

The Photographic News, November 19, 1880.

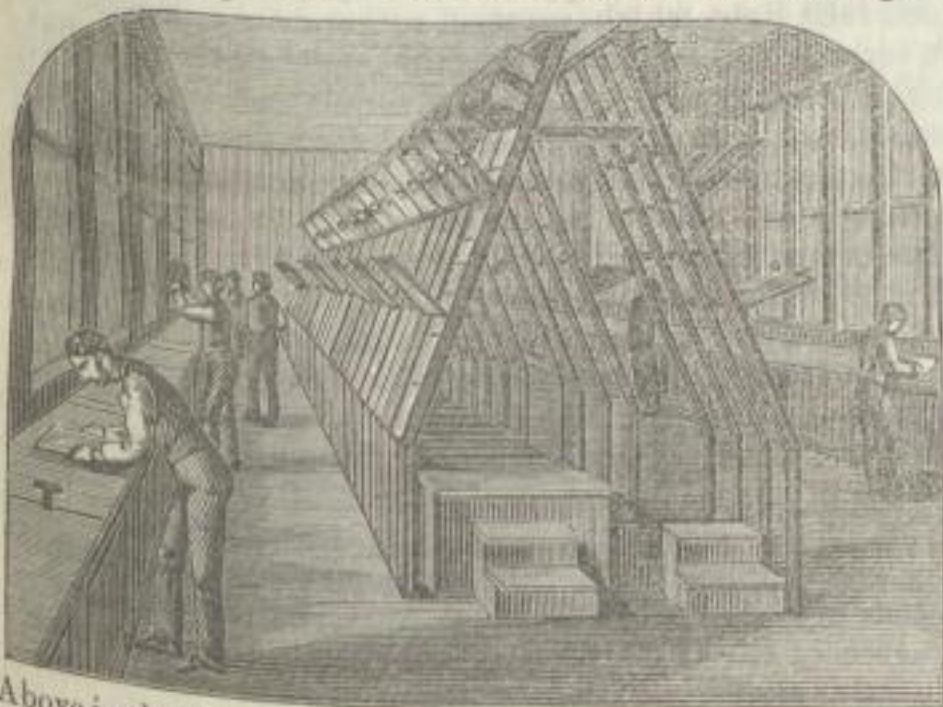
At Home.

MESSRS. A. AND G. TAYLOR AT FOREST HILL.

"You must make a good many collodion transfers here," we said, as our blinking eyes penetrated the gloom, and we became aware of animated beings busily moving to and fro. "Two hundred and eighty is an average day's work," was the reply, "and we shall do that number to-day."

It was like the lower deck of a ship—dark and vague, and with wooden machinery on every hand, the active ship's crew going about its work quickly but quietly; and yet not so much like the 'tween decks as a carpenter's room under the theatre, where there are all sorts of beams and slides and movable frames to be seen. Only there was this difference: if you go into the lower regions of the Theatre Royal Comus, among the "sinks" and "traps," you cannot touch a beam or a cross-piece without leaving an impression behind of your fingers, while in Messrs. Taylor's big enlarging room there is, as one might imagine, not a speck of dust to be encountered. As your eyes get accustomed to the darkness, you begin to perceive all the clever arrangements that exist for rapid and accurate working. There are no less than twenty-four lenses in use, and, in consequence, twenty-four enlarging stands; the lenses and cameras are let into the roof, or, at any rate, depend therefrom, so that the collodion plate for the enlargement only requires to be laid down in a horizontal position to receive the image.

But let us explain a little more definitely. It is a long room with an arched roof. There are four principal assistants, and each assistant has charge of six lenses; the six lenses are arranged in a group, so that they may be all served from one and the same platform, the assistant requiring to mount a couple of steps to reach this platform. Here is a sketch showing how the instruments are arranged.



