

MICHELE FELICE CORNE

by

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## SUMMARY

Michele Felice Cornè (c 1757-1845) was born in the Kingdom of Naples, possibly on the Island of Elba. Trained in his native country, he was an accomplished marine and landscape painter at the time he left Italy and emigrated to Salem, Massachusetts in 1800.

During his 45 years in America, Cornè lived a quiet life, and were it not for his painting, his obscurity would be complete. For the first 15 years of his residence in this country he was an extremely prolific and versatile craftsman, painting on canvas, paper, wood, metal and plaster, and in such media as oil, water color and india ink. Although best known for his ship portraits and panoramic views of naval battles and landscapes, he also drew portraits, painted charming genre scenes, and copied works of other artists. A testimony of his success in portraying the naval actions of the War of 1812 was the wholesale copying of his paintings of these subjects by other artists, and by craftsmen who utilized them to decorate ceramics, clocks, mirrors and other household items. A catalogue appended to this paper will present the most comprehensive listing of Cornè's work thus far assembled.

This paper will attempt to discuss the following points in the career of Cornè: I. A biographical survey, included in which will be an attempt to correct several erroneous facts which have long been attached to his name. II. A discussion of Cornè as a painter, particularly illustrating the influences on his style. III. A short chapter on Cornè's place in American art, his influence on later American painting, and a critical discussion of his work from both a contemporary and modern viewpoint.

Although Cornè is certainly not the most important, or most influential painter of his time, he is a colorful and interesting artist, whose work has been overlooked by the great majority of the chroniclers of American art. This paper will try to set the artist in his proper place in the history of American painting.

## INTRODUCTION

Although Michele Cornè painted portraits, genre and historical pictures, he is primarily known as a landscape and marine painter. The history and development of early American landscape painting has never been adequately studied in spite of the rather large quantity of material written on the subject.<sup>1</sup> It will not be the task of this introduction to cover this extensive and complex subject, but only to discuss briefly the history of landscape in New England before 1800, the year in which Cornè emigrated to this country.

Perhaps the earliest New England painting which makes use of a scenic background, is a self-portrait of "Captain Thomas Smith" at the Worcester Art Museum, painted about 1690. Though the central figure of the painting is the Captain, himself, through an open window over his right shoulder, a stone fortress and a sea battle between several men-of-war are visible. This technique of introducing landscape as a background for portraits had been used in England since the time of Van Dyke, and it was practiced in the Colonies throughout the eighteenth century by such artists as Smibert, Feke, Blackburn, Greenwood, and Copley. The backgrounds were usually poorly painted, however, and completely subordinate to the figures themselves.

As early as the 1720's there seems to have been some definite attempt at reproducing land and cityscapes for their own sake, rather than as mere foils to portraits and family groups. In 1722 William Burgis moved to Boston from New York, and brought out "A South East View of Ye Great Town of Boston in New England in America." It was quite successful, and several other topographical views followed within a few years.

Nathaniel Emmons, who was born in Boston in 1704, is known to have painted several landscapes, although none survive. His obituary notice in the Boston News Letter of May 29, 1740, stated that:

Some of his pieces are such admirable Imitations of Nature, both in faces, Rivers, Banks, and Rural scenes, that the pleased eye cannot easily leave them.

John Smibert is also thought to have painted at least a few landscapes, but like those of Emmons, none survive today.<sup>2</sup>

By the time of the Revolution and the years after, engraved views of towns and famous sights had become quite popular in Boston. Thomas Johnson, Paul Revere, and Christian Remick were all engaged in this sort of activity, as was Amos Doolittle, who engraved Ralph Earl's four views of the Battles of Lexington and Concord. These



engravings were little more than topographical views, however, and not true landscape.

Marine painting, with the exception of the engraved harbor views, was almost non-existent. The earliest known portrait of a colonial ship is an unsigned representation of the letter of Marque Ship, "Bethel," at the Peabody Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, painted about 1750. There is, however, no proof that the painting was done in this country. There are also at the Peabody Museum three views of the topsail schooner, "Baltick," painted in 1765, and these quite probably were done in the Salem area.

To this point I have discussed only the canvases and engravings done by the better known, and more or less sophisticated artists of the period. As is readily evident, the production of landscape paintings by these artists was quite limited. There is one facet of the artistic production of the eighteenth century which has not been examined, however, the decorative painting of untrained and itinerant artists found on the walls and over the mantels of a large number of houses in the New England area. It is in this rather primitive type of painting that the greatest quantity of early landscape is found.<sup>3</sup>

Sometime before 1742, eleven decorative scenes peopled with small figures were painted on the parlor

walls of the Clark-Frankland House in Boston's North End. Five of these panels survive today, and are perhaps the earliest extant American landscapes with figures.<sup>4</sup> From this time on, and well into the nineteenth century, this type of painting flourished in New England, principally in the rural areas. Walls, overmantels, and fireboards were decorated in a variety of scenes, many of them fanciful representations of classical ruins, but a fair number showing local scenery and village life.

Michele Felice Cornè bridged the gap between the two trends in landscape painting, not only in New England, but in the country as a whole. Though interior decorative painting continued for some time after his death, perhaps the culmination of the art was reached in his work. Walls, fireboards and overmantels in Massachusetts and Rhode Island were decorated not by an untrained artist, but by a man thoroughly versed in the traditions of European art. At the same time, Cornè also painted a number of impressive seascapes and naval scenes, by far the best of their type that had been done in this country up until that time. The following treatise will attempt to install Cornè in his proper place in American painting, by an examination of the life and career of this too little known artist and decorator.

CHAPTER I  
BIOGRAPHY OF MICHELE FELICE CORNE

Cornè in Italy

Michele Felice Cornè was born in the Kingdom of Naples, probably in the year, 1757. The date of his birth has been given by various sources as 1752, 1757, 1762 and 1765, but the exact year is, at present, unknown. His tombstone in a Newport cemetery is inscribed with the year, 1762, but his obituary notice in the Newport Mercury of July 12, 1845 states that he was born in 1757, and was 88 at the time of his death. This date is confirmed by George Champlin Mason, an early biographer of the artist.<sup>1</sup> I am inclined to accept the 1757 date, but the question is purely academic, cannot be proved without research into Italian records, and makes little difference to a discussion of his artistic career.

The exact location of his birth, his parentage, and the station of life into which he was born are unknown. His tombstone gives the information that he was born on the Island of Elba, but this is not confirmed by any other source. It is entirely possible, however, as Elba was part of the Kingdom of Naples, having been ceded to it by Spain in 1709.

Elias Hasket Derby III, son of the Salem merchant who

brought Cornè to America, claimed that the artist, whom he knew personally, was of a noble family, the brother of a count, and an officer in the King's Life Guard.<sup>2</sup> Another acquaintance of the artist reminisced that his whole bearing and manner were so elegant and even courtly that he seemed a French Count in disguise.<sup>3</sup> There is nothing further to bear out these claims, however. A brother, Joseph Cornè, is mentioned in the artist's will as a captain in the guard of the King of Naples, but no reference is made to a title held by either member of the family.<sup>4</sup>

There is as little indication of Cornè's vocations while in Italy, as there is evidence of his birth and parentage. There are no paintings known which were painted by him in Italy, except for several water colors which were executed in 1799 and 1800 of the Derby ship, "Mount Vernon" (Plate VI, fig. a). One can do little more than speculate on his career, but there is quite a good possibility that he was trained as a confectioner, as he almost certainly was engaged in that occupation while in this country. This facet of his life will be discussed below.

Virtually all that has been recorded of Cornè's early life relates to his experiences in the war with France in the 1790's, experiences which caused him to leave Italy and seek refuge in America. In order to discuss these

events adequately, some background information is vital.

Naples was ruled by the Bourbon king, Ferdinand, who had inherited the throne from his father in 1759 at the age of eight. Soon after he had obtained his majority in 1767, Ferdinand married Maria Carolina, the ambitious daughter of the Empress Maria Therese of Austria. In 1793 Naples joined England and Austria in the first coalition against France, and instituted severe persecutions against all those who were even remotely suspected of French loyalties. In spite of this, however, "Republicanism," or sympathy towards France, gained a good deal of popularity among the aristocracy.

In 1798, while Napoleon was occupied in Egypt, Ferdinand declared war on France. His judgement proved unwise, however, and by January 20, 1799 the King was forced to flee to Sicily as the French occupied the capital and proclaimed the establishment of the Parthenopean Republic.

The "Republicans" who ruled the city were generally men of culture and character, but they knew and cared little for the problems of the lower classes. Thus a counter-revolutionary army, composed mostly of brigands, beggars, and thieves, out for their own gain, was formed.

It was directed by Ferdinand from Palermo, and led by Cardinal Fabrizio Ruffo. By the thirteenth of June, his army had succeeded in regaining control of the city. The "Republicans" continued to hold out in the two harbor forts, Castelnuovo and Castel Dell' uovo. On the twenty-third, an armistice was signed permitting the remaining "Republicans" in the castles to go free, with the choice of sailing unmolested to Toulon, or remaining in the city itself.

These plans were upset, however, for the next day the British fleet arrived in the harbor, and for a number of personal reasons, the commander, Lord Nelson, refused to honor Cardinal Ruffo's armistice. The ships on the way to Toulon were seized, the principal "Republicans" were imprisoned, and several, including the "Republican" fleet commander, Caracciolo were executed.

Although the fighting was ended, the misery did not cease for the majority of the people. Plunderers and speculators swarmed over the countryside, unemployment was common, and the people were destitute and bewildered. Ruffo had promised exemption from taxes, but his word was not honored, and the unfortunate tax collectors became fair game for the populace. In a letter to Nelson, Admiral Troubridge wrote:

The money spent at Palermo gives discontent here; fifty thousand people are unemployed, trade discouraged, manufacture at a stand. . . . Out of twenty million ducats, collected as the revenue, only thirteen millions reach the treasury.<sup>5</sup>

This was the situation that apparently caused Corne to leave Naples for America. The early accounts of his life tell us that he served in the Neapolitan Army against the French, and that he attained the rank of captain. Mason relates an amusing story that Corne used to tell of his experiences in the army on an occasion when his regiment was brought face to face with the French troops:

We were all dressed, and marched very fine, in bright uniforms, to the music of the band. As we came up we fired away, shooting down the ragged Frenchmen, but when one fell another stepped into his place, and still we kept firing. By and by the French fire like one big gun; at dat we run. By gar I run T'ree miles.<sup>6</sup>

In spite of this and other accounts, there are a number of contradictions which are difficult to resolve. First, if Corne was a nobleman, why was he not fighting on the side of the "Republicans" as most of the wealthy Neapolitans seem to have been? Secondly, it is stated by at least two accounts that Corne was forced to leave the country.<sup>7</sup> If this were so, the question arises as to why an officer of the victorious Neapolitan army should have to flee his country, almost a year after the final battle. Perhaps the biographic accounts exaggerated the situation, and Corne left Naples only because the general situation

had deteriorated to such an extent that he was unable to obtain employment.

There is a second possibility, however, which, were it not for the traditional accounts of his serving in the Neapolitan Army, would seem much more plausible. The artist's name indicates French descent, and reference is made to this in his obituary notice. Another account mentions that he spoke with an intermingling of the French and English languages.<sup>8</sup> If such statements are true, it does not seem unlikely that Cornè fought, or at least sympathized with, the "Republicans" rather than with the Neapolitans, especially since all residents even suspected of French sympathies were persecuted by the Government. Such a position would also account for his being driven from the city, for even had he managed to escape the trials and executions of the previous year, Naples in 1800 was no place for an individual of French descent or sympathy.

This is, of course, nothing more than speculation at present. It does, however, seem to provide a more sensible reason for Cornè's decision to leave Naples than the traditional accounts, and it deserves some consideration until proven otherwise.

Cornè was brought to America by Elias Hasket Derby Jr., son of the famous Salem merchant who, in the years



following the American Revolution, had sent his fleet of ships around the world, trading in such places as China, the East Indies, Africa and Russia. In July of 1799 the elder Derby sent the newly constructed "Mount Vernon," under the command of his son and namesake, to the Mediterranean with a cargo of sugar obtained in the West Indies.<sup>9</sup> After several encounters with French ships<sup>10</sup> and a stop at Gibraltar, Derby arrived in Naples on September 2. He probably met Corne at this time, for several of his paintings of the "Mount Vernon" are dated 1799.<sup>11</sup> As a return cargo was not immediately ready, Derby undertook a successful trading voyage to the east coast of Italy. On March 8, the ship returned to Naples, and along with two other Derby vessels set sail for home towards the end of April. On July 7, 1800, the ship, with Corne aboard, arrived in Salem.<sup>12</sup>

#### Corne in Salem

An artist of the particular talents of Michele Corne could hardly have chosen a more appropriate location in which to begin his American career than Salem. It was in the sixth rank among American cities in both population and commerce, and according to Timothy Dwight was the wealthiest city per capita in the country.<sup>13</sup> In addition, although there had been, and still were, a number of

ornamental and portrait painters in the town, none apparently had been trained professionally, and none were equipped to render accurate representations of Salem vessels.<sup>14</sup>

Salem is located about fifteen miles north-east of Boston on a peninsula between the North and South Rivers. In 1800 the town extended approximately a mile and a quarter in length, a half mile in breadth, and was inhabited by 9,457 people.<sup>15</sup> There were fifty-six streets, several of them paved; seven churches and a Friends Meeting House; a jail; alms house; court house and market. The city's appearance was quite attractive:

The dwelling houses are generally decent; in many instances above this character, and in a few, handsome.<sup>16</sup>

Salem was chiefly a commercial city, although it contained a small amount of manufacturing as well. In spite of the fact that the harbor was so shallow that at low tides boats were forced to unload into small lighters, it had enjoyed almost unrivaled success in foreign commerce since the Revolution. This general prosperity did not affect the hospitality of the populace towards a stranger, for Dwight wrote:

We certainly found them as hospitable as we could wish, and received from them, every testimony of politeness which could make the residence of a stranger agreeable to himself.<sup>17</sup>

The accounts of Corné's residence in Salem are not numerous, and do not tell us all that we might wish. He seems to have been well received by the citizens of the town. Needless to say, the fact that he was brought to this country and introduced to Salem society by one of the most respected members of the community, aided him greatly. We know from the many commissions he obtained to portray their ships on canvas that he became acquainted with the leading merchants of the city. He is also mentioned quite often by the famous diarist and pastor of the East Church in Salem, the Reverend William Bentley.<sup>18</sup>

The artist apparently never invested in land or a house while in Salem. For a time he most likely lived with Elias Hasket Derby Jr.,<sup>19</sup> but he later boarded with a Mrs. Grafton on Winter Street, just off the Common.<sup>20</sup> In addition to his painting he was noted for a second, and rather less successful endeavor among the populace, as the first individual to introduce the tomato to this town. On October 12, 1802, the Reverend Bentley noted in his diary:

Mr. Corné is endeavouring to introduce the Tomatos, love apples, pomme d'amour, or his favorite Italian pomo d'oro. He finds it difficult to persuade us even to taste of it, after all his praise of it.<sup>21</sup>

The great majority of Corné's known paintings were done while the artist was a resident of Salem, from 1800.

to c. 1807. These works, which number over a hundred, fall into several categories. Among the most interesting are those painted in 1804 to decorate the new quarters of the Salem East India Marine Society.<sup>22</sup> On June 11 of that year Bentley visited the Society's new rooms and wrote the following commentary in his diary:

Spent the morning in the newly arranged Museum of the East India Society in the New Room. They have spared no pains to supply & decorate it. On one chimney is painted the landing of Plymouth, and on another the launching of the Essex with devices. There is a delineation of the Cape of Good Hope & of Whampum [Whampoa] in China. . . .<sup>23</sup>

Corné is known to have painted the "landing of Plymouth" (Cat. No. 9) and the view of Capetown (Plate I, fig. a), and quite probably was responsible for the other two as well.<sup>24</sup> In addition to the above mentioned scenes, he was also given several other commissions by the Society, including a view of Salem Harbor (Plate VII, fig. b) and a portrait of Captain Cook (Cat. No. 106).<sup>25</sup>

Perhaps Corné's most successful and profitable activity while in Salem was the painting of ship portraits, virtually all of them commissioned by their owners and masters. On October 7, 1802, Bentley jotted in his diary: "Mr. Corné as a painter of ships has great excellence."<sup>26</sup> Again, on January 6, 1803, he wrote:

Mr. Corné continues to enjoy his reputation as a painter of ships. In every house we see the ships

of our harbor delineated for those who have navigated them.<sup>27</sup>

The artist's favorite subject was of course, the "Mount Vernon," which he painted over a dozen times (Cat. Nos. 21-32) in various scenes of action. Most of these occurred during the ship's voyage to the Mediterranean which was mentioned in Part I of this chapter. In addition to these, and pictures of other Derby ships, Cornè also portrayed the vessels of the other leading families of Salem and the surrounding area, among them the Prebles, the Crowninshields, the Wests and the Danas.

Although these smaller paintings most likely provided Cornè with the major part of his income; he is better known today for his larger, and more spectacular works. Perhaps the earliest of these is the maritime scene covering the interior ceiling of the cupola of the Pickman-Derby-Brookhouse mansion (Plate IV, fig. b).<sup>28</sup> Above the cornice which surrounds the octagonal dome, the artist painted what is presumed to be the Derby fleet against a background of rocky headlands and romantic towers. When newly completed it must have presented a spectacular and colorful sight.

A larger and perhaps even more impressive project was the decoration of the walls of the Lindall-Barnard-Andrews House (Plate I, fig. b) at 393 Essex Street.<sup>29</sup>

The murals, which were painted on large sheets of heavy paper, covered the walls of the upper and lower halls. During the first decade of the nineteenth century, when these most likely were painted, the vogue for scenic wallpaper was approaching its height, and undoubtedly some of the wealthy Salem merchants had ordered paper by Zuber from France. The rather crude and unrelated rural scenes painted here by Cornè, were probably intended as an inexpensive substitute for the more costly imported papers.

At least two other houses in the Salem area could boast of decorative painting by Cornè. At "Oak Hill," the Derby residence in nearby Peabody, two overmantel genre scenes (Plate XI) attributed to Corne were mounted in frames carved by Samuel McIntire.<sup>30</sup> Entitled "Saturday Evening" and "Sunday Morning" they were copied almost exactly from engravings after the original paintings by the English artist, William Redmore Bigg.

In contrast to the almost literal copying employed by Cornè for the paintings in "Oak Hill," those from the Salem house of Simon Forrester (Plate IV, fig. a, Cat. Nos. 14 and 15) appear to be quite original and imaginative.<sup>31</sup> The two overmantel scenes are similar in appearance, romantic landscapes with buildings and figures in the foreground. One of the figures, carrying a sack

on a stick over his shoulder, traditionally represents Simon Forrester leaving Ireland, but the same figure appears on a third, and quite similar panel (Cat. No. 16), from an unidentified house in Salem.<sup>32</sup>

A small number of portraits comprise a final group of paintings executed by the artist in Salem. Though not numerous, they fall into two rather distinct groups; those commissioned by the sitter, and painted from life; and those of deceased, but notable persons, commissioned by an interested individual or institution. The former are, as a rule, quite superior to the latter, which were generally copied from other paintings or engravings. Among this second group are portraits of Captain Cook (Cat. No. 106) and Lord Nelson ( Cat. No. 111), painted for the East India Marine Society; and likenesses of Governors Leverett (Cat. No. 108) and Endicott (Cat. No. 109), apparently commissioned by William Bentley.<sup>33</sup>

While in Salem, Corne's talent was not confined strictly to the painting of pictures. He apparently undertook any form of artistic activity which would provide him with a few dollars. On October 26, 1804 Bentley wrote in his diary:

Mr. Dean's writing Exhibition was this day. I was not present. . . . At a good expense the ornamental parts are provided by Corné an Italian artist, & by several artists in town. . . .<sup>34</sup>

There is also an account of a poem, The Power of Solitude, written and published in 1804, by Judge Story, with an "adequately melancholy illustration" on the cover, provided by Corné.<sup>35</sup>

While in Salem, the artist was also employed to restore a seventeenth century portrait of George Curwin, with much less success than that attained by his original works. The story is best told by Bentley in his diary. On October 12, 1802, he wrote:

Delivered to Mr. Corné, the original painting in oil of Mr. George Curwin, who came to Salem in 1663 & died in 1685, aged 75 years. As the original was much injured, the extreme parts were separated & only a half length preserved, but the face left untouched. . . .<sup>36</sup>

The painting is not mentioned again until December 1, 1809, when the diarist wrote:

I shall never forget his [Corné's] mending the neck cloth of Curwin & daubing one of the best Antiques of our country.<sup>37</sup>

On November 30, 1819, a final comment is made:

This picture of Curwin was a three quarter length & much defaced. I cut out the part representing the head & employed Corné to supply the part injured, but he did it in a very clumsy manner. At length H[annah] C[rowninshield] undertook it & with the band before her with success.<sup>38</sup>

References to three additional supplementary activities of the artist are also to be found in Bentley's diary. The first concerns a carved wooden pear (Cat. No. 123), and is mentioned by the clergyman on September 25, 1807:



Saw an imitation of a wonderful pear which grew in Ipswich. It was carved by MacIntire & painted by Corné & was said to be an exact imitation. It might easily be mistaken excepting its size might make suspicion.<sup>39</sup>

At least one writer<sup>40</sup> has claimed that Corné also cut silhouettes, apparently basing her claim on another entry in Bentley's diary. On February 6, 1807 Bentley wrote:

Mr. King has a panorama still in Salem. It is the Siege of Tripoli. The ships are done by Corné, formerly living in this town & introduced by E. H. Derby from Naples. The Ships are good but the whole admits some improvement. The profits from such exhibitions in Salem are said to be much less than in Marblehead. Few visit it in the day time. Commercial habits enquire how much by it? His profile cutting produced him more in Halifax N.S., than in Salem.<sup>41</sup>

Although quite unclear as to his meaning, it is my belief that Bentley was referring to William King, rather than to Corné, when he spoke of "His profile cutting." It is known that King did travel to Nova Scotia and cut silhouettes there; on the other hand there is no evidence that Corné did. Thus unless further evidence should appear, the claim that the taking of silhouettes was one of Corné's many talents must remain highly questionable.<sup>42</sup>

Perhaps the artist's most successful supplementary activity in Salem was as a teacher. As early as May of 1802 Bentley made mention of his teaching abilities, and on January 6, 1804, while referring to the artist, he

wrote: "Painting before unknown in its first efforts, is now common among our children."<sup>43</sup> Of the three pupils referred to by name, the best known is George Ropes.<sup>44</sup> Born in 1788, the deaf mute son of Captain George Ropes was studying under Cornè by the age of fourteen. Much of his work is similar in both style and subject matter to his master's, although, as a rule, Rope's work presents a less refined and more primitive appearance.<sup>45</sup>

The approximately seven years that Cornè spent in Salem seem to have been quite active and profitable. If so, then the question quite naturally arises as to why the artist left the town. Perhaps part of the reason lies in his very success. Although Salem was one of the largest and wealthiest cities in the country, with only about 10,000 people, its opportunities for an artist were not unlimited. In addition, by 1810 other ports with deeper harbors and better facilities were beginning to attract much of the commercial business away from Salem, resulting quite naturally in a loss of income for many of the residents. There is also an indication that Cornè may actually have begun to suffer from overexposure. When he first appeared in Salem, Bentley praised his work quite highly, but by 1807 his comments about the artist were not always complimentary. Regardless of the reasons, however, by 1807, when Bentley speaks of him as "formerly living in this town," Cornè seems to have decided to seek his living in another city.

## Cornè in Boston

Although it is known that Cornè had departed from Salem by January of 1807, quite probably he left some time before that date, as the latest known paintings done by the artist in that town are dated 1805. For approximately the next four years his address is unknown. The traditional accounts<sup>46</sup> state that from Salem he went directly to Boston, but he does not appear in that city until June of 1809, and is not listed in the city directory until 1810. Quite probably he was residing in Boston during this time, but there is no direct evidence to support this belief.

On June 15, 1809, a deed was filed with the registrar in Suffolk County, Massachusetts, from Peter Pailhes to "Michele Felix Cornè of Boston, aforesaid Limner."<sup>47</sup> For the sum of \$2500 a dwelling house and land on Middle Street in Boston's North End were conveyed to the artist. This was apparently the first property that Cornè had purchased in this country, and the amount paid was not insignificant, indicating that he had prospered to some extent in his adopted land.

On the 29th of October, 1810, Cornè purchased a second parcel of land and a dwelling house from one Thomas Barnes, a housewright, for the sum of \$300.<sup>48</sup> It was

located on the opposite side of Middle Street and in area was approximately a third the size of his first purchase. As the artist's address is listed as being at 61 Middle Street during the entire period of his residence in Boston, he did not apparently move to this newly acquired house, and its intended use we can only guess.<sup>49</sup> Perhaps it was to be used as a studio, or possibly it was purchased as a speculative venture, and rented to another person or establishment.

On the 20th of October, 1818, Corn  bought a third piece of property in Boston, from Anthony Chapouil, for twelve hundred dollars.<sup>50</sup> Unlike the first two purchases, which were paid in cash, a mortgage was obtained on this piece of land. This purchase was located on Hanover Street, also in the North End, and contained a messuage (dwelling place) on the property. The purpose of this third purchase may be guessed at with some degree of accuracy. Chapouil, like Pailhes, from whom Corn  bought his first Boston property, was a confectioner. Throughout the artist's life in America his name is often found associated with confectioners or the confectionary business. Elias Hasket Derby III, in fact, wrote that Corn  himself had established a confectionary in Boston near the site of the American House.<sup>51</sup> Thus, in spite of the fact that the Directory listed him as a limner throughout his residence

in Boston, it is quite likely that Cornè's third purchase was intended as the site of a confectioner's shop to provide the artist with an additional income.

