

# THE PHOTOGRAPHIC NEWS.

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### THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

OUR sketch of the Academy must perforce be but a cursory one. A collection that numbers no less than 1,693 exhibits cannot be fairly mentioned, let alone criticised, within the limits of any space we could devote to the subject in this journal, and therefore we shall follow the plan we instituted a few years ago, of mentioning those pictures only that are especially attractive from a photographic stand-point. From portraiture, landscape, and story-telling pictures, much may be learned by the photographer, if he will but turn attention to such paintings that have an affinity with the work he can himself produce with his camera. In portraiture, for instance, there is the study of pose; in landscape, the study of composition, of light and shade, and of contrast between bold foreground and hazy distance, and how effect and harmony are produced; while, in looking at story-telling pictures, he may specially note those within the capacity of the camera, with a view to exercising his own talents in compositions of like character.

There are several examples of happy quiet posing in portraiture. Mr. Wells' portrait of "Mrs. Arthur Street" (375), and "Portrait of a Lady" (259), by Mr. N. H. J. Baird, are well worth looking at. Mr. Frank Holl's portrait of John Bright (278) is another; and so is Mr. Oules' portrait of the Bishop of Norwich (476). But the best are Mr. Holl's Lord Winmarleigh (514), a half-front sitting portrait, the head thrown back, the hands interlaced, and one arm round the top angle of a square-backed chair, the position denoting much firmness and force; and Mr. G. King's portrait of William Glover (877), a three-quarter standing portrait; the model is turned slightly from the spectator, dressed in a loose shooting jacket, the further hand loosely dropped into the coat pocket, the nearer arm bent at the elbow across the body, a cigarette between the fingers. A portrait of Professor Huxley (334), by Mr. J. Collier, is redeemed by the forcible expression of the Professor, which is wonderfully well rendered, for the pose is most conventional, Huxley standing at a table with three books piled up to support his arm; if three were not high enough, of course four would have been used. A portrait of the good old-fashioned type is that of General Willis at Kassassin (679); here we see the military hero in stern and striking attitude looking "off," as actors say, while a raging battle is going on behind him, a further proof of his utter disregard of circumstances being afforded by the fact that he carries his white helmet in hand, notwithstanding the glare of a tropical sun; but for these incongruities the painting is really a fine one, by Mr. J. H. Walker.

Of warnings to the photographer as to what to avoid in portraiture there are, as usual, many examples. Look at Mr. C. Johnson's picture of the Mayor of Bootle (320), for instance, which represents a very beautiful gentleman

indeed. Stout of habit and florid of complexion, he has arrayed himself in gown and chain of office, and sitting down plump in the corporation chair, one hand resting on each side of him, he seems to be saying: "There, now, what do you think of this?" Another scarcely less vulgar exhibition is the "Senior Past Master and Father of the Court of the Worshipful Company of Butchers" (87), by Mr. C. G. Munton, a pose very much after the same fashion. In Mr. J. H. Walker's Sir Ashley Eden (390), we have the conventional arm-on-a-pedestal-scroll-in-the-hand style of picture, the hair brushed well back, and the countenance very stern, to show us what a terribly great man the original really is. Strange to say, Mr. Herkomer, who has earned a great name by the pathos and feeling he puts into his pictures, has gone all to pieces over portraiture; his Hans Richter (369), showing us the full face of a fair-bearded man looking slightly upward, much as if he were a saint, strikes one simply as a picture of insufferable conceit. His Sir Richard Cross (523) is better, but gives an impression of weakness; the pose and expression of Mr. Samuelson (759) is also very bad; the model is sitting still, with bated breath, looking at nothing, while he is being painted.

Mr. Briton Riviere, we think, makes most mark this year. He is always graphic, and frequently exhibits both humour and pathos in his work. Two of his pictures are especially attractive; "Giants at Play" (694) shows us three hulking labourers not lazy, but evidently thoroughly tired out by sheer hard work, resting in a picturesque group, and amusing themselves with a tiny white beaver-terrier, whose excitement over a bundle of feathers held at the end of a bit of string affords considerable merriment to the heavy-limbed giants. "Old Playfellows" (392) is a no less masterly production, representing a sick boy propped up in an arm-chair with cushions and blankets, whose wan face looks down on a Spitz dog, who, with arched back and roguish look, puts one paw on the boy's knee, wistfully hoping of a gambol together. Mr. Marks has, as usual, several quaint bits in his own peculiar vein: the Professor (493), one of the old school, who stands before a lecture table laden with old bones and fossils, and whose physiognomy partakes a good deal of the craniums around him, is a capital picture; and so, too, is the bothered old gentleman searching in drawer and cabinet, "Where is it?" (43), and "The Old Clock," an antiquated time-piece standing in the hall, that is being set right by the old-fashioned clockmaker in his long brown coat, who consults a fat watch from his fob for the purpose.

The beggar (1,457), by Carlo Randanini, is a capital study that might be well followed in photography: a grizzled old man sitting down, one arm clasping his tattered garments, the other holding forth his hat for charity. Another simple and effective study is "What of the War?"