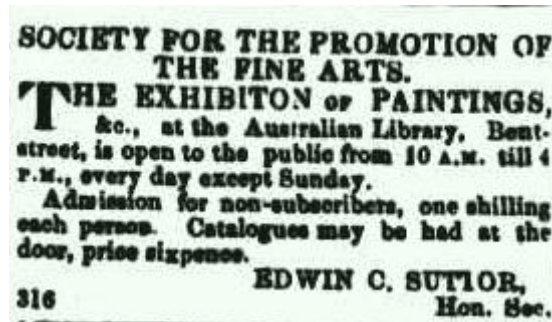


SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE FINE ARTS IN AUSTRALIA.

FIRST EXHIBITION.



(Concluded from Tuesday)

WE come now to a more difficult and invidious part of our labours, to speak of the works of our colonial artists and amateurs - *hoc irritable genus omne*.

We would gladly decline the task, but this would be leaving out the character of Hamlet from the play: for the improvement of our artists is one great object of the Society. Their works in the present exhibition number upwards of 100, but on account of the short notice which was given of the day of opening, very few of these were painted for the occasion. Instead, therefore, of alluding to their works seriatim, we shall give our opinion briefly of the ability and style of the artists, hoping that the examples of excellence which have been shown in the present exhibition may not be lost on our artists' productions in the next.

We shall as usual follow the order in the catalogue, and first on the list stands the name of **Felton**, deceased. His works are—

3. Portrait of a distinguished Member of the Human Society
311. Portrait of the Queen (after Tully).

Both in oils. They are both copies, but exhibit fair specimens of the artist's agreeable manner. Of the first we have already spoken, the second is a very correct and pleasing copy from a print. The likeness is good, and tho colours clear and harmonious. Mr Felton was one of our best portrait painters-as many of his works in the colony will attest.

The next in order is **Mr. J. S. Prout**, now of Hobart Town. The work of this artist exhibited by their proprietors are as follows, viz. :

19. South Head Reef, New South Wales.
40. Tempe, the Seat of A. B. Spark, Esq.
136. Macquarie Fort
137. The Weatherboard Inn on the Bathurst Road Road,
153. Spring Cove, Port Jackson.
154. The Valley of the Weatherboard, Bathurst Road.
160. View in Cornwall.
109. View on the Parramatta River.

- 172. A Winter Scene.
- 181. The Albion Mills on Fire, by Moonlight.
- 187. Cudgee Bay in a Storm. \191. Jamieson's Valley.
- 207. Winter Scene.
- 219. Bush Scene.
- 250. Moonlight.
- 251. Sunset.
- 255. Neutral Bay.
- 256. Quarantine Ground.
- 257. Willoughby Falls.
- 260. Goal Island.
- 3 7. Moonlight Scene.

Three of these, Nos. 19, 40, and 257, are oil paintings, and have been formerly noticed ; the rest are water colour drawings. Of Prout's abilities as a landscape painter in water colours, we have repeatedly spoken with admiration, and we think that his works above enumerated are sufficient to bear us out in the assertion that he is the best landscape painter who has appeared among us. We deem it unnecessary to particularise, or select from his works. They are all of a class. They all partake largely of his peculiar manner. He is an admirable painter of skies and distances-has a great facility in trees, though he sometimes carries this facility to extravagance, and Prout's trees become as well known as his signature. His sketches are correct, free, and full of detail-and he has a practical knowledge of aerial perspective - light and shade and effect, from the contrast and harmony- of colours. He is often less happy in his foregrounds, and we might expect more figures to be introduced to animate his landscapes. His water colours have often the force and effect of oil colours. On the whole he is an artist that does honour to the colony.

The next name in the catalogue is that of Mr. **Conrad Martens**, another colonial landscape painter, and one who still labours at his profession in Sydney. The works in the exhibition which acknowledge him as master are

- 98. View on the Mac Donald River above Wiseman's Ferry.
- 129. Landscape.
- 140. A View at Tahiti.
- 178. View of Rio Janeiro-British Cruisers making sail after a suspect vessel.
- 261. View of Sydney.
- 268. Travelling on the Paterson - the Seat of George Townsend, Esq.
- 273. The Valley of the M'Donald.
- 276. Landscape.
- 277. View of Sydney, from Waverly.
- 281. Landscape.
- 283. Landscape.
- 291. Landscape.