Cornè must have encountered some financial difficulty, for on January 8, 1820 the Hanover Street property was remortgaged for \$300.<sup>52</sup> This second mortgage was paid off by April 7, 1820, and the original mortgage by September 27, 1820.

In moving from Salem to Boston, Cornè appears to have effected much more than a mere change of address. The whole character of his painting underwent a profound transformation. While in Salem, his painting had consisted almost entirely of work done on commission for individuals or institutions. In Boston this type of painting seems to have become second in importance to huge decorative work intended for display to a paying public. There is, in fact, hardly a vestige of the type of work done by the artist in Salem, with the exception of some decorative wall murals. Not a single portrait, overmantel, scene, or individual ship painting is known to have been produced by him after his departure from that town. Quite probably the reason for this is simply that it was no longer profitable for him to paint in this manner. Boston was a strange town, and he had no connections to aid him as he had in Salem. Thus he first turned to a

form of painting which would best advertise his ability, the panorama, and when it proved successful, he saw little reason to return to his former type of work.

The device of the panorama was first patented in 1789 by Robert Barker, A Scottish portrait painter from Edinburgh. As originally conceived it consisted of a painting of an entire scene, as viewed from a central point in a circular building constructed for that purpose. The term also came to be applied to a scene, mounted on rollers, which was drawn across the stage before the spectators. The first circular panorama produced was a view of the city of Edinburgh, exhibited by Barker in 1789. American promoters lost little time in recognizing the possibilities of the invention, and as early as November of 1795 Edward Savage of Philadelphia was showing in that city a large circular panorama of London and Westminster, covering nearly 3,000 feet of canvas.<sup>53</sup>

Corné's first panorama, the "Bombardment of the City of Tripoli" (Cat. No. 90), was exhibited in Boston, Salem, Providence, and possibly Marblehead. The subject portrayed was the bombardment of Tripoli in 1804 by Commodore Preble's squadron, during the war against Tripoli and the Barbary Pirates. Also shown, presumably incorporated within the same picture, was the burning of the grounded frigate, "Philadelphia," in Tripoli Harbor, by

Stephen Decatur. By all accounts,<sup>54</sup> the painting was sixty feet long and ten feet high. As such it was probably not a true panorama, but merely a large painting on canvas.

According to Bentley, in an excerpt previously quoted (p. 19), Cornè was not responsible for the entire panorama, but only for the ships therein. Although this is certainly not impossible, other facts, and our knowledge of the artist, make it highly unlikely. First, although the painting itself has not survived, a smaller version, signed and dated 1805, has (Cat. No. 62).<sup>55</sup> This is two years before the panorama was exhibited, and possibly was a study for it. Secondly, the advertisements for the panorama mention only Cornè as the artist. Both the Salem Gazette and Providence Gazette stated that "it is executed in a masterly style by that celebrated Italian artist, Mr. Cornè."<sup>56</sup> Thirdly, although this was Cornè's first attempt at such a large work, all of the various elements had quite certainly been incorporated in his smaller works. It seems almost certain, therefore, that Cornè was responsible for the entire panorama. Quite possibly William King was the promoter of the exhibition in Salem, but it does not seem likely that he had any part in the actual execution of the painting.

Cornè evidently considered the "Bombardment of Tripoli"

a success, for in 1809 a second panorama was exhibited in the same cities as the first. Much smaller in size, its dimensions were only about 10 by 8 feet. Entitled the "Bay of Naples" (Cat. No. 91), it claimed to comprise a "complete prospect of Mount Vesuvius and the delightful coast of Italy for thirty miles," and as an inducement for patriotic Americans, the United States frigate, "Constitution," was shown in the harbor.<sup>57</sup>

The grandiose words of the advertisement were not echoed by Bentley after viewing the painting in Salem on December 1, 1809. The diarist seems to have been still miffed at the artist's handling of the Curwin portrait.

Went with my young females H[annah] C[rowninshield] and M[ary] W[illiams], to see Corney's [sic] Bay of Naples. Found it only a copy of the Common plates at the entrance neither showing the city nor Basin & without one stroke of originality. The claim on public notice was from a display of the American ship Constitution dressed in the flags of all nations with the six Gun boats lent by the King of Naples in the affair of Preble against Tripoli. . . . These things seem to speak the infancy of the Arts. And yet it is said to have had unbounded admiration in Boston & is exhibited in Salem at 1d. . . . as the keeper says looks best at a distance.<sup>58</sup>

A painting of the "Bay of Naples" exhibited along with a view of the "Battle of Trafalgar" was shown in Providence on February 3, 1810.<sup>59</sup> No mention is made of the artist in the one line advertisement, and no other reference has been found of a painting of the Battle of



Trafalgar, but it is virtually a certainty that Cornè painted at least the first of the two. Not only had he exhibited previously in Providence, but he was most likely engaged in decorating the walls of the Sullivan Dorr House in that city at the same time.

For approximately the next three years there are no recorded panoramas by Cornè. He instead seems to have devoted himself to another field of activity, that of decorative wall painting. The only surviving examples of this type of work, and perhaps the most important extant work by the artist, are the paintings in the Sullivan Dorr House in Providence (Cat. No. 2).

Sullivan Dorr was a prosperous Providence merchant who had come to that city in 1804 following a four year residence in Canton. Between February of 1809 and November of 1812, he had constructed for him, a magnificent house at 109 Benefit Street. It is the earliest documented design of the prominent local architect, John Holden Greene, and is one of the earliest "Federal" style mansions in Providence.<sup>60</sup>

How Sullivan Dorr came into contact with Cornè is not known. As he had probably already begun his work in the house by February of 1810, when the panorama of the "Bay of Naples" was exhibited in Providence, it is likely

that Dorr knew of Corne's reputation elsewhere. Possibly he had seen the panorama in Boston, or had been told of the artist by Boston members of the Dorr family.<sup>61</sup> The fact that he was chosen by such a prominent man to decorate the interior of such a fine house, is an indication of the growing reputation of the artist.

The decorations were probably executed in the winter and spring of 1810. The plastering of the walls was completed in December of 1809,<sup>62</sup> and the bill from Corne for his services is dated June 21, 1810. The itemized bill lists the following items:<sup>63</sup>

To painting in Fresco two rooms in your new house as pr agreement	220
Painting your lower & upper front entries pr agreement	140
Painting two front chambers with clouds & marble surbase	30
Painting two chambers in Blue & marble under surbase	12
Painting small writing room below	5
Painting under surbase in Nursery & bedroom in marble	<u>10</u>
	417

Of the several rooms which were originally painted, only in the parlor and "lower and upper front entries" does the decoration survive today. The painting in the dining room has long since disappeared, and no trace was

found of it during the restoration of the house in 1960. Photographs taken of the room in 1877 show bare walls, so the painting most likely was covered over when the room was repainted in 1853 and 1854. The second floor rooms were also examined in 1960, and here, traces of Corn 's original paint were found in all of the rooms detailed in the bill.<sup>64</sup>

Unlike the murals from the Lindall House in Salem, those in the Sullivan Dorr House were painted directly on the plaster. They were not done in true fresco technique as the bill might suggest, but were painted after the plaster had dried. The parlor is dominated by the Bay of Naples (Plate II, fig. a), on the wall opposite the chimney breast. Its inclusion was probably specified by Dorr after viewing the artist's panorama of the same subject, and is probably quite similar to the panorama itself. Other scenes in the parlor include rocky cliffs and classical ruins, subjects which carry out the Italian theme.<sup>65</sup>

The hall decorations are more varied and less complimentary to each other. They include a hunting scene, a waterfall, a wintry landscape, a floral composition, and several other romantic views. The walls are marbled below the simulated chair rail. It almost seems that it was Corn 's intention to demonstrate the complete range of his versatility in this one small area.<sup>66</sup>

Although there are no other extant wall paintings known by the artist, there are a number of references to such works which no longer exist. A number of painted scenes once decorated the walls of another fine Rhode Island residence, "The Mount," at Bristol (Cat. No. 3). Built about 1808 by a wealthy merchant, James De Wolf, the house was destroyed by fire in 1904.

The interior was arranged with artistic taste, the walls of one of the long drawing rooms being painted by a French artist in scenes from the owner's coffee plantations in Cuba.<sup>67</sup>

A second room was decorated with views of the story of Paul and Virginia.<sup>68</sup> There are existing photographs of these scenes, but they are so indistinct that it is impossible to gain anything from a study of them. It is, nevertheless, not unlikely that the scenes were painted by Corn , at some time during his residence in Boston.

The decoration of interior walls in several large Boston houses has also been attributed to Corn , but with no proof in the form of existing paintings or photographs. One writer stated that he (Corn ) made a modest fortune decorating the walls of fine houses on Summer Street, Temple Place, and Beacon Hill.<sup>69</sup> Mason wrote that Corn  was "occasionally called upon to decorate interiors in the best manner" while in Boston, and mentions specifically, the Hancock House. Presumably the dwelling referred to

was the one built by the Revolutionary patriot, John Hancock. A description of the interior of the house, written just prior to the time it was torn down, in 1863, fails to mention any such paintings;<sup>70</sup> nor does an advertisement listing the architectural remnants of the house to be sold at auction.<sup>71</sup> Thus if any wall decorations did exist they had almost certainly disappeared by that date.

A great turning point in Cornè's life was the outbreak of war in 1812 between the United States and Great Britain. Though little more than a series of small naval skirmishes, the several American victories did serve to excite the patriotic spirit of the citizens, and make them highly susceptible to any portrayal of these combats. Cornè was quick to realize this, and less than four months after the first major engagement, between the "Constitution" and the "Guerriere," a series of three paintings was put on exhibition in the major cities of northeastern America.

It is definitely known that Cornè painted and exhibited at least three of these large naval panoramas. In addition to the "Constitution and the Guerriere" (Cat. No. 93), two views of the "Battle of Lake Erie" (Cat. No. 98), and three of the engagements at Lake Champlain and Plattsburgh (Cat. No. 99) were shown in various cities. It is quite likely, moreover, that the

artist painted and exhibited scenes of most of the major American naval victories. Mason mentioned four others: the "Boarding of the Frolic" (Cat. No. 95), the "Surrender of the Java to the Constitution" (Cat. No. 94), the "Hornet and the Peacock" (Cat. No. 97), and the "United States and the Macedonian" (Cat. No. 96). Advertisements for panoramas of these and other conflicts appeared in several Eastern papers, but in all cases the artist is unidentified.<sup>72</sup>

There is little doubt that these exhibitions were successful. They were displayed in Providence, Boston, New York, and on at least one occasion, in Philadelphia. In a small city such as Providence they were shown for only a short time, but in Boston and New York they were exhibited for several months. The "Battle of Lake Erie" was first advertised in New York on June 29, 1814, and did not close until November 1.

Corn , quite naturally, attracted a good deal of attention as a result of his successful paintings, and perhaps nowhere was his reputation greater than in his home city of Boston. Soon after the war had ended, various schemes were put forth to publish illustrated histories of the naval engagements of the conflict. Two of the best known of these were published in Boston in 1816, and both were illustrated quite profusely with engravings and woodcuts after Corn 's paintings.

The Naval Temple<sup>73</sup> was a complete history of the American Navy, from its establishment in 1794 up until the end of the war. At least two of the seven plates were derived from Cornè's paintings, and four of the other five, though unsigned, were probably taken from his designs as well.<sup>74</sup>

The Naval Monument<sup>75</sup> was more limited in scope, striving only to record the naval history of the War of 1812, but it is much more detailed than the Naval Temple, and more profusely illustrated. Of the twenty-five illustrations, all but four are after designs by Cornè, and many of these were quite likely taken after the panoramas of the same subjects.<sup>76</sup>

The strain of supplying the illustrations for the two books, following closely upon the enormous effort which must have been involved in turning out so many paintings during the war, seems to have exhausted Cornè's artistic desire or talents. Although still listed as a limner by the Boston directories up until 1821, there is no evidence that he painted a thing between 1816 and 1821.<sup>77</sup> Quite probably he had prospered to such an extent that he could afford to retire, and perhaps carry on a confectionary business.

On April 15, 1822 a deed was filed with the Registrar of Deeds in Boston conveying the original property that

Corn  had purchased on Middle Street in 1810, to one Joseph Smith, for a sum of \$2000.<sup>78</sup> The disposition of the other two parcels of land is unrecorded. It is known, however, that the artist did leave Boston, probably in the summer of 1822, to spend the rest of his life in retirement in Newport, Rhode Island.<sup>79</sup>

### Corn  in Newport

It is somewhat ironic that the years of which we know the most about Corn 's life are precisely the years in which he did almost no painting. From the time the artist moved to Newport in 1822 at the age of 65, until his death in 1845, there are numerous accounts of his life and activities. Many, no doubt, are apocryphal, but the fact that he was remembered and written about by so many people is at least an indication of his popularity among the Newport populace.

Corn  arrived in Newport in the summer or early fall of 1822. He chose that city, according to one resident, because he found the climate favorable to the growth of his tomatoes.<sup>80</sup> On September 9, 1822, he purchased from the estate of one Silas Gardner, deceased, of Newport, a parcel of land with a stable on it for the sum of \$715.<sup>81</sup> The stable was converted into a gambrel-roof dwelling, which still stands today on Corne Street.<sup>82</sup>



While in Boston, the artist had apparently made the acquaintance of a Bolognese confectioner by the name of "Billy" Bottomore, a young man of only twenty-four when he came to Newport with Cornè. He lived with the artist in Newport, serving as his assistant and companion; and apparently opened a confectionary shop on the ground floor of their house and "sold lollypops and the like."<sup>83</sup>

Cornè, himself, was considered quite a respectable cook by the citizens of the town.

He was a chef of high ability; his soups and a certain preparation of macaroni linger even now, like a sweet savor, in the memory. He [sic] delicacies, made from the Newport quince into choice marmalade, were duly appreciated by the housewives of the town, and they commanded what was then considered extravagant prices.<sup>84</sup>

He also liked to shoot and fish, tell stories, sing old Neapolitan folk songs, and cultivate his tomatoes. The latter seem to have been more appreciably received than in Salem.

In 1830, to insure an income for the rest of his life, Cornè purchased an annuity from the Massachusetts Hospital Life Insurance Company.<sup>85</sup> According to Mason, he deposited \$1570 with the company which agreed to pay him \$100 every six months for the remainder of his life. By the time of his death he had received about \$3000 and apparently was quite satisfied with himself for "outsmarting" the company.

De prezedent he say he very glad I so well, but I know he lie all de time; he no know how much macaroni, how much oil, how much tomato I eat. My grandfather die when he one Hundred, my father when he one hundred and two, and I-I live forever!<sup>86</sup>

Although Mason says there was no employment for the artist as a painter in Newport, it is probable that Cornè did not actively seek out commissions. The few references to his painting mention only the decoration on the walls of his own house. Mason tells us that on a wall of the hall was a bust of Washington, "badly drawn," and in a room over the shop the walls were decorated with "rocky promotories, ruins, streams, bridges, ships, rustic figures-peasant women."<sup>87</sup>

In addition:

the wooden well curb on his limited lawn was painted in brightest hues, and the depicture of water coming from the mouth of a dragon with outspread wings was gazed at for hours by passers-by; and received the intence admiration of the children in the town.<sup>88</sup>

Virtually all this painting has disappeared. As early as 1889, when Mason was writing, the paintings had been removed from the walls. The intention was apparently to preserve them, but all that has survived today are two small fragments.<sup>89</sup>

On July 10, 1845 Michele Felice Cornè died at his home in Newport, at the age of eighty-eight. In his will, written in 1839, the bulk of his estate was left to Botto-

more, with the rest accruing to a brother in Naples, a housekeeper, and the son of a friend.<sup>90</sup> His remains lie in a Newport cemetery beneath a simple gravestone bearing the words:

Michele Corne

Born on the Island of Elba

Italy

Died July 10, 1845

Aged 83 Years

## CHAPTER II

### CORNE AS A PAINTER

Michele Felice Cornè was an enormously versatile artist and this, in part, may account for the amazing range of quality to be found in his work. We must recognize from the start that his talents as a painter were limited. He apparently accepted any sort of commission which was proffered to him, from a simple portrait in india ink to the decoration in water color of the interior walls of a house. He was at his best in the fields in which he was apparently trained. His ship portraits, for example, are remarkably well executed down to the smallest detail, while several of his portraits and genre scenes are nothing more than poor copies of engravings and paintings by other artists.

In spite of the considerable variety of subjects painted by Cornè, his work can be divided into three major categories: land and seascapes, ship portraits and naval battle scenes, and portraits. He also painted a number of genre and historical scenes, and several miscellaneous pieces; most of these are nothing more than copies of works by other artists.

#### Cornè as a Landscape and Seascape Painter

Michele Cornè is probably best known today to the

general public as a decorative painter who executed romantic, Italianate land-and seascapes on the walls and above the fireplaces of houses from Salem to Providence. Several of these scenes were obviously derived from other sources, but many seem to be quite original- a product of the artist's fertile imagination combined with personal observation of scenes in his native Italy.

Cornè's style of landscape painting was influenced by two great traditions of European landscape: the rather precise and classical seaport views, which reached their peak in the work of Claude, and the more turbulent and romantic style, embodied in the work of Rembrandt and a number of lesser Dutch artists.<sup>1</sup>

The classical seaport view had its origin in the Netherlands in the late sixteenth century, but it was Claude, painting in Rome in the first half of the seventeenth century, who popularized the seaport and Roman ruin type of picture, as well as the peaceful landscape peopled with small genre groups. His painting had an enormous influence on a number of seventeenth and eighteenth century European painters.<sup>2</sup>

Almost contemporary with the development of this "classical picturesque" tradition in landscape, a second tradition also was born, the romantic landscape, or landscape of mood. Its founder seems to have been Adam

Elsheimer (1578-1610), a German by birth who was working in Rome. His "Flight into Egypt" at Dresden, is perhaps the first landscape "in which all the constituent parts are deliberately stressed and distorted to express a sensation."<sup>3</sup> As Claude popularized the classical picturesque tradition, so Rembrandt developed the romantic tradition to its height in a painting such as "The Mill," in the Widener Collection at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, with its mysterious atmosphere heightened by rich, but subdued, browns and greens. And as the work of Claude influenced later painters in the eighteenth century, so did that of Rembrandt in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth.<sup>4</sup>

Both of these traditions were to be found in Italy in the eighteenth century. The romantic landscape of mood was best practiced by the followers of Salvator Rosa (1615-1673) whose tempestuous ocean storms evoked a tremendous sense of the destructive power of the sea. Among his followers in Naples were Gaetano Martoriello (c. 1673-1723), and Michele Pagano (c. 1697-1789).<sup>5</sup> The tradition of the classical harbor scene was probably best carried on by the Frenchman, Claude Joseph Vernet (1714-1789), who worked in Rome until the middle of the century.

While painting flourished in Venice and Rome in the eighteenth century, the art in Naples had declined to an

extremely low level following the death of Salvator Rosa.<sup>6</sup> Not only were local painters not competent, but talented foreigners no longer studied and worked in the city as they once had. Partly this was the result of the policies of the Bourbon kings who discouraged lengthy visits by foreigners, and thus succeeded in removing Naples as a principal stop on the Grand Tour. Only a few non-Italian painters, notably the Englishmen, Richard Wilson and Joseph Wright of Derby, and the Frenchmen, Vernet and Pierre Volet, made painting pilgrimages to the city, and their output was sufficient to supply the demand for views of the harbor and buildings.

Perhaps the best of the few local artists was the little known Carlo Bonavia, who worked in Naples from at least 1755 to 1788 or longer.<sup>7</sup> The twenty odd works which survive by this artist show that he was quite a proficient painter, influenced by both schools of European landscape painting. Comparing his work with that of both Vernet and Rosa reveals several similarities which show that he must have been familiar with the paintings of both men.

The importance of Bonavia to a discussion of Michele Corne is twofold. First, many of the compositions of Bonavia, though derived ultimately from other sources, are quite similar in both style and subject to works by Corne.

A view of the "Lighthouse at Naples" (present owner

unknown),<sup>8</sup> by Bonavia, is remarkably similar to the left-hand portion of Cornè's scene of the Bay of Naples in the Sullivan Dorr House (Plate IIIa). In both paintings small groups of figures stand on the shore beneath the lighthouse, sailing vessels ply the harbor, and the twin peaks of Vesuvius rise in the background. Bonavia's view of the "Castello d'ovo" (Van Cortlandt Collection, New York),<sup>9</sup> though seen from the opposite side as Cornè's view in the Sullivan Dorr House, is quite similar in both the general plan and details. The castle is in the center of both pictures with figures about the building and on the connecting causeway. Small boats can also be seen in the surrounding waters of both pictures.

Secondly, and perhaps even more important, the fact that Bonavia worked in Naples until at least 1788 indicates that he might well have had some contact with Cornè and possibly even instructed him. This, of course, is nothing more than speculation, but the similarities are quite remarkable and the possibility is certainly not entirely remote.

Though all of Bonavia's known works are oil paintings on canvas, the principal corpus of Cornè's original landscapes are wall paintings: those in the Sullivan Dorr House in Providence and those formerly in the Timothy Lindall House in Salem, and a group of overmantel scenes



done while he was a resident of Salem. In addition, a number of his ship portraits and naval battle scenes contain landscapes in the background. As previously mentioned, several additional scenes which were copied from other sources, must, of necessity, be disregarded.

The variety of scenes within the body of work is great, and it is often quite difficult to separate the two streams of influence previously discussed. Occasionally one or the other is dominant, but as a rule, a harbor scene with classical ruins is often pictured in subdued and highly suggestive colorings, evoking a distinct atmosphere of mood.

Among the various classifications of landscape painting done by Corne, his harbor and river views are the most numerous, and most important. The best of these, such as the fanciful scenes from the Simon Forrester House (Plate IV, fig.a) and the view of the Bay of Naples in the Sullivan Dorr House (Plate IIIa) are quite finely done. Full-masted sailing ships are reflected in the placid waters of a harbor ringed with ancient buildings. Lofty hills rise from the water's edge, but their height is tempered by the soft greens and browns used in the coloring. In several of the landscapes sharp rocky cliffs and stony shorelines are found, painted extremely well, and very much like similar features found in the paintings of both Vernet and Bonavia.

For example, the cliff scene by Cornè in the Sullivan Dorr House (Plate IIIb) is quite similar to the "Beach with a Cascade and Watch Tower" by Bonavia in the Cassa Depositi e Prestiti in Rome (Plate IIb). Both scenes are dominated by a rocky cliff at the left, partially overgrown with foliage and ancient gnarled trees, and were obviously inspired by such a work as Vernet's "Coast Scene by Moonlight," in the Amsterdam Art Market (Plate IIa).

Equally as well executed as the rocky shores, is the treatment of the foliage in many of the landscapes. In foreground trees, such as the row in the foreground of the overmantel painting from the Simon Forrester House (Plate IVa), each leaf is delineated carefully, and the whole presents quite a believable appearance. The same is also true of the trees in the cliff scene at the Sullivan Dorr House (Plate IIIb).

Background foliage is not handled as carefully; quite often the trees and shrubbery in the less conspicuous portions of a scene are roughly done and highly stylized. In one scene from the Lindall House in Salem (Plate Ib), several rows of hillside trees appear almost unfinished so crudely are they done in contrast to the treatment of the foliage in the foreground.

The quality of buildings in Cornè's paintings varies

remarkably. When drawing a building which he had seen, or a classical ruin of a common type which might be found in an engraving, his compositions are very successful. The buildings and ruins shown in the scenes on the walls of the Sullivan Dorr House are very finely drawn (Plates IIIa and b). Many in fact, particularly those in the scene of the Bay of Naples, represent identifiable structures. Among the most prominent features in this scene (Plate IIIa) is the famous lighthouse at Naples, while in an adjoining panel one can see the Castello d'Ovo.

When called upon to portray simple houses and churches, as might be found in a rural village, however, there is little to indicate that the artist had ever studied basic drawing. The rather mean houses and other buildings in the pastoral overmantel from the Simon Forrester House (Plate IVa) are very crudely constructed, and seem almost to be the work of a school child.

The lighting and cloud effects incorporated into his paintings, are among Cornè's most successful creations. Virtually every landscape is lit from the horizon by a setting or rising sun which casts a golden glow over the whole scene. This method was used successfully by Claude, and later by both Vernet and Bonavia. From the horizon the sky transcends through various shades eventually evolving into a deep blue near the top. Puffy white cum-

ulus clouds or darker stratocumulus forms usually obscure a portion of the sky, and cast shadows over part of the landscape (Plate Ia).

Small groups of figures are present in virtually all of Cornè's landscapes, conversing together or performing everyday tasks. In the harbor views under discussion here these characters take the form of peasants with fishing poles (Plate IIIa), men dragging a boat from the water (Plate Va), or men and women sitting on a rock and merely watching the activity in the harbor (Plate IIIb). No doubt Cornè was inspired in the use of these figures by the paintings of Vernet and Bonavia (Plate II, figs. a and b), but I have found no evidence that specific groups were copied except in cases where the scene as a whole was taken from another artist's work.

The quality of the figures varies from painting to painting. Cornè does not seem to have been basically a competent composer of figures, and in his earlier paintings, done in Salem, the figures are often crudely drawn and very stilted in their actions. The figures in the foreground of the Forrester House overmantel (Plate IVa) are similar to those found in many American primitive paintings. All are crudely placed along a horizontal line in the foreground, and are not an integral part of the scene. The anatomical structure is poor, and all of the figures

appear very stiff and formal. Several of the people have their arms extended in an awkward manner, and those who are walking appear ready to fall on their face at any moment.

