

Notes.

The Amateur Photographic Association, under the presidency of the Prince of Wales, is doing a useful work in forming a British Museum of portraits of notable personages. The idea of such a gallery of pictures has been talked about ever since the charge of want of permanence has been removed from the long catalogue of sins with which photography has been credited. On Saturday last a number of such portraits were submitted to the "private view" ordeal at 58, Pall Mall, and on the same occasion a dinner was given by the Association with the Duke of Teck as chairman. Under such auspices the work of the Association is sure to get along apace. We are glad to note that ladies who have distinguished themselves are to find a place in this gallery as well as members of the inferior sex.

There is just now plenty of opportunity for those who are fond of experimental work, and who have also a mind to contribute to the Meteorological Society's collection of pictures, to take photographs of lightning. On our Southern and Eastern coasts thunderstorms have been, during the past week, of daily and nightly occurrence, and the lightning has been of the most vivid description. Watching this lightning the other night, we could not help reflecting that many problems concerning these wonderful outbursts of atmospheric electricity remain to be solved. Why, for instance, do some of these jagged lines of fire remain in sight for a longer time than others which appear at the same instant? Why do others persist in the same position, while, during an incredibly short space of time, they are repeated again and again? Why sometimes does a flash, instead of striking direct to the earth, come near its surface and then return to another part of the sky, making an immense loop? Surely we may hope that some of these puzzles may be unravelled by means of photography.

The latest phase of trade protection is represented in Paris by the combination of artists' models with a view to air a grievance for which there seems to be justification. It would seem that there are middlemen in this business, as in most others; that these men are Italian by birth, and naturally favour their own countrymen and women, to the exclusion of French people. So the French models are up in arms, and assert that they are as well formed, and as well-favoured in other respects by nature, as their Italian rivals. It is intended that artists shall be supplied with a list of the unionists, from whose ranks they will be able to choose their Dianas, Venuses, &c., without troubling the Italians.

Such a demonstration on the part of artists' models will not at present affect photographers; but who knows how soon photography may employ such aids to picture-making? We can recall some exquisite little photographs in which models were employed, which pictures a few years ago deservedly won a prize at one of our exhibitions. They were the work of one who was a painter by profession, and admirably he had adapted his artistic knowledge to their production. The subjects were Pompeian. Carefully arranged accessories in the shape of a fountain-basin, tessellated pavement, &c., all looking as if they had been

borrowed for the occasion from the Pompeian house at the Crystal Palace, combined with suitably draped figures of a boy and girl, were the materials employed in the composition. We fancy that many more such pictures would be produced if only models were brought into contact with photographers as they are with knights of the brush.

The artists and sculptors chosen to decide the design for the new coinage are still sitting. We have not heard whether the photographer has yet been called in to assist them, but we fancy that the photographs of her Majesty can hardly be ignored if anything like a portrait is desired. The absurd caricatures which figure in the present jubilee coinage were probably not the fault of the late Sir J. E. Boehm, as he had to adopt the Queen's idea of what she fancied she was like. The approbation of Royalty must always fetter the artist. *Apropos*, one can hardly fancy the Queen approving the statue of herself which now stands conspicuous in the Royal Exchange, yet we suppose she must have expressed her satisfaction at the time. This statue deserves to be photographed, if only to show how an infinitesimal quantity of art satisfies the good citizens of London. If these photographs were publicly exhibited in the print shops of the metropolis, this frightful effigy would not remain another week in its present situation to be laughed at by foreigners.

Human nature in front of the camera is a curious study. Directly persons are told they are about to be photographed they draw themselves up in a stiff drill-sergeant attitude, put on their sternest expression, and prepare to be "took." We had an opportunity of seeing a glaring example of this kind of thing on Bank Holiday at Dunmow, on the occasion of the presentation of the time-honoured fitch. There were three couples as claimants, and previous to the trial it was intimated that the scene on the platform would be photographed. Instantly the smiles fled from the faces of the three husbands, and the simpers from the countenances of the three wives. Had they been quarrelling and had resolved never to speak to each other again, the expressions could not have been more stony. It was a good thing the jury had not to decide as to the fitness of the claims by the photographs of the claimants.

Apropos of Bank Holiday, it was impossible not to discover that itinerant photography is no longer what it was. The holiday folk have lost their fancy for posing in the open air in front of the camera; and where a dozen strolling photographers used to make a good living, there is scarcely sufficient trade for one man. The best business is done where picnics most abound, say in the neighbourhood of Epping Forest; but there, we believe, are restrictions which prevent over-competition.

The shareholders in the Automatic Photographic Co. are not at all satisfied with the state of affairs. Lord Kilmorey and another prominent director have retired from the Board; the machines, it is said, have been worked at a loss, and the assets of the Company—so far as can be gathered—are only £1,454 in cash and the value of the machines (which cost £9,000), leaving a deficiency of upwards of £26,000 to be accounted for. These and other statements are contained in a circular which has been sent out by a firm of solicitors whose services have been engaged by a number of dissatisfied shareholders.