

silver process "four years ago," or to-day, are not the only absurd experiments which have proved failures in the hands of your "authority."—We are, sir, yours respectfully,
29th April, 1868.

DIMSDALE AND CO.

[We are glad to have the assurance of Messrs. Dimsdale and Co. that the excellent portraits they have recently issued are by a process of photo-lithography properly so called. The allusions to "motives," of which they are well aware, to our "authority"—of whom, by the way, they can know nothing—&c., are entirely beyond our comprehension; we have not the slightest idea of what they mean; but as our correspondents seem to think them necessary to their explanation, and they may have a meaning for some persons, we give them insertion, repeating that the points in the letter which are clear to us—namely, the assertion of the truly photographic character of their excellent portraits—can give us and photographers generally nothing but satisfaction.—ED.]

PHOTO-LITHOGRAPHY.

SIR.—As I am wishful to make some experiments in photo-lithography, will you oblige me with answers to one or two questions?

1. Is there any special advantage, besides the convenience of working, in the mode of producing an image on paper to be transferred to stone, instead of working directly on stone as in some of the earlier processes?

2. I see in a contemporary an intimation that as the object of treating a transfer with water is to swell the unaltered gelatine, cold water is necessarily the proper thing to apply, and not hot, and expressing surprise that the members of the Photographic Society present when Mr. Griggs read his paper showed such ignorance on the subject. I wish to ask if the object of applying water is to swell the gelatine, and, if so, for what purpose? I have always understood that the object was to remove the gelatine, not to swell it.

3. Is photo-lithography generally, or any part of it, protected by patent, or is it open to the public to practise without licence or patent rights having to be gained? If not, which process is free to the public?—Yours, &c., X.

[The advantages of the transfer process, besides convenience in working, consists in getting a greasy image direct on the stone. In most processes in which the picture is produced by working on the stone, the image is formed on the stone in some such substance as gelatine and bichromate, or bitumen, and thus it quickly wears out. 2. We fear it is the writer in question, and not any member who spoke at the meeting, who betrays want of familiarity with the operations of photo-lithography. If the object had been to swell up the gelatine, most folks know well enough that cold water would effect it best. But the object is not to swell up the unaltered gelatine; where hot water is used, the object is to dissolve the gelatine and remove it entirely. Where cold water is used, or rather slightly warmed water, as in Mr. Griggs' case, the object is not to remove all the gelatine, but only just such a surface as will effectually take away the ink except on the parts made insoluble by light. If the soluble gelatine were swelled to any appreciable extent it would interfere injuriously with the operation of transferring, by bearing off the unswollen inked lines from contact with the stone. 3. There are several patents for photo-lithographic processes; but the general features of all processes are open to the use of the general public without restriction.—ED.]

SOURCES OF SUCCESS IN OPERATING.

DEAR SIR.—Mr. McLachlan's remarks in your number of the 17th January are, if practical, extremely interesting to photography. It has always been an art in which much was obscured; there is no rule, so to speak, on which to work with success; suggestion after suggestion is made in your Journal; one upholds *this* to be correct, the other flatly denies it, and states *that* to be the proper way, and so on. But Mr. McLachlan steps out of the usual course, and challenges the public to produce by himself, *consecutively*, a certain amount of pictures, and free from every blemish, with *success*! Every photographer knows it is possible, but in his experience has it ever happened that he could say the same? Consider, the number is large, and the amount of silver used is wonderfully small in proportion (see his letter, p. 400: 7 by 4 negatives with 2 ounces of silver,

and still plenty to spare). I shall be glad to see you comment upon it.

By the way, I was rather amused at the persistency of that idea argued about converting bad negatives into good ones, touching the negatives, &c.: not mere spots, but painting over it at a wholesale rate. Why not rather study your photo rooms, look more to your light, your chemicals, than to producing artificial effects? I was very much pleased with Mr. Johnson's paper on "Natural Clouds in Landscape Photography." What further proof would you require in reading his account of Mr. Braun's pictures? As pictures they are perfect; as a commercial speculation they have paid handsomely. Another fault is often committed by using the argument that "the public won't have it so." In how many various ways does one hear that expression? It is to some degree true; doubtless a large portion of the public do not care much about the delicate and beautiful—or, perhaps, I might put it, they prefer the excessive contrast to the fine gradation—but it is not wholly to them the photographer looks for his earnings. Moreover, if he were to produce superior pictures, the mind of the public would, in like manner, be educated up to them, and they would in time be appreciated. Mr. Johnson's letter is upon clouds; it will apply to nearly every species of photography. A good photographer will turn out a good picture at the same place and time in which an inferior one will produce a wretched caricature.

A grand discussion has been carried on in your pages with regard to the photographs in the late exhibition, more especially to those of M. Adam-Salomon, which I should much like to see. From what I can glean, the lighting is thought to be the chief source of success. Whilst lighting undoubtedly has a great deal to do with it, I agree with "Ennel," that it is *judgment* which is most required. You mentioned some time ago some photographs exhibited which had an extremely picturesque and pleasing effect, yet these had all the lighting from *behind*, viz., the person taken thrown in relief. I do not remember ever having seen any such, but your remark says at once that it is not the *material*, but the way in which light is applied, which is conducive to success; *i.e.*, your light may be north, south, east, or west; study the effect of each, and you will find each has its good effect; and, after all, it is the picturesque that is called for. To produce a portrait with every feature distinctly marked, every fold in the clothes sharply and softly defined, is good, but it is not everything. If one photographer (and there are some) can get that requisite, surely it is within the power of another to do it; the requirement is to make the best of what you have. I take it, in Mr. McLachlan's case, a knowledge of chemistry is indispensable. I shall look forward with eagerness to see more upon the subject.—Yours truly,
CEYLON.

Columbo, Ceylon, March 24th, 1868.

[As you will see, Mr. McLachlan has already made a partial statement, and will make a more perfect one shortly.—ED.]

Talk in the Studio.

SUGAR IN THE PRINTING BATH.—The Paris correspondent of a contemporary, giving a notice of M. Davanne's *Annuaire*, says that he "has a rap at Mr. Bovey" for having proposed "a little sugar in the nitrate bath." M. Davanne is represented as condemning the indefiniteness of the quantity described as "a little," and as failing to see how an organic substance having the power to reduce silver can preserve the whiteness of the sensitive paper. Somebody has blundered a little here. Mr. Bovey did not propose "a little" sugar, but, finding such a proposal made by an American photographer, he tried it, and gave photographers the benefit of his experience in the form of a definite formula, the value of which has been verified in his own practice and that of many photographers since. The paradox of a reducing substance having a preservative action was pointed out and discussed, with its probable solution, in our pages six months ago, when Mr. Bovey's recommendation to use sugar was first published.

COLOURED NITRATE BATH TO PREVENT "BLURRING."—Mr. Carey Lea proposes to prevent blurring from the light reflected by the back of the sensitive plate, by using a nitrate bath containing a neutral colouring substance, which makes the solution blood-red. The colour is washed away in the sub-