Photography

LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY.

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LETTERS ON

Landscape Photography.

BY

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PREFACE.

THE following letters were written to a friend whose study of photography enabled him to produce a technically perfect negative, but who did not know how to put his knowledge to pictorial use. They were not intended to point out a royal road to art, but rather to act as a stimulus to activity in the search for subjects for the camera, and to teach how readiness of resource may help good fortune in turning them into agreeable pictures.

Tunbridge Wells, 1888.

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LETTERS ON LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY.

Addressed to an American Friend.

No. I.—Preliminary.

Dear Blank,—As these letters are to be published, I must call you Blank, your name as yet not having any interest for photographers. But we may be permitted to hope the time will come when your true appellation will be that of a shining light in the Art which has light for its source.

I now propose to go into the subject of Landscape, more particularly as it can be represented by photographic means. As long as you were playing with toys—ten dollar sets—I was compelled to decline giving you any instructions, because I could have been of very little use to you. I have not a word to say against these cheap sets of apparatus, which make me wonder how they can be made for the money, and I have taken, and seen taken by amateurs, admirable little pictures with them; but serious art requires serious tools, and should not be satisfied with less than the best. You have now, however, got over the youthful maladies of the art—the

chicken-pox and measles of photography—and you have tried the usual remedies, such as endeavouring to find a means of photographing in colour, and a remedy for bad art in a new developer. You have also ceased to ascribe a lack of brilliancy in your negatives to want of definition in your lens. You have, in fact, got over the initial little perplexities and troubles, and are ready to provide yourself with proper tools, so that you will have no difficulty in following out my instructions, and you will find your work interesting.

You are an amateur with leisure, which gives you a great advantage. Hard working professional photographers can afford but little time for prosecuting the better parts of their art. I remember how surprised you were when I told you that I seldom devoted more than a fortnight in the year to landscape photography, and then had to take my chance of weather. But after all, shortness of time for actual working has its compensations. I get through a great deal of work in the time, because I have everything ready, everything cut and dried for use. I am always on the watch for effects and subjects, and ideas of all sorts, and jot them down in a pocket-book, so that perhaps a subject or scene is a year or two old before I use it. But I have the subjects so "handy," if I may so call it, in my mind that they are ready for use at any moment. And I take care when I have my landscape holiday that everything shall be in perfect order, not omitting the models for figures, and that nothing shall be doubtful except the weather. It may turn out bad, but we "trust the larger hope." Indeed, even in the matter of the weather, we are not so much in doubt as formerly. We turn to the meteorological reports in the morning papers to see what kind of weather you are sending us from your side

of the water, and "govern ourselves accordingly." Although you never predict anything but storms, we learn how to dodge between them.

Just as the proverbial millionnaire began his working life with half-a-crown, so has many a now well-known photographer begun his art with a cigar-box and spectacle lens, and it is not easy for the new generation of photographers to understand the difficulties through which the beginner of thirty years ago had to grope his way. To a modern dry plate worker it would be like listening to a foreign language if I told him of some of the difficulties of the collodion process. What does he know of comets, oyster-shell markings, and lines in direction of the dip? In apparatus, also, the early photographers had to put up with what they could get, and what was not always very convenient for use. Weight and French polish seemed to be the chief objects aimed at by the makers. Both camera makers and opticians were very stiff-necked in that generation, and would not allow that photographers knew what they wanted, so the camera was set up almost as solidly as if it were an astronomical telescope, and the lens was made with the definition of a microscopic objective with the focus all on one plane.

We have changed all that. We can now get apparatus and lenses adapted to our better known wants. Cameras, especially landscape cameras, without any loss of beauty in their manufacture, have been made very much lighter, and lenses are made sufficiently optically imperfect to diffuse the focus more in accordance with what the eye sees. The workers of the present day, who are benefiting by these improvements, have no idea of the trouble photo-

graphers of twenty-five years ago had in persuading opticians to make lenses with what they called diffusion of focus, because, as the opticians thought they convincingly replied, the instruments would not be optically perfect.

And now I come to what you really will require. I take it that you will not give your ambition at the outset too great a chance of over-leaping itself in the matter of size. The time will, I hope, come when you will feel the compelling influence of sufficient skill to make your work become visible in exhibitions, and you will feel you cannot do yourself justice in a less size than 15 by 12; but at present 10 by 8 will be large enough for you. You can put nearly as much art in a picture of this size as into one of much larger dimensions, and the smaller size saves you a lot of worry and bother in porterage.

First, of the Camera. This essential tool should be light, strong, and have all the necessary movements. It must at the same time be observed that in some modern cameras there are movements which are not at all necessary, and appear to be added only for the purpose of displaying the ingenuity of the inventors. These clever machines defeat the object for which they are intended. If a camera is efficient, it cannot be too simple. With a perfect camera a photographer of even small experience knows how it works at once, and what to do. The tripod stand should be firm and rigid, as well as light and portable. This you will easily judge for yourself.

The lens is always considered the most important of all the tools the photographer employs. So it is, but I should like to say boldly that, within limits, I do not care what make of lens I use. It is as well to have the best your means will

allow, but there has always been too much made of particular variations in the make of lenses. It has been the fashion to think too much of the tools and too little of the use made of them. I have one friend who did nothing last year because he had made up his mind to buy a new lens, and could not determine whose make it should be, and he was tired of his old apparatus. His was of the order of particular and minute minds that try to whittle nothing to a point. I have another friend who takes delight in preparing for photography, and spends a small fortune in doing so, but never takes a picture. But I am wandering from my subject. You will want a lens for general use. This should be of the Rapid Rectilinear form, and should not include too wide an angle. The focus should not be less than 13 inches for a 10 by 8 plate. You will find this lens useful for all ordinary landscape purposes as well as out-door groups and portraits. But there are some subjects which would be impossible with a narrow angle lens, such as interiors and subjects in confined positions where you cannot get far enough away to include as much as you want with the ordinary lens. For this purpose you must have a lens that includes a wide angle of view. To be quite complete you should have a 10½ inch also, as well as a single meniscus, but this is not necessary at present.

I need not go into the question of apparatus further. The experience you have already had will have taught you what else you will require, but I have one or two words to say on plates and developers.

Find one good make of plate and learn all about it—all its peculiarities, how long it takes under the developer before the image should appear, how long a properly exposed plate takes

to become rightly intense, and how it looks—and stick to this plate. I don't say don't try any other at any time, but make the chosen plate the standard. To be continually using different makes of plates confuses the judgment, and you scarcely know where you are. I do not recommend the quickest plates that are advertised, because some plates are made so rapid as to be unmanageable. We ought by this time to be able to give the sensitiveness of any plate to the sensitometer, but I have never known one in which I could place the slightest reliance. Much confusion prevails. One maker's "30-times" is quicker than another's "40-times," while the names given to the plates are most misleading. The plate I like best and use almost entirely—that is, when I am not compelled to take a very quick picture—is called by its maker "Special Instantaneous," but is by no means a quick plate compared with some others. There is one thing about which you may be quite sure. If the plate is not covered with a good body of emulsion—if it looks thin, blue, and poor—you will not get the best obtainable negative on it.

The last word I have to say in this letter is about developers. Many amateurs try every newly-suggested modification of the developer as it comes out, and fritter away their time and muddle their brains with weights and measures and homœopathic differences in proportions. My advice is—and I cannot state it too strongly, particularly as you wish to be an artistic photographer, and not merely a dabbler in chemistry—keep to one developer, and let that be as simple as possible. I have used one developer only since I commenced with dry plates, and have not found any want of quality in my negatives; but perhaps I am easily pleased in

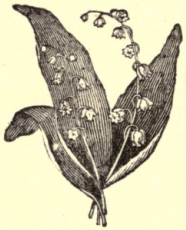
this respect. This developer was suggested by Mr. B. J. Edwards, and is as follows:—

No. 1.—Pyrogallic acid...	...	... 1 ounce
Citric acid	...	... 40 grains
Water ...	...	... 7½ ounces
No. 2.—Bromide of potassium ...		... 120 grains
Water ...	...	... 7 ounces
Ammonia ·880...	...	... 1 ounce

To make the developer, take three ounces of water and add one dram of No. 1 and one dram of No. 2. This quantity should be sufficient to develop a 10 by 8 plate. There are occasions when the quantity of No. 2 should be increased or diminished. If you prefer any other developer, such as the carbonate of soda, which is now much used, I have no objection; all I ask is, that you should keep as much as possible to one developer, and study it thoroughly.

That is all I have to say on the technical or chemical side of photography in this place; but don't mistake me. There are those who look upon technical excellence with indifference, but I would not have you be one of them. While I look upon great manipulative skill by itself as good work thrown away, there cannot be the least doubt that bad workmanship mars good ideas, and it is distressing to see beautiful conceptions wasted by the slovenly way in which they are sometimes set forth. It is fortunate, however, that great mechanical excellence is now within easy reach of any ordinarily intelligent mind. Plates and almost all other materials are now so prepared for the use of the photographer, that with care and attention to instructions it is difficult to go wrong. But there is this to be said. The

student must have a good knowledge of what a negative really ought to be. He must also learn how the "values" of nature should appear in a print, and he will find that his mechanical means will enable him to get what he desires. This power of seeing values belongs to the art side of photography, and is not so easily attained; but what I want to point out is, that when you can "see," there is no great difficulty in mastering the mechanical means of representing what you see. I do not, therefore, go into the preliminary chemical rudiments of photography, but assume your knowledge, and leave you to perfect it from any of the manuals now published, and of which Abney's is one of the best.



No. II.—Art in Photography.

