

## Books and Magazines.

To be useful, instructive, and worthy of permanent preservation, is a test whereby the value of any publication may be judged. *Current History* has all these qualities in an eminent degree. Between the covers of this magazine the reader will find every three months a wealth of information on all conceivable questions of interest in all parts of the world—solid, condensed, systematic, and yet presented in readable and attractive form, putting within reach of even the ordinary intellect a clear and comprehensive view of the drama of the world's history as it is being enacted. The present number of 256 pages appears in an attractive new cover. It gives special prominence to the Japan-China war (17 pages and map); Currency problem in the United States; Working of the new Tariff law; *Allianca* incident; Cuban revolt; Hawaiian insurrection; Nicaraguan and Venezuelan imbroglios; Silver question in the United States; Work of the 53rd Congress; Brooklyn Trolley strike; Municipal Reform in New York; Manitoba school question in Canada; Newfoundland crisis; Election of a new President in France; Armenian atrocities; Discovery of Argon; and Antitoxin treatment of Diphtheria. Hundreds of other topics also are fully treated. As a supplement to any list of reference works, it is of constant usefulness and great value. \$1.50 a year; single numbers 40 cents; samples, 10 cents; specimen pages and circulars free. Buffalo, N.Y.: Garretson, Cox & Co., publishers.

In the June number of *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly* the immortal art work of Richard Wagner is set forth in an admirably illustrated article by Mercia Abbott Keith, entitled "Richard Wagner and His Festspiele in Bayreuth," followed by a critical paper on the same subject by M. A. A. Galloway. Charles Edwardes, the well-known English essayist and descriptive writer, contributes to this number a highly picturesque account of the ancient and storm-worn Scilly Islands. In "Kite Flying Extraordinary," Wilf. P. Pond gives some very interesting information about this fascinating sport, and furnishes many curious examples of the application of the kite to practical and scientific purposes.

THE *Delineator* for June contains Summer Fashions, Travelling by Sea and Land, Rose and Violet Culture (Employment Series), Around the Tea-Table, Summer Foods and Dishes, Ohio State University (College Series), Venetian Iron Work (last paper), Kindergarten Papers, Workman as an Artist, Preservation and Renovation, Article on Cleaning Lamp Shades and Oil Paintings, the Newest Books, a Studio F. ty, Lace-Making, etc., etc.

Piperin is not tasteless, says Theo. Wiegler, as can be demonstrated by tasting a hot solution of it.

## Photo-Ceramics : The Fashion for 1895.

We have long recognized, says *The Photogram*, the necessity of some great and general improvement in photography as a profession and a business; and also that amateur photography, if it is to maintain its hold upon and its interest for the public, must be constantly opening fresh fields. On the establishment of *The Photogram*, we determined to put in practice our belief that a trade journal ought to "work as well as preach," and at once undertook such work as we could towards the opening out and popularizing of the most important recent developments of photography.

As the autumn came, we thought we saw an opening for assisting the profession by forcibly bringing to their notice the advantages and possibilities of artificial light photography. This we did by a series of special articles, and by our artificial light exhibition, open during the whole of October, which resulted in the adoption of artificial light by a very large number of photographers all over the country, and many abroad.

For this year we set ourselves a grander task, the reviving and popularizing of that beautiful work, the most exquisite and the least perishable of all the photographic processes, the production of ceramic enamels. We had the matter in hand before even our artificial light show was decided upon, but we worked slowly, because we wished to remove every possible difficulty.

We carefully considered why ceramic work had not been a greater success in the past, and divided the causes into two sections.

(1) It failed to become popular and general with photographers, professional and amateur, because:

(a) The process was largely a secret.

(b) The instructions published were (in some cases, at any rate) unworkable and misleading, which led some who took up the work to abandon it in disgust.

(c) The materials were difficult to obtain, had to be collected from various sources (often difficult to find), and were exorbitant in price, as well as uncertain in quality.

(d) The furnace for firing was an expense and a trouble, while "trade" firing was generally undertaken only as a favor and at an exorbitant price.

(2) It failed to become popular with the public because the few who did work the process successfully considered themselves artists rather than commercial workers, and demanded such prices as made ceramics impossible to others than the wealthiest classes.

Two events have just occurred which have caused us to alter our plans, and to call attention to the matter earlier than we intended. The first is that Messrs. Morgan & Kidd inform us that they have just completed a long course of experimental work, and are prepared to undertake ceramic work for the trade, and that their price list will be ready, and they will

be prepared to push the matter vigorously, about the beginning of May. The second consideration is that the authorities of the Imperial Institute Photographic Exhibition have decided to make a special feature of ceramic work, and have devoted a very large and prominent space to the loan collection illustrating this work, the arrangement of which they have placed in the hands of H. Snowden Ward and E. J. Wail. We expect that ample arrangements for demonstrations will be made in the exhibition. Such an opportunity for pushing the work is not to be missed, so we have hurried forward all our preparations as far as possible, for we believe that, with the assistance of the professional photographers, photographic societies, and the press, the work can be made as popular and as profitable as were the cartes-de-visite in their early days. We know that the photographic press will support the movement, for our contemporaries have often urged the revival of ceramic enamels as a way out of "Darkest Photography." Of the interest of the "lay" press we are assured, especially of that portion which appeals to the ladies, for the art is so extremely beautiful, and has the distinct advantage of being largely patronized by our Royal Family.

Photographers can assist the movement immensely; in fact, it is mostly upon them that its success will depend, and to them that the profits will accrue. We suggest that every professional photographer who needs an attractive novelty should at once obtain specimens from one or other of the trade houses above mentioned. He can also obtain from us, at a very low price, an attractive little booklet. This will be a "stock" line, but will have the photographer's own name on cover, and will only be supplied to one customer in a town, unless two are willing to use the booklet simultaneously. Specimen and prices can be obtained free for one stamp. We also issue a handsome two-color window show-card, a reduced copy of which, with price, will be found amongst our adverts.

Amateur photographers who wish to take an interest in these beautiful processes will find outline working particulars in early issues, and very full instructions in Ethelbert Henry's book upon the subject, which will be very shortly published. If they take up the work, they can hardly fail to be fascinated with it; and by the publicity that they can give to it amongst their friends, at the societies' meetings, etc., they may do a good turn to the professional photographer.

Bitter almond oil oxidizes, with formation of benzoic acid, unless it be kept in full bottles or have 10 per cent. of alcohol added to it, according to Schimmel & Co.

Household or cloudy ammonia is made by dissolving ammonium oleate in liquid ammonia. The process is patented and the name is copyright.