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NEW DISCOVERIES IN PHOTOGRAPHY IN NATURAL COLOURS.

In these pages to-day will be found an article from the Paris correspondent of the *Daily News*, telegraphed to that journal last Tuesday night, also a communication to us from M. Leon Vidal, about a new discovery made by Professor Lippmann, of the Sorbonne, in relation to the taking of photographs in natural colours. M. Lippmann has the idea that the phenomena of interference have some influence in the production of photographs in natural colours. The colours of thin plates, the colours of a thin surface of oil floating on water, and the colours of the soap-bubble as it grows thin, are phenomena of interference.

On perusal of the two articles just mentioned, it will be found that so little is stated about the process that nobody can work it until farther details are received from Paris. A film of albumen containing iodide of silver is used, but how to prepare it is not stated, but the negative information is given that an emulsion is useless, the particles of the haloid then being too coarse. Whether the film must be as thin as a soap-film which yields colours is not stated.

The interference of light-waves is produced by means of metallic mercury at the back of the plate to send the rays back through the film; at least, the inference from a sentence in one of the articles is, that the mercury is in contact with the back of the plate, and not in contact with the sensitive film. The plates are developed and fixed "as usual." Does this mean that the ferrous-oxalate developer is used, or what?

As to the quality of the results obtained, the statements of the two correspondents differ extremely. M. Vidal describes them as poor, and the *Daily News* correspondent, who also has seen them, as excellent. The latter saw them last Tuesday, and M. Vidal saw some on the preceding Friday, so M. Lippmann may have made improvements meanwhile. The one describes some unfixed photographs in colours; perhaps those seen by M. Vidal were fixed, and had been nearly obliterated by that process.

At all events, a fresh advance in relation to photo-

graphy in natural colours has been made, and we must wait for the details. Whether the first results be imperfect or otherwise is of small moment, for new discoveries are rarely of utilitarian value at the outset. If M. Lippmann wants a haloid film, free from granulation and rich in silver, perhaps a fluoride of silver film might answer, for that salt can be made in flexible films which can be cut with a pair of scissors.

RETOUCHING—ITS USE AND ABUSE.

SINCE photographers have been compelled to pay more attention to the artistic qualities of their work, an outcome of the better art education of the public, it has become the fashion in many quarters to decry the use of the lead pencil, and to assert that every photographic portrait should be untouched, and that its native blemishes should not be glossed over. At many recent exhibitions many pictures of large heads have been shown in which this idea has been carried out, but it must be noted that these have generally been from picked subjects. We remember some most effective ones by Mr. Adcock, of Melton Mowbray, whose untimely death has only recently been reported, and one or two of these will serve as examples of portraits in which retouching may be entirely neglected with advantage. One is the portrait of a man, who appears to be a gipsy. His swarthy face is roughened with constant exposure to the winds of all seasons, and there are characteristic lines about his mouth and eyes which tell of cares which are almost inseparable from a roving, hand to mouth existence. His unkempt, curly black hair is covered with an old felt hat, which shades half the forehead, and a velveteen coat thrown open shows a ragged, white, collarless shirt. The picture is a striking one, and no touch upon the negative could possibly have given it improvement.

Another picture by the same hand represents a man who is more of a tramp than our gipsy friend. He has a rougher coat, and around his neck is one of those gaily-patterned scarves or comforters which are so dear to the hearts of our vagrants. He is lighting his pipe, and his rough, dirty hands are as full of character as