

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC NEWS.

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MODES OF ENLARGING PHOTOGRAPHS.

A CHALLENGE given and accepted, is at any time certain to excite a certain amount of interest, especially if some important question is to be settled by the encounter. We have no doubt that many of our readers looked with considerable interest for the issue of the friendly contest between Mr. Vernon Heath and M. Claudet, to decide the merits of the modes of enlargement which they had respectively adopted. The little affair "came off," however, as our readers are aware, without materially altering the question, or bringing about any decision. M. Claudet and Mr. Heath each produced very excellent specimens of their methods, which were generally admired: some commended those of M. Claudet because they were developed prints on plain paper, and were flat and round; others admired those of Mr. Heath because they were on albumenized paper, and were sharp and vigorous; but no general decision was, or indeed could, be made.

The truth is, that the question in the form it finally assumed, never ought to have existed. As Mr. Heath stated, he never intended to put the case in such a form; by some misconception, however, it drifted into the position of ordinary camera enlargement *versus* solar camera enlargement, and ended by deciding nothing. The important question for photographers is not so much which of these methods is best, but are either or both good, or at least sufficiently good to be worth practising? Our own conviction often expressed is, that for certain purposes, and within given limits, they both are good and useful; and each is best in turn as circumstances may vary.

That very excellent photographs can be produced by means of the solar camera there is not room for question. Let those who have the slightest doubt on the subject visit the Exhibition at South Kensington, and examine the various enlarged specimens exhibited, the examples in the British department, even despite the very occasional willingness of the sun to lend his direct countenance to photography on such a scale. If any doubt exist after seeing these specimens, then proceed to the various foreign departments, inspect those of Disderi and others in the French Court, of Albert in the Bavarian Court, of Hansen in the Danish Court, or of Ghémar in the Belgian Court. The last especially: we have no hesitation in pronouncing the full length portrait of the Comte de Flandres the most perfect enlargement in the exhibition, and as little short of perfection as a photograph. The picture is about three feet high, the figure, which is enlarged from a card negative a little over two feet high. Every part of the picture appears to be in perfect focus; head, feet, and hands; carpet, curtains, and accessories; everything is well and delicately defined. The picture is, moreover, at once soft and forcible, free alike from the insipid feeble greyness, or the hard blackness which characterizes some enlargements. To say that it is absolutely untouched is more than we can venture upon; but we cannot perceive any touching; and we are assured by a friend, who had an opportunity of inspecting a copy in M. Ghémar's studio, that the touching is confined to the spot of light on the breast: objects like these, reflecting light so vividly from every facet, on the slightest movement caused by the heaving of the chest, become, as every photographer knows, blurred in the negative, and their need of touching in no way detracts from the merits of the solar camera enlargement. The flesh, hair, draperies, furniture, &c., are all, we are assured, pure photography, and quite untouched. We

can add that they bear every appearance of being so. M. Ghémar's pictures are not developed, but "printed out" by the sun, an exposure of three or four hours being necessary.

With results like these before us, notwithstanding the force of theoretical objections, we are satisfied that very perfect results are to be obtained by means of the solar camera. There may be theoretically, and to some extent practically, dispersion and diffraction of light, and diffusion or confusion of the image; but if these evils are practically found in such a minimized degree as to be, in good work, imperceptible, photographers may well afford to disregard them; and even if the results were such as served only the purpose of the artist to work in pastels or oil colours, we should still regard the solar camera as a most important aid to the photographer.

It may be urged, we know, that there is no evidence that many of the Continental photographers use the solar camera. On this subject, however, we have evidence that the majority of the Continental photographers do use the solar camera, or some modification of it. M. Ghémar states that he does so, and so do many of the French artists. A very fine enlargement of a portrait of Mr. Negretti, produced in Italy by an artist who is stated never to have seen a solar camera, turns out, however, on a description of the appliances to have been produced exactly on the solar camera principle. Whether that principle be new or old, is now, since the patent has ceased to exist, a question of very little importance. That the solar camera is in principle the same as the solar microscope, cannot be denied; nor can it that the solar microscope was long ago applied to photographic purposes. To Mr. Woodward is due at least the credit of a revival, and also of an extended application of the principle. Practically he brought to bear upon enlarging processes a method of using the maximum of light with the minimum of aperture, and directed that the aperture, or what is equivalent, the focus of the condenser, should be at that point which secures the greatest flatness of field, namely, in contact with the front lens.

Having admitted to the solar camera, however, all which can be claimed for it, the position Mr. Heath assumed before the Photographic Society at the meeting in May, is in no wise altered or destroyed. If the solar camera were more perfect even than it is, and all its perfections universally admitted, there cannot be a question that for the greater part of the year in this country, it must be entirely idle; direct sunshine is imperative; the idea of using a reflector and condenser in diffused light is simply useless. Even in Paris, where sunshine is a little more plentiful and constant than in this country, it is not sufficiently plentiful and constant; as M. Disderi, we understand, has founded an establishment in Algeria for using the solar camera, whither he sends all his negatives, from which amplified prints are required. But even if the instrument were admitted perfect, and the light unquestionably always sufficient, it is not every photographer, especially every amateur, who possesses or would care to possess, a solar camera, and devote a room entirely to its use. Mr. Heath, then, had given considerable attention to the improvement of a method long known, but little practised, whereby enlargements, not simply of the single prints, but of the negative, could be produced by a trifling addition to the appliances already in the possession of every photographer. That the enlargement was the result of two operations, was a small objection, seeing that, as we have remarked, when produced it was a negative, from which