By the time Corn  had begun to work on the Sullivan Dorr House, he had devised a method which greatly improved his figure compositions. This was accomplished by the use of a stencil, several of which have survived.<sup>10</sup> Each consists of one or more figures, probably copied from another source or drawn for him by another person. Each group is outlined by a series of tiny perforations through which powdered charcoal could be dusted forming the outline of the figures on the surface of the wall or canvas. Although perhaps this practice is one which would be frowned upon by many legitimate artists, it was a neat and practical solution to a difficult problem, and enhanced the artist's work to a great extent.

Corn 's renderings of non-maritime landscape scenes are less successful than those in which the ocean is the dominant theme. In style, several of them seem to be inspired by the rural genre scenes of eighteenth century English landscape painting. For the two overmantel paintings commissioned for "Oak Hill" in Peabody, Massachusetts (Plates XI a and b), the artist merely copied the work of one of the lesser English genre artists,

William Redmore Bigg, and it is quite likely that the thatched cottages and placid rivers found in a number of other scenes were inspired by engravings after Bigg or his contemporaries.

The reason for the inferiority of these inland scenes as compared with the maritime views apparently lies with Cornè's early training. He probably did not paint such views until he came to this country, and lacked enthusiasm for them. The mountains are quite often exaggerated in height (Plate Ib), and the artist's handling of rivers and rapids is quite inferior to his treatment of ocean waters. In contrast to the vivid sense of movement present in the waves and swells of the ocean scenes (Plates Va, VIb, VIIb), the river and shallow waterfall in the mountain scene from the Lindall House (Plate Ib) gives little of the sense of flowing or falling water. The highlighting is not well done and the ripples in the foreground pool are quite contrived and unimaginative. Only the foreground foliage seems to be of the same consistent quality as in the harbor scenes.

In the Sullivan Dorr House (Cat. No. 2), Cornè attempted several other scenic types which, apparently, he never repeated. A tropical scene is rather poorly handled, mainly because it combines elements which are quite incongruous, such as a palm tree and a deciduous

tree of the temperate zone standing side by side. Also in the Dorr House is a wintry scene which is more successful, and this landscape is probably the most American in feeling of any that Corn  painted, although it was probably inspired by Dutch examples. Of the type later made so popular by the prints of Currier and Ives, it shows a stone house by a frozen river with a horsedrawn sleigh approaching over the snowy ground. The icy mood of the painting is reinforced by the predominant use of grey and white.

There is also on a downstairs wall a moonlight scene, of a type painted several times by Vernet (Plate IIa). The soft light produces a grayish-green aura over the whole painting. The lighting effect is quite well done, but the effect as a whole is not up to the best standards of the artist.

As a group the paintings in the Sullivan Dorr House are probably the most important of Corn 's landscape paintings. Though several of the scenes have already been discussed in this chapter in relation to specific topics, due to their importance an additional discussion is called for. All of the scenes, both in the parlor and hallways, are painted in some sort of water color applied directly to the plaster. The scenes in the parlor are all views of the Mediterranean area, some,

such as the Bay of Naples (Plate IIIa) identifiable; others, more or less general views preserving only the character of the area. Almost every scene contains a view of the sea and the dark brown rocky ledges, a classical ruin or medieval tower, and a number of figures dressed in gaily colored costumes.

The hallway panels are greater in number, more diverse in subject matter, and on the whole not as finely done as those in the parlor. Before restoration they were darker in tone, due mostly to a heavy coat of varnish. The scenes range from inland hunting and snow scenes, to coastal views with ruins and rocky ledges similar to the panels in the parlor. Perhaps the most unusual feature is a fantastic floral arrangement of hollyhocks, lilacs, and snowballs which ascends the wall up the staircase.

The execution of the paintings in the Dorr House are generally superior to the paintings in the Lindall House, and to most of the overmantels which Cornè did. Virtually every item is carefully detailed, and though Cornè was noted as a fast worker, he obviously took some pains in the execution of these panels. He used a small brush stroke in his foreground details of such things as trees, rocks and buildings. As the scene faded into the distance he obviously painted more hurriedly, as evidenced by the larger strokes of the brush to be seen in those places.



As in several of his other paintings, Corn  made use of light and shadow a good deal in several of the Dorr House paintings, though not always very skillfully. In many of the hallway scenes, in particular, the foreground is in shadow and contrasts quite noticeably with the background, which is almost always light in tone and dominated by a high sky.

As a whole, Corn 's landscapes are among the most attractive and interesting paintings done by the artist. They vary greatly in quality with the later paintings, as a rule, being somewhat superior to those done during his first years in this country. Though inspired, in many cases, by the paintings of earlier artists, each contains Corn 's own distinctive touch in its composition, whether it be the handling of an ocean wave, or the placement of a tree in a particular location. Though hardly first rate landscape by European standards, as decorative pieces for an uncritical public, they were quite acceptable.

#### Corn  as a Painter of Ship Portraits and Naval Battles

The majority of Corn 's artistic production falls into the category of marine painting. I have already discussed the harbor views, as they seem to fit more appropriately under the category of landscape painting.

The rest of these marine paintings consists of portraits of individual ships, and views of naval engagements, particularly those of the War of 1812. Several of the latter took the form of panoramas (Cat. Nos. 93-99) which were exhibited in the various cities along the eastern seaboard. Most of the original paintings have been lost, but there are existing engravings which at least show the general execution of the paintings, if not the technique and colors.

Though perhaps not as decorative or as interesting as the landscapes, Cornè's paintings of ships are quite the most accomplished paintings as a class. There can be little doubt that the artist had been instructed in the portrayal of ships while in Italy, for his first recorded paintings, of the ship "Mount Vernon" in 1799 (Plate VIa), demonstrated mastery of the subject. Stylistically the ship portraits follow quite faithfully the painting done by local artists in many of the port cities of Italy and southern France in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>11</sup>

After coming to America, most of Cornè's ship portraits were painted in water color on paper, having been commissioned by leading merchants and captains of the Salem and Boston area. Whether on oil or paper, however, they are excellent representations of the ships.

They were usually painted with all sails flying, in a choppy sea; quite often other ships and a headland with buildings on it were shown on the horizon. Almost invariably a flock of seagulls was shown in some part of the picture. (Plate VIIa).

Although Cornè was not as talented a ship portraitist as the best European artists such as the Roux family of Marseille, he was undoubtedly the best portrayer of ships that had ever worked in this country up until that time, and was surpassed by no one during his period of activity. He was, perhaps, a sailor himself at one time, as every line and detail on the ships are shown, even in relatively distant views, and there is a distinct feeling of the sea present in every picture. The figures of the crew can be made out on most of the ships, and in several of the closer views the men can be seen performing their tasks (Plate VIIa).

Though Cornè's water color portraits are quite competent, the few that he did in oil are superb. Perhaps the finest of these is the representation of the ship, "America," on the Grand Banks of Newfoundland, now in the Peabody Museum in Salem (Plate VIb). The "America" is in the center flanked by a British sloop on the left and a French ship to the right. All of the vessels are painted in exact detail. A warm yellow glow, caused by the sun reflecting off the threatening storm clouds, pervades the

whole picture, adding a golden tint to the ships and to the sea itself. This is unequivocally one of the finest marine pictures ever painted in America.

In his paintings of the naval battles of the War of 1812, Corne reached his height as a marine painter, both artistically and financially. His panoramas of the various battles earned him a considerable sum of money and the praise of contemporary critics. Although only a small number of the many finished paintings survive, those that do are technically quite well done. The most famous, and probably the best of these surviving works, is the series at the New Haven Colony Historical Society of four views of the action between the "Constitution" and the "Guerriere," the initial American victory of the war and one of the most heralded American triumphs to this day (Plate VIII, IX). The ships are shown in amazing detail in all four views, including the dozens of men on the masts and sails. At the start of the battle both ships are silhouetted against the bright yellow and pink horizon caused by a rising sun. In the last scene, a bit of drama is added as the victorious "Constitution" stands in the sunlight, while the dismasted "Guerriere" sits in the darkened shadows of approaching storm clouds.

The fame of the series of paintings of the naval engagements of the War of 1812 is testified to by their

rapid utilization by other painters, engravers and manufacturers. Most of them were engraved and sold by booksellers and printers. Several naval histories made use of the engravings and woodcuts to illustrate their text (Plate Xa). Cornè undoubtedly profited in these legitimate activities, but his designs were also pirated by unscrupulous workmen, both in this country and abroad, to decorate a great variety of objects. In America, mirrors, clocks and hairbrushes were embellished with poor copies of Cornè's designs. In England, his designs were pirated by Bentley, Wear and Bourne and used to decorate thousands of pieces of porcelain, particularly the so-called naval, or Liverpool, jugs which were imported to this country in large quantities. As late as 1830 a Frenchman, Nicholas Garneray, painted a superb series of naval views of the War of 1812, and at least three of the scenes were copied either directly from Cornè's paintings, or from engravings of the paintings.<sup>12</sup>

#### Cornè as a Portrait Painter

Of the approximately one dozen portraits painted by Michele Cornè, only a handful are worth comment, since the rest are merely poor copies after paintings by other artists, or after engravings. All of these copies were commissioned by citizens or institutions which desired a

portrait of a noteworthy man, but were not able to obtain the original.

Corne's own portrait style is not easily determined since he painted so few original likenesses. Most likely he had no professional training in the field of portraiture, but merely adopted a style from among those he had seen by other artists. Basically he worked in the so-called neo-classical style.

As a rule, Corne's portraits are quite simple, and are free from any unnecessary details. All of the sitters are quite formerly posed, either profile or semi-front views, and dressed in similar styles of clothing. Colors are muted except for an occasional dash of red or bright blue on the clothes in some of the oils. Shadows, for the most part, are sharply defined. Brush strokes are small over most of the paintings, except for longer strokes in the background areas and on the hair of some of the water color portraits.

The best of the few portraits are a series of four done in 1802 and 1803, of and for the Ward family, prominent merchants of Salem. They are quite similar to those portraits done by a number of minor artists working in this country at about the same time. The india ink drawing of Richard Ward Jr. (Plate XII) recalls many of the likenesses done by Charles Balthazar Julien Fevret du

Saint Memin (1770-1852). A profile view of a strong-featured young man, it is very well drawn, particularly the treatment of the hair; and the use of shading indicates a close observance of the subject. The only fault which might be found is with the rather prominent nose, a characteristic common to virtually all of the artist's figures.

The small watercolor of Lydia Robinson (Plate XIIb), wife of Richard Ward Jr., is closer in feeling to the work of a miniature painter such as Edward Green Malbone (1777-1807). Like the miniature, it is encased in an oval format. The sitter, looking much younger than her twenty-one years, is dressed in a white dress with a rather low neckline, and with her hair done in the newly popular "Empire" style. Though not as finely done as the drawing of Richard Ward Jr., it is quite a charming painting nevertheless.

Though these small portraits certainly bear no claim as great artistic works, they are incomparably better than the copies of other artist's portraits which Corne attempted. It is difficult to believe that the same artist who drew the likeness of Richard Ward Jr., could also copy so poorly the portrait of Captain James Cook in the Peabody Museum (Cat. No. 106),<sup>13</sup> and compose such stiff and stilted figures as those which adorn the overmantel scenes from the Forrester House (Plate IVa). There is a possibility that he used a physionotrace, an instrument employed by St.

Memin and others to trace the exact profile of a sitter on a sheet of paper. It would seem, however, that if this were the case the artist would have executed many portraits, but there is no evidence that he did so.

### Cornè as a Genre and Historical Painter

Though the paintings of historical and genre subjects which were executed by Michele Cornè are quite attractive and competently done, virtually all of them are nothing more than direct copies after paintings by other artists. His talent as a copyist will be discussed briefly in the last section of this chapter.

It is probable that Cornè did not choose the subjects for the majority of these paintings himself, but rather was commissioned by various local people to paint them for their houses and meeting rooms. It is regrettable that these paintings are so few and that none were original compositions, for from a decorative point of view, several are the equal of the best of the artist's original works.

The most notable of the genre paintings are the two scenes done for "Oak Hill" in Peabody, Massachusetts; rural cottage scenes taken after the English painter, William Redmore Bigg (Plate XI). Though faithful to the originals in the composition of the subject matter, the



general execution of the paintings, and particularly the handling of the figures, is quite similar to Cornè's other work.

### Cornè's Painting Technique

A brief summary of Cornè's painting procedure is pertinent at this point. It is not a simple task to speak of the artist's technique, mainly because he worked in a multitude of media on a variety of surfaces. When painting a small portrait or water color his method was quite different than when executing a large panorama in oil, or when decorating the walls of the interior of a house.

Mason wrote that Cornè was a hasty worker. This is evident particularly in the wall paintings, which were done with a quick slashing stroke, and often appear careless and unfinished, especially in some of the background foliage and sky areas (Plate Ib). The panoramas too were turned out very hastily. The "Constitution and Guerriere" (Cat. No. 93) was advertised in Boston on October 26, 1812, just two months after the battle had taken place. Mason stated that it was painted quickly, with a "striking effect, free from all unnecessary details, but accurate enough to bear the criticisms of nautical men who flocked to see it."<sup>15</sup> He also stated that all the panoramas were "painted in distemper" and with but indifferent materials, and were exhibited as long as they would hold together.<sup>16</sup>

In spite of the hasty execution, these larger paintings, and probably all of the oils, were first sketched in with charcoal and a lead pencil. Traces of the original lines can still be seen through the paint on the walls of the Sullivan Dorr House. In the wall paintings the next step was to wash the surface in water color, using opaque colors in the foreground laid on with a size to give the work more body at this point.<sup>17</sup>

In his smaller works, Cornè's method of painting seems to have depended on the medium used. His oil paintings were probably sketched out first and then laid on with on with several layers of paint. A rather thick surface results, particularly on the surface of the ocean waters. His water colors, on the other hand, seem to have been painted directly, without previous sketching, except for some of the details on the ships. The paint was generally applied sparingly, resulting in pale, but finely shaded works. On the whole, his watercolors seem to present a more accomplished and finished appearance than the oils, which is only natural since his original training was probably in the former medium.

Cornè's palette consisted mainly of a few basic colors. Various shades of blue are the most prominent because of his frequent representation of water. Deep greens and browns predominate in the land areas, while

shades of yellow and pink were most frequently used in the sky. Often a touch of bright red or yellow is found on the vest or dress of a figure, serving to define him from the background landscape.

In spite of the great variety of subjects represented in Cornè's work, similar motifs occur repeatedly. A solitary tree, or a pair of intertwined trees are frequently found in the foreground of his landscapes (Plate IVa), while a flock of seagulls almost always can be seen in his marine paintings. The artist's figures always have the characteristically prominent Italian nose, and there is almost always a low horizon with a large expanse of sky in his landscapes. The artist's signature is often placed on a prominent rock in the foreground, or in the lower left or right hand corner.

#### Cornè as a Copyist

In addition to Cornè's original compositions, it has already been inferred a number of times that he copied the work of other artists. Where Cornè had access to the original painting his copy was taken directly from that, as was the case with the portraits of Governors Endicott and Leverett at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester (Cat. Nos. 108, 109).<sup>18</sup> Quite often, however, an engraving of the painting was utilized.

The quality of these copies varies greatly. The portraits are, almost without exception, poorly done. On the other hand, some of the landscapes and genre scenes appear to be almost on an equal plain with the original work. One of the best is the "Fish Wagon" (Plate Va), now in the Peabody Museum, and taken from an engraving by Woolett of a painting by the minor English artist, Richard Wright (Plate Vb). It is reproduced almost exactly, with only a slight variation in details and a slight lightening of the mood of the picture. Cornè's ships, although painted in the same position as Wright's, are clearer in detail, and on the whole seem more finely executed.

Only slightly less fine is a copy of "Columbus and the Egg" (Plate Xb), now in the Essex Institute, taken after an etching by Hogarth.<sup>19</sup> The figures in this case, are rather well done, certainly as fine as those in the rather poor reproduction of the etching which I have seen.

How ethical Cornè was in producing these copies is not difficult to determine. Though only in one case, the copy after the etching by Hogarth, did he give credit to the original designer on the canvas itself, most of the copies were undoubtedly commissioned by an institution or individual after seeing the original painting or an engraving of it, and were not initiated by the artist himself. Thus his clients were aware that they were getting only a copy, and there can be no stain on Cornè's reputation because of this work.

CHAPTER III  
MICHELE FELICE CORNÈ; HIS CRITICS  
AND HIS PLACE IN THE  
ARTISTIC HISTORY OF AMERICA

Where to place Michele Cornè in the history and development of the American art tradition is not a simple task. His work certainly does not fit into the Neo-Classical School of the last half of the eighteenth century, nor is it part of the great romantic movement which began in earnest in America early in the nineteenth century with the work of Washington Allston. The paintings of Cornè are somewhat peripheral to the main stream of American art, while touching on several of the movements. In discussing Cornè's role in the artistic history of America, several factors must be noted: the commentary of the critics, both contemporary and modern, his relationship to other painters in the country at the time, and the influence of his work upon later developments in American painting.

Cornè and his Critics

Contemporary critical comment on the paintings of Michele Cornè is not plentiful. The reasons for this are not difficult to explain when one considers the character of the artist and his work. Virtually all of his paintings

with the exception of the several panoramas, were done on commission for individuals or institutions, and thus never put into public circulation. In fact, several of his works are even today in the hands of descendants of the person for whom they were painted, and many of the rest have traveled no farther than to a museum or historical society in the same town in which they were painted.

There is no indication that Cornè ever held a public exhibition of his work, or even participated in an exhibition in conjunction with several artists. This is partly explained, however, by the fact that the first public exhibition in this country was not held until 1811, when the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts initiated the practice, and not until 1827 was there a public show in Boston, when the Athenaeum began its annual series of exhibitions. There was, thus, little opportunity for criticism of Cornè's paintings, as the general public probably saw very few of them, and it is not until the second decade of the nineteenth century that we find even a single commentary on Cornè's work in a newspaper or magazine.

This lack of exposure is not the sole reason for the scarcity of critical comment, however. The artist's motives and personality must also be taken into account. It would seem that even had Cornè been given the oppor-

tunity to exhibit samples of his work publicly he might never have done so. While in Salem, where the majority of his smaller compositions were done, he seems to have been quite busy and quite satisfied with the task of painting works commissioned by the families and institutions of that town. He never advertised in the local sheets, and there is no evidence that he ever attempted to sell a painting after its execution.

Corne was evidently a very shy and uncommunicative person in his early years in this country. He probably spoke little English, and outside of two bills of sale and his signature on a few public documents, there is no written commentary from his own hand. He never married, and apparently had no close friends until his residence in Newport. The exhibition of his panoramas, including the publicity, was handled by promoters in the various cities, and the artist probably did not even attend the showings. It would seem, then, that the lack of critical comment owes more to the reticence of the artist than to the faults in the paintings themselves, or to lack of opportunity for such commentary.

Virtually the only artistic judgement received by the artist while in Salem emanated from the pen of the Reverend Dr. Bentley. While, at face value, one tends to deprecate Bentley's comments as those of a rambling

old man, it must be remembered that the clergyman was one of the most learned men in the Commonwealth, and an early member of the American Antiquarian Society. In Cornè's early years in Salem, before he unsuccessfully repaired a seventeenth century portrait of George Curwin, Bentley thought quite highly of the artist and his talent. At one time he commented that "Mr. Cornè as a painter of ships has great excellence."<sup>1</sup> He also regarded the artist as a competent portrait painter, as evidenced by the copies of seventeenth century paintings of Governors Leverett and Endicott which he had Cornè paint for him (Cat. Nos. 108, 109).<sup>2</sup>

One would naturally expect a considerable amount of comment on the large panoramas. They were quite a new phenomenon and were apparently well-received by the general public. Unfortunately for present day biographers, however, only one review of any of these panoramas was written. In May of 1815 the North American Review, one of the leading periodicals of the time, commented at some length on the series of three paintings of the "Battle of Lake Champlain and Plattsburgh" (Cat. No. 97), then on exhibition in Boston:

Mr. Corny[sic] is one of the best painters of ships alive; he delineates them with the accuracy and fidelity of a portrait. The fault of his coloring is a general tone of blue or greenish blue that prevails through most of his pictures. Of those before us the first in the series is by far the



best. The gentle appearance of the lake, the grandeur of the mountains in the back-ground, the clearness, distinctness, and spirit with which the ships are delineated, make it a beautiful painting. . . .<sup>3</sup>

This is quite a complimentary review and it is difficult to explain the lack of further comment, even considering the reticence of the artist and the other reasons previously mentioned. Practically all of Corn 's later panoramas were exhibited in New York, many for some length of time, but with the exception of the newspaper advertisements, not a single reference is to be found. Perhaps, even at that time, the New York critics considered themselves above commenting on a painting with so much mass appeal.

George Champlin Mason cannot be considered a contemporary critic, as he wrote over forty years after Corn 's death, but he had known the artist and had undoubtedly seen many of his works which no longer exist. Mason did not consider Corn ' an artist of the first rank, and wrote that Corn ', himself, shared the same opinion.

He was not an artist, and made no claim to distinction of that kind. He was in fact, a decorative painter, but one of more than ordinary aptitude, and a man of a good deal of intelligence.<sup>4</sup>

Mason found several aspects of Corn 's painting faulty, particularly his figures and heads.

Present day art critics and historians have largely ignored Corn '. A few have written briefly on his ability

as a marine painter, but have ignored his landscapes and portraits altogether. One writer, who does mention the landscapes, groups them along with those by the more primitive artists.<sup>5</sup> His contribution to the artistic history of America has never been studied, and it will be the purpose of the next section to fill in this gap.

Cornè and his Influence  
in the  
History of American Painting

There is little that is new in the paintings of Michele Cornè. The influences on his style have already been discussed in detail above, and there is little need to go into it here. As a rule he was practicing a style which itself was at least fifty years old when he came to this country, and which derived ultimately from artists working almost two hundred years before. In addition, he was not alone among artists in America practicing in this style. A number of painters had arrived in this country in the 1790's whose work was quite similar, in some respects, to the paintings of Cornè. Most of these men were Englishmen: George Beck, William Winstanley, William Groombridge, and Thomas Birch being the most famous.<sup>6</sup> The landscapes of all four of these artists derive ultimately from the works of Claude and his contemporaries.

The compositions of Beck, in particular are quite similar to several of Cornè's paintings. His view of "Baltimore from Howard's Park," painted in 1796, bears a good deal of similarity to Cornè's painting from the Simon Forrester House (Plate IVa). The foreground is dominated by large, well drawn trees which frame the distant buildings and harbor, while the light in both pictures emanates from a setting or rising sun in a clouded sky.

Thomas Birch, though born in England, received most of his training in America, but stylistically he was influenced by the same elements which inspired Cornè. The seascapes, in particular, are quite alike, and Birch's naval battle scenes of the War of 1812 are almost identical to those of Cornè in several instances.

Thus Cornè's work cannot be considered unique in the history of American art. He was the only one of the group to work in New England for any length of time, but as far as American painting as a whole is concerned, he was only one of a school of several foreign-born artists working in a similar style at approximately the same time.

It would be pleasant to state at this point that the work of these artists, and Cornè in particular, was the direct inspiration behind the rapid development of landscape painting in the first half of the nineteenth cen-

tury. Unfortunately, however, this does not seem to be the case. Though Washington Allston and others were quite definitely influenced by the same European traditions which influenced Cornè, namely the paintings of Vernet and Salvatore Rosa, for the most part they attained their inspiration firsthand through studies in Italy and the other European countries.

John Trumbull and John Vanderlyn were among the first artists of note to consider the use of the panorama in this country, but both had probably seen the device while in Europe and most likely were influenced very little by Cornè's productions.<sup>7</sup> Washington Allston was in Italy between 1804-1808. He returned to Boston in 1808, at approximately the same time that Cornè took up residence there. There is no indication that the two ever met, but even had they been close friends it is doubtful that Cornè would have influenced the younger artist to any extent, since Allston, even at this point in his career, was a considerably more sophisticated painter than Cornè ever had been or ever would become.

Thus the main stream of American art had embarked on a new course, having been little influenced by the work of Cornè and his foreign contemporaries. This is not to say, however, that Michele Cornè must be completely dismissed as an artist who made no lasting contribution to the history of American painting. As a landscape painter,

it is true that he probably had no direct influence on the future of that field of painting in America, except in the rather limited area of wall painting. This tradition was carried on in rural New England and New York well into the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> His landscapes may have served another purpose, however, to popularize that form of painting in New England, and to pave the way for wider acceptance at a later date.

As a delineator of ships and naval conflicts, Corn  was much more of a leader, and exerted a greater influence on later painters. Although a handful of eighteenth century ship portraits are known, Michele Corn  was the first artist to represent ships in any quantity, and the first artist with professional training to interest himself in naval subjects. It was not until the nineteenth century was well under way that other artists of comparable ability undertook the painting of similar subjects.

In the field of marine painting Corn  exerted both a direct and indirect influence on later artists. His pupil, George Ropes, has already been mentioned. During his short lifetime he painted a number of ship portraits and maritime views, and were it not for his untimely death, he might well have developed into an artist the equal of his master.

Thomas Birch, himself, made use of some of Corn 's

designs for his own paintings of the naval battles of the War of 1812, as did a number of lesser artists in the twenties and thirties. There can also be little doubt that a number of later artists, painting in the Salem and Boston area were also influenced by the paintings of Corn . A fair number of his marine paintings were deposited in the East India Marine Society, and were available for study by such painters as Benjamin F. West (1818-1854), and William Henry Luscomb (1805-1866).

How much these later artists were influenced by Corn  is, of course, impossible to say. There were also paintings at the East India Marine Society by such European masters as the Roux family and Nicolai Carmilieri, and after 1828 the influence of the English immigrant, Robert Salmon, must be considered. Nevertheless there can be little doubt that the many paintings of Corn  did influence these later artists, and probably to a considerable extent.

