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Editor and Publisher
2 East 29th Street, New York
PORTRAIT OF WILLIAM HENNING, THE SCULPTOR
DAVID OCTAVIUS HILL
PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITIONS

The marked astuteness and evasiveness of the Scribes and Pharisees who write politic opinions regarding activities in pictorial photography in America each year, demand an antidote, hence we are constrained to chronicle here, in the order of their appearance, some exhibitions that have been conducted during the past few years:

The Newark Museum . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1911
The Montross Galleries, New York . . . . . . . . . 1912
The Ehrich Galleries, New York . . . . . . . . . . 1914
The Royal Photographic Society, London . . . . . 1914
The Ehrich Galleries, “Old Masters” . . . . . . . . 1914
The Rosenbach Galleries, Philadelphia . . . . . . . 1915
The Panama-Pacific Exposition . . . . . . . . . . . 1915
The Monthly One-Man Exhibitions at Brooklyn Institute of Arts
The Pittsburgh Academy (to follow)

These exhibitions represent the efforts of men and women whose desire is to originate something and to express it with sincerity in a simple and characteristic manner. This is all they ask. They do not aim at aesthetic perfection. Who cares to be perfect? They do not imitate the uniformity of style common to many painters. Who would follow so ancient a custom? They represent the medium of photography as it is intelligently applied in an expressive sense.

So that we may encourage the ambitious photographer to indulge in the exercise of thought as justification for the exposure of a plate to light, we shall have pleasure in stating later, detailed arrangements that have been perfected toward duplicating these exhibitions in Universities and in Museums throughout the country, where the work may be studied leisurely from an educational viewpoint.
OLD MASTERS IN PHOTOGRAPHY

Clarence H. White

Much has been said concerning the exhibition of Old Masters in Photography, held at the Ehrich Galleries in New York. By Old Masters is meant Dr. Thomas Keith, "Lewis Carroll," D. O. Hill, and Julia Margaret Cameron.

Some of the critics of this exhibition have been just, while others, who in their surprise knew not what to say, were very cautious in the expression of their opinions. Those there were who thought the work of these artists overrated: that the picturesque costumes were responsible for the interest in the photographs. I do not believe this is so, for it will be recalled that the sitters to these photographers were eminent and practical men and women of their day who were not given to effects in costumes.

The problems of these workers were similar to those of the present day photographer, and the results would reveal that the work was done with the greatest possible consideration for the decorative effect of the portraits as well as the characteristics of the subjects. Simple problems were selected so that their sitters seemed always at ease, and from their work we can also learn valuable lessons both in restraint of size of print and in restraint of dramatic effect. The exhibition also places before the younger worker, standards of artists' work in pure photography, which should inspire them to do great things in their own way.

While some questions have been raised as to the influence these workers have had on those of today, for my own part I must confess an influence on my work inspired by Mrs. Cameron's "Dalmatian Maid," a copy of which I saw in the days of my early efforts.

We recognize, however, in the prints which Coburn made from Hill and Keith's original paper negatives, the progress photography has made, since these prints are very much more beautiful than the originals, because of the elasticity of the medium of today.

As Coburn rightly says in a preface to the catalogue, "Compared with the average professional work of today, we seem to have been progressing backwards these seventy years." How consoling it is to think, however, that the progress of photography is left, not in the hands of calculating professionals, but in those of the amateur whose sincerity of approach has made photography become indeed a medium of personal expression. This is why we are glad to see these "Old Masters" and this is why we thank those who allowed us such an opportunity.

Concluding, I should like to say that the appeal of photography to the artist has never been more forcibly expressed than in the work of D. O. Hill, who was at first content to employ it merely as a means of aiding him in his art expression of painting; but it is his photography that proved him to be an artist and not his painting.
AND ENID SANG

JULIA MARGARET CAMERON
TELEGRAPH POLES

WALTER BENINGTON
BRITISH PICTORIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

THE FIRST PART

Alvin Langdon Coburn

The art of the camera is very young when one considers Egyptian sculpture or even Italian frescoes, but even so it can boast of several “old masters,” and its beginnings date back to 1843 when David Octavius Hill, in his studio on the slopes of the Calton Hill in Edinburgh, made his remarkable series of portraits of the notable people of his day. Hill was a portrait painter and a member of the Royal Scottish Academy, and having undertaken to make a historical group of five hundred people, he was advised by a friend to adopt the then new process of photography to help him in his undertaking. He secured as his assistant, Robert Adamson of St. Andrews, a young chemist, who was responsible for the technical side of the process. Hill was therefore the first painter to use photography as a prop to the memory, and strangely enough, although his paintings are almost forgotten, his photographs remain the object of the amazed admiration of photographers of today.

