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5 × 7		35	1 75	2 35
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5½ × 7¾		40	2 05	3 50
6½ × 8½		50	2 60	4 60
7 × 9		55	2 95	5 40
8 × 10		65	3 75	7 00
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11 × 14		1 30	7 55	14 00
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2½ × 3½ Carte-de-Visite		25		1 30
3 × 4 Mantello		25		1 30
3½ × 5½ Cabinet		30	1 30	2 15
3½ × 5½ Cabinet		30	1 30	2 15
4 × 6		35	1 45	2 45
5 × 7		40	2 10	3 45
5 × 8		45	2 25	3 90
5½ × 7½		50	2 50	4 30
6½ × 8½		60	3 10	5 50
7 × 9		65	3 55	6 45
8 × 10		80	4 50	8 40
10 × 12	1 20		6 80	12 90
11 × 14	1 55		9 00	16 80
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16 × 20	3 10		18 10	34 85
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These colors will burnish to the same brilliancy as film, and are put up in packages containing three shades.

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Put up by American Aristotype Company with special reference to use with Aristo paper and dry plates. No sticking or staining in any kind of weather if directions are followed. Does not remove retouching.

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- Per 6-oz. bottle.....\$0 50

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All brands of printing-out paper bearing our trade mark are manufactured with special reference to permanency, and have been fully tested in this regard by the leading members of the fraternity for the past ten years.

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American Aristotype Co.

Jamestown, N.Y.

Canadian Photographic Standard

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EDITORIAL NOTICES.

Mr. H. R. Cornish, the Canadian Representative of the American Aristo Co., has his office at No. 159 Bay St., Toronto, and will always cheerfully answer any communications regarding Aristo products.

Aristo Self-Toning Paper; The American Aristo Co. have just placed on the market a new paper which is specially intended for amateurs, it is A Self-Toning Paper, and is the first practical paper of this kind which has been placed on the market.

It is important to know; That the beautiful and fadeless matt surface prints made by the leading professional and amateur photographers on "*Aristo Platino*" paper can now be produced with one simple toning by the use of

"Aristo Single Toner."

Montreal Camera Club; From the account on another page, of the October meetings of this club, it will be seen, that they were of a highly practical character, and were full of interest to those who had the good fortune to be present. Amateurs who have not yet become members, should do so at once, so that they may begin to enjoy many profitable and pleasant evenings. Do not forget their Annual Exhibition which is to take place in the Club Rooms, Nov. 21st to 25th.

Celoron Panels—*They are Money Makers*; This size and style of photograph have plunged into popularity since the beginning of July. It was introduced at the Convention by the American Aristotype Company, since which time hundreds of prominent photographers have decided to introduce them, this style is fast becoming popular with the public. The Celoron panel is a 4 x 9 print, on Aristo Platino paper, mounted on 8½ x 13½ thick, beveled edge cards.

Make full length positions of ladies on 8 x 10 plate, make a specialty of showing detail in the drapery, ladies like photographs of themselves that show fine detail of their gowns. These dresses soon become old, and new ones take their places. Then new pictures are necessary. Make a big display of Celoron panels.

You will find the best line of Celoron Panel Mounts at the stores of David H. Hogg, Montreal and Toronto.

Y. M. C. A. Camera Club; Mr. H. R. Cornish of the American Aristo Co. gave a very successful demonstration of toning Aristo Platino, with Aristo Single Toner, before a large number of members at the Club Rooms, Y. M. C. A. Building, on Tuesday evening, Oct. 24th, it was very much appreciated, a hearty vote of thanks was tendered to Mr. Cornish at the close.

Rodinal; A practical article by C. F. Stanley on this developing agent, will be found amongst the reading matter. *Rodinal* is coming more and more into use, it is well adapted for any kind of negative.

Ross Lenses; The series advertised this month, is their Portrait Lenses, every gallery should possess one of these lenses. Everything has its place. a Portrait Lense is wanted for portrait work, if speed, softness, roundness, and brilliant work is to be done. There is no other lense made equal to a Ross.

If you order Aristo Platinum solution of a dealer and "by mistake" he sends you an imitation of what you ordered, watch that dealer; he is no friend of yours.

THE USE OF RODINAL.

BY C. F. STANLEY

We hear so many different opinions, regarding the use of *rodinal* as a developing agent, that we deem it advisable to state our experience with this agent on the Stanley plate.

