

## Photographic Notes

NOTES BY A PHARMACEUTICAL CAMERIST.—Photography has but two periods—session and season. In the former all good camerists meet together round lantern-screen and nicotinian shrine to criticize each other's work from the past season, talk bad chemistry and, occasionally, worse physics, and prophesy in regard to the coming season. Well, the session is practically over now, and the 1895 season has commenced. To many others in the trade besides myself this means a fresh period of pleasure and pecuniary profit. It would never do for the pharmacist to speak of all his wares from personal experience; but it is essential that the pharmacist who deals in photographic goods should know how to take a photograph, and most of the tricks and touches which help to make the photograph better than nature and the lens will allow. I maintain that amongst the best assistants to the amateur photographer (whose fancies the chemist particularly cultivates) is the retail chemist and druggist. My object is to help the latter, as far as I can, by noting things that are new in the way of apparatus and materials—notions that are new and of which no one person is the individual repository; therefore, I shall be glad if any pharmaceutical camerist will communicate to me for publication in this column ideas which he has found to be useful in cultivating the photographic trade. Perhaps, it may be an improved formula for a developer, or what not; it may be a difficulty solved, or which requires solution—anything, in short, practical and useful in photographic trade.

Every time I go to Canterbury I try to get good plates of those rare old stained-glass windows for which the cathedral is noted, and I have never been proud of my success; there is so much blur in the plates from halation—that eternal bugbear which spoils many an otherwise perfect picture. It generally happens, too, that the pictures sacrificed to halation are those which one cannot coat with a composition, because they are carried in the hand-camera. Once I was in that fix at the top of Ben Nevis; hence I never show my picture of the interior of the observatory there. I, therefore, welcome the appearance of anti-halation plates. These are made by R. W. Thomas & Co. (Limited), Thornton Heath, according to Oakley's method, for which patent protection is asked. I tried these plates during the Easter holidays, and the results are excellent. My plan was to try the anti-halation and ordinary plates with the same light and same time, and where with the ordinary plate I got beautiful examples of halation, with the Oakley-Thomas plate I had precise pictures. My only objection to the new plate is that it prints somewhat slowly; but better that than no print at all. The plates are made medium and ultra rapid, and require no special

manipulation, except that the alum-bath must not be omitted on any account, otherwise frilling takes place. I judge that the anti-halation medium in this case is a galatine film dyed with a non-aetonic crimson dye, and applied to the plate before the sensitive film so that the latter does not mix with the former. Perhaps a few notes on the methods of preventing halation may be useful at the beginning of the season. The common way is to use any backing such as *Trape's Backing Preparation*, which is much in request:

Mucilage..... 5j.  
Catalpel..... 5j.  
Burnt sienna (ground in water)..... 5j.  
Well mix, and add spirit..... 5j.

The method of using is to place a portion on the back of the plate and distribute evenly by means of a squeegee. The coating is then either allowed to dry or a piece of paper is placed over it before putting into the dark slides. The preparation should be put up in collapsable tubes, holding about 4 oz., and retailed at 1s. Before developing the backing has to be washed off with a damp sponge. A much better preparation is "anti halation fluid," the formula for which is:

Hard soap (in fine shavings)..... 3ss.  
Spirit..... 5v.

Digest at a temperature not exceeding 70° F., agitating occasionally for seven days. Filter, and dissolve in the filtrate:

Erythrosin..... gr. 1.  
Aurin..... " 1.

Paint on the back of the plate with a large camel's-hair brush, and allow to dry.

The great advantage of this fluid is its quick-drying property and the fact that it does not require to be removed before developing, as its presence in the developer is rather beneficial than otherwise on account of its deep ruby color. It should be put up in 2-oz. bottles, which sell at 1s.

*Backing Papers* consist of pieces of ruby or black paper cut a trifle smaller than the plate. They are intended to be stuck in optical contact with the back of the plate. Some are sold ready gummed, and only require wetting and squeegeeing to the glass. Papers are not so effectual generally as the methods described above. It is worth remembering that when halation has occurred, the dense portions can be much reduced by rubbing with a piece of lint moistened with methylated spirit.

Elliott's Barnet bromide paper is one of the newest printing-papers, and is so easily worked that it is sure to give satisfaction when recommended to customers—at least that is my experience. It has a pleasing matt surface, and, when finished, closely resembles a platinum print. It only requires an exposure of a few seconds to an ordinary gas flame. The best developer to use is metol, which does away with the acid-baths necessary with ferrous oxalate. The formula is:

A.  
Metol..... gr. 50  
Sodium sulphite..... 5j.  
Potassium bromide..... gr. vj.  
Water..... 5v.

B.

Potassium carbonate ..... 5j.  
Water..... 5v.

For use, mix 3 parts of A with one of B. Well fix in "hypo," 4 oz. to the pint.

I notice that a correspondent of the *Amateur Photographer* strongly recommends amidol for bromide-paper generally. His directions are: Dissolve 50 grammes of sodium sulphite in 1 litre of water, making a 5 per cent. solution; take 100 grammes of this, and add ½ gramme amidol; 4 or 5 drops of 10 per cent. solution of bromide potassium may be added. In portraits on Eastman's platino-bromide paper, the most splendid velvety black is produced. The addition of water produces greyer tones.—*Chemist and Druggist*.

STANDARD PHOTOGRAPHIC SIZES.—The "whole-plate," the "half-plate" (more than half the size of a "whole-plate"), and the "quarter plate," less than half the size of a "half-plate," had, we have been told, their origin in the days of the daguerreotype, the dimensions being those of the sizes of certain standard plates of copper. Whatever may be the origin of them, the fact remains that we have with us certain "standard photographic sizes," and, further, that the existence of these standard sizes has been, and is, highly detrimental to photography as art, whether "decorative" or "fine." . . . There is a difference between standard sizes of plates and standard sizes of prints. In the matter of plates, it is a question merely of convenience. The size of the plate ought not of necessity in any way to decide that of the print, but the mischief of the thing is that it does. Nine out of ten amateur photographers, apart from "carte-de-visite" and "cabinet" sizes, trim their prints as nearly to the size of the negatives from which they are taken as is practicable, with the result that the standard sizes of plates determine the dimensions of prints. . . . The modern custom of offering for sale sensitized papers of various kinds, ready cut to standard sizes, has, undoubtedly, had much to do with the evil of which we write. It cannot be too strongly impressed on the photographer that in prints there should be no standard size, nor should there be any attempt to fix a ratio of length to breadth. Each photograph should be treated on its own merits, and anything superfluous should be ruthlessly trimmed from top, bottom, or one side or the other. Although it would seem that, on the average, the length of pictures should be fully 50 per cent. greater than the breadth, it does not follow that every picture should be at least half again as long as it is broad. Indeed, there are a few subjects that are best treated by a square, or even a circular form.—*W.K.B., in Photography: Pharmaceutical Journal*.