

AN EXHIBITION OF ALPINE PHOTOGRAPHS AT THE CLUBROOMS,
DECEMBER 1925.

AFTER an interval of two years the customary Photographic Exhibition was held in the Clubrooms last December, and showed that in spite of two very indifferent seasons our members and their friends have been far from idle. In fact, the law of compensation was well illustrated on our walls, for it is a fact that bad climbing weather (provided that it is not too bad) produces good photographs. The cloudless skies, which are the climber's delight, are apt to become a trifle monotonous if they are the only mood of the mountains represented by our photographs, particularly as their chief beauty is to be found in their glorious colouring. But the sudden storms, the heavy banks of cloud and the swirling mists with which we are all so familiar, and which are sometimes so annoying at the moment, are the photographer's opportunity.

Our exhibitors this year have made good use of this opportunity, and the first impression we got, on walking round the gallery, was the very true rendering of the ever varying cloud forms of mountain scenery. There was hardly a ' bald-headed ' sky on the walls.

The next point that struck us was that although the sky renderings were so good, dark heavy foregrounds were in many cases well brought out, and were by no means lacking in detail ; and a warm tribute must be paid to the skill of those photographers who succeeded in this difficult task. Cases in point were a number of pictures of our British hills, and we should particularly like to mention in this connexion Mr. Henry Speyer's beautiful ' The Tryfan from the East at Sunset,' his ' Mountain Sheep near Llyn Idwal,' and his ' After Sunset : Head of the Ogwen Valley.' The same skilful technique was evident in Mr. Leonard Eagleton's dramatic ' Loch Maree : a Stormy Evening ' ; his ' At the Head of Glen Guisachan ' and his ' Sunset from Beinn Tharsuinn Chaol ' were both splendid pictures.

Speaking of the technique of the prints shown at the Exhibition, it is interesting to note that although the skill of the best mountain photographers of the past generation has hardly been exceeded, yet the improvement in modern apparatus, particularly in regard to lightness and ease of manipulation,



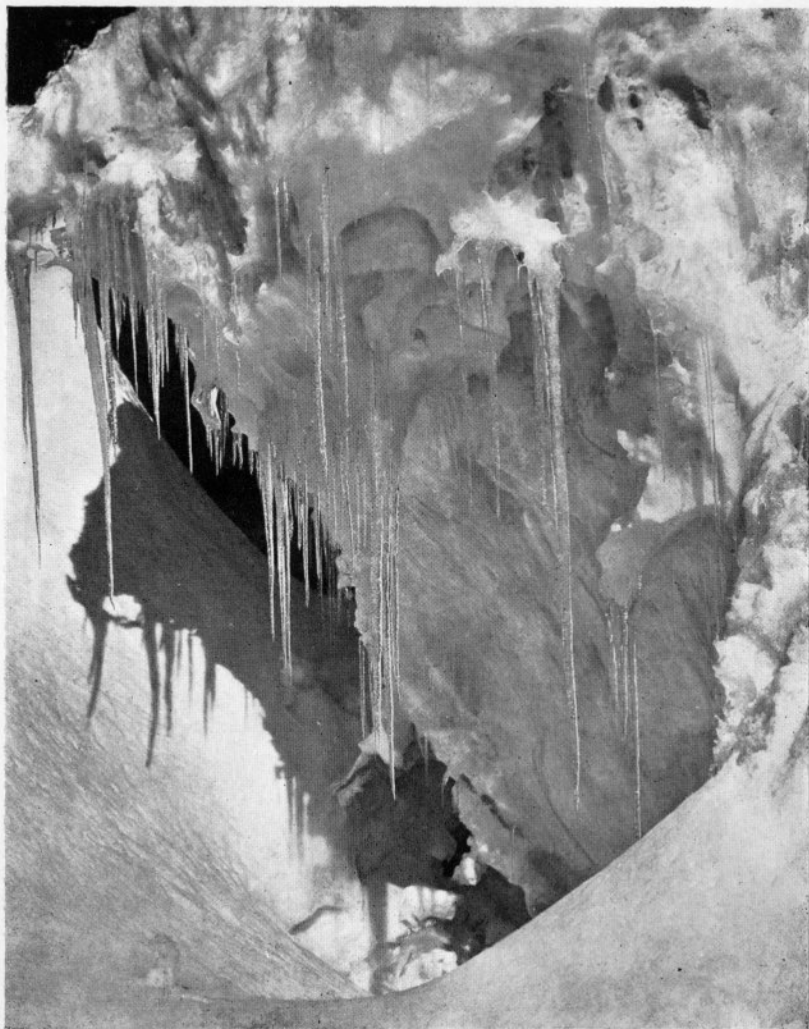
Photo, Henry Speyer.