Rodinal one part to water twenty-five parts, is a very rapid working developer, and although beautiful results may be obtained by the experienced worker, when plates have not been over exposed, yet we strongly advise starting the development with old solution, that is, solution which has been used once or more; when plates are about half developed, add to each 20 or 25 drams, 1 dram of fresh *Rodinal*.

This is for normal exposures, if plates are found to have had plenty or perhaps a little over exposure, development should be continued nearly to the finish, in the old developer.

If on the other hand, plates are much undertimed, a weak solution, say one part *rodinal* to 40 or 50 parts water, with development continued

perhaps for half an hour, or in extreme cases, the writer has mixed in proportion 1 to 200 and continued development all night.

This is of course, only in the most extreme cases, where it was quite important to save the negative, and I feel certain that the results would be extremely hard to duplicate with any other developing agent under the same circumstances.

Again very much over exposed plates, may be handled very successfully by adding from a few drops to several drams (depending upon the amount of over exposure) of a 10% solution of Bromide of Potash to either fresh developer, or old and new mixed, with development carried until sufficient strength is obtained.

Rodinal will never stain, no matter how old and discolored the solution may be. Its tendency to cause chemical fog, is less than any other developer we ever used. And its developing energy is effected by temperature, perhaps less than any other agent.

Therefore, although we consider *Rodinal*, one of the best developing agents for properly timed plates, when rightly handled; yet it is in cases of under and over exposures, that its superior qualities are most forcibly seen.

The writer has often made the statement, that any result possible with any other developer is as easily obtained with *Rodinal*, and with liabilities to failures reduced to a minimum.

CLUB NOTICES.

THE MONTREAL CAMERA CLUB.

The meetings of the Club during October, of which we published a list in the last issue of the *Standard*, were held in the Club Rooms and there was an average attendance of about 40. We regret that owing to the lack of space we are unable to give a com-

plete account of the Demonstrations but the few notes following will enable one to form a fair idea of the lines upon which they are conducted.

On the 10th October the Demonstration was on Lantern Slide making and was divided into two methods, "Reduction and Contact", Mr. George W. Davis took the former method and by the use of the new enlarging apparatus made some very fine slides from $6\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ negatives. While this was going on in one room Mr. A. B. Macfarlane in another was explaining the method of making them by contact. Both gentlemen were thoroughly conversant with the subject and judging by the many questions asked and answered during the evening a great amount of practical information was gained by attending members. At the end of the evening the slides were shown on the screen and as there was also a set of slides from the American Lantern Slide Interchange a very favorable opportunity was given for comparison.

On the 17th October Mr. A. B. J. Moore gave an instructive and interesting talk on his "Experiences of Bromide Enlarging". As a great deal of his work had been done on the Club apparatus he was enabled to explain the whole process very explicitly. In speaking of exposure he said "I always find it more satisfactory to use only 11" sheets of a package of bromide paper and to cut the remaining sheet into strips for trial exposures.

"By exposing say two of these strips for different length of time, one very much longer than the other, a fair estimate can be made of what the correct exposure should be."

"This method of making trial exposures from the same packet as used for the enlargement prohibits the possibility of variation in the emulsion speed either from age, different batches, or other causes, and less failures are the result".

He then gave the formula for the developer he used which was Ferrous Oxalate and explained the action of the different other developers in common use. In speaking of the mounting of Bromide Enlargements he continued "A great many when trimming their enlargements cut them to fit the mounts very accurately and are much surprised to find that after being wetted and pasted they have stretched so much that in many cases they are quite unsuitable for the mounts selected for them. Allowance must be made for stretching and I would not advise anyone to use a squeegee or even to rub very hard when mounting. A clean towel laid over the print and a gentle rubbing in one way to ensure complete contact with the mount will be found quite sufficient." Mr. Moore showed a number of enlargements he had made with the Club's Apparatus and said he would be very pleased to give the members what assistance he could at any time.

On the 24th October Mr. J. J. Mason took up the subject of "Over-exposures and their treatment" Eight exposures had been made of the same subject varying from 1-50th of a second to two seconds. On Development the correct exposure was found to be about 1-20th of a second but by the manipulation of the developer (Pyro-Soda) as good results were obtained even from the plates which had received fully forty times normal exposure. Stanley plates were used (as requested by the President) and proved to be excellent in quality, free from pinholes and under complete control during development-

Next month The Annual Exhibition of the Club will be held. A strong contest and large exhibit is anticipated and no amateur photographer can afford to miss seeing this the greatest collection of Photographic Pictures ever gathered together in Montreal.

The Exhibition will be open from Nov. 21st to 25th inclusive.

