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The young man's book of amusement

Halifax, 1848

Chinese Paints

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the moment light falls on the surface. This glass overcomes the difficulty of transporting the sight as it were to the dense centre of the water, where it takes advantage of the light in the water, and it is carried in a straight line, as it is in the air. To make use of this apparatus during the night, lights are placed all round the center of the cylinder, which are shorter as they descend to the base of the tube. These lights throw a strong light around, and enable the inspector to see distinctly the bottom of the river.

Preserving of Birds, &c.

Mr. Termineck, director of the Dutch Museum, has for many years, made use of no other means of saving preserved birds and quadrupeds from the attacks of minute insects, than placing a small wooden basin, containing tallow, in each case, which he finds to be more effectual than either camphor or Russia leather.

Chinese Paints.

The peculiar beauty of Chinese drawings is owing, not to the particular nature of the colouring substances, but merely to their being mixed with glue or size, instead of gum-water, as is the common practice in Europe. In regard to the preparation, two things must be observed; first, that the beauty de-

pend, in a very great measure, upon the fineness of its particles, the finest being always the most beautiful. A Chinese painter employs a man for three or four days to grind a small quantity of vermilion in a porcelain mortar, and it is from this they derive their fine reds. Secondly, it must be considered, that most mineral colours are prepared with acids, alkalis, or other salts, and that a small superabundance of those saline substances generally remains with them, which, after a longer or shorter time, produces considerable alteration in their brilliancy, and often entirely changes their colour. In order to obviate this inconvenience, the paint, after having been levigated, must be repeatedly washed in clean water: distilled water is the fittest. In order to effect this properly, put half an ounce of the paint in a half pint glass phial, and fill the rest of the phial almost entirely with water; shake it well: then let it stand for a while, and the coloured powder will soon fall to the bottom; then pour off the water, by inclining the phial gently, so as not to disturb the sediment, and fill it again with clean water, and so on for five or six times; after which, the colour being gently dried, must be ground a little longer, and then it is fit for use. The glue or size to be mixed with the paints is extracted from parchment in the following manner:—Take about four ounces of clean parchment, cut it into bits, and put it to soak in a quart of clean water for about twelve hours; then boil the whole on a gentle fire, and in the beginning take off the scum with a spoon. The vessel must remain always uncovered, and the liquor must be stirred occasionally.

After boiling about an hour, take off the pot from the fire, and strain the liquor while hot, through a coarse sieve. The liquor must be again put over the fire in a clean pot, and gently boiled till half is evaporated: the remainder is then spread very thinly upon panes of glass, which being kept in a warm place for a day or two, the size will dry, and become very hard. When it is wanted for use, put a small quantity of it in a cup of luke-warm water, and dip the hair pencil in it. The properties of this glue, which render it much superior to gum-water, are the following:—It does not deaden, nor otherwise alter the colours with which it is mixed: it does not crack like gum; and it becomes so soon hard, as not only to defend the colours from being affected by smoke and other vapours, but even to bear the surface of the drawing being cleaned by means of a wet sponge.

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