

# THE PHOTOGRAPHIC NEWS.

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

VOL. XXXV. No. 1725.—September 25, 1891.

## CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
Military Photography .....	665	Photographic Archaeology .....	673
Illusions of Sight. By Rev. H. Gordon Palmer.....	666	Taking the Baby. By F. E. B. ....	676
The Rate of Explosions in Gases .....	667	Volatile Platinum Compounds. By W. Pullinger .....	677
Chicago Exhibition, 1893.....	668	American Opinion concerning the Recent Convention Meeting at Bath.....	678
Photography in Germany. By Hermann E. Gunther.....	670	Photographic Chemistry. By Prof. R. Meldola .....	678
Practical Development. By W. S. Waterbury .....	671	Patent Intelligence .....	679
Notes .....	672	Proceedings of Societies .....	680
Address to the Graduating Class of the Chautauqua School of Photography .....	675	Answers to Correspondents .....	680

### MILITARY PHOTOGRAPHY.

AMONG the various arts helped by photography, the art of war—if the business of killing people scientifically can be called an art—has, as yet, been most chary in its employment of the camera. Certain officers and special correspondents have, it is true, taken pictures of battlefields and their surroundings, and we have seen more than one photograph which has been actually taken “under fire.” But these were not done under military authority, or to serve any military purpose, and may, therefore, be regarded as amateur productions which hardly touch the fringe of the subject before us. On the other hand we have, it will be remembered, a Photographic Section of the School of Military Engineering at Chatham, which has done a great deal of work in connection with big guns, in recording the havoc done to targets by their monster projectiles, and the effects upon various descriptions of armour plates by chilled and other shot. These useful photographs have frequently been exhibited, and are, therefore, more or less familiar to many of our readers. But so far as active work with an army in the field is concerned, photography has as yet done nothing.

The subject may really be regarded as a new one, for gelatine plates are not much more than a decade old, and before their introduction any use of the camera during the bustle of a campaign would have been voted impossible. No commander would have cared to have increased his impedimenta by a travelling dark room or tent, and such a collection of bottles and other paraphernalia as the collodion process entailed. But with the convenience of dry plates these difficulties at once disappear; the officer need no longer fear any noticeable addition to his kit, and it remains for him to consider whether any advantages are to be gained by employment of the camera on active service. This is a question that cannot very well be satisfactorily answered by a civilian, and we are therefore fain to turn to the pages of a little book by Captain Wheeler on “Military Photography,” which has recently been issued by Messrs. Iliffe and Son.

Captain Wheeler points out, in the first place, that the camera would be a valuable aid in reconnoissance, although he admits that there are hundreds of well-informed and generally sensible persons who are convinced that the pencil is all-sufficient in making such rough sketches as alone are necessary. It is, unfortunately, the way with a certain class of minds to pooh-pooh in this way any new thing. They are so used to the old rut that they quite decline to avail themselves of a better path. There is an authentic story about the introduction of the first electric telegraph, which was submitted to a high Government official in this country, who, in his wisdom, expressed the opinion that such a means of communication was quite unnecessary, for the Semaphore system answered all needs. The introducer of military cameras may possibly have to deal with this exasperating kind of opposition, unless he is able to secure the goodwill of someone having influence with the authorities. But, setting this difficulty aside by supposing that all such opposition has been removed, in what way is it proposed to make use of the camera in a reconnoissance? Any object or feature of importance would, of course, be photographed instead of sketched as at present, and, if the conditions were favourable, the hand-camera would be the instrument used. Such pictures generally are not wanted until the return to camp, when the plates would be developed and printed by any quick development process. The taker of the pictures would not necessarily develop them himself, but might hand them over to a divisional photographic section, which it is recommended should be attached to an army corps. Such photographs might be combined with pencil draughtsmanship, so that one system could be made to check the other—the photographs for general views, and the pencil sketches for details.

The term “Photographic Section” is not meant to imply a large staff of workers; on the contrary, two specially trained men with a pony or mule-load of apparatus would be enough. These men would be under the control of the chief of the staff and divisional