TORONTO CAMERA CLUB.

At a recent meeting of this Club, Mr. Moss one of the members gave a splendid demonstration on making Lantern Slides, the following is an account of it taken from the Toronto world.

MR. MOSS' DEMONSTRATION.

MAKING LANTERN SLIDES.

Two things were very much in evidence on the occasion of Mr. W. H. Moss' demonstration on making lantern slides at the Toronto Camera Club on Monday night last, viz. : The exhaustive knowledge of his subject by the lecturer, and his exemplification of the extreme modesty which usually characterizes that mental condition. The helpful vice-president of the club first fully explained the various uses of the apparatus required in making slides by reduction by artificial light. The first mistake made by all amateurs in first making slides, was pointed out and corrected, the demonstrator using the screen-holder of the club's lantern apparatus for the purpose of making it clear. This cannot be shown here, but the fault to guard against may be mentioned, namely, to centre the lantern plate opposite the negative in the reducing camera. The various qualities of negatives were then shown by passing them among the members, and the various kinds with reference to their slide-making qualities were explained, culminating with Mr. Moss' preference—a negative on the thin side, full of detail, with clear (not clear glass) shadows, and well-modulated half-tones.

TWO METHODS CONTRASTED.

One of the finest hits of the lecture was the contrast instituted between two almost identically popular methods of lantern-slide making by reduction, both of which claim their en-

thusiastic devotees. The first was to give comparatively short exposures and develop with normally strong developer. The second—that preferred by the lecturer—was to give long exposures and use a developer dilute eight times. For instance, one set of slides Mr. Moss exhibited, and which certainly, to my mind, proved his contentions, were given exposures varying with the densities of the negatives of from 3½ to 15 minutes' exposure, at f11, in a hundred candle power illuminated camera, and developed with one dram of negative strength metol in eight drams of water. As Mr. Moss knows, with the tolerance which always accompanies knowledge, that all men do not see beauty alike, he gave the members of the club instructions for developing with other developing agents, such as hydroquinone, cikonogen, pyro, etc., explaining the peculiarities of each and the effects produced with varying quantities of light and developer.

A GRAND DEMONSTRATION.

The club lantern was then set in motion, and Mr Moss exhibited a dozen or more slides, which showed on the screen the various phases of lantern slide making as no verbal lecture could do. The first was a set of six, same subject, with exposures of one second, two seconds, three seconds, four seconds, five seconds and six seconds in the club's electric light reducing camera, in each case the development being the same, with the metol developer given above. This unfortunately cannot be reproduced, but the members of the club were delighted with the demonstration, and will, no doubt, profit by it. The power over negatives and plates evinced by this method was in the nature of a revelation to many of the members. A more effective method of conveying knowledge could hardly be devised, and, as the beauties of the control percolated into members'

brains, they inwardly thanked the man who had taken so much trouble for their enlightenment.

SLIDES BY CONTRACT.

After the exhibit of a pyro-developed slide or two, made by another member of Mr. Moss' request, the exposure being on the same plan as his own, and the developer being 30 minims pyro solution, 30 minims alkali solution, in two ounces of water, another set of slides was put on, demonstrating the principles of lantern-slide making by the contact process. It was explained that slides made in this manner required a negative of the size of the lantern plate, if all the subject was required in the slide, or any portion of a large negative could be taken. The negative was placed in the ordinary printing frame, as if to print from paper. After brushing and being sure there was no dust or grit, the lantern plate was placed film upon film, and the back of the frame closed down with the springs. As a slight guide to exposure, it was stated that an ordinary medium negative as to density required $1\frac{1}{2}$ seconds exposure to the flame of a wax candle placed eight inches away. The development was made by either of the methods described, as preferred. Several slides, showing the contrast of differing exposures, were exhibited on the screen.

The Construction and Glazing of Photographing Studios.

The one condition absolutely necessary in order to obtain good photographs is that the photographer should have plenty of good light at his disposal. It is a generally accepted fact that this condition cannot be realized except in a well-built studio. Naturally every photographer is most desirous of possessing a good studio, and now comes the question as to the best method of construction.

And to this question we receive the reply that no one construction in existence will be found suitable in every case, because it is very difficult to find the principal conditions of good lighting, that is to say, plenty of light from above, from the front, and from the side. These conditions abound in the country and are fairly satisfactory in small towns, but in large towns it is often very difficult to meet with the desiderata.

