

The Artist William Keith

A Scots Giant Among the Redwoods

Alexander Sutherland

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For the Beloveds, Rashelle, Erga and Sheera.
Artists All, and part of the Scottish diaspora.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANESFHS	Aberdeen and Northeast of Scotland Family History Society
CAD	*Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers*
CARP	California Art Research Project
CDNC	*California Digital Newspaper Collection*
CSL	California State Library
ED	Enumeration District of Census
GBN	*GenealogyBank-Newspaper Archives*
KMPFP	Keith-McHenry-Pond Family Papers, 1841–1961, BANC MSS C-B 595
NHN	*Newspapers.com - Historical Newspapers from 1700s -2000s*
OPR	Old Parochial Register

Note: Some documents from the California State Library are behind a pay-wall and can only be accessed through ancestry.com. They are identified in the references and any reader wishing to view these is required to sign into ancestry.com.

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Man makes his own history, but he does not make it out of the whole cloth; he does not make it out of conditions chosen by himself, but out of such as he finds close at hand. The tradition of all past generations weighs like an alp upon the brain of the living.

Karl Marx (1852) *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*

Fate, which I consider to be the manifestation of the will of providence, governs all things. Born with certain forces, many of which I inherited – for heredity is a great factor in this world – I was played upon by circumstances and became what I am. My fate was marked out for me, and I followed it, kept in by circumstances entirely beyond my control.

William Keith, *The San Francisco Call*, 29 January 1899

CHAPTER ONE

Keith's Early Years in Scotland

> A prophet is not without honour except in his own country and in his own house.[1]

Oldmeldrum is a small town in Aberdeenshire not far from the former Royal Burgh of Inverurie. Surrounded by fertile farmland it is known as 'the Granary of Aberdeenshire' and famous for its abundant crops of barley and its crystal springs. Little wonder that a whisky distillery was built there, with the best of ingredients readily to hand. Glen Garioch (pronounced 'Geerie' in the vernacular Doric), founded in 1797 and one of the oldest functioning distilleries in Scotland, exports much of its output all over the world. In the eighteenth century Oldmeldrum was the principal town of Meldrum Parish, holding a weekly market and two feeing fairs in May and November each year when farm servants were engaged for six monthly terms.[2] It was a centre of the hosiery trade, but two impediments held back its development: it suffered from the want of fuel – wood having been long exhausted – and poor roads. Circumstances looked to have improved at the beginning of the nineteenth century when a good road was built through the town following the passing of the Aberdeenshire Turnpike Act of 1795.[3] Opened in 1805, the road connected the town with Aberdeen to the east and Banff to the north. Competition arrived almost simultaneously to dampen any real advancement in Oldmeldrum's prosperity; a canal was built linking Inverurie with Aberdeen and that was used to transport much of the region's traffic in heavy goods, grain going out and coal coming in. Inverurie prospered and grew while Oldmeldrum remained largely unchanged. In 1794 the population was 783 and by 1845 'the population has been about a thousand for many years past'.[4] It remained the same for the next hundred years, being 1,110 in 1911, and 1,103 in 1951.[5]

Many factors affect population numbers. Sickness and disease were frequent visitors; tuberculosis, smallpox, measles, chickenpox, cholera, whooping cough and influenza, took many, especially among the children; women died in childbirth.[6] However, people leaving to live elsewhere is one of the major reasons why populations do not increase or go into decline. Like many small towns in Scotland, Oldmeldrum's principal export has not been its whisky, agricultural produce or hosiery, but its people, numbers of whom have migrated to make a better life for themselves, some no further than the textile mills of Aberdeen, others to distant lands never to return. Some fared well, some less so. Feeing fairs were fertile ground for recruiting sergeants from the Gordon Highlanders and other regiments of the British army, tempting young men with the Queen's shilling and promising a life of adventure and foreign travel instead of one of drudgery and tedium at home. Many a 'gallus loon' succumbed to their blandishments and embarked for some far-flung outpost of the British Empire.[7] Some who left revealed an entrepreneurial or pioneering spirit and some few gained recognition and international fame in their chosen field of endeavour. For its relatively small size Oldmeldrum has more than its fair share of those who have left their hometown to make their mark elsewhere in the world. Among them are William Forsyth (1737–1804), botanist and head gardener at Kensington and St. James's Palace and founding member of the Royal Horticultural Society; Sir Patrick Manson (1844–1922), 'The Father of Tropical Medicine' who discovered that filariasis, a parasitical disease in humans, is transmitted by mosquitoes and founder of what is now the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; George Chrystal (1851–1911), a mathematician famed for his books on algebra and the study of seiches – wave patterns caused by winds in enclosed bodies of water; Sir George Watt (1851–1930), physician and botanist who worked for many years in India and produced a multivolume opus on the commercial plants and natural products with the aim of improving the economic lot of the country; Sir Thomas Mitchell (1869–1959), baker and Lord Provost of Aberdeen; and Donald Gordon (1901–69), Deputy Governor of the Bank of Canada and President and Chairman of Canadian National Railway.

These men are commemorated on a plaque to honour the *Famous Sons of Meldrum and Bourtie* now on display at the entrance to the Meldrum Community Library, part of the Meldrum Academy building. The plaque was unveiled in Oldmeldrum Town Hall in 2006 by Oldmeldrum-born Air Marshal Sir John George Donald (1927–2014), a former director-general of

RAF Medical Services whose distinguished career is related in a booklet containing biographical sketches of those named on the plaque and published to accompany the unveiling.[8] All are well worthy of their commemoration but the name of another man with a genuine claim to be included is missing from this illustrious group. That man is William Keith, who left Oldmeldrum too early in life to show that he was a 'lad o' pairts' but who, despite a disadvantaged beginning, made a name for himself as a landscape painter and portraitist in the United States of America after emigrating there as a twelve-year-old in 1851 with his mother and three sisters.

Notice of William Keith's achievements filtered back to his hometown only spasmodically. Aberdeen's *People's Journal*, in its column of local news and under the heading of 'Some Notable Paintings', reprinted an article gleaned from the *New York Scotsman* of August 1878 advising its readers that, 'There is now on Exhibition at Leavitt's Art Rooms, Broadway, a collection of oil paintings of California scenery by William Keith, an artist to be much better-known hereafter'. Professor William Henry Brewer of Yale University declared that the pictures were:

> [S]tronger and truer to the nature they represent than anything else which he has ever seen on canvas. Mr Keith is evidently a master of both colour and form. He does not paint in the minute and finished detail that is characteristic of many artists; but at the proper distance his pictures are very strong and beautiful. He seems to know and love the mountains and skies of California; and he unquestionably possesses beyond all other American painters the great and rare talent of producing the most delicate as well as the most powerful effects by the simplest means, and the use oftentimes of heavy masses of paint. It is not too much to say that [the paintings on display] are unsurpassed, if indeed they have ever been equalled in delicacy, beauty, and grandeur in the history of American Landscape painting.[9]

This homage from a man of science – Brewer was a botanist and member of the first California Geological Survey with an intimate knowledge of the state's topography – encapsulates Keith's early work in the United States of America. His love for the outdoors and mountain scenery was depicted in the style of painting he adopted of accurate, objective representation. Having an exhibition as a West Coast painter in New York, the hub of its own dynamic and competitive art world, also shows how much had been achieved in the early part of his career and the esteem in which he was

held within at least some circles. The cited article concludes, 'Mr Keith is a native of Oldmeldrum, Aberdeenshire, and is a nephew of our respected fellow-citizen, Captain William Bruce, of New York'. For good measure, the *People's Journal* reinforced the local connection by pointing out that Mr Keith was a nephew of Mr James Bruce, Banker, Oldmeldrum.[10]

If the people of Oldmeldrum took notice of the success of one of its expatriate sons that notice has gone unreported. Some twenty-nine years passed before another Scottish newspaper, the *Dundee Courier*, drew the attention of art lovers among its readers to William Keith's inclusion in an issue of *The Studio*, a glossy illustrated magazine of fine and applied art published in London. The October 1907 edition contained 'many beautifully-coloured and tinted-plate reproductions of notable water-colour drawings and paintings by such well-known artists as … William Keith'.[11] The monthly magazine also included an article by Henry Atkins, 'William Keith, Landscape Painter of California', with the *Dundee Courier* observing that 'the last-mentioned … is of special interest to Scotsmen. Mr Keith was born in Oldmeldrum, Aberdeenshire, sixty-eight years ago, and his career as a successful painter in the United States of America is a very interesting one'.

The article by Henry Atkins (1867–1923), Irish-born American artist-designer and founder of the Vickers, Atkins and Torrey Gallery in San Francisco, was accompanied by several colour reproductions of Keith's paintings, among them 'California Landscape', 'Near the Mouth of the Russian River, Sonoma County, California' and 'The Crown of the Sierras'. Atkins was very familiar with Keith's work having exhibited it in his gallery on several occasions and had by this time established a rapport with the artist. He noted how Keith's style had changed to convey the feelings engendered within the artist from what was seen rather than simply depicting what was seen and reproducing it as accurately as possible. In Atkins' opinion the change of style was for the better:

> Had Mr Keith's work progressed along the lines of his early, frankly out-of-door painting, with its cool colour and literal rendering of this aspects of landscape, we should perhaps today have had him as an American parallel of [French landscape painter, Charles-François] Daubigny (1817–78); but another element early entered the field – temperament asserted itself – the temperament of the poet and mystic, the mood rather than the material presentation of nature becomes his preoccupation, and the poet holds the brush with the painter.[12]

Keith's artwork had gone through a transformation from when it had appeared in Leavitt's Gallery in New York and was now being reproduced and discussed in a London art journal.

However, recognition of William Keith in his hometown remained elusive. A lengthy article 'On Reflections' by 'A. K.' – the byline of Alexander Keith, journalist, author, farmer, broadcaster and historian – appeared in the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* of Saturday 19 November 1938, under the bold headline, 'Oldmeldrum's Famous Artist Son. William Keith's Centenary is on Monday'.[13] Following these attention-grabbing words, A. K. explains just where the artist's fame lay. 'The United States and California in particular will celebrate tomorrow and on Monday what the Americans call the centennial and we the centenary of William Keith, the landscape artist. He was "by far the greatest painter California has developed" '.

Despite being well versed in Keith family lore, A. K. confessed to being no wiser than his readers about the achievements of the artist. 'One's ignorance on occasion is lamentable. It is only about a year since, quite by chance I heard of William Keith's existence. It is nice to know that a family so versatile should produce an artist. Art seems to be a new line in the family accomplishments.' The source of A. K.'s enlightenment was Keith's first major biographer, Brother Cornelius of Saint Mary's College, Moraga, California, indefatigable champion of his works, who had spent over three decades researching every aspect of the artist's life before producing the first volume of his biography, *Keith, Old Master of California*, in 1942.[14] He had imparted what he knew about Keith to A. K. whose article contains detailed information that could only have come from somebody with Cornelius's knowledge. Having fulsomely praised Keith's artistic accomplishments over a long and productive life, despite various vicissitudes and misfortunes; A. K. reflects that, 'perhaps someday we may be able to have in Scotland an example of his work as a memento of an astonishing achievement'.[15] A. K.'s musings would be realised in the fullness of time. It would take another eighty years, but it would come. In the meantime, his article drew a response from Canada.

'The Letters to the Editor' column of *The Aberdeen Press and Journal* for Wednesday 8 March 1939 leads with a long letter, 'William Keith, Artist – Some Fresh Facts from his Cousin'. The writer was George Taylor Bruce, graduate of the University of Aberdeen, classical master of Gordon's College, later Rector of Inverness Royal Academy, by now living

in retirement in Regina, Saskatchewan. He had read A. K.'s article in the *Weekly Journal* of 24 November 1838 (a sister paper of the *Press and Journal*) which 'comes to me regularly and I keep my eyes open for any reference to any person or place with which I have been acquainted of old'. George Bruce was born in Oldmeldrum in 1857, a first cousin to William Keith, his father being John Bruce, younger brother of Elisabeth Bruce, William's mother. George Bruce confirmed Keith's success following his emigration to America's West Coast and wrote of the wealthy steel and railroad magnates who were among his many patrons. 'An interesting side light as to the value of Keith's paintings is the fact that one of his finer landscapes, *The Glory of the Heavens*, was sold by auction in San Francisco for the sum of 12,000 dollars.'[16] William Keith had come a long way from the unpaved streets of Oldmeldrum he had walked and played in as a boy.

Oldmeldrum and its environs, the rural countryside of Aberdeenshire and Kincardineshire, and the grey granite buildings of Aberdeen were the extent of William Keith's physical world in his formative years. This, and the all too brief summers, and all too long 'dreich' – dull, wearisome – winters were what shaped him and the people from whom he sprung. Their immediate surroundings influenced all aspects of their lives, how they lived, what they ate, the work they did, the religion they chose to follow. William Keith was of the land; he came from farming stock; his father from whom he took his name, was born in the parish of Banchory Devenick, a parish that straddled the river Dee, the northern part now absorbed into the outskirts of the expanded City of Aberdeen. The hamlet of the hyphenated Banchory-Devenick on the south side of the river contains the parish church where William, Sr would have been baptised. He was the son of the farmer James Keith and his wife Margaret Ross from the farm of Hillside of Findon, Banchory Devenick. Young Keith's great-grandfather was John Keith who farmed at Mains of Banchory.[17] William Keith, Sr was a tailor; a trade, often peripatetic, especially in rural areas, much favoured by men whose constitution was less well suited to the more robust requirements of farming or other manual occupations.

Twenty-five-year-old William Keith married eighteen-year-old Elisabeth Bruce, daughter and one of eight children, of James Bruce, baker in Oldmeldrum, and his wife, Margaret Moir, the Banns having been posted on 30 October 1831, 'William Keith and Elisabeth Bruce both in this parish having contracted in order to marriage [sic] and consigned pledges were after due proclamation married 18 November 1831'.[18]

Elisabeth was always called Betsy by her family. They had five children, Margaret, born in 1832; James, whose date of birth is given as 30 January 1834; Anna (sometimes Hannah), born September 1836; Elisabeth (variously Lizzie, Betsy, Eliza) born February 1838; and the youngest, William, whose date of birth is given as 21 November 1838.[19]

William Keith, Sr died in October 1838 and was buried in the kirkyard of the Parish Church of Oldmeldrum on the eighteenth of that month. He was thirty-two years old. The family was charged a fee of six shillings for 'seeking Tailor Keith's Funeral People and macking his grave new burial ground'.[20] The cause of his premature death is unknown but the three most likely causes at that time, barring accidents, were tuberculosis, pneumonia and diarrhoeal diseases, which between them claimed by far the greater number of those who had survived childbirth. Left impoverished following the death of her husband and unable to keep her family together, 'Widow Keith' turned to her kin for help. By 1841 she was living under the roof of Alexander Rennie, a tailor who had a shop in The Square, Oldmeldrum, with three of her children, Margaret, her oldest, aged nine; James, aged seven; and Eliza aged four. Elisabeth was employed by Rennie as a milliner.[21] He was the unmarried head of the household; his cousin, Margaret Auld, also unmarried, looked after domestic affairs on his behalf. Among other occupants were boarders, including Elisabeth's younger sister Margaret Bruce, still single at that time and helping her with the children.

Two of Elisabeth's children were elsewhere; Anna was living on a croft in the neighbouring Parish of Boutrie with the elderly William Alexander and his wife Anne – formerly Keith and an aunt of William Keith, Sr, both aged sixty-five.[22] William Alexander was tenant farmer of a croft on land belonging to the House of Barra, a sixteenth-century tower house, owned by the descendants of John Ramsay of Melrose who had bought the property in 1754 with profits amassed as a merchant trading with Russia. Young Anna's stay on the croft may have been relatively short lived. William Alexander died in the winter of 1841 and his wife paid for a headstone to be erected in Bourtie kirkyard, where she joined him less than three years later.[23] For mutual company and support Anna may have stayed with Widow Alexander until she died, but it is very likely that the old woman had to give up the tenancy on the croft when her husband was no longer around to work it and they were forced to stay elsewhere. In any event, by 1851 Anna had completed whatever schooling she may have had

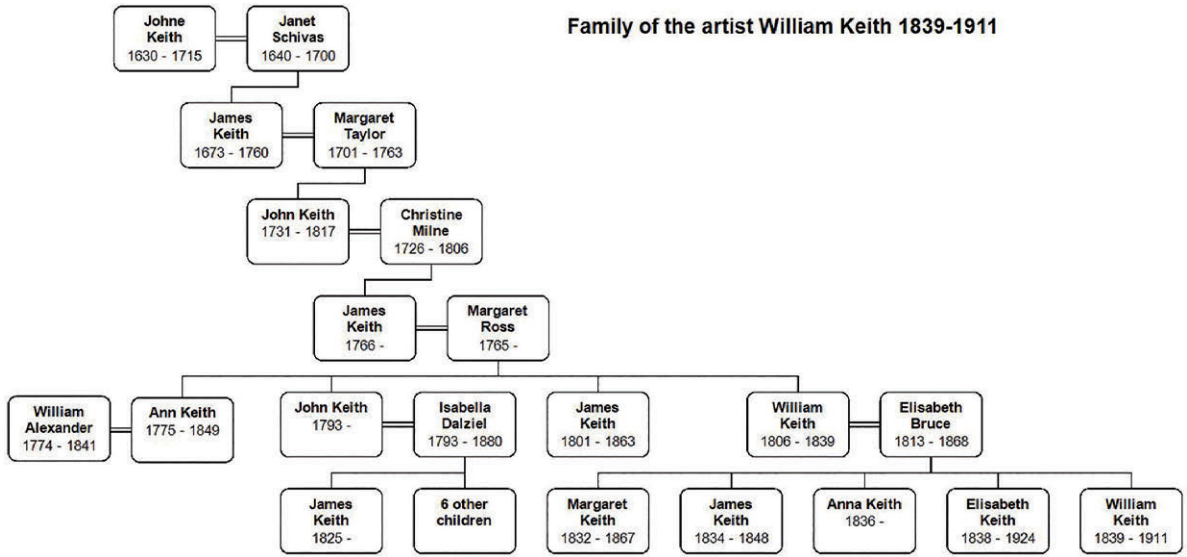

Figure 1. Family of the artist William Keith.

and was staying with a cousin of Alex Rennie, one Charles Auld, an auctioneer, who was head of a crowded household at North Turnpike Road, Oldmeldrum. At the same address were Auld's wife Ann, their four children, a nineteen-year-old unmarried niece called Ann Barclay and Auld's seventy-six-year-old mother-in-law. Fifteen-year-old 'Hannah Keith', as Anna's name appears on the census, worked there as a domestic servant; her thirteen-year-old sister Elisabeth was also living there, possibly temporarily, as a visiting schoolgirl.[24]

William, meantime, was living only a few doors away in The Square with his maternal grandparents, James and Margaret Bruce both aged fifty, where they ran a baker shop. Having brought up eight children of their own, all of whom had by now left home, James and Margaret were living in the relative calm of quiet domesticity, the only other occupants of the house were Susan Duncan, a twenty-year-old female servant and a second grandson, James Bruce aged five, the son of James Bruce Jr.[25]

In later life, William remembered that he lived with his grandparents in the neighbouring parish of Craigdam, mid-way between Oldmeldrum and the village of Tarves. While the family did attend church in Craigdam, there is no evidence that they ever lived there. Childhood memories are notoriously unreliable; stories can be embellished for the sake of a good yarn and tailored to suit the expectations of a particular audience, but William's contain more than a kernel of truth. He remembers his grandfather being a generous man who gave food to his neighbours and to visitors from the farming community to their home in Craigdam. It was common practice for bakers to sell off cheaply or give to those in need any unused stock from their 'breidy shop' on Saturday late afternoons rather than have it go stale and be thrown away, the shop being closed on the Sabbath. Bruce would have been no different from any other baker in this regard, but in an extension of this practice he chose to take his goods to Craigdam where he was an elder of the church, and possibly baking specifically for his fellow Congregationalists.

Craigdam was a seceder church built on land granted by the earl of Aberdeen, its congregation having broken away from the established Church of Scotland over differences concerning the right of congregations to nominate their own minister to fill any vacancy in the parish, rather than having a new minister chosen for them by the Crown and local heritors – property holders – who were required by law to pay for the upkeep of the church and who wanted to keep the right of choosing

the minister. In the early days, members of Craigdam's congregation were subjected to 'rowdy attacks and concerted plans amongst rude farm servants eked [sic] on sometimes by their superiors, to annoy the seceders and disturb their worship'.[26] A further Disruption, or Schism, erupted in the Church of Scotland in 1843 and the long-serving minister, Patrick Roberson, demitted his ministry and joined another breakaway church, the Free Church. From his pulpit in Aberdeen he berated his Craigdam parishioners despite having received six months' stipend when he left.[27] He seems to have taken all the church records with him and this may account for the absence of any baptismal records for the Keith children. Whatever the case, at the opening of the new Belmont Street Church in Aberdeen, in 1869 a Mr Turner of Craigdam regretted that its early history could not be given owing 'to the records having been destroyed'.[28]

While Robertson was still in his ministry, 'people came on horseback and carriage from miles around – even from as far as Peterhead to the Sunday service'.[29] Since people attended morning service and evensong at the very least, and possibly took Sunday school classes, or were involved in some other church related activities, it made practical sense, in view of the distances some were required to travel, that they remain in Craigdam for the whole day. Families and friends would meet and socialise; children would play. To provide comfort for these activities, segregated meeting rooms complete with toilets were built for men and women at the main entrance to the church, and stables were erected in a separate building to care for the horses. This was the environment in which his grandfather's bounty was dispensed and which William remembered with some fondness, where the children picnicked among the coconut-scented gorse bushes on their 'rough Whinny Knowe'. Among those who attended from farther afield were the Johnstone family from Brandsbutt, near Inverurie, including their daughter, Jane, who 'used to accompany some of the family on most Sundays in fine weather, and thought little of the long walk of nine miles'.[30] Jane Johnstone met John Bruce, William's uncle, while attending the church at Craigdam. They later married and were the parents of George Taylor Bruce.

William, young and impressionable and full of childhood energy, remembered the days at Craigdam as being long, and the price that had to be paid for brief periods of play. 'You know', he told one of his young students, Emily Parkin Babcock Hay, 'Sissie' to her friends:

> [T]hey used to make me go to church five times on Sunday. Well – the seats were so high that my feet couldn't touch the ground. The consequence was, first my feet and then the rest of me went to sleep during the preaching. My mother would lay me down under the seat – which generally woke me up. Then I would sit up and, realising my captivity, proceed to revenge myself against Fate. I would creep along very quietly on all fours the whole length of the pew, then suddenly poke my head out of my hiding place. It never failed to produce the result which I was hoping for: everybody jumped or squealed! There was another result, though, that followed: my mother! – With a rush of suppressed dialect: *'You, Wullie! When I get ye hame'*.[31]

Young William may very well have been in and about the church five times in the course of a Sunday between religious services and the social comings and goings. For a youngster it would have felt like a long day. He may also have been required to visit Craigdam on weekdays. The congregation had built its own thatched-roofed school, 'the Auld Thackit Skweel' as it was affectionately referred to in the vernacular Scots Doric of the region. For many years teachers were probationers of the church who taught during the winter months and studied divinity during the summer holidays. William may have attended this school, but it would have meant a daily trek from Oldmeldrum which had schools of its own.[32] It is more likely that he attended school there, where he would have been 'misca'd' by his fellow pupils for attending a seceder church.

Grandfather Bruce was the archetypal Victorian patrician figure – indeed, the archetypal Scottish church elder – and as such very much at the heart of congregational affairs.[33] He was stern in appearance and stern in how he conducted himself. As an elder he was required to hold strong Christian convictions about what was right and wrong and to ensure that his fellow churchgoers did likewise. Strict adherence to the Ten Commandments would have guided his everyday actions and he would have expected no less from others. A family member, George Walker, bookseller and baillie – magistrate – in Aberdeen, knew him well. Walker was a nephew through Bruce's wife, Margaret Moir, whose sister Jean had been introduced 'to the good-looking apprentice, James Walker', who was then working for and living with the Bruces.[34] Jean Moir and James Walker married on 21 November 1816, and James Walker moved to

Huntly where he set up on his own account. Their son George was born on 10 January 1821 and when he grew up he did not like the Bruces although the real target of his condemnation was James' son, John, to whom he felt a particular animus. By extension he criticised John's parents for being the source of their son's perceived character defects, suggesting that they, too, were flawed individuals. The traits of the parents may have been inherited by some of their children and help explain, at least in part, the course of action, at times impetuous, they chose to take on reaching adulthood and in particular their desire to flee the paternal nest.

John followed in his father's footsteps, but in 1833 aged seventeen and without completing his apprenticeship, he went to work in London as a journeyman baker. He loathed it, recalling his experiences when he was eighty-eight years old and living out his retirement in Aberdeen:

> Those were the days of cruel tyranny and small pay to the toiling masses. Every night the bakers had to begin work at 10 o'clock, and when the dough was made had a mouthful of supper and then lay down on the *bare boards* [original emphasis], with a sack above us, for an hour until the dough was ready, when we commenced and worked making bread until seven or eight o'clock in the evening. No matter how short a time one had been in bed, they had to rise and begin work at 10 o'clock.[35]

John Bruce aired several grievances in this vein, and it is little wonder that he returned to Aberdeen in 1836, setting up on his own account in June 1838, when he bought over the business of James Walker in George Street.[36] Even in Aberdeen, John Bruce's troubles were not over. He fell foul of the protectionism offered to their members by the Seven Incorporated Trades, because, as he complained, 'in those hateful times the several guilds had the power to prevent any *extranear* to open a shop. I being one of these, was made to pay a fine on three occasions'.[37]

John Walker relinquished the bakery and took up farming in 1870, at Fornet, Lyne of Skene, Aberdeenshire, where he tended 210 acres until his retirement in 1889:

> [B]ut with his active mind, which induced him to have lots of irons in the fire, which was always so red hot with him, that his irons had to be often changed, he will not die of ennui. I suppose no farmer in the country was better known for his quarrelsome temper that he was, *in this respect he*

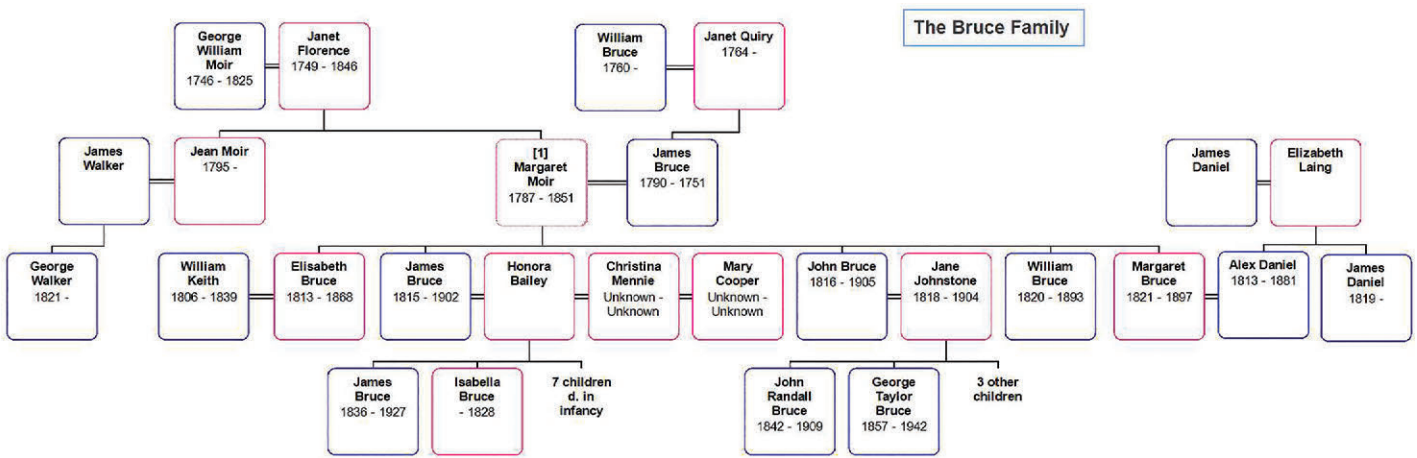

Figure 2. The Bruce family.

> *was his father's child* [emphasis added]. His penchant for writing letters he derived from … his mother, who in all probability derived it from some 'inglorious Milton' in the genealogical tree.[38]

According to Walker, John Bruce was most difficult to deal with in his business connections and in his family relations and he thought it a blessing to all those about him 'to know that he can blow off steam by a "Letter to the Editor":

> [B]ut for that safety-valve he must have exploded, and his little boiler of a body been shattered into fragments years ago. After discharging his accumulated steam in a letter, he cools down and there comes a great calm to himself, and to those around him – for a time'. [39]

When John Bruce died on 20 November 1905, of his children, only his son, John Randall Bruce, a banker in Paris, attended.[40] His wife had left him for a year or two but had returned to care for him during his prolonged illness but had died in their house some years before his death:

> All his numerous children had either left him or were driven out when they had got situations or were married. His bad temper seems to me to have been inherited from his father, and his gift of facile expression from his mother. Almost all the Moir family (but especially the females) had a bit of genius in them – the *Vox Humana* – which had to get out in themselves, or in their descendants.[41]

Of all the relatives that had a hand in young William's upbringing, Grannie Bruce, nee Moir, may have been the chief source of nurturing any fledgling artistic talent.

By Walker's account, Bruce the patriarch was a tyrant and his wife a woman whose high intelligence was neither matched nor fulfilled by the place allotted to her in the social order of the times. Their traits appear to have been passed on to their children, all of whom left Oldmeldrum, very often at a very early age. However, Walker's account of their son John's incendiary temper is balanced by his account of John's letter-writing to newspaper editors as he campaigned vociferously against injustice, especially on behalf of those who worked the land. *John Bruce of the Fornet* was so well known in farming circles that a ballad with this name was

composed and sung about him by farm servants in their living quarters – their bothies, or 'chaumers'. The ballad is essentially a panegyric, of which there is a long tradition in Scotland, with its emphasis on oral transmission, and tells of a well-to-do farmer with no less than three teams of work horses and the men needed to work them. He was a hard but fair taskmaster who cared about the living and working conditions of his men. He was 'a guid hertit mannie' with 'nae eneuch o' the devil in him'.[42] This particular trait is in keeping with his father's generosity at Sunday gatherings at Craigdam.

The 1840s were difficult times for Elisabeth although the decade got off to a bright start when her sister, Margaret, married Alex Daniel, a druggist in Oldmeldrum, on 11 July 1843.[43] Since he had his own shop in The Square, they were virtually next-door neighbours. As a druggist – the Victorian equivalent of today's chemist or pharmacist – Alex Daniel was permitted to dispense such items as opium and alcohol-based laudanum, the 'aspirin of the nineteenth century', cocaine and arsenic, all freely available without prescription which were used to treat a host of ailments. Daniel would have required the full range available in his pharmacopoeia, together with whatever medical skills he possessed, when tragedy occurred quite literally on their doorstep. On Friday 26 April 1844, the Royal Mail Stagecoach, *The Duchess of Gordon*, which ran the thirty-eight mile route 'on every lawful day' between the Post Office in Huntly and the Royal Hotel and Aberdeen Hotel on Union Street, Aberdeen, made its scheduled stop at the Meldrum Arms Hotel, round the corner from The Square, there to change horses at the mid-way point of its journey.[44] When fresh horses were being harnessed something startled them and with the ostler clinging helplessly to their heads they clattered out of control down the incline into The Square and crashed into the front of Alex Daniel's shop and that of his next-door neighbour, clothier, Mr Ferguson. Eight people were hurt, including a young blacksmith from Huntly who died from his injuries at the hotel on Sunday morning despite the best efforts of a fellow passenger, Dr Brebner, to save him. The *Aberdeen Press and Journal* praised the efforts of the good doctor and noticed 'with pleasure the humane attention of Mrs Daniel, Mrs Webster, and Mrs Keith, who threw open their hospitable houses to the sufferers'.[45]

For Elisabeth, tragedy of a more personal nature struck again before the decade was out. Her older boy, James, was buried in the parish kirkyard in Oldmeldrum on 27 November 1848.[46] He was fourteen years old.



Figure 3. The Square, Oldmeldrum, with Alex Daniel's shop on the right.

Courtesy of Meldrum and Bourtie Heritage Society.

Perhaps he had inherited his sickly nature from his father. Within months she lost her mother, who died some time in February of the following year. The Oldmeldrum Parochial Register recorded her demise with an economy of words: 'Mrs Bruce buried'.

Elisabeth was finding it increasingly difficult to keep her family together, but other family members reached out to help. By 1851 her sister Margaret had been married to Alex Daniel for over nine years and borne him three children. (They were no strangers to personal tragedy either; their son Alexander would drown as the result of an accident at Stonehaven in 1877, aged twenty-five.)[47] Alex's druggist business was successful; he employed his unmarried younger brother William as a druggist apprentice and they employed Elisabeth's oldest daughter, Margaret's namesake, by now aged eighteen, as a house servant.[48]

The Keith side of the family also helped. Elisabeth's husband had two older brothers: James, of whom little is known other than that he appears to have been employed as an agricultural worker and living in

Laurencekirk, a small town surrounded by fertile farmland, some thirty miles south of Aberdeen; and John, who farmed at Mains of Cowie, Fetteresso, Kincardineshire, about a mile south of the town of Stonehaven. When reflecting on his childhood in later life, William Keith recalled that it was his uncle James who farmed at Mains of Cowie and that his sister Betsy lived there with him. This must have occurred sometime after 1841, at which date Betsy was still with her mother. John Keith had a son, James, aged fifteen, in 1841, so it may be that it is this 'Jamie' that Keith remembers with fondness. By 1851 John Keith and his wife, and their large family – they had seven children – had moved to Logie Farm, two miles north of Stonehaven, where he tended 160 acres and employed eight men.[49]

Elisabeth moved out of Rennie's household on The Square some time before March 1851 by which date she was living not far away at number 8 South Turnpike Road, which led from The Square out of town to the south and east towards Aberdeen. She was working as a dressmaker; her 'condition' that of widow. The only one of her children still staying with her, indeed the only other occupant of the house, was William, by now twelve years old and a scholar.[50] Both her parents were now dead. James Bruce had followed his wife to the grave and another succinct entry in Oldmeldrum's Old Parochial Register records his passing under the date of 22 January 1852, 'James Bruce Buried'. This date seems to be an error, for James Bruce does not appear in public records for 1851 and the census for that year shows that the family business was now run by his son, James Jr who was living with his second wife Christina, and occupying the house over the shop.[51] James had emigrated to the United States of America, aged twenty-five, arriving in Philadelphia on 17 December 1839, on the SS *Caspian* from Liverpool, his occupation listed as baker on the passenger manifest. He returned to take over the family business on the death of his father.[52]

James kept the bakery going until the 1870s then focused on his parallel career in banking and finance. He was an agent for Aberdeen Town and County Bank and a town councillor. He went on to become Oldmeldrum's first provost and through these various activities a 'weel-kent' – well-known – figure in the community.[53] He was married at least three times and sired nine children, only two of whom survived beyond infancy. He died in 1902. The family headstone erected in the kirkyard of Oldmeldrum conveys no more than a hint of the colourful life he had led. His eldest son, James Bruce, who died in Shanghai, was the five-year-old cousin that William Keith played with when they lived together with their

grandparents in 1841. Like William, the youngster, born in England, had had an absentee father who had left him behind when he emigrated to the United States of America in 1839.[54]

The relative successes of Elisabeth's kin were all in the future and did nothing to alleviate her situation or that of her children through the 1840s. They were looked after by various relatives from both the Keith and Bruce sides of the family and were never too far away to make staying in touch difficult. Although they suffered hardships, they do not appear to have suffered any real poverty. Elisabeth had always managed to keep a roof over their heads and as soon as the girls were old enough, they worked in domestic service in familiar households. This had the added benefit of providing board and lodging. Elisabeth had responded to her straitened circumstances and supported herself and her children by making hats and dresses, first as an employee but apparently by the decade's end on her own account, a skill she could take with her anywhere. Perhaps her parents had been difficult to live with, as George Walker had inferred from the conduct of Elisabeth's brother, John, as almost without exception her siblings and their offspring had flown the nest, and travelled to distant lands: France, New Zealand, Canada and the United States of America. But her parents were now dead and there were no longer ties to bind her to Oldmeldrum. With whatever modest savings she had accumulated, and perhaps with help from her siblings and in-laws, she showed an enterprising spirit worthy of any pioneer, by uprooting what was left of her family and leaving familiar surroundings for the uncertainties of life in the United States of America. These uncertainties she was prepared to face in part to escape her present circumstances but also because she was drawn to an attraction that promised personal happiness.

CHAPTER TWO

New Beginnings in the New World

Nullius in Verba

Motto of the Royal Society[1]

When Elisabeth and her children arrived in New York sometime in the summer of 1851 they stayed initially with her older brother, William, who lived at 208 Eighth Avenue, where he enjoyed some early success as a liquor trader and by working as a plumber. Elisabeth personifies the dichotomy of many migrants, the push of escaping difficult and ultimately unbearable conditions at home and the pull exerted by promises of a better life elsewhere, often conveyed in letters from family members who had already made the often-arduous journey or who had returned to tell of opportunities awaiting in new lands. Her younger brother, James, had already emigrated to the United States of America before returning to take over the family business following their father's death, so was well placed to tell her what conditions were like and what was involved in making the ocean crossing.[2] Another of the Bruce siblings, Robert, the youngest, had gone into the wilds of Ontario, Canada, never to be heard from again.

The real attraction for Elisabeth was reacquainting herself with James Daniel, younger brother of her brother-in law, Alex Daniel, druggist in Oldmeldrum.[3] James Daniel was baptised on 29 January 1817 in the parish of Cruden, Aberdeenshire.[4] He had worked at Uppermill, Cruden, as an agricultural labourer for Barbra Wilkin, a thirty-five-year-old single mother of three who farmed the property with the help of several male and female servants.[5] James had arrived in New York on 1 July 1842 on board the SS *Sorento* from London. He was aged twenty-five and his occupation was listed on the ship's manifest as a mechanic, a generic term for any male manual worker.[6] He kept in touch with William Bruce and, in turn, with Elisabeth whom he supposedly married in New York, but there is no

record of this. At some point, they added an 's' to their surname, but not before James became a naturalised citizen, a process facilitated by his good friend William Bruce, who confirmed his eligibility and suitability:

> William Bruce, 268 [sic] Eighth Avenue, being duly sworn, says, that he is well acquainted with the above named applicant, and that the said applicant has resided within the United States for the continuous term of five years at least next preceding the present time, and within the State of New York, one year at least immediately preceding this application and that during that time he has behaved as a man of good moral character, attached to the principles of the Constitution of the United States, and well-disposed to the good order and happiness of the same
>
> Sworn in open Court, the 6th day Oct. 1853, [signed] William Bruce. [Initialled] R. R. C., Clerk.
>
> I do hereby swear, that I will support the Constitution of the United States, and that I do absolutely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to every foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty whatever; and particularly to the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, of whom I was before a subject.
>
> Sworn in open Court, the 6th day Oct. 1853. [signed] James Daniel R. R. Connolly, Clerk.[7]

By making this declaration James was effectively renouncing all rights previously held as a British subject and embracing those of a citizen of his adopted country. His presence in Elisabeth's life was probably a source of comfort to her but it does not seem to have done much for her son or helped her son's relationship with his mother whom he professed not to understand and with whom he often argued. In her effusive account of her days spent as a student in Keith's studio, Emily 'Sissie' Hay refers to his youth being 'bent by the hand of a not-too-tender stepfather allied to the yet sterner hand of Presbyterianism'.[8] While William got on very well with his Uncle William and his aunt, his early days in New York were not especially happy ones. William's mother obviously had ambitions for him, because after completing his schooling he worked for a brief spell in a lawyer's office, a job he did not like because he spent his days acting as a general dogsbody. Bored, he took to reading dime novels and was chastised by a senior clerk. A commotion ensued which culminated in missiles being

thrown: a bar of soap from the senior clerk and a penknife from William. It missed, but his spell in the lawyer's office was over.[9]

William was painting, was enjoying it, and expressed a desire to make his living from this. His family was opposed, seeing no future in it, his mother explaining that 'the two P's – painting and poverty – go together'. They could not afford to enrol him in an art school but wanted him to have a career that satisfied his artistic temperament while providing a comfortable living. So, as Keith was to relate many years later; 'they made me study wood carving as a kind of compromise'.[10] Probably with some relief to both mother and son she secured him an apprenticeship in an engraver's office and it was as 'Mrs Daniels' that she signed him on in a document that would have been instantly recognisable to the craft guilds of Medieval Europe. The indenture bound the apprentice to keep the mysteries of what is learnt away from the uninitiated, and expected moral rectitude in all actions:

> **THIS INDENTURE WITNESSETH that** William Keith, now aged Eighteen years, seven months, and twenty- three days, by and with the consent of Elizabeth Daniel, [sic] (Late Keith) his mother, has voluntarily, and of his own free will and accord, put and bound himself Apprentice to William Roberts, of the City of New York, to learn the art, trade, and mystery of Engraving on Wood illustrations for Books, etc., and as an apprentice faithfully to serve from the day and date hereof, for and during and until the full end and term of Two years, Four months, and Seven days next ensuing; during all which time, the said apprentice his master faithfully, honestly and industriously shall serve, his secrets keep, all lawful commands everywhere readily obey, and at all times protect and preserve the goods, chattels and property of his said master, and not suffer or allow the same or any part thereof, to be injured or wasted; and he shall not buy, sell, or traffic with his own goods or the goods of others, nor be absent from his said master's service, day nor night, without leave, nor frequent ale-houses, taverns, fire-engine houses, or play-houses, and will in all things behave himself as a good and faithful apprentice ought to do during the said term. And the said master does hereby agree that he will use and employ the utmost of his endeavors to teach, or cause him, the said apprentice, to be taught or instructed, in the art, trade and mystery of Engraving on Wood illustrations for Books, etc., and ~~provide him, suitable~~

~~for an apprentice, with good and sufficient board, lodging, washing and mending~~ to pay him as follows: Two dollars per week for board until the 31st of January 1857, to be … [There is a lacuna in the document, lost at a well-worn fold, so that the terms for the remaining period of Keith's indenture are missing. It is very likely that any wages would have been minimal, but it was usual to provide accommodation, or help towards it, for the duration of the indenture.] ***The Undersigned***, a Police Justice, in and for the City and County of New York, hereby certifies that the Father of the within named Apprentice is dead, as appears satisfactorily to said Justice, by the oath of Elizabeth Daniels [sic] (late Keith) mother of William Keith. *New York*, July 14, 1856. J. H. Webb, Police Justice.

I *(the Mother of the within named Apprentice) hereby consent to the binding of my Son, as within mentioned.* Elisabeth Daniels [sic] *New-York*, July 14, 1856.[11]

Staying away from alehouses, taverns and playhouses is self-explanatory. The inclusion of firehouses among the establishments to be avoided is a novel addition. They were seen as a bad influence and likely to turn the head of an impressionable young apprentice. In the early development of cities in the United States of America they were often a place of violence and firefighters the instigators of civil unrest as rival stations competed to put out fires. Fire stations also had their own fraternal organisations, created along masonic traditions, with the rituals and regalia that entailed, and took care of their own and their dependents.[12]

It cannot be an oversight on his mother's part that she should choose to declare William as being nearly nineteen years old in mid-1856 and thereby placing his year of birth in 1837. Her rationale for so doing can only be conjectured; perhaps she was aware that if he was apprenticed to a craftsman in any trade he would have to remain until he reached his majority on his twenty-first birthday, and she reasoned that she could shorten this tenure by deliberately falsifying his age. Curtailing apprenticeships seems to have been a family trait. If she was prepared to lie about his age on this occasion, albeit for short-term gain; had she done so before? Her action raises doubts about the accuracy of his true year of birth, especially since there are conflicting accounts of when that was.

The conventional account has it that William Keith was born on 21 November 1838, some nine months after his sister, Anna, assuming her birthday – given as some unspecified date in February – is accurate. While

it is possible for conception to have taken place before Elisabeth's first period, it would have been a statistical anomaly although not unknown. Nor is it unknown for siblings to be born in the same calendar year or within twelve months of each other. William may also have been born prematurely, the shock of losing her husband in October hastening the child's arrival. But, while most of Keith's biographers accept 1838 as the year of his birth, there is compelling evidence to offer a plausible alternative to the accepted narrative, indeed, to suggest that he may have been born a year later.[13] If Keith was born in November 1839, then the implication is clear. The man whose name he shares could not have been his biological father.

The people most likely to show 1839 as Keith's date of birth are those who knew him well. His son-in-law Edward N. Harmon attached this date to many of Keith's paintings after his death.[14] The evidence suggests the date comes from none other than William Keith himself. For most of his adult life he was inconsistent in declaring his year of birth. Once, when he and his first wife, Elizabeth, were on a return trip to Europe in October 1870 he gave his age as thirty-three on the passenger list which would make his year of birth 1836, clearly a mistake on his part. On a return trip from Europe in June 1885 with his second wife, Mary, he gave his age as forty-five which would make his year of birth 1839.[15] Further, like every householder across the country, William completed United States Census Forms every ten years; his age is given as forty in June 1880 and sixty in June 1900, where he records his birth as November 1839.[16] Perhaps not too much can be read into these 'rounded-off' ages; Elizabeth's is given as forty in the June 1880 census and she was born in 1838.

Keith's close friend, the much-travelled poet and advocate for the arts, Charles A. Keeler (1871–1937), gives 1839 as his year of birth in a eulogistic essay published in 1897 – Keith collaborated in the production of the essay by providing illustrations made especially for it.[17] Since the essay describes the artist's personal appearance in detail and criticises his art as only a close friend can, Keith must have endorsed the description of himself, the criticism of his art and the accuracy of what Keeler was writing including the year of his birth.[18] Emily Hay also gives 1839 as the year of his birth.[19] As well as being one of Keith's students, 'Sissie' was also Mrs Keith's cousin, so very much a close family member who knew Keith intimately. In 1907, Keith completed a Biographical Card Index for the California State Library and gave his full date of birth as 21 November 1839. He gave his father's name as William Keith and, intriguingly, recorded Aberdeen, Scotland,

as his place of birth.[20] Why he should do this remains obscure. Perhaps he felt the name would be more familiar to the library administrator is one simple explanation. But another possibility is that it is true; that he was born in Aberdeen. There are references to William living with his grandparents, the Bruces, in Aberdeen in the early part of his life although it is clear that they did not live there.[21]

If William was born out of wedlock, his mother may have removed herself from the strict and censorious gaze of her Presbyterian church elder father, James Bruce, and the wagging tongues of Oldmeldrum's townspeople and borne the child in the relative anonymity of the city, returning some months or even two or three years later when attention had transferred to some other, more immediate, concern and the presence of the infant could more easily be explained away. Elisabeth's brother John and his wife Jane Johnstone ran a bakery business in George Street, Aberdeen, and if she had been ostracised by stern, Presbyterian parents, she may have gone to stay with them to have the baby. Such actions were common, as indeed was the prevalence of illegitimacy; especially high rates existed among the north-east's agricultural community with its semi-itinerant farm servants moving from one six-month fee to another and leaving behind some poor domestic servant with a permanent reminder of their passing. What militates against Elisabeth seeking her brother's help is that he seems to have been even stricter than their father when it came to matters of morality. 'Johnnie Bruce was always a fickle, troublesome "knatterie bodie", with his father's temper [but] without his father's grace. [He] did ane harm, speaking to ane slightingly of sins of the flesh as of all sins the most venal being instinctively implanted … the idea was horrible.'[22] Brother John would appear to be the last person to turn to for help when seeking to bring an illegitimate child into the world. John's son, George Taylor Bruce, living in retirement in Canada and William's cousin was aware of the discrepancy between the two conflicting dates but he did not voice an opinion as to which he considered was the right one or offer an explanation as to how it may have arisen.[23] *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (not to be confused with *American National Biography* which has no listing for Keith) states that he was born in 1839 but this was compiled from unattributed sources and its accuracy cannot be relied upon.[24]

Keith seemed unable to provide his age with any conviction, as if he was wrestling to maintain a fiction that his conscience told him was false. Throughout his life he suffered from bouts of existential angst and sought

solace in religious doctrine and the study of spiritualism, while working tirelessly as if to assuage a guilt he felt in the secrecy surrounding his legitimacy. The inconsistencies continued as Keith approached the end of his life. In September 1906, incensed by newspaper reports that he was partially paralysed and no longer able to work following an accident, he railed at the press for saying he was seventy when he was sixty-seven.[25] A photograph appeared in the press on 29 April 1910 captioned 'William Keith, artist – A photograph taken in 1870 when Mr K was 31 years old.' It does not specify when the photograph was taken, his birthday seems an obvious occasion; if it was taken on his birthday or later, it suggests he was born in 1839; if before, 1838.[26] The US Census for 1910 took place that month and his age last birthday is shown as seventy-one which would mean he was born in 1838.[27] Keith was not a well man by this time so he may not have been the person who supplied the information. Later that year he celebrated what would be his last birthday. On 24 November 1910, from his home in Berkeley, he penned a short note to his friend Charles Green:

> Dear Charlie, I thank you for those beautiful segars [sic]. You're too good to me, how did you remember that my birthday was on 21st – *I am 72 now* [emphasis added]. I am getting better and will soon be at work again. I am getting stronger and [the health resort at] Paso Robles did me good. Thanking you again and again and with love to you and Mrs Green, I am ever yours, W. Keith.[28]

This, his last recorded words on the year of his birth, places it in 1838.

If the tailor William Keith was not William's biological father, the most likely candidate is James Daniels, one-time farm servant, who had absented himself to the United States of America, and the man Elisabeth is said to have married after following him there. The issue of William's paternity, and the possibility that he was born out of wedlock may have been the catalyst for him concocting an alternative narrative to explain his origins. While it would be wrong to describe him as a fabulist, at some point he started to circulate a creation myth about himself that was an obvious departure from the known facts. Being a new arrival in a new country would be the appropriate time and place to start with a new identity. Simply put, the story, which gained widespread currency during Keith's lifetime, and survives to the present, was that he was of noble birth, that his favourite uncle James, who farmed at Cowie of Fetteresso in the

shadow of the Keith family's stronghold of Dunnottar Castle had inherited the farm from the noble Keith relatives.[29]

Keith's uncle John, not James, farmed at Cowie of Fetteresso and he left that farm and moved to Logie north of Stonehaven some time before 1851, not a move one would expect from someone sitting on inherited land. Likewise, Keith's aged relative, William Alexander, who was a tenant crofter, was supposed to have inherited the land he farmed at House of Barra, near Oldmeldrum, which was not, and never had been, the property of the Keith family. Many who bore the name of Keith had distinguished themselves down the centuries and William seems to have been well versed in the history of his illustrious clansmen and read with interest any book with a bearing on the subject. He tried to align himself with these powerful and successful men and claim direct decent. He sometimes referred to James Francis Edward Keith, ninth Earl Marischal of Scotland, as an ancestor. Born in 1696 at Inverugie Castle, near Peterhead to the north of Aberdeen (his father's name was William Keith), this ardent Jacobite supporter fled the country after the failed 1715 Rebellion and saw military service in Spain, Russia and most notably with distinction under Frederick the Great of Prussia. He was killed, aged sixty-two, at the Battle of Hochkirch, in Saxony. He never married.[30]

Keith's widow, Mary, on being asked by Brother Cornelius about his claim of noble birth, replied, 'I did receive the impression that Mr Keith claimed descent from those Earl Marischal Keiths; but perhaps it is better to make a name for oneself than to rely on the name of one's ancestors … I have already referred to this; so, he must have been told something by his relatives'.[31] Long-time family friend, Miss Caroline LeConte, told Brother Cornelius that Keith referred to his noble ancestry several times. 'I am a cadet of that family [the Marischal Keiths] and my uncle inherited money from a Keith estate.' Another time he remarked briefly, 'I am of an old noble descent.' Once, while speaking of their mutual acquaintance, Mrs Phoebe Apperson Hearst, who had married into the newspaper dynasty and who was considered the most powerful woman in California, Keith said, referring to the haughty way that formidable woman carried herself, 'Mrs Phoebe Hearst has the *bel air* – but I'm really of noble descent though I have not the *bel air*'.[32] Even as Keith's fame grew and he had established a name for himself he persisted in expressing a belief in his noble ancestry as if reluctant to give up the fantasy. While it seems he had convinced himself of its authenticity and believed the story, as did some of his relatives,

others were more sceptical. On one occasion in the 1880s, Miss LeConte was standing with Keith looking at his painting of a medieval castle: 'that's the castle of my family, the castle of Dunnottar'. John Muir, his friend, and fellow Scot, who was present, chuckled, but Keith insisted that it was so, 'and he is not one to imagine such a thing'.[33] A pencil sketch, apparently in Keith's hand, either drawn from memory or from notes, depicts a recognisable likeness of the ruins of Dunnottar Castle atop its rocky headland.[34]

Brother Cornelius expended considerable time and effort in trying to confirm Keith's noble lineage. It is very likely that he had contacted Alexander Keith at *The Press and Journal* to see if, among anything else he might know about William Keith, he could provide confirmation that the artist was from an aristocratic branch of the family. A. K. wrote with some degree of pride about the exploits of Keith men who had found fame and fortune in a range of enterprises, as soldiers, statesmen, ambassadors, revolutionaries, writers, scientists, and some whose notoriety was based on less laudable achievements, such as the Keith who had been hanged in Australia for armed robbery. Among those he singled out for praise were the successive Earls Marischal of Scotland.[35] William, A. K. concludes, was not of this elite class. From his deep understanding of the genealogy of the various branches of the family, he did, however, offer a crumb of comfort. From his appearance he deemed William certainly a Keith:

> [A] pen-and-ink sketch that is before me stamps him as of the Keith family indubitably. His great shock of hair and trim pointed beard are doubtless part of his artistic expression but there is no mistaking the large Keith nose … he certainly bears a strong resemblance to several of the Old Deer Keiths of a generation now gone. There were Keiths in Methlick in the eighteenth century, who probably migrated from the Old Deer group.[36]

William's reinvention of himself may have satisfied a deep-seated need for a personal identity; he had not known the man whose name he bore, and if, as seems possible, James Daniels was his biological father, he had not known him in his formative years either. Transplanted to foreign shores at an early and vulnerable age, it is understandable that he would seek the protection of a powerful father figure, even an imagined one. That said, for the rest of his life, neither Keith nor his family appear to have done much to dispel the notion of his aristocratic origins and it continued to be part of the Keith narrative long after his death. The *San Francisco Call*, which

had enjoyed a close association with him for decades and knew him well, reported in an effusive obituary that he had been 'born in a feudal Scottish castle … a member of the Keith family that included Earl Marshall Keith, an aide to Frederick the Great of Prussia'.[37] Spread across the country by syndicated newspapers, this romantic version of his origins was perpetuated by a number of commentators. Variously, 'that he spent his early boyhood on the family estate at their feudal castle in the highlands'; that he 'first saw the light of day at an old castle in the highlands, still owned by the Keith family', that he 'came from a distinguished family'.[38] Only one of Keith's major biographers writes that his father was 'a humble draper'.[39] The possibility that Keith had aristocratic blood in his veins having been quashed, it was still difficult to dispel the notion that he was from a well-to-do background and had enjoyed a privileged upbringing; writers variously describing him as being born into 'a middle class merchant family', the son of a 'prosperous draper and cloth merchant' who was 'apparently in good circumstances'.[40]

Having sorted out her son's employment for the next two and a half years, Elisabeth set about finding him a place to stay. She found the ideal people to look after him, a couple who had emigrated from Scotland sometime after March 1851. It is very likely that they arrived in the United States of America about the same time as William and his family, indeed, it is possible they travelled on the same ship. William Taylor had been an agricultural labourer and his wife Annie French Taylor, had been a domestic servant for farmer John McArthur at Little Anochie, New Deer, Aberdeenshire, about fourteen miles to the north of Oldmeldrum.[41] Both were born in Tarves and were respectively twelve and ten years older than William. They shared his farming background and if they did not travel together, it is possible that some member of his family knew them before they left and enabled them to get in touch on their arrival in New York. In any event, they were clearly impressed with their young boarder for when their first son, Frank, was born in 1859 they gave him the middle name of Keith. A grandson of the Taylors, George Smith, of New York, also bore Keith as his middle name. Keith must have enjoyed his time living with the Taylors for he visited them some years later and gave them an oil painting of a pastoral scene as a token of his appreciation for their kindnesses. Smith inherited it from his grandparents.[42] William was happy while staying with the Taylors and working as an engraver's apprentice.

Keith's employer, William Roberts, moved his place of work several times in his early years of trading, but when William joined him, and for the duration of his apprenticeship, he was at number 86 Beekman Street. As business improved Roberts moved his private residence from his place of work, living for many years in Brooklyn.[43] William Roberts' (sometimes shown with the suffix '& Company') main line of activity was commercial art, producing illustrations for advertisements in trade directories and women's fashion magazines. Under Roberts' direction, William learned to work with meticulous attention to detail; to create, without flights of imagination, the accurate representation demanded by the company's customers among whom were Sutphen & Breed who owned a paper hanging emporium at 404, Brooklyn Avenue. They advertised in the Trade Directory section of the *Illustrated American Biography*, inviting 'the special attention of purchasers to their immense stock of elegant French and American paper hangings, decorations borders, etc'. Roberts produced exterior and interior illustrations of their imposing premises. *Godey's Lady's Book*, August 1853, carried two wood engravings by Roberts depicting the latest in lady's fashion; 'The Victoria' – 'a superb article of promenade costume' and a wood engraving after a painting by Lewis Towson Voight, 'La Duchesse' – 'a graceful garment for the season'.[44] This was the type of work that William engaged in; the attention to detail required to reproduce the intricate lacework and embroidery was to be reflected in his early years as an aspiring artist. The illustrations were aimed at a fashion-conscious audience living beyond the teeming tenements occupied by the poor of the overcrowded immigrant city. Exposure to the trappings of wealth and comfort seen in the woodcarving he was working with, indeed, mixing with the real thing in the shopping emporiums around him, must have spurred his ambition to outgrow his own poor upbringing.

William visited art exhibitions during his time off work, absorbing the paintings of great European artists, studying style and method and composition. He studied the works of an emergent group of American landscape artists who painted in the Catskill Mountains, the Adirondacks, the White Mountains and along the Hudson River, this latter giving the school its name. One artist from this school, Asher Brown Durand (1796–1886), whose paintings in the Catskills brought high prices, wrote a series of seven 'Letters on Landscape Painting' which appeared in *The Crayon*, a journal devoted to the graphic arts and the literature related to them which made its first appearance in January 1855. Keith read this magazine, the letters

appealing to him, untutored as he was in the finer points of art and without the means to pay for lessons. Durand wrote, 'You need not a period of pupillage in an artist's studio to learn to paint … let me earnestly recommend one studio which you may freely enter and receive the most sure and safe instruction … the studio of nature.'[45] Keith passed this advice on to his own students when he came to teach.[46] Durand believed an artist should paint direct from nature with as much realism as possible, a method Keith adopted in his early career before adopting a more subjective style of painting. One aspect of Durand's philosophy he never relinquished was a belief that nature was an ineffable manifestation of God.

On completion of his engraving apprenticeship in November 1858, William worked for several months at Harper Brothers, publishers of an array of titles, including catalogues and guidebooks and the famous *Harper's Weekly*, *Harper's Bazar* and *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, all of which required illustrations. Their New York office on Franklin Square had suffered a catastrophic fire on 10 December 1853, leaving the building in ruins. Almost immediately they started to rebuild on the same site between Pearl Street and Cliff Street, and in 1855 moved into new premises covering half an acre and standing five storeys high. There were two buildings, one facing the square, and the other facing an open courtyard to the rear. They were the epitome of modernity. 'It was determined that the entire structure should be fire-proof, strong, well-lighted and ventilated, and handsome.' The company boasted that 'no structure in this country, erected before or since, more fully meets all these conditions'.[47]

The health and safety of employees, customers and visitors alike was of paramount concern. All heavy goods entered the courtyard through an archway from Cliff Street so that the streets were not congested, and a steam elevator raised and lowered goods to the required storey. There were no stairs inside the main building. An isolated tower stood in the middle of the courtyard, enclosing a staircase by which people gained independent entry by an open walkway to the different levels of either building. 'There being no communication by stairway or otherwise between the different storeys, each floor is a distinct fire-proof apartment, and it is hardly possible that a fire happening in one of them could be communicated to another.'[48] The furnaces and boilers heated the buildings and as a further safety precaution a device in each room could fill it with steam. Visitors were not allowed into the workplace of the artists and engravers who were housed to the rear of the main building, with a separate entrance on Pearl

Street; 'not owing to any churlishness, or because there is any secret in the process; but because a concourse of visitors would seriously interfere with the work done there'.[49] Harper Brothers was a vast enterprise and Keith was one engraver among many. None of whatever woodcuts he produced has been identified as his. Yet, this was his working environment for a few short months in 1859 and despite the modern conditions the strong artificial light affected his eyes. It is not clear if he was already afflicted with short-sightedness but in trying to find a remedy, he fell into the clutches of a charlatan who injected a supposed remedy that nearly destroyed his sight. He wore strong glasses later in life to read and when not wearing them to paint his short-sightedness 'often resulted in a symphonic impression of gauzy earth, tree and sky'.[50]

Apart from work, visiting art galleries and absorbing the sights, sounds and smells of his new city, William had to find other interests to fill his waking hours. He was photographed, looking very youthful, in the distinctive uniform of bolero, vest, sash and skull cap of the Zouaves, but without the false moustache he had worn on another occasion to make himself look older, and this has given rise to the story that he joined the Union Army in order to fight in the American Civil War.[51]

As the war started in April 1861 men on both sides rushed to enlist before it was over and as this air of enthusiasm pervaded the city it was inhaled by William who 'was rarin' to go'.[52] Young men had 'only the vaguest and most romantic notions' of what war was like. 'Their vison was of bands, banners, massed formations marching in brilliant sunshine over open fields to glorious victories in which death, if it came, would be painless and honourable.'[53] The gaudy Zouave dress was among a 'motley variety of colours and types of uniform' adopted by volunteer units on both sides in the early years of the war before uniforms became regulated into the distinctive blue and grey of the opposing armies.[54]

According to Keith family lore, William enlisted because he was fired by evangelical zeal to free the slaves and so enlisted in the Fifty-first Volunteer Regiment of New York to help achieve that end. This regiment was an amalgamation of several existing militia groups, including a detachment of Empire Zouaves, but was not formed until 1861 and mustered into the Union Army between 27 July and 23 October, when a roll call was taken. They were enlisted for a three-year term.[55] The regiment did not leave the state until 29 October (or 31 October depending on the account). On hearing that William was already on board a departing troopship



Figure 4. Photograph of a teenage Keith in Zouave uniform from Brother Cornelius, *Keith: Old Master of California*, Vol. I (New York, 1942–56), 17.

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moving down New York Bay and bound for active service, William Bruce and another uncle, 'hired a tug, overtook the troopship and brought Keith back', much to the relief of his anxious relatives.[56] The notion that William was hauled off a departing transport because he was underage does not bear scrutiny. William Keith was not among the departing soldiers; he was not included in the muster rolls. He would have been twenty-two years old; some of the junior officers and non-commissioned officers in the regiment, as with most regiments in the army, were teenagers. William was not even in New York at this time; he was in California. William Keith is listed among the passengers bound for the east who left San Francisco on 1 May 1861 on board the SS *Golden Age* leaving that day for Panama.[57]

Another, more plausible, version of this story, is that the incident of his running away took place when he was still working unhappily in the lawyer's office. His anxious family could not trace him for many hours until they discovered he had signed on to a ship moored on the River Hudson. His uncle 'resolutely chartered a tug and in the darkness of night went out to reclaim him and return him to his worried mother'.[58] This was 'only accomplished upon presentation of proof that he was a minor acting without the consent of his guardian'. It would have been relatively easy for young William to go on board a ship; ferries and steamships sailed regularly from the quay at the foot of Barclay Street where Uncle William lived.[59] This episode seems to have been the catalyst for Elisabeth securing William his apprenticeship with Roberts.

The origin of William's Zouave uniform may lie with his Uncle William Bruce; acting, not in the role of some white knight rescuing his naive nephew from mortal danger but rather in the role of one who is preparing the youth for manhood. It is very likely that William was photographed in the uniform of the Barclay Guard, a quasi-military unit in which Uncle William was a captain, and for a brief period its commandant. The Barclay Guard, variously described as a company or corps, met in the autumn and winter months, wore military uniforms, paraded through the streets in full rig at an annual parade, and had as its primary purpose socialising with copious quantities of alcoholic drink. Judged purely on the basis of surnames, there appears to have been a strong contingent of expatriate Scots in it ranks. Uncle William was an astute businessman who combined business with pleasure. In his early days in New York he was involved in the liquor trade and by being a senior officer in the Barclay Guard he had a ready market for his products. The Barclay Guard was one

of many such organisations in New York, indeed, in any major American city. They conducted themselves along military lines, elected their own officers and office bearers, usually for a term of one year so that everybody had a turn, and appear to have shared masonic tendencies for ritual and benevolence towards members who needed support. They advertised their meetings under the heading of 'Military' in the *New York Herald*.[60] 'Barclay Guard: The active, honorary and exempt members of the Corp are required to assemble at No. 5 Barclay Street, Wednesday 20th inst., at 8 o'clock p. m. Punctual attendance is particularly required. The President.'[61] This entry indicates where the Guard took their name although they did not always meet there – some of their meetings took place on Bruce's premises. The various classes of membership suggest the voluntary nature of the organisation and a degree of tolerance towards those unable to pay subscription fees. Some of the announcements demonstrate a hope that members would show up rather than being expressed in brusque military-style orders while others are more robust in their language, some officers no doubt enjoying the status of command.

If there was any doubt about the primary nature of their activities, and the widespread notoriety they enjoyed for their indulgence, confirmation comes from a correspondent to *The Planters' Banner*, in Deep South Louisiana. In a whimsical piece he reflects on a recent visit he had made to the most northerly state of Maine where he had found it impossible to get a drink; 'You'll have heard of the "Maine Liquor law", I was down there, I was, and perhaps was as dusty in the glands as any one of the Barclay Guards was in all his life'.[62] Scarff's, another New York Corps, he suggests, was even more infamous for their capacity to consume liquor.

The Maine Liquor Law, prohibiting the sale of alcohol except for medicinal and industrial use, was passed by a temperance legislature on 2 June 1851. Several 'dry' states followed suit with varying degrees of success. The New York legislature passed a prohibition law in 1854 only for it to be vetoed by Governor Horatio Seymour. Following the election of a temperance governor it was reintroduced in early 1855 but largely policed without real vigour.[63] Very likely as a consequence of this, William Bruce, as Commandant, invited the members of the Barclay Guard to a special meeting on his premises at 208 Eighth Avenue on Friday Evening, 29 December 1854, 'to decide on the best manner to dispose of their surplus funds, and other business'.[64] William Bruce ceased his liquor trading about this time, no doubt having lost his core customers and suffering from the

effects of the new legislation. The Barclay Guards continued until at least late 1855 by which time Uncle William was no longer an active member.[65] It did not stop him from continuing to use the honorific military rank of Captain, a designation he seems to have maintained for the rest of his life.[66]

When, in February 1875, a Boston newspaper, the *Evening Transcript*, announced an upcoming artists' exhibition in the city's Studio Building Gallery it enthused about a number of painting to be displayed and pronounced '*The California Alps* … the best picture of California mountain scenery ever painted'.[67] There followed an effusive description of Keith's life and career including the intelligence that at the age of twenty he went to California but only stayed for two months before returning to New York and taking up employment with Harper Brothers where he remained two years before visiting Scotland. While in his home country he received an offer to return to the West Coast to work on the *California Magazine* but had spent all his money and went to London where he worked on the 'Art Supplement' of the *London News* in order to earn enough for the fare. When he reached California, he found the magazine 'numbered among the failures'. The *California Magazine* which Keith did freelance work on in 1859 was one of several commissions he carried out while eking out a precarious living until such time as work picked up.

Where the *Boston Evening Transcript* got this story is easy to discern. It had first seen the light of day in another Boston newspaper, the *Courier*, in December 1871.[68] Where that newspaper got its information is more difficult to establish but William Keith was living in Boston at that time having returned from a trip to Europe and was sharing a studio with the German-born American artist William Hahn (1829–87). Perhaps the source of the *Courier*'s story was none other than Keith himself. He was to return to the West Coast which he was to make his base for the rest of his life. There are several conflicting accounts of his life from the time he was an apprentice engraver to the time he settled in San Francisco. In later life Keith reportedly told the *San Francisco Chronicle* that he had worked for Harper Brothers 'for a long time'.[69] One biographer has suggested this was for eighteen months rather than two years and that he needed to terminate his apprenticeship with William Roberts a year early so that he could do so. There is no evidence that he did (he would not have been the first in the family if he had done). He took the agreement with him to San Francisco and used it to secure employment, not the actions of one who had quit the apprenticeship to which it referred.[70] Another suggestion is that Keith

had lost his job with Harper Brothers, which, with a sharp eye on costs, replaced the expensive process of hand engraving with the new, more efficient and cheaper methods of hand tone printing and photography.[71]

One story that persisted from this period is that Keith went to Scotland to collect an inheritance from his uncle 'Jamie' at Cowie of Fetteresso. If his uncle had left him a legacy, he is unlikely to get his name wrong. Uncle John had long since left Cowie for Logie and he and his wife were still there in 1861, albeit with ten fewer acres and three fewer farm servants. Their two youngest children, son Alexander, twenty-four, a student of medicine, and Isabella, aged twenty, both born when their mother was in her forties, were still living at home with their parents and in Alexander's case being supported through medical school.[72] They and their surviving siblings would be the eventual beneficiaries of any inheritance. None of William's uncles on his mother's side of the family died at this time; they would not become successful until several years later and had large families of their own to consider. The difficulties of crossing the United States of America and the ocean to receive a small legacy would render the whole enterprise costly and impracticable. And implausible. There was no need for such an undertaking with riches to be found among the gold fields of California.

CHAPTER THREE

Finding Treasures in El Dorado

Go West, young man.[1]

By all accounts William Keith sailed for California from New York on 9 May 1859 on the SS *Moses Taylor*, a 1,373 ton, two-masted, wooden-hulled paddle steamer operated by the United States Mail Steamship Company.[2] The ship had accommodation for six hundred passengers. From January 1858 until September 1859 when it was sold and transferred to the Pacific, it plied the route from New York to Aspinwall in Panama which was the east coast terminus of the Panama Railway then under construction by the United States to meet the demands of the tens of thousands of migrants seeking the shortest and quickest route to the California Gold Fields first discovered in 1849.[3] Along with the other passengers and mail from the *Moses Taylor*, Keith disembarked in Aspinwall, crossed the isthmus by rail and coach and transferred to the SS *Senora*, a larger vessel of similar construction, for the final leg of their journey up the coast to San Francisco. They set sail on 17 May, arriving at midnight on 1 June 1859 after having 'to contend with a furious gale and heavy sea from the northwest' for the last four days.[4] The vessel carried nearly a thousand souls including the crew, over three hundred and seventy named passengers and their dependents and '564 in the steerage'. Anonymous among this tightly packed throng was William Keith. The rough crossing logged by the captain suggests the voyage was not an experience that any on board would wish to repeat, especially those travelling in the overcrowded steerage.

Although the ostensible reason for Keith moving to California was that he had been engaged by a magazine which he found on arrival to have gone out of business, prospects of career development could not have been his only motivation for making such an arduous journey. Although there is no mention of him joining in the Gold Rush, he was a rarity if he did not; it is difficult to read of any artist who stayed to earn a living from his art who

had not first tried his hand at prospecting, falling back on his art when his efforts to find gold had failed. His family had moved west before him, possibly as early as 1856 after his mother had secured him his engraving apprenticeship with William Roberts and seen him safely boarded with a trusted couple from their homeland. There is no mention of Keith visiting any member of his family in California at this time but would he, could he, have come so far and been so close and not looked them up? His sister Anna had married Isaac Bartlett Otis on 8 March 1858 in Marysville, Yuba County, California where they both lived at the time. Isaac's father was a farmer; his mother had the charming forename of Wealthy.[5] By 1860 twenty-two-year-old Anna and her twenty-five-year-old husband had joined the Gold Rush and were living at Dwelling Number 96 in Rough and Ready Township, Nevada County, California, where Isaac worked as a miner. They had a four-month-old daughter, Eliza Otis, but she seems to have died in infancy as there is no further mention of her.[6] Staying at the same address were forty-two-year-old James Daniels, also working as a miner, and his forty-six-year-old wife, 'Eliza' Daniels, the mother of William Keith. If he wanted to catch up with his family, this would seem to be the logical place for him to do so.

The township of Rough and Ready, about 140 miles north-east of San Francisco, was established in the autumn of 1849 and was a typical mining community peopled by 'a volatile assemblage of transients, nearly all of them men, hailing from diverse cultures, [who] were fixated on "making their pile" and returning home'.[7]

The dearth of women was in one respect easily remedied as revealed by Scotsman John David Borthwick who describes an evening in San Andreas, Calaveras County, in which the men of this all-male settlement held a ball, although not one woman was present. For several hours, as depicted in his lithograph, *A Ball in the Mines*, heavy-booted miners danced to the music of fiddle and flute, the energetic Lancers being a particular favourite.[8] The absence of female partners:

> [W]as overcome by a simple arrangement whereby it was understood that every gentleman who had a patch on his inexpressibles should be considered a lady for the time being. These patches were rather fashionable, and were usually large squares of canvas, showing brightly on a dark ground, so that the 'ladies' of the party were as conspicuous as if they had been surrounded by the usual quantity of white muslin.[9]



Figure 5. *A Ball in the Mines.* John David Borthwick, *Three Years in California: with eight illustrations by the author* (Edinburgh, 1857), 320.

Courtesy of Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. https://collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/15498744

Miners lived on a poor diet, in harsh conditions, where stabbings and even murders were frequent. Vigilante groups kept law and order with harsh and often arbitrary punishment meted out to miscreants. Leisure time was spent sitting around campfires, listening to music, smoking and drinking, usually to excess, and engaging in impromptu entertainment. On Sundays, their one day of rest, they 'occupied themselves with gambling, horse racing, betting on horse racing and cockfights, brawling, and drunken dissipation'.[10] However, gentler, more civilised pursuits could be discerned because they also busied themselves 'with washing clothes, writing letters, and bible study, reflecting the varied character and needs of the men'.[11] When Keith's mother and sister arrived in Rough and Ready Township their presence would have been welcomed as a civilising influence and they would have been valued for their skills as seamstresses and the household tasks they carried out.[12] They were among the 364 women of whom all but six were white, numbered among the township's population of 1,719 in 1860.[13]

The Township Directory for the Year commencing 1 January 1867 contains the name of James Daniels but no further information and his name

slips from the record books.[14] His wife, Elisabeth, mother of William Keith, died on 10 August 1868, aged fifty-five, at French Corral, San Francisco.[15] She had had a hard life. Her daughter Margaret, her oldest child, of whom little is known, had predeceased her in Rose Bar Township, Yuba County, on 18 May 1867. She died in her mid-thirties, only just outliving her father.

