

Cloud Photography.

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In endeavoring to rid ourselves of bald-headed skies in negative making, it is possible to adopt any one of three different methods. First, we may have real clouds, by which it is meant those that were actually in the heavens when the exposure was made; then, we may have real clouds printed in from another negative that had been made for its sky effect alone; or, we may have artificial clouds on the back of the negative. Any one of the three schemes is productive of results that are superior to plain, white paper, though, depending upon the result aimed at, each way is apt to prove the best. For instance, in purely pictorial work, there is small reason to doubt that the best results are to be had from printing in. To photograph a landscape alone, paying proper attention to light and shade, composition and arrangement of mass, is by no means a simple task. To do all this at its very best and at the same time to watch for the most pleasing disposition of cloud lines, becomes almost an impossibility. In such a case, therefore, it is best to pay no attention at all to the upper part of the picture, trusting to be able to supply whatever is needed from some other negative at a later time. But then again, printing in means work and delicate manipulations. Difficult even with Solio, Aristo and other printing out papers, how much more so must it become, when one is in the habit of employing Dekko or Velox or is making lantern-slides. Undoubtedly, for work of this type, where one has to judge exposures, the method where both clouds and landscape are included on one plate, has much to recommend it. Of those negatives where the clouds are supplied by faking on the back with lamp-black or opaque, only passing comment need be made. They have never been capable of commanding consideration in connection with the term pictorial and never will be. The method's only claim for notice is that in such prints as are

intended for the engraver, it is better than nothing at all, inasmuch as it serves to break the monotony.

Just because so much has been said and written about cloud photography, amateurs have gotten into the way of regarding it as something very difficult and requiring all sorts of special ray-screens and plates. On the contrary, it is quite possible to obtain both clouds and landscape on one plate at one exposure, and on an ordinary plate at that. This can be done by what is referred to as a modified exposure, a method which consists in cutting off some of the light from the sky during the exposure. There are a number of simple ways of doing it. Perhaps one of the best is that which calls into play a shutter that is fastened to the lens tube by a hinge at the top and that swings up and then down again to make the exposure. As will be easily seen, this allows more time on the landscape than on the sky, greatly to the benefit of both. Needless to say, this method is not suited to quick exposure work and will call for a plate a trifle slower, perhaps, than the one you are in the habit of using. But a slow plate is no disadvantage. The thicker emulsion with which it is coated will allow of your securing more half-tone and gradation than a thinner and faster one would permit. Small obstructions, such as a tree, on the sky line, will not interfere with this method of exposure, but where there are mountains or a forest in front of the lens, the scheme will have to be abandoned or the middle of the plate will be underexposed.

In cloud photography, before one even considers whether or no, an orthochromatic plate is a necessity, must come the question of halation and its cure. This is true whether only clouds alone are being photographed or both clouds and landscape on one plate, though with the latter it is more apparent. Suppose, as an example, you take a photograph of a sunset with a building in the foreground