

le soleil y avoit passé la nuit—nous vîmes des avalanches & leur bruit étoit argentin—du pied de la glace j'ai bien observé la marche que nos devanciers de la St Jean ont tenue; c'étoit dans le plus grand des valons du Mont Blanc & il n'est point étonnant que la suffocation les aye forcé à descendre, s'ils avoient tenu les hauteurs ils auroient respiré le frais. Enfin, cette grande chaleur devoit être diminuée pour nous dans cette saison où le soleil ne darde pas ses rayons aussi longtems.

Je suis avec les sentimens les plus distingués

Monsieur

Votre très humble obeiss^t serviteur

M. T. BOURRIT.

THE EXHIBITION OF ALPINE PAINTINGS.

As the years pass on and the Annual Exhibitions in our Hall succeed one another the public for which they are provided, or at any rate a few critical spirits, are prompted to ask, 'How far do these shows fulfil their purpose?' Before they can give themselves an answer they may, perhaps, pause to enquire what their purpose really is. Are the shows to be looked on simply as adjuncts to tea and talk—under difficulties; as opportunities for amateurs to show an amiable appreciation of each other's endeavours to bring home pleasing reminiscences of their summer holidays? Or are they attempts to draw together the best work of the contemporary artists who are struggling with the problems of Alpine scenery, to record their progress and to encourage their efforts? Are they intended to foster the growth in this country of a school of painters devoted to the portrayal of mountain landscape, and, shall we add, of mountain incident? There seems no reason why the dangers and difficulties of the Alps should be represented only in the illustrated newspapers.

We venture to fancy that the two objects here mentioned have got a little mixed, and that it is possibly in consequence of this uncertainty that the higher aim has not been more effectually attained. We should be glad to see the responsible committee take, by way of experiment, some practical steps that might meet the difficulty, such as, for instance, reserving half the space for painters by profession and hanging the works of each in a separate group. We should be glad also could they endeavour to bring in painters like Professor Holmes and Mr. Albert Goodwin, who have both shown very striking mountain landscapes in London this winter.

The first impression of most visitors to this year's Exhibition was that they found themselves in the presence of a great deal of interesting and highly creditable amateur work, drawings in many instances capable of giving pleasure to others than those to whom they carried a personal or local interest. On a closer inspection they recognised excellent examples of artists of repute. But could we discover any proof of the growth amongst us of a school of

younger painters ready to devote themselves to the moods of the mountains, to interpret their delicate harmonies, to treat them as something more than a passing object of interest?

It is a frequent matter of speculation to the plain man with some sensibility to nature, when he finds himself in a gallery of modern art: Why, when there are so many beautiful things in the world, should artists spend their time in painting the ugly ones? It is no doubt true to a great extent that it is only in familiar objects that we can discern beauty, and perhaps it is as well that those to whom mountains are neither familiar nor congenial should paint impressions of pumps and backyards. But to this generation mountains have become familiar, and there ought to be somebody ready to paint them. It may, perhaps, also be suggested that there exists a public ready to hang pictures of mountains on their walls. But we would not insist on this mercantile consideration—the mountains must be painted in the first instance for love.

There remains of course the tradition, a commonplace of conventional criticism, that mountains are unpaintable. So, if we come to that, are the sea and sunlight, despite all the efforts of the latest Impressionists. That this tradition should have survived Turner is discreditable to the critical intelligence. We recommend our readers who doubt to go and look at the last series of Turner paintings and drawings unearthed and set on screens in the National Gallery, and ask themselves if they do not convey or recall to their minds and memories the shapes and splendour of the heights.

But it will be objected: 'Turner was an exception—a genius.' Granted, but it is not only genius that is wanted: love, patience, and industry will have their reward in this as in other branches of painting. The mountains will respond impartially to the realist and able craftsman, like Millais, or to the dreamer, like Watts, who finds symbols in landscape as well as in figures, who generalises rather than reproduces.

But we waste space in the repetition of truisms. It is time for us to come back to this year's pictures. The most important painting in the Hall was Mr. Compton's oil picture of a too familiar subject—the Matterhorn. We look with confidence to Mr. Compton's capable brush to give us the mountains as they are in their everyday aspect. He is sure in his draftsmanship, in the forms of his peaks, and in the texture of his glaciers; his atmosphere is bright, and his colour agreeable, if sometimes cold. There is no mystery in his mountains. Mr. MacWhirter was a generous contributor. He is always welcome when he brings back flowers from the upland meadows. The 'Lake of Como' looks rather northern; but in May Como can suggest colder climes. His drawing of the Rhône Valley from Berisal was a fine piece of mountain outline. Mr. H. R. B. Donne sent several delicate and delightful drawings. Mr. Colin Phillip took us again to Skye, of which he does not soften the ruggedness. His work is always interesting. Mr. Cecil Hunt, an artist of promise, showed a well-painted dolomite, and a 'View in the Arolla Valley,' blue buttresses under a silver gleam,

remarkable for composition and colour but marred by too sombre a frame. Mr. T. B. Wirgman had several small drawings, of which we preferred a very vivid view of the Puy de Dôme from Royat, and there were also some delicate drawings of Mount Fuji by his brother, the late Charles Wirgman, the pioneer of English artists in Japan. Miss Hechle painted 'A Glacier of Mt. Blanc' with surprising force and knowledge, and the drawing of Bourg S. Pierre by Dr. Fuller England was a good example of the way nature should be approached by a really studious amateur. Among 'old masters,' Monsieur Loppé was represented by two excellent pictures, and Elijah Walton by an unusual and very powerful drawing of snowpeaks against a deep blue sky.

But to pick out pictures for comment one by one a month (or possibly two!) after their dispersal seems a not very fruitful task. We might particularise many other very interesting exhibits. But we must be content to name a few more of the most generous contributors: Mr. Nelson Dawson, Mrs. Marrable, Mrs. Jardine, Miss Fox, Mr. C. Way, Mr. C. K. Wood, Mr. S. Thompson, Madame de Falkner.

We may also note some studies of lower mountain forms by Mr. Ralph Peacock, better known as a portrait painter.

THE ALPINE CLUB LIBRARY.

THE following additions have been made to the library of the Alpine Club since October:—

Club Publications.

Alpine Club of Canada. Constitution and list of members.

Sm. 8vo, pp. 22.

Calgary, 1908

The Club has altogether 407 members, of 5 varying grades, of whom 7 are members of the Alpine Club and 126 are ladies. "Active" members are (1) those who have made an ascent of a truly alpine, glacier-hung peak rising at least 2,500 ft. above the timber-line of the region; (2) those who for 8 years prior to date of organisation have been annual visitors to Canada's mountain regions, and have contributed to a knowledge of the same. Among the "active" members are 240 men and 63 women.

Appalachian Club. Bulletin. vol. 1, nos. 1-9.

Sm. 8vo, pp. 40.

November 1907-August 1908

"This Bulletin is to serve as a monthly gazette of the doings of the Club."

C.A.F. Règlement du Concours international de ski annuel.

1908

8vo, pp. 7.

— Troisième Concours international de ski du C.A.F. organisé à Morez-du-Jura, les 31 Janvier, 1^{er} et 2 Février 1909. 8vo, pp. ix-xvi.

— **La Montagne**, revue mensuelle. Maurice Paillon, rédacteur en Chef. Volume iv. Paris, Imp. Lecoq, 1908

8vo, pp. xxxi, 480; 252; ill.

The volume is in two portions, with separate pagination;— iv a, Articles originaux et Chronique Alpine: iv b, Bibliographie—Notes et Nouvelles Alpines—Chronique du C.A.F.