

by its facial expression at least, to vigorously object to the hub-bub I was raising. It was with a sigh of relief that I at last passed into the Hall of the National Gallery.

Here all was quiet, too, and the monotony of echoing footsteps just as pronounced, but now it was only a drowsy policeman they could disturb, and imagination could hardly vivify the pictured or sculptured figures there, and if so, they were at most only human beings.

It was here that I made the startling discovery that I was not the only one that had visited the museum on that afternoon. While passing around the hall, looking at the many pictures—the works of our great artists—which bedecked the walls, I almost stumbled over the outstretched legs of a man who was comfortably reclining on a bench facing the wall. He was an old man, humble in appearance, whose drooped shoulders and bent back betokened a life of toil. A glance backwards as I went my way made me aware that his attention was very pleasantly taken up with a picture immediately in front of him. When he had left I returned, to find that it was a harvest scene of pioneer days, painted by Frederick Chalonier, that had brightened the face of the old man. There could be no doubt but that in his younger days this man had experienced the hardships and trials and the simple joys of pioneer life. The scene so faithfully depicted—the little forest-fringed field in all the golden glow of harvest time, and the reapers; men and women about to begin their work of cutting and binding the yellow grain—had appealed to him as, perhaps, no other could. By it his mind had been taken off the troubles of the present. The shackles of old age had dropped from his limbs. He was made young again; a lusty pioneer, out in the fields that were won with so much toil, and yet so dear; out with other happy reapers, helping to gather in the crop that summer suns had ripened.

I pitied the shock that his return to real life must have given, but much could be sacrificed for that long half hour of revelry—in youthful strength and happiness—so kindly granted him. And then how often in the succeeding days would the scene “Flash upon that inward eye that is the bliss of solitude,” and at every flash fill the heart of the old pioneer with pleasure.

As I left the building and its awful stillness I could not help but think that, if our museum had done nothing else but bring a half hour of brightness into the life of an old man it had accomplished much, and the labor of those who had helped in that work was not spent entirely in vain.

J. C. LEACY, '15.