APPENDIX A  
CATALOGUE OF THE PAINTINGS OF  
MICHELE FELICE CORNE

The following catalogue of paintings by Michele Corne is the most complete record of the works of the artist thus far assembled. In gathering together the corpus of material a large number of sources have been consulted. Among the most helpful have been the Corne files at the Frick Art Reference Library in New York, at the New York Public Library, and at both the Essex Institute and Peabody Museum in Salem, Massachusetts. Many of the paintings listed have disappeared or been destroyed for some time, and for these works I have relied on contemporary sources, as well as engravings after these paintings.

Rather than organizing the paintings under the traditional headings of landscape, marine painting, etc., due to the nature of Corne's work I believe the following organization will be more helpful to future students. As far as possible the paintings in each section are arranged chronologically.

Wall and Ceiling Paintings  
Overmantel Paintings and Fireboards  
Ship Portraits  
Naval Battles  
Panoramas  
Portraits  
Drawings

## Miscellaneous

Historical (excluding naval paintings)

Genre

Ornamental Decoration

Painted Carvings

A brief description of each painting has been added where possible, and a short commentary where necessary.

The following abbreviations are used in the catalogue:

Biog. . . . . Biographical Data

Comment . . . . . Commentary on Painting

Descrip . . . . . Description of Painting

Exhib . . . . . Exhibitions

Ref . . . . . References

Repro . . . . . Reproductions



## WALL AND CEILING PAINTINGS

1. Lindall-Barnard-Andrews House, Salem, Massachusetts

Owner: Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1800-1807

Descrip: The paintings include a number of unrelated, but compatible rural scenes which originally covered the upper and lower hallways of the house. The predominant colors are soft greens and browns below a golden sky. Much of the softness is due to the aging of the paintings and the effects of several coats of varnish which have been applied over the years. (See below for detailed descriptions of the scenes).

Mountain Scene: Rugged greenish-gray mountains form a background to a mass of brown rocks, trees and a stream spanned by a stone bridge. Two men on horseback are crossing the bridge. (Plate Ib).

Thatched Cottage Scene: Half timbered thatched cottage to left, surrounded by tall trees. In the foreground flows a placid stream, and to the right a portion of a ruined wall.

Fortified House: A large stone house stands along the bank of a river. The figure of a girl can be seen kneeling in one of the windows of the house. To the right an arched bridge crosses a stream. White cumulus clouds partially hide a bright blue sky.

Cottage Scene: A small cottage is situated along the bank of a stream which disappears in the distance. In the foreground a woman and two children sit on the grass.

Waterfall: A large waterfall tumbles down the stairway, from a river in the upper hall. A cottage almost hidden in a grove of trees is seen on the left, and the trees extend along the far side of the river. The river is crossed to the right by a low, stone bridge in front of which can be seen two men in a boat. Several large rocks and thick green foliage fill in the extreme right of the panel.

Hunting Scene: Several hunters can be seen riding down a steep, tree-crowned hill at the right, after several hounds which have surrounded a fox at the bottom. One hunter is dressed in a blue coat, another in white, a third in red; all have yellow breeches. On the left is a small rocky hillock, while several more gently sloping hills can be seen in the distance.

Cottage Scene: A thatched, brick and stucco cottage, partially hidden by overhanging foliage is situated at the left. Three women are standing in the doorway listening to a young boy with a staff. The boy is pointing to the rough sea in the far right distance, in which can faintly be seen a sinking ship. Roughly drawn foliage slopes down to the sea, while beyond the water steep hills can be seen.

Pastoral Scene: A rocky hill with several trees can be seen at the left, one of the trees pointing dramatically to the right of the picture. Several sheep are grazing in the center distance, while in the foreground the herder and a man on horseback are conversing.

Comment: The paintings bear no signature, but are attributed to Corné on the basis of the similarity of design and technique with his other paintings. They were probably painted between 1805-1807 when the Reverend Thomas Barnard lived in the house. In 1957 the owner of the house, Dr. Alexander Vance, offered the papers to the Essex Institute when the house was being remodeled.

Repro: Edward B. Allen, Early American Wall Paintings (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926), pp. 30-35.  
Nina Fletcher Little, "Painted Wall Paper in the Lindall-Barnard-Andrews House," Essex Institute Historical Collections (October, 1958), pp. 328-333.

Ref: Allen, op. cit. Little, op. cit.

2. Sullivan Dorr House, 109 Benefit Street, Providence,  
Rhode Island.

Owner: Providence Preservation Society

Date painted: 1810

Descrip: The walls in the parlor and upper and lower halls are covered with a variety of scenes ranging from views of the Bay of Naples and classical ruins in the parlor, to winter and floral scenes in the hallways. (See below for detailed descriptions).

Parlor:

Bay of Naples: on wall opposite chimney piece.

Panoramic view of the bay with Vesuvius in the center distance. At far left is a large castle flying the flag of the Republic of Naples. A large lighthouse can be seen beyond. Along the shore of the bay small villages can be seen rising to the slopes of Vesuvius and a number of smaller green hills. Several men of war, and a number of smaller boats rest in the grayish-green water of the harbor, the largest probably being the U.S. ship, "Constitution." On a wharf in the immediate foreground, and beneath the walls of the fortress and the lighthouse, several groups of figures can be seen, dressed mainly in yellow, brown and violet. Several of the men wear tall beaver hats, while one, on the wharf, wears a full dress uniform with a plumed hat. (A pierced drawing for one of the groups is presently owned by the Redwood Library in Newport, Rhode Island). The sky ranges from yellow at the horizon to blue at the top. (Plate IIIa).

Island Fortress: (Probably the Castel D'Ovo) A castle-like structure surrounded by a wall rises from a low island. A long causeway connects the island to the mainland at left. A number of soldiers stand guard on the outer wall, while several small boats can be seen in the harbor.

Cliff Scene: The panel is dominated by huge, dark brown cliffs on the left, with several trees growing out of the ledges. A file of tiny soldiers with cocked hats and muskets can be seen marching down a pathway in the cliffs. At the bottom of the cliff several men are hauling in a small boat. In the immediate foreground two men and two women

are resting on the rocks. One of the girls is dressed in a red bodice, the other in blue; the men in white and brown. The towers of a town can be seen to the right, beyond the foaming sea. (The scene is copied almost exactly after an engraving by Jean Jacques Andre Leveau of Claude Joseph Vernet's painting, "Les Pecheurs de Mont Pyrenées." It was painted by Vernet in 1753, and the engraving was widely circulated).

Ruined Gateway: over the mantel. In the center stands the entablature and slender columns of a ruined classical gateway. A town can be seen through and beyond the arch. To the left are several houses, trees, and a ledge.

Ruined Fountain: A jet of water spurts from the mouth of a gargoyle in a partially ruined grayish-brown fountain. A lone tree stands to the left of the fountain while a grove of poplars can be seen to the right and beyond. In the foreground a man with a fishnet rests on some rocks and gazes at the fountain.

Landscape Scene: A stream of placid water in the foreground reflects several trees and narrow tongues of land. An old man leans on a staff in the foreground as he walks across a rustic wooden bridge.

Below the chair rail in the parlor the walls are painted in simulated marbledizing.

Hallways: These scenes are presently darker in tone than those in the parlor owing primarily to several coats of varnish applied over the paint. The prevailing tones are a deep-reddish-brown, yellow and green.

Hunting Scene: Two hunters can be seen standing on a peninsula of land at left; one is loading his gun while the other is firing at a flock of birds. A rude wooden bridge over a waterfall is visible across a small pond of water. The horizon is formed by a low range of hills, above which is a large expanse of yellow sky.

Pastoral Scene: Several cottages are situated in a grove of trees with hills beyond. A swiftly falling stream runs through the center of the picture, while on the right an inn with a signpost can be seen along a dirt road.

Winter Scene: A stone house sits on the snowy ground in front of a grove of trees. A horse-drawn sleigh approaches the house. In the foreground two men are visible, one carrying a load of wood across a wooden bridge towards the house, the other chopping ice from a frozen stream.

Tropical scene: Two hunters, assisted by two native helpers can be seen firing at a large red, white and blue bird. They are surrounded by lush tropical foliage, while in the distance, beyond a small pond, grassy slopes are visible.

Waterfall: A large, greenish-white waterfall cascades toward the front of the panel from a large pond. Above, to the right, is a second and higher fall, roaring down a steep ledge covered with exotic plants. At the left on a bank stand two figures, while beyond the pond rise some rather high mountains.

Ruin Scene: At the left on a hill a brown ruin overgrown with trees can be seen. Below floats a broad tidal river, on which drifts a sail boat. Across the shore are the buildings of a small town, while in the distance, across the bay, is another town. In the immediate foreground stand two men in brightly colored red and blue clothes, in contrast to the predominant browns and yellows of the scene.

Rural Scene: Beyond several large trees in the foreground a dark brown ruin is visible to the left. Beyond the trees in the center a man can be seen leading a horse to a small thatched cottage.

Floral Scene: Extending up the staircase a mass of red and yellow hollyhocks, roses, lilacs, and white snowballs can be seen. Above the flowers on a buff background rise a row of polar trees.

Moonlight Scene: A full moon casts a pale greenish-gray light on a river with a sloop resting in it. The shadow of the sloop is reflected in the water. A castle can be seen on the right shore and large trees on the left.

Comment: The attribution of these paintings is based on a bill given by Mrs. Margarethe Lyman Dwight to the Providence Preservation Society. The bill is from Cornè to Sullivan Dorr and itemizes all the painting done in the house, much of which has

since disappeared. The present location of the bill is unknown. It is reproduced in Chapter I, part C. The scenes were painted directly on the dry plaster. Most of the painting in the dining room and upstairs rooms has disappeared. The existing paintings are currently being restored by Mr. Constantine Cavousis under the auspices of the Providence Preservation Society. *They were painted*

Repro: Allen, op. cit., pp. 39-45. Jane Louise Cayford, "The Sullivan Dorr House in Providence, Rhode Island" (unpublished Master's dissertation, Winterthur Program, University of Delaware, 1961), Chapter IV.

Ref: Allen, op. cit., Cayford, op. cit.

### 3. The Mount, Bristol, Rhode Island

Owner: The house and paintings were destroyed by fire in 1905.

Date painted: c. 1810-1815

Descrip: The Mount was furnished with paintings supposed to represent scenes from the owner's coffee plantation in Cuba. A bedroom was supposed to contain scenes of the story of Paul and Virginia, after the original narrative by Bernardin de Saint Pierre.

Comment: The Mount was built about 1808 by a wealthy merchant and slave trader, James DeWolf. He was born in 1764 in Bristol, fought in the Revolutionary War, and became a slave trader after the war. Later he became a manufacturer of cotton, and later still a United States Senator from Rhode Island. He died on December 21, 1837.

The only description of the paintings, which has become the basis of attribution to Corné, is by Alicia Hopton Middleton, a great granddaughter of DeWolf. "The interior was arranged and finished with artistic taste, the walls of one of the long drawing rooms being painted by a French artist in scenes from the owner's coffee plantation in Cuba." It is quite possible that this "French artist" was Corné, but the existing photographs of the scenes are too indistinct to make definite attribution possible.

Repro: Alicia Hopton Middleton, Ed. Life in Carolina and New England During the Nineteenth Century as Illustrated by Reminiscences and Letters of the Middleton Family of Charleston, South Carolina and of the DeWolf Family of Bristol, Rhode Island (Bristol, R.I.: Privately printed, 1929), plates opp. pp. 101, 103.

Ref: Ibid, p. 22.

4. Hancock House, Boston, Massachusetts

Owner: Torn down in 1864

Date painted: possibly 1810-1812

Descrip: No record of the description of the paintings has survived.

Comment: The only reference to these paintings is contained in: George Champlin Mason, Reminiscences of Newport (Newport: Charles E. Hammett, Publisher, 1884). He stated that the walls of the "Hancock House" were painted by Corn . His reference was probably to the house built by Thomas Hancock on Beacon Street in Boston in 1737. It was owned during the time that Corn  was in Boston by Dorothy Quincy Scott. No mention was made of the paintings in a description of the house, nor in an auction notice of its contents, both written in 1864, shortly before the house was torn down.

Ref: Mason, op. cit., p. 332. Mabel M. Swan, "The Furniture of His Excellency, John Hancock," Antiques (March, 1937), pp. 119-121.

5. Corn  House, Newport, Rhode Island

Owner: The house is still standing on Corne Street in Newport. The paintings were removed in the nineteenth century, and all apparently have disappeared except for one small fragment at the Newport Historical Society, and a second, owned by Mrs. John Howard Benson of Newport.

Date painted: 1822-1845

Descrip: Except for the two known fragments, we must rely on nineteenth century accounts for a description of the paintings. "On the walls of the hall until

lately could be seen traces of his pencil, including a bust of Washington, badly drawn. . . . In his room over the shop the walls were decorated with rocky promontories, ruins, streams, bridges, Mediterranean views, ships, rustic figures and peasant women." Mason, op. cit., pp. 339-340.

Another writer commented that he was "an artist of real merit, which was proved by the portrayal, sometimes in crayon, on the plastered walls of his chambers. The perspective of many of them was admirable, and the representation of flame and smoke belching from the cannon's mouth was startlingly realistic." Mr. Northrup, article in the Newport Daily News (December 31, 1895).

Of the existing panels, that owned by the Newport Historical Society shows a small sailing sloop, with a British flag flying from the mast, and three men on board. The sea is rough and is dark green.

The panel owned by Mrs. John Howard Benson is a larger ship, supposed to represent the "Mount Vernon," sailing fully rigged on a rough, blue green sea.

Comment: The paintings were taken off the walls before Mason wrote in 1884 with the intention of saving them, but this plan was apparently not carried out.

Repro: The panel owned by Mrs. Benson is reproduced in Mason, op. cit., p. 330.

Ref: Mason, op. cit. Northrup, op. cit.

6. Ceiling of cupola from the Pickman-Derby-Brookhouse House, Salem, Massachusetts.

Owner: Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1800-1807

Descrip: The paintings are done in some sort of water color on a wooden domical ceiling. Panorama of ships around the ceiling (presumably the Derby fleet) against a background of rocky headlands. On one shore there are several towers and buildings of an Italian type city. Several small boats with fishermen drawing in nets along the shore can be seen. Sky is grayish blue, partly covered with white and reddish-brown clouds. (The paintings at present are very faded and indistinct).



Comment. The house originally stood at 70 Washington Street in Salem. It was built in 1763 by Benjamin Pickman and in 1782 was remodeled extensively by Angier and Samuel McIntire. At that time the cupola was added. Upon Derby's death in 1799 the house was left to his second son, John, and it was for him that Corné apparently painted the ceiling. The basis of attribution is solely on stylistic grounds, but it seems very likely that Corné painted them. The house was torn down in the early years of the twentieth century, and the cupola was removed to the grounds of the Essex Institute.

Repro: detail (Plate IVb).

## OVERMANTELS AND FIREBOARDS

### 7. The Fish Wagon

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1803

Descrip: Oil on canvas. Dramatic sea scene. Center foreground: two horse wagon driven by an old man; sign on the back of the wagon reads "Fish Machine." To immediate left, odd shape rock covered with foliage. Farther left: several boats, three men, and a pile of fish on a wharf. Far right: a high rocky bluff crowned with a spindly tree. In sea beyond, several large boats, one flying an English flag. Background left: a lighthouse and part of a stone fortress. Hills and the walls of a town in the far distance. Blues, greens and browns predominate.

Comment: Signed lower center on a rock: "Corné pinxit 1803." The painting is taken almost directly after a painting by the English artist Richard Wright (1735-1775), entitled "The Fishery" (Plate Vb). It was engraved by William Woollett (1735-1785) and the print was widely circulated, and undoubtedly seen by Corné. "The Fishery" was commissioned by a syndicate of gentlemen in England who desired to improve the transport of fresh fish from the coast to the consumer, and devised a water wagon for this purpose. They engaged Wright to commemorate the event, and he painted several canvases, one for each

member of the syndicate. One now hangs in the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool.

Repro: (Plate Va)

Ref: Oliver Warner, An Introduction to British Marine Painting (London; B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1948), p. 14, fig. 6.

## 8. Seascape

Owner: present location unknown, 1954 owned by Ginsberg and Levy, New York.

Date painted: poss. 1800-1807

Descrip: Oil on canvas, 24 x 16 inches. Very similar to previous painting (No. 7), except for the lack of a fish wagon. Two boats and several figures are beneath the cliff at right. Very rough sea, several large ships.

Comment: The painting is quite definitely taken from Woollett's engraving after "The Fishery" by Richard Wright, but it is somewhat questionable if it is by Corne. From the photograph I have seen, it seems nowhere near as finely done as No. 7. The ships are poorly painted and the whole perspective of the painting is odd.

Repro: Antiques (July, 1954), p. 11 (Advertisement by Ginsberg and Levy, New York).

Ref: Idem.

## 9. Landing at Plymouth

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1803-1804

Descrip: Oil on canvas, 40 x 55. Band of red-coated soldiers landing in a boat on a rocky shore at right. Several Indians stand on the snow-covered rocks near the shore. British man-of-war stands off shore to the left. An inscription, "Dec. 22, 1620" is written on a rock in the foreground. The sky is pink to blue, white clouds, brown rocks, dark blue sea.

Comment: Unsigned, but attributed by tradition and stylistically. Reverend William Bentley wrote in 1804 that the painting was hanging in the new rooms of the East India Marine Society in Salem. The scene is quite imaginary, and the people landing are obviously not Pilgrims, but British soldiers of the Revolutionary era. Quite probably the painting was taken, in part, from an engraving of another subject and given a new title.

Ref: William Bentley, The Diary of William Bentley, Vd. III (Salem: The Essex Institute, 1907-1914), p. 93.

#### 10. Launching of the Essex

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1803-1804

Descrip: unknown

Comment: Painted for a chimney piece in the new rooms of the East India Marine Society about 1804. It is attributed to Corne as he did several other paintings for the Society at that time. (See Nos. 11, 18, 20).

Ref: Bentley, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 93.

#### 11. Salem Harbor

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1805

Descrip: Oil on wood panel. Salem Harbor with the neck in the background to left, other land in distance to right. A large ship flying the American flag putting out to sea. Small dory with men waving to rear of ship. In foreground the top of a cliff appears to the left and to the right. A woman dressed in a white empire gown with her arms extended is seated on the left cliff. Two cupids, one on each cliff, are holding up a banner which stretches across the top of the painting, with the inscription on it: "East India Marine Hall." Greenish-blue sky with gray clouds tipped with white, blue sea.

Comment: Signed and dated "M. Corné pinxit 1803," on left hand cliff. Painted for the East India Marine Society when it moved to its quarters in 1804. The cupids and the banner were added in 1825 by Samuel Bartol.

Repro: (Plate VII b).

## 12. Sunday Morning

Owner: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1800-1807

Descrip: Overmantel oil on canvas, 52 x 48 inches. Genre scene, group of several adults and children under a gnarled spreading tree and beside a brick and wooden cottage with a thatched roof. The people are performing various domestic functions. A path winds from the foreground through a wooden gate towards several hills crowned with fortified cities in the distance. The dominant colors are brown and green. Blue sky with yellow clouds, a brown cottage with yellow thatch, hills and fields painted in several shades of green.

Comment: The painting, along with its companion (No. 13) is attributed to Corné on the basis of style and technique. They were originally painted for "Oak Hill," a house purchased in 1789 by Elias Hasket Derby and bequeathed in 1799 to his eldest daughter, Elizabeth Derby West. The paintings were probably painted for this couple.

The painting was derived from a painting with a similar title, by the English genre painter, William Redmore Bigg, RA. Bigg's painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1793 under the title, "Sunday morning, a cottage family going to church." In 1797 the painting was engraved by Thomas Burke, and entitled "Saturday Morning or the Cottagers Merchandize," (pubd. 1797). It was, most likely, this engraving that Corné copied.

Repro: (Plate XIb).

Ref: Algernon Graves, FSA, The Royal Academy of Arts-A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their Work from its Foundation in 1769 to 1904, Vol. I (London, Henry Graves and Co. Ltd., 1905), p. 192.

Edwin J. Hipkiss, Three McIntire Rooms from Peabody, Massachusetts (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1931), p. 16.  
 Parke-Bernet Galleries. Catalogue of Sale. May 8, 9, 1946.

### 13. Saturday Evening

Owner: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1800-1807

Descrip: Overmantel oil on canvas, 50 x 48 inches.  
 Genre scene. Family group about the door of a stucco thatched cottage overhung by a large tree. A road extends to the distance on the left with a town in the distance. The colors are much the same as in the companion piece (No. 12), with browns and greens predominating.

Comment: The painting is attributed to Cornè on the basis of style and technique. It was painted for a second room in "Oak Hill" (see above). It was copied after a painting by William Redmore Bigg RA entitled "Saturday Evening, with the husbandman's return from his labour," and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1792. In 1795 it was engraved by William Nutter (1754-1802) and entitled, "Saturday Evening, the Husbandman's Return from Labour." It was probably this engraving that Cornè copied.

Repro: (plate XIa).

Ref: Parke-Bernet, Catalogue, op. cit., p. 48.

### 14. Romantic Landscape

Owner: Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1800-1807

Descrip: Overmantel landscape of a bay and mountains. Land in foreground with two houses on right, a pair of intertwined trees, and several figures, one a boy with a sack over his shoulder (supposed to represent Simon Forrester leaving Ireland). Stone bridge across bay in middleground. Church and several stone towers on peninsula to left of bridge. Large bay in background ringed by mountains. Several ships on bay. Greens and browns predominate.

Comment: Attributed to Cornè on the basis of style and technique. Painted for the house of Simon Forrester at 188 Derby St. in Salem. Simon Forrester was born in 1746 in Killeenach, Ireland. He came to Salem in 1767 and built up a fortune as a merchant. In 1791 he purchased a large, unfinished house from Jonathan Ingersoll and had McIntire do some carving in it. The painting along with its companion (No. 15) originally hung in this house.

Repro: Essex Institute Historical Collections (January, 1935), opp. p. 17.

### 15. Romantic Landscape

Owner: Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1800-1807

Descrip: Overmantel oil on canvas, 53 3/4 x 35 1/2 inches including frame. Landscape of bay and mountains very similar to preceeding painting (No. 14). Several figures along path in foreground, including the boy carrying a sack over his shoulder. Several houses and other buildings to right and left. A bay in distance surrounded by hills. The whole painting is slightly lighter in tone than its companion, with browns and greens predominating. A painted border of flowers and leaves surrounds the picture.

Comment: Attributed to Cornè on the basis of style and technique. Companion piece to previous painting. Painted for the Simon Forrester House at 188 Derby St. Salem (see above).

Exhib: Exhibited at Ginsberg and Levy, New York, 1943.  
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November, 1952.

Repro: (Plate IVa).

Ref: Helen Comstock, "An Unrecorded Salem Wall Painting," The Connoisseur, (September, 1943), pp. 45-46.

### 16. Romantic Landscape

Owner: Nina Fletcher Little, Brookline, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1800-1807

Descrip: Overmantel, oil on canvas. Landscape of bay and mountains. Two large trees in left center foreground. Young boy with sack over his shoulder walking along a path in the foreground. Two houses on right, church with two stone towers on left. Stone bridge crosses bay in center. Beyond bridge bay widens. A sloop and smaller ships in bay. A bluff in right background with a lighthouse on tip, mountains beyond. Colors much the same as in the two previous paintings; greens and browns predominate.

Comment: Attributed to Cornè on the basis of style and technique. It came from an unidentified house in Salem, but is very similar to the two paintings from the Simon Forrester House (nos. 14, 15).

Repro: Nina Fletcher Little, American Decorative Wall Painting (Sturbridge, Massachusetts: Old Sturbridge Village in Co-operation with Studio Publications Inc., New York, 1952), p. 45.

17. Romantic Landscape (supposed to be a fanciful representation of Port Louis, Isle of France (Mauritus)).

Owner: Mr. and Mrs. Lamot DuPont Copeland, Greenville, Delaware.

Date painted: 1800-1807

Descrip: Overmantel oil on canvas. Landscape of island and sea. Point of land in foreground on which is a small house almost overgrown with foliage. Three tall trees, small groups of figures about house, one group cooking something in a pot over a fire. Large sailing boat in harbor to right. In background rise the towers and walls of a fantastic island city. Browns and greens predominate.

Comment: Attributed to Cornè on the basis of style and technique. From an unidentified house in New England.

Repro: Little, ADWP op. cit., p. 46.

18. Canton Factories

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1803-1804

Descrip: Oil on board. View of the waterfront of Canton with several of the factories of the foreign countries. The flags of the United States, Great Britain, Sweden, Denmark, and Spain are flying above the buildings. In the harbor in the foreground are a number of sampans, while several more are tied up in front of the factories. The buildings are yellow and red, the ground is brown, the water shades from brown to black, and the sky ranges from light brown to dark gray.

Comment: Attributed to Corn  on the basis of style, technique and tradition. It was painted for the new quarters of the East India Marine Society in 1803-4. It was probably taken after another painting or an engraving.

Repro: Charles H. Copeland, "To the farthest port of the rich East," American Heritage (February, 1955), p. 16.

#### 19. Whampoa

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1803-4

Descrip: fireboard, description unknown

Comment: Attributed to Corn  on the basis of a statement by William Bentley who mentioned that it was painted for the new quarters of the East India Marine Society in 1804. It is known that Corn  did several of the decorations for the Society at this time, so it is likely that he did this also.

Ref: Bentley, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 93.

#### 20. Capetown, South Africa

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1804

Descrip: Oil on board. Panoramic view of the town and harbor of Capetown, viewed from the top of a hill. Blue-green grassy hills and fields extend down to the town and the sea, in the center distance. A large fort at right side of town. In the light blue placid waters of the harbor are several French



sailing ships, while across the harbor rises a range of mountains. In the foreground stand two men conversing, while beyond them stand three others. A flock of sheep can be seen on a lower hill among several other figures. Browns and greens again predominate, with a yellow and pink sky.

