

National Academy of Design

THE WINTER EXHIBITION OF
THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF
DESIGN
BY ARTHUR HOEBER

RECENT years have seen little difference between the spring exhibitions of the National Academy of Design and those of the Society of American Artists. If the older organisation had grown more liberal, the younger had become less exigent. The old academicians saw—possibly, not without regret and, it may be, indignation—things admitted and given prominent places that were far above their ken, and which seemed to them outlandish and stupid, while the Society, now and then, was more kindly than some thought the occasion called for in admitting certain contributions, and its action finally culminated in a rupture, in 1897, when some of the important members broke away and formed the Society of Ten American Painters. In April last year, as all the art world knows, the Academy and the Society of American Artists joined forces, and this present display is the first since that union, so that it has been looked forward to with some anticipation, though, inasmuch as this is a winter exhibition, one must really wait until the annual spring display before a just estimate can be had.

The story of the academician's right of line space, not to say admission, is too old to be thrashed over again here. Its effect on the show is, of course, unmistakable and ever will be. Not thus are fine exhibitions made. It is a handicap that hanging committees have ever struggled against, and which militates against the excellence of this, as of other shows. There are a fair number of men who are out of the running, artistically, who are present this time, occasionally in prominent positions, though it is true the jury has done wonders in making their contributions felt as little as was possible under the

circumstances. Yet here they are and one may not altogether escape them. What is lacking, perhaps more than anything else, is a lot of centres—*clous*, as it were—on which to hang the rest of the display, one of the things that help to make the exhibitions of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts so noteworthy. There are a few here, it is true, but far from enough. The average visitor carries away little of the rank and file of the contributors and needs something whereby to be impressed. A handsome Sargent would help amazingly to pull up the general average; a group of some of the foremost painters' work gives a distinction not otherwise obtainable, and these help to fix in the spectator a vigorous impression of the display. For this purpose a jury is not so practicable as some responsible manager with taste, judgment and executive ability; one who can supplement the work of the jury and give that final touch to raise the show above the commonplace.

We remark little this time in the way of departures. The revolutionists of yesterday have, generally speaking, settled down to be law-abiding citizens of the republic of art. Maybe it is that our eyes have become accustomed to their various manners and they no longer strike us as being radical. The portraits do not abound in large numbers. Nor is



CARNEGIE PRIZE
"NIGHTFALL ALONG THE SHORE"

BY BEN FOSTER

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