

**A TREATISE ON THE
POSITIVE
COLLODION PROCESS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649428885

A Treatise on the Positive Collodion Process by Thomas Sutton

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

THOMAS SUTTON

**A TREATISE ON THE
POSITIVE
COLLODION PROCESS**

A TREATISE
ON THE
Positive Collodion Process.

BY THOMAS SUTTON, B.A.,
Editor of "PHOTOGRAPHIC NOTES."
Author of a TREATISE ON THE CALOTYPE PROCESS, &c.

LONDON:
BLAND & LONG, 153, FLEET STREET.
1857.

193. c. 69.

JERSEY :—Printed by C. LE FEVRE, Beresford Street.

INTRODUCTION.

THE following pages contain full information on the subject of the Positive Collodion Process. I have described minutely how to make the Collodion, and the various solutions required, together with the mode of taking the picture.

I have also offered some remarks on Photographic Portraiture which I trust may be found useful to those who are desirous of producing artistic pictures. I have always endeavoured to give my reasons for what I advance, and to express myself so clearly as to be intelligible to the Tyro in the Art, and nothing has, I believe, been omitted that can contribute to his perfect success in following my directions.

I have observed the great increase during the past year of the number of professional and amateur photographers who practise the Positive Collodion Process exclusively, on account of its economy and adaptation to the requirements of portraiture; but at the same time I have remarked

the almost universal bad tone of the pictures exhibited. Now I find that by using proper materials, and observing common precautions, very excellent WHITES, and every other quality of a fine proof, may be obtained;—that it is in fact just as easy to produce a fine white as a dull sombre grey or brown hue in the lights, while this superiority of tone seems all that is required to raise the Glass Positive to the rank of an artistic production. Should the reader therefore be dissatisfied with his present results and anxious to improve them, he will find in the following pages the means of so modifying his formulæ as to produce with equal ease the finest pictures that the process is capable of yielding.

It is therefore because I conceive that I have something new and good to offer that I publish this pamphlet; and in order that I may make it as useful and scientific as possible I make no mystery of any of the details.

Now, having taken great pains in describing the process familiarly and clearly, so that all may understand me, and being sincerely desirous that everyone may succeed with my formulæ, and that a most useful and delightful art may be advanced a step in public estimation, I have a right to require of the reader in return, that he withhold his opinion of my process until he shall have given it a careful and honest trial, following my directions implicitly in all points, great and small.

As example may add weight to precept, I am prepared to send a specimen, by post, to anyone who will apply for it, on the terms stated in the advertisement at the end. A stock of these specimens will always be kept in readiness, and no delay will therefore occur in their transmission. They are portraits, taken from the life by the process described, and with my Collodion. I forward them as specimens of colour : that is, of whites, blacks, and middle tints.

Although I have given the formula for the Collodion, in order that there may be no mystery in the matter, yet I would dissuade the reader from attempting to make it himself. It is a troublesome and delicate job, involving a knowledge of chemical manipulation, and requiring purer chemicals than can be ordinarily obtained from the chemist. Foggy, feeble, and spotty pictures are the inevitable result of using common chemicals, even when their purity is believed in and guaranteed by the vendor. I have arranged to manufacture the Collodion on a large scale, with materials properly purified and tested, and those who employ my formulæ will do well to obtain the collodion of me. The great secret of a good collodion consists, not in the addition to it of any empirical foreign substance, but in the purity and proper strength of the ordinary materials with which it is made, and the careful superintendence of the manufacture. This careful superintendence I guarantee; and I shall introduce any real improvement which may at any time be discovered.

.

On the subject of Colouring Positives I have been somewhat brief, for the fact is, I much prefer a good photograph uncoloured; and although an amateur artist, and formerly a pupil of Sass, of Bloomsbury, I have rarely tried my hand at tinting photographs. However, with the kind help of a friend who has had much experience in this matter, I have ventured to offer some remarks on Colouring.

I shall always be happy to reply to the queries of correspondents through the medium of my fortnightly Journal, "*Photographic Notes.*"

I think I may say with confidence that the Positive Collodion process, as described in these pages, is at once the simplest and cheapest of all Photographic processes. The pictures produced by it appear to be quite permanent, when protected from the influence of a sulphuretted atmosphere.

THOMAS SUTTON.

St. Brelade's Bay, Jersey,
March 10th, 1857.

CHAPTER I.

ON PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAITURE.

LIGHT AND SHADE; POSE AND EXPRESSION; ACCESSORIES OF A
PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAIT; AND ARTISTIC CONSIDERATIONS GENERALLY.

Photographic portraiture is not a mere mechanical art. A good photographic portrait is something more than a successful piece of manipulation. It involves the application of certain principles of art, the knowledge of which is essential to success. The mere photographer, in ignorance of these principles, may produce a copy of the human face, considered as a material body exposed to light, but he will never, except by a lucky chance, produce a pleasing portrait of his sitter. I cannot therefore do better than commence this treatise with a discussion of those essential points which determine the character of a portrait as an artistic production, viz., the pose, the effect of light and shade, and the arrangement of the background and accessories. The reader who prefers proceeding at once to the details of the