Although Hill started photography for the sake of its recording powers, he continued it for its own sake, and in spite of his cumbersome apparatus and exposures, which must have lasted sometimes for five minutes, he was able to produce work which has placed him in the front rank of pictorial photographers. His portrait of William Henning the sculptor, is one of his finest achievements. The half tone block was engraved from a platinum print which I made from Hill’s original paper negative, and I do not think it has been previously reproduced or exhibited.

Julia Margaret Cameron did not begin to photograph until 1865 and there is no reason to suppose that she ever saw any of Hill’s work. She was over fifty when she received her first camera as a present from her daughter when she married. “It may amuse you, mother, to try and photograph during your solitude at Freshwater” was the message which accompanied the gift, and we of this later age should be very grateful to that happy chance which started Mrs. Cameron on her career, for her series of portraits are certainly among the most interesting achievements of photography and her sitters include all the best brains and culture of her period.

Although, technically, her work was not always perfect, she was artist enough to realize a fine effect of light, and her generous nature made her beloved by everyone. Her original silver prints have very nearly all faded to a pale yellow color, except those which have been preserved in books, and even some have been partially discolored by the mountant, but there is something very beautiful about a faded silver print. It has something ethereal about it, and the picture which is here given, is from one of those exquisite originals.

These two then, Hill and Julia Cameron,
are the “Old Masters” of photography. They have gone now many years, but their spirits still remain with us in their work. It is very interesting, and a little difficult to understand, how, with a mechanical medium like photography, they were able to leave behind so much of their personalities.

All the other artists that I shall mention are alive: some of them very much alive, and I will therefore take them in alphabetical order.

J. Craig Annan, of Glasgow, is known wherever pictorial photography exists, and his charming personality is admired and respected by all who have the pleasure of his acquaintance. Annan was born at Hamilton near Glasgow in 1864, and his father was a photographer and a friend of Hill’s. In 1882 he went to Germany to study the then secret process of photogravure and he was the first in England to practise it. Some of his best exhibition prints have been in this process, and the reproduction, “A Franciscan, Venice” was engraved from one of his gravures. This picture is typical of Annan at his best, and I rank it with his “Lombardy Ploughing Team,” “Stirling Castle,” and “Janet Burnett,” as among the indisputable masterpieces of our art that have never been surpassed in dignity of conception and finish of technique. In photogravure he has found himself perfectly. In my opinion platinum and photogravure are the two most adequate means of interpreting a photographic negative, combining as they do permanence with subtlety of tone rendering. Annan is a remarkable man, and with it all he is as simple and unassuming as are most men who really accomplish things. Above all things, he is a sound craftsman, a very refreshing trait in these days of slipshod indifference to the technical beauties of photography.

Malcolm Arbuthnot’s early work, I remember, was very strongly influenced by Horsley Hinton, but later he adopted more modern methods. He perfected a Gum Bichromate process, and was one of the most enthusiastic workers it has ever been my fortune to meet. All day long, through the rain and mud, I have known him to wander in search of pictures, and far into the night he would work in the dark-room to the utter despair of his family. Having a great fondness for the sea, he has given us pictures of ships and docks that show an intimate knowledge of these matters. Some of his pictures have a whiff of salt air about them which is altogether enjoyable. Later he took up portraiture and his “William Nicholson” I consider one of his best, suggesting as it does to a remarkable degree, the painter and his work.

Walter Benington unites with his photography a keen appreciation of the arts of the Far East. It was he, first of the artist-photographers, who discovered the beauty of the dome of St. Paul’s as a subject for the camera, and his “Church of England” is a milestone in the history of British photography. His best prints are large multi-coated gums of which “Telegraph Poles” is perhaps one of the most striking. Benington’s work is almost always sombre, as is the London of which he is so fond, and from which his most impressive subjects have been drawn, but they without question possess a dignity that is all their own, and they are so individual that one would recognize a “Benington” anywhere.
MORNING
Archibald Cochrane
As a worker, Eustace Calland is never prolific. An amateur in the best sense of the word, he produces from time to time small prints of a refined character almost invariably full of light. "St. George's, Hanover Square" one remembers with pleasure in this connection, and I consider it one of his best pictures. "The Sweet Shop" is characteristic of Calland at his happiest, and its being reminiscent of Whistler does not detract from its charm. He is always worth while, never vulgar nor commonplace, and he occupies a unique place in the photographic world of Great Britain.