Keith's youngest sister, Elisabeth – variously answering to Lizzie, Eliza or Betsy – may have been late arriving in California, or at least in Rough and Ready Township. In 1860, her future husband, Orange Chester Hyatt, who hailed originally from Illinois of New Hampshire parents, was sharing a boarding house with several people working in various occupations related to mining, including his father Jacob, fifty-four, a toll road operator. Orange himself was working as a teamster.[16] Elisabeth and Orange married in, or around, 1870, for that year 'Lizzie Hyatt', as her name appears in the census is recorded as 'at home', living with Orange's parents and he, like his father, was by now a toll road keeper.[17] The Township Directory for the Year commencing 1 January 1867 lists both men as toll collectors at Pet Hill, a busy junction some eight miles out of town.[18]

In 1853 the State of California had passed the Turnpike Act which provides for private ownership of toll roads, toll houses and toll bridges to be kept in a good state of repair so they would be accessible and allow the safe and ready passage of goods and people. Owners entered into a legally binding agreement with the State allowing them to collect fees on which they had to pay taxes.[19] Several joint stock companies were set up to take advantage of what seemed a potentially lucrative business venture. In the spring of 1859, father and son were among the signatories on a number of advertisements that appeared in newspapers inviting investors to join their company.[20]

Whatever success they made of their time in Rough and Ready Township, Orange became a self-employed, home-owning contractor and by the end of the century was living with Lizzie – who had been naturalised in 1882 – at 1117 Willow Street, Oakland City. Intriguingly, her year of birth is given as 1843, and her year of immigration as 1850.[21] In 1910, and for the first time ever, and after they had been married for forty years, Lizzie declared that she had had one child born but none living. She gave the year of her immigration as 1852.[22] Orange died in 1915, at Oakland, California. By 1920, eighty-two-year-old Lizzie was living in retirement in the Saratoga Township Odd Fellows Home of California where she died in 1924.[23]

The township of Rough and Ready was central to the Keith family establishing itself in California but William appears to have expunged it from his memory, or at the very least from his conversation. None of his early biographers, all close family friends, refer to it and there is no evidence from the engravings he produced for publications, his sketches, or paintings, that he visited the gold fields. The strained relationship he had with his mother and the presence of a 'not-too-tender stepfather' suggest that he did not go there, or if he did, the memories were too painful to wish to recall. The San Francisco art world that he entered was in its infancy, but growing apace, and peopled by a *dramatis personae* from variegated backgrounds, many of whom had endured more than one misfortune in their efforts to establish themselves in the city. Almost without exception the early artists to arrive in San Francisco had not come to further their artistic career but had been swept up in the rush for gold, only returning to their creative talents as a last resort when disillusionment set in. Many had found that 'mining was a lottery and a hardship from which they soon turned in disgust, the few artists who had the courage to remain and practice'.[24] Even among these, 'some had little or no formal instruction and their work was, at best, simple and direct'. Many lacked patronage and returned to whence they came after a brief sojourn.[25]

One artist who did remain claims to have set up the first studio in San Francisco. He was English-born William Redmond Ryan (1823–55), who, bored with his job as a newspaper reporter in New York City, volunteered to serve in the Mexican War in California but arrived when the war was over. Ryan found time to keep a detailed journal, and his experiences encapsulate the embryonic nature of art in California and the ingenuity, and luck, required to overcome difficulties. Mustered out in Monterey in 1848 he mined unsuccessfully in the Stanislaus River area where he made sketches of mining life. He went to San Francisco where he eked out a living painting houses and the interior of the SS *California*. He shared cheap dormitory accommodation with about twenty others in a room devoid of furniture and with some of the planks in walls and roof either ill-fitting or missing. He had pencils but few colours so hired a boat and rowed between ships in the harbour where he obtained small lots of the necessary pigments and two or three makeshift brushes of poor quality. He paid twenty-eight dollars for a meagre haul he figured would have cost three dollars in New York.[26]

Ryan hung a sign in front of the tavern and attracted customers who commissioned portraits of themselves to send home, or pictures of mining life or scenes of the bustling seaport. He earned an ounce of gold a day, as much as a miner's twelve-hour shift, despite the difficulties of working with his sea chest serving as his easel in a cramped corner of the crowded dormitory. He did well enough to take on a partner who helped with commissions but their association came to an abrupt end when Ryan discovered his partner to be 'a gamester, and habitually addicted to inebriety … one of those convivial, specious, smooth-tongued individuals, who easily procure friends by their insinuating manners, and lose them as fast by their unsteadiness, or want of principle'.[27]

Finding a new partner was difficult; the best painters were in the mines and those that were left refused to work for less than twenty-five dollars a day, roughly what Ryan was earning. With luck, he met an artist acquaintance from his time in Monterey and together they bought the framework of a tent and employed a sailmaker to construct a canvas dwelling which they erected on a plot of land near the beach. 'A neat sign, with the name of the firm prominently displayed, was finally suspended outside; and [they] soon got a thriving and lucrative business.' This, according to Ryan, 'was the first painter's establishment of its kind that had as yet been set up in California – at least in San Francisco'.[28] They were there a matter of weeks but the damp marshy ground plagued Ryan's health and although they moved to a more expensive site in a drier part of town, and eventually into a cottage, he continued to suffer from 'the wretched peculiarities of the climate of San Francisco' which forced him to return to the east where he died aged twenty-seven of yellow fever.[29]

Everybody who rushed to California, whether they were artists, philosophers, scientists or litterateurs, were driven by the same infection of gold fever. In the early days, society, as such, did not exist; there were no libraries, no culture, what few paintings there were had arrived many decades earlier from Mexico and Spain via the Catholic Mission Churches. These seventeenth- and eighteenth-century works by European artists, some of high quality, portrayed religious and biblical scenes. Artists who were at the gold fields drew 'hasty sketches of men and scenery to illustrate their notes', but there was no local demand among collectors for the product of the artist's pencil or the engraver's burin.[30] However, J. D. Borthwick made a decent living by this means, travelling around the mining camps in the early 1850s and finding work easy to come by, as 'every man wanted

a sketch of his claim, or his cabin, or some spot with which he identified himself; and as they all offered to pay very handsomely, I was satisfied that I could make paper and pencil much more profitable tools to work with than pick and shovel'.[31] Not all artists who joined in the mad rush to El Dorado shared Borthwick's artistic skills, his business acumen or good fortune. Among them were characters with large personalities, including some out-and-out charlatans, but others were hugely gifted across a varied range of skills and accomplishments.

One of the earliest markets for artwork was the gambling houses and saloons. They were among the largest and most elegant buildings in San Francisco, providing employment for many and making a dramatic impression on the new arrivals who continued to stream into the city. One of the most famous was El Dorado, which occupied a prime location right next to City Hall on the east side of Portsmouth Plaza. Such gaming halls were lavishly furnished and, in their smoke-filled rooms, with orchestras providing high quality musical accompaniment, men in stove-pipe hats and broadcloth rubbed shoulders with sailors and miners and took on the professional gamblers at faro or monte. Fortunes could be lost on the turn of a card and with a shrug of the shoulders. The gaming halls never closed. Their walls were invariably decorated with large images of female nudes. The rougher the camp, and the further from urban civilisation, the rougher and more obscene the pictures. Only later, with the construction of large hotels such as the Union in San Francisco, were these superseded by the arrival of classical works of European origin.[32] Large landscapes of California painted by local artists would take the place of these foreign imports as sentiments and art appreciation changed, but they would have to wait their turn.

For the few early collectors, art did exist in California before the beginning of the Gold Rush; sculptures cast in bronze or carved from marble, and often copies of classical works such as the Venus de Milo, rubbed shoulders with life-size models of long dead popes. Many paintings by Dutch, German, Flemish and Florentine artists were imported from Europe, often depicting heroes from Classical Greek mythology or religious themes inspired by notable events from the Bible. Such paintings hung on the walls of the Spanish missions.[33] Work by nineteenth-century American artists was considered inferior to what was produced in Europe – with Paris as the epicentre. Furthermore, the artists on the Pacific Coast were considered inferior to their American counterparts on the eastern

seaboard. Accessibility to, and availability of, better quality art changed in the winter of 1850, when Samuel J. Gower, Austrian immigrant and auctioneer with a salesroom on Montgomery Street at the heart of the banking and commercial district, exhibited for sale 'the first collection of paintings ever brought to the State, comprising thirty or forty old European pictures of merit'.[34] Gower had been selling dry goods, foodstuffs, household utensils and the hardware needed by miners, but the business was liquidated on 1 April 1851 when he joined Thomas Poulterer, to continue trading under their joint names and from the same address.[35] Gower's foray into the art world must have been costly and very likely his failure to turn a profit contributed to his need to seek a partner. Worse was to follow: the best of the paintings were lost in a catastrophic fire that swept San Francisco just five weeks later, destroying much of the city and claiming around three thousand lives, a number of them looters who were shot by soldiers during the civil unrest that followed. Among those to comment on the tragedy was Benjamin Parke Avery, who, like many of the other pioneers in the art community had arrived in California to seek his fortune in the gold fields. Born in New York, he had worked there for a time as a banknote engraver before moving west where, as one of the original '49ers', he had enjoyed some modest success near Deer Creek to the north of Sacramento but had become disillusioned with his fellow miners who did not share the 'smooth faced "Yorker's"' taste for art and music. That, plus misfortune, and recurring bouts of dysentery made him give up prospecting.[36] Avery, while acknowledging there were works of real distinction among those lost, deplored the importation of European paintings and sculptures, and his laconic response to the fire was that 'many inferior pictures were sent here about the same time, but fortunately perished in the flames that twice consumed the city'.[37] So, the first effort to create a commercial art gallery was short-lived.

One man who thought he would have more success as an art dealer was Joseph Charles Duncan, mining engineer, banker, art connoisseur and father of the dancer Isadora Duncan, who owned an auction house called Duncan's Chinese Salesrooms also on Montgomery Street. Born in Philadelphia, Duncan had come to San Francisco in 1850 to seek his fortune. He had been editor of a magazine in Illinois and then the *New Orleans Crescent* in 1848 and looked to make his money in the printing trade. He was among many entrepreneurs who lost his fortune in the fire of 1851 when his press was destroyed, causing him to explore other business

opportunities including that of real estate. He was characterised as being 'one of the earliest to introduce and encourage Art in a liberal and critical spirit'.[38] As a collector, Duncan acquired many quality paintings and at one time 'owned the largest private collection in the city'.[39]

In 1853 he travelled to Europe where he bought about four hundred paintings including some by the great artists. During the trip he devised a marketing scheme of sheer, if ethically questionable, brilliance. He seized on an existing idea; the First California Art Union had been formed in 1850 by an Act of the State Legislature authorising the Trustees of the Union to 'save and distribute Art'. Duncan took this original idea a stage further. His gallery on Montgomery Street was perfectly situated for paintings to be viewed by the wealthy patrons of San Francisco, and the scheme involved forming the Second Art Union which issued $85,000 in shares of one dollar each, all bearing Duncan's signature. The property of the Union was to be the collection of paintings he had purchased in Europe, which he transferred to the shareholders. Once the paintings were on display the sale of shares began and:

> in a scheme perfectly suited to the reckless, gambling, go-ahead spirit of the gold rush, Californians purchased 100,000 tickets (shares or notes) which, in mid-November were drawn from a wheel of fortune at the Metropolitan Theatre. Over the course of two days, in a great spectacle that provided entertainment and promoted culture, 6,000 superb articles were distributed to the crush of excited Californians who jammed the theatre.[40]

While it looked like a sure-fire money-spinner, many of the paintings sold at a great loss; 'a Verbœckhoven that cost $500 brought only $68'.[41]

Fuelled by the wealth created from the gold fields, San Francisco was expanding rapidly. Civic buildings were being built to reflect the city's importance. The St. Francis Hotel started life in 1849 as an assembly of twelve small prefabricated timber-framed houses stacked atop each other before the arrival of bricks and plaster converted it into an imposing edifice.[42] The Montgomery Block was designed in Renaissance Revival style by New York-born architect and Argonaut[43], Gordon Cummings, and was the most impressive building in the West for many years after its construction in 1853.[44] Institutions were being founded and enlarged. The Mercantile Library Association was founded on 24 January 1853 to spread 'the civilising influence of the printed word'. Located on the second floor

of the California Exchange, it opened its doors on 1 March and featured a 1,500-volume library, as well as a reading room with current newspapers and periodicals.[45] The stately mansions of an ever-increasing number of very rich men were being constructed and needed to be filled with the accoutrements of wealth. Many of the men were from very humble origins and often lacking good taste they adorned the walls of their grand mansions 'with miserable daubs'.[46] As the number of mansions increased so too their trappings began to reflect an increasing refinement of taste on the part of their owners. Patrons also turned more and more to seeking works by local artists.

One such patron was Andrew Jackson Grayson (1819–69), a St. Louis merchant who had answered the call of 'Manifest Destiny' and moved westwards in 1846 with his wife and infant son. Wealthy after four years in California, Grayson commissioned William S. Jewett to commemorate the family's arrival in El Dorado. Jewett, a talented New York artist and member of the National Academy of Design, arrived in San Francisco in December 1849 and wasted no time in seeking commissions for his portrait painting while pursuing a side-line dealing in real estate. Between the two, he amassed a considerable fortune. He was popular among the city's elite for the high quality of his work. 'I am jolly among them as a clam at high water. I charge from a hundred and fifty to eight hundred dollars – [I] shall paint two or three per week if they come fast enough.'[47] Grayson's commission secured Jewett's reputation as an artist and shifted the focus of art appreciation in California from portrait painting to landscape painting: the work, completed in 1850, combined the best aspects of both genres. In *The Promised Land – The Grayson Family*, an oil on canvas measuring 50¾ inches × 64 inches, they are seen pausing at the point in the Sierra Nevada Mountains from which they catch their first glimpse of El Dorado. Grayson, wearing a fringed buckskin suit over a formal shirt, and shoes better suited to the ballroom, leans on his long-barrelled rifle and gazes across the landscape. A dead deer lies in the background, attesting to his ability to provide for his family.[48] His fashionably dressed wife sits holding their healthy, and equally well dressed, young son. They have fared well; they show no signs of the rigours of an overland journey of many hundreds of miles. The beauty and grandeur of the landscape did not go unnoticed; Benjamin Avery was among those who saw the picture and foresaw the significance of the 'panorama of natural charms destined to inspire poets, to glow on the canvas of painters, and to take on the magic

of human association and tradition … beauty awaits the poet who shall praise and the limner who shall copy her manifold fascinations'.[49]

Perhaps the first artist to create very good paintings of California life, including images of the Gold Rush in those early years, was Charles Nahl (1818–78).[50] He produced, among other, *Miners in the Sierras* (1851–2) and *Surveyor's Camp of 1853* (1858).[51] Born in Germany into a long line of artists and sculptors, Nahl had enjoyed success in Paris where he changed his name from Carl before moving with his divorced mother and her children to New York. On hearing of the Gold Rush, Charles moved to Rough and Ready Township where he was deceived into buying a worthless mine after being shown a 'salted' ore sample. Disillusioned and out of luck he moved with his brother Arthur to Sacramento where they opened a studio and then to San Francisco following a fire that destroyed nearly 85 per cent of Sacramento during the night of 4 November 1852.[52] Avery considered him the 'most versatile of artists who have resided here, being at home in all artistic genres'.[53] He was doing very well for himself, a 'large panorama of *An Emigrant Wagon on the Desert*, with the cattle dying of thirst, [was] in some liquor or billiard saloon in Sacramento', an early example of a public house adorning a wall with a work depicting a local scene, one that carried a salutary lesson, drawn from the American landscape and painted by a resident artist.[54]

Of all the pioneer artists, Charles Nahl was the one most able to produce large figurative compositions that appealed to art critics, miners and saloon keepers alike. He had started, like Borthwick, as a portraitist in the gold fields – in his case while recovering from malaria – charging twelve dollars a head, and was soon requested to paint rich attorneys, bankers and merchants.[55]

> Nahl's style reflected his German academic training of the 1830s with a highly 'finished' portrayal of figures in postures often exaggerated to the point of caricature – against a background often sentimentalised by the use of pastel blues and pinks … Despite the artificiality of his style, he had great artistic ability and his influence was pervasive in San Francisco during the 1860s.[56]

However, even an elite patronage was no guarantee of unqualified success when it came to facing the judges at a fair.

The Mechanics' Institute at the corner of Geary and Stockton held its first fair in 1857. Fairs customarily started with a fireworks display and 'were

enormously popular with Californians, who could spend days wandering the long aisles jammed with a display of mechanical, agricultural, and domestic industry, examining a model of a windmill, a plan for a quartz mill, a white silk embroidered vest'.[57] Professional artists were major contributors to the display of works in oil, pencil, India ink and watercolour, but their paintings and drawings were hung with little care.[58] Avery was dismissive of the overall quality of the work on display, 'Half a dozen good pictures from abroad and a few rude attempts at sculpture', he sniffed.[59] Charles Nahl submitted one painting without being awarded a prize, but one of California's first professional women artists, Mrs A. (Annie?) T. Oakes received a diploma in the same class for her six works in oil. The quality of her work can be gauged by the closing remarks of the judges who were perhaps no more impressed than Avery; 'they are rather cool, but their perspective and general effect are fine'. Mrs Oakes did not stay long in California before returning to her native New York in the mid-1860s where she continued to exhibit her paintings.[60] There was a dearth of landscapes on display, a fact acknowledged by the judges who put this down to San Francisco still being in its infancy; 'only with the introduction of wealth-creating improvements … will the talents of artists in this class be duly encouraged … it only awaits the cultivating hand of taste and wealth to foster its growth'.[61] Two years later the *Daily Alta California* repeated the same message:

> California is too young yet to have given birth to any artists; she is almost too young to patronise those who have come hither from abroad. So long as a country is engaged in providing itself with the first necessaries of life, building its homes, fencing its fields, it can scarcely be expected to spend much for the fine arts.[62]

These were the views of the polymath John Shertzer Hittell, from Jonestown, Pennsylvania, who, needing to spend time in the outdoors for the sake of his health, had travelled to California with a group of prospectors and spent the winter of 1849 and 1850 at Reading's Diggings in Shasta County. With no luck in the mines, or perhaps because of ill-health – he suffered from dyspepsia – he moved to San Francisco in 1853 and joined the editorial staff of the *Alta California* newspaper, where he worked for the next twenty-five years. He was also among the regular contributors to *Hutchings' California Magazine* and wrote on a diverse range of topics including the wines of California, the state's topography and the wonders

of phrenology. He was also the first to write on 'Art in San Francisco' in an article for the July 1863 edition of *The Pacific Monthly*, a magazine 'devoted to the arts, science, literature and life of the Pacific Coast.'[63] Therein, he bemoaned the lack of authentic paintings showing scenes unique to the state, despite the diversity of material available to the artist. 'There is no picture of a California rancho, none of the remarkable trees' such as the white oak, the redwood, the buckeye; 'none of them has been accurately represented'.[64] Turning to the people, he notes 'the prospector, the Indian, the Spanish ranchero, the Chinaman', and the mass of immigrants of every nationality, all crying out to be accurately represented in drawing, painting, sculpture and engraving. The mathematician and engineer in Hittell looked for precision in a painting. He had a poor opinion of those who chose to paint in any other way.

The number of artists active in the state was very small and images of the country's natural wonders were rare. Among those who were painting Californian life in this period was the New York-born Albertus Del Orient Browere who had rushed west to seek his fortune in the gold fields. He painted *Gold Prospectors* (1854–8), but Norton Bush (1834–94) from Rochester, New York, is considered to be the first professional landscape painter in California.[65] He was working part-time when his painting of a view of Diablo Valley impressed collectors and critics alike. It made Bush's reputation when it was bought by Willard Brigham Farewell, President of the Society of California Pioneers and enabled him to open his own studio in the Mercantile Library Building in the late 1860s.[66]

Not all artists prospered as much as they might have done, some because of their temperament and attitude to work, others because their style was not appreciated by patrons. Virgil M. Williams (1830–86), a landscapist and portraitist, a son-in-law of New York painter William Page (1811–85), arrived in 1859 from Rome, where he had 'occupied a very respectable position among the artists'. While acknowledging his undoubted talent, Hittell considered Williams 'very lazy unless driven by orders', and unless these were forthcoming, he did 'little in anticipation of them'.[67] He returned to his native Massachusetts. Enoch Wood Perry (1831–1915), another American artist who had done well in Rome, was an acquired taste and only for the connoisseur.[68] Thomas Hill (1829–1908) had a style 'suited to only a limited class of subjects which, however, are of a kind that frequently occur in the scenery of the plains and foothills of California'.[69] Hill moved to Europe and then to Boston.

Frederick A. Butman (1820–71), a specialist in landscapes of the Hudson River School, enjoyed more patronage than any other painter in California; his large works, viewed from distance and rendered in bright colour, featured mountain ranges in the Yosemite Valley, Mount Shasta and around Lake Bigler (now Tahoe). He aimed for the commercial market, to a buying public who were insufficiently knowledgeable to distinguish good art from bad; 'some of his late pictures are full of gaudy colours, and look as if they had been painted to sell; they have not the finish or the fidelity to nature which alone can gain the approval of the judges'.[70] His paintings were well represented on the walls of saloons where they served as a backdrop to the main pursuit of drinking and carousing and where paying close attention to the artistic merit of wall coverings was not at the forefront of viewers' minds.[71]

Few women artists were at work in San Francisco at this time but a Miss (Cornelia?) Swain had 'few superiors' in crayon drawings that were so accurate that photographs taken of them would pass as being from life.[72] Mrs Marianne Mathieu exhibited some watercolours of wildflowers 'of very high merit'.[73] If William Keith was to make a success of himself as an artist these are among the painters, some already established, many having been taught at prestigious schools in Europe, he would have to compete against, and if he was going to have any enduring commercial success his work would have to satisfy the critics as well as collectors. Competition to find a place in the market was fierce. A Mlle Petitin, a French historical painter 'of much ability and thorough artistic education' spent six months in California in 1862 but could find no buyers for her work and returned to France. Mr David D. Neal produced 'some very good' pictures in India ink but left to study in Munich. Some, like Edinburgh-born Alexander Edouart, 'formerly a portrait and landscape painter', turned to photography.[74]

To succeed, Keith would have to learn to paint and to do that he had to earn a living doing what he knew best, and to earn a living he had to compete against those artists who were also engravers, some of whom excelled in this medium. The versatile Charles Nahl, as well as being an artist, was an 'engraver on steel, copper, wood and stone. He discovered a valuable method of making negatives by hand, but he [kept] it a secret'.[75] Among the earliest pioneers to make a living as a wood engraver and illustrator was an individual named Hyatt who did some cuts in 1849 but died in 1855, and Harrison Eastman (1827–86), a native of New Hampshire, who arrived in

San Francisco on 16 September that year.[76] After a short stint as a clerk at the San Francisco Post Office, Eastman found full-time employment as an engraver, designing advertisements for several of San Francisco's fledging newspapers and producing watercolours of local landmarks such as the St. Francis Hotel on the corner of Grant Street.[77] Among the publications that Eastman contributed to was *Hutchings' California Magazine*, a monthly whose proprietor, English-born Forty-Niner James M. Hutchings, had struggled in the gold mines for a number of years until around 1853 when he wrote and published *The Miners' Ten Commandments*, 'an immensely popular pictorial newsletter that began, "Thou shalt have no other claim than one" '.[78] Eastman provided the artwork. The sheet sold nearly one hundred thousand copies in its first year and enabled Hutchings to found the magazine in 1856, the third literary journal established in San Francisco. In 1859 and 1860 Eastman was in partnership with another American artist, Pascal Loomis (1828–78) as 'designers and engravers in wood' at 151 Clay Street, above the offices of *The Golden Era*, a weekly literary newspaper founded in 1852. Although considered one of the very best engravers, Loomis abandoned the business for minstrelsy.[79]

An increasing number of daily newspapers and periodicals provided employment for artists many of whose work went unrecognised because it was unsigned. Several contributed to Hutchings' magazine; Nahl provided a series of engravings showing the hardships of prospecting and the death of a miner in a snowstorm to accompany a story called 'Winter in the Sierras of California', a topic he knew well from first-hand experience as a miner in Rough and Ready Township.[80] William Keith succeeded in having his first illustration for *Hutchings' California Magazine* published in August 1859.[81] Titled *A Scene at the Foothills of Suisun Valley*, badly printed, it depicts a well-rounded sheep and an ancient bristlecone pine growing precariously from the side of an embankment and was used to illustrate an article on Solano Mineral Springs.

He signed it 'Keith s[tudi]o. S[an]. F[rancisco]', suggesting that he was working on his own account at this time and showing some early initiative for one who had so recently arrived in the city; the same initiative shown by many of those destined to prosper. The quality of his workmanship came to the attention of Eastman and another engraver, Durbin Van Vleck (1833–98).[82] Both these men became friends and partners of William Keith. In early 1862, he formed a partnership with Eastman with a business address at rooms 21 and 22, on the south-east corner of Montgomery



VIEW OF THE SOLANO MINERAL SPRINGS.

hills, the principal of which seem to be the Empire, White Sulphur, Seltzer and Congress. The former is located near the head of a ravine, on the south side of Soda Spring Cañon. This spring furnishes a considerable volume of water, that issues in a jet, with a gurgling noise at intervals of from one to two seconds. The numerous bubbles that rise to the surface would indicate the pressure of a larger amount of carbonic acid gas in this, than in any of the other springs; but a careful analysis has failed to confirm it.

The White Sulphur Spring, as I have said, is near the foot of the cañon, some 200 feet above the bed of the small stream that runs thro' the latter. The flow of water from this spring is small, probably not more than from three to four gallons, daily, but it is highly impregnated with sulphur, the smell of which is perceptible for some distance. From this spring can be seen the famous Suisun marble quarry.

The Congress Spring is but a short distance from the Empire, and very much resembles the latter, except that the escapement of gas is less.

The Seltzer Spring is on the west side of the divide, overlooking the upper por-



A SCENE IN THE FOOT HILLS OF SUISUN VALLEY.

Figure 6. *A Scene at the Foothills of Suisun Valley. Hutchings' California Magazine*, Vol. IV, No. 38, August 1859, 57.

Hathi Trust. https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015021556132&seq=65

and California (Keith was living at 1123 Clay Street).[83] They were among twenty-two engravers listed in the *San Francisco Directory* for that year.

From the outset, they secured steady work. Short story writer and poet, Bret Harte (1836–1902), who had taken over the editorship of *The Golden Era* in 1860 and wanted to make it more of a literary publication, used Eastman & Keith to illustrate, from original drawings by Charles Nahl, the serialisation of a novel by G. B. Densmore called *Above and Below; or the mysteries of two cities*, a romance of New York and San Francisco that owed more than a passing debt to Charles Dickens. The series ran for sixteen weeks, and Eastman & Keith advertised themselves daily from the first instalment as 'Designers and Engravers on Wood' in *The San Francisco Bulletin*.[84] An advertisement for the Densmore series suggests that the work was done solely by Keith. Among other work, Eastman and Keith produced a series of full-page illustrations that ran in *The California Magazine and Mountaineer* which had succeeded Hutchings' magazine in 1861.[85]

Keith's partnership with Eastman was short-lived; the business was dissolved in 1864 and he is listed in the *Directory* as an artist who does not appear to be in possession of a studio, his private address being 1018 Powell.[86] That year the Mechanics' Institute held their fourth fair; their organisation had improved and a separate pavilion to house the fine arts had been erected alongside the main exhibition building. It had four galleries with one devoted to the work of Californian artists. This proved immensely popular and gave local artists an opportunity to strengthen relations with the public. 'For several weeks the rooms were thronged night and day … it led to the sale of many good pictures, and elicited commissions for more.'[87] There was an upsurge in interest in art and Keith's separation from Eastman may have been a misguided and premature effort to make his living as an artist. Several leading painters had left San Francisco around this time, including Williams, Hill and Butman, and Keith may have felt emboldened by their departure, leaving the field open to lesser lights such as William Marple and Harvey Otis Young with whom Keith may have felt better able to compete.[88] He had already set foot in the art world.

In the spring and early summer of 1863, Keith had taken a course in oil painting from the immigrant artist Samuel Marsden Brookes (1816–92) in his studio at 611 Clay Street. Brookes, who had studied in Rome and been active painting in the Midwest before arriving in California,

was both a landscape painter and a portraitist, 'one of the best in the city', but what earned him an international reputation was his portrayal of 'a sumptuous selection of fish, fowl, and vegetables from the local market, including the regional delicacies of western meadowlarks and California quail'.[89] Brookes sold his paintings to wealthy patrons including Judge E. B. Crocker of Sacramento.[90] On 5 May 1863 Brookes received a total of twenty-two dollars in three instalments of $10, $6 and $6 from Keith for 'Instruction in oil painting [at] $2 per lesson'.[91]

On 5 June 1864 Keith, now seemingly out of a job, got married in the Dutch Reform Church in San Francisco to Elizabeth Emerson, daughter of a Texas sea captain and distant relative of Ralph Waldo Emerson.[92] Raised in antebellum New England, she was a woman of refinement who had been a schoolteacher near San Jose. She painted still life and flowers in her spare time and, encouraged by professional recognition, had begun to spend more time on her art. Her paintings adorned the homes of friends and William took lessons in watercolouring from her. His means were modest; he was hardly bringing security to the union – it is said that for their wedding breakfast they shared a loaf of dry bread while strolling to the end of Meiggs' Wharf, an L-shaped wooden pier extending over 1,600 feet into the Bay from the San Francisco shoreline.[93]

Fortunately, not long after their frugal honeymoon, Keith received a commission to engrave portraits from Frederick Marriott, founding editor of the city's *Newsletter*.[94] Marriott, born in Enfield, London, was one of the many colourful characters who had been attracted to San Francisco by the Gold Rush, and among his earlier exploits he had been instrumental in the creation of the *Illustrated London News* in the early 1840s. This connection may have given rise to the notion that Keith had worked for a London newspaper. In any event, the work was sufficiently lucrative to provide a decent living for the newlyweds, and it sufficiently enhanced Keith's reputation as an engraver so that in 1865 he was able to set up in business with Durbin Van Vleck with an office at 611 Clay Street. Up until they formed their partnership, Van Vleck had been working for William Harrison, an advertising executive who painted in his leisure and who would become one of Keith's closest and enduring friends.[95] The business prospered; they had a full order book and enjoyed a comfortable living. While the studio and offices of the firm remained at Clay Street, Keith and Elizabeth moved home to 20 Clarence Place near Townsend Street. It is not impossible that Keith had been rescued from hard times by Durbin

Van Vleck, because when his first child was born in March 1865 he named him Charles 'Charlie' Van Vleck Keith, an honour not normally reserved for purely business partners.[96] Their partnership continued until 1867.[97] During their short time together they produced, under their joint names, routine commercial engravings of industrial machinery for, among others, the Union Iron Works, owned by Irving M. Scott. He would remain a friend and patron of Keith's for the rest of his days. More notably, they produced an illustration of Sentinel Peak from Hutchings' Hotel, taken from a photograph by C. E. Watkins for the front cover of *Hutchings' Yosemite Almanac for the Whole Pacific Coast for 1867*.[98] That same year they produced the eponymous *Lost Galleon* for Bret Harte's collection of poetry, *The Lost Galleon and Other Tales*.[99]

Early that year, Keith, in his own name, started work on designing and producing five illustrations for inclusion in a slim volume of poetry written by his friend, Charles Warren Stoddard, a collection produced by subscription and published in August.[100] In a departure from depicting subjects inspired by nature, Keith engraved a white-clad angel ascending heavenwards and bearing a laurel wreath, symbol of peace and in ancient times used to honour poets and poetry, to accompany Stoddard's memorial to a departed friend, 'Dion', which regrets that:

> You sang too early in the spring
> Of our uncheerful year of song;
> You felt the bitter chill of wrong,
> And on a sudden ceased to sing. [101]

'Dion' was the pen name of Lyman R. Goodman, a California poet who had died in Mariposa County on 3 November 1861, and 'whose poetical contributions to the California press … [had] been widely copied and much admired'.[102] He was only twenty-six; 'a modest and delicate gentleman, [with] a disposition tinged with melancholy', as evidenced from his poems which lament lost loves.[103] Stoddard's sentiments indicate an intimacy with Goodman that is more than platonic and the tragic end to a difficult brief relationship with a troubled young man. Keith's sensitive contribution suggests he knew how deeply felt was his friend's sense of loss.

However, beneath the outward signs of success lay fundamental flaws. Demand for Keith's services could not last as publishers turned to the cheaper and more efficient process of photoengraving to produce their

illustrations. Further, the work with Van Vleck was simply not what he wanted to do and there is a suspicion that he was not getting the recognition he felt he deserved. Illustrations appeared under the joint names of 'Van Vleck-Keith' and it is possible that Keith was the sole creator for some of them. By October, he had split from Van Vleck and was regularly advertising his services as an engraver on wood from the fourth floor, Room No. 1 at 420 Montgomery Street. He had secured a contract to produce engravings of scenes from along the route of the Central Pacific Railroad for *The Weekly*, but this did not seem to satisfy him.[104] Apparently matters came to a head over a large order for the engraving of mining machinery which he had failed to deal with. When the dissatisfied customer asked, 'Why in the name of sense don't you attend to business?', Keith replied, 'Because I am through with engraving. There is something better in me'.[105] With that, he pulled from his desk drawer and showed the bewildered customer a small watercolour landscape. Whether or not the order was ever completed or if the customer even liked the painting, is not recorded, but Keith, despite a growing family to support, was by now sufficiently confident in his own ability as an artist, to give up the trade of engraving and devote himself entirely to landscape painting. He had already started selling pictures to supplement his income. These had met with some commercial and critical success and in 1868 he took an office in the Mercantile Library Building at 212 Bush Street, an address he shared with a number of other artists.[106] William Keith had embarked on his career as a professional artist.

CHAPTER FOUR

In Search of Subject and Style

> The youth of an art is, like the youth of anything else, its most interesting period.[1]

Keith's entry into the world of professional artists was not without difficulty. His first foray in 1864 had been brief, if, indeed, it had actually taken place. Efforts to sustain public interest after the success of the 1864 Mechanics' Fair had come to nought. This, despite the number of American artists who had travelled to Europe to experience the new modernist schools at first hand and who were returning with fresh ideas and styles. There was a time-lag between European developments in art and their subsequent adoption and rise in the United States of America. In 1865 there were about thirty professional artists in San Francisco, and a serious effort was made to establish a permanent gallery. An Art Union was formed with Samuel Brookes as 'manager' and with Keith and Charles Nahl among its members. They charged five dollars per share with the money to be used exclusively to buy works of local art. They rented a small gallery and entrance receipts helped swell the number of pictures that could be attracted from across the country. However, although the exhibition was kept open over several months, public interest began to wane and after only two exhibitions the Union collapsed largely because too much was given by way of gifts to members.[2] Another hiatus followed in 1869 when Keith appears to have given up his studio in the Mercantile Library Building and was working from his home at 909 Post Street and had reverted to calling himself an engraver.[3]

These difficulties aside, Keith had already attracted the attention of a body that was to become a major influence on his life. The press began to take an interest in art and devoted sections to local artists and events while engaging in frequent art criticism which had been largely absent until then, an absence lamented by John Hittell. 'In painting, as in poetry, there

is no credit for mediocrity', he argued, 'no painting should be hung up as an ornament unless valuable as a respectable work of art; and no lenient standard is chosen as the standard of respectability. Justice cannot be done to the good artist, without severity to the bad one'.[4] Among the early art critics was Benjamin Avery of the *San Francisco Bulletin*. He collected paintings and was extremely well connected. His brother, Samuel Putnam Avery was a wealthy connoisseur and art dealer in New York, and one of the founders, and long-time trustees, of the city's Metropolitan Museum of Art. Benjamin Avery became one of Keith's first patrons and took every opportunity to champion him in the press.

In July 1866, Keith had made his first visit to the Yosemite and this trip paid immediate dividends for his fledgling career. The *Daily Alta California*, with an eye for the minutiae of city life, informed its readers on 15 October that the day before they had seen, in the window of Snow and Roos, purveyor of artists' materials at 21 Kearny Street:

> [T]hree beautiful water colours by William Keith, a new name in our immediate art circle. These productions, we understand, are the first of his efforts to be brought before the public for inspection … They are noteworthy for their truthfulness of colouring, and the perspective is at once natural and pleasing to the eye. They certainly evince more than ordinary genius, and we may confidently expect still greater attractions from an easel that produces such excellent 'first attempt'.[5]

One of the paintings depicted the Three Brothers, a distinctive granite rock formation rearing out of the Yosemite Valley, the other two were compositions, or still lifes, either painted while he was under the tutelage of Brookes or influenced by his time with him. The influence of his wife, Elizabeth, is also noticeable in the medium he chose to use. This public commendation for his first publicly displayed work must have given Keith encouragement for he shortly thereafter revealed two new views of Marin County scenery, including *Mount Tamalpais from San Rafael*, praised by the critic of *The Californian* as showing 'more correct drawing and careful finish than are generally displayed by watercolourists'.[6] Avery praised these same paintings for their 'boldness' and 'confidence'.[7]

Keith moved to Oakland for a year in 1867 and his watercolour scenes of the East Bay area started to appear in San Francisco galleries. Among them were depictions of the Alameda oaks, which he was to paint many

times and which became a favourite subject for other artists.[8] In June, he made a trip to the Donner Summit in the Northern Sierra Nevada and painted near the sparsely populated community of Cisco, as far as the Central Pacific Railroad line went at that time.[9] There he made the acquaintance of the company's Superintendent of Construction, Arthur Brown, a man with whom he had so much in common. Brown was born in 1830, in the village of Kintore only ten miles from Oldmeldrum. He was taken to Canada by his widowed mother, where he grew up in Ottawa, Ontario. As a young man he helped his uncle Alexander Christie, who had emigrated from Fyvie, Aberdeenshire, in the construction of railways, bridges and culverts. Brown moved to California in 1864 and, like Keith, showed a prodigious capacity for work. Promoted rapidly, in 1868, in an ambitious undertaking, he led the 2,500 men assigned to him in constructing a series of snowsheds in just five months, thus enabling trains to cross the mountains in all weathers. Keith and Brown became lifelong friends; Brown acted as a pallbearer at Keith's funeral.[10]

Avery continued to praise Keith's watercolours, and in October reported that he was working on a series of woodcut engravings illustrating the scenery along the route of the Central Pacific Railroad for publication in the short-lived *Sunday Mercury*.[11] In January 1868, Keith exhibited oil paintings – by now his preferred medium – at Niles Gallery on Kearny Street and through the spring was reported to be 'making great advances in oils with the enthusiasm of a poetical nature'.[12]

That year he was often away from the studio. In June he went on a sketching trip in the Sonoma Valley and down the coast the short distance to San Mateo.[13] He returned to his studio in the Mercantile Library Building barely long enough to work up some of his sketches in oil and for Benjamin Avery to have a look at them. The critic was impressed with these early efforts in this new medium. He wrote:

> William Keith, a good wood engraver, and one of our best water-colourists in landscapes, has lately given evidence of astonishing capacity in oil. His studies of San Mateo scenery – in twilight and in storm – show remarkable power, fidelity and sentiment. His atmospheres are luminous. His woods have depth and richness. His colouring is full of the finest feeling. He imbues his pictures with poetry. All that he needs is patient study in detail, more attention to individuality of vegetable forms, more careful manipulation of foregrounds.[14]

Keith's tentativeness may have been occasioned by his efforts at emulating the style of successful painters such as Frederick Butman (1820–71), Albert Bierstadt (1830–1902) and Charles Nahl (1818–91) – for which he had been criticised.[15] This would have placed constraints on his ability to express himself freely.

By July he was away again. He had been hired by the Oregon Navigation and Railroad Company to paint the scenery of the Pacific Northwest. He took along American landscape painter, Thaddeus Welch (1844–1919), who, in return for art lessons, did all the camp chores. Demonstrating exceptional physical stamina, Keith explored much of California's picturesque landscape, sketching views of Mount Hood, Mount Baker, Mount Shasta, as well as along the Columbia River and the Yosemite Valley.[16] By September he was back in his studio where he spent the winter painting scenes from his sketching tour including *Sunrise, Columbia River*, now in the Saint Mary's College Collection.[17]



Figure 7. William Keith, *San Anselmo Valley near San Rafael*, 1868–1869, Oil on canvas, 24 × 36 inches.

Gift of Adrienne Williams, 1973, Saint Mary's College Museum of Art Permanent Collection. [0–168]

Keith had obviously paid attention to what Avery had had to say; the foreground detail is strong, and this painting is considered among the best of his works from this time. Another work, *San Anselmo Valley near San Rafael*, was described by Avery, 'as remarkable for [its] fidelity to the actual scenes depicted as for the poetical spirit that pervades [it]'.[18]

The view of rolling, shrub enshrouded hills is reminiscent of parts of Keith's homeland.[19] Thirty years later, he was to remember that in fulfilling the railroad commission, 'I was suddenly revealed to myself'.[20] Avery's appreciation of Keith's art, and the reception it received from other critics in the newspapers, set the tone for a relationship between artist and press that was to endure for the rest of his life. Californian newspapers and periodicals consumed copious amounts of newsprint and ink over the years in their social columns, art columns or general news columns, discussing Keith's various doings and seeking his views on matters ranging from the artistic to the philosophical.

Avery was optimistic about the flourishing art world that existed in the burgeoning 'metropolis of the Pacific' even though there had been no public art displays, 'except in charitable or industrial fairs, in auction saloons, or in print shops'. Someday, 'there will exist a distinct Art School, supported by a cultivated public taste … where already there are more evidences of aesthetic culture than exist in any other community so isolated, so exposed to frontier influences, and so youthful'.[21] Looking back on this period in the closing years of his life, Keith wrote that:

> Everything and anything in the semblance of a picture sold then. An art wave swept over California … and everybody bought pictures. Those were the halcyon days for painters in [San Francisco]. People had money, more than they needed, so they bought artworks generously. Men who could mix colours and put colours on canvas had no trouble selling the finished canvas. Some who sold pictures … could do more than mix colours, and some few could even paint pictures that were deservedly ranked as art works – but the latter number was not large. I like to dwell upon those days because San Francisco artists found home appreciation then, and, what is better, a home market. The wealthy people of California bought pictures painted by California artists. The country was young then and men could see the poetry and the romance and the art that that lay at their own doors.[22]

But Keith was already planning to go east; and once again Avery pointed the way. He wrote:

> Success will go to those young artists who labour in the true artist spirit, who make of art not a trade, but a passion; who, while painting Californian scenery, grasp not its outline merely, filling them with the colour, tone, and details of another clime, or with merely conventional strokes, but catch its own atmosphere and sentiment, absorb and reproduce its individuality.[23]

Keith had determined to visit Europe to study art in depth, to view for himself the works of the Old Masters and to find a style that would reflect his own personality and set him apart from his fellow artists. The trip was first mooted as early as October 1867, it was reported by Avery, who may have been party to the decision, but put on hold with the impending arrival of his daughter, Mary Hortense Keith, who was born on 4 January 1869.[24] The idea resurfaced in April 1869 and Keith worked assiduously to help pay for it.[25] As a first step, he appears to have sent his family east before him. On 1 June Mrs William Keith and two children were registered for passage by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company's steamer *Golden City* which sailed that day for Panama (even though the transcontinental railroad had recently been completed).[26]

In August, thirty-one of Keith's paintings from his excursions into the wilderness were displayed in a special exhibition by various artists, including Thomas Hill, held in the museum hall of the Mercantile Library prior to sale by the dealers, Snow and Roos.[27] The newspapers provided extensive coverage and reviews with Avery again lauding Keith, being particularly impressed with one aspect of his work: 'The skies are transparent and luminous, the clouds are generally well-rounded and have that perspective that Ruskin justly insists upon – they rarely fail to express a certain atmospheric condition peculiar to the variations of our climate'.[28] While some of Avery's less knowledgeable readers may have been mystified by the reference to Ruskin, it would not have been lost on Keith. A few months after he had received tuition from Samuel Brookes in the early summer of 1863, he had been gifted several volumes of John Ruskin's *Modern Painters*. These, inscribed 'Wm Keith, from a friend Oct. 3, 1863', were among his treasured possessions until the day he died.[29] Ruskin argues that art should devote itself to the accurate depiction of nature. Volume I contains a lengthy chapter 'Of Truth of Skies and of Clouds' containing

his insights into how these natural forces and atmospheric effects are to be conveyed by the artist without error.[30] One possible reason for invoking Ruskin's name is that Keith had discussed with Avery his desire to paint according to Ruskin's principles.

Avery, whose influence on, and importance to, Keith's early development has been largely unheralded, is signalling publicly that Keith had succeeded while adding his own seal of approval and although there is no evidence to confirm it, he may have been the anonymous donor of Ruskin's volumes. All of Keith's painting sold, including *San Anselmo Valley near San Rafael*, grossing the sum of $1,517.50, which, with the money he had saved from earlier sales and the railroad commission was enough to pay for his European venture.[31] Not all critics were as enamoured as Avery; the *Chronicle*'s was particularly condemnatory: the paintings look 'as if painted by steam-engine rapidity and proportionate carelessness, just to sell at auction. Knocked down at intervals of a minute. Selling for about ten percent less than the frames cost. This will not do'.[32] The highest price paid for any painting was $75.

The sale served its purpose; in early September 1869, William Keith left San Francisco, first to visit New York and then Maine to catch up with his wife and the children who were with Elizabeth's family in the quiet town of Damariscotta.[33] The family enjoyed the beauty of the New England autumn and remained there through Christmas but early in the New Year Keith and his wife took their leave of the children and departed for Europe. By February 1870 they were settled in Dusseldorf. Keith's eastern Odyssey, in search of answers to perfecting his knowledge of art, had begun.[34]

During the 1830s and 1840s, Dusseldorf had established itself as the leading school of landscape painting in Europe. It became a rite of passage for many young American artists including George Caleb Bingham (1811–71), who was in Dusseldorf in 1859, Sandford Robinson Gifford (1823–80) there in 1859, and Albert Bierstadt who was taught briefly by fellow American Worthington Whittredge (1820–1910) when their paths crossed there in 1853–4. German American Emanuel Leutze (1816–68) taught there and mentored many of the American students over nearly two decades, 1841–59. In 1850, Leutze rounded up some of his students including Worthington Whittredge to pose as models for what would become a national icon: *Washington Crossing the Delaware*. According to Whittredge, who posed as the steersman in the prow of the boat, and even as Washington himself, complete with genuine uniform borrowed from

the US Post Office, only Americans were used, the Germans being 'either too small or too closely set in their limbs'.[35] Edward Bourlier and Peter Oscar Dietz were among the Americans who were there at the same time as Keith though it is unlikely they socialised; Bourlier was still in his teens and Dietz barely twenty.[36] By the time the Keiths arrived Dusseldorf was losing it lustre as the leading art city in Europe. The School had emphasised solid, meticulous attention to the minutest detail and demanded almost photographic clarity. This rigorous approach had flourished for thirty years but was giving way to a more interpretative style, allowing for the imagination of the artist, a change Keith noted in a gushing letter written shortly after his arrival. On 6 March 1870, hardly able to contain himself, he began:

> Dear California Friends and particularly Mr and Mrs Avery: Here I am in Germany and at work and such work. I am full of Bliss and *Catsinyamar* (the last word means the Blues) and Black Blues at that. Oh, the pictures, [Andreas] Achenbach and [Albert] Flamm and [August] Weber's – oh – oh – and Keith.[37]

He is torn between his delight at seeing the works of these artists and despondency when he compares his works to theirs. Mood swings of this nature were to be a recurring theme throughout his working life. He continues:

> You mustn't expect a sensible letter. I am incapable of it. Look at this Achenbach – a steamer struggling out of a harbour in a storm. You will instinctively grab hold of the iron railing that protects the picture from too close scrutiny – and you will need to hold on tight for you'll hear the wind roaring, and the waves, the hoarse screaming of the sailors – and so staggeringly holding on, you will find how a man paints the sea. Oh, the stupendous force and skill, no niggling finish here; look closely and it's a mass of unmeaning paint. I felt just wild with delight. I am studying with Flamm he ranks next to Achenbach, and some think he has more feeling – but give me the power and force of Achenbach. Flamm seems to think I am going to be somebody. All the painters who have seen my sketches seem to have a favourable opinion and all express great compliments on my colour and suggestiveness in sketching. I am astonished to find that suggestive painting is the thing here. – They say anybody can do niggling detail – but

> one must feel to do the other, but I want to be able to do the detail and then with that power kept in hand, to suggest, just to see the difference as I have the opportunity of doing by comparison in the galleries – the difference between this broad and yet detailed work and this one with every leaf and flower and shrub marked? You'll feel at once how petty is the detail, and how the other [shows] broadly and yet [not] the flat masses, for in one broad sweep there are hundreds of tints and hints of others things. I hope you are all right again and now Mr Avery take the advice of Dr Keith, don't work too hard and when I get cooled off a little I shall write more coherently – now it's impossible. I am wild with delight. I am going ahead fast. Please send me a paper. I don't expect you to write. I know you have too much to do, but if you would just send a benediction very short, so as to let me know you are about again, I should feel glad. Love to Mrs Avery. Truly yours, Wm. Keith. 26 Alexanderstrasse, Duesseldorf, Prussia.[38]

In a postscript across the first page is written, 'I am going to be a good one or die in the attempt, but I won't die till I have shown that you were not wrong in your appreciation of me'. Keith is showing obvious concern for his mentor who has been ill, probably brought on by overwork. Keith was right to be concerned. In addition to being lead writer for the *San Francisco Bulletin*, Avery, who had always been susceptible to illness, was the *Bulletin* correspondent in Washington, DC and was helping Bret Harte set up the *Overland Monthly*.[39] Keith's postscript also shows the extent of the encouragement he was receiving from the older man.

Keith was also very fortunate in the men he studied under in Germany. Andrea Achenbach (1815–1910) had been a child prodigy, joining the Dusseldorf Art Academy at the age of twelve and selling paintings at exhibitions as a teenager. Considered one of the founders of the Dusseldorf School in the 1830s, he was a landscape and seascape painter, noted more for the latter, as Keith seems to recognise from the work he was enthusing over. Albert Flamm (1823–1906) was one of Achenbach's pupils; he had made several trips to Italy in 1850–3 and the landscapes he produced became his signature works. Keith appeared to be in his element but some of his early excitement may have been due to the novel experience of being in a foreign city and it evaporated quite quickly. He mentions Flamm as having been his teacher, but formal classroom instruction would have been difficult because he did not speak the language, a disadvantage that was to impede him on future visits to Europe. He was also over thirty

and his 'serious outlook upon life did not harmonise with the frivolities of the average European art student with whom he had little in common'.[40] Unless he was obtaining private tuition, and there is no evidence that he was, his knowledge was more likely acquired from being able to visit art galleries, museums and attending numerous exhibitions. In later years, he took pride in stating that he had been self-taught, his achievements the result of nothing more than hard work.

He did not stay long in Dusseldorf before he and Elizabeth went to visit Paris and while he may have started by admiring the mechanical renditions of the Dusseldorf School, he became acquainted with a new art movement that emphasised broadly painted 'suggestive' landscapes during a whirlwind tour of the Louvre, the Musée de Luxembourg, the Salon and the galleries of dealers. These changed his opinion about what constituted good landscape painting, a discovery he conveyed in a letter to Avery as soon as they returned to Dusseldorf from where he wrote on 7 May 1870:

> Dear Friends, I have just come back from Paris and find a joyful surprise in your letter and one from Stebbins, such letters – they were just the thing. Yours was more than I expected and served to put fresh courage into a rather hopeless heart, not hopeless from fear of not being a good painter, I have that strong all the time, but ravens don't feed people nowadays and good paintings don't always sell, but I ain't going to grumble. I've been to Paris and all the time I was longing for your company.[41]

Whatever insecurities and uncertainties assailed him were dispelled by the reassurances and encouragement he had received in the post from the United States of America; practical and creative from Avery, spiritual from the Rev. Horatio Stebbins, minister of the First Unitarian Church in San Francisco. His visit to Paris had also cheered him up and there he had already decided on his next course of action. He continued:

> I tell you that Paris is the Hub – galleries – Oh, it would take six months to do the Louvre alone, Versailles, Luxembourg – Oh you must go there and see … The modern school of French landscape I like very much and I have got some ideas that I never could have got here in Dusseldorf. When I came back the pictures here looked very different to my eyes, the French are so unconventional and here with the exception of Achenbach and one or two others, everything is of a type.

The painters Keith admired were men from the Barbizon School which was active roughly from 1830 to 1870. Unlike their German counterparts who painted with 'dry meticulous accuracy' from their rational minds, Barbizon artists painted from their emotions, synthesising form and colour and aiming at 'the elimination and simplification of detail without losing a sense of veracity'.[42] The Barbizon School was a loose association of mid-nineteenth-century French landscape painters whose members included Charles-François Daubigny (1817–78), Jules Dupré (1811–89) and Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot (1796–1875).[43] They took their name from the village of Barbizon near the Forest of Fontainebleau where many of them were active. They worshipped nature and rendered their pastoral scenes in extravagant darkly shaded colours, where nature became the theme rather than the backdrop to dramatic events. In contrast to working from sketches in a studio, painting *en plein air* was de rigueur. They often portrayed the ancient oak as a symbol of strength and longevity. This held particular appeal for Keith and when he returned to California he found artistic inspiration in painting the Alameda oaks in that style. Later, under their influence, artists of the American Tonalist movement in northern California would do away with sharp detail and paint in gauzy contours dominated by one muted colour to which all others were harmonised.[44] Keith's lengthy epistle of 7 May 1870 continues:

> If the exhibitions in Paris were permanent, I should go there and study, but as they only continue for a month and Paris being far from nature, I remain here, but not for long. I have been gradually coming to the conclusion … that I am going to study altogether from Nature – you know that if there is anything I want to be it is to be original and when I came back from Paris and saw my pictures, and the ones here in the galleries, I saw that I had been unconsciously falling into the German style that I am going to get rid of and the only way to do that is by studying nature. I will have learnt a good deal by Fall and intend to go down in Maine and study for a year. After that I shall go back to California for I feel that San Francisco is my home. I can't give you all my reasons for this but I am sure you would uphold me if you were here and had my experience.
>
> I tell you, Mr Avery, that the schools are the places for machines of a higher class than they have with us, but a man who has the artistic instinct strong needs only nature – to learn to do the things in a certain way ties the mind to that way, and one never can fairly break from it. As for me

I can do it by myself and with nature this particularly applies to landscape. If I wanted to paint figures I should go to Paris. The French do things anyway, and all different from each other. I wouldn't write this to any but you because I think you'll understand that it is not conceit. Oh, it makes me wild that I can't show you all the reasons, which are so plain to me, but *you were the first to encourage me and I only ask your faith in me to hold on and you'll see that I am right in this* [emphasis added]. The money I have to spend I shall spend in looking at the Galleries of Holland and England and in the Fall after making notes of all I can see I go back to Maine. I only tell you this because most people think that if one is in a European school they get the art of painting poured into 'em in a mechanical kind of way, so please keep it to yourself. What's wanted is capacity – opportunity is everywhere. I don't mean to say that it isn't a good thing to come here. If I hadn't seen these pictures, I should never have had the ideas I now have, but I have learnt to look at nature with different and more intelligent eyes – that's the advantage in seeing Nature. I can't explain my meaning, but I am right, that is, for my individual self. I don't intend to sit down and be a mediocre painter.

The Old Masters, particularly Rembrandt, Rubens, Murillo, Berchem, are splendid. Titian has a glow and richness of color, but Rubens, Murillo, and Rembrandt for me. I know that this is heresy – a lot of others who painted 'Saint' pictures I don't care one cent for – Paulus Potter is splendid, Claude Lorrain is a bilk; nasty yellow green sky – this is also heresy – Salvator Rosa is a bilk. Vandyck is a Bilk with few exceptions. Some splendid pictures among the moderns are vividly in my mind. Charles Nahl would take a foremost place in Paris or Germany. I made mental comparisons when looking at all the pictures. I have so many things to say to you that I am all befoozled. I was awful glad to get your letter. I felt uneasy and was about to write your brother in New York. I should have gone to see him before I left but felt bashful. What a fool I am. I suppose he must think me very rude, but I'll never get along … Thank you for your kind offer about the *Bulletins*. Send them along. I'll do something for you one of these days, and also for your letter. I felt good as I read it and more firmly resolved to do or die, but not the die. I ought to fill up the remainder of this with health injunctions but it would be more fitting to set you an example. I am working in a way that astonished some of them here. *I wish you could pop in and see me for a few minutes, so as to give a little encouragement as in times past* [emphasis added].

> Is Charles Warren S. gone off to the Sandwich Isles? If he isn't please give him my best love and tell him I would write but that it costs four groschens and that's money. Living is high here, higher than in San Francisco, I find it very expensive. Our kindest love and remembrance to Mrs Avery. Yours truly, an old Californian by the name of Keith.[45]

Keith's request for news about his friend Stoddard's trip to Hawaii derived from more than passing interest; he had a notion to go there so that he could make sketches of the volcanoes. Stoddard made several trips to the South Sea Islands and would have been an ideal travelling companion. The idea never came to fruition. Not long after Keith's return from Europe Stoddard accepted a commission to act as special correspondent for the *San Francisco Chronicle* and left for a five-year tour of Europe and the Middle East.[46]

Although Keith had already determined he would not remain in Dusseldorf for very long his sojourn was interrupted by the Franco-Prussian War which broke out on 19 July 1870. Dusseldorf was an important railway hub and watering station for military forces, conveniently situated on the Berlin–Paris route not far from the French frontier. To escape the disruption, Keith accepted an invitation to visit the safer city of Dresden, well out of harm's way. The invitation came from Judge Edwin Bryant Crocker, former Supreme Court Justice in California, a multi-millionaire from railway investments, now retired from the stresses of public duties following a stroke, who was travelling around Europe with his family collecting pictures to adorn his home. 'Crocker apparently possessed all the self-assurance of the successful man, and Keith suffered some embarrassment in recognising in this collection of "original" masterpieces at least several paintings which to all appearances were not even good copies'.[47] Keith managed to paint *Landscape on the Rhine* for Crocker even though his movements along the river were hindered by the war.[48] The art collection and the home of Judge Crocker in Sacramento would eventually become the Crocker Art Museum.

Although he complained about the cost of living being higher than in San Francisco, Keith returned to Germany primarily because he could live there more cheaply than in Paris. He also wanted to visit Munich, which, like Dusseldorf, was a long-standing popular art centre and more was to be gained from immersing himself in what was available to him there. Keith's brief visit to Paris, in conjunction with what he had seen and absorbed

by way of contrast in the German art centres, taught him two important lessons: he decided to study nature more closely, and he concluded that 'a man with artistic instincts needs no school'.[49] In that, he was following Ruskin's injunction.

Satisfied that his trip had been worthwhile and that he could improve his technique as a consequence, Keith left Germany – not without difficulty, the war still had seven months to run – and returned to the United States of America.[50] He and Elizabeth sailed from Liverpool on the SS *Algeria* and arrived in New York on 10 October 1870 after a brief stop in Queenstown, Ireland, where the ship took on more passengers. They had the luxury of sharing a cabin; a far cry for the overcrowded and anonymous steerage that William had endured in his younger days.[51] It is not clear that he paid a visit to Avery's brother, Samuel, whom he had been too bashful to see on the way out, but he did exhibit *Tamalpais* and *Mount Shasta* at the New York Academy of Design, both pictures painted while he was in Dusseldorf.[52]

They were reunited with their children at Damariscotta for Christmas, and Keith was soon painting from some of his open-air sketches. The San Francisco press kept their readers informed of his progress, the *Alta California* reporting that he was getting between $800 and $1,000 for these works.[53] Keith spent 1871 with Elizabeth painting and sketching and enjoying the scenery of New England, especially the glories of autumn. They were joined by Carl Wilhelm Hahn (1829–87) who was known as William throughout his American career. The Keiths had befriended Hahn in Dusseldorf and encouraged him to come to the United States of America where his work had already been exhibited in Boston, New York and San Francisco.[54] Hahn had been trained at the Dresden Academy of Fine Arts and the Dusseldorf Akademie. At the start of the New Year, Hahn joined William and Elizabeth in sharing a studio in a purpose-built studio complex in the Lawrence Building at 149A Tremor Street, Boston.[55] They worked there for four months, with Keith developing the results of his studies in Maine and finishing the landscapes he had brought back from Europe. All the while he kept Avery informed of what he was doing and of his intentions; the *San Francisco Bulletin* being the first to report that he was returning to California. It also paid tribute to him for 'striving to elevate his art, rather than to make money'.[56] Following a joint exhibition by all three artists, the *Boston Times* applauded their work, reserving special praise for Keith's landscapes.[57] When the Keiths and Hahn relinquished

their studio at the end of April, the other artists in the Lawrence Building held a farewell reception in their honour.[58] At the beginning of May, 'Lizzie' arranged for them to visit her distant cousin, Ralph Waldo Emerson, at his home in Concord. Their conversation must have been interesting. Keith had read Emerson's essay on art and while he admired his ideas that nature should not be copied mechanically and that 'frills and ostentation were for novices', he took issue with his transcendentalist beliefs that seemed to Keith to 'deny the divinity of Christ and so take away the key to understanding the sublimest of pictures'.[59] Emerson had returned from a trip he had undertaken to California while Keith had been in Dusseldorf and during his visit had met the naturalist, John Muir, while on an excursion to Yosemite. Emerson recommended that Keith should make the acquaintance of his fellow Scot.

Keith, accompanied by William Hahn, departed by train in mid-May 1872 and arrived in San Francisco on the evening of 3 June.[60] Elizabeth and the children did not accompany them and by the time they did arrive on 6 August, Keith and Hahn were ensconced in adjacent studios in the Mercantile Library Building from where Hahn would become known as a painter of San Francisco still life.[61] Elizabeth was soon busy with her studies of California fruit.[62] The art world they returned to was different from the one they had left.

The completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 had done away with the discomfort of travelling across the continent and brought many artists to the west coast. 'Most were excursionists, staying briefly to paint, some remained for months, stimulating local painters and helping to create enthusiasm for art at all levels of society.'[63] When Keith was painting in Boston, he was not the only California artist working there at the time. Thomas Hill and Virgil Williams were prominent among them.[64] Both returned to California where they were joined from Boston by John Ross Key (1832–1920) who had worked for the Corps of Engineers during the Civil War and made many sketches of the siege of Charleston. He was famed for his frontier landscapes.[65] As part of the stimulus the San Francisco Art Association was founded on 28 March 1871 by a group of some thirty artists and aficionados with the express purpose of promoting 'Painting, Sculpture, and Fine Arts, akin thereto.'[66]

Most were landscape painters led by the returnee Virgil Williams. They hoped to achieve their aims by forming an art library, promoting art exhibitions and eventually establishing an art school which they did

in 1874. Co-founder with Williams was English-born Juan Buckingham Wandesforde (1817–1902), who was elected the first president. Early members include George Henry Burgess (1831–1905), Gideon Jacques Denny (1830–86), Thomas Hill and the Nahl brothers.[67] Another returnee, Albert Bierstadt, master of the 'heroic style' of landscape painting, was made an honorary member shortly after his arrival in 1871.[68] By the summer of 1872, Benjamin Avery, having added writing for the *Overland Monthly* to his workload was giving the San Francisco Art Association the major credit for:

> [T]he very noticeable increase of the general interest taken in art matters … bringing together persons of aesthetic taste at its social reunions. [This] has not only given an enlivening impulse to the *esprit de corps* of the professionals but tended to make art popular by making it talked about and fashionable.[69]

Avery, it appears, was understating his own considerable efforts in getting the association and the art school up and running. William Keith joined them.

Although the newspapers had lauded Keith's work during his time in Maine, with Avery's *Bulletin* providing generous coverage, it was not received with universal approval. The Art Association's exhibition attracted some attention and was modestly successful financially but 'not a milestone in Keith's artistic career'.[70] As for painting the glories of the New England autumn, 'there is nothing particularly "glorious" about Keith's paintings of this brief period, which show all of the characteristics of the Hudson River School'.[71] The characteristics which condemn this school, according to Eugen Neuhaus, are several.

The Hudson River School was an exclusively American phenomenon, the name applied for posterity and as a convenient label, to a group of native-born artists from several generations who worked between 1825 and 1870 and who wanted to express their love for their country through the medium of art. They were trying to become independent of foreign influence, although reliant on European schools for their technical training. As their name implies, they sketched along the Hudson River but also in the White Mountains of America's east coast and are sometimes referred to as the White Mountains School.[72] Many American painters

'served their apprenticeship' with the Hudson River School but most outgrew their methods:

> The work of the pioneers as a group possesses but few enjoyable qualities. It is undoubtedly often timid, even niggled, in brushwork, and when it is least convincing it gives the impression of having been painted by spectacled pedants comfortably seated on cushioned stools and painstakingly counting out, by means of a very small brush, every leaf on every tree, no matter how distant.[73]

This attention to detail is reminiscent of the Dusseldorf School where several members of the school had studied, Worthington Whittredge and Albert Bierstadt among them. They sought to express the truth through conveying the accuracy of detail and stimulated the intellect by facts rather than stimulating emotions through the use of form and colour. They showed no understanding of shifting colours as the appearance of trees, shrubs, hills, rocks and skies changed at different times of the day or under different weather conditions.[74] Often derided, 'The sincerity of their efforts cannot be questioned, and they had neither rivals nor superiors. And we must credit them with having awakened in the hearts of their countrymen a pride in the out-of-doors of their own land'.[75] Regarded as the founder of the group, and the only one not born in America, was Englishman Thomas Cole (1801–48). Cole, like American literary figures such as Washington Irving, tried to cultivate the 'cult of the wilderness' to romanticise the grandeur and beauty of America's own landscape in Americans' own terms.[76] While the spiritual values of American scenery contributed to the emergence of America's native school, vibrant economic and social forces were busy transforming American society. Scientific advances since the eighteenth century stimulated a genuine interest in knowledge about the geology of the United States of America and an interest in natural sciences. Patriotic sentiment also contributed to a growing interest and pride in the physical features of the country's landscape.[77] 'A newly discovered West had revealed to an amazed and proud American people scenery of a magnificence unknown in the east and equalling if not surpassing in grandeur and spectacular quality anything to be found in Europe'.[78] Poet and journalist William Cullen Bryant's *Picturesque America* laid this before the public in graphic, accurate detail.[79]

Americans began to observe nature with a sense of wonderment and scientific curiosity rather than contemplating it in a search for spiritual revelation and moral truths. Yet the very forces that were civilising the country were in danger of causing the wanton destruction of its primitive scenery. And the 'mission' for American painters was to preserve on canvas those pristine features of America's unique features before they were destroyed by the advances of civilisation.[80] As people moved westward, artists began to paint beyond the narrow confines of the Atlantic Coast. The scenery was different and required a different approach. The Hudson River School with its mild, lyrical effusions, had little to offer. Painters from the eastern seaboard and from European countries, with diverse backgrounds, different methods and varied skills, joined government geological and surveying expeditions or the excursions of sportsmen and made pictures of the vast open ranges of the Midwest prairies; the towering mountain peaks of the Rockies and the Sierra Nevada, the grandeur of Yellowstone, Yosemite and the Grand Canyon.[81] Many of the early landscapes were topographical views for the very practical reason they were the product of artists who accompanied the numerous surveying expeditions who set out across the country, they were skilled draughtsmen who drew maps of previously uncharted territory; their artistic endeavours were secondary. Several were military officers who as amateurs painted landscapes for their own amusement:

> The aim of these expeditions, under the aegis of the army or navy, was primarily military, but among other objectives was the aim to dramatize the West as an American destiny and to provide a range of scientific and economic information … that would encourage overland emigration.[82]

Artists employed by the government were not necessarily of the best, expeditions were arduous affairs and the less adventurous were better off remaining in relative comfort on the Atlantic Coast where their work could be more handsomely rewarded. Many struggled with little success to get the scale and magnitude of spectacular mountain scenery on to canvas.[83]

One group of artists who tried with more success than most was referred to as 'The Rocky Mountain School', a convenient label used to include artists who shared not so much 'particulars of technique' as 'identities of attitude'.[84] The Rocky Mountain School grew out of the Hudson River School and painted in the west rather than the east of the country.

Many commentators make no distinction between the two. If there is a distinction to be made it is that most of the leading painters of the former were foreign born, among them Thomas Mann (1837–1926) who was born in Bolton, Lancashire and a man of 'extraordinary versatility and even greater industry'.[85] American art historian Sadakichi Hartmann has been credited with coining the phrase in his *History of American Art* (1902) but it was around in art circles before then. William Keith used it in a lecture to members of the Sorosis Club in his Pine Street Studio in 1898, and then only to note that 'The Rocky Mountain School has pretty well disappeared'.[86]

Albert Bierstadt, who made his first trip to the Rockies in 1859, and who had spent six weeks camping in Yosemite in 1863, is usually considered the leader, or founder, of this school and Thomas Hill and William Keith are included among its several members.[87] Bierstadt had early success with his vast, panoramic canvases, such that 'a tidal wave of prosperity [lifting him] to the pinnacle of [such] fame' that he had Mount Bierstadt and Bierstadt Lake in the Rocky Mountains named after him. His paintings were widely distributed and some reputedly fetched as much as $25,000 when he was in vogue.[88] Thomas Hill was well known at one time in the east but became identified with the west to such an extent that 'in his day, his name was a byword in California art life'. His status as 'semi-official' painter of 'Yosemite Scenes', painted all year round and in all weathers, made him well known beyond the Pacific Coast. Considered something of a genius, he is reputed to have made several fortunes, only to lose them by unwise investment and poor management.[89] Hill eventually rejected the strict methods of the Hudson River School in favour of a more broad-brush approach but, like Bierstadt, the subjects he painted 'were on such an enormous scale that they cannot be sensed by the observer as a whole; they pass the bounds of observation'. Critics pronounced them 'an artistic impossibility' and artists moved to depicting some single localised scene instead of a whole panorama of mountains.[90]

Both the Hudson River School and the Rocky Mountain School 'had dealt only with externals, and the subject had been the first and last end sought'.[91] The difficulty for American painters was trying to marry spiritual values with topographical accuracy. A new school, with an entirely different approach, the Barbizon School, which had so excited Keith on his visit to Paris and which had been stimulating American artists since around 1860, was required to reveal 'nature itself, the poetry and mystery

of its simpler moods' and became the leading focus of American landscape art.[92] This presented William Keith with a dilemma. On the one hand he was aware of the looser style of the Barbizon School with its focus on depicting more intimate, pastoral scenes which were becoming more popular with art lovers in the east and were the very antithesis of the grand scale renderings largely devoid of staffage that continued to be popular among patrons in the west who wished to have reproduced on canvas the mountain scenery many of them had experienced at first hand. Bierstadt and Hill showed that this Rocky Mountain style was a proven commercial success that had not yet lost its appeal. Keith needed to find a way to combine his preferred method of painting with what he knew to be one that was becoming passé. Perhaps a trek into the wilderness would provide the answer.

CHAPTER FIVE

An Introduction to John Muir

> Let us probe the silent places, let us seek what luck betide us;
>
> Let us journey to a lonely land I know.
>
> There's a whisper on the night-wind, there's a star agleam to guide us,
>
> And the Wild is calling, calling … let us go.
>
> Robert W. Service[1]

When Keith's family rejoined him in San Francisco in August 1872, they went to live in Oakland, on Broadway between Nineteenth and Twentieth Streets, and William made the daily commute to his studio in the Mercantile Library Building.[2] Already, Keith had been into the wilderness, braving a heatwave while sketching around Mount Tamalpais in Marin County a short distance to the north of San Francisco. His pictorial efforts were praised in the press for their 'delicacy, tenderness and harmony of colouring'.[3] In September he was off again, this time down the San Francisco Peninsula to the south, sketching the Santa Cruz Mountains and turning out a view of *Loma Prieta* when he got back to his studio.[4] Later, in what would be a busy month, he sold several paintings of Mount Tamalpais and was again praised in the press, one large canvas being described as:

> [T]he largest and most successful he has yet produced. Certainly, it is the favourite of our local orators, writers and artists, who have nearly all celebrated its charms … Keith has painted it with particular felicity … it is a genuine bit of San Francisco coast scenery, which would make a Californian home-sick if he should see it abroad.[5]

This description places it clearly within the 'Grand Scenery' of the Rocky Mountain School and its reception by fellow Californians appears to be warm. Keith still found time to exhibit, among an array of arts and crafts, a small collection of 'landscape, marine and fruit paintings in oil', at the Nineteenth Annual State Fair in Sacramento.[6] His work was considered by one critic the best in show.[7]

Keith did not rest on his laurels; at the start of October he was in the Yosemite Valley where he hoped to sketch and to meet his compatriot John Muir who by then was making a name for himself as a naturalist and advocate of environmental conservation through writing 'valuable articles in the magazines'.[8] John Muir had first visited the mountains of California in 1868, when the vast region of the Sierra was unspoilt with no obvious mark of humankind's encroachment:

> [Where] the richness of the life it cherished, or the depth and grandeur of its sculpture … [with] in the middle region of deepest canyons the grandest forest-trees, the Sequoia, king of conifers, the noble Sugar and Yellow Pines, Douglas Spruce, and the Silver Firs, each a giant of its kind, assembled together in one and the same forest, surpassing all other coniferous forests in the world … [where] winds flow in melody through their colossal spires, and are vocal everywhere with the songs of birds and running water.[9]

Although the region was still largely unspoilt, people had been enjoying 'the scenes of wonder and grandeur' long before Muir arrived in 1868. In the spring of 1855, James M. Hutchings, having heard rumours of a thousand foot waterfall, organised the first tour group to visit Yosemite, and built his hotel there to accommodate visitors to the region.[10] In 1869, Muir built and supervised the running of Hutchings' sawmill during the construction of tourist facilities and whenever he returned to the valley floor from the High Sierra he lived at the sawmill, sleeping in a hammock in a room above the workshop.[11] Muir had been introduced to Hutchings by Jeanne Carr, wife of Dr Ezra Carr, at one time professor of natural sciences and agriculture at the University of Wisconsin where Muir had studied.[12] Muir stayed on with Hutchings until the close of summer 1871.[13] He also earned a livelihood by overseeing a shepherd and a flock of over 2,000 sheep and during these months witnessed the damage done to the environment by unchecked grazing. Keith was armed with a letter of introduction

from Jeanne Carr, a close mutual friend and Oakland resident.[14] He was accompanied by another artist, Benoni Irwin (1840–96), Canadian-born of forebears from the Scottish Borders, who had trained in New York and Paris.[15]

In 1872, having spent the summer exploring, studying and measuring the glaciers that lay at the head waters of the San Joaquin, Tuolumne, Merced and Owen's Rivers, Muir was making his way down to the Yosemite Valley from his camp at Mount Lyell in order to replenish his depleted stores of bread and tea. The first snows were on the ground, winter was approaching and his work for the season nearly at an end. Unlike most people who would baulk at the prospect, Muir was cheerful about spending the winter living in a cabin 'with plenty of bread and books' even though he might not see this favourite region again until the next summer, except for distant views of the Yosemite peaks.[16]

As he travelled down the valley, Muir considered the scope of such a view from an artist's perspective. It was, he thought, too vast; an artist could not do it justice. 'Few portions of the High Sierra are, strictly speaking, picturesque. The whole massive uplift of the range is one great picture, not clearly divisible into smaller ones'.[17] Every now and then he stopped, turned, and looked back at the 'glorious' view as he descended, using his arms to shape a frame to see what the enclosed picture would look like. This view was different: 'Here, on the head waters of the Tuolumne, is a group of wild peaks … which is yet in a high degree picturesque, and its main features so regular and evenly balanced as almost to appear conventional.'[18] The image, he thought, 'seemed now to be ready and waiting for the elected artist, like yellow wheat for the reaper'.[19] At which point serendipity played her hand. Muir had no sooner arrived at his destination on the valley floor when he found the two artists awaiting his return.

