

**OLDHAM ART GALLERY.**

912

**A DISCRIMINATING SPRING.**

**EXHIBITION.**

The high level of recent Spring Exhibitions at Oldham is well maintained in that now arranged in the public gallery—whose chief need is, I understand, extension. But if the space be limited it has at least one advantage, in that it compels a more fastidious choice of works to cover its walls.

Taking the oils first: Mr. Charles Ginner's uncompromisingly severe and rigid manner may not be to everyone's taste, yet one cannot but admire the keen definition, which discards all atmospheric effects, and depends on a searching out of details, in which none is greater or less than another. His "Hampstead Roofs" (120) is as matter of fact as its title, but none the less it impresses one. A keen realism is noteworthy in some interiors: Mr. Campbell Taylor's "Old Drawing Room" (126) is very real, but is somehow rather dull and prosaic; happier in its general impression is Mr. F. H. Shepherd's "Bloomsbury Interior" (143), simply because it has a better suggestion of atmosphere; and still more pleasant is Mrs. Elwell's "St. Mary's Close" (153), which is enlivened by a gleam of sunlight.

For intensity of realism the most remarkable picture in the exhibition—as it was at the Royal Academy some few years ago—is Mr. Alan Beeton's "Girl in a Wood" (127), in which every square in the pattern of the girl's frock is made out with pitiless accuracy, yet her face remains the focus of interest, so keenly is it seen, and so sensitively modelled. In this it reminds one of Holbein. It is less easy to reconcile one's self to the colour, which is cold, negative, and almost repellent. Mr. Borlase Smart is a disciple of a great sea painter, Olssen, but he has surpassed his master in the force and freshness with which he has painted the breakers in "Silvery Night" (130).

The charming portrait study by Mr. W. W. Russell, "The Blue Dress" (138), recently acquired through the Chantrey Fund, justifies its choice on a further acquaintance, for it is of the finest quality in drawing and texture. Its colouring is pleasant, if one may perhaps detect in it a slight tendency to over-sweetness, which is more emphasised in another girl's portrait, "Lelia" (205), in which the red belt seems rather an intrusion. Mr. Harry Watson is so wedded to his compositions of cool grey rocks and dark peaty water, varied by the flesh tints of bathers, that it threatens to become a recipe with him; but he still uses it with delightful charm, as in "Freshness of Morning" (141), of which it can be said that it answers its title:

Mr. J. A. Park has been painting at St. Ives, which has afforded him subjects in "The Coal Ketch" (149), "The Wharf" (161), and "Beach Scene" (173), which are full of light and colour. Mr. F. W. Elwell, in addition to a more

which is a well-arranged composition, shows the fruits of a visit to Cahors in two very pleasing landscapes (183, 216). Mr. Owen Bowen is at his best, so far as landscape is concerned, in "The Border Country" (163), which is stronger in design than usual, and has a touch of severity of line that redeems it from the charge of prettiness.

#### A FINE LANDSCAPE.

Perhaps the most distinguished piece of landscape work here is Mr. George Houston's "April, Glenfyne" (170), which makes no attempt at strength, but appeals by its extreme sensitiveness and delicacy. It is perfectly coherent in design and colour, and the severest criticism one can apply to it is that it seems more suited to the medium of water-colour than to that of oil. Mr. de Glehn is quite a brilliant executant, but his two pictures here suggest that his style is derivative; his portrait of his wife (171) reminds one of that virtuoso in paint, Laszlo, whilst a slightly painted little canvas, "The Dogana, Venice" (191), might easily pass for a Sargent.

Miss Norah Neilson-Grey is exceptionally gifted. Her portrait group, "Little Brother" (192), is a very beautiful work of art: the draughtsmanship is easy and assured, the colour scheme, in which yellows preponderate, is delightful, and give the picture uncommon distinction. Miss H. Stuart Weir, who paints flowers, knows how to give them great decorative value, and her "Spring Flowers" (197) would, one imagines, satisfy a botanist as much as it pleases one who loves art for something more than its illustrative powers.

Mr. Oswald Moser's fanciful "Scene from Tales of Richoux" (209) is a most elaborate composition, cleverly designed to fit a circular canvas, finished like a miniature, and flushed but quite coherent in colour. Mr. I. M. Cohen's "June Child" (213) has vitality, perhaps all the more marked because it is slight and allusive in handling, and the grey tones are happily employed.

#### WATER-COLOURS.

In the Water-Colour Room there are many excellent drawings; indeed, it would be difficult to point out any that are unworthy of their place on the walls. Mr. A. Reginald Smith has never done anything better than his landscape, "Cader Idris, North Wales" (64), which is well composed without being too sophisticated in design, strong in its sense of light, and forcible without being forced. There is great charm in Miss Anna Airy's "Summer Pruning" (63), a branch of plums drawn with sensitive delicacy. Mr. William Hoggatt has made a most effective decoration of "Morning" (66), in which a finely designed cloud forms a striking feature, and finely drawn skies are to be noticed in two of his smaller drawings, "On the Curragh" (26) and "Carting Seaweed" (27).

One of the strongest drawings here is Mr. Warwick Reynolds' "Polar Bears" (44), virile in its lines, and showing a thorough appreciation of the nature of the beast. For extreme delicacy Mr. Alfred Wildsmith's "Holy Island Castle" (55) is noteworthy, and Mr. H. M. Harvey's "Winter Sunshine" (97) has remarkable intensity. Mr. Hawksworth's "Rain in the River" (109) is delightful in its easy allusive style, in which the pen is very happily employed, and for brilliance and force there is little to surpass Mr. W. B. E. Ranken's sketchy portrait, "Little John" (113).

Mr. H. Gresty's "Caracalla" (118) is a study of cleanly drawn architecture, and drawings by Mr. G. W. Leach (72), Mr. Behrend (62), Mr. Ince (49), and Mr. A. N. Paterson (48) deserve more notice than the "also ran" which is all for which there is an opportunity.

H. T.