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THE DOMES OF THE GREAT YO-SEMITE. To the Editor of the Evening Telegraph

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PHILADELPHIA, May 16.

If the writer of this article were to follow he usage consecrated by time and tradition. he would have to commence his remarks by making complimentary allusion to the valuable space of your journal, and indulge in a num" ber of apologies for venturing to encroach upon its columns. I shall do neither; for your recent exhaustive essays upon the Fine Arts (as represented in the present annual exhibition of our Academy) have abundantly proved that the interest you feel in matters pertaining to the arts is sufficiently strong to warrant the belief that you will insert this c mmunication.

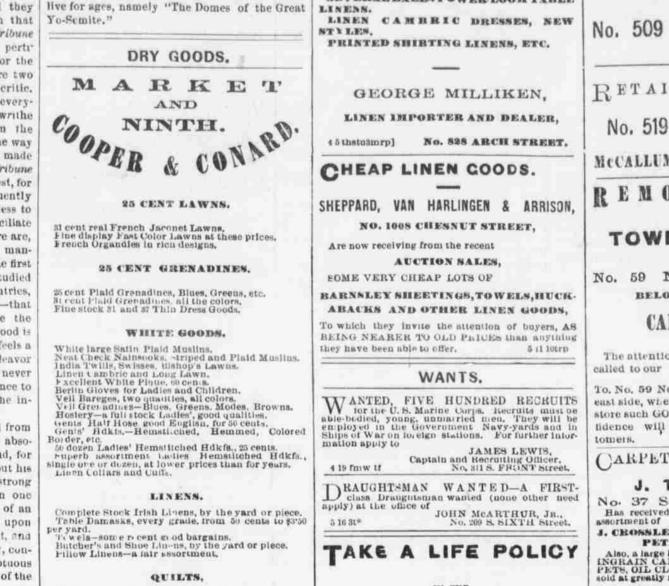
I am one of the few who have faith in the artistic abilities of American painters, and be-Heve that a generous recognition of their merits should be fairly accorded them. Among the names of those that are found at the head of the list of fine laudscape artists is Albert Bier. stadt; and, until the other day, a great many unsophisticated persons believed that he was capable of producing a work of some merit, and there were some few to be found who backed their ideas on the subject by paying thousands of dollars for his productions. Unfortunate creatures! how dreadfully harrowed will they he after a perusal of the slashing criticism that appeared in last Saturday's New York Tribune on this artist's last painting ! It may be perty nent to the subject in hand to state, for the benefit of the uninitiated, that there are two ways of being considered a successful critic, The first manner is to be delighted with everything, to distribute praise right and left, to writhe and grovel before works that are from the easels of celebrated painters. This is one way of writing about paintings, and it has been made to pay ; but our critical friend of the Tribune seems to consider the other method the best, for reasons best known to himself. Consequently he wields a trenchant blade, and is merciless to those who have not taken pains to conciliate him after the fashion he likes best. There are, then, two styles of criticism, and in like manner there are two classes of critics. In the first class we shall place the man who, having studied the works of the best masters in all countries, draws as result of their study this lesson-that infall conscientous efforts to reproduce the beautiful in nature, a certain amount of good is to be found; in fact, a critic of this class feels a large share of sympathy with all who endeavor to represent nature in a poetic sense, and never thinks of preaching from a fanciful eminence to the abashed crowd of art-lollowers, as the inferior art critic would do.

Our second-class writer is distinguished from the first by this great feature-he knows absolutely nothing in reference to nature, and, for the matter of that, very little about art; but his great forte is flippancy, and this is a very strong point indeed. How easy it is for such an one to examine in a few minutes the work of an artist, who has, perhaps, given months upon months to the development of the subject, and then, with a few lines of witty scribbling, consign both artist and picture to the contemptuous amiles of the public ! Our carping friend of the Tribune belongs to this category; but he overestima es his force if he thinks he can displace Bierstadt from the estimation in which he is held by amateurs.