The quality of the light alone offers serious difficulties. The ideal is a north light, failing that, then a north-west or north-east light is the next best. But these aspects cannot be obtained everywhere, and one has often to content one's self with another, which it is necessary to adapt to circumstances, a feat sometimes difficult to accomplish.

In face of such a variety of individual circumstances, it would be impossible to give precise particulars, and it will be as well to examine different kinds of constructions.

In most cases a lean-to form of roof is preferred, and in this the studio is formed by a side panel of glass, and a sloping glass roof. With this style, when the situation is not too closed in, all the necessary conditions for using top, front, and side light can be fulfilled. For a studio of this kind to give the best results it must be built to certain standard proportions, which should vary very little. In this case, the construction of the glazed roof is of the first importance, therefore it is most important to know what its size ought to be relatively to the studio itself. To find this out we must thoroughly understand the part to be played by this glazed roof. Its object is not only to give us a direct top light, but also the front light — a most important point when the side light is weakened by surrounding buildings, etc. Here we find that the top light is predominant, it produces deep

shadows below the nose, in the hollows formed by the eyes, etc. If it is softened proportionately we often get details in one half of the face while the other half is altogether in the shade; if the sitter be facing the camera the nose forms the line of separation between light and shade. For this reason in such a case the top light should be long and wide. At the same time if the side light be sufficiently strong, it will be better, in order to obtain a good lighting, to have the top light very long so that it will fall on the model at an angle of 45° to 50° . Therefore the length of the glazed roof ought to correspond with the proportions demanded by this angle.

The glazed roof is generally made fairly flat. There are, however, many studios both in England and the United States with very sloping glazed roofs. The reason for this is to be found in local conditions, such as the great quantities of snow which prevail in Canada and the northern United States during winter, sometimes also it is accounted for by the custom of employing numerous screens and reflectors.

For making a glazed roof the system of iron T's is used. These irons rest on stout joists of hard wood, on which they are fixed by wooden screws. In order to prevent the roof from falling under the weight of the snow, or from the pressure of the wind, it is well to strengthen the construction by one or two interior supports. To make these look well, bars of iron may be used, and let into the wood on two sides and fixed very firmly.

Herr Ulrich, of Charlottenburg, builds his studio in such a way that the roof and the side panel are in one piece; the roof is, so to say, curved, and offers no point of attack for the wind. The general view is very pleasing.

Herr Eggenweiler's system has

many supporters, and that for very different reasons. The use of a glass roof which brings with it many disagreeable features is avoided; it is replaced by a very high glass side panel. This studio can be easily warmed during the winter, and it is cooler in summer. For the same reasons a studio can be placed where a top light studio would be impossible.

In the United States excellent results have been obtained with a similar construction, not only for a single person, but also for groups. This style is worth the attention of readers, and I will speak of it in detail.

There is no glass roof, it is replaced by a solid ceiling, and the lighting is done by means of a very high side light, by the use of screens and reflectors.

To give a good idea of this particular construction, a description follows.*

The glazed panel begins about twenty-one inches from the floor, and is sloped in such a way that its upper extremity is situated about one and a half yards inside the studio. Opposite is a reflector R', which can be inclined at any desired angle, and whose length equals the width of the glazed panel. This reflector produces a top light.

To weaken the side shadows a smaller reflector R'' is used, which can be moved backwards and forwards on the floor as desired.

To avoid the sun's rays, and to soften the very strong light, a curtain is placed over the glass panel, parting from the bottom to a height of ten feet. This panel can also be provided with other small supplementary curtains.

In certain cases the work can be done without curtains, a good head-screen being used instead. The cur-

*This style of studio was recommended more than ten years ago by Mr. H. P. Robinson, in "The Studio, and what to do in it."

tains are not really necessary if the panel be glazed with ground glass.

In studios with sloping glazed roofs it is not necessary to use ground glass, but a kind of ribbed glass is suitable, with the ribs inside and the smooth side outside, as the dust, soot, etc., settle in the ribs and are difficult to remove, and so the light gets worse and worse.—*Allgemeine Photographen Zeitung*.

Lighting : Its importance in photography

BY T. N. ARMSTRONG.

Perhaps there is no more important factor in the obtaining of successful results by means of photography than the possession of a thorough knowledge of the most suitable form of lighting to employ in the particular class of subject being dealt with.

It does not matter what particular branch of photography is being pursued, *lighting* is of the utmost importance, and any negligence in regard to it is certain to be reflected in the quality of the work turned out.

