

made the landscape photographer's life a burden to him; and show them our light and complete equipment, with which man may travel round the world, and leave—if he choose—his negatives to be developed by his grandchildren, with every probability that, if preserved with reasonable care, they will turn out all right.

But one consequence of this great change has been, that while the multitude of "new hands" have naturally had everything to earn, the oldsters have not been much better off; for there is a world of difference between the management of a collodion plate which required an exposure of, say, twenty seconds, and a gelatine plate—25 on Warnerke—which I have known to be "much over-exposed" with an exposure of one-twentieth of a second.

Then I say boldly that we all have much to learn; and I believe that we can learn more rapidly, more effectively, and, I trust, more pleasantly from one another than we can from books. By our fortnightly meetings, with the papers which will be read at them, the specimens which will be shown, and the discussions which will take place, we hope that a benefit will be conferred on each individual who attends. In the question-box which will be provided, members may drop questions on knotty points, or even without fear of being thought ignoramuses, whose why and wherefore are sometimes sufficiently perplexing.

During the coming winter we may anticipate that the "lantern-nights," when slides prepared by members, together with those made by experts in the art, will be exhibited, will prove a great attraction. From first-class lantern slides of good subjects shown in the best possible way, it is perhaps possible to secure the greatest happiness of a greater number than by any other photographic exhibit, and I look forward to large audiences on our lantern nights.

An exhibition of pictures and apparatus—annual, biennial, or triennial, as may be determined—seems to me one of the important objects of such a society as this. Every photographer, I am sure, whether amateur or professional, is desirous to see and to study the works of the leading men in our art-science of this and other countries. By an exhibition, with liberal offers in the way of prizes, we may hope to attract the choicest works of the photographers of the British Isles, and even those of France, Germany, Russia, and the United States. Such a collection would not simply be an instructive one for the photographers of our district, but I am persuaded that it would be a revelation and a source of great pleasure to the people of this town, and would show the marvellous progress made by photography during the last decade, and the services it has been able to render, and is now rendering, to science and to art.

Not the least benefit which a photographic society is able to confer upon its members is a series of well-organised excursions during the summer months. For the complete success of these outings it is necessary to have a leader who knows the ground well, so that the various points of interest may be visited at a time when the light is suitable for each. It would be a good plan, too, to appoint a recorder for each excursion—or the offices of leader and recorder might be conjoined—whose duty it would be to write a brief account of the trip, which should be read at the next meeting of the Society, and preserved in a book for future reference.

Another service which a photographic society can do for its members is the issuing of presentation prints, consisting of copies of the choice works of celebrated men in our art-science. For such a purpose and in such numbers these can be secured under favourable conditions, and they will serve as a standard of comparison, and as an incitement and a guide.

The formation of as complete a library of books on photography as can be collected, I consider a duty of this Society. Not only should all modern periodicals and books be bought or begged, but everything which bears upon the past history of photography must be secured. More than this, it is very desirable that the leading works in such cognate sciences as chemistry, optics, &c., should be on our shelves, and, under proper regulations, at the service of all our members.

An album has already been provided to receive the portraits of members, which they are required by one of our rules to contribute, and I trust that other albums will receive a goodly collection of work done, accompanied by all those particulars with reference to lenses, plates, stops, &c., which photographers alone know how to value.

Much useful local work may be done by a photographic society in a large town like Birmingham. By securing accurate representations of old buildings, we can furnish a record for

posterity whose accuracy cannot be disputed, and whose interest in the future will be great. But I would not only photograph the old buildings, I would secure, or try to secure, on rapid plates, impressions of the appearance of our streets, of the principal lines of thoroughfare, and of the busy crowds by which they are traversed. Even in the short half century which has past since the discovery of photography, if such pictures could have been secured of Birmingham at intervals of every five or ten years, what an interest they would have for us to-day. We exclaim at the pleasure it would give us if we could see photographs of Stratford as it was when Shakespeare lived there, but there will come a time when a similar desire will be expressed to see England as it was in 1885, and, fortunately, by the aid of photography, it will be possible for such a desire to be gratified.

Then we can do something in the direction of beautifying the bare walls of our Board Schools, and of similar institutions. Frames of good photographs—and more especially, perhaps, enlargements—would bring forcibly before the minds of children some of those beauties of nature which, alas! many of them never behold.

From members of the Natural History Societies numerous specimens of shells, rocks, plants, &c., have been received, and these have been placed in suitable cases upon the walls of our Board Schools; but I feel sure that the Kyrle Society—which is doing an excellent work in adding an element of beauty to the interior of our schools—would welcome the gift of good local photographs, more especially if they were produced by some permanent process, as platinotype or carbon printing.

In conclusion, I need hardly say that the successful achievement of even the least of the objects I have named, requires the hearty co-operation of every member. By regular attendance at the meetings members can do good, not only to the Society, but to themselves. Such meetings as these revive the flagging interest, and give a new interest to work. We include all within our ranks—amateurs and professionals—all who are desirous to learn, and all who are willing to teach.

MAKING LANTERN SLIDES.

BY A. B. BENJAMIN.*

I FIND in reducing a 5 by 8 negative to 3½ by 4, having the copying camera containing the negative placed within six inches of the window, and the latter protected by a piece of ground-glass or white tissue paper, the sun's rays shining direct, or nearly so, upon it, an exposure of from five to seven seconds is sufficient for negatives of ordinary density. For a very thin negative I have reduced the time to cap on and off.

I prefer this latter exposure for negatives of such subjects as rocks, white stone buildings, steamboats, sailing vessels, and rough water and marine views. In such cases I use the developer at its full strength, as I notice it yields what are called "black and white" tones, but which are actually more black and blue or black and very dark purple, such as is often seen in an ordinary silver print. For such objects as landscapes containing considerable foliage and grass, brown stone buildings, or those composed of the yellowish brick much used at the present time, I prefer a dilute developer, as I think it yields tones more in accordance with the subject. The exposure should be trebled, and the strength of the developer reduced one-half, putting in one grain of bromide to two ounces of solution, and picking out the plate when the development has proceeded far enough.

By commencing the development with a weak solution, there is little need of ever losing a plate. My plan of proceeding is as follows:—Suppose we have two ounces of developer just half the normal strength in the tray, and in a graduate near by an ounce of the same full strength; now this latter solution can be added, a little at a time if necessary, to bring out the picture without danger of causing any immediate chemical change in the developer. I do not advocate using a developer that has been mixed over thirty minutes, as beyond that time the yellow precipitate begins to form, and though the developer appears to remain clear, there is a sprinkling of golden sand deposited on the surface of the plate, which, while it can be easily removed by a constant and rather violent agitation of the tray, is a movement which is really needless so long as the plate is well covered.

* A communication to the Society of Amateur Photographers June 9th, 1885.