Of these-Nos. 98, 273, 276, and 277, are oil paintings. The rest are water colour drawings. Sir. Martens' mannerism is very perceptible in all his works. His oil paintings are remarkable for the want of that strength and depth of tone-of that power in short which it is the property of oil colours to give. They are pure and clear in colouring and tone, but they look like water colour drawings. His sketches are free, bold, and artistical. In his, water colours there is great purity of colouring ; and he possesses a very good knowledge of composition and effect. No one knows better how to select a scene for a picturesque drawing. His distances and aerial perspective are good, but we do not so much admire his skies ; his trees are too much of repetitions. They want variety. His foregrounds are somewhat deficient in power and detail, though they are often happily arranged. Martens on the whole is a pleasing painter,

and one of our standard artists. Of his oil paintings we prefer Nos. 98 and 273, and of his water colour drawings No. 283. His style in 178 is considerably altered; but we do not like this so well as some of his other works.

The works of **Mr. Fowles** are

- 127. The Wreck of the Edward Loome, off the Middle Head, Harbour of Port Jackson.
- 166. U.M.S. Carysfort.
- 184. Kangaroos.
- 226. The Steamer Sovereign.
- 227. Ditto, another view.
- 235. The Ship Sir George Seymour.
- 236. H. M. Steamer Inflexible.
- 342. Shipping at the Mouth of the Thames.

They are all in oil colours. Mr. Fowles, we believe, is a professed marine painter, and succeeds very well in seizing ' the likeness of the ships. He has improved considerably since we first knew his works ; but he still wants correctness in his drawing in some points. His colouring has on the whole too much greenness for our eyes, and he has not much knowledge of effect ; in fact, if we might presume to say so, we think Mr. Fowles sometimes attempts too much for a young artist. His quiet scenes are much better than his attempts to represent "the hell of waters," howling and hissing in a tempest.

There are four works by **Mr. Griffith**, viz. :

- 132. Portrait of George Suttor, Esq.
- 149. Portrait of a Lady
- 204. Portrait of Mr. Justice Burton.
- 319. Portrait of the late Thomas Moore, Esq., of Liverpool.

Two of these, 132 and 149, are in crayons, and two in oil, 206 and 319, and we need hardly say that we much prefer the former to the latter ; the chalk drawings are really good in drawing and effect; the oil paintings; on the contrary, are deficient in both. "If the likenesses be correct, the paintings remind us of the solitary virtue in the character of Conrad the Corsair. We forbear to say more.

The next on the list is **Mr. Garling**. His works are—

- 135. A Wharf in Darling Harbour.
- 165. The Britomart off Sydney Heads, signalling for a pilot.
- 185. A View of Sydney from the North Shore.

Garling we look upon as one of our best marine painters, though he has still some lessons to learn. He understands the build of a ship well, and he gives us something more than a bare likeness of a ship—he paints a picture—he has some knowledge of breadth of effect, but there is a stiffness in the water, and a want of toning in his pictures, which he ought to struggle against; and he has some noble examples in the exhibition for educating his eye on these points. His landscapes are not to be compared with his marine views.

The works by **Mr. Rhodius**, are

- 143. A Water Colour Sketch.
- 240. Sketch from Mitchell's Pass-View of Emu Plains.

312. Church of Cologne, on the Rhine.

All water colours, and all in the ancient style. We like Mr. Rhodius's drawing better than his colouring and effect. The architectural style of drawing in the church (312) does not harmonise with, the rough handling of the trees which surround it. Mr. Rhodius is a professed painter of heads, and his outline sketches, such as the head of Leichhardt, are excellent. How is it that he has exhibited nothing but landscapes?

The works in the catalogue which claim the paternity of **Mr. O. AV. Brierly**, are

154. Sea-piece - A Sketch.

177. The Shamrock on her Passage to Port Phillip, speaking the packet-ship St. George.

282. Amateur Whaling, or a Tail of the Pacific.

292. The Yacht Wanderer, R.Y.S., running between the Cape of Good Hope and the Bellows and Anvil Rocks, in the gale of the 14th April 1842.

