

THE CORK SCHOOL OF ART.

THE presentation of prizes to the successful pupils of the Cork School of Art took place on the 20th ult., at the Rotunda attached to the theatre.

The Mayor presided, and there was a large attendance of the pupils and their friends.

The Mayor, on rising, was loudly applauded. He said he was not a student of art himself, but he had felt its influence, and he could envy those who with the pen or the brush could touch the inmost recesses of women's or men's hearts. He sincerely trusted that the study of art would still be encouraged in Cork, and that, their city would send forth in the future, as in the past, talented artists to all parts of the world. In the past, Cork had produced many famous artists—men like Barry, Maclise, Grogan, Ford, Fisher, and Hogan—and he was proud, as father of the city of Cork, to say that his children had not degenerated. In Cork they had many worthy successors to the great men he had just mentioned, for they had had produced by the Cork School of Art a Shiel and a Brenan. They had also a Hartland, and they had also others whose names they heard so frequently—one of whom was Mr. Henry Jones. Mr. Hovenden, who resided in New York at present, was a pupil of the Cork school, and many of his works were found decorating the *salons* of Paris. When he entered on his year of office he had hoped that some important progress would be made towards erecting a proper building for Cork people in which to pursue the study of art; but men's thoughts had been otherwise engaged, and there had been but little time to devote to the cultivation of a taste for art and the other intellectual gifts which their people so much possessed. But he trusted that a return of that social peace, which they all so earnestly longed for, would conduce to the development of the genius and talent of their youth.

Mr. Brenan (head master) read the report for the year ending June 30th, 1881. The total number of students on the roll of the school for the year was 227, being 38 less than last year. This decrease was greatest in the evening class, the morning and afternoon class having a decrease of 11, and the evening class of 27 as compared with the former year. This decrease has not been confined to the school alone, and may, I think, be fairly attributed to the general depression in business which exists throughout the country. But while there was a decrease in the number attending I am happy to say there was a considerable increase in the number of prizes gained in the competition with the other schools of art at South Kensington. The examiners for the National Competition state in their report that a great improvement was visible "in all the works sent forward, and some stages, such as painting direct from Nature, elicited their warm admiration. The school was awarded 3 national book prizes, 23 prizes for drawings and paintings—being 6 more than last year. 25 students were successful in passing in one or more subjects in the second grade examination in freehand geometry perspective and model drawing, and 10 students were awarded 13 prizes for the mark "Excellent" in this examination. In the local advanced art examination 5 students were successful: 1 in painting a group from Nature in a given time, 1 in anatomy, and 3 in advanced perspective. 2 free studentships were awarded to this school. In the examination on the science subjects taught in the School of Art, all the students who presented themselves for examination were successful. In perspective geometry 3 were successful, and 1 Queen's prize was obtained in building construction, 8 passed the examination, 5 Queen's prizes were obtained, and 1 student gained a second class in honours. It affords me great pleasure, to record the success which attended the energy and perseverance of one of our lady students this year: In the competition for Christmas cards instituted by

Messrs. Hildesheimer and Co., Miss Alice C. Swan was successful in obtaining 1 of the £50 prizes for her designs. Some, sets of her designs were purchased at the exhibition held in the Egyptian Hall, and she has had also several and valuable commissions for designs from other publishing firms. This, I consider, illustrates in a very practical manner the benefit to be derived from an earnest, painstaking and intelligent study of art. Your Worship most kindly gave the usual amount of money to be expended in Mayor's prizes. These have been supplemented by the committee, and the competition has been quite as earnest as in many preceding years. Works have been sent to London, divided into 11 stages, viz.—5 for the morning, and 6 for the evening class. 26 prizes were awarded, and the examiners reported most favourably on the character of the works. The subject for Professor Armstrong's silver medal was, at my request, changed this year to a study of a head from life, shaded in chalk. This has enabled a larger number of students to compete. 20 works were sent in for competition, and the medal was awarded to Mr. Hugh Charde. The works of Mr. O'Meara were recommended as being "highly meritorious," and honourable mention was made of Messrs. Baker and Scully. There are two great wants in Cork connected with the study of art—the first is a building properly constituted for the purpose of study. I am happy to state that considerable progress has already been made towards the realisation of a new school. It is only those who have to study in the wretched building now available can appreciate its many defects. The second want can only be supplied gradually, and that when a school has been obtained; but I have carefully watched the effect of two or three students who have taken a journey to London in the summer for the purpose of seeing the exhibitions and the national competitive drawings from other schools of art, and the evidence of the advantages so derived has been so manifested in their works that I am tempted to suggest to the committee the desirability of offering as a very valuable prize for competition amongst the students of this school a sum of money to enable one or more to go to London each year, and spend a week or a fortnight in visiting and studying the various exhibitions. I believe if the details of this scheme were carefully wrought out, a considerable impetus would be given to the art education of this city. In conclusion, while I can testify to a great improvement in the character of the works executed in the school, yet I am not content with this. I wish the progress to be continuous. I fear we are too much inclined to be content with what we have already gained, and that sufficient heed is not given to the fact that other schools are working earnestly. The standard of art has greatly risen, and will continue to rise, throughout the country; and if we do not improve, we must decline. I notice that students apparently forget that art is most exacting in the amount of study it requires and the time and attention it demands. I would, therefore, impress publicly on the students the necessity that exists for sustained effort, and a firm resolve that, as other schools progress, so shall we do likewise, and also enter into competition with them on every available opportunity.'

Mr. Robert Scott, in moving the adoption of the report, said he was for many years connected with the School of Art, and he was glad to know the success which the efforts of their pupils had received outside their own country. He pointed to the exhibition of the pupils' works on the walls of the Rotunda, and said these were the results of the labours of the various pupils under the tuition of their talented master, Mr. Brenan.

Mr. Crosbie said the report was a document so clear, so distinct in all its statements, so valuable in its suggestions, that it needed no recommendation from him. There was only one matter just at the end of it which he would mention. Mr. Brenan read with justifiable pride the statistics of prizes that

had been gained by the school, under the extraordinary circumstances of going into the competition with lessened numbers, but in a strain which was not sufficiently often adopted amongst them—a strain of warning rather than of glowing eulogy. He cautioned the students that they must not be led away by those successes into negligence; that they must not think because they succeeded now that they could always succeed, unless they always brought to the task before them the utmost diligence, and appreciate to the full force all the competition which was going on around them. They were here in a comparatively remote little corner of the three kingdoms, and they talked at times rather highly of themselves; but they were only a very small community. They had, no doubt, a fair share of intelligence and a high average of artistic capacity; but they should remember they were labouring under great disadvantages—that they had many privations to contend with; they had the privation of an adequate school, the want of those galleries which more favoured cities in England and Scotland and their own capital possessed, to act as a stimulus to the student, and offer him a model and a standard by which to guide his ideas.

Mr. G. J. Adams said it would be a great source of disappointment to them all that the prizes from Kensington had not arrived, and those now to be distributed would only be those given by the Mayor. The other prizes were on the way, and they would be very happy if the Mayor would come and present them at the school when they arrived.

Mr. Brenan then read the list of prizes.

The usual votes of thanks having been passed, the proceedings were brought to a close.

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