At Home.

MR. ALDERMAN MAYALL AT KING'S ROAD, BRIGHTON.

"The 9th of January, 1840," said Mr. Mayall. We had asked our host the date of his first handling a Daguerreotype, and this was his reply. "You know Goddard suggested the employment of bromine in 1840 in conjunction with iodine for sensitizing the silver plate; well, although I was one of the first to employ bromo-iodide of silver, I practised the slower process with iodine alone, when I began photography." Mr. Mayall came to England in 1845, and then commenced that war between him and Mr. Beard on the subject of the Daguerreotype patent. The process had been improved, added to, and modified so much since the patent was granted, that it could scarcely be deemed the same thing. In 1851 Mr. Mayall made his great *coup*, and his pictures of the International Exhibition, which many of our readers have seen, brought him at once to the front rank. The Prince Consort was especially kind, and took Mr. Mayall by the hand, consulting him now and again upon the rapid strides which photography began to take. When it was suggested, in 1855, to Lord Panmure that the camera might be made a useful observer upon the field of battle, it was to Mr. Mayall our military authorities turned for advice. Two young officers, Ensign Brandon and Ensign Dawson, were selected to perform the duty of military photographers, and these were ordered to report themselves to Mr. Mayall for instruction. So spiritedly did everybody enter into the work, that within a month these officers had been tutored and equipped for duty, and despatched to Sebastopol. The pictures sent home by the young military photographers are still to be found in the archives of the War Office, together with the fine prints secured at the Crimea by Roger Fenton and Robertson.

On the occasion of the wedding of the Prince and Princess of Wales, Mr. Mayall accomplished a feat which, seventeen years ago, made considerable stir among photographers. He was commanded by Her Majesty to proceed to Windsor to take a series of pictures of the Royal pair, of the bridesmaids, and other illustrious visitors. The command reached him but forty-eight hours before the time fixed for the wedding, and how he was to make arrangements for so much work was a problem not easy to solve. There was no corridor or conservatory at Windsor suitable for the purpose, and all the authorities could offer him, in reply to his telegram, was a canvas marquee. Bridal dresses of glaring white are at all times difficult subjects for the camera, and to photograph a score or two of them in a marquee, and photograph them well, was a task only to be contemplated by a strong man. In a frame of mind less complacent than his wont, Mr. Mayall was hunting in a hansom cab along the New Road, to get together, as speedily as possible, the numerous requisites for his responsible task—for heirs to the throne are not married every day—when he caught sight, in one of the long front gardens of that thoroughfare, of a spacious glass house for sale, with the notice, "Can be erected anywhere." The cab was stopped, the builder called, and the price asked. "I'll purchase," said Mr. Mayall, "if you will pull it to pieces and set it up for me at Windsor by ten to-morrow morning." The builder was an enterprising man, and, learning its object, at once caught the bridal infection, and gave his hand on the bargain.

We sat in that glass house, now a trim little conservatory, not so long ago, and, amid scarlet pelargoniums and purple heliotropes, and in a dewy atmosphere redolent with perfume, Mr. Mayall told us its history; for after the structure had done duty so well at Windsor, our host carried it off with him to make an adjunct to his own dwelling. The series of bridal pictures of the Prince and Princess of Wales and bridesmaids taken by Mr. Mayall on that occasion are historical, and need no comment on our part, and, from their popularity and wide-spread publication, it can readily be imagined that the photographs brought their producer some profit; but there are few who guess the extent of the sum that actually was realised.

We have shown that Mr. Mayall is intimately connected with the history of photography; but there is one other reason why you cannot set foot into his studio without thinking of "old times." There is, probably, no other photographer who possesses such an extensive collection of negatives of bye-gone celebrities. Here is the Prince Consort, quiet and dignified; here, two tough Chancellors of the old school—Lord Lyndhurst and Lord Brougham; on another wall there is Kossuth, and further on Lord Palmerston, Marshall Pelissier, the late Lord Derby, and Earl Russell, Sir J. Herschell, Sir David Brewster—nay, even a picture of Daguerre himself is to be espied in a corner. The value of some of these negatives is very great, and here is a wrinkle we may mention out of hand, which our readers will do well to make a note of. You can hardly keep a stock of glass negatives a quarter of a century, especially if you print much from them, without running some risk, and with the best care in the world, they occasionally get cracked and broken. Of Mr. Mayall's costly collection there are some in this condition, but still, strange to say, the prints exhibit no sign of the defect. And for this reason: all cracked negatives are printed by themselves, and in a singularly ingenious manner. There is a simple roasting-jack on the printing roof, and from it depend four cords holding up a square board by its corners. When the jack is wound up, this board revolves first one way, and then the other, and cracked negatives laid upon it to print, leave no record behind them of the defect. For vignette printing, whether cotton wool or glass masks are used, this mode of proceeding should be very valuable, and we commend it strongly to our readers. A jack may be purchased for a few shillings, and does not require to be wound up more than four times an hour.*

To Mr. Whaite, Mr. Mayall's manager at Brighton, we have to tender our best thanks for all we saw in the way of practical working. "This is one of our studios," said Mr. Whaite, as we ascended to the first floor. We looked in. It was a spacious drawing room with two windows, with couch, table, and mantel-piece within eight or ten feet from the light. That there should be no deception, Mr. Whaite insisted on posing us upon the sofa, and taking a portrait forthwith. "I am employing a landscape lens, and I am not sure of the sensitiveness of these plates, as they are some of a batch I made last night, so I shall stop down, and give you fifteen seconds." And in less time than it takes to write, a drawing-room picture was secured. A white screen, placed on the shadow side to reflect back the light from the windows, was the only adjustment necessary.

"In making gelatine emulsion," said Mr. Whaite, "I always prepare four or five small batches rather than one large one. I then test, and, as they turn out in sensitiveness, I mix. A batch that shows tendency to fog is cured of the evil by mixing with a comparatively insensitive batch, and so on. I always test with a landscape lens well stopped down, for it is only by means of a long exposure that you can thoroughly get at the qualities of your emulsion."

We went upstairs to the ordinary studios. They are three in number. "Sitters for portraits are requested to place themselves as much as possible in the hands of the artist," is a notice conspicuously placed. A feature of these studios is the cameras. They are all fixed upon heavy cast iron stands, and stand and camera are never severed. The stands, though heavy, being upon small wheels, may be moved smoothly and with ease. On no account are cameras to be dismounted, is one of the rules of the

* Mr. Tulley has commented on the utility of the roasting jack in a similar connection.