

Photographic Notes

Photographic Developers.

G. A. Le Roy observes that the reducing power of alkaline peroxides, or of hydrogen peroxide, in aqueous solution, is capable of exerting itself upon the bromide or chloride of silver in gelatin emulsions employed on dry photographic plates, after those salts have been exposed to the action of light. The intensity of the reduction effected is proportional to the extent of the luminous action upon the exposed surface. Such solutions, therefore, are capable of revealing latent photographic images obtained by means of dry plates. At the same time the alkaline peroxides are inferior in that respect to the developing agents usually employed in photography, and require the time of exposure to be prolonged. Moreover, the developed image, formed by metallic silver and its oxides, loses its intensity to some extent in the hyposulphite or sulphocyanide solutions used as fixing baths.—*Comp. Rend.*

A Dark Room for Amateurs.

Although the beginning of amateur photography in the United States dates back but a few years, there are estimated to be already in this country more than one half a million of persons, both young and old, who own cameras. They form an enormous constituency. They are, moreover, as a rule, persons who are at least comfortably well off, and many of them belong to our very richest families. There trade is as desirable as any that could be had, and the wise druggist is he who does all he can to get it.

It is the pleasure of *The Spatula* to propose this month an inexpensive method by which the amateurs may be successfully baited, and, we believe, a large portion of their trade secured. It is by the establishment, wherever practicable, of dark rooms for the free use of this class of persons. We have it upon the authority of one of the largest photographic houses in the United States that there are not in the whole country more than one thousand places where facilities are offered for the changing of dry plates, and that most of these are inaccessible to the ordinary amateur photographers.

The fitting up of a dark room does not involve any considerable outlay; it simply means the setting apart of a small room and the supplying of a ruby lamp, and keeping the same clean and always ready for use. If at every druggist's, a dark room was so placed, at the disposal of the amateur photographer, and a stock of plates and other necessary materials kept on hand, there is but little doubt the amateur would avail himself of the opportunity to reload his plate holders, and without doubt, purchase his materials from the same obliging druggist.

The profits in photographic materials are not enormous, but they are sufficient to more than cover expenses, and to build up a trade in this stock, it is not necessary to carry any large supply of goods; but the druggist should certainly have on hand those things that are essential to the photographer. "We have come to look upon the druggist's as the place of all others to go for postage stamps. If now," says the authority to whom we have above referred, "the photographer could with equal certainty, apply there for permission to change his plates, there is but little doubt that in a short time he would go there for his materials.

"It is a side line, which might well be fostered, as it would bring both pleasure and profit to him who undertook it. It is not necessary that developing materials should be supplied in the dark room, or even that development should be allowed there. In fact, this should be rather discouraged than otherwise; but a dark closet, in which is a safe ruby lamp, would be a great boon to many thousand amateur photographers, who daily pass such drug stores, and who daily wish for a place in which to change their plates."—*The Spatula.*

Kola and Its Uses.

Last Tuesday's issue of the *Free Press* contained a Washington dispatch to the effect that an official report bearing upon the cultivation and preparation of the kola nut had just been received by the state department from the United States consul at Sierra Leone. This is the first response to a call issued to all United States consuls in Africa for specific information regarding kola. The kola nut is the product of a tree which grows wild in that portion of the western coast of Africa comprised between Sierra Leone and the Congo. The tree is distributed over a comparatively limited territory, but where climatic conditions are favorable it may be found five or six hundred miles from the sea coast. Schweinfurth, the famous explorer, found it as far inland as seven or eight hundred miles, but it is more than probable that such growths were the result of cultivation. Kola in its wild state is apparently unknown upon the eastern coast of Africa, as none is found there except such as has been transplanted by the English, who have also introduced it in the West Indies, Ceylon, Demerara, Sydney, Brazil and other South American countries. It has been freely cultivated in Jamaica, and has recently been introduced into the French colonies, Gaudaloupe, Cayenne, Cochin China and the Gaboon. In addition to the cultivation of kola in the British colonies, it has also been carefully cultivated at Kew gardens and thence distributed to other botanical collections, including those at Cambridge, Mass., and Washington, D. C. There has, however, been no systematic effort to cultivate it in the United States, although the soil and climate of certain

portions of California and the gulf states are said to be admirably adapted for the purpose.

If we are to believe all that is said of the wonderful properties of the nut, kola culture in this country should prove a profitable industry. Explorers of the "Dark Continent," from the middle of the sixteenth century to the present time, have given vivid descriptions of the tree and its fruit, and of the remarkable properties attributed to it by the natives. Among the more eminent of the explorers who have written upon the subject are Schweinfurth (above mentioned), Rene Caillie, and Griffon du Bellay. It would be easy to multiply quotations showing the remarkable esteem in which the drug is held as a tonic stimulant by the natives of western Africa. There is no analogous product in the vegetable kingdom in that part of the world which occupies so important a relation to the social or dietetic economy of the negro tribes, or which constitutes so important an article of commerce there and in the Soudan. While we are compelled to doubt some of the apocryphal reports of early investigators regarding the miraculous properties of the nut, modern scientists have clearly demonstrated the fact that it possesses extraordinary merit as a tonic stimulant. Year by year, its curative powers have become more and more widely known. It has been tested in the practice of eminent physicians, with the result that it has established itself, with both the profession and public, as one of the most valuable medicinal agents known to science.

Kola is both a necessity and a luxury to the inhabitants of a large portion of Equatorial Africa, where the fresh seed is employed as a masticatory with a view to overcoming fatigue, hunger and thirst, while the dried seed is made useful as an aliment. The former is in great demand, but tribes far remote from the coast will often trade an equal weight of gold dust for even dried kola. Tea and coffee, though containing some of the principles which characterize the kola nut, have no charm for the natives, who will constantly nibble at the latter while gathering coffee berries.

Carefully dried, reduced to an impalpable powder and served with honey and milk, kola makes an agreeable beverage which is said to equal in flavor, and excel in nutritive qualities, the finest coco.

Capt. Binger, a prominent explorer, speaking of the Bobodioulossou, says that he noticed women manufacturing various articles out of cotton and bleached pineapple leaves which had been colored with the red juice of the kola, red lead, and indigo.

In the social, political and religious customs of the natives, kola performs an important function. For instance, when a young barbarian becomes weary of single blessedness he sends, with his appeal to the mother of his chosen one, a package of the white kola seed and awaits the result with fear and trembling. If the white kola be returned, the youth realizes