

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC NEWS.

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GALLIC ACID AS A PRESERVATIVE.

The value of a solution of gallic acid as a preservative in connection with several of the dry processes as suggested by Major Russell and Dr. Ryley, has already been proved. It was illustrated to us in a striking manner the other day by Mr. Morley, who has been in the habit of using it as suggested by Dr. Ryley. Having prepared some ten-by-eight plates by the Fothergill process, using dilute albumen only, without either ammonia, chloride of any kind, or any organic salt, washing well before and after applying the albumen, they were dried and put away ready for use. On examining them, however, in the dark room, prior to exposure, it was found that they were much stained, and altogether unsatisfactory-looking, apparently from the use of badly-cleaned plates. It occurred to Mr. Morley, from what he had observed of the action of gallic acid, to try an application of it to these plates. One was taken as a trial, and the gallic acid solution poured over half of it, left to dry, and then exposed and developed. The result was most remarkable. That part of the plate which had not been treated with the gallic acid, was not only stained, from the plate being dirty, but the image was feeble, muddy, indistinct, and worthless. That part coated with gallic acid, up to every edge marked by its irregular flow, presented a clear, rich, brilliant, vigorous image; full of detail and crisp definition. Stains of every kind which might have existed in the film, seemed quite ignored, and that half of the plate had as perfect a negative image as could be desired. The exposure was four minutes, in a moderate light towards evening, with a lens of thirteen or fourteen inches focus, and a small stop.

One or two persons to whom we have mentioned this method, and who were in the midst of some fogging difficulties with their Fothergill plates, have tried this remedy with the most complete success. We commend it to the attention of any of our readers, in similar difficulties, and shall be glad to hear of the issue.

BIRMINGHAM PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION.

It is we believe five years since an exhibition was held in connection with the Birmingham Photographic Society, and the result on that occasion was a pecuniary loss. Notwithstanding a discouragement of this nature, with that courage and enterprize which has placed Birmingham as one of the first manufacturing towns in the world, the society resolved to illustrate once more the progress of photography, by establishing another exhibition. On this occasion we are happy to believe the arrangements are such as will preclude the possibility of any very heavy pecuniary liability either by the society or its officers.

The exhibition is now held at Aston Hall, a place which, if it have the disadvantage of being a few miles out of the town, possesses also its own attractions of position, scenery, association, and the vast interest of its collection of curiosities in nature and art. Aston Hall, as some of our readers may be aware, is a fine old Elizabethan mansion, situated in a noble park a short distance from Birmingham. Possessed of many interesting historic associations, not the least of which is the fact that it once gave shelter to the ill-fated monarch Charles I; it has passed through many fortunes until, in the year 1857, a company was formed by gentlemen interested in preserving to the town the advantages of a park, and place of amusement, who purchased the Hall and as

much of the park as remained intact. The interior is converted into a museum of natural and artificial curiosities with which it is in many respects well furnished, and was inaugurated by Her Majesty in 1858. It is in some of the rooms of this ancient building, and forming for the time one of the features of attraction of the place, that the photographic exhibition is opened.

In using the term opened we are scarcely strictly correct. From the tardiness with which contributions were at first forwarded, the arrangement and cataloguing were unavoidably delayed, and we regret that in our necessarily short visit we were unable to see the display in that state of completeness which it promised in a few days to assume.

The pictures contributed at the time we were present, numbered upwards of 360, and more were promised. Of these, many we had already seen at the London Exhibition, but there were amply sufficient novelties to give the exhibition a distinctive character and individualism of its own, and render it well worthy of a visit. Foremost amongst these characteristics are the stereoscopic transparencies of Mr. Breese, a member of the Birmingham society. Of these pictures we shall speak more in detail next week; but we may here remark that they far surpass in wonder and beauty anything of the kind we have seen. We do not simply refer to the interesting instantaneous pictures, representing the streets of Birmingham during Her Majesty's visit to inaugurate the hall of which we have spoken, the views of which elicited Her Majesty's high commendation, but to the wonderful representations of clouds, water, and atmosphere, rising and setting suns, and, most marvellous, moonlit scenes. A series of pictures from China, the display of solar camera pictures, and some other excellent pictures all contribute to give the distinctive character to which we have referred.

More immediately associated with the department of the Hall devoted to Chinese illustrations, but as possessing high photographic interest, we may first mention the photographs from China, contributed by Philip Cohen, Esq. Amongst these are photographs of the summer palace of the Emperor, which was sacked in the war, and of various scenes in connection with the war. Some of them possess a horrible and ghastly interest: scenes immediately after the conflict, in which the bodies of the slaughtered Chinese are scattered around, and in some cases blood trickling from their wounds, all of which is rendered with a sickening fidelity. A panorama of Pekin is upwards of six feet long. The pictures, although somewhat marred by spots and pinholes in the negatives, apparently from dust, are full of detail, and in many respects very good photography. We have no information as to the artist, but are disposed to attribute them to Signor Beato, who, it may be remembered, was described by the *Times* Chinese correspondent as being present with the army at the time.

First in position in the catalogue, and in many respects taking priority in interest, as being the first time they have been invited to a formal competition for medals, stand the solar camera pictures. Of these there are about twenty-one: four contributed by Angel of Exeter; six by Smyth and Blanchard of London; three by Atkinson of Liverpool; five by Turner of Birmingham; and three by Pickering, of Birmingham. Four of these are coloured, and one worked up in black and white. Amongst the coloured ones a very large portrait of the late Rev. J. Angel James of Birmingham, by Mr. Turner, will attract most attention. The size of the picture is 44 in. by 34 in. The position and expression are easy, natural, and characteristic. The painting is good and the