

*Buffing.** In the morning before using your buffs, brush both as clean as possible, in order to free them from dust, then with the blade of your shears, held perpendicular, rub your buffs from end to end, then knock them both together in order to free them from all dust or other substances, occasionally exposing them in the sun or to the fire.

Take one of the buffs, (reserving the finest and softest for the last operating,) powder its face with fine rouge and brush off slightly, leaving only the finest particles in it, every artist should have two plate holders, one for cleaning, and one for buffing the plate; for using only one, the rotten stone is liable to get on the buff and scratch the plate.

Rest the fingers of the left hand on the back of the buff, near the farther end, with about the same pressure as in cleaning; while with the right you bear on the handle to correspond, and give the buff a free, easy, horizontal motion, passing it very nearly the whole length over the plate each time. Continue this, changing ends of the plate occasionally, during at least a minute and a half for a medium, three minutes for a quarter, and five for a half size. The buff once well filled with polish, add but little after,—say a small quantity once in two or three plates. This, as well as the buffs, must be *perfectly dry*.

Now with the other buff, proceed to give the final surface, on which the image is to be formed; and as you desire a fine picture, in the same ratio you must exercise care and skill in this operation.

Some buff the smaller plates on the hands, by resting them on the fingers in such a manner that the buff cannot touch them; some, by holding the edges with the thumb and little finger, with the remaining fingers under, or on the back; and others buff on

* Some Artists use wheels for buffing the plate in which case it is fastened on a block of wood, by means of sealing wax. Mr. Peck of New Haven, Ct., has lately patented a holder intended for this purpose which does away with the use of the wax.

the holder. When this last method is adopted, it requires the greatest caution to prevent the dust from getting on the buff. The holder should be wiped clean.

The plate frequently slips around, and the buff comes in contact with the bed of the holder. This is very detrimental to the successful operation, and in such cases, great care should be taken to clean it before farther buffing.

The buffing may be continued as before, except without the application of polish powder to the last buff. Examine the surface occasionally, and buff more lightly toward the close of the operation, using at last the mere weight of the buff. This last buffing should occupy as long time as the first.

The point to be aimed at, is the production of a surface of such exquisite polish as to be itself invisible, like the surface of a mirror. The secret of producing pictures discernable in any light, lies in this; the more dark, deep, and mirror-like the surface of the plate, the more nearly do we approach to perfection.

In all cases, very light and long continued buffing is productive of the greater success, since by that means a more perfect polish can be obtained.

When a view is to be taken, or any impression which requires the camera box to be turned down, the bed-piece to the plate-holder must be changed round sideways, and the plate buffed in the other direction, as the polish mark must always show horizontal when the picture is in position.

It was formerly thought necessary to subject every plate to the operation of burning. This is not now in general practice, unless the plate has either been gilded, or lost its sensitiveness by mercury deposited on the surface and rubbed into the silver in cleaning,—which fact can be ascertained by observing the numerous black scratches or marks across the surface.

In the last of these cases, clean the plate as before, then taking it in the pliers by