

MOUNTAIN PICTURES OF THE SEASON.

IN no recent year have the exhibitions contained so few Alpine pictures. There is positively not one view of the Wetterhorn from Rosenlauri. In the Academy is only a single 'Matterhorn,' a moonlight view, by M. Albert Gos. The Jungfrau is likewise only once depicted, though then on a large scale, in the ambitious, but not wholly successful, picture by Mr. E. T. Compton. A very poor picture of Mont Blanc, from the valley of Chamonix, by Miss Bearne, is the only representation of the monarch of mountains. A small, almost monochrome view of Monte Rosa from the Moro, by Mr. Collingwood, is the solitary example of Alpine art at the Grosvenor, and is poor at that. In fact the only good Alpine picture in any of the exhibitions is Mr. Alfred Williams' 'Finsteraarhorn,' at the New Gallery. Mr. Arthur Croft sends two pictures to the Academy, but one is a view of the rapids above Niagara, and the other is a study of autumn colouring in the Rhone valley, so that neither is properly Alpine. A winter scene in the Engadine, by Mr. H. H. Robinson (R.A. 380), is neither true in effect nor beautiful in conception; whilst the less said the better about Mr. Nowell's creamy 'Lucerne' (R.A. 554) with the carbuncle sun in the midst of it. Charming landscapes by Signor Costa (New Gall. 209) and his follower, Mr. Corbett (R.A. 233), contain distant views of the mountains of Carrara, as seen from the neighbourhood of Bocca d'Arno. A feeble view of Etna (R.A. 708) is altogether unworthy of Mr. MacWhirter's brush. These complete the catalogue of foreign mountain pictures.

The pictures of British mountain scenery are a far finer set, and each of the galleries has a good example to show. The winter scene in North Wales, 'Idwal's Glory,' by Mr. A. J. Black (R.A. 244), is certainly fine. The scheme of light is bold and original, and the artist, by suppressing all unnecessary detail, has attained an effect of size so generally missed by mountain draughtsmen. Mr. H. Coutts' 'End of the Sheep Fair at Eskdale' (R.A. 1344) is another winter study in the mountains, where sunlight illumines the yellow-brown moor and the snowy crest behind. The same painter's 'Bleak Hill-side' (R.A. 1261) is likewise a praiseworthy work. Mr. Colin Hunter sends two Scotch mountain views (R.A. 384 and New Gall. 67). Of these the 'Hills of Morven' is the most impressive, representing, as it does with some originality, a fine mountain wall, crested with soft clouds of finely varied forms. Sunset effects among the Highlands, where the sky is full of wild mist and the rocks are ruddy with the last rays of evening, form the subject of several pictures, notably of Mr. Peter Graham's 'Departing Day' (R.A. 190), in which the foreground is too green, and of one (Gros. 384) by Mr. C. Stuart. Finer and truer than these are Mr. C. E. Johnson's 'Last Light' (R.A. 687) and Mr. Frew's 'Summer Evening' (R.A. 480), in both of which the scene is laid in a barren upland valley. Mr. Inglis' 'Highland Corrie' (R.A. 183) remains to be mentioned, but with no special praise. A portrait of a distinguished member of the Alpine Club (R.A. 501) scarcely falls within the category of mountain pictures.

To sum up, the feeble quality and trifling quantity of the Alpine pictures of the year may be regarded from two points of view. They mark the close of an epoch of Alpine art, and may mark the opening of a new epoch. The noticeable fact is the increase in quantity and excellence of English mountain views as compared with Swiss. Painters must live among the scenes they habitually depict. We have produced a certain number of artists who year after year lived for several months together in the Alps. They were the companions of climbers—were often climbers themselves. They looked at mountains as things to be climbed. Their ideal was accuracy of form and truth of detail in foreground and distance. Now, however, a new ideal begins to reign, and a new art results from it. Artists are paying much more attention to atmospheric effects than ever before. They are painting the atmosphere, with figures, houses, trees, mountains, or what not for background. Details thus shrink into insignificance. Apparent inaccuracy of detail seems to obtain. Much of what we used to like is thus lost, but certain new qualities of size are now attainable, and by some artists are attained. Not impossibly artists of the new school may devote themselves to mountain landscape. Some known Alpine artists show signs of looking at the old scenes with new eyes. The old art is at any rate passing out of fashion and ceasing from the walls of our exhibitions. Alpine landscape will either no longer be painted or it will be painted on new principles. We await the development of the next few years with interest, and not without hope.

W. M. C.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ALPINE CLUB.

A GENERAL MEETING of the Club was held on February 4, 1890. Mr. HORACE WALKER, *President*, in the Chair.

Messrs. G. G. Groeger, T. A. Nash, and G. A. Solly were balloted for and elected members of the Club.

The HONORARY SECRETARY and TREASURER presented the accounts for the year 1889, which were, after some remarks from Mr. Freshfield, unanimously adopted.

Mr. C. T. DENT read a paper on the 'History of the Search Expedition to the Caucasus.*'

At the conclusion of the paper, the PRESIDENT commented on the great sagacity with which the search had been conducted, and without which it would have been quite impossible to bring it to such a successful issue. He then introduced to the meeting Mr. Phillipps Wolley, for whose endeavours to ascertain the fate of the lost party in the autumn of 1888 the Club would always be grateful. Mr. PHILLIPPS WOLLEY made some remarks with regard to the search instituted by him, which had been unsuccessful owing to the lateness of the season and the absence of guides; he had gone to the Caucasus for purposes of sport only, and not with a view to mountaineering; he also referred to the character of the natives, which had, no doubt,

* *Alpine Journal*, vol. xv. p. 26.