

LONDON ART SALES

Notable Pictures Disposed Of in the Past Season—Decline of Mid-Victorian Artists and Rise in Favor of Eighteenth Century Painters—Large Profits of Shrewd Buyers.



PORTRAIT OF MISS NELLY O'BRIEN, THE IRISH ACTRESS. BY J. REYNOLDS, P.R.A. PRICE \$13,125



PORTRAIT OF A LADY, ONE OF A PAIR BY NICOLAS ELIAS THAT SOLD FOR \$16,275



THE VIRGIN, SANDRO BOTTICELLI. PRICE \$26,250



PORTRAIT OF A GENTLEMAN, ONE OF A PAIR BY NICOLAS ELIAS THAT SOLD FOR \$16,275



PORTRAIT OF MRS. DOROTHEA MORLEY. G. ROMNEY. PRICE \$13,125



THE STANHOPE CHILDREN. G. ROMNEY. PRICE \$24,150



PORTRAIT OF VISCONTRESS TRACY. T. GAINSBOROUGH, R.A. PRICE \$31,500



PORTRAIT OF MRS. ROBERTSON. SIR H. RAEBURN, R.A. PRICE \$5,562

PORTRAIT OF LADY WALDEGRAVE. J. HOPPNER, R.A. PRICE \$31,500



PORTRAIT OF MISS EMILY CHARLOTTE OLLIVIER. SIR T. LAWRENCE, P.R.A. PRICE \$3,750

PORTRAIT OF MRS. MINGAY. G. ROMNEY. PRICE \$32,550

LONDON, Aug. 8.—The art sales of the season which has just concluded have been instructive rather than sensational. If there have been fewer huge prices than last year it is because fewer objects of special rarity have come into the market. The number of people able and willing to pay great sums for works of art is certainly not less, and probably the kinds of things for which they are willing to pay largely are now somewhat more numerous.

If the works of certain artists lose rank in the market others take their places; and though it is evidently to the interest of dealers to bring this about, it must also be said that such changes as have taken place indicate a better discrimination. Taste plays a more important part in the determination of market values.

An instance of this is the decline of mid-Victorian art, one which has been operative for some time, but has lately been more strongly marked than ever before. Half a century ago people liked pictures illustrating some story, executed primarily with that object. Many specimens were in the collection of Sir Frederick Mappin sold at Christie's on May 5.

That was the Saturday before the Royal Academy opened, and no date could be more favorable; yet the well known picture of "Peppys' Introduction to Nell Gwynne," by Augustus Egg, R. A., which brought \$6,300 on its first appearance in a saleroom now realized only \$787.

"Raising the Maypole," by F. Goodall, R. A., sold in 1864 for \$4,225, in 1873 for \$7,150, in 1891 for \$2,885, and now for \$2,100. "Edward II. and His Favorite, Piers Gaveston," by Marcus Stone, R. A., fell from \$2,520 in 1865 to \$1,077, and many similar instances could be quoted.

When these Victorian story pictures were bringing good prices the market took little note of most of the eighteenth century British portrait painters, whose work is now in such great demand. Pictures by such men as Raeburn, Romney and Hoppner could be bought very cheaply. This was strikingly illustrated at the sale of the

late Thomas Hoade Woods, an ex-partner in the firm of Christie's, who died recently, leaving an estate of \$2,500,000.

In 1872 Mr. Woods purchased "The Stanhope Children," a rather poor Romney, for \$147. At his sale on May 26 last it brought \$24,150. In 1881 he paid \$121 for Hoppner's small portrait of Lady Waldegrave, which this year brought \$31,500. Lawrence's portrait of Miss Emily Ollivier, bought in 1886 for \$1,024, now produced \$15,750, an auction record for this artist's work.

Another shrewd buyer was the late E. M. Denny, an Irishman who sold the bacon of his native land and amassed much wealth thereby. He was so fond of pictures that he had a magnificent Adam mantelpiece removed from his London house to make room for them.

As recently as 1885 he bought Gainsborough's "Viscountess Tracy" for \$7,500. At his sale last March it brought \$31,500, and his Reynolds portrait of the charming Irish actress, Nellie O'Brien, bought in 1864 for \$3,517, produced \$13,125.