Archibald Cockrane, like Craig Annan is a Scot, who for a number of years has been known for his original and well composed figure compositions. I have a print of his, "Horses Drinking," in my private collection, which is a very able solution of an extremely difficult problem. His pictures always strike a personal note, and he goes his own way, uninfluenced by anyone. His "Morning" is a well balanced arrangement, and in this as in all his work, he seems to know exactly what he wants, and deliberately gets it without any flurry or excitement. One might say his prints have repose, which would partly describe this peculiar charm, but his work is as difficult to label definitely, as is his rather illusive personality. I remember once, after a "Linked Ring" smoker, walking up Charing Cross Road with him; a tall figure with a coat to his heels and a broad brimmed felt hat. We chatted of art and of life, and it impressed me then, as it has often impressed me since, how inseparable a man is from his work, and how an interesting personality always does work of an arresting character, whether it be in poetry, painting or photography.

A PROPHECY NOW FULFILLED

"You have heard of the Daguerreotype. I have the instruments on the point of completion, and if it is possible I will yet bring them with me to Boston and show you the beautiful results of this brilliant discovery. Art is to be wonderfully enriched by this discovery. How narrow and foolish is the idea which some express that it will be the ruin of art or artists, for everyone will be his own painter. One effect, I think, will undoubtedly be to banish the sketchy, slovenly daubs that pass for spirited and learned; those works which possess mere general effect without detail, because, forsooth, detail destroys general effect. Nature, in the results of Daguerre's process, has taken the pencil into her own hands, and she shows that the minutest detail disturbs not the general repose. Artists will learn how to paint, and amateurs, or rather connoisseurs, how to criticise, how to look at nature, and therefore, how to estimate the value of true art. Our studies will now be enriched with sketches from nature which we can store up during the summer, as the bee gathers her sweets for winter, and we shall thus have rich materials for composition and an exhaustless store for the imagination to feed upon."

Extract from a letter written in 1839 to Washington Allston by Dr. S. F. B. Morse, the inventor of Telegraphy, on the discovery of Photography. Dr. Morse was a pupil of Mr. Allston, a painter of great distinction at that time.
PRAYER TO PAN

O Pan, God of the fields and forests, great God of Nature, hear my earnest prayer. Here in the dimness of my poor, little room I stretch out my hands to thee. I look through the dusty, cracked window-pane across the narrow street, but see it not; the belching smoke and musty grime of a busy world fade away and the roar and rattle within the city’s iron gates is hushed. I no longer feel the weight and ache of this tired clay, as I stretch out my hands to thee.

O Pan, let me dream.

Let me dream of some cozy nest in a far-off land, a land of hazy hillsides and purple distances, between high, rising mountains and overhead, vast, rolling, billowy clouds. Let me dream of brooks and trees and wild flowers and ripening yellow grain. Let me hear the whirr of the reaper and the songs of the workers and the soughing of the gentle summer breeze through the swaying elm top and tall locust tree. Let me hear the hum of the honey-gathering bee. Let the odors of moist earth and of blossoms be wafted gently to me on the peaceful evening air. Let me hear the merry laugh of joyous children. Let me dream of love and of sweet sleep and rest.

And yet, O Pan, if it must be that having set my hand to the plough I may not turn back, but must do that which my hand findeth to do in the place where I am; if in so doing only may I live in happiness and bring joy to those about me, hear thou my prayer; let me, Oh, let me dream a little, but let me be content.

Spencer Kellogg, Jr.
PORTRAIT OF WILLIAM NICHOLSON
MALCOLM ARBUTHNOT
Someone has said that “the alphabet is so closely linked up with our everyday life that its very familiarity causes it to be, in a measure, overlooked and neglected.” Who, of all the thousands that daily read letters and words in books and papers, if asked whether they knew their A B C’s would confess that they did not, or if asked to do so, could correctly form or draw a lower-case “g,” or say at once which leg of a capital A or V is the heavier? I have seen, in the works of noted decorators or illustrators, many errors in the formation of letters, and even in the lettering designed by distinguished architects whose study of classic inscriptions should have taught them better than the making of capital A’s, V’s, X’s, etc., with the thick stem wrongly placed.