After several weeks, in which you have certainly not been idle, I have received the prints taken from negatives produced with the new apparatus, and find them most interesting. They show that you have completely conquered the slight difficulties met with on the scientific side of photography, so wrongly thought by many to be the end of the art, and are now ready to try to make pictures with the tools you have selected, as other artists select whether they will use the brush, the chisel, or the graver. Your prints show a great approach to mechanical excellence; they are fair to see, they are sharp, clear, soft, rich, of good colour, but they are not pictures. They tell us nothing, there is not an idea in the lot; they are dead bodies, admirably embalmed, without a soul amongst them. I speak very frankly, as I could not help gathering from your letter that you think these prints, because of their mechanical excellencies, approach very near to perfection; but I am anxious that mere executive dexterity should not have the first place in your mind.

Touching this same "something" beyond mere mechanical perfection in photographs, I think I had better say what I have to say about it at once, and get it out of the way. That much vexed question, Is art possible in photography?

has been discussed over and over again, yet I have always been content to keep out of the controversy, and with endeavouring to show, however feebly, in my work, how art could be made of it. I have never called myself an art photographer—that title is usually usurped by those who know nothing of art—but have been content and proud to call myself simply a photographer, thinking it better to leave pretension to those who pretend. Nevertheless, I have always held a very firm belief, and had a profound faith, that photography used by an artist produces art.

The lines of those who now try to put a little art feeling into their photographs are laid in pleasanter places than were those who made the attempt a few years ago. There are still some who deny that anything artistic can be done by a photographer, but it is my experience that the best painters now call the photographer "brother" when he deserves it, and recognise that he can put thought, intention, and even a vein of poetry into his work—that mysterious something beyond the border line of hard fact which is felt perhaps more than seen in a picture. Of course, it is only those who produce art, in whatever material, who should be called artists. Original genius is one of the rarest gifts in this age of imitation. Anything absolutely new seems to be almost impossible. Emerson says: "The new in art is always formed out of the old," and unfortunately some of those original geniuses who create their novelties out of old ideas are not unlike that divine

> "Who took his discourse from the famed Dr. Browne,
> But preached it so vilely he made it his own."

It does not seem to be rightly understood what art is. A man might be a good painter or a good photographer without

being an artist at all. A man who paints is not an artist because he paints, or a photographer an artist because he photographs. Both are artists when they can produce fine art with either paint or chemicals, or any other materials. The fact is the critics have confounded the art with the operator. There can be no question that ninety-nine per cent. of the immense mass of photographs produced year after year have no claim to rank as art any more than the works of the million of art students in this country can rank as art. That, however, is no reason why art cannot be produced by the camera. Every candid person knows it is, as usual, a question of degree. Art has been and is produced in the camera; the great difference is, that it is more difficult to produce art with our instruments than with the brush. I should be rash if I attempted to define minutely what fine art is, but I will limit myself to accepting the dictum that "art is the result, in the first place, of seeing rightly, and in the second place of feeling rightly, about what is seen." I also hold it true that "art is interpretation by means of a creative idea, and never a stupidly exact copy." There are, of course, incapable photographers, as there are incapable painters, but that is not the question. The question is, is it possible for a photographer to put his own ideas into his work, to alter, add to, or modify; or is photography to be, as Mr. Mantilini would say, "one demmed eternal grind?"

The camera may be a machine if you like; I will go further, and admit that it is a machine, but *you* cannot be a machine if you would, and will not be able to prevent yourself putting yourself into your work for better or worse; indeed, there is so much mannerism in the work of many photographers, that one who is used to studying photographs

scarcely requires the names of the producers. A year or two ago I was one of the judges at an exhibition. The names of the photographers were not given to us, but I soon found we were talking of the pictures as the work of So-and-so, and So-and-so, almost as freely as if we had been supplied with the names.

I have seen it argued somewhere, that the charm and value of art consist in every case of its difference from nature as well as its likeness to it. There is just a slight streak of truth running through the idea. The difference is often the root of our enjoyment; old facts are presented to us in a new way and become more interesting, but when it is claimed that every step in advance from the mirror or camera to the master-pieces of painting and sculpture is a step of difference, we must pause. When the "difference" shows a purpose, an idea, or a sentiment, then the piece that is differentiated from nature becomes a work of art.

There is more common sense spoken about art now than there used to be. There is not so much said about the "awe-inspiring mysteries." The painter now kindly allows that others may care for and are able to see and feel the beauties of nature. More than twenty years ago, when the opposition to art in photography was at its fiercest, there was a capital article on landscape painting in a now dead review. Of course its tendency was against there being any art in anything but paint. It was particularly severe on the "Chemical Mechanic," and the author gives an illustration of how out of sympathy with nature the camera is. His illustration depends on the quality of the photographer he introduces. The mere fact of using a camera does not put a

man out of tune with nature. That the exact opposite is the fact would be nearer the truth. The perfect and unadulterated loveliness of the conceit, that none but the painter artist can see and feel nature, is delicious. This is what he says:

"To begin with sympathy. In the midst of the forest when you are alone, and are beginning to hear the finer sounds, the turn of the leaf, the thud of the nut, did you ever feel as if you were an attraction there, as if all were drawing round you? I remember, when touring in Scotland, swinging out of a wood on the top of the stage from Oban, into a wide space of sea and sky, with a glorious foreground of cattle and their doubles in the lucid shallows of the bay; colour so pure, so bright, so precious, that it drew a grunt of admiration from the Highlander on the box. I was put down and disposed myself quietly in a corner of the wood, and was soon part of the colour, from the water to the sky. The ripple hardly broke louder than my pulse. Presently a stoat bounds into the road, and I had time to observe what enjoyment of life there was in the unalarmed, untamed step of the creature. The heron rose near me; and as I was beginning to take it all in with half-shut eyes, and to remark how the powerful tones of the cattle, fawn and flame colour, white and yellow, blood-red and black, seemed to give infinitude to space—a photographer walks briskly before me, and with an air and noise of satisfaction begins to open and adjust his box. I give you my word that the look of quiet horror that came over the scene was unmistakable—not horror exactly—did you ever remark the face of a girl when she sets it? It was precisely that. Not only did the stoat disappear, but—I don't know whether it

was the creaking of the machine, or the business-like stare of the man—the cattle grew conscious and uncomfortable, and it was not without satisfaction that I saw a mist creep up from the sea, and steal away the shimmer and the charm. I left him some cows lashing their tails, some blackthorn and Scotch fir, and the average coast formation."

All this is very fancifully and prettily written, and it serves to show with what contempt the painter treated the photographer twenty years ago. This sort of tip-tilting of the nose at photography as an art is only possible now with fifth-rate painters, or, in the press, with their friends, or those who have failed in art.

Anyhow, what you have to do, and what other photographers have to do who care for the status of their profession, is to keep pegging away at the production of good pictures. Taking pleasure in your work, but never being satisfied; being always determined that the next picture shall be better than the last, your feeling for nature will increase and become more intense, and this love for and better understanding will shine forth in your work. As you progress you will find that, metaphorically, the stoat will be no longer startled or the bird disappear, the machine will no longer creak, and—who knows?—you may feel that you are an attraction to nature, and she may draw all around you as she did round the young gentleman who lay down in the corner of the wood.

You may console yourself further; you may feel that photography has taught art to artists. It is acknowledged that portrait painting has enormously advanced since the introduction of photography. Painters are now ashamed of the conventional absurdities of the pre-photographic days,

when they "had plenty of taste and all of it very bad." The column with voluminous curtains dangling from the skies is now never seen.

Perhaps the photographer has taught the lesson, as the Spartans cured drunkenness, by showing awful examples; but the lesson was learnt, and portrait painting is now the one thing we have reason to be proud of in English art. Photographers had nothing but bad examples to follow in the portraiture of thirty or forty years ago, and most of their early faults in taste and composition were due to the painter's work, which was then worshipped as art, and is now looked upon with contempt.

No. III.

The Photographer's Control over His Subject.

Let us now go into the country, camera in hand. Here, at the outset, I meet with a difficulty which places me at a great disadvantage. I shall have to refer to the aspects of nature, and your nature differs, I believe, considerably from the kind we have in England, and I can only refer to the scenery of this part of the world. I have to confess with sorrow that I have never been in the States. I have had many invitations and a few chances, which I feel ashamed of not having accepted, but in spite of Shakespere's saying,

"Home-keeping youths have ever homely wits,"

I have never been able to tear myself away from home, especially as I feel it impossible to disabuse myself of the doubtless erroneous notion that the more accessible Wales contains in itself all the elements of foreign travel—mountain, lake, ruin, rock, and river, as well as a most picturesque seaboard—besides a language which few but born natives can understand.

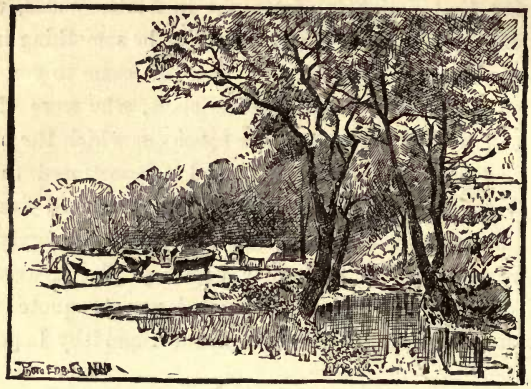
This is of the less consequence, as when you were here at

Tunbridge Wells we took many walks together in the neighbourhood, and when I talk of heather, gorse, and whin, you will understand what I mean, and turn the application to scenes in your own country. Besides, were you not with me during that delightful fortnight in North Wales, when it first dawned upon you that there might be something in the claims of photography as an art? But this came to you only after one of the two Royal Academicians, who were of the party, had fiercely advocated our cause (in which the other, being Scotch, cautiously agreed), and demonstrated that it was not the material, but the man, that produced fine art. It was there also where Gelligynan, Llanarmon, Dwygyfylchi, Llanfairpwllgwyngyll, and other names of places, were too much for your tongue, and compelled you to quote, with your usual readiness, the lines from the Ingoldsby Legends:

> "For the vowels made use of in Welsh are so few,
> That the A and the E, the I, O, and the U,
> Have really but little or nothing to do;
> And the duty, of course, falls the heavier by far,
> On the L and the H, and the N and the R."