Keith and Irwin, both new to the High Sierra, asked Muir if he had ever come across landscape suitable for large paintings, and he described the view he had so recently admired on his descent. The more detail he provided, the more their excitement rose and within two days, and fearful that approaching snow might obliterate the view or trap them on the mountains, Muir started off to show them scenery he thought they would like, taking a different route from the one he had used to arrive. With them was another Scotsman, Thomas Ross (1829–96), who had joined the Gold Rush in 1850 and later worked in San Francisco as a house painter and as an illustrator for *The Morning Call* newspaper, and Merrill Moores, the

teenage son of a close friend of Muir, who was staying with him for the summer.[20] Muir was intrigued by the reaction of the artists to what they were seeing around them:

> The way the fresh beauty was reflected in their faces made for a novel and interesting study. They naturally were affected most of all by the colours – the intense azure of the sky, the purplish greys of the granite, the red and browns of dry meadows, and the translucent purple and crimson of huckleberry bogs; the flaming yellow of aspen groves, the silvery flashing of the streams, and the bright green and blue of the glacier lakes. But the general expression of the scenery – rocky and savage – seemed sadly disappointing; and as they threaded the forest from ridge to ridge, eagerly scanning the landscapes as they were unfolded, they said: 'All this is huge and sublime, but we see nothing as yet at all available for effective pictures. Art is long, and art is limited, you know; and here are fore-grounds, middle-grounds, backgrounds, all alike; bare rockwaves, woods, groves, diminutive flecks of meadow, and strips of glittering water.' 'Never mind,' I replied, 'only bide a wee, and I will show you something you will like'.[21]

Towards the end of the following day, he took his companions round a headland from where the Sierra Crown could be seen, and when it was revealed in all its glory, 'their enthusiasm was excited beyond bounds, and the more impulsive of the two, a young Scotchman, dashed ahead, shouting and gesticulating and tossing his arms in the air like a madman'. This is what they had been looking for. 'Here, at last, was a typical alpine landscape'.[22] The madcap Scotchman was William Keith.[23]

Muir, in his choice of language, and in words he attributes to Keith, demonstrates that both men had an understanding of orthodox Western philosophy with regards to the aesthetic appreciation of nature whereby natural phenomena can be described under three headings; the *beautiful*, the *sublime* and the *picturesque*, terms that, beyond any commonplace meaning, represent distinct categories in Western aesthetic thinking. The distinction between the beautiful and the grand, or novel, as he called them, was made by Joseph Addison, in a series of essays in the *Spectator* in 1712 and 'is the most striking feature of eighteenth-century aesthetic theory, and … shows a remarkable persistence'.[24] The term *beauty* can be applied to 'those things that please due to their regularity, smoothness,

tranquillity and unity, a certain smallness of scope'.[25] In landscape painting it can refer to pastoral scenes, cultivated fields and gardens, parklands; signs of bucolic human habitation, churches and follies. The *sublime* refers to the more threatening aspects of nature that arouse a feeling of awe and fear: grand vistas of rugged mountains, the vast sweep of deserts, heaving seas, thunder and lightning storms, nature beyond our control. Edmund Burke argued that the sublime causes a delightful feeling turning on our having a deep-rooted sense of self-preservation; we have an idea of pain and danger and our delight stems from being close to danger but not actually in it.[26]

The concept of the *picturesque* – literally 'picture-like' – became more prominent than either the beautiful or the sublime from the late eighteenth century, providing, as it did, a synthesis of both. Essentially, everything could be reduced to a smaller human scale by consigning large natural phenomena such as mountain ranges to the background and showing human endeavour in the middle ground, with the notion of wildness provided by crumbling walls and overgrown rural pathways. The concept gained added acceptance following the publication of several essays by William Gilpin describing his travels and sketching trips around Great Britain. Describing Derwent Water in the Lake District, he wrote, 'Nothing gives an idea of beauty more strongly than the lake, nor of hourrour [sic] than the mountains; and the former *lying in the lap* of the latter, expresses in a strong manner of their combination'.[27]

Archibald Alison, whose *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste*, first published in 1790 and widely disseminated in the United States of America, is remembered for his theory of association. Alison believed that 'when any object, either of sublimity or beauty, is presented to the mind … every man is conscious of a train of thought being immediately awakened in his imagination, analogous to the character or expression of the original object'; it was these associations in the mind of the beholder, rather than the object observed that caused the pleasure.[28] The natural environment offers an opportunity for aesthetic appreciation, but only to those who have the disposition to appreciate its aesthetic benefits. The emotions of beauty and sublimity depend on simple emotions such as delicacy, grace, dignity and majesty. Places have to be visited and attention paid to their qualities by engaging these simple emotions to appreciate the difference between the *beautiful*, the *sublime* and the *picturesque* in order to arrive at a 'considered aesthetic judgement'.[29]

Landscape that could be rendered as the picturesque was what Muir's 'painter boys' were seeking, and he took them to his 'best sanctum' to enable them to complete their quest. Muir, however, did not view nature from this theoretical perspective, nor did he subscribe to the theory of the sublime. Often when he used the word in his own writings it is as a synonym for beauty. Nor did he feel the sense of delight from viewing danger from a safe place that the theory demanded. Muir was very often in genuine danger and revelled in being part of it. He was once caught in a storm, with no living creature, man or beast to be seen, when he was:

> [S]tartled by a sudden thundering crash as if a rock avalanche had come to join the chorus … it was the flood wave of Yosemite Creek … the most sublime waterfall flood I ever saw – clouds, winds, rocks, waters, throbbing together, as one, and then to contemplate what was going on simultaneously with all this in other mountain temples; the big Tuolumne Canyon – how the white waters were singing there, and the winds, and the clouds were marching.[30]

Muir viewed the world through the eyes of a geologist but also with a profound sense of wonderment. He always tried to establish a harmonious relationship with nature and always expressed his sense of wonder in its presence, considering it to be God's handiwork. As for the Sierras, 'the place seemed holy. Where one might hope to see God'. Nature is never a source or cause of fear: 'We see that everything in Nature called destruction must be creation – a change from beauty to beauty.'[31] For Muir all the natural environment was beautiful, the only part he considered ugly, and which he deplored, was where it had been defiled by human intrusion. His aesthetic appreciation of nature was reserved for untouched lands which he felt should be preserved in their pristine state by excluding human activity as far as possible. He was also aware that the beauty of nature was not shared by everyone.[32] Although he was a naturalist this did not prevent him from couching his scientific observations 'in language which reflects his enthusiasm and zest' for being in the mountains.[33] When Muir writes of 'Daisies too small to fear' and flowers leaning 'confidently', or the Tamarack Creek 'rejoicing, exulting, chanting, dancing in white', he is attributing human emotions and conduct to things found in nature that are not human.[34] Importantly, although these literary metaphors provide a sense of vividness and immediacy, they are expressing his genuine

sentiments and conveying an emotional truth. No 'pathetic fallacy' is being committed here, there is no 'emotional falsehood'.[35] John Ruskin, who coined the phrase to attack the sentimentality common among contemporary poets, would have understood this. Muir expressed his scientific discoveries with scientific accuracy couched in the language of a poet. He looked for the same in art.

Muir made camp while the artists ran about looking for the best spots from where to sketch. When darkness fell and after they had had their tea, they sat around a blazing fire and decided what to do next. Muir wanted to climb the summit of Mount Ritter and the artists decided to stay for a few days while he was away doing this, or at least until it looked as if the snows would close in on them. Warning his companions not to be alarmed if he had not returned in a week or ten days and advising them what to do if the snows should come, Muir departed in the early morning after breakfast. He was gone three days, failing to reach the summit of Mount Ritter by being unable to find a suitable route and very nearly coming to grief in the bitter cold at night. He arrived back at camp as night was falling, his companions glad to see him, having wondered if he would ever make it and when should they think of getting away.

Keith recalled that the trip was not without its difficulties, but in the company of a stoic like Muir, there was little point in complaining:

> Travelling about in the Sierra, one must undergo a good deal of hardship and keep it to oneself. Yellow saleratus biscuit, pork and 'garden sauce', otherwise potatoes, make the chief of one's diet in this land of fruits … [we] lived on tea and flour and water; I sickened of the pork. In such places one must get along with the least possible weight. You are on horseback and can't carry much. It is a matter of scramble, tumble, rumble, and wallow, over moraine, rock, chaparral; rock polished by glaciers so that it glitters and shines in the sun – chaparral so thick that when you get into it your only way of getting out is to get into a rage and tear things.[36]

With Muir safely returned, 'their curious troubles were over. They packed their precious sketches, and next morning set out homeward bound, and in two days entered the Yosemite Valley from the north by way of Indian Canyon'.[37] So ended William Keith's first foray into the High Sierra with John Muir, a foray that cemented his innate love of the wilderness, a foray that yielded a friendship that was to last him the rest of his

life. It also yielded many sketches from which he could create a number of landscape paintings. John Muir's aesthetic appreciation of nature informs his ethical appreciation of nature such that they are virtually indistinguishable; his exuberance conveyed itself to Keith and influenced his art. Likewise, Keith had made an impression on Muir who was always keen to champion his artist friend.

As soon as he was back in the studio Keith got down to work, painting from his sketches, and before long his images of the Sentinel Peak and the Merced River appeared, with the approbation of the press, in the window of Nile's frame shop in Kearny Street.[38]

The Art Association, now boasting six hundred members, held their spring exhibition. It was thronged, with five hundred visitors during the week and twelve hundred on Saturday. 'Everybody of taste and refinement' visited the art gallery and Keith's *Sunset in Santa Cruz* was much admired.[39]

All this rigorous wilderness travel and hard work may have taken its toll on his health; he was ill with pneumonia for several days in February but was soon up and about after a short period of convalescence.[40] In May 1873, his first 'Grand Scenery' painting in the style of the Rocky Mountain School, *The Crown of the Sierra*, was exhibited at the summer show of the San Francisco Art Association.[41]

All through the summer he was in the wilderness sketching and producing paintings. At the beginning of July, he spent twelve days with Muir in Hetch Hetchy Valley setting off with horses and two mules packed with provisions to set up camp from where they could explore the Tuolumne Canyon on foot carrying their own equipment. Keith's pack was almost too difficult to lift, and he was continually losing his footing on the uneven ground. He recalled this trip a year later as being very hard and a 'marvellous experience' but on his immediate return reported it as 'painful'.[42] Muir forgot to bring sugar and on returning to camp from one detour they found their store of provisions had been eaten by bears. The last few days were exhausting, slipping and stumbling through difficult terrain and suffering the pangs of hunger, but when they reached the valley Keith was heartened by the appearance of their packer with fresh supplies including a sheep bought from a shepherd. They had 'a right royal feast of mutton chops and sugar, having been without the latter for twelve days.'[43] 'Keith returned with the material for the first good pictures of Hetch Hetchy Valley, that younger twin sister of Yosemite'.[44]



Figure 8. William Keith, *Sentinel Peak and Merced River*, c. 1872–1883, Oil on canvas, 21½ × 17¼ inches.

Gift of Dr. William S. Porter, 1934, Saint Mary's College Museum of Art Permanent Collection. [0–137]

Less strenuously, Keith spent the following month making 'some delightful studies' in the more accessible lower regions of the Russian River. By early October *A Summer Afternoon Near the Mouth of the Russian River*, measuring 3 foot × 6 foot – 'a strikingly faithful transcript of Coast range scenery' – went on display in the window of Nile's frame shop on Kearny Street.[45] At the winter exhibition of the Art Association Keith contributed 'a fine little view near the mouth of the Russian River and a small picture of Mount Lyall' and sold a picture of the Russian River for US$1,200.[46]

By November, Keith was travelling further afield, this time on a sketching tour to Utah's Wasatch Mountain Range in the company of Carleton Watkins, widely considered America's greatest photographer. He specialised in landscapes; Yosemite was his favourite location. They chartered two railroad carriages and 'considerable curiosity was excited' at the Long Wharf, Oakland as the carriages awaited their departure.[47] One carriage contained horses, wagons, hay and feed, and a special photograph wagon was well stocked with artist's equipment. The other was supplied with all the accoutrements required for domestic life including sleeping accommodation, a sitting room and kitchen.[48] They travelled along the Pacific Railroad as far as Echo Canyon and whenever they wanted to stop, they did, and whenever they wanted to move on, they were hitched up to a passing train. The weather was bitterly cold, but Keith still managed to made studies in colour with the thermometer showing minus twenty-six degrees Fahrenheit.[49] His perseverance brought results. He worked assiduously on his return to the studio, producing large views from sketches made in mid-winter of Cottonwood and Weber canyons, east of Salt Lake.[50] 'It is seldom', noted the correspondent from the *Overland Monthly*, 'that quite such honest, truthful and quiet pictures are painted by an American'.[51]

Keith was rarely away from the outdoors for very long. In April 1874 he climbed the easily accessible Mount Diablo which afforded him panoramic views of the Bay Area and in May he visited Napa Valley. All the while, his paintings went on display and were sold. At the sixth annual Summer Exhibition of the San Francisco Art Association in June, he displayed an enormous work measuring six foot by ten titled *California Alps*.[52] His 'oversize canvases demonstrate his ambition to compete for the public's favour and equal the fame of Bierstadt', who, together with Hill, was making large fees from such epic works.[53] Their depictions of vast panoramic vistas of the mountains revealed a region only accessible

to the hardiest of outdoorspeople, and presented 'the challenge of a physical world rather than an invitation into a spiritual one'.[54] John Muir, in an effusive review in the *San Francisco Bulletin* praised its spiritual and scientific dimensions.[55] The *Overland Monthly* joined in the general acclamation, enthusing that, 'William Keith, "The Poet-Painter", as he has been styled, represents more truly than any other the art development of this young land … his inspiration is drawn solely and purely from its noble landscape. His *California Alps* is a grand and passionate poem in colour'.[56] The painting was reportedly sold to a buyer described as Judge J. T. Best for the sum of $5,000 which would make it far and away the most paid for a Keith in the 1870s, but identifying this elusive character has proved difficult.[57] To confuse matters, Keith apparently painted more than one version of *California Alps*; a painting with this title was photographed for an engraving for the *London Art Journal* and supposedly acquired by 'a Colonel Best' in 1878.[58] This character has proved equally elusive and it may be that 'Best' is a figment to boost sales. It is difficult to see why anybody would pay such a sum for an artwork that was not exclusive and in view of the prices Keith's paintings fetched later in the year, this figure is most likely an exaggeration.

In September Keith went on a sketching trip to the headwaters of the Merced River above Yosemite and the following month enjoyed the relative tranquillity of sketching around Drake's Bay to the north of San Francisco. Muir, by contrast, was informing Jeanne Carr that he'd 'had a glorious storm and a thousand sacred beauties that seemed yet more and more divine … I care to live only to entice people to look at Nature's loveliness … tell Keith the colours are coming to the groves'.[59]

For some time, Keith had been contemplating an extended trip to the east and decided that he had accumulated enough material to hold a one-man exhibition and sale of his works to fund it. In December his entire collection of California scenery, entitled *From Sierra to the Sea*, comprising around a hundred paintings, 'all of them meritorious; many of them highly so', was exhibited at the salesrooms of H. M. Newall and Co., auctioneers.[60] An advertisement he placed in the *Overland Monthly* advised the public that this is 'his first auction sale, it may be his last'.[61] While this was meant to be an inducement to acquire a painting while they were still available, Keith was showing remarkable prescience about what would be the outcome of the sale. John Muir, meanwhile, had just completed a 100-mile circuit on foot around the upper reaches of Sacramento

Valley during which he had not eaten for two and a half days, but having recovered quickly from the rigours of his trek he reported to Mrs Carr, 'now I am sleeping and *eating*. I found some geological facts that are perfectly glorious, and botanical ones too'. Content that his own simple needs had been met, his next line demonstrates his generosity of spirit and the depth of feeling for his artist friend. Knowing of the upcoming sale, he wrote, 'I wish I could make the public be kind to Keith and his paint'.[62] Although well-advertised and attracting considerable attention the auction realised only $7,087.50. Framing costs were $2,000; the sale working out at a net $50 per painting. One grossed $22.50.[63] The art correspondent of the *San Francisco Call* registered his disgust at the poor prices.[64]

Disappointed with the result, Keith did not go east and continued to paint large canvases depicting scenes from his excursions into the wild. His next significant work, *The Head Waters of the Merced*, took him rather longer to complete and was viewed by John Muir as it unfolded on the easel. Even while it was still a work in progress Muir was moved to convey in the *Overland Monthly* his 'admiration for a spiritual interpretation of mountain scenery presented with scientific accuracy'.[65] The magazine was happy to receive a letter from 'Our friend John Muir, the "Hugh Miller of the West" ' who described the painting thus:

> The foreground … is planted with picturesque, brown-barked junipers, mats and fringes of *chaparral*, and minute, garden-like patches of the various flowers characteristic of the region. The middle and back grounds are … flushed and inspired with pure mountain light. From its lofty fountains the young Merced is seen foaming down between its grandly sculptured Canyon rocks, curving gracefully through meadow and grove … The painted rocks are so truly rocky, we would expect to hear them clank and ring to the blows of a hammer; notwithstanding they are so full of plain truth in form, sculpture and combination, as to be fit for scientific illustrations, the whole picture glows with the very genius and poetry of the Sierra.
>
> Keith is patiently following the leadings of his own genius, painting better than he knows, observing a devout truthfulness to nature, yet removing veils of detail, and laying bare the very hearts and soul of the landscapes; and the truth of this is attested more and more fully by every picture that he paints.[66]

Keith struggled to complete *The Headwaters of the Merced* but eventually, referred to as *The Summit of the Sierra*, it was exhibited at the Snow and May Gallery, before, renamed *The High Sierra*, it was considered the picture of the month when the Art Association held its Summer Exhibition in July 1875.[67]

> [It] fully justified in its perfect state, the enthusiasm it called up, when half done, in the mind of such a masterful judge of mountain scenery as John Muir. It reproduces the giant mountains … not alone with an accuracy of detail satisfactory to a geologist, but also with … the power of calling up in the soul of the spectator, the same spirit and impression that the original of the picture would evoke … There is a poet here, as well as a painter … Not, of course, a poet without discords, not a painter without flaws, but, best taken with worst, a great and sympathetic artist.[68]

Keith, thin skinned as he was regarding criticism, may have felt slightly put out by this qualified tribute, the first mild censure he had received from the *Overland Monthly*. In any event, he was already in the Yosemite on an extended visit and provided the magazine with a lengthy account of his trip which was published over two issues in August and October. Keith had left for the Yosemite on 3 June in the company of John Muir, he to pursue his artistic studies and Muir to pursue his geological studies among the glaciers around Mount Lyall before travelling southward to the California Alps.[69] Keith took his family with him and joined Muir on his southward trip on which they were accompanied by the schoolteachers John Swett and Joseph B. McChesney. Swett, considered 'the father of the California public school system', had arrived on the West Coast to look for gold in 1853 but had quickly taken a job as a schoolteacher and had devoted his life to educating the young. He had befriended Muir the year before.[70] McChesney was the Principal of Oakland High School and, like Swett, an educational innovator. On 15 June, supplied with saddle horses and equipment for camp life they left the Hutchings' Hotel on a four-week trip into the High Sierra with only Muir to guide them. They did their own cooking. Behind them they left Keith's family, young Hortense riding around on a little horse, 'looking as cunning and pretty as possible in a tasty bloomer suit' while 'her mama stayed at the hotel painting flowers'.[71] They camped near the soda springs in the Tuolumne Meadows, crossed through the Mono Pass, down Bloody Canyon to Mono Lake, then trekked

forty miles south along the range, climbing upwards towards the mountains where they camped for several days in a glacial meadow nine thousand feet above sea level. On their return they visited the Lyell Glacier, where, '… under the instruction of Mr Muir. Every day was crowded with the richest and rarest lessons'.[72]

Keith wrote two letters from Yosemite to the *Overland Monthly* describing the early part of this trip, the first dated 5 July 1875. They appeared in two editions of the magazine under the heading of 'An Artist's Trip to the Sierra' in 'Etc.', a column devoted to the arts, science and literature. By this time Keith had become accustomed to the dangers and hardships of travelling with Muir because he glossed over them and focused his attention on the delights of the array of colours he saw around him and the difficulties of painting in changing light and weather conditions. In fact, he starts by stating:

> Yosemite has yet to be painted; painters' visits of a month or so have not done it. Time is required to take it in, and digest it, or else the inevitable result will be artistic dyspepsia (in the shape of the conventional yellow and red rocks), which, perhaps is the reason for the average Californian's disgust for Yosemite pictures.[73]

This last may be an allusion to the dismal prices received in his December sale over which he was still smarting:

> The cliffs are neither red nor yellow, but an indescribable shifting gray, changing and shifting even as you look. The lightness and evanescence of the morning gray, and the burnished light of evening, cannot to be gotten by a lucky hit out of the fog-cloud; sometimes the wind would tear into shreds the shifting fog-masses, until they looked like torn cobwebs … It all looks very deep and dark in tone, yet over all is the lightness of grayness, which you can only know by trying to mix the different tones; a hasty dash will only approximate to its truth of colour … It stormed and thundered and lightened all night, and next morning was like a winter morning – the ground covered a foot or more deep with snow … The day was half sunshine, half cloud, and the snow rapidly melted – the flowers looked curious peeping out from their beds of snow – and at evening there was a glorious sunset, with the sky perfectly clear … the foreground in sharp and sudden relief, a yellow-green, the green fused into the yellow,

as in a roaring night-camp fire you see the fusion of orange, sulphur, and gold.

Next morning we went through magnificent groves of pines (noblest among them all, the yellow-pine), through the shifting sunshine, deeper and deeper through the thick rich forest, climbing up and down; on every side riches of colour, riches of sunshine and shadow … Gaudy butterflies; bees droning and humming in the summer air; winged insects of different kinds – all unite to make a picture which indelibly impresses itself on the mind. Breathing in such beauty with the pure air, free from taint of every kind, no wonder that to us the echoes sounded their returns joyously on and up through the glittering sunshine, sparkling on every twig and rock and leaf, dancing back from the surface of laughing and gurgling brooks. We seemed to float on ethereal wings up and up, until, looking back, the deep dark lake appeared to have engulfed the sunlight.

Nature takes kindly to her children; if they would but leave their swaddling-clothes of conventionality and submit themselves to her influences – leave carking cares and come to the mountains, for a little while at least. Do not fancy that June is the only month; July is good, August is better, September is yet better, and October is the blessed one of all the year.[74]

Keith's second letter, undated, takes up from where he left off the first, with the same appreciation of nature viewed with the practised eye of a skilled painter:

As the light gains in the east, faint twitters are heard, gradually gaining strength and volume, and just as the first flush of sunlight falls on distant snow-covered dome and peak, the song is loudest. You spring up, not as in the sleepy town, but with a keen sense of enjoyment … On looking about … I found myself wishing for a little conventional studio-shadow tone in the landscape. There are, I fancy, but few painters who think for themselves and who leave the studio behind them when studying from nature, who have not had some sense of this puzzled feeling in finding nature oblivious to their preconceived ideas.

There is a feeling of sadness in the whole landscape, and in the blue-black sky which seems to close in upon you … We were near the top of Bloody Canyon … we begin to feel the influence of the savage desolateness of the place … the black lake – colourless … except at your feet, where the submerged boulders look green and brown, abruptly fade into

> the blackness – suggesting unknown horrible depths … A general feeling of blackness, of darkness, completes the picture, leaving fearful impressions which the real danger behind and before us failed to create … We see Mono Lake, the volcanoes, the eastern flank of the Sierra, peak piled on peak … light and heat radiating and reflecting from lake to sky, and from plain to peak.[75]

Keith's account stops with the party's arrival at Mono Lake which is a pity because their visit was not without incident. In fact, the rain and wind he had dismissed on day one as 'poor companions for a journey in the mountains' was rather more than that. Fortunately, John Muir kept a private journal and recorded their visit with the naturalist's eye for detail and the raconteur's gift for recounting a good story. During their trek he also sent a series of three special dispatches to the *San Francisco Bulletin*, describing their adventures.[76] He noted very early on that 'Keith's health is improving in response to the delicious pine-scented air', suggesting that his friend had been ill, but it was not long before they had freezing wind and rain in their faces. Muir could see storm clouds approaching so advised caution. Swett and McChesney, well wrapped up in winter clothes, were all for continuing to their prearranged stop for the night but it was Keith who declared, 'with a scowl and flash of savage wit blacker than any cloud, and with a voice like thunder, that it was "perfect madness for poets, painters and mountaineers to seek the darksome, dripping-snow-dusted woods in such wild, woeful weather" '.[77] Keith suggested they stop at an abandoned cabin; a wise decision as the storm raged and thundered all night while they remained secure within.

At Mono Lake, all three of Muir's companions wanted to visit volcanic islands some seven miles out where boiling springs and hot jets bubbled to the surface. They borrowed a waterlogged boat from a 'nomad' who advised them not to stay too long as a storm was approaching. They set out after breakfast, rowing on a flat calm surface but around noon they were caught in a heavy squall on the way back and with the boat taking in water faster than they could bail, Muir advised them to return to the islands where he said they should stay the night. Hungry and without blankets they began to rebel. Muir was unperturbed, the heaving waves reminding him of his boyhood on the seashore in Scotland. They tried to sleep but the fire of light brushwood gave little heat and after midnight, with the wind abating, Muir relented, the others having decided that the perils of the

waves were a lesser danger than being stranded on the island. They made good progress, with Muir in the prow acting as pilot to keep the boat heading into the wind to prevent overturning, the others taking turns at rowing and steering. Muir sat 'with shoes unlaced, ready to swim, and fearing not for his life, as the water was not cold, though the dashing of bitter spray would be trying to the eyes'. They eventually made their way back to the haven of the abandoned cabin which they found in the possession of wood rats.[78]

Keith returned to San Francisco at the beginning of September.[79] A postscript to their adventure was revealed by the December issue of the *Overland Monthly* which advised its readers that Keith's latest 'and most satisfactory art production' titled *Morning on the Upper Merced*, was painted to the order of Obed J. Wilson of Cincinnati, Ohio. An art collector and philanthropist, he had made his fortune as an educational publisher and spent a long and early retirement indulging his passion for travel. He had met Keith and Muir in the High Sierra while on a pleasure-trip to the West Coast during the summer.[80] He had seen two of Keith's large landscapes in San Francisco and commissioned one for himself. On the day the packet arrived, he wrote:

> I have not yet had the box opened, but presume the picture came safely. I shall arrange to-day for having it stretched and framed, after which I shall again write you as to our impressions concerning it. I do not doubt … that it will realise our expectation … in naming the price of the picture you put it at $2,500 … I therefore inclose (sic) a gold check for $2,500, payable to your order.

Keith had shown the letter to the *Overland Monthly* with obvious intent, and it gave the magazine 'great pleasure to place the above on record'.[81] By hoping that Wilson's example 'will be followed by the money-princes of our community and so give the lie to the old proverb that a prophet, etc.', the magazine atoned for its earlier mild but adverse criticism of *The Headwaters of the Merced*.

Keith was not only trying to hit back at buyers who had snubbed him; he was trying to lift his spirits. The news had arrived by telegraph from Peking of the death on 8 November 1875 of Benjamin B. Avery who had gone there in August 1874 as United States Minister to China. About a year before his departure, he had relinquished his role as city editor of the

Bulletin, a post he had held for nine years, and spent a protracted vacation in the mountains on account of his failing health. Somewhat recovered, he spent a few months as editor of the *Overland Monthly* before his departure for China. He was forty-seven years old.[82] Keith had lost a dear friend and his first mentor and champion. His mood was not helped by the poor prices he was getting for his paintings, Wilson's largesse excepted. At an auction by Newell and Company, Thomas Hill got $800 and $430 for two pictures; William Hahn got $270 and $300. Keith sold two paintings, *Spring* and *Tamalpais* at $115 each.[83] His mood might have been lifted slightly by John Muir who gave a talk in the Congregational Church, Sacramento on the 'Glaciers of California' illustrated by Keith's pictures of mountain scenery above the headwaters of the Merced.[84]

It is possible that one of the two large landscapes of Keith's that Wilson saw was *The Headwaters of the Merced* which was proving difficult to sell. Perhaps buoyed by the high price paid by Wilson, and in an attempt to prove local buyers wrong, Keith offered it, for a price well above what similar works had brought, to the California State legislature in Sacramento where it went on display at the State Library in the recently opened Capitol Building. A Mr Carson introduced a bill to purchase Keith's painting with a view to it representing the State at the Centennial Exhibition to be held in Philadelphia, but the Assembly Committee of Commerce turned it down because it had not met with very great popular appreciation.[85] None of Keith's painting appeared among the American landscapes at the Centennial.[86] His effort to emulate Albert Bierstadt's practice of selling expensive paintings to government departments embroiled him in controversy; a withering attack in the *Sacramento Record-Union* thought the price 'curious'.[87] The painting was returned from Sacramento and Keith, always sensitive to criticism, never repeated this ill-judged marketing strategy. The problem was resolved in April when it was bought for an undisclosed sum by the industrialist and former state governor, Leland Stanford, for the gallery in his new mansion.[88]

With the proceeds of this and other sales Keith bought a house at 1221 Clay Street in San Francisco on the west side of Nob Hill.[89] He paid $4,000 for it.[90] Around this time he started buying mining stocks and despite his increasing wealth he could never shake off the fear that poverty might 'one day stretch out its gaunt hand and claim him as a victim'.[91] Both Keith and Elizabeth exhibited paintings at the Art Association's Summer Exhibition in June before he tacked a note to his studio door and joined the summer

exodus of artists by embarking on a trek with the photographer Carleton Watkins to Soda Springs near Donner Summit in the Lake Tahoe area and on to Virginia City, Nevada.[92]

While Keith displayed several 'small, charming landscapes, full of soft hues and sentiment', he continued to paint large mountain canvases. In 1877 his *California Alps* (was this the version acquired by the mysterious Colonel Best, or the original which had never been sold for a reputed $5,000?) won the first prize of $350 for the best painting in oil by a local artist at the Mechanics Institute Fair, a competition judged by his close friend Irving M. Scott and Charles Walcott Brooks, the consul of Japan in San Francisco.[93] For all his seeming success, Keith was plagued by doubts about the work he was producing and his output was determined by pronounced swings in mood. These did not go unnoticed, with the *Chronicle*'s critic, who seemed to enjoy easy access to Keith's studio, observing that 'he works according to his moods, slowly and laboriously in quieter hues when depressed, and dashing off exquisite pictures full of bold effect when in exuberant spirits'.[94]

Part of Keith's despondency at this time can be attributed to the death of Charles Nahl on 1 March 1878. Nahl had done much to place the art community at the heart of the cultural life of the city and he was an honorary member of Eureka Turn Verein Hall, a gymnasium and social club run by the German community. He was buried from the hall with the service largely conducted in German and with a eulogy in English from James Hutchings, former editor of the *California Magazine* which Nahl had illustrated since its early days.[95] At a meeting of the Art Association it was resolved that Nahl's passing be recognised publicly because:

> [T]he community had been deprived of a man of more than ordinary merit and prominence … a man noted for his purity of character and honesty of purpose; who, as a friend, was full of kind sympathies, true, generous, and faithful … As an artist he was justly distinguished for his skill in the superior grades of his profession, uniting great fidelity with imagination and execution in detail, which denoted a mind of no common order and ability.[96]

Nahl's death was deplored 'as a public misfortune'. The association resolved to publish the proceedings of the meeting and send a copy to Nahl's nearest relatives. William Keith chaired this meeting as a personal tribute to

his friend. Times were changing, and Keith's insecurities were further tested towards the end of the year.

In the meantime, another massive painting measuring six feet by ten feet, *The Headwaters of the American River*, was unveiled at the San Francisco Art Association Summer Exhibition; Keith sold a number of paintings to connoisseurs, and, as had become his practice, he left his studio for the summer and went on an extended sketching trip around Mount Shasta.[97] In October he sold seventeen large paintings of mountain scenery to William Goodyear of New York City.[98] These were exhibited for three or four weeks at the Leavitt Art Rooms on Broadway where they were seen by the art correspondent of the *New York Tribune* who not only criticised the work but also criticised those who accepted it as good art:

> These pictures have been much praised by the California newspapers for the accuracy with which they represent the scenery of that state … it is certainly possible that these pictures do faithfully represent the scenery … but we must mildly dissent from the conclusion that they are therefore worthy of praise as art … art has little to do with literal portraiture … Mr Keith gives us not even map-maker's work … These pictures are a forcible illustration of a popular error among us, but happily not so widespread as it once was – that to have a great painting, it is necessary to paint great things … We must begin to take this truth to heart in America, or our painting is doomed to years of pettiness and insignificance; defects that are made doubly disheartening when displayed in the treatment of what is grandest in our natural scenery.[99]

Fired by this criticism, Keith, although his interest in large mountain scenes would never disappear, started to experiment with paintings that were more modest in scope and subject matter, and relied more on imaginative interpretation than topographical accuracy.[100] He had to overcome another bruising to his ego when a large illustrated volume, *A Table Book of Art: A history of art in all ages*, published in San Francisco in December 1878 made no mention of him.[101]

Notwithstanding, Keith had embarked on a radical change of style and in February 1879 the art critic of the *Chronicle* noted that he was working on 'a brilliant canvas, which may be looked upon as a new departure'.[102] This allegorical painting of a shepherd in a foothill landscape with 'its sky … rich with red, green, gold and crimson … the sunset being presumed to

represent to the shepherd's imagination the end of life and the glories he expects to come after'.[103] The picture did not please everyone; the art critic of the *Alta California* thought it 'a great mistake in Mr Keith to suppose that the public taste will be satisfied with landscapes in which there is a yellow sunset, with distant mountains, middle ground and foreground so vaguely painted that nothing can be seen distinctly save the sky'.[104]

In 1879, Keith sold his house on Clay Street for the same amount he had paid for it and the family moved to 580 Jones Street, Oakland. Keith only rented this property because they did not stay long at this address, and he bought more mining shares to the value of $10,000.[105] By 1880 they were living at 117 Popular in Oakland.[106] Young Hortense attended Irving School in Oakland where she was a model pupil, showing signs of artistic talent – and domestic contentment – in her end-of-year project with her drawing of *Washing Dishes*.[107]

All this time Keith maintained his studio at Mercantile Library Building while continuing to make excursions into the outdoors, seeking out less rugged locations in search of new subjects and inspiration in keeping with the smaller-scale paintings he was now producing. In July 1879 he visited the Missions at Monterey and Carmel and later in the year he went to Pope Valley in Napa County.[108] At the Mechanics' Fair in September, in a departure from his annual offering of a vast canvas, he exhibited a 'charming little landscape' but continued to exhibit large canvases at the State Fair in Sacramento, including *First Rains – Coast Range* and *Glacier Point, Yosemite*.[109] With these important exhibitions demanding Keith's attention, his absence from the fair at Oakland was regretted by the local press.[110] Keith had recurring bouts of illness at this time, partly because he found it difficult to relax, partly because he suffered from depression. This forced him to spend some days on a 'hygienic visit' to the ranch of Dr Maxwell in Napa County, where he sought the balm of country air and quietude. This may be an intimation that Keith, beset by the death of friends, hurt by criticism of his work, and wrestling with the rightness or wrongness of his decision to change his artistic style, was suffering from clinical depression. Whether on his own volition or on the advice of the doctor, who perhaps saw immersion in work as the best cure, he found the time to make some sketches.[111] A few months later he was secluded at San Rafael for several days in consequence of a severe cold.[112]

Keith's outlook improved and recognition of his standing in the art community came in March 1880 when he was appointed a director of

the San Francisco Art Association for three years.[113] With this acknowledgement secured he left for the east in May, travelling to Philadelphia, New York and Boston, before spending time in Maine with Elizabeth's family and sketching in the White Mountains and other haunts of the Hudson River School before returning to San Francisco in late October armed with two hundred sketches and studies, many of them in oil.[114] One account reported that Keith had gone east with the intention of staying there but Elizabeth had the more potent intention that they should return to 'God's own land'.[115] They went to live at 311 Stockton Street.[116]

Back in his studio, he set about developing his sketches in oils ready for the 1881 spring reception of the Art Association. *The Wasp* reported on the event with its customary stinging satire, noting that attendance was unusually large:

> [With] interest centred more on the floor, a rather novel feature. Of the oils, those of Keith are rather a surprise. He has five pictures, the best of which is *Weather* and the worst *The Old Mill*. The quintet are a disappointment. We miss his former breadth and discover many more weak spots than in former work. Somehow, they give the impression that his visit East has altered his ideas somewhat without improving them.[117]

Because of such criticism, Keith's transition from painting panoramic vistas relying on topographical precision to more pastoral subjects relying on spiritual interpretation was gradual. He tried to satisfy his own yearnings on the one hand and the demands of the buying public and critics on the other. Not least among the latter was his friend John Muir. Keith continued to seek out subject matter to satisfy both while hiking in the rugged wilderness of Oregon and in Puget Sound in Washington State or while strolling among the sand dunes of western San Francisco.[118] He might have continued this parallel output for some time, but personal tragedy intervened to force the change of direction.

Keith's wife, Elizabeth, his 'Lizzie', died on 9 March 1882.[119]

CHAPTER SIX

The Lure of the Old Masters

> Every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter.[1]

Elizabeth Emerson Keith's death in March 1882 was widely reported, with some newspapers referring to her familiarly as 'Lizzie'.[2] An artist in her own right, she had become 'proficient' in still life and fruit painting; her work considered 'conscientious, accurate and spirited, and reproduced with faithfulness'.[3] Her influence on Pacific Coast art lay primarily 'on the effect which her sympathy and encouragement had upon her husband' for whom she was 'a wise counselor'.[4] Her sudden death from a heart condition at the age of forty-two devastated Keith. In reply to a letter of sympathy from Mrs Ellen J. McHenry, he expressed his remorse at the way he had treated her:

> Eighteen years of married life with never a cross look or word from her, but. Oh, how many from me. I know her dead far better than when she was here – the pathetic patience – and love with which she bore my impatience … I fear and tremble for the coming months and years with loneliness and despair and their desperate companions; many a far better man has gone deep into the mire and perished there from just this cause.[5]

Keith's structured life was thrown into disarray; he found it difficult to deal with the funeral arrangements and had to take care of the children, fourteen-year-old Hortense and seventeen-year-old Charlie who was at Sebastopol about seventy miles away, either with an aunt, Mrs Phoebe Withers, or more likely at the military academy where Keith could not reach him by telegram. He asked his close friend, the engraver Charles Riedy, to go and fetch him. This he did with considerable difficulty, being

delayed in part by the deep mud of country roads. Such was the heartache that overcame Keith, for a brief period he took to sleeping in his studio with son Charlie for company.[6]

Although he found it difficult to function, artwork he had completed before Elizabeth's death in his newly adopted intimate style appeared in the May edition of *The Californian* when a full-page sketch of the Carmel Mission accompanied Frances Fuller Victor's, 'Studies of the California Missions'.[7] Keith might have had mixed feelings when the same magazine reported that he had recently finished a large picture of Mount Shasta:

> [W]hich many will be inclined to pronounce his best piece of work. It has none of the clap-trap art that is so frequently introduced with theatrical effect into large canvases … Anyone who is familiar with the Sierra will recognise the verisimilitude of Mr Keith's work … the whole picture is an evidence of that painstaking conscientiousness which has produced such marked results in Mr Keith's later work.[8]

Such high praise for work in a style he was trying to shed must have unsettled him and intensified his anxieties for the future, although his material needs were not in doubt. Apart from his own funds, Elizabeth left an estate valued at $9,000 United States gold deposited in a bank and with her husband the sole beneficiary.[9]

Keith did not sink into decades of depression as he had feared. Instead, he turned for spiritual comfort and guidance to a man he had known for a few years, the Reverend Joseph Worcester, minister of the second Society of the New Jerusalem Church in San Francisco and active in charitable works in the city. He had arrived in California from his native Massachusetts in the 1860s. A keen lover of nature and the arts – he was an accomplished architect – he had lived for some time in Yosemite Valley before moving into the city. He was a follower of Emanuel Swedenborg, the eighteenth-century Christian theologian and philosopher-mystic who had spent twenty years exploring the spiritual world and who believed that within the literal meaning of the Bible lies a spiritual sense that is unseen by ordinary humans. Unlocking and interpreting this 'unseen spiritual sense would become the inspiration for Keith's later symbolic and imaginary landscape paintings'.[10] A central tenet of Swedenborgian thought was the Doctrine of Correspondence whereby: 'Nothing is to be found in the created universe which has not a correspondence with something in man, not

only with his affections and their thoughts, but also with his bodily organs and viscera; not with these, however, as substances but as uses'.[11] The doctrine reveals the natural world to be but a shadow of the real or spiritual world. Objects respond, agree or are analogous to each other so that the heat and light of the sun correspond to God's love and wisdom. Thus, heat and love and light and truth are correspondences.[12] The doctrine has much to say about colour:

> There are two colours fundamental of the rest, in the spiritual world, red and white. And so far as they partake of red, they sig[nify] good; and so far as they partake of white, they sig[nify] truth, because the heat of the spiritual sun is of a fiery red, and the light thereof a shining white. But black colours derive their origin from the hells, which are also two in number, one in opposition [to] white, which is with those who have falsified the truths of the Word, and the other in opposition to red, which blackness is with those who have adulterated the goods of the Word … Colours in the spiritual world are modifications of celestial light, thus of the intelligence and wisdom which is with the angels in heaven. There are colours in another life, and in heaven most beautiful, which were never seen here on earth.[13]

A painting looked at through the eyes of a Swedenborgian, 'ceases to be the mere depiction of a scene in nature and becomes instead a representation of one of the artist's own interior states of consciousness'.[14] It was up to the artist to communicate these emotions to his viewers, 'who in turn bring their own state of feeling to bear on their reaction to the picture'.[15]

Keith's first exposure to Swedenborgian beliefs had been when he travelled from New York to Aspinwall on board the *Moses Taylor* on his way to California in 1859 when he passed much of his time in the company of George H. Sanders (variously Saunders), an architect who would go on to design school and university buildings in San Francisco and become president of the American Institute of Architects from 1891 to 1895. He was an ardent Swedenborgian.[16] The extent to which Sanders' views were imprinted on Keith is unclear, but when he sought comfort from the Rev. Joseph Worcester his interest was awakened, and he became a follower. Worcester regularly visited the artist's studio, punctually at the same hour on each visit and so impressed Keith's pupils that they resolved to 'follow him to forest-depths of introspection … to search for that mysterious

Something that invested him with the air of tranquility that surrounded him'.[17]

A man of 'great charm', Worcester would supplant John Muir as the most far-reaching influence on Keith's artistic ideals. Under Muir's guidance, Keith had traversed the landscape of California and painted a wide range of its natural phenomena in a competent and skilful manner while endeavouring to render the scenery as accurately as possible. He had already modified his output, painting fewer large panoramic mountain scenes in the Hudson River School style – increasingly seen as outdated – and painting more picturesque scenes of an intimate nature. Consequently, few artists could have known the state's diverse geography as well as he did, from rugged mountain wildernesses with raging rivers to babbling brooks and undulating farmland; in all its seasons, in all weathers. 'Under Worcester's spiritual influence Keith began to realise that what determined the lasting appeal of a painting is not so much what is painted but how the artist explores and exploits his subject matter in terms of the purely abstract elements of design and colour.'[18] He started to doubt the validity of presenting facts merely as facts without reference to artistic criteria.

Keith, somewhat restored by Worcester's spiritual counsel, was soon hard at work in his studio. He was already planning another trip to Europe and had a clear-out of oil paintings and sketches from his time in New England and 'every phase of Scenery in the Mountains and Valleys of California and Oregon', that had accumulated in his studio since his last auction eight years earlier. The collection went on display at the Gallery of the San Francisco Art Association before being sold by Easton & Eldridge, Auctioneers, on the afternoon and evening of Thursday 12 October.[19] 'The auction was well attended and the bidding quite spirited'. Among the pictures were nearly a hundred small sketches without frames which brought from fifteen to thirty dollars each. Many of the larger pictures brought good prices. *Mount Shasta, from Castle Lake* at $1,600 was by far the most successful; *Glacial Lake and Meadows – High Sierras* at $500 next. Many of the others did not reach treble figures and some larger pictures were withdrawn due to the small prices offered.[20] The total proceeds were over $10,000 and Keith appears to have been pleased with the result, having predicted in advance what he thought the sale would bring.[21]

Another person who was instrumental in lifting Keith from his slough of despondency was Mrs McHenry's daughter, Mary, whose father John, who died in 1880, had been a San Francisco County Court judge. He was

born in Raleigh, North Carolina, of Scottish ancestry, and raised on his family's plantation in Tennessee. He served on the First Municipal Court of New Orleans. US President Martin Van Buren had offered him the post of Ambassador to Spain, which he turned down to go west in 1852, intrigued as he was by the life and law there.[22] The McHenry family was prominent in the city, and wealthy. They lived first on a 160-acre property on the East Bay called Temescal Rancho, a three-storey mansion with Doric columns and glass conservatory surrounded by extensive terraced rose gardens containing a fountain and flanked by an orchard of over 5,000 fruit trees. John McHenry made the daily commute by ferry to his law office in San Francisco. This was an idyllic place for Mary to be born into, as the middle child, on 20 November 1855.[23] In 1864, the family moved to Telegraph Hill in San Francisco and Temescal Rancho was transformed into Shell Mound Amusement Park complete with racetrack and dance halls.

Although the McHenrys were Episcopalians, Mary went to a Catholic boarding school in San Jose because of its reputation for excellence. One school report card described her as 'a little self-willed', early evidence of a trait that was to remain with her.[24] She attended two other private schools before graduating from the Girl's High School in 1875. In the spring of 1879, she graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with a classics degree.[25] A keen reader of her father's law books, she enrolled in the Hastings College of Law in September 1879 and had the distinction of being the first woman to graduate from there with a Bachelor of Law degree on 29 May 1882.[26] Free from years of study and prior to setting up her own law practice in San Francisco, where she would focus on probate, Mary joined her older sister, Emma ('Em'), and a party of seven amateur women artists on a field trip led by Keith to the Santa Cruz Maintains where they 'ruralised' around Summer Home Farm for the month of June.[27]

Both sisters had previously met Keith; Mary as a young girl when he had encouraged her to study wood engraving, which she did with Harrison Eastman, near Keith's own studio.[28] 'Em' had been an informal student of Keith as far back as the 1860s. Keith was reinvigorated by the experience of acting as teacher and guide and 'sang duets at night with Emma in his fine tenor voice', but he fell in love with Mary towards whom he had felt an attraction while still married to Elizabeth. He saw a lot of her in Mary and his feelings intensified on 'Lizzie's' death. The 'impetuous artist' declared his love during a moonlit walk, and in March 1883 they were officially engaged.[29]

The couple spent a lot of time together and Mary relinquished her law practice after less than a year in preparation for married life. Keith continued to make sketching trips in the neighbouring countryside and Mary often accompanied him. During one outing he took her to visit Rev. Worcester at his 'little cottage' in the Piedmont Hills near Oakland where the pastor lived for a brief period before moving into a house he designed himself on Russian Hill, San Francisco, and where he would live for the rest of his life.[30] Mary did not enjoy the visit. They were given a 'frugal refreshment of strong tea and rye bread with marmalade' and her fiancé left her alone for the afternoon with Worcester while he went off sketching. She felt a 'great repression and a sort of moral tension' in his presence and the two found little to talk about. She was on the point of leaving when Keith returned.[31] Mary never took to Worcester, perhaps she felt that he exerted too much influence over Keith. She was not a churchgoer herself, and in later life rarely accompanied her husband on his regular Sunday journey to attend the New Jerusalem Church – to give the Swedenborgian Church its formal name – in San Francisco. Despite his regular churchgoing habits, Mary thought her husband was 'never an unquestioning convert' to Swedenborgian principles and thought the finer points of religious doctrine did not interest him.[32]

Keith certainly was not 'unquestioning'. He read voraciously books given to him by Worcester, including Swedenborg's *Divine Providence and its Laws*, first published in Latin in 1763 at a time of intense philosophical and theological debate on the nature of God's governance of the world through divine love. It offered a solution to the 'the problem of evil': How to reconcile God's goodness and power with the presence of evil in the world and in the human heart and mind by revealing the divine laws that lie behind these contradictory phenomena to restore human faith in the meaningfulness of the word. The book also offered spiritual guidance for the conduct of everyday life, how negative thoughts and deeds can become positive through the exercise of free will aligned to divine providence. Keith wrestled with the concepts of free will and determinism for the rest of his life.[33] Keith also read *Lectures on the Nature of Spirit: And of Man as a Spiritual Being* by Chauncey Giles, a Swedenborgian minister in New York, who argued that the spiritual world is a real world, existing in the same way that matter exists, that it is all around us, that man is a spiritual being with the same real properties, that he is the crowning achievement of God's creation, that death is merely the stepping out of the material

into the spiritual world, and at the resurrection stands complete as a spiritual being before the judgement of God. Man is either consigned to hell or raised up to enjoy eternal repose and happiness in heaven.[34] Whatever Mary might have thought, by exposing Keith to such thoughts, Worcester's influence on him was profound and long lasting. Such books held no interest for Mary; her intellectual pursuits were worldlier, and her considerable energies and legal expertise were directed towards the advancement of women's suffrage, another area of divergence with Worcester who was not a supporter.[35]

William and Mary married on 2 June 1883. The ceremony took place in the evening at Mrs McHenry's home in Berkeley, with the Rev. Giles A. Easton of San Francisco officiating and Keith's friend Harry Bigelow acting as best man.[36] Known to friends as 'Petey', Bigelow was a journalist who wrote for the *Argonaut*; little wonder the social columns of the press reported with a flourish that 'nearly all the principle [sic] artists in the state were among the guests … The ceremony took place in the spacious parlour, which resembled a fairy bower, so beautiful and lavish were the floral designs … After the service an elaborate supper was served'.[37] Mary claimed that this was 'all a splendid exaggeration'.[38] The arrangements were festive but informal. 'No crowd, no grand supper, only wine and wedding cake.'[39] Keith, despite the lack of formality, 'looked like a scared rabbit', according to one guest. He relaxed after the ceremony when he and Mary had their own reception in San Francisco, first at the Grand Hotel Annexe and later at the Palace.[40]

After a few days at the home of Mrs McHenry, the newlyweds left on honeymoon, travelling by train to San Diego and then overland by easy stages in the blazing heat of the summer that was so intense that Keith complained, despite all his experience of roughing it in the outdoors. Enduring uncomfortable accommodation and suffering indigestion from food that was 'something frightful' must have tested Mary's resolve as they visited many of the old California missions on what for Keith was essentially a working holiday.[41] The project may have been suggested by Rev. Worcester, 'who saw the missions as embodying the ideal of self-supporting religious communities united by deep faith', because Keith took time to write telling him he had painted all the best missions and advising that, 'with the sketches and memoranda they will form a collection of unique and historical value'.[42] If, indeed, Worcester was the orchestrator of her honeymoon's itinerary, this would be another reason for Mary to feel resentful towards

him. Keith recorded these crumbling remnants of early California history including Missions San Luis Rey, San Juan Capistrano and San Gabriel in a real and accurate manner, a style he was soon to abandon in favour of projecting a more personal or spiritual vision.[43] All of these missions have since been restored, but when Keith, some fifteen years later, was shown comparative pictures of Carmel Mission and asked what he thought about plans for its restoration, he threw up his hands in horror. 'They must mean destroy. Why, there is nothing left of old Carmel Mission. I would never recognise it. And so they want to treat the other missions the same way? For my part I think the plan should be discouraged and the missions let alone'.[44] As for Keith's mission paintings; they languished in his studio for decades until the Ruskin Art Club of Los Angeles acquired seven of them by paying Keith's life membership of $100 to the Southwest Society of the Archaeological Institute of America and then handing over the paintings to the society to hang in their museum.[45]

In the summer of 1883, following a sketching trip to Santa Cruz, Keith rekindled his plan to visit Europe. Initially he had asked 'Em' and her husband, naval officer Charles Fremont Pond, to accompany them but now just he and Mary would be going. A young San Francisco native, Theodore Wores (1859–1939), had recently returned after seven years in Munich and taken a studio next to Keith in the Mercantile Library Building where he regaled Keith with accounts of his time in Munich studying portraiture under fellow American Frank Duveneck who had opened a school there. Intrigued by the quality of the work Wores produced, Keith determined to add portrait painting to his repertoire and determined that Munich was the place to study.[46]

Before departure there was a flurry of social engagements, the couple being guests of Mr and Mrs Thomas H. Buckingham at their private table at the Baldwin Hotel and at the home of Judge Wallace, among others.[47] More importantly, arrangements had to be made for the care of the children, Charlie now aged eighteen and Hortense, fifteen. Keith was a worried man; not so much about Hortense ('Tennie'), for 'she was reserved and contented' living in the home of Mary's mother, Mrs McHenry. Charlie also went to live there but 'was inclined to be a little wild' and often stayed elsewhere.[48] Keith wanted the best for his children, but in echoes of his own childhood he seems to have been stern with them and had expectations that any rewards to be got from life came from working hard, this being

especially so in the case of his son. Just as Keith had been in his formative years, they were often left for protracted periods with relatives, especially when he and his wife went to Europe. They had been left in the care of Elizabeth's sisters in Maine when Keith and his wife went to Dusseldorf in 1871 and Keith was often absent on lengthy sketching trips in the mountains. Keith asked Rev. Joseph Worcester to act as Charlie's guardian during his absence and sought the help of Charles Riedy, telling him he would be away for a year or two and reminding him that Charlie had been sent to the military academy but would not stay at school. Charlie had also recently returned from Tennessee where he'd had 'a fine opportunity but failed to make anything of it'.[49] Keith told Riedy that Rev. Worcester would also help but felt that Charlie would listen to Riedy because he was only slightly older. Riedy was reluctant to take on the responsibility. 'I can't follow him', he said, 'to see where he goes or what he is doing.' 'No,' responded Keith, 'you can't do that. But when you talk with him you can tell where he goes and what he does; and then you can help him to keep in the right way'. Riedy acquiesced and agreed to teach Charlie wood engraving in his shop. Keith rewarded Riedy with an oak framed painting of a Yosemite Valley scene.[50] The Keiths left San Francisco on 15 September 1883 with many friends at the overland depot to bid farewell.[51]

They travelled by train to New York City with Keith happy to see Mary enjoy scenery that was new to her. Keith, who was inclined to be prudish and did not like blasphemy and coarse language, was less enamoured by having to share their carriage with four California students; 'mean, vulgar, impudent fellows'.[52] In New York, they spent a pleasant time visiting Keith's uncle, William Bruce, then a relaxing week in Stamford, Connecticut with Mrs Eva Perine, a friend of Mary's whom Keith had met when he acted as their guide on their Santa Cruz field trip the year before. This was followed by social visits to several of Mary's relatives throughout New England. They visited Washington, DC, catching up with Emma and her husband, stationed there with the navy, and visited the Corcoran Gallery. For the entirety of his absence, Keith kept up a lengthy and detailed correspondence with Joseph Worcester. Writing from Washington in October 1883, he described his visit to the Corcoran Gallery where he paid particular attention to the work of American landscape artists, most of which he dismissed.[53] Some paintings brought back memories. Frederic E. Church's *Niagara* he found interesting because he had seen the painting

in New York when he was an apprentice and had recently visited the falls, but he thought the painting:

> had all the look of having been done piecemeal. There were two or three … possibly by Whistler of London, they were absurd and yet showed artistic feeling, only you could see the affectation of singularity and the tendency was to make one laugh as at a mountebank's tricks.[54]

The Keiths embarked for Europe on 14 October. They lingered some time in Belgium, having endured a stormy crossing to Antwerp which made Mary seasick.[55] On their way to Munich they visited the Museum at Cologne, where Keith saw landscapes by artists he had once 'reverenced, such as Achenbach … and a good number of Dusseldorf artists, they looked very hard and very painty'. Keith was surprised and disappointed, 'they all had such a self-conscious look, some were very bad … and the prices on the pictures – big prices, paint must be dear in Deutschland'.[56] They arrived in Munich on 8 November 1883.

Munich, a vibrant, cosmopolitan city, had supplanted Dusseldorf as the centre of the international arts movement. It enjoyed royal patronage, which fostered the Royal Academy, created museums and provided artists with lucrative commissions.[57] It attracted artists from all parts of the world and between 1850 and 1920 some four hundred Americans, among them Frank Duveneck (1849–1919) and William Merritt Chase (1849–1916). These artists contributed to the artistic standing of Munich by returning to the United States of America and becoming important art teachers, recounting their experiences at the Academy where they had been taught to emulate the style of seventeenth-century Dutch and Spanish portraitists. Another American, Carl Marr (1858–1936), remained in Munich where he rose to be President of the Royal Bavaria Academy and was knighted by the King of Bavaria.[58]

Hampered by his inability to learn the German language, Keith did not enrol in the Academy. Instead, from the moment he arrived he made the most of other opportunities the city had to offer.[59] He visited the old and new Pinakothek, finding the old more interesting than the new, which he did not care to see again, and his reactions, possibly borne of frustration, are mixed and changeable. 'I like Rembrandt the more I see of him and … tire of Rubens, he is a little too ponderous and fleshy … but he was a wonder and what would he not have done if living in these days'.[60] On a visit to the old Pinakothek a fortnight later he had modified his opinion.

Rubens was now an unqualified 'wonder' but there 'wasn't much grace' in Rembrandt's drawings.[61] The more he saw of landscapes, the more his response became mixed. He thought the pictures at the museum of the leading art association, the Kunstverein, very poor but by the time he paid another visit to the old Pinakothek in early December he had begun to enjoy more those Old Masters who had flourished before the nineteenth century; Van Dyck portraits were 'so elegant and refined', two or three by Rembrandt, one or two by Titian, Rubens he had 'chills and fevers about'.[62]

The Keith's first home was in an archetypal artist's garret. As soon as they had taken up residence Mary wrote a letter to all the female members of her family including 'Tennie'. She enclosed a diagram of their one-room apartment describing its location and the cost of their rented furniture. The room had a southern exposure and from the window she could 'see only a lot of roofs, steep and thick with snow'.[63] They were living in a poor neighbourhood, with a poor woman sweeping the street. It was bitterly cold, 'breathing is like drinking ice water through your nose'.[64] Keith spent some days looking for something more suitable but anything cheap would be among the students 'who lived a café or Club life which he did not care for'.[65] Their stay in these mean lodgings was brightened by sharing a Thanksgiving meal at the Hotel Oberbollinger with friends from San Francisco; John Hittell, correspondent for the *Bulletin*; his nephew Carlos, recently arrived to train as an artist and Hittell's sister, Katherine.[66] Keith quickly found 'a splendid large room with a north light and big stove' in a new building at 77 Gabelbergerstrasse, paying in excess of what a similar studio would cost in New York.[67]

Once in their new, spacious studio Keith and Mary spent a lot of time cooped up indoors, refusing an invitation to a concert because it was so cold outside. His intermittent bouts of homesickness and mild melancholy were only relieved by her cheerfulness and tales of her upbringing and family – her father's forebears had come from Scotland and fought against the British in the Revolutionary Wars.[68] They entertained other American visitors and Keith invited Eva Withrow, who had been a student of Wores, to share his studio without charge, but she whistled and sang at her work, was volubly proud of the connections she had made with famous German painters, and started to act as if she was doing Keith a favour; that he was learning from her. Eventually she had to go. Keith enjoyed working in his studio during this period as he explained to Wores:

> I have been painting from the model and have been for the last two months. I am just infatuated with it. When I commenced it was with the idea of just

> playing at it; now it has taken complete possession of me. I think when springtime comes, I shall go to the country somewhere, and try to paint, half landscape, half figures. That's what I should like to do. I wish you were [here], I'd take lessons of you. I am improving a good deal in drawing, but it seems to me that my colour is fearful, so hard and wooden, it makes me think of some of those old pictures, where they know nothing about painting, only drawing; my colour is just like a board, and I don't know how to get over it. I often think of you, and the way you used to swing your brush around. I only hope that you will come here. I should be sorry for California, but I think it would be best for you.[69]

Wores had given Keith a letter of introduction to his friend, fellow American artist and New England transcendentalist, Joseph Frank Currier (1843–1907), who had been active in Munich for several years. Keith delivered the letter and Currier, who had no studio of his own, visited Keith two or three times a week and offered advice. Currier's approach to landscape intrigued Keith; he painted large canvases *en plein air* in a single afternoon, refusing to do any more work on them, saying they lost their value if he did. Keith thought Currier took this broad, slashing, energetic style too far, and when he tried to sell Keith a sketch in lieu of payment for his advice, Keith, who liked Currier personally but thought it a poor exchange, was glad when he stopped visiting.[70]

Away from the seclusion of his studio Keith continued to visit the galleries. He was often disappointed with the pictures, apart from a few exceptions in the Bibliothek – the Bavarian State Library – and the Galerie Wimmer, a long-established art association in Munich with its own museum. Joseph Worcester suggested he copy Van Dyck and although he thought it a good idea he 'should feel ashamed to stand with people looking on at [his] work' and doubted whether he would have the courage.[71] Every now and then his enthusiasm waned, and he conveyed his disappointment to Worcester:

> Today, [24 February 1884], when I went to the old Pinakothek, it seemed so curious a thing to see famous names of painters and see nothing I could really admire … I wondered if there really was the merit in them that people talk so much about. For myself, I couldn't see anything, but … very bad drawing and very mediocre colour, I didn't feel either that I was in fault-finding mood.[72]

Although Keith kept up a weekly correspondence with Worcester on the state of his art, it was not the only thing of importance they had to discuss. The letters, written on a Sunday, his one day of rest, were interspersed with references dealing specifically with his son Charlie. By such means Keith was kept informed of Charlie's circumstances; there was no direct contact between father and son:

> I am glad you saw Charlie. Tennie [Hortense] gives me a fine account of him and his work … I have been thinking of your proposal to allow him $20 a month and charge it to me. I like the idea very much, but it's for that reason that he will call on you and, in that way, get under your influence … I am very glad Charlie goes to church occasionally … Today is the anniversary of his mother's death – two years ago today.[73]

Most of Keith's remarks in his numerous letters to his trusted confidant and counsellor spell out his continuing disappointment and frustration. Charlie had moved away from Berkeley and the influence of Mr Worcester and Mrs McHenry, ostensibly because he thought it a waste of time having to cross the bay every day to work in Riedy's workshop, but Keith pointed out that when he was an apprentice, he walked four miles to work each day. He complained to Rev. Worcester, 'I don't know how Charlie lives, nor anything about him; he doesn't write and keeps me in ignorance of his doings … I feel as if there were no confidence between us … we are both at fault. I don't have enough consideration for him, and he doesn't for me'.[74] This was in sharp contrast to Keith's relationship with Hortense who continued to be a model student. Now at the Denman Grammar School, she was one of the pupils who entertained the school at the closing prize-giving programme by reading a composition. She was one of thirteen pupils from her class of forty-two who were named on the Roll of Honour and honourably promoted.[75]

An undercurrent of anxiety about Charlie always remained with Keith and was reflected in his inability to give full attention to his work. At this juncture he was struggling in his own mind to reconcile the importance of subject matter and abstract artistic qualities, and he could not see that even the Old Masters were able to achieve this:

> Take all the religious pictures of Rubens, Van Dyck, etc. They seem to me to be simply painted from the pictorial sense, not from any religious

> feeling, at least in me there is nothing of that sentiment aroused when looking at them and I doubt whether the painter had any of that feeling. Rubens is only an enjoyment of sensuous colour, dramatic in design. Van Dyck the same only in a fainter way. I don't see that the art of painting elevates either the painter or the spectator, it is a simple intellectual pleasure, not of the heart at all.[76]

Keith, at times turned 'somersaults'. He apologised to Worcester for an earlier dismissal of the French landscape painter Claude Lorrain (c. 1604–82), whom he now thinks '*was* a landscape painter' (original emphasis).[77] His next change of heart concerned Rubens, whose real significance eventually dawns on him, now he:

> is simply wonderful, so prolific, so full of virility and yet unsatisfying from the excess of his virility, but he makes everyone else seem weak in comparison … Durer … I don't believe was a painter, he was a draughtsman, and I think when that is the feeling in excess in an artist then colour goes.[78]

As spring approached, and it became easier to get out and about, Keith returned to the study of landscape, looking especially at the work of Jacob van Ruysdael, preeminent master of the Dutch Golden Age that flourished with Dutch nationalism in the seventeenth century, and his pupil, Meindert Hobbema. The more he studied Ruysdael, the more he saw to admire and the more he studied and compared the Flemish painters, Rubens and Van Dyck, and the Germans Holbein and Durer, the more he appreciated the distinction between painting and drawing, between being a colourist and a draughtsman.[79] Rubens was beginning to emerge as the painter that intrigued him the most. His huge canvases were made to adorn the walls and ceilings of churches and palaces and meant to be viewed from distance and from below. Keith recognised this:

> I think that Rubens' pictures at the time they were finished must have been raw and decorative, the reds and blues and yellows … if they had been truer to nature and consequently less coloury, they would have suffered altogether. Van Dyck worked differently, more true to nature, and less decorative, but then he didn't paint those large things as much as Rubens and when he did it showed him weak comparatively – he was a portrait painter par excellence and yet time has flattered his work.[80]

In May 1884, William and Mary travelled to Paris where they stayed with John Randall Bruce, a cousin of Keith's from Oldmeldrum, a banker in the city and living at 36 Rue Traversière in the 12th arrondissement.[81] Keith spent a lot of time in the Louvre captivated by the extent of its collection, with every art school, 'even the English', represented. A small landscape by John Constable he thought was, 'one of the most beautiful pictures I ever saw … and such a sky …' He must have been heartened at seeing this because he wrote, 'do you know Mr Worcester, this looks like some of my pictures'.[82] The landscapes he liked were of the picturesque, buildings, trees, old mills. The artists he had studied in the Pinakothek, Hobbema, Rubens, Van Dyck, were all represented, not necessarily with better paintings although some were 'simply wonderful'. Keith also visited the Salon where he was very much impressed 'by a high "Caravansary" of pictures some very large and these brought the crowd around them … There were a great many very good pictures painted well but they seemed painted for the Salon'.[83]

After a few busy weeks they returned to Munich via Switzerland where they had to take to their beds in the middle of the day to keep from freezing. In Munich, Keith found that his studio was occupied until the end of June by a young artist and they had to live in a hotel instead of the private room which he had engaged. Eating out in smoke-filled raucous restaurants did not agree with him. He dreaded going, and dreaded having to take Mary there, but had no alternative.[84] On a brighter note, he compared revisiting the Pinakothek to being reunited with 'an old friend'. Although 'so small and poor' in comparison with the Louvre, he thought it 'rich enough for me'. One thing he could appreciate more than ever was that 'the old fellows were simpler and more straightforward' than modern painters who can be 'superior in an analytical way and are more minute … but can't combine the two things'.[85] Keith also recognised how alike Ruysdael and Hobbema were – he preferred Hobbema – and 'how much these old pictures owe to time in toning and enriching the whole effect'.[86]

Keith had learnt a great deal in his time in Europe. Having done the research, he now applied himself to putting his newly acquired knowledge into practice. His lengthy epistles to Worcester change tack and he starts to describe in detail his own work and how he is faring:

> I am at work again here and I am delighted with a life-size figure I have been at work on. (it looks like Capt Cuttle in Dombey and Son) it's the best by far I have done. I am very much encouraged … I don't believe much is

> to be got out of a regular teacher. I find that the criticisms I get are what I see clearly enough myself. It would be different if I were a young man without experience, but I have had a lot of experience in Nature only in another direction and so I see that the only way is to go on with Nature for a guide and so preserve my individualism … All I gain will be my own, honestly gained and not a mere weak imitation of someone else. It's a long road, and … if it wasn't that I know that every downright honest effort to do something in this new line will and does help me in landscape I should be discouraged and give it up, but now I can't give it up until I have given myself a trial. It's the only downright study I have ever done, and I know it is for my good and if I stay here another year doing nothing but figures, I feel that it will be time not thrown away … Since I have been at the heads, I look at things differently … to see if the head is understood in the little delicacies about the eyes, the mouth and nose, understood in modelling, in drawing, and in colour. One doesn't have to look so closely to such things in a landscape. Colour and effect is the thing looked for mostly in that, but in a head the range of vision is so close that the other things have to be felt too.[87]

He sent some of his completed portraits of living models back to San Francisco where they were greeted with approval by those who saw them.[88] In his weekly stream of letters to Worcester, Keith's optimism and enthusiasm shine through. In a letter (partly written on headed notepaper from the art gallery of his friend William Macbeth, 237 Fifth Avenue, New York), he wrote:

> I am doing better work now – have taken quite a jump (for me) … I feel very much encouraged at my progress, it is hard work and I occasionally refresh myself with landscape, but I am determined about the heads and figures … It would make you laugh to see and hear me talk to [my models], they do not understand one word in ten. When I don't understand the German word, I add 'ich' or 'hausen' or something that ends in German … and when that won't do, I add pantomime – that is better understood. I don't have much to do with the younger female models, they are all bad I am told by old hands, so I confine myself to old men and women and children. It is wonderful how these children will sit; they seem to realise the value of money. I think the children … like to come to me, but the secret is I feed them with raisins, and raisins are an unheard-of luxury and the way they gobble them down shows itself so.[89]



Figure 9. William Keith, *Girl in Bavarian Costume*, c. 1884, Oil on canvas, 32 × 28 inches.

Gift of Charles H. King and Marguerite West, Saint Mary's College Museum of Art Permanent Collection. [0–132]

Worcester appears to have reproached Keith for his display of self-satisfaction because he felt obliged to defend himself by pointing out that:

> I am improving week by week now and of course it makes me feel good. I don't know that I have any other feeling about it than that I shall be able to paint a portrait, and I don't know whether there is anything of the sense

> of possession of which you speak. It doesn't seem a wrong feeling, in fact it seems to me as if there was a kind of increase in the sense of delight I feel about it. I suppose what you mean by the word possession is a pride and conceit in being able to do it?[90]

Worcester had enquired about a cholera outbreak that was sweeping across Europe, but Keith replied that it had not appeared in Munich:

> [A]s far as we know … but it will have no effect on my plans … This year must see me through … until I can paint a head … it's just as well for me to stay here and work. I can live cheaper than in Paris, and in the winter, I may go down to Italy for a visit. There is no use for me to plan, I can only get on with the work that's nearest my hand.[91]

Worcester's mild rebuke may have triggered a reassessment of the work Keith had boasted about, for he acknowledged that, 'Some of the heads I did a few months ago look so ridiculous to me now that I am astonished that I didn't see it at the time'.

News from home did little to cheer him up. Charlie attended the pastor's church service occasionally and then visited Worcester in his home. One such visit took place in June 1884, and Worcester wrote a supportive letter to Charlie telling him how pleased he was to see him:

> Because you seemed to care for things that are worth caring for and to care more than I have ever known you to do … You seemed to care for your work and to excel in it; also for your father and Tennie, two people that I care ever-so-much for because they seem to me real genuine characters – sincere and affectionate.[92]

There is no mention of Charlie's stepmother, Mary. The clergyman and Charlie discussed the reading material preferred by the younger man, and the gulf in understanding between them becomes apparent as Worcester's letter to Charlie continues:

> You will be surprised to hear me say that the copy of the *Argonaut* was the first one I ever read thro'. I have, of course, taken it up many times, but only to lay it down in disgust, but I read yours thro' and it is a worse paper than I supposed … it is vulgarly cynical. By cynical … unbelieving

> in virtue … it is vulgar because it is not sincere. It does not want to believe in virtue because virtue would condemn it; while disbelieving it is selling itself for the meanest things – money, the recognition of rich men, etc. … I think the *Chronicle's* open parade of vice better than the *Argonaut's* insincere cynicism. I shall write to your father to-day.[93]

Keith received regular and full accounts of Charlie's doings from Hortense, and he was grateful for Worcester's pastoral care. Anxiety about his son's well-being was never far from his mind. It darkened his own moods, making it difficult to share in the traditional *Gemütlichkeit* – the idea of a state or feeling of warmth, friendliness, and good cheer – for which Munich was famous and which Worcester encouraged him to embrace. Keith's good cheer was evaporating; the lack of professional and social contact began to take its toll and resentment turned to complaint verging on self-pity:

> It is very lonesome for us here. You speak of getting acquaintances among the artists, but the Germans are very exclusive and some of the Americans are like them in that respect, and besides I don't speak German. I have no time to study it. As for 'Café' friends and acquaintances, I don't care to go there. Today I again worked. I am very anxious to get a good insight into this work and I must work at it. I long … for California. I sometimes regret having had to go through this experience, but it had to be and there's the end of it … It's hard work tho' … I sometime think it would be best for Mary to go home. She has no one here and I sometimes tell her she had better go back and I would work alone for another year and do the best I can, but she won't agree to it.[94]

The relationship between Keith and Mary was close, but he preferred to spend his time at the easel, sometimes working on his day off. It does not seem to have occurred to him to spend more time with his wife, although he did suffer pangs of guilt:

> I have worked all day and consequently feel dissatisfied with myself. I don't feel quite right about this Sunday's work. I don't go to church; I don't want to go except to a New Church. This must all seem contemptible to you because you can see the self-deception so apparent. We are getting dreadfully tired of this place … I have my work to take up my thoughts, but I am

> afraid time hangs heavily with Mary for we are entirely alone. I want her in a half-hearted way to go back to Berkeley, but she won't hear of it. This morning we had four letters from California, a perfect feast for we rarely get so many at once.[95]

Receipt of these letters lifted his mood, and he sent Worcester a brief note the following morning:

> [S]ince 9 o'clock (it's now 20 minutes to 12) I have painted the head of an old woman, and it looks well. I find all the time that my best work is done at once and at a white heat. I paint a head now in about two and half hours, of course it is not a finished production, but it has qualities which I always lose on returning. Rapid work is and will be with me always the best.[96]

Keith's optimistic mood evaporated as quickly as it had arisen. By the time he had penned his next regular missive he was expressing a long-standing complaint about the weather:

> It's a gloomy rainy day today … since we have been here there hasn't been a month that it hasn't snowed in the shape of hail stones, and rains have been very frequent. I wonder if it is the reason there are so very few good landscape painters here. … This has been a blue kind of week some of the time, in my work. … We both look forward with a kind of dread to another winter. I had hoped to pass some time in Italy, either this late fall or winter, but the cholera is raging very badly there and although I wouldn't budge an inch for it if it came where I was, yet I wouldn't run the risk of going deliberately where it was unless I had something compelling me, but there's no use in planning, let things come and go, it makes not much difference.[97]

Keith closes this letter by admitting that he often wished he was back in California, but he 'reflected that it would be just the same William Keith wherever he was, restless and dissatisfied, so work comes always to the rescue'. His introspection enhanced his self-awareness but also served to reinforce his self-doubt, a theme he returned to in the following week's letter:

> The only thing clear to me is, keep on with the work and wait for what will come, and can't you see that Fatalism to such a state of mind is that mind's

> best friend – it saves from despair. … This week has come and gone just as the rest comes and goes, I think with slow improvement. … As to whether I shall ever do anything that the world will be the better of, I have my doubts, and as to whether I have anything to stay with in my work, I also doubt. … The weeks and months will pass quickly enough if they will only not leave me as I am, feverish and discontented.[98]

Work, at least the physical part of it, was, as always, the antidote to his frequent bouts of depression. By the following week he was enthusing about the colourful characters he was employing as models, including a 'splendid' old man of eighty-four, one of some twenty siblings, whose parents lived until their nineties:

> He is a nice old fellow. He takes a lot of snuff and is much pleased when I take a pinch and more pleased when I sneeze heartily. I had an old woman with a leather-yellow face and big black eye and eyebrows. … She brought a costume of some peasant place near here and all the colours of the rainbow were there; she did look terrible with her yellow face and gay ribbons.[99]

Despite these happy moments, Keith's disposition to dourness reasserted itself and he could not avoid introducing an element of despondency into the same letter and although this was followed by a closing tone that is more upbeat, it still manages to convey a hint of resignation:

> There is nothing new here, the cholera is very bad in Italy and consequently I won't go there this fall. I sometimes feel as if I had made a mistake in coming here. I think that if I had gone to London at first, I could have stood a chance of selling something and have had a better opportunity of seeing pictures there. But then, I couldn't have made a study of the head, I would have confined myself to landscape and so it's all for the best.[100]

Worcester kept Keith in touch with the art scene in America, sending him articles culled from *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*. Keith was sufficiently interested in an obituary of George Fuller (1822–84) to compare the individualism of the New England portraitist's work with his own. Fuller painted with little realism, with little accurate imitation, but with an ability to convey the characteristic traits of the sitter, the quality that ensured

the enduring appeal of the Old Masters, the very quality Keith was trying to achieve in his own work.[101] However, Keith's pessimism about achieving success was never far from the surface. 'After all, fame and recognition in many instances is just like art criticism, a thing of fashion without law and without foundation, one says something, another says the reverse and it's all as muddled as I am at this present time.'[102] Keith took ill, with what he thought was malaria, and without models for a week he refreshed himself with painting landscapes among the sand dunes. However, this outdoor work made him feel homesick and he wanted to get back to California very much. He also received no letters from Worcester that week and no letters from Berkeley.[103]

Despite worries about Charlie and not having seen daughter Hortense for two years; despite his unrest and long-held desire to get home, Keith and the ever-forbearing Mary remained in Munich for another seven months. Finally, on 10 May 1885 he wrote to Worcester:

> I think this will be the last letter you will get from me in Munich. I am all packed up. Have a frightful quantity of things which at times I feel foolish in bringing back, still they are all honest efforts, and that consoles me … I have hot and cold fits … when I think of what I have done in the past eighteen months, but after all I have been doing the best I could do. I should like to have another eighteen months of close study but not here … I can't stay longer for several reasons. … I can improve the time in California. We shall sail from Antwerp on the 23rd or 30th of this month … I may go to Paris for a week (alone) just to see the 'Salon' but I am not quite certain … it seems to me that it will take a whole ship to carry the load I have packed.[104]

William and Mary sailed from Antwerp on the SS *Noorland* and arrived in New York on 13 June 1885.[105] They wasted little time in getting back to San Francisco. After a brief stop in New York and Chicago they were being entertained at dinner by Irving and Mrs Scott on the 25th.[106] As had been the case following Keith's previous visit to Europe, he found the local art world had changed in his absence. This time it was moribund, and the *San Francisco Chronicle* in welcoming him back expressed the hope that the return of their 'leading man' would give it a boost.[107]

CHAPTER SEVEN

Collaboration with George Inness

Aye Tyaavin Awa[1]

On his return from Munich Keith took up from where he had left off, working hard in the studio, producing portraits and landscapes influenced by his European experiences, including 'half a dozen paintings sure to cause controversy. They are impressionist paintings, "poetic suggestions of subjects that belong to the region of romance rather than that of reality"'.[2]

He contributed nine landscapes to the Art Association exhibition, he sent a number of favourites including *House in the Redwoods* and *Mount Shasta* to the State Fair in Sacramento, and went on a sketching trip to Santa Cruz.[3] He rented a studio at 417 Montgomery Street, moving in at the beginning of October 1885, and threw himself into producing portraiture influenced by his discoveries in Europe.[4] Formerly a photographer's gallery, the studio afforded him a large semi-public area for the display of his work and was reached by climbing two long flights of stairs, passing through two narrow passages until they branched out into four dingy rooms lit by skylights, 'black with the soot of many chimneys'.[5]

The studio was in the centre of the city's tightly knit artistic and literary community, an enclave of bohemian hotels and restaurants, centring on the Montgomery Block at number 600, an enormous four-storey building occupying the whole east side, where, or around which, many artists and writers had their place of work, including Mrs Elizabeth M. Walton, resident in San Francisco 1856–75 and one of the city's earliest female artists.[6] The building housed offices on the upper floor, a public bathhouse and a saloon.[7] Some of San Francisco's grandest and most opulent hotels – the Lick House, Russ House and Occidental – were on Montgomery Street.[8] Chileon Beach's bookstore, where Charles Warren Stoddard worked for two-and-a-half years selling religious tracts and

bibles, was on Montgomery as were the offices of Anton Roman the bookseller who started the *Overland Monthly* and published Stoddard's *Poems*. The street was also home to photographers Eadweard Muybridge and Carleton Watkins.[9] In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, artists, newspapermen and bohemians moved into the area in increasing numbers.

