

# THE PHOTOGRAPHIC NEWS.

EDITED BY T. C. HEPWORTH, F.C.S.

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### PHOTOGRAPHING INTERIORS.

If dry plates have made the general work of the photographer less irksome than it was when he had the anxieties of a silver bath to cope with, they have certainly brought with them and rendered possible tasks which the men of twenty years ago seldom thought of attempting. To those outside the world of photography, everything that is visible must be capable of being photographed, and some will gravely argue that, because an express train travelling at sixty miles an hour can be made to give its swiftly passing image to the gelatine plate, therefore all things are possible by photography. A list of the impossibilities which some of these patient workers have been asked to perform would be amusing to read as a good example of human credulity. But, although it may seem impolitic to explain to the ignorant why particular subjects are unsuited to the camera, and can, if attempted, never give satisfactory pictures, it is better to do so candidly than to risk one's reputation in sending out a photograph which is a failure.

Among the chief subjects, apart from portraiture, with which the photographer is called upon to deal, are pictures of interiors. These embrace not only public rooms and churches, but also private mansions, and one or two of our foremost photographers appear to have laid themselves out for this particular class of work. They have made an earnest study of it, and, as they do the work well, they obtain plenty of patrons. There is a wide field open for this phase of photography, and those who have not yet turned their attention to it, and still keep to their old groove of portraiture, would do well to consider whether it would not be worth their while to encourage such a profitable branch of business.

Twenty years ago no one would have dreamt of recommending photographers to take up interior work as a profitable thing, and for two very good reasons: the first, that the old wet-plate process was unsuited to the work, unless careful precautions were taken to keep the film moist; and the second, that, so far as domestic

interiors are concerned, there was little that was worthy of being photographed. We, of course, had our palaces and show places at that date, but the average rich man had not begun to think it necessary to spend, as many do now, a small fortune on the interior decoration of their dwellings. In many of the West-end squares of London, the exterior aspect of the houses is precisely the same as it was fifty years ago. The fronts of the mansions receive their annual or triennial coat of sober cream colour, and year by year they preserve their stolid appearance of comfort, cleanliness, and intense respectability; but if we step inside, we find what a change this half-century has brought about. The dining room, for instance, has no longer its walls flatted with a coat of green or drab, upon which the oil pictures, hung in massive frames, looked so well, but is now ablaze with the carefully chosen tints worked out by the ancient or modern tapestry weaver, while the lower portion is filled in with the inevitable dado made of inlaid woods. The spotless white-washed ceiling which contented our forefathers has gone, and its site is now panelled in polished woods. The floor is similarly ornamented in beautiful parquetry, and, instead of being hidden from wainscot to wainscot by a Brussels carpet, has a large square of "Turkey" or "Axminster" in its centre. The furniture has undergone the same transforming process, while the whole is brightened up with stained glass in the windows, and with rare flowers and handsome ornaments *ad libitum*. The room, and indeed every room of the house, is itself a picture, and small wonder is it that its proud possessor should desire to have it photographed.

Now, a photograph of such a room as we have described is not generally a difficult operation; but it requires great care if we desire to secure a first-class negative. The best lens to employ is a rectilinear, which may be replaced with advantage by a wide-angle of the portable symmetrical type if space be limited, as it very often is. Windows must be excluded from the picture if possible, and those which are outside its limits must be made to yield all the light available by either removing or tying back temporarily the window