Above all—and to me this is of the greatest importance—it was there that you were first inspired to do or die as an artistic photographer, and determined to carry the world with a fifty-shilling set. When you assisted me to get some pictures it seemed to you so easy to do my part of the work, which you said consisted principally in shouting, while you were acting as cowboy, collecting the cattle together and worrying them about until I got the three white cows in exactly the position in the group I desired, and when you defied the big brindled bull—like another Buffalo Bill—while I photographed him. A short description of the

photographing of one of these cattle pictures—a type of many others—may be of interest to other readers than yourself. Here is a reduction of it:



CALLING THE COWS.

It is a much quoted proverb that everything comes to him who waits. In this age of hurry it is not everybody who can wait—it is said to be especially difficult on your side of the water, so perhaps I am suggesting something you would find impossible; but I waited for this picture as I have often waited for other subjects. Two years ago it struck me that there was the material for a good subject in this bit of meadow, trees and stream; I therefore made a rough sketch of it in my pocket-book, indicating the cattle and the figure as objects I must get in somehow. I even noted down the title, "Calling the Cows." At that time there were no cows in the field, but there were some very pretty calves, which the farmer told me would not be removed for a year or two, so I could wait for them to grow. At the same

time the banks of the stream were so overgrown with underwood, and the trunks of the trees so covered with foliage, that the pretty glimpse of the river was lost, and the best part of the picture would have been obscured by a dense mass of alder leaves. Orders were given to have all this obstruction, as well as one of the trees, cleared away during the following winter. The next summer the hand of the hedger was too plainly visible, and the picture was allowed to wait still another year for the effect of the severe pruning to be outgrown.

Critics say photography can have no control over nature. This erroneous notion has often been confuted; nearly every photographer worthy of his camera makes some changes in the subject before him. To show that he may make even considerable changes in the aspect of a scene I give a view taken from the same spot, but with different figures, before the alteration:

TRESPASSERS.

Everything was ready last summer. The calves had grown

up into young cows, and we soon prepared a figure to call them. What a delightful morning that was! How you, with two or three other assistants, worked at getting the cows together so that the right coloured animals should come in the right place, and that they should *express the feeling* of being called. How we failed again and again, and how we got them at last so that I did not find anything in them that I should care to alter! Yet some people say: "How lucky you were to find such a beautiful group of cattle in such a picturesque place!"

"True ease in writing comes from art, not chance;" so also in picture-making, it is better to rely on the art which you may depend upon, than the chance which may fail you. Touching the figure calling the cows, do you remember the first time you saw her? Do you remember the first day you joined as I took you for a walk along a rural lane, where you were surprised to find a poor girl in rags hard at work at a large and masterly painting in oils of the scene before her? How I said nothing, but allowed you to admire and wonder if this was the ordinary occupation of the aboriginal Welsh girl, and how astonished you were when you found the poor tatterdemalion was a clever lady-artist, whose works are often well placed in the Royal Academy Exhibitions, and who had so often to act as one of my models that she found it more convenient to wear the clothes until we gave up work for the day?

It was on this holiday you first learned to see. Our party consisted almost entirely of artists, and some of them were entomologists and botanists, all worshippers of nature. The talk, the thought, was all of nature and how to imitate her,

and there you had your first lessons in noticing, like Browning's Lippo Lippi,

> "The shapes of things, their colours, lights and shades, changes, surprises."

This faculty of artistic sight, or, indeed, the faculty of seeing anything, only comes with training. The ordinary observer only takes a superficial view of things. He is sensible that the view is "pretty." He may even go so far as to feel the grandeur of a mountain, but he can have no feeling of the exquisite sense of beauty that appeals to the trained mind. The artist can get very real enjoyment out of objects and sights in which the ordinary eye would only see the common-place. The average man only sees the most gaudy of the flowers and butterflies, the entomologist and botanist see realms of beauty that do not exist for the other, and so it is throughout all the arts and sciences. I will not further enforce this necessity for learning to see here, as I shall, I hope, have further opportunities of alluding to the subject. I will content myself with saying that to see artistically you must learn art. To do this you must learn what has been considered as the backbone of art for all ages —composition. Of late years it has been the fashion with a certain school of painters to decry composition as artificial, false, and quite too old-fashioned for modern use; but I notice that the more these painters emerge from their pupilage state, the more do their pictures show that they are glad to make use of the old, old rules. Rules were never intended to cramp the artist's intellect, and I have never advocated that the artist should be the slave of any system; but I know the value of what are called the Laws of Composition and

Chiaroscuro when used as a walking stick to help you along, and not as a crutch to lean upon.

It is time we got out the camera, so I will finish with what I have to say in this letter before we begin our work.

Enjoy your work, or drop it. You can never do good work as a task; good photography, perhaps, but not good art. One of the best things said by William Hunt, whose delightful "Talks on Art" are as much enjoyed in England as in his native country, was, "Draw firm, and be jolly!"

You must enjoy even your failures, for one of the best teachers is failure. Like the poets,

"Who learn in suffering what they teach in song,"

the art photographer teaches himself by his mistakes, and arrives at beauty through much tribulation. I don't ask you to so far enjoy your failures as to welcome them with joy whenever they arise, but you may rejoice that there is something more to overcome, and that you will be the better for it. On the other hand, don't be too easily contented. Art is not easy, and it is only the incapable who are always pleased.

To conclude, I will quote another William Hunt—*old* William Hunt, the painter of Birdsnests, Primroses, Country Life. His advice used to be,

"Paint what you love, and love what you paint."

No. IV.—The Choice of Subject.

As to the choice of subject. A great deal has been claimed for the extraordinary range of art, "from the hues of a cabbage leaf to the sufferings of a Christ." "Nay, there is nothing that man has ever dreamed, or hoped, or feared, suffered, enjoyed, or sinned in, which is not a subject matter for art," says Mr. Quilter, one of the most acute art critics of our time. But all who practise art must appreciate the limitations of the particular department of art which they practise. The painter in oil has the widest range and an almost unlimited choice of subjects; the water-colourist has a narrower scope, so also has the sculptor; and shall I be wide of the mark when I say, it is left for the photographer to show the greatest ingenuity in the choice of subjects in which to exhibit his skill as an artist?

The photographer should try to understand and be satisfied with the limitations with which he is "cribbed, cabined, and confined," and endeavour to turn them to his use, or rather find in the very limitation a certain fitness and use, because it clears away a vast number of impossible subjects, confines his study in a narrower groove, and enables him to give more complete attention to "the things that are his."

We are in the habit of claiming for photography an unlimited range of subjects, from the infinitely little to the infinitely remote; from the microscopic diatom dredged up from the depths of the ocean, to the infinitely distant

nebula in star-packed space; but there are some things that may be possible which are yet unaccomplished.

In landscape photography, which is our present subject, there are one or two things that have not been done. For instance, have you ever seen a photograph in which one very common fact in nature is adequately represented—I mean the effect of storm and wind on an inland landscape? I say inland, because such effects are easy enough in sea pictures. The effect often seen in pictures by Salvator Rosa and Gaspar Poussin. The bending and swaying branches of the trees, the driven sky and the fluttering garments of the figures. The effect of wind is, unfortunately, too often to be found in photographs, always to the disfigurement of the picture, but no "lightning" or "special instantaneous" plate has yet been made that could enable us to do justice to the grand and pictorially fit effects I have suggested.

Then, again, I have never seen a photograph which gave me any proper idea of mountains. Photographs of the Alps always remind me of toy mountains, and I want to see a child's Noah's Ark on the highest peaks. Perhaps it is because we now-a-days make such fun of what were once inaccessible solitudes. We go up Ararat on a bicycle, instead of waiting for the orthodox flood as Noah did.

There is another effect which has never been quite properly captured. In a mountainous country, when the sun has set to the observer it still shines on the mountains. The effect is often one of the most beautiful in nature, but the non-actinic colour of the sun's rays at that time of the evening has hitherto prevented anything like success in photographing this subject. As Milton says:—

"Yet from these flames,
No light, but rather darkness visible."

However, this is a difficulty that may soon be added to the many conquered in the past. Orthochromatic plates will solve this problem, and when you have obtained a really fine example of the effect, here is a title for it (there is a good deal in a title) from Tennyson's new "Locksley Hall," but make the picture worthy of the line:—

"Cold upon the dead volcano sleeps the gleam of dying day."

This reminds one of another important thing. Never give your picture a title it cannot support. I like good titles. I don't mind even if there is a bit of sentiment —not sentimentality—in them, so that it is healthy, and the boundary between the sublime and ridiculous be not overstepped; but beware of anything in the nature of an anti-climax. If you have a picture in an exhibition, and the spectator, before seeing your poor little work, reads an ultra-poetical title, with perhaps a verse attached to it in the catalogue, his expectations will be so raised that when he sees the picture he may feel a cold fit of disillusionizing bathos come over him that he may remember against you for some time.