In portraiture, for instance, any one who never experienced the difficulty can form no idea of the amount of labour and thought that is incurred in the fitting up of a studio before the best effects in lighting are obtainable and, if this be necessary for the production of not only portraiture where specially fitted-up studios are concerned, but what is of equal importance, lifelike results, how much more difficult it is to obtain anything like equal results in what is termed 'home portraiture,' a branch of photography now practiced by thousands of amateur workers, who derive a large amount of pleasure therefrom.

In studying any face it is intended to photograph, the first aim should be to ascertain what light best suits it, and it only requires but a little consideration by any one desirous of practising portraiture to understand

that the light more suitable for one face would not by any means be equally so for another.

Therefore it follows that the professional, working in a specially fitted-up studio, has at command, by means of his top and side lights, each of which is furnished with a well-devised system of screening, a power which enables him to execute portraiture in a manner superior to that which any one working without these adjuncts and facilities need never expect to attain; and if we examine still further into the question of what is required in lighting of a face to its best advantages, we will find that not only consideration be bestowed upon the amount of direct and diffused light employed, but some thought must be given to the proper directions from which both the direct main and also the diffused lights are permitted to fall on the face and the figure of the sitter.

Portrait painters, as a rule, work with a side light falling at an angle of 45°, because this is found to suit the majority of faces; and this has been followed in a great measure by professionals in the construction of their studios.

In executing portraiture outside a specially fitted-up studio, say, in such a situation as a large-sized room having an ordinary window, much may be done to assist and improve the lighting of a face by means of a few well-arranged screens and reflectors.

When work of this kind is attempted in an ordinary room without any such provision being made, it generally ends in failure, by reason of lighting showing too powerful contrasts, and this is painfully evident by the shadow side of the face coming out almost black, whilst the side next the light is far too hard—results brought out by a want of diffused light, to obviate which not only must

be provision made to throw reflected light upon the shadow side of the face, but, what is of much greater importance, the light that is permitted to reach the side of the face next the window must be filtered or diffused by means of thin transparent muslin screens.

In carrying out an arrangement of this kind it does not necessarily follow that the entire surface of the window should have blinds fitted to it, for this would tend to cut off an amount of useful light, that can ill be spared when working under such cramped conditions of lighting. All that is required is to provide some simple screen of muslin of just sufficient dimensions as will be capable of diffusing all the main light that otherwise would reach the face. A screen of muslin, made by stretching this material on a light frame three feet square, so that the frame can be interposed between the face and the window at a point just outside the range, will be found to work admirably.

Any one desirous of attempting portraiture in ordinary sitting-rooms would do well to try the following experiments from which he will be able at once to judge the immense importance that is attached to the proper lighting of the face. At a distance of, say, four feet from any ordinary window, let a sitter be placed, on as low a chair as possible, and let the body be posed so as to have the chest and the front part of the figure *almost* facing the window, but not quite under the full light of same; then, without moving the chest or figure, let the face be turned away from the window until a somewhat side light only falls upon it. If the operator now steps back and views the effect of such a disposition of lighting he will at once see that it is quite unsuitable, for the side next the window is much too brightly lighted,

whilst the off-side of the face is enveloped in deep shadow, in which the finest details of the face are entirely buried. At this stage let the operator have the service of some kind friend, and, without altering the position of sitter or moving from the same spot from where he viewed the effect, let his friend or assistant hold up slightly above the head of the sitter, at a point between the same and the window, the muslin screen as described previously, and the very moment it is placed in position he will be surprised at the change that comes over the sitter's face, for not only will the side next the window, that was previously far too bright, appear to be beautifully softened down, but the shadow side will immediately appear to lighten up, but the dense shadows previously apparent will disappear, and detail spring into view that was entirely unseen before the screen was placed in position. And, if at this stage the services of some simple reflector be brought into requisition, so that a somewhat front side light be thrown upon the front as well as the shadow side of the face a marked improvement will have been effected, and, under such conditions, heads and busts may be photographed in any well-lighted sitting-room; but it must not be imagined that full effect is capable of being given to every class of faces in such situations, for this is really impossible for some kind of faces, where more or less top light is required to yield life-like results, and which can only be attained in properly fitted-up studio.