THE CARNEDDS from ELIDYR FAWR.



Photo, Rev. A. E. Murray.

SUNRISE ON THE DENTS DU MIDI.



Photo, W. T. Lister.

BERGSCHRUND ON LYSKAMM.

has resulted in a tremendous improvement in the general run of photographs. It should, of course, be remembered that most of the prints shown at our exhibitions are the work of those who are first of all mountaineers, and only secondarily photographers, and that many of the results have been obtained under hasty and often uncomfortable conditions. When these facts are borne in mind extra credit will be given to those who, in spite of difficulties, have succeeded so well.

These difficulties are very markedly illustrated by the set of six frames sent by Dr. Somervell of the Everest Expedition. Such pictures can never lose their appeal. Perhaps the most striking of the set was 'The Ice Cliff near Camp II with Peak 22,580,' and the most historic was certainly 'The Summit of Everest from the Highest point reached.'

This last picture, with its figure struggling on towards the summit, suggests a subject that might receive more consideration than it sometimes does, viz: the place of figures in mountain pictures. Since the mountain is greater than the mountaineer, we think that when a climbing party is shown in a mountain photograph, its existence there is only justified if it adds in some way to the dignity of the mountain itself. In J. C. Gait's 'Piz Roseg from its North-West Arête,' the figures on the ridge are the key to the picture. So small are they that at first they are hardly noticed, but when once seen they add enormously to the apparent size of the mountain. N. S. Finzi's 'St. Niklaus Gabelhorn' was another successful example of the use of figures, as was also Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond's 'Descending the Portiengrat,' though this last was—as its title tells us—more a picture of a climbing party than of a mountain. G. A. Lister's 'A Glacier Scene' would be almost meaningless without its figures; with them it is a complete success. But we venture to think that photographs of climbers climbing are less satisfactory, in that they are neither portraits nor mountain photographs. Alpine portraiture pure and simple is always welcome, especially when the originals are really distinguished men in the Alpine world. Sir William Lister's 'Alexander Burgener' was a good example of this.

Since mountain scenery includes valleys as well as peaks, we were glad to see a number of subalpine views, and would like to mention in this connexion C. Gordon Smith's 'Le Joseray—Val d'Isère' and Miss Ulrica R. Dolling's 'Wetterhorn'—a much-photographed view, but always welcome when done as well as this. Arthur Gardner's 'Spring Flowers at Pontresina' delighted us, and J. L. Yeames' 'Caux—Spring' brought back

vivid memories to those who have spent a real spring in that frequented but lovely district.

R. S. Morrish's 'A one-seater in the Val Masino' was a charming study of Alpine life. We liked also the simplicity of G. L. Corbett's 'The Young Entry.'

The Rev. A. E. Murray's two pictures, 'Winter Sunrise' and 'Winter Sunset,' were two of the most beautiful exhibits on the walls. The sunset picture was a very difficult subject, and Mr. Murray may be congratulated on having achieved a real triumph. His contributions were all framed in a most artistic manner, a point to which photographers in general do not attach sufficient importance.

