EXHIBITIONS.

I. PHOTOGRAPHS.

THE experiment, rendered possible for the first time by the new rooms of the Club, of dissociating the photographs from the annual exhibition of paintings and drawings as a whole proved successful. The photographers unquestionably had no cause for complaint, while there can be no question that the work of the artists was seen to much greater advantage when there were no photographs to distract the attention of visitors. In the matter of paintings oil and water mix effectively enough, but the addition of photographs also always seemed out of place, and even at the nineteenth-century Art Galleries last year produced an effect of incongruity. It appears hardly fair, however, to have the photographic exhibition in the summer months, when the light is at its best, thus relegating the paintings to the darkness or the artificial light of the winter months, and in future years we hope to see the dates altered. Perhaps a still better arrangement would be to have the picture exhibition in some month such as April, and the photographic exhibition a few weeks later.

The great majority of the photographs contributed were the work of members, though the exhibition was not confined to them. The list of exhibitors was fairly representative, though there were some notable absentees. Captain Abney sent only a few studies of the 'climbing foot,' taken for the purposes of book illustration; we looked in vain for any of his superlative winter photographs. The ladies either were not made aware of the Exhibition or forbore to cross the austere portals of the Club. We would have welcomed work from photographers such as Miss Moysey, and we were sorry to miss any examples of Mrs. Main's admirable skill.

At the present moment, at any rate as regards exhibitions, there would seem to be two schools of photography, one of which aims chiefly at technical excellence and purity of method on the lines encouraged by the Photographic Society, while the other, which seeks after new departures and employs any kind of method calculated to give a pictorial effect, finds its home, where it illustrates its principles and its vagaries, in the Exhibition of the Photographic Salon.

Judging by the late exhibition, the views promulgated by the new photographic school either do not lend themselves much to mountain photography or do not find much favour. Some of Sir Martin Conway's enlargements, however, are such as might have been seen at any exhibition in the Dudley Gallery. Photographs of distant mountain panoramas with much sky, and dealing with early dawn or sunset effects, are extremely difficult subjects; and even when the resulting picture is attractive it is difficult to be sure that it is in the least like what the photographer expected. But at least Sir Martin Conway's photographs were not in any hackneyed style, and aimed honestly at reproducing the effects which attracted him

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as beautiful. His views were not very well treated by the hanging committee, and were very much spoilt by having large white labels stuck on to the glass, but some of them were very effective.

Photographs of mountain scenery labour under the great disadvantage of having very little human interest. It is a very rare thing to find any figures or life of any sort suggested without spoiling the picture. Of climbing photographs we noticed but two examples—one an interesting portrait group of Dr. Wills's, and the other a snap-shot of a climber negotiating the famous 'jammed-stone' couloir on the Kleine Zinne, by Mr. P. A. L. Pryor. Whether this was intended to have any reference to a remarkable illustration that appeared in a recent Alpine work we know not. If such was the case the print suggested that descriptions of Dolomite climbs, characterised more by fervour than prosaic accuracy, need rather to be illustrated by Alpine artists in their more emotional moods than by the photographer.

The tele-photographs by Mr. Hoddinott were rather disappointing, and it seems that much further work is required before this form of lens can be made of much use practically in the mountains. Mr. Dallmeyer, when he first described his tele-photographic lens at the Society of Arts, gave it as his opinion, in the course of the discussion, that the lens was unlikely to fulfil the expectations that had been formed of it in some quarters with regard to mountain photography. He believed that there was always likely to be considerable blurring of the picture, owing to the long exposure required and the refraction produced by the variations of temperature in mountain landscapes made up of alternate snow and rock, valleys and heights. Such blurring, while commonly present, does not apparently succeed in giving softness to the picture. Much, evidently, depends on the choice of an appropriate subject. Thus a view of the Matterhorn from the Zmutt Bridge, taken with one of these lenses, was surprisingly successful in destroying all sense of atmosphere and distorting the mountain, producing the same effect as a photograph taken with a short-focus lens from the Hörnli. Far more effective, because a more suitable subject, was a view of the Moming Rothhorn taken from the Riffelalp. Mr. Lamond Howie contributed an interesting view of Ben Nevis in winter time. This was taken as a panorama, and required a good deal of retouching at the joins of the several prints. Geologically, however, it was a very valuable photograph.

Of the direct photographic work in which Mr. Donkin excelled so greatly Mr. Woolley's 'Ailama' was one of the best examples—a very fine photograph indeed of an excellent subject, in which the modelling of the snow, the massiveness of the hanging glaciers, and the solidity of the mountain were brought out to perfection. Most of Mr. Woolley's examples were of Caucasian subjects, chosen deliberately from the topographical point of view. All were marked by the high degree of technical excellence we are accustomed to see in his work.

