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GEORGE W. GILSON, - - EDITOR

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**Original Communications.**



**VERY USEFUL.**

By A. C. AUSTIN, Albany, N.Y.

I do not think that many of the fraternity are acquainted with the wonderful properties of formaldehyde, also known as formic aldehyde, or formalin. I have not the means at hand to give you the chemical nomenclature nor the derivatives of this comparatively new agent; but I have given it very thorough tests in everyday practice during the past two years, and I can speak truthfully concerning its wonderful hardening powers. I do not know of anything that can be compared with it, and, best of all, its cheapness puts it

within reach. A pound, costing only 75 cents, will make nearly two gallons of solution, which is enough for a good many gross of eight by ten plates. "What do I do with it?" Oh! yes, certainly. I nearly forgot the purpose of this article in expatiating on the merits of the subject. In making gelatine negatives the drying after the washing is the most prolonged part of the operation, which in damp, muggy weather is not only annoying but oftentimes detrimental to the chemical quality of the photographic image. The fact of this slowness is certainly one that would deter the process man from the use of dry plates, if it were not possible to alter the conditions, because it oftentimes happens that a process block is required in a few hours, and formalin is the only thing I know of that would render this feat possible in connection with the dry plate.

Let me describe what I have done, then go try it yourself on any negative you may be in a hurry for, and see if you are not as much pleased as I have been.

After developing, fixing and thoroughly washing the negative, place it in a tray containing one ounce of formalin to sixteen ounces of water, and let it remain for about five minutes, after which remove, and without rinsing blot off the surplus