While I am talking of titles, I may just add an illustration of how it is possible to go wrong in naming even the simplest subjects. I am told that the cows in the photograph of which I gave a reduction in my last letter were not cows at all, but are what are called in Scotland "Stirks." I am quite aware that the natives of that far country, with an independance which is perhaps praiseworthy but slightly puzzling, call things by names beyond the comprehension of other parts of the world, yet I believe I am *almost* wrong in calling these animals cows. Some of them may attain the dignity of cowhood by-and-bye.

Now for subjects that are possible.

It is a true saying that each student must discover for himself what is beautiful. It is not every kind of scene that appeals to the feelings of all alike. Some of us delight in particular kinds of landscapes, some like grandeur, others are content with quiet simplicity. "Each of us is constituted," writes Mr. Hamerton, with, perhaps, not a few verbal impediments, "with a special idiosyncrasy related in some mysterious way to a certain class of natural scenery, and when we find ourselves in a scene answering to our idiosyncrasy, the mind feels itself at home there, and rapidly attaches itself by affection."

The student may be guided in his search for beauty, but it is not wise in a teacher to insist too strongly on what is picturesque or the reverse. Many painters will make good pictures out of subjects which would seem to be quite inadequate to others. Many of the greatest landscapes are of the most ordinary scenes. What could be more commonplace than the scenery of Gainsborough's "Market Cart," Turner's "Frosty Morning," or any of the pictures by De Wint and David Cox? A writer I have already quoted has written so much to the point on this subject, that I cannot help quoting him again.

"When an old Greek made a perfect statue, he made it (so at least says one school of æstheticians) with absolutely no feeling, save that of enjoyment of its beauty; all other meaning, all other emotion, was unnecessary. He wished simply to produce a beautiful thing; he produced it, and it was good. But it is a very curious thing to note, though a little consideration will convince any art student of the truth of the fact, that there has never been in the world a great

school of landscape painting, or even a great landscape painter, whose motive has been restricted in like degree to the beauty, pure and simple, of nature. Landscape painters have continually sought beautiful scenes, and painted them with more or less ability; but the greater the man, the more individual, the more personal to himself, and to men in general, have been his pictures. And so truly is this the case, that the rank of great landscape painters might almost be determined by reference to this fact alone. Beauty sought *per se* in landscape has always hitherto destroyed itself; and people have turned ignorantly but determinedly from the compositions of snowy Alps, clustered vines, and deep-blue waters of Italy, to gaze upon David Cox's muddy lanes, sheltered by dark trees, beneath whose shadow the peasants plod wearily homeward; or on a picture of some bleak expanse of rain-beaten moorland, across which a belated traveller struggles in the teeth of the wind."

Don't be so conceited as to fancy there are so few subjects sufficiently important for your camera. Of all things, simple subjects obtain the widest sympathy. Simple things appeal to everybody; the commonplace is always attractive when well treated. These simple scenes have the advantage of exercising the photographer's picture-making abilities more than the more obvious and grander subjects. It is a greater triumph to find beauty worth recording in every-day homely scenes than in those of which every amateur can feel the beauty. Many a commonplace scene, as I hope to show, requires only the proper lighting, and perhaps a figure of the right kind in the right place, to make it beautiful.

Let us, in imagination, stand on this wide piece of waste land, covered with gorse and broom and bramble, and

experimentalize a little in "effects." We are on high ground, and all around us is presented good middle distance bounded by low hills. Bits of broken foreground, one of the most important parts of a photographic landscape, are to be met with everywhere. Materials for pictures are here in quantity, but there is nothing very striking, nothing that shouts aloud, "Come take me!" Here is a chance for selection and treatment. Subjects are so plentiful, that the best picture—other things being equal—will be the one that is best lighted. Let us stand with the sun behind our backs and observe the scene. We find it, although beautiful in itself, pictorially flat and tame. The sunlight, being directly upon every object, affords no shadow. The sun, being broad on everything, allows no breadth of light and shadow. There is no relief, no mystery. The equal illumination flattens all before us. Now turn half-way round and you will have the scene lighted from the side. There is more relief, and this kind of lighting is very suitable to many subjects, but there is still more relief and still more picturesque effect to be obtained. Turn so that the sun is nearly—not quite—in front of you. Now we get the utmost amount of relief, and in this case breadth, for the great mass of gorse and junipers in shadow, their edges being only just skimmed or kissed with sunlight, form a broad mass of dark which is opposed to a grand wedge-shaped breadth of broken sandbank in sunlight, which fills nearly half of the picture. We now only want a dark object, which shall be the darkest in the picture, joined with if possible a precious speck of white, to put the whole into tone, and afford us all the elements of the picturesque, balance of composition, breadth of light and shade, and tone.

I want to avoid, if possible, going too fully into any part of my subject, on which I have written at length in my little handbooks. About composition and chiaroscuro I have said all that is necessary in "Pictorial Effect," but there has been so much said about "Tone"—and, what is nearly the same thing, "Values"—of late years, that I may as well have a word or two on the subject here.

"Values," or the right relation of one shade to another in a picture, appears to be looked upon by the young school as the newest and most marvellous discovery in art. "Tone," or the right relation of one shade to another in a picture, is as old as art itself." Some people—especially those painters who call themselves of the naturalistic school—seem to think this is the only aim and end of art. It is really only part of the beginning. A picture without tone can never be pleasing in effect, but it must contain a great deal more than this to be effective.

The study of tone is of more importance to the painter than the photographer, although a knowledge of it is of vast use to the latter. In photography, tone, like drawing, is done for the artist, if his work is properly accomplished, and both may be untrue if he does not understand his work. A scene may be distorted—put out of drawing—by a bungling use of the camera and lens, and the values in a photograph may be entirely falsified by under or over-exposure or development. A due appreciation of values, also, enables the photographer to choose and add to his views, as I have already pointed out in selecting the scene on the common. It is especially useful in relation to the introduction of figures. The lights and shades and leading lines of a scene may be all out of tune, but the introduction of a figure of the right value may

"pull it together." I cannot do better than recommend you to read carefully a little book I have already quoted, "Hunt's Talks about Art." The author is mad on values, and goes far towards making his reader mad also. It is delightful reading, full of quaint thoughts, admirable advice, apposite anecdotes, sound sense, and bewildering contradictions.

No. V.—On the Mountain.

Just the day for photography! The wind is still; not a breath shivers the delicate leaves of the Lombardy poplars; the sky is not quite cloudless, for numbers of small clouds float lazily over the blue, affording varieties of lighting, either all sunlight, all shade, or, by careful waiting and observation, a little of each—often useful when softness and sparkle are wanted in the same picture. I don't think I can do better than imagine you are with me. It may be, like a legal fiction, most convenient; besides, you know the scenery. Fill your slides, look over your camera to see that everything is in order, for however sure you may be that everything is right, it is always best to have an inspection before marching. To forget a screw, if you have a loose one, and only discover your loss when you are miles from home and the view before you is "perfect," is to promote, possibly suicide, certainly profanity. There are some things better left at home if you unfortunately possess them. One of them is any kind of actinometer. I never knew anything but harm from this instrument when used to help to judge exposure. Another perfectly useless worry can be got out of "exposure tables." It takes all the "go" out of a picture if you have to do a sum in arithmetic when you ought to be concentrating all your heart, and mind, and soul, on your subject. Knowledge of exposure must come by experience to be of use. No

calculations based on length of focus and stop are of any service to a practical photographer. All other things being equal—which they never are—they would be an infallible guide, but otherwise they are misleading. After the plate has been exposed, and the excitement is over, it would be useful to make a few notes for further guidance—such as kind of plate, lens, stop, and length of time, also of the light and nature of the scene.

Besides the apparatus there is another very important help to picture making, which is seldom thought of—some models. It does not matter much what kind they are, whether old men, young girls or children, or mixed; the one thing of the utmost importance is that they shall be appropriate to the scene, for there must be no suggestion of sham about the finished results.

MODELS.

The illustration, which was done on a day that turned out unfit for good work with the camera, shows some of my

models. A painter is making use of one of them, while two others are watching the artist, and another is reading in the foreground. One of the many disappointments which happen frequently to the photographer is to go out fully prepared to do a good day's work, and to see the quality of the light collapse as he walks to his ground.

We will have a lofty beginning to day. Let us go to the top of the mountain—Moel-y-plas—a hillock you called it, with your transatlantic contempt for little things, but it is 1,442 ft. 8 in. high, according to the minutely exact calculation of the Ordnance Survey, and at least affords us that sense of standing on a round world spoken of by the author of Adam Bede as one of the out-door delights she most cared for. Shall we find a picture here? The hill is glorious with purple heather just coming into flower, green ferns and bracken, mingled with the orange and brown of last year's decay—new life springing from death. As we ascend, we startle a brood of grouse, which goes whirring down the valley. We need not mind them now; next month their turn may come. The land dips into valleys all around us; to the north the lovely vale of Clwyd, beyond which, afar off, is a glimpse of the pale grey sea; to the south, the Llanarmon valley running for miles in the direction of Chester; and to the west, the grand range of mountains known as Snowdonia. We are standing on the oldest bit of Britain, from the geological formation down to the Druids. The scene calls up memories on which every Welshman loves to dwell. There rise up before us in mental vision, Llewellyn and his dog, Owain Glyndwr, and King Arthur and his round table; but this is not what we are here for. The question of the moment is, Where are we to point our

camera? I cannot see anything that will afford a good subject. A magnificent view is before us, "palpitating with actuality," but it is beyond our reach. It would be impossible to give any adequate representation of those distant hills—they would be dwarfed into insignificance, and, if relied on to come on the same plate as the foreground, over-exposed to the verge of blankness. The foreground is too insignificant in itself to make a picture, and the view, *as a view*, consists of the valleys and mountains. So we must remember the limitations of our art, and give up the impossible; but don't pack up the camera, for here comes our picture. Here is a group of children, five of them, gathering bilberries: we will give up the mountains for the present, and make a picture of the children. We will send one of our young lady models to make friends with them and rub off the edge of their shyness. That she is dressed in shabby clothes will be in her favour; the children will be more natural and familiar with her. We will select a spot where the undergrowth is not too dense, but broken up with plain patches of turf or bare earth. You have already made up your mind roughly how the group shall be arranged, and have placed the camera approximately on the right spot, and focussed, pulling out the top of the swing-back before focussing, so as to get greater depth of definition from foreground to distance. The more exact focussing may be left until the group is nearly ready.

