described, but with two perfectly distinct curved black lines extending from one axle to the other, as shown in the upper central figure. When four loops are joined at right angles to each other, three jet black lines are shown, as indicated in the upper left hand figure. A circular loop shows a single black line.

This curious effect is produced by holding the apparatus so that the light is reflected as much as possible from the inner surface of the wire. The result is due to the eclipsing of the bright surface by the shaded portion of the upper loop as it passes between the eye and the lower loop. The whole of the loop is not eclipsed at the same instant, but persistence of vision causes the entire eclipse to be seen at once.

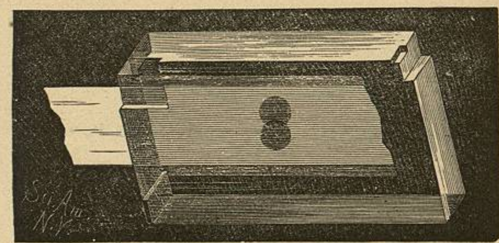
Success in this experiment depends upon holding the loops in the right position relative to the light, as well as the provision of the proper background. The loops should be held over a dark ground, with the axles parallel with the plane of vision.

CHAPTER XII.

POLARIZED LIGHT.

Glass, like all uncrystallized bodies, is said to be single refracting, because it diverts the ray in one direction only. By placing a rhomb of Iceland spar over a small black spot formed on a piece of white paper, two images of the spot appear, showing that the beam of light has been split up into two rays, one of which is called the ordinary ray, the other the extraordinary ray. As the rhomb is turned, the extraordinary ray moves around the ordi-

FIG. 241.



Iceland Spar.

nary one, and the image of the spot produced by the extraordinary ray appears nearer to the observer than the spot itself. This property of splitting the ray transmitted through the crystal, which was first noticed and commented on by Erasmus Bartholinias, in 1669, is known as double refraction. It is possessed by many crystalline bodies in a greater or less degree. Both rays emerging from the spar have acquired peculiar properties.

Newton, after investigating the properties acquired by light in its passage through the spar, concluded that the particles had acquired characteristics analogous to those of magnetized bodies, that is, they had become two-sided, and were, in fact, polarized.

Light, in the state of two-sidedness as observed by Newton, is still known as polarized light. By inserting the double refracting crystal known as tourmaline between the eye and the rhomb of spar, and turning it, the ordinary and extraordinary rays will be extinguished and will reappear in alternation. All vibrations, except those executed parallel with the axis of the tourmaline, are quenched. A Nicol prism (to be described later on) will do the same thing. When the Nicol is turned, the black spots seen by the two rays become alternately visible and invisible. One-quarter of a revolution of the prism is sufficient to extinguish one ray, and bring the other out; and a further turning of the prism through another quarter of a revolution

Fig. 242.

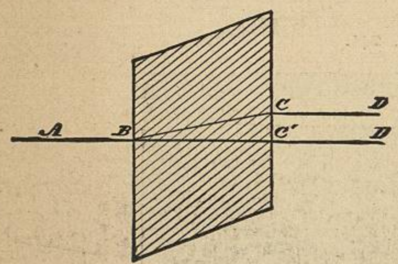
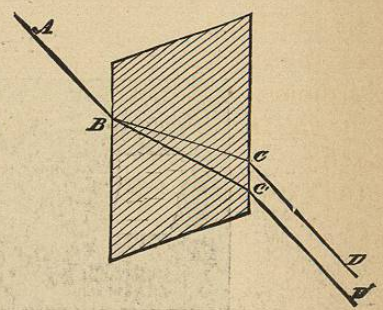


Fig. 243.



Course of Light through Iceland Spar.

reproduces the extinguished spot and effaces the visible one. This experiment shows that the vibrations of the two rays are in planes at right angles to each other. A beam of light in which all of the transverse vibrations are parallel with a single plane is plane-polarized. Both of the beams emerging from the spar are therefore plane-polarized, but in different planes.

The course of the light through the rhomb of Iceland spar when the incident ray is perpendicular to one of the faces of the crystal is shown in Fig. 242. The ordinary ray, A, passes straight through the crystal on the line, A C′, while the extraordinary ray is bent away from the ordinary ray, on the line, B C.

When the incident ray enters the side of the rhomb at an angle (as shown in Fig. 243), the ordinary ray follows the law of refraction, and the extraordinary ray is bent away from the ordinary ray, as in the other case.

