

A Word to the Wise Amateur.

PHOTOGRAPHERS are naturally divided into two classes—professional and amateur—and each of these may be sub-divided into two (*a*), the professional who has studied his profession both from a technical and art point of view, has made himself acquainted with all that has been done by those who have gone before, and lets no picture out of his establishment that does not at least please himself. He generally has the knack of teaching his customers also to be pleased, because he has secured their confidence. This class never needs to complain of dull trade or low prices, recognizes the amateur as the photographer's friend, and never forgets how much photography owes to him.

Those who belong to sub-division *b* have nothing in common with those of *a*. They have little knowledge of the technique and less of the art of photography, but try to make up for the deficiency by writing over their door "Photographic Artist," or some equally misleading title. They have taken to photography as an easy means of making dollars. They learn nothing, because they "know it all already," and as the dollars do not materialize, they look without rather than within, blaming everything rather than the true cause of their failure, and showering especial maledictions on the head of the amateur, the *raison d'être* for whose existence is really much clearer than anything that can be said in favor of this class of professionals.

The amateur sub-division *a* is given over to experiment, and, so far as photography is concerned, is the most valuable of the four. He who belongs to it doesn't care for pictures; really, in fact, prints from his negatives, but pro-

bably derives more real pleasure from a new fact discovered through his original research than is got from the production of many even good pictures. To the experimentalist I have, in this article, nothing to say. He had better skip to the next and look out for some advice I may have to give him in a future issue of THE CANADIAN PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNAL, while I proceed now to have a few words with division *b* of the amateur class.

The object of the men of this division is to make pictures, and their great delight is to be able to show to their friends in general, and give to those in particular, the results of their labor. Theirs is indeed a labor of love every step—from the dusting of the plate as it is taken out of the box to the burnishing or rolling of the finished print—getting intelligent care and giving much real pleasure. But do they get all the pleasure out of it that they should? I think not; and am persuaded that the fairly good pictures produced are so few as to be out of all reasonable proportion to the labor. It is true that there are a few amateurs who succeed in making a good negative on almost every plate they expose; but they have acquired the important art of "seeing," and recognize possible pictures in subjects that their less observant fellows pass by, and, fully understanding the limitations of the camera, see at a glance the impossibility of getting pictorial effect in subjects on which they waste both plates and time.

The average modern amateur is carried away by the snap-shot craze, and the facility for frequent exposures that the magazine hand camera affords, and with his store of one or two dozen of plates fires away like an unexperienced sportsman, only discovering his mistake when he betakes himself to the