Two children to the left of the picture, three to the right, and, to make a principal point, the trained model, not quite in the middle of the picture, but a little to the left of the centre, and nearer the camera than the others. Let the principal figure be standing with her left arm outstretched over a

large basket, looking to the ground on the left, as if searching for berries. She, knowing what is expected of her, will not stand in an awkward attitude, resting evenly on both feet, but you may rely on her, when you have given her the leading idea, to carry it out instantly. The sun is shining to the right front of the camera, throwing out the figure dark against the distant mountains, but touched with a brilliant edging of sunlight. Take care in exposing to lift the cap as if it were hinged to the top of the hood of the lens, for it will then act as a sunshade. If the least touch of sunlight rests on the

SKETCH FOR PICTURE.

glass during exposure, the plate will be hopelessly fogged. It is with the children that the trouble comes. This, however, we get over with a little patience, taking care that each figure appears to be as unconscious of the camera as possible. Now expose two or perhaps three seconds. . . That stupid child looked up, just as you took off the cap, to see why you were keeping her waiting so long. Quick! another plate before she is aware you mean another. That is the picture. It is often the second shot that brings down the bird.

To succeed with a picture of this kind requires quickness

of decision, and the faculty of seeing at once what ought to be done, and promptly acting on that insight. The photographer also must be able, without hesitating or waiting for words, to say, or oftener to shout, the right thing at the right time to the models. In fact, the life of the picture depends on your doing absolutely the right thing in several directions on the spur of the moment. This facility can only be attained by long practice, good knowledge of composition and light and shade, and keen observation of effect.

In the scene described above, the figures predominate over the landscape. We will now reverse the effect, and the landscape shall be of the most importance. We won't give up the mountain now we have taken the trouble to climb so high. Let us see if we can get a good picture by taking it on two plates instead of one. Some people say that combination printing is not quite orthodox, but whether it is so or not, let us break away sometimes. It is awfully dull to be always correct. It is not easy to an active mind to be satisfied with "the priceless merit of being common-place." The difficulties of the subject before us are these: we have a near foreground of comparatively dark and non-actinic character, a blue sky with some small strongly defined clouds, a distance composed of grey blue mountains, and middle distance; this latter point of the scene, however, is a long way off. The problem is how to combine these apparently incompatible elements, giving the least prominence to the foreground. No lens would get the foreground and distance together with anything like a passable focus, and no dodging of the exposure would afford both the widely different times they would require. These difficulties are easily surmounted by combination printing. Get the immediate foreground on the plate with

an exposure of, say, ten seconds (for you will use a small stop), and all the other part of the picture on another plate, with an exposure, say, of one second. These exposures are only approximate. It would be better in practice, in taking the distance, to move the camera forward a little, so as to take in more than is required; this will facilitate the joining. I have fully described the various methods of combination printing which may be of use to the landscape photographer in "Silver Printing," and it would scarcely be worth while to go over the subject again.

No. VI.—Various Subjects.

We did not finish the day's work in the last letter. Indeed, we have only taken one picture, and parts of another. But if that one picture is right, we have done a good day's work. For I do not count the value of the day's work by the quantity of pictures secured; yet I, as do all other enthusiastic photographers, like to get all I can out of one of the few days in the year that are perfect for the practice of our art.

On our way up the mountain we passed a small lake—Llyn Gweryd—a wild tarn amongst the hills, on which we have often enjoyed pleasant sails and rows in the summer days, and fishing with the long line from the punt in the evening twilight of the days in the photographic time of year. Let us see what kind of picture we can make of the boat-house, which is a picturesque, weather-worn, wooden building, covered with decayed and moss-grown thatch. We get out the old punt, in which there is room for ten or a dozen people. This we draw to the bank to the right of our picture, and it makes a grand object for our foreground. It should keep clear of the boathouse, which is to the left, and allow the boat and any figures we may have to appear dark against the shining waters of the lake beyond. In the middle distance is a tiny island with a tree or two on it, and beyond, a beautiful curve of the banks of the lake, fringed with low trees and undergrowth, and backed with hills which are far enough off to look pale and atmospheric. This is not a case for rustic figures, so our models are useless.

But here come some of the lazy people from the house who find it too hot to paint or play tennis. We will impress them into our service. We will take the camera a sufficient distance away to avoid making the figures too important. What we want is a landscape with a little life in it to give additional interest. The party from the house is coming nearer. Don't let them know what you are going to do. The punt is so placed that some of them, with their aquatic propensities, cannot fail to jump aboard. It follows as I said. One of the men takes up a boat-hook and walks to the head of the punt to steady it while the others get in. Another man now jumps in, and is helping a lady to get on board, while several others stand on the bank waiting their turn. Now is your time. Yell out, "Steady all, keep your places." They know what you mean, and keep as they are while you make a little alteration in the group—not more than you can help, and without fuss.

The man with the boathook should put some action into his figure, and the others should be intent on what they are doing; but don't exaggerate; don't let the figures look as though it were a matter of life and death to them to look natural.

Nature does not always compose. Awkward lines will happen; and there is that stupid native carpenter, who has been at work repairing the boat-house, and looks on with wonder to see what we are doing, standing just where he will come in the picture. Take him by the arm and run away with him. There is no time to explain, and he will understand nothing less. The camera should be quite ready. You know where all the points are, and have had time to focus, arrange the swing back, and make all the

other little arrangements, so that nothing is left but to expose. "You cry out, "Steady all!" and in two or three seconds you have certainly secured a fine picture.

You could have taken all this with a drop shutter, but let us see what you would have missed.

In the first place, you must have used a large aperture to your lens, and as the figures must, whatever else suffers, be in focus, the lovely distance would have been blurred and disfigured. Now I don't mind a part of a photograph being out of focus when necessary, or when it is conducive to pictorial effect; but this is a kind of picture in which moderate definition is required in all parts. Just a little softening of the distance through being slightly out of focus would not matter, but it must not amount to astigmatism, as it would have done if the full aperture had been used. But it is not the optical point that is the most important. Your picture is now the result of design, not accident. For if it had been taken instantaneously without the figures knowing what was going on, it would have been full of faults, and all the credit you could have taken would have been for the selection of the subject and laying out the punt like a trap to catch the figures—all very creditable in its way, but not complete. As it was, you had to select your moment, improve the pose of the figures, remove the carpenter, and, as I was glad to see you do, all out of your own head, alter the oars on the ground so that they should not make objectionable lines, and improve the composition by arranging the heap of boat cushions and shawls as a balancing point.

However tempting it may be to take another picture, with variations, of the boating party, we will refrain. There can

be no greater mistake than to take several pictures much alike to each other, especially if you intend to exhibit. Your pictures become simply portraits of your model in various attitudes, or hesitating efforts, without knowledge, to get the best of your view. Always conceal the art if you can, and never show your failures. Get all the lessons you can out of your mistakes, and then destroy them. I once had something to do with an exhibition to which a number of beautiful little pictures were sent by a clever photographer on your side of the Atlantic. There was one real gem amongst them, but the artist had sent several other pictures of the same subject that just missed being perfect. The gem looked like an accidental success amongst a lot of failures. I saw them before the hanging was completed, and took the perhaps unwarrantable liberty of getting the inferior pictures removed. The gem got a medal which it thoroughly deserved, but which it probably would not have got if it had been surrounded by the various attempts to attain success.

Now for another picture. Just to the left of the boat-house, rising from a bit of land that projects into the lake, are two beautiful specimens of the graceful silver birch, called here the "lady of the woods." The leaves of this tree are seldom still: to-day, when all Nature seems hushed in repose, affords us an opportunity we must not neglect. This must be an upright picture. No figures will be necessary, for the water lilies, now in blossom, and the reflections, will give us all we want to make up the fore-ground. We shall not require any help from the swing-back. The sun is nearly full on the trees, which, in this instance, is not unsuitable, and will give you a chance for a

quick exposure. A trout was rising a few minutes ago in the clear patch of water between the lilies. Wait a little while on the bare chance, and see if you can secure the surface rings he makes on the water. There he is, and you were in time with the exposure. I believe you will find them in the negative, but if not it will be no great matter, as the picture ought to be good enough without them. The lesson I want to inculcate is, never miss a chance.

I see at a little distance down the valley a shepherd gathering his flocks on the hill-side. The large mass of sheep huddled together ought to afford material for a good picture. Let us walk towards them. Here is a pretty sight! The shepherd is greatly assisted in his labours by his collie, who appears to understand every word and motion of his master, and I notice that the old dog is teaching a young one his business. This is a most interesting sight; I have only seen it once or twice before. These Welsh collies are the most intelligent dogs in the world. See how the old one runs round the sheep, and then stands at gaze on the high ground to see that all is going well and that no sheep strays. Notice how the young dog is giving his mind to his lesson. Now the old dog runs in among the sheep and detaches about a dozen of them, then barks to the younger dog to bring them back. He has done this to give his pupil some practice. We must secure this scene, if we expend the remainder of our plates on it. We will place the camera on the rising ground opposite: the back horizontal and the focussing glass swung back, for our subject gradually recedes from us. The broken hedge and the little rill between us will give a good foreground. Put in a middle sized stop, for there is no great depth of focus required that the swing-back

will not correct, and the exposure must be quick—just on and off of the cap—or the picture may be spoilt by one or two of the many sheep bolting. I may state here, as a general rule, that it is better to have a little loss of definition though using a large stop, than to have disfiguring blurs through long exposure. For all that, I like a rather long exposure when I can get it with safety.