In another branch of photography, viz., copying, lighting also plays an important part. Take, for instance, the photographing of oil paintings. Here, again, we see the need of having command over the light that is permitted to reach the object, for hardly any two pictures will be found that require exactly the same treat-

ment, as, apart from the ever-varying range of colours met with, there are also great difference in the skies, some paintings having wide expanses of such and others none at all, and these large portions of what may be termed high lights in a painting require to be specially treated in the way of lighting. otherwise, these parts are hopelessly over-exposed before the details in the darker portion are sufficiently brought out, and it is only by unwearied practice that any one becomes expert in the copying of oil paintings. That very much of the success in this work lies in being able to have complete control over the light at command the writer well knows, for his experience, gained by photographing hundreds of oil paintings during recent years has clearly shown that there is a best form of lighting for this particular class of work, and this will probably be found by those anxious to undertake the work in the direction of a top light alone; but it must be also a very high light, and the studio must also have plenty of length, so situated that sunlight never reaches it. With such a high top light there is no difficulty experienced with reflections from the surface of the paintings, provided they are placed upon the easel in a vertical position and suitable material is spread over the floor. This is the natural outcome of a simple law in optics, and without a suitable light there will be no end of trouble in equally lighting the surface of any picture, and, in the case of oil paintings, any broad expanses of reflection is quite fatal.

The obtaining in monochrome of correct colour values when photographing coloured objects is quite a different matter now to what it was fifteen years ago. At that time the reproduction in monochrome of colored objects was considered well-nigh an impossibility, and what was at-

tempted in this direction before the introduction of chromatic plates was confined chiefly to the manipulation of the negative and the special treatment of same in printing.

These negatives were generally produced in a thin, fully exposed form, and were largely worked up by hand, such as the strengthening of high lights and half-tones and also giving depth to the shadows, thereby howering the tone of the colours which came out too prominently and raising others to their proper proportions. Although in the copying of oil paintings more or less of this kind of modelling is still practised, the wonderful improvements effected in the orthochromatising of plates has tended to reduce the labour previously necessary to a very great extent, and now, with a well-appointed system of top-lighting and facilities for shielding certain portions of the object, results are obtained far in advance of those produced years ago.

In connexion with the photographing of numerous light-coloured objects, such, for instance, as statuary, the direction of the main light, as well as the quality of the light employed, plays a most important part if pleasing results in light and shade are to be secured. It is quite surprising the difference in appearance such objects will present under varying dispositions of light.

With heavy objects, such as statuary, much difficulty is sometimes experienced when they have to be photographed in unsuitable positions. As a rule, however, a well-diffused top light, backed up with, when necessary, an increase of reflected light at such points as bring into strong relief such parts as require to be portrayed as high lights, will be found to yield excellent results.

Heavy statuary as a rule, especially in all well-appointed public galleries is never placed in situation without a

considerable amount of thought being bestowed upon the manner in which it is to be lighted, but it will be found very often the ever-varying direction of the sunlight and daylight always yields a particular hour of the day when it is seen to the best advantage, and this should be closely studied when photographing same.

In commercial work there are innumerable instances where special provision has to be made for certain objects, among which may be mentioned such articles as delicately formed fabrics, in which fine tracteries are present, and in which also the design is also represented by the form of the fabric, an instance of which we see in lace articles and fine embroideries. When dealing with many of these, special provision must be made when stretching them, so that the design of the lace is not interfered with by excessive stretching and this is best accomplished by using special stretching frame, which only applies equal tension in all directions. Lace curtains, for instance, have frequently to be photographed for process work. Here, again, not only must special attention be given to the lighting, but they must be treated in such a manner as to bring out the pattern and design in bold relief. This is accomplished by photographing them when they are suitably distended on stretchers, and placed under a very high top light only, with an absolutely black background, and this must on no account be brought close up to the fabric, as many suppose, and sometimes actually place in contact with the curtain.

For a background in work of this description there is nothing to equal black velvet, placed at least twelve to fifteen inches behind the fabric, and when such arrangement are carried out, and a slow transparency plate used with a very full exposure on a high top light, beautiful repro-

ductions of the finest design and tracteries are possible of accomplishment.

In work of this description the faintest inequality in the lighting will be apparent when the negatives reach the printing stage, so that it frequently happens that some experience and previous test of which is the best portion of the studio to employ at a given hour of the day, is required, so as to produce nice even results that permit of good process blocks being produced.

British Journal of Photography.

THOUGHTS ON GROUPING.

BY WARD MUIR.

