

E. A. Walton

A SCOTTISH PAINTER: E. A. WALTON, A.R.S.A. BY JAMES L. CAW.

Just twenty years ago the work of a number of young painters began to attract attention in the Glasgow exhibitions by its difference from what was current in Scotland at the time. Although many good and some noble pictures were being produced by Scottish painters, the great majority were concerned with incident and fact for their own sake rather than with their artistic possibilities and the problems involved in their pictorial presentation. Sentimentality was strong in the figure subjects, and, like most of the landscapes, they were deficient in harmonious design and unity. There were notable exceptions, and in many cases a pleasant vein of feeling and a genuine love of nature were evident; but diffuseness, the elaboration of parts without relation to the whole, was in fashion; and, for the most part, the oil medium was used with little sense of style and less feeling for its material beauty. It was in re-action from these that the new movement (for it soon assumed such proportions) originated by these young men had its beginnings; and, to some extent, its manifestations were moulded by a wider horizon than most Scottish painters had enjoyed. All of them were familiar with the pictures of the French and Dutch Romanticists, which were favourites with Scottish collectors, and were often to be seen at the Glasgow Institute; a few had received a Paris training, and others had been impressed by the work of some of the greatest moderns. Yet there is no doubt that the determining factor was the association of the men with one another.

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This close companionship, augmented as it was by study from the life in the studio of one of their number, and by painting in the country together, focussed the movement and gave it special characteristics, without interfering with the individuality of those concerned. Young and enthusiastic, they were iconoclasts, of course, and denied any merit to art not obviously in sympathy with their own. Their ideals were narrow and excluded much that is excellent and desirable, but to them they were the only legitimate aims in painting. Still, if they had the arrogance, they had the earnestness of youth also; and separation from the older school only gave the *coterie* greater cohesion and added to its belief in itself. Working in this spirit and stimulated by friendly emulation, in which there was no envy, their work was almost certain to possess distinctive qualities. Briefly



"ROMANCE"

FROM A WATER-COLOUR BY E. A. WALTON
(In possession of James Smith, Esq.)

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