Comment: Signed and dated lower left: "M. Cornè pinxit 1804." It was painted for the East India Marine Society in 1804 to decorate their new quarters. It was probably taken from another painting or engraving. The view of Capetown was significant to the Society, for in order for a captain to qualify for membership, he had to have sailed beyond the Cape of Good Hope.

Repro: (Plate Ia).

Ref: Bentley, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 93.

### Ship Portraits

#### 21. The Mount Vernon

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1799

Descrip: Water color on paper, 17 x 13½ inches. The stern and starboard side of the "Mount Vernon" is shown in the center, shooting at a French lateener at the left. Other ships are to the rear. The sea is very calm. A light blue is the predominant color.

Comment: Signed lower right, "MCP," lower left, "Naples 1799." Painted in Naples commemorating an engagement on the voyage of the "Mount Vernon" from Salem to the Mediterranean.

#### 22. The Mount Vernon

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1799

Descrip: Water color on paper, 17½ x 13½ inches. The "Mount Vernon" is shown fighting a small French lateener. A light blue color predominates.

Comment: Signed lower left, "MCP," lower right "Naples 1799." Painted in Naples commemorating an engagement on the voyage of the "Mount Vernon" from Salem to the Mediterranean.

23. The Mount Vernon

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date: 1799

Descrip: Water color on paper,  $17\frac{1}{4}$  x  $13\frac{1}{2}$ . The "Mount Vernon" is shown fighting a French ship. A large fleet is in the background. Light blue predominates.

Comment: Signed and dated lower right, "Naples 1799 MCP." Painted in Naples commemorating an engagement on the voyage of the "Mount Vernon" from Salem to the Mediterranean.

24. The Mount Vernon

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1799

Descrip: Water color on paper  $17\frac{1}{4}$  x  $12\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The "Mount Vernon" is shown fighting a small French lateener. A light blue is the predominant color.

Comment: Signed and dated lower left, "MCP Naples 1799." Painted in Naples commemorating an engagement on the voyage of the "Mount Vernon" from Salem to the Mediterranean.

25. The Mount Vernon

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1799

Descrip: Water color on paper  $17\frac{1}{4}$  x  $13\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The "Mount Vernon" is shown fighting several French ships. The predominant color is light blue.

Comment: Signed and dated lower right, "Naples 1799 mcp." Painted in Naples commemorating an engagement on the voyage of the "Mount Vernon" from Salem to the Mediterranean.

26. The Mount Vernon

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1799

Descrip: Water color on paper. The "Mount Vernon" is shown fighting several French ships.

Comment: Signed lower right, "MCP," lower left, "Naples 1799." Painted in Naples commemorating an engagement on the voyage of the "Mount Vernon" from Salem to the Mediterranean.

27. The Mount Vernon

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1799

Descrip: Water color on paper. The "Mount Vernon" is shown fighting a small French sloop, with a fleet in the background.

Comment: Signed lower right, "MCP," lower left, "Naples 1799." Painted in Naples commemorating an engagement on the voyage of the "Mount Vernon" from Salem to the Mediterranean.

28. The Mount Vernon

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1799

Descrip: Water color on paper. The "Mount Vernon" is shown fighting a small French lateener. The predominant color is light blue.

Comment: Signed lower right, "MCP," lower left. "Naples 1799." Painted in Naples commemorating an engagement on the voyage of the "Mount Vernon" from Salem to the Mediterranean.

29. The Mount Vernon of Salem Commanded by Capt Elias Derby-1789

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1799

Descrip: Water color on paper, 21 x 14½ inches

The "Mount Vernon" is shown in the foreground firing at a French ship to the left. A fleet of ships is shown to the rear and to the right. Light blue sea and sky.

Comment: Signed lower right, "mcp." The date 1789 in the title inscription is obviously erroneous, as the ship was not launched until 1798. The date was probably intended to be 1799.

Repro: (Plate VIa).

30. Ship Mount Vernon of Salem meeting a British squadron, 1799

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1799

Descrip: Oil on canvas. "Mount Vernon" in center firing at two ships, with a fleet in background. Dark blue sea, light blue sky, white clouds.

Comment: Unsigned, but attributed to Corne on the basis of style, technique, and subject matter.

Repro: John Robinson and George Francis Dow, The Sailing Ships of New England, Series Two (Salem: Marine Research Society, 1924), fig. 455.

31. The Mount Vernon

Owner: Present location unknown, 1941 owned by Benjamin R. Kittredge Esquire, Carmel, New York.

Date painted: 1799-1807

Descrip: Water color on paper. The "Mount Vernon" is shown fighting two French ships off Gibraltar. Gibraltar can be seen in the background. A light blue is the predominant color.

Comment: unsigned, but similar to several water colors by Corne in the Peabody Museum. The engagement pictured took place on July 31, 1799 on the voyage of the "Mount Vernon" from Salem to the Mediterranean. The painting descended in the family of Captain Luther Dana, and was probably painted for him.

Ref: Richard W. Hale, "Three Watercolors by Cornè,"  
American Neptune (April, 1941), p. 164.

32. The Mount Vernon Departing from Naples

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1799

Descrip: Water color on paper,  $17\frac{1}{4}$  x  $13\frac{1}{2}$  inches.  
 The "Mount Vernon" can be seen leaving a wharf in the foreground, while behind can be seen the city and Vesuvius.

Comment: Signed lower right, "MCP," lower left, "1799."  
 The scene was probably painted from life in the fall of 1799 as the "Mount Vernon" left Naples for a short trading voyage to Manfredonia and Leghorn.

33. The Mount Vernon, Lucia, Nancy & Cruger of Salem departing from Naples, year 1800.

Owner: present location unknown, 1941 owned by Benjamin R. Kittredge Esq., Carmel, New York.

Date painted: probably 1800

Descrip: Watercolor, description unknown

Comment: Unsigned but attributed to Cornè on the basis of style and subject matter. Cornè was aboard the "Mount Vernon" at this time. It was probably painted for Captain Dana of the "Nancy" in whose family the painting descended.

34. Brig Cruger of Salem Capt. John Barton

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: c. 1800

Descrip: Water color on paper,  $14\frac{1}{2}$  x  $11\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Port side view. "Cruger" firing guns out of the side of the ship. Small boats to left, figures on deck of several of the ships. Calm sea.

Comment: Unsigned, but attributed to Cornè on basis of style, technique and subject matter. Written lower right: "Naples 1800." The "Cruger" was one of the ships which sailed from the "Mount Vernon" from Naples.

Repro: Robinson and Dow op. cit. Series I, fig. 56.

35. Mary

Owner: present location unknown, 1937 owned by Gershwin Bradford of Duxbury, Massachusetts.

Date painted: 1800

Descrip: Water color on paper. View of starboard and stern of ship, firing out the stern at a small French sloop to the left. Another small ship to right.

Comment: Inscription across bottom, "Ship Mary of Boston engaging 3 French privateers." Signed lower left, "MCP," lower right, "Naples 1800." The captain of the ship, Gamaliel Bradford, was in Naples in 1800 in command of the ship "Industry." The painting was probably done at that time. The scene pictured occurred March 8, 1799 in the Straits of Gibraltar.

Repro: Old Time New England, (October, 1958), frontis.

36. Fame

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1802-1807

Descrip: Water color on paper. View of starboard side of a ship in a calm sea.

Comment: Unsigned, but attributed on the basis of style and technique. The boat was launched in 1802.

37. Margaret

Owner: Present location unknown, 1906 owned by Miss Alice B. Mansfield

Date painted: 1802

Descrip: Water color on paper, starboard view of a fully rigged ship on a choppy sea. Other boats in left background. Gray sky with white clouds, blue sea.

Comment: Signed at bottom: "Michele Cornè p. 1802."

Repro: Robinson and Dow Series I, op. cit., fig. 180.

38. The Ulysses, Brutus and Volusia sailing from Salem Harbor

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: c. 1802

Descrip: Oil on canvas, 27 x 20 3/4 inches. Three large ships shown leaving a wharf at left. Blue sea, very yellow sky.

Comment: Unsigned, attributed on the basis of subject matter. There is only a probability that this and its two companion pieces (Nos. 39,40) were painted by Cornè. An inscription across the bottom reads: "A view from Crowninshields Wharf of the sailing from Salem Harbour at 10AM on the 21st of February 1802 of the Ships Ulysses, Brutus, Volusia, James Cook, William Brown & Samuel Cook Commanders, the two first bound to Bordeaux & India & the last to the Mediterranean."

39. The Wreck of the Ulysses, Brutus and Volusia

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: c. 1802

Descrip: Oil on canvas, 27 3/4 x 20 3/4 inches. The scene is a night view and is almost totally black. The wrecked ships show only faintly as areas of light.

Comment: Unsigned, attributed to Cornè on the basis of subject matter, but it is only probable that he painted them. An inscription across the bottom reads: "A View of the Ships Ulysses (on the right) Brutus (in the centre) & Volusia (on the left) commanded by James Cook, William Brown & Samuel Cook in the tremendous snow storm, on the night of the 22nd of February, 1802."

40. The Ulysses, Brutus and Volusia stranded on Cape Cod

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: c. 1802

Descrip: Oil on canvas, 27 1/4 x 20 1/2 inches. Rough green sea, boats stranded on various points of land across

the picture. Sand dunes on shore, very yellow to pinkish sky. The whole effect is rather drab.

Comment: Unsigned, attributed to Corn  on the basis of subject matter. An inscription across the bottom of the picture reads: "A View of the Ships Ulysses (on the right) Brutus (in the centre) & Volusia (on the left) as they appeared stranded on Cape Cod at sunrise on the 23rd of February 1802. The crews of the Ulysses and Volusia commanded by James Cook and Samuel Cook were saved. Two of the crew of the Brutus were lost overboard & Capt. William Brown & seven others were frozen to death."

41. Captain Cook Cast a Way on Cape Cod 1802

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: c. 1802

Descrip: Water color on paper, 15½ x 13½ inches. A large ship with one mast gone and another falling is being driven onto the coast by a huge wave. Several figures are clinging to the remaining mast. The sky is bluish-gray, the sea blue with white foam, the ship brown with white sails.

Comment: Unsigned, but attributed to Corn  on the basis of style and technique. The ship shown is the "Ulysses," and is a view of the same action shown in Nos. 39, 40 (above). It took place on Febraury 22, 1802.

42. The Wreck of the Ship Volusia

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: c. 1802

Descrip: Water color on paper, 15½ x 13½ inches. The stern of a ship is shown off a rocky coast. The mast is falling, and the ship is about to be swept on to the rocks. Rough white and blue sea. Heavy, grey overcast sky.

Comment: Unsigned, but attributed to Corn  on the basis of style and technique. An inscription at the bottom reads, "1802-Ship Volusia of Salem Cutting the Meason Mast." The action took place on February 22, 1802.



Repro: Robinson and Dow, Series I, op. cit., fig. 298.

43. Charles

Owner: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1803

Descrip: Water color on paper mounted on a panel,  $13\frac{1}{2}$  x  $19\frac{3}{4}$  inches. Single topsail brig in center with tan sails, in a light blue sea. Black hull with gold trim. "Charles of Boston" inscribed on stern. Six white-sailed vessels in distance. In background, blue mountains against blue and pink sky with pink and white clouds.

Comment: Signed lower right: "M. Corn  pinx." Inscribed across the bottom in gold, "Charles of Boston 1803." Painted for Commodore Edward Preble, owner of the "Charles."

Repro: Catalogue of Paintings and Drawings in Water Color (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1949), p. 225.

44. John

Owner: Nina Fletcher Little, Brookline, Massachusetts

Date painted: c. 1802

Descrip: Oil on panel, port side view of ship with an American flag. Several figures can be seen on deck. Choppy sea. Land and small ships at far left. Fair sky, some white clouds.

Comment: Attributed to Corn  on the basis of style and technique, and similar subject matter (No. 45).

45. John

Owner: Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts (on deposit at Peabody museum in Salem).

Date painted: 1803

Descrip: Watercolor on paper. Ship approaching land at left of picture with all sails flying. Calm sea, pink clouds in blue sky. Other ships to rear on both left and right sides.

Comment: Signed: "Michele Cornè pinxit in Salem"

Repro: Robinson and Dow, Series I, op. cit., fig. 146.

46. Hazard

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1802

Descrip: Water color on paper, 18 x 13 inches

Comment: Signed lower right, "Michele Cornè pinxit,"  
written lower left, "In Salem, 1802."

47. Hazard

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1805

Descrip: Water color on paper, port side view of ship.  
Land and other ships at left.

Comment: Signed lower left: M. Cornè pinxit 1805."

Repro: (Plate VIIa).

48. Hazard

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1800-1807

Descrip: Water color on paper, 23 x 16½ inches.

Comment: unsigned, but attributed to Cornè on the  
basis of style and technique.

49. Snow America

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: c. 1803

Descrip: Water color on paper, 24 x 17 inches. Vessel  
shown being engulfed by a huge wave and apparently  
ready to capsize. Rough blue sea with white foam,  
gray sky with darker gray clouds.

Comment: Signed lower right: "M. Cornè." Inscription across bottom, "Snow America of Marblehead Archibald Selman Master on Mond. 2 January 1803."

Repro: Robinson and Dow Series I, op. cit., frontis.

50. America of Charleston

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1800-1807

Descrip: Water color. Starboard view of a large ship flying an American flag in the foreground. Several men dressed in red and blue seen on deck. Several other ships faintly in the distance. Calm, greenish-blue sea. Tan and black boat. Sky ranges from pink on horizon to blue at top. White cumulus clouds.

Comment: Signed lower right: " in Salem M. Cornè Delineavit & Pinxit." Inscription across bottom "Ship America of Charleston, Upon Grand Bank May 1789."

51. America of Charleston

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1800-1807

Descrip: Water color on paper. Stern and starboard view of a vessel in a rough sea. "America of Charleston" written across the stern. Overcast sky.

Comment: Signed lower right, "M.C. deli & pinxit." Inscription across bottom of painting: "The Ship America of Charleston 8 days from grand Bank to the Channel of England-May 1789."

Repro: Mabel M. Swan, Louise Karr, "Early Marine Painters of Salem," Antiques (August, 1940), p. 63.

52. America 3rd

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1800-1807

Descrip: Oil on canvas. Large ship flying the American

flag with 13 stars, in center. Large British ship to left, small fishing vessel to right, several other ships beyond. Choppy sea. Golden glow dominates the whole picture. Sky and clouds bathed in a golden light, reflected in the sea.

Comment: Unsigned, but attributed to Cornè on the basis of style, technique and subject matter.

Repro: (Plate VIb).

### 53. Preserverance

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: c. 1805

Descrip: Oil on canvas, 26 3/4 x 20 3/4. Ship breaking up on land in the foreground. Rough gray-green sea, white snow on land, gray scudding sky.

Comment: Signed lower right, "MCP." Inscription at bottom of picture, "View of Ship Preserverance James Cook Commander from Batavia bound to Salem wrecked-Tarpaulin Cove at 8AM January 31, 1805."

### 54. Adventure

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1800-1807

Descrip: Water color on paper. Port side view of a fully rigged ship, in a calm, deep blue sea. Blue sky, pink horizon.

Comment: Signed lower right: M. Cornè fecit."

### 55. Recovery

Owner: present location unknown, 1941 owned by Benjamin R. Kittredge Esq., Carmel, New York.

Date painted: 1800-1807

Descrip: Water color on paper

Comment: Signed: "Corney pinxit." Inscription across bottom: "Ship Recovery of Salem owned by Honourable

Elias Hasket Derby, Esq. Luther Dana, Commander, returning from Mocha in the Red Sea." The picture descended in the Dana family.

Ref: Hale, op. cit., p. 164.

56. Prudent

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1800-1807

Descrip: Water color on paper, 16½ x 13. Port side view of ship with figures on deck. Calm sea, blue sky.

Comment: Unsigned, attributed to Cornè on the basis of style.

Repro: Robinson and Dow, Series I, op. cit. fig. 234.

57. Fame

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1802-1807

Descrip: Water color on paper, starboard view of a ship in a calm blue sea.

Comment: Unsigned, attributed on the basis of style.

58. Belisarius

Owner: Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts (on deposit at Peabody Museum in Salem).

Date painted: 1800-1807

Descrip: Water color. Ship leaving a wharf in Salem in the center of the picture. Port side of the ship shown. Wharf at right, building and several figures on the wharf. Hills beyond, other ships in the harbor in the background.

Comment: Unsigned, but attributed to Cornè on the basis of style and technique.

Repro: Robinson and Dow, Series I op. cit., fig. 22.

59. A sloop

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1800-1807

Descrip: Water color, 12½ x 8 ¾.

Comment: Unsigned, but attributed to Cornè on the basis of style and technique.

60. Ship Hercules

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1809-1822

Descrip: Water color 32½ x 22 inches. Ship at anchor in right foreground. Figures on deck. Small boat with several men in it alongside. Rocky shore in left foreground, several figures on rocks, one with a fishing pole. Part of a lighthouse shows at left. There is a city in the background left. Mountains, behind the city.

Comment: Unsigned, but attributed to Cornè on the basis of style and technique and the similarity of the background scenery here to the view of the Bay of Naples in the parlor of the Sullivan Dorr House in Providence (Plate IIIa). Inscription across bottom of picture: "Ship Hercules of Salem, Capt. Edward West passing the Mole Head of Naples, coming to an anchor [anchor] 13th Sept. 1809."

Repro: Robinson and Dow, Series I, op. cit., fig. 132.

### Naval Battle Scenes

61. French and British Ships Engaged in a Battle

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1800-1807

Descrip: Oil on canvas, British ship in foreground. French and British ships fighting in background.

Comment: Unsigned, but attributed to Cornè on the basis of style and technique.

62. Bombardment of Tripoli

Owner: United States Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, Maryland

Date painted: 1805

Descrip: Oil on canvas, 40 x 72 inches. Large ship (the "Constitution") at right center, several other smaller ships behind and to the left. All are firing at batteries on the shore, which are returning the fire. A small gun boat at right is firing at an oared vessel near the shore. Behind the shore fortresses and the towers of a city rise in front of several hills. Browns and the blue of the sea predominate in the picture.

Comment: Signed and dated "M Cornè pinxit 1805." The action took place on the third of August 1804 led by Commodore Preble. The painting is probably quite similar to the panorama exhibited in Boston and Salem under the same title.

Exhib: M. Knoedler & Company, New York, September 24-October 13, 1945.

Repro: William Wood and Ralph Henry Gabriel, The Winning of Freedom (Pageant of America Series) (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927), fig. 565.

63. Bombardment of Tripoli

Owner: United States Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, Maryland.

Date painted: c. 1805

Descrip: Water color, 17 x 24 inches. View similar to that of No. 62. Composition is lighter in tone due to the medium used.

Comment: Unsigned, attributed on the basis of style and technique and the similarity to the signed view of the same scene (No. 62).

64. Bombardment of Tripoli

Owner: Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, Rhode Island

Date painted: c. 1805

Descrip: Oil on canvas 33 x 48 inches. Very similar to the larger signed version at Annapolis (see above No. 62).

Comment: Unsigned, but attributed to Cornè on the basis of the large signed painting at Annapolis and on the basis of style and technique as well.

Exhib: Art Institute of Chicago, April 21-June 19, 1949. The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C., July 8-December 17, 1950,

Repro: Rhode Island History (July, 1955), pp. 80-81.

Ref: "The Bombardment of Tripoli in 1804" The Old Print Shop Portfolio, (November, 1944), pp. 51-53.

65. The Constitution's Escape from the British Squadron after a chase of sixty hours

Owner: Present location unknown

Date painted: 1812-1816

Descrip: (taken from an engraving in the Naval Monument). "Constitution" at left, surrounded by several small oared boats. The English fleet is at right, and in the background. Calm sea, partly cloudy sky. The "Constitution" and a British ship are firing at each other.

Comment: Engraving signed lower left: "M. Cornè p." lower right: "W. Hoogland Sc." The action took place in the Atlantic on the 17th, 18th, and 19th of July, 1812.

Repro: Abel Bowen, The Naval Monument (Boston, Published by A. Bowen, 1816), opp. p. 1.

Ref: Idem.

66. Constitution and Guerriere (first of a series of four paintings)

Owner: New Haven Colony Historical Society, New Haven, Connecticut

Date painted: 1812-1816



Descrip: Oil on canvas. "Constitution" on the right, commanded by Captain Isaac Hull, and the "Guerriere" on the left, commanded by Capt. Dacres. The two ships are squaring off at each other and preparing for action. The deep blue sea is quite choppy. A broad expanse of gray overcast sky with several puffy white clouds. Toward the horizon, where the light emanates, the sky turns to a pinkish and yellowish hue.

Comment: Unsigned, but attributed to Corne on the basis of style and technique and the presence of a signed engraving taken from the painting. The tradition is that this series of four paintings were done for Captain Hull, himself.

Prints derived from the painting: A series of three aquatints were issued in 1812, derived from the first three paintings of this series. "Plate 1st Preparing for an Engagement. The Constitution clearing for Action & bearing down La Guerriere Laying too. Painted by Michael Cornee under Directions from Commodore Hull & Capt. Morris. Nov. 1, 1812 Published according to Act of Congress & engraved by J.R. Smith Boston."

A woodcut of the painting was also done, by Abel Bowen of Boston, and used as an illustration in the Naval Monument. It bears the inscription: "The Constitution Bearing Down For The Guerriere," and is signed by "M. Corne p." and "A. Bowen Sc."

Repro: (Plate VIIla).

Ref: Bowen, op. cit. Irving S. Olds, Bits and Pieces of American History (New York, privately printed, 1951), p. 112.

67. Constitution and Guerriere (second of series of four paintings)

Owner: New Haven Colony Historical Society, New Haven, Connecticut

Date painted: 1812-1816

Descrip: Oil on canvas. Close engagement between the two ships. "Constitution" at the left firing a broadside at the "Guerriere" whose rear mast is toppling into the water. Much gray smoke surrounds the two ships. The whole picture is somewhat

darker than the first of the series. The sea is deep blue, and the sky is somewhat lighter in tone.

Comment: Unsigned, but attributed to Corn  on the basis of style and technique and the presence of a signed engraving taken from the painting.

Prints derived from the painting: Second of a series of three aquatints issued in 1812. "Plate 2nd Close Engagement, The Constitution in 15 Minutes fire carries away La Guerrieres Mizzen Mast. Painted by Michael Corne  under directions from Commodore Hull & Capt. Morris Nov. 1st 1812. Published according to Act of Congress & Engraved by J.R. Smith Boston."

A woodcut of the painting was also done, by Abel Bowen of Boston and used as an illustration in The Naval Monument. It bears the inscription, "The Constitution in Close Action with the Guerriere" It is signed by: "M. Corne , p." and "A. Bowen, sc."

Repro: (Plate VII Ib).

Ref: Bowen, op. cit., opp. p. 10.

68. Constitution and Guerriere (third of a series of four paintings)

Owner: New Haven Colony Historical Society, New Haven, Connecticut

Date painted: 1812-1816

Descrip: Oil on canvas. The "Guerriere" is being dismasted by the guns of the "Constitution." Puffs of smoke can be made out on both ships, as can small figures on the decks. The mizzen mast of the "Guerriere" is falling, the other two masts have already disappeared. The sea is still dark blue and somewhat choppy. The sky shows more traces of blue than in the two previous pictures, although clouds are still prominent. The pinkish glow near the horizon is gone and the light at this point is yellow and white.

Comment: Unsigned, but attributed to Corn  on the basis of style and technique and the presence of a signed engraving taken after the painting.

Prints derived from the painting: Third of a series of three aquatints issued in 1812. "Plate 3rd Surrender. The Constitution in fifteen Minutes more fighting totally dismasts La Guerriere who fires lee Gun Painted by Michael Corne under Directions from Commodore Hull & Capt. Morris Nov. 1st 1812 Published according to act of Congress & Engraved by J.R. Smith Boston."

Repro: (Plate IXa).

Ref: The United States Navy 1776-1815 (New York: The Grolier Club, 1942), p. 46.

69. Constitution and Guerriere (fourth of a series of four paintings)

Owner: New Haven Colony Historical Society, New Haven, Connecticut

Date painted: 1812-1816

Descrip: Oil on canvas. End of battle. "Constitution" at right, mostly undamaged except for a few holes in the sails and some tattered lines. Dismasted hulk of the "Guerriere" at left. Parts of mast and lines hanging over side. Figures with guns can be seen on the decks of both ships, but no firing is taking place. The sea is calmer than in any of the three previous pictures. The sky is grayer, and still light yellow to white on the horizon.

Comment: Unsigned, but attributed to Corne on the basis of style and technique and the fact that it is the last of a series of four paintings, the other three of which are attributed by means of a signed engraving.

Repro: (Plate IXb).

70. Constitution and Guerriere

Owner: present location unknown, 1936, Max Williams, New York

Date painted: c. 1812-1816

Descrip: Oil on canvas, 18 x 23½ inches. "Constitution" at right firing a broadside at a half demolished British ship. Blue green sea.

Comment: Unsigned, attributed by Anderson Galleries on a stylistic basis. It is not similar to any of the four views at the New Haven Colony Historical Society (nos. 66-69). The photograph I have seen is too small to make any definite judgement.

Repro: American Art Association. Catalogue of Sale. May 8, 9, 1936, No. 327.

Ref: Ibid, No. 327.

#### 71. Constitution and Java

Owner: Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, Massachusetts.

Date painted: c. 1813

Descrip: Oil on canvas, 30½ x 21½ inches. "Constitution" at right, dismasted hulk of "Java" at left. Figures can be seen on the decks of both ships. Much wreckage in the water about the "Java." Very calm sea with high cumulus clouds. Bright light on the horizon caused by a setting sun.

