to satisfy European curiosity - Then portraitists record social ideals - Colonials demand to be painted as if they were English lords - Gradually they become proud to be themselves - By the time of the Revolution, democratic images predominate - Enter a genius who paints greater pictures than any he has ever seen.

II

The World Stage

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As soon as American painters study abroad, they pioneer in European styles - Triumphs achieved by using Old World techniques to express New World ideas - American art flourishes on both sides of the Atlantic - A Pennsylvanian President of England's Royal Academy - Faces by Stuart reflect the Bill of Rights.

III

High Horses and Saw Horses

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National independence brings cultural self-consciousness - Disastrous efforts to ignore America and import an artificial style - A fast starter collapses in mid-career - The President of the National Academy gives up art and invents the telegraph - Only untutored painters dare be true to their own experience - Technique separated from content, American painting falls apart.

IV

The Rediscovery of America

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Painters notice their own mountains and rivers - Long Island farmers and Ohio boatmen at long last considered suitable subjects for art - Picturesque Indians ride on canvas - American painting achieves new popularity and vigor, yet often the artists shout when more subtle workmen would whisper.

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The golden age of American painting - A Massachusetts esthete conquers London - A painter of New England pastorals turns to great epics of the ocean - Philadelphia is frightened by a realist - In Paris, a Pennsylvanian spinster creates touching visions of motherhood - In New York, a gentle giant gives substance to stupendous dreams.

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Here as abroad, new thoughts and circumstances call for a new style - American experimenters - Modern French art floods into the Armory Show - Painters struggle to find means of expression suited to twentieth-century America - Many fall by the wayside, but others find a hard and winding road to a new and personal art.

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Painters of "the lost generation" - Efforts to flee into a Middle Western Arcadia or a mathematical Eden - Visions of horror and visions of social change - The younger painters walk an ever-darkening landscape - A Pacific Coast poet and a Hoosier Jeremiah.

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