

THE CORK SCHOOL OF ART.

DISTRIBUTION OF PRIZES.

THE annula distribution of prizes to the successful students of the Cork School of Art took place on the 22nd ult., in the Round Room of the Theatre. The Mayor presided, and, having opened the proceedings, explained the object for which they had met there that night.

Mr. Jas. Brennan, R.H.A. (Head Master), read the report :—

The slight falling off in the attendance in the winter of 1880 has been retrieved in the past year, as the number of students on the roll for the year was 269, being an increase of 48, and I am happy to say this increase is likely to be maintained, judging from the number attending the school this winter. 269 students attended the art classes, and 20 the science classes, which are taught in the School of Art; 6 in solid geometry; 6 in machine construction. In the second grade examinations in freehand, geometry, perspective, and model drawing, which were held in May last, 35 students were successful and 10 second grade prizes were awarded for the mark "excellent." In the local advanced art examinations 5 students were successful—1 in advanced architecture, 2 in advanced perspective, and 2 in painting studies from nature. Two National book prizes were awarded at the National Competition at South Kensington, and a third grade prize for works sent up for examination. One free studentship was awarded to Hugh Charde. This student also obtained a prize in the National Competition; he has determined to devote himself to Art as a profession, and he has lately left to prosecute his studies at Antwerp, where he was at once admitted to the School of Painting. I trust a bright future in Art lies before him, and that we shall yet bear of his taking a high place in the artistic world. In the emanations in the Science Division 9 students were successful, 3 in solid geometry, and 2 Queen's prizes, 1 in machine drawing, and 1 Queen's prize, 5 in building construction, and 3 Queen's prizes, one student passing in the Honors Division of this subject. I regret very much that we are so deficient in manufactures, as they would afford an opening for the talent of many students who have no prospect of making a livelihood for their artistic efforts in their native city, and so, year after year, our best students who have determined to devote themselves to Art, leave us for those more favoured localities, where they can hope to win a competency by their exertions. Until we can afford to retain their services here we can only do our best by laying such a foundation as regards good drawing, and painting as shall make their progress easy in that particular branch of Art which each may afterwards select. And as a proof that our students are well able to hold their own when they leave us, and that the foundation laid here is a sound one, I may mention that Mr. Richard Willis, a former pupil teacher in this school, whom many present will remember, won the gold medal for painting at South Kensington this year, and also a silver medal for a design for silversmiths' work. Mr. Henry T. Jones, who succeeded Mr. Willis as pupil teacher, had a picture in the Irish National Exhibition, "The Wounded Poacher," which secured a purchaser. Miss Swan, at present a student in this school, had a picture hung in the Academy Exhibition this year. As regards the subjects of design in the *Irish Builder* Competition for architectural designs, Mr. Daniel Synan obtained two prizes, and Mr. Richard Good one. Mr. Louis Roche won the first prize offered [through the *Irish Builder*] by the Buckley Tile Company, Cheshire, for a design for a Greek vase to be manufactured in terra cotta, and of which I hope to be able to exhibit a manufactured example at our next exhibition. Lastly, within the last week, in the competition for designs for Irish point lace, offered by Mr. Vincent Scully in connection with the Irish National Exhibition, Miss C. C. Beatson was awarded the first prize of £10. In the subjects I have just mentioned, the competition was thrown open to all Ireland. These facts tend to prove that the faculty of designing is not wanting in our students, and that what we require are good opportunities for turning this faculty to practical account. The usual amount of money was placed at the disposal of the Committee for "Mayor's Prizes." The awards were made by one of the Department's Examiners in London, and the stages were made as comprehensive as possible, so as to give encouragement to all classes of the students; eleven stages were represented in the competition, and the number of works sent forward for examination was 80. Professor Armstrong renewed his kind gift of a silver medal for the best head from life. Thirty-four drawings were sent for examination, and the medal was awarded to Achilles Bradish for a set of three heads. The works

Miss Beatson and Miss Woodroffe were commended. Drawing from life is a most useful study. It causes the student to work with an energy and determination that is certain to develop good results, and I wish the circumstances of the school were such that a life class could be maintained throughout the year; and this leads me, in conclusion, to speak once more of the present premises and their great unsuitability for the purposes to which they are devoted. The students and myself look forward earnestly to the time when we shall have a building with all the modern appliances for the pursuit of Art, when Cork shall have its public picture and statue gallery, in which, from day to day, the work of educating a people already full of artistic instincts shall proceed silently and quietly, but none the less effectually.