Keith worked hard and busily, painting many portraits in the first two years, including: Darius Ogden Mills, California's leading banker and philanthropist; Professor George Davidson, the geodesist, geographer and engineering surveyor; Keith's close friend Joseph LeConte, professor at Berkeley and early member of the Sierra Cub; Edward Rowland Sill, the poet, newspaperman and teacher; Warren Olney, Sr, lawyer, politician and founder member of the Sierra Club; and Joseph Redding, child prodigy and polymath, who was 'conceded to be one of [the] city's handsomest men'.[10] Keith's clientele was not confined to patrons in the State of California; his reputation was sufficiently widespread for others to avail themselves of his services; Dr Robert Beverley Cole from Virginia was a 'sitter' as was the socialite Mrs H. H. Metcalf of Council Bluffs, Iowa.[11]

Although Keith took to portraiture with his customary zeal and energy it was no more than a temporary interest and consensus among art critics suggests that while his portraits have been lauded, it is his standing as a landscape painter that will endure. Keith was not usually happy with his portraits of women. The portraits of European peasants he had brought back from Munich – relatively few in number compared to the many landscapes – attracted little attention although some were 'superlatively characterised', and 'in many of his male subjects he was extremely successful'.[12] Keith himself understood an important difficulty: those who commission portraits want an accurate, photographic likeness of the sitter's appearance, but the genre offers insufficient scope, 'apart from technical legerdemain, for the achievement of abstract artistic values' that can be achieved with landscape or still life. '[Even] a good likeness has little meaning to anyone unacquainted with the sitter'.[13] When Judge John S. Hager – 'leading light in judicial circles' and former US Senator for the State of California – took the weight off his bad leg and settled to have his portrait painted, Keith had already voiced his doubts about how the sitting would go. Worse than that, and 'despite the fact the portrait was progressing satisfactorily, he declared he had half a mind to give up portrait painting altogether'.[14] 'Who sees a person just as someone else sees him?', he groaned:

> A wife comes in one day and says I've painted her husband's face too thin. The daughter comes in the next day and says I've painted her father's face too fat! *Nobody* is satisfied! … Worst of all troubles just now is the Judge's cravat. The Judge desires immortality for his cravat which, strictly up-to-date, is polka-dotted.[15]

Keith objected to painting the polka dots, despite them being the height of fashion. He thought them inartistic and painted the cravat in ivory black. The Judge wanted to be seen to be in vogue, they were his polka dots, and Keith would be handsomely rewarded. But the artist refused to bow before the weight of the Judge's legal argument and 'the warfare of soul and intellect proceeded within the limited area of a speckled cravat'.[16]

Keith's portrait painting followed the traditions of the Old Masters whose surviving works are valued not because they bear a good likeness – who could tell? – but because they are imbued with qualities and depth provided by the artist. Like them, 'Keith's portraits are more than good likenesses … they reveal the personality of the individual portrayed'.[17] That said, his surviving works will be valued less for their artistic merit but for their historical importance in depicting the prominent public figures of his day.[18]

Perhaps as an escape from the problems of compromising his artistic integrity or having to justify his methods while trying to satisfy the demands of his customers, Keith found other artistic pursuits to occupy his time and provide a source of income. He produced the sketches from which the scenery was made for the California Theatre's production of *Macbeth* with musical accompaniment – a departure for both Keith and 'the Scottish play' – and in another innovation, his paintings adorned some of the earliest Christmas cards to be made on the West Coast and sold by Vickery from their shop on Market Street.[19] Perhaps as a means of helping with the rent, Peter Toft, an English watercolourist, was installed at Keith's studio for a few weeks at the start of his tenure in Montgomery Street.[20]

From November 1885 he conducted art classes for women of all ages. Although he did not believe that artists benefited from too much teaching if one was to retain one's individual style, he did think it helped beginners and took the classes, more because he liked the company of women with whom he got on very well and they with him, than that he needed the money.[21] Folding doors, which were never shut, connected the 'official'

class room with Keith's working studio. A small room on the left of the second hall was used for the overflow of pupils on class days; '[and] for the brewing of tea and general high spirits'.[22] The fourth and smallest room was used for tipping rubbish and cinders. Keith's studio was a clutter, and always had been, a 'pile of dirty brushes in the wash-stand, and other flagrant outrages upon "Heaven's first law" proclaim that Mr Keith is not an exemplary housekeeper', while an illustration in *The San Francisco Examiner* shows two pupils working at their easels, surrounded by a haphazard array of paintings, and with materials littered all over the place.[23]

Keith's students – among whom were Mrs L. Jaynes-Putnam from Los Angeles, Mrs Wattles from Oakland and Miss Carrie Anderson of Santa Cruz – followed his rather aggressive instructions as best they could, accompanied by the occasional tear as his well-meaning but abrupt criticism got the better of them:[24]

> *Don't* pitter-patter over one little detail in the landscape! … Can't you see that everything belongs *together*? *Can't* you see things as a whole? … Work Largely! … Go to nature … all very well to copy *some* … but this pittery-puttering won't do. You've simply *got* to go to *Nature*. You've got to get in and *gouge*! … Your sky isn't bad! … but your clouds are boiled potatoes. *Smash* in your clouds – *this* way! Use a big brush – work *largely*. Keep everything *together*! *See things as a whole*! (all original emphases)[25]

His students 'were devoted to their mentor with uncompromising loyalty' and 'proved [their] allegiance to his slogan by wielding brushes of enormous size and squeezing out paint unlimited in quantity'.[26]

Some of his pupils, and they numbered several score, emerged as significant artists in their own right. Among them were Bertha Stringer Lee, who was never interested in commercialising her work and who gave away her paintings as gifts during the regular teas she served at the studio in her own home; Mary DeNeale Morgan, a favourite pupil from her youth until the time of Keith's death; Miss Annie Frances Briggs, another favourite of Keith's who had an exhibition and sale of paintings at the Sketch Club, San Francisco, before departing for Europe; and Chicago-born illustrator and teacher, Martha Patterson, a member of the San Francisco Art Association who won prizes at the Mechanics' Institute Exhibition and at the California State Fair.[27] Keith may have introduced one student, Marion Kavanagh, to her future husband, fellow artist, Elmer Wachtel.[28] In addition to teaching

in his own studio, Keith taught at the San Francisco Art Association along with Virgil Williams, where among those who benefited from his classes were some men, including John Gutson de la Mothe Borglum, who later sculpted the monumental presidents' heads at Mount Rushmore.[29] His first wife, Elizabeth Jane Putnam Borglum, twenty years his senior, was also a student of Keith. Another student was Edwin Bonnell, an unsuccessful gold prospector of 1849. An accountant by profession, he briefly became Keith's business partner in a wood engraving shop in 1862. Bonnell remained a lifelong friend and pupil of Keith and was executor of his estate.[30] One of Keith's few male pupils that he did not retain was Will Lawler, dropped by Keith who was jealous of his ability to copy his landscapes.[31]

When Keith began to occupy the Montgomery Street studio, he did not live in San Francisco's bohemian neighbourhood but was instead staying with Mary's mother in Berkeley. As soon as he returned from Munich, construction had begun on a home of their own on a building plot he purchased at 2207 Atherton Street, near Mrs McHenry's house.[32] Mary was instrumental in choosing the architect W. W. Goodrich to design and build 'one of the most picturesque residence structures in the quaint, colonial Knickerbocker style'.[33] Built of redwood, fir and spruce on a slight elevation, it was 'a model of taste and convenience', with porcelain sinks and bathtubs and a petroleum burner for water heating. Among its ten rooms, Keith had 'the finest studio on the coast', open to the north, east and south, with two skylights on the roof.[34] The design had its detractors: 'Mr Keith may boast of having the most unique house in Berkeley. From an artist's standpoint it may perhaps be termed picturesque, from the standpoint of an ordinary, common citizen it is interestingly ugly'.[35] The Keiths moved in towards the middle of 1886 and lived there for the next twenty-six years until his death.

Keith was a creature of habit. Every working day he commuted by walking through the University of California campus in Berkeley to the Shattuck Avenue station of the Southern Pacific Railway where he joined other passengers for the short journey to Oakland Pier where they caught the ferry to San Francisco. On these trips Keith had a constant reminder of how closely he had become woven into the fabric of Bay Area society. When the Ferry *Piedmont* entered service between Oakland and San Francisco in November 1883, around the square wood panelling surrounding the smokestack were a series of landscapes and seascapes by Keith, views of California placed there as an attraction for visitors.[36] In the afternoons

he made the return journey, scarcely missing a day irrespective of the weather.[37]

Several times a week Keith lunched with Rev. Joseph Worcester at his home on Russian Hill, where they relaxed over their simple meal of nuts and cocoa and enjoyed the fine view of the Bay Area. On other days he frequented one of the many restaurants that clustered around Montgomery Street, but he did not linger, preferring a short break, quick service and fast food so that he could return to his work.[38] Keith smoked all his adult life, at one time a corncob pipe, but when he could afford them he smoked expensive cigars. He did not allow this indulgence to go too far. Having been frugal by necessity in his early days of poverty, he recycled the lids of his cigar boxes and used them to produce some of his smaller pictures.[39] It has been said of him that at the end of the working day he enjoyed a dram on the way to the ferry but when he noticed that this was happening at ever earlier times in the afternoon he quit the habit.[40]

A respected member of the art community, Keith was elected First Vice-President of San Francisco Art Association in March 1886 and at the Association's Spring Exhibition he displayed some of his portraits and landscapes. They were well received and gave 'ample proof of a versatility of talent that is gratifying to his friends'.[41] In May, Keith sailed for British Columbia and Alaska on the steamship *Queen of the Pacific*, sharing the cruise with other 'excursionists' keen to experience the scenery of an untamed wilderness that had been vividly described in the press by John Muir.[42] Mary did not accompany him; she wanted to attend her sister Bessie's wedding that took place at the same time. Keith made several watercolour studies, some of which were worked up into finished paintings on his return and shown at a reception in the Bohemian Club in May 1887 under the title *Dreams of Alaska*, thus implying that Keith had shifted from depicting 'matters of fact' to a more imaginative interpretation of nature. Neither the exhibition title nor the works on display impressed the art critic of the *San Francisco Evening Post* who exclaimed, 'It is amazing that a man who knows so much, who has done so much, should at his time of life fall into the silly error of supposing that there is more poetry in a vague jumble of paint than in the facts of nature'.[43] Needless to say, Muir did not like them either, forcing Keith to hide a painting he was showing some friends when Muir was heard climbing the stairs to his studio.[44] Some of the paintings did receive praise. Francis C. Sessions, entrepreneur, philanthropist and art collector from Columbus, Ohio, particularly liked

and may have bought, *Muir Glacier*, and Stopford W. W. Brooke, British-born minister of the First Unitarian Church in Boston and future Member of Parliament, had one of these paintings in his home in the village of Ewhurst, Surrey.[45] Overall, the less-than-enthusiastic response meant that the watercolours from Keith's Alaska trip were never shown publicly and he stopped working them up into finished paintings.[46] He continued to enjoy summer excursions into the high mountains, and retained his interest in producing canvases of grand vistas, but his landscapes began to reflect the more intimate, pastoral style of the artists he had admired, such as Ruysdael and Hobbema, while in Munich, and the Barbizon men (Rousseau, Diaz, Daubigny, among others) whose works he had seen in Paris.[47]

Towards the end of the year, Keith held a sale of the works that had accumulated in his studio. Organised by Easton & Eldridge, Auctioneers, the collection included landscapes based on his studies in Europe, Oregon and California. The 182 paintings that were sold realised $8,700 and although a substantial sum this averages less than fifty dollars per lot. Whereas in the past such a poor return caused outrage in the press on behalf of the artist, this sale attracted little coverage, and any criticism was directed at the inconsistent quality of the pieces on offer.[48] Keith may have included some single-application, unretouched works in the style of Frank Currier but these would have been few and unlikely to have affected the overall outcome. The real cause of suppressed prices and lack of press interest was that local artists had fallen out of favour in a city whose population was not growing as quickly as it had once done. A finite number of people had an interest in art, and an even smaller number had the wherewithal to buy expensive paintings. The existing and stagnant market was already saturated.[49] Keith's prolific output was brought to a halt when he suffered a serious eye affliction, 'brought on by too close application to his profession', that confined him to his home in Atherton Street. He 'recovered sufficiently to endure the daylight but [would] be compelled to use his eyes with great caution for some time to come'.[50] Keith had barely recovered from this condition when he was confined to bed for three weeks over the Christmas period with sciatica.[51]

While these afflictions may have been a blessing in disguise by providing temporary respite from his heavy work schedule, he still found ways to sell his paintings in a depressed market. He turned his attention elsewhere and at the premises of The Southern California Land Co. sold at auctions,

'the finest collection of oil paintings ever offered in Los Angeles'.[52] Among the paintings sold was his vast mountain vista *Shasta*, bought by Thomas Shaw for display in his Bouquet Saloon, Los Angeles.[53] A relative through marriage of Joseph Worcester had already saved Keith from sharing the fate of several artists who found it difficult to make ends meet. Daniel Burnham, a successful Chicago architect and urban developer whose numerous tall buildings would go on to define that city's skyline, as would his design for Selfridges department store in London's Oxford Street, became Keith's agent in the rapidly growing 'Windy City' where he used his contacts in the business community to find buyers for Keith's works. He became a patron himself and the two became close personal friends.[54]

The art market, at least for Keith, improved in 1888. At the Spring Exhibition of the San Francisco Art Association, 'in a show of high order', his portrait of good friend, Professor Joseph LeConte, was considered by at least one critic, as best in show.[55] In the early summer he was cheered by the engagement of his daughter, Hortense, to Edward Newall Harmon, son of a wealthy timber merchant. The couple were married by Rev. James Worcester at the Keith's home on Atherton Street on Tuesday 22 May 1888 with the various vessels of the S. H. Harmon Lumber Company gaily decked with flags and bunting in honour of the wedding.[56] The couple honeymooned by touring Monterey, then Oregon and Alaska before setting up home at 3 Essex Place, San Francisco.[57]

At this happy time John Muir embarked on an ambitious project organised by the *San Francisco Call* that would be three years in the making: the production of *Picturesque California* (1888–90), a coffee table work extolling the interests and the beauties of the state. It contained over 600 etchings, photogravures and wood etchings, a further 700 illustrations embedded in the text and 120 tinted plates. Muir was general editor and wrote six of the accompanying articles. It cost over $200,000 to produce. The original was sold by subscription through the Coupon Department of *The Call* and distributed monthly in thirty parts at ten cents each, postage paid, barely enough to cover the cost of printing. The complete set could be bound at extra charge in a variety of coloured cloth or Morocco leather embossed in gold lettering.[58] Keith was among the many artists who contributed to *Picturesque California.*

Although Muir had expressed his dislike of Keith's subjective Alaska paintings, he still trusted the artist to deliver topographically accurate grand mountain views if called upon to do so and hired Keith to join him

on a six week sketching tour in July and August visiting some of their old haunts at Lake Tahoe, Mount Shasta and on through the Pacific Northwest, to Mount Hood, Mount Rainier and north to Victoria, British Columbia.[59] The trekking party met settler families on their way, including the one-legged Carnahan and his family at their cabin in Succotash Valley.

Keith provided illustrations for three chapters of *Picturesque California*: 'Peaks and Glaciers of the High Sierra', 'Washington and the Puget Sound' and 'The Basin of the Columbia River'. Alfred C. Harrison, Jr notes that 'the rough broad style of these works is not particularly suited to black and white illustrations. Keith appears to be attempting a compromise between subjective and topographical depictions of mountain scenery'.[60]



Figure 10. Mostly unidentified group (William Keith third from left and John Muir fourth from left) at Carnahan Cabin, Succotash ('Succatash') Valley near Mount Rainier, Washington.

John Muir Papers, Holt-Atherton Special Collections and Archives, University of the Pacific Library, ©1984 Muir-Hanna Trust. https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/jmp/240/

Muir's opinion of these works is not recorded but he made no secret of his distaste for Keith's new subjective, visionary landscapes with their disregard for scientific accuracy, and shortly after they returned from their expedition they had a bitter argument over a rock formation Keith was working on at his easel. 'The ominous rumbling in the caverns of their minds explodes in quick short sentences', wrote Emily 'Sissie' Hay, who witnessed the eruption, 'there is much disdain on the part of the artist for the foot-rule criticism of the scientist'.[61] Despite Muir's vocal and persistent criticisms, Keith's new style was becoming increasing well-regarded in the wider art world which itself was finding increasing favour among those in the upper reaches of California society. In September 1888 he won the silver medal for a Russian River Valley scene and his Glacier series was applauded at the State Agricultural Society Fair, in Sacramento.[62] He was elected to the Board of Directors at the annual general meeting of the San Francisco Art Association in March 1889.[63] In May, Daniel Burnham organised a successful exhibition of his paintings at The Rookery, his Chicago business headquarters, where thirty of them were sold, the city's *Inter-Ocean* describing Keith as 'a coming painter, showing the influence of George Inness'.[64]

Keith was re-elected to the Art Association's Board of Directors the following year and an indication of his standing in the community, indeed the Art Association's standing in the community, can be gleaned from a brief look at some of his fellow directors.[65] Among them was George H. Hopps, a stage set designer, who was appointed treasurer; Sir Henry Heyman, internationally renowned violinist; Edward Bosqui, patron of the arts and man of affairs; probate lawyer D. P. Belknap; James D. Phelan, banker, politician, a future mayor of San Francisco, first vice-president; Frederick W. Zeile, president of the Mercantile Trust Company; William H. Crocker, president of the National Bank that bore his name; John I. Sabin, president of the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company, and M. H. Hecht, wool dealer.[66] Several of these pillars of San Francisco society were Keith's close friends. He was appointed one of twelve jurors, among whom were Amédée Joulin, Arthur Mathews and Eva Withrow, who had to decide which paintings were to appear in exhibitions and adjudicate on prize-winning and bursary applications.[67] Their immediate task was to decide what should go on display at the Association's Spring Exhibition in 1890. Whether or not the prospect of a conflict of interest troubled Keith, he nevertheless exhibited several of his own works among the eighty-seven

oils and forty watercolours.[68] The exhibition was well attended and while it contained 'not many superior pictures' the collection was deemed 'meritorious'.[69] Coming from *The Wasp*, this was high praise indeed and an indication that Keith and his colleagues had done a good job in choosing what to show from the material submitted.

In 1890, following an extended trip to Lake Tahoe and the summit of Soda Springs as one of a party that included his wife, Keith relinquished his lease at Montgomery Street and moved his studio to 115 Kearny Street on the corner of Clay where he was to remain for the next five years.[70] He may have enjoyed travelling to work on the first streetcar in the world propelled by cable, running from Portsmouth Square down the steep incline of Clay Street.[71]

Keith continued to teach his students and was frequently interrupted by the many visitors who appeared, often unannounced, some of them potential buyers. Sometimes they were an intrusion, at other times they were welcome, depending on Keith's frame of mind and what they brought by way of stimulation. His poet friends were always welcome, especially if he felt in need of spiritual uplift. Among them were Dr Edward Robeson Taylor, Ina Coolbrith and Charles Keeler.[72] Dan Burnham, 'a splendid type', visited from Chicago. Theodore Hittell, historian, state senator and brother of John Hittell, could drop in on any day and at any time; his visits frequently culminated in good natured banter if he expressed criticism of Keith's latest work in progress. Keith would cry in mock indignation:

> '*Make the grass greener?* What do *you* know about painting? Because you've written five volumes on the History of California you think you can paint grass better than I can!'
>
> 'I don't … but I've *seen* grass all my life'.
>
> '*Seen* grass! Can you build houses? You've seen houses all your life!' [emphases in original][73]

Chortling, Hittell would button up his overcoat and head off down the stairs to attend to more serious matters. The young, multi-talented artist, Bruce Porter, whose legacy to the city includes the monument to Robert Louis Stevenson in Chinatown's Portsmouth Square, was another frequent and welcome visitor.

Whatever Keith's artistic differences with Muir, the naturalist continued to call in regularly and he continued to use Keith's work to illustrate

articles he wrote for a growing number of publications that were being disseminated to a widening readership. Californian topics occupy considerable space in the September 1890 edition of New York's *Century Magazine*. This had started life as an Evangelical Christian publication but over time began to address a more general educated readership as it grew into one of the largest circulation periodicals in the United States of America. Muir's 'Features of the Proposed Yosemite National Park', was illustrated by Keith, among others, from photographs by George Fiske who had worked with Keith's friend, Carleton Watkins.[74] Muir had contributed 'The Treasures of the Yosemite' to the previous month's edition of the *Century* without Keith's involvement.[75]

As the new decade opened, Keith, despite his seat at high table in artistic and cultural circles, with his name widely known, became prone to increasingly frequent bouts of depression. He was over fifty and frustrated that a style he could call his own continued to elude him. On top of worries about his career he had problems with son Charlie who continued to display the same irresponsible behaviour that had scandalised Worcester when Keith was absent in Munich and which Charles Riedy had tried to curb through the discipline of work in his engraving shop. As Keith had expected, Charlie did get on well with Riedy, and one day Charlie confided in Riedy that: 'When a boy I used to sell papers – but my father forbade it; he said it wasn't dignified. But that didn't stop me. You know, he's short-sighted, and so I used to get great fun out of selling the papers right to himself when he came along in the crowd at the Ferry building'.[76] Charlie had a mean streak, a trait that had manifested itself quite early. When the children were young their holidays were sometimes spent in the care of their aunt Phoebe Withers on her husband's farm, first at Napa, Sebastopol, and later at Forestville. She remembered that on one occasion, 'Charlie nearly rode my colt to death'.[77] This wild and reckless spirit became increasingly evident as the child grew older. If selling newspapers had occurred while he was still a schoolboy, Keith would be more inclined to applaud him for his initiative. Rather, he seems to have been doing this after he had given up on the military academy at a time in life when his father thought he should be applying himself to learning a skilled trade. Keith obviously thought there was no future in it.

Charlie used to visit his father's studio in Kearny Street; one day he was arguing with Keith over some trouble he was in, and they put on boxing gloves and engaged in a bout of sparring to resolve the issue. Keith

accidently put his fist through one of his paintings and flew into such a rage that Charlie fled in fear, only returning when he thought it safe to do so.[78] It was here that Charlie took a shine to one of his father's pupils, a Miss Marie Hoesch. He would 'hover around her easel' and there was talk of an engagement, but nothing came of it – probably a blessing for the 'good fellow' Marie.[79]

Neither of these minor episodes was reported in the press with its ready access to Keith's studio, an easy relationship parodied mercilessly in a column called 'Unauthenticated Tales' by A. D. that appeared in *The Wasp* in January 1891. Keith, it said, invited William Chauncey Bartlett, a journalist on *The San Francisco Bulletin*, and 'a genial old gentleman' who often dropped in for a cup of tea to look at a new landscape he had just finished.[80] ' "Perhaps the Doctor would find it of sufficient interest to give it a piece in the paper?" ' *The Wasp* had Keith say before he left Bartlett and, on his return, found him sitting before the picture and contemplating it with rapt attention, his notebook with the completed review resting on his knee.

> 'Excellent, excellent', he exclaimed, 'But I think perhaps the middle distance – at least the sky, you know, is perhaps a little too …' 'Yes, that's so, but that is easily improved', replied Keith as he turned the painting right side up … 'Ah, yes, that is better', said the critic not at all disconcerted, 'but I shall have to rewrite the whole criticism if you exhibit the picture in that position'. 'Oh, not at all', replied Keith, 'Give me your manuscript', and taking it, he pencilled the following introductory lines:
>
> The subjoined criticism of Mr Keith's splendid landscape, *The Realm of the Hogherd*, has an interest that is at once enchanting and unique, the novelty and value lying in the point of view. The writer is afflicted with a singular physical infirmity known to physicians as the tip-ups, and while studying the picture he stood on his head. By assuming the same position – for which cushions will be provided – the public will see how justly and accurately our critic has caught the spirit of the scene.[81]

Despite the shared jocularity, an undercurrent of criticism flows through this account as it does in the bantering exchanges with his friends, a criticism shared by Keith himself. Only Joseph Worcester, whose opinion he valued above all others, stood unshaken in his belief that Keith was on the right road and must keep the faith in exploring the 'mysteries of our inner life' in his 'subjective' work.[82] Rev. Worcester, imbued with these thoughts,

would sit for an hour in silent contemplation as a landscape formed on Keith's easel. His prolonged absorption in the unfolding scenery was revealing something to him that was not yet evident to Keith because the artist 'had not yet sounded the depths of his own thoughts and emotions as read into forest and meadow by his devoted friend'.[83]

Beset by self-doubt through his failure to master this elusive style, easily stung by criticism and worried about his dissolute son, Keith needed some stimulus to revitalise his flagging energies. The beginning of Keith's self-realisation required the intervention of a fellow artist who not only shared his aesthetic ideals but who had travelled a similar road to enlightenment. He found it in a man he had long admired. George Inness (1825–94), thirteen years Keith's senior and already an established figure on the East Coast was American-born of Scots ancestry and his life in many ways mirrored Keith's.[84] Inness was born in 1825 in Newburg, New Jersey, in the Hudson River Valley, one of thirteen children of John William Inness, a farmer whose forebears were from Stirlingshire. To make him a useful member of society his father apprenticed him to a greengrocer, but this employment came to a sudden end when it was discovered that through shyness he hid from customers.[85]

Inness, who had ambitions to be an artist, first turned his hand to engraving, working, like Keith, in New York which he left about the same time. He lost his first wife, Delia Miller of Newark – of whom nothing is known – at an early age, and was married for a second time to seventeen-year-old Elizabeth Hart who bore him six children, five of whom survived infancy.[86] In his early days, Inness fell under the influence of the Hudson River School. He followed their style, studied their methods and painted every leaf on every tree, his early paintings full of intricate, meticulous detail. The results did not satisfy him.[87] He struggled to make a living, and confided in a letter to his wife in 1881 that he had been willing to give up landscape painting for portraiture to make ends meet.[88] He travelled to Italy twice, in 1851–2 and again in 1870–4, to study technique and develop his art.[89] Unlike Keith's sojourns in Dusseldorf and Munich, Inness did willingly socialise with the expatriate artist community among whom he was well-liked. In Rome in early 1871 he was the recipient of a surprise party when 'all the American and English artists clubbed together and gave him a genuine "Benefit." They had oysters cooked in a genuine Yankee fashion and lots of "fizz" ' and, as Inness said in writing to a friend in New York, he had 'a right royal and high old-fashioned time generally'.[90]

Just as Keith had an early and lifelong patron and friend in the steel baron Irving Scott, Inness had Ogden Haggerty, a wealthy auctioneer, who financed his overseas trips.

Influenced by these visits (the first changed nothing) Inness abandoned the strict rules practised by the Hudson River School and replaced them with a fine style of decorative realism that earned him plaudits at home.[91] When he returned to the United States of America in 1875, he was lauded as 'the father of "a new and original school" '. After years of modest success, he now 'attracted admirers as well as imitators'.[92] Still not satisfied, he railed against his own objective realism and his inability to express a subjective interpretation of the various moods of nature. He thought art inadequate to the task:

> What does it mean – this striving – this everlasting painting, painting, painting away one's life? What is art? … Art is the endeavour on the part of the mind to express, through the senses, ideas of the great principles of unity … Limitations there must be in art, how hopeless it all seems when we look at nature.[93]

Inness persevered, freeing himself from the strictures of any recognised school and developed his own innovative style of 'vaporous' or dreamlike paintings that captured the many moods of nature. 'These gave birth to his greatest works … and many artists, encouraged by his success, followed in his footsteps. With him begins the golden era of American landscape painting'.[94] Inness responded to the adulation by saying, 'I can only attribute any success which I may have obtained to the will of God'.[95] He was a committed churchgoer and, like Keith, had become a member of the Swedenborgian Church, arriving by a circuitous route but as an experienced religious seeker. With Methodists, Baptists and Universalists in his immediate family, religion was often the main topic of conversation around the family dinner table. Able to make his own mind up, Inness, at the age of twenty-four, was baptised into the Baptist faith but later switched to the Methodists before falling under the influence of Henry Ward Beecher, minister of the Plymouth Congregation Church in Brooklyn.[96] He met the Swedenborgian artist William Page while they both lived in an artist colony at the Eagleswood Military Academy in New Jersey in 1863 and this settled his religious affiliation.[97] For the rest of his life he was a deep and devoted student of the philosophical, metaphysical and religious theories of Swedenborgianism.[98]

He nailed his colours to the mast, so to speak, and showed a clear and early understanding of Swedenborgian doctrines in his response to the Reverend Dr Jonathan Bayley's London sermon, 'The Ribband of Blue', after buying a copy of the tract for seven cents having seen it advertised in the *New Jerusalem Messenger*, the official organ of the Swedenborgian Church. Inness took issue with Bayley's interpretation of the Hebrew word *Techeleth* relating to the colour of the tassels – *tsitsiyot* – worn on the ends of a Jewish prayer shawl. These were blue tinged with red, according to Bayley, to signify blue for truth, red for love and hence 'all our truth ought to be warmed and softened by love'.[99] The third essential colour was yellow for truths of life. In a short article in the same newspaper eighteen months later, titled 'Colours and Their Correspondences', Inness agreed with Bayley's summation of these three 'primitive' colours but pointed out that blue and red tended towards purple and it required the addition of yellow to produce the 'warm blue' that Bayley sought. Inness pointed out that he had studied colours for most of his life and that he had read the writings of the Swedish theologian:

> Red corresponds to love. Blue corresponds to faith, and yellow corresponds to what is natural and external. In a work of art red in excess produces fineness, or what is artistically called hardness. Blue in excess produces vulgarity, but the perfect combination of these three colours in their relative proportion produces harmony. This can only be done by what artists call *feeling* [original emphasis]. Science may lay down rules but they cannot be of much service in any creative process.[100]

This was the Doctrine of Correspondence that Keith was to adopt as he moved towards self-realisation and from representation to expression.

By the late 1880s Inness was in his prime. He worked tirelessly, his output was prodigious and his pictures sold. Despite these successes and the esteem in which he was held he was subject to insecurities; he was a man of changeable moods who suffered from chronic ill health due to epilepsy and, according to Frederick Stymetz Lamb, who occupied a studio next to him in the Holbein Building at 139 West 55th Street, New York, an artists' haven, he was 'a martyr to dyspepsia and could barely speak above a whisper'.[101] On the recommendation of his doctor, Inness travelled to the warmth of the West Coast in the spring of 1891. It was his first visit and lasted for three months although he had been planning to visit since 1876 when one of his paintings of a New England sunset had been shown in San Francisco.[102]

When Inness and family, including his granddaughter, arrived in San Francisco on 12 March 1891 they stayed at the Palace Hotel, although they had been in the city briefly the week before when the artists had met and Keith had invited Inness to share his studio.[103] They seem to have taken an early liking to each other. As, indeed, had their respective wives. Keith had told Inness much about Rev. Worcester, and both families attended his Church, Mary overcoming her dislike of the minister and making one of her rare visits.[104] Ever since they had returned from Munich, she had thrown her energies into campaigning to win the vote for women in California. This had nearly succeeded in the election of 1885 but had failed at the eleventh hour in the face of implacable opponents among whom was Rev. Worcester. This had merely stiffened her resolve, and her commitment to suffrage had grown.[105]

Both artists loved pastoral scenes and both had painted in the style of the Hudson River School. Both had abandoned this style of painting in favour of one that relied less on detailed realism and more on imagery that conveyed an idea to the viewer while using tones to represent the mood or



Figure 11. William Keith, *Secluded Grove*, 1898, Oil on canvas, 12 × 16 inches.

Saint Mary's College Museum of Art Permanent Collection. [0–151]

dark side of a scene or personality. This tonal approach was inspired by the Barbizon School and Inness had seen samples of Keith's work while attending Burnham's exhibition in Chicago in 1889. He praised their 'poetry … that appealed to the higher intellect'.[106]

When, two days later, the Inness family left for a prearranged stay at the Del Monto Hotel in Monterey, Keith joined them at the invitation of socialite Mrs Stanley who had just been to his studio and bought several paintings.[107] At their luxury retreat they were among 750 guests who could enjoy the amenities of 'a world-class polo club, the first golf course west of the Mississippi, a race track for horses and automobiles, an electric trolley to the hotel's private railroad station, gardens, beach, yachting dock as well as a lake', and 'a short walk from the groomed lawns the thousands of acres of surrounding forest' provided the artists with 'the sort of oak grove that was perfectly tailored to a painting in the Barbizon aesthetic'.[108] Inness painted these oak groves rather than the rugged coastline of Monterey.

The artists returned to San Francisco where Inness's imminent arrival caused a stir among Keith's pupils who busied themselves by tidying up the studios so that 'everything was in perfect order for the royal visit … when the Dean of Eastern Landscape painting drew near to the Dean of the West'.[109] They had a shared heritage and similarities in temperament – they could be sociable or communicative as circumstance demanded. Where they differed was in working practice. Keith at that time was painting in broad, free strokes without regard for detail and when Inness, impetuous and excitable, effectively took over his studio for the better part of six weeks and almost immediately started to demonstrate his artistic theory on Keith's own canvases, the initial excitement among the students gave way to disquiet.[110] What if Inness upset their mentor and drove a wedge between him and his pupils? To their minds the interloper spent too much time continually retouching and painting over his initial broad strokes. They chomped at the bit to pass judgement on the veteran painter and as soon as he left at night were unanimous in pronouncing his latest creation 'Woolly'. They attempted to mollify their mentor by saying they did not like Inness's paintings half as much as they liked his. Although this had the desired effect, it was clear that Keith saw something in Inness's methods that intrigued him. Inness, like Keith, liked to express his theories as fully and as lucidly as possible so demonstrated his ideas over the whole canvas as he spoke, even though this detracted from the vividness and power of his work. Although his pupils implored Keith not to heed the opinions

of Inness, 'from that time on there was an increased "going over" of his canvases'.[111] Inness was 'known to revisit paintings, sometimes years later, even after they had been sold – and not always improving them in the eyes of their owners'.[112]

Keith's brief association with Inness had 'a magical effect' upon his artistic style and this elixir had a powerful and positive outcome for the malaise that affected Keith more generally. On 9 April 1891, Keith paid a visit to the home of his friend Reverend Worcester which the pastor describes in a memorandum:

> Mr K., as he entered the house this noon, said, 'I am a very happy man, Mr W., he [Inness] is a wonderful man. You know the big picture, the one with the oaks that was going to illustrate all his theories. He has changed it entirely, it isn't the same picture anymore, he has made something entirely different of it – I am learning ever so much from him. I have painted too solidly, laying on the material, and so my pictures lack colour and are black and white. I must paint more thinly and transparently, that makes colour and middle tones'.[113]

Keith concluded this rush of enthusiasm with a remarkable confession which must have come as a surprise even to the man who knew his state of mind better than anyone: 'I no longer want to die since Inness has come. I have been feeling for a long time that I was just hanging round waiting; now I want to work'.[114] Keith was in his early fifties at the time, so may have been harbouring a feeling of resignation at the onset of old age, but it was also a manifestation of the doubts that assailed him at regular intervals, and his words suggest he was undergoing, unseen, an especially deep attack of melancholy. He never stopped worrying about his artistic ability; he was always going to do better with each passing year, and as old age did eventually creep up on him, he kept hoping for ten more years in which to achieve all he wished to accomplish. These recurrent bouts of depression were evident to only a small group of close family and friends; they were rarely, if ever, observed by those in his studio, whether pupils, visitors or buyers. He always described new works as 'crackerjacks' and would countenance no unfavourable criticism.

The Monterey trip yielded several paintings that were worked on in April and early May. Irving Scott, Keith's long-time patron, commissioned two paintings from Inness, one large landscape which Inness priced at

$4,000 – more than he usually charged in the east – and a smaller, cheaper one. Scott chose the latter, claiming the larger one was too big for his house.[115] Inness took a keen interest in promoting his own paintings but was prone to snub buyers if he did not take a shine to them, and lost lucrative sales in consequence. He also valued his pictures by size irrespective of quality and content.[116] As was his wont, he took umbrage at what he considered Scott's mean-spiritedness and refused to sell him either painting, and to Keith's amazement forfeited the prospect of a sale.[117] The large work commissioned by Scott, titled *Near Monterey* and listed in the catalogue as 'the property of the artist' appeared in the 1891 San Francisco Art Association exhibition which opened its doors on 7 May. Displayed next to Inness's work was Keith's 'smaller but equally good paintings', *Under the Oaks of Monterey*, *Twilight* and *In the Valley*.[118]

Having seen their Monterey paintings safely displayed in the Art Association exhibition, the high spot of the city's artistic calendar, the two artists left for a visit to Yosemite Valley, accessible now that the winter snows had cleared, and the rushing torrents of swollen rivers afforded scope for more dynamic scenery. They had argued over the problems of depicting panoramic mountain vistas and Inness declared in front of Keith, Mary and John Muir that no artist had ever successfully painted Yosemite or been able to convey the impression of towering three thousand feet cliffs. He rashly declared that he was just the man to do so. As Keith, Thomas Hill and Albert Bierstadt, all western artists of the Rocky Mountain School, had spent several years in California and had made several studies of Yosemite Mountain scenery to passable but not brilliant effect, this was at the same time discourteous, questionable and egotistical. On the morning following their arrival Inness set out with his equipment to commit the scenic wonders to canvas but returned to the porch of their hotel in the afternoon, and 'threw down angrily a little insignificant sketch, declaring that "Yosemite could not be painted" '. Keith, after years of toil and study in the Sierra, knew this all along and was silently amused to see how quickly the over-confidence of the Eastern 'tenderfoot', who came to show them how things should be done, evaporated in the presence of nature's grand panoramic workshop; and to see how quickly Inness came to recognise this.[119] Keith refused to be drawn and the subject remained closed for the rest of Inness's stay.[120]

Several of Inness's sketches from the Yosemite trip were displayed for a few days in Keith's studio but even he thought them 'childish'.[121] Irving

Scott, despite their differences, generously gave a reception for Inness on the eve of his return to the east. Keith helped with the reception honours at the glittering event attended by prominent citizens and many artists.[122] The society columns of the San Francisco newspapers reported that Inness was overwhelmed by the many kindnesses he received and how he had praised the high quality of the art works in Scott's collection. This did not stop him withdrawing his painting *Monterey Oaks* from the Art Association exhibition ten days before the show was due to close, on the basis, probably false, that it had been sold to an 'eastern gentleman', sight unseen.[123] The mean-spiritedness which Inness had attributed to the ironmaster in their dealings over the art sale would appear to be traceable within himself. Perhaps, in general, he thought the West Coast art world inferior to that of the east.

This air of superiority may have revealed itself on Inness's departure, when he is said to have presented Keith with his palette, thinking he would deem it an honour. Instead, Keith was apparently offended because it was an old palette and he had one of his own, so he gave it to the self-taught artist, Alphonso Herman Broad. It is possible that Inness left it behind by accident. In any event, Broad asked Keith to paint something on the palette as a memento and he painted one of his typical woodland scenes. Broad had it framed in rough weathered wood taken from the old Shattuck ranch house which was the first white settler's dwelling in what is now Berkeley. When the newly erected Shattuck Hotel in Berkeley was visited by nearly 300 society and club women organised by the wives of the directors for its first reception in 1910, Broad's palette was one of the features of interest on display.[124] Some of Keith's friends could be equally superior; 'I hear that you gave a fine palette to a common carpenter', said Mrs Mary Bisbee Enquist, a professional photographer and friend of Keith's who had a studio near the Ferry Building. She painted as a hobby and Keith would call on her on his way into San Francisco of a morning and give her advice. 'Yes, I did; why shouldn't I? he retorted, 'The man has talent'.[125] Broad painted woodlands in the Barbizon tonal style but his creative fame rests on the many fine homes he designed and built in and around Berkeley, several still standing on Bancroft Way and elsewhere. In a light-hearted exchange between the two men, Keith apparently said he wished he could paint trees as well as Broad. 'If you had sawed and pounded as many trees into houses as I, you might be able to paint them better', replied the carpenter. A man of many talents, he served Berkeley in several civic roles,

designing a functioning underground sewage system, providing plans for paving the streets, and much else.[126]

There is no mention of Keith and the time spent in his studio in Nicolai Cikovsky's biography of Inness or George Inness, Jr's biography of his father written from personal reminiscences and letters, in which his sojourn in California is recounted briefly in a single, simple sentence: 'He did go to California … where he painted scenes of the Yosemite Valley, and other parts of the State, and later spent several winters in Florida'.[127] However, Inness may have shown some generosity towards his host by saying that Keith's landscapes could be 'equalled by few if any artists of the day. If you San Franciscans appreciated him, you would turn on the street every time he passed'.[128] These words, spoken by 'an eminent painter now here' have been attributed to Inness.[129] While appreciating the commendation, the attention of passers-by in the street is not something that Keith would necessarily have welcomed.

There is only one instance of a painting being credited to both artists as collaborators. As the story goes, Alfred Livingston Gump, whose family owned a luxury home furnishings and jewellery store, was in Keith's studio one day, when Keith showed Inness a picture and asked him what was wrong with it. 'Blast it open', cried Inness. 'You do it', replied Keith and so the eastern master took Keith's brush and 'painted a sunshiny vista in the centre of the landscape, which the Californian had filled almost completely with trees'. 'That's good,' cried Gump, who claimed several years later that he had immediately bought the painting *The Twilight Hours* which was still being exhibited at the Gump Galleries in San Francisco in 1930.[130] While the painting certainly exists, this version of its provenance is questionable; reports suggest that Gump purchased the painting from a retired Colorado preacher in 1924 and it was credited initially to Inness alone.[131]

Whatever the extent of influence previously exerted on his artistic performance by the Reverend Worcester, there is little doubt that Keith's association with Inness deepened his convictions in, and application of, Swedenborgian doctrines. Considered 'close friends and kindred spirits', it has been suggested that 'they were both too original for either of them to influence the other artistically', but what is not in doubt is that Keith changed his style of painting following Inness's visit, and judging from his remarks to Rev. Worcester about wanting to live and work, was quick to acknowledge the reason.[132] They remained friends and Keith and Mary

visited Inness while passing through on their way to and from Europe in 1893. Inness died in the arms of his wife on 3 August 1894 in Bridge of Allen, Scotland where he had gone to improve his health.[133] The debate about the relative merits of the two artists would be maintained by their supporters long after their deaths, with Inness's paintings generally fetching more than Keith's. However, praise from Inness for Keith's paintings legitimised his aesthetic approach and the city's connoisseurs started to buy his paintings in considerable numbers. One wealthy San Francisco resident, Kate Johnson, amateur artist, avid professional collector of art – and cats, whose portraits she had painted at great expense – noted for her many acquisitions and the generous sums she paid for works, bought four 'major' Keith paintings soon after Inness left but she died while the transaction was incomplete and one twilight landscape, commissioned by her at $1,500, was sold to the executors of her estate for the reduced price of $1,000. It was sold at auction shortly thereafter when the executors were clearing the 'Costly Bric a Brac' from her house. The auctioneer opened the bidding at $30. It was eventually sold for $400.[134] This latter did not affect Keith, and despite the loss of a new patron, he entered a period of unprecedented prosperity.[135]

CHAPTER EIGHT

Keith's Golden Years

O Master, if such halting verse as mine
Can for a moment stay thy magic brush,
Until mid thankfulness' religious hush
My grateful note shall fall on ear of thine,
I pray thee hearken to this heart-wrought line –
Thou constant one, whose thoughts in beauty's flush
From welling fountains so unceasing gush,
We hail thy Art as born of the divine.

Edward Robeson Taylor[1]

Following the visit of George Inness, Keith went on a sketching trip to Buena Vista, Sonoma County, in October and November 1891, and on his return settled into a period that can be described as his Golden Years, during which, in view of his advancing age, his prominence as an artist and as a teacher of influence for younger artists, he was variously described as 'The Dean of California Artists' or 'California's Old Master'.[2] His personal success ensured that he was an accepted member of both elite society and the artistic community. His prodigious output and commercial success also made him wealthy although Keith himself maintained that he enjoyed painting and as long as he had enough to live on he would not let commercial considerations overrule his contentment.[3]

In April 1892, the art critic of *The Wasp* spent 'a day with the daubers' at the Spring Exhibition of the San Francisco Art Association, or 'San Francisco Mutual Admiration Association' as he termed it, where the meagre audience, if he is to be believed, consisted of 'one architect, four artists, one paid admission; three art students, one Japanese janitor; and "Scumble", an "ex-artist", attending by the grace of the doorkeeper on the "Old Showman" racket, and "Bumble" [himself] attending by the grace

of a newspaper pass'.[4] Although happy to criticise several works in scathing terms, they passed on Mathews, Keith, Robinson and Yelland because their paintings were above reproach. *The Wasp's* journalists were frequent visitors to Keith's studio and he was always good for an amusing anecdote. They reported that he was a great admirer of German literature and had several fine paintings of scenes drawn from the works of Schiller, Heine and Goethe. In one scene from Schiller's *Ritter Toggenberg*, the Master of the Knights Templar is reproving a young knight for his disobedience. 'You see', said Keith, explaining the picture to a young woman, 'the young man stands with head bent before the Master of the Order in his knight gown …' 'Oh, Mr K …', she exclaimed.[5]

Keith spent the summer of 1892 in the High Sierra with John Muir, sketching diligently, displaying works at the various exhibitions, winning the prize for the best landscape in oil, *Yosemite*, at the State Fair, Sacramento and selling paintings to his expanding group of patrons for good prices.[6] In February 1893, he sent twenty-four paintings to William Macbeth, 'the astute old Scotch dealer of Gotham' whose gallery specialised in American art. The critic of the *New York Tribune* described Keith as a 'new artist', and picked out his *Moonlight* for special praise, seemingly unaware of his predecessor's less than favourable review of earlier work.[7]

In late April 1893, Keith set out once more on a trip to Europe. His intention, at the suggestion of Irving M. Scott, was to study the Old Masters for new ideas, especially the seventeenth-century Spanish court artist Diego Velázquez (1599–1660), on what was intended to be an all-male trip in the company of John Muir. The tour, as planned, was to last six months and would be long and arduous. They would start in London, then travel to Spain, and from there to Scotland, before visiting Ireland to view the Lakes of Killarney. They would then go to Sweden and Norway because Muir wanted to see Scandinavian scenery. On their return to the United States of America, they were to stay in Chicago for two weeks and take in the World's Fair.[8] The best laid schemes …

On 27 April, the eve of their departure, Keith was courted at a reception held in his honour at Scott's Harrison Street residence. 'A very large and extremely choice crowd' of some 200 responded to the invitations sent out by the San Francisco Art Association to view his latest work, *Through the Oaks*, adorning the wall of the billiard room in the Scott mansion, and to shake hands with the man who had painted it. Ladies were in evening dress and all the men wore claw-hammer dress coats. All except one; Keith

had his arm in a sling and spent the evening making apologies for having difficulty shaking hands. He had little else to say. Despite, or perhaps because of the dancing and social whirl around him and being 'the petted darling of a dozen or two of the prettiest girls in all California', he grabbed his hat and coat and left early.[9]

In the event, Keith made the trip accompanied by his wife; Muir was to catch up with them in New York. He never did. He set out on his own itinerary. Several times they arranged to meet; their paths crossed, but events always conspired to ensure that they missed each other. The *San Francisco Call* later amused its readers with a satirical account of their 'shared' adventures.[10] Although Keith had spent considerable time in Europe, primarily in Germany, he had only a few words of foreign languages, despite often fooling around in mock accents and talking gibberish for the amusement of his friends to suggest otherwise.[11] He was acutely aware of his lack of genuine ability and this added to his heightened excitement as the trip got under way. His nervousness was compounded by his sense of isolation at being tucked away from the mainstream art world on the west coast and his perpetual feelings of inadequacy as an artist. He raised his spirits on the outward journey by stopping in Chicago to be handsomely entertained by his friend and long-time admirer, Daniel Burnham, who had organised the World's Columbian Exposition in the city to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's arrival in the New World in 1492 – the fair opened to the public in 1893 due to construction delays – and where four of Keith's paintings were on display in the California Building.[12]

As always on his foreign trips, Keith sent lengthy missives to his confidant, the Rev. Joseph Worcester, giving detailed accounts of his movements and laying bare his emotions. 'Sunday afternoon [30 April] … We got to Chicago yesterday morning. Nervous at the hustle and confusion …'[13] The Keiths attended the official opening of the Exposition on Monday 1 May 1893. Keith had apparently tried to get into the American Exhibition Rooms for a sneak preview the day before but was evicted by a guard because they were not yet open. When he did get in, he was disappointed to find one of his landscapes badly sited – it was a late entry – too high up on the wall to be seen properly. Paintings by Evelyn McCormick and Arthur Mathews had also been badly positioned.[14] Keith had a vested interest in knowing how these paintings looked. He had chosen them. When the State of California agreed to participate in the Fair, Keith's expertise as a juror had been called upon by the Commission organising the State's pavilion to pass judgement

on all works intended for display. Keith's friend and patron Irving M. Scott was president, James D. Phelan, one of the commissioners.[15] Keith was appointed chairman of the art committee and became embroiled in controversy when Thomas Hill claimed that his painting, *Driving the Last Spike*, had been excluded. Keith countered by stating that Hill had voluntarily withdrawn it. Keith chose his own paintings:[16]

> After seeing the launch, we took the cars … and rode through the Fair Grounds and found Dan in all his glory. He hugged me and kissed me in his big way and seemed to look more like a boy than ever. He is very happy in his work, which is *immense* beyond description, it is *simply marvellous* … it is your duty to come and see it. The party went home about 11 pm but Dan made me stay all night. Frank Millet [who was later to drown with the sinking of the *Titanic*] and a number of artists keep a sort of bachelors' hall, eat and sleep and seldom go outside the grounds … I am nervous and excited as usual when travelling. I want to be on the go all the time. I saw some good things in the British Exhibit. [Glasgow-born, Sir] David Murray [1849–1933], I like the best; Sir John Everett Millais' [1829–96] two landscapes, very good in colour, but terribly minute. I don't care for them.[17]

By and large, Keith was not overly impressed with many of the paintings on display, but:

> [P]erhaps among so many one can't judge, it's very hard work and my head aches at looking at so much … I saw my own pictures, of course, they don't look very good, but I think you'd be surprised at the credible showing California makes … The Russians have strong brutal work (terribly brutal). The Hollanders sober and gravely grey. Joseph Israel's [Jozef Israëls, 1824–1911] a dreadful putterer in his poor dumb human cattle.[18]

Few of the pictures lingered in his mind having seen so many but as was his practice he left off a perusal of the catalogue until he had finished looking at the entire collection, preferring to make his own judgement without the mediation of some critic or artist. The press shared his view of the credible showing of California painters and included Keith in their commendation, with one of his landscapes considered the best in the collection.[19]

Keith's next port of call was New York where he visited George Inness and other acquaintances and enjoyed the peace of a vernissage at Macbeth's Gallery on a Sunday, when he reflected on what he was viewing and gave

further thought to what he had seen in Chicago.[20] He was in contemplative mood. The day before he had gone to visit his uncle William Bruce and found the doors shut and barred. Bruce's next-door neighbour informed Keith that his uncle had died two weeks previously. This must have shocked and dispirited him. Even before he had left the country he was thinking about curtailing his trip and wishing he was at home working. Despite telling Worcester that, 'I don't know where to begin nor what to say about anything', Keith proceeded to give an art critic's account of what he had seen in Chicago and in New York. He thought a book, *Art for Art's Sake*, by John Charles Van Dyke, published that year in London, spoke 'very fairly' of George Frederick Watts (1817–1924), a British allegorical painter, who claimed to 'paint ideas, not things' and having seen Watt's work 'in a hasty way and surrounded by lots of different coloured things', felt he may have been harsh with his judgement. Despite this he was disappointed. When he looked back and compared the works of the different nationalities he had seen in Chicago, he thought the British displayed 'plain truth', the Germans showed 'strong material' and the Frenchmen 'gay exuberance'.

> American [art] stands between and makes a fine showing … and I sincerely think that Inness stands at the head. My pictures lack smoothness of tone, they are too fierce, too untoned … I don't feel discouraged a particle, I'm perfectly sure that I could in a short time take a distinguished place here, but of course, I should have to stay here, which I don't intend to do.[21]

Among the French exhibits were four or five by Monet which gave Keith pause for thought. He described them as:

> a lot of scrawlings with black lead water colour just as a child might do … but after you keep looking you felt that there was something, a sort of flashing look at the nature and then trying to do it with the sense of dreariness and miserable uncomfortableness, no beauty, nothing but cold discomfort, if I had paint I could do you one.[22]

Another, by Jean-François Raffaëlli (1850–1924), seems to have troubled Keith more than any other. The French realist depicted:

> a line of peasants sitting against a wall. Such faces and hands, and each painting wonderful in its dreary reality … so unlike what you are acquainted with in nature, and yet it must be true, it bears the stamp of

> truth, and what a story it tells of hardship, of coarse usage, the skin swollen and tightly drawn over the bones … the flesh bleached with washing dishes and rags, scouring floors, chapped and worn by hard work. The faces, dumb, and heavy-looking eyes dead with no light in them of joy or sorrow or any emotion, dumb cattle. Is it right for anyone to be at ease, enjoying good things, art, and music, when one's brothers and sisters are like these? These pictures affected me very much and it all seems queer to me, the mystery of life, I can't write anymore.[23]

Such images clearly unsettled Keith and he seems to have found it difficult to deal with his own emotional response to them. Though skilled enough to produce similar works, he shied away from attempting portraiture which might provoke an existential crisis in the act of painting them.

Keith and Mary left New York City on 3 June on the steamer *Circassia*, bound for Glasgow where he enjoyed the Scottish art of the 'Celtic School'.[24] Keith visited galleries in London and Paris – where, in the Musée de Luxembourg he 'saw some pictures which looked exactly like some of my own … quite dark and monotonous, but very like mine' – and Madrid, carefully studying the paintings in each.[25] However, his trip was curtailed and he returned to San Francisco in early August with no pleasant news from the Old World. Instead, he found the weather in Spain 'most trying'; so hot and oppressive that it 'almost cost me my life', and cholera seemed to have taken hold there and in France. He had problems crossing the border between the two countries, each accusing the other of illegally allowing infected patients to cross. In France, good horses were being offered for sale at the equivalent of eighty cents each with few buyers even at that price; drought prevailed over much of Europe, crops could not grow, livestock were being slaughtered, business was at a standstill. Having complied with Scott's suggestion, he was anxious to return to work and reminded his wife that they had better get home before the close of the watermelon season.[26]

Although Keith had not enjoyed his time in Europe, when he returned to his studio on Kearny Street, he was fired with enthusiasm for trying out a painting technique he had seen in the Prado Museum, Madrid, where he had been impressed by a 'great picture' by Velázquez, in which, as well as the figures of the royal children, were those of the artist and his canvas:

> Now I figured out from this particular painting that those old masters must have used a mirror of some kind. From their splendid middle tones this mirror could not have been silver or even Claude Lorraine (sic) glass …

> because of the high perfection to which the Spaniards brought their steel – as is evidenced by the famous Toledo blades and armour – their master painters must have had a steel mirror.[27]

The use of mirrors to view the reflection of images was quite common, but they were usually silver or gold plated. Artists, often tourists, painted with their backs to the view, using the reflection in the glass as their subject. Claude glasses, named after the seventeenth-century French landscape painter, Claude Lorrain (c.1600–82), had their surfaces tinted a dark colour and this gave a tonal effect to the reflection.

Convinced that he could produce a similar tonal effect which had so far eluded him, Keith constructed a great steel mirror of his own. If successful, he would take up portrait painting again.[28] He confided in Scott who warmed to the idea and produced a small, polished steel mirror measuring six by eight inches. So successful was this prototype that Keith, 'in a moment when I was temporarily bereft of my reason' ordered one measuring four feet wide by six feet tall and surrounded by a heavy ash frame. He was astounded when this monster, two inches thick, weighing a ton but 'better on Alcatraz Island', confronted him as he turned up for work in cheerful mood one morning at the beginning of January 1894. In the street awaiting his arrival were seven brawny labourers from the Union Iron Works with the mirror lying on a dray behind two immense draft horses. Keith's cheerfulness evaporated. With considerable outlay of brute force, the men lugged the mirror up three flights of narrow stairs while the staircase, walls and floors bore witness to their slow progress. Finally, it was installed in Keith's studio. It was a waste of effort. The polish was not high enough and the mirror was too heavy to be of any use. Finding out that the useless piece of apparatus cost $300 did nothing to lessen Keith's mounting agitation. He thought his friend should have told him it would cost so much but Scott pointed out that he was only being charged for the materials and labour. The whole episode had been viewed by a gathering crowd of witnesses who were volubly amused by what they saw and this just added to the artist's discomfiture.[29] All day a steady stream of visitors turned up to view his latest acquisition. He no longer wanted it. 'For heaven's sake take it away. It makes life one continual nightmare, and it cost $300 – to think of it – $300 … Oh. I am just paralyzed, and $300 hard cash for a poor painter.' Keith offered to paint a portrait of Scott if he would remove the mirror, but he refused. So there it stood, 'silent and grim and spectral as a great piece of artillery', with various flippant opinions expressed by visitors as to its

real purpose, including the observation that Keith had become a spiritualist and it was to be used in the subtle elements of the supernatural.[30] Keith never did use the steel mirror. He sold it back to the Union Works as scrap metal; for five dollars according to one account, but this was likely a deliberate understatement to emphasise the wastefulness of the whole enterprise; its purchase having been 'a novelty which points to Keith's penchant for the dramatic and sombrely mysterious in nature'.[31]

Within a week he had put the mirror episode behind him, gifted the small Claude Lorrain glass to his pupil Laura Mellen who was on the eve of departing for South Africa to work as a missionary, and turned his attention, he thought, to uncovering another secret of Old Master painting.[32] He had been experimenting with colour for some time and believed he had found out how the masters made their canvases virtually indestructible by the way they applied lime-based material. 'You see', he explained, 'I [now] use no white, not even in mixture. I get on canvas the outline of my landscape, after thoroughly priming it, leave it for some time. Then, with transparent colours, I finish it up – work it, or mould it as you might say'.[33] One art correspondent thought Keith had 'made a gigantic step forward', enthusing over the new paintings in lyrical terms. 'There is so much depth – not an imitation of nature, but a translation of the spirit of nature'.[34] This method of working seems to have been short lived.

Keith enjoyed music and experimented with the relation between sound and colour. He had acquired a Japanese bowl; purchased, according to his friend George Wharton James; gifted to him by Doctor Harry Lloyd Tevis, son of a wealthy San Francisco banking and investment family, according to others. It would become one of his most treasured possessions.[35] He would strike its globular form with a large leather-bound clapper, setting the bowl to vibrate with a deep sonorous sound and rush to his easel to apply the colours that harmonised with the sound.[36] On first hearing the vibrations, Keith was said to have cried, 'Eureka! I have found the very thing to stimulate my colour sense! – to set my subjective self *dum-thundering*!':[37]

> Isn't it wonderful? Now I want to paint! That thing always makes me see pictures and hear songs. It reminds me of Tuolumne meadows, up in the Sierras. I have heard every sound of Nature there – songs in the night, bands, orchestras, overtures, sweet symphonies, crashing choruses – everything – even bagpipes. That's where music comes from. Everything has its origin in Nature.[38]

He produced many pictures, rich in mellow colours, under the influence of the vibrating gong. These fascinated the artist and his admirers and became known as his 'Gong Pictures'.[39] Doctor Tevis had a collection of these and one, *The Spirit of Music*, was a favourite of Keith and his wife.[40]

Over the early months of 1894, Keith continued to experiment with different methods of painting to emulate the works of the Old Masters. He had another 'Eureka' moment when he discovered the 'long lost' art of laying on colour. He was working on the portrait of a youth when he exclaimed: 'Yes! I have just hit it off at last … you have got to be in the right mood and feeling to do it; in fact, I don't strike it every time yet'.[41] The portrait was painted in dark and sombre colours, with a ray of yellow light across the boy's face, playing on the sharp contrast between light and dark in the chiaroscuro style in vogue during Italy's High Renaissance period and employed and developed by artists such as Leonardo Da Vinci, Caravaggio and Rembrandt. Keith pointed to his work in progress, comparing the 'chromo[gen]' unfavourably with a finished Rembrandt; but, he insisted once he had treated it and applied layers of colour, it would stand comparison with the Old Master.[42] 'As for the juices, well, you cannot get that juice, that intricacy … by a mere mechanical process. I use white only as a background, but that is not the secret, I would rather not explain it, in fact, it would not help you if I did.'[43] 'It is such an awfully exciting pleasure to paint in this new way that I have no time to think of anything else just at present', he concluded by way of adieu, leaving his interviewer to find his own way out of the studio.

Keith continued to enjoy success. He won the Diploma of Honour at the San Francisco Art Association's Midwinter Fair, although there was consternation when it was announced that all the major prize-winners were men. The judges were castigated, fury erupted, and there was talk of medal winners refusing their 'Baubles'.[44] The furore was seized upon by the ever-watchful *Wasp*, and, under the heading of a seafaring metaphor, 'Canvas in a Squall', it reported that, 'Bohemia … is just now in a ferment of excitement, over the Midwinter Fair art awards. Keith tops the list … But, worse of all, the ladies come no nearer the top than the silver medals:

> There is howling in Bohemia,
> From all the painter men,
> And red with recent tears the eyes
> Of each Bohemienne.

There is sorrow in all studios,
Where women wield the brush,
And the mutterings of vengeance dire
Escape with angry rush.
For the ladies of Bohemia
Were left out in the cold,
And not a single woman got
A medal made of gold.

The Chief Mourner.[45]

The disappointed members of the art community only had to wait a few months to visit upon Keith a measure of vengeance, or at least feel a soupçon of *Schadenfreude*, when a new Society of Arts and Crafts, which he had tried to set up with the architects Willis Polk, newly arrived, outspoken and whose 'personal obnoxiousness offended many', and artist Albert Pissis, died a premature but welcome death. 'It was one succession of rows from the start and not for one moment could its organisers agree to live in harmony.'[46] They could not agree on electing a president and they were riven by discord over who could join.[47] However, the Arts and Crafts Movement flourished without the society, largely thanks to the Rev. Joseph Worcester, himself an architect of some repute. Keith was a member of the 'Worcester Group' in the 1890s, which 'met regularly for informal discussions and to socialize' under Worcester's leadership. Other members included Polk, impressionist painter Mary C. Richardson (1848–1931), Charles Keeler and Bruce Porter.[48] The pinnacle of local success for the movement came when Dr O. N. Orlow, art lover and philanthropist, founded the United Crafts and Arts Building at 2203, Central Avenue, Oakland, in the former Trinity School in 1903 with the aim of exhibiting and selling the work of local artists, delivering lectures and providing a reading room. In his inaugural address Orlow stated that: 'Among the first artists to signify their intentions to exhibit were Messrs. Keith and [Charles P.] Neilson [(1867–1937), born in the village of Pitlessie, Fife]. These gentlemen have given me invaluable assistance in bringing this work to an established fact'.[49] The building eventually became part of the campus of the present-day California College of the Arts.

In July 1895, Keith and Mary were among the 'people in the swim who were out of town for the summer', spending several weeks together at Castle Crags Tavern south of Mount Shasta.[50] On their way back to San

Francisco they joined Professor and Mrs Joseph LeConte, their daughter Carrie, Theodore Hittell and others of their friends, at McKinney's Hotel on Lake Tahoe.[51] His time at Castle Craggs was productive; he did not fish for trout or laze around in a hammock, but spent most days at his easel. Using the tavern as his vantage point, he sketched Mount Shasta, some thirty miles distant, and the Sacramento Valley, producing thirty-two colour sketches which he set to work up on return to his studio.[52]

A portrait of Keith sitting in his studio with palette and brushes in hand, appeared in the 7 September 1895 edition of *The Wasp* as number five in a series of 'Our California Artists' and describes him as 'the famous painter whose works have won him world-wide celebrity as one of the great living masters of landscape work'.[53] Keith reciprocated by painting *The Sentinel of the Redwoods*, for a full page in *The Christmas Wasp* of that year.[54]

Keith's continued success ensured added prosperity, and in October he moved to a large four-roomed suite of studios above the California Market



Figure 12. William Keith (1838–1911) b. Scotland, *Shasta all in Snow*, late 1890s, Oil on canvas.

Saint Mary's College Museum of Art Permanent Collection [0–268]

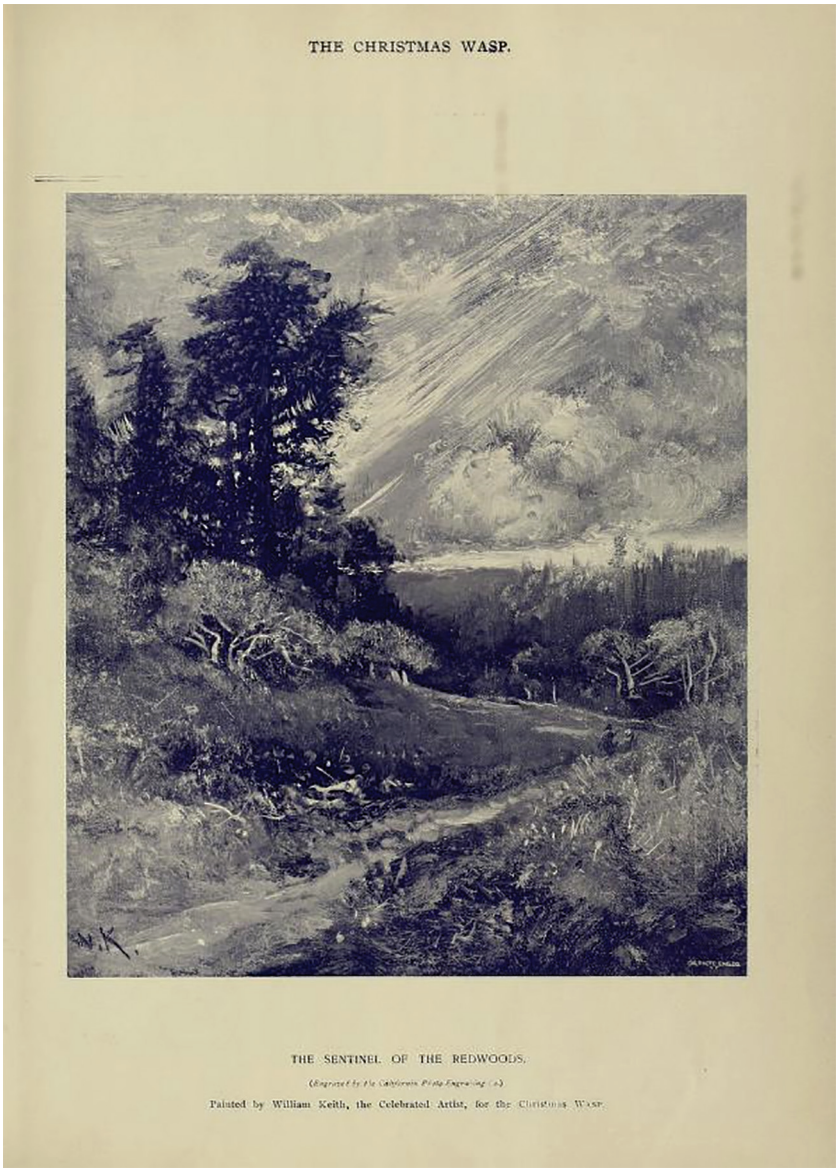

Figure 13. *The Sentinel of the Redwoods*, from *The Christmas Wasp*, 1895. *The Wasp*, San Francisco, Vol. XXXIV, No. 51, 2 December 1895. Internet Archive. https://archive.org/details/waspjandec1895unse/page/n1041/mode/2up

at 424 Pine Street, in what had been the premises of the Bohemian Club but now converted to accommodate several artists' studios. He decided to open a permanent gallery, recruiting Theodore Hittell and George Davidson's son to act as a hanging committee.[55] Several well-known artists, including Eugen Neuhaus, shared the building:

> [Where Keith] occupied the front room facing the corridor, where he could most easily be disturbed … probably because it was the only one with a skylight and hence best adapted to his purposes. Often through the half-open door one could see him at work on one of his rich pastoral landscapes. In the room adjoining, toward the street, which was equipped with large windows, he kept on display his larger pictures, and in a third room, artificially illuminated, were kept his mountain landscapes, which to the end of his career continued to find occasional buyers, and where one was fairly dazed by the wealth of pictorial treasure displayed.[56]

In the autumn of 1895, Keith had begun work on four murals for the Swedenborgian Church, newly established by Worcester on Washington Street, San Francisco. The building was designed by professional architect, A. (born Arthur) Page Brown, in conformity to Worcester's ideas which reflected the Arts and Crafts Movement's reaction to the ornateness of Victorian architecture by championing the use of raw, natural materials and simple homemade designs of rustic simplicity. 'The ceiling is wooden, the arch of which is supported by Madrone – or strawberry tree – timbers with the bark on, selected for that purpose while they were yet part of the forest in the Santa Cruz Mountains'.[57] The murals represent the seasons of California and grace the otherwise unadorned walls; surrounded by simple wooden frames, they give an impression of looking at a view through a window.

'A Stranger' visiting the church thought the murals could be described by passages from Scripture, such was the sense of wonder in the beauty of nature they invoked.[58] When Keith was working on *Autumn*, or *Early Rain* in January 1896, he heard of the death of his friend, Page Brown, following an accident with a runaway horse and buggy. He was thirty-six. Upset by the news, Keith made the piece 'more dreamy, putting thought and feeling and even a bit of sadness in his work, with just a tiny patch of hopeful blue sky in the far, far distance, at the end of that long sombre path through the

woods'.[59] The mural, dedicated as a memorial to Page Brown, was hung in the church along with the others in February 1896.

Keith's restlessness of spirit and quest for the elusive grail that would enable him to paint at the highest level of his calling, while also providing him with a clear explanation of why he painted, or strove to paint at that level, was not satisfied with the chiaroscuro style he had embraced with such enthusiasm and before long he had moved on to other methods, some of them outlandish, in order to produce the works he craved. Any despondency he may have felt at the death of Page Brown did not last; the art correspondent of the *San Francisco Call* visited his studio and found him in talkative mood. He watched while Keith used his feet to paint pictures, 'and good ones, too', a method that could be witnessed at any time of the day; barely stopping short of suggesting that the newspaper's readers should troop along to see for themselves.[60] Keith then proceeded to dance all over sheets of painted material on the floor like an excited school boy. His visitor reported with his tongue firmly in his cheek that Keith hoped in time:

> to perfect a new school of art where the painter can throw his pictures down on the floor and let patrons walk on them for a while, after which they will be varnished, framed and sold at the regular rates as 'footprints'. Everybody [would] be their own decorator. Men and women with big feet [would] be in demand and Chicago [would] become the art centre of the world.[61]

It is not clear if these frivolous hopes for the future were supplied by Keith or the reporter. Keith is not noted for being the founder of such a school, nor are his 'footprints' a notable feature of his legacy.

On another occasion, Keith puffed the smoke from his cigar on to the canvas, turned the picture upside down, pressed newspaper onto the wet paint, removed it and expressed himself delighted with the soft tones revealed in the foreground.[62] Keith took these experimental methods a stage further by dabbing two newly painted pictures together and jumping on them to merge the colours. Despite the ridicule of critics, he sold one such painting to Collis P. Huntington, the railway magnate and man of considerable vision, and no less than three to Timothy Hopkins, a trustee of Stanford University.[63]

A more conventionally produced artwork was submitted to a competition organised by the San Francisco Art Association and sponsored by James D. Phelan who offered a thousand dollars in prize money to encourage local artists to paint and engage in historical research. The paintings had to be on the theme of the discovery of the West Coast by Spanish explorers.[64] Despite what for many would have been considered a generous prize, only four paintings were submitted and exhibited at the Spring Exhibition in April 1896. The winner of the $800 first prize was A. F. Mathews; Keith won $150 for second place; the winner of the third prize was Emile Pissis. All three prize-winners chose to paint *The Discovery of the Bay of San Francisco* by Gaspar de Portolà in 1769. Keith's painting shows a large group of mounted conquistadores – their armoured breastplates and steel morions gleaming in the sun – emerging from a thickly wooded gully and wending their way to the top of a headland where they have erected a large cross overlooking the bay spread out before them, the rays of the sun beaming down through the clouds onto the shining, placid waters of the Pacific Ocean.

Whatever its merits, one writer dismisses his Spanish soldiers as resembling 'nothing so much as a flock of sheep massed in the hollows of the hills and give a curious Barbizon intimacy to a painting that is supposed to depict a grand historical event'.[65]

Although Mathews claimed first place and the plaudits that went with it, his painting became the property of the Art Association. Keith's was returned to him and shortly thereafter acquired by Mrs Phoebe Apperson Hearst for an undisclosed sum, but later reputed to be $25,000.[66] If true, which is highly unlikely, this represents the highest price ever paid for a Keith and would have removed any disappointment he may have felt at not having won the competition.[67] The painting was badly damaged in transit to Mrs Hearst's home in Washington and she returned it to Keith for restoration, which he did, 'once he got over the blues'.[68] Whatever the actual amount paid, Keith seems to have been amply rewarded, in contrast to the other entrants. Emile Pissis' fifty-dollar prize money may represent the totality of his earnings from painting: a man of wealth, he is not known to have ever sold a picture.[69] Arthur William Best, the one artist not to win a prize, had only recently arrived in the city from Canada and with his wife Alice established the serendipitously named Best Art School in San Francisco.[70]



Figure 14. Image of William Keith's *The Discovery of the Bay of San Francisco*, 1896, from Brother Cornelius, *Keith: Old Master of California*, Vol. II (New York, 1942–56), 212.

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Keith's decision to create an art gallery in his studio had paid off almost immediately. He sold Collis P. Huntington three paintings called *Resignation*, *Berkeley Oaks* and *Golden Sunset*, completed while he was still in his Kearny Street studio.[71] In April 1896 he wrote to his friends the Brackenbury sisters, Marie and Georgina ('Ina'), who were painters and suffragettes; he was cock-a-hoop at this coup and the other successes he had had since the first of January.[72] By his own reckoning he was on course to earn around $50,000 for the full year, having earned 'a little over $12,000' for the first quarter. He had sold one painting for $2,500; Huntington's painting *Resignation* was to go to the Art Association of New York, and another, sold to a 'New Yorker for $1,500' to go on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Keith seems to have been unwell, but

had had 'a tremendous time since the first of January and now suffered from "nervous prosperity" '. Everybody, it seems, wanted to own a Keith and took pleasure in inducing others to acquire one. Keith's pastoral painting, *The Golden Heritage of the Native Sons*, was gifted to the august body, the Native Sons of the Golden West, by Irving Scott, and handed over at a formal reception in their grand hall at 414 Mason Street with Keith in attendance.[73] One of Keith's paintings was presented to the industrialist Claus Spreckels, in appreciation of the 'many favours and courtesies' he had given grateful investors during their association in 'the great industry of making sugar from beets'. They hoped it would be a lasting adornment to his new mansion on Van Ness Avenue.[74]

Keith's place in the community was cemented when he and Professor Joseph LeConte were elected honorary life members of the University Club at Berkeley at a time when many artists were finding it difficult to make a living.[75] At the 1896 winter exhibition of the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art, several artists bemoaned the fact that they found it difficult to sell a ten-dollar sketch, although there seemed to be money about for fancy dresses, the visitors more interested in social intercourse than studying the art on display. Among Keith's exhibits at this show was a portrait called *An Auld Gaberlunzie*; this archaic Scots term is a nod to his own past, perhaps remembered through reading his Walter Scott novels.[76] (The Saint Mary's Collection contains two portraits that may be of this worthy, with the more prosaic titles of *Portrait of an Old Gentleman* and *Portrait of an Old Gentleman (#2).* They were painted at the time.)[77]

Despite Keith's commercial success, one man who continued to question his artistic style was John Muir, still a regular visitor to his studio when he came to San Francisco from his ranch in Martinez in the Alhambra Valley, and who continued to insist on geological accuracy in his mountain pictures. For Muir, a painting had 'to represent recognisable facts, depict a definite locale', and not some 'poetical romantic landscape suggesting some charming but remote Arcadia'.[78] 'He made no attempt to conceal his disapproval of such "snuff-brown" pictures.'[79] 'You never saw a sunrise like that', Muir would chide when evaluating a new canvas: 'Why in the deuce don't you imitate nature? You'll never paint a decent picture until you do that'. Keith would respond by telling people that Muir 'may be a poet and a man of education [but] may never get beyond the outside husk of art, the imitative side'.[80] Regardless of their differences, their friendship endured and they were to enjoy regular excursions into the wilderness



Figure 15. William Keith, *Portrait of an Old Gentleman*, 1884, Oil on canvas mounted on Masonite, 20 × 17 inches.

