

Few inventions have been the victim of so many commercial misfortunes as Mr. Woodbury's photo-relief printing process, all of which tend to retard its fair chance of commercial application. After more preliminary troubles than most novelties encountered, a company was formed for working it in Manchester; but, beyond causing considerable delay, nothing was effected. The commercial utilization of the process did not seem to be advanced at all. Next, we hear that the patent has been purchased by a company in London, Disderi and Co., Limited, and active preparations are made for the working of the process. Fine examples of the work begins to be seen in retail establishments, and a full tide of prosperity seems to be promised, when suddenly Mr. Disderi is reported as "wanting," and shortly his solicitor applies to the Court of Chancery for a liquidator, and states that no money at all has been contributed by the shareholders and directors. *On dit*, that not less than £40,000 has been supplied by a French capitalist to the company in London to initiate and carry on its business, but that no satisfactory answer can be given as to where the money has gone. To those having a purely scientific interest in the progress of this mode of printing, these things are somewhat distressing, because they delay the establishment of a good process, which, in spite of the commercial difficulties, has steadily progressed in the excellence and certainty of its results.

The commercial application of the carbon printing process has not been so rapid as might have been desired; but it has had no such drawbacks as those I have just mentioned, and in the hands of the new company, which will, I understand, direct its fortunes for the future, will, I believe, be worked with great energy. Perhaps its success in the hands of Mr. Braun, of Dornach, is unparalleled in the history of our art. It seems only the other day since it was initiated by Mr. Swan, in Dornach, and now they are turning out fifteen hundred prints daily by the process; and the spirited proprietor, who has invested over £16,000 in the work, is, I hope and believe, making a rapid fortune by it. The purpose of the Autotype Company, to inaugurate a new system of reproduction by the aid of this process, promises well for art education in a form hitherto sadly neglected.

The unmounted Saloman prints will, I presume, remove the remaining doubts of sceptics. For my own part, although fully satisfied that the photography was of rare excellence, I must confess that a sight of a score of such examples of magnificent photography in the rough state has surprised me, and I am almost disposed to concur with the dictum of an artistic friend, that any touching upon such prints was almost desecration. I may here repeat one curious remark I have heard, to the effect that if any "dodge" had been practised, it consisted in giving a few touches, to suggest that a far greater amount of artistic skill had been applied in finishing than the prints had either received or required.

Have any of your readers ever noticed a fact recently mentioned by an American correspondent in your pages, namely, that a negative dried by the fire was generally more brilliant than one left to dry spontaneously. I have never seen it mentioned before, but I remember to have been occasionally struck by the fact in my own practice. It is surely something worth further examination.

One of the most interesting papers I have read for a long time is that recently contributed by Herr Grune to your pages, on the transformation of the image obtained in silver to some other metal by a process of substitution. It appears to me to point out a comparatively unworked field for photographic experiment. With the exception of the well-known method of converting the image in a salt of mercury, but little has been done in that direction. Research in this direction furnishes a new field, I fancy, for experimentalists in photographic engraving.

The meetings of societies during the month have in many cases been interesting. The length of Mr. McLachlan's

communication at the Parent Society left little time for discussion; but the remarks made were interesting, and to the purpose. Mr. Spiller's comments on the statements put forth furnished an admirable example of quiet force strikingly in contrast with Mr. McLachlan's excited exuberance. The example of Mr. Robinson's promised presentation print, a charming composition, entitled "Watching the Lark," excited much interest. At the North London, Mr. Bockett's paper on the condition acquired by chemicals after long disuse, was interesting, and might in a fuller meeting have excited more copious discussion. At the South the material was more meagre than usual, or the members were less disposed for discussion. Some capital enamels were exhibited by Mr. Henderson, and some fine studies by Mr. Rejlander, as well as a large number of M. Salomon's unmounted prints, which excited equal surprise and gratification by the photographic perfectness of the pictures.

At the Oldham Society, which maintains its activity, Mr. Beverley read a good paper on "Dry Plate Photography," in which he expressed his preference for Mr. England's process. At the Edinburgh Society Mr. Muir gave some photographic experiences in Sweden. A discussion followed on the fading away of the image on dry plates when kept long before development. At the Liverpool Society an interesting discussion took place on the collodio-bromide plates of the Liverpool Dry Plate Company, some fine negatives, obtained by development with a weak solution of ammonia, being shown in illustration of the value of this mode of operating.

SKETCHES OF TRAVEL FROM A SUN-PAINTER'S PORTFOLIO.

BY STEPHEN THOMPSON.

"What we write
Should be the reflex of the thing we know,
How can he limn the glories of the morn
Whose eyes have never looked upon Aurora's face?"
Prof. Aytoun.

No. 1.—A WEEK ON THE ISLAND OF IONA.

THERE is a little island lying off the bleak and stormy coast of Argyleshire to which, in bygone days, a peculiar odour of sanctity was attached, and a belief in special privileges to be conferred at the end of the world on those buried thereon. There together sleep the mighty of a long past age—a long line of Scotch, Irish, and Norwegian kings; a race of "Lords of the Isles," and powerful chieftains from far and near. After many a stormy and turbulent life, Norseman and Scot alike came there to repose in quiet proximity. On dark winter nights, when the storm-driven waves of the Atlantic lash the wild rocks on the seaward side of the island, and the blue hills of Morven to the north, wreathed in mysterious mist, are full of all that which inspired the song of Ossian, the ear of fancy may hear borne on the wings of the wind the wail of sorrow for "the dark-haired Orla, destroyer of Lerves, chief of Oithona," or the bards raise the song of praise for the yellow-haired son of blue-eyed Mora,—

"Whose dark ghost gleams on the red stream of tempests?—Lovely was thou, but not harmless was thy sword! It hangs in thy cave: the ghosts of Lochlin shriek around its steel. Hear thy praises! Thy name shakes on the echoes of Morven! Then raise thy fair locks, spread them on the arch of the rainbow, and smile through the tears of the storm."

A low rocky isle set in the Northern Sea, is the island of Iona, one

"Where more of winters than of summers be,"

but though destitute of tree or shrub, there are patches of verdure here and there, upon which the black Highland sheep graze and are content. The cottages in which the islanders dwell are of the rudest description:—roofs of thatch, secured with lacings of hempen rope where the Swiss chalet would have had rude planks of dark brown timber secured with large stones at regular intervals. Under one of these roofs I was fortunate in possessing half a bed-room shared with an engineer engaged in superintending the construction of another lighthouse near the far-famed Skerryvore, built by