

us, not a single carte picture has been taken in the establishment. Here too, we find Madame Nilsson, not in a frame, but in the flesh; she is looking at some portraits of sister artistes, after undergoing a lengthened sitting. "We have just taken one hundred clichés," our friend whispers, "and within the space of an hour and a half."

Before we walk up stairs, we are presented with a card of terms. Here it is:

12 Cartes-de-visite, 30 francs; the dozen following, 20 francs; 12 cabinet portraits, 80 francs; 6 cabinet portraits, 50 francs; the dozen following, 60 francs; 12 Paris portraits, 120 francs; 6 Paris portraits, 80 francs; the dozen following, 100 francs.

In the Benque establishment, gelatine reigns supreme. "Do you develop at once, or in the evening?" we ask. "Always in the evening—we are now so confident of our results; of those hundred clichés just taken of Madame Nilsson, not one will be developed till to-night." The development is done by artificial light, by means of a gas-burner behind ruby-glass, a convenient tap permitting the photographer to heighten and lower the jet at will. The developing, too, for the most part is done mechanically. As soon as some idea has been obtained of the exposure of the plate, and the time and strength of development, half a dozen clichés are put together in a rocking tray. The developer is poured over the films, and then the tray rocks to and fro by itself, kept in motion by a heavy pendulum that swings underneath. It saves a world of trouble, our host tells us, and produces very uniform results. We always like to take the sense of photographers on the development of dry plates, and we put the question whether pyrogallic or oxalate treatment is preferred. "*Oxalate toujours—Oxalate toujours*" is the energetic reply.

The studio is large and roomy—the largest in Paris, our friend says; at any rate, it measures fifteen meters (nearly fifty feet in length). There is nothing particular to be noted about the lighting; top-light is the dominant light. The walls are of very dark brown, and we remark upon this. They are dark, admits our host; but when they are again painted, we shall color them darker still. Large plates are in general use at the Benque establishment, and large cameras. As a rule, six poses are taken on one plate. We mentioned the other day the circumstances of Madame Judic being portrayed 132 times in this studio at one sitting. She was at the atelier for two hours only, and, during that time, changed her dress four times. Twenty-two poses were taken, of each six clichés, with an exposure of about three seconds. The negatives were developed at night, and there were only two technical failures. "Elle ne voyait plus," when she went away after the ordeal, our host remarked of the fair comedienne. Certainly, such rapid work could not have been undertaken before the days of gelatine. There is no dark room adjacent to the studio; the plates in their slides are sent up a shaft from the laboratory below, and delivered close to the assistant's hand in the studio, after the manner of Messrs. Window & Grove's studio, which we described the other day. The exposures are made by means of the ordinary pneumatic-Cadett shutter.

In the enlarging-room there is one point worth mentioning. The camera is disposed pretty well as usual; but just in front of the transparency is placed a swing looking-glass or mirror, perhaps twenty inches high. This permits, in a most convenient manner, the concentration upon the transparency of light that comes through a small opening in the wall, and if the mirror is turned to its proper angle by hand, the hand being never quite steady, no partial lighting is likely to ensue.

There are two printing rooms, and MM. Benque send the negatives to one or the other, according to their density. Thus in the top printing room, which is on the roof, the denser clichés are to be found, and those which will bear strong light; while in the more subdued light of the lower printing room are located such clichés as require more delicate treatment. From 1,200 to 2,000 prints are produced here every day, for the firm has now a large publishing connection, and their portraits go to every capital in Europe. Printing to this extent would be impossible in a London atmosphere, and for this reason our big metropolitan firms have usually an establishment in the suburbs for the purpose. But in Paris they burn charcoal more than they do coal, and, moreover, when this is used, it is of a much less sooty character than that employed in England.