The Domes of the Yo-Semite is now on exhibition in New York for the benefit of a South-

quisitely truthful rendering of foreground, both in color and form, I have never seen; and yet the foreground in the "Domes of the Yo-Semite," which is at least as equally well realized, causes the writer in the Tribune to regard the very qualities which I, in common with thousands of others, admire, as lacking in color, form, and detail.

as the gentleman who "uses up" Brierstadt in such an unceremonious manner. A thorough acquaintance with the works of every landscape painter both in Europe and America, may not help in any way to form a comparative idea of the various merits of artists. A love and delight in studying nature, in all her changeable forms and moods, muy not assist one in forming an opinion of the studies that are made from nature by landscape artists. All this is of no use whatever in aiding one to become a judge of the beautiful. No! it is irue, we were once vain enough to believe that that sort of study aided a man to become a judge of pictures; but our friend of the Tribune has convinced us that no other qualification is necessary but one of unblushing cheek, plenty of assurance, and a gift of gab. These are the attributes to render a sharp writer able to attack, with some noise, an artist who has produced a great work that will live for ages, namely "The Domes of the Great





ern renei fund, and the lady managers of the exhibition have a printed description of the work scattered around the room, in order to explain the points of interest of the picture to visitors. A few complimentary allusions are there to be tound in reference to merits of the artists, and these laudatory remarks seem to have had a maddening effect upon the temper of our critical friend. I extract from his own article the remarks from the printed description that excites his ire. Here they are:-

"Famous as other paintings of Mr. Bierstadt have become, this, his latest gift to the world of art, merits the highest admiration ever accorded to his gonius, The singleness of its idea, the sublimity of its subject, the masteriy skill which has drawn its perspective, and deludes us with its seemingly endess aerial di-tances, betray the reverent worshipper of the leanti-ial, and the unlatering artist."

To those who have looked with unqualified admiration upon this artist's sublime production of "The Storm in the Rocky Mountains," this does not seem by any means too great a meed of praise to accord to one who is certainly a conscientious student of nature, and yet it is overpowering in its effect, for with concentrated spite does the writer in the 2ribune exclaim :--

"Why Mr. Bierstadt should think for a moment of faltering, with such backers as this all over the isnd, we really do not know. It will be, to our mind, a plain case of flying in the faces of Providence. We wish, with all our hearts, he would falter."

I am sorry that I cannot agree with the wish so heartily expressed, but, on the contrary, fervently pray that an artist of such power and ability as Mr. Bierstadt may long continue to give us such delightful renditions of nature's charms as may be found in this last great work of the Yo-Semite. Lovers of nature have always been solemnly impressed with the abundance of beauty that the Creator has lavished on all lands. The apparent waste of loveliness that grows and decays in solitude is a lesson for us all, impressing us as it does with the illimitable resources of our Heavenly Father, who renders the most maccessible retreats, monuments of His glory and His goodness, Fancy, for a moment, the woodland glens where the foot of man has never pot crushed the modest daisy or tram pled upon the waving terns. The flowers bud and grow in beauty. The chequered sunlight silvers here and there the murmuring river, and we cannot look thereon. To those who pass their lives in the study and research of these beauties, we owe a debt of gratitude for presenting to us the counterfeit presentments of such woody nooks; and foremost among them all may be placed the name of Bierstadt, the adventurous artist whose labors have reudered us familiar with the severe grandeur of the Rocky Mountain range, and with the solitude of its woods.

But our friend of the Tribune interrupts us at this point, and tells us, in the dogmatic style usual to his class, that

"Mr. Bierstadt is entirely dead to all sense of what is properly termed color. He paints with asnes, with clay, with brinstone, but never with light. He has but little accurate knowledge of nature, either in her general forms or in her detail; the proof of which is at band to the cloud-drawing of the present picture, in the vegetation throughout, and in the uninterest-ing and unvaried foreground."

The readers of this communication cannot at present see the picture under consideration, but en attendant we would advise any person interested in the subject to examine the right-hand toreground of "Mount Hood," now on exhibition at the Academy of Fine Arts. A more ex-