Mr. Brierly should disown the first mentioned one, 145 ; the remaining three are sufficient for his fame. He is undoubtedly at the head of our colonial marine painters. He has an elegant and graceful as well as effective and powerful pencil. For elegance and lightness of sketching, let our artists and amateurs look at No. 177; and for the union of grace with sublimity - "love Avatching madness," - let them study No. 292, which we prefer to any water colour painting in the Exhibition. Mr. Brierly's ships are studies, and he has a wonderful art of giving fluidity of motion to his seas.

The next in order are the works of **Mr. Peacock**, consisting of

161. Government House, Sydney, from the Botanic Gardens.

167. Government House.

180. View of Sydney.

182. View in the Harbour of Port Jackson.

228. View in Port Jackson.

287. Landscape

306. View of Sydney

307. View of the North Head, Port Jackson.

They are all oil paintings, and all appear to be members of the same family. Mr. Peacock's drawings are praiseworthy for their correctness and attention to details ; but we cannot discover to what school his system of colouring belongs. Mr. Peacock must look at nature through warm-coloured spectacles. His pictures have not the force nor the transparency which we expect to find in oil colours. To satisfy himself of the singularity of his style of Colouring, we would advise him to place one of his pictures beside one of the good paintings of the Dutch school. The contrast will teach him a lesson which may be turned to advantage in his future works. The Italian Landscape by Wilson would be an admirable subject for him to copy from.

Mr. Winstanley's name is attached to two pictures.

170. Race Horses. -A water-colour drawing; and

288. A Hunting Scene - in oil colours.

The former is neatly coloured, and drawn with some spirit, in the style of the coloured engravings of similar subjects in England. The latter betrays much more genius, and if we be correct in stating that it is painted by Winstanley, we can only advise him to stick to colours in future.

The next name on the catalogue is that of **Mr. AV. Nicolas**, portrait painter. His works are -

- 171. Portrait of a Lady,
- 179. Portrait of a Lady.
- 186. Portrait of Lieut. Piggott, of the Mounted Police, 99th Regiment.
- 195. A Study from Nature.
- 197. The Morning Walk.
- 203. Portrait of Miss Fairbrother, as Abdallah, in the Forty Thieves,
- 252. A Study from Nature.

No. 186 is a beautiful pencil drawing; the rest are water colour drawings. Mr. Nicolas has been practising his profession for a good many years in Sydney, without making much noise about it. He is one of those quiet unobtrusive men of genius who work their way into notice and distinction without any assistance from the newspapers. His fame is now established in Sydney as the best portrait painter in water colours in the colony, and the consequence is that there are more heads offered to him for decapitation than he is able to take off. He possesses a thorough knowledge of the theory and practice of his art. He accordingly does not confine himself to heads with unmeaning backgrounds. He endeavours to make his backgrounds harmonise with his figures, and is generally successful in the snatches of scenery which he occasionally throws in.

His works are remarkable for correctness in drawing, and with occasional exceptions, freedom in action and position, for their clearness of tone, and high finish. Instead of laying on his tints in washes, he adopts the stipling style of colouring even when painting on cardboard, which is his usual practice. We cannot say that he is always correct in his likenesses ; but this is a weakness to which most portrait painters must plead guilty. We don't think he has made a very judicious selection in the works exhibited; at least we have seen many of his works which we prefer to any in the pre-sent exhibition. 179, 186, and 252 are our favourites. Probably before the next exhibition, Mr. Nicolas will be known as a painter in oil colours.

175. Flowers and Fruit - **Mr. Jacob Jansen**.- This is a creditable performance for a colonial artist ; the composition is good, but the colouring is raw and inharmonious. Mr. Jansen may take a valuable lesson from several of the fruit pieces exhibited, some of which are so natural that birds might be excused for pecking at them.

176. Mounted Policeman- **D'Arcy**.-Rather a clever sketch ; the mounted policeman's horse is too much of a Rosinante for active service, but there is character about the picture which we like. The colouring might have been better.

188. Sydney Aborigines--Tomarra, the Chief ; and Kaaroo, alias Old Gooseberry, widow of Bungaree - **G. F. Angas**.-Characteristic sketches in the agreeable manner of Mr. Angas, who is better known in England than in the colony.

Mr **W. Davis** is the painter of three oil paintings in the exhibition, viz ;

- 189. Scene from Byron's Ginour, after B. Vernel
- 289. Portrait of a Gentleman.
- 344. The Grecian Sisters.

