

Transactions

OF THE

BANFFSHIRE FIELD CLUB.



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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1932.

An interesting evening was spent by the members of Banffshire Field Club this evening, when, under the chairmanship of Sheriff More, Mr H. Holman, Banff, spoke on the development of the magic lantern and of the home cinematograph, and at the close showed many fine views on the screen.

For early hints in connection with his subject, Mr Holman went to experiences in Italy in the 16th century and there he also found early hints of what in course of the centuries came to be the lantern slides. For long it was regarded as quite a mystery and as late as 1831 Sir David Brewster styled it the magic lantern. It was recalled that in 1666 Pepys wrote in his diary how he "came by agreement with Mr Reeves, bringing me a lantern with pictures on glass to make strange things appear on a wall; very pretty." Mr Holman traced the system of photography on paper, the credit of which is given to Fox Talbot, and spoke of discoveries in the art made by the Swedish chemist, Sheele, noting how from that time it took 92 years to bring photography to its full development and to a commercial importance that is extending every day. He traced the progress also made in the 19th century with dissolving views, limelight projection and other features of lantern work and pointed to how there had been discovered the first principles of the moving pictures. He reviewed briefly the career of George Eastman, the founder of the Kodak Coy., and related some incidents of life in the film city of Hollywood. He emphasised the evils of some varieties of films and stated his belief that gifted men and women would in coming days use their ability to produce pictures of a high order and representing what was noble and beautiful in life.

Mr Holman sketched in particular the career of a Banffshire man who gained an outstanding position as a photographer and artist, G. W. Wilson. His father, who had been a sergeant in Wellington's army, settled down

on a small farm near the school of Forglenn. His son George learned the trade of a carpenter in Turriff and soon made his mark as an artist. Many of his pictures are to be seen in the district and all that Mr Holman had seen were well and faithfully painted. He opened a photographic studio in Crown Street, Aberdeen, and for twelve years held the supreme honours in Great Britain in landscape and portrait photography. Among the last honours that he won was a gold medal at Brussels for a profile head of Princess Beatrice. His portraits would still compare with the best work of to-day as would also his stereoscopes and lantern slides. In a concluding word Mr Holman stated his belief that in coming days, with electric light so general, home cinema projectors would become as common as the hand camera, providing a real pastime for old and young in the long winter nights.

Interesting as Mr Holman's remarks had proved and highly appreciated as they were, even greater pleasure was derived from the long series of lovely views he projected on the screen. They came from all three divisions of the kingdom and were all characterised either by individual beauty or associated interest. Many of the Irish slides were the work of Mr Wilson which had been bought at a sale by Mr Holman, and although they were sixty or so years old Mr Holman averred they were as good as any from France, Germany, or America to-day. Not the least appealing of the series was found in the large number of local views by Mr Holman himself, all showing the possession of an artistic eye and the ability to convert the views into striking and highly effective lantern slides. This magic lantern night was thoroughly enjoyed.

A vote of thanks to Mr Holman for all his trouble and goodness in the matter was passed with enthusiasm on the call of the president.