The orb of day, pursuing his endless march across the skies, gazes down, (I venture to think) upon no spectacle more melancholy than that of the budding amateur preparing to perpetrate his first group. His family, posed at the portal of their residence, faces the camera with a solemn fixity of attitude and expression which would appear to have been assumed with peculiar pains especially for the occasion. Mamma and Aunt Maria are accommodated with straight-backed seats hastily procured from the hall, a bevy of sisters ranked themselves in the rear, the younger generation of relatives are packed into any odd crevices that may offer, while a few bored males arrange themselves in front after the manner of patent folding deck-chairs, and fruitlessly try to look as though a hard step were their favourite lounging place. A sunny day has of course been selected for the experiment, and the light striking through the leaves of the front garden's vine or fig tree, causes each sitter to wrinkle his or her respective eyebrows and gaily dapples with shadow the tennis-trousered legs which form the foreground, until the unsophisticated observer of the final picture would be led to suppose that the bored males had recently cycled

over city thorough-fares without the protection of mudguards. To add to the general misery, a deep depression—born, perhaps, of scepticism as to the photographer's powers—has descended upon the party. The anxious artist is alarmed by the cessation of talk amongst his sitters, and endeavours to disperse the gloom by a few pleasantries shot humorously from beneath the fold of the black cloth. In vain! His jokes are met by stony silence. And when, the focussing concluded, he emerges at length from the enwrapping velvet, he is met by a rebuke from Aunt Maria who (having laboured under the delusion that the picture was in actual process of being taken) assures him that he very nearly made her laugh in the middle.

This error is rectified, and happiness reigns once more. The party, in fact, rushes to the other extreme of spirits and the camera man, his preliminaries over, finds that levity has now fallen like a mantle upon his models. Peals of laughter shake the group to its vitals; the junior members of the company are dislodged from their positions by sheer excess of gaiety; and in a pause between the gusts of merriment, the aged uncle insists upon relating (*à propos des bottes*) a favourite dog story, which is received with, if possible, more than its usual meed of applause. Truly, the photographer has much to endure; for when (silence having at last been restored) he announces that all is ready for the exposure, he is met with expostulatory demand as to "Why he didn't say so before?" while the aged uncle pathetically intimates that he has caught cold through being kept waiting so long bareheaded in the open air.

But if the thing in its initial stage be so appalling, what words can I conjure up wherewith to depict the actual resulting print! Glossy P.O.P. (the

invariable refuge of amateur group takers) enshrines the final picture. Toned to a sickly purple and yellow, it represents, without a doubt, the lowest depths to which Art of any kind or form can descend. Aunt Maria, glaring at the beholder from her fortress on the straight-backed seat, looks like some witch of the Middle Ages cursing a mortal enemy; the first-born, whom the sun shadows have kindly provided with a black eye, is a hooligan to the life; the bored males are rendered—to put the thing in its least offensive light—with marvellous truth; the bouquet of beauty in the rear is robbed of its facial details by an over-dose of Bromide; and the most fortunate member of the entire group is by common consent a small nephew, whose extreme restlessness at the moment of exposure has caused him to come out as a blurred and hopelessly unrecognisable blot.

The experienced photographer pressed unwillingly into an attempt such as this at wholesale portraiture is even worthier of our compassion than his more innocent fellow-craftsman. A procession of past failures unfurls itself before his mental vision as he erects the tripod, and the unpleasant conviction that history will repeat itself in this as in other matters forces its creed upon his soul with a persistency that is unnerving in the extreme. Need we then be surprised should he meekly stand by while his sitters, with that contrariness peculiar to their tribe, arrange themselves in three straight lines, project their feet towards the lens in an invitation to faulty perspective, crush into a corner or spread out in a weak straggle, don their most unbecoming expressions—in a word, act as groups always do act; need we, I say, be surprised that the photographer stands helplessly apart, and with a devil-may-care recklessness lifts the cap upon a subject which he knows must, from its very

nature, not merely waste a plate, but also prove another crack in the already crumbling edifice of his local reputation? Indeed, we cannot but suspect that the cunning artist will be rather glad than otherwise when with a despair begotten of many a disappointing result, his family cease their periodic demands to be photographed *en masse* upon the domiciliary doorstep.

Alas! it will be long before that day dawns for most of us. The habit—nay, the vice—of group-taking, and its coexistent mania for being taken, has buried its poisonous fangs too deeply in our national character to be easily withdrawn. Years of patience must, of necessity, be passed in fighting the insidious foe before the hour of freedom can appear. And this, although the evil is one possessing no shadow of *raison d'être*, nor even the merit of a superficial attractiveness.

