

Scenska Turistföreningens Årsskrift för aar 1891. (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand.)

Though the annual publication of the Swedish Tourist Club this year is of a more sub-Alpine character than has previously been the case, we are, nevertheless, introduced to some grand mountain scenery in Swedish Lapland which is almost unknown. One enthusiastic botanist describes the scenery on the Swedish side of the Oxetinder and Rösuvand in Norway, a region of sharp peaks and glittering glaciers, in latitude 66°. Another writer describes in graphic language his visit to Sulitelma, the name of which mountain we are all familiar with since the days of childhood, when we read with delight Miss Martineau's 'Feats on the Fjord.'

There are admirable papers on life in Lapland, reindeer, bear-hunting, and fishing. Our Swedish friends, with their usual energy, are reducing the difficulties of travel by building numerous and comfortable mountain huts where most needed, and certainly show that they mean to explore for themselves the weird glaciers on their western frontier, and to scale their most rugged peaks. In this laudable endeavour we wish them much success.

W. C. S.

MOUNTAINS AND HILLS IN ART.—1891.

A FEW years ago every picture exhibition contained its quota of Alpine pictures. There was always a 'Wetterhorn from Rosenlauri,' a 'Matterhorn,' and a few other well-known subjects. The exhibitions this year (with the exception of the Institute, which I saw too late to notice in this place) are remarkable for the absence of all such work. There is only one snow-mountain in the Academy: a view of the Piz Bernina from the Palù Glacier, by Mr. E. T. Compton (617). I did not observe a single water-colour of the kind so popular a few years ago. This phenomenon is probably to be accounted for by the change in character of all progressive landscape, brought about by the influence of the French school. It is possible by neglecting atmosphere to plot down a detailed plan of a mountain view; but if the atmosphere is taken into consideration, and the relative values of light-intensity, received from different planes, are expressed, the character of the whole being in any degree rendered, it is obvious that all detail must be omitted, that sharp outlines must be disguised, and that only a broad and partial semblance of the parts of a scene can be preserved. A single picture, the 'Eiger,' by Stott of Oldham (New Gallery, 95), is the first example I have seen of any effort to depict mountains in what must be the style of the future. The picture is remarkable, original, ugly, and very important. It was badly hung. The artist endeavoured to minimise the difficulties of his problem by placing his mountain in a misty moonlight. He thus gets rid of sharp outlines and of intruding detail, the rendering of which on any canvas destroys all possible effect of scale. The picturesque element in misty moonlight is, however, a soft sparkling brilliancy in the mist

itself, and this the painter has not succeeded in catching. His work remains a clever effort in the right direction, but not a beautiful thing in itself.

A collection of seventy-six of M. Loppé's pictures was exhibited in the month of May at the Fine Art Society's Galleries. M. Loppé's work is so well known to members of the Alpine Club, and so deservedly popular, that we are not called upon to notice it here at great length. A thorough artist by temperament and training, he manifests his skill in nothing more than in the choice of subject. He seldom attempts what the conventions of his art do not admit of his accomplishing. His bits of glacier scenery are amongst the best of his works, and the 'Crevasses on the Mer de Glace' (68) is a good example in this kind. M. Loppé, too, has made his own the Alpine sunset beheld from some lofty standpoint. Looking westward over a vast horizon, when the sun is low, all the details of earth vanish within the glowing colour of the air, and a panoramic subject thus becomes possible of treatment on a small canvas. Nos. 3, 24, 37, and 61 were all good works of this type, three of them representing sunsets from the Grands Mulets and one from the summit of Mont Blanc. But the exhibition was chiefly remarkable for its revelation of the winter glories of Switzerland. When centrists no longer congregate in their summer haunts then do the minor mountains hold high state, and the valleys put on the robes of majesty, usurped in summer by the giants for themselves alone. M. Loppé (in No. 45) shows that the nobly-formed Mythen, wreathed in snow and wintry mist, possesses all the splendour of Ushba. He bears witness to the aggrandisement of Pilatus (No. 58), and many another point of equally low degree, measured by summer estimates. Some of his pictures bring us in presence of the valley bottoms, especially the Zermatt valley, when they are floored, and the banks of their streams are corniced and often arched from side to side, with snow. Most mountain-painters use clouds as a mask for their difficulties. Many a Scotch example of this trick could be quoted from the Academy exhibition. But with M. Loppé clouds exist for their own sake. He feels their decorative value, and paints them decoratively, sometimes making them fully as important both in form and mass as the mountains that are their foundation. In one of the sunset pictures (No. 8) there is depicted a remarkable array of clouds, coming up the glacial valley from the west, fiery red, like a charging phalanx of flame.

At Paris I only saw the Old Saion (in the Champs Elysées), and noticed in it but one mountain picture, by—I forgot what artist. It purported to represent the lake under the Riffelhorn, and was painted in a conventional manner. On the right was the base of the Riffelhorn. Left of that, where the Lyskamm ought to have appeared, was a long flat thing, apparently the Alphubel; and left of that again was the upper level of the Furggen glacier, in the neighbourhood of the Theodul Pass! While on the subject of mountain pictures by foreign artists, I may mention a striking series of paintings of Norwegian fiords, by A. Normann, three of which I saw at the Continental Gallery in New Bond Street, one or two more at a dealer's in Liverpool, and one—the

least attractive—at the Royal Academy (No. 1,040). All these are strongly painted, and give a dignified and often impressive rendering of mountain mass and form. I also noticed at the Continental Gallery a picture of the mountains bordering the Straits of Magellan, painted by H. Schnars-Alquist.

