

SHEFFIELD PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY.

THE ordinary monthly meeting was held on February 6th at Freemason's Hall, Dr. M. S. H. MORTON presiding. There was a large attendance.

The PRESIDENT, who had only recently arrived from India, expressed the pleasure he felt at meeting the members after so long an absence from home, and thanked them for the honour of re-election, which was to him quite unexpected. He hoped that the present season would be productive of good photographic work.

Mr. J. TAYLOR (Hon. Sec.) brought a fine selection of prints for presentation to the members, amongst them being Mr. Robinson's well-known studies "A Merry Tale," "The Fern Gatherers," &c., also specimens by Messrs. A. Lewis and W. Mc'Liesh.

Mr. YEOMAN exhibited a solid brass tripod top plate which, with the material of an ordinary bamboo fishing rod, made a good telescopic stand for a light camera.

It was unanimously voted that Dr. Morton read a paper respecting his tour in the East. The Chairman said he had secured a few negatives, and would be able to contribute a short account of them.

BURY PHOTOGRAPHIC AND ARTS CLUB.

THE first annual Exhibition of Photographs and Drawings in Monochrome took place at the Co-operative Hall, Bury, on January 24, 25, 26, and 27. There were 150 exhibits, 15 being in black-and-white, and 135 photographs.

Mr. F. COOPER was well represented, having a choice collection of views taken by himself in North Wales.

Mr. E. ECCLES exhibited several nice opal pictures of children, a variety of portraits of local celebrities, and a few choice views of Haddon Hall and Whalley Abbey.

Mr. F. W. LIVSEY had a number of portrait groups, architectural views, and landscapes, his snow scene being much admired; he also exhibited several paintings in black-and-white, and a nice view of Conway Castle in sepia.

Mr. W. G. BARLOW had one case of cabinet landscapes, and one case entitled "Home Scenes;" he also exhibited two paintings in black-and-white, "A Lonely Tramp," and "Ramsey Bay," which attracted much attention.

Messrs. C. H. WOOD and R. SMITH were also contributors in monochrome.

Mr. JOHN NELSON had eighteen views taken at Bolton Abbey and other places.

Mr. W. PALMER exhibited a case of plaques painted in sepia, being very unique.

Mr. JOHN HOLDNEY (the veteran artist) was represented by four oil paintings in black-and-white, which attracted much attention, being painted so soft, and having all the appearance of porcelain.

There was a lantern exhibition each night, conducted by Messrs. Walmsley, Eccles, and Cooper, which the public duly appreciated, the views thrown upon the screen being principally local, and the production of the members.

EDINBURGH PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY.

THE fourth ordinary meeting of the Session was held in 5, St. Andrew Square, on the evening of Wednesday, 7th February, Mr. A. CRAIG-CHRISTIE, F.L.S. (vice-president) in the chair.

The minutes of last meeting having been signed, the following gentlemen were unanimously elected ordinary members of the Society:—Messrs. John Simmonds, James Wilkes, David Hunter, James H. Smith, James Gourlay, Alex. M. Low, L.A., Robert Chambers, Thomas C. Johnstone, and Thomas Black.

Before proceeding to the business of the evening, the Chairman drew attention to the very successful "popular meeting," recently held in Queen Street Hall, and said the Society had reason to congratulate itself that, without extraneous aid, it was able to produce such a capital exhibition. A vote of thanks, proposed by Mr. Wm. Nielson, was accorded Mr. Bashford for the very satisfactory manner in which he carried through his portion of the programme.

The SECRETARY read a letter from the President, directing the attention of members to the exhibition to be held in the Fine Art Galleries, Brussels.

The paper of the evening was by Mr. JOHN P. SUVERKROP, entitled "Notes on Commercial Photography in the United States" (see page 102), and was illustrated by a number of phototype prints.

