

music of the brook. It *bubbles* into the bays; it *babbles* on the pebbles. It really seems incredible that in quoting four lines from a well-known poem, so many mistakes could possibly be made. "Ebbles" for "trebles;" "ways" for "bays;" "bubble" for "babble." It is enough to make the author tear from his head the little hair of which his photographs show him still to be possessed.—Yours obediently,

F. H. CARTER.

Wood Vale, Forest Hill.

PHOTOTYPE BLOCKS AND OUR PATENT LAWS.

DEAR SIR,—Having just received Nos. 1,306 and 1,307 of the NEWS, I am astonished at the possibility of the "interesting feature" of the Luxotype of Messrs. Brown, Barnes, and Bell, mentioned in the Notes, being tenable as a patent, seeing that most of these methods for breaking up the half-tones in a photograph have been published long ago.

In the first instance, Mr. W. B. Woodbury published in 1870, in answer to a letter by Mons. Davanne, means for giving a grain or stipple to gelatine reliefs by the aid of emery and other powders; and the Brothers Bullock published their method of graining negatives by laying a transparent grained medium upon the picture or negative, and taking a copy therefrom, so that the resulting picture would be grained. Or they proposed making a picture upon transfer paper which had been previously grained by any means whatever—*vide* "Handbuch der Emailphotographie, &c," by the late A. Martin, 1872.

There the lining or stippling from a printing medium by the use of printers' ink is already protected by patent No. 1535, A.D. 1879, the results of which invention is, the rapid production of printing and copying surfaces, etched blocks for printing, and for the making of printing blocks by photographic agency.

Further, patent No. 3732, A.D. 1881, says:—"The exposed prints are of two kinds; if the photograph is a reproduction of lines, it requires no special treatment, but if it be a photograph from nature or an artistic drawing in half-tone, it is first covered with a thin pellicle to give the necessary grain. It will be evident that, instead of producing a uniform grain, it will be easy to produce for the purpose of a photographic negative, either artistically an original of any kind, or mechanically, by employing wire or other cloths combined in various ways in order to produce the effect indispensable in certain kinds of engravings, &c.

If the Luxotype patent is valid after the above, then the patent laws still permit vast monopolies, as intimated by Mr. D. C. Dallas, twenty years past, in his letter to the *Journal of the Society of Arts*, anent his photo-electric engraving.

Here is another example in confirmation of the above. Mr. John Moss has, through his representatives, applied for a patent for Russia for his improved method of transferring designs, &c., as laid down in Specification No. 388, A.D. 1882. But there is very little novelty in it. The improvement consists in impressing the design upon a gelatine tissue by the action of light, raising the unchanged portions by moisture, inking in and finally pressing it to the surface which is to be etched. Further, he claims the dusting-on of a resinous powder as a protecting medium, and the use of perchloride of iron for etching upon copper substantially as described.

As the above has been published over and over again, no novelty was found, and I imagine that patents would not be granted so easily in England if the specifications were, while in the provisional protection stage, handed over to competent authorities. For instance, over here the applications for patents are all forwarded to the council of the Imperial Polytechnical Society, whence they are distributed to the several sections, according to the subjects treated, who in their turn determine their validity as patents. In a recent issue of the *Polygraphische Centralblatt*,

a great future is prophesied for the above process in Germany, where a full patent has been granted on the strength of the English one. Very likely the Patent Commissioners grant patents indiscriminately.—Respectfully Yours,

C. CHESTERMAN.

St. Petersburg, Oct. 10th. 1883.

[Patents are constantly granted for old inventions, and the consequence is that but a moderate proportion of them are valid. Agents draw a well-marked distinction between "fighting patents" and "ordinary patents."—Ed. P.N.]

AFAR-OFF PHOTOGRAPHY.

DEAR SIR,—In the PHOTOGRAPHIC NEWS of the 12th inst. you insert a letter and issue strictures on my enlarged photograph of the Isle of Man as seen from Blackpool, evidently to some extent the result of misrepresentation or misapprehension, if not also for the ulterior purpose of injuring my reputation as an artist.

I beg to enclose you a copy of the original negative, and also a memorandum given with each photograph sold, informing the purchaser that it did not, and does not, absolutely represent the original negative as taken, but that it is an enlargement made to bring out more strikingly the contour of the hills. The buoy (not *buoys*) and the sea-gulls are simply an artistic manipulation to give more depth and interest to the picture, and do not in any way impugn the integrity or originality of the photograph.

Trusting to your fairness to insert this in your next issue, I am, yours respectfully,

R. BANKS.

PS.—I may add that it is no uncommon thing to see the Isle of Man from Blackpool, as many can testify.

Proceedings of Societies.

PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

A MEETING was held in the Gallery, 5A, Pall Mall East, on Tuesday last, the 23rd instant, Capt. ABNEY in the chair.

After some formal business, those gentlemen who had contributed apparatus to the Exhibition were invited to explain any points of interest relating to their exhibits.

The multiplex back (see p. 270) was first explained by Mr. Dale, who considered it to afford a practical solution to the question of changing-boxes *v.* slides.

The CHAIRMAN, however, pointed out the undesirability of unduly loading the camera, and appeared to consider that the use of the changing-box in question would necessitate a very much heavier and less convenient stand than would suffice for an ordinary camera and back. He then commented on the desirability of adopting the standard screw of Photographic Society for new forms of apparatus.

Mr. SAMUELS next explained the action of his changing-box (page 649). The ease and rapidity with which he manipulated the apparatus produced a favourable impression upon those present; still it was urged that the main disadvantage of such an apparatus consists in the circumstance that it would require an especially heavy stand.

Mr. GEORGE SMITH next called attention to an improvement in his brattice-stand. Instead of hinging only one end of the top stretcher into the bifurcation of the leg, and allowing the other end to merely push against its seating, he now not only hinges each end of the stretcher, but also provides a kind of toggle joint in the middle of the stretcher. By this arrangement the stand can be more quickly set up, and the legs are tied more firmly to the top of the stand. He also showed his long-focus portable camera.

Mr. SHEW called attention to slides so constructed as to be charged through a slot instead of the usual manner, and he wished to gather the opinion of those present as to the relative advantage of this form, resembling, as it did, a pattern in use many years ago, and the kind usually met with.

Mr. SANDS next called attention to his adjustable finder, which could not only be readily adapted to any camera, but could be so adjusted as to indicate the field of a lens of any focus. It can, moreover, be readily folded up so as to lie flat in the pocket.

Mr. STEBBINGS' roller camera was next handed round.