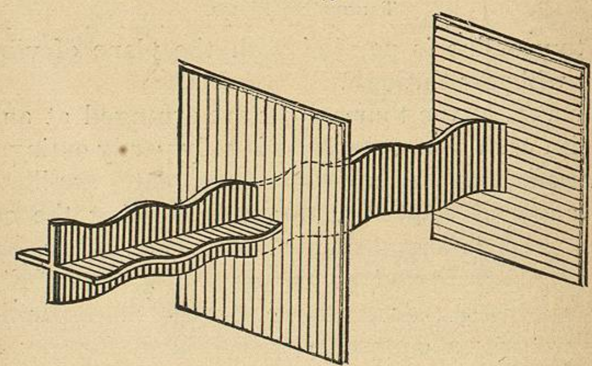
Fig. 244.

Nicol Prism.

The most perfect instrument for polarizing light and analyzing it after its polarization is the Nicol prism, made from a rhomb of Iceland spar, and named after its inventor. In this prism, the ordinary ray is disposed of, and the extraordinary ray alone is used.

The prism which is shown in Fig. 244 consists of a rhomb of Iceland spar, divided through its axis on the line, D D, with its ends cut off at right angles to this line. The two halves of the prism are cemented together by Canada balsam, whose index is between that of the two indices of the spar, so that the ordinary ray, B C′, meets the film of balsam at an angle which is sufficiently oblique to secure the reflection of this ray to one side, where it is lost, while the extraordinary ray, B C, passes through the balsam, and

Fig. 245.



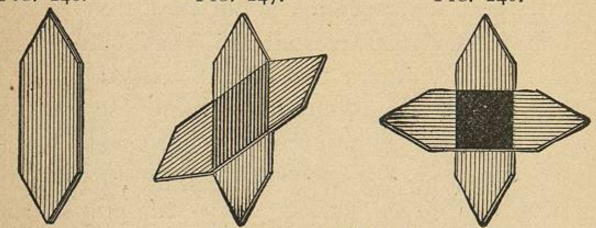
Action of Tourmaline Crystals.

onward through the other half of the prism perfectly polarized.

To observe the effects of polarization, an analyzer is required. Anything that will act as a polarizer will also serve as an analyzer, and since the Nicol prism is unsurpassed as a polarizer, it will answer equally well for an analyzer.

Perhaps the action of polarized light cannot be better illustrated than by a representation of a hypothetical beam of light and two tourmaline plates (Fig. 245). Here is shown the beam of light with vibrations traversing the path of the beam in two directions. On reaching the first tourmaline plate, those vibrations which are parallel with the axis of the tourmaline crystal (represented by the parallel lines) are readily transmitted, but all the vibrations in any other direction are extinguished. The beam now polarized passes on to the second tourmaline plate, and the axis of the crystal being arranged at right angles with the plane of vibration, it is extinguished; but if the axis of the

FIG. 246. FIG. 247. FIG. 248.



Tourmaline Plates.

second tourmaline is parallel with the plane of vibration, the light will pass through.

If the axes of the tourmalines are arranged at an angle of 45° with each other, the light is only partly extinguished.

These effects of the two tourmaline plates are illustrated by the annexed diagrams, Fig. 246 showing the crystals with their axes arranged parallel with each other, Fig. 247 showing them arranged at an angle of 45°, and Fig. 248 shows them crossed or arranged at right angles with each other, exhibiting a complete extinction of the ray at the intersection of the crystals.

If, now, when the polarizer and analyzer cross, a double refracting crystal be inserted between them, the light passing the polarizer will be made to vibrate in a different plane, and will therefore prevent the complete extinction of the beam by the analyzer.

Besides those means of polarizing light already described, there are others which should be examined. Light is polarized by reflection at the proper angle from almost every object; glass, water, wood, the floating dust of the air, all under certain conditions will polarize light.

That the light beam becomes polarized may be readily ascertained by receiving it through a double-refracting body and an analyzer.

FIG. 249.

