

## THE WEIR-TWACHTMAN PAINTINGS.

Fourscore paintings and pastels, and not a single stupid one! That is an event in the brief annals of American art which is not without its lesson for those artists who are wanting in courage and those amateurs who hold aloof from native painting. Two young New-York artists have the assurance to expose a gallery full of works for a week, and offer them at auction to the highest bidder. Both have had European training, with all the good things and the drawbacks which that training implies, and each exhibits an individual view of American landscape while using a technique learned in the two foremost schools of Europe. The question is, Will the picture-buyers see enough merit in these paintings and pastels to bid for them and demonstrate that American workmen are supported by Americans?

Mr. J. Alden Weir is a graduate of the Ecole des Beaux Arts, and has been prominent for many years in the Society of American Artists. Mr. John H. Twachtman is a member of the same society, but his training is more of the Bavarian than the French sort. Both have had time to free themselves from any mannerism they may have contracted from their foreign teachers and struck out for themselves. The pictures they now show are a surprise to their friends in the solid qualities of painting they exhibit and the variety in ways of handling paint.

Mr. Twachtman is a landscapist pure and simple; Mr. Weir is also a portrait and game painter. The former handles pastels better than Mr. Weir; his "Venice" might be from the easel of Whistler, and his "Abandoned Mill" is thoroughly charming. He has the light touch which comes with difficulty to Mr. Weir, and is so necessary in this delicate, yet crisp medium. The water color by Weir, "Flowers in a Black Japanese Jar," show that he can handle washes when the crumbling chalks are too much for him. Yet he offers nothing in pastels that lacks some merit, "Early Spring" and "A Bit of Sunshine" being particularly good.

That sportive, joyous touch which Mr. Twachtman shows in pastels is even more apparent in some of his oils, which have the bright transparency of watercolors or the clear, vivid, dry notes of the chalks, much, it would seem, as it strikes his fancy. He paints snow as hardly any other artist one could name—lightly, flakily, with a feeling for its moist, shrouding, enveloping effect. Sometimes it is a village plunged in the soft, white robe; then some docks, ("Snow Bound") with a bark laid up at a pier, the hull, the string-pieces, and timbers of the dock showing warm between the masses of white. Atmosphere full of damp and not a little city smoke appear in such a scene. The touch of an etcher appears in "The Old Toll House at Bridgeport," with its poles and piles driven into the gray water, its barges and boat bridge floating between. "November" has a look of the season quite its own; "The Mill in the Woods" is painted in the grays that Frenchmen love, broadly yet lightly, with poetic appreciation of the desolation of the place. "Silver Poplars" is a dainty bit; the groys in "Wayside Inn" are subtly adjusted. Joyous greens of the springtide run riot in the delicate sketch "In the Woods," and seem bent on proving that all which is claimed for water colors can be attained by oils. Some of these have the apparent spontaneity and that look of having been enjoyed when created, which sketches often have; others are solid pieces of work to which no little time and labor have gone, but all have that individuality which marked Mr. Twachtman's exhibits heretofore.

Mr. Weir offers pictures to a wider round of amateurs. Here is an early study from Spain, "At the Fountain, Grenada," in which the woman and child are well posed and drawn. A quick sketch, "The Lawn" has fixed certain tones, like the heavy red of the lawn chair, the paler red of the footstool, the yellow of the cushion on the grass, without finishing sharply the seated woman and the child in the distance. "Ideal Head" is the robustly-painted lady with two violets in her severe gray gown, shown at the Society exhibition, and "The Miniature" is a lady gazing at the likeness of some friend, the figure painted with extreme thinness of pigment, just the contrary to "Ideal Head." That beautiful hillside shown at the Union League Club, called "Lengthening Shadows," is among the best of Mr. Weir's landscapes. In "The Moon Obscured" clouds of a smoky hue have swept aside on the left above a well-drawn road full of ruts. "The Land of Nod" is the quaint Biblical title of a place near Branchville, Conn., from which he has taken a landscape full of good composition and feeling for elevations and depressions in a rolling country. But Mr. Weir offers also a number of bits of still-life which are not the least successful among his paintings. "A Bit of Blue" recalls the old Dutch painters of inanimate objects, so fine are the reflections in the coffee pot of thin brass, so "old-time" are the pale pink roses on the table. "Dutch Greybeard Jug" is another little masterpiece, but the best in this line is unquestionably "Flowers," not only for the pale yellow chrysanthemums, but for the faience bowl in which they lie. Finally it will not do to forget a romantic head by Mr. Weir called "Orlana," which is extremely effective with its pale complexion, large sombre eyes, and abundant hair.

A distinct flavor of high art will be found in all the 84 pictures at the Fifth-Avenue Art Galleries. There are few which would not hold their own on the walls of the most fastidious lover of painting.