Wait until the dogs and shepherd stand to take another look at their flock, then expose. I believe you have got them, but try another plate to make sure; you may never again have such another subject.

We have a couple of plates left, so will return to the lake. We must have a general view of the whole piece of water. We see it in a totally different aspect to that of the morning. The wind is now beginning to stir; the clouds are gathering over the far end of the lake, leaving a vivid break reaching to the horizon. The breeze is also beginning to stir the surface of the still water in little puffs, a pretty effect easily secured. The near water is broken up by picturesque groups of sedges and deep green "horsetails," degenerate descendants of the gigantic *Equisetum* of which our coal measures are largely composed. Although there is sunshine on the foreground, the distance is in gloomy shadow from the lowering clouds. The feeling or sentiment of this aspect of the lake is distinctly solitude, which should be carried out as much as possible. The figure of a heron standing silent, solitary, on that point in the foreground, just clear of the rushes, where his dark form would show as a precious spot of dark against the white reflection of the rift in the clouds, would tell splendidly in the picture; it would be a grand illustration of how tiny a point in a composition would be the making of it.

This, however, cannot be. Many herons visit the lake, but it would be one of the thousand to one chances that sometimes occur to the patient photographer—who ought, however, not to trust to chance for his effects. He may and must take advantage of the accidents of nature, but if he plays to win miracles he must expect to lose his time. Here the painter has one of his many advantages over us. He could easily put the bird in at home—and so could we by double printing. One almost feels inclined to run down to the house and get out that old stuffed heron that has ornamented the hall so long, but the critics would call this illegitimate—if they found it out—though what difference a knowledge of how a picture was done should affect in the Art value of that picture I never could discover. In exposing this view of the lake, it would be well to lift the cap slowly, as if hinged to the top, and lower it slowly; by this means the foreground will get more exposure than the sky, and you will save the clouds.

Now, as all our plates are exposed, and the afternoon is far advanced, let us get home and forget photography for the day, if we can accomplish that almost impossible feat. We shall doubtless find the others of our party on the tennis-lawn, as it has become cool enough for a game before dinner —dinner always followed by those discussions in the billiard-room, chiefly on art and kindred subjects, you so much enjoyed, and of which I may perhaps give you a sample in a future letter.

No. VII.—Figures in Landscapes.

When I left you we had just taken a view in which we sadly wanted a heron. Our artistic instincts craved for that long-legged bird, but it was denied to us. By the introduction of the heron the picture would have been raised from insignificance to a position of some importance; it would have shown intention, acquired a meaning, been sensibly improved in sentiment, and the proprieties of composition would have been observed; yet we did without the figure rather than use a stuffed one which we had at hand, and which, if used, could not have been distinguished in the print from the live, feathered, fish-eating biped. From a miserable fear of being found out, we spoilt our picture. We refrained from doing something which nobody would have detected, and which, to blissful ignorance, would have been harmless—nay, very good—because we were afraid of the critics. How useful critics are to keep us guiltless of deception!—and that is the only moral I can find in it.

Even a bird—and a live one, too—may sometimes be made to pose as the balancing point in a photograph. I once selected the corner of a small piece of water as a good subject, if I could only get a "point" of light or dark in the right place on the water. A boat was not available, but there was a solitary swan that appeared to be very much interested in what we were about. After playing with him

and throwing him biscuits for nearly an hour, I got him to the place where he was wanted, when he steadied himself in expectation of more crumbs. Here is the result.

THE SWAN.

At the time of exposure a puff of wind ruffled part of the water and greatly improved the effect by giving surface, as the reflections give depth. The swan makes a very small point in the picture, but is invaluable to the effect. I won't go into the reason why. You have read my little book, "Pictorial Effect in Photography," in which I have gone fully into the subject of the balancing point. I would rather that you should now know and feel that the picture is made by the swan. Imagine the scene without the swan, and you will at once see how little there is in it. All this is much more apparent in the photograph than in the little illustration.

This would be a convenient time for me to enter a little into the question of figures in photographic landscapes. In

one of his delightful papers, written always with rare humour, and nearly always with sound sense, my friend Mr. Andrew Pringle gives many reasons why the photographer should not attempt to introduce figures. Writing in the *British Journal of Photography*, he says :—

"A very crucial test of a man's artistic power is his selection and arrangement of *figures* in a landscape. I do not wish to be hypercritical, and the stone I throw hits myself often, but I must say that in ninety-nine out of every hundred landscapes with figures that I see, the figures ruin the whole affair. They are inappropriate figures, inappropriately dressed, inappropriately occupied, inappropriately posed, inappropriately and wrongly placed, and in most cases would be better at home in bed. Wherever figures are in a landscape picture, they are sure to catch the eye; if they are near the camera, the eye can with difficulty look beyond them; if they are at a moderate distance, they irritate and distract, unless treated with the greatest skill; if at a great distance, they look like defects in the plate; if they appear near one side of the picture, they are in almost all cases fatal; while in the middle they are almost invariably mischievous. I have never myself learned properly to arrange figures in a landscape, and I prefer sins of omission to those of deliberate commission, so, as a rule, I leave figures out, and among the photographers of the world I cannot count more than three or four who *ever* use figures perfectly, and not one who is *always* happy in his arrangement. Among the hundreds of landscape negatives with figures in my possession, not one satisfies me in this respect, while most of them are actually criminal in their ugliness. The commonest faults are (1) Making the figures so important that one can-

not say whether the "subject" of the picture is a landscape or a figure subject; (2) Making the figures so small as to distract and harass the eye, and to produce a sensation of superfluity; (3) Putting figures in without any connection with the landscape, or where figures are not wanted at all."

The writer gives one excellent reason for figures in landscapes, which should be all-sufficient to the enthusiastic photographer. He says that to introduce figures properly requires the greatest skill, and is a "test of a man's artistic power.' Ordinary photography is so easy and so entirely mastered down to its chemicallist depths by Mr. Pringle, that he should be rejoiced to find there is still something left to call for his reserve powers. I agree with much that my friend says. It does too often happen that the figures are inappropriate to the last degree—wrongly dressed, wrongly occupied, wrongly placed. All this only shows that there is a good deal of art-ignorance and want of taste amongst photographers, and that the great thing they really want is art-teaching. What is the use of all their fine manipulation if they cannot turn it to a good use? All photographers strive to get beautiful gradation in their negatives this is the one bit of art beyond which they do not attempt to go. Why cannot they go further, a step at a time, until they really learn how to "put squadrons in the field?" That figures attract the eye is true—it is one of their chief functions; that they irritate and distract is, as Mr. Pringle justly says, from want of skill in the artist; but how they can be especially fatal when they appear on one side of the picture puzzles me; figures are often very useful at the side. Their quality, though small in size, will often balance mere quantity on the other side. For an illustration of this see the

little picture, "Calling the Cows," in Letter No. 3. Mr. Pringle would probably call this composition "juist a wee ae-sidet," but to my eye the mass of trees to the right is perfectly balanced by the greater pictorial value of the cows to the left. To leave out figures, to prefer sins of omission to sins of commission, is not worthy of the pluck I know Mr. Pringle possesses.

Mr. Pringle points out the "commonest faults;" my answer as a teacher is, don't commit them. Not that I think the first of them a very great defect. I don't know whether it is necessary to anybody but a statician to know whether a picture is a landscape or a figure subject. If it is interesting, it will give sufficient pleasure without being tabulated.

A landscape without a figure in it can seldom claim rank as a picture. I have taken the trouble to look through the exhibition of the Royal Academy for examples of pure landscape without figures, and have found very few—not one per cent. I call to mind one or two fine exceptions of which Millais' "Chill October" is the chief, but their beauty depends almost entirely on the splendid power of execution. They do not translate well into black and white, and can therefore be no guide to the photographer. Of course there are some scenes which come under the head of landscape in which figures would be inappropriate or impossible, such as some aspects of Niagara, yet in one view of this tremendous scene I have seen a tiny steamer which, by contrast, added immensely to the realization of the majesty of the mighty rush of water, and I have seen others in which the impertinence of the figures have made me sorry that photography was ever discovered. There can be

little doubt that "combining the aspects of nature with the doings of man" is at the root of all great landscape, whether painted or photographed. I grant that it is difficult to obtain good models, but it is a difficulty which can be surmounted. Then again I am often told by young beginners that they cannot think of incidents, cannot find anything for their figures to do. All I can say is, these things will come by constant study, and the more subjects an intelligent photographer may use up, the more will come to him. Ideas seem to come with practice. John Stuart Mill, who had more ingenious ways of making himself miserable than any dozen other pessimists, used to reflect on a time when all musical combinations would be exhausted; and the artist also may look with apprehension to the time when all possible subjects may be used up. But he need not fear. It may be said of nature as of Cleopatra—"Nothing can stale her infinite variety."

No. VIII.—Another Day Out.

It may be worth our while to take just one more walk with the camera. There is that lonely lane, famous for its wild roses, and the river, and the mill, and more particularly the miller. New and useful experience is obtained from every picture you make, if you study the subject earnestly, and put all you know into the representation of it.

