

ensued : the poor man, who carried axe and rope and a well-filled rucksack, arriving at Martigny bound for Bourg St. Pierre to meet friends, had gone to Sharpe's Hotel, was there set upon by the concierge, told his friends had altered their plans, that he must meet them at Champex ; and here he was. It seems to have been a rare mix-up by the two idiots at either end of the telephone ; but our new friend made light of it, and promptly set off for Bourg St. Pierre ; a proper sportsman if ever there was one ! To my eternal shame, and undying regret, I was so confused at the trouble we had caused him, albeit unwittingly, that he was gone before I realised that we had never even offered the poor man a drink. Needless to say, W. S. Sharpe himself did not arrive until the following day.

It remains to be added (*a*) that the point of this paper, of which you have probably long lost sight, was to enquire whether from the axe's point of view it were better to be laid upon the shelf to rust, or to be degraded to perform trivial domestic duties ; and (*b*) that the matter is now open for discussion.

#### MISS HECHLE'S ALPINE DRAWINGS.

**T**HE collection of some fifty water-colour drawings of the High Alps by Miss Hilda Hechle, which was shown in the neighbourhood of the Alpine Club in February last, might have been appropriately displayed in our own Hall, where it is to be hoped some specimens of her work may be included in the proposed Exhibition this summer.

Miss Hechle has the courage of her convictions, and she has set herself to meet boldly the challenge of the art-critics who still maintain that the scenery of the upper zone of the Alps, of the glaciers and crags above the snow level, is unpaintable.

Most of her subjects have been found in Dauphiné, in the neighbourhood of La Grave ; or among the N.-E. (Swiss) outskirts of the chain of Mt. Blanc. She has ventured to the Brèche de la Meije, and sojourned in the Club Hut above the Glacier d'Orny. Miss Hechle's art, as a rule, is austere ; she eschews prettinesses of foreground and is often content to reproduce unflinchingly the uncompromising noontide clearness of the Swiss atmosphere and the consequent hardness and crude colours of many Alpine foregrounds. But if born a topographer and a realist, she has gained eyes for the beauty

of the mountains, for the happy and fortunately not rare moments when the veil of dawn or twilight, or the blue and black scarves of mist, are drawn between them and their frequenters.

'Winter Evening, Adelboden' and 'The last gleam, Col d'Orny,' were attractive drawings likely to awake memories of similar visions in the minds of mountain-lovers. Of a delicate but more sinister aspect was the green-gold sky, prophetic of coming bad weather, in 'The Aiguille du Tour.' One of the most pleasing subjects was, 'Lac de Champex, a rainy day,' where the blue outline of a distant range was mirrored in the still waters of a pine-girt lake. 'Le Lac de la Pucelle' represented with fidelity the (*experto crede*) almost incredible blueness of that gemlike pool. 'The Grand Combin,' a great rose-coloured block against a pure, pale sky, was, perhaps, the most striking presentation in the gallery of the grandeur of a single peak. 'From the Cabane de Bertol' exhibited a tumbled confusion of rock, snow and cloud, a medley of dark grey and blue masses. 'The Aiguille de Chardonnet' was a sound and pleasing drawing, and 'Above the clouds from Pointe d'Orny' showed a hand familiar with the broader aspect of the heights. Glaciers and séracs hold no secrets or terrors for Miss Hechle; she is as familiar with the white bosses and blue depths of the tossed névés as with the ranged lines of crevasses of the lower icefalls. She reproduces both with equal knowledge, but the former with, perhaps, the greater sympathy. When she has to deal with cliffs and rocks close at hand her treatment is less satisfactory. Not unfrequently she falls into the modernist tricks of defining objects by hard, black outlines, and misrepresenting natural structure by drawing the bare crags as rectangular blocks, fresh from a quarry and piled anyhow one on another.

We shall look forward with interest to Miss Hechle's future career. At present her weak point, beyond this occasional crudeness in rock drawing, is a tendency to pay too little attention to selection and composition in planning her pictures. In an article in this JOURNAL (vol. ix, 1878) on Alpine Art—which Ruskin was kind enough in a rash moment to describe as 'the most sensible he had ever seen' (Complete Edition xxvi, 566-7)—we wrote as follows: 'To copy Nature in the Alps, to be clear but not crude, forcible without violence, delicate as well as sublime, the painter must learn a new lesson in the depth and arrangement of his colours. . . . Our painter of the Alps must combine many qualifications. He must not

only be the close friend of the mountains, knowing them in all their moods ; he must also have a quick and sure perception, so that, when it is impossible to paint all, he may select and insist on the most essential and characteristic features, and a power of composition equal to dealing with great and often difficult subjects.'

Miss Hechle possesses several of the qualifications here suggested. She sees the mountains with fresh and understanding eyes ; she is capable of entering into their more intimate and sympathetic moods. Let her cultivate this intimacy rather than linger over the harsher aspects they assume to the eyes of 'the harriers of scenery,' and of the school whose highest endeavour is to make a pattern out of mean ugliness.

D. W. F.

#### THE AMERICAN MEMBERS OF THE ALPINE CLUB.

Précis of Minutes of Meeting held December 6, 1924.

**T**HE Autumn Dinner of the Association was held at the University Club, New York City, on Saturday evening, December 6.

The members present were : Messrs. Allston Burr, Allen Carpe, J. Ellis Fisher, Henry S. Hall, jun., Howard Palmer, Norman H. Read, H. B. de Villiers-Schwab, William Williams, and Joseph Wood, jun. ; the guests being Messrs. L. G. Day, John Hall, W. S. Ladd, and J. M. Thorington.

In the absence of the Chairman, Professor Fay, the Vice-Chairman, Mr. Burr, occupied the seat of honour, and at the beginning of dinner mentioned the great loss to the Club through the death of Mallory and Irvine on Mt. Everest, everyone then standing for a moment in silent tribute.

Directly after dinner, there being no business to come before the Meeting, the speaker of the evening was introduced. Mr. Wood proceeded to give an account of a traverse of the Aiguilles Rouges d'Arolla and of an adventurous descent of the Dent Blanche by the Ferpècle Arête, showing, in addition, a number of slides taken in the Bernese Oberland. Following a pause, Mr. Wood described a visit made by Mr. L. G. Day and himself in 1911 to Petra, the ancient rock city of the Nabotaens (in Arabia), illustrating his extraordinarily fascinating story with