Why—to go to the root of the matter—*why* should we take groups? They are neither *genre* nor landscapes; neither interesting to the scientist, nor good specimens of topographical work; neither pleasing artistically, nor (except in the case of celebrities, to which class I plead guilty to supposing that the relatives of only a minority of my readers belong) suitable as magazine illustrations; satisfactory neither to the impressionist nor the “truth-to-nature” man, for what family out of Bedlam ever huddles itself on the front doorstep as an ordinary course of procedure in real life? Even looked at as a species of portrait, the thing is a fraud. The faces are too small, and surrounded by too great a multiplicity of detail, to be genuinely characteristic. And the expense saved by photographing (say) twelve persons on one plate, instead of the same twelve persons on twelve separate plates, is altogether insignificant in these days of cheap materials. No; there is nothing for it. The amateur photographer must mournfully admit of groups (as

Beau Brummel's valet did of his master's cravats): “This was one of our failures!”

The fact is obvious on the face of it. Yet the practice continues, though the mind reels with the effort to retain half the number of reasons why it should cease. A strange people are we! There are a thousand arguments against the thing; I have still to learn that there exists a solitary one in its favour. Nevertheless, it goes on. Groups, groups, groups, and (it would be sheer weakness not to add) ninety per cent of them posed upon the doorstep. Oh that doorstep! Of what depths of human degradation is it not the silent spectator; to what miserable attempts at wit the listener; for what atrocious tableaux the unwilling stage!

In conclusion, let me present the question (without extra charge) to the editor of any one of our great dailies for use during the maligned “silly season.” I will even, if desired, set the ball a-rolling by an epistle on the subject from my own pen. From that moment forward no difficulty would ever be experienced in filling the columns of the journal with matter of interest to the British public. The claims of rival giant gooseberry growers and lawlessness in the Church would indeed be compelled to pale into a shamed obscurity before the meteoric brilliance of a discussion raging round such a universally absorbing question as, “Are Groups Worth Taking?”

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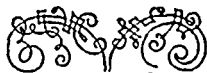
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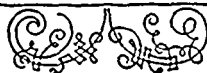
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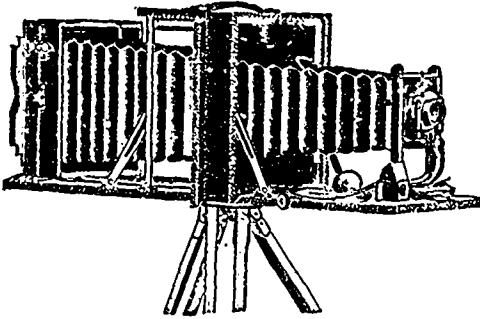
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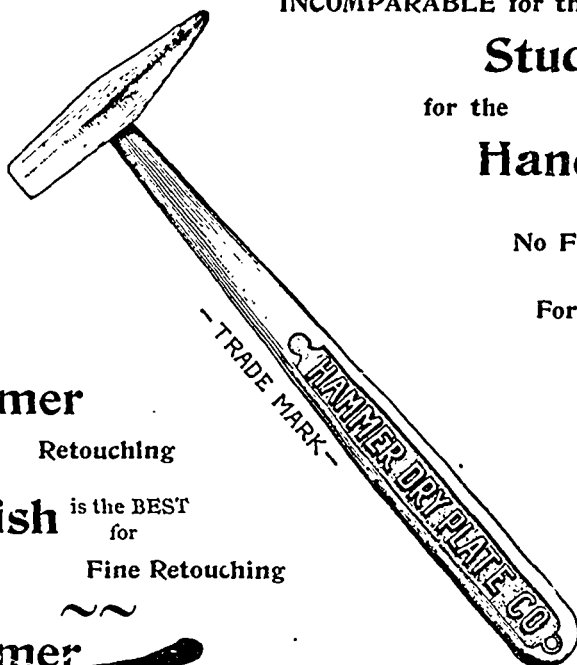
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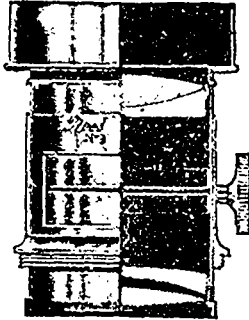
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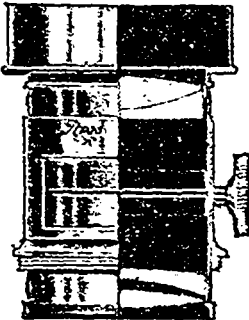
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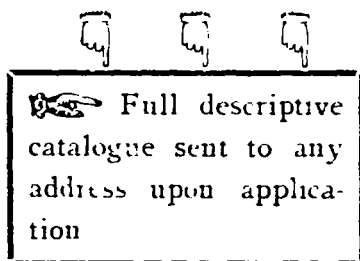
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