

certainly some interesting experiences to relate. Perhaps the most promising effects had been produced by the addition of hydroxyl-monohydride in varying proportions. He found that a large addition had a decided slowing action, but in moderate quantities its action was very beneficial, especially in enabling the developers to flow freely, and he should now be very sorry to develop a plate without it. Perhaps the best way to employ it was to use it to make up the stock solution of pyrogallic acid with the addition of sulphite. It might be produced by treating anhydrous hydroxyl with nascent hydrogen, the reaction at a high temperature being very energetic, and the result being the pure compound. The commercial article was frequently contaminated with chlorine or carbonic acid in combination with some of the calcium salts, so he advised those who wished to use it to make it themselves. The yellow tint sometimes seen in the home-made article was due to organic matter in solution, but it had no deleterious effect. It should be used freshly prepared, as if kept it underwent decomposition with the liberation of ammonia. He passed round a number of negatives developed by it which were much admired."

We can quite understand Dr. Coxe (if Dr. Coxe in reality exists) being somewhat unwilling to attempt development without this substance, but it is heartless in the extreme to perpetrate such a joke upon the innocent editors of *Photography* and their readers. In our schoolboy days the professor of chemistry in charge of our class used to teach us that hydroxyl-monohydride was but another name for that already well-known ingredient of most developers—water.

Sorrow is not so hard to bear as the thought of sorrow coming. Airy ghosts that work no harm do terrify us more than men in steel with bloody purposes.—*T. B. Aldrich.*

It is an excellent rule to be observed in all disputes, that men should give soft words and hard arguments—that they should not so much strive to *vex* as to *convince* an enemy.

CONCERNING CERTIFICATES.

WANTED.—A first-class retoucher. *No duffers need apply.* Address, with references, specimens of work, and salary required. X

The above advertisement, clipped from the columns of a contemporary of recent date, tends to show very forcibly how necessary is the permanent establishment of a body of men duly qualified to act as a board of examiners, and issue certificates of proficiency to competent assistants presenting themselves for examination in the various branches of photography.

Among the masses of so-called "good all-round hands" and "general assistants," how many could gain even the lowest grade certificate?

And yet there are thousands of men—steady, conscientious workers, who have duly served an apprenticeship and have devoted several years to careful study of chemistry and art—who have to drag out an existence on some seven dollars a week.

Now, in what manner does this sort of thing affect the employer? A man presents himself, in answer to an advertisement; he is backed up, perhaps, by a letter from his late employer, which gives him a good character, as "honest, anxious to please, always willing to learn, does not swear nor smoke, and is a total abstainer," etc.

These are very estimable qualities, no doubt, but what about his being competent to fulfil the duties required of him?

It usually ends by his new master having to put up with him during the "week on trial," and then installing in his place some one perhaps far worse: while he does the work himself.

Of course, when a first-class photographer is fortunate enough to secure the faithful services of that rare treasure, a *thoroughly efficient assistant*, he