It is unlikely that works of this kind, not by any means of the first rank, will maintain their present prices, but they may easily go still higher before the fall comes. A factor making for increase is the growing

appreciation in the British Colonies. This is more recent than the American demand. On the other hand a factor making for an ultimate heavy decrease is that as the standard of public taste improves still further, more and more people will realize that the first rate work of numerous modern artists is far better than the third rate work of old ones; and with this encouragement, moreover, the standard of contemporary work will rise.

With regard to the present state of things at the time of reporting on last season's sales, and on earlier occasions, it was pointed out that the famous British masters of the eighteenth century had excellent contemporaries, whose best works were well worth buying, either as an investment or for their own sake.

Gradually, as was expected, they emerge from a comparative and undeserved obscurity, one of the latest arrivals being John Downman, A. R. A., who was born in 1750 and studied under Benjamin West. In 1885 a typical specimen of his dainty tinted drawings, a "Portrait of a Lady," brought \$25 at Sotheby's. Last season his best price was \$1,365. This year three drawings have averaged \$1,500 and one has reached \$4,306, a record price.

The work of Patrick Nasmyth, born 1787, still shows an upward tendency, and a later Scottish artist whose work has come into demand this year is Sam Bough. His "Loch Achray" sold for \$5,145 the other day. Among modern foreign artists Fantin Latour's pictures continue their advance. His best price in London sales-

rooms is now \$2,780 for "The Idyll," a canvas that would have brought about \$250 a few years ago.

Noteworthy work having made a first appearance in British auction rooms this year was catalogued as that of Nicholas Elias among old masters and as that of Benezuc Gryla among moderns. Both were puzzles to the sale chroniclers, and the latter still remains so.

He is, however, quite a well known Hungarian artist, born in that country in 1844. Gryla is the Hungarian for Julius, and his family name should be written Benezuc. He entered Piloty's studio in Munich in 1865, and in 1880 became a professor at the Munich Academy, and afterward was director of the Budapest Academy. In Munich he married a daughter of Gabriel Max.

The large picture of his which appeared in the Mappin sale at Christie's, and realized \$2,750 on its merits, "The Assault on the Tulleries," was dated 1872. At that time he was painting several scenes from French history for Wagner's patron, the mad King Ludwig of Bavaria. Numerous genre pictures stand also to his credit, and many portraits of the Hungarian aristocracy.

The new old Dutch master is better known as Nicholas Elias Pickercy, the reputed

master of Van der Helst, and born about 1590. Excepting several excellent portraits at the Rijks Museum in Amsterdam, his work is rarely seen. The London examples were at the Denny sale, two fine portraits executed in 1632. Mr. Denny purchased them privately for about \$8,000, and at Christie's they realized \$10,375. In spite of being rather overcleaned they were cheap enough at the price.

The best price for any old master was \$26,250 for a reputed Botticelli in Lord Grimthorpe's sale, a charming picture even if painted by somebody else. Ten years ago it belonged to a noble family living at Arezzo. The head of the house sent it to Milan as security for a loan, and there it was seen by an expert who bought it and sent it to England.

Most of Lord Grimthorpe's pictures seemed to have very little history. They included an admirable Mieris, "The Declaration," measuring 11 inches by 8½, and formerly in the Van Loon collection. This brought \$4,620, and a pair of Holbein portraits yielded \$15,750.

His objects of art included a French fourteenth century stone statue of the Virgin and Child, life size, which sold for \$5,750, with there by Mino di Fiesole, fifteenth century, \$2,730. The total for his art treasures was \$162,820.

The total number of works sold this season for 5,000 guineas (\$36,250) and upward is five, the same as last year; but the number of works exceeding \$5,350 is

only 27, as compared with 43 last season; 37 in 1904, and 58 in 1903.

Five Romney portraits made an aggregate of \$88,885, and eight by Raeburn made \$99,000. With the latter should be compared the forty-nine Raeburn portraits sold in 1877 for only \$30,000.

Romney's best price was \$32,550 for the portrait of Mrs. Mingay, and Raeburn's, \$30,450 for a portrait group of John Johnstone of Ailoch, and his sister and niece.

