

Date

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ART IN LIVERPOOL.

Important Exhibition at the
Walker Gallery.FINE COLLECTION OF
PICTURES.

The exhibition to be opened by Sir W. Martin Conway to-morrow at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, adds largely to the credit first placed to that city's account one hundred and fifty years ago. In 1774 Liverpool inaugurated the first art exhibition ever held in the provinces. The collection then shown was of a curious character, the exhibits including a "frame with seven gentlemen's and one lady's portrait in miniature," "A figure with an urn," and "A head of the Marquis of Granby in human hair."

As already stated in our columns, one of the objects of this primitive Society was "the assistance of youth in their studies without any expectation of pecuniary advantage," and ever since Liverpool has been a generous patron of the fine and applied arts. We have read of its liberal treatment of the sculptors (among them Flaxman), who sent in designs in 1806 for a monument to Lord Nelson.

The Liverpool Academy, which existed from 1810 until 1867, was the only official body that supported the Pre-Raphaelite Movement, and the city's permanent collection includes "Dante's Dream" by Rossetti, Holman Hunt's "Triumph of the Innocents," and "Lorenzo and Isabella," by Millais, while other fine works of art enrich the Walker Art Gallery, many of them having been purchased from the annual exhibitions held therein. Moreover, that Gallery itself, the handsome St. George's Hall and the magnificent Cathedral on the hill, nobly testify to the munificence of the citizens of Liverpool on behalf of art and artists.

ADMIRABLE PORTRAITS.

The fifty-second Autumn exhibition is one more proof of Liverpool's importance as an art centre. The city's reputation in this respect has enabled the Corporation to bring together as fine a collection of works as we have seen in any annual exhibition of modern art. The United Kingdom is admirably represented, and the Continental Section contains masterly paintings, chiefly by artists of the French School. Careful selection and tasteful hanging add to one's pleasure in passing through the rooms.

Quite a number of the best works have been shown in London, but it is interesting again to see them in a new environment. Some of the pictures even look better in Liverpool than they did at the Royal Academy. This is especially apparent in the case of portraits such as Mr. John S. Sargent's sensitive "Sir Philip Sassoon" (317), Mr. James McBey's charming "Lady Frank" (30), and "H.S.H. the Princess Dilkusha de Rohan" (852), Mr. George Harcourt's excellent "Amaryllis" group (73), Sir John Lavery's vivacious "Pavlova" (85), and "Listening In" (953), by Mr. Philip A. de Laszlo.

The pictures on loan include the late W. Y. MacGregor's massive view of Durham (934), the property of Glasgow Corporation, and "Sir Charles Scott Sherrington" (83) by Mr. Augustus John, which comes from University Club, Liverpool. The Chantrey Trustees send two of their latest purchases, "Apollo and Marsyas" (922), by Mr. Henry Morley, and Mr. Sidney Lee's vigorous representation of the Dolomites (865).

NOTABLE LANCASTRIANS.

There are, of course, a considerable number of portraits of shrewd Liverpool people. Mr. John A. A. Berrie, for example, contributes two, one of the "Lady Mayoress of Liverpool" (49) and another of the "Lord Mayor of Liverpool" (84). Both are solidly painted and evidently good likenesses. Mr. Frank T. Copnall's portrait of "Sir Henry Flemming Hibbert, Chairman of the Lancashire County Council" (863) is also a sound, unassuming rendering of a strong personality. Note should be made of a capital portrait of Dr. A. H. Millar, of Dundee (599), by Mr. Henry W. Kerr, and Mr. Howard Somerville's delightful "Silvia, Daughter of Sir Alfred Booth" (310) is sure to be popular.

But the outstanding portrait of the exhibition is the wonderful "Thomas Hardy" (120) by M. J. E. Blanche, who more significantly than any other artist reveals the mentality of the great novelist. As a contrast we have the same painter's "Misses Savile Clark" (125), which is a work of ineffable charm, and historically entertaining as a study of the coquettish costume of 1892. Other foreign pictures include works by M. A. Guillaume, M. Rochegrosse, Mr. Walter Gay, M. Aman-Jean, Senor Sorolla-y-Bastida, M. Camille Pissarro, and M. Henri Martin.

ATTRACTIVE WORKS.

Were space abundant one would like to refer to many attractive figure and landscape subjects as well as sea pieces. A few of the more striking of these are Miss Anna Airy's "Captured" (23), Mr. Haly Smith's "April" (27), Dr. R. Anning Bell's "Pont Valentré, Cahors" (51), "Daphne" (78), by Mr. Malcolm Gavin, "Harvest" (93), by Mr. W. M. Fraser, "Borth-y-Gest" (94), by Mr. W. Alison Martin, "Chiron and His Pupils" (98), by Mr. G. Spencer Watson, the beautiful "Near Dalry" (337), by Mr. George Houston, the exquisite "On the Dunes" (987), by Mr. Charles Sims, the splendid river scene (855), by Mr. Reginald G. Brundrit, and "On the Trail to Paradise" (569), by Mr. Goddard F. Gale. The water-colour section is distinguished by examples of the art of our best practitioners in this medium, and there are dainty miniatures, clever works in black and white, and admirable sculpture to add to our enjoyment.