Gift of John Dowling Relfe, Saint Mary's College Museum of Art Permanent Collection. [93.15.1]

for the rest of their lives, and if, as has been suggested, Muir had by this time given up on Keith artistically, that capitulation was premature. After recovering from a bout of pneumonia he returned to his Alaska portfolio of several years earlier and *The San Francisco Examiner* reported that he had 'forsaken to some extent his pastorals and his umbrageous oaks. His *Misty Morning in Alaska* is the very antithesis of the canvases he has been

painting recently, but he has shown that nature is beautiful in the chilly, mist glacial regions'.[81]

Keith's fame had slowly spread from the west coast across the whole nation and to Europe as his work received exposure and acclaim in exhibitions in New York, Boston, Chicago, London, Frankfurt and Paris. His successes were reported back to the press in California in glowing terms and this burnished his reputation until it shone. The *Overland Monthly* reported enthusiastically that he was: 'Receiving the honour due him in London' where English-born Richard Brackenbury, successful sheep farmer in California, poet and brother of Marie and 'Ina' organised a private exhibition of his work, garnering 'especial praise from the London Press, and members of the royal family [who became] enthusiastic admirers'.[82]

Closer to home, an Art Association had been formed at the university in Berkeley and in April 1899 they held a two-day exhibition of picture and art productions in Stiles Hall. While several California artists were featured, Keith was the main attraction, his collection having been loaned for the occasion by art lovers and had a room to itself. Charles Keeler gave a talk on Keith's life and work.[83] Berkeley's proximity to San Francisco afforded a convenient respite from the rigours of city living, and with its own natural beauty, its oak glades, coastal routes, views of wildlife and distant hills, the town attracted many painters at weekends, where they could sketch its rural splendour. A discernible art colony grew up in its environs. William Keith, recognised as the 'Dean', who had moved there permanently in 1886, was later joined by Edwin Deakin and Xavier Martinez. They were followed by a host of others, some of whom enjoyed celebrity status among their peers, including Henry Joseph Breuer, Louise Carpenter, Charles M. Crocker, Carl Dahlgren, Jules Mersfelder, Perham Nahl, Charles P. Neilson, Eda Smitten and Elizabeth Strong.[84] Despite their numbers and the esteem in which many of them were held, an Oakland Art Fund, set up at the turn of the century to promote music, literature, theatre and visual arts and with the ultimate aim of building an Oakland Art Gallery, failed to elicit sufficient public support and after several years of various benefit exhibitions it ceased in 1905.[85] William Keith and his longtime friend Theodore Wores had been among the many exhibitors and their paintings had hung in the Oakland Free Public Library in what was hoped would form the nucleus of the Oakland Art Museum or Academy of Design.[86]

Partly in response to an invitation from London, Keith decided to visit Europe in the summer of 1899. He went with his friend, the businessman

and art patron, John Zeile, who met up with him in New York.[87] From the outset, Keith's foreign adventure unfolded in a by now familiar pattern, of discomfort, regret, and a desire to be back in familiar surroundings. As always, he wrote to the Rev. James Worcester, describing how he had been 'right royally entertained' by Dan Burnham during a six-hour stopover in Chicago, but the rushing about in New York, where he found he 'was pretty well known', the noise, and the extreme heat were making him 'all of a tremble … When I think of my quiet life in San Francisco, I just feel as if I must get back to work quietly'.[88] At this point, Keith broke off, promising to write more fully when on board the steamer. He must have considered not boarding, because when he resumed, he wrote:

> On Board S.S.Noorland … you see by this that there is no possibility of me getting back to California … I am eager to get back, every good thing I have seen (and I have seen a good many) tells me the same story, 'Go back to work'. That's the only way, the old fellows did, and what's in them will come out *if it's there*. You would be astonished at New York; the crazy, faddy art talk … it seems to me there is more sanity in S. F. because it's quieter … the swindling that can be done and is surely practiced, would amaze you, and shrewd, hard-headed businessmen seem to have a childish faith in those dealing in the art of the old masters … I got so bewildered that I commenced to doubt the genuineness of everything I had seen.[89] [original emphasis]

Keith wrote from Antwerp after a three-week voyage, which had been, 'smooth but very monotonous and tiresome. The people amused themselves principally by watching their neighbours, and drawing false conclusions, needless to say, I suffered, people at sea are worse than Scotch people in a village'.[90] This is an intriguing thing for Keith to write; has something someone said triggered an unhappy memory from his childhood? Whatever its significance, this incident may have acted as the precursor to an equally intriguing decision he was to make later in his travels.

Keith spent about three weeks in Amsterdam.[91] He had intended to stay three days but saw for the first time, Rembrandt's *Night Watch* and sat in front of this for twelve days. He considered it his favourite painting, the most beautiful picture in the world. From an artist's perspective that alone was worth the trip.[92] By mid-July, Keith had arrived in London but his entire trip, despite visiting the Royal Academy, and thinking Turner

'really great', was overshadowed by his dislike of the turmoil of a busy city and his desire to be back in San Francisco.[93] He repeated this like a mantra in his letters to Worcester. 'I am crazy to get home to work. I am idling my time away and I have only a few years to work … *I know I can do the work of my life* in the next *few years* if I have the strength' [original emphasis].[94] He wrote again, just three days later, reiterating his unhappiness. 'I just yearn for home, homesickness in its worst form just devours me. I wouldn't do this again for any amount of money … I long to hear from home and really am very homesick. After all the Old Masters *worked* and that is all there is to it' [original emphasis].[95]

Keith's trip was already soured. He had fallen out with Zeile who had befriended a Douglas Maclise whom Keith had taken a strong dislike to. Maclise had done something that Keith could not bring himself to tell Worcester about.[96] Keith would not go to Scotland with Maclise and Zeile refused to go without him. They parted company. Keith turned to a friend from San Francisco, the violinist, Sigmund Beel, who was performing in England, and begged him to travel with him.[97] Beel agreed, and having seen as many of London's pictures as there were to be seen, Keith and his new travelling companion visited Warwickshire, Stratford-upon-Avon, Windsor and Scotland.[98] Inexplicably, despite having travelled as far north as Aberdeen (they may have gone as far as Inverurie, just six miles from their ultimate destination), Keith decided not to go back to his birthplace. 'We did not go to Oldmeldrum', Beel wrote, '[Keith] confided in me that he had not been in Scotland for forty years [1860?] and did not wish to meet any relations'.[99] He had travelled a very long way to sit on a station platform and refuse to travel the last leg of his journey. No explanation for this was forthcoming, which is remarkable given that Keith got on well with and kept in touch with relatives while in the United States of America: his sisters Mrs Anna K. Chamberlain and Mrs Elizabeth K. Hyatt and his cousins in New York. He kept up a convivial correspondence with John R. Bruce, banker in Paris then in London.[100] Did the prospect of visiting his hometown stir up long dead childhood memories he would rather not be reminded of? Had he suffered from the sharp, gossiping tongues of 'Scotch people in a village' as he recalled on the Atlantic crossing? Did he suffer guilt because of his legitimacy? Had he fashioned a creation myth about his origins and could not face the stark reality of seeing it exposed as a lie? Whatever emotional forces had influenced his decision, they must have been extremely powerful.

Keith enjoyed the rest of his trip to Scotland, visiting the haunts of Robert Burns around Dumfries and the cottage and kirk at Ayr. Keith fell in love with the scenery in Burns' Country, but it is clear where his heart lay. However much he loved the country of his birth, its landscape, its culture, its literature, Keith now considered himself an American. He had become a naturalised citizen of the United States of America on 17 August 1883.[101] When, a few years later, Keith was asked what he saw that pleased him most when in Europe, he replied, 'Letters from California'.[102] While on the steamer on the way home, Keith met John Ingalls, a partner in a carpet business. They had known each other as youths in New York and not seen each other since. When asked if Ingalls knew he had become a famous painter, Keith said, 'Oh, yes, I told him so'.[103] On his return, and to commemorate his trip, *The Berkeley Gazette* published a homage to Burns that they credited to Keith, but it was penned by his mother-in law, Mrs Ellen J. McHenry.[104]

I've been wandering over ocean,
And through the classic lands,
I've viewed the wondrous gems of Art,
The work of human hands.
But never a picture stirred my soul,
As 'The Beautiful Sunset Scene'
On the rocky road, where 'The Bluebells' grew,
Burns picked for his 'Bonnie Jean.'
I knew t'was painted by 'Hand Divine,'
No other could spread the glow,
Of the sunset o'er the Abbey walls,
Or make those 'Blue Bells' grow.
These 'Banks and Braes' of 'Bonny Doon'
Still bloom 'sae fresh and fair'
But I'm looking away to the western sea,
Far from these 'Bonny Banks of Ayr.'
To my western home I long to go,
And feel the western breeze,
To paint again her glowing skies,
Her mountains and her trees.[105]

Keith was no sooner back in his studio than he regained his composure by taking to his art with renewed vigour.[106] Among his paintings

was one of Dundrennan Abbey, Dumfries, the first of his 'foreign' studies. Professionally, he entered the twentieth century at the zenith of his career. Many of the city's leading citizens were drawn to his studio where he worked assiduously and was still keen to experiment. In a trio of portraits of his friend, the poet Charles A. Keeler, he departed from the normal conventions of portraiture and reverted to the depth and darkness of the Old Masters to produce a dreamy effect in which, instead of the figure 'standing out' from the canvas as was customary, it seemed to be bathed in mysterious depths from the other side of the frame and was declared 'yet another triumph for our Western genius'.[107] Keith's success did not pass unnoticed by the reporter Blanche Partington, who interviewed several leading artists, asking the question, 'Does Art Pay?' All pointed to Keith as proof that it did. 'It is pleasant … to hear them say. "There's Keith, now" – envying his success, perhaps … and finding in his good fortune a bow of promise'.[108]

Flush from his sales, Keith bought a house for $10,000, 'which I rent, and am in a terrible state of excitement'.[109] The advice to buy a property may have come from the Rev. Worcester. Keith had Willis Polk design and build a house adjoining the Swedenborgian Church on Washington Street, San Francisco.[110] One outcome of this transaction was that both William and Mary had to deny they were moving from Berkeley.[111]

In the summer of 1901, Keith and Mary joined Muir and a party of one hundred men and women from the Sierra Club on a sketching trip to Mounts Dana and Lyell. A train of eighteen pack horses carried a thousand pounds of supplies. Professors from the university were among those who gave scientific talks interspersed with songs and games in the evenings as they sat around the campfire after a hard day's trekking. They established a permanent camp on Tuolumne Meadows.[112] A trip beyond the headwaters of the Merced River yielded valuable sketches for Keith and rekindled his interest in painting mountain scenery.[113] 'I have a craze to paint mountain pictures', he enthused in a letter to the Brackenbury sisters, 'here they are looked down upon by amateurs and painters but … *to paint a mountain picture in any successful way means a lot of knowledge of art methods and structure of the mountains*' (emphasis added). Keith was clearly bringing science into the equation.[114] As a result of this trip, a painting of *The Headwaters of the Merced* measuring 36 inches × 60 inches was commissioned and in January 1902, Keith personally supervised its installation on the second floor of The Emporium at its prime location on Market Street.

This large department store was a magnet for San Francisco shoppers, and the picture was intended to act as the centrepiece for its newly installed art gallery. In style and composition it harked back to his early days of topographical accuracy and was 'perhaps the finest of all his mountain views'.[115] Keith had resurrected a style of grandiose Yosemite landscapes at a time when those of Bierstadt, 'which used to fetch ten thousand dollars apiece, had declined so much that now they commanded scarcely any price at all'.[116] Not only had Keith reverted to his early, objective style of painting, he enjoyed doing so. His niece, Elizabeth Keith Pond, daughter of 'Em' McHenry Pond and known as 'Bessie', then one of his students, remembered that 'he was full of enthusiasm for the new [painting] and had his students copy a smaller version of it. Soon after, Keith finished another large painting to which he gave the significant title, *Path of the Glacier*, in homage to Muir's discovery that glacial action had carved out the great valleys of the Sierra'.[117] This painting must have been done with some scientific understanding of deep time which Keith was able to convey accurately on to the canvas.

He continued to trek into the mountains each summer with John Muir and the Sierra Club, climbing to the summit of Mount Whitney on their 1902 excursion to King's River.[118] Illness prevented Keith from going the following year and it may have been the same illness that forced him to decline a special invitation from Muir and Professor Wheeler of the University to accompany them during President Theodore Roosevelt's visit to Yosemite Valley in May.[119] His output continued to reflect his interest in painting large mountain scenery; an exhibition of his work in the Rose Room at Vickery's Gallery contained 'some panoramic in size, some more suited for American homes'.[120] There was still a demand for large paintings. Keith worked on two murals for the St. Francis Hotel, whose directors seemed determined to outdo any other institution in terms of the size of their artwork. The larger of the two, a depiction of *Mount Tamalpais*, measured seven feet by eleven, and was so heavy Keith had to employ a carpenter to set up a mechanical contraption to help manhandle it into position.[121]

The early years of the twentieth century saw Keith's standing rise in the wider community. When the California Promotion Committee honoured their Executive Officer, Rufus P. Jennings, a prominent merchant, for his work in trying to increase immigration, attract investment and stimulate demand for Californian products, the members turned to 'California's

greatest landscape artist' to provide an oil painting commensurate with Jennings' achievement.[122] In May 1904 Keith was among a host of prominent citizens invited to attend a conference dinner in the Maple Room of the Palace Hotel where the guest of honour was his good friend Daniel Burnham from Chicago. Leaders of the city's artistic and business communities had formed an Association for the Improvement and Adornment of San Francisco and sought Burnham's counsel on the best ways to achieve this.[123] It is not clear if Keith attended this prestigious gathering of San Francisco luminaries, but it is a sign of the esteem in which he was held that he was invited. He had spoken out against the Board of Public Works and the mercantile associations who joined forces to get rid of a flower market:

> It was a beautiful and picturesque thing and should have been encouraged and enlarged. Its destruction at the hands of commercialism is a disgrace to San Francisco which boasts its progress in taste and culture. Let us cultivate the spirit of Paris and other European cities which are not willing to sacrifice beauty when someone thinks they can make a little profit thereby. The action of the Works Board was a cheap and discreditable thing.[124]

In June 1904, Keith joined Muir and his daughters and Edward Robeson Taylor on a trip to the Grand Canyon and brought back several sketches. As seemed to be happening with increasing frequency, he was indisposed on his return but did start to work these up in oils once he was back in his studio.[125] Such was his fame that unsubstantiated stories sprang up about him. In May 1905 he is said to have sold several paintings to Charles Follen McKim, a distinguish architect and art connoisseur from New York, for $15,000. McKim 'told a friend' in a lengthy and detailed conversation piece, that 'I had heard of Keith, of course, and knew that he did good work, but I was wholly unprepared for what I saw … a new master has arisen. And such perfect … work. Well, I bought $15,000 worth of it in ten minutes [and then] spent several hours in admiring his collection'.[126] While it is true that McKim did visit San Francisco in May, he did so at short notice at the request of Daniel Burnham during a whistle-stop fundraising tour of American cities on behalf of the American Academy in Rome where he had been a student. Burnham gave a banquet to leading citizens where the guest of honour was the President of the American Academy in Rome who gave a lengthy speech. McKim found the whole

thing 'a somewhat trying occasion' but was glad he had endured the three-day visit; the dinner raised $100,000 for the Endowment Fund, matching Harvard's contribution, and was to be made in the name of the University of California. All this McKim related in a letter to his daughter, Margaret, while en route to Chicago for the next stop on his tour. At no point does he mention having spent time with Keith – they could have discussed how sharp and beautiful he found the contrasting colours of Scotland's grouse moors or reminisced about the country more generally – or having bought any of his paintings.[127] This, of course, could be an oversight on McKim's part; Keith had been an overnight guest of Burnham at his Twin Peaks bungalow and McKim may have met him there.[128] In any event, he is reported to have visited Keith's studio at Burnham's invitation.[129] Brother Cornelius visited the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1933 with the express purpose of seeing these paintings but could not find them and 'no one seemed to know where they were'.[130] Keith has nothing to say about this supposed success, but despite a lack of 'matters of fact' it makes for a good story and even without this sale his fame and prosperity seemed assured.

Visitors to his studio continued to be frequent. He entertained Miss Ethel Barrymore, 'The First Lady of the American Theatre', who was performing at the Columbia, and her guests, presenting her with a small painting as she was leaving. She was so thrilled she insisted on carrying it back to her hotel rather than having it sent.[131] But illness overcame Keith once again. When Macbeth ordered another dozen paintings for his New York gallery, he had to decline, because he was suffering from a cold.[132] When he was fit, he continued to work industriously and in March 1906 he exhibited twenty-six paintings at the Vickery, Atkins and Torrey Gallery ensuring further exposure to potential buyers.[133] Jacob H. Schiff, the New York banker, visited his studio and arranged to buy several of his works when he returned from his trip to Japan.[134]

All Keith's resilience and resolve in keeping up his prodigious output through his Golden Years were sorely tested when, at 5.12 am on Wednesday 18 April 1906, his world, and that of hundreds of thousands of people in the Bay Area, was abruptly shattered when two earth tremors lasting barely a minute brought large swathes of the city crashing down to earth.

CHAPTER NINE

Keith's Philosophy of Art

> Great art is precisely that which never was, nor will be taught, it is pre-eminently and finally the expression of the spirits of great men.[1]
>
> John Ruskin

Keith articulated his philosophy of art, derived in large part from his immersion in Swedenborgian doctrines, in a public lecture he delivered at the University of California, Berkeley in February 1888 and at a private meeting of the Sorosis Club of San Francisco in his Pine Street studio in October 1898. What may have been the genesis of Keith's first lecture was the visit to San Francisco by Oscar Wilde although the period of gestation was a long one – some six years. Wilde arrived in San Francisco by train on 26 March 1882, as part of a North American lecture tour, with his first lecture scheduled for the next evening at Platt's Hall. Wilde's agent for the American trip was the English theatre impresario Richard D'Oyly Carte, and Charles E. Locke, San Francisco impresario and theatre manager, was responsible for his lectures in the city. After his Monday lecture Wilde visited Oakland, then returned for his second lecture at Platt's Hall on 29 March on the subject of 'Art Decoration! Being the Practical and Application of the Aesthetic Theory to Everyday Home Life and Art Ornamentation!' Wilde did not endear himself to the audience of near five hundred, many of whom were women, by criticising, among other things, their brightly coloured hats which they had worn specially in his honour.[2] Later, Wilde toured Chinatown, taking the opportunity during his lectures to criticise the anti-Chinese sentiment prevalent in the city. He visited the Bohemian Club, where he was mistaken for Charles Warren Stoddard, and where he had his portrait painted. After a brief tour of San Jose, he left the

city on 8 April 1882 while being assailed from the press and from the pulpit for his 'Sunflower Aestheticism'.[3]

Even while he was still in San Francisco a satirical cartoon by George Frederick Keller had appeared in *The Wasp* on the eve of Wilde's third lecture. 'The Modern Messiah' caricatures Jesus's entry into Jerusalem with Wilde sitting atop a braying ass.[4] Among the accompanying crowd are many of the city's luminaries who had facilitated his visit, including Charles Crocker, whose Central Pacific Railroad had carried Wilde to the West Coast and Daniel O'Connell, poet, writer and journalist and co-founder of the Bohemian Club.[5] The cartoon's sunflower motif represents the symbol of the aesthetics movement; tied to the ass's tail is a money bag representing the $5,000 fee Wilde purportedly received for his American tour, and the padlock around the neck carries the likeness of Charles E. Locke.[6] Among the most vociferous in condemning Wilde was Ambrose Bierce, Civil War veteran, newspaper columnist and writer, best known for his *Devil's Dictionary*, and considered by many to be Wilde's equal in acerbic wit. His attack on Wilde appeared in the same edition of *The Wasp*, in his weekly column 'Prattle'. Among his unapologetic and least offensive gibes, targeting his sexuality as well as his poetical prowess, was the comment that, 'this gawky gowk has the divine effrontery to link his name with those of Swinburne, Rossetti and Morris – this dunghill he-hen would fly with eagles. He dares to set his tongue to the honoured name of Keats.'[7]

A more measured form of criticism was conducted by the Rev. Joseph Worcester who between August and October 1882 presented a series of lectures on 'The Role of Art in Life' for 'a Club', in which he attacked Wilde and his fellow aesthetes who shared the philosophy that art was for art's sake. Instead, Worcester insisted that it was useful, uplifting, spiritually derived from nature and had moral value.[8] Worcester wanted to build on this theme by arranging a series of 'Talks on Art by the Artists'. He discussed the idea with William Carey Jones, Professor and Founding Director of the School of Jurisprudence at the University of California, who supported the idea – he may have first suggested it – but there was considerable delay in bringing this to fruition largely due to the unwillingness of artists to speak in public about their work.[9] Among those asked to participate and who were reluctant to do so, were Theodore Wores and William Keith who did not think he could stand before an audience and talk for an hour. Writing to Jones, Worcester passed on Keith's response: 'I should just like to stand before the professors and tell them that they don't

know the first thing about art … I could tell them all I have to say in five minutes'. Worcester knew very well that the five minutes would consume an hour and persisted in his courting of Keith, 'I will ask him tomorrow to select the slides from which he will talk. I told him he must begin with the question: What ought one to look for in a picture?' Keith acquiesced.[10]

Keith's long-standing invitation to speak was eventually realised on the afternoon of Wednesday 29 February 1888. His was the second in a series under the patronage of the Longfellow Club, a Berkeley literary society. His friend Theodore Wores had delivered the first on Japanese art a week earlier. Keith had attended, perhaps as a measure of support and with a view to getting a few pointers on public speaking. He delivered his lecture on the art of landscape painting at the Assembly Hall of the University of California, Berkeley, before a crowd of university students and members of the public.[11] He had been working on his paper for some time, having started to draft it while in Alaska in 1886, and it was both a response to public criticism that his work had become careless and a systematic explanation of his philosophy of art showing his metamorphosis from a scientific painter depicting the accurate 'matters of fact' so beloved of his friend John Muir, to the creator of original artwork 'of the spiritual, often mystical, moods which were later to become typical of his work'.[12]

The lecture reveals how much Keith's philosophy of art adheres to Swedenborgian principles and the extent to which it is influenced by an article written by George Inness – they had yet to meet – that had been published in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in February 1878 under the title, 'A Painter on Painting'. Inness wrote, 'There are no absolute rules about methods of painting … Yes, principles – a few of them, that's all. Pupils can't be taught much by an artist. I have found that explanations usually hinder them, or makes their work stereotyped'.[13] Inness's advice to the aspiring artist was to paint – to practise, practise, practise; and ask what it is that a painter tries to achieve?

> Simply to reproduce in other minds the impression which a scene has made upon him. A work of art does not appeal to the intellect. It does not appeal to the moral sense. Its aim is not to instruct, not to edify, but to awaken an emotion. This emotion may be one of love, of pity, of veneration, of hate, of pleasure, or of pain; but it must be a single emotion, if the work has unity, as every such work should have, and the true beauty of the work consists in the beauty of the sentiment or emotion which it inspires.[14]

To make his point, Inness contrasts the paintings of French landscapist Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1796–1875) with his fellow countryman, the classicist painter and sculptor, Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier (1815–91). 'Corot's art, lacking in objective form, is higher than Meissonier's; the one supplies a poetical truth, the other, with his attention to detail, a scientific truth; the former is aesthetic, the latter is analytical'.[15] For Inness, the purpose of art is twofold: 'first, to cultivate the artist's own spiritual nature, and secondly, to enter as a factor in general civilisation'.[16]

Keith expounds and expands on these themes in relation to his own work. He also discusses Impressionism, then taking a hold in the country, especially in the East, which he thought was little understood, was difficult to master, but which he liked if done well:

> When I began to paint, I could not get mountains high enough nor sunsets gorgeous enough for my brush and colours. After a considerable number of years' experience, I was contented with very slight material, a clump of trees, a hillside and sky. I find these hard enough and varied enough to express any feeling I may have about them. It is not so easy, after all, to take – say an old roadway, and by the aid of figure incident, make it express either joyous or melancholy history; it cannot be done by a bare imitation of the thing itself. Big mountains and flaming sunsets are plain and patent when helped out by details [but] the painting I like best, is not helped by such details, but rather the reverse … Imitation is not all of Art, though many think so …
>
> There are many things in nature beautiful to look at – to all lovers of nature the mountains are inspiration of everything that is grand and lovely, but I know of no great landscape painter who from choice paints mountains and it is only from the grossest exaggeration that any true impression can be given. There are many pictures painted of Yosemite (I have perpetrated several myself – I am sorry – I won't do it again) [Keith was mistaken], but have you ever seen *one* that gave the true impression of size and colour? There you have in summertime a constantly blue sky, then you have a large mass of purplish grey rock cliffs and a mass of dark green – if you paint in the morning and face the sun – in the evening you paint with your back to the sun … The same mass of sky, cliffs, and foliage, but out of all proportion to make a harmonious whole. Your eye wanders over it; here the sunshine lights up this part and that; the shadows play here and there, and you try to paint it. But you now must concentrate

your attention on one part, and you find, when you have finished that the proportions of colour do not produce an agreeable whole … What is to be looked for in landscape painting, is unity, simplicity, and detail subordinated to the whole. … If there is anything more wearisome to a painter, it is the monotony of a blue sky [emphasis added].

Colour has its absolute mathematical values as well as its uncertain quantities. Did you ever see the flaming mountain sides in the eastern states, in fall time, in Maine, Massachusetts, or New Hampshire's White Mountains, with masses of white clouds in motion, drifting across a blue sky? And if you were a painter how eagerly you would want to paint but how chilled your enthusiasm would be at the result, the stereotyped, most chromo-like result. It is the impression generally, that landscape is the easiest kind of painting to do, and figure painters think so, as does much of the general public; but is it so in reality? The painter has only white paint to compete with the sunshine, which reconciles all harshness of colour and form. Art has its limitations … and in imitating nature the artist is at a great disadvantage because he is trying to do the impossible. The facts as facts are too much thought of in Art (and we are matter-of-fact people).

Accuracy of drawing is held by figure painters to be one of the chief things in art, but accuracy of drawing in landscape leads to hardness and stiffness. If a photograph, in colours, of a landscape, could be made from nature, with all its gradations, the result would not be satisfactory. It would not do away with the work of the landscape painter, as many suppose. There is a quality of drawing in landscape, which only a landscape painter of long experience knows the difficulty of; and that quality is truth to the Nature of the thing represented. Landscape painters try to draw accurately at first, but they find, if they progress, that it is this truth of quality which they must look for. It is not all that lies before the eye that is the valuable thing, what we see depends more on what is behind than what is before the eye, and what is behind is the valuable thing – viz., the personality of the artist. A sketch with its varyings and uncertainties, is often much more interesting than when carried into detail, and it is this thing of mobile palpitating life for which you must seek in art, and which makes it the more valuable. Some days it must appear differently from others and change as your mood changes. Hard literalness will not represent this …

… A practiced landscape painter, even when sketching from Nature, can tell whether he will make a successful sketch, by the sense of being able to surround his subject. And so with the Old Masters; they knew when to

stop, and were satisfied to interpret, whereas we wish to make the thing itself. Understand me: I do not wish to ignore the necessity of obtaining the facts; by hard and constant practice from Nature you must have them, but after you have them, you must control and not be controlled by them.

Some time ago, I was in New York and saw two pictures side by side in the Metropolitan Museum. At that time, I was called a conscientious and painstaking artist, but still I was anxious to learn, and although I thought much of the facts of Nature I was often questioning with myself, whether they were the all, and was open to conviction from whatever source … The first repelled me on the instant; it seemed dauby and without detail. I looked in the corner for the name. It was Corot, of whom I, of course, had read a great deal. I could see very little to admire in it; remember, I was looking at it closely and could not understand it. The one adjoining was by a well-known name, [Scots-born] William Hart [1823–1894] of New York; and with that I was very well pleased; it had plenty of detail, and it was worked up with a great deal of care. It had my idea of finish. I studied them for some time and at last I stepped back some distance halfway across the hall and to my surprise the whole picture of Corot seemed to grow and expand before my eyes, and I felt as if I were in the presence of nature; you could breathe its air. On looking at the other from the same distance it appeared as simply a mass of colour and a lot of lines. It was some time before I grasped the full meaning of it.

The Corot picture made me think of Nature, and the other of the workman … Which is the more valuable thing, this intellectual and sympathetic impression of Nature or the hand work of the painter? Many artists, the public generally, and art dealers, (and in knowledge, I class them with the public) side with the hand work, but there are a few who value spirit more than form. There is so much in Art that is dependent on the sympathies of your audience – so much that cannot be proven – that it behooves a painter to be careful to whom he talks sometimes. The difference between the two classes of work is the difference of aim. On the dealers' part, they know what the Public wants, and so practically they are the judges, and many an artist is compelled by hard necessity to sacrifice the best that is in him. Take a portrait painter … He finds that the sitter has his ideas of himself, and each of his friends have their ideas. How can a man work in freedom and give you his impression of the sitter? He must either give up in disgust or make a photographic caricature … Their sitters dare not express themselves as dissatisfied. They pay their money and

point out with affected pride to their pictures by so and so … In Munich, for example, I know of pictures that people (not artists) make pilgrimages to see, and these pictures are by world renowned names, and are rubbish. Great painters do not always paint great pictures. I often think the French are right after all in claiming for themselves all of Art. People give in to strong demands, rather than think for themselves.

Nature is so rich and so compelling that if an artist lives too near to her she tyrannizes him, and he tries to swallow more than he can digest. There are some painters who think that the only way to paint is to do so directly from Nature and day after day on the same picture they labour away, thinking they are getting the best thing. It seems to me they can only get a certain kind of truth – perhaps a number of them, but a number of truths do not make a true whole … a painter paints day after day for two weeks. He then does not paint more than just an hour or so. By the end of that time the colour is changed, the form is changed, and everything changes from day to day, and the whole tone of a landscape is different. In California, generally, one can paint a greater number of days in succession than in the eastern states, but even here, that kind of study is only good for foreground or quick studies of masses of colour. It may give a kind of accuracy, but it is not the best. There is a kind of accuracy which gives topography. A painter who can paint Nature's impression, must be able to do that sort of work, and [is] indeed obliged to go through with that experience, but he does not stop there. An artist ought to go to Nature as a poet goes, selecting and combining, to make his impression the stronger. If he finds lines or colour in the landscape, which interfere, he subordinates them, and exaggerates everything which tends to the unity of the whole. Take, for example, a springtime scene in California, when the flowers are all in bloom. The whole earth is a wild arrangement of different colours; over it all, the reconciling sun; and suppose the stickler for individual truth and mere imitation, should attempt such a thing. What he would get would be as intolerably untruthful to the impression, and as unartistic as a Brussels carpet. Every thoughtful painter must have his *Katzenjammer* times, that is, the artistic blues, in trying to impress others with his own feelings, through the medium of his work. Suppose an impressionist painter wishes to convey in a landscape, his idea of innocence, without using the conventional ideas too strongly of sheep, children, etc., etc., but simply by the quality of the colour, so that if the painter should show only the sky, it would impress the spectator with a sense of the painter's own feeling, viz.,

of innocence. You can readily see what a difficult thing it would be to do, but if others (a few) could be so affected, would it not go to show there was a reality to it, and not self-delusion on the part of the painter. And is not such work an appeal to a more interior and sympathetic knowledge of Nature? The majority might not feel it; but that would not prove its non-existence.

I often think that the kind of recognition which an artist receives is according to the truth which he expresses, and which is shared with him by a larger or smaller number. There is another fame, or recognition, of a meaner sort, which is made by the art dealer, for many people trust his judgment sooner than their own. I know that there is a contradiction here with regard to the fine Arts, the critical faculty is innate; and no more deadly insult can be given a man or woman than to question his or her knowledge of a picture. The same individual would go into a machine shop and listen humbly enough to explanations given by the workman, where he would not in the case of a painting. [John] Ruskin, says with regard to the critical faculty being innate as to the Fine Arts; 'There are laws of truth and right in painting, just as fixed as those of harmony in music or of affinity in Chemistry.'[17] It would be a good thing for the cause of Art, if artists would talk and write more about their work, but most of them feel it to be a hopeless task; they are placed too often in the position of pupil. A painter is painting a picture for someone who occasionally comes in to see its progress. After the painter fondly thinks it is finished, it is suggested to him that the putting in of more detail would be beneficial, especially in the foreground. 'Oh, yes; something must be left to the imagination; but do you not think a little more detail, etc., etc.?'

A great many people look at a picture, and if it is what is called warm and soft, they are satisfied. The expression or language of colour is what an impressionist wishes to see. Two pictures may, side by side, appear equally right and attractive to the casual observer, and yet one of them may be dead colour, and the other singing colour. Can philosophy tell me why certain colours in combination produce on certain sensitive minds the keenest feelings of pain or pleasure? … People generally think that a grey landscape has no colour; but it is full of its own colour. See how the local colour of objects is brought out on a wet day. Some impressionists (and because this is a kind of work little understood and unconventional, I have seen people very angry with it), when their day's work is done, wipe off their brushes and colours on a piece of canvas and seek for such

suggestions as they can find a certain quality of colour or tone or combination of colour will give them a hint and they will carefully try to carry it out. There is a fascination about it that is irresistible when successful. It is something of the same feeling which one experiences when trying to paint in the presence of Nature, on a cloudy day with the landscape constantly changing, so that it must be done with the greatest rapidity; just as if the Nature was before or within you as the spirit is. But this very thing of rapidity is a charge brought to bear against such work.

If a painter has got the sublime in himself, he does not require a large canvas to express it well … and full of an idea, which may have been working in his mind for months – is saturated – it does not take very long time to put that impression down … It is the workmanlike value, the time taken to do a piece of work, that is often wrongly made the criterion of value. A lawyer gives an opinion and its value is not called in question. People know that he has given years of time and study before he is capable of giving an opinion. A painter must give as much time, and his ability to do his work well is of a rarer kind. I often think that an Artist's experience consists of three states, just as in life there are the three states of childhood, youth, and manhood. The first state – the young painter is full of ideas and vague feelings, but he cannot express himself; in the second state, he gets down to hard work and in the pursuit of knowledge he accumulates all kinds of facts, and gradually the knowledge and facts crowd out the vague and mysterious impulses and feelings, and here is where many stop. The next state is when there is a return to the state of feeling, but with the increase of knowledge which gives him the power of expression. For some time back, I have been labouring hard to get into the third state where *I can express myself*, subordinating the lesser to the greater. Some good friends may think that I am going too far, but I know that I am on the right road, as long as I have a widening and deepening love for everything in Nature, and in that feeling there is nothing common or unclean [emphasis added].[18]

Keith simultaneously demonstrated his religiosity and his love of literature, when, in closing, he quoted a passage from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem, 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'. 'I know, too', he said, 'that "He prayeth best who loveth best / All things both great and small" '. His lecture was well received by his audience and by the press.[19]

Keith was already expressing himself through his art in purely Swedenborgian terms, seeking that third state whereby his scientific

knowledge of nature was supplemented by a depth of feeling that revealed this material reality to be no more than a reflection of a spiritual reality that would become evident after death. At this period in his emotional life the word 'subjective' entered common currency around the studio, helping to make clear the mysteries of inner life thus far unexplained to the ordinary understanding. 'I have found the path!' cried Keith, one day; 'I've found the one true path which I must follow in order to reach my highest results!'[20] Precipitated by a recurring bout of melancholy and self-doubt, Keith sought assurance for the Swedenborgian doctrine that the real world is in the spiritual world and began examining the systems, doctrines and practices of spiritualism – the belief that communication could be had between the living and the dead – 'devouring the works of Hudson, Hyslop and Sir Oliver Lodge and others'.[21] Thomson Jay Hudson was a psychical researcher, known for his *Three Laws of Psychic Phenomena*, first published in 1893. These can be summed up as follows: man has two minds with distinct attributes and powers, the objective mind (conscious) and the subjective (subconscious). The subjective is always open to control by suggestion and is incapable of inductive reasoning. Each is capable of independent action.[22] It is very likely that it was this book that triggered Keith's interest in spiritualism. Some of the authors he read did not publish their work until the first decade of the twentieth century, so he seems to have maintained an interest until his death.

James Hervey Hyslop, professor of ethics and logic at Columbia University, was a psychologist and psychical researcher. From 1906 until his death in 1920 he was the secretary of the American Society for Psychical Research. He had published books since 1892, mostly on ethics, logic and psychology but began to link this last to psychical phenomena with *The Wants of Psychical Research* (1900), *Science and a Future Life* (1905), *Enigmas of Psychic Research* (1906), *Borderland of Psychical Research* (1906), *Psychical Research and the Resurrection* (1908) and several others after Keith's death. He became convinced of the existence of an afterlife and summarised the findings of his life's work in his penultimate publication:

> I regard the existence of discarnate spirits as scientifically proved and I no longer refer to the skeptic as having any right to speak on the subject. Any man who does not accept the existence of discarnate spirits and the proof of it is either ignorant or a moral coward. I give him short shrift, and

do not propose any longer to argue with him on the supposition that he knows anything about the subject.[23]

Sir Oliver Lodge was a British physicist who held patents for work on early radio and radio wave detection but is best remembered for his research into telepathy. In 1909, he published *Survival of Man*: *A Study in Unrecognised Human Faculty* where he stated his 'conviction' that 'man's survival of bodily death' had been demonstrated by mediumship.[24] It is very likely that this is the book of Lodge's that Keith read.

Mary Keith had been right; her husband was 'not unquestioning'. He was unable to rely on blind faith; he wanted proof of an afterlife to underpin his Swedenborgian principles. The tenets of these spiritualists enabled him to do this. 'Now, if we cannot understand truth and right until our souls leave our bodies', he told Mary Bell of the University of California in 1897, 'and if the truth and right are real and vital things, then the body, the material life is unreal, and our puny efforts to find truth are useless'.[25] Trying to find and convey the reality in the spiritual world while existing in the material world was what informed his art.

Over a decade passed before Keith did another lecture, when, in October 1898, he gave a talk in his Pine Street studio to members of the Sorosis Club of San Francisco. Founded on 8 September 1893, the club was established for women with a shared interested in literary, scientific and philanthropic pursuits so that they could support each other and prove themselves useful to society. Their origins lay in New York, when, in 1868, reporter Jane Cunningham Croly, a member of the Press Club, was barred from attending a dinner they were throwing at Delmonico's Restaurant in honour of Charles Dickens. Women at the time were not allowed to attend public events or even be out in the streets unless in the company of a man. Croly objected; the Press Club relented but insisted she and other single women remain incognito behind a curtained section. Her reaction was to form the Sorosis Club exclusively for women so that they could dine out and meet in each other's company without the need for men to be in attendance. They took their name from the scientific term for the group of budding flowers that form a fruit that Croly had plucked from a botanical reference work, having liked the connotation.[26] Several of Keith's friends were members, including Mrs Phoebe Hearst and Mrs Theodore Hittell, although his wife does not appear to have been, despite her energies being directed towards issues of women's equality.[27]

The club occupied the rooms next to Keith's and ever since he had moved there in 1895 he had lent them rooms so that they could hold large receptions and musical recitals. The club had considerable membership so Keith's studio must have been quite crowded.[28] The talk, as befitting the familiar, relaxed and intimate setting, was more informal than the one he had given at the University of California, and this is reflected in what Keith imparted to his audience. He began by recalling his earlier lecture and the hard work he had put in to bring all his notes together from the many books and articles he had consulted so that the finished paper appeared as if it were one original whole. He did not like delivering lectures, he said, 'the anguish of mind I endured while getting it up was only equaled by what I suffered in its delivery'.[29] On the day of delivering that first lecture the omens were not propitious, his house had caught fire, he said, 'and to the regret of the lecturer he and his lecture were not burned together'. The fire was extinguished but his worries were not over. A minor earthquake shook the lecture hall while he was sitting in an anteroom waiting for the signal to mount the platform. Although the tremor was not enough to disperse his waiting audience, he 'vowed then and there never to appear before an audience again'. (There had been a fire on the day of his lecture, but it had occurred at the nearby home of his mother-in-law, Mrs McHenry. Keith adapted the incident to amuse his audience and put them and himself at ease.)[30]

Why, if he disliked delivering lectures, did he agree to speak before the Sorosis Club, he asked rhetorically? He had lent his lecture notes to somebody, he said; he had forgotten who, so this would not be a lecture, 'but a sort of personal experience, and will be much more interesting than the lost lecture, and I confidently expect neither fire, earthquake, or any other calamity will occur during its delivery'.[31] Keith might not have liked delivering lectures but he was a natural raconteur, like his friend John Muir, who could deliver a lecture without notes, and could tell a good story. He began with an amusing anecdote to make the point that people sometimes do not understand how art is created:

> Art is a pretty big subject to talk about and hard to define. People have very hazy ideas about it sometimes, but the haziest idea of its practical workings I know of, was of a man who came into my studio one day and said that he had just got out of the County Hospital, was hungry and wanted to get money enough for dinner. In going out he had to pass through another

> room where I had a few young lady pupils. After he had gotten into the passageway leading from this room, one of the young ladies said to me that he would make a good model … I went after him and told him that the young ladies would like to have him come and sit for them and that they would pay him six bits or a dollar for sitting an hour or so. He asked what he would have to do. 'Oh', I said, 'just sit up in a chair and they would paint you.' 'Paint me! … I don't know; how would I get the paint off?'[32]

Keith contended that the theories and principles of art could be studied in books, but there were too many books on different art forms and the only ones that matter to a painter are those that deal with the history of art, that deal with 'its human expression … the only way one can get any idea of it, is to do some work in it. I do not mean in order to become an artist, but simply to cultivate the habit of looking at Nature and Life not analytically or scientifically, but for the sake of external aspect and expression'.[33]

Much had changed in the decade that had passed since Keith's first lecture. He had matured into an artist with his own identifiable style, his collaboration with George Inness and Inness's imprimatur had secured his reputation, and he had enjoyed prestige and commercial success. He had also come across the works of Claude Monet (1840–1926) at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 and whatever admiration he had once held for Impressionists had evaporated on seeing the work at first hand; his criticism of the movement was now scathing. Perhaps, with his own success, he felt he could be a harsher critic, perhaps he no longer needed to court artists from that, or any other, school. Although he had once admired them, he now thought the Impressionists too scientific in their approach and showed considerable prescience in what he thought would become of them:

> I say that they are on the road to ruin as far as the best qualities of the artistic mind are concerned, for they never work without the model, trying to make the thing itself, whereas it is with the appearance of the thing that the artist has to do … I claim that this constant reference to the model destroys the imaginative quality of the mind. We lean too much on the model and cannot risk being caught out of drawing – the conception is never clear because we cannot trust it, and we must compare our work, touch by touch, with the model – we are never free, and so end by mere posing, which is the caricature of art. The purely scientific habit of

reproducing the thing set before us has little by little extinguished the sense of the ideal – just as an absorption in the material life with its greedy and grasping claims, stifles and kills the spiritual faculties … What a landscape painter wants to render is not the natural landscape, but the state of feeling which the landscape produces in himself … Art is not the slave of Nature, but an independent force using Nature as a mine of material or like a dictionary with lots of words which have to be put together to express ideas. You have to keep constantly in mind two principles which are independent of each other, or nearly so, and which, when reduced to practice, are found to be complementary of each other – the principle of imitation and the principle of interpretation.

In working from Nature, the imitative principle is a dangerous one to admit without the most jealous control, for, when allowed to go unrestrained, it utterly paralyzes all the higher artistic faculties … Nature is not to be studied in the closest way. It is the foundation, but Nature copying is only to get a multitude of facts in order that they may be used to express your feelings and ideas … All the knowledge and truths of Nature simmer in the mind, and in some mysterious way become crystallized into a unit … Sometimes it comes upon one suddenly, unexpectedly like a surprise, and yet, sound and perfect … Sometimes it grows slowly into shape without one's will, hangs vaguely about the mind for a time in a misty way, and finally condenses into shape and presence. Sometimes the seed germ has been unconsciously within us for years without our being distinctly aware of it before it has developed and assumed its final shape. We find hints of it cropping out here and there in our previous work; some in one shape and some in another, so that if you get behind the artist's thought you can see the relationship of all his pictures; they hang together, even the most dissimilar. I find too, that when I have an idea about a picture, clearly cut in my mind, that it becomes too objective.

It is different when you are possessed with an idea; then it's a kind of inspiration … Then it is a kind of unconscious working of your mind but dominated and directed by something entirely distinct from yourself; in such state of mind and feeling you feel that life is worth living. One day of such work even if life were to end there – and then you could truly say that you had had a glorious time. In this life of art, enthusiasm does not fade and become stale as the years creep on, but grows and flowers more and more on truth and beauty, which is its daily food. What would life be to a painter without them?[34]

His opening remarks could serve as a manifesto for a reactionary and predominantly French group of painters that flourished roughly between 1886 and 1905. Labelled Post-Impressionists, their luminaries included Paul Cézanne, Vincent Van Gogh, Paul Gaugin, George Seurat and Henri Toulouse-Lautrec among others. These artists wanted to free themselves from an art form that dealt with visible reality to one that conveyed attitudes and emotions. Keith stressed that a true painter grows slowly and steadily and never ceases to grow and, in what sounds almost as a plea for approval, thought the hard thing for a painter to experience is a want of sympathy. He also thought that artists did not receive the right kind of encouragement; he meant 'intelligent and thoughtful criticism'. He described the problem faced by a portrait painter who, 'impressed by the beauty of the character in the face before him, and how it affects him', finds that no two people are agreed on the result. This contrasts with a landscape painter who tries to convey some human feeling such as innocence into his picture without using conventional ideas. This is a much more difficult thing to do than simply to make a record of the facts of nature. It is that intangible and yet real thing which is so difficult to catch, and to explain:

> I have often thought of those Old Masters that they were really painters and made by the Lord; all the others following them have been too scientific, and that is what has been the trouble. The men of to-day are better technical painters than the Old Masters were, but they do not have the feeling … It may seem curious, paradoxical to say it, but I am convinced that what the men of to-day look upon as finished work, the Old Masters regarded as the ground-work on which they commenced to play their color and feeling into their pictures, and I am sure I could convince any reasonable person of this, but, of course, only by illustrations. Art has been looked on too much as a sort of lazy kind of way of making a living, but that is not true – it is just as serious as religion. Even buying pictures is hard work; if you buy intelligently you must study and compare in order to get a good thing. Great painters do not always paint good pictures – just as Harriet Foster Beecher, when she was asked who was the greatest painter in America, said, 'George Inness – and the worst'. Some people, but they are few, will take the greatest pains to get their pictures; others trust to the dealers and that is to me the most wonderful thing – pathetic in its trustfulness![35]

Looking at pictures is the hardest kind of work and the worst way to look at pictures is to look at a great number at one time. A great deal better way of seeing them is to take one or two and study them but beware of the bright and taking pictures; rather study the low-toned ones. I think it is the experience of every painter that when they begin to paint they are seized with the desire to paint lurid things, and mountains miles high. I used to go in company with John Muir all over the Sierra Nevada … At that time, I was almost as crazy about the mountains as he was and was continually trying to paint them, but the trouble about painting mountains is that you are so hampered with the bigness of them, that it would require a canvas as big as a house and then it would only be a panorama. I found after a while that there were lots of things in Nature that to look at were beautiful, but that were not fit to be painted. Yosemite and Yellowstone Park and the Big Trees, or try to paint the Autumn Forest in the White Mountains, and what do you get when reduced to painting? Simply a chromo. White paint as against the Lord's sunshine does not do very much. You haven't got the gradation in your box. You may go from white to pure black, but your light – the highest you can get – is shadow against Nature's light, and your deepest dark is light against her shades. The Old Masters frankly accepted this truth and never attempted to compete with Nature. They knew art's limitations and knew that Nature and Art were two distinct things. After a while I got down to more simple things and found my enjoyment increased a hundredfold. A clump of trees with a sky behind as a background – the best painters have been satisfied with such simple things, and they are enough to satisfy future generations of painters. *The Rocky Mountain School has pretty well disappeared* [emphasis added]. Sometimes in sketches one gets qualities of grandeur and bigness that are lost in the working out of the parts. A panorama is not fine art … I have turned my back on the mountains and objective nature, Mr Muir thinks of me as one of the lost, a son of perdition. I don't know why I drag poor Mr Muir in so much, except that … I use him in another way, which is that a man may be a poet and a man of education and may never get beyond the outside husk of art, the imitative side. Of course, you can get, by study to know the technical side of art, and that is what the dealers know, but to know and sympathize with the spirit of it – I think that is an innate faculty and not given to everyone. I could give you lots of advice, but that is such a cheap and easy thing to give that before I commence, I had better stop.[36]

On that note, with a reference to his friend John Muir and their differences of opinion on what constitutes art, Keith closed his talk. Freed from the formalities of addressing a public audience he has, through anecdotal reflections, encapsulated his personal experiences of life as an artist. In understated terms, he demonstrates an understanding of the conventional aesthetic theory of nature and the difficulty of translating the grandeur of the sublime onto canvas; that grand subjects do not lead to grand paintings. His fleeting mention of the Rocky Mountain School without naming any of the artists who were considered members, himself included, suggests that his audience was sufficiently familiar with the term – considered by some scholars to have been coined in 1902 – to require no elucidation. It also suggests that its demise was slow and still to reach a conclusion. Keith reverted to painting large mountain vistas in the Rocky Mountain style around the year of his talk, to his personal enjoyment and commercial success. To understand nature, one must study nature; to understand art, one must study art, and no amount of teaching can compensate for the lack of an innate artistic ability. Keith would later explain to his good friend George Wharton James that this innate ability was touched by the will of Providence.

Although Keith expressed many insightful comments during his talk, none of them attracted the attention of the newspapers as much as the amusing anecdote of the hungry man's inconsequential visit to Keith's Montgomery Street studios with which he started. Yet this story had a slow burn, having first appeared in the *San Francisco Examiner* some nine years earlier where it was embellished into a tale of an 'honest Milesian', complete with faux Irish brogue. The source of the story was Keith himself. The man at its centre could very well have been an Irish *spailpín*. Keith does not suggest this on paper, although it would not have prevented him from doing so in speech.[37] Not until Keith addressed the Sorosis Club did the story gain traction. Members of the club who were present had connections to newspapers so one of them may have passed the story on to the press. Four of Keith's art students were also present, including Emily 'Sissie' Hay whose account of her time in Keith's studio contains a description of this unsuspecting visitor, 'who is humorous without knowing it'. According to her account he was 'an Irishman with a thatch of glowing red hair' seeking a good square meal and willing to work for it, and not a beggar as may be inferred from Keith's account. The artist had no work to

offer, slipped the man a quarter and was sending him on his way when his students suggest he pose for them.[38]

The story took wings, appearing in numerous newspapers across the United States. The story passed from Columbia, TN to Kansas City, MO to Carlsbad, NM to Worthington, MN, to Hope, ND; all in the space of a few short weeks before arriving in Anderson, South Carolina, in late February 1899.[39] Even before the story reached North Dakota, it had appeared in England, where, with each retelling, the word count rose, passing quickly from Litchfield, Staffordshire; to Driffield, Yorkshire; to Rhyl in Wales; to Jarrow in Durham; to Yorkshire. The story was widely circulated and was still being regurgitated over eighteen months later by the *Bridgnorth Journal and South Shropshire Advertiser*, under a column 'Tit-Bits'.[40]

While interested in publishing amusing anecdotes, newspapers did address weightier matters of the day. A week before his death in September 1898, the American lawyer, politician and diplomat, Thomas Francis Bayard, is reported to have said that it was fate and not his own efforts, or disposition or desires, that had determined his course through life. 'We are all playthings', he said, 'in the hands of fate.' This remark piqued the interest of the editor of the *San Francisco Call* and he invited several 'prominent thinkers' from a cross section of the city's elite to address the question: 'What is fate?'[41] Among those who responded were Professor Martin Kellogg, seventh President of the University of California; Professor Joseph LeConte at the University of California; Edward Bates Pond, former mayor of San Francisco; Professor Van der Naillen, civil engineer; Richard Croker, politician; and William Keith, artist, who shared his views with the newspaper's readers:

> I am a fatalist, most certainly. I believe that whatever is to be will be, and that no amount of study or plan or personal effort can change a man's career or his destiny. Perhaps my Scotch Presbyterian ancestry and my early training in the doctrines of predestination, foreordination, and the like, influence me in the belief which I hold. I do not admit that there is either such a thing as accident or free will in the story of human life. If a man starts to go across the street and for some reason – or no reason apparently – turns back and thus escapes the death which seemingly waited for him on the other side, it is clear to me that that especial form of death was not waiting for him at all, but for the man whom it caught. Fate, which I consider to be the manifestation of the will of Providence, governs

> all things. Born with certain forces, many of which I inherited – for heredity is a great factor in the world – I was played upon by circumstances and became what I am. My fate was marked out for me and I followed it; kept in it by circumstances entirely beyond my control. As to 'individual effort', the man who thinks he is 'self-made' generally worships his creator too blindly to pay any unselfish attention to anything; or anyone else, and his example is not usually good to follow.[42]

Some years later he reiterated these beliefs and explained how they had come about in conversation with George Wharton James:

> Do you know I am a fatalist? Man-universal is one; Man-individual is only part of the great Man-universal; each is a tack, a wheel, a cog, a lever, a frame in the great machine. Sometimes, I go so far as to say, that no responsibility attached to any individual man; that he deserves no credit for what he does; that he should suffer no blame. I know that this is not a working hypothesis, but all the same, there are times when I think that I believe it. Observe, I do not say that I believe it, but sometimes I think I do. I came to this philosophy through my work. Now, look at that (pointing to a large picture of Mount Tamalpais, which he had just painted) that is merely a question of canvas, paint, subject, and training. I can paint that kind of thing, any time, and all the time. It is a good painting, as fine a piece of work as I know how to do, from one point of view. But, for the productions of such paintings, nothing else is needed but the four things I have mentioned. But at other times, I stand before the canvas, and a certain indefinite mood comes over me – to take possession of me. I know not whence it comes, or what it is, but it seizes me, and – why, look at that (pointing to an exquisite scheme of subdued colour in live oaks and sycamores) I painted that one morning in two hours' time. Think of it – in two hours! And you know I'm near sighted. The unity of a picture is the last thing that comes to me; I can only see an inch or two at a time as I paint, and yet I painted that thing, and finished it in two hours! I could just as well have painted it with my eyes shut. I was no more responsible for it than I am for the war between Japan and Russia.[43]
>
> It came to me, with what I call lightning rapidity of thought. Some persons call it inspiration. I don't, for it required years of training to acquire it. But all the same, the thought comes like a flash, and I accept it, or it accepts me. The picture is painted – and from such things I get my

> fatalistic ideas. Will has nothing to do with it. The man is a mere instrument! People talk about geniuses, and they say that if geniuses were only workers, if they were not so wretchedly indolent, how much magnificent work they could accomplish! Indolent they are not. [That has] nothing to do with it. These flashes don't come all the time.[44]

These flashes derive from the artist's subconscious; he is unaware of them and they are what separates the mechanical reproduction of which a competent artist is capable and the mystic who reveals much of himself and his innermost thoughts in his art. James recognised this ability in his friend: 'There are times when Keith paints better than he knows; his work reveals things that he never dreamed of'.[45] Keith had been wrestling through years of introspection with the age-old dilemma of free will and determinism – the vexed question of not attaching blame for evil acts clearly giving him pause from unqualified acceptance of the latter. Notwithstanding his years of struggle, the years of study, the trial and error; ultimately, Keith believed that the best of his paintings, those that revealed his emotional response to nature, that revealed the mysteries of nature itself and which were conveyed through the medium of his hand, was the work of God.

CHAPTER TEN

Away from the Easel

> To be at ease is better than to be at business. Nothing really belongs to us but time, which even he has who has nothing.
>
> Baltasar Gracián.[1]

Keith worked hard, sometimes excessively so, and although selective about spreading his sociability, was a member of several clubs and societies, often in an honorary capacity, and often with little direct involvement in their affairs. In 1907, he listed his interest as: 'Life Member of Nat. Association Equal Suffrage; State Equal Suffrage Assoc.; Life Mem., S. P. C. to Animals'. And under Honours, he listed: 'Hon. Membership University; Bohemian Club: Life Mem. Archaeological Society; etc. etc.'.[2] This almost dismissive lack of detail suggests he attached little importance to them; perhaps he felt that declaring his interests was an intrusion into his personal life of which he was particularly guarded. The clubs and societies he joined were usually orientated towards a field of artistic endeavour of one kind or other where he could mix with similarly minded people involved in painting, literature, poetry or music. He championed several worthy causes, often by donating paintings for use in fund raising. He supported the education of children, the prevention of cruelty to animals and the care of the environment. He supported fellow artists who had fallen on hard times or suffered misfortune, and in particular women's suffrage, his wife being one of the leading suffragists in the state. This last he supported often with real generosity, sometimes with ambivalence; his motive driven more by expediency and self-interest than by altruism.

One of the earliest clubs Keith joined on arrival in California was the newly formed San Francisco Olympic Club – now simply the Olympic Club – the oldest athletic club in the United States.[3] The club was established formally on 6 May 1860 by a group of gymnastic enthusiasts who had

first held informal training sessions in the back yard of property belonging to Keith's fellow artists Arthur and Charles Nahl as early as 1855. This, in turn, had grown out of a *Turnverein*, or gymnastic society, established by German immigrants, who had built a gymnasium on Battery Street in 1853. To celebrate May Day that year Emanuel Russ opened his sprawling Russ's Gardens to fellow Germans who put on a gymnastics display accompanied by music, dancing, oratory, eating and drinking. Such was its success, it became an annual event.[4] In 1860, the Nahl brothers set up the Olympic Club and three years later they published their illustrated *Instructions in Gymnastics*. They thought it right and proper that females should exercise as well as males, indeed, that women were in need of it more, 'being confined to close rooms more than men', and they marked with an asterisk 'the descriptions of such exercises' which were in their judgement 'most suitable for the female sex'.[5]

Some of the club's earliest members were 'behemoths' of the city's volunteer fire department who competed in feats of strength and gymnastic prowess. Along with the Nahls, Keith practised athletics and competed against like-minded friends such as Durbin Van Vleck, Harrison Eastman, Edwin Bonnell and Henry B. Russ.[6] For the benefit of members and charity they put on monthly gala exhibitions, their first in September 1861, in Platt's New Music Hall on Montgomery Street, with tickets to 'the city's most fashionable event' much in demand.[7] Two years later, at the November gala in the Olympic Club's new premises on Sutter Street, in a programme that included a sword fight and a patriotic address, Keith's friend, Van Vleck entertained an audience of nearly eight hundred, 'fully one-half of whom were elegantly dressed ladies' with his daring portrayal of a drunk man trying to perform on the parallel bars.[8] Leading citizens clamoured to join the Olympic Club and membership swelled to five hundred, necessitating a move to larger premises on Market Street.[9] Success brought tensions; two factions had emerged, one in favour of athletics, the other in favour of promoting social events exclusively. In 1871 there was a parting of the ways, with the latter group forming the California Olympic Club. A reconciliation was effected in September 1873. The Olympic Club suffered a catastrophe in 1883 when a fire destroyed several of the club's rare works of art in premises they were occupying on Post Street. These must have included Charles Nahl's large panorama picture, *The Royal Family of the Sandwich Islands Riding on the Beach*, which he had donated to the club in its early days.[10] It opened its first permanent clubhouse on

Pond Street in 1893.[11] During Keith's lifetime the club was a bastion of male virility (women were not admitted until 1990). Keith appears to have stopped attending while still young, possibly because he preferred the athletic aspects to the social aspects, but also because by 1864 he was a married man.

Keith was a long-time member and office bearer of the San Francisco Art Association whose raison d'être was the advancement of art. However, the association also had a thriving social aspect and Keith was not above participating in its social programme. Within a few years of its formation in 1871 it held a celebration of King Carnival and his Motley Subjects at the Pavilion, being a glorious masquerade on 'a night of mirth and jollity' with over two thousand historical, fanciful and grotesque characters represented. Many men and women cross-dressed. Among the 'funny men' was William Keith as 'a troublesome clown'.[12]

Buoyed by early success, the Art Association held regular Mardi Gras Balls with the School of Design used as a ballroom and the Bohemian Club used for supper. For over two decades Keith was a member of the organising committee for these events, either involved with arranging the reception or in choosing the musical programme. Dancing commenced at ten, broke up for supper, then resumed until half past three in the morning. Whether or not Keith habitually attended is unclear, but he certainly gave his time to help organise the events.[13] One event he did attend was a formal 'Artists' Dinner' at the Palace Hotel. Tickets for this elaborate and somewhat exclusive society event cost five dollars; the hotel showed off its new silver service, the menu was in French, and diners were entertained by floating musicians. Around two hundred people attended, but it aroused little enthusiasm among bohemian artists.[14]

Keith, it seemed, preferred dining to dancing, even if the social conventions were sometimes lost on him. Shortly after he and Muir returned from a trip to the Grand Canyon they were invited to lunch at the Palace Hotel by E. H. Harriman of the Union Pacific Railroad. On the way they met a Bohemian Club friend and told him where they were going. 'I thought you were going camping', he said, judging by their attire. Keith, in tweeds and slouch hat, took the hint, and bought a fifty-cent tie to spruce himself up. Muir thought they were being teased. They arrived to find a distinguished company, including banker William H. Crocker in frock coat and his fashionable wife in a Parisian gown.[15] On another occasion he and Mary attended the National Opera's production of *Faust* but Keith was

discovered between acts taking a sketch of a friend's son whom he thought made an ideal cherub.[16]

Another club that Keith belonged to was the Bohemian Club which grew out of a meeting of staff journalists in the editorial rooms of the *San Francisco Chronicle* on 15 February 1872. A committee was established to draft a resolution, and the club was formally incorporated on 17 May 1872. It was designed to be:

> [A] moral, beneficial and literary association, and its objects [were] the promotion of social and intellectual intercourse between journalists and other writers, artists, actors and musicians (professional and amateurs), and others associated by reason of knowledge and appreciation of polite literature, science and fine arts. And also, the collection and preservation of records, mementos and archives illustrating the progress of literature, science and art on the Pacific Coast, and calculated to perpetuate the memory of those who have been or shall be instrumental in promoting such progress.[17]

The first clubhouse was at the Astor Building on the south-east corner of Sacramento and Webb Streets, which was occupied on 25 March 1872, even before the club was formally constituted. Five years later the club leased more spacious premises at 424 Pine Street over the California Market. When they moved to new premises in the Morton House on Post Street William Keith moved into the rooms vacated by the club. On 23 February 1889 they moved to a new Club House on the north-east corner of Post Street and Grant Avenue.[18] Among the founding members were Thomas Newcomb, editor at the *San Francisco Call*, author Henry George, journalist and writer, Ambrose Bierce, and Arpad Haraszthy, pioneer California winemaker. The Club motto, 'Weaving spiders come not here', reflected the wish of members to leave all business matters at the door, but the Articles were subtly altered to include 'gentlemen connected professionally with literature, art, music, the drama, and also those who, by reason of their love or appreciation of these objects, may be deemed eligible'.[19] This did no more than formalise an arrangement that had existed since the inception of the club which opened its doors to businessmen who might be connected to the liberal arts through dealerships, sponsorship or patronage. When Oscar Wilde visited in 1882, he is said to have remarked: 'I never saw so many well-dressed, well-fed, business-looking Bohemians

in my life'.[20] Many of the most influential men of San Francisco society were members.[21] Henry Edwards Huntington, the railway magnate; James Duval Phelan, Mayor of San Francisco and Senator for California; and Claus Spreckels, the industrialist, all friends of Keith, were members; as were the artists Amédée Joullin and Thomas Hill and the writers Charles Warren Stoddard and Bret Harte. According to the club's records, William Keith did not become a registered member until quite late in the day, despite participating in art exhibitions and enjoying the hospitality of the club over the years. His membership dates from 13 February 1895 and he is subsequently listed as both a full and honorary member, the latter in virtue of being an artist and exempt from paying fees.[22]

The Bohemian Club of Keith's day became increasingly wealthy. In addition to their city clubhouse, they bought up parcels of cleared land from logging companies in Monte Rio, Sonoma County, and set up a camping ground among the redwoods called Bohemian Grove. In mid-July every year they hosted a two-week encampment for some of the most prominent men in the country where, on the edge of a lake and at the foot of a forty-foot stone owl, they performed an elaborate ceremony called 'Cremation of Care', when the woes of everyday life were burnt with great pageantry, fireworks and elaborate costumes. Their devotion to the liberal arts found expression in their 'High Jinks', literary, musical and dramatic entertainments complete with lavish set designs and orchestral accompaniment. A more bawdy production was called 'Low Jinks'.[23] Keith was certainly eligible to participate in both but 'his social habits were governed entirely by his artistic interests, which always came first and required every ounce of his energy and mental faculties'.[24] This observation is from newly arrived immigrant Eugen Neuhaus who rented the studio across the corridor from Keith's in 1904 and so only knew him for the last few years of his life. Perhaps his advancing years and natural reticence of character made Keith avoid such tomfoolery, which he would have joined in twenty years earlier, but now, 'although an honorary member, he rarely availed himself of its facilities and eventually ceased from attendance altogether'.[25] He did, however, understand the value of being a member. After they had become acquainted, Keith informed Neuhaus that he had taken the liberty of writing to the Bohemian Club recommending him for membership, without which, he said, he 'could not hope to get very far in San Francisco as an artist'.[26] Elected as an artist member, Neuhaus enjoyed ten years of free membership up until the outbreak of the First World War, including the

amenities of Bohemian Grove, and benefited from a close association with 'that unique group of artists and writers … [and meeting] such literary lights as George Sterling, Jack London and Porter Garnett'.[27] Many members of the faculties of the University of California and Stanford University belonged to the Bohemian Club and Neuhaus tacitly acknowledges that his connection engineered by Keith helped facilitate his being employed by the former where he rose to become Professor of Art.[28]

Keith continued to exhibit his paintings at the annual shows of work by members and donated to the club at least one painting. Called *The Unceasing Round*, it was among those celebrated by his friend Edward Robeson Taylor who describes it thus:

> In Centre of the canvas see this pine
> All stark in death, with arms in vain appeal
> For what it nevermore can taste or feel
> Of joys of earth or of the heavens divine.
> Straight as in life it stands, still bearing sign
> Of noble majesty and dauntless will;
> While at its base its elder brothers spill
> Their ashes where the grasses kiss and twine.
> A glorious redwood centuries have blessed
> Uptowers, while with bliss of life possessed
> The Forest sings in grand, harmonious tone.
> And careless men pass by – the children they
> Of other children death has made his own,
> And who like them shall strive and pass away.[29]

This tribute, and Keith's paintings, are not the only reminders of his membership of the Bohemian Club. A large canvas, *La Boheme*, by Mrs Amanda Romer Shawan, shows the heads of forty-one members – from across the artistic, musical and literary spectra – who were celebrated in their chosen field. Keith is prominent among them. Painted in 1905, it was presented to the club about 1952 by Mrs Shawan's son.[30]

The Press Club of San Francisco enjoyed a close relationship with the Bohemians and Keith was a member of this club too. When the club premises on Pine Street suffered a fire on 4 November 1894, members enjoyed the convivial hospitality of the Bohemians until such time as their new premises were ready for occupation. As was a common feature of San

Franciscan reaction to adversity, this did not take long. On 31 December 1894, in anticipation of a 'housewarming' on the first day of the New Year – an event the Press Club had celebrated annually since their inception in 1888 – following dinner, a raucous procession went from the 'Owl's Quarters' to the new home of the Press Club in the central location of the Thurlow Block at the south-east corner of Sutter and Kearny Street. This was leased for five years at a rent of $150 per month.[31] Three of the apartments were converted into a large, airy, well-lit assembly room, to be 'used for jinks and receptions'. The walls were decorated in Pompeiian and Renaissance style and adorned by sketches in pencil and pen and ink by newspaper illustrators. Several paintings were donated by artists. Among the art works destroyed in the Pine Street fire was one by Keith, gifted to the newspapermen in March 1893. *In the Maine Woods* was painted from a sketch he had made during his sojourn in New England in 1872. It showed a woodland meadow where a flock of sheep is browsing in the high grass of spring, while a farmhouse stands in an opening, surrounded by the trappings of a New England country home.[32] Keith replaced it with 'a far better' copy which, at his request, was hung in a large panel under the north light, where every visitor paid 'obeisance'.[33] More difficult to replace was the club's much-lamented cat, Tombstone, which had disappeared.

Much as members of both clubs enjoyed their high jinks, their coming together was not always for fun and games. They demonstrated their generosity on several occasions and revealed that, even while at play, they could be thinking of others. On 21 May 1896, large numbers attended the funeral of much-loved journalist, Bohemian, connoisseur and epicure, Henry D. Bigelow, whose passing so affected a lowly newsboy that he was publicly overcome by grief. Bigelow had been Keith's best man when he married Mary and the artist was among the many who crowded into the undertaker's parlour as Rev. Joseph Worcester conducted the service, after which the mourners followed the hearse to Laurel Hill Cemetery where 'Petey' was buried beside his mother.[34]

When another much-loved Bohemian Club member, artist and architect Newton Tharp, died in November 1909, several artist members contributed a picture to the Newton Tharp Collection. This was sold over several months and the proceeds devoted to the education of Tharp's twelve-year-old son, Laurence. The idea originated with the artist, Charles Dickman, while he was attending the Midsummer revels at the Bohemian Grove earlier in the year. The paintings were exhibited at the Bohemian

Club, the San Francisco Institute of Art and the California Club, accompanied by a reception and musical recital. Although several artists are named in the newspaper as being among the contributors, William Keith is not one of them, although 'two or more of his most striking works will be on view' alongside the Newton Tharp Collection.[35]

Aside from his undoubted fame, William Keith's friendship with, and generosity to, the Bohemian Club and the Press Club helps to account at least in part, for the frequency with which he appears in numerous articles in the San Francisco newspapers, whether it be in the news, social or art columns. Conversely, without necessarily any active participation on Keith's part, this easy familiarity could help suppress a story that he and his family wished had never seen the light of day. At its core was the ever-dissolute son Charlie.

After mooning over Marie Hoesch in his father's studio, Charlie's next known romantic entanglement so appalled his father and deepened his blues that it was excised from the family narrative. It came to light when, on Sunday 28 July 1890, an eighteen-year-old salesgirl by the name of Eva Magee who worked in a Market Street store died in suspicious circumstances in the lodging house kept by James Eison at 715½ Tehama Street, San Francisco. She had lived at home with her parents at 744 Folsom Street until a few days before. The dead woman was said to have been seen a great deal in the company of a Charles King, a wood engraver, whose address was given as the same lodging house where she was taken ill. A Doctor Favor with an office in the St Ignatius Building was called in but could do nothing for her. He signed a death certificate giving the cause of death as metritis, also known as puerperal sepsis, an inflammation of the uterus which occurs most commonly within ten days of a delivery. The body was taken to an undertaker for the performance of last offices and from there to her parents' home. The dead girl had been associating with King for a long time and it was suspected that she had secretly married him. On Wednesday, during her mother's absence in Alameda, she had run away from home and the family had seen or heard nothing from her until they were notified of her death. The family was suspicious and Eva's brother-in-law, Robert Crab, went to the morgue and suggested the death should be looked into. The body was accordingly returned to the morgue where an autopsy ascertained that death was caused by blood-poisoning as the result of injuries sustained during an illegal operation. Dr Favor testified that Magee and King, whom she introduced as her husband, had called

at his office on Thursday 25 July complaining of being sick, and that they had consulted four doctors. He examined her the next day and found her case to be as described. The case was reported to the police and detectives launched an investigation.[36]

Jurors were selected to hear the testimony at the inquest.[37] Then, a week later, newspapers reported that Eva's 'False Lover', was, in reality, Charles Keith, who had worked for Charles Riedy for eighteen months in 1884–5 but who now worked for several local engravers able to identify him from portraits.[38] He had been in the habit of assuming the name of 'King' but was known only by the name of Keith in the trade. He had fled the lodging house as soon as Eva had been pronounced dead and had not been seen since. William was asked if he knew where his son was but said he did not. It appears they had been estranged for some time.[39] Charlie's friends described him as 'a wayward fellow but they will not believe he deliberately debauched the girl or committed the crime with which he is charged'.[40]

The inquest into Eva Magee's death began without Charlie but was adjourned pending further testimony.[41] On resumption, Eva's mother testified that she had been told by Mrs Eison that her daughter had given birth to a child at the lodging house and that Mr Eison had buried the body in the back yard. Mrs Eison, in a robust and eventually hysterical reply, denied having said any such thing as there was no body to bury. Charles Keith, alias King, 'the murderer' held responsible for her ruin and death could not be found and no witnesses came forward to say where he was. Without evidence to determine who had performed the abortion, the coroner returned a verdict of death from the effects of an operation performed by someone unknown.[42] A number of questions remained unanswered, with neither the authorities nor the police emerging with any credit. There the matter ended, an unsatisfactory conclusion to a sad affair, not least for the unfortunate Eva Magee and her family. No further reference to this sordid episode or Charlie Keith's involvement appeared in the press.

Charlie escaped punishment, if not censure, for Eva Magee's death, and remained self-indulgent and spendthrift. 'He made out fairly well at wood-engraving while it lasted, but after that he did not succeed in any other pursuit. He took it easy, knowing that his father was rich.'[43] Keith, who disliked owing money, helped him with his debts and would ask, 'Now, is that all you owe?' It never was. Charlie hurt his family by getting married on 18 June 1893, without telling them or inviting any of them to the wedding. His wife was Elizabeth McLatchie, born in Sydney, Australia.

Deeply religious and a devout Catholic, she brought up their two children, William Charles and Alice Elizabeth, in her faith. She was good for Charlie but he did not mend his ways. They lived in Alameda where Charlie tried his hand at boat building. The project interested Keith who paid for the timber needed for building a workshop and boats, supplied by Edward Newall Harmon, Keith's son-in-law. Harmon had married Hortense on 29 May 1888. Unlike her brother, 'Tennie' proved to be gentle, loving and thrifty. The couple had two children, Edith and Minnie.[44]

Charlie's business was not a success; he was more interested in sailing the yachts than selling them. He continued to sponge off his father, sending his apologetic wife as his intermediary. Mary figured that the children would benefit more if the money went directly to their mother and for some years she brought $100 to her every month. Keith despaired; he wanted to see his son display the same independent spirit he had himself. On one occasion Mary, who was more sympathetic, thought he was being too impatient. 'You think I'm hard, do you know that I've given Charlie over $17,000?'[45] It was not the final tally.

In his later years Keith became essentially a homebird who enjoyed the peace and quiet of domestic life at Atherton Street, Berkeley, where he lived for twenty-five years, from 1886 until 1911, and from where he rarely ventured out at night. On fine days he liked to return from his studio early enough to enjoy late afternoon walks through the wooded campus area and the canyons and foothills beyond, where:

> [T]o see him walking in his favourite haunts, stick in hand, and with his two dogs sporting about him, one could be impressed at once by his pronounced features and intense, absorbed expression. He seems oblivious to the outside world at times; although he is most impressible and is quickly and powerfully moved by the people and scenes which environ him. Colour appeals to him more strongly than form, and … fascinated by bits of colour which to others might seem trivial and commonplace … He is a man of simple, almost child-like disposition – a man of moods, sensitive and warm-hearted. He may be depressed by health or circumstances into a state of the deepest dejection, and from this elevated almost instantly into a condition of glowing enthusiasm by a successful morning's work.[46]

He would make numerous pencil sketches for working up in oils the next day in his studio, many of the finished paintings showing a distant

glimpse of Mount Tamalpais.[47] On these exploratory walks he was accompanied by his beloved collies, Hegel and Jumbo, and was heartbroken, when, in 1898, Jumbo had to be put down after he bit a delivery boy.[48] Hegel and Jumbo were replaced by Hazel and Brownie, a spaniel and setter, probably the two dogs Keith still had at his death.[49] His love for nature extended to the creatures who inhabited it. He was always generous to the Ladies Auxiliary of the Oakland Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and donated a painting to be disposed of as the ladies saw fit.[50] His efforts to help were not always appreciated. In the garden of his house, he built an elaborate fountain costing $1,500 to provide birds with fresh clear water and was volubly put out when the birds steadfastly refused to use it, preferring to drink and bathe in a muddy, microbe-infested creek.[51]

Having settled in Berkeley, Keith tended to shun social gatherings if it meant travelling any distance and apart from his professional activities was rarely seen in public.[52] Even an invitation to a lavish entertainment from Mrs Phoebe Apperson Hearst at the Hacienda del Pozo de Verona, her home in Pleasanton, some thirty-three miles away, could not tempt him. 'I will not go out at night for anybody, not even for Queen Victoria', he declared, alluding to Mrs Hearst's sobriquet of 'Fairy Queen' from the way she conducted herself at the Hacienda.[53] He was more inclined to attend if the event was in the afternoon and closer to home. He and Mary attended Mrs Hearst's regular receptions at her town house on Taylor Street in San Francisco. These were always lavish affairs with lots of guests, orchestral entertainment and abundant floral arrangements. They were better suited to Keith's temperament; they finished at 7.00 pm.[54]

Close friends and neighbours visited Atherton Street frequently in the evening, knowing they would find Keith at home and they would play charades or nonsense word games together. Among them were William Harrison, Professor Joseph LeConte and the architect Clinton Day, who, like Keith, enjoyed childlike diversions from their busy professional lives. Keith had a fine tenor voice and when occasion arose, would delight his audience by singing 'Scots Wha Hae', and other songs from his homeland. He was an excellent story teller and accomplished mimic and could accurately reproduce the physical or vocal characteristics of many people to general amusement.[55] He was 'well equipped for a boon companion on a frolic; but the habitual seriousness of his nature and his absorption in his work prevented him, except occasionally in his own home, among a few chosen friends, from exercising these talents'. None of his friends were

artists, 'although known and honoured by all the artists on the Pacific Coast, he was intimate with none of them'.[56] Keith, with his childlike sense of wonderment, enjoyed the circus. Once, in Ringling Brothers' big top in Berkeley, he bumped into 'Joe' LeConte, much to the surprise of both men, 'when after [an] interval of thrilling absorption each discovered the close proximity of the other'.[57] They were on their own and had not said a word to anyone about attending.