Comment: Unsigned, but attributed on the basis of a signed woodcut in the Naval Monument, and on the basis of style and technique as well. The action took place on December 29, 1812 off the coast of Brazil, Commander Bainbridge in charge of the "Constitution."

Print derived from the painting: A woodcut of this painting appears in the Naval Monument. It is signed: "M. Corne, p." and "A. Bowen, sc."

Exhib: American Art Galleries, New York, Sept. 25-Oct. 9, 1929, "Girl Scouts Loan Exhibition."

Repro: Loan Exhibition of Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century Furniture and Glass etc. for the Benefit of the National Council of Girl Scouts Inc. (New York: At the American Art Galleries, Sept. 25-Oct. 9, 1929), No. 856.

Ref: Bowen, op. cit., opp. p. 25.

#### 72. Constitution and Java

Owner: present location unknown, 1936, Max Williams, N.Y.

Date painted: c. 1813

Descrip: Oil on canvas, 18 x 23½ inches. Close encounter between two ships. The American vessel is firing, while the British ship is in the process of losing its last mast. Choppy blue green sea, with white cumulus clouds in the sky.

Comment: Unsigned, but attributed by Anderson Galleries on the basis of style and technique. The view is not similar to the view of the same battle at the Addison Gallery (No. 71) and the picture I have seen is too small to make any judgement.

Repro: American Art Association. Catalogue of Sale.  
May 8, 9, 1936, No. 326.

73. The Wasp Boarding the Frolic

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1813-1816

Descrip: (taken from a woodcut in the Naval Monument). British sloop, "Frolic" is on the left having struck the American ship, "Wasp" broadside. Several figures can be seen scurrying about the decks of both ships. Beyond, to the left, can be seen a fleet of six ships, while a single ship is in the distance to the right. Very rough sea, partly cloudy sky.

Comment: Woodcut signed at left: "M. Corne p." and at right: "A. Bowen, sc." The action took place on Oct. 28, 1812 in the Atlantic, and in two hours the "Wasp" was captured.

Repro: Bowen, op. cit., opp. p. 13.

Ref: Idem.

74. The Hornet Blockading the Bonne Citoyen

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1813-1816

Descrip: (taken from a woodcut in the Naval Monument). The American ship "Hornet" under the command of Captain Lawrence is on the left, standing outside the harbor of St. Alvdor. Beyond the buildings of the town on the right can be seen the "Bonne Citoyen".

74. Hills in the background, sea rather choppy.

Comment: The woodcut in the Naval Monument is unsigned by Corne, but there is another copy of the same plate which is signed at left: "M. Corne, p." The action shown took place in January of 1813.

Repro: Bowen, op. cit., opp. p. 34. The United States Navy 1776-1815 op. cit., p. 89.

75. The Hornet Sinking the Peacock

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1813-1816

Descrip: (taken from woodcut in the Naval Monument). The "Hornet" on the left riding the waves. The sinking British brig, "Peacock" on the right already has her stern under water. Men can be seen on the deck of the "Peacock" and several boats from the "Hornet" are transferring men between the two ships. In the background, land with a fortress. Very rough sea, partly cloudy sky.

Comment: Woodcut signed lower left: "M. Corne, p." Lower right: "A. Bowen, sc." The action took place on the 24th of February off the coast of British Guiana.

Repro: Bowen, op. cit., opp. p. 36.

Ref: Idem.

76. The Chesapeake and the Shannon

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1813-1816

Descrip: (taken from engraving in the Naval Monument). American frigate, "Chesapeake" on the right and British frigate, "Shannon" on the left, firing broadsides at each other. Thick smoke almost engulfs the two ships. Shadowy figures on decks of both ships. Lighthouse to left, several small boats watching the action. Very calm sea, partly cloudy sky.

Comment: Engraving signed lower left: "M. Corne p." lower right: "Wightman Sc." The action shown took

place on June 1, 1813 just outside Boston Harbor.  
The "Chesapeake" was captured by the "Shannon."

Repro: (Plate Xa).

Ref: Bowen, op. cit., opp. p. 41.

77. The Enterprize and the Boxer

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1813-1816

Descrip: (taken from woodcut in the Naval Monument).  
American brig, "Enterprize" and the British brig,  
"Boxer" firing at each other. Clouds of smoke rising  
from the ships. Rear mast of "Boxer" down, and flag  
hanging out over water. Smaller sloops to left and  
right. Land beyond, very calm sea.

Comment: Woodcut signed lower left: "M. Corne p."  
lower right: "A. Bowen, sc." The action took place  
on September 4, 1813 off the coast of Maine, with the  
"Enterprize" capturing the "Boxer" after a fight of  
a little more than half an hour.

Repro: Bowen, op. cit., opp. p. 76.

Ref: Idem.

78. First View of Commodore Perry's Victory

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1813-1816

Descrip: (taken from an engraving in the Naval Monument).  
In center of picture a small boat is conveying Perry  
from the "Lawrence" to the "Niagara." The American  
line of ships is at the right, the British, on the  
left. Several of the ships are firing, and smoke  
fills the air. Water very calm.

Comment: Engraving signed lower left: "M. Corne p."  
lower right: "W.B. Annin Sc." The action shown  
took place on September 10, 1813 on Lake Erie. The  
whole British fleet was captured.

Repro: Bowen, op. cit., opp. p. 83.

Ref: Idem.

79. Second View of Commodore Perry's Victory

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1813-1816

Descrip: (taken from engraving in Naval Monument).  
"Niagara" in the left center hoisting a signal for close action. American fleet advancing on the right towards the British line on the left. The "Lawrence" is out of action on the far right. Sea rougher than in the first view.

Comment: Engraving signed lower left: "M. Corne p." lower right: "W.B. Annin Sc." The action shown took place on September 10, 1813 on Lake Erie.

Repro: Bowen, op. cit., opp. p. 86.

Ref: Idem.

80. Capture of the Essex

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1814-1816

Descrip: (taken from woodcut in the Naval Monument).  
American ship, "Essex" on the left firing at the British ships, "Cherub" and "Phoebe," who are returning the fire. Land in background, calm sea.

Comment: Woodcut signed lower left: "M. Corne, p." lower right: "A. Bowen, sc." The action shown took place on March 28, 1814 off the coast of Chile.

Repro: Bowen, op. cit., p. 104.

Ref: Idem.

81. Wasp and the Reindeer

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1814-1816

Descrip: (taken from woodcut in the Naval Monument).  
American sloop, "Wasp" at left, British sloop, "Reindeer" on right, partially dismasted and apparently burning. Wreckage scattered about the water



in the foreground. Small boat being rowed from the "Reindeer" to the "Wasp." Calm sea.

Comment: Woodcut signed lower left: "M. Corne, p." lower right: "A. Bowen, sc." Action shown took place on June 28, 1814. The "Reindeer" was captured after a fight of 19 minutes, and the next day was set on fire and burned.

Repro: Bowen, op. cit., opp. p. 132

Ref: Idem.

## 82. The Wasp and the Avon

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1814-1816

Descrip: (taken from woodcut in the Naval Monument). Night scene. American sloop, "Wasp" at right center firing at British sloop, "Castilian" at left. British ship, "Avon" in rear also firing. Two other British ships in rear. Calm sea, cloudy sky.

Comment: Woodcut signed lower left: "M. Corne, p." lower right: "A. Bowen, sc." The action took place on August 27, 1814. The "Avon" was sunk and the "Wasp" escaped.

Repro: Bowen, op. cit., opp. p. 139.

Ref: Idem.

## 83. Commodore Macdonough's Victory on Lake Champlain

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1814-1816

Descrip: (taken from an engraving in the Naval Monument). In foreground American troops lined up on right side of Saranac River, British troops on left side. They are firing at each other with rifles and cannons. Plattsburgh bridge spans the river where it enters Lake Champlain. Several buildings on either shore. American and British fleets fighting on lake in background. Several small galleys and gunboats seen among larger ships. Much smoke. In background, Grand Isle and Camelrump Mountain.

Comment: Engraving signed lower left: "M. Corne p."  
lower right: "W. Hoogland, Sc." The action took  
place on September 14, 1814.

Repro: Bowen, op. cit., opp. p. 144.

Ref: Idem.

84. The President Engaging the Endymion While Pursued  
by the British Squadron

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1815-1816

Descrip: (taken from a woodcut in the Naval Monument).  
"President" in the right foreground sailing away while  
being pursued by the British ship, "Endymion." Four  
other British ships in the background. Very calm  
sea, partly cloudy sky.

Comment: Woodcut signed lower left: "M. Corne, p."  
lower right: "A. Bowen, sc." The action shown took  
place off Long Island on January 15, 1815.

Repro: Bowen, op. cit., opp. p. 157.

Ref: Idem.

85. The Constitution Taking the Cyane and Levant

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1815-1816

Descrip: (taken from an engraving in the Naval Monument).  
Moonlight scene. "Constitution" in the center back-  
ground firing at the two British ships in the fore-  
ground, the "Levant" on the left, and the "Cyane" on  
the right. Calm sea, the moon shows through a break  
in the clouds.

Comment: Engraving signed lower left: "M. Corne, p."  
lower right: "A. Anderson, sc." The action took place  
off the island of Madeira on the evening of April  
10, 1815.

Repro: Bowen, op. cit., opp. p, 172.

Ref: Idem.

86. The Hornet and the Penguin

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1815-1816

Descrip: (taken from woodcut in the Naval Monument).  
American sloop, "Hornet" on the right firing at the  
English brig, "Penguin" on the left. Much smoke  
about the "Hornet" Calm sea, cloudy sky.

Comment: Signed lower left: "M. Corne, p." lower right:  
"A. Bowen, sc." The action shown took place on March  
23, 1815. The "Penguin" was captured.

Repro: Bowen, op. cit., opp. p. 184.

Ref: Idem.

87. The Hornet's Escape from a British Seventy-Four

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1815-1816

Descrip: (taken from a woodcut in the Naval Monument).  
The "Hornet" at the left is being pursued by a  
British ship which is firing her guns at the "Hornet."  
The sea is rather choppy and the sky partly cloudy.

Comment: Woodcut signed lower left: "M. Corne, p."  
lower right: "A. Bowen, sc." The action took place  
in the South Atlantic on the 28th through the 30th  
of May, 1815.

Repro: Bowen, op. cit., opp. p. 190.

Ref: Idem.

88. Triumphant Return of the American Squadron under Com.  
Bainbridge from the Mediterranean 1815

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1815-1816

Descrip: (taken from an engraving in the Naval Temple).  
In the foreground are thirteen American ships, sail-  
ing in three lines. In background an English squad-  
ron and the Rock of Gibraltar. Calm sea and partly  
cloudy sky.

Comment: Engraving signed lower left: "M. Corne Del." in center: "Printed by Samuel Maverick N.Y.," and at right, "W.S. Leney sc." The action shown took place in 1815 after a short war with the Algerians.

Repro: The Naval Temple (Boston: Barber Badger, 1816), frontispiece.

Ref: Ibid, p. 1

89. Captain Sterrett in the Schooner Enterprise paying tribute to Tripoli, August 1801

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1801-1816

Descrip: (from engraving in Naval Temple). American schooner "Enterprise" on the right. Her men can be seen boarding the Tripolitan ship and proceeding to cut down her mast, so as to send her back to Tripoli in disgrace. Calm sea.

Comment: Engraving signed lower left: "M. Corne, p." The action took place off Malta in August, 1801.

Repro: Naval Temple, op. cit., opp. p. 17.

## PANORAMAS

90. Bombardment of Tripoli

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1807

Descrip: 10 x 60 feet. The exact description of the panorama is unknown, but it was, most likely, quite similar to the existing, but much smaller signed painting in Annapolis (No. 62). The advertisements described it as "an elegant view of the Bombardment of Tripoli, by the American Squadron commanded by Commodore Preble, and a Sublime Description of the Burning of the Philadelphia Frigate in the Harbour of Tripoli, by that gallant officer, Capt. Stephen Decatur." It is not clear from the wording whether the burning of the "Philadelphia" was actually shown, or merely described in written words.

Comment: Attributed to Corn  through advertisements in the Salem Gazette and Providence Gazette. Both state that the panorama was painted by that "celebrated Italian artist, Mr. Corne." Bentley, in a notation in his Diary for Feb. 6, 1807 stated that Corn  painted only the ships and that William King of Salem painted the remainder, but this does not seem to be at all likely in light of other evidence (see Chapter 1).

Exhib: Salem, Massachusetts, January 16, 1807-last advertised, February 6, 1807. Shown in Washington Hall for 25 cents per person, children half price. Providence, Rhode Island, May 9-19, 1807, in Mr. Snow's Golden Ball Inn. Possibly exhibited in Marblehead, Mass. before it came to Salem.

Ref: Salem Gazette, (January 16, 1807). Providence Gazette, (May 9, 1807). Bentley, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 275-276.

#### 91. Bay of Naples

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1809

Descrip: c. 10 x 8 feet. The exact description of the panorama is unknown, but it was most likely similar to the depiction of the same scene on the parlor wall of the Sullivan Dorr House in Providence (Plate IIIa). According to the advertisements it "comprised a complete prospect of Mount Vesuvius and the delightful coast of Italy for thirty miles." The American ship "Constitution" was shown in the harbor, along with six gun boats that the King of Naples had lent to this country in the Siege of Tripoli in 1804.

Comment: Attributed to Corn  on the basis of a statement by Bentley on December 1, 1809. The advertisements do not mention the artist by name. The Salem Gazette states that it was "executed by an Italian painter, a native of the City of Naples." Bentley found fault with the painting claiming that it was "only on a larger scale, the Etching of Hogarth without the addition of a single stroke of the pencil." I have been unable to find a copy of this etching to make a comparison.

Exhib: Boston, 1809. Salem, Mass. Advertised November 28, 1809 that it would be shown for one week only in a room in Crombie's Salem Hotel at an adult charge of twenty-five cents.  
 Providence, Rhode Island. Advertised there on February 3, 1810 for that day only at Mrs. Young's Hall.

Ref: Salem Gazette, (November 28, 1809). Providence Gazette, (February 3, 1810). Bentley, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 481-482.

## 92. Constitution and Guerriere

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1812

Descrip: The exact description is unknown, but according to the advertisements it consisted of three views, seeming to correpond almost exactly to the first three of the series of four paintings at the New Haven Colony Historical Society (Plates VIII, IX). The three views were said to comprise a total area of 500 feet.

Comment: Attributed to Corn  on the basis of the description which corresponds to the existing pictures and signed engravings, and a statement by Mason that Corn  painted such a panorama. In Boston the artist is identified only "as one of the best Marine Painters in America."

The group of paintings of the naval battles of the war of 1812 apparently were collected by J. Scudder after their exhibition under his proprietorship in New York. In 1819, a visitor to Scudder's American Museum in New York (John M. Duncan) commented: "On a partition in the centre of this room are some immense paintings, in sized colors, of the naval actions of the late war in which America was victorious. . . ." Most likely these were Corn 's paintings.

Exhib: Boston. Advertised in that city on October 26, 1812, at the Marine Hall of the Columbian Museum. The name of the artist is not given.  
 Providence. Advertised on January 2, 1813 at Mr. Aldrich's Hall.  
 New York. Advertised on July 1, 1813 to be shown at the Commercial Building along with several other panoramas.

Ref: Boston Gazette, (October 26, 1812). Providence Gazette, (January 2, 1813). New York Post, (July 1, 1813). John M. Duncan, Travels Through Part of the United States and Canada in 1818 and 1819 Vol. II (Glasgow: Hurst Robinson and Company, 1823), pp. 294-295. Mason, op. cit., p. 334.

94. The Constitution and the Java

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1813

Descrip: The exact description of the panorama is unknown, but it is quite likely that it was very similar to the woodcut in the Naval Monument (No. 71).

Comment: Attributed to Cornè on the basis of a statement by Mason, who included it among a list of panorama's he said were painted by Cornè.

Exhib: New York. Exhibited at the Commercial Building by J. Scudder from July 4 to c. Oct. 16, 1813.

Ref: Mason, op. cit., p. 334. New York Post, (July 1, 1813).

95. The Wasp and the Frolic

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1813

Descrip: The exact description is unknown, but it is quite likely that it was very similar to the woodcut in the Naval Monument (No. 73).

Comment: Attributed to Cornè on the basis of a statement by Mason, who included it among a list of panoramas he said were painted by Cornè.

Exhib: Boston. Advertised at the Columbian Museum on June 14, 1813. The name of the artist was not given. New York. Exhibited at the Commercial Building from July 4-c. Oct. 16, 1813, along with several other panoramas.

Ref: Mason, op. cit., p. 334. Boston Gazette, (June 14, 1813). New York Post, (July 1, 1813).

96. The United States and the Macedonian

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1813

Descrip: The exact description is unknown.

Comment: Attributed to Cornè on the basis of a statement by Mason, who included it among a list of panoramas he said were painted by Cornè.

Exhib: New York. Shown at the Commercial Building by J. Scudder from July 4 to c. October 16, 1813.  
The artist's name is not given.

Ref: Mason, op. cit., p. 334. New York Post, (July 1, 1813).

97. The Hornet Sinking the Peacock

Owner: Present location unknown

Date painted: 1813

Descrip: The exact description of the panorama is unknown, but it is quite likely that it was very similar to the woodcut in the Naval Monument. (No. 75).

Comment: Attributed to Cornè on the basis of a statement by Mason, who included it among a list of panoramas he said were painted by Cornè.

Exhib: New York. Shown from Sept. 16, to c. Oct. 16, 1813 at the Commercial Building.

Ref: Mason, op. cit., p. 334. New York Post, (September 16, 1813).

98. Battle of Lake Erie

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1813

Descrip: The panorama consisted of two views, covering nearly a thousand feet of canvas. Their exact description is unknown, but they were probably very similar to the two plates engraved for the Naval Monument (Nos. 78, 79).



Comment: Attributed to Cornè on the basis of the signed engravings, and the advertisement in the New York Post which stated that the paintings were "executed by MICHAEL CORNE, a celebrated Italian Marine Painter." The actual executions of the drawings were not done by Cornè, himself, but were copied from two drawings by F. Kearney, who had been sent to Lake Erie by Murray, Draper & Fairman to accurately record the details of the fighting for two engravings. The advertisement claimed that Cornè had copies of the original drawings, from which he painted the pictures.

Exhib: Boston. First advertised in that city on December 27, 1813 at the Columbian Museum.  
New York: exhibited there from June 29, to November 1, 1814 at the Commercial Building by J. Scudder.

Ref: Boston Gazette, (December 27, 1813). New York Post, (June 29, 1814).

99. Battles of Lake Champlain and Plattsburgh

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1815

Descrip: The panorama consisted of three views, but their exact description is unknown. As described by a review in the North American Review: "the first represents the American Squadron at anchor at the moment they are opening their first fire on the British Squadron coming down upon them; the second, the heat of the action between them; the third represents the contest between the land forces for the passage of the river."

Comment: Attributed to Cornè on the basis of the statement in the North American Review, that: "Mr. Corny is now exhibiting paintings of the memorable contests on Lake Champlain and at Plattsburgh." The paintings were probably taken from drawings done on the spot by another artist. The advertisements in the New York Post stated that the drawings were taken under the direction of Commodore MacDonough and General Macomb.

Exhib: Boston. May, 1815, probably at the Columbian Museum.  
Providence. September 9-11, 1815 at Aldrich's Hall.  
New York. October 7 to c. October 25, 1815 at Ross' Building, No. 2 Fair Street

Ref: New York Post, (October 7, 1815). North American Review, (May, 1815). Providence Gazette, (September 9, 1815).

# PORTRAITS

## 100. Richard Ward Jr.

Owner: Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1802

Descrip: India ink drawing on paper, 11 3/4 x 10 1/2 inches framed. Head and shoulders profile of a young man turned towards the right. Rather yellow face with a prominent nose and long curly hair. Brown coat buttoned half way up, with white stock. Medium gray background.

Comment: Signed and dated lower right: "M. Corne p. 1802." Painting was left to the Essex Institute in the will of George Rea Curwen, March 28, 1900.

Biog: The subject was born on October 31, 1776 in Salem, the son of Richard and Mehitabel (Curwen) Ward. On April 14, 1805 he married Lydia Robinson (Plate XIIb), daughter of Colonel James Robinson of Lynn. He died in New Orleans on Dec. 14, 1822.

Repro: (Plate XIIa).

Ref: Essex Institute Historical Collections, Vol. 36, (1900), p. 250.

## 101. Samuel Curwen Ward

Owner: Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1802-1803

Descrip: India ink drawing on paper, 11 3/8 x 9 5/8 inches framed. Head and shoulders profile. Rather yellow face, gray hair, brownish gray coat, white stock. Gray shading and background.

Comment: Written in ink on back of portrait: "Saml C. Ward M. Corne, pinxit." Left to the Essex Institute in the will of George Rea Curwen, March 28, 1900.

Biog: The subject was born June 29, 1767 in Salem, the son of Richard and Mehitable (Curwen) Ward, and the brother of Richard Ward Jr. (see above). On October 31, 1790 he married Jane Ropes, daughter of Hon. Nathaniel and Priscilla Sparhawk Ropes. He was a prominent mariner and a member of the Salem Marine Society. He died on Nov. 26, 1817.

Ref: Essex Institute Historical Collections, Vol. 36, (1900), p. 250.

102. Daniel Ward

Owner: Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1803

Descrip: India ink drawing on paper, 11 3/8 x 9 5/8 framed. Head and shoulders profile. Rather yellow face, fine shading, long gray hair. Gray coat with black shading, yellow vest and neck cloth, white and gray shading.

Comment: Written in ink on back: "Daniel Ward M. Cornè Pinxit September 21st 1803 Aged 21 Years" The painting was left to the Essex Institute in the will of George Rea Curwen, March 28, 1900.

Biog: The subject was born March 21, 1782 in Salem, the son of Richard and Mehitable Ward, and brother of Richard Ward Jr. and Samuel Curwen Ward. After a career as a merchant, he died on February 15, 1813.

Ref: Essex Institute Historical Collections, Vol. 36 (1900), p. 250.

103. Lydia Robinson

Owner: Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1803

Descrip: Water color, 3/4 length standing figure slightly turned to right. Full dress tied at the waist, elbow length sleeves, low neckline. Three strings of beads worn about neck. Empire style hair-do, brushed down over forehead. Set in oval format.

Comment: Signed lower right center on background:  
 "M. Corne pinxit-1803." Left to Essex Institute in  
 the will of George Rea Curwen, March 28, 1900.

Biog: Subject was born in Lynn, Massachusetts in 1782,  
 the daughter of James and Lydia Robinson. In 1803  
 she married Richard Ward Jr. She died in Bridgeport,  
 Connecticut in 1870.

Repro: (Plate XIIb).

Ref: Essex Institute Historical Collections, Vol. 36  
 (1900), p. 250.

104. Thomas West

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1803

Descrip: Oil on canvas, 26½ x 21½. Head and shoulders  
 bust of middle aged man turned slightly to left.  
 Thin gray hair brushed over forehead. High white  
 collar, white stock, striped waistcoat buttoned up  
 to neck. Dark coat opened. Dark background.

Comment: Signed and dated lower right front: M. Corne  
 fecit 1803."

Biog: The subject was born in Salem in 1777. He com-  
 manded several Salem vessels, and died in that town  
 in 1849.

Repro: Antiques Magazine Vol. LVII, No. 6, June, 1950,  
 p. 450.

105. Henry Prince Jr.

Owner: present location unknown, 1946 Mrs. Calvin  
 Hosmer Jr.

Date painted: 1803

Descrip: unknown

Comment: Signed lower right: "M. Corne p. 1803."

Biog: Died in Portland Maine, 1854.

Ref: File at Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts.

106. James Cook

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1803

Descrip: Oil on canvas, 27 3/4 x 20 inches. Three-quarter head facing right. Dark hair, small black cravat, white collar, frilled shirt, white waistcoat. Metal buttons decorated with anchors. Dark blue coat with white facings. Dark gray background.

Comment: Signed and dated: "M Corne pinxit/ Salem 1803." Commissioned in 1803 by Thomas Ward for the East India Marine Society. Copied from an engraving in the French edition of the first voyage of Captain Cook.

Biog: The subject was born in Yorkshire, England in 1738. On his several voyages to the Pacific ocean he made many important discoveries. He was killed by natives on the Sandwich Islands on February 14, 1779.

Repro: Antiques, Vol. XXXVIII No. 2, August, 1940, p. 63.

Ref: Bentley, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 93.

107. Luther Dana

Owner: present location unknown, 1941 Mrs. Aubrey Gould, Great Neck, New York (1941).

Descrip: Water color

Comment: Attributed only through comment in Hale (see below).

Ref: Hale, op. cit., p. 164.

108. John Leverett

Owner: American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts

Date painted: c. 1804

Descrip: Oil on canvas, 20 x 14 inches. Three quarter length standing, face nearly front. Dark hair,

moustache and imperial. Brown uniform, large buckled belt, ornamented sword. White collar and cuffs. Right hand, gloved, left hand against hip, holding glove. Ring on small finger of left hand. Coat of arms in right upper background.

Comment: Attributed to Corné on the basis of a statement by William Bentley, who apparently had the portrait commissioned for himself. It was copied from the original 17th century painting attributed to Sir Peter Lely (now in the Essex Institute, Salem). It was bequeathed to the American Antiquarian Society in 1819 by Bentley.

Biog: The subject was baptized in Boston, Lincolnshire England on July 17, 1616. He emigrated to America in 1663 and became a prominent merchant. He was elected governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1673 and died in office on March 16, 1678/9.

Ref: Bentley, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 96.

