



**RANDOLPH
PARKER
BELL-SMITH,**

Cincinnati, O.,
President of the Photographers' Association of America, was born on February 16th,

1857, in London, Eng., his father being an artist of considerable note. Mr. Bell-Smith removed to Canada with his parents at an early age. He first took up the study of art, intending to follow in his father's footsteps as a portrait painter. Later he decided to study photography, being convinced that in this profession there was really more scope and opportunity for a young man to succeed than in painting. His first lessons in photography were gained in the studio of Frank Cooper, of London, Canada, under whose able teachings he remained for several years. By his own hard work and the constant study of the art in all its phases, combined with a born ability as an artist, Mr. Bell-Smith has advanced in his chosen profession until at the present day his standing is among the first artists of the camera. As a man, he is well liked by hosts of friends in all parts of the States. On his return from the convention at which he was elected President of the P. A. of A., some of the leading citizens of Cincinnati gave him a dinner, presided over by the mayor, as a testimonial of their appreciation of him as a citizen and the honor bestowed upon him as a business resident of their city.

In the following lines, Mr. Bell-Smith gives a little of his early experiences, some advice to young men, and his opinion on the present state of photography :

"My first attempts at operating were very indifferent, my employer assuring me that 'I might try for a hundred years, but I would never make an operator'; but I persevered, agreeing to work for a good deal less if I could have an opportunity to learn, and finally succeeded in making myself very valuable to my employer.

"My advice to a young man starting in the photograph business would be, first, to learn thoroughly every branch, and then to save every cent he could. I know of no other business that can be made to pay so well on a limited capital, the necessary requisites being good workmanship and sound business sense.

"I think there is a bright future ahead of photography. There are more business men in the profession than formerly, which is improving our financial and social standing as a profession. There is less of that jealous rivalry among photographers and more honest competition and the sincere desire to improve their work, which is bringing the fruit of higher and better remuneration for their work. I attribute this largely to the National and State conventions, which, having brought photographers of the different sections together, started competition in work and general improvement, and have invariably been a means of mutual benefit. In a number of cases I have known men in the same city who had never recog-