Keith enjoyed playacting in the company of children and took the title role in a three-act melodrama 'My Lord and Some Ladies' arranged by Lawrence Rising, son of Professor Willard Rising, Dean of the College of Chemistry at Berkeley. The performance was given in the studio of his home and all the other actors were under fifteen years of age.[58] At a birthday party arranged for Keith by Mary, attended by the family and a few personal friends, and with Theodore Hittell as guest of honour, some of the children gave a presentation of 'Cinderella'.[59]

One evening Keith did venture out to share an 'Evening in Scotland and Ireland', a performance of music and folk songs to transport people back to the old countries. The entertainer was Helena ('Lena') Charlotte Duthie from Oldmeldrum, a second cousin of Keith's, being the granddaughter of Alex Daniel and Margaret Bruce. An accomplished raconteur, folklorist and singer whose repertoire ranged from Italian Opera, to French, German, Russian, Irish and Scottish traditional songs, she performed in a variety of costumes, from plaid, bonnet, lace cuffs and feathers to impersonating a fishwife, complete with creel on her back. Having started public performances with her cousin, Margaret Daniel, in Oldmeldrum Town Hall while still a youngster, she had graduated to singing operatic solos at the annual concert of Madame Norris-Adams and her pupils in the YMCA Hall in Aberdeen.[60] She had been touring North America for a number of years before arriving in California for a well-earned holiday and to visit Keith and other expatriates from the north-east of Scotland.[61] Among the expatriates was Samuel Leask. Born in Craigdam, he had attended 'the Auld Thackit Skweel' – old thatch-roofed school – as a boy before emigrating to Santa Cruz and establishing a department store dynasty in California that bore his name until the 1960s.[62] His home was a Mecca for the Scots community, expatriates and visitors alike.[63] Lena would tour again and return to perform all over California before settling down in Stockton, becoming especially close to Mary after Keith's death.[64]

Perhaps the pastime that gave Keith most pleasure was reading. He particularly enjoyed literature on Napoleon and on spiritualism. According to Neuhaus, 'Books on aesthetics or art history apparently did not interest him so much'.[65] Although the contents of William Keith's 'well stocked' library have not survived, those of his close friend, John Muir's, have.[66] A collection of seven hundred books stored in Muir's original cases in the Reading Room of the Holt-Atherton Special Collections at the University of the Pacific represents about half the books that were known to exist in Muir's working library at his home in Martinez. Many contain Muir marginalia. Several are signed and dated 1891 by William Keith and the scope of the material suggests he was a voracious reader with an eclectic range of interests and with the subject matter lending itself to selective or repeated reading. Among them is *Horae Subsecivae* (Leisure Hours), by the Scottish physician and essayist, John Brown. This consists of essays and papers on art, medical history and biography (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1890). All volumes are signed and dated by William Keith, 1891, and by John Muir, 1892, All eight volumes of *The Works of Robert Burns: with his life by Allan Cunningham* (London: James Cochrane & Co., 1834) are signed and dated by Keith in 1891, as are the three volumes of William Forsyth's *History of the Captivity of Napoleon at St. Helena* (London: John Murray, 1853). All ten volumes of the *Diary and Correspondence of Samuel Pepys* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1889) are signed by Keith without a date, as are – except for volume six – the ten volumes of Walter Scott's *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1856).[67] It was around 1891 that Keith, precipitated by another of his recurring bouts of melancholy, began 'saturating himself in "suggestion," "thought transference," and "phantasms of the living and the dead" '.[68] It is difficult not to see a connection; perhaps Keith cleared his library shelves to make room for books on spiritualism.

Another book that Keith appears to have owned, judging by the 'Ingleside' songs he sang, and which would have afforded him some light relief from weightier existential musings, was by Archibald M'Kay, bookseller, poet and collector. In 1855 M'Kay issued a small, limited-edition of lyrical poems, *Ingleside Lilts*, which was so well received that in 1861 he produced an enlarged collection called *Ingleside Lilts and Other Poems*, which, 'for the simple Scottish dialect in which his lays are generally written, the writer offers no apology'.[69] Keith also liked to have books read aloud to him by Mary as he sat tweaking the ears of his dogs and discussing

the contents of various books.[70] Keith drew inspiration from and had his imagination stirred by poetry. His friend Maud Wilkinson, who became the wife of Leon J. Richardson, Professor of Latin at Berkeley, read aloud to him the work of Scottish poets. Keith had a particular fondness for the work of James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, whose uncouth style and subject matter no doubt reminded him so much of his own rural upbringing.[71]

Maud Wilkinson's poetry recital took place in Keith's studio. He liked having women around the place as pupils or as models and preferred women to men in the latter role. He clearly enjoyed their company. In September 1898 he threw open the doors of his studio to the members of the Pacific Coast Women's Press Association (PCWPA) and for two hours in the afternoon his spacious rooms were filled to overflowing by more than a hundred women prominent in artistic, literary and social circles who availed themselves of the invitation.[72] The association had been set up in 1890 at the home of the poet and prose writer, Emelie Tracy Swett, daughter of Professor John Swett, close friend of Keith's since their travels in the Yosemite with John Muir. Its primary purpose was developing relations among women writers and to create a forum where they could meet regularly to discuss ways of improving civic amenities such as roads, parks, libraries and the development of kindergartens. They also wanted to suppress criminal details of sensational cases in newspapers and clamp down on criminal advertising.[73] What the PCWPA was not, was a suffragist organisation – discussions on politics, religion or social reform were not allowed.[74]

Emelie died in childbirth on 21 April 1892, aged just twenty-nine and her passing galvanised Keith into providing more help for the young. He had already been involved when he collaborated with her father who was one of the supervisors responsible for producing *Bancroft's Readers*, a series of five lavishly illustrated textbooks prepared for schools. Keith was one of artists from whose work illustrations were made; the frontispiece of the Fourth Reader on prose and poetry is his picture of Mount Shasta in winter.[75] Hortense was still at the Denman Grammar School when the Readers were introduced into the curriculum in 1883. Keith regularly donated paintings to Kindergarten Associations in Berkeley and Oakland to be used as raffle prizes at their charitable fetes.[76] The Keiths attended a concert by children that raised $650 towards the purchase of books for the Juvenile Department of Oakland's Carnegie Public Library with Keith painting a picture expressly for the library building.[77] Charles Keeler did public poetry readings from his *Elfin Songs from Sunland* to pay for the

frame.[78] This, in 1896, appears to have been a relatively low key event, but Mary was one of the patrons of the first art exhibitions held at the studio building at Shattuck Avenue in Berkeley in December 1906 when many pictures by Keith were on display together with works by several other painters, sculptors, photographers and crafts people. Russian artwork, plaster casts, miniature ivories, hammered brasses, grass baskets, Japanese brocades, all featured. The beneficiary of this extensive exhibition was the Kindergarten Association of Berkeley.[79] The Keiths supported the Girls' Club Settlement of 3740 Twentieth Street San Francisco with Keith putting a painting on show at Gump's Gallery before disposing of it on behalf of the club at an afternoon concert performed by the girls.[80]

Support for young children, especially for their education, was a shared interest of the Keiths but generally they immersed themselves in their respective passions. Mary's passion was that of women's suffrage and she expended considerable time, effort and money in its cause. Keith's support for the movement seems to have grown only gradually and be more a matter of pragmatism than based on ideological grounds. His attitude to women and the vote is set out in a letter Mary wrote to the editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle* on 19 May 1896 in response to an article that had appeared in the newspaper's columns by Grace E. Barhwere. The columnist was a commentator on local events, who had given her opinion on what made an ideal man and presented several from different walks of life who she thought were exemplars.[81] Leading suffragist Anna Shaw, a physician and one of the first ordained female Methodist ministers in the United States, and Professor Edward Howard Griggs, Lecturer at Leland Stanford University, were among those who had joined the debate. Among those suggested as being the ideal man were Rabbi Jacob Voorsanger, newspaper editor and professor of Semitic languages and literature at the University of California, and General William H. L. Barnes, leading advocate and defence lawyer. Mary wrote that she was unable to judge either of these two gentlemen, not being sufficiently acquainted, but:

> William Keith, the man I know best, is my ideal; for *he doesn't care how often women vote if they will only let him paint* [emphasis added]. But this is not all, for he otherwise fits the description given by Anna Shaw and Professor Griggs.
>
> As is not always the case with men and women, his private life is in accord with his public character. He is known as a hard worker, a man of

> singularly regular habits, sincere, religious, courageous and ready to fight when necessary. With all this, he is more chaste and purer than a woman; one whom they all instinctively trust. As a class, ministers and artists are more exposed than other men to admiration. There is something which appeals to the finer sympathies of both men and women in the high ideals of these professions. But women, young and old, feel as safe with William Keith as they do with a father or brother; and it will be one of the chief characteristics of the 'New Man' that he will develop his own self-respect by according respect to all women, the bad as well as the good – for he will reverence in them the type of the 'eternal womanly,' however much obscured – treating them as St. Paul exhorted Timothy, 'The older women as mothers, the younger as sisters, with all purity.'[82]
>
> Of William Keith it may be said, as of his model, Sir Galahad, that 'His strength is as the strength of ten, because his heart is pure'.[83]

Quite what Keith thought of this glowing testimonial is not known. It says a lot about Mary that she was prepared to put his name in the public domain in this way but she cannot quite separate her suffragist sympathies from personal endorsement. It appears that only the 'New Man' and his sensibilities will give her what she wants and that is the vote for women on the same terms as that granted to men, and she challenged the notion that women already influenced the outcome of political events by exercising control over the men in their lives. She could not escape being identified as 'the wife of the famous California artist' – his very name lent her considerable cachet in her high-profile role – and she was described thus, or in similar terms, in almost every press report of her many public speeches, of which there were scores. She may have felt that her own identity was being subsumed by that of her famous husband, but she used his fame, their combined wealth and their joint position in society for the good of the movement. Keith was a life member of the National American Women Suffrage Association (NAWSA) at a cost of fifty dollars, but it was Mary who paid for his membership.[84] That said, there is no doubt that Keith's personal commitment to the cause towards the end of his life was sincere. What he did not give was his time. He did give, or did not prevent his wife from giving, several paintings to NAWSA over the years so that they could be auctioned to raise funds.[85] When NAWSA held a bazaar in the concert hall of Madison Square Gardens, New York, in December 1900, every state in the union was represented. California's booth was decorated with

yellow poppies, and Keith gave a painting worth $400 to be sold for the benefit of the organisation. The event, and Keith's generosity, was widely reported.[86] Keith's sympathy for women's suffrage can be gauged by his response to a question put to him in December 1900, when he was asked what he thought the future might hold more broadly:

> The outlook for the twentieth century indicates a wonderful increase of knowledge in all directions. Complete inventions foreshadowed in the nineteenth century, together with many as yet undreamed of – this all goes without saying, *ceteris paribus* – unless progress be interrupted by some great cataclysm in the physical or moral world, which, like the hitherto eccentric course of comets in the astronomical world, would interfere with the result of our ordinary calculations. The prophet Daniel said, 'When knowledge covereth the earth, then cometh the "millennium".' Our reason agrees with this doctrine in whatever sense we conceive the word 'knowledge'. In accordance with this natural increase in knowledge, I believe the new century will be an era of great moral power, as the last century has been one of great physical power. Education will be, not more than, but equally moral as intellectual. It will be more moral because more intellectual. Politics will be studied as a branch of applied ethics. This is in accordance with the saying of Victor Hugo, *that the twentieth century will be woman's century – meaning by this that the virtues popularly supposed to be most characteristic of women will be more esteemed and more exalted* [emphasis added]. There will be greater cooperation between men and women in every sphere of human activity, and with both sexes more sincerity with deeds, not doctrine, as the test of true religion.
>
> All honest work for the service of mankind will be rewarded according to its value, and it will be considered disgraceful for a man or woman to live without working for the good of all.[87]

Keith reveals much about himself beyond the confines of his art. Some of the ideas he conveys in his prophecy were expressed in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* and help demonstrate the depth of Keith's immersion in literature. His prophecy owes more than a passing debt to the influence of Mary whose impassioned and indefatigable efforts on behalf of women's suffrage he continued to support.[88] From the vantage point of the twenty-first century, we can gauge how his predictions have held up.

While Keith's support for women's suffrage remained largely passive, his wife's support was nothing if not resourceful and she took every opportunity to further the cause. As president of the Berkeley Political Equality Club she contributed considerable sums to this and to NAWSA over the years and encouraged others to do so.[89] During a dinner given for Keith by A. D. Shephard of Del Monte the guests included several women from suffragist clubs, artists, and literary people. Mary used the occasion to get people to sign a suffragist petition.[90] A regular guest of the Keith family for dinner was Susan B. Anthony, abolitionist and foremost feminist and suffragist in the nation, who had laboured for the cause for sixty years, and who as president of NAWSA was a frequent visitor to California for the purpose of attending conventions.[91] On one such visit early in 1905, Keith agreed to paint her portrait and she sat for him several times up until the summer when she took ill. She died in March 1906. Keith completed the portrait after her death.

William Keith did not live to see the success of the women's suffrage movement, but he did leave a legacy which Mary used in the service of the cause. One of his last professional acts was to paint *The Triumph of Suffrage* which he completed just before he was confined to bed. Among the few who saw the finished painting was his close friend, William E. Colby, lawyer and first Secretary of the Sierra Club. Keith tried with his failing strength to describe it to his wife who brought him pencil and paper as he was held up in bed while he struggled to sketch the picture, but his shaking hand and fevered brain failed to respond and no member of his family could identify it among any of his paintings from the indistinct pencil lines he drew. Mary had several of his paintings brought from his studio in San Francisco but each time he shook his head. 'This painting is a large one (measuring 25x30 inches), and very beautiful', he said. The search was called off and a short time afterwards he died.[92] Then Colby remembered that over a year earlier Keith had shown him the painting he intended to surprise his wife with but had never alluded to again. After a thorough search of Keith's studio Colby found the painting on 10 August 1911. The painting is an upright canvas depicting a meadow scene with deep, heavy forests on either side. In the centre are several female figures on which the bright, mellow sunlight shines particularly strongly. The light on the women represents their coming into the light of their emancipation.

Mary was so delighted that she arranged to have it exhibited in the State Capitol, Sacramento, as an inspiration in the campaign to obtain the vote.[93] *The Woman's Journal* was particularly fulsome in its praise of *The*



Figure 16. William Keith, *The Triumph of Suffrage (Women's Suffrage)*, mid-nineteenth–early twentieth century. Oil on canvas, 30 × 25 inches.
Collection of the Oakland Museum of California. Gift of the Keith Art Association.

Triumph of Suffrage and praised both Keiths for their contribution to the success of the movement.[94] By completing the painting, a personal tribute to Mary, William clearly thought that victory was inevitable and when she attended a Convention of Women's Suffrage at the Palace Hotel she lent the picture for the occasion and a bronze tablet on which there was inscribed a statement from Keith: 'Yours, on the right side of suffrage'.[95]

Mary had given the California Equal Suffrage Association (CESA) a donation of $1,000 in 1908 and again in May 1911.[96] She reportedly gave $2,000 to help win the ballot on 10 October 1911 when the State of California granted women the vote.[97] It was a close-run thing. The motion passed by a narrow margin in Los Angeles but lost in San Francisco. What swung the vote in their favour was the rural areas where opposition was less well organised than in the cities. They had to wait for confirmation; these outlying votes took several days to come in. The motion passed 125,037 votes to 121,450, a majority of only 3,587.[98]

All his life, when Keith could tear himself away from the easel and interests related to the pursuit of art, and when he was not trekking in the wilderness, he spent his leisure time on a range of pastimes. Even before his arrival in San Francisco he had been a member of the Barclay Guard with its focus on drinking and military ritual. Once in California he had joined the Nahl brothers and other friends in the Olympic Club where he had enjoyed the displays of gymnastic prowess and athletic competition before he became a married man. As a long-time member of the San Francisco Art Association, he had enjoyed helping to organise and participate in their social events, preferring to dine than to dance. He enjoyed the camaraderie of the Bohemian Club and the Press Club, preferring to absent himself from the worst excesses of their 'jinks'. In later years his pursuits centred on the home, only dining out if the event was neither too far distant nor too late in the evening. His tastes were simple, he enjoyed reading and owned a large and eclectic collection of books, his tastes in reading material changing over time with advancing years. He liked walking his dogs and cared for animals and the environment. Most of all he enjoyed evenings spent with his family and friends and their children, making their own amusements. One such evening was on 17 April 1906, when he and Mary entertained daughter 'Tennie' and her husband who were staying overnight. Mary played the piano, Keith sang, and when she struck up the tune for 'The Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane', he joined in with the lyrics of this popular American Folk Song: 'Oh the chimney's fallen down and the roof's all caved in / Lettin' in the sunshine and the rain'.[99]

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Disaster, Decline and Death

> The end of a man's life is often compared to the winding up of a well-written play, where the principal persons still act in character, whatever the fate is which they undergo.
>
> Joseph Addison[1]

When the earthquake struck the San Francisco Bay Area in the small hours of 18 April 1906, the Keith home began to shake, the bed began to slide across the floor, ornaments and books fell off shelves, their two dogs sat mesmerised. When the tremor ceased, Keith looked out of the window to survey the damage; the chimneys were down, and there was a hole in the roof of the kitchen annexe. He went back to bed, but another tremor roused him again. Still, he did not allow this to disrupt his usual routine. He took his regular train to the port and as he approached San Francisco, watched from the deck of the ferry as building after building burst into flames including that of a friend who was with him. Keith tried to go up Market Street to his studio on Pine Street but was turned back by soldiers.[2] He returned to the ferry and was back home in an hour or so, his 'face pale' and 'much shaken', wondering if he had lost everything and thinking he might have to go to Chicago or New York to start again. Unable to concentrate, and despite there being 'a closet full of easels at home', he went across the street and borrowed an easel from Lily Wall, an amateur artist, and was soon at work painting. He later boasted to reporters that the earthquake had cost him only one hour of working time.[3] He saw the University Cadets and National Guard patrolling the street and felt he should be helping them with the refugees but thought he could do just as much good by keeping at his work. He took the dogs for a walk in order to fetch some paint from a friend and neighbour, Mrs Keeler, and went back to his easel. The result was *California in Spring*.[4]

In the meantime, a good friend, Archie Treat, had gone to check on Keith's studio. It was locked, but he had a key and thinking Keith would come along he locked it and left. Carlos Hittell also checked on the studio but without a key he thought better of breaking in and went to take care of relatives. Rev. James Worcester entered the studio with his key but with the fires at some distance and heading in a different direction thought that nothing needed to be done.[5] Next day, from the vantage point of his home on Russian Hill, Worcester could see that the fire had changed direction and was now heading for Keith's studio. With the help of two friends, he returned to the studio and managed to get twenty-five of the best paintings onto an express wagon and safely transferred to the home of his neighbour, the artist Mary Curtis Richardson. The rescuers returned to the studio and moved as many of the paintings as they could to the Sherwood residence on California Street. A young artist friend, Richard Huddart, cut three pictures from their frames and a few days later brought them to Keith at Berkeley.[6] These survived. The Sherwood cache did not; it was destroyed when fire engulfed their home early the following morning.

Other artists were better placed to save some of their work; Xavier Martinez fled his Montgomery Street studio with several of his canvases; Maynard Dixon, 'his arms full of paintings', joined him in rushing for the safety of the open spaces.[7] At the St. Francis Hotel, many of the guests were alarmed by the quake and ran out into Union Square, but the structure of the building remained undamaged and the restaurant continued to serve breakfast. In the hotel's ballroom, Arthur Mathews spent all day up a ladder completing decorative artwork while unbeknown to him his nearby house was being consumed by fire. Mathews' artistic endeavours were wasted. The fires sweeping along the waterfront destroyed the water mains, firemen could not fight the fire and in the small hours of the following morning it reached Union Square and gutted the hotel. Lost in the conflagration were William Keith's two mountain paintings. Another casualty of the fire was Daniel Burnham's lavish and comprehensive Report to the Association for the Improvement and Adornment of San Francisco, delivered to the Board of Supervisors and Mayor at a banquet held in the hotel in September 1905. Such was the haste in rebuilding the city that the plan was never implemented. How different San Francisco would have looked had his vison to create a 'Paris of the West', with its wide boulevards, terraced hillsides and open parks and playgrounds been realised.[8] The fire claimed the mansions of several leading families, along with the artworks

they had collected, so that scores of artists were left with little or nothing to show for years of effort. Unknown numbers of Keith's works were lost in the hundreds of private homes that were destroyed. Photographer Carleton Watkins who had shared several wilderness treks with Keith, lost his entire collection of rare old photographs and prints which was being catalogued for immediate preservation when the earthquake struck. Watkins, old, enfeebled and nearly blind, was in the studio at the time and had to be forcibly removed to safety.[9] Ada Romer Shawan's studio was destroyed along with everything in it except her picture *La Boheme* with its forty-one heads of Bohemian Club members. It was rescued by her son at the risk of his life.[10]

Many artists left the city including Mary DeNeale Morgan, who went to join the artist colony in Monterey. Joining her there temporarily was Eugen Neuhaus, Keith's next-door neighbour at Pine Street, who lost his studio when the building was destroyed. Neuhaus went to Sacramento but decided 'it was not such a good place after all' and returned to the city before the year was out after a short interlude in Monterey.[11]

Keith, at least, had the luxury of retaining a spacious and fully equipped studio at his Berkeley home but his corpus of work from forty years of effort was largely destroyed, including paintings of the High Sierras, a set of the Missions of California and unsold works from his days in Munich. Such was his prodigious output that an estimate of his losses is difficult to quantify and most figures that have been suggested are probably exaggerated; *The Wasp* tops the list, claiming 'he lost nearly three thousand pictures. Many of them the gems of his collection'.[12] Other accounts report that 'among the nearly 4,000 oils, he was known to have painted, 2,000 were lost in the fire', more conservatively, he lost '1,000 canvases and 1,250 sketches' or '2,000 paintings, mainly studies and sketches'. However, 'many of the lost pieces were of minor significance', regarded by Keith as nothing more than 'plain canvas to be used again'.[13] On the advice of Rev. Worcester, he reported his loss to an insurance agent, Mr Whitney Palache who acted for the Hartford Fire Insurance Company and the Citizens Insurance Company of Missouri, who promised prompt settlement of claims. Keith said he had 'a collection of at least 2,000' but now only had '25' saved by Worcester. Keith valued the collection at $100,000 but it is not clear that he had insured the paintings.[14] Irrespective of accurate numbers, and the variable quality of the work, this was still a tragic loss for a man who had laboured industriously for decades and who was now entering his

twilight years. A small consolation was discovered when Keith's cherished Japanese bowl, the source of his 'gong pictures', found its ways down the stairs and he was reunited with it several days later when he recognised its blackened shape lying in the street while surveying the fire-ravaged building.[15] A painting which may reflect Keith's sanguinity at this time is *Joy Comes with Morning*, though quite when it was painted is unclear.

There was a genuine feeling of cultural loss that so many of Keith's paintings had been destroyed, but showing his customary resilience, he worked in his studio in Atherton Street and took up his brushes again with renewed vigour, finding solace in hard work and vowing to replace as many of the lost works as possible. He was apparently offered $50,000 for the surviving paintings but he refused this and other help. 'I will paint more pictures and better ones', he declared, 'I can paint something small in an hour, but it has taken me forty years to learn this trick'.[16] The banker Jacob Schiff, whose picture was among those lost, sent him an advance of $5,000 from New York, and told him 'To work with an easy mind'.[17] Patrons wrote requesting he replace pictures they had lost.[18] His friends Charles Keeler and William Colby acquired materials for him.[19]

Whatever Keith's outward appearance of equanimity and his philosophical response, the disaster must have come as a crushing blow and he did admit to 'being dazed just now'.[20] However, he was among the first to respond in a positive way. Another who showed a pioneering spirit was Arthur Mathews (1860–1945), director of the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art, who wanted artists to remain and thought that they alone had the vision to plan and rebuild the stricken city.[21] (Burnham's plans appear to have been ignored.) Mathews organised a committee for distributing relief funds to destitute artists and managed a small group of artists and artisans who quickly designed and built 'an arts-and-crafts style compound' to accommodate studios and craft workshops. The timber-framed complex at 1717 California Street between Van Ness Avenue and Franklin Street and at the heart of the Pacific Heights district was financed by Keith's businessman friend John Zeile, who, with Mathews, established a furniture shop and interior design business on the ground floor. Keith was the first to put his name down for a studio, and with him setting an example others soon followed, stemming, at least for the time being, an exodus of artists from the city.[22]

Other members of the creative arts world remained in the city of their own volition and helped survivors who had suffered; among them a group



Figure 17. William Keith, *Joy Comes with Morning*, 1900–1911, Oil on wood, 30 × 18 inches.

College purchase with assistance from Wallace Grant, Saint Mary's College Museum of Art Permanent Collection. [0–148]

of like-minded women who, at the turn of the century, had organised themselves into the Spinners Club. Mirroring the Bohemian Club in many respects, it afforded a place where women with an interest in the arts, science and literature could relax with members of their own sex in an environment of their own making. The club went for summer outings and held social gatherings in the loft of a barn at 1213 Jones Street:

> In good time the loft was fitted up with burlap and pretties, presents and works of the members, until it was a most comfortable and inviting place. A few receptions were given there and … guests in frou-frou and silks, dainty and modish – things fit to grace a palace – could be seen making their way through the barn door.[23]

William Keith, 'a devoted friend of the club', was made an honorary member in those early days and enjoyed the gatherings in the clubhouse. As membership grew, they began to carry out work of a benevolent nature and following the fire they figuratively tore up their constitution so that they could use their reserve funds to help writers and artists who had lost everything. They launched 'The Spinners' Benefit Fund' to help those who, 'by reason of age, infirmity or misfortune, have been crowded out of the whirl of living and left dependent'.[24] The first recipient was a friend of Keith's, California's first Poet Laureate, Ina D. Coolbrith, one of only four women who were honorary members of the Bohemian Club; in her case by virtue of being the club's librarian.[25] Coolbrith wrote two laudatory poems about Keith in 1907 and 1910 indicating a warm regard for him and as a thanks for the help he had given her.[26]

Berkeley, which already had an art colony, became 'quite an art centre' following the San Francisco fire, when William Keith 'settled there to work in earnest'.[27] He was joined by several artists who sought refuge after losing their studios. Among them was the miniaturist, Frances (Fanny) Soule Campbell, who opened a salon on Bancroft Way where she invited artists and art lovers to engage in 'shop talk'. Although Keith's refuge was only temporary – he always intended to return to a studio in San Francisco – the Berkeley Art Colony, to which he had been affiliated since arriving to live there in 1886, 'enjoyed the prestige that such an accession to its ranks would naturally bring' now that he was working there.[28] From 1906 until his death he participated regularly at the town's public art exhibitions.[29]

Both Keiths contributed to the first art exhibition held at the Dakin Studio in December 1906: William by lending pictures; Mary by being one of the society patrons. (The funds raised were given to the public Kindergarten Association of Berkeley.)[30] The Studio Building was the first home of the California College of the Arts founded in 1907 by Frederick Meyer, prominent in the Arts and Crafts Movement. Among early tenants were artists Henry Joseph Breuer and Evelyn Almond Withrow, and the nationally recognised pictorial photographer Oscar Maurer.[31]

Thanks to Keith's celebrity, followers of the Barbizon School made pilgrimages to the sites where he painted, seeking to draw inspiration from being in the same locations as the great man and rendering their romantic paintings in subdued tones. Bohemian poets visited the sites, composing lyrical verses they hoped would capture the perfection of the Elysian Fields. Artists came from far and wide to bask in the reflected glow of Keith's celebrity. Although many had already gained a considerable reputation in their own right, they spent so long in Berkeley sketching his favourite locations in and around the campus that they were often mistaken for new residents. Among them was Mary DeNeale Morgan, relocated from Monterey, and Katherine White Newall, both of whom had lessons from Keith in his Berkeley home where he maintained a Friday night sketch club for many years.[32]

Keith sometimes conducted his art classes around the LeConte Oak, planted in the grounds of Berkeley campus to commemorate his friend Professor Joseph LeConte. Despite the best efforts of the university's botanists and ground staff this revered living memorial succumbed to a plague of caterpillars which ravaged many of the oaks in nearby Wildcat Canyon.[33] Keith painted the LeConte Oak while it was still in its prime and the women of his art class in their brightly coloured clothes enjoying themselves around it provided him with staffage for future use in his paintings.[34] Despite these classes, Keith's reclusiveness and separation of work and play increased with each passing year. While he retained a coterie of close friends and advisers who were always welcome at his home, fellow artists, with a few exceptions, were not generally among them. His reluctance to socialise and associate with them meant that he became venerated for his artistic skills while being considered unapproachable at a personal level. As the value of his paintings rose to reflect his elevated status and as his wealth accumulated in consequence of his prodigious output; this became a matter of speculation in the gossip columns of the press,

and jealousy within the art word added to his lack of popularity.[35] Artists who had the temerity to try to meet Keith in person and called at his home uninvited, were given short shrift. Henry Joseph Breuer, although a publicly stated admirer of Keith, was not welcome: Keith had earlier banned him from visiting his San Francisco studio because of his boasting about the high price – $2,000 – he had received for one of his paintings.[36] Keith, despite his own burgeoning wealth, was seemingly jealous.[37]

While Keith was respected rather than liked by Berkeley artists, by far the most popular, and the unofficial leader of the bohemian set, was the eccentric, flamboyant, Jules Mersfelder (1865–1937).[38] The very antithesis of Keith in appearance, temperament and behaviour, he was twenty-seven years his junior and had discomfited Keith on more than one occasion in his San Francisco studio. Keith was jealous of the attention lavished on Mersfelder whom he had helped to sell two paintings to Irving Scott. Mersfelder had watched Keith at work and slavishly followed his style. In the summer of 1896, Mersfelder sold paintings to a Geary Street art store, where they appeared alongside works by Keith and which were very similar in composition and with almost identical names.[39] Mersfelder's paintings were cheaper and sold quickly; Keith attacked him publicly for copying his style. Relations were further strained when it was revealed that a Los Angeles dealer had bought a dozen unsigned Mersfelders as a job lot and displayed them in his shop window signed 'W. Keith'.[40] Mersfelder departed for Sacramento where he checked into the best hotel and secured the best rooms and unlimited hospitality by saying he had a contract with Mrs Crocker, of the Crocker Art Gallery, to paint some great historical picture. His imposture was soon discovered, and he had to flee the city. While many artists thought his behaviour the innocent pleasures of a larger-than-life character, Keith thought it outrageous and reacted with fury and indignation to such an extent that he became the butt of jokes: stories circulated of him tearing out his hair and fuming all over his oriental carpets.[41] Mersfelder returned to San Francisco and in 1904 he and his wife established a salon where they entertained the cream of bohemian society. They lost everything in the fire of 1906 and moved to Berkeley where they set up an equally ostentatious studio and carried on as before. He entertained buyers at lavish receptions among the sumptuous furnishings, all this in sharp contrast to the demanding physical hikes he led to study nature in the raw.[42] Keith and Mersfelder were never reconciled.

Despite his self-imposed workload, Keith joined John Muir and the Sierra Club on their annual summer outing to the King's River Canyon in July and August 1906. The whole party was broken up into small groups, each with its own camp and its own tent and carts. Keith and Muir shared a tent and invited Leon Richardson, Professor of Latin at the University of California, to join them. For three weeks they were in the High Sierra, travelling from place to place, and spending pleasant evenings talking round the campfire. Richardson was in his early thirties, both Muir and Keith were in their late sixties, but Richardson thought Muir 'physically vital'.[43] Keith, too, was energetic, forever drawing their attention to some vista he thought would make a great picture. He did not sketch, according to Richardson, but 'when he got back to his studio in San Francisco he could recall enough to paint a picture … His mind acted that way'. When Richardson asked Keith why he did not have his studio in Berkeley where he lived, Keith replied, 'I like to have people visit my studio, especially travellers and people that represent some other part of the country in some way'. He did not mind people looking at what he was doing. Keith was a good conversationalist but though genial, he preferred to talk about 'his primary interest'.[44] Richardson makes no mention of them discussing the San Francisco fire of three months earlier.

Events on the University of California campus attracted Keith's attention that summer. He had no sooner returned from his outing with the Sierra Club than he involved himself in a controversy over the use of nude models in an 'unorthodox life course' being offered by the newly appointed drawing professor at the Department of Architecture. Harry W. Sewell, native of San Francisco and son of a superior court judge, had studied at the School of Design in New York and at the Académie Julian in Paris, where he had also exhibited at the Salon. The University President, Benjamin Wheeler, responded to this 'wickedness' by denying Sewell a classroom. The man largely responsible for elevating this from what was essentially an internal dispute to a nationwide controversy was William Keith. He declared in the press, 'The idea to eliminate the artist's model from all the studios seems to me to be absurd … there is no moral objection', the nude model 'is conducive to perfection in art'.[45] Keith did not publicly criticise Wheeler but referred to a similar scandal in New York where Anthony Comstock, secretary of the city's Society for the Suppression of Vice, waged war on what he considered obscenity in any form.[46] Such was the power he wielded, the word 'comstockery' entered

the lexicon. Wheeler felt obliged to issue a public rebuttal claiming unconvincingly that it was a private matter between himself and Sewell and 'not in any way connected with the University'.[47] A former design instructor in the Department, architect Bernard Maybeck, sided with Wheeler, arguing that the 'University was not the place for an art school' and that Sewell's life class 'should be entirely separate from such an institution'. The local newspapers enjoyed the furore. The art critic of *The Call*, Will Sparks, wrote a piece headed 'President Wheeler Upheld' in which he concluded that 'by his action, President Wheeler has shown a keen insight and a sound judgment as to the "fitness of thing" '.[48] The piece is so laden with irony it has to be read with care to see that he is actually making a fool of the President's decision. Berkeley's Art Colony was firmly behind Sewell. Two of their number, Frances Soule Campbell and Walter Cox, were interviewed for a syndicated article that appeared as far away as Fairbanks, Alaska.[49] The controversy did not diminish. In the summer of 1909, Professor Mortimer Clapp, staff lecturer at the University of Chicago and expert on Florentine art, gave an illustrated talk on the nude in Italian painting, at the Assembly Room in Berkeley, arguing before a rapt audience that clothes were an impediment to understanding the human body. Italian painters needed the undraped figure to express human feeling and emotion.[50] Only in 1916 did the University allow nude models in life classes on campus and 'even then the course was restricted to senior students and postgraduates with suitable majors'.[51]

Keith, who had helped place the controversy in the public domain, appears to have taken no further part in the dispute and got on with his work. Although he seems to have responded positively to the destruction wrought to his studio and many of his paintings, the San Francisco earthquake signalled the start of a slow decline in his health as advancing age and accidents took their toll. In early September 1906 he had injured his left knee when he fell over while walking his dogs in the University campus. He was watching some students playing ball when the dogs took off at speed, entangled his legs in their leads, and he fell over. He got home with difficulty and had to hobble around on crutches while confined to the house.[52] He was incensed when the press reported that he had been so severely injured ('partially paralysed' following an accident in San Francisco) that there were fears for his career.[53] Despite being attended by a doctor his injury was slow to respond to treatment and such was the interest taken in his health that his accident was reported as far away as Salt Lake City. Keith put a

brave face on it, laughing off fears that his career was over, but those closest to him were concerned that his near seventy years would prove too much of a handicap to a full recovery.[54] Their fears were not entirely unfounded; this injury was the first of several health scares that were to occur with increasing frequency, each one more serious than the last.

Once recovered, Keith worked on, and before the year was out he unveiled a collection of his latest landscapes at Vickery, Atkins and Torrey Gallery, the first artist to exhibit since the fire.[55] *The Call*, full of praise for his poetical, dreamlike compositions, promised viewers 'a rare treat' at the exhibition of his handiwork.[56] He was cheered by receiving a letter from the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, commiserating with his loss in the San Francisco fire and advising that next year:

> [T]hey wished to hold a winter exhibition of contemporary American oil paintings … We propose to maintain the highest possible standards … we earnestly desire to see you represented … No exhibition of contemporary American art can be complete without something from your brush, especially since you represent our great Western States more than any other American painter.[57]

Keith took possession of his new office-studio on California Street at this time, but the building was a temporary one and did not afford him the best protection from the bitter winter cold. The distraction caused by the work of his neighbours and the comings and goings of their customers added to his discomfort and he painted almost entirely in his Berkeley studio until the spring, producing enough canvases for an exhibition of twenty-four of his paintings at the Macbeth Gallery, New York, in March–April, his first exhibition there since 1893. The paintings sold out in three days, but the art critic of the *New York Tribune* considered his work outmoded. He thought Keith a member of the Barbizon School, if he was a member of any school, and not an Impressionist and remarked that:

> [I]t is good to see an exhibition like this from time to time, in an epoch which is marked by much crude exploitation of the Impressionist idea. What Mr Keith lacks in the quality that comes from the study of sunny light, he makes up in the light that is poetized out of nature. His most recent pictures … are interesting productions, the work of a man who has stood aloof from the newer treatment of his time.[58]

(It appears that the work of the Post-Impressionists – the term was coined in 1906 – had not yet reached New York.) Later in April, twenty-nine of his canvases, mostly painted since the fire, went on exhibition at the Blanchard Gallery in Los Angeles where they were received with less than wholehearted enthusiasm. Reviewers there criticised his style 'for being derivative of the French Barbizon painters'.[59] Keith had publicly disparaged the Impressionist movement, yet two members of the Barbizon School, Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot and Jean-François Millet, whose work he admired, had parallels with Impressionism because of their interest in depicting an accurate rendering of light and colour. They were also pioneers of painting *en plein air*, a method which the Impressionists embraced. The reviews from his New York and Los Angeles exhibitions were a sign that Keith had lost, or was choosing to ignore, his customary deft touch at gauging current trends, such was his haste in churning out mediocre 'potboilers' that were not always to current taste.

Despite working feverishly to produce new works, Keith found time to participate in matters involving the interests of the art world beyond his studio. Monterey's art colony had been bolstered by an influx of refugees from San Francisco in 1906, and the following year Keith joined Mathews and his wife, Eugen Neuhaus, Xavier Martinez and former members of the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art in meeting the directors of the town's Hotel Del Monte and getting them to convert the hotel's ballroom into a commercial art gallery devoted exclusively to exhibiting the work of California artists. This helped turn the Monterey Peninsula into a cultural colony that attracted new blood from across the creative spectrum.[60]

But all this hard work was taking its toll and Keith's health continued to suffer. On 13 July 1907 he injured his left eye in a fall while walking uptown from the Ferry Building to the foot of California Street. He was in the company of William P. Harrison, a member of the Bohemian and Olympic clubs. The accident happened at 7.00 pm, so they may have been going out for the evening.[61] Keith stumbled while stepping over a makeshift railway which had been laid to remove rubble from the street and fell on an iron spike which pierced his cheek. Although badly shaken, he is reported to have shown his characteristic pluck and fortitude by smoking one of his trademark cigars on the way to the Clara Barton Hospital on Post Street. Doctor Conlon, the surgeon who treated him, reported that 'Mr Keith is not dangerously hurt, but there is a danger that he will lose the sight of his eye.' This prognosis was met with alarm by his friends, who

once again feared the worst.[62] Mary stayed in the hospital with him, many of his friends visited, and he was soon sitting up, smoking and joking.[63] Joking aside, in a brief, undated note to John Muir he acknowledges how close he was to disaster. 'I had a narrow escape – really, Muir, a miracle, and it has left me humble and grateful.'[64] Within a week he was back at home with his sight unimpaired but with a slight permanent scar. He was receiving visitors and planning a holiday.[65] He had not yet returned to work when he was again injured in the streets of San Francisco. He was slightly bruised while travelling on a streetcar on Hyde Street when the cable broke and the streetcar was brought to sudden halt by the brakes being applied. Seated passengers, including Keith, were thrown to the floor. Several were injured. He went on his way.[66]

In October, Keith was sufficiently recovered to accompany John Muir to Hetch Hetchy in the Yosemite.[67] Muir regarded the mountains as a panacea for all human ills. The trip revitalised Keith as Muir later recorded:

> One of my later visits to the Valley was made in the autumn of 1907 with the late William Keith, the artist. The leaf-colours were then ripe, and the great godlike rocks in repose seemed to glow with life. The artist, under their spell, wandered day after day along the river and through the groves and gardens, studying the wonderful scenery; and, after making about forty sketches, declared with enthusiasm that although its walls were less sublime in height, in picturesque beauty and charm Hetch Hetchy surpassed even Yosemite.[68]

Although reported as a vacation, Keith was hard at work helping his friend with his campaign to save Hetch Hetchy from becoming a reservoir and the valley destroyed by the construction of dams and water works. When they returned in early November, Muir went on to Washington to report his finding to President Theodore Roosevelt, at whose insistence he had carried out the study.[69] Keith returned to his study to work up his sketches and '*the bright topographical paintings that resulted from this trip were painted in order to call attention to the beauty of the valley as part of Muir's campaign to save it*' (emphasis added).[70] Keith had employed the accurate depictions of his early days in the interests of learning, a tribute to his versatility and ability to adopt a needs-must approach to his work. Muir would have been pleased, but despite their efforts his campaign to save Hetch Hetchy ended in failure.

On a lighter note, Keith was asked to judge a poster competition, 'California's welcome to the fleet, San Francisco, May 1908', which he was happy to do as the competition was aimed at the young, and when he was awarded the prize for best painting in the San Francisco Art Association Spring Exhibition he presented the money to the Association to provide the William Keith Scholarship and a year's tuition in the School of Design.[71] That same month he was among a panel of four prominent artists with the unenviable task of deciding the winner of the *Oakland Tribune's* bonny baby contest from the large array of photographs submitted.[72]

In the summer of 1908 Keith travelled in a private rail car to spend some time on a hunting and fishing trip at Harriman Lodge on Pelican Bay, Klamath Lake, Oregon, at the invitation of the railroad tycoon Edward H. Harriman, an important buyer of his work whom he had first met in 1902.[73] Keith had endeared himself to Harriman when he had turned up in his daywear direct from his studio at a formal lunch in Harriman's honour at the Palace Hotel. They had kept in touch.[74] Keith had also visited Harriman Lodge in the summer of 1907 following the accident which nearly claimed his eye, and it is very possible he had convalesced there before his autumn trip to Hetch Hetchy with John Muir. Muir was already on the Harriman estate and Keith joined him in excursions into the surrounding mountains and found time to paint a few canvases while in the 'webfoot country'.[75] Rejuvenated, he returned to Berkeley but was becoming increasingly prone to accidents. In September he avoided serious injury while driving his horses and carriage on the way back to Berkeley from an Orinda Park picnic trip with Mary when his team broke into a gallop after being frightened by a motor car coming down the mountain pass. The traces broke, separating the carriage from the horses which careered off down the track, leaving the carriage stranded in the middle of the road. They were both unhurt, but Keith had to call a vet to tend to an injured horse. Shaken but relieved, they were given a lift home in a passing motor car.[76]

In November that year the San Francisco Art Association honoured Keith with a week-long exhibition of seventy of his best works loaned for the occasion by private collectors in recognition of his long and distinguished career. The event was advertised weeks in advance with invitations extended to civic dignitaries, the deans and faculty heads of the university and many of Keith's patrons and friends.[77] Keith was made an honorary member of the Association at a reception in the Art Institute where

between two hundred and three hundred guests gathered under a system of electric lighting being used for the first time to show his landscapes to best advantage. Keith chose not to attend but expressed his appreciation and regrets for his absence in a letter to the Association President that was read out during the evening.[78] Eugen Neuhaus was one of the few artists of note who attended.

The clear up and rebuilding of San Francisco continued apace through 1908, and on 1 December Keith moved into a new studio on the Fifth Floor of the Hirsch-Kayser Building at 220 Post Street.[79] This he occupied until the time of his death, although recurring bouts of illness meant that commutes to his city studio became infrequent.[80]

At the beginning of 1909 he completed *Klamath Lake with Pelicans and Mount McLaughlin*, for Harriman's home in Arden, New York, one of several of the lake and Pelican Bay he completed following his visits.[81]

Keith complained that he was unable to complete a portrait of Harriman he had been working on for several months because the railway baron was such a busy man that time spent on sittings was limited. Indeed, he appears to have sat only twice, and Keith had been forced to use a photograph, a compromise he found unsatisfactory. He was keen to complete the portrait from life because of the distinguished appearance of his sitter; 'One can understand why he is a master of finance', he said, 'his head is truly Napoleonic. His face is strong, and unusually interesting'.[82] Such was Keith's fame that his difficulties were reported across three states. More months passed, and when Harriman died in September 1909 with the painting still incomplete, the newspapers again took up the story and asked if it would ever be finished.[83] Public interest was aroused when Keith could not say what would become of the portrait, although he did suggest he might finish it one day. He may have done, possibly out of pride if nothing else, but there is no record of Harriman's widow, the philanthropist, Mary Williamson Harriman, claiming the painting.

A row erupted at the San Francisco Art Association when professional artists objected to the work of amateur artists appearing alongside theirs at the Spring Exhibition. The row boiled over into the Bohemian Club whose members were among those who boycotted the show. Keith did not endear himself to some of his fellow professionals by steadfastly insisting that his pictures would appear.[84] Keith had not been well since his return from Pelican Bay and was able to work only at intervals. Mary denied there was anything seriously wrong but admitted his health had not been good for a



Figure 18. William Keith, *Klamath Lake with Pelicans and Mount McLaughlin*, c. 1908, Oil on canvas, 22 × 32 inches.

Gift of Averell Harriman, 1948, Saint Mary's College Museum of Art Permanent Collection. [0–287]

few weeks and he had been warned by his physician to rest.[85] The stress of falling out with other artists would not have helped his general well-being, nor discovering that there was an increasing number of forged works in existence. When a young woman showed him a painting with his signature on it, he said it wasn't his. 'It's the meanest kind of steal, it's worse than taking money a thousand times. But', he finished, 'the man writes my name as well as I could do it myself'. He seems to have retained his sense of humour.[86]

Despite his failing health, Keith continued to prosper financially. Referred to as the 'millionaire artist', he sold two paintings to Mrs Frank Carolan in August for $1,000 each and three more in October for her home in Mountain View, Santa Clara County.[87] William Macbeth returned to the coast from New York looking for good work for his gallery and took away ten of Keith's. 'While other artists complain, Keith goes on prospering. "I love the labour, and the people have been very kind and appreciative. I have made a great deal of money out of a task that is purely a labour of love".'[88] Perhaps to escape jealousy and any residual resentment for his

support of amateur artists at the Spring Exhibition, he spent more time away from San Francisco but still involved himself in finding ways to benefit his art. He was by now chairman of the hanging committee of the art gallery he had helped set up at the Del Monte Hotel, Monterey, and they met quarterly to decide what went on show.[89] He could still get a thrill from seeing images of the mountains and from seeing his own works appreciated. He attended an illustrated talk at the hotel by Stanley McGinnis and George F. Clifton whose *Real Colour Photography* showed 175 colour photographs of the Pacific Coast. A view of Mount Shasta at sunset brought exclamations of delight from Keith and several of his pictures appeared on the screen.[90]

Keith gave up wearing spectacles. Although his vision was dimmer, the colours appeared softer.[91] He was painting less and less. He made his first visit to the E. B. Crocker Art Gallery in Sacramento early in 1910 and expressed surprise at the vastness and the quality of the collection.[92] He also completed his last major work, *Gethsemane*. Begun the year before and worked on intermittently as his health allowed, it was inspired by Sidney Lanier's poem, 'A Ballad of Trees and the Master'.

> Into the woods my Master went,
> Clean forspent, forspent.
> Into the woods my Master came,
> Forspent with love and shame.
> But the olives they were not blind to Him,
> The little gray leaves were kind to Him:
> The thorn-tree had a mind to Him
> When into the woods He came.
> Out of the woods my Master went,
> And He was well content.
> Out of the woods my Master came,
> Content with death and shame.
> When Death and Shame would woo Him last.
> From under the trees they drew Him last:
> 'Twas on a tree they slew Him – last
> When out of the woods He came.[93]

Lanier wrote the poem in Baltimore in November 1880 when he knew he was terminally ill. He died in September 1881, aged thirty-nine, from tuberculosis contracted, or exacerbated, by being incarcerated in an overcrowded

prison during the Civil War. The ultimate meaning of the poem, and hence the painting, suggest that nature offers a comforting respite from the exhaustion of life's travails. A literary critic suggests that 'repeated readings increase the sense of beauty and produce an effect comparable only to that of a picture of the scene by a master hand'.[94] Keith, beset by recurring illnesses and all too aware of his own mortality, had read and understood the poem, and was the 'master hand' that supplied the required picture of a lonely Christ-like figure walking through a sombre wooded landscape. It was shown under the title, *Saviour in the Garden of Gethsemane*, at an exhibition of Keith's paintings at the Art Institute of Chicago in April 1913. This fuller title gives a better understanding of Keith's intentions and is a closer link to Lanier's poem than the more commonly used truncated version, conveying as it does a sense of solitude, contemplation, tranquillity and the utter loneliness of being unique among humankind.[95]

His erstwhile pupil, Laura Mellen (now Mrs Robinson, and returned from her missionary work in Africa), was among the admirers who



Figure 19. William Keith, *Gethsemane*, n.d., Oil on canvas, 30.5 × 40.5 inches.

Collection of the Oakland Museum of California. Gift of the Keith Art Association.

appreciated the 'nobility of his spiritual interpretation' of Lanier's poem.[96] Keith apparently started on a companion piece called *The Glorification*.[97]

Keith's failing health was beginning to let him down with increasing frequency. In August 1910 he was confined to his home with a severe cold contracted as a result of a change in the weather, although overwork was reported as the cause. Keith had spent fifteen hours on a painting, arriving home late at night and a nervous wreck.[98] In consequence, he missed an afternoon in the company of the Pacific Coast Women's Press Association under the leadership of their new president, Ina Coolbrith, who had arranged a 'William Keith Day', with Charles Keeler and Edward Robeson Taylor reading poems in his honour together with a session of his favourite Scottish ballads.[99] Despite a heavy cough his condition was not thought to be serious and he was expected to return to his San Francisco studio within a few days. He was able to paint and entertained several visitors.[100] Mary, who had organised no formal schedule of work for the season, resumed her activities on behalf of the suffragists.[101]

At the start February 1911, Keith was again confined to his bed by a 'mild' attack of *la grippe* – influenza – and despite optimistic reports of improvement and assurances by Mary of an imminent return to work, he was still bed-ridden several weeks later. With the complication of sciatica which had plagued him for so long adding to his heart failure due to hardening of the arteries, and his breathing difficult, he spent much of his time sitting in an armchair.[102] By early April, the newspapers were reporting that Keith was 'In the Shadow of Death'. He had been in a coma for five days and his demise was expected hourly. He was attended by Dr Charles H. Buckley assisted by Dr A. G. Bailey, both friends, and his constant companion, Mary. Such was his fragile state that members of the family were summoned and, in their midst, and with his wife by his bedside, William Keith died peacefully at his home at 9 o'clock on the morning of 13 April 1911.[103]

Such was Keith's fame that his death was reported across the country. Among the first with the news was the *Daily Capital Journal* in Salem, Oregon, who managed to issue a brief statement to its readers on the same day. *The Norwich Bulletin* in Connecticut was also quick off the mark, getting a three-line announcement in print the following morning.[104] Accounts in the San Francisco press were fulsome in their praise for 'one of the foremost landscape artists in the United States', whose 'work will live forever'. In giving a sketch of his life, only one reported that 'Keith's

people were not wealthy people. He did not dream of a painter's fame, for he knew nothing of painting and little of pictures'.[105] The others invariably described his claimed aristocratic origins in their own romantic terms.

In a special dispatch for *The Call*, prominent artists were invited to reflect on his passing, and with 'uniformity of spirit' they 'lamented his death and praised his works'. Between them, they summed up all that was good with William Keith, his art, and his character. Evelyn Almond Withrow, who had shared Keith' studio in Munich, said, 'I have always considered William Keith one of the greatest artists of America … He has been kind to me … when I commenced my work, he helped me, and I believe he has always been gracious to everyone. California will pay tribute to the memory of its great landscape artist.'[106] Bohemian Club member, Guiseppe Cadenasso, regarded him as:

> [T]he leader of our Californian art. His work stimulated painters and artists. It was more than meritorious – It was the work of genius. Long after Mr Keith the man is forgotten, his work will live. It was he who brought to the attention of Californians and Americans the beauty and grace of the oak.[107]

According to Amédée Joullin, 'Keith was the most industrious painter California ever had. He possessed a genius for landscape painting, concentrating everything pertaining to art, poetry, thoughtfulness and strength'. Arthur Putnam, many of whose large sculptures are public monuments, weighed in with, 'Keith's death is a loss to California and to America. He was a hard worker, and never idle. Like all men who have done big work, he had many imitators, but no rivals. His best pictures were full of poetry and romance. I am sorry that he is gone'. Arthur Mathews said that:

> Keith was a big, broad, liberal genius. He was primarily a student. Because of his extreme depth he was able to paint landscapes which will serve to keep him in the minds of our people forever. His greatest work was undoubtedly accomplished during the nineties. His highest art made itself manifest during those years. He deserved the title of 'King of California Artists', for he was the leader and the best in his line. His personality, together with his power as an artist, makes him a sad loss to the west.[108]

Many people visited the Keith home to express their condolences. Among them were former Mayor of San Francisco, Edward Robeson

Taylor and his wife. Other callers included Mrs Joseph LeConte, widow of the late Professor 'Joe' LeConte; their son, Professor Joseph N. LeConte; and Professor C. E. Bradley and William Colby.[109] Friends and patrons, including Sir Ernest Cassell, London banker and owner of a Keith picture, and Jacob Schiff wrote to Mrs Keith offering condolences.[110] Several weeks earlier Keith had discussed the arrangement of his funeral with Mary. 'I want many women to weep over my body when I am gone. I want young girls all dressed in white to attend my funeral service, which must not be of a personal nature; merely the "regular service of the church".'[111] His wish was carried out at St Mark's Episcopal Church, Berkeley on the afternoon of 16 April, when ten young girls, dressed in white 'from bonnet to shoes' – to suggest the atmosphere of spring and the purity of life – preceded the casket. Wildflowers, forget-me-nots and a spray of Scottish heather adorned the coffin.[112] The service was conducted by Keith's lifelong friend, Rev. Joseph Worcester, assisted by Rev. Edward Lamb Parsons, pastor of St Mark's. Rev. Worcester found it difficult to deliver the sermon without overstepping the request that there be no personal tribute. He recalled Keith's own words, 'the quality of a man's life is in its spirit or motive and that there is only One who knows that'. He continued, 'It was this acknowledgement of the One … that gave enduring character to his work. I think of his laboriousness in faithfully portraying and interpreting the facts of each as a part of that acknowledgement. Did he not for the earth and for us, answer the call.'[113] The pall bearers were Keith's closest friends: John Muir, Edward Robeson Taylor, Arthur Brown, Sr, William P. Harrison, Joseph N. LeConte, William Colby, 'Abe' Livingston Gump, Charles E. Green, William F. Merrill and Charles Keeler. The body was taken to Oakland Crematorium. His remains are buried in Mountain View Cemetery, Oakland.

Many people attended the funeral. Members of the faculty of art from the University of California paid their last respects to a man with whom they had been closely associated for many years. Among the numerous floral tributes were those from the San Francisco Art Association, the Bohemian Club, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Berkeley Suffrage Club and the nurses who had tended to Keith in his last days, all attesting to his wide range of interests and the esteem in which he was held. Notable absentees included his son, Charlie, and despite their tributes in the pages of *The Call* it is difficult to find among the list of attendees any member of the artist community other than the photographer, Anne Brigman. Evelyn Almond Withrow delivered a wreath to the

family home. William Keith had gained considerable fame during his long and busy lifetime and his connections and easy access to the upper reaches of San Francisco and Berkeley society may have created a degree of jealousy in fellow artists who snubbed him at his death. Notwithstanding, news of his death and of his funeral was reported across the country with universal praise for the man and his work.[114] His literary friends had not abandoned him, the poet Edwin Markham writing that:

> The name that makes our assembly of painters shine … is that of William Keith – a rare spirit, now gone into the Next Chamber of the Mystery … a Scotchman, with the Celtic ardour for beauty and colour, and the Covenanter's conscience for truth. His landscapes take on the colour of the soul, they are nature, plus the man. Hence, they are not a mere imitation of nature, but the creation of a wilder beauty than earth supplies.[115]

Keith's wealth was considerable; he had amassed a fortune finally valued at $272,334.[116] His will, dated 10 July 1907, written on plain white paper in Keith's own hand, was lodged in a safety deposit box at the Mercantile Trust Company's vault and taken from there and filed for probate with the county clerk. The executors were his son-in-law E. N. Harmon and long-time friend Edwin Bonnell.[117] The main beneficiaries were his widow and his two children. He left his friend Joseph Worcester the house next door to the Swedenborgian Church in San Francisco. In case the pastor should not survive Keith, the property was willed to the church in his memory. Keith's two surviving sisters, Mrs Anna K. Chamberlain and Mrs Elizabeth K. Hyatt were left $5,000 each. These bequests were to be doubled if his wife died before him. The balance of his estate was left in proportion, one half to his wife, and one quarter each to his daughter Hortense and son Charles. Pending settlement of the estate, Mrs Keith was granted an allowance of $300 per month.[118] Keith had more than $100,000 in cash in various bank accounts and considerable investments in stocks and bonds, most with local public service corporations.[119]

In a detailed inventory, 216 paintings in Keith's estate were valued at a modest $27,905.50, the most valuable being *Autumn, Lagunitas* valued at $750, and *Mount Ritter* valued at $700, the remainder averaging less than $124 each.[120] The executors paid $3,262.35 in inheritance tax within six months of Keith's death in order to receive a 5 per cent rebate.[121] By a decree from Judge Ogden, the estate of William Keith was finally distributed on

18 April 1912.[122] The true value of the paintings became a matter of debate, with art connoisseurs asking if his works would retain their appeal now that he was gone, a point Keith had himself often discussed with friends. *The Wasp*, in an obituary, thought it likely they would increase in value, Keith being 'the only Californian artist represented prominently in famous collections', but sounded a note of caution by instancing Thomas Hill as one artist among many whose work had not followed the general rule that when an artist ceases to paint, his paintings increase in value.[123] Harmon decided to keep the Post Street studio open for two hours a day, where he and Mary entertained guests and prospective buyers by showing them paintings including *Saviour in the Garden of Gethsemane*.[124]

Keith's future value as an artist was in many ways bound up in the fortunes of the Berkeley Art Colony as its fortunes were similarly bound up in his. Keith's decline and death was followed shortly thereafter by the colony's demise, its decline having started during his lifetime. A discordant note was struck in October 1910, when, with a flourish, Herbert Offield opened his Temple of Fine Arts in the town. Although hailed as 'the most perfectly arranged art gallery west of Chicago', resident professional artists – they numbered about seventy – were less than impressed when only three, William Keith, Jules Mersfelder and Charles Crocker, were represented at the inaugural event. The bulk of the exhibition was given over to artists from the east and locals had expressed their anger and resentment even before the gallery opened.[125] Instead of taking their side, the town's press annoyed them further by suggesting that most would use the gallery as an informal meeting place.[126] The omens were not good; two weeks after the grand opening someone broke into the gallery through a skylight and stole an oil painting of *The Sisters' Convent at Bruges* by the British artist Alfred d'Lemon (sic) valued at more than five thousand dollars.[127] Insensitive to the artists' mounting bitterness, Offield presented an exhibition of paintings drawn largely from the East Coast in San Francisco's St. Francis Hotel, now restored to its former glory. It was one of several galleries being celebrated, as art now played 'a major part in the edifices of the reborn city'.[128] While several artists for different reasons had already left the colony for good, the number leaving swelled by the spring of 1911. Among them, and perhaps the most damaging for the social cohesion of the Berkeley colony, was Frances Soule Campbell, who closed her salon and art school and moved to New York.

The photographer Oscar Maurer organised a weekend-long exhibition of 'the better-known artists on the West Coast' at the Hillside in March

1911 with some half of the exhibits provided by members of the Berkeley Art Colony; it was attended by 'several hundred guests', while the corresponding event in 1909 had attracted over two thousand. Berkeley's leading literary weekly, *The Courier*, abruptly ceased printing 'The Studios' column which had been the recognised source of all local news and gossip in the art world. Keith's death was the final straw. Artist Jennie Cannon had for several years bemoaned the fact that the Berkeley Art Association had failed to build a permanent exhibition space and had no museum for contemporary art, or 'a room filled with the finest of Keiths'.[129] The Barbizon movement had had its day and Berkeley painters who continued to paint in this 'old fashioned style of dark representational art', found it difficult to find buyers for their work. Photographers like Maurer were developing a nationwide reputation for themselves, and their work was much sought after by those who preferred an artistically composed nature study or portrait to a painting. Although the conservative San Francisco Art Association continued to teach the Barbizon approach, as did the newly founded San Francisco Institute of Art, within a few years a cultural revival in San Francisco saw many Berkeley-based artists relocate to the larger city where property prices were cheaper and where they found it easier to sell their paintings.

Other influences were impacting detrimentally on the Berkeley Art Colony. An active temperance movement; conservative politicians enacting conservative legislation; energetic clergymen railing against vice in all its guises; and authoritarian law enforcement officers all combined to ensure that Berkeley was a safe place to get an education and to bring up a family, while simultaneously sucking the vitality out of the bohemian lifestyle favoured by artists.[130] Berkeley was left an artistic backwater until restored during the Roaring Twenties. 'The Dean's' reputation, burnished by a corpus of acclaimed works from the 1890s and sustained by occasional masterpieces such as *Saviour in the Garden of Gethsemane*, was tarnished by an embarrassment of indifferent works completed in haste following the disaster of 1906. His adherence to an unfashionable style rather than adapting to changing demands was among the reasons his work lost its appeal in the years following his death. However, resolute champions, changes in taste and the quality of his work ensured that his time in the artistic wilderness was temporary.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Resurrection

Thay Haif Said: Quhat Say Thay: Lat Thame Say
A Keith family motto[1]

Shortly after Keith's death several small exhibitions of his work were held around the country as gallery directors rushed to honour his memory or cash in on the anticipated increase in value of his works. In April 1911, Gump's Gallery, San Francisco, was the first to show a small number; in September, the Kanst Gallery in Los Angeles followed suit and in the same month fifteen of his paintings appeared in the Associated Artists of San Francisco Exhibition at the O'Brien Gallery in Chicago. In October, the Portland Art Museum, Oregon, held a memorial exhibition of fifteen paintings borrowed from local collectors. These exhibitions helped to bring Keith's work before a wider audience. Keith's heirs became active in helping to organise exhibitions with a view to publicising his paintings for eventual sale. In August 1912, the family authorised a free exhibition of thirty-one artworks produced in the period following the 1906 fire, at the Golden Gate Park Museum, San Francisco. These were reportedly worth $100,000, a figure substantially higher than the valuation of the entire collection lodged at his death. The exhibition contained what was reputedly the last painting finished and signed by Keith. Listed as No. 141 and titled *Adobe and Oaks*, it was painted in February 1911.[2] Five new paintings, one called *Woman Suffrage* from 1909 and dedicated to his wife, were added to the Golden Gate Park Museum exhibition before it moved to the City Art Museum in St Louis for display in January–March 1913; from there it transferred to the Art Institute of Chicago for display in April–May.[3]

Other works were already being offered at auction. Keith's executor, E. N. Harmon, placed twenty-four paintings with H. Taylor Curtis, auctioneer, at his saleroom, 532–534 Sutter Street, San Francisco, in what was

advertised as the final sale to close the estate.[4] The public auction on 16 January 1913 realised $22,365 in an hour and twenty minutes and was 'said to be the largest amount ever realized from a single sale of paintings in San Francisco'. Art dealers attended from all over the country but most of the better pictures were bought by local people. *Meditation*, showing two figures seated at the foot of a giant oak, with a third standing nearby, brought $1,700, the highest price of any picture sold. W. H. Ketcham, an authority and writer on Japanese art, purchased a portrait of Edward H. Harriman for $250.[5] This may be the portrait that Keith was having difficulty with when his sitter died before completion. Perhaps it had remained unfinished, a distinct possibility judging by the price.

Following the success of this auction, fourteen of Keith's paintings were included in a sale of works by several California artists, including two by Thomas Hill, at the same Sutter Street venue just three months later.[6] The works came from the estates of art collector and philanthropist, Mrs Kate E. Johnson and collector Dr Jules Simon. E. N. Harmon bought two Keiths, *The Glory of the Heavens* for $12,000, and *Twilight Hour* for $5,750. They were sent to St Louis before going on to Chicago for exhibition there. Harmon appears to have been acting on behalf of William Owen Goodman, retired banker, timber baron and president of the Society of Friends of American Art which controlled the Art Institute of Chicago, who wanted them for the institute's collection. Neither painting ever became the institute's property.[7] Instead, *The Glory of the Heavens* was sold to a wealthy private collector, Mr Gordon Blanding, who paid $11,000 for it so that it would remain in California. For many years it was on loan to Saint Mary's College where it hung in the students' grand dining hall in the Gallery and could be viewed by the public on Sunday afternoons during the scholastic year. It is now in the collection of the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco.[8]

Artist James William Pattison, a contemporary of Keith's, reported on the Chicago event for *Fine Arts Journal*. Twenty-two paintings were exhibited, most painted after 1906, but included were two that were rescued from the burning studio, with the marks of the knife with which they had been cut from their frames still visible.[9] Pattison thought Keith's paintings:

> [H]ave a fascination because they are so magnificently executed. Hard truths are always fascinating when well noted but they are not poetical. Keith carried a sufficiency of facts in his head … and used just enough

> of them to tell his story of poetical mystery. If we mistake not, the poetry is the better of the two and will continue to soothe us for many years to come. [Although Keith's] idealisation of the moods and life of Nature seem to constitute his chief claim to greatness … With few exceptions … he did not disregard the fixed laws governing his craft, the balance of his composition is remarkably perfect … He used his art almost unconsciously; a strange mix of artfulness and innocence which brings about the hoped-for result. Great art is certainly present when science and love work together.[10]

Pattison here has encapsulated the key to Keith's success, but despite this cogent analysis from an experienced art critic, the buying public was rather less enthusiastic; only twelve of the twenty-two paintings on display were sold.[11]

Notwithstanding, Keith's reputation was still such that he was given his own gallery at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco in 1915; an event that drew art aficionados from far and wide, many of whom wrote about it in detail. Among the first to appear in print was Jessie Maude Wybro who wrote for *The Overland Monthly* and who shared that magazine's long-held proprietary interest in Keith and his exhibits. She did not have much to say; she did not feel it necessary:

> William Keith – our own Keith, who has perhaps seen deeper and more beautifully into the soul of the California landscape than any other – occupies one of the largest Galleries set apart for individual exhibitors in the Palace of Fine Arts … His soft, rich tones, his poetic interpretation, his fine and sensitive handling of the inmost beauty of the land he loved are too familiar to need discussion.[12]

Edward Robeson Taylor wrote a poem *In the Keith Room at the Exposition*: 'It's not enough that they alone who live today shall see these works / for all the years should rest forever on the endless toil of art.'[13]

Frank Vincent DuMond, primarily an easel painter and book illustrator but an experienced muralist who took on commissions for murals to avoid 'the least worries of poverty', produced two huge panels measuring 12 feet × 47 feet for the Exposition. Titled *The Westward March of Civilisation*, they showed settlers being greeted by earlier arrivals in California. Historical luminaries, dressed in the garb and carrying the tools of their trade or profession, march towards a sunny orange grove to

be greeted by the outstretched arms of Queen Califa and a welcome to the 'land of gold fruit and flowers'. Among them is the artist, William Keith.[14]

Eugen Neuhaus, who gave a series of university lectures at various venues on the 'Art of the Exposition', reflected that it seemed odd that California, 'famed for its sunshine', should produce men like Keith, whose work:

> Surrounded by modern landscapes … seems somewhat sombre … [but he] must not be looked upon as a painter of nature nor even an interpreter of nature. He used landscape simply to express an ever-changing variety of personal emotion. His attitude towards nature in his later work was of the most distant kind, although his early career was that of the most painstaking searcher for physical truthfulness.[15]

A compendium of essays was published to coincide with the Exposition and several of the contributors wrote at length about Keith, with different opinions as to his significance. Bruce Porter reflected that, despite being dismissed in some quarters, much of the early painting in California by artists such as Keith deserved to survive because, 'it was good painting, and, in particular instances, of an expertness quite amazing'.[16] He thought the critical assessment of Keith's work, 'and how great that work was at its best', would be made by the more objective art critic of the future. Everett C. Maxwell thought that Keith:

> [W]as a unique genius and a personality of many parts. His days of scenic painting are of minor importance. He soon changed his style and his poetic conception of nature took precedence over everything else, and today his canvases are recognised the world over as the first great works of art produced in the West.[17]

John E. D. Trask took a contrary view, writing that:

> [T]he Barbizon painters made their great contribution to the world three-quarters of a century ago … and while no doubt the individual works of Keith possess both beauty and charm, his attitude and accomplishment (if one is to judge by the works shown at the Exposition) are too much an echo of the past to place him among those who have been the great leaders in his profession.[18]

Another detractor, Michael Williams, thought that while Keith, 'unquestionably stands today as the most notable manifestation of art in California; it can hardly be said of him that he expressed the native spirit of the West in an individual and original style'.[19] Porter Garnett, playwright, critic and Bohemian Club regular, believed Keith's significance was local and his style dated, noting that, 'Many persons do not for a moment question his pre-eminence among California painters … In his best work [he] carries on in a notable and interesting manner the Barbizon tradition'.[20] Another visitor to the Exposition, and writing over a decade later, was Rilla Evelyn Jackman, who recalled that:

> One of the interesting surprises for the eastern critics … was found in the room devoted to the works of William Keith. *Though the artist was unknown* [emphasis added], and his style of work frankly old fashioned, he, there [sic] came to hold a respected place, in the esteem of many … The general effect of his pictures is dark but rich and pleasing. *Revelation*, a hazy sunset … is truly delightful. The tonal quality in most of his works is excellent. The technique of his water-colours is freer, and at times quite up to date.[21]

The mixed reviews of Keith's exhibits at the Panama-Pacific Exposition intimate that, by and large, his Barbizon style of painting had had its day. Gone were the golden years from the 1890s, when his work was received with almost universal acclaim; when, thanks to its popularity and ready availability, dealers such as Vickery, Atkins & Torrey and the S & G Gump Gallery in San Francisco, and the Macbeth Gallery in New York, competed to mount one-man shows. The surge of interest following his death had dissipated. The art world had moved on, especially in Europe where Impressionism, while being challenged by the Post Impressionists, was now the norm and had reached and influenced artists in North America. This was reflected in the International Jury's award of the Grand Prize at the Exposition to the Impressionist painter Frederick Carl Frieseke, whose collection of some dozen works they thought demonstrated the 'latest and most advanced expression' and 'represented most clearly and convincingly those qualities of painting which were considered typical of the artistic ideals of that time'.[22] Frieseke was an American, from Michigan, who had studied painting in France where he spent every summer from 1906 to 1919 with his wife and where he was an influential member of the Giverny

Art Colony. He was among a whole generation of young American artists living abroad who had discarded old ideas and seized upon new and more advanced techniques.[23] William Keith had been exposed to Impressionist paintings on his trip to Europe in 1893, but he rejected the ideas of a school that would soon be recognised by many American painters. Perhaps he felt he had no need for it. He was at the height of his power and popularity. He wished to retain an individual style that was serving him well and so continued to work in the medium of soft-toned idealism separated from the mainstream by the relative remoteness of California.[24] Perhaps, even though he experimented with some bizarre and unorthodox methods on his return from Europe, he was getting old and tired and competing within a new style of painting was one further challenge he was unwilling to undertake.

In any event, the encroachment of modernism heralded a diminution in the value of Keith's paintings which held up for just one more year with East Coast dealers and buyers. Although he was for a long time relatively unknown outside the West Coast, his reputation was buoyed by exposure at the Panama-Pacific Exposition – most early reviews were from California and generally laudatory – and an auction of thirty landscapes at the Anderson Galleries, Madison Avenue, New York in April 1916 realised a reputed $30,800, which was considered excellent as many of them were but sketches. The leading price of the day, $4,900, was paid by H. M. Kittredge for *Golden Heritage*, a midsummer scene in a wood. This was a considerable, and no doubt welcome, addition to the finances of the profligate Charlie, who was disposing of the works from his share of his father's estate.[25] He did not live long to enjoy it. Following a life of reckless disregard for the needs and feelings of others, in the spring of 1923, following a short illness, and to the astonishment of his wife and daughter, Charles Keith, who had shown no previous inclination to discuss religion, while lying on his deathbed at their home in Alameda, 'received voluntarily and joyfully not only baptism which initiated him into the Catholic Church but also the Catholic sacraments and blessings for the dying. Two days later he died in great peace of soul'.[26]

Whatever the amount realised from this New York sale, it represents the pinnacle of Keith's commercial value, for there was no further major sale by his executors who had made no effort to evaluate the quality of the paintings he left behind or consider his reputation in the manner of their disposal. 'His output was prodigious and uneven', noted Neuhaus:

> Good, bad, or indifferent, and many unfinished pictures were indiscriminately put on the market and sold by measure rather than by merit … It would have been much better for his reputation had his work been carefully gone over … and everything destroyed which was not a credit to him.[27]

As if that was not bad enough, fake Keiths started to appear in considerable numbers, produced by poor artists with no name of their own to maintain, which were sold to the gullible public through unscrupulous dealers. In Los Angeles, one art dealer was called to the district attorney's office where he was questioned by the police and ordered to refund the $300 a society woman had paid him for *The Quiet Pool*, a painting she had been told was a genuine Keith. Several art experts agreed it was a fake and if genuine would have been worth nearer $2,600.[28] The proliferation of counterfeit paintings distressed Keith's friends and admirers and also disturbed the market where collectors became wary of parting with money for works of dubious provenance, although genuine Keith paintings could still be found by discriminating connoisseurs and continued to change hands where their provenance could be confirmed. They found their way on to the walls of private and public galleries.

One gallery which had forsaken Keith shortly after his death, despite his long and close association with the institute that owned it, was the one at the University of California, Berkeley, among whose treasured possessions was the Bacon Collection donated by Henry Douglas Bacon, financier and merchant, and displayed in the Bacon Art and Library Building opened in 1881. The collection was broken up in 1911 and the Bacon Building converted into lecture halls when the new Doe Library opened to house the university books but did not have space for paintings. The most valuable art works, including pictures that had been donated by William Keith, were supposed to be put into temporary storage in a fireproof building with the intention that they be rehung in a new gallery in Room 101 of the California Hall, the room 'most frequented by the public', but in 1929 when Elizabeth Keith Pond tried to locate the Keith paintings she was told they were either in 'basement storage' or distributed around various administrative offices. 'What is the meaning of this treatment of these fine pictures!' she wrote in a stiff letter of complaint.[29] Elizabeth 'Bessie' Keith Pond, who had studied under Keith, was the daughter of Mary McHenry Keith's older sister Emma, and therefore a niece of Keith through marriage.

