

majority of the members instead, then I take it that they may be safely set down as misapplied.

It is truly a gratification to note the goodly array of gifted professors, doctors, and other men of high scientific standing enrolled in our members' lists, and we may find further room to feel proud for knowing that we are so closely encompassed within the sheltering wings of the College of Science; yet we have a prior claim on our consideration and pride to all this—that is, in the advancing and fostering of our great art science, photography itself. Of course, these matters and feelings might in reason be considered to nourish each other; and they doubtless would do so under certain guidances, and if they could be more closely coupled with social fraternity and intercourse.

That we have not yet reached this Utopian state of things, however, is evidenced by several suggestive facts which cannot now be shelved on the plea of the youth of our assemblies.

One of our members—the contrary to a silent man, by the way—assured me that he had been nine months connected with the Society before he interchanged beyond the barest greetings with a soul. When our inestimable Secretary was nominated for the post which he now so ably fills, I believe I am right in stating that even his name was unknown to most of us, although he had also been in regular attendance for some long period previously. On asking a practical photographer, whose name is on our books, why he did not attend more regularly, his rejoinder was, “that business itself proved dry enough, without undergoing a repetition of the dose at our meetings.” I asked another young fellow, who had been here on several occasions, why he did not join us, and his literal answer was: “Oh! it's too stiff for me; one's frightened to open one's mouth!”

These items speak for themselves; it may be that the last two of them, more than inuendoes, are not altogether deserved; but a celebrated painter and lecturer on art matters suggests, in addressing his students, that if a portrait is executed and even an illiterate person, in criticising it, were to exclaim, “Ah! dear man, I see he takes snuff!” then the lecturer would consider it quite time for the artist to look to the actual extent of the shadow under the nasal organ. And we may equally let the same gentle admonition strike home with regard to the smudge on that facial lineament of our Association.

It has been contended that each member has every liberty of speaking to the rest of the body individually or collectively; yet the stubborn fact remains, that the opportunity is not taken advantage of—in spite, too, of the natural weakness we almost universally have to hear our own voices.

The fault of the present arrangement is, that it does not encourage immunity from the heavy bondage of our own innate bashfulness; hence many interesting ideas and discussions lie buried,

“And let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,  
Feed on their damask cheek.”

Now, there seems to me to be a very comparatively easy means of combating with this lack of interest, general unsociability, and shyness, which I am striving to show is the combined outcome of the long intervals between our gatherings, and their formal character.

I would suggest that we have what I may term a club connected with the society—not as altogether an offshoot of the more austere Association, but rather to be as special gatherings of avowedly the same body.

These meetings might be held on the alternate fortnights, intermediate to the present recognized monthly attendances; and the *rendezvous* might be in a large room of some respectable hotel, where we could be preferably seated face to face.

The club might be most harmoniously managed by the same council as the Association, seeing that the present duties of these gentlemen are far from ardent; but an extra secretary might be appointed, as one could not be well expected to attend to the double duties which fall so specially heavy in this particular office.

The business of the meetings might principally consist of (1) free discussions on technical matters, special encouragement being given to the recountal of every-day phenomena and practical observations, even when these are of a supposed trivial character; (2) short papers on matters of common interest, that may be handed in on the night without previous notification and ceremony; (3) some attention might be bestowed to the chemical action as well as to the practical effects connected with processes in ordinary use. This last item I take to be very recommendable, as the knowledge of the average photographer is, in this direction, particularly hazy.

This business might continue to something like half-past nine o'clock, after which formalities might cease, a change of chairman be optionally effected, refreshments be allowed, and the meeting generally to partake of that amount of sociability with which the feelings of the members should care to judiciously invest it.

I have heard that some of our members would raise their voices against this proposed state of things, maybe, as derogatory to the dignity of the Society. The project has not yet beheld the light of the world that could not be objected to in some particular, real or imaginary; and I think the demurrals would partake of the latter character in the present case. But do let us, at least, be common-sensed in the matter; so long as we can calmly meet at dinner-parties for the absolutely set purpose of eating and drinking, I fail to see what *reasonable* exception can be taken to our socially cultivating the friendship of each other as brethren for half-an-hour or so, “When the Day's Work is Done.” If the trust was abused—which, looking upon my *confrères* as gentlemen, I should feel it an insult to suspect—then it is the member, and not the system, deserving censure.

There still appears to me to be an expedient as simple as it is efficient by which any of these particular gentlemen may avoid personal pollution—that is, for them to quietly evaporate on the tail of the mechanical discussion; or we might meet in Lockhart's Cocoa Rooms, as far as I individually desire, either hotel accommodation, or the presence of alcohol for inward application. I only feel inclined to withdraw the cork of strange restraint, and allow the sparkling nectar of practical experience to bubble forth that we may all drink.

I think it almost impossible to estimate the benefit that would attend the organizing and judicious managing of a satellite-like club, such as I alluded to. While it would be pleasant in itself alone, its discussions would raise subjects and educate speakers for the more stately meetings, and our members would become more familiar, more interested, and subsequently more energetic, for reasons that I have already endeavoured to enumerate.

Furthermore, this means would undoubtedly develop the interesting idea of out-door social meetings to a satisfactory issue, instead of the non-successes which, I fear, we cannot deny their having hitherto been in our hands.

I have had some considerable experience in the arranging of picnics of one description and another, and I have always found persons of confined occupation look upon holidays as periods of too sacred importance to be expended where there existed a wisp of the trammels of stiffness or coldness abiding.

I would strongly advise, too, that special social meetings be well countenanced, and, without going to the extent of investing them with the importance of recognised exhibitions, yet they might be held in some suitable hall or room where the photographic productions of members might be hung, and thus impart some additional interest to the proceedings, whilst it would also be an incentive to artists to work.

They should also assume the form of *conversazione* or *soirées*, in my opinion, and not dinners, such as we regaled ourselves with at our last annual gathering. Apart from this having strongly the same taint of formality, I hold that it is inconsistent in principle, seeing that it practically debars ladies from participating in the entertainment, at the same time as we acknowledge and are prepared to accept them as members of the Association. It seems to me that the inconsistency exists pretty much the same whether or not we have lady-members enrolled in our books at the time. Besides, as I heard a gentleman remark while the question of the form of entertainment was under discussion: “Many of the wives of practical photographers take almost as much interest in matters photographic as their ‘lords of creation,’ and it is surely, at least, ungallant to exclude them from its more genial phases.”

I have left much unsaid, and probably, in some cases, stated more than is altogether acceptable in this matter; but, at all events, I hope I have opened a discussion that will result in increased welfare to our Association.

#### MICRO-PHOTOGRAPHY.

BY WILLIAM FORGAN.\*

THE production of photographs of microscope objects may be taken to be the most difficult subject which a photographer can attempt, and yet at the same time one of the simplest. It is simple in this respect, that when the object to be photographed

\* Read before the Edinburgh Photographic Society.