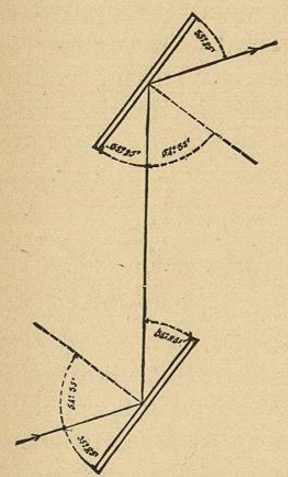
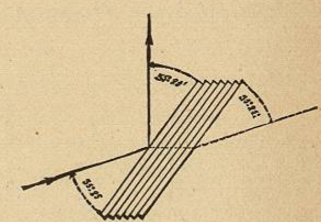


FIG. 250.



Polarization by Reflection and Refraction.

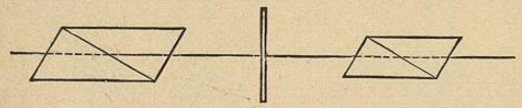
Two plates of unsilvered glass, receiving and reflecting light, as indicated in Fig. 249, act respectively as polarizer and analyzer.

For every substance there is an angle at which the polarization is at a maximum. For common window glass the angle the ray must make with the normal is 54° 35′. This is called the polarizing angle. It depends upon the index of refraction of the glass, and is such that the reflected and transmitted rays are at right angles to each other.

Balfour Stewart explains polarization by reflection as follows:

"It is imagined that in the reflected ray the vibrations are all in a direction perpendicular to the plane of reflection, so that the portion of the incident ray consisting of vibrations in the plane of reflection has not been reflected at all. If, therefore, we allow an ordinary ray of light (Fig. 249) first to be reflected from a plate of glass, at the polarizing angle, and if the reflected ray be again made to impinge upon another surface of glass at the same angle, the latter will then be the analyzer, and if its plane be parallel to the polarizer, as in the figure, the light will be again reflected in the direction indicated by the arrow. If the analyzer be turned round the first reflected ray as an axis, until its plane is at right angles to the polarizer, it will be found that the light is no longer reflected. For the reflected ray consists entirely of vibrations perpen-

FIG. 251.



Arrangement of Polarizer, Analyzer, and Object to be Examined.

dicular to the first plane of incidence. But vibrations perpendicular to the first plane of incidence will be in the second plane of incidence, which is at right angles to the first, and therefore they will not be reflected from the second surface."

A series of thin plates (Fig. 250), at the proper angle, polarizes light in a marked degree. These plates will also act in a similar manner when the light is transmitted through them, a part of the light in each of these cases being reflected and a part transmitted, both the reflected and transmitted beams being polarized, but in planes at right angles to each other. A single black glass plate is a good polarizer, but a bundle of glass plates backed with black is perhaps better. The arrangement of the polarizing and analyzing prisms with reference to the object to be examined is shown in Fig. 251.

The beam of polarized light may be apparently depolarized by a body which will produce no color, but will simply

render the field bright when the polarizer and analyzer are crossed, as shown by the insertion of a rather thick piece of mica between the polarizer and analyzer.

By placing thinner pieces of mica in the same position, various colors are produced. When the polarized beam encounters the thin mica, it is resolved into two others at right angles to each other, the waves of one being retarded with reference to the other; but as long as these rays vibrate at right angles to each other, they cannot interfere. The analyzer reduces these vibrations to the same plane, and renders visible the effects of interference due to the retardation of the waves of one part of the beam. The thick plate of mica gives no color, because the different colors were superposed and blended together, forming white light.

In a slice of Iceland spar cut at right angles to the axis of the crystal, the ray is not divided as it is when the light passes in any other direction through the crystal, and if the slice be placed in a parallel beam of polarized light, no marked effect is produced; but when the beam is rendered convergent, by a lens interposed between the polarizer and the crystal, beautiful interference phenomena are developed.

When the polarizer and analyzer are crossed, a system of colored rings intersected by a black cross appears.

The arms of the cross are parallel with the planes of the polarizer and analyzer. On these lines no light can pass, but between them the colors of the rings increase in intensity toward the middle of the quadrants inclosed by the arms where the interference is most marked. Turning the polarizer or analyzer causes complementary colors to change places, and brings out a white cross instead of the dark one.

SIMPLE EXPERIMENTS IN POLARIZED LIGHT.