#### 109. John Endicott

Owner: American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts

Date painted: c. 1804

Descrip: Oil on canvas, 22 x 18 inches. Waist length, face nearly front, in oval format. Long gray hair, gray moustache and goatee. Black gown, white muslin collar with tassles, black skull cap.

Comment: Bentley records the following on July 26, 1802: "Mr. Corné of Naples, an Italian Painter in the Town, introduced by Mr. Derby, rode with me to the estate of Gov. Endicott, to see whether he could preserve a likeness from the family picture of that venerable Puritan. We found the heir poor. . . . We have the promise of the picture." The painting was finished by July 4, 1804 when it hung with the portrait of Governor Leverett in the Meeting House in Salem. It was apparently commissioned by Bentley, and bequeathed by him to the American Antiquarian Society in 1819.

Biog: The subject was born in Clagford, Devon, England in 1589. He arrived in Salem in 1628 and served as temporary governor until the arrival of John Winthrop.

He served as Governor of the Mass. Bay Colony in 1644, 1649, 1651-1653, 1655-1664, and died in Boston March 15, 1664/65.

Ref: Bentley, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 441-442, Vol. III, p. 96.

110. Joseph Peabody

Owner: present location unknown, 1930 Ehrich-Newhouse Inc., New York

Date painted: 1805

Descrip: Oil on canvas, 25 3/4 x 20 inches. Half-length figure to half left. Blue eyes. Black coat with white stock. Telescope in left hand. Gray background with ship at left.

Comment: Signed and dated on back of canvas before relining: "Michele Felice Corne 1805." Offered at auction on January 11, 1934 at the American Art Association, Anderson Galleries, New York; no purchaser. Offered again on March 16, 1934 at same gallery; sold for \$55.

Exhib: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, 1926.

Repro: Alan Burroughs, Limners and Likenesses-Three Centuries of American Painting (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), fig. 75.

Ref: American Art Association. Catalogue of Sale. January 11, 1934. American Art Association. Catalogue of Sale. March 16, 1934.

111. Captain Horatio Nelson

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: c. 1805-1806

Descrip: Oil on canvas, 33 x 19 1/2 inches. Full length standing figure, less than half size. Full dress uniform of white and blue, complete with hat and orders. Left hand points to right. Empty right sleeve partially tucked into front of coat. Ship deck in foreground, curtain and seascape in background. Cannon to right of figure.

Comment: Unsigned, but attributed to Cornè on the basis of style and technique.

Biog: The subject was born in Norfolk, England in 1758. He entered the Navy in 1770 and was responsible for the occupation of Toulon and the capture of Corsica in 1793. In 1798 he succeeded in defeating Napoleon at the Battle of the Nile. In 1805 he defeated the French and Spanish fleets at the Battle of Trafalgar, but was mortally wounded and died on the 21st of October in that year.

112. Benjamin Crowninshield

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: c. 1800-1807

Descrip: Oil on canvas,  $8\frac{1}{2}$  x  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Young man with a green coat, white stock, brown hair.

Comment: Unsigned, but traditionally ascribed to Cornè, stylistically bears a good deal of resemblance to other portraits by Cornè.

Biog: 1782-1861

MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS

HISTORICAL PAINTINGS

113. Figure Group

Owner: Redwood Library, Newport, Rhode Island

Date drawn: c. 1810

Descrip: Four figures conversing, three dressed formally in long coats and beaver hats, the other dressed in a dress soldier's uniform, with a cocked hat. The figures are outlined by tiny holes.

Comment: Attributed to Cornè on the basis of a similar figure group in the foreground of the Bay of Naples scene in the parlor of the Sullivan Dorr House (Plate IIIa).

Repro: Little ADWP, op. cit., p. 119.



114. Bird-shooting scene

Owner: Nina Fletcher Little, Brookline, Massachusetts

Date painted: probably c. 1810

Descrip: Water color drawing. Men at left shooting at a flock of birds. Landscape scene with a river and a wooden bridge at right. Quite similar to the scene in the hallway in the Sullivan Dorr House (Cat. No. 2).

Comment: Unsigned, but attributed to Corn  on the basis of the similar scene in the Sullivan Dorr House. It was probably intended as a preliminary study.

115. Landscape scene

Owner: Newport Historical Society, Newport, Rhode Island

Date drawn: 1800-1845

Descrip: India ink, stone bridge across creek in center. Mountains in the background, house on right. Very rough sketch.

Comment: Unsigned, attributed on the basis of the similarity of the design with the two finished paintings from the Simon Forrester House (Cat. No. 14, 15, Plate IVa).

116. Three figure group drawings (framed together)

Owner: Newport Historical Society, Newport, Rhode Island

Date drawn: prob. 1822-1845

Descrip: India ink. 1) Man in top hat at left conversing with two military men in cocked hats. 2) Several soldiers sitting and standing around a table, preparing to eat. 3) Woman hanging clothes on a line, child in a play pen beside her.

Comment: Attributed to Corn  on the basis of Mason, op. cit.

Repro: Mason, op. cit., pp. 333, 335, 338.

## HISTORICAL PAINTINGS

117. Columbus and the Egg

Owner: Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1805

Descrip: Oil on canvas. Several figures seated around a table. Columbus in the center pointing to an up-turned egg on the table before him. Wizzened figure on the left holding an egg in the same position. Figure on the right doing likewise. Three other men behind Columbus looking on. All dressed in fancy costumes with ruffs and lace. Plate of eggs on the table. Dog at bottom of picture with paws up on table. Pillar to the right. Drapery behind to left.

Comment: Signed and dated lower right: "Hogarth invenxit M. Corne pinxit 1805." The painting is derived from a print by Hogarth, published in 1752 and intended as a subscription ticket for his *Analysis of Beauty*. The idea behind the painting was that after Columbus's voyage, several people downgraded his achievement and stated that anyone could have made the discovery. Columbus correctly pointed out that it was not difficult now that he had shown the way. He then challenged them to stand an egg on end on the table. They all failed, and then Columbus showed them how easy it was to do by first breaking the end of the egg.

Hogarth felt the story had meaning to him also and intended it as sarcasm on the critics who laughed at his idea of the "Line of Beauty" and called it a discovery which anyone might have made.

Ref: Bentley, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 481. James Harnay, The Complete Works of William Hogarth (London, Griffin, Bohn, and Co., no date given), p. 154.

Repro: (Plate Xb).

118. Death of Captain Cook

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1800-1807

Descrip: Oil on copper. Violent close action in foreground. On the right, a figure which appears to be Captain Cook is swinging the butt end of a rifle at a hoard of native warriors, one of which is about to plunge a dagger into his heart. Beyond and in boats in water to left, men are firing at shore. In the background to the left, a high cliff with two intertwined palm trees sticking out at an odd angle is visible.

Comment: Unsigned, but attributed on the basis of style. It was probably commissioned for the East India Marine Society, or one of its members. The painting was apparently based on a drawing by William Webber, the official artist on Cook's last voyage to the Pacific. Cornè simplified Webber's sketch which appeared in the first edition of Cook's voyages.

#### GENRE PAINTINGS

##### 119. Man Holding a Hat and Flowers

Owner: Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1800-1807

Descrip: Water color

Comment: I have been unable to see this picture or a photograph of it

##### 120. A Man Lying on a Table and a Dog on the Floor

Owner: Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts

Date painted: 1800-1807

Descrip: Water color

Comment: I have been unable to see this painting.

#### DECORATIONS FOR MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

##### 121. Ornamental Parts for a Writing Exhibition.

Owner: present location unknown

Date painted: 1804

Descrip: unknown

Comment: The only reference to this work is found in William Bentley's Diary for October 26, 1804:

"Mr. Dean's Writing Exhibition was this day. . . .

At a great expence the ornamental parts are provided by Cornè and Italian artist & by several artists in the town."

Ref: Bentley, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 118-119.

122. Illustration for a Poem, The Power of Solitude

Owner: No copies have survived, apparently

Date done: 1804

Descrip: A melancholy illustration

Comment: In 1804 Judge Story of Salem published the Power of Solitude. Cornè was hired to decorate the cover. Later in life the judge burned every copy he could find.

Ref: Frances Winwar, Puritan City, The Story of Salem, 1775-1830. (New York: Robert M. McBride & Co., 1938), pp. 256-257.

## PAINTED CARVINGS

123. Wooden Pear

Owner: Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts (On deposit at the Essex Institute, Salem)

Date painted: 1800-1807

Descrip: 37½ ounces, 7½ inches long, 15 inches in circumference. Painted to resemble a real pear, yellow with some green and brown specks.

Comment: The pear was carved by Samuel MacIntire after an original which grew in the garden of

David Choate of Ipswich. Bentley states that Cornè painted it, but there has been some question of late whether Bentley's handwriting was accurately transcribed, and possibly he wrote Cowan, referring to Robert Cowan (1762-1846) the Salem decorative painter.

Ref: Bentley, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 321.

APPENDIX B  
WILL OF MICHELE CORNE

Be it remembered that I Michele Cornè, late of Naples, in the Kingdom of Naples, now a citizen of the United States of America, residing at Newport in the County of Newport and State of Rhode Island being advanced in life, but preserving a sound mind: tending that the continuance of my present state of existence is uncertain, and having a desire while thus possessed of my faculties, to make a testamentary disposition of such of the goods of this world as I have been permitted by a beneficent Providence to accumulate and enjoy, do make and declare this my last-will and testament.

First I give and bequeath to my brother Joseph Cornè of Naples aforesaid, a Captain in the guards of the King of Naples, the sum of one thousand dollars, to be paid him as soon after my decease as may be convenient.

Secondly I give and bequest to Samuel L. Gyles son of my friend Charles Gyles herein after named, two shares of the capital stock of the Bank of Rhode Island.

Thirdly I give and bequeath to Esther Adly, now residing with me, an annuity of Fifty dollars per year, for and during the term of her natural life, and charge my executors to retain a sufficient portion of my stock in

the bank of Rhode Island for that purpose, and pay the said Fifty dollars a year out of the dividends accruing there from.

Fourthly I give devise and bequeath to William Bottomore who has lived with me for many years, for his assistance and fidelity to me during that time, the House and lot of land in Newport wherein I now reside, to have and to hold the same to him, his heirs and assigns forever.

Fifthly I give devise and bequeath to the said William Bottomore all the rest residue and remainder of my estate both real and personal to him, his heirs, and assigns forever.

Lastly I hereby nominate, constitute, and appoint, my friend Charles Gyles, and the said William Bottomore Executors of my last will & testament, hereby revoking and annulling all other and former wills by me made, and establishing and confirming this only, as my last will and testament.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this seventeenth day of January in the year of our Lord Christ one thousand eight hundred and thirty nine.

Michel Cornè<sup>l</sup>

## APPENDIX C

## CODICIL TO WILL OF MICHELE CORNE

Be it Remembered That I Michele Cornè of the town and county of Newport in the State of Rhode Island do this twenty sixth day of November one thousand Eight hundred & forty four, make and publish this Codicil to my last will and testament in manner following, that is to say, whereas, by the first item in my said last will and testament I bequeathed to my brother Joseph Cornè of Naples the sum of one thousand dollars to William Botto- more, heretofore named in my will, and hereby order and direct this my Codicil to be annexed to and make a part of my last will and testament, to all intents and purposes, and hereby confirm all other parts of my said will as hereto fore made, In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand & seal this 20th day of November one thousand Eight hundred & forty four.

Michele Cornè<sup>2</sup>



## NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

<sup>1</sup>Among the best of these studies of American landscape painting are: Alan Burroughs, A History of American Landscape Painting. (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1942). Abbott Lowell Cummings, "The Beginnings of American Landscape Painting," The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin (November, 1952), pp. 93-99.

<sup>2</sup>Smibert's landscapes have vanished, and all that we know of them is contained in a letter written by him in 1749: " . . . My eyes has been some time failing me but I'm still heart whole and hath been diverting myself with some things in the landskip way which you know I always liked." Quoted in: Edgar P. Richardson, Painting in America, The Story of 450 Years (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1956), p. 46.

<sup>3</sup>The most comprehensive study of these is: Nina Fletcher Little, American Decorative Wall Painting, 1700-1850 (Sturbridge, Massachusetts: Old Sturbridge Village, 1952).

<sup>4</sup>Two of these panels are owned by the Maine Historical Society at Portland; two by Mrs. Frederick Gay of Brookline, Massachusetts, and one by the Bostonian Society, Boston, Massachusetts.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER I

<sup>1</sup>George Champlin Mason, Reminiscences of Newport (Newport: Charles E. Hammett, Publisher, 1884), pp. 339-340.

<sup>2</sup>Elias Hasket Derby, "Letter to the Editor," Boston Evening Post, February 12, 1877.

<sup>3</sup>Mr. Northrup, article in Newport Daily News, December 31, 1895.

<sup>4</sup>In 1625 there was a blacksmith in Naples by the name of Giulio Corne who, along with his brother, Lorenzo, furnished a magnificent iron grillwork for the Church of the Trinity in Monaco. There is no way of determining, at present, whether Michele was related to these men, but there is a possibility and provides a starting place for further research since we know the Cornè name was established in Naples before the eighteenth century. Ulrich Thieme, Allgemeines Lexikon Der Bilden-den Kunstler, Vol. IV (Leipzig: Verlag von E. A. Seeman, 1912), p. 421.

<sup>5</sup>Quoted in Angus Heriot, The French in Italy, 1796-1799 (London: Chatto & Windoss, 1957), p. 289.

<sup>6</sup>Mason, op. cit., pp. 337-338.

<sup>7</sup>The two accounts are his obituary notice in the Newport Mercury, July 12, 1845, and a letter in the Boston Evening Post, February 12, 1877.

<sup>8</sup>Northrup, op. cit.

<sup>9</sup>The information for this discussion is derived from a series of letters written by Elias Hasket Derby Jr. to his father, and now collected in a scrapbook of the Derby Papers at the Essex Institute in Salem. "Essex Institute Derby MSS" Vol. XXII. They are extremely interesting, not only for the information they contain about the voyage of the "Mount Vernon," but also for the light they shed on the whole arena of Mediterranean trade during the Napoleonic War. Several of the letters have been reproduced and discussed in Robert E. Peabody, "A Voyage to the Mediterranean During the Napoleonic Wars," The Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, XXXII (1937), pp. 505-514.

<sup>10</sup>At this time, the United States was virtually at war with France, so greatly had she interfered with American commerce. The English, on the other hand, were quite conciliatory to the United States, hoping to gain our support in their struggle with France.

A pictorial record of the adventures of the "Mount Vernon" has been preserved in over a dozen views by Corn  (Cat. Nos. 21-32). Although not on board at the time, the battles were described to him by members of the crew, and are thought to be quite accurate. Most of the paintings are now in the Peabody Museum in Salem.

<sup>11</sup>No mention is made of Corn  in Derby's letters, but it is virtually certain, from the existing evidence, that he boarded the ship in Naples.

<sup>12</sup>From the Salem Register, July 10, 1800, p. 3:  
"Arrived Thursday July 7, 1800. . . . Ship Mount Vernon of 20 nine-pounders, E. H. Derby master, 40 days from Gibraltar. Sailed in company with 18 Amer. vessels, and saw them all safe through the straights."

Virtually all of the biographical accounts of Corn  state that he arrived in Salem on the "Mount Vernon" in 1799. The error is due, perhaps, to the letter written by Elias Hasket Derby III in 1877 (heretofore noted) specifying this date. In addition several of Corn 's paintings contain the date 1799, a date which represents either a painting done in Naples (of the "Mount Vernon"), or done at a later date of an action that took place in 1799.

<sup>13</sup>Timothy Dwight, Travels in New England and New York, Vol. I, (New Haven: Timothy Dwight, 1821), p. 447.

<sup>14</sup>At least three of these artists are known by name

John Hazlitt (1767-1837) advertised in 1785 that he could do portrait painting

William Northey (d. 1788) left two small sketches, one a landscape view of Winter Island in Salem (owned by Nina Fletcher Little).

Robert Cowan (1762-1846) was born in Scotland, and came to Salem before 1782. He did ornamental painting for the Derby family including a landscape for a chimney board. He also decorated the stern of the Derby ship, "Grand Turk." None of his work is known at present.

<sup>15</sup>Dwight, op. cit., p. 447.

<sup>16</sup>Idem.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 448-449

<sup>18</sup>William Bentley, The Diary of William Bentley D.D. (Salem: The Essex Institute, 1907-1914). This is the principal source for our knowledge of Corn  while he was a resident of Salem.

<sup>19</sup>Elias Hasket Derby III, "Letter to the Editor," op. cit.

<sup>20</sup>Benjamin F. Browne, "Youthful Recollections of Salem Written in 1869," Essex Institute Historical Collections, Vol. L (1914), p. 13.

<sup>21</sup>Bentley, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 453.

<sup>22</sup>This organization had been founded on the 31st of August, 1799 when twenty-two men met "to form an association to consist of such Ship Masters only as have had a Register from Salem and who have navigated those Seas at or beyond the Cape of Good Hope, to continue our friendly and mutual association by dining in Company together each month or quarterly, forming a society by the name of the East India Marine Society."

The principal purposes of the organization were defined as 1. aiding the widows and children of deceased members, 2. to collect nautical information, 3. to form a Museum of curiosities mainly those gathered beyond the Cape of Good Hope or Cape Horn. This collecting of curiosities had begun as early as 1799, and has developed today into the Peabody Museum of Salem.

The first quarters of the Society were located in a building at the corner of Essex and Washington Streets. By 1804 the quarters had proved inadequate for the growing collection and new quarters were found in the recently completed Salem Bank Building on Essex Street. It was for these rooms that Corn 's decorations were commissioned.

The preceeding information was taken from: Walter Muir Whitehill, The East India Marine Society and the Peabody Museum of Salem (Salem: Peabody Museum, 1949).

<sup>23</sup>Bentley, op. cit. Vol. III, p. 93

<sup>24</sup>The "Landing at Plymouth," and the view of Capetown are still in the possession of the Peabody Museum, and both are signed by the artist.

<sup>25</sup>Both are still owned by the Peabody Museum.

<sup>26</sup>Bentley, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 452.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>28</sup>The house, at 70 Washington Street, was built in 1763 by Benjamin Pickman. In 1782 it was sold to Elias Hasket Derby Sr. and remodeled extensively by Angier and Samuel McIntire. At that time the cupola was added, presumably to enable Derby to watch for his incoming ships. Upon Derby's death in 1799 the house was left to his second son, John, and it was for him that Corn  apparently painted the cupola ceiling.

<sup>29</sup>A 3½ story gambrel-roofed structure, the house was built c. 1740 by Timothy Lindall. It was subsequently occupied by the Rev. Thomas Barnard, pastor of the North Church in Salem. During Barnard's residence, Samuel McIntire produced a carved mantel and dado in the parlor. In 1957 the house was remodeled and the paper removed and given to the Essex Institute. The house and its decoration are discussed in: Nina Fletcher Little, "Painted Wall Paper in the Lindall-Barnard-Andrews House," Essex Institute Historical Collections (October, 1958), pp. 328-333.

<sup>30</sup>"Oak Hill" was bought by Elias Hasket Derby in 1789 and presented to his eldest daughter, Elizabeth Derby West, in 1799. In 1921, the last resident of the house, Mrs. Jacob Crowninshield, died, and the building was put up for sale. Before the public auction the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston obtained three rooms, including the two in which Corn 's paintings were hung. The three rooms, with the two paintings in place, were opened to the public in 1931.

<sup>31</sup>Simon Forrester was born in Killeenach, Ireland c. 1748 and came to Salem in 1767. He soon built up a fleet and succeeded in making a modest fortune. In 1791 he purchased an unfinished house at 120 Derby Street from Captain Jonathan Ingersoll. McIntire was hired to carve much of the interior woodwork including at least one of the chimney breasts which house the paintings. Both paintings, within their original frames, are now owned by the Essex Institute.

<sup>32</sup>This panel is in the collection of Nina Fletcher Little. A fourth panel (Cat. No. 17), bearing many of the same characteristics is owned by Mrs. Lammot Du Pont Copeland of Greenville, Delaware.

<sup>33</sup>The portraits of Captain Cook and Lord Nelson are still owned by the Peabody Museum. The portraits of the two Governors are owned by the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts.

<sup>34</sup>Bentley, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 118-119.

<sup>35</sup>Francis Winwar, Puritan City, The Story of Salem 1775-1830 (New York: Robert M. McBride & Co., 1938), pp. 256-257. Apparently all of the copies of the poem have been destroyed.

<sup>36</sup>Bentley, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 453

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., Vol. III, p. 482

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 631

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., Vol. III, p. 321. There has been some controversy whether Bentley actually wrote Cornè or Cowan, referring to Robert Cowan, the Salem ornamental painter. The pear is now owned by the Essex Institute.

<sup>40</sup>Nina Fletcher Little, American Decorative Wall Painting, 1700-1850 (Sturbridge, Mass., Old Sturbridge Village in co-operation with Studio Publications Inc., New York, 1952), p. 42.

<sup>41</sup>Bentley, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 275-276.

<sup>42</sup>At the Newport Historical Society there is a silhouette of Cornè himself, taken as a rather old man. There is no record of the name of the cutter.

<sup>43</sup>Bentley, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 275-276.

<sup>44</sup>The other two pupils were Hannah Crowninshield and Anstis Stone. Nothing is known at present of Hannah Crowninshield except for Bentley's comments on her work on the Curwin portrait. Anstis Stone was the second daughter of Robert Stone and was regarded as the best artist of the three. "Her larkspur, rose & bust of Bonaparte do her great honour. The head of the bust I admire." Bentley, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 431.

<sup>45</sup>Several of his paintings are owned by the Peabody Museum of Salem.

<sup>46</sup>George Champlin Mason and Elias Hasket Derby III.

<sup>47</sup>Peter Pailhes to Michele Cornè, (June 1, 1809), Suffolk Deeds, Lib. 239, pp. 56-57.

<sup>48</sup>Thomas Barnes to Michele Corne, (October 29, 1810), Suffolk Deeds, Lib. 234, pp. 175-176.

<sup>49</sup>The Boston City Directory of 1813 lists Cornè's residence as being at 64 Middle Street, but as the succeeding issue returns to 61, the 64 is probably a misprint.

<sup>50</sup>Anthony Chapouil to Michele Cornè, (October 20, 1818), Suffolk Deeds, Lib. 200, pp. 108-109.

<sup>51</sup>Elias Hasket Derby III, "Letter to the Editor," op. cit.

<sup>52</sup>Anthony Chapouil to Michele Cornè, (January 8, 1820), Suffolk Deeds, Lib. 260, p. 135.

<sup>53</sup>Gazette of the United States, (Philadelphia), August 31, 1795.

<sup>54</sup>Salem Gazette, January 16, 1807. Providence Gazette, March 9, 1807.

<sup>55</sup>It is owned by the museum at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. The Naval Academy also owns a smaller attributed water color of the same subject (Cat. No. 63), and the Rhode Island Historical Society in Providence owns a large unsigned oil (Cat. No. 64).

<sup>56</sup>Salem Gazette, January 16, 1807. Providence Gazette, May 9, 1807.

<sup>57</sup>Salem Gazette, November 28, 1809.

<sup>58</sup>Bentley, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 481-482.

<sup>59</sup>Providence Gazette, February 3, 1810.

<sup>60</sup>Jane Louise Cayford, "The Sullivan Dorr House in Providence, Rhode Island" (unpublished Master's dissertation, Winterthur Program, University of Delaware, 1961), p. ix.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 76

<sup>63</sup>This document was among the papers concerning the Sullivan Dorr House given to the Providence Preservation

Society by Mrs. Margarethe Lyman Dwight, great granddaughter of the original owner. Its present location is unknown.

<sup>64</sup>Cayford, op. cit., p. 77

<sup>65</sup>It has been suggested that Corné's wall murals in the Sullivan Dorr House were influenced by the Dufour wallpaper, Vues D'Italie, more popularly known as the Bay of Naples. This is impossible, however, as this particular paper was not published by Dufour until 1815-1820. Except in general subject matter the scenes are quite dissimilar.

<sup>66</sup>The extant paintings in the Sullivan Dorr House are currently being restored by Mr. Constantine Cavousis under the auspices of the Providence Preservation Society.

<sup>67</sup>Alicia Hopton Middleton, Ed., Life in Carolina and New England During the Nineteenth Century as Illustrated by Reminiscences and Letters of the Middleton Family of Charleston, South Carolina, and the DeWolf Family of Bristol, Rhode Island (Bristol, R.I.: Privately printed, 1929), p. 22.

<sup>68</sup>Wallpaper bearing this subject title was published by Dufour in 1820.

<sup>69</sup>Mrs. Maude Howard Elliott, "Some Recollections of Newport Artists," Bulletin of the Newport Historical Society, No. 35 (January, 1921) p. 19.

<sup>70</sup>Arthur Gilman, "The Hancock House and its Founder," Atlantic Monthly, XI, No. LXVIII (June 1863), pp. 705-707.

<sup>71</sup>Listed in: Mabel M. Swan, "The Furniture of his Excellency, John Hancock," Antiques, XXXI, No. 3, (March, 1937), p. 121.

72

J. Scudder, the proprietor of the American Museum in New York, advertised in the New York Post of July 1, 1813, that a panorama of naval paintings would open on July 4 of that year. Included were views of the "Constitution and Guerriere," "Constitution and Java," "Wasp and the Frolic," and the "United States and the Macedonian." It was advertised as the first of a series which Scudder intended to collect. On September 16 of that year the view of the battle between the "Hornet and the Peacock" was added. Although the name of the artist is not given, it is very likely that they were painted by Corné. Not only had Mason stated that all five of these were painted by Corné but Scudder is known to have been the proprietor of the exhibition of "The Battle of Lake Erie" in 1814.



73 The Naval Temple (Boston: Barber Badger, 1816).

74 Two of the unsigned plates are the two views of the Battle of Lake Erie which appear signed in the Naval Monument, and the other two are views of the Battles of Lake Champlain and Plattsburgh. All four are probably similar to the large paintings which were exhibited.

