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PHOTOGRAPHY IN AND OUT OF THE STUDIO.

PHOTOGRAPHING BY GASLIGHT—AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHERS
AND THE GELATINE PROCESS—PHOTOGRAPHING SEA-BIRDS
—LANTERN ENTERTAINMENT.

Photographing by Gaslight.—Mr. Law's method of photographing by gaslight opens up quite a new possibility in the way of artificial illumination. It certainly has the advantage of simplicity as compared with electricity. Without the sensitive gelatine plates the process, perhaps, could not be worked conveniently for portraits; but as gelatine plates, fortunately, do exist, the want of sensitiveness as compared with daylight does not very much matter. Eight seconds for a carte portrait is, after all, an exposure of which no complaint can be made on the score of rapidity. On reading the description of Mr. Law's burner, it occurred to us whether anything would be gained by the use of a gas-flame on the same principle as that in use in the clock tower of the House of Parliament. This burner, as most Londoners know, is fixed above the clock at a height of over three hundred feet from the ground, and is kept alight to inform the outside world when Parliament is sitting. The form of burner now in use was only adopted after a large number of experiments, and certainly gives a most intense light which can be seen from a great distance. This burner consists of a number of jets placed opposite to each other somewhat like teeth, only, of course, the jets are in clusters, and not in rows. By this arrangement half the gas descends from the upper cluster of jets, and half ascends from the lower, the flame from each mingling in the space between the jets. The consumption of gas is large, but the body of flame could scarcely be exceeded in brightness. Of course it may be that the lamp which Mr. Law uses is as good as can be obtained, still, as the standard of sensitiveness is daylight, and as the gas portraits, good as they are, have not yet reached this point, any increase in rapidity must be looked for in an improved form of burner.

American Photographers and the Gelatine Process.—The "Britisher" has certainly gone ahead of Brother Jonathan in the matter of dry plates. It is almost amusing to read in the discussion of the Photographic Section of the American Institute, Professor Seeley gravely stating that he believed a new gelatine process was much used in Europe, which Dr. Draper's experiments had led him to think was a great deal better than the wet process. Apparently very little research has been made in America into the subject of gelatine plates, as from the remarks of other speakers it would seem that the sole experience has been gained from plates exported from Europe. It is not likely that much progress will be made until the American photographers prepare gelatine plates for themselves. The drawback to the process is that absolute certainty cannot yet be guaranteed. Whoever may be the manufacturer, and no matter the amount of care he bestows on his work, there are times when batches of plates are sent out, a large proportion of which turn out failures. The most annoying part of the affair is that in many instances the cause of these failures cannot be traced. Under these circumstances it is evident that, as regards dry plate work, the American photographer is heavily handicapped, because at present he is working in the dark, and cannot readily get information on points of detail from the manufacturer who lives some three thousand miles away. But this is only a question of time. It is now fairly established that the gelatine process has advantages which cannot be claimed for wet collodion. The results are no longer fugitive examples which sceptics might be tempted to call "flukes," but are the productions of everyday commercial work. As we have already said, there are failures, but failures are not unknown with the collo-

dion process, and it would be unfair to reproach the new for a defect which belongs also to the old. Our American friends may take it as an absolute truth, that in Europe the gelatine process is an accomplished fact, and they will have to bestir themselves if they do not want to be distanced by the old country.

Photographing Sea-Birds.—Without in anyway detracting from the merit of Mr. Chadwick's photograph of a sportsman shooting sea fowl, we are inclined to think that with a gelatine plate of only moderate rapidity it is comparatively easy to secure pictures of sea-birds on the wing. Dwellers on the sea coast are perfectly familiar with the spectacle of gulls remaining apparently motionless in the air, especially when the wind is blowing strongly. This phenomenon has lately attracted the attention of scientific men, and a variety of theories has been put forward to account for it. Mr. R. Proctor, for instance, believes that the true explanation is to be found in the enormous propelling power of a bird's wing, by which it acquires a momentum needing only a few slight movements of the wings to sustain it in mid-air, and cause it to progress. Sir William Thompson, on the other hand, speaking on this subject at the meeting of the British Association at Glasgow, was of opinion that in still air, if a bird held its wings inclined at a small angle to a horizontal, it would descend in an oblique direction; but if the air be in motion, or a velocity equal, but a direction to, that of the bird, it would descend slowly in a perpendicular direction. Suppose, however, the air-current or wind had an upward tendency, caused, for instance, by having to pass up the slope of a hill, the bird might, by a suitable adjustment of its wings, make use of this upward force to counteract its downward tendency, and thus remain supported by the upward current in a fixed position. Which of the two theories be correct we are unable to say, but the fact undoubtedly remains that gulls, kestrels, and other sea-birds have the power of poisoning themselves quite motionless, and therefore to photograph them is not nearly so wonderful as it appears.

Lantern Entertainments.—Apropos of explosions at magic (we beg Mr. Dallmeyer's pardon—"optical") lantern entertainments, we remember once being present when there was an explosion, or rather a series of explosions, arising from a cause which it may be said is very rare, but is still likely to happen, even with the most careful and well regulated lecturer. In this instance we may premise the explosions were of the most harmless character, as they were simply confined to the laughter of the audience. The lecturer was expatiating upon a foreign tour he had made, and, to render his discourse more interesting, had it illustrated by lantern slides. Everything would have gone off well had it not been that the operator at the lantern had his own ideas as to where the illustrations should come in, and these ideas, unfortunately, did not quite coincide with the arrangement of the subjects in the lecture. The audience were at first puzzled by a picture of Mont Blanc being described as the Bay of Naples, and the Great Pyramid as the leaning Tower of Pisa, and a few others equally incongruous, but eventually they got perfectly accustomed to these eccentricities, and the chief amusement consisted in wondering what would come up next, especially as the lecturer every now and then appealed to the operator despairingly to be a little more careful. Three or four views absolutely did come right, and then the lecturer, in something like serenity, turned to his manuscript, and as he could not have his eye on the paper and on the screen at the same time, he was obliged to leave his assistant to his own devices, with the result that, while the former was eloquently describing the picture of the Cenci, the latter was calmly exhibiting the portrait of Pius IX. This was too much for both audience and lecturer, and the discourse came to a very speedy end.