

nevertheless Russell chose one other distinct theme for his work, the coming of the settlement of Montana. Of course no abstract picture of the West could be complete without the overworked comparison of the prairie schooner and stage coach with the present method of travel and transportation. But Russell takes the Concord and the Jerkey, the ponderous Fish and the Cumbersome Murphy and makes of them as they come toiling to you out of distances that are vast from across an unmarked prairie, an abstract story that speaks of hard and trying times in words of graphic briefness but with unmistakable understanding and intent.

"Once, standing with a critic, studying the great panel in one of the assembly rooms of the state capitol, on which Russell shows the explorers, Lewis and Clark, first meeting Montana Indians, the critic said: 'It's pretty good—it's good. But those saddles now. The Indians, in those days, couldn't have had saddles, you know.' So I had to explain that the northern Indians made saddles, pommeled and cantled high with elk-horn forks very soon after they began stealing Spanish horses on far war trails down in Mexico. And that this was very shortly after one Hernando Cortez, with flaming sword, brought a new life to a new world, some four hundred and fifty years ago.

"I have listened to criticisms of Russell's drawing and have proven that it was wonderfully correct. I have heard objections to his theme and grouping and showed, beyond doubt, that his understanding was profound, his execution as of a master. And also his coloring. 'Who ever saw that violet on our prairies?' To these I have answered with another question: 'Who first reads the page printed in an unknown tongue?' Those who look and see and understand."