Starch, prepared fresh every day, is invariably employed for mounting at the Benque establishment; where so much publishing is done it is a matter of imperative necessity that the mounting should be depended upon, especially as black mounts are used just now. We are glad to hear, by the way, that of late these black mounts are more satisfactory than was the case a short time ago. Numerous cases of fading were then rife, and

the cause, as our reader knows, Mr. Spiller was able to trace to the presence in the mount of a considerable quantity of sodium chloride, or common salt. The test to discover this—namely, the adding of a few drops of nitrate of silver solution to water in which one of these has been steeped for some hours, and observing whether any turbidity results—is so simple that any photographer can make use of it for himself.

Besides making itself known through its publication, the firm also adopts the practice of exhibiting its work largely in Paris. The Boissay d'Anglais, although a turning out of the Faubourg St. Honoré, is not a very frequented thoroughfare, and hence visitors to Paris might well escape seeing the studio. MM. Benque et Cie. have therefore opened an exhibition in the Rue Royale, that familiar street leading from the Madeleine to the Place de la Concorde, and here a display of the firm's finest work is exhibited. A *piece de resistance* is always present in the form of a scene from one of the Paris plays. Whatever happens to be popular on the boards for the moment is here illustrated. The boat-scene from Michael Strogoff is the present attraction, a fine enlargement from nature, measuring perhaps three feet across, and including the portraits of half a dozen favorites. Any scene is chosen in which many characters are grouped, and the photograph being well executed, it naturally draws considerable attention. A magnificent portrait of Gounod, another of Judic, and a forcible picture of that Swedish professor with the hard name who discovered the North East passage, are attractions at the little exhibition in the Rue Royale.—*Photographic News.*

SATIN PAINTING IN OILS.

It is beyond our province to teach oil painting in itself, and therefore, if any of our readers wish to undertake it on satin, and have not already mastered its technicalities, our first direction to them will be that they should take one or two lessons in the technicalities of the art, especially as oil painting on satin does not admit of alteration or effacement, and all that has to be done must be resolved on beforehand, and carried steadily through without change.

We will suppose, therefore, that a knowledge of oil painting has been acquired, and that the amateur only wishes to know how to apply it to decorating satin. The requisite materials are oil colors in tubes, small bristle and red sable brushes in tin ferrules, a large palette, and some turpentine, with the usual requisites of palette knife, etc. All materials must be kept scrupulously clean and free from dust, the color must be fresh and pure, and the hands must never rest on the satin, but on a sheet of tissue paper spread over the whole, excepting the part actually being worked upon; and the greatest care should also be taken to avoid any smears or splashes of paint. It saves time to have separate brushes for each color.

Their exact sizes will depend partly on the painter's method of work, and whether its aim is breadth of effect or fineness of detail; but, unless for folding screens or very large work, the higher numbers are useless. Nos. 3, 5, and 7 are useful sizes; 2 may occasionally be required for fine strokes, and 9 for broad leaves, such as water lily or arum. It is best to have two jars of turpentine for rinsing the brushes—the second for the final cleansing—to ensure their being thoroughly empty of color.

The satin must have a perfectly smooth face, and be free from folds. If these are unavoidable, they should be slightly damped and ironed on the wrong side, with a handkerchief or thin paper between, but only the folds themselves must be pressed down, as, when possible, satin should not be ironed. If, when it is held horizontally to the light, the face looks woolly, the piece should be rejected; but, on the other hand, a fine, close make of satin, without any admixture of cotton or thread, is preferable to the richest quality. When two substances are mixed in the same material, one is apt to shrink more than the other; hence arises the wrinkled look which is called "cockling."

When the satin is cut to the required size, it must be pinned out flat on a drawing board, on which a sheet of paper has been laid. Toilet pins will make smaller holes than drawing pins. A large piece of satin, such as a fan leaf should have the pins not less than an inch apart; very small pieces can have one pin at each corner only. Though it must lie perfectly flat, the satin must not be stretched, as the recoil would make the painting uneven. No sizing is required for oil painting, and the next step, therefore, is to sketch the design. If the artist can draw sufficiently well, the better plan is to do this directly on the satin, all danger of soiling it with the transfer paper being