

The Canterbury Society of Arts Exhibition.

BY LEAFLET.

OVERS of art, living in New Zealand, have more than one cause for regret, when considering the improvement, or the reverse, to be noticed in our Annual Art Exhibitions; not the least of which is the fact that distance separates the chief centres so widely, and breaks up what should be one good exhibition into numerous secondary shows. Another cause for regret is, that so soon as our promising young art students arrive at a period when their productions can not only please us, but make us proud of their proficiency, they leave our shores to seek a wider scope for their budding ambitions, and a more competent school than we can possibly offer; and so it is that, year after year, we are pleased and yet disappointed at the result of our year's work amongst the artists. We never seem to get any further advanced, for after all is said, our exhibition is little more than an exhibition of students' work. As such we are proud of it, but as an art exhibition the result is very disappointing. I have not had the privilege and opportunity of comparing our Christchurch exhibitions with those in other centres, but I presume they are all very similar, and have the same merits and demerits in common.

I hope to be able in a short space to give a slight notice of some of the best pictures hung in our gallery for exhibition this year.

The Art Gallery is situated in one of the prettiest parts of Christchurch, opposite those charmingly interesting buildings, the old Council Chambers, better known as the Government Buildings, which I love to think of as still peopled by the early law-makers

of Canterbury, the little band now growing so thin. The gallery, which is built of brick, is very largely due to the enterprise and energy of the late secretary, Captain Garcia, who gave his extensive art knowledge so courteously and so freely to the furtherance of art in our city. It is not very decorative from an outside point of view, but I hope that I may live to see, hanging on the walls of the permanent gallery, many examples of the best of modern art.

I have often wished that some arrangements could be made for the temporary exchange of pictures with Dunedin, Auckland and Wellington, to enable students to profit by seeing the best examples possessed by the various societies, to say nothing of the extra pleasure which might be thus given to the art-loving public.

We want to see more work by English and Continental artists, and if the societies of New Zealand would join forces in this respect, much lasting good would be done. Good work not only serves as a guide to those who are floundering in a hopeless whirlpool of ignorance and incompetence, but it educates the public taste to appreciate and love what is good and true in art. It is always sad to me to notice the class of pictures which almost invariably sell during these exhibitions. It is not the best, but the pictures which are painted with a view to catch the eye. Of course this is not always the case, but in the majority of instances it most certainly is.

Perhaps few of the paintings in the gallery this year created more interest than those sent by Miss Stoddart. It is interesting to note the effect study in England has had upon her work. Of the eight which she exhibited seven sold, which speaks for itself