Mr. Robert Scott, in moving the adoption of the report, said he had to congratulate the master of the school and all concerned, on the result of the past year's working. It was unnecessary for him to indulge in praises of the master of the school, for his great services in connection with the School of Art had been demonstrated for a number of years past. The speaker referred to the great want of technical education in this country as compared with continental countries. He gave as an instance the fact that in an ironworks in Liege, where 10,000 workmen are employed, and £400,000 a-year paid in wages, 2,000 of the employees attended in the evenings a school attached to the establishment, where the instruction was given free, and anyone who should attend the instruction in the evening, and did not, was at once dismissed from the employment. Having complimented Mr. Colbeck on establishing science classes in connection with the Literary and Scientific Society, he concluded by referring to the great success of Mr. Matthew Mullins, in Cork, in the art of carriage building, who had taken the best prizes among competitors of the whole kingdom, and who had received a letter that day from the Carriage Builders' Association of England, asking him to become a member of the association. They ought to feel a pleasure in knowing that Mr. Mullins got his training in the school.

Mr. Thomas Crosbie seconded the adoption of the report. It recorded a number of successes which were the best passport to favour amongst those who were interested in the success of the school. He had listened with perhaps almost as much pleasure to the applause which had greeted every announcement of success as the successful students themselves; because it was a pleasant thing to know that while they were doing good things in Art, it was also gratifying to see, that those who were competitors with the successful candidates were proud of their successful rivalry. It was a good thing to be great in Art but it was almost a better thing in a community to be generous in the recognition of ability, even where that ability had been fortunate, as they might suppose, at their own expense.

Mr. George Adams said he had been deputed by the ladies of the Cork School of Art present and many former pupils to make a presentation to Mr. Brennan. He then read the following letter, which accompanied the presentation, which consisted of a beautiful and valuable set of Crown Derby china :—

Cork, 22nd Dec.

DEAR MR. BRENNAN—We beg your acceptance of the accompanying present as a slight token of gratitude for your unvarying kindness from your present and many of your former lady pupils. Wishing you a happy Christmas, we are, on behalf of the pupils, sincerely yours, C. M. Shannon Crawford. Ellie Exham, France J. M'Mullen, E. Woodroffe, Ladies' Committee.

Mr. Brennan returned thanks for the presentation, which was quite unexpected, and he bore testimony to the great kindness and assistance he had always received from the committee of the school as well as from the secretary.

The Mayor said that any compliment that would be paid to Mr. Brennan would not be undeserved, and as the ladies of the school had that night taken the initiative, he hoped the gentlemen would follow.

The prizes were then distributed by the Mayor.

Mr. Denny Lane proposed a vote of thanks to Professor Armstrong for having given a silver medal to the school for the past five or six years, and he did so with the greatest pleasure, because he and Professor Armstrong differed as to what was the proper limit of the Classic. Professor Armstrong thought it referred only to the Greek and Roman type, while he (Mr. Lane) believed that the truly Classic was the highest class of every type and age, and, at the present moment they had types which were as highly inspiring to the human imagination as any that had ever lived in the times of the Greek Tragedians and the Roman Poets. He believed that a cardinal error had been made in trying to limit such a school as theirs to a mere school of design for manufactures; for, in order to design a vase well, or even an ordinary garden pot, or a saucepan, a student should know something about the human figure. He believed the great defect among the young men of Cork was want of ambition, and he thought the tendency of some of the teaching in the School of Art in limiting the designs to those of manufactures had been to narrow the ambition of the pupils; and he ventured to say that if the great Cork artists of former days had been trained on such narrow lines they would never have reached the eminence they did, and which shed a lustre on the country.

Alderman Hegarty seconded the resolution, which was adopted.

Mr. Crosbie having been called to the second chair, a vote of thanks was passed to the Mayor, and the proceedings terminated.

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