

business. It has been our watchword, as many of the citizens of Montreal can testify, since we came to this place and commenced taking Sun-Pictures—first as principal operator for Parks, and latterly in the fitting up of our own establishment.

Through the whole time that we have been engaged in Photography (which is about eleven years,) we have been making the business a special study. The extracts from other journals, which we insert in these columns, testify as to our success.

If a new style of picture is discovered which will prove of benefit to society, we shall be prompt in introducing it into Montreal. Opposition we expect, but, by our energy and attention to business, we hope to surmount all difficulties. We are sparing neither time, money, nor trouble to present to the citizens of Montreal, a superior establishment. The Rooms are new, and the light is constructed on the most scientific plan. The chemicals are pure, and the accessories will be according to the wants of the time.

What constitutes a Good Picture.

Many persons think the only necessary qualifications for a good picture are, that it should look like the subject, and be easily recognized. This is a great mistake. A picture may be a perfect resemblance, and yet be devoid of artistic merit. It would be possible to sketch a correct likeness with a whitewash brush on a brick wall, but who would call it a good picture? In like manner it requires something more than to be recognizable, though this is very necessary, to constitute a superior work of Art. To be a good picture, the likeness must be a pleasing one. This quality depends much upon the arrangement of light, and the position given to the subject. It often happens that one view of a face presents a much better appearance than another, and it requires an artist's eye to correctly decide upon this point. Another requisite of a good picture is, that it should denote character; that the artist should so place the person as to bring out in the picture the indescribable something which denotes the cast of the mind, or peculiar habits of the sitter. This can only be learned by experience, and not even then unless the operator be indeed an Artist. The tone or color of a picture should also be good. Its appearance should correspond with the complexion of the sitter. There should be no unnatural shade upon it, or a dark spot in one place, and a light spot in another; but the shades should appear just they would to the close observer of the face. The person of the subject should have a round and full appearance in the picture, standing out as it were, from the background. It should also have an easy and natural position of the body, being destitute of the restrained or stiff appearance, which is too common in pictures. There are other minor points which aid in constituting a good picture, but which are too numerous to allow of record here. The above general requirements will, however, be of benefit to any one who can comprehend them in judging of works of art.

Gleanings from Photographic History.

"Photography," is the name given to the

art of delineating or printing by light, or by invisible rays which accompany the different varieties of light.

This art is one of modern invention, which we owe to M. Nicéphorus Niepce, Mr. Fox Talbot, and M. Daguerre. So early as June, 1802, Mr. Thos. Wedgwood published in the *Journal of the Royal Society* "An Account of a Method of Copying Painting upon Glass, and of making Profiles by the agency of Light upon Nitrate of Silver," with observations by Sir Humphrey Davy. "When white paper or white leather," says Wedgwood, "covered with a solution of nitrate of silver, is placed behind a painting on glass, exposed to the solar light, the rays transmitted through the differently-painted surface produce distinct tints of brown and black, visibly differing in intensity according to the shades of the picture, and where the light is unaltered, the color of light becomes deepest."

Mr. Wedgworth, however, tried in vain to fix the copies which he obtained—that is, to prevent the uncolored portion of the pictures from being darkened by light. His process seems to have excited very little notice.

In 1803, Sir David Brewster called the attention of the public to it in a Scottish journal, but no person seems to have improved, or even repeated the process during the next thirty years. Some time previous to 1834, Mr. Henry Fox Talbot, without any knowledge of what had been done by Mr. Wedgwood, had been led to the same process, and, in the spring of that year, he had actually taken pictures in a camera, by the agency of light, upon paper washed with nitrate of silver, and had succeeded in fixing them. To this new art he gave the name of *Calotype*.

At an earlier period, another branch of photography had taken its rise in France. So early as 1814, M. Niepce had attempted to fix the pictures produced in the camera obscura, and to copy engravings by means of light transmitted through them upon substances made visible to its action. The substances used by M. Niepce was a tablet of copper, coated with highly-polished plate-silver, and he gave to his process the name of *Heliography*.

In the year 1829, M. Daguerre had made experiments with the view of fixing the pictures in the camera, but he seems at that time to have had no definite results.

Having heard of each other's labors, M. Niepce and M. Daguerre entered into a partnership in December, 1829, in order to pursue the study of heliography for their mutual benefit. The processes of the two artists were essentially different. M. Niepce used, as the ground-work of his picture, a thin film of a solution of asphaltum, dissolved in essential oil of lavender, and spread over the clean surface of a plate of silvered copper. After the plate was exposed in the camera about five hours, the picture was developed by covering it with a mixture of one part of essential oil of lavender, with ten parts of oil of white petroleum. In order to produce a better effect, M. Niepce darkened the silver surface with a film of iodine, which no doubt suggested to Daguerre the use of that material in his process. M. Daguerre introduced considerable improvements; and, in the course of his investigation, he discovered, by accident, an entirely new photographic

process; in the success of which M. Niepce did not live to share. He died in July, 1833; and, soon after, a co-partnership was formed between his son, M. Isidore Niepce, and M. Daguerre, in which it was admitted that the process discovered by the latter was essentially a new one, and should be called the *Daguerreotype*, after its inventor, or accidental discoverer.

The accident was in this wise: Daguerre, "working with plates of silver which had been submitted to the fumes of iodine, strove to obtain an image in the camera which should be visible and permanent. Heart-sick with disappointment, he put away in a cupboard, which contained a heterogeneous assemblage of chemicals, his broken spells and charms—the tablets which bore no record of the image to which they had been submitted in the camera. Taking up one of these tablets one day, in order to clean it and recommence experiments upon it, he found, to his surprise, a perfectly delineated picture thereon. The circumstance was incomprehensible; no picture had been there when the plate was put away; but here, in its minutest detail, was the image to which the plate had been submitted. The operation was repeated with like success. A few hours in the magic cupboard produced a picture on the iodized tablet, which showed no trace of anything of the kind before. After long and puzzling search, a vessel containing mercury, a substance which slowly vaporizes at the ordinary temperature of the atmosphere, was found to be the cause. The action of light on the iodide of silver, although not made apparent by any visible change, had actually impressed a latent image on the surface, sufficient to determine the deposition of the vapors of mercury on certain parts where light had acted, and thus bring out and develop a picture."

While these two ingenious Frenchmen were occupied with heliography, Mr. Henry Fox Talbot was, as we have already stated, occupied with the same subject. On the 30th January, 1839, six months before M. Daguerre gave his process to the world, Mr. Talbot communicated his discovery to the Royal Society, and in the following February he published his process of *Photogenic Drawing*, to which he afterwards gave the name of *Calotype*, which his friends changed to *Talbotype*, in imitation of the example set by the friends of Daguerre. In this process, he made paper sensitive to light by nitrate of silver, and fixed the image with common salt.

Notwithstanding the beauty of some of the pictures obtained by Mr. Talbot with the process which he had published, the art was but in its infancy. The discovery of a more sensitive process was necessary; and, after much experimental research, he was led to the valuable photographic method which he secured by a patent, sealed on the 8th Feb., 1841.

The Talbotype process, after it became accessible to the public, underwent numerous improvements by Herschel, Cundell, Bingham, and many others; but the most important improvements were made by M. Victor Niepce, and Mr. Scott Archer, who introduced into photography—the one the use of albumen, and the other that of collodion, as substitutes for the paper used in the Talbotype process.