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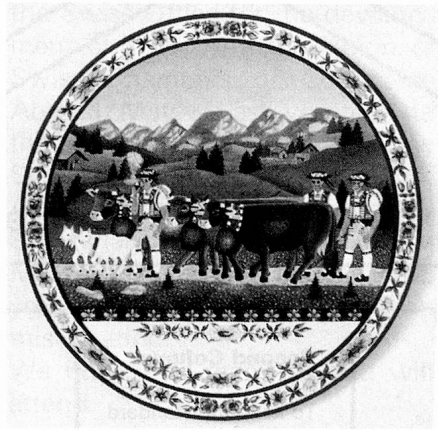
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Peasant Painting

«*Senntum*» Painting (herdsmen's art), a tradition still alive today, but unknown to many.

The so-called «*Senntum*» painting, predominantly panel pictures from the life of the Appenzell and Toggenburg herdsmen-farmers, appeared for the first time towards the middle of the 19th century, and they have managed to succeed right up to the present. The actual origin of «*Senntum*» painting can be found in the second half of the 18th century. At that time, romanticism began to set in, and the educated classes of the population began to find pleasure again in simple rustic life. This change of mood had its influence on popular art in the land of Appenzell and the Toggenburg. Many of the herdsmen who take off with their herds to the lower alpine pastures in early summer and to the higher pastures in summer, who return to the lower pastures again in late summer and go back home at the beginning of autumn, very often move to other stables in winter, together with



Procession to the Alpine pastures in Toggenburg

their herds, so that these can eat the stored hay there, which had been bought earlier.

This wandering in winter from one feeding place to another took place already in the 18th century according to an unwritten ritual. The herdsmen walked in front of the cattle, carrying the beautifully carved milking-pail on his shoulder, and the finest cow following him wore a large bell which made all the other animals walk behind her. Already at that time, the



wealthy herdsmen had three harmonising bells carried by the three most beautiful cows, all three leading the procession. Out of this formation gradually grew the «*Alpfahrt*», the picturesque march up to the alpine pastures, in all its diversity, and which we find later again and again as main subject in «*Senntum*» painting.

The tradition of «*Senntum*» painting has been kept right up to the present, and nothing has changed, not even in the choice of subjects. The renewed success of this type of painting, especially also with young people, is to be found above all in its power of expression and painting technique. Similarly to primitive painting, the observer sees immediately what the artist meant to paint. The love and positively fanatic precision of detail enhance these pictures with a charming romantic radiation. The proverbial dot on the «i» is the «A» and «O» of «*Senntum*» painting.

It is, however, not only the «old» painters who have suddenly come into the centre of interest; on the contrary, it is the «new» representatives of this type of art who are still alive, amongst them also S. Kuratli from 9650 Nesslau in the Toggenburg.

Winter landscape in Appenzell