Above is the camera (C). Daylight through an opening in the roof comes in at the back of the camera and illuminates the negative, which is in a slide (D.) The image thrown by the lens is vignettted by the diaphragm (B), and then falls upon the table (A). It is upon this table that the collodion plate is laid. The focussing is done by the assistant moving the table up or down, a single screw permitting this action without difficulty. The table (A) may, in fact, be moved horizontally as well as vertically, by an equally simple arrangement.

It will be seen at once how quickly an arrangement of this kind works. In the first place, the light comes down almost vertical, and therefore it is the best of all lights for the purpose. In cloudy weather the light is not interfered with in the least; but in bright sunshine a screen of opal glass is employed. The assistant slips the negative to be copied into the camera; he focusses at A, measures with a quarter-plate in his hand the size of the head (for all heads are en-

larged to this size), and then calls for a sensitized plate. A lad, whose duty it is to supply him with these, withdraws a collodionised plate from the bath, drains it, and simply places it on the table (A). There is no dark slide required—no loss of time involved in fitting the plate into an apparatus of any kind; it is brought bare and moist, and laid on the table. An exposure of two minutes suffices, and the film is then carried off for development.

All twenty-four lenses are of the same make—No. 1B Dallmeyer's; all the plates are coated with the same collodion, and all are treated with the same developer, &c. Consequently the work of all assistants should be the same if they work well and conscientiously. The Messrs. Taylor thoroughly believe in sys'em, and they have here initiated a self-checking method that cannot fail to work satisfactorily.

We have been talking about collodion transfers only, but opal-coated plates are here produced under the same conditions. But we ought, perhaps, to go back a moment to the preparation of the glass, &c. The chief difficulty in making collodion transfers, or collodion enlargements on opal, as many of our readers know to their cost, is the tendency of these to stain, and on this point we had some conversation with our good friend the manager. In his opinion the staining is due, in nine cases out of ten, to the glass. "We put our glass plates in acid for a week," said Mr. Smith, "before we attempt to use them. We never albumenise, and we always employ *old* collodion." Let our readers note this. There is simply no firm in the world which has so much experience of collodion transfers, and on behalf of our readers we tender our best thanks to Messrs. Taylor for this practical straightforward advice. After leaving the acid bath, the plates are rubbed with spirit, and are then fit for use. The plain glass (which is very thick, by the way, for thin glass bends under the squeegee, and then the transfer, when stripped, is not so solid) is dusted with talc before coating with collodion; the pot-metal, which is smooth, and not ground, is coated with collodion, without, as we have said, receiving any preliminary film of albumen.

When the exposed plate is taken from table (A), it is at once developed; the developing, fixing, and washing arrangements being situated on one side of the long dark-room, while the coating of the plates and sensitizing are confined to the other. Rising out of the developing sink is a wood block, about five inches square on the top, which makes a suitable resting-place for the plate. There is no toning. The development is complete within two minutes, and the plate then put under a rose of running water; but it is not allowed to remain here many minutes, as the stream of water is not found to arrest development. The photograph is speedily popped into the hyposulphite bath, washed again thoroughly, and then backed at once. A good quality paper, not too stout, which has received a facing of gelatine, is wetted, placed upon the collodion plate, squeegeed firmly, and then the overlapping margins of paper skilfully cut off by rasping them against the sharp edge of the glass with a wooden paper-folder. When dry, the transfers strip without the least difficulty, and are then mounted on card-board for touching and painting.

To tell the truth, we are rather glad to get out of the enlarging-room, for the ether fumes cause one's eyes to smart a little sharply. Mr. Smith tells us, however, that none of the assistants suffer after being at the work for a few days, while cases of sickness are almost unheard of, and have certainly never been traced to the inhalation of ether fumes. You have to be very careful in opening and shutting the doors in this portion of the building, and the invariable rule is to close one before you open another—a regulation which is invariably complied with. On looking round once, to see if a door had actually closed behind us, and hesitating whether to go back, or run the risk of letting it be as it was, we caught sight of a warning in big letters: EVERYBODY SHUTS THE DOOR BUT YOU.

"It's a very good idea, isn't it?" said Mr. Smith. "I