

mistake or other left out all the inner spirit of the man so to speak, left out, in fact, the one thing necessary to make the photogram worth looking at, and the only thing that could possibly make it worth preserving. What is it, let me ask, that distinguishes the work of the cheap professional from that of the high priced man? Is it the "finish?" I would like to just say right here that I do not think that it is. Look at the display of the cheaper man and make a careful note of how not only is there a lack of judgment shown in the lighting and posing, but how the very expression of the face seems to say all over it, "cheap work," and then, in addition, how any semblance of expression that there was in it is all retouched out till the appearance is that of the famous Kipling housemaid, "beefy face and grubby." This over retouching is, I note—since amateur portraits have commenced to have the tremendous run that they have—just as common among the amateur fraternity as among the professionals. Turn from these to the pictures of our celebrated men, which are commonly on sale, and which are the work of men who are famous the world over as makers of good portraits, and note will you how the very individuality of the man is portrayed all over it, so that on looking at it one involuntarily says to one's self here is a man of strong character and well fitted for the position that he holds, or here is a weakling and an incompetent. Look at those photograms that we see daily of McKinley and Roosevelt, and see how they show up the very life of the men so to speak. Why I'll bet those fellows both get lots of votes on nothing else than their good looks as shown by the man behind the camera. But just imagine how these same men would look if the picture had been the production of some pot-wash amateur, who knows nothing beyond the laws of lighting and posing, and not very much of them. The real trouble is that for a long time the desire has been to catch the effect, something that is suitable for exhibition purposes, regardless of expression or likeness, and now when he is called upon to do something more he cannot fill the bill. Portrait photography is fast sifting down to a point—among professionals as well as among amateurs—when it is necessary that the production be a likeness as well as an effect, and this, taken into consideration with the fact that all persons are more or less conceited and want a little flattery thrown in, leaves the ambitious amateur with his work well cut out.

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That extremely reliable newspaper, the New York World, is authority for the following story, and while I do not think it can be exactly true, still I give it for what it is worth. Canaan, Conn., is fixed by the World as the locality of this truly miraculous happening, and the article ends up by saying that scientists and experts are already flocking to make investigations. But to proceed with the story. One of the villagers was visiting his henery to collect the daily fruit and found a young pullet guarding her first egg, apparently very much amazed at the result of her efforts. And well she might be, for apart from the fact that the egg was an unusually large one for a first lay, it bore upon its surface an excellent reproduction of a chicken's head. Whether the chemicals that were in the bird's food are to blame for the strange occurrence or whether the picture is the "result of hen-influence," as the World puts it, is not definitely known. No mention is made of there being a lens used in the production of the photogram. All efforts to remove the picture failed, and the shell is now on exhibition, and will later in all probability be sent to the State Museum after the photogram experts from Yale University have had a chance to examine it. Of course I'm not saying that all this

may not be true. All I say is that the World is my only authority. The World is a big paper, surely it must be a fact.

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Now that the summer with all its little atmospheric peculiarities is coming on, it might not be amiss to just say a word or two on that elusive quantity known as aerial perspective. When you look at a landscape that has been properly developed and printed with a due regard for what is right and proper, you will notice that in the near foreground there are considerably heavier shadows than there are in the distance, and that in between these two extremes there is, or should be, a range of half tone that gradually blends off from the one to the other. But this is not always done properly. I remember a case in point where the worker had a truly excellent photogram of distant mountains, hazy, indistinct and picturesque, in fact just what he needed to form a most beautiful background for his landscape. And would you believe it, he did not know enough to use it. Instead, he read some sort of an article on how to reduce a portion of a negative without touching the rest and then went and did away with what constituted the chief charm of his picture. Such idiocy makes me positively angry. Here I am trying by means of short exposures and careful development, and every other way I know how, to get just the effect that he had, and that he threw away. As Shakespeare puts it, "What fools these mortals be." But just try to imagine if it were not for atmospheric perspective, how our photograms would look, and what dull, flat, lifeless things they would be. Take a piece of white paper and draw across it two straight lines—the one above the other—and you will have an idea of about how much expression there could be in a picture without this aerial perspective, and at the same time learn far better than I could ever teach you how much of it you must have to make your photogram worth looking at.

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Do not use every kind of dry-plate that is put on the market, but instead settle on one that you consider to be a good one and then study that one alone, as to exposure and development, until you get it working to perfection. This is not a new piece of advice in these columns, but judging from the number of queries that come as to which is the best plate and the best developer, it is, I think, a thing that can stand repeating. If you do as you should, you will find that after you get accustomed to it you will get better results than if you used first one and then another, simply because a friend recommended it. Any of the standard plates will give a good result, provided that it is properly manipulated, and all you have to do is to stick to it to get good work all the time.

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Correspondence.

(Correspondence should be addressed to H. McBean Johnstone, Box 651, Sarnia, Ont.)

Bayard E. Sparham, Smith's Falls.—Your query has already been answered by mail. I have your other letter in reply to my request and trust that I may have an early opportunity of hearing from you.

W.R.G., Ridgetown, Ont.—In reading over your letter, asking that I recommend one of the cameras from the list that you enclose, it seems to me that it would be better if you were to write to me and let me have your address that I might write to you direct, when it would be possible for me to say things that could hardly be said here. If I thought that you had any idea of the kind of work you want to do, I would ask you to