The season's best price for a picture of any kind was \$23,900 for Turner's "Rape of Europa," a very fine example of his later style. It was described as the property of a gentleman, who was, however, Walter R. Cassels, and it was at Christie's that he originally purchased this picture. That was in 1871, and the price he then paid was only \$1,850.

The sales which attracted most public attention were those of Sir Henry Irving and G. H. Woods. Besides illustrating abroad by the day of the Woods picture sale produced a total of close upon \$200,000, surpassed this season only by the recent jewel sale, which yielded a day's total of \$350,740, and a top price of \$50,000 for a pearl necklace.

The Irving sale; a sentimental record; was described so fully in THE SUN at the time that it is now only necessary to recall the Whistler portrait of Irving as Philip II. of Spain, which sold for \$23,300 and now belongs to George C. Thomas of Philadelphia, and the Sargent portrait of Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth, withdrawn from the sale at the price of \$6,300 and subsequently presented to the National Gallery of British Art by Mr. Duveen.

Minutaires that brought high prices were Nicholas Hilliard's portraits of himself and his father, which each realized \$7,775. The Rembrandt etching of "The Three Trees" has advanced to \$1,925, and some of Whistler's etchings are still going up.

The sales of the late Edwin Truman's collections showed large profits on engravings, one mezzotint which he had bought for \$2 selling for \$2,350.

In the way of porcelain \$11,500 was paid for a pair of old Chinese mandarin vases and covers of the Kien-Lung period; but a newer feature, showing the growing popularity of old English porcelain, is \$12,875 for a set of seven old Worcester vases. This is more than double the value realized by any old Worcester within recent years.

Coming to silver, J. Wells of New York paid \$14,500 for a pair of Elizabethan tazze; little shallow bowls, which formerly were part of the corporation plate of Boston, Lincolnshire; and a small salt cellar of the same period realized \$4,260.

A set of eight Chippendale chairs produced \$9,515, and for some old Beauvais tapestry, the property of the Count de Premla Real, offers went up to \$22,000, but were seemingly unsatisfactory to the owner. It is understood that only one lot changed hands, a single panel representing the crowned achievements of Louis XIV. for which Seligmann paid \$9,975.

The season was further remarkable for a few sales possessing considerable interest for specialists, but the foregoing probably sums up such features as may appeal to a wider public.

SAMOA'S GREAT VOLCANO.

THE ERUPTIONS ON SAVAII GROWING MORE VIOLENT.

Sea Heated to the Boiling Point by the Tremendous Lava Flow on a Distant Island of the Pacific—The Spectacle Described as Terrifying as Well as Magnificent.

At last accounts the new volcano on the island of Savaii, the largest of the Samoan group, was in more violent eruption than ever. The volcano was just a year old on August 8.

It came after a series of about fifty earthquakes, some of them very violent. A photograph of the volcano taken only a few weeks after it first came into view shows an enormous mass of volcanic matter heaped around the crater. This mass was lifted from the subterranean depths by the eruptive forces to a height of at least six or seven miles and scattered in the first two or three weeks around the chimneylike vent through which it had passed.

It is not known from what depths under the earth's surface volcanic matter may be brought, but the volcanic islands of Samoa rise from sea depths of from 25,000 to 28,000 feet, and the millions of tons of outpourings in the volcano of Savaii were carried up through the throat that opened from subterranean regions to the surface of this island mass.

This is the second volcano that has come to light on this island within three years. All the islands of the group, excepting the coral islets around them, are of volcanic origin, but there is no evidence that volcanic disturbances have occurred on any of them, excepting Savaii, for thousands of years. The new volcano is in the interior of the island, about seven miles from Maunafu,

the volcano that was found in September, 1902. In all phases of these outbursts the recent eruption has been far more severe than its predecessor.

The spectacle at times has been magnificent as well as terrifying, and though Apia, the capital of German Samoa, is about 60 miles away, the inhabitants, from the heights above the town, have at times been able to discern the black outpourings that covered as with a pall the skies above Savaii, and more frequently they have seen at night the glow in the sky reflected from the molten lava that has been flowing in main and branch streams to or toward the northern coast.