75 The Naval Monument (Boston: published by Abel Bowen, 1816). This book was illustrated by engravings and woodcuts, the woodcuts done by Bowen himself, the engravings by various people.

76 Among the other artists whose works are illustrated are Thomas Birch and J.R. Penniman.

77 The Boston City Directory of 1820 fails to list the artist, but he most likely was in the city during that year.

78 Michele Cornè to Joseph Smith (April 1, 1822), Suffolk Deeds, Lib. 276, pp. 128-129.

79 As Cornè sold his Boston house in April, and purchased a house in Newport in September, it is quite likely that he moved between these two dates.

80 Elliott, op. cit., p. 19.

81 Silas Gardner, deceased to Michele Cornè (September 16, 1822), Newport Deeds, Book 16, p. 171.

82 The street had been named for Cornè as early as 1854, only nine years after the artist's death.

83 Mary Edith Powel, "A Few Words About Some Old Buildings in Newport," Bulletin of the Newport Historical Society, No. 55, (October, 1925), p. 15.

84 Northrup, op. cit.

85 On February 24, 1814 the trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital were granted permission to issue annuities on lives, the first company so designated in Boston. The Massachusetts Hospital Life Insurance Company was incorporated in 1818 with a capital stock of \$500,000 and issued its first policy on September 15, 1823.

86 Mason, op. cit., pp. 338-339.

87 Ibid, pp. 339-340.

88<sup>8</sup>Idem.

89One (Cat. No. 5b) is owned by the Newport Historical Society, the other (Cat. No. 5a), by Mrs. John Howard Benson of Newport.

90In a codicil to the will, added in 1844, the money left to his brother was left instead to Bottomore. Presumably his brother had died in the intervening years. Both the will and the codicil are reproduced in their entirety in Appendix B and C.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup>Corne was not the first artist so influenced to work in America. In the 1790's, George Beck, William Winstanley, and others painted in the Middle Colonies, in a similar style. Their work will be discussed briefly in Chapter III.

<sup>2</sup>Among those followers were Nicholas Berchem and Adam Pynacker in the Netherlands, Pannini in Italy, Hubert Robert in France, and Richard Wilson in England.

<sup>3</sup>R.H. Wilenski, An Introduction to Dutch Art (London: Faber & Gwyer Ltd., 1929), p. 137.

<sup>4</sup>The landscape of mood reached its height in the paintings of Jacob Van Ruysdael, Meindert Hobbema and Alfred Cuyp.

<sup>5</sup>W. G. Constable, "Carlo Bonavia," Art Quarterly, (Spring, 1959), p. 19.

<sup>6</sup>Naples did play an important role in the revival of antiquity which began about 1740 following the discovery and excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii. Undoubtedly Corne was familiar with the excavations and was influenced quite heavily by them, as the frequent presence of ruined classical buildings in his paintings indicates.

<sup>7</sup>The following discussion of Bonavia is taken from W.G. Constable, op. cit., pp. 19-44.

<sup>8</sup>Illustrated in Constable, op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>9</sup>Illustrated Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>10</sup>These figure studies are at the Redwood Library in Newport, Rhode Island. Only one corresponds to a known painting by the artist, a figure group at the Sullivan Dorr House.

<sup>11</sup>The Roux family of Marseille are the best known of these artists. Anton Roux senior painted a number of pictures of American ships. A large number, including several sketchbooks are at the Peabody Museum in Salem. Their works are discussed and illustrated in: Alfred Johnson, translator and annotator, Ships and Shipping with introductory text by Louis Brès (Salem: Marine Research Society, 1925).

<sup>12</sup>These paintings are now in the Henry Francis DuPont Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

<sup>13</sup>Reproduced in: Mabel M. Swan and Louise Karr, "Early Marine Painters of Salem" Antiques, (August, 1940), p. 63.

<sup>14</sup>Boston Gazette, (October 26, 1812).

<sup>15</sup>Mason, op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid, p. 337.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid, p. 333.

<sup>18</sup>Reproduction, Frick Art Reference Library.

<sup>19</sup>Reproduction: James Hannay, The Complete Works of William Hogarth (London: Griffin, Bohn and Co., no date given), p. 154.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER III

<sup>1</sup>Bentley, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 452.

<sup>2</sup>These paintings are now at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts.

<sup>3</sup>North American Review, (May 1815), pp. 132-133.

<sup>4</sup>Mason, op. cit., p. 330.

<sup>5</sup>Alice Ford, Pictorial Folk Art-New England to California (New York, The Studio Publications Inc., 1949), p. 18.

<sup>6</sup>The work of Beck, Winstanley, and Groombridge is discussed in some detail in: J. Hall Pleasants, Four Late Eighteenth Century Anglo-American Landscape Painters (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1943).

The definitive work on Thomas Birch is: Doris J. Creer, Thomas Birch: A Study of the Condition of Painting and the Artist's Position in Federal America. unpublished masters thesis, Winterthur Program, University of Delaware, June, 1958.

<sup>7</sup>John Trumbull planned a panorama of Niagara Falls as early as 1804, but never completed the project. John Vanderlyn exhibited a panorama of Versailles in New York and other cities in 1817.

<sup>8</sup>At the Henry Hibbard House, built in 1819 in Ithaca, New York is a large wall mural showing the eruption of Mount Vesuvius above a castellated city. It recalls elements from several of Corne's paintings and quite possibly the artist had seen Corne's work and was influenced by him.

## NOTES TO APPENDICES

<sup>1</sup>Cornè, Michel. Will. January 17, 1839. Vol. 14, pp. 213-214 in Newport Probate Records, Newport City Hall, Newport, Rhode Island.

<sup>2</sup>Cornè, Michel. Codicil to Will, November 26, 1844. Vol. 21, pp. 137-138 in Newport Probate Records, Newport City Hall, Newport, Rhode Island.

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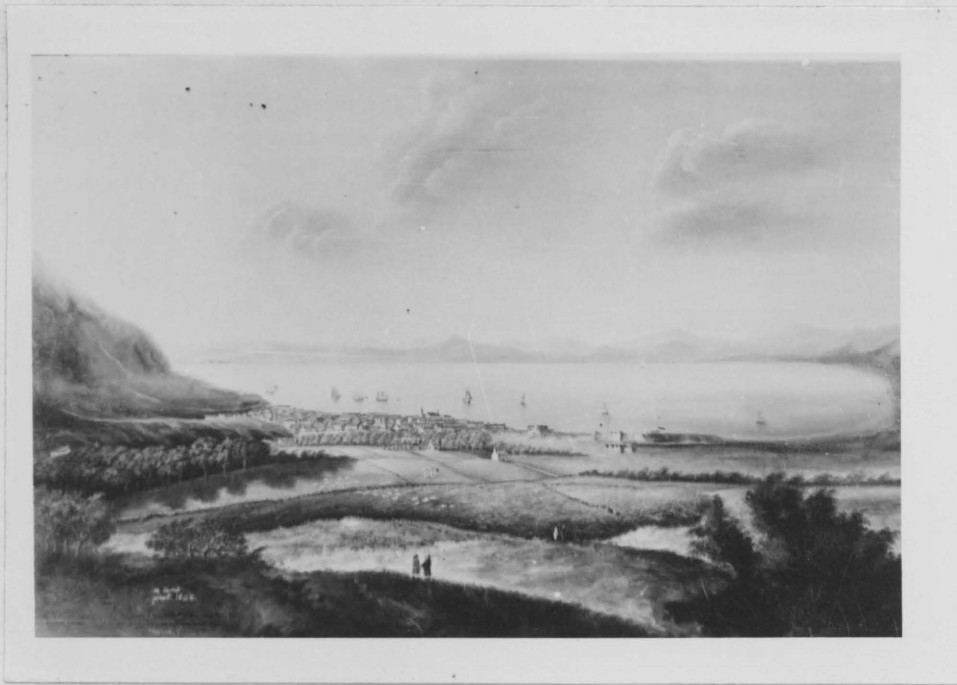
Frick Art Reference Library. Cornè Folder. New York.

New York Public Library. Cornè Folder in Arts Division.



PLATES  
EXPLANATORY NOTE

Numbers in parenthesis following titles of works in the following plates refer to numbers in the Catalogue of Cornè works presented elsewhere in this paper. All items reproduced are by Cornè, or after his designs except where otherwise noted.



a. Capetown, South Africa (No. 20). Oil on board, 1804. (Courtesy, Peabody Museum).



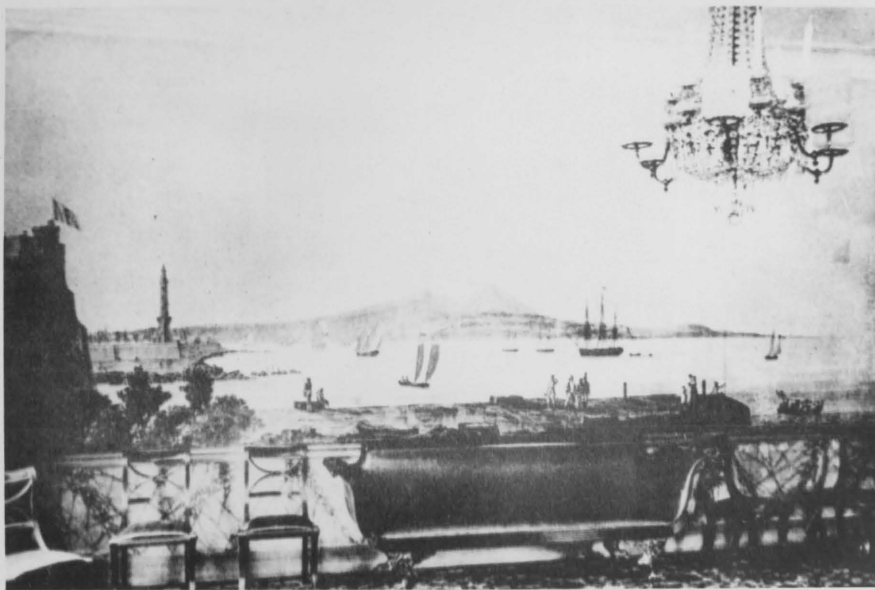
b. Mountain Scene from the Lindall-Barnard-Andrews House (No. 1). Water color on paper panel, 1800-1807. (Courtesy, Essex Institute).



a. Coast Scene by Moonlight. Oil on canvas, Claude Joseph Vernet, 1754. (From Art Quarterly Vol. XXII, No. 1, Spring, 1959, p. 40, fig. 25).



b. Beach with a Cascade and a Watch Tower. Oil on canvas, Carlo Bonavia. (From Art Quarterly Vol. XXII, No. 1, Spring, 1959, p. 39, fig. 23).



a. Bay of Naples, from the Sullivan Dorr House (No. 2).  
Water color on plaster, 1810.

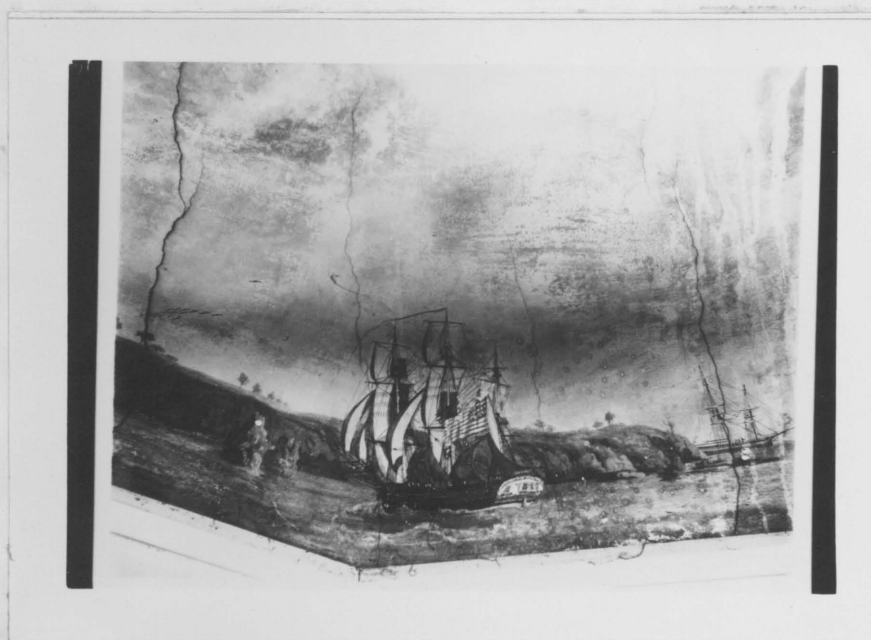


b. Cliff Scene, from the Sullivan Dorr House (No. 2).  
Water color on plaster, 1810. (From Allen, Early American Wall Paintings, p. 37, fig. 36.





a. Romantic Scene, overmantel from the Simon Forrester House (No. 15). Oil on canvas, 1800-1807. (Courtesy, Essex Institute).



b. Ship and Coastal Scene, from the cupola of the Pickman-Derby-Brookhouse Mansion (No. 6). Oil on board, 1800-1807. (Courtesy, Essex Institute).



a. Fish Wagon (No. 7). Oil on canvas, 1803.  
(Courtesy, Peabody Museum).



b. The Fishery. Oil on canvas, Richard Wright.  
(From Warner, British Marine Painting, fig. 6).



a. Mount Vernon (No. 29). Water color on paper, 1799. (Courtesy, Peabody Museum).

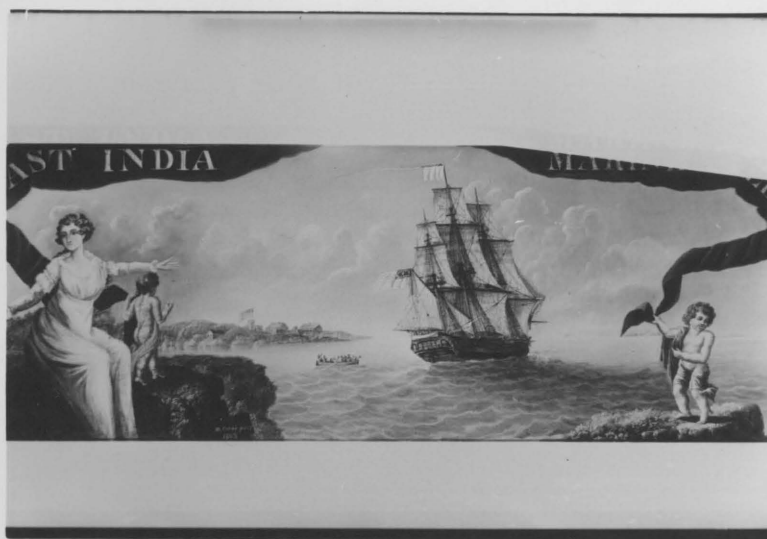


b. America (No. 52). Oil on canvas, 1800-1807. (Courtesy, Peabody Museum).





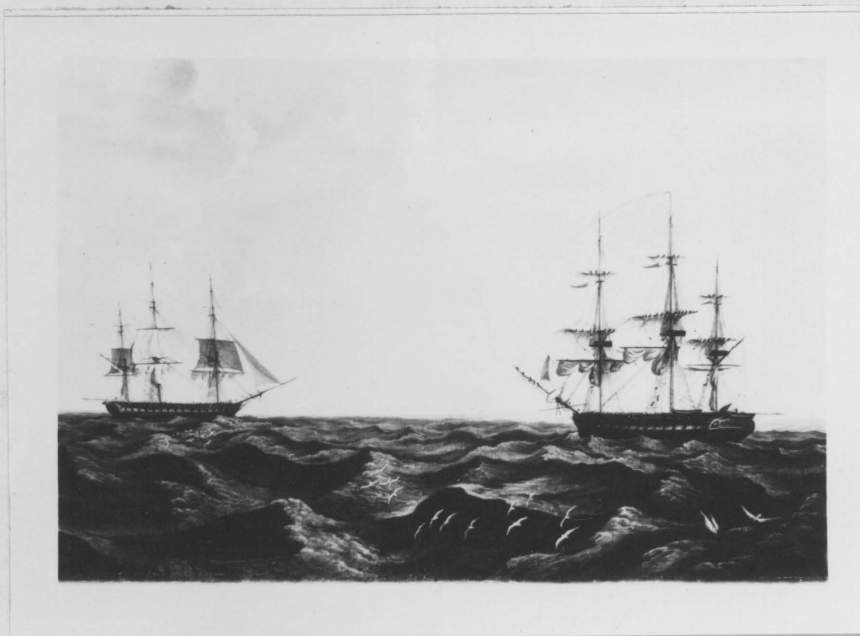
a. Hazard (No. 47). Water color on paper, 1805.  
(Courtesy, Peabody Museum).



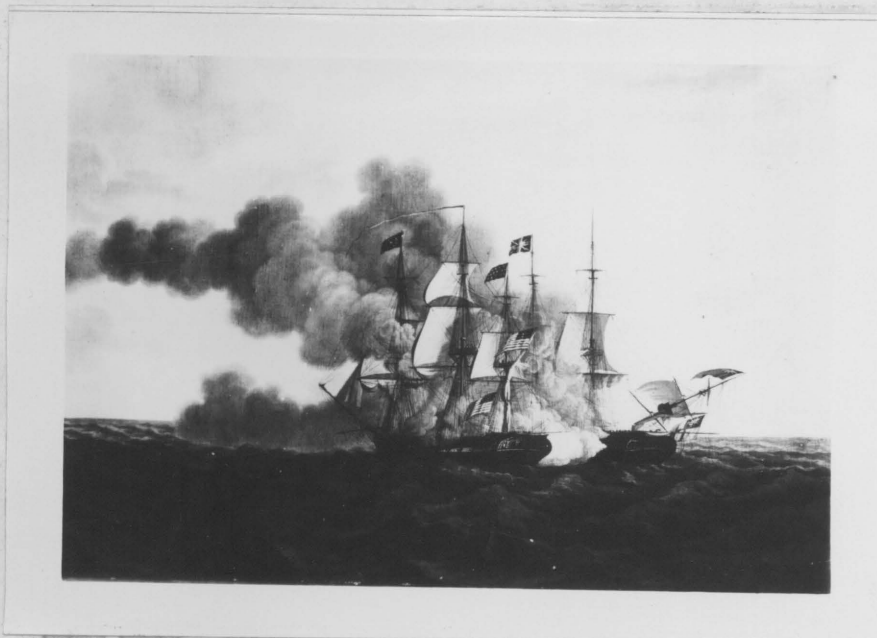
b. Salem Harbor (No. 11). Oil on board, 1805.  
(Courtesy, Peabody Museum).

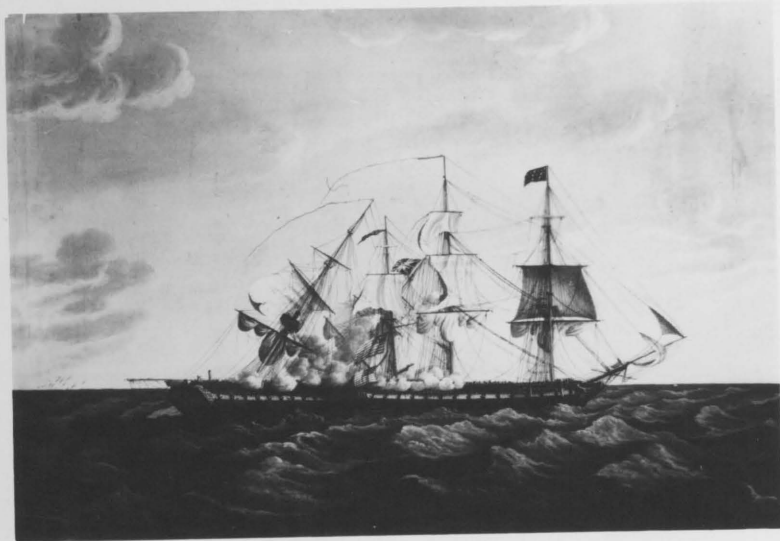


- a. Constitution and Guerriere, 1st of series (No. 66).  
Oil on canvas, c. 1812. (Courtesy, New Haven  
Colony Historical Society).

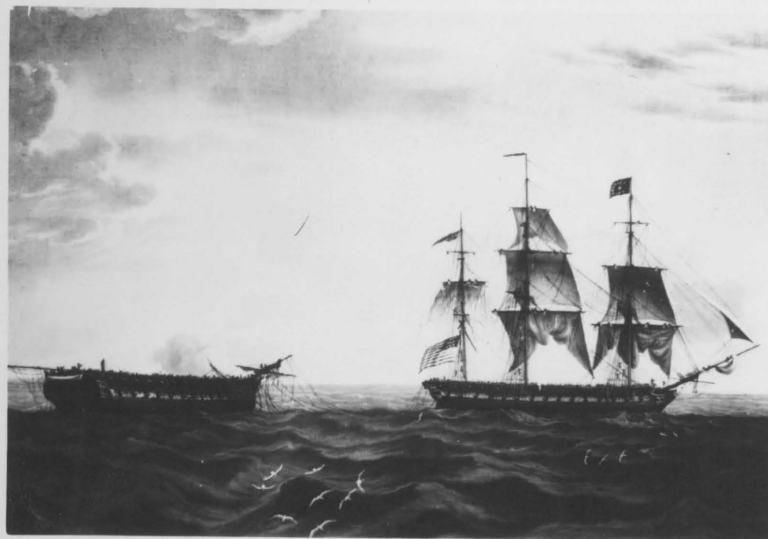


- b. Constitution and Guerriere, 2nd of series (No. 67).  
Oil on canvas, c. 1812. (Courtesy, New Haven  
Colony Historical Society).

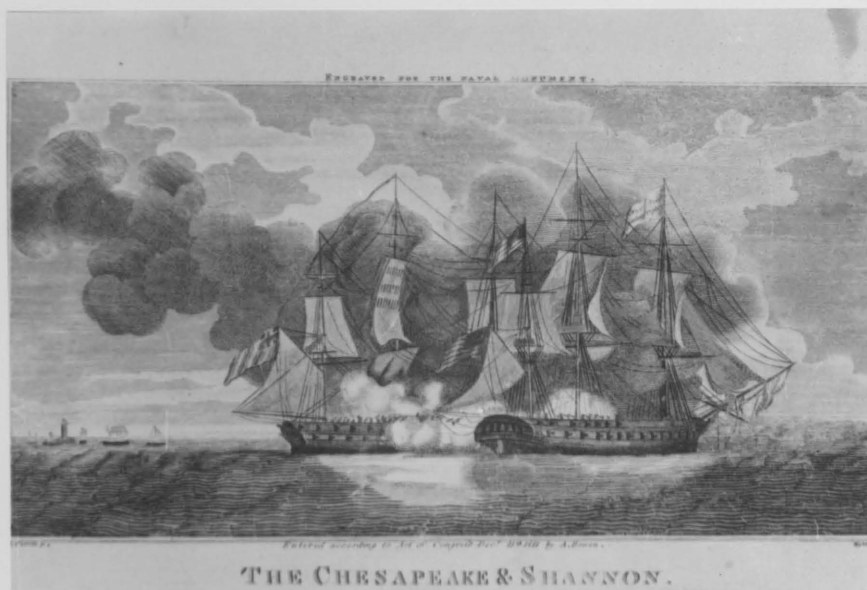




a. Constitution and Guerriere, 3rd of series (No. 68).  
Oil on canvas, c. 1812. (Courtesy, New Haven Colony  
Historical Society.



b. Constitution and Guerriere, 4th of series (No. 69).  
Oil on canvas, c. 1812. (Courtesy, New Haven Colony  
Historical Society.



a. Chesapeake and Shannon (No. 76). Engraving from Naval Monument, by Thomas Wightman, c. 1816.



b. Columbus and the Egg (No. 117). Oil on canvas, 1805. (Courtesy, Essex Institute).



PLATE XI

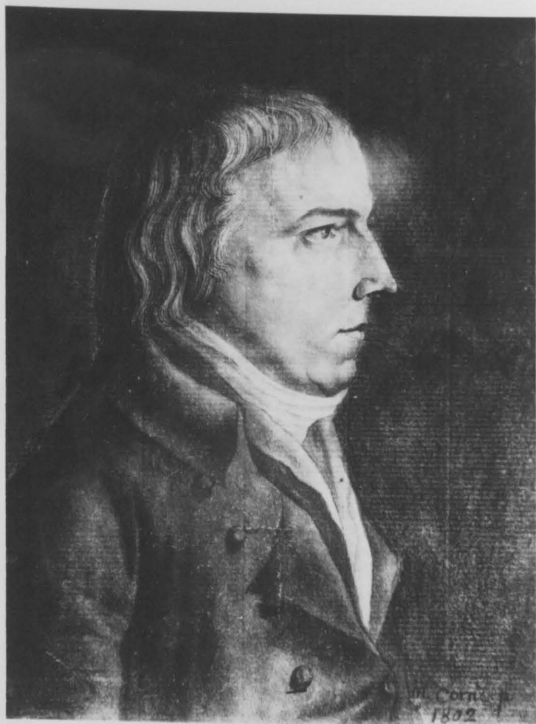


a. Saturday Evening  
No. 13). Oil on  
canvas, 1800-1807.  
(Courtesy, Boston  
Museum of Fine Arts).



b. Sunday Morning (No. 12). Oil on canvas,  
1800-1807. (Courtesy, Boston Museum of  
Fine Arts).

PLATE XII



a. Richard Ward Jr.  
(No. 100). India  
ink on paper, 1802.  
(Courtesy, Essex  
Institute).

b. Lydia Robinson  
(No. 103). Water  
color on paper,  
1803. (Courtesy,  
Essex Institute).



Miss Lydia Robinson  
Daughter of Col. James Robinson  
Gift of George H. Arrows. Engraved.