

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC NEWS.

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THE EXHIBITION MEETING OF THE PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY.

THE Exhibition Meeting of the Photographic Society has proved a great success, and has furnished evidence full of pleasant reassurance to all interested in the progress of our art. It has proved that, notwithstanding the dullness consequent upon a year or two of bad times, there is no real declension of interest in photography; and it has further proved that, in spite of the gloomy vaticinations of a few, the Photographic Society of London is neither dead nor dying. At its request that photographers generally should bring their recent pictures to give interest to the inauguration meeting of a new session, not less, we believe, than four or five hundred frames were sent in, and not less than four or five hundred persons flocked to examine the pictures with an eager interest that reminded us of the first day in each year of the Exhibition of the Royal Academy. When we saw, two or three hours before the opening of the meeting, the extraordinary and unexpected amplitude of the response which had been made to the invitation of the Society in a most magnificent collection of pictures, we felt that to confine the exhibition of such display of photographs to three or four hours of one evening would be deplorable in the extreme, and we at once took counsel with the esteemed Secretary, Dr. Diamond, who equally felt the importance of prolonging the exhibition, and immediately took steps to arrange with the authorities of the Gallery in Conduit Street to allow the pictures to remain for a few days instead of one evening only. We have pleasure in announcing, therefore, that the exhibition of the photographs will remain open for a week at 9, Conduit Street, during the hours of daylight, gratuitously, all interested in the art of photography being invited to attend, the presentation of their own cards securing admission.

The excellence of the pictures generally is fully equal to the extent of the exhibition. In excellence, we have no hesitation in saying that this is the best display of photographs ever brought together in London, the pictures in many respects far surpassing in quality those exhibited in the English Department of the French Exhibition. We have pleasure in noting that not only the metropolitan photographers, but many from various parts of England and from Dublin, contributed excellent pictures, and visitors travelled very long distances to be at the meeting. We are satisfied that they were well repaid; and we urge all our readers who can make it convenient in the brief time during which the exhibition will remain open after they

read these lines, if possible, to spend some hours in examining the pictures.

There were two drawbacks only to the perfect success of such an exhibition, both necessarily arising out of the elements of unexpected success, or, rather, a degree of success which far outstripped the most sanguine anticipation. It was expected that a few dozen frames of fine pictures would be sent in, which, carefully arranged and well displayed, would furnish interest to the visitors during the evening. When, soon after mid-day, the Secretary, a member of the Council, and a carpenter, proceeded to Conduit Street to arrange these pictures, they were startled with an *embarras des richesses*. Volunteers gradually joined in the work, and the Secretary, with the aid of two carpenters and of Mr. Robinson, Mr. Hughes, Mr. England, and some other members of Council, contrived to get the bulk of the pictures hung before the room was full of visitors. Some few pictures remained unhung, some were spread over the many tables, some were not as satisfactorily hung as might have been desirable, if time and carefully-considered arrangement had been possible. Another slight disadvantage to the public, and especially to ourselves, was the fact that, with such an extensive collection, many of which were inefficiently labelled, and some not at all, less information regarding many of the pictures was obtainable than might have been desired. As this experiment of inaugurating the session with an exhibition will doubtless be repeated, these shortcomings can easily be remedied in future, and perfect success be so attained.

We cannot, under the circumstances we have named, and with the brief glance at each picture of such a collection which could be gained in one evening, attempt to give a complete list of the contributions, much less enter into description or criticism. We can only hastily refer to some of the noteworthy pictures now, and possibly return to the subject again next week. *Place aux étrangers*: we will refer first to the fine collection of M. Adam-Salomon's portraits which we were enabled to contribute, and which formed an especial focus of attraction during the evening. Amongst the dozen pictures we sent in will be found one which will interest all visitors. It is a most admirable portrait of Dr. Diamond in his gown as Doctor of Medicine. Nothing can exceed the fine modelling and rendering of texture in the face, which it is difficult to believe is not the result of elaborate stippling. The treatment of the hair is also singularly suggestive of an artist's work, but as we have most carefully examined the negative and the exhibited print side by side, we can affirm that, with the exception of the stopping out of one or two spots or accidental defects, and a little strengthening of the pupil of the eye, there is no retouching whatever, on either negative or print, and that the excellence of this picture, as of others, is due to pure photography. The frame of black and gold in which this print is exhibited, and which becomes the class of portraits so