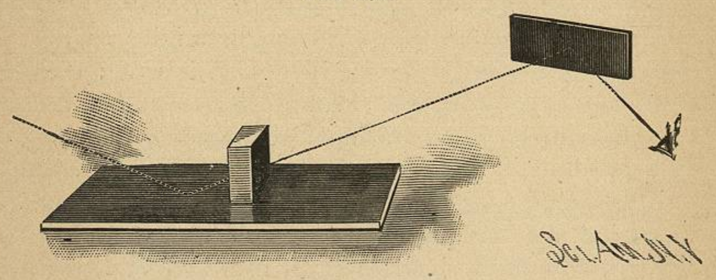
It is ever a source of pleasure to the student of science to be able to explore an unfamiliar realm by means of commonplace and readily accessible things, which, if not already possessed, may be had almost for the asking.

There is scarcely a branch of scientific research more prolific in the development of expensive apparatus than that of light, yet there is nothing in the domain of physics capable of being better illustrated by apparatus of the most simple and inexpensive character. The subject of polarized light, as intricate and difficult as it may at first appear, may be illustrated by apparatus costing less than a dime, in a manner that can but excite the wonder and admiration of one inexperienced in this direction.

A small piece of window glass and a black-covered book constitute the apparatus for beginning the study of this interesting subject, and with a glass bottle stopper, a glass paper weight, or a piece of mica, the effects of polarized light may at once be shown.

The book is placed horizontally near a source of light,

Fig. 252.



Polarization by Reflection from Blackened Glass.

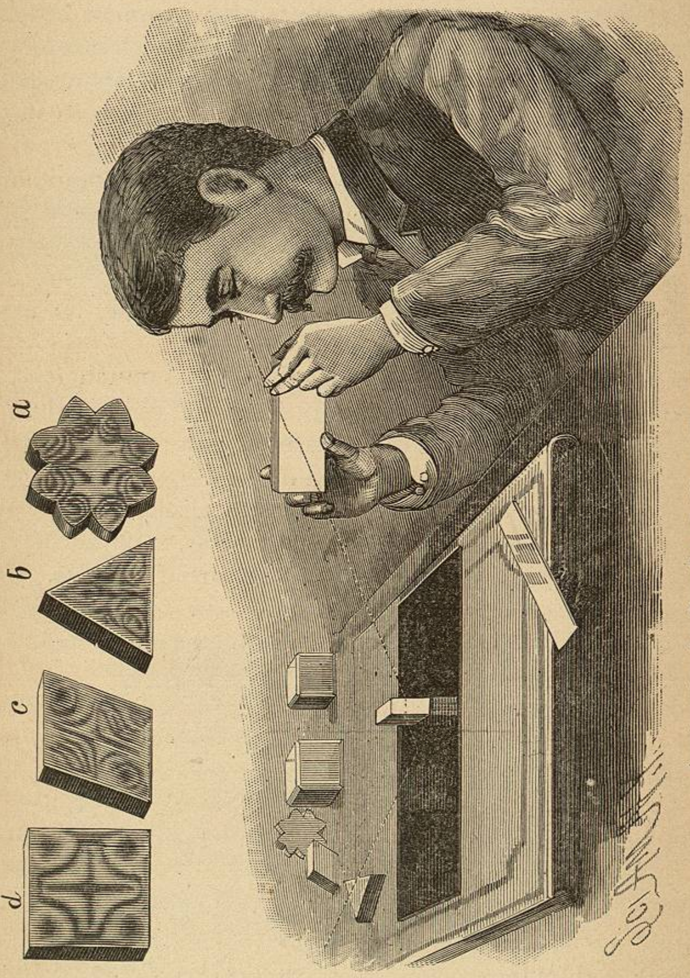
such as a window or a lamp, so that a broad beam of light will fall obliquely on it, and upon the book is placed the object to be examined, which may be either of those named.

Now, by viewing the reflected image of the object in the piece of window glass, with the glass arranged at the proper angle, it is probable that colors will be seen in the object. If no colors appear, it is due to one of three causes: either the object is incapable of depolarizing the light polarized by reflection from the book cover, or it is too thick or too thin to produce interference phenomena, or the eye of the observer and the glass employed for the analyzer are not in a correct position relative to the object and the polarizer (the book cover).

The glass, if thoroughly annealed, will produce no effect on the polarized beam, but most thick pieces of glass, such

as paper weights, ink stands, heavy glass bottle stoppers, and the like, are either unannealed or only partly annealed, and are thus under permanent strain, which is readily indi-

Fig. 253.



