

ing processes conducted, in Egypt; and the display certainly illustrates the marked progress which that country has made under the unscrupulous but sagacious Mehemet Ali.

CHROMATIC OR COLOUR PRINTING.

By little and little the art of printing in colours has arrived at great perfection. One single colour, if well printed, was accounted a feat in bygone times; now, the diversity of colour is almost unlimited. The colour may be mixed with oil instead of with water; and the style of the engraving may be almost any one of those adopted for ordinary purposes.

As to the origin of this kind of printing, it is difficult to attribute it to any one inventor; for the simple use of red ink instead of black would, in effect, be colour-printing. There are found to be initial letters, in some of the very earliest printed books, in two colours; these must have been printed at two operations, with ink of two colours. At various times during the last three centuries modes were adopted of producing engraved pictures, not exactly in colours, but in light-and-shade, as if copied from drawings in India-ink or in sepia. Mr. Savage's *Treatise on Decorative Printing*, published rather more than thirty years ago, was one of the first works which gave an impetus to this beautiful art. The fancifully-adorned lottery-tickets (of which the present generation know little, except by tradition) were, under the inventive talent of Mr. Whiting, made another of the means for introducing colour-printing; not pictorial, but typographical. It is not a little remarkable that *playing cards* (which were among the means of introducing woodcut printing four centuries ago) gave also an impetus to the art now under notice. In a former number of this series we have described the mode of making these cards, and have stated that, by Messrs. De La Rue, the cards are printed in *oil-colours*. Now it was only after numerous trials and much expenditure that Mr. De La Rue, about twenty years ago, devised a mode of mixing and applying oil colour which would bear the polishing processes necessary to the finishing of playing-cards. This card-colour printing has been the basis of many subsequent improvements in the art.

Another curious example presents itself to our notice, showing that humble productions illustrate a principle as efficiently as those of greater dignity or rank. Let us select the label of a *blacking-bottle* as an example of a notable advance in colour-printing. We must, of course, begin by duly acknowledging the unrivalled merits of "Day and Martin's incomparable jet;" no matter whether Day is dead, or Martin dead, or both; no matter whether Day and Martin have had merely a hypothetical existence, like Boz's "Mrs. Harris"—it is sufficient to know that this "inestimable composition," has a large sale; and we are further justified in believing it possible that roguish traders (for there may be rogues in blacking as well as rogues in grain) might imitate the label, as a means of sharing in the profits of this "real japan." Now if such were the case, the manufacturers would have a strong inducement to employ a label which would be very difficult to imitate; and this, we believe, is the true history of the colour-printed label found on the bottles sold by the firm in question. It must have been indeed an achievement when that production was brought to light in the infancy of colour-printing. How to produce the lace-work ground-pattern in red ink; and the waving lines in red and black ink; and the white and black and red letters of varied sizes and shapes; and the woodcut of the ambitious Ionic-columned factory in Holborn; and