

conforms with the large and small samples found nearer to Val d'Isère.

As regards the geological origin of manganese, at the spots I have indicated, I am not in a position to make any pronouncement. It is my hope that other observers, fully conversant with such matters, and with more opportunity of making a closer and wider examination of the regions referred to, will consider it worth while to take up this quest, and in due season will make a considered and informing statement.

In case any reader of these observations should know of any publication (in particular, geological) connected with the subject of this note and region and will kindly communicate the reference to this JOURNAL, it is probable that others beside myself will be interested.

LEGH S. POWELL.

EXHIBITION OF PICTURES AT THE ALPINE CLUB, 1930.

My first impression on going into the room was that of an exhibition well above the average, but of walls unnecessarily overcrowded with a superabundance of lightish cardboard. The Hon. Secretary told me that this was inevitable, as most of the exhibits were water-colours, for which white or cream coloured mounts are the most suitable. It would perhaps have been truer to say that as such mounts are fashionable, water-colours look their best in them; for artists are given to paint what looks best when dressed according to fashion. Swiss colour prints support this view; for though they lose market value when cut, the better ones are often improved by fairly close framing. Again, one of the best water-colours in the exhibition, showing the 'Head of Sulden Valley' (E. Harrison Compton), has no mount at all; and has been painted in a style which does not require one.

At the other extreme are Mr. Nelson McCleary's 'Morning Glow near Ax' and 'Pyrenees near Tarascon,' which are sufficiently good to stand on their own, without those relatively enormous mounts which look as if spaces have been left for next year's calendars to be pasted on below the pictures. I have had to translate Mr. McCleary's titles, because I absolutely decline to encourage such a mixture as 'Morning Glow près d'Ax.'

Impression number two, which applies to the club exhibitions in general, was that the pictures as a body formed far better representations of mountain scenery than do those one usually sees elsewhere. The reason is fairly obvious. If artists wish to become efficient painters of the human body, they take courses in anatomy. In the same way, if they desire to become efficient painters of hills, they should also take courses in anatomy; and is there any better

system of instruction in mountain anatomy than that available to our members and their friends ?

I am told I am wrong, because Turner would not have satisfied the Committee on his climbing qualification ; but if his pictures do show what mountains are really like, his skill must have made him an exception. To support my case I will call in Dr. Collie, who, although only an amateur, and at that an amateur better known for his climbing than his painting, shows three or four views of the Coolins which come up to best professional standard.

It is not in every country that the hills affording the finest climbing make also the finest pictures, but it is certainly so at home ; and that has enabled Mr. Cecil Hunt to produce a really fine effort in 'Glen Brittle, Isle of Skye,' a picture so underpriced at fourteen guineas that I saw no less than four members surging round the Hon. Secretary at one and the same moment in their desire to buy it.

I can also quote Mr. E. T. Compton in support of my contention on the anatomical question ; for there is scarcely another painter who can rival the combination of artistic skill and technical accuracy revealed in the glaciers which form the principal features of the examples of his work, lent by Mr. David Murray and Mr. W. A. Wright ; while a non-climber would have made his pictures look ridiculous if he had attempted to introduce a bit of life by indicating a climbing party threading its way through the crevasses.

At the same time I acknowledge there are two sides to the question whether the average non-climbing artist can ever hope to make a perfect job of a mountain picture ; and the answer depends on the public for whom he is painting. To paint a glacier for a climber, or for the man in the valley, or to please other artists and their artistically minded critics, must necessarily be divergent propositions ; and this must account for the rare sight in the Royal Academy of mountain pictures which would have a ghost of a chance of being hung by Mr. Spencer.

I do not know whether I must couple Mr. Sidney Lee with Turner as being an exception ; but in 'The Devil's Bridge' he has succeeded in drawing a rock cliff so well and yet with so few strokes that I cannot help feeling that, while he was at work, he was also scheming a feasible route by which he might lead up a seemingly impossible face. His other picture, 'An Alpine Pass,' is probably the best in the Exhibition ; and that is the unanimous verdict of those who have forced their opinions upon me. I am curious to know, however, whether the cows in the foreground were intentionally permitted to make such skilful use of their protective colouring, that I first mistook them for boulders. Many people would have erred in making them more conspicuous.

This picture brings me to my third general criticism : which is also applicable to Mr. E. T. Compton, or whoever has christened one of his pictures 'A Glacier.' I assume that neither artist is so presumptuous as to imagine that he can improve on mountain

scenery ; for to do so would lower landscape painting to the level of mere design. It may therefore be accepted that Mr. Compton has painted an actual glacier ; and that Mr. Lee's picture, which shows a high driving pass so characteristically that one automatically hopes for a drink at the summit hotel, does in fact represent some definite pass. If so, there was no need for them to have attributed us with so little intelligence as to be unable to recognize what their pictures are intended to portray ; or to have adopted attitudes of false modesty in pretending that we could not reasonably be expected to do so. By not disclosing their spheres of operation they have lessened the degrees of practical interest their efforts would otherwise have invoked ; for titles which are not informative are merely superfluous.

