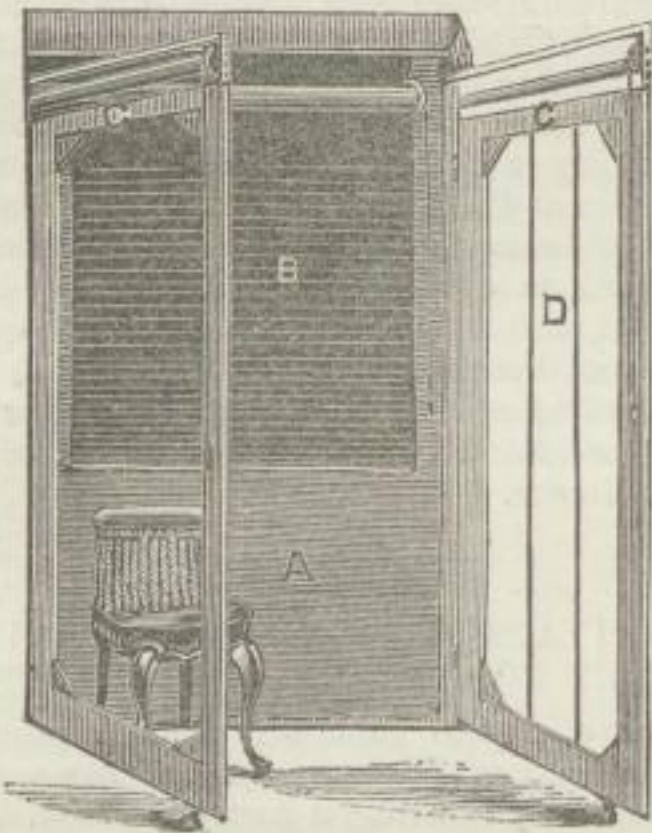


says: "But if the journey was sure to be a long one, it was equally certain that we must not attempt to sketch the studios of Scotland without including in the number Mr. Fergus' establishment. Nay, so highly esteemed is Mr. Fergus' name by one and all in North Britain, that it is but a matter of course that in attempting to describe Scotch studios, a sketch of his must of necessity come first."

Another celebrated Scotch photographer, Mr. John Henderson, of Perth, has shown great energy in the same direction. So great was his desire to elucidate every fact towards obtaining any degree of light and shade on his model, and just at the particular point he chose, that he constructed an experimental studio at a considerable cost. Every part except the floor was glazed with ground glass, and fitted inside with small wooden shutters—said shutters not being more than twelve inches square, and hinged to open inwards. It will be seen that, by starting with all the shutters closed, the sitter would be almost in darkness; but by opening these doors one by one, the operator has the light perfectly under his control; any amount can be admitted, and almost any effect may be produced. A great number of appliances have from time to time been designed for the better production of these pictures, and, as the result of many years' practice, the writer believes an arrangement somewhat similar to that exhibited in the accompanying wood-cut will be found the cheapest in construction and the most effective.



A, light background, stretched on a wooden frame measuring 7 feet high by 5 feet in width.

B, background on roller consisting of black velvet or dull black cloth, indispensable for vignetting in the camera on a black ground, or when great contrast is desired in the treatment of large heads, &c.

C C, side leaves 7 feet by 5 feet, fitted with blinds (not shown in the sketch); the leaves are hinged to the back frame, to permit adjustment at any angle with the background, a matter of importance when determining the amount of light to be admitted on the subject from one side, and shutting it off completely from the other, or using it as a reflector, as the case may require. Castors are provided to facilitate locomotion. When not in use, it can be folded, thereby occupying very little room.

Should the top light prove too strong, it can be filtered through a screen of light material, such as very common alpaca stretched over a wooden frame about 3 feet square, retaining it in the required position by any convenient means (an old head-rest will do).

Owing to the dark backgrounds often employed for these pictures, together with a considerable diminution in the quantity of light admitted into the atelier, the length of exposure becomes necessarily lengthened, causing many failures from under-exposure and movement when working wet plates—this being the process by which the majority of Rembrandt effects have been produced.

The great struggle after drop-shutter exposures in the studio, and the indifferent films employed when gelatino-bromide plates were first adopted by the portraitist, were not conducive to high-class Rembrandt effects; therefore, no doubt, the results obtained by many skilled operators were so disappointing that they ceased for a time to produce this class of photograph.

In this short article I wish to point out that instead of the dry plate being inferior for this class of work, it is vastly superior. Firstly, on account of its extreme rapidity, thereby reducing the chances of movement to a nominal value; secondly, the deep shadows about the eyes and chin, or on the shaded side of the hair and drapery, which many photographers reproduced as intense shadow with a wet collodion plate, may now, with a properly timed exposure on a dry plate, be rendered with proportionate blending of detail, from the strongest light down to the deepest black, with only a very slight increase in the exposure over that required for ordinary work. Thirdly, we may consider the difference in the two modes of development. Every worker of wet collodion plates must have noticed the affinity which exists between the most exposed portion of a plate, and the reduced metallic silver in the process of development, especially when large masses of deep black—such, for instance, as velvet—are being treated; the depositing silver seems to ignore these deep shadows, and exert all its energy, or pile up layer after layer on the strongly-lit portions. This effect is excessively noticeable when developing this class of picture, the result being very dense whites where half-tones should pervade, thereby necessitating, as above-mentioned, prolonged exposure to overcome the difficulty.

Gelatino-bromide plates developed by means of alkaline pyrogallol do not act in the manner above quoted; there is not a large excess of free silver floating about in the developing solution ready to attach itself anywhere, whether one desires it or not. The action must of necessity be regular, for with a properly timed exposure, the relationship existing between the alkali and pyrogallol can alone determine the degree of density or otherwise.

For the reasons above given, there can be very little doubt that a heavier class of lighting is admissible with gelatino-bromide plates in portraiture, than we have been familiar with of late years with collodion plates, and I am fully convinced that a little consideration of this subject by our practical portraitists will lead them to resuscitate a seemingly half-defunct mode of lighting; or, at all events, induce them to infuse more shadow generally in their productions.

HALF-A-DOZEN PORTRAITS.

III.—IN CHEAPSIDE.

THE bustling City is not predisposing to quiet portraiture. The jostling, elbowing, hurrying, scurrying, rushing, rubbing, chattering, clattering, multitude in Cheapside on a busy morning, is about the worst preparation one can have before sitting for a picture; for in the City one rapidly acquires City manners, and we soon find ourselves walking as briskly as the best of them, and hurrying along as if a rise in Spanish Fours, or a downfall of Peruvians, and not simply the taking of a photograph, were uppermost in mind and memory. In fact, on turning sharply into the studio, we are almost breathless, and in business tones demand if we can be taken immediately.

The clerk at the desk is quite equal to the occasion. He has his books and papers before him, and is ready to fill in an order before we can give it him.

"What sort of a portrait?" he asks, with pen in air.

"A small one will do."

"Do you mean for a locket?"

"No, an ordinary carte-de-visite."

"Ten shillings, if you please. Name and address?"

So rapidly does he proceed, that it reminds you of the Civil Service Stores, where you have to describe what you