As it is near at hand, we will begin with the lane, and I know at least one subject there that is properly lighted at this time of the day. Climbing over a stile we come to a picturesque part of the lane where a small stream meanders along, while dotted across the stream is placed a row of stepping stones, beautifully varied in their forms. These stones are to be the subject of, and give name to, our picture. The sun shines from the side, but slightly in front of us, casting the shadow of part of the hedge over the foreground, throwing up the stepping stones—our subject—into brilliant light. The scene as we now see it is pretty, but it is not a picture, it is only good material for a picture. It is even badly composed. There are several parallel lines running in the direction of the stones. This must be corrected. We must have a figure, and the place for a figure is obvious. We have brought a model with us. On the way she has amused herself gathering ferns, and is carrying the great fronds over her shoulder. Get her to cross the stones, and call her to stop at the right spot and remain in the act of stepping. Try again and again until

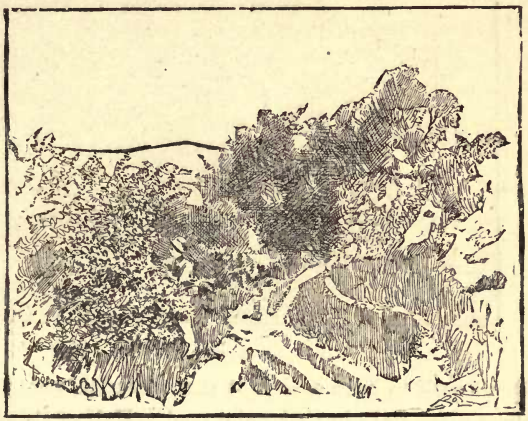
you are satisfied with the action of the figure. Don't be afraid of giving trouble, she is here only to obey your command; you may obey hers when she changes her dress. In her present capacity she would take any trouble to help you, or she is not worthy of her office. Don't you see how that dark hat she is wearing is lost in the dark hedge behind it? It is essential to make the figure stand well out from its background, therefore change the hat for a lighter one,

STEPPING STONES.

which you will find in the basket of odds and ends of rustic costume we always carry with us. Now you will find that the figure has converted a scene not worth photographing for itself into a picture. The composition is corrected, the parallel lines are broken and are no longer prominent, the eye is centred on a principal object. I almost think you may exhibit this picture if you do not muff it in development. Expose an extra plate for fear of accidents.

Going up the lane we turn and find this scene. The scene

is well composed in itself, and the lines of the pathway are so varied and picturesque, that we won't hide them by placing a figure in front of any part of them, although a small figure, someway down the lane, would be effective. However, we elect to have the figure rather nearer, for the sake of the blossoms. She shall be gathering wild roses, which will give us a title. Now when you are doing a thing it is as well to do it thoroughly, therefore I recommend you to gather some more branches of roses and add to the rather scanty supply



GATHERING WILD ROSES.

growing in the place for our figure. The girl must appear to take interest in what she is doing. In this case the upper part of the dress would have been more effective if not so dark in colour, but we have neglected to bring a lighter jacket.

We come to the mill just in time to catch the miller feeding his two calves, and they fall easy victims to our camera. A little way up the river is one of the artists painting, and

another of the boys looking on. They happen to be in exactly the right place, so we will not disturb them. Say nothing to them. They will pretend not to notice what you are about—professional etiquette, I suppose—but they see what you are going to do, and will be quite still all the same. This suggests that some subjects must be shouted to, and others left to themselves.

ARTISTS.

Don't omit to have a shot at that splendid group of cows cooling themselves in that quiet pool. Half of them in sunshine, the other half in shadow from the trees and bank, they make a fine effect of light and shade. Be quick, but don't be in a hurry; there is nothing gained by going off your head. Above all, don't be tempted to under-expose. In this subject there is great contrast of light and dark, and it is essential that the cows in shadow should be very well defined, to give transparency and depth to the shadow, and that the lights should not be chalky. This can only be secured by sufficient

exposure. If you blow a dog whistle just before you are going to expose, you will find it will sufficiently attract the attention of the cows without making them move away. It may even have some effect on their whisking tails, which are always a nuisance.

We are again in luck. Here comes material that must suggest a grand picture for our final effort to-day. Let us call up all our forces. The miller's donkeys are coming up to be loaded with great bags of flour for his boy to deliver to some of the villagers. The miller is always our friend, and will do anything to oblige us, so that we don't take up too much of his time. Range the two donkeys up to the mill-door, put some bags and the boy on one, and let the miller be loading the other. See that he does it with vigour. What more natural than that a couple of passing girls should stop to observe the interesting operation and have a chat? We have two models with us, who are soon in their places. It so happens that the gamekeeper who accompanies us to carry our camera and plates is coming up from the river; stop him in the act of walking before he gets up to the group. His dark figure is in the right place to carry the eye into the landscape, where in the distant meadow among the trees on the other side of the river I see some cattle, but I fear they will come too much out of focus to be of much use. Your models now all know their duty, and the only doubtful part of the problem is, Will the donkeys be still? It is of very little use trying to attract the attention of these animals, so your only chance is, in fact, to take your chance, and several plates.

In this case the figures are larger than is usual in landscape, and, perhaps, not large enough to make what would be called

a figure subject. It may be either, or anything you like to call it, so that it makes a picture. There is much diversity of opinion as to what is a landscape. I once took a medal for Genre with a picture that contained only three small figures in a large landscape. This was at an exhibition where the exhibits were strictly divided into classes, and the selection must have been left to the porters.

THE MILL DOOR.

I don't know that it would serve any good purpose to go through other scenes with you at present. Every picture you do should be the outcome first of a deliberate purpose; secondly, of the operator availing himself of every accident. These latter differ with every subject. I should like to impress upon you before we part that the world is full of beauty. This is an evident platitude, but it is not so evident that there is beauty in almost everything; it depends on how you look at it. It does not follow that every beautiful

thing would make a picture. A great deal that is beautiful in nature is far from adapted to pictorial treatment. I remember you once said to me that a good deal of this so-called beauty was not visible to you. That was probable; you had not learnt to see. You also posed me by asking me what beauty I could see in chimney-pots.

At the time I really had no reply. I could not defend chimney-pots, but it happens that I have since had a grand opportunity of studying these useful, but not very attractive objects. Perhaps I may be allowed to relate the personal experience, possibly more interesting to myself than to others, when I found that a little mist, aided by as much imagination as is within nearly anybody's reach, give beauty—even grandeur—to the much maligned chimney pots. It depends on how you look at it. Anybody who likes to think so has a good look out even if his view is only, like Dick Swiveller's, an uninterrupted view of "Over the way."

It was my unhappy fortune, in the early part of 1886, to have to lie on my back for some weeks, after a remarkable exploit in vivisection of which I was the victim, in an upper room at the back of a large house in one of the London squares. There was a large plate glass window overlooking a spacious court, in which were some low buildings with flat-roofs of lead, the back of some old delapidated houses, and a splendid collection of chimney pots, amongst which the chirpy London sparrows held carnival. As many a London photographer will remember, there was scarcely a day in town during January and February of that year that was not foggy, the nature of the fog varying from a delicate silvery grey mist on some days, through drizzle, sleet, Scotch-mist, pea-soup, to "the blanket of the dark" of

Macbeth, and the absolute darkness of "collied night" on other days. Thus thinly or thickly obscured, the view underwent every variety of picturesque change. The chimneys sometimes became towers and castles; the otherwise ugly and ignoble backs and roofs of houses, rocks and mountains—the scenery of the Rhine without the river; and when the lead roofs beneath were wet with rain, it was not difficult to imagine the scene where—

> "The castled crags of Drachenfels
> Frown o'er the wide and winding Rhine."

Sometimes the rare gleams of the low sun struggled through the houses and illuminated the mist, then the backyard became a scene of enchantment, and when a touch of delirium came on, as it would now and then, the cloud-capp'd towers and gorgeous palaces of Shakespeare were nothing to compare with the mystic view. There is much pictorial virtue in mist; even fog may be beautiful in the right place.

I have seen that backyard since on a clear summer day, and all the beauty had vanished with the mystery of the fog and mist. Perhaps also I was in better health.

Corot, the most poetical of the French landscape painters, is said to have seen a great deal to like in a London fog, and I know nothing to surpass in fairy-like beauty a still, misty, silver-grey day in the country, with a dash of sunshine on the foreground.

No. IX.

A Talk in the Billiard-Room.

I PROMISED I would give you something like a report of one of the discussions that take place at night in the billiard room during our annual visit to Wales. I fear I shall not be able to recall any particular night, therefore you must be content with a "blot" or "impressionist memory" of several. A smoking chat, well mixed with chaff, is not easily reportable or profitably readable, so I will omit a good deal that may not be interesting or teach you anything.

White. Our photographer was painting to-day; how did he get on?

Black. I was much complimented by the Miller, who takes an acute interest in art. His great desire is, he says, to go to London to see all the pictures in the Tower. He had never seen me painting before, and it gave him great satisfaction. He said in his best Anglo-Cambrian, "Ah! you do do them by hand too. It is well when a man can turn his hand to anything. You do yours by machine mostly, and can make many, but it takes the other gentleman a long time to do them by hand!"

White. Ante up the product.

Black. There is the interesting and valuable result. Speak your mind, Brown, you are a great painter; but as is often the case with great painters now-a-days, you don't know much about art, but we will take your opinion on the smudgey part of it.

Brown. Oh! I can't be bothered with such juvenile efforts. You ought never to waste good oil colours. Turn it upside down and begin another if—and only if—you can't find something better to do. But why do you bother yourself with paint?

Black. Eliger Goff says, "When a man forgets his first mother it's time for him to be born again," and this is not the first time I have painted.

Grey. The Renaissance *was* a healthy time for art.