Of good technical work there were few photographs in the

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exhibition better than Mr. Spencer's. His small views included a very admirable panorama from the Aiguille Verte and some excellent studies of sun and shadow and modelling of snow taken in winter time at Chamonix. Among the best, to our mind, were two views of the Aiguille Verte and the Aiguille des Charmoz. In another frame was one of the best photographs of the dirt-bands on the Mer de Glace that we can remember to have seen. Mr. Shea showed a striking enlargement of a study of Dolomite rocks on the Pelmo, but his views were rather spoilt by over-enlargement. Among much good work from Mr. Holmes we noticed especially the 'Dent des Bouquetins,' a photograph which combined admirably a really pictorial effect with a direct reproduction of a high Alpine scene.

Signor Sella contributed too little, unfortunately, but the few examples which he had showed off his admirable skill to advantage. The effect of a hot day in producing a vivid sense of atmosphere was well shown in his photograph of the 'Punta Gnifetti.' Too great accuracy in focussing, or the employment of lenses of too great depth of focus, in such a manner as to show off their capabilities to the utmost, often spoils Alpine photographs. The pictures become hard, and fail altogether to 'make a hole in the wall.' The atmosphere, the sense of distance and scale, disappear entirely. Slight veiling, as photographers term a result of over-exposure, is often very efficacious in correcting these defects. Of this fact Signor Sella shows that he is fully aware and occasionally utilises it with great skill. Signor Sella seems almost the only man who is able to introduce figures effectively into his pictures. Some transparencies of Caucasian and Alpine subjects from the same hand were taking, but hardly improved by being tinted. In one of these, a view taken above Gressoney, the clouds were superb and required no colour to heighten the effect. We would gladly have welcomed more sky and cloud studies, such as M. Loppé has so often exhibited. Several photographs showed the familiar scene of a sea of clouds, as seen from above, lying over the Italian valleys or over the Swiss lakes; in fact, this effect was repeated so often as to become quite monotonous. The most successful, to our mind, was one of Mr. Eccles's characteristic studies; but by far the best contribution of Mr. Eccles was a winter view taken near Rosenlaui. It was almost impossible to exceed the delicacy of the snow modelling and the transparency of the winter shadows exhibited in this photograph. There still seems a considerable tendency among Alpine photographers to choose only subjects to which distinctive titles can be given, and it was quite refreshing to meet with Dr. Pasteur's autotype prints of village scenes. Excellent as pictures, they avoided most discreetly the fault, so common, of endeavouring to include too much in the photograph. Good work was also contributed by Mr. E. J. Garwood and Mr. Brushfield. Nor must we omit to mention a striking little view, by Mr. J. Walker, of the Dent Blanche at sunset as seen from the Mountet Hut.

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Photography, as much as pictorial art, exhibits personal idiosyncrasies: we can often recognise at a glance the work of different men. There is the portrait photographer, who takes a great peak in its best aspect; there is the topographer who gives us a whole range, careless of its picturesque capabilities; there is the sporting climber, who depicts only what the Germans call 'detail pieces,' with a view mostly to the illustration of his own or his friends' exploits; there is, lastly, the mountain impressionist, the man who recognises beauty and aims at reproducing it.

Two frames of photographs contributed by Mr. Clinton Dent are remarkable as proofs of the advance made in converting topographical representations—such as we were all (except, perhaps, W. F. Donkin) content with a few years ago—into pictures. In one sense this tendency is hostile to topography, for to avoid distortion it often limits its field, it is ready to sacrifice detail in order to secure passing effects of mist or sunshine. Two or three of the Caucasian views of Mr. Dent are eminent examples of happy selection of time and place. We prefer Ushba above the birch-tops, the white horn of Tetnuld lifted between earth and sky, the shadowy vale of the Laila, where the glaciers fall in avalanches into a garden of lily and rose. Hardly less novel or less beautiful are the winter studies of snow and storm and low sunshine from the familiar, and in summer monotonous, valley that lies under the shadow of Mont Blanc.

II. MR. A. D. McCORMICK'S CAUCASIAN SKETCHES.

The new Hall of the Alpine Club, with its abundant wall-space and excellent lighting, is admirably fitted for a picture gallery. We may look forward to periodical exhibitions, in which the work of the artist members of the Club will be more frequently than in the past brought under the notice of climbers. Will this be for the benefit of Alpine art? An affirmative answer may seem obvious; but a paradoxical person might, we think, find a good deal to urge on the other side.

In so far as our criticism tends to recognise and condemn unrealities, to put an end to the muddled memories of Alpine scenery which used to pass muster with a public no better instructed than its painters, it will do good service. But, on the other hand, it might be plausibly argued, the artistic perceptions of the average Alpine Clubman are exceedingly limited. He looks on mountains primarily as climbs; he estimates views by quantity, by the miles he can sweep over with his 'circumambient eye,' and cares only for 'the blue, unclouded weather,' most favourable to his pursuit. His ideal is a photograph which shows the crack up which he wriggled, or the chimney in which he cut steps. He finds relief from the too oppressive grandeur of Nature by asserting his own place in the foreground, and that in attitudes which might make an angel, or any winged creature, weep. For such clients are painted the canvases that send the artist away sorrowful; for them

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are made the drawings which are in reality diagrams—drawings which, carried to their highest excellency, can only represent the intricacies of a great peak, as Denner represented an old woman's wrinkles; for them are prepared the book illustrations, which are, in fact and intention, reduced posters.