No. 289 is a fair likeness, but a poor painting. The subjects of the other two, we fear, are rather beyond the artist's abilities. Many young artists retard their progress by attempting too much. If Mr. Davis will condescend to study some of the fine works exhibited on the present

occasion, we shall not be surprised to find a great improvement in his style at the next exhibition. Portrait painting seems to be his forte, though he has much to learn in it still.

16. Portrait of Sir James Dowling, late Chief Justice - **Dennis**.—An excellent painting, and good likeness. Mr. Dennis, we believe, is an eccentric genius. What profession he is now following we know not; but this we know, that he is the best painter in oil colours among us; and if he were to practise his profession in Sydney, we have no doubt that he would receive ample support.

279. Portrait of Mr. Councillor Iredale - **Backler** -And as far as features and expression are concerned, a correct representation of the worthy gentleman. The painting itself is poor enough, and we would offer to Mr. Backler the same advice as we tendered to Mr. Davis to study good paintings, if he wishes to excel as a painter of good portraits.

330. Rocky Scenery- **Ellis**.-A fair performance ; his style of colouring is of a different school from Mr. Peacock's, but we would respectfully refer him to the same models for improvement.

By a letter from Mr. H. A. Melville, published in our paper of Saturday, we are glad to be able to include him in the list of our colonial artists. He will rank high in the list.

From our ignorance of the exact line of demarcation between artists and amateurs, we may be wrong in our classification of the amateurs which follows. Some of them, we believe, sell their productions; but whether this be sufficient to constitute them artists, we are not aware.

Mr. S. Elyard exhibits four drawings by him-self. They ere as follows

1. View of Miller's Point, Sydney.
157. Elgin in Scotland.
173. Sketch of Darling Hatbour.
269. Pencil Drawing.

We like Mr. Elyard's pencil drawings better than his sepia or China ink sketches.'259 is an elaborate and minute copy after Turner, but we have seen better pencil drawings by him than this. His drawings exhibit great patience, and minuteness, and delicacy of touch, but they are deficient in power and effect. He possesses one good quality for an artist, viz.-a devoted love for the art.

Miss Bray's drawings are four in number, viz.

138. A Pen and Ink Drawing;
139. Ditto ditto.
210. Spaniels.
349. Head.

Miss Bray shows a decided taste for drawing, but a few lessons under a good master, or a careful study of some of the pictures exhibited, would enable her to produce more striking effects, with half the amount of labour which she now bestows on her drawings.

The drawings by **Mr. J. Rae** are as follows, viz.:

144. View of the Domain Gate.
206. Macquarie-street, Sydney.

208 Sunset.
234. landscape.
253. The Porteus Mob-The Heart of Midlothian.

They are all in water colours. The first two are sketches from nature. The next two are after Prout, and the last is from a print. Mr. Rae has studied under a good master, and may now take lessons from nature-the best teacher after all, we would advise him and all our amateurs and artists to spend some hours in the exhibition room, and drink deeply of the beauties of art which are there exposed to public view.

Miss Lucy Havens exhibits five drawings, viz. :

249. Hawker and Hawks.
353. Dead Game,
354. Ditto.
355. Pen and Ink Sketch- Rubens
356, Ditto, of Henry, Prince of Wales.

Our remarks on Miss Bray's drawings will apply to Miss Haven's productions. Another piece of advice that we would give these young ladies and all who are equally far advanced in the art of drawing is not to content themselves with copying from copies, but to go to the fountain head and copy from nature.

270. Head of Christ in pencil -**Miss Jones**. An excellent chalk drawing-good in all respects-drawing, toning, and effect.

315. A Frigate at Anchor in Plymouth Sound - **S. Prout Hill**. - Not by any means a favourable specimen of Mr. Hill's abilities as a marine painter. We have seen many of his sketches far superior to this. We would advise Mr. Hill and our other ship painters to study the works of Brierly- for " to study nature is to study them."

Mr. **C. Delohery's** paintings are two in number, viz. :

346. Portrait of Cornelius Prout, Esq.
347. Portrait of a Young Lady.

Fair productions for an amateur, but timid and ineffective. We shall hope for something better from Mr. Delohery, and all our amateurs, at our second exhibition of paintings.

