

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC NEWS.

VOL. V. No. 140.—May 10, 1861.

PHOTOGRAPHY, AND THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF 1862.

THE photographic community at large were somewhat startled when, some weeks ago, the first rough draft of the classification proposed for adoption in connection with the coming International Exhibition was published, in which photography was placed under the head "machinery," and in the, doubtless highly respectable, company of "ship's tackle," "agricultural implements," &c. Our own first impression of the matter was that it was purely an inadvertency or oversight. It appeared too rich a joke to suppose that the pictures of such men as Bedford and Mudd, Wilson and Fenton, Lyte and Heath, Rejlander and Robinson, Williams, Claudet, and Mayall, and a host of others, could seriously be regarded as rightly classified amongst railway plant, machinery, and tools; and the more so, when we remembered that the royal family of this country were amongst the warmest admirers and patrons of our art.

Knowing, however, that the surest way to render permanent the blunder was to enlist the *amour propre* of its perpetrators in its defence, by a public condemnation of it, and perceiving no readier means of calling the attention of the authorities to its rectification, we resolved to write to Her Majesty's Commissioners, pointing out the error, and the evil influence it must have in preventing a fair representation of our art. Accordingly, a little more than a month ago we forwarded a letter, of which the following is a copy:—

"April 11, 1861.

"To Her Majesty's Commissioners for the Exhibition of 1862.

"GENTLEMEN,—Referring to the proposed classification of articles for the International Exhibition next year, will you permit me, as being familiar, from my position, with the views and feelings of the mass of British photographers, amateur and professional, and as, in a non-official sense, representing them, to point out, respectfully, the injustice to them and the art which is involved in placing photography under the classification 'machinery and engineering.'

"It has been the aim, for some time past, of photographers to render their art worthy of consideration amongst the fine arts, and has of late, in portraiture, landscape, and reproductions of paintings, &c., been adjudged by connoisseurs worthy of such consideration. And notwithstanding its importance in connection with engineering, &c., a very large class of the finest photographic productions could not, with propriety, find admission into a class designed for machinery.

"May I respectfully suggest, gentlemen, if the matter be not definitively settled, that photographs be admitted into the department designed for works of Fine Art, and that they may be so classified in any future announcements, as otherwise I fear that many valuable productions of the art will be kept out of the Exhibition.—I am, gentleman, your humble

G. WHARTON SIMPSON,

"Editor of the PHOTOGRAPHIC NEWS."

In due course we received the following reply:—

"INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION. 1862.

"OFFICES, 554, West Strand London, W.O.

"16th April, 1861.

"Sir,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13th inst., which will be laid before Her Majesty's Commissioners in due course.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,

F. R. SANDFORD, Secretary.

"G. W. Simpson, Esq."

What further attention our suggestion received we are not in a position to state; but as we are not at present aware that any other communication was made to the Commissioners, we may fairly assume that it had some influence in the steps which followed, and which we hope may issue in a satisfactory arrangement, in which the claims of photography shall receive proper acknowledgment.

From an announcement made by the secretary of the Photographic Society on Tuesday night, we learn that a communication from the Commissioners had been addressed a few days ago to the Chief Baron, as President of the Society, suggesting that six or eight persons should be appointed to advise with the Commissioners as to the proper steps to be taken in connection with the representation of photography. A meeting of the council was at once called, when it was very properly resolved that no steps should be taken until photography should be placed in a proper position; classification amongst the works of fine art being claimed as its proper place. The Chief Baron, we understand, then wrote a letter of remonstrance to the Commissioners, arguing the case very pointedly, and conveying the resolution of the Council of the Society. So far as our information goes, the matter thus remains; but we cannot but hope that a wrong so palpable and indefensible, only requires to be pointed out, and the remedy firmly claimed, to receive a satisfactory solution.

We are glad to record that the steps of the council of the society were so prompt and consistent with the dignity of art, when once their attention was aroused by the communication of the Commissioners; although we should have been better pleased to have been able to state that they had taken the initiative in a matter so important, and in which they alone could act with that weight and influence the occasion demanded.

We may here remark that the publication of the official list of the classification intended, whilst it removes the idea that any mistake had been committed in the first published list, still leaves the matter in a somewhat ambiguous state. In Section II., Class 13, we find "Philosophical Instruments, and Processes depending upon their use;" and immediately following, Class 14, "Photographic Apparatus and Photography," not *Photographs*. From this allocation it would seem that photography as a *process*, and not photographs as works of art, is referred to. Without material alteration in the classification, it is only necessary, therefore, to add "Photographs," to the fourth section—"Modern Fine Arts," to render the classification satisfactory and complete. And as the Attorney-General, in his new Copyright Bill, has essentially defined photographs as "pictures" and works of fine art, Her Majesty's Commissioners can scarcely have much difficulty in following so righteous an example. Now, however, is the time for vigorous remonstrance; and we recommend to the various photographic societies throughout the kingdom, to take consentaneous action, and memorialize the Commissioners, so as to assist the parent society in impressing upon them the extent of the wrong, and the amount of indignation it has excited.

THE TANNIN PROCESS.

It is important that the real grounds of merit in this valuable process should be well understood. It is not a quick process. It is simple in manipulation; and under fair conditions, clean, brilliant, and certain in results,—the nega-