Another impression was that the exhibitors suffer either from bad circulation or deficient clothing ; but I suspect the real truth is that they find bad weather at close quarters too difficult to paint. When I go to look at mountain pictures I hope to be shown the mountains in the condition I normally find them ; and at all events some of those which were painted during the two last summer holiday seasons might reasonably be expected to be reminiscent of the conditions I then experienced, approximating to those of the Grampians on an average December day. Next year I hope to see a fair percentage of pictures which enter into the spirit of ' British Hill Weather ' or ' The Pass in Sight ' ; and which by catching the effects of wind, mist and driving snow, dispel the monotony of everlasting sunshine.

And yet another impression was the almost total absence of living matter. Of flowers, it is true, there were some good examples, notably Miss de Lautour's ' Gentian and Glocknerblumen,' and Miss Helen Topham's ' Picked at Champéry ' more so ; but I do think the Club is somewhat misrepresented as a concourse of mountain gazers, when its Exhibition is so exclusively devoted to landscapes. I give this as a hint for the future ; and if mountain painters cannot paint figures, figure painters must be taught to climb and paint mountains, and give us some really effective studies of step-cutting and shinning up rocks. Animal painters should also be induced to frequent the Alps ; and there is one thing I should like to see them tackle quickly—that is the horse-drawn winter diligence-posts, with their long string of sleighs in close order, the middle ones without drivers and the horses at a slinging downhill trot. Unless someone does this soon, the next generation will not know what they were like.

I also noticed an undue absence of interiors ; and I am sure that if anyone is skilful enough to draw them, an overcrowded hut, or the primitive cheese factory of the alp, would make satisfactory subjects. As it is, the other fifty-eight exhibitors have loaded interiors on to the already overburdened shoulders of Mr. Sydney Spencer. His is uncommonly good for what I imagine to be an enterprising first

attempt, and may he give us more ; but I prefer his ' Rimpfischhorn from Rotenboden ' with its excellent rendering of a sprinkling of fresh snow upon the grass, and still more his ' View from Belalp.' I will not criticize his other pictures here ; because they include bare grass, regarding which he says I am colour-blind.

That accusation of colour-blindness makes me reluctant to mention Signor Gianni Molteni's five pictures. Some people admire them greatly ; but others, including myself, dislike his all-pervading and what we consider unnatural blue. It may be that he uses dark blue goggles, while I use Zeiss's brown ones. Still, I regard his paintings as bordering on the eccentric ; a term I apply for what I believe is technically known as modern art. But, joking apart, I think he has rather overdone it. So has Mr. A. F. Topham ('Summer Mist, Matterhorn'), in painting the valley red so early in the day.

I am not suggesting that pictures should not be eccentric. In fact, ' The Road to Niaux ' (Cubitt Bevis) shows that being so need not in the least deprive them of astonishing truth to nature ; but this picture is so deliberately eccentric that I should not care to live with it. On the other hand, I think Miss Hechle has to some extent spoilt what would otherwise have been quite a good view of the ' Portalet ' by adding an eccentric touch in the way of mourning borders to the foreground rocks. I consequently much prefer her ' Knocker's Lynn on Snowdon,' which is a real gem.

I will now say a word or two about peak-bagging and scree. I couple them together, because this Exhibition shows me that both can be as objectionable in painting as in climbing. In the first place I only notice one attempt at painting scree slopes, and they have tripped the artist badly, for he has converted them into slabs which would not be likely to ' go ' without rubbers. I suppose most painters are cunning enough to give them a wide berth in clear weather, as being an impossible subject. In regard to peak-bagging scarcely any of the more successful pictures show an individual peak as the main feature, although there are a few exceptions. Here again it is a case of knowing what not to paint, as well as how to do it.

Having dealt with the actual pictures, I will end up about their frames and glass ; for both are as important for a picture as tar is to a ship. It really seems a pity to keep ' Returning Home ' (E. T. Compton) in such an appalling frame, which certainly ought to be scrapped ; while Miss Florence Anderson has spoilt the effect of half a dozen very pleasing studies of ' Sunrise over the Rottal Hut ' by framing them as twins.

