

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC NEWS.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
A Novel Cause of Discolouration	565	A Washing Machine. By E. Trembath	570
The Photographic Exhibition	565	Photography in the Witness Box	571
Improvements in Photo-Collographic Printing	566	The Press and the Photographic Exhibition	571
French Correspondence	567	Colouring Photographs	573
American Correspondence	568	Correspondence.—Col. Stuart Wortley and Mr. C. Lea—Photo-	
Photography and Jealousy	569	Collographic Printing	574
A Rapid Method of Producing Large Prints by Development.	570	Proceedings of Societies.—Liverpool Amateur Photographic	
By J. H. Hallenbeck		Association	575
A New Method of Revolving Old Silver Baths.	570	Talk in the Studio	576
By Hermann Krone		To Correspondents	576

A NOVEL CAUSE OF DISCOLOURATION.

A somewhat singular form of stain or discolouration on a photograph was brought under our attention recently. The print was a fine one, which had been produced some years, and was generally pure in the whites, and of excellent colour. It was framed carefully, the edges of the backboard being sealed up with strips of paper to keep out dust or impure air as far as possible. The defect appeared in the shape of patches of yellow, somewhat less than half an inch in diameter. The surface of the patches appeared as if varnish had been dropped or smeared on the print, or as if the albumen had been blistered or frizzled by heat. The stains appeared altogether inexplicable. We were assured that every care had been taken to secure perfect preservation of the picture. It had, it was true, stood upon the chimney-piece in a hot room, but there was no possibility of the frizzled-looking spots being due to burning. As we had not opportunity of removing the print from the frame, we were obliged for the time to leave the problem unsolved. More recently, we find an allusion in a report of one of the American photographic meetings which seems to afford a complete explanation, and at least suggests caution in regard to a possible serious source of injury to the print. Mr. Shoemaker, we are informed, being called upon for a paper, presented a piece of backboard, having a strip of sap on one edge, and a spot of balsam. He found the picture this board had been against, stained directly opposite the balsam. It had gone completely through the mounting board and the picture, taking the colour entirely out of it. He had seen another picture stained when there was a knot in the backboard. There can be little doubt, we think, that the cause here referred to was the source of the patches we have described; they were yellow and resinous, like smears of varnish. Whether the backboard contained knots, or was of a quality likely to contain much resinous matter, we do not know, but the class of wood generally used for backboards is commonly of the resinous character, and as the frame had stood on the chimney-piece, the heat would probably be quite sufficient to cause the exudation of such resin, and it oozing through the mount and picture, little room is left for doubt that the discolourations were due to resin. Of course, all framed pictures where a backboard comes into contact with paper, whether photographs, water-colour drawings, or engravings, are equally liable to injury from this cause, and a general caution might, with propriety, be urged here in the selection of suitable wood, or the interposition of a protective substance between pictures and backboards. But the caution comes with double force to the photographer. Such a misfortune would be equally, or more, disastrous to a valuable water-colour drawing, or to an engraving; but no one would

dream of charging the defect as a drawback against water-colour drawing, or against engraving; but any accident of this kind happening to a photograph, the result is at once set down to the inherent instability of photographs, and the discoloured patch is regarded as the first stage of the inevitable fading inseparably associated in the public mind with photography. Hence photographers are doubly concerned for their art's sake, and for their own reputation, as well as for the sake of the individual picture, to see that their pictures are at least protected from such easily preventible sources of injury.

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION. SUBJECT PICTURES AND COLOURED PORTRAITS.

The number of *genre* pictures in the present exhibition is much less than at many former exhibitions, and there are no compositions of the kind claiming special attention by their daring or ambitious character. The chief form in which effort in this direction is found is in character portraiture, of which we have here many very excellent examples already referred to. Coming within this class, and most charming in their kind, are the studies of animals (138) by Mr. D. Hedges. This is a comparatively unworked branch of photography, and one which, whilst undoubtedly calling for the exercise of much patience and skill, would well repay attention and effort. The perfect naturalness of the cattle, the admirable foreshortening of some of the individual kine, and the fine grouping and good photography, combine to give the studies especial value. Messrs. W. W. Law and Son also exhibit a frame of the same character as examples of rapid photography; the handsome dog in the centre, taken in full sunlight, as shown by the well-marked and effective cast shadow, as well as the rest of the work, is very excellent indeed. Mr. Earl's large composition, the "Pride of the Home"—a little girl and rustic interior—has many excellent points, but is scarcely so harmonious as many of Mr. Earl's works. The large hop-picking scenes by Messrs. A. and J. Bool are rather reproductions of actual scenes in nature than subjects imagined by the artist, but they are of exceeding value pictorially, not less than as admirable photographic records of a phase of rural life and occupation. Of Mr. Rejlander's studies we have already spoken; we may here in passing, however, refer to the very perfect examples of enlargement which several of his contributions present. Some of the subjects familiar to the public in small size from the original negatives are here exhibited in a considerably enlarged size, and are singularly perfect in every detail. To Mr. E. H. Cox's studies from life we have already alluded as charming, simple, and natural rendering in character of a pretty and well trained little girl. Mr. A. Diston's compositions, already noticed in these pages,