

How fortunate we are if for a background we can have our extreme distance show a range of hills where the outlines will fall harmoniously but without monotony, and in our middle distance dark shadowing trees that will give to the hills the effect of being far away. In such a picture as this interest could be given to the foreground by the introduction of a flock of sheep, not photographed by the impetuous, purely because being sheep or cattle they are regarded as essentially picturesque, but because the grouping of the white spots which they form would have a pleasing effect, even if they were grave-stones. It is under these circumstances only that animals should receive our attention, and certainly not because they are animals, for if they are photographed merely because of their being animals all the glory must belong to the machine; whereas if they are photographed because of their pleasing effect and the relief they afford to the landscape, the credit of having the requisite judgment and taste is yours.

Nothing but a knowledge of the laws of composition, coupled with a capacity for originating occasional ideas and a more or less finely developed artistic temperament, can secure for us uniformly good work, for though the snap-shooter who takes everything just as he finds it, may be able to show some good results, his work taken as a whole cannot compare with that of the more careful worker, even though the best productions of the latter are not as good as the best of the former. Ill-balanced photographs are sufficiently numerous, and however faultless in technique such may be, they fail to exact the unqualified praise that is accorded to their more symmetrical—that is, more artistic—prototypes. For absence of this symmetry suggests nothing less than a dimness of artistic perception in the photographer—a lack of intuition of what and where to photograph, and where this deficiency stares one in the face perfect technique avails the work but little.—H. McBean Johnstone in the *Photo-American*.

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The Scrap Bag.

An elaborate setting has something of the annoying effect of a chatter of conversation while we are trying to listen to music. It will not help us to render our subject as a song; let the background be a silence.

The tone of the mount should be settled by considering, first, the tone and subject of the print; and, second, *the size of the print*. The latter point is too often neglected. A small print requires a mount of a size that is relatively much larger than is desirable with a large print. When the mount forms merely a border around a large print, a dark tone may be desirable: but when the visible area of the mount is four times the area of the print, as is often the case with small prints, a lighter tone is usually best.

It is a fact worth knowing that ordinary printing frames can be made into beautiful little picture frames by simply staining them to a color appropriate to the print with which they are to be used. A handsome Dekko print mounted on a gray card and inserted in a printing frame of the proper size that has been painted a dull black makes a very striking effect. Where the photographs are the full size of the frame, no matter need be used. Amateurs who are looking for pleasing little novelties will find that printing frames can be readily made into artistic and inexpensive picture frames—and at any time they can be temporarily or permanently returned to their original use.

O! what a chance we have to study landscape composition in the twilight, when all the hard masses of superfluous detail have been swallowed up in the enshrouding gloom of approaching night. Think of the glorious summer evenings. Even the most practical of us are stirred to something like poetry in the soft balmy air. As Eleanor S. Inslee puts it:

"Peace, so dear to all worldly ken—
Peace, from the tender God above
Brooded over the hearts of men,
Whispering the calm of perfect love.
Still and silent the green hills lay;
Stirred neither leaf, nor twig nor flower;
Rosy yet from the sun's last ray;
Lulled to rest by the twilight hour.
Then a bird's song rose, true and clear,
Thrilling the thought it fain would tell
Hush, ye children of men and hear,
'God's in his world and all is well.'"

Mr. John Bartlett, formerly editor of the "*American Journal of Photography*," is now associate editor of the "*Camera*," of Philadelphia. The "*Camera*" is to be congratulated upon securing him.

In the carbon process warmth and damp both cause the sensitized tissue to become unworkable. In a climate where there are rapid changes the tissues should be printed as soon as possible after sensitizing.

Because a photographer seems to crawl backward in focussing, shall we jar him by calling him a lobster?

If a negative is too dense it can be improved by reducing it in the following solution: Hyposulphite of soda, 1 ounce, water 16 ounces, add a few drops of a 10 per cent. solution of red prussiate of potash. The energy of the solution will depend on the quantity of prussiate added. After the reduction has been carried far enough, wash well, to remove the hypo.

It is the hardest kind of a task to make a successful picture from a poor negative by the use of a sentimental title. The following little item appeared some time ago in the *Photo-American* and deals with the subject straight to the point. "The vapid landscape, sugared with such a title as 'Now sadly fades the dying day,' the portrait of an able-bodied, elderly laborer reading, with palpable indifference, what is obviously not a Bible, labelled, 'Light at Evening Time,' these are errors in taste analogous to that of the young person who thinks to make good all personal shortcomings by the simple expedient of a scented pocket-handkerchief." Now, that is straight from the shoulder, and practically covers the whole ground thoroughly. Think it over and you'll find a little sermon in it.

Do not, after focussing, swing open the camera back whilst the dark slide is being sought for, as the wind will get into the camera and disturb the dust that is almost sure to be present in the folds of the bellows. Or the wind itself might be charged with dust, which is liable to settle on the film when the shutter is drawn. Again, by opening the camera back the full glare of light will enter, and the bellows will often retain some portion of it—quite sufficient to fog a rapid plate. *Moray*—slip your dark slide in as quickly as possible after opening the back of the camera.