Mr. Philip Burne-Jones's large painting of 'Earth-rise from the Moon,' in the New Gallery (190), certainly comes within the area of my survey, but need not delay us. The rock structure should have been its strongest, and is its weakest feature. The picture is neither beautiful, nor scientifically true. There is not, for instance, a single patch of cloud across all the continents and oceans of the earth. The best mountains in the New Gallery were in the pictures of Signor Costa and his follower, Mr. M. R. Corbett, both of whom render with so much success the fair colouring of the lower Italian ranges. The Alban hills appeared in one of Signor Costa's works (No. 122), and the graceful contour of the Pisan mountains in two pictures by Mr. Corbett, both doubtless painted in the neighbourhood of Bocca d'Arno. The Earl of Carlisle's rendering (No. 107) of the same subject was less successful. Amongst Scotch scenes the best was painted by Mr. A. J. Ryle—an autumn landscape from the far north, where the colours are daring and the mountain forms are bold.

Of Scotch pictures in the Academy there was a full supply, but none of special excellence. The Skye Hills are feebly imaged by Mr. H. W. B. Davis, R.A. (184), and the same artist's 'West Highlanders' (395), all fussed over with useless detail, is equally ineffective. Mr. Peter Graham's 'Morning Mists' (238) is a stalwart but not very successful attempt to depict the broken foreground, rocks, and mist forming the Scotch landscapist's stock-in-trade; the picture lacks depth, and the detailed distance dwarfs the whole. By stretching a point we may reckon three of Mr. Brett's works (424, 600, and 1,029) among mountain views. Mr. Brett, in his well-known 'Britannia's Realm,' has shown that he can bring the vastness of the ocean within the limits of a canvas, but the vastness of the hills escapes him. He is so fascinated by the beauty of their details, the most dangerous beauty of their many brilliant colours and visible complexities of form, that he embroiders his picture all over with them, and lo! grandeur, of necessity, vanishes.

Art is not Nature, but only one view of Nature—Nature with everything left out that the eye does not grasp in a single impression. Thus it often happens that the mountain spirit is better caught when mountains are not the subject, but only the background accessories of a picture. This is the case in Mr. J. J. Inglis' 'Spring's First Flood' (485); but in his 'Sunset over a Highland Loch' (650) the same painter makes a remarkable, and, on the whole, a successful attempt to wrestle directly with a mountain scene. The conception in this case is powerful and bold, and the lonely landscape forms an admirable scaffolding for the diabolic and horrible splendour of the colouring. Bold massing of the lights, and broad and effective handling of the material, in Mr. Majoribanks-Hay's water-colour, entitled 'Glen Strae' (1,349), make it, on the whole, the best of all the Scotch

pictures of the year. It is an impressive and admirable piece of work by the hand of an artist not previously known from any exhibits at the Alpine Winter Meeting. His portfolios doubtless contain leaves that we should gladly have an opportunity of seeing.

The large landscape of the Isles of Loch Lomond and the surrounding hills (515), by Mr. F. Goodall, R.A., demands no praise. There is a pleasing softness and ideality about it, but of a cheap and commonplace kind. Mr. Sidney Cooper, R.A., contributed an example of a fossil style of landscape art in his view of Land's End (1,136), where there are Cuyyp-like cows standing in the calm sea, while a little further off a yacht is racing before a merry breeze; the Longships rock appears to be formed of well-squared masonry.

It is pleasant to be able to mention in this place a landscape by that charming artist, Mr. Alfred East, entitled, 'Reedy Mere and Sunset Hills' (142). The hills, indeed, are but a graceful line along the far horizon, but the picture could not exist without them. Hills similarly, but less prettily, introduced form an essential part of Sir J. E. Millais' 'Lingering Autumn' (293) and Mr. MacWhirter's 'Highland Bay.' The Alps behind Venice, seen from the Lido, are conventionally rendered in a picture by Mr. Bryan Hook (536). Mr. J. Farquharson contributed a pleasant study of Nile scenery, in which the fine wall of cliffs that the limestone Arab chain opposes to the west is bathed in the pleasant sunshine and soft atmosphere of Egypt. Finally, I may be permitted to refer to the delicious background of blue hills, crested with distant clouds (or snow), forming the far margin of the African valley into which the Panthers look in Mr. J. M. Swan's most beautiful painting (110).

W. M. CONWAY.

SIGNOR SELLA'S 1890 CAUCASIAN PHOTOGRAPHS.

THE encouragement given to Signor Vittorio Sella, by the award of the Murchison grant of the Royal Geographical Society, has been productive of another very complete collection of photographs, which formed an attractive feature at the last winter exhibition of the Club. It will be remembered that Signor Sella took with him three Italian porters, and spent the greater part of last summer, from July to October, photographing in detail the peaks, passes, glaciers, forests, village architecture, and inhabitants of the central chain of the Caucasus. The party visited and photographed amongst three distinct races: the Ossetes and Aryans, mostly Christians; the Tartars, or Mohammedans; and, lastly, the Georgians. The work, therefore, is of interest ethnologically as well as topographically. As far as concerns ourselves, it is difficult amidst so many representations of ice and snow to select the best picture or group of pictures. Some good judges give the palm to the panoramic views of the Adai Choch district, and from Mr. Freshfield we understand that in 'two districts Signor Sella's work renders possible a reconstruction of the map of the Adai Choch, and the making of a map of the Suanetian glaciers, two