Analyzation by Bundle of Glass Plates—Strained Glass.

cated by their action on polarized light. A plate of mica of suitable thickness exhibits bright colors when examined by polarized light, particularly when the plate is either bowed or inclined.

To render the polariscope thus described more efficient, a plate of glass may be placed on the book, when the superior reflecting surface will at once make itself manifest in the increased brightness of the colors and improved definition of the object. A still greater improvement may be made by blacking one side of each glass with asphaltum varnish or any other convenient black varnish or paint, using in the experiments the unblackened surfaces, as shown in Fig. 252.

The angle which the incident light beam should make with the polarizer or horizontal blackened plate is 35° 25′, and the polarized beam should strike the analyzing plate at the same angle to secure the maximum effects; but it is unnecessary to measure the angles, as they may be easily determined by the appearance of the object.

With the two plates of blackened glass much may be learned with regard to the properties of polarized light. Plates of mica of various thicknesses and forms, inclined at various angles, bowed and turned in their own planes, pieces of quartz, bodies of glass such as those already mentioned, and odd-shaped pieces of unannealed glass, such as may be picked up at glass works, are easily secured objects. Brazilian pebble spectacle lenses often show gorgeous colors when turned at different angles in the beam of polarized light.

The best position for the polarizing plate is near a window, with the broad light of the clear sky shining upon it.

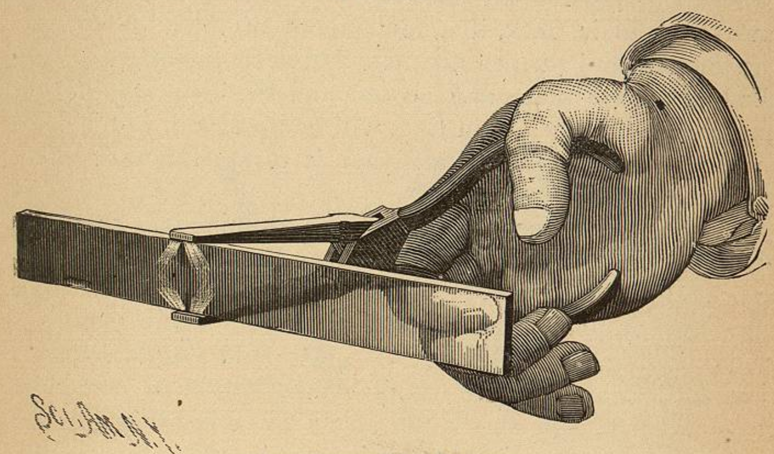
By turning the analyzing plate on the axis of the light beam, some curious effects may be observed. When the plates are at right angles with each other, the polarized beam will be nearly quenched,* and when they are parallel with each other, the reflection of the sky will be quite bright.

The employment of a blackened glass reflector for an analyzer is attended with some difficulty, on account of the necessity of changing the position of the eye for each new

* With black glass reflectors employed as polarizer and analyzer, the extinction of the light is not quite complete, even when they are arranged accurately at the polarizing angle.

position of the analyzer. A bundle of six or eight plates of ordinary glass is more convenient, but not quite so efficient.

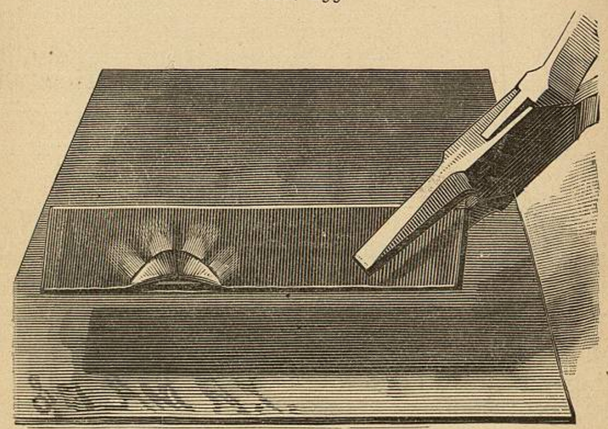
Fig. 254.



Glass Strained by Pressure.

These plates will be used as shown in Fig. 253, the light passing through them to the eye instead of being reflected.

Fig. 255.



Glass Strained by Heat.

The plates may be turned at any angle without changing the position of the eye.