There are also instances of pictures which have not been improved by defective glass, although there should have been no trouble in getting them decently glazed. The cost is negligible, as the difference between best and worst cannot amount to more than about three shillings a square foot. Any careful glazier can select sheet glass

without bubbles; but if some artists think that it gives better tone to their work, they are welcome to use it. However it is not easily obtainable with a true surface, and a wavy one does not help the picture; so those who wish for perfection as to surface and transparency should use $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch polished plate; which is, I understand, the glass adopted by the Tate Gallery.

So far I have only referred to a few artists whose pictures have helped me to illustrate my remarks, and I do not intend to name any more, for reference to all the good work would involve a tedious repetition of a large part of the catalogue. The unnamed artists must be satisfied at being told that the Club will back me up when I say that we fully realize how greatly we are indebted both to those who have lent pictures which they themselves have not painted, and to the showman and all the performers alike for their diverse but characteristic interpretations of what W. P. Ker might have called 'God's idea of a mountain.'

HIMALAYAN CLUB EXHIBITION, 1930.

THE Himalayan Club held its second exhibition on the Simla Fine Arts Exhibition premises from September 18 to 27. The committee of the latter allotted the club considerable wall-space, and the club's Hanging Committee were able to exhibit nearly three-quarters of the pictures and photos sent in by members. Except that there were no 'Shikar' photos and very few from the Eastern Himalaya, the exhibits were representative of the areas and activities in which the club is interested. No air-photos were sent in, and a few obliques of the N.W. frontier would have been welcome. Major-General R. C. Wilson and Mr. H. Rutledge exhibited a few photos of Kashmir and several of their recent expeditions in the Kumaon Himalaya, by the Pindari Glacier route over the main range to Mt. Kailas in W. Tibet, round which are the sources of the Indus, Sutlej, Brahmaputra and Ganges rivers. Some of these photos were produced in slate-grey, a very effective colour for snow scenes with a low sun. Photos sent in by Major G. W. P. Money also dealt with the Kumaon Himalaya, but his route into Tibet lay up the Dhaulī River farther E.

Mr. E. B. Wakefield's photos were taken on a recent journey from Simla and ended, like that of Wilson and Rutledge referred to above, near the Manasarwar Lake in W. Tibet. Wakefield's route was the one originally surveyed by the Ryder-Rawlins party on their return from Lhasa to Simla after the Tibet Mission of 1904-5. Mr. C. P. Skrine's photos consisted of a wonderfully clear panorama of the Hunza Valley in Baltistan, some fine photos of the mountains just S. of Kashgar in Chinese Turkistan, a group explored by himself in 1926, and a few in S.E. Persia. In the last,

cloud-effects make a desolate country look comparatively delectable. Mr. T. H. Somervell's contribution consisted of an excellent oil painting of Nanda Devi in Kumaon, some water-colours of the Kangchenjunga group in Sikkim made on the occasion of an unsuccessful climb in 1922 and a reconnaissance of the Kabru region in 1928, also some curious photos taken between 27,000 and 28,200 ft. from Everest, which must be the highest altitude photos ever taken by a man on foot. These last show various 25,000 ft. peaks seen from above, and a bird's-eye view of the routes of the successive Everest expeditions.

Except for a few photos from Sikkim and Bhutan, Somervell's were the only pictures of the Eastern Himalaya shown. Mr. B. J. Gould's photos were of Kabul and the Kurram, chiefly around the Peiwar Kotal, the pass forced by the 1897 expedition and the scene of the present restlessness on the N.W. frontier.

Ski-ing, a sport still in its infancy in India and apparently confined so far to the Kashmir Valley, was represented by photos of trips above Gulmarg and on the Pir Panjal range by Squadron-leader C. C. Durston and Mr. M. D. N. Wyatt. Mr. D. M. Burn's survey duties in Chitral entailed his reaching altitudes above 21,000 ft., and resulted in some fine photos. Major B. J. Cripps's photos dealt with the lower end of the same (Chitral) valley, above Kila Drosh.

Photos by Major Keith Dawson, Messrs. E. F. Neve and C. H. Donald dealt with Kashmir and the Baspa and Sutlej Valleys, and Mr. G. Carter sent in a very fine series covering Chamba state and Ladakh. Lahul and Zaskar (Baltistan) were dealt with by Capt. D. G. Lowndes and Mr. C. A. Mead.

A series of Himalayan forest photos by Mr. H. M. Glover show the causes and progress of deforestation and erosion, and apart from technical interest contain some excellent views in the Kagan Valley, Hazara.

IN MEMORIAM.

JOHN TRANT BRAMSTON.

(1843-1931.)

IN the Reverend John Trant Bramston, who died on January 12 at his house in St. Cross, near Winchester, we lose one who is remembered with much affection by several generations of climbers, a familiar presence in Zermatt during more than half a century. Born in 1843, he came of an old Essex family; his second name, by which 'for love and for euphony' he was very generally known,