337. The Laughing Girl -an enamel- **Bene**. We cannot speak in too high terms of this beautiful production. It is an excellent copy from one of Sir Joshua Reynolds's most admired works. The reflection of the light is cleverly managed; and the work is faultless in all respects.

There are two engravings in the catalogue. 4. The Last Supper- **R Morgen**.

298. The Waterloo Heroes- **Glover**.

They are both fine engravings, particularly the former ; but as engravings do not form part of the present exhibition, we shall reserve our remarks on them till another opportunity.

360. The Last Supper- From an Engraving by Morgen.-This is an iron cast from No. 4 ; cleverly executed, and well polished with black lead, reminding us of an ornamental portion of a register stove.

The rest of the exhibition consists of statuary and plaster casts, and wax models.

Mr. Abraham's works are as follow :

- 361. Bust of Leichhardt.
- 363. The Graces-after Canova-a Cast.
- 364. Child's Head-a Cast.
- 365. Bust of George Suttor, Esq.
- 367. Bailey's Eve (?) at the Fountain-a Cast
- 368. Bust of the Queen-a Cast.
- 369. The Virgin-a Cast.
- 372. Bust of Sir George Gipps.

We have spoken of Mr. Abraham's abilities on former occasions. His busts are free and natural, the likenesses in general good, and the drapery well disposed. His casts are well executed, but do not require so much artistical skill.

362. The Gladiators-From the Antique, in alabaster. - An admirable little group ; the chiselling, arrangement, and action good.

366. Canova's Bacchus and Ariadne-a Cast. -Beautiful in design and composition, and executed with the wonted grace of the sculptor.

370. The Laocoon-A. cast from the antique ; a miniature, but excellent copy from the glorious original.

371. The Infant Samuel-o Statue in marble, -Prayer personified ; an admirable embodying of Montgomery's lines.

"Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try :
Prayer, the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.
Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear :
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none hut God is near".

The reverential expression of the child's features, attitude, and modelling of the figure, are all excellent. It seems to breathe an atmosphere of purity around it. We gaze on the kneeling form of the beautiful child and almost fancy we hear the lisping of his tongue in prayer.

373. Cupid and Psyche-a cast from the antique.-A poetical fiction, most gracefully told: the most elegant group of the exhibition,-a design of a higher order than the Samuel, and very superior both in design and execution to Canova's group, 366. The ancients are worthy of all their honours, which.

"With increase of ages grow,
As streams roll down enlarging as they flow."

371. Cupids fighting for a Heart .-A pretty conceit, prettily designed and executed.
 375. Ruins of the Temple at Poestum.- An elegant little model, betraying considerable minuteness and neatness of handling.
 376. Steeping Child, in marble.-A beautiful statuette, gracefully designed and executed.
 377. Wax Models-**Mrs. Walker**.- Neat, and in some instances successful in the likeness, though in the majority of the heads exhibited, the resemblance is not by any means striking.
 278. Medallions from Rome, showing the succèssion of the Popes,
 379. Medallions, Works of Art at Home.
 380. Medallions, Landscape.

A large, curious, and beautiful collection.

We have now completed our running commentary on the catalogue, winch notwithstanding our attempt at brevity, has extended beyond our prescribed limits. That we have been correct in our judgment of the works of art in all cases, can hardly be expected ; but we have at least endeavoured to speak without prejudice, to forget the names of the proprietors and artists, and think only of the works of art. We should be sorry to feel we had made a single remark that would give offence to anyone. But should any artist or proprietor of a painting imagine that we have treated him with injustice, let him console himself with the reflection that

"Tis hard to say if greater want of skill,
 Appear in "painting," or in judging ill;
 Some few in that, but numbers err in this,
 Ten censure wrong, for one who paints amiss".

If we have done nothing more, however, we have at least disseminated a catalogue of the works exhibited among thousands who could not otherwise have seen it, and have thus given to the colonists and our friends in the mother country, some idea, however imperfect, of the character and extent of the first exhibition of paintings in New South Wales.

May it be followed by a long series of exhibitions equally creditable to the colony. May our artists strive to emulate each other in the improvement of their works before the next exhibition ; and may the time soon come when the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in Australia, may be in possession of a building to be devoted exclusively to the improvement of artists, and the furtherance of art in the colony.