In the discussion which followed, Mr. NORMAN MACBETH, R.S.A., said it was a well-known fact that American wood-engraving was far ahead of what was produced in this country,

and he would like to know if any of the processes alluded to by Mr. Suverkrop were capable of producing such fine work as is found in *Scribner's* or *Harper's* magazines; and he would also like to know the limit to the style of drawing fitted to the modes of reproduction described, and whether the degree of fineness would compare satisfactorily with the choice woodcuts for which America is so famous.

To these and other questions asked by various members, Mr. Suverkrop replied:—As to the "limit of the style of drawing," the answer is, there is no limit to the fineness or coarseness of the drawing so long as the desired artistic effect is produced in pure black lines or dots on white paper. The limitation is in the finished plate and the purpose for which it is to be used. Thus it is evident that a drawing nine inches square, embodying a tint of lines one-thirtieth of an inch apart, may be reproduced the same size, and will print clearly in a newspaper, with the necessarily unfavourable conditions of rapid press-work, cheap ink, and paper. The same drawing, in order to appear favourably in a magazine illustrated with fine cuts and printed with the highest typographical skill upon the best paper with the finest ink, must obviously be reduced to a fineness commensurate with its surroundings, say to one-third diameter, which will result in a plate three inches square, embodying a tint of lines only one-ninetieth of an inch apart. We must, however, draw a practical line at that point, beyond which the printer cannot go with the finest materials at his command. Both *Scribner's* and *Harper's* magazines of the current month have illustrations produced in this manner, and it requires the eye of an expert to detect them from fine wood-engravings. It must be remembered that the drawings must in every case consist of pure black lines or dots free from half-tones or washes. It is the introduction of photo-engraving that has made the wood-engravers of America what they are; but with all their skill the immense labour and time required to produce the woodcut gives the photo-engraver an immense advantage. At the present time one firm turns out in one day as much as all the wood-engravers of America in a week. In the first successful experiments Nelson's amber gelatine was imported from England; but the heavy duty bringing the price up to four and a-half dollars per pound, made it necessary to find a cheap home-product, and now a quality of glue costing twenty-five cents per pound is found to answer if a portion of decomposed gelatine be added to it. Decomposed gelatine is soluble in cold water, but the bichromate of potash renders it when exposed to light insoluble. Usually but 10 per cent. of decomposed is added to the good gelatine. The ink employed to form the drawing over the silver print which it is intended to reproduce was originally Indian ink, but now lamp-black ground up with a small quantity of gum and glycerine is used. In order that this ink drawing should remain uninjured by the process of bleaching out the silver image, the bichloride of mercury was dissolved in alcohol. The object attained by conveying the outside air to the drier through ice is to lower its temperature sufficiently to enable the operator more readily to get the 65° Fahrenheit, and at the same time deprive the air of a large portion of suspended moisture. Much of the moisture condenses on the zinc lining of the chamber, and provision is made for draining this away. A temperature thus introduced at 60° or lower is raised by the lamp to the required 65°, for without the lamp there would be no circulation of air.

A number of remarkably beautiful instantaneous prints by Mr. Reid were greatly admired; as also were a number of platinum prints produced by the Hon. A. U. Erskine.

The following query was found in the question-box:—"What is the best moveable arrangement for a stretched studio background—allowing its use in any required position and angle?"

Mr. CROOKER, by means of the black-board, illustrated the plan he had found very satisfactory; the bottom of each end of the frame-work dropped into a groove formed in two pieces of wood about eighteen inches long and three inches thick; these blocks were fastened to the frames by what he believed were called "bed-screws," and each block was then supplied with two castors. By means of these feet the background was supported, and could easily be moved to any position required.

Two framed pictures were exhibited and presented to the Society by Mr. Pettit.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman terminated the proceedings.

PHOTOGRAPHERS' BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION.

THE Board of Management of this Association held its usual monthly meeting at 181, Aldersgate Street, on the 7th. inst.

The minutes of the previous meeting having been read and