

position of which esparto or wood pulp enters, are frequently liable to become seriously affected by the action of light. It need scarcely be mentioned that the most satisfactory method of testing the capability of any sample of paper to resist the action of light is to mask a specimen, and to expose it for a sufficient number of months to the best light which may be available; but as this course only gives an indication of value after the lapse of a considerable time, it is important to be able to arrive at some kind of a conclusion rapidly. As regards colouring matters with which paper may be tinted, we may remark that most of those which are rapidly destroyed by light are also decomposed quickly by the action of a weak solution of bleaching powder (the so-called chloride of lime). It may consequently be considered that any tint which rapidly disappears when the sample of paper is moistened with a solution obtained by stirring up a couple of ounces of commercial bleaching powder with a pint of water and filtering, is likely to be fugitive.

Thoroughly purified vegetable fibre, or cellulose, from whatever source it may have been obtained, is so little subject to darken under the action of light as to be well adapted to serve as a basis for the photographic picture; and although it is possible to so perfectly free esparto or wood pulp from the incrusting matters as to make these thoroughly reliable, this is seldom done in actual practice.

A rough test for that incrusting matter which is especially liable to darken is afforded by immersing a strip of the paper in strong sulphuric acid, it being assumed that no darkening will take place if the fibre has been thoroughly purified. This test is, however, liable to mislead, and, although useful in some cases, should always be supplemented by the aniline test, which depends on the circumstance that aniline salts possess the property of reacting upon the incrusting matter of pine wood, a bright yellow compound being formed. It is convenient to use a solution prepared by agitating two ounces of commercial aniline with a pint of water and three ounces of hydrochloric acid. Strips of white paper immersed in this solution for a second, and then exposed to the air, retain their whiteness, provided that perfectly purified cellulose has been used in the manufacture, but very soon take a bright yellow tint if any of the incrusting matter of pine wood is present.

Mr. C. F. Cross, in a paper recently communicated to the Society of Arts, points out the extreme difficulty of thoroughly purifying the ligneous fibre, and he points out the value of a neutral sulphite as a test for perfect purification, this reagent being applied to the pulp immediately after chlorination, a magenta tint being developed if the purification is incomplete. This method of testing is not, however, easily available for a photographer who wishes to test any samples of paper which may be presented to him.

While treating of paper, we may mention that resinized papers often—or, indeed, generally—exhibit an acid reaction, and it appears that this acid reaction arises from the use of aluminium sulphate for fixing the size.

THE POSTAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY.

THIS Society, open to all *bona-fide* amateurs within the range of the penny post, has now been established on a firm basis. A fortnight since we published some interesting details of the progress of the Society, which now musters upwards of sixty members, among whom, as the albums of the Society show, there are many very capable photographers.

The true test of a man's work is to compare it with the work of other men; and so, by placing photographs side by side, you get a very good idea of their comparative merits. This the Postal Society does. The pictures sent in to the Honorary Secretary (Mr. H. H. Cunningham, of

7, Fig Tree Court, Temple) are carefully mounted in suitable albums, and these then sent round to members for their inspection. Not only this, but the members are their own critics, and become their own judges in awarding the prizes. This is a very satisfactory plan of proceeding, and it is managed, as the Secretary explains, in the manner following:—

"1. It is obviously easier to compare landscape with landscape, than with portrait or *genre* subject. We therefore divide all pictures upon which members are to express their views in the form of votes—*i.e.*, competition pictures—into classes, view or landscape, portrait or group figure, and set subject—all being kept distinct.

"The merit of any picture depends, firstly, on its technical execution, and, secondly, on its pictorial or artistic qualities.

"In photography the technical execution is further divisible into the quality of the negative and that of the print.

"We therefore get the three qualities, viz., of the (a) negative, (b) the print, (c) the pictorial. Any one of these may be obviously present in the absence of one or both of the others.

"The members are told to look at the landscapes; then to pick out the one which they think is the best negative, and, having found it, put a cross in the column for negative, under the name of the exhibitor; and where several pictures are shown by one exhibitor, to put the number of the picture also.

"Next to see which is the best as a specimen of printing, and treat that the same way—by voting for it.

"And then look again for the one which seems to be the best as a pictorial composition, and vote for that in the same way. This exhausts the three votes for landscapes: and the portrait and set subjects are treated the same way, except that the latter, being more especially intended to encourage the artistic side of photography, greater weight is given to pictorial than technical, two votes being allowed for pictorial, and one for technical qualities, not distinguishing negative from print in this case.

"It is further incumbent, so that all may compete on equal terms, that exhibitors should state on one of the forms provided full particulars of conditions under which the picture was produced; and where double printing, retouching, or other artifice has been had recourse to, these must also be stated; these things are not excluded (the object being, by all means available, to make pictures), but so that members may know what they are voting for, details of this kind must be given."

We have had the pleasure of looking through the albums of the Society, and must compliment its members on a marked improvement during the present year; in fact, the books contain pictures equal to the best exhibited year by year at the Pall Mall Exhibition. The members, whether they live far or near—one of them, we hear, resides in the wilds of Northern Sutherlandshire—all are bound together by the Postal Union, and thus the Society, although its members are more scattered than in any other body, participates in all benefits and are as cogitant of one author's works as if they all resided under one roof. The criticisms and notes recorded in the volumes of photographs form most interesting reading, and are a capital substitute for the meetings of ordinary societies.

HALF-A-DOZEN PORTRAITS.

No. V.—WITH A BUSINESS FIRM.

It is a business establishment, as we find out to our cost.

We have been searching for a studio where seven shillings and sixpence is the regulation charge for a dozen cartes, and this is it. In a busy and fashionable thoroughfare,