On the island itself and to vessels out at sea the scene during the most violent eruptions has been of almost overpowering grandeur. If the calamity had occurred on a populous Upolu, with its many hamlets and its rich cacao and cocoa palm plantations, the loss of life and property would have aroused the sympathy of the world. Upolu is the Garden of Eden in the colonial domain of Germany, but Savaii is still among the wilds of Polynesia. A number of important islands in the vast waste of waters are still partly unexplored, and Savaii is one of them.

A very few white traders and planters live on the coast of a little island. The Samoan population is scattered among a few hamlets.

The lava flows between August, 1905, and March last made straight for some of these settlements and wiped them out, but damage was not great, for these primitive habitations are easily replaced. The flows from the volcano to the north coast were still moving in March, and at all times they have been so regular in their progress that the hour when they would reach a threatened hamlet could be computed closely, and so all had ample time to escape. There has been no loss of life, and the chief sufferers have been a few whites, who have seen

the plantations which they had developed in ten years hard toil swept away in an hour.

We have heard of the heart breaking labor it takes to clear away the jungle of a tropical forest. It is child's play, however,



LAVA STREAM FALLING INTO THE PACIFIC FROM A HIGH CLIFF.

for red hot lava, and the mightiest trees of the forest melt away as the stream enfolds them like tow in the flame.

White men who have seen the spectacle of the last few months say that the grandest sight of all has been the dropping of several of the lava streams into the sea. Some of them have fallen over steep cliffs 100 feet high into the ocean with a mighty splashing of the water and a deafening hiss as clouds of steam arise. The water penetrates through many crevasses to the heart of the molten mass, giving rise to the continual detonation of explosions which blow fragments of the lava high into the air.

The color of the steam is constantly changing from white to black or yellow or a mixture of all three according to the sulphurous or other mineral ingredients that are mingled with it. The photograph reproduced here shows three men on a shore cliff watching this remarkable spectacle from a distance of about half a mile. The surrounding waters are raised to boiling heat, hundreds of thousands of fish have been killed and the little coral animal has been destroyed for a long stretch along the shore. In places the advancing lava has pushed through the coral reefs and broken them down.

One of the observers says that the scene by night is far more imposing than by day. For hundreds of feet the lava mass rises above the water and looks like a red mass of iron out of which jets of white flame are constantly emerging.

One of the lava streams in February made an average advance of 404 feet a day and was twenty days in reaching the northeast cape of the island. Another stream flowed 1,200 feet in six days and was steadily advancing the coast at the latest advices.

The Samoan Zeitung reported that at

the beginning of March there was more lava in motion than at any previous time and it seemed as though there would be no end to the eruption. The volcanic activity, which began just a year ago, gradually subsided and it was thought in November that the phenomena were practically at an end, for a time at least.

In December, however, the eruptions began again with redoubled fury, and there is no telling when peace and quiet will again bless the lonely island. Savaii is off the usual ocean routes and communication with it is rare and regular not frequent, and so it happens that news only occasionally reaches us from the land that is now the victim of such troublous times.

Two photographs which one explorer took have a rather pathetic interest. One of them shows the neat little cottage that an English planter had built, and he and his family and assistants are grouped at the side of the house, which makes a pretty impression, with its wide veranda and the cluster of, cocoanut palms that almost overhang the roof.

The other picture shows the cooled lava that rises almost to the top of the windows in the concrete walls of the house. Just a little of the ruin appears above the surface of the lava.

It is a melancholy monument to the blighted hopes and the lost labor of an isolated family that had left the fatherland in the hope to better its fortunes on a lonely Pacific island.

Many Officers in This Post.

From the Minneapolis Journal.
Ransom Post, No. 31, of St. Louis, Mo., one of the famous Western posts of the Grand Army, has arrived in Minneapolis on a special train over the Burlington road. In all there are sixty comrades in the detachment from Ransom Post, and they are quartered at the Nicollet.

The boys of Ransom Post say there may be other posts with more notable in their ranks, but they "are from Missouri" and it will be necessary to show them. Of the six hundred, 402 of whom still remain, two were Lieutenant-Generals, five Major-Generals, eighteen Colonels, sixty-two staff officers, fifty-nine were or are of the Regular Army; fifty-seven are from the navy; sixteen have medals of honor, and several have received the thanks of Congress for acts of bravery or for special service.