To letter correctly requires a knowledge of design and a taste developed by study and analysis of beautiful forms. To emphasize the individuality of each character in such a way that nothing in it inclines us to confound it with another, while it still retains its kinship and harmonious quality, is to add to legibility. As the main purpose of letters is to be read, legibility is the most important element; but I believe letters may be beautiful and legible too.

I doubt that there is art in individual letters. A delicately drawn “O” or “S” may be as beautiful as any abstract lines can be, yet letters in combination or singly may be satisfying, and in a well-composed and placed page may be even beautiful as a whole. Art in lettering consists rather in the art to arrange and compose letters in a beautiful way, and not so much in the forms themselves. Of course the letters must be well-shaped and proportioned, well-spaced, harmonious, and fit for the purpose, each the kin of its partner, full of life and character.

It is not necessary for us to know whence the early forms of our alphabet were derived. It is sufficient to know that those we use today are based on early forms and that we have not been able to alter, improve, or add to a single character to make it more legible or more beautiful. We can, however, note with profit the difference between the manuscript hands in use before printing.

The letters shown in this issue are Roman capitals reduced from a rubbing I made in the Roman Forum in 1910. Actual size of the letters is 5\(1/16\) inches high, and were probably cut in stone in the first or second century. These two lapidary forms alone present an opportunity for careful study and analysis. Note the beautiful curves, the variety in thicks and thins, and the handling of the serifs. The curves seem lighter in black, but in the stone the shadows probably added to the apparent weight.

In the next number of Platinum Print I will endeavor to point out and illustrate some characteristic forms of the early scribes as leading up to the forms used by the early printers.
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Edward R. Dickson: Editor and Publisher
2 East Twenty-ninth Street, New York
Alvin Langdon Coburn, Foreign Correspond.
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STUDYING A JAPANESE PRINT
Edward R. Dickson

That which accompanies is a reproduction from
a print by Hokusai, a Japanese who was born in
1760. Hokusai was a master of Ukiyo-ye, the school
which freed Japanese art from the conventions.
In studying this picture, one feels the presence of
a wind of alarming velocity. It has scattered bits
of paper and hats broadcast, and raiments and fig-
ures are swept before it. In the division of his
space-area, Hokusai has placed the preponderance
of weight on the left and balances the same with
objects on the right. The trees attract our atten-
tion immediately and their bending tops carry us to-
toward the leaves, thence to the flying bits of paper,
to the men in the background, until we come to the
large figure at the root of the trees. We are not to
stop here, for the wind continues to sweep us to-
toward the men in the foreground, where our eye
is directed to the large hat in the air, whence it is led
again toward the tops of the trees and back into the
picture in a circular movement.
Hokusai has made this truant hat very large, as
you will observe, because he desires that the eye
should go there and be a stepping stone to the trees.
We may be puzzled at the position of the hatless
figure at the root of the trees; but a closer study
reveals that he is placed with his back toward the
other men in order that his raiment and poise may
be contributing factors to this great wind. With
his face toward them, he would cease to be an oppos-
ing line to the trees, and he would also cease to be
a strong point from which the eye may return into
the picture. With hat on, too disquieting a note
would have been instituted. The little man to the
left in the background, at the intersecting roads, is
used to prevent our departing too hastily.
Follow the lines of the roads, beginning with the
figure near the root of the trees, do they not take
you in a zig-zag manner to the summit of Fuji, down
its steep western slope and back into the print
where the artist desires you to be?

NOTES

The Second Annual Pittsburgh Salon of National
Photographic Art will be presented by the Photog-
aphic Section of the Academy of Science and Art,
Pittsburgh, Pa., in the galleries of the Carnegie
Institute of that city. The exhibition, which opens
during the month of March, will represent the work
of some of the leading pictorialists of America, and
it will also be reviewed for our readers in another
issue. For particulars you may communicate with
O. C. Reiter, 2424 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa.

The possessors of Volume I, Number 1, are re-
mined that their subscriptions expire with this
number and that we shall be very glad, indeed, to
see practical signs of their support for another year.
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We are unable to furnish copies of Volume I,
Number 6, on the Nude in Photography, the edition
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ment which so many of our readers have experi-
cenced. Our future numbers will all be on special
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