Black. The appositeness of the application excuses the interruption. I don't see why I should not paint occasionally; I acknowledge that disuse of the brush has made it more difficult for me to express my thoughts in the easier vehicle than with the camera. There was a time when painting was easier to me than photography, and I don't know now which is the less difficult, the machine—as the Miller calls it—or the brush; if, indeed, the brush also is not a machine.

Grey. We are all machines in our way. We—even we painters—we can own it among ourselves, are all adepts at turning on steam and stoking. It is, perhaps, shameful, but nevertheless true, that we are most of us manufacturers. As I read in a provincial paper the other day: "The great painter turns out so many pictures a year, just the same as the machine turns out so many legs and backs. All his materials are provided for him, and are very convenient. His

tubes, his easels, his fanciful brushes, his arrangements of light, all simplify the task for him; and, perhaps, as he sits and paints, a faint dream crosses his mind of a happy day when artists will paint portraits by electricity, playing them out on the keys of a piano-like instrument." The writer should have made exception, but I am afraid he is right in the main.

White. Really, Grey, I wonder how you can be so dreadfully candid. Success has made you reckless. It does not do to exhibit your thoughts in the nude in that barefaced manner; you should clothe them a little. It is positively indecent to talk as you are doing.

Brown. Especially now we have got the public to believe that painters are the only poets in art; and that Black here, with his machine, isn't in it.

Grey. You know I don't agree with you there. I have always maintained that there were art possibilities in photography. The difficulty has been in the ease of the process. The art work of the few in photography has been swamped in the rubbish of the million. All men are not born to play Bach's fiddle fugues, as Browning somewhere says, and it is reserved for the few to get the right tune out of the camera box. Photography has not had time enough to produce a large crop of geniuses. There are those who think that the really great geniuses in painting—an old art like that—are only lately born, and that "only we, the latest seed of time," know anything about it. I am an old-fashioned painter myself, and don't believe it.

Brown. Well, I think we are showing them how to do it, if I may be allowed to say so.

Black. "Thy modesty's a candle to thy merit."

Brown. Go to! irreverent youth. Tell me if anything has ever been seen in art like some of the suggestions of nature some of us give you.

Black. Never! Small things were never done so greatly, so few great things done.

Brown. Your emphatic "never" scarcely sounds like applause. Let us see what the others have been doing. Ah! Grey and White have been painting the same scene. Both of the pictures are like the subject, but they are a long way from looking like each other. This shows how man's mind comes in. The photographer cannot do that with his boxes.

Black. Cant we? As usual, you are perversely ignorant of what we can do. I never yet saw two photographs of a scene that were alike, and if I saw two by different men, and I had been accustomed to their work, I could tell you who had produced which.

Grey. Different people see differently and translate what they see differently, it is astonishing to how great a degree. Ask any two men to describe the effect of no rain for forty days. One will go from Charing Cross to Yokohama to describe it, the other will just walk round his garden and do it better.

Black. That is what I claim for Photography.

White. Take it and be happy.

Brown. Both sketches are good. White's only wants the details of the trees, which he can easily get from one of Black's photographs, to make it a finished picture.

Black. Just like you painters, everybody's property is your own. You only look on photographs as something you may possibly purloin. I totally differ on this subject. Why should the photographer play jackal to the painter's lion,

and collect scraps for him? The photographer should be above this, and make complete pictures for himself. I would no more copy another man's photograph than I would his sketches. I don't mind painters "refreshing their memory" with photographs, but there are some who are not ashamed of stealing complete and perfected ideas. They soothe their honour by persuading themselves that the photograph is not the work of man but of nature, and nature, they say, is open to everybody. I am often pirated. Once there appeared in one of the London Galleries a large painting, copied "lock, stock, and barrel," from one of my photographs. After I had kicked up the demon's own row, and threatened to claim the painting, as I could do under the Copyright Act, the painter apologised for the "inadvertence!" Ancient Pistol said, "Convey the wise it call," but the modern art euphemism for making a mistake in the ownership of property is "inadvertence."

White. Do you object to painters photographing?

Black. I no more object to painters taking photographs and copying them than I would object to their making sketches with a pencil for the same purpose; but he must be a very experienced painter with a fine memory for colour who could make a good use of photographs. It must be very deleterious practice for the young, immature student. He had much better keep to nature and draw and think for himself. Now for Brown's picture.

Brown. There it is. If you see anything worthy of your approbation you can put your hands together, but don't wake the house.

Black. It reminds me of the criticism of a famous R.A. on

your last year's great effort, "and he had so much promise!" Take it away.

Brown. It is not composed artificially enough to suit Black. A picture is not a picture if not composed, or I have read what he has written on the subject wrongly. Composition is not the whole of art.

Black. I agree with Brown for once. Chalk it up. In the endeavour to be simple and clear, I believe I am often too definite and precise. Many people think that I am trying to teach art when I am struggling to give them some notion of composition and light and shade. It is nothing of the sort. I know perfectly the distinction between the means and the end. I am afraid I am sometimes wearisome in the way I explain that rules, and laws, and principles, are only the skeleton of art, and not the living soul; yet dense fellows, like Brown, will misread me.

Grey. The principles of composition are the principles of common sense, and run through all the doings of civilized life—from a picture or building, to a dinner or a company of friends. These annual holidays of ours, for instance, have been going on for twenty years, and how harmonious they have been!—never a hitch anywhere. This is all due to skilful composition. The components were selected and put together by an artist who understood composition. We have balance, contrast, light and shade—and havn't we our "values?" The result is a harmonious whole.

Brown. Ingenious, but too gaudy. It would be interesting to know what you photographers do, that you claim to be artists and judges of art.

Black. Everybody is a critic now-a-days, so why not photo-

graphers? Touching the other part of your question, we invent, we select, we modify, we execute. What more do you want? Modern painters do little more. We confess there are many things we cannot do. We do not aspire to such subjects as "The Last Judgment," or the "Battle of Waterloo." We have the sense, which painters have not, to avoid such impossibilities. But we can do many things. If nature does not suit us, we can alter nature, just as a painter does.

White. Your alter-native is to alter nature?

Black. Yes, if nothing short of a pun will suit you, we even alter the natives when they do not suit us raw, or provide substitutes for them. Like that grim Earl Doorm we read of in the Idylls to-day, we compel all things to our will. See the changes I have had made in the river to suit my work.

Brown. It is not every photographer who can lay waste a country side for the sake of his pictures.

White. And call it art!

Black. I only want to show our resources. I do not advocate an indiscriminate felling of timber. I could go into details touching invention, &c., and how we can modify nature, also how we can modify our execution of it—what you would call "treatment"—but it would be the old tale over again; we have had it over a score of times. You all agree with me, but, being excellent draughtsmen, you love to "draw" the photographer.

Grey. Whether he is an artist or not, we must all agree that his affection for art reminds us of that ardent lover who

worshipped the very smoke that came out of his mistress's chimney.

Brown. Perhaps the analogy is nearer than you intend. You imply that the photographer gets no nearer the flame of art than the smoke.

Black. It certainly seems to come under the head of contentious matter, but I am content to accept the compliment Grey intended. I am not to be drawn any further. I feel that my verdantcy begins to assume a russet hue. I am not so green as I have been. Good night.

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No.	Large Stop covering	Medium Stop covering	Small Stop covering	Equiv. Focus.	Price.
1	3 × 3	4 × 3	5 × 4	3 in.	£2 14 0
2	4 „ 3	5 „ 4	7½ „ 4½	4 „	2 18 6
3	5 „ 4	7½ „ 4½	8 „ 5	5 „	3 3 0
4	7½ „ 4½	8 „ 5	8½ „ 6½	6 „	3 12 0
5	8 „ 5	8½ „ 6½	9 „ 7	7 „	4 10 0
6	8½ „ 6½	9 „ 7	10 „ 8	8 „	5 8 0
7	9 „ 7	10 „ 8	12 „ 10	9 „	6 6 0
8	10 „ 8	12 „ 10	13 „ 11	10 „	7 4 0
9	12 „ 10	13 „ 11	15 „ 12	12 „	8 2 0
10	13 „ 11	15 „ 12	18 „ 16	15 „	9 0 0
11	15 „ 12	18 „ 16	22 „ 18	18 „	10 16 0
12	18 „ 16	22 „ 20	25 „ 21	21 „	13 10 0

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FOR

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6 „ 5	5 „ 4	1¼ „	7½ „	4 14 6
8 „ 5	7¼ „ 4½	1⅜ „	9 „	5 3 6
8½ „ 6½	8 „ 5	1½ „	11 „	5 17 6
9 „ 7	8½ „ 6½	1⅝ „	12 „	6 15 0
10 „ 8	8½ „ 6½	1¾ „	14 „	7 12 0
12 „ 10	10 „ 8	2 „	16 „	9 9 0
13 „ 11	11 „ 9	2¼ „	18 „	10 7 0
15 „ 12	13 „ 11	2½ „	20 „	13 0 0
18 „ 16	15 „ 12	3 „	24 „	16 13 0
22 „ 18	18 „ 16	3½ „	30 „	22 10 0
25 „ 22	22 „ 18	4 „	34 „	27 0 0
28 „ 24	25 „ 20	4½ „	38 „	36 0 0

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1	7¼ × 4½	⅞ in.	3½ in.	4 in.	£4 1 0
2	8½ „ 6½	1⅛ „	4⅝ „	5¼ „	4 19 0
3	12 „ 10	1½ „	6¼ „	7 „	6 19 0
4	15 „ 12	2 „	7½ „	8½ „	9 9 0
5	18 „ 16	2½ „	11 „	13 „	12 12 0
6	22 „ 20	3 „	14 „	15½ „	18 0 0
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$6\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$ ...	7 2 6 ...	1 0 0
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