'Do not,' our Advocatus Diaboli might continue, 'let the Alpine climber think that he is a serviceable Art-critic. What gain there is must be all on the other side. The test of genius is to widen the scope of human sensibilities. It is a work of time, for which reason the genius, if an artist, frequently starves; if a religious reformer, is stoned or otherwise put out of the way.'

Modern painters have learned and taught the beauties of the sea. The glories of the great mountains offer them a field for further successes. But it is not the aspect which strikes the average climber that will most attract them; they will hardly notice the details that are all-important to the man who has 'to do' a peak. It is not the moments of calm weather that will fascinate the modern painter. 'See the mountains, their infinite movement!' cries the poet. It is the movement, the atmospheric gradations, the alternations of colour and light and shade, the framed visions of peaks, the enchantments of whirling sunlit mists, upon which the impressionist naturally seizes. He listens to his climbing friend's criticism, and murmurs, perhaps, under his breath the familiar lines from the 'Mikado'—

> His taste exact
> For faultless fact
> Amounted to a disease!

We are not at all disposed to adopt this pessimistic view of the Club's relation to Art. But it may be open to doubt whether Mr. McCormick's Caucasian sketches will satisfy the average climber, or even the travelled mountaineer. Our first feeling, we confess, was one of disappointment. Where were the great peaks we had seen or read of, the cathedral towers of Ushba, the spire of Tetnuld, the sky-cleaving pyramids of Dykhtau and Koshtantau? Mr. McCormick has turned his back on the obvious. He has been most impressed by the peculiar colouring and atmosphere of the Caucasus—the purples of the hill-sides, the orange splendour of the rainy sunsets. He has emphasised the broken weather, which often, though not always, meets the traveller. His collection might have been called 'Notes and Studies of Caucasian Atmosphere.' Elijah Walton would have delighted in the mountain forms and the snow and ice draperies—far more ample than those of Switzerland—that cover them. Mr. McCormick cares more for the valleys—for effects, for movement. He uses details, whether of flowers or architecture, sparingly, and mostly when they serve in his scheme of colour. The inhabitants he has left out—reserved, we are glad to hear, for a further Exhibition of Black and White Studies.

Going round the walls we noticed (2) A storm gathering on

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Tetnuld, with a window of clear sky beyond, very characteristic of Suanetia; (4) 'A Corner of the Village: Teeb,' the best architectural drawing shown; (19) 'Driving Home the Flocks,' a very successful and harmonious composition; (40) 'The Shreds of the Storm: Karaul,' a vigorous and accurate study; (57) 'Icefall of the Tintiun Glacier,' which, perhaps, needs more detail in the glacier; and (61) 'Giulchi from the Dykhsu Gorge,' a capital sketch of a peak that can inspire even the most unskilled hand. Ushba appeared only in a single sketch, which was shown in a somewhat rudimentary condition.

Mr. McCormick is, we are convinced, an artist of much feeling and sincerity. We take what he has given us with gratitude, and hope for something more in the future. Let him go on seeing Nature in his own way; but let him try to be less content with first impressions, and to become more intimate with his subjects.

NEW EXPEDITIONS IN 1895 (*continued*).

[Contributors of 'New Expeditions' are requested to observe the following rules:—(1) To forward their accounts in the form in which they are to appear. (2) To prefix the name of the peak or pass from the best map, and the altitude both in mètres and feet in a parenthesis after the name. (3) To give the date of the ascent, and the names of the party. (4) To give exact references to any previously published descriptions of allied routes to which they may have occasion to refer. (5) To write the description with the best existing map before them, and to quote the figures of any measured point their route may touch. (6) To use always the points of the compass instead of the misleading words 'right' and 'left.' (7) To record their 'times' exclusive of halts. (8) To make their descriptions as brief as possible consistently with the above considerations. (9) To write on one side of the paper only, leaving a large margin, and to begin a new sheet for each expedition.]

NORWAY.

Söndmöre District.

Storhorn, about 5,200 feet. *August* 2.—Messrs. W. Wareing, J. E. Sunderland, and J. S. New, with Sivert J. Bjerke as guide, ascended this mountain direct from the foot of the upper lake on the Kalvatn road by steep wooded slopes to a broad arête N.E. of the Lauedal and the little aiguilles which bear the strange name of Kjœrringkjœfter, or Sweet Hearts-lips, and gained the summit 6 hrs. after leaving Bjerke. The view over the Hjörund fjord, whose glassy waters reflected the many serrated ridges and sharp peaks which overlook this, the most beautiful of all the Norsk fjords, and of the glistening snowfields of the Justedals bræ, was superb. The descent was varied by a détour to the Lauedal.*

Trold Horn and Kvithövd, each about 5,000 feet. *August* 6.—The same party, without Sivert, left Bjerke at 2.50 with the object of exploring the unknown recesses on the north and east sides

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* Rander's *Söndmöre*, p. 46.

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