We were most glad to welcome five frames (two of them contained two pictures each) from the Skala Club. All these were beautifully taken. Some were printed in a blue colour, and some in brown. We are bound to say that we preferred those done in brown. As a picture, 'Koena in the Kamnik Alps' by Janko Skerlep, was as fine a mountain photograph as we expect to see. Charming also was 'Spik in the Martuljek near Krajska' by Janko Revnik.

We have again to thank a number of ladies for sending contributions. Mention has already been made of one of Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond's prints: we should like also to refer to the same lady's interesting set of four prints, 'The Evolution of an Ice Flower.'

Miss MacAndrew sent two views taken from that delightful little range, the Aiguilles Dorées. Miss Ulrica R. Dolling sent several exhibits, and Miss H. F. Margaret King six prints, several of which were coloured—as were G. H. Lancaster's. These were all well done, though we are really of opinion that as things are at present, photographs in monochrome are more effective than those that have been coloured. Dr. Mary Boyle and Mrs. Clive Smith also contributed.

It is unfortunately impossible to mention in detail all the exhibits that we should wish to, but we must note J. O. Walker's 'Esk Pike, Cumberland' and his 'Bernina Group—Winter'; J. C. Gait's 'Dent Blanche from the Roc Noir'; R. S. Morrish's 'Clouds at Sunrise on the Piz Palu'; E. B. Beauman's 'Dawn'; Hugh Gardner's 'Mont Blanc'; Arthur Gardner's 'Mont Maudit'; Charles D. Brook's beautiful 'Les Bans'—a very fine brown colour this; F. N. Ellis' two large Riffelalp pictures, taken after the summer snowstorm of August 1925; Sir William Lister's two splendid berg-schruns—there was nothing finer in the room than his upright picture

of a schrund on the Lyskamm; and Reginald Graham's large picture, a picture full of atmosphere, 'Drakensberg Mountains, S. Africa.'

Special mention must also be made of a very historic print, G. P. Baker's 'Spring Meeting of the Alpine Club 1882, Summit of Snowdon.'

Speaking generally, exhibitors did not conform to the present-day fashion of using white or very light-toned mounts. Undoubtedly pictures in a low key look well when framed close up. Yet we think that the large white mount is no mere whim, but really does show off most photographs to their best advantage, and that our Exhibition would gain by a more widespread use of it. A few small prints, excellent in themselves, were inconspicuous only because of the small size and neutral tone of their mounts. On larger, whiter mounts the same prints would have shown up well.

Taken as a whole the Exhibition was thoroughly good, and it certainly brought back pleasant memories of holidays to many of us, for it is a joy to live over again climbs now long past.

'Forsan et haec olim meminisse juvabit.'

The Club has once again to thank Mr. Sydney Spencer for the trouble he has taken and the skill he has shown in hanging the pictures. We should like to add that, much as we appreciate all that he has done, we really do miss those excellent photographs of his that used to adorn our walls.

THE EXHIBITION OF ALPINE PAINTING.

(May 3 to May 15, 1926.)

THIS has been quite a good exhibition, and well up to standard. How could it be otherwise, including, as it did, paintings from the brushes of Sir Herbert Hughes-Stanton, R.A., P.R.W.S.; Mr. Adrian Stokes, R.A.; Mr. Percy Lancaster, R.I., A.R.E.; Mr. Graham Petrie, R.I., R.O.; Mr. Cecil A. Hunt, R.W.S.; Mr. Colin Philip, R.W.S.; Mr. Charles M. Gere, A.R.W.S.; Miss Hilda Hechle, R.B.A., and other well-known artists?

Moreover, it was not a monotonous exhibition, although the absence of figure subjects was regrettable. It had plenty of variety, both of subject and of treatment. There was little, if any, of the old type of amateur 'Swiss view,' with its staring, glaring, dark hard rocks and white snow and blue sky. The