A keen skier and outdoorswoman, she took long hiking and camping trips in Yosemite and other parts of the Sierra with her father, Rear-Admiral Charles Fremont Pond, following his retirement from the US Navy in 1918. She started to collect material from which she later compiled the 'William Keith Miscellanea', now part of the Keith-McHenry-Pond Family Papers 1841–1961 lodged at the Bancroft Library, Berkeley.

The University of California made amends less than a decade later, when, to mark the official centenary of Keith's birth, the Regents published *William Keith: The Man and the Artist*, by Eugen Neuhaus – who was by then Professor of Art – and acknowledged the close relationship between artist and institute, noting in a foreword that:

> During the greater part of his professional career William Keith lived in Berkeley, and his most significant work was inspired by the sylvan beauty of the University of California Campus; therefore it is fitting that this estimation of the man and the artist, a contribution to the centennial celebration of his birth, should be published by the press of the University of California.[30]

The university had a second reason for making amends to the Keith family. Part of Atherton Street running north and south between Allston Way and Bancroft Way, and containing the Keith home of a quarter of a century, disappeared under university development in 1932 and the art deco Edwards Stadium was built over the site.[31] Spectators in the stadium could enjoy panoramic views of the Berkeley Hills and Strawberry Canyon to the east, Keith's old stomping grounds, and the San Francisco Bay Area and skyline to the west. In 1954 a plaque was placed on a wall of Edwards Field announcing that 'William Keith, 1838–1911, Old Master of California, from 1885 to the end of his life his home stood about fifty yards east of this spot. "He who is a blessing for his time is a blessing for all time".'[32] The donors were the Keith Memorial Associates of Saint Mary's College, California, and the Keith Art Association, Berkeley.

The university also held an exhibition of Keith paintings to commemorate his centenary; an event commented upon by Alfred Frankenstein in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, who, in a round-up of art news, reported that, 'They will exhibit the progress of Keith's art, beginning with the big, naturalistic mountain scenes and going on through a Barbizon and brown gravy phase to a kind of impressionistic search after fugitive twilight moods'.[33]

Frankenstein, long-time and much respected art and music critic, who was attuned to the heartbeat of the city's art world, noticed a paradigm shift in trends which he describes in a telling phrase, comparing Keith's earlier works with his later, and very much indicating which of the two he prefers.

> *I suspect that 10 years ago the earliest, clearest canvases would have been frowned upon as mere photography, and today the shoe is on the other foot … it seems to me that the more moody and less naturalistic the pictures become, the less interesting, well designed and suggestive* [emphasis added] … Keith was no master of colour as the French impressionists, and he had no colour art comparable to theirs to offset the lack of design in the later creations.[34]

While Frankenstein declares a preference for Keith's early work, he stops short of giving it his wholehearted endorsement, and notes that:

> It is curious to observe … how little of the spirit of the California landscape finds its way into the works of the earlier local landscapists, whether directly representational or not … as if, in their concern with the exact forms of trees and mountains, they had forgotten all about the light that makes these forms and gives them their character.

Despite his criticisms, Frankenstein appears to have noticed that the photographic realism in Keith's early landscapes, replaced by more dream-like qualities in later works that invoked introspection in the viewer, was more suited to the modern age where idealist detachment from reality 'had given way to a frank concern with realities', suggesting there would be a resurgence of interest in his work.[35]

Keith's days of public rejection did not last, and his work started to receive more general recognition. Among those who admired its quality was his first major biographer, Brother Cornelius, who became aware of it while teaching in Martinez in 1908 when he paid a visit to John Muir's home; 'and there, above the desk in his study, was a painting of the *Berkeley Oaks* by William Keith'.[36] His interest aroused, Cornelius talked with Muir for an hour about his collection, resolving to return so that he could study the paintings more closely. So began his quest for other works by Keith, 'because [he] found them nearest to expressing the quality, mystery and wonder of nature of any paintings [he] had ever seen'.[37] His quest grew

into a labour of love that lasted more than half a century. He travelled across North America and Europe and exchanged voluminous correspondence with Keith's widow (he wrote over 500 letters to her), family (he wrote nearly 300 letters to Elizabeth Keith Pond), friends, patrons, anyone with any connection, however remote, who might provide information to help satisfy his obsession.[38] His quest endangered his life as he followed Keith's footsteps in the Sierra Nevada, where he wandered lost and without food for four days in 1935.[39] After twelve years of writing he produced *Keith: Old Master of California* in October 1942.[40] Mary McHenry Keith, who had worked quietly but assiduously to protect and preserve her husband's legacy, gave $6,000 towards the cost of its publication.[41]

Brother Cornelius worked tirelessly to promote the name of William Keith and did not confine his efforts to the halls of academia or the wider art world. On hearing that John Muir had been honoured by having a Second World War Liberty ship named after him, he lobbied the US Maritime Commission in Washington, DC to have Keith similarly honoured. The criteria for having a name on a Liberty ship were simple. A person had to be American, had to be famous and had to be dead.[42] Any group that raised War Bonds worth $2 million could propose a name but Brother Cornelius sent the Chairman, Admiral Emory S. Land, a copy of his recently published biography and that was sufficient to have Keith's name included in the shipbuilding programme.[43] One of over 2,700 cargo ships built to a British concept but modified to suit more efficient US construction methods, SS *William Keith*, Hull No. 1722, was laid down at Permanente Metals Richmond, California Yard No. 2, on 15 July 1943 and launched just three weeks later on 6 August. The ship saw service until the end of the war and was finally scrapped in 1966, a fate shared at around that time by many others including SS *John Muir*.[44]

Shortly after being introduced to Keith's artwork, Brother Cornelius started to assemble a collection of his paintings with the aim of creating a permanent gallery for the exclusive use of his favourite artist:

> I can think of no better memorial … than a Keith Gallery at Saint Mary's College where the students can understand and appreciate Keith and absorb the sublime messages of his art … The work of California's Old Master would be found in an ideal setting – a sanctuary of learning.[45]

To this end, in 1930, he established The Keith Memorial Associates of Saint Mary's (KMA) to promote the idea and to garner funds which accumulated

slowly over several years while the paintings were displayed in temporary spaces around the campus. In 1945, with Brother Cornelius's encouragement, Elizabeth Keith Pond founded the Keith Art Association (KAA), dedicated to promoting, conserving and exhibiting paintings drawn primarily from the private collections of Keith family members. The association had a properly drawn up constitution and by-laws and a members' register. At one point they had over two hundred members paying annual dues of one dollar each; and produced a quarterly newsletter called *The Palette*.[46] The KAA was independent of the KMA but they were essentially trying to achieve the same aim while competing for the same target audience and it was agreed that the KAA would concentrate on working in the Berkeley area. The KAA loaned out Keith paintings to libraries and museums in Oakland and held exhibitions in various galleries, including Crocker's in San Francisco, but dealers had commercial interests to consider so these exhibitions were necessarily short-lived.

The KAA did not survive Pond's death from chronic heart disease on 6 September 1955 but by then the main objective had been achieved. She bequeathed some 108 works by Keith to the Oakland Art Museum, many undated, including early sketches, small paintings, twenty-one oils on cigar box lids and, intriguingly, an undated painting called *The Blasted Heath*.[47]

Nearly two years earlier – the official opening and dedication took place on 14 November 1953 –Brother Cornelius had established the William Keith Gallery at Saint Mary's. Funding was secured from various benefactors including Mrs Mary McHenry Keith who left twelve painting to Saint Mary's from among her collection of over fifty that adorned her home when she died peacefully early in the morning of 13 October 1947, with her niece, Elizabeth Keith Pond at her side.[48] Three years before her death, Mary, who had loaned *Gethsemane* to Saint Mary's on two occasions, decided that the College should have the painting on her death but that it would remain in her home in the meantime. Brother Cornelius, as director of the College gallery, declined the offer, insisting that the work should be accessible to a wider public audience, and it was bequeathed instead to the Oakland Art Museum together with forty-eight other paintings gifted though the KAA.[49] Among them was *The Triumph of Suffrage*, four gong pictures, a self-portrait and an undated painting *Return from the Raid (Dunnottar Castle, Scotland).*[50]

Throughout the 1940s and 50s, Brother Cornelius gave a series of talks on Keith at various venues across the state, sometimes in conjunction with

exhibitions, sometimes appearing on the radio.[51] He published the second volume of *Keith: Old Master of California* in 1956. He regularly lectured on Keith on Sundays in the gallery until he was tragically killed, along with a fellow Brother, when the car they were travelling in went off the road on Highway 50 near Riverton, California, on the evening of 29 January 1962. A friend who was driving survived the crash.[52] Brother Cornelius was eighty-four and still working to improve and enlarge the gallery.

In 1977, Saint Mary's opened the larger Hearst Art Gallery near the site of Brother Cornelius's original building. The new gallery contained the William Keith Room, dedicated to maintaining Brother Cornelius's legacy and displaying the ever-growing collection of Keith artworks which he founded. *William Keith: The Saint Mary's College Collection* was published in 1988 in recognition of 150 years since his birth; followed by *The Comprehensive Keith: The Hundred Years History of the Saint Mary's College Collection of Works by William Keith* in 2011, to commemorate the centenary of his death. That year the College announced a new home for the Hearst Art Gallery and the William Keith Room when they were incorporated into Saint Mary's College Museum of Art, with exhibition space increased by 50 per cent.

During Brother Cornelius's lifetime, his single-mindedness, his energy and enthusiasm, had convinced museum curators and gallery directors to reappraise Keith's place in the history of art. Those who owned his paintings were urged to display them more prominently; those who did not own a Keith were urged to acquire one. Many did so by gift or by purchase. Permanent collections of his most valuable paintings available for public view have included those in the Crocker Art Gallery in Sacramento; the University of California, Berkeley; Stanford University, Palo Alto; Berkeley Library, Oakland Art Gallery, the Young Museum in Golden Gate Park; Mills College and the San Francisco Museum of Art; the former Mark Hopkins School of Design, where Keith was a teacher; and its successor, the San Francisco Art Association, of which he was a director; the Brooklyn Museum and Metropolitan Museum in New York; the Art Institute in Chicago; the Boston Museum of Art; The Cincinnati Museum; the Delgado Museum at New Orleans; the Corcoran Gallery and the National Gallery, in Washington, DC.[53] Works from the Saint Mary's Collection have been on view in museums throughout the United States of America and Europe.[54]

Keith was such a prolific painter, there is no way of establishing his total output.[55] He kept no records and some of the work he produced in a flurry of spontaneity bear no signature. Many Keith paintings are privately owned. An unknown number would have graced the walls of private houses in the West Coast, acquired by purchase, gift, inheritance or nefarious means, until being disposed of, lost or damaged in the years since they were acquired. There will be fakes among them. Keith paintings turn up regularly and in numbers at auction houses in the United States of America; prices range from the low hundreds for works damaged, 'attributed' or 'in the style of', to tens of thousands of dollars. A check on over two hundred auction prices from 2005 to 2025 shows that among the prices paid for a Keith was $52,500 for the picture *Half Dome, Yosemite*, 1881 at Heritage Auctions, Dallas on 15 May 2024. Other notable sales were *A View of Mount Shasta*, painted in 1891 and sold at the saleroom of Heritage Auctions, New York on 25 January 2009, for $41,825; *Yosemite Valley* painted in 1882, was sold at Christie's for $50,000 on 16 May 2012, while a version with the same title painted in 1876 sold for $75,500 at Sotheby's, New York on 22 May 2013. *The Headwaters of the Owens River* painted in 1878, sold from the Ron and Diane Disney Collection at Christie's Auction House, New York, on 20 November 2019 for $68,750. *Glacier Meadow in the High Sierra* sold for $84,000 at Scottsdale Art Auction on 2 April 2016.[56]

These prices are noteworthy because all the pictures are accurate representations of large mountain scenery from his sketching trips with Muir before Keith turned his attention to producing more intimate, dreamlike, pastoral images created from memory or from imagination. Keith's career trajectory and the appreciation of his art mirrors the growth of the country in which he painted – large vistas of uncharted territory giving way to the depiction of more nuanced scenery as he reached maturity, followed by a return to painting the wilderness landscapes that first attracted him. Now, a reflective appreciation of the nation's own past, without the need to feel beholden to outside schools of thought, has enabled art lovers to look beyond their towering columns of steel and glass, set in their sprawling conurbations and connected by rivers of concrete roads, to gaze with yearning upon a purer, natural beauty surrounded by landscapes that are commensurate in size with the buildings they inhabit. Keith's wilderness paintings continue to attract the best prices paid for his work. *Kings River*, painted c.1878, was sold at Bonham's, Los Angeles, on 20 April 2021, for

$75,312. A later painting of *Kings River*, 1901, had sold for $85,000 at Coeur d'Alene Art Auction, Hayden, Idaho on 21 July 2012. A large oil on canvas (36 × 60 inches) *Into the Yosemite Valley*, c.1895–1906, sold for $90,000 at Clars Auction Gallery, Oakland, on 16 June 2023. The same painting sold for $113,400 when it reappeared in the same auction room on 16 June 2025. The sale price was described as the fifth highest auction record for the artist. The highest price recorded for a Keith painting is $192,000 for *Land's End*, 1873, realised at Bonham's, San Francisco, on 10 December 2007.[57]

With few exceptions, Keith had little direct dealings with the artists of his time. He did not seek them out. His steadfast, at times driven, work ethic left little time for the amusements and distractions of the bohemian way of life many artists followed. He preferred the company of younger, mainly female, students and those to whom he could give advice. Perhaps artists were overawed by his success, equally, perhaps he did not wish to engage in lengthy discussions where his views might be challenged. He drew his friends and associates largely from those active in the affairs of the world: university professors, bankers, lawyers and businessmen; all men of influence. They were often self-made, and Keith could identify with and find an affinity with them. Like many of his friends, Keith, the artist and the man, is honoured in the United States of America. What then, of his native land?

There is little doubt that Brother Cornelius launched a one-man crusade to bring the name of William Keith to the attention of his fellow Scots; he took time and care to write personally to those he thought might benefit from receiving a copy of his biography or who could help make the artist's name better known. There is now no copy of *Keith, Old Master of California* in Aberdeen City Library although they did receive a copy, and the librarian, Marcus Milne, wrote to Brother Cornelius to say that he had given his last letter some publicity in the local press. 'We are certainly proud,' he wrote, 'that an Aberdeenshire man should have achieved greatness in California; but it is no uncommon thing for Scots, and especially Aberdonians, to make their mark in other countries'.[58] Despite this commendation, it seems that the wider public did not share Brother Cornelius's enthusiasm. Edinburgh Public Library contains a copy. The librarian, Mr R. Butchart wrote that he was 'very glad indeed to have such a fine work for use in our Art Library. I am sure it will be of great interest to many of our readers.'[59] It is missing the cover and is little used.

The University of Aberdeen purchased a copy of volume one. The copy of volume two in the University Collections Library bears testament to Brother Cornelius's scrupulous attention to detail, the time he was prepared to invest in pursuit of his life's work, and the interest he took in those he met. The following inscription in his own hand appears on the flyleaf:

> Cordially inscribed to the faculties and students of Aberdeen University, in particular to Dr W. Douglas Simpson, long time and scholarly librarian of King's College library.
>
> May God continue to bless you, Dr Simpson, and also dear, historic King's College.
>
> With reverence I add a memento of its illustrious founder, Bishop Elphinstone, and of Hector Boece, his devoted and heroic right hand man.
>
> Brother Cornelius
> Saint Mary's College, Calif.
> 20 May 1958.[60]

Consigned to storage, the book is rarely requested, having been last issued, before the present enquiry, in November 1991.

Not until 2018, 180 years after his birth, did William Keith's name appear prominently in the Scottish press to offer some belated recognition to this largely forgotten son of Oldmeldrum with the announcement of an exhibition of his work in the Garioch Heritage Centre Gallery, Inverurie, from November 2018 to the end of February 2019. The reception to launch the exhibition took place on Wednesday 21 November, to coincide with Keith's birthday. Although the event was supported by Aberdeenshire Library Services it was instigated and curated by the Friends of John Muir's Birthplace in Dunbar, East Lothian, where the paintings had been on display from 28 June to 31 August, before transferring to Inverurie. Muir's birthday was 21 April, but the opening had been delayed. The exhibition, titled *William Keith and John Muir: Kindred Souls*, was to celebrate their friendship, their shared interest in painting and their shared interest in the natural world.

Announcing the forthcoming exhibition, *The Press and Journal* carried a full-coloured reproduction of Keith's painting, *Near the Mouth of the Russian River, Sonoma County, California*, and under it the bold announcement: 'Exhibition to shed light on artist's work. Scots-born

painter "household name" in United States.'[61] Having gained his readers' attention, the journalist reins back somewhat in the claim he makes for the extent of Keith's fame but remains very clear about the absence of it in his native land. 'His name will be unfamiliar to many in the north-east. Yet while not widely known in his native [country], he is a "household name in art circles" in the United States'.

This was not the first time that William Keith's paintings had appeared in Scotland thanks to his friendship with John Muir. Five of his works were included in an exhibition called *An Infinite Storm of Beauty: The Life and Achievements of John Muir, a Scottish Voice for the Millennium*, which appeared at the City Art Centre, Edinburgh, in 1999, during the Edinburgh International Festival. The exhibitions title is taken from Muir's *Travels in Alaska*. When he was sailing through Puget Sound, he gazed with wonderment at the heavens and declared, 'When we contemplate the whole globe as one great dewdrop … flying through space with other stars all singing and shining together as one, the whole universe appears as an infinite storm of beauty'.[62] Organised by the John Muir Trust in Scotland with help from the John Muir Memorial Association in California, the exhibition was to honour Muir, so Keith's name figured less conspicuously than that of his friend. Muir would have approved of the Keith paintings loaned from the Saint Mary's Collection: *Glacial Meadow and Lake, High Sierra (Tuolumne Meadows)*; *Sierra Forest Stream and Sunny Peaks*; *Yosemite Falls*; *Yosemite Valley with Bridal Veil Falls*; and *Donner Lake* are all painted in the accurate representational style he admired. Even *Hetch Hetchy Valley*, painted after their trip in 1907 when Muir had tried unsuccessfully to save the valley from developers, shows Keith reverting to the objective style of their earlier trips to the Sierras.[63]

A series of exhibitions then followed in the William Keith Room organised in collaboration with the John Muir Memorial Association, to assess Muir's influence on Keith's paintings.

John Muir is justly famous in the United States of America; 21 April was declared John Muir Day in 1988 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of his birth. That fame started while he was still alive and, having written several books, some of them published posthumously; having contributed numerous articles to journals; had his letters published in 1915 and 1924; founded the Sierra Club; seen numerous National Parks created across the United States of America; had the John Muir Memorial Park established as one of the numerous honours conferred upon him in recognition of his



Figure 20. William Keith, *Glacial Meadow and Lake, High Sierra (Tuolumne Meadows)*, 1870s or early 1880s, Oil on canvas, 14 × 26 inches.
Gift of Dr. William S. Porter, Saint Mary's College Museum of Art Permanent Collection. [0–19]

environmental protection and conservation works, he nevertheless shared the same fate as Keith in being largely unrecognised in his native Scotland. Only two of Muir's books were published in Great Britain, both in London; *The Mountains of California* (1894) by Fisher Unwin, and *My First Summer in the Sierra* (1911) by Constable. (They appeared simultaneously in the United States of America.)

In 1967, American authors William F. Kimes and Maymie B. Kimes were researching for their book, *John Muir: A Reading Bibliography*, first published in a limited edition in 1975, and wrote to the Lady Provost of Dunbar asking if some local historian could show them around the various locations connected to Muir's childhood during their upcoming visit to his birthplace. The Lady Provost knew next to nothing about Muir and a fruitless search of the town library was extended to the county library and finally to the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh without uncovering a single copy of a book by Muir. Finally, some books about him were traced to a library in Plymouth.[64] The Kimes' enquiry, their subsequent visit and intercession on behalf of Muir, ultimately laid the foundations for the establishment of the John Muir Country Park in Dunbar in 1976, the opening of John Muir House in 1981 and the founding, in 1983, of the John Muir Trust, whose aim is 'to purchase and conserve wild land for

future generations and to foster Muir's conservation ethos in Scotland and the UK'.[65]

In 1895, at the height of his powers and while he was busy painting the murals for the Swedenborgian Church, Keith was invited by *The San Francisco Call* to write a piece on 'The Future of Art in California'. It duly appeared on Christmas Day and offered some seasonal cheer to the paper's readers. After reminiscing about his early days with some fondness, the passage of time having blunted the hardships he had endured, he continued:

> I am not sighing for those old times to come again, because I see a greater promise in the future … because San Francisco's wealth of true art is far greater to-day than it was then, and I suppose if we had to have the old days over again we would have to take all their conditions, and some of those conditions were not pleasant. Things have advanced, art has progressed … Yet when a great man is wanted, California looks eastward for him … California has lost the faculty of seeing the wealth at her own door. A California artist – in whatever department – labours under two serious obstacles in his battle for recognition. The first disadvantage is that he was born in America … The last time I saw George Inness, he told me in confidence that he sold his pictures to middle-class purchasers. There was, and is, no better landscape-painter than Inness; yet the wealthy and cultured people of the East passed by his pictures and went to Europe to buy. Only among purchasers who could not afford the luxury of paintings with foreign names on them and still had a yearning toward art treasures could he find buyers for canvases that will, one day, I am sure, be valued among the very best.
>
> Of course, the Californian [artist's] second disadvantage is that of being born in California. Our wealthy men go to the Eastern markets … overlooking many [works] that are as intrinsically good … We are always worshiping something far off … This distance lends enchantment … We must have faith in ourselves … we must be able to see our own wealth if we would convince the world that we have any. Eastern people who visit San Francisco studios are surprised at what they see … The difficulty is that not enough of our visitors … can be induced to look into [the] studios. The few who do, and are discriminating, find themselves repaid for their pains, and sometimes take back a canvas or two to hang beside their pictures with foreign names … seldom to [the formers'] disadvantage …

> California art is appreciated to-day a little better than it was yesterday – though not so well as it was in the [eighteen-] sixties. California art is better than it ever was, and it respects itself more than it ever did. We are proud of our art school, and the outside world is beginning to respect it. Still, the hope for California art lies in the future, some little distance in the future, perhaps, [it lies] in the spirit which animates the native Californian … California is a chosen land … San Francisco will become a great art centre and students from far off will journey to this City as they now journey to Rome … California has a wealth of picturesqueness and inspiration to offer that the artists of the future will be quicker to appreciate than are the artists of today. It is in such a climate and amid such surroundings as are only to be found in California that the world's revival in painting, sculpture, poetry and romance will eventually find its highest expression.
>
> This is a prophecy not original with myself, but I wish to endorse it, because I believe that it is true. What will hasten the day more than anything else … is to foster that belief in California's greatness of which the Native Sons of the Golden West seem to have the monopoly today. Their faith in the land of their nativity is of the kind that will move mountains. I hope to live to see it grow to such depth and breadth and earnestness that the people of California will seek their art treasures first at home. And if they seek – much less diligently than they need to seek abroad, for here the field is narrower, the painters fewer, the artists in all branches less in number – if they seek they will find.[66]

This optimistic prediction was only partially fulfilled. The art community in California, which Keith did so much to foster, suffered the vicissitudes of a catastrophic earthquake, with artists losing their studios and many of their works. They suffered from changes in style and taste and Keith personally lost touch with what was in demand. He did, however, over a fifty-year career, produce work of considerable merit, and his paintings adorn the walls of many art galleries across the United States of America and beyond while continuing to be in demand at auction. He never achieved the greatness of the Old Masters he studied at length and tried so hard to emulate, and quite late in life, he reflected on the fundamental reason for what held him back:

> Fate, which I consider to be the manifestation of the will of providence, governs all things. Born with certain forces, many of which I inherited – for

> heredity is a great factor in this world – I was played upon by circumstances and became what I am. My fate was marked out for me, and I followed it, kept in by circumstances entirely beyond my control.[67]

His deterministic outlook suggests a tacit acknowledgement of his humble beginnings. Had he cleaved to an old family motto from the aristocratic Keiths he claimed to have sprung from, he might have been better able to ignore whatever foolish talk he had had to endure as a child either because of doubts about his legitimacy or his attending a seceder church. There may have been no need to create a false or fanciful story to explain his origins. But then, he may not have felt obliged to justify his existence and it is in his search for an identity, helped by imbibing Swedenborgian and Spiritualist ideals, and interspersed with periodic bouts of *katzenjammer*, that the prodigiousness and quality of his output lies.

From humble beginnings in Scotland's north-east corner, uprooted during an unsettled childhood and translated to a distant land, William Keith, the widow's son, showed resilience in the face of adversity through his determination to make a name for himself and leave his mark on his chosen profession. He painted early landscapes in the style of the Rocky Mountain School, later he painted dreamlike landscapes and portraits in the style of the Barbizon School, and the collection in Saint Mary's College shows that he was an exemplar of both styles. He was among the pioneers of American art during the second half of the nineteenth century, helping to develop a viable artistic community on the country's West Coast by creating his own identifiable style. He did this by harnessing his inherent trait of 'aye tyaavin' awa' to the blessing of artistic genius that had been bestowed upon him. Combined, they enabled him to convey nature in a range of guises through the medium of his art, from the scientific depiction of 'matters of fact' to the imaginative interpretation of nature's more intimate moods. These enabled him to reveal the beauty of nature while expressing his own emotions, encouraging others to do the same and inspiring in them a greater understanding of the real purpose of art. Few artists, certainly few Scots artists, can compare with Keith's rise to artistic achievement. This artist-prophet-poet deserves to have his name added to Oldmeldrum's, indeed, the country's, roster of famous sons.[68]

NOTES

Keith's Early Years in Scotland

1. Matthew 13:57.
2. *New Statistical Account of Scotland* (NSA), Meldrum, County of Aberdeen, Vol XII (1845), 480. https://stataccscot.ed.ac.uk/static/statacc/dist/home [accessed 20 November 2025].
3. John Patrick, *The Coming of Turnpikes to Aberdeenshire* (Aberdeen: Centre for Scottish Studies, 1976), 42–4.
4. *Old Statistical Account of Scotland* (OSA), Meldrum, County of Aberdeen, Vol XIII (1794), 154; NSA, Meldrum, County of Aberdeen, Vol XII (1845), 478. https://stataccscot.ed.ac.uk/static/statacc/dist/home [accessed 20 November 2025].
5. *General Register Office for Scotland*, census statistics for those years.
6. In January 1832 there was an unusually high number of burials in the parish kirkyard (Old Parochial Register (OPR), Oldmeldrum). This coincided with a cholera epidemic that was sweeping over the country.
7. 'Gallus loon' is Scots/Doric for a rash, mischievous or cheeky lad, language that would have been familiar to Keith.
8. *Famous Sons of Meldrum and Bourtie*, published by Meldrum and Bourtie Heritage Society (2006).
9. *People's Journal*, 14 December 1878. [British Newspaper Archives (BNA) accessed 4 October 2019]. 'Lad o' pairts' (lad of parts), a clever, talented young man, especially one from a poor or humble background, a clever lad from a small country school.
10. Ibid.
11. *Dundee Courier*, 24 October 1907. [BNA accessed 4 October 2019]
12. Henry Atkins, 'William Keith, Landscape Painter of California', *The Studio: An Illustrated Magazine of Fine and Applied Art* (London) Vol. 42, Number 128, October 1907, 36–42. Paintings cited on pages 36, 37, 40; quote, 39. (An international edition of the same magazine was published in New York each following month.) *The International Studio: An Illustrated Magazine of Fine and Applied Art* (New York) Vol. 33, Number 128, November 1907.
13. *The Aberdeen Press and Journal*,19 November 1938.

14. Brother Cornelius (Fidelis Cornelius Braeg), *Keith, Old Master of California*. Two Volumes: Vol. 1 (New York, 1942); Vol 2 (Fresno, CA, 1956).
15. The diaries, correspondence and related materials of Alexander Keith, together with the detailed catalogue of his extensive library, are in the University of Aberdeen Special Collections, MS 3017 et seq. There is no reference to William Keith.
16. *The Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 8 March 1939. See Chapter 12 for an account of the sale of *The Glory of the Heavens*.
17. Old Parochial Register (OPR), Parish of Banchory Devenick. Births 1713–1845, Marriages 1716–1845, File No. 251. Aberdeen and Northeast of Scotland Family History Society (ANESFHS).
18. William Keith was baptised on 4 March 1806, OPR, Banchory Devenick; Elisabeth Bruce was baptised 13 June 1813, and her marriage above, OPR, Parish of Oldmeldrum, Births 1717–1854, Marriages 1752–1854, Deaths 1748–1854, File No. 251. ANESFHS.
19. Accurately determining a date of birth is extremely difficult, dates of birth per se are unusual before their statutory registration was introduced in Scotland on 1 January 1855. This requires not only a record of the date but the time of birth too. Before then the Church of Scotland had responsibility for registering all births, death and marriages and it is the date of baptism that is recorded. These usually took place as soon as possible after the birth, on the same day if possible, such was the fear of infant mortality, and in such cases very often only the father's name is recorded. None of the Keith children were shown to have been baptised in Oldmeldrum but may have been in the neighbouring parish of Craigdam whose church records are missing for the period.
20. OPR Oldmeldrum. This archaic Scots phrase although relatively rare appears in several burial records and in this context 'seeking' means to extend an invitation to attend the funeral, done by placing an announcement on the church notice board. 'macking' is simply an old spelling of making, meaning to prepare.
21. 1841 Scotland Census, National Records of Scotland, Parish of Meldrum. Enumeration District (ED) 2, 1.
22. Ibid., Parish of Bourtie, 4.
23. The inscription reads 'In Memory of William Alexander late tenant in Barra. Died 30 November 1841, aged 66; this stone is placed by his widow as an affectionate tribute of respect. His widow Ann Keith died 18 May 1849 aged 74'. *The Kirkyard of Bourtie*, compiled by Sheila. M. Spiers, ANESFHS (1986, reprint 1992), entry No 54, 6.
24. 1851 Scotland Census, ED. 1, Old Meldrum, 17.
25. 1841 Scotland Census, ED. 2, Old Meldrum, 2.
26. George Walker, *George Walker's Journals*, in handwritten bound volumes, Nos. 1–21, Aberdeen Central Library. Vol. 7, 1005–1207. Folios 1068 (r)/9(l).

27. George Walker, *Craigdam and its Ministers, the Rev. William Brown and the Rev. Patrick Robertson* (Aberdeen, 1886), 37, 40. Robertson and his parishioners were later reconciled.
28. Walker, *Journals*, Vol. 7, 1005–1207. Folio 1061(l).
29. Walker, *Craigdam and its Ministers,* 3. 'Rough (*roch* in Doric, as in loch) whinny Knowe', a gorse covered knoll.
30. A letter from George Taylor Bruce to Brother Cornelius, dated 3 November 1939, Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. 2, 9–10.
31. Emily P. B. Hay, *William Keith as Prophet Painter* (San Francisco, 1916), 7.
32. Anne McEwen (nee Smith), former Sunday school teacher. Personal reminiscences and notes in Craigdam Church binder file, Tarves Heritage Centre, Tarves, Aberdeenshire.
33. James Bruce is buried in Meldrum Churchyard, Oldmeldrum. From a photograph by descendant, Frederic Gannon, Paris. https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/119314317/james-bruce [accessed 31 October 2019]
34. Walker, *Journals*, Vol. I, 1–101. Folio 4(l).
35. John Bruce, a contributor to Jane Unwin (ed.), *The Hungry Forties: Life under the Bread Tax, descriptive letters and other testimonies from contemporary witnesses* (London, 1904), 36–242, 236–7.
36. Walker had returned from Huntly, subsequently moving on the sale of his George Street business to Lobban's Court, Castle Street, Aberdeen. Walker, *George, Journals*, Vol. 1, 1–101. Folios Preliminary XXLVI.
37. *The Hungry Forties*, 241. an *extranear* is an outsider, a stranger, or one not belonging to the burgh, one that had not served a seven-year apprenticeship with a freeman of the burgh.
38. Walker, *Journals*, Vol. II, 1827–2006. Folio 1830(r).
39. Ibid., Vol. I5, 2581–818. Folio 2634(r).
40. John Bruce's death reported in *The People's Journal*, 25 November 1905. He was eighty-nine years old. His wife, Jane Johnstone, had predeceased him on 12 December 1904. John Bruce and his wife are buried at Springbank Cemetery, Countesswells Road, Aberdeen. https://billiongraves.com/grave/John-Bruce/14645660 [accessed 31 October 2019]
41. Walker, *Journals*, Vol. I5, 2581–818. Folio 2634(r).
42. Patrick Shuldham-Shaw, Emily B. Lyle, and Peter A. Hall (eds.), *The Greig-Duncan Folk Song Collection*, 8 Volumes, Aberdeen University Press (1981–2002) Vol. 3 songs 347–706. Song No. 372, several versions, 51–6; Jim Fiddes, 'Face behind the ballad of the Fornet; Auld Jock Bruce', *Leopard*, Magazine of the North-East of Scotland. Issue 332, February 2007, 30. 'A good hearted little man with not enough of the devil in him'.
43. OPR, Oldmeldrum, File No. 251. ANESFHS.
44. *Digital Directories, Aberdeen 1840–1846, Scottish Post Office Directories, Mail and Stage Coaches,* 12. National Library of Scotland (NLS). https://digital.nls.uk/directories/browse/ [accessed 31 October 2019]

45. *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 1 May 1844. The print showing Oldmeldrum's Market Square around the time of the accident is in the collection of Meldrum and Bourtie Heritage Society. It adorned the front cover of their publication *Bygone Meldrum VI* (2012). The shop of Alex Daniel, druggist, is clearly visible on the right, next to a tailor's shop just visible on the extreme right. The print was originally published by Daniel and A. Farquharson in 1843. A copy is in the collection of Saint Mary's College. (Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, opp. 16). Alex Daniel's descendants were still operating as Daniel and Christie, Chemists, known locally as 'Danny Christie's', until well into the twentieth century.
46. OPR, Oldmeldrum, File No, 251. ANESFHS.
47. *The Kirkyard of Oldmeldrum*, compiled by Sheila M Spiers (Aberdeen: ANESFHS, ab64F., 1987), entry 149, 19.
48. 1851 Scotland Census, Old Meldrum ED. 2, 9.
49. 1851 Scotland Census, Parish of Fetteresso, Kincardineshire, ED. 7, 2.
50. Ibid., Old Meldrum ED. 1, 2.
51. Ibid., Old Meldrum ED. 2, 10.
52. *Philadelphia, Passenger and Immigration Lists, 1800–1850.* [accessed ancestry.com 17 August 2019]
53. Various directories from 1846 through to 1868 contain entries for James Bruce, Baker, Oldmeldrum. *County Post Office Directories 1846–1848*, 208; *New County Directory 1853–54*, 210; *Slater's Royal National Commercial Directory 1868*, 305. *Digital Directories, Scottish Post Office Directories,* National Library of Scotland (NLS). https://digital.nls.uk/directories/browse/ [accessed 17 August 2019]
54. 'Sacred to the memory of James Bruce and Margret Moir, the parents of James Bruce, Bank Agent, Old Meldrum and his three wives Honora Bailey, Christina Mennie and Mary Cooper likewise his seven children died in infancy also his eldest son James died and was interred in Shanghai, China; said James Bruce died Old Meldrum 19 May 1902 aged eighty-six; daughter Isabella died 21 July 1928 aged seventy-seven.' *The Kirkyard of Oldmeldrum*, ANESFHS, ab64F, entry 197, 23.

New Beginnings in the New World

1. Loosely translated as 'take nobody's word for it'; members of the Royal Society wanted to deal scientifically in provable 'matters of fact'.
2. *Philadelphia, Passenger and Immigration Lists, 1800–1850.* ancestry.com [accessed 17 August 2019]
3. Alex Daniel married Elisabeth's younger sister, Margaret, on 11 July 1843, OPR, Oldmeldrum, File No. 251.
4. His father was also James, his mother Elizabeth Laing, OPR, Parish of Cruden Aberdeenshire, Births 1707–1854, marriages 1707–1854, Deaths 1707–1854, File No. 185. ANESFHS.

5. 1841 Census, Parish of Cruden, Aberdeenshire.
6. *New York, Passenger and Crew Lists (including Castle Garden and Ellis Island), 1820–1957.* ancestry.com [accessed 30 August 2019]
7. *The Petition of James Daniel*, *New York Common Pleas*, Bundle 22, Record 2858 in the U.S. Naturalisation Record Indexes, 1794–1995. ancestry.com [accessed 17 August 2019]. The *New York Directories* for 1850/51–1852/3 show William Bruce living at 208 Eighth Avenue where he was engaged in the liquor trade. By 1853/4 he had moved to 286 Eighth Avenue where he worked as a plumber. The 1855/6 *New York Directory* lists him as living and working as a plumber at 286 Eight Avenue and continuing in the liquor trade from number 208. From 1856/7 he is listed as living and working (sometimes his trade shown as that of gasfitter), at 280 Eighth Avenue, until 1866/7 when he continued to trade from number 280 but had moved his private residence to New Jersey. These arrangements continued until 1868/9 when he opened a second place of work at 65 West, 14th Street. The 1870/1 and 1871/2 New York Directories show his Eighth Avenue business address as number 286 as well as having premises at 65 West, 14th Street but he had moved back into the city and was by now living at 345 West, 24th Street. In 1872/3 William Bruce is listed as a plumber living at 123 Ninth Avenue but without a business address. He is not in the directory for 1873/4 but there is a William Bruce living at 346 West, 24th Street in the directory for 1876/7. *New York Directories* 1845/6 to 1873/4 inclusive and 1876/7. The New York Directories were published each year on 1 May. New York Public Library Digital Collections. https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/new-york-city-directories#/?tab=about [accessed 15 August 2019]
8. Emily P. B. Hay, *William Keith as Prophet Painter* (San Francisco, 1916), 6. 'Stepfather' is clearly what she intends to write but her book reads 'step-mother,' as does a draft in The Writings of Emily Hay, Keith-McHenry-Pond Family Papers (KMPFP) 1841–1961, BANC MSS C-B 595. The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. The copy in the library of the University of California has been altered by hand; reprints contain the original error.
9. Eugen Neuhaus, *William Keith: The Man and the Artist* (Berkeley, CA, 1938), 7.
10. Ibid., 8; Alfred C. Harrison, Jr, 'The Art of William Keith' in *William Keith: The Saint Mary's Collection* (1988) reprinted in *The Comprehensive Keith: The 100–year History of the St Mary's College Collection of Works by William Keith* (2011), 10–11; 'Works of the Artists as Shown in Exhibits', *San Francisco Chronicle*, 22 November 1908. [newspapers.com (NHN) accessed 31 October 2019]
11. Papers of William Keith, Personalia, 1856–1883, Apprenticeship papers. KMPFP, and cited in Brother Cornelius (Fidelis Cornelius Braeg), *Keith, Old Master of California* Vol.1 (New York, 1942), 11–12.
12. Jackson Landers, 'In the Early 19th Century, Firefighters Fought Fires … and Each Other', *Smithsonian Magazine, Smithsonian.com*, 27 September 2016.

https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/early-19-century-firefighters-fought-fires-each-other-180960391/ [accessed 29 September 2019]

13. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 1.
14. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 1.
15. *The New York, Passenger and Crew Lists (including Castle Garden and Ellis Island), 1820–1957.* [accessed ancestry.com 18 August 2019]
16. United States Census 1880 for Berkeley, Alameda County, ED 3, sheet 17. ancestry.com [accessed 8 August 2019]; US Census 1900 Berkeley, Alameda County, ED 397, sheet 5A. [accessed FamilySearch 24 April 2020]
17. Charles F. Lummis, 'The New League for Literature and the West (II)' in *The Land of Sunshine*, *a Magazine of California and the Southwest*, Vol. VII, June–November 1897, 260–6. 261, 253, 259 for Keith's illustrations.
18. Charles A. Keeler, 'The American Turner. William Keith and his Work', *The Land of Sunshine*, Vol. VII, June–November 1897, 253–9, 253.
19. Hay, *Keith as Prophet Painter*, 3.
20. *Biographical Card Index. California, Biographical Index Cards, 1781–1990.* No. 100. Sacramento, CA: California State Library. ancestry.com [accessed 8 August 2019]
21. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 3.
22. George Walker, *George Walker's Journals*, in handwritten bound volumes, Nos. 1–21, Aberdeen Central Library. Vol. 8, 1207–459. Folio 1220(l). 'knatterie bodie', peevish, bad-tempered person.
23. *The Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 8 March 1939.
24. *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, Vol XIII, New York, 1906. 'Keith, William', 168. This states that both his parents were with Keith when they emigrated to America; as does Gene Hailey (ed.), *William Keith, Thomas Hill, Albert Bierstadt: Biography and Works*, 2. California Art Research Project (CARP), Volume Two, First Series (1937). Digitised by the Internet Archive 2010 with funding from the San Francisco Public Library. [Retrieved 9 July 2019]
25. *The Berkeley Gazette*, 11 September 1906, 1. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
26. *The San Francisco Call*, 29 April 1909, 8. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
27. United States Census 1910 Berkeley, Alameda County, ED 48, sheet 3B. [FamilySearch accessed 24 April 2020]
28. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. II, 150, date as per postmark.
29. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. 1, 5.
30. Dictionary of National Biography. https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Dictionary_of_National_Biography_1885-1900/Keith,_James_Francis_Edward [accessed 6 November 25]
31. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. 1, 5.
32. Ibid., 6; Alexandra M. Nickliss, *Phoebe Apperson Hearst: A Life of Power and Politics* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 2018), xv, xvii, 142, 233, 238, 299, 330.

33. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. 1, 6.
34. Illustrated in Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, facing 16.
35. *The Press and Journal*, 19 November 1938, 'Reflections by "A.K." Oldmeldrum's Famous Artist Son.' The Keiths could trace their family holding the non-hereditary titles of Marischal and Great Marischal of Scotland back to the middle of the twelfth century. The title was forfeited following their support of the Jacobite Rebellions, 1715 and 1745. William Keith was well versed in their history.
36. Ibid.
37. *San Francesco Call*, 14 April 1911. [California Digital Newspaper Collection (CDNC) accessed 1 October 2019]. This obituary gives his year of birth as 1838.
38. Robert Walker, *Exhibition of Paintings by the Late William Keith, 22 April to 6 May 1913* (Art Institute of Chicago, 1913); James William Pattison, 'William Keith: Poetical Painter', *Fine Arts Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 6 (June 1913), 366–78, 367 [Retrieved 9 July 2019]; CARP, Volume Two, 1. All these commentators give Keith's year of birth as 1839.
39. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 1.
40. Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith,' 8–9; Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 1.
41. 1851 Scotland Census, Parish of Old Deer, Aberdeenshire ED. 10, sch. 50; Parish of Tarves, Aberdeenshire, ED. 8, house. 17.
42. Correspondence between Brother Cornelius and Gordon Keith Smith, Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 13.
43. Roberts continued to be listed in the *New York Directories* trading from 36 Beekman until 1873/4 by which time his private residence was 391 Pacific, Brooklyn. *New York Directories* 1845/6–1873/4 inclusive. *New York Directories*. New York Public Library Digital Collections.
44. Catherine Hoover Voorsanger and John K. Howat (eds), *Art and the Empire City: New York, 1825–1861* (New York, 2000), 280. Figures 230 and 231, exterior and interior depictions respectively of Sutphen & Breed's Store. Both images are taken from the list of advertisers in Abner D. Jones, *The Illustrated American Biography; containing correct portraits and brief notices of the principal actors in American history; embracing distinguished women* (Three Vols. Volume III (New York, 1855), exterior image of store, 18; interior, 21. *Godey's Lady's Book*, No. 47, August 1853; 'The Victoria', 192; 'La Duchesse', 194 (this image appears in *Art and the Empire*, 247, figure 198).
45. Asher B. Durand, 'Letters on Landscape Painting: Letter I,' *The Crayon*, Vol. I., No. I, 3 January 1855, 1–2. The series of letters continued at regular intervals until May 1855. Eugen Neuhaus, *The History and Ideals of American Art* (Stanford, CA, 1931), 70.
46. Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 11.

47. *Visitors' Guide to Harper & Brothers' Establishment*, published to coincide with the opening of their new premises (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1855), i.
48. Ibid., i–ii.
49. Ibid., xv.
50. Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 11; Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 9.
51. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 8. Algerian Zouaves had fought against the French in the colonial war of 1830 and so impressed were the French at the dashing appearance and fearless fighting qualities of their former opponents, an elite battalion had been absorbed into the French Army.
52. So described by Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 13.
53. James M. McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York, 1982), 164.
54. Ibid., 165.
55. Frederick Phisterer, *New York in the War of the Rebellion, 1861–1865*, 5 volumes and Index (1912), 7–14, 412–13; *Annual Report of the Adjutant-general of the State of New York, for the Year 1900.* Registers of the Fifty-first, Fifty-second … and Fifty-sixth Regiments of Infantry. Serial No. 25 v.5. (1901), 115, 337–57; History of 51st Infantry Regiment, Shepard Rifles, Civil War. New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Centre, NYS Division of Military and Naval Affairs. Unit History Project, http://dmna.ny.gov/historic/mil-hist.htm [11 July 2019]; Eugen Neuhaus states that Keith joined the 5th Regiment, New York Volunteers and that he did so in 1860. But the chronology of that regiment's enlistment, mustering and departure mirrors that of the 51st and Keith does not appear in their records. He does state that Keith did not see service in the Civil War. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 11.
56. Cornelius, Vol. I, 8.
57. *San Francisco Bulletin*, 30 April 1861, 3. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]; *The Sacramento Bee*, 1 May 1861, 4. [GenealogyBank – Newspaper Archives (GBN) accessed 5 December 2019]
58. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 8.
59. *New York Daily Herald*, 12 September 1847, 1. [GBN accessed 5 December 2019]
60. *New York Herald*, 6 November 1851; 8 November 1851; 13 November 1851; 19 October 1852; 24 November 1852; 3 December 1854; 17 December 1854; 18 December 1854; 19 December 1854; 28 December 1854. [All Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers (CAD) accessed 17 October 2019]
61. *New York Herald*, 18 October 1851. [CAD accessed 17 October 2019]
62. *The Planters' Banner*, Franklin, Louisiana, 17 January 1852. [CAD accessed 17 October 2019]
63. Henry Stephen Clubb, *The Maine Liquor Law: Its Origin, History, and Results, Including a Life of Hon. Neal Dow.* Published for the Maine Law Statistical Society (New York, 1856), 81/2, 378–388.

64. *New York Herald*, 27 December 1854. [CAD accessed 17 October 2019]
65. Ibid., 5 October 1855. [CAD accessed 17 October 2019]
66. *Aberdeen People's Journal*, 14 December 1878. [British Newspaper Archives (BNA) accessed 4 October 2019]
67. *Boston Evening Transcript*, 11 February 1875. [Google Newspapers https://news.google.com/newspapers accessed 23 November 2019]; Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 12.
68. Cited by Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 12.
69. Ibid., 11; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 22 November 1908. [NHN accessed 6 December 2019]
70. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. II, 19–20. For over eighty years Keith's Indenture lay among the papers of Durban Van Vleck with whom he went into partnership and was sent to Brother Cornelius by Vleck's niece in December 1943. It is now in the KMPFP.
71. Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 9.
72. 1861 Scotland Census, Parish of Fetteresso, Kincardineshire, ED. 5, 9.

Finding Treasures in El Dorado

1. A phrase of disputable origin but usually attributed to Horace Greeley, founder and editor of the *New York Tribune*, who used the paper's columns to exhort young people to grow with the country to help fulfil its Manifest Destiny – the doctrine popular with many nineteenth-century Americans that the expansion of the United States was ordained by God and was both justified and inevitable. Although Greely was anti-slavery, the doctrine called for the removal of native peoples.
2. 'William Keith Memorabilia', Reminiscences of Mrs R. S. Holway, Book xii, 1907. Keith-McHenry-Pond Family Papers (KMPFP) 1841–1961, BANC MSS C-B 595. The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.
3. Aspinwall was named after prominent American shipping and railroad magnate, William Henry Aspinwall. Spanish speaking peoples called the city Colón, after Christopher Columbus, and this is the name that has come down to the present day.
4. 'Shipping Intelligence', *Daily Alta California*, 2 June 1859. [California Digital Newspaper Collection (CDNC) accessed 1 September 2019].
5. *1858 California County Birth, Marriage, and Death Records, 1849–1980*. [ancestry.com accessed 30 August 2019].
6. 1860 United States Federal Census for Rough and Ready Township, County of Nevada, California, 12. Since there was no appreciable street plan the enumerating officer simply numbered the dwellings in the order in which he visited them. Starting on 5 June 1860 he visited dwelling number 96 on 8 June. Anna's name appears as 'Hannah' on the census. The census of all 415 dwellings was completed on 26 June. Otis's personal wealth was declared as $500. Daniels declared real estate value of $200 and personal estate value of $150.

7. E. W. Roberts, 'Sketch of Rough and Ready Township', in Edwin F. Bean (ed.), *Bean's History and Directory of Nevada County, California. Containing a complete history of the county, with sketches of the various towns and mining camps* (Nevada, 1867), 353–66, 359; Robert Phelps, '"*All hands have gone downtown*" Urban Places in Gold Rush California'. 113–40, in Kevin Starr and Richard J. Orsi (eds.) *Rooted in Barbarous Soil: People Culture, and Community in Gold Rush California* (Berkeley, 2000) 121, 125–6; Kevin Starr, 'Rooted in Barbarous Soil: An Introduction to Gold Rush Society and Culture', 1–24, vii.
8. John David Borthwick, *Three Years in California: with eight illustrations by the author* (Edinburgh, 1857), 320.
9. Borthwick, *Three Years in California*, 321.
10. Starr, 'Rooted in Barbarous Soil: An Introduction', 23.
11. Gary F. Kurutz, 'Popular Culture on the Golden Shore', 280–315, in Starr and Orsi, *Rooted in Barbarous Soil*, 281.
12. Nancy J. Taniguchi, 'Weaving a Different World: Women and the California Gold Rush', 141–68, in Starr and Orsi, *Rooted in Barbarous Soil*, 159.
13. 1860 *United States Federal Census for Rough and Ready Township, County of Nevada, California*. Of the 1,355 men, 1,001 were white, 331 were Chinese and there was a handful of freed African Americans.
14. Roberts, 'Sketch of Rough and Ready Township' in Bean's *History and Directory of Nevada County*, 364/5.
15. *California County Birth, Marriage, and Death Records, 1849–1980.* [ancestry.com accessed 30 August 2019].
16. 1860 United States Census for Rough and Ready Township, County of Nevada, CA, 11. Dwelling number 87. Being a toll road operator was obviously a lucrative business; Jacob had a real estate value of $2,000 and personal estate value of $5,000.
17. 1870 United States Census for Rough and Ready Township, County of Nevada, CA, 19.
18. Roberts, 'Sketch of Rough and Ready Township', 364/5; Rough and Ready had its own Tollhouse, built by the Union Turnpike Company. It still exists and is protected for posterity, having been declared a Nevada County Historical Landmark. Resolution No 08-444 of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Nevada declares the Rough and Ready Toll House at 14365 Old Rough and Ready Highway, as a Nevada County Historical Landmark. 9 September 2008. [Accessed 30 September 2019].
19. Resolution No 08-444.
20. *The Nevada Journal*, California 11 March 1859. The notice was repeated in the same newspaper on 18, 25 March and 1 April, these last two entries after the meeting had taken place. [Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers (CAD) accessed 30 September 2019].
21. 1900 United States Census for Oakland City, CA. ED. 350 sheet B9.
22. Ibid., ED. 99, sheet 2B.

23. 1920 United States Census for Saratoga, CA. ED. 212, sheet 2.
24. B. P. Avery, 'Art Beginnings on the Pacific, Part I', *Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine*, Volume 1, Issue 1, July 1868, 28–30, 30.
25. Anthony Kirk, '"As jolly as a clam at high water" The Rise of Art in Gold Rush California', 169–203, in Starr and Orsi, *Rooted in Barbarous Soil*, 176, 178.
26. William Redmond Ryan, *Personal Adventures in Upper and Lower California, in 1848–9; with the author's experiences at the mines. Illustrated by twenty-three drawings taken on the spot*, 2 Vols (London, 1850), Vol. 2, 229–234.
27. Ibid., 235; Kirk, 'As jolly as a clam' in Starr and Orsi, *Rooted in Barbarous Soil*, 170/1.
28. Ryan, *Personal Adventures*, Vol. 2, 239, 241.
29. Edan M. Hughes, *Artists in California 1786–1940* (San Francisco, 1986), 402.
30. Avery, 'Art Beginnings on the Pacific, Part I', 30.
31. Borthwick, *Three Years in California*, 162; Kirk, 'As jolly as a clam', in Starr and Orsi, *Rooted in Barbarous Soil*, 174.
32. Borthwick, *Three Years in California*, 57– 63; Malcolm Rohrbough, 'No Boy's Play: Migration and Settlement in Early Gold Rush California,' 25–43, 38; Kirk, 'As jolly as a clam', 179; Kurutz, 'Popular Culture on the Golden Shore', 285, all in Starr and Orsi, *Rooted in Barbarous Soil*.
33. Avery, 'Art Beginnings on the Pacific, Part I', 29.
34. Ibid., 30; *Daily Alta California*, 1 April 1851. [CDNC accessed 16 November 2019].
35. *Daily Alta California*, 1 April 1851. [CDNC accessed 16 November 2019].
36. Ernest R. May, 'Benjamin Parke Avery: including a review of the office of State Printer, 1850–72', *California Historical Society Quarterly*, Volume 30, No. 2 (June 1951), 125–49, 125–6.
37. Avery, 'Art Beginnings on the Pacific, Part I', 30.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. *Alta California* 26 June; 23 September; 16 November; 17 November 1854. [All CDNC accessed 16 November 2019]; Kirk, 'As jolly as a clam', in Starr and Orsi, *Rooted in Barbarous Soil*, 182. A share certificate, number 53,496, was put up for action in San Francisco in 2012 with a reserve price of $1,500. It did not sell. Online Collectibles Auctions. icollector.com. https://www.icollector.com/Duncan-s-Chinese-Salesrooms-One-Dollar-Share-Note-CA-San-Francisco-2012aug-Numismatic_i13391223 [accessed 18 November 2019].
41. Avery, 'Art Beginnings on the Pacific, Part I', 30. Duncan's later life as newspaper proprietor, duellist, banker, runaway fraudster, was as colourful as his early years, *Weekly Trinity Journal*, Weaverville, CA. 15 August 1857. [CAD accessed 18 November 2019]. Duncan died, aged eighty, when he was shipwrecked along with his second family and more than a hundred others, off the coast of Cornwall, a tragic end to a buccaneering life. He is buried in

St Keverne Churchyard, Cornwall: https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/153591497/joseph-charles-duncan [accessed 18 November 2019].

42. Charles Lockwood, 'Tourists in Gold Rush San Francisco', *California History* Vol. 59, No. 4 (Winter 1980/1), 314–33, 320; Phelps, 'All hands have gone downtown', in Starr and Orsi, *Rooted in Barbarous Soil*, 133.
43. Argonaut is a term used for those who took part in the initial Gold Rush of 1849.
44. Starr, 'Rooted in Barbarous Soil: An Introduction', 18.
45. Kurutz, 'Popular Culture on the Golden Shore', in Starr and Orsi, *Rooted in Barbarous Soil*, 300.
46. John S. Hittell, 'Art in San Francisco', *The Pacific Monthly*, Vol. X, No. 3, July 1863, 99–107, 100.
47. Elliot Evans (ed.), *Letter of William S. Jewett, 28 January 1850, in 'Some Letters of William S. Jewett, California Artist', California Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 23 No. 2, June 1944, 149–77, 160; Kirk, 'As jolly as a clam', in Starr and Orsi, *Rooted in Barbarous Soil*, 175.
48. Painting *The Promised Land – The Grayson Family*. Terra Foundation of American Art. https://conversations.terraamericanart.org/artworks/the-promised-land-the-grayson-family/ [accessed 20 November 2025].
49. Avery, 'Art Beginnings on the Pacific, Part I', 31.
50. Hittell, 'Art in San Francisco', 100.
51. *Miners in the Sierras*, Smithsonian American Art Museum (and the Renwick Gallery), Washington, DC. https://americanart.si.edu/artist/charles-christian-nahl-5806; *Surveyor's Camp of 1853*, [both accessed 2 May 2020]. https://americangallery19th.wordpress.com/2016/05/28/charles-christian-nahl-1818-1878-2/
52. *Sacramento Daily Union*, 6 November 1852. [CDNC accessed 17 November 2019]. The paper never missed an edition despite considerable loss of presses and materials in the fire.
53. Hittell, 'Art in San Francisco', 102–3. Hughes, *Artists in California*, 326.
54. Hittell, 'Art in San Francisco', 103.
55. Kirk, 'As jolly as a clam', in Starr and Orsi, *Rooted in Barbarous Soil*, 182, 185.
56. Alfred C. Harrison, Jr, 'The Art of William Keith' in *William Keith: The Saint Mary's Collection* (1988) reprinted in *The Comprehensive Keith: The 100-year History of the St Mary's College Collection of Works by William Keith* (2011), 13.
57. Kirk, 'As jolly as a clam', in Starr and Orsi, *Rooted in Barbarous Soil*, 194.
58. Avery, 'Art Beginnings on the Pacific, Part I', 32–3; Kirk, 'As jolly as a clam', in Starr and Orsi, *Rooted in Barbarous Soil*, 186.
59. Avery, 'Art Beginnings on the Pacific, Part I', 33.
60. Hughes, *Artists in California*, 336.
61. *Report in the First Industrial Exhibition of the Mechanics' Institute of the City of San Francisco held at the Pavilion of the Institute, from the 7th to the 26th September 1857* (San Francisco, 1857), 97, 102.

62. *Daily Alta California*, 28 May 1859. [CDNC accessed 20 March 2020].
63. Hittell, 'Art in San Francisco', 99–107; Hughes, *Artists in California*, 213; Eugen Neuhaus, *The History and Ideals of American Art* (Stanford, CA, 1931), 86.
64. Hittell, 'Art in San Francisco', 99.
65. Hughes, *Artists in California*, 65–6, 74; Neuhaus, *History and Ideals of American Art*, 89.
66. Hittell, 'Art in California', 102.
67. Ibid., 103; Hughes, *Artists in California*, 506.
68. Ibid., 104; Hughes, *Artists in California*, 357.
69. Ibid., 104/5; Hughes, *Artists in California*, 213; Neuhaus, *History and Ideals of American Art*, 86.
70. Hittell, 'Art in California', 105; Hughes, *Artists in California*, 75.
71. Avery, 'Art Beginnings on the Pacific, Part I', 30.
72. Hughes, *Artists in California*, 451.
73. Hittell, 'Art in California', 106; Hughes, *Artists in California*, 298.
74. Hittell, 'Art in California', 106; Hughes, *Artists in California*, 143, 328.
75. Hittell, 'Art in California', 103.
76. Avery, 'Art Beginnings on the Pacific, Part II', *Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine*, Volume 1, Issue 2, August 1868, 113–19, 115; Hughes, *Artists in California*, 141.
77. Peter E. Palmquist and Thomas R. Kailbourn, with foreword by Martha A. Sandweiss, *Pioneer Photographers of the Far West: A Biographical Dictionary, 1840–1865* (Stanford, CA, 2000), 215.
78. Starr, 'Rooted in Barbarous Soil: An Introduction', 16.
79. Avery, 'Art Beginnings on the Pacific, Part II', 115; Hughes, *Artists in California*, 282.
80. *Hutchings' California Magazine*, Vol. II, No. 7, January 1859, 289–98.
81. *Hutchings' California Magazine*, Vol. IV, No. 38, August 1859, 57.
82. Hughes, *Artists in California*, 476.
83. Langley, *San Francisco Directory for 1862*, 141, 446.
84. *The Golden Era*, weekly from 6 April to 20 July 1962. [Google Newspapers accessed 20 March 2020]; *The San Francisco Bulletin* adverts for Eastman & Keith ran daily from April to September 1862. [GenealogyBank–Newspaper Archives (GBN) accessed 21 March 2020].
85. Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 12.
86. Langley, *San Francisco Directory for 1864*, 227.
87. Avery, 'Art Beginnings on the Pacific, Part II', 116; Kirk, 'As jolly as a clam', in Starr and Orsi, *Rooted in Barbarous Soil*, 194.
88. William Keith, 'The Future of Art in California', in *San Francisco Call*, 25 December 1895 [CDNC accessed 9 October 2019]; Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 1; Hughes, *Artists in California*, 294, 521.
89. Hittell, 'Art in California', 105; Kirk, 'As jolly as a clam' in Starr and Orsi, *Rooted in Barbarous Soil*, 195; Elaine Adams, 'William Keith

(1838–1911): Seeking the Unseen Spiritual Sense in Nature', *California Art Club Newsletter*, Winter 2011, 1–6, 10, 3/4; Hughes, *Artists in California*, 64–5.

90. Adams, 'William Keith: Seeking the Unseen Spiritual Sense in Nature', 4.
91. *Samuel Marsden Brookes papers, 1862–1915. Account Book volume 2, Spring–Summer 1863.* Collection Number: MS 228. California Historical Society Library, San Francisco; Langley, *San Francisco Directory for 1863,* 79, 428; Barbara Lekisch, *Embracing Scenes About Lakes Tahoe & Donner; Painters, Illustrators & Sketch Artists 1855–1915* (Lafayette, CA, 2003), 101.
92. Brother Cornelius (Fidelis Cornelius Braeg), *Keith, Old Master of California*. Two Volumes: Vol. 1 (New York, 1942); Vol 2 (Fresno, CA, 1956), Vol. I, 21.
93. Eugen Neuhaus, *William Keith: The Man and the Artist* (Berkeley, CA, 1938), 10.
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid.
96. Alfred C. Harrison, Jr suggests the possibility that Charlie is also called after Charles Nahl; he and Keith were close friends. Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 13.
97. Langley, *San Francisco Directory for 1865*, 437, 499; there is no directory for 1866; *1867*, 48.
98. James M. Hutchings, *Hutchings' Yosemite Almanac for the Whole Pacific Coast for 1867* (San Francisco, 1867)
99. Bret Harte, *The Lost Galleon and Other Tales* (San Francisco, 1867), 13.
100. *San Francisco Bulletin*, 22 February 1867; *San Francisco Bulletin*, 24 August 1867, 'A Dream Picture: Suggested by a painting of Tamalpais from Angel Island by Keith' by Stoddard appeared in the poetry section of the *San Francisco Bulletin*, 4 May 1867. [All GBN accessed 23 September 2019].
101. Charles Warren Stoddard, *Poems* (San Francisco, 1867). 'Dion'. A Memorial, 119. Keith's illustrations appear, 15, Point Lobos; 43, Tamalpais; 58, At the Spring; Decrees, 89.
102. *Marysville Daily Appeal*, California, 19 November 1861. [CDNC accessed 9 October 2019].
103. Bret Harte (ed.), *Outcroppings: Being Selections of California Verse* (San Francisco, 1866) contains two poems by Goodman, both on the theme of lost loves; 18, 'The Swing'; 23, 'The Broken Rose'.
104. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 23 October 1867, 3 December 1867. [Both Newspapers.com (NHN) accessed 23 November 2019].
105. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 11.
106. Gene Hailey (ed.), *William Keith, Thomas Hill, Albert Bierstadt: Biography and Works.* California Art Research Project (CARP) Volume Two, First Series (1937), 3; Langley, *San Francisco Directory for 1868*, 58, 657. Keith is listed under 'painters, landscape and marine' but not under 'painters, portrait'. His private address is given as 909 Post Street; *Directory* for 1869, 347, for Keith as engraver.

In Search of Subject and Style

1. Samuel Butler, A Painter's View on Painting', *The Note-Books of Samuel Butler* (London, 1912), 153.
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9. *San Francisco Bulletin*, 1 July 1867. [GBN accessed 5 December 2019]
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62. 'Art Notes', *San Francisco Bulletin*, 24 August 1872. [GBN accessed 4 November 2019]
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68. Kirk, 'As jolly as a clam', 198. Bierstadt's honorary membership was conferred because he was only to be staying for three months. He did leave but returned in January 1872. Hughes, *Artists in California*, 45.
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16. Muir, *The Eight Wilderness Discovery Books*, 314–5.
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30. John Muir, 'The Treasures of the Yosemite', *The Century Magazine*, Vol XL, No. 4, August 1890, 480–500, 499/500.
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42. William Keith, 'A Sketching Trip in the Sierras', in *Daily Evening Herald* (Stockton, CA), 28 June 1873. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]; *Daily Alta California*, 12 July 1873. [CDNC accessed 9 November 2019]
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44. *Daily Alta California*, 12 July 1873. [CDNC accessed 9 November 2019]
45. *Daily Alta California*, 11 October 1873. [CDNC accessed 9 November 2019]; 'Etc.', *Overland Monthly*, Vol. 11, Issue 5, November 1873, 478.
46. 'Etc', *Overland Monthly*, February 1874, Vol. 12, Issue 3, March 1874, 288; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 18 November 1873. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
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48. *Daily Alta California*, 17 November 1873. [CDNC accessed 9 November 2019]; Patricia Trenton and Peter H. Hassrick, *The Rocky Mountains: A Vision for Artists in the Nineteenth Century*, published in association with the Buffalo Bill Historical Centre, Cody, Wyoming (Norman, OK, 1983), 262.
49. 'Etc.', *Overland Monthly*, February 1874, Vol. 12, Issue 2, February 1874, 192.
50. *San Francisco Bulletin*, 8 December 1873; idem, 20 December 1873. [Both GBN accessed 5 December 2019]; *Daily Alta California*, 16 March 1874. [CDNC accessed 9 November 2019]
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58. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 8 March 1875. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]; Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 19.
59. John Muir, *Letters to a Friend Written to Mrs Ezra S. Carr, 1866–1879* (Boston, 1915), 168–9. Letter from Yosemite Valley, 7 October 1874.
60. *Daily Alta California*, 30 November 1874; idem, 7 December 1874. [Both CDNC accessed 16 November 2019]; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 30 November 1874; idem, 8 December 1874. [Both NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
61. *Overland Monthly*, Vol. 13, Issue 6, December 1874, ix (an advert).
62. Muir, *Letters to a Friend*, 173. Letter from Sissons Station, 9 December 1874.
63. Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 20.
64. 'A Remarkable Art Collection', *San Francisco Bulletin*, 5 December 1874; idem, 11 December 1874. [Both GBN accessed 5 December 2019]; 'The Keith Gallery,' *Alta California*, 7 December 1874; *San Francisco Call*, 11 December 1874. [Both CAD accessed 17 October 2019]
65. Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 37.
66. 'Etc.', *Overland Monthly*, Vol. 14, issue 5, May 1875, 481–2. Hugh Miller was a self-taught geologist, writer, and folklorist from Cromarty, Scotland. An evangelical Christian, he held similar views to Muir about the great age of the earth.
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71. 'Yosemite', *San Francisco Chronicle*, 7 July 1875. [GBN accessed 5 December 2019]
72. Swett, *Public Education in California*, 231–2.
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74. Ibid., 198–201; cited more fully in Brother Cornelius (Fidelis Cornelius Braeg), *Keith, Old Master of California*. Two Volumes: Vol. 1 (New York, 1942); Vol 2 (Fresno, CA, 1956), Vol. I. 66–9.
75. 'Etc.', *Overland Monthly*, Vol. 15, issue 4, October 1875, 389–91; cited more fully in Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I. 69–71.
76. *John Muir*, 'Summering in the Sierra', serialised in *San Francisco Bulletin*, 22 June, 24 June and 3 August 1875. [All GBN accessed 5 December 2019]

77. Linnie Marsh Wolfe (ed.), *John of the Mountains, the unpublished journals of John Muir* (Boston, 1938), A June Storm. Camping trip with John Swett, J. B. McChesney, and William Keith. No. 379., 201–9, 201; Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 71–4, 71.
78. Wolfe (ed.), *John of the Mountains*, 205–7.
79. *Daily Alta California*, 5 September 1875. [CDNC accessed 16 November 2019]; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 8 September 1875. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
80. Muir does not mention meeting Wilson in his journal.
81. 'Etc.', *Overland Monthly*, Vol. 15, issue 6, December 1875, 588.
82. *Sacramento Daily Union*, 3 December 1875. [CDNC accessed 14 May 2020]; 'In Memoriam (Benjamin P. Avery), poetry and prose', *Overland Monthly*, Vol. 15, issue 6, December 1875, 585–6.
83. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 27 November 1875. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
84. *The Sacramento Bee*, 25 January 1876. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
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86. 'Art at the Centennial, Philadelphia', *San Francisco Bulletin*, 26 October 1876. [GBN accessed 5 December 2019]
87. 'A Curious Bill', *Sacramento Record-Union*, 14 February 1876. [CAD accessed 17 October 2019]; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 15 February 1876. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
88. *Los Angeles Evening Express*, 14 April 1876. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
89. Langley, *San Francisco Directory for 1876*, 453.
90. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 97.
91. 'Painter and Palette', *San Francisco Chronicle*, 22 April 1877. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
92. *Daily Alta California*, 29 June 1876; idem, 30 June 1876. [Both CDNC accessed 16 November 2019]: *San Francisco Chronicle*, 27 August 1876. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]; 'Art Notes', *San Francisco Bulletin*, 1 September 1876. [GBN accessed 5 December 2019]
93. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 28 January 1877. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]; *Daily Alta California*, 11 October 1877. [CDNC accessed 16 November 2019]; The prize money was $250 according to *The San Francisco Examiner*, 11 Oct 1877. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
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99. 'California Scenery – Paintings by W. Keith', *New York Tribune*, 9 November 1878. [CAD accessed 29 February 2020]
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103. Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 45.
104. 'The Art Exhibition Again', *Alta California*, 9 March 1879. [CDNC accessed 16 November 2019]
105. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 98.
106. 1880 United States Census for Oakland, Alameda County, CA: ED. 3, Sheet 17.
107. *Oakland Tribune*, 30 May 1879. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
108. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 27 July 1879. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
109. *Daily Alta California*,13 September 1879. [CDNC accessed 29 February 2020]; *The Pacific Bee* (Sacramento), 13 September 1879. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
110. *Oakland Tribune*, 6 September 1879. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
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115. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 28 November 1880. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]. Keith was later reported to be considering a move to Philadelphia, at a time when several artists were leaving San Francisco to try their luck elsewhere, most notably in New York. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 14 August 1881. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
116. Langley, *San Francisco Directory for 1882*, 551.
117. *The Wasp*, San Francisco, Vol. 6, No. 243, 26 March 1881, 197. [California State Library (CSL) accessed 9 March 2020]
118. *Cloverdale Reveille* (Cloverdale, CA), 20 August 1881. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
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5. Brother Cornelius (Fidelis Cornelius Braeg), *Keith, Old Master of California*. Two Volumes, Vol. 1 (New York, 1942); Vol. 2 (Fresno, CA, 1956). Letter from Keith to Mrs John McHenry, March 1882, Vol. I, 100–101.
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7. Frances Fuller Victor, 'Studies of the California Missions' (first instalment), *The Californian, An Illustrated Western Monthly Magazine*, Vol. V, No. 29, 1 May 1882, 389–405. Keith's illustration, 395.
8. *The Californian*, Vol. V, No. 29, May 1882, 477.
9. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 18 March 1882. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
10. Elaine Adams, 'William Keith (1838–1911): Seeking the Unseen Spiritual Sense in Nature', *California Art Club Newsletter*, Winter 2011, 1–6, 10, 4.
11. Emanuel Swedenborg, *Angelic Wisdom Concerning the Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom* (New York, 1901), 142.
12. Emanuel Swedenborg, *A Dictionary of Correspondences, Representatives, and Significatives, derived from the Word of the Lord / Extracted from the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg* (Boston, 1841), 79–81.
13. Swedenborg, *A Dictionary of Correspondences*, 60–1.
14. Eugene Taylor, 'The Interior Landscape: George Inness and William James from a Swedenborgian Point of View', *Archives of American Art Journal*, Vol. 37, No. 1/2 (1997), 2–10, 2.
15. Ibid.
16. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 16.
17. Emily P. B. Hay, *William Keith as Prophet Painter* (San Francisco, 1916), 19.
18. Eugen Neuhaus, *William Keith: the Man and the Artist* (Berkeley, CA, 1938), 24.
19. *Daily Alta California*, 9 October 1882. [California Digital Newspaper Collection (CDNC) accessed 1 October 2019]
20. Ibid., 13 October 1882. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
21. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 13 August 1882; *Oakland Tribune*, 30 September 1882; *The Record-Union* (Sacramento), 30 September 1882; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 13 October 1882; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 13 October 1882; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 16 October 1882; *The San Francisco Examiner*,

17 October 1882. [All NHN accessed 6 November 2019]; Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 107.
22. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 122.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid., 121.
25. Noel Wise, *An Uncommon Journey: Reflections on the Life of Mary McHenry Keith*, Women's Legal History (Stanford, CA, 2002), 7.
26. Wise, *An Uncommon Journey*, 9.
27. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 11 June 1882; *The Record-Union* (Sacramento), 15 June 1882; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 25 June 1882; *Santa Cruz Weekly Sentinel*, 1 July 1882. [All NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
28. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 28–9.
29. *The Record-Union* (Sacramento), 17 March 1883. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]; Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 103–105, 107.
30. *Oakland Tribune*, 24 February 1883. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
31. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 110, Mary's account of the visit as told to Brother Cornelius.
32. Ibid., 110, 370. Mary talking to Brother Cornelius.
33. Ibid., 110; Emanuel Swedenborg, *Divine Providence and its Laws from the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg*, Edited by B. F. Barrett (Philadelphia, 1878), passim.
34. Chauncey Giles, *Lectures on the Nature of Spirit: And of Man as a Spiritual Being* (New York, 1867), 14, 17, 25 and passim.
35. Alfred C. Harrison, Jr, 'The Art of William Keith', in *The Comprehensive Keith: The 100-year History of the St Mary's College Collection of Works by William Keith* (California, 2011), 53; Wise, *An Uncommon Journey*, 7.
36. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 110.
37. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 10 June 1883; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 11 June 1883. [Both NHN accessed 2/12/2019]; *San Francisco Morning Call*, 12 June 1883. [CAD accessed 5 August 2019]; Wise, *An Uncommon Journey*, 22, citing the *Argonaut*, 9 June 1883.
38. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 110.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. T*he Independent* (Santa Barbara, CA), 30 June 1883; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 July 1883; *The Independent*, 2 July 1883. [All NHN accessed 6 November 2019]; Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 112–13; Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 53.
42. *The Los Angeles Times*, 17 July 1883. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]; Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 113; Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 53.
43. Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 53.
44. *San Francesco Call*, 28 November 1897. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
45. *Los Angeles Herald*, 25 May 1905. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]

46. Edan M. Hughes, *Artists in California 1786–1940* (San Francisco, 1986), 516; Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 113–14.
47. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 21 August 1883; idem, 28 August 1883. [Both NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
48. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 114.
49. Ibid., 279. Charlie was in Tennessee for some time in 1883 and may have acted as his father's agent in trying to sell his paintings to art dealers there and in New Orleans.
50. Ibid., 114–15. The picture passed to Mr Riedy's son, Dodge, ibid., 585.
51. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 16 September 1883. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
52. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 116.
53. Ibid.
54. Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 25.
55. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 2 December 1883. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
56. Papers of William Keith, Letters written by Keith, 1870–1910. Letter dated 4 October 1883, Keith-McHenry-Pond Family Papers (KMPFP) 1841–1961, BANC MSS C-B 595. The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 25.
57. Marisa J. Pascucci, 'The Dusseldorf and Munich schools', in Joan M. Marter (ed.), *The Grove Encyclopedia of American Art* (Oxford, 2011), 112/3; Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 26.
58. Eugen Neuhaus, *The History and Ideals of American Art* (Stanford, CA, 1931), 155, 158 et seq.; Hughes, *Artists in California*, 88, 129, 186, 189, 419.
59. Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 55.
60. Neuhaus, *Keith, Man and Artist*, 26, letter to Joseph Worcester (JW), 11 November 1883.
61. Ibid., 26/7, letter to JW, 25 November 1883.
62. Ibid., 27, letter to JW, 9 December 1883.
63. Wise, *An Uncommon Journey*, 24. Letter from Mrs Keith to family, 8 December 1883.
64. Ibid., Letter from Mrs Keith to family (undated).
65. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 117, letter to JW.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid., 120–22.
69. Letters. Letter to Theodore Wores from Munich, 30 January 1884, KMPFP; Gene Hailey (ed.), *William Keith, Thomas Hill, Albert Bierstadt: Biography and Works.* California Art Research Project (CARP), Volume Two, First Series (1937), 4, 5.
70. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 141–2.
71. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 28, letter to JW, 10 February 1884.
72. Ibid., letter to JW, 24 February 1884.

73. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 131–2, letter to JW, undated but must be 9 March 1895 with reference to anniversary of Elizabeth's death.
74. Ibid.
75. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 30 May 1884; idem, 31 May 1884; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 4 June 1884. [All NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
76. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 28, letter to JW, 2 March 1884.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid., 31, letter to JW, 23 March 1884.
79. Ibid., letter to JW, 6 April 1884.
80. Ibid., 31–2, letter to JW, 6 April 1884.
81. KMPFP Letters. Letter written by Keith to Rev. James Worcester from Paris, 23 May 1884. J. R. Bruce was the son of 'John Bruce of Fornet' and a brother of George Taylor Bruce who had emigrated to Canada.
82. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 32, letter to JW, n. d.
83. Ibid.
84. KMPFP Letters. Letter written by Keith to Rev. James Worcester from Munich, 15 June 1884.
85. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 33. Letter to JW, n. d.
86. Ibid., letter to JW, 20 July 1884.
87. KMPFP Letters. Letter by Keith to Rev. James Worcester from Munich, 27 July 1884. Captain Cuttle is a character in Dicken's novel *Dombey and Son*, illustrated by Charles Green. See also Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 33/4.
88. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 20 July 1884. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
89. KMPFP Letters. Letter by Keith to Rev. James Worcester from Munich, 3 August 1884; Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 34–5.
90. Eugen Neuhaus, *Keith, Man and Artist*, 35, letter to JW, 10 August 1884.
91. Ibid.
92. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 194/5, letter from JW to Charlie Keith, 15 June 1884.
93. Ibid.
94. KMPFP Letters. Letter by Keith to Rev. James Worcester from Munich 17 August 1884; Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 36.
95. KMPFP Letters. Letter from Keith to Rev. James Worcester from Munich, 24 August 1884; Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 36, 39.
96. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 39, letter to JW, 25 August 1884.
97. Ibid., letter to JW, 31 August 1884.
98. Ibid., 40, letter to JW, 7 September 1884.
99. Ibid., letter to JW, 14 September 1884.
100. Ibid.
101. F. D. Millet, 'George Fuller', *Harpers New Monthly Magazine*, Vol. LXIX, June to November 1884, 517–22.
102. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 41, letter to JW, 21 September 1884.
103. Ibid., letter to JW, 28 September 1884.
104. Ibid., 42/3, letter to JW, 10 May 1885.

105. *The New York, Passenger and Crew Lists (including Castle Garden and Ellis Island), 1820–1957.* [ancestry.com accessed 18 August 2019]
106. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 28 June and 30 June 1885. [Both NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
107. Ibid., 12 July 1885. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]

Collaboration with George Inness

1. Doric for 'always working away' – a phrase with which Keith would have been all too familiar, often given as a reply to the question 'How are you?' or, in the vernacular, 'Fit like?' It is the motto of the Aberdeen and North East of Scotland Family History Society.
2. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 24 August 1885. [Newspapers.com (NHN) accessed 7 November 2019]
3. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 16 September 1885; *The Sacramento Bee*, 15 September 1885; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 4 October 1885. [All NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
4. Eugen Neuhaus, *William Keith: The Man and the Artist* (Berkeley, CA, 1938), 43.
5. *San Francesco Call*, 12 October 1895. [California Digital Newspaper Collection (CDNC) accessed 3 October 2019]; Emily B. P. Hay, *William Keith as Prophet Painter* (San Francisco, 1916), 16.
6. Edan Hughes, *Artists in California, 1786–1940* (San Francisco, 1986), 488.
7. Donna J. Graves, and Shayne E. Watson, *Citywide Historic Context Statement for LGBTQ History in San Francisco* (San Francisco, 2015), 40.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 43; Hay, *Keith as Prophet Painter*, 29.
11. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 29 November 1885. [NHN accessed 7 November 2019]; Hay, *Keith as Prophet Painter*, 29.
12. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 43; Hay, *Keith as Prophet Painter*, 20.
13. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 43.
14. Hay, *Keith as Prophet Painter*, 20.
15. Ibid., 21.
16. Ibid.
17. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 44.
18. Ibid.
19. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 25 October 1885. [NHN accessed 7 November 2019]. There is no evidence that Keith attended the play. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 13 December 1885. [NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
20. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 15 November 1885. [NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
21. Brother Cornelius (Fidelis Cornelius Braeg), *Keith, Old Master of California*. Two Volumes. Vol. 1 (New York, 1942); Vol. 2 (Fresno, CA, 1956). Vol. 1, 173.

22. Hay, *Keith as Prophet Painter*, 17.
23. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 10 July 1881; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 29 January 1888. [Both NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
24. *The Los Angeles Times*, 10 November 1885; *Oakland Tribune*, 16 December 1887. [Both NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
25. Hay, *Keith as Prophet Painter*, 18.
26. Ibid., 8, 11; Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 48.
27. *Oakland Tribune*, 1 September 1898. [NHN accessed 7 November 2019]; *American Art Annual 1900–1901*, Directory of Painters, 53; Hughes, *Artists in California*, 272, 320, 350 and passim.
28. Elaine Adams, 'William Keith (1838–1911): Seeking the Unseen Spiritual Sense in Nature', *California Art Club Newsletter*, Winter 2011, 1–6, 10, 6.
29. *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, Vol. XIV (Supplement) (New York, 1910), 80. Hughes, *Artists in California*, 54.
30. *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, Vol. XV (New York, 1916), 63.
31. Hughes, *Artists in California*, 270.
32. *Oakland Tribune*, 5 September 1885. [NHN accessed 7 November 2019]; Ed Herny, Shelley Rideout, Katie Wadell, *Berkeley Bohemia: Artists and Visionaries of the Early 20th Century* (Layton, UT, 2008), 19.
33. *Daily Alta California*, 19 October 1885. [CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]
34. *Oakland Tribune*, 13 October, 21 November and 19 December 1885 [All NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
35. *Oakland Tribune*, 3 October 1888. [NHN accessed 3 October 2019]
36. *Oakland Tribune*, 13 November 1883. [NHN accessed 3 October 2019]
37. Hay, *Keith as Prophet Painter*, 40.
38. Neuhaus, *Keith, Man and Artist*, 66; Hay, *Keith as Prophet Painter*, 24.
39. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 66. Some of Keith's cigar box panel paintings survive and are in the Hearst Art Gallery Collection, St Mary's College of California: *Brown Hillside* and *Cattle at Edge of Meadow*, cat. nos. 76, 77; *The Comprehensive Keith: The 100–year History of the St Mary's College Collection of Works by William Keith* 2011 to coincide with the 100th anniversary celebration (California, 2011), 153.
40. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 66.
41. *Daily Alta California*, 31 March and 28 April 1886. [Both CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]
42. Ibid., 29 May 1886. [CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]; Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 166.
43. Cited in Alfred C. Harrison, Jr, 'The Art of William Keith' in *William Keith: The Saint Mary's Collection* (1988) reprinted in *The Comprehensive Keith*, 60.
44. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 167.
45. Ibid., 166/7. Brother Cornelius saw Brooke's painting when he visited his home in Ewhurst.
46. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 48.

47. Ibid.
48. 'Keith's Sale', *San Francisco Chronicle*, 28 October 1887; *Oroville Register* (Oroville, CA), 17 November 1887. [Both NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
49. Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 61.
50. *Daily Alta California*, 9 November 1887. [CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]
51. *Daily Alta California*, 5 January 1888. [CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]
52. *The Los Angeles Times*, 7 December 1887; *Los Angeles Evening Express*, 10 December 1887; *Los Angeles Herald*, 15 December 1887. [All NHN accessed 7 November 2019]; *Los Angeles Daily Herald*, 26 November 1887. [Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers (CAD) accessed 5 August 2019]
53. *Los Angeles Herald*, 18 December 1887. [NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
54. Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 61.
55. *Daily Alta California*, 25 April 1888. [CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]
56. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 23 May 1888. [NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
57. *Daily Alta California*, 17 May, 21 May, 27 May and 3 June 1888. [All CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]; *Oakland Tribune*, 26 May 1888; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 28 May 1888. [Both NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
58. One sample advertisement of many appears in *The San Francisco Call*, 1 November 1894. [CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]. *Picturesque California* was originally published in thirty parts, then ten, and finally as two volumes by J. Dewing and Company, British Columbia, 1888–90). Reprinted as *West of the Rocky Mountains* (Philadelphia, 1976).
59. William Frederic Bade, *The Life and Letters of John Muir*, Vol. II (Boston, 1924), 219–20; *Daily Alta California*, 9 September 1888; 'Berkeley', *Alta California*, 21 September 1888. [Both CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]; Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 167–71.
60. Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 64.
61. Hay, *Keith as Prophet Painter*, 25–6.
62. *The Sacramento Bee*, 13 September 1888; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 October 1888. [Both NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
63. *Daily Alta California*, 27 March 1889. [CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]
64. 'Art and Artists', *Inter-Ocean*, Chicago, 12 May 1889. [NHN accessed 29 February 2010]
65. *Daily Alta California*, 26 March 1890. [CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]
66. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*; 'The San Francisco Art Association, 430 Pine Street, Officers and Members, 1892', *The San Francisco Blue Book & Pacific Coast Elite Directory, 1892* (San Francisco, 1892).
67. *Daily Alta California*, 6 April and 21 April 1890. [Both CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]
68. *Daily Alta California*, 23 April 1890. [CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]
69. *The Wasp*, San Francisco, Vol. XXIV, No. 19, 10 May 1890. [California State Library (CSL) accessed 9 March 2020]
70. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 22 Sep 1890. [NHN accessed 7 November 2019]; Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 58.

71. Rick Wilson, *Scots who Made America* (Edinburgh, 2006), 65. Built by Andrew Smith Hallidie, London-born son of a Scottish engineering family, it commenced operation in August 1873, and despite initial scepticism the cable-propelled streetcar slowly became a much-copied, worldwide commercial success.
72. Hay, *Keith as Prophet Painter*, 26–7.
73. Ibid., 27/8.
74. John Muir, 'Features of the Proposed Yosemite National Park', *The Century Magazine*, Vol. XL, No. 5, September 1890, 656–667. Keith is credited with illustrations along with J. A. Fraser, Harry Fenn, W. H. Shelton, Thomas Moran and A. B. Davies, from photographs by George Fiske (Index, vii); *Daily Alta California*, 31 August 1890. [CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]
75. John Muir, 'The Treasures of the Yosemite', *The Century Magazine*, Vol. XL, No. 4, August 1890, 483–500.
76. Cornelius. *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 132, as related to Brother Cornelius by Riedy.
77. Ibid., 97, Phoebe Withers in conversation with Brother Cornelius.
78. Ibid., 194.
79. Ibid., 175.
80. Hay, *Keith as Prophet Painter*, 29.
81. *The Wasp*, San Francisco, Vol. XXVI, No. 4, 24 January 1891, 11. [CSL accessed 9 March 2020]
82. Hay, *Keith as Prophet Painter*, 36; M. S., 'William Keith', *Art and Progress*, Vol. 2, No. 8 (June 1911), 227–30, 230.
83. Hay, *Keith as Prophet Painter*, 20.
84. Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr, *George Inness* (New York, 1971), 18.
85. Eugen Neuhaus, *The History and Ideals of American Art* (Stanford, CA, 1931), 97.
86. Cikovsky, *George Inness*, 21/2; Hughes, *Artists in California*, 231.
87. Elliott Daingerfield, 'A Reminiscence of George Inness', *The Monthly Illustrator*, Vol. 3, No. 11 (March 1895), 259–68; Frederick Stymetz Lamb, 'Reminiscences of George Inness', *The Art World*, Vol. 1. No. 4 January (1917), 250–52, 251.
88. Mark D. Mitchell, 'George Inness in Italy', *Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin*, new series, No. 2 (2011), 10–43, 41, fn. 52; Adrienne Baxter Bell, *George Inness: Writings and Reflections on Art and Philosophy* (New York, 2006), 101.
89. Cikovsky, *George Inness*, 26.
90. *Chicago Tribune*, Chicago 27 March 1871. [CAD accessed 12 August 2019]
91. Neuhaus, *History and Ideals of American Art*, 99.
92. Mitchell, 'George Inness in Italy', 41.
93. Daingerfield, 'A Reminiscence of George Inness', 262, 266.
94. Neuhaus, *History and Ideals of American Art*, 97, 99, 103.
95. *Morris Tribune* (Morris, Maine), 5 June 1889. [CAD accessed 12 August 2019]

96. Cikovsky, *George Inness*, 35.
97. Sally M. Promey, 'The Ribbands of Faith: George Inness, Colour Theory, and the Swedenborgian Church', *The American Journal*, Vol. 26. Nos. 1/2 (1994), 44–65, 45–7.
98. Cikovsky, *George Inness*, 57.
99. Promey, 'The Ribbands of Faith', 47–9. The advertisement for the sermon appeared on 11 April 1866.
100. George Inness, 'Colours and Their Correspondences', *New Jerusalem Messenger*, Vol. 13 (November 13, 867) 78/9; cited in full in an appendix in Promey, 'The Ribbands of Faith', 59/ 60.
101. Lamb, 'Reminiscences of George Inness', 251/2; Cikovsky, *George Inness*, 20.
102. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 11 December 1876. [NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
103. *Daily Alta California*, 13 March 1891. [CAD accessed 12 August 2019]; Alfred C. Harrison, Jr, 'George Inness and the San Francisco art world in the 1890s', *Antiques* (November 2000), 715–25, 717.
104. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 215.
105. Noel Wise, *An Uncommon Journey: Reflections on the Life of Mary McHenry Keith*, Women's Legal History (Stanford, CA, 2002), 26.
106. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 30 June 1889. [NHN accessed 7 November 2019]; Harrison, 'Inness and the San Francisco art world', 717.
107. *Oakland Tribune*, 18 March 1891. [NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
108. Robert W. Edwards and Jennie V. Cannon, *The Untold History of the Carmel and Berkeley Art Colonies*, Vol. 1 (Oakland, CA, 2012), 45. http://www.tfaoi.org/aa/10aa/10aa557.htm [accessed 15 August 2019]; Harrison, 'Inness and the San Francisco art world', 717.
109. Hay, *Keith as Prophet Painter*, 34.
110. Ibid., 33–4.
111. Ibid., 35–6.
112. Mitchell, 'George Inness in Italy', 38.
113. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. 1, 216, Memorandum of the Rev. Worcester's, 9 April 1891; cited (as 7 April 1891) in Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 55–6.
114. Ibid.
115. Harrison, 'Inness and the San Francisco art world', 715; Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 55.
116. Lamb, 'Reminiscences of George Inness', 251.
117. Harrison, 'Inness and the San Francisco art world', 719.
118. Ellen Halteman, *Exhibition Record of the San Francisco Art Association, 1872–1915* (Los Angeles, 2000), 187; *Daily Alta California*, 8 May 1891. [CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]; Harrison, 'Inness and the San Francisco art world', 719/20.
119. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 544–5, citing a letter dated 22 April 1913 to the editor of the Town Talk section of *The Wasp* by Mrs Mary McHenry

Keith in response to an earlier article comparing the value of paintings by the two artists.

120. Neuhaus, *Keith, Man and Artist*, 57.
121. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 217.
122. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 15 May 1891. [NHN accessed 7 November 2019]; *Daily Alta California*, 17 May 1891. [CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]
123. *San Francisco Call*, 19 May 1891; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 19 May 1891. [Both NHN accessed 7 November 2019]; Harrison, 'Inness and the San Francisco art world', 723.
124. *The Berkeley Gazette*, 14 December 1910; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 15 December 1910. [Both NHN accessed 7 November 019]
125. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 219–25. In a letter from Mrs Enquist to Brother Cornelius. Hughes, *Artists in California*, 146.
126. Daniella Thompson, 'Builder-artist A.H. Broad left his mark on Berkeley', *BAHA East Bay: Then and Now*, 6 February 2007 and 6 August 2009, citing *Berkeley Gazette* columnist Hal Johnson. http://berkeleyheritage.com/eastbay_then-now/ah_broad.html [accessed 10 February 2020].
127. George Inness, Jr, *Life, Art, and Letters of George Inness* (New York, 1917), 168; Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr, *George Inness* (New York, 1971).
128. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 5 April 1891. [NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
129. Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 68.
130. *Art Digest*, 1 October 1930, Vol. 5, no. 1, 13; Gene Hailey (ed.), *William Keith, Thomas Hill, Albert Bierstadt: Biography and Works* (California: California Art Research Project (CARP), Volume Two, First Series, 1937), 18; Barbara Lekisch, *Embracing Scenes About Lakes Tahoe & Donner; Painters, Illustrators & Sketch Artists 1855–1915* (Lafayette, CA, 2003), 104.
131. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 11 January 1924; idem, 14 January 1924. [Both NHN accessed 7 November 2019]; Harrison, 'Inness and the San Francisco art world', 719.
132. CARP, 18.
133. Inness, Jr, *Life, Art, and Letters of George Inness*, 209–10.
134. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 11 November 1894. [NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
135. Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 68.

Keith's Golden Years

1. Edward Robeson Taylor, *Sonnets of Edward Robeson Taylor on Some Pictures Painted by William Keith* (San Francisco, 1898). The introductory sonnet addressed to William Keith, 5. Two hundred copies were printed, none of which were for sale; they were distributed to friends and admirers.
2. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 4 October 1891. [Newspapers.com (NHN) accessed 6 November 2019]; Elaine Adams, 'William Keith (1838–1911): Seeking the Unseen Spiritual Sense in Nature', *California Art Club Newsletter*, Winter 2011, 1–6, 10, 6.

3. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 3 January 1892. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
4. *The Wasp*, San Francisco, Vol. XXVIII, No. 13, 16 April 1892. [California State Library (CSL) accessed 9 March 2020]
5. Idem, Vol. XXIX, No. 14, 8 October 1892. [CSL accessed 09 March 2020]
6. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 7 August 1892; idem, 4 September 1892; *The Record-Union* (Sacramento), 15 September 1892. [All NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
7. As Macbeth was described in *The Berkeley Gazette*, 26 January 1906. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]; *New York Tribune*, 5 March 1893. [accessed 2 April 2020]
8. *San Francisco Call*, 21 April 1893. [California Digital Newspaper Collection (CDNC) accessed 1 October 2019]
9. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 19 April and 28 April 1893. [Both NHN accessed 6 November 2019]; *San Francisco Call*, 28 April 1893. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
10. 'How William Keith and John Muir did Europe Together Without Meeting', *San Francisco Call*, 13 June 1897. [NHN accessed 14 April 2020]; Ronald H. Limbaugh, 'California's Kindred Spirits, John Muir and William Keith', in Sally M. Miller and Daryl Morrison (eds.), *John Muir: Family, Friends, and Adventures* (Albuquerque, New Mexico, 2005), 65–80, 71–2.
11. Emily P. B. Hay, *William Keith as Prophet Painter* (San Francisco, 1916), 13.
12. A detailed account of this journey is in Brother Cornelius (Fidelis Cornelius Braeg), *Keith, Old Master of California*. Two Volumes. Vol. 1 (New York, 1942); Vol 2 (Fresno, CA, 1956). Vol. I, 252–62.
13. Eugen Neuhaus, *William Keith: The Man and the Artist* (Berkeley, CA, 1938), 58. Letter to Joseph Worcester (JW), dated Sunday 30 April 1893.
14. Alfred C. Harrison, Jr, 'The Art of William Keith' in *The Comprehensive Keith: The 100-year History of the St Mary's College Collection of Works by William Keith* (California, 2011), 72.
15. *San Francisco Call*, 22 September 1892. [CDNC accessed 8 October 2019]
16. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 18 February 1893; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 21 February 1893. [Both NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
17. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 59. Letter to JW of Sunday 30 April continued.
18. Ibid., 60. Letter to JW of Sunday 30 April continued.
19. *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, 7 August and 12 September 1893. [Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers (CAD) both accessed 5 August 2019]
20. Limbaugh, 'California's Kindred Spirits', 72.
21. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 62–3. Letter to JW from New York, n.d.
22. Ibid., 63.
23. Ibid., 64.
24. *The San Francisco Call*, 12 June 1893; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 19 August 1893. [Both NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
25. Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 72. Letter to JW, 25 June 1893.

26. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 21 July 1893. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]; Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 64.
27. *The San Francisco Call*, 10 January 1894. [CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]
28. Hay, *Keith as Prophet Painter*, 36.
29. *The San Francisco Call*, 10 January 1894. [CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]; Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 72. The mirror cost $400 according to Neuhaus.
30. *The San Francisco Call*, 10 January 1894. [CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]
31. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 72.
32. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 229; Vol. II, 52.
33. *The San Francisco Call*, 16 January 1894. [CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]
34. Ibid.
35. George Wharton James, 'William Keith', *The Craftsman*, Vol VII, No 3. December 1904, 299–309, 307.
36. Gene Hailey (ed.), *William Keith, Thomas Hill, Albert Bierstadt: Biography and Works*. California Art Research Project (CARP), Volume Two, First Series (1937). Digitised by the Internet Archive 2010 with funding from the San Francisco Public Library [Retrieved 9 July 2019], 8.
37. Hay, *Keith as Prophet Painter*, 37.
38. James, 'William Keith', 307; Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. II, 124.
39. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 72/3.
40. CARP, 8.
41. *The San Francisco Call*, 2 March 1894. [CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]
42. Ibid. The chiaroscuro style continued to be used in the following centuries and had a renaissance of its own in the camera work of the Hollywood film industry and in photography.
43. Ibid.
44. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 28 June 1894; idem, 12 Jul 1894. [Both NHN accessed 7 December 2019]
45. *The Wasp*, San Francisco, Vol. XXXII, No. 26, 30 June 1894. [CSL accessed 9 March 2020]
46. Idem, No. 43, 27 October 1894. [CSL accessed 9 March 2020]; Caroline Seebohm and Boca Rococo, *How Addison Mizner Invented Florida's Gold Coast* (New York, 2001), 58.
47. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 6 October 1894. [CDNC accessed 2 April 2020]
48. Edan M. Hughes, *Artists in California 1786–1940* (San Francisco, 1986), 386.
49. *Oakland Tribune*, 7 November 1903. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]; Hughes, *Artists in California*, 329.
50. *San Francisco Call*, 14 July 1895. [CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]; *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, 9 August 1895; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 17 August 1895. [Both NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
51. *San Francisco Call*, 15 July 1895. [CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]
52. Idem, 7 August 1895. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
53. *The Wasp*, San Francisco, Vol. XXXIV, No. 36, 7 September 1895. [CSL accessed 9 March 2020]

54. Idem, No. 51, 2 December 1895. [CSL accessed 9 March 2020]
55. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 6 October 1895; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 13 October 1895. [Both NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
56. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 65; *San Francisco Call*, 12 October 1895. [CDNC accessed 2 April 2020]; *The Wasp*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 51, 26 October 1895. [CSL accessed 9 March 2020]
57. 'By a Stranger', 'A Departure in Church Building – the Second New Jerusalem Church in California', *The Craftsman*, June 1906, 330–4, 334; Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 73.
58. 'By a Stranger', 'A Departure in Church Building', 334; *San Francisco Call*, 10 February 1896. [CDNC accessed 2 April 2020]; Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 74.
59. 'Page Brown Memorial', *San Francisco Call*, 1 February 1896. [CAD accessed 2 April 2020]; Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 74.
60. *San Francisco Call*, 14 January 1896. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
61. Ibid.
62. Hay, *Keith as Prophet Painter*, 36.
63. *San Francisco Call*, 3 March 1896. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
64. Letter from James D. Phelan to Directors of San Francisco Art Association, 12 November 1895, cited in *San Francisco Call*, 24 April 1896. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
65. Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 76–7.
66. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 296, 166.
67. Over half a century later an advertisement appeared in the *San Francisco Examiner* of 16 June 1949: 'For Sale by Private Owner, famous painting by William Keith, *Discovery of San Francisco Bay*, formerly in the collection of Mrs Phoebe Apperson Hearst (she had died in 1919)' Brother Cornelius saw the painting, authenticated it, enquired about the price and was told it was valued at $25,000 because that was the price Mrs Hearst had paid Keith directly for it, this information coming from the then owner via a Hearst lawyer at the time the painting was bought out of the Hearst estate in New York. Brother Cornelius wanted to buy the painting for Saint Mary's College but knew at that price it was out of the question. A price of $6,000 was agreed, still too much for the college and the State legislature then spent three years discussing the advisability of buying it for display in the State Capitol in Sacramento or the State Building in San Francisco, before deciding that the money would be better spent on education. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. II, 86, 166.
68. *The San Francisco Call*, 17 January 1897. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
69. Hughes, *Artists in California*, 362/3.
70. Ibid., 43.
71. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 17 November 1895; *The Los Angeles Times*, 16 December 1895. [Both NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
72. *The San Francisco Call*, 24 February 1896. [CAD accessed 3 April 2020]; Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 404; Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 76.

73. *The San Francisco Call*, 4 December 1896. [CDNC accessed 6 October 2019]; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 2 December 1896. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
74. *The San Francisco Call*, 13 July 1897. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
75. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 13 May 1896; *The Berkeley Gazette*, 19 May 1896. [Both NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
76. *San Francisco Call*, 4 December 1896. [CDNC accessed 5 August 2019]. 'Auld gaberlunzie', old beggar, tramp.
77. *The Comprehensive Keith*, cat. Nos. 52, 55.
78. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 56.
79. Ibid.
80. 'Travelling Companions', *San Francisco Call*, 13 June 1897. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]; Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 275; Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 82.
81. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 3 December 1897; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 19 December 1897. [Both NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
82. *Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine*, Vol. 31, Issue 182, February 1898, 192. Richard Brackenbury named a son Gabriel Keith, b. 1902.
83. *The Berkeley Gazette*, 10 February, 15 April and18 April 1899. [All NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
84. Robert W. Edwards and Jennie V. Cannon, *The Untold History of the Carmel and Berkeley Art Colonies, Vol. 1.* (Oakland, CA, 2012), 29. http://www.tfaoi.org/aa/10aa/10aa557.htm [accessed 15 August 2019]
85. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 15 February 1904; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 22 February 1904; *The Berkeley Gazette*, 24 February 1904; *Oakland Tribune*, 10 March 1904. [All NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
86. *Oakland Tribune*, 21 June 1899. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]; Edwards and Cannon, *The Untold History*, 73.
87. *Oakland Tribune*, 20 May 1899; *The Berkeley Gazette*, 8 June 1899. [Both NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
88. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 75/76. Letter to JW from New York, n. d.
89. Ibid., Letter to JW from on board the SS *Noorland*, n. d.
90. Ibid., 76, Letter to JW from 'Anvers', 19 June 1899.
91. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 248.
92. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 3 September 1899. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
93. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 250.
94. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 76. Letter to JW from London, 20 July 1899.
95. Ibid., 79/80, Letter to JW from London, 23 July 1899.
96. Cornelius, *Keith*, *Old Master*, Vol. I, 396
97. Ibid., 397, 402.
98. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 13 August 1899. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
99. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 396–7. letter from 'Sig' Beel to Brother Cornelius, n. d.

100. Ibid., 329.
101. William Keith's Naturalisation Certificate, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Ref: Index to Naturalisation in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California 1852–1989. Index Vol 14, 5131, NARA Publication Number: NARA M1744, NARA Roll 78. The witnesses were Timothy H. Rearden (afterwards Judge Rearden) and Cyrus H. Carmony of the Clay City Bank; Personalia, 1856–1883, certified copy of record of naturalisation in Keith-McHenry-Pond Family Papers (KMPFP) 1841–1961, BANC MSS C-B 595. The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.
102. *Santa Cruz Surf*, 18 February 1905. [NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
103. *Oakland Tribune*, 1 July 1911. [NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
104. *The Berkeley Gazette*, 18 August 1899. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]; Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 259–60.
105. *The Berkeley Gazette*, 18 August 1899. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
106. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 80.
107. *San Francisco Call*, 5 October 1900. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]; *The Berkeley Gazette*, 6 October 1900. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
108. *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 20 May 1900. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
109. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 404.
110. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 27 July 1901. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
111. *The Berkeley Gazette*, 29 March 1901; *Oakland Tribune*, 29 March 1901. [Both NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
112. S*an Francisco Call*, 13 August 1901. [CDNC accessed 25 January 2020]; *The Berkeley Gazette*, 5 August 1901; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 18 August 1901. [Both NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
113. 'Artists Ready for Fall and Winter', *San Francisco Chronicle*, 24 August 1901. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
114. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 404. Letter dated 26 January 1902; Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 78.
115. *San Francisco Call*, 14 January 1902. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]; 'Notable Painting by William Keith', *San Francisco Chronicle*, 14 January 1902. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
116. CARP, 10.
117. 'Notes of the Studios', *San Francisco Chronicle*, 9 February 1902. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
118. *The Hanford Sentinel* (Hanford, CA), 14 July 1902; *The Berkeley Gazette*, 21 July 1902; *Daily Delta* (Visalia, CA), 22 August 1902; *The Berkeley Gazette*, 8 September 1902. [All NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
119. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 24 May and 24 August 1903. [Both NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
120. Idem, 19 October 1903; *Oakland Tribune*, 24 October 1903. [Both NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
121. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 30 November 1903 and 20 March 1904; 'Art Notes', *San Francisco Call*, 20 March 1904. [All NHN accessed 2 December 2019]

122. *San Francisco Call*, 4 May 1904. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
123. Ibid.
124. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 21 February 1904. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
125. *Los Angeles Evening Express*, 25 June 1904; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 10 July 1904; *The Berkeley Gazette*, 11 July 1904. [All NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
126. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 412/3.
127. Charles Moore (ed.), *The Life and Times of Charles Follen McKim* (Boston, 1929), 296, in a letter dated 14 May. McKim was a keen shot and had spent August 1900 shooting grouse on the Millden Estate on the River Esk near Brechin. He thought it beautiful, in letters to his daughter and to Mrs Stanford White, August 1900, 286/7. He returned to Scotland in July 1904, 292.
128. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 22 May 1905. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
129. *The Berkeley Gazette*, 26 May 1905; *Oakland Tribune*, 6 June 1905. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
130. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 568.
131. *San Francisco Call*, 1 October 1905; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 8 October 1905. [NHN accessed 2 January 2019]
132. *The Berkeley Gazette*, 26 January 1906. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
133. Idem, 19 March 1906. [NHN accessed 2 January 2019]
134. Idem, 8 March 1906. [NHN accessed 2 January 209]

Keith's Philosophy of Art

1. John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 5 Vols. (1843–60). Vol. III, Chapter III, s28. Project Gutenberg, 2012. The Complete Works of John Ruskin. https://www.gutenberg.org/files/38923/38923-h/38923-h.htm [accessed 21 April 2020]
2. Roy Morris, Jr, *Declaring His Genius: Oscar Wilde in North America* (Cambridge, MA, 2013), 137–8.
3. Lois Foster Rodecape, 'Gilding the Sunflower: A Study of Oscar Wilde's Visit to San Francisco', *California Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (June 1940), 97–112, 110.
4. Zechariah 9:9.
5. John Cooper, 'The Modern Messiah', *Oscar Wilde in America: A Selected Resource of Oscar Wilde's Visit to America* (2020) https://www.oscarwildeinamerica.org/features/the-modern-messiah.html [accessed 27 January 2020]
6. Rodecape, 'Gilding the Sunflower', 97; Cooper, 'The Modern Messiah'.
7. *The Wasp*, San Francisco, Vol. VIII, No. 296, 31 March 1882 https://archive.org/details/waspjanjuly188208unse/page/n241/mode/2up?q=prattle [accessed 27 April 2026]
8. Leslie Freudenheim, *Oscar Wilde, Joseph Worcester, and the English Arts & Crafts Movement: an Historical Footnote* (Berkeley, CA: Berkeley

Architectural Heritage Association, 17 July 2008) http://berkeleyheritage.com/essays/wilde-worcester.html [accessed 17 October 2019]
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. *Daily Alta California*, 28 February and 29 February 1888. [Both California Digital Newspaper Collection (CDNC) accessed 9 November 2019]
12. Eugen Neuhaus, *William Keith: The Man and the Artist* (Berkeley, CA, 1938), 48.
13. George Inness, 'A Painter on Painting', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, No. CCCXXXIII, February 1878, Vol. LVI, 458–61, 458.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., 461.
17. Keith is citing John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 5 Vols. (1843–60). Vol III, preface, xii. (Project Guttenberg, 2012) http://www.gutenberg.org/files/38923/38923-h/38923-h.htm [accessed 21 April 2020]
18. Personalia, 1856–1883, Notes for Lectures. The Keith-McHenry-Pond Family Papers (KMPFP) 1841–1961, BANC MSS C-B 595. The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; Brother Cornelius (Fidelis Cornelius Braeg), *Keith, Old Master of California*. Two Volumes: Vol. 1 (New York, 1942); Vol. 2 (Fresno, CA, 1956), Vol. I, 202–8; see also Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 48–52.
19. *Oakland Tribune*, 1 March 1888; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 March 1888; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 4 March 1888. [All Newspapers.com (NHN) accessed 7 November 2019]. An abridged version of the lecture appeared, together with a favourable critique, in the *Daily Alta California*, 5 March 1888. [CDNC accessed 9 November 2019]
20. Emily Hay, *William Keith as Prophet Painter* (San Francisco, 1916), 36.
21. Ibid., 37.
22. Thomson Jay Hudson, *The Law of Psychic Phenomena: Systematic Study of Hypnotism, Spiritism, Mental Therapeutics, Etc.* (Chicago, 1893), 25–6.
23. James Hyslop, *Life after Death: Problems of the Future Life and its Nature* (New York, 1918), 306.
24. Sir Oliver Lodge, *Survival of Man*: *A Study in Unrecognised Human Faculty* (New York, 1909), preface. Lodge was mocked by his fellow scientists as a gullible researcher unable to detect fraud. Undeterred, he continued to work in this field, especially after he lost a son in the carnage of the First World War whom he tried to reach by telepathy.
25. Alfred C. Harrison, Jr, 'The Art of William Keith' in *The Comprehensive Keith: The 100-year History of the St Mary's College Collection of Works by William Keith* (California, 2011), 66, citing Mary Bell, *University of California Magazine*, Vol 3, Berkeley, 1 April 1897, 95.
26. Jane C. Croly, *The History of the Women's Club Movement in America* (New York, c. 1898), 15–16.

27. Charles C. Hoag, *Our Society Blue Book*: *The Fashionable Private Address Directory* (San Francisco, 1899), 295–6.
28. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 15 November 1895; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 10 December 1895; idem, 8 October 1901. [All NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
29. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. 1, 268.
30. Ibid., 269, and footnote for the location of the fire.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Personalia, 1856–1883, Notes for Lectures, KMPFP; Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 270–3.
35. Harriet Foster Beecher (1854–1915), portrait, landscape and still-life painter, arrived in San Francisco in 1875, she studied at the School of Design under Virgil Williams. Highly regarded, she exhibited widely. Edan Hughes, *Artists in California, 1786–1940* (San Francisco, 1986), 39; Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 273.
36. Notes for Lectures, KMPFP; Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 273–5.
37. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 28 April 1889. A truncated version of the story appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, 9 June 1889. [Both NHN accessed 7 November 2019]. From Irish mythology, the Milesians were the final race to settle in Ireland after wandering the earth for hundreds of years. They represent the people of Ireland. A *spailpín*, *spalpin* or *spalpeen* is Irish Gaelic for an itinerant farmworker or rascal.
38. Hay, *Keith as Prophet Painter*, 30.
39. *The Columbia Herald*, 4 November 1898; *Kansas City Journal* (Missouri), 13 November 1898; *The Eddy Current* (New Mexico), 3 December 1898, under the heading 'Was Wondering'; *The Worthington Advance* (Minnesota), 8 December 1898, under the heading 'His Quandary'; *The Hope Pioneer* (North Dakota), 15 December 1898, under the same heading; *The Anderson Intelligencer* (South Carolina), 22 February 1899, under the heading 'A Troubled Irishman'. [All Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers (CAD) accessed 1 August 2019]
40. *Litchfield Mercury* (Staffordshire, England), 9 December 1898: *Driffield Times* (Yorkshire), 10 December 1898, under column 'Varieties'; *Rhyl Record and Advertiser* (Wales), 28 January 1899, under a column 'Literary Extracts'; *Jarrow Express* (Durham), 24 March 1899; *Yorkshire Gazette*, 22 July 1899, under a column 'To Raise a Smile'; *Bridgnorth Journal and South Shropshire Advertiser*, 2 June 1900, under a column 'Tit-Bits'. [All British Newspaper Archives (BNA) accessed 1 August 2019]
41. *San Francesco Call*, 29 January1899. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
42. Ibid.
43. The Russo-Japanese War (8 February 1904–5 September 1905) was being fought at the time of their discussion.

44. George Wharton James, 'William Keith', *The Craftsman*, Vol. VII, No 3., December 1904, 299–309, 305–7; Gene Hailey (ed.), *William Keith, Thomas Hill, Albert Bierstadt: Biography and Works* (California: California Art Research Project, Volume Two, First Series, 1937), 14–16; Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 433–4.
45. James, 'William Keith', 305.

Away from the Easel

1. Baltasar Gracián, *The Art of Worldly Wisdom* (1647), 247, translated by Joseph Jacobs, 1892.
2. *Biographical Card Index*. Card Nos 101–3. Sacramento, California, California State Library. *California, Biographical Index Cards, 1781–1990*. [Accessed ancestry.com 11 July 2019]
3. Alec X. McCausland, 'The Olympic Club's History', *The Olympian*, Diamond Jubilee Number, May 1935, Volume XXIII, no. 5, 6–7, 30–1, 64, 6. https://archive.org/stream/olympian19351937olym/olympian19351937olymdjvu.txt [Accessed 31 October 2019]
4. *The May Festival of the Turnverein Association*, San Francisco. A pictorial letter sheet (San Francisco, 1856); Gary F. Kurutz, 'Popular Culture on the Golden Shore', 280–315, in Kevin Starr and Richard J. Orsi (eds.) *Rooted in Barbarous Soil: People Culture, and Community in Gold Rush California* (Berkeley, 2000), 304, 306.
5. Nahl Brothers, *Instruction in Gymnastics* (San Francisco, 1863), 12.
6. Brother Cornelius (Fidelis Cornelius Braeg), *Keith, Old Master of California*. Two Volumes: Vol. 1 (New York, 1942); Vol. 2 (Fresno, CA, 1956), Vol. I, 18.
7. *Daily Alta California*, 19 September 1861. [California Digital Newspaper Collection (CDNC) accessed 1 December 2019]
8. Ibid., 28 November 1863. [CDNC accessed 1 December 2019]
9. McCausland, 'The Olympic Club's History', 6.
10. John S. Hittell, 'Art in San Francisco', *The Pacific Monthly*, Vol. X, No. 3, July 1863, 99–107, 103.
11. The Olympic Club, official website https://www.olyclub.com/history/ [accessed 29 October 2019]
12. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 20 November 1875. [Newspapers.com (NHN) accessed 2 December 2019]
13. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 1 May 1879; idem, 16 January 1899. [Both NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
14. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 7 April 1892; *San Francisco Call*, 7 April 1892. [Both NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
15. *The Berkeley Gazette*, 25 July 1904. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
16. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 19 April 1887. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]

17. *The Bohemian Club San Francisco: Certificate of Incorporation, Constitution, By-Laws and Rules*, Club House. NE Corner of Post Street and Grant Avenue (1904), 11, 20–1.
18. Ibid., 12. They moved to their present location at 624 Taylor Street in 1933.
19. Ibid. The motto is from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act 2: Scene 2.
20. Roy Morris, Jr, *Declaring His Genius: Oscar Wilde in North America* (Cambridge, MA, 2013), 140.
21. G. William Domhoff, *Social Cohesion & the Bohemian Grove: The Power Elite at Summer Camp* (2005). https://whorulesamerica.ucsc.edu/power/bohemian_grove.html [accessed 17 January 2020]
22. *The Bohemian Club, Constitution, By-Laws and Rules*, 92, for Keith's date of joining as full member; on 109 he is listed as an honorary member. He appears in the 1911 edition in the Obituary List, 126.
23. Domhoff, *Social Cohesion & the Bohemian Grove*.
24. Eugen Neuhaus, *William Keith: The Man and the Artist* (Berkeley, CA, 1938), 67.
25. Ibid.
26. Eugen Neuhaus, *Drawn from Memory: A Self Portrait* (Palo Alto, California, 1964), 75.
27. Ibid., 75–6, and photographed in Bohemian Grove, 1912, facing 96.
28. Ibid., 76.
29. Edward Robeson Taylor, *Sonnets of Edward Robeson Taylor on some pictures painted by William Keith* (San Francisco, 1898), 25.
30. *Oakland Tribune*, 8 July 1905. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]; Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. II, 91. The painting is reproduced, together with a key, in Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. II, 181.
31. *San Francesco Call*, 31 December 1894. [CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]
32. *San Francesco Call*, 26 March 1893. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 26 March 1893. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
33. *San Francesco Call*, 3 February 1895. [CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 3 February 1895. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
34. *San Francesco Call*, 22 May 1896. [CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]
35. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 27 November 1909. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]; *San Francesco Call*, 28 November 1909. [CDNC accessed 6 October 2019]
36. *San Francisco Call*, 30 July 1890; *Daily Alta California*, 30 July 1890. [Both CDNC accessed 10 January 2020]
37. *Daily Alta California*, 31 July 1890. [CDNC accessed 10 January 2020]
38. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 8 August 1890. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
39. *San Francisco Call*, 8 August 1890; *Daily Alta California*, 9 August 1890. [Both CDNC accessed 10 January 2020]; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 8 August 1890. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]

40. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 8 August 1890. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
41. *Daily Alta California*, 13 August 1890. [CDNC accessed 10 January 2020]
42. *San Francisco Call*, 13 August and 21 August 1890: *Daily Alta California*, 21 August 1890. [All CDNC accessed 10 January 2020]
43. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 328. A Keith family relative in conversation with Brother Cornelius.
44. Ibid., 329.
45. Ibid., 328–9.
46. Charles A. Keeler, 'The American Turner: William Keith and his Work', *The Land Of Sunshine*, *a Magazine of California and the Southwest*, VII, June to November 1897, 253–59, 253, 259; Gene Hailey (ed.), *William Keith, Thomas Hill, Albert Bierstadt: Biography and Works* (California: California Art Research Project (CARP), Volume Two, First Series, 1937), 26–30.
47. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 47–8.
48. Ibid., 66.
49. Ed Herny, Shelley Rideout and Katie Wadell, *Berkeley Bohemia: Artists and Visionaries of the Early 20th Century* (Layton, UT, 2008), 20.
50. *Oakland Tribune*, 21 March 1905. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
51. *The Californian* (Salinas, CA), 7 September 1903. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
52. Neuhaus, *William Keith: Man and Artist*, 87.
53. Ibid., 67; Alexandra M. Nickliss, *Phoebe Apperson Hearst: A Life of Power and Politics* (Lincoln, NE, 2018), 315.
54. *Daily Alta California*, 14 November 1886. [CDNC accessed 10 January 2020]
55. Emily P. B. Hay, *William Keith as Prophet Painter* (San Francisco, 1916), 12.
56. Keeler, 'The American Turner', 253.
57. Hay, *Keith as Prophet Painter*, 15.
58. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 13 July 1898. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
59. *The Berkeley Gazette*, 29 November 1901. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
60. *Aberdeen Journal, and General Advertiser for the North of Scotland*, 12 April and 8 May 1899. [Both NHN accessed 12 June 2020]
61. *The Berkeley Gazette*, 28 January 1910; *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, 19 April 1910. [Both NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
62. Cutting. Craigdam Church binder file, Tarves Heritage Centre, Tarves, Aberdeenshire.
63. *The Fresno Morning Republican* (Fresno, CA), 8 November 1914. [NHN accessed 2 February 2019]
64. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. II, 23. When Lena died in 1949, Mary arranged, after six months of negotiation, to send her ashes to Oldmeldrum for burial.
65. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 67.
66. 'William Keith Memorabilia Shelf Lists'. The Oakland Museum of California, publications and periodicals.

67. From John Muir's personal library Holt-Atherton Special Collections. https://www.pacific.edu/university-libraries/find/holt-atherton-special-collections/john-muir-papers/john-muirs-personal-library.html [accessed 1 December 2019]
68. Hay, *Keith as Prophet Painter*, 37.
69. Archibald M'Kay, *Ingleside Lilts and Other Poems* (Kilmarnock: Archibald M'Kay, 1861), iii. Ingleside is Scots for (open) fireside, hearth.
70. Hay, *Keith as Prophet Painter*, 40.
71. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 75.
72. *The San Francisco Call*, 11 September 1898. [Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers (CAD) accessed 1 August 2019]; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 18 September 1898. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
73. *Californian Illustrated Magazine*, Volume 4 (California Publishing Company, 1893), 526–34.
74. Ibid., 528.
75. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 18 November 1883; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 2 December 1883. [Both NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
76. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 29 October 1896; *San Francisco Call*, 30 October 1896; *The Berkeley Gazette*, 22 December 1908. [All NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
77. *Oakland Tribune*, 7 May 1904. [NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
78. *The Los Angeles Times*, 11 December 1904; *The Berkeley Gazette*, 17 December 1904. [Both NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
79. *San Francesco Call*, 2 December 1906. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
80. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 28 January 1910. [NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
81. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 18 May 1896. [NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
82. 1 Timothy 5:2.
83. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 19 May 1896. [NHN accessed 7 November 2019]. The quotations is taken from the poem 'Sir Galahad' by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 'My strength is as the strength of ten / because my heart is pure', lines 3, 4. *Ballads of Bravery* (Project Gutenberg, 2016), 87. https://www.gutenberg.org/files/53148/53148-h/53148-h.htm [accessed 7 November 2019]
84. Noel Wise, *An Uncommon Journey, Reflections on the Life of Mary McHenry Keith* (Stanford, CA, 2002), 30fn., citing Mary McHenry Keith, *Notes in Answer to Questions by Brother Cornelius*, September 1933. Mary also paid NAWSA subscriptions for her mother and several friends.
85. Wise, *An Uncommon Journey*, 30fn., citing a letter from NAWSA to Mary McHenry Keith, 27 July 1900.
86. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 16 July 1900; *The Santa Maria Times* (Santa Maria, CA), 28 July 1900; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 14 November, 2 December and 16 December 1900; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 16 December 1900; *Oakland Tribune*, 17 December 1900; *Feather River Bulletin* (Quincy, CA), 27 December 1900. [All NHN accessed 6 November 2019]; *The Topeka State Journal* (Kansas), 24 November 1900. [CAD accessed 5 August 2019]

87. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 6 January 1901. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]. Keith is summarising the fourth prophecy in the Book of Daniel, 10–12. Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables* (New York, 2005), 474–7.
88. Wise, *An Uncommon Journey*, 26–30.
89. Ibid., 30, citing a letter from Mary McHenry Keith to C. Pardee, 27 February 1898; *The Press Democrat*, Santa Rosa, 24 May 1907; *San Francesco Call*, 9 July 1907. [Both CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
90. *The Berkeley Gazette*, 18 May 1909; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 18 May 1909. [Both NHN accessed 6 November 2019]; *Sacramento Union*, 1 March 1910. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
91. *The San Francisco Call*, 19 July 1896. [NHN accessed 6 November 2019]; Wise, *An Uncommon Journey*, 33fn. citing a letter from Susan B. Anthony, President of NAWSA, to Mary McHenry Keith, 28 January 1905.
92. *San Francesco Call*, 12 August 1912. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
93. Ibid.
94. *The Woman's Journal, Official Organ of the National American Woman Suffrage Association*, Boston, 16 September 1911. Law Journal Library. https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/wmjrnl42&id=289&collection=journals&index= [accessed 22 January 2020]
95. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 10 July 1911. [NHN accessed 7 November 2019]
96. Wise, *An Uncommon Journey*, 36–7, and 38fn. citing an article in the *San Francisco Call*, 1 December 1908; and letter from Sarah C. Borland, CESA to Mary McHenry Keith, 14 May 1911.
97. *Sacramento Union*, 12 February 1911. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
98. Robert P. J. Cooney, Jr, *Winning the Vote: The Triumph of the American Woman Suffrage Movement*, National Women's History Project. (Half Moon Bay, CA, 2005), 153. On 26 August 1920, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution gave female citizens the right to vote in all American elections.
99. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 447; Robert B. Waltz and David G. Engle, 'Little Old Cabin in the Lane', *The Traditional Ballad Index: An Annotated Bibliography of the Folk Songs of the English-Speaking World* (hosted by California State University, Fresno, 2007). http://www.csufresno.edu/folklore/ballads/RcLOLCIL.html [accessed 4 June 2020]

Disaster, Decline and Death

1. Joseph Addison, *The Spectator,* No. 349, Thursday, April 10, 1712.
2. Brother Cornelius (Fidelis Cornelius Braeg), *Keith, Old Master of California*. Two Volumes: Vol. 1 (New York, 1942); Vol. 2 (Fresno, CA, 1956), Vol. I, 448. The events were described to Brother Cornelius by Mary Keith. See also Cornelius, Vol. II, 131, where, according to one report, Keith was turned back by having a policeman point a gun at his head.
3. 'Local Artists Re-establishing Their Colony', *San Francisco Chronicle*, 30 June 1907. [Newspapers.com (NHN) accessed 2 December 2019]

4. Mabel Urmy Seares, 'William Keith and His Times', in Bruce Porter et al., *Art in California: A Survey of American Art with Special Reference to Californian Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, Past and Present, particularly as those Arts were Represented at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition* (San Francisco, 1916), 105–10, 109; Gene Hailey (ed.), *William Keith, Thomas Hill, Albert Bierstadt: Biography and Works* (CA: California Art Research Project (CARP), Volume Two, First Series, 1937), 10.
5. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 449.
6. Ibid. The Huddart rescue was told to Brother Cornelius by Miss E. K. Pond and reported in *The Evening Mail* (Stockton, CA), 24 April 1906; *The Los Angeles Times*, 24 April 1906. [Both NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
7. Tirza True Latimer, 'The Art of Starting Over: San Francisco Artists and the Great Quake of 1906', *American Art*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Spring 2006), 96–107, 96.
8. Daniel H. Burnham assisted by Edward H. Bennett, *Report on a Plan for San Francisco Submitted to the Mayor and Board of Supervisors* (San Francisco, CA, 1905).
9. Latimer, 'The Art of Starting Over', 98/9; Peter E. Palmquist and Thomas R. Kailbourn, with foreword by Martha A Sandweiss, *Pioneer Photographers of the Far West: A Biographical Dictionary, 1840–1865* (California, 2000), 582.
10. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. II, 91, citing Shawan's *Scrap Book*.
11. Eugen Neuhaus, *Drawn from Memory: A Self Portrait* (Palo Alto, CA, 1964), 78, 81; *San Francisco Call*, 1 October 1906. [California Digital Newspaper Collection (CDNC) accessed 1 October 2019]
12. *The Wasp*, 25 August 1906, cited in CARP, 11–12.
13. Latimer, 'The Art of Starting Over', 96–107, 99; Elaine Adams, 'William Keith (1838–1911): Seeking the Unseen Spiritual Sense in Nature', *California Art Club Newsletter*, Winter 2011, 1–6, 10, 6; Alfred C. Harrison, Jr, 'The Art of William Keith' in *William Keith: The Saint Mary's Collection* (1988) reprinted in *The Comprehensive Keith: The 100-year History of the St Mary's College Collection of Works by William Keith* 2011 to coincide with the 100th Anniversary celebration (California, 2011), 43, 87; 'How Artists Came Out of the Disaster', *San Francisco Chronicle*, 14 May 1906. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]; Seares, 'Keith and His Times', 109; CARP, 16–17.
14. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 450.
15. Seares, 'Keith and His Times', 109; Eugen Neuhaus, *William Keith: the Man and the Artist* (Berkeley, 1938), 88.
16. *Oakland Tribune*, 9 May 1907; *The Berkeley Gazette*, 10 May 1907; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 14 May 1906. [All NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
17. *Oakland Tribune*, 3 May and 9 May 1907; *The Berkeley Gazette*, 10 May 1907. [All NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
18. Partial List of Correspondence, Letters from Thomas E. Gibbon and Francis B. Harrison. Keith-McHenry-Pond Family Papers (KMPFP) 1841–1961, BANC MSS C-B 595, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

19. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 88.
20. *Oakland Tribune*, 3 May 1906. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
21. Edan M. Hughes, *Artists in California 1786–1940* (San Francisco, 1986), 297–8. The Mark Hopkins Institute survived the earthquake but was destroyed in the fire that followed, but not before nearly all the valuable paintings had been saved. *The Berkeley Gazette*, 24 April 1906. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
22. *San Francisco Call*, 2 September 1906. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]; Latimer, 'The Art of Starting Over', 99/100; Adams, 'Keith: Seeking the Unseen', 6.
23. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 31 August 1902. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]; *San Francisco Call*, 27 October 1907. [CDNC accessed 8 October 2019]
24. *San Francisco Call*, 27 October 1907. [CDNC accessed 8 October 2019]
25. *The Bohemian Club San Francisco: Certificate of Incorporation, Constitution, By-Laws and Rules*, Club House. NE Corner of Post Street and Grant Avenue (1895), 58. Coolbrith was made an honorary member in 1874. Margaret B. Bowman, wife of club founder, James F. Bowman, was elected during the club's first ever formal meeting; author Sarah Jane Lippincott and actress Elizabeth Crocker Bowers were the others.
26. Partial List of Correspondence. Correspondence with Ina D. Coolbrith, KMPFP.
27. *The Wasp*, 21 July 1906, cited in CARP, 11.
28. *San Francisco Call*, July 15, 1906. [NHN accessed 6 December 2019]; Robert W. Edwards and Jennie V. Cannon, *The Untold History of the Carmel and Berkeley Art Colonies*, Vol. 1. (Oakland, CA: East Bay Heritage Project, 2012), 75/6. http://www.tfaoi.org/aa/10aa/10aa557.htm [accessed 15 August 2019]; *San Francisco Call*, 1 December 1906; *The Berkeley Gazette*, 3 December 1906; *Oakland Tribune*, 9 December 1906. [All NHN accessed 6 December 2019]; *San Francisco Call*, 3 October 1909. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
29. A list of exhibitions and venues at which Keith participated is in Edwards and Cannon, *The Untold History*, 246.
30. *San Francisco Call*, 2 December 1906. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
31. Susan Dinkelspiel Cerny, *Berkeley Landmarks: An Illustrated Guide to Berkeley, California's Architecture* (Berkeley, 2002).
32. Edwards and Cannon, *The Untold History*, 52, 79: Hughes, *Artists in California*, 31, 389.
33. *Oakland Tribune*, 28 March1905; *San Francisco Call*, 3 April 1905; *The Berkeley Gazette*, 4 April 1905. [All NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
34. *San Francisco Call*, 3 April 1905. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]; Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 48 n12.
35. Edwards and Cannon, *The Untold History*, 78/9.
36. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. 1, 495.
37. Ibid., 495, 589; Edwards and Cannon, *The Untold History*, 102, n73.
38. Hughes, *Artists in California*, 309.

39. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 423–4.
40. Ibid., Vol. II, 115.
41. Edwards and Cannon, *The Untold History*, 87–8; *San Francisco Call*, 1 May 1896. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
42. Edwards and Cannon, *The Untold History*, 87–8.
43. Leon J. Richardson, *Berkeley Culture, University of California Highlights, and University Extension, 1892–1960: oral history transcript and related material, an interview conducted by Amelia R. Fry*, Regional Cultural History Project (Berkeley: University of California, Bancroft Library, 1962), ii, 69.
44. Ibid., 70–1, 73, 77.
45. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 4 August 1906. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]; Edwards and Cannon, *The Untold History*, 81.
46. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 4 August 1906. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
47. *Berkeley Daily Reporter*, 4 August 1906, cited in Edwards and Cannon, *The Untold History*, 81.
48. *San Francisco Call*, 9 September 1906. [CDNC accessed 17 December 2019]
49. *Evening Star* (Fairbanks, Alaska), 30 August 1906, cited in Edwards and Cannon, *The Untold History*, 82.
50. *San Francisco Call*, 3 July 1909. [CDNC accessed 17 October 2019]
51. *The Courier, Berkeley Weekly*, January 1916, cited in Edwards and Cannon, *The Untold History*, 82.
52. *The Berkeley Gazette*, 11 September 1906. [NHN accessed 7 December 2019]
53. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 11 September 1906; *San Francisco Call*, 11 September 1906. [Both NHN accessed 7 December 2019]
54. *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 15 September 1906. [Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers (CAD) accessed 1 August 2019]
55. *Oakland Tribune*, 1 October 1906; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 21 October 1906; *The Berkeley Gazette*, 22 October 1906; *Oakland Tribune*, 10 November 1906. [All NHN accessed 7 December 2019]
56. *San Francisco Call*, 1 October 1906. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
57. The letter, dated 8 October 1906, is reprinted in full in *San Francisco Call*, 26 November 1906; *The Berkeley Gazette*, 26 November 1906. [Both NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
58. *New York Tribune*, 6 April 1907. [CAD accessed 5 March 2020]; *Oakland Tribune*, 9 May 1907; *The Berkeley Gazette*, 10 May 1907. [Both NHN accessed 6 November 2019]
59. *Los Angeles Times*, 21 April, 28 April and 29 April 1907. [All NHN accessed 7 November 2019]; Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 89.
60. Latimer, 'The Art of Starting Over', 104.
61. *Oakland Tribune*, 14 July 1907; *The Berkeley Gazette*, 15 July 1907. [Both NHN accessed 6 December 2019]
62. *San Francisco Call*, 14 July 1907. [CDNC accessed 3 October 2019]

63. *The Berkeley Gazette*, 16 July and 17 July 1907. [Both NHN accessed 6 December 2019]
64. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 89; *San Francisco Call*, 14 July 1907. [CDNC accessed 5 March 2020]; Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 82.
65. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 21 July and 22 July 1907; *The Berkeley Gazette*, 22 July 1907; *San Francisco Call*, 22 July 1907. [All NHN accessed 6 December 2019]
66. *Oakland Tribune*, 24 July 1907; *San Francisco Call*, 25 July 1907. [Both NHN accessed 6 December 2019]
67. *Oakland Tribune*, 25 October 1907; *The Evening Mail* (Stockton, CA), 28 October 1907; *San Francisco Call*, 26 October 1907. [All NHN accessed 6 December 2019]
68. John Muir, 'The Yosemite', *The Eight Wilderness Discovery Books* (London, 1992), 715.
69. *San Francisco Call*, 5 November 1907; *The Recorder* (San Francisco), 6 November 1907. [Both NHN accessed 6 December 2019]
70. *San Francisco Call*, 26 October and 5 November 1907. [Both CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]; Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 82.
71. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 5 February 1908; *San Francisco Call*, 3 May 1908. [Both NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
72. *Oakland Tribune*, 23 May 1908. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
73. 'Art Topic', *San Francisco Chronicle*, 22 June 1902. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
74. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 84.
75. *The Berkeley Gazette*, 22 August 1908. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019] California gold miners used 'webfoot country' as a pejorative term for settlers in Oregon, implying they were so accustomed to the rain they must have had webbed feet. Oregonians embraced the term and by the 1860s it was commonly used to describe themselves.
76. Ibid., 28 September 1908. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
77. *San Francisco Call*, 28 October 1908. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 29 November 1908; *The Berkeley Gazette*, 30 November 1908. [Both NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
78. *San Francisco Call*, 28 October 1908. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
79. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. II, 140, 149.
80. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 90; Harrison, 'The Art of William Keith', 95.
81. *Oakland Tribune*, 21 February 1909. [NHN accessed 2 January 2019]. The painting was one of three depicting the locality, gifted in 1948 to the Saint Mary's College Collection by his son, Averell Harriman, Democrat politician and foreign policy diplomat during the Cold War years. *The Comprehensive Keith*. Catalogue nos. 118, 119, 120, 174–5. A painting of *Pelican Bay* dated 1908, executed for Keith's friend and trekking companion,

'Charlie' O'Callaghan, is also in the collection, gifted by O'Callaghan's sister, Margaret. Catalogue no. 121, 175.

82. *Oakland Tribune*, 11 May 1909; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 11 May 1909. [Both NHN accessed 6 December 2019]; *The Daily Capital Journal* (Salem, Oregon), 11 May 1909; *The Tacoma Times* (Washington), 11 May 1909. [CAD accessed 1 August 2019]
83. *San Francisco Call*, 24 November 1909. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
84. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 1 March 1909. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
85. *Oakland Tribune*, 15 March 1909. [NHN accessed 6 December 2019]
86. *San Francisco Call*, 18 April 1909. [NHN accessed 6 December 2019]
87. *Oakland Tribune*, 22 August 1909; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 7 November 1909. [Both NHN accessed 6 December 2019]
88. In eadem locis.
89. *San Francisco Call*, 8 August 1909. [NHN accessed 6 December 2019]
90. *Monterey Daily Cypress and Monterey American*, 3 September 1909. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
91. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 25 September 1909. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
92. *The Sacramento Bee*, 2 April 1910. [NHN accessed 6 December 2019]
93. Winfried P. Woolf, 'The Poetry of Sidney Lanier', *The Sewanee Review*, Vol. 10, No 3 (July 1902), The Johns Hopkins University Press, 325–40, 329–30. Forspent is an archaic term for worn-out, or exhausted.
94. Woolf, 'The Poetry of Sidney Lanier', 329–30.
95. *Exhibition of Paintings by the Late William Keith, The Art Institute of Chicago; 22 April to 6 May 1913.* Catalogue number 18; James William Pattison, 'William Keith: Poetical Painter', *Fine Arts Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 6 (June 1913), 366–78, 376.
96. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. II, 80.
97. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 28 August 1910. [NHN accessed 6 December 2019]
98. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 1 September 1910. [NHN accessed 6 December 2019]
99. Ibid., 13 September 1910; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 18 September 1910. [Both NHN accessed 6 December 2019]
100. *San Francisco Call*, 2 September 1910. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]; Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 523, for Keith's illnesses.
101. *The Berkeley Gazette*, 14 October 1910. [NHN accessed 6 December 2019]
102. *San Francisco Call*, 22 February and 24 March 1911. [Both CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]; *The Berkeley Gazette*, 22 February 1911. [NHN accessed 6 December 2019]; Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 9.
103. *San Francisco Call*, 13 April 1911. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
104. *The Berkeley Gazette*, 13 April 1911; *Oakland Tribune*, 13 April 1911. [Both NHN accessed 6 December 2019]; *The Daily Capital Journal* (Salem, Oregon), 13 April 1911; *The Norwich Bulletin* (Connecticut), 14 April 1911. [Both CAD accessed 1 August 2019]

105. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 14 April 1911. [NHN accessed 6 December 2019]. It gives his date of birth as 3 November 1839.
106. *San Francisco Call*, 14 April 1911. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
107. Ibid.
108. Ibid.
109. Ibid., 16 April 1911. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
110. *Oakland Tribune*, 9 July 1911. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
111. *San Francisco Call*, 15 April 1911. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
112. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 16 April 1911. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]. As many as thirty young girls preceded the casket according to some reports.
113. *San Francisco Call*, 16 April 1911. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
114. *Hanford Journal*,14 April 1911; *Los Angeles Herald*, 14 April 1911; *Morning Press* (Santa Barbara), 15 April 1911; *Los Angeles Herald*, 16 April 1911; *Sacramento Union*, 16 April 1911; *San Diego Union and Daily Bee*, 16 April 1911. [All CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]; *The Fairmont West Virginian*, 19 April 1911. [CAD accessed 1 August 2019]
115. Edwin Markham, *California the Wonderful*: *Her Romantic History, Her Picturesque People, Her Wild Shores* (New York, 1914), 373.
116. Papers of William Keith, Papers Relating to his Estate, Will. KMPFP. *Estate of William Keith, No. 15212, Dept. 4, decree Fixing Inheritance tax (Cal. Super. Ct., 23 September 1911*; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 30 July 1911. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
117. Papers of William Keith, Papers Relating to his Estate, Will. KMPFP; *San Francisco Call*, 23 April 1911. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 22 April 1911. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
118. *San Francisco Call*, 18 May 1911. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 18 May 1911. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
119. Papers of William Keith, Papers Relating to his Estate, Will. KMPFP; *San Francisco Call*, 30 July 1911. [CDNC accessed 8 October 2019]. Among the biggest of his holdings were United Railroads of San Francisco, $21,440; Southern Pacific Company, $9,500; Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company, $24,750; Western Pacific Railroad Company, $10,230; Spring Valley Water Company, $18,800; Pacific Gas and Electric Company, $9,800; and Los Angeles Pacific Railroad Company, $10,400.
120. *Oakland Tribune*, 29 July 1911. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
121. *San Francisco Call*, 29 September 1911. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]
122. Ibid., 18 April 1912. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
123. *The Wasp*, 22 April 1911, cited in CARP, 53–4.
124. *The Berkeley Gazette*, 21 July 1911; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 10 December 1911. [Both NHN accessed 2 December 2019]. The family split the studio in two and rented half to the artist Margaret Herrick. Although the lighting was good there was no ventilation and she left after a month. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. II, 140.

125. *The Oakland Tribune*, 15 October 1910. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]; Edwards and Cannon, *The Untold History*, 96.
126. *The Berkeley Gazette*, 15 October 1910, cited in Edwards and Cannon, *The Untold History*, 97.
127. Ibid., 31 October 1910. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]; Edwards and Cannon, *The Untold History*, 97. Alfred D. Lemon is perhaps best known for his much-reproduced portrait of Miss Jenny Lind, the opera singer.
128. *San Francisco Call*, 26 February 1911. [CAD accessed 12 April 2020]; Edwards and Cannon, *The Untold History*, 97.
129. Edwards and Cannon, *The Untold History*, 169.
130. *The Statutes of California and Amendments to the Codes, passed at the Thirty-Eighth Session of the Legislature, 1909, pertaining to the city of Berkeley, Chapter 17 Article IX, sec.47 (32)*, (Sacramento, 1909), 1236, https://clerk.assembly.ca.gov/sites/clerk.assembly.ca.gov/files/archive/Statutes/1907_09/1909.pdf#page=53 [accessed 12 April 2020]; *San Francisco Call*, 5 December 1906. [CAD accessed 12 April 2020]. *Berkeley Gazette*, 9 April 1900. [NHN accessed 2 December 2019]; Richard Schwartz, *Berkeley 1900: Daily Life at the Turn of the Century* (Berkeley, 2009), 187; Edwards and Cannon, *The Untold History*, 98.

Resurrection

1. The motto (They have said, What say they: Let them say) is inscribed above the inner door of the tower leading to Mitchell Hall and the Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen, taken from the original gateway of Marischal College and University of Aberdeen founded in 1593 by George Keith, 5th Earl Marischal of Scotland.
2. *San Francisco Call*, 15 August 1912. [California Digital Newspaper Collection (CDNC) accessed 1 October 2019]; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 15 August 1912; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 19 August 1912; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 2 September 1912. [All Newspapers.com (NHN) accessed 6 December 2019]
3. Brother Cornelius (Fidelis Cornelius Braeg), *Keith, Old Master of California*. Two Volumes: Vol. 1 (New York, 1942); Vol. 2 (Fresno, CA, 1956), Vol. I, 519, 537fn; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 30 September 1912; *The Berkeley Gazette*, 30 September 1912. [Both NHN accessed 6 December 2019]
4. *San Francisco Call*, 7 January 1913. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 9 January 1913; *San Francisco Call*, 10 January 1913; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 16 January 1913. [All NHN accessed 6 December 2019]
5. *San Francisco Call*, 17 January 1913. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 17 January 1913; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 13 March 1913. [Both NHN accessed 6 December 2019]
6. *San Francisco Call*, 19 March 1913. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]

7. *Exhibition of Paintings by the Late William Keith, The Art Institute of Chicago; 22 April to 6 May 1913*; Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol II, 74–77, 235; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 21 March 1913; *Oakland Tribune*, 21 March 1913; *San Francisco Call*, 21 March 1913; *Oakland Tribune*, 29 March 1913. [All NHN accessed 6 December 2019]; Author's correspondence with Ryerson & Burnham Libraries, Research Center, the Art Institute of Chicago, 3 August 2020.
8. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. II, 74–7, 235, 256; The Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, *The Glory of the Heavens*. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%27The_Glory_of_the_Heavens%27_by_William_Keith, 1891.JPG [accessed 20 November 2025]
9. James William Pattison, 'William Keith: Poetical Painter', *Fine Arts Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 6 (June 1913), 366–78, 366.
10. Pattison, 'Keith: Poetical Painter', 376, 378.
11. Ibid., 366.
12. Jessie Maude Wybro, 'California in Exposition Art', *The Overland Monthly*, series 2, Vol. 66, December 1915, 517–521, 517.
13. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 30 November 1915. [NHN accessed 6 December 2019]
14. James A. Ganz (ed.) with Emma Acker, Laura Ackley, Heidi Applegate, *et al.*, *Jewel City: Art from San Francisco's Panama-Pacific International Exhibition* (San Francisco, 2015), 73, 77–8. Following the Exposition, the two murals were moved to the San Francisco Main Library building that opened in 1917. One was installed in the History Room and the other in the general Reading Room. When the Old Main Library became the Asian Art Museum at the close of the twentieth century, the murals were removed and stored with the San Francisco Art Commission where they are still held.
15. Eugen Neuhaus, *Galleries of the Exposition: A Critical Review of the Paintings, Statuary, and the Graphic Arts in the Palace of Fine Arts at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition* (1915), 71; *The Evening Times-Star and Alameda Daily Argus* (Alameda, CA), 2 March 1915. [NHN accessed 6 December 2019]; Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. II, 175–6, for a list of exhibits.
16. Bruce Porter, 'The Beginning of Art in California', in Bruce Porter *et al.*, *Art in California: A Survey of American Art with Special Reference to Californian Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, Past and Present, particularly as those Arts were Represented at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition* (San Francisco, 1916), 21–32, 30.
17. Everett C. Maxwell, 'The Structure of Western Art,' in Bruce Porter *et al.*, *Art in California*, 33–7, 36.
18. John E. D. Trask, 'The Department of Fine Arts at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition', in Bruce Porter *et al.*, *Art in California*, 81–91, 89.
19. Michael Williams, 'The Pageant of California Art', in Bruce Porter *et al.*, *Art in California*, 51–62, 57.

20. Porter Garnett, 'California's Place in Art,' in Bruce Porter *et al.*, *Art in California*, 39–46, 43.
21. Rilla Evelyn Jackman, *American Arts* (New York, 1928), 67–8; Gene Hailey (ed.), *William Keith, Thomas Hill, Albert Bierstadt: Biography and Works* (California: California Art Research Project (CARP), Volume Two, First Series, 1937), 36, 58–9.
22. Eugen Neuhaus, *The History and Ideals of American Art* (Stanford, 1931), 269; Eugen Neuhaus, *William Keith, the Man and the Artist* (Berkeley, 1938), 94.
23. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 95.
24. Neuhaus, *The History and Ideals of American Art*, 113–15.
25. *The Sun* (New York), 16 April 1916. [Chronicling America Historic American Newspapers (CAD) accessed 5 August 2019); *Oakland Tribune*, 23 April 1916. [(NHN accessed 6 December 2019]
26. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 593/4.
27. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 94, 117.
28. *Los Angeles Herald*, 6 August 1919. [CDNC accessed 1 October 2019]
29. *San Francisco Call*, 25 November 1911. [CDNC accessed 6 October 2019]; Alfred C. Harrison, Jr, 'The Art of William Keith' in *William Keith: The Saint Mary's Collection* (1988) reprinted in *The Comprehensive Keith: The 100-year History of the Saint Mary's College Collection of Works by William Keith* (California, 2011), 85.
30. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, n. p.
31. Ibid., 44n.
32. The quotation is a rendition of Friedrich Schiller's, 'He who has done his best for his own times has lived for all times' from the prologue to his play, *Wallenstein* (1798).
33. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 23 October 1938. [NHN accessed 15 August 2019]. Cited in Robert W. Edwards and Jennie V. Cannon, *The Untold History of the Carmel and Berkeley Art Colonies*, Vol. 1 (Oakland, CA: East Bay Heritage Project, 2012), 466. http://www.tfaoi.org/aa/10aa/10aa557.htm [accessed 15 August 2019]
34. In eadem locis.
35. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 93.
36. Brother Cornelius was born Herman Emanuel Braeg in 1877, in Hemishofen, Switzerland, along the Rhine River in what, for a country renowned for its Alpine peaks, was an area of relatively low-lying foothills. From an early age, he appreciated its natural beauty, an appreciation he found easy to translate to the natural wonders of California. Braeg emigrated to America and entered the Christian Brothers as a novice in Baltimore, Maryland in 1892, taking his perpetual vows and the name of Brother Cornelius in 1905. He remained in the Order for the rest of his life, teaching for a year in Maryland before going west for the benefit of his health. He taught at Saint Mary's College, Moraga, for forty-eight years, first as Professor of Religion

and of German, before he founded the Art Department. He also served as the College's Vice-President. *Oakland Tribune*, 30 January 30, 1962. [NHN accessed 6 December 2019]; *Legacy of Brother Cornelius F.S.C. 15 Mar. – 18 Oct. 2003*, a display of Cornelius's own paintings, drawings and sketchbooks. Saint Mary's College, Moraga, CA. https://www.stmarys-ca.edu/past-exhibits/the-legacy-of-brother-cornelius-fsc [Accessed 15 April 2020]

37. *Legacy of Brother Cornelius F.S.C. 15 Mar. – 18 Oct. 2003.*
38. Ibid.

Ibid.; Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. II, *passim*.

39. *Fresno Bee*, 13 June 1935. [NHN accessed 23 April 2022]; Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. I, 587.
40. *Legacy of Brother Cornelius F.S.C. 15 Mar. – 18 Oct. 2003.*
41. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. II, 187.
42. A very small number of ships bore names that were exceptions to these rules. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Liberty_ships [accessed 29 October 2019]
43. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. II, 180.
44. Permanente's California Yard #1 and Yard #2 were usually referred to as 'Kaiser Richmond' Shipyard, after Henry J. Kaiser, industrialist and father of modern US ship building and responsible for organising the Liberty ship construction programme.
45. *Legacy of Brother Cornelius F.S.C. 15 Mar. – 18 Oct. 2003.*
46. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. II, 220; Keith Art Association, Miscellaneous Papers, copies of *The Palette* (bulletin), KMPFP.
47. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. II, 218–21, 225; Oakland Museum of California. https://portal.museumca.org/?search_field=text&q=William+Keith [accessed 15 September 2025]
48. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. II, 229, 233.
49. Ibid., 162, 212, 224/5, 229–30.
50. Oakland Museum of California. https://portal.museumca.org/?search_field=text&q=William+Keith [accessed 15 September 2025]
51. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. II, 192–200.
52. *Oakland Tribune*, 30 January and 31 January 1962; *The San Francisco Examiner*, 31 January 1962; *Sacramento Bee*, 31 January 1962. [All NHN accessed 6 December 2019]
53. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 90; CARP, 58–9.
54. *The Comprehensive Keith*, 202–6.
55. Neuhaus, *Keith: Man and Artist*, 90.
56. Liveauctioneers: https://www.liveauctioneers.com/price-guide/william-keith/24983/; Invaluable, The World's Premier Online Auctions: http://www.invaluable.com; Christie's: https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5561312 [All accessed 18 April 2023]; Auction Lot Search, Mutual Art: https://www.mutualart.com/auction-search? [accessed 16 September 2025]

57. Auction Lot Search, Mutual Art: https://www.mutualart.com/auction-search [accessed 16 September 2025]; Clars Auctions – Artist Spotlight: https://clars.com/artist-spotlight-william-keith/ [accessed 16 September 2025]
58. Cornelius, *Keith, Old Master*, Vol. II, 191. Letter from Aberdeen City Library to Cornelius, 9 February 1949.
59. Ibid., Letter from Edinburgh Public Libraries to Cornelius, 29 January 1952.
60. Brother Cornelius's inscription on the flyleaf of the University of Aberdeen's library copy of *Keith, Old Master of California*, Vol. 2. (1956). William Elphinstone (1431–1514), Bishop of Aberdeen, founded the university in 1495. Hector Boece (1465–1536) was the university's first principal.
61. *The Press and Journal*, 3 December 2018. An article on the forthcoming exhibition had appeared in the *Press and Journal*'s sister paper, *The Evening Express*, the night before.
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63. The *Comprehensive Keith*: *Glacial Meadow and Lake, High Sierra (Tuolumne Meadows)*, 1870s or early 1880s. Cat. No. 27, 128; *Sierra Forest Stream and Sunny Peaks*, circa 1880. Cat. No. 26, 128; *Yosemite Falls*, 1870s or early 1880s. Cat. No. 21, 125; *Hetch Hetchy Valley*, 1907–1910. Cat. No. 166, 198; *Yosemite Valley with Bridal Veil Falls*, circa 1880. Cat. No. 24, 127; *Donner Lake*, circa 1878. Cat. No. 19, 124.
64. Graham White, intro. to *Journeys in the Wilderness: A John Muir Reader* (Edinburgh, 2009), 11.
65. Ibid., 15.
66. *The San Francisco Call*, 25 December 1895. [CDNC accessed 9 November 2019]
67. Ibid., 29 January 1899. [CDNC accessed 9 November 2019]
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